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OF PC FORMAT

# PC FORMAT

Presents

# A Hatful of Hit Squad

Welcome to the best previews, reviews and  
tips for the cheapest games around!



**OVER 50 GAMES REVIEWED**

— and they all cost less than £15!

**PC FORMAT PRESENTS**

# **A HATFUL OF HIT SQUAD**

*How to play some of the best PC games in  
the world without breaking the bank*

Written by PC FORMAT in conjunction with The Hit Squad.

Words by Richard Longhurst

Produced by Clare Johnson

Designed by Martin Parfitt



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## A page with small words

Special thanks to Paul Millar and Simon Alty at Ocean for all their assistance, Ian Richardson and Kelly for a great wind-up, Jane Richardson (no relation) for having the idea and Mark Higham for letting me do all the work. No really, I wanted to – you get more money that way. And hey, just remember, if you want something done properly, do it yourself.

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*PC FORMAT* is Britain's best PC leisure magazine, and thanks to you it's also Britain's best-selling PC leisure magazine. Every month *PC FORMAT* serves up an irresistibly potent cocktail of news, reviews, tips and advice for anything and everything to do with PC leisure. And when we say leisure, we mean just that. You won't find reviews of terminally dull and horrendously expensive databases and spreadsheets. You will find hundreds of fun-loving, informative features, looking at affordable software and hardware, and all written with the UK's finest blend of wit, cynicism and searing insight. If you're into games, graphics, animation, music, DTP, comms, video, CD-ROM or shareware, you'll be into *PC FORMAT*. Got a PC? Get *PC FORMAT*.

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## A word to the wise

Welcome to *A Hatful of Hit Squad*. Over the past few months, here at *PCF* we've been campaigning to bring down the price of software, not just games, but serious stuff too. Obviously it's the games that get most attention, because they're what most people are interested in, and they are also grabbing all the headlines in the papers. Budget labels such as The Hit Squad can only be good for PC games.

For a start they give you the chance to buy many top-quality titles at greatly reduced prices, titles which might otherwise have been deleted from the publisher's lists. Wouldn't it be a shame if you could no longer buy classics such as *Populous*, *Prince of Persia* and *Ultima 6*?

But on a broader level, budget labels are good news for games because they prove that software houses can make money from low-priced games. Let's not get all starry eyed about why The Hit Squad is making such an effort on the PC game front - it wants to make money, pure and simple. But the thing is, the people at The Hit Squad have had the sense to see that the best way for them to make money is by giving you (mostly) the best games at the best prices.

There are loads of classic games already waiting to be snapped up for £10 or £15, and even though not all the currently available titles are brilliant, there are plenty more good ones in the pipeline. As well as all the games featured in this book, The Hit Squad already has the rights to distribute some of the biggest games the PC has ever seen, only we're not allowed to tell you about them just yet. If you think big, you can bet that The Hit Squad is thinking even bigger.

Anyway, that's enough from me, let's see what The Hit Squad's got to offer...

**Mark Higham,**  
Editor.

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# HERE'S THE HIT SQUAD

*Big software houses can often be faceless de-personalised companies, but The Hit Squad is different. It's run by real people, the sort of people who want you to save money when you buy computer games. But why do they do it? What's in it for them? Let's meet the brains behind Britain's biggest budget label...*

# WELCOME TO THE UNIQUE WORLD OF The Hit Squad

## A word from David Ward

When we took the decision to launch The Hit Squad into that newly burgeoning niche market – the budget label – in early 1989, we were unaware that the company would, so quickly, become a major software publisher in its own right.

Currently boasting a catalogue of more than 345 8-bit and 186 16-bit titles, the bed-rock philosophy of the company remains the same today as it did at its launch.

Quite simply, our aim is to provide the ever-expanding leisure/educational software user base the opportunity to purchase classic, quality titles at greatly reduced retail prices.

This publication is testament to the success of that philosophy.

As a member of the Ocean Software group of companies, The Hit Squad exclusively pub-

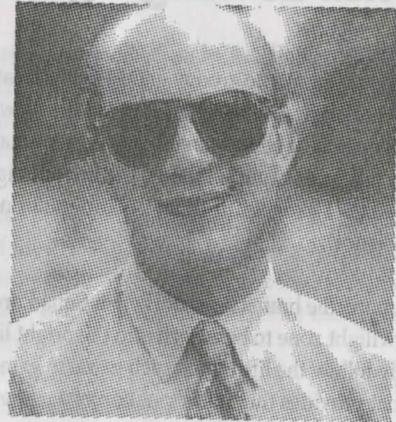
lishes Ocean products into the budget arena. As well as Ocean's premium product line up, a quick look at any market report of the UK's leading software publishers provides a good pointer to the other companies whose classic titles make up The Hit Squad's extensive product range.

Electronic Arts, Domark, Accolade, Activision, UBI Soft, Europress – the list grows monthly, as do the major film licences The Hit Squad boasts in its catalogue. From *Batman* to *The Simpsons*, *Terminator 2* to *WWF*, the big names always make their way on to The Hit Squad label.

The rest of this book will give you a taste of the exciting future ahead for The Hit Squad. Our superb product line up for the end of 1993 and into the new year provides an unrivalled selection of truly top titles. The Hit Squad will, I promise you, continue to get bigger and better.

Keep on gaming!

**David Ward**  
Chairman.



**David Ward,**  
Chairman of the Ocean group of companies.

# THE SOFTWARE TITLE'S GUIDE TO LONGER LIFE AND LASTING HAPPINESS

or  
how the hell do budget games get here?

You're about to read about all the groovy games and educational software that The Hit Squad offers, and that's going to be released in the next few months. There are some incredible games available at some incredible prices, but have you ever wondered how that block-busting full-price game is granted the gift of long life? How it becomes one of The Hit Squad's range of budget titles, and in doing so brings the wonders of its code to an even larger audience?

Well, wonder no more, the brains behind The Hit Squad are here to tell you exactly how a game leaves the twilight zone to be reborn into the bright light of budget-label stardom. We can exclusively follow the life of one such game to gain a unique insight into the marketing machine that provides the transformation of a game from full-price to budget.

Without further ado or faffing around, here's *Wing Commander*...

Just 19 months ago, the classic deep-space 3D shoot-'em-up was topping the full-price

charts immediately upon its release. Today, the Terrans and the Kilrathi have received a new lease of life, because as a Hit Squad title a whole new group of gamers can enjoy the ultimate space-combat simulator.

Let's follow *Wing Commander* as it makes the transition from full-price number one to budget-game beauty. Our guide for the journey is the legendary Mr Paul Millar, sales manager of The Hit Squad, friend of the stars (the Seven Sisters mainly), one-time boot-boy for Everton FC (shoe-shiner, not head-kicker) and all-round bon viveur.



**Paul Millar, an important man (he tells us).**

## So Paul, how did *Wing Commander* first take your interest?

Before any product is taken on board, we go through a rigorous market research exercise to ensure that the product is commercially viable.

## Yes, OK, cut the marketing speak, just tell us in English, would you?

Well, we often find ourselves pitching for products, sorry, bidding for games, against other software houses, so it's important that we select the right titles. In the selection process, the following research is carried out.

- We check out the original ratings in magazine reviews. A good score is needed.
- We check the quality of the game ourselves. We have a special Hit Squad team of evaluators, as well as independent reviewers to test the games.
- We find out whether there is still a potential market for the game – are people still using the computers the game was released on?
- We examine the historical sales of the game.
- We evaluate the potential for future sales.

If a product emerges from this research looking good, then we will produce sales forecasts that need to be guaranteed.

*Wing Commander* fitted the bill almost perfectly. It had been both a commercial and critical success, and this, coupled with the large amounts of new PCs entering the home, convinced us that it would be an asset to the range.

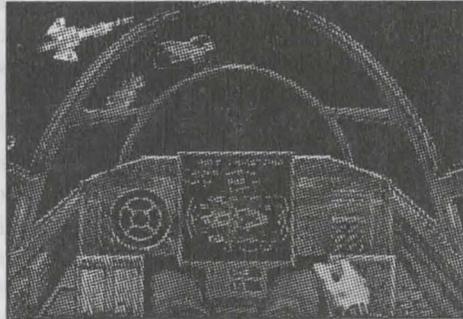
### **That's fine, but what's in it for the original publisher of the game? How do they make their money from a game's successful move to The Hit Squad?**

This is where our sales forecasts become so critical. A percentage of the price of each game sold will automatically go to the original publisher – this is called a royalty. As I described earlier, our sales forecasts are guaranteed, which means that even if those guaranteed sales are not reached, the percentage royalty still has to be paid on the higher sales figure originally forecast. You can see how important the initial market research is!

### **So, *Wing Commander* passes all the tests and you decide to take it on. What happens next, Paul?**

We get the product into the market place. The first step is to produce the packaging (the box and manual etc) and brand the product with The Hit Squad corporate identity. Having said that, we always use the product's original imagery to ensure consumer recognition once the box is on the shelves in shops such as Boots and WH Smiths.

The final step is the duplication of the master disks. First the product is re-mastered, re-tested and then duplicated on to Hit Squad branded disk. The whole process for *Wing Commander* took about eight weeks for the transition into the budget arena to be completed.



***Wing Commander*. What's the fuss about?**

### **How old does a game have to be before it finally becomes old enough to appear as a Hit Squad budget game?**

Traditionally, games have been about two years old before they've moved over, but the times are getting shorter. Some games are available on budget within 14 months of the

original release, and many of the titles we're releasing before Christmas are much less than two years old.

### **How do you see the future shaping up for The Hit Squad?**

Budget labels furnish the growing armies of PC owners with libraries of best-selling titles at a fraction of their original price. Purchasing a product at a budget price enables the PC owner to remove the risks from making their first software choice.

In the future, we will continue to supply this market with quality products – the search for new products will be relentless. We are so determined to give PC owners the best deal that for some products, we will be able to secure the budget rights even before the full-price launch.

Ultimately, the future offers budget CD games. The introduction of compact disc technology as a viable mass-market medium means we can now look forward to the biggest hits appearing on CD from The Hit Squad.

# COMING SOON

*There's plenty of excellent software already available from The Hit Squad and plenty more is on the way. More titles from Hit Squad stalwarts such as EA and Accolade will be joined by games from new signings such as Virgin Interactive Entertainment and Renegade. You'll be able to get hold of these games for less than £15 each in the first half of 1994.*

# LURE OF THE TEMPTRESS

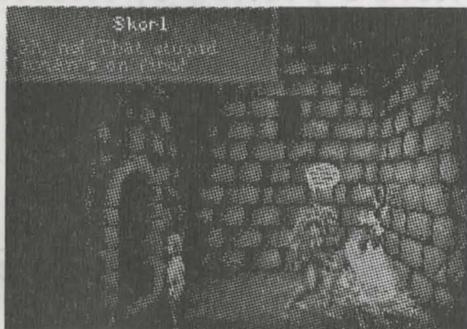
Virgin  
Reviewed: PCF 11

As super heroes go, Diermot and Ratpouch are just about the most unlikely pairing you're ever going to find. Diermot is a peasant, a complete nobody with not a penny to his name, and Ratpouch is a servile, snivelling wretch. These weird characters live in the once-thriving town of Turnvale, which no longer thrives

because it has been taken over by the Skorl, a vicious race of trog-like monsters led by the bewitchingly beautiful Selena. It's up to the dynamic duo to free Turnvale from its oppressors, which is no mean feat, and the task is made even harder when Diermot starts the game locked in one of the Skorl's deepest dungeons.

Together, though, the peculiar pair are more than a match for anything the Skorl or Selena can throw at them. You see, Ratpouch does anything Diermot tells him, short of drinking sewage, so what Diermot can't do, Ratpouch probably can. This comes in extremely useful at various stages throughout the game, particularly at the start, for example, when the heroes are locked in the dungeon. With his last gasp, a dying prisoner tells Diermot of a secret passage in the wall, but Diermot isn't strong enough to push the bricks out of the way. Enter Ratpouch, with biceps bulging, and pretty soon a passage to the outside is revealed, and you can set about the serious business of saving Turnvale.

It's always a good idea to keep an eye on Ratpouch when he's not carrying out your orders, because he seems to have a mind of his own, and this nearly always leads to one form of comic japery or another. For example, he often wanders off to the Magpie Tavern for a drink, opens the door, goes inside and orders a beer. The barmaid refuses to serve



Virtual goings on in Turnvale.

him, of course, because he's a stunted dwarf and looks under age – you have to be at least 12 to drink intoxicating liquor in Turnvale.

*Lure of the Temptress* was the first game to use a game system called Virtual Theatre, which was developed by a small UK software house called Revolution Software. Virtual Theatre is a grandiose title for what is essentially a very simple concept. All it means is that all the characters in the game who you don't control (non-playing characters as RPG buffs call them) wander around the game world doing their own thing. They have a degree of intelligence that enables them to buy drinks in the pub, have conversations independently of your actions, and generally make a nuisance of themselves. This creates a believable, living gameworld for you to play in, and it's so much more realistic than many other adventure games.

The Virtual Theatre system doesn't just provide a cosy gameworld for the characters to live in, it becomes an integral part of the gameplay, and has to be used to solve certain puzzles. If you want to find one of the other characters, the best places to look are in their homes or in the taverns, and if they're not there, you have to wander around looking for them. It comes into play when you have to learn the routine of the Skorl patrol, so you can time a little breaking-and-entering job, and when you have to spy through the shop window to eavesdrop on a private conversation.

The point-and-click control system is one of the best around, giving you plenty of scope for interaction and experimentation, particularly with Ratpouch always ready and willing to do your bidding. The detailed graphics give every location its own atmosphere, from the dank dungeon where you start the game, to the warming glow of the blacksmith's fire, to the bare boards of the monks' house.

There are many aspects of *Lure of the Temptress* that set it apart from other adventure games, but the main impression you get is one of well-rounded completeness. The Virtual Theatre system combines with the slick interface and beautifully drawn locations to create a detailed gameworld and an excellent adventure.

**Minimum system: 640K; EGA; XT; mouse.**

**Hard disk or high-density disk drive required.**

**Optional extras: VGA; AdLib; Sound Blaster; Roland.**

# MEGA LO MANIA

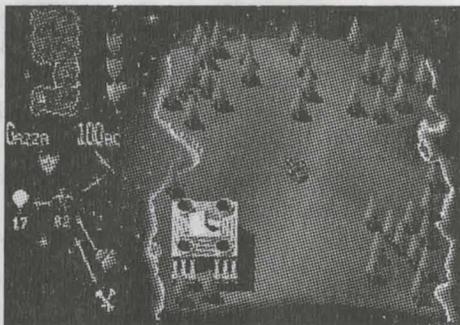
UBI Soft  
Reviewed: PCF 10

Compared to the mayhem in *Mega Lo Mania*, the Creator of our Universe had it easy. According to all biblical accounts, He had the field, or rather the vacuum, to Himself and could design the universe however He wanted to. The story goes that in the beginning He Was, and it was as simple as that, no fuss, no confusion. But in *Mega Lo Mania*, you play one of four deities who are battling to decide who is going to have the honour of taking charge of a newly created world. Yep, He certainly had it easy.

You have to battle against three other would-be gods in a series of epochs running from 9500BC to 2001AD. The weapons and technology available change in each setting, so you start throwing rocks at enemies and beating them with blunt instruments, and end up by launching a nuclear attack against their SDI-protected installations. To win an epoch, you have to conquer three islands of varying shapes and sizes, which is harder than it sounds because you have to develop all the offensive and defensive weaponry yourself.

