ST ACTION

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ST GAMES MAGAZINE

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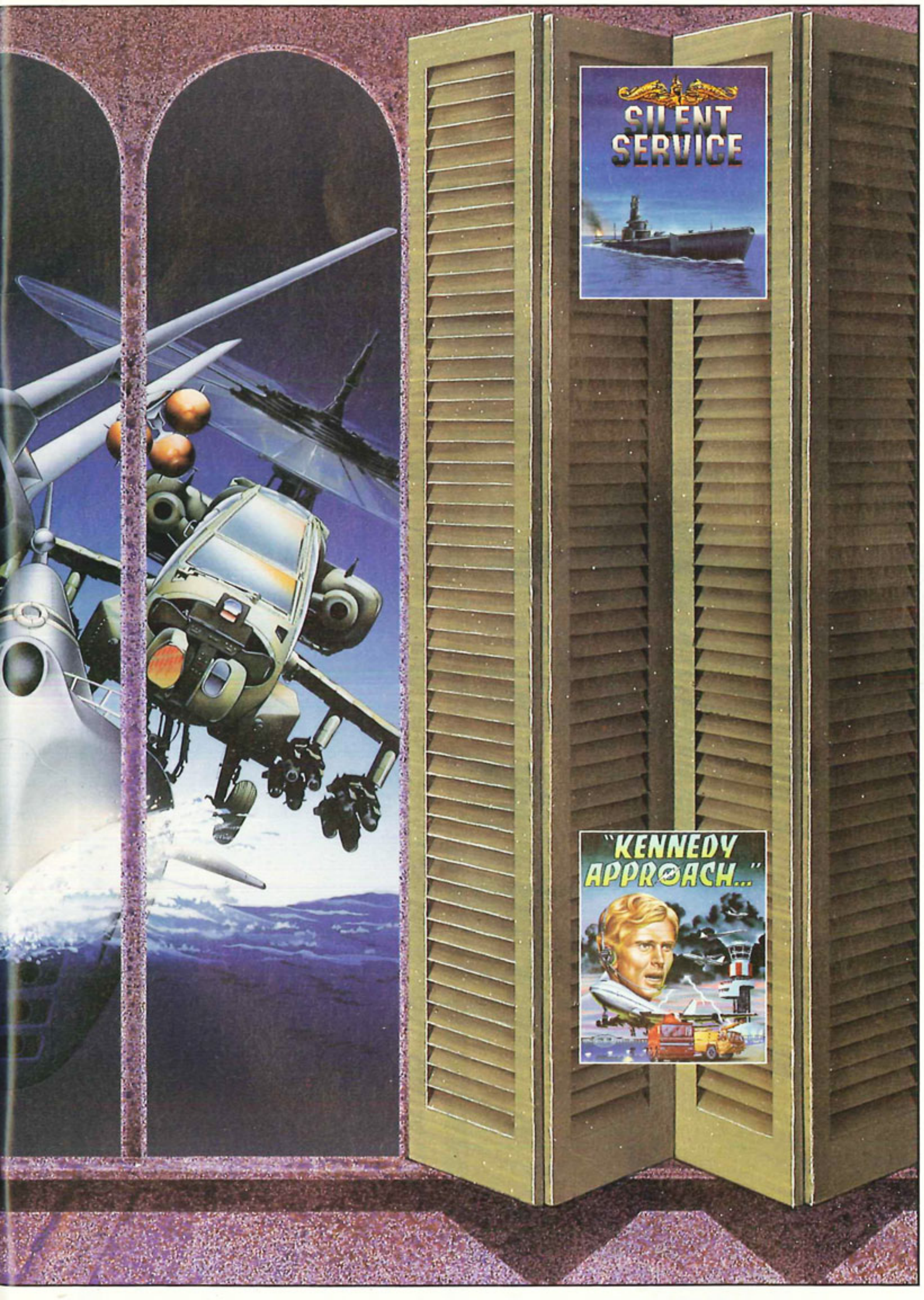

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ACTION PACKED

FEATURE ARTICLES

Action News - among this months various happenings: Cascade announce Ring Wars, Greg scores half a mill' in Gunship, Grandslam launch Chubby Gristle, CRL reveal their new software label 'Actual Screen Shots', Entertainment International are 'Better Dead than Alien' and Martin Moth visits Microdeal.

4

In STA's regular arcade column ***'Case for Conversion'***, Dennis Hemmings and Mark Smith, review Dead Angle and Haunted Castle from Konami.

50

The highly successful ***'Giving the game Away'*** this month includes tips on: Crystal Castles, Karate Kid II, International Karate, Goldrunner, Carrier Command, Xenon, Oids and BMX Sim.

36

There are many different areas that the computer entertainment industry has to incorporate in order to get the end product, be it a game, joystick or computer, to the consumer. One of these is PR, or Public Relations. Martin sidetracks from the mainstream of computing to visit ***Headlines PR,*** one of the main PR companies dealing with the computer entertainment industry.

47

*** YOUR VIEWS ***

The all-new STA letters page including: posters please, Bubble Bobble and Wizball review request, Out Run - a good conversion, game maps, 'Best' Computing Magazine, Games programming course, Long-Term adventure reviews, and 'Just what we want'

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*** COVER FEATURE ***

In this months ST Action Megatest, Jason Spiller test-flies seven ***Flight simulators*** to find out which of them earns their wings.

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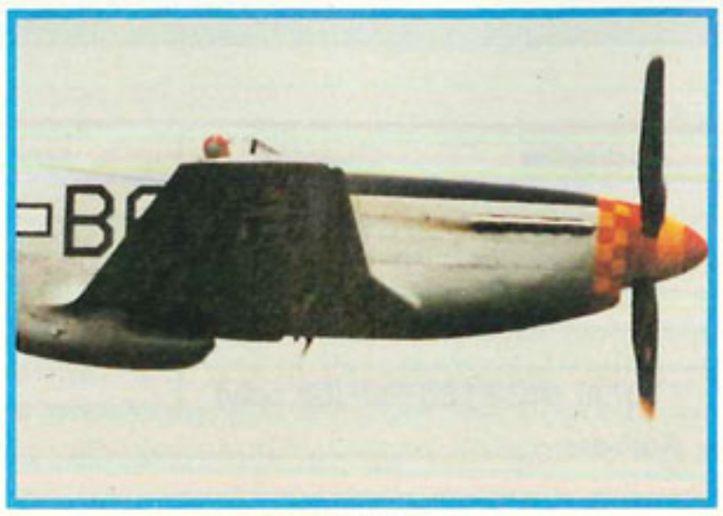
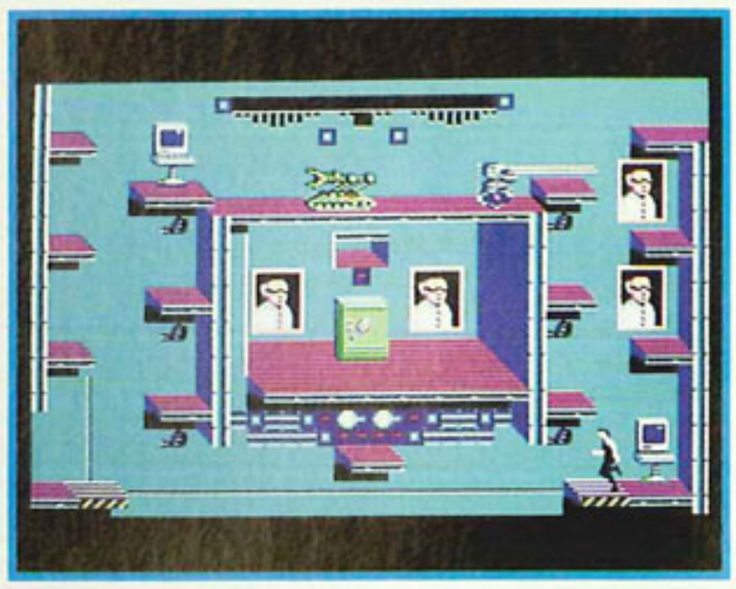


REVIEWS



"The computer genius, Elvin Atombender is back! Epyx Software, along with U.S. Gold, proudly present the long-overdue follow-up to the award winning ***Impossible Mission.***"

53

"The visual effects created by television's boundless optical technology has brought adventuring to life in a popular television programme called ***Knightmare.*** But have Activision managed to convert the game onto a medium which is limited by comparison?"

58

"Those endearing prehistoric characters, the ***Flintstones*** and Rubbles, have kept T.V. fans amused for two decades and in response to their current popularity, Grandslam have based an arcade game about them. But do cartoon characters lose their appeal in the translation?"

57

"From FTL, the team which brought you Dungeon Master and Oids, comes ***Sundog.***"

60

"There are enough Commando-style and Ramboesque combat games available for the ST to storm Navarone, so how do Microdeal justify their latest release, ***Leatherneck,*** as an addition to this prolific theme?" **62**

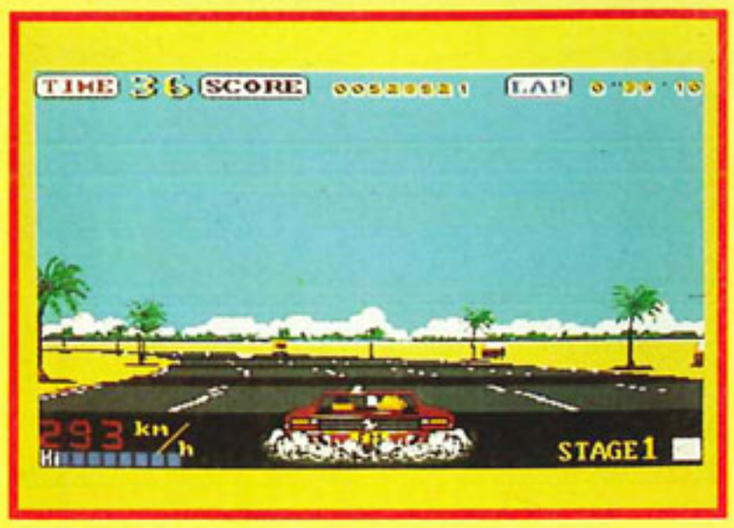
"Protected by his Vibranian Adamantium alloy shield and an expensive copyright, the character of ***Captain America*** has managed to avoid being turned into pixels - until now!" **64**

"In my opinion, games that are based on movies rarely live up to expectations. But do Gremlin Graphics 'have the power' to disprove my scepticism with this, the official ***Masters of the Universe*** game?" **66**

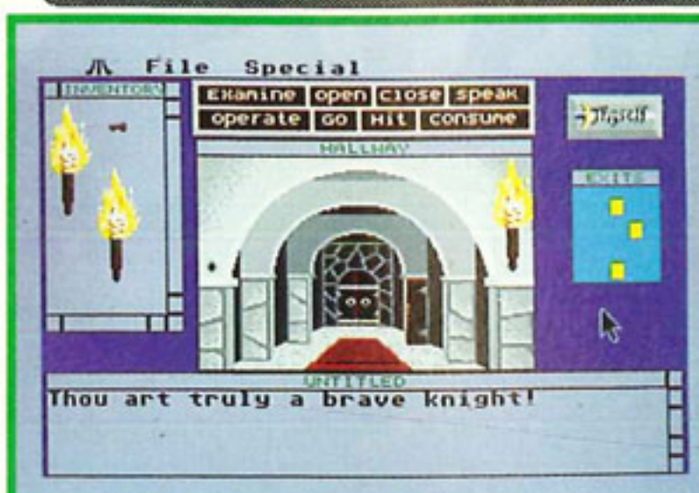
"When was the last time a computer game made you laugh? As if we needed to be reminded, so-called entertainment software invariably demonstrates what a violent world we live in. Therefore, it was a refreshing change to review ***Stir Crazy***, a game that is abundant in laughs and devoid of gratuitous violence." **68**

"Please fasten your seat belts and extinguish your cigarettes. The aircraft's instruments have begun to spin wildly, the radio is out and it appears we have just entered the ***Bermuda Project.***" **70**

"U.S. Gold gave their programming team the daunting task of converting the ultimate arcade game, ***Out Run***, into the ultimate home-computer game. After nine months development time, have they succeeded ?" **72**



"If you have any money left in your pocket, prepare to spend it. Shadowgate has arrived! The last thing you remember is standing before Wizard Lakmir as he gestured wildly and chanted in an archaic tongue. Now you find yourself standing before the gate to ***Castle Shadowgate***, wherein lies your quest." **76**



"Imagine pressing a button on your steering wheel and blasting anything that gets in your way on the motorway! But until then, Melbourne House present ***Road Wars*** an arcade game which allows traffic-weary motorway drivers to expel their pent-up aggression!" **78**

Starquake "The current trend in the market is for arcade conversions with stunning sound and graphics - there is even a tendency towards more intellectual subjects! But, according to Mandarin Software, there is still a place for simple and vacuous arcade entertainment. Is alien blasting a thing of the past?" **79**

"Just when you thought everybody had forgotten about the ancient Goldrunner, his long lost descendant has appeared to save us once again ***Goldrunner 2*** " **80**

"***XOR*** is a most deceptive game; if you enjoy super-fast shoot'em-ups, then I'm afraid that XOR won't be your cup of tea." **82**

"Yet another double-disk, vertical-scrolling shoot'em-up? Will Exocet's first ST release be a hit or will we file it under ***Waste***?" **84**

Stock Market "Hurricane Annie hits the south coast of England!, Telephone lines are down, houses ruined...", Sell BT shares quickly and try investing in British Steel, there's no time to lose! **86**

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CREDITS

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Fax (0243) 789809.

EDITOR: Hugh Gollner.

ASSISTANT EDITOR: David Stewart

ART / DESIGN EDITOR: Greg Percival.

COVER GRAPHICS: Steinar Lund

REGULAR CONTRIBUTORS:
Nick Clarkson, Steve Kennedy, Steve Merrett, Andy Mitchell, Martin Moth, Jason Spiller.

ADVERTISING M/GER: Jean Gollner.

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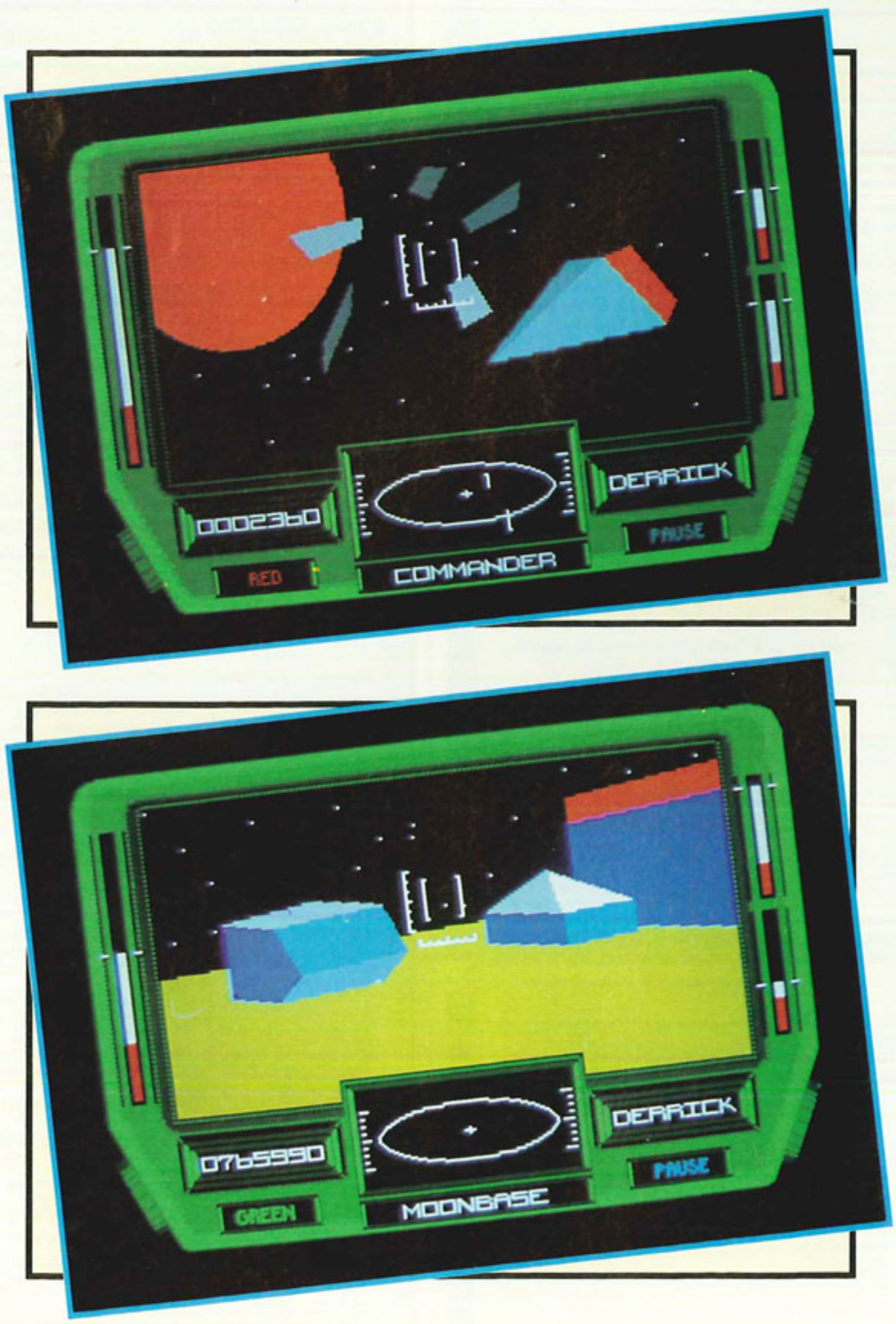
ACTION NEWS

CASCADES RING WARS

Cascade are soon to be releasing Ring Wars. Although a multi-format release, from what I've seen of the screen shots, the ST owners are, by far and away, getting the best deal when it comes down to graphics. Featuring 3D solid graphics, the game is set in space where you are in charge of a squadron engaged in multiple-bogey combat, with your mission being to stop the Ring Worlds who are currently advancing towards your Solar System. The game promises to be action-packed, so watch out for the review.



CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOUR AWARDED IN GUNSHIP

For services to his country above and beyond the call of duty, added to the fact that he scored more than 5000 points on a single mission, flying at ultimate level in Western Europe, Rainer Gellert, of East London, has gained the CGM in Gunship, MicroProse' excellent helicopter combat simulator. He joins a handful of games players who have won this award.

However, he did not have the

benefit of our exclusive pokes for Gunship, which will undoubtedly enable many more players to gain incredibly high scores, albeit not quite aboveboard. Also, far be it for me to brag about our games playing prowess, but Greg, our Art Editor, managed to score 655,008 points on a SINGLE mission! Greg was naturally quite pleased at this score, it being roughly twenty times higher than any other top score on the game disk!

A Pic of Greg "Oops sorry chaps!!!!!" Percival

However, under extreme interrogation (we offered him a pint at the local! Ed.) he let it slip that all he had done was take off, blow up a couple of friendly tanks, turn around, shoot up his own base and then crash land the Apache. Not surprisingly, he was confined to spud-peeling for a week and blew any chance that he might have had for promotion. However, due to a minor bug in the program, his points score for the mission went through the roof. C'est la guerre!

CAN YOU TACKLE THE HIGHER STRATEGY?

FOOTBALL MANAGER 2

Kevin Toms, inventor of the world's best selling football game says, ***"It beats my best seller – hands down"***

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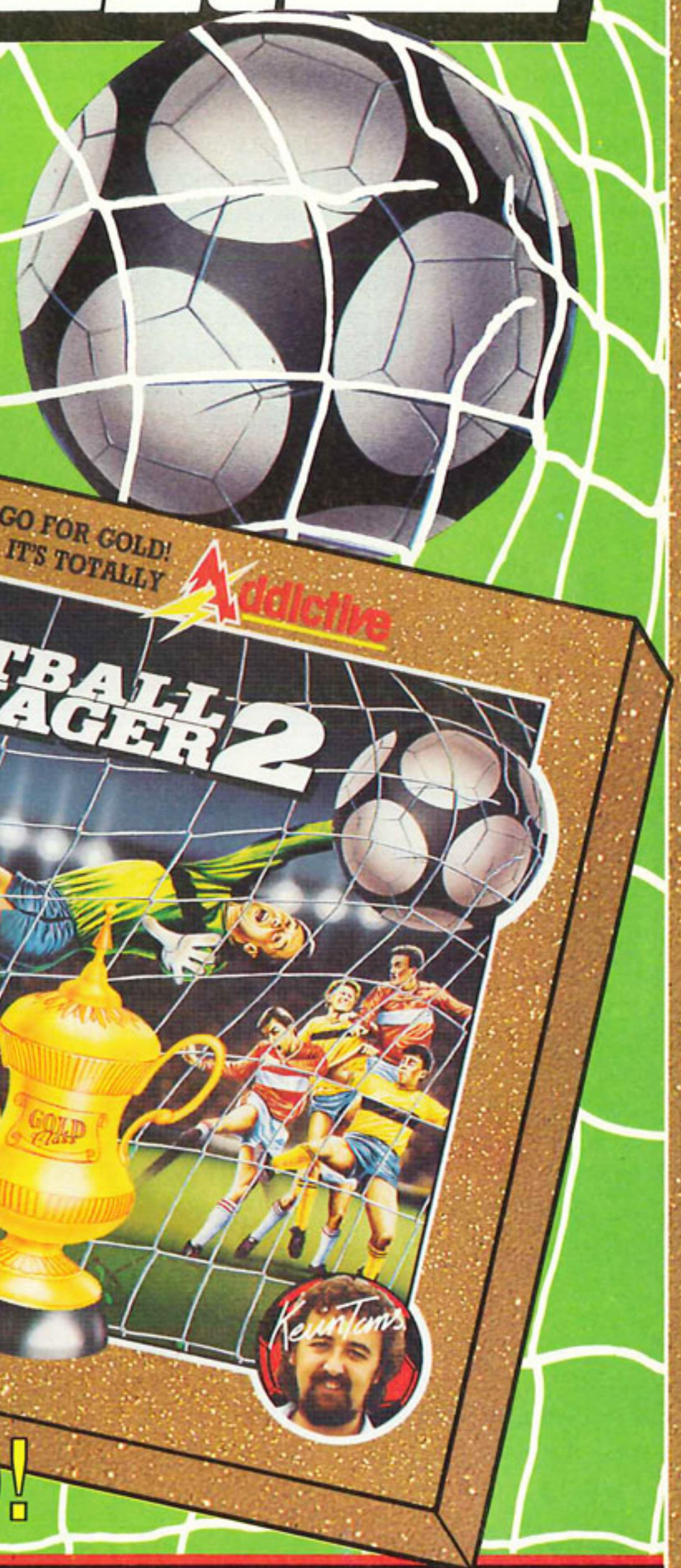
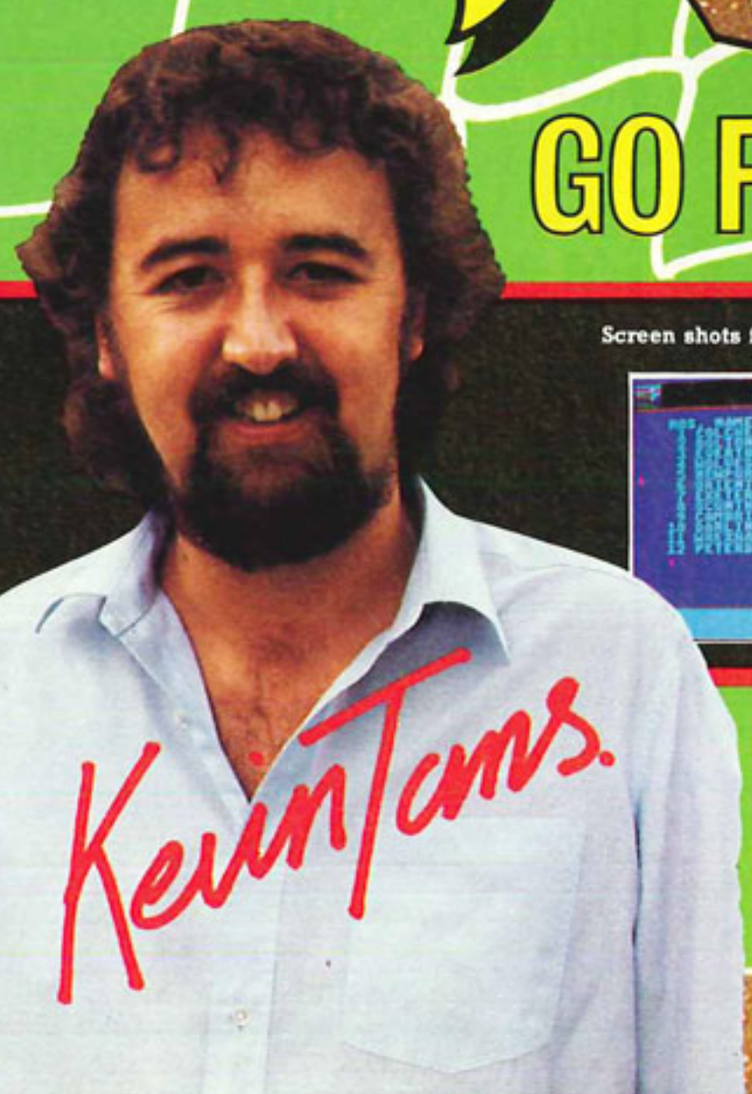


"Football Manager 2 is not just an improvement on Football Manager – it's the next generation!



GO FOR GOLD!

Screen shots from Atari St system.

IT'S TOTALLY Addictive

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ACTION AT ARGONAUT

I visited Argonaut Software the other day to find out how, amongst other projects, Starglider II was getting along. The office looked as though it was a shrine to organized chaos. Machines, both fully clothed and in partial states of undress / disassembly, and monitors were literally falling over each other on desks. However, the eight people in Argonaut were beavering away, putting the finishing touches to Starglider II. They had delivered a disk in the first week of May to Rainbird for playtesting and so the product should just about be ready by the time this mag hits the streets.

With Starglider II, one of the unique features is the dual format disk. This, unlike other dual format systems (as they were at pains to point out to me), works around the fact that there are not two separate programs on the one disk, but that there is one common program that can run on either the ST or Amiga. The idea is that, on booting up, you tell the program which computer you are running and the computer then runs the standard program and calls any code routines specific to that machine as and when they are needed. This means that much more data can be stored on one disk and the same high-score table is used for both formats.

One other program they are working on, albeit at a very early stage, is a flight simulator to beat all flight sims. At the moment I'm not at liberty to say too much about the game other than details of what they are working on. With a working title of Hawk, it is already looking graphically superior to any other flight sim that I have seen, and that is only a working demo! I chatted with the guys at some length about making it as realistic as possible with regard to g-forces, energy levels and such like, but what really concerned Paul was the fact that he was trying to work out an algorithm for the angle of attack of the aircraft and could not find a definitive answer anywhere. Angle of attack is very necessary to simulate realistic flight as it allows the aircraft to 'round out', or 'flare' on landing, and give more accurate stall features. Maybe a helpful reader could come to the rescue with the required algorithm? If so, write to me at the usual Chichester address and I'll forward the info on. Right, that's enough pleas for help, so on with the story...

The game will feature not only filled vector-graphics, but also full screen (no borders) out-of-the-cockpit view, mountainous terrain with the possibility of bombing runs down valleys, spotter-plane view of your aircraft (a la Flight Sim II) with full 3D control as to where the spotter plane flies in relation to your own plane AND the possible linking of STs via the MIDI port, thus enabling multi-user dogfights to take place!

Any further information is classified, I'm afraid, but I'll inform you of further details as and when I am able.

BOB WINNER

As promised, here are more details on Bob Winner, from Loriciels. The game itself revolves around the central character, android No. 0, Bob Winner. Set in London, Paris and New York, the graphic adventure has you seeking out and destroying an assassin before you can progress in your search for the secret temple where the 'Ultimate Secret' can be found. Obstacles hinder your progress and you must utilise all your street-fighting skills in order to overcome

them. The game should be out very shortly, unfortunately too late for review this month. However, look out for it in the latecomers section, where I give quick summaries of games that arrive too late for inclusion in the normal review section.

Also, Super Ski, the game that they are trying to get endorsed by Eddie 'the Eagle' Edwards, is almost complete and should be ready in time for a review next issue. Just to whet your appetite, here's a shot of the game. Just in time for summer!

RISKY BUSINESS

A very quick news piece, here. Virgin Games are, in all probability, going to release Risk!, the computerised version of the best-selling board game, just before Christmas. Now don't say I didn't give you enough warning!

GRISTLEBURGER

Grand Slam are working on Chubby Gristles, a platform game that is bound to be graphically and sonically very good. However, let's hope that there is more gameplay than in their last ST release, Flintstones. And I wish someone would do something with that name - sounds like a fat lump of bacon rind! (Hope you're not eating breakfast as you read this. Ed.)

STOS - BASIC

An update on Stos, the Basic language from Jawx International via Mandarin Software that was featured in our news pages last month. Priced at around £30, it has more than 320 commands and up to 16 different sprites can be animated along with the addition of three-voice music. Stos is deliberately geared towards the writing of entertainment software, i.e. games, and features commands that enable the games writer to create a scrolling background, flip, zoom or reduce the screen.

NOW PLAYING AT A STORE NEAR YOU.

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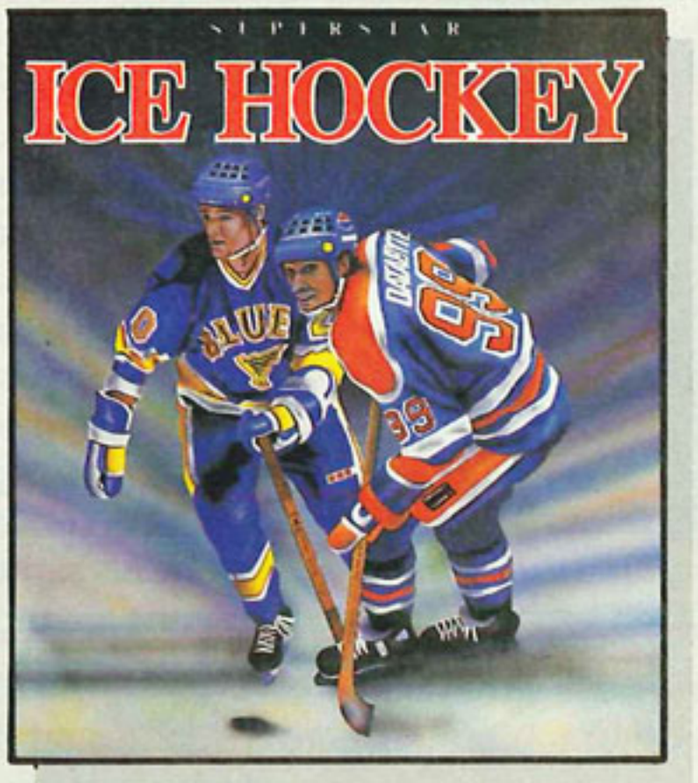

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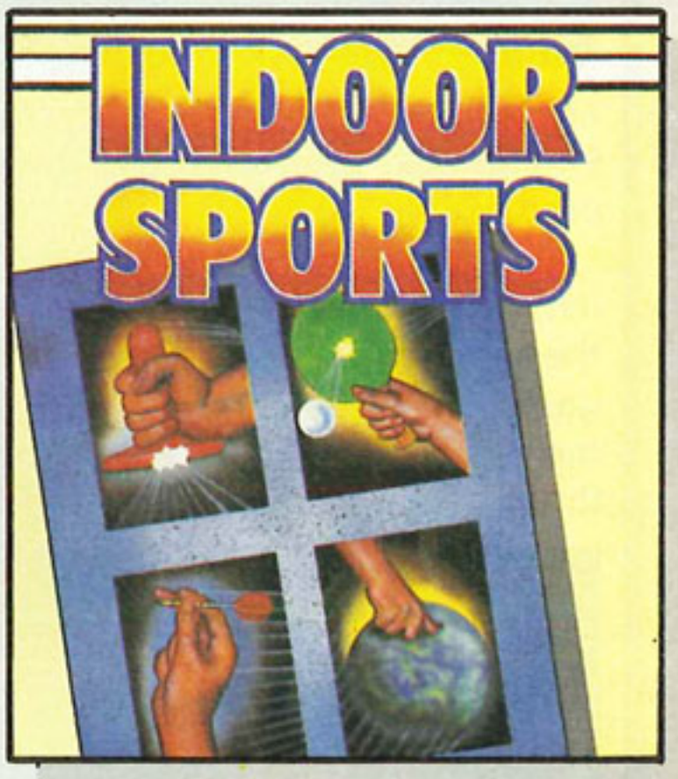

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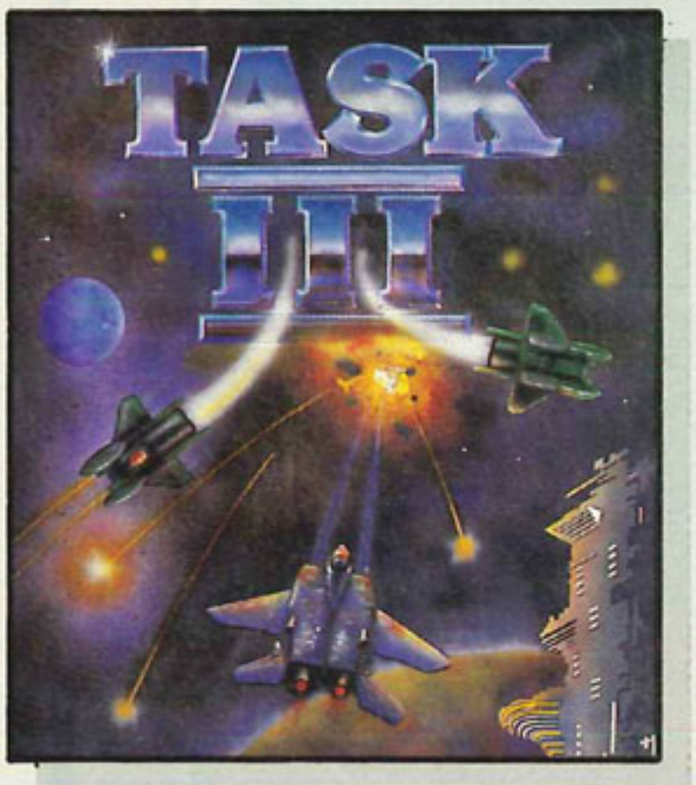

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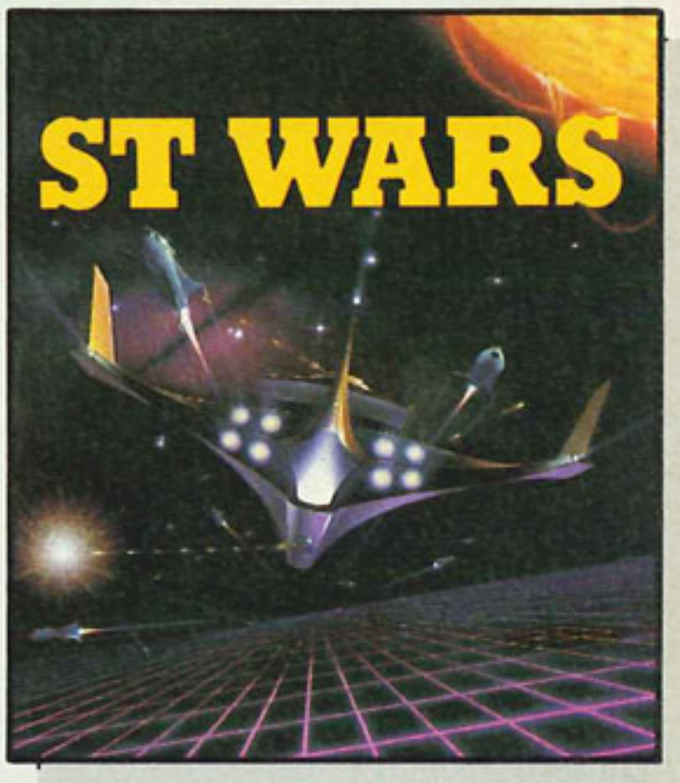

1 SPY VS SPY TRILOGY

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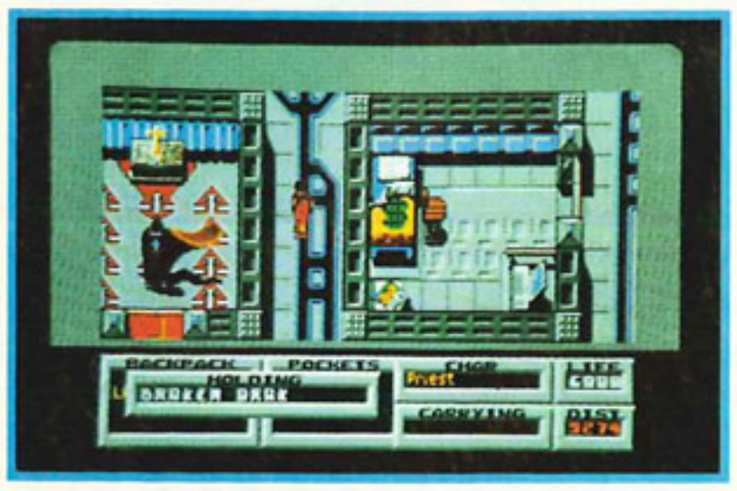
4 TASK III
"It really has to be played to be believed, I'm hooked" – *Commodore User*
Commodore 64/128 Cass £9.95 disk £14.95

5 ST WARS
"If you liked Starglider you'll love this game – it plays better and it's much more fun to play, overall its a much better game"
Atari ST £24.95

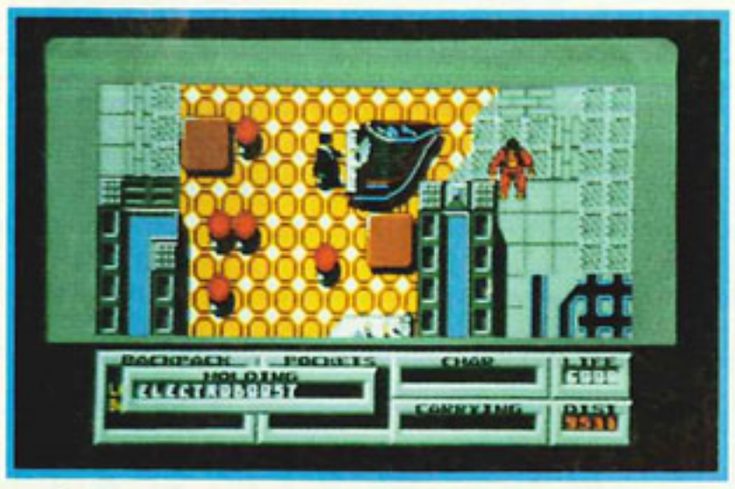
PANDORA'S BOX

One from Firebird that is due for release in May is Pandora. Mentioned in previous issues, I can now reveal more information. You take over the role of Intergalactic Salvage Dealer and have just been beamed aboard Pandora, a spaceship that has been used by top scientists since the 20th century to collect alien



artefacts. It is now the 22nd century and Pandora has just returned to the Earth's orbit.

You are faced with many problems, such as, establishing the intent of the ship's 7th generation computer and gaining the trust of the surviving crew members. Having to fight your way through the ship is not good sense, so

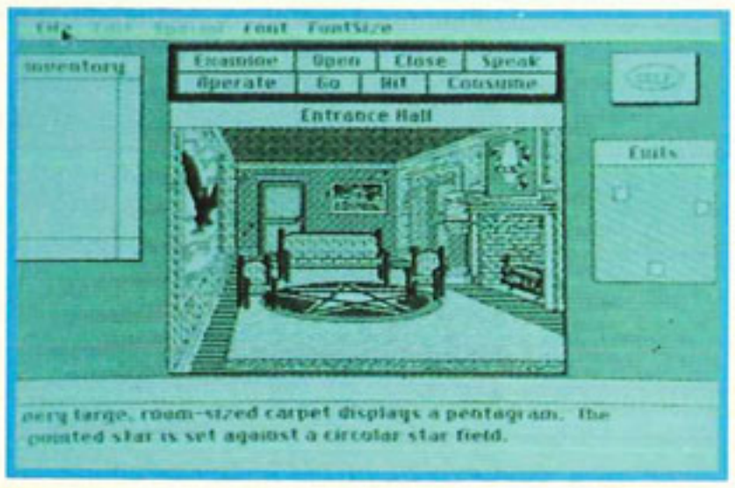


perhaps an untimely death of some untrustworthy character such as the bank manager could instantly gain you quite a few friends. Character interaction plays a large part in this space venture. Try gaining access to the ship's computer in order to extract valuable information or vital clues that will help solve some of the complex puzzles that can entrap the unwary.

Written by PSI Software Designers, Pandora will be available for £19.95

MIRRORSOFT ROUND-UP

Falcon, the F16 flight simulator, is being converted to the ST and could work out to be very good indeed. I have played the IBM version and the graphics, flight



characteristics and gameplay are very good. Hopefully, all of these should improve in the ST version, especially the graphics. Look out for this game around Autumn.

Uninvited draws its inspiration from the Hammer Horror-type films so often seen on late night TV. The action starts with the rather archaic 'car crashes on lonely road' plot. When you come to, you find that your brother, a passenger in your car, is missing. You walk to the mansion at the side of the road to get help but find the place full of black magic. You must deal with all that is thrown your way in order to escape.

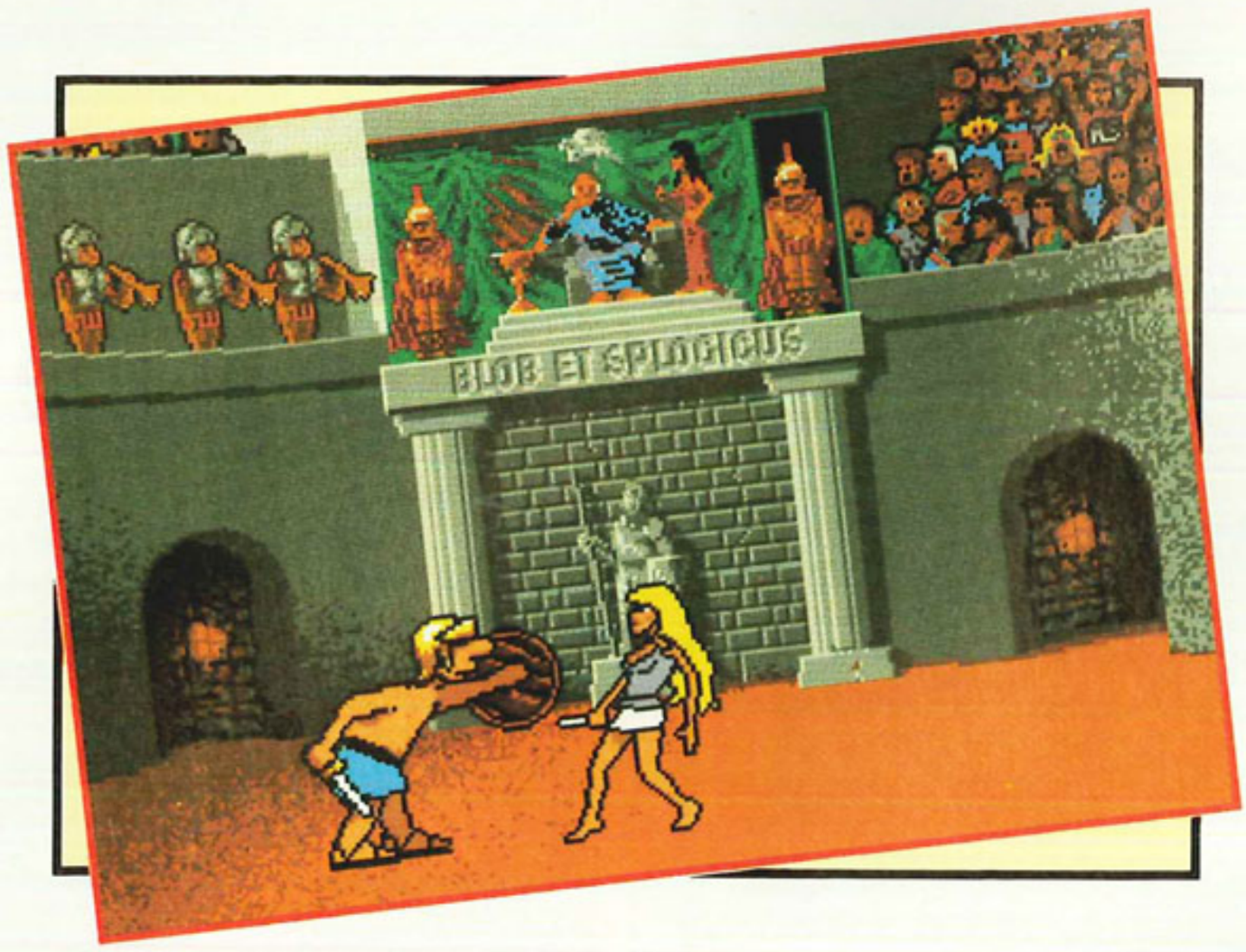
Actual Screenshots

CRL are working on a couple of new games that will see the light of day under a new label of Actual Screen Shots. The theory behind this title is that the games produced for this label will have graphics good enough to use as cover artwork, thus, what you see on the packaging are 'Actual Screen Shots'. Simple, eh? Anyway, to kick off the new label, the guys working in the Zen Room are currently developing an 'interactive cartoon' based loosely around the Asterix set of stories, by the name of 'I, Ludicrus'. You play the part of Ludicrus and the optional two-player mode allows your opponent the choice of one of the four characters as depicted in the screen shot.

Ludicrus works in the armoury, polishing weapons and such like, and is the brunt of many a joke. However, one night you visit the Gladiator Arms and have a drink too many and start saying and doing the wrong things. Someone then informs Caesar and you end up being dragged to the arena in order to prove capable of what you were bragging you could do in the pub. This is where you come in and the aim of the game is to fight your way through various levels of combat in the arena to win your freedom. If you lose at any of the levels, you get thrown to the lions and have to fight your way out of there before you continue on your way.

Overall, there are eighteen moves that are available to you via the joystick. Just moving the joystick will give you defensive moves, but with the fire button depressed you can make attacking moves. The defensive moves bring the shield in to use, thus you can block an opponent's thrust with your shield and then counter attack with your sword. The graphics, as can be seen from the shots, are pretty impressive and the animation of the characters is first class. One to look out for, as they say, and I'll bring you more news on the game later.

Another game under development is Attack on London, or London's Burning. The reason for two names is that the guys at CRL are still fighting it out amongst themselves as to what the final version will be called. Including 3D filled vector graphics and many of the famous sights of London, it is a form of blast-'em-up with a difference, although how the game will finally play is anybody's guess at the moment.



Featuring 'classy graphics, digitized sound effects, sophisticated animation and a complex and challenging plot' the game will be available for the ST on 19 May. Unfortunately, the only screen shots I could obtain are those of the Mac version. However, the game won't change that much, apart from the addition of colour, so at least it gives you an idea of what the game is about.

VIXEN LAUNCH

On a very hot day a few weeks ago, I attended the press launch of Martech's Vixen. Held at the Intercontinental Hotel just off Park Lane, we were shown the game, which was just about finished, and treated to lunch. Also in attendance and much better dressed to cope with the extremely hot temperatures caused by a breakdown in the air-conditioning system, was Corrinne Russell. That, I thought, was an extremely polite way of saying that, apart from a whip and a smile, Miss Russell was wearing very little else except a designer leopard-skin bikini. Most of the journalists were persuaded at one time or another to have their photograph taken and so, in order not to disappoint any avid readers, I somewhat reluctantly agreed. (Very funny! Ed.)

Back to the game. It should be on its way through the postal system to us at the moment, so look out for it in our latecomers section and a full review in the next issue.

EMPIRE STRIKES - MORE INFO

The fight against Darth Vader and the mighty Empire is on again. You are placed in command of Luke Skywalker's snowspeeder and Han Solo's Millenium Falcon with your mission being to reach the safety of the huge asteroid. To do this you must first reach the rebel base on Hoth and escape to the skies.

There are four levels to complete on your path to the huge asteroid. The first requires you to destroy probots sent by Vader to take pictures of the rebel's power generator. The second level is spent destroying Imperial

walkers in Luke's snowspeeder. The penultimate level sees Han Solo in his Millenium Falcon attacking a veritable swarm of Tie Fighters. Finally, you hit a turbulent asteroid field and have to dodge asteroids as well as fend off enemy attacks.

Programmed by the same Vektor Grafix team responsible for Star Wars, the game promises to be one of the hot arcade-type games released this summer. Expect to see the game around in late July.

BETTER DEAD THAN ALIEN

This year's prize for the most original and tacky press release undoubtedly goes to Entertainment International for their game, Better Dead than Alien. With quotes for their shoot-'em-up ranging from, 'the ugliest life-forms that you'll be lucky never to see' to 'a package that cries out "let me get at those vile beings", the pre-release hype must surely be one of the most original ever produced, and the game obviously has a lot to live up to if it is to survive on its own out in the big, bad world.

Okay, so I've heard the infamous US battlecry, 'Better dead than Red', but this? Oh, well. Back to the story. You play the part of Brad Zoom (is that real?) and it is your task to 'save civilization as we know it' by using your 'super zapper!' (This could end up being censored if I'm not careful!)

Scatter shots, super-bolts, double firepower and multi-player mode all feature in the game, along with graphics that are 'out of this solar system'. The game is the first from a new publishing venture, Electra, that consists of SPA (production), Entertainment International (delivery) and two guys from Oxford Digital (programming). Available in May, the game has got to be worth seeing purely on the strength of the press release. I'll let the guys from Electra have the last word. Oxford Digital: 'This game is our first shoot-'em-up. It started as a spoof but the aliens just took over'. SPA: 'This is the slimiest product I have ever handled'. Entertainment International: 'Just watch this mother move'.

I guess that just about sums it up...

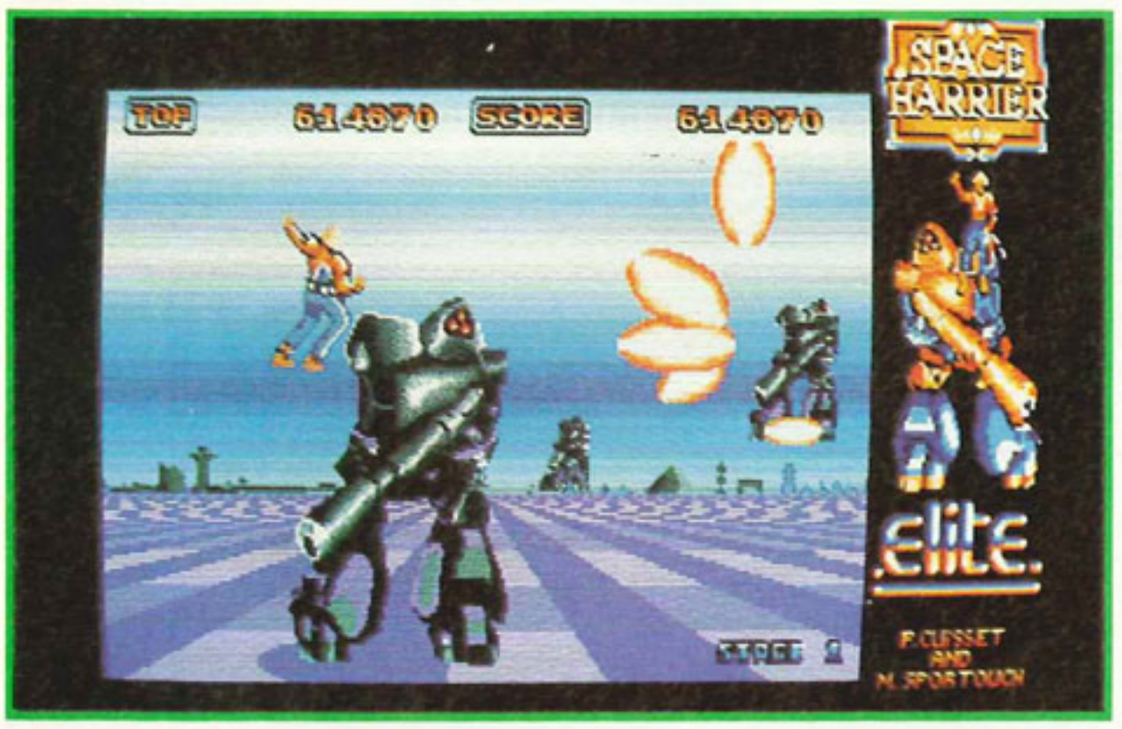
MORE ACTION FROM THE ST GAMES WORLD

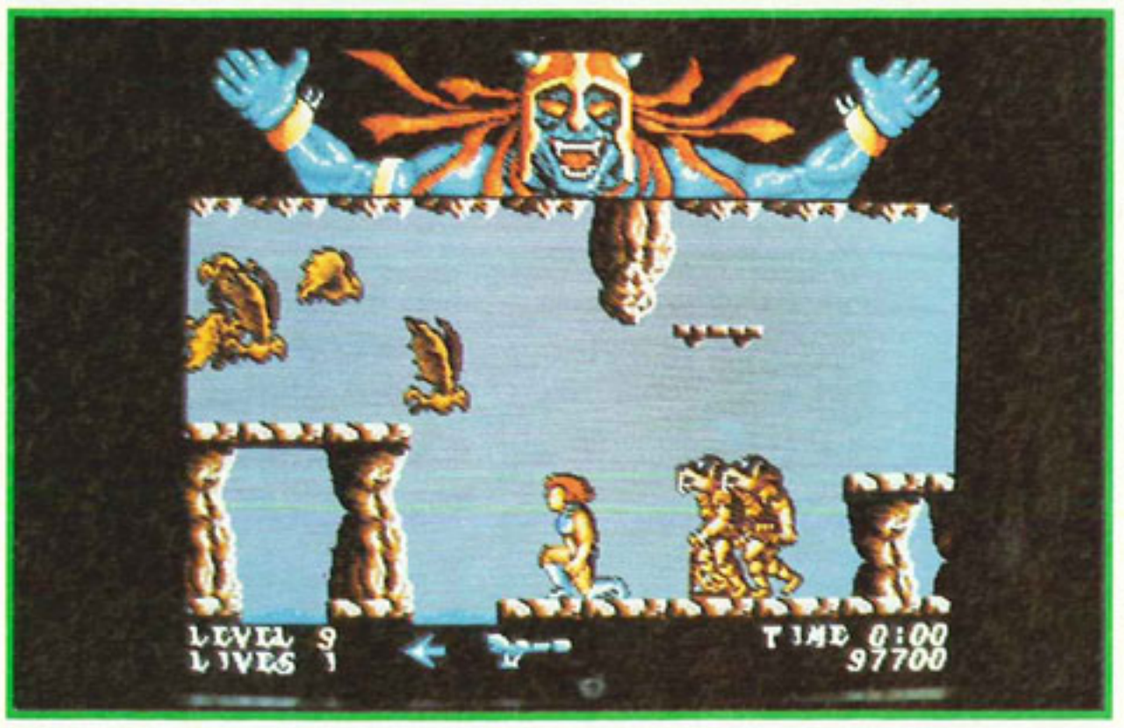
Rainbird have said that Virus for the ST will be ready towards the end of May. They have also announced a 3D filled-vector space blaster called Whirly Gig. Further details to follow.

