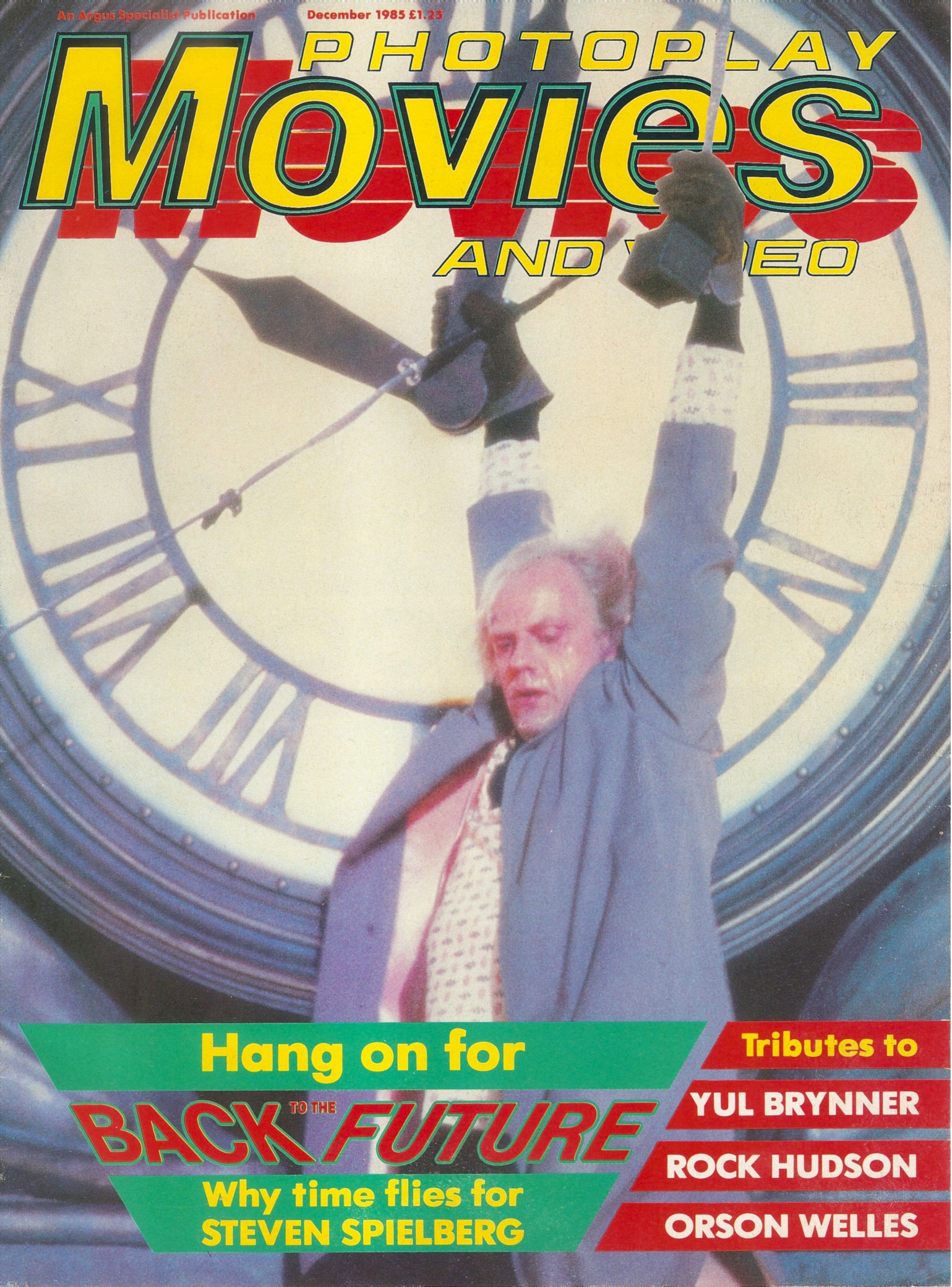


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A ROBERT ZEMECKIS Film

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Written by ROBERT ZEMECKIS & BOB GALE Music by ALAN SILVESTRI Produced by BOB GALE and NEIL CANTON

Executive Producers STEVEN SPIELBERG KATHLEEN KENNEDY and FRANK MARSHALL Directed by ROBERT ZEMECKIS

