



# TEST

## STARQUAKE

Bubble Bus, £8.95 cass, joystick or keys

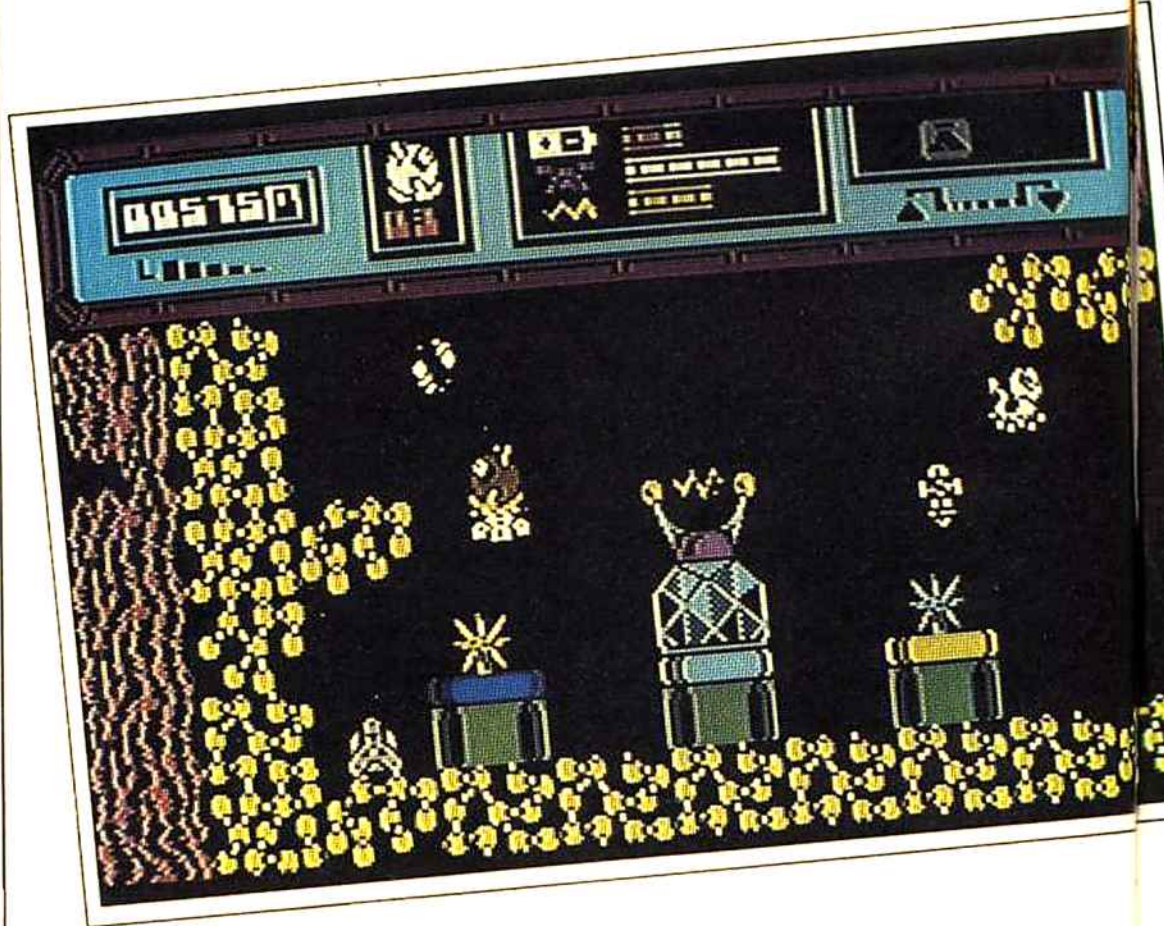
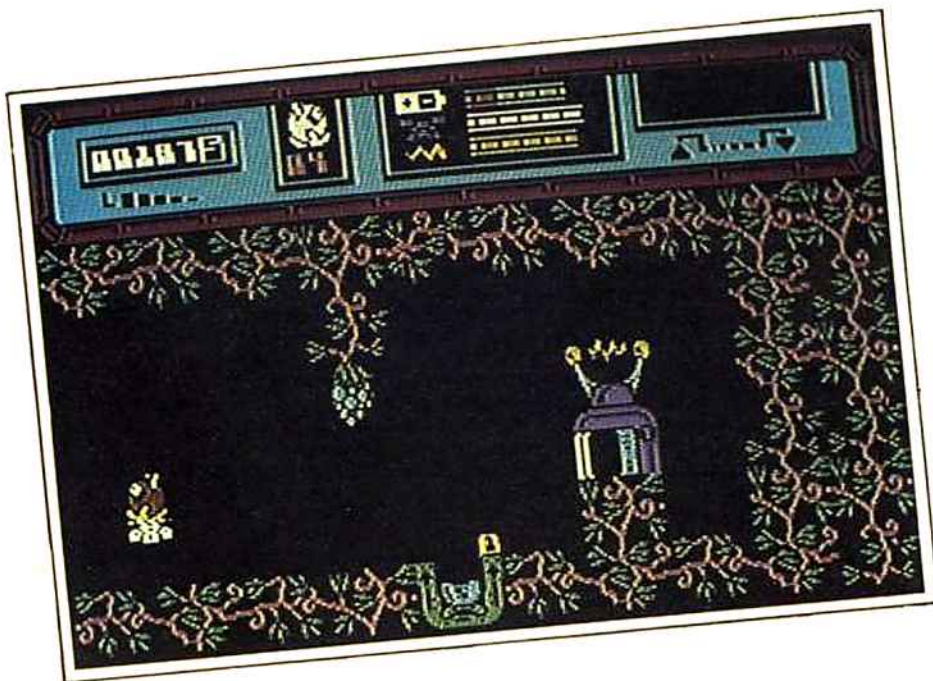


**W**ell knock me down with half a pound of pre-quark, some highly unstable planet has just emerged out of a black hole and is in ever so severe danger of going 'blam'. Not so bad you may think, one planet within an infinite universe going 'blam' is no real loss. This is true, but because of the unstable little worldlet's location such a 'blam' would trigger off an explosion so huge that there wouldn't be any universe to live in any more. Obviously this is not a desirable state of affairs so a plan is hatched. Unfortunately this plan involves a hero flying off to the asteroid and stabilising its core. Heroes are not stupid and all of them realised that this mission would mean certain death and no more chat show appearances. So they all declined. This left BLOB — a Bio-Logically Operated Being. He's not very able but is stupid enough to have the greatest enthusiasm for the mission.

