

It's been a long time coming but finally MILES 'LEMMINGS? HERE? I DON'T BELIEVE IT!' GUTTERY bids a belated welcome to one of the most original games in years. Was it worth it? Read on and find out.

● **Psygnosis £\*\*\*\***

**A**h-roo! *Lemmings* is finished at last! What can one say about this one that hasn't been said before? A hundred levels of traps, ravines and retarded rodents, complete with jazzy green hair and blue pullovers.

Actually, I'm perched on the horns of a dilemma here. Traditionally, a review begins with a rundown of the plot, brief appraisal of gameplay and finally a critical conclusion weighing up all good and bad points to justify a final percentage. Unable, as I am, to believe there's an individual unfamiliar with this game, I'm left in the unfortunate position of having the easy two-thirds of the review rendered useless. Hmm — what to do!

I could waffle on about nothing to kill a few hundred words, that'd be easy enough, but no! Am I not a professional? I shall treat this situation as a challenge. I shall write in an amusing and informative



● Believe it or not, that horrible mouth thing is the exit in this instance. Rather than us; its breath probably smells!

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way without straying from the point. So, in reverence to those immortal words — 'Let's go!'

You're greeted by an animated sequence identical to that found on the 16-bit versions before yomping confidently onto the options screen. Choose music or FX and start difficulty (Fun, Tricky, Taxing or Mayhem) or enter a code for a specific level. Then it's into the classic puzzle-action.

*Lemmings* demos have floated around in various states of completion forever, or so it seems, but the final game still appears fresh and lively. Background graphics fully capture the flavour of

each level with well animated sprites striding around as smooth as you like. Characteristically fine Jeroen Tel toons bounce along so jauntily you hardly notice the lack of those famous samples.

Where things could've become tricky is in the joystick control. A mouse allows you to move almost instantaneously from one part of the screen to another — essential in such a game. To avoid unnecessary fiddling around, actions are highlighted by using the number keys.

## Suicide is fun...

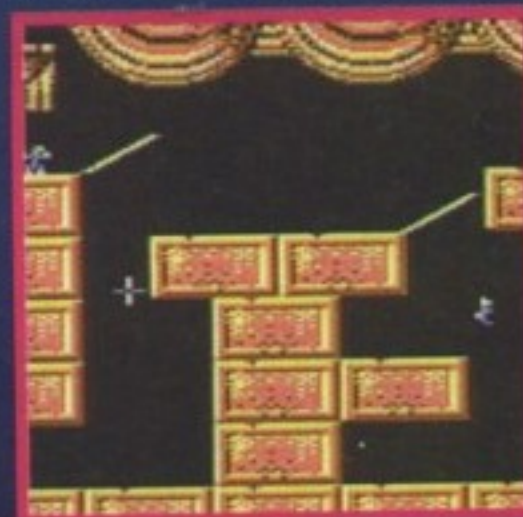
To make things easier still, it's possible to scroll around and select icons while paused. This means

relative immobility of the joystick and attribute problems are all but eradicated.