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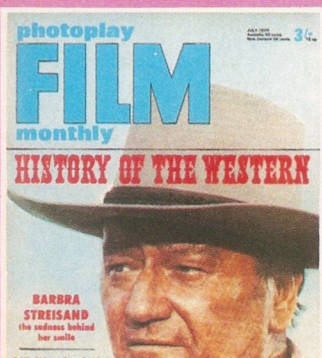
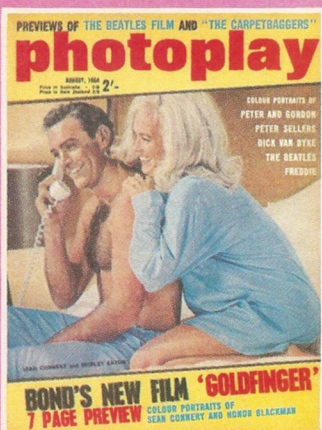
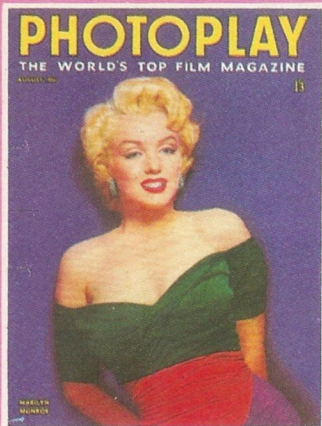
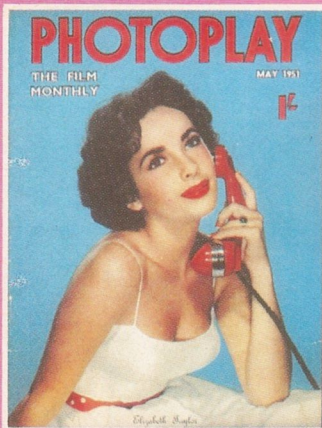
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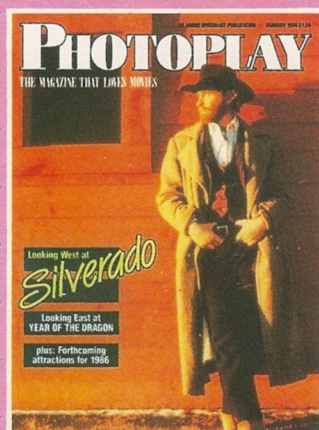
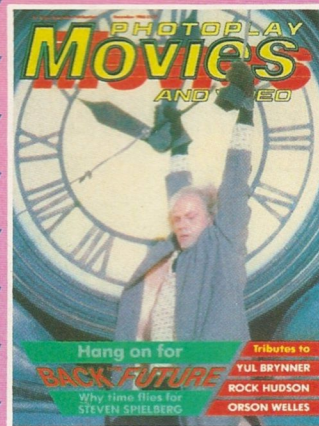
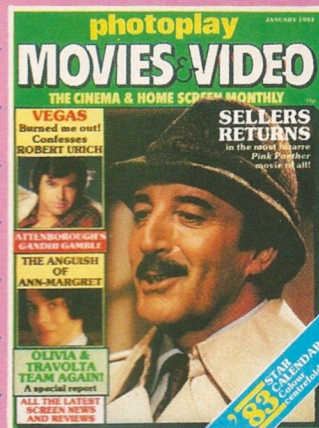
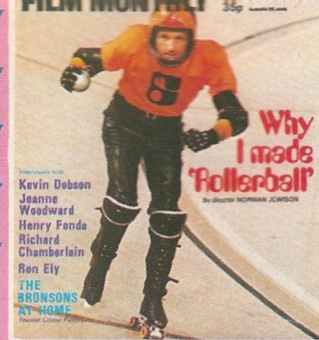
PHOTOPLAY

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With the January 1986 issue *Photoplay* will be entering its 36th year of publication. Like Hollywood, the magazine has had a colourful history since its birth in March 1950. Over the years we've welcomed new screen faces, marvelled at the progress of special effects, and applauded the box-office success of top quality films. In the same breath we have lamented the decline in cinemagoing and become nostalgic for the glamour and glorious past of the big Hollywood studios. What the future now holds for cinema only time will tell, but whatever lies ahead *Photoplay* always has, and always will be, the magazine that loves movies

