

the domain

An International Amiga PD & Shareware Newsletter



Ta-daaaa! Issue Three is here, and it's on time! (give or take a few days) This issue sees our little stab at the decline of the Amiga future, but this is equally balanced with the many reviews we've squeezed onto these two pages. You may be happy to realise that we've included a range of different products, so maybe at least one of them will tickle your fancy (and remember that all of what we review are available from US!) As we speak, our subscriber list continues to grow, and we'd both like to welcome our new readers, we hope this is all you dream of in a PD newsletter! Cheerio! *Rob & Keith.*



IS THE END FINALLY IN SIGHT?

The Amiga is on its last legs - okay, I guess you already knew that, but as each month goes by, we see more and more evidence of the departure of this truly wonderful machine.

What leads me to write this article, is the rapid shrinking in content of Amiga magazines. Each month's new issue sees less pages, with less features, and noticeably, less adverts. Already about 75% of Amiga mags are bound together by staples, and yet we're still asked to fork out £4.50 for a magazine that covers nothing new, and features lots of public domain software (not that there's anything wrong with PD software is there?). We've seen 2 coverdiscs each month, reduced to one, and gone are the special previews of yet to be released software - that's because there isn't going to be any - developers have left the Amiga. Hey, even Lightwave is now available for PC's - scary isn't it?

I don't like sounding like the harbinger of doom here, but we have to face up to the truth. Without our help and commitment to the Amiga, the machine we all know and love will soon be dead. Remember Syndicate? Well now Syndicate Wars is out, but it won't be appearing on the Amiga, only the PC and Playstation will see the follow up to the best strategy shoot-em-up ever. Brings a tear to the eye doesn't it?

But what can we do to help? Simply supporting the machine isn't enough, we need to be developing new and exciting software for it. And this is possible - just look at the amount of top quality PD there is about. People who simply dabble on the Amiga for something to do, are capable of writing some truly professional software. So why not push for it's commercial release? Surely with enough backing, this could be possible. Viscorp tell us the new operating system will be out by December - with the upgrades and improvements to the existing workbench that I've seen available on the PD circuit, I'd say that the Amiga already has an improvement to the already outdated Workbench.

So it can be seen that the capability of Amiga users to champion the cause of this machine does exist - we just all have to try a little bit harder if we're to keep the Amiga alive.



Huzzah! After all the botheration of waiting for a mortgage to come through, Rob can now offer you his new address! So, the new northern address is now:

41 Wellstone Garth,
Swinnow,
Leeds,
West Yorks, LS13 4EJ.

Now you can send all those a-waiting letters and 'congratulations on a new home' cards to me NOW! Oh joy and rapture!

Title: **AUTHENTIK**
Author: **SKARLA**
Type: **DEMO**
No. Of Disks: **TWO**
Requirements: **HD, 4mb, AGA**

"Original and Funky" is how this group describes themselves, and you know, they just might be right. I can't get over the fact that we see so many varied routines within this drop dead gorgeous demo. A colourful lo-res fantasy artwork greets us while the demo decrunches. Alright, obviously we have the usual, bog-standard effects in here, we can't expect to see a whole demo that's completely new, although the already used and abused routines are rather polished, and succeed immensely. Routines like; textured vector objects, picture plasma, gouraud shading, smooth fractal landscapes etc etc... So where does the originality come into it? There are plenty of pieces of fantasy art scattered around the show, which are all very well done. The music is a rapid funky jazz, which suits the effects greatly, everything moves in time, which feels ever so satisfying. And at the end of part one, a frighteningly scary light-sourced face stares right at us, with a whole spectrum of colours flying around it. Depending on where the lights fall, it reminds me of when you shine a torch under your chin, the spooky effect is reflected in this routine. It's terribly convincing. A humourous characture of Gerard Depardeau introduces part two. A more up-beat dance tune jumps in, and so do more vectors. But don't switch off yet! The best is yet to come!! A very foggy fractal 'landscape' bellows at the bottom of your screen, and various words and objects emerge from it, including a Jaws like sharks' fin. The whole thing melts away, and yet more gouraud shading appears. A couple of rings later, the music becomes meatier, and the words "Prepare to Skarla Dance" slams onto your screen. And what follows is the most original bit of programming I've ever seen on the humble Amiga. A bloke made up of vector shapes takes over the rest of the demo, and dances away in PERFECT time to the music. He's ultra smooth and amazingly convincing, and very very funny. This isn't some 'State of the Art' / 'Nine Fingers' routine, this is genuine 3D vectors. Imagine Tekken on the Playstation, then imagine the characters dancing. Get the picture? The entire demo is worth sitting thru just for this last effect. Absolutely stunning.

