

Druid Scrapbook Album

By Andrew E. Bailey

**Collected during the release of Druid
by Firebird in 1986.**

**Page layout is such when printed using double sided option the layout
is the same as the original scrapbook. In other words the first two
images should face each other in a binded copy.**

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The magazine art created by a White Dwarf Artist.



Druid – It's a winner

Program *Druid Type* Arcade Adventure **Micro** Commodore 64/128 **Price** £7.95 **Supplier** Firebird, 74 New Oxford Street, London W1.

There have been many attempts at producing an arcade version of *Swords & Sorcery/Dungeons & Dragons* games, but with limited success.

Now comes *Druid*, a superb release from Firebird, which combines fast, arcade action, with the monsters and spell-casting of a role-playing game.

The obvious attraction of *Druid* is its superb graphics – solid, colourful characters, nicely animated. But beyond this, the gameplay is, to coin a phrase, wizard.

Your adversaries include ghosts, beetles, demons and sundry other malevolent types who must be disabused of their evil notions by the violent application of magic spells.

Different foes are suscep-

tible to different types of magic. You need to work out which are which.

You'll also need to find key spells to open doors, and chaos spells which are like old-technology smart bombs.

Invisibility spells will come in useful, as will golems. A golem is a magic servant who will do your bidding. It is highly resistant to damage so you can use it to clear out tricky rooms, or to guard your back.

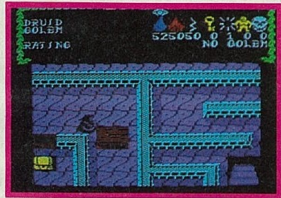
It is possible to control the golems yourself but this involves very fast manipulation of keyboard and joystick. Far better to employ a willing friend on a spare joystick.

Far more than just an arcade zap, *Druid* requires fast reflexes, a good memory and puzzle-solving skills.

Initially for the Commodore 64, *Druid* will be converted for the Spectrum and Amstrad. Keep an eye open for it – it's a winner.

Preview

Sinclair
User
1986
September
No. 54



DRUIDS

At first sight, *Druids* from *Firebird* looks very like Atari's coin-op giant *Gauntlet*.

It's only when you play the game that you realise *Gauntlet* must have inspired *Druids*. Very pretty graphics greet you in a scenario which could almost come from the original, were it not for a few changed oddments here and there. Nevertheless, it looks to be an excellent game. All fast action with a touch of strategy thrown in for good measure.

The idea is to attain the title of Light Master, though the lowliest rating tends to be Half-wit. Kill the baddies which hang around every corner of this maze-like game, open chests for spells and keys to open doors to get to the next level. Your assistant, the gorilla golem, is a slow creature with immense strength and it's useful if you can make golem go ahead killing off the adversaries while you cower behind him saving your strength for more important things.

Golem is controlled by the computer but you can instruct him to *Send*, *Follow* or *Wait*.

There are seven useful spells including ones which create a golem slave, unlock doors, kill of the grobles and make you invisible.

Sounds like good stuff, more news on *Druids* later. The Commodore 64 version is here now — and the Spectrum version (above) is well under way.

Streetdate: early Autumn.
Price: £7.95.

Druid is to be released at the PCW show.

That is Britain's biggest computer show is to show it at Britain's biggest computer show.

The screen shot on the left is from the unfinished Spectrum version.

Why keep comparing it to *Gauntlet*. It did not inspire *Druid*. It slightly inspired the *Cryptic*, yes. But the gameplay is totally different.

Top: *Druid* Porting
Light Master

I'm not clear this

High Druid

High Priest

Conjurer

Magie Master

Illusionist

Priest

Love Master

Potion Master

Cleric

Spirit Master

Love Seeker

Seer

Acolyte

Apprentice

Mailman!

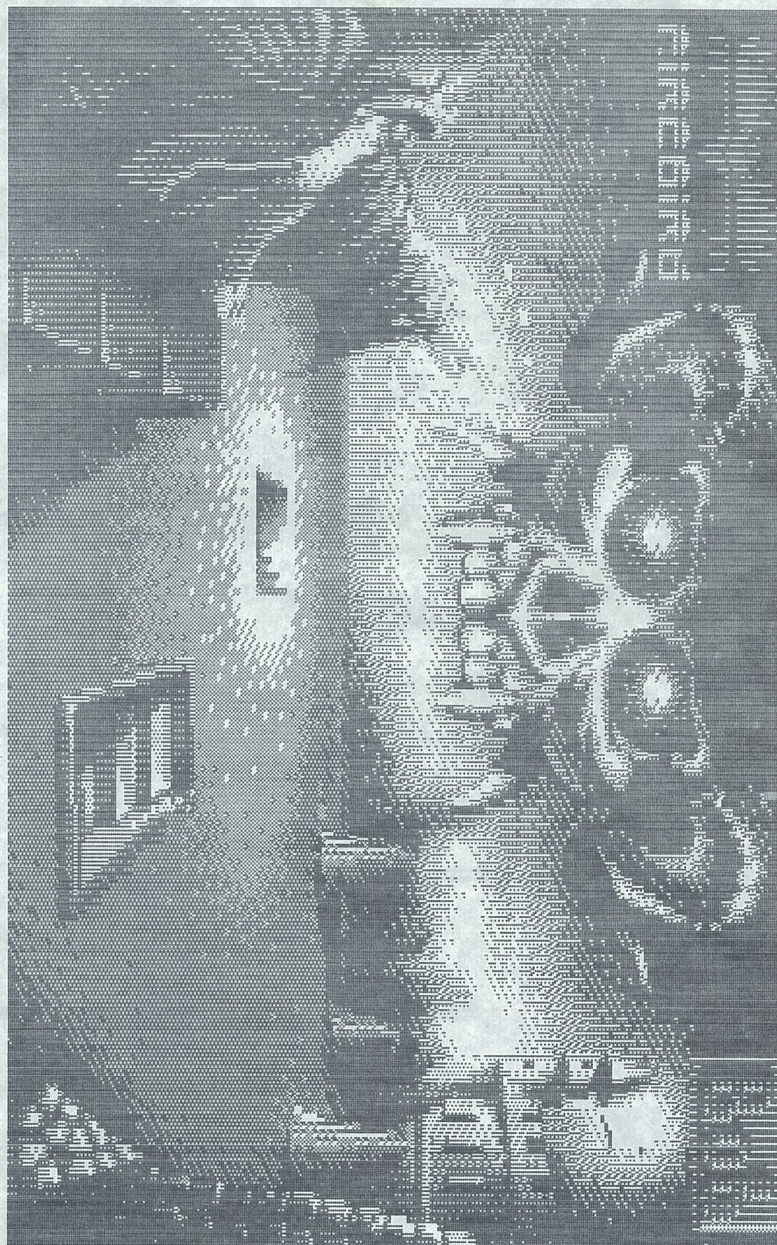
SOUND FAMILIAR?

If we say the word 'Druid', what thoughts are conjured up in your mind? Strange old rituals? Human sacrifices? Stonehenge? Or maybe, if you hail from the land of the leek and daffodil, the Eisteddfod Genedlaethol Cymru... Well, whatever you thought of we bet you didn't think of a one or two player (simultaneously) role playing arcade game.

Druid is the name of *Firebird's* latest product and they have looked to the arcades and found some inspiration in the form of a innovative four player game which slips our name at the moment. It should be finished in time for review next month so look out for more details, it sounds rather interesting.

What do they know?

Bob Stevenson (Has hooding Angel
for drink. You should see it in colour



First main Review in COMMODORE USER Sept. 1986
 Top C64 game. Reint. Fridis Alpha, Mission AD., Mission Vibe
 Parsons Loin



A nasty vapourises after being biffed by the trusty Golem.

Worth keeping well topped up.

Electricity: is a good nastie killer, though it may take up to three direct hits to finish off some of the tougher characters.

Water: useful against certain water-sensitive creatures. This is a short life spell.

Golem Spell: one of the best spells and definitely the most fun to use. This spell produces a gorilla-like character who can be made to follow you (the Druid) around the screen providing protection whilst you explore the terrain, trying keys in doors or searching chests. This is where the two-player fun begins. To get a Golem

DRUID

64/128
 FIREBIRD

Price:
 £7.95/cass

Screen
 Star

If you've been in any arcades lately you can't help but notice the crowd of people standing around *Gauntlet*, the biggest game of '86. It was only a matter of time until a software company produced the first *Gauntlet*-type game for the 64 and now it has arrived.

First off the mark are Firebird with their *Druid* game which beats the officially licensed version from US Gold by a clear two months. Actually *Druid* is not quite *Gauntlet* — for a start it is only a two-player game whereas the Atari coin-op can cater for up to four players-all playing simultaneously. This four player novelty is what first got *Gauntlet* noticed in the arcades.

You could be playing merrily away on the machine when a complete stranger would come up to the console, insert a coin, and start battling it out with you and anyone else who happened to be playing.

Druid employs the same basic play technique as *Gauntlet* in that hordes of nasties materialise in front of you as you explore the game's huge scrolling terrain.

The storyline for *Druid* is that the land of the Druids has been taken over by various nasties. Horrid things they are in the shape of Harpies, giant beetles, ghosts and various assorted ghouls. To rid the land of this evil the Druid must destroy the Four Skulls scattered through the land's eight levels.

Each of the levels is fairly large —

but not so big you need to map as you go. There are various chests scattered around the land. In these you will find quantities of the spells. Some of these you will have had when you started and some are completely new.

Selecting the right spells is the key to success in *Druid*. At the beginning of the game you can more or less pick what you like and it won't make much difference. But if you get further into the game, what you pick up and when becomes of much greater importance.

★ Spells

Fire Spell: this is your Druidonian laser. Blasts most things and kills them quicker than Electricity and Water.

the Druid first has to find a Golem spell in a chest then stand in an open clearing and bring the Golem to life.

When I got my first Golem I nearly flipped. It was a dream come true. I was Arthur Daley with my very own Minder. You should see that Golem laying into those ghosts, effortlessly vapourising them with the slightest contact.

The Druid wisely selects the key from the list of contents inside the first chest.

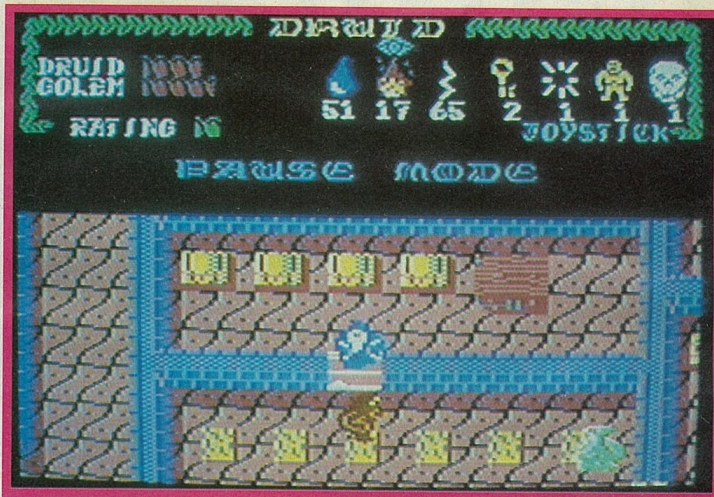


I love the last paragraph!

At first the temptation is to get the Golem to kill everything in sight for the hell of it. This is not the best policy as Golems, like Druids, have limited energy and there are often large distances between energy-boosting Pentacles so you need to conserve as much energy as possible.

The Golem is a long life spell. The danger with this is that you can get used to the Golem being with you and then suddenly have him disappear. Some hard-hearted Druids I know actually kill off their Golems rather than risk being suddenly deserted and pick up a new Golem when a new spell represents itself. Personally, I don't approve of this ill treatment of Golems — it smacks of euthanasia (Look it up, Ed).

The main thing about Golems is that they allow you to have great fun with a friend — taking on the nasties as a team, and planning your strategy as you go.



The Druid enters a new level whilst the Golem guards the door.



The Druid boosts his energy by standing on the magic pentacle.

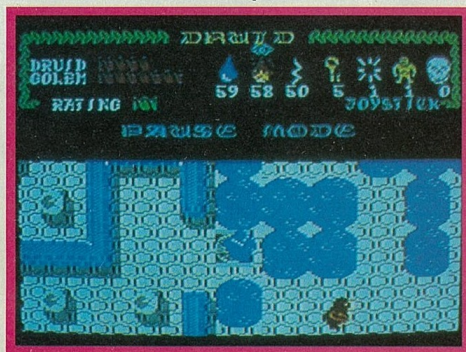
Certain levels are reached by stairs.

Chaos Spell: possibly a more powerful spell than the Golem. It acts a bit like a Smart Bomb in *Defender*, killing everything in sight and restoring your energy level.

The main advantage of the Chaos spell is that it allows you to get through particularly tricky parts of the terrain, like the narrow paths between the Lakes at the bottom of Level Three (see screen shots). You'll also need a Chaos spell to kill a skull should you happen to find one.

Chaos spells also have a short life, literally about twenty seconds, so they are not to be wasted. Take it from me — if you find a skull and don't have a Chaos spell on you you'd feel pretty sick about it.

Key Spell: you need these to get



through doors restricting your entry to certain levels. They last a long time and are used by lining the Druid up against the door and firing away until he hits the spot.

Invisibility Spell: pretty obvious what this one does. Lasts a fair amount of time and stops the demon servants chasing you. Be warned, it also freezes your Golem.

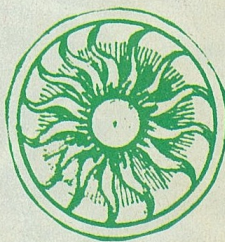
There are stacks of different strategies in *Druid*. It's going to be tough to get to that 8th level and I am sure that we will see many heated arguments in *Play to Win* over the next few months as to which one is the most effective.

When you die (the Druid gets only one life) you are given an Elite-style rating. I predict that pretty soon people are going to be boasting about their Druid status just like they did at the height of Elite mania.

Just so you'll know how well you're doing here are the ratings: Halfwit (I was one for a whole weekend), Apprentice, Acolyte, Seer, Lore Seeker, Spirit Master, Cleric, Potion Master, Lore Master, Priest, Illusionist, Magic Master, Conjurer, High Priest, High Druid, and Light Master.

Druid will launch a whole new gaming trend. Just as *Fist*-type games characterised late '85 and '86, prepare for an onslaught of *Druidesque* games. Don't bother waiting to find out which one will be the best. Get the eight notes out, put away the suntan lotion and get the computer out again. Now buy a copy of *Druid* and invite a friend round. I promise you won't regret it.

Eugene Lacey and Frank Byrne



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

9
Overall

This rating is very good compared to the other games review in this issue

THE Ghoulies AND Ghostie COMP (EEEEK!)

AMTIX!
COMPETITION

**Design A Screen
And Win Win Win
A unique copy
of the game,
DRUID!!!!
25 Firebird
T Shirts also
up for grabs!**

Druid is one of the latest game to be released by Firebird and puts the player in the role of Mr Druid out to defeat the Evil Princess of Darkness. The nasty lol princess has unleashed her wrath in the shape of four skulls (Wouldn't you just know it?) which have infested the lower vaults of a tower. Druid has to vanquish these meanies and transform the world into a happy and peaceful place.

Ok? sounds good. Problem is Firebird are a bit stuck for a final congratulation screen which will greet Druid when he completes his quest, y'know sort of, peace and happiness all round etc. So knowing what a bunch of clever, artistic people you all are we thought we would let you design this special final screen. Although it won't be included in the final version of the game it will be implemented into a special one off production copy of the game, and, bonus upon bonus, it will be unprotected so you can make lots of copies and give them to your friends. (If you don't have

any friends I'm sure the cat would enjoy it).

To give you a few pointers what the screen could look like here are a few things that *Druid* will have to encounter and overcome to complete the game.

The nasties include ghosties, skeletons, skulls, witches, various spells, magic spells and all sorts of traditional scary thingies (sounds like a normal day at AMTIX! Towers). When a druid arrives at this final screen he will have risen through the ranks to become a legendary Light Master. So, get your Play School Painting set out and whisk your emblazoned pieces of paper off to:

**THE BASH THE GHOSTY
COMP, AMTIX!, PO Box 10; Lud-
low, Shropshire, SY8 1DB.**

It must arrive no later than 6th October. Best scribble wins their very own copy of the unique game and the next best 25 masterpieces win a Firebird T Shirt to love and to hug each. Happy Ghost bashing, O loyal minion watchers!

PREVIEW

RUNNING THE GAUNTLET

The arcade hit **Gauntlet** comes to the Arnold courtesy of Firebird and is renamed **Druid**.

The continuing popularity of arcade conversions has prompted an endless stream of such games. This latest game is based on the current arcade rave **Gauntlet**. In **DRUID** the wizard must destroy the power of the evil Skull Lord. It's a multi level arcade adventure positively crawling with nasties.

The four skulls that must be destroyed are located on levels five to eight — one skull per level.

The Wiz tromps around the screen blasting nasties. There are no less than twenty varieties of meanie. The wiz has an array of spells to use. Fire, water and lightning are his common or garden weapons, doing in a meanie will take one, two or three globs of these — you've got to work out which glob is best for which sort of nastie.

To replenish his spells, the Wiz must go to various chests scattered around. The contents of the chests will vary, some contain just the globs, others will contain goodies such as keys, Golem, invisibility or Chaos spells. The keys are to open doors, and, since not all chests contain them, it is a good idea to keep a spare one of these handy, as otherwise it could be impossible to go any further.

The Wiz also has an energy level, which is drained by such things as drowning, being headbutted by nasties, or touching various traps on the floor. Energy can be built up again on kabbalah symbols — there's normally one per floor. The Golem comes in very handy. Casting this spell conjures a golem which trundles around the place, either with orders to follow you, or it can be controlled by another player. Whilst a bit thick (it can't cast any spells) it's pretty strong and can take a lot of flak from the local meanies and give the Wiz an easier time.

The confrontation with the skull is bad news, the joint is jumping with meanies. So Gollum goes stomping in and deals with the meanies, and just as the Gollum expires, the Wiz steps up and casts his Chaos spell and it's ta-ra!

