

Reset . . .

#8.5



Ghosts 'n Goblins Arcade - Bomberland - Heroes & Cowards

Blast From The Past - Reset Rewind - Format Wars

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The magazine for the casual Commodore 64 user.

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Kickstarted!

It was a no brainer that we accepted Chris Wilkins' invitation to be a part of his Kickstarter campaign for *The story of the Commodore 64 in pixels* book. Kickstarter has been a fantastic medium to be able to fund niche projects like Chris' that appeal to a passionate but select group of people, such as us retro computer and gaming enthusiasts.

It amazes me how projects such as Chris' bring together the past and the present. The book itself is a celebration of the past and the wonderful entertainment and art medium that was (and still is) the Commodore 64. Yet, these projects also inspire and encourage renewed conversation and passion as well as new development, on and for our beloved breadbox, especially with the various stretch goals and perks. Modern day development on the C64 never ceases to amaze, which is evident with the selection of C64 game reviews in this very issue.

We hope you all enjoy this special edition of Reset that we hope compliments Chris' book. We have tried to compile what we consider to be a fair representation of what Reset has been about since the first issue two years ago, as well as throw in a few new

articles (and the brill new Ant Stiller *Ghosts 'n Goblins* cover) to keep our regular readers entertained until our next proper issue.

Reset is a non profit publication that is produced purely for fun by a team of dedicated and slightly insane Commodore fans, just for people like you. If this is your first taste of Reset and you like what you see, feel free to check out our other issues which are available at <http://reset.cbm8bit.com/>. Also, keep an eye on our Facebook and Twitter accounts for news on the upcoming issue. We also welcome anyone who can contribute to Reset who would like to share their knowledge, enthusiasm and expertise on anything Commodore 64.

Thank-you to Chris Wilkins for allowing us to produce this issue for the Kickstarter and also to the entire team of Reset Staff and contributors for their continued hard work. Also, a big thanks to you, for being a big part of keeping this scene so active, fun and friendly.

Sincerely,

Unkle K



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Ghosts 'n Goblins cover image by Anthony Stiller.

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A Conversation With...



JTR in the flesh!

"The C64 has a special feeling to it. The style of graphics and especially the sound still amaze me, they strike me as exceptionally beautiful and sympathetic even today."

In this special compilation version of Reset, we thought we'd start things off by having a chat with the man in charge of one of the major players in Commodore 64 games publishing since the commercial C64 era ended. Tim Jakob Chen-Voos, aka Jak T Rip is the current organiser and leader of German C64 developer and publisher, Protovision.

Q. Hi JTR, welcome to Reset. To start things off, can you please tell us a bit about your own history with the C64?

My C64 history started in the mid 90's. Although Amigas and PCs were on the hype, I found them dull against the C64, which had better games, anyway. But was I the only one feeling like this? I wasn't sure.

Long before internet and emails were commonplace, there was a German paper magazine for classified ads. You could offer or buy things through it - or you could ask questions / ask for help on certain matters. It was like a huge forum, but on paper and with every communication taking ages, because the mag would only be published once a month. The makers of this magazine must have been really surprised when the mag was more or less hijacked by C64 people who used this magazine to communicate with each other and get in touch with new contacts. The mag was very popular and survived for quite a long time and many people found their way to the C64 scene through it. Even Crossbow wrote there and

replied to coding questions. It was also my entry to the scene. For a couple of years I just swapped disks all around the globe. I was a proud member of the demo group Smash Designs and founded "the Stock", a group specialized in uncovering rare software or repairing software that was in circulation with errors.

I also tried to learn BASIC and failed miserably. I understood BASIC only later on when I learned Assembler... (I will never understand why "high" programming languages are considered easier than nice and fluffy opcodes!)

