

after hours: *family*

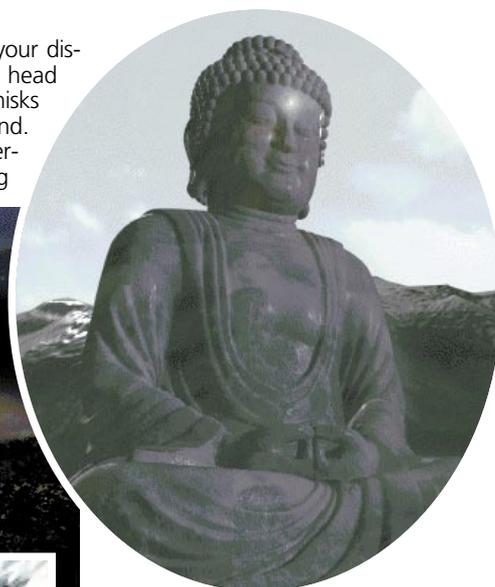
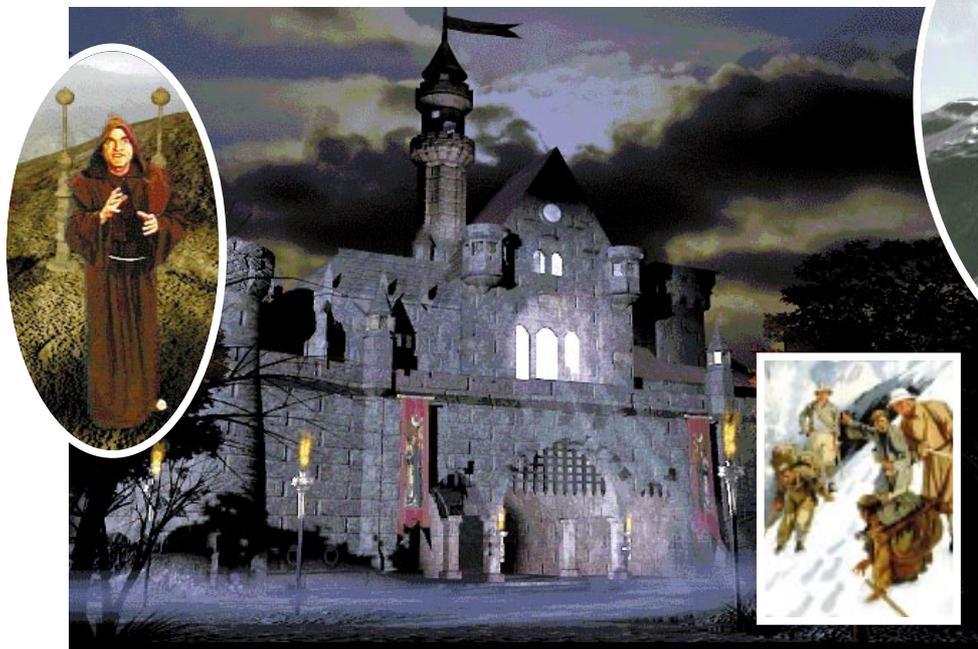
Myths and Legends: Monsters and Mythical Creatures

The first in a series of three, this CD is an interactive documentary which explores the mysteries surrounding various monsters and mythical creatures.

To begin with, you find yourself in the centre of a castle, from where you make your way through winding tunnels to the outside. A monk appears and introduces you to the game: it is his task to guide you, and you click on him when he mentions the creature you want to learn about.

We bring monsters and mythical creatures into your living room, and present you with the charming story of Pocahontas. We also dip into Blender, an on-screen lifestyle magazine

Alternatively, you have at your disposal a staff with a lion's head which, when clicked on, whisks you away to the mythical land. Here you will find ten different lights which, according



to the guide, each represent the memory of a different creature. Each beast has its own virtual world through which you travel, clicking on hot spots for information. It's like a reference work, with pages of dense text and pictures, (go to the library if you really want to knuckle down to some background research). Click on ►

family/multimedia news

Sting – All This Time was released on April 22nd. A must for the devoted fan, the CD lets you hear his music, watch his concerts, listen to his views and even get a taste of his acting – all for £39.99. *Philips Media: 0171 911 3081*

Softkey has slashed the prices of its **Key Kids Range**, with products now retailing at £12.99 each. *Softkey: 0181 789 2000*

Meanwhile, if you buy one of Broderbund's **Living Classics** products, 40p will go to Great Ormond Street Hospital for Sick Children. *Broderbund: 01429 273029*

Corel has put together two special packs of ten CDs from its Home series (see **Corel Super Ten** review, page 77). The entertainment pack includes **All-Movie Guide**, **Internet Mania** and others; while the kids' one includes **Wild Board Games** and **Adventures with Edison**. Each pack retails at £39 for all ten products. *Corel: 0800 581028*

Disney has released a **Toy Story** screensaver to complement the film

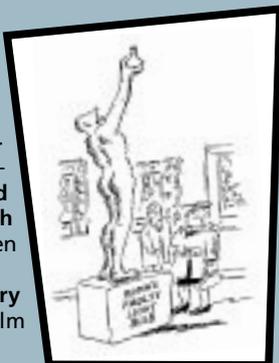
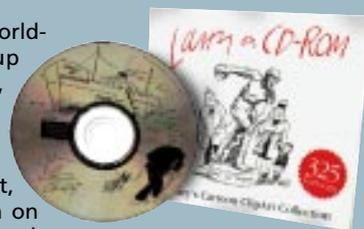
released in late March. Also, a World-wide Web site has been set up which has games, film clips, soundbites and competitions. *Http://www.bvi.co.uk/toystory/ Buena Vista: 0171 605 2890*