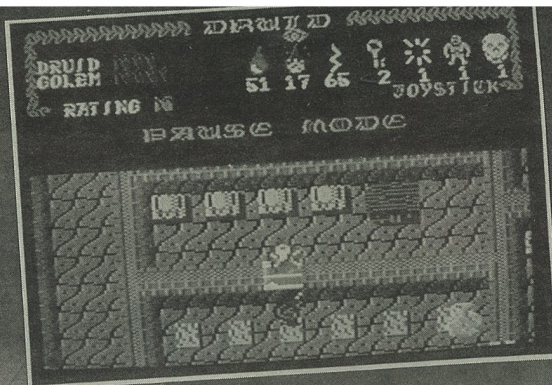
Despite mode 0 graphics, the result of all this looked very pretty, and the game play is fast and furious. This is one that should appeal to shoot-em-up and arcade adventurers alike, and the two player bit is a nice touch, although the Golem player gets a pretty dull role as cannon fodder.

LEE PADDON

First look at the Amstrad
Version (2/9/86)

← The competition.





There you will find the object of your quest: four skulls created by the Princes of Darkness.

Your mission is to destroy them all.

You control a powerful Druid who can cast seven types of spells. Three are weapons (fire, water and electricity). The others are Key (to unlock doors, but of course), Invisibility, Chaos (to destroy the skulls) and a Golem that can be summoned to protect you.

The nastier the monster . . .

You begin your quest with fifty each of the water, fire and electricity spells that can be used to shoot the ghosts that swarm around you. As you explore the depths, you'll battle with beetles, skeletons, wraiths, slime monsters, snakes and devils.

Although the monsters don't shoot at you they will drain away your life energy. The nastier the monster the quicker the energy drain.

The weapon spells are more effective against some monsters than others. For example a single water spell will kill a ghost but it will take three to kill a beetle or devil. It takes three fireballs to dispatch a devil but only one to kill a beetle or slime monster.

Just to confuse things, a single electricity spell will kill a devil but it takes two to kill a ghost.

Scattered throughout the levels are chests containing spells. The worth fighting for as they contain a selection of spells. For example a good haul might include 34 water, 57 fire, 29 electricity, one key, one Golem and a Chaos spell.

Seek out a Pentagram

Unfortunately you can only select one item before the Princes detect your presence and destroy the chest. Consequently you must plan carefully what to take from each chest. Although the contents vary dramatically (one chest only contains two water spells) the contents remain the same every game.

Should your energy be getting low you should seek out a pentagram which will revive you while you work out what to do next.

Below ground the action heats up with more monsters and energy draining traps and pools set into the floor. Here you will need a Golem that can either be controlled by a second player or ordered by you. This adds dramatically to the gameplay as you must guide the Golem around using it as a protective shield (the monsters are destroyed when they touch it) by issuing the commands wait, follow and send.

The graphics and gameplay are obviously inspired by the arcade machine *Gauntlet* with the result being a 3D battle for survival that will drive you back for more and more.

HINTBOX

1. Don't be tempted by the spells in the first chest. (9 fire spells may come in useful but without the key you won't get any further).
2. Don't stand near water as this will quickly drain your energy. If you must go near it, move away as quickly as possible.
3. Learn to use the Golem spell as this is invaluable. For example it can be left in a doorway to keep out any monsters while you search for chests.
4. Map the positions of the chests and the spells they contain to ensure that you don't waste them. It's pointless taking 45 fire spells if you already have 80 as the maximum you can carry is 99.
5. Use the pause key between levels to take a break and to plan your moves as standing around only attracts monsters.
6. Remember where the pentagrams are and ensure you know the way back to one for when your energy gets low.
7. Don't make the mistake that something is safe just because the Golem can stand on it. After all, the Golem can stand in water.
8. While you move faster than the monsters the Golem doesn't, so take care not to leave him behind.

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TEST

DRUID

Firebird, £7.95 cass, joystick with keys

The mists of time slowly clear to reveal an awesome quest. Four skulls of immense evil have been brought to life by the Princess of Darkness — her wrath is beginning to spread. Four floors of an eight floor tower are where they are to be located, and you, a Druid, have been assigned the mystical task of defeating the Princess and her monstrous minions.



This is a neat little game — but only for two players. I found it very difficult to play on my own, since it is rather tricky to move the Druid with the joystick whilst using the keyboard to control the Golem. However, Druid is still a very good game with pleasant graphics and adequate sound effects, and is well worth the asking price.

Your Druid finds himself abandoned in a mysterious forest — devoid of all humane life — with only a few spells to his credit. The destruction spell is the most powerful and useful — this can take the form of energy balls of water, fire, or electricity, but Druid has to be selective about which one he uses to defeat a particular demon.

Making contact with any of the

nasty creatures instantly drains energy from his energy bar, located in the top left hand corner of the display. Fortunately, energy can be revitalized by standing on a revolving Pentacle of Life; however, on later levels don't mistake similar images for they will sap your energy.

To get to the lower vaults, you will need to gain access to the



Although this doesn't work particularly well as a one player game, it's really great with two players. Playing the fatso Golem minder is a real laugh, and there's plenty of interaction when two players venture out together. The graphics are really good, and show that the official Gauntlet can look very much like the original when it's finished. The sound is another good feature, and the whole thing boils down to being an enjoyable and novel program which is an essential purchase for Gauntlet fans.

tower by locating a key. These can be found in chests, which are opened by simply walking into them, and then used to open doors



by pressing the + key. All sorts of other goodies can be found within the chests, such as water, fire, electricity, invisibility spells, and Golems. Unfortunately, only one spell can be extracted from any one chest at a time.

Golems are large ape-like creatures which help you battle it out against your adversaries and can be called up at any time once you have collected a Golem spell from a chest. He is controlled via the Commodore key, and each time it is pressed it toggles between three commands: SEND, FOLLOW and WAIT. Alternatively, the Golem can be controlled by a second player via a joystick.

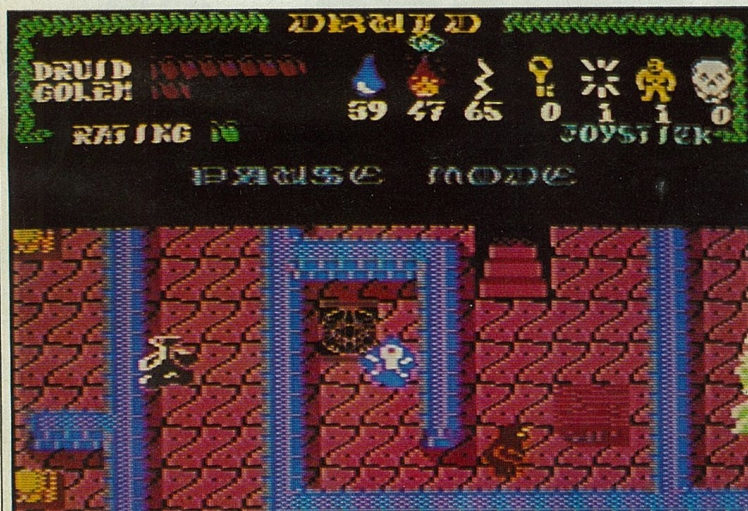
Another spell which ranks amongst the most powerful is the Chaos spell. This destroys all meanies in the Druid's vicinity and also bumps up his energy a fair bit. Death comes instantly if Druid falls into one of the many lakes — fortunately, there are bridges for him to

make his way safely across.

At the end of the game you are given a rating ranging from Dimwit to Light Master, and this depends upon how many chests were opened, and the number of creatures and skulls destroyed.



It's pretty obvious that this is a Gauntlet derivative but nevertheless, it's not bad at all, even if the playing area is verging on microscopic. Probably most enjoyment can be achieved from a two player game where one takes control of the odious Golem and scampers around bashing all the meanies before they have a chance to assassinate our beloved Druid. Not an essential buy, but if you can't wait for the official version then Druid may keep you occupied for the time being.



Presentation 89%

Good instructions and many attractive features, such as the unusual two player option.

Graphics 82%

Clear and colourful but not that well animated.

Sound 68%

Nice title screen tune and spot FX.

Hookability 89%

Plenty to kill and explore.

Lastability 85%

Playable and challenging — even more so with two players.

Value For Money 88%

Fans of this type of game won't gripe at the price.

Overall 88%

A great two player game and a real 'fix' for Gauntlet junkies.

FIREBIRD HAVE THROWN DOWN THE GAUNTLET!



TAKE UP THE CHALLENGE AND YOU COULD WIN A PERSONALISED COPY OF DRUID!

Firebird's latest release, DRUID, puts you in the role of Mr Druid, out to defeat the Evil Princess of Darkness. The nasty ol' princess has unleashed her wrath in the shape of four skulls (wouldn't you just know it?) which have infested the lower vaults of a huge eight storey tower. Mr D, along with his faithful (but not so clever) companion Mr Golem, has to fight zillions of meanies and cast spells left, right and centre in order to transform the world into a happy and peaceful place. Sounds great, eh. Yes it does.

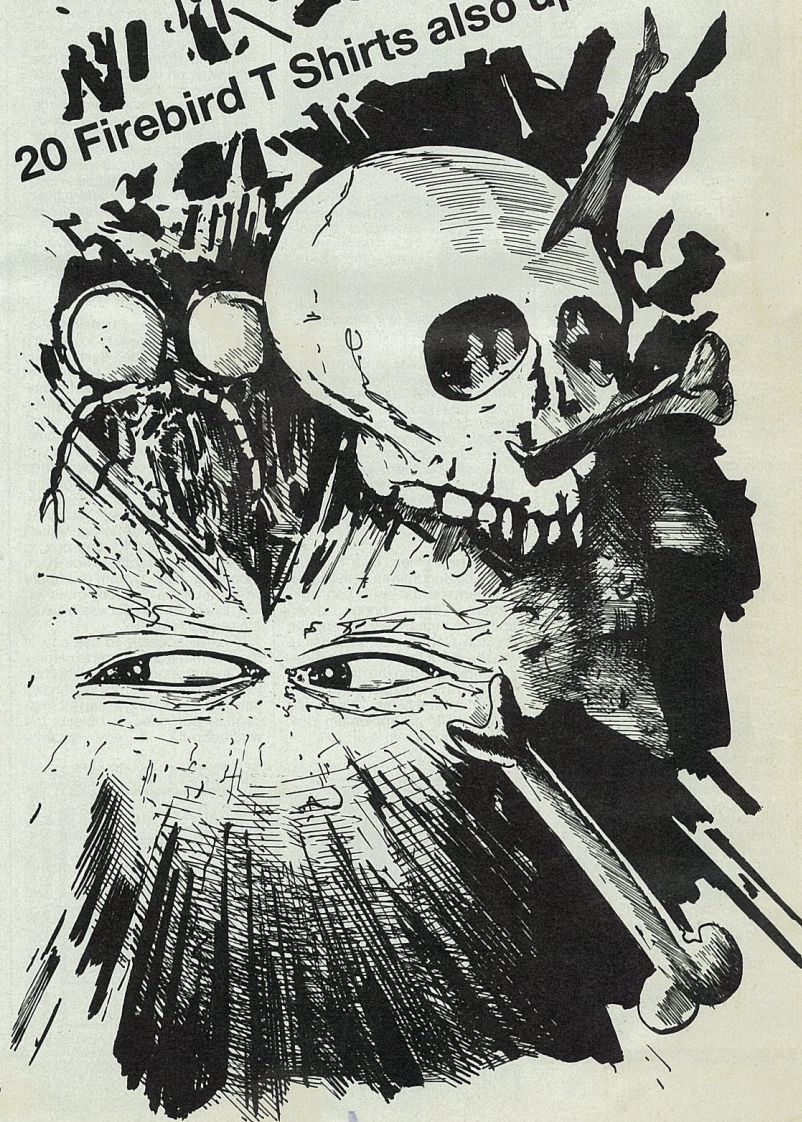
Anyway, some kind 'n' clever chappy at Firebird had an idea — uh huh, and a rather good one at that. What he wants you oh-so-cool-and-artistic people to do is design a final congratulatory screen for DRUID. The bestest entry will be programmed into a special one-off production copy by the authors of the game. Cor! Just imagine: if you win you could own a personalised copy of a best selling game! Impress your friends! (Nyah! Nyah! Look what I've got). Amaze and astound your relatives! (Look Auntie, look what I did).

Tell you what, just to give you a few ideas what the screen could look like, here are a few things that the DRUID will have to encounter and overcome to complete the game...

The creatures include ghosties (eek!), skeletons (ooh!), big 'n' nasty beetles (ah!), skulls (aargh!), witches (shriek!) and all sorts of traditional scary thingies (sounds like a normal day at ZZAP! Towers). When a druid arrives at this final screen he will have risen through the ranks to become a legendary Light Master. So, get your Play School Painting set out, scribble a screen and whisk your emblazoned pieces of paper off to: **DROOLING DRUIDS, ZZAP! MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB.**

Entries must arrive no later than the 9th of October. Best scribble wins their very own copy of the unique game. The next best 20 masterpieces each win their creators a Firebird T-Shirt to love and to hug, so don't forget to include your T-Shirt size. Well then, what are you waiting for — get to it!

20 Firebird T Shirts also up for grabs!



Crash
Competition



FIREBIRD

**TAKE UP THE CHALLENGE AND
YOU COULD WIN A PERSONALISED
COPY OF DRUID!**



20 Firebird T Shirts also up for grabs!

FIREBIRD's latest release due out for the Spectrum ever so soon is *Druid*. The game puts you in the role of Mr Druid, out to defeat the Evil Princess of Darkness. The nasty ol' princess has unleashed her wrath in the shape of four skulls (wouldn't you just know it?) which have infested the lower vaults of a huge eight storey tower. Mr D, along with his faithful (but not so clever) companion Mr Golem, has to fight zillions of meanies and cast spells left, right and centre in order to transform the world into a happy and peaceful place. Sounds great,

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your art kits out, scribble a screen and whisk your emblazoned pieces of paper off to: **DESIGNER DRUIDS, CRASH MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB.**

Entries must arrive no later than the 23rd of October. Best scribbler wins their very own copy of the unique game. The next best 20 masterpieces each win their creators a FIREBIRD T-Shirt to love and to hug, so don't forget to include your T-Shirt size. Well then, what are you waiting for — get to it!

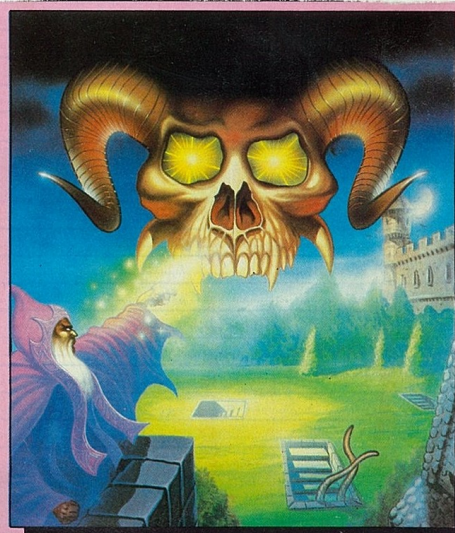
The comps for the Specky



I said you should see it in colour;
And here it is.

Some people
take their time
(Your Computer
Oct. 1986)

While... →

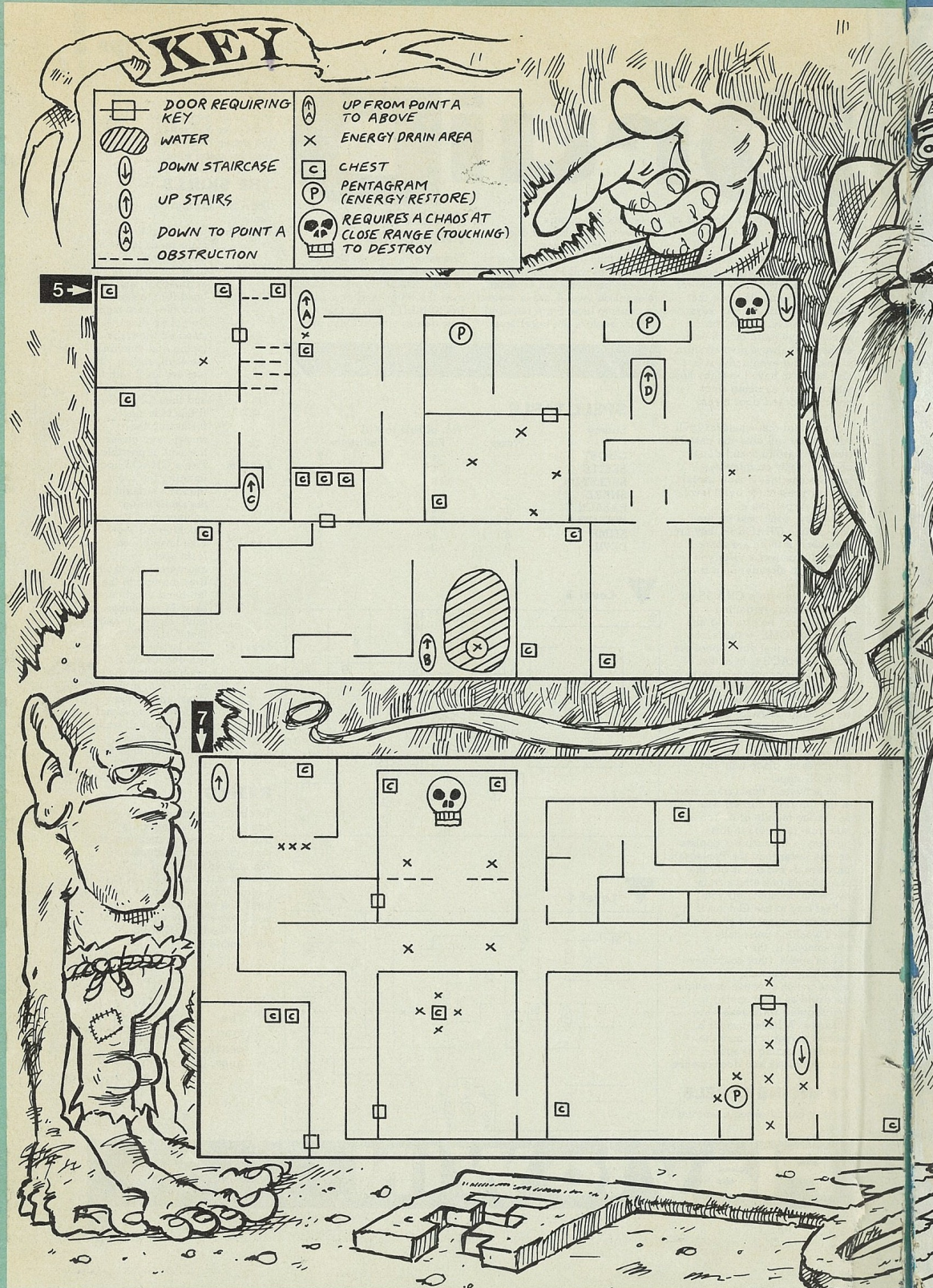


The Druid cometh

One game which looks set to take the market by storm in the next two months is the new one from Firebird. Called *Druid*, it uses a well-known arcade game as the idea for a classic arcade adventure. Released initially on the Commodore 64, with Spectrum and

