

The ST FILE

Are your games are a loss?

Try **STOS**

see page 52 to see if its any good



END OF EVIL
End of Evil

HILL BUNT



A rather different look with **TUTORON**

Behind the wheel in **LORD OF THE RAC**



What's that strange creature doing at Lord of the Rac?

ST NEWS

Pygmalion, having released only a select few games over the past couple of years, are now expanding with new labels and associations with various programmers. First release on their new Pygmalion label is *End*, in which the supreme God of Evil has dispatched his army of undead to steal its deadliest weapon of destruction - the War Machine. Those with weak stomachs will be pleased to learn the game is not quite as gruesome as the advertising! Next up from Pygmalion is *Captain Rex Meets the Master-Tron*?, a two player collaborative game that Pygmalion claim is so addictive that they had to ban it from their own offices! Lots of blasting, lots of food, gates to unlock and other adventures with split screen view of each player's action. Right in action and, at £14.95, low in price — from Electronic Arts is a new arcade strategy game called *Fusion* featuring two dimensional parallel scrolling, digitized sound, the lot. Object is to collect nine pieces of a bomb scattered over 12 levels and return them to level 1 via an Assault Cruiser. Doesn't seem to be too much blasting, more puzzle solving such as trying to operate coloured switches to other levels. At least the screen shots look different from what is now becoming almost standard — then there's *Hill Bunt* from Nasagen, following up *Hereditary* and *Backlash*, not programmed this time by Paul Winkler but by one Donovan Polaris. *Hill Bunt* is standard *Base* 'em in *Coliseum* vein but plenty fast — Codemasters, hoping to repeat their success with *BMX Simulator*, have *Bugly Simulator* coming up in which, you guessed it, all those of us who didn't go to public school can vent in the noble game without having to lose teeth and eyes in the process! Can't figure out, though, what that giant tortoise is doing on the field! — plus for too many more to mention between the time of writing and the time of reading, but is the flood of ST software now beginning to abate?

STOS

The greatest thing so far for
the ST or just another program?

Damon Howarth tries his hand
at writing games

Every so often in the life of any computer there comes a program that can only be described as a 'muse'. Normally this is some form of 'mega game' or highly efficient set program, very occasionally an application such as a spreadsheet but I have never thought of a programming language coming into this category. STOS though does it is hard to know just where to start in a description of such a comprehensive package, perhaps the best start is to explain that STOS stands for ST Operating System and expand from there.

The packaging for STOS claims it is a games creator, this is a little unfair since it brings to mind other packages which have no relation to the breadth of function of this software. There is nothing truly comparable with it and in its own field of graphics handling and sprite development, it can really compete with most leaders currently on sale.

So what is it STOS? At grass roots level it is a basic programming language that comes as a single sided disk one of which is full of archived accessories, the second with three demonstration games and the third with the actual language

fully debugged menu command line that would change the screen colour and present windows with differing fonts in them. Obtaining this effect in most other languages I have used, has involved resorting to GEM calls and complex IF THEN routines. In STOS the command words 'menu 11="MENU"/menu 01, 11="Item 1" and so on as far as you want menu choices. The activation of the menu is - menu on/Auto menu 01 A, and then print "you chose item "B". Obviously this is extremely easy and is most user friendly.

The most important part of the program is, of course, the manner in which graphics and sprites are controlled. This is simply effected using nothing more than x, y co-ordinates and the commands move and on/off. The sprites, of which it is possible to have fifteen active at a time, are interrupt driven (without needing in depth programming) and easily made aware of collisions, boundaries and all

these other useful things sprites need to know in order to function in games. It was so easy to make a sprite pattern that I developed a Wildlife Panda head to bounce around the screen in under forty-five minutes, and thirty-five of that was trying to get the correct curve in it's ears since I am no artist!

