FUTURE VISION
THE GAMES OF TOMORROW. TODAY!

TOP SECRET

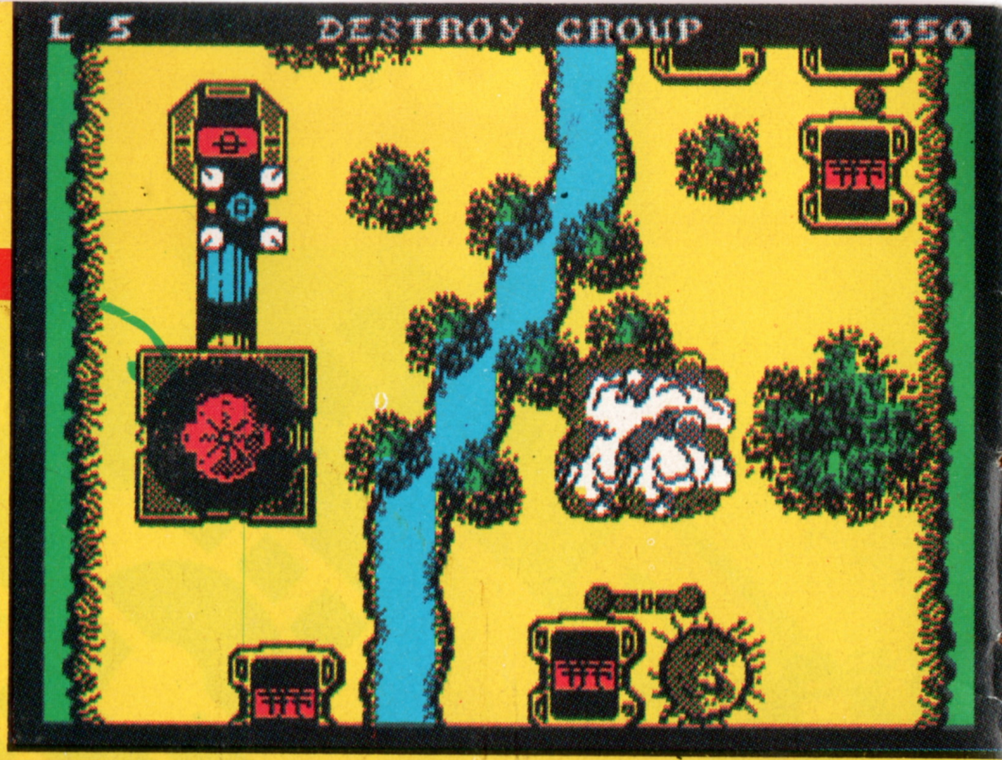
SINCLAIR User

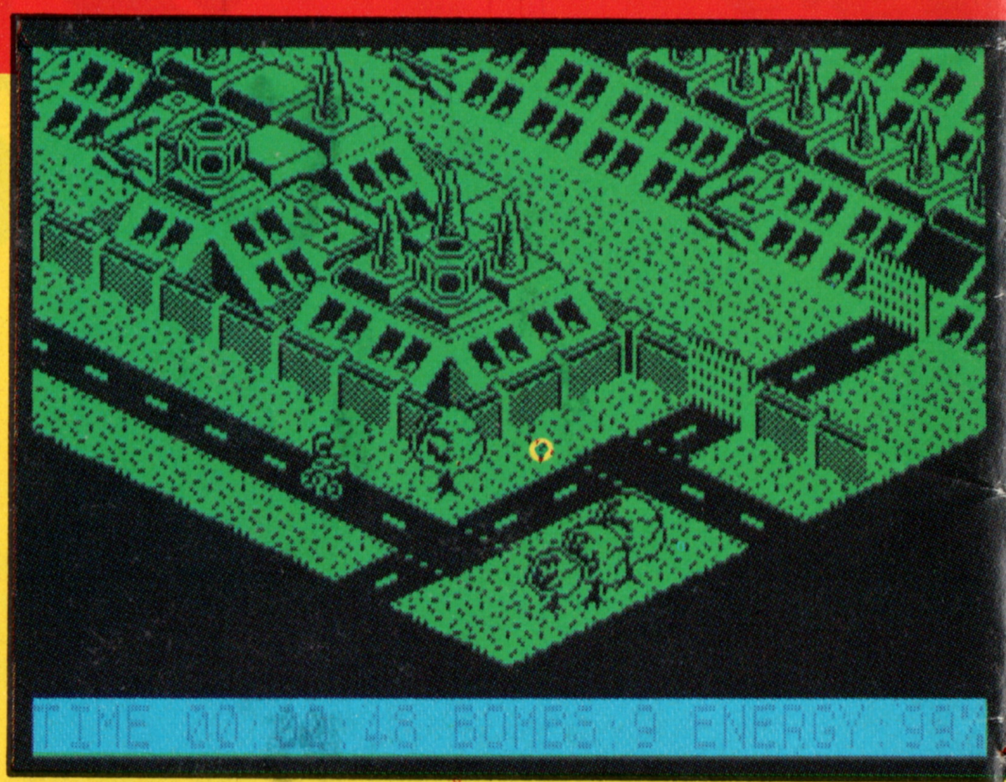
It's the essential guide to the classic programs of tomorrow.
All the crucial games about to explode on your screen.
Read our spies' confidential report on the secret games now in preparation...
Can YOU afford to miss out?
Read it here — first!

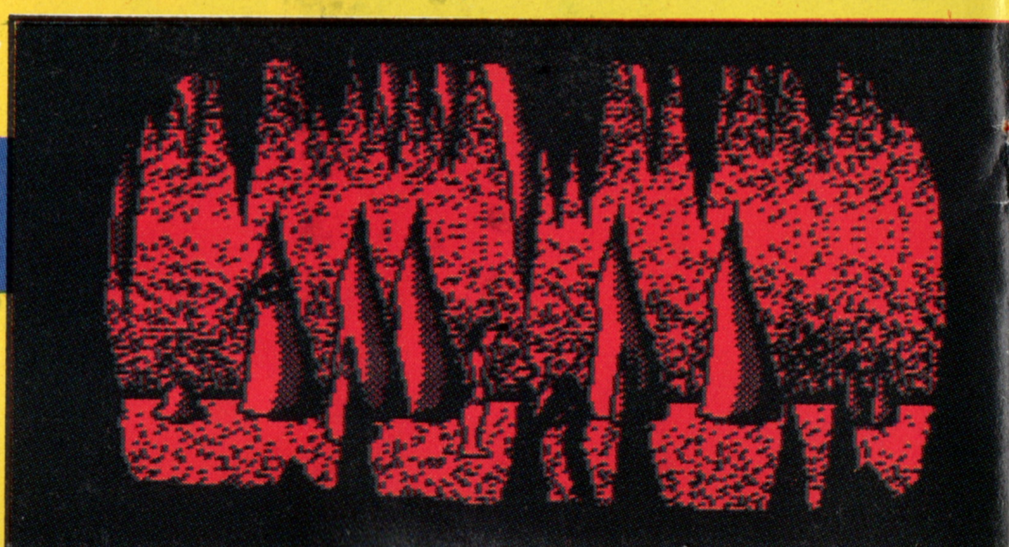
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SINCLAIR USER

What games will be scorching your cathode ray tubes this Christmas?

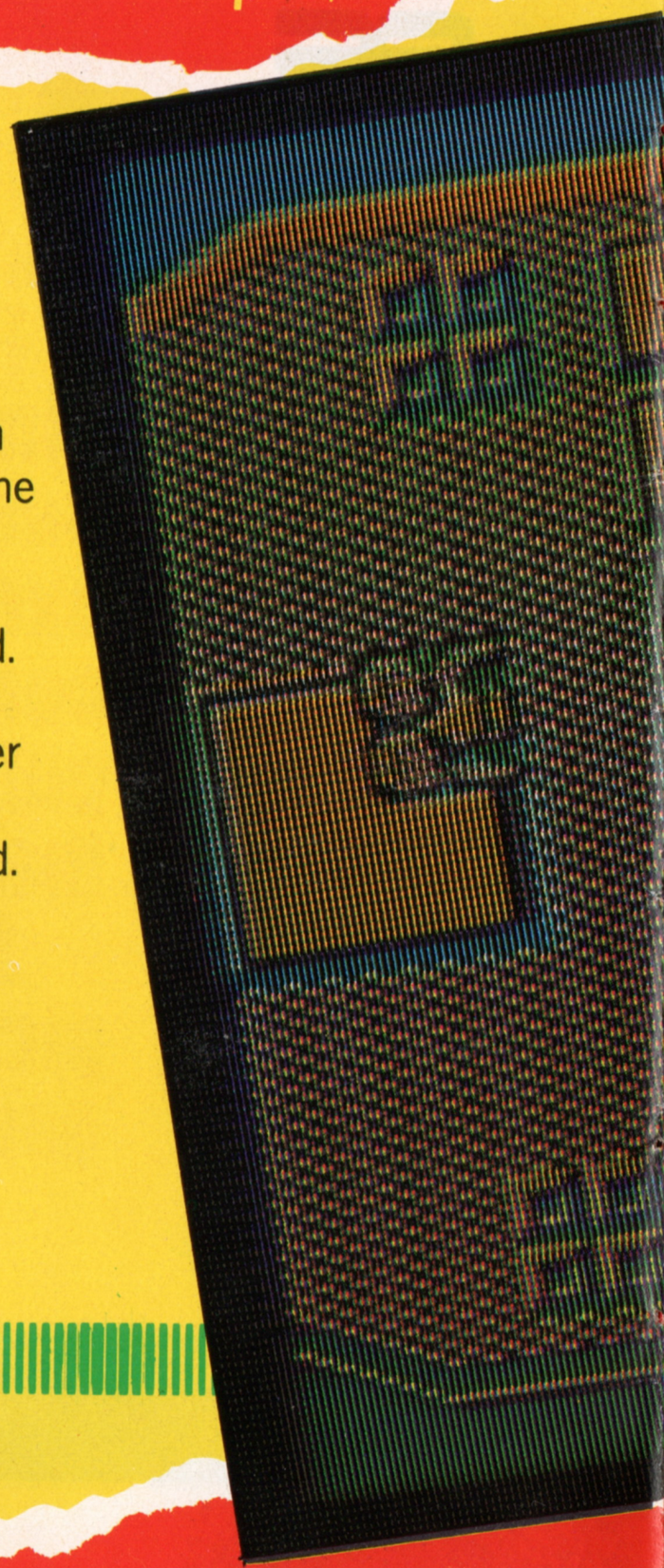
Find out with Sinclair User's 'Top' Secret utterly exclusive and completely definitive guide to all the games that will matter.