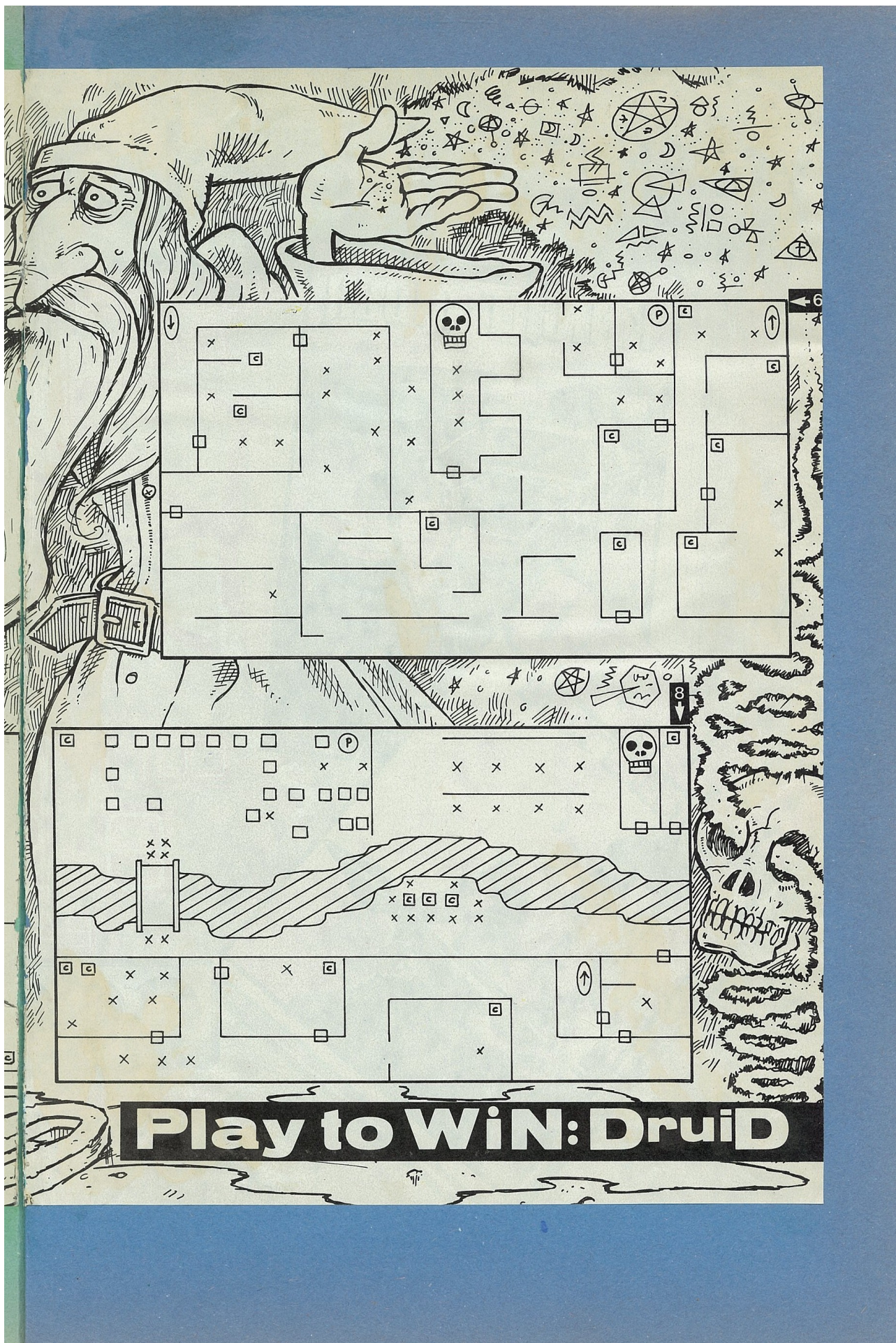
Amstrad versions to follow, it combines elements of shoot-'em-up, and a massive playing area, to create an excellent all-round game. Look for a full review in next month's issue of *Your Computer*.

... Others have been playing it a long time.



(Commodore User Oct. 1986)

P.T.U.



Play to WiN: DruiD

DRUID

- Machine: C64/128
- Supplier: Firebird
- Price:

Firebird claim that the game is not a *Gauntlet* rip-off — so we'll have to believe them.

The aim of *Druid* is this: As the last Druid in the world you must set about destroying four skulls which form a chain of evil around the land. Or something like that. To destroy a skull you must use the Chaos Spell, which is one of the many spells you must find in order to complete your quest.

Now, you remember that I mentioned that this game could have two players, who play at the same time. People seem to be treating this theory as revolutionary, but I myself remember games such as *Bruce Lee* and *Spy vs Spy* which did the same thing ages ago. So much for the new ideas.

The second player comes in the form of a Golem spell. This spell will create a huge monster, a Golem, which can be controlled by a second player.

This creature is used as protection for the Druid, as it kills



able to do level two. If you can manage to get all the way through the first level, that is.

Once a level has been cleared of all its chests and skulls you must make for the exit and get to the next dungeon/maze.

The first screen is a little boring, it is a sort of forest, but the levels inside are much more like the arcade classic. On his quest the Druid will be attacked by a horde of creatures, including demons, slime, ghosts, skeletons and wraiths

that the amount is just right.

When the Druid gets attacked, his energy will deplete rapidly. To recharge with magical power you must stand on a holy pentacle which will spin and recharge you.

When you reach a skull, you may be presented with a problem. To kill it you must use a chaos spell, but you have to be standing next to the nasty thing. The problem is the skull has incredibly bad breath which kills a Druid after about 50 sniffs.

What do you do? Try this. Use the Golem as a shield, and walk up to the skull's mouth. When you get there, step aside and get next to it. The skull will be distracted by the Golem giving you time to cast a chaos spell and dispose of it.

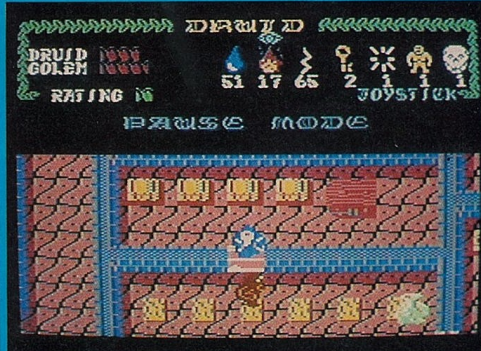
When you have died, or completed the game (Ha!) you will be presented with a rating, a bit like *Elite*. The lowest is Halfwit, which speaks for itself. Moving up, you get Apprentice, Acolyte, Seer (my best so far), Sprite Master and so forth until you reach the ultimate title, C+VG reviewer!, otherwise known as Light Master.

The graphics are not stunning, but they do look good, in a strange *Gauntlet* sort of way. The sound is quite good with a nice noise when the Druid walks, and a lovely lightning sound when you cast a chaos spell. But the music at the start is a bit on the naff side.

I say *Druid* is great, and those of you who like *Gauntlet* can have real fun without putting pounds into the arcade machines. Me, I'll wait for the official *Gauntlet*.

Chris

- Graphics 7
- Sound 7
- Value 8
- Playability 9



ghosts, slime and demons with a single touch. This allows the Druid to save his energy.

But before you get to enthusiastic about the Golem, it's not indestructible. Every time it kills something it loses energy.

Do not fret single joystick owners, as the Golem can also be controlled by player one using the Commodore key. Pressing this will select one of three commands which the Golem will carry out instantly.

These commands are Wait (obvious), Follow (even more obvious) and Send (send the Golem in the Direction the Druid is facing).

The layout is a general *Gauntlet* style maze, but it has chests which the Druid must open and choose a spell from.

These spells include more Druid weaponry, in the shape of Fire, Water, and Electricity spells, keys — you must take the key from the first chest to be

(which look like Druids, only black).

He must choose his weapon, gather strength and fight to the death.

Unfortunately, not all weapons are that effective on different creatures. Fire kills beetles with one blast, but you must use three shots to kill a Demon.

Now onto important things, like control. The Druid is controlled by joystick, with eight directional movement and fire button activated weapons.

The Golem is very difficult to control in a one player game, so you may not see his real use until you have a friend round. Walking up and down the maze is fine, but the doors are sometimes a bit tricky to get into.

The Druid has energy, which must be topped up to keep him alive, I don't think you get enough energy, although Firebird's Tom Watson argues



I have had
my Golem
for C+VG

It got a hit.
They found a way
to the symbol on.

CHARTS

GAMES 50

1	(1)	PAPERBOY	Elite
2	(—)	LIGHT FORCE	FTL
3	(2)	DRUID	Firebird
4	(3)	TRIVIAL PURSUIT	Domark
5	(5)	DRAGONS LAIR	Software Projects
6	(—)	PUB GAMES	Alligata
7	(—)	STREET HAWK	Ocean
8	(9)	A C E	Cascade
9	(—)	STRIKE FORCE COBRA	Piranha
10	(7)	DAN DARE	Virgin
11	(8)	ALLEYKAT	Hewson Consultants
12	(re)	INTERNATIONAL KARATE	System 3
13	(12)	STRIKE FORCE HARRIER	Mirrorsoft
14	(4)	SUPER CYCLE	Epyx/US Gold
15	(19)	TT RACER	Digital Integration
16	(15)	GREEN BERET	Imagine
17	(11)	GHOSTS AND GOBLINS	Elite
18	(14)	NIGHTMARE RALLY	Ocean
19	(—)	TRAP DOOR	Piranha
20	(6)	JACK THE NIPPER	Gremlin Graphics
21	(18)	KUNG FU MASTER	Data East/US Gold
22	(10)	GLIDER RIDER	Quicksilver
23	(13)	AMERICAN FOOTBALL	Mind Games
24	(22)	BEST OF BEYOND	Beyond
25	(21)	ELITE	Firebird
26	(24)	YIE AR KUNG FU	Imagine
27	(17)	ASTERIX AND THE MAGIC CAULDRON	Melbourne House
28	(—)	VERA CRUZ AFFAIR	Infogrames
29	(—)	NOW GAMES 3	Virgin
30	(27)	COMMANDO	Elite
31	(16)	KNIGHT RIDER	Ocean
32	(25)	HEAD COACH	Addictive
33	(23)	PARALLAX	Ocean
34	(38)	MISSION ELEVATOR	Eurogold
35	(49)	JEWELS OF DARKNESS	Rainbird
36	(31)	THEATRE EUROPE	PSS
37	(43)	WINTER EVENTS	Anco
38	(35)	FOOTBALL MANAGER	Addictive
39	(42)	COLUSSUS CHESS 4.C	CDS
40	(30)	SPY HUNTER	Sega/US Gold
41	(46)	RAID OVER MOSCOW	Access/US Gold
42	(—)	HARDBALL	Accolade/US Gold
43	(—)	HACKER 2	Activision
44	(—)	WAY OF THE TIGER	Gremlin Graphics
45	(—)	DANTES INFERNO	Beyond
46	(—)	AMTIX ACCOLADES	Gremlin Graphics
47	(re)	BATMAN	Ocean
48	(41)	WINTER GAMES	Epyx/US Gold
49	(37)	KNIGHT GAMES	English
50	(20)	LEADERBOARD	Access/US Gold

SPECTRUM 20

1	(1)	Paperboy	Elite
2	(—)	Light Force	FTL
3	(—)	Strike Force Cobra	Piranha
4	(—)	Street Hawk	Ocean
5	(2)	Dragons Lair	Software Projects
6	(13)	TT Racer	Digital Integration
7	(5)	Thrust	Firebird
8	(3)	Storm	Mastertronic
9	(6)	Universal Hero	Mastertronic
10	(7)	Nightmare Rally	Ocean
11	(—)	Trap Door	Piranha
12	(8)	Kai Temple	Firebird
13	(10)	Video Olympics	Mastertronic
14	(9)	A C E	Cascade
15	(—)	Pub Games	Alligata
16	(12)	Trivial Pursuit	Domark
17	(16)	Ollie and Lisa	Firebird
18	(14)	Strike Force 3D	299 Classics
19	(15)	Happiest Days	Firebird
20	(re)	Full Throttle	299 Classics

You can't
EXPECT
A 40 P.
MAG
TO SPELL.

C64 20

1	(1)	Droid	Firebird
2	(2)	Go For Gold	Americana
3	(4)	Alleykat	Hewson Consultants
4	(6)	Warhawk	Firebird
5	(3)	Super Cycle	Epyx/US Gold
6	(5)	Ninja	Mastertronic
7	(—)	Pub Games	Alligata
8	(10)	Trivial Pursuit	Domark
9	(12)	Dragons Lair	Software Projects
10	(9)	Dan Dare	Virgin
11	(8)	Asterix and the Magic Cauldron	Melbourne House
12	(14)	Speed King	Mastertronic
13	(13)	Parallax	Ocean
14	(16)	A C E	Cascade
15	(18)	Green Beret	Imagine
16	(7)	Jack the Nipper	Gremlin Graphics
17	(—)	Harvey Headbanger	Firebird
18	(—)	Strike Force Harrier	Mirrorsoft
19	(—)	Happiest Days	Firebird
20	(15)	Ghosts and Goblins	Elite

Charts

Top Twenty

- 1 (1) Paperboy
 - 2 (-) Lightforce
 - 3 (2) Druid
 - 4 (3) Thrust
 - 5 (8) Speed King
 - 6 (9) Ninja Master
 - 7 (12) Ninja
 - 8 (5) Trivial Pursuit
 - 9 (7) Dragon's Lair
 - 10 (-) Pub Games
 - 11 (-) Streethawk
 - 12 (-) Video Poker
 - 13 (4) Go for Gold
 - 14 (15) ACE
 - 15 (-) Strike Force Cobra
 - 16 (13) Dan Dare
 - 17 (14) Alleykat
 - 18 (11) Kane
 - 19 (15) Warhawk
 - 20 (-) International Karate
- All figures compiled by Gallup/Microscope

Elite
Faster Than Light
Firebird
Firebird
Mastertronic
Firebird
Mastertronic
Domark
Software Projects
Alligata
Ocean
Mastertronic
Americana
Cascade
Piranha
Virgin
Hewson
Mastertronic
Firebird
System 3/Endurance

Lightforce is a pure
Speaks game like Paperboy
and build is a pure C64
so far.

16-22 Oct

SINCLAIR

user

NOVEMBER 1986 No. 56 £1

MORE
SOFTWARE
REVIEWS

DRUID'N'DANDY
THROW DOWN THE
GAUNTLET



128K+2 CODING ★ JOYSTICK ZAP TEST
MOUSE WORK ★ CHEETAH SAMPLER ★ DAN DARE DUO
DUCK MOVIE COMPO! ★ HIGHSOFT COMPILER
URIDIUM ★ PRODIGY ★ GALVAN

MICROE
★ In The ★
MOVIES



P.T.O for Comparison Review

In **Dandy the Gauntlet**-style playing area — that threatening mixture of blind alleys and sudden wide open spaces as designed by a architect from ancient Greece — looks as impressive as ever.

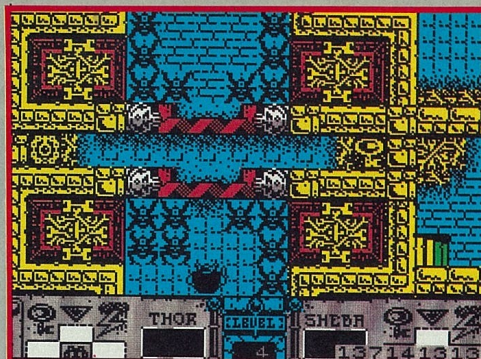
There is perhaps marginally less variety than with **Druid**. The main differences between the look of each level are only colour and the actual design of the maze.

The detail however is greater than for **Druid** — it's a trade-off of screen detail against screen variety.

The broad idea of the plot is easily summarised. Kill hundreds of monsters (a nasty kind of spider) though don't accidentally destroy goodies like keys, zap spells (smart bombs) and food. Through the game are large treasure chests which may reveal treasure.

Part of the game, at least first time round, is simply finding your way through to the next level. This is made that little bit more tricky by the fact that there are a series of underground passageways whose sometimes complex linkage takes a while to unravel — simple ordinarily but tough when giant spiders are queuing up to take you on.

Now **Dandy** is a pretty stupid name for a game don't you think? I mean you wouldn't expect a game called **Dandy** to be fast and frenzied would you?



▲ Monsters line up to do battle ● Chests are for opening ● The exit to the next level is on the right ● Things look pretty bleak for your hero

Many moons ago there was a game in the arcades called **Dandy**. It was sort of swords-and-sorcery played as if it were a manic zap-'em-up. You rushed round a mythical landscape armed with a selection of spells, which behave curiously like photon blasts, and killed mythological enemies by the cart-load. You had to select your spells to kill

most effectively and pick up keys and bonus spell power by opening caskets. It wasn't that successful until it was renamed and turned into a multi-player game. It became **Gauntlet** — and the rest is history.