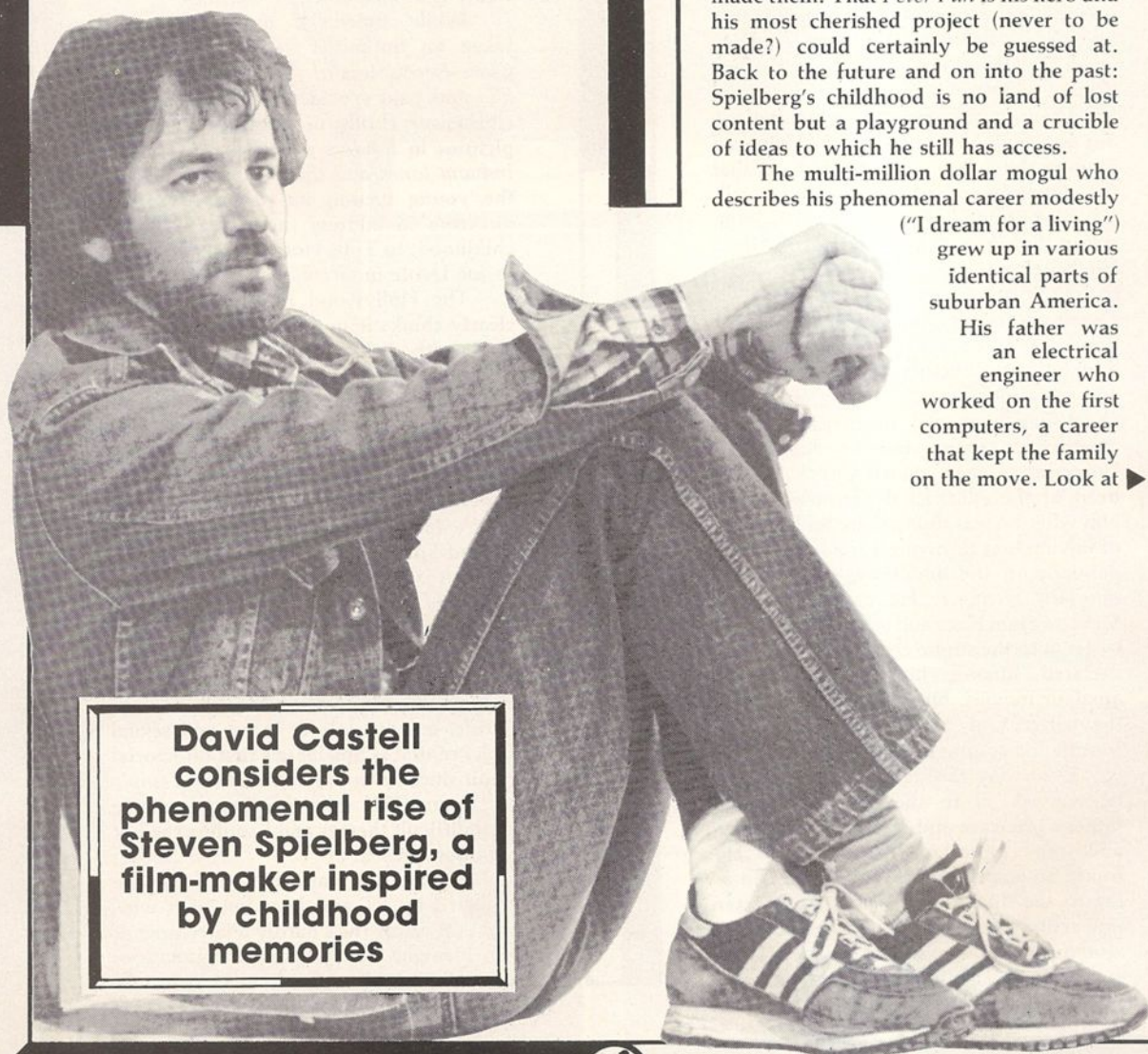
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PHOTOPLAY

On to the past



**David Castell
considers the
phenomenal rise of
Steven Spielberg, a
film-maker inspired
by childhood
memories**

I equate it with working for Walt Disney in the old days," says Robert Zemeckis of directing *Back to the Future* for Steven Spielberg.

"Producers like Steven and George Lucas are functioning like the old studio heads. They put out a mass of product that they personally oversee and the public equates their names with a certain quality of production. If the public understands that, it has to be good for all of us."

