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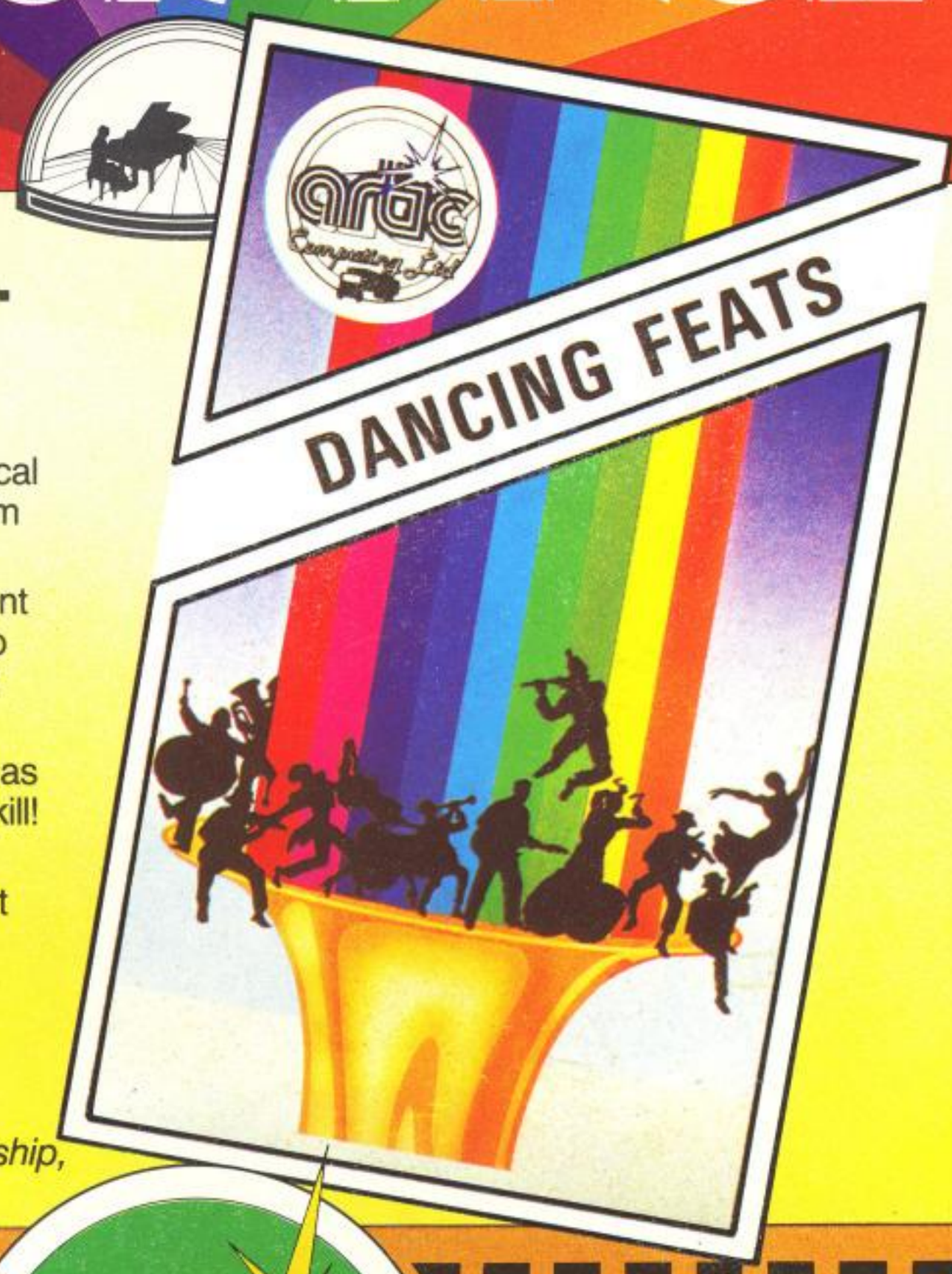

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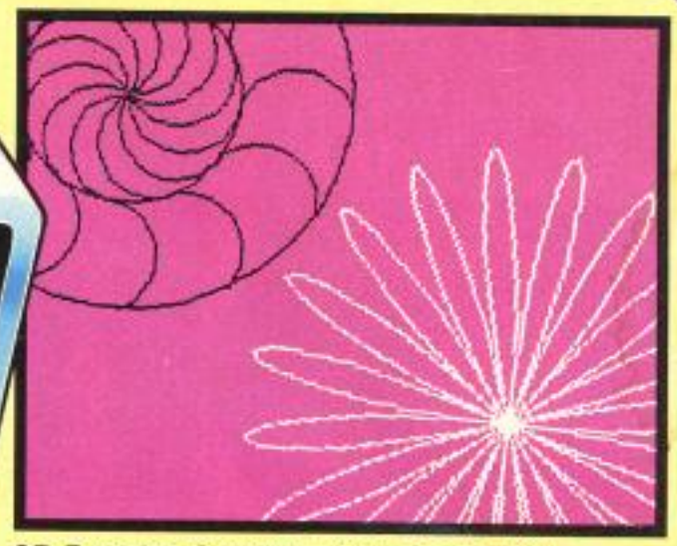
Wot about a bit of British Orc? (p.48)



3D Rotating Spectrum Graphics (p.76)

Ongoing Review Situation (p.24)

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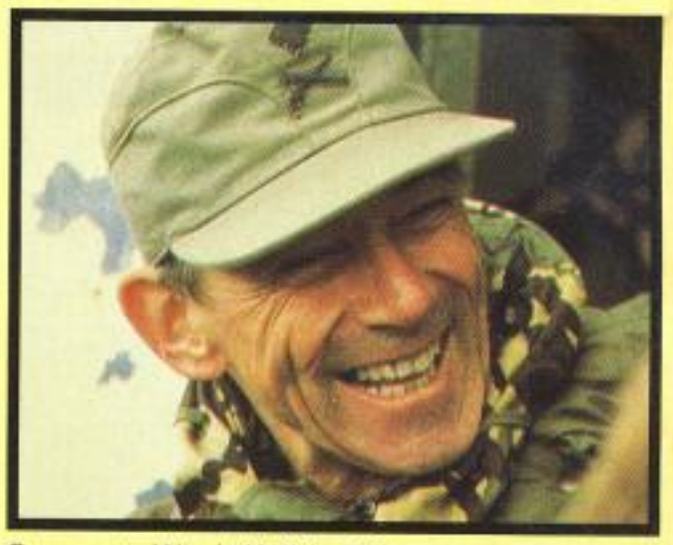

Computer War is Hell (p.72)

DROP MONEY, TAKE MAGAZINE

SOME OF the best computer games are the games we play WITH games. Sorting them into families, tracing lineages, working out how far into space all the Kong games would stretch if laid end to end . . . it's fun, and it fills an hour or two.

Nonetheless in the end there really are only two categories: one is that vast group where (to quote from elsewhere in this issue) "blocks of colour hit each other". The other is called Adventure. Few of you will have come this far unscathed by this branch of computer fantasay — THE branch, as its aficionados swear. Adventuring traces its origins theough role-playing board games, which in turn were stimulated into existence by fantasy literature; which itself has a long and noble pedigree (ask any Elf). Yet isn't it curious that so many Adventure plots are set in the same ageless mediaeval universe (caves, trolls, treasure, and the like)? We'd be interested to hear from anybody who thinks he knows why.

Meanwhile, have a crack at ADVENTURE X (p.50) If you suffer from Digit Fidget, tale it in easy bite-sized portions.

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Next Month in BIG K

MODEM LIVING: plug in, power up, and tap. Right? Wrong.
PETER SHELLEY: ex-Buzzocks guy sounds out the music progs.
THIS YEAR'S CHIP? The 68000 gives 32 bits of bliss. We check it out.
ATARI 800XL: latest salvo in the under-£300 war. We review it.
PLUS TYPE-IN GAMES LISTINGS; REVIEWS; LETTERS and MUCH, MUCH MORE.

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GULPO!

You know how these things happen. Bugs kind of, y'know, creep into the system. In last month's ish we published SAVE THE CITY. We said it was for CBM 64. When all the time it was for, er, Vic-20.

The culprit has been shot.

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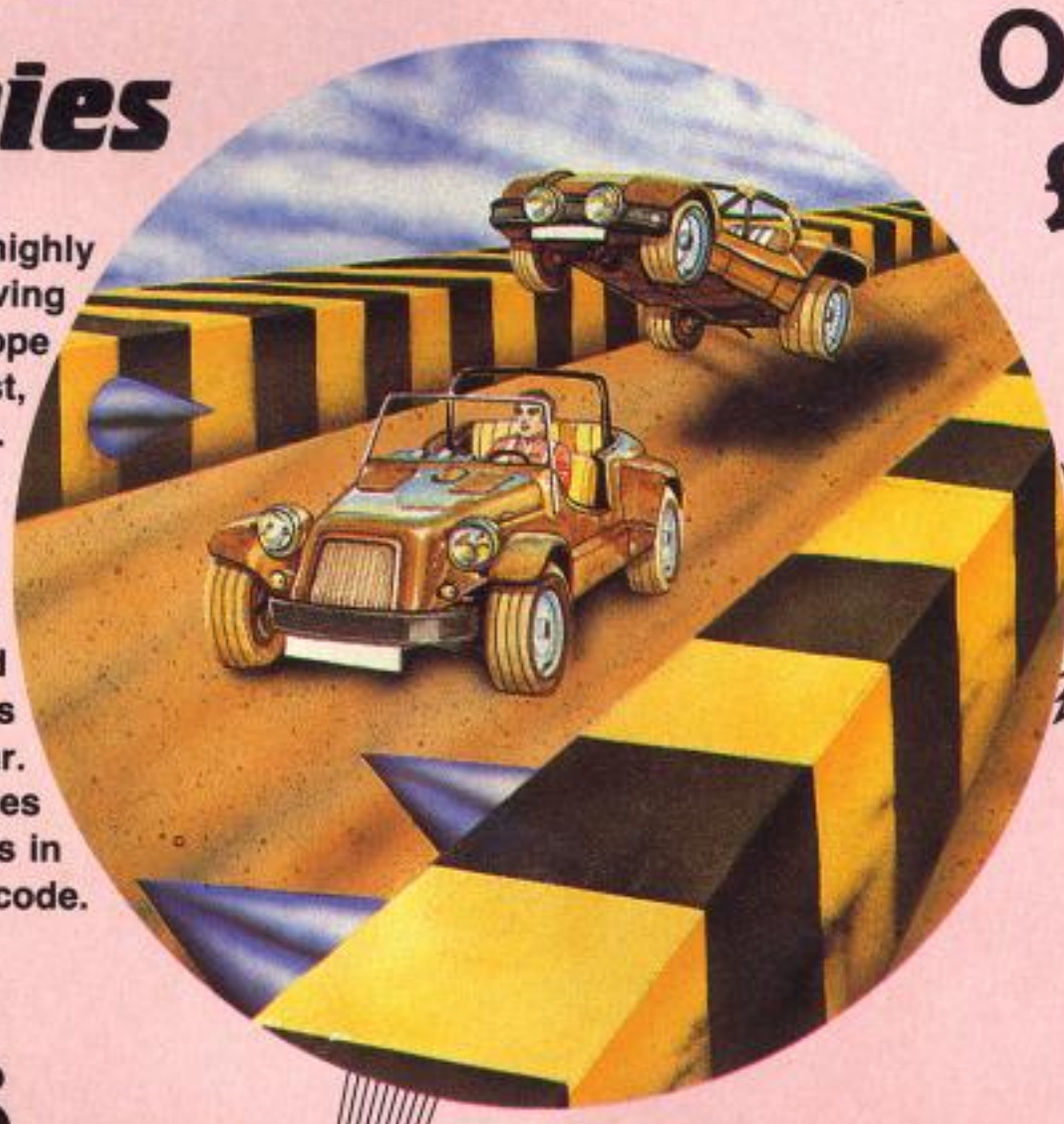
High scores kept.
All machine code.

Bumping Buggies

Thrills and spills is what you'll get in this highly addictive motor racing game. You'll be driving over some pretty hazardous terrain having to cope with lakes, islands, rock formations and, not least, other cars which are intent on making you crash. Luckily you can vary your speed and line and you have one ace up your sleeve – when you maintain a sufficient speed you can jump over obstacles to help you out of trouble. The track gets progressively more difficult with 20 different patterns and you have to cope with driving conditions in the four seasons of the year.
Like most bubble bus classics, Bumping Buggies has its own specially scored music and is in machine code.



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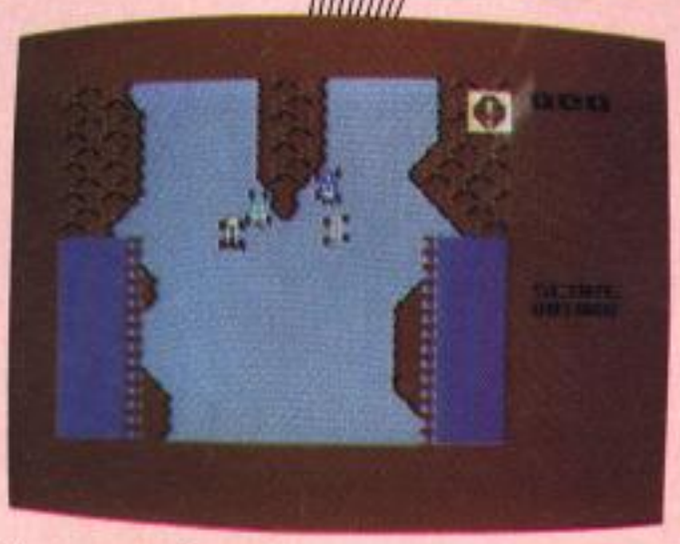

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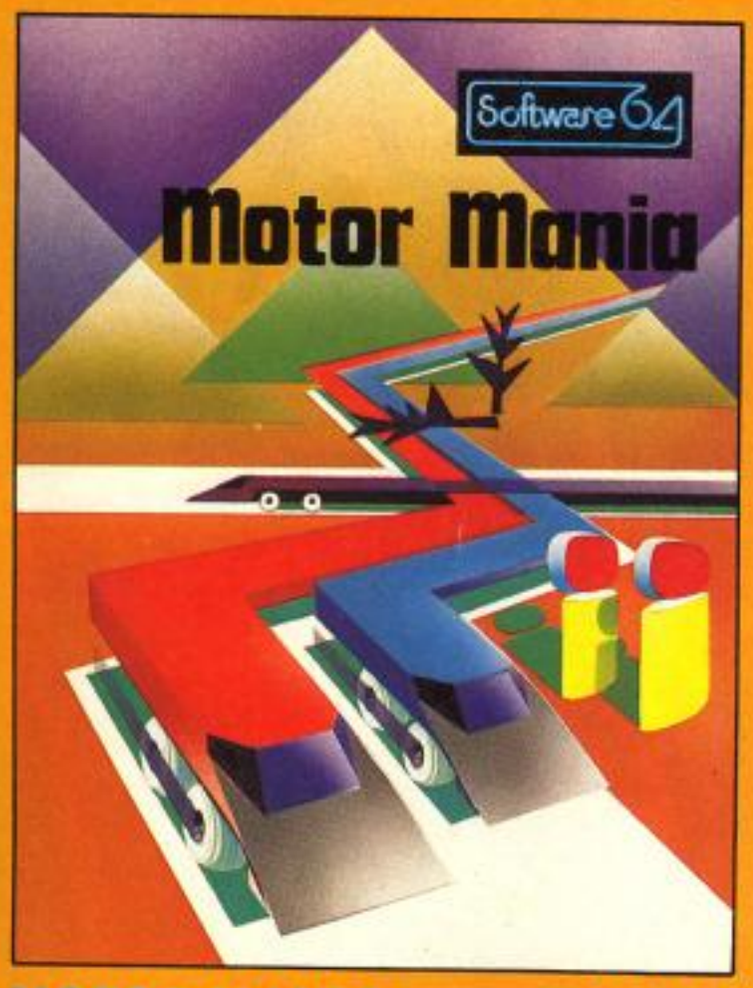

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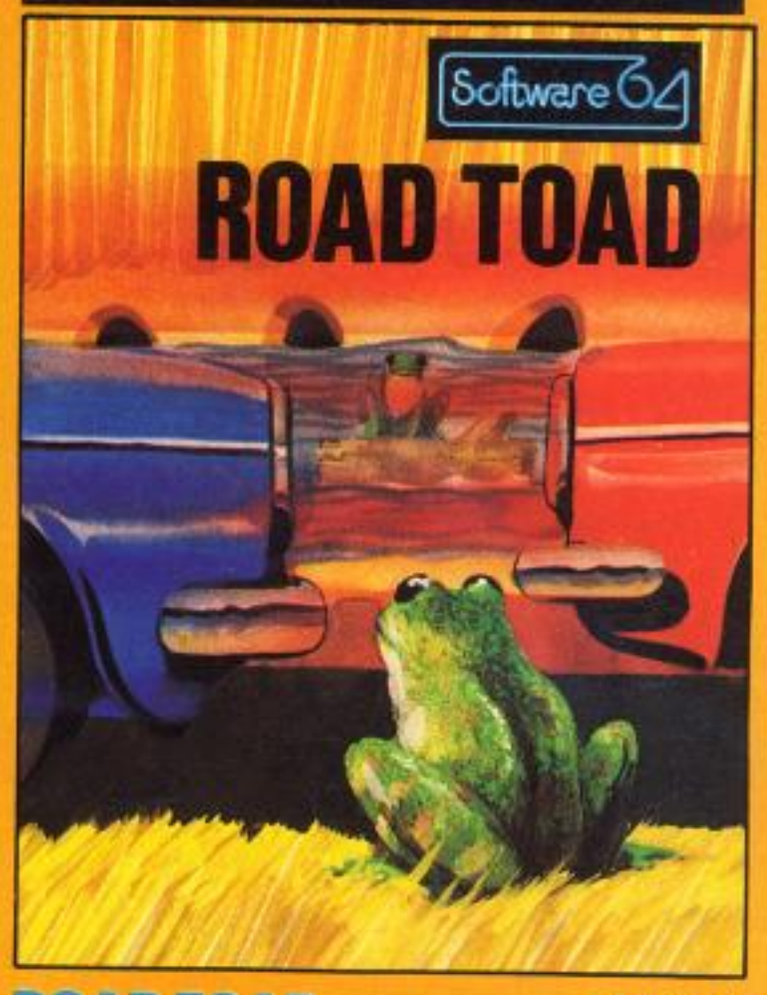

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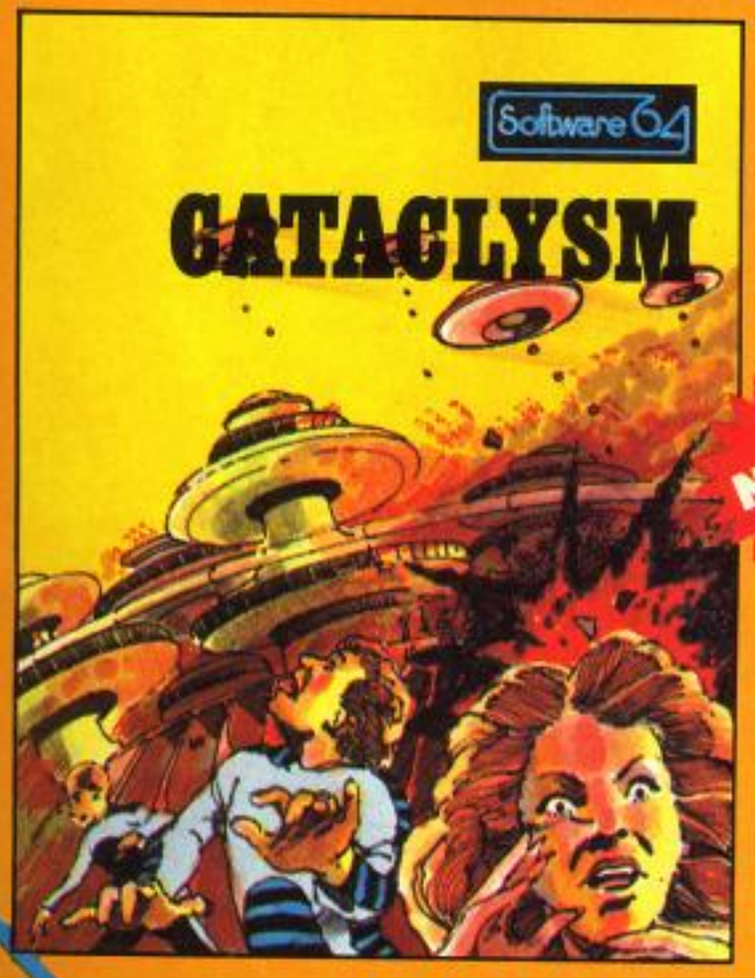

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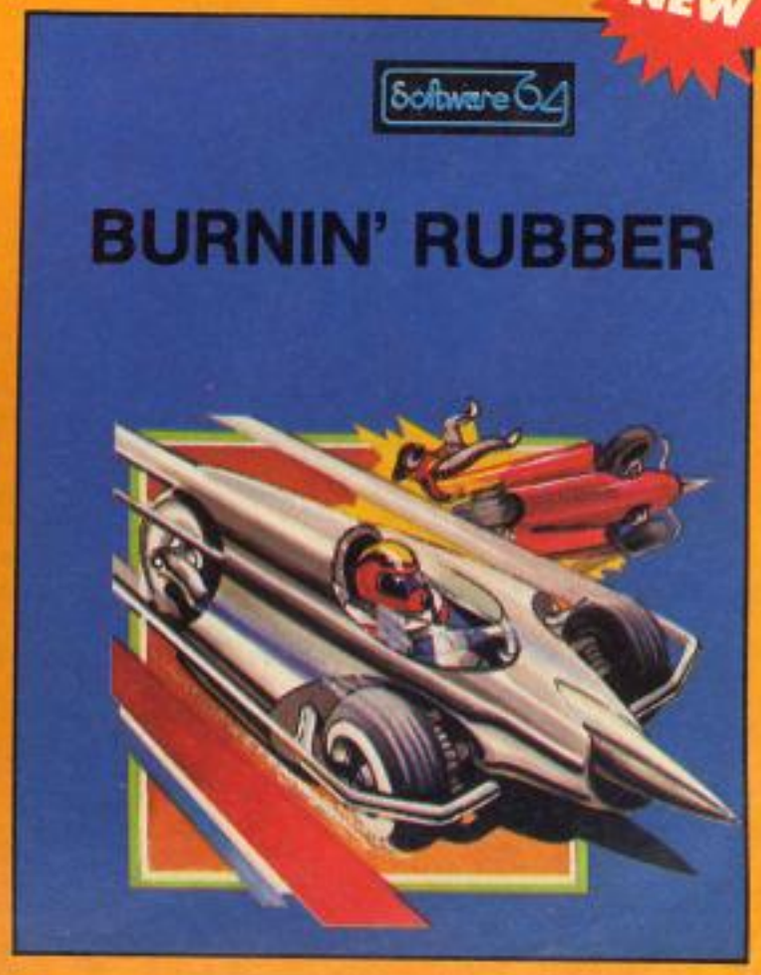

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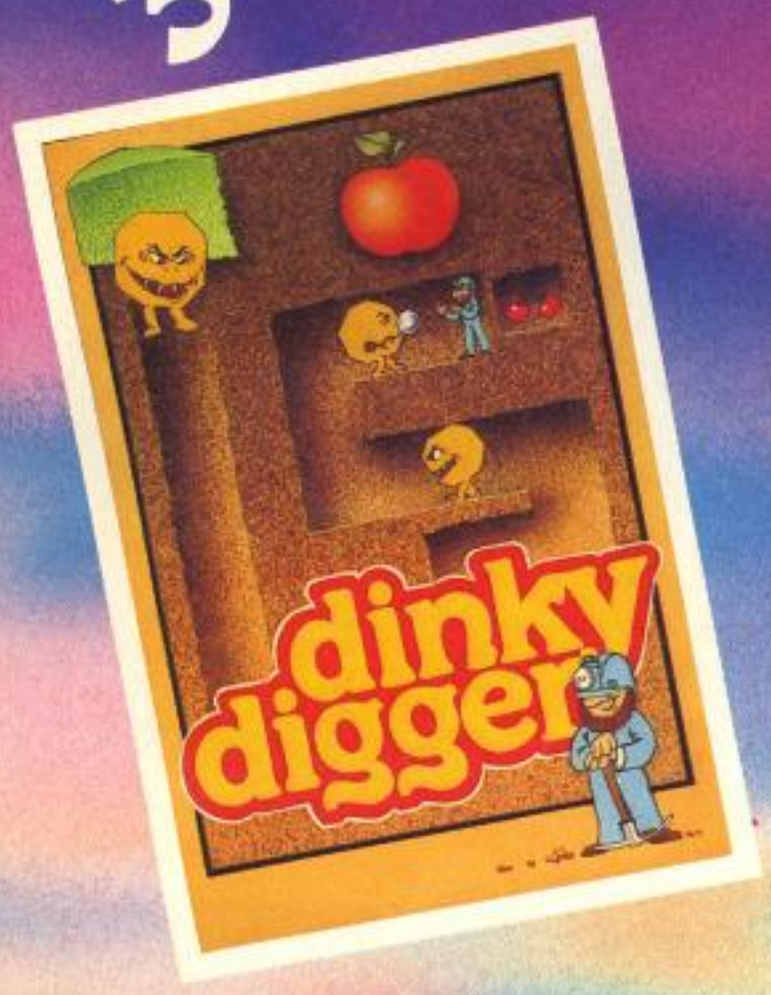

