

RESET 64

THE MAGAZINE FOR ALL THINGS C64



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RESET64

Run 'n Gun Baby!

Welcome to Reset #14, our run 'n gun issue, which along with the shmup, is one of my own personal favourite genres. It's also one of the oldest, with Green Beret, Gyrzor and Midnight Resistance being classic examples of ancient run 'n gun arcade machines that we've been playing now for decades. For me, it wasn't until Turrican hit the scene that the genre was completely revolutionised on the microcomputer. With Metroidvania influences, Turrican offered massive, multi-directional scrolling worlds that encouraged exploration, as well as a large assortment of weapon upgrades, enemies and formidable end of level guardians. Metroid may have really kicked things off in a big way on the consoles, but Turrican has also been massively influential as well. Contemporary C64 releases such as Metal Warrior Ultra and Steel Ranger have continued the legacy in modern times, offering fresh ideas to the genre. The sheer technical achievements of these massive action orientated games on the Commodore 64 cannot be understated either. The genre is explored further in Andrew Fisher's 'Hawkeye Legacy'. Hawkeye, a divisive but well produced late 80s run 'n gun from Thalamus, directly influenced an entire crop of clones and 'heavily inspired' games on the C64, notable examples being Flimbo's Quest, Rubicon and the recently released (and reviewed in this very issue) Outrage. Rob invites us all to take cult classic Arnie out for a spin. Programmer Chris Butler's C64 swansong in the dying days of the machine's commercial life, Arnie is almost an isometric Commando, albeit slower paced, which also takes inspiration from games such as Mercs and perhaps even the WW2 themed isometric The Great Escape. We tried to mention as many notable examples of the genre as we could. No doubt, there will be some that we just plain forgot. If you can think of any, we'd love to hear about them and discuss them on our social media channels.

This is the bit where I usually talk about the vibrancy of the Commodore 64 scene and the amazing developments. Well, it just gets better and better. We certainly encourage all of you to go down that rabbit hole and begin exploring everything the modern C64 world has to offer. But don't stop there, because the retrogaming scene in particular is going strong on so many other platforms. Make sure you take the time to explore other systems as well, there is so much to discover, even if your only avenue is emulation. You certainly would never have heard Commodore Force or Format suggesting that you do that! I've particularly enjoyed many new offerings on the Spectrum, Amstrad, Amiga and Mega Drive (amongst others) in recent times, as well as the indie gamedev scene on modern platforms such as PC. There are countless discoveries to be made. Enjoy the C64, but don't limit yourself!

A big thanks again to all of our contributors, especially the amazing Reset staff. I'd also like to welcome Louie, owner of Retro Gamer Nation, to the Reset team and he's been a terrific help, as well as being a great sounding board for ideas. It's also great to have Del back, sprucing things up with his amazing page designs. We're still having an absolute blast making Reset, and as long as that continues, we'll continue. Please remember to leave a comment on itch or one of our channels and catch the podcast that will closely follow the issue. Until then, stay safe. Happy retrogaming!

Sincerely,

Kevin Tilley

We Are Stardust

An Introspective

By Kevin Tilley

80s and 90s computer and console users belong to a very unique club. We share a love of chunky pixels, simple and accessible games, and chip music. Yes, chip music! Nostalgic tales of Commodore kids recounting how they recorded their favourite SIDs onto tape are common on forums and social media. We all did it! However, to the untrained ears, chip music can be a series of irritating bleeps and bloops, noise that invokes feelings of irritation and displeasure from the very depths of hell itself. But for us, the melodies, instruments and arrangements of chiptunes are music to our collective ears. It didn't matter whether the sounds were produced by the SID, Paula, AY, Yamaha or any one of the other synthesiser chips contained within our favourite computer or console hardware, our feet were always tapping and those sweet melodies were always swimming and swirling in our minds. Chip musicians quickly became celebrities to a generation of gamers, with many games actually becoming more famous for their soundtracks than the gameplay itself. The multitude of online channels and radio stations, producers, bands and orchestras that are performing, rearranging, remixing and playing chiptunes to this very day certainly attest to this.

The influence of chip music in pop culture can't be understated, with countless examples of chiptune melodies and samples gradually finding their way to the mainstream. Genres have also been created, and this is exactly where the story of LukHash, a Polish composer and producer residing in Edinburgh, comes in. Producing music described as being "infused with a strong sense of nostalgia stemming from a childhood growing up playing retro arcade games."

LukHash describes his music as chipwave, an offshoot of the synthwave genre. Incorporating the sounds of 80s and 90s computer and console sound chips of such platforms as the Commodore 64 and Game Boy, and infusing them in contemporary productions with synthwave elements, inspired by legendary synth artists such as Jean-Michel Jarre.



This blend creates unique electronic music, filled with beats, varied instrumentation, tempo changes and melodies that hit the listener with a wall of pleasurable sound.

Fast forward to 2021, and LukHash has just released his latest album. *We Are Stardust* is a 10 track album (not including the bonus, which we will discuss later), which “explores the concept of other universes and realities, the idea that those we lose remain with us in other dimensions of time and space.”

It's certainly an interesting concept, which strongly implies that we remain an integral part of the universe in both life and death, whether or not in our current or another reality, or realm of consciousness. The concept contextualises the album and guides the listener through each song, encouraging interpretation of the sounds, and almost a subconscious improvisation of images that form as you make your way through the tracks. Of course, you can always simply listen to enjoy some killer tunes as well - the journey is optional, but hard to ignore.

Album highlights include opener *Cyberiad Theory* and title track *We Are Stardust*, both of which are mid tempo synth tunes, heavily bass driven. *Cyberiad Theory* mixes guitar driven melodies with fast solos, while *Stardust* employs chip music style arpeggios and synth melodies.

Turbo Challenge begins with Nine Inch Nails style distorted drum and guitar riffs, leading into a heavily synth driven series of melodies that are almost refreshingly hopeful and uplifting, especially after the dark undertones of some of the other tracks.

Dying Breath is an absolute banger, with vocals performed by regular LukHash collaborator Meredith Bull. The song features spacey lyrics infused with a lovely pop melody, with the mix becoming almost hypnotic by the time it finishes.

Impact Event contains a variety of melodies, including an

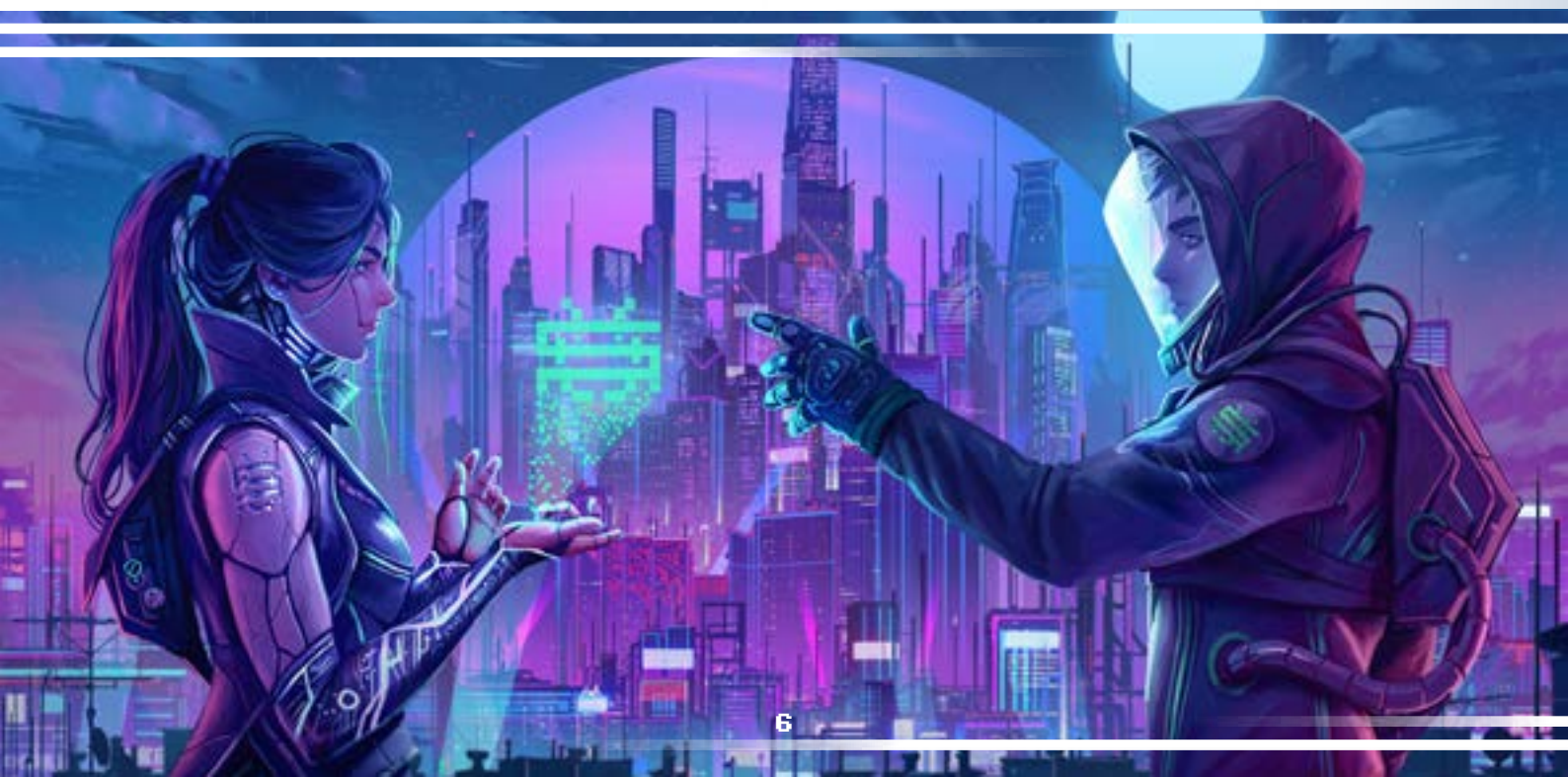
inspiring mid section which blends into a wall of sound and captivating lead in the last minute of the song.

Coin Op Hero and *Final Boss* see the album out as faster tempo tracks, which both come off sounding more aggressive yet strangely uplifting as well.

While *We Are Stardust* is able to be streamed, it's the physical editions where the true enthusiasts and purists will find the most joy. Released by New Retro Wave, a New York based label specialising in synthwave and retrowave audio and video, the album was released as limited vinyl, CD and minidisk editions. These sold out very quickly, but *We Are Stardust* is still available to be purchased as a digital download. It must be said that the quality of the physical albums are superb, complemented with the striking visual style of the artwork by Portuguese conceptual artist, Pedro Lourenço. There is one more advantage of owning a physical release.

Continuing on with the Commodore 64 connection, LukHash has collaborated with the C64 gamedev and demo group, Megastyle, on a game that actually forms part of the album and is an integral element of the entire *We Are Stardust* experience. Sharing a name with the album, the game code itself is included on the physical releases of the album as a separate track at the end, with the user requiring a level of initiative to convert the audio into a format so that the code can be loaded onto an actual Commodore 64 or emulator. It's certainly an engaging way to get the game running, giving the user a real sense of satisfaction when they finally get to play.

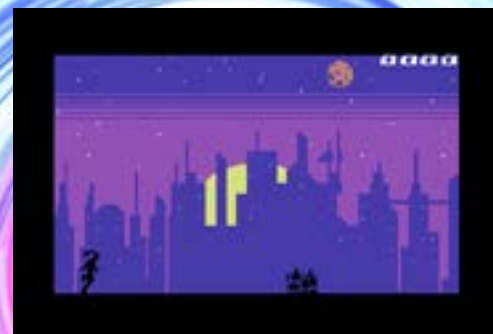
Coded by Jamie Fuller, *We Are Stardust* (the game) is a runner that plays similarly to games such as the multiformat *Canabalt* and the Icon64 produced C64 exclusive *Run Demon Run*. However, there is one glaring difference, as unlike the other two aforementioned games, *We Are Stardust* is anything but infinite. The player is able to jump and slide through the various



obstacles as they proceed through the map. There are also elements of rhythm required, as every action corresponds to the timing and beat of the in game track. Each game is only as long as the song, with the player earning points for correct moves and scoring combos. Being a timed game, it means that there should be a maximum amount of points the player can score, making a perfect game an achievable target. At the end of each try, a QR code is displayed, directing the player to a website where they can upload their score, creating a bit of fun competition between players. LukHash has also hinted at offering prizes through the site in the future for players of the game.

Featuring three amazing SID renditions of tunes from the album by Magnar Harestad (Code Veronica as the loader tune, Cyberiad Theory on the title screen, and We Are Stardust in game), the game also features attractive, stylized in game graphics by Roy Widding. In addition, a rather brilliant C64 loader screen, based on the album cover, was pixelled by Rune Spaans. Overall, the Megastyle team have created a game that perfectly captures the look, feel and spirit of the album. It's a simple yet highly effective Easter Egg. While, theoretically, We Are Stardust can be beaten with practice, it's a highly polished and aesthetically pleasing effort.

As another bonus and definitely worth mentioning, LukHash has also produced a SID album, titled CyberChip, that features SID renditions of two tracks from We Are Stardust amongst eight other tracks lifted from previous LukHash albums. The SID tracks on CyberChip have been masterfully composed on a real Commodore 64 (using different SID revisions on the various tracks) and tracker software. They really do sound outstanding. Listening to the SID album left me craving for more, perhaps leaving room for the possibility of exploration of other sound chips, or even twin SID tracks in the future. The album art for the digital album was pixelled by none other than gamedev legend Stoo Cambridge, of Sensible Software fame. Available



on the LukHash Bandcamp page as a 'name your price' digital album (which can also be freely streamed), the artist also intends to release CyberChip as a physical cartridge, packaged together by Samar and released through Protovision. Definitely something to look out for.

We Are Stardust is a project with its roots firmly entrenched in both the retro gaming and chip music subcultures. The album is highly enjoyable, can be listened to in a variety of settings and continues to be enjoyed after many replays. The artwork is outstanding and the limited nature of the physical editions make them highly collectable. The game is a fun addition, included in a creative way that certainly is a great way to engage the target audience. Overall, LukHash and team have produced a memorable project combining various forms of music, as well as conventional and digital art.

Well played!

Links

LukHash

<https://www.lukhash.com>

We Are Stardust (physical/digital/merch)

<https://lukhash.lnk.to/WeAreStardust>

CyberChip

<https://lukhash.bandcamp.com/album/cyberchip>





The Mix-i-Disk is Reset's very own cover disk, which is available as a free download or as an optional physical disk with the purchase of the printed edition from Protovision.

Insert/mount the disk into your drive and type LOAD^{*},8,1 and then type RUN. After this, you will need to choose which loader to use, either Fastload enabled or KERNAL (choose KERNAL loader if you are using an SD2IEC device or a THEC64).**

Use your joystick in Port 2 to navigate the menu.

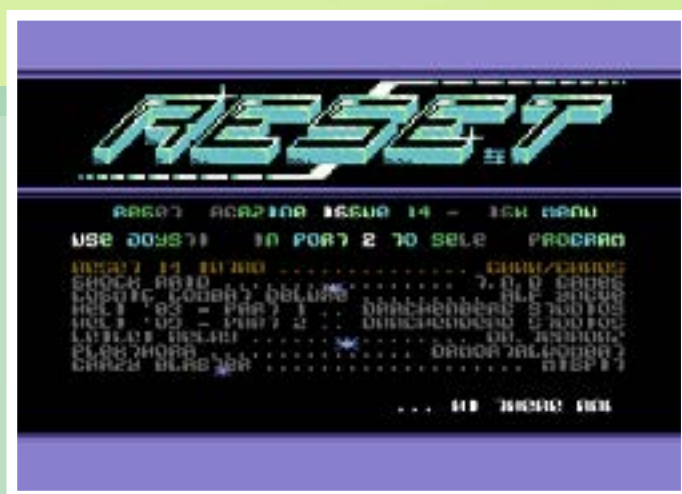
Reset Intro: Run n' Gun! (Chris Page)

Code & Design
Chris Page
Graphics
Shine
Music
Rock

Chris Page of C64 gamedev label, DESIGN/chaos stood up to the challenge to design and code our new run 'n gun themed intro, with spectacular results. Plug a joystick into port 2 and you can even play the run n' gun themed mini game, built right into the intro!

Shine stepped in to provide the stunning petscii logo, while Rock/Finnish Gold composed the amazing exclusive tune, titled Last Night.

The Reset intro is a chance for us to informally say hello and greet our friends in the scene. Special thanks to Chris, Shine and Rock for their hard work!



Reset Disk Menu (TND)

Code, Character Set and Sprites
Richard Bayliss
Logo
Shine
Music
Richard Bayliss
IRQ Turbo Loader
Martin Piper

The Reset disk menu has been coded especially for Reset64 by Richard Bayliss, with a logo by Shine and featuring stunning new music by Flex. Use a joystick in Port 2 to navigate the menu. The menu is 100% THEC64 Mini and Maxi compatible too, just make sure you select the Kernal loader for 100% compatibility. Special thanks to Richard, Shine, Martin and Flex for their efforts in putting this menu together.

Cosmic Combat Deluxe (TND Games)

Additional Code, Music

Richard Bayliss

Design, Graphics & SFX

Alf Yngve

Redux Engine

Martin Piper

Another cracking enhanced SEUCKER from the Alf Yngve/Richard Bayliss camp. Designed by Alf, Cosmic Combat looks, sounds and plays like an old school static screen shooter. It's sure to test your aging reflexes!

You know the score! Forget the silly stories, hit fire in Port 2 and go kick some ass!

Special thanks to Alf, Richard and Martin for another fantastic contribution.



Leilei Relay (Dr. TerrorZ)

Code, Graphics & Music

Dr. TerrorZ

Leilei Relay is a stunning 2021 game release by Dr. TerrorZ. Carefully guide your UFO while collecting all of the lanterns to advance to the next field. Eventually, you will reach the cathedral and gain the title "UFO Master".

Fans of Thrust will feel right at home with the physics and controls. Push upward to obtain thrust. Use left and right on your joystick to maneuver the UFO. No rage quitting, ok!



Crazy Blaster V1.3 (Misfit)

Code, Graphics & Music

Mika Keränen (Misfit)

Ahh Misfit. He's back to troll us unsuspecting C64 gamers again with another classic, hard as nails 'tortureware' title (Misfit's word, not ours!). Rescue the cosmonauts, destroy the baddies, collect the items and return to base to advance to the next level. Sounds simple eh? Of course it isn't!

If you like the game, visit Misfit's itch.io and leave him a tip and a nice comment. The Future Was 8Bit also has physical editions of Crazy Blaster and other games by Misfit, available on tape and cartridge.

<https://misfit.itch.io/crazy-blaster>



Plekthora (drmortalwombat)

Code, Graphics & Sound

drmortalwombat

Plekthora is a lovely old school horizontally scrolling shooter from drmortalwombat. The game features 20 levels as well as upgradeable weapons.

If you like the game, visit the good Doctor's itch.io to leave a tip and a nice comment. Also check out the amazing 3D filled polygon C64 space trader "Gates of the Ancient" while you're there!

<https://drmortalwombat.itch.io/plekthora>



Heli '83 - Parts 1&2 (Drachenberg Studios)

Code & Graphics

TB

Music

KB

Level Design

Pentagon

We are proud to present Heli '83 parts 1 & 2 for you lucky lot! For part 1, guide your helicopter through the invading Martian's underground fortress and find the disk with the alien blueprints. Part 2 begins where you left off. The blueprints are yours, but the alien scum has teleported you to their base on Mars. Fight your way out and make your way home.

Heli '83 is a cool flip screen shooter, with traps to avoid, doors to open, fuel to collect and aliens to vaporise. Fans of Airwolf (are you the one?) and games like Cybernoid will know what to expect. Have fun, and die Martian slime!

Very special thanks to Timo for providing the game to Reset.



NEWS

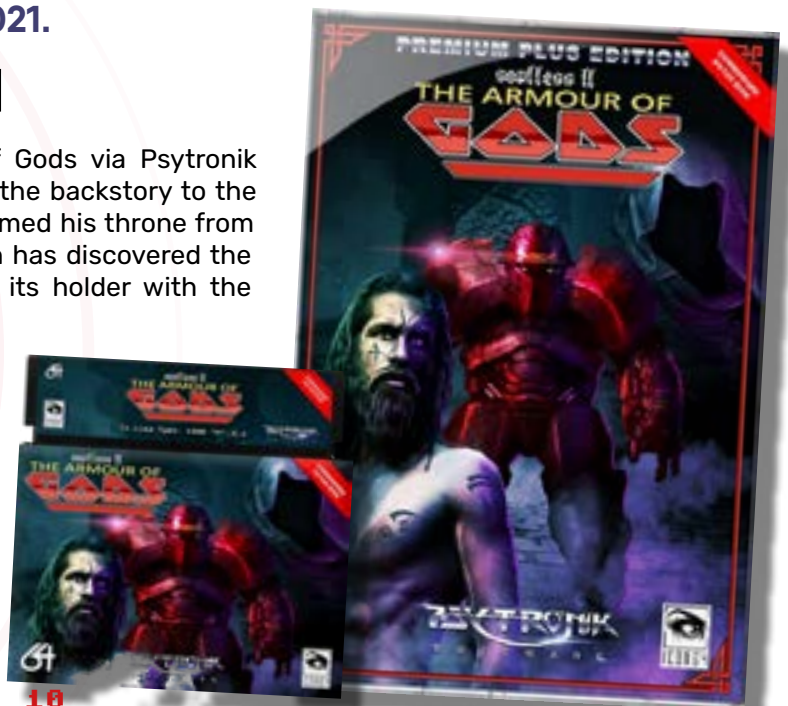
PSYTRONIK SOFTWARE

Psytronik Software continues to lead the way when it comes to providing commercial titles for the C64 with their latest announcement of game releases for the second half of 2021.

SOULLESS 2 - THE ARMOUR OF GODS

Icon 64 has released Soulless 2 - The Armour of Gods via Psytronik Software. Continuing on from the original Soulless, the backstory to the game takes place many years after King Rizek reclaimed his throne from evil wizard Kalen - but there are rumours that Kalen has discovered the whereabouts of the armour of gods which grants its holder with the weapon of the sun and the ability to fly. With this powerful weapon in his hand, Kalen would have no trouble taking back the throne, so it's up to the King to stop him once and for all.

While the first Soulless drew inspiration from Draconius and Impossible Mission, Soulless 2 is looking to provide a modern day interpretation of the Sacred Armour of Antiriad. The game is set out across four expansive levels with game play that provides a good sense of progression.



Soulless 2 is available now as a digital download and as a physical disk edition. We'll have a full review on Soulless 2 in the next issue of Reset 64.

<https://psytronik.bigcartel.com/product/soulless-2-the-armour-of-gods>

<https://psytronik.itch.io/soulless2>

POLAR BEAR IN SPACE!

Psytronik Software has released a trailer for POLAR BEAR IN SPACE! - an upcoming hybrid horizontal scrolling shooter/platform game being developed by Unrolled Loop Studios headed by Silvan Reinhold. This will be their debut release for the C64 and when asked about what inspired him to get into developing a C64 game, Silvan replied "I've always been inspired by the challenge of building something with limited available resources. Writing a C64 game was a great opportunity to do just that, and to create something fun at the same time."

The protagonist within the game is a polar bear who finds himself stranded in space and needs to collect 99 crystals in order to fuel a transporter that will take him home. POLAR BEAR IN SPACE! appears to borrow inspiration from some classic C64 shooters, which Silvan confirmed: "The game started out with a demise sequence for what was going to be a plain shoot-em-up. I added ideas over time, prioritizing what was important enough to still fit into 64K. While POLAR BEAR IN SPACE! does stand independently, I also wanted to give a nod to milestones like Dropzone and Wizball".

As for the addition of the platform elements and the feature character being a Polar Bear (all of things): "The platform elements initially came in for variety, but turned out to become a main feature. And the most natural connection between all of this was clearly a polar bear."



Featuring fast smooth scrolling and plenty of different enemy types, POLAR BEAR IN SPACE! is looking to provide some hectic paced arcade action with impressive visuals and sounds, something that Silvan was keen to highlight by stating that the game will contain "responsive controls and a clear connection to the on-screen audiovisuals".

POLAR BEAR IN SPACE! is expected to receive a disk release through Psytronik Software, and a cartridge release via RGCD.