But whereas Disney used to always listen to the opinions of young teenagers and value those above the ideas of his board, Spielberg has only to listen to the teenager in himself for inspiration. His films are never childish, but you can sense that the child still lives in the man who made them. That *Peter Pan* is his hero and his most cherished project (never to be made?) could certainly be guessed at. Back to the future and on into the past: Spielberg's childhood is no land of lost content but a playground and a crucible of ideas to which he still has access.

The multi-million dollar mogul who describes his phenomenal career modestly

("I dream for a living")

grew up in various identical parts of suburban America.

His father was an electrical engineer who worked on the first computers, a career that kept the family on the move. Look at ▶



► the neat houses erected on the burial ground of *Poltergeist*, the snug estate where *ET* hides out, and you see the irrelevance of specific geography. It is a landscape of memory, of well maintained houses and open gardens, of comfortable living rooms and messy bedrooms.

From the very start Spielberg has plundered his memory for incidents and plot outlines. Told that his toy trains would be confiscated if he crashed them once more, he disobeyed, but filmed the pile-up on a home movie camera. The train set might be appropriated, but film is memory made tangible. Oh no, they can't take that away from him.

One vivid memory from childhood is of the night his father scooped a sleepy child out of bed and took him to a hill on the edge of town to watch a meteor shower. That moment is recreated in *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* and was the entire genesis of his amateur film *Firelight*, a science fiction thriller made when Spielberg was 16. The following year he went to Universal.

Went, it must be said, as many of us do: as a paying customer on the Universal Studios tour. But when he realised that the buses were plying a safe, well-travelled route away from the main action, Spielberg slipped the leash. Alfred Hitchcock was shooting *Torn Curtain* and the 17 year-old sneaked in to watch. Twenty years later he is (as Hitchcock was then) one of only a handful of international directors whose name alone will sell a film.

What happened next really sealed Spielberg's career, and his loyalty to Universal. A man named Chuck Silvers, head of the editorial department, asked him what he was doing there and, instead of having him thrown off the lot, listened patiently to the ambitions of this film-obsessed teenager. He agreed to view Steven's 8mm films and so gave him a pass to get in to the studio the next day. Silvers declared himself impressed with the amateur movies, but there was an end to the matter. Only Spielberg now knew the routine for getting in to the studio.

Every day throughout that summer, he walked on to the lot carrying his father's briefcase and trying to look older and more important than he was. He found an empty office and fixed a name-tag to the door. Three years later, after university studies and making the short, *Amblin'*, that gave its name to his company, he was offered a seven-year

contract, the youngest employee on the studio payroll.

Nowadays the tour buses skirt the spooky Norman Bates mansion used in *Psycho*, they drive round the Amityville basin where Bruce from *Jaws* lurks, but they don't go near the two-storey adobe ranch-style block that is the headquarters of Amblin, built for him at an estimated cost of \$5 million as a thank-you from Universal; the house that *ET* built. But if some film-mad kid slipped through the studio security and wandered into Spielberg's presence, it's odds on that he'd get a fair hearing. Certainly the young writers and directors in his court have been given every advantage of his patronage. Spielberg got Bob Zemeckis his first directing breaks on *I Wanna Hold Your Hand* and *Used Cars*; there's a similar debt on the part of Chris Columbus who wrote *Gremlins* and *The Goonies*.

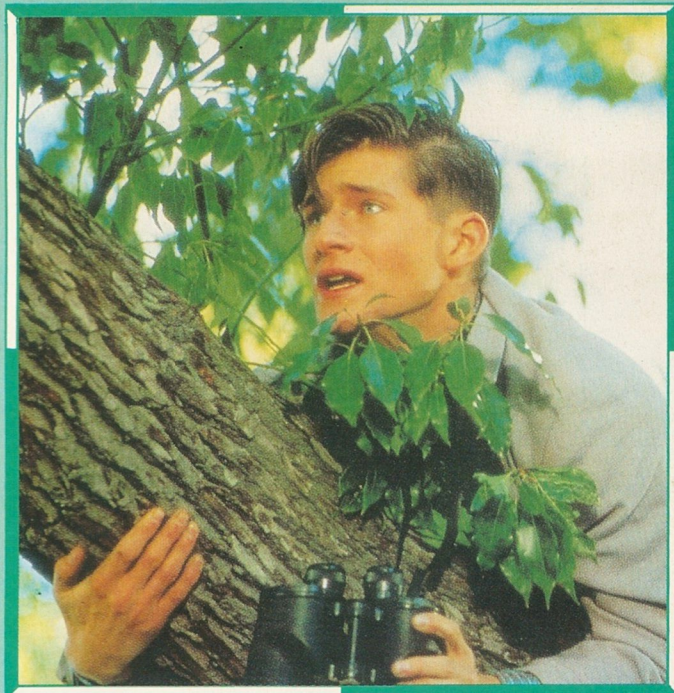
While Spielberg has consistently taken an optimistic view of space, in *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* and *ET*, and paid spectacular homage to the cliffhanger thrills of Saturday morning pictures in *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, the young tycoon has left it to other directors to address the darker side of childhood; to Tobe Hooper in *Poltergeist*, to Joe Dante in *Gremlins*.

