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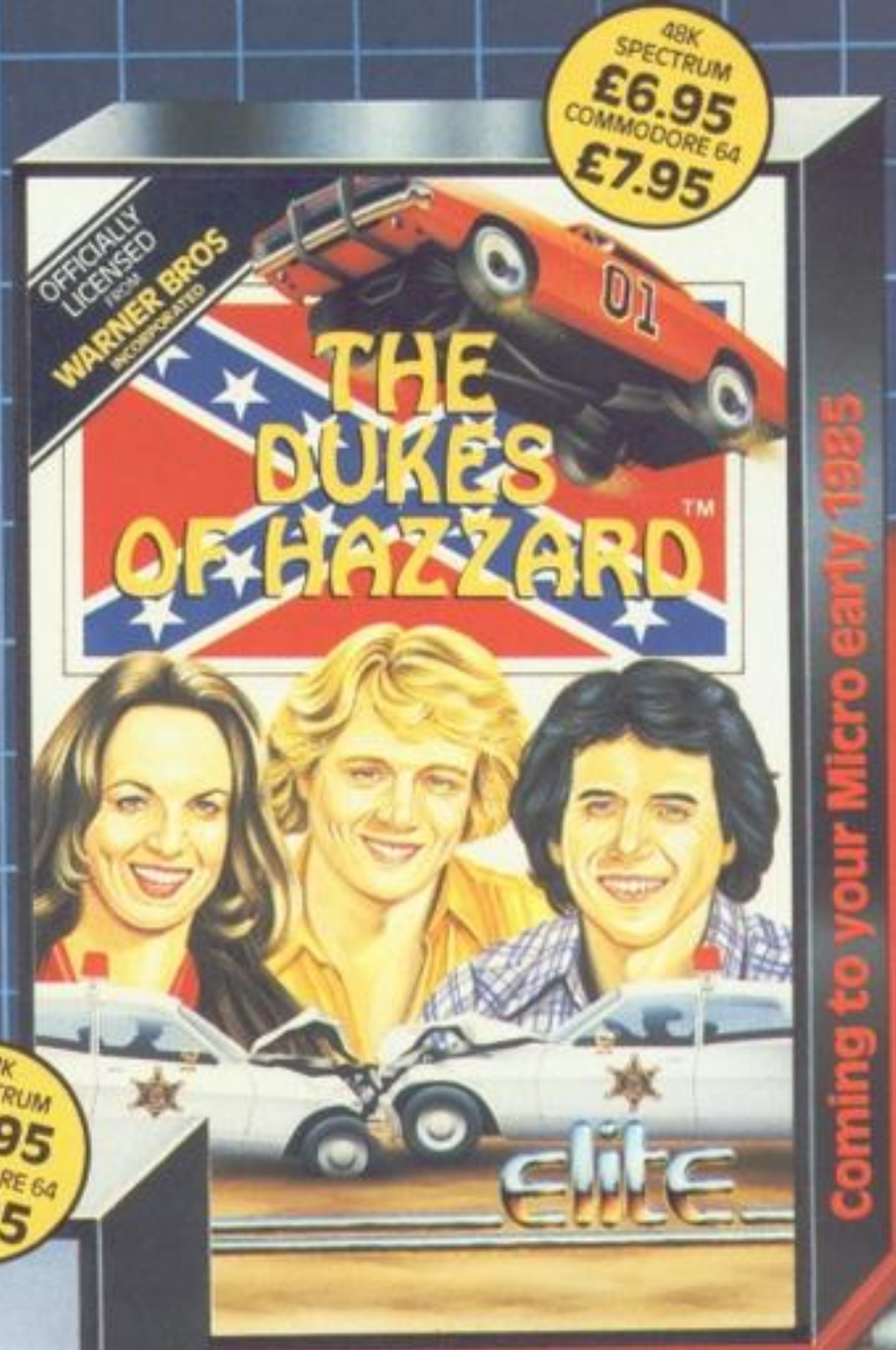

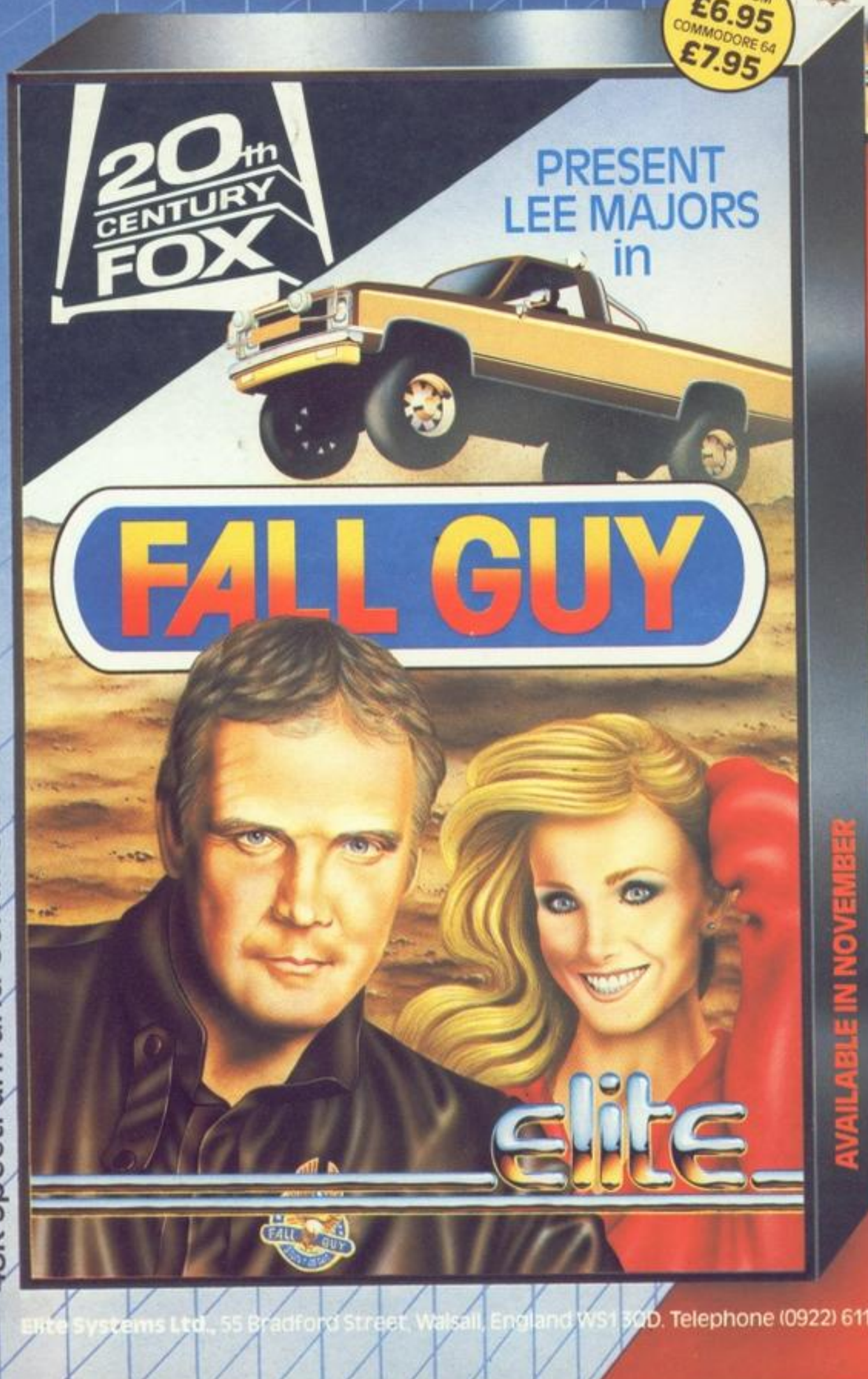

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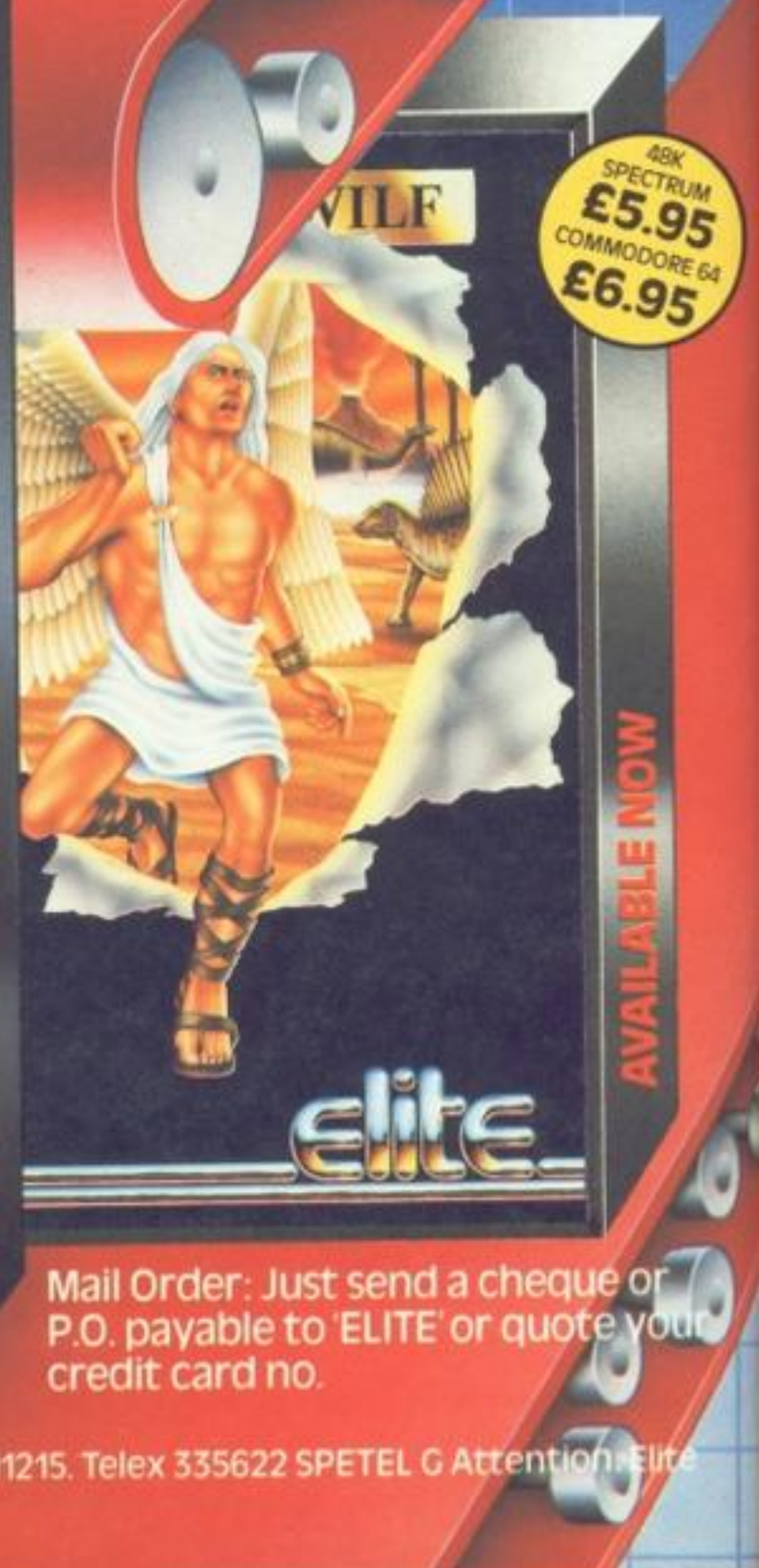

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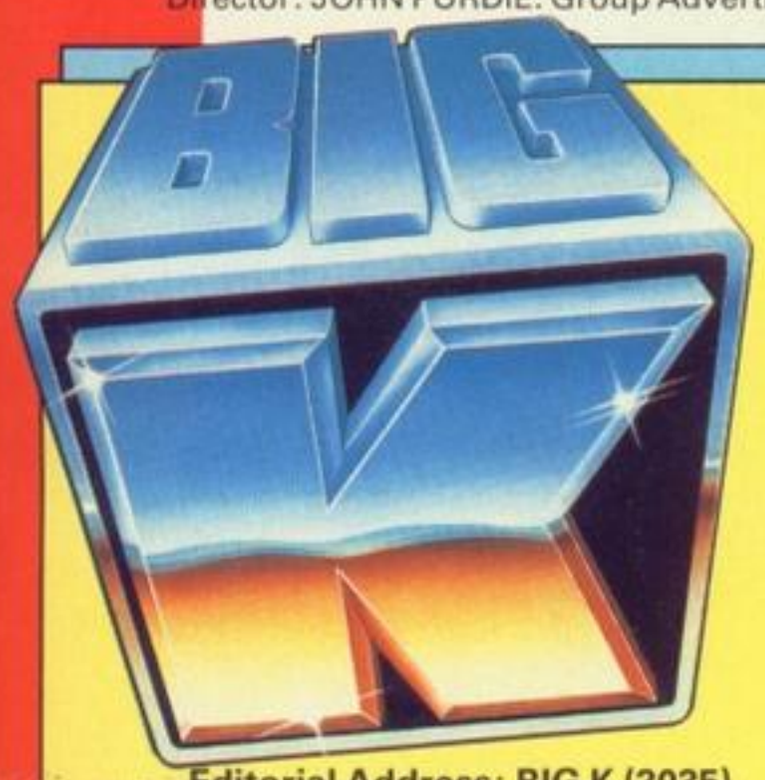
Editor: TONY TYLER. Assistant Editor: RICHARD BURTON. Art Editor: IAN STEAD. Features: NICKY XIKLUNA. Contributors: ANDY GREEN; KIM ALDIS (Technical); STEVE KEATON; RICHARD COOK; RICHARD TAYLOR; FIN FAHEY; DAVE RIMMER; JOHN CONQUEST; NIGEL FARRIER; DUNCAN GAMBLE; TONY BENYON; GARY LIDDON. Publisher: BARRY LEVERETT. Publishing Director: JOHN PURDIE. Group Advertising Controller: LUIS BARTLETT. Advertisement Manager: ROBIN JOHNSON (01-261 5119).



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A LETTER TO SANTA

Dear Santa,

First of all, thanks for the rubber duck last year. I like legendary philanthropists with a sense of fun, though I'm hoping this year you'll be able to come through with the Sage IV originally specified.

We continue to make progress down here this side of the chimney. That is, we continue to re-vibe the product. Our editorial team swells weekly with gung-ho hackers, eyes agleam. I have to admit our new-look Charts failed to materialise last month (a mainframe went down), but we're on to that this time around.

Knowing your own penchant for hyper-atmospheric ligging, I recommend our four-colour blitz on THE LAST STARFIGHTER (p.55). We've also expanded (doubled) the size of our review section, which your Gnomes seeking out good Xmas blags may well find useful.

The Festive Season, in short, finds us in good heart.
Merry Christmas.

TONY TYLER

P.S. A Mac will do if Sages are out this year.

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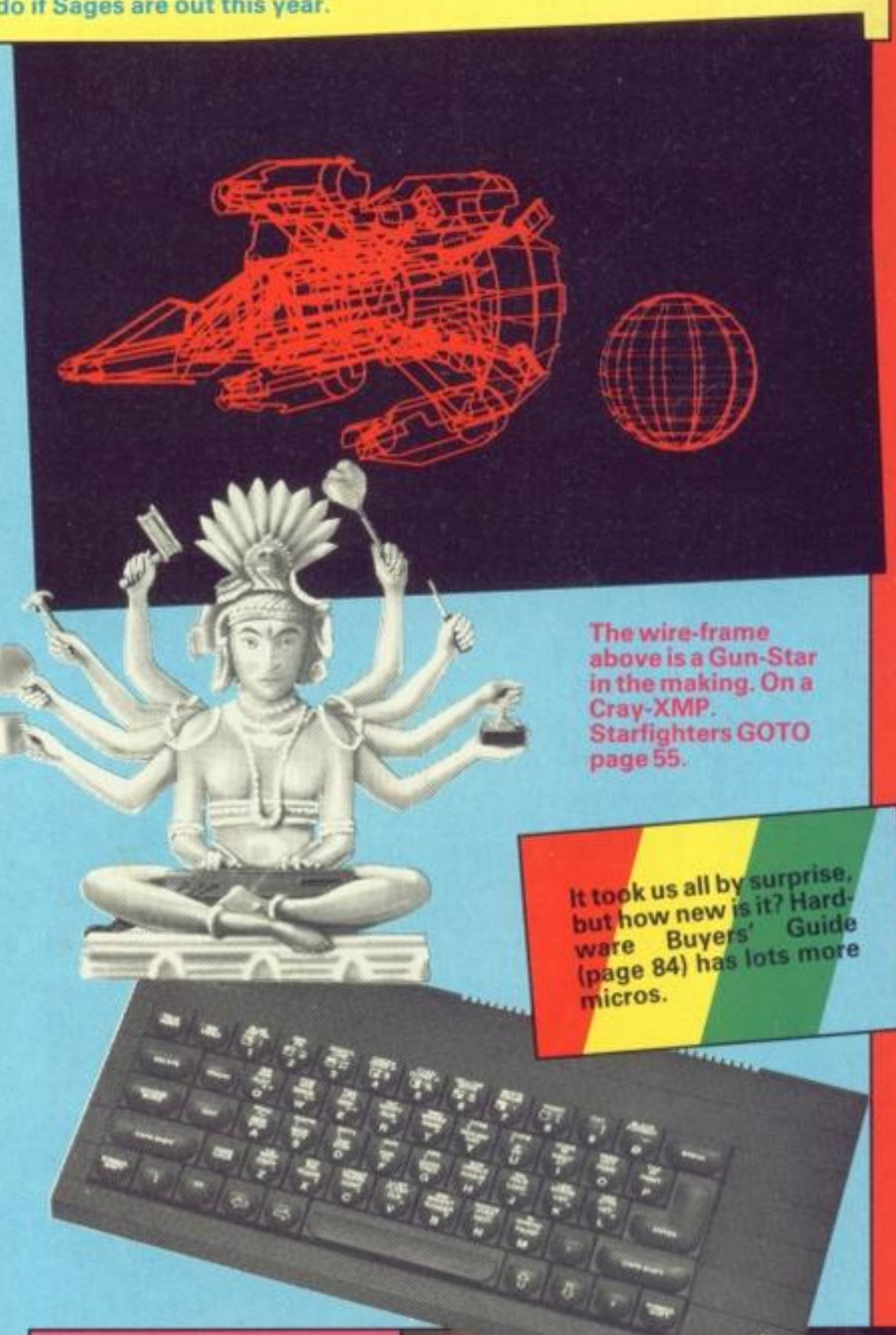
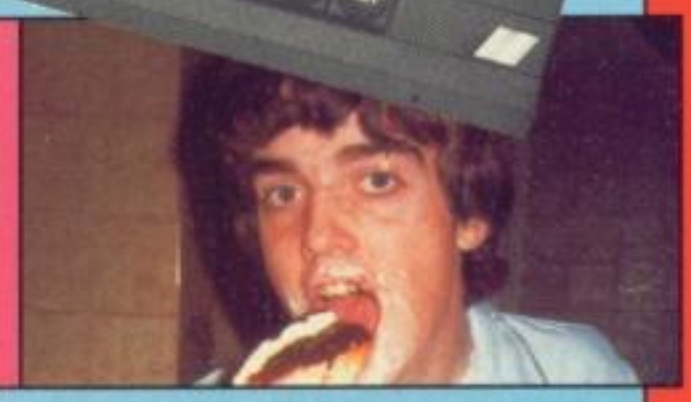
BIG K JANUARY ISSUE will be on the stands a week or so earlier than usual. So watch out for us around **DECEMBER 10 — ONE WEEK EARLY!**



The wire-frame above is a Gun-Star in the making. On a Cray-XMP. Starfighters GOTO page 55.

It took us all by surprise, but how new is it? Hardware Buyers' Guide (page 84) has lots more micros.

Are you a secret lemonade drinker, small-hours snarfer or midnight muncher? Oric owners try pages 90-93 for a satisfyingly full feeling



Published approximately on the 20th of each month by IPC Magazines Ltd., King's Reach Tower, Stamford Street, London SE1 9LS, telephone 01-261 5000. Monotone and colour origination by G.M. Litho Ltd., Princes Risborough, Bucks. Printed in England by Chase Web Offset, Cornwall. Sole Agents: Australia and New Zealand, Gordon & Gotch (Asia) Ltd.; South Africa, Central News Agency Ltd. BIG K is sold subject to the following conditions, namely that it shall not, without the written consent of the Publishers first given, be lent, resold, hired out or otherwise disposed of by way of trade at more than the recommended selling price shown on the cover, and that it shall not be lent, resold or hired out or otherwise disposed of in a mutilated condition or any unauthorised cover by way of trade or affixed to as part of any publication or advertising, literary or pictorial matter whatsoever. © IPC MAGAZINES 1984.

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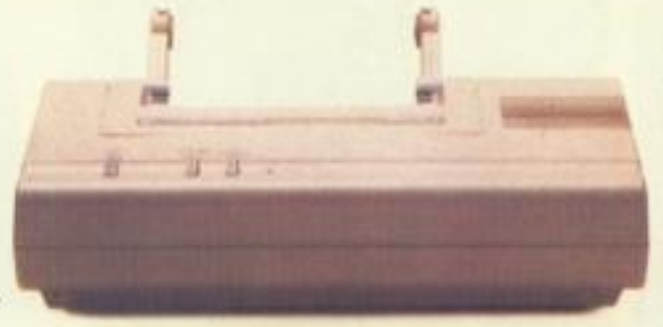

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PICK OF THE MONTH

IS THIS A KEYBOARD THAT I SEE BEFORE ME?

FIN FAHEY finds Oxford Digital Enterprises' *MacBeth* bites him in his 'O' level sore spot.

A MIDSUMMER SPRITE'S DREAM
or MUCH ADO ABOUT ZERO

Scene 1: You are in a forest.

EXITS: South

You can see: Lots of birds, green things and stuff.

Enter ***Puck*** and ***Macbeth***.

PUCK: Good my lord, what makes this weary countenance? For thy frame downcast is, as tho' by leaden harness burdened.

MACBETH: Thou knows't my repute. For each day a thousand players strut the boards in most faithful enactment of my bloody deeds. Would that the tale were told by an idiot! Yet 'tis most keenly related and the sweaty mob to loudly clamour for attendance. Yet this besets me not, but from learned Oxford issues news of further calumny.

PUCK: Aye, 'tis said aboard. Is't not a game of which thou speakest, and yet one conjured with devices so skilful that, from a vantage of ease and homely comfort, the smug player may let hap events the like of which Scotland's turf was ne'er privy to?

MACBETH: A long sentence, but thous speaks't sooth. The very judgement of time itself now in every common home goes not unchallenged. 'Tis unseemly, and besides nought is there in it for me.

PUCK: Methinks from thy loss of royalty, yet others do gain royalties.

(*Enter* a drained and weary ***Programmer***.)

PROGRAMMER: Haste, haste! Lest life's thread doth snap untimely! To Oxford fly! For the years' nocturnal hackings let just remuneration be made!

(Exeunt, absent-mindedly dropping a floppy disc)

MACBETH: Now doth fortune favour the fittest! See, flighty Puck, this slight wafer, of lodestone clad, doth hold an account most interactive of thy own adventurings.

PUCK: What favour dost ascribe to this? Meseems 'tis a chance most dolorous.

MACBETH: Why, thy wits are addled. See thou not that Albion's folk do grasp eagerly at a entertainment. To market shall I haste!

PUCK: 'Tis piracy! Fifty-fifty?

MACBETH: 'Tis thy play, and charity doth become a king. Thirty parts in every hundred shall be thine.

PUCK: (sulkily) With condition the marketing shall be thy domain!

MACBETH: 'Tis done.

(They shake hands)

Macbeth goes to pick up disc.

DISEMBODIED VOICE: You can't carry any more!

MACBETH: We are undone! Quoth the witches, bubble bubble, toil and trouble. Recalled well is it for mine is a bubble memory! Aye 'tis e'en so! Lay on, 'tis duff!

