

MORE TEA, VICAR?



Ah, the side-scrolling blast-em-to-bits shooter. There are quite a few great examples of said shooter on the Spectrum, with titles like R-Type and Zynaps numbing the thumbs of many a joystick junky, and now there's a new game to test your finger-twitching skills. Step up the bizarrely named *More Tea, Vicar?*, developed by Jonathan Cauldwell and Javier Alcaniz and soon to be released by Cronosoft. *Martyn Carroll* went along to find out more!

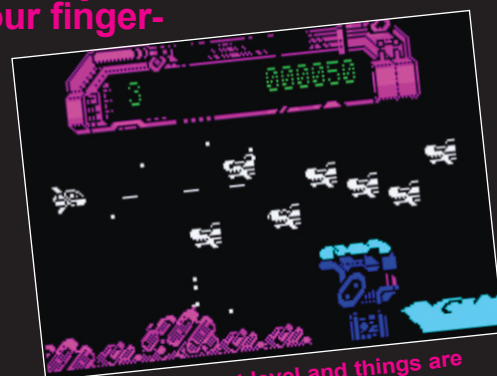
Jonathan's been working on *More Tea, Vicar?* for some time now, by all accounts. Quite when the game will appear is not entirely clear, so I cornered him in a dark alley and demanded answers. "It's quite close to completion," he told me. "Aside from a few final touches the code is all written, and Javier is currently designing the graphics for the final level. Hopefully the game will be finished in a matter of weeks." Great, not long to wait then. But what about that wacky title? It certainly doesn't sound like the hardcore blaster I've been promised. "A Speccy enthusiast called Philip Bee suggested a plot which made me chuckle," explains Jonathan. "It involved a black marketeering vicar and part-time bounty hunter speeding through the galaxy with a cargo of Earl Grey tea on board. Some nasty aliens have heard about his illicit cargo, they're desperate for a cuppa, and the kettle is on..."

OK, it all makes *perfect* sense now. Plot aside, MTV? is a full-on arcade action-fest that doesn't pander to the wimpy skills of modern gamers. However, I must say that I found the going a little too tough in places – it takes several shots to kill each alien baddie – but as Jonathan explains: "Difficulty is a relative thing and some will find it harder than others. The second level has been tweaked to make it slightly easier, but from then on life

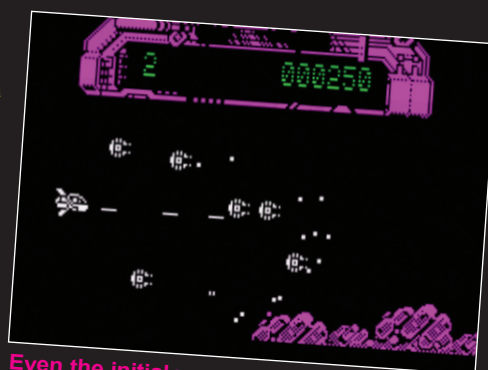
will get progressively tougher as you would expect. I'm quite sure that within days of the game's release there will be an infinite lives POKE for it somewhere on the Internet anyway."

Judging from what I've played of the game so far, everything is looking mighty fine. Jonathan's built himself something of a reputation in the technicalities of smooth sprite animation and this combined with Javier's superb graphics make the game a visual treat for Speccy fans. What's more, I've heard rumours of a secret game inside somewhere. "So you heard about that then?" says Jonathan, surprised. "Yes, there's one in the playable demo that's on this month's YS Smash Tape (*You'll find it on the Retro Gamer coverdisc. Ed*) which can be accessed by pressing the two Spectrum shift keys together on the title page. There will probably be a different secret game, and method of accessing it, in the final version which you'll have to find for yourselves."

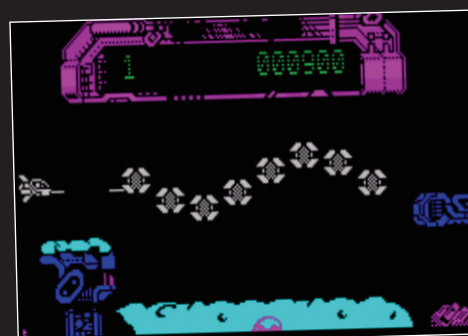
Before I said my farewells, I asked Jonathan about the game's influences. "It's hard not to be impressed by Zynaps. Technically it's a marvellous achievement, and it had bucket loads of playability. That aside, MTV? borrows most from a couple of other classic shooters. R-Type is an obvious one, but then there's an old Amiga game called Menace, which is a particular favourite of mine. Alas, they don't make them like that anymore." I couldn't agree more.



Early into the first level and things are already looking problematic



Even the initial wave takes some beating. Hopefully the auto-fire button on your Quickshot II still works



No time to admire the scenery with all these hostile aliens around



Think I'll just pop down underneath this blue platform