First you have to design a weapon blueprint, then you have to collect or mine the raw materials required for the weapon, and then you have to build enough weapons to equip your troops. The more advanced weapons have to be designed in laboratories and built in factories, which your men have to build themselves. All of these tasks, mining, designing, building, defending, attacking and making, require men. You start the game with 100 men, and it's up to you how many you assign to conquer the islands in the first epoch — any you've got left over can be used in the next epoch.

*Mega Lo Mania* is a real test of brain power. Firstly, you have to think very carefully about what you're going to produce, and then you have to decide how many men to assign to each task. The race to conquer an island is always a close-run thing, unless of



It's a mad, mad, mad, mad world.

course you can think of a devious way to gain the upper hand. The length of time it takes to invent or produce a weapon depends on its complexity and the number of men you assign to the task. It's very difficult to strike the right balance between mining and production, and between having enough men to defend and attack.

For most of the game your men are represented by numbers against the icon for the task they are performing, but when you send them into battle, they appear as cutely animated people. It's quite amusing to see them scurrying manically around the landscape, throwing pikes or shooting cannon balls.

*Mega Lo Mania's* sharp graphics and animation makes it instantly appealing, and its slick point-and-click control system means that it's much more accessible than many strategy games. Expect to spend ages trying to battle through to the end, because there's no guarantee that the strategy you use on one island is going to work on one of the other islands in that epoch, let alone an island 1,000 years in the future. It's sometimes too easy to end up with a quick defeat, but because the game is so easy to play, and because each island looks so eminently conquerable, you're always all too eager to get stuck in.

**Minimum system: 640K; EGA; 286; hard disk.**  
**Optional extras: AdLib; Sound Blaster; mouse.**

# SIMANT

Ocean  
Reviewed: PCF 8

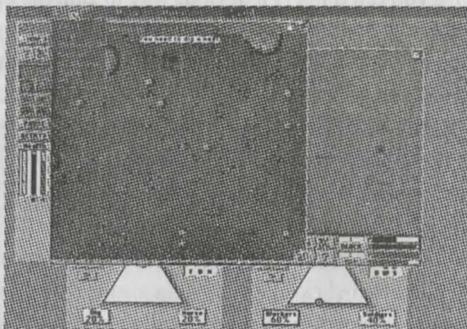
What a daft idea for a game. A simulation of an ant colony in which you play the part of a female ant whose three aims in life are to defeat the red ants in the mother-of-anthill-battles, take over a back yard and then kick the humans out of their house. Daft, but extremely playable and thought provoking.

There are three ways to play the game, the simplest of which is the quick game in which you have to pit your wits against the red ants in an effort to utterly destroy them. In the full game you have to defeat the reds and then move on to conquer the yard and the house, while in the experimental mode you can mess around with the terrain and the ants to create your own game environments.

The gameplay starts off on a small scale, but soon expands as your colony gets bigger. At the beginning of a new game you have to build a nest (which involves digging), find food, build up the colony (which involves lots of breeding and more digging), and then, once your power base is strong enough, it's time to conquer the world.

The graphics and sound are well implemented, even though you might not think there's much scope for them in a game about ants. The windowing system can be used to simultaneously give you several different views of the yard, the house and your colony. In fact, the programmers have gone out of their way to make *SimAnt* a very easy game to play – the control system is friendly, logical and very well presented.

Giving your ants orders is the most interesting part of the game because the little critters don't behave as you might expect them to. Because ants are group creatures, you can't rely on them to dig, forage, or fight on their own. You have to use the menu options to create certain classes of ants, including workers, fighters and breeders, in order to give your colony structure and longevity. The trick is to get the right balance between the activities your colony members should be concentrating on. There's a fine line between starving your ants to death, killing them through overcrowding, or leaving them vulnera-



Unusual antics of the sim variety.

ble to an all-out attack from the reds.

Although your main priority is to build up the nest, forage for food and defeat the reds, there are plenty of predators to be dealt with. One of these is a particularly vicious spider who sits around looking mean and preventing your ants from getting near the food supplies. On the other hand, if you happen across a spider's corpse then you can chow down for an impromptu feast.

*SimAnt* has all the finesse and thought of Maxis' best *Sim* games, and a level of subtlety that's sadly lacking in many PC strategy games. It has numerous intelligent and humorous touches that endears it to you. Ants may not be the most attractive creatures in real life, but in *SimAnt* you can't help but feel for them, and you always feel like helping them. Against all the odds, Maxis has successfully taken a rather obscure topic and turned it into a highly enjoyable game. The only problem is that for its apparent complexities, you might find it too easy to complete. A decent full game might last only four hours, but at least you've got the experimental mode to satisfy your curiosity when you've taken over the back yard and the house.

**Minimum system: 640K; EGA; 286; hard disk.**

**Optional extras: AdLib; Sound Blaster; Roland; mouse.**

# SIMEARTH

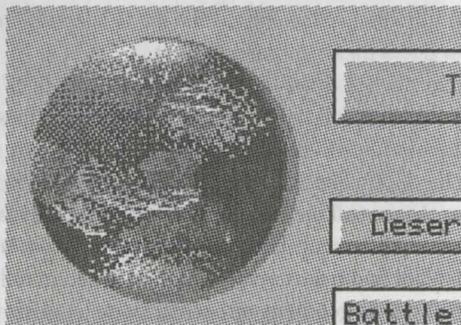
Maxis  
Not reviewed

Maxis' *SimCity* was a slow-burning success. It wasn't one of those massively hyped games that sells thousands on the first day of release and then quickly gets forgotten once all the publicity dies down. It sold reasonably well, and then kept on selling reasonably well for the next few years, achieving classic status along the way. After the immense success of this city-building game, Maxis set its sights on the ultimate simulation, a simulation of Earth itself. The result was *SimEarth*, a game which gives you the task of trying to evolve and maintain a sentient species, starting with a smouldering lump of rock somewhere in the depths of time.

Fortunately for you, the game gives you all the other stuff you're going to need to create your species. There's equipment to create air, oceans and land masses, as well as all sorts of bacteria, archaeobacteria and other organisms that you usually find in a three-day-old half-drunk cup of coffee. All you have to do is throw the whole lot into the melting pot, stir, fiddle with the environmental settings and hope you can produce something worthwhile.

For example, you can alter cloud formations, surface and cloud albedo (yes, go on, go and get the dictionary if you want to know what that means), solar input, rainfall and the air-sea thermal transfer rate. Then there are things such as the rate of continental drift, volcanic activity, erosion and axial tilt to consider. This is one game that certainly makes you work hard.

The manual tells you all you need to know about Lovelock's Gaia theory, which proposes that the Earth and all the things on it live as a single, self-regulatory organism. It's up to you to decide where you harness energy from, and how you expend it, all the time



What sort of world would you create?

giving due consideration to how your actions affect the planet's overall state. You can harness energy from nuclear, biological, fossil, hydroelectric and solar sources, and then allocate it to science, agriculture, medicine, philosophy or art.

Eventually you get to the stage where you can start dotting a few different species around the planet, but you don't have to use the plants and animals that we're stuck with in the real world. You can tweak the evolutionary process to create some of your own more unusual flora and fauna, you just have to maintain suitable environments for them to live in.

If you're not quite happy with the way things are looking on your planet, or you just want to liven things up a bit, you can call upon a few natural disasters. Hurricanes, tidal waves, meteors, volcanoes, fires, earthquakes, plagues and atomic tests (OK, so they're not all quite natural disasters) can all be wrecked on your unsuspecting populations.

There's such immense attention to detail in *SimEarth* that it's hard to know where to start. Thankfully, the manual is well written, making even the more complicated aspects of creating your own planet seem relatively simple, even if the realities of the game are slightly different. In fact, calling *SimEarth* a game is a little insulting, it's much more than that because it teaches you a lot about the way the world works, and there's so much complicated mathematics going on behind the scenes. Don't buy *SimEarth* expecting an easy ride through the history of the world, it's hard work, but ultimately it can be rewarding.

**Minimum system: 640K; EGA; 286.**

**Optional extras: AdLib; mouse.**

# GRAND PRIX UNLIMITED

*Accolade*  
*Reviewed: PCF 12*

It looked like Damon Hill had it all sewn up. His first Grand Prix victory was within his grasp, but then as he screamed around the final bend, his exhaust fell off and all his tyres burst. Oh well, there's always next season, and there's always *Grand Prix Unlimited*.

You don't have to be an expert to get to the top in *GPU*, but it does help. On the easiest of the five skill levels, your PC-controlled opponents crawl around the tracks, making it easy for you to roar into first place. Increase the skill level and your opponents get faster and more aggressive, and they begin to use blocking tactics as well. You also have to adjust the car's setup to suit the weather conditions, the track and your driving style.

If you ever get fed up of racing round the prestigious circuits supplied with the game you can use the track designer to create your own Grand Prix tracks. While it's great fun creating a twisting track with hardly any straights, it's not so much fun driving around them, so you soon learn to strike a balance between sharp bends and fast straights.

The game is occasionally let down by glitches in the 3D graphics system, and some rather dubious collision detection, but it's still an excellent all-round racing sim. The wealth of options and difficulty levels means there's plenty of depth, and the track designer will keep you up long into the night.

**Minimum system: 640K; VGA; 286; hard disk.**



**Get ready to race in the Williams Renault.**

# SPEEDBALL 2

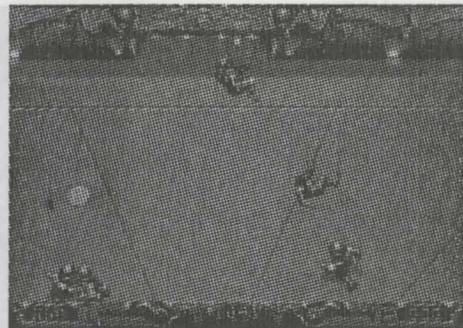
*Renegade*  
*Reviewed: PCF 1*

If you think the brawls you see on the rugby pitch are violent, wait 'til you see what *Speedball 2* has in store for you. *Speedball* is an incredibly violent futuristic sport, a cross between American football, basketball and street fighting. Whether or not someone's got the ball makes no difference – you have to hit, trip, punch and kick your way to victory. If someone's in the way, hit 'em hard; if someone's got the ball, hit 'em harder still.

You control a team called Brutal Deluxe, which starts as a sort of futuristic Accrington Stanley, languishing at the bottom of the league with players who could definitely do with a boost. The sort of boost you want to give them depends on your style and the amount of cash available. You can grab coins on the playing field, known as the pit, but while you're doing that the opposing team is racking up the points, so you have to strike a balance between trying to score points to win the matches and grabbing money.

The game's easily at its best when you play with, or rather against, a friend. The PC opponents get progressively better as you move up the league or through a tournament, but they're no competition when compared to a human opponent. *Speedball 2* is just a good excuse to have some violent fun in the name of sport.

**Minimum system: 640K; CGA; XT.**  
**Optional extras: AdLib; Sound Blaster; joystick.**



**Forget the corpse, a goal's been scored.**

# SLEEP WALKER

*Ocean*  
Reviewed: PCF 20

The first ever official Comic Relief game, and let's hope there'll be plenty more. With sound effects and speech from Lenny Henry, this platform puzzle game was almost guaranteed to be a success right from the word go. You play the part of Ralph, a faithful pooch who's shocked to discover that his master,



**Help Ralph get Lee safely back to bed.**

Lee, is a somnambulist of the highest order. He's wandered out through the window and is in danger of falling off a building or down a manhole, so Ralph leaps off to the rescue.

Lee blindly walks along at the same pace wherever he is, and it's up to Ralph to push Lee to speed him up, kick him up the backside to lift him to a higher level, impede his progress by standing in front of him, or hang between two ledges to bridge small gaps. It all sounds very simple until you see some of the levels that Ralph has to guide Lee through. There's water in the sewers, long drops, bouncy canopies, irate night-club bouncers and all sorts of bizarre creatures. Lucky, then, that Ralph is an indestructible cartoon dog who can be squashed, electrocuted, crushed and beaten up ad infinitum. Lee can only suffer two fates – death or waking up – either of which means it's game over for you and you have to start the level again.

The levels get increasingly complicated and increasingly frustrating as you progress, so if you've got a short temper it's a good idea to take it in extremely small doses. *Sleep Walker* is a fun game that at times can be immensely irritating, but it's guaranteed to give you hours of animated fun.

**Minimum system: 640K; VGA; 286; hard disk.**  
**Optional extras: AdLib; Sound Blaster; joystick.**

# XENON 2 MEGABLAST

*Renegade*  
Not reviewed

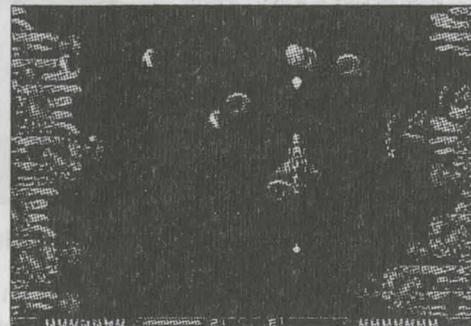
Decent shoot-'em-ups are few and far between on the PC, and there's really only one game worth considering if you want to have a good blast. *Xenon 2* was created by the Bitmap Brothers, and is simply an excuse for out-and-out destruction.

You control a ship that's making a perilous voyage through alien-infested space, and the only way you're going to survive is through sheer firepower and lightning-fast reactions. Your ship starts with a puny plasma weapon, but a few power ups later and you've got hold of some pretty awesome weaponry. The weird aliens come swirling down the screen in formations, and if you destroy a complete formation, you're rewarded with a diamond. The more diamonds you collect, the more credits you have to spend at the mid and end-of-level shops.

These shops stock all the firepower any space hero could wish for, but at a price. Simple weapons such as side-shooters and rear-shooters set you back a couple of hundred credits, but lethal weapons such as the super nashwan power are obscenely expensive.

A word of warning though, if you buy *Xenon 2*, you'd better get yourself a joystick, otherwise your keyboard is going to take such a pounding it might give up working altogether. *Xenon 2* is an old game, but for simple finger-blistering fun it's still unrivalled in a world of PC games that concentrates on heavy flight sims and role-playing games.

**Minimum system: 512K; CGA; XT.**  
**Optional extras: AdLib; Sound Blaster; joystick.**



**Hit the firebutton until you get a blister.**

# ROBOSPORT

Maxis

Reviewed: PCF 17

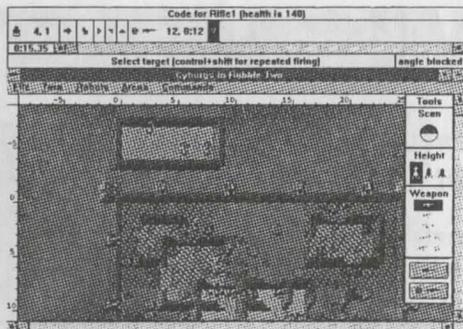
It was a bit of shock when Ocean released this Maxis game – the title didn't have the word 'Sim' at the start of it. It could easily have been called *SimRobot*, because you're put in charge of a team of four robots in a game that's an engrossing blend of strategy and shoot-'em-up.

You play a variety of games against human or PC-controlled opponents. You can go for survival (kill your enemies), capture the flag (get your opponent's flag before he gets yours), hostage (rescue one of your 'bots), treasure hunt (collect gold coins) or baseball (scamper from one point to another without getting killed). Whichever you choose, you're in for plenty of fun because your team is always equipped with some lethal weaponry.

