

LEMMINGS

Psygnosis

PRICE

£25.99

OUT

NOW

GRAPHICS

88%

SOUND

90%

PLAYABILITY

96%

VALUE

93%

OVERALL

95%

WHENEVER YOU'RE SITTING IN YOUR ROOM on a rainy Sunday afternoon, feeling sorry for yourself and wondering whether life has any meaning, then just spare a thought for small, furry, stupid creatures that are less fortunate than you are.

The critters we're talking about are lemmings - and on the Good Times Scale (from one to 10) the life that these guys lead doesn't even rank.

For a start, they live in the Arctic Tundra, a location that has all the residential qualities of Slough. But that's the least of their problems: because of a rather embarrassingly high sexual drive, lemming communities are facing an alarming population problem. This has led to a huge number of unwanted lemmings.

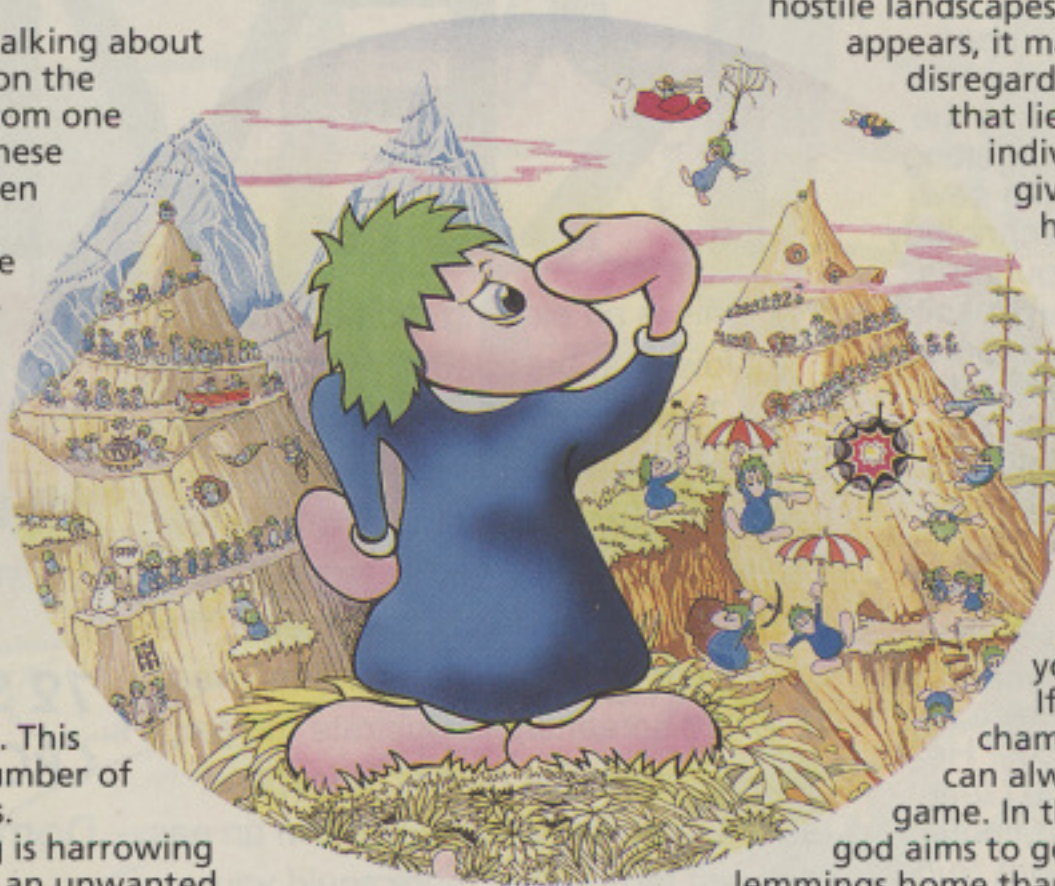
If being a lemming is harrowing enough, then being an unwanted lemming is downright depressing. It's not surprising then that many of the little guys are becoming suicidal, and taking off to the Siberian equivalent of Beachy Head to end it all.

