



Reset . . .

#08

The magazine for the casual Commodore 64 user.

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C64, The Adventure!

Since the release of [Colossal Cave Adventure](#) on the [PDP-10](#) in 1976 (which has been ported to the C64 numerous times), adventure games have been released on just about every system. Some of us have been lucky enough to witness both the birth and evolution of this classic genre. Even on the Commodore 64, the evolution of the humble adventure game is obvious. From the earliest text only adventures with their simple parsers, the integration of graphics and the ability of the parsers to decipher more complex language, sprawling interactive fiction adventures to the birth of the point and click with Maniac Mansion. All of this happened in a very short amount of time and as the systems got more powerful, the genre was able to be expanded even further.

There are many legendary adventures on the C64, as well as classic adventure game publishers/developers (Infocom, Magnetic Scrolls, Level 9 and Melbourne House to name but a small fraction). The genre itself is so diverse and catalogue so expansive, that there is something available that just about everyone can enjoy. The curiosity and compulsion to solve puzzles and also interacting with the characters and

environments allow us to be fully immersed into other worlds, all housed within our beloved breadbins, C2N units and computer screens.

Reset #08 is dedicated to the humble (well, maybe not so humble) adventure game. My earliest memories playing adventures aren't about actually being able to solve the puzzles, but instead just being immersed in a whole new world, stuck behind a brick wall with nothing but a cryptic sign and mailbox in sight and no idea what to do, but loving it all the same.

The high quality C64 releases just keep on coming and it couldn't have been timed better that a lot of them are pure adventure games, or throwbacks to the genre. The recent Forum64 game development competition, the RGCD 16kb competition and Richard's SEUCK competition continue to inspire and encourage game development on the C64 and while the various developers do all of the hard work, we get to play and enjoy their wonderful creations on our favourite computer.

Ahh, sweet bliss!

Sincerely,

Uncle K



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Cover image by Anthony Stiller.

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Visit Reset at <http://reset.cbm8bit.com/>

Visit the Reset Magazine Staff at the [CSDB](#)

Follow us on Twitter: [@ResetC64](#)

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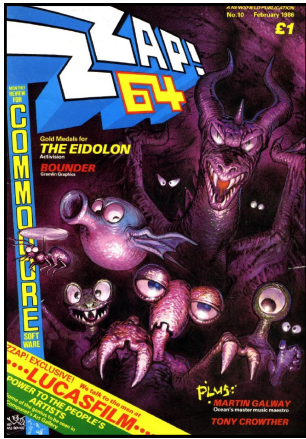
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Reset Reloaded – Jan '86

By Martin Grundy



Zzap!64 #10 featured some stunning games from early 1986, now 30 years old. You're probably even older, heh!

“Considering the unprecedented worldwide success of the C64 it seemed unbelievable that Commodore was in such dire straits.”



Unfortunately, Phil Lynott died way too early to ever get to use a 1541 Ultimate II.

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times. With sales of the Commodore 64 skyrocketing over Christmas, and the C64 leading the way in the rapidly developing games industry, you'd be forgiven for thinking that the champagne corks would be a-popping all over the place at Commodore HQ. But the announcement of losses of well over \$100 million meant that both the Commodore champs and any New Year celebrations were on ice for the moment.

With debts piling up, Commodore made the decision to close their only UK based assembly plant in Corby. Previously all Commodore's European 8-bit computers had been built there, but now production was moving to Germany.



The plant was closing with the loss of 250 jobs only 18 months after it opened. Commodore had invested \$30 million in the plant and its failure was another blow to the chances of the company surviving the year ahead. Debts were spiralling out of control with Commodore Horizons magazine reporting that by the end of 1985 Commodore was a staggering \$192m in the red.

Considering the unprecedented worldwide success of the C64 it

seemed unbelievable that Commodore was in such dire straits. Yet you only had to look at the company's other machines to see where things had gone wrong. The VIC20 had been a massive success in the early 80s but by 1986 it was hopelessly out of date and had been discontinued in favour of the budget priced C16 and +4. Multiple price cuts in the run up to Christmas had temporarily boosted sales of these new low spec machines but with hardly any software support they were floundering and the future of both computers was looking as grey as the C16 itself.

If that wasn't bad enough, a number of teething problems surrounded Commodore's flagship C128 machine. Although developers welcomed its advanced features and much improved keyboard there were some compatibility issues causing a few headaches. One of the C128's selling points was its backwards compatibility. Advertisements boasted 'it's compatible with our all-purpose computer, the Commodore 64, the world's best-selling computer'. Yet this wasn't quite true. In issue 10 of Zzap!64 Newsflash reported that changes to the display chip meant that some games didn't run properly and that other titles which used a certain type of fast loader, such as Frankie Goes to Hollywood, were incompatible also. It was a bit of an embarrassment with Commodore promising to sort the problem out as quickly as possible.

Stories like this didn't do much to instil consumer confidence in the 128 and, although it had only been in stores for a few months, slow sales suggested that it hadn't captured the imagination of home micro users. As with the C16 and +4, few software houses were developing 128 only games and leading publishers like Activision, US Gold and Ocean were staying well away from it. Even over the Christmas period 128 sales were disappointing and some in the industry suspected that the much celebrated backwards compatibility could be the computer's Achilles heel.

In an attempt to boost sales over the New Year, Commodore were offering 64 owners the opportunity to trade in their old C64 for a £50 discount off the 128. They were also offering owners of non-Commodore computers a free datasette (apparently worth £45!) if they traded their machines in. The trade-in was available for a limited period and closed on 31st January 1986.



Thankfully not everything Commodore touched turned into a disaster. The new 16 bit Amiga looked extremely exciting and had amazed everyone who was lucky enough to see it in action. However, with a retail price of over £1000 it was way beyond the reach of the average home computer user. Happily Commodore announced that a new model would soon be available at a cut down price. However, it was a bit early to smash open the piggy bank with the reduced price coming in at around £850!

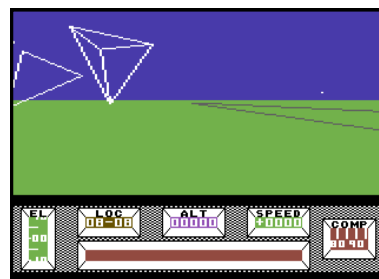
In other news, enigmatic software house Ultimate was taken over by US Gold. The Birmingham based games giant took complete control of the publishing, marketing and manufacture of all Ultimate's titles. The idea was that Ultimate would remain as a programming team but would not be involved in any marketing processes at all. On

paper this sounded like a smart move. With Ultimate doing the coding and US Gold taking care of the marketing, what could possibly go wrong? Everything, as it turned out. With US Gold collecting the bulk of the profits, quality took a nose



dive and within 18 months Ultimate would play the game no more. It was a huge disappointment for Speccy owners everywhere but was less of a loss for us Commodore kids. Apart from some success with The Staff of Karnath and Entombed, Ultimate never achieved legendary status on the 64 in the way that they did on the Spectrum. Shortly after the release of the god awful Imhotep, the below par Outlaws and the decidedly average final Pendragon game Dragonskulle, the company disappeared from the C64 market forever.

Other January 1986 gaming news included a number of previews of titles due out in the coming months of the new year. Rock n Wrestle was announced by Melbourne House as a follow up to the awesome Way of the Exploding Fist. A game based on the 1985 smash hit film Back to the Future was being developed by a certain Martin Walker for Electric Dreams and US Gold announced some awesome looking games that they planned to bring to the UK in the spring. Two of these - Hardball and Law of the West - looked amazing and gamers waited with bated breath for their release.



No Vagueness publicised a new release by Encounter programmer Paul Woakes which promised to deliver super-fast 3D vector graphics - something that the old C64 was notoriously bad at (much to the delight of Speccy fans everywhere). Mercenary: Escape from Targ looked excellent and C64 gamers crossed both their fingers and toes. Maybe it would shut those smug Spectrum owners up once and for all.

With Christmas only just gone there were lots of games in the shops in January 1986. In an attempt to persuade you to part with your Christmas cash, software houses released a stack of titles and, although there was a lot of rubbish released - I'm looking at you Friday the 13th, One Bite Too Deep, Gertie Goose and the hugely disappointing Blade Runner - there was also a lot of quality on the shelves.



The Eidolon



Bounder

The latest Lucasfilm offering, the deeply absorbing The Eidolon earned a Zzap!64 Gold Medal, as did Gremlin Graphics' novel and highly addictive platform game Bounder. In the same issue Sizzlers were awarded to Fight Night and Revs while Worm in Paradise by Level 9 was getting a lot of

love from the White Wizard. A trio of tie-ins were also released. Swashbuckling platformer Zorro was based on the old black and white TV show, Rambo by Ocean was the big name movie license while Elite's Commando - the arcade hit of 1985 - was the coin-op conversion that everyone had been waiting for. As it turned out none of the licensed games were outstanding but all three were pretty good little games. Zorro was a nice mix of platform and fighting action reminiscent of Datasoft's Bruce Lee while Rambo and Commando were fun run and gun titles with great graphics and outstanding music. The major disappointment regarding Commando was that of the coin-op's eight action packed levels, Chris Butler's C64 version only contained three. To make matters worse all three levels were rather easy meaning that the game, while fun for a while, held little lasting appeal. Yet despite Commando's shortcomings, Elite's latest license game shot to the top of the C64 charts with Koronis Rift, Winter Games and Rambo taking 2nd, 3rd and 4th place.

In the world outside computer games rock music fans mourned the death of Phil Lynott, front man of the rock group Thin

Lizzy. Phil collapsed on Christmas Day after a drink and drugs binge left him hospitalised. After 11 days in intensive care, he died on the 4 January of heart failure and pneumonia. He was 36 years old.

Over in Westminster it looked as though cracks were beginning to appear in the seemingly impermeable Thatcher government. On 7th January, Defence secretary Michael Heseltine resigned after rows over the Westland helicopter company. Then, just two weeks later, Leon Brittan, the Trade and Industry Secretary, followed suit and also left. Heseltine was gone for now but re-emerged at the end of the decade to play a significant role in Thatcher's downfall.

Across the Atlantic tragedy struck on the 28th January when the space shuttle Challenger disintegrated just 73 seconds after launch killing all seven astronauts on-board including Christa McAuliffe. Christa was a school teacher and the first civilian to go into space having won the opportunity in a competition. The Challenger exploded in the sky above Cape Canaveral in Florida and the whole incident was witnessed by millions across the world live on TV.

On a brighter note the Chicago Bears beat the New England Patriots, 46-10 to win Superbowl XX (soon to be an Ocean Software release) while back in Europe the British and French announced plans to bring the Brits closer to the continent with the construction of the Channel Tunnel.



In the UK music charts the Pet Shops Boys held the top spot with West End Girls. The synth-tastic duo had beaten off the challenge from Scandinavian popsters A-HA with The Sun Always Shines on TV and US singing megastar Whitney Houston's Saving All My Love For You. Also in January 1986 Catchphrase made its TV debut as did Boon and Lovejoy while in the cinema Iron Eagle and Down and Out in Beverley Hills were pulling in the punters.

Reset Mix-i-Disk

The Mix-i-disk is Reset's very own cover disk, which is available as a free download or as an optional physical disk for subscribers of the Reset Special Edition.

Reset #08 Intro 2015 Reset

Dr J and Shine once again team up to deliver us their fantastic intro for Reset #08. Thanks again guys!



Rock Maze - Reset Edition 2016 Graham Axten/Reset

Graham Axten (aka Toki) presents an updated version of a game he programmed over 20 years ago. Featuring a few graphical updates, new sound and new level design, this nice Boulder Dash clone should keep you going for a while.

Make your way through the maze, collecting diamonds, avoiding falling boulders and various enemies. Sounds simple, really!



Jump Ninja 2016 Wanax

Wanax returns with a nice casual games to delight his fans. Coded for his son and featuring both graphics and music from the very talented Saul Cross. Guide your ninja through the scrolling levels, jumping on each platform to avoid imminent death. Beat your high score!



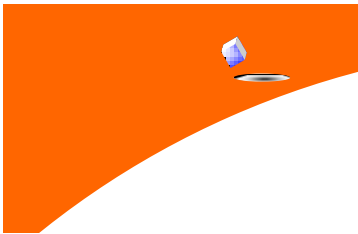
Blap 'n Bash, Nuclear Strike Force 2015 TND

Richard presents us with two new games. The first, Blap 'n Bash, is a crazy take on the breakout theme. This time, we have a bat on both the top and bottom of the screen, varying game speeds, power ups and full on craziness. You have been warned!

Nuclear Strike Force is a vertical shooter made with SEUCK, fully enhanced and further modified using Martin Piper's SEUCK Redux engine. Nice one Richard!



<http://cloud.cbm8bit.com/resetc64/Reset08.mixidisk.zip>



News



Barnsley Badger, coming soon to a C64 screen near you. If you backed the Kickstarter and purchased the game, that is!

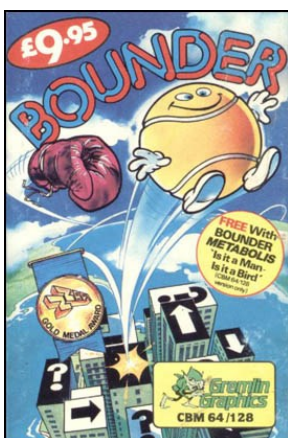
Check This Out!

An oldie but a goodie. 8 bit Legends, by Mike Berry.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=08qsP8GgaBQ>

Commodore 64 Training Tape, from the late, great Jim Butterfield.

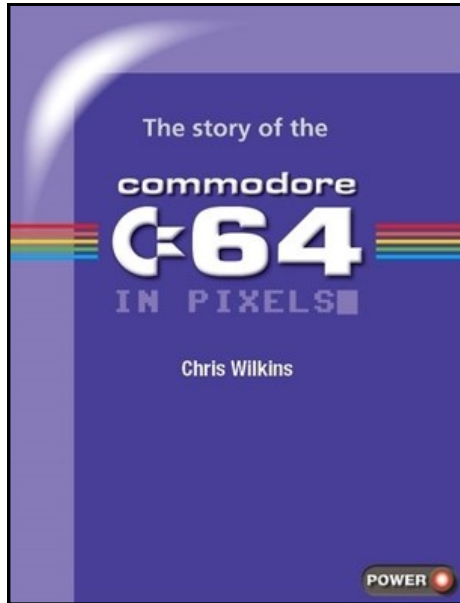
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=chwQnTQyGY0>



Gremlin were responsible for publishing many a Commodore 64 classic, and a few duds! Bounder is one of the good ones.

Kickstart This!

The Commodore 64 related Kickstarters show no sign of slowing down. Here's a roundup of what has been going on.



Chris Wilkins' [Fusion Retro Books](#) are getting close to shipping their book [The Story of the Commodore 64 in Pixels](#), which was successfully funded in August 2015. According to Chris, the new C64 games (which were made available to backers only), Tiger Claw and Barnsley Badger, are in the testing phase. The physical edition of the book will also come with a special printed edition of Reset as one of the stretch goals, which is a compilation of some of our best articles from issues 1 to 7. The issue features new cover artwork by Ant and an exclusive interview with Protovision leader, Jak T Rip.

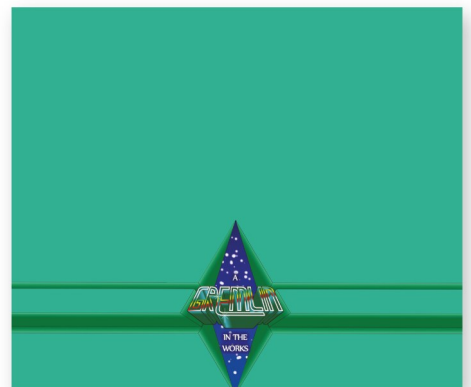
Another book coming soon from Fusion Retro, which has a link to the C64, is [The Story of](#)

[the Oliver Twins](#), which was funded in November 2015. The Oliver's of course are most famous for their Dizzy games, which were converted to the C64.

Both books are available for pre-order from the Fusion Retro Books website.

<http://www.fusionretrobooks.com/>

Sam Dyer has been equally busy at [Bitmap Books](#), with the successful funding of the English translation of *Generation 64* in August 2015. *Generation 64* is "a beautiful hardback book that tells the story of how the C64 inspired a generation of Swedish gamers in the 1980s."



A Gremlin in the Works by Mark Hardisty is a 500+ page book which charts the story of legendary publisher [Gremlin Graphics](#), with a series of anecdotes from those who were there at the time, as well as lots of beautiful artwork.

Currently live on Kickstarter and successfully funded after only 4 days is [Commodore 64: a visual Compendium \(second edition\)](#). According to Sam, the idea behind the book is to

increase the amount of editorial content, artist interviews and developer profiles from the first edition, to more closely match the subsequent Amiga and Spectrum Compendiums. Backers have the option of buying the edition as a stand alone book (with a free cardboard slipcase to house both editions together) or both the first and second editions combined into a single hardback volume. The Kickstarter finishes on February 15th.

Generation 64 and *A Gremlin in the Works* are both available for pre-order from the [Bitmap Books](http://www.bitmapbooks.co.uk/) homepage.

<http://www.bitmapbooks.co.uk/>

<https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/2146199819/commodore-64-a-visual-compendium-second-edition>



Back in Time Symphonic Collection - C64 Symphonic Box Set from C64audio.com is a huge multi-album project by Chris Abbott that is still available to pre-order at [megafounder](http://megafounder.com).

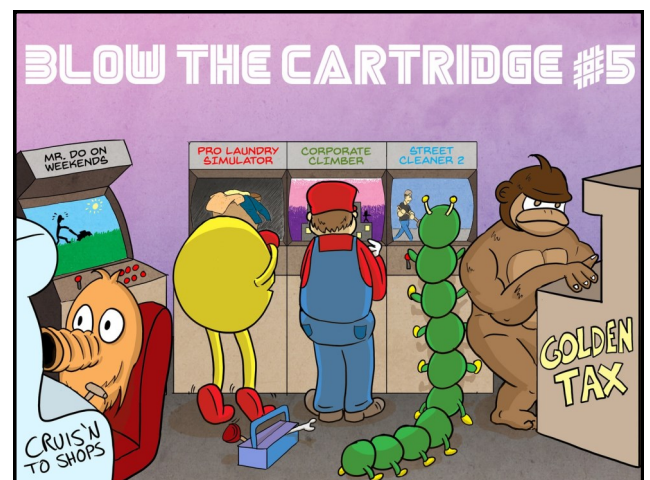
<https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/c64audio/back-in-time-symphonic-collection-c64-symphonic-bo>

Project Sidologie - JARRE style Commodore 64 music remakes from C64audio.com was successfully funded and can once again be pre-ordered at [megafounder](http://megafounder.com).

<https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/c64audio/project-sidologie-jarre-style-commodore-64-music-r>

Growing the 8bit Generation was successfully funded in September 2015 and is a documentary focused on “the explosion of home computing”, in particular Commodore’s role in the ‘personal computer revolution’. The movie features interviews with the likes of Jack and Leonard Tramiel, Bill Herd and Richard Garriot amongst many others.

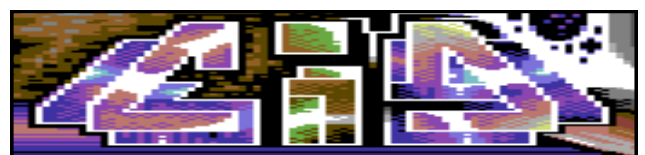
<https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/1744798558/growing-the-8-bit-generation>



Our very own Gazunta had his Kickstarter for *Blow the Cartridge #5* funded in September. The book is a 48 page compilation of his latest Blow the Cartridge comics, featuring material already released on the BTC website as well as new strips. The issue is currently available from the [Blow the Cartridge](http://blowthecartridge.com) shop.

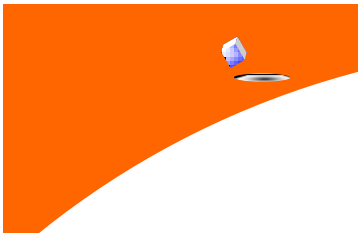
<https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/camerondavis/blow-the-cartridge-5-the-retrogaming-comic-book>

<http://blowthecartridge.com/>



For the latest, up to date, C64 related news, please visit our friends at Commodore is Awesome.

<http://commodore.ninja/cia/>



Games Scene News

Games Scene News



Things have been fairly quiet at **Psytronik**, but they're gearing up for a very big 2016 with some exciting releases planned.

Mid-late 2015 saw the release of the new Psytronik website, with everything tidied up and updated for the launch of the new Premium Plus disk range.

Knight 'N Grail was released as the second Ultimate Edition release. The game comes boxed in premium packaging and includes:

- Deluxe A5 individually numbered box featuring full colour front + rear artwork.
- Knight 'N Grail C64 disk presented in new full colour PREMIUM+ packaging.
- Stunning double-sided A3 map showing every single screen / secret / object / enemy along with hints & tips + cast of creatures!
- 40 track music CD featuring the complete KnG C64 soundtrack, KnG musical sketches + remixes, the Fairy Well C64 soundtrack + bonus C64 tunes by Hans Axelsson!
- Super-glossy A3 artwork poster! (Note:

This will be packaged ROLLED to avoid creasing rather than folded).

- KnG Keyring (featuring different front + back designs)!
- KnG Button Badge!
- Cover-art sticker!
- Set of 6 KnG mini-stickers!
- Bonus C64 game *Fairy Well* from KnG author Mikael Tillander!

This all sounds good to us. You can also choose to upgrade the standard edition if you already own the game. Limited to 100 sets, you'd better get cracking if you want one!



<http://www.psytronik.net/>

<http://www.binaryzone.org/retrostore/>



2016 is looking like being another big year for **RGCD!** Jam It (physical release, the digital download has been available for quite a while), *Moonspire* and *Tiger Claw* (Kickstarter exclusive)

all appear to be fairly imminent.



The **RGCD 16kb Game Development Competition** deadline has been extended to the 31st March. This years comp will once again be very competitive, with 9 confirmed entries (and maybe even a few unconfirmed). Some competition regulars, including Richard Bayliss, Wanax, Saul Cross, John Christian Lønningdal and PIX3L.net all have entries under development, as well as a few newcomers.

Look out for big things from RGCD in 2016. Take a look at their website and subscribe to their newsletter for more information.

<http://www.rgcd.co.uk/>



Protovision have been busy, releasing the two physical editions of *Heroes & Cowards* in conjunction with **Out of Order Softworks**. The 'Cowards' edition came with a steel box, handbook, disk and keychain and is still available, but in limited quantities. The 'Heroes' edition included a few extras such as soundtrack remix CD, individually numbered serial number (1-

50), certificate with wax seal and a pentagram amulet. Needless to say, this edition sold out very quickly.



JTR from Protovision hit us with the following news about upcoming Protovision releases:

"We are working on an English edition of the D42 adventure game creation system (boxed with manual). Currently the extensive manual is German only.

The next game to be available will most probably be "32", a kind of adventure thriller and also the third adventure game made by our friends from Out Of Order that is available through our shop.

My very own game, Pac It. Pac It is a 4 player Pac Man team game (with 4 Pac Men!) with action and puzzle elements. I love games you can play together in a team! But you can also play it alone. The levels differ if played in one, two, three or four players. The final game will feature 4 worlds with 20 levels each, charming intro/interlude/end sequences and will span over two disk sides (or so I hope - actually I am having a hard time cramming it all to two sides... please keep thumbs I'll make it!). If you want to get a feel for

the game, please grab the preview from our website! Chances are good that Pac It will be released in 2016, finally, after 15+ years of development.

Ultimate Newcomer - The project is not dead, but we cannot tell you when it will be ready for release. Ultimate Newcomer, or UNC as we call it, is expected to be ultimate, which also means free of any bugs, and that is quite a task for a game of this size. Putting the code, the scripting language and the many many graphics aside, the in game texts alone are 3.5MB - imagine that for a C64 game!

Immensity. It will still take a while until this gem will be available, but this game is really worth mentioning as its manifold gaming experience has a unique atmosphere to it. Just have a look at the very impressive previews on CSDB.

So hang on for some big stuff coming."

<http://www.protovision-online.com>



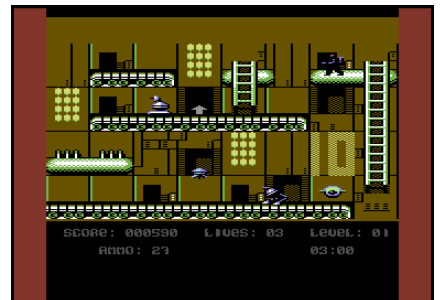
Results for Richard's Sideways SEUCK competition have been announced and are as follows:

1. Retro Pan Pan (Errazking)
2. Eidothea - The Daughter of Protheus (Errazking)
3. Double or Nothing 2 - Edge of Time (Alf Yngve)

Congratulations to Errazking for taking out first place. The games can be download from the TND homepage.

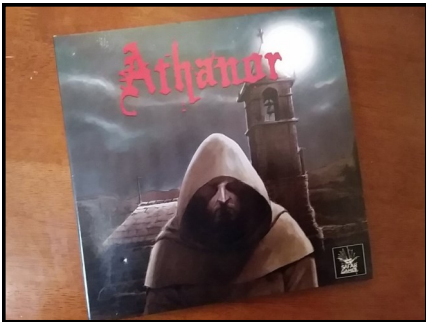
Richard has continued working hard with several projects on the go. These include a 16kb version of Blap 'n Bash and a new game called Vortex Crystals, both earmarked for entry in the current RCCD 16kb game competition. Richard maintains a development blog on the TND homepage, check it out!

<http://tnd64.unikat.sk/>



Alf Yngve has been hard at work on the 4th and final edition of the Shoot'em up Destruction Set. The compilation will contain at least 5 sideways and vertically scrolling SEUCK creations from Alf, completely enhanced by Richard Bayliss and all put through Martin Piper's Redux engine. More games may be included as bonuses. Alf is by no means finished with SEUCK, instead opting to release his games individually rather than

through compilations in the future. *SEUDS 4* will be released through **Psytronik** and be available sometime in 2016.



Athanor is a brand new release from C64 newcomers, **Safar Games**. A pure 80's style text adventure and the first game in a planned trilogy, the game comes packaged in a beautiful gatefold box including a numbered disk and various other additions, which double as essential clues for the game (including a real snake skin!). *Athanor* also includes vector graphics for 50 locations. *Athanor's* author, Erik Safar, has many years of industry experience, having worked at Legend Software and Cryo Interactive.

A preview for *Athanor* can be downloaded at the [CSDB](http://www.csdb.org/).

<http://www.safargames.fr/>



Arkanix Labs are still busy working away on their cRPG

Crimson Twilight. The game has been in development for some time, however, project leader Moloch has informed us that it is still under active development. According to Moloch, recent progress includes finishing off 11 tunes for the in-game music, completing a further 15 maps and finishing off various new player sprites.

<http://www.arkanixlabs.com/>



The Real Wanderer has announced that the theme for the **2016 Forum64 Game Competition** is strategy, with the deadline set for 31st October 2016. Participants must already have registered as of 31st December 2015.

2015's Adventure themed competition was fiercely competitive, with six high quality entries. Results were as follows.

1. Caren and the Tangled Tentacles (PriorArt)
2. Zeit der Stille (Claus)
3. Awakening (Endurion, Spider Jerusalem, The USER)
4. Die drei Musketiere (M.J.)
5. Das Camp (TUGCS)

6. Kevin in the Woods Beta (Bamse)

Congratulations to PriorArt for achieving first place. Already some of the entrants have earmarked their games for further bugfixes, expansions, translations and possible physical releases (some have already been re-released). All games are available for download at the CSDB and are all well worth a look.

<http://csdb.dk/event/?id=2307>



Hackersoft have produced a limited quantity of tapes containing 48 crazy hacked games. Hackersoft founder and good friend of Reset, Vinny Mainolfi, delves deep into the original games code to add various trainers and other features. Why? Just for the fun of it! Why not send Vinny an email at webmaster@c64endings.co.uk, or alternatively, find him on Twitter [@c64endings](https://twitter.com/c64endings) if this sounds like something you'd like!

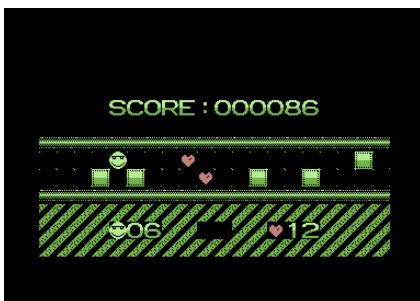
<http://www.hackersoft.co.uk>

Freeware Game Releases and Previews

**Get To The End (Final),
Iceout/Avatar, 13/7/2015**

A simple reaction based game from Iceout which has the player avoiding obstacles and collecting hearts, with various power ups, switches and traps along the way.

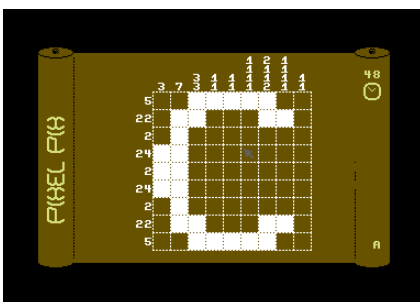
<http://csdb.dk/release/?id=139752>



**Pixel Pix,
Simon Quernhorst/Reset, 25/7/2015**

A fun puzzler in which the player has to set the correct pixels in columns and rows to form a picture by following numerical clues. A tough one with tight time limits, but lots of fun!