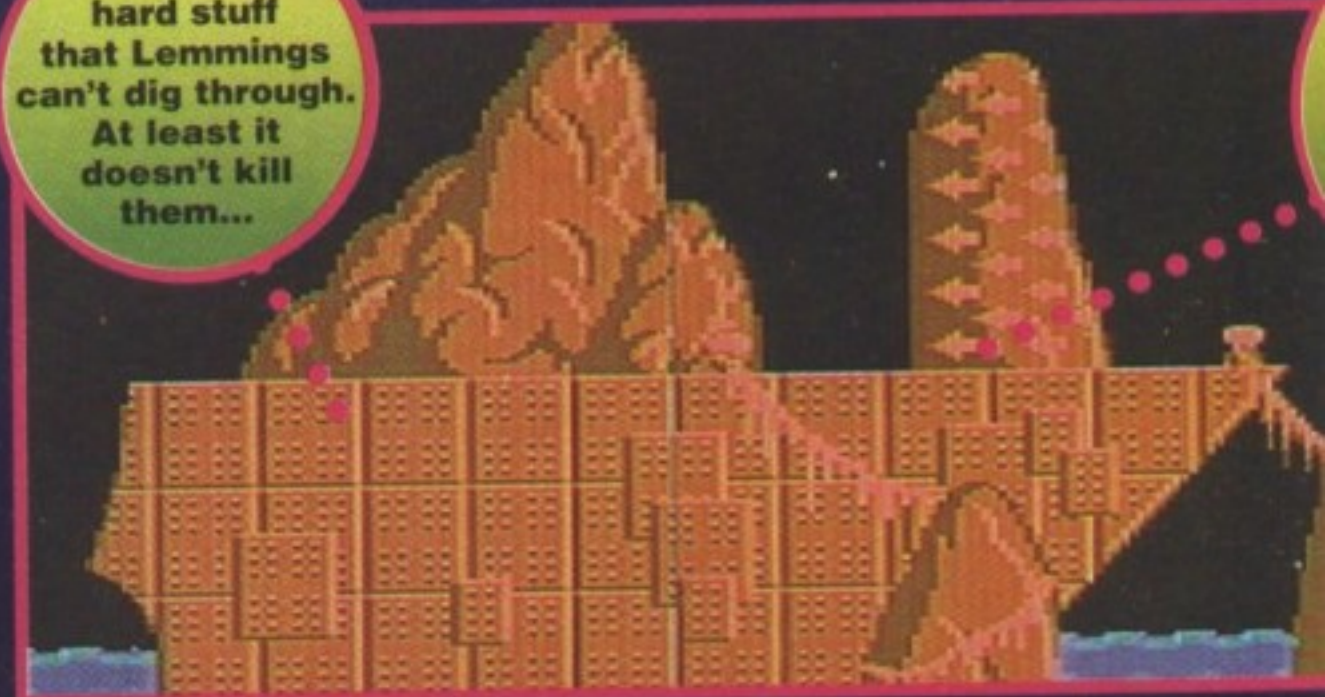
Things tend to slow down a tad when there's a lot of activity but this almost seems a blessing, giving precious extra seconds to gather your thoughts. To keep things running at a decent rate, the play area is only about half a screen wide — a little disconcerting at first but fiendish, addictive play soon diverts your attention.

So the compliments are out of the way, now for the fun part — the slugging (cackle!). For a start there's, um... and then there's... Great Scott! There's really nothing to fault!

● **Bye bye, Lemming! Prepare to splatter...**



Horrible hard stuff that Lemmings can't dig through. At least it doesn't kill them...







● Where do Lemmings go when they enter the exit?



● A Lemmings orgy. Well it's got to be, hasn't it? What else could they be doing?

I could gripe about the fact there's never more than thirty Lemmings to a level, but that would over-complicate things. Okay, here's one that never fails — multiload. Get outta this one, Alter Developments. Oh no (no pun intended, honest)! *Lemmings* has the least officious multi-load in history, because when you reach a level, you stay there until it's completed.

All right, so loading's bit of a drag at first, as early levels are so simple, but once you get into the tougher ones it fades into insignificance. Just remember to write down those passwords and make a note of each level's position on

The rows signify is rock can only be tunnelled through in one direction...

The exit. This is where Lemmings should be guided. What lies beyond is a mystery to us...

● Heh heh! Possibly one of Lemmings' most entertaining moments...

the tape counter.

C64 *Lemmings* is a fine achievement.

There's only one thing that really goes against it: the timing. The original game's been popular for nearly four years, so the whole thing's just a bit old hat. There was even a Spectrum version way back.

Recent 'Work In Progress' features gave some reasons for its delayed C64 debut, but the question remains — do we still need *Lemmings*? In my opinion (and that of most readers, judging from the mail we get) the answer is 'yes'. It's a classic, totally original when first released and nothing's come close

since. Even *Lemmings 2* on the Amiga doesn't have the same charm as its predecessor.

C64 *Lemmings* a spot-on con-version of a computing legend. Don't leave home without it.

**MILES! 97%**

**JAMES!**



● So it's arrived, then? One of the most talked about — not to mention original — games of all time, *Lemmings* is something else. You could shove it into a category, call it a God or strategy game, but it's still the nail-biting amount of playability that makes it so special. Unlike the Spectrum version, C64 *Lemmings* has up to the maximum 100 potential suicides of the Amiga version on-screen at any one time — Sir Clive's little baby could only handle 20. It even sounds well; Jereon Tel's marvellous tunes are, although a wee bit cute, nevertheless very listenable. In fact, I'm so impressed by '64 *Lemmings*, I'd go as far as to say this is the best 8-bit version I've seen — even its multiload is bearable. In fact, why are you reading this now? Why aren't you nipping out to buy it? Miss this, and you're letting a piece of software history pass you by.