Ocean are likely to be releasing a compilation disk for the ST in the near future. No details at present as to what will be on the disk, but I'll keep you posted on any developments. They are expecting Platoon to be ready mid May, with Army Moves following close on its heels at the end of May. Target Renegade is another new one for the ST that should see the light of day around the end of June. More details next month.

Gremlin Graphics are working on Alternative World Games, Alternative Olympics and Gary Lineker Super Skills. No dates as yet, but as soon as I hear anything...

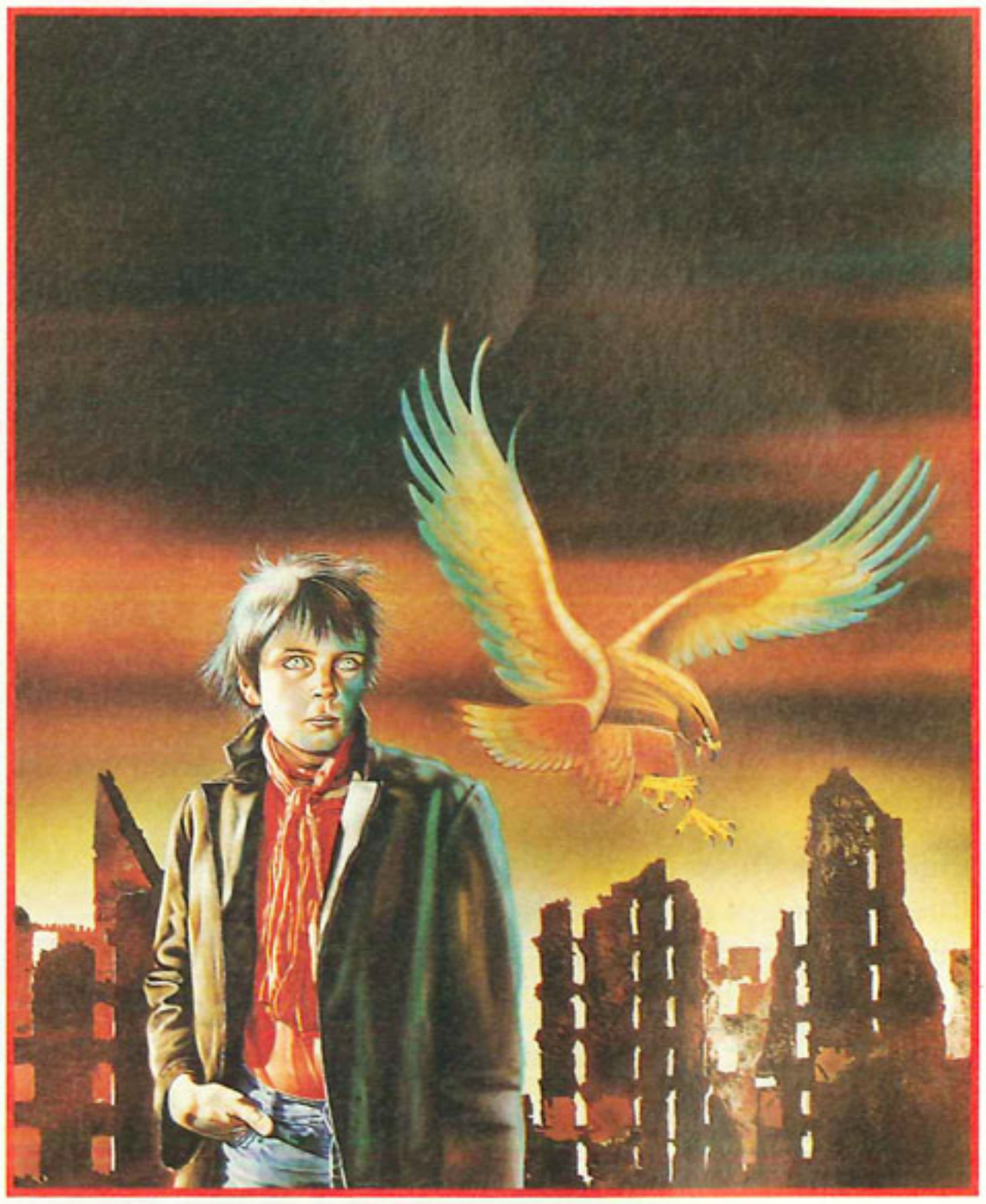
Elite Systems are working on Space Harrier and Paper Boy. Both of these should be ready around the end of May but, as yet, no details are available other than they are accurate conversions of the arcade versions.





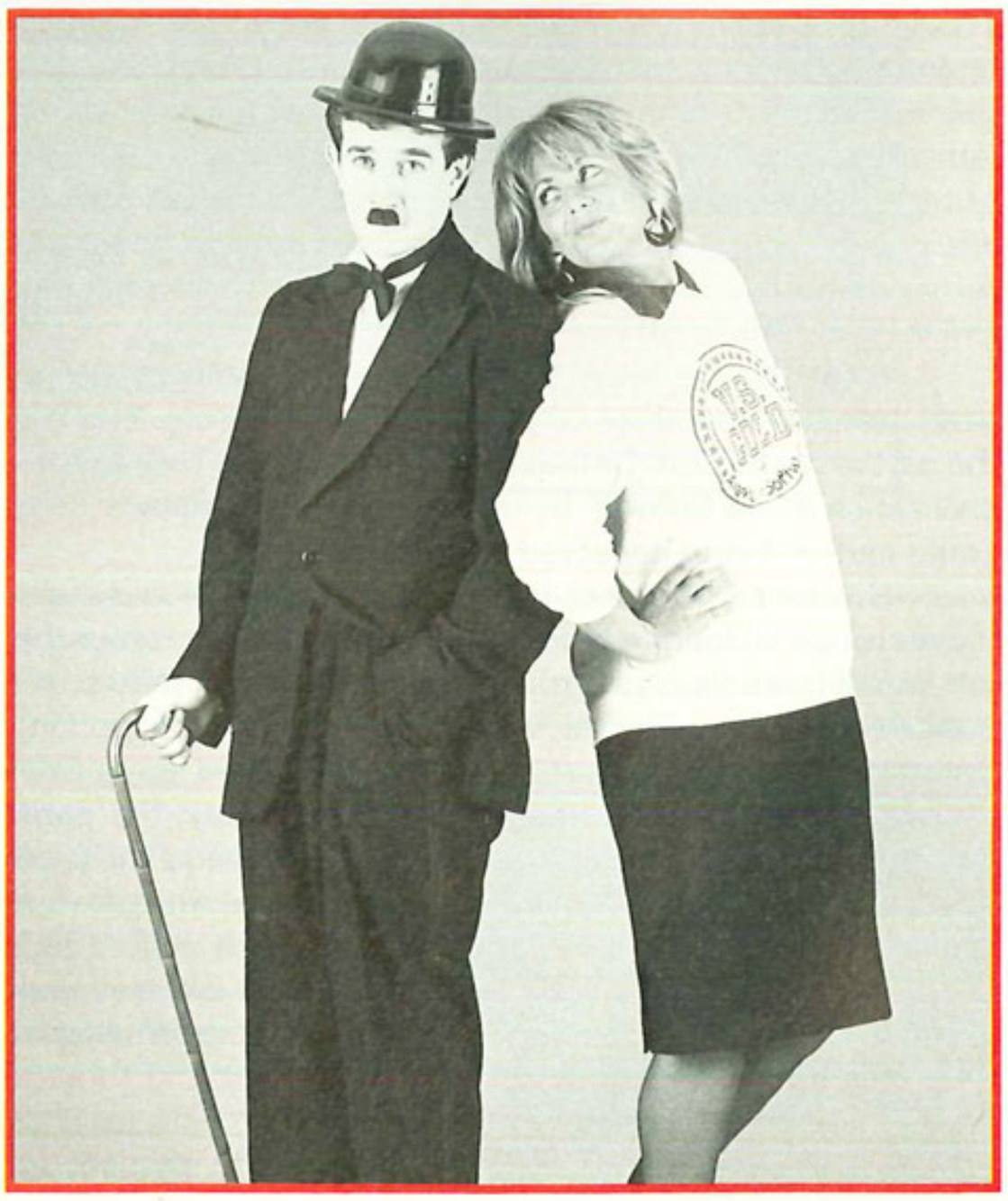
Microdeal are working on Jug and Fright Night for release at the Personal Computer Show in September. Slightly nearer, Tetraquest looks a good game to get into. This is a grid-based arcade game that should be out by the time you read this.

Activision are releasing Mindfighter this week and are also working on the conversion to the popular arcade bike-



racing game, Super Hang-On. Further details next month as there is a press announcement at the Cafe Royal just after this mag goes to print. I'll also be visiting their Southampton offices to see the latest developments.

U.S. Gold are working on a game involving that master of comedy, Charlie Chaplin. More details to follow, but for now, here's a picture of Danielle, U.S. Gold's marketing assistant clowning around with Richard (call me Charlie) Tidsall, the marketing manager.



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- **Features:** *Sierra Adventures, (sorry we couldn't make it for this issue)*

  Domark - More than just bow-ties

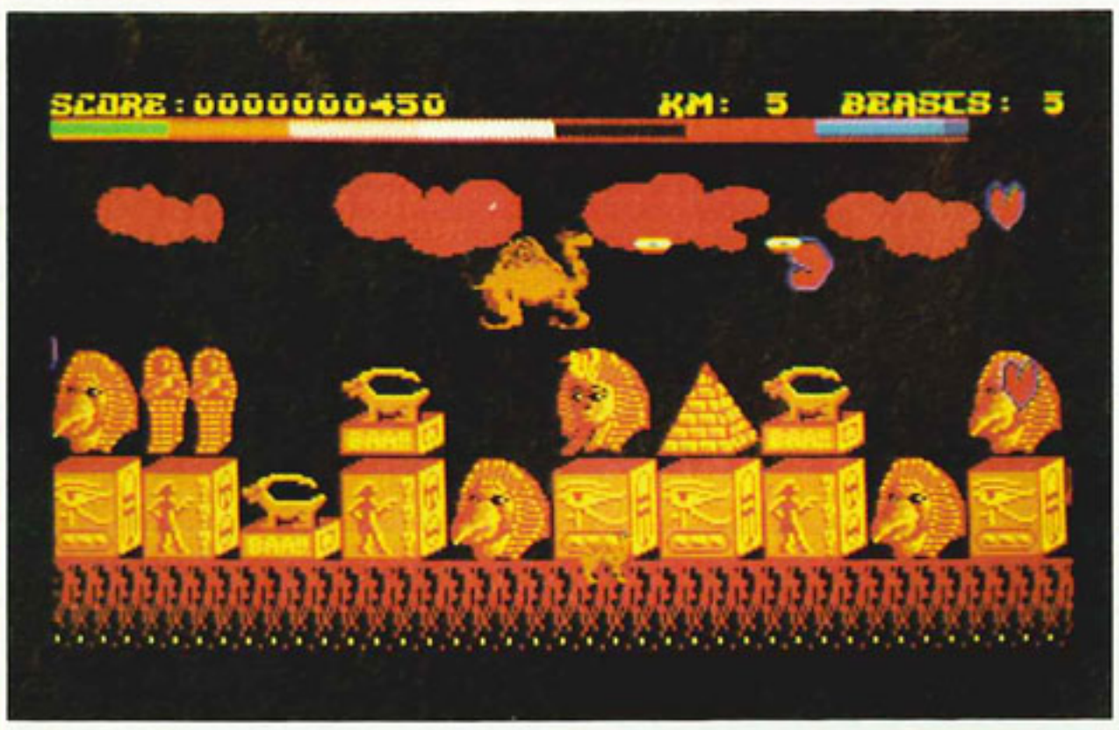
  Atari's Oldies - including: Battlezone, Joust, Star Raiders and Missile Command
- **Games Reviewed:**

  Gauntlet II, Beyond the Ice Palace, Pandora, Tetra Quest, Quadralien, Vixen, Platoon, Killdozer, Thundercats, Virus, Legend of the Sword, Mindfighter, Uninvited and many, many more.
- **Hints, Tips 'n Cheats:**

  Out Run, Leatherneck, Pink Panther, Foundations Waste, Captain Blood, Carrier Command, Ninja Mission, Bubble Bobble, Dungeon Master and much, much more.
- **Issue four on sale: 12th July**

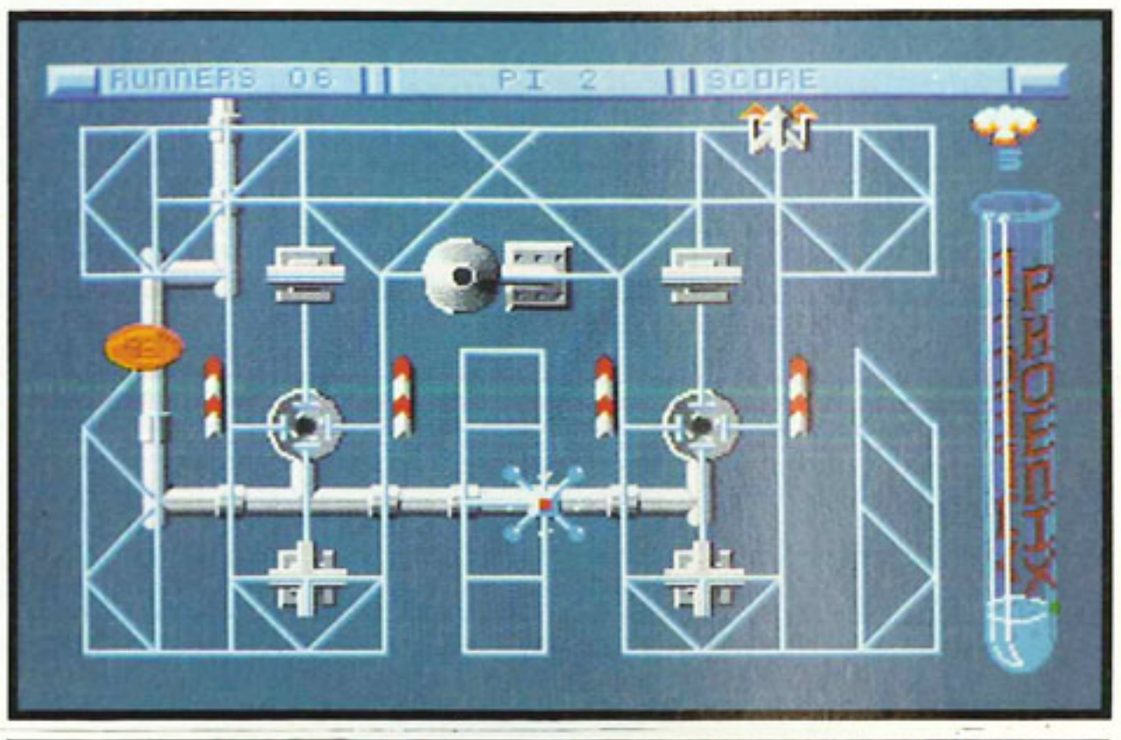
Revenge is sweet?

Revenge of the Mutant Camels II, from Icon Design, is a sideways-scrolling shoot-'em-up that somewhere along the line has lost its Minterisms. Flying tea-cups and the usual odds and ends abound. Mixed reception for this one, so read the review.



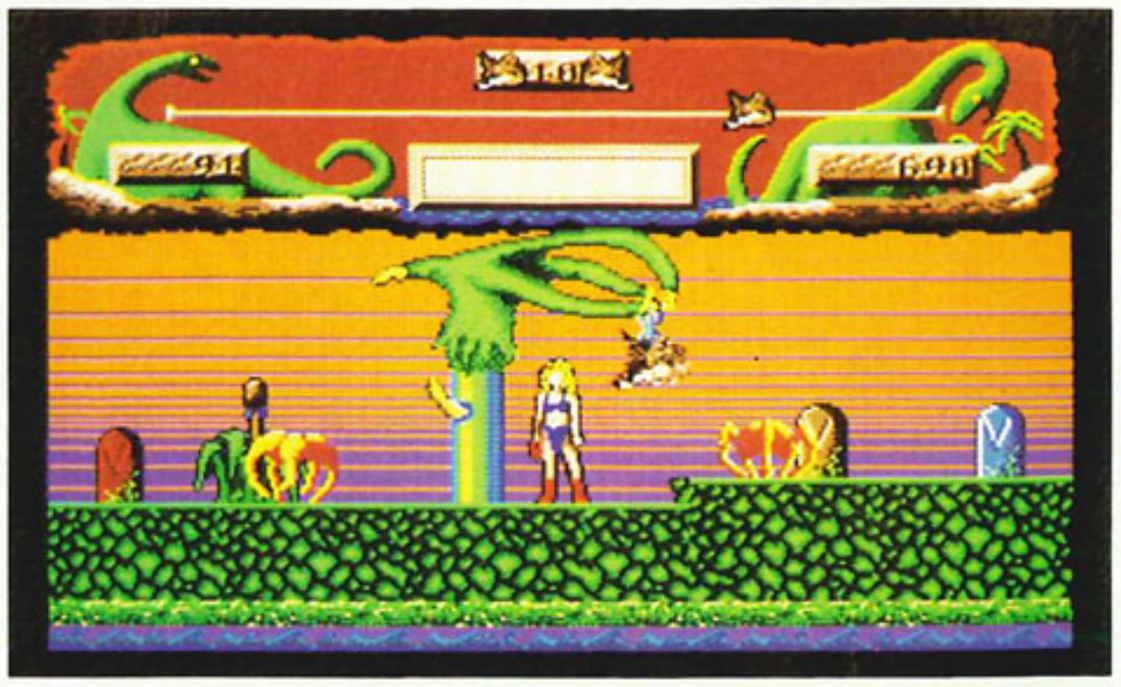
Beyond the Ice Palace

This game, from Elite, is basically Ghosts and Goblins re-written for the ST. So far, reviewer's opinions are mixed, with some raving about it and others less than enthusiastic. A sideways-scrolling, jump-over-the-baddies-and-kill-them type of game.



Tetra Quest

Tetra Quest, from Microdeal, is a very original idea taken to its logical conclusion and developed into a very interesting game. Pilot your space vehicle along tracks, collecting bonuses and destroying baddies. Set up blocks along the tracks so that diversions are necessary. As is usual from Microdeal, the action is thick and fast, with plenty of gameplay.



Vixen

The game that has had more publicity than the launch of the first Apollo mission finally sees the light of day. Control Corinne through the jungle, whipping the enemies to death (or is that 'into a frenzy'?). Collect bonuses along the way and change from woman to Vixen, and vice versa.

ATARI ST — COMMODORE AMIGA

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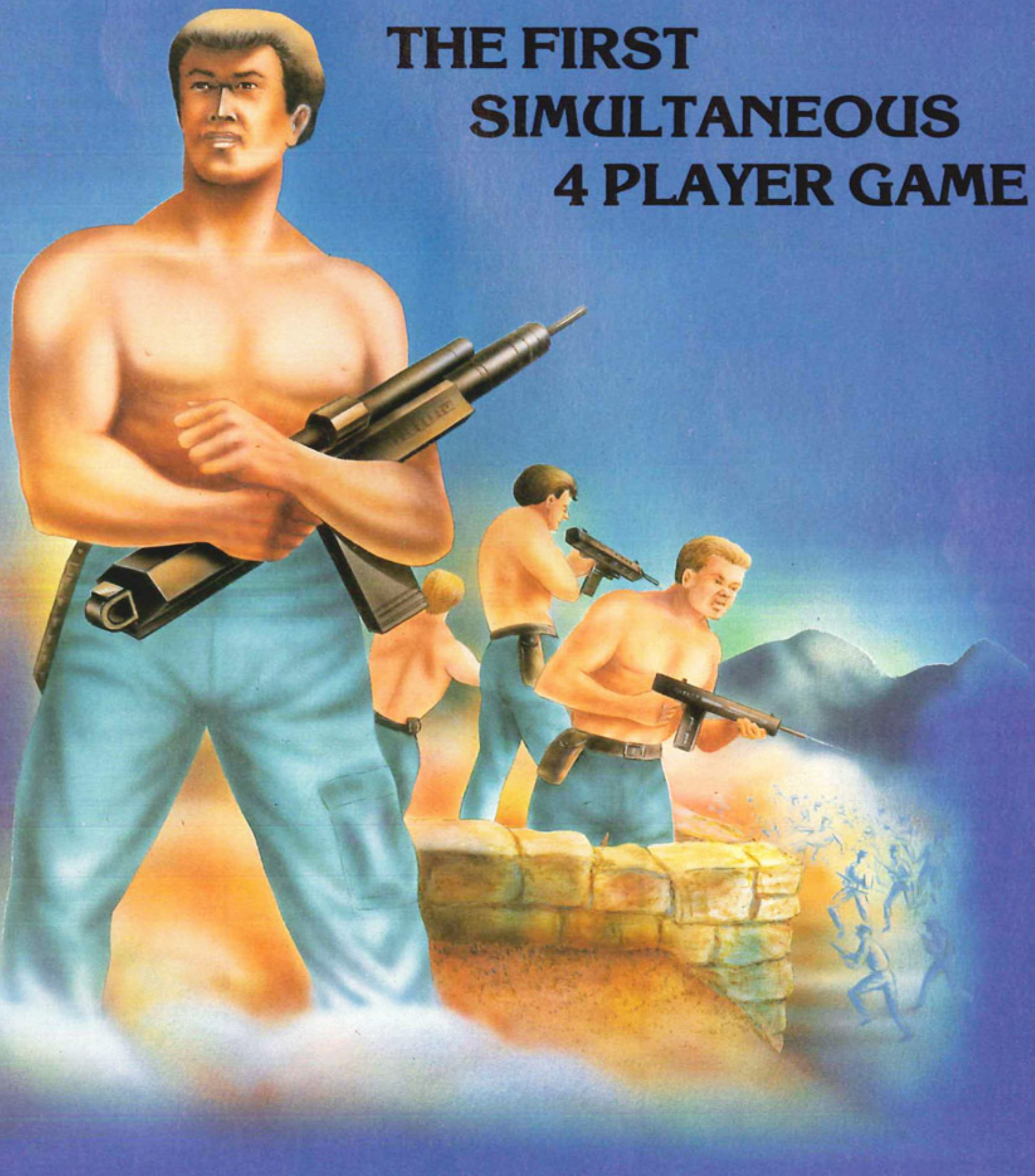
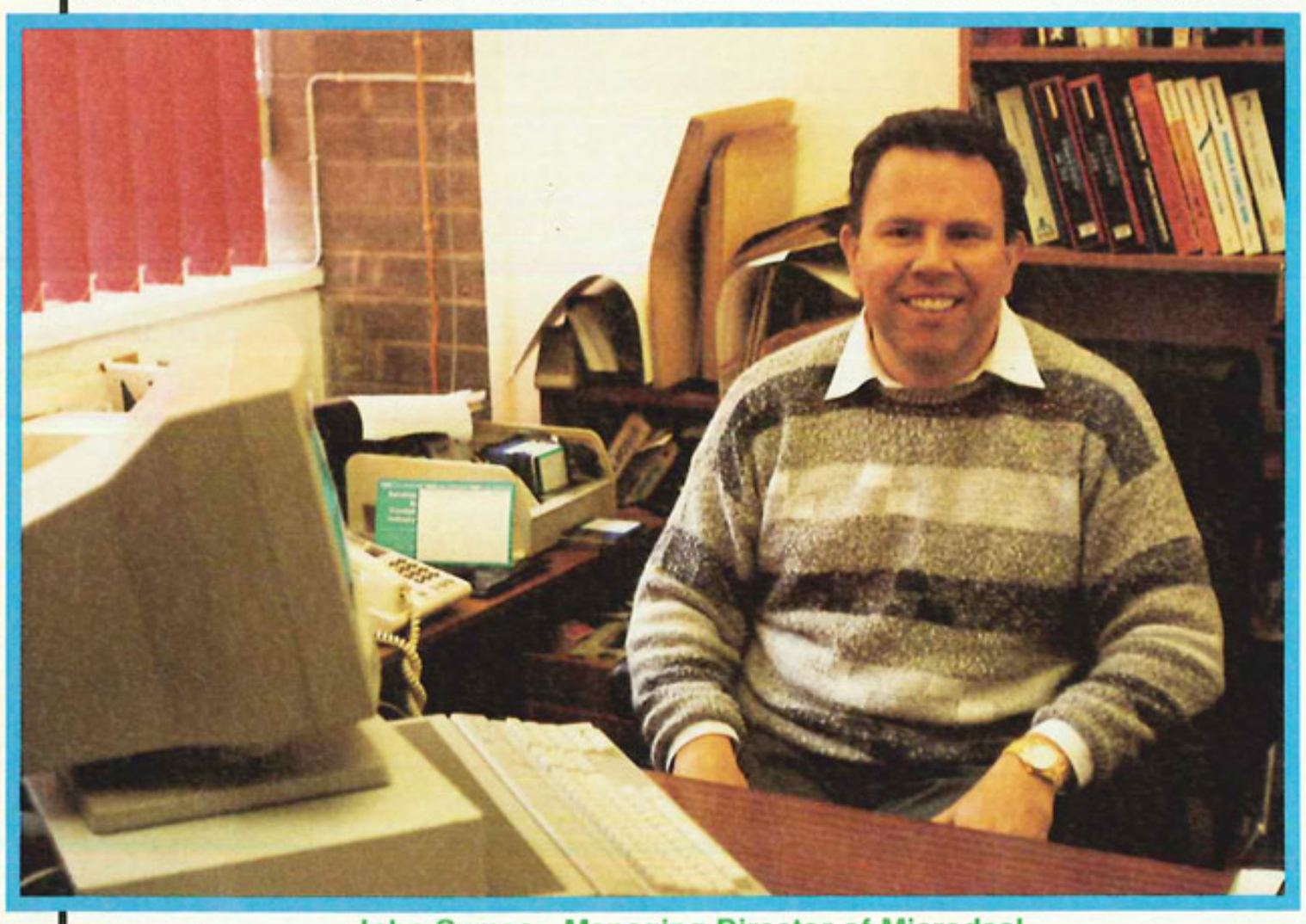


PROGRAMMED BY STEVE BAK
GRAPHICS BY PETE LYON

microdeal

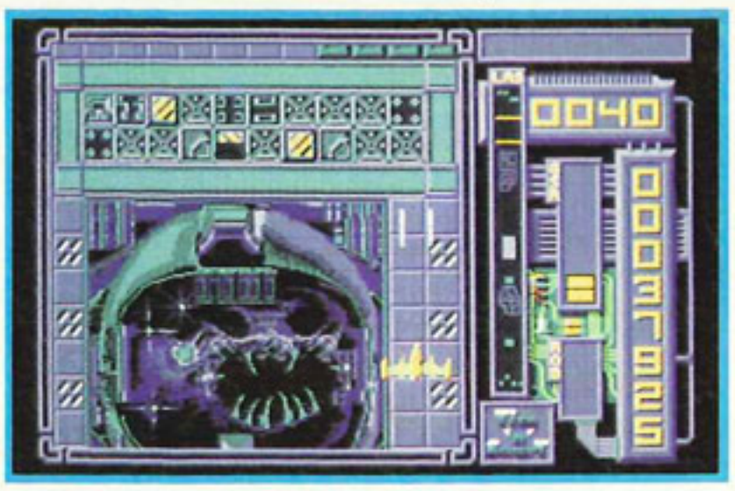
ST Action Profile: Microdeal

It was early this month that I made the long trek down to Cornwall to see Microdeal, who have their premises in St. Austell. Microdeal are as well-known for offering quality, low-cost utilities as they are for publishing very playable games. I thought I'd pop down and take a look at what goes on behind the scenes.



John Symes - Managing Director of Microdeal

I was met by John Symes, the driving force behind the company. I started by asking about the history of Microdeal and found that, like many people in this business, John bought a ZX80 when it came out and started to play around with it. That was in 1980 and, soon after, he visited the US and went along to Tandy. There he bought a Tandy computer and brought it home. One of the main reasons for this was the exhorbitant cost of the machine over this side of the pond. In America the machine cost around $20, whilst in the UK it was roughly £49.



Goldrunner II

Another product that John saw whilst over there was a magazine on tape, called C-Load. John liked it immensely and thought it could sell well here. He ordered 50 and sold out almost immediately. He then became the UK importer for C-Load and also started to sell colour Tandy computers. By this time he had got to know quite a few programmers and with these he formed a loose working relationship. With the release of the Dragon in the UK, he set to work with the programmers to convert Tandy games to the Dragon and then, on its release, the QL.

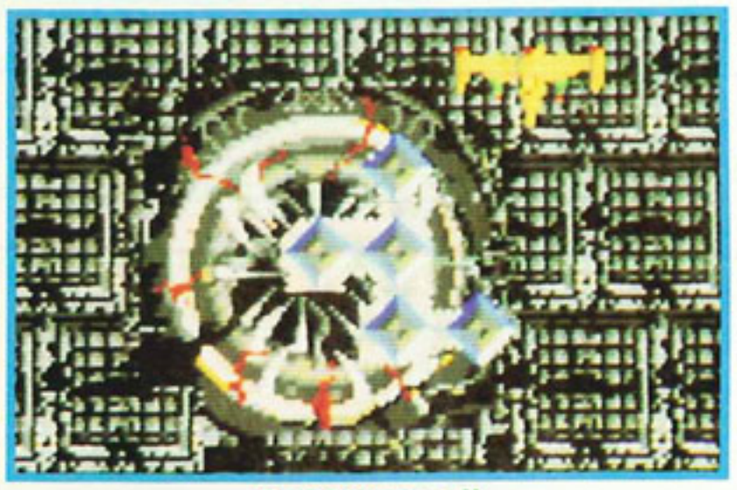
The progression to 16-bit machines was with the ST and John makes the proud claim that he picked up the first ever ST development kit from Atari in July 1985. Microdeal's first 16-bit release was Lands of Havoc, a conversion from the QL which, according to John, was 'a big adventure with grotty graphics'.

From there they have moved from strength to strength and now sell direct to over 40 distributors worldwide. The most profitable markets are in Germany and in the U.S., where they have another office, this time under the name of Michtron. Michtron normally deals with the business and utilities side of things, leaving the Microdeal label for the entertainment side.

That particular morning, the first copies of Goldrunner II and Leatherneck were being packaged and so I was the first journalist to see the finished copies. I played both games in the office and liked both games, with Leatherneck taking the edge initially. Goldrunner II is one of those games that, at first, has you playing the game and saying 'nice, but...'. However, once the game is played properly, the game's qualities shine through and it really is good.

Microdeal have an in-house disk-copying facility, named Top Copy, and this service is also available commercially. This enables them to get a finished game from the programmers and, if necessary, copy disks over the weekend for deadlines. I arrived two days before the Atari User Show started and the disk copying had been going on round the clock in order to reproduce enough units of the above-mentioned games for the show.

As for computers in the office, a Vax 1173 was bought a couple of years ago to deal with the stock control. This has now been linked to six 1040 STs that are used as terminals. The STs all run under Microdeal's 220ST emulator and, from what I've seen, the whole lot works well and they report no problems at all. Another good point of using STs is that they can be used in their own right and run ST software as well, thus opening up a completely different range of utilities, etc.

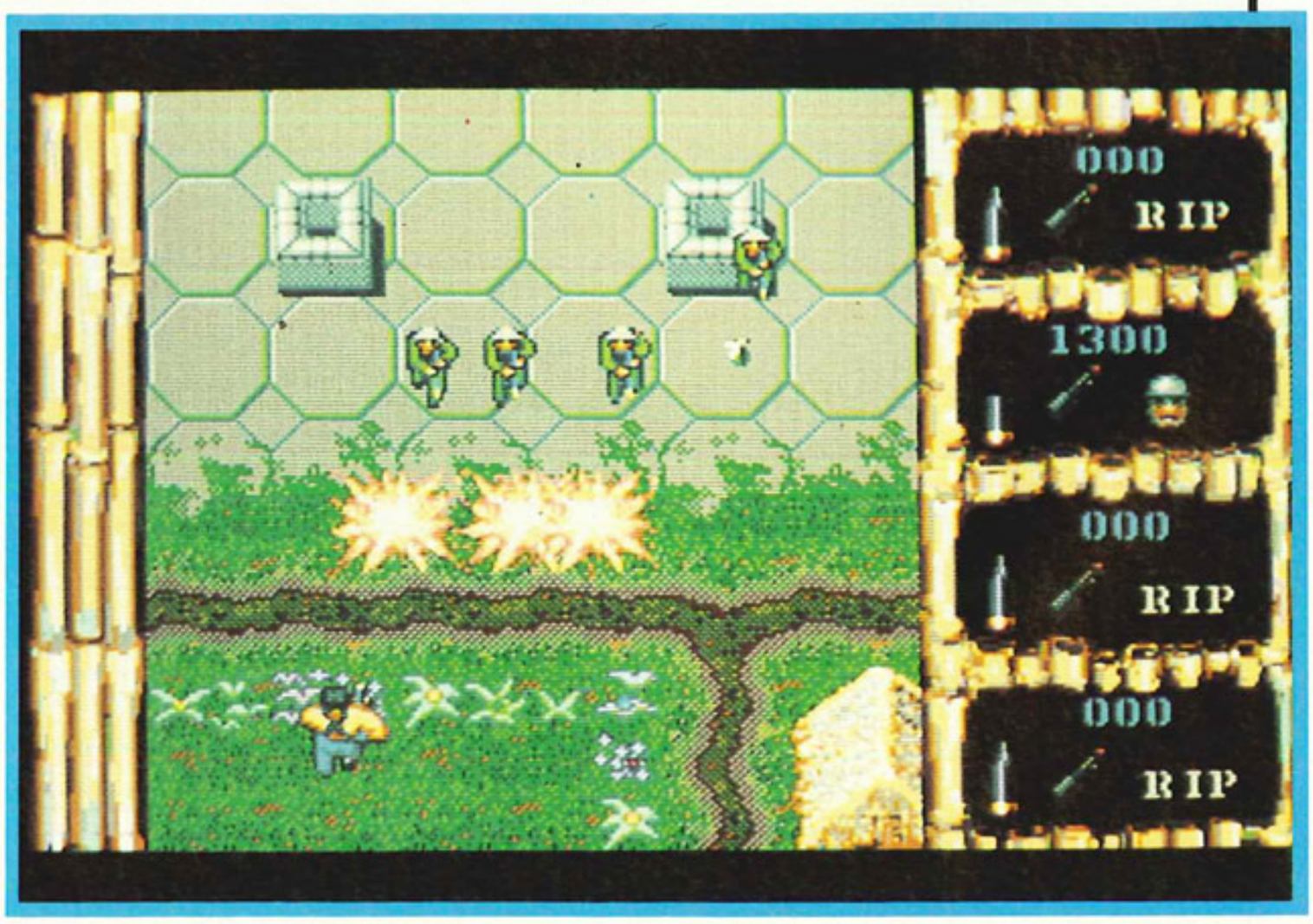


Goldrunner II

John is now expanding the accessory side with disk wallets (very useful if, like me, you have to travel anywhere with disks), mouse mats, mouse brackets for parking your mouse at night (very Yuppie-ish!), and a disk stacker, similar to the CD-style of container, that will take 80 3.5" disks.

I came away from Microdeal very impressed with the operation - they are a small company doing a large job effectively and efficiently.

STA



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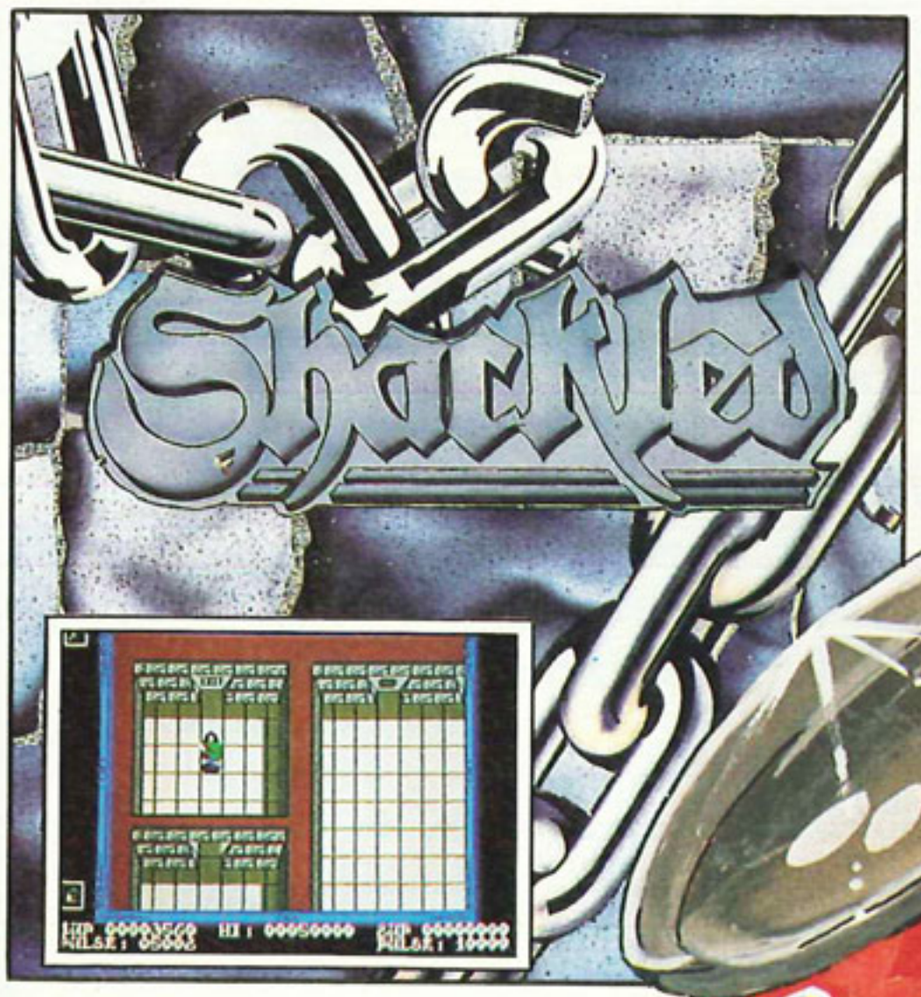
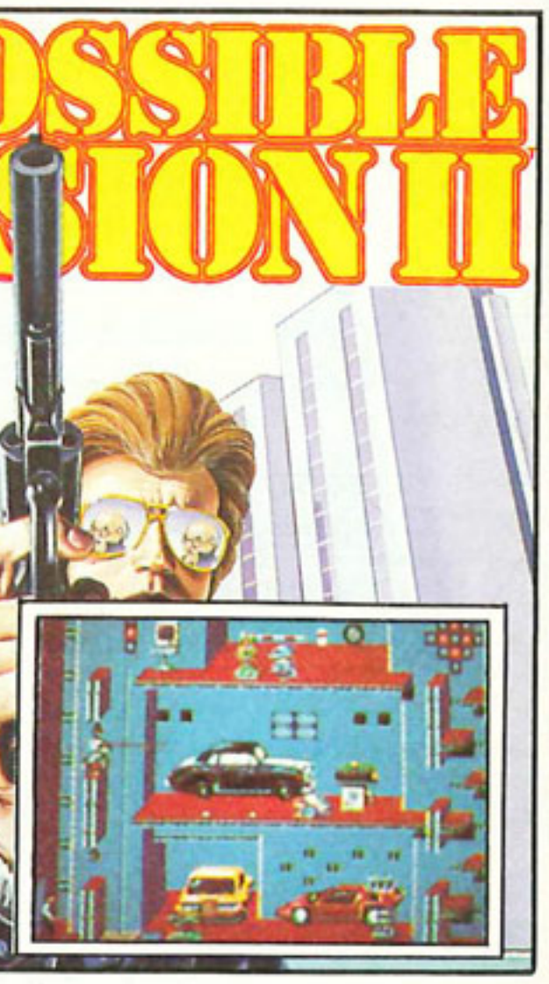


IMPOSSIBLE MISSION II



Screenshots taken from various 16 bit versions.

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The Letters Desk, ST Action, 10 Theatre Lane, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 1SR

Last month we put in a plea for letters. It's a little early to have had any response from that, but many of you have written in without prompting and here is a selection of your comments concerning issue 1 of ST Action:

Posters Please

Thank you for an excellent magazine, it's exactly what I've been waiting for. One suggestion: why not put a double-page poster in the centre pages?

Andy Grossett,
Guisborough, Cleveland.

Bubble Bobble and Wizball - review please

I would like to congratulate you on your new magazine. It is a great success in this household.

However, there is a let-down, in that Steve (Merrett) said that he would review Bubble Bobble and others, such as Wizball, but there were no hints or tips on Bubble Bobble.

Please, Steve and others, please, please next month, not just in the Hints and Tips, review it please. No more let-downs.

Your magazine has inspired me to buy an Atari ST 520 upgrade 1 Mega disk drive. Please reply by reviewing Bubble Bobble.

Ashley Griffin (aged 15),
Bracknell, Berks.

Sorry the tips went astray - we'll fix that ASAP. Bubble Bobble and Wizball are relatively 'old' games now - we reviewed them in our sister magazine (ST World) several months ago. The STA Megatests do go back on old ground - but do you all really want full reviews of older games? If so than get writing! And if not then you had better write anyway!

Out Run - A Good Conversion?

I am a relatively new reader to your mag as I have just recently purchased an ST. I would thankfully accept any information you could send me on the game 'Out Run' as I am confused on whether to buy the game or not. Certain Spectrum and Amstrad owners have told me that their conversions weren't up to a high standard, yet the arcade and ST screen shots look outstanding.

Mark Purslow,
Marple, Cheshire.

Out Run is one of the meanest arcade games out and the fact is it just isn't that easy to transfer it to humble home micros. The good news is that the ST conversion is excellent and far better than any of the others. See the double-page review this issue for the full low-down. Remember, if you're ever unsure whether to buy a game, just sit back and wait for our reviewers to pull it apart, byte by byte, and pixel for pixel - the idea is that you never waste your hard-earned cash on duff software.

Maps like ours?

My brother and I are sending you the first section of Ikari Warriors. We hope it's the sort of thing you're looking for and print it in your tips section helping other ST owners who've bought the game. Loved the first issue, especially the Out Run and Gauntlet II screen shots and info (very interesting).

Paul & Barry Monger,
Hayes, Middlesex.

This type of map is just what we're looking for. What we would like to know is: which levels are you all most keen to see mapped in games? The very first levels or further on? Also, please write in if you want specific games mapped or tips or cheats produced for them. Those who shout loudest will be answered first!

Readers Letters Page

I am writing to you after reading the first issue of your ST Action magazine, which I thoroughly

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enjoyed, although I do have one complaint. I was extremely disappointed to learn that you did not include a readers' letter page - so please let's have one or two pages to air our views.

V D Kirby,
Baguley, Manchester.

Your wish...

'Best' Computing Magazine?

My god, at last someone's produced a clean, simple magazine which treats its readership as adults, and doesn't see the need for juvenile comic strips, little stick-men running about in the page borders or illustrations taking up reviewing space. Not only is ST Action a joy to look at, but it's also a great read, with full-page multi-reviewer reviews, (it's always nice to have more than one persons opinion on a piece of software) plenty of screen shots (all in colour) and, best of all, a good old-fashioned percentage rating system! The final bit of icing on the cake is the adventure section! There isn't one! It seems that you've incorporated the adventures into the main body of reviews. And quite right too! In fact, ST Action appears to be the best computer publication on the market, which is a pity really, as I own an Amiga!

P.S. I'll be buying ST Action for the next couple of months, just in case you print this!

Yours TK
(No address given)

Now that's the type of letter I like to receive. TK obviously thinks on similar lines to us at STA. We spent many a long hour slaving over a hot keyb... at the pub thinking about how, exactly, ST Action should look and read and we decided that discerning ST owners wanted something a little better, a little classier and a little less amateure - so here it is. Shame you've bought the wrong computer, TK!

Contact Addresses

I am sorry to trouble you, but I am having trouble with a copy of Backlash from Novagen on my Atari ST. I have had the disk exchanged by the mail order company I bought it from who considered it to be an error on the disk, but the new copy is still playing up.

I would like to write to Novagen & ask their opinion, but cannot find out their address & their phone number is ex-directory. After reading your article in ST Action about them, I was wondering if you could let me have their address.

D Golledge,
Bracknell, Berks.

We have passed on Novagen's details to Mr Golledge, but his letter gave us an idea. How would you like to see a regular page full of names, addresses and telephone numbers of software houses, software dealers, shops, repair companies etc?

Games Programming Course

I have just purchased an Atari 520STFM, and I would like to start programming games. I have had some experience in programming games but not on the ST. I wondered if you could tell me which basic to use and where to start. I would be very grateful if you could help me.

Jason Aldridge,
Reading, Berks.

One distinct possibility would be a regular 'how to program games' section which could give details of techniques, principles, design and nitty-gritty programming - more feedback from you can make all this a reality!

Long Term Adventure Reviews

I am writing to congratulate your game reviewers on their honesty and objectivity in the first issue of ST Action. It would have been too easy to proclaim everything great in an attempt at

establishing good relationships. What did annoy me was your treatment of Ultima IV. I felt you undermined the whole concept of the quest. It was not intended to be finished in one or two sittings. I have been questing for some time on my 64. Simon, my Avatar elect has reached level 6, the Abyss. So I can anticipate regonition from Lord British in the near future.

I recently upgraded to the ST in preference to the Amiga and because Dungeon Master came on the scene. I am currently down to level 3. Interactive adventure games should be viewed from a different perspective. They cannot be judged over the short-term interest value. This may apply to the shoot'em-up market where there is a wide range of software offering games of similar content. My son, who inherited my 64, is delighted but I have to book in advance to use the ST.. There is, in my opinion, no comparison between the machines, the 16-bit is here to stay.

I agree that Jeff Minter is an average programmer so I hope the mag utilises the vacuum with something more stimulating. The 'best joystick' theme has been well aired by a host of mags.

I think that people (myself included) expected too much from your first edition. Like the adventure game, it needs time to develop its own cultural following and I intend to be one of those followers.

Graphics: 90%
Sound: N/A
Addictiveness: 99%
Originality: Trying
Overall: 95%

James Doyle,
Prestwick, Scotland.

I think maybe your marking system rates a little high. But thanks for the comments and support!

Just What We Want!

I must congratulate you all for producing an excellent mag. I'm sure I speak for a lot of ST users in saying 'it is what we've all been waiting for'. Everything is on the ST and it's nearly all games. There are a few points which could be added to the mag to make it better still:

1) A high score chart
2) A top 10 games chart
3) Even more tips + pokes
4) Features on software houses
5) More reviews
6) A page where you can tell us what is happening next month and when.

Other than those points (most of which I'm sure, will be added) the mag is great.

Also, why not have a monthly column where you teach people how to write programs and small games. People are dying to learn ST basic and machine code so why not try to teach US?

Excellent mag, keep up the good work.

Jason Allen,
Birkenhead,
Merseyside.

More hints, tips and pokes are already the order of the day; features on software houses are now a regular item; more reviews - almost twice as many as issue one; what's in next month' is also actioned. Points 1 and 2? What do the rest of you think?

The year is 1987; Robin, an 11 year old boy with phenomenal psychic powers is in a trance. His mind has left his body and travelled through time, taking him to a post-holocaust Southampton ruled by Fascist forces — The System.

Everywhere is bare, scorched and desolate. He is totally alone!

The friends he left behind are powerless to help him as they stand over his inert body, watching transfixed as his fluorescent green eyes reveal like a TV screen the horror and devastation of his surroundings.

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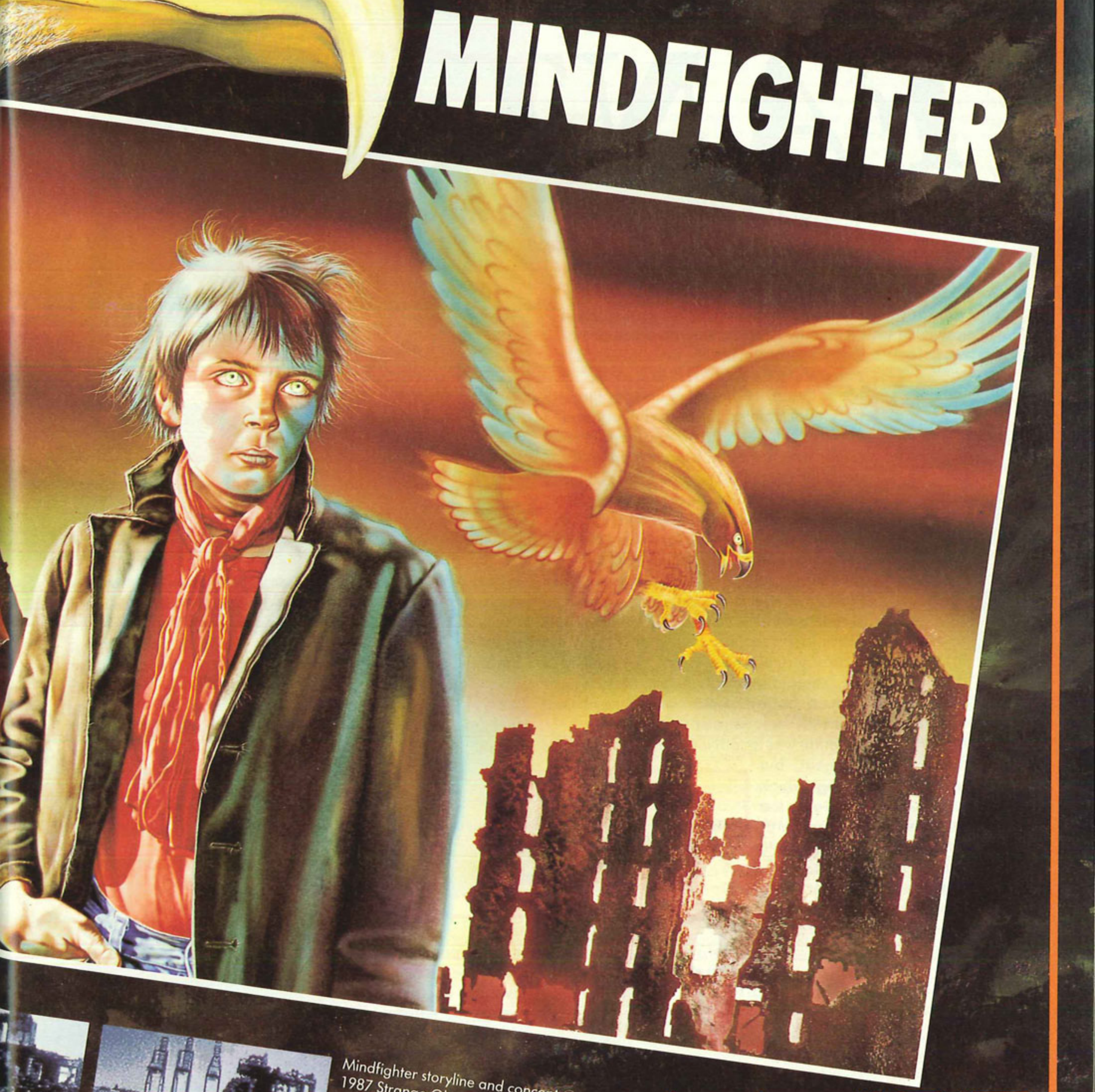
MINDFIGHTER — THE FIRST OF A NEW GENERATION OF ACTI

A flight into a nightmare—

MINDFIGHTER



Mindfighter storyline and concept © 1987 Strange Obsessions. Mindfighter computer game © 1988 Activision Inc. Marketed and distributed by Activision UK Ltd. Atari screens shown.