EASY SPRITE DESIGN

Having pointed out that my artistic talents are limited it was with some relief that I discovered that there was a utility called a sprite grabber with the software that enabled the user to lift their favourite sprite and tinker with it to include in their own programs. Even better there is also a means to store Degas and Neochrome format backing screens in compressed mode

to make multi-screen game creation a possibility. Graphically there is the option of defining two concurrent screens to enable rapid and effective scroll changes, instead the software even allows for commands to fade the pictures together at whatever rate or style is desired. The example from the manual gives a sort of Venetian blind effect for a slow change, although by a change in control variables this can become instant or explosive. The window creations (up to thirteen on screen at a time) can allow for quite complicated screens to be built and by careful programming and interrupt use can almost look like the Master is installed in your machine. Admittedly when there is a great deal of action on the screen at one time things slow down somewhat but not too excessively and, once more, the manual makes suggestions as to how to keep optimum speeds at any one time.

Once the initial euphoria of creating sprites and being able to control the wayward ST screen waxes, the other features of the software become apparent, it is possible to install various accessories into the machine (although this is better with a 386) which may be activated by function key, help menu or menu bar. Thus it is quite possible to have the sprite editor, an assembler, screen compiler and font editor at finger tip command without losing other parts of the current program or programs, since four separate pieces of work may be maintained at any one time.

Obviously this uses memory and is not recommended for 320s, although even they can cope with one key development aid installed at a time. The really useful thing about all the accessories is that they are written in STOS and are totally extensible, thus they may be loaded from or altered in time. It is also possible to create your own accessories to run within the system and run three versions of anything as possible by using a trigger supplied with the package.



itself. The system recommends that it be Auto-booted thereby relocating the ST from the structure of GEM and gaining an extra 32K to use. The loss of GEM is not so worrying as may at first be thought since the language provides a most user friendly environment. STOS has excellent file select and menu commands, indeed it took slightly less than half an hour to obtain a

CREATIVE ACCESSORIES

Having discussed the 'built in' accessories it would seem to be a good time to comment on the more important of them. The most exciting areas of creativity are the sprite and map creators. The sprite creator looks like a standard art package with all the palette functions, and an option to create sprites that will adapt to any of the ST's three modes. All the basic art package tools are included such as semi circles and lines with the addition that an eraser is incorporated and changes may be saved and worked on with the minimum of fuss. The creator is, like the other accessories, icon controlled and, on each, user friendly. The sprites serve to a special file which is subsequently called in the programs and accessed during run time whenever the basic calls it, which saves time defining sprites in programs and also allows for modular programs creators. Why waste a good sprite control routine when it can be used to govern various banks of sprites. The map maker allows for the laying of static sprites in order to create Gausler style games. There are some quite familiar landmarks already in the memory and indeed the basic set up almost resembles a Gausler editor.

ADD SOME MUSIC

There is also the facility to produce music, again, interrupt driven, to accompany your game. The accessory is not as sophisticated as some of the most expensive software but it is certainly effective. If the writer has some basic knowledge of music then the system is even more comprehensive, on the other hand it is still a great deal simpler than programming the sounds from other boxes. These files when created and saved, appear to be executable linked parts of the program so, with the sprites, your tunes can accompany many of your games. The music is controlled simply by the commands music on/off and the predefined sound effects by commands such as bang, tap effects are equally easy to program should the pre-programmed library not fill your needs, they simply require envelope parameters pointing to basic statements and - zap - there it is!

There is even a font designer included in the basic accessories which in conjunction with quite excellent string handling allows manipulation of any form of lettering, even Egyptian Hieroglyphics. The editor is again icon driven and user friendly and a joy to work with. Minor useful accessories include a mouse decoder, which allows the user to obtain screen co-ordinates of any

point of a Neo or Dega picture thus allowing the programming of dangerous areas for sprites to enter.

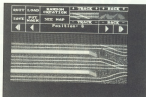
FURTHER ENHANCEMENTS

The idea of accessories that will tack into parts of the program bank mean that the system can be upgraded as needed as development dictates. Already there are promises of a compiler and solid 3D additions from Mandarin. These and other such devices will surely enhance this

package. A great deal of thought and preparation has gone into creating this 'all round good egg' and on each it deserves support, which it certainly seems to be receiving. Mandarin offer a help line to all registered users, hardly a better

way to deliver pleasure than precise protection devices and it seems odd now even on Microsoft.