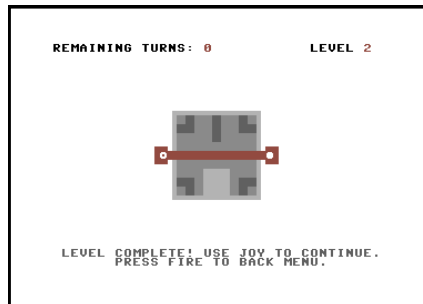
<http://csdb.dk/release/?id=139955>



**Glow Path Basic,
Steveboy, 29/7/2015**

Interesting puzzler in which you have a limited amount of moves to clear a path for the liquid to flow through the puzzle. An impressive feat of basic programming!

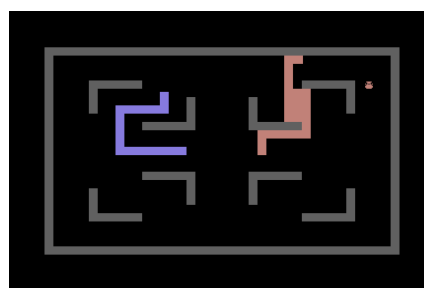
<http://csdb.dk/release/?id=140075>



**Megatron,
Technische Maschinenfabrik, 8/8/2015**

Another impressive effort from TM, this time a Tron variant. This one includes a CPU player, tournament mode, various level designs and of course, a two player mode.

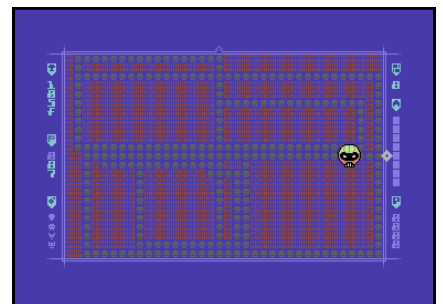
<http://csdb.dk/release/?id=140321>



**MAH,
Retream, 9/8/2015**

Save the world by stopping an apocalyptic countdown. Slickly presented and with an interesting premise behind it, MAH is something a little bit different! Full documentation is available within the game.

<http://csdb.dk/release/?id=140321>



**Simon,
Flashlights, 22/8/2015**

Not, in fact, another conversion of the Ralph Baer electronic game, but rather a strange take on Qix. Fun for a few goes when you finally work out what to do! Joystick in port 1.

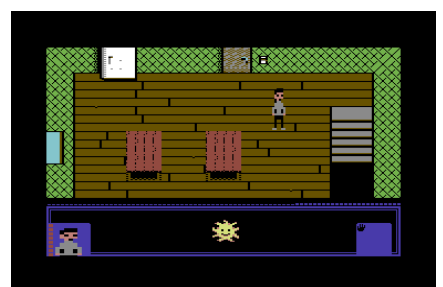
<http://csdb.dk/release/?id=140880>



**Kevin in the Woods Beta,
Bamse, 31/8/2015**

A new adventure with oldschool blocky graphics and a fantastic atmosphere.

<http://csdb.dk/release/?id=140954>



**Reddest Baron,
BAMSE, 4/9/2015**

An impressive proof of concept for a flight simulator graphics engine. Not so much of a game in there, but technically impressive.

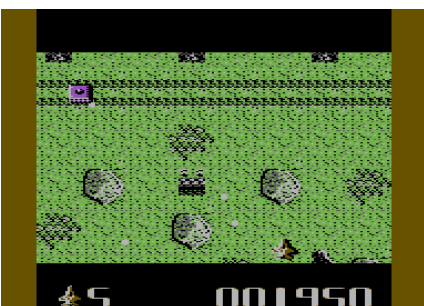
<http://csdb.dk/release/?id=140992>



**Nuclear Strike Force,
TND, 22/9/2015**

Nice, traditional, vertically scrolling SEUCK Redux shooter from Richard Bayliss. Fully enhanced and fun to play!

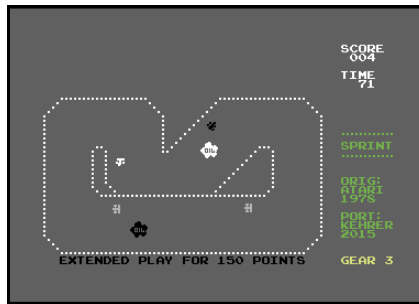
<http://csdb.dk/release/?id=141416>



**Sprint 1,
Norbert Kehrer, 3/10/2015**

Amazing port of a 1978 Atari arcade game, based mostly on the 6502 code from the original game. Lots of fun, for one or two players

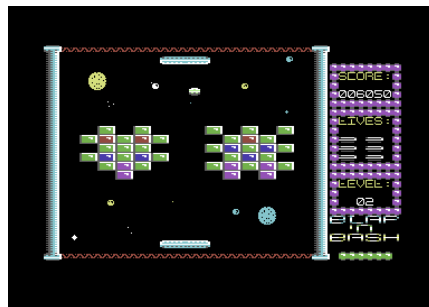
<http://csdb.dk/release/?id=141676>



**Blap 'n Bash,
TND, 10/10/2015**

Crazy take on Breakout from Richard Bayliss. Includes all sorts of power ups and features to make a classic game fresh again.

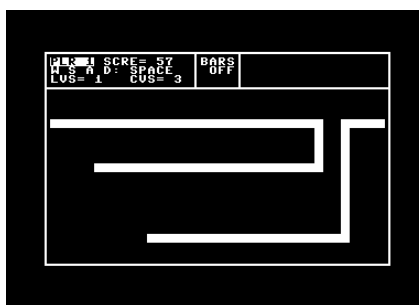
<http://csdb.dk/release/?id=141913>



**Tronowo,
Tom Rain, 24/10/2015**

Simple Tron variant for one or two players, programmed in basic. Not bad and resembles an 80's style type in game.

<http://csdb.dk/release/?id=142262>

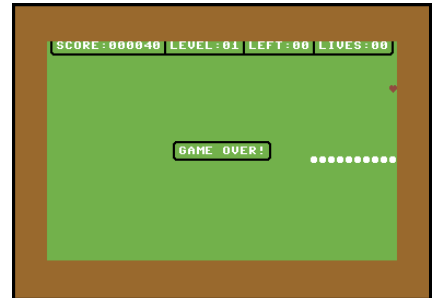


**Masken Preview V0.1,
Software of Sweden,**

25/10/2015

A nice, simple Snake variant from SOS. Still to be expanded upon!

<http://csdb.dk/release/?id=142264>



**Quad Init Exit V1.5,
Retream, 7/11/2015**

Another update of Saimo's bizarre piggie themed platformer, with various additions and optimisations. Still a fun game and 16kb still left to improve upon for possible future versions.

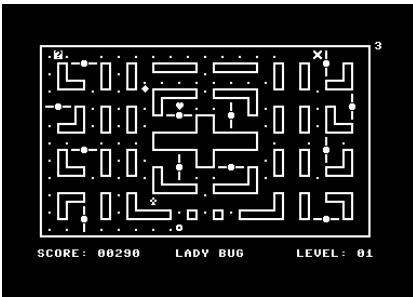
<http://csdb.dk/release/?id=142794>



**Ladybug 2015,
Mr. NOP, 18/12/2015**

A port from the Commodore Pet of a game based loosely on the original ColecoVision game. A nice game, but is it better than Pacman?

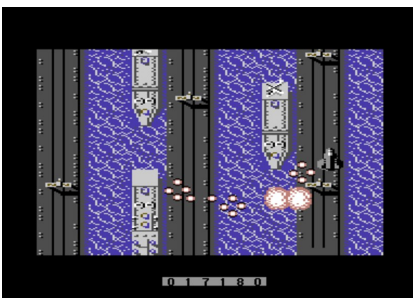
<http://csdb.dk/release/?id=143833>



Flying Cobra RX
TND, 31/12/2015

Wonderful upgrade to Alf Yngve's original SEUCK title. Given the full treatment once again by Richard Bayliss, with new frontend, music and also put through the Redux engine.

http://tnd64.unikat.sk/f_f.html#FlyingCobra



Crow Boy (Preview),
Demux, January 2016

Demonstration of a game engine for a side scrolling beat'em up. Nice graphics and music!

<http://csdb.dk/release/?id=144552>



Petscii-Poker 2016,
Software of Sweden, 1/1/2016

Very nice poker game from SOS, programmed in basic and compiled in Blitz! This is actually a bugfixed version of the original game, released in 2015.

<http://csdb.dk/release/?id=144130>



Jani,
Oliver Orosz, 3/1/2016

SEUCK game with incredible graphics. Well worth a look for the pixel art alone! Hopefully we will eventually see an enhanced version.

<http://csdb.dk/release/?id=144193>



Jump Ninja,
Wanax, 3/1/2016

Coded for his son by Wanax, Jump Ninja is an endlessly scrolling platform game in which you have to jump between platforms. A fun high score beater!

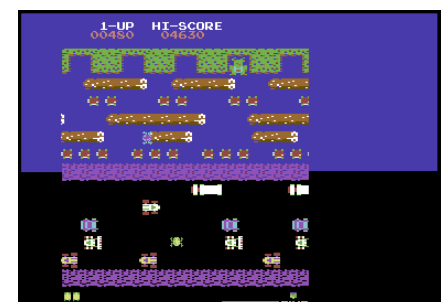
<http://csdb.dk/release/?id=144276>



Frogger Arcade (Preview 2),
Hokuto Force, 7/1/2016

Second preview of Hukoto Force's Frogger conversion in which they are aiming to produce a faithful arcade port. So far it looks and plays great, with some minor bugs and playability issues still to iron out for future versions.

<http://csdb.dk/release/?id=144293>

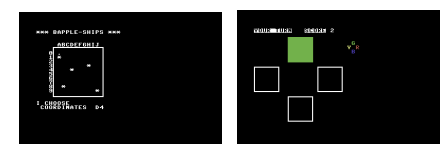


Bapple-Ships and Simon,
Cout Games, January 2016

Two very nice basic games from Cout Games. Bapple-Ships is a battleships variant played on a 10*10 grid against the computer. Simon is a conversion of the Ralph Baer electronic game.

<http://cloud.cbm8bit.com/cout/SIMON.d64>

<http://cloud.cbm8bit.com/cout/BAPPLESHIP.D64>

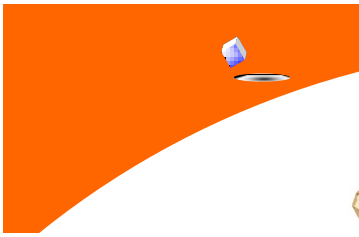


Coming Soon!

Game	Developer	Publisher/Comment
Armalyte II	Cyberdyne Systems	?
Atlantian	Achim Volkers	Psytronik (Cancelled)
Barnsley Badger *	Smila/Endurion	Fusion Retro Books
Bear	Graham Axten	?
Bomb Jack DX	Retrofan	?
Caren and the Tangled Tentacles	PriorArt	RGCD
Catnipped	Smila/Endurion	Psytronik
CBM Asteroids	Commocore	Commocore
Crimson Twilight	Arkanix Labs	TBA
Eye of the Gods	Retro Dreams	Psytronik
Faster Than Light	Faue	?
Hessian *	Covert Bitops	Freeware/Psytronik
Honey Bee (Physical Edition)	TND	Psytronik
Hyperion	Smila/Endurion	Psytronik
Immensity	Dév	Protovision
Jam It (Physical Edition) *	Throwback Games	RGCD/Psytronik
Knight 'n Grail 3	Mikael Tilander	?
LuftrauserZ	Paul Koller	?
Lawless Legends	?	?
Magot	Warlock Entertainment	?
Maze of the Mummy	Magic Cap	Psytronik
Moonspire	Victory	RGCD
Outrage	Cosmos Designs/?	Protovision
Pac-It	Protovision	Protovision
Pharaoh's Return	Lazycow	?
Platman*	Wanax	2016 16kb Cart Game Compo
Pushover	Magic Cap	?
Quad Init Exit II	Saimo	?
Rocky Memphis	Wanax	Freeware
Sam's Journey	Knights of Bytes	Knights of Bytes
SEUDS 4	Alf Yngve	Psytronik
Super Carling the Spider	English Invader	Psytronik
Tiger Claw (physical release)*	Lazycow	RGCD/Retro Fusion Books
Ultimate Newcomer	CID	Protovision
Wonderland	Endurion	Psytronik

* Release imminent

Every effort has been made to make this list as accurate as possible. Please support the developers and publishers by sending them messages of support and buying their games when released.



High Scoring Heroes!

<http://cbm8bit.com/highscores/>

Ancipital

1984 Llamasoft

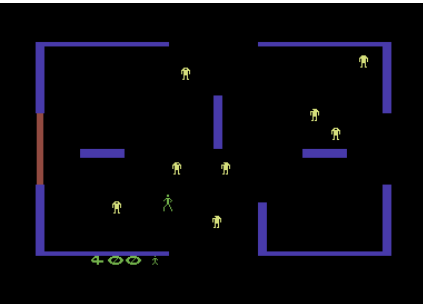
- #1 - mitchfrenzal (204805)
- #2 - stooart (189409)
- #3 - ?



Bezerk Redux

2014 Nostalgia

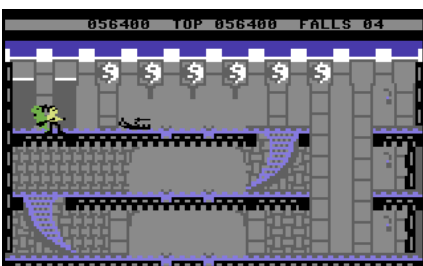
- #1 - hammerhead (39320)
- #2 - roysterini (12060)
- #3 - el_pasi (8800)



Bruce Lee

1984 Datasoft

- #1 - gameznut (150850)
- #2 - el_pasi (132700)
- #3 - hammerhead (66950)



C64anabalt

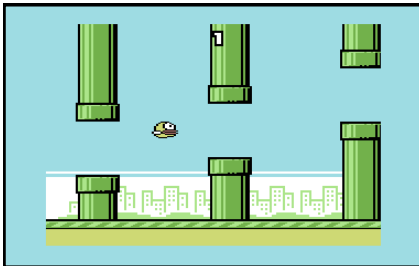
2011 Paul Koller/RGCD

- #1 - cabman (12877)
- #2 - virtualele (11388)
- #3 - gameznut (10758)

Flappy Bird

2014 SOS

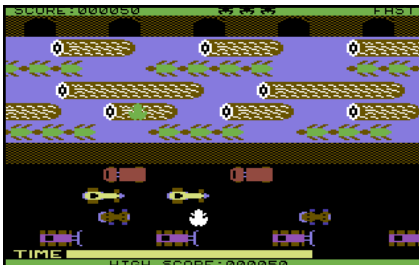
- #1 - cabman (51)
- #2 - el_pasi (29)
- #3 - virtualele (22)



Frogger

1983 Sierra Online

- #1 - gameznut (26650)
- #2 - shinjide (26080)
- #3 - howlinalan (20645)



H.E.R.O.

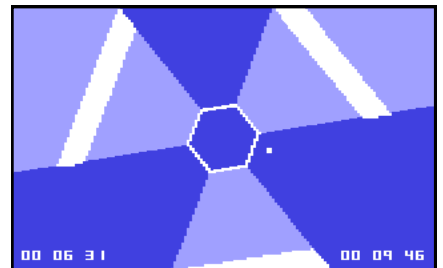
1984 Activision

- #1 - shinjide (606323)
- #2 - thrash75 (192231)
- #3 - el_pasi (132239)

Micro Hexagon

2013 Paul Koller/RGCD

- #1 - virtuale (116.52)
- #2 - el_pasi (107.5)
- #3 - ?



River Raid

1984 Activision

- #1 - yaztromo (105550)
- #2 - gameznut (97330)
- #3 - v-12_tropyx (79040)



Wizball

1987 Ocean

- #1 - hammerhead (812760)
- #2 - ina666 (761630)
- #3 - mlotchfrenzal (254700)

Post your high scores at <http://cbm8bit.com/highscores/> for possible inclusion in the next issue of Reset to be a *High Scoring Hero*.. And remember, no cheating!



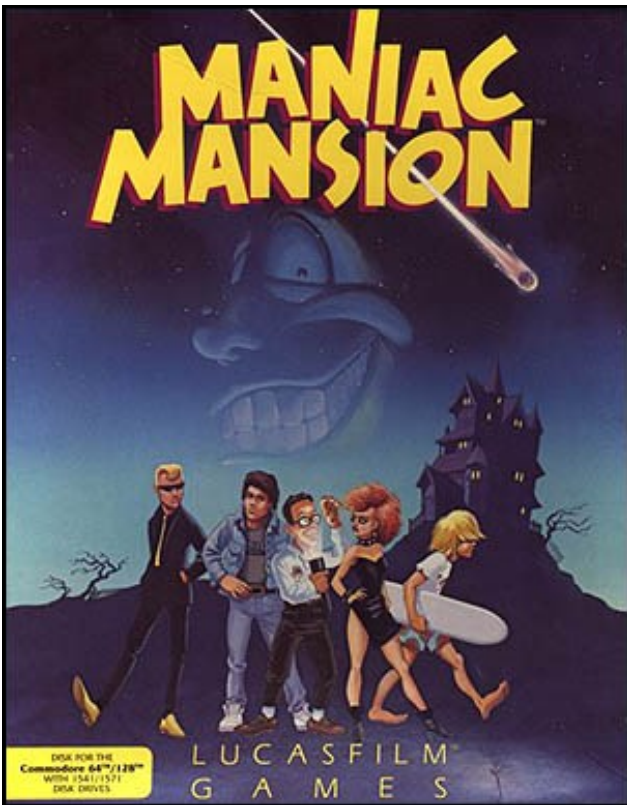
Blast From the Past

By Alex Boz

It's adventure time!

No, not the hit Cartoon Network TV show kind, but the kind that you immerse yourself in front of a computer, hammering commands on the keyboard to get to your quest's objective. I was never any good at sleuthy, gotta-think type adventure games, but interestingly enough, the first game I ever played on a computer (Apple IIe) was Transylvania, which was, as you guessed, a graphic text adventure game. I owe it to our primary school's solitary Apple IIe computer for getting me hooked on computer games and Transylvania for opening up a whole new world of gaming quests to a wide-eyed 9 year old. The fact that I could control the play and interact with the environment in my quest to save the Princess (limited as it was for the time), it totally blew my mind.

Over time, I tended to steer away from adventure games, as the investment of time was far too great for a kid wanting a quick play fix so he could then go outside and kick a ball or shoot some hoops. Sadly, I never got into the more popular traditional adventure games on the C64 (sorry Zork and Zork II), but it doesn't mean my fellow Reset colleagues weren't into quests. With that said, I turn to my Reset mates to tell us about their favourite adventure games. Ready, set go!



Merman

Before I played any C64 adventure games, I read Fighting Fantasy gamebooks. In many ways they were like a computer adventure game, with puzzles and obstacles to overcome. There were C64 games based on Fighting Fantasy, using the split-screen view - graphics at the top, text at the bottom.

The earliest adventure I played was CIRCUS by Brian Howarth / Channel 8. Although I understood how to play, I was often frustrated. Channel 8 made several games but were soon outclassed by The Hobbit. It had a big influence on the perception of adventure games and the way the genre developed.

I bought into the hype surrounding the "big blue box" adventures from Rainbird Software. GUILD OF THIEVES was purchased after I got my first disk drive. The best thing was the "feelies" in the box - the What Burglar? magazine providing clues, the Bank of Kerovnia credit card (essential for game progress) and the mock certificate. Infocom had got there first, and in time I have added more to my

collection - the superb Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy based on the Douglas Adams book, and the adult-oriented Leather Goddesses of Phobos.

For me the real revelation was MANIAC MANSION. Here was a great looking game, with a physical world I could move around and a clever way of doing anything in the world - point and click. The Script Creation Utility for Maniac Mansion allowed the game to be made and ported to more than one machine, and would lay the foundation for a classic range of SCUMM games from Lucasfilm Games/LucasArts. Zak McKracken and the Alien Mindbenders stands out for its surreal humour. These days I have less time to go adventuring but look back fondly to past exploits.

Rob Caporetto

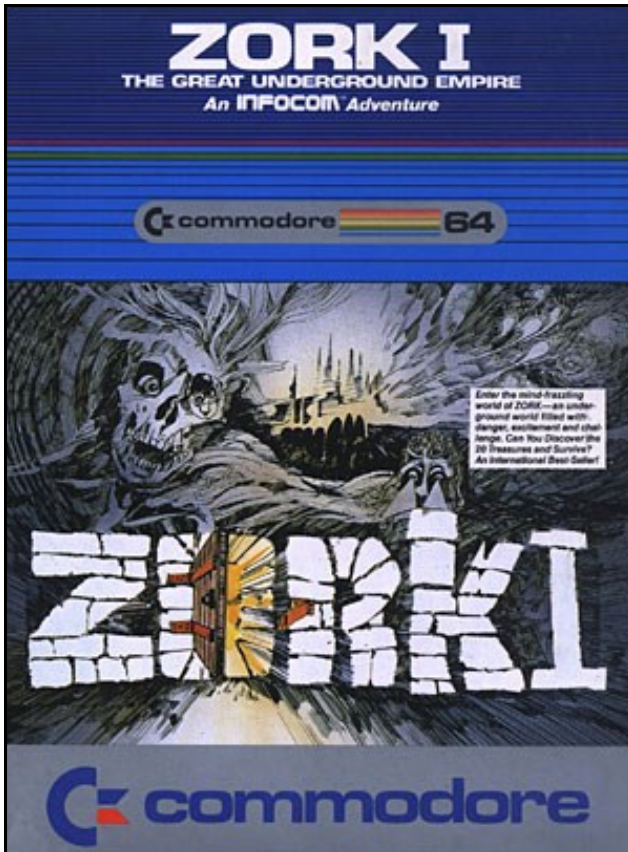
When it comes to adventure games, it's really hard to think about what I'd consider the defining one. When I think back to the ones I played, they tended to be the more amateur efforts which were found gracing the covertapes of Zzap or Commodore Format over the more polished commercial stuff. Sadly, I never got to see the Lucasfilm Games titles or many of the other defining classics during those days.

I guess I wasn't really the audience for them as a kid - most of my time spent playing them was typically stuck in the initial rooms, or in the case of "Island of Spies" (featured on the disk which came with the C64 Pro-Pack) dying without jumping out of the plane - who said Sierra were the masters of brutally hard adventure gaming?

But all up? I think it's the original Zork which would be the one I most fondly remembered. I borrowed the disk (from Commodore's release) from a friend, and could at least get somewhat into it. I never got close to solving the mysteries of the Great Underground Empire, but I was able to get somewhat through it.

Plus, there was also the thrill of being able to print out the transcript of all your inputs - funnily enough, when digging

up through some stuff a few years ago, I managed to find one of those printouts. It's amazing that after all this time, the memories can come flooding back when scanning through something like that.



Frank Gasking

I was never really into adventure games at all to be honest, though I do have fond memories of playing two particular titles from very early on in my C64 journey. The first was the brilliant *Hobbit*, which thanks to the pictures and the way the adventure was almost real-time, was a very engrossing experience for me. It got me into the book series as well, and the book also helped me to progress further into the game at the same time. It was however frustrating to get captured by goblins all the time, and I never quite managed to get into the barrel to be thrown onto the lake. Gandalf was also a massive pain in the ass for never actually picking me up, so I could get out of the window. Thank god for long-plays these days to show how it should be done!

Then there was *Valhalla*, which came with brilliant novella detailing each of the game's characters - and had more of an action theme to it, with it's superb animated character window. I had no real idea of what I was doing, but used to keep getting the other characters to give me all their armour and weapons, and then kill them afterwards (which must mean I was a pretty sadistic child!). Typing swearwords meant a nice slap in the face from Mary, where I would then proceed to "summon" her and throw an axe at her. The game was owned by my brother-in-law - who had never quite completed it, so I remember using C64 BASIC to once fake an ending screen. Everyone fell for my dishonest achievement, and my brother-in-law was not happy at all! I did eventually fess up though in later years and was subsequently called a c**t for my efforts!



Mat Allen (Mayhem)

A lot of the best adventure games at the time were only available on disk, and as I didn't get a disk drive until 1991, then most were out of my reach until that point. After that point is an entirely different matter. It was probably about the right time as well in my life, as when I was younger I wasn't that interested in typing commands on the keyboard. Instead like a lot of gamers, I just wanted to blast aliens or jump around platforms!

Zork is obviously a classic, a head scratching one albeit, but a game that should be on the list of any adventure fan. The Silicon Dreams trilogy by Level 9 showed that you could get great adventure

games on tape within a single load, although admittedly I didn't get that far into any of them! Conversely Magnetic Scrolls tried to give Infocom a run for its money, and The Pawn was deeper and more complex than initially thought.

Finally, there's Maniac Mansion on the C64 and the sequel Day Of The Tentacle on PC, I sunk tens of hours into both, trying to solve them. Got very near the end of the former, and did manage to complete the latter. In fact you could probably include most of Tim Schafer's output into this list.



Like most games from Magnetic Scrolls, The Pawn featured some stunning scenery graphics.

Roberto Dillion

For a non-native English speaker kid, adventure games were always a true "adventure" that went far beyond solving the puzzles themselves but included the necessity of overcoming the language barrier: Infocom games were as mysterious and challenging to decipher as they were engaging! On the other hand, point and click games, from Maniac Mansion onward, were a breath of fresh air and managed to change all that, making the genre much more approachable to a crowd with less than perfect English skills and only a limited vocabulary at their disposal.

Indeed myself, like countless of other youngsters, became instant fans of anything Lucasfilm Games was producing at the time, with the crazy and "mind bending" setup of Zak McKracken as a personal favourite.

From the surreal dream that opened the game to every quirky puzzle that took us around the world and beyond, Zak showcased a perfect mix of silliness and wit that set new, high standards not only for adventure games but also for interactive entertainment in general.



Zak McKracken and the Alien Mindbenders was the second game by Lucasfilm to use the SCUMM engine.

Ant Stiller

I've always loved adventure games. Evocative, haunting, beautiful things they are.

The quite-possibly-not-very-well-known The Secret of Bastow Manor, released in 1982 by SoftGold, is one of my favourites.



There's an opening dirge in Bastow Manor that sets the tone of the game perfectly, conjuring up an image in my mind

when I hear it: a mournful organ sounds as a dread bat flaps ominously across the screen. Bastow Manor is all about haunted mansions and hidden corridors and foul traps.

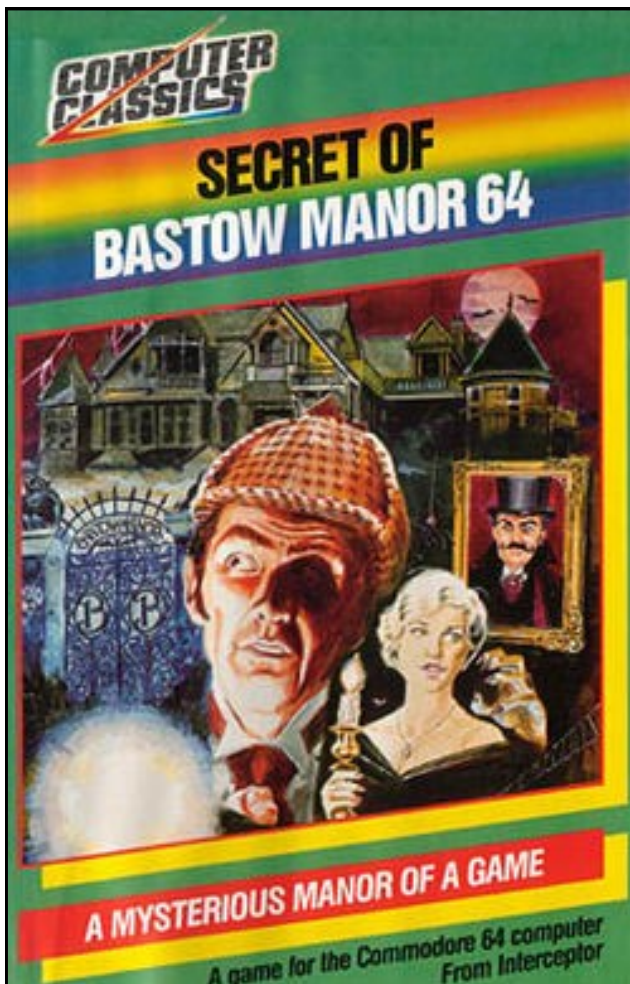
While the graphics in Bastow Manor are low-res with some sprites overlaid for effect (like that swooping bat) there's a simple beauty about them and, as in other SoftGold games like The Search for King Solomon's Mines, the PETSCII character set is used to paint some lovely imagery.

Bastow Manor users a simple verb/noun parser and, while lacking the sophistication of its peers, there are some distinct advantages. It's much easier to play the metagame plaguing most early adventures: guessing the allowed verbs.