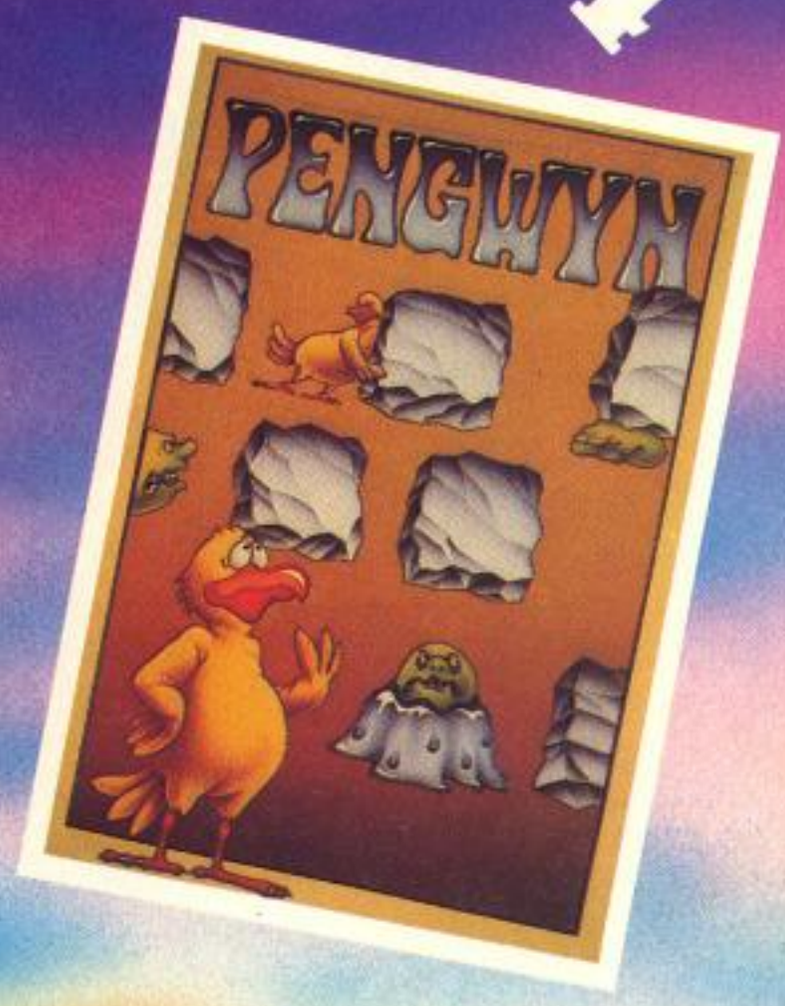

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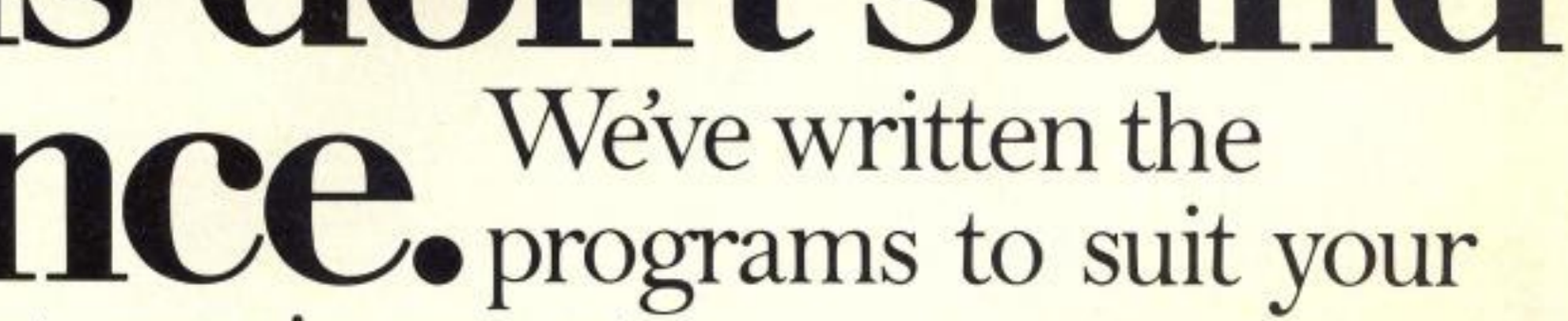

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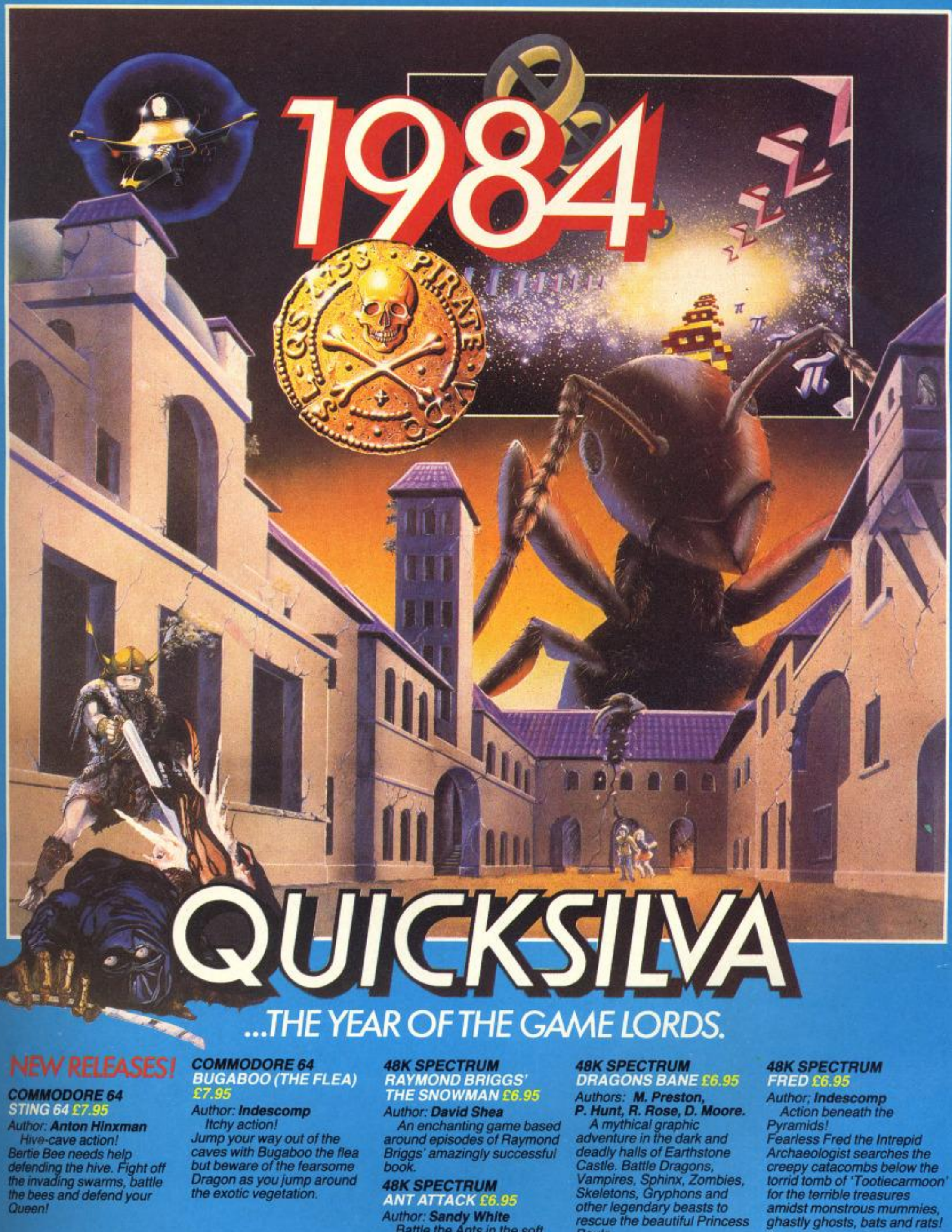

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On the trail of the Hobbit Habit...

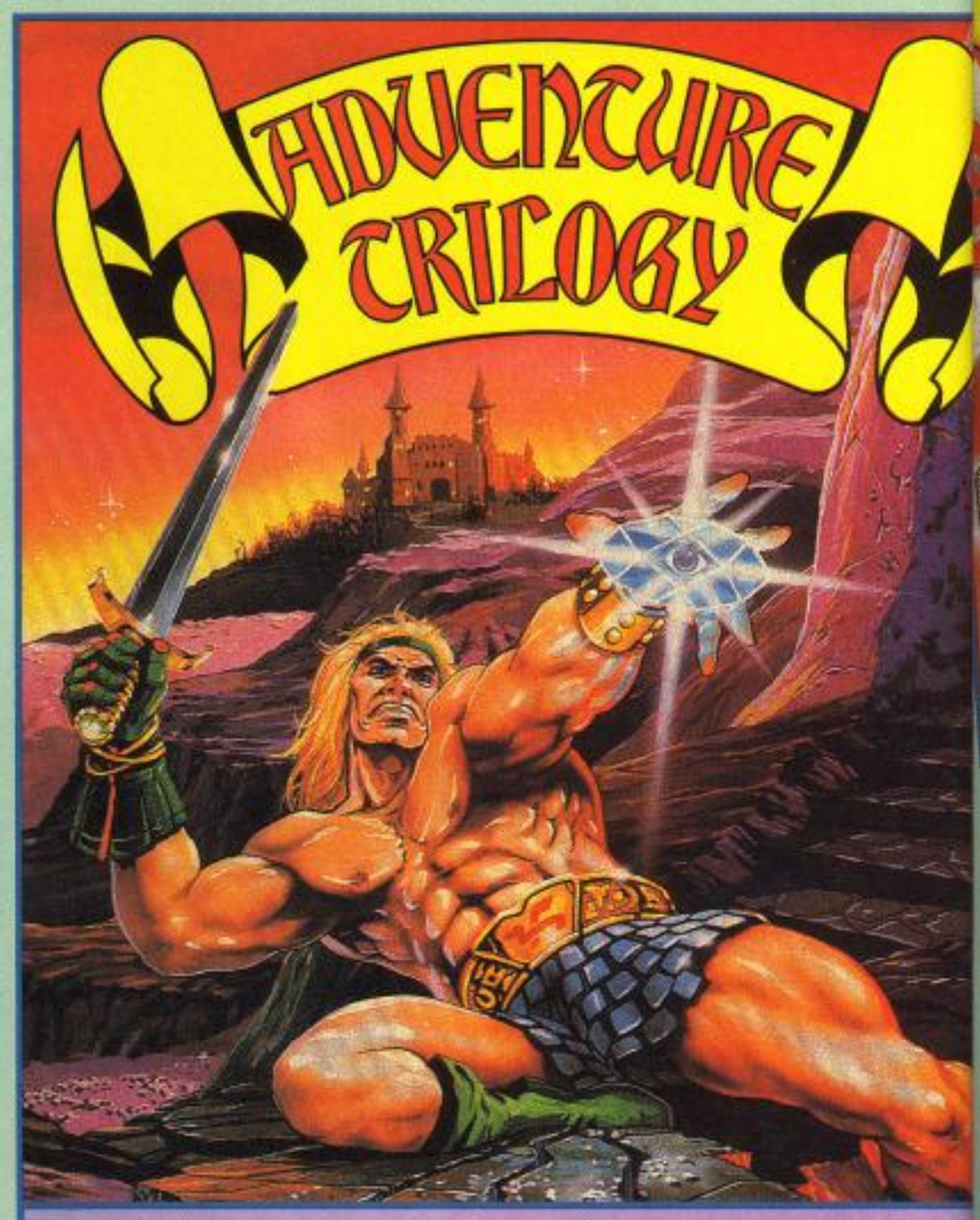
The Hobbit comes in the usual Melbourne House cardboard package together with a paperback copy of the book by J.R.R. Tolkien. Like the original Spectrm version the Oric program boasts high resolution pictures that are 'painted' when you visit certain locations in the adventure. Over the past few months several 'Hobbits' have been released by Melbourne House for various computers. However, due to lack of memory space the BBC version doesn't contain any graphics.

Graphics are only two-colour on Oric, unlike the 8-colour pictures on the Spectrum. This doesn't detract from the art much, and the graphics are very nice to look at. I won't spoil the fun by describing the game plan, but suffice to say locations and people from the book make an appearance.

Talking of the people, the much vaunted Animaction algorithm — which supposedly lets animals and people interact with you 'physically' and verbally — turns out to be a disappointment. Thorin's vocabulary, for example, consists of telling you to hurry up, or sitting down while you're being eaten by a troll and singing of gold.

The HOBBIT — on any micro — is a significant advance over simpler adventures written in BASIC, but it doesn't, in my opinion, come near any of the INFOCOM series. For Oric, the graphics are very good, and I guess even at £14.95 the program is worth checking out. — **A.G.**

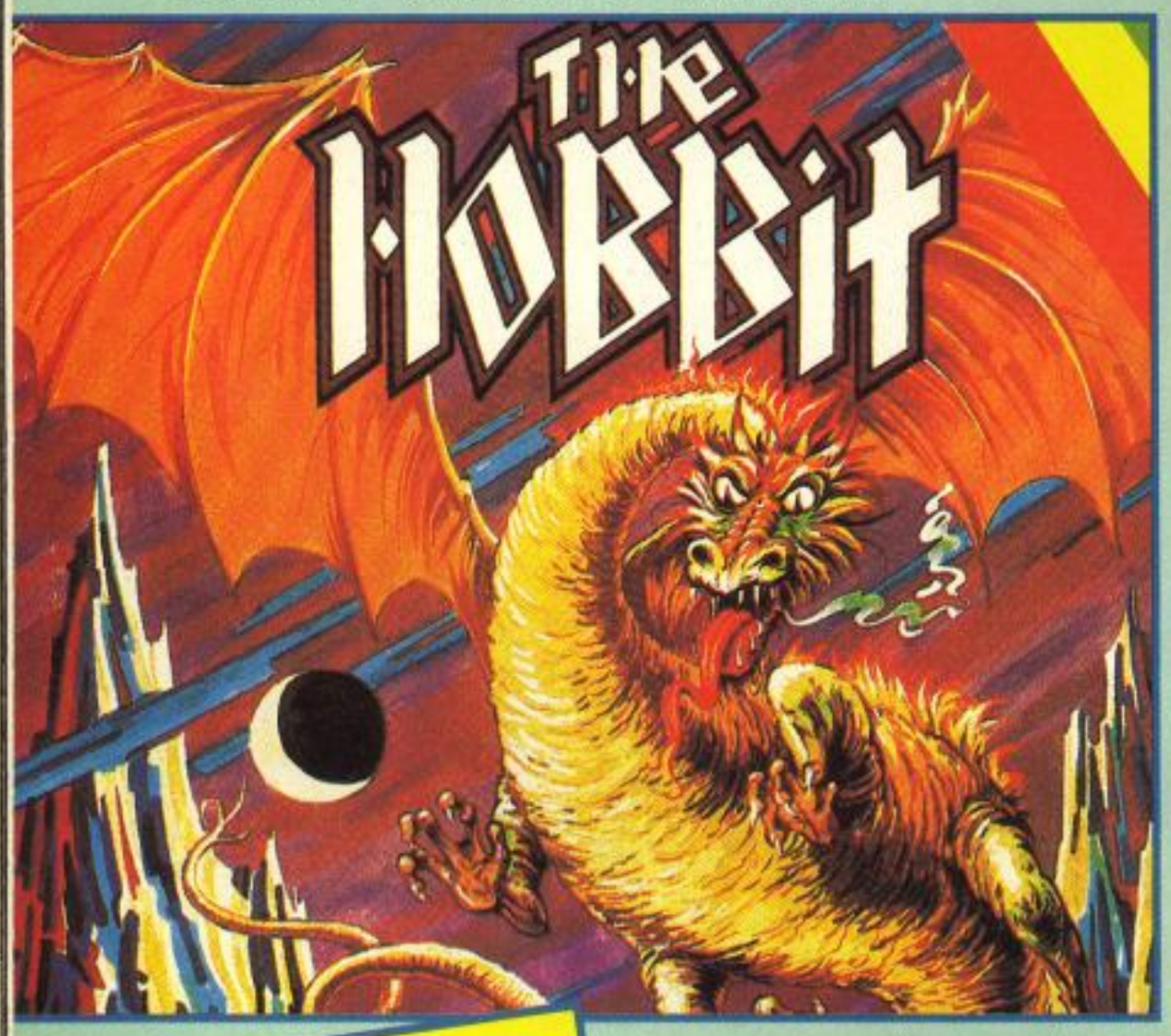
Game: THE HOBBIT
Maker: MELBOURNE HOUSE
Machine: ORIC-1
Format: cassette
Price: £14.95
Rating: KK

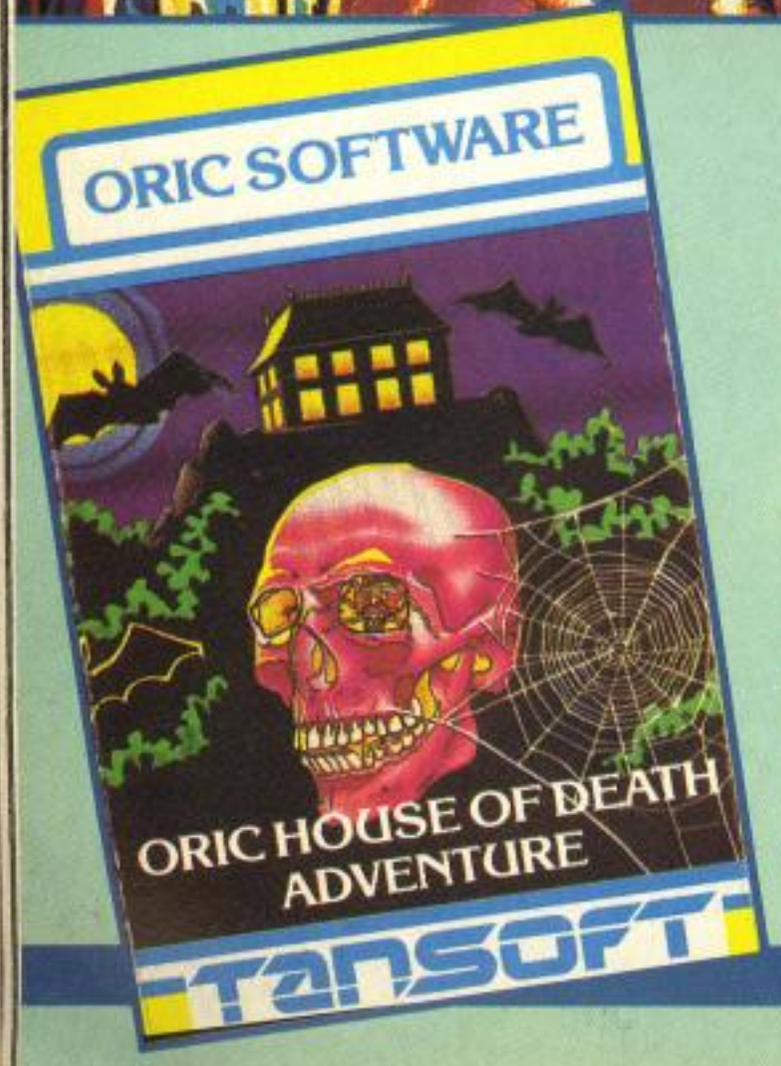


THREE TIMES A LOSER

Incomprehensible graphic 'adventure' from the same team that brought you *Beyond the Cimeeon Moon*, a tarted down maze game. Like *Moon* this is exceptionally unfriendly. A shame really as the scenario seems almost interesting. You play a warrior in the realm of Mandoor. With your firespouting war sword you must vanquish the dreaded denizens of the combat arena before embarking on a bold quest for the Eye of Dazmor. All well and good you might think. Unfortunately the game is almost inaccessible. You're only granted a vocabulary of sixteen words to play with and the graphics themselves are baffling. I couldn't make out what was meant to be happening most of the time. I mean, what would you make of a screen that depicted only a small red globe? It looked like a disembodied zit to me. Serious adventures are advised to steer well clear of this supposed trilogy. I've had more interesting adventures shopping in Neasden. — **S.K.**

Game: ADVENTURE TRILOGY
Maker: DRAGON DATA LTD
Machine: DRAGON 32
Format: cassette
Price: £7.95
Rating: none





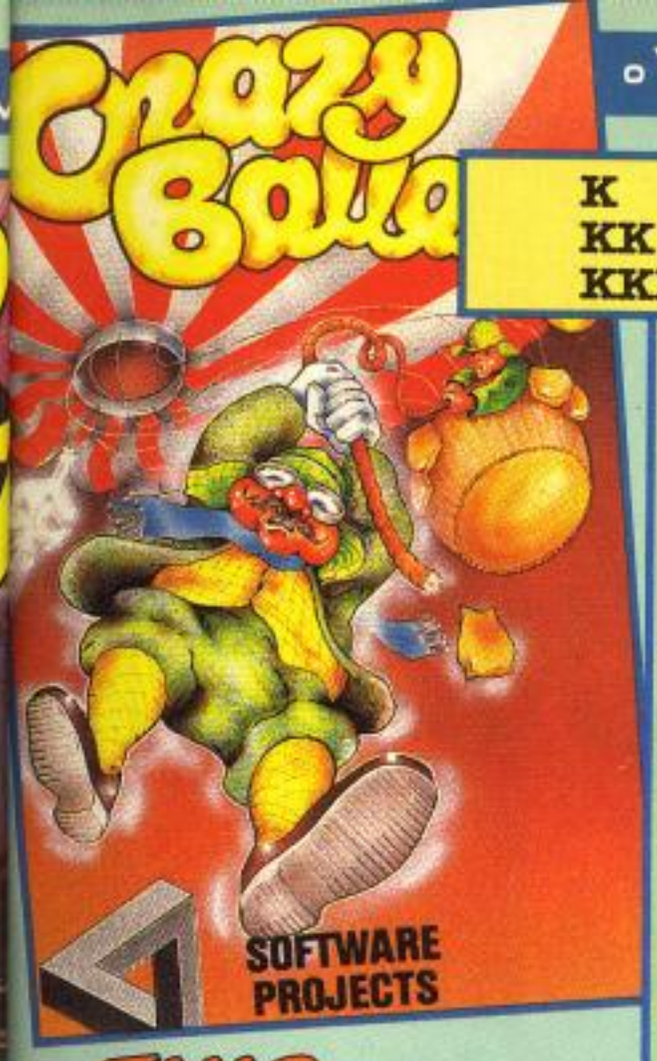
LAUGH? I Nearly Died.

Reviewers
Richard Burton
Paul Rambali
Tony Tyler
Steve Keaton
Andy Green
David Crosswell

House of Death *is a non-graphic adventure game set in an abandoned horror movie studio, a location brimming with possibilities. Naturally, it's a test of nerve as well as logic. Halfway up the stairs, you are told that they are particularly rickety at this point. GO UP and you go up — but try coming down again with any treasures from the second floor . . . The treasures themselves are out of the ordinary. As you find yourself wandering about wearing a scuba outfit and a werewolf mask, clutching a tadpole and a cake marked "Eat Me", you feel the author's sense of humour could have been well used on* Game For A Laugh. *But there is a method in this madness (though I have yet to find a use for the tadpole) and the zanier aspects of the adventure make it all the more distracting. While the dialogue can be somewhat limited, for a 48K game* House of Death *offers the maximum entertainment. My only gripe, as a fan of horror movies, is that some of the details are drawn from the general store of adventure archetypes, and there still remains a great horror game to be written. — **P.R.***

Game: HOUSE OF DEATH
Maker: TANSOFT
Machine: ORIC-1
Format: cassette
Price: £9.99
Rating: KK

K = Could Be Better
KK = Could Be Worse
KKK = Unsurpassable



THIS BLIMP IS A WIMP

The inlay card speaks of Crazy Nathan Wigglesworth, Flyer Supreme, and his trusty pal T.C. Barton undertaking "... the balloon trip of a lifetime". Of these two gentlemen I could find no sign, not of the 'churches and skyscrapers" they were supposed to fly over (though they might appear in the higher levels of the game). All I could find was a lazily swinging green balloon in a spiky labyrinth. Hardly the trip of this or any other lifetime.

Your task — should you decide to accept it — is to quide the balloon (one of six) safely through the maze avoiding contact with any of the surfaces. The slightest touch — even by the basket — causes the balloon spectacularly to deflate and plunge to the ground.

This task is made more hazardous by the ballon's swinging, making it a larger target, and various mobile sharp things which inhabit each of the 26 levels. There are even magnets to pull the ballon off course and targets to aim for which can net you extra points.

Crazy Balloon does little to earn its name. The colours are pretty, the sound is minimal and the game play rarely climbs above mildly frustrating.

As for Crazy Nathan and his pal — they probably opted for the latest in flight simulation programs. — **R.B.**

Game: CRAZY BALLOON
Maker: SOFTWARE PROJECTS
Machine: COMMODORE 64
Format: cassette
Price: £7.95
Rating: K

DONNER UND METRO

LET'S FACE it, any aliens daring to invade Earth these days are in b-i-i-i-g trouble! Fast, space-zapper games like ***Metro Blitz*** *here are spawning a whole new race of hyper-reflexed beings with brilliant hand-eye co-ordination. Put them in charge of the laser batteries and we'll have no problems!*

While we wait ***Metro Blitz*** *is good practice at tackling overwhelming odds. Alien craft are descending on the city in suicide raids that destroy parts of the city.each time one lands. You have command of a small, nimble fighter with one mission only . . . blast anything that moves.*

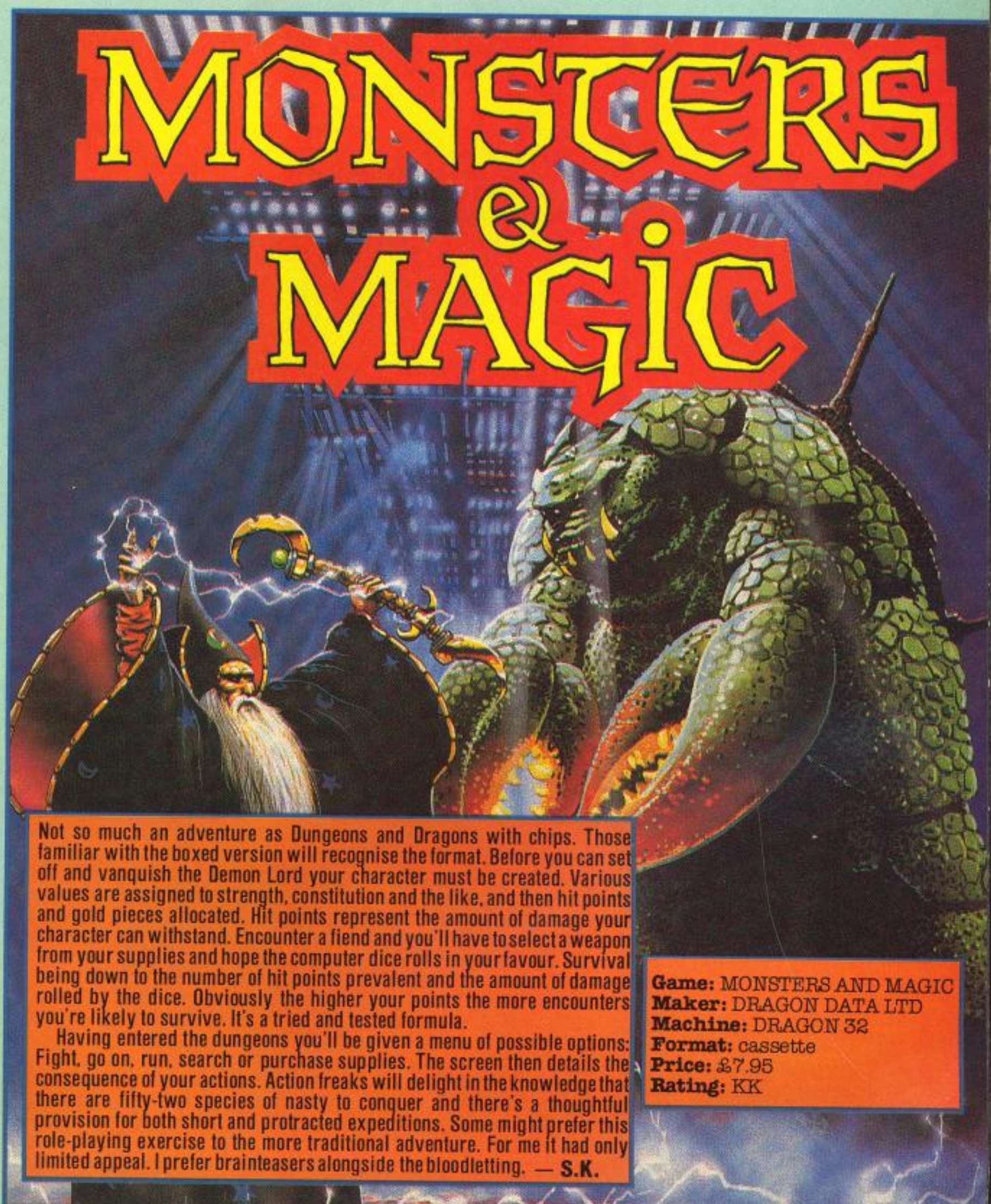
At first glance the game looks limited with all the action taking place on one screen and with no scrolling. However, with 24 attack waves and six different types of aliens there's plenty to keep you busy. Some aliens exhibit deviousness by scrolling in from the side at high and low levels or releasing hunter drones to follow your every move.