If the system is viewed as only another Basic then its number crunching abilities are not that of, say, 80-86 although having said that the editor on this system is one the most friendly I have come across. Perhaps in contrast with many old time Basic converts I find some security in line numbers and the discarded GOTO statements but the lack of strange windows, appearing and leaving being in the way helps to evaluate the command I wish to use now a thing of the past. To my mind this makes up for the 'older' approach. As a Basic it fulfils its functions adequately, and is more than competent at file handling especially with its file select and move commands. Indeed the ability to create spare accessories may well allow for creating a number crunching environment, perhaps from the, now included, assembler.



STOS is too powerful to be regarded as just a game creator and indeed with its extremely powerful screen handling and mouse recognition could even be used to create adventures in the mode of ChaosQuest or even adventures with action in the style of the Cinematixware software. The three flexible demo-games give good examples of how to use the system in its best advantage and can be playable on many commercial variants. One of the most interesting variants is the Gobi game which bears a distinct similarity to Arkward and in some respects plays better.

VALUE FOR MONEY

By now it must be obvious that I am most enamoured of the package and feel that it represents extremely good value. If it is viewed only as an upgrader Basic to use instead of the supplied Atari package then it is much cheaper than any other on the market. When it is realised that it also combines the sprite creator, music writer, font creator and the three good-quality games then the whole package is an absolute bargain, and feel that it truly deserves its position in the charts. Furthermore it deserves to become one the leading languages for magazines in the future.

**'I cannot
recommend this
highly enough'**

STOS
Mandarin Software
£29.95

READERS OFFERS

FOR YOUR ST

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The ideal language for owners familiar with other Basics especially those who have upgraded from Atari 8-bit Basic. Although promoted as a 'games' writing language, STOS is much more - almost any kind of program can be written easily with STOS. Try it now! And don't forget that STOS is the language that gets most support in the magazines including NEW ATARI USER.

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STOS II ... The Accessories

When STOS was launched many add-ons were promised, and owing to the language's phenomenal success they are now ready. The three items which I have had the joy of combining into my STOS system are the Compiler, Sprites A&O and STOS Maestro. Each of these are compatible with the system and in the case of the Maestro and Compiler need certain installation programs to be run to ensure that everything goes smoothly.

ADDING SPRITES ...

Perhaps the most impressive package both in packaging and content is the Sprites A&O. This single disk comes in a booklet type cover with a plastic coated instruction sheet. The disk is simply what it claims to be and gives the owner access to several well-drawn and animated sprites covering subjects as varied as Pterodactyls to Dragons and submarines to spacebirds. They prove useful to people like me who write articles, novel makers, creating convincing sprites almost impossible. Since they are created in STOS format they slot into the sprite banks with no problems and as the demo provided in written in STOS it may be listed to obtain other hints as to construction. What's more the sprites can even be edited in the editor provided with the language. On the whole a very handy package that can save creation time.

ADDING SOUND ...

Maestro is a sound sampler package and the smaller edition of Maestro Plus which contains the hardware needed to extract and store samples. Sadly I did not receive a cartridge with the review copy and so cannot comment on that side of the software. It was noticeable that no dealers or companies were willing to comment on the compatibility of other cartridges to Maestro. It was surprisingly difficult for me to make arrangements with Maestro to buy the optional add-on as well as to face the situation because so complex I gave up trying to buy it. These problems aside, the software is truly remarkable. It is run as a stand-alone program but includes an extension to STOS Basic to enable the programmer to insert samples into their own creations with no real difficulty. The

Damon Howarth tries out the first extensions to STOS allowing you to add sprites and sound and to compile the programs

Maestro manual also includes full instructions on this and even explains the assembly language routines for those who wish to write machine code programs. Maestro also claims to be compatible with other languages that are capable of calling assembler routines from Basic, thus making Maestro of potential interest to users of Fort and C&B Basic.