GRAPHICS: 93%
The stills are great, and the anims are smooth!
SOUND: 90%
Spankingly good dance tracks.
LASTABILITY: 90%
You won't believe your eyes, so you'll be loading it again and again!
OVERALL: 91%
An ending to die for!
Reviewed by: Rob

Title: **KNOCKOUT 2**
Author: **BEN WYATT**
Type: **GAME**
No. Of Disks: **ONE**
Requirements: **1mb+**

Now here's a game that's just so mind-bendingly simple makes me wonder why it wasn't done years ago. Knockout is a game for 1 to 8 players, and involves 8 cars trying their utmost best to knock each other off a rapidly shrinking platform. The action is viewed from above, and when it starts, all the cars hurtle toward the middle eagerly smashing into their opponents to tip them over the edge. That's all there is to it, and that's your basic game. BUT! that's not where the excitement stops, there are four other different variations of the game also included; 'Ball' - where four players knock around a ball to score in each other's goal, while also knocking them off. 'Team' - includes 4 groups of 2 cars, each group trying to knock off their opponents, leaving 1 group remaining, hopefully. 'Magnet' - Plays like the normal round, but each player gets pulled to each other. And finally, 'Elastic' - For all 8 players, each player linked to another by a length of elastic band. One falls, so does the other. It's a clever, exciting game, that's lots of fun, has lots of options, a large range of music and sound effects, plus, with the music, you can also change it to your liking via a seperate music editor, and the package also comes with a vehicle editor that helps create your own.

Knockout is full of neat little touches that raise a smile or two, such as the way it hurries you along to select your car by subtly coughing, or the way it says 'goodbye' when you quit back to workbench, plus the options screen is rather funky, with some lovely music.

Full instructions are included, within a handy guide format. The game maybe limited fun for one player, but for multi player, it's top! I take back all those nasty things I said about AMOS....

GRAPHICS: 72%

Not wonderful, but does suffice.

SOUND: 80%

The music can be up to you, but the sound effects suffer from the odd bug.

LASTABILITY: 88%

Will undoubtedly get your family & friends playing.

OVERALL: 87%

Jolly good fun!

Reviewed by: Rob

Ad

Programmers wanting their software tested, or any Amiga problems that need answering, contact:

Stephen Nicolle, 7 Artists Way,
Andover, Hants, SP10 3SU.

SAM4 - A Collection of the BEST Amiga mods of today now available on one audio cassette.

Title: **ICONIAN v2.97**
Author: **CHAD RANDALL**
Type: **UTILITY**
No. Of Disks: **ONE**
Requirements: **WB3.0+, HD**

You've all probably seen how wonderful Magic Workbench can be, what with eight colour workbenches, smart marbled backdrops, hi-res screens and all those cracking icons. But, after a while, it becomes a little samey. It's all well and good you being able to get an unlimited supply of icons from an uncountable amount of CD-ROM's and BBS's, but what do you do if you want that special icon for that special program of yours? Workbench's 'Icon Edit' doesn't quite fare, and so, up steps Iconian.

Within Iconian, you can create any icon up to 256 colours, any dimensions, in any icon format. Iconian is a wonder to use, it's just like using PPaint or Brilliance, it's ultra smooth, very versatile, very friendly, and very easy to use. The screen is set out thus; on loading, two windows appear over your workbench, one showing the main drawing area, including all paint types, foreground & background colour and fill types, and the second showing what the final icon looks like. You can load up one of the supplied templates to give your icons that professional touch, and then the rest is up to you. Pictures you've drawn in your favourite art package can be imported to be used in your icon, or you can just start from scratch if you like. Iconian has a very good scaling and dithering routine when loading in imported pictures, which produces satisfying results. There's a whole host of drawing routines, some you can't understand why they were included (like the dripping spray can for example), but they're all a doddle to use. Iconian offers loads of other options that I just don't have enough room to cover here, and is an excellent, nigh-on essential utility. Recommended.

GRAPHICS: 90%

Set out nicely, but it's up to your potential.

SOUND: N/A

LASTABILITY: 96%

It'll remain on your HD until an update appears.

OVERALL: 94%

You won't give anything else a second look.

Reviewed by: Rob

Title: **NO NAME**
Author: **SCOPEX**
Type: **MUSIC**
No. Of Disks: **ONE**
Requirements: **1mb+**

Chip-tunes. You either love 'em or loathe 'em. Me? I reckon they prove just what a musician is made of, not having to rely upon big samples to complete their work. 'No Name' from Scoopex opens as you'd expect a fully fledged demo would, what with nice artwork and logos, a checkerboard fly-through and textured cubes and vectors which are all certainly unexpected on a music disk.

Shortly, the menu appears, and the names of four musicians are on our screens: Daddy Freddy, Laxical, Oxbow and Vegard. Click on one of these, and up pops a menu of their tunes. Click on one of those, and the mod plays immediately. Among the collection of the 41 musics, you would expect some slack tracks. Yes, there are, the majority of which just sound like some in-game shoot-'em-up tune from the eighties. But there again, there are the odd one or two that stand out. Like the tune 'Strawberry Theme' for example, which is a rendition of the Beatle's classic 'Strawberry Fields Forever', or something to smile at, 'Let's go El Paso', which is a jolly cowboy barn dance effort.