(Runs on sword. Dies)

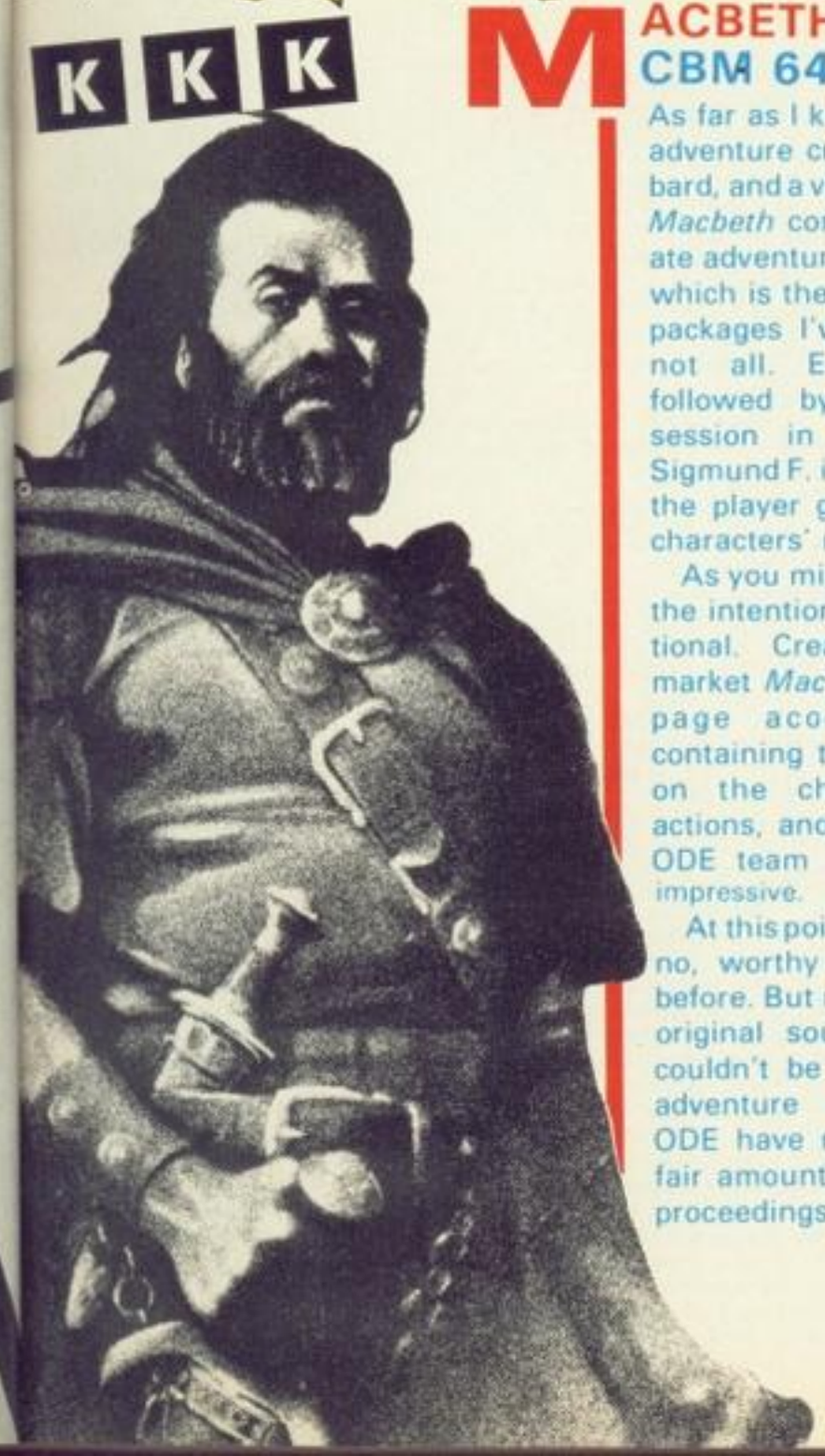
PUCK: O impulsive prince! Thou shouldst have dropped thy blade, space to make, not employed it thus. All profit to Puck falls. 'Tis an ill wind!

(Picks up disc and goes to exit South)

DISEMBODIED VOICE: You can't go that way!

(Puck sits down on a toadstool and weeps.)

End of Scene



MACBETH
CBM 64

As far as I know, this is the first adventure crack at the immortal bard, and a very hefty one it is too. *Macbeth* consists of four separate adventure segments, each of which is the size of many single packages I've seen. And that's not all. Each adventure is followed by a psychoanalysis session in which cranky old Sigmund F. is resurrected to help the player gain insight into the characters' motives.

As you might gather from this, the intention is definitely educational. Creative Sparks, who market *Macbeth*, supply a 169-page acoompanying book containing the play itself, notes on the characters and the actions, and a run-down on the ODE team itself. This latter is impressive.

At this point you're thinking, oh no, worthy but boring, seen it before. But no! For one thing the original source material really couldn't be better suited to an adventure game, for another ODE have managed to inject a fair amount of humour into the proceedings, although they do seem to have a dubious obsession with privies.

Each game depicts one of the dramatic moments in the play. The first sees Macbeth as a goodie — you have to save Scotland from rebels and Norwegian invaders. In the next, you become Lady Macbeth. Tricky this one, you have to get the castle ready to entertain King Duncan, lull him into a false sense of security, and then persuade Macbeth to see the poor guy off without getting caught, literally, red-handed.

After, this the scene moves to the witches. The ingredients for their port, many of which I remember as being quite unwholesome (liver of basphemming Jew?) have to be gathered. Finally we finish up in Dunsinane castle with the enemy at the gates fetchingly disguised as shrubbery. You have to resist the siege and butcher MacDuff before he performs the same service for you.

Very little of this action is actually in the play. For example, the initial battle scenes are toid second-hand by a wounded sergeant in the original. As a result it tends to fill out the gaps in the same way as the epic Polanski film version.

The analysis programs are very much linked to the academic side of things, but I found them entertaining. They're not your Eliza free-form conversations though, but multiple-choice sessions which get pretty cross if you stray from the point.

Given the naffness of adventure software in general, *Macbeth* is surely a step in the right direction. I really don't mind being educated by a program, as long as I don't notice it happening, and that's what this does. But what's the next step? The prospect of Hamlet, my personal favourite is mouth-watering. In the mean time, this should keep me up for a few more nights. — F.F.

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Ad Astra	5.95	**2.97**	06360	Gargoyle
Can you survive in deep space against the deadly phasers of Pira Battlecruisers and Robot Scout Ships, scatter bombs, and the almos impenetrable curtain of lethal mines.				
Blade Alley	5.95	**2.97**	04340	PSS
Six different screens of incredible arcade action featuring Saucers Asteroids, Tie Fighters, Space Hoppers, Banking Spaceship and movin 3D Scenery.				
Crusoe	6.00	**3.00**	07750	Automata
Shipwrecked and stranded on a remote island with nothing but an emoti stomach, a bottle of granny's patent elixyr and the clothes he stands up i — your job is to return Crusoe home again.				
Micro Olympics	5.95	**2.97**	07070	Micro-Use
Game description as for Commodore 64.				
Moon Alert	5.90	**2.95**	05840	Ocean
Emergency! Battle across the rugged lunar terrain from the wreckage o your Space Fighter back to the lunar base. Scrolling landscape coven over 300 screens!				
Moon Sweeper	7.95	**3.97**	10420	Cheetah
You command the Moonsweeper Raider on a deadly seek and fin mission for stranded lunar pioneers. There are four moons to search guarded by hostile Base Carriers, Short Range Interceptors and Deat Towers.				
Olympimania	6.00	**3.00**	04080	Automata
Starring the Piman in five different Olympic events with a difference - who let those alligators into the swimming pool? Features Lurch the Offic Parrot, Mutant Trees and many more surprises.				
Special Operations	5.95	**2.97**	09790	Lothlorien
Superb graphics adventure war game — features 18 different maps, plus maps for resolving skirmishes with enemy patrols, and seven differen levels of play each with a different objective.				
Trashman	5.95	**2.97**	04290	New Gen
Empty all the bins from each road into the dustcart in a race against you slowly reducing score, get more points doing jobs for householders bu step on the grass and you'll get bitten by their dogs and end up with a limp — watch out too for cyclists and cars!				
War of the Worlds	7.95	**3.97**	06260	CRL
Based on Jeff Wayne's Musical Version of the H.G. Wells classic. You live in a world under Martian domination — you must survive against the terro of their Fighting Machines and weapons of death.				

ORIC

Chess	9.50	**4.75**	06950	IJK
Quite simply the best version of the game available for your Oric wit variable skill, care, sub and speed levels . . . stuck? the computer wi suggest a move — just one of the many features of this superb program.				
Digger	6.95	**3.47**	06540	Lothlorien
Fast and challenging — deposit sacks of gold in your bank while attempt ing to kill all the monsters on the screen before time runs out.				
Ghostman	7.50	**3.75**	07460	Severn
Control your Ghostman around the Maze eating the dots and fruit bu avoid the Ghosts who are out to get you. Find the Power-Pills in the corners of the maze and you'll become temporarily invincible. Nine levels each one faster than the previous maze!				
Lone Raider	8.50	**4.25**	03150	Severn
For eons Earth's Battle Fleet has held back the alien Zugs. As Captain o the Lone Raider you must breach their defences wreaking havoc on you way to their Mother Ship.				
Trick Shot	7.50	**3.75**	06970	IJK
You have to pot the balls in the pockets by lining up the cue and hitting the cue ball with just the right strength — it's highly realistic and each ball and pocket combination scores differently.				

DRAGON 32

Chuckie Egg	7.90	**3.95**	02300	A&F
Game description as for Electron.				
Don't Panic	5.45	**2.72**	09360	Peaksoft
A great double bill . . . Towers of Death and The Ice Kingdom are two classics that should feature in every collection. But miss a vital clue and you could be playing for months in your quest for the treasure.				
Photo-Finish	7.95	**3.97**	09330	Peaksoft
Superb real-time graphics, authentic race-cards showing previous form odds based on actual form, races from 5 furlongs to 2 miles, timed results and a photo-finish feature! For 1-4 players.				
Project Volcano	7.95	**3.97**	07530	Mission
A top secret missile command centre has been discovered in an extinct volcano on the Yugoslavian border. It's the heart of a network covering the whole of the Soviet Block — your job is to neutralise it.				
S.A.S.	6.95	**3.47**	09350	Peaksoft
You'll be briefed on your mission and then, equipped with helicopter gunships, wire guided missiles and grenades. It's up to you. There's a night action feature and nine minefields just to liven things up.				

BBC B

	Retail Price	Half Price	Item Code	Software House
Blagger	7.95	**3.97**	04880	Alligata
Game description as for Commodore 64.				
Chuckie Egg	7.90	**3.95**	02540	A&F
Game description as for Electron.				
Mr Wimpy	6.90	**3.45**	07170	Ocean
The zaniest, craziest burger battle to sizzle your screens! Fight Waldo and the rebel ingredients to make your delicious Wimpy Burgers the best in town.				
Spitfire Flight Sim.	7.95	**3.97**	05990	Alligata
Take off, roll, loop-the-loop and landing must be performed with complete accuracy or your flight will end in disaster — this will have you glued to the screen for hours.				
Uncle Claude	7.95	**3.97**	07480	Alligata
It's workers against bosses because the Union suspects that Uncle Claude (the electronics magnate) is about to lay off the workers. They elect you, Micro Micky to foil this dastardly plan.				

ZX81

	Rec. Retail Price	You Choose at Half Price	Item Code	Software House
Cassette 50	9.95	**4.97**	07700	Cascade
The title says it all because this program has 50 great games on one cassette. We don't have space to list them but they're all here . . . maze, arcade, missile, tactical and logic.				
Football Manager	5.95	**2.97**	01470	Addictive
Captures the real life drama and excitement of the game . . . transfers, full league tables, injuries, promotion and relegation, FA Cup, seven skill levels and much more.				
Krazy Kong	3.95	**1.97**	01590	PSS
Climb the pyramid knocking out the supports for the giant gorilla as you go, meanwhile dodging the barrels and rocks he drops on you.				
Pilot	5.95	**2.97**	01530	Hewson
Take the controls for a night flight, navigate by beacons using the instrumentation, take off, climb, bank left and right, descend and land — you'll learn to master them all.				

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You are the Android — stop the advance of the Millitoids, survive the Maze of Death, rationalise the Paradox Zone and cross the Flatlands — but beware the lethal hoveroids, bouncers and landmines.				
Blagger	7.95	**3.97**	05510	Alligata
Follow the exploits of Rodger the Dodger, master burglar, through banks, shops and houses — but watch out for alarms and very spooky night-watchmen.				
Son of Blagger	7.95	**3.97**	05520	Alligata
You've polished your skills on Blagger, now put them to the test with his son — Slippery Sid's not after money . . . espionage is his game.				
Cavelon	6.90	**3.45**	05860	Ocean
Enter the castle stronghold at your peril! To rescue Guinevere you must ascend six awesome levels dodging and battling the deadly knights. Will the magic of the sword Excalibur make good prevail?				
Dare Devil Dennis	7.95	**3.97**	06790	Visions
So you think you could be a stuntman . . . the money is good but will you live to enjoy it — test your skills on land, sea and snow.				
Hunchback	6.90	**3.45**	03750	Ocean
Rescue Esmeralda from her castle stronghold. Featuring the Ramparts, Knights, Arrows, Fireballs, The Pit and of course those Bells!				
Loco	7.95	**3.97**	06180	Alligata
Through terrifying hazards and under constant aerial bombardment, this is the nightmare train journey of all time — can you make it before you run out of fuel and become a sitting duck.				
Micro Olympics	5.95	**2.97**	07080	Micro-User
Five track events plus long jump, high jump, pole vault, javelin, discus and hammer — you can take part in them all at the fabulous Micro Olympics.				
Potty Pigeon	7.95	**3.97**	09210	Gremlin
Percy the Potty Pigeon makes suicidal attempts to build his nest by plucking twigs from the path of onrushing traffic — he has one weapon though — his revolting explosive eggs!				
Snooker	8.95	**4.47**	03960	Visions
Accurate table layout, variable shot strength, spin on the ball in any direction, foul feature . . . it's like having your own full size table but guard it or you'll never get a chance to play yourself.				
VIC 20				
Bongo	7.95	**3.97**	05210	Anirog
Hilarious game for the whole family — Bongo the Super Mouse sets out to find the stolen diamonds so he can win the hand of the King's daughter in marriage.				
Dungeon Droid	5.00	**2.50**	07630	Novasoft
Your Space Ship is low on Novalite fuel crystals forcing you to land on a planet whose inhabitants worship them. Brave the many dangers in the multi-level tomb before your ship is destroyed.				
Mini Kong	5.95	**2.97**	01780	Anirog
Kong has abducted a young maiden and trapped her in his lair — you have to climb the ladders to rescue her as the angry Kong rains down a stream of barrels to crush you.				
Flight Path 747	7.95	**3.97**	05690	Anirog
As the pilot of this high performance jet liner you must take off from an airfield surrounded by high mountains and having climbed safely over them prepare yourself for a landing in the valleys below.				
Snooker	8.95	**4.47**	02170	Visions
Game description as for Commodore 64				
ELECTRON				
Blagger	7.95	**3.97**	05170	Alligata
Game description as for Commodore 64.				
Chuckie Egg	7.90	**3.95**	02190	A&F
Who'd think a farmyard could be so stressful? You must collect the eggs before the nasties get out and eat all your corn. And if the crazy duck gets out of the cage, you're in real trouble!				
737 Flight Simulator	7.95	**3.97**	06420	Dr. Soft
"Start approach well out, starting down from 3000ft at 10nm range, don't forget flap and gear, aim for a 3 degree slope down to the runway, follow up with power to control speed" . . . just one of the manoeuvres in this superb flight simulation — a real test of skill.				
Guardian	7.95	**3.97**	05910	Alligata
Stop the Landers trying to capture Humanoids from your planet surface while tackling flying pods, swarmers, alien bombers, deadly baiters and a carnivorous overblown jellyfish.				
Snooker	8.95	**4.47**	02280	Visions
Game description as for Commodore 64.				

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ALL OR NOTHING Spectrum 48K

Spy vs Spy vs Keyboard

Everyone's hitting the graphic adventure bandwagon these days. *A.O.N.* goes for the espionage theme. You are attempting to get hold of the secret files from a heavily guarded emeny camp. Various useful objects are strewn around, and a graphic inventory shows you what you've got. The problem is the guards. Although they seem to possess roughly the same level of intelligence as their dogs, there are plenty of them, and they carry guns. They can however be bribed, gassed, or shot. I wasn't too successful at any of these options and spent most of my time running up and down frantically.

Well I'm not so sure I'd call them that. Since all motion is in one plane, it looks pretty two-dimensional to me. You can run behind the sheds though, so perhaps it's a bit 3D. Control is through the cursor keys or joystick, and you get prompted for special options like picking things up. There's also compatibility with the Currah speech unit, but I can't comment on that 'cos ours don't work! — F.F.

3D Graphics, say Abbex.

From: ABBEX
Format: cassette
Price: £5.95
Graphics: KK
Playability: KKK
Addictiveness: KK

K

DUCK/BBC

Alas! A Canard

K

British Telecom seem to associate themselves with birds. First there was that revolting yellow parrot, Buzby, and now there's this thing called Firebird, which thinks it makes software. First thoughts were to put a bomb under it and reduce it to bits small enough to forget about, but on reflection it's difficult to give it a total slagging when you consider how cheap the only word for it — that it is. This business of low price software is something of a Catch 22. Peanut priced games are very nice, but unless they're good there's not much point in having them, to put it another way, do you cough up a tenner on something that keeps you up to see the sun rising or do you spend five bob and forget about it as soon as you walk out the door?

Which brings us back to *Duck*, another bird from BT. Cheap, but so primitive you could compare it with *King Kong* and see a hairy genius. Basically the game features a man, I think, with a gun and a flock of geese flying overhead. All you've got to do is pick off the geese without letting any fall on your head and avoid the odd, seemingly indestructible egg that plummets from the heights to land unbroken at your feet. Even less occasionally, a duck comes down to ground level for a chat and somehow knocks you to the ground if not avoided, to the accompaniment of the most revolting noises ever heard coming from a computer.

It's a rather slow game without much in the way of action. Protecting a country field from a plague of ducks doesn't have the same ring to it as saving the Universe from a fate worse than death and it's unlikely that anyone with the savage lust for violence of the seasoned games freak will get any satisfaction from it. — K.A.

From: FIREBIRD
Format: cassette
Price: £2.50
Graphics: K
Playability: K
Addictiveness: K

BIG K

GOLD DIGGER/BBC

Ya Really Want Those Shares?

K

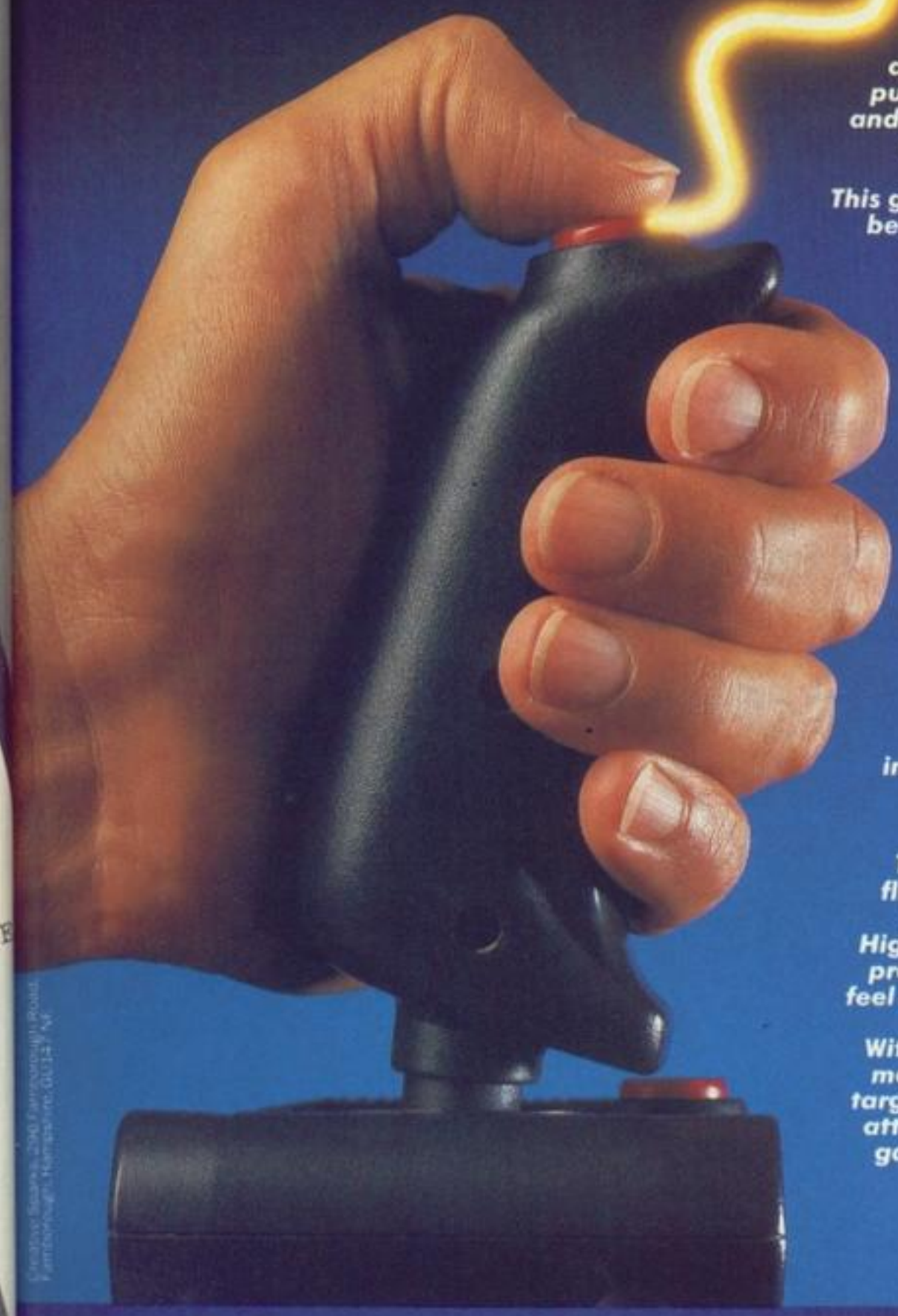
Yet another cheapo offering from the people who seem to think they're offering a telephone service. Little do they know they've deposited their pride and joy in the hands of the lad whose telephone they cut off last week and have steadfastly refused to reconnect it until they get some money. Could this be the chance to get back in the good books and earn a few free calls to New York? After a quick glance I think not. Nobody could get away with saying good things about this.

I was a little suspicious when it took about thirty seconds to load and when the game got under way all my fears were confirmed. It's so simple and repetitive, it's almost laughable. It's called *Gold Digger* and, as you would expect, it involves digging and gold. This, in effect, means guiding a speck around an orange screen looking for gold nuggets and keeping clear of different coloured specks that chase around after you. It couldn't be more monotonous. After the first screen is swept clear of nuggets you move on to the next screen with, wonder of wonders, an extra speck to avoid and a few more nuggets to collect. As the game goes on it, gets as exciting as a day trip to Croydon. I got so worked up I nearly said 'Gosh!'. Out loud even, but luckily I managed to contain myself. — K.A.