<https://psytronik.bigcartel.com/product/polar-bear-in-space-limited-edition-usb-tape>

GRAVITON

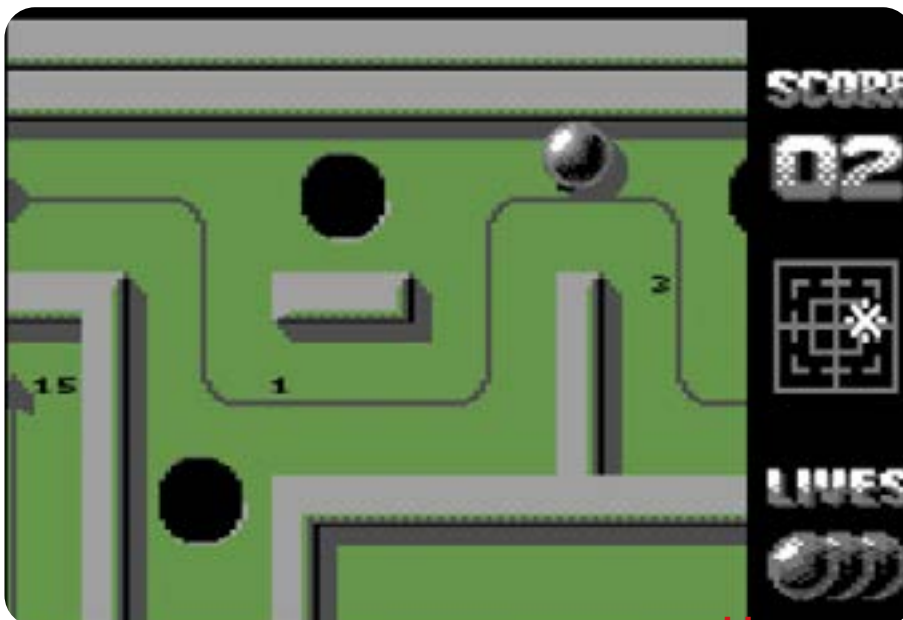
Karl Hörnell, the developer behind many fun C64 titles like Clean Up Service, Fungus, Velocipede and Iceblox Plus is back with another release. Graviton is a tilt maze style of game where you have to use dexterity to guide a ball through a maze.

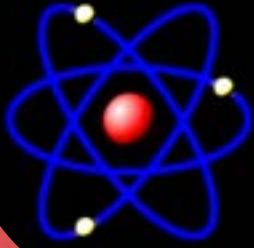
Featuring 20 challenging maps, Graviton is very well presented with sleek clean visuals and an atmospheric soundtrack from Hans Axelsson-Svala & Alexander Danielsson. Controlling the tilt of the maze board does require a lot of precision and patience and it will certainly take a bit of time before you are able to complete all 20 maps on offer.

Graviton has been released via Psytronik Software with the digital download version being available for free. For collectors, the game also comes available in cassette and disk editions.

<https://psytronik.itch.io/graviton>

<https://psytronik.bigcartel.com/product/graviton-c64>





PROTOVISION

Creating the Future.

Protovision has provided an update on a couple of their upcoming projects that is sure to contain something of interest to the current day C64 enthusiast.

MUDDY RACERS

Those of you who enjoy top down racers will be pleased to hear that Protovision will be partnering with coder Monte Boyd to bring out Muddy Racers. Promising to deliver a whole lot of fun and hectic racing action. Muddy Racers will feature 18 different tracks across three different environments, a championship racing mode, car upgrades and power ups, multiplayer mode and a thumping soundtrack by Kamil 'Jammer' Wolnikowski.

When we reached out to Monte about the news of his partnership with Protovision, he revealed: "I was delighted and humbled when Protovision contacted me about possibly partnering on Muddy Racers. Joining the team pushed me to make a much better game than I would have working solo with their great ideas, testing, music and SFX. I'm really excited about the physical release!"



Having played through a preview version of the game, we can confirm that Muddy Racers is looking to live up to its hype. Monte has nailed the driving mechanism and is a fun single player experience. But as a multiplayer game, Muddy Racers will excel and is sure to be popular at future Commodore user group meets.

<https://www.protovision.games/games/muddyracers.php>

CURSED TOMB

Zbigniew Ross has recommenced development on his action puzzle game - Cursed Tomb. Having taken a break from working on the game for a little while, Zbigniew is now determined to see the project through to completion:

"I am happy that we are moving forward again, and can't wait to see how the game will be received. The game is close to being ready but there are still a few things that I would like to improve to make it even better. If there is still some free memory (and time) left I would be looking to do changes like including additional sound fx or other small things to improve playability."

Cursed Tomb looks to take you on an adventure through creepy catacombs, collecting treasure as you navigate your way through many hazards such as ghosts, deadly artifacts, moving walls, hidden traps, teleports and a lot more.

<https://www.protovision.games/games/cursedtomb.php>





ICON 64

TERRESTRIAL

In addition to releasing Soulless 2, the Icon 64 team have been in full swing working on Terrestrial - an alien space theme title featuring 10 different mini games spread across 20+ missions.

Terrestrial sees you returning to your homeworld from the outer reaches of the solar system when you suddenly receive a transmission informing you that your homeworld has been invaded by an alien force. The planet's only hope is a hidden base on one of the nearby moons that happens to be home to an elite group of soldiers. You are ordered to head to the hidden base and make plans to win back your homeworld.

In chatting to Trevor Storey, graphic artist and lead game designer at Icon 64, about the mini games on offer within Terrestrial, he listed out the game types that would be on offer: "The range of mini games will be quite varied and will include target shooting of enemies fighters, bombing enemy cruisers, scrolling sections where you need to shoot/avoid enemies and buildings, cabal style sections where you must clear the landing zone of buildings, canyon style sections where you need to take down enemy ships and destroy the sub boss, and levels where you need to destroy shield generators by shooting the power nodes."

Based on that description, Terrestrial certainly sounds like it will be a highly engrossing gaming experience featuring many different game genres. We will certainly be looking forward to this one.

RVG SQUAD

CASSETTE 50 PLUS CHARITY COMPILATION

Cascade's Cassette 50 compilation tape from 1983 is infamous for being one of the earliest examples of shovelware where quantity was clearly prioritised over quality.

Looking to bring together C64 developers with varying skills and experience, The RVG Squad ran a game development competition in early 2021 with strict limits imposed on the amount of memory that each game could use. With the intent of having submissions be included as part of a new Cassette 50 style compilation, hopefully with a greater focus on game playability, the competition garnered a lot of interest.



With 56 entries submitted, the winner of the competition was judged to be TinyBubbles, a mini Puzzle Bobble style clone, developed by Pixs.

TinyBubbles plus another 55 mini games can now be found on the Cassette 50 Plus compilation released by Phoenixware in a USB cassette format. All the net proceeds of the compilation go towards charity. You can order your copy from <https://www.phoenixware.co.uk/product/cassette-50-collectors-usb-tape/>

Alternatively, you can go over to <https://itch.io/jam/the-c64-cassette-50-charity-competition/entries> and download each of the game individually for you to try out.

TND SEUCK COMPO 2021 RESULTS

The New Dimension has been organising the Shoot'Em Up Construction Kit (SEUCK) Compo on a regular basis for over a decade - receiving many fun and interesting submissions from coders of varying experience and skill level.

Well, the SEUCK Compo 2021 event has been held with Alf Yngve's Droid Rumble just edging out Robo Form X (by Pinov Vox) to take out this year's first prize. Droid Rumble, is a futuristic beat 'em up, written using the Sideways scrolling SEUCK, that borrows some graphical inspiration from the game RoboCop.

Given that this year was the final SEUCK Compo to be run by TND, we think it is quite fitting that the award go to the SEUCK maestro himself who really pushed his

skills to the limit to ensure the Droid Rumble was the best it could be. Reflecting upon his award, Alf divulged "I'm very glad to win, even as it feels a bit melancholy that it's the very last competition run by TND. I really tried to outdo myself this time with the entry "Droid Rumble," and I hope it shows.

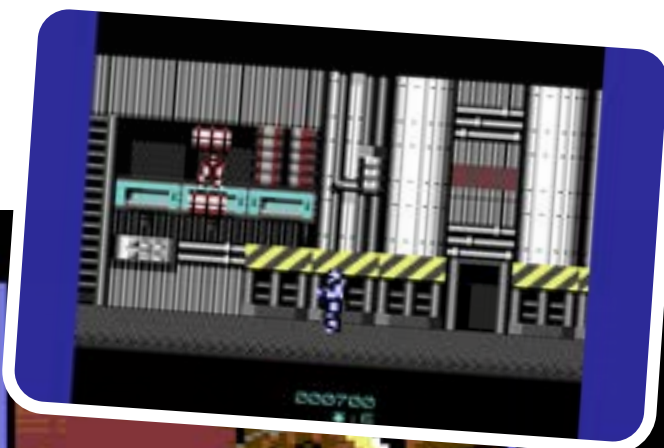
An enhanced version of Droid Rumble featuring an intro presentation, high score table, in game enhancements and much more can be downloaded from <https://richard-tnd.itch.io/droid-rumble>

BITMAP SOFT

FUNGUS II

Karl Hörnell and Bitmap Soft have joined forces to provide the C64 community with an official physical release of Fungus II, a previously unreleased sequel to the original Fungus.

Fungus II is an arcade style game represented in an elevated 2.5-dimensional graphical perspective that sees Fungus out on a mission to collect special space mushrooms (of the non-magical kind) for his dinner. To succeed in his mission, Fungus needs to explore nearby space islands while avoiding nasty creatures



and hazards that inhabit the environment all within an allocated amount of time.

As Fungus II has been available as a free download for some time now, we reached out to Jamie Battision of Bitmap Soft to ask him what lead to the game being selected for a physical cassette release: "We have always been huge fans of unreleased games, being able to release a game that was supposed to come out when I was a kid is all kinds of awesomeness to us."

The exclusive cassette version of Fungus II is now available from Bitmap Soft at <https://www.bitmapsoft.co.uk/product/fungus-ii/>



EW E WOZ 'ERE DX

Design/Chaos have completed work on an enhanced version of their quirky shoot'em up Ewe Woz 'Ere. Featuring a cyborg sheep from the future who must preserve the existence

of mutton-kind by defending the fields from an invasion of meanies, the DX edition of the game builds upon the original 4KB game to provide a far more immersive game experience.

When we asked as to what triggered the team to work on a DX edition of Ewe Woz 'Ere,

Chris Page - designer, coder at Design/Chaos reflected: "We weren't originally going to do Ewe Woz 'Ere DX at all; that came about after I archived some of our old development disks from the 90's and came across a set of mountain graphics that Bop did years ago - I touched them up and put them into the engine from the 4k game and it looked pretty good."

But Chris informs us that Ewe Woz 'Ere DX is more than just a graphical enhancement as additional gameplay elements have been added and that he is quite pleased with the results : "Originally the DX game was just going to be a graphic overhaul but after the graphic updates it sat around for months until we decided to add the gateways and the charges that need to be collected which transformed the gameplay and the rest came together relatively quickly. Ewe Woz 'Ere is our take on Moon Patrol (with strong influences from Iridis Alpha), and I am very happy with the game that we ended up with!"

The physical edition of Ewe Woz 'Ere DX can be ordered at <https://www.bitmapsoft.co.uk/product/ewe-woz-ere-deluxe-edition-c64/>

while the digital only edition can be downloaded from <https://designchaos.itch.io/ewe-woz-ere-dx>



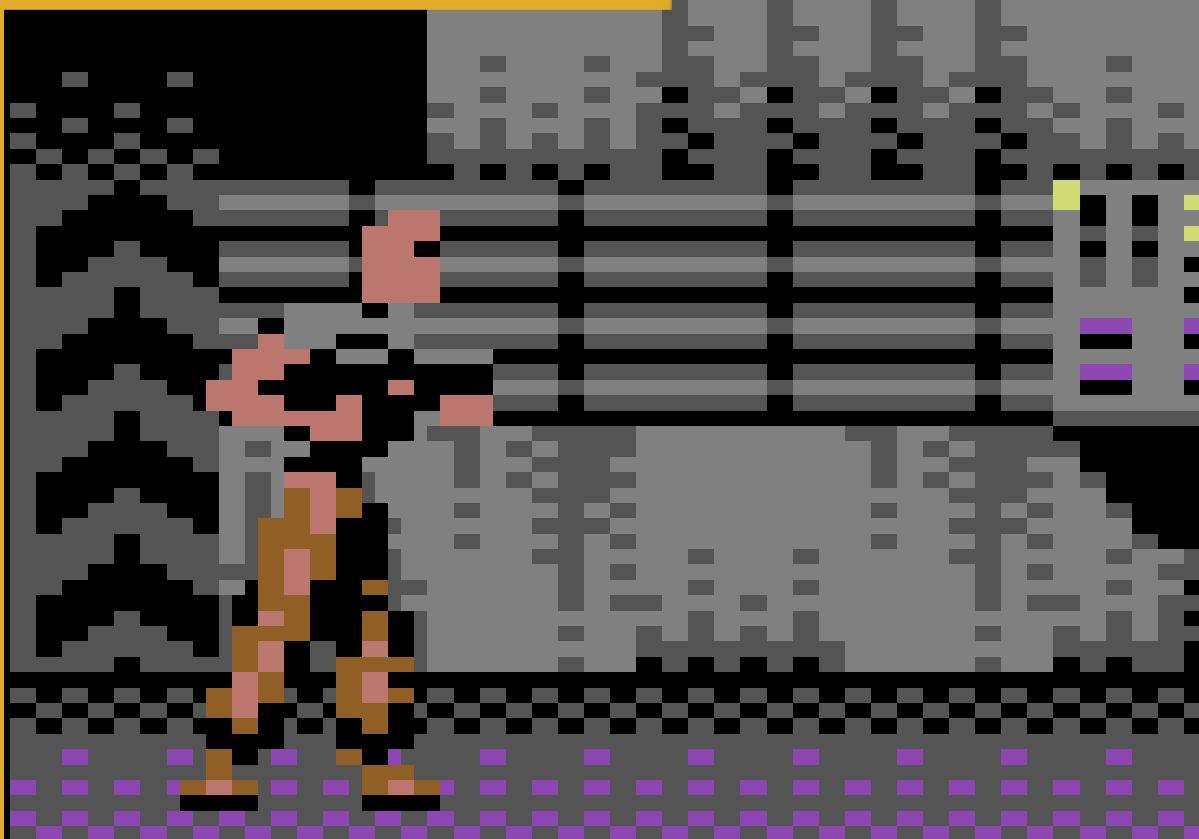
The Making of

ALIEN 3

on the Commodore 64

By Kevin Tilley

Alien 3 was not only a much different movie to its predecessors, it was infamously afflicted with a notoriously difficult production as well. The corresponding video game was also beset with problems. Almost lost when Image Works' parent company Mirrorsoft was declared bankrupt, the company had sunk (along with its missing owner Robert Maxwell, presumably) and was wound down completely by receivers in the first few months of 1992. Several assets, including the publishing rights to Alien 3, were acquired by American publisher Acclaim Entertainment. They didn't hesitate to release the already completed Megadrive version, which was developed by UK studio Probe. Not seeing any use for the home computer ports in the US, Alien 3 was licensed for release by UK publisher Virgin Games in Europe, but only the Amiga version appeared. Then, in early 1993, it was released by Acclaim, slightly redesigned on the SNES, closely followed by conversions for other consoles such as the Master System, Game Gear and NES. The BiTS developed Gameboy version was also released during this time. But what of the rumoured C64 game?



Reporting on the sale of Mirrorsoft to Acclaim in November 1992, Zzap!64 happily conceded that forthcoming Image Works titles such as Alien 3 would eventually see the light of day once all of the business was sorted. Alas, almost a year passed and a C64 version was nowhere to be seen. Suddenly, out of nowhere, a news snippet appeared in the September 1993 issue of Commodore Force that alluded that the C64 version might just exist and may actually be released. Two months later, and more than a year after the initial Amiga release, Virgin saw fit to release the C64 game to a largely unsuspecting and dwindling audience. By then, those still using their C64s were hungry for any new game, let alone a big licensed product like Alien 3.

I was able to catch up with Michael Archer, who was employed by developer Probe and coded C64 Alien 3. He immediately dropped this little bombshell and swiftly corrected my assumption when I first asked him about the conversion.

"It's not a conversion. I helped with the design and it was a lead version of the title."

...it was like "ummm no guns, no weapons. Shit, looks like we'll be using artistic license with this one."

Wait, what?

"The reason why C64 was first I think is mostly because I was first on the scene ready to start, I don't recall 100% this fact... So the graphics and maps were done firstly on the C64 and then transferred to other formats."

Well, that's quite the bombshell, especially considering C64 gamers of the 90s were quite used to receiving cut down conversions of games from the more powerful 16 bit machines. This begged the question as to whether the limitations of the C64 needed to be taken into consideration during the design process, or if there was a conscious decision for the 8 and 16 bit versions of the game to be as close as possible when making design choices?

"This was not a title which pushed the C64 to the limits, with reasonable size maps, and some minor compression on the data. I know I compressed the map data on tapes just so it would fit into the space. And for the effect in the tunnels where it would show only the line of sight, this was my idea on which the top bit of the data would just flip and this re-draw cleared the other tiles out."

Ok then. Let's backtrack a bit. Alien 3 began development at Probe in late 1991 for the C64, Amiga and Megadrive. As the story goes, the two home computer versions were set for an earlier release. However, with the bankruptcy of Mirrorsoft, the actual release and publishing was left in limbo until the new rights owner, Acclaim Entertainment, got themselves organised.

Alien 3 was well received by the C64 gaming press when it did eventually appear, as well as being legendary as one of the last major commercial releases for the system. In fact, for a while, it was actually unclear whether the game even made it to the shops. When reviewing Alien 3, Miles Guttery of Commodore Force described it as "a first class tie-in and wicked action adventure that no gung-ho xenophobe should neglect to own". Quite strong praise indeed, with the magazine awarding the game an overall score of 93% and a 'Hurricane Hit'. Commodore Format weren't quite as enthusiastic. Reviewer Andy Dyer still enjoyed the game though, describing the action as "well paced" and praising the time limits and perceived tension, eventually awarding Alien 3 a respectable 78%. I asked Michael if he ever got to see the reviews?

"I never actually saw any reviews on Alien 3, I know it was released at some point as I got some copies in the post. I did normally read and buy many of the mags but for some reason this one was a miss."

Alien 3 is a run 'n gun with multi directional scrolling levels and light puzzle elements. Playing as Ripley, the player is tasked with rescuing prisoners while navigating the map, avoiding the Xenomorphs and adhering to the strict time limits. Ripley can run, shoot (unfortunately, no knives and sharp sticks, but a full arsenal of automatic weaponry, flamethrowers and grenades), climb and slide. She also needs to access terminals to open various doors in order to unlock inaccessible areas of the map, or create shortcuts to save time. The 15 levels are broken up into four different 'missions', which are nothing but slight variations of 'seek & destroy' and 'rescue'. Every 3rd or 4th level is a boss fight, which are all followed by a new graphical theme and music.

It all sounds wonderful, but actually has very little to do with the film. You see, one very critical plot feature of the film was that there were no weapons. Instead, Ripley and co outwitted the single Xenomorph featured in the film, eventually trapping and coercing it to its untimely demise in a vat of molten lead. This all transpired in the maze-like structure of the combined prison/foundry setting on Fiorina "Fury" 161. I asked Micheal about the rather dramatic design choice of largely ignoring the film's plot and was curious as to whether there were any restrictions or requests from the movie studio.

"I know for the movie tie-in we had a visit to London Soho for a private cinema showing of the movie. I know after we all came out, it was like "ummm no guns, no weapons. Shit, looks like we'll be using artistic license with this one". After seeing the movie, it was a case of never mind, we'll just use what we like, as perhaps no guns would have made it a little too boring. No limits were imposed on us by the studio. In those days, I presume, they were happy to get a sum of cash for a movie title tie-in."

Fair enough then. But who else was involved in the design of the game?

"I know a lot of the design ideas were with myself, Fergus McGovern, and Joe Bonar (the producer) and I'm sure also we had input with other people. Keith Burkhill, Tony Beckwith and Tim Round were some I do recall meeting a few times briefly."

I was interested in learning about how C64 games like Alien 3 were developed so late in the commercial life of the machine, especially at a major studio like Probe. At the time, the company was beginning to develop games for much more powerful consoles, such as the Megadrive and SNES. I asked Micheal to elaborate about the tech that was used at Probe during the development of Alien 3.

"I used PDS for the development, in which I had re-programmed the C64 bios with a boot link which had the communications code copied to zero page and executed all from a PC."

This was by far the best system at the time, smooth, quick and very fast. So on the PC you can develop and hit a button to assemble, and I had a few DOS batch files you just could run and send the entire game to memory and execute quickly. With also debugging enabled (if needed)."

Alien 3 featured music and sfx by the prolific Andrew Rodger, who was quite well known as a SID musician at this time on a myriad of budget titles published by Zeppelin Games (as well as some outstanding demo scene releases, such as the Dark Star inspired Terminus demo). Alien 3 was his biggest title but unfortunately he couldn't be tracked down for this article. Who did the graphics has remained a mystery, with neither Lemon64 nor GB64 including the necessary credits. Michael was only too happy to solve this riddle.

"The graphics were Lee Ames and Lloyd Baker (what a good memory!). Nar, it's inside the ending source code. Lee also did the mapping, but I had to modify it a great deal myself due to misunderstanding of the limits."

Well, that settles that, with the proper credits contained within the game's end sequence (oops - ed). Lee, of course, is known for his work on the Probe developed C64 conversion of Smash TV, as well as the Infogrames published strategy epic, North & South. Lloyd's Commodore resume is a little lighter, although according to his mobygames





profile page, he contributed graphics to a whole range of (mainly) 16 bit titles in the '90s.

Michael, of course, has quite the history on the Commodore 64 and programmed a number of other highly regarded titles after his earlier days making games on the BBC Micro. Amongst them are the Activision published conversions of the SEGA arcade games Altered Beast and Atomic Robo-Kid. He reflects fondly on his early programming days and for those of you interested in coding, he has very generously released the sources of many of his C64 projects from back in the day, including Alien 3.



"Not so long ago I took it to release all my old source code into github (<https://github.com/milkeybabes>) so anyone could take a look and maybe learn something. At least I did my part, some code has comments and sometimes even I don't remember what it does."

The stars aligned just the right way for Alien 3 to make it out on the Commodore 64 at a time when many other publishers were cancelling their final C64 releases. The Commodore Format scanner predicted a myriad of titles during the same era that never quite made it, most of which are documented on Frank Gasking's wonderful Games That Weren't website. To get such a polished and accomplished licensed game was a wonderful way for Probe, publisher Virgin Games and Michael to retire from the C64. I asked Micheal if there was an awareness at the time that Alien 3 was going to be Probe's, or his own, last C64 game?



"It's hard to say, I think the C64 needs did indeed dry up a bit after this, and I was also keen to move onto the SNES, to a point where I had a development system from Probe to do some demo stuff with. There was an initial call for me to do a SNES title, but this sadly fell through and I moved onto other projects whilst waiting. But I did get to do some learning on the SNES."

Alien 3 is a game that very nearly wasn't. A well polished run 'n gun, released at a time when full price games on the C64 had all but disappeared. Michael enthusiastically looks back on his early development days. Cryptically, he hints at some kind of return to the retrogaming scene.

"It's a time of fond memories, and that I hope brought some enjoyment to many, and some frustration also (sorry for that). I think being a games programmer back in those days had some different elements, and I do have a soft place in my heart for what little I did bring to the table. I got to say modern titles with the state of the art 3D etc don't make a game, there is a lot to be said of the retro world, and in fact I'm going to produce a retro product as a collectible later this year."

It's not a conversion. I helped with the design and it was a lead version of the title.

That certainly sounds like something to look forward to. But while you wait, dust off your copy of C64 Alien 3 and revisit what is a highly polished and enjoyable run 'n gun, and a game that very nearly didn't make it out at all.

Reset64 would like to thank Michael Archer for his participation in this article.

OCTOBER 1986



I turned 13 in October 1986, and although it's not considered the luckiest of numbers, it certainly was a great age and a fantastic time to be a C64 gamer.

That month I was spoilt for choice deciding what to spend my birthday money on. The shelves of Boots, WH Smiths, Microtrix and Peek and Poke (two brilliant independent computer shops in my hometown of Bolton) were heavily loaded with an amazing array of games to pick from.