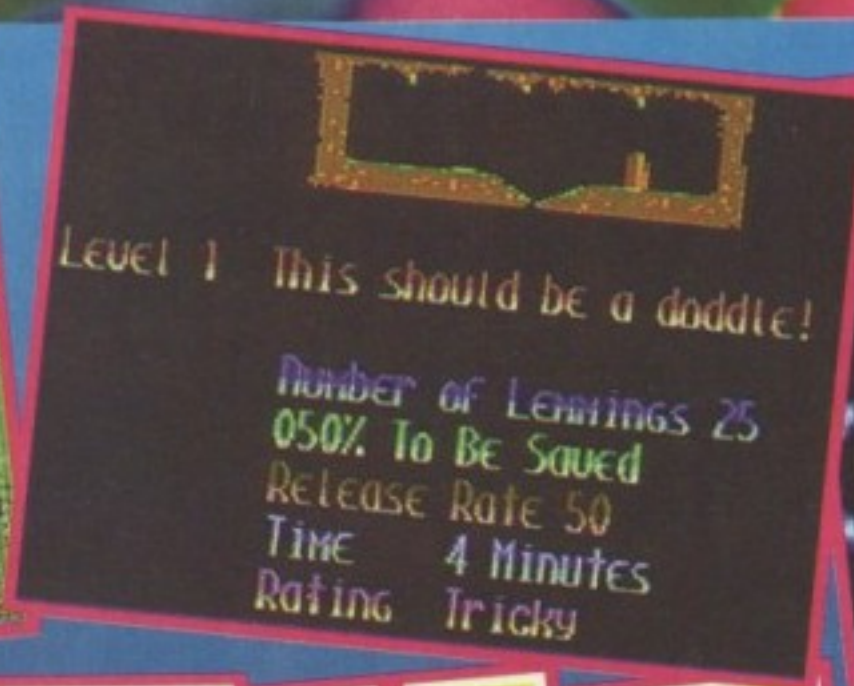
**97%**



|  |   |            |
|--|---|------------|
|  | ■ <b>PRESENTATION</b> ■<br>FAITHFUL TO THE 16-BIT AND NO-PROBLEM MULTILOAD    | <b>85%</b> |
|  | ■ <b>GRAPHICS</b> ■<br>NEAT SPRITES AND SUPERB BACK GROUNDS                   | <b>92%</b> |
|  | ■ <b>SOUND</b> ■<br>JOLLY DITTIES PLAY THROUGHOUT                             | <b>89%</b> |
|  | ■ <b>HOOKABILITY</b> ■<br>SIMPLE LEVELS GET YOU STARTED BUT THEN...           | <b>94%</b> |
|  | ■ <b>LASTABILITY</b> ■<br>A HUNDRED LEVELS KEEP YOU AWAKE TILL IT'S VERY LATE | <b>95%</b> |

**FORCE FACTOR 97%**





**You can't blame people for being cynical. Convert Lemmings to the C64? Impossible. Or so it seemed. E&E software's conversion of the original Amiga classic is every bit as good as we'd hoped it to be.**

**E**&E Software (formally Alter Developments) have just put the finishing touches to *Lemmings* — possibly the most hotly-awaited title for the C64 in years. Despite endless deadline extensions, controversy and, of course, the departure of Nikaj Ejik, they've managed to make it — in our opinion — the best 8-bit version of the DMA Design(ed) classic. After all the ifs and buts, it's finally ready, but, with the benefit of hindsight, would the team do anything differently?

'I would've seen to it that the communication between the members of the team — and Psygnosis — would be better,' admits Remi, 'I'm sure things could have gone a lot smoother.'

Thomas, on the other hand, is more concerned with the technical side of things. 'For a start I'd

# THE LEMMINGS

have used a PC with Cross Assembler and port everything down to the C64, instead of the four C64 set-up I'm using at the moment.'

But did the team ever have their doubts about the conversion? Were they ever tempted to throw the towel in and call it a day? 'Yes, on times such

as seven in the morning, having worked through the whole night,' reveals Thomas, 'only to find the disk I'd been saving all my essential code on had corrupted.'

Remi, on the other hand, reveals a more optimistic attitude. 'Not really. Of course, there were moments where things just didn't seem to go the way we'd have wanted them to go, but I never stopped believing we were able to pull it off.'

Jeroen sums it up in a single word: 'No.'