From: FIREBIRD
Format: cassette
Price: £2.50
Graphics: None
Playability: K
Addictiveness: K

QUALITY CONTROL FROM CREATIVE SPARKS ON C64

For those who demand excellence



JAVA JIM

Guide Java Jim around the screen digging neat square holes as he searches for ancient relics.
You will have to avoid the lumps of sizzling lava being continually showered down on Jim from the still active volcano in this highly original fun game.
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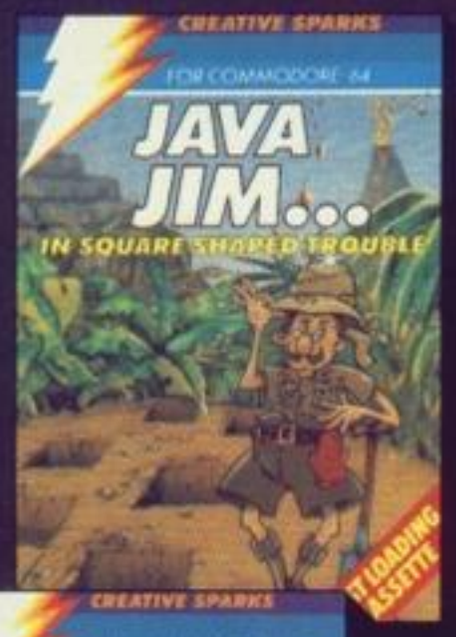
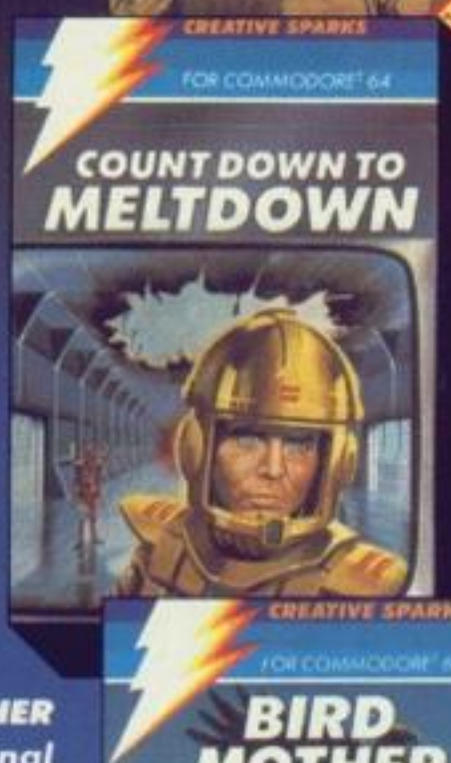
20 levels of play.
High score feature.
Fast loading cassette.



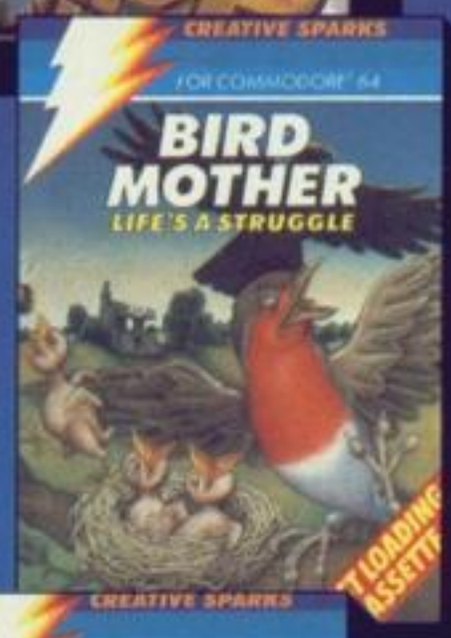
COUNTDOWN TO MELTDOWN

An amazing graphic action adventure game which puts you in charge of a team of androids trying to reach the core of a nuclear reactor before it explodes.
This game has over 2000 rooms to be negotiated and every single one of them is in 3D!!
Probably the most exciting game yet developed for the C-64.
Fast loading cassette.



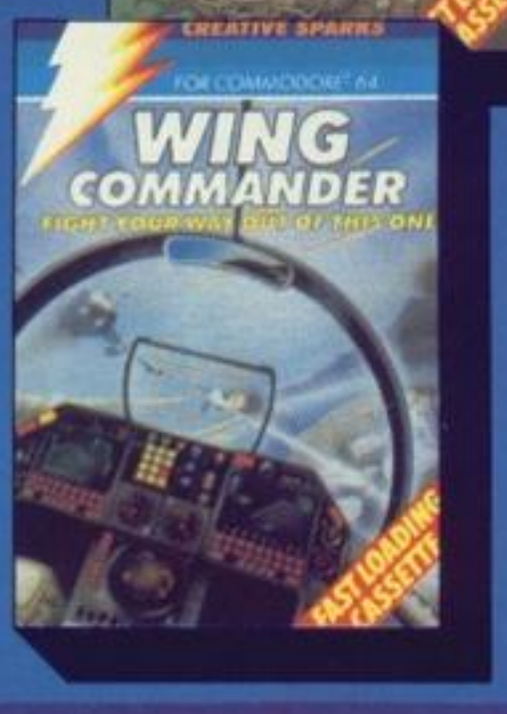
BIRD MOTHER

This is a delightfully original game which uses nature as the setting for a highly compelling and challenging game. Guide the Bird Mother as she builds her nest and raises her young, finally protecting them from a predator hawk.
Fast loading cassette.
The stunning graphics and music in Bird Mother are not to be missed.



WING COMMANDER

This is a highly sophisticated flight combat simulator which puts you in the pilots seat.
Highly advanced machine code programming has ensured you feel every stomach lurching dive and roll.
With 17 separate controls to be monitored and several ground targets to be defended from the attacking enemy bombers. This game will stretch your skills to their limits.
Fast loading cassette.



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BK/12/84

SPACE STATION ALPHA

K

BBC

Nice box. 'GRAPHICAL SPACE BATTLE' it screams at you. And it's right, it's graphical and it's a space battle — just.

As commander of earth's last orbitting space station — yet again — your mission (yawn) is to destroy as many of the invading Cylon fleet as possible (hohum) before their lethal lithium missiles (ZZZZZZZ . . .) reach earth.

What you get is a pretty screen display which does no more than act as a stationary backdrop, a set of bog-standard crosshair sights which you move about the screen and the Cylon fleet. Each ship from this fleet makes its entrance screen right, squirts a missile at earth, screen left, and makes its way to screen centre. You have to reduce it to a molten glob before the missile hits earth. Fleets come in waves of fifty, after which comes another fleet, followed by another, followed by . . . — K.A.

From: ICON
Format: cassette
Price: £7.95
Graphics: K
Playability: K
Addictiveness: K

BUT WHERE IS HIS BALACLAVA HELMET?

SAS COMMANDER

BBC

K

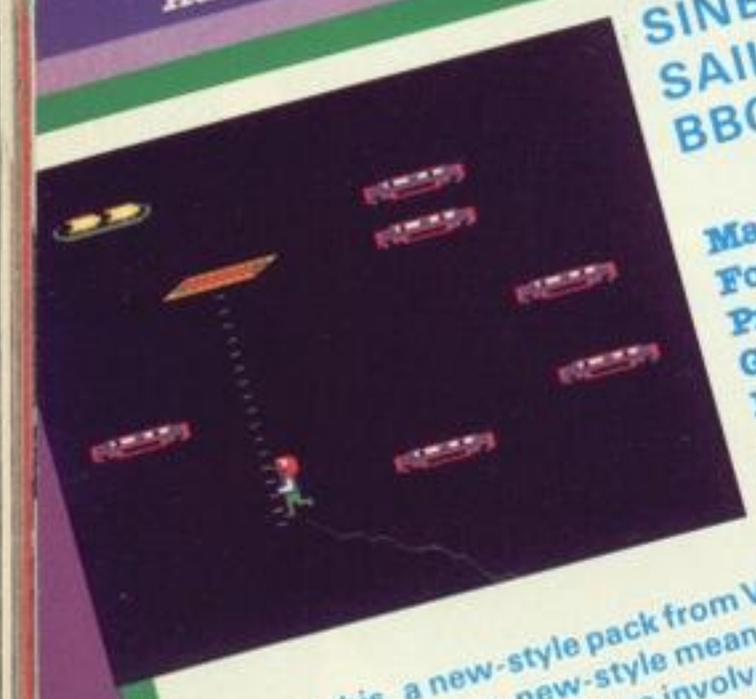
I hunted high, I hunted low. It had to be there somewhere, after all there was one every week, and there it was. Little devil, nestled tightly between *'Attack of the Killer Sugar Bowl'* and *'Joey Wibbles Wabbles the Wubbles'*, this week's Space Invaders clone.

This time it goes under the awe-inspired title of *SAS Commander* and it makes tea at the vicarage look like the Falls Road. Your mission, as they say, is to go to various trouble spots around the world, which are all identical, save the hostages and kill terrorists, who are all identical twins.

And so, with a hoarse cry of 'Who Dares Whines' let battle — or lack of it — commence. One side of a street appears our stalwart representive of Her Majesty's finest, elegantly knock-kneed, slides onto the screen like Wild Bill Hiccup on his way to a chimps tea party. Terrorists appear in windows across the street and you have to slide this character from side to side shooting them, with the proviso that they are not holding a hostage in front of them. After about thirty seconds I got bored, went out to get insanely drunk and came back to give it another go. No good, it didn't make it look any better. — K.A.

From: COMSOFT
Format: cassette
Price: £4.95

Graphics: K
Playability: K
Addictiveness: Zippo



SINBAD THE SAILOR

K

BBC Model B

Maker: VIRGIN GAMES
Format: cassette
Price: £7.95
Graphics: K
Playability: KK
Addictiveness: K

Look at this, a new-style pack from Virgin to go with their new-style games. In this one, new-style means touching the bad guys instead of avoiding them. The game involves *Sinbad the Sailor*, you can tell by the name on the packet, and his magic carpet. In the first instance Sinbad has no control over his carpet as such, it just kind of floats around the screen doing exactly as it pleases. No way for a magic carpet to behave in my opinion, but we're stuck with it.

There's a rope hanging off the side of it and steam-rollered gerbils, inventively titled 'Sinbad's Enemies', float about. Sinbad has to jump onto the rope and run up and down it, touching them — but only once — to convert them to friends. If he touches them more than once they knock him off his carpet. 'Eat dirt, Sinbad'. When he's converted them all he gets to sit on his carpet and have asteroids thrown at him. If he manages to avoid them all he goes back and converts squashed gerbils. And so it continues.

It's not a bad game, sort of middle of the road, which probably accounts for the beasties having that squashed look. — K.A.

KK SON OF BLAGGER

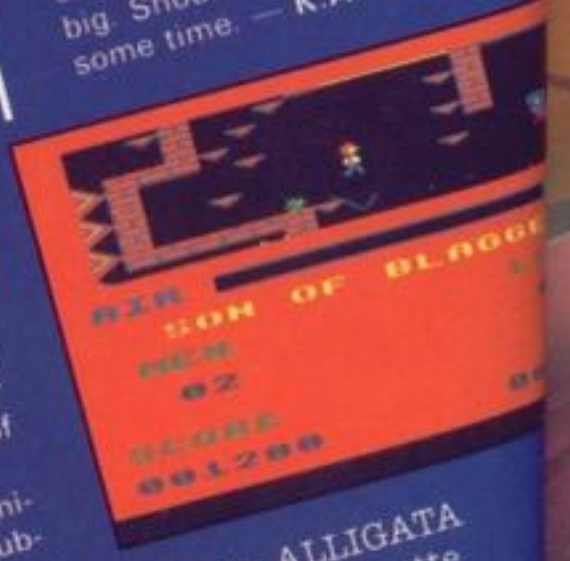
BBC

So ya thought Blagger was a mean sonofabitch didjya? Well just take a look at his boy Sid. Not so much greedy for money as shifty, his speciality is espionage, which is how he finds himself in the National Security HQ with a journey through one of the biggest, most dangerous buildings in the land to look forward to. Which land? Nobody says, so is our hero the patriotic type, digging around in the bowels of the Kremlin looking for a secret Borstch recipe for Maggie? Or is he grubbing around for Z80s in the corridors of Whitehall to send to out pink pals pals over the wall Who knows, ours is not to reason why, ours is but to plonk the keys to the best of our ability and get our man out of this hairy situation.

The graphics are a little primitive and the sound about as subtle as picking your nose with a pneumatic drill, but we can probably live with that when there's so much exciting territory to explore.

Son of Blagger is one of the scrolling maze variety where you've got to look for keys to get into the next area. The action starts with Sid standing on a wall with only one direcrion in which to go, so he goes hence, slips onto his backside and down a slope. Good start. This is a pretty good indication of the way the game goes, largely by trial and error. You can spend days playing the game, trying to avoid that small spikey thing in the corner, only to accidently fall over it and discover it to be quite benign.

How deep in the maze of collapsing floors, ladders, etc., he can go is something I don't know yet, but I've every intention of finding out — in the interests of science, you understand. All I can say is it's pretty big. Should keep you going for some time. — K.A.



From: ALLIGATA
Format: cassette
Price: £7.95
Graphics: KK
Playability: KKK
Addictiveness: KKK

BOILERHOUSE

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FRONT Runner

Meet the Challenge

UP FRONT

WHEN IMAGINE crashed earlier this year, they went down fighting . . . for their famous Megagames. The only one of these to achieve near-completion was/is Bandersnatch. Our Man With The Snap-brim Fedora previews the game — which may yet see the light of day — and unravels other great software mysteries of our time. You read it here first . . .

by TONY TAKOUSHI

WELCOME to what I promise will be the hottest review pages in the games industry. Each month I will be reviewing all the newest and tastiest software around — as often as I can, *before* it's around!

This month's reviews cover two Spectrum and two Commodore 64 games. For the Spectrum there's the famed *Bandersnatch* (originally from Imagine) and *Moon Patrol* from Atarisoft with *Basketball* and something oh-so-similar to *Jetpac* on the 64 (more of this anon).

There has been tremendous interest in the megagames from Imagine, only one of which has had any appreciable work done on it — this being *Bandersnatch* for the Spectrum. After all the hype I think you deserve to know what the fuss was all about . . .

The concept of a megagame was produced by getting all the programmers at Imagine to list what they thought a megagame should have. The final report detailed the use of much artificial intelligence, large well-defined graphics and many stages of play. The game was designed to be 128K long and as the Spectrum could not handle this much code a hardware add-on was designed. This was a 64K ROM designed to slot in the back of the Spectrum. A company in Taiwan called PCI was approached to produce 100,000 ROMs. PCI costed these at one million pounds, (a sum Imagine did not have), so began the search for funds.

All the while John Gibson and Ian Weatherburn were writing *Bandersnatch*. As Imagine was wound up the games were shelved and now both programmers have left Imagine. The game itself revolves around a character called Vol who lives on a planet in another galaxy. There are no points scored in the game, the aim being to pass through life (do you get points every time you cross the road?). There are many rooms to pass through, with lifts helping you on your way. In fact, it is *Miner 2049'er (Manic Miner* to you) — derived except that Vol is very large and beautifully animated. The various stages include levels like the Mine Shaft where a large worm, about a third of the screen in length, wriggles along with each segment being fully animated.

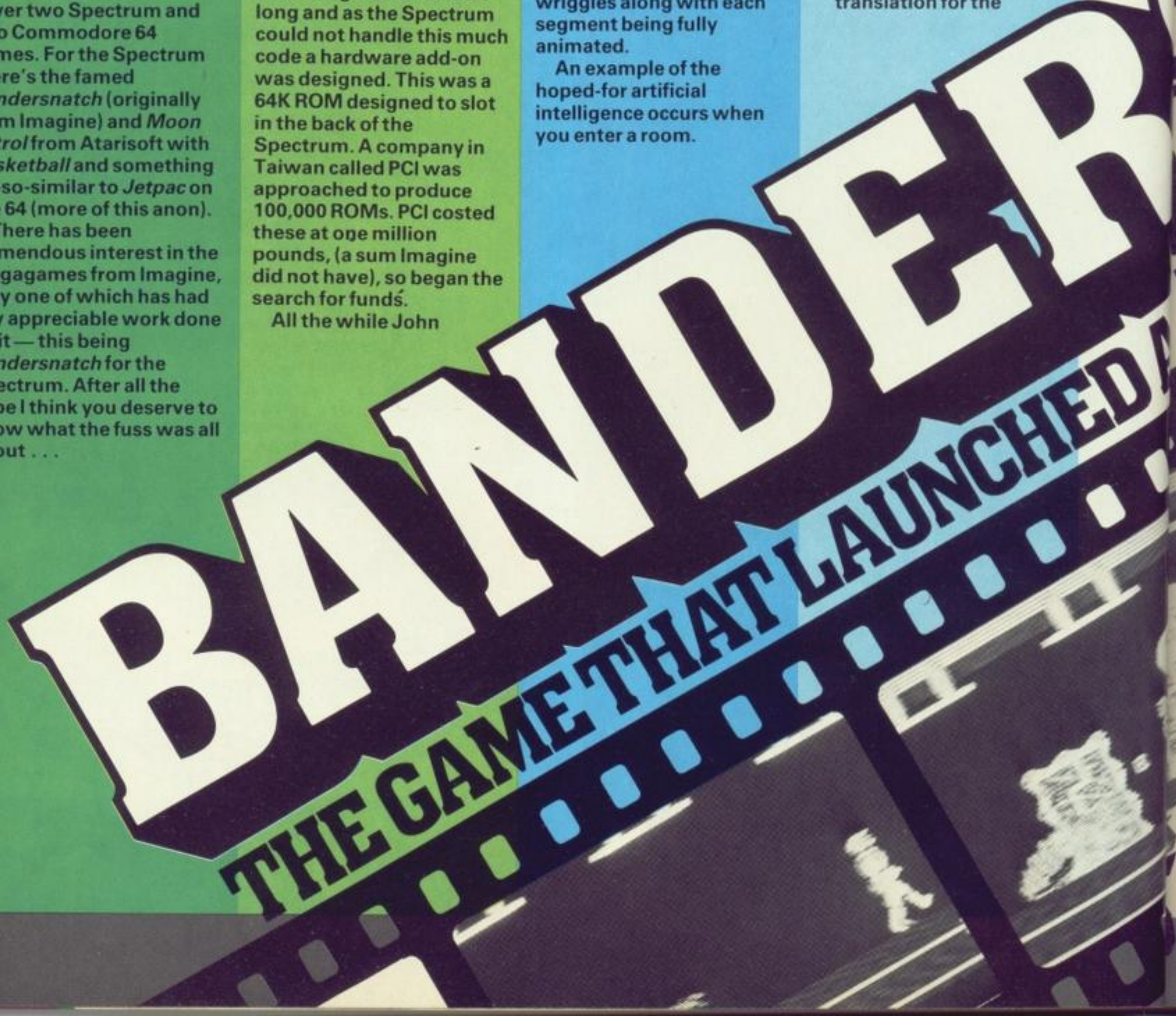
An example of the hoped-for artificial intelligence occurs when you enter a room. Characters are standing around talking to each other in speech bubbles. You can see other features for yourself in its accompanying screen shots . . .

Late news: at going to press time we heard that Sinclair Research has acquired *Bandersnatch* as a QL game, to be released next year after wholesale re-writing. This should mean that the QL's 128K of RAM will make the ROM dongle unnecessary . . . watch this space.

TOUCH DAY BALL

Andrew Spencer caused quite a stir when he wrote *International Soccer* for the 64 — now he's all set to repeat his success with *Basketball*.

This is a superb translation for the



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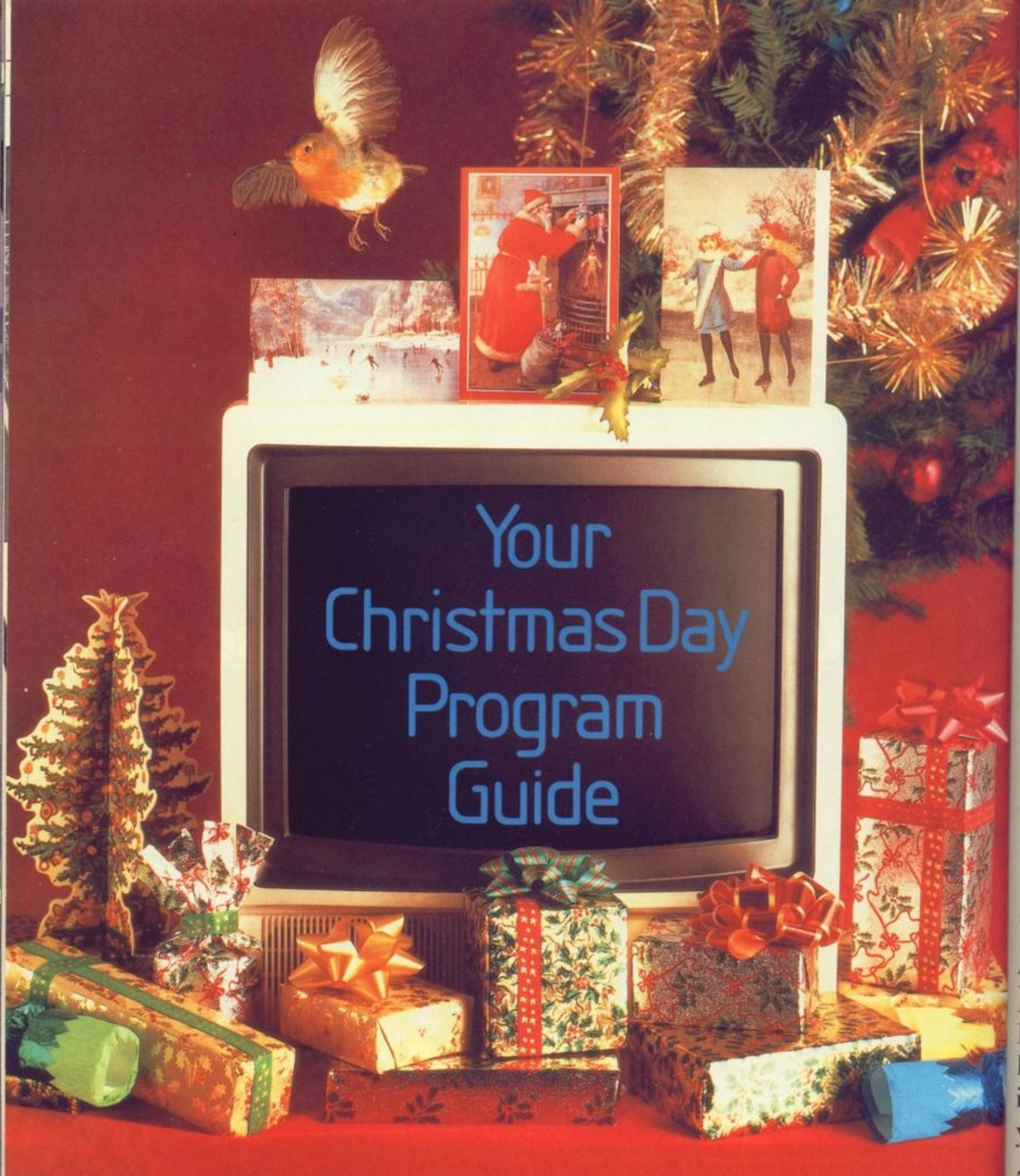

Acornsoft announce tidings of great joy for both BBC Micro and Electron owners: eight brand new programs for Christmas.

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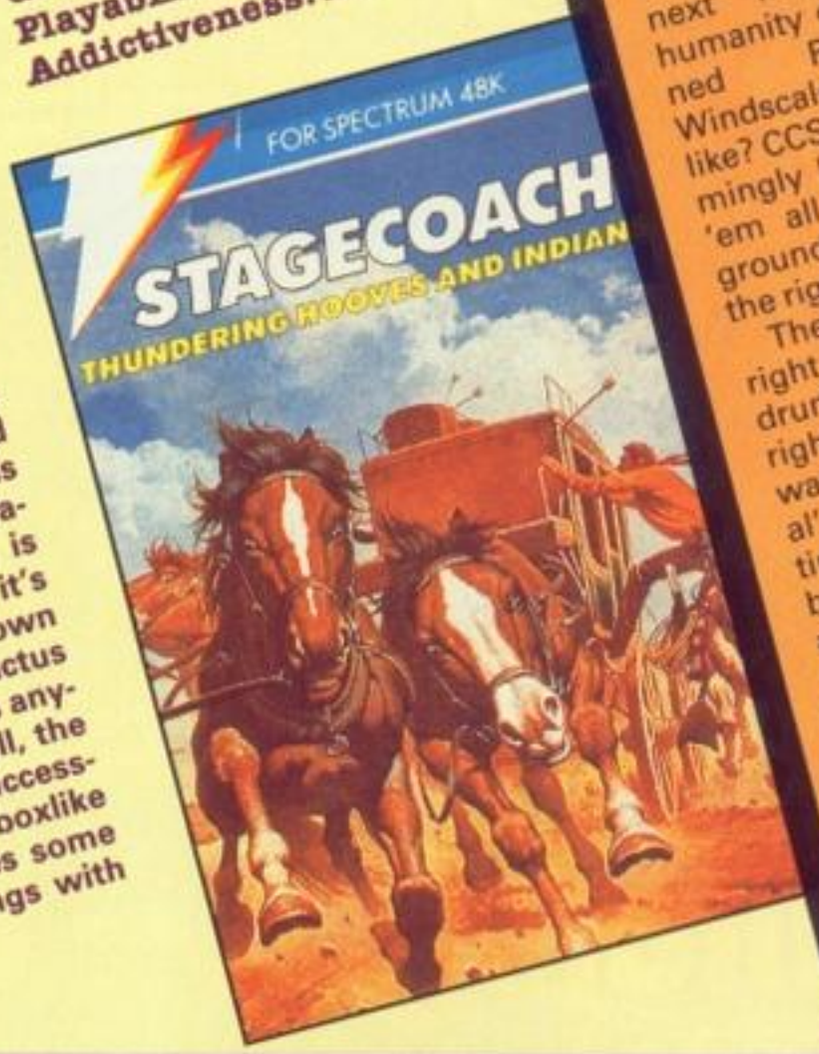
K K

STAGECOACH
Spectrum

You're riding across the desert when you see a runaway stagecoach. You leap onto it, which is about the trickiest manouevre in the game, and take the controls. Your destination is San Pedro, but first you have to pick up passengers, negotiate (with the help of a Map mode and signposting) the avalanche prone Sierra Peligrosa, scooping up boxes of gold and ammo en route, and then outrun and outshoot the dreaded Camache Indians.