A generous 10 ships to start with means that you can survive for quite a while before succumbing to the inevitable 'no win' conclusion. Bonus points and an extra ship are awarded for surviving each wave.

Metro Blitz *looks and sounds good but, ultimately, ranks with all the other space shoot-em-ups as fun until easily tired of. On the other hand, if playing it can one day save the world, well . . .* — **R.B.**

Game: METRO BLITZ
Maker: PSS
Machine: COMMODORE 64
Format: cassette
Price: £7.95
Rating: K

MONSTERS & MAGIC



Not so much an adventure as Dungeons and Dragons with chips. Those familiar with the boxed version will recognise the format. Before you can set off and vanquish the Demon Lord your character must be created. Various values are assigned to strength, constitution and the like, and then hit points and gold pieces allocated. Hit points represent the amount of damage your character can withstand. Encounter a fiend and you'll have to select a weapon from your supplies and hope the computer dice rolls in your favour. Survival being down to the number of hit points prevalent and the amount of damage rolled by the dice. Obviously the higher your points the more encounters you're likely to survive. It's a tried and tested formula.

Having entered the dungeons you'll be given a menu of possible options: Fight, go on, run, search or purchase supplies. The screen then details the consequence of your actions. Action freaks will delight in the knowledge that there are fifty-two species of nasty to conquer and there's a thoughtful provision for both short and protracted expeditions. Some might prefer this role-playing exercise to the more traditional adventure. For me it had only limited appeal. I prefer brainteasers alongside the bloodletting. — **S.K.**

Game: MONSTERS AND MAGIC
Maker: DRAGON DATA LTD
Machine: DRAGON 32
Format: cassette
Price: £7.95
Rating: KK

ORICULA

The scenario is this: armed with only a pistol firing silver bullets and the ability to open windows, the good friar has been charged with sanctifying Dracula's numerous castles. I suppose everyone is by now used to finding these fanciful descriptions reduced to caricature graphics and stock game formats. *Dracula's Revenge* is a Snakes & Ladders type maze game, the best of which is *Elevator* in the arcades. It's simple, but it's fast and the basic elements are cleverly plotted. While the characters — ghosts, werewolves, the vampire and the friar — are typically crude, the changing light outside the castle adds a splash of colour. Letting in the daylight (by touching the ends of a corridor) will slay the vampire, twilight will despatch ghosts, but once evening falls there's no alternative but to dodge until dawn comes. *Dracula's Revenge* lacks a two-player function, but the action is remarkably smooth and instantly addictive. Side by side with similar cartridge games, such as Coleco's *Space Panic*, you wouldn't know the difference. — **P.R.**

Game: DRACULA'S REVENGE
Maker: SOFTEK
Machine: ORIC-1
Format: cassette
Price: £6.95
Rating: KK

HOLE IN 10

Ahh. The rush of bracing fresh air into the lungs, the crunch of emerald turf beneath your feet, the solid weight of a number nine iron in your palm. There's nothing like it . . . here. The graphics appear to have been etched with a trowel and any similarities between it and the real thing are obviously coincidental. In fact it rather reminds me of an old Atari VCS cart. You have to guide your little golfer, who looks as if he's had one over the eight, around a nine hole course. Just line the tip of his club against the ball and then hit your fire button. The longer you hold the button down the greater the force of the put. Thrilling indeed. Unlike Pool this is one game which doesn't convert well to the small screen and only the most enthusiastic of golfers here will find anything of interest here. The animation is hesitant and sound sparse. Personally I'd like to bury the thing in the nearest bunker and forget about it. — **S.K.**

Game: TEE OFF
Maker: DRAGON DATA
Machine: DRAGON 32
Format: cassette
Price: £7.95
Rating: none

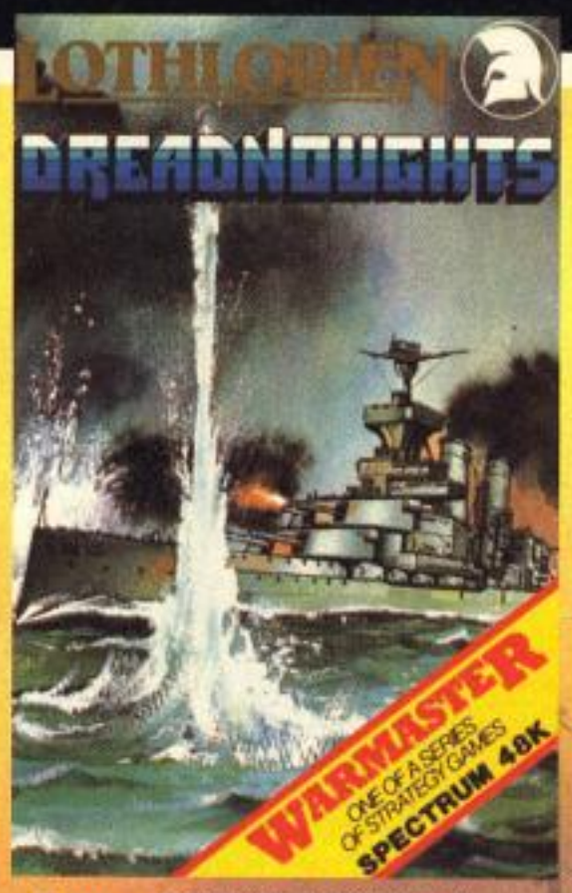
LOAD! LOAD! LOAD!

FUNNY HOW life imitates Art. Just as the US Navy put the giant World War II battlewagon **New Jersey** back in commission and sent it to lurk menacingly off the coast of Lebanon, several software companies obviously decided that there's mileage in resuscitating this obsolescent — but fascinating — form of naval warfare, where gun-armed ironclads seek each other out on the high seas and, having found each other, do their best to blow their opponents out of the water.

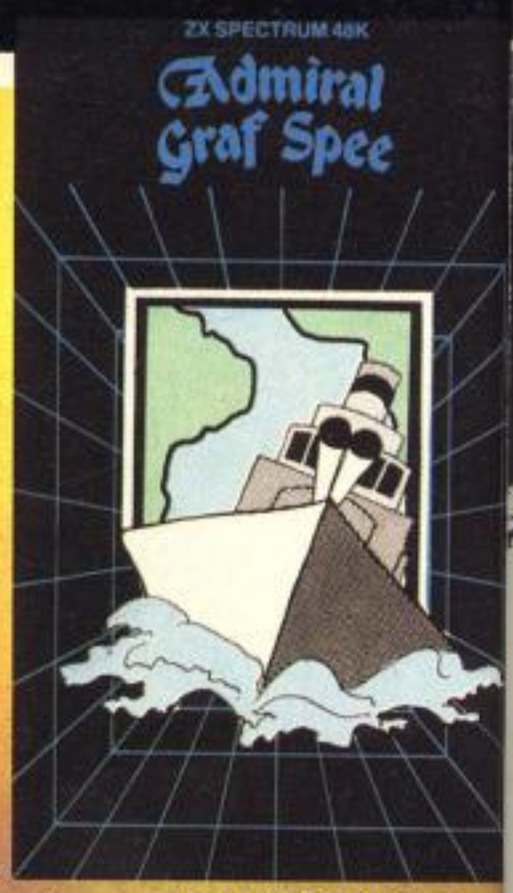
Both MC Lothlorien (**Dreadnoughts**) and new Rye-based company Temptation (**Admiral Graf Spee**) have elected to simulate actual eras of battleship warfare. The first goes for that most fascinating of epochs, the 1914-18 war, when mighty fleets hunted each other over the wintry North Sea. Temptation's offering reproduces the last cruise of the pocket battleship **Graf Spee**. Both have 'search' modes, with **Dreadnoughts** allocating you a pre-set plotline and **Graf Spee** allowing you to hunt the oceans rather like the Thorn-EMI game **Submarine Commander**. Of the two, the Lothlorien search mode is the more realistic, since it exactly reproduces the confusion and poor visibility for which that era of naval warfare was noted. However, **Dreadnoughts** is fairly dull to look at consisting essentially of menus and — I have to say it — spreadsheets, whereby you alter individual vessels' speed and heading.

Dreadnoughts eventually gives you a 'look-down' (Zeppelin?) view, whereas the Temps opt for a bridge view. Combat sequences therefore are tokenised on **Dreadnoughts** and — because of the BASIC programming — tacky and wooden on **Graf Spee**. The best thing about either game is the capability of **Dreadnoughts** to allow two players to alternate on the same consule, so that what each player sees (the other guy politely staring at the wall meantime) is exactly what the admiral would see.

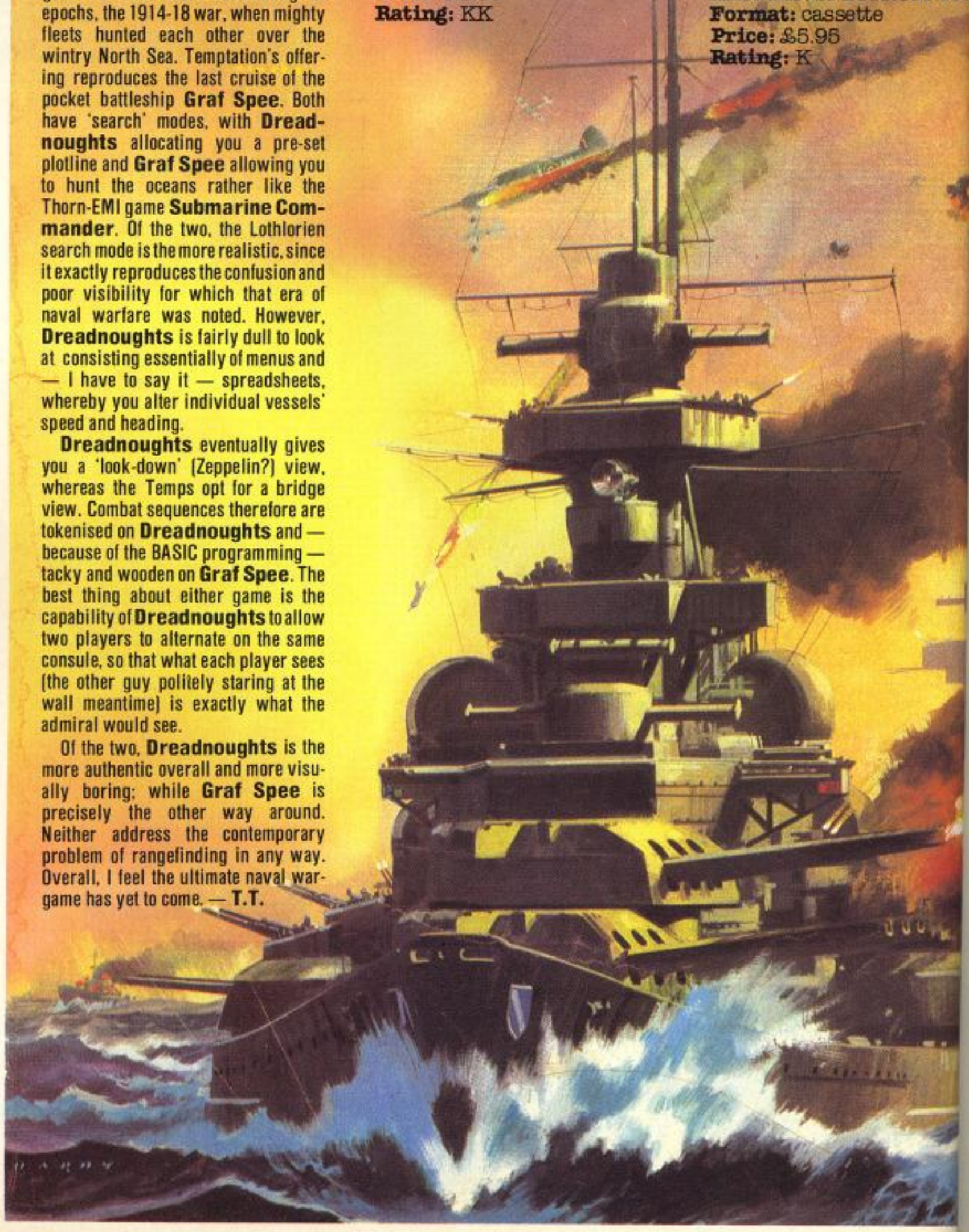
Of the two, **Dreadnoughts** is the more authentic overall and more visually boring; while **Graf Spee** is precisely the other way around. Neither address the contemporary problem of rangefinding in any way. Overall, I feel the ultimate naval wargame has yet to come. — **T.T.**



Game: DREADNOUGHTS
Maker: MC LOTHLORIEN
Machine: SPECTRUM 48K
Format: cassette
Price: £5.95
Rating: KK

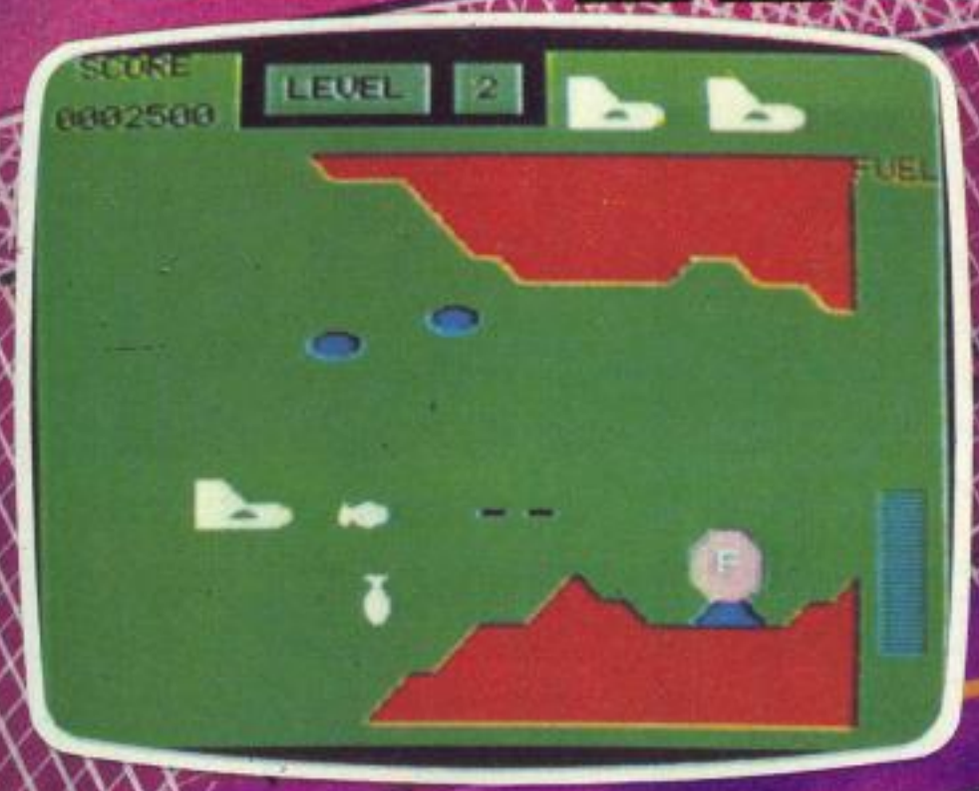


Game: ADMIRAL GRAF SPEE
Maker: TEMPTATION SOFTWARE
Machine: SPECTRUM 48K
Format: cassette
Price: £5.95
Rating: K



ORIC(16&48K) TANDY COLOUR(16K)
DRAGON 32

SKRAMBLE



Actual picture of screen on
ORIC 48K

Your mission is to penetrate the enemy scramble system and destroy their headquarters. You will start with three of our latest spacefighters equipped with repeating cannon and twin bomb launcher. If you succeed in evading the elaborate ground defences, you will arrive at the Cave where flying becomes more difficult. In the cave are UFOs, after which you must avoid a hail of meteorites. Very few pilots succeed this far, but if you do, then you must enter the Fortress, followed by the Maze. If you manage to destroy Enemy Headquarters, then your reward will be a more difficult mission! One or two player game.
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It's no picnic!

But if you go down to the woods today, will you help Ted get his batteries?

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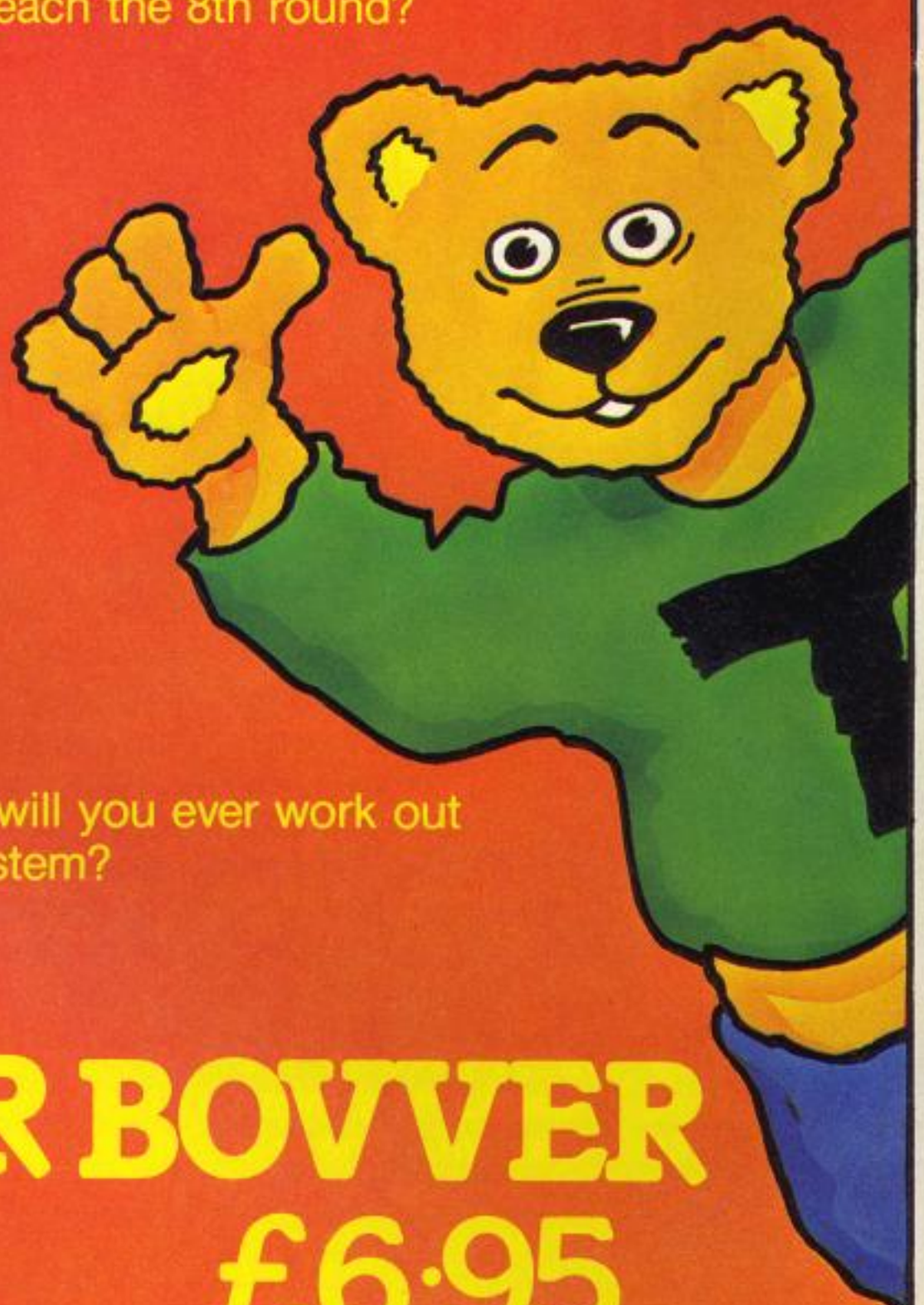
Will you ever reach the 8th round?

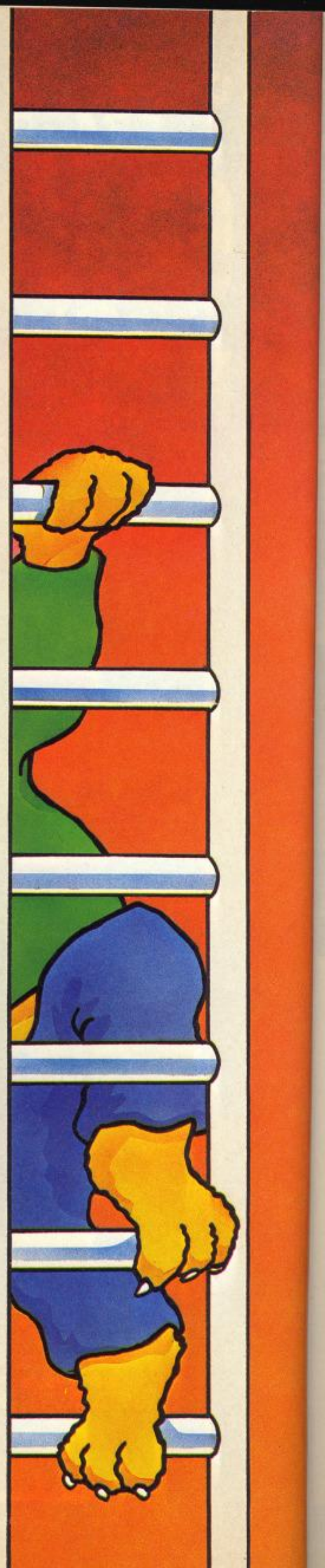


Come to that, will you ever work out the scoring system?

BEAR BOVVER

£6·95

(Spectrum 48K)



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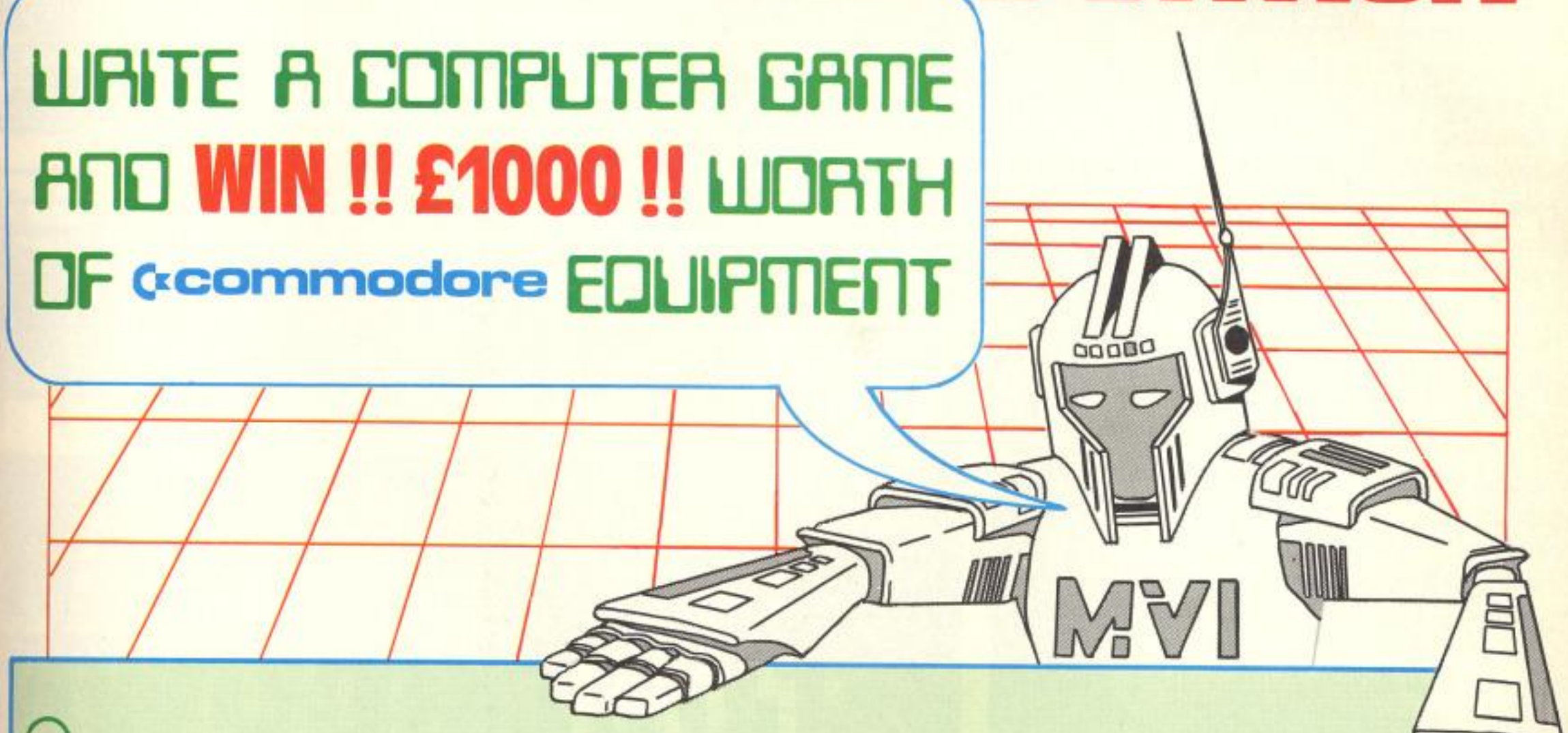

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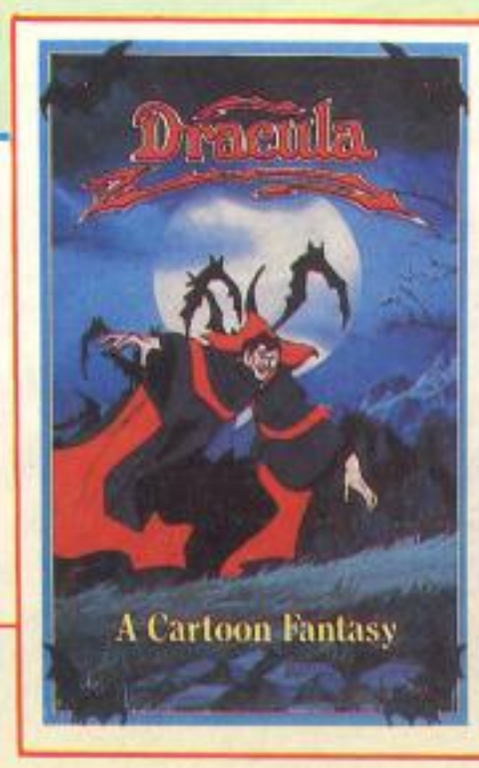
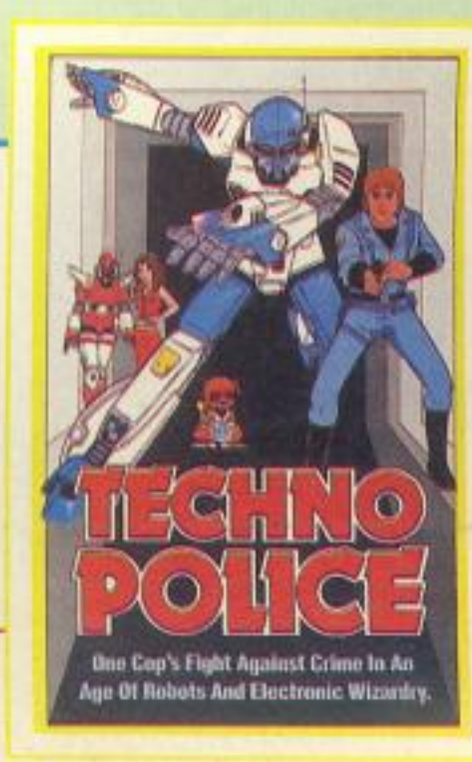




