

* A MOMENT WITH... Jon Hare

Every issue, we put an industry legend in the hotseat. This month, David Crookes met Jon Hare, founder of Sensible Software

Who is Jon Hare?

Jon Hare and Chris Yates formed a formidable partnership in the Eighties. Sensible Software would go on to produce an amazing series of games including *Mega Lo Mania*, *Cannon Fodder* and *Sensible Soccer*, and Hare has won many accolades and awards.

Which of your games would you recommend to our readers and why?

In general, *Sensible World Of Soccer* for sports fans who like fast multiplayer action and light accessible management, *Cannon Fodder* for boys who used to run around the playground pretending they were shooting each other, *Mega Lo Mania* for history swots and strategy heads, *Wizball* for the mad, annoying kids who jumped around a lot, and *Wizkid* for the space cadet kids who were smoking funny fags behind the bike sheds.

What is your proudest memory?

Winning the Indie Developer of the Year award for the second year running in the Nineties and when we were number one in the UK all-format charts for 52 weeks of a three-year period from 1992.

What's the most difficult thing you've encountered while working on a game?

Mega Lo Mania was very difficult to finish and the end of Sensible's three-game deal with Warner was a nightmare, both technically and from a business point of view.

Which industry veteran do you admire?

Miyamoto. He is by a distance the best game designer that ever lived.

How would you like your games to be remembered?

As enjoyable, varied, genre-defining games that helped to shape and influence the games industry prior to its over-commercialisation.

Which game do you wish you'd made?

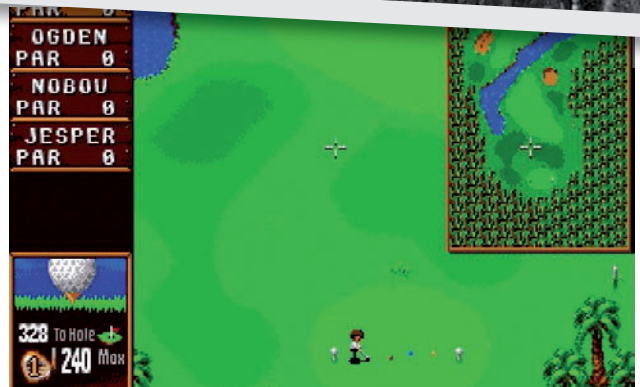
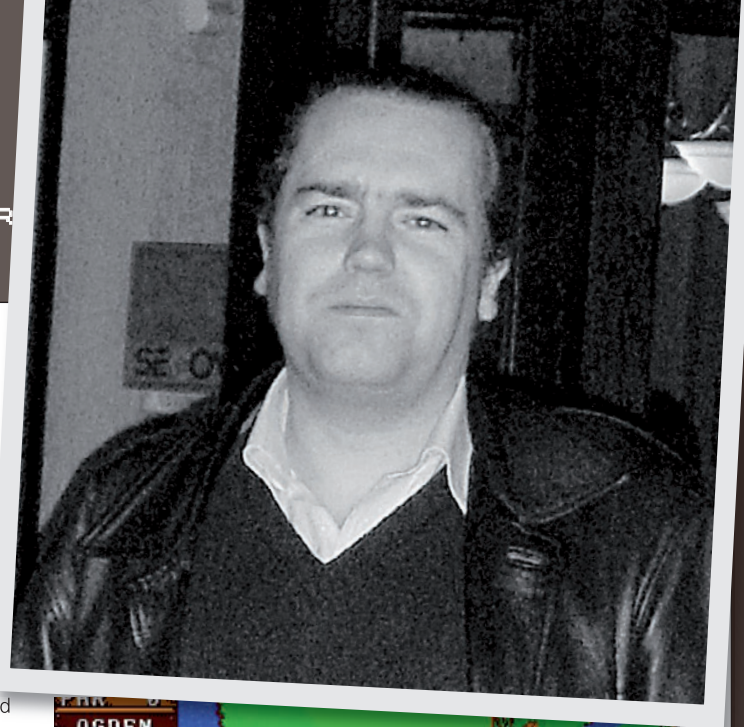
Space Invaders or *Mario 64*. They are the two most groundbreaking games of all time.

What opportunities has making videogames given you?

It has given me my entire professional life – enough money to own my house and have a bit tucked away for a rainy day. Games are a valid means of creative expression that has actually given me enough money to live on, and this is a fanciful dream for most artists.

What's your darkest memory of being in the games industry?

Well, 1998 was a year-long bout of palpitations and bad sleep stemming from



» *Sensible Golf* aimed to do for teeing off what *Sensi Soccer* did for kicking off.

fear of having to pay back £1 million to GT Interactive if they decided to flex their legal muscles in regard to our under-performance in our multi-game deal with them at the time. Thankfully nothing bad happened.

And your best?

The very first *Sensible Soccer* World Cup in our old offices in March, Cambridgeshire. We had a whole bunch of games journalists and TV people over, cans of beer, fish and chips at half time, Pavarotti singing the intro in two-frame animation. It was buzzing.

Can you share one interesting anecdote about your time in the industry?

In 1985 Chris Yates and I were showing off *Twister* at the first ECTS show I went to for Mark Cale's System 3. Mark hired some minimally dressed young girls to dance on stage. Another game Mark was promoting was *International Karate* and martial arts guys were smashing breeze blocks with their bare hands. The girls could no longer dance because the bits were sticking in their feet.

How has the industry changed over the last 20 years?

The rest of the world had overtaken UK development and publishing. The money men and empire builders have overpowered the creative visionaries. The public have become more conservative in their tastes, less able in their game playing. Online is starting to overpower retail. And some of our guys get MBEs and OBEs these days. *

“Gaming's money men and empire builders have overpowered the creative visionaries”