In the STOS tradition of borrowing parts of good games, Maestro allows the importation of sampled files from other sources on disk. For example I transferred the whole of the Snowman sample from a demonstration disk and was readily able to tinker with it. One of the features of the software is this ability to take a piece of music or noise and feed it into events and when to make sounds that were never dreamt of by the composer.

The editing of any sample is most user friendly. The system shows both where in memory a sample lies and how much memory is used by the sample. This can be altered by clicking left and right markers to change any data on the representative bar and the sound waves then appear within this pattern. It magnify command allows very detailed study of very short pieces of sample and if enough time, patience and listening is expended spectacular edits of sound may be created and saved. My Snowman sample eventually took up approximately 2600, included several calls for help and a modified passage taken from the sample disk supplied, leaving the samples to disk is just as well thought out and simple and works through an easy menu system. I also managed to add some sampled cracks and raps as suggested in Zulu but most of that with the compiler. The Maestro disk has a most amusing demo of a drum kit wherein up to thirty two keys may be defined as samples of

various pitch, tempo and style and played through a drum kit. The supplied STOS Basic written drum demo is, as always, fully flexible and extremely modifiable with. To do this of course STOS Basic must be present and have had the necessary modifiers added to it (available on the Maestro disk). Sadly the other demos needed the sampler cartridge attached and so I can offer no comment as others are saying that there is a phase effect and a sort of light show effect available to immediately imported sound. It is also possible to set direct sampling of various volume rates and speeds. If you were to try this ability I would advise purchase of the Plus version but if you already own sampler hardware then the Maestro software will be compatible with samples you have made in that system.

COMPILE IT

Next on offer is the STOS Compiler. This piece of software contains an update for STOS users since it works on STOS 3.0 and includes the updating software. The new update makes floating point arithmetic, at single precision and certain mathematical operations much faster. Certainly helped on the trigonometric functions such as SIN and COS. At this point it is necessary to explain that I reviewed all these on a two drive 1040 and I understood them straight with half meg drive 128s that memory is tight and several demo features cannot be found without a one meg drive. The manuals for all these products do explain this and the compiler especially has programs on it to maximise half meg memory.

The compiler disk comes complete with a run disk necessary and a formatter for disks. The compiler has to be installed on

SORCEROR LORD

PS5/Microsoft £24.99

John Sweeney knows a thing or two about war games so he was delighted to be able to try a new one - but not for long!

an accessory and needs the whole folder of functions available in either the active drive or the 3.5in disk. The item disk compromise is one of the best of its kind and is most friendly to set up though it seems that this is not practical on STOS.

The compiler will turn only reason 2, 4 or converted 1, 3 STOS Basic programs into runnable machine code, even the accessories and games on the original set. Indeed it is now possible to run the sprite designer and music writer from desktop to produce STOS compatible sprites and sounds. This enables 128 colours to have more development space. The compiled versions are normally a great deal more compact than the run time versions and if compiled as GIM and stored on PLOT are invaluable in saving space if you distribute them to friends or software companies.

The compiler will compile in Basic allowing the machine language to be run and the original program to be edited although compiling to GIM loses this option. The actual compilation may be done from any combination of memory and disk - from memory-to-memory up to disk-to-disk.

Obviously the more memory options are used the quicker the compilation but compiling to disk is not of all memory intensive and although slower is certainly feasible. To activate the compiler it is only

necessary to enter the accessory menu and press the appropriate function key. This sets up the relevant files and puts the user into the very helpful front end, there as long as no bugs lurk in the Basic the compilation is complete. Having said that the compiler is very fast and, if nothing else, will make an aid and good programming practice. From the demo games on the STOS disk written by the creator item will show up compilation errors which is why the compile to basic is used first. The system needs module type programming defined groups and careful data statements but the produced code is normally error free and a series of achievement surrounds a successfully written and compiled PLOT. Once again there is nothing that can be criticised too much, every type of machine in the ST range is covered for and that in itself is an achievement. Personally I felt the system needed a minimum of two drives although a one meg memory with ram disk would be an efficient.