Each turn, your robots have a certain number of action points which you can use to move the 'bots around the playing area, and then arm and fire weapons. When you've given your orders, the PC generates the results of the ensuing combat and you can view the mêlée at your leisure. The results of the combat depends on which weapon was fired, the type of robot hit, the type of land it was standing on and the distance from the attacker. You're going to need a good head for figures if you're going to work out the results of combat in advance and plan a sophisticated attack strategy. But you can always hide behind a hedge with your missile launcher and wait for an enemy to waddle past.

*Robosport* has plenty of game varieties, and even a custom game builder should you exhaust all the possibilities provided. Of course, it won't be to everyone's tastes, but it's good to see a decent *Windows* strategy game with a sense of humour.

**Minimum system: 2Mb; EGA; 286; Windows 3; hard disk.**  
**Optional extras: Sound Blaster; mouse.**



Strategy with a sense of humour.

# MIKE DITKA ULTIMATE FOOTBALL

Accolade

Reviewed: PCF 5

Hang on a minute! Don't turn over just because you're not interested in American football, this could be the game that shows you the fun side of a dozen 150-pound beefcakes slamming into each other.

One or two players can take part in *MDUF*, and if you don't feel like getting stuck straight into the action, you can opt just to coach the team. In this mode you simply select the plays and then let your team cock it up on their own. When you get fed up of PC-controlled fumbles, you can take over and cock it up yourself.

It's best to get to grips with the game by playing one-off practice matches because the controls can take a while to get used to. But when you're a dab hand at ordering your team around, you can dive into a regular season that hopefully ends with your chosen team appearing (and winning) the Superbowl. The leagues provided contain all the NFL teams, but if that's not good enough you can create your own league, team and players. The statistics of the players can be altered, so if you want your quarterback to throw better passes, you can increase his skill level, but this reduces his speed and stamina.

*MDUF* looks and sounds great, and there are plenty of options and stats to last you an age. Controlling your players can be annoying at times, but you can just about forgive this foible because it's such a comprehensive game.

**Minimum system: 640K; EGA; XT; hard disk.**  
**Optional extras: AdLib; Sound Blaster; Roland; joystick; mouse.**



Can you make it to the Superbowl?

# AL MICHAELS ANNOUNCES HARDBALL 3

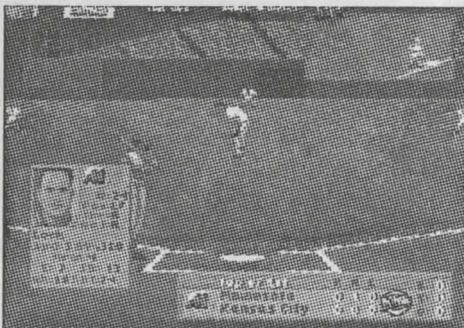
*Accolade*  
Reviewed: PCF 11

For some reason, baseball has never taken off in the same way that American football took the UK by storm a few years ago. Perhaps it's got something to do with the fact that Channel 4 didn't have a convenient Sunday afternoon program about it that you could veg out to after wolfing down the Sunday roast. Whatever the reason, baseball isn't very popular in this country, but you can still have a good laugh with *Hardball 3*.

You're in for a treat if you've got a Sound Blaster or compatible soundcard, because the famous American sportscaster Al Michaels (what do you mean you don't know who he is?) gives a ball-by-ball and blow-by-blow commentary. The digitised speech adds to the atmosphere, even if you can't always understand what he's going on about.

Unless you're heavily into baseball, you won't appreciate the complexities and subtleties of pitcher rotation and batting orders. It's not the ideal game to get if you fancy a quick slog, but if you're determined to find out more about baseball while you play, there's more than enough depth and statistics to satisfy your lust for knowledge.

**Minimum system: 640K; EGA; XT.**  
**Optional extras: AdLib; Sound Blaster; Roland; joystick.**



Are you a natural like Robert Redford?

# WINTER CHALLENGE

*Accolade, Reviewed: PCF 3*

Seven games in one can't be a bad deal, and that's what you get with *Winter Challenge*. There's speed skating, downhill skiing, cross country, giant slalom, the luge, the bobsleigh and the biathlon. All the events can be played by up to 10 people, which makes this the ideal party game when you've got a few mates round after the pubs have shut.

The game is played in two modes, training mode, in which you, er, train, and tournament mode, in which you (surprise, surprise) compete in tournaments for the glory of winning a medal. The events can be tackled in any order, and you can choose one of three skill levels (amateur, professional and world class) for the PC-controlled opponents. Some of the events (notably the skiing) are far more enjoyable than others, and the game's long-term appeal is limited because there's no career option, but it's still good for a laugh.

**Minimum system: 640K; EGA; XT; hard disk.**  
**Optional extras: AdLib; Sound Blaster, Roland; joystick.**

# SUMMER CHALLENGE

*Accolade, Reviewed: PCF 16*

Eight games in one can't be a bad deal. Hang on a minute, are you experiencing some sort of déjà vu. There's horse jumping, hurdles, cycling, kayaking, archery, the javelin, the high jump and the pole vault. All the events can be played by up to 10 people, which makes this the ideal party game when you've got a few mates round after the pubs have shut. Right, that's enough déjà vu.

The game is played in two modes, training mode, in which you, er, train, and tournament mode, in which you (surprise, surprise) compete in tournaments for the glory of winning a medal. The events can be tackled in any order, and you can choose one of three skill levels (amateur, professional and world class) for the PC-controlled opponents. Not as good for summer games as *Winter Challenge* is for snowy games, but fun nevertheless.

**Minimum system: 640K; VGA; XT; hard disk.**  
**Optional extras: AdLib; Sound Blaster; Roland; joystick.**

## EPIC

*Ocean, Reviewed: PCF 10*

As extremely fast 3D deep-space shoot-'em-ups go, *Epic* is one of the fastest. It has you hurtling through space and over planet surfaces at incredible speeds. At times it goes so fast that it's difficult to take advantage of all the weapons your epical fighter has been equipped with, which can be a bit of a bummer when there are hundreds of enemies swarming around your ship. Fighting on the planet surfaces is extremely impressive, with numerous detailed installations such as buildings and radar to be destroyed, but the space-based dogfights soon get boring. Unfortunately, the game's badly let down by lacklustre polygon graphics and an incredibly short lifespan – there simply aren't enough missions to keep you going for any considerable length of time. *Epic* is OK for a quick blast, but not much more than that.

**Minimum system: 640K; VGA; 286; hard disk.**

**Optional extras: AdLib; Sound Blaster, Roland; joystick; mouse.**

## CADAVER

*Renegade, Reviewed: PCF 3*

Who in their right minds would call a game *Cadaver*? Let's face it, you'd have to be pretty barmy, but then again you'd have to be pretty barmy to play an isometric RPG-cum-adventure that stars a stunted dwarf-type creature who has to dash round the most bizarre dungeons you're ever likely to come across. Oh well, it takes all sorts. *Cadaver* has a peculiar control system – if you push the joystick up, your character moves up and across the screen. This can be remarkably infuriating the first few times you play the game because the hero keeps falling down holes, but when you've worked out that you have to rotate the joystick through 45 degrees, it all gets a lot simpler and a lot more enjoyable. A fun little game, but prepare to be frustrated.

**Minimum system: 640K; VGA; XT.**

**Optional extras: AdLib; Sound Blaster; joystick.**

# ROLE-PLAYING GAMES AND ADVENTURES

*Whether you want a gruelling sword-and-sorcery romp, or a flit to Never Never Land, The Hit Squad has got a game for you. Venture through the fabled lands of Britannia in Ultima 6 or puzzle through Shadowlands. Only brave adventurers need apply.*

# SHADOWLANDS

£12.99, Domark  
Reviewed: PCF 10  
Available now

If you've never played a role-playing game before, entering the bewildering world of hit points and armour classes can be a daunting experience. Considering the amount of statistics many games make you plough through just to create your own characters, it's not surprising that many people are put off from playing RPGs before they've even started. *Shadowlands*, on the other hand, gives you all the depth you'd expect from the most sophisticated RPG, but shelters you from all the annoying statistics.

The game gives you the usual sword-and-sorcery storyline about having to fight your way through a series of dungeons in order to find and kill the chief bad guy. It's not the most original idea for a game that you've ever seen, but *Shadowlands* does have a couple or three features that set it apart from most other RPGs. You control your four warriors with a slick point-and-click mouse-driven interface. Each of your warriors has an on-screen portrait which you use to give them orders. Click on the portrait's arm to make him pick something up, on the weapon to make him attack, or on his legs to make him walk. It's an incredibly intuitive system that makes it easy for you to get into the game without being unnecessarily hindered.

Rather than give you a first-person perspective 3D view that you find in games such as *Underworld* and *Eye of the Beholder*, the game shows you the action from an isometric point of view. This means that you don't get to see the game world through your characters' eyes, but you do get an excellent idea of the traps and monsters surrounding your intrepid adventurers. What strikes you most about the view you're given of the dungeons is that everything seems to be in the dark, and unless you've got a torch, it stays that way. *Shadowlands* uses a system called Photoscape to create realistic lighting effects, for exam-



Sinister skeletal shadow play.

ple a torch only lights up a small area of the dungeon around the person who's carrying it.

The gameplay consists of the usual quota of monster bashing and spell casting, but the dungeons also present you with loads of fiendish puzzles that have to be solved before you can continue your journey. There are pressure pads that activate doors, teleporters, slots in the walls that you have to feed bronze or silver coins, and traps that are triggered by the light from your torch. To solve some of the trickier puzzles, it's often essential to split your party into two groups. For example, a pressure pad that operates a locked door might need two people to stand on it, which means the two warriors not standing on the pad have to continue until they can find a way to keep the door open.

*Shadowlands* makes a refreshing change from first-person perspective RPGs. It doesn't have the depth of *Ultima 6* because there's very little interaction with other characters in the game (apart from the fighting of course), but the number and variety of puzzles is enough to keep you glued to the screen. For newcomers to the genre, this is an excellent introduction to role-playing games, but even if you consider yourself a hardened adventurer, there's bound to be something here that you haven't seen before. An excellent game.

**Minimum system: 640K; EGA; 286; mouse.**

**Optional extras: AdLib; Sound Blaster; Roland.**

# ULTIMA 6

£14.99, Origin

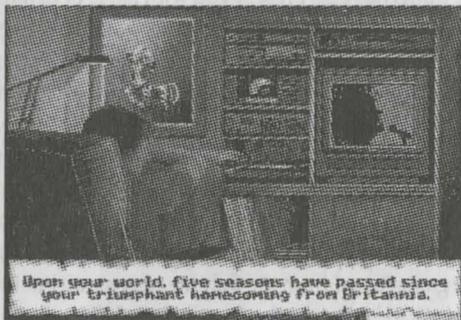
Not reviewed

Available: October 1993

Origin's long-running *Ultima* series is one of the most well known and widely respected collection of role-playing games in the world. It all started back in the early 1980s with the release of *Ultima 1* (no surprises there) and since then the Avatar (the game's hero) has explored the land of Britannia to banish all manner of unmentionable miscreants. The game's plot is a long and complex one, but you don't have to have played the previous games in the series to be able to appreciate the rich history of Britannia. The designers at Origin pride themselves on creating believable worlds for you to explore, and Britannia is one of the most interesting places you could ever hope to visit.

Origin co-founder Richard Garriott is the main brain behind the stories and characters, in fact he's even in the game, going by the name of Lord British, ruler of Britannia. Even though Lord British is in charge, he doesn't have much control over what goes on in his land because it's constantly being invaded by the aforementioned monsters, and at the start of *Ultima 6* the whole place has been overrun by gargoyles. Unlike Tina Turner, Lord British is in dire need of a hero. But not just any hero, he needs a hero controlled by you, a hero called the Avatar. Luckily, you're not alone in your quest to defeat the gargoyles, you have three strong companions who go by the names of Iolo, Shamino and Dupre.

The slick intro sequence sets the scene for the adventure to come. One minute you're sitting at home watching television, the next minute there's a flash of lightning and you're walking through a vortex that takes you back to Britannia to renew your old acquaintances. The game gives you a top-down view of the action, with internal and external locations depicted with excellent attention to detail. You start in Lord British's castle, where you immediately have to dispatch a couple of gargoyles before getting on with the



Get ready for a gruelling adventure.

serious business of exploring.

The beauty of *Ultima 6* is that it gives you incredible depth of gameplay – it's so much more than your run-of-the-mill hack-and-slash RPG. The primary mission is to defeat the gargoyles, but it's supplemented with numerous subquests and sub-plots than you can choose to explore. You can have intelligent conversations with all the people you meet (with the exception of Lord British's irritatingly inane court jester) and you can go inside all of the buildings (even if you have to blow down the doors first). There are hundreds of objects to pick up and use, the magic system is marvellously sophisticated, and there's a gruesome menagerie of monsters to fight.

Even though it's a couple of years old now, *Ultima 6* can still hold its head up high in a PC game world crowded with RPGs and adventures. If you've never played a role-playing game before, you are probably going to find it heavy going to start with, but it doesn't take long before you lose yourself in the world of Britannia.

**Minimum system: 640K; EGA; XT.**

**Optional extras: AdLib; Sound Blaster; Roland; VGA.**

**Hard disk recommended.**

# HOOK

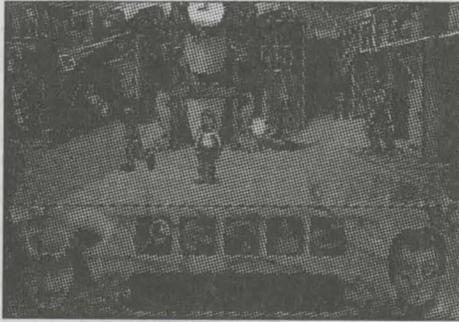
£12.99, Ocean  
Reviewed: PCF 12  
Available now

OK, so Steven Spielberg's Peter-Pan-grows-up-and-then-rediscovers-his-roots film wasn't up to much, but at least it makes a change for a licensed game to be better than the film that inspired it.

*Hook*, the game, is based solidly around the plot of the film – Peter Pan has grown up, married Wendy's daughter, and had several children into the bargain. But worse than all of that live-happily-ever-after nonsense, he's forgotten what it's like to be a child. How terribly sad. The evil Captain Hook isn't one to forget an old enemy, so he hatches a dastardly plan to kidnap Peter's children and whisk them away to Never Never Land.

Naturally, our heroic flighty friend is more than a bit perturbed by this sinister turn of events, but there's not an awful lot he can do about it because he's forgotten how to fly and he can't get to Never Never Land to rescue the bairns. So that's the end of the game before you've even started. Hook hacks up the children and Peter Pan lives a life of misery in London, never daring to go near the giant Hamleys toy shop on Regent Street. Not much to it is there? Hang on, something's not quite right. Didn't we forgot somebody? Ah, yes, the beautifully vain Tinkerbell. As luck would have it, she's heard all about Captain Hook's evil plans, so she scoots off to London, gathers up Monsieur Pan in a sheet and carries him all the way to Never Never Land, which is where your adventure really begins.

Most of the game takes place in a seaside pirate town that's extremely reminiscent of rough-and-tumble Woodtick in the classic *Monkey Island* adventures. It doesn't take you long to find out that Hook has locked the children on his pirate ship, but the trouble is that a burly pirate won't let you on board because he doesn't like the cut of your 20th century clothes. To get on the ship, you need some fine and dandy pirate gear so you can pass yourself off as one of the regular swashbuckling crew. The first part of the game cen-



**A real fairytale adventure. How sweet.**

tres around your quest to find the appropriate items of clothing, and no, you can't just go into the local Marks and Sparks to pick up some off-the-peg pirate duds. You need a hat, a jacket and some trousers, so you just need to find some people to steal them from. When Peter's got the right clothes, he has to learn how to fly again, and once he's done that he's ready for the final show-down with Captain Hook.