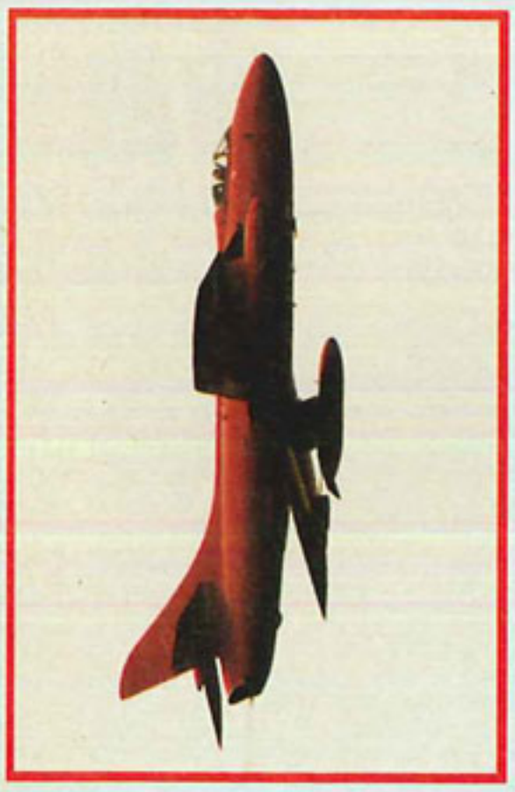
-PACKED ADVENTURE GAMES

ABSTRACT CONCEPTS

FLIGHTS OF FANTASY

In this months ST Action Megatest, Jason Spiller test-flies seven flight simulators to find out which of them earns their wings.

Aviation pioneers had no option but to defy gravity in order to test there flimsy canvas and wooden aircraft and, in two world wars, inexperienced airforce recruits risked their lives in what can only be described as crude prototypes. In fact, until quite recently, testing both the aircraft and the pilot's aptitude was a matter of life or death. Today, of course, preliminary pilot training for both military and commercial aircraft is computer-simulated, which makes training more accessible, cost effective and safer. These realistic and thorough simulations can adapt to test the aptitude of a novice or place an experienced pilot in any number of hazardous situations. In order to give a completely realistic interpretation of flight, massive mainframe computers can simulate combat training for military pilots or communication with air-traffic control in a commercial environment. The realism of the three-dimensional graphics is enhanced by hydraulics which react and move in accordance with the controls.

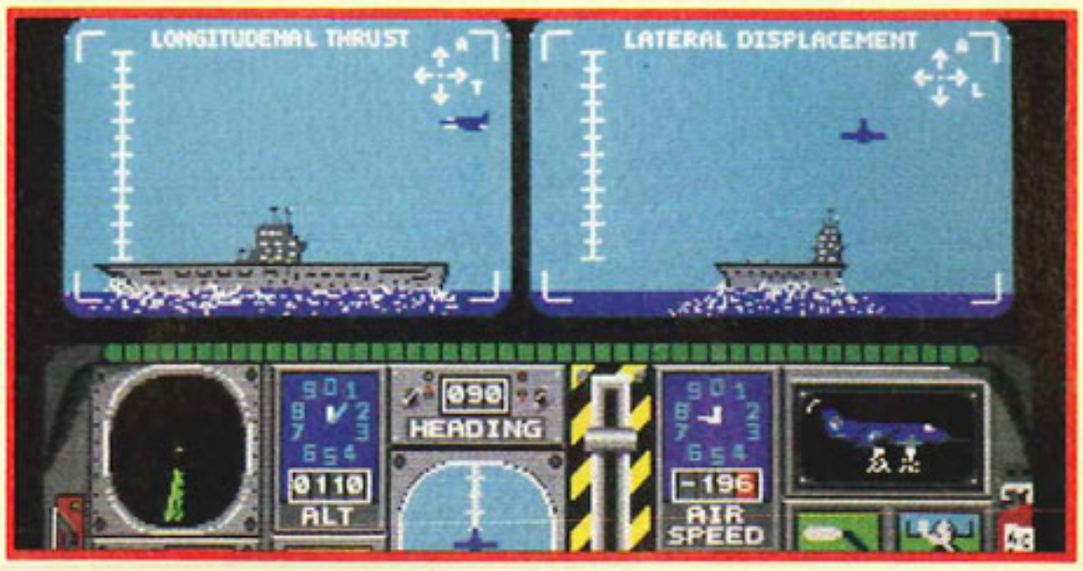


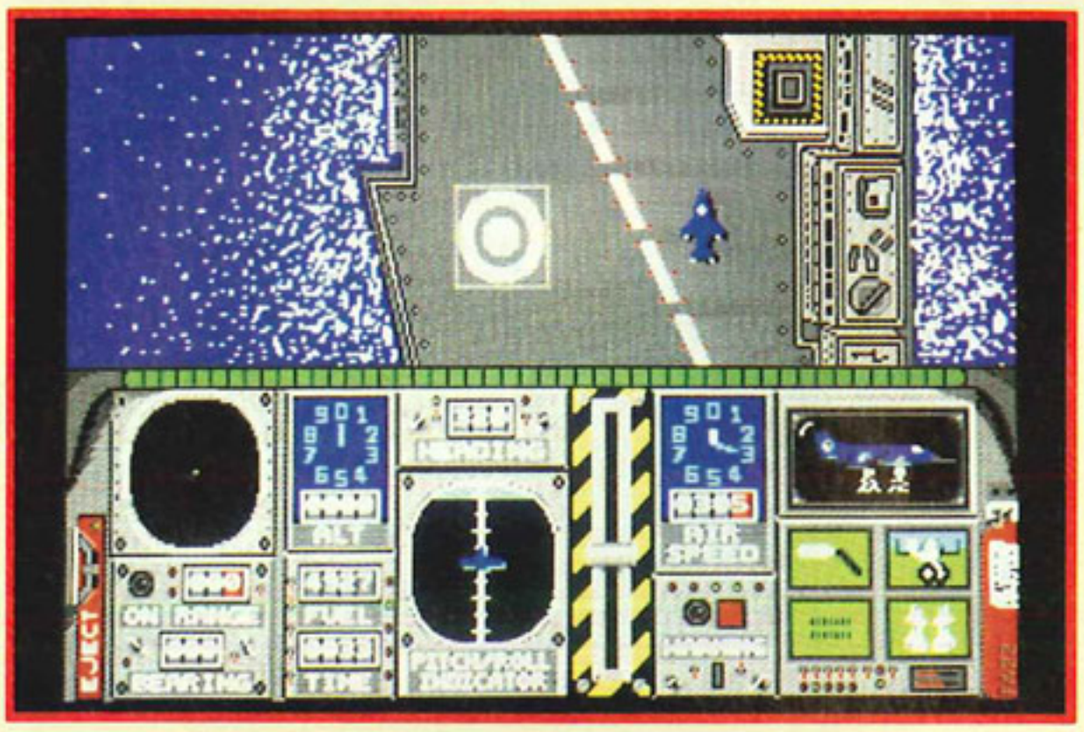
Aircraft simulation was an obvious subject for home-computer entertainment, but converting something which required a mainframe onto the humble eight-bit computer was a seemingly impossible task and, as a result, early simulations were poor. The instrumentation was easy to emulate and the joystick an excellent substitute for the control-column, but it was smooth scrolling that proved to be unattainable. A number of techniques were employed to enhance the effect of movement and speed. Vector-graphics was an obvious solution but wire-frame graphics simply failed to present a realistic impression of flight. However, with the experience of a Major from the U.S.A.F. and a wealth of programming talent, Microprose developed an aircraft simulation for the Commodore 64. With solid, three-dimensional graphics and relatively smooth scrolling, F15 Strike Eagle (which features in this super test) was the inspiration that made aircraft simulation a major genre in the software market.

The aircraft simulations available for the ST range from pure simulation to arcade entertainment, and the purpose of this supertest is to evaluate each one, gauge the simulation-to-arcade entertainment ratio and indicate any unique features.

Jump Jet

Anco's Jump Jet only just qualifies as an aircraft simulation in this supertest. Originally, this eight-bit conversion was designed to appeal to a predominately game-playing public and, in accordance to their requirements, emphasis was placed on arcade entertainment rather than faithful simulation. Initially, the game-





screen displays an out-of-cockpit, overhead view of the Jump Jet, which is positioned on an aircraft carrier. With easy-to-read icons and a few key commands to alter the flaps, raise the undercarriage and regulate the vertical thrust, a much simplified take-off procedure leads to a second out-of-cockpit view which shows the side of the aircraft carrier and the Jump Jet hovering above. Then, at 200 feet, this is finally replaced by the view from the cockpit. The instrumentation panel remains on screen throughout the entire take-off sequence.

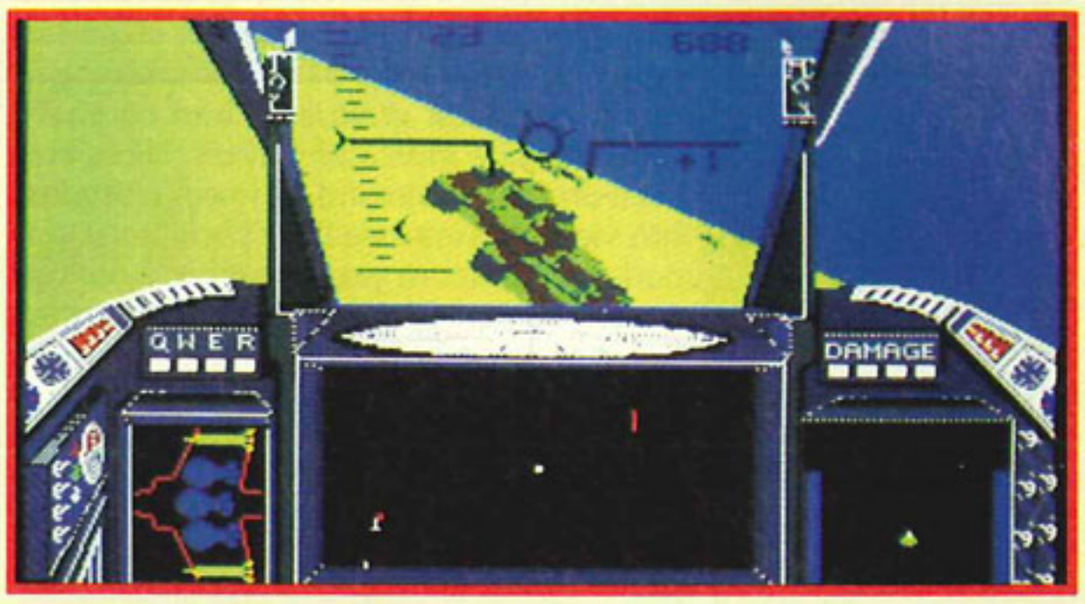
The joystick is an excellent substitute for the control-column in a military jet and so it is with some puzzlement that Anco have incorporated the controls within the mouse. Pushing the mouse forwards and backwards causes the aircraft to descend and ascend which registers on the Pitch and Roll display and Altimeter, while shifting the mouse to the left and right causes the jet to bank uncontrollably in the corresponding direction. Naturally, the mouse-ball is linear and not fixed, which makes controlling the angle of the bank quite impossible. Jump Jet contains five levels of difficulty which are indicated by progressive R.A.F. ranks. Choosing Flight Lieutenant allows you to make nine mistakes, whereas the higher ranks allow fewer warnings.

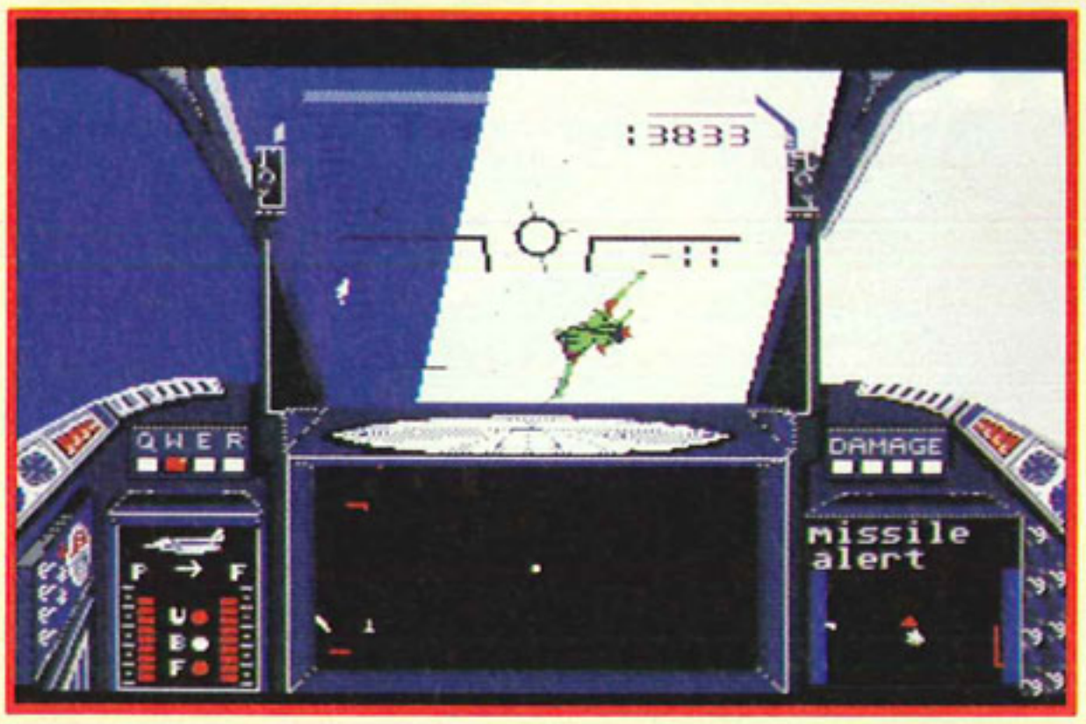
Each mission is flown over sea, which is not exactly conducive to interesting and varied flight. In fact, with the exception of a few clouds and the occasional enemy aircraft, you encounter very little during the game. Although the enemy aircraft are made up of solid graphics and come into view at five miles, you have no choice but to engage the intruders and press the 'M' key to activate the weaponry sights. The gun-sight is fixed and so you must manoeuvre the aircraft until the enemy are within the sights. Then, tapping the 'L' key locks on to the target and pressing the right-hand mouse button launches a missile. If you score a direct hit, the aircraft explodes into a dramatic fireball. Finally, you must relocate the aircraft-carrier on the radar and return to base.

Jump Jet is an over-simplified simulation, which can be played with the minimum of reference to the instruction manual. The mouse controls are unrealistic for a military jet and the joystick controls would undoubtedly have improved the game-play. As described Jump Jet leans more towards arcade entertainment and consequently should not be misinterpreted as a realistic aircraft simulation.

Strike Force Harrier

Strike Force Harrier comprises a thorough and unforgiving flight and combat simulation and, at its simplest level, you can fly straight into a combat situation against an abundance of enemy aircraft. For security reasons, it is claimed, the controls and



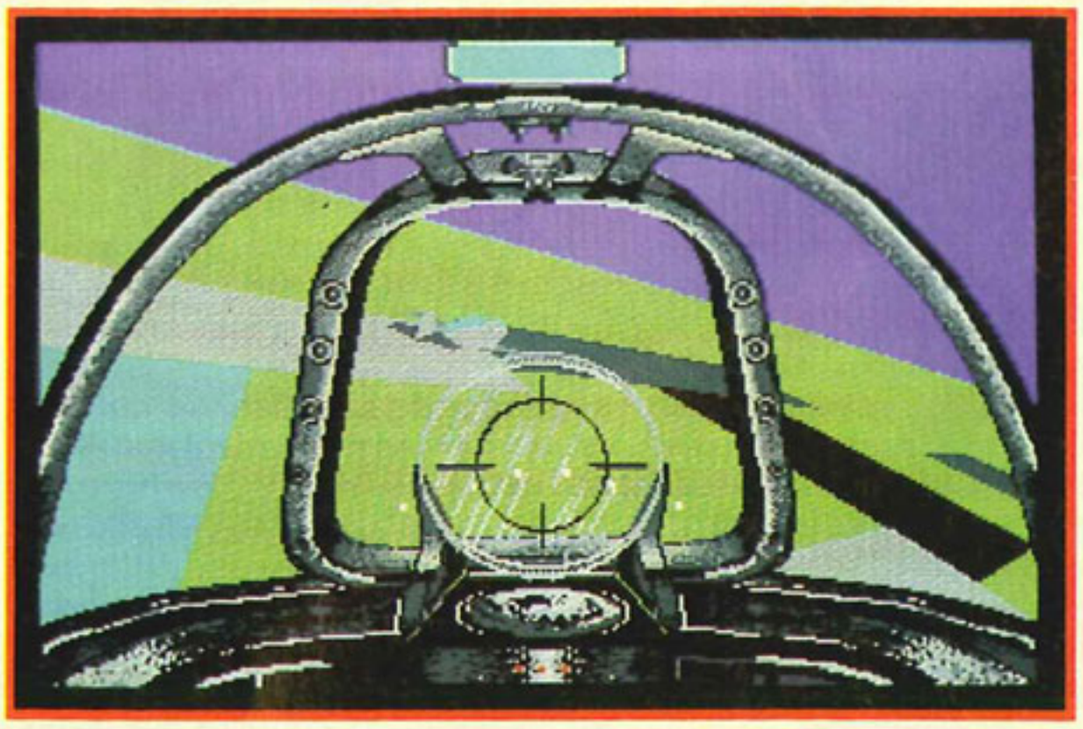


instrumentation are not an exact replication of the Harrier, although I cannot imagine the leaders of the Soviet military forces crowding around an ST at the Kremlin. In contrast to the all-action Combat mode, selecting Practice encompasses take-off procedure, navigation, combat and landing. There are three levels of difficulty determined by a decrease in the aircraft's tolerance to error and increase enemy presence.

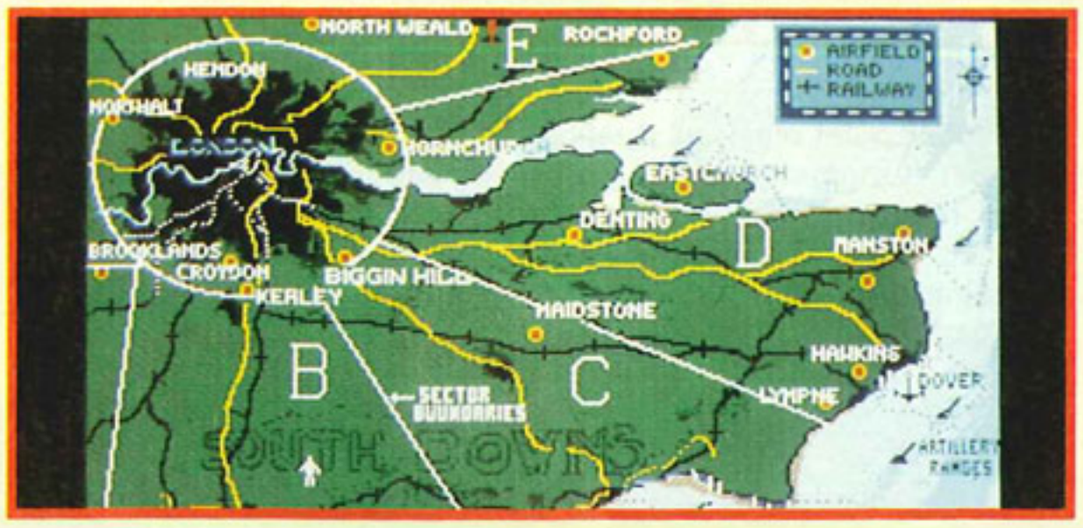
As described, the instrumentation is not accurate, but it contains a full complement of conventional equipment which has been given a modern, bordering on futuristic, interpretation. Selecting 'Combat' places you above the clouds at 10,000 feet in a confrontation with a squadron of enemy jets. A so-called Friend or Foe Tracking System traces your progress and pinpoints mountains, ground installation and SAM missile bases on the ground and enemy aircraft above the clouds. The FOFTRAC pinpoints enemy presence within an area of eighty square miles, but an Attack Radar acts as a late-warning system, showing close enemy position and pursuing missiles.

You have the choice of conventional or vertical take-off, both of which have been given a simplified interpretation. Once airborne, easing back on the joystick increases your altitude and at ten thousand feet you cut through a thick blanket of cloud. The joystick affords responsive and accurate control, but if you choose a high-ranking level of difficulty, the aircraft demands fewer errors. At this altitude you are exposed to attack from enemy aircraft and SAM missiles, while below cloud cover, radar-controlled anti-aircraft artillery maintain a constant and accurate barrage of fire. Above or below the clouds, the scrolling is remarkably smooth and the lower your altitude, the more ground detail is visible. Military manoeuvres, ground bases and terrain undulation are clearly visible.

Strike Force Harrier encompasses simulation and combat in separate options. The scrolling is smooth, ground detail is good and the joystick controls are responsive. Although the cockpit instrumentation is a futuristic interpretation of conventional equipment, it is quite plausible. The accompanying flight manual is in booklet form and takes you through the various take-off and flight procedures step by step, with an additional five pages which explain various defensive and offensive flight manoeuvres to help you during the mission. In short, Strike Force Harrier is the best military jet simulation available for the ST.



Spitfire 40



Appropriately, we begin this supertest with a simulation of the oldest aircraft available for the ST. Spitfire 40 offers fighter and bomber option and four flying modes, which individually incorporate various aspects of flight. Selecting 'Game' places you immediately at 10,000 feet in a combat situation, whereas 'Practice' and 'Combat' modes encompass take-off, flight and combat. My initial observation of the cockpit layout was the complete absence of instrumentation, which is housed in a separate screen. Tapping the space-bar replaces the cockpit screen with the instrumentation panel, which incorporates conventional instrumentation, such as an Artificial Horizon, Compass, Altimeter and Airspeed and Pitch indicators, all of which are fully usable.

Selecting Practice or Combat mode places you on the runway for take-off and, with the absence of a keyboard function diagram, you must follow the instruction manual's take-off checklist. With the instrumentation panel on screen, you must wait for the fuel tank to be filled, put the flaps up by pressing the 'F' key, push throttle to 2000 rpm with the 'Q' key and, as ground speed reaches 100 mph, ease back on the joystick to take off. As the Spitfire leaves the ground, pressing 'U' retracts the undercarriage and the rpm should be reduced to 3000. If the take-off procedure is followed to the letter, it is a relatively simple manoeuvre.

Once airborne, the terrain is entirely green with little variation to enhance the effect of movement. Uniquely, however, pressing F3 reveals ground detail, such as patchwork fields, buildings, roads and railways, which become more distinguishable at low altitude. During flight, the joystick is extremely responsive and there is no limit to how hard you can bank the aircraft. It is often necessary to toggle from the cockpit to the instrumentation panel in order to check fuel levels, altitude and airspeed.

Combat is quite excellent in Spitfire 40, with solid-graphic Messerschmidts moving as smoothly as separately-animated, solid graphics will allow. The practice mode contains a token representation of enemy presence, but you are briefed on how many enemy planes must be intercepted in Combat mode. There are no weaponry sights in the cockpit and so the Spitfire must be physically directed at the enemy in order to fire. Locating the airfield and landing is the most difficult aspect of Spitfire 40, as the majority of the manoeuvre must take place with the instrumentation panel on screen, so that the descent and airspeed can be monitored.

Only 'The Few' could say whether Spitfire 40 is a faithful interpretation of flying this classic aircraft. I am, however, qualified to recommend it for its entertainment value. Nevertheless, it is a shame that the instrumentation could not have been housed within the cockpit screen.

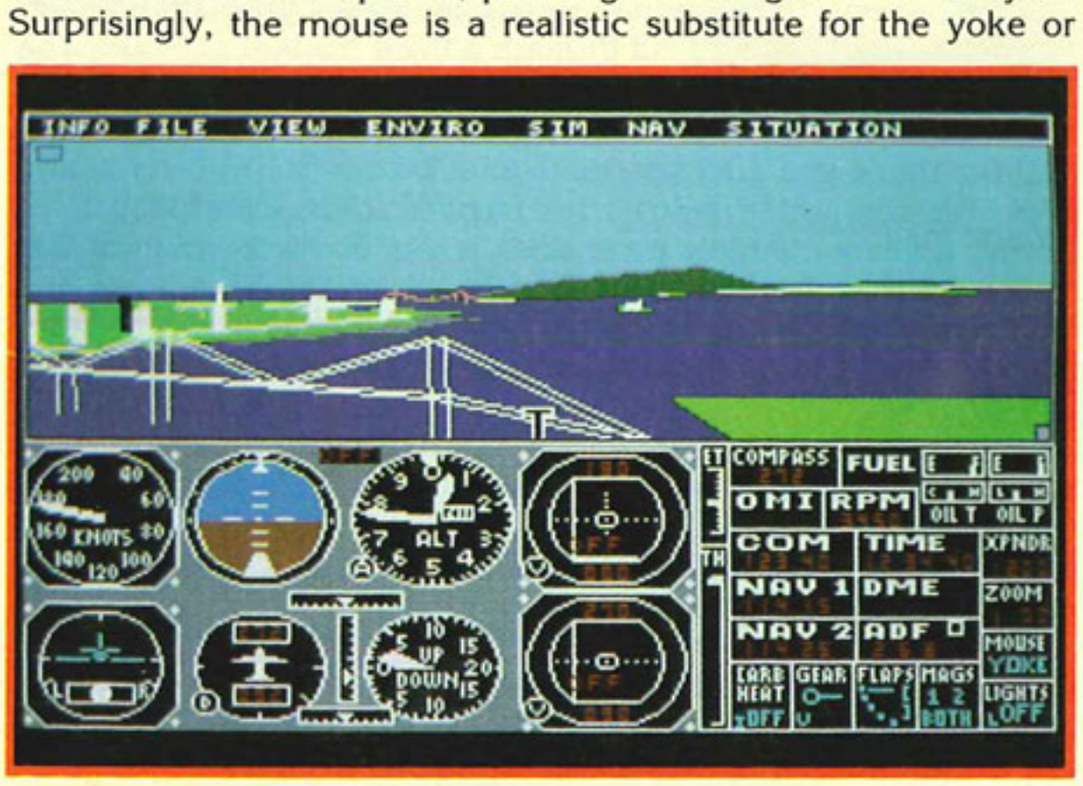
Flight Simulator II

Short of devoting the entire magazine to this aircraft simulation, it would be impossible to cover every aspect in detail. Suffice it to say, Flight Simulator II is the most thorough simulation in this supertest. You have the choice of piloting a single-engine, prop-driven Cessna or a Gates Learjet. The Cessna offers a realistic interpretation of flight, whereas the Learjet is more forgiving to error. Selecting the Cessna entitles you to choose World War I combat, which certainly breaks the monotony. The environment can affect flight and so the weather conditions and wind speed can be adjusted by pulling down 'Enviro' from the menu bar. The mouse selects these options from the menu bar and also has complete control over the aircraft.

The instrumentation panel, which comprises conventional dials and modern digital readout, can be dragged down with the mouse to give more room to the view through the cockpit window. Initially, the cockpit window displays the runway, terrain and horizon, but selecting 'View' from the menu-bar enables you to look from the left, right or rear of the aircraft and from the control tower. With all these view options, pressing F10 magnifies the subject. Surprisingly, the mouse is a realistic substitute for the yoke or control-column in a commercial aircraft and before take-off you can adjust the sensitivity of the controls. Holding down the left-hand button and dragging the mouse back and forth decreases and increases the throttle.

Nudging the mouse to the left releases the brake and pushing forward increases the throttle and the aircraft proceeds to travel forward. The throttle indicator must show maximum rpm before the aircraft can take-off, then releasing the button and drawing the mouse back slightly, causes 'stick back' or up elevator and the aircraft should leave the ground. Once airborne, slight left and right movements are required to bank the aircraft and changes in direction and altitude must be made gradually, and carefully monitored on the Aileron and Attitude indicator. Rivers, lakes and mountains can easily be seen on the terrain and, at lower altitudes, roads and bridges come into view. Adverse weather conditions can affect flight and heavy clouds can obscure your vision and darken the skies. In these conditions, you can climb to an altitude above the clouds. Night flight, however, is perhaps the most challenging mode, as your only visual reference is to lights on the ground.

We have looked at a variety of titles with varying degrees of realism, but Flight Simulator II is, without doubt, the most complete. An indication of this thoroughness is indicated by the accompanying 140-page flight manual. The mouse controls are an excellent substitute for the control yoke and the instrumentation reacts realistically to your directions. This is simply the most recommendable simulation available on the ST.



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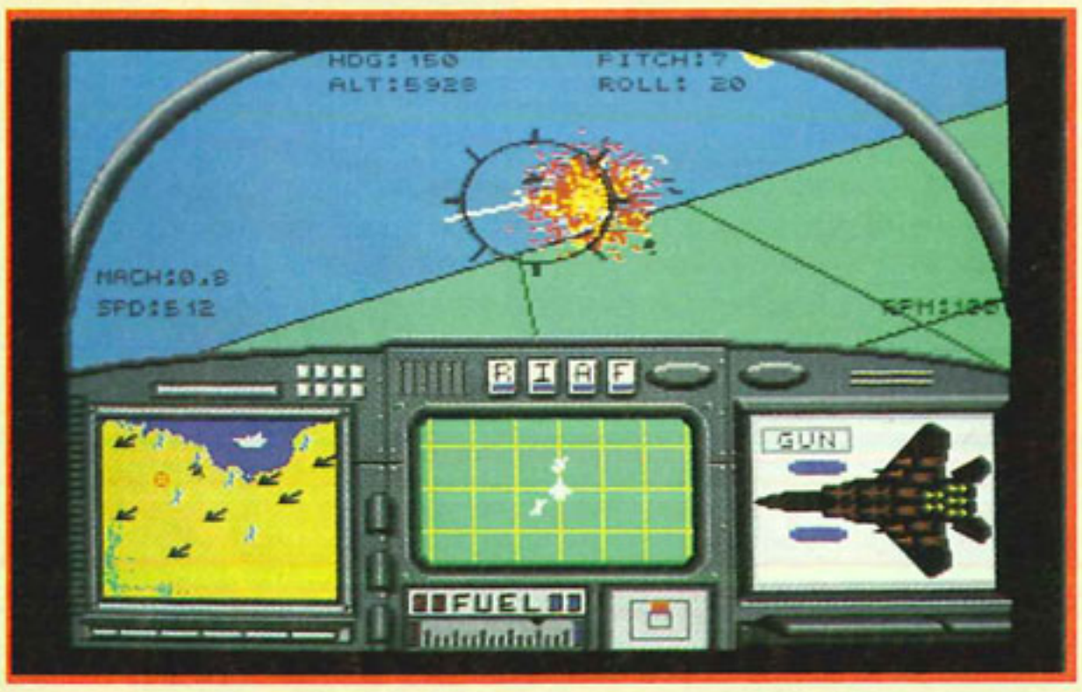
F15 Strike Eagle

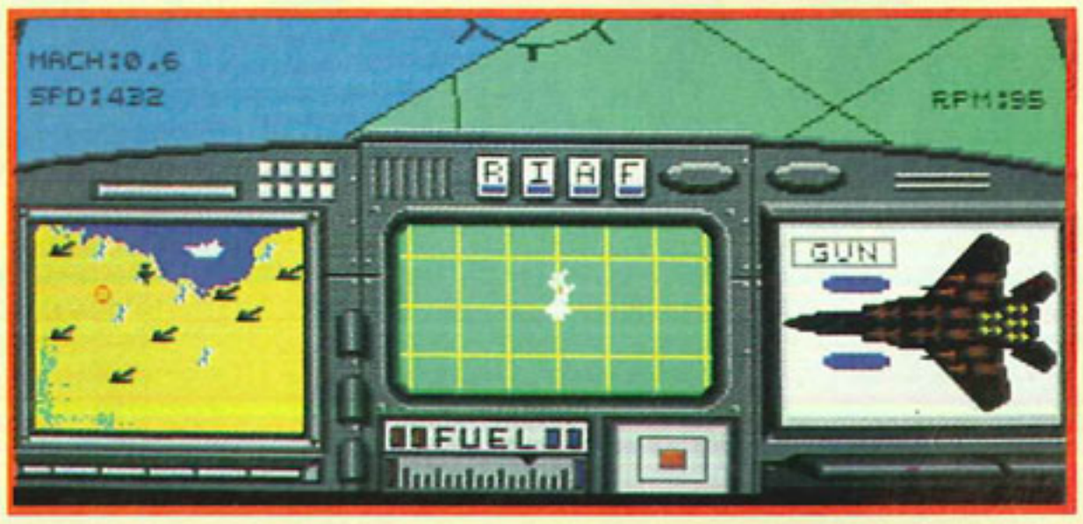
F15 Strike Eagle first soared through the jerky blue skies of certain eight-bit machines over three years ago, and its success opened the hangar door to a whole squadron of aircraft simulations. There are four levels of difficulty, from Arcade through to Ace, which contain an increase in authentic aircraft idiosyncrasies. Cockpit equipment includes a Head-up Display projected on the windshield and a selection of unconventional instrumentation. The HUD comprises a circular gun-sight and a smaller sight which locks on to targets. The instrumentation panel beneath the cockpit windshield houses a radar which pinpoints enemy aircraft and missiles within your immediate airspace, while a Horizontal Situation Display shows the location of enemy ground targets.

Each of the seven separate missions take place over volatile areas in the Middle East and Vietnam and the primary objective in each mission is to locate and destroy all enemy ground targets. You begin the mission engaged in combat with an enemy interceptor jet. The secondary gunsight locks on to the target and pressing the firebutton activates 50-round bursts of 20 mm cannon fire. The terrain is segmented into rectangular grids to enhance the effect of movement and speed, although there is no visible undulation on the surface. The Horizontal Situation Display indicates the location of the enemy ground bases and traces your position. On nearing the target, you must descend to a low altitude by pushing forward on the joystick.

The closer you are to the target the more frequently the enemy dispatch interceptor planes. The target becomes visible at about a thousand feet and the secondary sight should lock on then; pressing the 'B' key launches a bomb. A number of passes are necessary for effective bombing with the constant threat of SAM missiles homing in on your white-hot engines. The joystick controls are sluggish and a little jerky and it is tempting to wrench the joystick in frustration. However, you soon discover that slight and precise correcting movements are far more effective. Bombing raids are time, fuel and ammunition-consuming and it is advisable to relocate your aircraft carrier on the HSD and return to base. A SAM missile is usually launched in a last ditch attempt by the enemy. A message warns of SAM missile launch and pressing the space-bar reveals a rear view - a white speck confirms that you are being pursued by a heat-seeking missile.

As expected, Microprose have written an informative manual to accompany this simulation. The scrolling is somewhat jerky and the jet's roll-rate is sluggish (roughly 60 degrees per second). Nevertheless, considering the age of F15 Strike Eagle, it is a tribute to Microprose that it is still considered by many to be the best jet aircraft simulation.





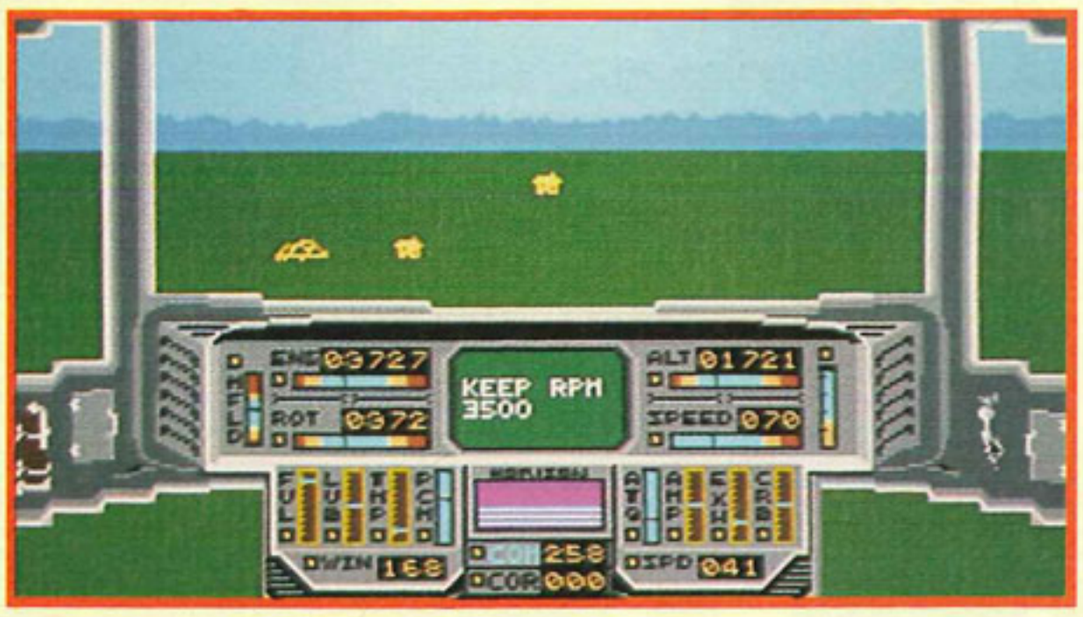
Super Huey

Unlike the majority of simulations that deal with conventional aircraft, the UH-1X, or Super Huey, is an experimental concept helicopter. Therefore, we must assume that the futuristic cockpit layout is imaginative rather than realistic. The control system requires the joystick, keyboard and Function key commands. However, there is no need for a keyboard overlay or diagram because you enter direct commands into the on-board computer, such as 'POW' to power-up. Super Huey was the first helicopter simulation to incorporate realistic Cyclic and Collective modes within the joystick. The Collective mode is engaged by pressing the firebutton and the joystick controls vertical thrust, and on releasing the firebutton the Cyclic mode governs the forward thrust during flight.

With the exception of an Artificial Horizon, there is no conventional instrumentation to identify with in the cockpit. However, a small monitor which is located in the centre of the console allows two-way communication with the computer, which is more convenient than realistic. The instructions for take-off must be followed precisely and you have to wait for the engine to warm up before the controls become operational. Pressing the firebutton and manipulating the joystick should regulate the throttle, but there is some delay before the revs begin to increase. At 1200 rpm, the rotor speed increases to a tenth of the engine speed and the joystick must be redirected forward in Collective mode for take off.

Once airborne, ground detail is distinguishable and the many buildings and radars that are scattered across the terrain enhance the effect of movement. Super Huey has three missions: Rescue and Exploration, which both require navigational skills; and Combat, which allows you to use weaponry which is not even on the M.O.D's drawing-board yet. Each mission takes place over a different terrain and, in Rescue, stranded personnel are lost on a mountainous and snowy waste and you must track their homing device on a Rescue Frequency indicator. The task in the Explore assignment, however, is one of reconnaissance and locating an enemy base. However, Combat is by far the most exciting option, with constant air and ground attacks to contend with.

Super Huey is a futuristic helicopter and, as described, the electronic instrumentation is more imaginative than realistic. However, this was the first simulation to incorporate the Cyclic and Collective modes within the joystick. Once airborne, the scrolling is relatively smooth with distinctive ground detail on three very different terrains. Additionally, although there are only three missions, the coordinates and locations vary from game to game. Super Huey may not be a realistic simulation of a conventional aircraft, but it is challenging, detailed and complex.



Apache Gunship

Gunship combines realistic simulation of flight and combat in an AH-64 Apache. A substantial operations and flight manual can be used as a reference throughout the simulation and, by way of an initiation test, a military vehicle is selected from a library in the manual for you to identify. Correct identification allows you to bypass flight school and select a mission. Duty assignments can be selected in the safe skies over Northern America, the volatile Middle East or against Soviet advances in Europe. The quality of the enemy and adverse weather conditions can be adjusted on the Reality screen and a suggested risk level is given after your selections. After a mission briefing, an Arming screen enables you to arm and equip the helicopter for the mission.

The cockpit instrumentation combines conventional dials with modern digital displays. This includes a so-called CRT display which encompasses a grid coordinate map, radio message interpreter and, in combat, it locks on to and magnifies the target. The joystick controls the attitude of the aircraft, but Gunship uses an abundance of function keys. Thoughtfully however, Microprose have included an excellent keyboard overlay. After familiarization with the instrumentation and functions, the flight manual comprehensively tutors you through take-off procedure. The joystick contains the Cyclic mode which controls and corrects the flight of the helicopter and Collective Mode, which regulates the vertical lift of the aircraft.

Once airborne, changing to Cyclic pitches the aircraft downwards causing forward momentum. At its most realistic level, the take-off manoeuvre is affected by pitch and roll and low altitude turbulence, but you can increase altitude quickly with Cyclic pitch-up to compensate. From the air, the terrain is by far the most outstanding and realistic in this super test. With the CRT in Map mode, you can pinpoint the enemy installations and bases and plot your progress towards them. Flying at a low altitude avoids radar and you can use the hills as cover from enemy fire. The ground detail is excellent and by maintaining a low altitude, you can hover just above the hills, fire at the enemy installation and drop to avoid retaliatory fire. The Apache is well armed with Hellfire and Sidewinder missiles and 30mm cannon. Additionally, chaff offers some protection from the constant threat of SAM missile and enemy aircraft attack.

Microprose have combined believable realism with enthralling entertainment and excellent graphics. At tutorial level, Gunship offers the most comprehensive flight training and, once experienced, the many and varied missions maintain your interest. From arming the Apache to military decoration ceremony, Gunship is the most complete simulation available on the ST.

To Sum Up...

Game	Difficulty	House	Price	Telephone
Apache Gunship	AVE-HARD	Microprose	£24.99	0666 54326
F-15 Strike Eagle	AVERAGE	Microprose	£24.95	0666 54326
Flight Simulator II	AVE-HARD	Sublogic	£49.95	N/A
Jump Jet	EASY	Anco	£14.95	0322 92513
Spitfire 40	AVERAGE	Mirrorsoft	£24.95	01-377 4645
Strike Harrier	AVERAGE	Mirrorsoft	£24.95	01-377 4645
Super Huey	HARD	Cosmi	£19.95	N/A

Game	Graphics	Sound	Addictiveness	Overall
Apache Gunship	84%	65%	88%	86%
F-15 Strike Eagle	53%	50%	68%	64%
Flight Simulator II	81%	65%	82%	81%
Jump Jet	44%	50%	51%	49%
Spitfire 40	50%	50%	62%	61%
Strike Harrier	75%	50%	76%	73%
Super Huey	59%	55%	72%	69%

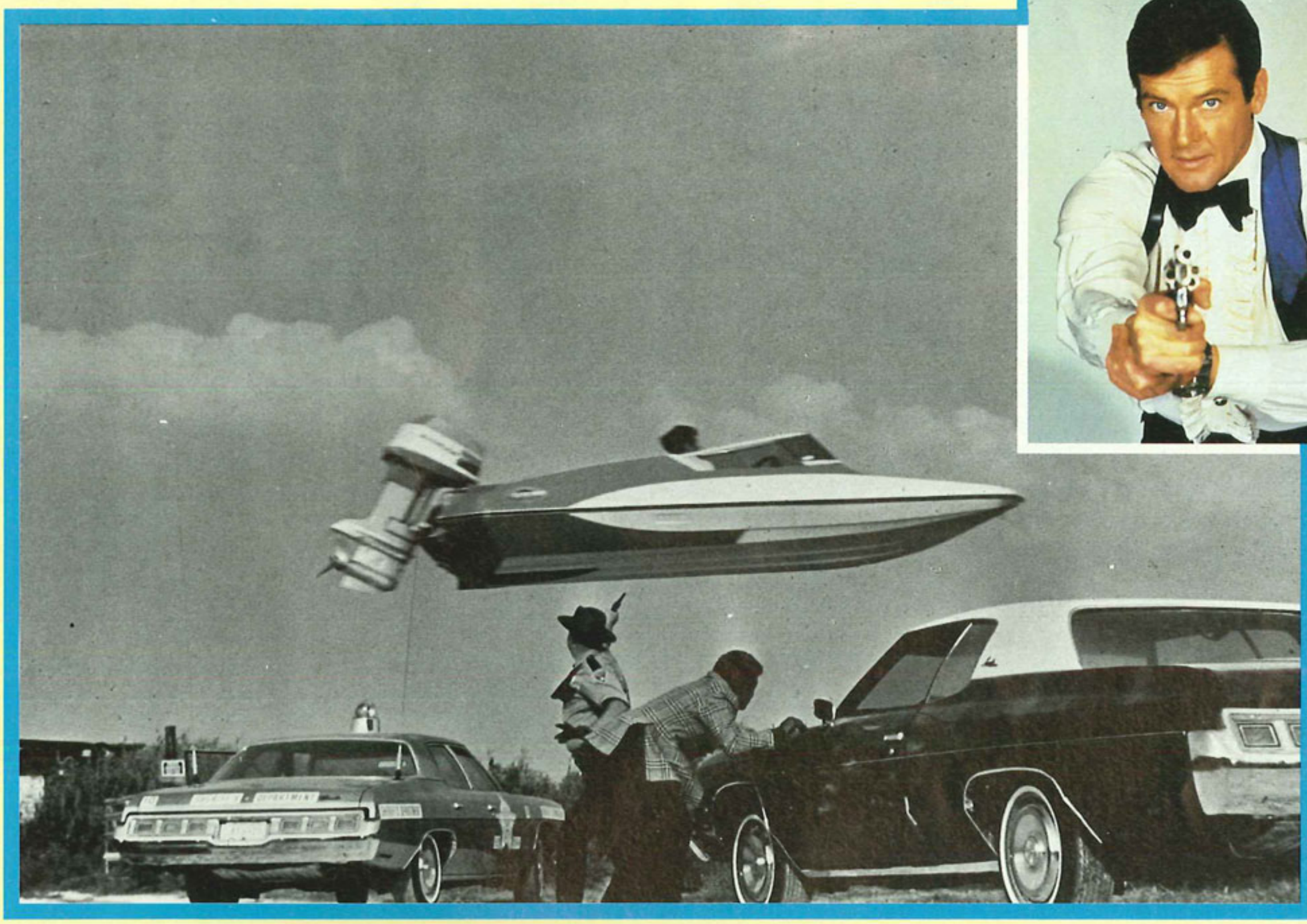
My Name is Bond...

Five copies of the 'Live and Let Die' video and the official James Bond Book to be won.

Domark are soon to be releasing the game based on the Bond movie, Live and Let Die, and are offering FIVE fantastic prizes based around the game. Each winner will receive a video film of Live and Let Die, starring Roger Moore as James Bond and Jane Seymour as Solitaire. The lucky winners will also receive a book, entitled The Official James Bond Movie Book, that gives the entire history of the Bond movies from Doctor No, Goldfinger and From Russia with Love right up to The Living Daylights in glorious colour, with over 200 stills taken from the films - essential reading for all movie buffs.

Many of the answers can be found within the magazine (you may even come accross a few of them on this very page!) so pick up your pen, fill in the answers on the form provided and post it to: ST Action (Live and Let Die), to reach us before 11th July 1988.

...James Bond!



The all important Questions

1 - Complete the saying: 'My name is Bond, _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _'
2 - Name two Bond movies, other than Live and Let Die
3 - Who played Bond in the film Live and Let Die
4 - What is the name of 'M's secretary who appears in all the Bond movies? Is it:
a) Moneypenny b) Margret Thatcher or c) Brigitte Bardot?
5 - What is James Bonds favourite weapon? Is it::
a) Nuclear Submarine b) Chieftain Tank or c) Walther PPK Pistol
6 - What is the codename given for the technical genius who invents things, such as: the Aston Martin with the ejector seat and the tear gas umbrella? Is it:
a) 'ST' b) 'RS232' c) 'BBC' or d) 'Q'

Answer to Question 1 : .....
Answer to Question 2 : .....
Answer to Question 3 : .....
Answer to Question 4 : .....
Answer to Question 5 : .....
Answer to Question 6 : .....

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Send entry to:
Bond Competition,
ST Action,
10 Theatre Lane
Chichester,
West Sussex
PO19 1SR

WINNERS

Llamasoft Competition winners

The competition set in the first issue of ST Action in conjunction with Llamasoft is now over and for those that entered, here are the lucky winners:

Jonathan Ray, Shrewsbury; Phillip Wright, Lewisham; Scott D Wallace, Yealmpton; Mr D J Christie, Alnwick; Mr J Holsgrove, Ickenham; Mr B Weatherstone, Meopham; P Caswell, Ebbw Vale; Kevin McNally, Stockport; P J Bendall, Ipswich and Robin Baker, Shoreham by Sea.

Each of the above will receive a copy of Trip-A-Tron from Llamasoft. Many congratulations to the ten. For those of you who are interested, the answers were:

1 - The Vicuna or Llama
2 - Because it was hunted almost to extinction.
3 - Defenda.
4 - b/ Mama Llama.
5 - KML. If said quickly the language used in Trip-A-Tron sounds like 'camel'.

There you have it. However, there were some very amusing entries, particularly the question asking why the Vicuna Llama is so rare. The top silly answers were as follows:

1) Jeff Minter has them all on his hard disk!
2) It lives in North Africa and can't swim.
3) There is no South. American Camel; it does not exist.
4) It was eaten by the Incas in Peru.
5) They can only have one child per year.
6) Due to poor climate.
7) There are so few!

We won't print the names of the readers responsible for these, but thanks for making us laugh anyway.

Electronic Arts Competition

The winner of the day out at the Brands Hatch Racing School is N H Oughton of Moreton-in-the-Marsh, Glos. Congratulations Mr Oughton and we hope you enjoy your day driving a Formula First racing car around Brands Hatch. As for the twenty five runners-up, who each receive an Electronic Arts T-shirt and mug, they are, in no particular order:

K Starling, Littlehampton; S Siddiqui, Chiswick; D Miles, Rochester; C Bailey, Compton; N Ford, Penryn; P Wallace, Iver Heath; P Smith, Port Isaac; L Gyer, Brentwood; A Lumb, Sheffield; H Mossop, Gt Missenden; D Cresdee, Oxford; G Standing, Alton; A Nash, Doncaster; A Bailey, Leicester; P Bradstock, Loughborough; A Reynolds, Northampton; P Bromley, Bristol; M Gelpi, Portsmouth; K Dyer, Hetton-le-Hole; B Kelly Evans, Brighton; P Hopkins, Newcastle; S Fenwick, Liverpool; S Sanderson, Birmingham; K Fletcher, Bristol and P Miles, Muswell Hill.

The answers to the questions set are:

1) 5167cc
2) 5 secs
3) Because of the red cam covers on the engine. Testa (head) Rossa (red).
4) Brazilian (Nelson Piquet)
5) Trip Hawkins

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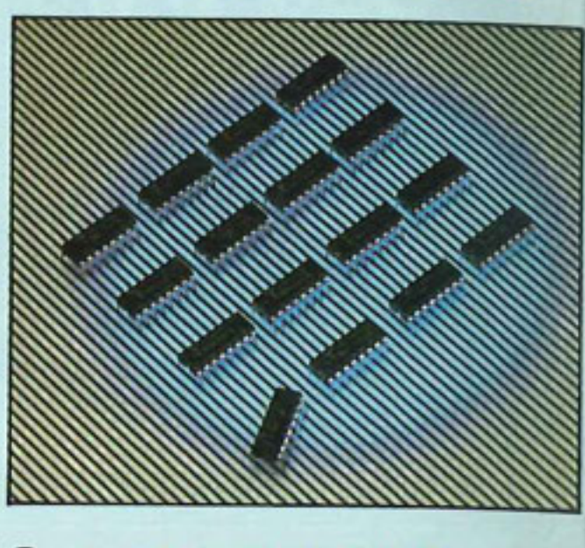

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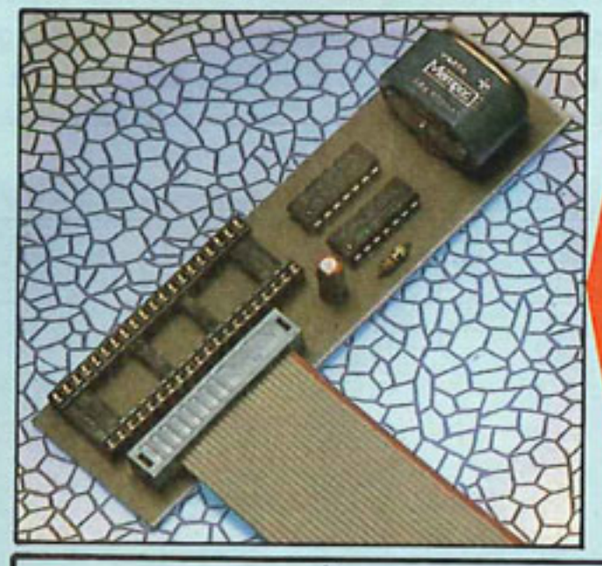

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You will be taught the basics of flying and even have a chance of landing the aircraft. You will then be able to compare for yourself the differences between real flight and simulated flight.

Also at Goodwood is the only two seater Spitfire in the UK and you will be invited to have a look around to see for yourself what the young, often 19 or 20-year old, pilots, such as Douglas Bader, Sailor Malan and Johnnie Johnson flew in the Battle of Britain in order to defeat the hordes of aircraft from the Third Reich.

Below are three close up photos of recent Mirrorsoft games - all you need to do is lable them correctly from the list of games below and send the form to the usual Chichester address to reach us before 11th July 1988; mark your envelope 'Mirrorsoft Competition'. Who knows, the name that is pulled out of the hat might just be yours...

Oids - A spacey little number Dungeon Master - A gruesome adventure
Spitfire 40 - This one's bound to take off!

Photo 'A' is: .....

Photo 'B' is: .....

Photo 'C' is: .....

Name .....