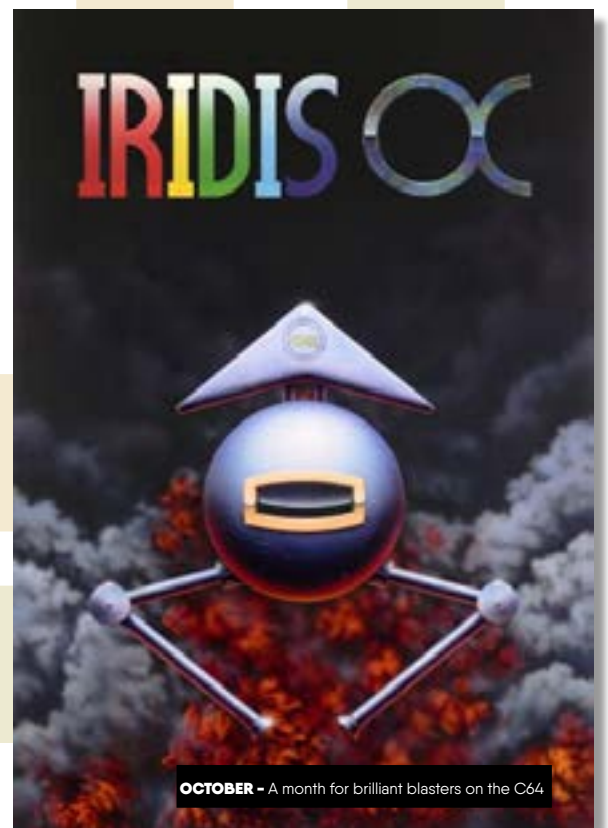
Top of the podium that autumn was World Games. Epyx had already smashed the sports sim genre out of the park in 1985 with the amazing Summer Games 2 and Winter Games, but World Games took things to a whole new level. Eight ace events all fantastically innovative and hugely playable, it was awesome and scored a massive 98% Gold Medal in ZZAP! who declared it "The state-of-the-art sports simulation for the 64".

Another epic from Epyx that month was Super Cycle - the closest thing to the arcade smash Hang-on on an 8-bit home computer. It was fantastic. Packed with fast, exciting racing action, gorgeous graphics and great presentation, it scored a whopping 95% Sizzler in ZZAP! with Gary Penn describing it as "the most addictive and exhilarating race game yet".

As well as being a great month for sports games, October '86 was also a fantastic time for shoot 'em ups. Jeff Minter's brilliant Iridis Alpha scored a 95% ZZAP! Sizzler, while two future big names in computer games made their debuts with two quality blasters. Thalamus released their debut hit Sanxion from at the time unknown Finnish programmer Stavros Fasoulas, and Sensible Software brought us the innovative and technically brilliant Parallax (okay, Galaxi-birds came out a few weeks before, but Parallax was their first major game). Both games were excellent, and both earned 93% Sizzlers.



On the arcade adventure front Virgin released the delightful Dan Dare (94% Sizzler) and Paul Norman brought us the sequel to his early C64 classic and one of the first ever survival horror games with Beyond the Forbidden Forest. The latter adorned the cover of the October edition of ZZAP! and scored a very healthy 91%. Of course, not everything in the world of C64 games was wonderful that month. Two massive disappointments skulked their way onto the shelves, both from Ocean software. The official Miami Vice computer game (apart from an amazing Martin Galway score) was a total turkey. Awful controls, terrible design and unplayable gameplay made it a huge let down. But that wasn't the biggest disappointment that month. As a kid I loved Knight Rider and couldn't wait for the game but what an absolute car crash it turned out to be. A horrible game with zero playability, it was an absolute dog and was duly awarded a paltry 16% in ZZAP! More shite rider than Knight Rider.



OCTOBER - A month for brilliant blasters on the C64

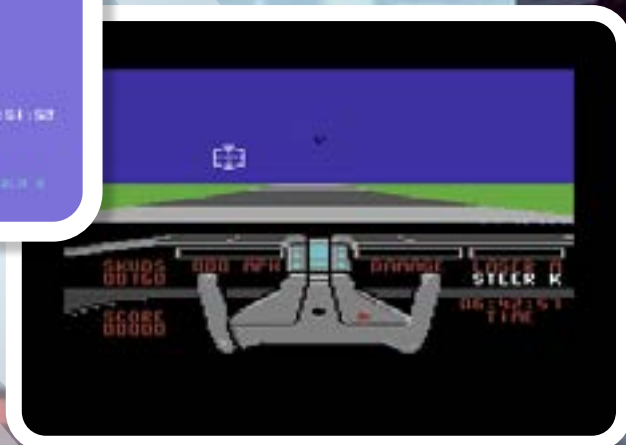


ABOVE - Cliff Diving, Caber Tossing, Sumo Wrestling and more in **WORLD GAMES**.

BELOW - The Hoff pondering how **KNIGHT RIDER** went from KITT to S**T.

Outside in the real world in October 1986 the M25 motorway opened (soon to be renamed The Road to Hell by Chris Rea), Australian soap Neighbours debuted on UK TV and Martin Scorsese's *The Colour of Money* starring Paul Newman and Tom Cruise hit the silver screen. In the British pop charts EastEnders actor Nick Berry's *Every Loser Wins* was Number 1 for 3 weeks, having knocked Madonna's *True Blue* off the top spot. *True Blue* had toppled the biggest selling song of the year, The Communards' 'Don't Leave Me This Way'. Which seems like the perfect way to leave this issue's Reset Reloaded.

Thanks for reading Commrades. See you next issue.
Martin Grundy



5 REASONS TO... LOAD UP MIDNIGHT RESISTANCE

by RICHARD TAPPEN

MIDNIGHT RESISTANCE IS A 1990 PORT OF THE RUN N GUN ARCADE HIT FROM DATA EAST. AS IT REVIEWED FAVOURABLY IN ZZAP!64 ISSUE 68 (SCORING 90%), CHANCES ARE YOU'VE ALREADY PLAYED IT. BUT IF YOU HAVEN'T, HERE ARE 5 REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD LOAD IT UP.



1 THE MUSIC!

Midnight Resistance has great music throughout, but the highlight is the title tune - a thumping bass line highlighted by a synth melody that sounds like it could be Muse. There's a variety of different tunes throughout the game, all that seem to tie together nicely and keep you humming along. If that isn't enough for you, load up the Hit Squad version and you get the amazing Ocean Loader theme too.

2 THE WEAPONS!

Midnight Resistance features a weapon upgrade system - as you progress through the level you pick up keys from dead enemies which you can then use at the end of each level to upgrade your firepower. There's full automatics, shotguns, flame throwers, homing missiles, shower bombs, full automatics and my favourite - the three way gun. It's not particularly good, but it reminds me of a ping pong ball gun I had as a kid and hits me right in the nostalgia feels. Also these weapons are powerful and can even blow up electricity!



3 THE GRAPHICS!

The main character is almost definitely Rambo. He's muscle bound, in a vest and wearing a sweatband. And when he is crawling backwards, he looks sexy! Like he's posing for Jack to paint him like a French Girl or something. There are some well drawn enemies too - the jetpack wearing soldiers look particularly good. The loading screen is awesome too, showing our hero taking on enemies with a flamethrower.



4 THE ACTION!

There's 9 levels in the game, and they're pretty varied. I mean you are always blasting but sometimes you are running, sometimes you are crawling, sometimes climbing up or down ladders, and sometimes you just gotta blow a great big hole in the floor to fall through. You'll fight a variety of different enemies - soldiers, soldiers with jet packs, tanks, planes, helicopters, navy ships and some menacing circular saws. The boss fights are pretty cool - my favourite was the six fighter jets that come at you from each direction, and has a little interlude between waves that show progress - a nice touch. The final level is like some surrealist nightmare and completely bonkers.

5 THE ENDING!

Yes, it has an ending! Enjoy a beautiful sunset with your rescued family. That in itself is pretty awesome - you get to rescue your family in the same way you'd select weapons - maybe you can leave your sister behind?



RAINBOW ARTS' 1990 RELEASE TURRICAN SCORED A WHOPPING 97% IN ZZAP ISSUE 61, EARNING IT A GOLD MEDAL AND I SUSPECT THERE ARE VERY FEW C64 OWNERS WHO HAVEN'T PLAYED IT. FOR THOSE WHO HAVEN'T, HERE ARE 5 REASONS TO SUIT UP.

5 REASONS TO LOAD UP... TURRICAN

by RICHARD TAPPEN

1 THE FIREPOWER!

Your character is wearing an hi-tec combat suit equipped with all kinds of weaponry and a gyroscope ability (which rolls you up into an indestructible ball). I'd love to have one - imagine rocking up to a retro event in that? Not sure being rolled up into a ball would be that comfortable though. You are armed with grenades, mines, a lightning beam that rotates 360 degrees, super powerful full screen laser lines and the ability to collect either a scatter or laser gun. It really is a blast!



2 THE WEAPONS!

The awesome title screen depicts our suited hero standing in front of fire and smoke with his/her fist raised triumphantly, the in-game graphics throughout are beautifully drawn and animated with superb little effects like water splashes as you jump out of pools. There is a lovely screen wipe/respawn sequence that softens the blow of losing a life (you'll probably see this quite often). Most of the levels are sound fx only but what music there is is great (though I recently discovered the title tune is a cover of the Transformers movie theme tune!).

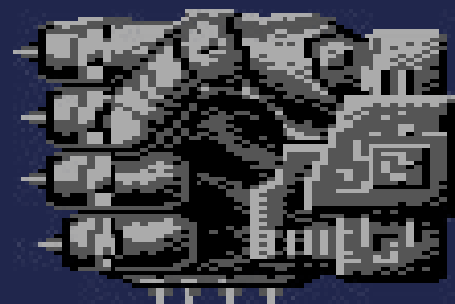


3 THE ADVENTURE!

This game is huge. It boasts 13 levels - most of which have full 8 way scrolling - and a total of 1300 screens spread across 5 different worlds. You'll walk through a variety of different spaces, encouraging you to explore as you find your way to the end of the level. It is definitely not a case of just moving from left to right. There's even a nice change of pace mid way through when you get some shmup action. Inevitably the size does mean a multi load for cassette users but it's pretty fast and doesn't ruin the game for me.

4 THE ENEMIES!

It seems that every time you make some progress (either in a level or from one level to the next) you come across something new (animal, mechanical or mineral) that wants to sap your valuable energy. There's a huge variety of different enemies and even parts of the scenery want to kill you too. Then there's the bosses - massive fish, giant fists, and weird mutant skeleton things await.



5 THE LEGACY!

Without Turrican you wouldn't have Turrican II and that would be a real shame. That's not even taking into consideration the various other sequels (official and unofficial), clones and other related releases that have appeared over the years on other platforms and even now!



It's the future. The distant future that is, and the Soultron system has been a bastion of peace for many @millenia. But for some, the lingering thoughts of what lies outside their system inspired the development of Project Soul Force.

That's the set up for the latest shmup from the prolific Sarah Jane Avory, in which you'll take charge of the Soul Force fighter and blast your way through 20 levels of bio-mechanical threats to save the day and restore peace to the Soultron system.

These 20 stages will take you from deepest space, into a variety of asteroid facilities and enemy space fortresses, to planets, and the depths of the seas. Each offering a distinct atmosphere and plenty of tricky foes to dispatch.

The Soul Force fighter starts out firing Plasma Shots, but by collecting the power ups released from dispatched enemies, three additional weapons can be obtained: Multi Shots offer greater coverage. The Laser Cannons provide greater stopping power, damaging multiple foes in a single blast. Finally, the Energy Wave releases a blast of energy which will expand to provide forward coverage.

Each can be upgraded several times, and collecting a given weapon type switches over to that weapon.

Where most shooters will strip you of your weaponry upon death, Soul Force only weakens your current weapon, ensuring you still have a fighting chance.

Pickups also release Smart Bombs which clear out everything on screen when collected.

Even better, are the defensive options - Shields will absorb a limited number of enemy shots, and then there's full-on Invulnerability for a limited time as well!

At the climax of each stage, you'll be pitted against one of the aliens' guardians. As expected, these are intense battles but once defeated, you'll move onto the next stage and receive a password to start there from your next session.

Soul Force is available through Protovision, on both physical cartridge, or as a digital download through their itch.io page. It's compatible with both PAL & NTSC systems, with the download supporting EasyFlash, the Ultimate II+ & Ultimate64 systems along with common emulators.



**RESET
RIPPER**

SOUL

R

Publisher

Psytronik

Game credits

Programming and Design

Sarah Jane Avory

Graphics

Sarah Jane Avory, Gergely Sinkó & Paolo Pomes

Music & Sound Effects

Sarah Jane Avory

Box artwork Gergely Sinkó

Manual Sarah Jane Avory, Lobo

Additional help Tim Jakob Chen-Voos, Milo Mundt, Benedikt Schäfer





Wow. Just wow. That's really what I feel about Soul Force in a nutshell. As when it comes to what makes a great shmup, it delivers on just about every darn detail.

Silky smooth scrolling and flicker free visuals? Check.

Challenging enemy formations which are learnable but not overwhelming? Check.

A power-up system which offers stupendous fire power, but is intuitive to use? Check.

Loads (and gosh, do I mean loads) of levels to work your way through? Check.

This is the start of what makes Soul Force such a great shmup experience. From the technical proficiency, to the well balanced challenge and the sheer number of waves you'll battle through, there's plenty to keep you hooked as you claw your way up the score table.

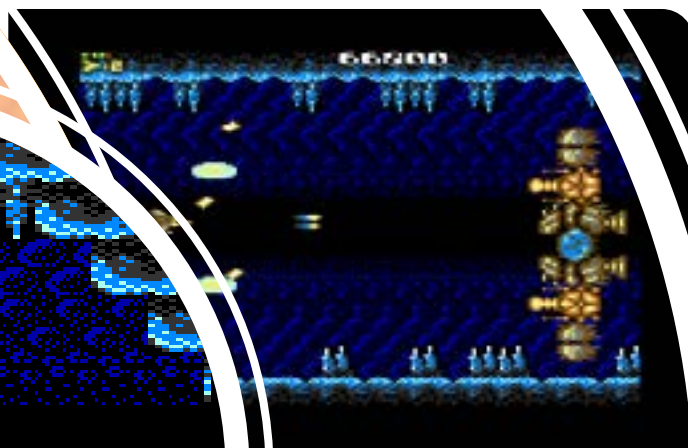
The cartridge only release totally seals the deal - with no loading, the pace is truly there, and those cutscenes between levels brings a console-esque flair to the C64.

Soul Force offers everything I love in a shmup, with very little to set it wrong in my book.

FORGE

BEYOND
THE
SCANLINES

See page 72



Soul Force was teased by Sarah Jane Ivory on Twitter over a long period of time, building anticipation for the release and setting high expectations. It doesn't disappoint and the super slick boxed edition from Protovision completely seals the deal.

Reminiscent of 8 bit console and MSX shooters from the likes of Konami and Taito, Soul Force is super smooth while presenting a tough but fair challenge. The graphical themes are varied and presentation impressive, with the cartridge format allowing the developer to give us lucky gamers some next level content in the game. Sarah has some real coding tricks up her sleeve which certainly have been implemented effectively.

If I had a criticism, it would probably be that the music isn't exactly to my taste. It's high quality, but won't go down as a classic soundtrack. But I'm seriously knit picking here. Everything else, and I mean everything, is superb.

Soul Force will certainly always enter into any conversation or argument about which is the best Commodore 64 shmup. It's a divisive argument, but that it's in the mix says it all, really. A must play!



MONSTRO GIGANTO



R

Developer
Pirates of Zanzibar

Publisher
RGCD

Game credits
Game concept/Graphics Lobo
Code Antonio Savona
Music and Sfx Aldo Chiummo
Additional Support & Hardware
Testing James Monkman



ANT AND CAM, BESIDES BEING THE MOST SOUGHT-AFTER HARD-HITTING GAMES JOURNALISTS ON THE PLANET, ARE ALSO AMATEUR SCIENTISTS KEEN ON DEVELOPING THE ULTIMATE IN EVOLUTION: A CREATURE THAT CAN REVIEW GAMES WITHOUT FEAR, FAVOUR OR EVER BEING PAID. TO THAT END, EACH OF OUR INTREPID HEROES CAPTURED A STRAY ANIMAL AND INJECTED IT WITH THEIR HOME-MADE FORMULA X, TRANSFORMING THEM INTO A SEVENTY FOOT TALL WEREWOLF AND A GARGANTUAN LIZARD CREATURE. THE SAVAGE BEASTS WERE THEN SET ON THEIR FIRST TASK: REVIEWING MONSTRO GIGANTO ON THE COMMODORE SIXTY FOUR THESE ARE DR. ANT AND PROF. CAM'S SCIENTIFIC FINDINGS:



Monstro Giganto is about size and style - the flashy cartridge, the gigantic characters, the over the top production values - everything just represents immense scale and care for the giant monster movie genre. And I'm all for that! It really is a game that needs to be seen in motion and played with to really get what the fuss is about. I love the fact that this kind of game exists on our beloved bread box!

However as a game it's actually quite small. The number of playable characters is limited, though there is considerable challenge involved in unlocking the hidden monster, and there's not a huge range of moves available. Look, with an eight-way stick and one fire button we

were never going to get Street Fighter-levels of complexity but when each attack is so slow, the whole process becomes repetitive quickly.

At the end of the day though it's really hard to fault this game. It does exactly what it sets out to do and does so with considerable flourish. It's about the same price as a monster movie rental back in the day, and will probably last as long as a silly feature. I do recommend you try it, just don't expect gameplay that will keep you coming back for weeks or months on end.

PS: For the record I want to say that Ant's wife is a delight who so far has not murdered me for giving her devastatingly handsome husband more Commodore 64 stuff every time I see him and beat him at Daytona.

Day One

At first, the creatures were bewildered with the task before them: A fighting game on the Commodore 64 that uses exclusively PETSCII characters? Thankfully, the werewolf's powerful eyesight saw that the images, while chunky, exude character and charm.

Lizard creature, on the other hand, moaned in agony about the way you can never see the fighter's feet... and the 70,000 volts of electricity it was subjected to every time it accidentally stomped on top of the 1084.

Day Two

Today we set our own gigantic monsters to the task of playing the game and sampling the two player mode. Progress was slow in the beginning, due to the slightly sluggish response time and the fact that even the largest Commodore 64 joystick was hard to use when your hands are the size of a station wagon.

Still, our beasts expressed joyful grunts for quite a few hours, trying out the four initially playable characters against each other and seeing which one suited their playing style. There is a surprising amount of depth to each on-screen persona to encourage experimentation.

Worryingly, after the the game Commodore 64 was thrown switched off, our around at creatures started the slightest copying the moves they provocation, saw on-screen and how started hitting each adorable! other until Doctor They were Ant pulled out the tranquilizer darts.

Day Four

After a day wasted trying to teach them how to take screenshots (because if there's one task we'd love to outsource, it's that) the beasts turned their attention to the overall package. It was immediately clear to both the werewolf and lizard like the alike that Monstro Giganto was a masterclass in presentation with colourful menus, a delightful they started console-style interface and amusing throwing around backstories to every playable character.

They were inspired so much by the on- they weren't getting screen origin stories that they enquired paid. Thankfully we about their own creation, and were were able to calm them incredibly upset to find out they were down by offering stock genetic mutations designed so that options, because we're out of their masters wouldn't have to work tranquilizer darts. any more. They started using their massive fists to pound against their restraining walls, and out came the tranquilizers again.

Day Seven

We knew that these towering monsters had advanced hearing capabilities, so their finely tuned reminded of their upcoming deadline. senses could appreciate the They were eager to start writing the review, stonking tunes the game but...um, we forgot to teach them English and belts out during gameplay Google Translate doesn't understand Monster. and on menus. They even In frustration they smashed down a wall and ran off learned some basic vocal into the city streets, punching cars and tearing down communication skills after street signs along the way. hearing the dazzling We're sure they'll be back when they get hungry. Games digitised speech that journalists are always hungry.

Day Ten

Disaster has struck! The monsters broke free of their cages and started exhibiting late-stage game journalist behaviour. They spent the entire morning scrolling Twitter and only stopped when

Day Fifteen

All is lost. The creatures that we thought would be the perfect game reviewing machines have instead turned on us and flattened the entire city in a devastating wave of devastation and mayhem.

Perhaps we were the monsters all along?



While it's a known fact that I let Cam beat me at Daytona because he's so dashing handsome, not everyone would be aware that he is actually quite deft with his dexterous digits. Nothing is a better example of this fact than when we were locked in battle as giant PETSCII monsters. A battle that could only end in one victor ... my wife, when she demanded we stop wasting time playing games on "that ridiculous computer that I worry you are a little too infatuated with."

Monstro is a fun beat-em-up and I love the clever, colourful PETSCII art and animation. Controls are responsive, which is so vital to a two-player fighting game, and I appreciate the work put into making the gameplay slick and rewarding.



AN INTERVIEW WITH



Lobo Spitoufs is a bit of a 'jack of all trades' within the retro gaming graphical community. Having been bitten by the C64 bug way back in 1982, Lobo has utilised his illustration talents to work on a wide variety of projects including game manuals, packaging and box art for Protovision, layout designs for various magazines/annuals and providing graphics for many great demos and games across multiple platforms.

Having provided the graphics and game concept for **Monstro Giganto**, **Reset 64** was keen to catch up with Lobo and find out more about his many talents and how his **Monster Brawler** came to fruition.

Reset: Welcome Lobo! Thanks so much for taking the time to chat with us today. We are great admirers of the graphical art that you put out to the scene. You certainly have been keeping yourself quite busy of late.

Lobo: Hello, thanks for the invitation and kind words. Yes, it's been rather busy lately due to the fact that I've decided to finally finish some of the ideas that I have had floating in my mind so they don't linger around my head any more. I've had some images at various stages of completion so it was about time to sort them out.

Reset: You have a prolific profile as a pixel artist within the scene, how did you get started drawing graphics?

Lobo: Probably back when I was five years old with crayons and all that. Since then, it's been a long and continuous journey, from drawing something on paper to moving to digital and then to various platforms as time went by until there was a window of opportunity to draw something related to a specific machine. In my case, it's C64 and I always did something around it but it never amounted to anything visible until I started releasing some of the work and joined my first demo group, Atlantis.

Reset: The quality of your pixel art is of such a high standard. Is there a particular piece that stands out the most for you? A piece of art that you feel quite proud about?

Lobo: All the things I have drawn were done for a reason. Usually there is something fun about them or because they feature cats. It's hard for me to tell which one of these might be my favourite. To me, they're just a reminder of what made me curious at some point in my life. However, I would say 'Jimmy' is one that I definitely feel the most as it was not only a bit tricky to mix hires with PETSCII but it was also to celebrate my country finally getting a president who's not a lizard overlord.

Reset: In recent times, you have been producing a number of C64 pixel art done using PETSCII. What attracts you to using this approach?

Lobo: I used to do PETSCII on the Basic screen back in the 80s. I had patience back then to memorise what key does what - clearing the screen, POKE the colours and then selecting different colours to draw. I would do drawings of game characters with Zorro being one of my favourite sprites to draw. Later on I would draw everything from IK, Commando to Monty and Parallax among others. I had no trouble replicating these sprites in character set. Later on I got interested in drawing ASCII/ANSI as there is something wild and sublime about doing graphic work with text. Guillaume Apollinaire, the French poet, published his works of poetry titled 'Calligrammes' back in 1917 where he used his typewriter to illustrate his poems by drawing, for example, some smoke while typing all the letters in a way that gave the impression of the smoke dissolving into the air. The idea of drawing with characters is not new but it's ultimately satisfying on any machine to try to make something that just doesn't look like it should be possible. It feels like something between cheating the system and a guilty pleasure of sorts.

Reset: How did your working relationship with the Pirates of Zanzibar team come about?

Lobo: I came up with Pirates of Zanzibar for a simple reason - it's always easy to distinguish a game by 'developer studio' rather than trying to remember any number of people working on any specific game. Back in 2017 I wanted to have a C64 specific group that would

do some games and include anyone out there who had enough time and interest to join in and do some work. So I started writing down some game ideas and asked my friends in Atlantis if anyone wanted to join in. It's been so far so good up to this point. I make it as easy as possible for my teammates to understand the concepts and, of course, I make myself available to work with them until the game is done. There is no pressure, just the choice to join in and do something that we would like to see appear digitally or on tape, floppy, cart for as long as it's fun and no aggravating business attached. So far it really worked well.

Reset: Who comes up with the concepts for the game that the team produces?

Lobo: So far I have come up with all the games but that doesn't mean that in the future someone else won't come up with something that should be done. When we do decide to use someone else's idea, I will still contribute in the graphics department because really the only thing that shifts here is responsibility of holding firm the game play idea, reporting on various issues which might occur during the development phase and organising any necessary changes thereafter. More important than coming up with the concept is to have all involved stick with it and see it done, that's what makes a game in the end.