This then is **Dandy** not **Gauntlet**. On the other hand **Dandy** when played by a maximum of two players is,

DANDY

DRUID

Let me make one thing perfectly clear. This game is not **Gauntlet**. It has no connection with **Gauntlet** and just because the whole look of the game and gameplay is

somewhat Gaunletesque I wouldn't want you to come away from this review with the impression. Hope that's clear.

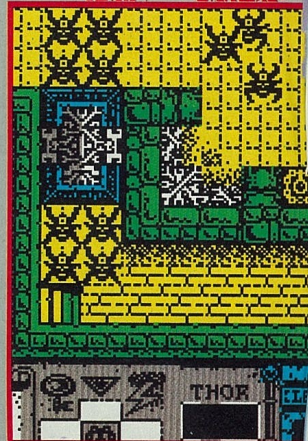
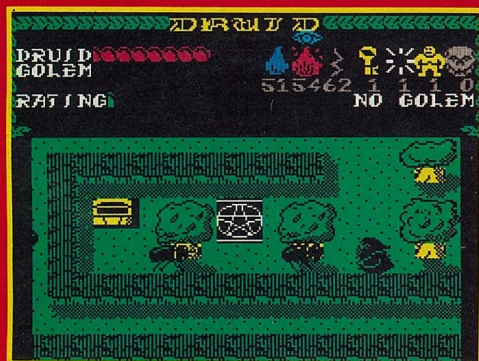
Druid is a swords and sorcery arcade game in which you rush

about killing hundreds of assorted ghouls using one of three spells. You open magic chests to discover extra spellpower, cast various special spells and use keys to open doors. Travel from level to level via flights of stairs and the whole thing is presented top-down with a vast fantasy landscape scrolling behind you.

The curious thing about **Druid** is that the first screen is all shrubbery — trees and hedges: for a few moments you may be mistaken into believing it was not really all that much like the big G at all. However, as soon as you hit the second level — which looks like some sort of ancient greek temple and is full of mythical beasts and such — bells of familiarity start to be rung. This couldn't be deliberate could it? I mean they wouldn't try to hide in the shrubbery the fact this is a bit like G would they?

I completed the first level without too much trouble. You'll need to discover quickly the location of the first door key (needed at the beginning of the second level), the exit stairs

▲ Level one ● Not too much like Gauntlet? ● The pentagram restores energy Now this looks more like it ● Another level on **Druid** ● Chest and exit right ▶



▲ Level 2 ● Exit stairs bottom left ● Food for bottom right ● Can our hero's name really be Sheba?

and the position of a handy regeneration pad.

You'll also need to discover what spell works best on what creature and learn to switch between spells quickly and remember to keep them all topped up.

Druid looks good. The backgrounds aren't quite two-colour but have been carefully designed so that for attribute clash-purposes two



more or less, **Gauntlet**.

Let's just say that **Gauntlet** fans will find **Dandy** as good a conversion of **Gauntlet** as they could hope for. (The reason that Electric Dreams is putting out **Dandy** rather than licencing **Gauntlet** is more complicated and decidedly tacky in places. In the event the **Dandy** licence was

much cheaper than **Gauntlet** and US Gold (which licenced **Gauntlet** for a lot of money) was not amused.

The curious — and deadly — way the monsters have of lining up to batter you is retained



faithfully in **Dandy**. Those who enjoy mass destruction should be well pleased. It is, however, more of a two-player game than **Druid** and if you have a duel port interface both can control their characters from joystick. This should substantially add to the game and help capture much of the excitement of the arcade original. At the time of writing the two players seemed to be Thor and Sheba, personally I wouldn't want to have a name like Sheba (unless I was an Alsatian) and I hope that's changed before the game goes out.

There is really no major problems with recreating the general look of the original on the Spectrum. The background

is fairly orderly — lots of straight lines — and the pathways generally stay the same colour all the time so almost no colour clash at all.

Design is elegant and movement is smooth — given the requirements of the two-player version, ie, that both players have to be in the same area of the screen there is no point in making the screen scroll — it just up-dates very quickly when you reach the edge of the current section.

In other words it looks great ■

ARCADE



REVIEW

TO THE DEATH

Probably the hottest arcade licence of the past couple of years or so, **Gauntlet** is destined to be BIG.

So big in fact that games which (let's be generous) are heavily inspired by the game are being developed by dozens of companies.

The first two have (just about) thrown down the **Gauntlet** to US Gold's official version, which is still to appear.

We scrutinise **Druid** and **Dandy** and ask: Which will strike the first blow?

to my typewriter to actually get around to writing about the damn thing. It captures a good deal of the spirit and playing feel of That Other Game and it will sell in huge quantities unless the legal boys start to get nasty ■

FACTS BOX

Astonishingly authentic conversion of what is effectively 'that game'. As a two player game it's an astounding experience

DANDY

Label: Electric Dreams

Author: Ram-Jam

Price: £7.99

Memory: 48K/128K

Joystick: various

Reviewer: *Graham Taylor*



FACTS BOX

Frenzied, spell bashing, otherworldly mythological violence on a grand scale. A bit reminiscent of Gauntlet in fact

Label: Firebird

Author: Dean Carter,

Andrew Bailey

Price: £7.95

Memory: 48K/128K

Joystick: various

Reviewer: *Graham Taylor*



colours are mostly all that is involved. Consequently, although the sprites are at times a little indistinct there are no real vomit-inducing colour flicker moments.

I made it to level three within an hour or so and soon realised that there is far more to the game than mere blasting (sorry, spell casting). The keys are vital. Sometimes a chest which appears to contain some wonderful goodies, like gigantic charges for spells, in fact contains something far

Your rating starts to grow ● Re-energised you can exit down the stairs to the next level ● Currently set to the fire spell ● Will it be effective on the next screen ▶

more vital, ie your way into the next level.

There are smart bombs (called Chaos spells), a special invisibility spell that causes the assembled warlocks, fiends, trolls, spooks (and less easily described denizens of the dark) to stand still for a few moments whilst you make a getaway.

More unusual is the Golem spell which conjures up a golem — an unearthly being that looks sort of like a bouncer from the Hippodrome and performs a similar sort of function — it keeps the insalubrious elements (and elementals) away by stomping into them.

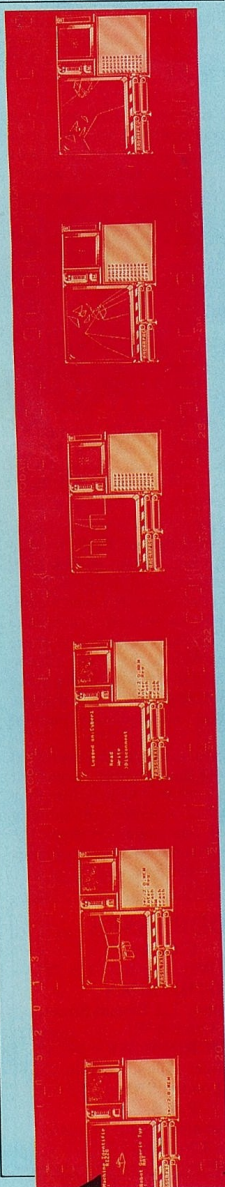
Druids is devilishly addictive. I had to be dragged screaming

SINCLAIR USER CLASSIC





Francis Jago reports on hot stuff coming out of the fire this Christmas.



It has taken a long time for Firebird to get into its swing. Some of its earlier releases failed to dominate a market where there was undoubtedly a gap. Only *Thrust*, surprisingly, of the £1.99 Silver range managed to achieve the sales expected from such a major software house.

Recently, however, things have changed dramatically. The release of *Druid*, together with the plethora of other high-quality products which should

soon be leaving its doors, seems set to establish Firebird once and for all.

Firebird was set up as the first software publishing side of British Telecom, although it was soon joined by companies such as Odin and Thor, which BT masters and distributes, and finally Rainbird, a company dedicated almost solely to the production of high-quality 16-bit computer games.

Starting relatively well, with successful conversions of *Elite* and a number of good, solid

games, what it lacked was a direct source of good product, a problem reflected by a string of less-than-successful games.

Only recently has that been seen to change even in the slightest. The appointment of Tom Watson as marketing manager, and a new feeling of determination throughout the company, means that Firebird is ready to attack the big boys and, with a new product catalogue as big as it is, I can see no reason why it should not become one of the leading

Phoenix out o



COMPANY PROFILE

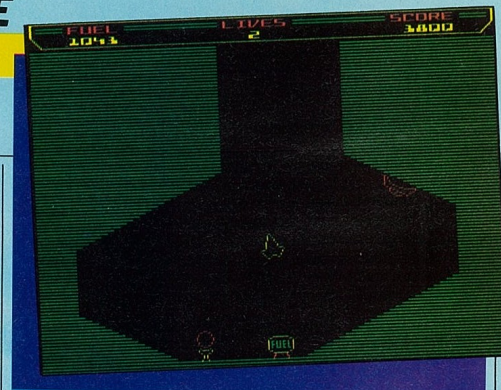
powers in the software industry.

Of its latest releases, *Druid* is the one likely to cause the most immediate stir. Everyone has seen and been impressed by the Commodore 64 version, not only because of the obvious similarities to *Gauntlet* but because the game is vastly playable in its own right. *Druid* fans may well be interested in the following list, which shows the complete list of levels it is possible to achieve:

Halfwit!

RAT, which allows the player to guide a robot round a shattered city – a city which seems vaguely familiar yet unplaceable. It is only then that the thought enters your mind. Could *RAT* be a real view of the topside? Could the Committee have been lying?

Using a three-way split screen, with an action screen, a message screen and a scanner, the game makes *Elite* look simple and, as with its illustrious predecessor, the three-dimensional vector graphics are



scape on which you are placed. That may sound easy but it requires a great deal of planning, as well as some split-second reactions.

To climb up the landscape the player is required to build blocks upwards and that calls for a great deal of energy. Energy, the most vital commodity of the game, is acquired by absorbing trees, building blocks and the Sentinel. To absorb anything, you must be able to see the base on which it stands, so the game is not so easy as you would at first imagine.

Unfortunately, the Sentinel likes nothing more than draining you of as much power as possible. If you are scanned by the Sentinel, you must make a quick dash round the landscape until you find a safer spot. Staying in any one place for more than a minute, however, is inadvisable, as the Sentinel also has a number of helpers.

If 10,000 screens sounds a

little excessive, in play the levels whizz by, especially if you become adept at the game. If you finish a level with a great deal of energy it is possible to skip 10 or even 20 levels onwards. The difficulty increases correspondingly with the amount of Sentinels and at certain points you can have up to eight, which makes life very difficult.

Although programmed on the BBC first, as with *Cholo*, the Commodore 64 version is well advanced and is both as playable and, more surprisingly, as fast. When the game is released in roughly three months it is set to take the market by storm and should be one of the best games of 1987.

At last, *Firebird* has begun to fulfil its potential and 1987 should prove to be by far its most successful yet, especially if the games I have seen are a criterion.

of the fire

Apprentice
Acolyte
Seer
Lore Seeker
Spirit Master
Cleric
Potion Master
Lore Master
Priest
Illusionist
Magic Master
Conjuror
High Priest
High Druid
Light Master

That should help to determine just how close to completion certain players are.

Apart from *Druid*, *Firebird* has a number of other releases which it hopes will keep it on top both before and after Christmas. The first to expect is *Cholo*. Although available initially for the BBC, *Firebird* already has a Commodore version up and running, although the date for release has yet to be finalised.

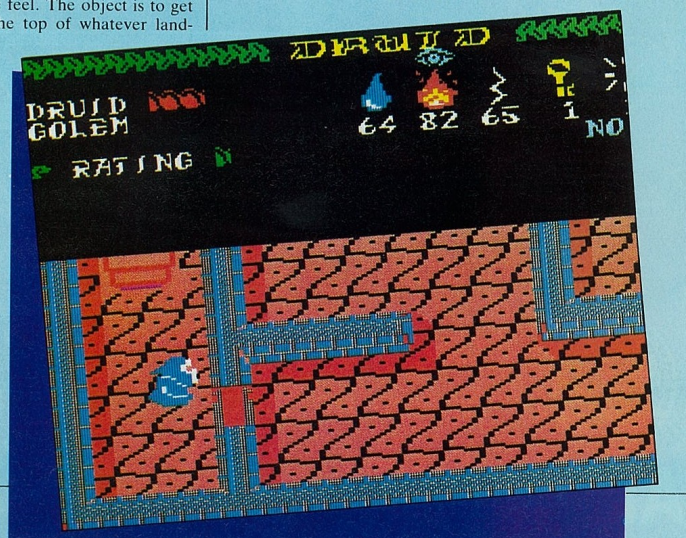
Set on the surface of a planet called *Cholo*, the game puts the player in the role of a worker, sitting beneath the planet surface. The surface of *Cholo* smoulders and glows. There are no trees, no oceans and no life – only post-nuclear fallout and instant suntan. Your life is spent doing what you are told and listening to Committee Reports from the topside – 1984 anyone?

There is only one way of forgetting the monotony of life and that is to play the only reasonable computer game,

drawn and animated immaculately.

Although *Cholo* looks to be a very impressive game, it seems *Sentinel* is the game which will steal the limelight. Programmed by Geoff Crammond, the man responsible for possibly the best racing simulation on any home computer, *Revs*, it promises to be the biggest *Firebird* coup yet, especially as it arrives unexpectedly.

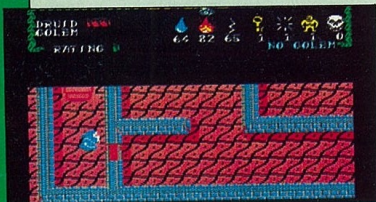
Based on a massive 10,000-screen landscape, with excellent use of filled-in three-dimensional graphics, the game relies heavily on strategy while still retaining a distinctly arcade feel. The object is to get to the top of whatever land-



SOFTWARE SHORTLIST

DRUID

► Various ● Firebird ● Arcade/Adventure ● Francis Jago ● £7.95



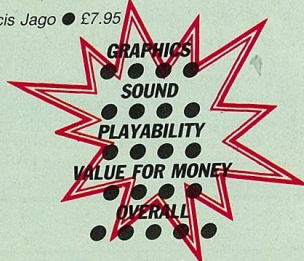
If the thought of waiting almost two months to buy the official version of *Gauntlet* is too much for you, the latest release from Firebird might be just the medicine you need. Although not so close as to attract the wrath of Atari, it still maintains the immense playability, as well as some more obvious features, of the original arcade machine.

Using a multi-directional scrolling screen, *Druid* combines a true arcade feel with an atmosphere not dissimilar from the early *Dungeons and Dragons* board games. The object is to travel through various levels, reaching the exit, and using the keys you have collected to complete the game.

Although unlike the original *Gauntlet*, no more than one player can play a whole game. At certain points the player can pick up an object called a Golem. He acts as a defensive helper who, although he is unable to fire, can kill any baddies by walking through them. If you have a friend, he can control the Golem but, even on your own the Golem can prove extremely useful.

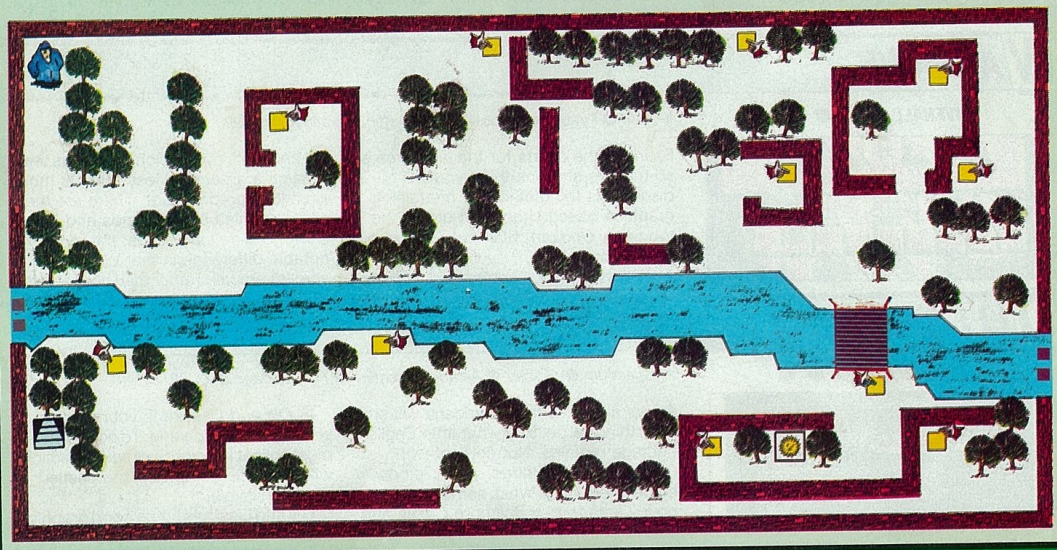
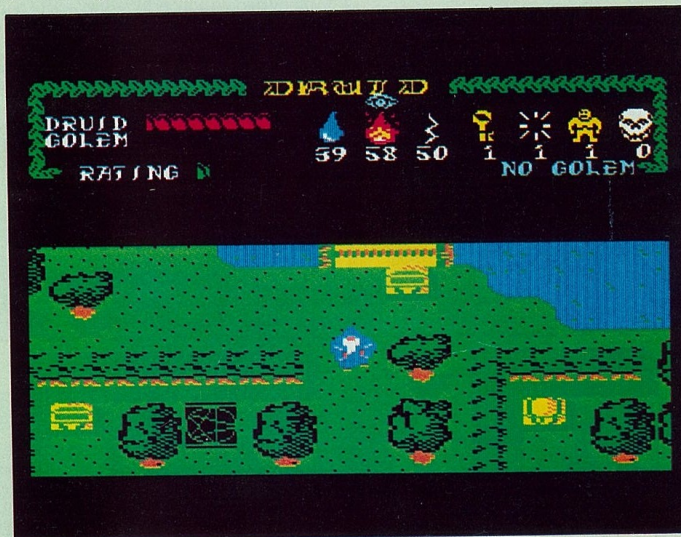
Other objects which can be collected include Chaos, which acts in the same way as a smart bomb would. Invisibility – an extra firepower for each of the three weapons you use – water, fire, and

electricity. The length of your game depends on making the most of the energy with which you are supplied, or getting to the five-pointed star which re-vitalises your energy.