Giving back a world its stability is not an easy thing at all, and to do so a number of objects have to be placed within the world's core, filling a gap that is threatening to implode. It needs a mid-morning snack. Little wonder though that the planet is so potentially explosive since it's a bit of a mess, beriddled with caverns, the whole structure is rather tenuous. After a bit



*Not only is Starquake one of the best arcade adventures to play, it is also one of the nicest to look at. The backgrounds are very pretty indeed, and the sprites are beautifully drawn and animated — especially the hero, BLOB, who must be the cutest computer game character to hit the small screen yet. Anyway, Starquake is neat — one of the most playable and absorbing games of its type, and certainly worthy of any arcade adventurer's time and money.*







Copies of ZZAP! this way — the poor astronaut at the bottom of the screen didn't quite make it. It looks as though BLOB in the centre of the screen, happily seated at the controls of his flying baking tin, will make it.

of a messy landing (crash is probably a better word) BLOB must traverse and explore the asteroid's interior to find the correct core filling objects.

It's an awfully large asteroid and exploration on foot would be far from easy. Luckily the remnants of some ancient civilisation abound and these can be put to BLOB's use. The main help is a teleportation system, seen by the nodes that are scattered around the environment. Each booth has its own codeword of which BLOB is informed when he enters it, while within the booth typing the code of any other node will beam blob there in the flash of a frame flyback. Another mode of transport are the flying baking tins parked around the joint, though a speedier form of transport than walking, sitting on a tin tray makes it impossible to pick objects up.

BLOB and his universe are seen as a series of screens. To flip from one to another BLOB must move off an edge and another jaunts into view. Slower than a baking tin, on foot BLOB's still quite a fast mover and can zip left and right over the ledges and rocks in the asteroid. He is susceptible to gravity though, and troling off a ledge edge has its usual effect — he accelerates downwards till some terra firma rushes up to greet his feet. Falling can be halted with a quick downwards motion on the joystick that should be in your hand. A platform will instantly appear under BLOB's padlike



*After quite a lull Bubble Bus are back with yet another extremely nice arcade adventure in a similar style to the old Ultimate Spectrum product.*

*Starquake is very neat indeed, it's cleverly thought out, fun to play and pretty to look at. BLOB, the main character, is delightfully animated and comfortable to control. Despite having a totally massive amount of screens (512) they do retain some sort of unrepetitiveness. Different zones of the asteroid have different types of scenery, ranging from flowers to rocks. It is very pretty indeed. The large amount of little features dotted around BLOB's universe keep things interesting as well. All arcade adventurers should possess this product and any respecting games player should at least take a look.*

tootsies, and seconds later it decays. Repeated down pulling raises blob higher and higher as more and more platforms appear under him. Unluckily infinite platforms are not in your possession and a meter at the top indicates how many ledges are left. Two other meters also sit here, one showing a constantly sapped energy and the other a ray gun status. Energy is important as a zero amount of this is like nature's way of telling you to slow down, ie death. Extra energy, platforms and ray gun bullets can be picked up by passing over supplies of such substances which may be found lying about the place.

Hassling and harrasing the poor BLOB are a number of mindless nasties, a touch from these and energy depreciates, fire the gun at them and they die.

The asteroid's scenery is also quite interesting and in places deadly. Luna undergrowth is worth avoiding as death results. Some very narrow gaps that BLOB must travel through are booby trapped as well with powerful field generators that sometimes spark the gap. Get caught mid-spark and BLOB gets blipped. Among the other artifacts knocking around of particular interest are the Cheops pyramids. These mysterious items allow objects to be traded if the right code parts are possessed. To pick up an object just position the person over the object and push up. There is a buffer area along the score line showing any of the objects held.



*This is an exceptionally jolly arcade adventure which stars a character with character — BLOB.*

*There are plenty of locations and the scenery is very pretty, colourful and varied. The alien things that float about the place are small but detailed and nicely animated if you take the trouble to look at them. All the little features in the game are really brilliant — elevators, teletransporters traps and BLOB's methods of transport, and all make the game fun to play. There are two marvellous arcade adventures out this month so unless you can afford both you'll have to make up your own mind about which one to buy.*

To finish the game the core centre must be found, not an easy job considering the hundreds of screens to be explored, and the various items that must be fitted. Fail and die — this seems a pretty good reason to have a game.

#### **Presentation 92%**

Great title screens plus all the nobs and bits that change games from good to great.

#### **Graphics 94%**

Clever clever use of hi-res mode that's most colourful indeed.

#### **Sound 80%**

Not the nicest tunes yet but some very pleasant sound FX.

#### **Hookability 91%**

Easily accesible and immediate fun to play.

#### **Lastability 93%**

A whole of bunch of screens to keep the hardened gamer in check but not too hard to ever become frustratingly boring.

#### **Value for Money 93%**

Well worth the less than normal amount of money usually asked for what's a very good game.

#### **Overall 93%**

This Star release will make the opposition Quake — (Groan, thank you GL! — Ed).