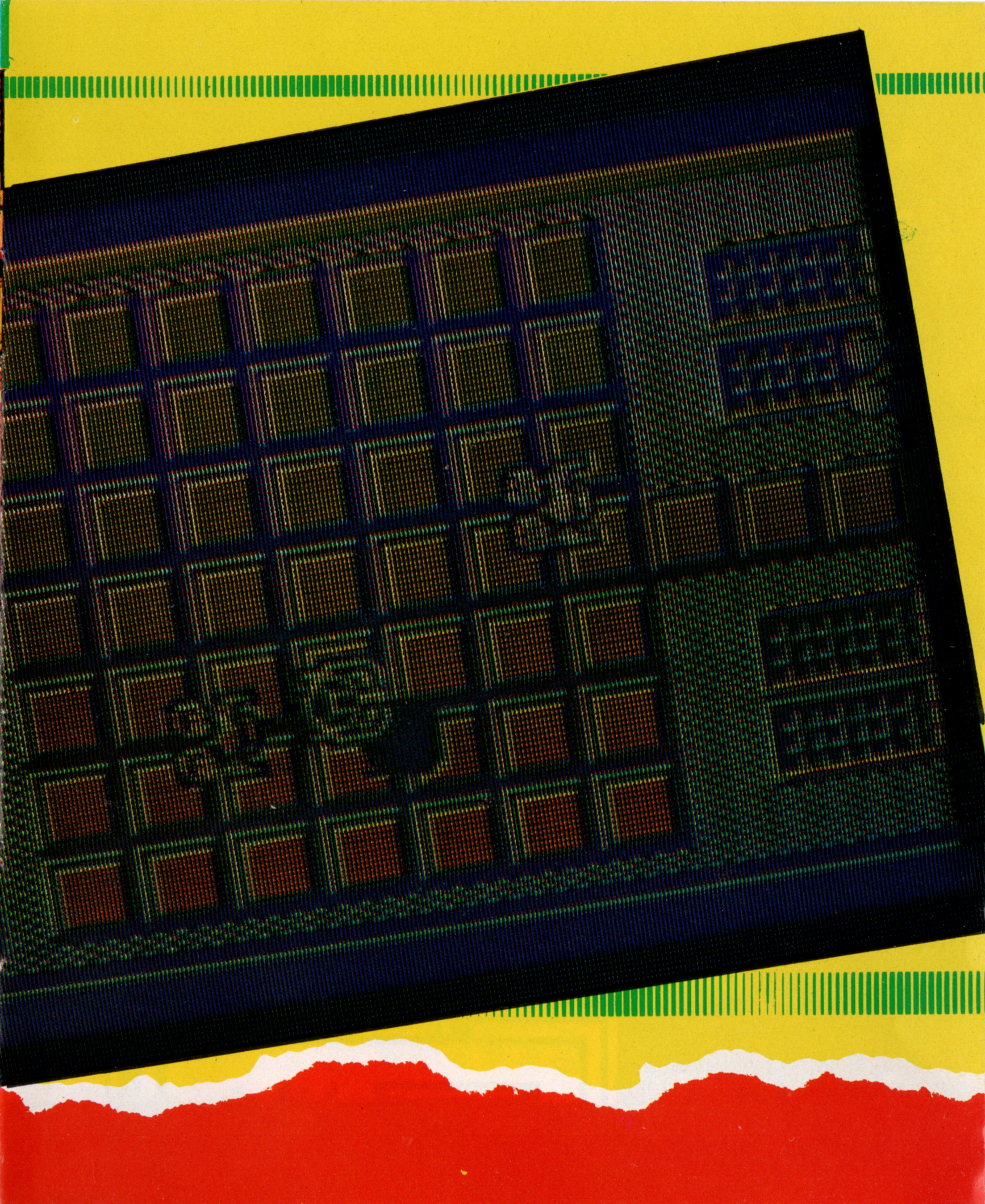
Sinclair User picks this year's hot games.

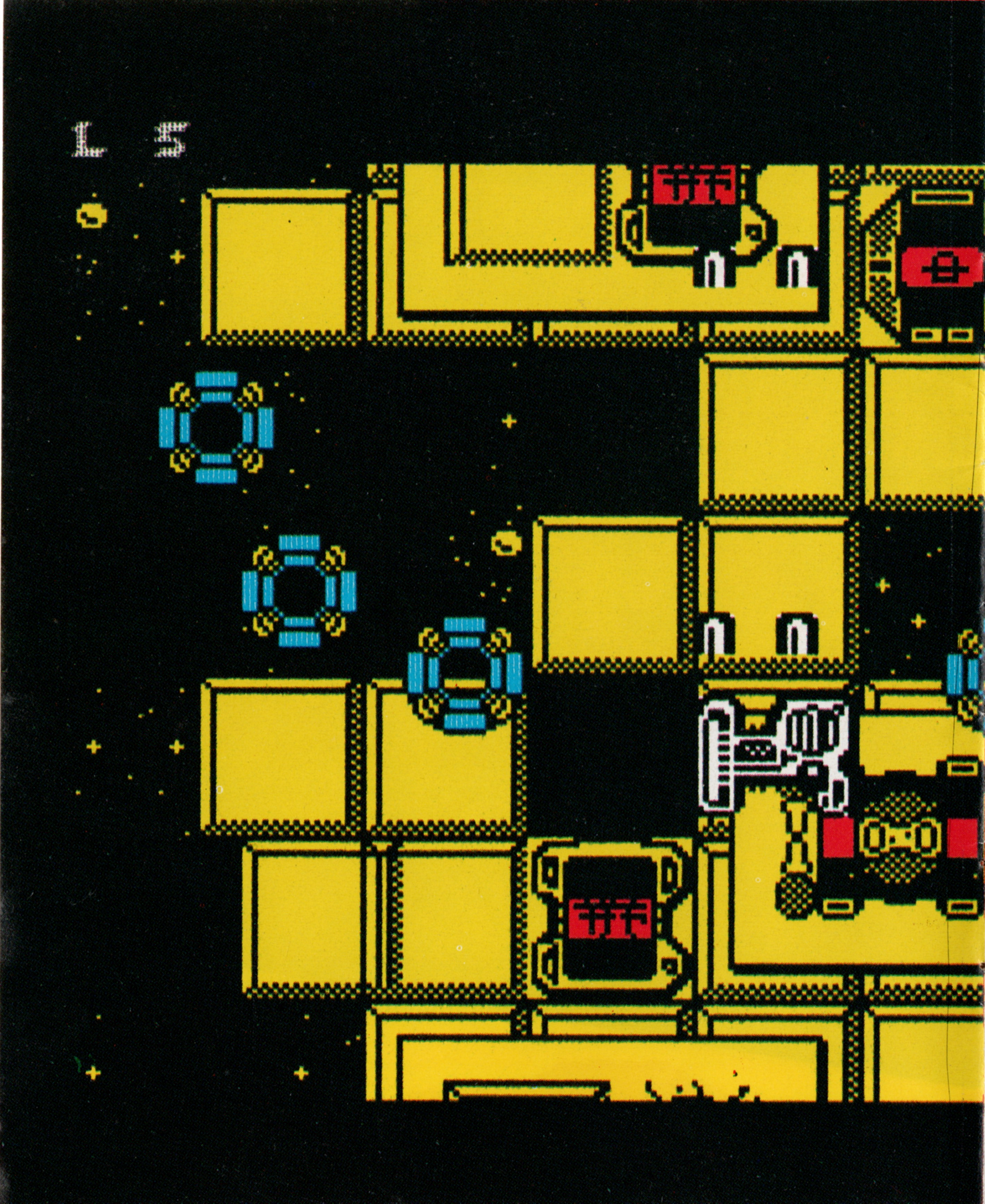
ZAPPING THE ENERGY

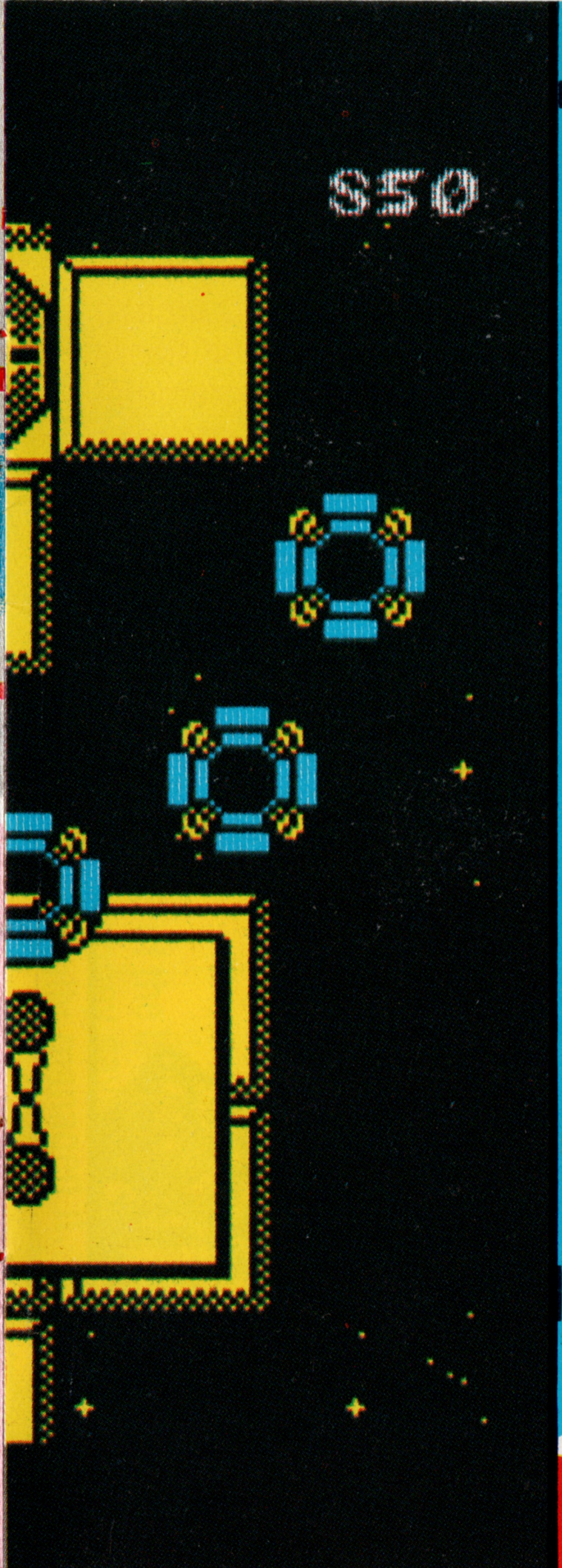
You can't beat a good old-fashioned zap!

Uridium reduced the C64 charts to rubble last Spring and the Spectrum version is just as good. Fly your ship along the hull of a gigantic space battleship, blowing away the opposition as you go. The screen scrolls back and fore smoothly and at speed. The graphics look good: the tremendous effect of shadow and 3D relief as you fly over the mothership has been retained and the gameplay up-rated to suit Spectrum's speed. Commodore-lovers will get a shock: they've been using **Uridium** as proof of C64 superiority all year. They were wrong.