Perhaps surprisingly the Amstrad version is as good, if not a little better than the Commodore version, with the graphics being exquisite. All the levels I have managed to see – getting past level three proved to be almost impossible – are of equal quality, with excellent definition of all the backgrounds.

One thing to look for on both Commodore and Amstrad versions are the amazing loading screens. Originally done by ace 64 artist Bob Stevenson, The Amstrad version has a very creditable look-alike done by the game's programmer.



COMPETITION

WIN THE ORIGINAL ARTWORK FROM DRUID, THE LATEST HIT FROM FIREBIRD

Anyone with an interest in the games world will know that *Druid* was intended originally as only a *Gauntlet* clone. In practice, however, the game has proved to be much more, incorporating new and innovative features which were not seen on the arcade original.

In this exclusive competition, *Your Computer* is giving away the original artwork from the cover of the game, as used in magazine advertisements. Already valued at more than £100, the picture has been specially framed and is definitely a fine prize.

Even if you fail to win the picture, there are still 15 runners-up prizes of two Firebird games, so start entering. To win, all you need to do is answer three simple questions and send your answers, together with what computer you own, to *Your Computer*, 79-80 Petty France, London SW1H 9ED.

The winner and runners-up will be the first 16 correct answers drawn from all those received by the closing date of the competition, November 30, 1986.



COMPETITION RULES

- ★ The winners of the competition will be the persons who send the first all-correct entries drawn from all those received before the closing date of the competition.
- ★ The names of the winners will be announced in the January 1987 issue of *Your Computer*.
- ★ All entries must arrive at the *Your Computer* offices by the last working day in November, 1986.
- ★ Each person may enter the competition only once.
- ★ Entries to the competition cannot be acknowledged.
- ★ No employees of Focus Investments nor their agents or close relatives may enter the competition.
- ★ The decision of the Editor in all respects of the competition will be final.
- ★ No correspondence with regard to any aspect of the competition will be entered into.
- ★ Focus Investments assumes no responsibility or liability for any complaints arising from this competition.

QUESTIONS

1. In what year was Firebird formed?
2. Name three Firebird number one hits?
3. Which new Firebird game has 10,000 screens?

FIREBIRD COMPETITION

Do not forget to enclose this coupon, or a photocopy of it, when you send your entry, marked Firebird Competition, to the *Your Computer* editorial offices at the address shown at the front of the magazine.

Answers 1 2 3

Name Age

Address

POSTCODE Day Tel. No

G A M E O F T H E M O N T H

Druid

Enter the dank, dark depths of Firebird's latest masterpiece and see if you can survive.

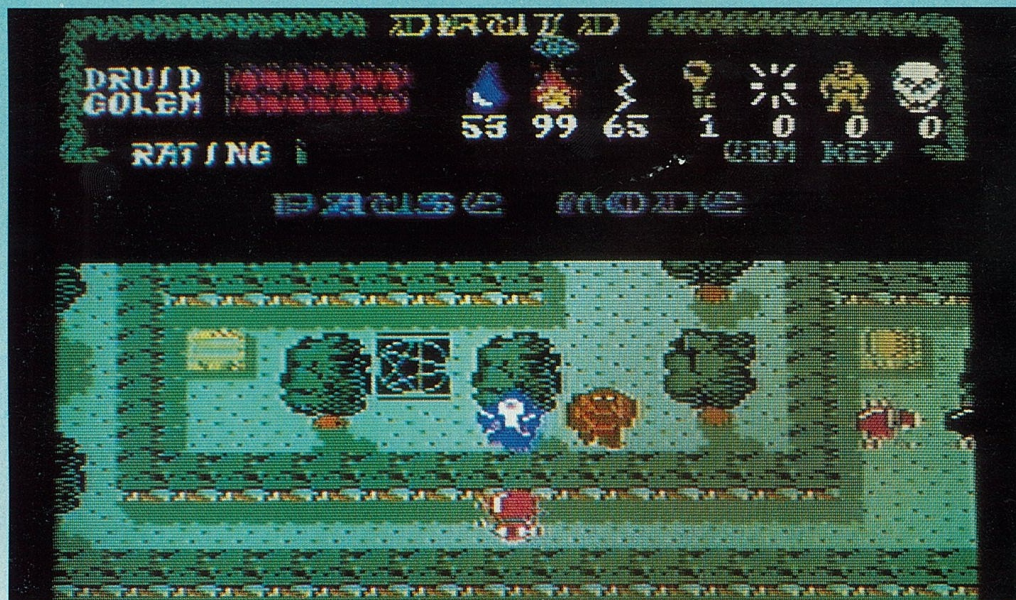
By Stuart Cooke

The arcade game gauntlet has certainly started off a new craze in computer games. Many companies are producing clones or programs similar to this superb arcade game. Firebird's offering is Druid. It has everything you would expect, spells, scrolling dungeons, treasure and obviously an overall goal. What's more it is exceptionally easy to play. Give it a couple of minutes and you'll be hooked. Even so it's going to take you quite a while to win.

The object of the game is to guide your druid through numerous levels of dungeon and find your evil skulls that were created by the Princes of Darkness. At the start of the game our Druid finds himself wandering around a forest with a number of spells to protect him. No sooner has he started on his quest than the enemy lets his goats and giants at you. Be thankful that your druid is carrying a number of water spells as a quick blast from one of these is enough to banish the nasties back to whatever plane of your C64's circuitry they came from.

The water spell isn't the only one that your druid can use. He has access to fire and electricity spells which effect

different monsters that he meets upon his travels, different spells having more effect on some nasties than others. A key spell enables him to open any doors that he comes across, if he should want to. Invisibility spells allow your druid to disappear for a short time. Chaos destroys everything in



C64 REVIEW

sight and perhaps the most interesting of all spells, the Golem spell gives your druid an aid by his side.

You can replenish your supply of spells by searching the treasure chests that you find on your way. Be warned however, make sure that you choose the right item from the treasure since the rest will disappear as soon as one item is removed.

The Chaos and Invisibility spells are quite easy to understand, the Golem however needs further explanation. The Golem when brought into life will wander around the playing area either under the control of yourself or that of a second player, with a second joystick. The Golem has no interest in its own safety and kills everything that it comes into contact with, even if this does mean that his energy is reduced and he will finally disappear into nothing. If you are letting the Druid control the Golem then it does take quite a lot of handling. Getting the Golem to go where you want it to is sometimes nigh on impossible. Quite often he'll simply get in your way so that you can't move anywhere. When another player takes control the game becomes much easier. With the Golem taking care of the nasties the Druid has much more time available to him to find treasure chests and the way deeper into the complex, and hopefully to the four skulls.

Energy is something that not only the Golem loses upon contact with the enemy but the Druid also suffers from this type of loss. As with most mortals, the druid does only have one life. He can however replenish his energy but standing upon one of the mystical pentagrams that are to be found

while chasing after the skulls.

The graphics used within the game are in the main excellent with only a few of the monsters lacking in reality. There's nothing worse than watching a quivering ghoul heading towards you when you've just ran out of spells. The monsters lack any real intelligence and seem to take the shortest path to you. This means that a nasty will quite often find itself stuck behind some object be it a wall of some foliage allowing the druid to pick it off at his leisure.

The actual playing area consists of a number of large scrolling levels. The scrolling of the background being very smooth. As with real life the fact that you don't see the whole screen is annoying when you find you've just battled your way past a horde of giant ants only to find yourself at a dead end and having to retrace your steps.

Druid is an excellent game. It is extremely simple to play with minimal controls, the joystick is used for movement with just a few keys to select spells etc, but extremely difficult to master.

The numerous levels of the game are enough to keep both the newcomer to computer games and the arcade freak hooked for quite some time.

TOUCHLINE Title: *Druid*. Price: £7.95. Machine: C64. Supplier: *Firebird, Wellington House, Upper St Martin's Lane, London WC2H*. Tel: 01 379 6755.

Originality: 7/10. Playability: 10/10. Graphics: 10/10. Value: 10/10.

YC

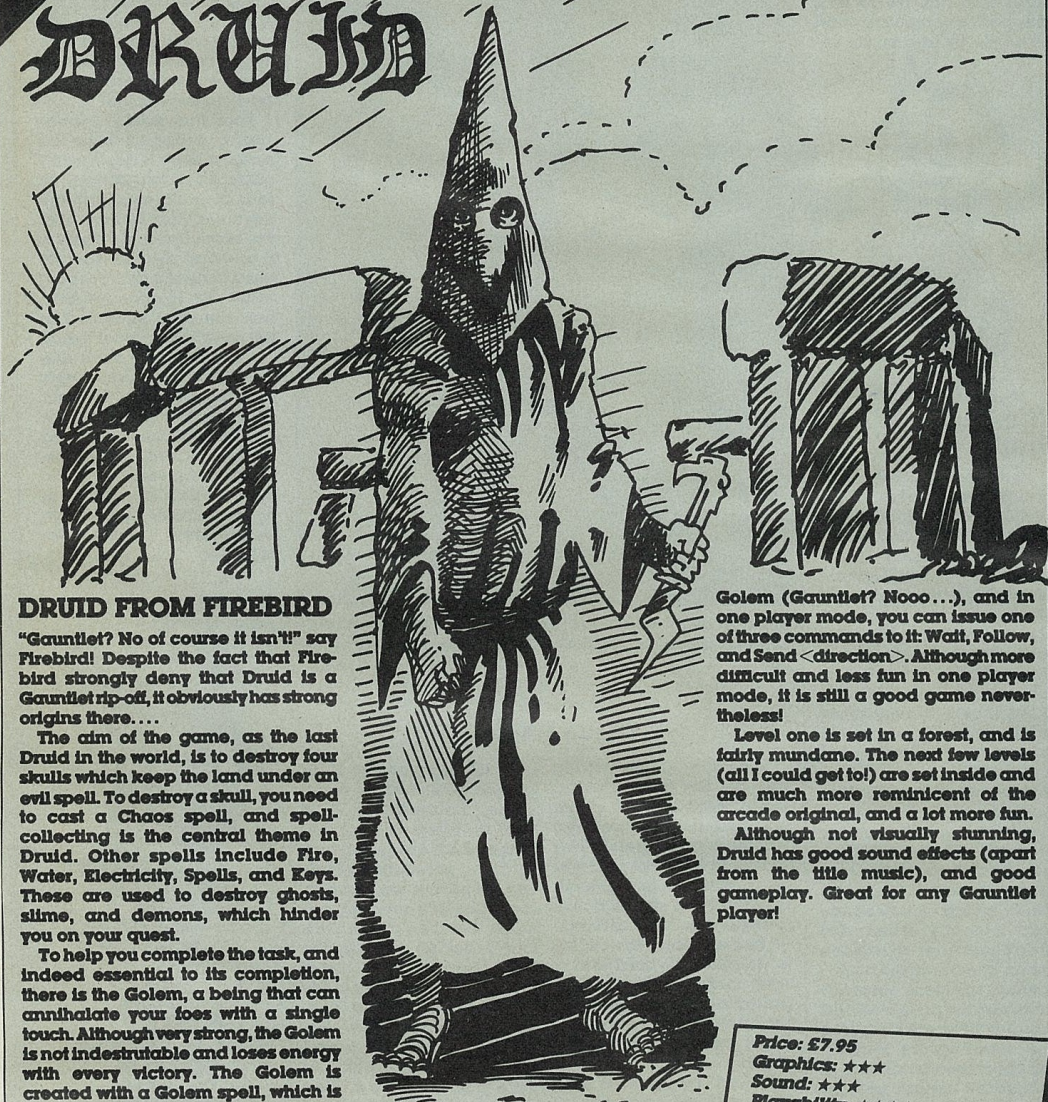
MEGA REVIEW

CCI Rating

C64

MEGA

DRUID



DRUID FROM FIREBIRD

"Gauntlet? No of course it isn't!" say Firebird! Despite the fact that Firebird strongly deny that Druid is a Gauntlet rip-off, it obviously has strong origins there....

The aim of the game, as the last Druid in the world, is to destroy four skulls which keep the land under an evil spell. To destroy a skull, you need to cast a Chaos spell, and spell-collecting is the central theme in Druid. Other spells include Fire, Water, Electricity, Spells, and Keys. These are used to destroy ghosts, slime, and demons, which hinder you on your quest.

To help you complete the task, and indeed essential to its completion, there is the Golem, a being that can annihilate your foes with a single touch. Although very strong, the Golem is not indestructible and loses energy with every victory. The Golem is created with a Golem spell, which is pretty hard to come by! In two player mode, the second player controls the

Golem (Gauntlet? Nooo...), and in one player mode, you can issue one of three commands to it: Wait, Follow, and Send <direction>. Although more difficult and less fun in one player mode, it is still a good game nevertheless!

Level one is set in a forest, and is fairly mundane. The next few levels (all I could get to!) are set inside and are much more reminiscent of the arcade original, and a lot more fun.

Although not visually stunning, Druid has good sound effects (apart from the title music), and good gameplay. Great for any Gauntlet player!

Price: £7.95

Graphics: ★★★

Sound: ★★★

Playability: ★★★★★

CCI Rating: MEGA

Firebird don their habits for a bit of mystical mayhem.

**Druid
Firebird
£7.95**

I'm told by those in the habit of frequenting such places that Druid is based on that arcade game of the moment, Gauntlet (though the official version of Gauntlet is being produced by US Gold). I've not played Gauntlet myself, but I did find Druid enjoyable, if a little frustrating.

In the game you control the figure of a plump little Druid (who obviously spends too much time lying around between solstices) who has been saddled with the task of destroying four skulls, created by the Princes of Darkness and hidden in the depths of a dismal tower. The tower is guarded, as towers tend to be, by all manner of ghosts and water beetles (?).

Your druid has a number of spells at his command, and different spells are effective against each of the monsters that will come at you in hordes and try to drain your life energy. The main offensive spells are Fire, Water and Electricity, though there are also spells for opening doors and invisibility. You only have a limited number of spells and of life energy, but if you can find the magical chests and pentagrams that are scattered around each level you can recharge your supplies.

On each level there is a set of stairs leading up/down to the next level, and the skulls that you are looking for are hidden away in the lower four of the

DRUID



tower's eight levels, so you've got a lot of monster-blasting in store.

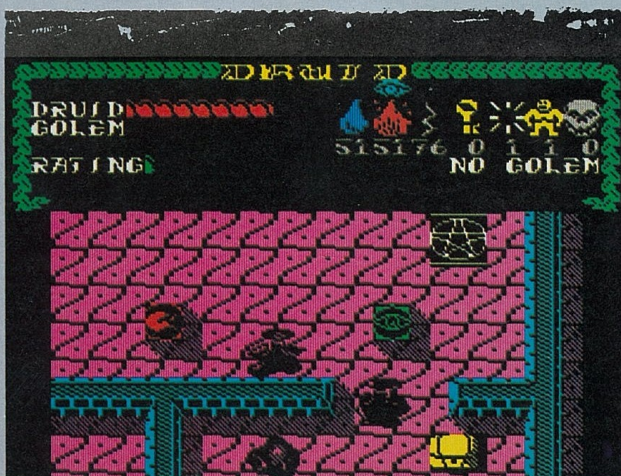
One of the more interesting spells that you can call upon is the Golem spell. When cast you suddenly find that you're accompanied by the lumbering figure of a golem, whose movement can be controlled either by the druid or by a second player (special guest appearance by John Smith from next door). The golem acts as a sort of mystical quarterback, running interference and generally flattening the opposition before they can drain your druid, but his own energy is also limited so he has a limited lifetime and then you're on your