The first and third sections are littered with cacti and other obstacles. The game is in 3D, but the apparent relationship between objects is very hard to judge and it's pretty annoying to be thrown from your horse by a cactus that doesn't look as if it's anywhere near you. All in all, the animation isn't very successful, the stagecoach, a boxlike affair, particularly does some very odd-looking things with perspective when it's changing direction. Still it's entertaining enough and an original concept. — J.C.

From: CREATIVE SPARKS
Format: cassette
Price: £6.95
Graphics: K
Playability: KK
Addictiveness: KK



K K

NUKE LEAR
Spectrum 48K

One of today's pressing problems here, namely what do the next fifty generations of humanity do with all the canned Roentgens from Windscale/Sellafield and the like? CCS come up with a charmingly lo-tech solution: drop 'em all down a hole in the ground, and head-butt them in the right direction.

The main movement is left-right to get under the falling drums to redirect them into the right channels. If too many waste cans gather in the 'illegal' slots then it's melt-down time. It has a certain charm, but the graphics are very basic, and I wasn't hooked. — F.F.

From: CHARLIE CHARLIE SUGAR
Format: cassette
Price: £2.99
Graphics: K
Playability: KK
Addictiveness: K

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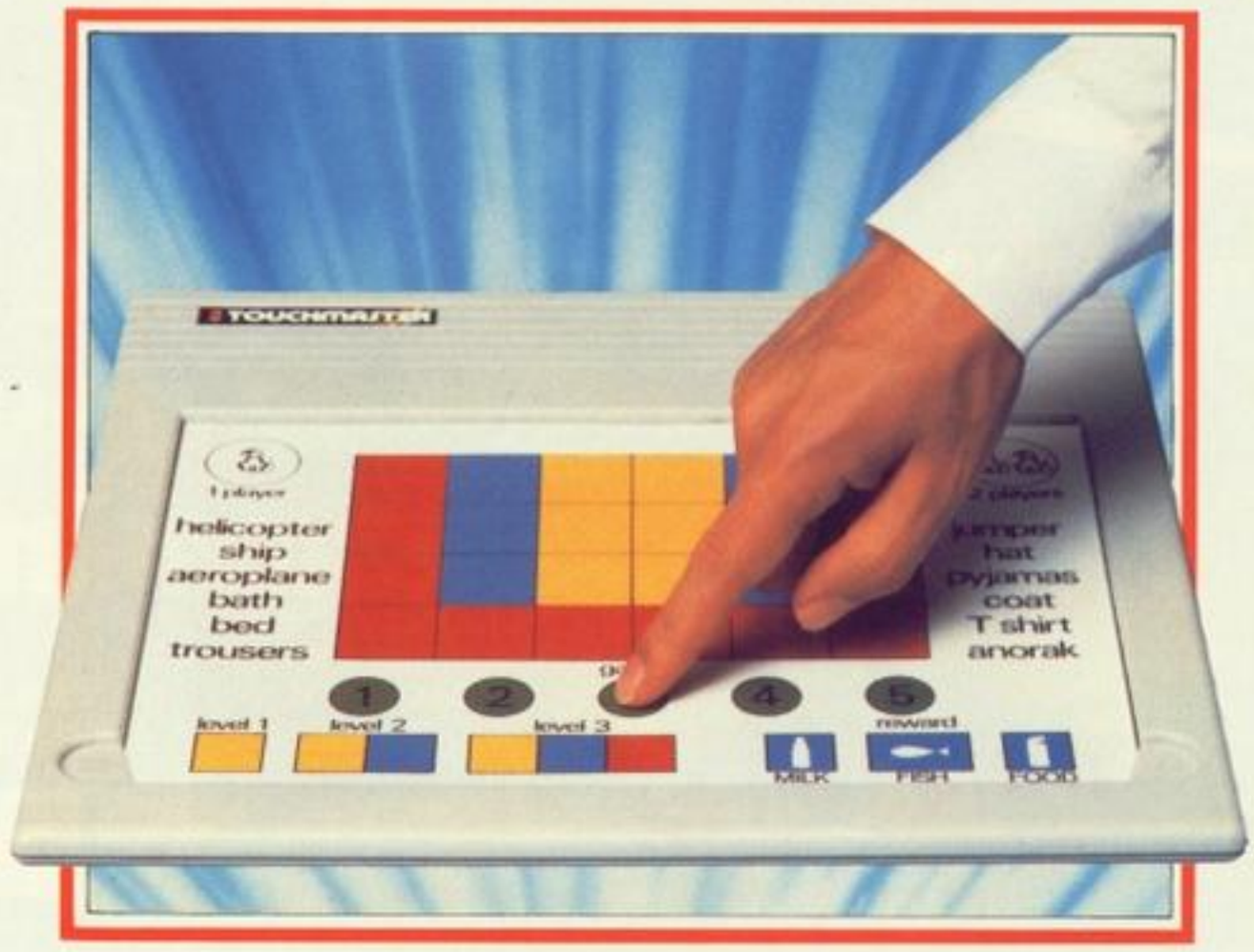

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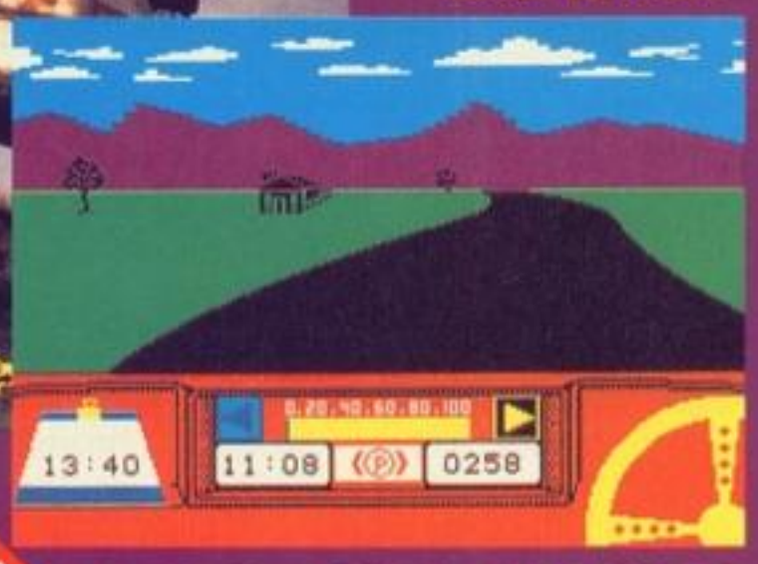

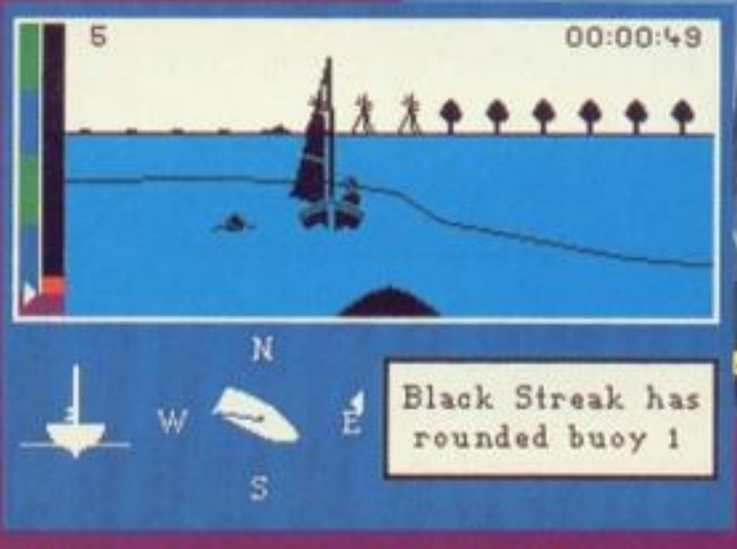

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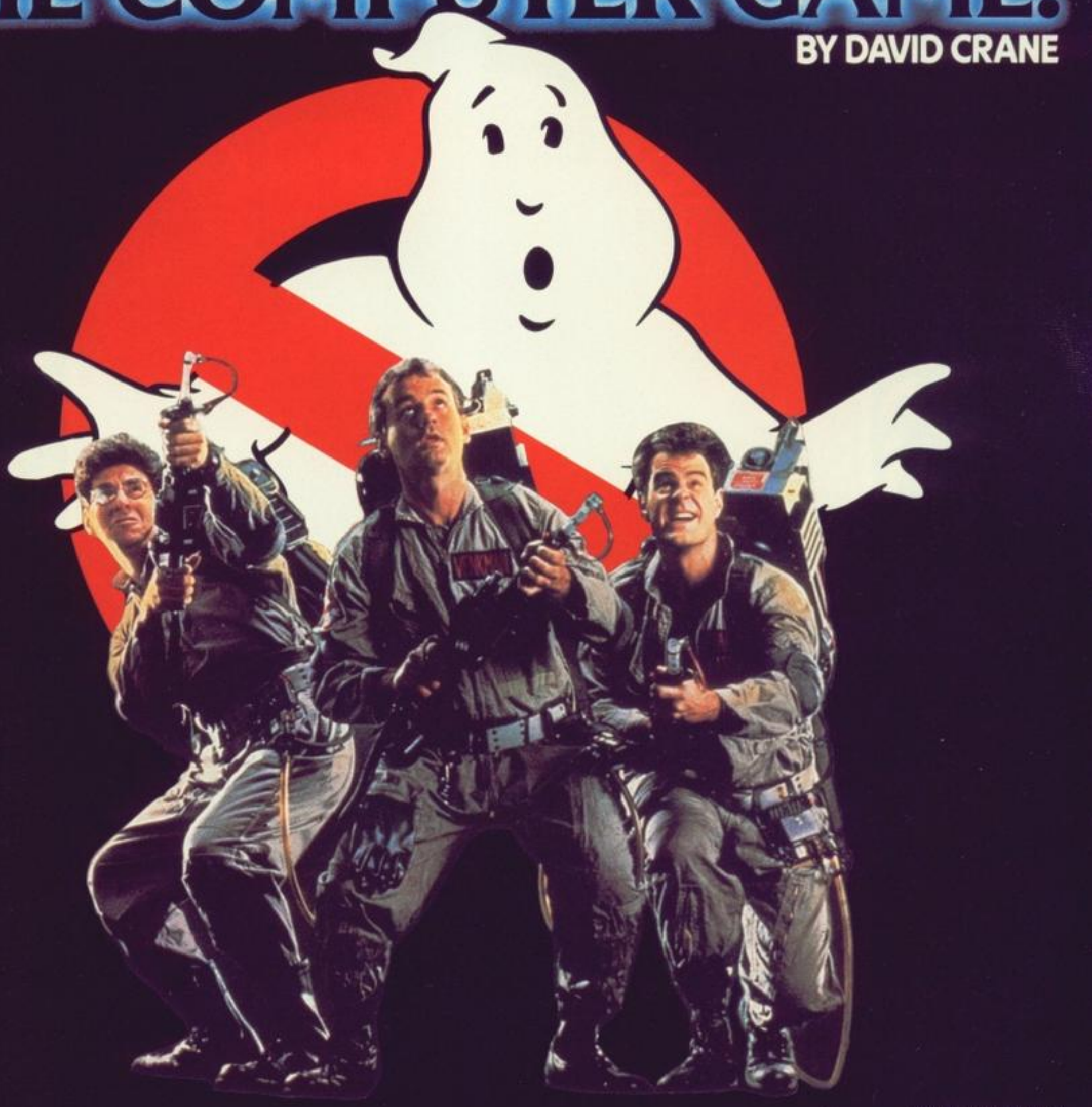
BY DAVID CRANE



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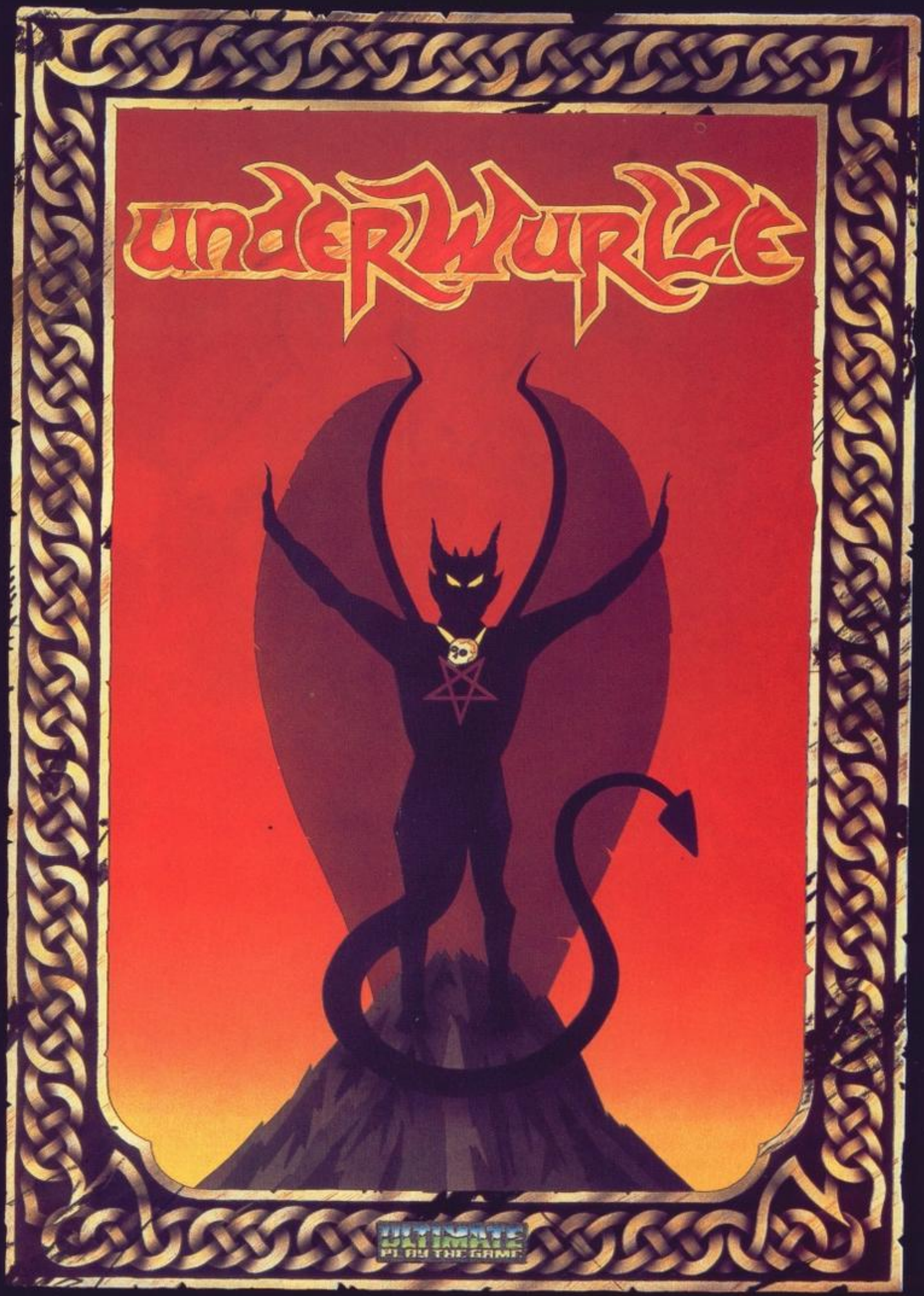

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VIDE GAMES • COMPUT AMES

BEACH-HEAD
Spectrum 48K

K

ELDERLY AMERICAN

It's nice to know that the dam' Yankees can produce turkeys as easily as any Brit software house. *Beach-Head* is as well thought-out as the average White House press release.

The sleeve notes are promising. There are seven stages in play, each of which is a little game in itself. The trouble is that they're all totally boring. To take one example, the first, all you have to do to complete it is move a cursor across a map from point A to point B. This involves the superhuman ability to distinguish between the up, down, left and right keys. A half trained rhesus monkey could do it.

U.S. Gold's Commodore products impress me. When it comes to the Spectrum, I think they'd better sharpen up their act. — F.F.

From: U.S. GOLD/ACCESS SOFTWARE
Format: cassette
Price: £7.95
Graphics: K
Playability: K
Addictiveness: K

ZOMBIE ZOMBIE
Spectrum

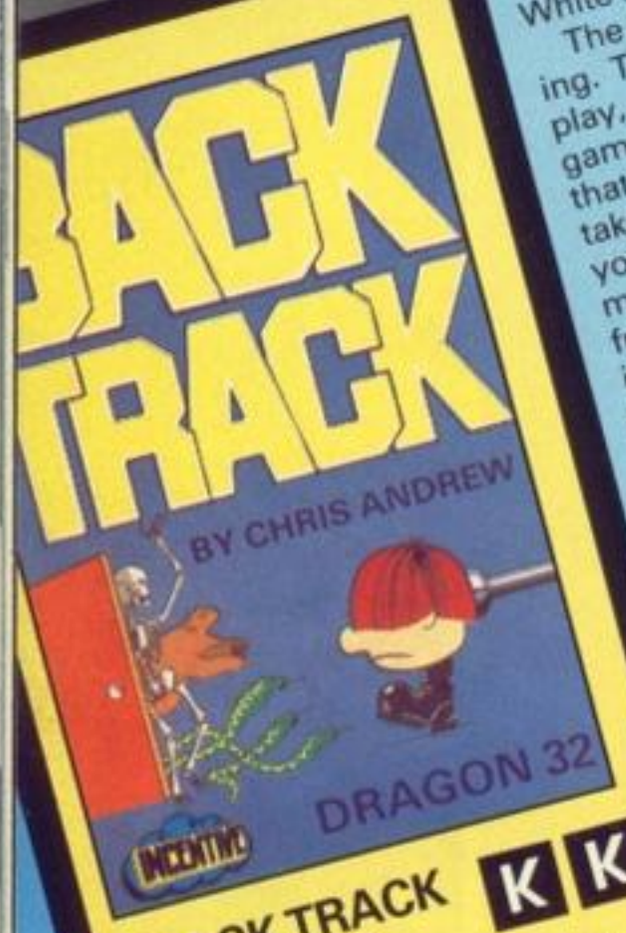
K K

After fiddling around with this for about half an hour, I'm left with lingering feelings of bewilderment. *Zombie Zombie* is definitely for those who relish enigmas.

The sleeve offers little help, simply one of Quicksilva's crazed blurbs, which I must admit I always enjoy reading. The game itself looks great on first impression, but you have to pick up tips on playing from the demonstration mode. This much do I know ... You are in a ruined city with a little red helicopter at your disposal. The ruins are beautifully realised, in what Quicksilva term Softsolid graphics. You can climb into the chopper and fly around, in which case the ruins can be re-arranged by picking up or dropping individual blocks. In the helicopter you are safe, but if you choose to go foot-slogging, along come the zombies. Nasty little green figures, these do something of an unspeakable nature to you if they get close, but you can temporarily blow them away.

But here's the puzzle. What really is the object of the game? In the demonstration it seems as though you have to construct ramps up which to lure the zombies so that they can fall to a precipitous death. But to me this seems a rather clumsy tactic in what is otherwise a very elegant game. I suppose I'll have to accept it, though. The game failed to hook me as I just couldn't believe in it. — F.F.

From: QUICKSILVA
Format: cassette
Price: £6.95
Graphics: KKK
Playability: K
Addictiveness: KK



BACK TRACK
Dragon 32

K K

Dragon software is usually uninspiring stuff, and of late there hasn't been a lot of it, so I feel charitably disposed towards this Incentive offering — it tries hard.

Our hero is Eddie, an unappealing youth who lacks a torso — his Dr. Martens start just below his chin. Poor Eddie is being made to run mazes by a mad behaviourist, who has — rather unscientifically I think — released snakes in the maze as a hazard. There is however a map lying around in there somewhere. To get out of the maze, at least four keys have to be picked up, and in the right order. The number of keys goes up by one for each level of play. To add gastronomic interest, there's a fair bit of fruit lying around to be picked up, too.

Movement is with the cursor keys, and pressing M gives the map. The display shows a birds-eye view of Eddie's current position, and it's passably well done, the laws of perspective being adhered to. It's not the most spectacular game in the cosmos, but by Dragon standards ... well, say no more. — F.F.

From: INCENTIVE SOFTWARE
Format: cassette
Price: £6.50
Graphics: KK
Playability: KK
Addictiveness: K

ART DESIGNER
BBC Model B

K K

GOOD GRIFFE

A short while ago I reviewed *McVid* from pICa software, a very nice and comprehensive set of routines which gave the user machine code graphics of all types in all screen modes, something on which there is very little advice for the serious user, so I was expecting *Designer* dropped through the letterbox the other day. Unfortunately I was disappointed. It's is a very simple package with very few really useful facilities for making images other than pretty patterns.

First of all let's look at what it does. Options listed include airbrush, circle, elipse, draw, area fill, filled blocks and text. All very nice except they don't come easy and you can't do much with them. For a start, everything is in Mode 2. Fair enough, you say, more colours, but why not give the user a choice, he might want more detail from a hi-res mode. Then there's keyboard input. The cursor keys are used to position a cursor and every function requires a control character, that is CTRL and a key, both at the same time. In airbrush mode you have to keep the keys held down at the same time as the cursor keys, three keys for one function is asking too much. Why not use a single key to toggle functions?

Circle and elipse routines are much the same in their over-use of keys. First CTRL P for the centre, then CTRL R for the radius in the case of a circle or two CTRL Es for an elipse, after which, in both cases, you have to specify whether solids or lines are required. On top of this you get a whacking great white dot in the centre, and what happens if you want an elipse drawn at an angle to the horizontal?

I could go on like this but there seems little point really, other than to say I wouldn't recommend it to anyone over seven and that I'm disappointed to see it come from a company who got off to such a good start.

Incidentally, there's a character editor sitting inside it somewhere. There have also been several hundred character editors just as good going for free in just about any magazine you care to pick off the news-stands, BIG-K included. — K.A.

From: pICa
Format: cassette/disc
Price: £7.95
Graphics: K
Playability: N/A
Addictiveness: N/A

BIG ARCADE ALLEY SPECIAL

THE LAST STARFIGHTER

Since TRON — and possibly WAR GAMES — the western world has been desperately short of a good videogame movie epic. Now a contender has emerged: THE LAST STARFIGHTER (by those nice folks who brought you DALLAS). It's got everything: romance, evil-looking alien creeps . . . and some of the very best digital starships ever to grace the big screen. PAUL RAMBALI reviews the movie, while JOHN CONQUEST works out how it was all done . . .

DEEP IN the infinite, a space-craft banks into view. It looks like any other space-craft, employing the classical configuration of four out-riding engines and a central fuselage. As the ship turns, a helmeted figure is visible in the cockpit, giving a final salute to the receding planet. Nothing unusual about this, a scene from a new hollywood space-opera, *The Last Starfighter*. Except that the space-craft and the helmeted figure don't actually exist. They are neither models nor actors, but computer-generated images.

Take another look at this scene, a movie-making first. The space-craft, the home base on a barren, rocky planet, the legions of enemy ships with which it will join battle, and the brief view of the helmeted Starfighter — all of these exist only as digital code stored in the

CONTINUED OVERLEAF

ARCADE ALLEY

THE LAST STARFIGHTER

memory of a Cray X-MP super-computer.

