



McDonalds Land

Did you know that if you mix a Big Mac with a hint of Mario and add a few neat touches to taste, you end up with up with a platform-based romp which is really rather good? No, neither did Simon Byron...

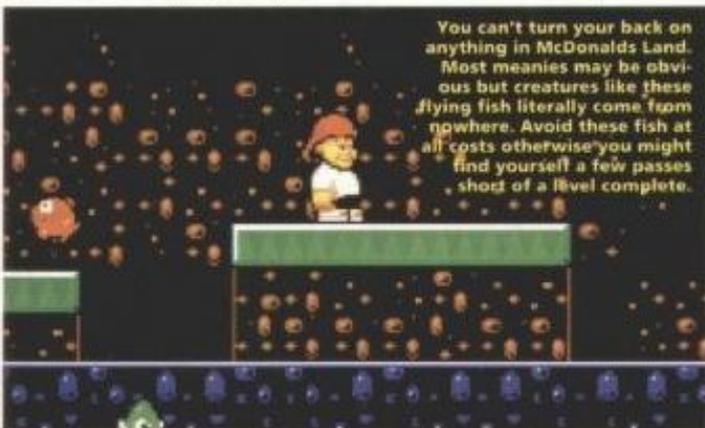
Now here's a thing. McDonalds Land was originally developed in consultation with Frank Manis, a psychologist no less, so playing this must surely count as therapy or something. Originally a Nintendo game (what isn't these days? Oh yes, all the really good games) Arc Developments have, it says here, brought the visuals into line with 16-bit expectations - whatever they may be. Armed with that newly-discovered pot of knowledge let's take a look at what the game's about.

Mick and Mac, two street-wise, wise-cracking, word-hyphenating teenagers, have been asked to help none other than Ronald McDonald (that rosey-faced clown who started McD's with only a mouldy loaf of Sunblest and a few golden arches) who's had his 'Magic Bag' pinched by the evil and cleverly-named Ham-

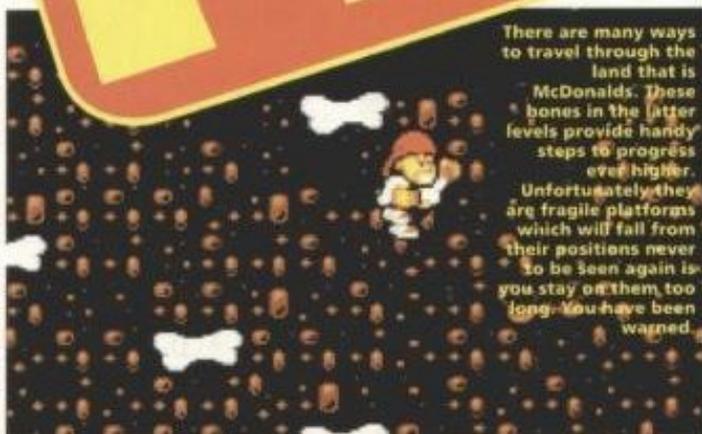
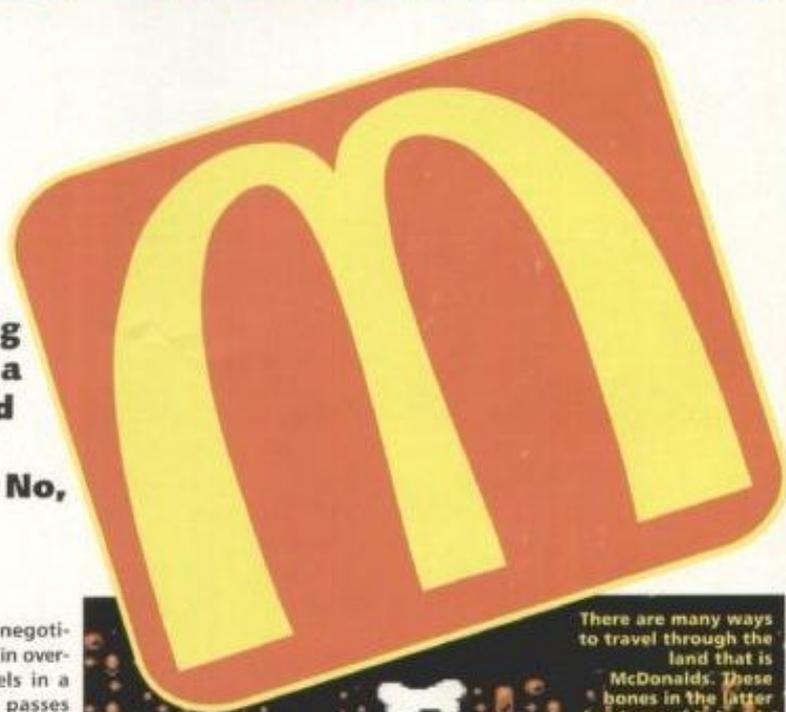
burglar. The two lads must negotiate a series of, erm, 'plumber in overalls'-inspired platformy levels in a quest to find a number of passes which Ron needs for some reason or other.