*Hook's* got just the right blend of fiendish puzzles, amusing antics and illogical riddles to keep you, er, hooked. Take the dentist, for example. Yes, please, take the dentist, take him away, take him anywhere – you won't want to let him near your gnashers when you've seen what he does to poor Peter's teeth. The flighty fairy is so desperately in need of some gold coinage that he lets the near-sighted dental technician extract a couple or three molars – without anaesthetic.

The game's 256-colour graphics are excellent, and the smoothly scrolling larger locations give you an excellent feeling of actually being there while all the action's taking place. *Hook's* an excellent adventure, and while it may be a little on the short side for experienced gamers, it's definitely one you should be on the look-out for.

**Minimum system: 640K; VGA; 286; hard disk.**

**Optional extras: AdLib; Sound Blaster; Roland; mouse.**

# THE IMMORTAL

£14.99 Electronic Arts, Reviewed: PCF 22, Available now

Being immortal is a raw deal. A Greek geezer called Eos wanted his son Tithonus to be immortal, and Zeus granted his wish – but Tithonus just grew older without dying. He became either a disembodied voice or a cicada in a cage. Strange, but probably not true.

Let's be realistic, the only way you're going to achieve immortality is by completing this hack-and-slash isometric adventure-cum-RPG. Mordamir, a wizard who is also your mentor, has been kidnapped and taken to a foul dungeon. You have to hack your way past enemies, collecting magic potions, spells, weapons and gold as you go, to rescue Mordamir. The isometric view switches to a peculiar one-on-one combat sequence when you fight a monster. The approach is refreshing, gleefully emphasising action and puzzle solving at the expense of statistics and seriousness. Plenty of fun, and it's not too taxing.

**Minimum system: 512K; CGA; XT.**

**Optional extras: AdLib; joystick.**

# MAGIC CANDLE 2

£14.99, Mindcraft, Reviewed: PCF 10, Available now

On the other hand, if you fancy a far more serious adventure, you can't go far wrong with the second instalment of the *Magic Candle* saga. The game gives you an *Ultima*-style top-down view of the action, although it can't compete with *Ultima 6* either graphically or in gameplay terms. However, it's easy to play and there's an extremely helpful manual.

Once again you're on a quest to kill an evil miscreant of dubious parentage, and once again you have to bring together a rag-tag band of adventurers to tackle the nasty creatures you meet along the way. The graphics wouldn't win a £10 prize in a beauty contest, but they give you a good feeling for the main locations, and the screen layout is functional and easy to use. The game runs on low-spec PCs, so if you've got an XT with only 512K RAM, you've just found yourself a jolly enjoyable bargain-basement RPG.

**Minimum system: 512K; EGA; XT; hard disk.**

**Optional extras: AdLib; Sound Blaster; Roland; mouse.**

# SIMULATIONS

*The PC is ideal for simulations. But often gameplay and speed are sacrificed for technical jiggery pokery – what use is Gouraud shading and voxel graphics if you've got a 286? The Hit Squad's range of simulations feature some old classics that outshine many recent releases, and they all run well on 286 machines. If you want speed, thrills and spills, you came to the right place.*

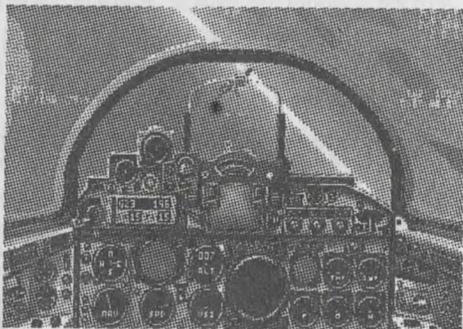
# CHUCK YEAGER'S AIR COMBAT

£14.99, Electronic Arts  
Not reviewed  
Available now

It's all the rage to get big-name sports stars to sponsor computer games, but what do you do when you've got a flight sim? Ask someone to name a pilot and there are usually two names that spring to mind. One of them is the heroic Douglas Bader, and the other is

Chuck Yeager. You haven't heard of him? You don't know why you should take his flight sim seriously? Well, for a start this game's really called *General Chuck Yeager's Air Combat*, he flew P-51 Mustangs in the Second World War and was one of the famous Yoxford boys. In 1947 he was the first man to break the speed of sound, and subsequently he flew in combat in Korea. He's a special pilot, so it's rather fitting he's got a special game.

In today's crowded flight sim market, it's hard to make a game stand out, but *Chuck Yeager's Air Combat* has many features that recent releases have copied, and several that nobody has dared to emulate. The most obvious one is that the game gives you the chance to fly planes from different eras against one another, a feature blatantly copied by MicroProse's *Dogfight*, but you have to pay £44.99 for the privilege of flying a Messerschmitt against a MiG in MicroProse's version. *Air Combat* gives you six planes to fly in three eras. The World War II planes are the P-51 and the FW-190, in Korea you fly the F-86 and the MiG-15, and in Vietnam you're at the controls of the F-4 or the MiG-21. You can create your own missions with up to 15 planes from different eras, and it's not always obvious which plane's going to come off best in the unusual dogfights.



Down those MiGs with the help of Chuckie.

When you fancy something a little more structured, you can delve into the complexities of the historical missions set in World War II Europe, Korea and Vietnam. Many of the scenarios are ones that Chuck took part in for real, so there's always an added edge to the fighting – can you do better than the pilots did in the past, or haven't you quite got the bottle when it comes to the crunch?

The point of the game is that Chuck wants to make you think and act like a fighter pilot. It's no good just lumbering along in a straight line and expecting to be able to loose off a couple of missiles when you feel like it, you've got to work hard to earn your kills. Chuck pops up to give you snippets of advice while you're flying, which makes it much easier to learn the necessary combat techniques, and it's a lot more interesting than ploughing through a several-hundred-page manual.

Considering *Air Combat* is now over two years old, it's got an extremely smooth 3D graphics system. Even on a 286 it's an absolute joy to play, and it puts many of today's power-hungry games to shame. There isn't very much ground detail, but the speed and smoothness of the flight more than compensates for that minor misdemeanour – who needs Gouraud shading when things move this fast?

**Minimum system: 640K; CGA; XT.**

**Optional extras: AdLib; Sound Blaster; joystick.**

# LHX ATTACK CHOPPER

£14.99, Electronic Arts  
Not reviewed  
Available now

Fed up of all that high-altitude bombing and all those planes you can shoot down before you even see them? You are? Well what you need is a good dose of low-level combat in a helicopter. Trundling along at 150 knots only 100 feet up is the ideal way to test your nerve, particularly when you can see the triple A and SAM batteries just waiting to open fire and blast you out of the sky.



There's lots to destroy in LHX.

Whereas most flight sims give you the chance to fly only one sort of plane, *LHX* gives you the chance to fly four helicopters, each of which has a different purpose in life. The eponymous LHX (Light Helicopter eXperimental, which later became known as the Comanche) is a lean, mean fighting machine that can be equipped with a potent cocktail of missiles and rockets to supplement its intelligent nose-mounted cannon. The Apache, as seen in the rather sad film *Wings of the Apache*, is an all-purpose shoot-everything-to-bits helicopter gunship. The Blackhawk assault helicopter carries a significant number of weapons, but is also used as a troop carrier and supply vehicle. Finally, the Osprey is a hybrid plane and helicopter that looks so daft you probably won't want to fly it.

The missions in *LHX* are set in three scenarios, East Germany, Libya and Vietnam, with appropriately nasty enemies in each. The game designers must have put extra effort into designing the missions, because as well as your usual fly-over-them-bomb-some-stuff-and-fly-back tasks, you also have to perform some rather tricky prisoner of war rescue missions. These involve flying to an enemy base, destroying the defences, picking

off bazooka-toting enemy soldiers (while being very careful not to hit your men) and then hovering about 10 feet off the ground so your men can clamber aboard. To make the mission just a tad more difficult, the LHX and Apache can't be used because they don't have enough room to carry the POWs, so you have to use the less well-armed Blackhawk or Osprey. Nobody said life as a helicopter pilot was going to be easy, did they?

There are some excellent weapons to use, from the 200-rounds-per-minute cannon, to anti-tank Hellfire missiles. At one end of the scale your chopper can carry 60 or so dumb-fire TOW rockets which you can spray liberally over the landscape, and at the other you have guided missiles. Not only do you have to learn to fly the helicopters, you have to learn which is the best ammunition to take on which missions.

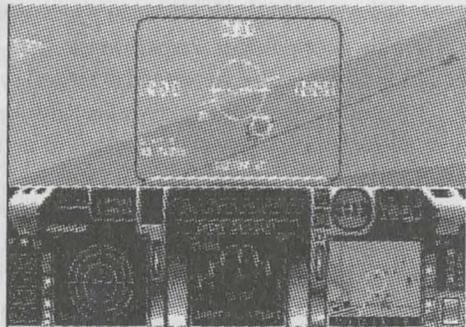
The game's polygon graphics look outdated now, but there's enough ground detail to create realistic scenarios, for example in the Libyan missions there are liberal scatterings of camels just waiting to be torn apart by your machine gun. If you're normally put off flight sims by the numerous and complicated keyboard controls, you are going to find it easy to get to grips with *LHX*. The controls have been kept to a minimum, and while this might annoy simulator purists, it makes for an action-packed game that only takes a couple of minutes to get into.

**Minimum system: 512K; CGA; XT.**

**Optional extras: AdLib; Sound Blaster; joystick.**

# F-29 RETALIATOR

£14.99, Ocean  
Not reviewed  
Available: October '93



**Fly in low and get ready for the kill.**

One of the great things about flying simulated planes is that you don't get killed if you cock things up. Admittedly, it's a bit of a pain if your favourite pilot gets killed after completing half a dozen successful missions, but you can usually resurrect him with a bit of technical

jiggery pokery with the files. Another of the great things about PC flight sims is that they give you the chance to fly planes that are still on the drawing board, planes that haven't yet seen active service. *F-29 Retaliator* is one such game, putting you in the hot seat of the Lockheed YF-22A Advanced Tactical Fighter, and the F-29 Retaliator. The latter plane is based on the Grumman X-29, which is notable for its distinctive forward-swept wings.

You can fly the planes in a total of 100 complex missions in four different scenarios. The best place to put the planes through their paces, and to improve your pilot skills, is in the USAF test range in Arizona which simulates a hostile enemy environment. It's a good idea to spend a while in Arizona because the 3D flight system is so smooth and fast that at times it's hard to keep up. When it was first released, *F-29* was one of the smoothest games around on a 286, and playing it on a 386 or above is an absolute dream. As you progress through each scenario, a series of war updates keep you informed of the latest happenings, and ultimate victory in the fight against evil depends on your dogfighting and bombing performances.

The first battle scenario is the Middle East, where you have to support a friendly nation that's heavily out-gunned by its aggressive neighbour. This battle is on two fronts, with large numbers of tanks waiting to be destroyed in the south west, and artillery exchanges in the south east. Three enemy aircraft have to be shot down for every friendly aircraft destroyed.

Next comes a battle in the Pacific Ocean, or rather, over it. A group of volcanic islands that supplies the US with oil has been blockaded by enemy ships, and to make matters worse, troops on the ships are preparing to invade. Flying from a small military base on the islands, it's up to you fend off the invasion until support ships can arrive.

The fourth scenario is Europe. Following a series of border disputes, diplomatic efforts have failed and the world is about to be plunged into another world war. All air-fields, installations, factories and towns have to be attacked, but enemy tanks are massing on the border ready to strike deep into your territory. Now's when you find out what a target-rich environment is really like.

As well as selecting which plane to fly on each mission, you also have to choose your armaments. Five air-to-air weapons are available, including your usual Sidewinders and AMRAAMs, as well as the less common AIAAM Fire Bolt and the rear-mounted Backwinder 9X. There are four air-to-surface weapons to choose from, including the Cruise missile, the ASALM (that's Advanced Strategic Air Launched Missile, abbreviation fans), the Maverick laser-guided missile and finally the CSW (Conventional Stand-off Weapon) which is ideal for use against tanks and other armoured vehicles.

If you don't think 100 missions are going to provide you with enough excitement, you can always link two PCs for a head-to-head dogfight. The difference it makes is amazing when you know that the enemy F-22 is being flown by the person sitting opposite you – just look at the pain on his (or her) face when one of your Sidewinders finds its target. Whether you use a modem or null-modem cable, you're in for hours of fun as you frantically try to shoot down your best friend.

*F-29 Retaliator* is one of the best all-round flight sims available. The instant action option makes it easy to get up in the air to learn the ropes, and when you're in complete control, the training and battle scenarios are only a click away. What sets the game apart from most other flight sims is the sheer speed of the 3D graphics engine – it has to be seen to be believed.

**Minimum system: 640K; EGA; 286**

**Optional extras: AdLib; Sound Blaster; Roland; joystick; mouse.**

# 688 ATTACK SUB

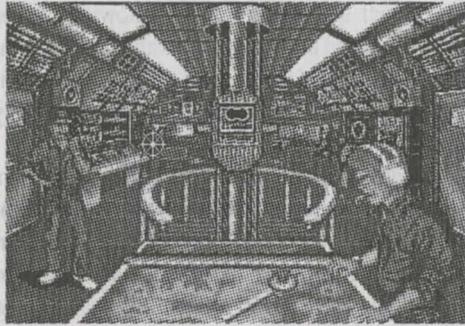
£14.99, Electronic Arts  
Reviewed: PCF 22  
Available now

If you've seen *The Hunt for Red October* and you fancy yourself as a Sean Connery Russo-Scotsman type, then here's the ideal game for you. An atmospheric underwater simulator, packed to the gunnels with realistic features, and it gives you the chance to control both American and Russian submarines. Many flight simulators don't place a great emphasis on the human aspect of warfare, but when you're cooped up in a submerged tin can for days on end, you can't help but get irritated with your fellow crew members. Life in a submarine must be incredibly tough, and *688 Attack Sub* sets out to recreate the gritty, claustrophobic atmosphere.

As captain, not only is it your responsibility to deal with navigation, the radio and the weapons, you also have to take care of your crew. Morale plays an important part in the game, and serves to heighten the excitement. It's one thing making a mistake and having some depth charges dropped on you, but it's quite another to have the crew complaining about getting blown to bits. You need to be an excellent strategic thinker to succeed at *688 Attack Sub*, but you also need to be able to react quickly under pressure. Controlling a modern high-tech submarine is no easy task, there are lots of unfamiliar systems to get to grips with, and there's a whole host of nautical tactics and terminology to learn. It's tough going, but it's more than worth it when you sink your first aircraft carrier.

**Minimum system: 512K; CGA; XT.**

**Optional extras: AdLib; Sound Blaster; joystick; mouse.**



**A tense moment in the control room.**

# MIG-29 FULCRUM

£14.99, Domark  
Reviewed: PCF 22  
Available now

Just what does MiG stand for then? You get to fly or fight MiGs in just about every flight simulator around, but have you ever questioned what it stands for? Well, it stands for Mikoyan and Guryevich Design, the top fighter design team in what used to be called the Soviet Union. So now

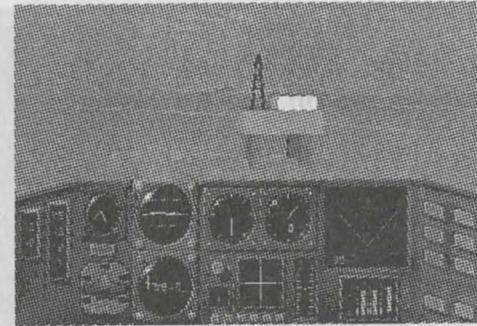
you know. Anyway, what's so special about the MiG-29 Fulcrum that sets it apart from all the other MiGs, the Flogger, the Foxbat, the Flanker and so on? Well, as the Soviet Union's premier fighter, it was ideal material for a computer game because it was designed to be highly manoeuvrable, which gave programming team Simis the chance to show off its expertise in creating a wonderfully smooth 3D graphics system. As with *Chuck Yeager's Air Combat*, the level of ground detail leaves a bit to be desired, but the flight model is so smooth that at first you have trouble just controlling the plane.