A lot of the mods are nice to have on in the background while you're up to other things, but the rest you won't give a second play. 'No Name' is a large selection of tunes that are neither here nor there. It does have it's high points, and is put together very well. But doesn't offer a great deal in originality. Except maybe for the end part, which previews one of Scoopex's newest demos in a little box in the middle of the screen. Novel, but inane.

GRAPHICS: 78%

Colourful and abstract.

SOUND: 80%

A mish mash of everything.

LASTABILITY: 62%

A second look maybe, but it won't be treasured.

OVERALL: 72%

Looks fine, sounds fine sometimes, but it's nothing special.

Reviewed by: Rob

Title: **RAINBOOT**
Author: **KIMMO PEKKOLA**
Type: **UTILITY**
No. Of Disks: **ONE**
Requirements: **WB3.0+, HD**

It's another bootpic!! When you thought you'd seen enough of them, up crops another. So what makes this so special? Quite a lot really. Firstly, Rainboot will show any picture, of any amount of colours and any screen size. It will play any number of samples on request, when you request them and will type any text you like, over your chosen screen. All this is configured within your own script. Rainboot comes with three examples of what can be done and admittedly, I was impressed. So as I wondered how it was all put together, I up loaded one of the supplied scripts. My first reaction upon reading it was to poo my pants. 'This is far too hard for little old me!' I cried, but as I pursued it further (and printed out the easy to follow guide) as luck would have it, everything became clear. It all looks rather daunting at first, but once you get to grips with the language, it all goes along swimmingly.

You are capable of greeting the user with your own texts, in your own font, size, colour and position, you can also vary the speed it appears on the screen. You can include all aspects of your system's configuration, as well as the time and date. Rainboot is incredibly configurable and the given examples must be seen to be believed.

So, sick of staring at a black, lifeless screen everytime you boot your hard-drive? If you don't mind the work to get it set up, Rainboot is probably just what you're looking for.

GRAPHICS: N/A

That's all up to you, as is the....

SOUND: N/A

LASTABILITY: 92%

Once you've got it sussed, your effort will remain on your HD for months to come.

OVERALL: 85%

A smart little program, slightly let down by it's complexity.

Reviewed by: Rob

Our Addresses:

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To obtain software reviewed in this, or any issue of *the domain*, simply enclose the required number of disks, and a chq/po for 30p per disk and return postage. Don't forget to include your details.

Introduce A Friend and receive an item of reviewed PD software for FREE!
(Obviously excludes Shareware material)

That was the domain issue 3:

What was used...?

2x Amiga 1200s, with 6mb each, running Pagestream 2.2UK, and printed on a Canon BJ printer.exhilarating.

BUY THINGS!!

Soon to be your birthday? Or need that extra special gift for someone else? May we recommend a couple of items you can get from us at the domain? Why not put in an order for a smashing **CATALOGUE DISK?** A brilliant up-to-date, easy to use, joyous piece of wonderfulness. Selling points include: A crisp, clean point 'n' click Amiga Guide interface, with screenshots of selected titles and a lovely piece of meadowy music. It also has some fantastic icons, and a smart title screen which make it worth buying in their own right.

PLUS! Once you purchase a copy, you only need to send back the disk to get a **FREE** update, now we can't say fairer than that can we? So, how much cash is needed to get a copy of it? 50p. A measly, pathetic 50p along with a 26p SSAE, and that's all. Send it to one of the addresses shown somewhere on this page, and it'll be sent right sharpish. (Oh, by the way, you'll need an A1200 to boot it - sorry!)

Or how about something a little different? Something that NO PD house has to offer? A special something for that er, special someone in your life? (bar your Amiga) May we introduce **SAM?** Supreme Amiga Music Volume Four. One 90 minute audio cassette jam-packed full of TOP quality Amiga tunes. All tracked on an Amiga and recorded directly to DAT, so a high standard sound recording is guaranteed! **SAM 4** contains tunes by some of the most respected musicians of today in the Amiga world. A mixture of tracks come on the tape, one side devoted to the more hard and heavy tunes, and the other has the more melancholic melodies ever heard. The cassette has it's own printed inlay-card which is available in a choice of colours: White, Yellow, Pink, Blue and Green, it's your decision! The tape has a total of 24 pieces of music on it, all of which are fully credited to the relevant musicians, and, as far as we know, are all public domain. And to get a copy? Send a blank, 90 minute tape (preferably new, and as higher quality you can afford) plus a cheque or postal order to either of the addresses mentioned elsewhere, for £1.50, mentioning which colour would be suited, if you're not bothered, it'll be random, but at least you have the choice. That's it. Goodbye!