Reset: The team's debut release, BoxyMoxy, has a somewhat unique cartoony graphical look (for the C64) that wouldn't look out of place on a game for Nintendo or Sega console. Was this intentional?

Lobo: The visuals are really just fitting the relatively confined and static single screen space as everything is set in a grid at a sprite size. The visuals in BoxyMoxy ended up somewhat cute-like console style, as you mentioned, since the limits imposed dictated the look so to speak, that is, 'big head-small body' cats to a sprite size as large as it can be without making things look overcrowded.

Reset: We hear that Monstro Giganto is one of RGCD's best selling games of all time - Congratulations!

Lobo: Thanks, yes I heard James of RGCD has bought a yacht already :D

Reset: Actually didn't he just move into a fancy new place in the English countryside, there must be a bit of money to be made in this game publisher caper :) Anyway, what was the inspiration behind working on a Monster Fighter game?

Lobo: I had the title and monsters drawn some odd 20 years ago until it finally dawned on me to make a game out of it. Inspired by Godzilla and other similar crazy monsters, I wanted to make a fighting game out of it with as large characters as possible in single and 2 player mode. The first thing was to write down the game play, controls and back story before I did drawings and animations to show it to a potential coder and musician. It was the summer of 2010 when I had all

these elements ready as an 'attract mode' for anyone interested in making this game with me. I posted it in our Atlantis chat forum and Tony (Antonio Savona) volunteered together with Aldo Chiummo on music and we just went from there until it was done.

Reset: How did it come about that you would include an unlockable monster based on Humphrey Bogart? It seems to be an odd (but inspired) choice for a monster character.

Lobo: Many years ago I made a little Windows game based on the movie 'Casablanca' and ever since I've wanted to do something with Bogie on C64. At the time, when I was preparing Monstro gfx, Qzerow, Diverigo and I worked on an Atlantis demo called 'Lovecats' where I finally had the opportunity to include the PETSCII version of Bogie in the end sequence of that demo which references scenes from 'Casablanca'. When Monstro Giganto was underway, I asked Tony if we should add an unlockable character. He agreed and as my drawing of Bogie was perfectly suitable in terms of size, we decided to add him to the game. Funny thing now is that one of the PETSCII games I'm working on currently, Murder City Noir, has this same Bogie character as a main protagonist so he's not done with showing off just yet.

Reset: How difficult was it to get the backgrounds scrolling so smoothly in Monstro Giganto?

Lobo: From what I've learned after working with Tony and Qzerow, is that achieving the smooth scroll is rather trivial for seasoned coders. More time is spent optimizing a lot of screens and squeezing out the memory task as much as possible. All work is always a more demanding task as you want to make things feel unpredictable as much as possible. In that area, Tony really did a great job on making Monstros not only smart but progressively tougher and crazier based on their personal abilities and skills. During my testing, I would often go 'Whoah' after seeing how the opponents used their skills to their benefit, level after level.

Reset: So can we expect to see more of your work in future C64 games, whether it be through Pirates of Zanzibar or collaborating with other coders?

Lobo: Yes, definitely and all under the POZ flag. Current future line up consists of 2 PETSCII games, 'Hex Maleficus-Laredo' and 'Murder City Noir' and one multicolor game called 'Magnificent Drunken Tiger'. All three games are currently under development and there's a lot of work to be done but... all in good time.

Reset: It has been a pleasure speaking with Lobo. Thanks again for taking the time to answer our questions. We can't wait to see what you have got in store for us all with your future releases!

Lobo: Thank you for the interview and yeah, fun times are ahead for sure so stick around.



Classic Cosmos Designs presentation, a great Steve Day loading screen and the PETSCII manual impressed me on starting this Hawkeye-inspired game. Graphics do a decent job, with the bosses particularly looking good. Music and sound fit the game well. But at the end of the day, the gameplay does feel dated. Falling through the edges of platforms, enemies spawning close to the player and the difficult-to-spot falling spikes belong in the past. In some ways it feels closer in spirit to Rubicon, throwing a lot of opponents in your path as you head endlessly right. Something also feels "off" with the shops, the way they appear and the values of the upgrades. Dead enemies dropping coins where you cannot reach is also annoying. If you have grown a lot of hair on your chest over the years, you might stand up to the challenge - but it misses out on greatness for me, given the long wait to play it.



The backstory to Outrage is that a great warrior wakes up from a period of unconsciousness to find decimation all around him. His home base is destroyed and all his friends and loved ones have perished in a war that they were ill equipped to contain. In a state of rage and despair, the warrior arms himself with some weapons and limited supplies and sets off on a mission to serve justice to those that destroyed his world.

Outrage is a horizontal run n' gun game that sees you blast your way through five levels packed with hordes of spawning monsters. You start off with five lives and an energy bar that decreases over time, costing you one of your lives should it ever become empty. So if you are considering employing a cautious approach through the game levels then you better think again, as time is of the essence.

As you plough your way through enemy creatures, you will have the opportunity to collect the coins that they drop. The funds you collect can be exchanged for useful items at the shops that pop up at various locations throughout the game. Upgrades such as extra lives, replenished energy, rapid fire and smart bombs can all be purchased with your blood money.

You have four weapons at your disposal with the default weapon being somewhat weak (resulting in most enemies requiring multiple hits to be killed off) but comes with unlimited supply of ammunition. The other three weapons available have stronger firepower but your ammunition for these is limited. Additional ammunition for these can also be bought from the Shop and you are going to need them if you are to ever succeed in your mission.

Outrage is littered with a myriad of platforms that must be navigated across carefully to ensure that you don't needlessly lose one of your precious lives by slipping down through a chasm with the landscape.

As you make it through to the end of each level, don't think it's a time for you to rest as you have a boss battle to contend with before being able to move on to the next world.



Outrage feels like a game put together in the 90s with its rock-hard difficulty. But the main issue I have with it is that it's too much of a 'stop/start' affair rather than providing a pure adrenaline rushed run n' gun experience.

Needing to navigate endless platforms that aren't clearly defined against the background causes great frustration. Time after time I watched my hero fall to his death while leaping onto a ledge that I thought was part of the play area. Add to this the general banality of the game play itself and the whole experience feels like a chore.

I enjoyed the end level bosses and the weapon shop upgrade system employed but the stand out within Outrage is Roy Widding's thumping soundtrack that is one of my favourites to grace the C64. But all this doesn't make up for the fact that Outrage feels quite rough around the edges and in need of current day sensibilities to be added to its game design to make it more engaging.



OUTRAGE

OUTRAGE WAS A GAME DESTINED TO BE ANOTHER ENTRY TO THE **GAMES THAT WEREN'T** ARCHIVE. A DECLINING C64 MARKET, INCOMPLETE SOURCE CODE, AND GLITCHY GAMEPLAY ALL CONSPIRED TO SEND THE GAME INTO THE FORGOTTEN REALMS - THAT IS UNTIL THE PERSISTENCE AND COLLABORATION OF THE C64 CODING SCENE FINALLY WON THROUGH AFTER 30 YEARS TO PROVIDE FRUITFUL RESULTS.

R

Developer

Cosmos Designs/Onslaught

Publisher

Protovision & Psytronik Software

Game credits

Game concept, Code & GFX

Bernd Buchegger

Additional Development

Sidney Arbouw

Original title & doc music Karl Sommer

In-game music & SFX Roy Widding


Loading picture Steve Day

Producer & Story David Simmons




MW ULTRA represents the ongoing evolution of Lasse Öörni's C64 gaming development skills spanning in excess of 20 years to deliver what is a fantastic blend of interactive objective based gameplay, engaging storytelling and fluid combat controls.

From the outset, I couldn't help but be impressed with the high overall production values on offer. But what stood out the most to me are the silky-smooth player controls. Gone are the days where going up a staircase would cause endless frustrations (looking at you Hessian) as moving our protagonist around the screen feels seamless and quite enjoyable.




The new additions to this iteration of the MW franchise are noteworthy, starting from the perfectly executed grapple gun system, to the versatility of the melee combat move set and finishing off with the tactical application of the cover system that is critical for minimising damage from well-armed enemies and bosses.

MW Ultra delivers everything I want in my C64 gaming and I would consider the game to be categorised as a 'modern classic' that should be enjoyed by all.



It's a grim time, in a city where the sun doesn't shine. It's a setup common to many a dystopia, and so sets the grounding for Cover Bitops' MW Ultra, which serves as a reimaging of their 1999 game Metal Warrior.



The story opens on a similar tone, with you slipping into the combat boots of Ian, a loner who's concerned with nothing more than drinking booze and growing his hair out. At least until what would have been a routine chance to earn a bit of cash goes wrong, resulting in the death of his friend Lucas, and a great deal of questions to find out.

So there's a lot of investigation involved, the kind which involves meeting up with various characters - ranging from police, to owners of various establishments and more. Along with that, there's plenty of fighting to be done as well - from missions you'll undertake to random goons you'll encounter on the streets.

You'll also need to undertake a variety of missions, each of which can mount a serious challenge to beat. Not only that, but they can also have some impact on the story, based on how things play out.

Defeating enemies in battle, along with completing missions earns you experience which lets you improve Ian's stats in one of several areas - from improving his overall fitness and endurance, to improving



Developer
Covert Bitops
Publisher

Psytronik (Disk), Protovision
(Cartridge, Digital Download)

Design, Code & Graphics:
Lasse Öörni

Music & Sound FX
Kamil Wolnikowski & Lasse
Öörni

Story Assistance
Marja Kuipers



RESET RIPPER



I won't lie, seeing a C64 release from the late '90s (itself an upgraded version of an Amiga game) get the fancy modern remake treatment is exciting. But MW Ultra takes the core of the original Metal Warrior and expands it to be an epic action adventure.



The way it builds upon the story of the original game, adding in wider threads inspired by conspiracy theories making its world feel more hazardous and alive.

Then there's the more involved character mechanics, with the RPG style character upgrading giving you plenty of room to level up and customise your character's strengths as you fight your way through the adventure.

The scope, story and size of the world goes a long way to fleshing out the game, with plenty of tense situations to deal with as you find out what really happened to Ian.

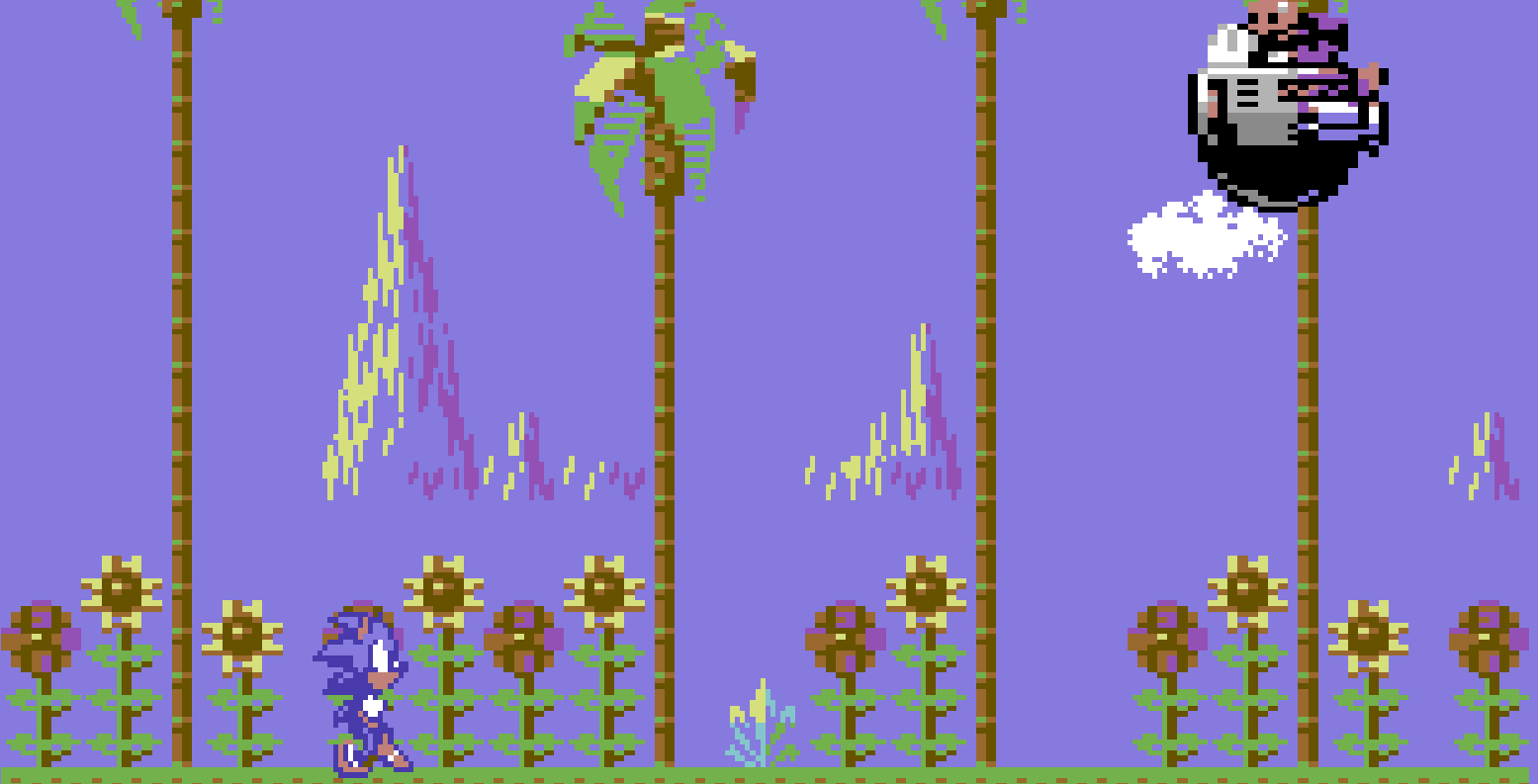
MW Ultra is a high watermark for action adventure games on the C64, truly showing off the talent which Covert Bitops brings to the table, and I can't wait to see what's next.

his fighting prowess, or his athleticism. Like any good RPG, the choice is tough on what you'll want to upgrade, which adds to the overall experience.

The biggest selling point is in the greatly expanded story, which adds a great deal of background to Ian and the other character's you'll encounter in his journey. It results in a story which is more than just about a simple tale of revenge, making Ian's journey much more intriguing as a result.

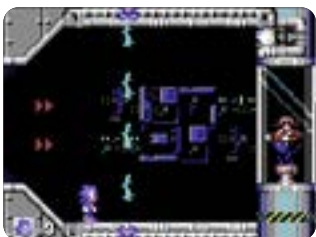
MW Ultra is available in disk form through Psytronik, and in Cartridge form through Protovision. Protovision are also handling the digital download which includes both the disk images and cartridge images for emulators, TheC64 Mini/Maxi and hardware devices like the SD2IEC or 1541 Ultimate family.





SONIC THE HEDGEHOG

REVIEWED BY KEVIN TILLEY



Those of us who stuck with the C64 long enough to bear witness the end of the commercial era, would well remember that it was every 12 year old's dream that Sonic and/or Mario was released on the C64. Every month, some tot would write in to one of the remaining mags and ask the question, and the answer was always a resounding 'never'. C64 users of the time always seemed just a tad envious of console gamers, understandably too.

It was certainly a shock to the system when programmer Mr. SID dropped the bombshell that his C64 port of Sonic was merely days away. The excitement within the various Facebook groups, Twitter and forums was a clear indication that we not only wanted Sonic, but some felt the C64 needed it.

The hard truth is that most of the drivel churned out by budget labels late in the day just wasn't anywhere close to the same level as even mediocre console releases. Just be thankful that the rumoured US Gold port of Sonic never surfaced. We would have been stuck with some embarrassing Tiertex or Creative Materials developed release with missing levels, jerky scrolling, and tiny playing area. No thanks.

Instead, what has been delivered now is a 1:1 port of the Sega Master System version of Sonic, with wonderfully crafted graphics (to suit the C64s palette and resolution), full screen fast scrolling, as well as a wonderful SID soundtrack. Sure, the game needs an REU, but I'll allow it. Sonic is truly a masterclass of C64 gamedev.

As a programming exercise and project, C64 Sonic is second to none. As a game, it's certainly very good, but the challenge seems a bit tame compared to some C64 platforming classics. Alas, I'm a Commodore lad through and through and this age old feeling of loyalty to the C64 still remains. Give me Giana, Mayhem and Sam any day of the week, at least on the C64 anyway.

R

Publisher
Freeware

Game credits
Programming & SFX
Andreas Varga
Graphics
Oliver Lindau
Musician
Mikkel Hastrup
Sound Effects
Andreas Varga



8



TURRICAN 3

REVIEWED BY KEVIN TILLEY

Turrican 1 & 2 are epic run 'n gunners that are arguably unequalled on the C64. Turrican 3, released in 2004 by German demo group Smash Designs, is a fan-made unofficial sequel in which coder André Bürger (AEG) clearly tries to outdo The Master himself. Spoiler alert, he fails, though honourably so.

It's quite incredible how authentic everything looks, feels and sounds. Hold on, yes, we have music playing throughout all of the run n' gun levels (something Manfred couldn't quite manage) and it must be said that the soundtrack is amazing, featuring SID remixes from the 16 bit Turrican games as well as original tunes. The in-game graphics are stunning, featuring the familiar parallax scrolling effects, massive guardians and bullets flying everywhere! Level design is authentic, with the large levels giving the player plenty to explore and do. It's quite astonishing really. Turrican 3 is clearly a love letter to Manfred's C64 originals and almost feels like an extension of Turrican 2, with the aesthetics and design emulated perfectly and remaining true despite being new.

Unfortunately, Turrican 3 is far from perfect, with various bugs taking their toll. When things start getting hectic, the screen occasionally stutters and glitches momentarily, but I can live with that as the added soundtrack is well worth the raster time it eats up. I'd love to know if it could have been avoided though. Spelling mistakes in the cut scenes (yes, cut scenes!) and various other 'knit picky' bugs, such as invisible steps when climbing walls, really do give the game an unpolished feel. Shame really, because these small, fixable errors remain as distractions to the sheer scale of the production and effort put into making the game. What I can't forgive though are the game killing bugs, such as respawning in walls (leading to the player becoming stuck in the scenery) and occasional crashes. These are real motivation killers. The game feels somewhat rushed and unfinished, but this should never be given as Turrican 3 is a homebrew release.

Overall, I'd nearly go as far to say that Turrican 3 is a flawed masterpiece. The amount of effort and dedication that went into making the game is admirable and the skills on display by the are team quite incredible. Unfortunately, a probable lack of adequate testing, proofreading and bug fixing diminish what is otherwise an incredible experience playing through the game. Turrican

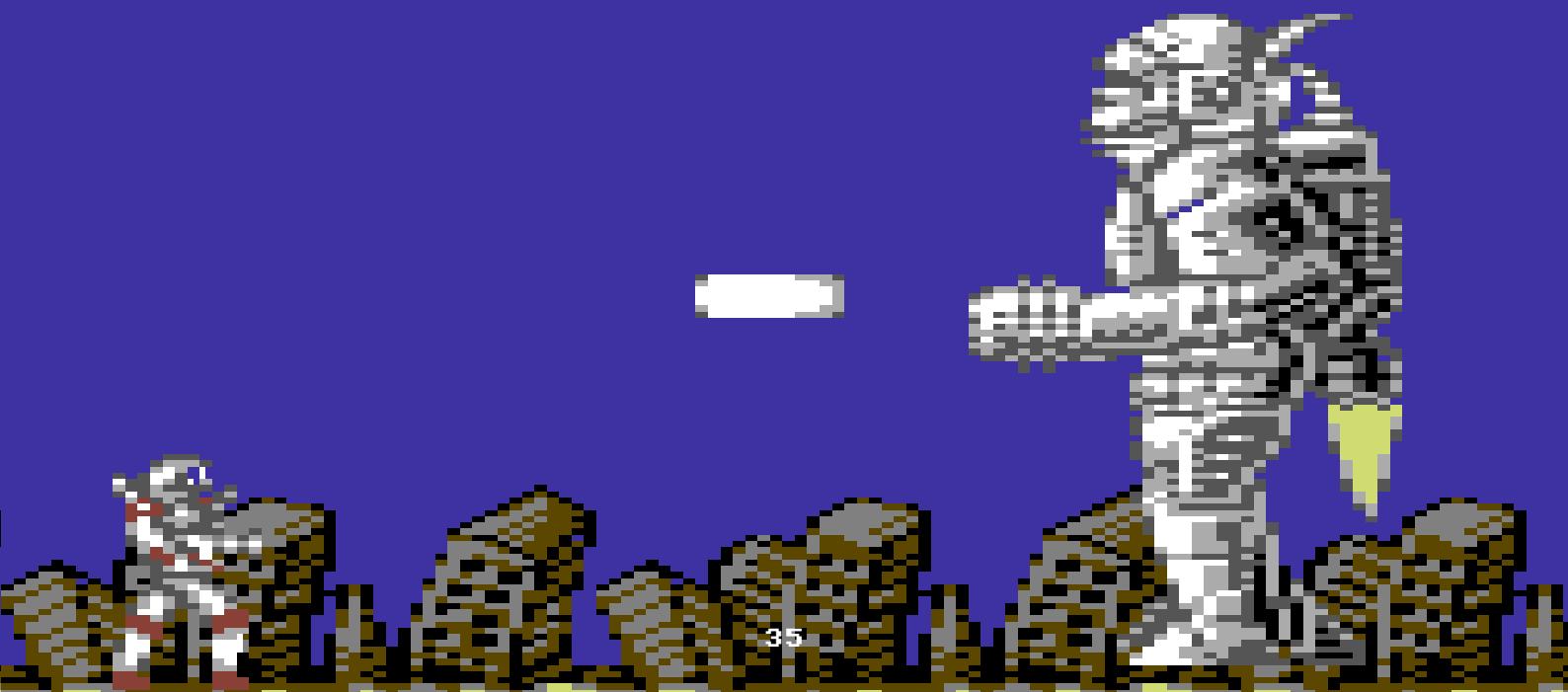
3 is highly ambitious and otherwise impressive. Definitely worth a playthrough, just have those glasses tinted to the slightly rosy spectrum to help ignore the deficiencies.

8

R

Publisher
Freeware

Game credits
Development
Smash Designs (2004)
Programming & Graphics
André Bürger (AEG)
Music
Tufan Uysal, Seren Lund
& Tammo Hinrichs





RUNN 'N GUNN

REVIEWED BY RICHARD TAPPENDEN

Soldiers Runn & Gunn were involved in a failed military experiment that resulted in them being fused together into a single super soldier. Runn is the faster, more agile of the two and can jump better, whereas the slower Gunn has stronger firepower.

Your mission is to blast through the base on Bantaya preventing an attack on Earth. You'll be confronted with many enemies and obstacles, as you collect key cards to progress past electrified force fields.

Alongside plentiful blasting action there's excellent platforming sections, occasionally made pretty frantic by the pursuing Alu-Minion - a robot that copies your every move until it catches you. You'll also encounter the ghoulish Violet-V who aggressively circles you until you either escape the screen or blast it away.

The game has two control options - one where you use UP to shoot and FIRE to jump, and the inverse. This is a nice touch - I actually found the default configuration to work really well after a few plays. To change between the characters, you hold DOWN on the stick - which is also what you use to deactivate the force fields. I did find that I would occasionally change character unintentionally while moving around the screen, but given the limitations of a single button the scheme works well.

The player and enemy sprites are well drawn and animated, and the catchy music works well with the gameplay.

The game is pretty generous - you have 3 lives and 3 shields - meaning you can get hit 4 times before losing a life - and then 3 continues too. On it's easiest setting, it wasn't too hard to get through the screens to the final boss fight, but there are two further difficulty levels which help longevity. Even if you play through all difficulty levels with ease, you'll get plenty of entertainment for the budget price this game costs.

This is the first of 3 proposed missions, and I look forward to the next two.

8.5



R

Publisher
Below The Tower

Game credits
 Developed by Below The Tower
 Programming & Design
 Carleton Handley
 Graphics & Music
 Saul Cross

D

BOXY MOXY

REVIEWED BY RICHARD TAPPENDEN

Boxy & Moxey are the King's cats, sent on a mission to rid the kingdom of a plague of noisy skulls that are disrupting His Highness's sleep.