The six foot high, 12 million dollar computer, cooled by Freon gas and capable of 100 Megaflops (or 1 billion computations) per second, created almost all of the special effects for *The Last Starfighter*: nearly 300 scenes, about 25 minutes of screen time. The results are, to quote the film's producer, 'photo-real'. Which is to say not quite real — since the subject is anyway fantasy — but strikingly effective. As far as anyone knows, or can compare from the accumulated images of galaxies long, long ago and far, far away, this is what it's really like out there in deep space.

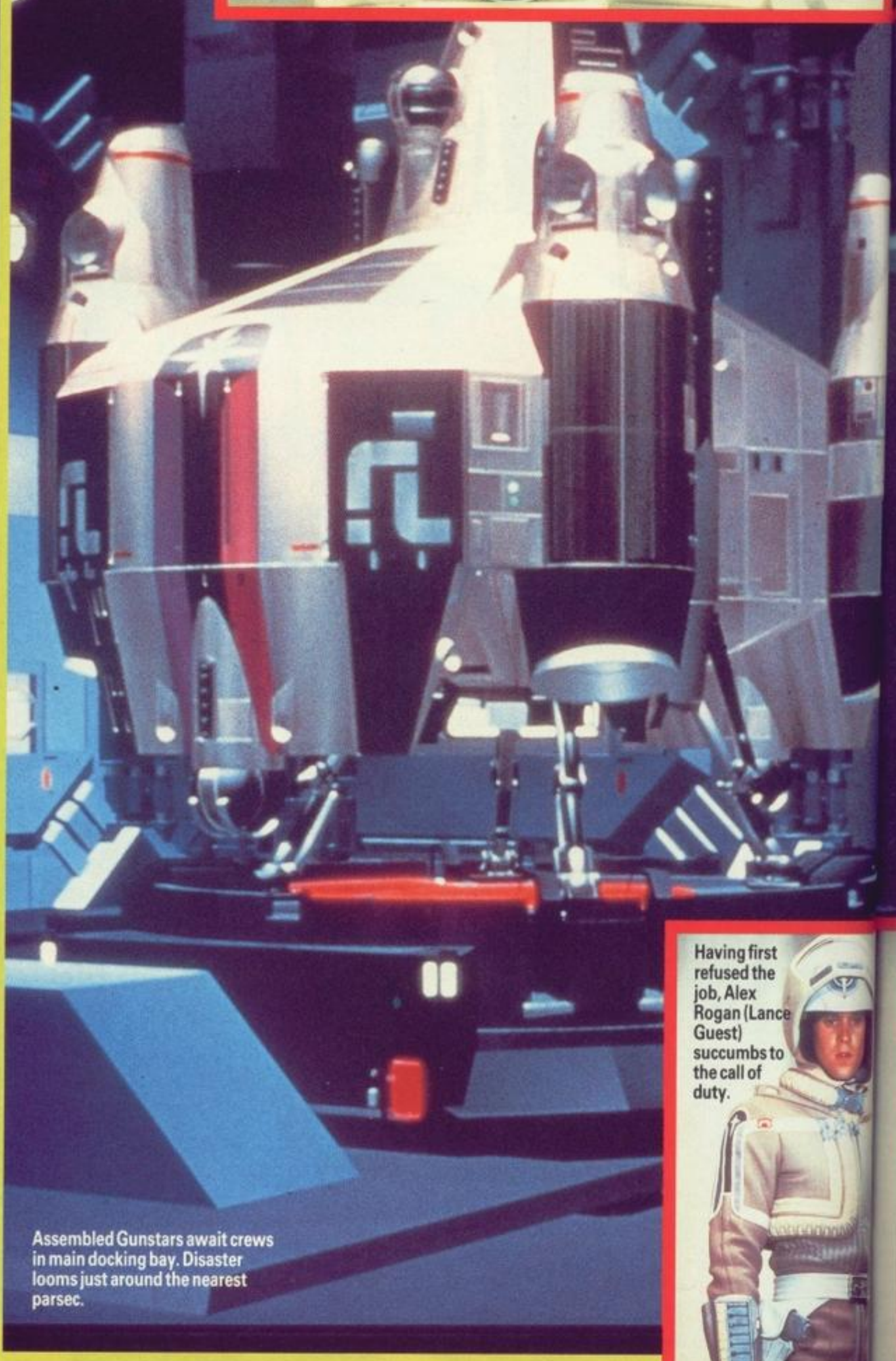
And in deep space, it seems, no-one can hear you scream 'I've had enough!' The Empire has struck back, Spock has been found. What possible nemeses remain to threaten the inter-stellar peace?

Uppermost

The question is hardly uppermost in the thoughts of young Alex Rogan (Lance Guest). Alex is a major nice guy who lives on his parents' Starlight trailer-park in Nevada, where his girl-friend Maggie also lives. Alex has only two problems in life. He wants to leave the trailer-park. He is perceived as a *nerd*. While his friends are out having fun, Alex has to do the chores, amusing himself meanwhile on the video-game that sits outside the campsite store, flashing ominously.

"You have been recruited by the Star League to defend the frontier against Zouer and the Kodan armada," commands the micro-electronic voice within. Having nothing better to do, Alex complies, notching up record scores on what appears to be a run-of-the-program space shoot-em-up called *Starfighter*.

One evening, a bizarre automobile, its licence plate spelling the word RYLOS, pulls up outside the Starlite park. "Centauri's the name," announces the vehicle's driver. "I invented *Starfighter*!" Climbing inside, Alex is soon being driven at impossible speed. "You're the best, kid,"



Assembled Gunstars await crews in main docking bay. Disaster looms just around the nearest parsec.

Having first refused the job, Alex Rogan (Lance Guest) succumbs to the call of duty.

Alex is no slouch at Atari's Starfighter game. Just how useful this is, he doesn't realise.

The GunStar. The supreme space fighter, and Alex's mount — eventually.

enthuses Centauri (Robert Preston), a bow-tied, fedora-hatted flim-flam man from — guess where? Before he can protest, Alex finds the vehicle transformed into a space-craft and himself whisked off to Rylos where, against his wishes, our reluctant hero has indeed been recruited to defend the frontier against the Kodan armada.

This promising scenario needs no more elaboration, and gives rise to the first of the movie's dazzling effects sequences as Centauri's car speeds past the rings of Saturn.

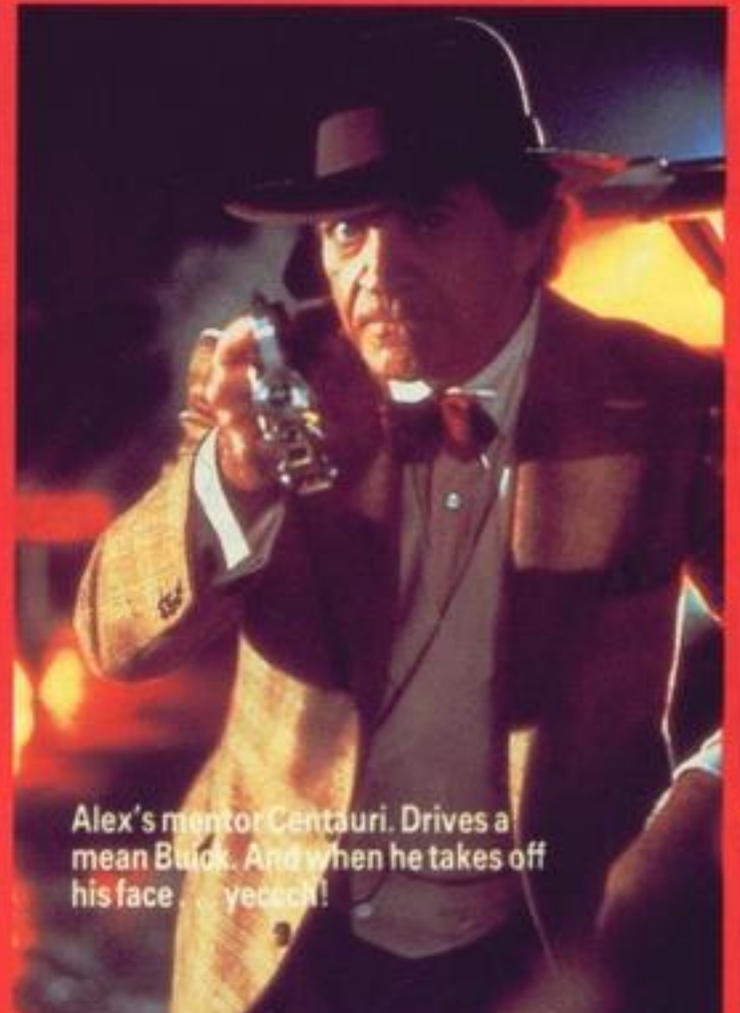
The flat, vivid colours and precise, detailed geometric shapes generated by the Cray X-MP begin to fill the screen: Star League bases, Gun Stars, Kodan fighters, acres of space hardware designed by Ron Cobb (*Star Wars, Raiders*), fed into the computer point by point and transformed into 3D graphic sequences no less credible than the usual miniature models. "In traditional cinema you are tied down by the mechanics of moving a camera around in the real world," says Cobb. "Now we can sever those ties and generate forms that never existed."

Computations

Working at Digital Productions, who also did the computer animation for *Tron*, Cobb saw his drawings turned into film. Each frame required 72 billion computations — in other words, just over a minute of Cray time. The final cost was 3 million dolars, and for the first time, a Hollywood blockbuster is being trumpeted for how little, rather than how much, it set the studio back. With the Cray — a computer more often used for defence work at the Pentagon — the special effects budget was cut by two-thirds.

Digital Productions have beaten Lucasfilm, also working on computerised screen effects, into the movie theatres. By the end of the decade, they expect to be able to create computer-generated humans, rather than just hardware.

Their work on *Tron*, distinctively gothic in style, was wasted by the film's weak plot and thin characters. *The Last Starfighter* succeeds both as high-tech spectacle and enjoyable hokum. Its hero gets to play the biggest arcade game of all, and gets the girl too. Alex Rogan's graduation from slouch to Starfighter could be anybody's. Given the chance. And — wouldn't you know it? — Atari will be doing just that in UK arcades soon.



Alex's mentor Centauri. Drives a mean Buick. And when he takes off his face . . . yeeech!

CONTINUED OVERLEAF

THE LAST STARFIGHTER

THE ULTIMATE sci-fi shoot-'em-up film has more computer simulation than all previous movies put together, 300 different synthesised shots totalling over 25 minutes of running time. And it's not just quantity — with anywhere from 3 to 5 million polygons in each frame, some sequences shatter all existing records for complexity and detail.

Digital Productions, the creators of this milestone in computer graphics, started out with a Cray 1-S, at the time the most powerful off-the-shelf computer available, but turned it in for the very first Cray X-MP supercomputer to leave the factory, which was four times as powerful. So advanced is the Cray that the top of the line Digital Equipment computer, the VAX 11/780, is used as a front-end processor!

The X-MP houses 200,000 special microchips, joined by 67 miles of wire, in its 5ft. diameter, 6½ft. tall bulk, and weights 15,000lbs. To push all that takes a lot of power, 100,000 watts give or take a couple, which in turn means a monster freon cooling system to keep the copper circuit boards at a constant 680°F. The Cray is a bit fast, with a cycle time of 9½ billionths of a second and is also a bit expensive. If you fancy the sound of it, you'll have to take $12 million out of your Giro account.

Blueprints of objects were drawn on paper, top, bottom, front and back views, then digitised with an interactive cursor, cross-hairs on a glass circle round which a coil gives off a continuous electromagnetic signal, with the encoding table surface acting as an antenna. Flat surfaces are built up with polygons, the vertices between them being encoded, while curved ones are broken up into lots of smaller flat ones that add up to the right shape, which the computer will average out. The Gunstar, our hero's ship, the most detailed object in the film, has 600,000 polygons and took months to encode.

The next stage involves a vector monitor on which the object can be manipulated through x (left/right), y (up/down) and z (forward/backward) axes in black and white line drawing form. The movement of the animation can then be viewed in real time. Motion is created by designating key frames and telling the computer how many frames apart they are. Effects such as laser beams, rocket exhausts and live-action are composed at the same time. Then the action can be tested and changes made either by adding in more key frames or modifying the existing ones.

When the animation has been polished the action is transferred to a raster monitor for colour and lighting. Shaded colour, even on a supercomputer, can't be generated fast enough to view in real time. First time round the polygons are assigned colours, specified by three numbers representing the blend of primary colours. They're decimals between the extremes of zero (no intensity) and one (full saturation). Graded tones are created by specifying the points of extreme difference, with the computer then supplying the transition between them.

A new frame is begun by calculating how much each object has moved since the one before. The Cray is very, very good at perspective and can determine exactly how big each of the millions of polygons is and how it is orientated, and give each one of them the right distortion. It then decides how each individual polygon should be lit, depending on its angle to any light or lights, the shape of the surface it's part of and the material it's 'made' of, metallic, matt or ceramic.

Finally the X-MP starts painting the frame, deciding the colour of each pixel. As it calculates them it stores the colour values in a frame buffer until the image is complete, which takes about 120 seconds. Finally the film recorder reads off the contents of the buffer.

The end results are astonishing (if rather super-clean), computers being incapable of anything short of perfection, despite attempts to build-in textures. First generation is more important to film makers than moviegoers, but the effect is very different from the model animation we've been used to, apart from being able to do things which would be incredibly difficult, if not impossible, any other way.

Picture Design Group, Digital Productions' parent company, dubbed 'The Total Forge' by futurist Ted Nelson in *'Dream Machines'*, were too far ahead of their time and dissolved. But now computer film making is here to stay — at $2,000 a second. Which, believe it or not, is competitive with other methods.

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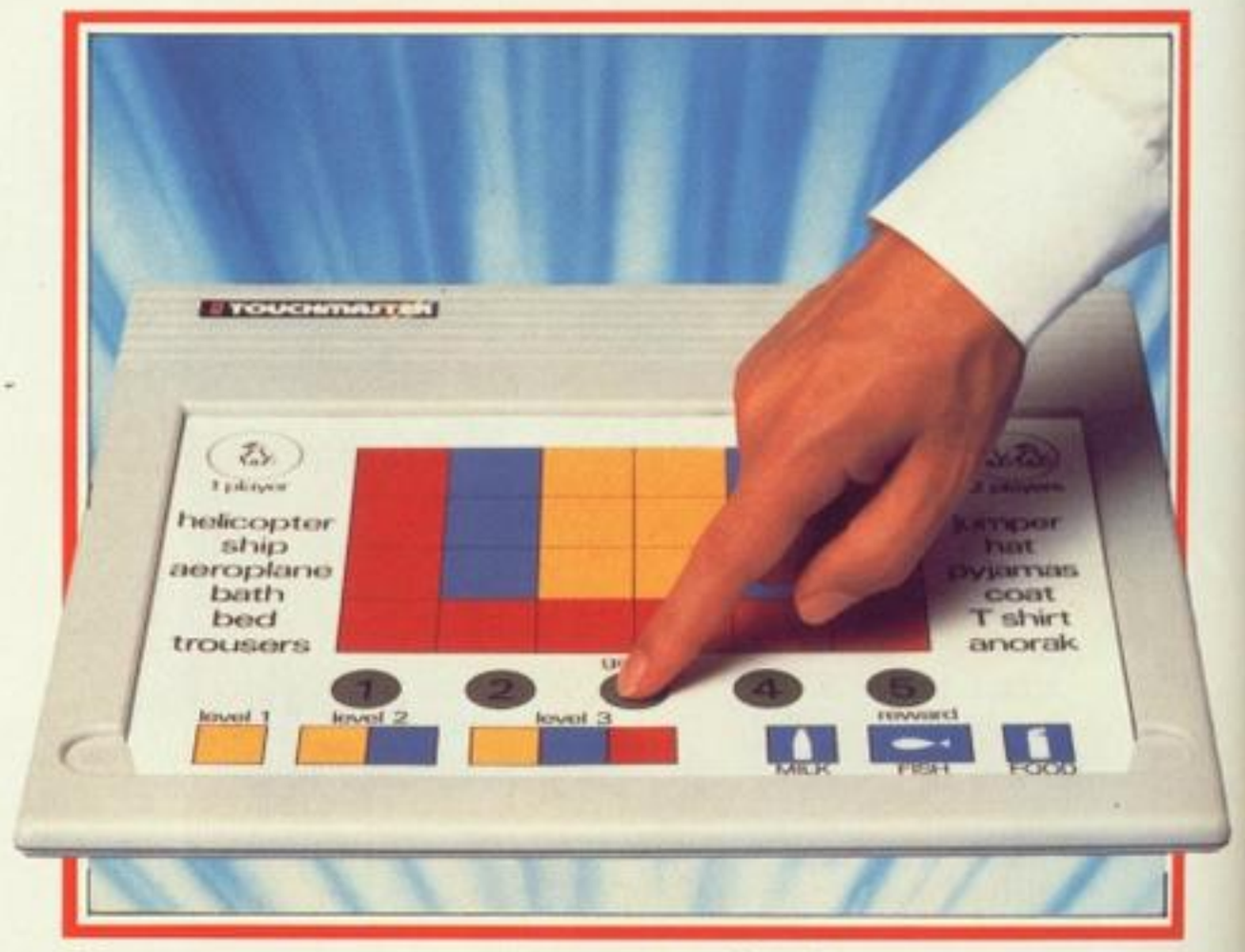

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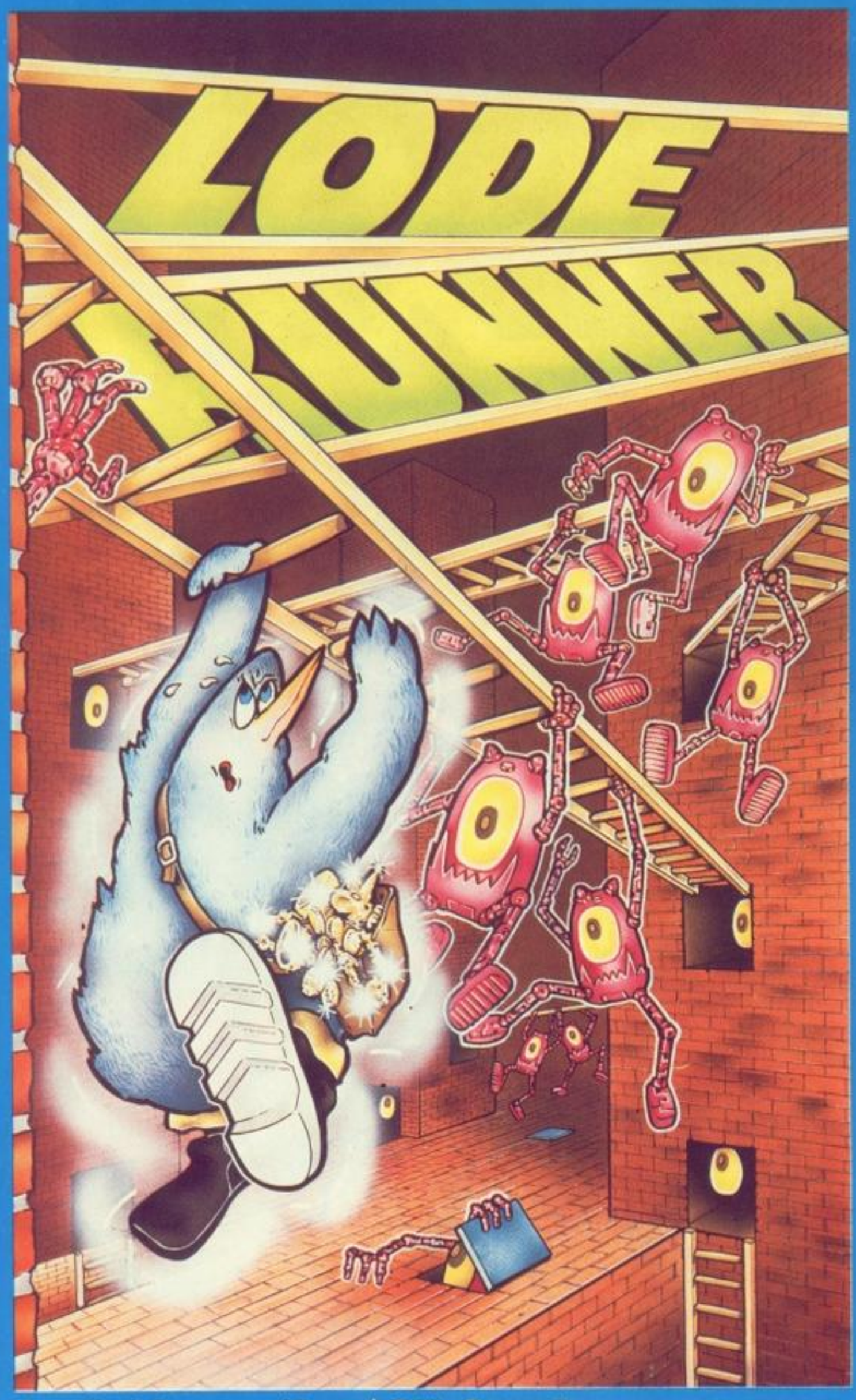

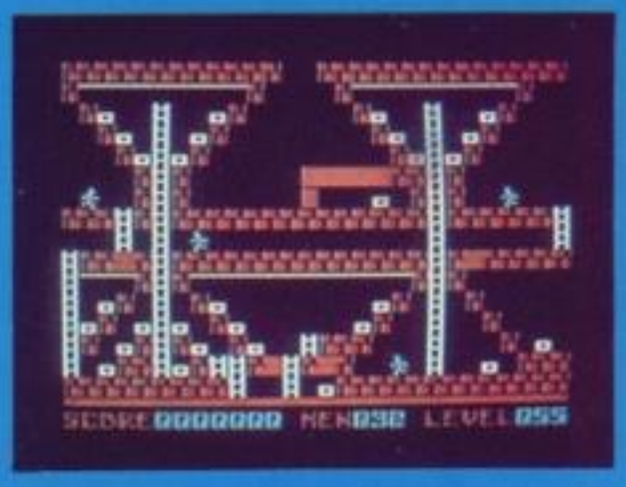

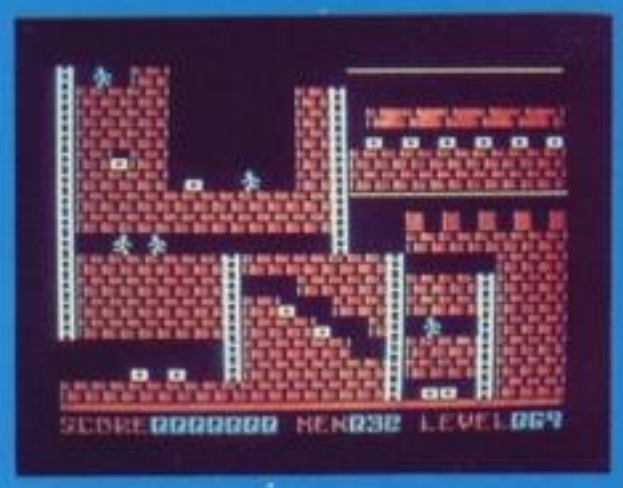

You are a highly trained Galactic Commando deep in enemy territory. Power hungry leaders of the repressive Bungeling Empire have stolen a fortune in gold from the peace loving people, and you have just discovered their secret underground treasury. Your goal? To recover every last ingot of Bungeling booty. You'll be running, jumping and climbing heroically, solving perplexing puzzles and drilling passageways through stone floors and barriers using your laser drill pistol. You'll need more than fleet feet and good looks to get through this mission alive. You'll need quick wits and brains!