The Hollywood film Establishment clearly thinks it puny and trivial to deal only with lightweight matters (it also thinks that artists should starve in garrets rather than dwell in style in adobe ranch-style blocks) and so has withheld its ultimate accolade, the Oscar that lesser film-makers have frequently won. The underdog gets to bark on Oscar night and there's far too great an aura of success around Spielberg.

But whereas the jolly time travel jaunts of *Back to the Future* and the treasure hunts of *The Goonies* are unlikely, on the present showing, to pick up one statuette between them, hopes are high in the 1986 voting for *The Colour Purple*, a gritty tale of incest and sexual violence that is Spielberg's first directorial credit since *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*. This time Spielberg is dicing with difficult themes and handling the hot potatoes himself.

It may not earn him the fortune attracted by *ET* and *Jaws* but, if it wins him that Oscar (he's hardly a latecomer at 38), it might well mark the beginning of the end of childhood. ►





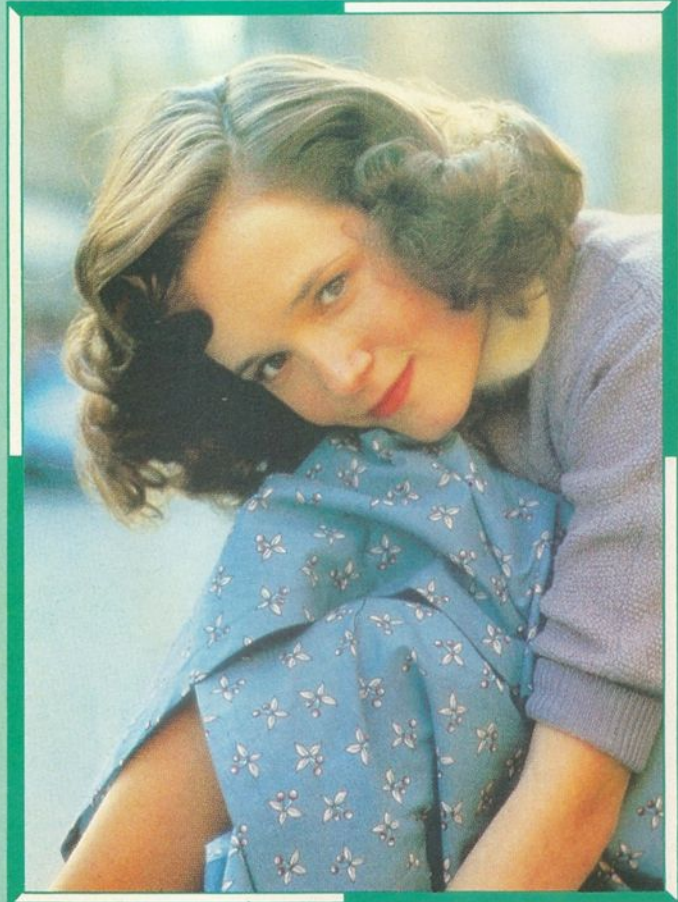
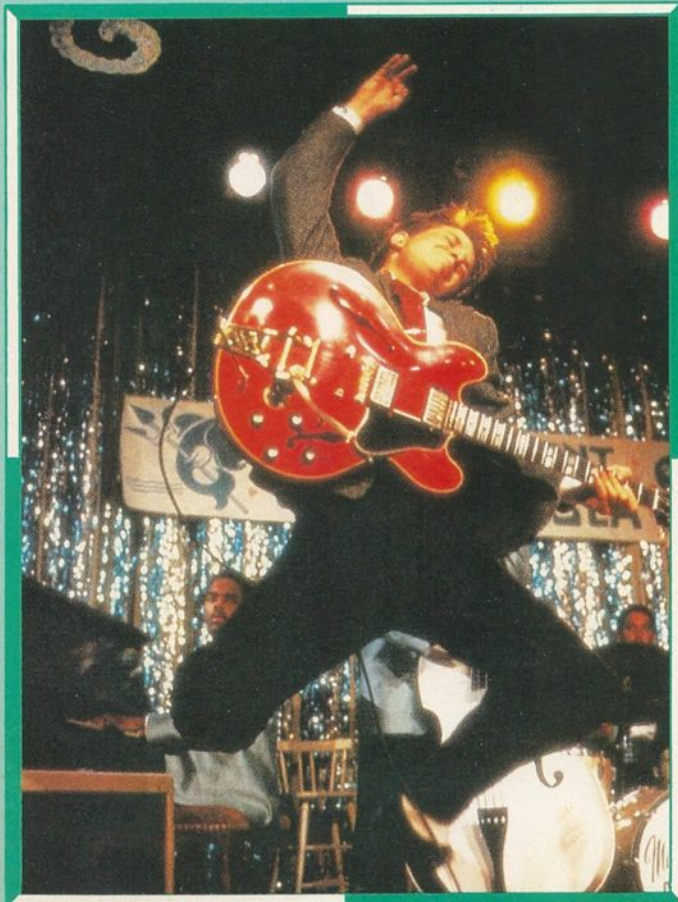
BACK TO THE