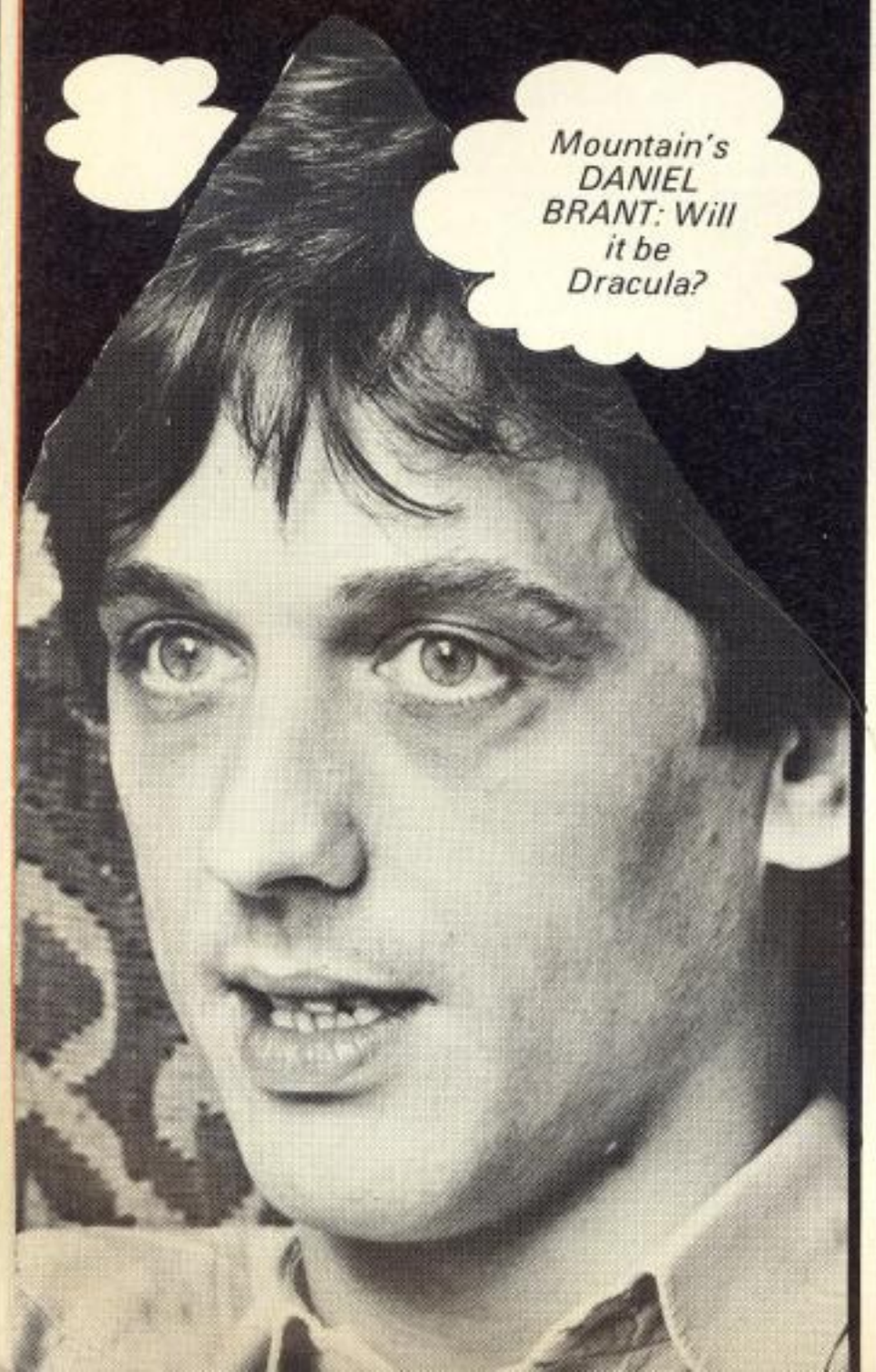
PROGRAM EVERY MOUNTAIN

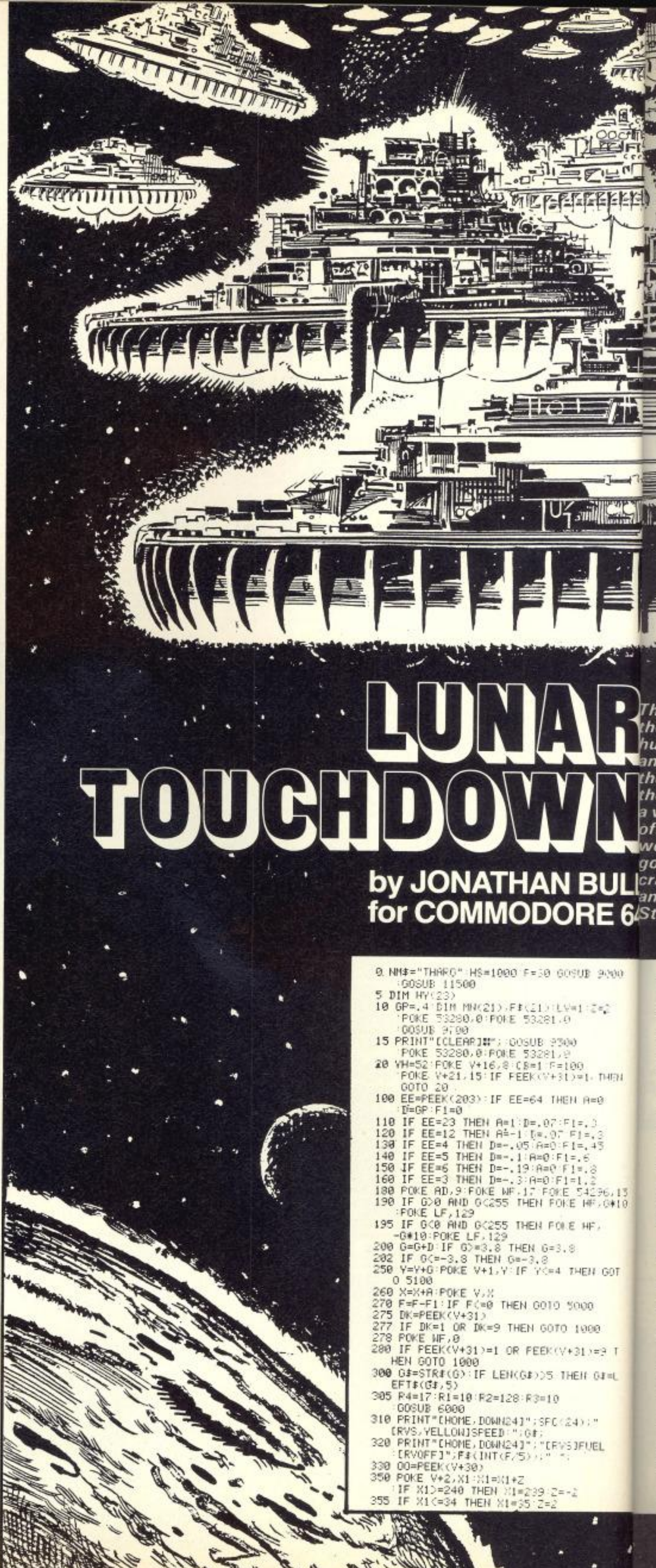
PROGRAMMERS out there eager to score a Commodore 64 plus peripherals can have their chance — Mountain Video (the animation specialists) are organising a competition with £1,000 worth of said equipment as the overall prize.

All the tempted tapper has to do is design a game program to complement any of Mountain's three top-selling animated cartoon videos: **Techno Police** and **Space Firebird**, two amazing sci-fi offerings from the Land of the Rising Sun and **Dracula**, an amimated adaptation of a contemporary story featuring that well-known bloodsucker, star of stage, screen and video games.

Mountain Supremo Daniel Brant assures Big K that his company will either market the prizewinning game themselves or arrange for its marketing — with full credit, royalties, etc., for the lucky winner. Closing date for entries will be Monday May 30.

Entry forms available from: Judy Sergeant, Mountain Video (Special Projects, 45 New Oxford St., London WC1.

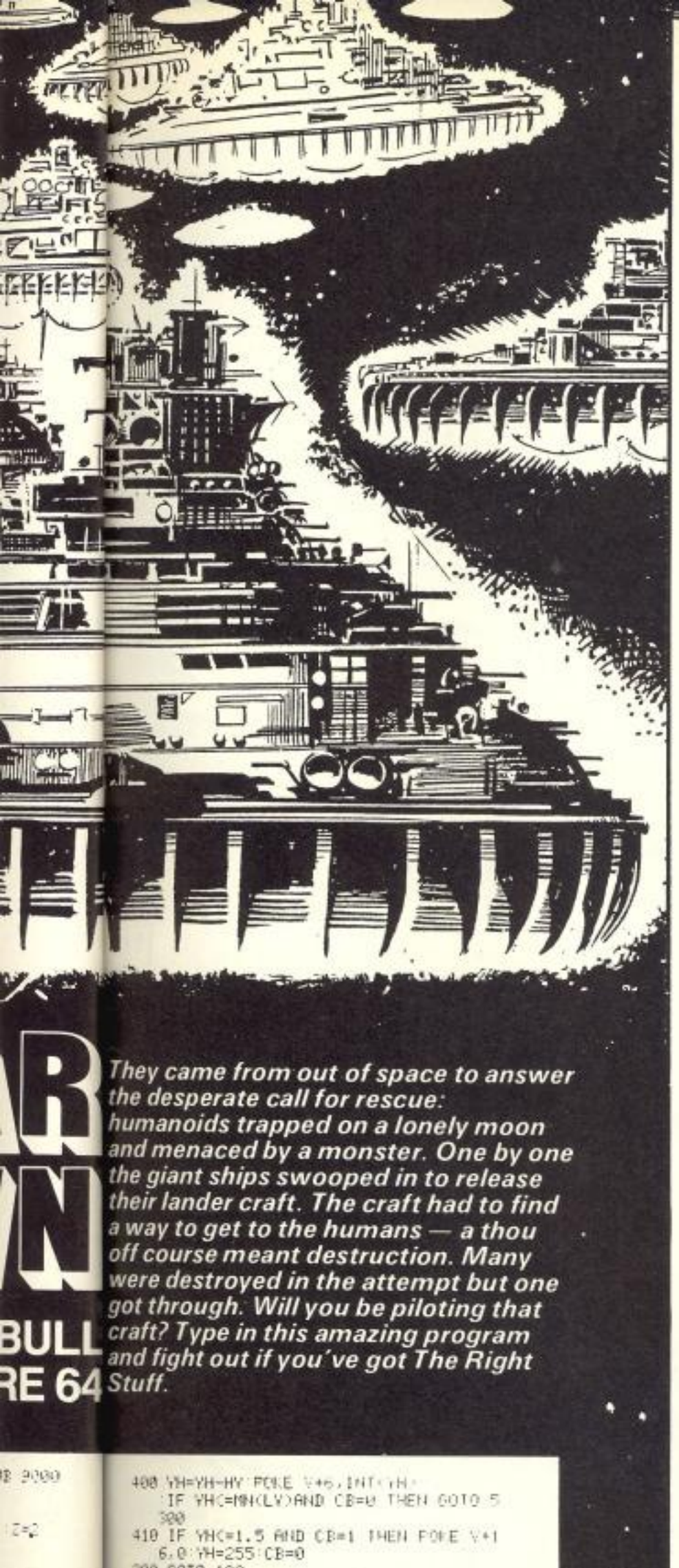




LUNAR TOUCHDOWN

by JONATHAN BULL for COMMODORE 64

```
0 NM$="THARG":HS=1000:F=30:GOSUB 9000
  :GOSUB 11500
5 DIM MY(23)
10 GP=.4:DIM MN(21),F$(21):LV=1:Z=2
  :POKE 53280,0:POKE 53281,0
  :GOSUB 9700
15 PRINT"[CLEAR]#";:GOSUB 9300
  :POKE 53280,0:POKE 53281,0
20 VH=52:POKE V+16,0:C$=1:F=100
  :POKE V+21,15:IF PEEK(V+31)=1 THEN
  GOTO 20
100 EE=PEEK(203):IF EE=64 THEN A=0
  :D=GP:F1=0
110 IF EE=23 THEN A=1:D=.07:F1=.3
120 IF EE=12 THEN A=-1:D=.07:F1=.3
130 IF EE=4 THEN D=-.05:A=0:F1=.45
140 IF EE=5 THEN D=-.1:A=0:F1=.6
150 IF EE=6 THEN D=-.19:A=0:F1=.8
160 IF EE=3 THEN D=-.3:A=0:F1=1.2
180 POKE AD,9:POKE WF,17:POKE 54296,15
190 IF G>0 AND G<255 THEN POKE HF,G*10
  :POKE LF,129
195 IF G<0 AND G<255 THEN POKE HF,
  -G*10:POKE LF,129
200 G=G+D:IF G>=3.8 THEN G=3.8
202 IF G<=-3.8 THEN G=-3.8
250 Y=Y+G:POKE V+1,Y:IF Y<=4 THEN GOT
  O 5100
260 X=X+A:POKE V,X
270 F=F-F1:IF F<=0 THEN GOTO 5000
275 DK=PEEK(V+31)
277 IF DK=1 OR DK=9 THEN GOTO 1000
278 POKE WF,0
280 IF PEEK(V+31)=1 OR PEEK(V+31)=9 T
  HEN GOTO 1000
300 G$=STR$(G):IF LEN(G$)>5 THEN G$=L
  EFT$(G$,5)
305 R4=17:R1=10:R2=128:R3=10
  :GOSUB 6000
310 PRINT"[HOME,DOWN24]";SPC(24);"
  [RVS,YELLOW]SPEED:";G$;
320 PRINT"[HOME,DOWN24]";"[RVS]FUEL
  :[RVOFF]";F$(INT(F/5));" ";
330 OO=PEEK(V+30)
350 POKE V+2,X1:X1=X1+Z
  :IF X1>=240 THEN X1=239:Z=-2
355 IF X1<=34 THEN X1=35:Z=2
```



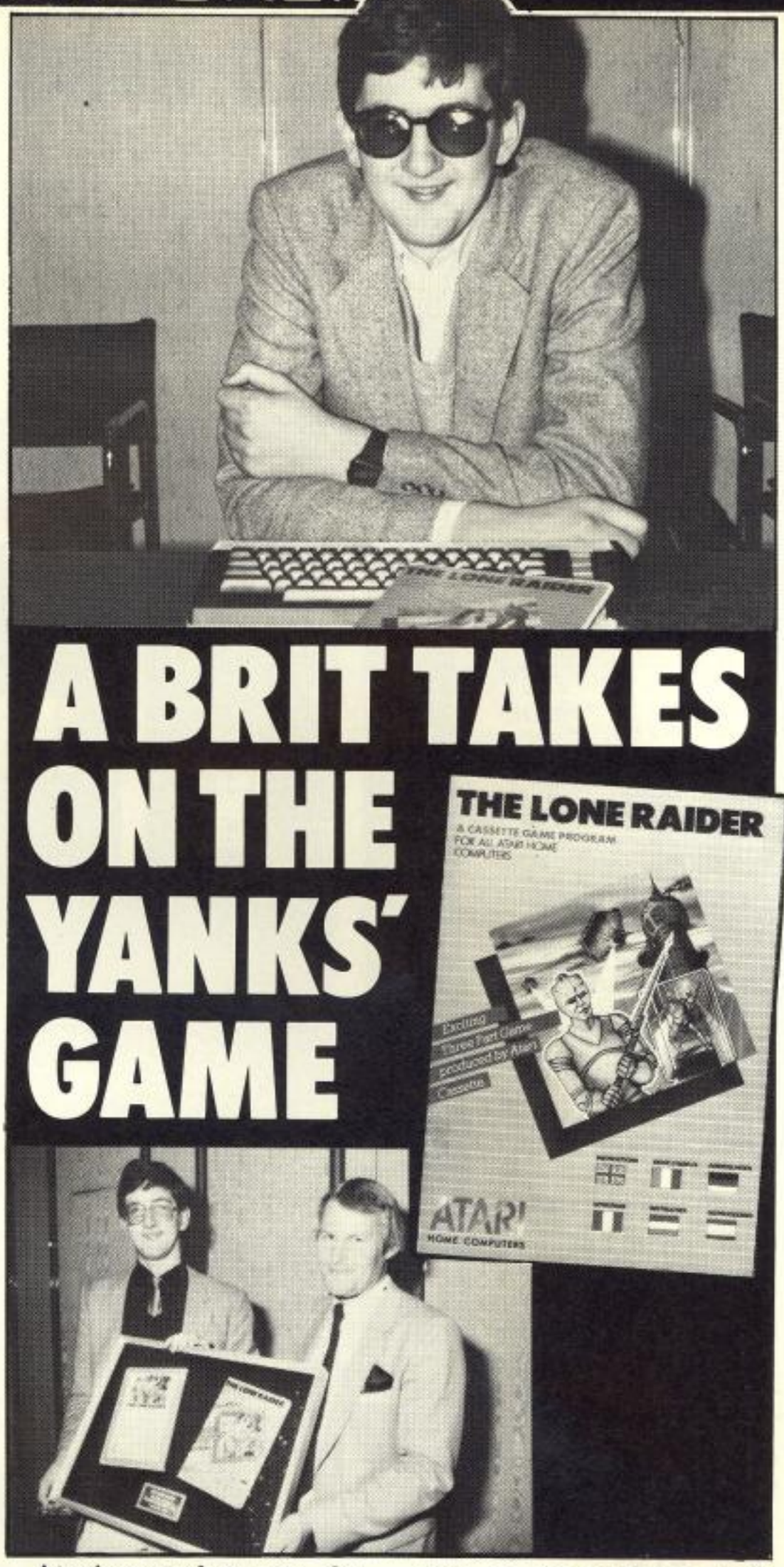
BULL RE 64

They came from out of space to answer the desperate call for rescue: humanoids trapped on a lonely moon and menaced by a monster. One by one the giant ships swooped in to release their lander craft. The craft had to find a way to get to the humans — a thou off course meant destruction. Many were destroyed in the attempt but one got through. Will you be piloting that craft? Type in this amazing program and fight out if you've got The Right Stuff.

```
400 YH=YH-HY:POKE V+5,INT(YH)
    :IF YH<=MN(LV)AND CB=0 THEN GOTO 5
    300
410 IF YH<=1.5 AND CB=1 THEN POKE V+1
    6,0:YH=255:CB=0
900 GOTO 100
1000 IF G>1 OR G<=-1 THEN GOTO 1010
1005 GOTO 1100
1010 FOR N=1 TO 30:POKE 2040,13
    :POKE 2040,15:R1=INT(RND(1)*50)
    :R2=20:R3=4:R4=33
1025 GOSUB 6000:NEXT N:FOR N=1 TO 1500
    :NEXT:PRINT"[CLEAR]":GOTO 11000
1100 G=PEEK(V+30)
1110 IF G=5 OR G=5+8 THEN SC=SC+1000
    :GOTO 1200
1120 FOR N=Y TO 95 STEP-1:POKE V+1,N
    :R1=35:R2=240:R3=2:R4=17:GOSUB 6000
1122 NEXT N:F=100:G=-.2:D=-1:Y=N
1125 IF PEEK(V+31)=0 THEN GOTO 100
1126 GOTO 1125
1200 POKE V+21,3:FOR N=Y TO 110 STEP-1
    :POKE V+1,N:FOR T=1 TO 15:NEXT T
    :NEXT N:Y=N
1210 IF X<>X1 THEN FOR N=X TO X1+10
    :POKE V,N:FOR T=1 TO 15:NEXT T
    :NEXT N:X=N:GOTO 1220
1215 FOR N=X TO X1+10 STEP-1:POKE V,N
    :FOR T=1 TO 15:NEXT T:NEXT N:X=N
1220 FOR N=Y TO 76 STEP-1:POKE V+1,N
    :FOR T=1 TO 15:NEXT T:NEXT N:Y=N
1230 LV$=STR$(LV):PRINT"[HOME,DOWN9,
    RIGHT10,RVS,ER,END]LEVEL "LV$;"
    [RVS] COMPLETED[RVOFF]"
1240 LV=LV+1:SC=SC+1000
1262 FOR N=F TO 0 STEP-1
1265 PRINT"[YELLOW,HOME,DOWN24]";"
    [RVS]FUEL:[RVOFF]";F$(INT(N/5));
    " ";:SC=SC+5
1267 R1=INT(N/5):R2=23:R3=3:R4=17
    :GOSUB 6000:NEXT N
1268 FOR N=1 TO 100:NEXT
1270 FOR N=0 TO 100
1275 PRINT"[HOME,DOWN24]";"[RVS]FUEL
    [RVOFF]";F$(INT(N/5));" ";
1277 R1=INT(N/5):R2=23:R3=3:R4=17
    :GOSUB 6000:NEXT N:F=100
```

```
1300 FOR N=1 TO 100:NEXT
1350 PRINT"[HOME,DOWN9,RIGHT10]
     "
1360 POKE V+5,213:POKE V+4,MN(LV)
    :POKE V+21,15:GP=GP+.3:HY=HY(LV)
1400 GOTO 20
5000 PRINT"[HOME,DOWN2,RIGHT7,RVS,
    CYAN]OUT OF FUEL.[RVOFF]"
    :POKE V+21,0
5010 FOR N=1 TO 2000:NEXT N:GOTO 11050
5100 POKE V+21,0:PRINT"[HOME,DOWN2,
    RIGHT7,RVS]YOU FLEW OFF INTO SPHC
    E.[RVOFF]"
5110 FOR N=1 TO 2000:NEXT N:GOTO 11000
5300 FOR N=YH TO 1 STEP-1:POKE V+5,N
    :POKE V+4,N+4:R1=N:R2=125:R3=5
    :R4=17:GOSUB 6000:NEXT N
5310 POKE V+21,0:PRINT"[HOME,DOWN2,
    RIGHT5,RVS]THE YEHTI GOT THERE FIR
    ST.[RVOFF]"
5320 FOR N=1 TO 2000:NEXT N
    :PRINT"[CLEAR]":GOTO 11000
6000 POKE WF,0:POKE HF,R1:POKE LF,R2
    :FOR T=1 TO R3:POKE WF,R4:POKE WF,0
    :NEXT T:RETURN
8700 PRINT"[CLEAR,DOWN3]
    YOU HAVE ACHIEVED THE HIGHEST SCOR
    E"
8710 PRINT"[DOWN]TODAY PLEASE ENTER Y
    OU NAME."
8720 INPUT"[DOWN,RVS]NAME:[RVOFF]";NM$
    :HS=SC:RETURN
9000 POKE 2040,13:POKE 2041,11
    :POKE 2042,14:POKE 2043,14
9010 V=53248:POKE V+27,13
9020 POKE V+39,1:POKE V+40,2
    :POKE V+41,5
9100 FOR N=0 TO 62:READ A:POKE 832+N,A
    :NEXT
9110 FOR N=0 TO 62:READ A:POKE 704+N,A
    :NEXT
9115 FOR N=0 TO 62:READ A:POKE 896+N,A
    :NEXT
9117 FOR N=0 TO 62:READ A:POKE 960+N,A
    :NEXT
9120 POKE V,81:POKE V+1,76:POKE V+2,70
    :POKE V+3,57:POKE V+4,72
    :POKE V+5,213
9125 X=81:Y=76:X1=70
9126 POKE V+6,30:POKE V+16,8
    :POKE V+7,213:YH=255
9130 POKE V+23,2:POKE V+29,2:RETURN
9500 PRINT"[CLEAR,DOWN20]"
9510 PRINT"[RVS]          [RVOFF]
                          [RVS]
    [RVOFF] [RVS]  [RVOFF]"
9520 PRINT"[RVS]          [RVOFF]
                          [RVS]
        [RVOFF]"
9530 PRINT"[RVS]  [RVOFF]  [RVS]
    [RVOFF]          [RVS] [RVOFF]
    [RVS] [RVOFF]                [RVS]
        [RVOFF]"
9540 PRINT"[RVS]    [RVOFF]
    [RVS]  [RVOFF] [RVS]  [RVOFF]
    [RVS]  [RVOFF]          [RVS]
    [RVOFF]"
9550 PRINT"[RVS]    [RVOFF]
    [RVS]  [RVOFF] [RVS]  [RVOFF]
                [RVS] [RVOFF]      [RVS]
        [RVOFF]"
9560 PRINT"[RVS]      [RVOFF]
    [RVS]    [RVOFF]      [RVS]
    [RVOFF]      [RVS]          [RVOFF]"
9570 PRINT"[RVS]      [RVOFF]
    [RVS]        [RVOFF]      [RVS]
    [RVOFF]      [RVS]          [RVOFF]"
9580 PRINT"[RVS]      [RVOFF]
    [RVS]        [RVOFF]      [RVS]
    [RVOFF]      [RVS]    [RVOFF] [RVS]
        [RVOFF]"
9590 PRINT"[RVS]      [RVOFF]
    [RVS]  [RVOFF]  [RVS] [RVOFF]
                [RVS]    [RVOFF]      [RVS]
    [RVOFF] [RVS]    [RVOFF]"
9600 PRINT"[RVS]    [RVOFF]          [RVS]
        [RVOFF] [RVS]    [RVOFF]
    [RVS]    [RVOFF]              [RVS]
    [RVOFF]"
9610 PRINT"[RVS]
                          [RVOFF]":RETURN
9700 READ HY(1),HY(2),HY(3)
    :FOR N=4 TO 20 STEP 3
    :HY(N)=HY(N-3)+.4:HY(N+1)=HY(N+1-3
    )+.3
9701 HY(N+2)=HY(N+2-3)+.2:NEXT
9705 READ MN(1),MN(2),MN(3)
    :FOR N=4 TO 20 STEP 3:MN(N)=MN(1)
    :MN(N+1)=MN(2)
9710 MN(N+2)=MN(3):NEXT
9800 F$(0)="[RVS]E[RVOFF]":F$(1)="▗"
    :F$(2)="▄":F$(3)="▄▖"
9810 H=1:FOR N=4 TO 20 STEP 2:H=H+1
    :FOR T=1 TO H:F$(N)=F$(N)+F$(2)
    :NEXT T
9815 F$(N+1)=F$(N)+"▗"
9820 F$(N)=F$(N)+" ":NEXT N
9830 READ YD(1),YD(2),YD(3)
9840 POKE 54296,15:AD=54277:WF=54276
    :HF=54273:LF=54272
9999 HY=HY(LV):RETURN
10000 DATA 48,126,12,72,66,18,75,219,
    210,206,195,115,28,255,56,31,255,
    248,63
10001 DATA 255,252
10010 DATA 104,198,46,232,198,47,232,
    198,47,255,255,255,112,0,30,63,255,
    252
10011 DATA 31,255,248
10020 DATA 15,110,240,3,231,192,1,195,
    128,0,129,0,0,129,0,0,129,0,3,231,
    192
10030 DATA 28,0,56,127,255,254,125,85,
    126,127,255,254,248,129,31,240,129,
    15,240
10031 DATA 129,15
10040 DATA 127,255,254,120,0,30,120,0,
    30,112,0,14,112,0,14,112,0,14,112,
    0,14
10050 DATA 112,0,14,240,0,15,240,0,15,
    240,0,15,144,0,9,144,0,9,248,0,31
10060 DATA 0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,
    0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0
10070 DATA 0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,
    16,0,27,144,0,11,144,0
10080 DATA 9,16,0,15,240,0,3,128,0,3,
    128,0,2,128,0,2,128,0,6,192,0
10090 DATA 1,0,8,32,68,128,128,0,0,59,
    209,159,34,82,68,34,82,68,59,211,
    197
10100 DATA 138,18,68,10,18,69,58,26,
    68,0,0,0,8,0,41,132,0,128,64,137,8
10110 DATA 16,1,1,2,0,8,35,255,228,35,
    255,226,31,255,248,127,255,252,255,
    255,255
10200 DATA 1.5,.4,.1,72,175,240,.6,.4,
    .2
11000 POKE 53280,15:POKE 53281,15
    :POKE V+21,0:PRINT"[BLACK]"
11010 GET A$:IF A$<>""GOTO 11010
11020 IF SC>HS THEN GOSUB 8700
11030 GOSUB 11500:GOTO 15
11500 POKE 53280,11:POKE 53281,11
    :PRINT"[YELLOW]"
11505 PRINT"[CLEAR]                [RVS]
    HIGH-SCORE";HS
11510 PRINT"[DOWN15,RIGHT,RVS]
    TODAYS EXPERT IS ";NM$;"[DOWN]"
11515 PRINT"[YELLOW]▗▄▄▄
```

BIG K HE WROTE ONE..