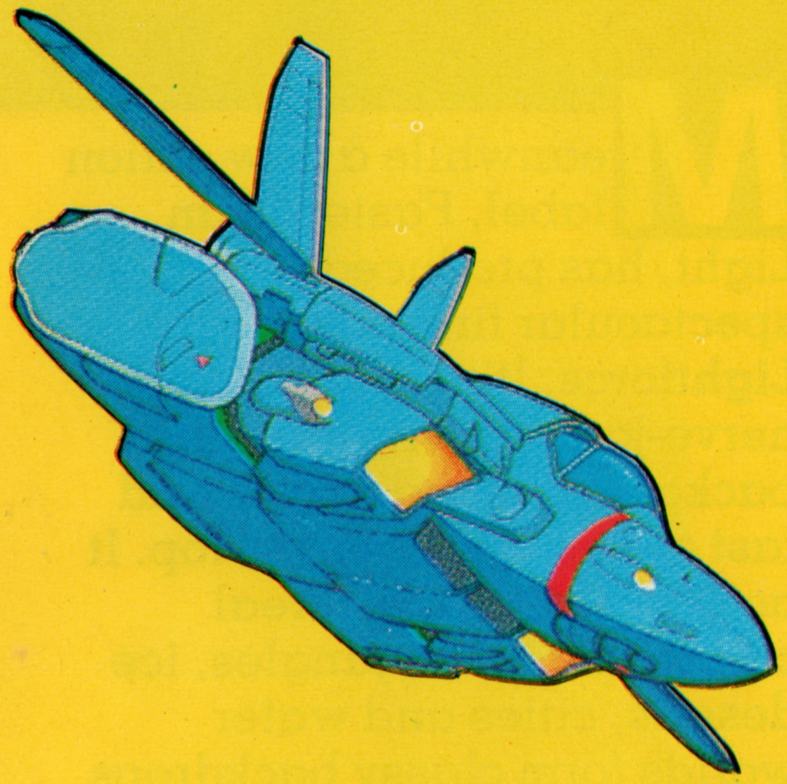




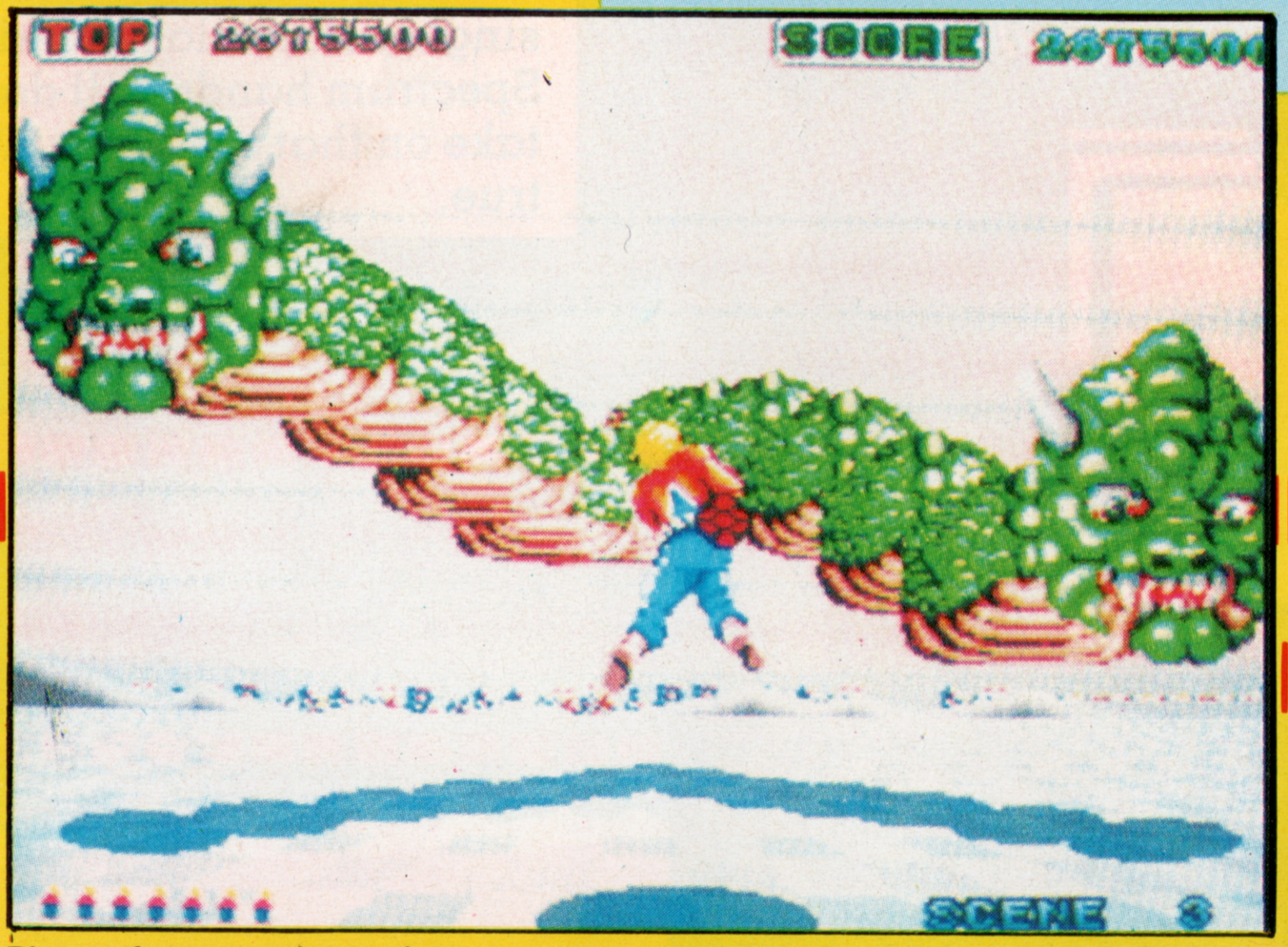

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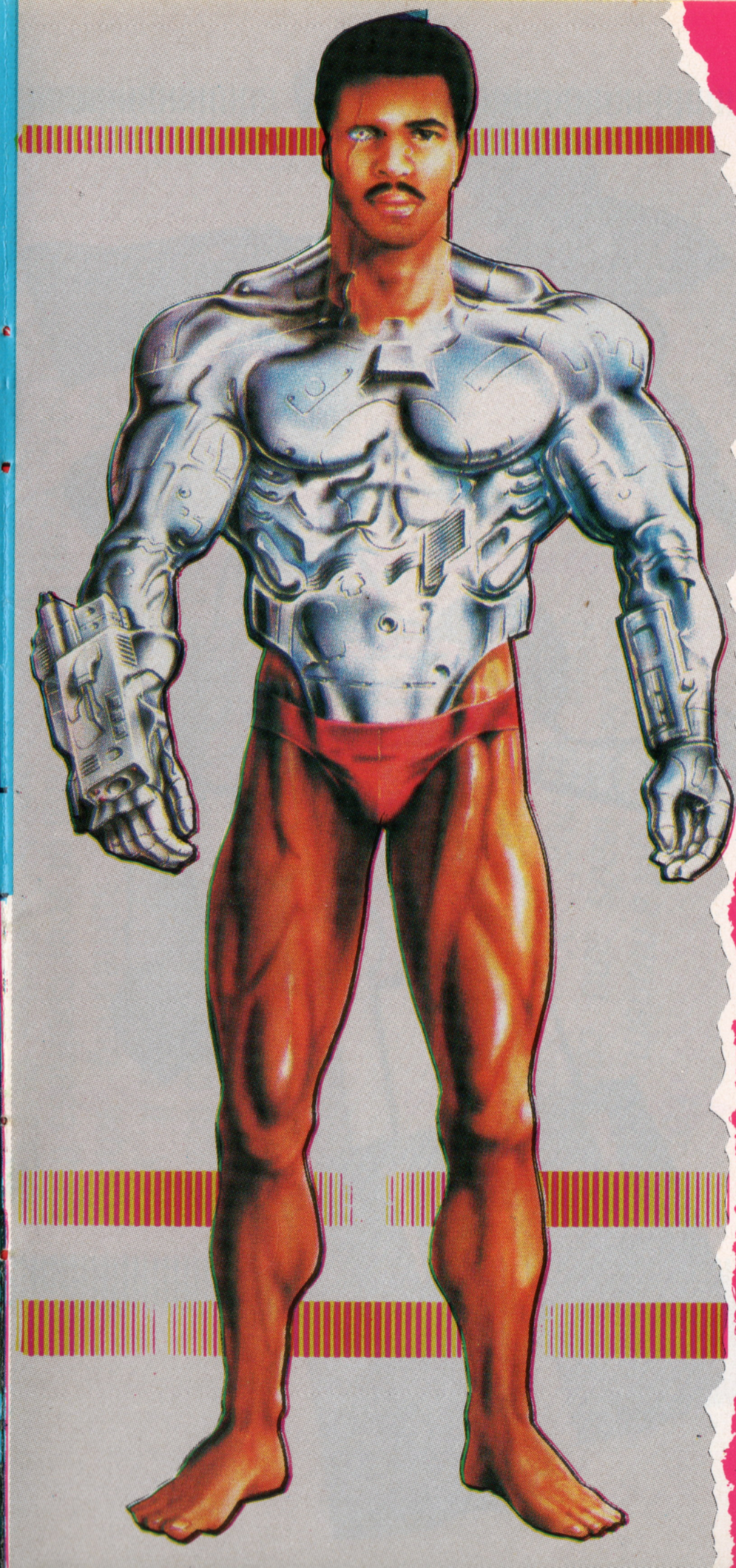
Meanwhile a new action label, Faster Than Light, has produced a spectacular first game, **Lightforce**. It's a high-speed nerve-jangler with beautiful background landscapes and fast action laid over the top. It actually looks like a real arcade machine: jungles, ice deserts, cities and water worlds form classy backdrops to the fire and fury, without a single colour clash. Old Spectrum hands will double-take on that claim, but it's true.



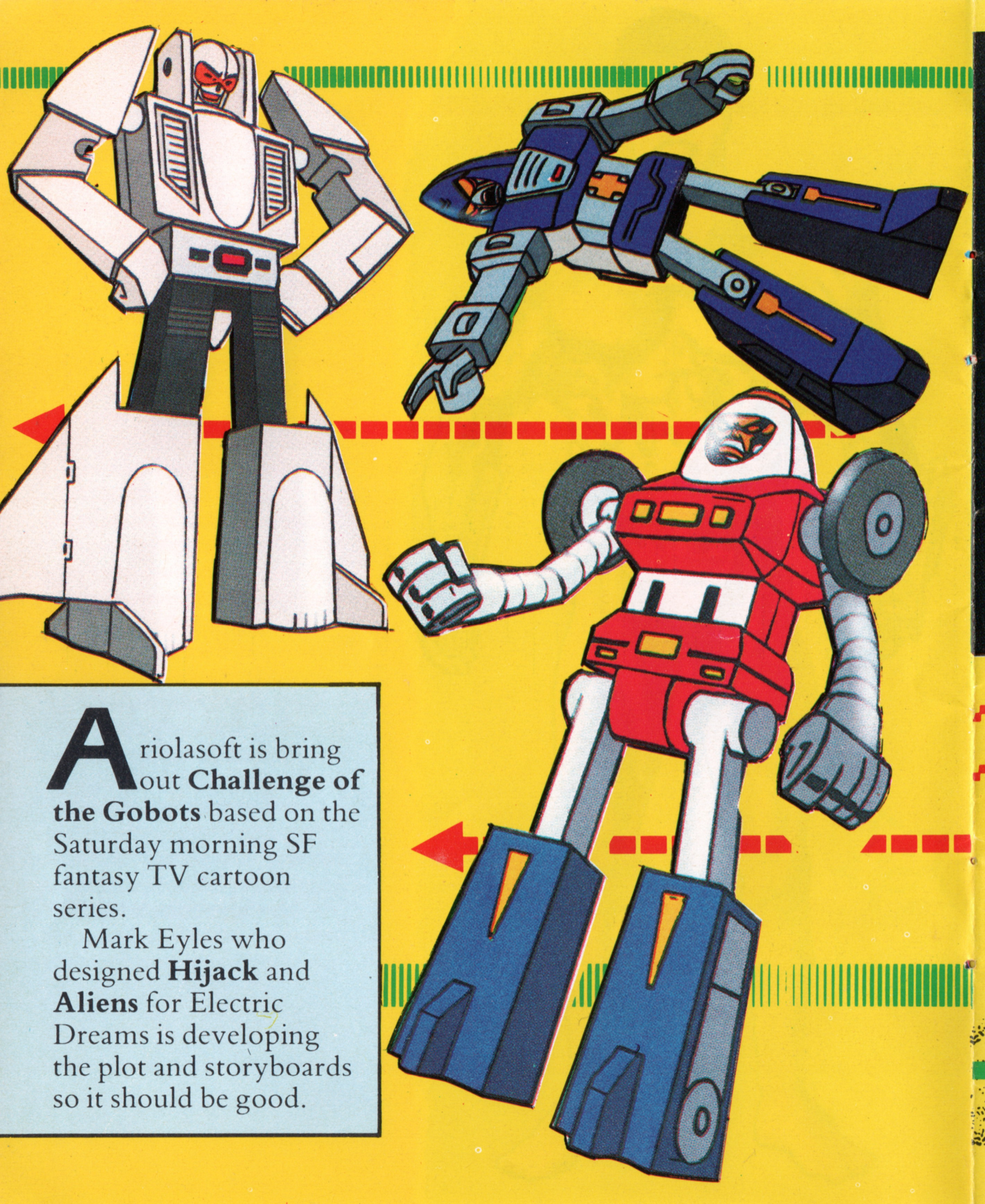
More of a mystery is Elite's **Space Harrier**. Ambitious this: how do you cram that incredible solid 3D arcade hit into a bog-standard 48K home computer? Elite's programmers are trying very hard – cockpit view, scrolling landscapes, and the bad guys hurtling towards you, getting bigger as they come. There's not enough game yet to judge for sure, but if they make it, you'll want it: check it out first before you buy. It could be a monster hit.