The game is set across 3 locations (a Forest, a Village and a Castle), each with 20 levels requiring the player to move Boxy and Moxey around the playfield clearing all the skulls. Either cat can move continuously in a direction until an obstacle is reached, but only Moxey can destroy the skulls - Boxy is there to help position Moxey in line with the skulls.

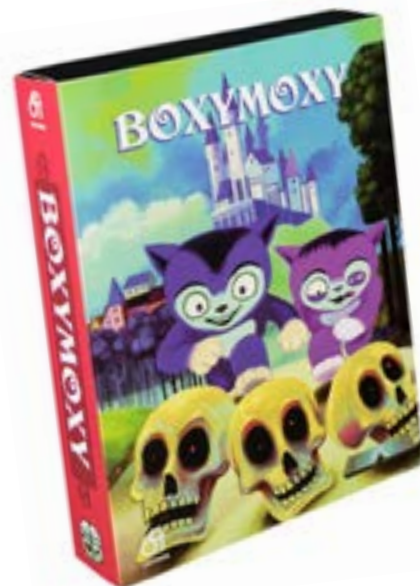
Your moves are counted, and each level has a target - beat or match that and you get 3 stars, within 2 moves for 2 stars, 3 or more will get you 1 star. To progress to the next location you have to get a specific amount of stars, so there is an incentive to get the best solution possible.

Clearing each level with a 3 star score can be quite a stiff challenge, but the game gives you unlimited tries and there's no time limit. You can also go back to revisit any stage again to improve your score, although getting there is a little cumbersome - requiring you to restart to get to the stage selection screen.

Once you've completed the 60 levels, another 20 levels are unlocked, this time set aboard a familiar looking space station.

The game's presentation is fantastic and packed with cute graphics, great music and a lovely game ending (in fact, two if you play through the bonus levels). In particular, the background details throughout the Castle levels are a delight.

The only thing missing is an 'undo move' option. Sometimes it isn't clear which character is selected, and you can end up making a wasted move. This is a highly recommended game, and even if you aren't a big puzzle fan, it's accessibility means you should still be able to get plenty of enjoyment out of it.



R

Publisher

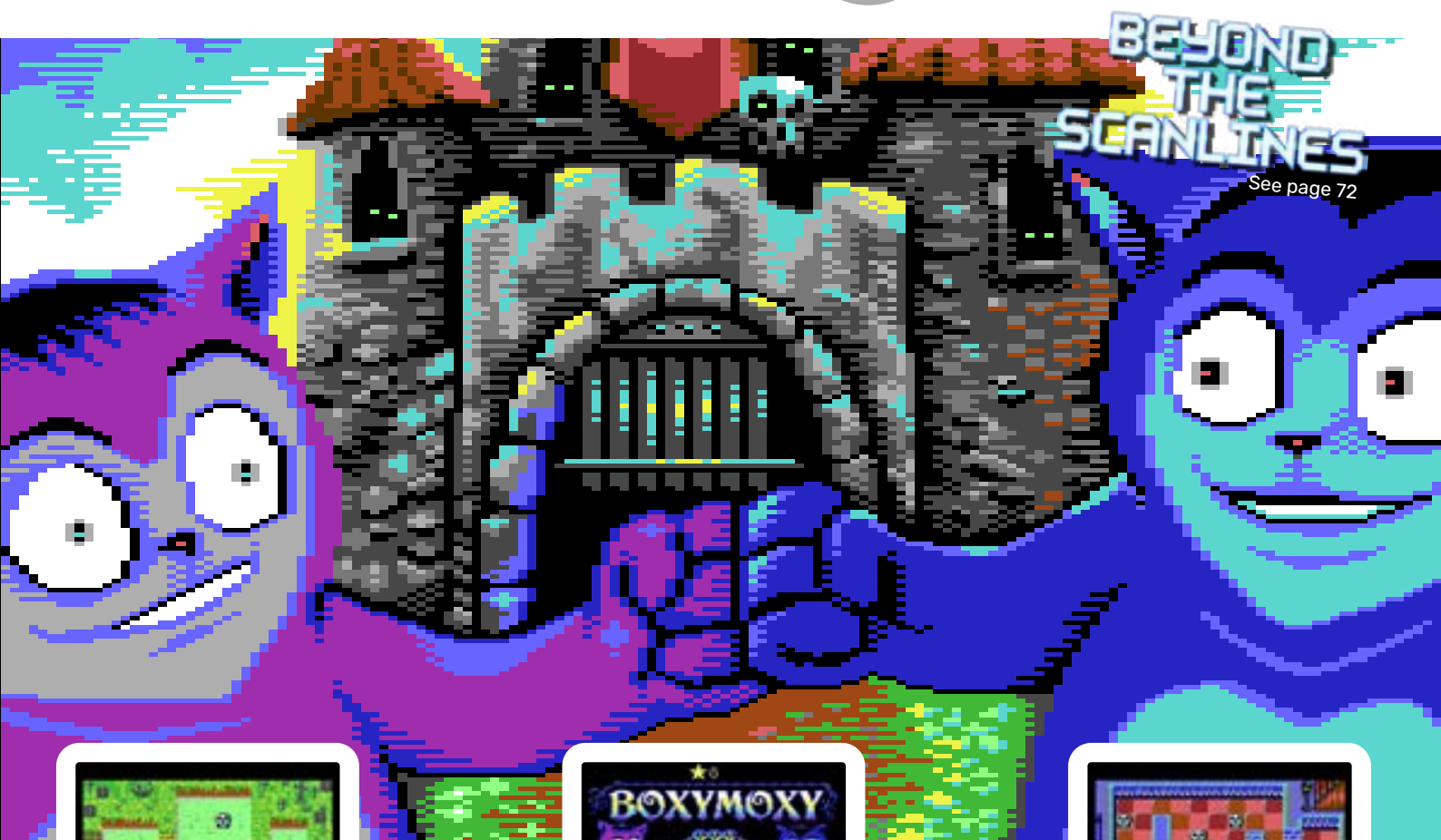
RGCD (cartridge)
Broken Bytes (digital download)

Game credits

Developed by Pirates of Zanzibar
Programming Antonio Savona
Design & Graphics Lobo Spitoufs
Music Aldo Chiummo



9



BEYOND
THE
SCANLINES

See page 72





TINY QUEST

REVIEWED BY MERVAN

True love never runs smooth, and Mr. Cube must traverse sixty-four screens filled with hazards and enemies to reach the shape of his dreams. But Mr. Cube is flat broke – so he must collect coins as he travels to pay for the cubic couple to return home and live happily ever after. Our regular-sided runner must move quickly, getting to the exit of each screen before his energy bar runs out and he loses a life. Colliding with spikes, flames or patrolling critters will also rob him of a life, sending him back to the left of the current screen. Complete 15 levels and you are presented with a password in the form of joystick directions; entered on the title screen, these passwords are randomised each time you play and last until you switch off. There are hidden items that will take you to extra screens, necessary to complete the game – if you have gathered enough coins along the way.

The graphic presentation of Tiny Quest feels like a modern indie game, with geometric shapes and bold colours. There is some variety in the backgrounds, and cute music adds to the feeling. Controls are very responsive, leaving you in no doubt that it was your mistake. I did miss the ability to drop down through platforms though. The password feature is quite innovative, but it might have been better to offer a permanent password that restored the number of lives/coins accumulated.

Tiny Quest lasts long enough for there to be a challenge, but there is little draw to come back once completed. With plenty of purchase options, it is a game worth trying. Be there or be square.

R

Publisher

RGCD (cartridge)
Bitmap Soft (disk/tape/digital download)

Game credits

Concept/Code

Andrea "Wanax" Schincaglia

Graphics: Federico "Raffox" Sesler

Music: Gaetano Chiummo, Stefano

"Dustbin" Palmonari

Cover Illustration: Simon Butler

Manual Design & Layout: Chris Mantil



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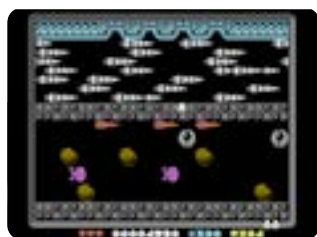
ARCADE DAZE

REVIEWED BY LOUIE

R

Publisher
Psytronik

Game credits
Developed by Icon64
Programming Stuart Collier
Design & Graphics Trevor Storey
Music/SFX Saul Cross



Lazy Jones is a quintessential title on the C64 featuring an abundance of mini arcade games mixed with great music. Specialising in modern day reinterpretations of classic games, Icon64 has set its attention to recreating the Lazy Jones experience with their release of Arcade Daze.

The objective behind Arcade Daze is simple - become the King of the Arcade Hall by beating 18 different arcade games. Things start off with a nice-looking representation of the arcade hall, littered with authentic looking upright cabinets. Access to the games is not free, so you'll need to go around collecting coins so that you can exchange them for tokens.

As you roam the arcade, you're going to have to avoid Kelly, the current champion, as bumping into her will cost you a life. This aspect of the game is somewhat lacking as Kelly's movement is slow and often seems random.

When it comes to the arcade games themselves, it's a little disappointing that Arcade Daze doesn't feature 18 distinct games - instead we get three variants of six genres - Pacman, Frogger, Space Invaders, Lunar Lander, Centipede and Tank. While the genres are familiar, it's not always clear as to what is required to beat some of the games.

The mini games are presented using functional hi-res graphics accompanied with a good soundtrack, including a brief nod to Lazy Jones. Arcade Daze provides two different difficulty settings making it instantly accessible to all gamers while still delivering a sturdy challenge to hardened players. Most games play well, with the Tank variant being the exception due the pixel perfect requirement to changing direction.

Arcade Daze provides a simple but fun arcade gaming experience. It doesn't knock Lazy Jones from its throne, but still provides enough enjoyment to make it a game well worth a play.

7



GTW 64 RUN 'n GUN

by FRANK GASKING



Hawkeye 2 1989 Thalamus

Perhaps a little overrated at the time, there is no denying that the 1988 original was incredibly impressive with its fantastic graphics, animation and sounds. It was a labour of love for the development team, and after wonderful scores – talks swiftly turned to a sequel. Those talks though fell through very early on, with the team moving later onto titles such as Flimbos Quest for System 3.

Whilst the Boys without Brains went onto other productions, X-Ample Architectures decided to pick up the baton and create their own sequel in late 1989/early 1990 time. What is not yet clear is if the production was being done with Thalamus' knowledge/consent, but a lot of graphical work was none-the-less created by Thomas Heinrich and Michael Detert, with music by Thomas Detert and Markus Schneider. The design of the game evolved from the original, featuring doors, lifts and separate rooms – similar in a sense to System 3's Deadlock.

When permission was denied by BWB to continue, development was abandoned. Code and graphics were instead refactored into other similar Hawkeye-style titles such as Tales of Boon and Greystorm. Any sequel was left to gather dust for many years, until around 2010 when Onslaught managed to recover a large amount of the development's remains.

The plan though was not just to release what was found, but to actually resume development, with code started from scratch and up to 12 levels planned. Sadly after an initial preview release, things have since gone quiet. But after seeing the recent release of Outrage, we are confident it will eventually happen someday.

Welcome back as we take another dumpster dive through the **Games That Weren't archive and showcase titles that never properly made it to our screens. When informed that this issue was going to be a special "Run 'n Gun" themed edition, the first thought was – "No problem at all, plenty in the archives to cover from that genre!"**

Well, actually it was much harder than anticipated, but thankfully there was plenty to ensure this month's feature kept in time with the theme, with one or two which you may or may not be familiar with.

Who Dares Wins

1985 Alligata Software

Capcom's Commando was one of the most famous titles of the genre and wowed everyone in arcades at the time (I'd be surprised if it doesn't feature somewhere in this issue either!). So much so that it clearly had to be in line for conversion to the Commodore 64, with Elite Software winning the rights over their arch-rivals Ocean Software. Ocean later responded by producing Rambo 2: First Blood, but it seemed though that Alligata wanted some of the action too with this cheeky little effort by Steve Evans in 1985.

To say Who Dares Wins is "inspired" by Commando is somewhat an understatement, with large sections of the game following the same visual layout. Although some may have seen it as a rather nice love letter to Capcom's coin guzzler, Elite were not impressed after paying for the rights and saw that the game was prevented from fully reaching shelves.

Alligata were not to be deterred and cleverly worked around Elite's spoilsport response by quickly knocking out a new version with unique maps to differentiate from Commando - releasing as the Who Dares Wins 2 title that we all know and love today. It's still clearly a Commando clone but was just about different enough to keep Elite at bay this time round and recoup their development costs. However, a few rare copies of the original did manage to sneak out via a computer show in 1985, which means we have been able to thankfully see what all the fuss was about at the time.

Rubicon 2

1992 21st Century Entertainment

Rubicon was a great sideways scrolling shooter, slightly reminiscent of titles such as Hawkeye with some wonderfully large enemies to fight off. It was a bit late to the party, not helped by the financial troubles at Hewson at the time and their transition into 21st Century Entertainment, but thankfully we were eventually able to enjoy its delights (if you could find a copy in the shops that is!).

After some good reviews from the magazines of the time, the team decided to press ahead with a sequel, in the hope that the original was going to sell by the bucket load. The original team would focus on the Amiga first, with a brand-new team separately handling the C64 conversion. Back on graphical duties however was the original artist Joachim (The Sarge) Ljunggren, who got to work on producing a series of sketches and concepts for both versions, as well as starting to put together background assets.

Just as things were beginning to take shape, it was decided to cancel production completely. Why that decision was made is not quite yet known, but we believe it was due to poor sales of the original game that did it. It may have also been a little too late for the C64 anyway, with 21st Century Entertainment having left the C64 market by 1992. Thankfully though, much of Joachim's artwork (and even an early test demo) has been salvaged and can be found on the website to check out. Hopefully, this one will still see an eventual release



Shellshock

1993 Beyond Belief

Even during the C64's dying days, Commando was still inspiring new developments – though with our next game, you could argue it has a bit of Ikari Warriors about it too. Shellshock was an unashamed clone of the two classics in places, but then when you looked at all the titles from the newly started up Beyond Belief software, they all had a familiar feel about them (Hands of Stone = Double Dragon, Super Wonderdog = Super Wonderboy for example). Beyond Belief's Jim Scott felt that with all the big companies leaving the 8-bit market, his new company could easily fill the gap.

A large spread on the company in Commodore Force magazine (January 1993, Issue 1) promised us many titles. Shellshock was even listed, but according to the article, was some way off compared to titles such as Biff. In fact, the title would be delayed further due to the original development team pulling out from the project. Stepping in was Alan Benson, Craig Wight and Nigel Smith – who would complete the development in just 2 weeks.

It was all to be in vain, as after poor launch sales, it was clear Beyond Belief had arrived far too late and so called it a day. As Shellshock was complete, Jim decided to recoup funds by selling the game to Commodore Format, who placed it on their Power Pack 34 in July of 1993. For 2 weeks of work, it is not bad at all, but what is perhaps surprising is that a sequel had been under way by the same team – a split screen Green Beret clone that is sadly is still at large.

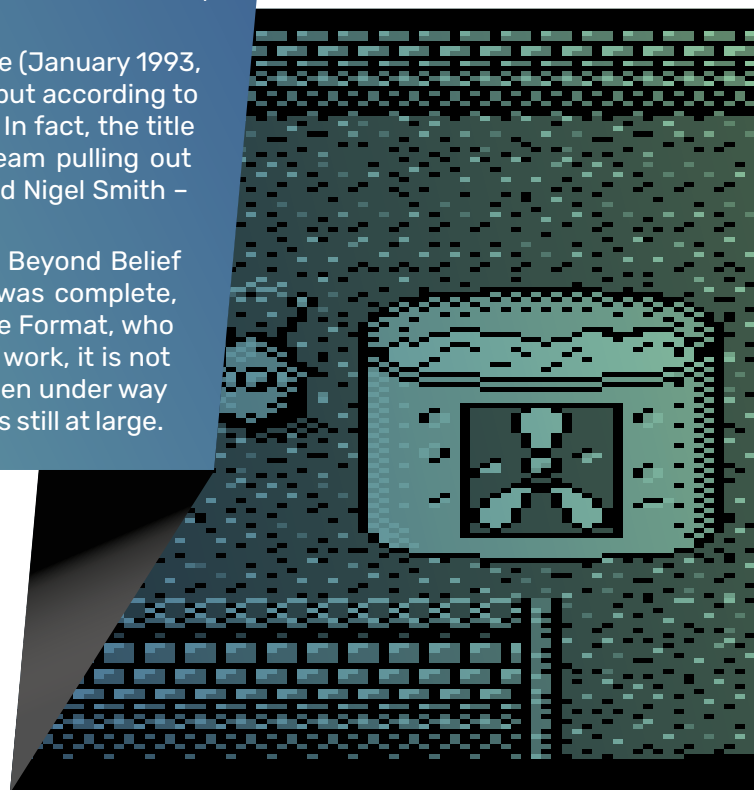
Heavy Barrel

1988 Sales Curve and then 1989 Data East

When John Twiddy's Ikari Warriors showed us just how well an arcade top down shooter could convert across to the C64 with some effort, it was a no brainer to see other similar titles trying to follow suit. Heavy Barrel was planning to add to the genre with a conversion from the Data East arcade. However, there were actually not just one, but two efforts overall trying to bring the game to our screens.

First off, it was reported in Commodore User magazine that French company FIL had got the licence, and were arranging with their UK representative The Sales Curve to handle the conversion. At the time FIL had been extremely ambitious and had acquired rights to a dozen coin-ops, but it seems they were too ambitious and got into trouble when one of their financial backers pulled out. The Sales Curve would still go on to do conversions of titles such as Silkworm, but many others such as Heavy Barrel would face the scrap heap.

It wasn't long though until plans were resurrected – by Data East themselves and for the US market. Allocated the conversion were Financial Accounting and Computing Software (F.A.C.S), a West Bloomfield Township, Michigan company. On development duties was a young Chris Teslak, working with another developer and his supervisor on what would be their one and only C64 development. According to Chris, the development was coming on very well and reached a 4th milestone, but sadly F.A.C.S folded before any further development could be completed. It is hoped that Chris will some day find the final build to show just how well it was shaping up.



Victory Road

1988 Imagine Software

Before you start shouting and screaming, yes – the arcade conversion of SNK's Victory Road did see release on the Commodore 64 in 1987, and we'd rather wish it never existed either. Handled by the US based Quicksilver team, who had already produced atrocious conversions of the Ikari games, it was perhaps no surprise that Imagine Software decided to do a fresh conversion for the European market.

For months, the game was advertised by Imagine for all the key platforms of the time, and eventually saw release on the likes of the ZX Spectrum. The Commodore 64 edition though was to forever remain at large, with Commodore User magazine reporting that after two programming attempts to bring the game to the platform, the towel had been well and truly chucked in. It is likely that at least one of those attempts was just the US edition being tidied up for release. After asking numerous Ocean/Imagine team members about the conversion, no-one knew a thing – suggesting that it was likely an out-sourced job. Who exactly this was had been lost to time, with Gary Bracey's synapses sadly not firing enough to recall.

In 2017, Games That Weren't were however supplied with art disks from Dean Hickingbottom, which contained a hi-res loading screen produced by David Bradley, complete with Imagine logo in the bottom corner. Dean had no knowledge of a conversion, but it seems clear that Video Images had been lined up to be involved in some shape or form. Sadly there has been no further evidence of it getting much further than that loading screen, so you're stuck with Quicksilver's festering turd for now.



Unfortunately, there isn't quite enough room to cover the entire suite of run 'n gun games never released on the C64, but if you are hungry for more, then check out the following titles on the Games That Weren't Archive for some more lost Run 'n Gun action:

Scorpion

<https://www.gamesthatwerent.com/gtw64/scorpion/>

Liberation

<https://www.gamesthatwerent.com/gtw64/liberation/#tabs-gallery>

Gung-Ho!

<https://www.gamesthatwerent.com/gtw64/gung-ho/>

Undead

<https://www.gamesthatwerent.com/gtw64/undead/>

Trooper

<https://www.gamesthatwerent.com/gtw64/trooper/>

Outrage (Now Released in 2020)

<https://www.gamesthatwerent.com/gtw64/outrage/>

Sturmtruppen

<https://www.gamesthatwerent.com/gtw64/sturmtruppen/>

R.I.O.T

<https://www.gamesthatwerent.com/gtw64/r-i-o-t/>

BLAST FROM THE PAST

Your Favourite C64 Run & Gun Game

by Alex Boz (ausretrogamer.com)

When it comes to gaming genres, the Run 'n Gun one is rich in brilliant games on the Commodore 64, complete with difficulty settings set to rage-inducing levels!

Depending on who you ask, this genre can be difficult to pinpoint – can it also be a fighting game? Perhaps a shooting game too? Well, the answer I always have is, if you are running around and shooting, stabbing, or avoiding enemies, then rest assured that is the definition of a run 'n gun game.

Phew, glad I got that definition sorted out. My earliest memories of playing fun games on the C64 were those in this genre. One of the first was Green Beret – an absolute tough as nails game that had me restarting more times than I would like to admit. Imagine did a cracking job on the conversion, and speaking of cracking, the only way I ever got further in the game was via some elicit trainer with unlimited lives turned on. Another early run 'n gun game that had me hooked was Commando. This one was a bit different from Green Beret, as it wasn't strictly a side-scrolling game, but instead your titular commando could run up and across the screen, mowing down anything or anyone that stood in the way.

I could go on about others, like my particular love of playing Ikari Warriors with a mate, but if I had to choose one favourite, then it would have to be Ocean's arcade conversion, Gryzor. If the game looks familiar, then you'd be right! Gryzor was the name of the arcade game released by Konami, called Contra. Also known as Probotector, Gryzor was a refreshing take on the genre, with differing level designs (horizontal, vertical, into the screen levels) and the ability to take turns playing with a friend. Gryzor was also the first game I played that I had to use every part of my body, including my feet, which hurled Lance over obstacles and some baddies!

Well look at this, I have been waffling on while the Reset peeps have been patiently waiting and itching to tell us all about their fave C64 Run 'n Gun game. So, without holding up the crew any longer, here we go!

Martin Grundy



— Rambo - First Blood Pt.2 —

As Brigitte Nielsen probably once said, I've always had a soft spot for Rambo. I know it's not really the greatest C64 run 'n gunner (Who Dares Wins 2, Green Beret and Ikari Warriors pip it to the post) but it holds a special significance for me as it was one of the first full-price games I got for my C64. It was a classic case of heading into town on a Saturday with my recently acquired birthday money and scouring the shelves of Boots, WH Smith and Microtrix (Bolton's indie computer shop) for hours, before opting for Ocean's blockbuster tie-in. 35 years later, I can clearly remember being awestruck when Martin Galway's amazing loading tune kicked in. What an incredible SID – and the loading screen was pretty ace too. When the game itself loaded I was impressed with its slick presentation, nice graphics and super cool Galway SIDs, and 12-year-old-me spent many happy hours exploring the map, mowing down baddies, discovering different weapons, flying the helicopter and attempting to rescue hostages. 12th Birthday money well spent.

Andrew Fisher



— **Green Beret** —

The first joystick I got for my C64 was the Wico Boss, advertised on the strength of its metal shaft. And it broke, after too many games of Daley Thompson's Decathlon. When I got Konami's Arcade Hits compilation, I wanted to play GREEN BERET – and it was tricky without a joystick. I did find a way, by holding down Space and pressing keys. But that meant as soon as I collected a power-up from the white-suited guys it would be fired off quickly. When I did get a new joystick, I really got into Green Beret. It remains both a top-notch C64 conversion and a run & gun classic, helped along by its brilliant Martin Galway score. Back then I struggled to get past level 2, but nowadays I can get to the end. I can forgive the graphic glitches and harsh difficulty (especially when an “invisible” bullet is fired) for the hours of fun I have had.

Jakob Voos



— **Metal Warrior 3** —

One of the most intense gaming experiences I ever had was Metal Warrior 3, one of few games I actually completed. I found it impossible to master without dying. I always thought that my copy was probably buggy because when I restarted the game, I kept the weapon from the last game! And with each new weapon I could get a bit farther, until finally my weaponry was advanced enough to survive the initial parts and then the game really unfolded. The story, action and soundtrack that follows is nothing short of legendary. For years I felt guilty that I had only completed the game due to the weapon bug, until the author of the game told me it was not a bug but a feature!

Frank Gasking



— **Midnight Resistance** —

I was almost tempted to say Zamzara, but it has to be Midnight Resistance. I vividly remember seeing the game being demoed in my favourite second-hand shop back in 1991, where a guy completed the first level to show that his C64 set up (that he was selling) all worked. I'd never seen anything like it at the time, so right away I found out the name and was then saving money to pick up a copy from John Menzies. One of the rare full price games that I had bought, and one worth every single penny.