Programs that benefit most are those that rely on calculations. Not a lot can speed up interrupt driven sprites but try to compile and then play Babel, it then lives up to its name.

All in all these three pieces of software are masters of their kind and certainly the compiler is an indispensable aid to any STOS user. Master is fine and certainly useful while the sprites are like having one of snap in the cupboard for those days when making your own are impracticable.

Also like this packaging - map, player's guide, reference and Claims to be a Fantasy Wargame Simulation. The game where victory is a reality! Good the game and it may appear lots of identical icons representing the Woodland's forces, most moving round the screen in the accompaniment of a sound like a Basic machine in need of a service. As one moves off the edge of the screen the view shifts to a different section of the map. (The board covers six screen sections but doesn't scroll.) One of the enemy reaches a little distance and there is a truncated shield indicating a battle sounds more like a score in your head bangs!

After a couple of minutes of this I switched to Combat Mode. Data briefly flashes up at the top and bottom of the screen - how strong a magical attack each side has succeeded in casting, numbers of troops, and number of deaths. (I hate games which don't let you control the how long data is displayed!) Next is the Alliance Phase. Some of my leader's mobilise and various of my enemies get reinforcements.

Movement Phase! At last I get a chance to do something. Keyboard only! As I move the cursor onto my castle and toggle I get their status - number of sides and warriors, leader's characteristics (leadership and ferocity), fatigue and remaining movement points. (The documentation is incomplete at this point as it fails to mention that the SELECT key is a DIRECT in 2, War Status in W, and View Map Unit in Start in S)

So I move a few guys around. I can also look at an overall view of the world (shown in the hours which make the board up) - there are PLOT shown on the actual playing board, and pick up or drop troops in garrisons. I tell the computer I have finished this phase. After my Combat Phase (which looks just like the computer's it's back to his movement phase again - more screen jacking, but thankfully much faster and quieter now that I've turned off the noise!

If you can't remember all your lost castles or his HQ before time runs out or he gets your HQ then you win. That's it. Not a lot for £25!

I managed to win the Beginner's level after three or four goes, didn't try Advanced, and gave up on Expert - it is extremely difficult and doesn't appear to give you anything like enough information on what is happening. The average player is likely to be frustrated by the continually repeating, the lack of interaction and the difficulty of winning. The less experienced is likely to be put off by the lack of information.

This is basically a very ordinary wargame - if you were playing this as a board game then you would wonder confused by throwing dice and looking up the results on a Combat Resolution table (CRT) showing the appropriate part of the table for the type of troop where one of the nations and two types - warrior and rider, the type of ground and the relative size of the troops, modified by the dice throw, the leadership and fatigue factors and the enemy level. The enemy level is determined in some way from your leader's victory factor plus the distance to eight nearest Stone-Ringers (Stone Rings), a dice throw(s) and how many Stone Rings you hold(s).

In this version the computer throws all the dice secretly, keeps all the CRTs and modifier tables secret, and doesn't even know the results up long enough. With so many variables it is impossible to deduce what is going on, especially when so many other details are also involved. What is the terrain type or effect on battle of being in a Stone Ring or a Castle? What happens if there are multiple leaders present? What happens to movement points and battle strength when you combine different nations under a single leader? And so on...

And where are all the Magic Spells advertised in the box? I don't think the fact that your leader's victory factor acts as a CRT modifier is sufficient to justify all the references to victory and magic in the descriptions of the game!

THE STOS ADD-ONS

SPRITES 600	£14.95	STOS MAELSTRO	£24.95
STOS MAELSTRO PLUS	£69.95	STOS COMPILER	£19.95

Published by Mandarin Software

STOS GAMES MAKERS MANUAL

Despite the clatter of many reviewers, and indeed Mandrake's, the main criticism of STOS is that the package does not teach the basics of games programming. This is perhaps the only point in which STOS falls out to dedicated games writers like *The Blood-Soaked Construction Kit* and STAC. Not any more though because Stephen Hill (author of the original STOS manual) has written a book entitled *The Game Maker's Manual - About ST and STOS Basic*.