As a tribute to these sorry examples of lemminghood, DMA Design and Psygnosis have got together to prove that they can be redeemed after all, and it's up to you to help out.

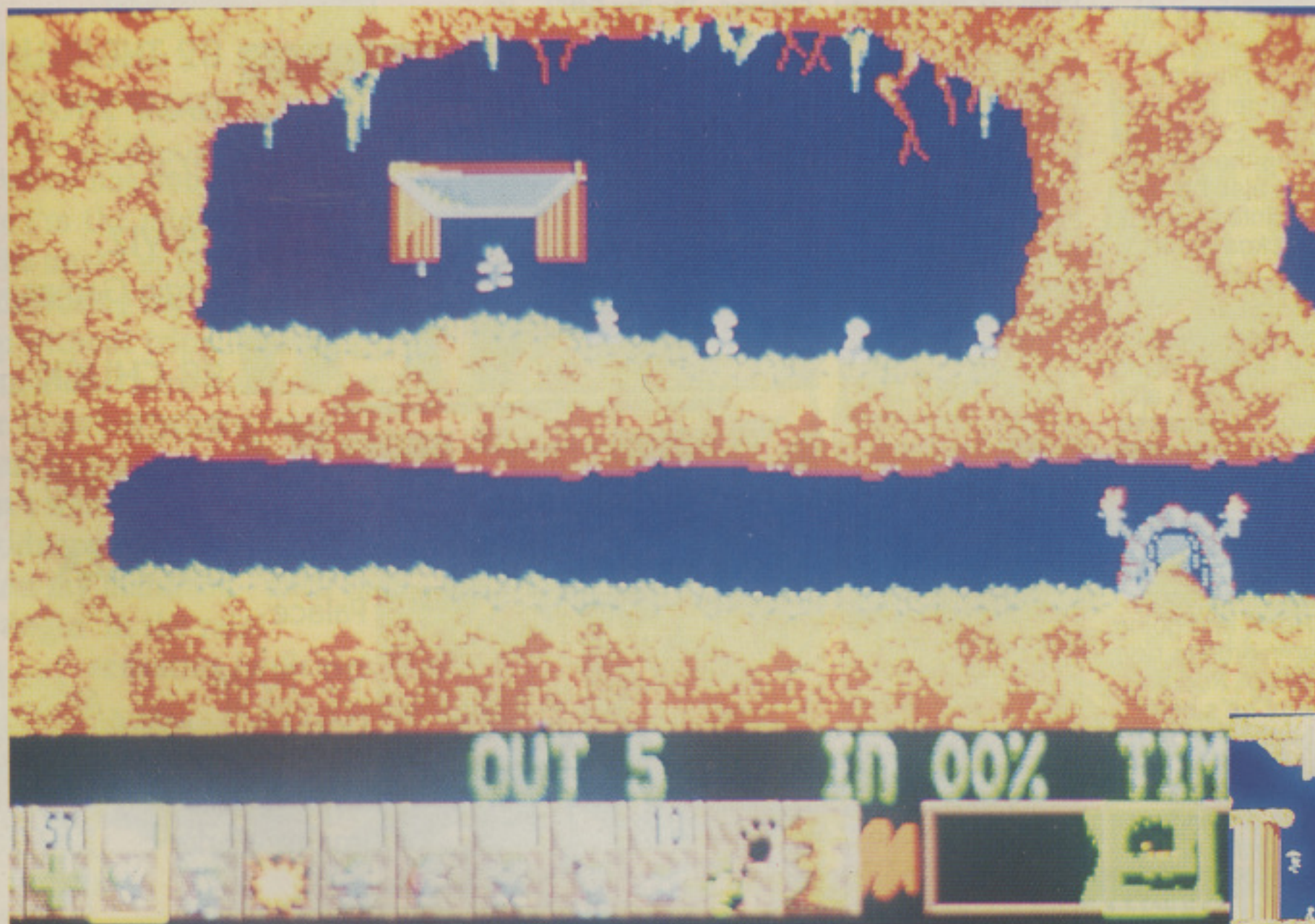
Lemmings are being released at a constant rate into hostile landscapes. Once each lemming appears, it marches straight for home, disregarding all the deadly pitfalls that lie in its way. Fortunately individual lemmings can be given one of nine skills to help them guide their fellows safely home.