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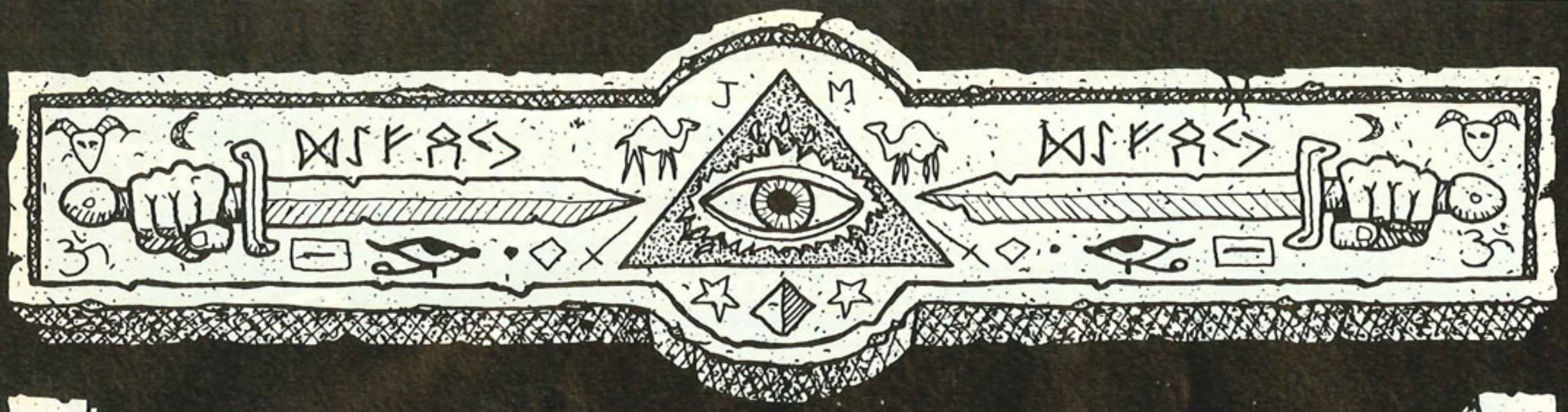

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***THIS IS TRIP-A-TRON.** It will run on any version of the ST from 512K up. It comes in a form which is instantly useable but behind that facade is a comprehensive and fascinating range of controls and variables which allows the adventurous user to experiment creatively, producing unique and amazing effects. On ST's of 1 Meg and up, or combinations of several machines linked via the MIDI interface, TRIP-A-TRON becomes a professional's tool, enabling the artist/composer to lay down graphics and music tracks on video tape, for performance purposes.*

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TRIP-ART LIGHT SYNTHESISER

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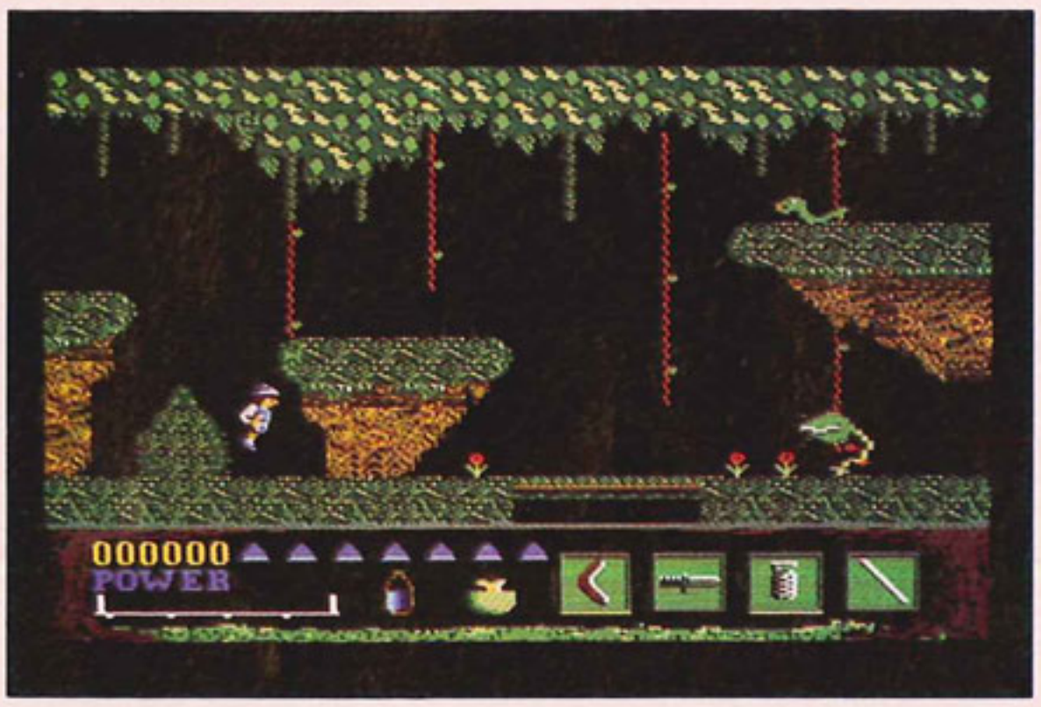
GIVING THE GAME AWAY

Hello, and welcome to the next six jam-packed pages of tips, pokes and maps. I have been very impressed by the amount of tips that have been coming in. Thanks a lot and please keep sending them in. One thing I must mention is that a few of you have sent in tips that have been lifted straight out of other magazines. Please do not do this as the cheats are then old hat.

Livingstone - Alligator

For infinite lives in this romp around paradise, simply press all the keys on the keyboard, making sure you press the space bar last. Thank you to Kenton Bush from Broadstairs in Kent.



Crystal Castles - Atari

The mysterious Andy L from Rainhill, Merseyside, has sent in these tips for this shoddy conversion of what was a good arcade game.

To warp to the third level, run round to the furthest back corner and jump. Also on this screen there is a special warp. When the hat appears, collect it, go up the lift until you get to the top level and then go down the hidden ramp; when you reach the bottom, press fire and you will be warped to level five. This will only work if you reach the bottom of the hidden ramp, whilst wearing the hat.

The Bard's Tale - Electronic Arts

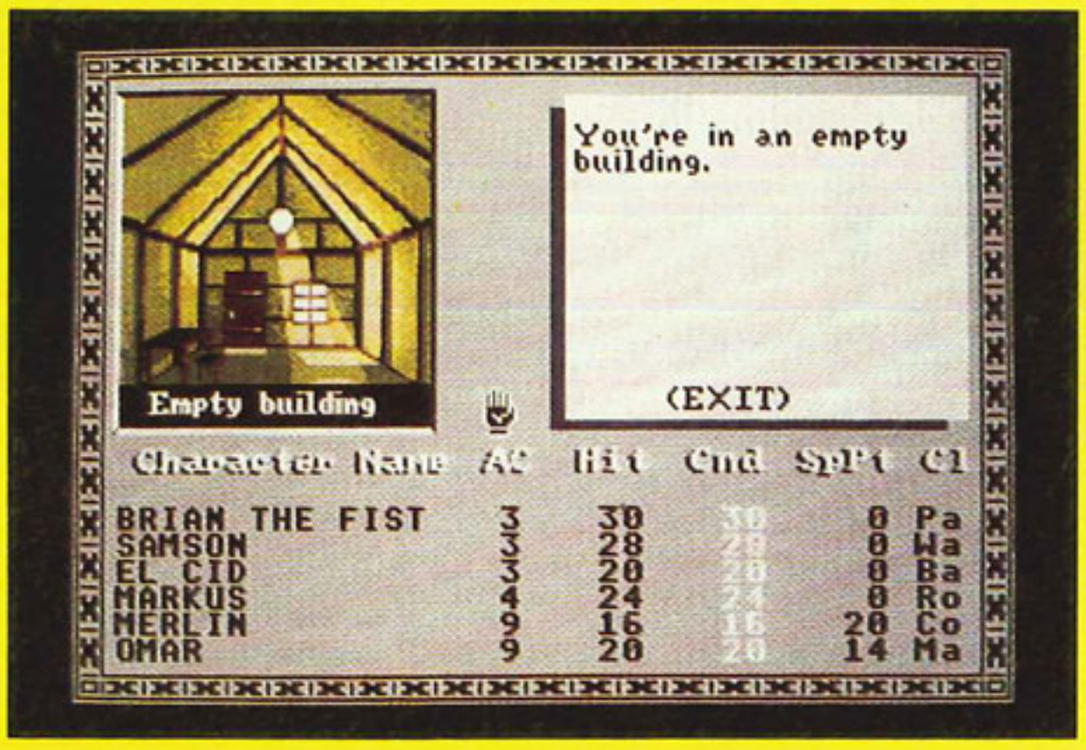
This is one of the best games in the role-playing genre. E. Kyle Dunbar has sent in this useful tip which stops you having to go all the way back if you forget an object.

After saving the group, go through the normal procedure for transferring items. Save the character now holding the item. Remove the character disk and turn the write protect on. Remove the character who originally had the item; you will get an error message, so 'click' on cancel.

The character has now been removed from the party, but not saved on the disk, so add the character from the disk and you will have two characters with the item. Remember to turn the write protect off before removing any characters you want saved.

This method can be used to build up money supplies, pass armour and weapons, as well as creating spare special items.

E. K. D. also writes that if you use the Second Sight or Sorcerer Sight spells, you can identify monsters' weaknesses, and act accordingly.



Karate Kid II - Microdeal

This is getting a bit old now, but it is still one of the best martial art games out. A. Nonymous sent in this useful tip for advancing on a screen. All you have to do is press 'P' and on you go... simple eh?!

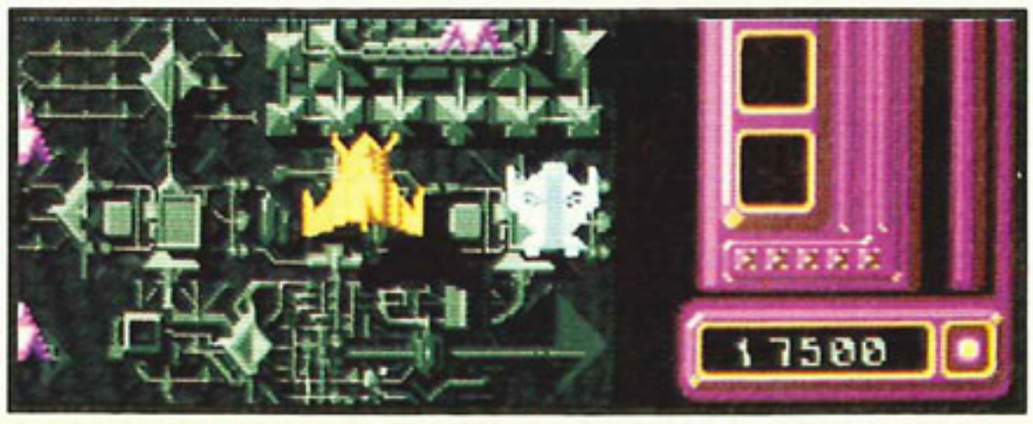
International Karate - Activision

Once again, A. Nonymous comes to the rescue of all you martial art fans out there! If you find the game too slow, press 'X' and '1' to speed up the action, and if that's too fast, 'X' and '4', slows it down.

Goldrunner - Microdeal

More tips for this oldie but goldy. It seems to be just as popular now as when it was first released!

If you press 'F4', only three aliens will come on the screen. Thanks again to Mr A Williams, who also mentions that pressing 'F10' will create some strange effects.

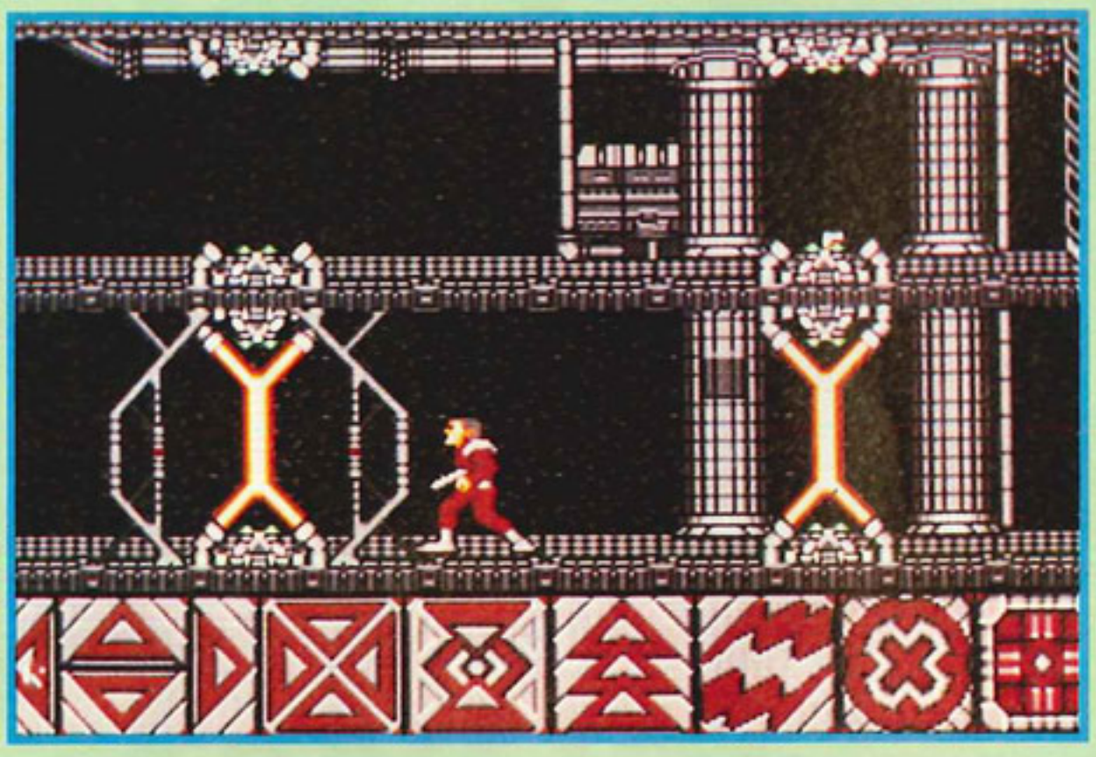


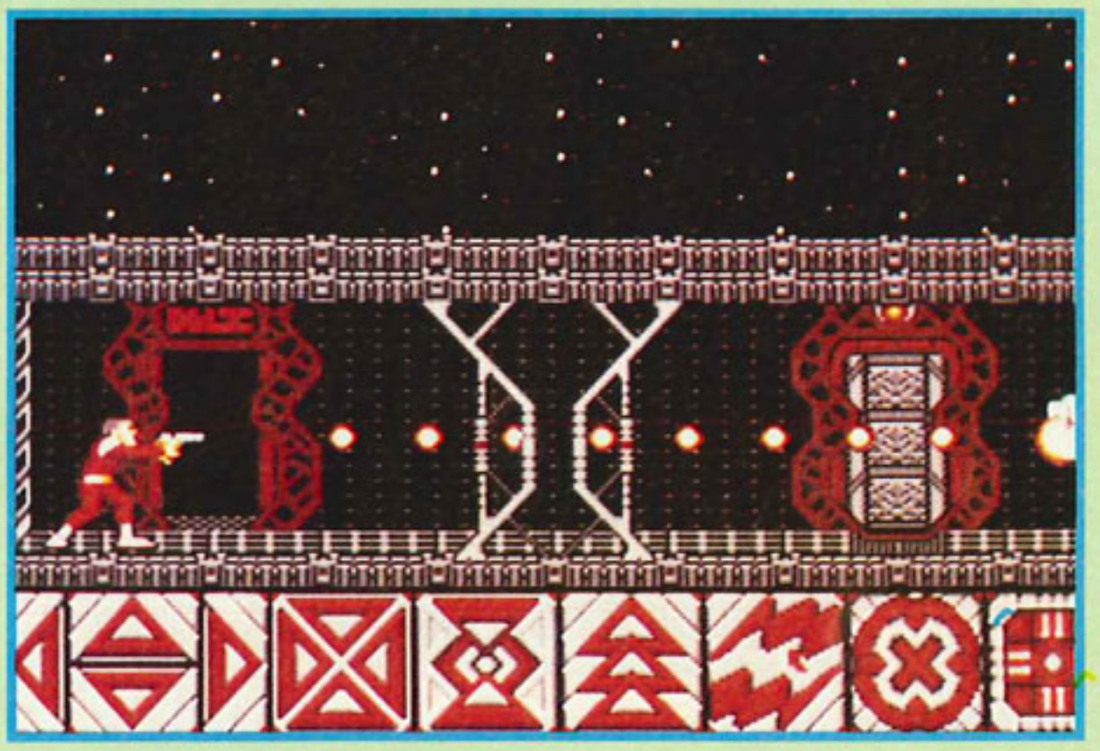
Obliterator - Psygnosis

I found this very disappointing due to its similarity to Pygnosis' previous title, 'Barbarian'. Anyway, if you bought it you may be glad of these tips from M. Jordan from Farnborough in Hampshire.

1. Keys are easier to use than the mouse.
2. Press the 'D' key whilst Drak is running and he will dive and roll. Use this to get past aliens whenever possible.
3. Always fire when entering a room you know is occupied by an alien.
4. When you reach the room with the thick, seemingly impassable column, blast it with the bazooka and it will shatter; and when you return, do so again.
5. When leaving a lift, if you find an alien which is difficult to pass, by using the mouse, point the red dot at Drak's feet and press the right button, keeping it held down. As soon as he is out of the lift, press the left mouse button and keep that down as well. Keep these pressed until the alien has passed Drak and you escape unscathed without any loss of energy.
6. As you progress through the game, the different weapons you find will only kill certain aliens.
7. It is possible to save the game after finding components or whilst using a Personal Shield Regenerator. But only do so if your energy level is high.

Matthew Pawley from Aldershot also sent in a useful tip: When you find some ammunition, collect it and leave the room again. Now re-enter the room and lo and behold the ammo is there again!



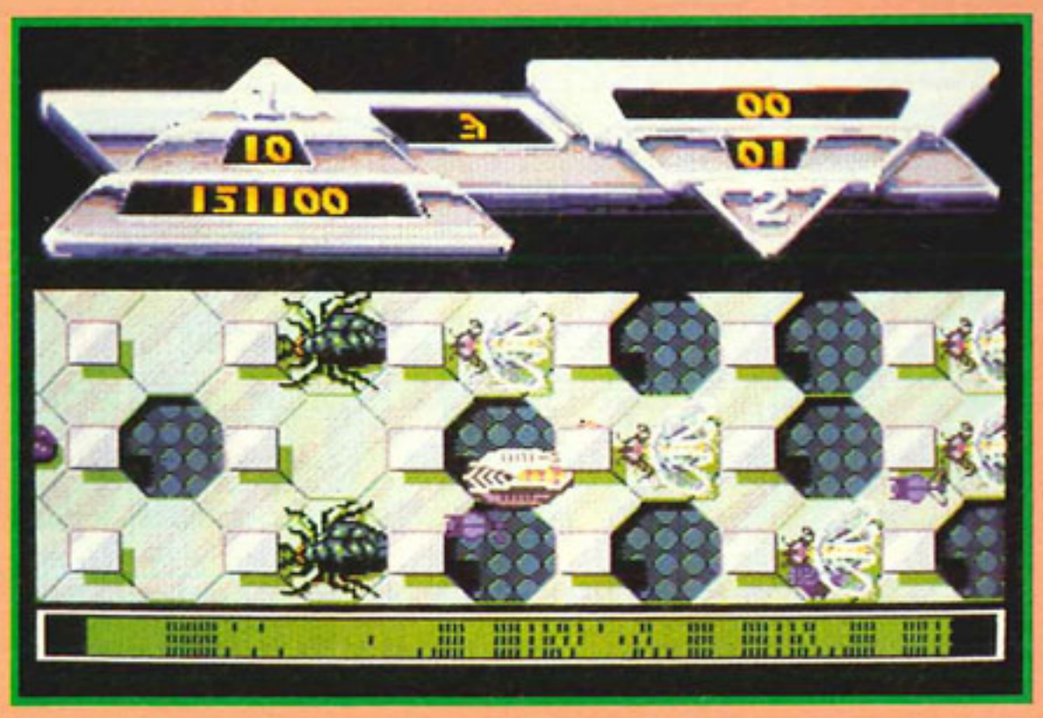


Return to Genesis - Firebird

Champion hacker Mark Lawrence has reported a useful cheat mode in Return to Genesis. At any time type: 'WASP.ASM', this activates the mode and gives you the following new functions:

Press F5 - Makes your ship indestructable.
Press F4 - Changes monitor frequency.
Press CONTROL - Displays program version message.

Some other keys also have an effect. Once you've seen all of the impressive backdrops, and clocked up a mammoth score, the only way to end the game is to select scientist 'Festus' and destroy your ship by pressing the space bar. You can then enter your name on to the permanent high-score table.



Star Wars - Domark

Another classic conversion - one I can play for hours. I can play it for even longer now, thanks to Nathan Woodhouse who harks from Sheffield.

Instead of whizzing around the screen zapping Tie Fighters galore, keep your sights central and keep firing. Since any enemy fire heads towards the middle of the screen, you can mop it up with ease!

Right, that's all I've got space for this month, but please keep your hints and tips rolling in.

For his useful Obliterator tips, M JORDAN wins himself the £20-worth of software. and while I'm at it Kenton Bush also wins a prize for his contribution. Once again, thanks very much and I'll see you next month.

SM

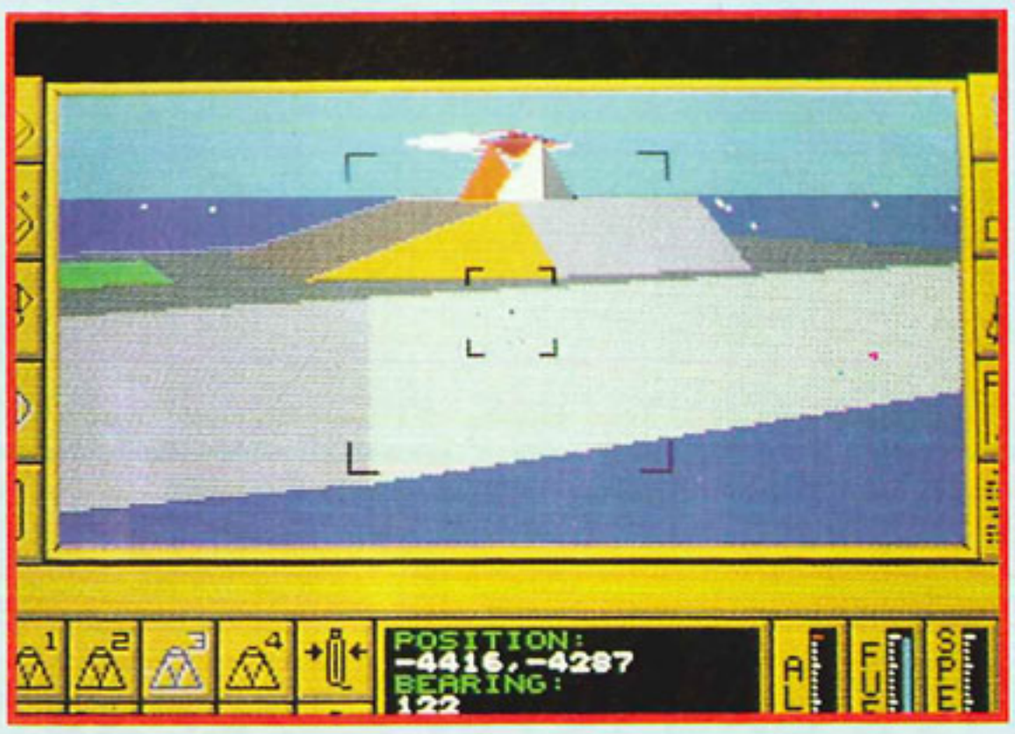
Carrier Command - Rainbird

Not content with his useful Livingstone cheat, Kenton Bush has flown in some useful tips for this stunning simulator.

Attack all enemy islands using your Mantas armed with missiles. Climb to the maximum height and set your speed to maximum then dive on the island.

Taking a Defence Island:

Aim all your Manta's missiles at the Command Centre. If all seven missiles hit the Command Centre and it is not destroyed, then crash your Manta into it - this should do the trick. If all your Mantas have been destroyed and you have not destroyed the Command Centre, then reverse your Carrier towards the Island. Using the Carrier's radar, stop before you get into the enemy aircraft's



range, then use the Carrier's surface-to-surface missiles to destroy the Command Centre.

Once the Command Centre has been destroyed, launch a Walrus carrying whichever type of command pod that you want. When you drop the command pod the entrance to it will be on the left-hand side, so try to make this side face a volcano or hill.

Taking a Resource or Factory Island:

Do not aim your Manta's missiles at the Command Centre this time: instead, aim them at the enemy's ground defence, e.g. their guns and rocket launchers. When these are all destroyed, send in a Walrus armed with a virus bomb and fire it at the entrance to the Command Centre.

Making a Stockpile Island:

Make sure the Stockpile Island is either a Resource or Factory Island and that it is well connected to other friendly Islands.

THE AWESOME STACTION POKES SECTION INCLUDING: Xenon, Oids and BMX Sim

Yet more stunning pokes and cheats from Mark Lawrence. This time it's your chance to master Xenon, BMX Simulator and Oids, and to make life easier for you, Mark has designed a master cheat routine which you can use several times over - just add the game specific data to the bottom of this program.

Due to the copy protection scheme used by Oids, the pokes for this are supplied in the form of a separate program which cannot be used by the master cheat routine. Mark has also written versions of his cheat routines in Fast Basic. And don't forget, if you have the HiSoft Basic compiler, you can use the ST Basic routines directly.

Note: When using the game specific data with the Fast Basic version, change the &H (used by ST Basic) to a '$' which FB prefers.

Next month we'll have another good selection of pokes 'n cheats from Mark

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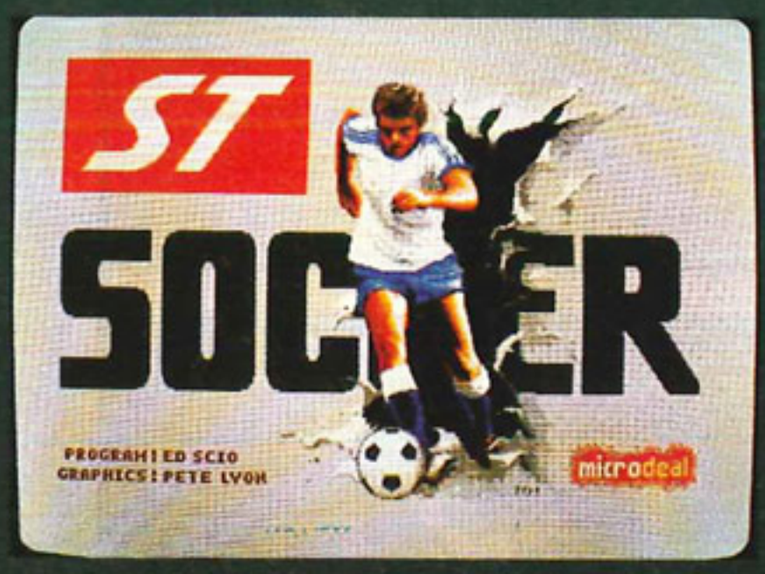

PROGRAMMED BY EDDIE SCIO
GRAPHICS BY PETE LYON

microdeal

```
10    REM ***********Universal Cheat Routine*********************************
20    OPTION BASE 1: DIM A%(128):CHEAT=VARPTR(A%(1))
30    DEF SEG=0: REM  Remove this line if new ST Basic is in use
40    X=CHEAT:READ B
50    WHILE B<>99999
60    POKE X,B:X=X+2
70    READ B
80    WEND
90    REM This code is common to all cheat routines. Type in this listing
100   REM and save it for future use. To use a cheat routine replace the
110   REM lines of code in this program with those in the new listing.
120   DATA &h601a,&h0000,&h00e4,&h0000,&h0000,&h0000,&h0000,&h0000
130   DATA &h0000,&h0000,&h0000,&h0000,&h0000,&hffff,&h4ffa,&h01fe
140   DATA &h2f3c,&h0000,&h0300,&h487a,&hfef4,&h4267,&h3f3c,&h004a
150   DATA &h4e41,&h4fef,&h000c,&h487a,&h0064,&h3f3c,&h0009,&h4e41
160   DATA &h5c8f,&h3f3c,&h0007,&h4e41,&h548f,&h4267,&h487a,&h004a
170   DATA &h3f3c,&h004e,&h4e41,&h41fa,&h0068,&h3018,&hc0fc,&h0006
180   DATA &hd1c0,&h487a,&h0037,&h487a,&h0033,&h2f08,&h2f3c,&h004b
190   DATA &h0003,&h4e41,&h4ff9,&h0007,&h7ff0,&h2f40,&h0004,&h2240
200   DATA &h43e9,&h0100,&h41fa,&h003a,&h3018,&h5340,&h2458,&hd5c9
210   DATA &h3498,&h51c8,&hfff8,&h4ed1,&h2a2e,&h2a00,&h1b45,&h496e
220   DATA &h7365,&h7274,&h2067,&h616d,&h6520,&h6469,&h736b,&h2061
230   DATA &h6e64,&h2070,&h7265,&h7373,&h2061,&h206b,&h6579,&h0000
240   REM ************************************************************
250   REM The following code is game specific.These are the lines
260   REM of code that must be altered to provide cheats for
270   REM different games.
```

```
280   REM ************************************************************
290   REM       Pokes to give infinite weaponary on Xenon
300   REM ************************************************************
310   DATA &h0007
320   REM if you don't want the poke change &h1b42 to &h1b40
330   'wing tip weapons
340   DATA 0,2250,&h1b42
350   'side shot
360   DATA 0,2246,&h1b42
370   'homing missles
380   DATA 0,2274,&h1b42
390   'lasers
400   DATA 0,2254,&h1b42
410   'armour
420   DATA 0,2258,&h1b42
430   DATA &h0000,&h141c,&h0000,&h0000,&h1456,&h0000,&h6175,&h746f
440   DATA &h5c65,&h7269,&h632e,&h7072,&h6700,99999
450   REM ************************************************************
460   BSAVE "XENONCHT.PRG",CHEAT,256
470   REM The above statement saves the cheat routine to disk.
480   REM This is the file that must be double clicked to run the cheat.
490   REM When asked to insert the game disk,do so and press a key.
500   REM It's a good idea to keep all your cheat routines on one disk
510   REM and insert this in drive A when you switch on.
```

```
290   rem Infinite time for BMX SIMULATOR
300   rem ************************************************
310   DATA 1,0,27420,&h4e71
320   DATA &h6175,&h746f,&h5c62,&h6d78,&h2e70,&h7267,&h0000,99999
460   BSAVE "BMXCHT.PRG",CHEAT,256
```

MORE CHEATS...

```
REM **** UNIVERSAL CHEAT ROUTINE FOR FAST BASIC ****

RESERVE CHEAT,256
X=CHEAT:READ B
WHILE B<>99999
{X}&=B:X=X+2
READ B
WEND

REM This code is common to all cheat routines.Type in this listing and save it for future use.To
REM use a cheat routine replace the lines of code in this program with those in the new listing.

DATA $601A,$0,$E4,$0,$0,$0,$0,$0
DATA $0,$0,$0,$0,$0,$FFFF,$4FFA,$1FE
DATA $2F3C,$0,$300,$487A,$FEF4,$4267,$3F3C,$4A
DATA $4E41,$4FEF,$C,$487A,$64,$3F3C,$9,$4E41
DATA $5C8F,$3F3C,$7,$4E41,$548F,$4267,$487A,$4A
DATA $3F3C,$4E,$4E41,$41FA,$68,$3018,$C0FC,$6
DATA $D1C0,$487A,$37,$487A,$33,$2F08,$2F3C,$4B
DATA $3,$4E41,$4FF9,$7,$7FF0,$2F40,$4,$2240
DATA $43E9,$100,$41FA,$3A,$3018,$5340,$2458,$D5C9
DATA $3498,$51C8,$FFF8,$4ED1,$2A2E,$2A00,$1B45,$496E
DATA $7365,$7274,$2067,$616D,$6520,$6469,$736B,$2061
DATA $6E64,$2070,$7265,$7373,$2061,$206B,$6579,$0

REM       DATA LINES GO HERE
REM NOTE: USE $ INSTEAD OF &H SO &H45 BECOMES $45 ETC.
REM       LEAVE OUT THE LINE NUMBERS TOO.

REM ******************************************************
REM The following code is game specific.These are the lines
REM of code that must be altered to provide cheats for
REM different games.
REM ******************************************************

REM Pokes to give weaponary on Xenon
REM ******************************************************

DATA $7
REM if you don't want the poke change $1b42 to $1b40
REM 'wing tip weapons
DATA 0,2250,$1B42
REM  'side shot
DATA 0,2246,$1B42
REM  'homing missles
DATA 0,2274,$1B42
REM  'lasers
DATA 0,2254,$1B42
REM  'armour
DATA 0,2258,$1B42
DATA $0,$141C,$0,$0,$1456,$0,$6175,$746F
DATA $5C65,$7269,$632E,$7072,$6700,99999

REM ******************************************************
BSAVE "xenoncht.prg",CHEAT,256

REM The above statement saves the cheat routine to disk.
REM This is the file that must be double clicked to run the cheat.
REM When asked to insert the game disk,do so and press a key.
REM It's a good idea to keep all your cheat routines on one disk
REM and insert this in drive A when you switch on.
```

MORE CHEATS...

```
REM Infinite time for BMX SIMULATOR
REM ************************************************
DATA 1,0,27420,$4E71
DATA $6175,$746F,$5C62,$6D78,$2E70,$7267,$0,99999
BSAVE "BMXCHT.PRG",CHEAT,256
```

```
REM FAST BASIC ROUTINE FOR INFINITE LIVES ON OIDS V1.0
REM { } SYMBOLS ARE SHIFTED SQUARE BRACKETS

RESERVE CHEAT,1024
BLOAD "A:START.PRG",CHEAT
{CHEAT+$260}&=$357C:{CHEAT+$262}&=$302C
{CHEAT+$264}&=$4718:{CHEAT+$266}&=$4E92
BSAVE "A:START.PRG",CHEAT,770

REM TO USE THIS CHEAT,TYPE IN THIS LISTING, INSERT
REM OIDS DISK AND RUN
REM NOW LOAD GAME AS USUAL
```

```
10    rem ******* Infinite lives for OIDS - ST Basic ************
20    dim a%(770):cheat=varptr(a%(1))
30    def seg=0:'delete if using new basic
40    bload "a:start.prg",cheat
50    poke cheat+&h260,&h357c:poke cheat+&h262,&h302c
```

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HEADLINES

There are many different areas that the computer entertainment industry has to incorporate in order to get the end product, be it a game, joystick or computer, to the consumer. One of these is PR, or Public Relations. Martin Moth sidetracks from the mainstream of computing to visit Headlines PR, one of the main PR companies dealing with the computer entertainment industry.

A potted history

Headlines PR Ltd. was formed on October 1st 1987. It has had previous incarnations under Lesley Mansfield (now with Electronic Arts) and David Crosweller (now head of Infogrames UK). Simon Harvey, the current MD, started his career in the computing arena at CTW (Computer Trade Weekly) as a trainee reporter and worked his way up to Deputy Editor. Last year, however, he had reached a plateau and could go no further with CTW. One thing that he had noticed by working in the journalistic world was that very few PR companies worked for deadlines, that ever-important word to the ears of the computer press. He decided to talk to Lesley and with an offer attracting her to EA, Simon took over Headlines. At that time they were dealing with Robtek, Martech and CRL, and these companies decided to put their faith in Simon and stay with Headlines. After a short while, things started to come together and work picked up. Simon is currently the UK press relations manager for MicroProse, with Headlines representing Martech, Domark and Grand Slam which, according to Simon, is 'a nice company mix'. They also do some work for CRL and two smaller companies, CCS and Exocet, about whom he was very enthusiastic.

As for personnel, Simon started off with just himself and Nadia Singh, who had worked with Lesley Mansfield at Headlines previous to Simon's arrival. They then expanded and took on Lesley Walker, previously at C&VG, thus making up the trio that form Headlines today. As far as sharing the workload goes, Lesley deals with Exocet, CCS and the CRL account, Simon deals with the MicroProse account and both he and Nadia deal with the Domark, Martech and Grand Slam accounts.

Future deals

Not content with six computer software clients, Headlines are moving into other areas and are taking on one major client in the computer industry. Simon declined to say anything further, other than that they are not in the software industry and that he was really looking forward to working with them. He is also talking to a couple of companies in the US. Apparently, they are nothing to do with the computer entertainment industry, but had heard of Headlines and are pretty keen to set up a deal. Of all this, Simon says, 'I guess life is pretty hunky-dory right now!'

However, it is one thing to gain clients, but the trick is to maintain that client base. This involves providing effective PR across all products, letting people know what you are doing and ensuring that you provide

PUBLIC

people with what they want. This, in turn, provides the company with good coverage, which keeps the contracts, which, at the end of the day, is what it's all about.

So, exactly what is PR?

'I think of PR as another form of sales, really. It's just an extension of selling. My client will have a sales manager. Now he is actually dealing with selling units, whereas I am dealing with selling the company and the idea of the company's products to the press. PR is about getting nice people to write and think nice things about you. That is essentially what my clients want me to do. There are many different ways of getting there but, in the end, what my client wants to see is column inches, i.e. written publicity.

It is more than that as well. It's creating a centre of coherent information that is easy to understand, so that magazines know what they can get from us and they can get it quickly and efficiently, within reason. I say within reason, because the software industry runs on programmers. Now, they may be wonderful people, but because of the nature of what they do, things do tend to slip. Understandable maybe, but when you're trying to beat magazine deadlines and ensure that they have the product and all the necessary information that goes with it, then things do tend to get a little bit awkward. This has proved to be a problem on a number of occasions, but there's not really much you can do about it, unfortunately.'

I commented about the fact that companies that are more than willing to help with information, screen shots, visits, etc., are more likely to get better coverage because, if computer journalists can communicate on a more friendly basis, then without really trying, more 'column inches' are written about them. Simon agreed: 'I'm a great believer in the simple process of being sociable with the magazines. At the end of the day, we are all trying to promote the good of entertainment software. We're all in the same boat; we're all trying to make something out of it, and luckily I'm in a position where I enjoy what I do and I like being friendly to people. I'm a great believer in generally 'being a nice chap'. I don't get anything out of being nasty to people. You get some advertising people phoning you up and hassling the living daylights out of you sometimes, and that becomes a bit annoying; but they have their job to do, as well, I suppose.'

Nadia Singh

Simon Harvey

Lesley Walker

A job in the life of Headlines

With so much obvious press attention focussed lately on Martech's Vixen along with Corinne Russell, this was obviously no 'rush job' but a well-thought-out 'promotional package'. I asked Simon if he would run through the PR side of the Vixen game, thus illustrating what is involved in a game promotion. This cannot be construed as definitive for all PR jobs, just an example of one particular variation on a theme. The 'theme', of course, is to get the game noticed, written about and talked about.

'Well, to start with, I'll sit down and talk with my client and we'll discuss what products they have in the pipeline, and how best to address the publicity for them. With the Vixen game, David Martin, of Martech, and I put the whole marketing package together from the original concept of the game. We knew what the game would be, and then from the marketing idea that we had, we then based the woman in the game around Corinne. It may look like the game was written around Corinne which, to a certain extent, it was, but the original concept of the game was there in the first place and, overall, we think that this has been one of Martech's biggest marketing successes to date.

Okay, there has been some stick from certain areas, with some people saying that we were selling on the back of Corinne.

DOMARK

MICRO PROSE
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We were to a certain extent, but at the end of the day, the consumer in the street is discerning enough to realise what products he does and does not want. I don't think you can fool the consumer these days and, although Vixen is a damn good game, simply dressing up a bad game doesn't work. We also did some phone-in lines, competition phone lines in the national press and competitions across various magazines and, altogether, it has worked really well.

Getting back to the plan of action for Vixen, the first task, as with all FMCG (Fast Moving Consumer Goods), is to identify your (the software house's) objective, which is obviously high sales. After the concept of the game that has been planned, or is under development, is decided upon, I'll come in and we'll discuss the whole idea, what they want and what I think I can do from what they tell me. We'll then go and mull it over in our heads for a week or two.

We thought about the idea of using someone like Corinne and then looked at the costing. We have to look at costings and so on and how best to promote the game and whether we felt it more worthwhile to spend

Exocet SOFTWARE

more money on this or on other things. Then the game gradually evolved into this Vixen - Corinne Russell theme and we decided to use her in the game itself. Once this was decided, we then needed to think of things, such as, we needed a model, a photographer, a set, a costume and some information to accompany the game as a press release.

So, we found all the above and we decided to use Corinne. She was very cooperative and worked very well. You have to pay for people like that but in the end it's worth it and they look better in the long run. We then did a shoot and that worked really well and we used some of the trannies for the packaging and made others available for magazines, dealers, distributors, posters and flyers (a promotional package). All of these then went into production. At the same time, David Martin would have been thinking of where he could get the best deal for the tapes, disks and packaging and then include the

CRL The Dream Makers

costing for all that into the final budget.

The next step would be to send screen shots to magazines along with some information about the game. What I try and do is to get some news about the game in a magazine one month, a preview the next, and then a review with perhaps a competition. If it's a big enough game, then possibly even a front cover.

You then have all these elements coming together: the press information for magazines; the distributors now know what to buy; the dealers not only read the leisure magazines but are contacted by their distributors and told what is coming out soon. They also read the trade press, such as CTW, which is important to us as it puts our client's products under the noses of the most important retailers and distributors in the country.

The next step is the launch. This requires a lot of work and, for Vixen, involves checking out a lot of silly details, such as: was the costume washed? How was Corinne getting to the launch and would she be there on time? Was the hotel okay, are there enough plug sockets for the computers? What formats would be shown, and would it be a demo or a finished game? If the game was only being launched for the ST and Spectrum, then was it worth inviting other people or would they be interested because the nature of the game would mean it being released on all formats? Who should we invite?

You then have to think about the budget you have to play with, as this affects the choice of venue. For a game such as Vixen, I like to keep the launch fairly simple as all most people want is to have a few drinks and some lunch for free, then come away with a press pack and a few games and think, "I've had a good chat with a couple of people and I know more about Vixen than before I went so I'll go and write some nice things about it". They come away informed, basically, and that particular launch worked very well.

martech
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After the launch there is the release date, and hopefully everything will have come together for that date. After that there is what I term "secondary PR", which encompasses things such as competitions. This is to extend the period of time that the game is in the public eye, which equates to greater sales. And that, as they say, is that.'

I hope this has given you an idea of what PR for computer software involves. This profile is not of your usual run-of-the-mill software company, but is, nevertheless, about a part of the computer entertainment industry that is as vital as any other. Without it, the computer entertainment industry would not be one of the major growth areas that it is today. STA

PROFILE

CASE FOR CONVERSION

Dead Angle - Seibu

When arcade game-creators run out of ideas for new scenarios, they inevitably approach dead themes from a different angle (excuse the pun!). Seriously, though, this proved a successful formula with games such as R-type and Salamander, and also works to some extent in Dead Angle, a game of guns, guts and goons...

You take the role of a 1930's style detective who has to fight off hordes of family gangs who have abducted his girlfriend. These gangs are trying to prevent you from reaching 'The Boss', and subsequently, your imprisoned girlfriend. Your quest leads you through Italy, across the Atlantic, into the Big Apple, across the States and through to Chicago, where your girl anxiously awaits.

In order to defeat each gang, you must shoot enough members to take a pot-shot at the gang leader. Their morale then breaks, and will allow you to continue their travels. A bar at the foot of the screen decreases as you dispose of the thugs, and when this disappears, you are then allowed to fight the gang leader. Also displayed is your energy, the amount of grenades that you have remaining, and your score.

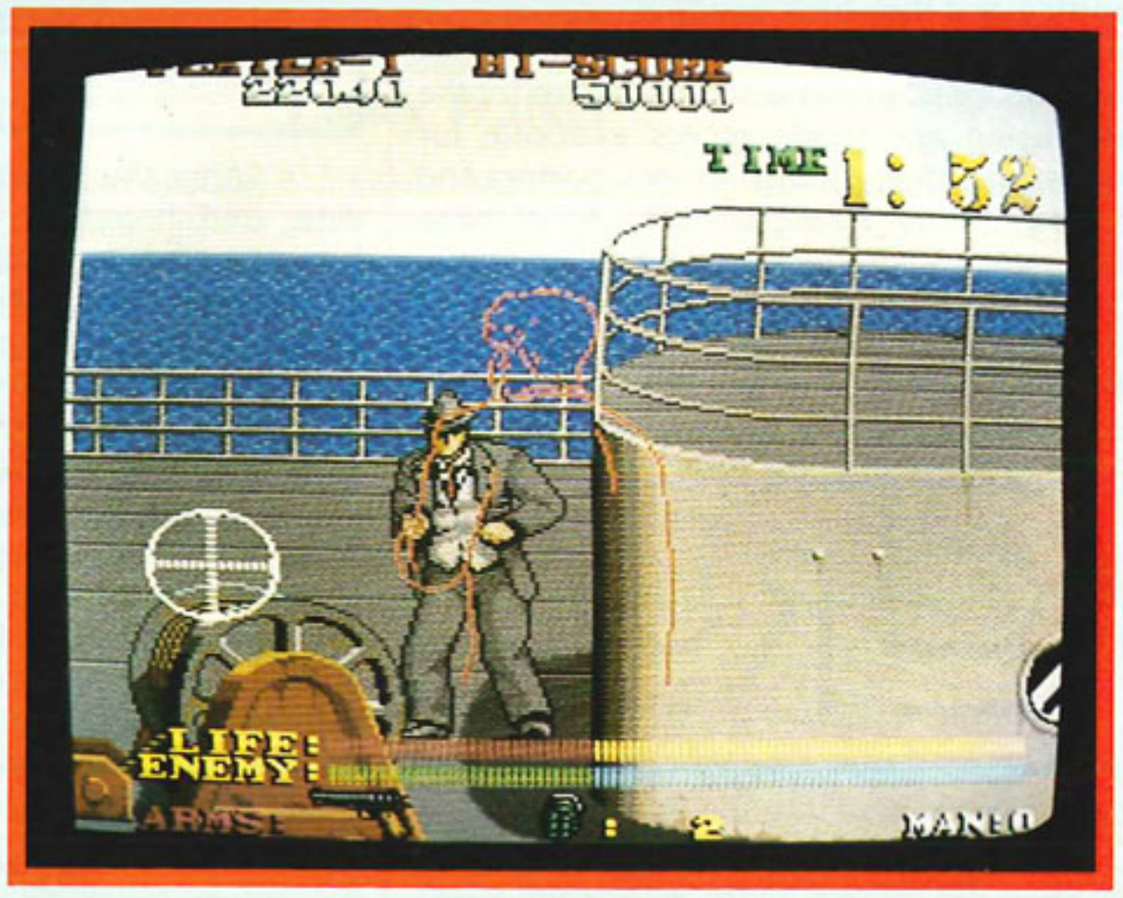
All very unoriginal, don't you agree? To add to the whole lack of imagination, extra weapons have been included, such as shotguns and S.M.G.'s, which have a limited supply of ammo, yet a more devastating effect. Medicine boxes and extra grenades are also available when certain objects are shot.

Originality, though, can mean sweet nothing if the game is fast and exiting, which Dead Angle is. The atmosphere generated is overwhelming in some cases, and you find yourself cursing, swearing and kicking at the arcade machine!

An interesting part of Dead Angle is the way that your quest takes you around the world (it must have been one heavy boat fare). Each scene in each town is nicely depicted, every one having different obstacles to hide behind, new doors and windows to explode and varying heights to rise to!

As you progress from gang to gang, you will find that the thugs get cleverer, and more difficult to kill. Some start carrying two guns, others lob grenades and knives, while a couple of the goons, who seem a bit ahead of their time, think they are on a certain TV show, and wear the coolest suits outside of Miami, whilst rushing around with rifles and shotguns. It can be very satisfying to gun them down and ruin their suits with their own blood!

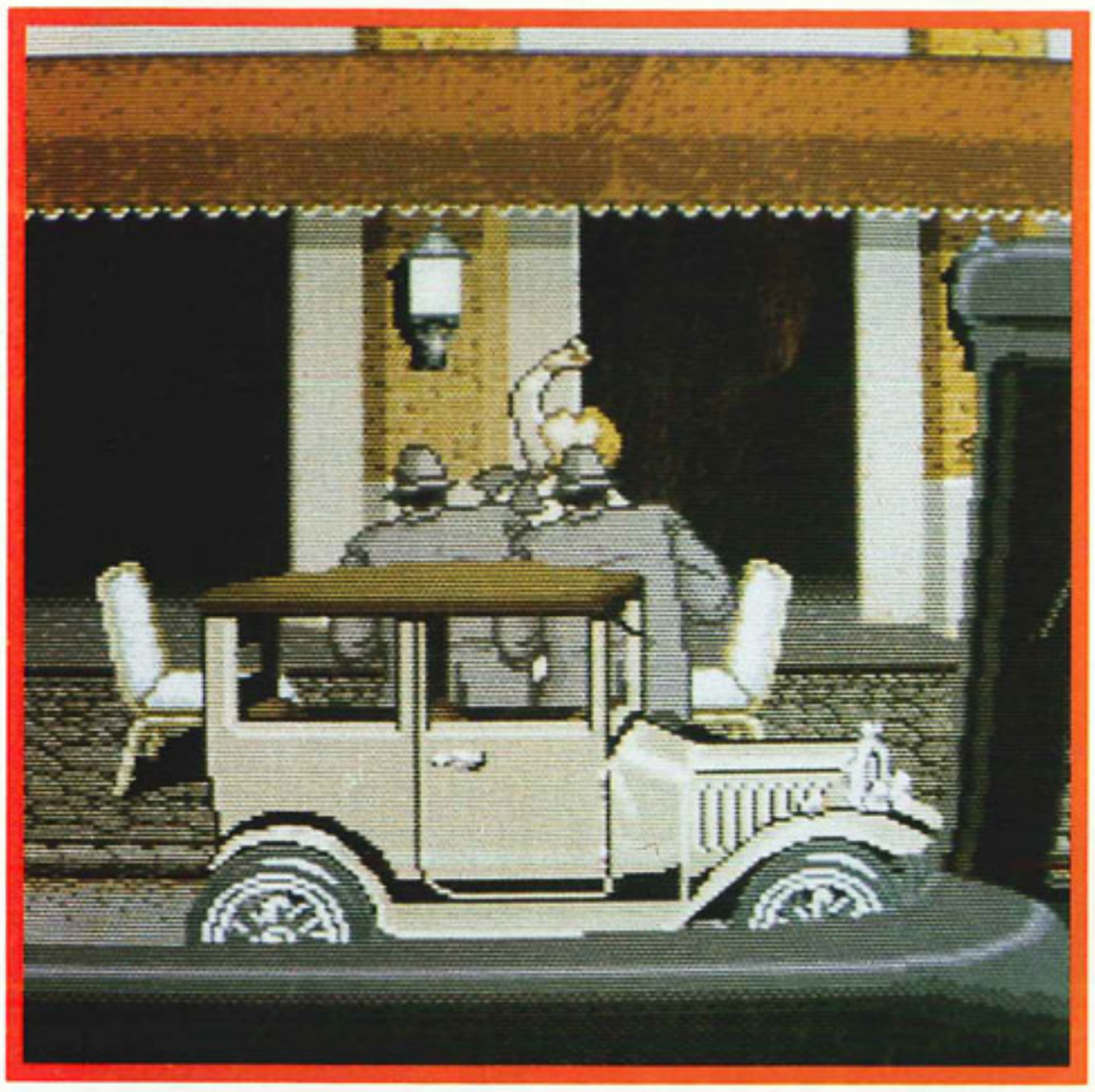
The action is viewed from behind the detective with the backgrounds scrolling parallax to you. The graphics aren't awe inspiring, as they are what is only expected nowadays, yet perform adequately, allowing for enjoyable playability.



We found that the music was rather a strange choice for such a fast action game - soothing '30's jazz, with shades of the Bond theme, was not expected! On the other hand, it does add to the atmosphere, as did the sound effects.

ST owners have already had Prohibition, and anyone who reckons that they would enjoy a more in-depth version of this rather bland game would love Dead Angle. It may only be a shoot-and-kill arcade game, which should make it big in the arcade halls, but it is highly enjoyable with a lot of sparkle. No experienced programming team would have any real problems when tackling a conversion (apart from, maybe, the size of the game, and some of the intermission screens), and a decent version would be worthy of anybody's attention.

There aren't any details of a licence having been taken yet, but we're sure that any software house worth it's salt will be considering Dead Angle right now. ST Action will keep you up to date on any developments.