Before embarking on one of the five missions, it's wise to spend a few hours getting used to the plane's controls in the training section, after all, it's no use flying to bomb an oilfield and then realising you don't know how to use the bombsight. The five missions give you a wide range of targets, including storage silos, bridges, trucks, trains, oil-rigs, ships, and, if you're good enough, a nuclear power plant.

*MiG-29* is a couple of years old now, and while it doesn't offer as much depth as *Chuck Yeager's Air Combat*, it does give you the chance to take control of one of the most awesome jet fighters ever created.

**Minimum system: 512K; CGA; XT.**

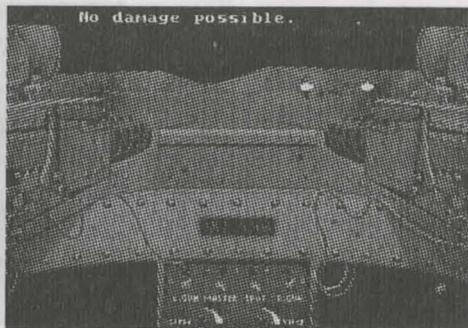
**Optional extras: AdLib; Sound Blaster; joystick; mouse.**



**Let the oil rig have it with your missiles.**

# GUNBOAT

£14.99, *Accolade*  
Reviewed: PCF 24,  
Available now



Another Viet Cong soldier bites the dust.

Whether it's World War II fighters, high-tech stealth bombers or helicopter gunships, there comes a time when you want to get back down to Earth. You don't want to stop blowing things up, you just don't want to have to do it from several thousand feet in the air. Anyone who's ever

seen *Apocalypse Now* can hazard a guess at the sort of action you're in for when you load up *Gunboat* and take a deadly cruise up a dangerous river in a well-armed patrol boat.

There are three scenarios for you to tackle (in Vietnam, Colombia and Panama) each giving you loads of enemy soldiers and hardware to blow away. But gunboats aren't like planes that enable you to drop a bomb from a mile away and then escape before the enemy knows you've arrived. Instead you have to sail your boat right up to your foe's doorstep and then open fire with all weapons. Luckily, the river patrol boat is equipped with three guns, and there's also a grenade launcher in the midships. While this gives you a superior firepower advantage, it also makes the gameplay incredibly frantic because you have to control each of the gun stations as well as taking on the pilot's responsibilities.

It takes a while to get used to the boat's controls and the peculiar motion and restricted views, but once you do, you're in for some gripping entertainment. Game designer Tom Loughry hasn't shied away from depicting the gruesome realities of close-combat warfare, so expect to see plenty of enemy soldiers dying on the river bank as your boat charts its deadly course through the treacherous waters.

**Minimum system: 512K; CGA; XT.**  
**Optional extras: AdLib; Roland; joystick.**

# HARD DRIVIN' 2

£12.99, *Domark*,  
Not reviewed, Available now

When you get into an expensive car, usually one that isn't yours (assuming you've been given the keys, rather than taken it upon yourself to take the car without the owner's consent) do you ever get the urge to drive it upside-down around a loop-the-loop and then crash it head-on into a lorry? You don't? Oh, perhaps it's just us then. *Hard Drivin' 2* puts you behind the wheel of several high-performance cars and lets you put them through their paces on some weird and wonderful stunt and speed tracks. Brilliant boy-racer fun.

**Minimum system: 512K; CGA; XT.**  
**Optional extras: AdLib; Roland; joystick.**

## TEST DRIVE 2 (THE DUEL)

£9.99, *Accolade*  
Not reviewed, Available now

*Test Drive 2* is like a my-computer's-better-than-yours argument, only with cars. You choose from cars such as a Porsche and a Ferrari, and then put the pedal to the metal to race around a tortuous track to prove that your choice was the best. It's a frill-free game, though not an entirely thrill-free one, that pits you head-to-head against a PC driver. There are plenty of scenarios, the most exciting of which is the mountain route that sees you hurtling through pitch-black tunnels and tumbling off the edge of the road into a gaping chasm.

**Minimum system: 512K; CGA; XT.**  
**Optional extras: AdLib; Roland; joystick.**

# STEEL THUNDER

£12.99, Accolade, Not reviewed, Available now

There still aren't many tank simulations on the PC, which is a bit of a surprise considering the excitement of close-quarter combat in hulking death-dealing machines. *Steel Thunder* gives you five different tanks to fight in. The biggest is the M1A1 Abrams, which is the US Army's main battle tank, and the two smallest are the M2 Bradley infantry fighting vehicle and the M3 Bradley cavalry fighting vehicle (no, you don't have to shoot horses). In between you get the M60A3 medium-sized battle tank, an upgraded version of the M48A5 Patton, which is also provided in the game. *Steel Thunder* does its best to recreate the claustrophobic action inside a variety of tanks, but by today's high graphical standards it's looking a bit sad.

**Minimum system: CGA; 512K; XT.**

**Optional extras: EGA; VGA; joystick.**

# BIRDS OF PREY

£14.99, Electronic Arts, Reviewed: PCF 13, Available: December '93

In this game you can fly all the assorted Warsaw Pact and NATO hardware in mini campaigns around the world. The range of planes available is quite breathtaking. On the Warsaw side, you can fly MiGs, SUs and even the Backfire bomber, many of which you've never had the chance to pilot before. For the good guys (if you think NATO are the good guys, that is) you can fly loads of F-ing planes, as well as the A-10, the B-52, the SR-71 which can reach speeds of Mach 3, and the incredibly lethal stealth plane, the top-secret Boeing 747. The only trouble is that in the effort to give you 40 planes, programming team Argonaut failed to deliver enough raw seat-of-your-pants dogfighting action. It has depth and lots of scenarios, but the quantity horse has definitely been put before the quality cart.

**Minimum system: 512K; CGA; XT.**

**Optional extras: AdLib; Roland; joystick.**

# SPORTS GAMES

*What's the point of playing a sports game on your PC? Where's all the fresh air, the physical endeavour, the posey types who have got all the gear but don't have the first idea about how to play the game? Nowhere, that's where, and isn't it brilliant? Whether it's motor racing, golf, tennis or baseball, you can cut the crap and get straight into the action.*

# INDIANAPOLIS 500: THE SIMULATION

£14.99, Electronic Arts  
Reviewed: PCF 5  
Available: October '93

There are two schools of thought about *Indy 500*. The first is that despite being a bit long in the tooth, it is still one of the most accurate and demanding simulations of race driving there is. The second opinion is that it's a game in which all you do is turn left for two and a half hours.

Both descriptions are accurate, but don't go far enough to explain why *Indy 500* gives you such an addictive drive.

You can choose to drive one of three different cars, each with different handling and performance levels. The Penske Chevrolet has sensitive steering, but has the highest potential top speed. The Lola Buick is next fastest, though it has a tendency to blow the engine if you get the gear ratio wrong, and finally the March Cosworth is the oldest and slowest (for some reason it doesn't even have a speedometer on its dashboard).

Before entering the race, it's vital to spend time practising on the oval circuit. You might not think there's much skill involved when you're driving round in circles, but it's important to know every kink of the track because the slightest mistake can make a huge difference to your time. As well as wearing the driver's helmet, you also have to wear the mechanic's cap. You have to tinker with the car's setup in order to squeeze the last ounce of speed and performance out of it, but in a manner that suits your driving style. There are eight important elements in configuring your car, and if you don't get it right, you've got no chance of winning. The eight factors are wings, gears, shocks, stagger, camber, tyre pressures, tyre compound and anti-roll bars. There's also the fuel level to consider when



You go straight to the end and turn left...

you're qualifying, and the turbo boost that ups your speed but guzzles fuel.

Into the race and the high level of realism is maintained with PC cars that actually make mistakes and crash. You might think this makes it easier to win, and to a certain extent it does, but you can never be sure when you're going to be cut up, or whether you're going to come out of a bend and have to swerve to avoid a pile-up. There are four levels of racing to break in, from the modest 10-lap races in which you can't damage the car, through tough 30 and 60-lap races to the full-blown 500-mile, 200-lap race. In the longer races you have to learn when to take pit-stops – after all, it's not surprising that a car might need at least a change of tyres after clocking average lap speeds in excess of 240mph.

When your race is over, whether you've finished in fine style or ended up in the pits after a horrific crash, you can review your performance with the action replay. You can see the action from six different camera angles, making it easy to show off both your brilliant passing manoeuvres and unfortunate accidents.

Obviously, with its massive attention to detail and realism, *Indianapolis 500* won't be everyone's cup of tea. It's definitely not the sort of game for those who like arcade-style games in which you can just put your foot to the floor and complete a race without ever having to touch the brakes. But if you want a real racing challenge, *Indy 500* is hard to beat, and you don't need an incredibly high-spec PC to run it on.

**Minimum system: 512K; CGA; XT.**

**Optional extras: AdLib; Sound Blaster; Roland; joystick.**

# GRAND PRIX CIRCUIT

£12.99, Accolade,  
Not reviewed  
Available now

Until recently the PC wasn't overly blessed with driving games. *Indianapolis 500* took pole position on a starting grid that only had a couple or three other contenders on it. Also taking a high position on said grid was Accolade's *Grand Prix Circuit*, a forerunner to the more recently released *Grand Prix Unlimited* (see page 28). *Grand Prix Circuit* enables you to race in one-off Formula One Grand Prix races or to take part in a full-blown season. The game includes all the circuits that constituted the Grand Prix a couple of years ago, and that includes Silverstone, Monaco and Hockenheim.

You can tinker with the numerous game settings to make it suitable for game players of all experiences and aptitudes. If you've never played a race game before it's easy to get into because you can choose whether you want manual or automatic gears, and whether your car is going to suffer when you accidentally crash into an opponent. When you've mastered the car's handling and have got to know the circuits, you can begin to work your way through the five difficulty levels. If you're feeling a bit down in the dumps, you can cheer yourself up by winning everything in sight on the easiest setting. It's not much of a challenge, but it makes you feel good. *Grand Prix Circuit* is not the most sophisticated racing sim in town, but you get the chance to race for Ferrari, Williams and McLaren, so what are you waiting for?

**Minimum system: 512K; CGA; XT.**

**Optional extras: AdLib; Sound Blaster; Roland; joystick.**



**Forget that mirror, signal, manoeuvre stuff.**

# JACK NICKLAUS GOLF

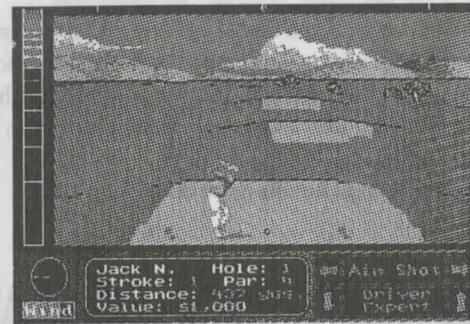
£12.99, Accolade,  
Reviewed: PCF 17  
Available now

He's the man. He's the Golden Bear. He's the Golfer of the Century. He's won 18 majors, including five British Opens and five US Masters titles. He's quite good at golf, and as a result he's the ideal person to endorse and help produce a golf game. Sorry, but we sold you a bit short on the title – the game's full name is *Jack Nicklaus Greatest 18 Holes of Championship Golf*, a title who's unwarranted verbosity was only surpassed by this game's sequel, the snappily titled *Jack Nicklaus Golf and Course Design Signature Edition*.

Anyway, forget the title and get into the game. There are three courses to play on, two real ones in the form of Castle Pines and Desert Mountain (no, we hadn't heard of them either) and a third imaginary course which comprises the 18 holes that Jack considers to be the greatest in championship golf (so that's where the name comes from, it all makes sense now). The game uses the tried-and-tested three-press method of controlling the shot – hit the [Spacebar] once to start the swing, a second time to set the shot's strength, and a third time to control the direction – too early and you hook the ball, too late and you slice. You can choose to play either match or stroke-play, and whether you want to play on the pro, men's or ladies' tees. Not the best-looking golf game in the world by today's spectacular 256-colour digitised VGA graphics standards; but once again, if you've only got a low-spec PC, or you don't fancy forking out £45 for an occasional nine holes, you can't go wrong with this.

**Minimum system: 512K; CGA; XT.**

**Optional extras: EGA.**



**Anyone for a round with Jack?**

## THE CYCLES

*£12.99, Accolade, Reviewed: PCF 22, Available now*

What do you get if you take *Grand Prix Circuit* (see page 60), take out the cars and put in motorbikes of varying horsepower-age? You get exactly the same game, only instead of sitting behind the wheel of a car, you sit behind the handlebars of a motorbike. So, if you're into Meatloaf, leather jackets and greasy hair, buy *The Cycles* and you're made.

**Minimum system:** 512K; CGA; XT.

**Optional extras:** AdLib; joystick.

## LOMBARD RAC RALLY

*£12.99, Europress, Not reviewed, Available now*

It's a funny old game, isn't it Brian? Sorry, wrong sport, it's just that Murray Walker impressions are notoriously difficult to write. Anyway, rallying is a funny sport because you hardly ever see another car on the track, you're just racing against the clock. Sometimes this takes the edge off the excitement, but for the most part it's a decent game.

**Minimum system:** 512K; CGA; XT.

**Optional extras:** joystick.

## PRO TENNIS TOUR

*£9.99, Blue Byte, Reviewed: PCF 17, Available now*

Gordon was ranked 64 out of 64 in the tennis ratings. The trouble was he couldn't decide whether to use a joystick or a keyboard. He had tried a racket, but couldn't recreate the professional touch. Perhaps it had something to do with playing on CGA XT, perhaps it was his lack of hand-eye co-ordination. Perhaps you can do better. Help Gordon. Please.

**Minimum system:** 512K; CGA; XT.

**Optional extras:** joystick.

# BRAIN TEASERS

*For all those doubting fools who think computer games rot the brain, here's an entire section devoted to brain-teasingly brilliant games. Forget all that frantic joystick waggling and get stuck into some serious mind-bending software. You can fight against the gods in *Populous*, defeat opposing tribes in *PowerMonger*, or topple the weirdest dominoes in *Push-Over*.*

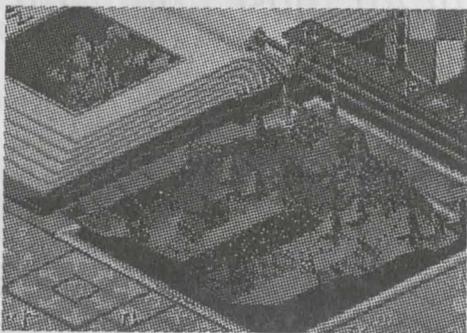
# POPULOUS AND THE PROMISED LANDS

**£12.99, Bullfrog,  
Reviewed: PCF 21  
Available now**

There are only three reasonable excuses for never having heard of *Populous*. One is that you died in 1988, a year before the game was created, the second is that you became a Tibetan monk in that self-same year, and the third is that you were born at the end of the eighties (and even

that's pushing it a bit.) *Populous* is one of the first god games ever created, the game that inspired innumerable isometric imitations, the game that gives you divine powers. But not only has The Hit Squad brought you the original *Populous* in all its hundreds-of-levels-to-get-though splendour, it's brought you *The Promised Lands* data disk that gives you hundreds more levels of deity-destroying fun on a bizarre range of landscapes including Sillyland, Wildwest and Blockland.