A BRIT TAKES ON THE YANKS' GAME

THE AMERICANS must be feeling pretty sick. In rock music, films, TV and now computer gaming, the spirit of True Brit is showing. Now Atari has chosen a BritProg for its first international release. Big K managed too track down the history-making Briton . . .

JUSTIN WHITTAKER is a tall, bespectacled 18 year-old from Staplehurst in Kent. He exhibits a calm self-assurance ("I decided that I'd write a hit game") and realistic attitude ("I wouldn't recommend that anyone else leaves school at 16 and starts writing software, they could be very disappointed") towards his work. All this is reflected in *The Lone Raider*, Justin's first game; a skilful blend of action, excitement and good play values, utilising the excellent sound and graphics capabilities of the Atari Home Computer.

Justin's computer interest began at school with computer studies, a subject he didn't feel he was doing as well as he should in. So he went out and bought a ZX81 to help. Through this he learnt programming and began writing his own programs straight away. He left school when he was 16 with a career as a programmer firmly in his sights. But it wasn't that easy. A long round of fruitless interviews left him with a lot of spare time on his hands and, by this time, an Atari 800 to play with. It was then he decided to write his "hit game".

THE THEME'S THE THING

Weeks were spent thinking up ideas. "Eventually I came up with the idea of — instead of just having a game, which is pretty meaningless — to actually provide a theme. I chose raiding a factory. So I designed the first screen of the game around getting into the factory, the middle screen doing the raiding and the last screen getting out again. I built the game round that."

Four or five months of off and on work passed before the game was complete. Justin then wrote to Atari's U.K. HQ telling them about the game and asking if he could show it to them.

Why Atari and not some British software house? "Because I had an Atari computer," was the simple reply. Oh.

Atari agreed to see the game and Justin journeyed up to their Slough offices to show it to them.

"They were struck by it the moment they saw it," he says modestly. "Almost on the first day they said the would release it." At that time, like many others writing independently for the Atari, all Justin could hope for was his game to be put out by the APX (Atari Program Exchange), a service available only to Atari owners. Then a few weeks later came the surprising news that *The Lone Raider* was going out 'mainline' with the rest of Atari's catalogue.

"I was dumbfounded," says Justin. "It was fantastic because, up to then, everything was so select with all the mainline stuff being written in America. Everybody says that the Americans are best and all that but I'm sure the British can do just as well."

Atari agreed to pay Justin a royalty on each copy sold in return for holding copyright and *The Lone Raider* was launched with great ceremony at the end of October, 1983. Initially the game is only on sale throughout Europe through Atari International, but hopes are high for an eventual U.S. release.

THE GAME'S THE THING

The Lone Raider is a three-stage game. On the first screen the Raider is beamed down from his mothership and must destroy all the robot guards to enter the power factory.

There are ten ranks to work through. The first five can be selected but the last five must be taken in sequence. Unlike some games *Raider* isn't endless. If you can beat the tenth rank ("almost impossible" says Justin) there is a special message and tune waiting. But nobody has done it yet, including Justin, who claims only to have cracked it ". . . by cheating"!

THE SOUND'S THE THING

The Lone Raider is an immensely 'playable' game involving the need for good tactics as well as reflexes. Sound is remarkable though the graphics are surprisingly simple for such a machine. "Some people write a game round a graphic technique," Justin explained. "They don't care about the play value. That isn't the way to do it. Sound is one of the most important things in games because it affects your subconscious as opposed to anything else. You can't ignore it. In the second level of my game the droning sound really gets you sweating!"

As is fairly clear by now, Justin is a big fan of Atari computers. "They're fantastic," he says. "You can never really master an Atari because there are lots of little things hidden inside. You can get 255 colours on the screen at once — what other micro can do that? There's just so much potential that's not realised."

Okay, so how about a few tips for Big K readers, Justin? "Get a book called *De Re Atari* by Chris Crawford. If you've got an Atari micro you think you've just got a basic micro. When you read that book your mind will be blown when you realise what you've really got your hands on!"

Justin was 17 when *The Lone Raider* was released last year. He's now 18 and a freelance programmer working on converting some of Atari's most popular games to other home micros for the new Atarisoft range. When Big K spoke to him he was working on *Dig Dug* for the BBC and Electron.

But what about a follow-up to *Raider?* That'll be in the works very soon and Justin is saying nothing about it other than it will be an arcade-style game. Fine. When you're a 'lone raider' taking on the awesome task of cracking the American grip on software, you're entitled to a few secrets!

Advertisement

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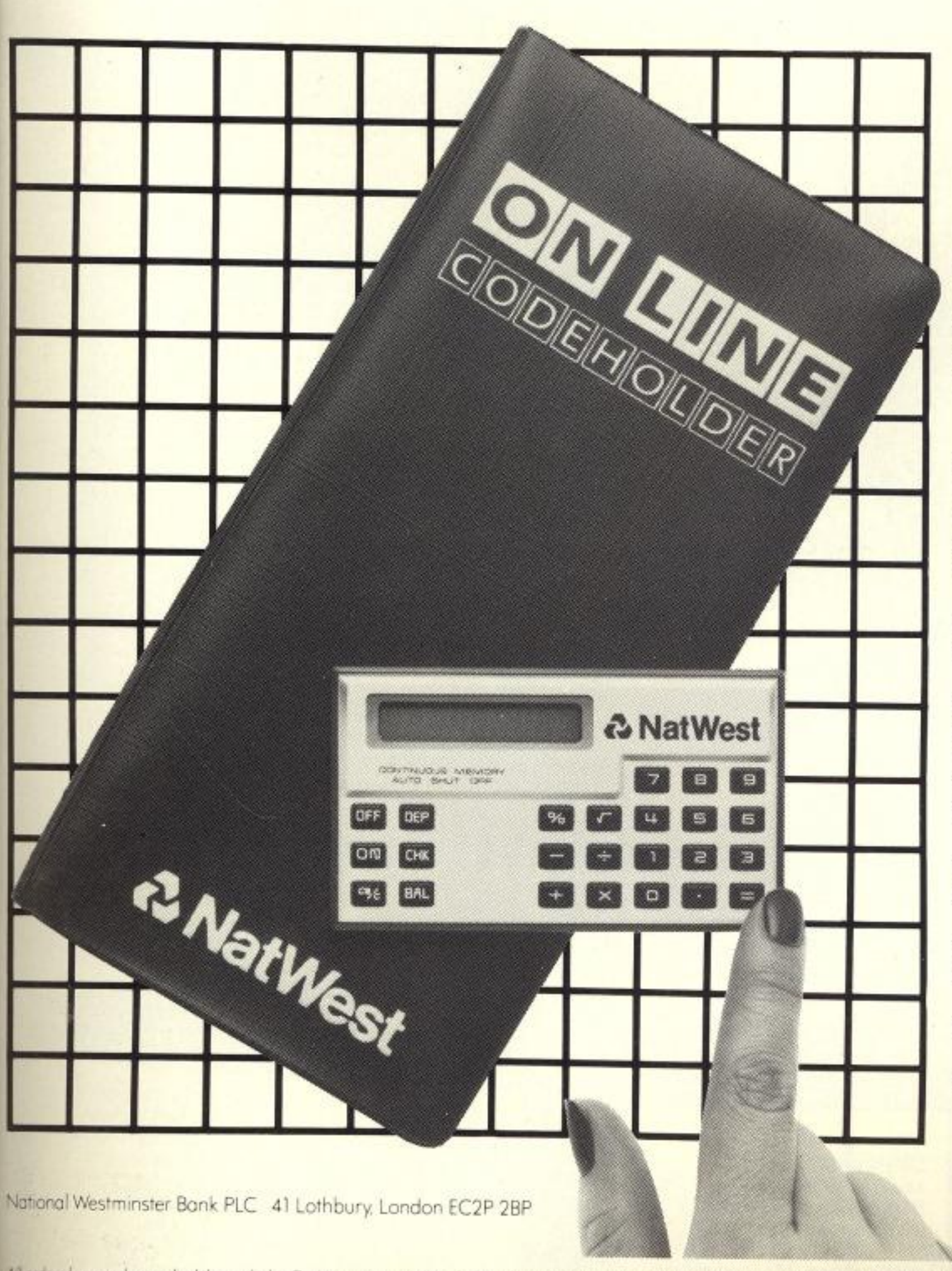

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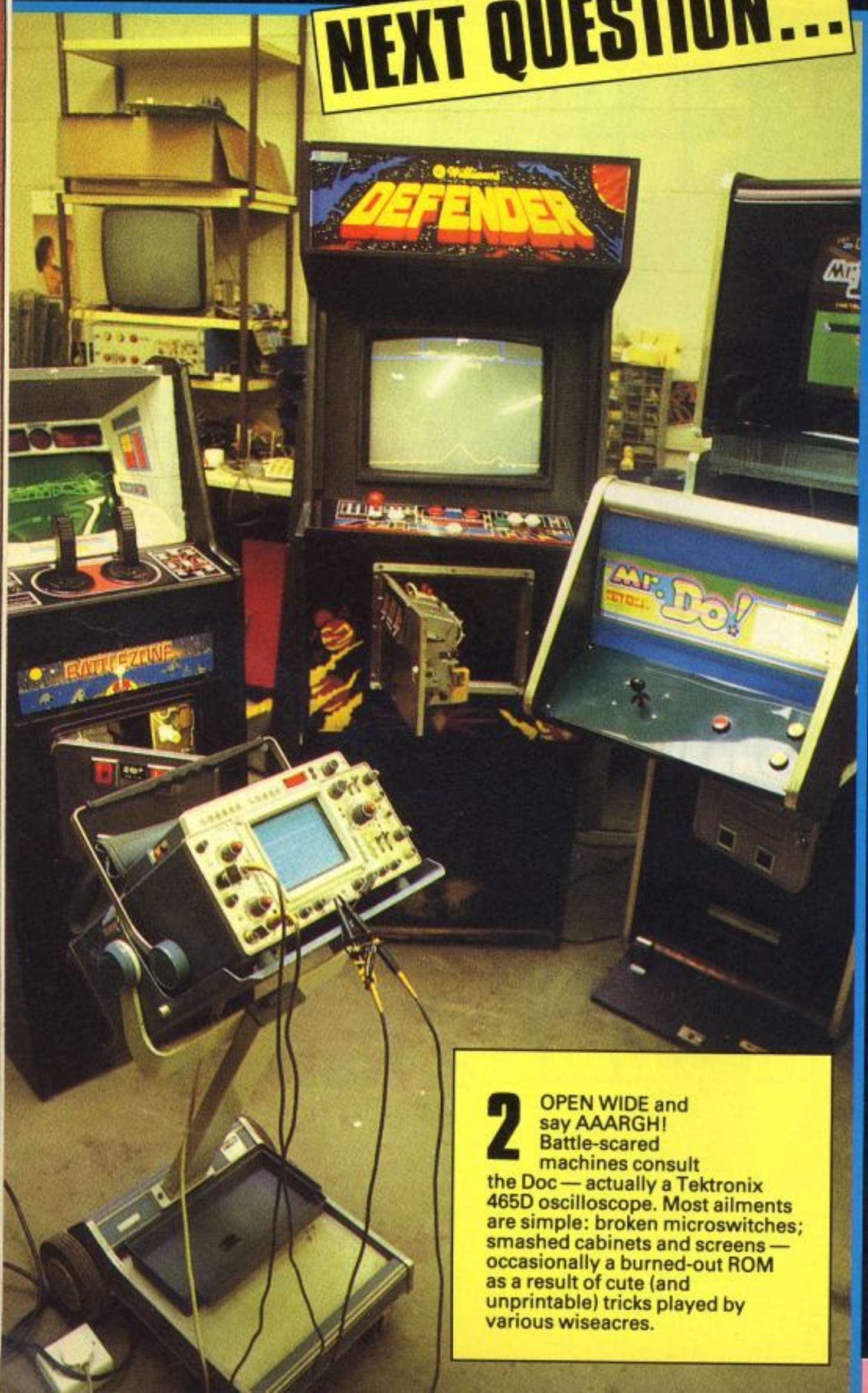
BIG K

ARCADE ALLEY

WHERE DO VIDEO GAMES GO WHEN THEY'RE SICK?

Answer: to the Doctor's

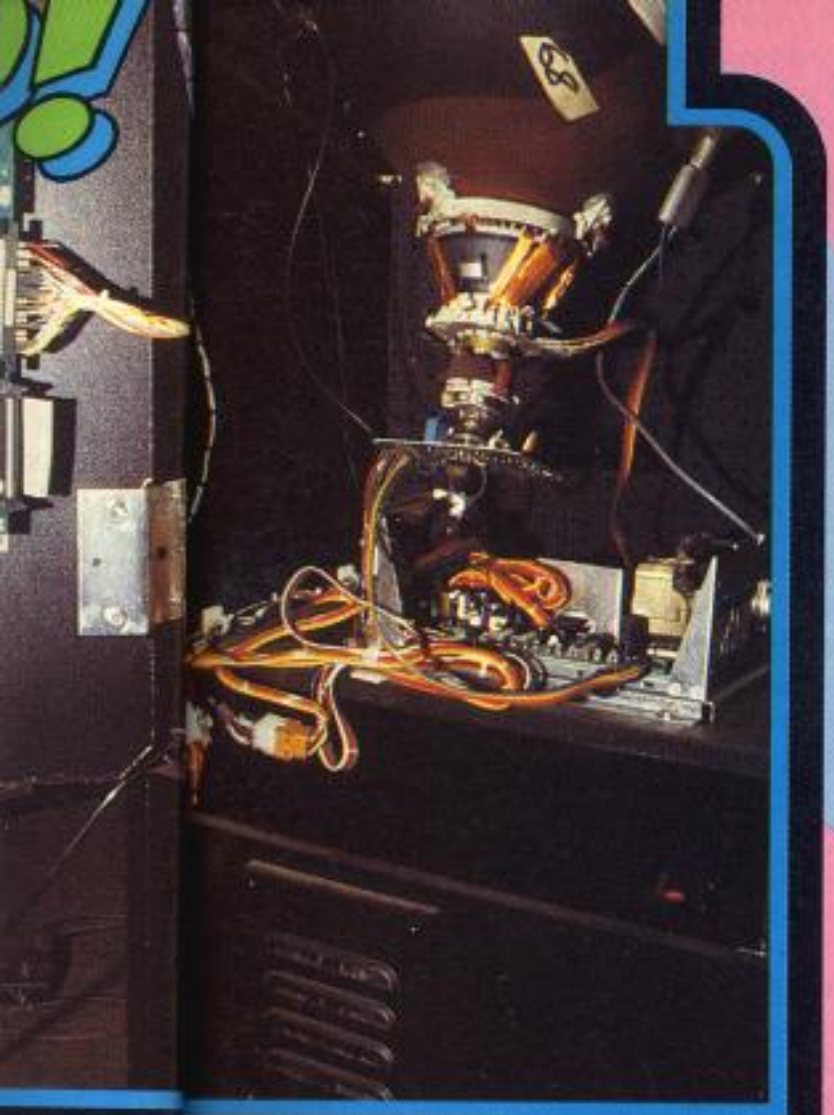
NEXT QUESTION...



2 OPEN WIDE and say AAARGH! Battle-scared machines consult the Doc — actually a Tektronix 465D oscilloscope. Most ailments are simple: broken microswitches; smashed cabinets and screens — occasionally a burned-out ROM as a result of cute (and unprintable) tricks played by various wiseacres.

3 The innards of TIME PILOT. Beneath the tube are the TV transistors and transformer. Left:

4 There was nothing actually wrong with this sturdy DEFENDER at all! In fact, it had merely come in for its regular three-month check-up, including a quick test of the colour balance. "And how are we feeling this time? Bombs still Smarting? Mutations progressing satisfactorily? Fine. Then if you'll just cough . . . Thank you. I think you're fit enough to go out there and take another three months' bashing at the hands of demented arcade freaks."



PILOT.
transis-

PCBs for sound and display. CPU? The good old Z80A — pressed into service in an upmarket capacity.

5 This BATTLE ZONE (above) had its joystick panel wrenched clean away by desperate manoeuvering. The MR DO (below) had a faulty power supply, now updated to switch-mode.

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PARDON, MY DISC HAS SLIPPED...

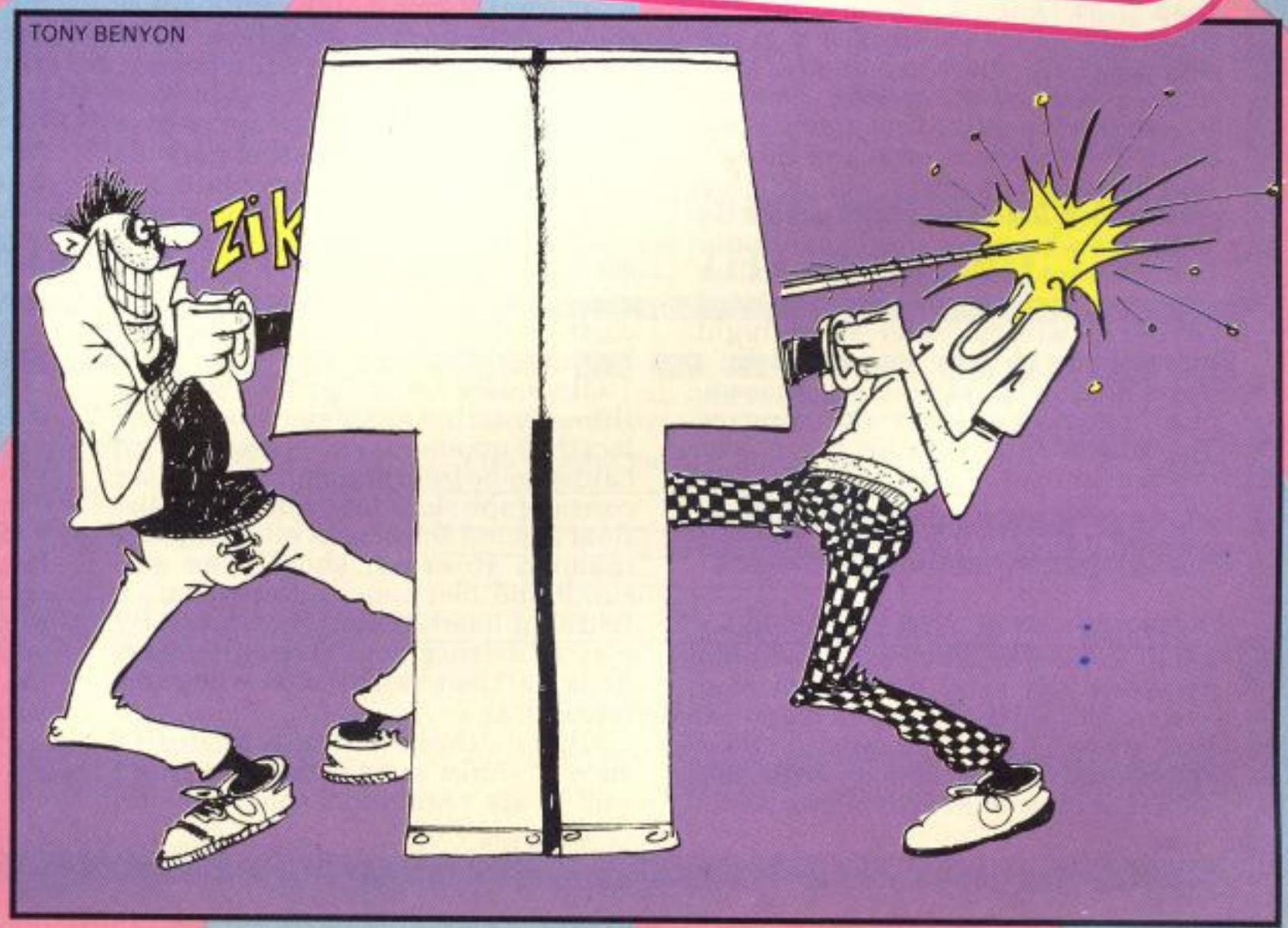
Disney's *Tron* was a supremely weird technoflick. Everybody was too busy gasping at the fact of megabuck computer animation to notice just how weird. But when was the last time you saw Ionian battlecruisers? And who would ever have imagined that the insides of a computer would look like a Trojan palace? The *Tron* game, like the film, was too weird, perhaps, to catch on with fans of the basic space-borne shoot-'em-up. And the neatest of the four game options — the laser bike — was over too quickly even when you had the knack.

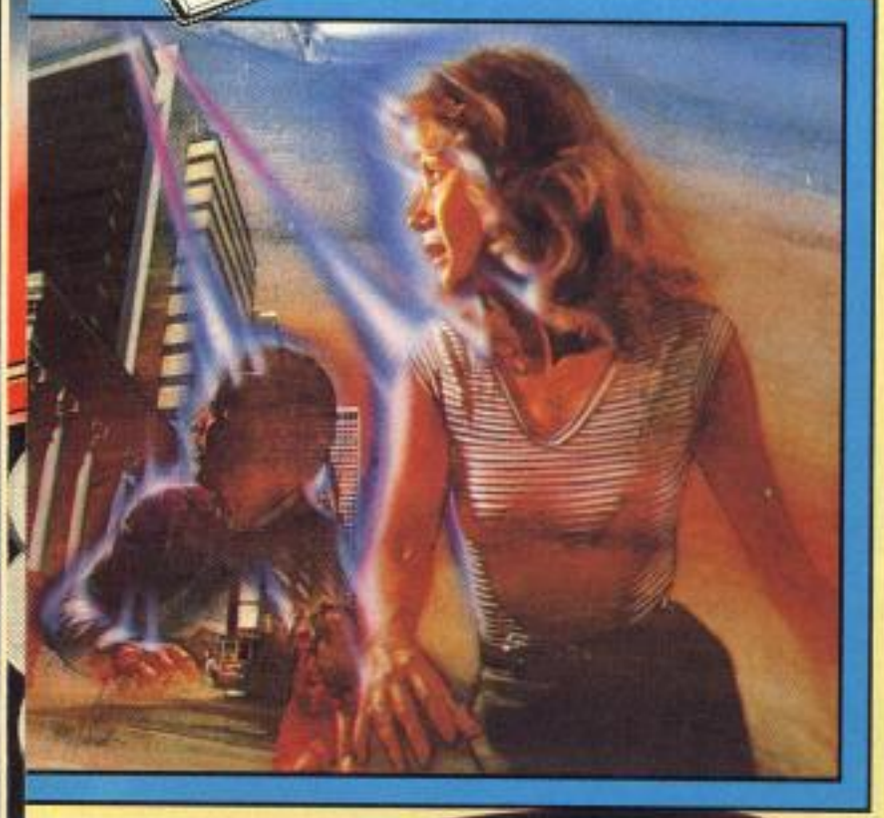
The new *Tron* game rectifies the diffuse appeal of the first with a single 360-degree game housed in a wrap-over console. Once inside this fantasy cabinet you're transported. *"You have been selected to serve on the games grid . . ."* Those about to be thrashed salute you!

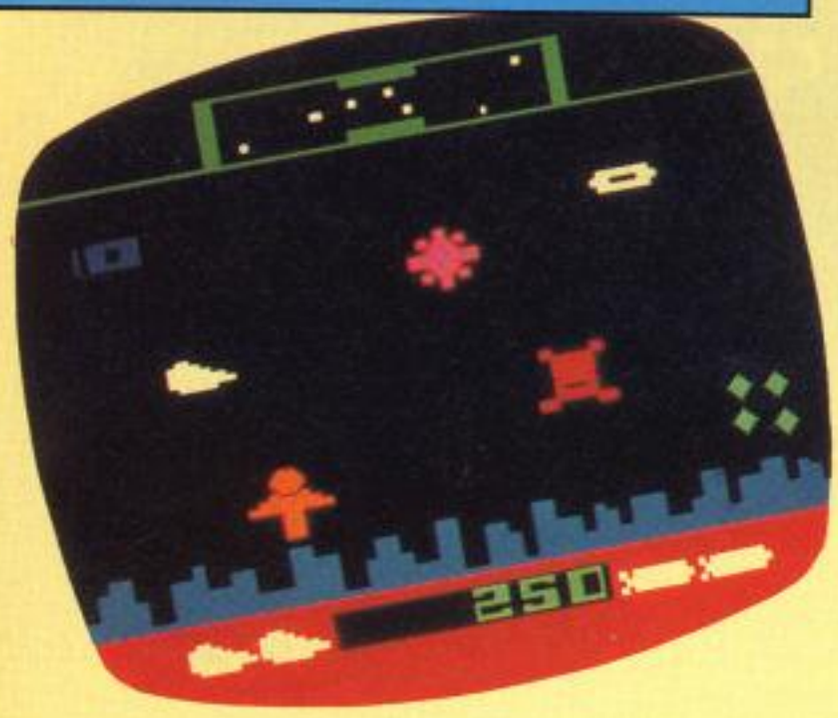
Your arena appears, a rectangle viewed from the same perspective as snooker tables on the TV, with your opponent poised on a hovering platform at the far end. You have to throw your three discs to knock him off, aiming with a marker that can be set at any point around the four walls, while dodging the discs he's throwing. At each stage, the number of platforms increases, and the game gets not so much faster as more mobile and more perilous.

Ultimate 3D Game

The discs bounce like snooker balls from the walls and return to you on your platform. At stage five, the platforms begin to change height, making *Disc Of Tron* the ultimate 3D game. In other respects too, *Discs Of Tron* is different: the Mannerist colours and strange hieroglyphics of the upright console; the reflex speed of play, the futuristic Olympics of the game. It's weird but it's wonderful. Walt would turn in his fridge if he knew.







No.1 DEFENDER

DEFENDER IS THE quintessential Atari VCS cartridge. It has an appeal that's lifted it far above the faddish popularity of other games, and since its release remains pretty much unequalled as the ultimate 2600 challenge.

The cart is an adaptation of an arcade monster first unleashed by Williams Electronics, a company until then best known for its pinball machines. *Defender* strolled into the arcades during the Christmas of 1980 and revolutionised coin-op warfare overnight. It was the first game to bite back! The ferocious attack of Baiters and Swarmers made the old plodding menace of *Invaders* seem positively homely. Arcades had suddenly become grim-faced arenas of merciless gawping at those slick wristed *Defender* wizards who stood night after night happily enveloped in a dazzling display of pixels. I was jealous! I had no idea what was going on. The sheer speed of the thing was overwhelming.