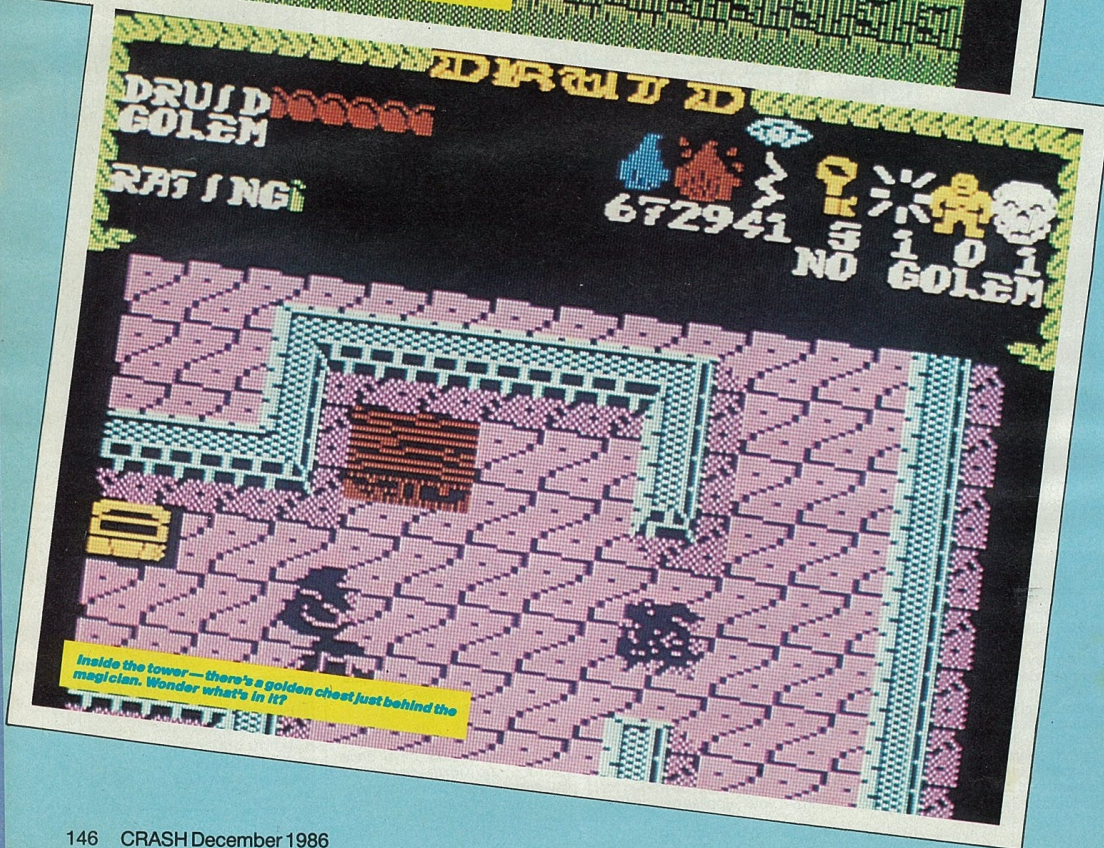
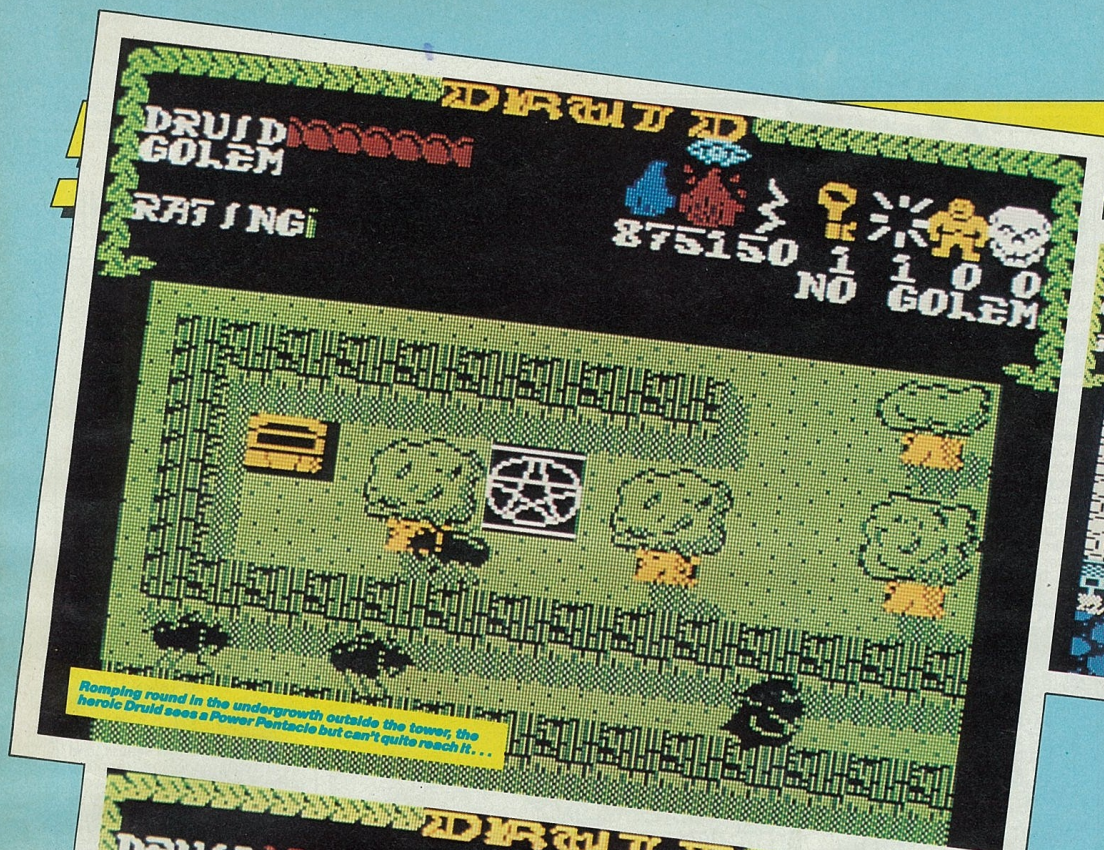
own again.

You are given an overhead view of each level, and the screen switches rapidly from section to section of the maze as you move around. Being set in a maze, it's the kind of game that lends itself to large block-graphics and these have been done quite well, though they're not particularly spectacular.

The animation is smooth, despite the rather lumpy sprites, which is important because the game is basically a fast-reflex shoot 'em up. There is some element of judgement involved in your choice of spells and the use you make of the golem, but underneath the druid's habit lurks a mediaeval commando, despatching ghosts and ghoulies with all the gusto of a Rambo.

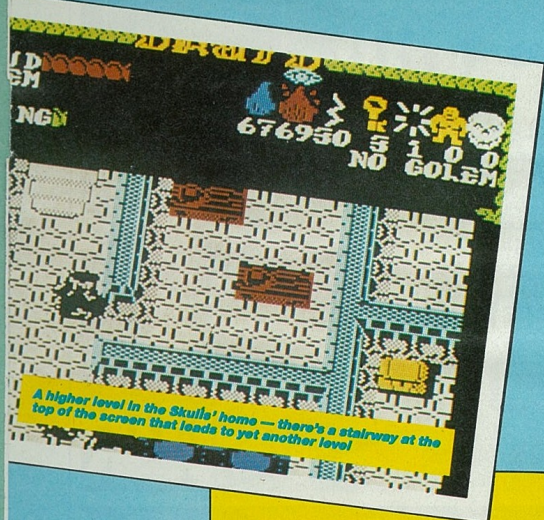
It's quite good fun, and the exploration of the levels in search of spells and skulls adds a bit of variety to the mystical mayhem. I found that the druid's lifeforce tended to get drained a bit too quickly, leading to a lot of not terribly long games, but though it's reasonably addictive I shan't be rushing to the arcades to join the rest of the Gauntletters.





D·R·U·I·D

A
CRASH
Smash



Producer: Firebird
Retail Price: £7.95
Author: Andrew Bailey,
Dean Carter

Four skulls of immense evil have been brought together by the evil Princes of Darkness and placed in a tower. Gathered in the same location, their power to spread destruction, plague and dereliction is vastly amplified and the land is suffering. You, an aging mystical Druid, must destroy the evil skulls to thwart the Princes of Darkness.

The skulls reside in lower levels of an eight-level tower and the game begins in the fields surrounding the skulls' new resting place. You must penetrate the tower, defeat the demons, destroy the skulls and make good your escape.

The action is viewed from above and the flip screens that make up each level contain walls, or hedges in the open country, which combine to make up a maze of passageways. Demons scurry round the screens and need to be eliminated rapidly — contact with them saps the magician's energy, and the longer he stays in one place the more demons turn up.

The Druid can move in four directions, and can cast Water, Fire or Electricity spells with a press of the fire button — toggle between them with the P key. Each time a spell is cast the Druid's capacity for casting that particular spell reduces, and the counter under the respective icon decrements. Selecting the appropriate spell for the type of demon being attacked is an important factor of the game.

Apart from the workaday, fire-button-controlled spells, the Old One has four powerful spells at his command. Providing the inventory contains a supply of the appropriate spell material, these extra spells can be invoked with a press of the correct number key. The Key Spell opens doors; the Invisibility Spell hides the hero from the gaze of the demons for a while and temporarily immobilises them; the Golem Spell conjures up an assis-

CRITICISM

"Druid is amazingly good, and very easy to get into. The layout of the screen is excellent, giving a good mix of large characters and lots of colour — without any attribute problems at all! The game is smooth to play and contains loads of big, bad baddies. I like the way you can swap easily between different types of spell casting, and also the way you go around picking up different things from chests. This game is extremely addictive, loads of fun to play and quite different from your average 'run of the mill' arcade/adventure."

tant, and the Chaos Spell is a magical smart bomb that destroys all the nasties on the current screen. The Chaos Spell is the only spell powerful enough to destroy one of the skulls and has the pleasant side-effect of topping up the Druid's energy whenever it is cast.

Energy is added to the Druid's status bar when he stands on one of the Pentacles of Life that are scattered around the tower. Chests are a source of useful spellpower — all the Druid has to do is walk up to a chest and it will open to reveal its contents. Careful thought is needed before selecting an item from a chest, however, as the Princes of Darkness sense that one of their storecupboards has been opened the moment something is removed and destroy the chest and its remaining contents instantly.

CRITICISM

"Is this the start of a flood of variants inspired by the arcade game Gauntlet? If the rest are as brilliant as this, then we're all in for a good time. The gameplay is great — your Druid is easy to control, so whizzing around the place is great fun, although it is very hard to get anywhere as the rampaging nasties gang up quickly and tend to kill you off rapidly. After a lot of play, however, dealing with them becomes slightly easier. Graphically, Druid is presented well: the characters shuffle around smoothly and the playing area is highly detailed, with excellent shading. The sound is a little disappointing when compared to the graphics, but it is adequate. I strongly recommend Druid as it is playable and everso compelling."

If things are getting a bit hectic, casting a Golem Spell invokes a handy acolyte. The Golem can either be controlled by a second player or by separate keyboard commands and it really comes into its own as a bodyguard. Your assistant can be given three commands: send, follow and wait, and has its own Energy bar that is reduced by contact with nasties. On the plus side, the touch of a Golem is instantly fatal to demons! To play the game efficiently, care must be taken to select the right object from chests once they are

CRITICISM

"Oh yes. This game is superb, one of the best I've honoured my Spectrum with in a long time. Graphics are excellent, with lots of colour used over the various levels, and as far as playability is concerned, well, Druid is something else! Comparison with Gauntlet is, I suppose, unavoidable, but I would certainly like to see us come out with a better game than this — that'll take some doing! Everything about Druid is excellent: it's one of my fave games of the moment. And it's incredibly addictive too; if I didn't have to write this comment, I'd still be playing it. 'Nuff said?'"

opened. A map will prove essential if you are to stand any chance of achieving the legendary Light Master status — at the end of a game, one of sixteen rankings available is awarded, and they start with Halfwit...

COMMENTS

Control keys: 1 cast Key Spell, 2 cast Invisibility Spell, 3 cast Golem Spell, A control Golem, H and A control Golem separately from joystick, 4 cast Chaos Spell, Z left, X right, K up, M down, SPACE fire, P toggle Water, Fire and Electricity spells
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2

Keyboard play: responsive
Use of colour: neat, and without attribute problems
Graphics: fairly large and well detailed, with neat shading effects

Sound: spot effects only

Skill levels: one

Screens: large eight-level play area

General rating: A compelling demon-bashing game

Use of computer 87%

Graphics 91%

Playability 90%

Getting started 88%

Addictive qualities 90%

Value for money 88%

Overall 90%

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an official
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ACTION

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COVER CASSETTE

The Christmas

AA's stocking-filler for Amstrad owners: a tape with helpful utilities, fun listings and some great game demos from Firebird, Odin and Beyond – including a complete playable level of our December Mastergame, *Druid*.

There's something for everyone on the cassette on our cover.

The other side contains some top-quality programming by Amstrad enthusiasts – our readers. There's a database, a utility to partition the 6128's memory into a ramdisk, and a disk formatter that can also pack more data on one of your pricey disks. These have not been published before.

The other three are among the most popular fun listings we have ever printed. As lengthy Type-ins they might have been too daunting for some to tackle, so here they are as a Christmas cassette.

Dazzling demos: 8 games to taste

The words Telecom Soft may not mean much to you but grouped under this name are the illustrious software houses Firebird, Beyond and Odin. They're currently responsible for some of the hottest software available on the Amstrad, and they're giving you the chance to see it exclusively in

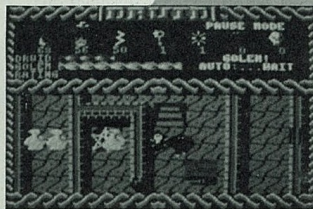
Amstrad Action.

On the tape are tasters of eight games to whet your appetite. Four of them are already out and have received a tremendous reception. The other four are new, due out in the coming months.

DRUID

Pick of the bunch is *Druid* from Firebird: the demo allows you to play the whole of the game's second level (but not the seven others).

Once loaded the game can be controlled with a joystick or with these keys:



- 1 for using keys
- 2 for invisibility
- 3 to create a Golem
- 4 to use a chaos spell
- H to pause
- P to cycle through the three missile types.
- Z – left
- X – right
- K – up
- M – down
- SPACE – fire.

If you create a Golem he can be controlled by a second player or by the computer. Pause the game and press P to select between the two. In auto mode you press A to command the Golem to wait, follow or send.

You'll find there's plenty of blasting to do, treasure chests to open, doors to unlock, pentagrams to replenish energy and exploring to do.

The other seven games aren't playable but they'll give you a flavour of the game.

Tape loading instructions

Before loading, rewind the tape completely and zero the counter on your cassette deck.

Type the usual command RUN" to load either side of the cassette, or simply press Control and the small Enter key simultaneously.

Side one contains a rolling demo of seven games, ending with a playable level of *Druid*. When this starts to load, read your counter and write it down. Then next time, you can fast-forward to *Druid*.

Transferring to disk

Side two will transfer easily to disk. In cases where binary files are included in the program, instructions on transferring to disk are included in their write-up. All other files are Basic and can be transferred by typing:

```
[TAPE IN  
[DISC OUT  
LOAD"filename"  
SAVE"filename"
```

HEARTLAND

A rave from Odin in this issue with 92%. It features some stunning graphics as you try to collect the pages of a book from five different lands. See the review for the full story.

DOOMDARK'S REVENGE

The October Mastergame from Beyond reveals its panoramic beauty for all to see. Over 6,000 locations and 128 separate characters to control. It demands and gets total absorption from the player.

STARSTRIKE II

Another Mastergame, this time from the September issue after Realtime had produced the game for Firebird. Some of the most amazing solid colour 3D vector graphics you'll see. Several different attack sections mean there's plenty of variety and action in a tremendous shoot-em-up.

DARK SCEPTRE

The latest from the keyboard of Mike Singleton, responsible for *Lords of Midnight* and *Doomdark's Revenge*. It promises a main character half a screen high and smooth scrolling action across 4,000 screens. It should be a strategy game to marvel at when it comes out early in the new year from Beyond.

THE HIVE

This comes from the same programming team that brought you *Elite*. It takes you through the twisting passageways of a hive where you have to destroy the queen. It promises some amazing vector graphics when it comes out in January from Firebird.

LUSITANIA

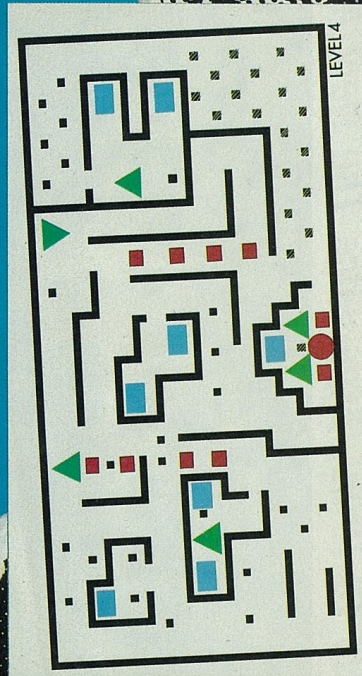
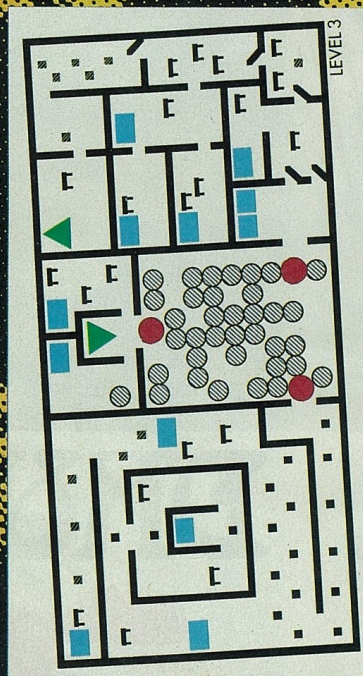
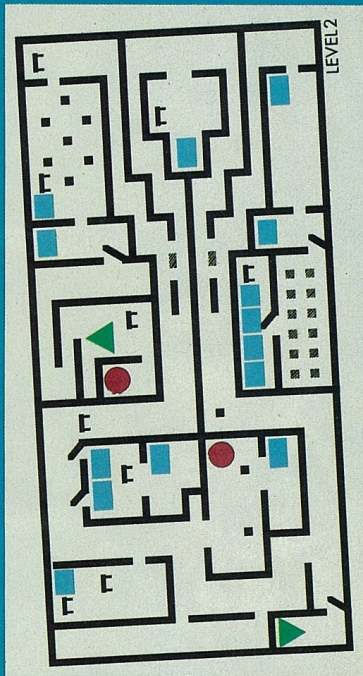
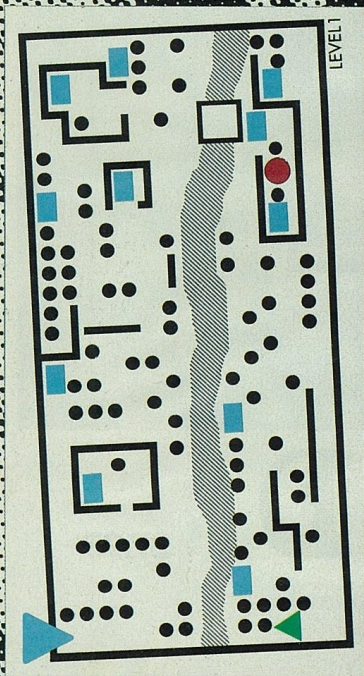
From Odin comes a task of rescuing gold bullion from the liner sunk at the start of the first world war. You'll be facing all the normal underwater hazards like running out of air, hitting unexploded mines and being attacked by nasty sea monsters.