OK, now for a sensible bit. Assuming that you're one of the people who falls into one of the three categories mentioned above then we'd better explain what *Populous* is all about, but not before remarking either 1) We bow down before you because you are the Second Coming, 2) Congratulations on escaping, 3) Shouldn't you be playing with your Fisher Price telephone, you precocious little brat? Right, *Populous* goes a lot like this. You are a god, you control a tribe of people, you have the divine power (called mana) to raise and lower the land. When your people find some flat land, they settle, they build houses and they breed. The more people you have, the more mana you get. The more mana you have, the more power you have to call upon natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes and volcanoes.



**Who wants to be a god, anyway?**

The reason you want to call upon these powers is that you are competing with another deity for control of a small world that's not much bigger than the centre of Beirut. The place isn't big enough for the both of you, so one of you has to go. You usually play the game against the PC, but if you've got a modem or a null-modem cable, you can hook up two PCs and play head-to-head against a friend which adds a whole new dimension to the gameplay because you're bound to end up hating whoever you're playing against.

Depending on which world you're on, you can only use certain powers. For example, early in the game you can use all your powers to wreak absolute havoc on your enemy before calling down the ultimate Armageddon when you get bored of messing around. Later on, however, you're not allowed to use Armageddon, which means you have to create an army of knights that soldier through enemy encampments setting fire to all the buildings. It can be a laborious process at times, but it's great fun to watch.

All these marvellously Machiavellian machinations are best controlled with a mouse, so if you haven't got one, go out and buy one now. Oh yeah, while you're out there, buy a copy of *Populous*, four cans of Kronenberg 1664 and a chicken tikka. What more is there to say, apart from with *Populous* you're in for many, many hours of brain-teasing strategy-type fun?

**Minimum system: 512K; CGA; XT.**

**Optional extras: AdLib; joystick; mouse.**

# POWERMONGER

£14.99, Bullfrog

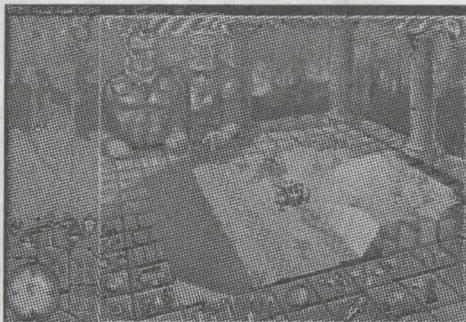
Reviewed: PCF 11

Available: November '93

When you dress in an eye patch and a sheepskin cloak and you carry a huge sword, there aren't many people who are prepared to offer you a job. The civil service thinks you're a communist, your local council thinks you're insane (but still won't reduce your Council Tax bill) and the nearby zoo thinks you've just turned up to reduce overcrowding in the monkey cage. What you really need is the chance to flex your muscles and conquer a few (well, 195) small islands with a merry band of well-armed thugs who are more than prepared to do your evil bidding.

You and your motley crew start on a petite island of no particular merit in the top left-hand corner of the map, and you have to gradually spread your evil stain across the whole world. It's all very megalomaniacal, but then if you wanted a peaceful life you shouldn't have signed up as a powermonger in the first place. To gain control of the territory you have to win the support of two thirds of the population, which you can do by sending your armies into towns to 'persuade' the people that it's a good idea to be on your side. The armies are controlled via captains, who tell your troops to gather food and recruit more men before going off to butcher the local populace. You use the icons at the bottom of the screen to give orders to your captain, and you can set the level of aggression displayed by your troops. If you're in a good mood, and you think the people might be receptive, you can tell your men just to have a quiet chat with the townsfolk, but if you're feeling nasty, you can tell them to hack everybody to bits.

Of course, the attacking and pillaging approach to conquering is the one you try out first, but it's not always the most effective way of winning. You can try inventing things (swords, bows, siege catapults and boats for example), and what you can invent depends



Power to the mongers, fish or iron.

on the raw materials found in the vicinity. Alternatively, you can try trading to form alliances with other tribes on the island, and barter food, weapons and all sorts of non-military items.

One of the game's main features is the immense amount of detail in each island, it's as though they're all living, breathing places. As you progress through the different territories you encounter bigger cities, more sophisticated road networks and bustling ports. There are numerous graphical touches that serve to heighten the game's atmosphere. When men die in battle, white angels float up to heaven, and when babies are born in swelling cities, a stork flaps overhead and drops a little bundle of joy. The seasons change too – rain makes your men miserable, snow makes them cold, and the sun makes them even more bloodthirsty than before.

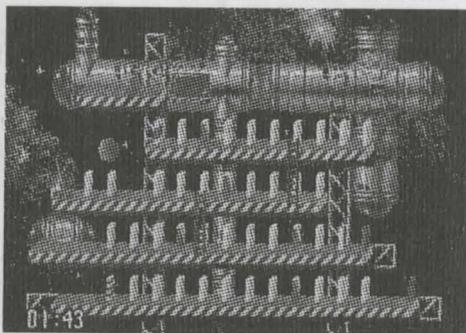
As if battling through 195 islands against PC-controlled opponents wasn't enough, there's also a two-player modem-link option. This is definitely the best way to play the game, and it gets extremely personal as you fight a friend (soon to be an enemy) over a series of territories. *PowerMonger* is a huge game, not simply because there are so many islands to conquer, but because there are so many different approaches to try. The strategy is marvellously complicated, encompassing war, trade and technological advances, all of which have to be finely balanced if you're to succeed. Once you start playing, it's very difficult to stop because you've simply got to try out all the options.

**Minimum system: 640K; EGA; 286; hard disk.**

**Optional extras: AdLib; Sound Blaster; mouse.**

# PUSH-OVER

£12.99, Ocean,  
Reviewed: PCF 12  
Available: November '93



**There's more to dominoes than you expect.**

Poor old Colin Curly. He's lost his Quavers down an ant-hole and doesn't know where to find them. Luckily for him, he's got a really good mate called GI Ant who is just the right size to dive down the ant-hole to retrieve them because he's an, er, ant. But this ain't no ordinary ant-hole, it's stuffed full of dominoes which are just waiting to be pushed over. GI Ant has another problem because they aren't ordinary dominoes that you find old men playing with in pubs, they're special dominoes that have strange abilities. Some of them never stop rolling, some wait a couple of seconds before tumbling, some bridge gaps, some split into two and some explode.

To find the Quavers, GI has to topple all the dominoes on a level by rearranging them and then pushing just one domino. Yep, one push is all he's allowed, so you have to make him beetle backwards and forwards, swapping splitters with stoppers and bridgers with tumblers until you've found the way to make all the dominoes fall. When you've successfully completed 10 levels, Colin gets rewarded with one of the packets of lost Quavers and GI gets straight on with the fun-filled business of finding the other packets.

With 100 increasingly difficult levels, this is one puzzle game that you're not going to finish in a hurry. Not for the want of trying, however, because it's a surprisingly addictive little puzzler.

**Minimum system: 640K; CGA; XT; hard disk.**  
**Optional extras: AdLib; Roland; joystick.**

# STRIKE FLEET

£12.99, Electronic Arts  
Not reviewed, Available now

War games are criticised for poor presentation and complicated control systems, but here's one that's simple to play. In *Strike Fleet*, you execute a series of missions in order to earn promotion through the naval ranks. You can configure your fleet from 12 different British and American ships, and at any one time you can deploy up to 16 ships in four scenarios, the North and South Atlantic, the North Sea and the Persian Gulf. The information you need is presented clearly on screen, and the point-and-click interface means you don't have to fumble around when you're in the heat of battle. *Strike Fleet* is still one of the best naval sims around, and even if you're not normally into war games, it's worth trying.

**Minimum system: 640K; CGA; 286.**  
**Optional extras: EGA; joystick.**

# HUMANS

£TBA, Mirage  
Reviewed: PCF 17, Available: Early '94

Here's a simple idea – guide the evolution of the human race. Luckily the process is split over 80 levels, each covering five or six scrolling screens of various platforms, traps and pitfalls. The aim usually involves finding a new object, getting a certain number of men to the exit, or simply finding a way out. At first you have just the humans and a spear, but as you progress you discover fire, the wheel, rope and a sundry selection of other objects.

Depending on which objects you find, the humans have different abilities. Using the wheels they can zoom down slopes, with fire they can raze everything to the ground, and with the ropes they can reach high ledges. Plenty of fun to be had, but don't expect to get carried away with excitement – evolution was a slow process after all.

**Minimum system: 640K; VGA; 286; hard disk.**  
**Optional extras: AdLib; Sound Blaster; Roland; joystick.**

## PICTIONARY

£9.99, Domark, Not reviewed, Available now

You've had loads of fun playing the board game, so now it's time to see what it's like on a computer. If you're not an expert computer artist, you don't need to worry, the program's drawing section is easy to use. When you've run out of inspiration, you can get the computer to draw pictures while you try to guess the phrases.

**Minimum system: 512K; CGA; XT.**

**Optional extras: Hercules; EGA.**

## TRIVIAL PURSUIT

£9.99, Domark, Reviewed: PCF 17, Available now

How long do you think it took those Triv geezers to think up all those questions? And it must have taken them hours to think of the comedy Titsling-type brassiere gags. Oooh, how chortlesome. What do you mean you haven't bought the board game yet? Get this instead. It doesn't fit on your coffee table quite as well, but it's still reasonably good fun if you've got a few know-all round after the pubs have shut.

**Minimum system: 640K; CGA; XT; hard disk.**

**Optional extras: AdLib.**

## FUN SCHOOL 2

£9.99, Europress, Not reviewed, Available now

Several titles from Europress' impressive *Fun School* range are available, suitable for teaching children of a variety of ages. Each title features several different games, designed to teach children about letters, words, shapes, colours and basic mathematics. The programs look outdated now, but are still worthwhile.

**Minimum system: 512K; CGA; XT.**

**Optional extras: EGA.**

# ACTION GAMES

*Who says the PC can't cope with action games? Take a good look over the following pages and you'll find some of the most impressive action-packed titles on any computer format. From the incredible 3D graphics you get in Wing Commander to the crazy fun in Wizkid to the furious gunfights you encounter in Robocop 3, the PC has got it all.*

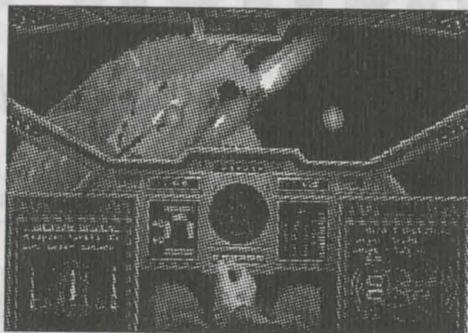
# WING COMMANDER

£14.99, Electronic Arts  
Not reviewed  
Available: October '93

What do you mean you've never heard of *Wing Commander*? It's the definitive space combat simulation, the game that persuaded millions of doubting Thomases that the PC is an awesome games machine. Before the advent of *Wing Commander*, the PC was blessed with text adventures and graphically challenged RPGs and adventures. *Wing Commander* showed that the PC was not only capable of producing thrilling gameplay, but that it could produce graphics and animation of a quality that was unmatched by home computers.

For the two or three of you who really have never heard of it (perhaps you were out of the country or you've been asleep for the last couple of years), here's a quick résumé of the plot. Somewhere in the distant future, mankind is battling for survival against an evil feline race called the Kilrathi. Not only do these giant cats make lions and tigers look like domestic moggies, but they're supremely intelligent and they have learnt how to build spaceships. Along with this intelligence comes an almost inevitable desire to rule the known universe, as well as all the bits of space that haven't been discovered yet. The humans, or Terrans as they are known in the game, realise that this is not a good thing, and set out to thwart the Kilrathi's insidious plans.

How the story goes from there depends entirely on you and your wingmen. Flying from the impressive Terran capital ship the *Tiger's Claw*, you have to fight your way through a series of gruelling missions, and the plot development depends on how well you perform in them. Your next mission depends on whether you succeeded or failed in the previous one – fail several in a row and the Kilrathi take over



Another close call in a thrilling 3D fight.

the Universe, but if you succeed, the cats are gradually pushed back. The complicated mission structure means that you can take several different paths through the game, according to which missions you win and which you lose. Between the missions, beautifully animated sequences develop the plot depending on your performance, so you always know where the Terrans stand with regards to the Kilrathi threat.

What sets the game apart from the other space combat games, even ones released more recently, is the quality and speed of the 3D graphics. Even on a 286 highly detailed enemy ships hurtle past your cockpit at alarming speeds, and at times it's all you can do to keep them in your sights, let alone fire off a few accurate shots. Play the game on a 386 or above and you're in absolute heaven. The combat is absolutely thrilling. There are several different ships for you to fly, a variety of weapon systems to get to grips with, and loads of Kilrathi fighters and capital ships waiting to be shot down.

The game's a delight to play because so much attention has been paid to making it seem like you're actually operating from a spaceship. In the ship's bar you can usually find a couple of experienced pilots who you can ask for combat advice, and there's also a *Wing Commander* arcade machine which doubles as a training tool. It's a good idea to keep an eye on the kill board in the bar because you can see your name gradually rise towards the top. The briefings for each mission are always detailed, with a high-ranking officer handing out the orders via an overhead projector setup. One of the neatest touches is the pilots' barracks, which is the save and load game section – to save a game you click on one of the empty beds, to load a game you wake up one of the slumbering pilots.

*Wing Commander* is a classic – it deserves a place in everyone's collection. Even if you're not usually a fan of action-packed games, *Wing Commander* definitely deserves a look, not only because it inspired so many other games, but simply because it's still an incredibly enjoyable game.

**Minimum system: 640K; EGA; 286; hard disk.**

**Optional extras: AdLib; Sound Blaster; Roland; joystick; mouse.**

# WIZKID

£14.99, Ocean

Reviewed: PCF 15

Available: January '94

Sometimes you can tell from a game that the programmers had an absolute riot of a time making it. *Wizkid*, which was created by the raving loons at Sensible Software, is one such game.

Enjoying your job is one thing, but enjoying it so much that you produce one of the craziest games in gameplaying history is quite another. As you read this, the men in white coats are trundling around to take the not-so-sensible programmers away in a specially padded van. The public simply has to be protected from these insane programmers.

*Wizkid* is so weird that it almost defies description, and draws on elements from so many different game styles that it's nearly impossible to categorise it. So, what's this bizarre fun-filled game all about?

Well, (are you sure you're ready for this?) you control the eponymous hero, who is the son of Wiz (who happens to be the star of another of Sensible's not-so-sensible games). Sometimes *Wizkid* is just a round head, and sometimes he's a head with a body and a few limbs, it varies from time to time and place to place.

The aim of the game is to guide *Wizkid* through a series of strange worlds, collecting even stranger objects as he goes, in an effort to track down his lost kittens. Quite how he lost the kittens isn't important, it's enough to know that they've vanished and he's got to get them back. Oh all right, if you insist on knowing what the story is about, here goes. It's a complicated tale of kidnapping (or should that be catnapping), evil wizards, fathers and rowing boats. Any clearer now? No, didn't think it would be.

