08-1983 [A-0507] Milton Bradley - **Phantom**
De Phantom van de vroegere firma Milton Bradley Electronics is het meest zeldzame model van de drie technisch identieke robotuitvoeringen. De Milton werd vooral in Duitsland verkocht en de Grandmaster in de U.S.A., terwijl de Phantom juist in de U.K. werd aangeboden.

Tim Harding
The new chess computer book

Phantom. The first mass-produced robot machine that actually moves its own pieces, as well as sensing the ones that its opponent makes, made quite a publicity stir when launched in 1983 by the American toy company Milton Bradley. Unlike various robot-arm models announced at computer trade fairs, this one actually works, although not in the same way. An unseen 'hand' (or rather, servo-mechanism) beneath the board makes all the moves and captures, including castling, promotions and en passant, and will restore the board for a new game when it is told. Setting up positions is also fairly easy. The effect of seeing this machine in action is most eerie at first, but you soon come to accept it as one of the latest wonders of modern technology. The main problem with it is that t is noisy, especially when you first switch it on and it adjusts all the pieces in readiness for play. The Phantom (known rather pretentiously as Grand Master in the USA) has a space-age console at the front, with membrane keys and lights, enabling you to do standard chess computer things like set the level and colour. Although large, it is not too heavy because most of the body is in plastic. The whole appearance is Star Wars-ish.
The machine as initially launched is aimed at the average player. It has a program from Intelligent Software for which the company marketing the machine in Ireland and the UK claim a rating of round 1540, but saying that it would later be possible to send the machine back for a stronger program when this was developed. The magic figure of 2000 ELO was mentioned, but I wonder.
The Phantom may, if they can afford it, encourage many people to take up or resume playing chess - people who find even ordinary sensory board machines off-putting. Why would such people want a strong program? This is the luxury machine for people who do not want to be beaten by their computer nearly every time - it even has a level (level one) in which it will play normally until it is in immediate danger of beating you, when it will start giving away all its pieces and only beat you if it cannot avoid doing so!

Source: Tim Harding, The new chess computer book (1985), page 77-78.
Thank you very much for your outstanding information Tim!

Some characterize
- Pressure sensory - robotic arm under the board
- 12 levels of play (incl. analyse)
- Problem solving (max. in 5 moves)
- Coach mode
- Legal moves (where the computer can show all valid moves for any given piece)
- Take back (whole game)
- Computer can play against itself

Programmierer / **Programmer**
• Mark Taylor (Intelligent Software)

Baujahr / Release
• Erste Einführung: August 1983

Technische Daten / Technical specifications
• Mikroprozessor: 6502A
• Taktfrequenz: 2 MHz (?)
• Programmspeicher: 16 KB ROM
• Arbeitsspeicher: 2 KB RAM

Spielstärke / Playing strenght
• Spielstärke: ca. 1350

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Literaturhinweise / References / Literatuuroverzicht
• ??-1985, Tim Harding, The new chess computer book, p. 77-78.

Internet
http://www.chesscomputeruk.com/html/milton_bradley_phantom.html
On this website, a very, very nice story about David Levy and Milton Bradley ...
Thank you Mike for this striking story!
http://www.chesscomputers.org/
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milton_Bradley
http://www.meca-web.es/museo/miltonbgm/miltonbgm.htm

Milton Bradley Phantom. Picture from the very nice website of Mike Watters …