We asked the team about the biggest problem they encountered during production. 'Squeezing as much as possible into the memory — every bit is used,' says Thomas, with Jeroen also having suffered technical difficulties. 'Separating the audio data from the audio driver,' explains the tuner. 'Usually these are loaded into memory at the same time. In *Lemmings*, the driver is loaded once while the data is loaded in every level. This was needed to save disk space.' Thomas' response is a little



**Leon:  
Graphicist**



**Jeroen:  
Musician**



**Remi:  
Remi!**



**Thomas:  
Programmer**

## THE DAILY DESIGN

**T**he man behind *Lemmings*, so to speak, is an individual known as Mike Dailly of DMA Design. We asked him how the idea was formed, to which he responded: 'This one's in the history books by now, but if you've lost yours I'm sure I can let you know...'

'One lunchtime around August 1990 I was occupying my time by creating a small Dpaint animation. It was only eight frames, but had

hundreds of little men walking up to a gun and getting shot. A guy called Gary Timmonds then added some other men, touched up the animations and then we let others see it. Russel Kay — the programmer of PC *Lemmings* and *Lemmings 2* — was somewhat amused and was sure there was a game in there somewhere. He then did some tests — Lemmings walking around, falling etc, and this was shown to Psygnosis at one of the computer shows in London.

successful as it has been? 'No,' he says. 'Okay, we thought it would be big, but not... BIG!'

Finally, we enquired about Psygnosis' reaction after first seeing *Lemmings*. Mike confidently answers 'If you remember most people's reaction when they first saw it, it was much the same with Psygnosis. One big "WOW, COOL...". You can't really say much more than that, can you?'

Finally, we managed to get in touch with a fellow

Later, I did some tests — on a C64 of all things — but eventually Dave Jones took up the challenge on the Amiga, and history was made.' Did Mike think *Lemmings* would be as



# MAKERS OF LEMMINGS



more colourful. 'Only having two different colours out of a pallet of four to create a light source on all the objects and grounds.', with Remi cheekily admitting 'Trying to find new excuses to keep Psygnosis happy and interested!'

Obviously, fitting every element of the Amiga original into the C64 version would be nigh-impossible. What were the most difficult compromises Thomas and

Leon had to make as programmer and graphicist respectively? Thomas answers 'Having to squeeze the five-screen Amiga levels into two screens on the C64 — you could say they're completely new levels. Also having to leave out some levels and traps due to memory restrictions.' Leon, again, is preoccupied with golden hues. 'Creating colourful levels with only four colours,' he says, echoing many a graphic artist's dissatisfaction with the C64's limited palette.

But would they do it all again? Remi's indecisive 'I think so... or...' is a sharp contrast to Thomas' quick 'Get real!' However, Leon's far more positive about the project, responding 'Certainly!', in a similar manner to Jereon's 'Absolutely!'

We don't know about you lot out there, but if this is what the E&E guys can do with their first ever piece of commercial software, we eagerly await future productions...

