

ADVENTURE

exclusive review

JINXTER

Another epic from *Magnetic Scrolls* just about to hit the streets, and the C+VG team hasn't got to play it yet? Shock! Horror! We sent **Keith Campbell** round to *Scrolls* HQ to rectify the situation and demand a copy. . .

✦ Magnetic Scrolls' office, near London Bridge station, was buzzing with activity as I walked in. The Amiga version of *Jinxter* had just been sent for mastering, and the race was now on to complete the other versions. All manner of micro lined both sides of the room, and each was manned by a frantic adventure-person.

Anita Sinclair led me over to an Amiga, and took me through a selection of the pictures.

"You probably won't reach some of these before you write the review," she predicted. As she paged through them I wondered: Why is it that each new *Scrolls* picture is such a treat to view? After all, we see so many different pictures on TV every week, what is the extra attraction of a 'still' produced by a computer?

Of course, it is the creation of an artist, not a computer nor a TV camera we are talking about. It is the mental images in the story, so beautifully brought to life, that makes the pictures so exciting.

In contrast with *Guild Of Thieves*, where Geoff Quilley drew the original 16-bit format, *Jinxter* has had three artists working on it, each doing his own conversions. This adds a lot more interest, for although the same high standard has been achieved, there is a variety in style evident throughout the game.

But at *Scrolls*, *Jinxter* has all but passed through, and the next production is beginning to take over. It has a working title of *Assassin*, although this is definitely not what it will be called. One of the many busy people in the room was its author Rod (The Pawn) Steggles, who was currently testing out the text.

Assassin, for want of a better name, will be a departure from

Scrolls' usual adventure formula. It is based in the world of high finance, and involves matrimonial intrigue and insider dealing. You are the fall guy, and as you come to learn more about what has been going on behind your back, someone arranges for you to be assassinated. . .

"You won't need to know anything technical about stocks and shares," claimed Rod, who had just got back from a research visit to the Commodity Exchange.

There will be many more characters to interact with in *'Assassin'*, but the adventure might not have quite the same appeal to the younger elements of Magnetic Scrolls' following. "We're hoping to attract a more serious audience, and reach a more adult market," explained Anita, adding that there was no reason why younger people should not enjoy the game, which should be ready around March.

With the pace accelerating at *Scrolls*, space is getting tight, and so a move to larger offices upstairs is planned for January, Anita told me. At that moment, a cheer went up. Simultaneously a working Atari ST *Jinxter* had been prepared for me, a task which on my arrival had been forecast to take between 30 minutes and seven hours (it took 40 minutes), and just around the corner, C-64 *Jinxter* had unexpectedly started to run successfully.

Clutching the coveted disk, I decided this was a good time to make a getaway. "Not so fast!" exclaimed Anita, thrusting sheaves of photocopied material into my hands. "You won't get anywhere without these, there're clues and copy protection built in!"

Stuffing the paperwork into my briefcase, I hurried out into the cold evening, eager to get

► MACHINE: ATARI ST/AMIGA/AMSTRAD PCW AND 6128: IBM PC/COMMODORE 64; APPLE
► SUPPLIER: RAINBIRD/MAGNETIC SCROLLS
► PRICE: ST/AMIGA (£24.95)
► REVIEWER: KEITH

✦ To speak to him, you would hardly take him for an immortal demi-god. It was only the way he swooped down out of the sky and landed on the pavement beside me that convinced me he was, in fact, the Guardian in the Department of Turani (Sacred Charm Subdivision) that he claimed to be.

The wossnames from the Green Witches charm doodah had been removed and dispersed, he told me. If they can be found, and the doodah re-assembled, before the Green Witches' do it, their power will be broken. But this was a job for a mortal, not a god, and I was he. Narmean?

Complaining bitterly about the processed cheese in the

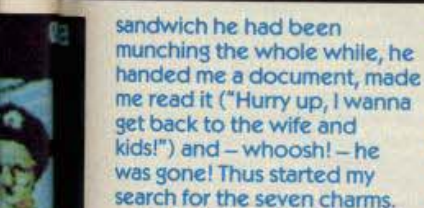


ON THE BUS



happy summers that you and Xam spent the evening watching the flies disporting themselves with merry cries and fluttering wings. But this is winter, and every autumn, they go to Dead Fly Wood to snuff it. In fact, the ground there is knee deep in them!

Full of delightfully humorous text, *Jinxter* also has plenty of puzzles that, even when you think (correctly) that you know the solution, require four or five attempts – because they don't work

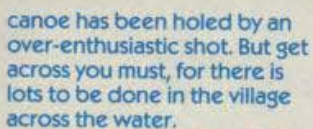


Set in the country, the action proper starts in your bungalow, and soon moves across the fields (beware of the bull!) to your friend Xam's chocolate-box thatched cottage. Xam has mysteriously disappeared after phoning you with a panic warning. . . With Xam gone, it is with nostalgia that you walk across his garden, and notice the fly bath — a lot smaller than a bird-bath, but performing the same function. Many were the

exactly as you reckoned. So save your position frequently!

Like Old Lebling the postman, who comes along puffing and panting, but you miss his delivery, and merely find a Post Office note telling you how to reclaim the parcel. Sounds easy 'cos you think you've sussed it out, eh? But when Lebling (I've heard of him before, somewhere, surely?) returns with it, no way is he going to hand it over to anyone other than the rightful resident of the property...

Xam has a mad gardener with two rather unusual hobbies – cheese making and fish shooting. So perhaps it comes as no surprise, when you decide to take a trip across the lagoon, that Xam's



The village, with its pub, its Post Office, its bakery, and its clockmaker, is where careful reading of *The Independent Guardian* will pay dividends. This August publication, mainly concerned with herring-bone overcoats and cheese sandwiches, also contains type-in coded clues, and clues. But beware! The coded clues are just what clues should be – they don't actually tell you the answer!

The IG will also help you make use of the charms which by now you will have acquired (won't you?). For they are magic, and as such, can be used to cast spells. The mechanism for doing this is hilarious, but their usefulness is quite serious, and must be learned to be effective. They also have the means by which some extremely ingenious

puzzles have been constructed. For example, it's not much use thingy-ing when it's sunny, nor doing a bit of watchercallit on something you don't want.

Most of the problems are challenging, of not over-difficult in hindsight, yet give great satisfaction and much mirth in solving. And many, too, have more than one solution. Sometimes the least preferred of these can lead to a reduction of points, meaning that you can complete the game with less than 100% scores.

I proclaimed *Guild Of Thieves* better than *The Pawn*. I now proclaim *Jinxter* more entertaining even than *Guild*. As the Guardian might say: "If you gotta doofah that'll play it, you'd be wosname if you didn't go out and mean watchercallit. Narmean?"

- ▶ VOCABULARY 8
- ▶ ATMOSPHERE 10
- ▶ PERSONAL 10
- ▶ VALUE 9