The book is a pretty 282 pages, containing eleven chapters suitable for STOS users from beginners to Assembly Language programmers. The structure of the book is laid out in such a way that total beginners will enjoy reading from the very first page and people who already have some knowledge of software creation can steal from Chapter seven where some of the more advanced techniques are discussed.

The first chapter introduces new programmers to established programming techniques such as pseudo-code, module construction and optimisation by discussing the popular FI-Intercede variant - Megascade. Stephen uses possible criticisms of Megascade to construct a game called 'Puzzlefinder' which could easily be implemented in STOS. One of the more interesting points in this chapter is the fact that details about memory usage in STOS are revealed, so no longer do you have to guess how much room is spare or an ending is going to consume, you can work it out!

At the start of Chapter Two things get really interesting, from here specific game types are examined in depth. Chapter Two is all about Space Invaders, Chapter Three covers Breakout, Chapter Four is simulations, Chapter Five features role playing games and Chapter Six is all about adventures. I don't want to ruin the book for all you prospective readers so I will not reveal much about the content in these parts, but each Chapter contains a brief history of the game type under discussion, and Chapters Two and Three contain detailed breakdowns of Kolossal and DRI, so you can all see how brilliant Francis Llover's programming techniques are!

Chapter seven starts to deal with more advanced topics by offering a thirty page introduction to drawing 3D wire frame graphics. Some of the things contained in this chapter are very advanced and I must admit to getting a bit lost amongst some of the listings, but then so do people, rightly says. Thankfully you don't really need to understand any of these options in order to use them in your own programs.

Chapter eight takes a look at all of the different ways that animations can be achieved using STOS, colour cycling, screen flipping etc. Although the other chapters all contain sample listings this is the first in which there are lots of examples which can be entered in order a minute each, so you can have some real fun without having to work too hard! For those of you with the STOS Master cartridge Chapter Nine contains some interesting new things for you to do with your samples. If you have ever wanted to produce alien speech (Captain Blood style) then check out this book. The penultimate chapter is all about scrolling and shows how to use those

incredibly advanced Scroll commands with much more know than you ever thought possible. Also in this chapter is a breakdown (and a bit of a re-write) of the STOS map editor, included are routines to speed up the plotting of the maps to near instantaneous speeds and code to demonstrate scrolling maps.

The final chapter (and this could be squeezed into this book) is for really advanced users who wish to add their own commands to STOS. It contains essential information on the construction of extensions for both the STOS interpreter and compiler. Also revealed here are facts about 'unimplemented features' in STOS (things as you did wish that could exist) the potential extension writer.

This book is really fabulous, Stephen's writing style throughout is interesting and witty and, perhaps more importantly, he does not ramble on about one thing for too long. Although not a replacement for the STOS manual *The Game Maker's Manual* supplements it superbly, it's just a shame that Mandrake did not have the foresight to include in the original manual information similar to that contained in this book.

My only real criticism is that the book is not ring bound, this makes typing in the listings a real one-handed task. If, perhaps at Sigma Press is making this book they could rectify this fault for the second edition?

**Reviewed by
Peter Hickman**

**THE GAME MAKER'S MANUAL,
ABOUT ST AND STOS BASIC**
by Stephen Hill
Published by Sigma Press
Price £11.95
ISBN 1-85028-158-4