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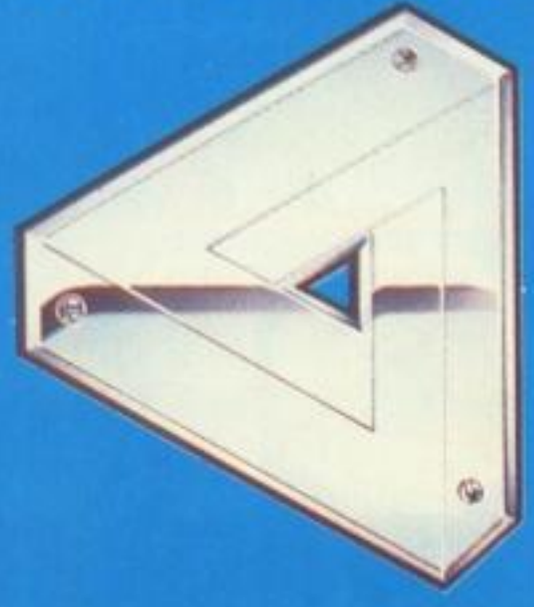

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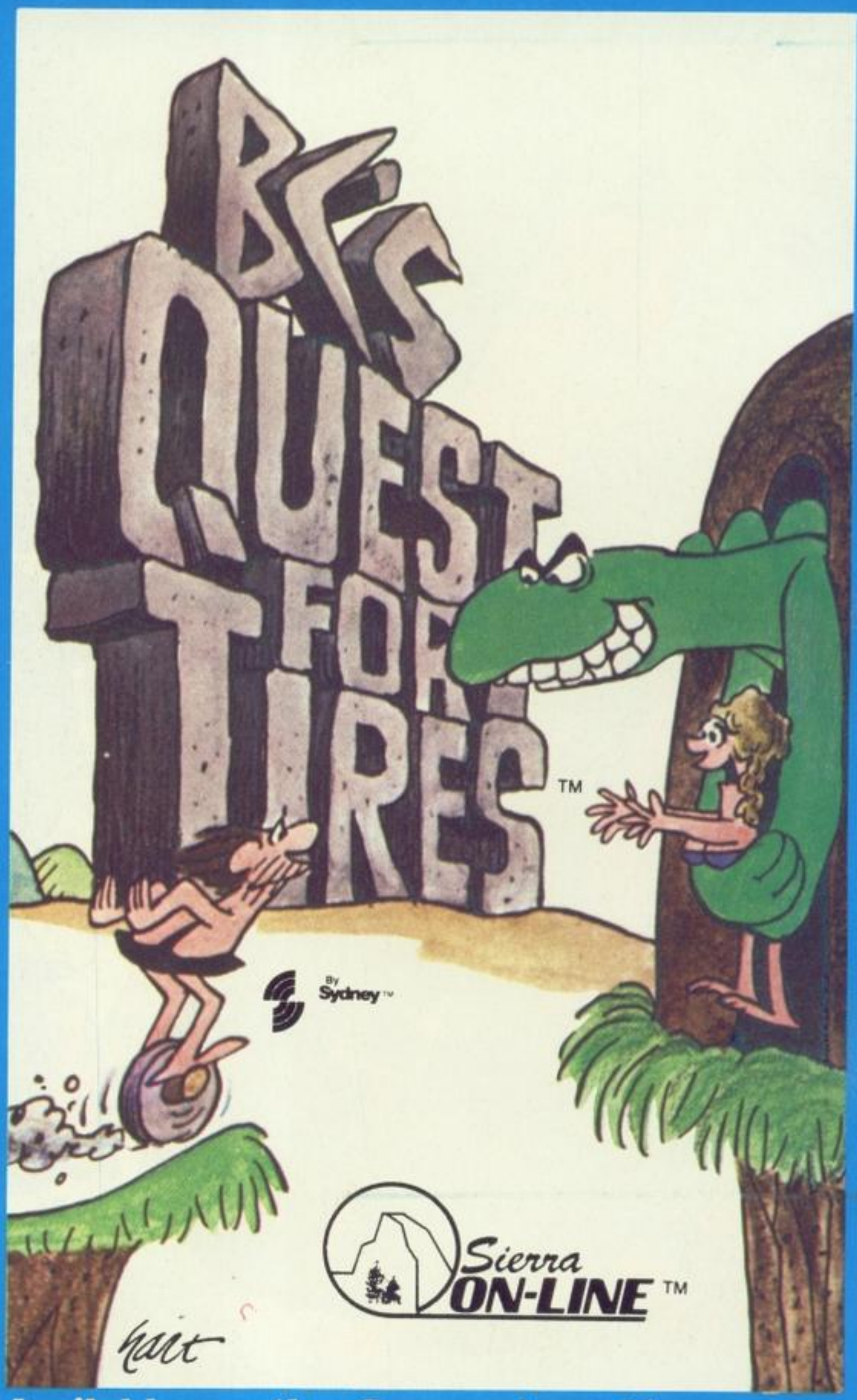
Can Thor save Cute Chick from the hungry dinosaur? Only you can help. At first he only has to jump rocks and holes. Then he must jump and duck, almost simultaneously, to avoid the logs and low hanging tree limbs in the Petrified Forest. The only way Thor can get across the river is to hop on the turtles' backs. These turtles sometimes get tired and submerge at the wrong moment, much to Thor's dismay! To add to Thor's difficulties, his arch-enemy Fat Broad is waiting on the other side to ambush him. If Thor's timing is good, the Dooky Bird is overhead, the prehistoric bird will pick him up and carry him across!

Thor must build up plenty of speed during his downhill run before the cliff. Timing is crucial, too. If Thor's balance is off or he is too slow he will crash into the ravine or the face of the cliff. Once over the cliff, Thor faces his most difficult challenge: the volcanic eruption. In addition to the obstacles on the ground, he is showered with boulders from the sky.

Once again Thor must cross the river on the turtles' backs. Then, at last, he must face the dinosaur! If Thor can get past the dinosaur and into the cave, he has only a short way to go to rescue Cute Chick. On his way, Thor must duck under stalagtites and jump over stalagmites to avoid crashing.

If Thor does crash, don't worry: he has five wheels. But True Love is calling him, so use all your agility and cunning to help him rescue Cute Chick!



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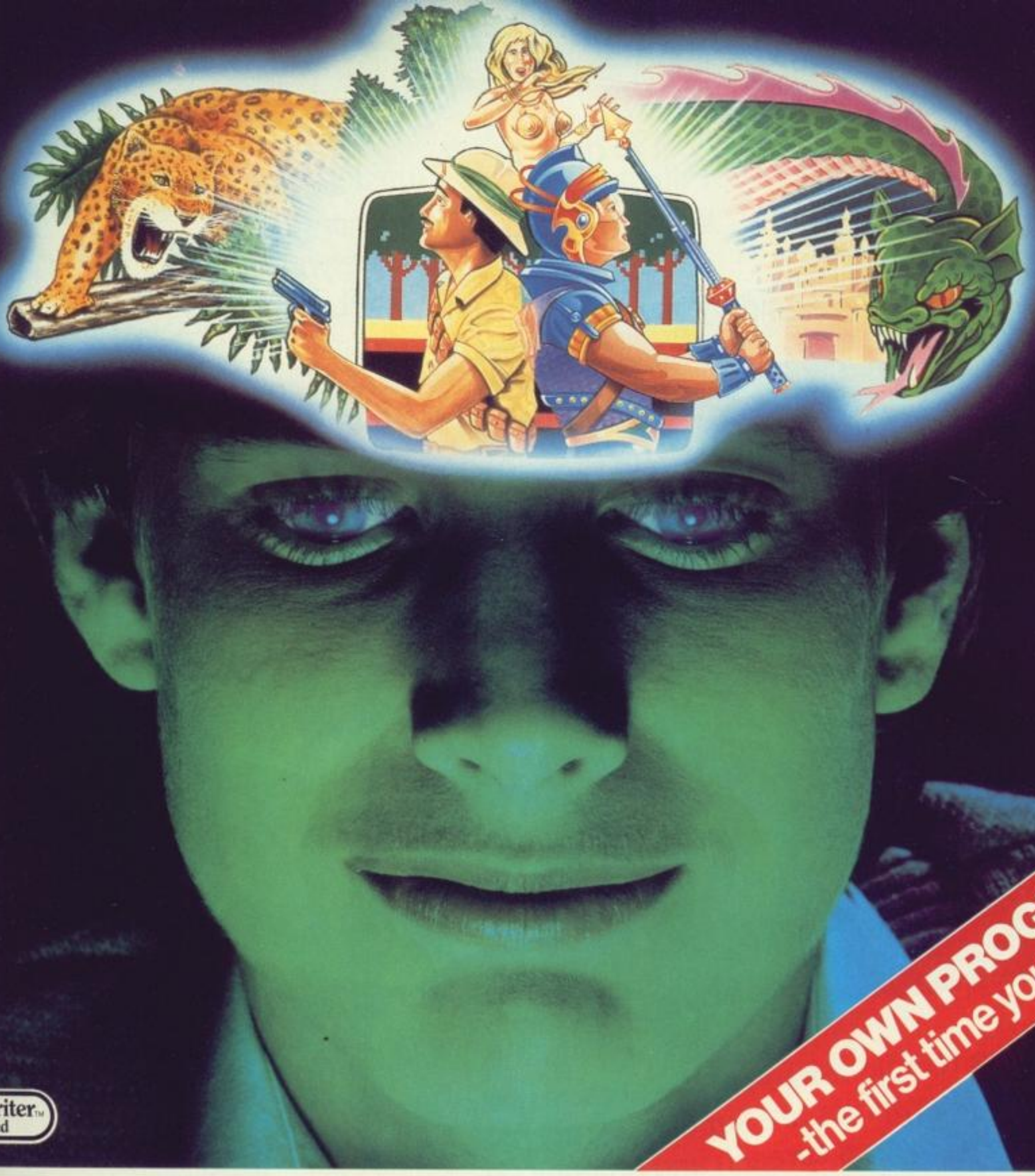

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DORKSLAYER! Steve KeatoAd

AVA

Is Hewson Consultants' Avalon difficult? Put it this way: it takes Steve Turner 20 hours to finish — and he WROTE it! Our Man Keaton extracts keyboard from stone, dons rusty green armour, and sets to . . .

FRANKLY, I'M not one for subtle colour.

For me an adventure must REEK of atmosphere before I'll give it the time of day. Unfortunately this predilection for gratuitous padding often obscures the all important art of puzzle solving. Dragons can be slain and demons exorcised but heavy atmosphere will fog the nog every time. Look at *Avalon* the deliciously animated mega-quest from Hewson Consultants. I've become so entranced in its authentic gloom that I'm quite unable to make any headway! Once in, I'll just wander aimlessly through the cobwebs and play hide 'n' seek with the goblin guards! The thing has me spellbound.

Set in the afterglow of the Roman Empire, it tells of the eldritch confrontation between Maroc and Mage and his dread nemesis, the dark Lord of Chaos. As you might suspect, your task is to guide Maroc toward this climactic battle with the shadowy one, negotiating over two hundred rooms on eight levels in the process. Quite a task when you realise that entrance is gained to a room only after an impressive head-butt to the appropriate door. Something of an adventure innovation from creator Steve Turner.

"I'd originally planned to write *Avalon* years ago," Steve tells me, "but no one was interested in the story-board because 3D games were the in-thing. I think that if I'd gone ahead with it then I might well have become a millionaire, because that was about time animated programs suddenly took off! I'd always thought that a game which combined the scope and puzzle solving element of adventures with arcade style movement would be somethin' else to play!"

He was right. But it also proved something else to write. An unexpected nine months, in fact. Still, the result is both engrossing and fiendishly difficult. Indeed rumour has it that even certain head honchos from Hewson are unable to progress beyond the first Gatehouse level! Can it be possible that *Avalon* is just *TOO* complex for us ordinary mortals?

"No, I don't think so!" he declares cheerfully. "Standard text adventures are probably more complex! I guess it's possible that some people will buy it just as an arcade game and they might well have problems on the final levels. Y'see, there are four objects down there which must be used in sequence to create another object which you'll need to complete the adventure. But the first couple of levels hardly contain any problems at all! They're only there to introduce people to the style of movement. To enable them to get used to the joystick. It gradually gets more complex the deeper you go."

IRON HEAD

He ain't kiddin'! In fact, I rather think that we can take Steve's dismissive attitude with a pinch of salt — as he admits (when pressed) that *Avalon* still takes him around TWENTY hours to complete! And he wrote it! The thing is tough. No question.

"I spent a lot of time researching the game," he explains. "All the place names are real and even the artifacts are genuine. The iron head on Maroc's staff actually exists in the British Museum. Go along and see it! I've tried to make the game so deep that even after maps are published and help given there will still be plenty of things for people to enjoy. I wonder how long it will take