Picture from arcade version



Another couple of space operas worth waiting for are *Academy* and *Cyborg*, both from CRL. *Academy's* the sequel to *Tau Ceti*, and takes you to the GalCorp training planet for 20 different scenarios which show off Peter Cooke's 3D graphics routines to great effect. You also have to build your own spacecraft in a separate configuration program, select weapons, shields and so on, and also completely redesign the cockpit. Likely to be even bigger is *Cyborg*, an arcade-adventure with 3D graphics in which you zap your way to the heart of hostile asteroid searching for five scientists. The first game, incidentally, to feature a black hero, even if he is partly constructed in steel. Don't miss the finale . . . you'll have to learn Alien Basic to reprogram the main computer and win!



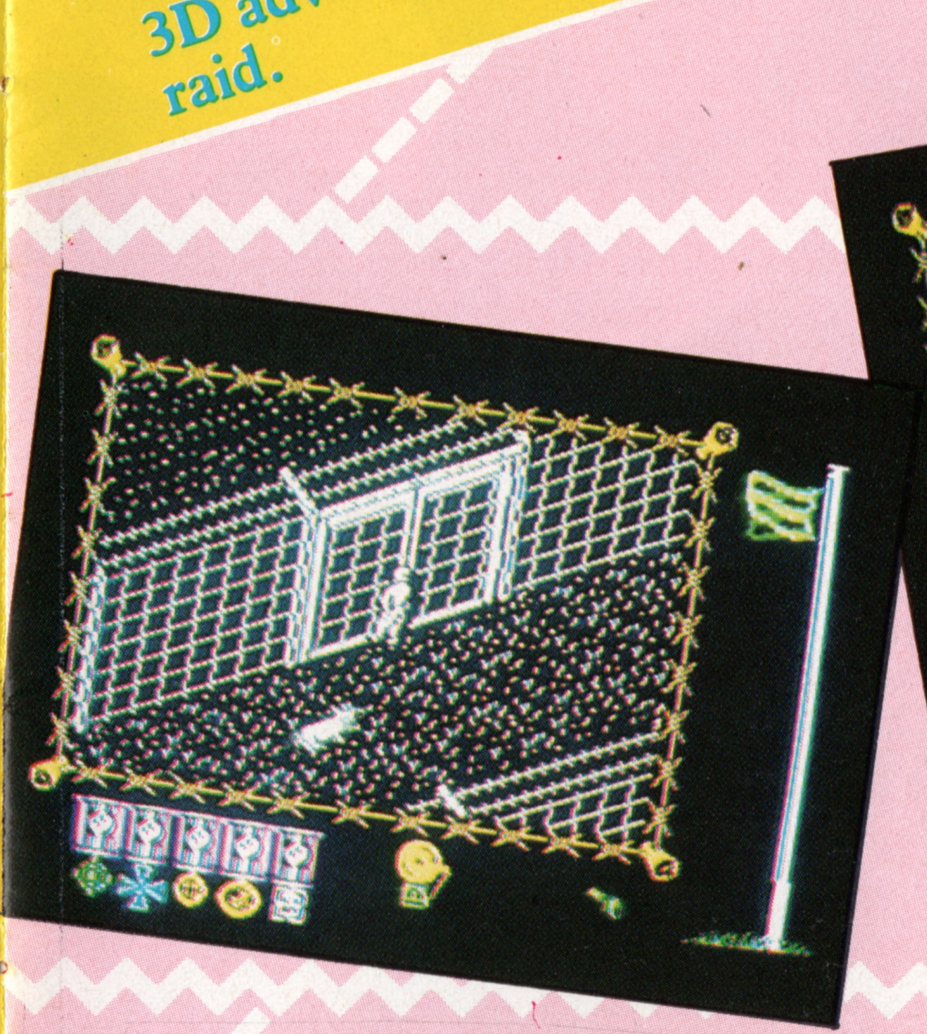
Ariolasoft is bring out **Challenge of the Gobots** based on the Saturday morning SF fantasy TV cartoon series.

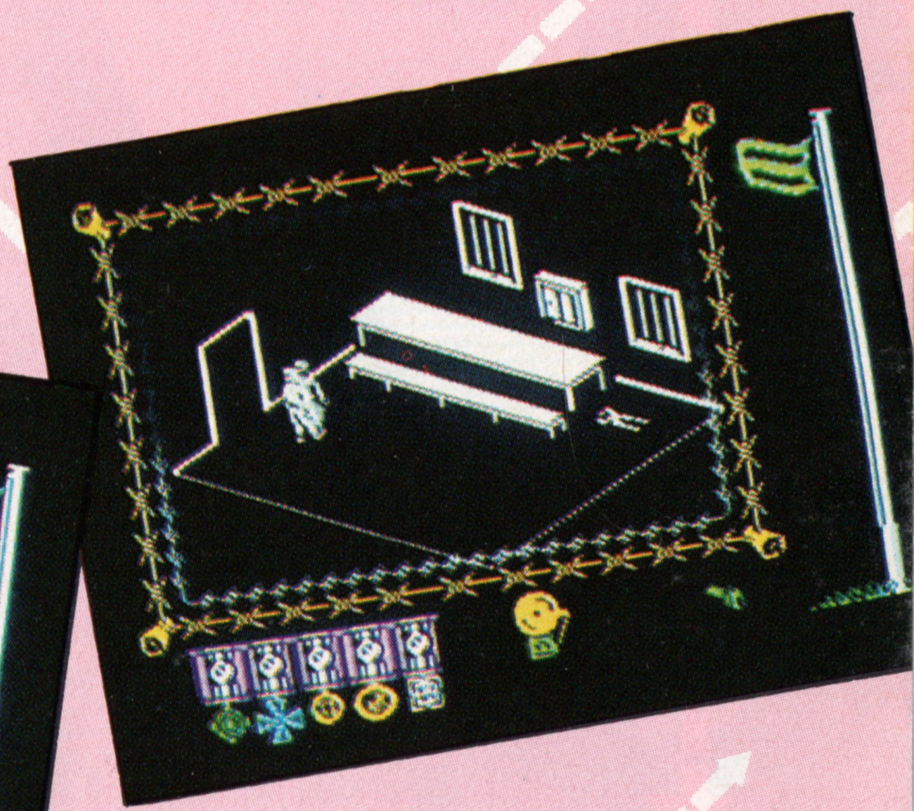
Mark Eyles who designed **Hijack** and **Aliens** for Electric Dreams is developing the plot and storyboards so it should be good.

PLAYING SOLDIERS

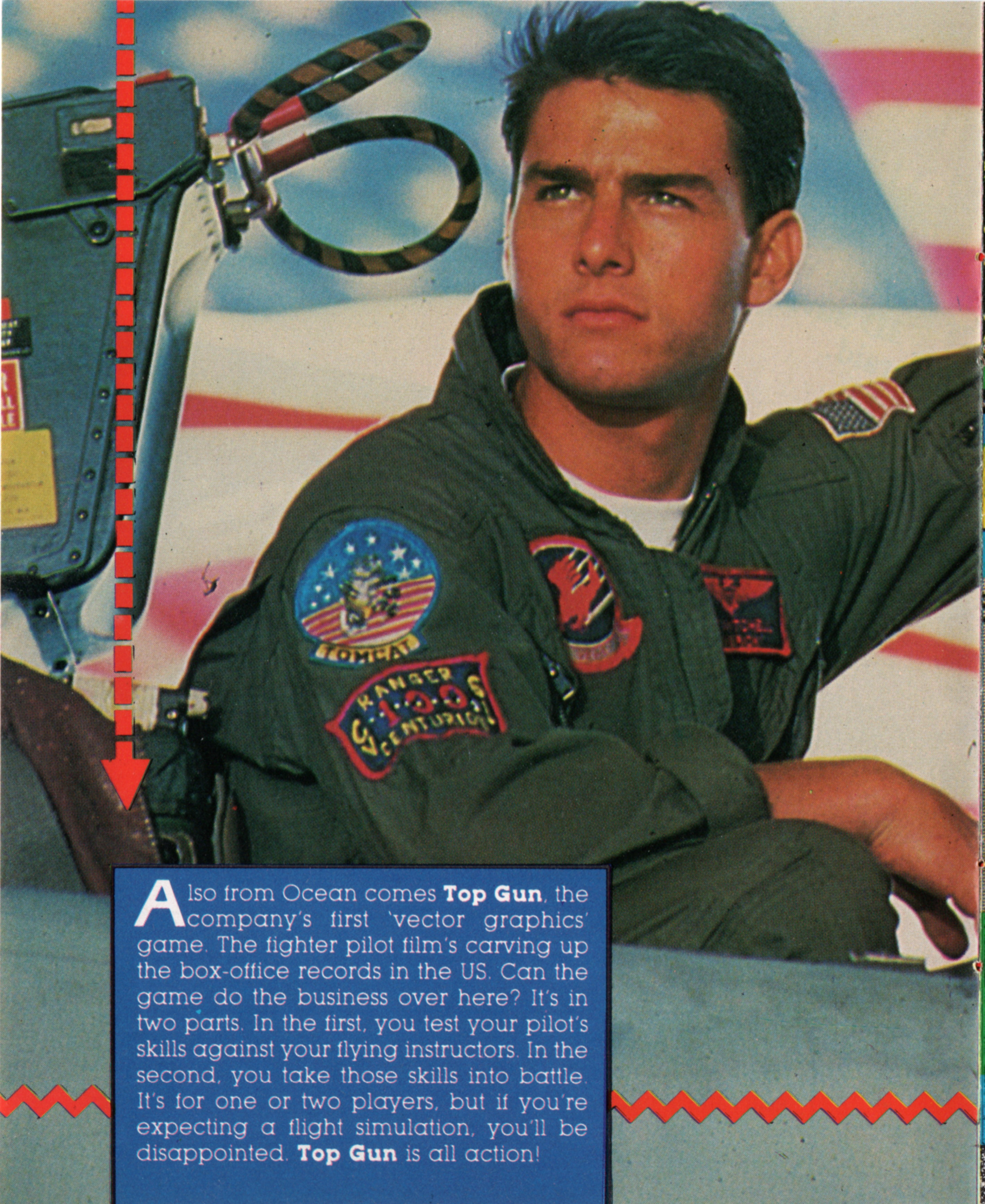
Blowing 'em all away

Three very different war-tribe games look hot: a 3D adventure, a flight game and a Commando-type raid.





Great Escape is the impressive 3D arcade adventure. Superb programming by Denton Designs for Ocean gives you a very realistic POW camp and any number of ways to break out. Will you cut the wire, dig for freedom or try to bluff your way through the front gate? Whichever you choose, you have to assemble the right gear, and avoid the guards. Clever use of illuminated pixels gives searchlights, torches and night and day graphics which build atmosphere. 255 screens of WWII paranoia.



Also from Ocean comes **Top Gun**, the company's first 'vector graphics' game. The fighter pilot film's carving up the box-office records in the US. Can the game do the business over here? It's in two parts. In the first, you test your pilot's skills against your flying instructors. In the second, you take those skills into battle. It's for one or two players, but if you're expecting a flight simulation, you'll be disappointed. **Top Gun** is all action!