The puzzles aren't overly difficult and the game avoids overuse of insta-death. This was perfect for the young adventurer (and also perfect for the older, slightly forgetful adventurer I now am). Deeper into the manor, things become a little trickier. There's some nice foreshadowing of certain dangers, too.

I adore the box art for Bastow Manor. Look! Am I Sherlock Holmes!? It's an old mansion! I wonder what's in there? Box art is very important to that early gaming experience.

A while ago I had the pleasure of sharing some correspondence with the Australian author of this game. He is a lovely chap and I'm glad I've been able to thank him for showing me the path to adventure.



But for now I must grab my hat and coat, for the game is afoot!

Cameron Davis

Zak McKracken introduced me to many weird things - alien telephone operators, mysterious relics on the moon, and great pieces of art made from bent kitchen knives - but to me it'll always be the game that introduced me to San Francisco.

Most of the games I played until then were set in some vague locale that I had no intention of ever going to, such as a military war zone, the furthest reaches of space, or a high school. The setting of Zak McKracken was different. Thin, colourful townhouses juttied against tiny eclectic shops that you could walk around with a sense of wonder, and the streets looked like something new was always around the corner.

The city was interesting and alive and so far away from my remote, desolate suburb that hosted one broken payphone, a closed water park and a dilapidated outdoor cinema that just played Brian Brown movies. I had to go there! The game - with its focus on a globe-trotting writer that explored the world in search of a world-saving scoop - pointed me towards becoming a journalist myself, in the hope I could see cool cities like this one.

Yes, Zak had all the classic ingredients of a good adventure game - solid puzzles, believable characters and enough humour to urge you towards the next plot point - but to me the sense of character that was given to the city made it so memorable.

I ended up flying off to San Francisco for several work trips, completing a life goal that I had to wait almost 20 years for. Sure, there were no weird aliens trying to take over the world or places I could drop cultural artefacts off at, but the city was just as alive and magical as I always imagined it. I was just bummed I forgot to bring my Groucho Marx mask!



Lucasfilm Games is very popular amongst the Reset'ers. And why wouldn't it be!

Unkle K

Adventure games aren't really something I had the patience for when I was a child. I remember playing Bastow Manor (not making it much further than the front gate) and The Hobbit (which I enjoyed) but it was the arcade games that had me hooked. It wasn't until my father bought a PC in the early 90's and I purchased the amazing Day of the Tentacle, spending months of saved up pocket money all in one go, that I actually got into adventuring. It wasn't long after that I purchased Sam & Max, and I was hooked!

Since then, I have bumbled my way through many an adventure on the C64 and Amiga, and while I have a massive appreciation and love for Magnetic Scrolls and the early Lucasfilm efforts, a relatively short lived company named Telarium (an offshoot of Spinnaker Software in the US) made some stunning C64 adventures and yet remain fairly niche.

Between 1984 and 1986, Telarium released five Commodore 64 adventures that are often categorised as *interactive fiction*. The games were often collaborations with well known authors. They came in beautiful gatefold packaging which contained an assortment of goodies and clues for the game itself, making them highly collectable. Of these, Amazon (written by Micheal Crichton) and Rendezvous With Rama (with a special ending penned by Arthur C Clarke himself) are my favourites. Fantastic graphics and stories, often spanning multiple disks, as well as absorbing puzzles and high level

presentation still impress today. Being so big and memory intensive, with lots of graphics, sound and animations, they were only let down by those awful but necessary loading times!

It's worth noting the resurgence of adventure games that have surfaced on the C64 in recent years, with games such as the recently released Heroes & Cowards, as well as Athanor, to name but two, carrying the torch for the genre.



Amazon was Telarium's first title.

So there you have it. I knew my fellow Reset'ers were adventure gaming fiends! Ah, I have always regretted not going back to my gaming roots and playing more adventure games. I have always wanted to play Zork, Maniac Mansion and the like. Perhaps I should dust off the tapes and give them a whirl. It is never too late to go adventuring!

Alex Boz is the owner and editor of the wonderful Ausretrogamer E-Zine.

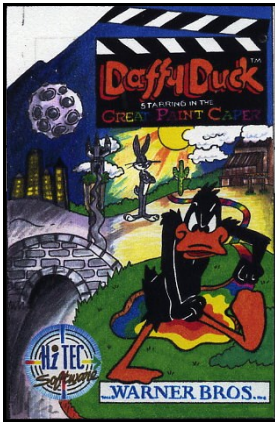
You owe it to yourself to check it out!

<http://www.ausretrogamer.com/>

AUSRETROGAMER



Game Review



The likely cover art for a game that was never released. Something to think about!

"It's hard to fault it though given how they cobbled it together. And they did a fantastic job. No matter what you say about the game. Them just doing this is a beautiful thing."



When we first saw this screen, we nearly wet our pants. True story!

Game: Daffy Duck
Publisher: Hi-Tec
Release Date: 3/9/2015
Available: [Games That Weren't](#) (free download)
It's a bit like: Hudson Hawk
Score: 6.5/10

After 20+ years in the wilderness, Daffy Duck is finally found and served up, much to every C64 fans delight. The question remains, is Daffy still fresh, or will we be wishing it was Wabbit season? Ant and Cam investigate.

Game Overview

Daffy Duck, star of stage, screen and the occasional licensed bubble bath, is the protagonist in this recently unearthed platform adventure title. Billed as The Great Paint Caper, the game sets Daffy out to collect various objects around each of the game's multi-screen levels that are based loosely on Looney Tunes scenarios, and interact with familiar characters such as Porky Pig, Tweety Pie and Speedy Gonzales.

Players start the adventure at the studios, which come complete with wandering security bulldogs, lit up stages and sentient clapper boards. After that, Daffy heads down into the sewers to contend with electrified walls and jumping fish. Fans of demilitarized warzones will enjoy the city level as its streets are full of potholes and shops are staffed by the army of the undead. In the canyons, Speedy Gonzales needs your help to assemble a rocket for reasons that never become clear. Later, the far reaches of space are conquered by Daffy's adventurous alter-ego, Duck Dodgers.

In each stage, Daffy will need to unlock the next area by finding keys and unlocking different sections of each map. Many of these are only made available after talking to his friends that are placed about the level. Every character has a range of dialogue options to choose from, which range from the humorous to the informative. They will often point you towards what you need to do or collect next - but be warned, around every corner are new dangers.

To help him contend with such perils, Daffy is equipped with a spritely jump that sends him leaping twice his height in the air. This proves useful to reach high platforms and avoid enemy contact, which would otherwise knock him around and deplete a small energy bar. He can also climb ladders and telephone poles to reach high places, and activate switches that are placed around the level. Not bad for a duck.

Contact with enemy characters or water [wait, what kind of duck is he? - Ed] reduces Daffy's energy, and losing all energy ends the game immediately. Th-th-that's all, folks!

For something different, Reset 64 editors Ant and Cam played the game together in Reset's Brisbane office, like how they reviewed games back in the old days. Here's some edited highlights of their discussion [don't ask me how long it took to transcribe! - Ant]

C: I could see Daffy Duck working on a console.

A: Yeah, but it's too hard for a kid's game. It's a game where your younger brother would watch you play as Daffy where you jump over these things a million billion times.

C: Those little enemies that roam around the levels annoy me [I swear they're bee smokers with legs! - Ant]. I wish there was a way to kill these enemies because that's just bollocks.

A: It really annoys me about a lot of platform games like this - continuously respawning enemies. That's what I hate about Starquake, Wizard's Lair and Atic Atac. It was really a war of attrition. How much health do I have so I can get through all these enemies?

C: Yeah, that's stupid.

A: [Ant discovers you can jump on scorpions] Hey! Want to score infinite points in this game?

C: It doesn't make sense that you can jump on a scorpion!

A: I can do this all day.

C: Rubber scorpions are prevalent in the Nevada desert.

A: I'm a big fan of rubber scorpions. So to speak. I'VE SAID TOO MUCH! Can I jump on the back of the hedgehog?

C: That should be ripping his webbed feet to shreds!



Title Screen: Ash & Dave. It had to be!

C: So how would you compare this to, oh, say, Hudson Hawk on the C64? Do you think this was worth all the initial hype?

A: This is pretty. And ... it's not very deep though. It's a very standard platformer. I wouldn't give this 94%.

C: I think it was very much an "Oh, shit! We have no other games to write about and this is original and it's very well produced and it's slick."

A: It is slick.

C: It was worth the attention.

A: Yeah, if I bought this I wouldn't be sad. Like what do you expect from a Daffy Duck game?

C: I BOUGHT HUDSON HAWK, ANT!



C: I like the little graphical touches. Like there's a little air vent in the corner of the previous room.

A: Yes. Even that chequered floor there. Nice perspective.

C: Reflection on the windows there.

A: Yes, really nice work on the art.

C: Look, there's a stage there in level one. It doesn't do anything. Just nice.

A: Porky Pig looks like Porky Pig. It's pretty. Very Pretty.

C: That big Daffy graphic at the bottom. I wish it did something.

A: Maybe when you got wounded. Like Doom Guy. Gets all beaten up. That'd be nice. The thing I hate about this game is that the bottom of the ladder does NOT look like it's a hole.

C: I like that you throw switches and they stay thrown.

A: I think these jungle ladders are even worse than the other ladders. This is the problem with this game. That door is actually a door but you don't get a lot of visual cues that it's different.

C: Especially for a game that's gone to such lengths to have such nice attention to detail.



A: There's another key. Get those coins. Get that donut. Did that give me energy?

C: No. Nothing gives you energy. That's disappointing. I think we're kind of spoiled by modern games where we have health regen.

A: Wouldn't you think donuts would give you health?

C: I know. I eat lots of donuts and I feel better than ever!

...

A: So the puzzles are quite easy but ... illogical, They start off easy but then you're like ... whaaaat?

C: Yeah, they kind of .. it's like you're halfway through a conversation you didn't know you were in.

A: We've spent ten minutes aimlessly wandering around the sewer level. This is down to my complete lack of being able to navigate. When I play first person shooters I'm renowned for getting trapped in rooms with one door.

C: [uproarious laughter]

A: I get lost in the toilet, Cam.

C: Do I have to get grid paper out? Isn't it interesting how many little decisions that would have been perfectly acceptable back in 1992 or whenever this came out are stupid now.

A: It's like, WHY? WHY WOULD YOU DO THAT? There are two identical lunch boxes in the first level but only one of them solves the puzzle. Why would you make a red herring that's exactly the same as the thing you actually need?

A: Why can't I scroll to the "Bye" option in the conversation options? Why do I have to press the 'Q' key?

C: Or just select "You're Despicable" to exit conversations. That would be perfect.



A: It's hard to fault it though given how they cobbled it together. And they did a fantastic job. No matter what you say about the game. Them just doing this is a beautiful thing.

C: Oh, absolutely! Wait. Since when did Toontown not have colour!?

Rating:

Ant - 6/10

10/10 to the team who resurrected the game though!

Cam - 7/10

I'm a sucker for cute platform games, even ones with questionable gameplay design choices.

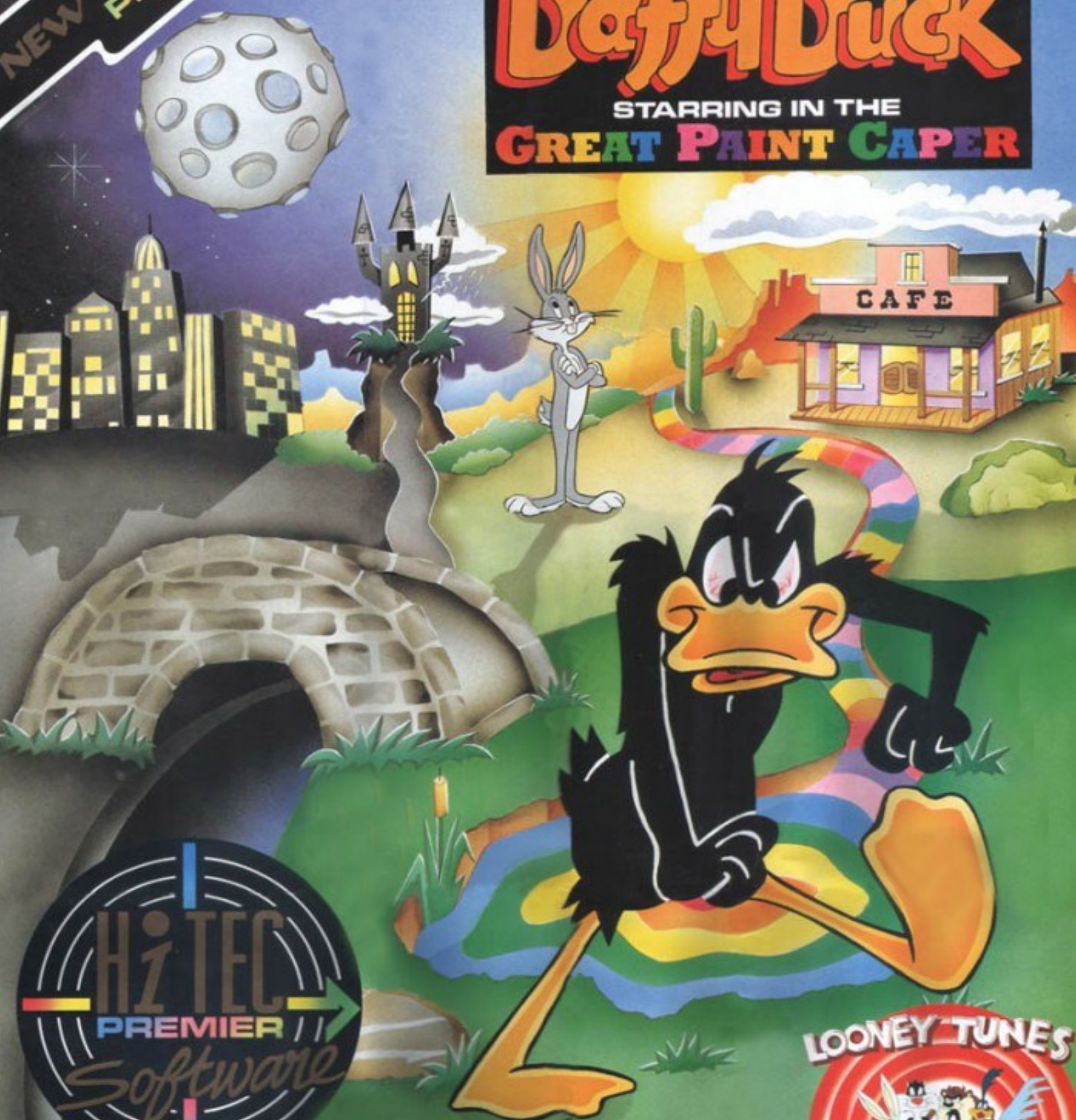
Special thanks to Games That Weren't for supplying scans and screenshots.

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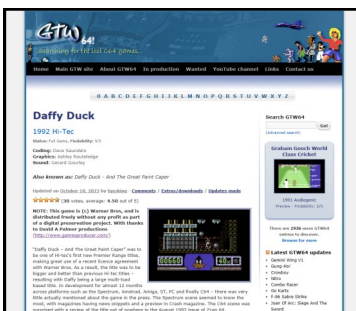
Finding Daffy!

By Paul Morrison



The Zzap!64 Daffy review made us want it even more!

“Every time I went back to that magazine afterwards, the review was a constant reminder of something that seemed like a tragic loss.”



Daffy Duck at GTW.
A beautiful story!

<http://www.gamesthatwerent.com/gtw64/daffy-duck/>

If you've had any interest in the Commodore 64 in the years since its commercial demise, then you must surely have come across Frank Gasking's superb "Games That Weren't" website. It's a veritable Aladdin's cave of previously-unreleased Commodore 64 games, none of which would have seen the light of day if it wasn't for Frank and the dedicated volunteers who happily discover, recover and preserve lost games for posterity and, of course, our gaming pleasure.

Over time, the unavailability of some games has seen them rise to mythical status, with the likelihood of them ever turning up diminishing with every passing day, week, month and year. There are some which are more wanted than others for various reasons, and one of the most elusive and sought after of all was Hi-Tec Software's Daffy Duck game.

Receiving a massive 94% in Issue 87 of ZZAP! 64, it seemed like Daffy Duck must have been one of the best budget games of all time. Anyone who read the magazine must surely have been waiting for it to hit the shops... but the wait went on, and on... and the game never hit the shelves. It was a shame for such a highly-rated game to simply disappear without a trace, but lo and behold, just in time for Christmas 2015 and twenty-two years too late, it appeared on the Games That Weren't website!

There had to be an epic story behind this, so I decided I needed to speak to Frank about it and hear the tale... and while I was at it I talked to Martin

Pugh, who had the job of actually turning the game's assets into a fully functional Daffy Duck computer game. Read on, and discover how the Holy Grail of lost games was finally recovered...

Obviously, the first thing I wanted to know was: why, of all the games known to be lost in the mists of time, was Daffy Duck so important to Frank and GTW64?

FG: *“I think Daffy Duck has always been the “one” that has been top of the list for us, mostly as it got given the full review treatment by Zzap! and scored so highly compared to previous Hi-Tec games at the time. Personally, back in 1992 when the review came out – I was 10 years old and excited to see new C64 games each month. Daffy Duck stood out for me, as it was colourful and vibrant – and the review did little to stop me wanting to save up and buy a copy when it was out. Of course, we know what happened next.*

For me personally, that was really the first experience I had of getting excited about a new game from its review/screenshots and then not being able to play it. Every time I went back to that magazine afterwards, the review was a constant reminder of something that seemed like a tragic loss.”

It was certainly a real shame. By the back end of 1992, quality game releases were becoming much more scarce, and those fans who had stuck by their machines as consoles rampaged across the land would

have snapped it up by the truckload.

Once the Commodore 64 had had its production halted it became obvious that Daffy Duck would never see the light of day, and so the search for its whereabouts began. I asked Frank how long he had been looking for it and what frustrations he had encountered during his long search.

FG: *"It was pretty much on our list from the start - that and all those mentioned in the original Commodore Force article on unreleased games. Originally when we started the actual digital archive (around 1998/99), it was a case of just putting up a page on the game with some scans, and asking people if they had a copy. As simple as that to start - as we already knew that some unreleased games (like Gauntlet 3) had managed to sneak out via certain means, and hoped it was the same for Daffy Duck."*

With the start of the Internet, now was the chance to reach out to an audience - but no-one had it, and there were just a lot of people like myself who also wanted to know how to get hold of a copy. It was frustrating, and was the start of a realization of the detective work that was required in trying to find something that never made it out into the open."

As the years went by, readers of GTW64 shared Frank's frustrations and many believed that no working version of the game would ever turn up. Still, Frank kept plugging away, never giving up hope that his prized treasure would be uncovered. When did he first get an idea that the game might finally exist, after all?

FG: *"The first indication was when we heard a rumour that the game had managed to sneak out in the shape of about 250 copies to WH Smith. Not sure where that came from, but it was a red herring anyway - as it was confirmed that it never got to mastering. The real feeling that it was still saveable, was when we worked out the development team to be Ash and Dave (Ashley Routledge and Dave Saunders). Dave had long rid of all his disks, but Ash suggested he may have kept some - but didn't feel he would have a copy of the actual full game. He looked, but couldn't find anything unfortunately of his disks in his attic."*

The biggest opportunity came when we got hold of David A. Palmer around 2005 time, who ran Hi-Tec - and he still had most of the master disks for everything. He was confident that he would have it somewhere, though initial searches proved fruitless. However, he did find another unreleased Hi-Tec game in the shape of Bugs Bunny, which he sent to us right away to preserve. At the time, we were very confident that Daffy would follow - but it didn't. David just couldn't find it, and multiple house/office moves since had still not brought it to the surface."

A major disappointment, for sure. And yet, all hope was not lost. All the signs pointed to the fact that someone, somewhere could have a fully-working version of the game. With Frank inching closer to a breakthrough, I asked him what he felt was the most important moment in cracking the case.

FG: *"I had decided about a year or so ago to do a complete article on the game (that I still haven't finished!) and properly write up the story about the game, including the other formats which we knew little about. Part of that required getting in touch with Ash and Dave again to ask them some questions for the article. I knew (or thought I knew) what the answer was probably going to be, but I on the off chance asked Ash if he felt there was still any chance he might have some C64 disks somewhere. I wasn't quite expecting him to tell me that he had found all his work disks since we last spoke!"*

Obviously, this was tremendously exciting. Surely, if ever the elusive Daffy Duck was to turn up, this would be the moment! It was a huge breakthrough, but Frank kept his emotions in check.

FG: *"There was still a long way to go, and it could yet end up being yet another dead end. But it was now a real opportunity to find *something* of the game - at the very least, some graphical assets to show. Also - there was a lot of Ash's work which was decaying away - so it made sense to offer to preserve all his C64 disks for free, while at the same time hoping we could find the game."*

Finally, Frank was going to get his hands on some actual developer disks. Of course,

there was no way of knowing if there was anything relating to Daffy Duck on any of them... until Ash inadvertently provided a clue.

FG: *"When Ash got the disks down from his attic, he sent a picture of the scale of what I was about to preserve (about 2-3 large tray disk boxes!). Clearly on one of the labels at the front was "Daffy Intro", which was very exciting. But it was when I went to pick up the disks from Ash that as he was handing everything over, he flipped through a few boxes and there were a number of Daffy labelled disks right away - but all looked like graphic asset disks."*

So it looked increasingly likely that at least some part of Daffy Duck still existed and might be salvageable. This was great news, although not as great as actually having the game would have been. Still, Frank's excitement level was high as he made the trip to meet Ash and Dave and collect his "prize"... but that excitement level was about to go through the roof.

FG: *"In the pub with Ash and Dave, and before the handover - Ash mentioned to us both that not only had he found his disks, but he found a few small 3M disk boxes which were not recognizably his. They were actually Dave's, and Dave had miraculously given Ash a backup of his PDS hard drive across a number of disks. When Ash handed the disks over, he opened the 3.5" box, and showed a few - there were disks with labels such as "Daffy Lev 1,2,3,4,5,6" and "Daffy Final".*

It felt like we had hit the jackpot, not an executable full game (as of yet) - but the keys to the whole bloody castle and more than we could ever have imagined! I remember Dave saying to me - "I think you've hit the jackpot here, I think that's it!". It was an odd experience coming home on the train, wondering if I was finally bringing the game home at last."

Surely this was it! All this time, all this effort... surely now, it had been worth it? Well, we were getting there... but there was still some disappointment in store. It appeared that all the parts were there, but still no working game...

FG: *"I was knackered when I got in from all the travelling to get the disks, but I had*

to start checking through (who wouldn't?). Disk after disk, and I kept finding graphic asset files and that was it! It was as I feared with Ash's disks, even though we did find an executable demo of the sewer level (which was amazing!).

Although disappointed, I knew that it wasn't over and there was a major chance still with Dave's disks. All Dave's disks worked flawlessly on my USB floppy drive and I backed everything up - but I still wasn't 100% sure or confident if the game was all there. There was still a concern that there was something missing, like how we were missing all the graphic assets for Streethawk, and that kept playing on my mind.

Amazingly after properly sifting through Dave's backed up folders/files, it did really look like it was all there (including a folder with all the music/sfx and graphic assets). The 3.5" floppies were just PC format, and easily copied over. The 5.25" PC floppies required digging out an old Windows 98 rig that I have with a drive and copying over. For the C64 disks, I used a 1541-II hooked up to my C64 and 1541-II Ultimate, and just used a full disk copy tool with error check process to get all the data off successfully. Often the disks would need cleaning beforehand, before they fully read without errors."

Despite Frank's ongoing reservations, this was now by far the closest the Commodore 64 world had been to seeing one of its most coveted lost games. All that seemed to be left was for Frank to reach out to his army of helpers to complete the most important electronic jigsaw puzzle of their lives.

FG: *"Once I had collated together all the Daffy related materials (including all of Ash's C64 asset disks), they were passed onto David Simmonds (who is part of GTW64, and helps to organize development/fixing of our findings). Martin Pugh was then tasked with the reconstruction work. Martin used a PC based compiler to piece it together, and amazingly after about a night's work - he managed to get one of the levels fully compiling! After another night, all the levels and intro were fully compiled - and it was then I started to relax and knew we had done it. There were different versions of the code, so we had to carefully test*

and work out that we were working from the very final version of the source and assets as well.

After that, myself, Martin and David Simmonds spent the next couple of weeks testing the entire game and making sure there were no compilation bugs or problems with completion. When Martin linked everything together, we checked that the loading was working correctly and that the entire game could be completed from start to finish, with and without cheats."

And that was that. After more than two decades, Daffy Duck's Commodore 64 game had been found and put back together and was ready to play. How did Frank feel to have a fully-working and complete version of the game in front of him, after all this time?

FG: "The first time that I got a fully linked version from Martin, I stuck it straight onto a real C64 to play. Seeing the intro load, a loading screen and then the title screen was an amazing experience. At times it was almost overwhelming, because we had worked so hard to find and recover the game, and after so many years too.

It meant a lot to us and there was a massive sense of relief that we had finally done it. Even Martin shared the excitement whilst working on the game, as he knew just how important it was from his Gamebase 64 involvement over the years. I then had to keep quiet for a while before we released it, which was tough!"

When you've wanted something for so long, there's always a danger that it will be something of an anticlimax when you finally get it. As Frank had been so invested in the recovery of Daffy Duck, I wanted to know if the wait, and the search, had been worth it?

FG: "Definitely! The risk though is always that you build a picture in your mind of how a game will be from its screenshots, and when you finally get to play it - it doesn't quite live up to expectations. For instance - I always thought that the Mars level was going to be some kind of multi-scrolling Turrigan level, where Daffy could shoot the ray gun! Didn't quite pan out like that, did it? ;-)

It ended up being a simple platform affair throughout, where you just went to and fro, dropping off objects at key points - but it was still fun and enjoyable, like many of the Hi-tec games were. As kids at the time, I'm sure we would have still loved it had it been released. Did Zzap! overrate it? Yeah, a little - but I'd say it's still one of Hi-tec's best C64 games."

The search was over and the result was a resounding success. Through this whole ordeal, Frank never gave up hope that the game was out there, and for that we are thankful. However, I did wonder if there were ever times where he felt like admitting defeat and giving up on the whole thing?

FG: "There were numerous times where I'd say to myself - "I'm running out of avenues with this one!". Everything I tried, just kept giving back the same usual deflating response. I never gave up, and probably would have always kept it open to the possibility of being found - but I was starting to run out of ideas to be fair.

In the past, we've had games turn up in such bizarre circumstances (see Solar Jetman for instance) that you just never know. Often we get almost encouraged to give up, and that it is a wasted cause - we had that a little with Daffy Duck - which I'm glad we ignored!"

As are we all.

And so, one gigantic search has come to an end. However, that's not the end of Frank's job. There are tons of titles still out there, undiscovered, and it would be a shame to let them lie. With that in mind, I asked Frank if he had a new Holy Grail title to replace Daffy Duck?

FG: "Well, there were always two "Holy Grail" titles overall with GTW - Daffy Duck and Murder. We have searched equally for both games since the start, though the latter is proving even trickier to find. Daffy had people involved that were (and still are) passionate about the industry. Murder was product from a company that was clearly business focused and churned out so many games. To those involved, Murder was just another job which they did quickly and moved on from - which means memories have faded or people don't care. I've even said

this on the game's page, but Murder could well be the title that defeats us - but again, we'll keep trying."

With the tale at an end, it only remains for me to ask Frank if he'd like to give credit to anyone in particular for their part in bringing Daffy Duck to the world.

FG: *"Yes please! Vinny Mainolfi and Jason Kelk for always encouraging me never to give up on trying to find the game. Ashley Routledge for putting faith in me with his disks and allowing us to save the game (Dave Saunders also for giving Ash a backup of his work all those years ago!). Martin Pugh for his amazing work on reconstructing the game and putting up with my nit picking over any issues I spotted. Dave Simmonds for helping to pull things together and helping with the intense testing towards the end."*

And of course, of interest to all readers... what's next for Frank and GTW64?

FG: *"Work goes on for the archive, and we'll just keep doing what we do and see where it takes us. Something big that I've been working on too is coming to a head, which I hope I can reveal later this year."*

We also have a pretty big finding lined up very soon, with hopefully a contribution from the artist (for their first C64 work in over 20 years) to finish the game off. There is a major US Gold title (not Murder!) on its way, which is being bug fixed as we speak. Hopefully an unreleased version of a crap Ocean game by a different developer - and if we can get legal clearance, maybe two sequels to two popular franchise games that never made it out. The rest ... time will tell!"

Lots of exciting stuff in the works, then! All these are great reasons to make sure that GTW64 is in your favourites and visited regularly... you don't want to miss out on anything, after all!

Martin Pugh

I thought it would also be a good idea to speak to the man who put Daffy Duck together again and gave us the fully-reconstructed game. Martin Pugh has been involved with the C64 community for a long

time, although is not perhaps a name you will be immediately familiar with. Read on, though, and see what he's done for you... and find out all about his part in recovering Commodore history's most elusive game. First of all, I asked Martin how he came to be involved with the project in the first place.