Haunted Castle - Konami

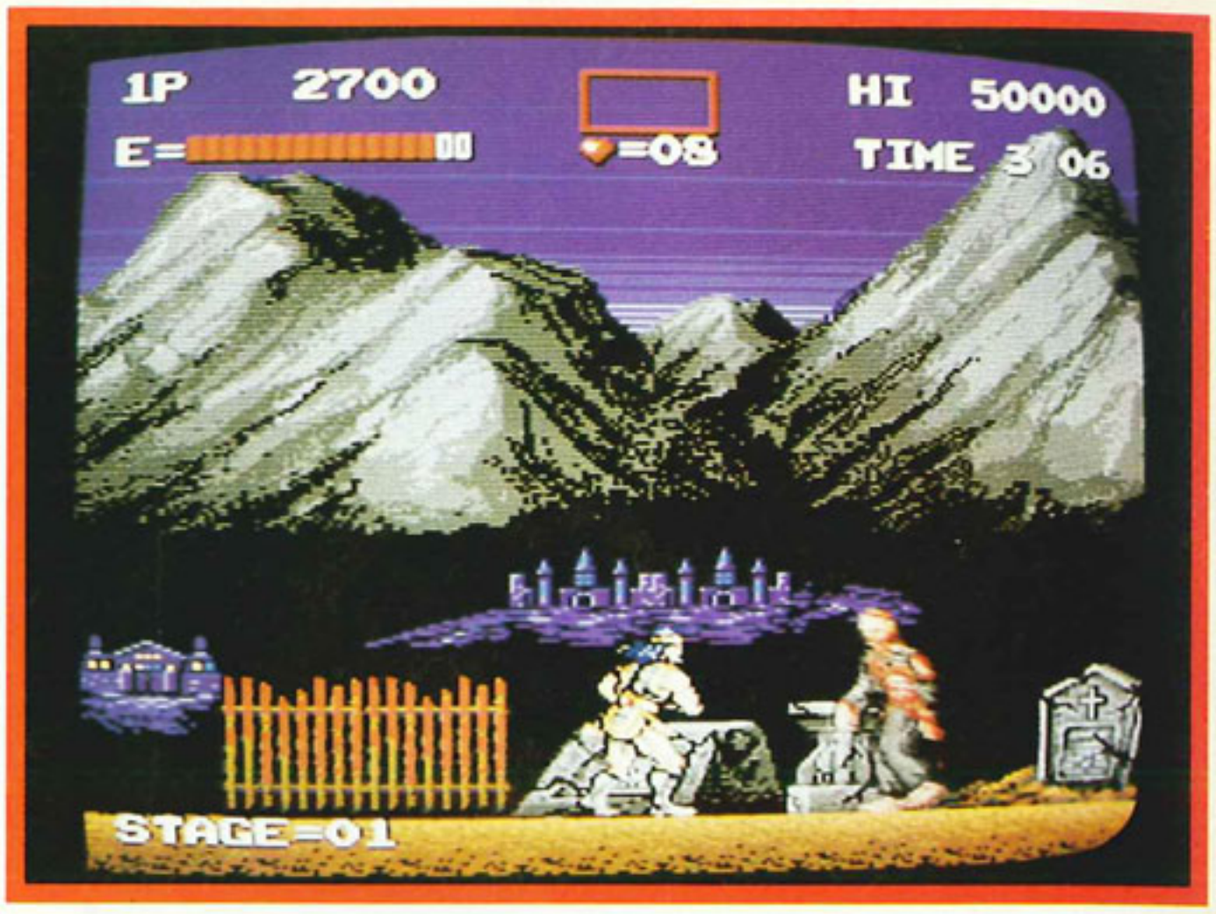
Konami have just released some specialist titles of late (such as Rack 'Em Up), and have been finding it difficult to repeat the success of Salamander and Wec Le Mans. While Haunted Castle is nearer to the high quality arcade games that are expected from such a renowned arcade manufacturer, it still doesn't contain the magic found in Konami's more popular games.

The current trend for game scenarios is to have the bad guys kidnap the hero's girlfriend. Dracula is to blame this time, and he whisks the newly wed bride off to his castle, although we aren't sure why (we've got some unprintable ideas!). Your aim is to fight through graveyards and caverns and reach the castle where your wife is held (sounds familiar!).

At the start of the game, you have a whip which you can use to beat the skeletons and ghouls to death ('super!'). When you kill off one of the undead creatures, you are rewarded with a heart or a new weapon. The hearts decrease each time that you use one of the special weapons, which range from bombs which can be thrown at the creatures, to watches which halt the enemies actions temporarily.

Dracula's undead creatures aren't the only obstacles attempting to kill you. There are also deadly boulders falling from above, pools of lava and a wall, who's bricks fly out at you in the middle of a thunderstorm. There are also falling statues to avoid, and a trail of fire to dodge from time to time.

At the end of each level, which scroll as you walk to the right, you have to fight off the guardian which obstructs your path. This takes the from of a Medusa on one level one, and a snake on the next level, which is very similar to the one in Salamander and R-Type. Shades of Ghosts and Goblins are also recognisable, especially when the ghouls rise out of the ground, and the theme is very reminiscent of Labyrinth Runner.



This must be one of the first arcade games that was derived from a computer game. Vampire Killer and Castle Vania, on the MSX2 and Nintendo respectively, are the original games, and are actually better than the arcade version! They are basically the same game, yet more fun, with extra levels and a more original theme. After each three levels (you needed a key to progress from one to the next) you were attacked by a guardian, and there were more items to collect and obstacles to avoid.

Haunted House features some clever graphical effects with changing times of day and fading mists. The animation is of a very high quality and the colours are crisp and clear.

The audio effects are also wonderful. The tunes that play throughout are of Konami's usual brilliance and the digitised effects provide a perfect accompaniment.

However, the gameplay is very unoriginal and tedious, and goes to prove that great graphics and sound don't make a great game. There would be very little gain from converting Haunted Castle, yet a conversion of the original computer versions would be very worthwhile. Programmers would have a choice of flick screens (MSX2 style), or scrolling levels (a la Nintendo), and the computer version of Haunted Castle would suit the ST much better. It is far more enjoyable, a lot more playable and much more interest-

ing! A strange predicament for any potential licencee, yet we are sure that you would agree with us which versions are superior when all three games are compared.

Arcade Action News

An exciting prospect has arrived in the form of Domark's news that they are to convert 'The Empire Strikes Back' to all major machines, including the Atari ST. The game puts you in control of Luke Skywalker's snowspeed vehicle, and Han Solo's Millennium Falcon, and your main goal is to reach the safety of a huge asteroid. Before you can get there, though, you are going to have to reach the Rebel base on Hoth, which will allow you to escape into the skies.

There are four levels in the game, with you having to fight off probots, small AT-ST robots and swarms of Tie-Fighters. the game takes place both on ground and in space, and looms like being a great conversion for ST owners.

Next issue we will be taking a look at Konami's new smash, Vulcan's Venture, the follow up to the massive Nemesis and Salamander coin-ops. With the news that Activision have plans to release After Burner, we will be looking at the pros and cons of such a conversion, plus, of course, the new arcade games that are ripe for licencing! See you next month.

Written by
Dennis Hemmings
and Mark Smith

STA

IMPOSSIBLE MISSION II

US GOLD (£19.99)

"The computer genius, Elvin Atombender is back! Epyx Software, along with U.S. Gold, proudly present the long-overdue follow-up to the award winning Impossible Mission."

Bravo 29 checks his hair in the mirror before tackling yet another robot.

It was way back in 1985 when hordes of gamesplayers put to right the schemes of the evil Atombender. You might have thought that Elvin would have been locked up and the key thrown away, but you would have been wrong! It seems that either Elvin has escaped from his captors or, that due to some red-tape foul-up, he has been released on parole. Either way the psychotic genius has built himself yet another seemingly impenetrable stronghold. Elvin, one of the world's leading experts in the field of computer codes, has funded his latest scheme by breaking into the world's banking systems and draining their accounts. Over the last four years Atombender has also been attempting to electronically break into military computer installations around the world. Elvin's mental condition has deteriorated so much that he has vowed to destroy himself and with him the entire planet! So far the earth is safe, but should this madman succeed in breaking the military codes...

The action starts shortly after you, Field Agent Bravo 29, receive a message confirming Elvin's entry into the national defence system. You are to put Cobra Blue Phase II into immediate operation, enter Atombender's stronghold and arrest or kill him! There are only eight hours left in which to complete the mission. It isn't going to be easy - more like impossible!

Elvin's fortress consists of seven towers, six outer units and a central one in which Atombender's penthouse suit is situated. Starting in one of the outer towers you must search for both secret PIN codes, allowing movement between the external units, and musical scores which should be used to gain access to the central tower. Now Elvin, being a rather insecure chap, has decided that his fortress should be guarded, just in case some fool should try and put a stop to his little plans.

Dwelling within the metallic citadel are six types of robotic guards. The first, Sentrybots, are identical to those Atombender used in his first stronghold. These most deadly guards are also the most common type of robot encountered. Special care should be taken when in close proximity to these marauding machines. Minebots, as their name suggests, simply trundle around various rooms dropping surprise packages for our hero. The third type of robot poses more of a hindrance than a threat. Pestbots simply ride on the complex's lifts and platforms, thereby rearranging the room's layouts. Squatbots are simple devices which lie on floors. They pulsate up and down causing any unsuspecting "visitors" to crush

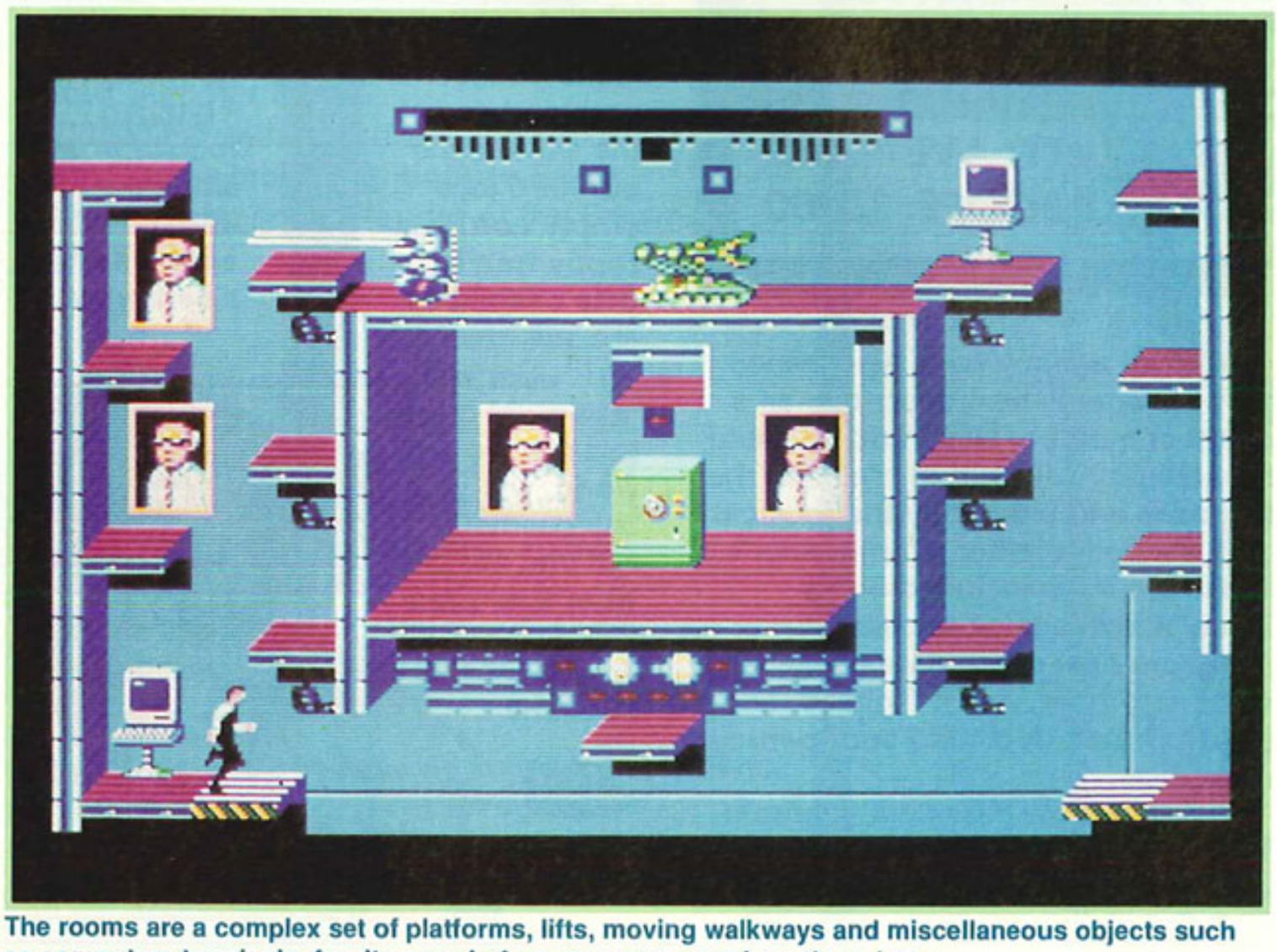
This sequel has been a long time in the making but it was definitely well worth the wait.

All the atmosphere of the original has been retained and improvements made. The game also appears to be considerably harder with the advent of horizontally-moving platforms and new styles of robots.

The scream as you plummet through the floor is even more chilling than the original, as are general game effects, such as the hum of the lift and the echo of footsteps.

The original stood out as a classic on the 8-bits and this sequel preserves that reputation, as well as Epyx's brilliant track record of quality software.

SM



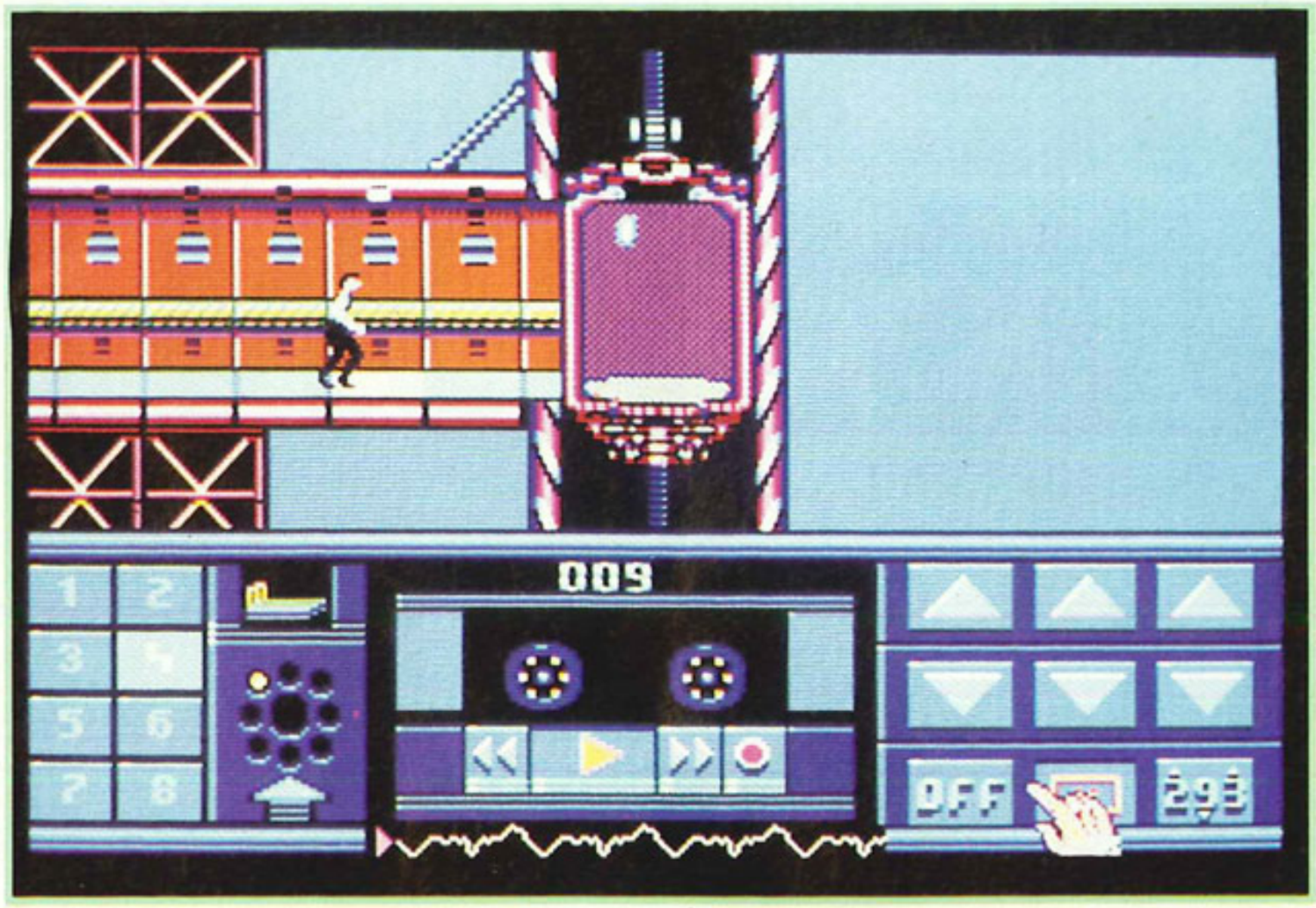
The rooms are a complex set of platforms, lifts, moving walkways and miscellaneous objects such as computers terminals, furniture and of course your enemies - the robots.

KEYBOARD		✗
JOYSTICK	✓	
MOUSE		✗
COLOUR	✓	
MONO		✗
520ST	✓	
1040ST	✓	

Well, about time too! At last we are pleased to announce the long-awaited release of Impossible Mission II. "Two?", I hear you say, "Whatever happened to Impossible Mission I?". Unless you previously owned a C64 then you may not have witnessed the original game. Still, if you like platform games then you'll love this one. Technically, Impossible Mission II has no radically new features, and I for one feel that because of the game's "ordinary" feel it is a little bland. Either way, with both Epyx and U.S. Gold and the runaway success of the original behind it, Impossible Mission II should sell like hot cakes! Check it out!

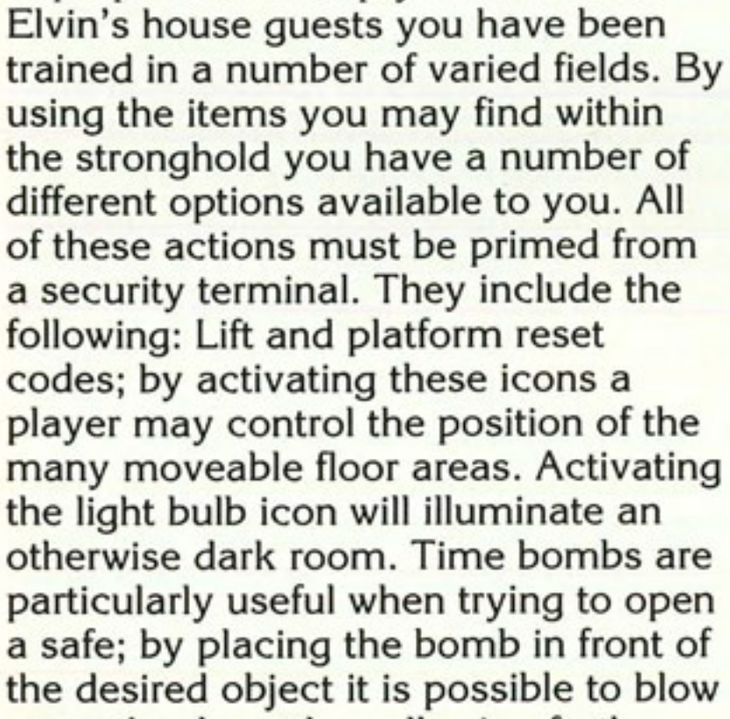
NC

The lift screen is used to move from room to room and from tower to tower. The control panel is also situated on this screen



their heads on the low ceilings! Finally, Bashbots and Suicidebots. Both of these metallic monsters have your swift demise in mind; both will grab you in their jaws intent on throwing you off some nearby platform. The only difference is that the Suicidebots forget to let go and follow you to your untimely death. All of these units are best avoided, although a well-timed somersault will often help.

Of course, no self-respecting agent would undertake a mission unprepared. To help you overcome Elvin's house guests you have been trained in a number of varied fields. By using the items you may find within the stronghold you have a number of different options available to you. All of these actions must be primed from a security terminal. They include the following: Lift and platform reset codes; by activating these icons a player may control the position of the many moveable floor areas. Activating the light bulb icon will illuminate an otherwise dark room. Time bombs are particularly useful when trying to open a safe; by placing the bomb in front of the desired object it is possible to blow away the door, thus allowing further inspection to be carried out. Mines work in a similar fashion to the time bombs, although they are only effective on the robotic guards. Finally, Field Agent Bravo 29 can pull the plug on the ever-present patrols. Selecting this icon will give our hero a few precious seconds in which he may abandon any worry of being zapped. Beware though, the robots will not stand idle for ever and many a good agent has perished due to poor timing.



Impossible Mission 1 only had 1 tower - Mission 2 has FIVE. Here Agent Bravo 29 moves between two of them.

STA Rating

77%

GRAPHICS: 79%
SOUND: 57%

ORIGINALITY: 70%
ADDICTIVENESS: 76%

DIFFICULTY: AVE-HARD
1ST DAY SCORE: 13000

Your agency have also issued you with what is best described as a pocket computer. This intricate piece of machinery will help in cracking the PIN codes and ultimately the musical score needed to enter Atombender's penthouse. Also included on its display screens is an accurate timer telling you how much time is left before zero hour, and a digitally displayed map depicting your particular position.

Impossible Mission II is graphically similar to its predecessor, the inclusion of a simulated perspective being the most noticeable difference.

Improving on Impossible Mission is an impossible mission in itself! I first played this phenomenal game three years ago on a Commodore 64 and it has remained in my top ten favourite software list ever since. Epyx have maintained the athletic figure that runs and somersaults across the screen, as well as the elevators which take you to the different floors in Elvin's lair, but the rooms have been totally refurbished with a stepped-up security system. The evil Elvin has designed more robots and has even installed video cameras. The action is still there, the puzzles are more confusing and the venue is even more foreboding than Elvin's subterranean lair in the original. Impossible Mission II is simply an essential addition to your software collection.

JS

Aurally it seems as though nothing has changed - the same eerie footsteps as our hero jogs along the empty corridors and the zappy frazzled sound as he gets crisped by a sentrybot are still present.

So, with just eight hours to save the world, will you succeed? Or will you fail in what is termed just another Impossible Mission?

STA

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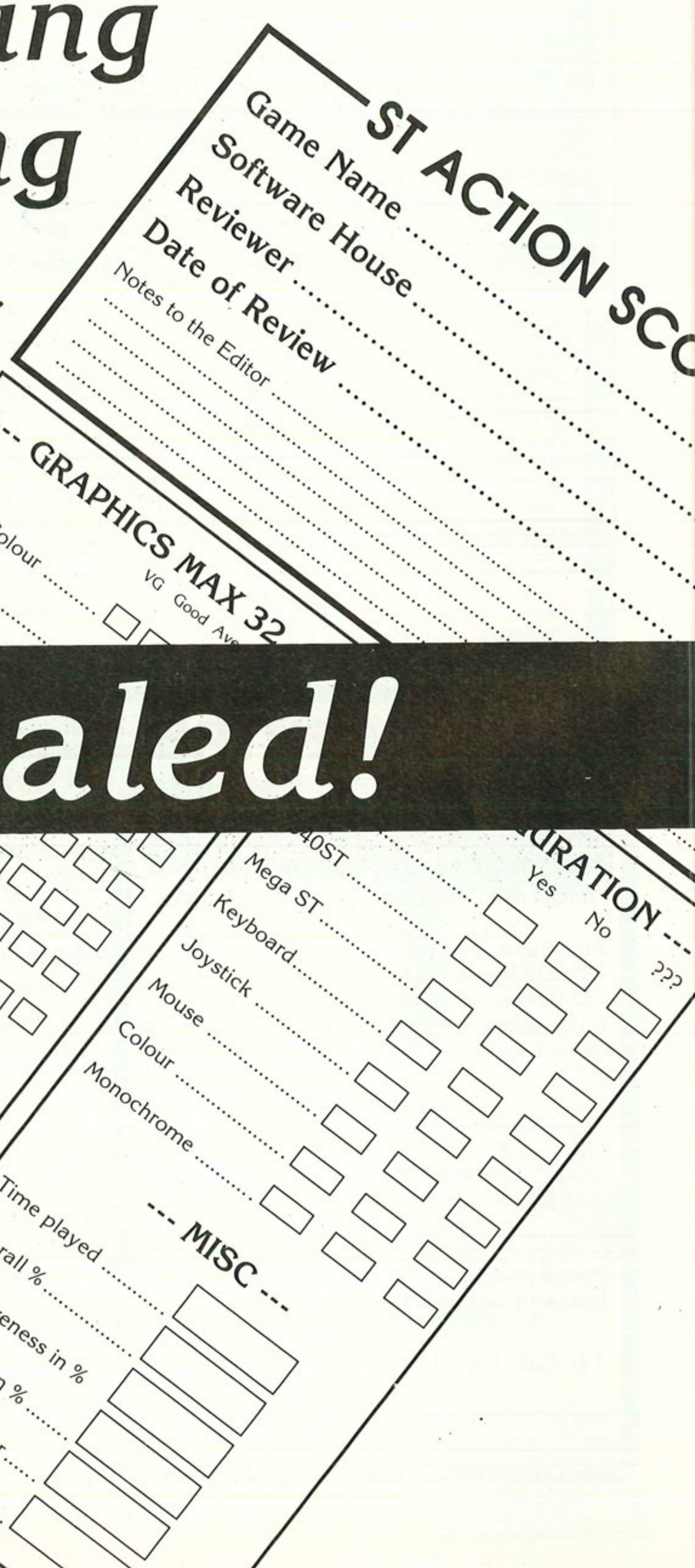
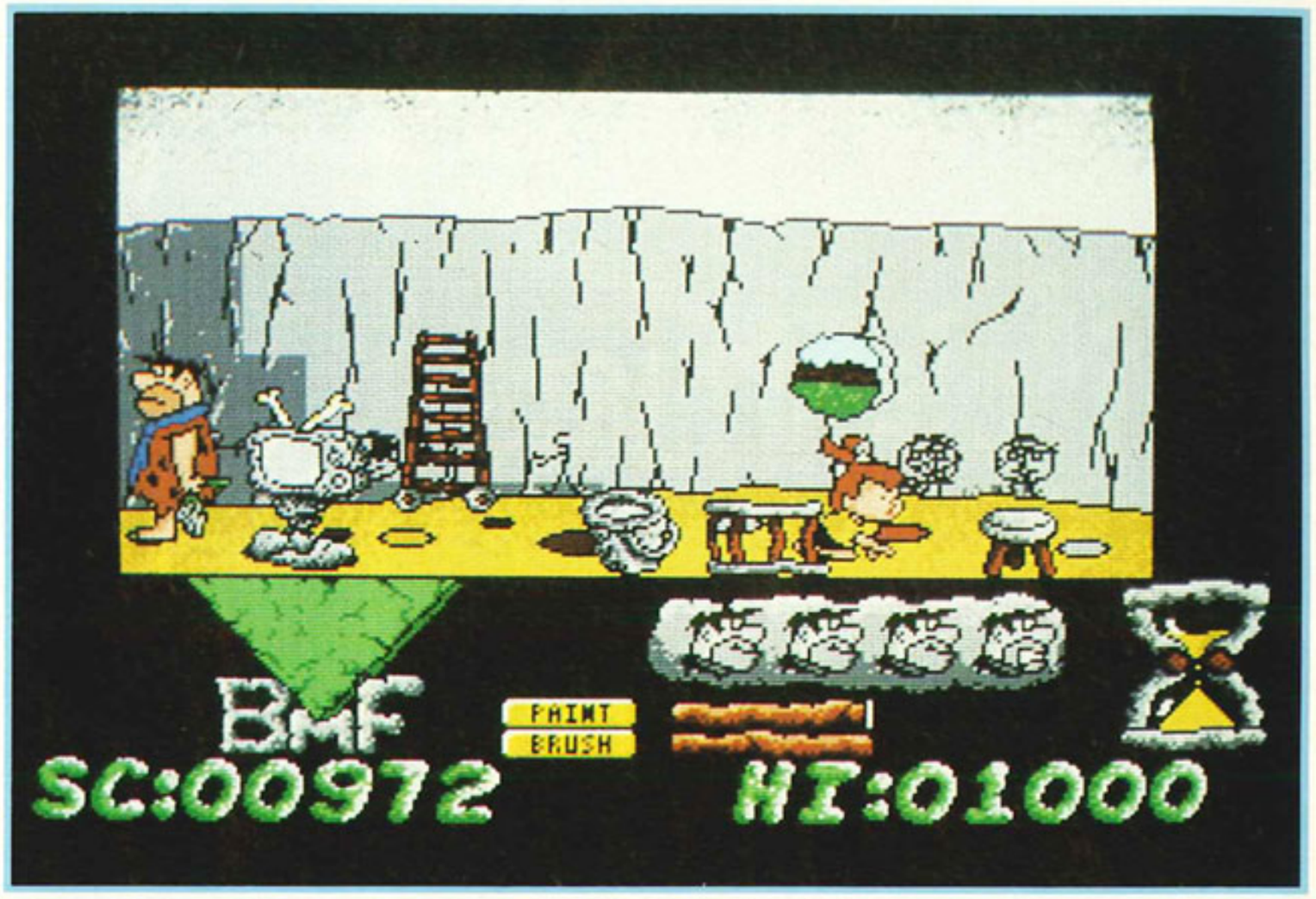


Revealed!

"Those endearing prehistoric characters, the Flintstones and Rubbles, have kept T.V. fans amused for two decades and in response to their current popularity, Grandslam have based an arcade game around the residence of Bedrock. But do cartoon characters lose their appeal in the translation?"

Fred attempts to decorate the living room - Unfortunately Pebbles has decided to practive her handwriting all over the newly painted walls



FLINTSTONES

GRANDSLAM (£24.95)

Combine amusing cartoon characters with absorbing arcade entertainment and you can be certain of success in the eight-bit market. However, will The Flintstones appeal to the majority of ST users? The painting section is clever, infuriating and taxing, but the bowling scene could have been more thoughtfully designed. Additionally, the token speech synthesis at the beginning of the game seems to have been grafted on to use up some spare memory. The Flintstones simply lacks a certain Yabba Dabba Doo!

JS

A manic rendition of the Flintstone theme accompanies the loading procedure, after which appears a simple option-screen. There are five separate sections in the game and you can select to practise the two main themes or to play the entire game which requires the successful completion of each section in order to proceed to the next. Whether you have selected practice or the actual game, a short animation sequence shows Fred finishing work at the quarry for the weekend and, as he slides down the brontosaurus crane's tail, he yells the only speech synthesis in the game - yes, you guessed it: 'Yabba Dabba Doo!'

The rest of the communication between the characters is achieved with speech bubbles and, in the first scene, Fred has agreed to paint a wall in the cave before he and Barney go to the superbowl bowling competition. The game-screen shows the inside of the Flintstones' cave with the wall in the background; but before Fred can start painting, he has to catch his paintbrush - a squirrel! Finally, with paintbrush in hand, Fred must be manoeuvred to the bucket of paint and then back to the wall to apply it. Once the brush runs out of paint, he must go back to the bucket again. Meanwhile, Pebbles crawls around the cave and scrawls graffiti on Fred's freshly painted wall - how cute!

Repeatedly, Fred has to stop painting in order to pick up his daughter and return her to the playpen. However, as soon as he picks up Pebbles, the squirrel paintbrush scurrys away and, once again, Fred must regain the paintbrush in order to continue his task. The top part of the wall can only be reached with a ladder which is leaning up against the wall. The ladder is on wheels and Fred must release his paintbrush and move to the base of the ladder, then, jerking the joystick quickly to the left and right moves it along. The best tactic is to concentrate on the top part of the wall and let Pebbles scribble at the bottom. To add to Fred's dilemma, he only has five minutes to complete the painting before Wilma returns home.

On the way to the bowling final, Fred's car loses a wheel and he and Barney must find and fit a suitable replacement, jack the car up and fit the wheel before the start of the match. The bowling alley has two separate screens showing Fred and Barney's run-up in one and the skittles at the end of the alley in the other. The amount of left or right spin is achieved by moving the joystick in the corresponding direction and is indicated on spin meters at the base of the screen. Pressing the firebutton increases the power meter and releasing it at the desired level sends the bowling ball up the alley. You control Fred's game, whilst Barney is computer-controlled.

After the tournament, Fred returns home to discover that Pebbles has escaped from her pen and has crawled off to a building-site. He finds her perched on top of a stone girder with a confusing array of scaffolding, girders and ladders beneath her. Under your control, Fred must climb up in an attempt to rescue her.

STA

Oh dear! This really is a disappointment. Grand Slam could have made an excellent game out of a topic like 'The Flintstones', but the end result is a two-part disaster.

Sluggish controls and the slow speed make the painting scene unbelievably tedious and, sadly the bowling scene is, if anything, worse. A lot of time is wasted as the computer resets the pins, or whilst Barney bowls, and this means just sitting and waiting until it is your turn again.

There is nothing about this program I can recommend; it is slow and painstakingly boring. Avoid at all costs.

SM

STA Rating

49%

GRAPHICS: 55%
SOUND: 45%

ORIGINALITY: 64%
ADDICTIVENESS: 41%

DIFFICULTY: VERY HARD
1ST DAY SCORE: 6000

The cover of the book opens to reveal each of the screens page after page

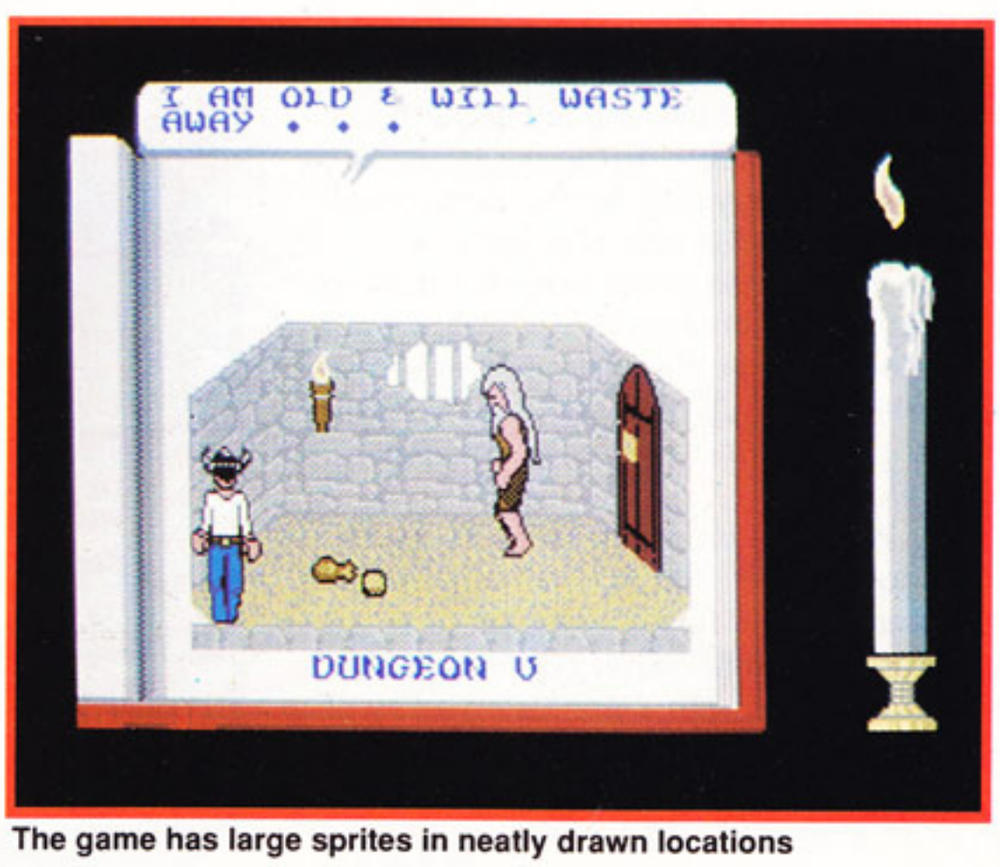
KNIGHTMARE

ACTIVISON (£19.95)

"The visual effects created by television's boundless optical technology has brought adventuring to life in a popular television programme called Knightmare. But have Activision managed to convert the game onto a medium which is limited by comparison?"

'Welcome, Watchers of Illusion, to the castle of confusion!' This is Treguard the Dungeonmaster's chilling invitation to enter the book of legends and work your way through Damonia Castle with one aim, to survive. Although each contestant in the television programme begins the quest in a different area of the castle, this game always begins in the dungeon. Once loaded, the game-screen shows a closed book with a large candle burning on the right-hand side of the screen. Pressing the firebutton opens the book to reveal a dungeon containing an old man and the candidate for knightship, who is blinded by that famous, full-face helmet.

The joystick directly controls the knight and the firebutton confirms and activates the various features throughout the game. Treguard constantly informs you during the game that he is watching and gives an occasional cryptic clue, but as an overseer he never directly intervenes or helps. However, two Oracles called Runnius and Buggaine, appear at the top of the screen at your beckoning. Runnius often gives reliable clues in the form of riddles, while the evil Buggaine takes pleasure in misleading you into mortal danger. The Oracles can be consulted throughout the game, although their clues may have more significance later on and so it is advisable to keep a list of every clue.



The game has large sprites in neatly drawn locations

Meanwhile, back in the dungeon! Using the keyboard you can select the various commands, such as the 'O' key for Open or 'D' for Dig or Drink. There are only three objects to collect in the first dungeon and so pressing the 'T' key activates Take and tapping the Return key confirms this choice. Then, pressing the first letter of the item that you want to collect, such as 'F' for food or 'R' for rock, and pressing the Return key once more, completes the action. You can only use an item if it is in your possession but there is no limit to the amount you can carry.

After collecting the rock and a leg of chicken, you can remove a torch from the wall and the Oracles will give a cryptic clue. 'Fire may burn but it is a different heat that you seek.' Moving the knight to the dungeon door and using the most obvious command, 'Open Door', turns the second page of the book to reveal yet another dungeon room. The door is locked and so the obvious solution is to return to the other dungeon and ask the old man for advice; but Treguard suggests that you

Trying to emulate the spectacular settings from the television program would have been a futile exercise that would have left little memory for the adventure and so Activision have concentrated on game content. The controls and functions are comprehensive and easy to use and the puzzles are never short of infuriating. But spending some time toiling to escape from one cramped and uninteresting screen only to end up in a very similar room, is not conducive to interesting adventuring and gives little incentive. Nevertheless, a must for those fans of the seemingly impossible.

JS

KEYBOARD	✔	
JOYSTICK	✔	
MOUSE		✘
COLOUR	✔	
MONO		✘
520ST	✔	
1040ST	✔	

consult the Oracles. Occasionally, the Oracles show mercy and help out with a seemingly impossible obstacle, which on this occasion does not include opening a locked door.

The Oracles supply you with the first of many red-herrings and after trying to throw rocks at the door but with no success, there seems to be no other option than to return to the dungeon and ask the old man for help. 'I am old and frail and will fade away!' This pessimistic answer is yet another red-herring and, to give an example of the obscurity of the solutions in this game, I will describe how to escape from the dungeon. Giving the old man the food you have collected and some water which you begin the game with, brightens him up considerably, and in exchange for the refreshment, he gives you a spade. You can then go to the next dungeon, select 'D' for Dig and 'G' for ground and escape from the dungeon.

Outside the dungeon, you are immediately confronted by guards and you must quickly pull back on the joystick to move down the corridor. A red devil is a constant annoyance and contact with him considerally increases the melting speed of the candle. As you make your way around the castle, characters within the castle quiz you and pose problems for you to solve. But before you confirm your answer, you must read the question carefully to ensure that there are no hidden meanings which could change the events of the adventure. Pressing the 'S' key enables you to dabble in Merlin's magic, although spell-casting requires experimentation and the substances and objects for the spell must be in your possession in order to use them. These include an anvil which hovers at the top of the screen and can be dropped to squash an evil adversary, while Caspar the Key can open certain doors within the castle. When you become experienced at spell-casting, Alchemy can be selected and used to turn unsavoury characters into gold spheres, which can then be collected as treasure. But by far the most amusing spell is the one which turns other characters into warty toads.

Often, you must enter into combat with another character, but you need to be in possession of a sword or some other weapon. Manoeuvring the knight near the character and repeatedly pressing the firebutton achieves a crude, hacking movement. Each room in the castle contains a more taxing and apparently insolvable puzzle which requires asking every character for clues and trying every possibility. But time is your enemy and the quest must be completed before the candle melts - it's only a game, isn't it? **STA**

My main quibble with this is that the solutions to the puzzles are very obscure. It was by pure guess-work that I was able to escape from the confines of the first two rooms.

The instruction input system is irritating due to the large amount of options. and it is very slow to use, which, when being attacked, can easily cause premature death.

The game is of a reasonable size, and if you have the patience, it can be quite rewarding. But because of the input system and the obscurity of the problems, I feel that this should only be bought by the most patient of adventurers.

SM

STA Rating

48%

GRAPHICS: 61%
SOUND: 43%

ORIGINALITY: 65%
ADDICTIVENESS: 30%

DIFFICULTY: AVE-HARD
1ST DAY SCORE: N/A

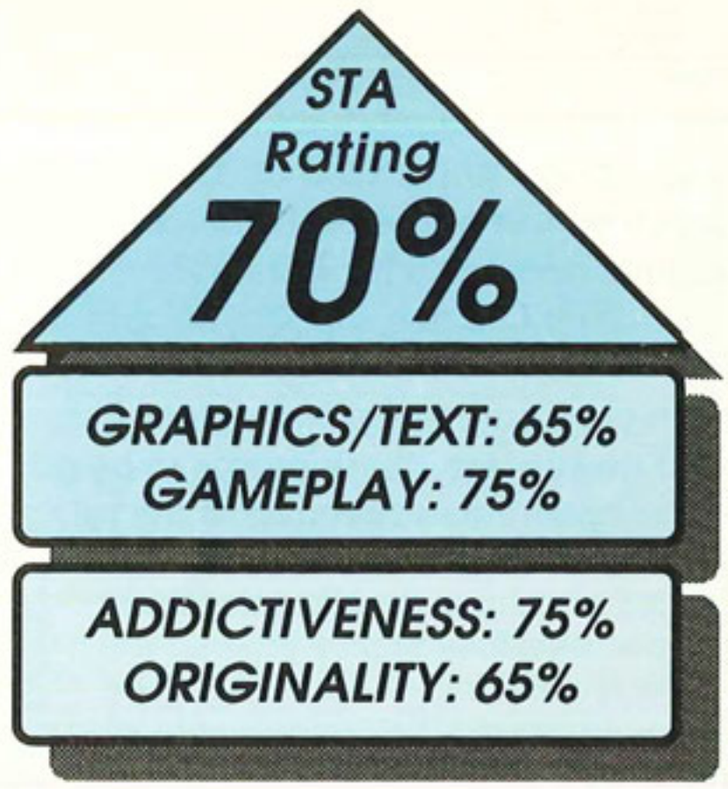
Treguard is constantly watching and does give an occasional cryptic clue

"Welcome fearless adventurer..." Oh no not this, anything but this. I really disliked the Anglia television series of the game so my thoughts of it were already a little tarnished. Graphically Knightmare is so-so, as is it aurally. I'm sure that many of the puzzles within the game are quite intricate but I found that the controls were just a little obscure. Sure enough the knight is easily moved via the joystick, it is the text input that proved tiresome. It's probably a shame because Knightmare might have made quite a good computer game, but as it stands I wouldn't bother too much.

NC

SUNDOG

MIRRORSOFT (£14.99)

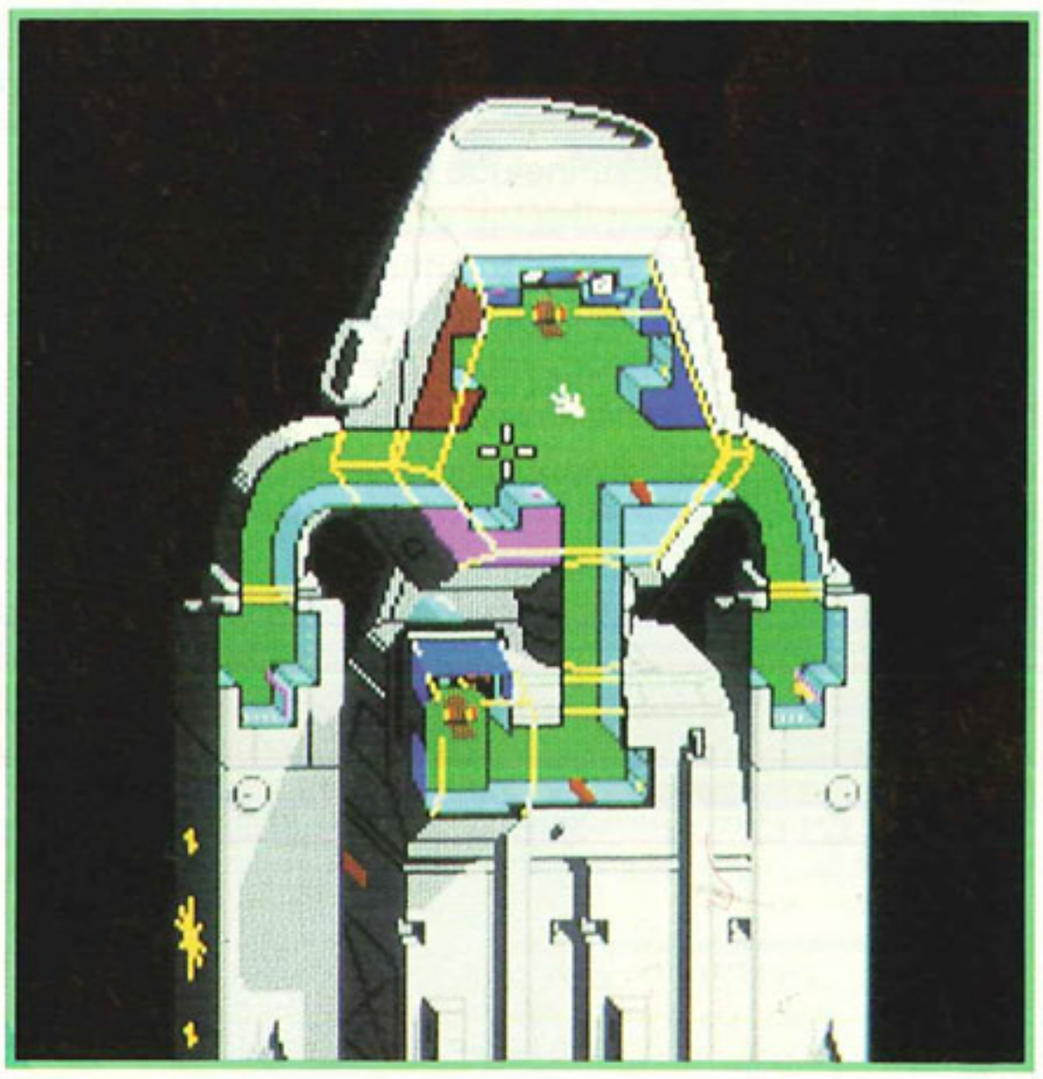


"From FTL, the team which brought you Dungeon Master and Oids, comes Sundog."

Lucky you, your rich old uncle has died and left you a large inheritance plus a spaceship called 'The Sundog'. The bad news is that he has also left you three dangerous tasks to complete. You must find the secret location where your uncle was constructing a colony for a persecuted religious group; you must buy and deliver the materials to finish the construction; and you must locate the cryogenically-frozen colonists and take them to this new world. As you know nothing about trading or flying a spaceship, this could present a few problems!

Sundog is a re-release from Mirrorsoft of a game from the American company, 'Faster Than Light', so the older hands amongst you may have already played it. This is essentially a space trading game which involves you in hyper-space hopping around the galaxy while keeping a weather-eye open for space pirates.

Your first view of the game shows an overhead view of the Sundog ship complete with the small matchstick figure of our hero. This figure will follow the movement of the mouse cursor, and in this way you can walk around the ship and examine the different locations. Moving your character to the various control positions will cause the view of the ship to be replaced with the screens of the control panels. From these panels you will be able to navigate the ship with the aid of galaxy maps and generally keep an eye on all the support systems. The ship is fitted with warp engines which guzzle the expensive fuel, plus inter-planetary engines for short hops. There are Weapon Control systems which are used to fight off pirate attacks and these include shields, lasers and cannons. The Damage Control Panel plus the computerised store lists are used to repair any damage to the ship, and it is wise to keep a large back-up of useful items for in-flight repairs. Managing your own personal systems is also important, which means that you must ensure you get enough sleep and food to keep you in the peak of condition. You also need to keep an eye on your bank balance to avoid running out of fuel in some space backwood.



Upon landing on a planet of your choice, you may walk or drive your land pod around a scrolling bird's-eye view of the cities while searching for trading stores and clues. Dismounting from your pod will allow you to enter many of the buildings and spend your inheritance on replacement parts, trading goods or a simple beer. While moving around the buildings you will be treated to a plan view of the interiors which contain many other matchstick characters. During your walks you will encounter both muggers and beggars and in each case you will be required to pay up or risk attack. You may buy various articles which will enable you to attack or defend yourself from these unwelcome attentions, but you must remember that some people have vital information and it sometimes pays to be generous. Conversation between the characters generally means selecting your answer from a menu of options. These options include such things as: ARGUE, REFUSE, AGREE or CHARM. You can actually buy additional charm from the local bar but, in my case, giving muggers a blast with my boyish smile only got me shot!

If you are feeling lazy you may use the city's teleport system which will, in exchange for a few space credits, whisk you in the twinkling of an eye to any point in the city. Longer journeys between the cities can be carried out using your own transport or by means of the intercity transport system. There are also branches of the Space Bank to be found and you may use these to withdraw cash or move your account to a distant planet to await your arrival.

I like it! I don't really know why. On a TV the graphics are blurred, the figures are tiny. I didn't know what I was doing or what I could do, because I didn't get a copy of the documentation with my review copy. Even the deep-space fight sequences are rather basic. But despite all this, I like it. Perhaps it's because there is so much to do and find out. What little info that came with the game indicated that you would have to find out a lot for yourself.

I understand that the game was originally written for an APPLE II. In general, I tend to dislike games made over from 8-bit machines as they are often just embellished with a few pictures and don't utilise the capabilities of the ST. This might well be the case with this game, but they've done a nice job.

SJK

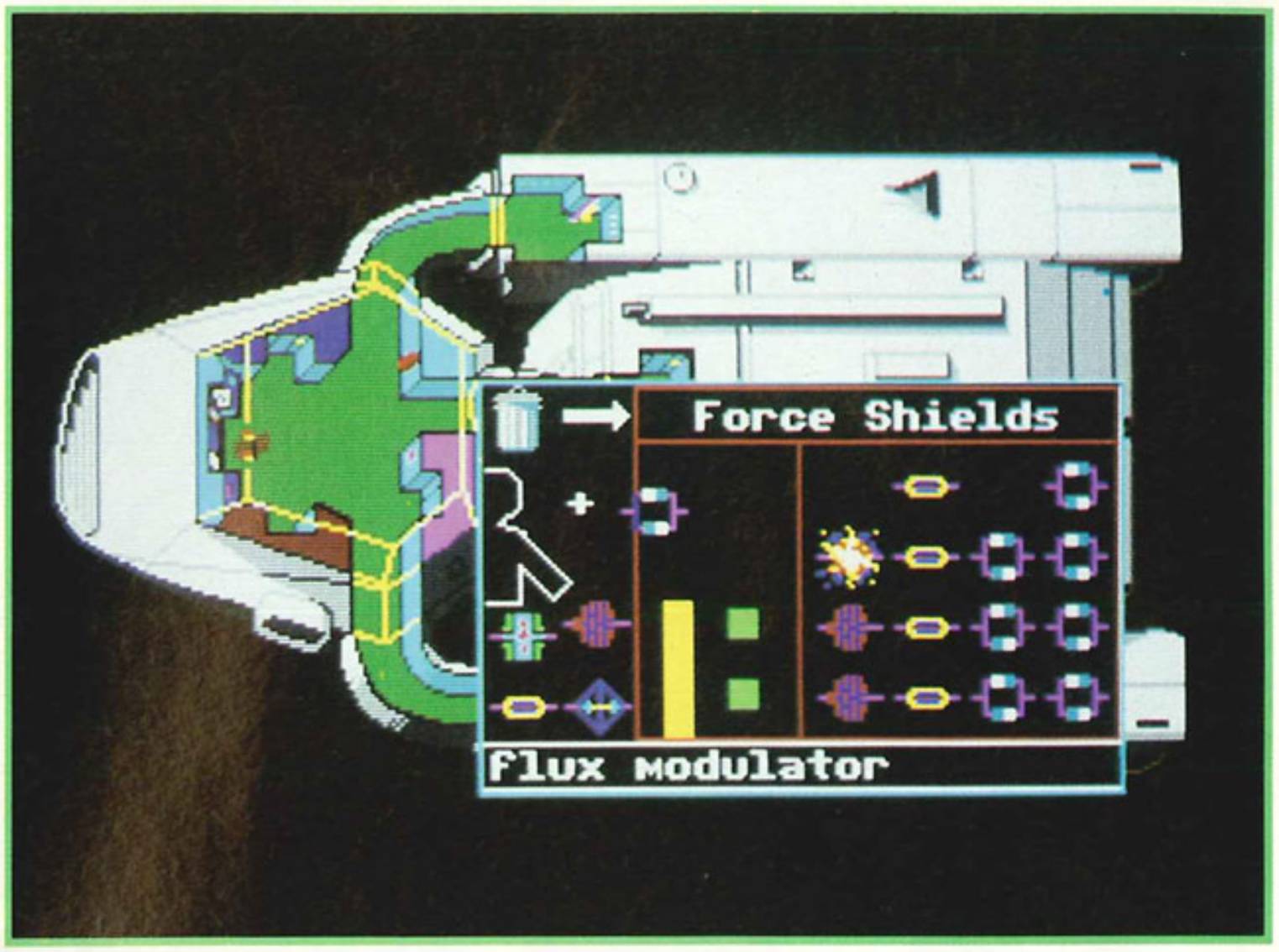
This is a clever strategy game which will take a long time to complete. Control of the game is neatly done and all the windows and graphic features have been well implemented. Arcade-action fans will not find anything to get over-excited about as the game has little in the zap and crash department. There is lots of humour to be found in the meetings with the muggers and beggars and you are able to argue and charm your way out of some situations. If you want a laugh, watch what happens when you use a six-shooter to settle an argument with a group of six muggers.

If you like a game which stretches your mind and imagination rather than your reflexes, then this will do very nicely.