There are massive enemies to fight against throughout, and a wonderful array of weapons at your disposal - my fave combo being the three-way shot and homing missiles. You also feel genuine pain if you don't get enough keys at the end to save all your family. It is such a brilliant arcade conversion, let down only by a lack of second player option that would have been amazing as a kid when friends came round to play.

Rob Caporetto



— **Cyberdyne Warrior** —

Compared to some of the picks which I'm sure others will throw up, I've got to go for something smaller with Apex Computer Productions' Cyberdyne Warrior. I didn't get it from its original release in Hewson's 4th Dimension compilation, but rather from the cover tape of an issue of Commodore Format.

Taking charge of said Warrior, the goal is to locate a series of misplaced droids and return them to safety before the timer expires. It's not necessary about blasting your way through crowds of enemies, but jumping about the map, and not getting trapped in the process. Making the mission that bit less challenging is upgrading your firepower, using the money earned dropping off droids, or found around the stage.

It's not a big game, as it can be beaten quickly once mastered, but until then, there's plenty of challenge in mapping each stage and working out how to find the droids as quickly as possible. It might be overshadowed by Apex's later games, but you can easily see their future potential at work here.

Louie Dimovski



— **Cobra** —

OK here goes nothing - my favourite Run & Gun game from the past is Cobra! But before you bring out the straight jacket let me explain. Yes, the gameplay is average, but it brings many wonderful memories of playing my C64 as a kid. From the moment the Ocean Loader music kicks in and the iconic image of Stallone looking like a bad-ass is drawn on screen, I am taken back to simpler joyful times. When the game finishes loading and one of my all-time favourite soundtracks starts playing, I'm engulfed by warm fuzzy feelings as I let the music play through. I love the game aesthetics - so much colour. I love the game characters from the dodgy guy in the trench coat, to the crazy axe guy, all the way through to the lady with the explosive pram. No matter how bad the magazines told me this game was, I persisted with it until the very end and I never regretted it.

Cameron Davis



— **Dynamite Dux** —

I was originally going to talk about Alien Syndrome here as Sega's frantic coin-op made for an ideal home computer conversion - not exactly the most technically taxing game ever made but packed with atmosphere. But while writing about it, I realised I've sunk way more hours into another very similar Sega run-and-gun arcade conversion, but one that was way cuter!

Dynamite Dux is pretty much Alien Syndrome but you play as a duck instead of a human and you shoot at wacky animals with big googly eyes instead of scary aliens with no eyes at all. And since I really don't like to consume any media that's tonally darker than The Muppet Show, this is a great substitution!

I love the graphics - this game makes extensive use of double-width and double-height sprites to fill the screen with cute (and blocky) characters that can be torched, bazooka'd or even punched with a novelty boxing glove. I even love the way the baddies (an adorable assortment of dogs, cows and other freaky animals) go POP! when blasted.



Mat Allen



— **Arnie** —

There are a few choices available here, but I'm going to plump for Arnie! Zeppelin had the ability to spring the odd quality game in its later life (see the 3D snooker and pool titles), and this appeared from nowhere. Playing much like a 3D version of Commando, which was oddly coincidental seeing as it was apparently written by Chris Butler, Arnie was effectively a single level game, but boy did it stretch on and on. And on. The level was also very cleverly designed so that it occupies a rectangular map but the pathways skew all over the place like an elongated maze. In line with its inspiration, I liked the tiny rocket launchers and situations that did mimic Commando to a degree. Cute little graphics, decent collision detection, and a fair progressive difficulty curve meant that for three quid, you got an awful lot of addictive one-more-go gameplay. Pity the sequel was such a disappointment in comparison.

Kevin Tilley



— **Turricon 2** —

How could we have a run & gun themed issue without at least mentioning Turricon? The first game hit the C64 gaming scene to great acclaim in 1990, but the follow up turned it up to 11 and surpassed it in just about every way. Manfred Trenz was a genius C64 coder and as a technical achievement, Turricon 2 was simply stunning. It didn't fall too short in the gameplay department, either.

The whole package is a sight to behold. Stunning graphics, killer sfx and title tune, atmospheric introduction. The levels are massive, enemies varied and action frantic. The huge worlds are a pleasure to explore, with an endless onslaught of baddies, bosses and special weapons keeping you busy. The special shoot'em up levels were no afterthought either, they really must be seen to be believed.

Turricon 2 set the standard for run & guns, not only on the C64 but 16 bit platforms as well. Not many have come close on the C64 (the recent Steel Ranger comes to mind) and it is the game that got me well and truly hooked on the genre

Ant Stiller



— Ikari Warriors —

Commando-killer and pinnacle of the C64 two player co-op experience, Ikari Warriors ticks all of the mandatory boxes when it comes to a fantastic run 'n gun game. I fondly remember firing this one up with my cousins and brother (after gambling on whether the dodgy datasette would load it correctly) and spending hours blasting and laughing and “accidentally” being shot by your older cousin over and over again and maybe there wasn’t quite as much laughing as I remember, actually.

Still, Ikari Warriors is such a frantic and fun game that the difficulty level can be forgiven. I mean, you can jump into tanks and wreak havoc, grab pick-ups, and save your buddy’s hide as you bravely charge the enemy! The graphics are a little crude but who cares when gaming is this good? As an added bonus you can catch Reset’s very own Rob and myself playing Ikari Warriors on Rob’s YouTube channel - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C5CTWQlhZdg>. (There, Rob! I did the plug! Please return my copy of PSI-5 Trading Company as promised!).

Cameron Jackson



— Who Dares Wins II —

When I heard the theme was Run & Gun, a few games immediately sprang to mind (Rambo, Commando and Green Beret). The one I remember back fondly is Who Dares Wins II. I think it was in recent times I found out it was in fact a sequel.

To me, this has the edge over Commando (although not in music but the theme music fits and has a Great Escape feel). Variety of enemies (plenty of soldiers, snipers and blue guys running) and especially vehicles is what I remember most (oh and quicksand). You had trains, boats, tanks, Jeeps and planes bombing and strafing you (I can still remember placing my man between the bullets as the plane swooped down the screen). Another stand-out was trying to rescue the firing squad soldiers. You had those precious few seconds to get the shot off and save them. Always felt bad when that didn’t happen, even more so when you accidentally shot them.

A game I certainly enjoyed back in the day and have revisited since.

Ah, there you have it folks, so many awesome Run & Gun games listed here. It’s a testament to the mighty C64 that it has such an embarrassment of gaming riches when it comes to this genre. There is absolutely no shortage of picking one or two (or perhaps 5) to fire up on your trusty Commodore 64 right now. Go on, I dare you to!



Ikari Warriors loading screen by **Paul Walker**



ARNIE

BY ROB CAPORETTO

Each issue, the Reset team journeys back into the mists of time to revisit a title from C64 history, and see how it fares today. Does it still stack up, or is it one best left in our collective memories?

With the issue focusing on run & gun shooters, why not look at something from close to the end of the C64's commercial life, in Zeppelin's Arnie released in 1992. It might be an unassuming release at first glance, but it marks one important point in C64 history: the final C64 game developed by Chris Butler.

Critical response was quite positive at the time, with both ZZAP! 64 and Commodore Format giving scores in the 80% range when reviewed.

But as always, it's time to turn over to the crew to see whether or not it still is worth a play all these years later...

As a later budget release, Arnie had no right being as solid as it is. But with the experience and talent of Chris Butler, it's no surprise it turned out how it did.

Run & gun games tend to be brutal - and many on the C64 do fit that category, but Arnie is tuned enough to be tough, but fair. Which it absolutely needed to with its single stage to master.

But what a stage it is! The way it twists, and turns back on itself as you work your way through the city onto your objective truly makes it feel dense and quite a battle. Which is also compounded by the weapons you'll liberate from those soldiers outfitted in their fancy, pink attire.

The arsenal you'll acquire might not be as fanciful as in other games, but it certainly doesn't stop you from getting the job done.

Which sums Arnie up to a tee - straightforward mechanics, tight presentation and something which doesn't overstay its welcome.

Sounds like perfect budget fodder to me!

Rob Caporetto

Forget Commando, Arnie is where it's at when it comes to some running and gunning action! What I want to know is, how the hell did I miss this game back in the day? Anyway, I am just glad I got to play it now, as the action is frenetic as you dodge, weave and blast past enemy soldiers, tanks, turrets, helicopters, cannons, ah, you get the picture. The isometric view of the military compound scrolls ever so gracefully on the trusty C64. Oh yeah, the way Arnie moves is a sight to behold too. Just like most C64 games, this is a tough mother, so you can't go all gung-ho, otherwise it's game over. To have any chance in this game you got to holster your handgun and grab the beefier weapons of choice, either the rocket launcher or the flamethrower. Mowing down everything and anything in sight with a flamethrower while making a dash across the base to reach the General has never been so much fun. Now be like Arnie and get to da choppa!

Alex Boz



As I load up Arnie for the first time, I am instantly intrigued as it mixes two of my favourite graphical styles – isometric view and mini characters. Kicking the game off, I quickly realise that hanging around and trying to clear enemies on screen will get me nowhere as they respawn at a relentless rate and that Arnie represents the true nature of what a run'n gun game is about – constant movement, careful timing, fast reflexes and memorising major enemy locations and behaviour.

I found progressing through Arnie to be a tough affair but the unfolding nature of its long singular multi-directional level had me hooked. I really enjoyed the proxy boss battles that come in the form of doing battle against an armoured vehicle, helicopters and heat seeking missiles and the constantly evolving game environment just pushed me to have another go after my little commando met his untimely demise. More of this please!

Louie Dimovski

There is something very satisfying about playing Arnie, even years later. At a budget price it was irresistible, and I snapped it up before I read the review.

At the time I did not know it was coded by Chris Butler, but it seems obvious – it is an isometric take on the classic Commando formula, a game Chris converted to the C64. I love those dinky little sprites and the larger, menacing vehicles. The way on itself makes the map winds back much larger, and there is a logical progression through different areas as the layout and difficulty becomes tougher. From the helicopter dropping you off to the high-score table, it is also a well-presented game. In fact, the only thing it really lacks is music.

Barring the odd annoyance (being shot through barbed wire, or the pink guys running away before you can shoot them for the weapon upgrade), it remains so much fun to pick up and play for a few minutes' blasting.

Andrew Fisher



From the screen grabs, you might wonder what the Arnie fanboys are so in love with. After all, the Commodore is hardly short of games where you just run and shoot, right? Well, right. But it isn't just what Chris Butler did for his last Commodore 64 game. It's how he did it. You're never lost or taken out of the frantic action looking for an exit, 'cos arrows constantly show you where to rampage next. There are bridges to cross, but if you stray too close to the edge the game won't troll you by taking away a life - you can't fall in. Arnie wants you to keep having a laugh, not curse yourself for standing one pixel too many to the left. Similarly, there are four weapons of increasing beef to pick up on and boy, do they blow things up in a satisfying way. It's a game that takes everything from the machine's '80s prime and sprinkles it with the coder's '90s maturity, talent and love for the Commodore. Now, about that copyright dodge...

Neil Grayson

Arnold squeezed the trigger of his semi-automatic ArmaLite AR-15. The powder in the chambered 5.56mm round ignited, launching the bullet out of the AR-15's muzzle at a velocity of over 1000 metres per second. Hot lead and steel slammed into the enemy causing extensive soft tissue damage. Subsequent bullet fragmentation and hydrostatic shock disrupted vital organs beyond repair. "B-I-I-n-g!" went the little man in his death throes. Arnie is a lot of fun. A tight, almost claustrophobic affair, with plenty of blasting as tiny-sprite Arnie wi run 'n gun nds his way through the cleverly designed isometric playground. The weapon power-ups work well and are a handy counter to the strategically placed military vehicles that hinder your progress. Collision detection is a little ropery but this often works more in your favour than against it. There are copious baddies to wade through and the action is frenetic even if the atmosphere is eerily subdued due to the lack of music. Another Rewind game I'd not played before and one well worth the investment (I still prefer Commando though!).

Anthony Stiller

The inherent behavioural meta-structure of this piece of interactive entertainment, 'Arnie', is both a response to the dada-esque fascism of 1980s motion picture films and a knowing endorsement of its values and tropes. One would find themselves simultaneously repulsed by the subject horrors of war on display while engaging in said acts in order to progress further, and puts in mind the works of Fellini, Coppola and latter-day Hemingway. Viewed entirely through a modern day lens, Arnie would not win awards for its simplistic visual style and muted range of tones used to illustrate the environments. The camera viewpoint remains poised too far away to encompass the realities of war, reducing the on-screen goings-on to the trivialities of an anonymous stick figures. This reviewer wonders if this is a postmodern reaction to the American government's styling of the Gulf War to look like a video game. Likewise, the outlandishly preposterous concept of a one-man walking army is exacerbated with a deluge of power-ups and explosions, but I suppose the first casualty of war is ludonarrative dissonance.

Cameron Davis

An enigma! Arnie seemingly appeared from nowhere in 1992 and I clearly remember playing (and loving) the Commodore Format covermount demo. It's classic Chris Butler; technically accomplished, fun, but short and leaving you wanting more. No doubt Butler wanted to keep it in a single load, hence it's just crying out for an unofficial enhancement. In short, more please!

I'd love to know the dev story on this one. It could almost be a lost game, filed away incomplete on a disk somewhere which Chris found, quickly finished and flogged off to Zeppelin before it was too late. Arnie has a distinct 1980s feel to it, that's for sure. Sadly lacking music and with sound effects that could come straight from a SEUCK creation. I'd love to be rocking out to a Hubbard tune while playing this one. What we have is a short but impressive and amazingly fun little run n' gunner, made better by the pseudo 3D effect, fluidity of gameplay and some massive sprites as well! Perfect budget fodder.

Kevin Tilley

FORMAT WARS

by Jari Karjalainen



As unlikely as it might sound, there aren't all that many games of the "run'n gun" genre that are available only on a small number of platforms and could be written a comparison of. So, for Reset #14, I have selected Fox (or Foxx, if you prefer) Fights Back from Denton Designs, because it gives a nice twist to the genre.

Perhaps it's not the best known game of its kind, but it did receive well above average reviews in its day. Now, the scores at our favourite haunts are 7.1 from 55 Lemon64 users, and 7.71 from 23 World of Spectrum users - at least according to the original archived WOS.



C64



SPECTRUM

Foxx Fights Back, as it says in the cover art, is not exactly a conventional run 'n gun game, although you certainly do plenty of both in it. You take the role of an alpha male fox, whose job it is to feed his family. These foxes like all sorts of foods, so you need to pick them from anywhere you can find food from your surrounding area and bring them to your home. While you're at it, hunting dogs are roaming in the forest, riding their bicycles and wielding pistols, trying to hunt you down. Of course, our protagonist is no ordinary fox, and he knows how to operate various kinds of firearms, so it certainly fits the genre.

Although it certainly has a fun and unconventional premise, Foxx Fights Back doesn't really have all that much of content to keep you entertained for more than perhaps 10-15 minutes at a time. Most of your first attempts will be spent on getting to grips with the controls, but there is a fair amount of fun to be had after that. It is a singular game, and highly recommendable for anyone wanting to play something a bit different but familiar. Hardly a classic, though.

LOADING

For both C64 and Spectrum, there seem to be two cassette releases floating around, with rather notable differences in loading times for both machines. In both cases, the difference is around 1 and a half minute, but whereas the original C64 release by ImageWorks was slower than the Zzap!64 "Mammoth Megatape" release...

C64 ImageWorks: 4 min 41 sec

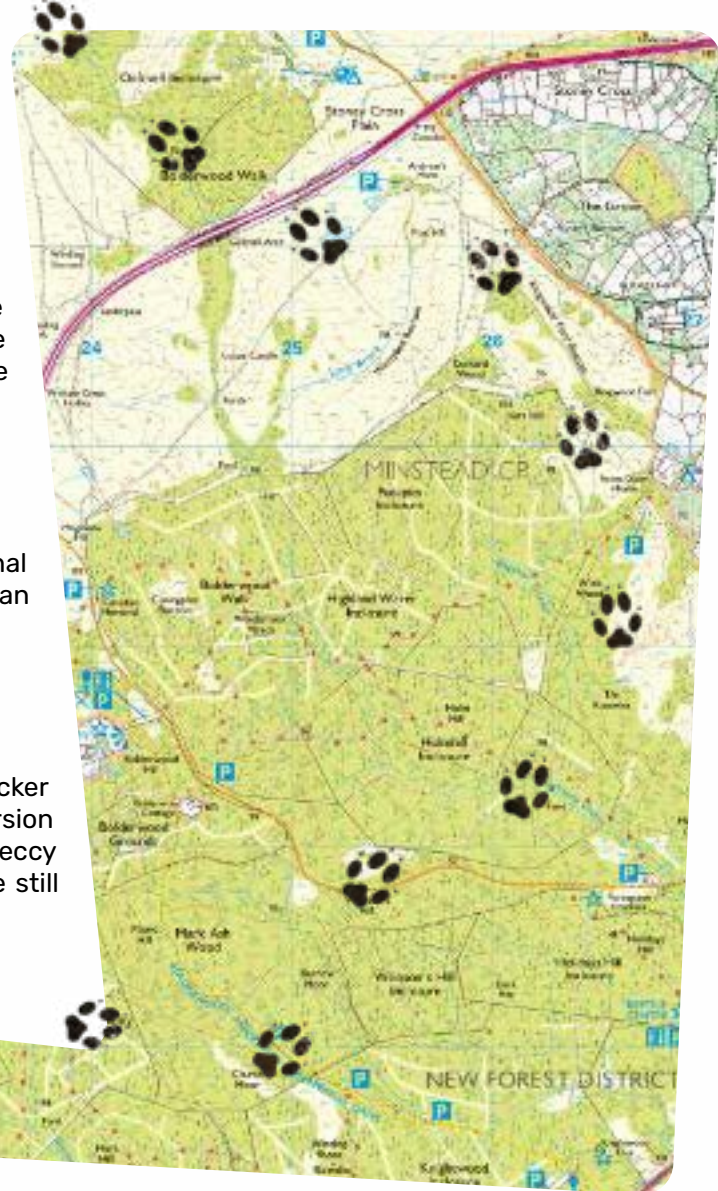
C64 Mammoth M: 3 min 6 sec

...it's the other way round on the Spectrum - the original ImageWorks release is almost the exact same time faster than the MCM Software re-release.

SPE ImageWorks: 3 min 29 sec

SPE MCM: 4 min 56 sec

That said, the quicker C64 tape version is 25 seconds quicker than the quicker Spectrum version. Also, there is a disk version available for the C64, which just barely beats the quicker Speccy tape's loading time at 3 minutes and 26 seconds, so you're still better off with the Mammoth Megatape version.



As for the loading screens, you get a similar view of the protagonist and his machine gun - something modelled after a Thompson submachine gun - in both loaders, only the C64 version has a circular frame with the fox's other elbow just breaking through the boundaries, and the SPECTRUM version has the fox standing inside the grey rectangle containing the game title. The C64 picture details the background graphics, while the SPECTRUM picture details the fox himself, and also features the publisher logo at the bottom right corner. Neither is, to be perfectly honest, particularly nice to look at, but the nature background included in the C64 loader gives it more character and feel of the game's own graphics.



SPECTRUM



C64

FORMAT WARS

PLAYABILITY

As is only customary, the SPECTRUM version starts off by giving the player a number of different control options. If you choose to play on the keyboard, you are taken straight to the screen where you change your keys, and the game starts straight away after you confirm your chosen controller and/or keys. The C64 version can only be played with a joystick.

That's only the beginning of a long list of various gameplay differences, though. Both versions do let you go both left and right, jump and shoot around, pick up and deliver food and go up and down foxholes, but the comparison is all in the details.

Mr. Fox's basic stance in the C64 version is an alert state, ready for action, with his front down and rear high, which basically is the crouch mode in the SPECTRUM version, which the C64 version doesn't have. The SPECTRUM Fox's basic stance has a more general standing around, relaxed manner. This already shows a key difference in the balance of controls. Running around in both versions is pretty much equally quick, but there is a turning animation in the C64 version, which perhaps makes it look more professional, but it also takes away from the immediacy of the action, which might or might not be a good thing - let's just say the feel of the controls becomes very different from this simple element.

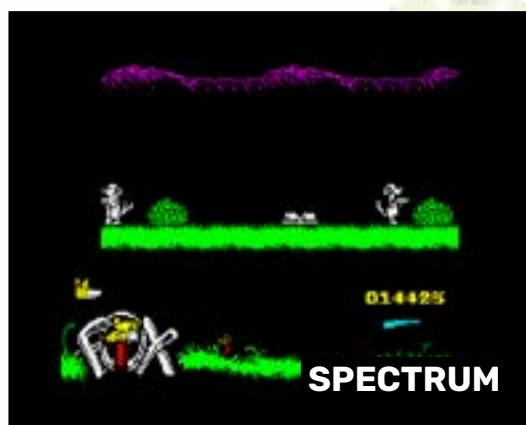
As I mentioned, the crouching mode is the basic stance in the C64 version, the SPECTRUM version has this as a unique move, but you can't do anything else while crouching. Pulling the joystick down in the C64 version lets you drop down a foxhole, while in the SPECTRUM version, you drop down these holes by merely walking over them. In order to avoid getting sucked into these holes, you have to jump over them instead.

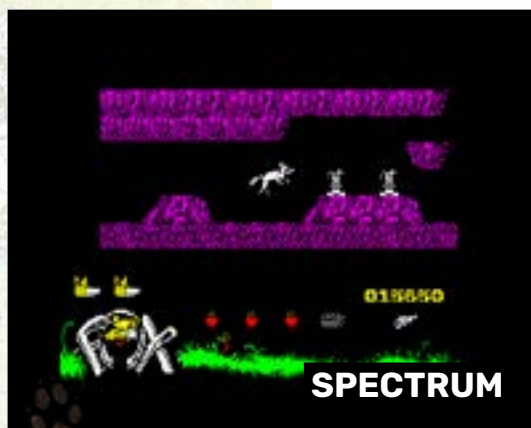
The SPECTRUM version has one rather interesting advantage in it: you can walk more slowly while having the fire button pressed down, which keeps Mr. Fox more alert for any trigger-pulling action. You can only fire your guns while standing still, which goes for both versions, but it's not instantaneous.

There are also marked differences between the guns. In the C64 version, firing a pistol can only kill one enemy at once, while the SPECTRUM pistol bullet can go through several enemies. You need a rifle for that to happen on the C64, but in the SPECTRUM version, the upgrade isn't exactly necessary. You do get weapon upgrades up to a bazooka, but frankly, the weapons aren't even very useful in the SPECTRUM version, because you can avoid most hits by constantly jumping around. The only thing you really need to avoid are traps, which I haven't come across in the C64 version. The C64 version does make it necessary for you to upgrade your weapons, because some of the later enemies require more powerful and long-reaching bullets to kill them, and a pistol just isn't good enough at that point any longer.

Dying is another thing to consider. When you lose a life in the C64, you still keep all the food items you collected into your inventory, but losing a life in the SPECTRUM version drops all these items. Not that it really matters on the long run, since the game has no ending.

As if all that weren't enough, the maps are very different in both versions - much larger on the C64; as is the variety of enemies, as well as enemy behaviour. The





SPECTRUM version has a tendency to throw more enemies on the screen than the processor can handle, so dying from overexposure to bombs and bullets happens quite often. The C64 version is usually more lenient in this regard, although due to the differences in controls affected by the animations makes moving around a bit more challenging. It's all about the circumstances, really, which can alter drastically in a matter of seconds. In the SPECTRUM version, this alteration can happen regardless of your location, while the C64 version has been more clearly sectioned into areas, which are occupied by different kinds of enemies.

Considering the arcade-like neverending style of the game, it doesn't really make all that much of a difference, which version's gameplay details suit the game better. For myself, I'm leaning more towards the more sophisticated C64 version, even though the SPECTRUM version offers a very good alternative with its creative, if cheaper gameplay approaches.

1. COMMODORE 64
2. ZX SPECTRUM

GRAPHICS

We could just oversimplify this, but fair play requires some close examination, and as usual, we'll start with the title screens.

Fox Fights Back happens to be one of those games that doesn't have a separated high scores table from the title screen. When the title screen first appears, the C64 version's only differing details to the later alterations is your last score shown in the score section of the info panel at the bottom, as well as the last held weapon. The SPECTRUM version starts off with the control selection screen, and if you choose to go with keyboard controls, you are automatically taken to the key redefining screen, after which the game starts. Only after a game has ended for the first time, the default title screen with the high scores table is shown. As it's all just some text along with the info panel at the bottom, there's not much to say. Even the font is very similar in both versions.