MP: *"Dave Simmonds is the GTW64 member who sorts a lot of stuff out for Frank and GTW64, and Onslaught is Dave's baby so as I've been a member of Onslaught for a few years now I have gotten the pleasure/honour/dibs on some of the GTW64 finds in the last few years."*

So the connection to Frank was already established, but how was Martin given the honour of rescuing Daffy from the apparent wreckage?

MP: *"Pretty much through Dave, as soon as I heard about the Daffy source being unearthed I looked at getting a method together to rebuild it using the original tools under emulation."*

Talk about being a step ahead of the game! Being prepared meant that Martin could crack on as soon as possible though... and after all, he was as keen to see the game as everyone else, as I found out when I asked him if he was aware of Daffy Duck's mythical status.

MP: *"Oh yes, I've been involved with the C64 for a long time and as a Gamebase team member since the start I knew that Daffy Duck was the Holy Grail of unearthed C64 treasures. As a Gamebase member I know we've been waiting for almost as long as Frank has been looking for it."*

That being the case, it must have been pretty damn exciting to be given this opportunity?

MP: *"Was it ever! Like I said to Frank at the time "I feel like a 9 year old on Xmas Day". I'm forever in Frank's debt for giving me the opportunity and thankfully for recovering PDS V1.26 from the original disks literally before the disk crumbled away."*

Having all those materials in his hands must have been a hell of a feeling, so I wondered how it felt to load up the disks

and actually have those genuine game assets there?

MP: *"I must admit I never looked at the game files. I was really blinkered in just getting it to build into a full game. Once Frank recovered the version of PDS that was needed (I was using V1.21 which was the only version available on the net) - I had all the levels up and working within no time. Then it was a matter of stitching everything together into a multi-load and fixing some bugs."*

Speaking as someone who could barely manage to create a backup disk on my Commodore 64, I wanted to know exactly how Martin went about the task of taking all the game pieces and stitching them into place to create the game, as it was intended.

MP: *"I used MAME to emulate a 486 to run the PDS software on, I just patched out the simple hardware check (I later found the PDS hardware could be emulated in MAME anyway). Then it was a matter of building some PC floppy images containing the source and I just mounted them in MAME and used the MAME debugger to save the assembled code out. I had to repeat this for every level and repeat the process a number of times whilst I was squashing various bugs."*

This sounded like a lot of hard work to me, so I asked Martin how long it took to get the game working.

MP: *"As the whole process was reward itself I wouldn't call it work.... from start to finish it was probably only about two mad weeks. I think I got the source around 6pm on 18 August and I managed to get all seven levels compiling by 10pm the next day. Then it was just a matter of crushing any bugs (lots of testing by Frank) and getting it all into a multi-loader."*

It was two mad weeks that righted the wrong of 23 years! At the end of that time, Daffy Duck - And The Great Paint Caper (to give the game its full title) was up and running and fully playable for the whole world! It might have been a silly question, but was Martin proud of everything he had achieved in getting the game running?

MP: *"I'd never seen any PDS code till I saw Daffy Duck and the assumptions I made about*

how to get PDS working in emulation worked from the get-go, I was very pleased about that. To play a small part in the Daffy Duck legend is reward enough...

I feel content that it all worked, I have little doubt that others could have done what I've done given the chance but I can't see many people demonstrating the level of persistence that Frank has over the years in chasing the disks down."

Whether anyone else could have done it or not, Martin was the man who put the game back together and so, as he says, his part in the legend is secure and much appreciated! After all that, did he actually feel that the game was worth the wait?

MP: *"I do actually quite like the game, it actually a lot better than I thought it would have been. I'm not really much of a game player, though for me it was definitely worth the wait as I had a great time playing with it :)."*

Well, there you have it. It's an epic take, for sure, and one that we never thought would come to a happy conclusion. Thanks to Frank's dogged determination and the willingness of others to go the extra mile, one of the greatest gaming mysteries of all time has been solved. You can see what we at Reset Towers thought of the game in this very issue, and once you've done that, if you haven't already... GO AND PLAY THE GAME! It's a true piece of history and you owe it to yourself to see what all the fuss is about!

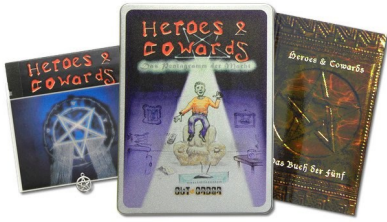


That's all folks!



COMMERCIAL RELEASE!

Game Review



The special 'Cowards' edition is still available from Protovision, in limited numbers. Get in before they're all gone!

Game: Heroes & Cowards
Developer: Byteriders, [Out of Order Softworks](#)
Release Date: August 2015
Available: [Protovision](#) (disk), [itch.io](#) (digital download)
It's a bit like: Leisure Suit Leo II
Score: 9/10

Hero or Coward? Unkle K and Ant take up the challenge to save Dartenwood and prove themselves worthy adventurers, but do they have what it takes?

Game Overview

A dread curse has befallen the town of Dartenwood, calcifying its residents into statues, forever frozen!

Swept up by an arcane maelstrom you...

Wait! Apparently the curse was caused by the death of the dread wight Morlon, who doomed the village of Dartenwood even as his own unlife was snuffed by the poison within the five Rubies of Power.

I have mentioned the Rubies of Power, haven't I? No?

Right. So, the Rubies of Power were created by the Council of Five -- powerful sorcerers who poured their essence into these gems and affixed them using eldritch rites into a mystical pentagram.

This Morlon chap, all dead and evil, stole these gems from the pentagram.

Why were the gems in a pentagram? Inquisitive thing, aren't you?

You see, the Council of Five created the gems because the land was overrun by all sorts of terrible beasts, wasn't it?

So, yes. Where were we? Ripped from your world of modern conveniences you find yourself thrust into this troubled fantasy realm. Using only your wits, copious inventory items and a

joystick-driven user interface, you must recover the five Rubies of Power and restore them to the Pentagram of Power, thereby breaking Morlon's curse, returning the good folk to their own fleshy forms and cheering up everyone's day considerably.

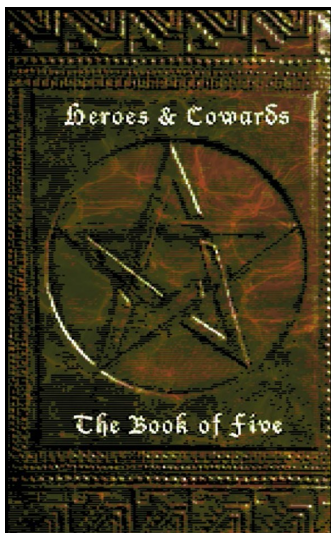
Control is via a joystick and you can select verbs and nouns from the list provided. The game conveniently separates items in the current location and those on your person.

You can also use the joystick to guide you to different locations that you want to move to.

Each location greets you with a picture of your view and various ditties play throughout, based on the area that you're in. Handy indicators highlight directions you can go and how many rubies you have returned to the pentagram.

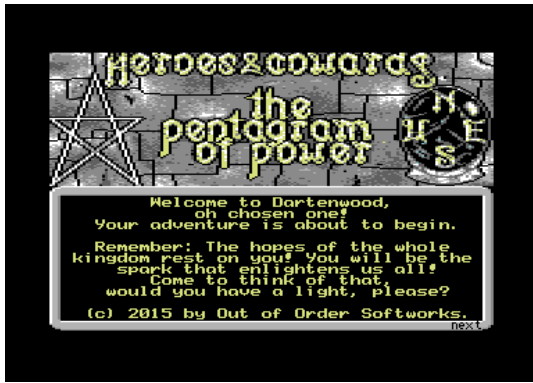
With all that help this adventure should be a right walk in the park! Go on! What are you waiting for?

"Most importantly, the story is entertaining and the puzzles are generally quite fair. Dartenwood is a big enough world full of interesting locations, inhabitants, objects, puzzles, riddles and the odd surprise."



The game comes complete with an extensive manual, also containing a host of interviews and other interesting tidbits.





Unkle K - 9/10

It's nice to see adventure games having such an impact on modern C64 gaming. We've been spoilt recently with the physical releases of Leisure Suit Leo II and Athanor, as well as the recent Forum64 Adventure Competition encouraging the production of some fantastic games as well. But here before me now is Byterider's long lost epic Heroes & Cowards, served up in a delightful tin box, with an assortment of goodies to make us feel even more special. Out of Order have spared no expense to make the physical edition a must have collector's item. The packaging and inclusions (particularly with the Hero Edition, now sold out peeps!) are highly impressive and as professional as it gets. Adventure games always have been fun to unbox!

Byteriders are highly regarded for their C64 adventure games by our German speaking friends. However, mostly having never been released in the UK or US markets, their games remain largely unknown to most of us outside Germany. Heroes & Cowards was to be their C64 swansong, but having never been completed, the game was kept nice and safe at Out of Order, who plugged away slowly at the game over a decade or so to finish it off, adding presentation, bug fixing and most importantly for us, an English translation (amongst other things). Hooray for them!

The game itself is impeccably presented, with a full intro and end sequence sticky taped onto the main game itself. Graphics and music in these sequences are what you would expect - atmospheric and of a high quality. It helps add a special touch to the overall package.

The interface is intuitive and well

thought out. One click of the button brings you to the various options available to you, however you can move around in the usual directions by pushing the joystick without needing to go to the interface. It all works well, and all of the usual options are there as well as a handy save game function. A clunky interface can be a game killer, but luckily the programmers have got this right. It's all joystick controlled, with no need to type using a parser.

Graphics and sound are both fantastic. The location graphics are small but diverse, colourful and well drawn. The rest of the screen is well decorated with the Heroes and Cowards logo, a compass and plenty of room for dialogue. The in game tunes are atmospheric and do the job quite nicely.

Most importantly, the story is entertaining and the puzzles are generally quite fair. Dartenwood is a big enough world full of interesting locations, inhabitants, objects, puzzles, riddles and the odd surprise. The game is well paced and most of the puzzles seem logical enough. The script itself can be quite humorous and the translation is better than that of Leisure Suit Leo II (much less of an afterthought this time), so there shouldn't be too much confusion.

Overall, Out of Order have done a fantastic job resurrecting and restoring this lost Byteriders epic. It has been made with love and care. It's certainly the C64's best adventure since the end of its commercial era and it should keep you occupied for a fair amount of time. Highly recommended for both adventure lovers and accessible enough for less hard-core adventurers alike. Now off you go, chosen one.. You have a world to save!





Ant - 9/10

Elsewhere in this issue you'll see some comments from me about an early adventure game called Buggy. Most of my criticisms about Buggy have been resolved within Heroes & Cowards, such as the wonders of more modern game design principles. There's a big, lovely dose of LucasArts adventures here with regards to the user interface and the game is far less punishing (even dying isn't really a big setback, again a definite nod towards LucasArts).

The interface is incredibly well designed and as slick as a pool of goblin's blood. The joystick is used for everything and a lot of thought has gone into the layout. All very intuitive, clearly presented, and easy to use. And this from a guy who likes typing in his verby nouns!

The pictures for each location are small but very pretty, adding a lot of visual interest (and some clues) to the story. I like that the picture in a location can sometimes change depending on how you interact with it. Good stuff!

I was also pleasantly surprised by the music that plays throughout the game. It changes based on certain locations and I didn't reach for the volume control once. There's some really evocative stuff in there and some clever use of the noise waveform in places.

While the interface is a winner it's the story that is the life's blood of any adventure game. Though the usual fantasy tropes abound there's a neat contemporary twist to things that I do appreciate. This

is a bit of a double-edged sword though, and coupled with the fact that the game is translated into English a number of the jokes do fall flat (some embarrassingly so). Occasionally the humour does shine through as intended though and there's a chortle or two to be had.

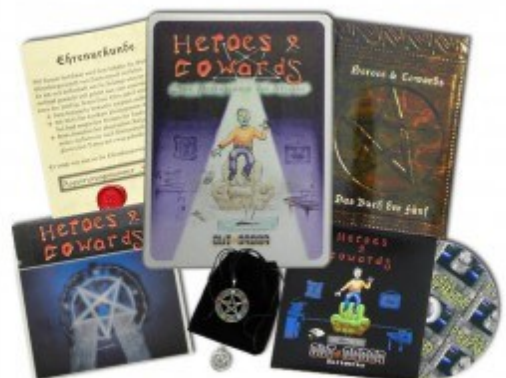
Puzzles range from simple to difficult (with the usual traipsing back and forth) and, for the most part, are logical enough (though I did get lucky once or twice, not realising I'd solved something). I rarely felt truly stuck and there always seemed to be some other nook or cranny to explore. This is good pacing which tends to be lacking in a lot of earlier adventure games.

So, where Buggy was ultimately a frustrating experience, Heroes & Cowards is a game I look forward to diving back into until all five of the Rubies are found and Dartwood is at last at peace.



Hero Edition

The now sold out, limited and numbered, HERO edition from Protovision came with all sorts of goodies. You need to be quick to snap up these specials, but they're well worth it! The 'Cowards' edition, minus the trinkets, is still available.



Reset Remembers...

Steve "Peter Parker" Kups 1970 - 2015



It is with great sadness that we learned of the passing of Steve Kups, legendary co-founder of Byteriders and Heroes & Cowards co-creator, who died from a heart attack, late December 2015.

Steve began his C64 scener life in a series of German cracking groups, but it is his time at Byteriders that will be his lasting legacy on the C64.

Along with programmer Sebastian Broghammer, Steve worked on a series of acclaimed adventure games in the early 1990's. Only one of these games made it to the UK. Crime Time was published in English by Starbyte in 1990, translated from German by Steve himself. It wasn't until the release of Heroes & Cowards in 2015 that another Byteriders game had been officially translated to English.

Byteriders' *magnum opus* is widely considered to be the award winning Brubaker, a massive adventure which was published in 1992 by Golden Disk. The game, of which the story was written by Steve, put the player in control of ex-CIA agent Kyle Brubaker, who had mysteriously disappeared over the Bermuda Triangle. In

an interview with Volker Rust, Steve reflects on Brubaker; *"My absolute favourite when it comes to the story. I put a lot of mysteries in there that had fascinated me since my childhood. And of course it was a little bit inspired by the more than fantastic Zak McKracken."*

Steve has worked at publishing house [Panini](#) for the past 15 years, translating graphic novels such as Batman and Iron Man for the German market.

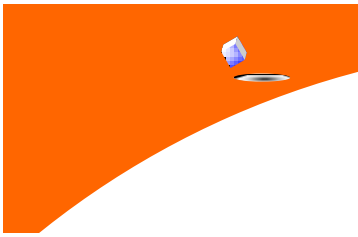
The Reset team send our deepest condolences to Steve's family and friends.

R.I.P.

Information and quotes were sourced from Heroes & Cowards, The Book of 5. Thank-you to Volker Rust.

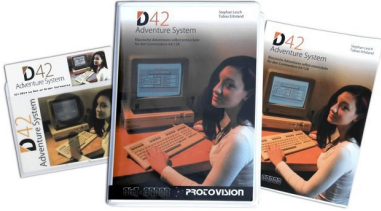


Brubaker, as published on Golden Disk 3/92, from German publisher Computec Verlag. There is an unofficial English translation floating around on the scene for non-German speakers who would like to check out this wonderful game!



D42 Adventure System

By Anthony Stiller



They say the Grue can't be tamed, but Reset's very own game making guru Anthony Stiller gets his lamp and heads into the dark caverns of the D42 Adventure System, emerging triumphant (and with no cheat sheet to help either!). Take it away, Anthony!

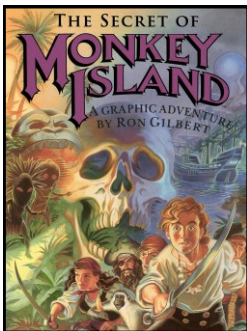
The D42 Adventure system is available to buy in a lovely Special Edition from the Protovision Store.

"Game creation tools like this live and die by their ease of use. Lack of an English manual aside, D42 is deceptively easy to use, but only once you understand the core functionality, user interface, and experience some of the idiosyncrasies of the system."

Getting this combined review/tutorial for D42 out the door was an adventure unto itself. There's no English manual available and you need the manual to sufficiently understand how D42 works. After painstakingly cobbling together my own 'Rosetta Stone' for the English version (translated from a purchased German version) I was ready to go.

The D42 Adventure System by Out of Order Softworks has been evolving since the 90s and in its current state is a powerful and cleverly designed graphic adventure engine. Leisure Suit Leo 2 Deluxe Edition (reviewed in Reset #05) was built using D42. For the purpose of this review I built a splendid and totally original one screen "adventure" (two screens if you count the intro!).

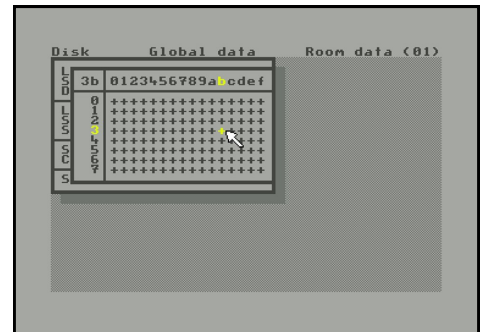
At its core, D42 is divided into Rooms, Objects, Conditions, Messages and Flags. A matrix of rooms (with room '00' being the Intro screen) provides the total adventuring area. Objects can be found and manipulated within the rooms. These interactions are done using the Conditions and Flags and events trigger based on this interaction. Specific actions can be triggered for each room and there are also General Conditions which apply globally.



Create your own C64 Monkey Island conversion using D42. C'mon, we dare you!



Trademark pending. (Additional: This took about a billion hours and copious amounts of alcohol consumption to draw in Koala Paint.)



The Room load/save option shows how the adventure area is a matrix. Hexadecimals abound!

Rooms and objects can also have properties and actions applied to them to allow or prohibit certain behaviour. For example, an object could be automatically placed in the player's inventory or an object can be marked as unmovable.

Feedback is provided to the player via messages. While some messages are locked into the engine (e.g. if you try to pick up an unmovable object) you can create your own to be displayed when the relevant event triggers.

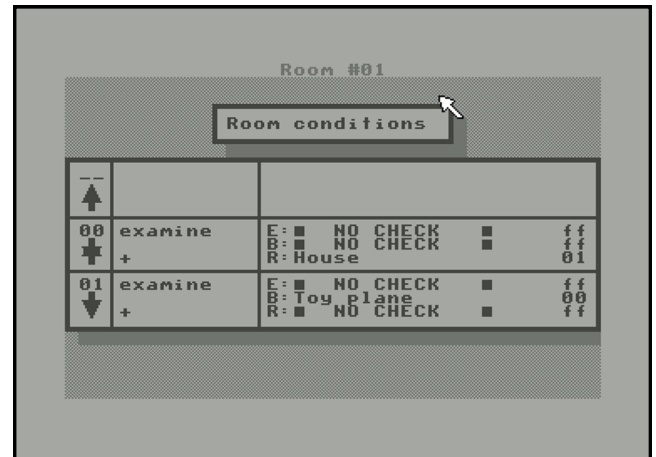
There are some limitations to D42 and the manual (mostly) lays these out for you. Unsurprisingly size is limited however there's still plenty to work with - 128 rooms with images, 56 objects with sprites (plus an additional 64 without). There's some rigidity in the internal structures however it is interesting that the authors endorse taking the freely available D42 source code and making changes to it as you see fit.



In the editor, up to 56 objects can have sprites assigned. These sprites need to be created by a third party program. Biplane sprites are, of course, mandatory.

D42 comprises of multiple tools: The editor, a demo player and the main player, a tool to span a large adventure across multiple disks etc. Fortunately most of these have an English translation.

Graphics and music need to be created with an external program though some music files are already provided and you can pull apart the sample adventure to see how things are done. After creating the graphics in the tool of your choice you then load in them into the game design engine. Music is a little trickier and this is one of the many reasons why you need that manual.



It looks like arcane sorcery but this actually makes sense. Trust me.

Game creation tools like this live and die by their ease of use. Lack of an English manual aside, D42 is deceptively easy to use, but only once you understand the core functionality, user interface, and experience some of the idiosyncrasies of the system. I initially tried to tackle D42 without a manual and it is not intuitive to use.

Each room is a separate save file and the manual explains that it's good to think of each room as its own puzzle (not to say you can't use something from one room in another). The manual also covers some aspects of designing and building good adventures with a host of tips (technical and otherwise) on ways to do this.



The game you create is played via this interface to interact with the world. Also, subtle product placement.



Ta da! Not shown: The other half of the room image I drew in bloody Koala Paint because I forgot that D42 only uses the first 96 rows of pixels.

D42 is impressive. After tackling the initial learning curve you can really see the power of this system. Crafting my simple demo made me want to sink my teeth into building a full adventure. This is the highest recommendation I can give.

I would be pay hard money for a properly translated English version of the manual though!

Score: 8/10 (9/10 with a manual in your language of choice)

The D42 Adventure System was produced by Out of Order Softworks and is available from the Protovision shop, either as a free digital download, or a limited edition physical version containing the box, disk and German language manual.

The price of the limited edition is 30EUR + postage. It's worth noting that even though the manual is German only, the software is available in both English and German.

Protovision Shop:

<http://www.protovision-online.com/shop/>

Out of Order Softworks:

<http://www.out-of-order.info/>

Notable games made with D42:

D42 has only just been released to the public, but even so, the software itself isn't new. At the point of writing, there haven't been many games developed with D42 (even though we have it on good authority that there are a few coming), but here are three examples that show off the power of the system.

Ludwig Mystify, D42 demo adventure



This preview was bundled in on the D42 software disk. Interesting example, even if just to see what can be achieved. German only.

<http://www.protovision-online.com>

Leisure Suit Leo 2 Out of Order Softworks



A fantastic adventure starring the wannabe ladies man Leonard Feuerstein. Really shows off what can be achieved using the

D42 engine and adding some skilful enhancements for presentation. Released commercially by Protovision, and rated a respectable 6/10 back in Reset #05.

<http://www.protovision-online.com>

Das Camp, TUGCS

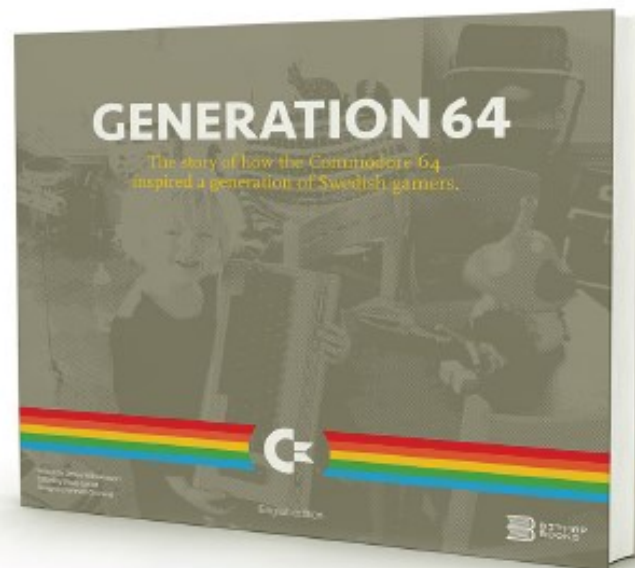


A German only adventure, which placed 5th at the 2015 Forum64 game competition. Another great example of what can be achieved with

D42 when put into the right hands. Hopefully we see an English translation some time soon.

<http://csdb.dk/release/?id=140960>

The story of how the Commodore 64 inspired a generation of Swedish gamers



Pre-order from bitmapbooks.co.uk for delivery in February

Reset Rewind

By Rob Caporetto

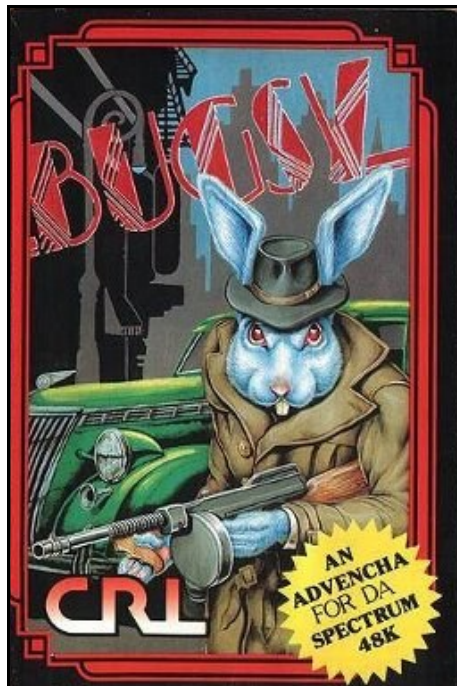


St Brides was a school for women who wanted to escape the real world and have a 1920's style boarding school experience. They also developed 8bit adventure games. Go figure!

<http://www.gamestm.co.uk/features/how-a-1920s-boarding-school-created-the-c64s-defining-text-adventures-discover-the-mystery-of-st-brides/>

“Definitely worth a try if you are into text adventures, and what makes it work is the humour.”

Each issue, the Reset crew will take a journey back into the mists of time, to take a look at a title from C64 history, and see how it fares today. Does it still stack up, or is it just another game best left in our collective memories?



With the focus on adventures this time, it only seemed apt to pick one of the Rewind. It was a tough choice to pick something outside of the usual circles - but after reading about the story of St. Brides, somehow one of theirs seemed to the right choice.. and call it fate, but Bugsy seemed to call out most of all.

Rob Caporetto (Hellfire64):

One thing with ye olde adventure games, you really need a lot of patience to get into them sometimes. Maybe it's the fact that I'm the youngest of the crew, but outside of Zork, Text

Adventures were mostly impenetrable to me.

So I approached Bugsy with an open mind, and fired up the adventures of a blue-haired bunny aspiring to be Public Enemy number 1.

Firstly, I absolutely loved the writing. Humour can be tough to get right in a game, and Bugsy did it well. I especially loved the fourth-wall breaking introduction. Such a perfect way to introduce the game, along with being a unique concept in general. Room descriptions flow well, the prose more than doing the part in building the game's atmosphere from dingy alleys and stores, all the way to hotels and banks.

What turned me off was the sense that the game was written for people who already knew the lingo so to speak. If you're a beginning adventure player, the instructions didn't help at all in getting me into the mindset (or giving you an idea or two on what you should start out doing). So whilst I ended up playing through the first part with a solution, on beginning the second part, I felt hopelessly lost as soon as I gave the secret code.

It's worth a look, but really it depends on how much a fan of old adventure games you

are, and how patient you can be in dealing with the idiosyncrasies.



Kevin Tilley (Unkle K):

One of the things I love about C64 gaming, is that there is always something to discover. Having never played Buggy (or heard of it, actually) I was able to look at the game from completely fresh perspective, not clouded with nostalgia or even bad memories!

As part of my research for this game, I also stumbled across the peculiar story of developer, St Brides School. It's one of the more interesting and bizarre backstories for a developer you will come across, that's for sure!

Bugsy itself is a fairly standard text adventure with the usual simple verb/noun parser that we've been used to from that era. The graphics are crisp and clean and add to the whole experience (I always was a sucker for additional graphics in a text adventure!). So while the mechanics of the game offer nothing outstanding, it's the story that sets games like Buggy apart and make or break a title.

Those of you who are into the early American gangster culture will enjoy the story. Think Al Capone, Dick Tracy etc. Here, we have the language, characters and story that could come straight out of a James Cagney movie. Buggy certainly is well written!

Unfortunately, my limited interest in the subject and era didn't help my enjoyment with the game. The in-jokes, humour and language used within Buggy just *aint up my*

alley. Saying that, playing through the title, solution in hand, was a nice, enjoyable way to spend a lazy Sunday afternoon. I would have been screwed without the walkthrough though.

You could do worse, you could certainly do better.. So, just to repeat myself, it's really in the eye of the beholder. If you're into this kind of story genre (or bunnies), you'll enjoy it. Me? It sure aint sci-fi!



Andrew Fisher (Merman):

Humour in a game is difficult, and parody can be even harder to pull off. BUGSY makes fun of Chicago gangsters and the name Buggy - by having the lead character be Buggy Maroon, a three-foot high blue rabbit. Written by the mysterious St Brides, there are some nice illustrations to liven up the text. And the text is good on its own, full of gangster slang and descriptions that could have stepped off the page of a bad novel.

The actual gameplay is interesting too. Rather than just a treasure hunt, the player must earn money (through protection rackets) to hire muscle and buy guns ready for the big push to take over from public enemy number 1 - a certain Mr Al Capone. What makes it stand out from other games is the TALK menu, offering several ways of interacting with the non-player characters. Bribery, threats and sweet talking all play their part. Despite a couple of sudden death situations, there is a logical progression to how the game's puzzles work and you see your character

become stronger (and more confident) as he works his way around dingy bars, swanky hotels and even carrying out a bomb attack on a rival gang.

Definitely worth a try if you are into text adventures, and what makes it work is the humour.

Footnote: St Brides was real, a school for adults to live out a fantasy. Their other games are worth playing too. CRL published The Very Big Cave Adventure and Jack The Ripper, while Mosaic published The Very Big Cave Adventure.