To win a level you have to ensure that a specified percentage of lemmings make it home. Do that, and you'll be considered grown-up enough to tackle the next devious level. Fail, and you'll just have to try again until you get it right won't you?

If you fancy yourself as a champion lemming saver you can always try a two-player game. In this case each lemming-god aims to get more of his batch of lemmings home than his opponent. The added twist here is that, as well as using lemmings to clear a pathway, you can also send them of on sabotage missions to disrupt your opposite's efforts. You beast!

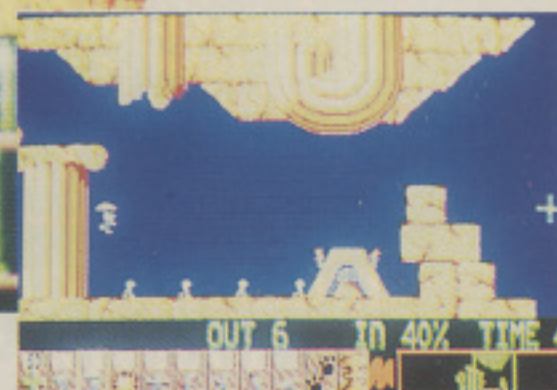


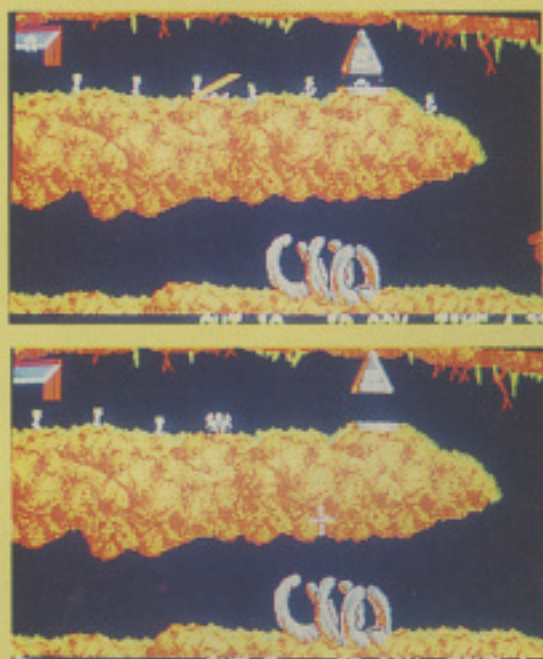
LEMMINGS



AT THE BEGINNING OF EACH LEVEL, the lemmings pour out their little trap-door. They don't have to march far to their doom, so it's important to target the first few out for special life-saving tasks.

NOW THIS IS A SIGHT TO WARM THE HEART - lots of loveable lemmings leaping safely back to their home after negotiating the tragically treacherous and tortuous route.