Scenes from the new time travel movie starring (above) Crispin Glover; (left) Christopher Lloyd; (opposite) Michael J Fox and Lea Thompson. (Below) the time-tripping DeLorean





THE FUTURE



...Back to the future

With five films being released over Christmas: *Back to the Future* and *The Goonies* in Britain, *The Colour Purple*, *Young Sherlock Holmes* and *The Money Pit* in America; the output of Spielberg's company Amblin Entertainment is currently the most prolific in Hollywood. But, as Tony Crawley exclusively reveals, it is only the start of a massive flurry of future activity from Spielberg and his production partners Kathleen Kennedy and Frank Marshall

Coming Up

YOUNG SHERLOCK HOLMES was directed in London during the summer by Barry Levinson who made *Diner* and *The Natural*. Amblin's first production outside America, it looks at the super-tec as a bright teenager.

THE MONEY PIT first hit headlines when Kathleen Turner had to withdraw from the comedy because of other commitments. Shelley Long, from television's *Cheers*, eventually joined Tom Hanks in the caper directed by another of Spielberg's favourite directors, ex-actor Richard Benjamin.

THE COLOUR PURPLE is far removed from what we've grown to expect from Spielberg or, indeed, from Amblin. No fantasy. No Indiana Jones stunts. Just life in the raw. Very raw. Incest and

lesbianism are just part of Alice Walker's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel about life among suburban blacks in Georgia from 1903-1943. "They're very well off — not sharecroppers," points out the male star Danny Glover (from *Silverado* and *Witness*). "It's a very important book. I just hope all this pre-publicity about how great it is won't harm the film because it certainly should be a very important film."

Next in line

AMAZING STORIES could be the next all Spielberg movie to hit Europe based, of course, on the young master's new anthology television series of short chillers. As some Euro-networks find the series too expensive to buy, Amblin is putting out a film of just the Spielberg episodes from the first season including the series opener *Ghost Train* (with

Lukas Haas from *Witness*) and *The Mission* (starring Kevin Costner).

PETER PAN is next on the Amblin schedule. At the moment. Stages are already reserved at Elstree studios and shooting is due to begin towards the end of the summer. The final script is by Walter Parkes and Larry Lasker, the *WarGames* team. And although Spielberg told the BBC a year ago that he had found his Peter Pan ("I'm not saying if Pan is male or female..."), his co-producers say: "He must have forgotten to tell us. We've done no casting whatsoever on the movie." (So much for the rumours of Dustin Hoffman as Captain Hook!)