Cameron Davis (Gazunta):

A little-known fact about history is that the 1920s are the absolute best. It's true! Everyone wore hats, you could see a ball game for a nickel and there were gun-toting rabbits everywhere. Okay, the last bit might not be true but it's the premise for this little-known but hare-brained adventure game by St. Brides.

You play as an aspiring Chicago mobster, who just happens to be a rabbit. You know, standard videogame stuff, right? One thing that impressed me was that the humour wasn't just a steady stream of rabbit puns, but cleverly written prose that was as witty as it was illustrative. Plus the clues led you on well like a carrot on a stick (sorry).

Visually, it wouldn't have turned heads even thirty years ago - simple images fill the top half of the screen slower than a racing turtle, and it's hard to think that

an era known for art deco expressionism would have a post office, barbershop and a bank that were more or less identical. Maybe I'm spoiled by modern titles that do mapmaking automatically but it was a bit of a head scratcher walking around the seedy, crime-filled streets that all started to look the same after a while.

Ultimately, there's some arcane puzzles that feel like an exercise in translation than logical thinking. This isn't a huge surprise though when you consider that you're trying to figure out how to interface with an '80s text adventure that is trying to emulate the world of the '20s - there's some serious time twisting going on!



Anthony Stiller (Ant):

It's 1am and I've just been "killed" in Buggy for the 27th time. I've refused to look at a walk-through. I'm making progress but I am not good at running a protection racket as an anthropomorphic blue rabbit Al Capone wannabe.

That paragraph perfectly summarises playing adventure games in the 80s. Don't worry, I love early adventure games so bear with me.

CRL and the St Brides produced some wonderful, quirky adventures and Buggy is definitely out there, exploring new territory. Bending The Quill to their will, the adventure authoring tool has been used to create an almost-simulation as you help Buggy bribe, threaten and extort his way around town, gaining funds, building his gang, and growing his empire.

Well, that's the theory anyway. Buggy stumbles over itself, the mash-up of cartel sim and text adventure never quite working, with one getting in the way of the other.

There's some sharp humour here (and a few groaners, too) which helps a great deal. Riffing off the stereotypes of the era, (not to mention that you're a blue bunny rabbit), it works as an incentive to see more of the game.

Graphics are crisp and fast with some good use of perspective, helping paint the scene of prohibition Chicago. Though I've been dying so much that that I've turned them off until I get to a new area.

Buggy isn't bad but it's a very close to being too frustrating to be fun.

A hare's breadth, if you will.



Concluding Thoughts:

Buggy seems to have been quite the decisive choice for our columnists - whilst everyone loved the humour and its delivery, the adventuring itself feels like it's fallen flat more often than not.

The idea of an adventure where you're building up an empire is certainly a unique one, but when the cartel aspects bump into the questing a little too much, it feels like only the most ardent adventure fans can push through.

If that sounds like you, then it's certainly worth checking out. Even if just to experience the unique atmosphere which

St. Brides provided on all their titles. But, if you're not wise to the ways of old adventures? Maybe keep away to avoid frustration.



Prism Leisure also re-released Buggy on disk. Good luck finding it, though.

Rob Caporetto owns and maintains the hellfire64 YouTube channel, featuring his 'Rob Plays' C64 gameplay and review videos.

Take a look!

<http://youtube.com/hellfire64>

They Were Our Gods

By PaulEMoz



Fergus McNeill, adventure game creator and published author!

“Yes, the original verb+noun parser was limiting, and I always wanted more variables to play with, but there was so much that The Quill could do.”



Fergus co-founded Delta 4 Software, most famous for their Spectrum and C64 text adventures.

Fergus McNeill

Just as arcade games created notable personalities, so too did the world of text adventures. Although you tended to think of the companies more than the personalities, with names such as Infocom, Level 9 and Magnetic Scrolls dominating the adventure sections of magazines, there were still individual programmers whose names would get individual recognition.

One such programmer was Fergus McNeill. As part of Delta 4, he became renowned for his spoof treatments of literary classics, and adventure gamers embraced the wacky worlds he created out of such well-established templates. I took the opportunity to speak to Fergus about his adventure game-writing days... and also to discuss his current writing passion, which has manifested itself through a series of well-regarded novels. I started at the obvious place... and asked him what it was that had got him interested in computers and writing computer games in the first place. For Fergus, the bug bit early.

FM: *“I’m not sure why, but from the very first time I saw a ZX81 in a shop window, I was fascinated by the idea of programming a machine and getting it to do things. It seemed to have limitless* potential, and I loved the idea of creating virtual game worlds (though back then, I hadn’t heard the word*

‘virtual’ used in that context).

** All right, it was 16k.”*

I always find it a little odd when people say the ZX81 is what turned their heads, probably because I had an Atari 2600 which had much better graphics and sound. Obviously, though, the big draw was being able to create your own games with relative ease.

Having said that, the ZX81 didn't really have the capacity to produce text adventures... there were a few but they were very limited, as you might expect. Naturally, as the writer of such games, Fergus must have played a few in order for the genre to grab his attention. I wanted to know if he could remember the first text adventure he played... and whether he enjoyed it or found it frustrating.

FM: *“I think it was Greedy Gulch, or perhaps it was Planet Of Death... in any event, I found those early adventure games simultaneously wonderful and frustrating. I absolutely loved the idea of exploring a story based on my decisions; a world where anything might happen... but conversely, it was disappointing when I thought of something fun and the game didn’t have a response for it. I suppose I always wanted more to do.”*

That was where I often fell down. A constant stream of “You can't do that's” would usually be enough to see me

loading up an arcade game to relieve the frustration.

The new range of 8-bit computers were so powerful that software companies were able to release programs which would enable anyone with some imagination and a bit of ability to write and release their own games. One of the most renowned of these was *The Quill*. It was Fergus' weapon of choice for the majority of his writing... was that because it was easy to use?

FM: *"The Quill was an excellent tool - powerful, well designed, and open enough to do things it was never intended to do. I found it very easy to get into, but it took me a while to appreciate just how much you could accomplish with it. Yes, there were some restrictions, but Gilsoft (the developers) were always innovating and they really listened to what their users wanted, adding extra features like 4-word input and text compression."*



C64 version of The Quill Adventure Writing System from Gilsoft. According to the [Wikipedia](#) page, The Quill was used to write upwards of 450 commercial adventure games!

Hmmm... a software company that listened to its users and made changes to their software for the users' benefit? There are a few companies around today who might benefit from that approach. Nevertheless, did Fergus ever find the restrictions he mentioned frustrating at all? Evidently not, as he was always able to write his way around them:

FM: *"To be honest, there were very few things that couldn't be overcome with a little thought. Yes, the original*

verb+noun parser was limiting, and I always wanted more variables to play with, but there was so much that The Quill could do. I remember working on Robin Of Sherlock and wishing there was a way to make a bigger game that would still run within 48K... and then it occurred to me that I could split the game into sections, and use the inbuilt SAVE and LOAD functions to transfer the player's progress and inventory between them. I'm told that I was the first person to do a true multi-part adventure like this, and it didn't require any crafty modifications, just a standard copy of The Quill."

It was very common to read a review of text adventure game and see that the game had been written using *The Quill*. I was interested to know just how important Fergus felt the program had been to the world of text adventure gaming.

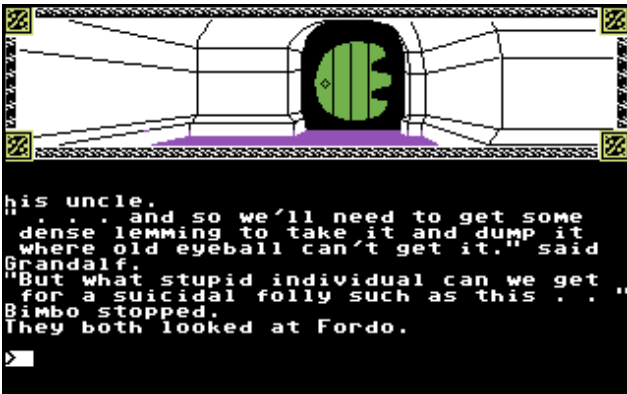
FM: *"I had already written a full text adventure in BASIC, and that helped me to understand the modules needed to build a game, but The Quill allowed people like me to focus on creating worlds and telling stories on a range of different machines. For that reason, I think it was hugely important to the emerging adventure scene."*

Certainly, without it there would have been far fewer text adventures available for us to play, and that would have been a bad thing.

It's probably fair to say that Fergus really made his name with his parodies of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. Entitled *Bored of the Rings* and *The Boggit (Bored Too)*, they took affectionate stabs at those classic works, whilst remaining recognisable to fans of the series. I presumed that to be able to write parodies, Fergus must have been something of a fan of the originals in the first place.

FM: *"I was a great fan of Tolkien back then, and my love for those books has only deepened over the years. The Lord Of The Rings remains my favourite story of all time and, as I write this, I'm glancing up at a framed print of Hobbit on the wall*

above my desk. I always wished that I could have been involved in an official game adaptation (it nearly happened a decade later when I was working at Sci) but sadly that was not to be. Looking back on the parodies, I have mixed feelings about some of the irreverence and silliness... but I was a teenager, and it was fun, and hopefully I helped introduce a few people to the real stories of Middle Earth along the way."



Bored of the Rings was a fun Tolkien parody, which scored 78% in Zzap!64 issue 14.

Fergus drew from a wide range of classics when writing his adventure parodies, but there was also a time when he was able to do a straighter interpretation of a future classic novel... one which would go on to be the beginning of a very long-running and much-loved series. The series was Discworld, and the book Fergus adapted was The Colour of Magic. As the first and, to date, only book in the series, it was an interesting one to pick for a computer game adaptation. I asked Fergus how he got involved with this one... but I was surprised to learn that it was his own idea.



Death in a game. Piranha made some calls and, a few weeks later I was on a train to

FM: "When the nice people from Piranha asked me about potential licenses for adventure games, I had just read The Colour Of Magic - there was only one Discworld book out at the time. I loved the writing, the narrative voice and, of course, the humour... but above all, I wanted to put

Bristol, where Terry collected me from the station and took me to lunch. It was a genuine pleasure to work with someone so talented and so funny, and I count myself very lucky to have known him. Now you've given me a hankering to read Pyramids again, or maybe Mort..."

Sounds like a plan...

To those of us growing up playing computer games, it felt like we were part of something exciting. No more did we have to travel to smoky arcades or dingy taxi offices to get our fix... talented people all across the country, and indeed the world, were putting great games into our homes. But I always wonder if the people making games felt like they were part of something exciting. Fergus certainly felt that that was the case.

FM: "I remember Keith Campbell from C&VG arranged a sort of Adventure Game industry get together - there were so many brilliant game-makers around that table, including Level 9, Infocom, Gilsoft, St Brides, and more... it was a very special feeling to be among such talented people. I recall Dave Lebling told me something very important about pizza, but it was a long time ago, and people kept buying me drinks."

There was also the fact that some of the computer magazines liked to focus on the individuals behind the games, with interviews and profiles being common. I wondered if Fergus ever felt like a celebrity, or if he's "made it" at all.

FM: "Very slightly. There was a period where the specialist press was mentioning me every month, people were asking for autographs at shows, and The Guardian ran a gushing feature article, complete with professional photo-shoot. Fortunately, the total absence of celebrity paychecks helped keep my feet firmly on the ground."

Yeah, you get the feeling that not too many people made their fortunes from programming on the 8-bits, no matter how much we loved what they did.

Now, as an adventure game programmer of some repute, and as an adventure gamer himself, it stands to reason that Fergus

must have a favourite adventure game of all-time. Which game was the one that truly left its mark on him?

FM: *"Without a doubt, it would be The Hobbit by Melbourne House. This was the high-water mark of adventure gaming for me, and nothing ever surpassed it (though Level 9 developed far better technology, and Infocom crafted much better non-linear fiction). The reason The Hobbit made such an impression on me was because it was the first time I'd seen true non-player characters; characters who could behave randomly and genuinely interact with the game world. I know that Thorin was always sitting and singing about gold, but I still remember the thrill of realising that there was some unpredictability to his behaviour – it was like finding the characters were alive... albeit, with some pretty serious restrictions to their intelligence."*

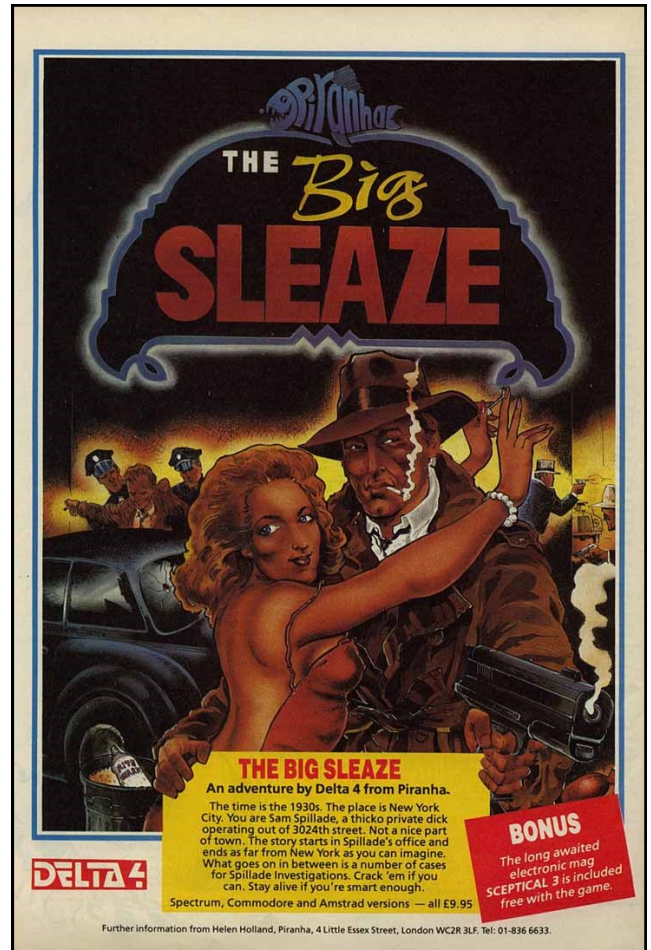
I suspect that a lot of people might give the same answer. The Hobbit was probably the one game that piqued the curiosity of many an arcade gamer. I was certainly familiar with its early passages myself, before giving up after getting irreversibly stuck.

Fergus went on to write half a dozen text adventures on the Commodore 64, and several more on other platforms. Somewhat harshly, I asked him to pick his favourite of all those he'd written.

FM: *"Aarrgghh, that's not a fair question! I suppose, if I had to choose, I'd say The Big Sleaze. It won more awards than the games that preceded it and, though it was still a parody of sorts, it had a lot more original material. There were some fun little sequences in there, and I loved the private eye / noir genre, but I think the main reason I'd choose this game was the fact that it forced me to adopt a different voice, and forced me to think more about my writing."*

It's interesting to hear him say that, as it was something that would go on to serve him well much further down the line as he moved into the writing of novels. For someone who wrote a lot of text for each of his games, it seemed inevitable that he

would go down that road... but it was a long time before he made that move. I wondered why he hadn't written books any earlier.



FM: *"Part of the problem was that I got stuck. Towards the end of the adventure era, I was planning to write a Star Wars parody with Level 9. For various reasons, the project never quite happened, but I had sketched out a lot of material for it, and I decided to pull it all together in a comedy sci-fi novel. This dragged on and on, and it took me years to eventually finish it (obviously, I'd been developing other kinds of games, writing numerous scripts and a novella in the meantime). When it was done, I wasn't completely happy with it, but it finally sated my urge to write comedy. Then, a few years later, I attended a Creative Writing evening class, because I wanted something that would force me to write regularly. One of our homework assignments was to produce the first chapter of a novel and I started writing a story about a serial*

killer who hunts down strangers based on whether they looked at him in the street. That went on to become my first 'serious' novel, *Eye Contact*."

From little acorns...

Of course, writing novels is a bit different from writing adventure games. You might think it's easier... after all, you "only" have to write the story, it's not a "choose your own adventure" book (or game) where you have to think about how the reader might act and have a number of possible options at the ready. I wanted to know how Fergus' approach differed when writing his novels as opposed to the adventure games.

FM: "Writing crime novels has proved quite a bit tougher than writing parody adventure games, but that's probably because psychological thrillers don't have quite as many laughs. In some ways, the approach is similar - I still spend a lot of time asking myself "What now?" and trying to work out all the possible courses of action for the central character - but now I have to make you empathise without allowing you to choose what happens. In the end, it's all about telling stories, and creating an emotional response in the reader, so I suppose it's not really all that different."

In the end, I suppose it all comes down to writing engaging prose. It's a difficult task... I know this, as I've often thought about attempting a novel myself. You need a good imagination and you definitely have to have a way with words. Fergus has those in abundance, as is evidenced by his novels to date. In conclusion, I asked him to tell us a bit about them.



FM: "There are three novels in the series so far - *Eye Contact*, *Knife Edge*, and *Cut*

Out - published by Hodder & Stoughton. They all feature my Bristol-based detective Harland, but each story is told partly from the killer's point of view, which hopefully provides an unusual perspective. They're a far cry from my *Delta 4* days, but I really hope people will enjoy reading them."

I'm happy to state that I've really enjoyed reading them, and if you have any kind of liking for crime thrillers at all then you would do well to check them out... we've even been good enough to provide links for you. Whether you want a riveting read or simply feel like supporting one of our gaming Gods on his latest venture, check out Fergus McNeill's Harland series. If you'd like a bit more interaction, check out the following links:

Fergus McNeill on Twitter:

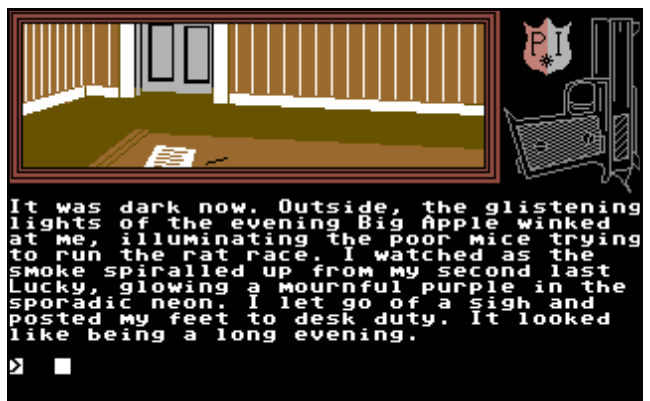
<https://twitter.com/fergusmcneill>

Fergus McNeill on Blogspot:

<http://www.fergusmcneill.blogspot.co.uk/>

Fergus McNeill on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/fergusmcneillauthor/?fref=ts>



The Big Sleaze on the C64. A parody detective story starring Private Eye Spillade and Fergus' personal favourites of his own games.

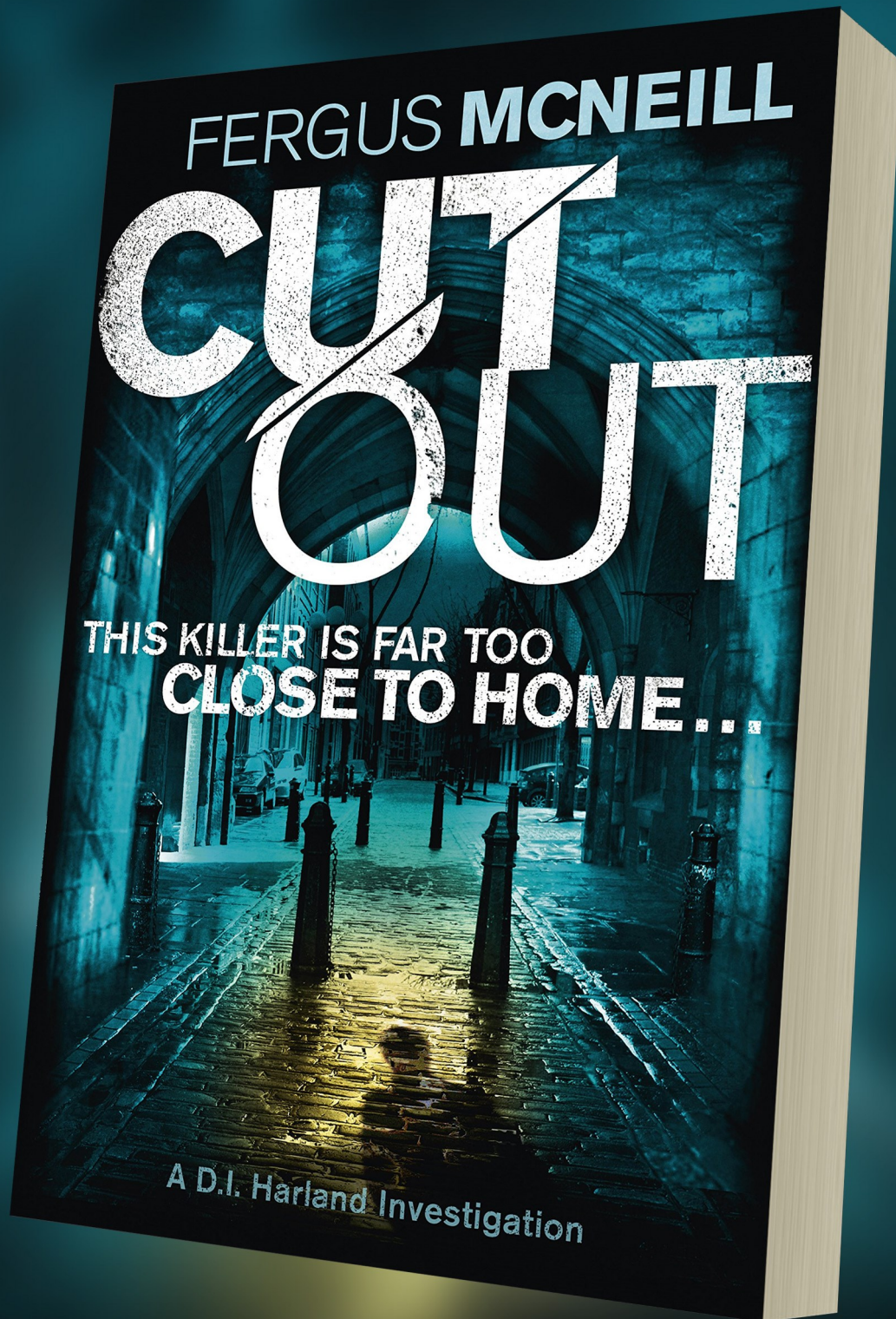
Visit Paul Morrison's website,

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Freeware! Game Review



Concept cover art for the upcoming RGCD cartridge edition. Are we excited? YES!

"The plot is deliberately obtuse, leaving the player to explore the world and work out what to do on their own volition..."

Game: Caren and the Tangled Tentacles V1.1
Developer: PriorArt
Release Date: October 2015
Available: CSDB, <http://martinwendt.de/caren/>
It's a bit like: Maniac Mansion
Score: 9/10

Alarm sounds. Wake up. Crawl out of bed. Drink coffee. Eat toast. Brush teeth. Shower. Get changed. Drink coffee. Leave for work. Repeat. But one day, as you crawl out of bed, the phone rings. This day is going to be different, complete with tentacles. For Mayhem and Uncle K, an adventure awaits!

Game Overview

The winner of the Forum64 Adventure Competition, Caren and the Tangled Tentacles was developed by PriorArt.

The story opens up with our heroine, Caren waking up having missed a phone call. When she manages to catch the follow-up, she learns that the majority of her co-workers haven't turned up to work. After grabbing her things, she heads to the office where she works as a researcher before discovering some strange things afoot.

Caren and that Tangled Tentacles plays out in a way similar to most other graphical adventures on the C64 - with your interface to the game being through a joystick controlled cursor, instead of directly moving her about the screen.

Tapping fire directs Caren to that location on screen, and if you move the pointer over an exit (or door), then a double-tap will exit the room and move onto the connected location, without needing to wait for Caren to walk to the exit.

When it comes to interacting with objects, placing the pointer over one and holding fire for a brief period will activate the interaction dial in the lower left. Here you can look at an item by pressing up, interact with it by pressing left, or use an item from your inventory by pressing right.

Along with the original competition release of the game, v1.1 was released in October 2015. This version fixes a number of small bugs in the game, along with some extended scenes and other minor improvements - and is available for free download from CSDB.

Another build of Caren, v1.3, is currently in production to be released on cartridge format. 100 physical copies are being produced by RGCD and are being sold as exclusive backer rewards for Bitmap Books' C64 Compendium Volume 2 Kickstarter campaign. The new version includes even more previously unseen locations and scenes. Also included with the physical release will be vinyl stickers, button badges and an A3 poster.



Welcome to the scene, PriorArt!



Right from the very first options menu, Caren just oozes quality!



Mayhem - 8/10

The point-and-click adventure as we know it started on the C64 with Maniac Mansion, but sadly migrated to the Amiga and PC soon after. So it's extremely welcoming to see an attempt to revitalise the genre with the release of this game.

The plot is deliberately obtuse, leaving the player to explore the world and work out what to do on their own volition. No real hand-holding, bar the odd comment from Caren which can reveal a little too much, arching back to how games used to be. It's quite refreshing to progress through a game at your own pace.

While the command set is extremely stripped down, it streamlines the experience and saves some inevitable fumbling for the correct command to solve a problem. The first few puzzles are reasonably obvious and allow you to understand the control system (and play a game of Pong in the process!), while a couple of the later ones do require a little lateral thinking, but nothing that you will get overly frustrated at not being able to figure out immediately.



Both graphics and sound are excellent, with a nicely rendered sprite of Caren herself walking around some detailed backgrounds, set above a clean looking control panel and inventory system. Many of the interactive objects will animate, and the game is full of little touches. Accompanying the action are a couple of boppy tunes, and appropriate sound effects for certain actions. It's definitely a convincing toilet flush!

The only unfortunate downside to the game is that just as you think it's beginning, you reach the end. Said ending is atmospherically framed by a rendition of Air On A G String though. The score given is based on the quality and polish of the title despite its length, and thankfully the team responsible are working on a hugely expanded version of the game for the near future.



Unkle K - 9.5/10

I never got around to playing Caren when it was originally released, but when the 1.1 version came out, I knew I had to give it a go. The initial PR campaign for Caren really worked to build anticipation, so it was especially pleasing to discover that it lived up to the hype - and then some!



The point & click adventure is quite possibly my favourite game genre, so booting up Caren and seeing that very first screen was

like being greeted by an old friend. It was all so familiar, helped by the not so subtle reference to Maniac Mansion hanging right there, on the wall.

I played through the game on VICE, kernel load with true drive emulation switched off - and it flew! However, playing on a stock C64 with fastloader enabled is by no means slow and in fact, the loading times are quick, efficient and in no way intrusive to the experience.

The interface works extremely well and is immediately accessible and intuitive. The double clicking is a handy feature too. The only drawback I noticed was with the inventory icons. Initially, I forgot what some of the items were and with no descriptions, I had to go back and start again to re-familiarise myself. The same happened with some in-game text, where I was distracted by something else and missed a bit and there was no way to repeat it.



Aesthetically, Caren is almost perfect. It's been crafted with love and care. The graphics are perfect, it's as simple as that. They couldn't be any better. The soundtrack and effects are of an equally high standard as the game swaps seamlessly between the two depending on the location.

The story? Let's just say it's a fun ride. The difficulty level is fairly easy so hopefully that aspect of the game is ramped up a few notches in any sequel. The game only took me an hour or two to complete - but it was an absolute blast! The save and load feature works a treat, too.

Overall, I couldn't recommend this game enough. I'd happily give Caren a perfect score, only I know an even better version is just around the corner. It truly is an amazing achievement on the C64 and would be considered a fantastic adventure on any platform.



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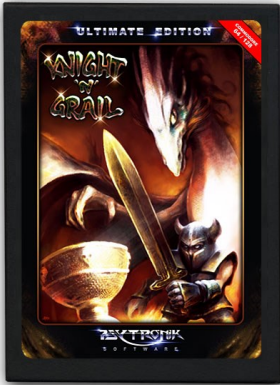
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COMMERCIAL RELEASE!

Game Review



The Ultimate Edition comes with all sorts of goodies in the box including a map, keyring, sticker, poster, badge and soundtrack CD. Phew!

"This game was a joy to play and the more I played, the more I understood what a marvellous game it is. This would have been a super hit back in the glory days."



Psytronik produced a cool 'cinematic' trailer for Knight 'N' Grail. You can access it from [YouTube](#) or the Knight 'N' Grail page at the Binary Zone Shop.

Game: Knight 'N' Grail
Developer: [Wide Pixel Games](#)
Release Date: 2009, 2015 (Ultimate Edition)
Available: [Psytronik](#) (disk)
It's a bit like: Powerglove
Score: 9.5/10

Ahh well, it's been one of those days. Girlfriend kidnapped, cursed, turned into a dragon. Most wouldn't blame you for just going back to bed and trying again in the morning. But not our brave knights, Sir Rob and Sir Roy, who document their perilous journeys while on their quests to find the Magical Grail and hopefully restore the missus to her former glory.

Game Overview

Developed by Wide Pixel Games, Knight 'N' Grail was originally released in 2009 by Psytronik Software. Following the success of the Darkness Ultimate Edition, it only made sense for Knight 'N' Grail to be the next title to get the treatment.