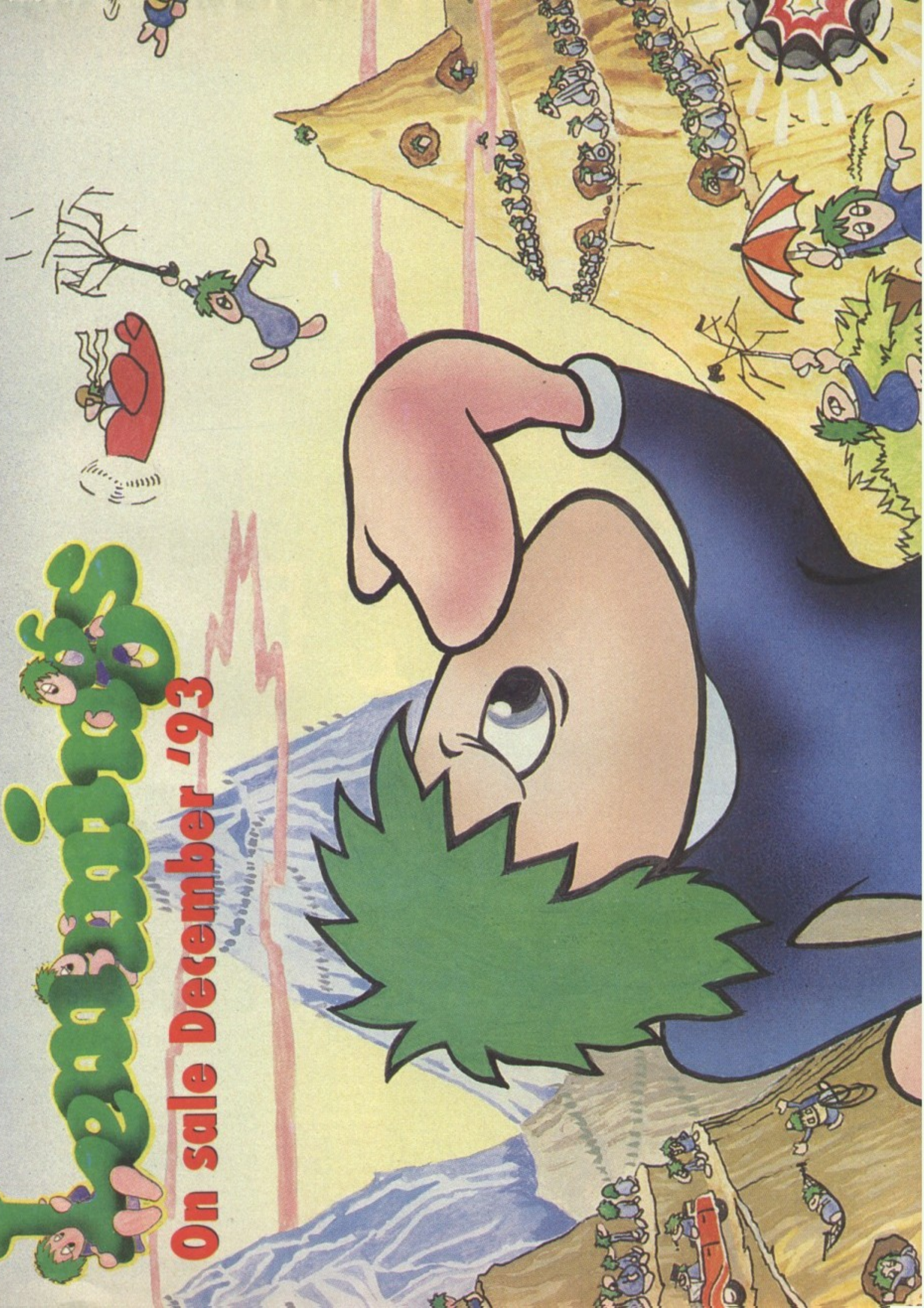


known as Greg Duddle. He's the Producer of *Lemmings*, and has been involved with more games than most people have eaten hot dinners. Having heard about E&E's excuses (Remi's in particular), we asked him what it was like to be working with the team. 'Remi and the others! Hmmm... although a decent, likeable bunch and very competent on the C64, they were notoriously difficult to pin down to any kind of deadline — "it's almost ready, it'll arrive on Friday etc"'. Finally, we enquired if working on C64 *Lemmings* had affected him in any way. 'Aaargh!' he said 'I can't believe it's over!'. Whatever could he mean...?



# Looney Tunes

On sale December '93







**COMMODORE**  
**FORCE**

EXTRA



# OH NO! IT'S A LEMMINGS COMPO

**TEN  
GOODIE  
BAGS UP  
FOR  
GRABS!**

**H**owdy folks! It's **COMMODORE FORCE** compo time again. Yep, to commemorate the cataclysmic events of this month — firstly me (Miles) crashing my car (again! — Just So Happened To Be Passenger Ed) and secondly *Lemmings*, we've gotten together with *Psygnosis* to bring you another great opportunity to grab a load of free loot.

So (sob), there I was, driving merrily along on my way to work, the sweet melodies of The Georgia Satellites billowing from the stereo. There's nothing like cruising to some cool sounds with the highway stretching ahead of you, then **KKERUMP!** Some dope had parked right in the middle of the road and yours truly obligingly ploughed straight into him. My lovely new car now resides at the local garage, a sorry sight to behold. It's headlamps smashed, bumper bent and shiny fender buckled and broken. Excuse my whining but it's been a bummer of a week...

But back to the comp. There's ten goody bags containing *Lemmings* and *Psygnosis* merchandise that must be won. Hats, T-shirts — you name it, it's in these bundles of brilliance, probably. If you'd like to lay your hands on one then here's how to get in with a chance — just think up an answer to our little *Lemmings*-related one-liner:

**Q : Why did the Lemming cross the road?**

**A :** .....

The least cringeworthy ten winners will be chosen by our good selves and the senders of the best entries will be rewarded. Send your entries to:

Oh dear, they really are scraping the barrel for these competitions! **COMMODORE FORCE**, Impact Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1JW.