AM

The graphics are pretty good but not earth-shattering. While the battle sequences are not exactly arcade action, they are sufficiently interesting to make them worthwhile. The 'cheaper' price of this package reflects the fact that it has been around for some time, but it is still a game worthy of consideration. The many different aspects of the whole adventure will keep you ploughing the spaceways for many weeks. **STA**

KEYBOARD		✗
JOYSTICK		✗
MOUSE	✓	
COLOUR	✓	
MONO		✗
520ST	✓	
1040ST	✓	



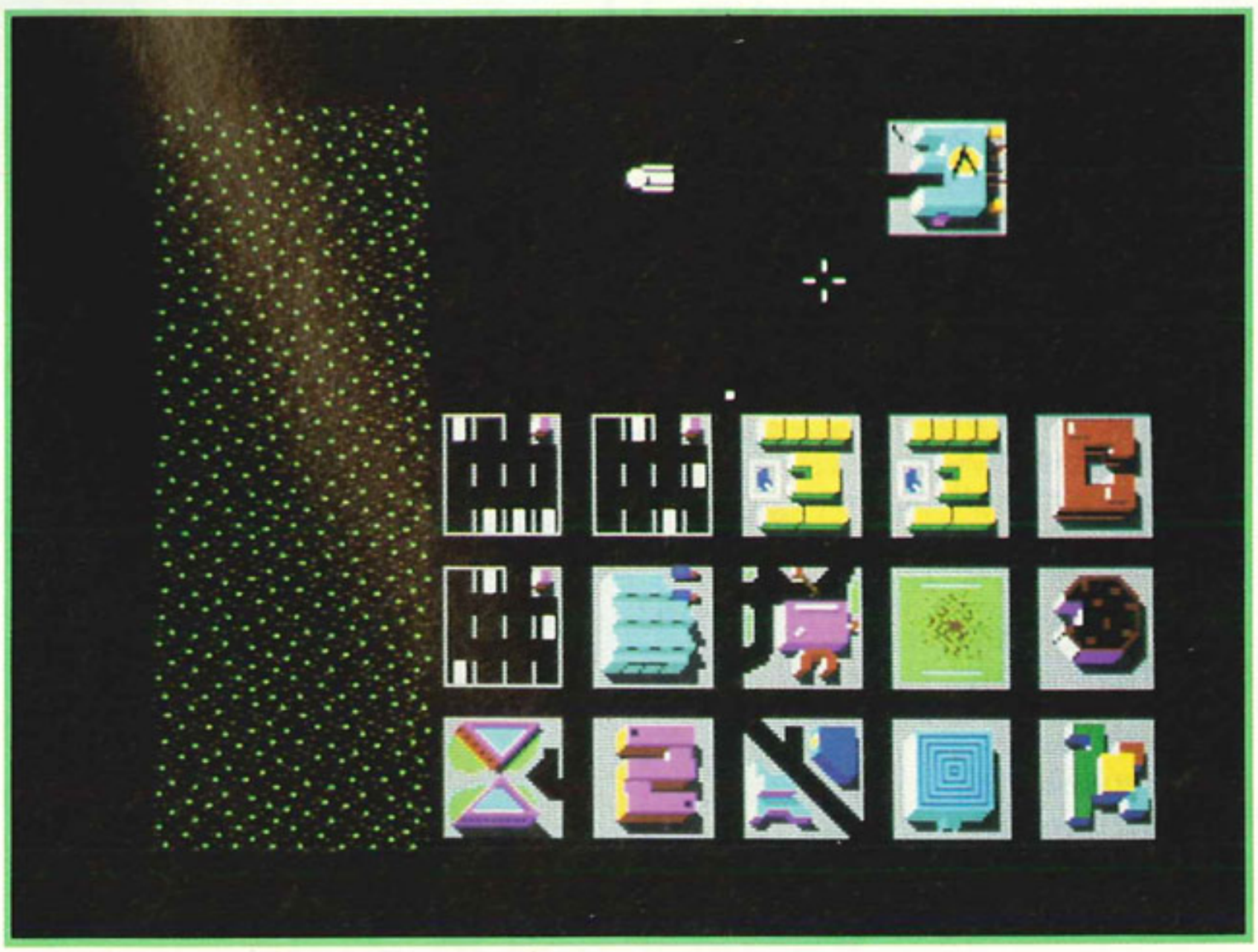
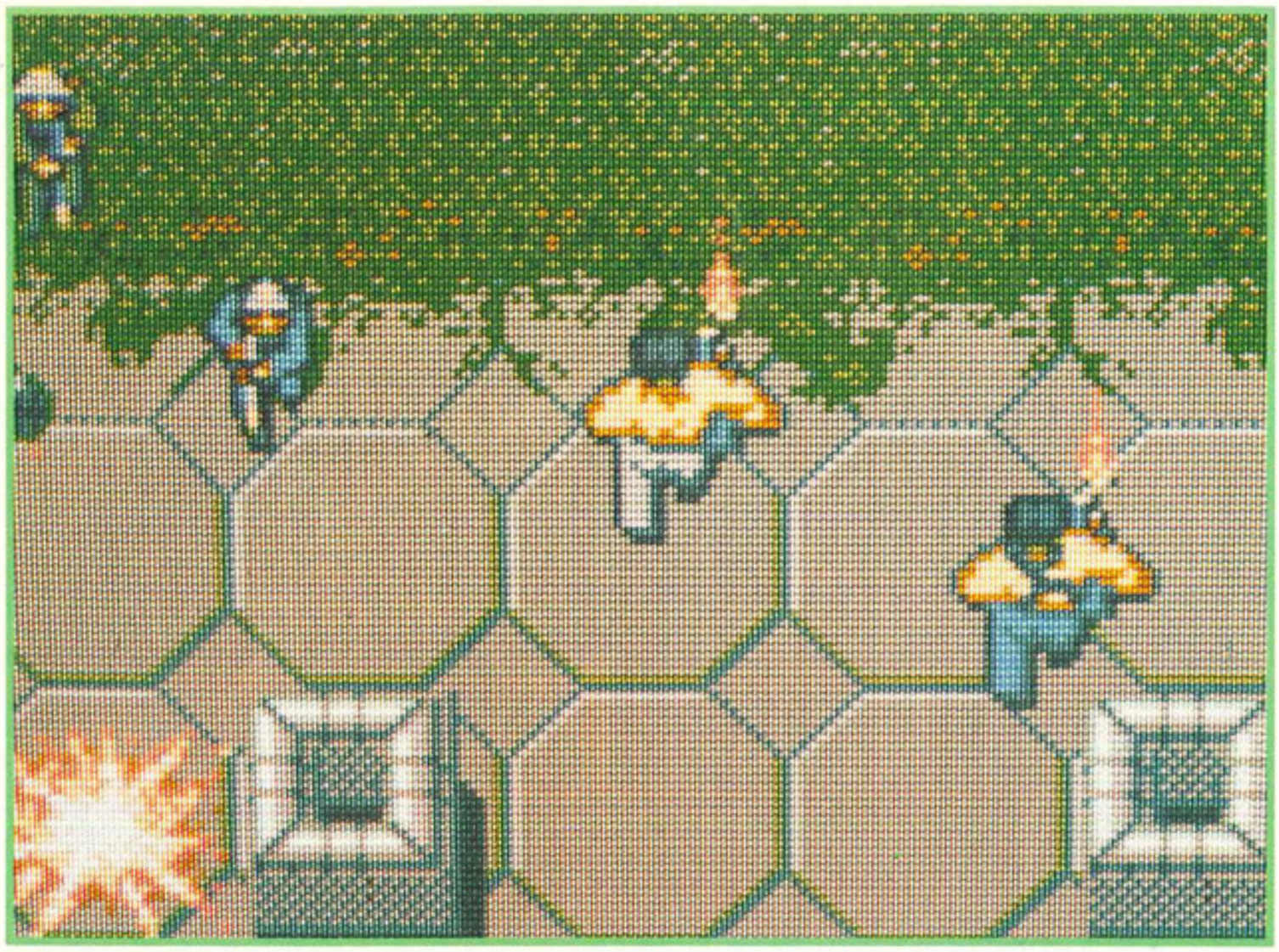


Photo top right: The craft you control is called the Sundog. As well as inter planetary travel the vehicle also has a land craft suitable for exploring planets. This is vital in order to complete your mission.

Photo centre right: The planetary navigation screen allows you to select a suitable course.

Photo bottom right: Once landed you can explore the massive and detailed planet surface using your mobile vehicle (the white blob centre top).



Two players let loose with their heavy machine guns. A granade explodes in the bottom left

The fact that there is no option to regulate the strength of the opposition to match the number of players participating, makes it blatantly obvious that Microdeal created Leatherneck to justify their dual joystick adaptor. The simple facts are that if you do not possess the adaptor, the game is very difficult indeed. Leatherneck has a confined game-play area which is constantly swarming with enemy troops who, in turn, are protected by deadly accurate weaponry. It is great to have a difficult and challenging game, but Leatherneck approaches the realms of impossibility - unless you acquire the adaptor and three comrades to help out!

JS

LEATHERNECK

MICRODEAL (£19.95)

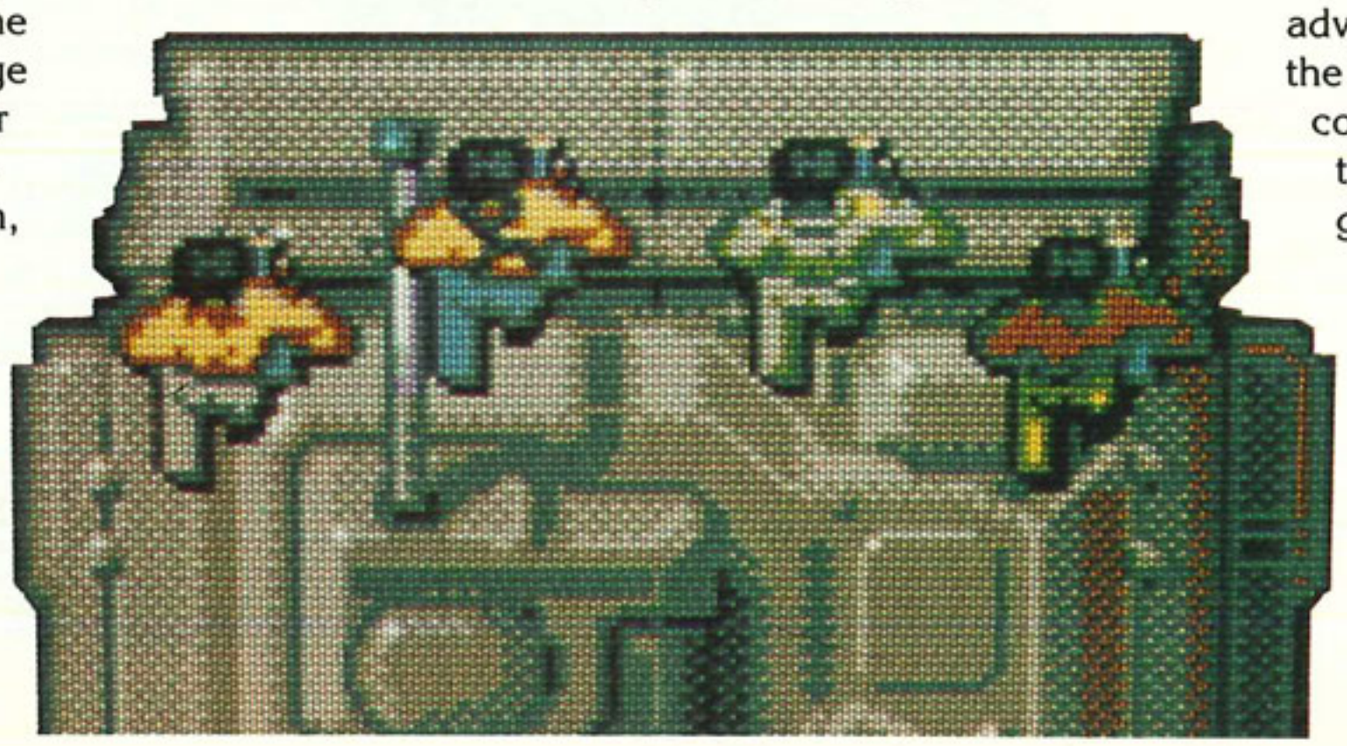
"There are enough Commando-style and Ramboesque combat games available for the ST to storm Navarone, so how do Microdeal justify their latest release, Leatherneck, as an addition to this prolific theme?"

Leatherneck is a typical, gung ho military combat game, representative of the many already available for the ST, but there is one feature that makes it unique-simultaneous four-player participation. This is achieved by inserting two joysticks in the computer's game ports and acquiring Microdeal's dual joystick adaptor. You can, however, play solo or against one opponent. The hero appears on the loading-screen and sprays machine-gun fire to signify that the game has loaded. A large status display for all four players is housed at the right of the game-screen, with a bullet which slowly decreases in size to signify ammunition exhaustion.

Surprisingly, Microdeal have not included an option to vary the opposition to match the number of players participating. Therefore, the strength of the opposing army is the same for four players as it is for one. You begin the game with four lives and a full quota of ammunition. At the base of the screen, an amphibious troop carrier lands on the beach and the four commandos run off the boat and onto the shore. Immediately, all of the soldiers who are not being controlled let out a blood-curdling cry as they stumble onto land-mines. The game-screen gives a Commando-style overhead view of the terrain, which scrolls vertically as you move Leatherneck up the screen. The joystick has full directional control over the commando and you advance up the screen by pushing the joystick forwards, while moving it to the left and right sends him across the width of the screen.

KEYBOARD		✗
JOYSTICK	✓	
MOUSE		✗
COLOUR	✓	
MONO		✗
520ST	✓	
1040ST	✓	

Leatherneck begins the game with a rapid-firing, light-calibre machine gun, which is only effective over a short range. This weapon can be exchanged for a heavier calibre gun by pressing any key on the left-hand side of the QWERTY keyboard. Both of the machine guns and a supply of hand grenades are activated by pressing the firebutton. Leatherneck's speed never exceeds a stroll, but you encounter the first platoon of enemy troops within the first ten seconds of the game. Moving Leatherneck past the centre of the screen activates whatever formation of opposition are operating in that area and, once you have committed Leatherneck to engage the enemy, there is no turning back as the enemy advance relentlessly down the screen. Each formation comprises at least five troops who fire machine guns and lob grenades sporadically. If you manage to massacre that group but fail to advance up the terrain quick enough, you encounter a replace

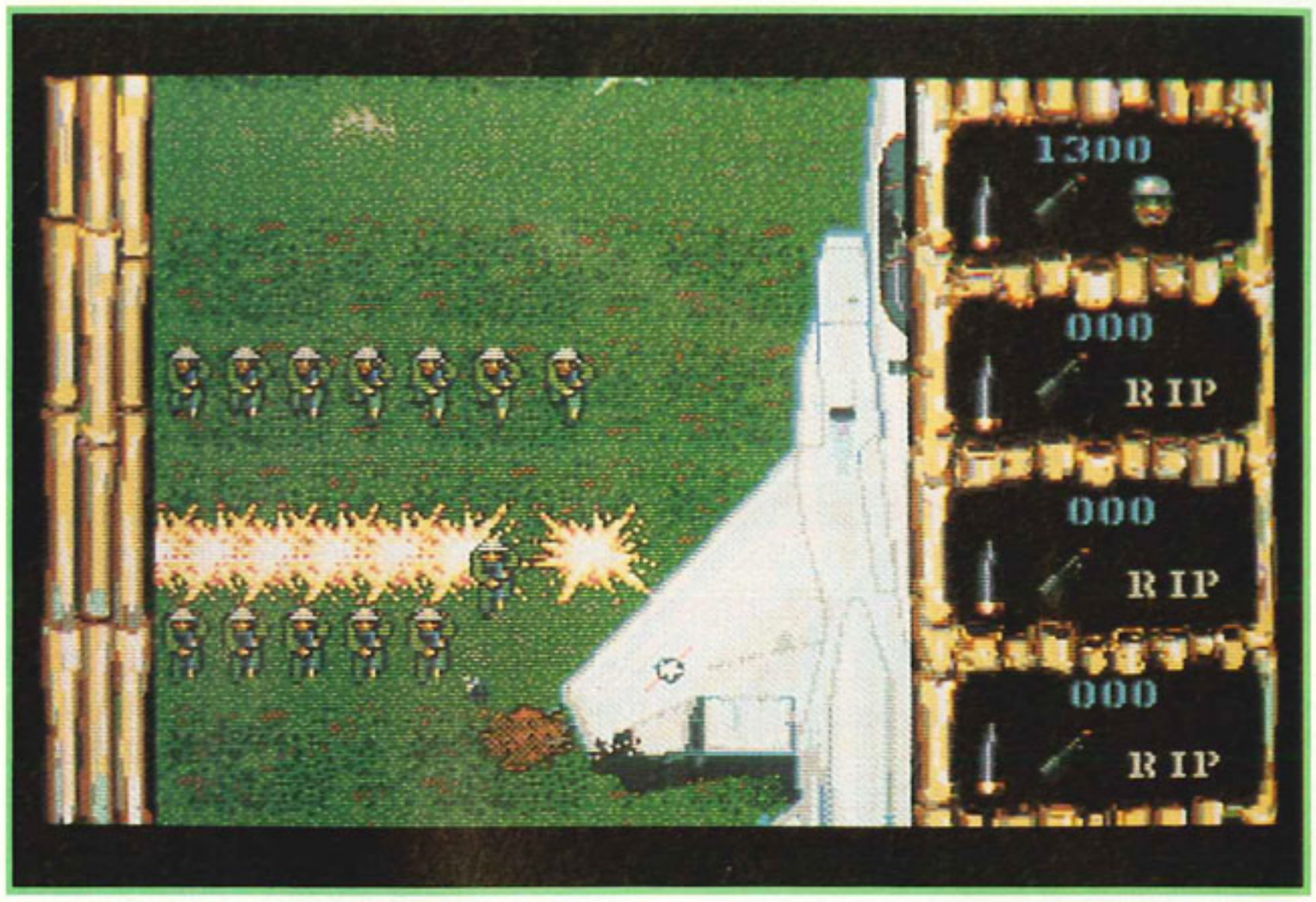


ment platoon who adopt the same combat routine.

Straw huts offer limited and temporary protection from the ever-increasing wave of enemy troops who swarm across the screen, but you have to choose your route carefully. One tactic which momentarily preserves Leatherneck's life and gains a healthy number of points, is to move him forward to engage the enemy and pull back on the joystick to retreat with continuous fire. However, although this may delay Leatherneck's demise by avoiding the shells, this tactic rapidly depleats your ammunition and slows your advance to a complete halt. The enemy's defence is fortified by strategically placed mortars and gunposts which fire constantly with machine-like accuracy. Negotiating a safe passage past the missile launchers depends on timing and allowing for the fact that Leatherneck's speed cannot be increased. You must take position behind the nearest cover, wait for the nearest missile to be lobbed and make good your escape as the barrel swings away to fire the furthest missile.

After trying every conceivable route to traverse the first section, you reach a jungle terrain and an opportunity to replenish your ammunition presents itself. All ammunition is enthusiastically protected by enemy troops, and Leatherneck must be moved directly over the top of the box. Apart from aircraft wreckage and sparse foliage, the jungle offers even less protection as the enemy continue to swarm across the screen. Using the retreat technique briefly halts the attack, but as described, this has many disadvantages. The troops are now fortified by gun posts and mortars and, at this stage, if less than three players are participating, you have little chance of beating the onslaught.

As you fight you way through villages, jungle and other terrain you spot many derolict war machines including this large jet fighter



Leatherneck is yet anóther addition to the 'Commando'-style games that lately seem to be experiencing something of a revival. Leatherneck's sound effects are quite impressive, probably due to the use of the much acclaimed ST Reply system. The game's graphics tend to be just adequate; that is not to say they are bad, but they are not radically different from previous games of this genre. Microdeal claim that Leatherneck can be played as a four-player game; I only played it with two brothers in arms but I'm certain a four-player game would be worthwhile. Overall, while not outstanding Leatherneck represents a well-developed, 'Commando'-style game which is definitely worth a look at.

NC

STA Rating 62%

GRAPHICS: 60%
SOUND: 67%

ORIGINALITY: 57%
ADDICTIVENESS: 53%

DIFFICULTY: HARD
1ST DAY SCORE: 23000

As well as constantly coming under attack from enemy troops, you occasionally find yourself bombarded by cannon fire or from what ever lurks inside a gun emplacement.

This is definitely a contender for 'The hardest game of 1988; it took me ages just to get my score over the ten-thousand mark!

The graphics work really well and the tune is good, and though a few quirks in the program make it very hard to progress, it is great fun trying. At first it is more luck than judgement, but, after a while, you can memorize the attack waves and learn how to avoid them.

Comparisons are bound to be made with Elite's Ikari Warriors which is a pity as both are good games in their own right. But due to Leatherneck's high difficulty level, I think that Elite's game could appear in more software collections than Microdeal's. This would be unfortunate because with a little perseverance a lot of fun could be had with Leatherneck.

SM

CAPTAIN AMERICA

GO! (£19.99)

"Protected by his Vibranian Adamantium alloy shield and an expensive copyright, the character of Captain America has managed to avoid being turned into pixels - until now!"

The Captain's arch enemy, the manic Dr Megaloman has been plotting a fiendish plan to eradicate the entire population of the United States with a missile containing a vile genetic virus. Only one man can save the citizens of the United States from genocide, Captain America! The Captain has already entered Megaloman's base and the game begins in an Orbivator. The Orbivator travels around three cylinders which contain quadrants or rooms. These quadrants continuously rotate within the cylinder enabling the Orbivator to lock-on to an access and the Captain to disembark.

Within the orbivator, you direct the Captain's right hand to operate the various functions, such as the control stick which selects a quadrant. The lower quadrants contain a higher level of toxicity which chips away at the Captain's immune system at different rates. A monitor screen within the orbivator indicates the level of toxicity of the chosen quadrant and a panel of control buttons enables you to leave the Orbivator and enter the quadrant. The Captain appears on a platform with two droids travelling vertically down each side of the platform firing missiles which damage your immune system. The joystick controls the Captain's direction and the firebutton activates that famous shield. Moving the Captain to face the target and pressing the firebutton sends the shield spinning towards the target. Pressing the fire button again, return the shield to the Captain's arm, but the longer you delay, the further the sheild will travel and it can be lost if you allow it to go too far.

After initial difficulty with aiming and judging distances, the shield becomes an effective weapon and eliminating the droids is a matter of timing the release of the shield. Once both droids have been destroyed, you can move the Captain to the back of the platform, which enables him to enter the inner quadrant. On the first level, the toxicity is low and so the Captain should maintain enough immunity to complete the level. Crab-like 'Cybos' swirl around the screen firing toxic missiles. Immediately after the final Cybo has been destroyed, a strange rotating droid emitting an even more powerful toxic missile enters the room. Contact with the droid or its missile results in rapid loss of immunity and a direct hit with the shield is required to destroy the droid. The words 'Code Word' are left in their place, which can be used to open the vaults containing the so-called raw Ying and Yang, which is the only antidote to produce immune anti toxin for the converter quadrant which lies deep in Megaloman's headquarters. Each quadrant contains a similar challenge, but in lower decks, the Captain's immunity reduces almost immediately, which allows you little time to complete your task. STA

STA Rating

56%

GRAPHICS: 64%
SOUND: 48%

ORIGINALITY: 61%
ADDICTIVENESS: 52%

DIFFICULTY: AVE-HARD
1ST DAY SCORE: 3000

So far, none of GO's games have really impressed me, with the exception of Trantor which was short-term fun.

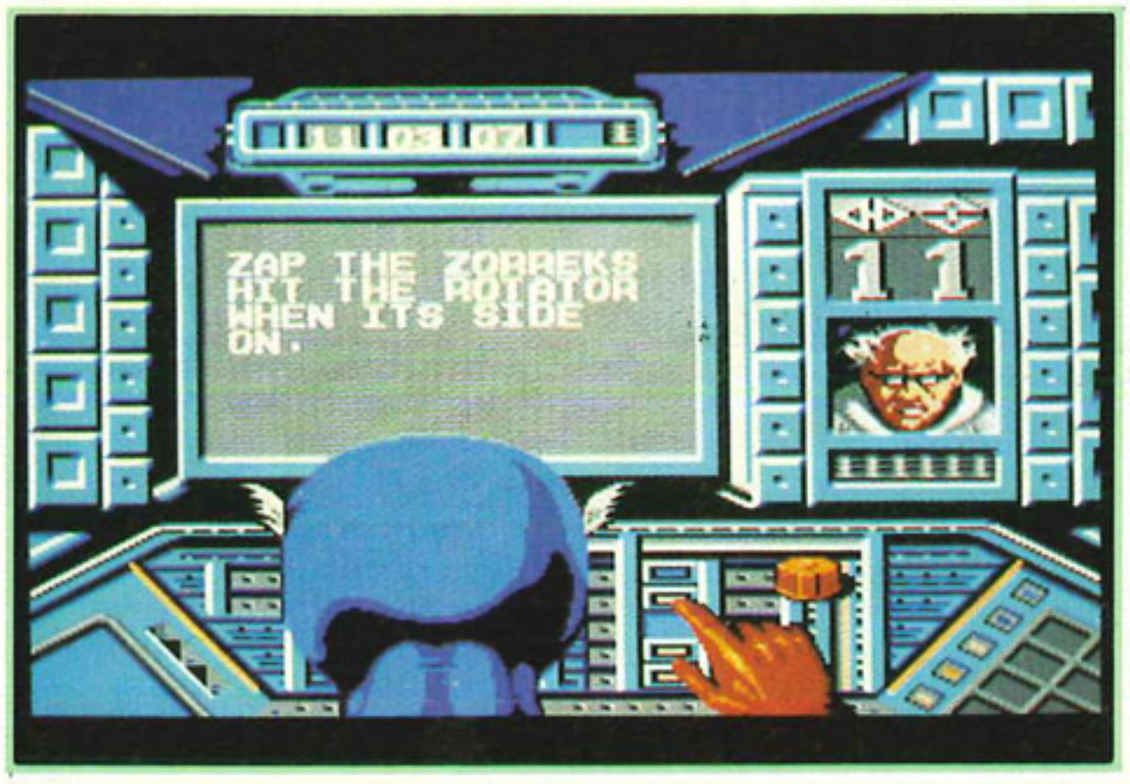
Sadly, Captain America continues this trend, as behind the attractive graphics hides a very mediocre shoot'em-cum-collect'em-up. The Captain zips about behaving like an extra from 'The Benny Hill Show', shooting robots and collecting passwords, only to have to do it again on a harder level. This makes gameplay slow and unrewarding.

The idea of bringing a cartoon character to the computer screen is a good one, but it is not being used to its full potential, which is a great pity.

SM

At last, a game which does a Marvel comic character justice! Go have incorporated excellent and challenging arcade action with a taxing puzzle. The graphics are great, the game-play absorbing, changeable and original. This is the best game to come out of the Go stables and the most recommendable arcade game this month - it's a 'Marvel'!

JS



Captain America inside the Orbivator

The Captain does battle using his Vibranian alloy shield

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MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE

GREMLIN (£19.99)

"In my opinion, games that are based on movies rarely live up to expectations. But do Gremlin Graphics 'have the power' to disprove my scepticism with this, the official Masters of the Universe game?"

The all-powerful Cosmic Key has slipped through the Vortex and into the hands of a student in modern-day America. Thinking that it is no more than an unusual musical instrument, the unsuspecting scholar plays it, unaware that each note attracts the evil Skeletor like a homing device. With the Key in his possession, nothing could stop old bone-head from wreaking havoc on Earth and ruling all Eternia. Meanwhile, He-man is outside Castle Greyskulle proclaiming that he is the most powerful man in the universe - modesty is not one of his strong points!

I would have thought that with an all-action film like "Masters of the Universe", Gremlin could have come up with something better than this.

The programmers have, for some unknown reason, used a system which, when running around the streets, totally disorientates you by changing the compass directions.

I should imagine that a game like this would appeal to the younger gamester. But by incorporating the silly direction system, Gremlin may have made it a little confusing to play.

SM

Transported to modern-day America, He-man must thwart Skeletor's evil plans by collecting eight musical chords, which lead to the discovery of the Cosmic Key. Gremlin have employed their Gauntlet-style game-screen for the majority of the game, with individual combat scenes which are fought from a variety of perspectives. The game-screen shows He-man in a dead-end street surrounded by Skeletor's sinister army of cloaked troops armed with a limitless supply of life-force-sapping missiles. The joystick manoeuvres He-man through the streets in any direction and the screen scrolls to reveal the next section of the city. Pressing the firebutton eliminates the enemy with a laser, but as fast as you can blast them, they are replaced by even more hooded fiends.

Action is momentarily suspended as one of He-man's comrades report that they require his assistance elsewhere in the city. On the first occasion, Gwilder has spotted some of Skeletor's band of misfits at the scrapyard and pressing the space bar reveals a map of the city that shows your position in relation to the scrapyard. With constant reference to the street map, you can plot your progress and enter the gates to the junk yard. Accessing disk 1 to load up the combat scene, the game-screen shows a side-view of He-man and the first of Skeletor's evil minions lurch on screen. Beneath the game screen, He-man's sword and Skeletor's staff act as life-force gauges for each of the competitors. Limited to only two fighting movements, frantic joystick manipulation must be employed to punch and kick the life-force out of each of the competitors. Victory in the scrapyard yields one of the eight cosmic chords.

At the end of the battle, you receive another report that Skeletor's hooded army are protecting a Cosmic Chord at Charlie's Electronic Store. Again, you must check your position and plot your course across the city. The game-play at Charlie's is a Prohibition-style shoot-out and the enemy have taken position in a building. As they appear in the windows and doors to fire their weapons, the joystick controls a set of cross-hair gunsights and 'Big H' turns sharpshooter. Success at Charlie's reveals another Cosmic Chord and information about the next location. He-man's Skimmer Disk is parked on a rooftop somewhere in the city and you must locate the access to the rooftops and find the disk. Once airborne, you can engage the enemy in an energy-sapping laser battle in order to clinch the third Cosmic Chord. The remainder of the Cosmic Chords are scattered around the city and must be collected before the final conflict with Skeletor can commence. 'Time is running out He-man, ha, ha, ha!' (Evil laugh.)

STA Rating 61%

GRAPHICS: 57%
SOUND: 45%
ORIGINALITY: 65%
ADDICTIVENESS: 59%
DIFFICULTY: AVERAGE
1ST DAY SCORE: 46000

More mature ST users may feel some embarrassment when purchasing Masters of the Universe, but it would be worth the momentary distress. Each of the games within the game are challenging and maintain your interest in the short term; but the fact that there is only one scenario, throws doubt on the long-term appeal of the game.

JS

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STIR CRAZY

INFOGRAMES (£19.95)

"When was the last time a computer game made you laugh? As if we needed to be reminded, so-called entertainment software invariably demonstrates what a violent world we live in. Therefore, it was a refreshing change to review Stir Crazy, a game that is abundant in laughs and devoid of gratuitous violence."

If Stir Crazy is not the funniest computer game available for the ST, I don't know of a more deserved claimant to the title. With large and hilariously expressive characters and smooth animation, you could be forgiven for mistaking it for a cartoon. It would appear, therefore, that the race to produce a controllable fully-animated game has been won by Infogrames. Bobo is more than a welcomed respite from misery and violence, it is a noticeable advance in computer graphics.

Bobo is a convict incarcerated at Her Majesty's pleasure. The game consists of six individual sections that show a day in the life of Bobo and his attempts to escape from prison. At first sight, he is trying to dig his way out with a pickaxe and makes no attempt to avoid the search lights that sweep across the prison yard. But instead of making a run for it when one of the lights spots him, he makes use of the spotlight and the attention to show off his ballet dancing skills and proceeds to pirouette across the prison yard.

The joystick controls may be less than positive at times, but graphically, Stir Crazy is the most advanced game available for the ST. The hilarious slapstick comedy is a joy and there is plenty of scope to exploit this there - I can't wait for Stir Crazy two, three, four - ad infinitum!

JS

I really enjoyed this: it's manic, it's daft, and it's brilliant! I have never seen or heard of 'Bobo', but if he's half as good as the game, then he must be quite funny.

The graphics and sound are excellent and the gameplay is not sacrificed for either - all the stages are well thought out.

The only fault I can find in this concerns its lastability; it is basically a decathlon-type, multi-event game. But when it's as well presented as this, who cares?

SM

STA Rating

86%

GRAPHICS: 93%
SOUND: 68%

ORIGINALITY: 82%
ADDICTIVENESS: 87%

DIFFICULTY: AVERAGE
1ST DAY SCORE: 13000

A convict's lot is not a happy one and prison life is one long succession of menial and demeaning tasks. Bobo is food monitor, and in the prison food hall he must keep the other prisoners supplied with porridge. With less than positive joystick controls, Bobo must be manoeuvred to the food hatch to pick up a bucket of porridge and then back to the benches to serve the prisoners. But, if you fail to keep him occupied, he proceeds to tuck into the porridge himself. The prisoners lick their plates to indicate that they have finished their food and Bobo has very little time to replenish their plates and the action becomes frenetic as more prisoners demand a second helping. In a state of confusion, Bobo trips over and manages to get the porridge bucket stuck firmly on his head.

From serving porridge to spud-bashing, prison life proves to be a real barrel of laughs! Bobo sits near an increasing pile of potatoes and pulling back on the joystick kicks a spud up to his hands. Then, left and right joystick movements peel the spud and pressing the firebutton makes Bobo throw it over his shoulder. However, if you have not removed all of the peel, an unseen adjudicator throws it back on the pile, much to the disgruntled Bobo's annoyance. Potatoes continue to pour into the room and soon Bobo is literally up to his neck in them.

Mopping the prison floor proves to be a pointless task in the next section of the game. The game-screen shows an overhead view of a prison corridor which is surrounded by six doors. Armed with a mop and bucket, Bobo must constantly wipe the dirty footprints from the floor. This would be a relatively simple task if it were not for the constant stream of prisoners, guards and guard dogs that flood out of the doors. Pressing the firebutton allows Bobo to get to the footprints quickly and points are scored on blocking the doorways to stop the flow of traffic.

Time to put Bobo's ingenious escape plan into action! Back in the prison yard, Bobo is wheeling a trampoline around in front of the prison as the convicts jump from their cell windows. With the joystick, you must position the trampoline so that the falling prisoners bounce over the prison walls. It often takes more than one bounce to get them over the wall and bouncing at an obtuse angle when the trampoline is too near the wall can result in a nasty collision - ouch!

When you are as ugly as Bobo, you need all the beauty sleep you can get. But when you are sleeping in the same room as a bunch of snoring convicts, this proves to be impossible. Every time one of the prisoners snores, Bobo must be manoeuvred out of his bunk bed and over to the offending convict. Pressing the firebutton nudges the lag and when he stops snoring, Bobo can return to his slumber to maintain his energy. However, the convicts take turns at snoring and poor Bobo has to keep getting up and nudging them - no wonder he's ugly!

Finally, Bobo makes best his escape and hurtles off into the sunset. But he is running on electric train cables and must avoid the pulsating current. The current increases as he progresses which requires some fancy footwork - unless you want a fried convict on your hands.

BERMUDA PROJECT

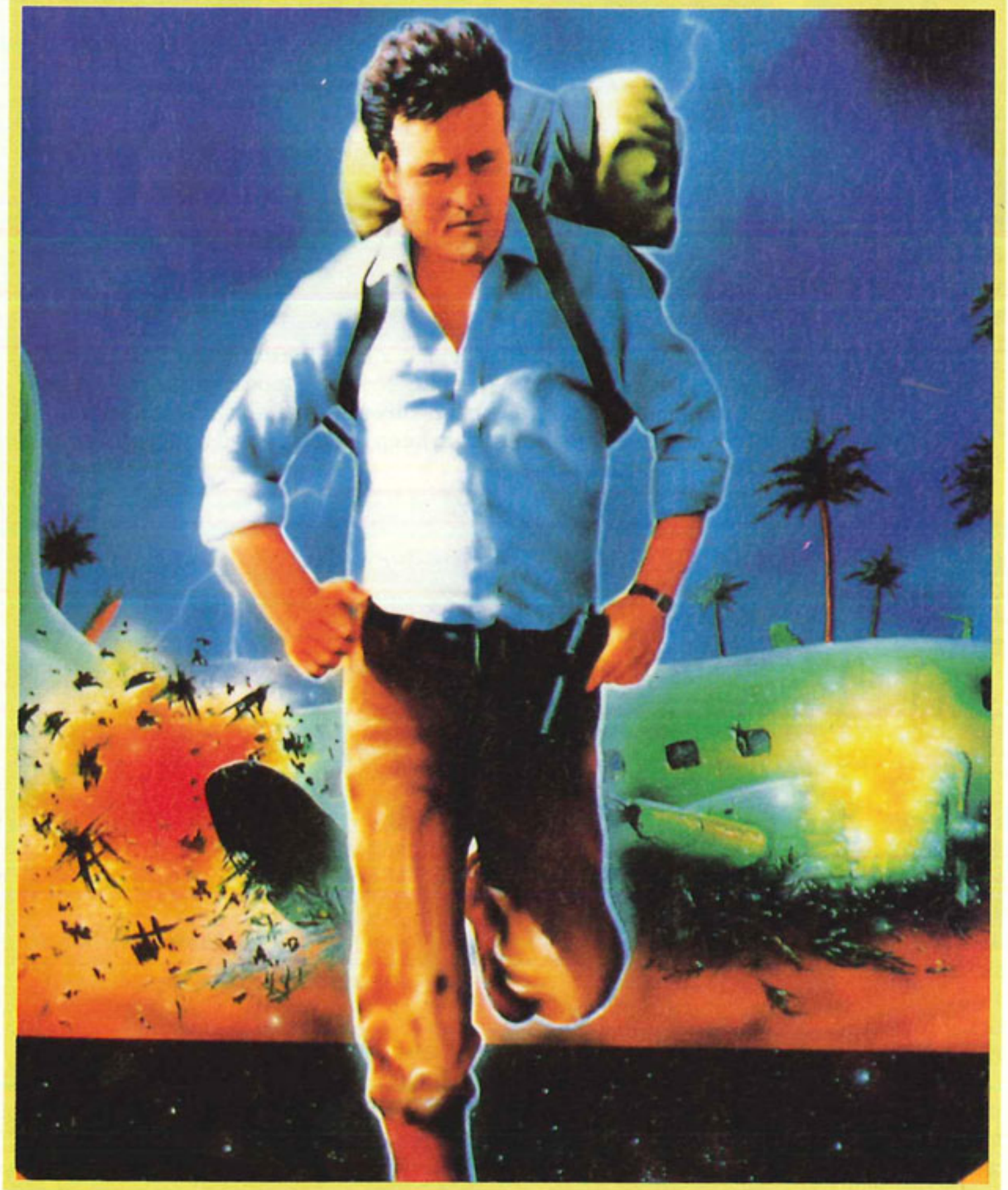
MIRRORSOFT (£24.95)

"Please fasten your seat belts and extinguish your cigarettes. The aircraft's instruments have begun to spin wildly, the radio is out and it appears we have just entered the Bermuda Triangle."

You awake with a memory of a loud crash and a scream of tortured metal to find that you are the lone survivor of an air crash upon a seemingly deserted island. This unchartered spot rests dead bang in the centre of the infamous Bermuda Triangle, a stretch of Caribbean Ocean which has a long history of mysterious disappearances. Rescuing little from the wreck, you have no option but to choose a path through the rock-littered landscape and trek for the coast. As this island has obviously been a magnet for all kinds of different craft throughout the ages, who knows who or what you may encounter on your escape to freedom. Still, as a journalist you could look upon this adventure as the scoop of a lifetime. To explore the land inside the Twilight Zone and return with the solution to the mystery of the age is the chance you have been waiting for.

This graphic adventure has been written by Eugene Evans who is himself a survivor from a crash. Eugene worked on the infamous Bandersnatch game which also disappeared down some black hole when Imagine Software went into liquidation. The Bermuda Project has been threatening to appear in the shops since the late summer of 1987 and it is only now making its debut.

The screen is a scrolling window centred around the small stumbling figure of our hero complete with backpack. Control over the direction of movement is via the mouse, as is the method of issuing commands. There is no text to be typed in this game as all commands are selected from a pop-up menu window. To issue a command you must depress and hold the right button to produce the menu. Moving the mouse vertically highlights the various options and selection is then made by pressing the left button. The options available include EXAMINE, USE, GET and DROP. Because all commands are carried out in this way, your actions tend to be more restricted than in a normal adventure and this can be a little frustrating. If, for example, you wish to deal with a troublesome scorpion by 'Using' the spade upon it, you will be told that 'Digging the Scorpion' has no effect. Actually, 'digging' the scorpion was not quite



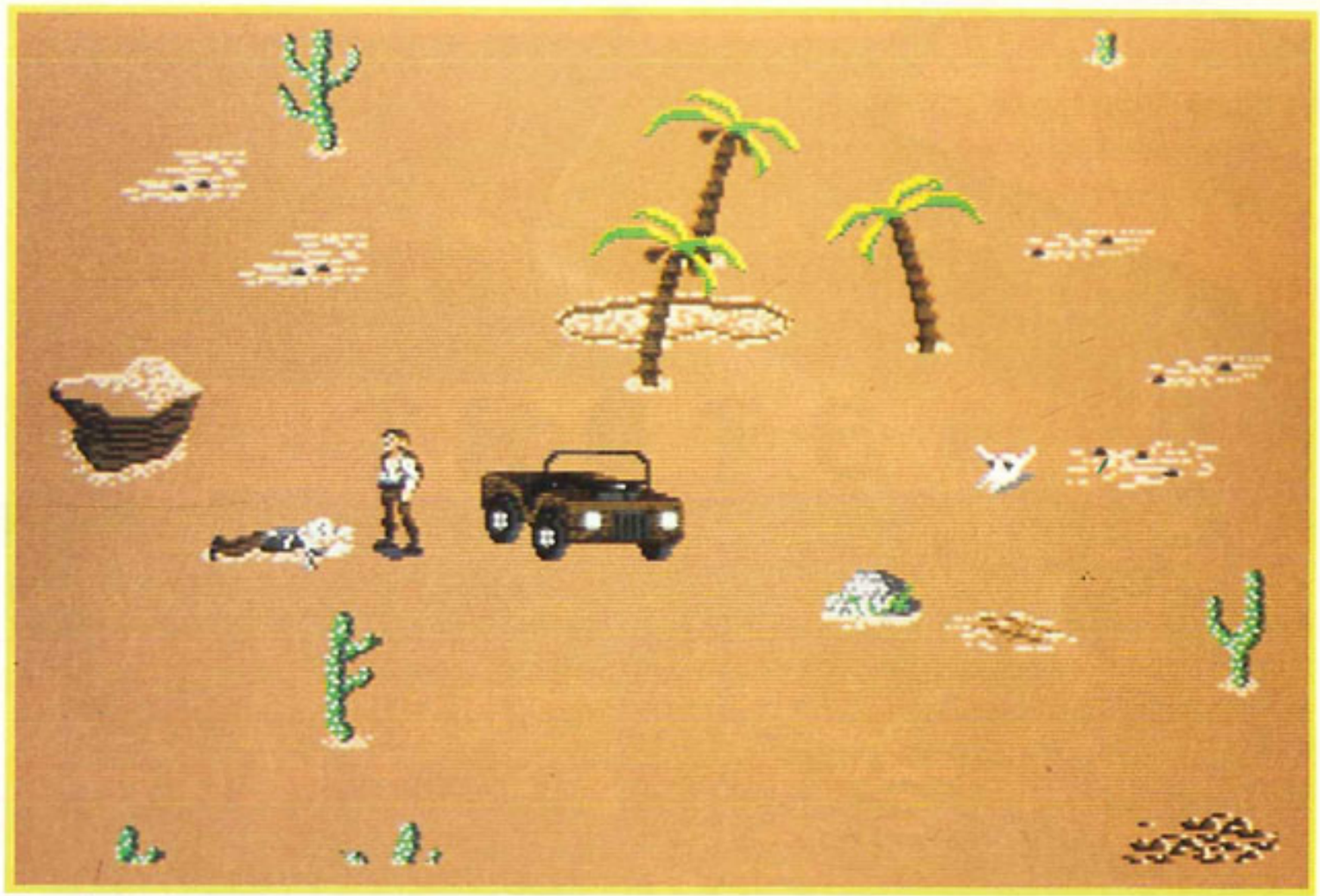
Awkward is the word I would use to describe this game. Not the game itself, but more the way in which it is played. I found the mouse too sensitive in moving the man about and I had great difficulty in stopping him where I wanted. The method used to select actions, i.e. by use of the mouse buttons, I found difficult to master. Having at last gained some proficiency in their use, I still found the selection of the action to be carried out rather cumbersome. You have to keep the right button depressed while you select the option from the pull-down menu, and then action the selection by using the left button which might then show another menu. You also have to 'EXAMINE' an object before you can take it. Considering the game is animated, the graphics are quite reasonable - even on my T.V. The sound is sporadic and not really of a high quality.

SK

what I had in mind for the sonofabitch!

Any text response by the game is also displayed in this small window. The idea of incorporating all controls into the mouse seems a good one but this implementation is extremely awkward in the initial stages. Press the wrong button inadvertently, or release one button whilst moving the mouse, and you can lose important screen messages which are not always repeatable. Moving the small, animated figure around the screen is also a little clumsy as he tends to spin and twirl as you wrestle to move him through the tangle of rocks. The animation of the figure is very well done, however, as he trudges realistically round every obstruction.

The initial graphic background to the game is a desert landscape randomly sprinkled with boulders and cacti which eventually gives way to the beach which sparkles and moves to the accompaniment of realistic surf sound effects. To the north of the island all progress suddenly ceases as you encounter a large wooden wall surmounted with skulls. A large imposing gate seals the wall and this appears to be very effective in keeping you out. Or is the gate there to keep something else in? Tramping around the island takes a long time and if you are unlucky in your choice of initial direction, you could be in for a long walk before you stumble upon any point of interest. Eventually you will meet some other inhabitants, but as they were not expecting you to drop in for dinner don't be too surprised if they decide to make you the main course! If you listen out on your radio in the correct spot, you will hear a fading SOS message which indicates that there is another plane which is going down nearby but whether they'll make



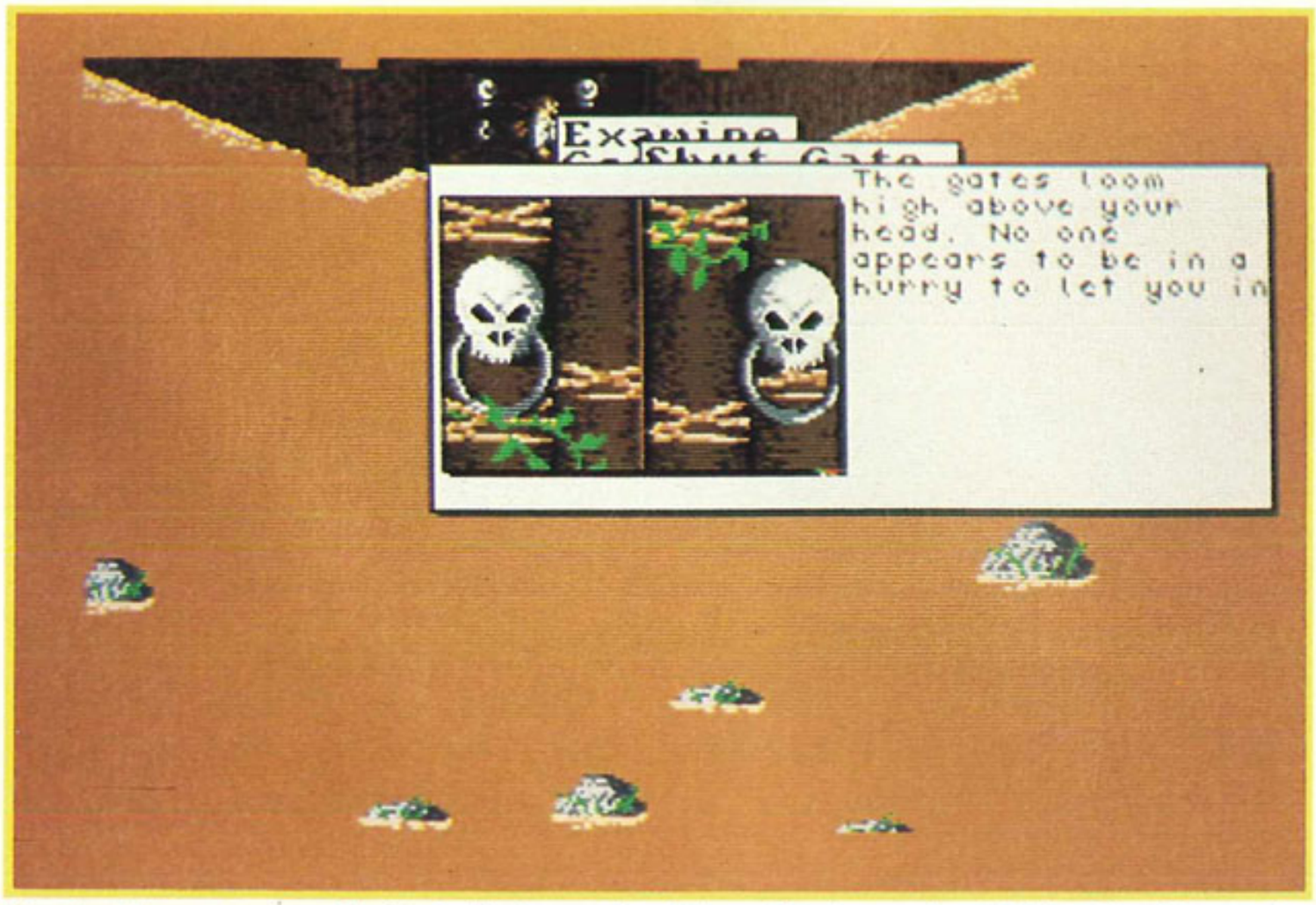
You find a jeep - its occupant appears to have met a nasty end. Now the only problem is: where's the key?

it to the island or whether they will manage to land south of the wooden barrier, you have no idea. One thing is for sure: without a pilot to help you, there is little chance of you ever seeing your great story in the headlines of the world's press.

The few areas of interest on the south side of the wall are separated by long distances and what is really needed is some means of transport. There is a vehicle to be found, but as the local vandals appear to have drained the petrol tank, it's not going to get you anywhere fast. A crude form of aerial transport is available but as it only works over the hot desert region it is of no help when it comes to scaling the wooden barrier. **STA**

I found this method of mouse control a most irritating feature of the game. I repeatedly made mistakes while selecting actions and this became quite frustrating. There is also the problem of having a small window scrolling over a large map with no paths thus making it easy to miss locations. This feature could condemn you to spend many hours tramping around a featureless desert in the belief that you have missed something. The graphics of our tramping hero are very good, but the other items are rather repetitive and plain. Owing to a puzzle in the early part of the game, which I failed to recognise or solve, I was condemned to spend hours of fruitless searching and this sapped my initial enthusiasm for the game. A lot of work has obviously gone into this game and no doubt it will appeal to some, but it somehow lacks that addictive quality which is needed to keep you struggling forward.

AM



You stumble accross a settlement with huge gates. Information boxes give details of locations and objects that you have found.

STA Rating

58%

GRAPHICS/TEXT: 70%
GAMEPLAY: 55%

ADDICTIVENESS: 52%
ORIGINALITY: 62%

U.S. Gold did not yield to pressure to release Out Run until they were certain that it was as close to the original as possible. Indeed, improvements and modifications were being made right up until duplication. The graphics are outstanding, the scrolling smooth and the joystick controls are responsive and distinct. In fact, apart from the inconvenience of a lengthy loading time and momentary breaks between stages, this first-class conversion will save ST users a fortune in the arcades. Out Run has already set a blazing trail through the arcades and eight-bit market, shattering both speed and sales records and it will undoubtedly and deservedly continue this success.