GAMES GALORE

Over the past few months many software companies have released compilations, hoping to ingratiate more money out of the public by flagging all what would previously have been considered "dead" titles. Games Galore is different though, it contains four brand new games, but can it survive in the tough world of the compilation? The pack contains two single-sided disks, each one holding two games. The first game of the pack is **HYPERTRIX**, a horizontal/vertical shoot 'em up set in space. This game is an eight level version of *Hypertrix* that which was featured in issue #1's 200th column, and if you have read that then you will know how incredibly addictive this game is. The concept is so simple all you have to do is play on old space around a flip-screen landscape and complete each mission that you are assigned to. These range from shooting down enemy aircraft, and going on bombing runs to using low level weapons under a bridge. Your aircraft is viewed from the side and is extremely maneuverable with it's nine different throttle settings and strings that control movement. If you are not clear by the enemy you have an alternative but to fail out, and it can be quite interesting trying this on different heights just to see how low you can go without going SPLAT! The game includes extra weapons and lots of other little features, that I can't wait to tell you about, because it will

spell for fun. On the same disk is **YEMO** which comes from the same stable as *Hypertrix* and is described as an arcade war game. Yet in a future controlled by tyrannical robot beings Yemo is similar to many wars in *Hypertrix* but adds a strategic element with a very intelligent

computer opponent. The idea behind the game is to destroy the TDR (Tyrannical Robot Helicopter) bases on Earth, the Moon and Mars by dropping marker flags behind enemy lines and calling in bombers, tanks and simulation squads, whilst trying to complete a sub-mission that is given to you at the beginning of the level. This could range from collecting lost nuclear bombs (and these robots are supposed to be intelligent) to rescuing hostages. You have a choice of different ships, a goal which is a slow bombing/ gunning around reliable and also divides as a Base Wars type war at the press of a button, and there is the silverfish which is incredibly fast, can carry eight lost seeking missiles but is almost impossible to land in a confined space.

Like *Hypertrix*, Yemo allows extra weapons to be collected such as a nuclear bomb, extra missiles, turbo speed and greater frequency. Each one brings a new element of strategy into the game as the choice between weapons can sometimes be a cause during hectic attack/bombing runs. This game takes a while to get into but, once you do you are going to have fun. It's like a cross between Defender, Commander and Captain The Flag. On the second disk is a vertical scrolling game called **SKY STRIKE**. This little gem is control around getting a little bird quite large



game (apart from it's playability) is the high quality of the music it contains. Twenty five tunes each of which fit perfectly with it's associated level from deep haunting beats during the game to charming ditty's when bonus points are awarded. As you work your way through the levels enhancements are added to your scoreboard which give it turbo speed, high score base plates and other such unusual accessories. This is a really nice game and includes the best graphics in this compilation but is a bit hard for this humble reviewer. I'm going to have to punture at this one!

The last game on Games Galore is called **MONSTER** and is so simple even my mum and eight year old cousin wanted to play it. The characterisation gives the usual atrociously silly story about a giant mouth being let loose in the largest food store in the land but don't let this lead you into thinking that *Monster* is a Pacman clone. You control a mouth that has to go around munching up fruit just in a mouth whilst avoiding the green that painted each screen, the background changes for every level as do the fruit, so you find yourself munching things as diverse as cherries and milk cartons. Now this may sound like Pacman to you but it's not. The mouth you control moves with momentum so when you release the joystick it does not stop straight away and, as if that was not enough, the mouth also moves slightly from side to side in a very erratic manner so gaining full control over it would be worth a Nobel prize for sheer brilliance. There are loads of other features such as the mandatory bonuses like a big POPP symbol which makes your mouth grow and allows you to eat the greens, and an apple



Title: **GAMES GALORE**
 Publisher: **Mandarin Software**
 Price: **£19.95**
 Reviewer: **Peter Hickman**

that appears occasionally which is used to build up an extra life. This game is one the whole family will enjoy (time-shift without becoming bored or too frustrated). Richard Yarnes of Manchester United has managed to get a number 2.7 million point high score, are if you can beat that I wouldn't.

If you have not already guessed I was interested in reviewing this compilation because all of the games were written in STOS, but believe me if they did not advertise that that you would be none the wiser. Each game within this compilation contains that certain something that seems to be missing from 99% of others in the games at the moment, I cannot quite put my finger on what it is perhaps it's playability, or perhaps it's the fact that all of these games are actually fun to play and don't demand too much from your trigger finger (great for everybody suffering from parosmia), or why, like me, suffer from the button finger after a five hour James II session.

