

Star★ chart

Starship Escape

Vic-20 with 16K expansion:

Maze shoot-'em-up:

Sumlock:

£7.95:

★★

A tractor beam drags you aboard the alien ship. Your craft is dismembered and you must prow about the eerie craft reassembling your own vessel. Ardroids, robots, space spiders and the ever-watching Force Cloud make life difficult. Playable with joystick or keyboard. You zoom around the space-hulk at great speed, infuriatingly being re-imprisoned where you started from with your trusty K9 friend. Graphics not marvellous, of course.

Destroyer

Unexpanded Vic-20:

Shoot-'em-up:

Sumlock:

£7.95:

★★★

An unembellished shoot-'em-up, requiring plenty of co-ordination, nevertheless. Using the keys you have to steer your destroyer back and forth on the oggin, shooting to left and right at attacking aircraft, depthcharging submarines, and dodging torpedoes and bombs. The whole game runs for a time period shown by a changing strip at the bottom of the screen. If you survive the time period, a bonus base on planes downed is added to your score. Not bad in 3K.

Bull Run

16/48K Spectrum:

Run away:

Phipps Associates:

£6.95:

★

Silicon Pamplona. On holiday in a Spanish village you are pursued by a wild bull. There is a 30,000 pesetas reward from which 50 is deducted every second. You use yourself as bait and put up fences. These do not stay up very long. The Bull will gore you if you are carrying a fence, but you are fairly safe behind one. Three levels of play, not great graphics, cheaper than a holiday in Spain.

SOFTWARE

Shortlist

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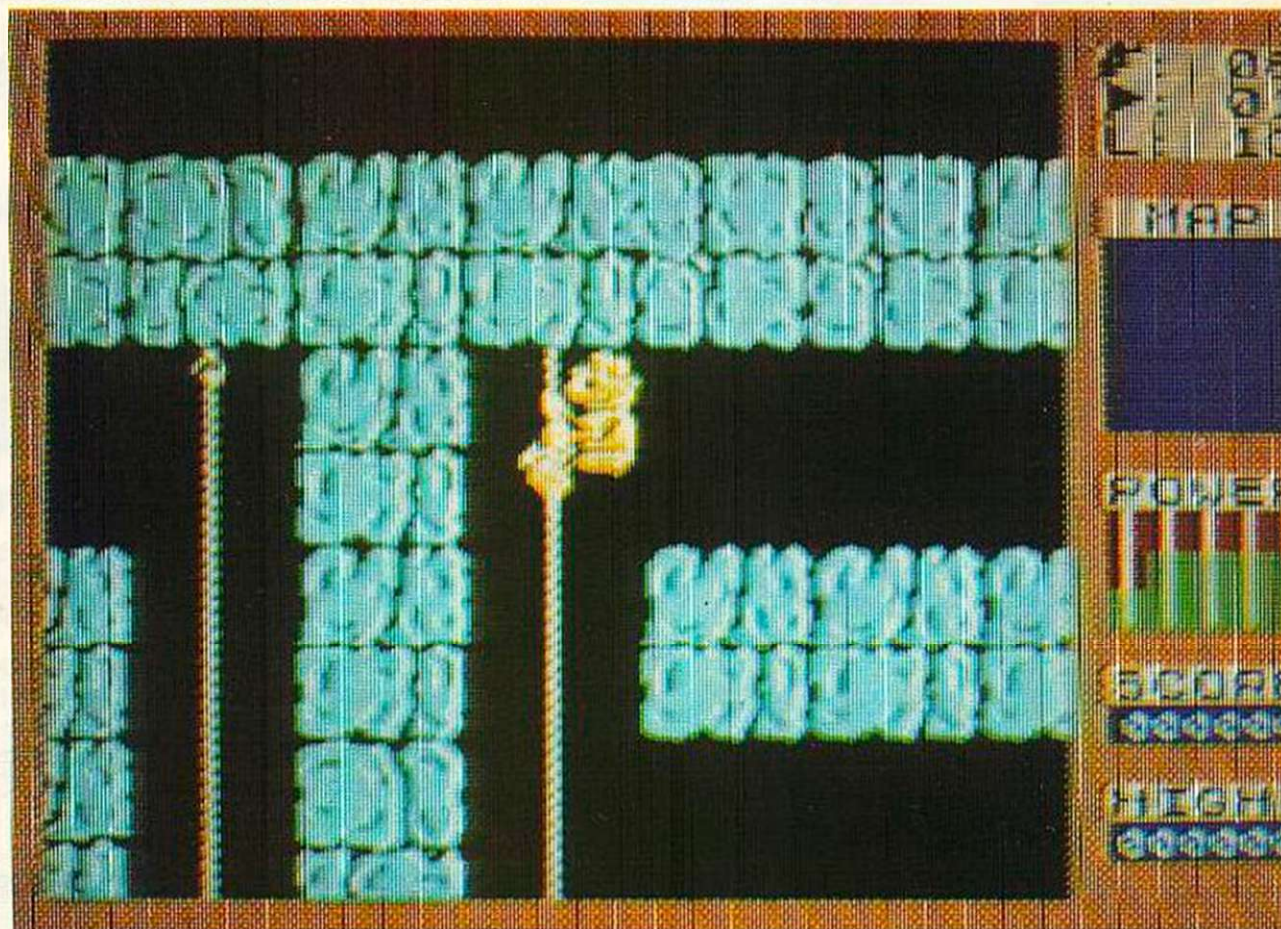
matters. I am also dubious about the claim of incredible perspective graphics.