Fearsome Nature

Defender is an extremely complex game to master. The cast is without exception the most malevolent ever assembled on a single video screen. But when Atari announced their acquisition of the title for the humble VCS, I fairly groaned at the prospect. I mean, there was NO WAY such a killer machine could be crammed into a cart.

Was there?

Thankfully I was wrong. Not only did they cram it in, they produced a game with almost identical play to the original! Atari programmer Bob Polaro achieved a minor miracle by reducing 26 kilobytes of 5 button, 1 joystick mayhem into the heart of a *Pong*-sized cartridge. Indeed, *Defender* is — I guess — the single most successful conversion in the entire 2600 library. A bona-fide classic.

Armageddon

Earth is under attack. Hostile aliens, ironically attracted by a 'friendship' signal beamed by us into deep space, are descending in waves. Civilisation is being razed to the ground. It's like some George Pal movie come to life. Only you, in the cockpit of the Universal Space Ship *Defender* , remain as the last line of defence. Did I say defence? Wishful thinking. Those ominous blips on your scanner herald Armageddon. With a defiant sigh your ship accelerates across the horizon. It's time for action...

Defender's inherent challenge lies in its cast. The aliens come in six shapes: Bombers, Baiters, Landers, Mutants, Pods and Swarmers. Bombers are the quiet types and cause the least of problems. They tend to drift quietly down the screen and are quickly picked off. Baiters are just the opposite. Their undramatic appearance belies a fearsome nature. They'll hunt you dogmatically until either they wipe you or you wipe them. Their attack is both relentless and deadly. They also manage to distract you from the activities of the Landers, whose main aim is to kidnap the Humanoids who live in the city below. Once kidnapped a Humanoid will be transformed into a hideous mutant! Should the Landers abduct all 5 humanoids then you're in DEEP trouble, as the earth is destroyed in an apocalyptic mutant takeover.

Obviously your prime concern throughout the game must be to protect the humanoids and prevent such a catastrophe from happening. Pods are considerably less fearsome; they just float around the screen in a tempting manner. However, should you succumb and blast one it'll erupt into a fistful of heartseeking Swarmers! By way of defence you have only lasers and smart bombs. *Defender* is no game for cissies.

OK, now that you're fully briefed it's time to shake some action. Screens 1 and 2 are regulation shoot-'em-ups. The aliens have yet to pile on any pressure and neat flying will enable you to crank up a respectable score. Remember to kncok out the lone Bomber immediately as this eliminates any possibility of an accidental collision (very humiliating) and watch out for descending Landers. On the lower levels they move at an unhurried pace and so are easily shadowed. Let the Landers abduct the Humanoids and then — as they ascend the screen for home — blast 'em. You'll be able to catch the falling hume and claim 1,000 points per hit. Make the most of this strategy here, though, as it becomes impossible on later screens.

From screen three onwards *Defender* begins to play tough. Landers move about the screen with uncomfortable speed and the Baiters begin to get ratty. Me, I always begin by smart-bombing the two pods. It's possible to catch both with one hit and this saves the hassle of outflying Swarmers later on. Never — ever — skimp on the smart bombs. They're easily replaced and only foolish (or brilliant) pilots store them. Just let the suckers fly. As before, your main aim is to protect the Humanoids. As soon as you hear the garbled cry of a hume being kidnapped check out the scanner and move. Only, having shot the Lander and caught the hume, don't bother to put him down. As long as you've a Humanoid clinging to your belly the population will be safe. The other Landers won't try to kidnap anyone else.

Nerve-racking

A peal of VCS thunder heralds the Mutant takeover of Earth. This terrible event occurs the moment those filthy Landers succeed in abducting your entire population. The city is vaporised in a cheapo flash and swarms of crimson Mutants loom on the horizon. This is no time to panic as you'll need to survive 4 screens of Mutant Hell before Earth is restored (a miraculous occurrence, I'm sure you'll agree). The cart thoughtfully provides Mutant training missions which'll help you practise for this nerve-racking occurrence. Once again, work carefully with your scanner and keep on the move. Remember that a sudden change in direction will confuse the scraggy beasts and so allow you time to line up a healthy salvo of laser fire. And, of course, if things get too hot you can always hyperspace away. (The wimp's way out.)

And so goes it goes. The ultimate challenge. The appeal of Atari *Defender* clearly goes far beyond that of lesser shoot-'em-ups. In fact, the complexities of the onscreen action can so absorb the player that it almost becomes an intimate experience. Only try and express that excitement to those in the outside world and they'll think you're nuts. It's the first true classic of the video era. And the only cart guaranteed to make your feet sweat.

Play it in clean socks.

STEVE KEATON

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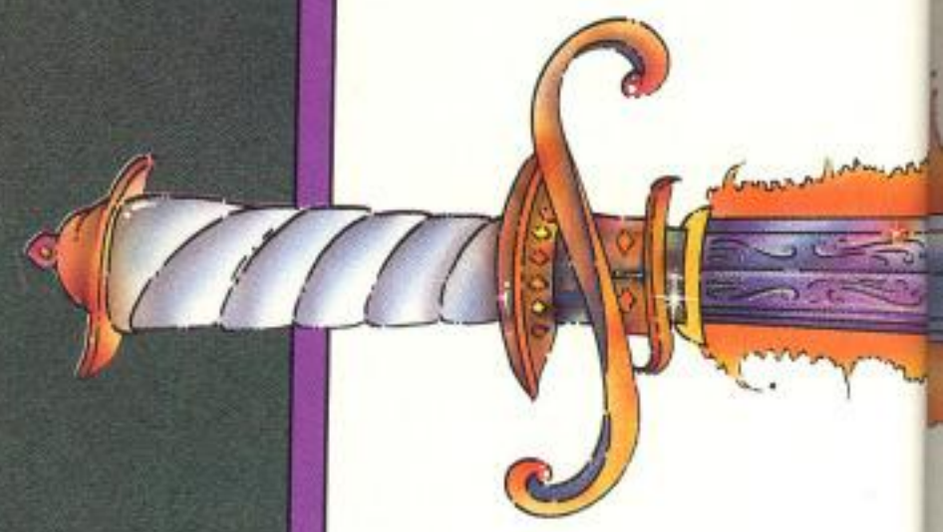
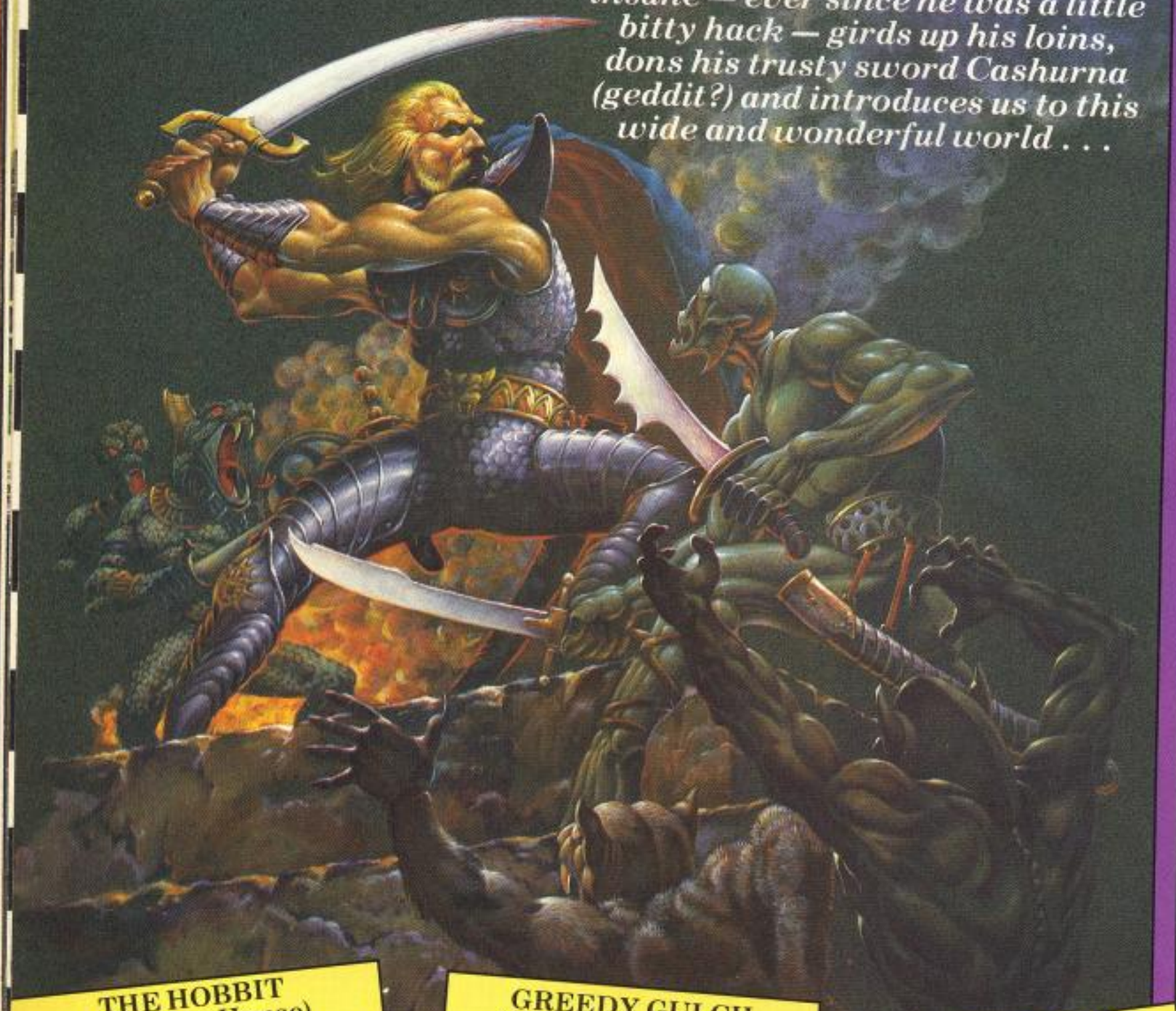
ADVENTURE

It all began way-back-when with two cats name of Crowther and Woods. They were skiving from the Stanford University, California, who employed them, and while dallying with a monster mainframe one day, they got tapping . . . The result was a 300K interactive storyline called Colossal Cave, and within weeks it became a bootleg hit. Since then it's growed and growed, and today Adventure is the fastest-developing form of computer fantasy. You can be who you want, where you want and when you want. But you'll find it difficult to get out alive.



STEVE KEATON, who's been playing the darn things with an obsessiveness that borders on the insane — ever since he was a little bitty hack — girds up his loins, dons his trusty sword Cashurna (geddit?) and introduces us to this wide and wonderful world . . .



THE DREADED mind-bender can take many forms: It could be an uncrossable chasm or an indefatigable Dragon; an unpassable giant or even an irate Black Pudding. It could be any one of many diabolical developments that forces you to grasp your hair and groan in despair. Perhaps you're incarcerated in some ghastly Goblin's dungeon and can't get out? If so then join the club. The Adventurer's Club. The cult of the

COMPUTER ADVENTURE

confused and slightly insane.

Its members are easily identified. They've withered from late night explotation, and have a disconcerting habit of breaking off conversations and declaring something inane like: "The cheese! I can divert its attention with the cheese!" for no apparent reason. They're a curious band. And rather disturbingly . . . they're growing!

The adventure is fast becoming an essential ingredient in the microgamester's diet. More substantial than the average arcade test, it'll tax and infuriate you, challenging your imagination like few things have ever done before. And, as you might imagine, it could well drive you nuts.

Needing several weeks to digest, a full-blown adventure will transport a player to an alternate reality where only lateral thought and a trusty blade will guarantee survival. It's a whole different ball game from Invader slaying.

Convention would almost certainly set an adventure

THE HOBBIT
(Melborne House)
The micro epic! Love it or hate it, its stature is unquestionable. Gasp at the art-work. Wonder at the sophistication. Despair at the gameplay. I wonder if Sherlock Holmes will be more forgiving?

GREEDY GULCH
(Phipps Associates)
Yup. A neat Western mystery set in an old deserted mining town. Can you and your pardners discover that durn lost goldmine before some pesty varmint plugs you full o' buckshot?

VELNOR'S LAIR
(Quicksilva)
Definitive, intelligent — if light-hearted — Sword and Scorcery opus that's guaranteed to chill, thrill and amuse. Go on, stomp on orc today. You know it makes sense.

MISSION 1: PROJECT VOLCANO
(Mission software)
Superior secret agent saga that pitches you against the nuclear might of the Soviet Bloc. Piece of cake, eh comrades?

ADVENTU

ADVENTURE

THE LAST FRONTIER

in some sub Gary Gygax *Dungeons and Dragons* scenario, peopled with orcs and other 'orrors; however, a great variety of locale is available. There's nothing to stop you loading up an adventure in the Wild West, or on a hostile alien world or even one within the confines of Number Ten. The choice is both bizarre and huge. Newcomers to the club are quite likely to feel swamped by choice.

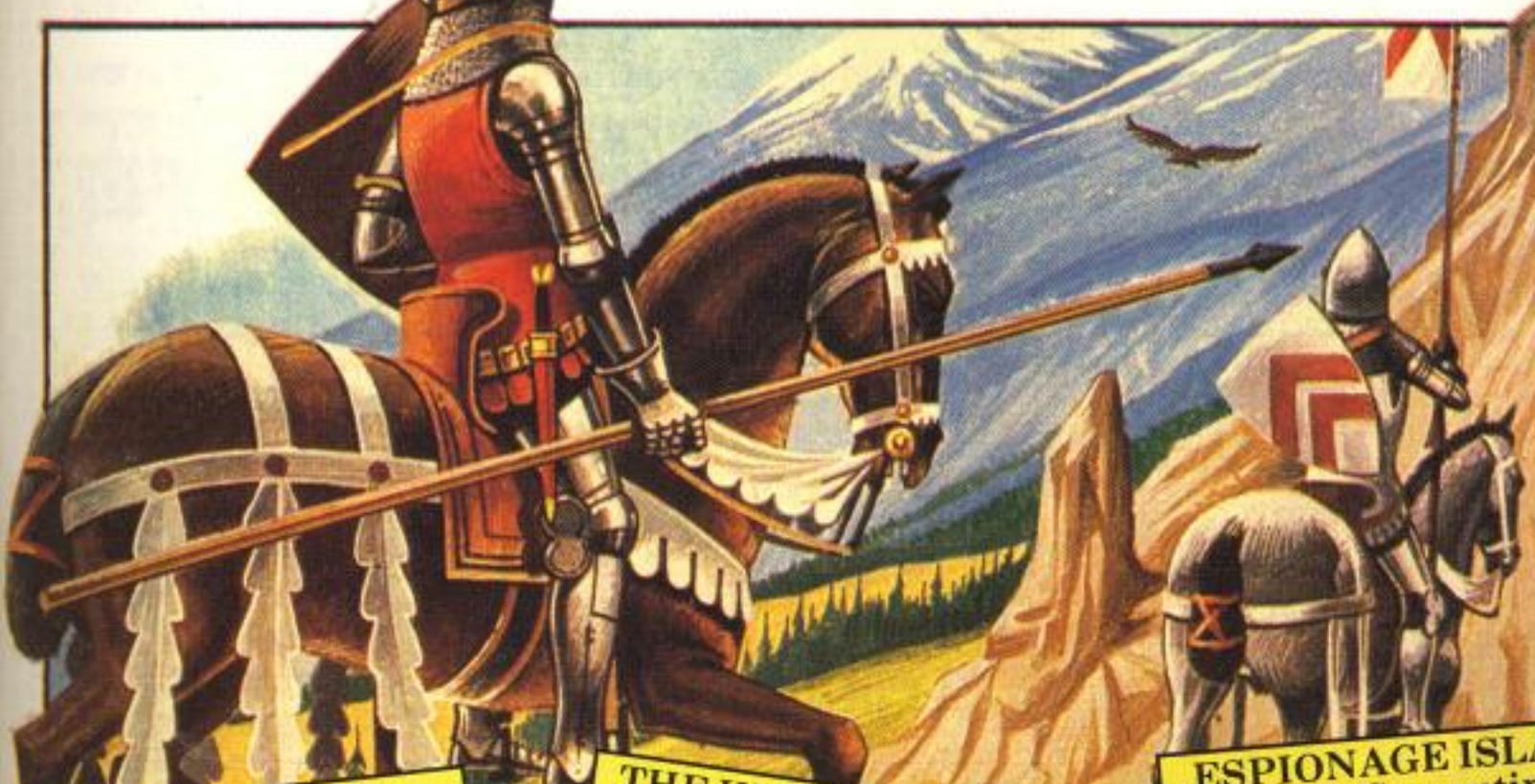
One's first adventure is always a memorable experience. The thrill of the quest setting the scene for your subsequent mental collapse. It's most important not to get lumbered with a duffer on your first outing, it could scar you for life. A personal favourite of mine is VELNOR'S LAIR (which runs on a 48K Spectrum from Quicksilva). It's a classically styled text adventure that pits you against Zombies, Orcs, Goblins and sundry in a chilling search for the Black Wizard Velnor.

It seems the old goat has taken refuge within the Goblin Labyrinth of Mount Elk and is about to realise his one great ambition, to become a true demon on Earth. Naturally this causes much consternation amongst decent thinking folks. Only you can thwart his plan and save mankind! It's a marvellous Sword and Sorcery romp with a wry sense of humour.

The game allows you the choice of a character. You can play a priest or a wizard — both of which have spells at their command — or a brawny barbarian, who, while being shortchanged in the smarts department, can slug it out with the best of 'em. Naturally wishing to emulate my own physical prowess and stature I played the game as the latter. The adventure is wonderfully scripted and delightfully friendly, which makes it an ideal initiation for the newcomer. And while not being exceptionally difficult it does possess a number of those infuriating mindbenders. The toughest of which is without doubt the crocodile infested river. It's giving nothing away to say that the log-like fiends have got to be fed in order for you to pass. But with what? I spent bloody ages puzzling over it.

Having found both apples and flour I concluded that the only solution was to bake the ravenous reptiles an apple pie! Needless to say this was way off beam. Their culinary bent was of a far

Continued on page 54



THE DUNGEON MASTER (Crystal)
Authentic adaptation of *Dungeons and Dragons*, the original role-playing fantasy game. Play is endless and connoisseurs will not be disappointed.

THE KNIGHT'S QUEST (Phipps Associates)
A medieval quest with a rep forged of solid gold. But be warned: it's fearsomely tough and not for the spineless. Can you find Merlin's hidden gold?

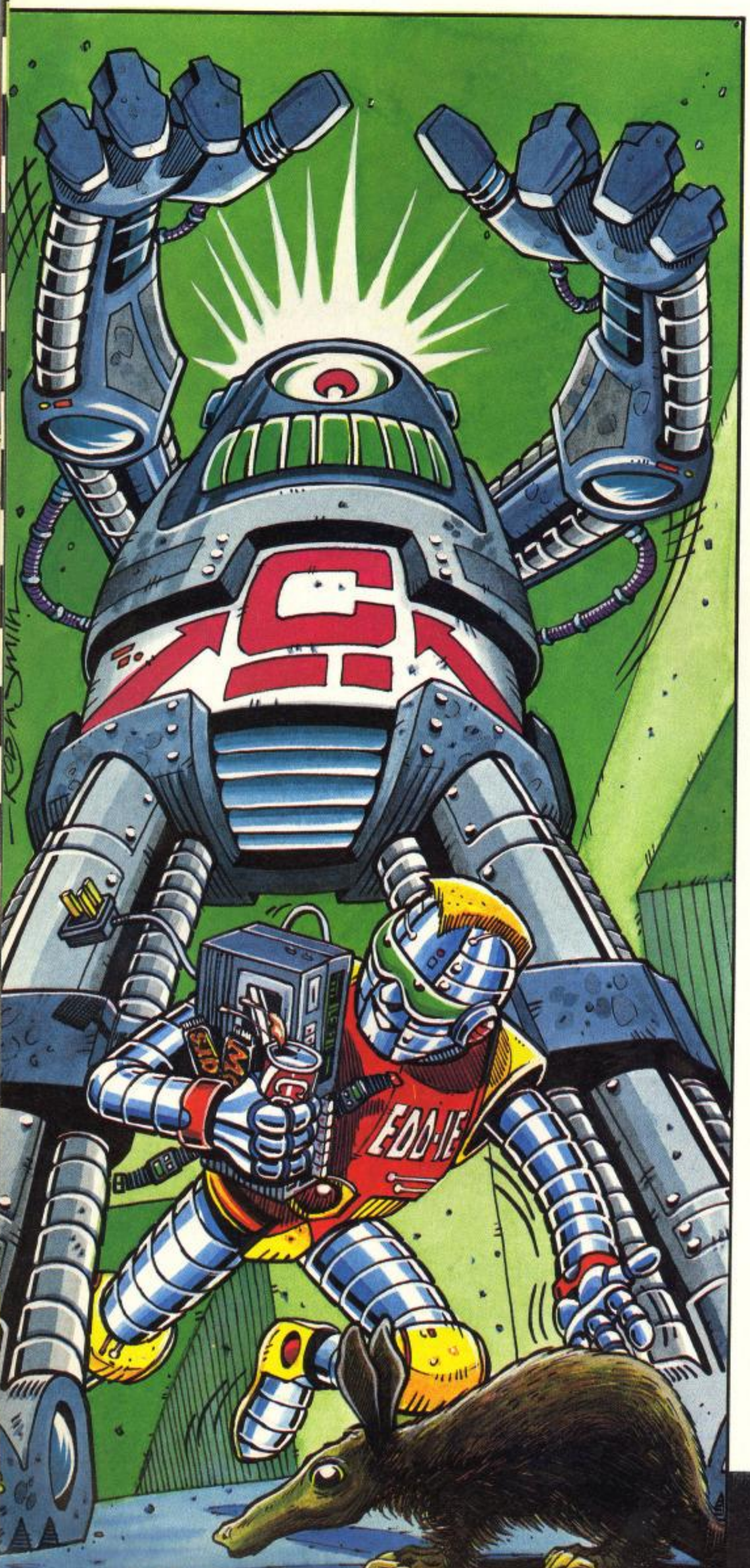
ESPIONAGE ISLAND (Artic Computing)
Downed while on a reconnaissance mission, you must penetrate the enemy stronghold in a vain attempt to solve the mystery of the peril-fraught island. Oh, by the way, don't dally with loose native women!

GOLDEN APPLE (Arctic Computing)
Travel through a brace of unrelated scenarios in this bizarrely scripted search for a mystical golden apple. Starts easy — gets tough.

MAGIC MOUNTAIN (Phipps Associates)
Dare you venture within the bug-encrusted confines of a treasure trove mountain? I thought as much. You guys are so predictable!

MCKENSIE (Software projects)
Entertaining SF escape adventure that has you abandoned onboard a decrepit space station; and as you might expect, there's only limited oxygen to be had. Beam me up Scotty!

ADVENTURE



Returning to Earth from Alpha Centauri, your teleport beam is interrupted by a weird glitch and you find yourself stranded in an eerie, apparently deserted alien city. As you begin to investigate your surroundings you encounter a friendly android by name of Eddie. With his help you begin to explore a maze of rooms, encountering oddly familiar objects and diabolical dangers at every turn. Will you ever find a way to leave this alien world? Or will you be stranded forever in an endless labyrinth — where perhaps you are not alone . . .?

```
  1 REM alien city adventure
  2 REM Steve Craddock
  3 REM © SCEIRON 1984
  4 REM check spaces when enter
ing any text and also for ""
  9 REM locations
  10 DIM a$(13,8): FOR a=1 TO 13
: READ a$(a): NEXT a
  20 DATA "sinister","smallish",
"big,blue","low,dark","freezing"
,"torchlit","spacious","wet,dank
","greenish","red-hued","cavelik
e","standby","teleport"
  29 REM directions
  30 DIM b$(7,5): FOR a=1 TO 7:
READ b$(a): NEXT a
  40 DATA "out","up","down","wes
t","east","north","south"
  49 REM objects
  50 DIM c$(21,13): FOR a=1 TO 2
1: READ c$(a): NEXT a
  60 DATA "guard","cyclops","sig
n","transmat","bag of canvas","t
icket","goblin","video unit","di
gital watch","aardvark","can of
coke"
  70 DATA "mars bar","spare manu
al","ring of gold","key of bronz
e","pile of bones","broken video
","wrecked watch","heap of bones
","empty can","sweet wrapper"
  79 REM descriptions
  80 DIM d$(15,32): FOR a=1 TO 1
5: READ d$(a): NEXT a
  90 DATA "a dark tunnel, stretc
hing away.","a pass between high
 rocky crags.","a dusty trail,le
ading to a bend.","thick dust,un
disturbed for years","footprints
. Someone's been here!","stalagt
ites & snow. It's chilly!"
  100 DATA "a sign: 'BEWARE OF TH
E CYCLOPS!'","a narrow path over
 a sheer drop.","an unused area,
thick in cobwebs.","an eerie glo
w from the next room","a message
: 'KILROY WAS HERE!'","an armed
guard at the exit."
  105 DATA "a transmat device ope
rating here","some rickety-looki
ng stairs here","a mean-looking
cyclops here."
  109 REM je ne comprends pas
  110 DIM e$(6,32): FOR a=1 TO 6:
 READ e$(a): NEXT a
  120 DATA "I beg your pardon?","
What ARE you talking about?","I
don't understand what you mean",
"What? Sorry, I don't know that.
","I can't make any sense of thi
s!","Want to try that again?"
  129 REM set up colours
  130 DIM p(13): FOR a=1 TO 13: R
EAD p(a): NEXT a
  135 DATA 0,1,5,0,5,0,6,1,4,3,0,
6,2
  140 DIM i(13): FOR a=1 TO 13: R
EAD i(a): NEXT a
  145 DATA 7,7,1,4,1,3,0,5,0,6,5,
3,6
  149 REM verbs
  150 DIM v$(23,3): FOR a=1 TO 23
: READ v$(a): NEXT a
  160 DATA "get","go ","loo","inv
","put","dro","des","dri","exa","
ent","hel","ope","run","eat","b
ac","tal","qui","fig","kil","att
","rea","giv","wea"
  169 REM cyclops graphic
  170 FOR a=0 TO 7
  171 READ b: POKE USR "a"+a,b
  172 READ b: POKE USR "b"+a,b
  173 READ b: POKE USR "c"+a,b
  174 READ b: POKE USR "d"+a,b
  175 READ b: POKE USR "e"+a,b
  176 READ b: POKE USR "f"+a,b
  177 READ b: POKE USR "g"+a,b
  178 READ b: POKE USR "h"+a,b
  179 NEXT a
```

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GOOD GAME...

As exclusively revealed in last month's BIG K, Yorkshire Television — with a little help from a friend or two — is planning to launch an entirely new kind of video-game TV show this autumn. PAUL WALTON plugged himself into Follow-Up Mode and went behind the scenes . . .

THE GAME is coming — it's going to be *Tron's Revenge* on millions of prime-time Saturday evening TV viewers. After this videogames quizshow watching TV or playing yourself will never be the same again.

It's nothing to do with education (a la Beeb). Or tradition. It's got everything to do with fun . . . and the future. What will begin this coming autumn as a novel quizshow could well go on to become the first-ever fully fledged interactive TV.

John Meade is producer of The Game at Yorkshire TV and he would only give out a few guarded hints to BIG K about what to expect: "TV is such a dirty game," he explained. A pilot programme was shot in utmost secrecy. But Steve Lovering, a creator of The Game's concept, did peel back a little of the protective coating on what's already being called VTFX — or the *effects* of modern *TV*.