In Knight 'N' Grail, you play a mysterious figure who along with their partner are the victim of a terrible curse. As your partner is dragged away, you turn to an Archmage and ask for the ability to wear armour and wield a sword in order to find the Grail which will break the curse. In exchange for this, the Archmage asks for the same Grail as payment, and thus your quest begins...

Knight 'N' Grail plays out like a Metroidvania, with explore the castle in a non-linear manner. You'll locate areas of the castle which are blocked off - some can be opened by finding the right switch, while others require new abilities to be found.

You'll also encounter an

assortment of enemies to dispatch, though many will require something more powerful than your starting Iron Sword. Along with abilities, finding new Swords and Armour is also important - as these grant resistance to different environments.

As with any Metroidvania, pressing Space displays your map showing the rooms you've explored, along with an interface for switching weapons and armour. Armour and Swords can also be switched with the F1 and F3 keys in game.

The Ultimate Edition is a 100 copy limited run from Psytronik, as a disk only release due to the multiloading. Along with the disk (in Premium Plus packaging), it includes an A3 Map, A3 Poster, Soundtrack CD, Badge, Key Ring and various stickers. Owners of the original release can buy the Ultimate Upgrade allowing them to pair their existing copy with all these extras.



Rob - 9.5/10

Embarrassingly, I hadn't played Knight 'N' Grail until being asked to cover this Ultimate Edition rerelease.

Knowing how the C64 community regard this one, I couldn't help but ponder whether said reputation would overshadow my expectations as I fired up the C64 and booted the game.

My worries were quickly dashed as Knight 'N' Grail more than lives up to the hype I'd built up for it. The quest you partake in may not be short, as the castle consists of a large number of rooms, broken up into a number of areas you can move between.



The castle size means backtracking becomes essential, with rooms opened up by triggering switches, along with previous inaccessible areas

being reachable by obtaining new weapons, armour and abilities. The castle design works well here, as each section of the castle is large enough to make loading infrequent, along with giving you plenty to do as you move about.

The castle is surrounded by a gloomy atmosphere - the music, whilst it doesn't loop, sets the tone well, plus the chosen colour palettes across the walls, enemies and the Knight add to the dank and dreary atmosphere which you would expect when exploring a place like this.

The biggest downer for me though would be the jumping. Whilst the Knight's

deliberate movement is generally well thought out, there are occasions where trying to reach a platform requires more thought than it should take.

The addition of a save system is greatly appreciated, although I wish save points were a little more common, as they're spread a bit too thick for my liking.

For me, Knight 'N' Grail should be checked out by any C64 fan - a great showing of what our humble little machine can do in modern times.



Roy - 9.5/10

It is quite a wondrous thing that so many years after the heyday of our beloved C64 that we still have high quality, rich titles being developed. Knight 'N' Grail looks like a game that the developers, Wide Pixel Games, have crafted with love and dedication.

Knight 'N' Grail is the perfect game for those who like exploration and mapping. A slow-paced game, rich in atmosphere, presented wonderfully with an ambient background music theme and charming graphics.

The game is quite large and therefore utilises a loading system. It would be asking too much to cram everything into a single load. Loading is rather quick though and not intrusive to the flow of the game at all.

Your hero is initially equipped with a "mahoosive" sword which he can use to smash and slash enemies or items. Now, what's nice is that when you press FIRE, you don't just do a simple swipe, but you

swing the weapon which will fly out with a spin and come swinging back to the player like a boomerang. Very nice and effective. If I'm honest, the way the sword is carried looks a bit odd and rigid, but it's still a great weapon to use.

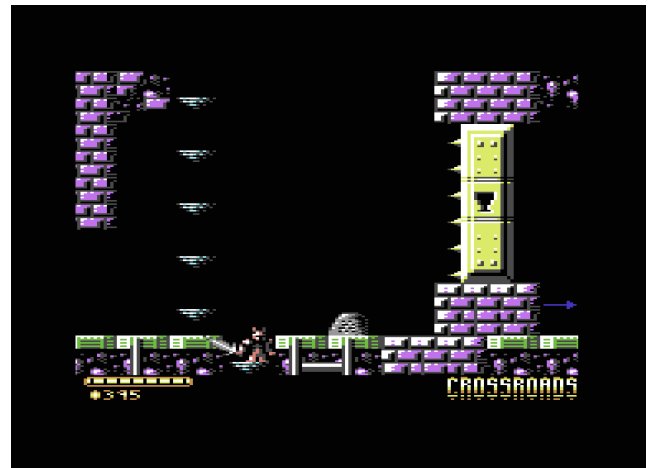
Enemies are well suited to this medieval style game with serpents, spitting gargoye heads, birds and wizards etc. Also, we need to navigate past hazards such as dripping water, moving pillars and spears etc.

You will learn which power-ups are best suited to your location/task in hand. Different swords have different trajectories when thrown, so you will see that some enemies are best attacked with a certain sword. Likewise, choose the right sword to shoot through walls to gain otherwise inaccessible sections of the castle. Again, the armour types can be used to suit the situation you find yourself in. For example, the Armour of Water will allow you to walk through the dripping water hazards unharmed.

Along your way, you will encounter guardians that block your path. All provide great challenge and variety and help immerse the player into the world.

You will notice the music will not play throughout, but cease and switch to sfx only, then restart again when entering a new area. I think I would have personally preferred music and sfx combined with an option to have just sfx. Or when just playing sfx, I would have liked more, eg. jump sound, land sound etc. For me, it sounded a tad sparse when the music ended. That's about the only minor negative thing I have to say.

This game was a joy to play and the more I played, the more I understood what a marvellous game it is. This would have been a super hit back in the glory days. It's professional and very well thought out and implemented. We are so lucky to have such dedicated teams working on such titles for a grandad of a machine. Everything about this game screams "QUALITY!". Fantastic stuff.



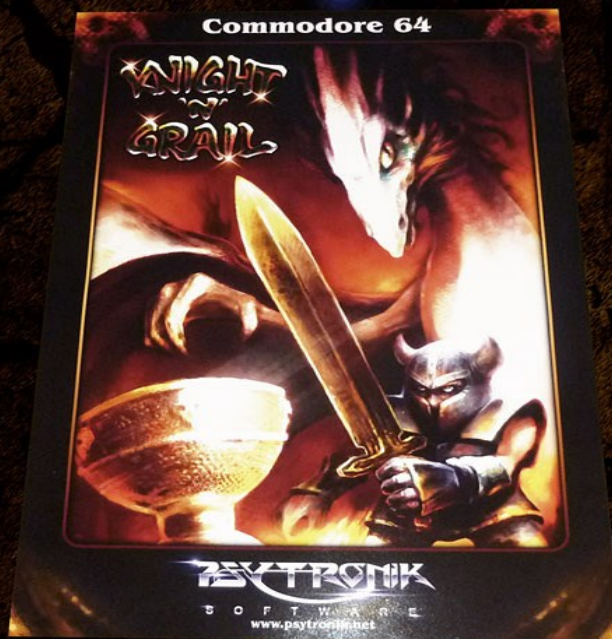
KNIGHT 'n' GRAIL

ULTIMATE EDITION

COMMODORE
64 / 128



RETRO
GAMER
SYNTHESIZER



ULTIMATE EDITION CONTENTS:
Knight 'n' Grail (C64 Game) · Soundtrack CD
Glossy Poster · Map · Keyring · Stickers · Badge

PSYTRONIK
SOFTWARE



FEATURES:

- Simple to use plug-in smart interface
- Safely connect Sega MegaDrive/Genesis, Nintendo SNES/NES joypads, or other controllers
- Enhances game play with a number of on-the-fly selectable gaming enhancement modes
- Works out-of-the-box with Commodore, Atari and other compatible systems

CONNECTIVITY:

- Provides diode protection to Commodore and Atari systems
- Direct connect to Sega controllers
- (via adaptors) Provides connection to other controllers such as SNES, NES, PC Wheels, flight yokes, 8-button joypads, and more...

ENHANCEMENT MODES:

(buttons used depend on controller attached to 64JPX)

- Fire and auto-fire
- Racing – buttons or triggers for acceleration and braking
- Waddle modes – sports game left/right waddle simulation
- Creep modes – platform or run-n-gun movement slow-down

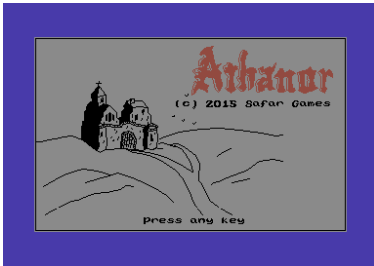
64JPX is basically a small interface that was designed to rejuvenate the way you play games on Commodore, Amiga and Atari compatible systems.

This little piece of hardware allows you to safely connect SEGA Genesis/MegaDrive, Nintendo NES/SNES joypads and other controllers to your retro system, while improving gameplay with a number of on-the-fly selectable play modes.



www.64hdd.com/64jpx/

Reset Mini-Bytes!



After the Athanor title screen, good things await! First puzzle is to find that elusive 'any' key!

"Athanor is a nice start to what should be a promising trilogy. It is moody, difficult and at times illogical. A true 80's adventure experience!"



Athanor opening screen.
Spoiler alert - go north!

Athanor - The Awakening Safar Games, 31/12/2015 Commercial

<http://www.safargames.fr/>

<http://www.lemon64.com/forum/viewtopic.php?t=58363>



Athanor is a new text adventure from French developer Safar Games. It is the first part in what is planned to be a trilogy of adventures. Originally released on the Oric, Safar Games have since ported Athanor to multiple retro platforms, including the C64.

The game takes place in a mysterious 12th century abbey. The protagonist is a Franciscan monk, who has been sent to the abbey to discover the cause of some mysterious events. Initially, the author doesn't volunteer much information to the player so the onus is on you to make discoveries regarding the plot.

Athanor plays like a traditional text adventure from the 80's. There is a simple verb/noun parser, location graphics and a few special commands, such as an ability to combine objects to make a new one, which adds to the challenge.

Everything that should be there is there (the location graphics are very nice!) and the game has been well put together, so it's up to the story and the puzzles to set Athanor apart. The story is mysterious enough to keep you interested. The puzzles themselves can be quite tricky and lead to frustration (when don't they), but I never was the most skilful text adventure player despite my love for the genre.

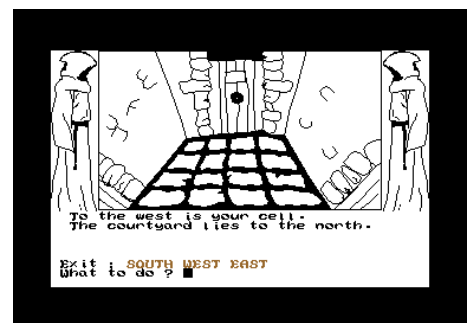
I liked the inclusion of physical clues within the game box, including a beautifully illustrated layout of the abbey and a real piece of snake skin!

Overall, Athanor is a nice start to what should be a promising trilogy. It is moody, difficult and at times illogical. A true 80's adventure experience!

One bonus point for the incredible packaging and contents too!

To order Athanor, contact Safar Games via email (eric@safargames.fr). There is a preview available on [CSDB](#).

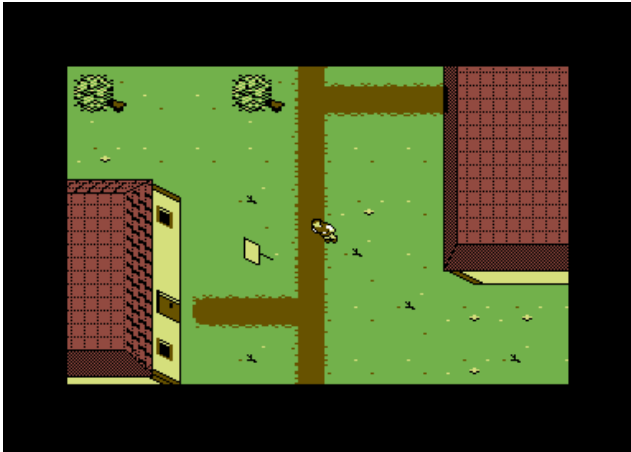
7/10
Unkle K



Time of Silence V1.0

Claus, 19/10/2015

Freeware

<http://csdb.dk/release/?id=142153>

I will be totally honest, I had no previous knowledge of this game (yep, shame on me). Originally titled "Zeit der Stille" and claiming the second spot in the F64 Game Competition of 2015, made even more impressive by the fact that it is all the work of one person "Claus". This version (currently v1.0) has been translated to English and has various bug fixes and the combat made little more difficult to boot.

"Time of Silence", set in the aftermath of an epidemic that wiped out most of human civilisation, is a top down adventure game, with all the features you would expect from this type of game. It's been many a year since I played a game of this type, and boy did it show!

The game features great presentation with some lovely background music, all backed up a nice control system, which is all joystick controlled. The first half of the game is all about interaction with the characters and environment with the second part being mainly combat based. There's also a game save feature that can be called upon at any time (not during combat, sorry).

I initially felt frustrated by the combat system as it appeared to be random on some occasions but once I got into the swing of things it all became a much more enjoyable experience and I managed to complete the

game in a couple of hours (no spoilers here), so the more experienced adventure gamer should finish it in a much shorter time.

All in all, it's superbly presented little adventure game that I really enjoyed getting to grips with and has inspired me to play more of this type of game. I look forward to the sequel.

7.5/10

Craig

Awakening

Endurion, Spider Jerusalem, The USER,

31/8/2015

Freeware

<http://csdb.dk/release/?id=140959>

Awakening is a new release that was written for the Forum64 Game Competition: Adventures compo. It features some brilliant graphics and appropriate sound effects. You start on a simple mission to deliver a package... and this is where it all goes wrong, and you're thrown into an adventure that will put you on a bit of an edge.

Controls are easy with just the joystick to move your character around the world, tapping the fire button allows you to then perform an action. Again, using the joystick to select one. Everything is covered here, with multiple options to get everything done. The only issue that brings down my opinion of this game was the collision detection, where I couldn't walk through scenery such as the leaves of a tree, or trying to interact with small

objects, where precision placement required.

Playing through this I did get hooked, apart from the niggles with collision. The sound really sets the mood and hints at when things are getting worse. The art style is great, and the game is easy to get into, with puzzles to solve and an adventure to get through. It's a worthy adventure and great to see this style of game getting created again.

6/10

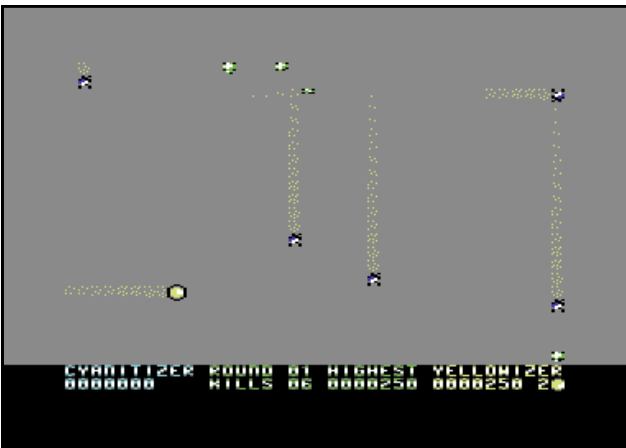
Raj

Redrunner

Aleksi Eben, 23/9/2007

Freeware

<http://csdb.dk/release/?id=53708>



As the name happens to suggest, Redrunner (along with its prequel Greenrunner) are both inspired by the classic series of Llamasoft games. Except in this case, both of these games have been turned up to 11.

The gameplay is straightforward: Clear each of the 100 levels by blasting the bugs crawling down the screen. Once you take out enough bugs, as tracked by the counter on screen - you move onto the next stage!

It makes it sound simple enough, but really, it's just the tip of the surface. Sure, the early stages happen to be rather straightforward, but as you start clearing levels, they'll start to include falling obstacles, or mess about with your sense of time. That's right - there are levels

which mess about with time, all on your humble C64!

Thankfully, when confronted with levels like that, you also have power-ups galore: Apples which turn everything into mushrooms to be blasted away, Fishbones which cause everything to explode, and finally Vodka which gives you temporary invincibility and rapid fire!

On top of that, there's also simultaneous two player support, meaning you can grab a friend and take on the bugs together, and hopefully clear a few more of those levels.

All in all, if you're a fan of Jeff Minter's work, or in general a fan of games involving some very fast paced blasting, then you'll really want to check Redrunner out, conveniently available in a two-pack with Greenrunner from Psytronik (on tape and disk) and RGCD (on cartridge), for those of you who enjoy collecting physical releases.

8.5/10

Rob

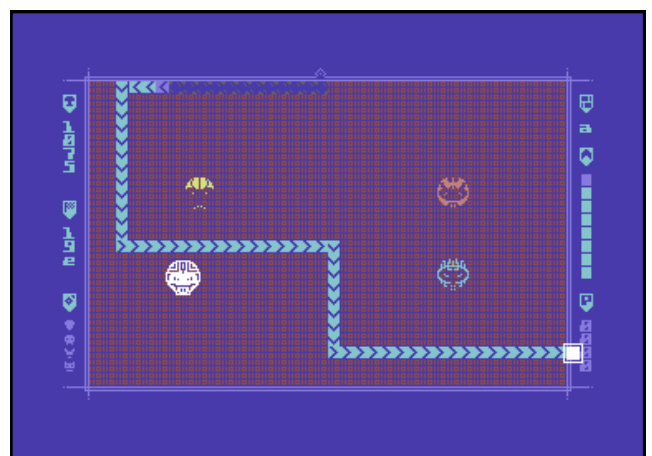
MAH!

Retream, 9/8/2015

Donationware

<http://www.retream.com/MAH/>

<http://csdb.dk/release/?id=140356>



MAH is the latest game from the crew at Retream, best known by C64 fans for QUOD INIT EXIT, amongst their games on other platforms.

After the ApocalypShield is activated by fanatics, humanity has 90 minutes to shut it down and save world. Which is where you come in. Between you and it however are a number of bitwalls, which you need to bust through to save the day.

Each bitwall consists of a number of phases - ranging from collecting bitbricks, collecting pieces of a password, collecting keys, along with blasting the Lockhead to open a port to the next bitwall.

Whilst I love the concept, playing it was another matter as I found it frustrating. It should be a pick-up-and-play game, but it's obtuse, and the enemy movements start far too fast for my liking. The character based gameplay doesn't help, as your high movement speed means you have to react quickly to make precise moves to line up with the items.

The presentation is top-notch, doing a superlative job of placing you into the mindset of saving the world. For me though, the frustration just gets in the way of enjoying it.

5/10
Rob

The Story of US Gold
Fusion Retro Books, 2015
Commercial

<http://www.fusionretrobooks.com/>



Chris Wilkins is back once more and, having successfully documented the history of Ocean Software, this time he's taken on arguably the only 80s' software company

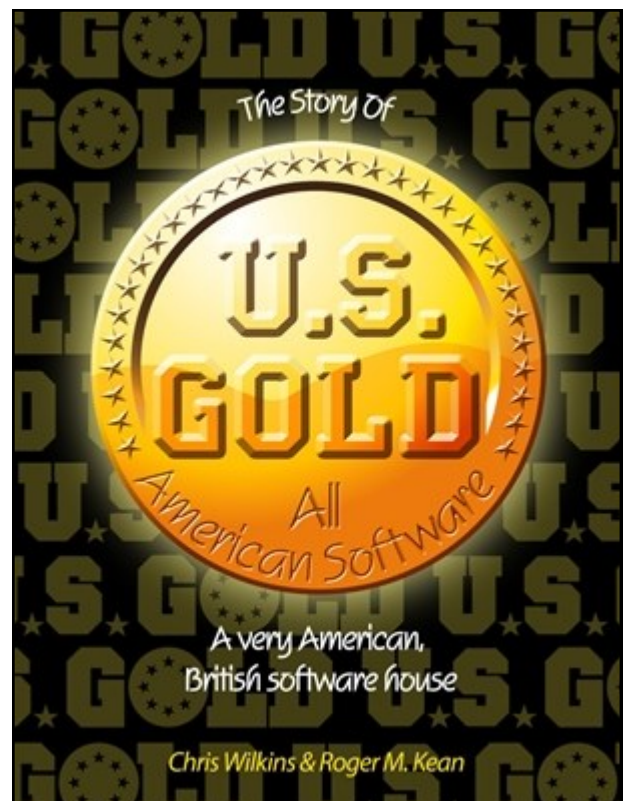
of comparable size... US Gold. It's a mighty task, so how has Chris done with it?

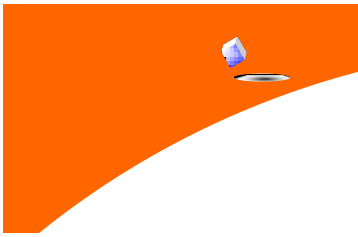
As you might expect, the answer is "very well". Featuring recollections from head honcho Geoff Brown and many other people important to the US Gold story, the first half of the book charts the rise and fall of the company while the book's second half features recollections from more than thirty people who worked there or produced games for them.

If I wanted to be picky I'd ask for a few more stories from individuals... for example, at the back of the book there's an interview with Steve Fitton which says he "has many a story to tell about those he worked with - for now here we just have the two". I want more of Steve's stories!

Still, the accounts that are included are, well, gold. It's never less than interesting to hear insights from the people who were responsible for creating and feeding our gaming addiction. The highlight for me is Dennis Caswell talking about Impossible Mission but there are plenty of Gold nuggets to be found here.

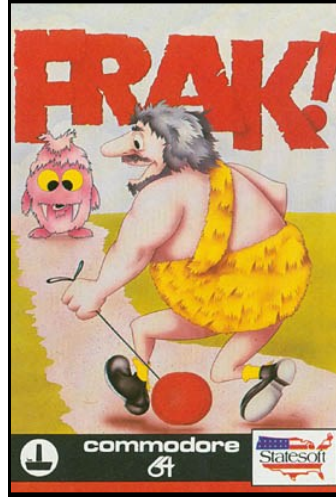
Paul





Format Wars!

By Last Chance



Game: Frak!
Publisher: Aardvark
Year: 1984

Game concepts by DCE, OMP & BOF
Designed and programmed by Nick "Orlando"
Pelling for the Acorn BBC Micro in 1984, and
converted for the Acorn Electron in 1986.

Converted for the Commodore 64 by Jason
Perkins, Anthony Clarke and Mark Rodgers,
and published by Statesoft in 1985.

"So you might wonder, what makes me like the game at all? Well, I'm a sucker for cheapness, and this game has it in spades."

INTRODUCTION & GAME STATUS

I've been trying to put our C64 against a different machine for each Format Wars article, whenever possible, and since it's the sixth article in the series already, it's inevitable that the game under the magnifying glass should be a more obscure one. I never knew much about the Acorn computers, since we didn't get them here in Finland. However, believe it or not, Frak! was one of my favourite platformers on the C64 back in the day, because it was deceptively simplistic in its mechanics, but completely unique in certain ways. Finding out only recently, that it was originally made for the Acorn computers came to me as a bit of a shock, so of course I had to do a comparison of it as I test the original game for the first time.

Somehow, Frak! doesn't seem to be a particularly well remembered game, even though at the time, at least the Acorn-related gaming press took it with open arms. Electron User, in particular, gave the game a 10 out of 10. I couldn't find

any new reviews or ratings for either of the Acorn versions - even MobyGames didn't have a single vote for the game, so it certainly feels like an obscurity now. The C64 version only has a score of 5.7 out of 41 votes at Lemon64, so it doesn't look very promising. But, this article is about comparing the versions, not about seeing whether it's a good game or not.

DESCRIPTION & REVIEW

In Frak!, you take the role of Trogg the caveman - or perhaps just an unnamed trogg, caveman-like creature, whose only purpose in life is to fend off hails of descending daggers, heat-seeking balloons and the evil Bunyip with his trusty yo-yo. Yes, that's right, a frickin' yo-yo. Supposedly this game takes place on another planet, where the yo-yo has been invented before the wheel, and is considered a weapon. And you might ask, what are the evil Bunyip? I can only say, they are the different kinds of groups of evil, unmoving nasties that inhabit each



Electron Vs BBC Micro Vs C64.
The Acorns and Commodore go head to head!

level, and cannot be described properly without witnessing them yourself. All this strangeness aside, Frak! is not much more than just another side-scrolling platformer with some puzzle elements, in a never-ending line of other puzzle-platformers, and it's very similar to numerous other Acorn-originated puzzle-platformers.

So you might wonder, what makes me like the game at all? Well, I'm a sucker for cheapness, and this game has it in spades. It's a silly idea with a silly representation, and an often unforgivingly stupid playability, but it is playable, and most of all, charming. That said, it's certainly not what you would call a good game by any actual standards, but it's worth a look at, just for a couple of laughs, if nothing else.

LOADING

Originally, all the versions of Frak! only came on cassette, although it was later included on some compilations, so it can be found on disk as well. But here are the loading times for all the available tape versions:

BBC Micro, original: 2 min 53 sec

ELECTRON, v1.1: 4 min 31 sec

ELECTRON, v2: 4 min 33 sec

ELECTRON, Play It Again Sam compilation: 5 min 15 sec

C64, original: 4 minutes, sharp.



Loading screens BBC Micro



Loading screens. Left: Electron Right: C64

If you haven't played the game on an ACORN computer yet, be sure to keep note of the controls shown to you during the game's loading sequence. Apart from the original Aardvark release, every version includes a loading picture, which is more or less fitting for the game, but not completely truthful to the in-game graphics.

Wikipedia says that the game had a copy protection system, which would make illegal copies not load the game properly, but instead make the computer play a fully polyphonic rendition of either "Trumpet Hornpipe" on the BBC Micro, or "Yakety Sax" on the Electron. Of course, having polyphonic music played during loading isn't much of a wonder to us C64 users, but since the Electron could only play a single note at a time, the 50 Hz interrupt-driven note-switching polyphony was something exciting for the Acorn fans, particularly for the loading segments. Through emulation, these wonders are practically impossible to reproduce, of course.

PLAYABILITY

Despite the strange premise of Frak!, it is a relatively simple game to actually play. You just need to follow a few simple rules. The main objective is to collect all the keys from the level before the timer runs out. When the timer runs out, the level turns dark, making it harder to see everything, and your weapon is made ineffective. Trogg can jump straight up, left or right, but he can only drop diagonally for a certain height at max (less than his own height), so you need to learn the angle he drops in. Unfortunately, the game fails at being constant in its rules from time to time, and in certain places, you can only drop straight down.

The ladders have their own rather peculiar set of rules. Trogg can climb ladders up and down where available, but he cannot grab a ladder from mid-fall, and even in mid-jump, he tends to be a bit selective as to when he is able to grab a ladder and when he isn't. At least on the C64, he can pass a ladder when jumping, when you choose not to grab a ladder - this is not

possible on either ACORN version. On the ACORN versions, though, he can grab a ladder directly adjacent to him, so when in doubt, try to enter an adjacent ladder when still standing on the platform next to it - just try to get near enough without falling. On the C64 version, the level layouts have been altered so that there is more room for error, but then there are no adjacent ladders either. Also, Trogg's position when climbing ladders doesn't automatically adjust to the centre of the ladders on the C64, which can sometimes prove useful. Then again, Trogg likes to drop down from the ladders on the C64 some steps before he reaches the bottom of the ladder he's on, which can cause some unnecessary troubles - something that both the ACORN versions handle nicely, as they actually give you room for movement even after Trogg has reached the bottom of the ladder with his feet.

Your unlikely weapon, the yo-yo, is worth experimenting with, because it can go a certain length, but you need to keep the fire button down in order to make it go as far as it possibly can. Releasing the fire button earlier will make the yo-yo roll back when you want it to. The yo-yo can be used to deflect any sort of object that can harm you, including enemies, balloons and daggers, but in order to successfully deflect a balloon or a dagger, you must hit these objects with a perfect timing, otherwise the offenders will continue as they were. In these cases, it is worth keeping in mind, that when you are using the yo-yo, Trogg cannot move simultaneously, and the relative slowness of the yo-yo can prove fatal if you're not careful.

The main puzzle element in Frak! is figuring out, how to navigate through each level successfully. Apart from the first level, you should be able to solve the levels in various routes, but learning the level lay-outs and how to be comfortable in moving Trogg around the levels without too many falls can prove to be a fair challenge. Added to that, the randomly appearing falling daggers and upwards floating balloons can make your progression unnecessarily difficult on

occasion. At least in the ACORN versions, you are given a fair warning of where the daggers and balloons are coming from, before they eventually do. Despite that, on the C64, the balloons and daggers are easier to deflect and avoid for a few reasons: you can drop further way down than on either of the ACORN versions, the daggers fall in a more suitable angle for you to deflect them (note that for the ELECTRON version, this has been fixed as well), and the balloons move slower.

Something else worth noting between the three versions is the lack of unnecessary repetition in the ELECTRON version. In the other two versions, if you manage to kill a few nasties, but get killed before reaching the final key, you are required to kill all the nasties and collect the keys again. In the Electron version, you do restart the level from the beginning spot after getting killed, but everything you did before will stay as they were. There are also some exclusive special tricks in the Electron version, which allow you to start from any difficulty level and any screen, and you can even make Trogg start from a chosen spot after death, if you know how to.