Once these items have been found, Mr McDonald gives the two little boys a tip-off as to the location of a certain Birdie who, in turn, requires a number of passes (of the cardboard kind, not sad one liners like "How about a quick snog?") before he'll supply any more information as to Hamburglar's possible whereabouts.

And so it goes on until the nasty meat thief is finally dealt with. With thirty-four levels, eight bonus levels, a complete bonus game etc, etc, etc, can McDonalds Land knock off whoever's currently at the top of the platforming tower?



You can't turn your back on anything in McDonalds Land. Most meanies may be obvious but creatures like these flying fish literally come from nowhere. Avoid these fish at all costs otherwise you might find yourself a few passes short of a level complete.



There are many ways to travel through the land that is McDonalds. These bones in the latter levels provide handy steps to progress even higher. Unfortunately they are fragile platforms which will fall from their positions never to be seen again if you stay on them too long. You have been warned.



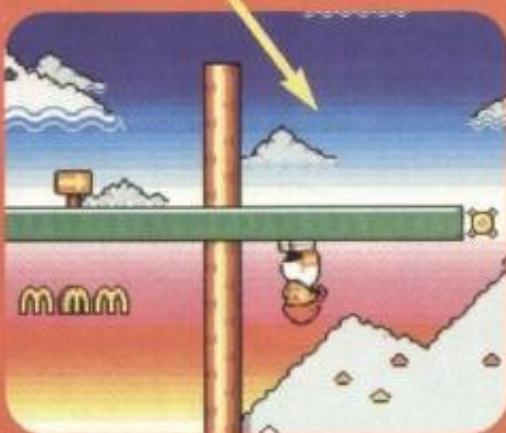
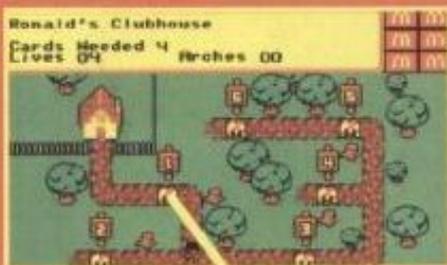
Blocks can be used for many things. Oh yes, they're flipping excellent for chucking at the oh-so-cute (but very deadly) bad guy and wonderfully marvelous for creating floating platforms out of. They often hide springs as well so it is worth taking time out to discover if every block contains a bonus (or something).

As well as running and jumping, Mick and Mac can occasionally take a trip in these bucket-type things. Whilst floating and bobbing our friends are safe from the jaws of that piranha but should they jump out at the wrong moment they can be sure that the violent fish will be nibbling through their flesh before you can say 'Jaws'.





WORLD ONE

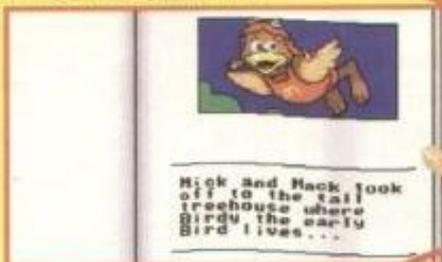


The first world is the easiest of the lot and should present the average gamer with no problems at all. As they say size isn't important we'll forgive the programmers for making these early levels fairly compact but they serve as an excellent introduction to the game and the only problem you'll have in this world is these cogs which flip you upside down when you cross over them.

The springs can be used to bounce ever higher during many of the levels in McDonaldsland. It's a good job that they're hear otherwise our little McDonalds promoter might not be able to collect all those lovely Golden Arches and obtain 'squillions' of bonus points.



The Frozen Caverns present some of the trickiest platforming negotiation seen for a long, long time. Take here, for instance. Due to the extra inertia of the characters whilst on ice, the chances of falling are vastly increased.

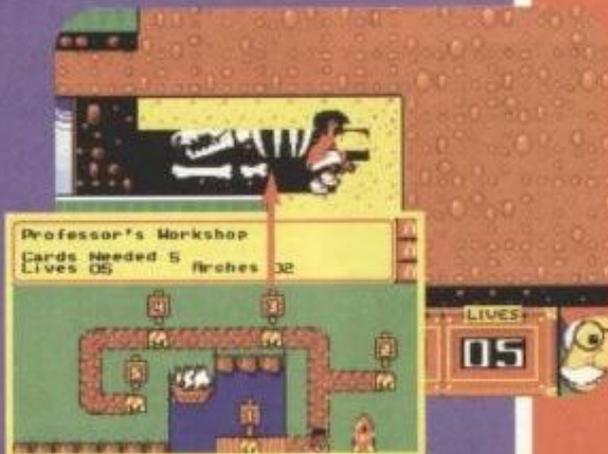
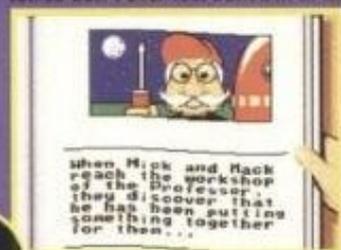


The arrowed black squares here should be avoided if at all possible as, if touched, they will send the playing character right back to the start of the level.