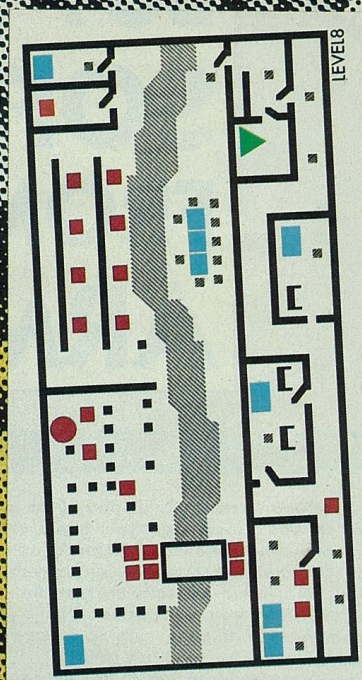
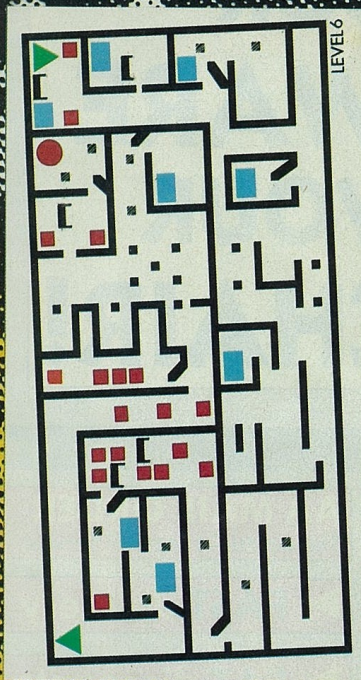
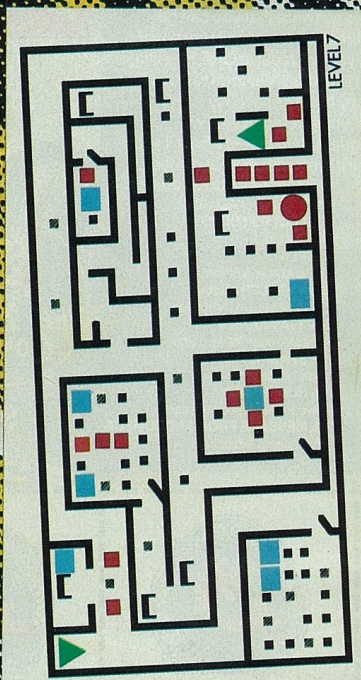
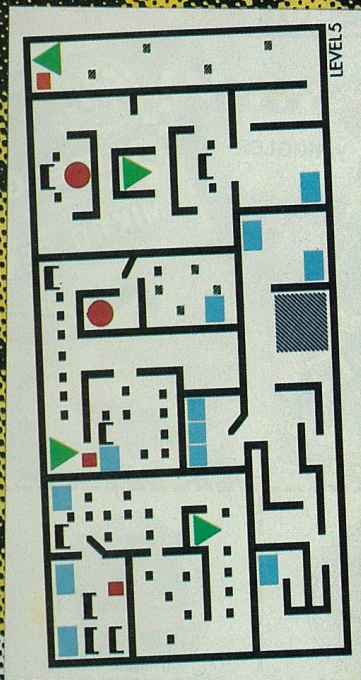
SPARTACUS

Odin takes us back to ancient Rome where you play the role of the legendary fighter. The game promises plenty of blood, guts and slaughter and even lions. It certainly sounds like a combat game to stir the blood – or maybe to put you off dinner.

D★R★U★I★D

A A M A P





KEY

-  CHEST
-  LOCKED DOOR
-  SKULL
-  BLOCK (drains energy)
-  STAIRWAY (to another level)
-  PENTAGRAM (replenishes energy)
-  FACES (BLACK - safe; WHITE - drains energy)



DRUID

Mrs Thatcher might be keen on the occasional stringent economic policy, but she's got nothing on the Princess of Darkness. Similarly, Britain in the late '80s seems like Disneyland compared with the Land of Belom.

Said Princess has been beastly all over said land, resulting in the sudden appearance of four Skulls. These are immensely evil and dedicated to the furtherance of unhappiness, darkness and East Enders.

This obviously can't be allowed to continue. To the succour of the troubled country springs The Druid. His (therefore your) task – the defeat of the Princess and all her millions of minions. Yeah, more minions. His only weapons – an assortment of spells.

These are quite a respectable selection and include magic to wallop the evildoers with water, fire or electricity.

Actual physical contact with any of Princess' punchy pals is to be avoided, as it saps your energy, makes your hair fall out and ruins your social life. Run out of energy, and you can cash in your golden sickle.

Energy can be replenished by a spell on a Pentacle of Life, the revolving five point stars that are scattered about.

Remember the skulls? They remember you . . . Their habitation is an eight-floored tower, which stands in the middle of the forest where all the unholy hankypanky goes on.

You obviously want in, but standing outside shouting "Rapunzel, Rapunzel, let down your long hair" as is traditional will get you nowhere and shatter any forest credibility you might have built up. Skulls are renowned for their lack of flowing locks and also have no sense of humour. What you need is a key.

Keys can be found in caskets. Caskets can be found just lying around. They can be persuaded to disgorge their contents, one at a time, by being bumped into.

However, the noise of the bumping attracts the attention of every meanie within orifaceshot and you



have to dispose of them before you can do any more chest disgorging.

As well as keys, chests have a number of other utilities hidden within. Two of the more useful are the invisibility incantation and the chant of chaos.

This latter is a cross between a sorcerer's smartbomb and Lucifer's lucozade; it de-minions the surroundings and enhances the old energy. Useful for the odd tight corner.

And if you're really lucky, you'll find the Dusty Bin of the druid world, a Golem.

You're thinking "But they came later, when Rabbi Josephi in the 13th century brought a man of clay to life and called it Golem (from the Yiddish Goylem, meaning a shapeless mass)." Cynic. He was probably a stone age Druid on the side.

And so the two of you battle into the sunset. Will you be the glorious leader that liberates the land, or just another by-election candidate?

Author: Firebird

Price: £7.95 (tape) £14.95 (disc)

Nigel

I loved the little wizard, sorry Druid, shuffling round the maze. Unfortunately he is, in my opinion, unfairly outnumbered by the bad guy demons, or maybe I'm just not quick enough on the joystick.

Anyway, trying to get away from them sapped

him(me) of the energy required to save Belon. Perhaps he'd stand a better chance if he could run instead of shuffling everywhere!

Good colourful graphics and interesting to play but I wish I could make it all end happily ever after.

16/20

Liz

Ah, but is Druid any good? Well, as the martial music fades away from the loader (the Wright stuff again, yawn), be prepared for another spellsizzling one-and-a-half player game.

Graphics good, sound sufficient, feel fine. Not bad at all. A few days fun to be had, especially if you've played and enjoyed Gauntlet.

17/20

Colin

Another song-while-u-wait loader by Melvyn gets this one off to a good start. The graphics don't let the side down either, even if they do only take up half the screen.

The scenery is a wee bit difficult to negotiate: Some shadows look as if they ought to be impenetrable, thus

wasting time while you weave your way round them.

The barley sugar-type twists that show how badly you're doing are a nice touch. This sort of thing may seem trivial, but it's that sort of attention to detail that keeps me at it, even when I get the rating Halfwit.

17/20



PLAYING TIPS

DRUID TIPS

Another massive wad of tips and maps arrived at CRASH Towers from The Mega Team of Tipsters from Stoke On Trent. These talented but largely anonymous lads (or maybe even ladettes) have now cracked FIREBIRD'S *Druid* and have sent me a very passable map with these tips to accompany it. But am I ever going to know who you are? Hmm? Yep? Ho?

Certain weapons work better on certain creatures in *Druid*. For the Ghosts, use water or fire. One hit will usually finish them off. The skeletons don't really like water. One hit with this will kill them. However, if you're using other weapons it will take three hits to finish them off. The Beetle hates fire and one hit with it will add to its hasty demise. Other weapons take three hits to kill it. Snakes also hate fire (three hits for other weapons). The odd Wraith or two have the same dislike of fiery substances but as with all the other creatures they take three blasts with any other weapon. Rallacks hate water (one hit) and the Devil (eek) hates electricity (one hit as well). Those nasty Slimies hate fire but take two hits and three of anything else.

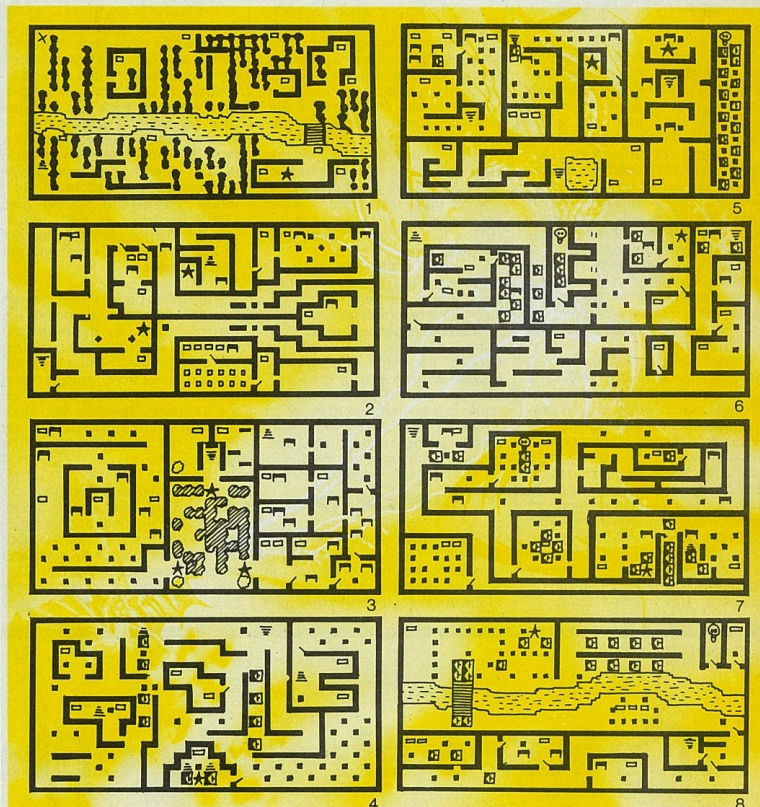
To get through the swamps on level three and over large areas of Vampire faces it is much easier to use a Chaos spell. To complete the game you will need as many chests as possible and don't just hare off to the nearest exit. Golem is of greatest use on levels six and eight, but he will follow you from level six into level seven. Get as many keys and Chaos spells as possible. The ratings in the game so you know what to aim for are: Halfwit, Apprentice, Acolyte, Seer, Lore Seekers, Spirit Master, Potion Master and finally the greatest accolade of all, Light Master.

DRUID TIPS

Hot from the pen of Sean Murphy from Harrow are these tips for the first three levels of *Druid*.

LEVEL ONE

Before you cross the river on the first level it is safe to use water on your enemies. However, after you've crossed it you must use fire because most of your assailants will be beetles. Save your Golem for level two because he's needed



a bit more here.

LEVEL TWO

Open the door with the key and go up and then right. Here you will find a holy pentagram which will very kindly restore your lost energy. Beware of yellow squares—they are very deadly. Use your Golem right at the beginning of the level so as to save on as much energy as possible because there's a mean section later on...

LEVEL THREE

Go right and up to the first chest and then go back and do the same but to the left this time. You will see a mass of blue thingummies

and must use the chaos spell in order to get across it. Once you're across this you will see two more Pentagrams which will very kindly restore your lost energy.

Mr Murphy reckons he's actually got further in the game than his tips suggest, but I think he's bluffing, so let's see the rest of the levels, Sean!

DRUID CHEAT

It says on the inlay of *Druid* by FIREBIRD that the Golem cannot be controlled manually by a second player. But, Peter Ellison

from Cheshire has found a way around this.

Set the control to Kempston and then begin the game. Find a Golem spell and cast it. Pause the game and 'A KEY' will be displayed at the top right hand side of the screen. Press 'P' and instead, 'Joystick' will be printed. Now unpauses the game. The Druid can now be controlled with the keys and the Golem can be controlled with the joystick. However, the golem cannot now go onto another level without reversing the procedure above and getting it to 'follow'.

BREAKTHRU BUG

If you've bought *Breakthru* by US Gold then you'll already know about this blatant bug. When the game was loaded up in the CRASH office to be reviewed everyone discovered the bug after about 30 seconds of first playing the game. No-one could believe it when we found out that it wasn't a pre-production copy

and was actually a finished game. If you've read the review this issue then you'll be wise to this little gem. When you first start playing the game press the jump key and you'll find that you can leap and sproing through the entire game, even over water and through thin air right to the end and all the nasty men with tanks will have no effect on you whatsoever! You don't score any points, though.

THANATOS TIPS

Robert Whitcombe from Hatfield Heath in Essex has sent in some starter tips for Durrell's latest CRASH SMASH, *Thanatos*. The game features a nasty dragon who rampages around looking for Virgins to eat and mayhem to wreck on anybody who comes into this path. In case anybody's having severe problems with getting started these tips should

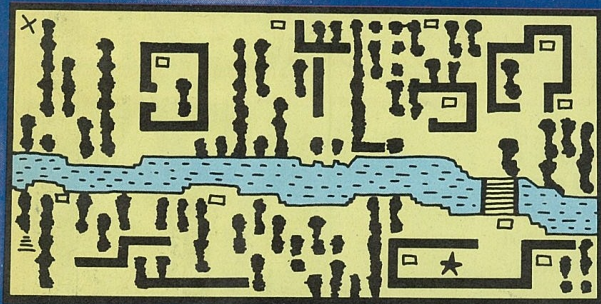
come in very handy.

One of the first hazzards for *Thanatos* to encounter is the creepy cave. Falling rocks must be dodged to help the dragon stay intact. Once out of the cave you can concentrate on hassling the natives. The humans can be picked up and hurled to their death from a great height. Knights can be plucked off their horses and the horses then used to crush them. Great fun! However, the townsfolk

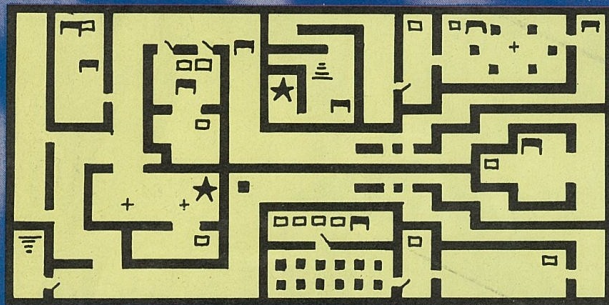
AM-TIPS

DRUID

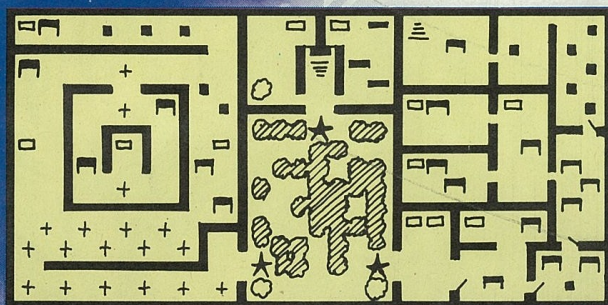
THE
MAP



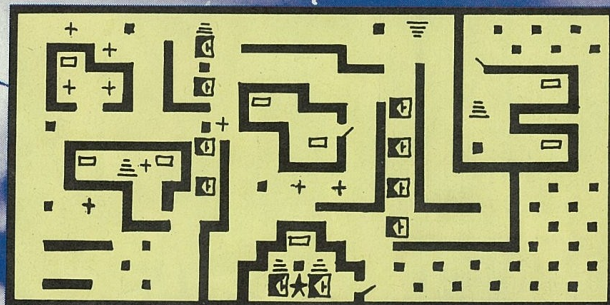
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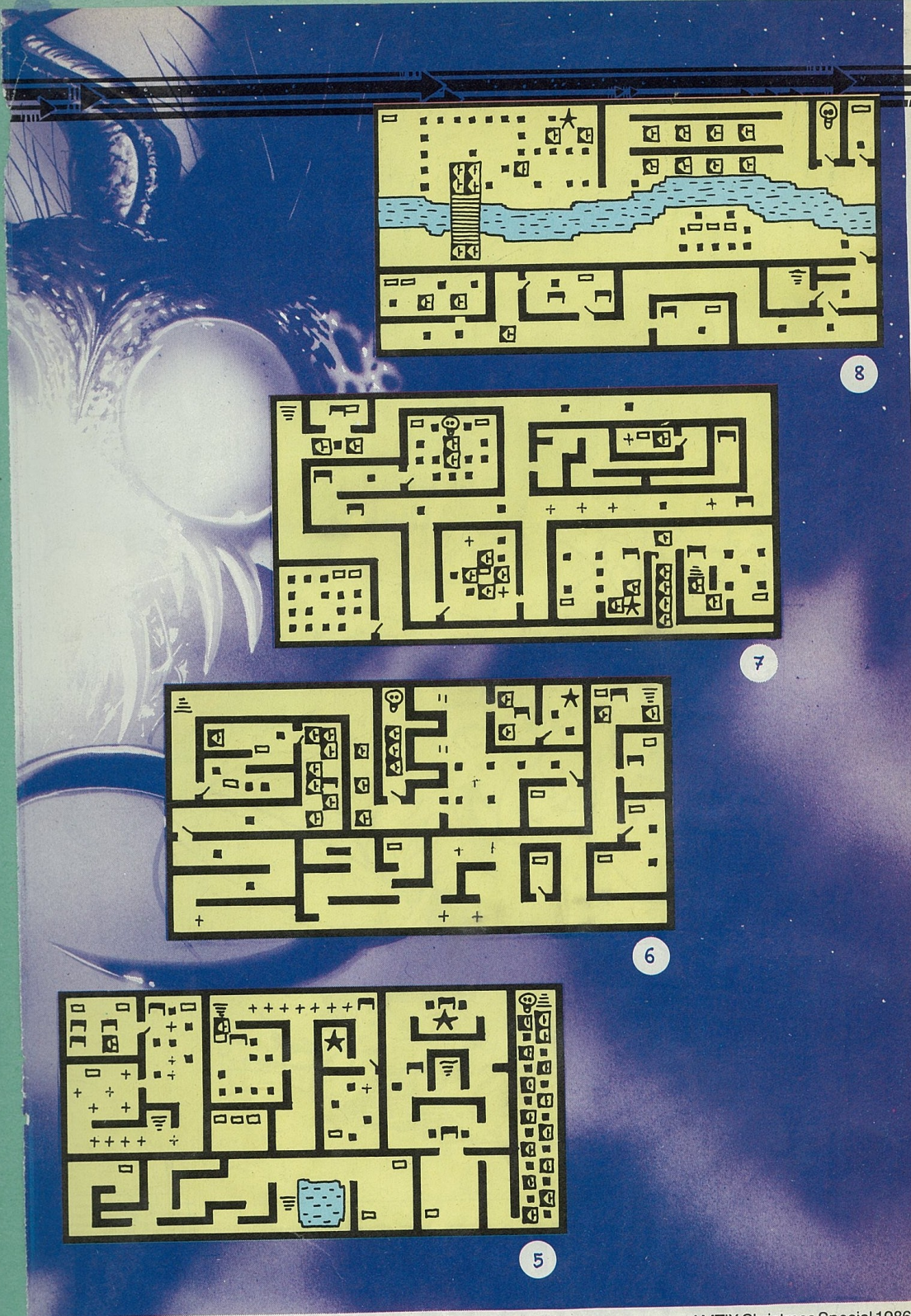
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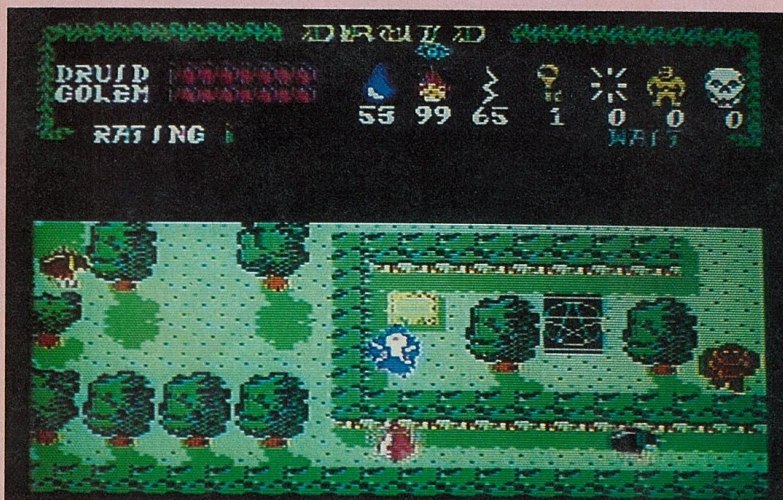
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4