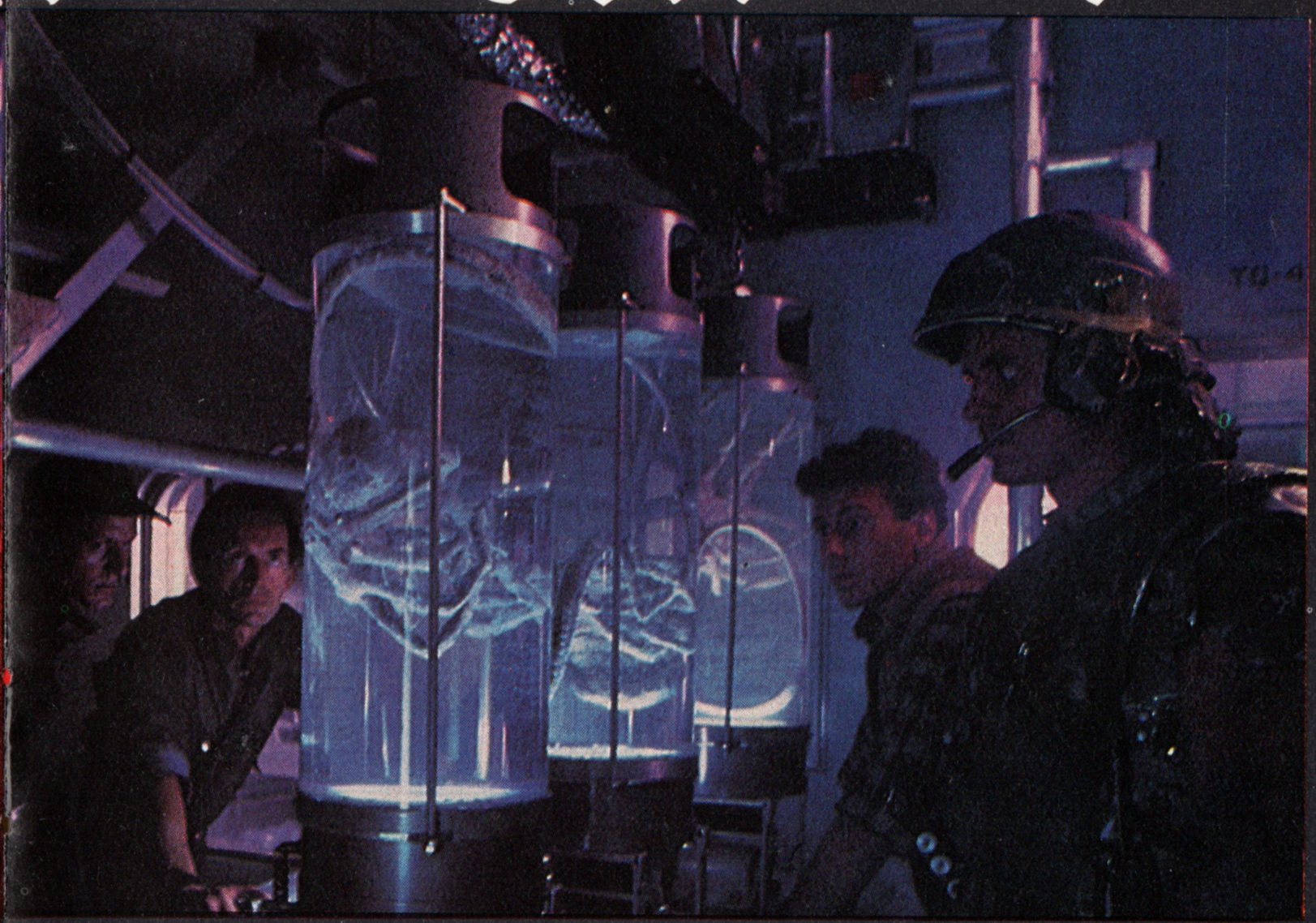
In Mikro-Gen's **SAS Strike Force** you command a team of SAS men, in three separate scenarios. Graphics are impressive, as the boys in the black baleclavas hide behind hedges or lope past lamposts, machine-guns at the ready. If you make the wrong decisions about your approach to the target – allowing yourself to be seen from the windows of the remote farmhouse, for example – you only find out later when the terrorists jump you. Not for those of a liberal conscience, but great mindless violence if you're feeling violently mindless.

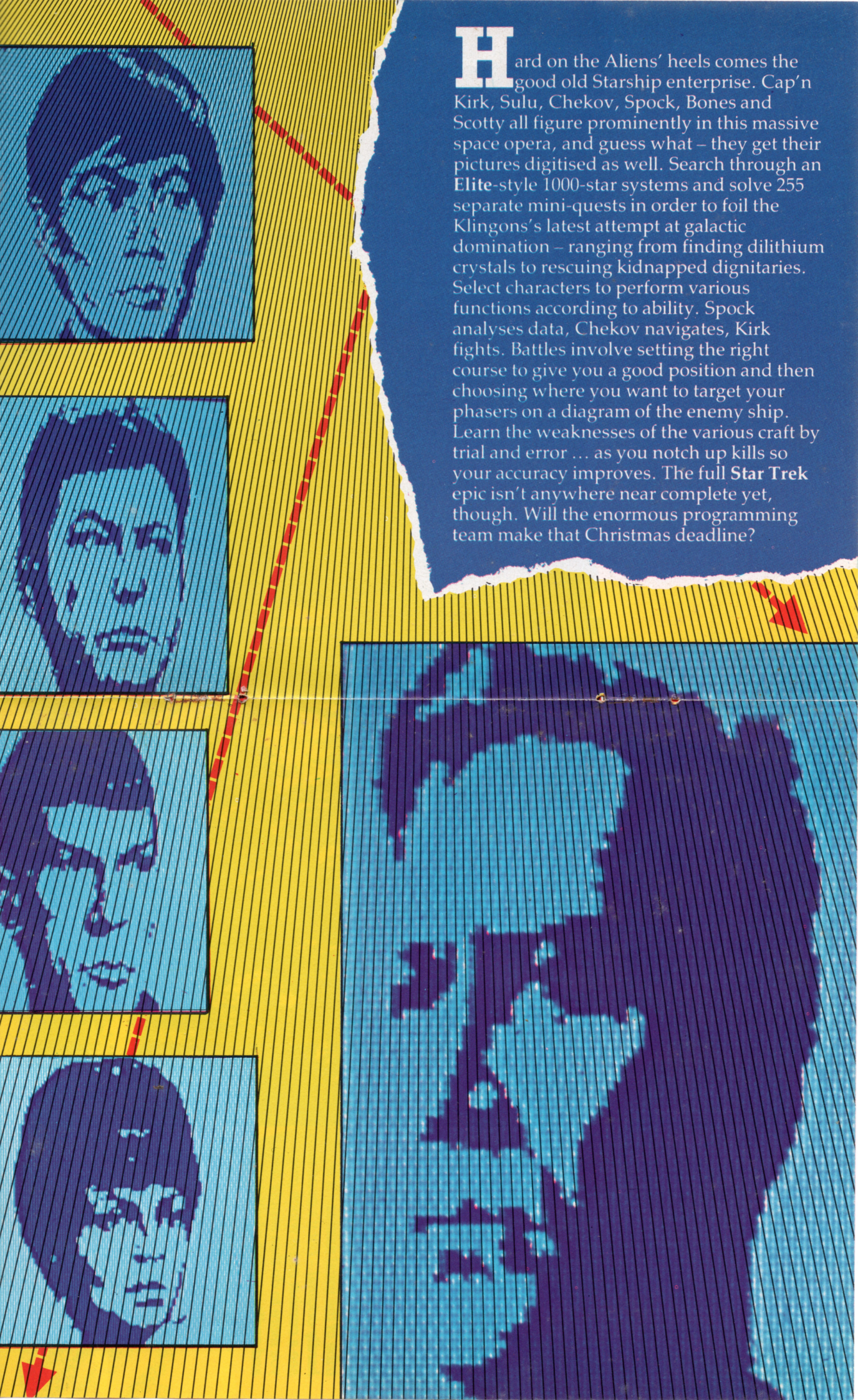
LOOKING FOR A HERO

There's been a mad scramble for film rights this year, and for a change the results ain't too bad in terms of decent games.



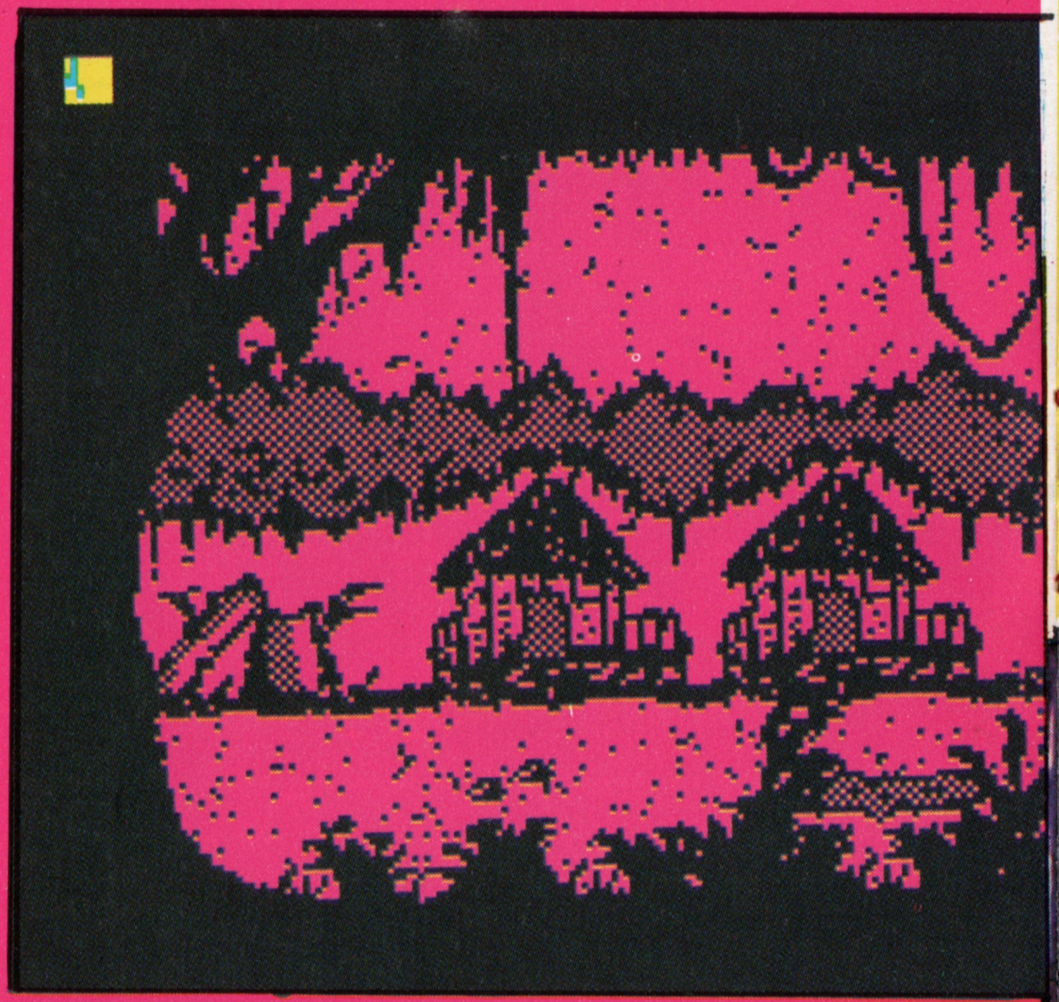
Electric Dreams has picked a sure winner with **Aliens**. Digitised pix of the stars add class to a strategy/blast game which asks you to control your team of film characters against the prodigious black beasties. They come for you pretty fast too, so keep your wits about you. Select a character and the screen opens up to show the view through their eyes. 3D animation gives your brain cells a rest as you blast the aliens with whatever weapons you can find. Sound is used to good effect too, with heartbeats thumping adrenalin into your trigger finger. Good 'n' tense. All three types of alien are here, from the crab-like 'hand' to the awesome Queen herself. With that sort of parental control, it's no wonder the little aliens eat up all their dinner so energetically.