What these men have done is to put together the integrated digital technology required to *merge* signals from a videogame with both live studio film and pre-shot location film to create a single collage. And they decided first to apply this technical genius with showmanship and panache in a giant leap towards The *(ultimate)* Game.

"I want competitors to be able to play from their armchairs — its technically possible today," said Lovering. "It will happen as the concept of The Game is integrated at higher and higher levels." He's the creative director with the giant Hutton Company (who design the ads). A professional visionary.

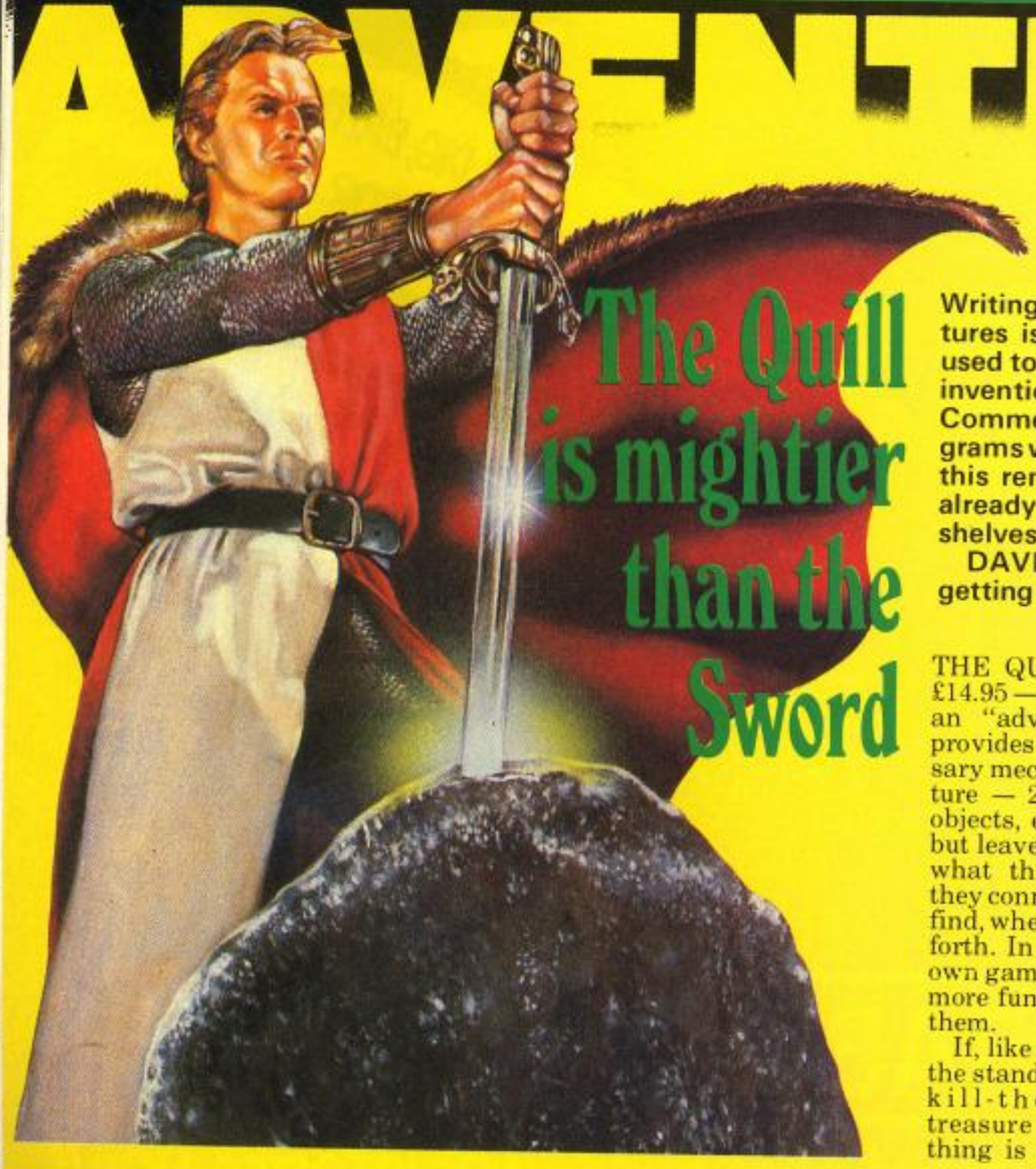
Imagine the screen. You'll be sitting at the keyboard playing a game first off — viewers at home will see a split-screen of you playing the videogame, and the videogame screen action as well. But anybody who's watched darts on TV will know that this kind of presentation can get pretty boring.

Next stop

The next step will be a television first anywhere in the world, employing a Quantel digitized graphics system, like that used to annotate items in a flash on News-at-Ten, or to create the flying Channel Four logo to pick up the player's image from the studio film and merge him or her into a complete videogames frame: the Space Invaders appear actually to attack the player.

To enhance the feeling of realism, contestants on The Game will be dressed for whatever period the videogame seeks to depict. But as you can well imagine it will still look like a badly cut film montage. So a

ADVENTURE EXTRA



The Quill is mightier than the Sword

Writing your own Adventures isn't as arduous as it used to be, thanks to a neato invention called The Quill. Commercial adventure programs written with the aid of this remarkable system are already appearing on the shelves.

DAVE RIMMER has been getting his fingers inky . . .

THE QUILL — price a mere £14.95 — is simply brilliant. It's an "adventure system" that provides you with all the necessary mechanics of a text adventure — 225 possible locations, objects, events and so forth — but leaves it up to you to decide what the locations are, how they connect up, what objects to find, where to leave them and so forth. In short, you write your own game. And that, frankly, is more fun than playing most of them.

If, like me, you're fed up with the standard sword 'n' sorcery, k i l l - t h e - g o b l i n - f i n d - t h e - treasure plotline, then this thing is a Godsend. It can be anywhere and involve anything you want. You are limited only by your imagination and sense of humour and — let it be said — by certain built-in parameters of the structure (on which more later) that are I suppose necessary.

A friend and I spent two happy afternoons recently writing a game based on a mutual aquaintance who's always depressed. The object is to cheer yourself up by visiting friends, going shopping, dealing successfully with parents, coping with your job and the like. Not as simple as it sounds. Getting into Marks & Sparks to buy the thick and creamy yoghurt you're going to need later on can be as difficult as bridging a bottomless chasm or killing that belligerent goblin, believe me. Naturally, by the time we'd finished it was crawling with in-jokes and comprehensible only to about three other people in the whole of Britain, but what a hoot we had doing it.

Despite what the manual says, there's no need to plan everything out beforehand. In fact it seems to be more fun if

ADVENTURE EXTRA

E...GOOD GAME

finishing touch will be added: scenery provided by pre-shot location film which is added as a third layer to the digitized Quantel frame.

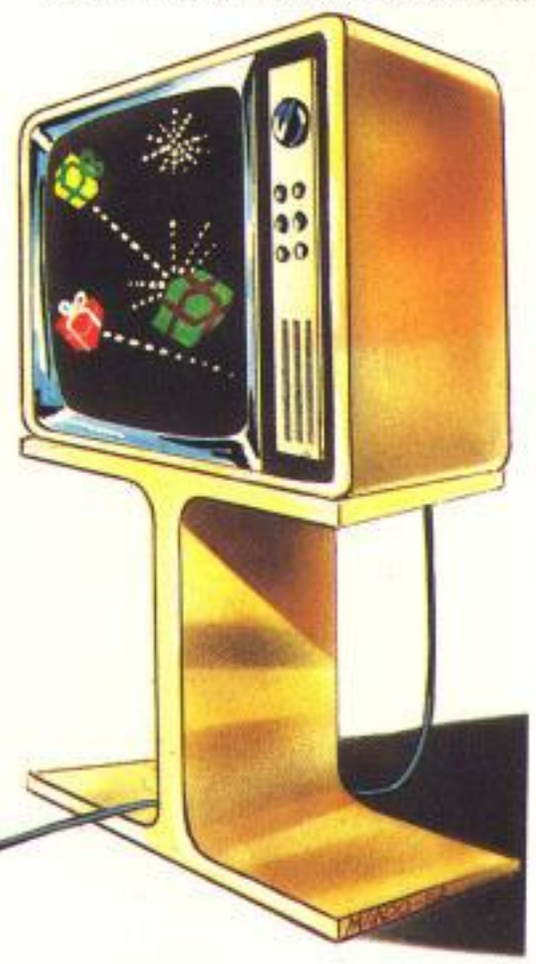
The overall effect is one of "believable realism," according to producer Meade. It was his job to shoot a pilot for The Game in January of this year, in conditions of utmost secrecy. This first programme, which will never be screened, was called *The Quest for Abigail* — a spoof on the Holy Grail story.

Adventure

An Oxford-based games software house called Insight Software prepared an adventure game especially for the pilot: this adventure house is destined to become a big name.

A live edition of The Game would entail three distinct sequences which follow the adventure. First of all the contestants must guess the period, location or flavour of the story — it might be anything from outer space to the inside of a molecule. Next, they will proceed through the adventure's machinations to uncover a hidden secret, fighting monsters all the way, in the shape of a guest personality. And finally they must work out just who is the mystery personality.

Insight weren't saying which micro *The Quest for Abigail* was written for (though en educated guess might settle as the Thorn-EMI Wren.) The choice of hard-



ware is likely to cause a battle royal amongst the suppliers. And YTV weren't saying whether Insight would be employed to write or commission all of its games software, or how it would be distributed.

What is clear is that the TV station and an off-shoot of Hutton's called Ventech will collaborate to market each videogame as it is used in the show. And Ventech would like the pair to agree either a 'YTV-logo' machine or some standard which could also be promoted as an accompanying machine for The Game.

When it comes down to the nitty-gritty of marketing The Game detail becomes difficult to find, whilst prognostications about its future are more forthcoming.

Ventech is talking to that Prism/Micronet/Transam consortium which is getting involved in everything from the mooted ITV games machine to games software juke-boxes. Prism made its millions selling Sir Clive's baby mail-order.

But it isn't clear whether they are trying to get the right to use a cut-down version of that Wren micro (a bit steep for games players at £1,000), or just access to the Prestel-based Micronet. Whatever comes of this canoodling is sure to be a bit special.

As the prime distributor, Ventech would be handling the sale of software. But as a creative ally, it would also be looking to realise the potential of that technology which makes The Game special for television.

Potential

Consider what Lovering had to say about that potential: "I see the TV as just another form of access to a screen, with the potential to bring anything into people's living rooms. One day there will be as many micros as there are now TV in the living room, so we have got to start thinking about how they might work together. This could be live, interactive television," he said.

In principle Micronet 800 could be a vehicle to link people who have the more popular micros into the TV studio "live" using just an inexpensive modem and the telephone/Prestel connection.

This basic network could accommodate up to a hundred simultaneous players of The Game. Huttons took the possibilities so seriously that they looked in to all kinds of spin-off: viewers' "live" response to programmes or advertising is under consideration: fancy being able to tell politicians where to get off; or alter the ending of *Coronation Street!*

But of course this kind of two-way link could never be on the same scale as the local Cable TV franchises due to start during 1985 — unless the broadcast TV companies invest a great deal more in digital telephony, studio equipment and the large controlling computer systems like Quantel.

Interactive

Before they can begin to think about doing that they will need some indication of how we, the audience, react: now they look like getting that chance with The Game.

"We are thinking very, very hard about the possibility for interactive television, having made this technical breakthrough," was about the only comment producer John Meade had to make.

When the ITV companies finally agree to screen The Game in the autumn it will probably replace that awful quiz show *'3-2-1'*, Dustybin and all. More importantly it will be a major boost for the home computer market and is destined to become a prime-time advertising slot for them early on Saturday evening.

Whichever micro The Game is eventually played on, the sponsors could be looking at the kind of perpendicular sales growth that Acorn scaled after its link to television. And thankfully micros won't just mean education anymore ... The Game might not even be *remotely* good for you.

A...VENTURE

you start out with a vague idea and slot in the complexities as they occur to you. Once you've written two locations, for example, there's nothing to stop you slotting another in between.

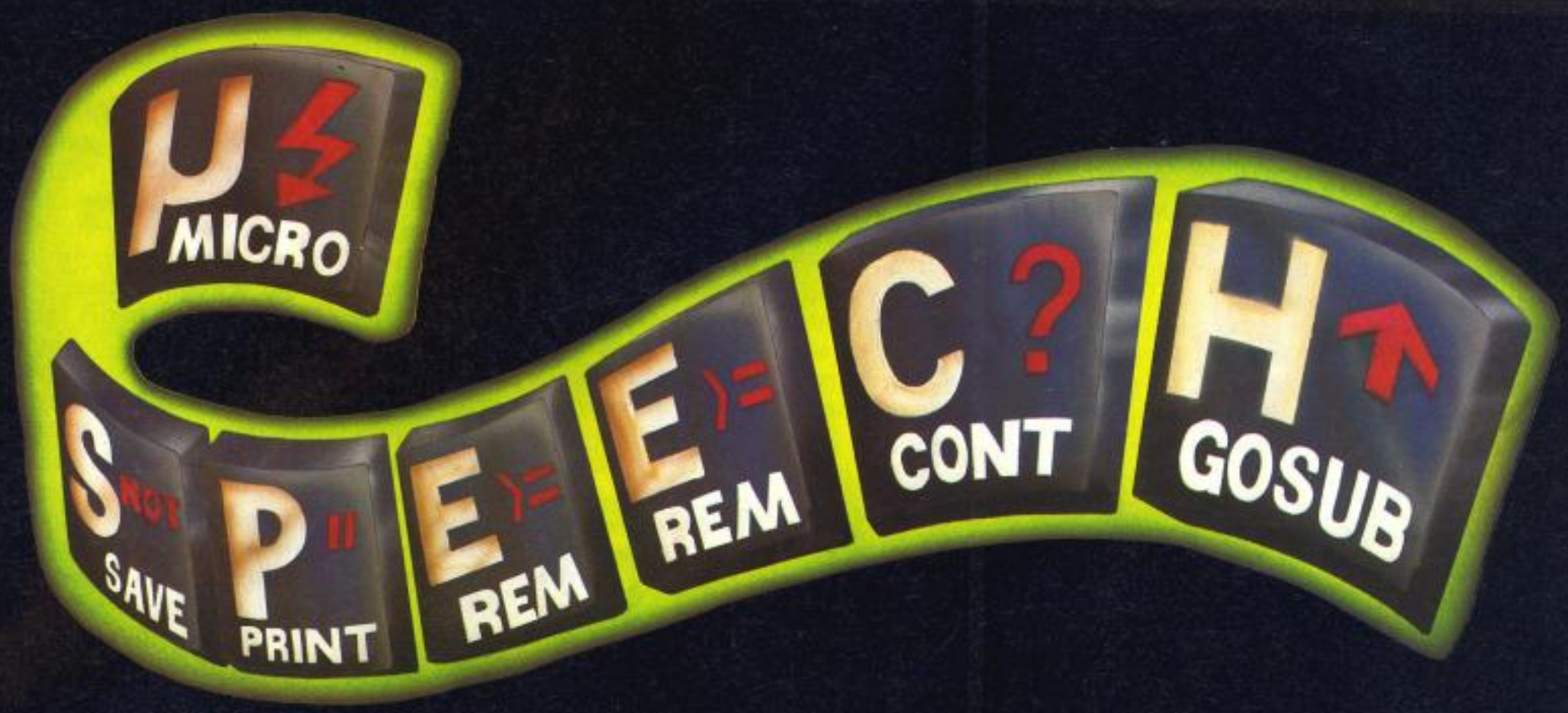
"Have a nice day"

Attention to detail is of course vital, and you continually have to stop and run through it. The pile of lists and maps you have to keep can get a bit irksome, but that's only one of a few minor drawbacks. Another is the fact that you can't change some of the basic text: it's always the rather servile "I await your instructions", for example, and the sign-off line is invariably a sickly rejoinder "Have a nice day". But these are quibbles.

Put a bit of work into The Quill and you can write a game as quick and slick as any on the market. And if you want to sell one you've written with The Quill, the author asks only that you give his system a mention somewhere.

And now all the legwork has been taken out of the writing, maybe some more will go into creating new types of scenarios and problems. In other words, maybe it's bye-bye to that bloody goblin.

A...VENTURE



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(some of these games are new versions of original programs)

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I VAS ONLY OBEYINK ORDERS

Basically (Cyril) the idea is that you man a revolving 75mm AA turret. Down on your head come the enemy paratroops. Down on your head come the enemy paratroops, dropping like leaves from transporter planes. Blast the swine! Actually, there's a major conceptual mistake here, since — for even the most bizarrely homicidal maniac — the very idea of potting paratroopers in mid-air is extremely repugnant.

Anyway, a good touch now emerges, since the revolving action of the turret is very accomplished; that said, this is about the only aspect of the program it's easy to like (do bear in mind this review refers exclusively to the Commodore version, since we didn't like *Paratroopers* enough to run the other versions). You have your choice of mobile or static turrets, by the way.

Bug City emerges not far into the game. A certain combination of turret movement and blasting causes an apparent momentary crash. Result: death. I assume this is a bug, since there was no apparent plot justification.

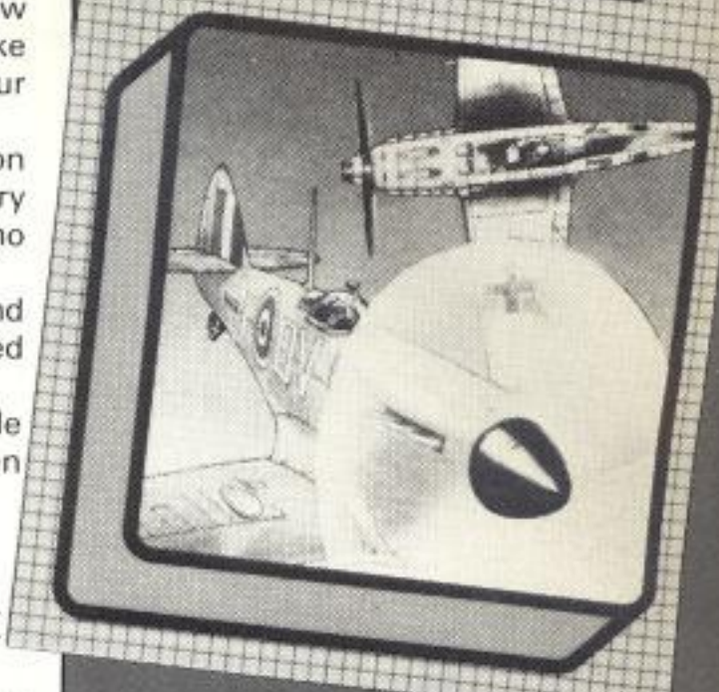
Every now and again a dirty great tank rolls through and crushes you to pieces — the result of allowing too many Red Devils to get themselves groundborne.

All in all an unsatisfactory game, with a Nuremberg-style plotline and an unhappily bug-like habit of hanging up just when you don't need it. As if you'll care. — **T.T.**

Game: PARATROOPERS
Maker: RABBIT SOFTWARE
Machine: COMMODORE 64; VIC-20; SPECTRUM 48K
Format: cassette
Price: £5.99
Rating: none

K = Could Be Better
KK = Could Be Worse
KKK = Unsurpassable

PROGRAM POWER ELECTRON BANDITS at 3o'clock



From the moment the go button is thumbed *Bandits At 3 O'Clock* shows its class. Two figures break from flight HQ and race for their biplanes which leap into the air (at a touch of the 'climb' key) after a short take-off run. Then it's each player for him(or her)self as the two planes engage in deadly dogfights.

Only a shot to the propeller will down your enemy convincingly. As the loser ploughs into the soil a gravestone marks his demise. Accumulate enough of these and your opponent's runway length is reduced making takeoffs decidedly tricky. Nice touch. Seven kills and you're the victor.

To this already good mix you can add tasty ingredients like flak, clouds, airship obstacles and night or day modes, all easily called up from an options menu. There's also a useful single player practice mode. I would have liked a full single player option but *Bandits* is designed for and best played by two people.

Bandits is one of those rare games that can be classed as sheer fun. It looks good on the screen (graphics limitations of the electron aside), is professionally presented and has a very high level of play value. An absolutely wizard game, chaps. — **R.B.**

Game: BANDITS AT 3 O'CLOCK
Maker: PROGRAM POWER
Machine: ELECTRON
Format: cassette
Price: £6.95
Rating: KKK

It was... ...aaaargh

An entertaining not to mention seabound version of that familiar board game *Cluedo*, in which you play a detective all at sea on the luxury liner 'Pacific 1'. Any chances of a mid-Atlantic romance are rapidly sunk with the arrival of an ominous telegram. It seems that there's a dastardly plot to destroy the liner and all on board, including HRH King David (gasp!). That fanatical loon Mr Sinister has slunk onboard disguised as a passenger and is at this very second busy planting an explosive device somewhere. Needless to say you must deduce his identity before time runs out and the ship's reduced to so much driftwood. There are three riddles to solve: the location of the bomb, the object it's disguised as (bible? teapot? pram?) and the identity of Mr Sinister himself. Once you have these three elements you use the 'Suspect' routine. This will tell you if any of your notions are correct. However, if you strike paydirt the computer won't tell you which element is right. You must solve the mystery by deduction. It's a nicely executed idea, with a multi-player option that makes it a winner in the family fun department. If you're into board games this could be well worth investigating. — **S.K.**

Game: DEATH CRUISE
Maker: VIRGIN GAMES
Machine: DRAGON 32
Format: cassette
Price: £8.00
Rating: KK

Game: SHUTTLEZAP
Maker: DRAGON DATA
Machine: DRAGON 32
Format: cassette
Price: £12.95
Rating: none

VOLGA SPACEMAN

WHEN YOU overlook the crude graphics; when you overlook that this game is for the unexpanded VIC; when you overlook the fact that it has about as much to do with cosmonauts as black bread has to do with pretzels; then Cosmonaut *isn't a bad game.*

It's your basic running, jumping, standing still game. To free your trapped spacecraft you must descend through several stormtrooper-infested levels and find the off switch for the tractor beam. Lifts connect the levels. The stormtroopers shoot to kill.

OK for a wet afternoon **R.B.**

Game: COSMONAUT
Maker: MELBOURNE HOUSE
Machine: VIC 20
Format: cassette
Price: £5.95
Rating: K

WE HAVE BORE-OFF

Naff NASA nonsense that's quaranteed to induce intergalactic size yawns. As pilot of the slowest space shuttle ever bolted together you must crawl into the upper atmoshpere and disable a fleet of hostile alien satellites. Presumably by boring them out of the skies. It's a punishing task. Shuttlezap *is in fact a futuristic cousin to Dragon Data's other notable dodo,* Jumpjet. *As before a reasonable concept has been sunk by the use of Basic, which is far too slow for this kind of program. But like its predecessor it features some impressive speech synthesis. Strange electronic comments pester you throughout the game. It's like having someone with a bad throat hanging over your shoulder. A pity the routines couldn't have found their way into a better game. All in all, not the right stuff.* — **S.K.**

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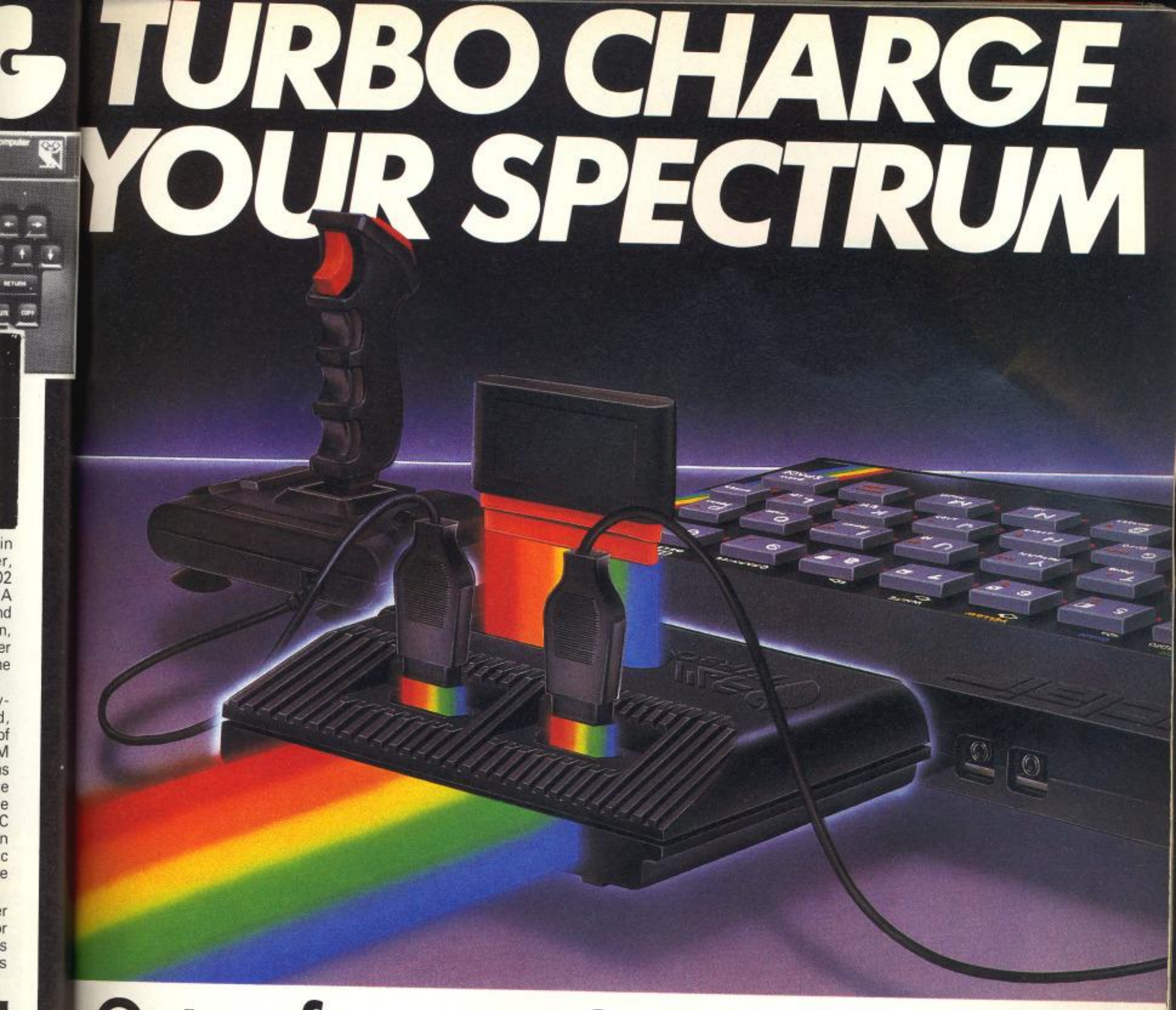