The info panel itself is rather interesting, though. You get a great big "FOX" logo at the left end of the panel, from which the fox's head is protruding from the middle letter. When in game, the fox's tongue acts as an energy meter – the further down the tongue is hanging, the closer to death you are. The grassy area makes a little room for the held weapon in the C64 version, above which you can see the score counter, and to the right of which the three given lives are shown as very small icons. To the left of the score counter, there are four invisible slots for your food item inventory.

The SPECTRUM version shows your remaining lives in much bigger icons in a horizontal manner above the "FOX" logo, and all the other icons are notably smaller than on the C64. The score counter has no specific graphics, but is shown roughly in the same place as on the C64.

As you will be spending most of the time above ground, most of the graphical variety happens above ground. In the C64 version, you get a fair variety of bushes and trees, and if you'd ask a Spectrum user, a surprisingly small amount of browns. Unless you count the fox's orange as brown, of course. The brown stuff does come along eventually, in the form of brick buildings and cows, as well as other collectable items aside from apples. Indeed, the above ground graphics are intensely green for the most part. The backgrounds aren't



particularly pretty, but they represent the intended things clearly enough. It's the animation department where the C64 version excels, with plenty of detailed drawings in the titular fox's animations, as well as all the enemies' animations.

Due to the techniques used back in the late 80's, the SPECTRUM version looks not a small amount colourless by comparison. All sprites are monochrome white against a largely black background, but the hi-res graphics do look nice. The animations, unfortunately, are not quite on par with the C64 version, which makes for 2/3 of the difference. The rest of it is more about

the lack of variety in background graphics, as there is not enough variety in buildings, natural-looking slopes and bumps or even trees. If for some unfathomable reason, brown is something to be avoided, that has been accomplished here. At least the SPECTRUM version scrolls rather neatly, and doesn't suffer too much from slowdown due to overpopulation on the screen.

For my eyes, though, there's definitely way too much of magenta, which certainly feels odd compared to brown as the colour for ground, dirt, mud or whatever the foxholes and tunnels have been built into. Also, one of the funniest graphical details in the game was completely dropped from the SPECTRUM version, and that is the fox's home decor. Of course you would want a couple of lamps hanging from the ceiling, a couple of couches and tables; why wouldn't you?

Despite the fair attempt, the SPECTRUM hardware just isn't very good at portraying nature with its graphical abilities. It's easy enough to see, why the C64 version wins this round again, only this time with a clear advantage.

1. COMMODORE 64 2. ZX SPECTRUM

SOUNDS

Fred Gray's soundtrack for the C64 version is interesting and hilarious... at first. The title screen has an original tune, which is a simple but frantic tune that's somewhat reminiscent of that old warhorse "A-hunting We Will Go", a song which has the lyric "we'll catch a fox and put him in a box", but of course, the theme tune from Fox Fights Back feels like the roles are supposedly reversed. The in-game tracks feature all sorts of classics from Mozart, Bizet, Brahms and Grieg put through a treadmill and bunched them all up together in a weird medley.

The soundtrack only utilises melodic sounds here, and very little of lower frequencies, which gives the game a chirpy, almost teasing feel. Unfortunately, that means that the soundtrack can get a bit annoying to listen to for more than a few minutes. Happily, you can turn off the music and get an acceptable array of sound effects instead. The game features some very nice shooting and exploding sounds, as it should, but also some very specific sounds for this game, such as the weird bleary sound of picking up food items, and the "nagging wife" sound effect, which will play regardless of whether you bring food home or not. However, even if you choose to have in-game music, you can still hear your guns shooting.



FRED GRAY
(photo courtesy of Remix64)

Since the game came out as late as 1988, it is no wonder, that the SPECTRUM version gives a different soundtrack for the 128k machine than the 48k machine. Obviously, the 48k mode plays sound effects through the single-channel beeper, but most of the music you get in the 128k mode has been kept in - only in fairly different arrangements. It all sounds surprisingly good, however, at least for beeper tunes, and the sound effects aren't that far away from the 128k mode, either.

You don't get constant music even as an option for either of the SPECTRUM versions, which might be just as well, since as we learned from the C64 version, it can get a bit bothersome. But still, an option would have been nice to have. The soundtrack consists in both beeper and AY-modes only 3 different tunes, as opposed to the C64's 10 tunes, but they're joyful enough to listen to, and they appear only when they're supposed to - during the title screen, a successful food deliverance, losing a life and Game Over. The sound effects are not quite as refined as on the C64, nor is the music, but if it weren't for the options in the C64 version, I would actually prefer the SPECTRUM soundtrack over the C64 one.

1. COMMODORE 64 2. ZX SPECTRUM

OVERALL

Despite the clear scores here, I ended up being fairly intrigued by both versions of the game. Fox Fights Back is a surprisingly different sort of a beast on both C64 and SPECTRUM, and both offer their own special kinds of experiences. On the whole, the C64 version is a bit more refined, has more content and feels more natural, but the SPECTRUM version is well worth looking into, as well.

COMMODORE 64 - 3 ZX SPECTRUM - 0

...as I said, the winner is quite clear here, but I might as well do one of those more traditional review scoring tables for this.

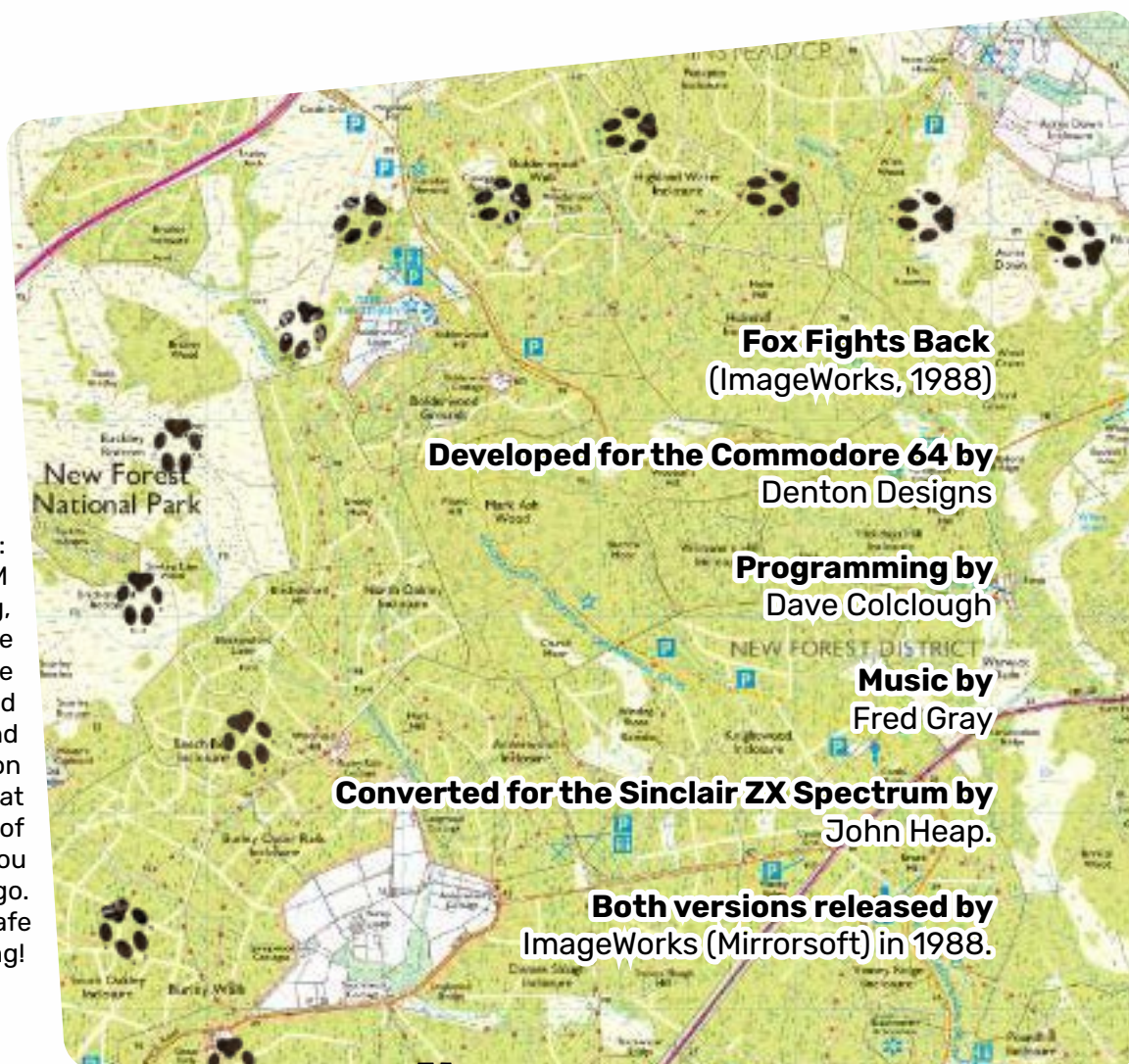
C64

Playability	7
Graphics	8
Sounds	7
Replay value	4
OVERALL	6.5

SPECTRUM

Playability	6
Graphics	7
Sounds	7
Replay value	4
OVERALL	6

One more thing: the SPECTRUM version has a bug, which freezes the game once you have picked up all the food items. You can find a bugfixed version by Einar Saukas at the game's World of Spectrum page, if you feel like having a go. Have fun, keep safe and keep retrogaming!



Fox Fights Back
(ImageWorks, 1988)

Developed for the Commodore 64 by
Denton Designs

Programming by
Dave Colclough

Music by
Fred Gray

Converted for the Sinclair ZX Spectrum by
John Heap.

Both versions released by
ImageWorks (Mirrorsoft) in 1988.

THE HAWKEYE LEGACY



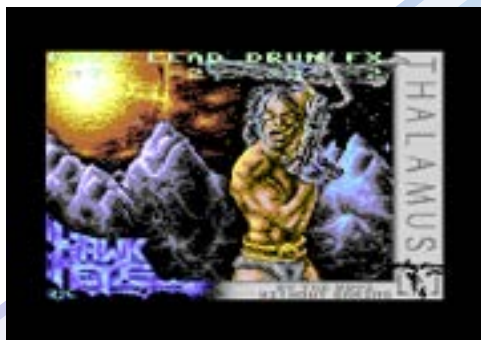
When Thalamus released Hawkeye in 1988, its influence continued to be felt for many years. Andrew looks back at the failed sequels, spin-offs and games inspired by the classic – as well as the controversy over the magazine scores.



HAWKEYE

Thalamus, 1988

When the Boys Without Brains teamed up with Thalamus, one of the most memorable run & gun games on the C64 was unleashed. From the Mix-E-Load sequence with Jeroen Tel music to the animated intro with the “talking” alien, the game was highly polished. One interesting aspect is the fact that the SLF (Synthetic Life-Form) has access to multiple weapons at the start and must juggle the ammunition use. The weak pistol, the stronger machine gun, the laser, and deadly rocket launcher are selected with the function keys – and as well as picking up the four pieces of the puzzle to unlock the next level, the player can pick up hearts to restore energy and ammo for the weapons. Finding pieces is helped by the blinking of the eagle eyes in the status panel.



HAWKEYE 2

Thalamus, 1989 (unreleased)

Thalamus entered discussions with the Boys Without Brains to begin work on a sequel – but it would be X-Ample Architectures that started creating Hawkeye 2. However, without approval from the BWB this version was cancelled, as Frank Gasking explains in his feature elsewhere in Reset. X-Ample would go on to create the game ANOTHER WORLD that featured many similarities to Hawkeye.

HAWKEYE 2 PREVIEW

Onslaught, 2010

The scene group Onslaught put out this all new preview of Hawkeye 2 at the X'2010 party, complete with brand new code, graphics and music. The levels are split into rooms, accessed through doors and lifts. There were plans to complete it, but no final version has emerged – although efforts have apparently restarted, and Hawkeye 2 may only be a working title for the eventual release.



BAMBOO

Thalamus, 1989 (unreleased)

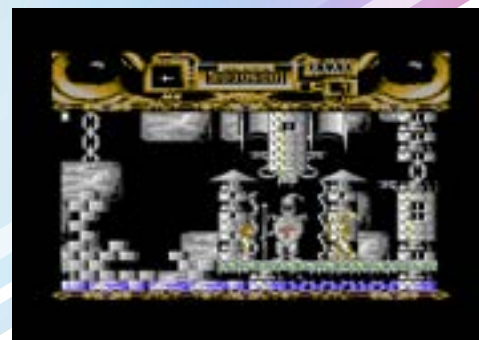
Meanwhile, the Boys Without Brains started work on their next C64 game. An impressive bitmap scroller was demonstrated and hype began to build, with plans for a mixture of game types – including a Hawkeye-like platform section and a scrolling shoot 'em up. However, this game would ultimately be shelved in favour of a new project.



RUBICON

21st Century Entertainment, 1991

Originally due to be published by Hewson, the company's bankruptcy saw the release delayed until Andrew Hewson formed a new company, namely 21st Century Entertainment. A cover tape demo gave a large section of the first level for players to experience, notable for the large jellyfish-like creatures swimming across the screen. Set in a Russia that has been devastated by a nuclear accident, the hero runs to the right blasting enemies and bosses through seven very tough levels. Power-ups can be obtained, and a jetpack breaks up the monotony a little. It got good reviews at the time, but the delayed release affected sales. Artist Joachim Ljunggren began work on a sequel, creating graphics for Amiga and C64 but it went unreleased.



TALES OF BOON

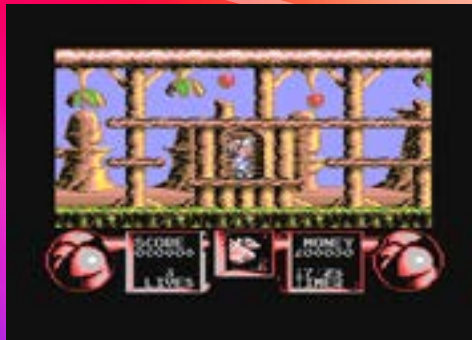
Prestige, 1993

This was re-released by CP Verlag under the title The Darksword in 1993. Much like Hawkeye, the status panel at the top of the screen features flashing eyes to help guide the player to the next object. There are some excellent parallax scrolling effects but the difficulty level is tough. It also reused graphics from the unreleased Hydrogenese, a game that would have mixed a scrolling shoot 'em up with Hawkeye-style platform levels.

GREYSTORM

CP Verlag, 1993

This X-Ample Architectures game was released on the Golden Disk 64 1993/02 issue, a German magazine on a disk from publishers CP Verlag. It features graphics reused from the failed Hawkeye 2 project and plays in a similar way. The plot sees the hero stranded in the past after a time machine experiment fails, with the player choosing which era to visit next. Each of the six levels (chosen from a map screen) sees the player moving left and right to pick up objects in the Hawkeye style, allowing them to advance through time to the next era.



FLIMBO'S QUEST

System 3, 1990

The next BWB title to be released was the cute platform game Flimbo's Quest, and while it may not seem related to Hawkeye there are a lot of similarities. Flimbo must hunt left and right for the creatures holding the code letters, and there are some impressive parallax scrolling backgrounds.

System 3 were naughty and put a ZZAP! Sizzler logo on the adverts, but the actual score on 64 and Amiga was lower. It is probably best experienced on the four-game compilation cartridge released for the C64GS (Games System), as that eliminates the long multiload.

OUTRAGE

Protovision/Psytronik, 2021

The Austrian group Cosmos Designs had started work on this title in 1990, with programmer Bernd Buchegger (Panther) at the helm. It was entered into a 1993 competition announced by 64'er magazine to be published by Boeder. But the publisher pulled out of the C64 market before the game could be released. After a couple of efforts to restart development, new team members were brought on board and the game was finally released in 2021. The hero must avenge an attack on his military base, running to the right and jumping through the five hazard-filled levels. Shot enemies drop coins that can be spent in the shops that appear during the level. Waiting at the end of each level is a boss that takes many hits to defeat. Although the player does not have to run back to the left, the Hawkeye influence is clear.



AN INTERVIEW WITH

ANTONIO SAVONA!

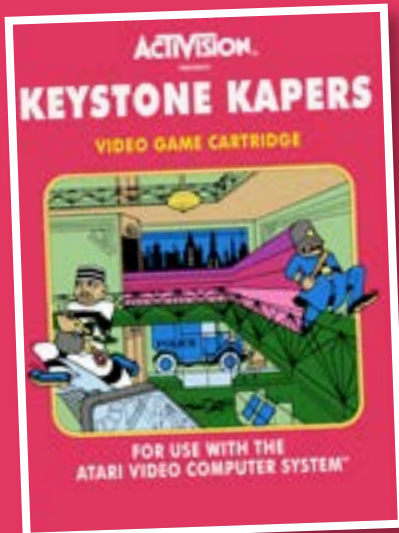
INTERVIEW KEVIN TILLEY | REVIEWS ANDREW FISHER



ILLUSTRATION DEL SEYMOUR

Formed in 1979 by a group of disgruntled Atari employees, Activision quickly became synonymous for high quality games, as well as giving programmers and designers well deserved credit for their creations. Massively successful on the Atari VCS, Activision churned out one high quality game after another to become one of the console's most respected 3rd party developers. They continued this run into the early days of the Commodore 64, porting some of their most beloved VCS hits to the computer, as well as a string of original microcomputer titles as well. Unfortunately, some of Activision's most notable (and maybe less well known) VCS titles never made the transition over to the breadbin.

Alas, more than 35 years later, Antonio Savona, Steve Day and Saul Cross had an idea! Between 2019 and 2020, four more titles from the Activision VCS catalogue made their way to the Commodore 64, ever so slightly enhanced to suit the C64's capabilities but with the gameplay, as well as the classic Activision look and feel of the games, remaining true to the originals. Chopper Command, Keystone Kapers, Frostbite and Crackpots were finally released on our favourite 8bit with amazing success. We had a quick catch up with programmer Antonio Savona to have a chat about the projects.



KEYSTONE KAPERS

In a busy shopping mall, our inept police officer races after an escaping Krook, jumping or ducking hazards. Static obstacles, bouncing balls and shopping trolleys cost valuable time if the player collides with them, while bonus items including moneybags add extra points.

At higher levels remote-controlled planes fly along at head height, costing a life if they hit. Running out of time before catching the Krook also costs a life. Escalators take the player up a level at either end of the mall, or they can wait for the lift to change floors. Time remaining when the Krook is caught is turned into bonus points.

Achim Volkers gave us the similar Rent-A-Cop, but this is even closer to Garry Kitchen's original. A great bitmap and jaunty music add to the comical atmosphere, and the graphics have had a subtle improvement while retaining the look and feel. The gameplay is intact, emulating the original's timings and quirks. It plays superbly, controls are responsive and it is very addictive. Top work from the team. **8/10**



RESET: Hi Antonio. Thanks for joining us! First, can you tell us how the collaboration with Steve and Saul came about to port these 'forgotten' VCS titles to the C64?

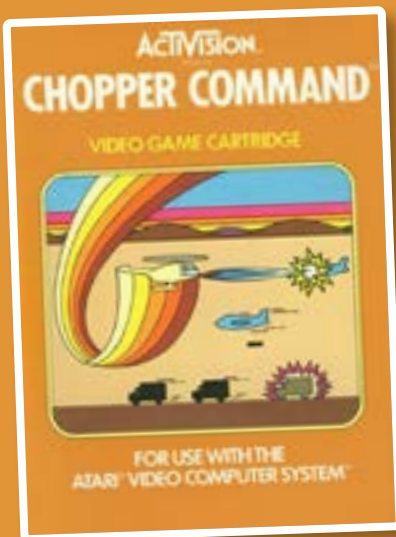
ANTONIO: The spark came from Steven really. He had been in conversions for a few years already, and approached me with the idea of porting Chopper Command and said that Saul would also be on board for the music. I had worked with Saul on a number of projects before and loved every minute of it. To be honest, I had never heard of Chopper Command, but Steven and Saul are two legends and I'd code anything they ask me to, so I jumped at the chance of doing something with both of them.

RESET: How were the four games chosen? What was it in particular that made you/the team choose these particular games?

ANTONIO: They were all selected for different reasons. Chopper Command was the first one, and that came in purely because it was Steven's favourite from his childhood. As a coder, when I started playing (with) it, I immediately fell in love with the impressive technical aspect. The way the radar is implemented, the complex management of the viewport, the physics of the titular chopper... there are so many aspects of this game that are way ahead of its time. And everything takes place within 4Kb! It's really a technical masterpiece. Then we



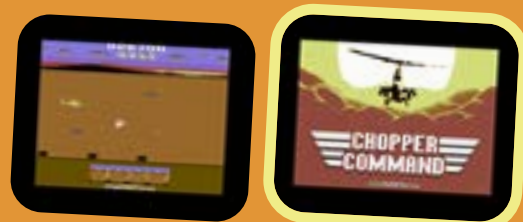
Steven and Saul are two legends and I'd code anything they ask me to, so I jumped at the chance of doing something with both of them.



CHOPPER COMMAND

Bob Whitehead's Chopper Command drew on Defender's influence, with a helicopter defending convoys of trucks from aerial assault. The attacking jets and helicopters can be seen on the radar below the main display, helping the player find the vehicles in danger. Later levels add more enemies and unpredictable movements.

This is a solid and well-made conversion, with a nostalgic menu screen (with levels you have reached being unlocked for subsequent games) and an impressive Ste Day bitmap. The sunrise effect at the top of the screen is nicely done and the chunky lettering (for GAME OVER and GET READY) fits the game so well. Sound works well without being anything dramatically original. It is just a shame there is not more variety or depth to the gameplay. It simply becomes a matter of protecting the convoys and surviving, repeating the same tactics for each level. It is a decent game for high-score chasing and shoot 'em up fans, but ultimately quite repetitive. **7/10**



chose Keystone Kapers because it was the most popular Activision title from the 80s that never made it to the Commodore 64. Finally, Frostbite and Crackpots were requests that we received from Activision fans. Once it was clear that we were converting outstanding titles from the Activision catalogue, the Atari community let us know which games they would love to see coming next.

Of course, we are not just running a conversion factory here, we also need to like what we are working on and that's the only common point of the titles we chose: we absolutely love these four games.

RESET: How important to the team was it to port the games as closely as possible to the originals? Did you give yourselves allowances/freedoms to make any changes?

ANTONIO: Very important. We took it as a team mission to leave the gameplay as faithful to the original as possible. I personally went as far as to reverse engineer the carts and study the code to try and replicate even the little bugs that we were initially willing to fix. Initially, in fact, the temptation was clearly there, but the more you play the originals (and we had to play them a lot), the more you realise that they are perfect as they are. You just need to give them some time to shine and then gone is that itch to alter this perfection. In fact, whenever we felt that the gameplay would have used some improvements, we just scrapped the project and moved to something else. In the end our mission was to make these games more accessible, which means that graphics and sound can and should benefit from the more capable hardware of the Commodore 64, but, from a fan's perspective, a game should play exactly

like the original. This doesn't mean that you can't put your touches here and there on the way. For example, Steven made the elevator in Keystone Kapers more functional, adding a direction indicator, so the player has a better chance to understand whether he should wait for it or rather run to the escalator. Saul added sound effects for specific actions that were originally "mute" in Frostbite, thus extending the feedback that the player gets beyond the HUD. These small touches don't alter the spirit of the originals in any way. In fact, in some cases the original developers reached out to us to let us know that they loved our conversions, thus officially "endorsing" them. Needless to say, that was a defining moment for us.

RESET: Activision were highly regarded for their VCS catalogue of games. What was it that made their games so special and remembered so fondly today?

ANTONIO: Very simply, Activision raised the bar for VCS quality. I guess people were happy enough playing Combat and Atari Golf but then all of a sudden they got Pitfall and River Raid! It must have felt like a revolution.

RESET: The VCS certainly had limited capabilities, but like the C64, it was commercially successful for a long period of time, with a strong homebrew scene also forming in the past decade. What was the secret to the longevity of platforms such as the VCS and C64, and what is your take on why their respective scenes are so strong and vibrant today?