ALWAYS has always been on his schedule — long before Amblin was even created. "It's been around so long," grins Frank Marshall, "we've begun calling it *Never*." It's Amblin's first re-make, based on the 1943 Spencer Tracy film *A Guy Named Joe* — a fond favourite of all the three Amblin chiefs, which is why they trailed it on the television in *Poltergeist*. A fantasy love-story, it originally had Tracy as a World War II pilot killed in action and sent back to earth, rather like Warren Beatty in *Heaven Can Wait*, to guide a young airman through life and love. The new version is written by Diane Thomas, who wrote *Romancing the Stone*. Stars? "Oh we've gone through everybody that anybody knows," says Kathy Kennedy. "It's the same old problem," adds Frank Marshall, "the availability of a... team. Once you get the guy right, then the girl has to be available and then there's got to be a younger girl. We're trying to slot it in so that everyone is available at the right time."

INDIANA JONES III — a Lucas film, of course, not Amblin — is due before the cameras in 1987 with a script by the *Gremlins* and *Goonies* man, Chris Columbus. "Man?" yells Richard Donner, the ▶



► *Goonies* director. "Chris is just a kid. You just can't believe all this comes out of this 23 year-old kid!" Says Spielberg: "You can drop a stone into the black hole of Chris' imagination and never hear it hit the bottom!" An Indy prequel or sequel? "We haven't determined yet," says Kathy Kennedy. "There will be a new girl and we'll possibly reprise one or two characters but even that is up in the air. We have a tough time coming up with something that will out-do... God! But knowing this is it — the finale — adds a certain element that we haven't dealt with before. It was always designed as a trilogy with Harrison doing all three — and Steven, of course. Oh yes, he'll direct *Indy III*. I don't know where these rumours about George Miller doing it came from..." Which means Spielberg won't have time for...

TINTIN. It was on Melissa Mathison's suggestion that Amblin bought rights to *all* the famous Belgian comic-books by Hergé (a Spielberg fan since *Duel*, who died before they could meet). Melissa, Mrs Harrison Ford and the *ET* writer, has completed her script — an original tale, not based on any of the books but faithful to Hergé style — with his widow's approval. Realising that Tintin is something of a god in Europe — and elsewhere — Kathy Kennedy promises that this rather teenage version of Indiana Jones will *not* be Americanised but will change his odd and old-fashioned image (no knickerbockers and that annoying tuft of hair looks like being shorn). "We don't want him looking ridiculous. But, yes, we'll make him a fairly modern 16 year-old."

GREMLINS II — THE FORGOTTEN RULE. "That's just the sub-title for now after sitting in a room for a couple days thinking: What shall we call it?" laughs Kathy Kennedy. Terry Jones, of the *Pythons*, wrote a treatment now in the hands of other writers. "It was a good

treatment but Terry wasn't sure he wanted to go so far as a full screenplay," says Kathy. "Joe Dante is lined up to direct."

BATTERIES NOT INCLUDED has suddenly arrived on the schedule from nowhere. Well, it's grown out of an *Amazing Stories* script. Spielberg fell so much in love with Isidoro (*Baby*) Raponi's designs for living spacecraft (you heard!) with eyes, mouths, tongue, etc, that he decided to turn the tele-episode into a feature film. Matthew Robbins (*Dragon-slayer*) directs this summer. Robbins and his partner, Hal Harwood, wrote Spielberg's first cinema feature, *The Sugarland Express*, in 1974.

Being developed

THE TALISMAN. The chiller novel, written by Stephen King and Peter Straub (the *Ghost Story* man) is being scripted by Arlene Sarner and Jerry Leichtling, writers of Francis Coppola's *Peggy Sue Got Married* — which Kathleen Turner *was* able to make, as a replacement for the ailing Debra Winger. Spielberg, as always, is keen on directing. That's why he bought the book. But he's awaiting the script. "Steven always wants to take the first shot," says Kathy. "But he can't do 'em all unless we clone him. He *must*, though, be making a movie, physically shooting something



Spielberg with Joe Dante on the set of *Gremlins*; a sequel is on the schedule



at some point during the course of the year or he would go mad!

SCHINDLER'S LIST was always tipped as Spielberg's eventual Oscar-winner, until *The Colour Purple* came along. Thomas Keneally's award-winning novel is about a German industrialist helping Jews during the war. Karl Luedtke, who wrote the new Robert Redford film, *Out of Africa*, is working on the script now but Spielberg wouldn't be able to do it until 1987 or so, by which time the film version could regain its original title, *Schindler's Ark*, since it would no longer muddle Indiana Jones fans.