JS

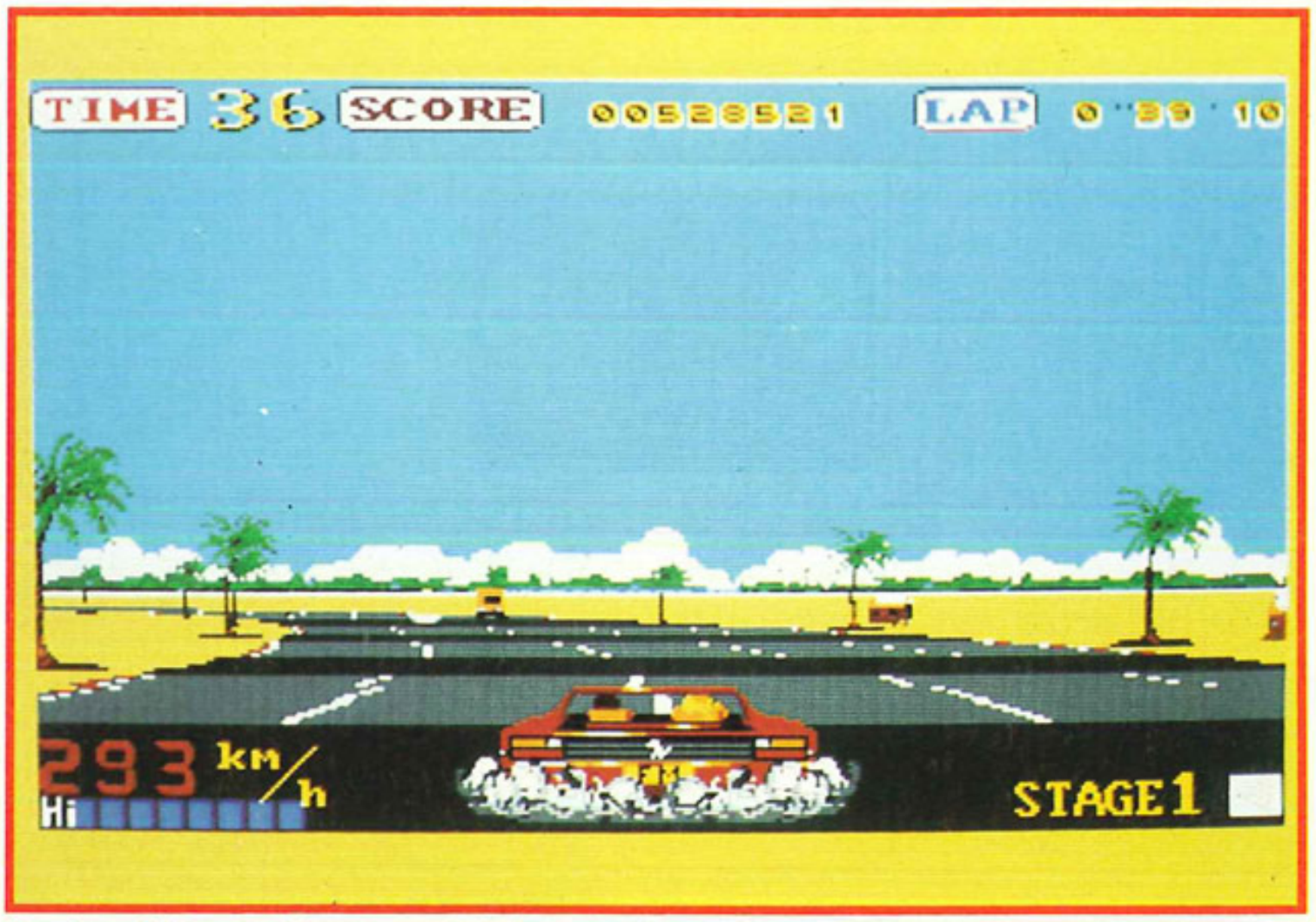
OUT RUN

US GOLD (£19.99)

"U.S. Gold gave their programming team the daunting task of converting the ultimate arcade game into the ultimate home-computer game. After nine months development time, have they succeeded?"

The loading-screen displays the starting line scene from the arcade version and after three minutes loading time a menu-bar enables you to choose certain features for the race. In keeping with the theme of the game, a steering-wheel-shaped cursor selects the various options with a choice of joystick or mouse control. A constant but changeable tune continues throughout the game, but the ST sound chip was unable to reproduce the original Out Run themes to U.S. Gold's satisfaction, and so they have included a separate audio tape. The menu-bar also contains an option to select the amount of traffic on the road, which gives two levels of difficulty. Finally, selecting 'Start' from the menu-bar removes the crowd from the starting line and a traffic light changes from red to green to start the race.

If you have selected joystick controls, pushing forward causes the



Burning rubber round the corner of the busy four lane highway at 293Khm. The graphics may not be quite up to arcade standard but the game play is every bit as exciting.

STA Rating

84%

GRAPHICS: 86%
SOUND: 68%

ORIGINALITY: 76%
ADDICTIVENESS: 91%

DIFFICULTY: AVERAGE
1ST DAY SCORE: 9100000

Wooow! At last, freed from the cash restraints imposed by having to slot endless 50-pence pieces into hungry arcade machines, I've achieved my all-time ambition of completing Out Run. I have to say it is a little easier than the original but it still retains all the thrills, spills and excitement.

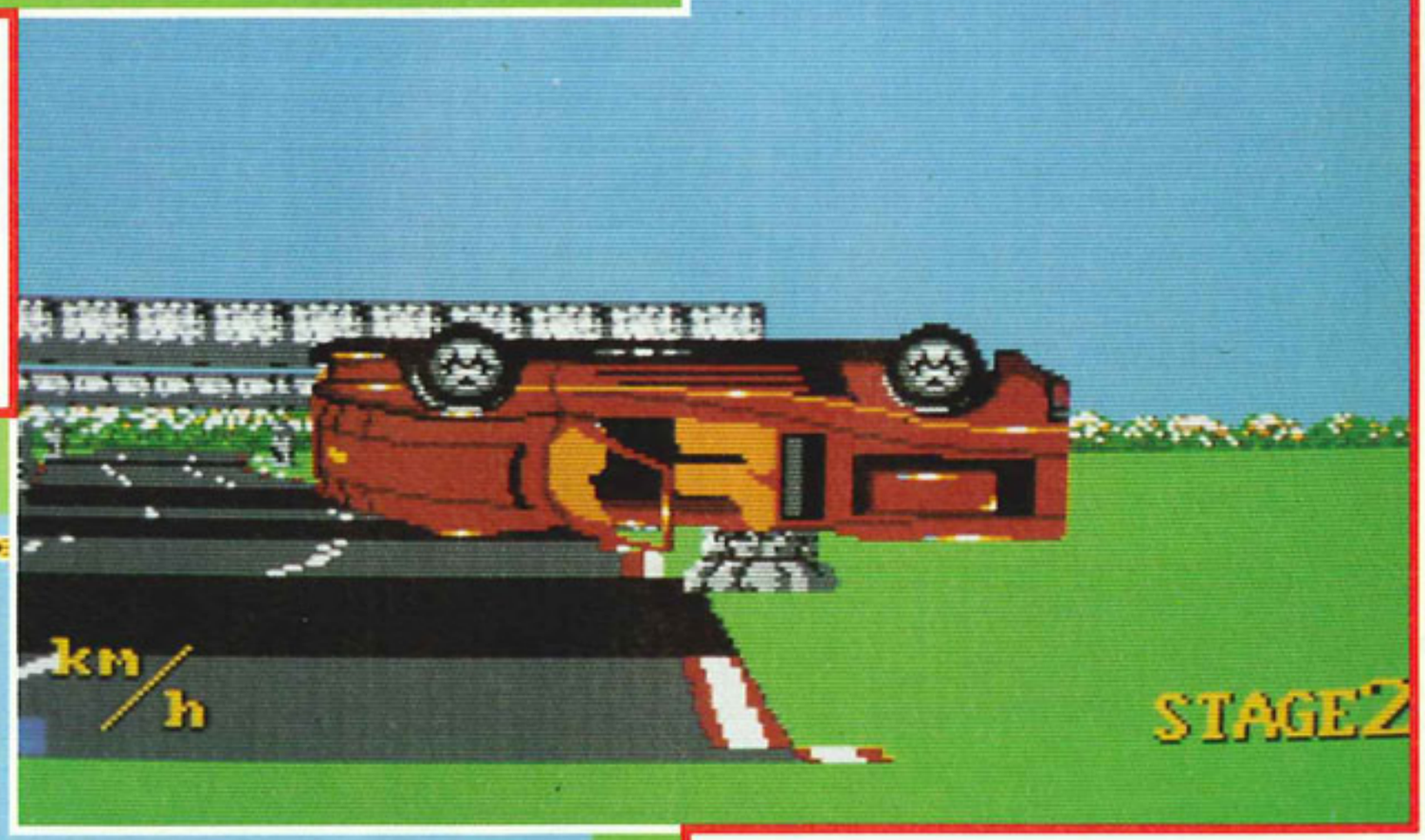
Once you get used to the fact that the graphics are 'merely' excellent home-micro graphics and not 'out-of-this-world arcade standard' you soon begin to realise that Out Run is a superb conversion of everyone's all-time-fave arcade hit. The controls and playability send other ST racing games crashing into the barriers. The sound is good, too, and as I've already mentioned the graphics are top notch for a home micro. If you like this type of game you're unlikely to make a better purchase than Out Run. If this one doesn't get STA1 rated it won't be my fault!

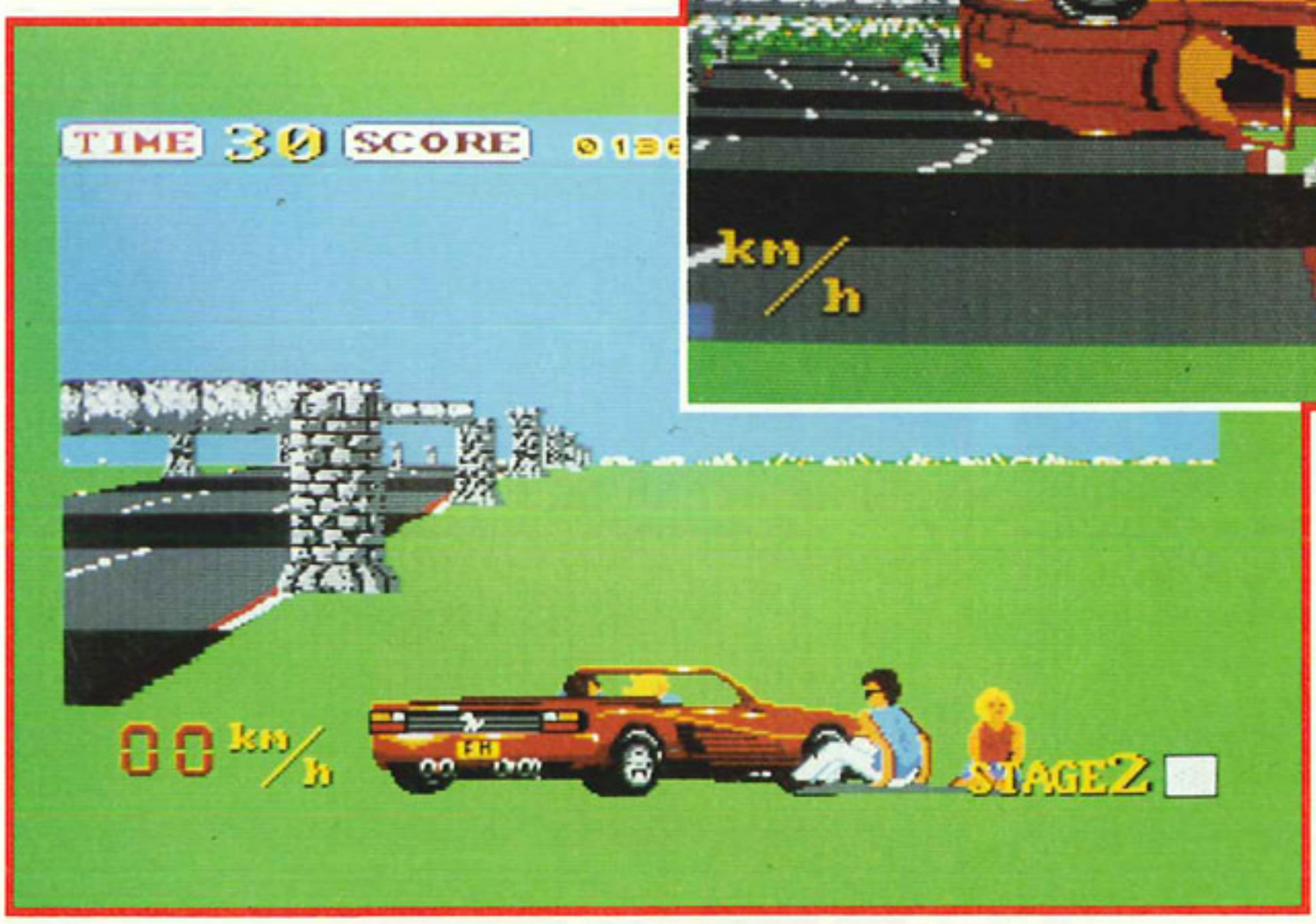
HG

Ferrari Testarossa to accelerate away from the starting line with a screech of tyres. There is only a two-gear transmission, which is indicated by Hi and Lo and changed by pressing the firebutton. The low gear has high revs for swift acceleration from the starting line, while high has lower rpm for top speed cruising. The joystick is the more preferable substitute for the sports steering wheel from the arcade version and offers remarkably responsive directional control. The mouse control mode, however, is not at all positive and quite intolerable. The reading on the digital speedometer increases rapidly and as the Hi gear is engaged, the Ferrari responds with a surge of power and a dramatic wheel spin.

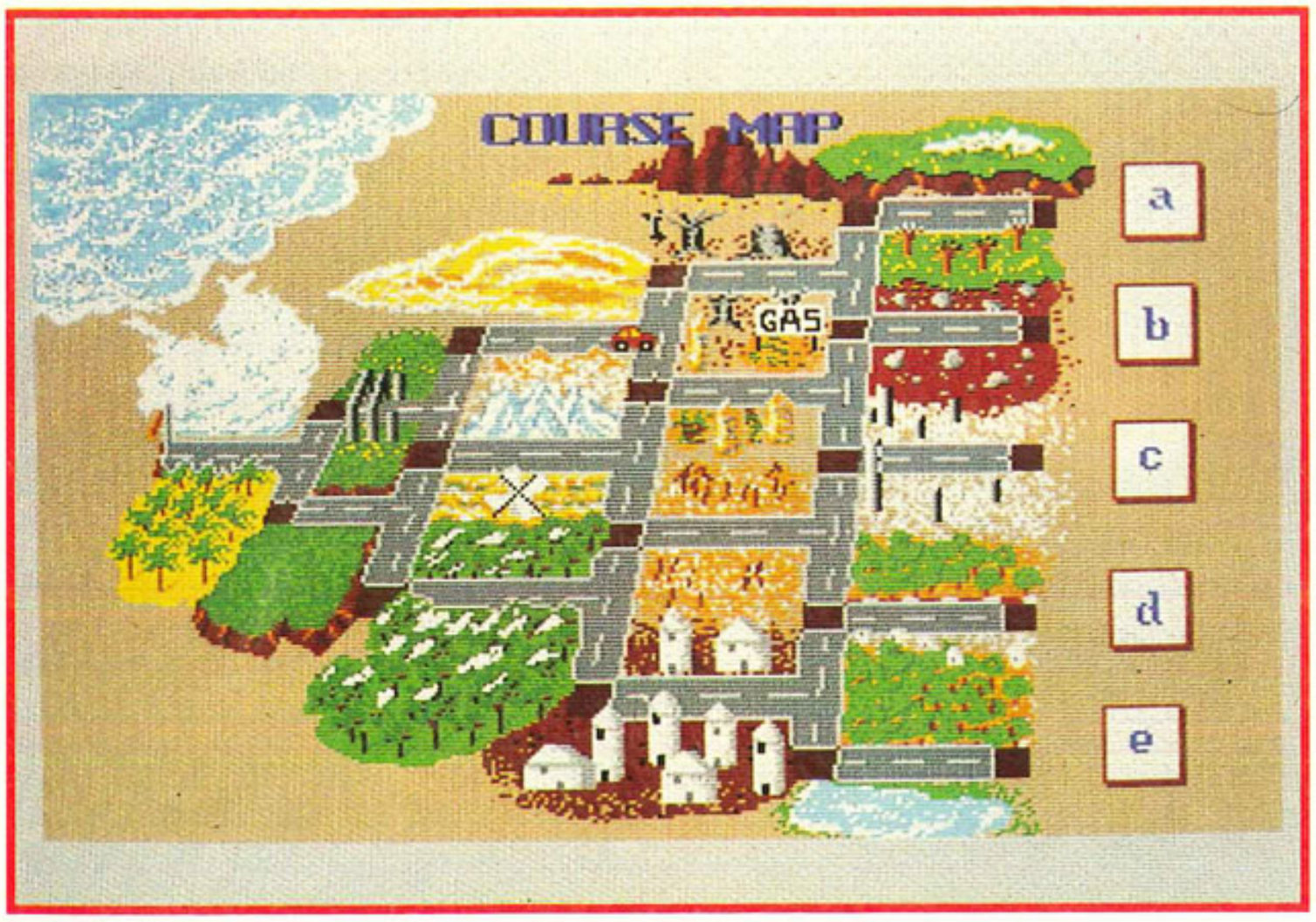
Like the original, the ST conversion contains fifteen timed stages which are all linked together and there are five main routes which lead to as many finishing lines. Stage one takes place on a five-lane motorway with sweeping bends that can be taken at full speed and, even if you have selected heavy traffic, the vehicles are well spaced out across the wide road. The vehicles on the road range from slow-moving lorries and Volkswagon Beetles, to rapid Porsches and Mercedes. Each vehicle is separately animated and moves at a different pace. The outstanding effect of movement and speed is achieved by a two-tone striped road which is enhanced by many and varied roadside objects. In stage one, lines of palm trees, bushes and huts flash by as you toil to complete the simplest stage of the race. Stage one must be completed within 60 seconds and any time you have gained is added on to the next. As the sequentially recorded audio tape moves from 'Passing Breeze' to 'Splash Wave', the first-stage finishing line comes into view. As soon as you cross the line, the race is momentarily suspended while stage two loads up.

Avoiding obsticles is the name of the game. Most of the stage two routes are bordered by rocks, buildings or structures of one kind or another. Contact with these sends £90K worth of Italian sports car crashing through the air.





At the end of each game a map appears showing you which of the many alternative routes you have chosen and how far you managed to get.



KEYBOARD		✗
JOYSTICK	✔	
MOUSE	✔	
COLOUR	✔	
MONO		✗
520ST	✔	
1040ST	✔	

Central reservations of bushes in the first stage of the race cause you to move from one lane to another, which dictates the route for the next stage of the race. There are two possible routes in stage two, but you are always four stages away from the finishing lines. Both of the second stages are reduced to three lanes and the traffic is considerably heavier. One of the options takes you through those famous rows of concrete arches which enhance the feeling of speed even further as they lead you through the most favourable route in stage two. The alternative road is a dark, winding, narrow and slippery track which forces you to slow to a sensible pace for the duration of the section.

The easiest route in Stage three takes you across the desert, but the other two possibilities consist of snaking country roads which impede your progress considerably. At this stage, you have probably lost any time advantage gained from the previous sections and, in your frustration to reach the check-point within the minimum sixty seconds, you collide with various obstacles both on and off the road. A collision with the shrubbery in the central reservation sends £90,000 of Italian sports car in a spin and, naturally, clashing with other road vehicles slows you down. A great interpretation of that dramatic crash sequence occurs after a collision with a more substantial obstacle, sending the Ferrari and its occupants rolling across the screen. Each stage becomes more hazardous as you near one of the finishing lines. But after you have had time to recuperate from the gruelling race, another four finish lines with very different routes await. Your score accumulates as you drive and points are awarded for continuous and uninterrupted progress. If you fail to complete a stage within the allotted time limit, the race is abandoned and a course map shows how far you have progressed. STA

Well, after all the hype and the advertisements etc., U.S. Gold actually release Out Run onto the unsuspecting public and, surprisingly, it is not a bad conversion.

The graphics are generally quite close to its arcade parent apart from being a bit indistinct in places, the weakest moment being the lousy crash scene in which both characters disappear while the car rolls over!

In my opinion, U.S. Gold took a risk with this conversion and, although it failed to create a stir in the 8-bit market, it deserves to do very well on the ST.

SM

Victory at last! You open the door of your gleaming £90,000 Testarossa to collect your reward (the trophy not the girl!)

Seconds later while you are still revelling in the glory, the car explodes!

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SHADOWGATE

MIRRORSOFT (£24.95)

"If you have any money left in your pocket, prepare to spend it. Shadowgate has arrived! The last thing you remember is standing before Wizard Lakmir as he gestured wildly and chanted in an archaic tongue. Now you find yourself standing before the gate to Castle Shadowgate, wherein lies your quest."

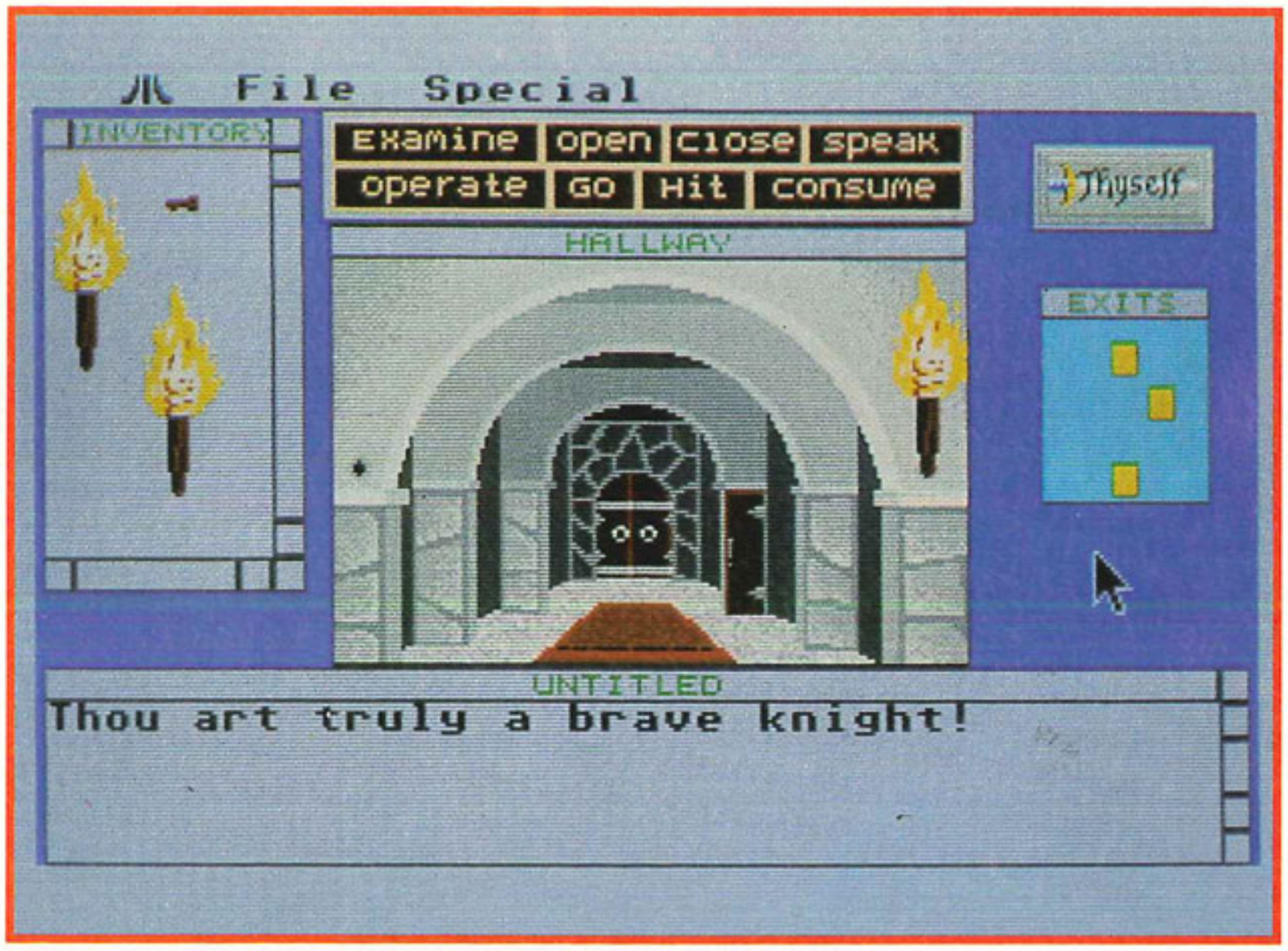
The dreaded Warlock Lord will shortly raise Behemoth, the deadliest of the Titans from the depths of the earth. Only you can stop him.

Shadowgate is the third in the award-winning trilogy of graphic adventures from Mindscape Software. The first game was 'Deja Vu' and this has already been released for the ST. The second game was 'Uninvited' and this will be released for the ST shortly. However, Mirrorsoft have decided to 'Go for Gold' and release, out of sequence, the final (and probably the best), game of the series. The game is similar in many ways to that other Mirrorsoft blockbuster, 'Dungeon Master'.

The game is totally mouse-controlled and with this you may manipulate both the graphic windows and the objects shown within them. To pick up an object, you need simply point and click, then move the object to the Inventory window and click again. Objects may be placed inside containers and this is done in a similar way to storing files inside a disk folder by 'double clicking' on the container. You may 'operate' one object upon another by pointing at the first item, pointing at the OPERATE command and then pointing at the second object. For example, you would unlock a door by pointing at the key, selecting OPERATE and then pointing at the door. This method of controlling the game makes everything very easy for young and old alike. The additional benefit of this method over traditional text adventures is that you no longer suffer the frustration of searching for the correct words to issue a command.

The exits from each location are shown by two methods. Doors and passageways are drawn in detail in the main graphic screen and, in addition, small squares showing these exits are displayed in the 'Exits' window on the right-hand side of the screen. You may move through the exit of your choice by pointing at the appropriate spot in either screen. All other possible commands are shown in the 'Command' window at the top of the screen. The final 'Text' window below the main graphics screen, scrolls the text responses from the game.

The graphics showing the rooms, monsters and the various objects are of a high standard and many include simple animation routines combined with digitised sound effects. Should you stray into the Dragon's Lair, you will be treated to the roar of a flame-thrower as a jet of fire spews out of the darkness. To ensure you keep one eye on the clock, you will find that your flickering torch



Shadowgate is a fully GEM-driven graphic adventure complete with menus, icons, mouse pointer and separate graphics and text windows. This scene is the first in the game.

This game goes on and on. Just when you think you must be near the end, you turn the corner to find another corridor riddled with doorways. I am amazed at the detail which has been crammed into the machine.

This is undoubtedly a fun-filled cracker which can't fail to delight both hardened adventurers and those who prefer a heavy slosh of graphics and sound effects to liven up their games. The problems tease rather than baffle, and every time I returned to a puzzle I managed to push my way a little further. If you liked Dungeon Master you'll like this. The graphics and sound effects really bring the game to life and make you want to keep playing. 'Deja Vu' had the same technical features as this game but had very little atmosphere. Shadowgate has pulled it all together to make a really great game.

AM

STA Rating

77%

TEXT/GRAPHICS: 67%
GAMEPLAY: 75%

ORIGINALITY: 72%
ADDICTIVENESS: 75%

KEYBOARD	✔	
JOYSTICK		✘
MOUSE	✔	
COLOUR	✔	
MONO		✘
520ST	✔	
1040ST	✔	

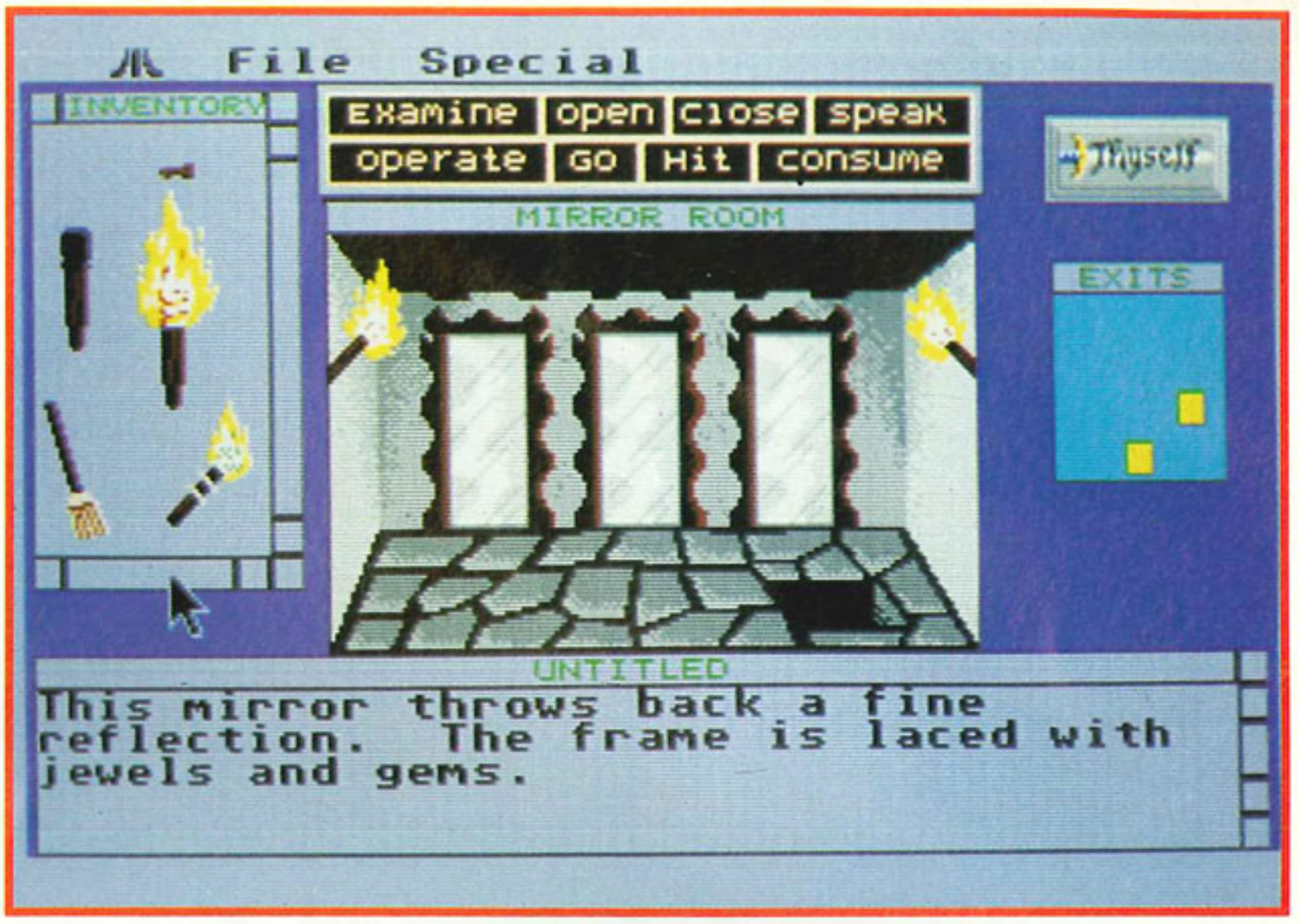
will cough and die at regular intervals, which means you must always carry spares in your pack. Food must also be found and consumed to keep you fighting fit.

The problems appear to have been carefully pitched between the average and easy level, which makes playing the game more enjoyable for a wider audience than do the usual brain busters. Death comes quickly in Shadowgate as there are few second chances given. Wrong decisions invariably mean another chorus of the Death March and another reload from the save game disk! This can be a little frustrating, but those with a double-density disk drive may incorporate their 'save' games on the same disk to speed up reloading. That being said, the game appears to allow you to progress past obstacles by alternative methods. Using the wrong objects may solve your present difficulties, leaving you up a gum tree later; but at least you can smash your way around for a good while before you are inevitably swatted! There are a bewildering number of objects to be found and used and each turn of the corridor seems to reveal yet another mysterious room.

Fighting with the other inhabitants of the castle is a sudden-death affair paying no consideration to such niceties as hit points. Pick a fight with the wrong guy and it's 'Goodnight Vienna' for you!

Many of the mysteries contained within each location can be uncovered by carefully moving the mouse pointer around the main graphic window and 'clicking' on any suspicious-looking shapes. If the shape in question responds by illuminating, you know you are 'cooking with gas'! A portion of rock which appears to be a 'whiter shade of pale' could easily be the entrance to a secret passage, and who knows what will happen if you highlight the handle on the old wishing well?

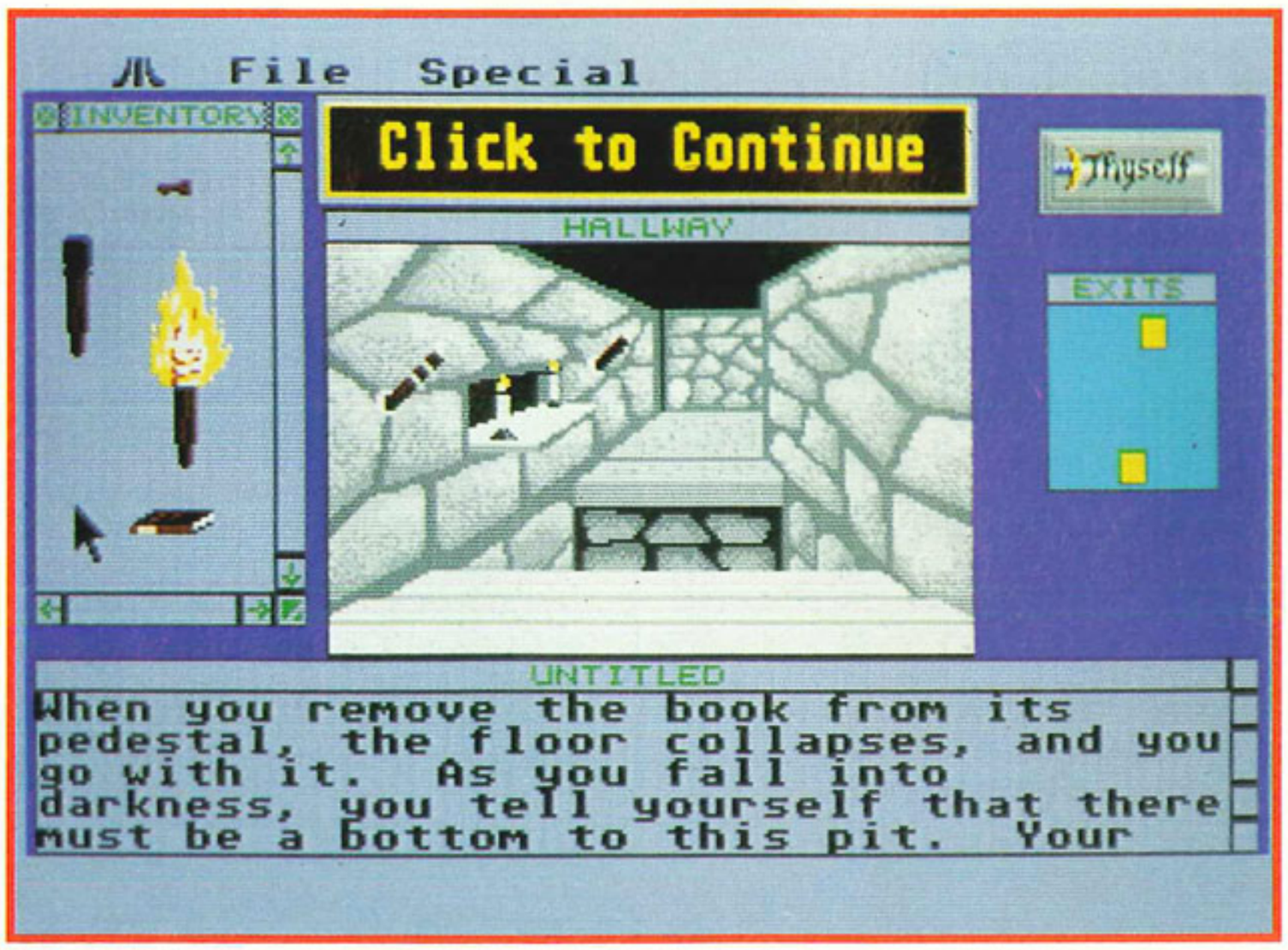
As magic plays a large part in this game, even the most humble object may be the solution to a large problem. For this reason you will need to face up to some pretty grim opponents and attempt to vanquish them with anything from a sword to a bottle of Goo-Go. Invariably, you will be rewarded with the grim reaper's signature tune but perseverance will eventually reward you and inch by inch you will wrest the secrets from within the castle walls.



I just couldn't get on with this adventure game. I'm not sure why not - the graphics are excellent and it has good sound. I can only put it down to not being on the same wavelength as the writers of the game. The one thing that really bugs me about it is that if you do the slightest thing wrong, BANG! - you're dead. It plays a nice little tune as a requiem but it could be a little kinder, especially at the beginning of the game, or at least give you some hint that you're about to do something silly.

I would have to measure this game against Dungeon Master since they are both graphical adventures driven by the mouse. In doing so, I would say that, to date, Dungeon Master is the Liverpool of graphic adventures, while Shadowgate is a Manchester United or Everton. Up there, but not the league leader.

SK



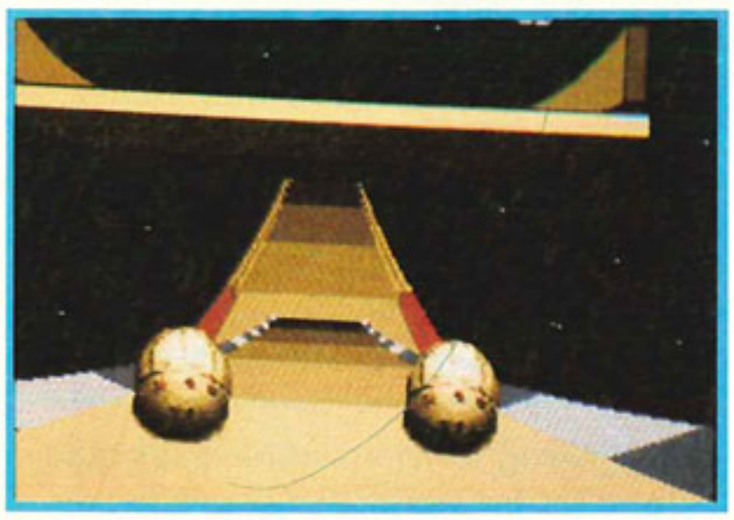
The game is full of surprises and puzzles including this rather nasty collapsing floor!

Roadwars, Melbourne House's first arcade conversion to hit the ST. The graphics are undoubtedly up to arcade standard but what about the gameplay?

ROADWARS

MELBOURNE HOUSE (£19.95)

"Imagine pressing a button on your steering wheel and blasting anything that gets in your way on the motorway! But until then, Melbourne House present an arcade game which allows traffic-weary motorway drivers to expel their pent-up aggression!"



Roadwars is set in the 25th century on a dangerous intergalactic highway - a sort of futuristic M25! The computer which monitors the roadway has gone haywire and traffic can no longer travel on it in safety - it is the M25! Your task could be described as a heavy-duty, road-sweeping assignment, as the game consists of clearing the motorway of all hazards and obstacles in an attempt to defeat the rogue computer. Immediately after pressing the firebutton, you are literally hurled into the thick of the action on a gold-coloured road that stretches from the base of the screen and trails off into the distance, circumnavigating a barren planet.

Two so-called Battlespheres roll down the highway like armoured road-sweeping vehicles and with two players participating, you can either join forces to combat the hazards and create a high-score or force each other off the road. If you are playing solo, the computer controls the redundant Battlesphere and adopts the more pacificatory tactics - but you don't have to conform! Pressing the firebutton turns the Battlesphere into a tank, complete with swivelling turret and double cannon, but you can revert back to the Battlesphere for armoured protection by pushing the joystick forward.

The most prolific hazards are small but destructive red spheres which roll down the track in a variety of formations, while military satellites fly past emitting deadly laser beams - I hope this doesn't give the Traffic Division any ideas! On the second section of the road, chevron road blocks have been placed in position which force you to veer violently from side to side in order to avoid a fatal collision - come on, this is the M25! Magnetic crash panels line each side of the motorway for the purpose of keeping vehicles on the road. The majority of these panels are brown, which signifies that they are functioning normally, but malfunctioning panels are identified by their vibrant blue colour. These rogue panels create electric currents which shoot across the road and destroy any vehicles that pass through.

De-activating the electric field requires the blasting of one of the blue panels which breaks the electric beam across the road. But if you miss the panel, quickly pushing the joystick forward returns you to the safety of the Battlesphere and you can pass through the electric field in safety. However, red panels are somehow linked to the electric fields and if inadvertently destroyed, re-activate the electric force field that you have just disabled. Finally, two green panels appear to indicate that the section of the roadway is clear and destroying them opens up the gateway to the next section of road.

STA

STA Rating
62%

GRAPHICS: 79%
SOUND: 30%

ORIGINALITY: 74%
ADDICTIVENESS: 62%

DIFFICULTY: EASY
1ST DAY SCORE: 21000

Roadwars is like a service station, serving up cool, thurst-quenching originality after a long journey of monotony. What it lacks in variety it compensates for with constant and frantic action, and the possibility of sabotage with two-player participation adds an element of excitement. Sadly, there is not enough variety to maintain long-term interest, but while it lasts, the action is hectic.

JS

I was quite looking forward to this as it is co-written by Andy Walker, (previously with Taskset), who brought us such 8-bit classics as 'Super Pipeline' and 'Poster Paster'.

Although the graphics are very well done, the game itself is totally boring.What gameplay there is consists of rolling up a road, shooting anything and everything.

This is a classic example of the old adage "Good graphics maketh not a game". On the packaging it boasts of the Amiga version: "The most amazing game this century - CCI"; doesn't that make you feel rather sorry for Amiga owners?

SM

STARQUAKE

MANDARIN (£19.95)

"The current trend in the market is for arcade conversions with stunning sound and graphics - there is even a tendency towards more intellectual subjects! But, according to Mandarin Software, there is still a place for simple and vacuous arcade entertainment. Is alien blasting a thing of the past?"

A black hole, we are told, has just 'belched forth' a new planet with an unstable core that is about to implode, taking the entire galaxy with it. 'Aaaagh!' There is no time to panic, because you, your trusty joystick and an insignificant little Biologically Operated Being called BLOB, are our only chance of survival - you'd better start saying your prayers! BLOB has just crash-landed his ship on the planet and is

standing next to the debris with a 'that's-torn-it' expression in his eyes. This saviour of the universe resembles a crash helmet with green limbs dangling down and two eyes staring vacantly out of the visor. Directing your unlikely assistant with the joystick, you must locate the planet's core and re-stabilize the planet.

With 500 screens ahead of him, BLOB begins the mission on the surface of the planet and you must move him over the edge of a precipice and regulate his descent by landing on ledges and rocks. As if negotiating a route through this cavernous underworld were not difficult enough, a plague of alien insects and creatures constantly swarm around BLOB, impeding his progress and sapping his battery level. You begin the game with limited fire-power which can only shoot horizontally, but you can collect more effective weaponry that fires destructive missiles and can be aimed in any direction. A status display above the game-screen gauges his battery and ammunition levels and an inventory contains the objects he is carrying. These objects include joysticks that give extra lives and an Access credit card which opens a security door to the trading pyramids.

Positioning BLOB on top of a docking-post connects a so-called hoverpad to his base, enabling him to hover around the caverns. However, with the hoverpad attached, object collecting comes to a complete standstill and so you must park it on the nearest docking post, collect the object and reconnect the hoverpad. This underground complex of caverns eventually leads to the core where you are informed of the nine objects which must be collected in order to re-stabilize the planet. The objects must be located, collected and brought back to the core. BLOB can only carry four objects at a time and if you try and pick up a fifth, he immediately drops the first. If you have collected an Access card, you can enter the trading pyramids, where you can exchange one object for another.

There are fifteen teleporters scattered throughout the game which can accelerate your progress considerably. On entering a teleporter, you are given a five-letter codeword which can be used in all of the teleporters throughout the game and with 512 screens to explore, BLOB is going to need all the rest he can get - it also helps to draw a map and plot your progress back to the planet's core as one cavern looks much the same as the next.

With over 500 screens, tons of things to collect and even more things to blast, Starquake is quite an arcade epic

I am not one to mince words, so I will just say that this is brilliant and that you should buy it now!

The game is 512 screens large and this, along with the barrage of aliens, will keep the most demanding of games-players going for weeks. I just cannot find fault in this. It is almost perfect in every aspect. It has cute graphics, nice sonics and amazing playability. If you are wondering which game to add to your collection next, look no further than Starquake. Now, excuse me, I'm off for another game...

SM

STA Rating 69%

GRAPHICS: 66%
SOUND: 53%

ORIGINALITY: 65%
ADDICTIVENESS: 73%

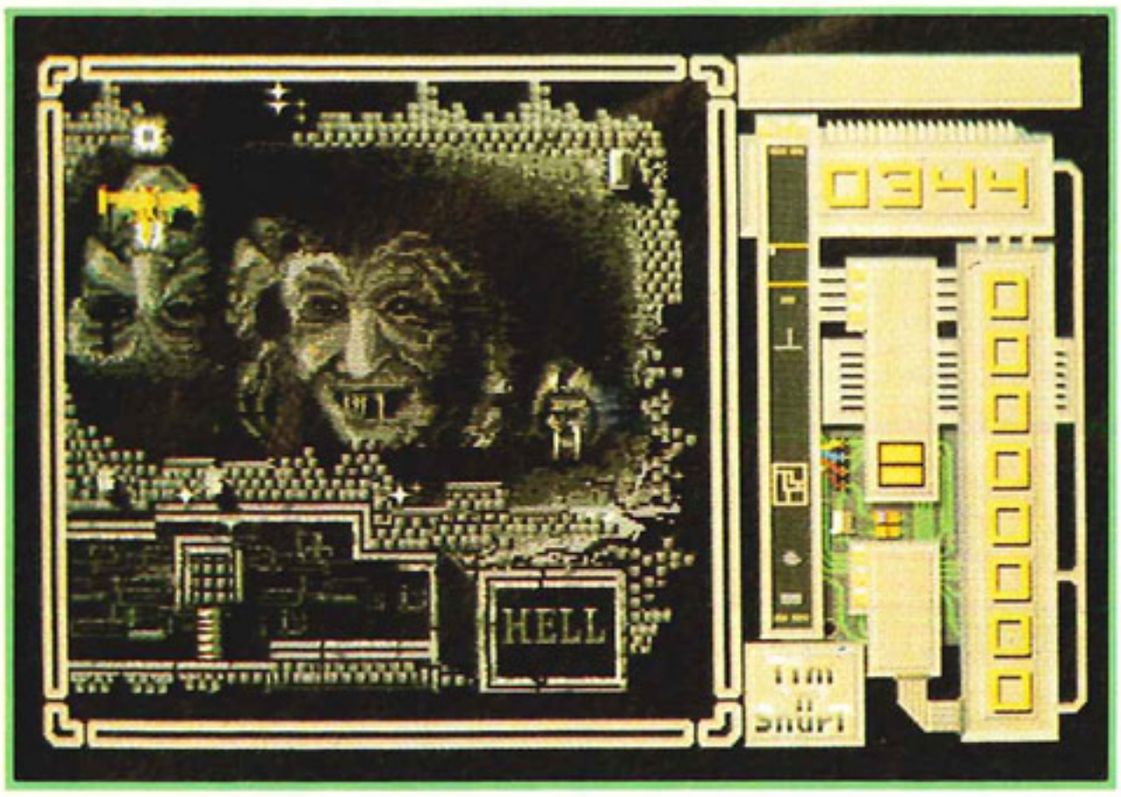
DIFFICULTY: AVERAGE
1ST DAY SCORE: 33000

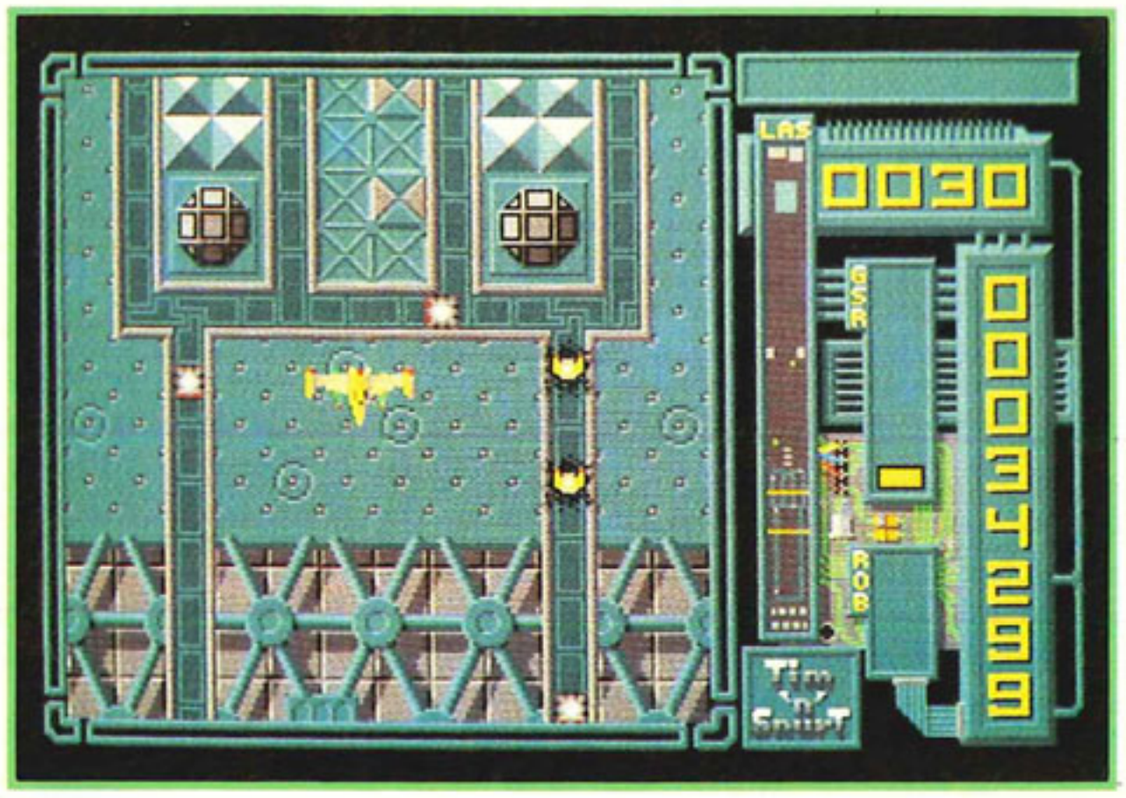
Starquake will not win any prizes for originality and outstanding graphics, but its game-play is mildly amusing and challenging. Collecting objects is certainly not a new preoccupation in arcade games, but it has been employed to great effect in Starquake. It seems that no matter how spectacular the graphics created on the ST, love them or hate them, multi-level arcade games of this ilk will always have a place in the software market.

JS

GOLDRUNNER II

MICRODEAL (£19.95)





"Just when you thought everybody had forgotten about the ancient Goldrunner, his long lost descendant has appeared to save the world once again."

Fifty long, peaceful years have passed since the original Goldrunner rid the star system of the fearful warriors who inhabited the wondrous Ring-worlds. Over the past five decades much has changed. The once feared Ring-worlds of Triton have since been inhabited by the Humans. Men have long ago laid down their warrior status and now live peaceably. With their huge advancements in technological skills the humans have developed a fully automatic defence system comprised completely of computer-controlled robotic droids. The new system, with no conception of fear and a reaction time just a little slower than the speed of light, has successfully managed to keep any attackers at bay; that is, until now...

But somehow, in a daring and swift raid, space pirates have managed to inexplicably capture most of the colony's defence droids. Whilst they are hidden amongst the sixteen space research platforms the pirates are thought to be planning a final and conclusive raid on the now undefended Ring-worlds. With the help of our very own robots the space pirates will undoubtedly recapture Triton. It is imperative that mankind finds a way to either return the droids or destroy them. The only other possibilities are either slavery or annihilation.

As a distantly related descendant of the Goldrunner, you have been selected to undertake the most important mission in your people's history. The Goldrunner II surface-assault craft has been specially constructed from the latest materials. This new ship is of an extra light weight and made from a revolutionary new alloy that makes it impervious to any enemy cannon fire. Space has been left aboard the craft to carry up to five robots. All of the enemy Cyborg pirates can be destroyed with the Goldrunner's powerful wing-mounted lasers, although some will require more zaps than others.

Upon commencing each level the Goldrunner's first task is to destroy the cars on which the precious robots travel. By disabling these vehicles the Goldrunner seemingly leaves the robots open to attack. But, as our hero's ship cannot collect the helpless droids, he must wait for enemy recovery craft to retrieve them and then cunningly steal them from the despicable pirates.

Of course, our friends at Microdeal wouldn't make the game that simple. Therefore, to further discourage the Goldrunner's attempt, the Cyborgs have many other defensive ships: magnet mines and fighters, Noumenon missiles, single Fighter-2s and carriers containing smaller Fighter-1s. Any captured droids can be deposited onto teleportation zones from which they are beamed to the Ring-worlds.

Graphically, Goldrunner II is far superior to its early predecessor. The super-fast, vertical-scrolling being particularly impressive. Also worthy of a mention are the alternative scenery disks, whereby simply substituting either of these disks for the original, a player may play the game over sixteen new and varied research platforms. The game's sound, too, is impressive: both the catchy tune and the wonderful speech and sound effects add to the game's overall appeal.

STA

STA Rating 71%

GRAPHICS: 80%
SOUND: 73%

ORIGINALITY: 56%
ADDICTIVENESS: 67%

DIFFICULTY: AVE-HARD
1ST DAY SCORE: 60000

Presentation is impressive throughout the game and the graphics and speed have both been 'tweaked' so that it looks better and runs smoother. The aliens are a bit on the small side - with the exception of the docking ship - but are generally well detailed. Gameplay is a touch repetitive, yet it has a certain addictivity to it.

The racey David Whittaker tune enhances the game's feeling of speed, but the actual effects are too quiet and subdued.

Goldrunner II is more a step sideways than any real progression in gamestyle terms and is a bit too similar to its predecessor, but that said, it is still one of the better shoot'em-ups.