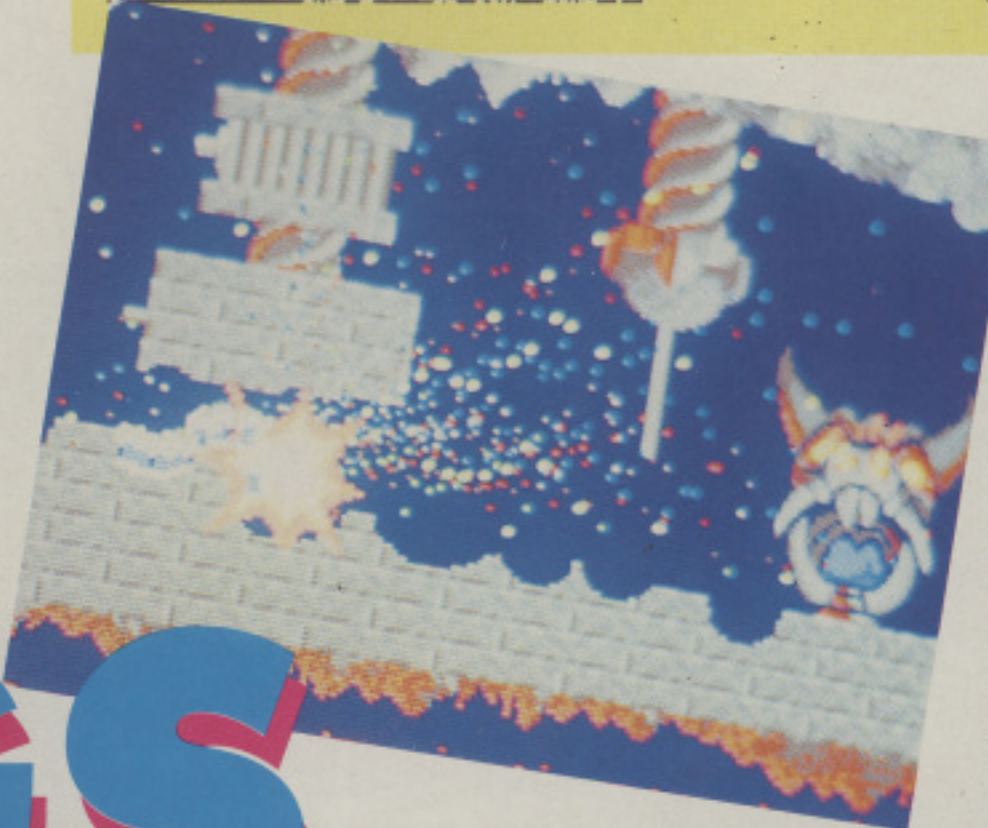




HERE ARE SOME OF THE NASTIER THINGS that plague lemmingkind. Ten-ton weights, lemming-traps, pits of fire and vats of water are, believe it or not, some of the milder forms of lemming punishment that the fiendish designers have dreamed up.



BEFORE EACH LEVEL YOU'RE SHOWN A USEFUL MINI-MAP and told what percentage of lemmings you're expected to get home (also, each level has a title which often gives a clue as to the way to solve it). You'll also notice that each level has an unpronounceable access code: handy for those moments when you're dying for a cuppa.



IF THINGS GO BADLY WRONG, or if you're hit with a sudden vicious streak, then you can always opt for Lemming Armageddon. All of the lemmings begin counting down from five to four and then explode simultaneously in a shower of lemming bits (yuk)!



AS WITH ALL PSYGNOSIS PRODUCTS, *Lemmings* comes with a superb animated intro. This one, however, scores extra points for being super-cute. Unfortunately the whole product gets cuter from here on. Don't say we didn't warn you!

GS

A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT KETTLE OF FISH boils up during the two-player game. Now, the exact percentage of lemmings that you get home is irrelevant as long as you get more home than your opponent. To this end, it's always best to reserve one or two lemmings for suicide missions into enemy territory. By blowing up your own lemmings at strategic points you can seriously hamper the enemy's efforts.



THE STATUS AND MENU BARS are where you do much of your lemming control. As well as altering the rate of lemming flow, pausing the game, and setting off Armageddon, you can select icons for Walking, Climbing, Floating, Bashing, Mining, Digging, Blocking, Exploding, and Building. The miniature map on the right is used to monitor the progress of lemmings off screen and to zero in on them quickly when necessary.

COMMENT

LEMMINGS IS ONE OF THE MOST PLAYABLE AND ENJOYABLE GAMES EVER - and if it doesn't outsell everything else on the shelves and pick up half a dozen awards in the process then I'm a grandfather lemming's belly-button fluff. Graphically it may not look very exciting: the lemming sprites are small (but well animated), but that's been a deliberate manoeuvre to get as much of each level on screen at once (although the well-designed control interface allows you to zip back and forth across the landscape very quickly and accurately). The sound too is delightful: the action is accompanied by jaunty supermarket style ditties complemented by cute spot effects and digitised speech. But where Lemmings really scores is in its addictive playability: the initial levels are no real challenge, but they do warm you up nicely by introducing the elements gradually - and by the time you reach the trickier levels you'll be hooked.

Laurence Scotford