As a James II fanatic have included a new STOS extension with these games called STOS Squashy, this allows users to compact (and decompress) any type of memory bank from within STOS thus saving disk space on any programs you may write, it takes a while to implement things but decompresses to almost instantaneous. As if that was not enough on side two of the disks (accessible by double sided drives only) is the source code for the games so you can see how they work, you can also change the graphics to suit your own tastes, or use the existing graphics and music from within your own programs.

To sum up I would recommend you buy this compilation even if you do not own STOS, the games on it are really fun to play and offer good value for money when you consider that it works out in about ten pounds for each program.

- **SOUND** - all the games have some really nice music, the best being present in Skunkette. Several effects are ok, with some of the games using pretty clear samples.
- **GRAPHICS** - the graphics in Skunkette are a bit flickery but well drawn. All of the other games contain the standard of colourful graphics that are expected of all present day software releases.
- **GAMEPLAY** - the most outstanding point of this compilation is that you find the rest of your family will still be playing the games long into 1992.
- **VERDICT** - if Manchester keeps releasing products on good on this they will never get a bad review.

SPORTING TRIANGLES

You don't have to be Emlyn Hughes to have a go at a television quiz game
John Barnsley tests his knowledge

This is the computer game based upon Central Television's quiz game of the same name. As with the television programme, three players compete with each other (or the computer) in seven rounds of sport-orientated questions, each contestant specialising in one particular sport - and the program lets out the player in the appropriate gear!

You initially select one of twelve different sporting categories as your specialist subject and you are given the option to set any length or time limit for the answers. There are seven different rounds and these are in line with the television show. The first two rounds are standard question rounds, with each player answering a single question in any of the three players specialist subjects (or general sporting knowledge).

Two points are awarded for a correct answer - but the money thing about this game is that you are not given the option to type in the answer but find the answer displayed on the screen and are asked if it is right or wrong! This obviously makes it very easy to cheat and win every time - so what's the point? Well it is only a game and good fun nonetheless!

The next round is 10/10 for the where the player has six attempts to answer according to the gradually helpful clues. The quicker you answer, the more points you earn. Next standard questions then the Jigsaw Picture round where a graphic is gradually formed on the screen. The final round is a little better where you hit your allocated 'buzzer' key to have the opportunity of answering the question. These 'buzzer' keys are only active when the question is completely displayed on the screen. Again, it seems rather silly when the answer is displayed and you are asked if you were right - now what did he (or she) in his right mind in games press 'BUZZ'?

Once you have completed the questions, fairly or otherwise, the end of the game is reached and the winner is duly congratulated. You then have the option to play again - although you must choose different sports than those selected for the previous game.

Sporting Triangles is, to be fair, reasonably fun to play yet I feel there is little going for it in terms of excitement. Although the program is reputed to contain 1500 questions, the same question is repeated all too often and they soon become well known to all players. It's just too easy to cheat but, if you're into sports in any other form, then I don't think you'll be too disappointed.

I must mention the soundtrack (or protection: 'drivel' - a host of 16-bit digitally coloured squares which relate to a colour legend from the program upon first loading of the game. The need for this kind of software security is appreciated but, do these colours really need to be as hard to define? Is artificial light - when most games are played - it can be extremely difficult to tell 'dark blue' from 'black'.

Overall, an enjoyable few hours of sporting fun (and cheating), but I don't expect that I'll be playing it again for some time, unless more question material becomes available (how about it, CDS?).

- **SOUND & SOUND** - Nothing special but adequate for this type of game
- **GAMEPLAY** - Have fun with 2 or 3 'human' players then solo against two computer contestants
- **VERDICT** - Initial curiosity soon disappears once all the answers are known. An option to create home-made questions would be useful

SPORTING TRIANGLES - CDS Software - £19.99