Hard on the Aliens' heels comes the good old Starship enterprise. Cap'n Kirk, Sulu, Chekov, Spock, Bones and Scotty all figure prominently in this massive space opera, and guess what – they get their pictures digitised as well. Search through an **Elite**-style 1000-star systems and solve 255 separate mini-quests in order to foil the Klingons's latest attempt at galactic domination – ranging from finding dilithium crystals to rescuing kidnapped dignitaries. Select characters to perform various functions according to ability. Spock analyses data, Chekov navigates, Kirk fights. Battles involve setting the right course to give you a good position and then choosing where you want to target your phasers on a diagram of the enemy ship. Learn the weaknesses of the various craft by trial and error ... as you notch up kills so your accuracy improves. The full **Star Trek** epic isn't anywhere near complete yet, though. Will the enormous programming team make that Christmas deadline?

Swingers, and especially yodelling swingers, will love Martech's ***Tarzan,*** *an arcade adventure which uses the fight game techniques so popular in* ***Exploding Fist*** *and similar combat games. Atmospheric screens of jungle foliage, village stockades, and mysterious underground caverns are picked out in an effective 'fuzzy' style.* ***Tarzan*** *looks a bit like a drunk picking a fight with a lampost when he puts up his fists, but there are plenty of creepers to swing from and some very nice animations of jungle animals bounding across the screen. Plot involving rescuing Jane from a lost tribe of the usual nasties – it is hardly original – but it's good to see a combat game which gives you more to do than simply defeat and endless queue of villains.*





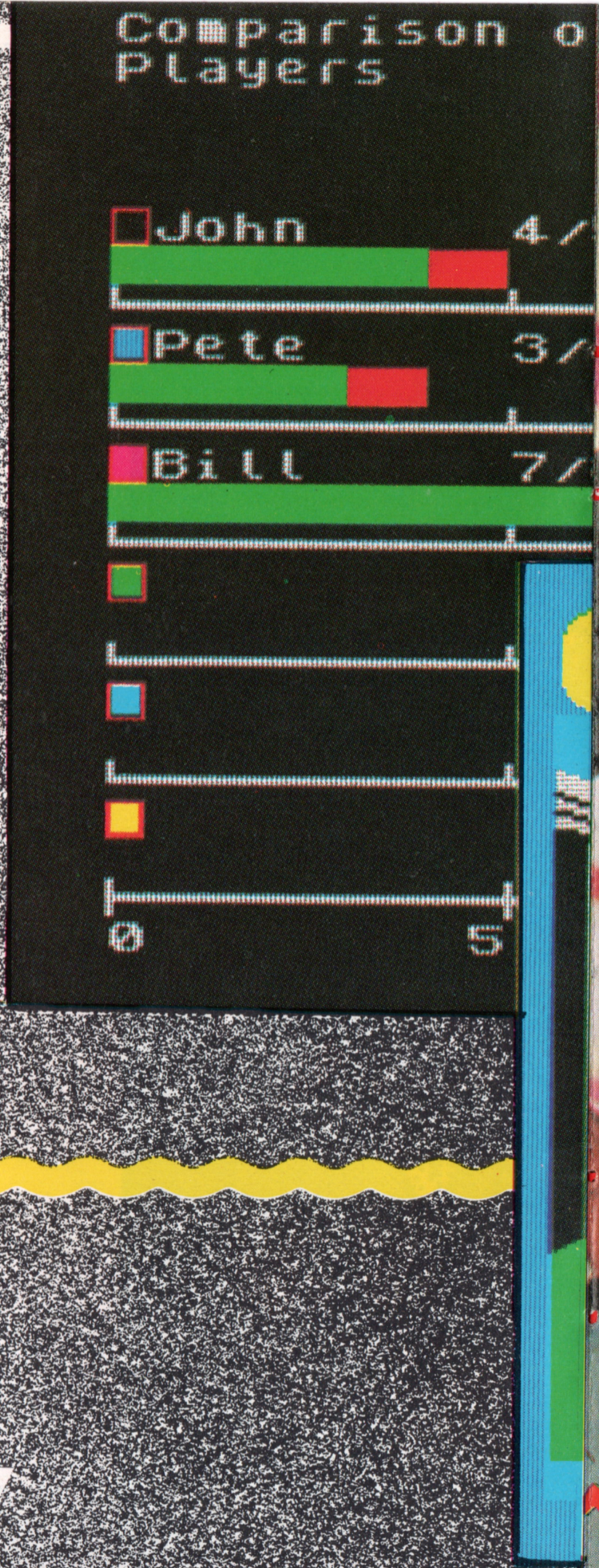


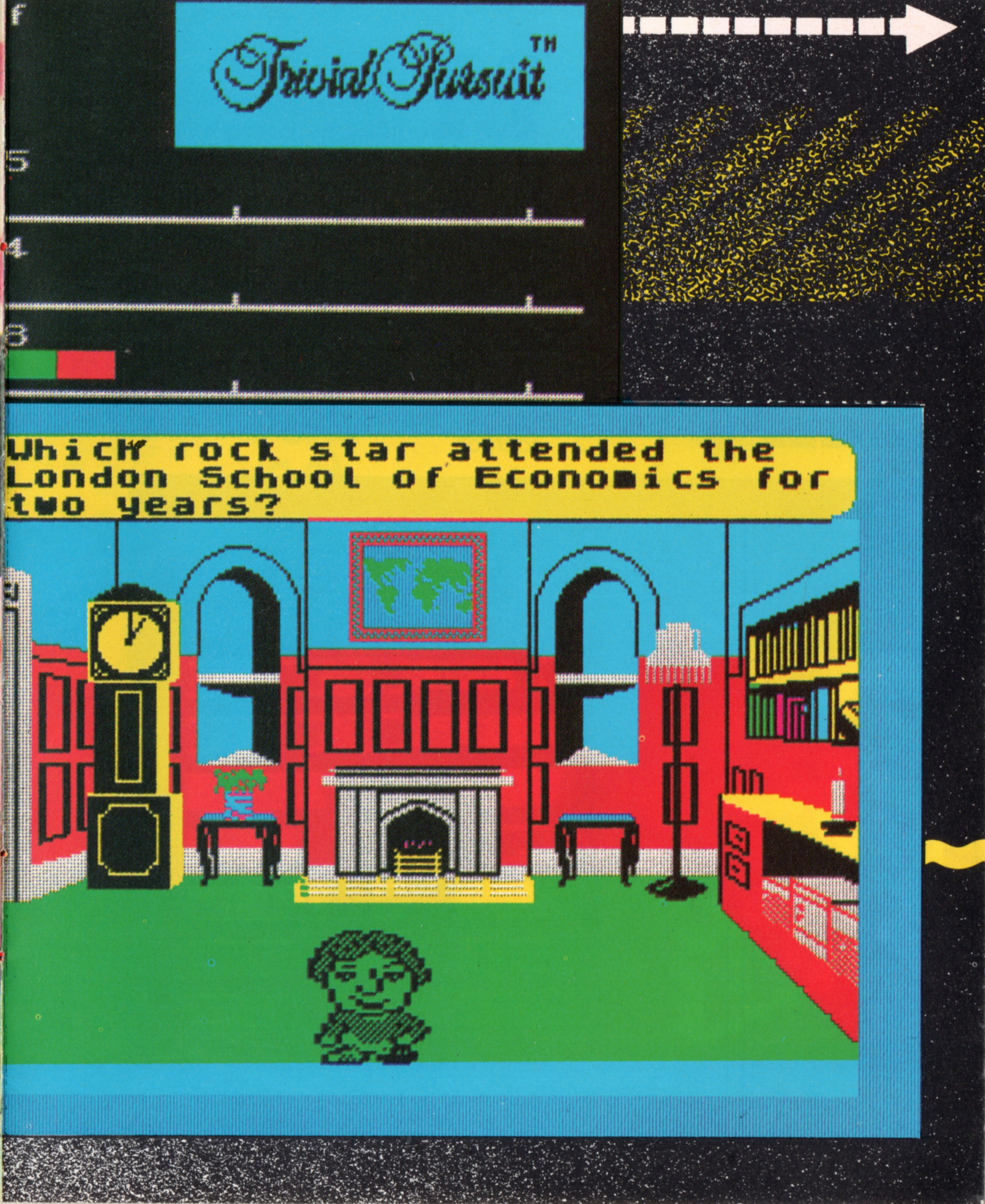


Finally, on another level entirely, a third SF movie joins the ranks of the film tie-ins: **Flash Gordon** is Mastertronic's budget reply to the big guns. A three-part game, **Flash Gordon** combines one-on-one martial arts combat with a dodge game and an airborne zap finale. First defeat your enemies hand-to-hand with an array of ten or so kicks, punches, jumps and ducks. You also get to use a gun, which is more than they'll give you in most other fight games! Then hop on your bike and negotiate the extraterrestrial obstacle course before finally taking to the air and blasting away at those funny men with wings strapped to their backs. It's all slightly tongue-in-cheek – **Flash Gordon** doesn't pretend to be the world's most advanced program. But it's a good taster for newcomers and it's cheap.