Due to the BBC MICRO and ELECTRON's graphical ability related differences, the ELECTRON version was made monochrome in order to reach the same video speed as the more able BBC MICRO. This freed up some RAM, making it possible to feature extra levels, bringing the total to nine against the BBC Micro version's three, and C64's six. The Electron version also features a screen designer (which you can access by pressing ESC and RETURN simultaneously during play), which isn't featured in either the BBC original nor the C64 conversion. Speaking of graphics, the C64 version feels very different due to the way it looks, but practically, it plays very much the same, apart from what I've already mentioned.

In addition to the basic set of levels, the game features different difficulty levels, all of which alter the gameplay in some unique fashion. At least on the C64, you get to play the levels in mirrored mode, meaning that the levels (not your controls) are now backwards; next, you get

to dodge bigger balloons and later on, swinging balloons, and finally, Trogg goes slow-motion. According to Wikipedia, the BBC version features a 90-degree rotated version of the three-level loop, another rotated loop with black-and-white graphics, and also a loop where the display is being flashed on and off in three second intervals. I couldn't find any information on the Electron version's difficulty levels, nor could I get to witness them myself, as getting through the nine actual levels was quite enough for me, thank you very much.

Regardless of my lack of further experience with the game, I think it's safe to say that the ELECTRON version is the most easily accessible one, and offers the most content as well - not only in the number of basic levels, but also in the form of a level editor. The C64 conversion is the smoothest one around, and is in some ways easier to play than the original, but in the ways that the C64 version tops the BBC MICRO version, the ELECTRON version strangely does it even better.

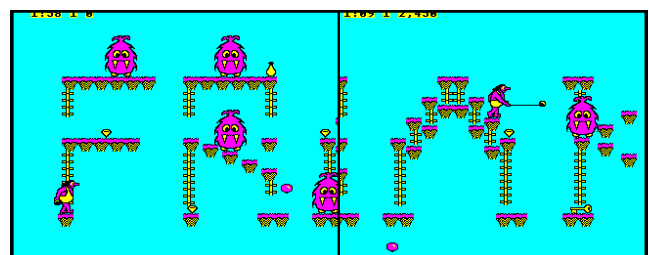
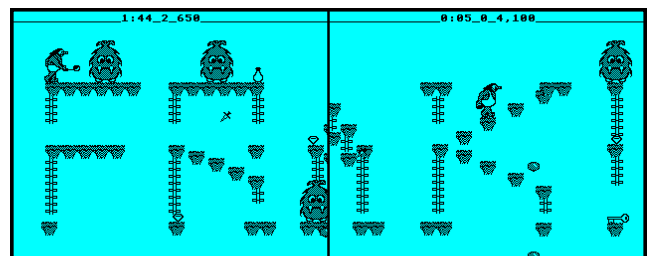
1. ACORN ELECTRON
2. COMMODORE 64
3. ACORN BBC MICRO

GRAPHICS

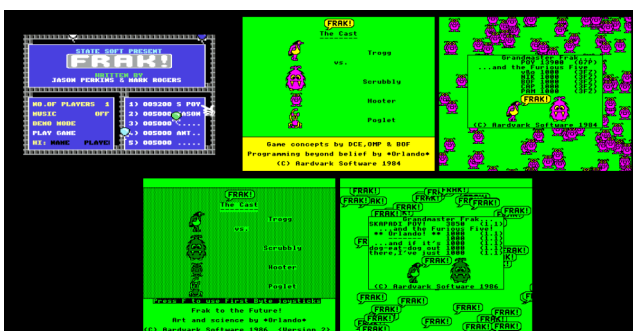
Although Frak! definitely oozes mediocrity from its every pore when it comes to playability, it's the graphics that make it such a charming and silly game to experience. Again, they're not all that impressive, just goofy enough to draw you in, and keep you hooked at least until you have seen all the game's graphics in their basic form.

Both ACORN versions show the cast of characters in the title screen, but the title screen only gets shown once after the game has loaded, which is right after the game has loaded and before you start the game. Unlike on the C64, where the title screen features the high scores table, the ACORN versions have a separate screen for it, which on the BBC MICRO has the colouring of the level you last played, and the ELECTRON version sticks with the blue version (with the "Frak!" speech bubbles) due to memory restrictions. The C64 title screen looks quite busy with the constantly scrolling grey background grid, all the differently coloured balloons floating up, the flashing hand-cursor and the text scroller at the bottom left corner.

Although the C64 conversion is the only one of the lot that has a "Get Ready" screen that shows up after each death, I don't really think showing it here would serve much purpose, since it doesn't have graphics as such. So, we shall move on to the first level.



Level 1: Electron (top), BBC (middle), C64 (bottom)



Level 1 is constructed from ladders and platforms in such a way, that the elements form the word "FRAK!" - a suitable enough start for the game. Although you wouldn't expect it to be so, the level design is slightly different on the C64 compared to the ACORN versions. Not only are you able to drop from the second-to-rightmost platform on the letter 'A' to the rightmost one, but the bottom right platform of the letter 'A' is wider and features another enemy, and the topmost ladder from the letter 'K' is taken off for the C64 version as well.

As for the graphics themselves, I think it's pretty obvious without me saying it, but still: the ACORN versions only scroll left and right, as the graphics are in such a completely different scale compared to the C64 version, as to make it possible to show everything necessarily vertically. The C64 version features wide pixels and a small action screen, making it necessary to scroll the screen in all four principal directions. In other words, it's very blocky, but multi-colour, and while the scrolling is very good, your field of vision is sadly restricted. At least you can shoot the yo-yo further from what the screen actually shows. The ELECTRON version's graphics differ from the BBC MICRO version by being monochrome (well, the info panel also looks slightly different), and the scrolling is segmented instead of being constant push-scrolling.

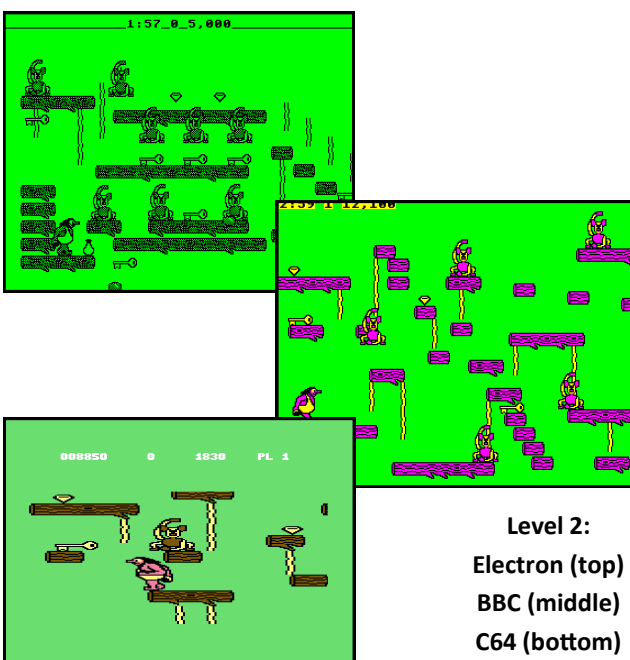
Level 2 is where the differences in level design start to show up properly. Whereas the C64 version follows the original quite faithfully, the ELECTRON version deviates quite radically from it, but they're all different enough in closer inspection.

Otherwise, the only notable difference can be seen on the C64, where there are now some different colours than what the BBC version is able to produce, namely brown. The only colour that changes in the BBC version is the background colour - everything else is just the same old yellow, black and purple. Still, the BBC version does look better on the whole.

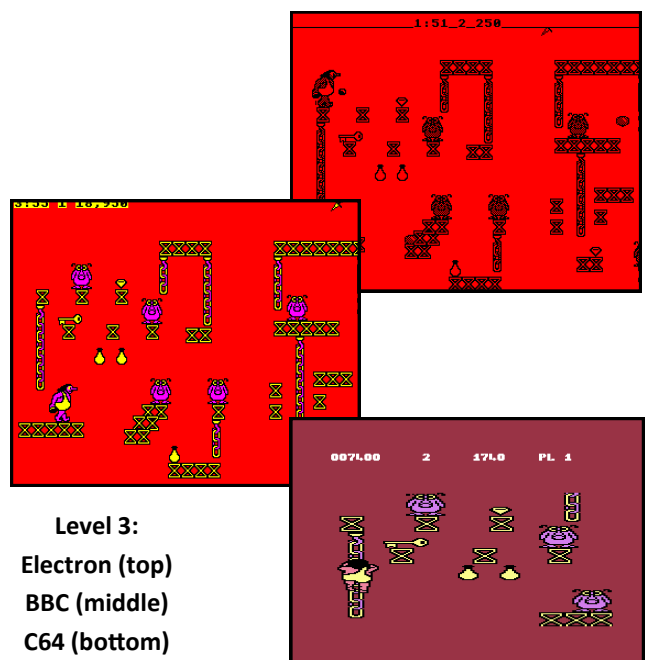


We've done it!! Left to Right: BBC, Electron, C64

Once you have completed a level, a message is printed into the middle of the screen, saying "We've done it!", and Trogg exits the stage right. In the BBC version, the background stays in the back, while in the ELECTRON version, the background vanishes. The C64 version throws a very different looking setup of the same idea at you, featuring probably the biggest pixelation of Trogg ever seen in action.

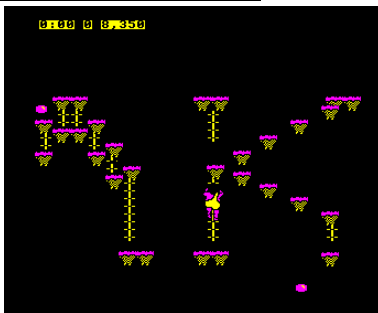


Level 2:
Electron (top)
BBC (middle)
C64 (bottom)



Level 3:
Electron (top)
BBC (middle)
C64 (bottom)

Further levels only give you similar variations in graphics - different looking enemies, different colours, different looking platforms and ladders and such. Considering that the BBC MICRO version only has variations of three levels, it logically follows that it has the least graphics to offer. Thus, the C64 version offers the most variations in colour and even enemy design, while the ELECTRON version only excels in the number of layouts.



Darkness! Top to bottom: Electron, BBC, C64

What could be considered the final point of interest here, is that the screen turns dark when the timer runs out. That's all there is to it, really - the background colour changes from whatever it is to black, and everything else remains as they were. On the BBC MICRO and C64, this effect only gives them a more colourful feel, while the ELECTRON version somehow feels even more monochrome than it already is.

All three versions have their pros and cons, as always. The BBC MICRO version has the prettiest graphics overall, although it has some flickering issues - as does the ELECTRON version. The ELECTRON version features graphics of similar quality, but has very little in terms of colour (at least, at one time on screen), and the segmented scrolling feels a bit strange at first. The C64 version has the biggest and blockiest graphics of the lot, but also has the most variety in colour, and easily the smoothest scrolling. Strangely enough, the best option would be to play the Electron version on a BBC Micro, so the game speed would improve, and most of the flickering issues would diminish notably. Still, in their natural habitats, here's how I would line up the three versions:

1. ACORN BBC MICRO
2. ACORN ELECTRON
3. COMMODORE 64

SOUNDS

Frak! isn't one of those games that you play because you want to hear good music or great sound effects. And there is a simple reason for this: because the game's soundtrack is not very interesting. Even in the original, the music is kind of generic, although very energetic (more so than the game itself), early 80's arcade-like music. Yes, there's a new tune for every one of its three levels, but it's all single-channel beeping and can hardly be called impressive. At least there are some bleepy sound effects that are played on top of the single-channel music, so it's not quite as cheap as it could have been. But as I hinted earlier, the cheapness factor is certainly high in this game, and most of it gives it a certain sort of a charm.

Of course, the ELECTRON version does it even cheaper - it's all single-channel beeper sounds, as if you were playing a really old DOS game or something. The music is still there, and the sound effects are there, but sound more basic and the sound effects take priority over the music. I'm not sure why, but for this game, I find it more fitting. It doesn't

sound as good, to be sure, but it fits the overall cheapness of the game better. But for the sake of logic, I shall give the BBC version more value. In both ACORN versions, you can toggle the music on and off by pressing Q and S respectively during play.

The C64 version starts off with no music by default, which can seem a bit curious. The music can be toggled from the main menu, but after playing the game for a few minutes, you might want to choose the quieter option. Not because the music is so awful - it isn't really. It's easily the best version around, when it comes to the quality of the music and sound effects (more channels, better sounds), but the music still feels way too hectic for the game, as it does in the other two versions as well. There are a bit more sound effects in the ACORN versions, but the C64 version has the best music, if you feel like listening to it. And the sound effects aren't that bad either, there just aren't that many.

1. COMMODORE 64
2. ACORN BBC MICRO
3. ACORN ELECTRON

OVERALL

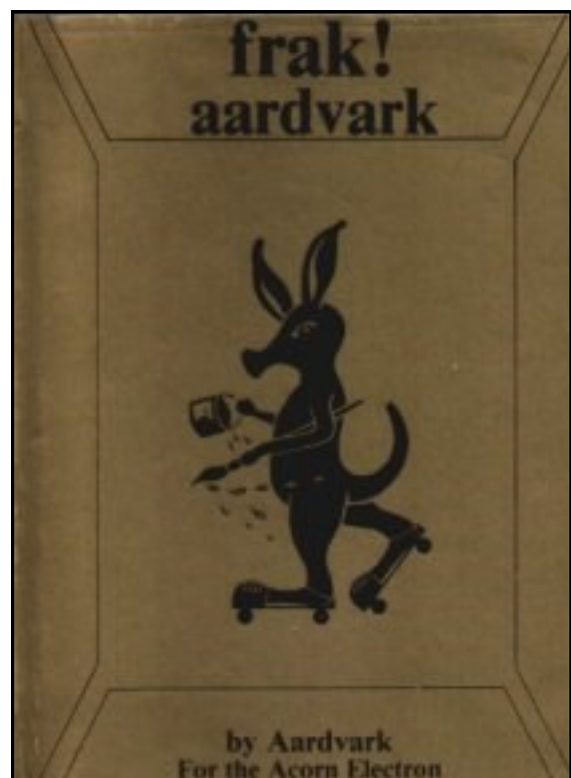
Of course, it has to be kept in mind, that the ELECTRON version is the latest one to come out of the three, which gives it a fair amount of time for further development after the initial BBC MICRO release, and even the C64 conversion. Although it's clearly inferior to the other two in some aspects, it also has the most content and the most comfortable playability, and to me, the lack of technological advantages on the Acorn Electron only seem to emphasize Frak's mediocrities in a good way. This is a rare feat indeed, and I can only recommend it at least as much as the other two. But since my blog uses a blindly mathematical way of calculating the scores, this is how the three versions line up:

ACORN ELECTRON: Playability 3, Graphics 2, Sounds 1 = TOTAL 6

COMMODORE 64: Playability 2, Graphics 1, Sounds 3 = TOTAL 6

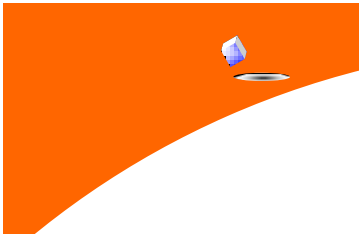
ACORN BBC MICRO: Playability 1, Graphics 3, Sounds 2 = TOTAL 6

Whatever you do, don't trust the scores. Try all the versions out by yourself and be the judge. My favoured option would be to play the ELECTRON version on a BBC MICRO, but of course I have a soft spot for the blocky C64 version because it's what I grew up with. It has to be said, though, that on both the Acorn computers, Frak! should be regarded as a classic, and for us C64'ers, it is nice to share some history with something so peculiar, yet so mediocre.



Visit Last Chance's Blog,
Finnish Retro Game Comparison Blog

<http://frgcb.blogspot.com.au/>



Reset...

Deep Thoughts

By Merman

```
PAUSE INIT DONE statement executed
to resume execution, type go. Other input will terminate the job.
go
Execution resumes after PAUSE.
WELCOME TO ADVENTURE!! WOULD YOU LIKE INSTRUCTIONS?

)
SOMEWHERE NEARBY IS COLOSSAL CAVE, WHERE OTHERS HAVE FOUND
FORTUNES IN TREASURE AND GOLD, THOUGH IT IS RUMORED
THAT SOME WHO ENTER ARE NEVER SEEN AGAIN. MAGIC IS SAID
TO WORK IN THE CAVE. I WILL BE YOUR EYES AND HANDS. DIRECT
ME WITH COMMANDS OF 1 OR 2 WORDS.
(ERRORS, SUGGESTIONS, COMPLAINTS TO CROWTHER)
(IF STUCK TYPE HELP FOR SOME HINTS)

YOU ARE STANDING AT THE END OF A ROAD BEFORE A SMALL BRICK
BUILDING. AROUND YOU IS A FOREST. A SMALL
STREAM FLOWS OUT OF THE BUILDING AND DOWN A GULLY.
```

"It runs on the most powerful graphics engine - imagination."

So says Sheldon Cooper in The Big Bang Theory, as he plays a classic text adventure in emulation. Is it worth going back and playing old games (often called interactive fiction) like that?

A long history links Colossal Cave to Myst to Minecraft Story Mode, taking in so many different machines and techniques. The common thread is puzzle solving. The best games have logical challenges, asking you to use an object or interact with other characters. The worst have sudden death situations or baffling puzzles.

These days we have the resources of the Internet and dedicated sites that can help us get past a puzzle. Using a walkthrough may not be everyone's idea of how to play, but there is no doubt it can save a lot of grief. But back in the day adventurers were on their own until the magazine columns printed hints and tips. Some games had built-in clues, or even printed booklets to help players.

Then in the second half of the 1980s the graphics race came to adventures. Classic titles The Pawn and Guild of Thieves are remembered for the glossy location images, but many fail to remember how well put

together these games were (with glossy extras in the box). For something different, try the real world drama of Corruption or the quirky comedy of Gnome Ranger.

The Graphic Adventure Creator is just one of the utilities that gave anyone the tools to make a game. Homebrew titles became an important part of keeping the adventure scene alive. But you still need the original ideas and clever puzzles to make your game distinctive.

So GO EAST, SIT AT KEYBOARD and PLAY GAMES. Enjoy!



Visit Merman's SEUCK archive, **SEUCK Vault**, for hundreds of downloadable SEUCK creations.
<http://www.seuckvault.co.uk/>

A Commodore Christmas

By Lenard R. Roach



Lenard was good all year, and we know what happens at Christmas when you're good!

*"Day after day I didn't stop talking about getting a Commodore disk drive for the holiday. Some people I talked to actually told me to "shut the **** up" about this disk drive."*



Don't worry Lenard, we've all been there!



Going over the last fifteen years of using the Commodore and Commodore products, nothing gave me more surprise than that one Christmas day back in the early 90s when my then wife threw me for a Commodore loop.

When I got my first Commodore 64, it was a hand-me-down from a family friend who no longer had a use for the machine. Whether she updated her computer to something more modern or not I cannot say, all I know is that I asked for a computer so I could word process my skits and plays and she saw herself in a position to surrender one to me. This poor C64 was the bare bones basic machine as one could get. It had an old MPS 802 non-graphic printer and used a tape drive as the software transfer device. This was not a problem at first since I never used a Commodore before and cassettes were \$3.99 for a pack of three at the local K-Mart. Everything was very affordable for me to run this set up. Unfortunately, I took over the living room television as my monitor so anytime the wife wanted to watch a show, I would have to log off the Commodore by spending the fifteen minutes or so saving my work to tape. Again, the makers of the

computer foresaw this and made the RF modulator to change between TV and computer so Mrs. Roach could watch half of her program before I had to switch back to computer to check if it was done saving. Of course to verify that my data was saved to tape, I had to rewind the tape to the front and tell the computer to verify data, and the fifteen minute process would start over. Again it was back to TV to catch the second half of the program being viewed. I think you get the idea how this love triangle worked as, every once in a while, I would have to bow out of computing to give Mrs. Roach her time to watch TV.

As the 5 1/4" disks were becoming more and more popular, the use of tape drive programs became harder and harder to find at the local computer store. Type-in programs from magazines that didn't require the use of a disk drive were the best way for the Roach family to get games and productivity programs for the Commodore 64 back in the early days, but even then, with Speedscript 3.0 as my main word processor and a stack of a dozen cassette tapes with games and manuscripts, the need for a disk drive was becoming more and more prevalent. Christmas was coming up that year, so I put a bug into everyone's ear that the one thing that Lenard wanted for Christmas was a 1541 (or its 5.25" equivalent) disk drive. Day after day I didn't stop talking about getting a Commodore disk drive for the holiday. Some people

I talked to actually told me to "shut the **** up" about this disk drive.

Ladies and gentlemen, I was anal expressive when it came to letting people know about my need for a disk drive so I could continue my work as a (hopefully) aspiring writer. I told both friends and family alike as well, as I am sure, some total strangers. Finally, in a bit of frustration, my wife looked at me in disgust and told me that I am getting a typewriter for Christmas and that was that. I didn't need a typewriter! I had a word processor in the Commodore and I could do what I needed with that, so again I pursued the need for a disk drive not a typewriter. When a present ended up under the tree that was about as big as a manual typewriter, I surrendered. Instead of getting the all-important disk drive I needed, I got a typewriter, and I'd better get that thought into my head. Once in a while, over the next few weeks I mentioned the disk drive, and each and every time Mrs. Roach shut me down with the typewriter under the tree. I was such a richard cranium over getting this device that the wife had to remind me that this holiday was mainly for the kids so I should start think about our 4-year-old son and what we should get him for the holiday. I consented and, acting like a 4-year-old for the rest of the Advent season, I went around to the various department stores with the wife looking at toys, clothes, and games for my son. Before the actual holiday arrived, I got my head out of my bum long enough to see a little daylight and get Mrs. Roach some things for Christmas. But oh, the fact that I was not getting that strongly coveted disk drive for Christmas burned in my soul was searing at me. I played back track for about two weeks telling everybody who knew I wanted a disk drive that I was getting a typewriter for Christmas. Most said that such a device was cheaper to get than the disk drive, and they were right; even parts for a manual typewriter was cheaper at the office supply store than going to the Commodore store in Overland Park, Kansas and getting a \$210 disk drive. Others told me that I deserved what I got for

being such an ass head about the disk drive so the downgrade was good for my pride and ego.



Christmas Day finally arrived. As my wife's parents, my mom, my son, my wife and I sat around the tree, I grabbed the typewriter box first, asking if I should open it up since I knew what it was. Mrs. Roach chided me, saying that it will be the LAST present you open since I was being such a baby about it for so many weeks. One by one and person by person, presents were passed out, opened, admired, and in some cases tried on for admiration. My in-laws were nice enough to get me a ten-pack of cassettes for both my music as well as my Commodore tape drive. I thanked them sincerely for the gift, knowing that the tape drive was going to be my computer companion for quite a while. With all the presents finally opened but the typewriter, I asked if I can open it now. Mrs. Roach had the packages marked 1 through 5, with 5 being the typewriter itself. She told me to open the packages starting with number one



and working my way down to the typewriter. One by one, each package was opened. One package was a disk notcher, which I didn't know what I was going to do with it. One was a disk file box, which I thought was to be used to organize my tapes since they were strewn all over the TV stand as I used them. Two packages were a stack of multi-colored 5.25" disks, which had me curious -- could package #5

be ...? No, I was told specifically and adamantly that I was not getting the disk drive. Chances were likely that Mrs. Roach got me a word processor that required the use of 5.25 disks to save the information on.

Now it was time to access package #5, the big one. I picked up the box and started to take off the wrapping. The ever-famous "chicken lips" C= glanced back at me, like saying, "Hello." As more of the paper came off, it was clear that I had been royally and perfectly duped. After the paper came off, my eyes started to fill with tears as in my hands was a brand-new, in the box, Commodore 1541 disk drive. I asked the wife, "How come so small?" She explained to me that this disk drive was a recent upgrade to the larger 1541 drives that required less space to run. Behind the 1541 logo was the double I symbol, indicating that this was the up-to-date 1541-II disk drive.

I went into meltdown mode instantly, hugging and kissing my wife over and over again as I showed her the disk drive she got me. I flashed the box to my in-laws, who didn't know what to think of the weird machine. My poor father-in-law, for a moment, thought I was disappointed that I got the disk drive and was ready to go out on December 26th and get me the typewriter. My mother-in-law explained that this was exactly what I was wanting for Christmas and not to bother a thing. My wife; so clever was she that she even convinced my son that the disk drive was indeed a typewriter so anytime I quizzed him about the "big" package, he would tell me it was a typewriter. This woman truly loved me, even through my own stupidity. I spent the rest of Christmas day working on transferring all my programs and writings, one at a time, from tape to disk and making my now useless tapes ready for use in my car as music tapes.

But this party isn't over yet. A day of retribution was at hand...

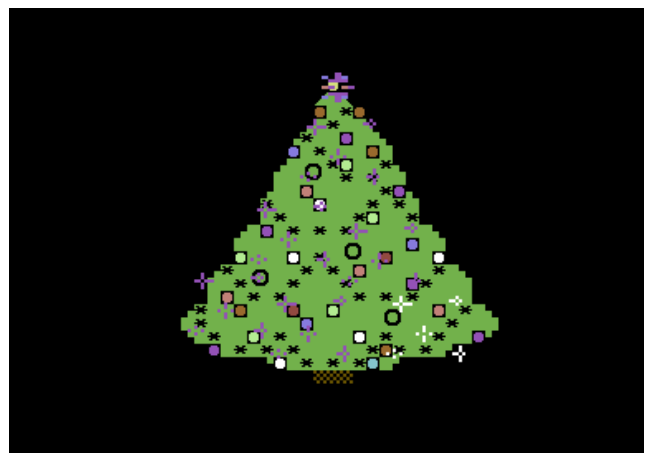
As life slowly started back up the following day, I ran into co-workers who smiled and asked, "So, how do you like the new typewriter?" I looked at them with a smile and said that she got me a very

special disk drive for my computer. "Yeah, we know," they said. "She had that thing bought since early November." Douchebags! Everybody knew I had that disk drive coming and they let me play the fool!

As the weeks wore on, I got phone calls from family and friends every day asking the same question. I can't believe that I made a butt face out of myself when Mrs. Roach had everything under control the whole time. I have never eaten so much shoe leather over something in my life, but I deserved it. From there on out I was thankful to get anything for the holidays and never questioned what was in packages again.

That 1541-II disk drive is well past gone now. I wore out the heads from all the constant use of loading and saving programs. I remember taking that drive to our Kansas City Commodore fix it guy several times and he replaced everything but the casing. That poor drive never worked right like it came from the factory that one Christmas day, but this much I'll say -- Commodore knew how to build computers during the day. No wonder I say, "Long live Commodore!"

Y'all come back now, ya hear?



Visit Lenard Roach's Homepage

<http://lenardroach.com/Home.php>

The Net

Commodore 8bit

<http://cbm8bit.com/>

Hand built by our esteemed Reset webmaster, Shane Wood, *Commodore 8bit* would have to be one of the most feature packed and exhaustive Commodore related sites on the internet.

Not content with hosting and preserving a large number of Commodore websites (for free, mind you, including the Reset homepage), as well as the [Commodore Banner Exchange](#), a resource of C64 related [articles](#) and an extensive list of Commodore related [web links](#), Commodore 8bit provides many other essential and handy services to the Commodore user.

Of most value and one of the sites earliest features are the exhaustive [search](#) capabilities. For the C64 alone, *Commodore 8bit* has indexed a massive amount of files, disk images and web sites to create the ultimate Commodore specific search engines. The site also provides file searching for other 8bit platforms across many different archives. It all works well and for the amount of times I have used it, it has very rarely let me down. If it's not there, it's probably not on the net. Also worth mentioning is the [SID music](#) search feature, which should probably be a part of the main search tab rather than a separate section.

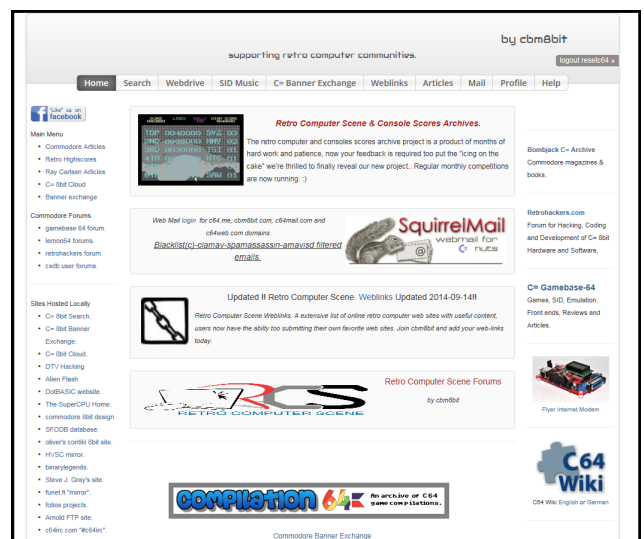
The [Webdrive](#) is a relatively new feature and allows account holders the ability to store their own Commodore disk images and files. This is a very handy feature that I have used extensively for Reset, including hosting the magazine PDF's and coverdisks. There is a 20mb file limit and it doesn't like you using some characters in the file names, but in the Commodore world of file archiving, this will rarely be a problem. Also there is a drag and drop disk image editor, a [disk image creator](#) and an interesting [D64 visualisation tool](#), which allows you to generate a graphic image of the disk data as it is laid out on the disk.