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 0REM MINOTAUR'S MAZE
 1REM BY WILLIAM M MCGREGOR
 2ON ERROR RUN
 3MODE6
 4PROCINSTRUCT
 5PROCINIT
 6MODE5
 7PROCDISPLAY
 8MODE5:REM THIS CANNOT BE LEFT OU
 9VDU23,1,0;0;0;0
10REPEAT
11PROCPREP
12PROCDRAW_MAZE(DIFF%)
13PROCCORRECT_ROUTE
14PROCGET_SET
15PROCPLAY
16IF NOT dead% THEN sc%=sc%+100
17PROCSCORE
18IF NOT dead% THEN PROCNEXTLEVEL
19CLS
20UNTIL lives%=0
21MODE6
22PROCEND
23END
24:
25:
26DEFPROCINIT
27VDU19,3,6,0,0,0
28level%=1
```

Controls:
Z;Left
X: Right
Colon: Up
/: Down

By
William M. McGr
for
Electron/BBC Mo

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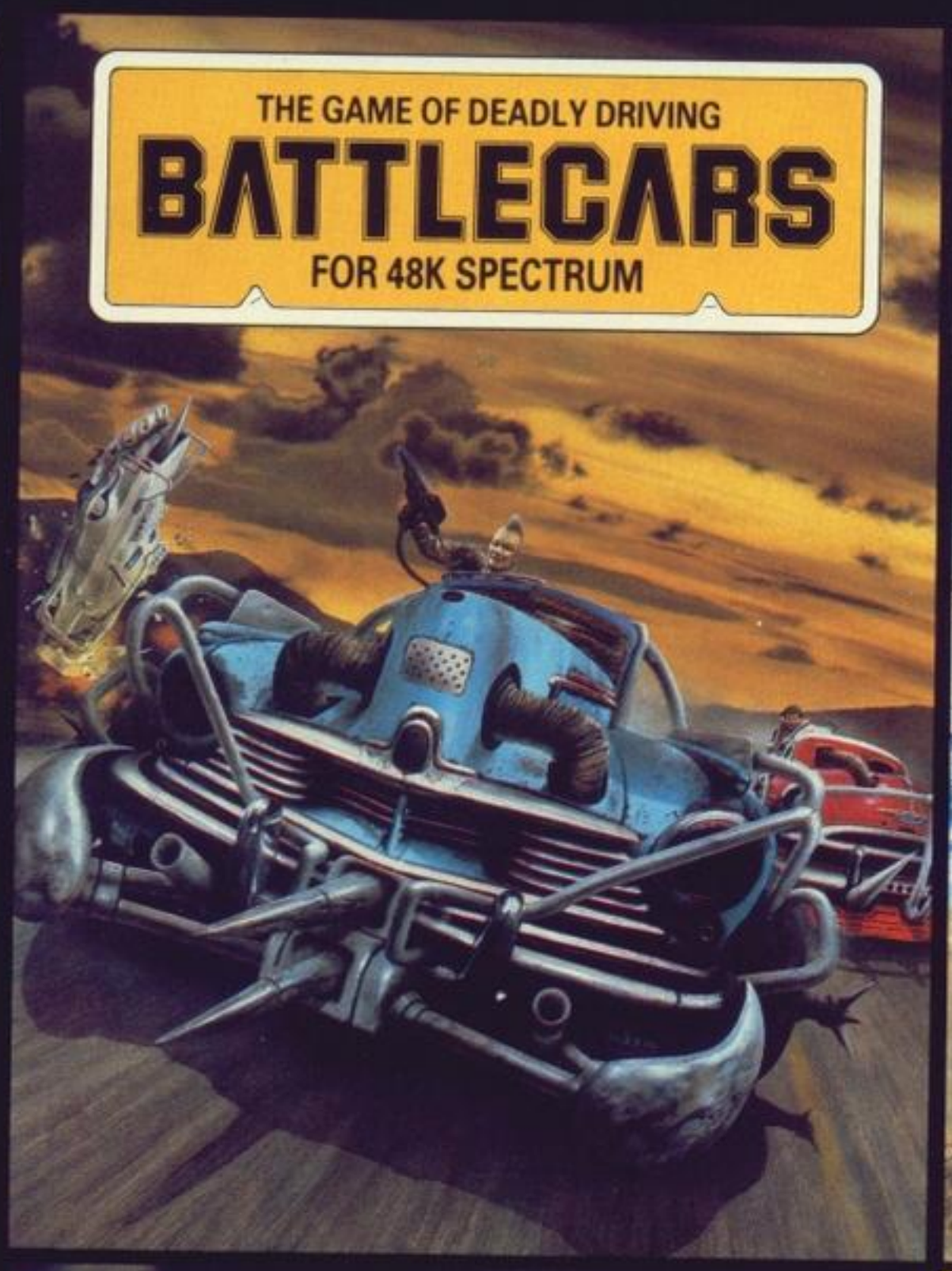

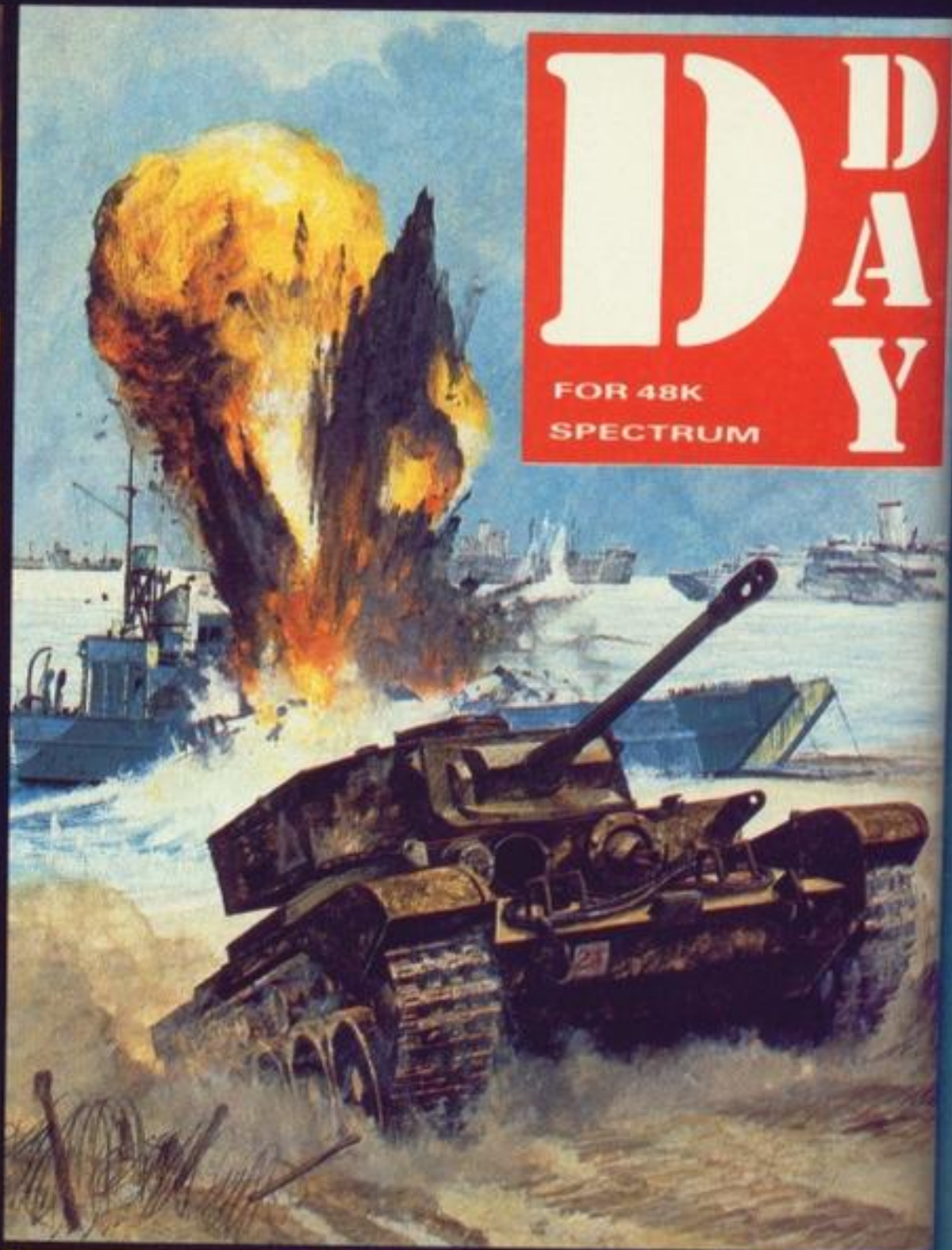

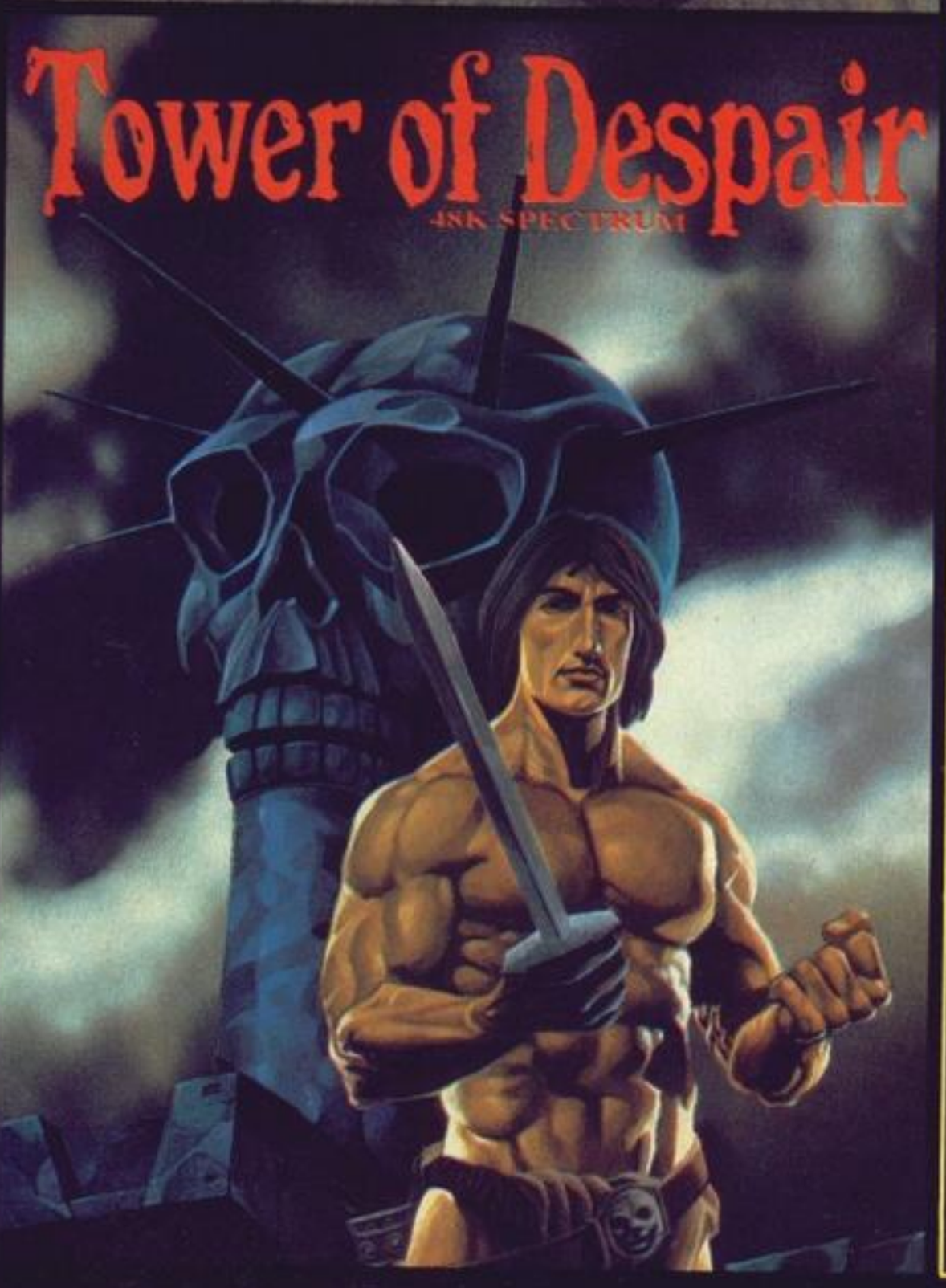

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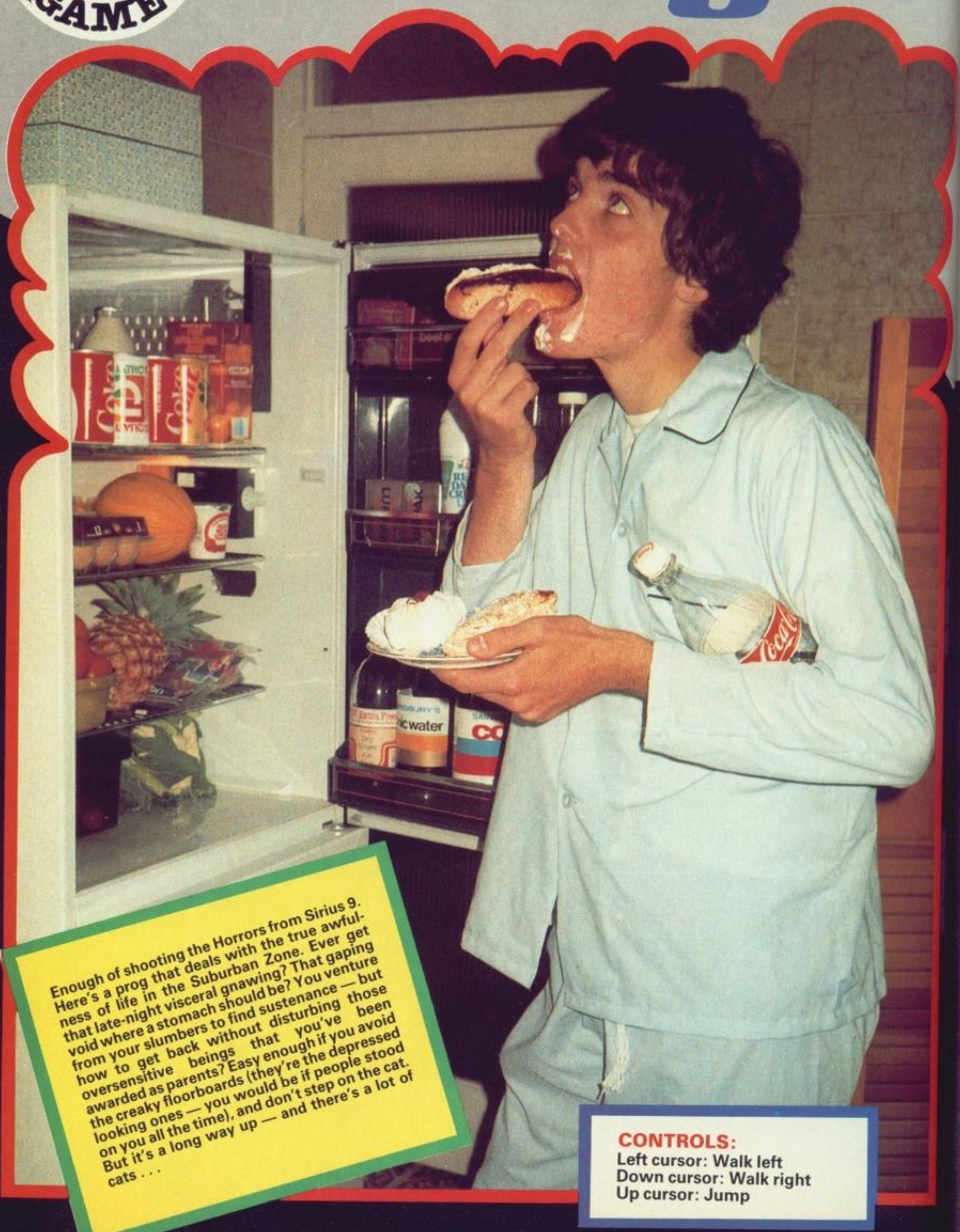

Enough of shooting the Horrors from Sirius 9. Here's a prog that deals with the true awfulness of life in the Suburban Zone. Ever get that late-night visceral gnawing? That gaping void where a stomach should be? You venture from your slumbers to find sustenance — but how to get back without disturbing those oversensitive beings that you've been awarded as parents? Easy enough if you avoid the creaky floorboards (they're the depressed looking ones — you would be if people stood on you all the time), and don't step on the cat. But it's a long way up — and there's a lot of cats . . .

CONTROLS:
Left cursor: Walk left
Down cursor: Walk right
Up cursor: Jump

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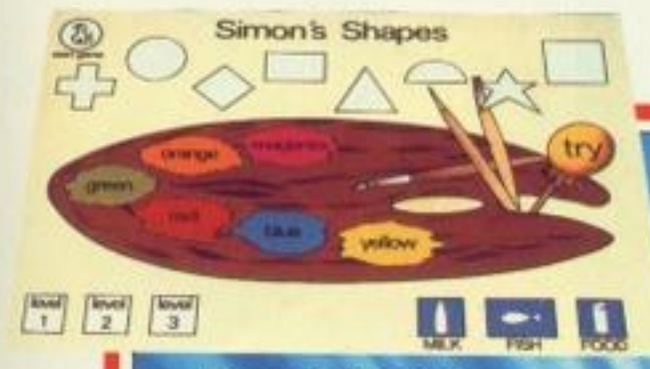
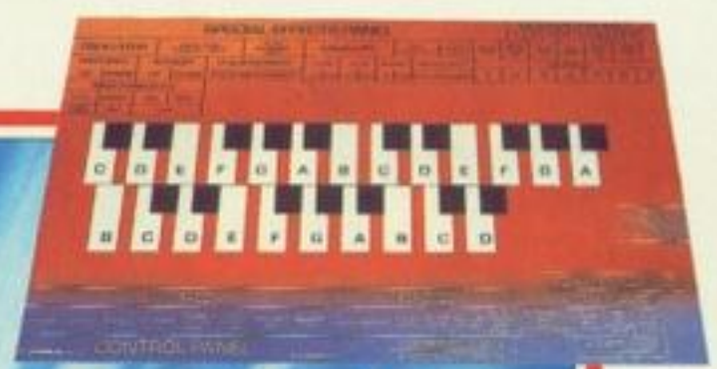
THINK TOUCHWARE



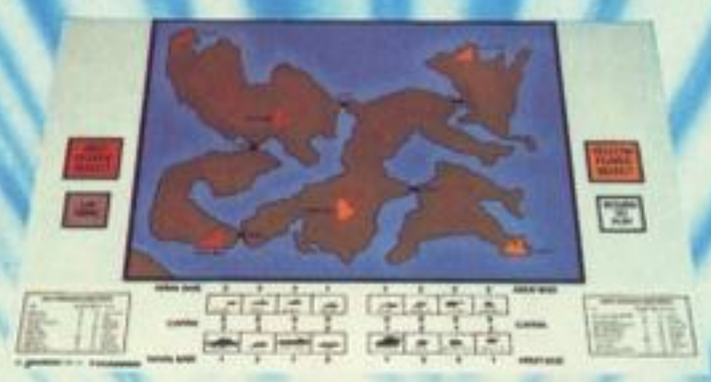
Simon's Shapes

Simon Says



MultiSound Synthesiser

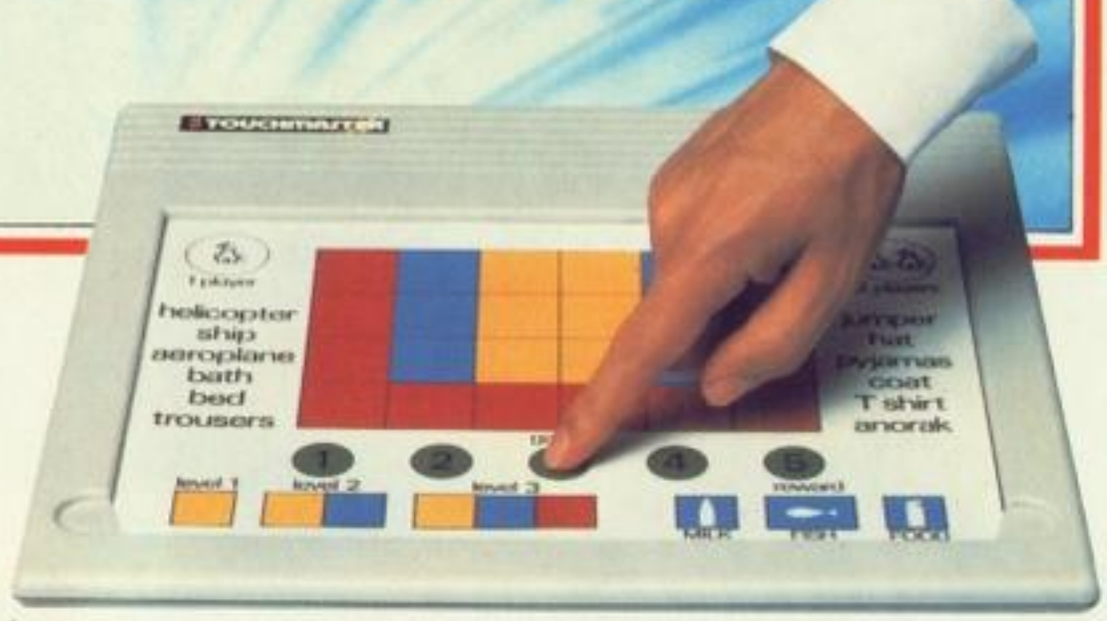
Dicky's Diamonds



Strategic Command

Othello

Graphics Editor



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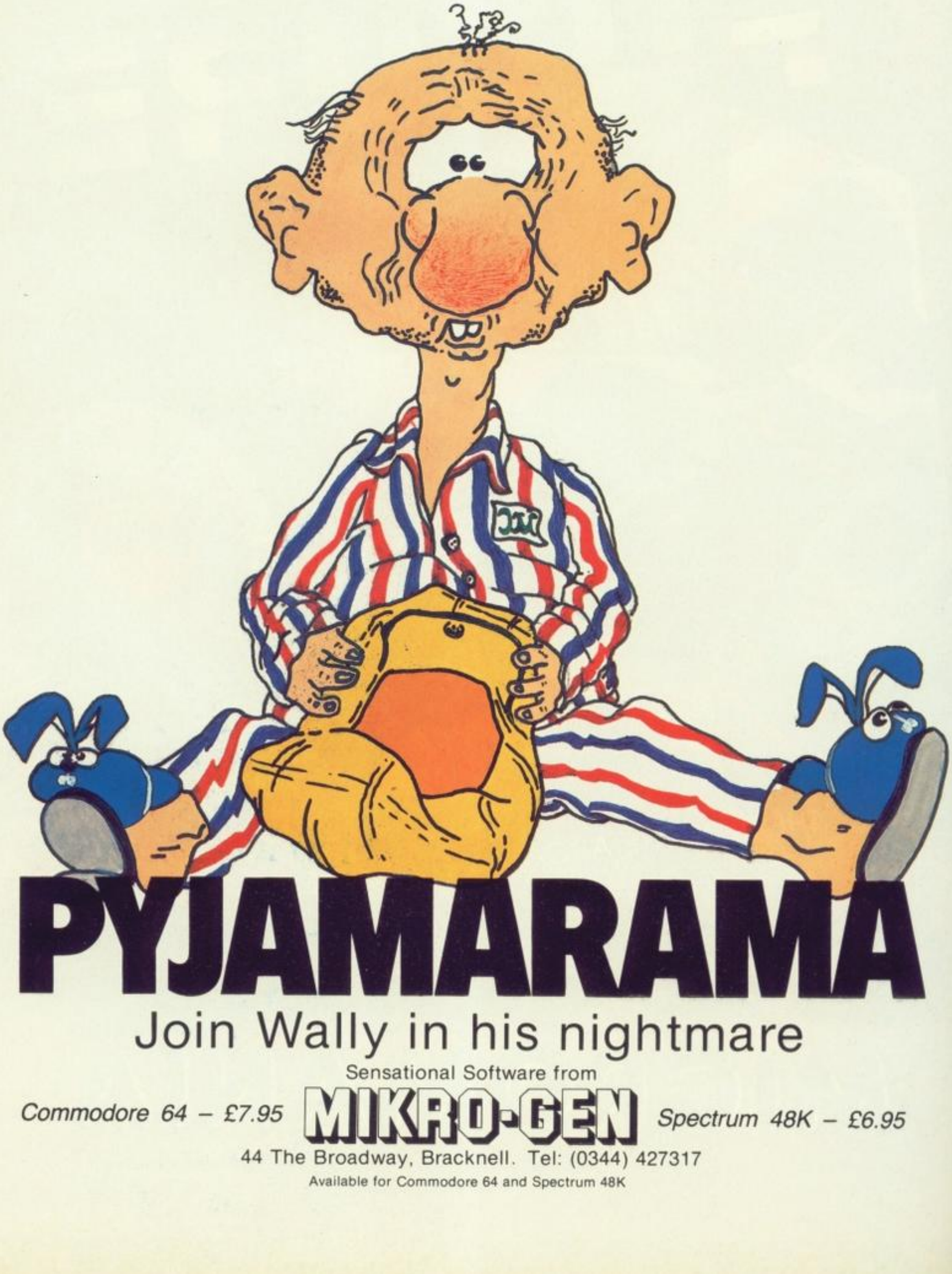

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6.40 pm Cloak of Death

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Special Effects Dr Zambesi
Directed Martin Edwards
Produced Argus Press Software

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Mid-evening
9.00 pm Quest for Eternity

Starring **The Overlords of the Universe**

The candidate (you) have to get to the Chamber of Creation. It's a laugh a minute, since it's 2000 light years away on the most horrible planet in the Universe ... and your starship doesn't work either!

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Directed Martin Edwards
Produced Argus Press Software

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Midnight Movie
11.55 Star Force Seven

Starring **The Zurgs**

After a desperate space battle only o fleet of heroes remain to prevent t invasion of earth. The future of huma ity lies with you!

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by KEVIN FLYNN

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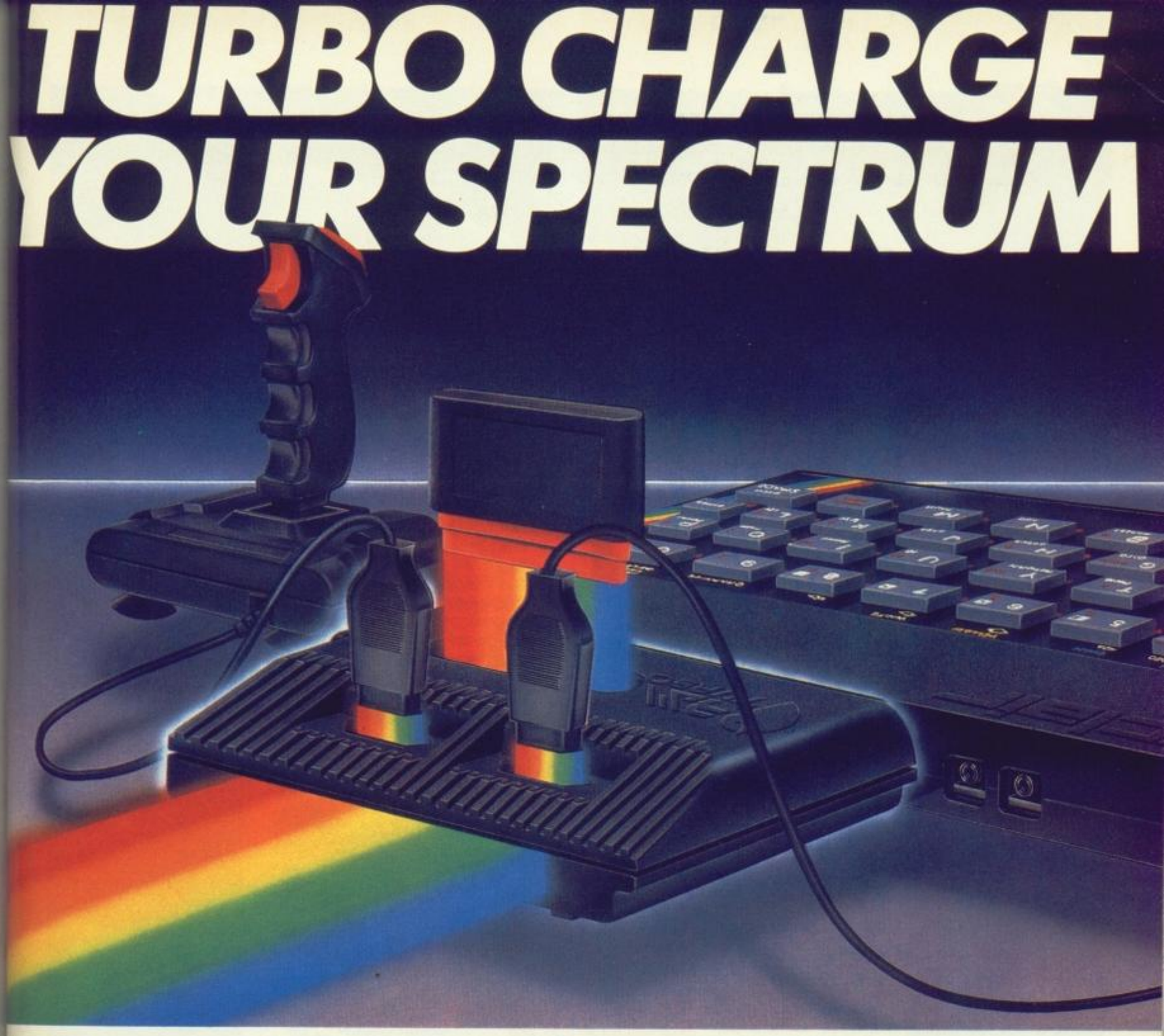

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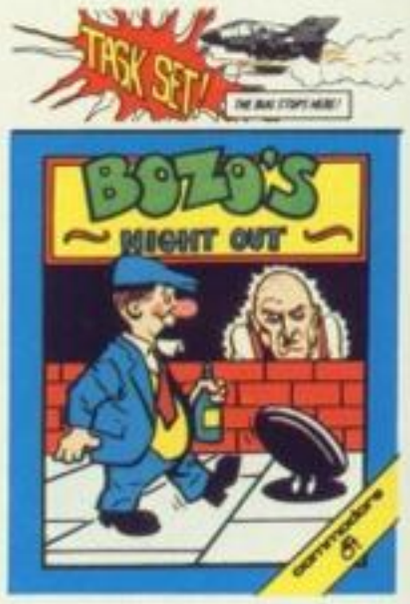
A brand new character game. Poor old Bozo, all he has to do is to get home after a night out with the lads. That's easy until a wobble becomes a lurch and a stagger. Later into the night, all rules go out of the window as he disbelieves what's happening in front of his blood-shot eyes. An epic journey with ultra-smooth graphics and sprites which run rings round normal games.

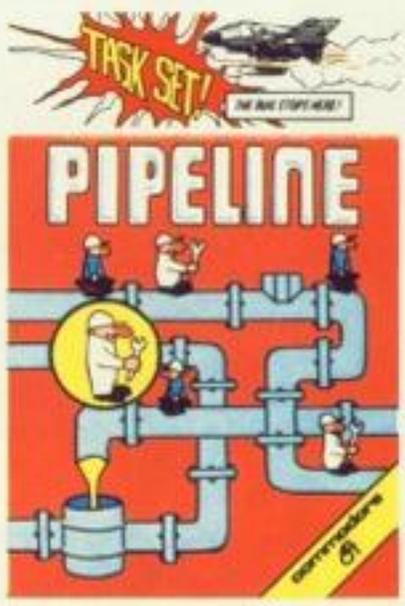
NEW



All available now on cassette or disk.

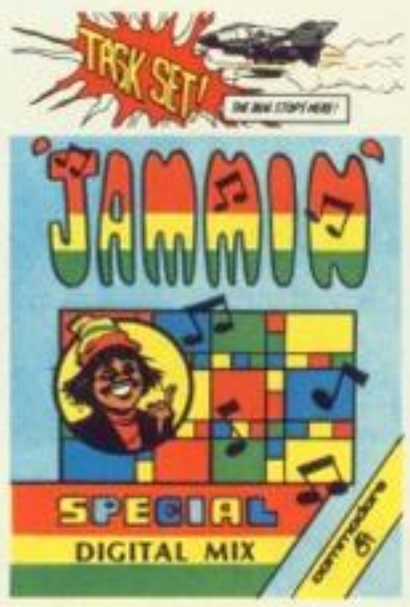
SUPER PIPELINE

Keep the pipeline open. Foreman Fred and Plumber Pete have their work cut out. The evil ladderman drops metal wedges to plug the pipeline – and only Pete can fix 'em. Pete trusts Fred to defend him against the six-legged Venusian pipe spiders and the hard case lobster while he knocks out the plugs and restores the flow. Full accompanying music and effects, options and hi-score table.



JAMMIN'

Unlike anything else, a totally musical game yet highly colourful. Guide Rankin' Rodney through the top 20 mazes – each with an interactive rock sound track. Gather the instruments and make a band but watch out for bum-notes, dischord and that most deadly effect – distortion. If you've never heard the full music capabilities of the 64, grab an instrument and join the band.



COSMIC CONVOY

Just surviving is not good enough in this giant convoy. Control three fighters at once, to defend the huge transporters as they ply between the planets. Only those transports reaching planetfall will gain galactic credits, and no-one expects promotion for losing the entire fleet. Which freighters must be sacrificed to get most cargo to the next planet. Full sound options and hi-score table complete the arcade package.

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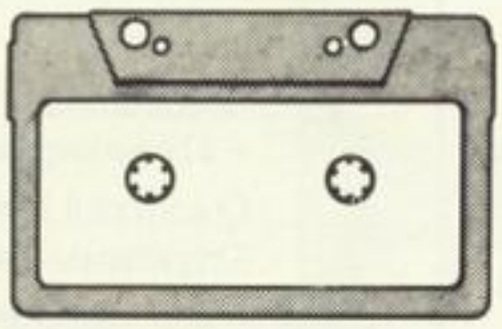

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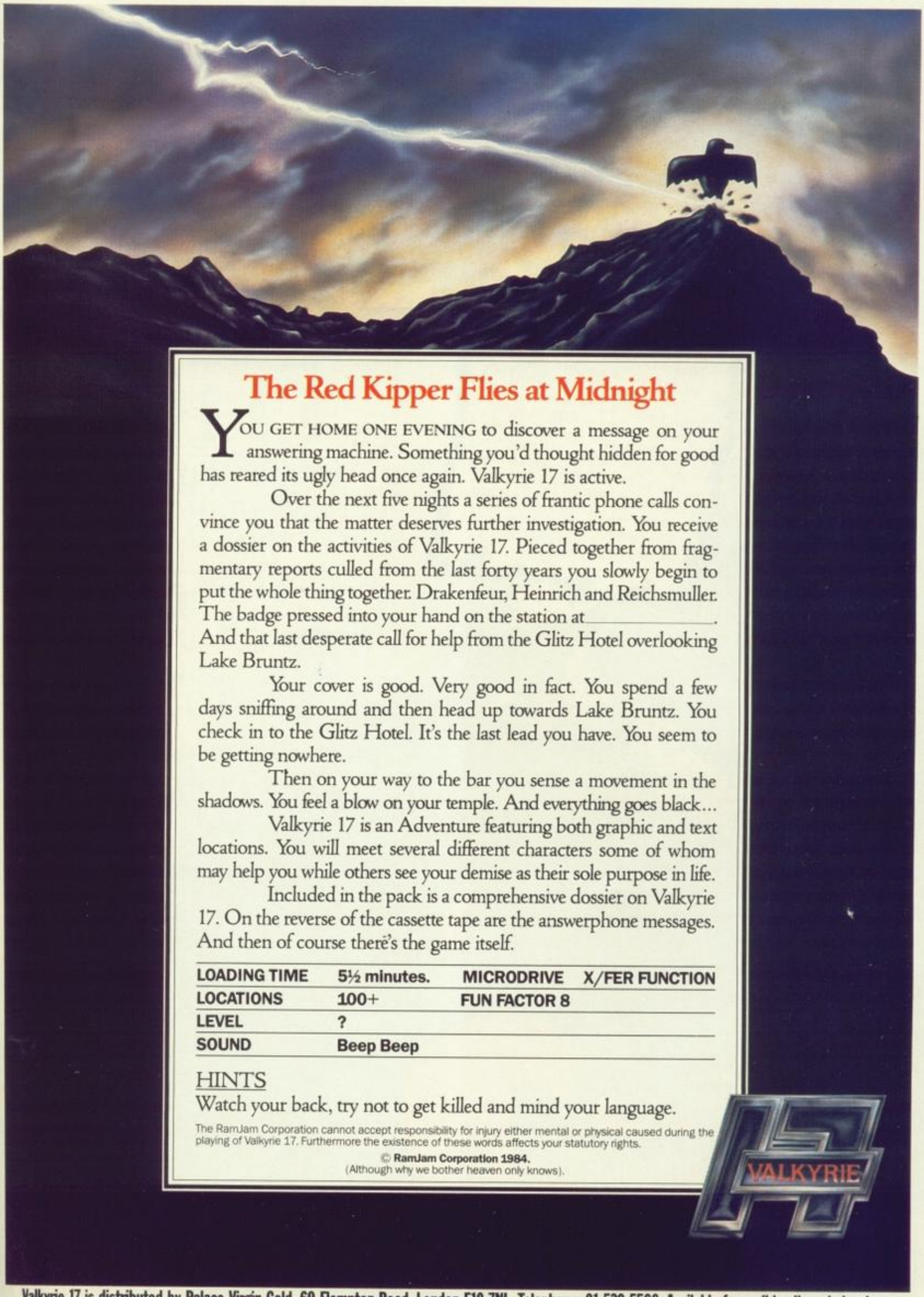

The Red Kipper Flies at Midnight

YOU GET HOME ONE EVENING to discover a message on your answering machine. Something you'd thought hidden for good has reared its ugly head once again. Valkyrie 17 is active.

Over the next five nights a series of frantic phone calls convince you that the matter deserves further investigation. You receive a dossier on the activities of Valkyrie 17. Pieced together from fragmentary reports culled from the last forty years you slowly begin to put the whole thing together. Drakenfeur, Heinrich and Reichsmuller. The badge pressed into your hand on the station at_____. And that last desperate call for help from the Glitz Hotel overlooking Lake Bruntz.

Your cover is good. Very good in fact. You spend a few days sniffing around and then head up towards Lake Bruntz. You check in to the Glitz Hotel. It's the last lead you have. You seem to be getting nowhere.

Then on your way to the bar you sense a movement in the shadows. You feel a blow on your temple. And everything goes black...

Valkyrie 17 is an Adventure featuring both graphic and text locations. You will meet several different characters some of whom may help you while others see your demise as their sole purpose in life.

Included in the pack is a comprehensive dossier on Valkyrie 17. On the reverse of the cassette tape are the answerphone messages. And then of course there's the game itself.

LOADING TIME	**5½ minutes.**	**MICRODRIVE**	**X/FER FUNCTION**
LOCATIONS	**100+**	**FUN FACTOR 8**	
LEVEL	**?**		
SOUND	**Beep Beep**		

HINTS

Watch your back, try not to get killed and mind your language.

The RamJam Corporation cannot accept responsibility for injury either mental or physical caused during the playing of Valkyrie 17. Furthermore the existence of these words affects your statutory rights.

© **RamJam Corporation 1984.**
(Although why we bother heaven only knows).

VALKYRIE

Valkyrie 17 is distributed by Palace Virgin Gold, 69 Flempton Road, London E10 7NL. Telephone: 01-539 5566. Available from all leading wholesalers.

BAR

In the Wild West, life just wasn't wild enough all the time. In the absence of TV people had to make their entertainment. Baiting the town drunk, tieing cans to cats' tails, that sort of harmless fun. Here you can participate in another popular sport — shooting beer glasses in the Lucky Strike saloon. The barman slides a stein of foaming Budweiser along the bar, and when it falls off the end, you have to zap it. Make sure you hit the handle though. And watch out for the bill — this is an expensive pursuit.