The main part of the game is a bounce-'em-up in which *Wizkid* has to use his



Head-bang the night away with *Wizkid*.

head to bash blocks around the screen to squash and kill whichever unfortunate enemies are fluttering around. The blocks can be anything from roof tiles to giant bags of popcorn – just expect whatever you come across to be strange and you should get through without losing your sanity. Every time an enemy is killed, a coloured musical note appears. If *Wizkid* can collect enough notes to fill the tune that appears on a staff at the top of the screen, he's rewarded with money which he can use to buy objects such as a newspaper, a blue diamond and a carrot-on-a-stick to help him through the adventure parts of the game.

When *Wizkid* has finished a decent head-banging session, he gets his arms and legs back and can head off on a small adventure to find one of his kittens. For some reason the puzzle elements often require him to spend time in public lavatories (please don't ask why).

As you may have gathered, *Wizkid* is one of the oddest games you're ever likely to come across. It's so refreshingly different that as soon as you start playing you are hooked, even if you're normally addicted to flight sims or role-playing games. There are so many different elements to the gameplay that you keep on finding new features and touches. A difficult game to put down.

**Minimum system: 640K; VGA; 286; hard disk.**

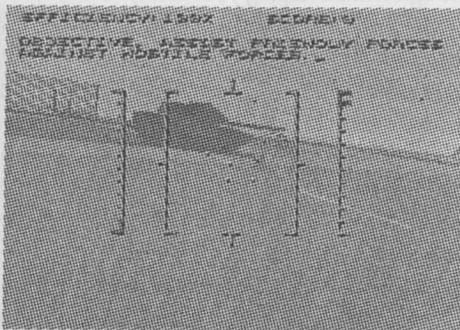
**Optional extras: AdLib; Sound Blaster; Roland; joystick.**

# ROBOCOP 3

£14.99, Ocean

Reviewed: PCF 16

Available: December '93



Another tank falls foul of Robocop's gun.

Games based on films are often notorious for not being as good as their celluloid counterparts – just because a film's been a big hit it doesn't mean that the game is necessarily going to do the same. But when it comes to a game of a film that hasn't been released, not to mention a film that might never be released, there's no hype, so the game has to stand on the merits of its gameplay alone.

*Robocop 3* makes a break from the usual platform formula for film-licence games. You play the part of Robocop, and have to fight your way through several different sections which give you a spectacular combination of 3D driving, flying, fighting, shooting and general destructive mayhem. You can play the game as discrete arcade games, or as a complete movie-style game in which the separate arcade sections are linked together by the *Robocop* storyline. It's impossible to say how closely the game follows the plot of the film because nobody's ever seen it.

The five arcade sections give you the chance to try out Robocop's special abilities. There are two sections, hostage rescue and bad-guy slaughter, in which Robocop is patrolling on foot and you have to shoot your way through a couple of large buildings, saving the innocent civilians and blasting the thugs. Then there's the driving section which puts you behind the wheel of a large automobile (a police car, actually). You have to chase a stolen van and repeatedly ram it to force it off the road, before racing to a predetermined destination. The fourth section pits Robocop's wits against those of a rival Japanese law-enforcement cyborg in a one-on-one clash of the Titans. In the fifth and best section, Robocop dons his experimental gyropack and swoops above the rooftops shooting helicopters, tanks and enemy cyborgs.

The benefits of being able to play the game as single arcade sections are two-fold. Firstly, you can dip into the game anytime you feel like venting some of your pent-up frustration and gun down a few thugs. Secondly, you can practise all the sections so you're fully prepared when you start to fight your way through the movie part of the game. If you don't spend some time practising, then you're never going to be able to find out what happens at the end of the game because your enemies are always going to get the better of you.

The 3D graphics aren't especially detailed, but they are extremely fast. The gyropack section in particular shows off the speed of the 3D system, with Robocop hurtling along at an insane rate of knots that sometimes makes it difficult to get a good fix on what you're supposed to be blowing up.

*Robocop 3* makes a great change from most 3D simulators because it's so easy to get into. The controls have been kept to a minimum, but without sacrificing any of the playability or difficulty. While you may be able to complete the individual arcade sections on a one-off basis, it's much harder to successfully fight all the way through the movie. Not only do you have to succeed at each individual task, but you sometimes have to take strategic decisions about where to go and what to do next. One wrong turn could send you down a blind alley and the hostages to their deaths. *Robocop 3*'s an exciting, all-action game. It doesn't pretend to be otherwise, and it doesn't have to. Great fun.

**Minimum system: 640K; VGA; 286; hard disk.**

**Optional extras: AdLib; Roland; joystick; mouse.**

# PRINCE OF PERSIA

£9.99, Domark  
Reviewed: PCF 17  
Available: now

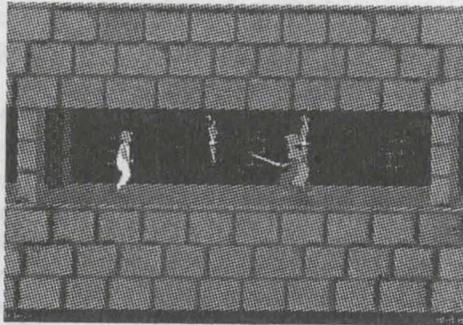
When it was first released in 1990, *Prince of Persia* was an instant hit, and now it's achieved classic status. You control a marvellously animated character (the prince of the title) who has to rescue a princess who's been kidnapped, or rather princess-

napped, by an evil sheik (no strawberry, chocolate or vanilla gags, please). What sets the game apart from other platform games is the fabulous animation of all the characters. The prince runs down corridors, jumps over gaps in the floor, swings on to ledges, and sword-fights with the sheik's soldiers.

You're given a side-on view of the action as the prince performs his heroic deeds, and the controls are remarkably sensitive considering the amount of animation that accompanies the prince's every move. The game is a delight to sit and watch because the animation is faultless and so smooth. It makes the prince seem sufficiently realistic for you to care about him much more than you care about your run-of-the-mill cutesy platform game characters.

The game's played against the clock, which gives a sense of urgency to the proceedings – if you spend too long struggling through the early levels you run out of time later on. *Prince of Persia* set a new standard for action adventures, and games are still trying to imitate its fluid feel and gorgeous graphics.

**Minimum system: 512K; CGA; XT.**  
**Optional extras: AdLib; joystick.**



It's a good idea to whip your sword out.

# THE SIMPSONS: BART VS THE SPACE MUTANTS

£9.99, Ocean  
Reviewed: PCF 5  
Available now

They've been on video, they've been on T-shirts and they've had their own hit singles, but no self-respecting 20th-century fad is complete until it's had a computer game made about it. *The Simpsons* have this decent, not to mention fiendishly difficult, platformer.

In the game of the cartoon, space mutants have invaded Earth and are building an enormous weapon to help them take over the planet. It's up to Bart and co to stop the aliens, which is easier said than done. The aim of the game is to hide, destroy or otherwise mutilate the resources that the aliens need to build their weapon. The extra terrestrials need to collect something different on each of the game's five levels, for example purple items are needed on the first level, so Bart has to dash around spray-painting all the purple objects he can see.

To make matters worse, the aliens are invading people's bodies, which makes it difficult to tell who's an alien and who's not – unless of course you've got a pair of X-ray specs. When Bart dons these, the aliens are revealed and he can meat out the appropriate punishment. Extra items such as catapults, spanners, rockets and extra lives can be bought with money Bart collects, but he also has to use catapults and dart guns if he's to succeed. The game's graphics aren't stunning, but the gameplay is entertaining and tricky enough to make you want to help Bart save the world.

**Minimum system: 640K; CGA; XT.**  
**Optional extras: AdLib; Roland; joystick.**



Watch out for the aliens, Bart.

# SUPER SPACE INVADERS

£9.99, Domark, Reviewed: PCF 7, Available now

*Space Invaders* was the coin-op that started the computer game revolution. It was invented by Toshiro Nishikado in 1979 and was so amazing that people spent hours playing, jeopardising their jobs, mortgages and marriages in the process. *Super Space Invaders* is a souped-up version of the old classic, giving you greater variety. Wave after wave of multi-coloured aliens march dumbly down the screen towards your laser-firing ship – if they reach the bottom of the screen and land on Earth it's game over. There are plenty of bonuses to be collected to give your ship extra firepower and shields, but in this high-tech day and age, the gameplay feels rather restrictive. Still, there's a distinct absence of decent shoot-'em-ups on the PC, so if you're after some mindless fun, you could do a lot worse than *Super Space Invaders*.

**Minimum system: 640K; VGA; 286; hard disk.**  
**Optional extras: AdLib; Roland; joystick.**

# RISKY WOODS

£12.99, Electronic Arts, Reviewed: PCF 15, Available now

At last, a solid platform beat-'em-up with loads of levels and plenty of weapons. A foul demon called Draxos has invaded your previously peaceful land and it's up to you to hack your way through 12 levels of monsters and traps in order to kill him. You start the game with three lives and a weedy little dagger, but by the judicious opening of numerous chests along the way, and by stopping off at the local armoury, you can soon boost your supplies into a major arsenal. The landscape scrolls from the right, with your character leaping, shooting and slashing as he goes. Die-hard platform fans are bound to appreciate the game and its high monster count, as well as the splendid sounds that tinkle along in the background. Sadly, there's nothing particularly special about it to convert doubters to the platform cause.

**Minimum system: 640K; VGA; 286; hard disk.**  
**Optional extras: AdLib; Sound Blaster; Roland; joystick.**

# BUDOKAN

£12.99, Electronic Arts, Reviewed: PCF 22, Available now

Before all the fuss about *Street Fighter 2* and *Mortal Combat*, one martial arts beat-'em-up ruled the roost. *Budokan* gives you the chance to learn several forms of martial art, though not for real. The game looks dated when compared to VGA games such as *Risky Woods*, but that's hardly surprising when you consider that it's nearly three years old.

**Minimum system: 512K; CGA; XT; hard disk.**  
**Optional extras: AdLib; Roland; joystick.**

# LETHAL WEAPON

£9.99, Ocean, Reviewed: PCF 20, Available: January '93

This scrolling platform shoot-'em-up doesn't follow the plot of any one film, it just provides an excuse for dashing around filling bad guys full of lead. You have to complete a series of missions by running and jumping around buildings, sewers, streets and docks, killing enemies and collecting bonuses and ammunition. Good fun for a while, but don't expect any revolutionary features or excitement.

**Minimum system: 640K; VGA; 286; hard disk.**  
**Optional extras: AdLib; Sound Blaster; Roland; joystick.**

# COOL WORLD

£9.99, Ocean, Reviewed: PCF 17, Available: January '93

Hands up everyone who's seen *Cool World*. Hmm, hardly a forest of hands, but then Kim Bassinger's not exactly flavour of the decade, is she? Like *Hook*, the game is better than the film on which it is based. It has some of the best scrolling ever seen on the PC, but the gameplay's an unsatisfying mix of shoot-'em-up and collect-'em-up.

**Minimum system: 640K; VGA; 286.**  
**Optional extras: AdLib; Sound Blaster; joystick.**

## WWF WRESTLEMANIA

£9.99, Ocean, Reviewed: PCF 22, Available now

We had a bit of a dilemma when we tried to decide where to include *WWF Wrestlemania*. If you're the sort of person who thinks it should be included in the sports section, then you're obviously a fan and would enjoy grappling with Hulk and the rest of the crew. If you think its position in the action games section more accurately reflects the *WWF* spectacle, then you probably wouldn't.

**Minimum system: 640K; EGA; XT.**

**Optional extras: AdLib; joystick.**

## WWF EUROPEAN RAMPAGE

£9.99 Ocean, Reviewed: PCF 19, Available: December

Somehow the *WWF* game got worse in its second incarnation. You still get to fight with usual *WWF* meatheads, but the artificial intelligence doesn't seem to work so well, the gameplay's a bit dull, the controls are sluggish and the sprites are smaller. OK if you're a *WWF* freak, but *Budokan's* a better game.

**Minimum system: 640K; CGA; XT; hard disk.**

**Optional extras: AdLib; Sound Blaster; Roland; joystick.**

## TERMINATOR 2

£9.99, Ocean, Reviewed: PCF 4, Available now

Unfortunately, the game doesn't quite live up to the spectacular brilliance of the film, but if you've got a couple of hours to spare one day, you might care to give this a try. The game's a rather sad mixture of shooting, driving and puzzle elements, which are mildly amusing for a short period, but provide no long-term interest.

**Minimum system: 640K; CGA; XT; hard disk.**

**Optional extras: AdLib; Sound Blaster; Roland; joystick.**

# A HATFUL OF HINTS

*If you're stuck on an adventure or bamboozled by a puzzle game, there aren't many places you can turn to for help. Over the next few pages you'll find some solutions, codes and passwords for some of The Hit Squad's more fiendish games. If these aren't enough, watch out for more in PCF's regular Bonus Points tips section.*

# HOOK

£14.99, Ocean  
Reviewed: PCF 12  
Available now



Come on Pan, get your act together.

The one film licence that Ocean doesn't turn into a platform game and it creates a *Monkey Island* clone. Still, it's an enjoyable enough game to play, and even though it's a little on the short side, it's quite tough in parts. So, without further ado, let's get on with the complete solution.

The first objective is to get yourself a pirate's costume so that you can blend in with the yokels and get on to Hook's ship. At the start of the game when you're in Pirate Square, go left to pick up the anchor and the washing pole, then go to the right to Deadman's Pier. Pick up the rope and use it with the anchor, then go into the Crossed Swords pub and get the two mugs from the tables. Go into the Bait and Tackle bar and pick up the third mug, then go out of the door at the top of the stairs. You should now be on the balcony over-looking the square, wait until the pirate is walking across the square and use the anchor on the top of the clock. If you've got the timing right, you should swing across to Mrs Smeedle's front door, and in doing so grab the pirate's hat. You might need to do this several times until you suss out the right time to swing. When you've got the hat, knock on Mrs Smeedle's door and when she replies, use the anchor to swing back. Now go back down to the square, go left and use the pole on the pirate jacket. Examine the jacket and you find a coin.

Go to the right and into Mugger's Alley to see Dr Chop. Have a couple of teeth pulled out and he gives you two coins in return. Take the roller blind and go to the Jolliest Roger pub and give the three mugs and the three coins to the barman. He gives you three mugs of cocoa, which you should then give to the man in the blue hat who falls asleep, giving you the chance to steal his trousers. Now you've got three pieces of clothing, head back to the washing line and use the roller blind on it - this enables you to put the clothes on in private.

Now go to the Good Form pier and on to Hook's ship. Walk to the right and take some money out of the three pots. Go back into the town, buy the magnet from the tailor's shop and then go to the beach. Use the magnet on the 'X' and in doing so you uncover a clock. Go back to Hook's ship and walk towards the pirates. After a little chat with Hook, you have to walk the plank and you find yourself gurgling on the seabed. Use the pole on the pulley to get it working, and then look at the shiny clam to find a conch shell. Use the clam to get out of the water, then walk to the right along the tree branch. To get through the forest go north, east, north, west, north, east and east again.

You should now walk into a rope trap, which reveals the lost boys' hideout. Walk left into the workshop and take the elastic, then go left to the jogging area where you can use the weights to get into shape. Go left to the Avenger, get the net and examine it to find a piece of string. Go right twice to get to the Four Seasons, then get the dead branch and the flower. Scare the chicken by blowing the conch shell at it, then pick up the eggs. Give the eggs to the boy in the workshop, and take the suction arrow.

Go right twice to get to the pond, talk to Tinkerbell and give her the flower. In return she gives you a thimble. Get the branch from the tree to the right and use it with the string to make a bow. Go back to the workshop and use the bow on the pan pipes, then pick them up and go to the slingshot. Use the elastic to fix the slingshot, then go up and right to the cliff top.