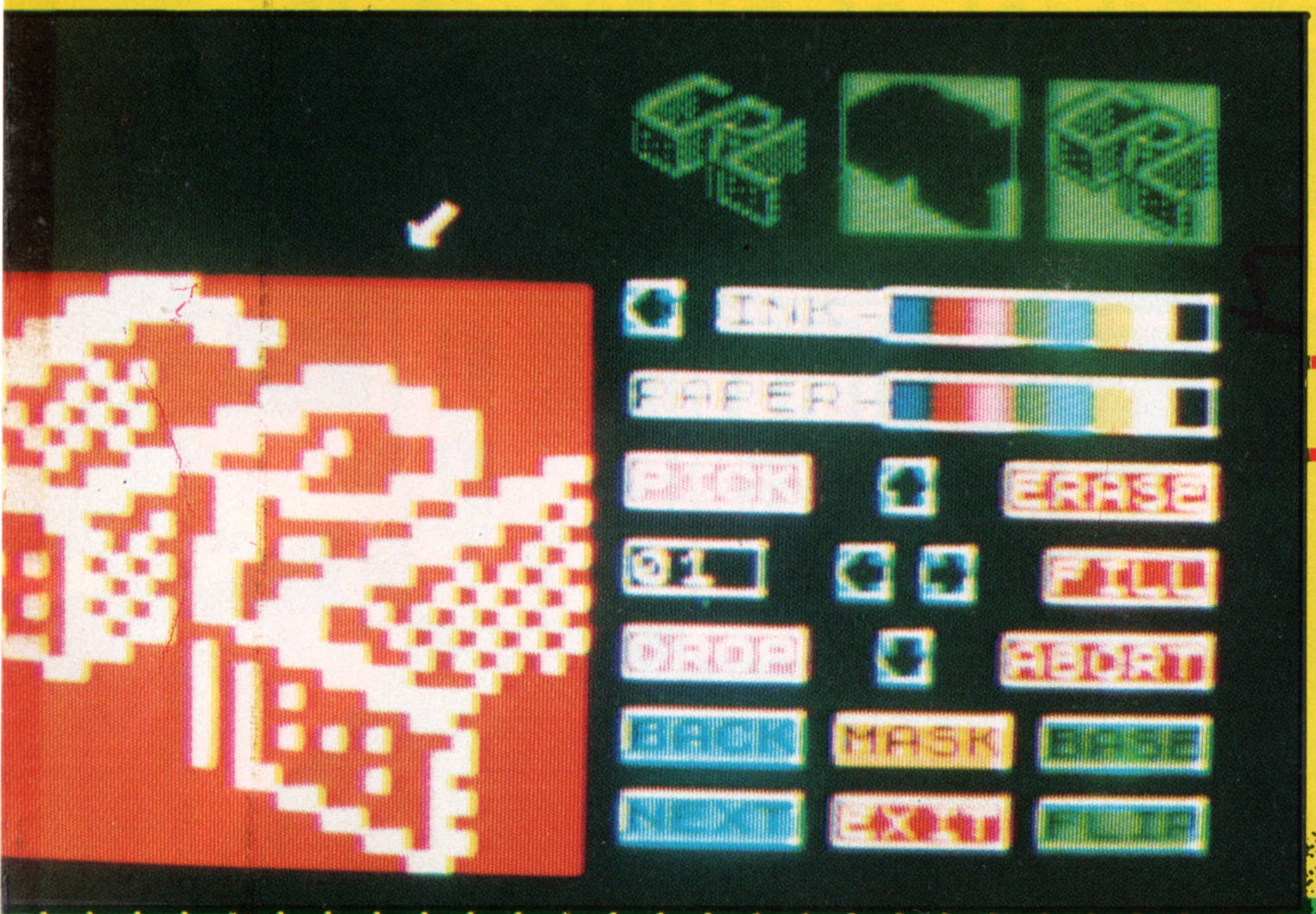
IN THE QUIETER MOMENTS

If you can't wait, it's out already. But, I'd bet big bucks that Domark's **Trivial Pursuit** will still be selling like hot cakes right up to the moment Santa hauls the reindeer out of cold storage. Very intelligently using sound and graphics to introduce visual and musical questions into the well-known trivia game, **TP** mixes golden oldies from the original board game with new, up-to-date trivia, including some brainteasers from the computer world. Careful byte-crunching packs in an impressive load of questions but there's a second cassette with new sets if you run out. Domark promises extra packs – Baby Boomer, Silver Screen etc – and there are lots of extra touches which, if anything, make the computer version superior. You can get statistics on all the players' scores, broken down category by category, a little animation sequence when the resident egg-head asks the questions (he even turns the light out to show you slides) and the facility to add players in the middle of a game. It's an absolutely brilliant translation from the board – guaranteed to get the most anti-computerish relatives round the table after Christmas dinner.




Trivial Pursuit™
Which rock star attended the London School of Economics for two years?

More demanding on the mind but equally fascinating is CRL's **3D Game Maker** which allows you to program **Knight Lore**-type games of your own design. In case you weren't around then, we're talking about those 3D games with one room per screen where you trundle your character about dodging sliding blocks, picking up objects and rearranging the furniture to gain access to ... yes, the next 3D problem. It's less than two years since **Knight Lore** took the world by storm. Now you can do it all for yourself. Is nothing sacred?





Rincewind stood outside the "Broken Drum", a rather sleezy tavern, on a busy street running from north to south through the bustle of Ankh-Morpork.

Twoflower and The Luggage came into view.

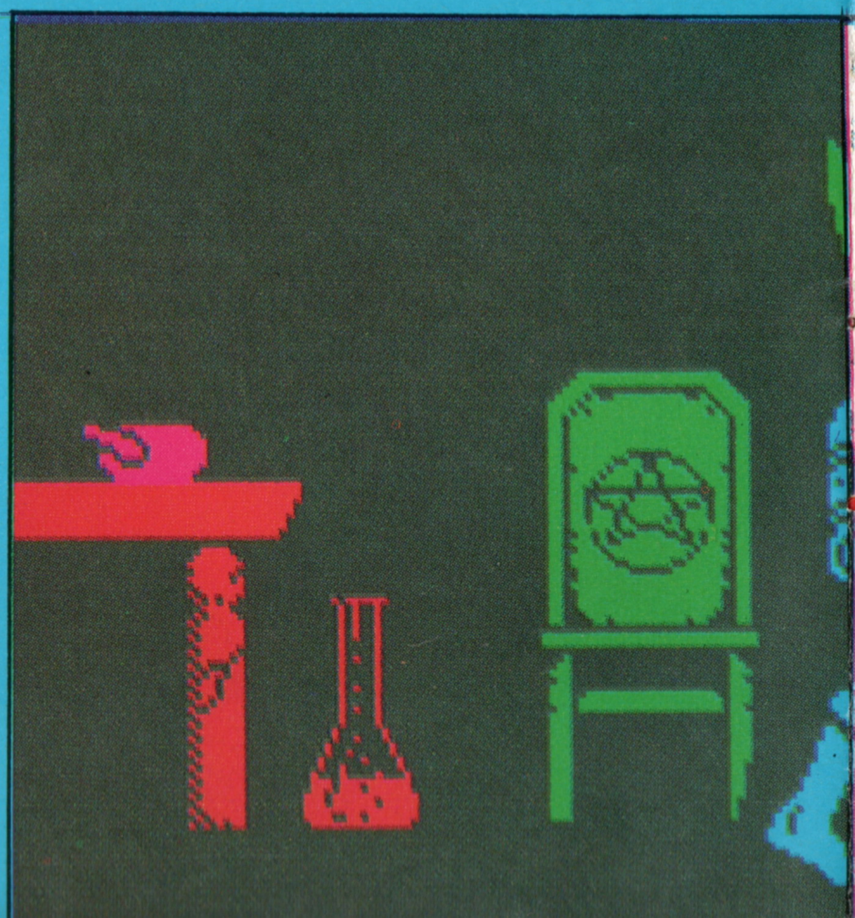
"HELLO.", said a voice, heavy as

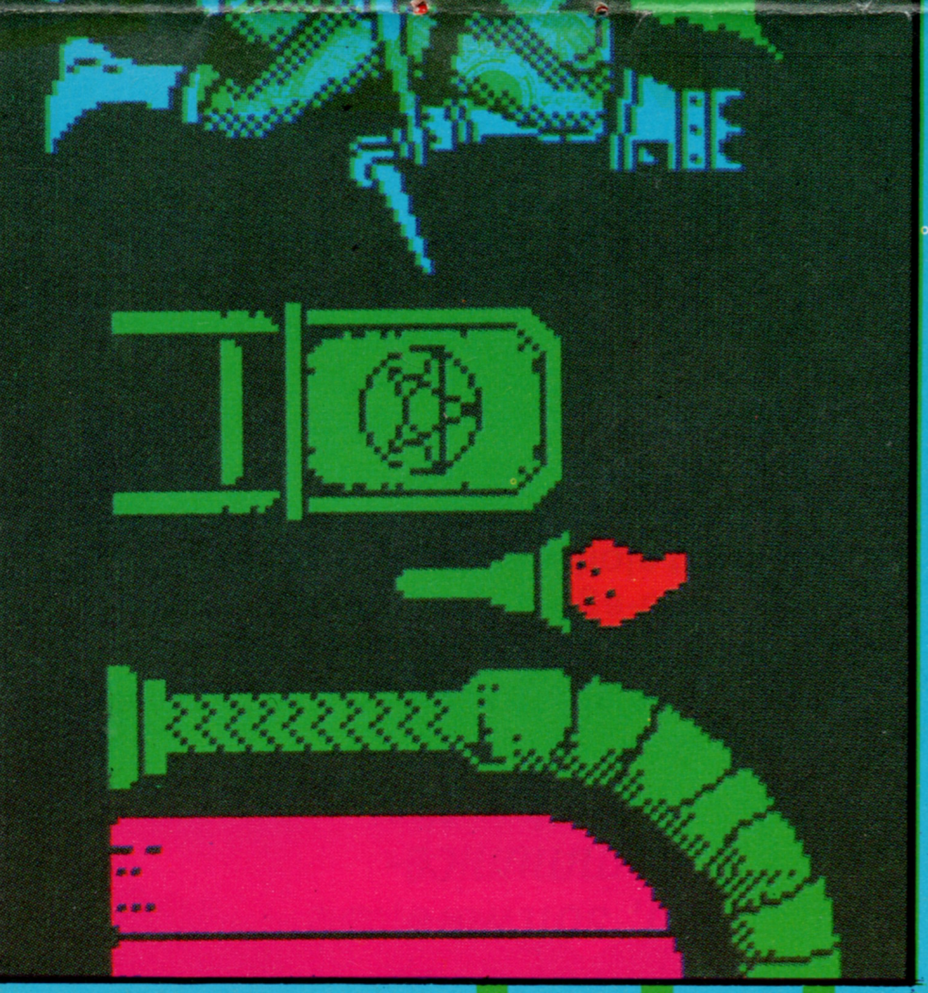
Fergus McNeill of **Boggit** fame teams up with new outfit Piranha for a characteristically crazed version of Terry Pratchett's spoof fantasy novel, **The Colour of Magic**. Having risen to fame writing adventures on the **Quill** system, Fergus has a new adventure-writing program to play with. The resulting tale of oppressed dragons, mad barbarians, flat-earth turtles and the awesomely indestructible sentient luggage should be the funniest thing on the market this Christmas.



Dark Sceptre

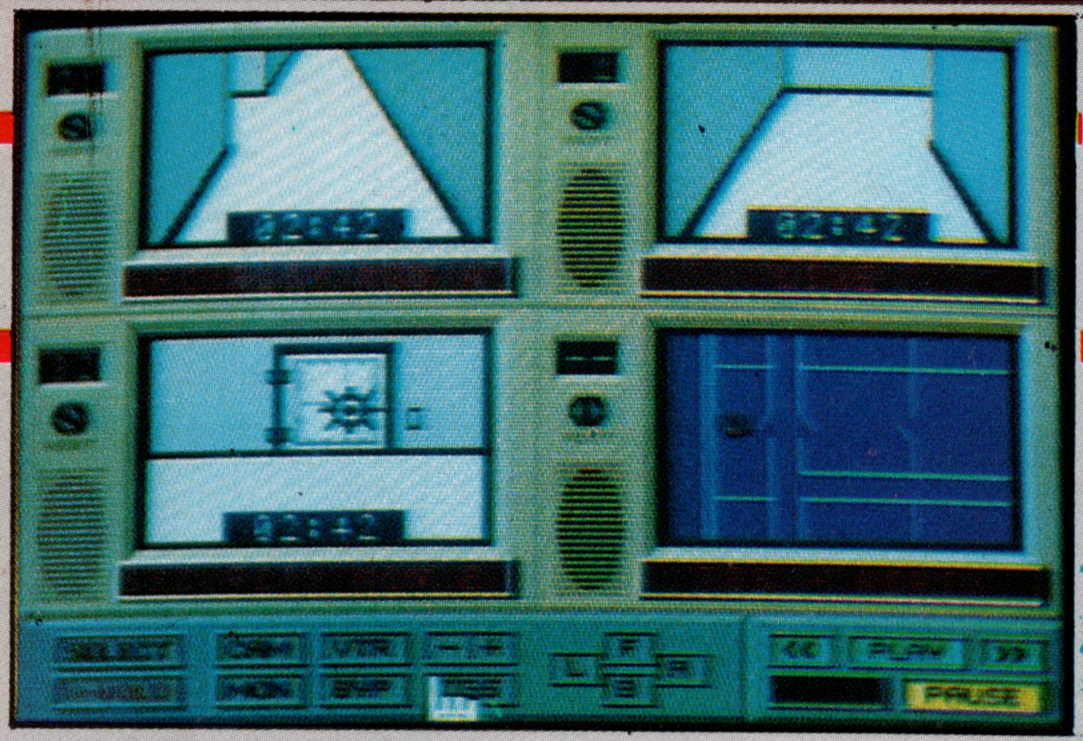
Mike Singleton writes the most intricate games you're ever likely to see on a Spectrum and **Dark Sceptre,** his latest, is being published by Beyond. You control a small army of characters, who must be moved around a medium-sized island fighting and outwitting the evil shadowlords. That translates to about 4000 screens of brilliant multi-coloured action with larger-than-life figures moving across them. Strategic in nature rather than pure zap, **Dark Sceptre** has to be the thinking gamer's choice for Christmas.