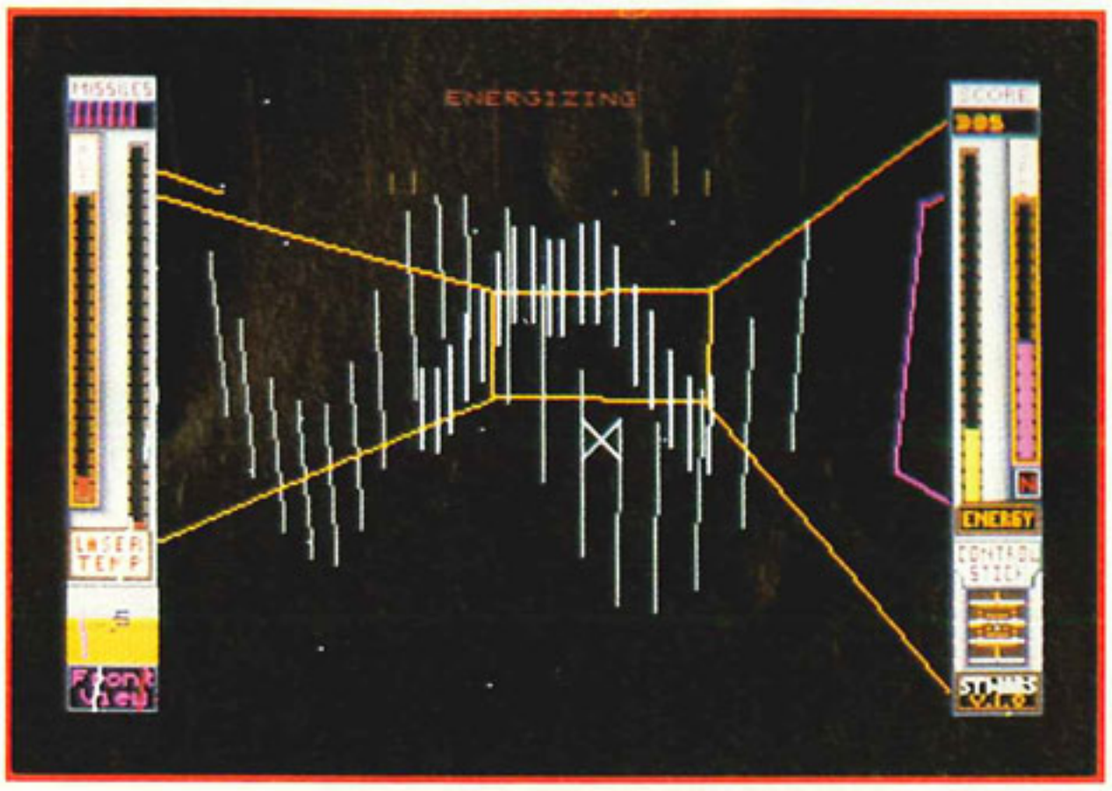
SM

Oh no! Not another vertical-scrolling shoot'em-up! Microdeal's Goldrunner II seemed to me to be a little tiresome at first, but after I had played the game for sometime and managed to understand its workings, Goldrunner II became a most enjoyable game. Both its sound and graphics proved to be impressive, and the extra scenery disks helped to enhance the game just that little bit extra. Goldrunner II is wholly recommended to any fans of the previous game and to any gamesplayer who enjoys a good blast.

NC

ST WARS

DATABYTE (£24.95)



As one of the Rebel's leading pilots you have been chosen to fly one of their last fighter crafts on a mission to destroy the Tyranny, the Empire's most powerful weapon. Many of the Rebel's bases have been destroyed by this monstrous craft and now, having been forced to take refuge on the moon of Estra, the Tyranny has located your whereabouts. Your ship, although totally operational, has been fitted with an archaic input console which means that you will have to pilot it manually. Information regarding the Tyranny has been received from a spy and input into your computer's databanks. The information is 82% reliable and it is suggested that you simulate all aspects of your attack before attempting a mission. Your brief is to locate the Tyranny and, using your missiles, destroy the ship by penetrating it's exhaust iris. There is no time to waste, you are our only hope.

Now doesn't that storyline sound familiar? Even the game's title gives away the fact that ST Wars is in fact a Star Wars clone. Unlike the official game bearing that name, ST Wars tends to be more of a simulation than a basic shoot'em-up. The game loads and proceeds to reproduce a "scratch" version of Jean Michael Jarre's Oxygene. After instructing the computer that I was sitting comfortably, I was presented with the options screen from which I could choose various elements contained within the game play and, indeed, if I wished, practice sessions. The game can be controlled via either the mouse or the joystick with a minimal keyboard intervention and I soon found myself running down a corridor towards my ship.

The gameplay itself is quite well structured, with beginning, middle and ending sequences. After knocking off a few enemy fighters I located the Tyranny and started my assault upon its surface. Taking out various towers proved simple enough and I eventually entered the trench and the heart of the Tyranny. After one well-aimed missile, I relaunched my ship into hyperspace only to discover that the Empire had built the Tyranny II. These persistent fiends had me performing the same tricks over and over again.

On the whole, ST Wars is worth considering, although does not quite manage to work as well as it should. The game is neither a Star Wars clone nor an Elite or Starglider imitation. ST Wars is a worthwhile effort which, unfortunately, just falls short of the mark.

STA Rating 43%

GRAPHICS: 50%
SOUND: 50%

ORIGINALITY: 40%
ADDICTIVENESS: 40%

DIFFICULTY: HARD
1ST DAY SCORE: 1200

TRANTOR

GO! (£19.99)

Trantor is the last of the once mighty Stormtroopers. According to his superiors there has been a little fracas on a nearby alien planet. Trantor, as the last Stormtrooper, has been sent to the planet's surface to sort out any disagreements. After leaving his spectacular craft, Trantor heads for the entrance to the terminal building only to be blown to his feet by the sudden combustion of his ship. After dusting himself down, Trantor realises that he has been set up. Someone back in the High Command wants to be rid of the elite body of Stormtroopers. Alone, Trantor has to find a way to return home. By venturing into the alien complex our hero has to locate eight computer terminals. By collecting the codes stored within the computers, Trantor must develop a code. The code must used to gain access to the beam terminal. Activating the beam will allow Trantor to travel back home and thus enable him to face his crooked superiors.

After watching the animated prologue I proceeded to play the game itself. The first thing that struck me about Trantor was the large, somewhat blocky, graphics. After briefly reminding myself that I owned an Atari ST and not a Spectrum or C64, I continued with the game. The basic idea of the game is simple: all the player has to do is move Trantor through the alien terminal searching for codes as he goes. Eight single-letter codes have to be located and rearranged to form an eight-lettered computer related word. Having deciphered the code Trantor must be manoeuvred to the central control console where, if the encoded word is correct, he will be issued with a transporter code. The final code should be used to activate the transporter beam and therefore help Trantor escape the confines of the alien complex.

To help, or indeed hinder, our hero, there are a number of storage lockers situated around the complex. Inside these metallic crates are time, health and fuel boosters and possibly passes, shields and even a time bomb! Trantor should utilise these extras if he should wish to survive. Scoring is on a percentage scale with the obligatory witty comment accompanying it.

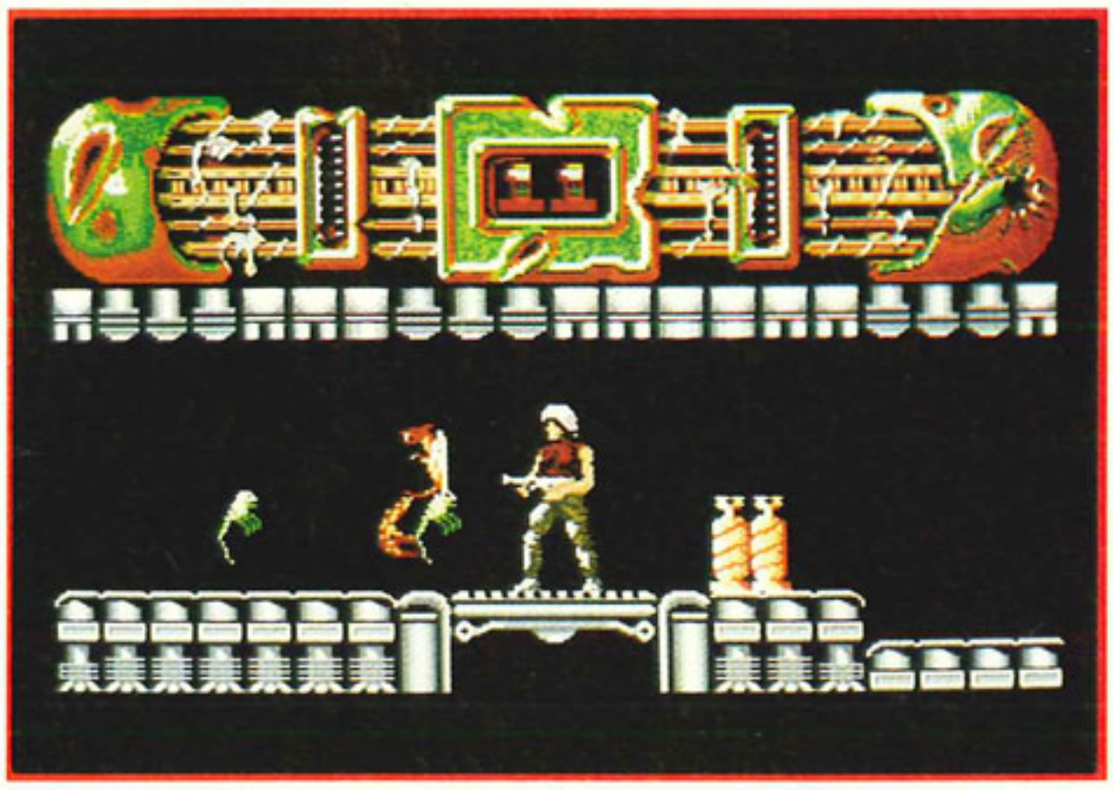
Trantor is neither graphically nor aurally outstanding, and to be truthful it is a rather weak game. The "just-one-more-go" attraction is present but I'm sure that after completing the game once, most games players would simply shelve this rather lacklustre game.

STA Rating 36%

GRAPHICS: 31%
SOUND: 35%

ORIGINALITY: 30%
ADDICTIVENESS: 30%

DIFFICULTY: AVERAGE
1ST DAY SCORE: 79



STA Rating
73%

GRAPHICS: 59%
SOUND: 48%

ORIGINALITY: 79%
ADDICTIVENESS: 77%

DIFFICULTY: AVE-HARD
1ST DAY SCORE: N/A

"Xor is a most deceptive game; if you enjoy super-fast shoot'em-ups, then I'm afraid that Xor won't be your cup of tea."

XOR

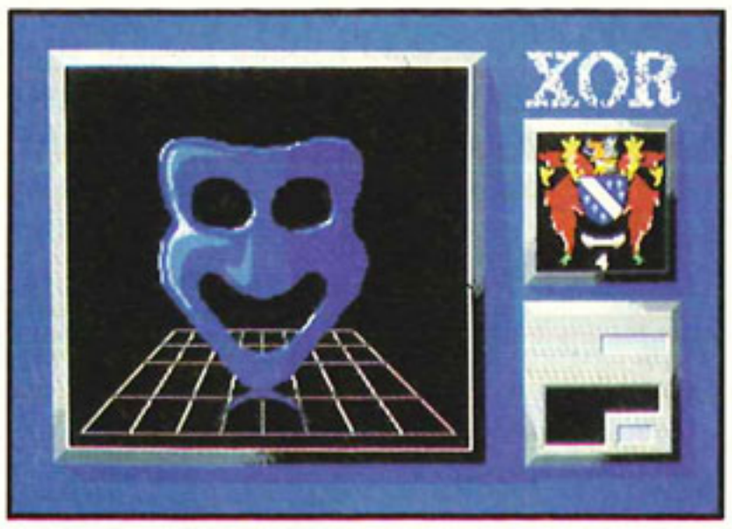
ATARI (£14.99)

The program takes on the form of a maze game, but if that makes you think of Boulderdash, Pacman and the like, then think again. Xor is a highly polished, strategic, maze game; certainly, it takes various elements from these other games but the way in which it has moulded together has resulted in a first-class piece of software.

Available on a single disk, the game loads accompanied by a rather merry tune while the screen depicts a wryly-smiling mask. Upon completion of loading, the screen changes to show the same blue mask on the level selection screen. Players may decide on which of the fifteen levels they wish to start by simply moving their joystick in a horizontal direction. This action causes a window in the top right-hand corner to display a selection of shields. Each of the shields represents an individual level and all of them adhere strictly to the rules of heraldry.

After selecting level one, I pressed my fire button, paused while the mask gave a sadistic laugh, and proceeded to play the game. The first thing that really attracted my attention was the game's very basic graphics. On the first level, players will only encounter the maze structure itself, the playing pieces, map sections, masks and forcefields. In short, the player's task is simply to collect all the masks and make his way to the screen's exit door. To do this, players will have to learn about all of the elements hidden within the mazes.

The forcefields encountered on all levels obstruct the player's shields but can be removed by being "run-over". Spotty forcefields can only be removed with a horizontal movement, while the striped ones are only erased



If you enjoy a more thoughtful game, then I feel XOR could well be the answer for you. Certainly, neither the game's sound nor graphics are anything to write home about, but the gameplay itself leads to a highly playable and enjoyable game. XOR has that indefinable quality which will project the game into the cult status bracket. How refreshing it is to see original, well thought-out and nicely programmed software becoming available for the ST. This game has real depth. Crucial!

NC

The old proverb, "Never judge a book by its cover", rings true here, for, on loading, this looks really dull. It is only when you persevere with it that its true addictivity is revealed.

Each screen is jam-packed with puzzles, and the only way to complete them is, at first, by trial and error. All the problems require you to think ahead, as the action you take may block the route onwards.

This is brilliant and I cannot help but recommend it. Buy it and witness state-of-the-art gameplay at its best.

SM

KEYBOARD	✔	
JOYSTICK	✔	
MOUSE		✘
COLOUR	✔	
MONO		✘
520ST	✔	
1040ST	✔	

with a vertical movement.

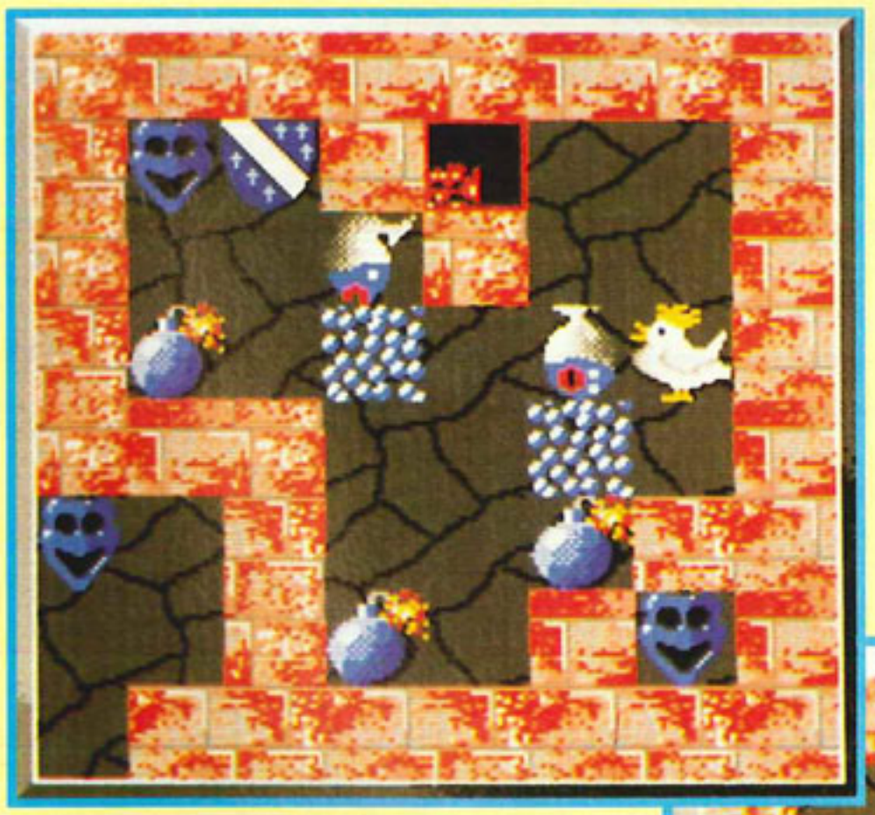
Four map sections can be found hidden around the mazes. Collecting these pieces will begin to form a plan on the maze, which is depicted in the top right-hand corner of the screen. I found it most useful to collect these pieces and therefore help me see where all the masks were located.

Later levels see the introduction of fish and chickens. When disturbed, fish will travel downwards at an alarming rate of knots, destroying any striped forcefields that may be in their way. Chickens act in a similar manner but travel in a right-to-left direction, destroying the spotted forcefields. Both of these elements should be treated with care: one false move and a player can find that either his shield has been rammed or that an essential mask has been blocked in, thus making completion of the game impossible.

Bombs and boxes of TNT both appear in the more advanced levels. Certain sections of the mazes may appear to be inaccessible, but by carefully positioning one of the explosive devices and letting either a chicken or fish crash into it, players may blast holes in the maze super-structure and allow further progress to be made.

The player controls two shields which can be toggled between by simply pressing the fire button. As both shields usually start different sections within the mazes, players will find themselves having to continually change between them. Should one of the shields be destroyed, the computer yells a loud "whoops!" and the player is reduced to only one shield. The further loss of the second shield will cause the computer to shout, "Gotcha!" and the game to end. At this point the program invites the player to watch an action replay of the past game or simply to re-select a level and try again. STA

The XOR screen features three separate windows. The large area on the left is the playing window in which all the action takes place. The scenery scrolls in all four directions. The window in the top right is where the map elements are assembled and the window in the bottom right gives info on how many moves have been made, which of the two shields is being used and how many masks there are left to collect.

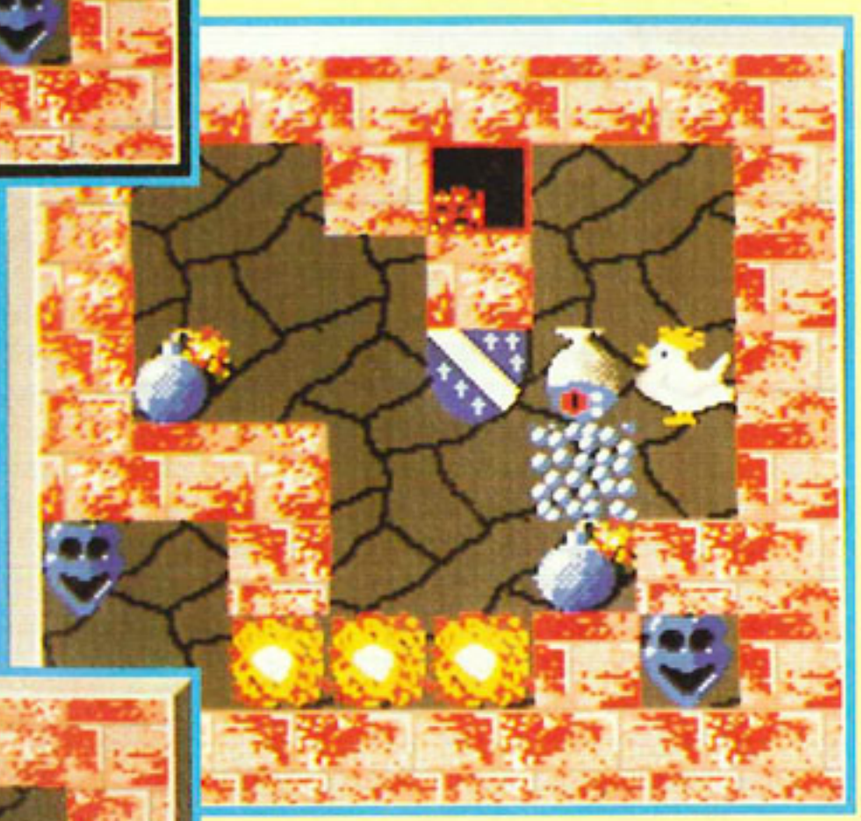


Action Shot 1

You control the blue shield in the top left. Your first task on this level is to collect the mask in the bottom right-hand corner of the shot. Unfortunately, it is surrounded by walls and is therefore inaccessible. You also have the problem of how to escape from this small area and move into the next section which can just be seen bottom left.

Action shot 2

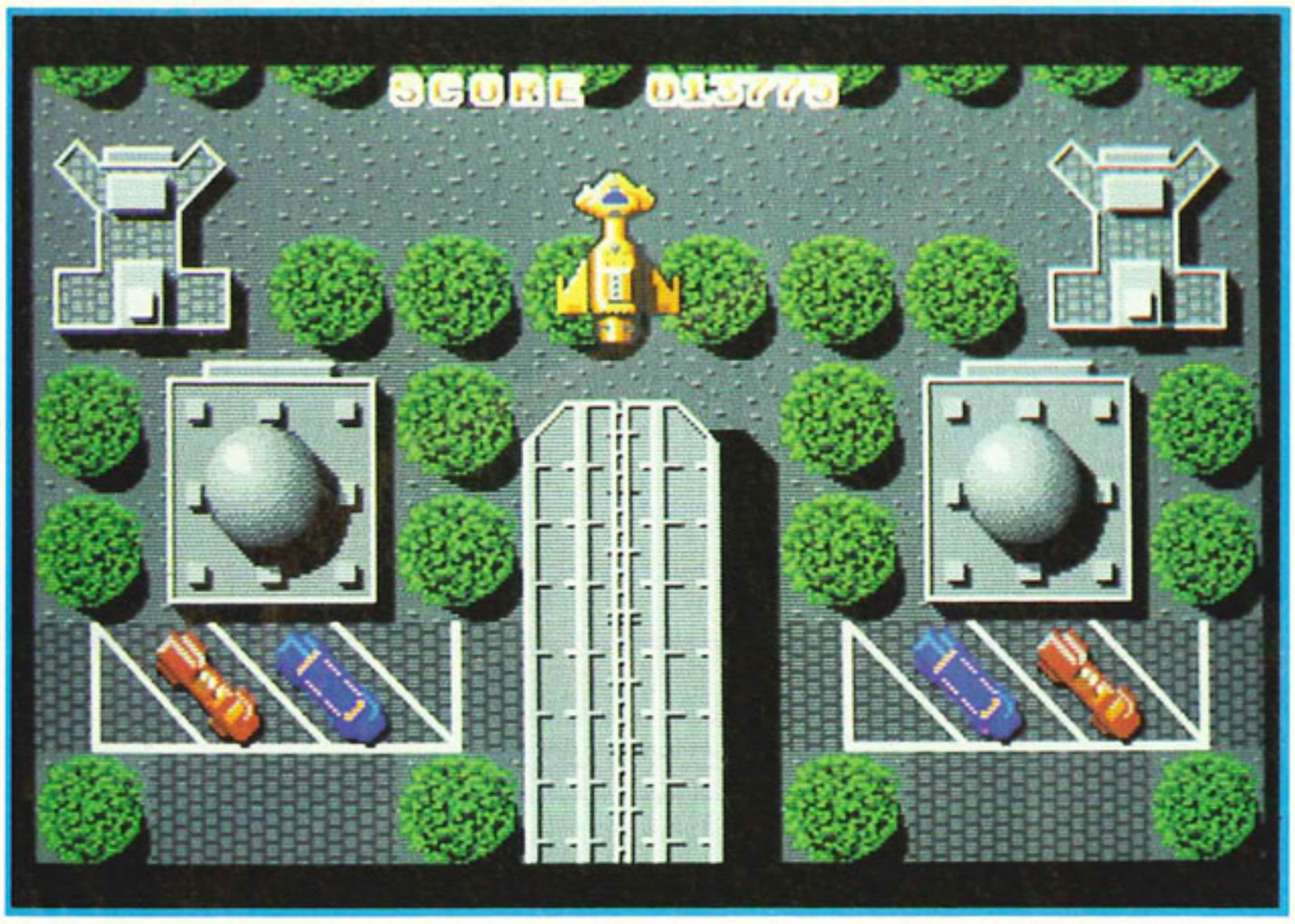
You have moved down and across through the blue bubbly block thus allowing the fish to drop down, hitting the bomb and blowing a hole in the wall opening an escape route into the next section.



Action Shot 3

You have moved down and right again, through another blue block allowing another fish to detonate a bomb which this time has removed the wall thus clearing your route to the loot! Notice also that removing the fish has freed a hen which is now winging its way left towards another bomb which will, of course, explode.

Your shiptakes off after completing a level. Notice the cars - they make excellent canon fodder!



WASTE

EXOCET (£24.95)

"Yet another double-disk, vertical-scrolling shoot'em-up? Will Exocet's first ST release be a hit or will we file it under Waste?"

Take on the guise of Zak Lambda Laurie, a menace to the state. Zak is one of the rebel leaders who has been charged with organizing resistance against the state, liberating workers, and subverting prisoners. He has a high mental level which he directs against the state run authorities. Currently serving four life sentences, Zak has escaped and been recaptured six times. He is an instinctive pilot and should not be allowed anywhere near any air/space vehicles.

You must help Zak escape from his captors, Unisect Inc Universal Security, and get him back to his home base. The action starts as Zak has managed to steal a space craft. A minor loop-hole has been discovered in the colony's defence systems and all units have been put on full alert in order to stop his bid for freedom. It's now up to you...

Zak will encounter many different enemy assault craft during his journey. Initially, armed only with twin air-to-ground missiles, you must destroy any installation which dares to block your path. These range from simple gun emplacements to more complex tanks, boats, trains and high-tec space fighters.

Ocasionally, after having been zapped into space dust, the enemy craft will leave behind a flashing, blue power module. By simply flying over these units your ship will automatically take the power module on board and add the feature contained within it to your ship's capabilities. This tactic can become a very hit-and-miss affair as there is no real way of telling what you are likely to collect. Two of the special features are beneficial whilst the other two can be somewhat detrimental to your ship's health. The laser cannon is one of the more helpful additions, enabling your craft to spit high-powered laser bolts that will sheer through any oncoming enemy traffic in it's path. The other useful "add-on" is a force field; this electronic shield is only operational for a short period of time, but during its brief existence it will protect your ship from any enemy attack, whether it be in the shape of laser fire or a collision. Your craft can collect a module which will noticeably slow its movements, thus leaving it more prone to enemy attacks. The final type of pod that may be encountered makes the ship behave in a most abnormal fashion: for a short period of time the craft seems to reverse its controls so that forwards becomes backwards. In addition to the blue power modules, red cells can also be found.

By successfully picking up a red power cell, your craft can become armed with a fearsome laser-spitting, remote auto-fire droid. This very useful craft can be used to destroy any offensive enemy installations from a safer distance. The special remote unit is controlled with the joystick and mimics the movement of your ship in a mirror-image fashion. I found the droid to be a most helpful 'add-on', but it did occasionally become a hindrance. I often found myself concentrating on the droid's movements, and hence neglecting my more precious ship causing it to career into a previously unseen enemy installation.

In addition to the power modules you may collect actual permanent ship add-ons. By running into these "pieces of ship" you may inherit extra firepower. Side lasers and homing missiles are amongst the extras to be encountered, and very helpful they prove to be.

Graphically, Foundations Waste is very pretty, although there is a noticeable lack of any level/status indicators. The sound, too, was good and appropraite. Waste seems to be one of those extra-long shoot'em-ups which will have players captivated for some time to come.

STA

STA Rating

59%

GRAPHICS: 61%
SOUND: 73%

ORIGINALITY: 49%
ADDICTIVENESS: 52%

DIFFICULTY: AVERAGE
1ST DAY SCORE: 15000

I would have thought that yet another vertical-scrolling shoot'em-up was the last thing that anyone needed. Sure enough, as Exocet's first release, Foundations Waste is not too bad. Graphically and sonically it is quite impressive; even the playability isn't too bad. What really annoyed me was the poor documentation with the game. Amongst the eight pieces of card that came in the box, only one really helped with the game - all the rest seem to be nothing but filler. Foundations Waste is by no means a poor game but I'm afraid it is not a superb one either.

NC

Although I am a great fan of shoot'em-ups, I am getting a bit fed up with the huge number surfacing on the ST at present. So it was with a great deal of scepticism that I loaded this.

The game plays very well with just the right difficulty level and the graphics are bright, bold and smooth. Sound is good with suitable bangs and crashes and throughout the game an excellent tune plays.

It is nothing we haven't seen before, and you probably have a couple like it in your collection already. But if not, give it a whirl - you could do a lot worse.

SM

NORTH STAR

GREMLIN (£19.95)

The North Star project is the most highly classified operation ever to be undertaken by the four Earth-Lords, but, unfortunately, it has gone critically wrong.

In the year 2499, the already over-populated earth was gripped in the serious state of starvation. Wars were commonplace and man fought man in the desperate attempt to control the more fertile regions of the earth. An emergency meeting was called by the four Earth-Lords, and together they decided on an elaborate plan. They would construct a space station that would orbit the earth. Not a space station like those you and I know of, but a huge man-made, star-like construction that would be capable of housing not hundreds of people, but thousands upon thousands of them. Not only would the space station provide a home for these peoples, but with the controlled simulated atmosphere it would be the perfect agricultural site, thus helping ease the food shortage.

Daily flights filled with materials and scientists were sent to build and test the station. Everything seemed to be on schedule until one day when a flight never returned from the station. The space station, now known as the North Star, was paged from the operations centre on the Earth, but there was no reply.

Upon arriving aboard the station you find that the North Star has been over-run by a strange alien horde. No human lifeforms are visible. Are they all dead? The life-support systems all seem to be inoperative and only your robotic implants stop you from becoming a victim of the aliens' atmosphere. Your task is clear: destroy the alien lifeforms and re-activate the life-support systems. To perform the latter, you will have to travel to the very heart of the North Star's nerve centre. This will not be an easy mission, but you must succeed - all Earth is depending upon you.

North Star is a horizontal-scrolling game that sees your character running from left to right frantically destroying any aliens which dare to cross his path. Initially armed only with a robotic arm our hero seems quite happy hitting the aliens, but should he find extra weapons, he can turn and zap the vile creatures from a safer distance. The game takes place over a number of levels which, on completion, sets our warrior on a lift platform before transporting him to another level.

I thought the game looked very much like an eight-bit Amstrad game. The cartoon-style graphics are well drawn and very colourful. The game's sound is adequately provided and of a standard we would expect for this type of game. Overall, North Star is very much a run-of-the-mill game. I found it very repetitive and after only a short while, became very bored with it. Try looking at the game before you buy it.

STA Rating 42%

GRAPHICS: 50%
SOUND: 50%

ORIGINALITY: 40%
ADDICTIVENESS: 30%

DIFFICULTY: EASY-AVE
1ST DAY SCORE: 35000

ROLLING THUNDER

US GOLD (£19.99)

"Go ahead, Punk, make my day!" Become an agent with the world's leading crime fighters and prepare to "kick some ass!"

The date 1960, the place New York and you, agent Albatross, are a member of the undercover branch of the WCPO (World Crime Police Organization). This elusive body is better known as Rolling Thunder. Their current case involves the activities of the world's leading megalomaniac, Maboo. A fellow female agent, Leila, has managed to get herself captured whilst trying to expose Maboo's diabolical plans. Your assignment is to infiltrate the secret underground organization of Geldra. It is believed that Geldra is headed by the sinister Maboo. So, as Rolling Thunder's top agent you must enter Geldra's secret base, confront Maboo and rescue Leila.

U.S. Gold have managed to negotiate the conversion of Namco's "sensational" coin-op, Rolling Thunder. Why, oh why does the game's packaging refer to it as "The coin-op sensation"? I for one have never encountered the game before, nor for that matter here I even heard it mentioned. Rolling Thunder takes on the guise of a predominantly horizontal-scrolling fire'em-up. Having entered the Geldra's lair your task is to shoot your way through the progressively difficult levels and finally rescue the beautiful Leila. To aid you in your quest there are two means of defence available. The first, your ever-handy revolver, can be put to good use in popping off any unwanted henchmen that decide to bother you. The second, your faithful sub-machine gun, acts in the same manner but with a greater feel of power.

Extra ammunition can be found behind marked doors; you'll need a good supply of slugs to win through. Most of Maboo's evil henchmen, who incidentally look like members of the sinister Klu Klux Klan, only need to be shot once before they slump to the ground. Others, however, simply fall to their knees and rest awhile before trying to execute your swift demise. Beware, too, of the odd bully-boy armed with a pistol. A well aimed shot between the eyes can make your character slump to the ground in a most dramatic fashion. Throughout the game agent Albatross finds himself in particularly sticky situations. On such occasions our hero should look to the skies and, if possible, make a swift jump from the overhead balconies. As the game progresses there seem to be a greater multitude of Maboo's followers. Warped, devilish characters and sleek panthers join the ranks of the bungling henchmen. But, throughout the action our man Albatross maintains his cool, laid-back walk.

Rolling Thunder is not an outstanding game. Aurally and visually the game is pleasant enough. The gameplay too, is of an adequate standard. The game's fault lies in its rather mundane concept. Apart from leaping about the screen popping off the odd thug there seems to be little else involved. Personally, I think the game is rather easy and I really enjoyed it.

STA Rating 55%

GRAPHICS: 50%
SOUND: 50%

ORIGINALITY: 40%
ADDICTIVENESS: 55%

DIFFICULTY: EASY
1ST DAY SCORE: 64320

STOCK MARKET

TYNESOFT(£19.95)

"Hurricane Annie hits the south coast of England!, Telephone lines are down, houses ruined...", Sell BT shares quickly and try investing in British Steel, there's no time to lose!

When this game first came into the office it was hidden away behind other releases. Nobody seemed keen to take a look at it. However, after becoming bored with the usual zap'em-up games, I tried it out. To my surprise, I found Stock Market to be a very enjoyable game. Having no previous knowledge of the stock market, I now understand a lot more about the dealings which take place. Stock Market may not become the latest blockbuster, but I rate it for its simplicity, educational and fun factors. Tynesoft have had a very good try at a difficult game area, and although the game has one or two faults, I feel it is well worth a look at.

NC

The world of high finance and especially the stock market has, until now, been somewhat of a mystery to me. Tynesoft's Stock Market - the game, however, has not only provided me with a different type of challenging game, but also given me some insight into the workings of the world's stock markets.

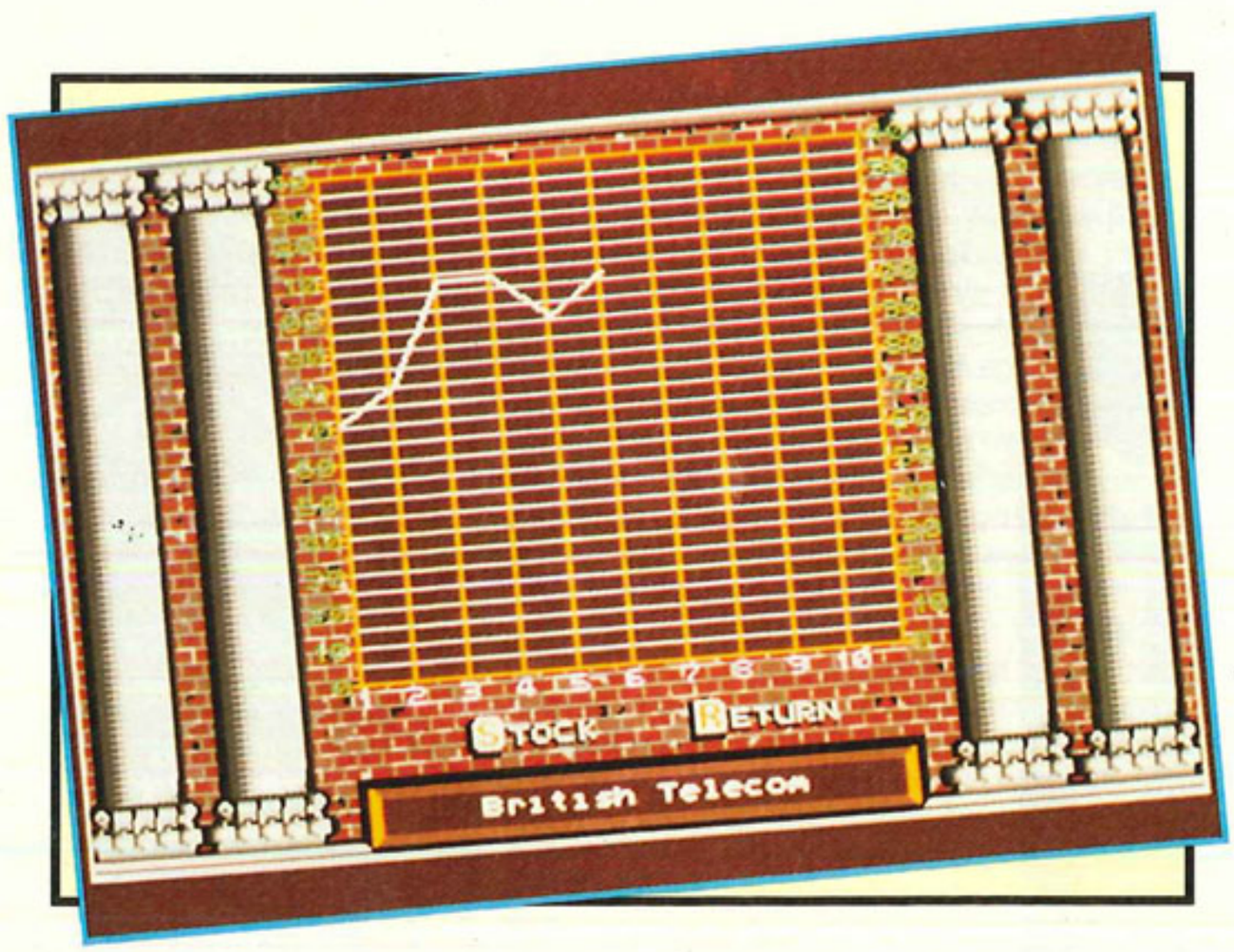
After the game has loaded from the two disks supplied, the computer displays a picture of a famous London landmark and proceeds to ask how many players would like to take part. Up to a total of six budding business tycoons can try their luck, or skill, on the market at any one time. After feeding the computer the relevant information regarding the number of players and their names, the screen changes to show a picture of the Tower Bridge and the computer declares the "Market Open".

Each player takes it in turn to buy and sell shares. The screen changes colour with the turn of each different contestant but the same "score board is depicted". On the table are shown the ratings of twenty different companies. Most areas of business are represented somewhere within the game and firms are as diverse as The Coca Cola Co., Woolworths, Rolls Royce, General Motors, British Steel and Pan Am Air. After each company name are six different columns which display the relevant information regarding the company's share dealings: the last period's cost; the current period's cost; the price change; the cost of shares when a player first invested in them; the profit made on the shares and the number of shares a player holds with that company. Of course, the last three columns will only be filled if a player has decided to invest (risk) his money with that particular company.

At the bottom of the screen are a number of key-words: sell, buy, loan, assets, graph, end and top 15. By selecting the first letter of any of these words, a player is entered into that particular option. Selling shares, whether it be to get out of a plummeting market or to raise capital for a better deal, should be carried out first as no further sales can be made after a player has selected the buy option. Buying shares is easy too: simply selecting the option and moving the cursor with the mouse will highlight any given company. With a little common sense and a lot of luck, players must decide with which

STA Rating 70%

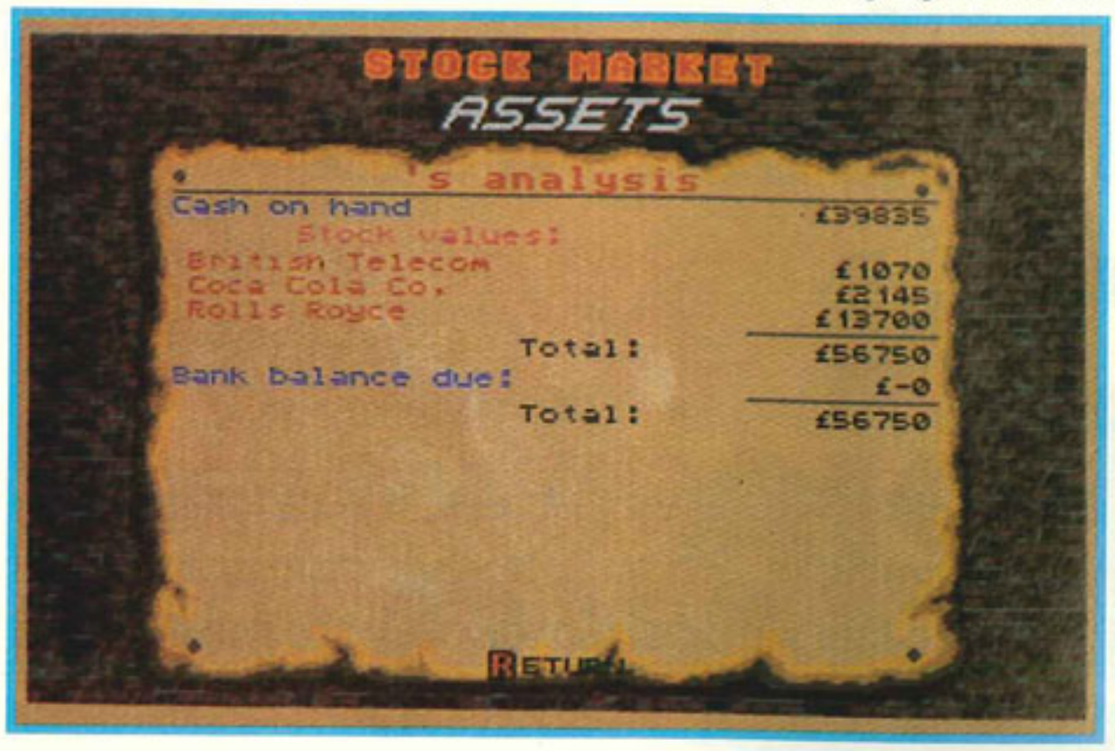
GRAPHICS: 36%
SOUND: 15%
ORIGINALITY: 77%
ADDICTIVENESS: 63%
DIFFICULTY: AVERAGE
1ST DAY SCORE: N/A



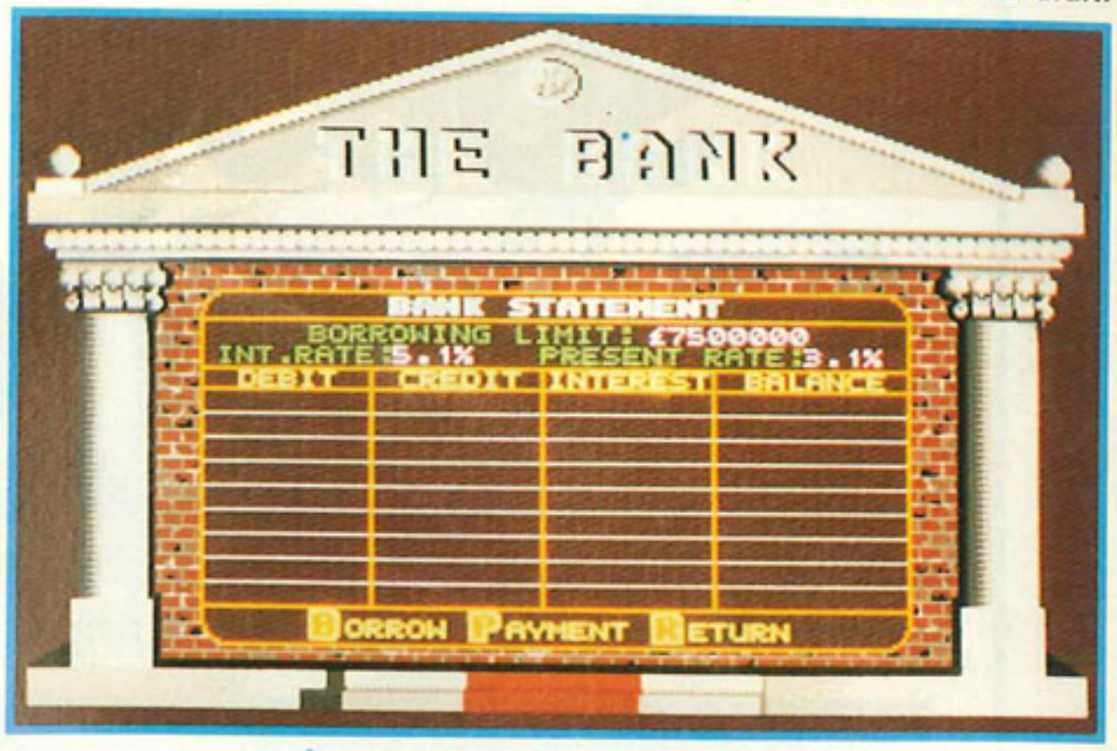
This graph shows the price of British Telecom shares as they vary.

KEYBOARD		✗
JOYSTICK		✗
MOUSE	✓	
COLOUR	✓	
MONO		✗
520ST	✓	
1040ST	✓	

This screen details you current assets take care or you might go to the wall



You get regular bank statements, so watch that overdraft!



company to deposit their money. Companies with seemingly upward trends are not always the best bet, a sudden crash could send profits reeling. Struggling companies, too, are not necessarily a good investment. Although a quick profit may be possible, just one drop in the market could see the company go bankrupt and all your hard-earned money lost. Borrowing money from the bank is also possible although only one trip per turn is allowed. Selecting the assets option will allow you to view all your profits and expenses, finally showing your present balance. The graph option will show how the companies are faring on the market, but this option depicted on a line graph is really of little use except for showing which companies are more likely to be profitable. The Top 15 option will simply show the game's previous top 15 scorers, and really only given you an idea of what you should be aiming for. The End option either quits to another player's turn or closes the market for the period.

With a name like 'Stock Market', you might expect this game to keep crashing! But what you actually get is an engrossing and enjoyable simulation.

Everything seems to have been taken into consideration, from tax cuts to strikes. Just like the real thing, this is going to be hard to master, and to make any major profits, a pen and paper to note down details are essential.

This is definitely worth buying, especially if you are a bit fed up with the mountain of arcade licences at the moment.

SM

Upon closing the market, the screen depicts a night time shot of the Houses of Parliament. After a brief pause, the market is declared open and the screen shows a view of the stock exchange. At the base of the screen scrolls a message concerning the latest stock-related news and the changes and the changes in prices of any stock effected. Finally, the screen scrolls across and dividends paid out before it reverts to the players' option screens where all contestants can see how they have fared before possibly changing their assets.

The game lasts for ten periods after which each player's score is assessed and commented upon, and if he, or indeed she, has amassed a high score his or her name is displayed on the high-flyers' score board.

Stock Market - the game, is a very simplified version of the real thing. It is a game of luck rather than skill. Nevertheless it is still an interesting idea.

London Stock Exchange

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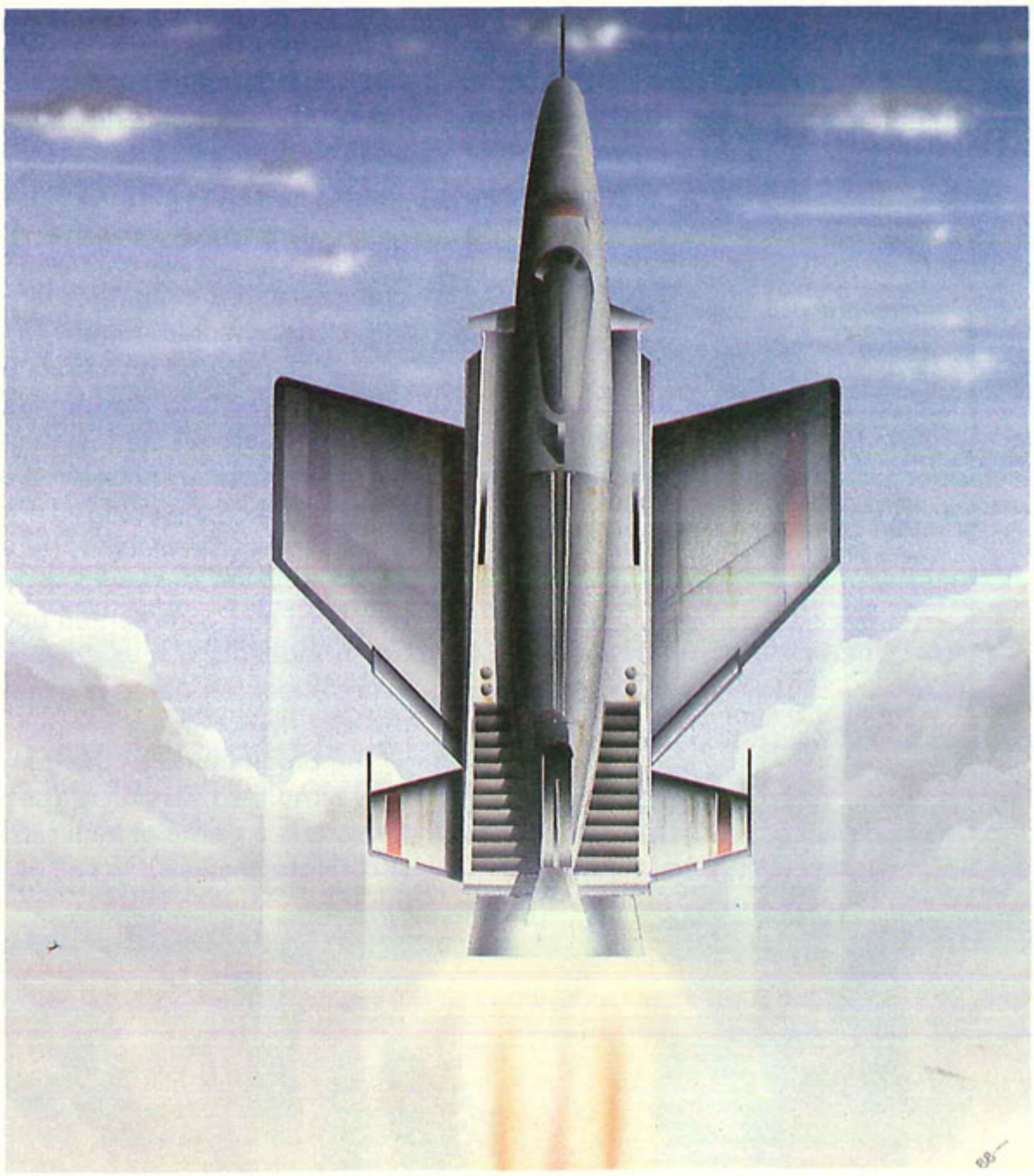

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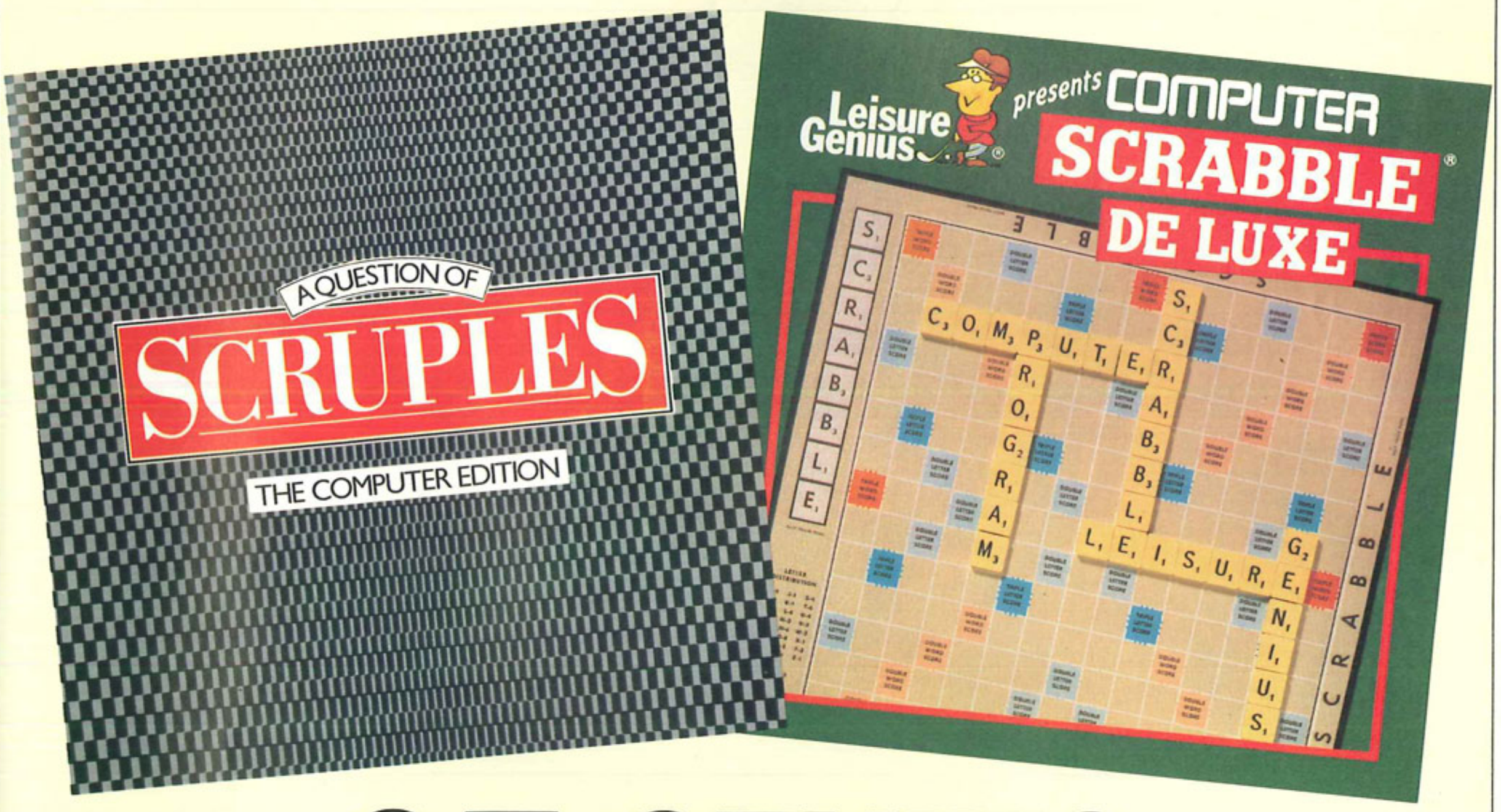

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ICE HOCKEY

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