```
0 REM BAR SHOOTING
3 AA=73:BB=160:CC=103
5 RESTORE:SC=0
7 POKE36879,25:REM SCREEN COLOUR
9 SO=36876:V=36878:REM SOUND & VOLUME
11 REM DATA FOR A$
13 A$="":FORI=1 TO 27:READA:A$=A$+CHR$(A
):NEXT
15 DATA18,156,46,17,157,157,146,172,18,3
2,17,157,203,17,157,146,28,223,18,223
17 DATA17,157,157,169,146,169,144
19 REM DATA FOR G$
21 G$="":FORI=1 TO 35:READA:G$=G$+CHR$(A
):NEXT
23 DATA144,175,18,17,157,162,162,162,164
,164,164,145,157,146,172,17,17
25 DATA157,157,157,205,203,18,32,223,146
,17,157,157,157,169,223,18,32,146
27 REM DATA FOR B$
29 B$="":FOR I=1 TO 12:READA:B$=B$+CHR$
(A):NEXT
31 DATA31,167,17,157,167,164,165,157,145
,157,167,201
33 REM DATA FOR C$
35 C$="":FORI=1 TO 25:READA:C$=C$+CHR$(A
):NEXT
37 DATA31,145,32,32,32,17,157,157,157,18
,17,157,167,18,32,146,32,32,145,157,157
39 DATA157,18,17,201,32
41 A=7680:B=22:E=A-19*B+12:F=0
43 PRINT"
45 PRINT"                    CITY SALOON"
47 FOR GAME=1 TO 8:R=0
49 L$="
51 I$="
53 PRINT    TAB(19)A$
55 PRINT  TAB(17)B$
57 IFSC=0 THENPRINT"    ":FORI=1TO6:PRINT
:NEXT:PRINT:PRINT"
59 IFSC=0THENFORI=1TO6:PRINT"    ":NEXT
:PRINT
61 IFSC=0THENPRINT"
63 PRINT LEFT$(D$,11)"
```

Controls: Space bar to fire

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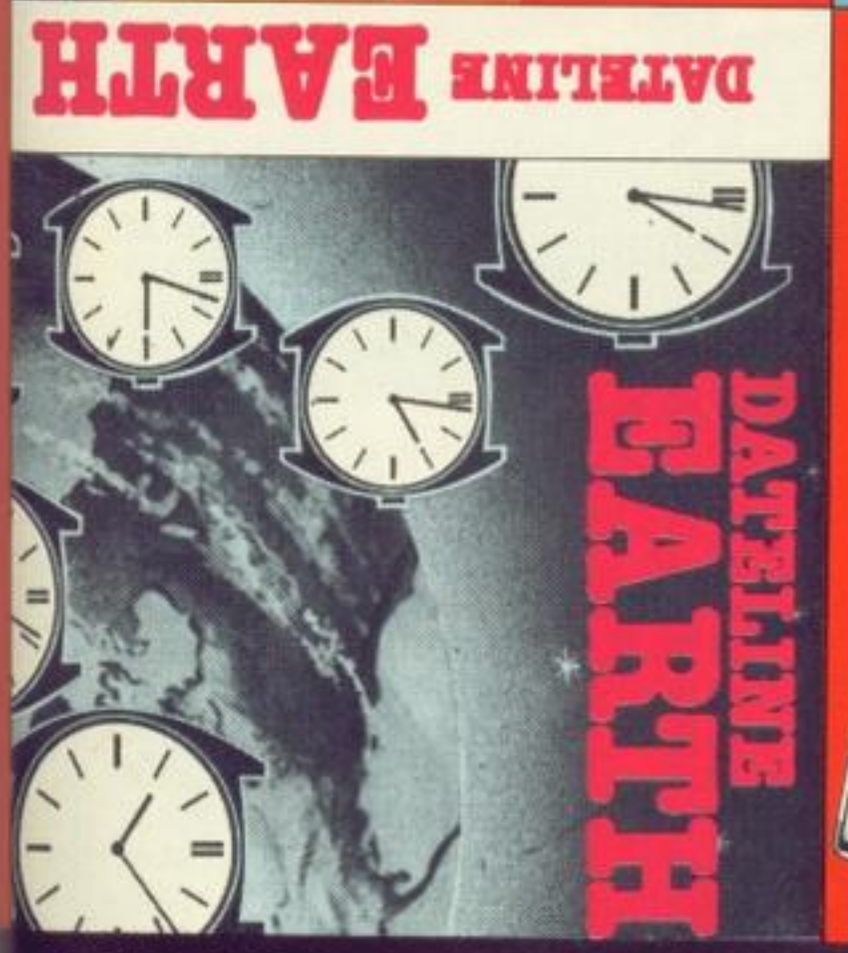
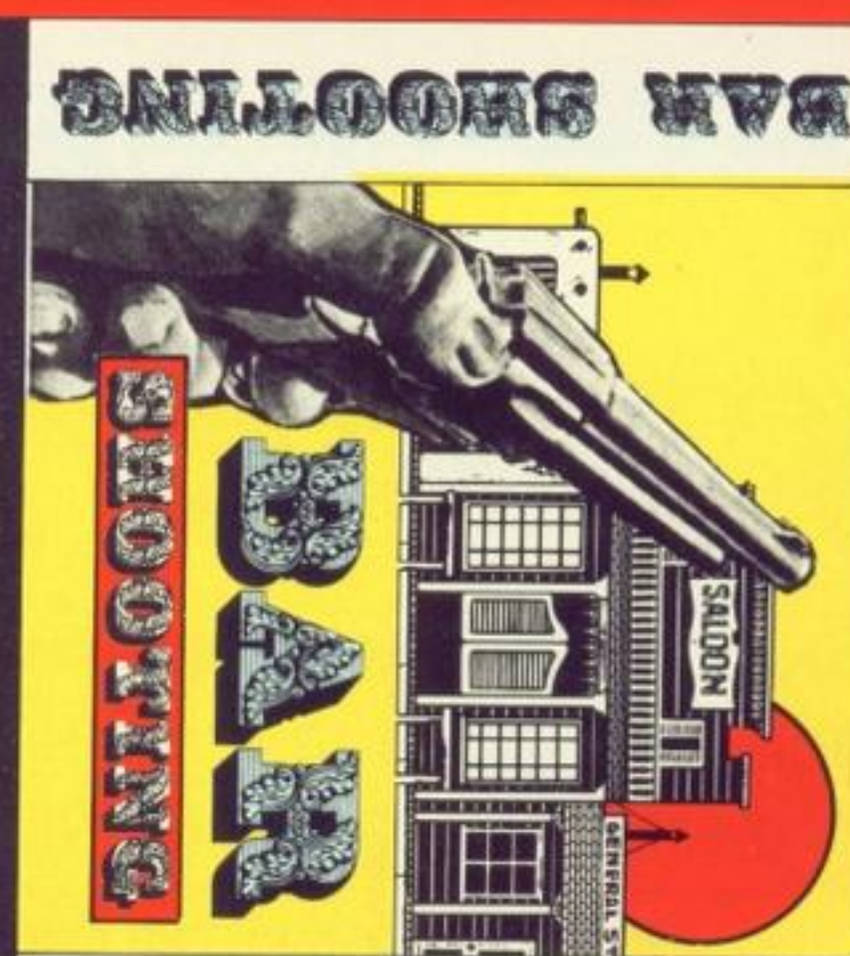
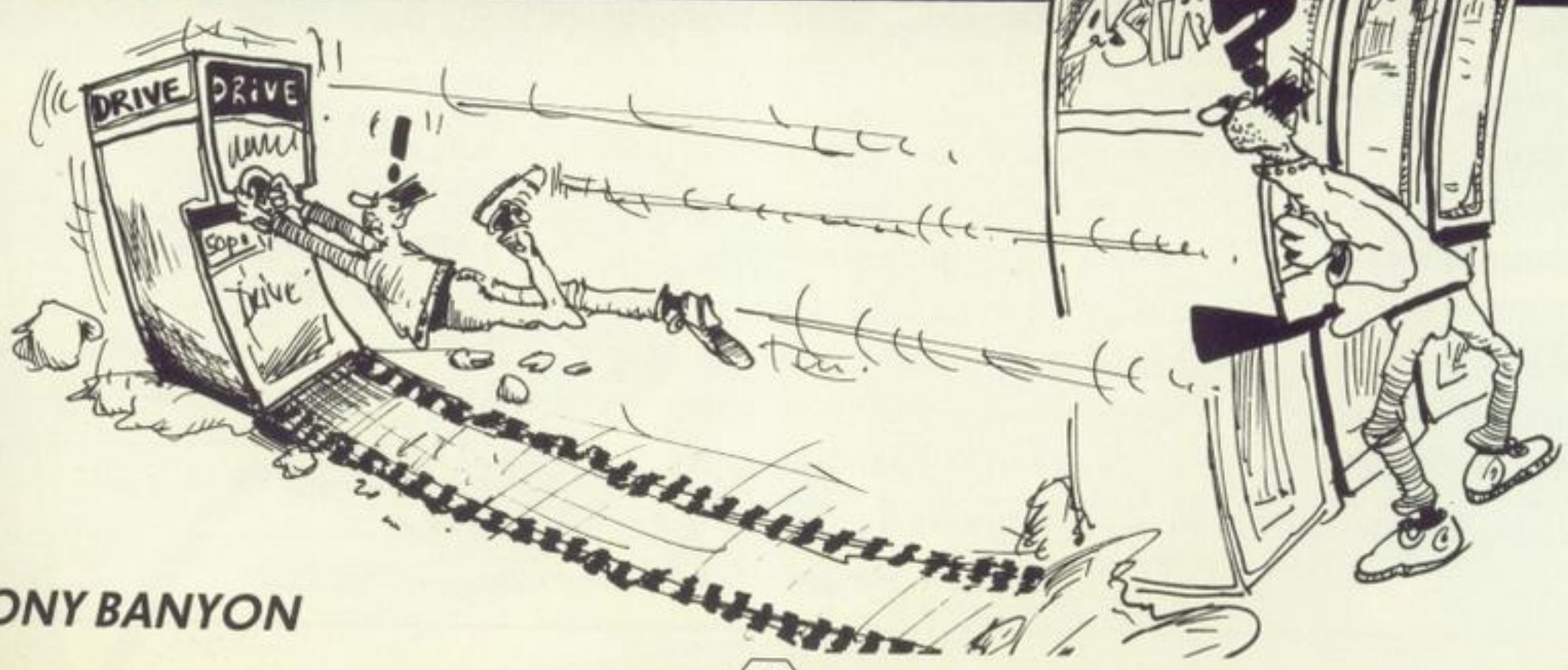




BIG K FUNNIES



BY TONY BANYON

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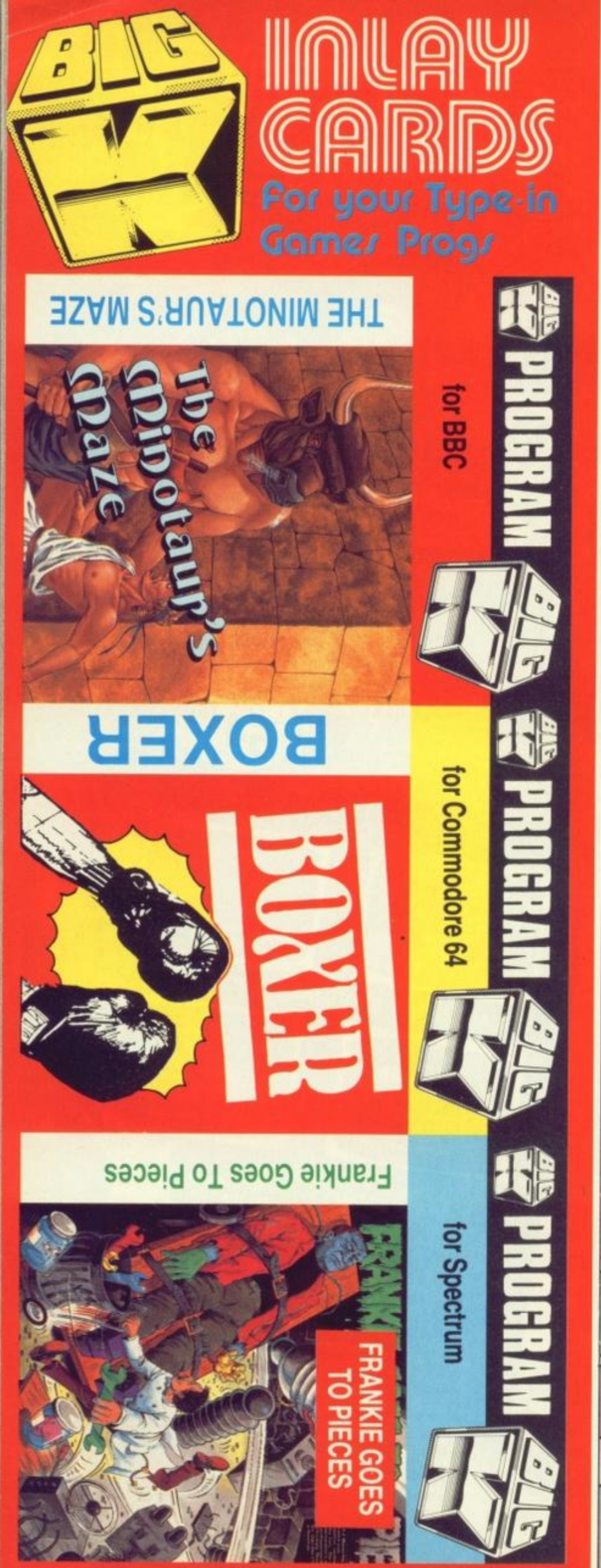
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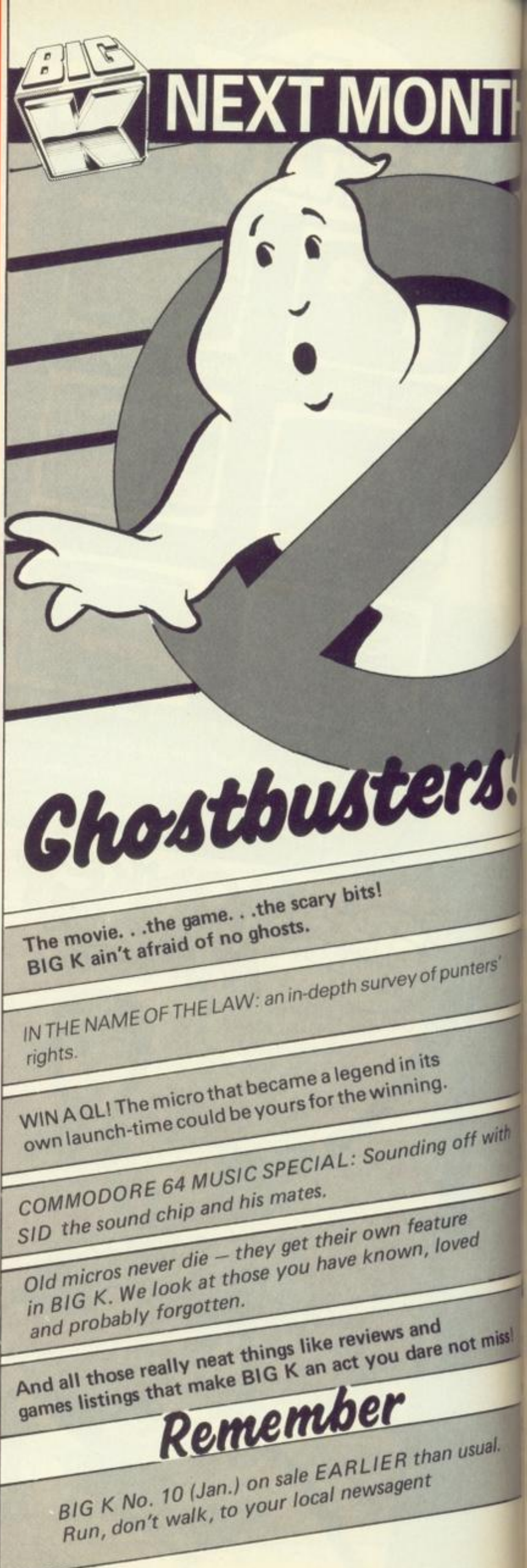
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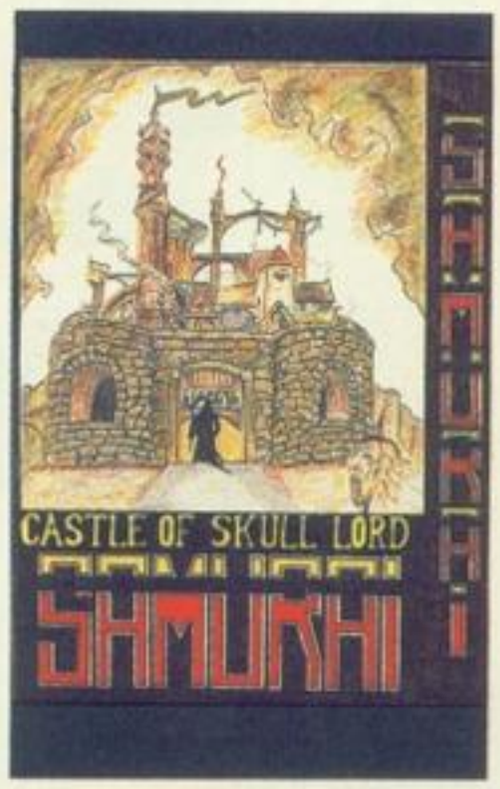

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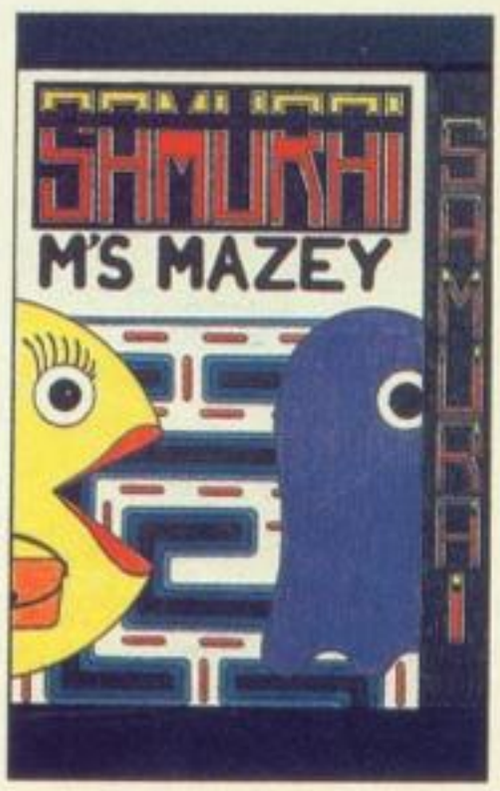
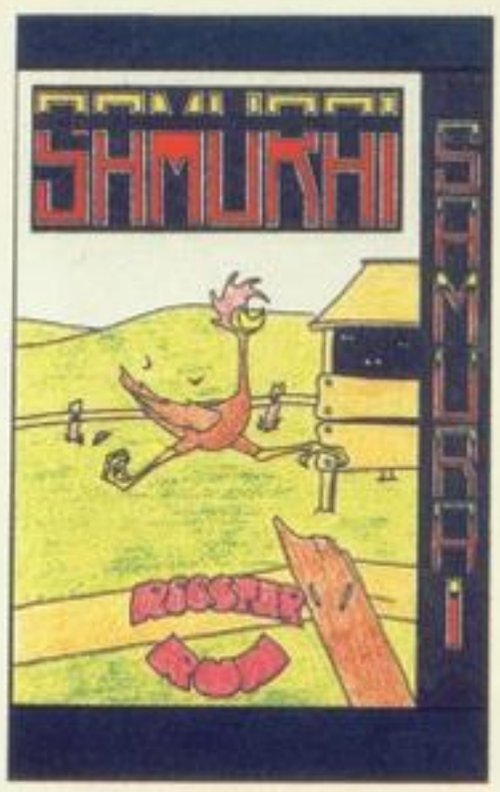


Ms. Mazey

Can you guide the intrepid Ms. Mazey around her garden maze and collect the daisies? Or will you fall victim to the evil skull riders? (In a garden?) Can you make it to the magical "flower pills". Will you get the "flower power" to zap the skulls? Will Ms. Mazey ever get to see the flower of her heart, Percy Chucka?



Rooster Run

Why DID the chicken cross the road? You don't know? Neither do we, but with the help of this game you may just find out! Your aim is to guide the hapless rooster across the road, then, get in the boat and avoid the aquamarine hazards. What could be simpler?!

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