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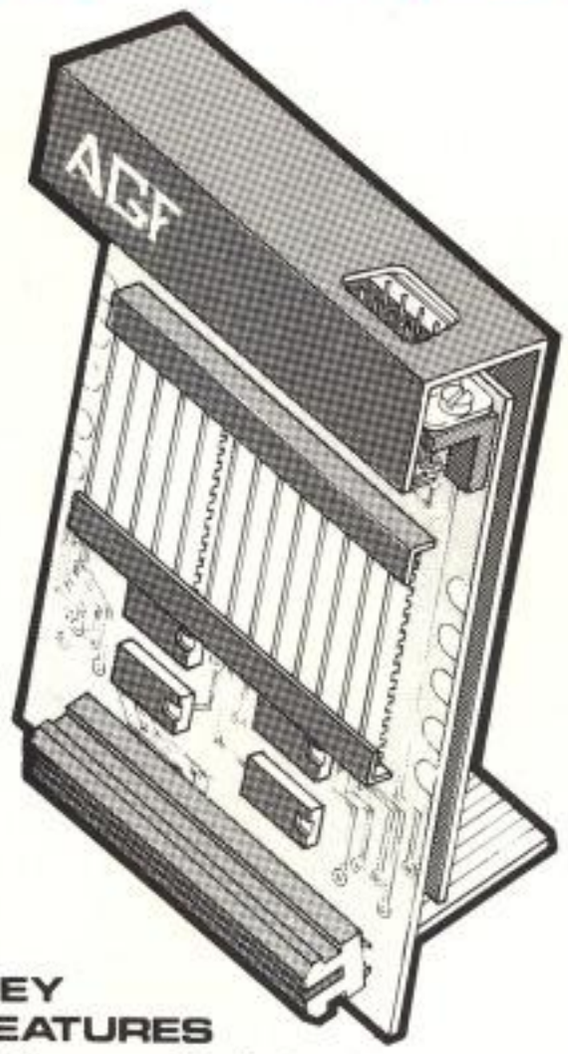

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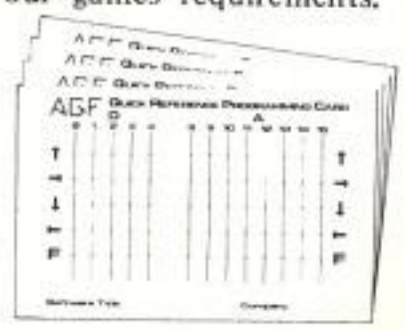

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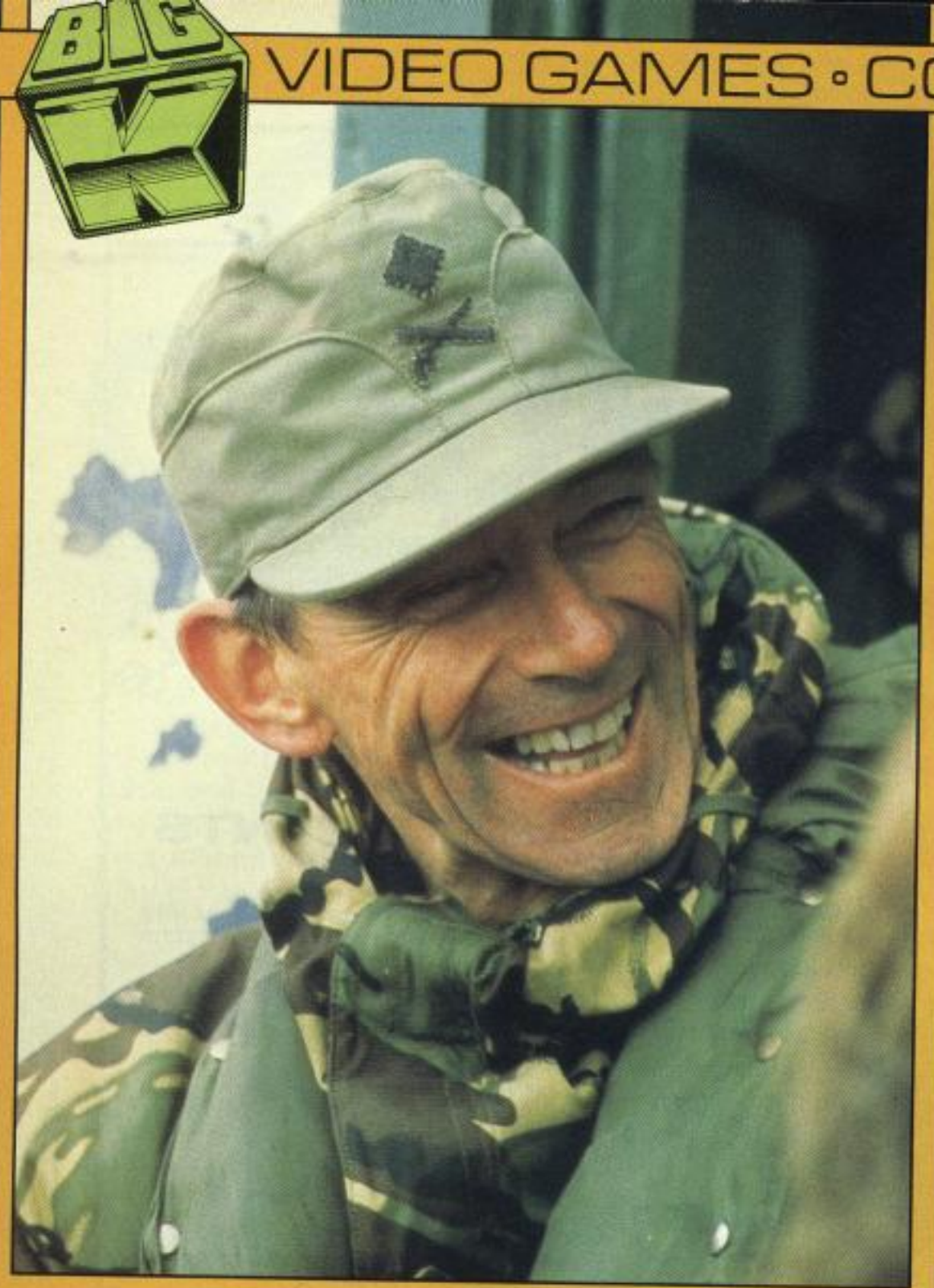


BIG K CALLS IN THE EXPERTS...

General Sir Jeremy Moore, Falklands victor, reviews some electronic kriegspiels...

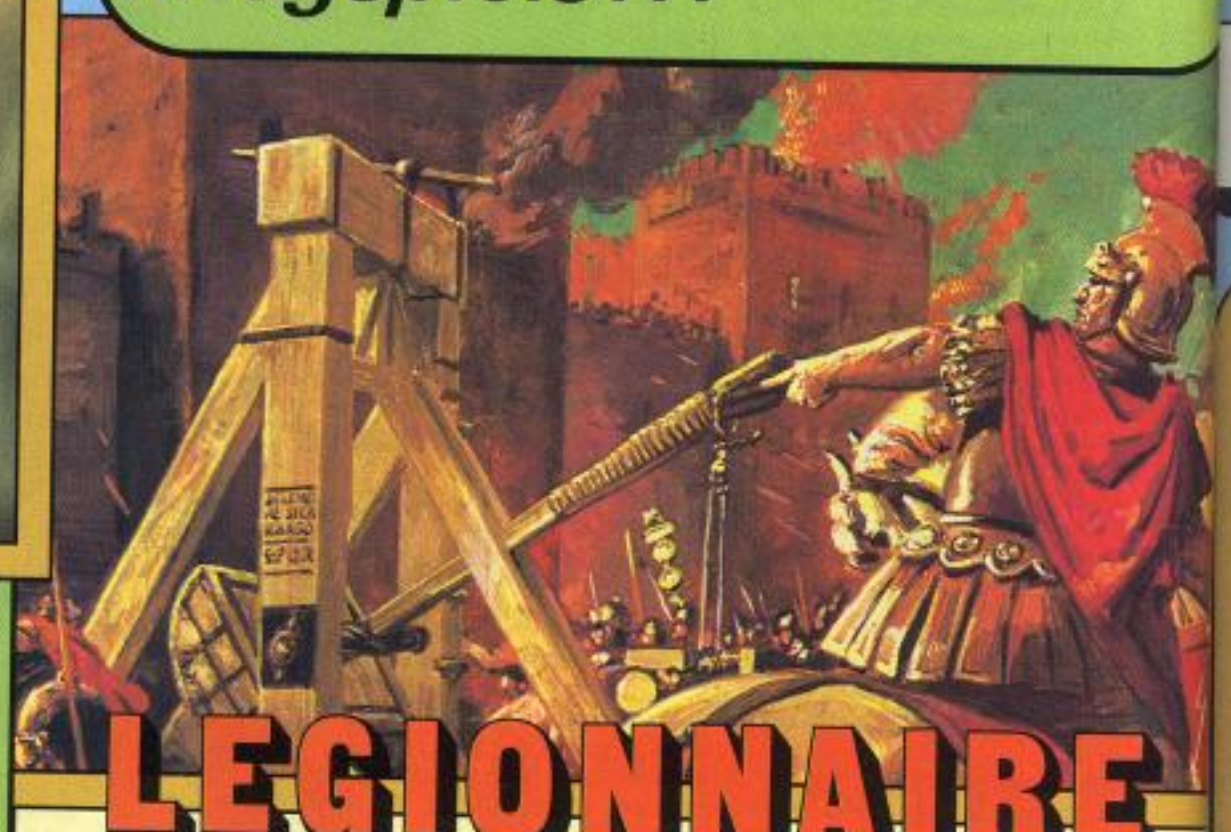
IT'S

MAJOR-GENERAL Sir Jeremy Moore, OBE, MC and Bar, was the Royal Marines amphibious and winter warfare specialist chosen to command the UK Land Forces in the 1982 campaign to retake the Falkland Islands from Argentina. That campaign was hailed as a brilliant and humanitarian use of force in pursuit of a legitimate political objective, and General Moore himself was widely seen as one of its major architects — though, as he is the first to point out, he was assisted in the repossession of the Falkland Islands "by about ten thousand other people", the squaddies and sailors for whom he clearly has the most enormous respect.

It was therefore with some understandable hesitation that we approached him with the idea of asking him to visit BIG K's offices and play — and then review — a few representative computer war games. To our delight he readily agreed, and as a result spent a February afternoon and evening taking on — and trashing, let it be said — the state of the kriegspiel art (so far).

The games we chose to show him were ***Legionaire*** *(Avalon Hill);* ***Stonkers*** *(Imagine);* ***Eastern Front*** *(Atari), and* ***Battle of Normandy*** *(Strategic Simulations): one ROM, two cassettes, and a disc. (We were also planning to show* ***Computer War*** *and* ***Confrontation****, but the former went astray in the post and the latter, by Lothlorien, unfortunately failed to load, despite having run perfectly the previous night. Alas, etc.)*

General Moore tore into each game with a vigour that — we suspect — was not wholly martial. (We think he enjoyed himself.) You can read his comments on each game, as well as one or two other related matters, elsewhere on these pages.



LEGIONNAIRE

(Avalon Hill)

Roman Army grid-system tactical game designed by Chris Crawford. Up to ten legions of varying qualities are matched, in hostile Gaul, against twice the number of barbarians, whose competence or otherwise can also be specified. General Moore started with three legions against six, stood off, from higher ground, a wild cavalry assault, then decoyed and annihilated in detail the remaining hapless Asterixes. It was No Contest.

"Obviously a very simp game and I think a good one t start with. The ability to se what the enemy is doing is great help! In real war, one studies the enemy's move ments at some considerable length. Another feature was that clearly one's own troops recognise their own side and don't attack them — in some cases I had two or more of my units moving on to the same grid square with no trouble. Which — sadly — doesn't always happen in real life.

"That deals with the realism of the thing. The technology? I'm not qualified to express an opinion, but it seemed very good indeed."

ON THE ETHICS OF IT ALL

"I'm certainly not in favour of glamorising war, because the last thing war is is glamorous. It's sordid and unpleasant. And any game that didn't base itself round the premise that war is both morally wrong and generally undesirable would itself be wrong. Nevertheless, wars do occasionally have to be fought from time to time.

"I don't think any sort of game makes war respectable. As long as it is seen as a game."

STONKERS (Imagine)

Technically successful transference of the large-format strategic wargame onto one-half of a Spectrum screen. Relatively shallow in content, it nonetheless is visually excellent (for a Spectrum) offering a genuine zoom facility. Scrolling is also available and operationally smooth. General Moore dabbled politely but the game title itself, which for some reason keeps reappearing via a sort of tickertape device, made him visibly restless. He thought his son might enjoy Stonkers.

"You say this is a smaller and cheaper computer? Well 'I'm sure it's very creditable but it's not really in the same class as the others you've shown me. [The line *YOU'VE BEEN STONKING FOR 8 MINUTES* ... comes up on the tickertape.] What's the origin of this word Stonkers? I don't like it very much. I don't think this would hold my attention for long enough though I'm sure my son would like it."

...IT'S MAGNIFICENT... BUT IT'S NOT WAR

EASTERN FRONT

(Atari)

Also a Crawford design — in fact it was chosen to illustrate two stages of a single idea — *Eastern Front* has the plotline of *Tigers in the Snow* — i.e. the 1941 German invasion of Russia: Operation Barbarossa.

Our guest rapidly grew involved in the easy-to-grasp mechanics of this spectacular game: Guderian-like, he punched massive holes through the massed tanks of the Red Army and drove through the Byelorussian plains towards Moscow. The sound and fury of the action were accompanied by a fascinating commentary on the historical event.

"This of course is a move on from the very simple Roman Legion game we began with. Although we only began *Eastern Front* at the Training level and then moved on to the Beginners' level, it had clearly become pretty complicated already. Let alone what it would have been on the highest level. This is not a game that you sit down and do in 20 minutes — you need quite a bit of time. Like a whole weekend, perhaps.

"Realism? It's very difficult to convey the pressure of wartime decision-making without real people at the other end ... their voices on the telephone and so forth.

"As for the morality of playing Eastern Front or any other wargame, it's neither more nor less right or wrong to play this rather than *l'Attaque* or various other board games — which I don't think anybody sees as being morally terrible. Even Chess!"

Continued on page 75

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EAGLES WING

. . . he glanced at his fuel levels, a few more seconds of flying time. He had to swing round through the burst of fire to reach the Docking platform, he knew, in two minutes the game could be over . . . GRAPHICS, REALISTIC COMBAT, SUPERB CONDITIONS.BBC MODEL B, £7.95 CASSETTE, £11.95 DISK.

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. . . perhaps, very slowly, he could reach the cellar – quietly he started climbing down, his foot slipped as the giant spider dived towards him . . .
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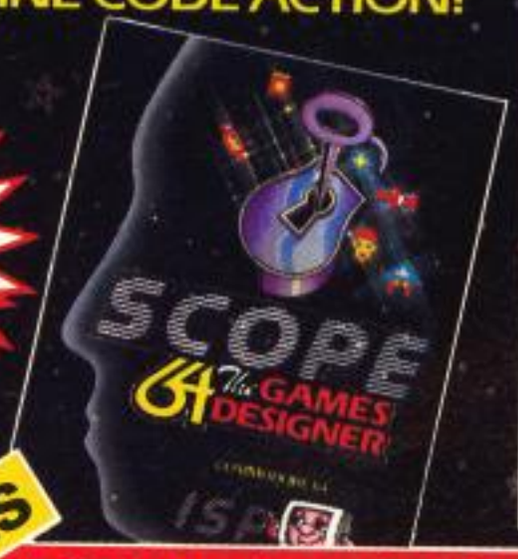

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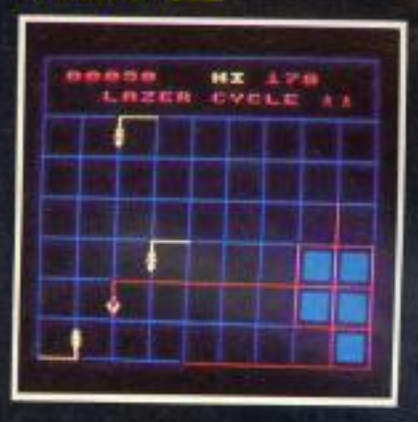

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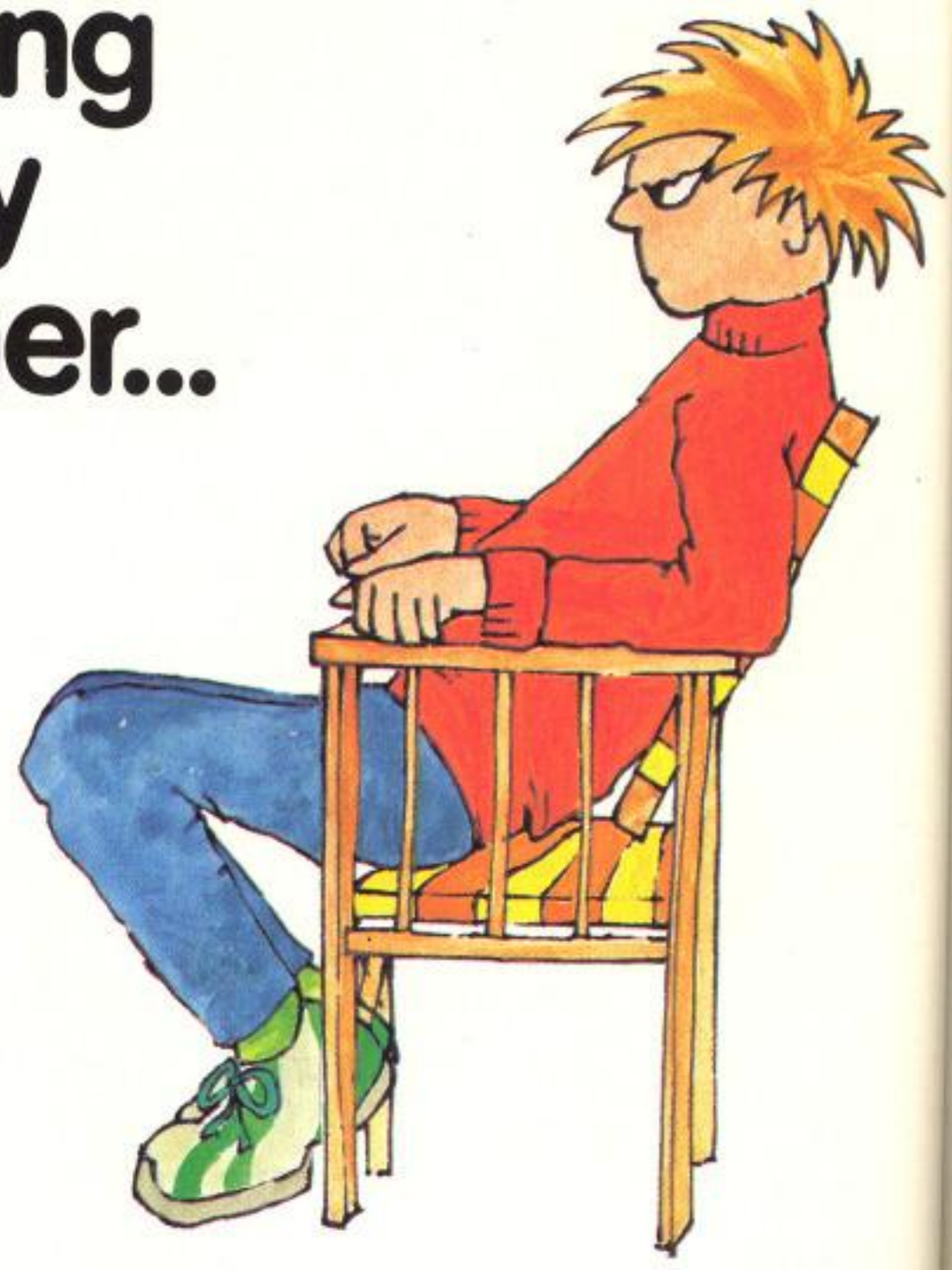

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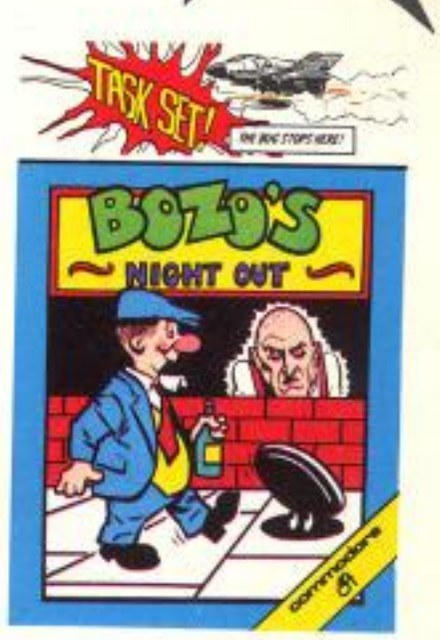

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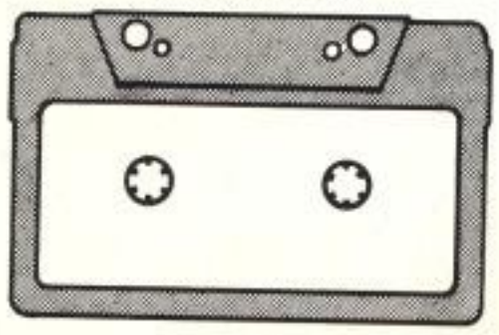

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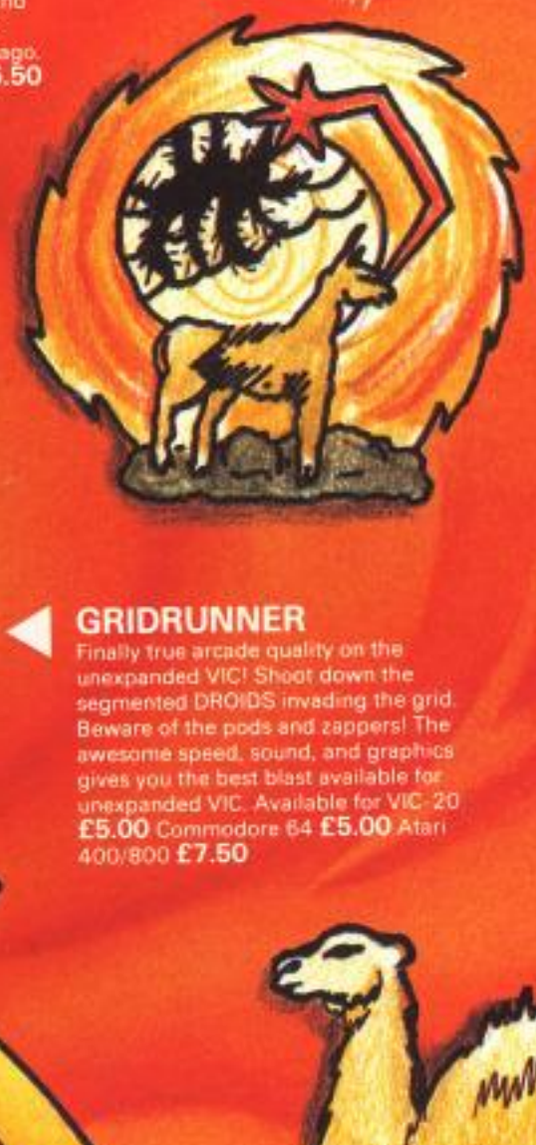

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£7.50

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At last the long awaited sequel to Attack of the Mutant Camels is available. You are controlling a ninety foot high, neutronium shielded lazer spitting death camel; leading a rebellion against your evil Zzyaxian overlords. The game features beautiful smooth scrolling graphics and no less than 42 different attack waves, more than any game in video history. The challenge of play will last for months as you battle to see what's on the next wave.

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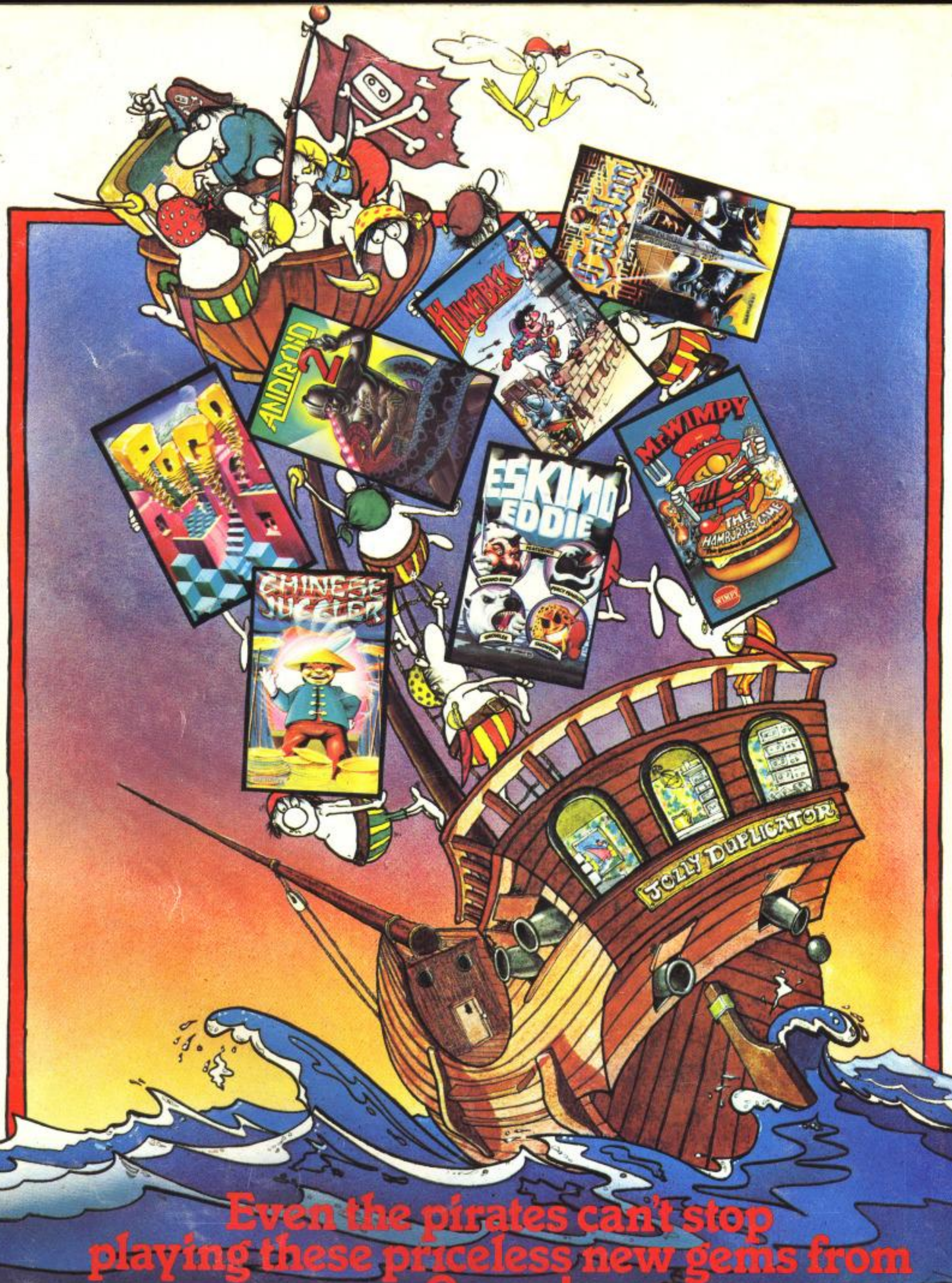

Even the pirates can't stop playing these priceless new gems from Ocean!

That's right, even the pirates will be dropping their duplicators to avenge with excalibur in **Cavelon**, to join in the swinging fun with **Hunchback**, to attack with **Android Two**, jump for their lives with **Pogo**, spin themselves dizzy with **Chinese Juggler**, they'll just crack-up with **Eskimo Eddie's** Arctic action and there will be no stopping the captain once he gets his hook on **Mr. Wimpy** that zany burger battle. Don't you miss all the Ocean action get down to your local dealer now and join in the fun and games.

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