This is a pretty Choplifter with a nuclear reactor thrown in. First, pilot your whirlybird. Off the VSTOL carrier over the islands, getting shot at. There are five different levels of difficulty. In the higher levels you contend with waves of jet fighters and indestructible red

balloons. Only one of the latter at a time — the number never gets as high as 99. You penetrate enemy lines, destroy the nuclear reactor and rescue up to 16 comrades in one

trip.

The on-screen score line displays from left to right, reserve choppers, current score and mission number. A vertical bar on the right of the screen indicates your chopper's fuel level. A challenging game.



Neptune's Daughters

Commodore CBM-64

£7.95

English Software

★★★

As THE OLD pre-decimalisation jokes goes "My girlfriend's a mermaid — lovely vital statistics: 36,24 and four and six a pound." Your history teacher might be able to explain it to you. The aim of this game is to rescue Neptune's beautiful daughter from the sea serpent who is holding her captive. Unfortunately we have to admit this game had us pretty well stumped. It is either a very demanding and challenging game, or impossible to play and consequently stupid, depending on who you talk to.

Either way, Neptune's daughter never showed up for any of us, and it is a lot of bother fighting octopuses, sucker plants and deadly amoebae just for a blind date. You take the

part of an acuanan who absorbs oxygen through his gills. You have to fight off the attentions of poisonous octopodes and clear the way of deadly sucker plants to get through to successive caverns in this Sutmanner Scramble scenario. You eventually encounter amoeba swarms, you have to manoeuvre yourself into a position where you can kill them with your harpoon and absorb the bubbles of oxygen which they emit as they die.

This is as far as most of us could get. Apparently after this a monster crab is encountered. You kill this and take it with you to feed the sea serpent. All being well, the zorged ophiuchan ogre will knock off for 40 winks while you depart with the girl in the wet-look outfit. You then lead her back to the safety of the palace, where presumably you can settle down to discuss the experience over half a shandy and a packet of shrimp-flavoured crisps.

This is all hearsay, however: one thing we can say — this game has a very high frustration quotient

Fred

48K Spectrum

£6.95

Quicksiva

★★★★★

FROM THE people who brought you Bugaboo or Booga-boo, depending on which computer you play it on, comes another feast of Disneyesque graphics.

The screen display presents you with a vertical maze of glowing blue stone walls, around which the intrepid Fred wends his weary way in search of the treasures of the Pharaohs. Yes, I know we have done the Pharaohs at the bottom of your garden joke.

Fred shins up and down ropes, avoiding contact with rats, acid crops, ghost which can go through walls, chameleons, mummies and vampires. He has a gun and six bullets.

There are six screens, increasing in difficulty, followed by the option to return to the first screen, or redefine the maze and number of monsters.