REVIEW



the druid receives a refreshing dose of energy to bring him back to full fighting strength.

The golem spell calls forth an ally from the nether world. Rising from the very clay of the land comes a powerful golem, strong and compliant it can either be commanded by the druid in the one-player game or controlled by a second player. Each option has its own ad-

vantages and disadvantages.

Under joystick control you become a victim to the golem controller's whims. The golem is an animated shield which destroys the wicked on contact. Its purpose is to guard and protect the druid with the strength of its body but, under the control of another person, it may not behave the way you expect.

Under the druid's control, the

golem must be told what to do but it can get in the way in the midst of battle. The golem is controlled by three basic commands. The usual mode for it is following the druid, acting as a rear guard, but at times it must be held at bay with a 'wait' command while the druid goes about his other business.

If the golem blocks the wizard's path, it can be

commanded to wander in the direction indicated by the druid but magic can only control the golem within a limited range and it will start to wander aimlessly if the range is exceeded. For the druid it is vital that he keeps his beast close at hand as a wandering golem is of little use. If its energy is high when it strays, it must be caught and brought back to heel because a new golem cannot be conjoured up while another still exists.

The power of the golem drains as it contacts and dispels the malevolent enemy until the faithful dumb creature makes the ultimate sacrifice and his existence ceases.

The druid is also being weakened by the fighting and soon he must restore his energy. A chaos spell is precious and too drastic to be used merely as a regenerative aid. Fortunately, there are Pentagrams of Life drawn on the ground in special places. The druid is refreshed merely by standing on a pentagram but he must make sure that he protects himself from evil attacks while the regeneration occurs.

Soon the surprise dawns. The tower does not rise from the earth but lies beneath ground in seven further storeys (or dungeons). Dashing down the stairs must be avoided if a golem is following. The result of too hasty an assault is that the golem will be lost forever.

Now the use and selection of door keys becomes more crucial. To succeed, the druid must enter many locked rooms in his search for replenishing magic and for the route to the skulls which lie on the lower floors.

On these levels there are new henchmen of the Princes and the druid must find the most effective magic with which to overcome their power. Additionally, there are energy sapping flagstones and pools.

At its simplest, Druid could be described as a glorified maze game but my impression is that it is a glorious maze game. The time is right for a new approach to computer games and this is an indicator of the current wind of change. The result is a wonderful game with impressive graphic animation and a challenge which few should ignore.

SCORELINE

Graphics	4
Sound	4
Addictiveness	5
Friendliness	5
OVERALL	18

DRUID

Firebird throw down the gauntlet in their latest challenge for the No. 1 slot.

The Princes of Darkness have created four evil skulls which must be destroyed at all costs if the land is to be freed of their malevolent influence. Only a druid can break the black spell but he must summon up all of his magical fighting skills if he is to succeed in penetrating the defences of the sinister tower.

This is the scenario conjured up by the Firebird team for their latest all action game Druid. Though they would be the first to admit that this is not really a Gauntlet clone they would, I am sure, acknowledge that the gameplay is influenced by the arcade progenitor.

For those who have not yet met Gauntlet, it is a four-player arcade machine game in which each combatant controls their own character in an attempt to wipe out the evil masses ensconced in a tower of many floors. Success depends on each character fighting towards the same end but there is enough room for the odd piece of treachery on each player's part which imbues the computer characters with real personalities. This is backed up with the fact that each member of the team has their own special skills and weaknesses which give them advantages at various stages of the game.

There are similarities in Druid but the limitations of a home computer means that a slightly different approach is necessary. The most striking difference is that only two players can join in the battle but the second character can be controlled in a one player game, unlike the solo Gauntlet game.

Enough of comparison, what does the Druid's task involve? We first meet the wizard in the green but unpleasant land controlled by the Princes of Darkness. His aim is to find the magical spells to overcome the ghosts and giant beetles which patrol the avenues of bushes and ruined buildings of which the area is composed.

Initially armed with a water spell, he finds that the evil

Title:	Druid
Computer:	C64
Supplier:	Firebird
Price:	£7.95



hordes come thick and fast. Their mission is to sap all of the life-force from the druid's soul and this they can only achieve at close quarters by touching him. Turning this way and that, the brave druid fires his water spells at any approaching foe but soon finds that his power is not equally effective on all of his assailants.

Dipping into his magical resources he finds two more spells of fire and electricity which are more effective on some of the

foes and he soon learns that he must control his powers according to the enemy.

Although his strengths are great, his weaknesses can be fatal. A lone druid is neither fast enough nor strong enough to overcome the Powers of Darkness which close in around him. There must be a way, there's got to be a solution. Evil cannot prevail!

Magical chests containing extra spells to boost his dwindling powers can be opened

and their contents displayed on the screen. The opening of a chest is sensed by the omniscient Black Princes and the druid can only seize one of the contents of each chest before their magic destroys the chest for all time.

Now the little wizard must use his powers of reasoning to decide which item in the chest will be of most use to him. Will he need more fire, water or electricity spells, or must he depend on more powerful magic like the Golem Spell, the Cloak of Invisibility or the all-powerful Chaos Incantation? Perhaps he should just remove a key to unlock one of the many doors of the tower. The choice is yours, for you are the druid and it is your decision that will save the world or plunge it into perpetual darkness.

What of the new spells? What power do they wield? The invisibility spell casts a temporary

shroud over the druid which prevents the enemies from sensing his presence and he can then travel short distances unmolested.

Chaos destroys any enemy within striking distance which, in real terms, means the area displayed on the computer's screen, but the spell lasts for several seconds and as the druid moves so does the spell. The spell has a double edged effect — evil powers are vanquished but the power of good is increased and

REVIEWS

DRUID

Firebird, £7.95 cass, joystick or keys

Life has not been easy for your average peasant in the land of Belorn recently. This is probably due to the appearance of four skulls of immense evil that have been brought to life by the Princess of Darkness while spreading her wrath all over the place. Four

Difficult it is, but it's also fun at the same time. The game just has the right mixture of action and brain work to make it very addictive. The clear graphics have been taken straight from the Commodore version. The inclusion of a Golem for use by a second player is a good idea as it affords protection throughout the game. The scrolling screen is a good idea as it gives you an idea of where you need to get to, or where to avoid. Overall a very nice variation on the GAUNTLET theme that should be a best seller. Oh just a little note to Melvin, let's please have some decent loading music, the fairground themes are wearing a little thin.



CRITICISM

Nass
If you want a game that will keep you busy for a long time and is full of action, then DRUID is for you. It's not the first game to give you the choice of weapons, or spells in this case, to use, but it works rather well. When it comes to the difficulty, I did find it quite hard to get used to, but like all good arcade types you soon learn to get through the various levels with the minimum amount of hassle from the nasties. The overall look of the game is very colourful with the animation and graphics being well defined. A neat shoot'em up that will appeal to most arcade players and anyone else who likes a game to keep them glued to their monitors.



CRITICISM



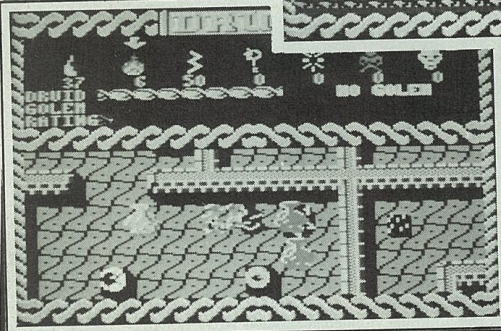
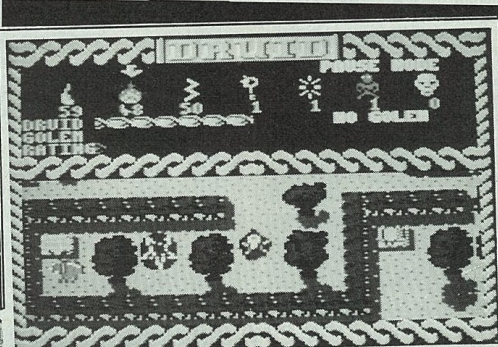
ing a key. These can be found in chests, which are opened by simply walking into them, and then used to open doors by pressing the 1 key. All sorts of other goodies can be found within the chests, such as water, fire, electricity, invisibility spells, and Golems. Unfortunately, only one spell can be extracted from any one chest at a time because as soon as a chest is opened the creatures sense your appearance and will swarm around you.

via a joystick.

Another spell which ranks amongst the most powerful is the Chaos spell. This destroys all meanies in the Druid's vicinity and also bumps up his energy a fair bit. Death comes instantly if Druid falls into one of the many lakes or pools that have formed in the Tower — fortunately, there are bridges or stepping stones for him to make his way safely across.

At the end of the game you are given a rating ranging from Halfwit to Light Master, depending upon how many chests were opened, and the number of creatures and skulls destroyed.

So, are you Druid enough to rise through the ranks and become a lightmaster? Play Druid, and find out.



floors of an eight floor tower are where they are to be located, and you, a Druid, have been assigned the mystical task of defeating the Princess and her manic minions.

Your Druid finds himself abandoned in a mysterious forest — devoid of all humane life — with only a few spells to his credit. The destruction spell is the most powerful and useful — this can take the form of energy balls of water, fire, or electricity, but Druid has to be selective to which one he uses to defeat a particular demon as

some will be more effective than others.

Making contact with any of the more violent creatures instantly drains your life force from the energy bar, located in the top left hand corner of the display. Fortunately, energy can be revitalised by standing on a revolving Pentacle of Life; however, on later levels don't mistake similar images as they will sap your energy.

To get to the lower vaults, where the skulls reside, you will need to gain access to the tower by locat-

Golems are large ape-like creatures who help you battle it out against your adversaries. They can be called up at any time once you have collected a Golem spell from a chest. He is controlled via the P key, and each time it is pressed it toggles between three commands: SEND, FOLLOW and WAIT. Alternatively, the Golem can be controlled by a second player

Richard



CRITICISM

I've played all three versions of DRUID and I must say that this is my favourite of them, even if it is slightly harder — but because of that it will keep you playing for a long time to come. Having never played GAUNTLET in any form before I must say that this does appeal to me — a sort of arcade adventure with a great deal of action to it, and quite atmospheric it is too. My only gripe with it is that the loading music, similar to that of a fairground organ, is totally unsuitable — can Melvin Wright do anything else? Never mind, there's a game there just waiting to be played and solved.

PRESENTATION 90%

Lots of helpful instructions, good loader.

GRAPHICS 85%

Very clear — no confusion.

SOUND 80%

Unsuitable loading tune, good FX.

PLAYABILITY 87%

A definite challenge...

ADDICTIVE QUALITIES 86%

... that will keep you going.

VALUE FOR MONEY 88%

A price rarely seen these days.

OVERALL 88%

Another great release from Firebird.

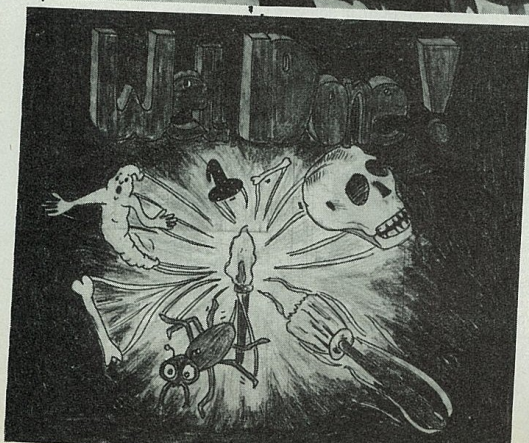
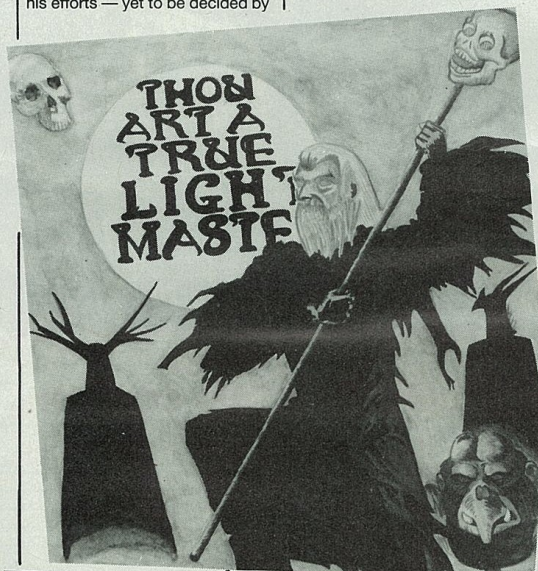
WINNERS WINNERS WINNERS WINNERS

DROOLING DRUIDS

FIREBIRD's game DRUID gave birth to this competition back in issue 18, but thanks to an interface that refused to live up to its title we didn't print this list in the last copy of the mag. I am but a humble minion and not versed in the ways of computers and I... (GET ON WITH IT!) Ah well, FIREBIRD were supposed to be giving away a unique once only copy of DRUID that will be coded with the winner's design for a congratulatory screen. However, lines were crossed between us and them and it was only recently discovered that FIREBIRD actually wanted you to redesign the final level, not design a congratulatory screen. Oh dear. Obviously it's a bit too late to re-run the competition, so as **Matt Lyon** of Honeysuckle Close RG22 5RH provided the most imaginative entry, he wins the first prize for his efforts — yet to be decided by

FIREBIRD (hopefully a special copy of the game). Ah well, whatever it is, it should be good. Anyway, twenty runners up will all get a FIREBIRD T-Shirt popping in through their letterbox in the near future...

L. Gollings, Southern Walk, DN33 2PG;
Robert Lawford, Faraday Road, DA16 2ET;
Sabir Valli, St Marys Place, WF12 9NL;
Robert Glendinning, Holford Way, SE16 3RD;
Andrew Boston, Shepton Crescent, NG8 5QP;
Gary Chandler, Burns Way, Middlessex;
Gordon Dunn, Marjory Road, PA4 8BG;
Simon Eden, Howard Road, HP9 2XS;
Stuart Fynes, North Park Avenue, KA26 9DH;
Stuart Price, Kennoway Road, KY8 5BX;
Neil Overy, High Street, BN18 9AJ;
Shane Ball, Garlands Road, GL15 6BB;
Christopher James poole, Upper-campsfield Road, OX7 1QF;
Zzap Reader, Chestnut Close, PL19 9JJ;
Richard Middleton, 7 Ash Grove, Burnham-On-Crouch, Essex, CMO 8DP;
Stephen Thomas, Renvyle Avenue, Cleveland; Mark Selby, Ashley Close, AL8 7LH;
Jonathan Twist, Winsford Crescent, FY5 1PS;
Barry Pringle, Langdale Gardens, UB6 8DG;
Terry Gilligan, Holt Dale Way, LS16 7SJ



THE ART GALLERY

DRUID by
Bob Stephenson

This artist's commissions proffer a valuable insight into the eternal conflict between commerce and art. At the affiance all is hopeful, but the marriage bed so often proves otherwise as selling dictates overwhelm originality. With this loading screen, Stephenson proves adroit at avoiding the divorce courts, as he piles colourful imagery onto the screen in cheerful disregard of the medium's limitations. The power of the centrally placed satanic skull is undeniable, and the strength of the drawing throughout prevents the whole from sliding into sentimental faerie-ness. Add to that the adumbration which complements the bright pigmentation, and the artist has created an inspired atmosphere suitable to the subject.