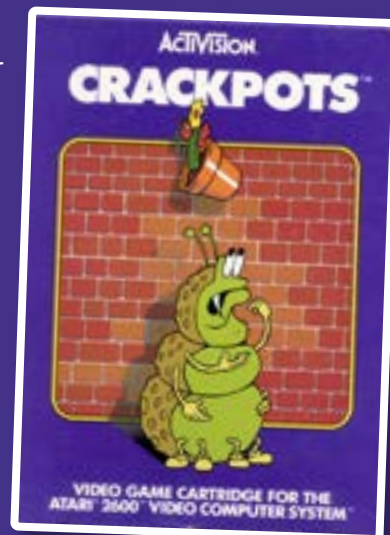
ANTONIO: The VCS was the first viable way of playing decent video games at home. I'm not old enough to know first hand what the world looked like before the Atari console, but I guess kids would get bored rather quickly playing Pong clones, so I'm not surprised that the VCS was so warmly received by consumers. As for the Commodore 64, I might be biased, but I think that hardware-wise it was the best balanced home computer ever made. Revolutionary graphics and sound (for the time), an excellent keyboard, very easy to code for, coming out at the right time and at the right price. It really ticked all the boxes.

In some cases the original developers reached out to us to let us know that they loved our conversions, thus officially "endorsing" them. Needless to say, that was a defining moment for us.

CRACKPOTS

Dan Kitchen's first Activision title was inspired by the earlier Kaboom! Potsy the gardener must stop insects crawling up the apartment into the windows, throwing down plant pots to crush them. Miss six insects and a section of wall gets eaten away; lose six layers of wall and it is game over. Learning the behaviour of the insects – shown by their colour, allowing you to judge their path up the wall – is key to success.

This was one I had not played before and appears quite simplistic at first glance. The updated graphics look fine, and I liked the effect as the wall is eaten away, although the light green bug is a little hard to see against the background. Music is fun but sound is otherwise limited. You can start at any of the first eight levels, although there is not much variation in gameplay at higher levels. Like Chopper Command, Crackpots is fun for a quick go but doesn't hold the attention long-term. **6/10**



Both these machines were so popular and successful upon their release that they gained enough momentum in the 80s to stay relevant beyond that decade. The Commodore 64, particularly, is still relevant today. In fact, things have never looked better for the breadbin, with a steady supply of new hardware and software that almost rivals that of the 80s. I guess once you have such a large and loyal user base, and so many developers who are still able to push the envelope when it comes to creating games, it's just a matter of supply and demand. I can't see this trend changing any time soon.

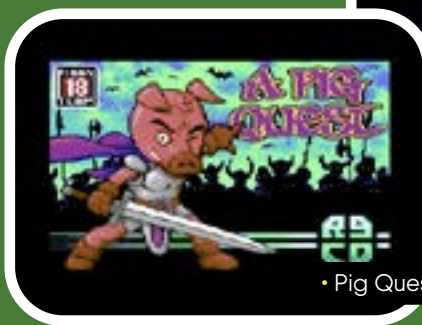
RESET: The Savona/Day/Cross collaboration certainly is a C64 gamedev supergroup, which not only produced the VCS Activision ports, but the absolutely wonderful Fix-It Felix Jr. Are there any plans for future collaborations?

ANTONIO: Thanks a lot for that, but I really think that Steven and Saul (and in general all the talented artists I'm lucky enough to work with) are the ones to be praised. Let's face it: if it wasn't for their art I'd be coding Pong clones. Fix-it Felix Jr came to be pretty much like the Activision unconverted: Steven sent me some graphics out of the blue saying "check this out", Saul hummed a tune, and before I knew it I found myself head down

coding.

For the future, we are planning to release an updated version of Fix-It Felix Jr, and another Activision conversion, but I have to finish the game I'm working on at the moment, A Pig Quest, which has kept me busy way longer than I had anticipated. In general, rest assured that whenever Saul and Steven trust me to code something I won't pass on the chance!

Thanks for joining us Antonio, it's always a privilege and a pleasure having you with us. All the best for your future developments. We are certainly looking forward to them!
Kevin/Reset64

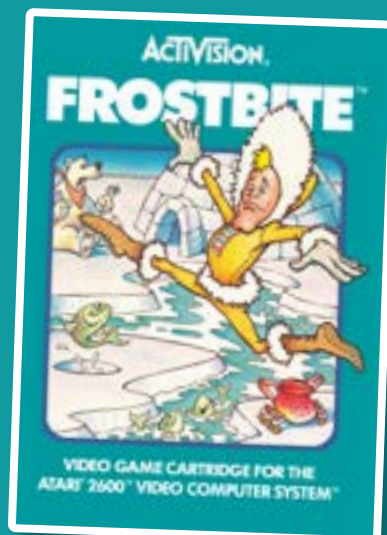


• Pig Quest – coming soon from Antonio.

FROSTBITE

Steve Cartwright combined elements of Frogger and Q*Bert as Frostbite Bailey must build an igloo before he freezes. Stepping on a white ice floe collects a block of ice, until all the floes turn blue; then you must wait for them to turn white again before collecting more. Pressing Fire "spends" a block and reverses the direction of the dangerous wildlife; birds and crabs knock Bailey off the ice into the water, while the polar bear on the shore will try to grab him. Complete the 15 blocks of the igloo inside 45 seconds and you earn bonus points, progressing to the next of twenty levels.

Sharing similar presentation to the other games here, the skyline effect here is enhanced by being in day and night variations. The difficulty curve is great, with new elements added gradually and the challenge ramping up. It may not be the best-known Activision 2600 title, but it is a very playable game that will draw you back as you try and get further. **9/10**



ATTACK OF THE PETSCII ROBOTS

(The 8-Bit Guy)

<https://www.the8bitguy.com/product/petscii-robots/>

PETSCII Robots is a top-down strategy game where robots have taken over human settlements and it's up to you to infiltrate and destroy them all by using items located on each planet. There are 9 levels on offer – each one with the same objective but requiring different approaches.

PETSCII Robots has a look and feel that harks back to the early to mid 80s, which does have some nostalgic charm to it. Each level nicely opens up gradually as you locate pass cards to access locked areas and using the environment to trap and destroy robots is quite fun. However, with only three different types of robots and each map having the same objective, there is a degree of repetitiveness. While the game's enhanced graphics do 'pop', the game's scrolling is somewhat jerky and the action takes place with a limited field of view.

PETSCII Robots is a solid experience but has the potential to be so much more with the adoption of a more ambitious game design



7/10

REVIEWED BY LOUIE.



ZETA WING

(Witchsoft)

<https://sarahjaneavory.itch.io/zeta-wing>



Considering we've also taken a look at Soul Force this issue, you might feel it redundant to be checking out its sort of predecessor, but Zeta Wing offers quite a few twists of its own.

Over seven challenging stages, you'll take to the skies aiming to wipe out the mutant creatures threatening the Earth. Each offers its own graphical style with plenty of parallax scrolling thrown into the mix too.

Rather than overwhelm you with threats, Zeta Wing focuses on small waves of foes with tricky patterns, and the occasional ground base. Taking out an attack wave earns you a power up, and collecting 12 of those upgrades your ship's weapon. Which is especially handy as you reach the boss at the end of each stage. The confrontations with these are frantic tests of skill as you dodge their fire and try to apply maximum damage to their weak spots.

Zeta Wing offers a charming twist on the vertically scrolling shmup, with plenty of challenge and lots of fun. Especially at a budget price too!

8.5/10

REVIEWED BY ROB.

DON'T BREAK THE BALLS

(Doublesided Games)

<https://doublesidedgames.com/>

Don't Break the Balls has the player controlling a fan to prevent bubbles falling to the bottom of the screen and bursting. The fan loses energy and needs to be constantly recharged. There are a variety of items that help progress, and there are obstacles that are, well, most unhelpful.

Presentation is top notch, with the digital download containing various files and PDF instructions. Graphics and sound are high quality (love Saul's soundtrack) and the whole game is well put together. Options and modes are plentiful, including two player duel and coop games. Don't Break the Balls is made for paddles and plays exceptionally well when using them. Joystick control is a bit more fiddly, but still playable.

Don't Break the Balls is an inoffensive arcade puzzler that is fun in short bursts (pun intended) but won't hold your attention for long periods of time in single player. As usual with games of this type, it shines with two players. Worth a download at the price, especially if you have two paddles and a C64 loving friend.



7/10

REVIEWED BY KEV.



GATES OF THE ANCIENTS

(drmortalwombat)

<https://drmortalwombat.itch.io/gates-of-the-ancient>



Gates of the Ancient tries to do something we've not seen for some time: making 3D work on the C64.

After activating a mysterious artefact, you find yourself taken to a far off galaxy. The journey home involves you flying through a variety of star systems and locating the gates which will bring you closer and closer to home.

During your journey you'll fight pirates and ancient guardians, search for abandoned treasure, buy upgrades for your ship and try not to be killed. Though when you do die, you can restart with all the goodies you've acquired thus far, making the next attempt a little easier.

Compared to other space combat games on the C64, there's far less action going on, though discovering what lies within each system certainly scratches that curious itch. Especially when you discover an artefact or lost treasure!

If you don't mind something slower, then there's plenty to enjoy here as making your way home is no cakewalk. Just be sure to keep a notepad handy to write those passwords down!

8/10

REVIEWED BY ROB.

LEILEI RELAY

(Dr. TerroZ)

<https://csdb.dk/release/?id=201753>

LeiLei Relay is an infamous training ground that Baby UFOs in UFOland must overcome before they are permitted to leave their homeland and explore what the universe offers.

The objective is simple - guide your UFO using only rotation and thrusters around the training course, collecting all of the lanterns before you can move onto the next course.

LeiLey Relay is a 'no frills' game that is executed very well. It features multi-coloured graphics that look good in their rudimentary form and smooth vertical scrolling. But it's the game mechanic that elevates the game. The implementation of inertia feels realistic and the game's controls are highly responsive, allowing you to pull off some precision moves in tight spots that you don't think are possible. The game strikes that perfect balance between being addictive and frustrating at the same time.

This is one of those games that you go in thinking that you will only play for a short session but end up sticking with for a few hours. A very good release.



8/10

REVIEWED BY LOUIE.



NIXY THE GLADE SPRITE

(Psytronik)

<https://psytronik.itch.io/nixy-c64>



This is one cute little platformer, featuring a boppy tune and instant death at the drop of a hat, or more specifically the touch of a flower, water, ghost and anything else that might be considered dangerous.

As the story goes, the world you live in is now broken and you must find this magical pool that could save everything. Visually, the graphics are crisp and detailed. They provide a great atmosphere and world to run and jump around. The music provides a suitable jingle as you make your way through the quest. As you traverse the level, the enemy patterns are simple and easy to remember which makes it a matter of just timing your jumps right to get through. Luckily the controls are tight making this quite fun, challenging and ensuring that failure is definitely on you, not sloppy controls. Nixy the Glade Sprite is a welcome game in such times, it's fun, it's frustrating (in the right way) and it's a delight to play.

7/10

REVIEWED BY RAJ.

LADY PAC

(LC-Games)

<https://lowcarb.itch.io/lady-pac>

Lady Pac is a charming and well made tribute to Ms. Pac Man, which was originally released (all of those years ago) in 1982, by Midway. Ms. Pac Man improved on its predecessor, Pac-Man, by adding more mazes, warp tunnels, bouncy fruit and baddies with varied behavioural patterns. Lady Pac is further enhanced by adding randomly generated mazes and bonus rounds.

The original Atarisoft C64 conversion of Ms. Pac Man was fantastic, but Lady Pac trumps it with its enhancements, yet remains authentic. It's just so well made, with attractive graphics and colour palettes, the familiar sound effects and jingles all intact. The gameplay is great and the randomly generated mazes, along with the challenging behaviour of the ghosts, keep the game fresh. Keeping first place on the high score table could be a fun challenge and reason to keep the game running for the kids to have a go.

Lady Pac is a love letter to a classic game. The gameplay is timeless, simple and remains endearing even to this day.



7/10

REVIEWED BY KEV.



FIX-IT FELIX

(Broken Bytes)

<https://brokenbytes.itch.io/fix-it-felix-jr>



Fix-It Felix Jr. is a "conversion" of a 1982 fantasy arcade game, based on the characters featured in the 2012 Disney animated feature, Wreck It Ralph.

Designed as a love letter to early 80s arcade games, Fix-It Felix Jr. is designed to emulate the charming, endearing gameplay, controls and aesthetics of early arcade games from the likes of Namco and Nintendo.

You are tasked with fixing the buildings which have been severely damaged by Wreck It Ralph, who is (rightfully?) throwing a tantrum after his home was destroyed by the new building developments.

Fix-It Felix Jr. is a technical masterpiece. Graphics, sound (including speech) and the various other effects are so good that the game actually feels more like an actual arcade game rather than a conversion. From the stunning animated intro, cutscenes and gameplay, Fix-It Felix Jr. is a sight to behold. The gameplay itself is fun and the kids will enjoy it. It really does harken back to simpler days. The adults will enjoy the game too, although longevity is questionable, though you will certainly appreciate the effort and masterful production if the gameplay is a little simple for your tastes.

71

8/10

REVIEWED BY KEV.



STARS AND SPRITES

DISKS HOLD HIDDEN TREASURES

by Lenard R. Roach



LENARD ROACH

The Fourth Equinox

SKITS AND PLAYS
FOR THE WINTER
HOLIDAYS

When I was growing up, my brothers and I would play a game called "Treasure Island" where each of us would get an empty box of kitchen matches, put a couple of dollars and some loose change into it, and then bury it somewhere in the backyard of our childhood home. We would then go and draw up a "treasure map" detailing exactly where the illustrator hid his "treasure chest." We would then exchange maps, and each one of us would try to find where the other brother hid his "treasure" and dig it up. The brother who found and dug up the treasure chest would then get to keep the money and add it to his personal coffer. Since I was the youngest of the three brothers, I usually was the one that either couldn't read the treasure map and find the treasure, or I just couldn't find where my brothers hid the matchbox even though the treasure map was as explicit as possible. Therefore, I was the one who was always broke at the end of the game and went crying to mom that I had lost. Fast forward to the 21st century where it appears that I am still playing this game of Treasure Island, but this time I am playing it against myself.

When I started work on my upcoming book, "8-Bit Gambit" (scheduled for release in March of 2022), I was seeing this as my last Commodore retro-computer book that I would ever write for quite a number of years until I could find time to amass more stories, articles, and essays out of the recesses of my mind. Even though this was looking rather true from a Commodore perspective, I was also concerned that this would become true as well for my non-Commodore work, i.e., my skit and play books. I assembled the various one-hour plays and quarter-hour skits from my various flash drives

that I had stored in the Commodore computer room for the new release, "The Fourth Equinox."

Usually, my most used disks are in an open cubby that is built on the top of my worn-down Commodore desk. When I need a disk, all I have to do is reach up into a selected cubby, pull the disk down, remove it from its dust jacket, insert it into the 1541 or 1571 disk drive, and load and run the needed program.

However, this time I opened one of the three cabinet doors that I had on the Commodore desk and found some of my very old 5.25" Commodore floppy disks stored in a couple of dusty disk file boxes. The old disks had been sitting quietly in the lower cabinet of the Commodore desk probably for the last ten plus years. I reached into the cabinet and slowly pulled out one of the disk file boxes, lifted the lid, and began to slowly rifle through the disks, making sure to read each disk label and trying to remember the contents.

Way back before I was divorced, the wife and I (well, more me than her) would go to the magazine rack of our local grocery store and browse the selections, looking for the latest Commodore magazine release. When I'd find one, I would place it on the cashier's register conveyor belt and purchase it. In the evening we would read through the magazine. If there was a program one of us wanted, she or I would take the time and type in the printed code so we could have the program for our own use or entertainment. Sometimes one of us would find something that would further educate one or both of our two boys in a certain study, and we would type that in as well. Each typed-in program was saved and verified on the Commodore so that we confirmed everything was correct to make the program run.

Some of the disks had nothing but document files on them, created in either Speedscript or GeoWrite, and these poor disks were not listed by program but by a heading that read something like, "Writings Geos Format," or "Lenard's Writings Geos Format Disk 1." There were many disks labelled with my writings. Most of them were files that were created for the old Commodore User's Group of Kansas City newsletter, "Ryte Bytes," of which I was editor for a few years until the club closed its doors back in the early part of the 2010's. Most of those were labelled, "Ryte Bytes Jan-May 2009," or something to that effect.

In this pile of disks, I found one disk labelled, "A Baker's Christmas." I remembered writing this story way back in 2004 in my son's hospital room while he was undergoing chemotherapy treatments for his AML leukemia. After the story was finished, I printed off a copy and submitted it to the choir and drama director of the house of worship where my family was attending

at the time. Even though the skit was good, the director rejected it, giving back to me. I filed the hardcopy in the big file drawer in my bedroom and stored the disk in a file box in the lower cabinet of the desk, where neither was supposed ever to see the light of day again.

I was excited to rediscover A Baker's Christmas and instantly stopped the process of preparing The Fourth Equinox. Dick Estel of the Fresno Commodore User Group emailed me the instructions to successfully convert the Commodore Speedscript text to PC, and I prepared the skit for insertion into the new book. My sister-in-law Wynn, who has been the story content editor ever since the release of my third professional book, "Skits for 2nd Hand Puppets: Adventures In Courage," did the editing. My cover designer Tim, of Montee Graphics and Photography in Keytesville, Missouri, made changes to the back cover to include a blurb about the new skit. The Fourth Equinox was released to the general reading public on March 16, 2021.

With The Fourth Equinox's final release and 8-Bit Gambit scheduled for a March 2022 release, I had some time to meticulously go through each of the above old disks. I read the file titles as found on track 18 of the disks, trying to remember why they were written in the first place, trying to remember why the projects had been abandoned.

As I went



through each disk, I found that many of the stories and skits had already been presented and produced by the individuals who requested them. Most of the stories were mainly short, five-minute skits written for pre-teenage children with short attention spans. I left them alone, because at the moment they really had little value to me. Some of the skits actually had good storylines, and I pulled them out of the file box and put them aside for possible file conversion in the future. I wanted to study them to make sure I would categorize them under titles that would best describe their genre.

As I was going through the disks, I came across one disk that I thought I would never see again. In fact, I had forgotten completely about it. The title on the disk was, "Tabitha Arise." It was a play – a very long one if I remembered correctly – that was based on a story found in Acts 9:36-42. I was impressed that this section of the New Testament seemed to feature a cast of all women and no men, with the exception of the apostle Peter. Putting my imagination to work to create a possible scenario that would best explain the events that led up to the actions that were depicted in Acts 9:36-42, I sat down at my Commodore and GeoWrite word processor and began to go crazy, writing both act one and the first half of act two. I converted the text to PC by using Big Blue Reader (back then I knew how to run the software without outside help) and submitted it to Sandra, the president of the women's group of the church I was attending. Weeks later, I got an email from her stating that even though the partial play was imaginative and definitely good, there were presently not enough women in the women's group to put on such a production, especially a production that appeared at the time to run longer than twenty or thirty minutes. Feeling dejected, I halted all progress on Tabitha Arise and shelved the work, again another piece of Roach-created literature that would never see the light of day.

As I looked at the disk, I wondered what I had exactly written. Since my son Gabriel went to all the trouble of fixing my Commodore 1902A 40/80 column monitor by resoldering all the solder points on all the boards (a job that took him more than five hours), I thought I would boot my copy of Geos and GeoWrite and examine any documents on the disk. Before long, I was reading my

personal text of Tabitha Arise, originally written way back in February of 2013 according to the Geos time stamp on the file. I had found my new writing project for the future.

Acting like I was handling the Shroud of Turin, I carefully started to make changes to Tabitha Arise while I was in GeoWrite. Everything was going along fine until disaster reared its ugly head. I had begun work on act two when the problems arose. When I went to save a small edit, GeoWrite gave me a screen message which read: ERROR 1:21. WRITING ERROR. Any edits that I made to act two would not happen because of this little snafu. Since this was the only copy on disk that I had of this script, I felt like I was dead in the water at this point. I got onto my laptop and contacted Robert Bernardo of the Fresno Commodore User Group and asked him if there was a fix to a corrupted disk. Robert replied quickly and suggested using the Maverick copying program to transfer the contents of the damaged file onto another disk; in the copying process, Maverick had the ability to correct some errors. I had a copy of Maverick, but when I tried to boot the software in my Commodore, it refused to load completely. I then came up with the idea to try and convert the act two file from a USR file to an SEQ file by using WrongisWrite, a program which was a gift from the Fresno Commodore User Group. I inserted the WrongisWrite program and converted the damaged act two to a SEQ file. It had worked! However, I needed to find out if WrongisWrite repaired any damage done to the file. From there I needed to convert the act two file from Commodore SEQ to PC TXT and then try to read it with the Apache Open Office word-processing program.

SOGWAP Software

BIG BLUE READER 128/64 version 4.1



Commodore <=> MS-DOS
File Transfer Utilities

for the Commodore 128 and 64
requires 1571/1581 or CMD FD-2000
Disk Drive





• "Peter Heals the Crippled and Raises Tabitha" fresco by Masolino (1338 – 1447)

The conversion was a success, and the file made it onto the IBM 720K disk as 80-column text. I got my external 3.5" floppy drive and plugged it into my PC. A quick search using the Search bar and I found the elusive act two file on the 3.5" disk. I dragged the file icon off the disk window and onto my desktop. Once that was done, I opened the file to read the text. As I scanned the pages that appeared, I looked them over and found missing data within the text.

I began to pray and seek a way to recall all the missing text so I could keep the flow of the script going. My prayers did more than I expected. While praying, I remembered that Sandra, Women's Group president, might still have a copy, even after a decade later. I shot an email to her. She got back to me and apologized that even though she remembered reading the play, the text had been saved to an older, now defunct laptop. There was a slim possibility that she'd still had a copy of the play, but she'd have to look. I waited for a few days. While I waited, hoping that somehow Sandra would find something, I converted the rest of the play to PC format and started writing the remainder of the play, like the second half of act two. I continued my day job and tried to keep my mind off the situation. However, I kept asking myself to recall the details in the play.

On an evening off, I opened my email and saw her name in my inbox with a couple of attachments. Her note was short. "I found these. Hope it helps." I opened each file, and as sure as the sun rising everyday, she had found and emailed me both act one and the first half of act two, all in their entirety. I just about fell out of my chair! I quickly downloaded the attachments and saved them both to desktop and flash drive. I even took the extra precaution of starring her message in my inbox to make sure that this file did not disappear in any way. I sent her my deepest thank yous for staying diligent in looking and subsequently finding the files. Later she explained that, even though the files were sent to her a decade

ago, they had gone into her archive file on one of her older hard drives. Originally, I had emailed the files to her business account, and all business hard drives were saved back, whether they contained personal mail or not.

I told her that these files were so important that I now had them saved just about everywhere in my house. I invited to take her and her husband out to dinner sometime to celebrate this victory. She declined. No matter. I had gotten the files. I needed to get Tabitha Arise finished, edited, and polished before the end of summer. I really didn't understand my urgency in this project, but at least I had something to do instead of moping around the house on my days off.

I haven't reviewed the other document files, because I've been busy getting other projects finished. There is a movie screenplay I had attempted to write. I may take it off the disk and run it through my PC to make it into a book as well. That would be another future project.

While I rediscover all of these projects on the 5.25" Commodore disks, I will still be writing more stories for Commodore magazines and newsletters. My goal is to keep adding Commodore content to these various mediums, and hopefully by 2025 or 2026, I'll have another Commodore compilation book ready for the printer.

As you can tell by this narrative, by searching through my old Commodore disks and finding all these story treasures, I no longer feel pressured. I can produce quite a number of books after 2022, now that I have my choice of material to research. I can now relax and let the ideas come to me in a more tranquil fashion rather than trying to force an idea out of my head in a frenzied manner, trying to meet some deadline. I exhort you, reader friend, to get into your very own Commodore disk files and find great Commodore things that were long buried and forgotten.

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 from our homepage. We do other things too, such as record C64 related podcasts and run coding competitions.

Who produces Reset?

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

How often is Reset released?

As a hobby project, the release schedule is dependent on time that the team has available to produce each issue. Needless to say, we'd love to release at least 2-3 issues of Reset each year.

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 get in touch. 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 we'd love to hear from you.

Can I buy a physical version?

A limited number of 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. You can join our subscriber list to receive information about when we are taking orders for each issue.

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.

Keep in touch!

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Reset64 itch.io page: <https://reset64-magazine.itch.io/>

Reset64 Podcast: <https://soundcloud.com/reset-magazine>

**BEYOND
THE
SCANLINES**

Beyond The Scanlines - a series of thoughtful deep dives & looks at interesting games new and old for a variety of vintage home computers and consoles.

Soul Force - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vQKOJA4A0hQ>

Runn 'n Gunn - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cY10IXBhJoo>

Boxy Moxy - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fxUMALAF0BQ>



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