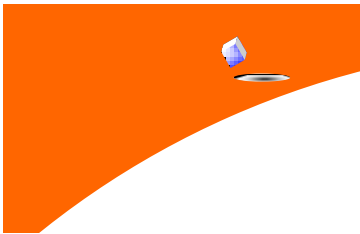
Commodore 8bit is also home to the fantastic [retro gaming computer and](#)

[console high score archive](#). This site allows users to post high scores for a large amount of formats and lists the top ten score submitters and players. It is here that Reset generates it's list of 'High Score Heroes' for each issue, so if you want to be featured, get posting! Shane occasionally hosts high score competitions and offers prizes for the winners. There is a rating and voting system to help try and weed out the cheaters and posters must also include a screen shot or photo to prove the score. The page works extremely well and is impressively built. Competition is also very competitive for certain games, so the site records are getting harder to beat.

Commodore 8bit is an essential C64 resource. The tools and features are all valuable and work well. On the whole, the site layout is a little dated and occasionally using some of the tools and features can be a bit clunky, with better offline tools available in some cases (such as DirMaster), but the functionality is there.

Overall, *Commodore 8bit* is a fantastic site that will hopefully remain active and continue to grow well into the future. Setting up an account is easy and from there you can gain full access to the sites features.





Under the Hood

By Ray Carlsen



Ray Carlsen is a Commodore enthusiast and has been involved in electronics for 60 years. Please visit Ray's [homepage](#) for the most up to date and complete versions of his articles.

EPROMS are not created equal, and neither are C64 motherboards. Ray Carlsen writes in to tell us about his experiments with this PLA replacement - C64 PLA chip replacement using an EPROM and adaptor. Take it away, Ray!

"The most common failure in the C64 has been IC U17, a pre-programmed 28 pin generic 82S100 programmable logic array or PLA."

A special "THANK YOU" goes to Francois Leveille for his contributions here! He now has a drop-in replacement for the C64 PLA: email him at eslapion@videotron.ca for "PLAnkton". They are \$12.67 each plus shipping and he uses PayPal for payment. He offers a 25% discount for 10 or more.

For those who still want to make their own replacement PLA with an EPROM,

read on...

FIRST, SOME HISTORY...

The supply of replacement ICs for Commodore computers has been shrinking since Commodore stopped making chips a few decades ago. Most of what you find now are used "pulls" from existing equipment, some good, some bad. The most common failure in the C64 has been IC U17, a pre-programmed 28 pin generic 82S100 programmable logic array or PLA.

That IC & the SID run very hot and should have been heat sunk. They were in later versions of the 64. Since the supply of obsolete un-programmed 82S100 ICs has likewise dried up, a way to replace the Commodore PLA with some other kind of device has been discussed many times on the

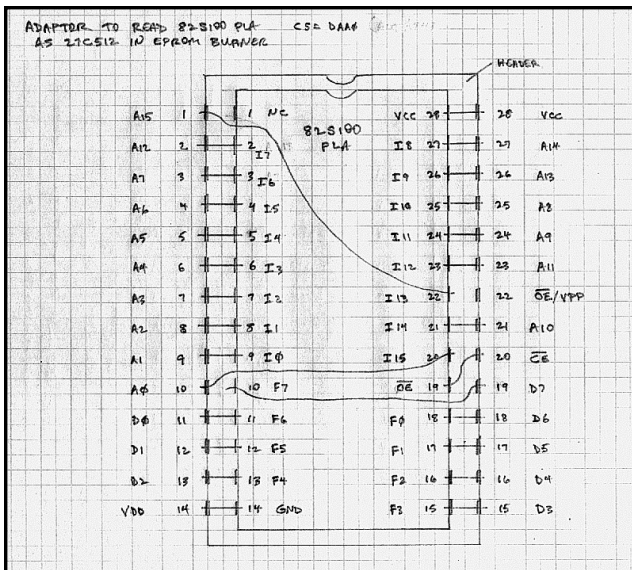
newsgroups and Commodore forums. Even the original PLA Commodore used over the years was not the same for all boards. That IC had to be tailored to match the increasing speed of other chips in later versions of the C64, and Commodore started making their own MOS chips with the 906114-01 number. They were slightly faster than the original 82S100 PLA chips and some boards needed to be "tailored" to correct the timing. Example: R42 and C204 on boards 250425 & 250466.

Note: the latest true C64C short board 250469 in the white case does not use the earlier PLA but a larger, more integrated IC. It runs cool and failures are rare. Only the earlier boards have the older PLA.

A 64K EPROM programmed with code from a working PLA and rewired via a circuit board or other adapter to cross-connect a few pins has had some success in duplicating the logic of the original PLA. Note that the code for the EPROM must match the pinout of the adapter that goes with it! The modification I found back then it took only a few pin swaps to make it work. One old 300nS 27512 UV EPROM worked in several boards with just a



single capacitor on the /CASRAM line but it's not as easy as that! It may boot fine but other problems often do arise.



Schematic of an adapter to read original PLA code.

Making the substitute PLA is pretty straightforward. With a few pins rewired via an adapter (schematic is readpla.jpg) I made with two "sandwiched" IC sockets, I used my EPROM burner to copy the code from a working PLA chip. The burner reads it as if it were a 27C512 EPROM and the resulting file pla.bin has a checksum of hex DAA0. That code was burned into a standard 27C512 EPROM. I then used another cross-wired adapter (schematic is eprompla.jpg) to install the substitute PLA in my C64.

Testing a fabricated PLA substitute involved

1. observing the bytes free on the opening screen to see if it's normal,
2. looking for "glitches", random colour shifts or odd characters anywhere on the screen while a program is running,
3. testing with several different cartridges such as Epyx FASTLOAD and CBM Jupiter Lander (which refused to load in one board when everything else seemed to work), and a passing grade using my C64 diagnostic cart.

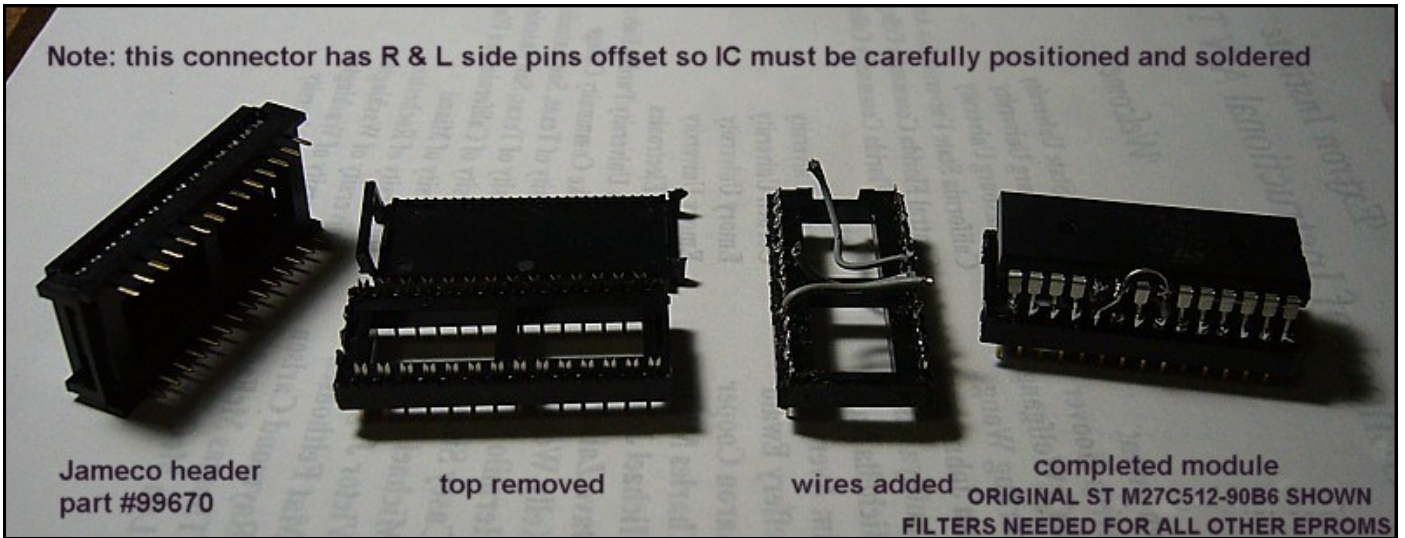
With a "burner" on my PC, I began

experimenting with various types of EPROMs when my stock of PLA chips was depleted. The original PLA averaged a rather speedy 50nS. The best information I had early on was that a very fast IC was needed to simulate it. Most reprogrammable UV EPROMs are much slower at 150 to 300nS and I already had some of those.

A one-time-programmable (OTP) Atmel AT27C512R45 seemed fast enough with its 45nS response time and they were cheap at the time, so a batch of the OTP chips was purchased and some adapters made out of "sandwiched" IC sockets. The resulting replacement ICs do work in many C64 boards but not in others, even ones with the same board number.

One of my C64 boards (250407) booted with just about any PLA substitute EPROM from the slowest 300nS to the fastest OTP but an earlier board was -very- fussy about a sub-PLA PLA. Results with those boards varied from blank screen to less than the normal bytes free at start-up to random character colour errors or program crashes... Common indicators of a failing OEM PLA or bad RAM. The sub-PLA could be made to work in some boards by replacing the VIC, the MPU and/or the CIAs. For example, a CPU with a later code date worked in a board with a sub-PLA whereas the earlier CPU chip wouldn't even boot up (blank screen). My oldest 64 board, a 1982 326298, gave me the most trouble. Most of the chips in it are early versions. Swapping some of them out with newer ones made that board work. I concluded that C64 ICs work within a narrow "window" of acceptable pulse timing, neither too fast nor too slow. The use of a substitute PLA in some boards obviously creates timing errors, some fatal (blank screen) and others producing subtle screen "glitches" and program crashes. I was later informed about problems that are not obvious with these tests alone.

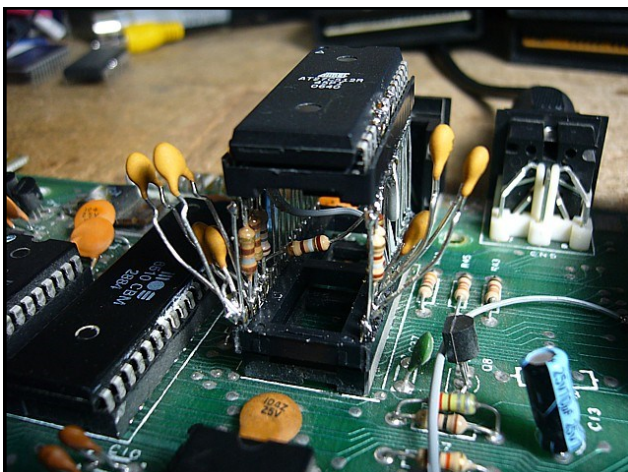
One early workaround I found was to add a small capacitor from ground to the replacement IC output pin 18, the /CAS line to the RAM, which adds a bit of delay to those pulses. Later C64 boards from the factory did just that... used a resistor-capacitor combination (82 ohms and 150pF)



The header I now use to make adapters.

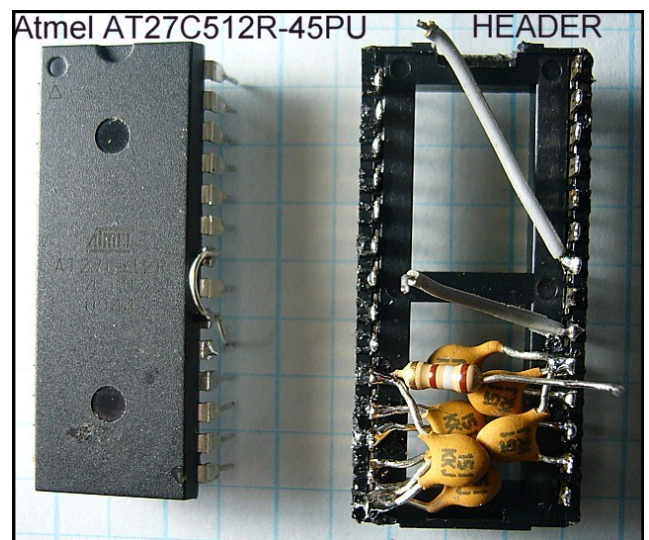
to create that delay as their new boards needed the compensation. One user found that an ST M27C512-90B6 EPROM was the best substitute using an EPROM only as a replacement PLA. I made up a bunch of those but soon ran out my stock. The problem now is that IC is no longer available! CAUTION: There are some counterfeit chips being sold on EBay (as of this writing) from UTSOURCE that are actually re-stamped Winbond chips and they do not work without filtering! They may boot but are not true ST chips and produce the same problems as Atmel EPROMs.

contacts, which they often do. A better way is an adapter with round pins that are thicker than the standard replacement types. Instead of sockets, I now use a 28 pin compression "header" that is normally used with ribbon cable, and solder the IC to it. Those 28 pin headers are available from Jameco Electronics as #99670 and they make excellent adapters. Ready made PC board adapters are also available from Jim Brain at Retro-Innovations. His board does the cross-wiring so jumpers are not needed. Lastly, OTP EPROMs don't need heat sinking like the original PLA should have been. EPROMs draw less current and run cool.



My first adapter with filters.

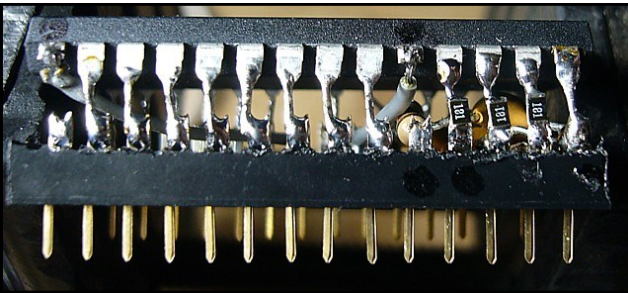
I used IC sockets to make my adapters but such a "module" that plugs into a board mounted IC socket may cause intermittent operation if the board socket has loose



The assembly before soldering the IC.

NOW, THE FINAL ANSWER...

As stated earlier, the ST M27C512-90B6 had certain characteristics that allowed its safe use as a C64 PLA substitute without any added filter components but that IC is now no longer available. The Atmel series of OTP EPROMs (one time programmable) are still available and are a good choice for a replacement PLA but it takes some effort to make them work reliably. The best substitute seems to be the 45nS version (70nS also works) although all EPROM based PLA replacements need "filtering" to make them work properly and not cause damage to the computer or peripherals. If any EPROM is used, the output lines **MUST** be filtered to prevent damage to CMOS devices such as a JiffyDOS Kernal upgrade or external carts such as the 1541Ultimate. This filtering takes the form of series resistors of 150 ohms on six of the EPROM output data lines.

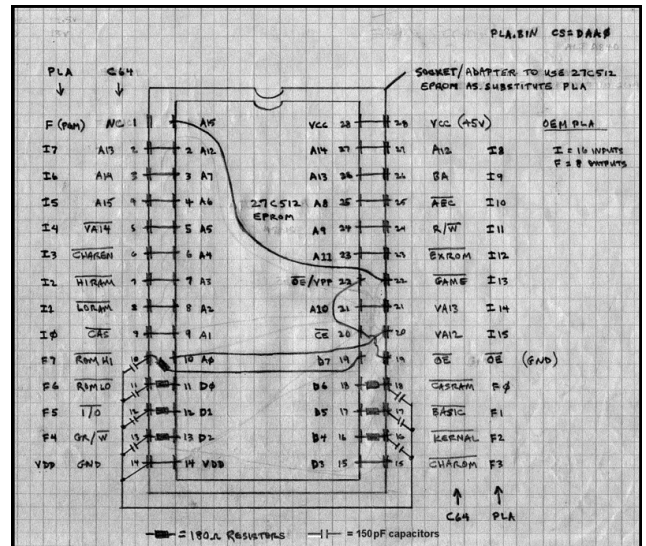


The final assembly with SMD 180 ohm resistors.

When an EPROM does the "calculations" needed as a sub PLA, it can sometimes drive all outputs low at the same time for a fraction of a second. Original NMOS chips in the computer may be tolerant of such errors but newer CMOS will not be. The EPROM outputs must also have small capacitors of 150pF to ground on the downstream side of those resistors to provide high frequency filtering of the "spikes" or noise pulses generated by the EPROM. That was not necessary with the original PLA because it was a different kind of logic chip. With filtering, the replacement PLA will work fine and is safe to use. I tested it on all my boards from the earliest 326298 and 250407 (the most plentiful) as well as the later 250425 and 250466. Note that those two later boards already have an 82 ohm and 150pF components on their motherboards /CASRAM

line from the factory, so those parts are not used on the sub PLA module for the 250425 and 250466. The EPROM IC pin 18 / CASRAM line is therefore wired directly to the plug for those last two C64 boards only. The /CHAROM line pin 15 is also wired direct to the plug in all sub PLA modules as it needs no "correction".

Bottom line: EPROM PLA substitutes can be safely made to work but that requires buffering of its data outputs so bus conflicts do not cause damage or improper operation. It's a lot of work but some users will want to "roll their own", and this seems the best way to do it.



A schematic of the new adapter.

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Reset Q&A

What is Reset Magazine?

Reset Magazine is a free, non-profit fanzine dedicated to the Commodore 64 computer. Our target audience is the casual Commodore 64 user and retro computer enthusiast. Reset is distributed on the internet as a free PDF.

Who produces Reset?

Reset is produced by Reset Magazine Staff. We also have many others who make contributions to the magazine. See page 3 for a complete credits list for this issue.

How often is Reset released?

We are aiming for Reset to be quarterly magazine. Keep an eye on our [website](#) or [Facebook](#) page for information about release dates. Reset #09 should arrive mid 2016.

Why bother?

Because we love the Commodore 64. Most of us have owned C64 computers for decades and have a long history with the computer. Our aim is to create an entertaining yet informative, light-hearted, English language magazine in the spirit of Commodore Format, ZZAP!, Commodore Scene and Commodore Zone, that we hope people can enjoy, learn from and have a laugh with.

Can I contribute to Reset?

If you would like to contribute to Reset, please contact us at our email address. New ideas are most welcome. If you have a product that you would like featured, some news to submit, or feel you have something else to offer please get in touch.

Can I buy a physical version?

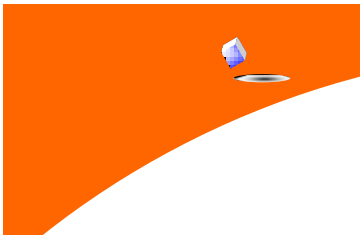
A limited numbered set (30) physical copies of each issue are printed as Special Editions and are available for a very short time at the time of publication for each issue. These are sold on a first come, first served basis. If you would like a Special Edition of this issue or would like to pre-order the next, please contact us at resetc64@gmail.com.

Can I advertise in Reset?

Yes, for free. All we ask in return is that you support us, either by plugging the magazine on your website and/or social media, providing us with news or help us in some other way. If you would like to advertise in Reset please contact us.

What is a Reset Ripper?

The Reset Ripper is an award given to outstanding games we have reviewed, which have received a score of either 9 or 10 out of 10.



Final Thoughts

We've made it to the end of another issue of Reset! It's hard to believe that it has been six months already since our Zzap! issue, how time flies! Here we are with an ever so slightly delayed Reset #08. I hope you enjoy it!

As usual, a big, massive thank-you to the sensational Reset team. I feel absolutely privileged to work on this magazine with such a wonderful bunch of people. I appreciate their continued hard work and efforts, putting their own personal projects on hold each time another issue of Reset comes around. These guys put in hours of work and it all pays off at the end when the magazine is released and you lucky sods get some good old fashioned Commodore 64 journalism into you!

Thank-you to the contributors and proof-readers, who each add a little piece to the jigsaw that is each Reset issue. Your enthusiasm and expertise shines through in your writing and proves that each Reset issue really is the sum of its parts. Couldn't do it without you!

Dr. J and Shine also deserve a big pat on the back for contributing this issue's brilliant intro for the cover disk. Great stuff again fellas! Also Graham, Richard, Alf and Andrea for contributing their various games, all for the love of the C64 and your entertainment!

If you enjoyed the issue, have any feedback, or would like to join in the fun, then please contact me at resetc64@gmail.com, leave a message on our guestbook at the Reset homepage, or alternatively, our Facebook page.

We have big plans this year, so keep an eye on our social media for Reset news. Until then!

Sincerely,

Uncle K

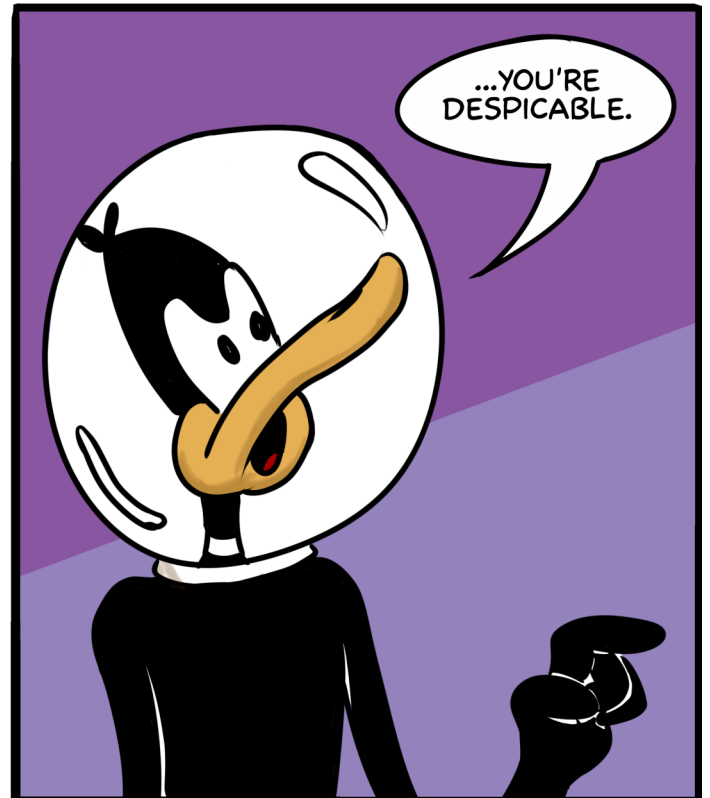
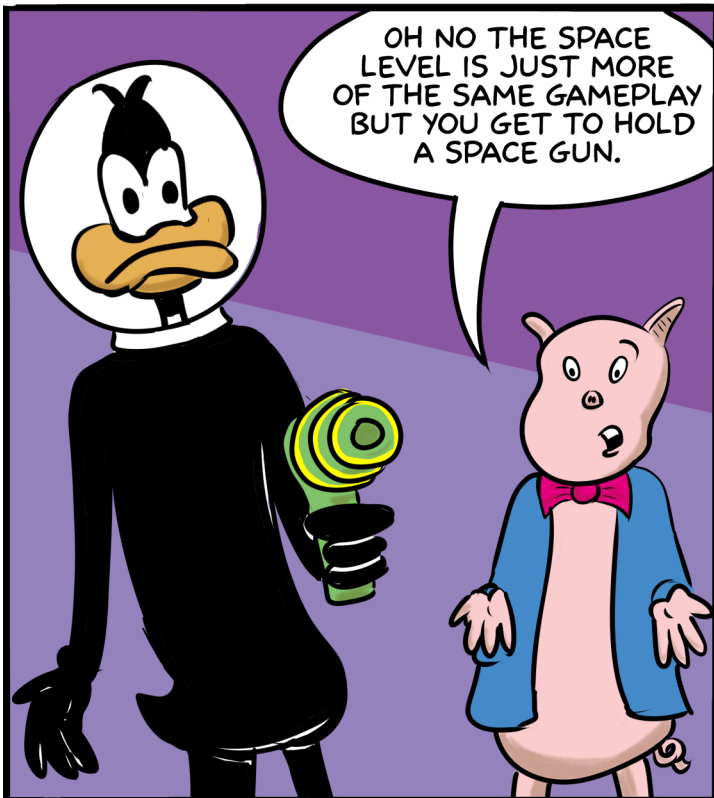
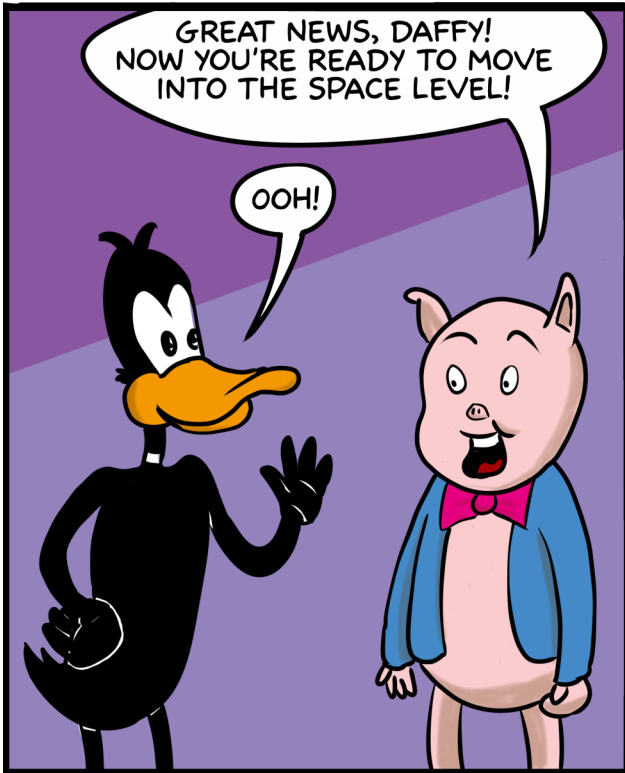


Reset Magazine Staff at PAX Melbourne, November 2015.
Left to Right: Cam, Rob, Ant, Kev & Alex (Shane stayed home and Paul is missing, located somewhere in another hemisphere!)

Blow the Cartridge

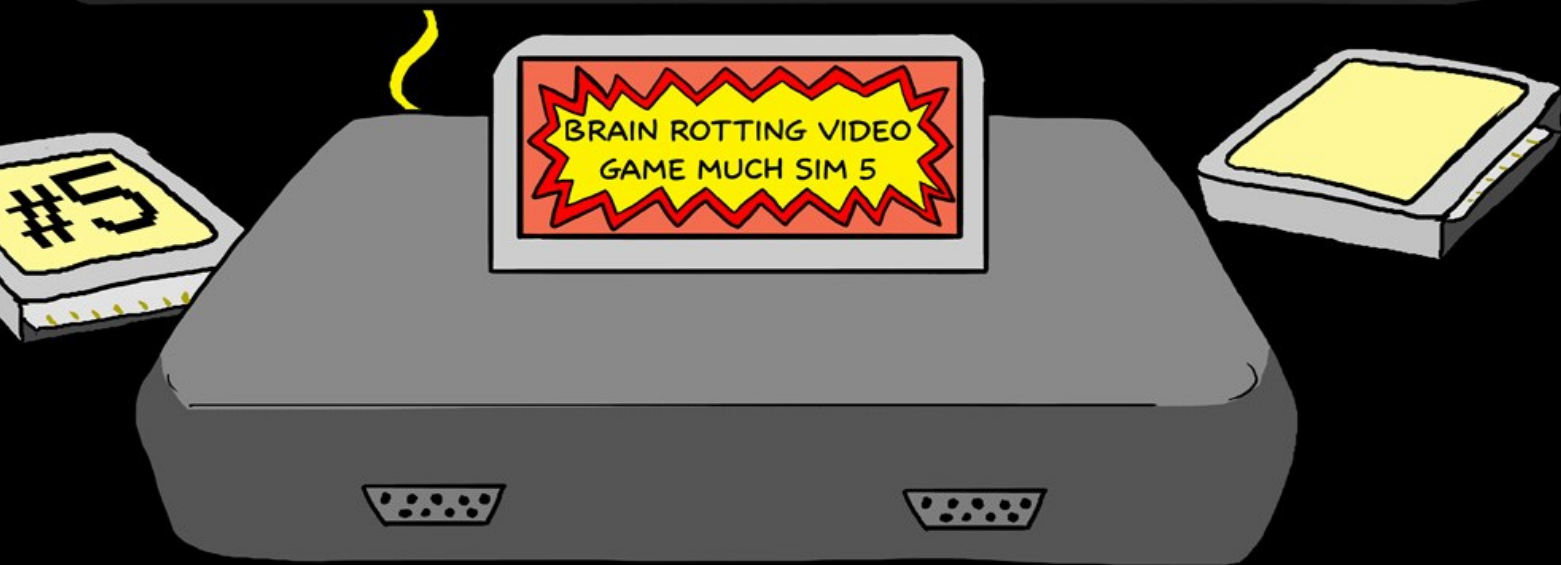
By Cameron Davis

DAFFY DUCK





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