Use yourself with the end of the fence to practice flying. You need to do this several times then ask Thudbutt about his happy thoughts, and he gives you some marbles. Go back and insult Rufio by saying "Oh, Rufio!", and this then enables you to use your imagination and throw some imaginary food at him. You now find that the table is covered with food.

Go down to the round pond and then walk towards the tree. This takes you to the island, examine the log bed, the fireplace and the chair, and then talk to Tinkerbell. You are shown a movie-like story, Rufio should give you a sword and then you fly off towards Hook. All you need to do to finish him off is talk him to death.

# HUMANS

£TBA, *Mirage*, Reviewed: PCF 17, Available: early '94

Man's evolution from caveman clot to 21st century boy has taken ages. It won't take long in *Humans*, in fact it won't take any time at all if you type in the codes and don't bother playing the levels.

LEVEL	CODE				
		27	NICENEASY	55	CONSOLIDATED
1	DARWIN	28	GREEN CARD	56	STAY HAPPY
2	ANDIE PANDY	29	COOKIE	57	AMERICA
3	GET A LIFE	30	MALCY MALC	58	ANOTHER HAPPY DAY
4	CARLOS	31	RAVING BURK		
5	HOWIE	32	YOU GOT IT	59	ISOLATION
6	MOOBLE	33	SGNIMMEL	60	PROMISED LAND
7	CSL	34	MINISTRY	61	DAEMONSLATE
8	THE HUMBLE ONE	35	MAD FREDDY	62	BIG RAB
9	PIXIE	36	BIZARRE	63	MIAMI VICE
10	MILESTONE	37	FREE SCOTLAND	64	MARGARET
11	WAR WAR WAR	38	APPLE JUICE	65	A34732473
12	J MCKINNON	39	PAYDAY	66	HELP ME
13	UNLUCKY	40	BANANNA MOON	67	THE EXILES
14	BLUE MONKEY	41	BONUS	68	EIGHTLANDS
15	RED DWARF	42	BOUNCING	69	WINE AND DINE
16	BAD TASTE	43	NO MONEY	70	NIN
17	THE KITCHEN	44	A S F	71	TECHNOPHOBE
18	CJ	45	VISION	72	GETTING THERE
19	SORT IT OUT	46	SISTERS	73	TIME IS
20	SMART	47	FAST FASHION	74	RUNNING OUT
21	VILLA3BORO2	48	CARGO	75	LORDS OF CHAOS
22	EARLY MORNING	49	RAB C NESBITT	76	NOW ITS DONE
23	BORO4LEEDS1	50	RANGERS	77	IM OUT OF HERE
24	EASY LIFE	51	RAINBOW	78	HERE TO A
25	JIMS TIES	52	DOODY	79	BETTER LIFE
26	PARKVIEW	53	MIGHTY BAZ	80	BYE BYE BYE
		54	TIRED		

# LURE OF THE TEMPTRESS

£TBA, *Virgin Games*  
Reviewed: PCF 11  
Available: mid '94



Take a peak into the village shop.

Help Dermont defeat Selena and the Skorl.

## The jail

Pull the torch on to your bedding and stand in the bottom left-hand corner of the screen. When the Skorl comes in, leave the room, shut the door and lock it. Speak to Wulf, who is the prisoner chained against the wall, and then go through to the guard room. Pick up the green bottle, look at the barrel on the left of the room and use the bottle on the tap. Pick up the knife from on top of the barrel, look at the sack on the right and use the knife on the sack. Look at the sack and Dermot picks up a coin. Go back to Wulf, give him the bottle, and he tells you of an escape route.

Go through the guard room to the torture chamber and use the knife to cut the cord that's tying Ratpouch to the rack. Tell Ratpouch to go to the outer cell and push the bricks in the wall. When he goes off, follow him through the hole in the wall and down the sewers into the village.

## Turnvale - Rescuing Goewin

Walk through the two exits and you're at the castle gates. Go left to the apothecary, then left to the castle walls, then down to the monks house, left to Ewan's shop, left to the Severed Arms then down. The opening on the left is the blacksmith's, go inside, tell Luthern you've escaped from the Skorl. Pick up the tinderbox from the floor (front of the screen). Go to the Magpie Tavern (below the monk's house), and talk to Morkus. Bribe him

and he tells you Goewin was taken prisoner.

Leave the inn and find Mallin (in the green jacket) – this might take some time. Talk to him and ask him to tell you what you have to do. Take the bar to the shop and give it to Ewan. Go back to the Magpie, talk to the barmaid and give her the gem. Go to the blacksmith's, talk to Luthern and then give Luthern the flask. Speak to the Grub – the beggar on the pavement outside the Magpie Tavern. Go back to the Severed Arms and speak to Edwina, who is sitting knitting at the table, and ask her if she's seen Taidgh. Examine the diary.

Go to the market place outside Ewan's shop, give Ratpouch the lockpick and look at the door on the right. Wait for the Skorl to walk past and you see there's a long gap then a short gap between appearances. At the next long gap, tell Ratpouch to use the lockpick on the lock on Taidgh's door. Open the door, go inside and examine the apparatus. Use the tinderbox on the oil burner and after steam is let off, use the flask on the tap. Drink the flask then go off the top of the screen to the Skorl guarding the gate. Talk to him, open the door, walk through, talk to the left-hand Skorl then leave with Goewin. Follow her to the apothecary, talk to her, hang around until the potion wears off and then talk to her again.

### Turnvale - the dragon

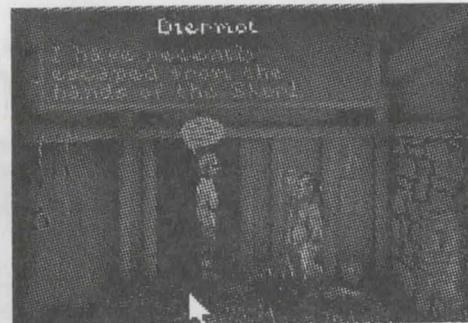
Go to the monk's house and read the notice on the wall. Find Mallin, talk to him and say "Yes, certainly". Take the book to the monk's house, give it to the fat monk and then talk to him about the smell – he gives you some herbs. Talk to the thin monk about defeating Selena, and remember the three herbs – houndstooth, cowbane and elecampane.

Go to the blacksmith's, talk to the old dear in the rocking chair and give her the sprig of herbs. Go out of the blacksmith's, and in the garden there are some flowers to the left. To the right of the two red flowers, there is some cowbane. Pick it up, go to the apothecary and talk to Goewin. Ask her to make an infusion of cowbane, houndstooth and elecampane, then find Gwyn and talk to her – she's the lady in the red hat. Go to the shop and talk to Ewan, then go back to the apothecary, talk to Goewin and ask for the potion. Go to the Severed Arms and talk to Ultar, then go to the Weregate and talk to the Gargoyle. Go back to the apothecary, talk to Goewin and go back to the Weregate and talk to her again. Go through the gates.

### Exploring the caves

Pull the right-hand skull, go through into the green cave, and then into the entrance cave. Talk to Goewin, tell her to go back to the green cave and follow her there. Tell Goewin to go back to the entrance cave and pull the left-hand skull. When the door opens, go into

the blue cave, pull the right-hand skull and then the left-hand skull. Wait until Goewin walks in and tell her to go to the green cave and pull the right-hand skull. Go to the left when the door opens, go up, kill the guard, go left and use the potion on the dragon straight away. Talk to the dragon and order it to help you, go into the blue cave, pull the left skull, go to the green cave, pull the left skull, then go back to the entrance cave and leave the caves.



**Bully for you, Dermot.**

### The castle

When you've left the caves, talk to Goewin and then find Mallin and have a chat with him. Go to the marketplace outside Ewan's shop and wait until a Skorl goes in. Look through the window and watch Ewan and the Skorl's conversation, wait for the Skorl to leave and then go in and talk to Ewan.

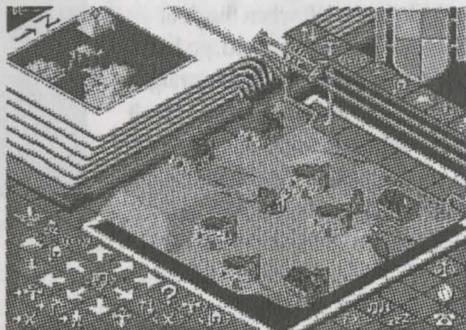
When you reach the cellar, look at the top cask in the stack of three in the bottom left of the screen. Go in to the kitchen and look at the carcass. Take the fat and tongs, and go back to the cellar. Use the tongs on the bung on the cask, go into the passage and wait for Minnow to walk past. Talk to him and ask him to tell the Skorl there's a leaky cask in the cellar.

Leave the kitchen on the right, walk up the steps to the balcony and then wait for the Skorl to go through the door. After a while you need to go down the stairs. Walk through the room of drunk Skorls to the gate room which is on the right. Use the fat on the lever, go back to the room of drunks and tell Minnow to go to the gate room and pull the lever. While he's pulling, operate the winch. Go back through the room of drunks, up the stairs, along the balcony and up the steps on to the drawbridge. Kill the guard, walk to the left and get ready to watch the finale.

# POPULOUS

£14.99, EA/Bullfrog  
Reviewed: PCF 21  
Available now

It's great fun playing god, but it can be frustrating if you're not as almighty as you'd like to be. Here's some excellent advice for power-crazed *Populous* players.



## Make your mana count.

● At the beginning, it is important to quickly create flat land for your first few walkers. When raising land from the sea, raise the same point twice and then flatten the top.

● If the enemy's papal magnet is on flat land, put a swamp next to it. This kills a lot of enemy walkers and it might kill their leader as well.

● Huts produce walkers quicker than castles. At the start of the game, make more huts by restricting the amount of flat land available for settlements. Later in the game, iron out the bumps and create castles, which give more manna, are better defended and produce stronger walkers.

● Don't waste manna on minor disasters such as earthquakes. Volcanoes are particularly effective, especially when you use them one on top of another.

● In ice and desert worlds, walkers die quickly, so don't let them wander around aimlessly. Keep creating flat land for them to settle on.

● If you decide to use the flood effect, get your followers on high land first. Save the game before using the effect in case anything goes wrong.

# PRINCE OF PERSIA

£9.99, Domark  
Reviewed: PCF 21  
Available now



## Time to press K to kill the guard.

If you're having trouble battling through this beautifully animated action adventure, there's a simple cheat that you can use to make things a lot easier. Before that, if you're stuck on the part where you have to defeat your shadow, be stuck no more – all you have to do is put away your sword and walk into your shadow. Keep going to the left and a bridge appears. Anyway, back to that cheat. When you start the game type:

## PRINCE MEGAHIT

You can now give the prince special powers by pressing the following keys.

Key	Special power
K	kills all enemies on screen
R	resurrects you where you last died
+	increases time left
-	decreases time left
Key + [Shift]	Special power
L	takes you to the next level
T	gives you an extra life
S	heals a lost life
W	enables you to float down long drops
I	inverts the screen

# PUSH-OVER

£12.99, Ocean, Reviewed: PCF 12, Available: November '93

Frustrated by Ocean's domino-toppling puzzle? Tap in the codes to skip the level you're stuck on and get straight to another infuriating level you can get stuck on. There's no way out of the ant-hole until you've got all of Colin Curly's Quavers, and GI Ant desperately needs your help.

LEVEL	CODE	25	10758	51	21534	77	22143
		26	11782	52	23852	78	21247
01	00512	27	11270	53	24094	79	20735
02	01536	28	09222	54	23070	80	28927
03	01024	29	09734	55	22558	81	29439
04	03072	30	08718	56	18494	82	30463
05	03584	31	08206	57	19006	83	29951
06	02560	32	24590	58	20030	84	31999
07	02048	33	25102	59	19518	85	32511
08	06144	34	26126	60	17470	86	31487
09	06656	35	25614	61	17892	87	30975
10	07680	36	27662	62	16958	88	26879
11	07168	37	28174	63	16510	89	27647
12	05122	38	27150	64	16511	90	28671
13	05634	39	26638	65	17023	91	28159
14	04610	40	30734	66	18047	92	26111
15	04098	41	31246	67	17535	93	26623
16	12290	42	32270	68	19583	94	25599
17	12802	43	31758	69	20095	95	25087
18	13826	44	29726	70	19071	96	08703
19	13314	45	30238	71	18559	97	09215
20	15362	46	29214	72	22655	98	10239
21	15878	47	28702	73	32167	99	09727
22	14854	48	20510	74	24191	00	44543
23	14324	49	21022	75	23679		
24	10246	50	22046	76	21631		

# ULTIMA 6

£14.99, Origin

Not reviewed

Available: October '93

Origin's *Ultima* series is one of the best role-playing games around. *Ultima 7* will be released at the beginning of January, but many adventurers may still be stuck in the caverns and mountains of *Ultima 6*.

And you can't start number seven without completing number six can

you? *Ultima 6* is a huge adventure and rather than spoon feed you a list of step-by-step instructions, here's some useful hints which will speed up your progress.

When the game starts you are directed to the Lycaeum to see Mariah for the translation of the Book of the Gargoyles. Mariah has half of the Rosetta Stone, a silver tablet which enables the translation. The other half has ended up buried with some pirate's treasure. A map showing the location of the treasure must be found.

Before you rush off and find the treasure, you need gold and supplies. The starting capital isn't enough to complete the quest - more funds are necessary to adequately equip your party.

On the eastern route of Yew, you cross a bridge just outside the town. You always encounter bridge trolls, who you can kill to gain experience points. When they are dead you can strip them of their weapons, armour, gold and goods. Go to Yew, sell arms and armour, keep the rest yourself and buy needed equipment, like swamp boots. Sleep for a couple of hours to regain strength and return to the bridge to have another bash at the unfortunate trolls.

A good way to get hit points and treasure is to visit the cave south of Empath Abbey, where the Cyclops live. They can be easily destroyed, and after clearing the cave of all useful items, leave it, freshen up and then go back. The third level of this dungeon is worth a visit because it is filled with food and powder kegs.



Let those evil dweebs taste your blade.

When the party is rich and fully armed, it's time to set out and find the treasure and the other half of the Rosetta Stone. The pirate ship, Empire, sank near Serpents Hold, where you find part of the map. One of the Empire's crew members, Homer, can be found in Buccaneer's Den. Ask him about treasure and he tells you that the map was divided into nine parts. If you can get the eight parts of the map to him he gives his part so that the map can be completed. To find the eight parts, the Empire's crew members must be tracked down.

1. Hawknose set out to the Drylands to kill the Daemon that lives there. Search the ant mounds for a body and a piece of the map.
2. The first mate settled in Trinsic and became the mayor, Lord Whatsaber. Look behind the magical locked door, you find a key that opens a door where you find the ship journal of the Empire. Question the mayor about Sandy – he turns pale and gives you part of the map.
3. Sandy is the chef in Trinsic's inn. To get a part of the map from him you must get a Dragon's egg from the dungeon Destard, for Sandy's pastry. It's guarded by a dragon that's nearly impossible to kill, but you've got to get that egg.
4. Old Ybarra set course for Shame.
5. One pirate died in a shipwreck on an island west of Serpent's Hold, fight the skeletons and then find a piece of the map.
6. One settled in Jhelom, he has a hook. He tried to use it to make a fire, but rats scared him away and he dropped the map in the dungeon called Wrong.
7. Some gypsies north of Trinsic have stolen a piece of the map from another of the pirates.
8. A mad hermit-pirate to the north-east of Dagger Isle has the eighth piece. Give his house a thorough search.

If that's too much like hard work, you don't need to collect all the pieces of the map – the treasure is buried in the island at 59S 50E, but you are going to need some special equipment to get it.

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