When you arrive on the Stratosphere you'll notice that not all the clouds are stationary. Many of them move about on a fixed track which can be extremely advantageous to our two friends.

WORLD FOUR

World 4 presents the player with a number of apparently inaccessible areas like this wall of sand. Most of these areas can be cleared with a session of taps on the old fire button so don't ever feel boxed in at all.



WORLD FIVE

The gravity of the moon enables the two kids to leap higher than ever. This particular level requires the player to negotiate a whole area of springs in an effort to discover the location of the pass which is made harder by the many meanies which mill around.



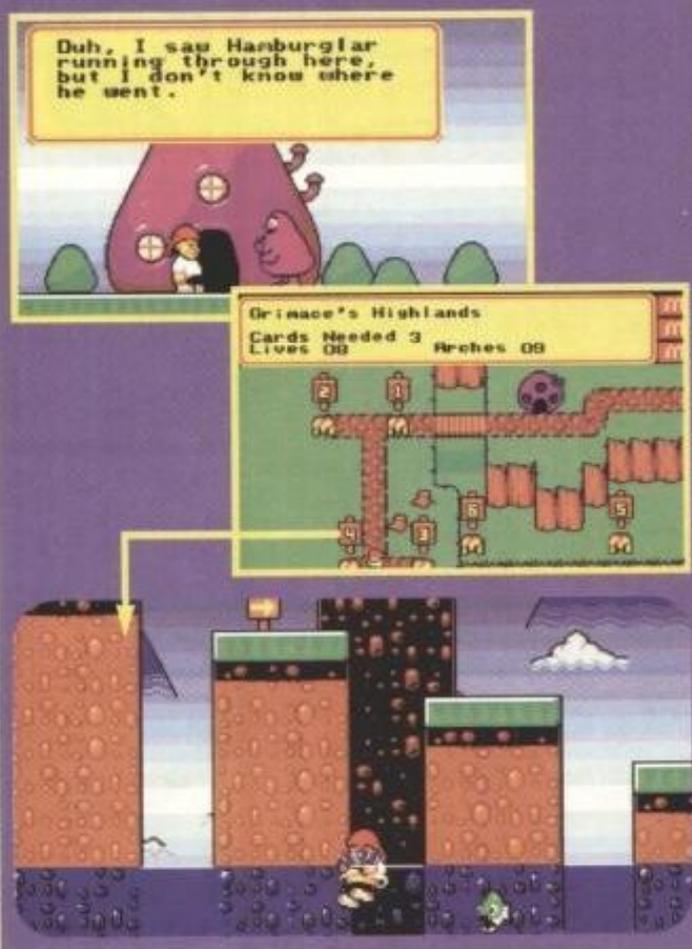


WORLD TWO

The second world takes you onto the Birdie's Treehouse and a different set of sky-high levels. Whilst in the clouds Mick or Mac occasionally disappear behind the suspended water-droplets (that's what clouds are, you know) and you can only see the whites of their eyes.

WORLD THREE

There's quite a lot of H2O splashing about on world 3 and although the characters can survive in the water the piranhas make swimming a hazardous hobby. There's some extremely cute baddies in this world (like the lovely little chicky-wicky) which make the task of destroying them all the more heart-wrenching.



THE VERDICT

Platforms, platforms, platforms! That's all we're getting these days but - hey! - who cares when they're as good as this? It's definitely not one of your new breed of platform games, that's for sure. There's no violent spinning, shooting or mass enemy destruction - it's more passive than all that - and the majority of the game is spent moving blocks around and leaping from platform to platform in an effort to find the lost items (although - hooray! - the blocks can also be used to knock the enemies off the screen). It plays like a dream most of the time, although the inertia of the two characters is, on occasions, a little heavy and negotiating some of the latter worlds is made slightly harder because of this. The visual variation between the various worlds adds to the game's appeal and whilst these six worlds (not forgetting, of course, the one bonus world) will not tax most players to the limit, there's plenty of extra things to do and see so even when the game has been completed there's still enough stuff in here to warrant playing it again. It's far less 'cluttered' than recent platform releases with a no-frills approach to the backdrops but it works extremely well and makes the game seem clean, fresh, smooth and overall very Gillette Contoury. I don't really agree with the cleverly 'indiscrete' product placement throughout the game but McDonalds Land is none-the-less a flame-grilled double burger with cheese of a game which should more than satisfy most Mario-hungry Amiga owners for the time being.



Publisher: Virgin
Developer: ARC Dev

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Joystick

MEMORY 512K
DISKS 1

GRAPHICS



SOUND



PLAYABILITY



LASTABILITY



OVERALL



WORLD SIX

We're nearly there! The perils that lay beyond cannot be described by words alone so we think you should finish reading the rest of the mag and nip and purchase a copy for yourselves. Don't forget to close the door on the way out.