Larry, the famous cartoonist, has created a clip-art collection on CD-Rom. It is selling for £9.99, and you

can also download a screensaver from the Larry Web site: *www.larry.co.uk*. *The Data Business Ltd: 01865 852102*

Guitar Hits – Plugged-In, Volume 1 is a guitar tutorial from Ubisoft. It features 84 lessons, 180 exercises, a metronome, video clips, and a chromatic tuner, and costs £39.99. *Ubisoft: 0181 941 4004*

Terraglyph and Funsoft have teamed up to produce **Hansel and Gretel** and **Rumpelstiltskin**. These are like interactive storybooks of old, but you have to solve puzzles in order to move through the tale. *Funsoft: 01782 566511*



After hours family

the background you can see through the cracks in the page to return to the creature's land.

When you have exhausted the hot spots in a particular world, the creature will appear from its hiding place. This acts as an incentive for younger children to learn as much from the CD as possible, but it is also good to catch a glimpse of the beautiful, 3D-rendered beasts. The guide is always with you—all you do is click on his staff to call him up. Among others, you'll meet the Yeti, Minotaur, Loch Ness Monster, Leviathan, Pegasus and the Gorgons. **RS**

This CD is excellent for people of all ages. It's informative, but it's the visual quality that makes it stand out. Superb value.

○ £29.99

○ Koch: 01252 714340

Myths and Legends

Enjoyment	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of use	1	2	3	4	5
Value for money	1	2	3	4	5

Requirements: 486SX; 4Mb of Ram; 4Mb of hard disk space; CD-Rom drive; Soundblaster-compatible sound card; Windows 3.1 or higher; MS-Dos 5.0.

Blender

Blender is an interactive magazine on CD. Published monthly, it's a mix of features, style, news, and reviews; enlivened by a generous helping of popular music, video clips, and animation.

The current issue's cover feature is an in-depth biography of Icelandic singer Björk, complete with filmed interviews, and music and video excerpts from her latest album. Other features include interviews with Simpsons creator Matt Groening, and Terry Gilliam; music from PM Dawn and KRS1; plus articles on sex, death, politics, and religion.

CD-based magazines such as Blender have numerous advantages over printed magazines. Take the regular music previews section, for example. You'll find no less than 25 albums, each with sleeve notes on the bands, arranged in five sections according to music type. You actually get to hear two tracks from each album—that's 50 tracks in all. Where else can you try such a large and varied selection of music before you buy?

Then there's the film section, which allows you to view trailers from recent or impending releases. You can click among the 3D-bespiced panel of Blender reviewers to hear their personal opinions. The panel remains the same from issue to issue, so you'll get to know whose taste to trust and whose to ignore. Blender works with either PC or Mac. **MA**

Blender is good value at a tenner. We especially like the music albums section.

○ £9.99 monthly

○ Dennis Direct: 01789 490215

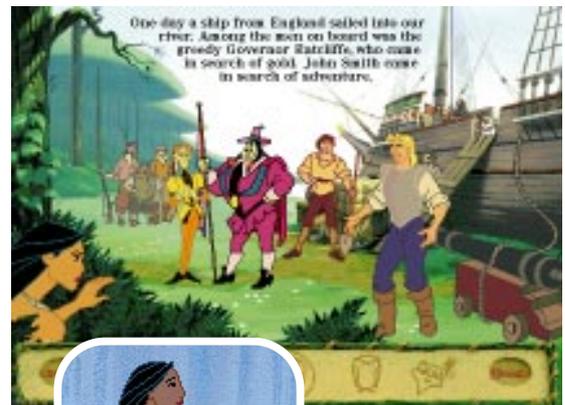
Blender

Enjoyment	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of use	1	2	3	4	5
Value for money	1	2	3	4	5

Requirements: 486/Pentium PC; Windows 3.1 or later; 4Mb of Ram.

Pocahontas

Simply, this is an animated storybook which has games to play along the way. In common with its successful predecessor, The Lion



King, this product is beautifully designed, loads up quickly and runs smoothly.

Following a brief introduction, the story begins. You can choose to sit back and have the story read to you (good for the youngest users), or opt for the read-and-play option. This is similar to the first option but, when each page has been read, the screen becomes active. Moving the cursor around the screen will show up hot spots. The games include archery with moving targets, and trying to catch cherries with the spike of your beak before Meeko eats them.

The themes in Pocahontas are love, war and man's relationship with nature. If you think this sounds a bit tough on a three-year-old, the animals provide enough comic relief to strike a balance. **RS**

The animation is of a very high quality and the product is good for the very young. However, the price hasn't been cut and remains quite high at £44.99.

○ £44.99

○ Buena Vista: 0171 605 2400

Pocahontas

Enjoyment	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of use	1	2	3	4	5
Value for money	1	2	3	4	5

Requirements: 486SX PC; 8Mb of Ram; CD-Rom drive; 8-bit Soundblaster-compatible sound card; Dos 6.0; Windows 3.1 or later.