NOISES OFF is the first play ever bought by Amblin. British playwright Michael Frayn had, perhaps, his biggest hit with the behind-the-scenes comedy in the West End and on Broadway and Noel Harrison is currently touring with it around America. It sounds a perfect piece for a director like Richard Benjamin — and Kevin Kline badly wants to make a film comedy ("even a farce") so who knows...

BACK TO THE FUTURE II. An inevitable notion due to the twist end of the original. Looks as if Robert Zemeckis will direct it, although he did turn down the sequel to his *Romancing the Stone*. *Future's* sequel, though, will take place in the future... which tends to make it a new movie. "Actually, Bob Zemeckis is quite excited about it. There's such a great opportunity to do crazy stuff!" says Frank Marshall.

CAR POOL. A Hitchcockian gem from the *Future* team: the two Bobs, Zemeckis and Gale. "Five men drive to work every morning in a car pool, taking turns in driving the group to save gasoline," explains Bob Gale. "One of them finds out that one of the car pool is a murderer..." Brian De Palma and Spielberg came up with the idea. The two Bobs developed it and Gale wrote the screenplay. "De Palma likes

some of it," says Gale, "but he's always off on 15 different projects... Steven, Frank and Kathy now have the script."

Top Secret

AN AMERICAN TAIL is the most secret Amblin shoot of 'em all. It's been in production for a whole year without one word of publicity hype. A year? Yes, this is Amblin's first animation feature — from an idea by David Kershner (no relation to Irvin). David is 26 and intrigued Spielberg with his determination to return American animation to the glory of Walt Disney's day. Spielberg has been discussing much the same dreams with ex-Disney artist Don Bluth, who'd shown where his artistic eye lay with *The Secret of NIMH*. So the trio got together and Bluth has been directing the cartoon for a year. The story covers a Russian family emigrating to America, going through Ellis Island, having their names changed because no one can pronounce them... and being told there's no cats in America. That interests them greatly. Oh, didn't I say — this is a family of mice!

UNTITLED for now is another Amblin animation feature with Don Bluth. It's more than likely that George Lucas will become involved with it, too. Actual story-boarding is due to start in four months.

Television

AMAZING STORIES. Spielberg's nostalgic return to television anthologies (his first Hollywood job at Universal was directing Joan Crawford, no less, in a *Night Gallery* episode in 1969) is already battling in the ratings over yonder with the all-new *Twilight Zone* series, George Romero's second bunch of *Tales From the Darkside*. In all, Amblin is committed to making 44 *Amazing Stories* for the NBC series over two years. The first 23 are in the can, including two from Spielberg. Clint Eastwood directed Sondra Locke opposite Harvey Keitel in the very romantic

Vanessa in the Garden. Joan Darling has more Raponi magic in *The Baby Sitter*. Bob Clark shot *Remote Control Man*. *Close Encounters* actor Bob Balaban has been *Fine Tuning* Milton Berle. Irvin Kershner chose a tale about a living, walking, moving toupee in, what else, but *Hell To Pay* (owch!) Other top-flight directors responding to Spielberg's invitation to come over and try something different are Martin Scorsese and *2010's* Peter Hyams. Even David Lean was tempted to tackle one. "He had such a great time on the set with us when Steven was shooting *Ghost Train*," reports Kathy Kennedy. The series is also designed to help new directors get their first shot as well as reviving the short film, an art-form which has all but disappeared from cinemas. Spielberg's second-unit action director on *Raiders*, Mickey Moore, directed *The Alamo* and British production designer of so many Lucas and Spielberg films, Norman Reynolds, is directing another. *Fandango's* directing find Kevin Reynolds is among the people signed up to shoot the second series.

Finally

ET II. Shock! Horror! We can forget the old story — reported by me in enough places — that Melissa Mathison completed the sequel script as long ago as 1983. And that it took up the story when Elliott was about 20 — 1992 as far as Henry Thomas is concerned. "There are no plans for any *ET II* right now," insists Kathy Kennedy. "In fact, there never was a thought to making such a film. I think all of us have really strong reservations about why we would do a sequel. There is a new book about *ET* and *The Green Planet*. And I can attest to the fact that Steven wrote the treatment for that. But we could never film it. To make that book as a movie would cost \$100 million!" And, doubtless to Hollywood's relief, there are some things beyond even the almighty power of Amblin. ■