If you're feeling creative, two DIY programs also look good value. Melbourne House is bringing out a **Marble Madness Construction Set** which lets you build up your own switchback courses by slotting in sections of graphic – slopes, flat track and so on – rather like computerised lego. Melbourne House reckons you can get about eight levels into a single game and save the whole lot to tape as well: perfect for sticking customised games on to your friend's machines and watching them fail dismally! It may lack some of the sophisticated features of the original game but when that ball starts to roll who's counting the decorations?

SEEING IT DOUBLE

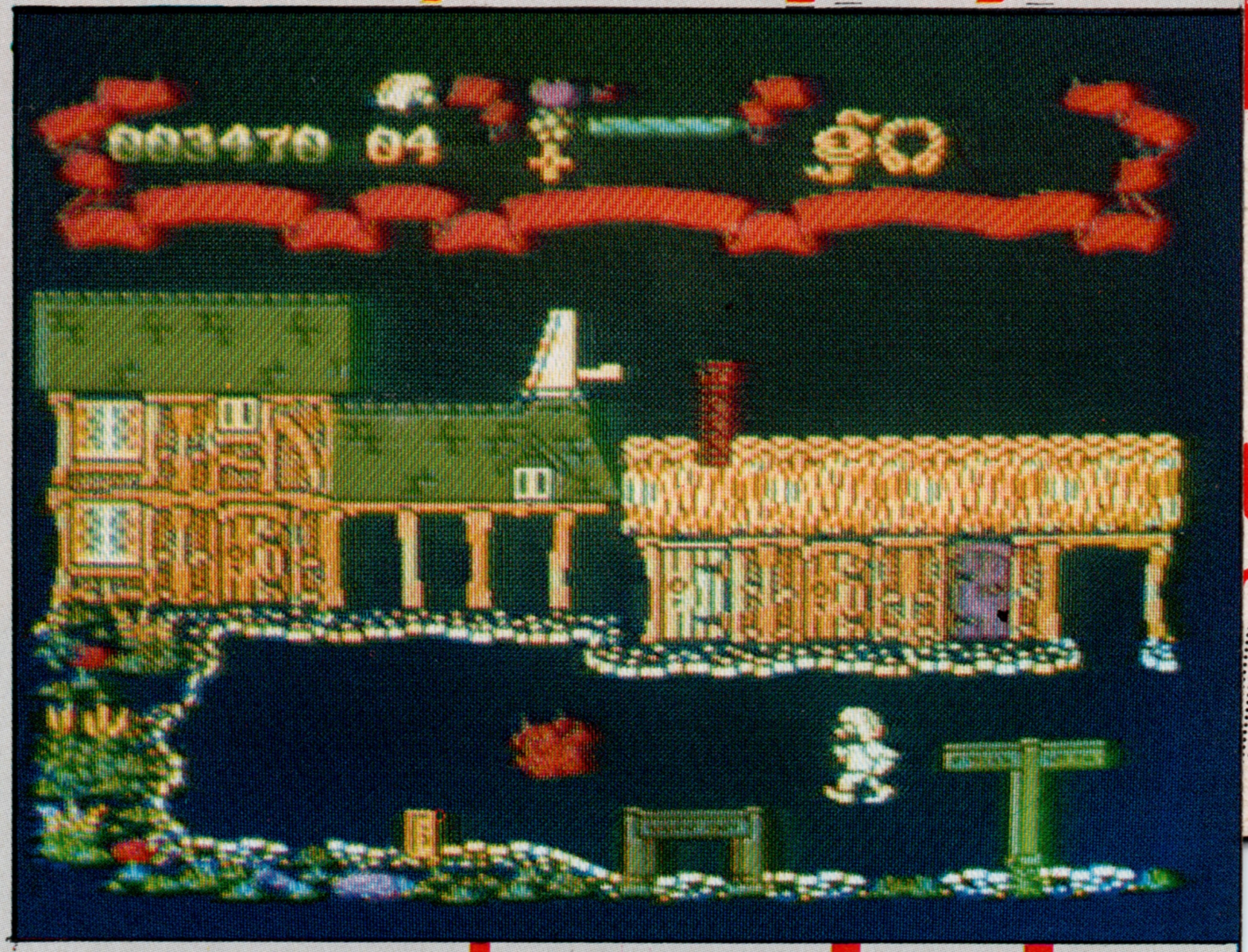


ST version

Good ideas are often worth repeating. Sometimes it's very tempting to do a sequel of a successful game but such efforts are almost never better. **Hacker II** from Activision's is an honourable exception. Forget the crass 'good guys against the Commies' junk – which involves getting secret US documents out of a fortress in Siberia – and concentrate on the devious gameplay. The screen is split into four simultaneous displays as you guide your remote-controlled spy robots through the intricate security networks of the Siberian labyrinth.

If Firebird lose out in the **Druid** stakes, they certainly deserve a medal for **Gyron Arena**. At £1.99 it's a cut-down version of **Gyron**, a classic mega-mega-brainbuster. **Gyron Arena** brings the whole thing down to manageable size. Huge balls patrol an imposing maze. Towers cover junctions with deadly firepower. And you must discover the (only?) route through with absolute precision. It's hardly a small game still, and the graphics are absolutely stunning. If you like to think while you play, think about grabbing a copy of this.

Progammer Steve Crow won reknown for his fine imitations of the Ultimate style in graphics programming. With **Firelord**, from Hewson, he's created some original gameplay but retained the same crisp graphics. Set in a medaeval village, you must find four pieces of a wotsit to win: standard stuff, but there's a big colourful maze, fast animation, and lots of characters to help you. Peasants guide you, witches cast spells, Reeves administer justice. You can trade objects and switch from magic to brute force as you go. Lots to do, very pretty graphics, extremely professional. You feel safe in Crow's hands the minute you load up the game. Solid value.



This year everybody wants to do **medaeval** games. There are four main contenders so far: **Druid** from Firebird, **Dandy** – the precursor to **Gauntlet** from Electric Dreams, **Avenger** from Gremlin and **Gauntlet** itself from US Gold. Alas, this last looks like being the last to be released. **Gauntlet**'s an arcade game where up to four players bomb around co-operatively (more or less) to gang up on the monsters, level after level, each player getting special abilities. The computer version is scaled down to two players, but you can also play solo. Right now **Dandy** looks to have the edge over **Gauntlet**, but **Druid** runs it pretty close. Try and get a look at both before you buy. there'll be a real battle between these two!

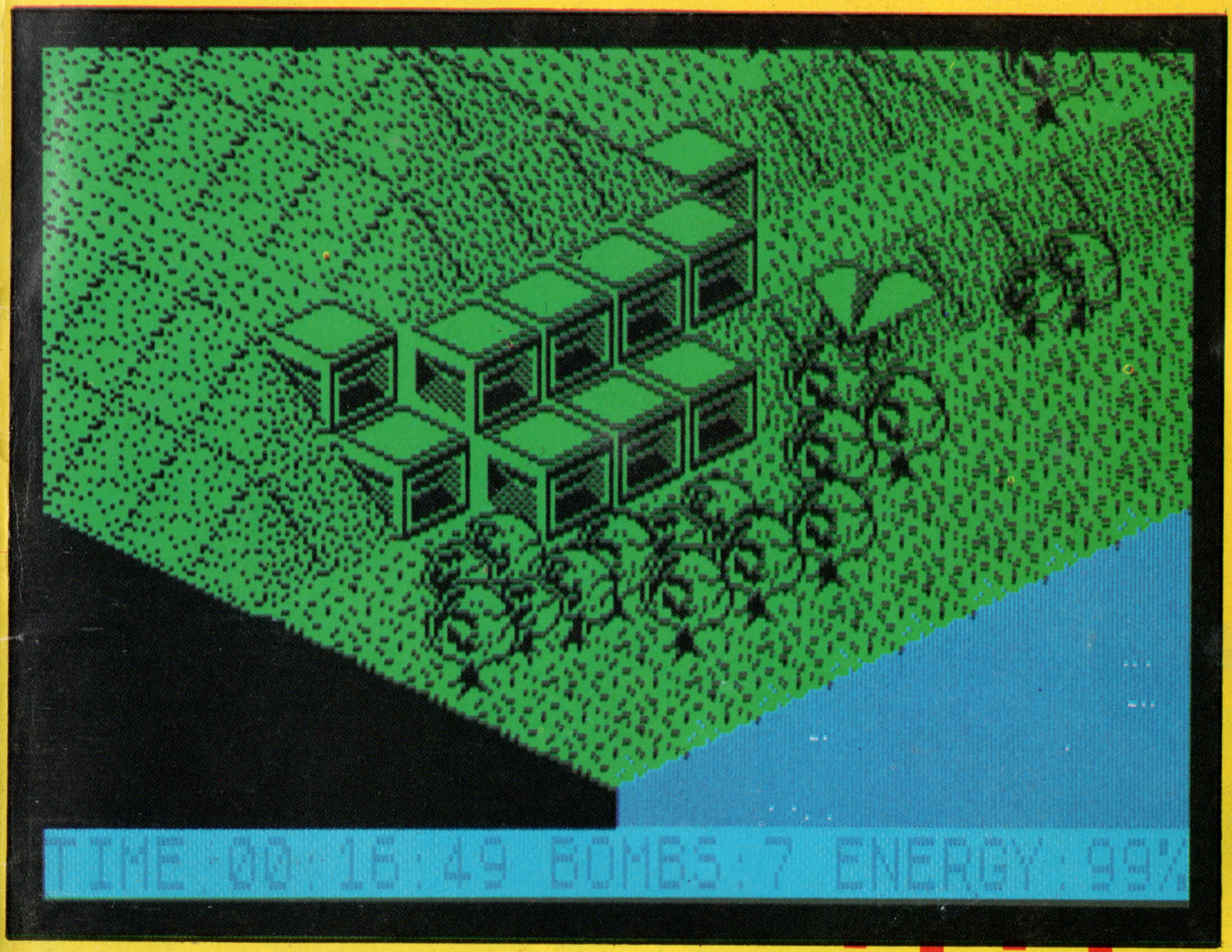



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HELL ON TWO WHEELS

A different type of bike is on view in the extraordinary **Glider Rider** from Quicksilva. This hog literally spreads its wings and flies – it turns into a hang-glider at moments of stress, basically when you wrench the front wheel sideways when powering down a steep hill! You've got to bomb installations on a beautifully detailed 3D landscape so you ride your bike round to find the hills from which to launch your bombing runs. Beware though, the installations can defend themselves and great skill is needed to avoid sudden death in a charred mess of glider struts and engine oil. If you've got a 128 or Spectrum 128K+2 you're even luckier. **Glider Rider** has the best music that's ever been heard on a Spectrum.





Simulation buffs will reckon **TT Racer** is The Buzziness! It's an authentic realisation of Grand Prix motorcycle racing. Twelve tracks and fifteen other riders to beat. The controls feel just right, and if you get a little bored chasing round and round the same track, you can't complain: that's what simulations are all about. Digital are the princes of simulation programming on the Spectrum, and **TT Racer** has been two years in the writing.

DESIGN BY ACA

And there's more!

SINCLAIR user

Next month Sinclair User is giving away THE crucial guide to Christmas buying. You know how much you want to pay — we know what on!

All the dirt for Future Vision compiled and written by Chris Bourne