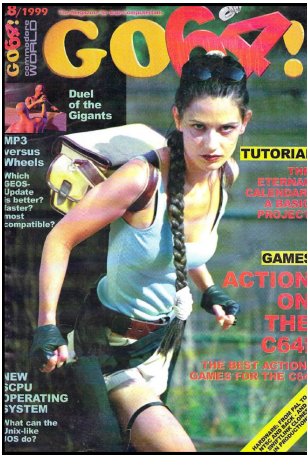
But the real reason why I was able to develop my coding skills was my friend Thunderblade (Malte Mundt), whom I got to know, because I wrote a letter to a new German C64 paper magazine at the time, namely "Go64!". The first issue was out and I was very enthusiastic about it. I wrote them a long letter and was more than impressed to find a reply to it in my mailbox the other day. Thunderblade said my letter was more than a usual reader's mail, it was detailed and constructive. We became very



Protovision have a fantastic website, complete with a shop and information on all of their past (and some future) releases.

Check it out at
<http://www.protovision-online.com>

good friends and he told me everything I needed to know in addition to what I had already learned in kindergarten (pun intended).



Thunderblade was not only a founder member of the Go64! magazine, but also of Protovision. So this is how I got into Protovision. Although I never intended to do so, I ended up as the main organizer of the group and introduced the distribution side to Protovision.

Q. Tell us a bit about how Protovision started. What was the reasoning behind the start up?

Protovision started out as a bunch of programmers wanting to produce quality games for the sixtyfour. It was the time when Apex stopped and basically the whole market was gone. But we were just starting - and we were not the only ones! Multiple individual coders offered their games on a "send money in an envelope" basis (i.e. Quizz/Reflex with Centric, Jan Zimmermann with Flummi's World and also Chester Kollschen and André Zschiegner who later on became members of Protovision, too). One problem at that time was that even though there were new games developed, there was little visibility for them. One had to know that the games were available and had to contact each coders themselves - quite cumbersome as well!

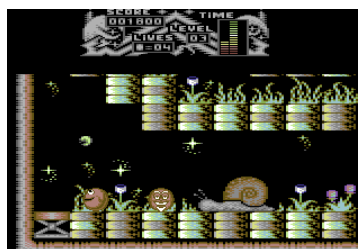
Then I wanted to join Protovision, but I had no skills: I wasn't able to code, draw any fantastic graphics or make music. So how could I be useful? I had an idea: would it not be better if all those nice new games could be ordered at one place instead of having to contact each coder individually? This was then the dawn of Protovision as a distributor. Today, sometimes people think Protovision would be ONLY a distributor, but that's only because we are soooo slow in developing

our own stuff and because we are taking on external projects as well (sometimes playing a part in the development as well, like providing music, helping with fixing bugs and the like).

The reasoning...? Well, first of all we are just enthusiasts living their hobby. Second, we want to show the world that the C64 is still alive and kicking. We particularly want to reach those people that are not so well informed, those that do not know there is still a roaring C64 scene.

We thought about releasing our games for free ample times, but the thing is that if you appear as a commercial company and can present decently packaged physical copies of your games, your impact is much bigger in the outside world. We want to hit the press and get media coverage in usual non-scene papers or sites, because this is the only way to get attention of "sleeping" C64 users whom we would like to reactivate and inspire. The press section on our homepage plus our guest appearance in the Simpsons tell us that our strategy can't be all wrong!

We also want to give something back to the developers of cool C64 products. We usually work 5-10 years on one game and put a lot of heart in it. The money we get out of it is miserable pay if you think about it, but if you don't do the maths it's still very rewarding. At the same time we always go by the rationale that the products we sell must be worth the money. We would never sell simple SEUCK games on the same price level as titles where thousands of work hours have poured in. We believe that price should display the quality of the game. In fact, we would



Protovision's Jim Slim took many years to develop, but believe us, the wait was well worth it!

probably never sell a SEUCK game for money at all. We have a number of titles that we released as freeware from the start, because we thought they were not worthy to be a "commercial" release. We are

very proud to say that all our priced titles won't play through in a day or two!

Q. What are some of your personal favourite games/publishers from the classic era?

Oh, there are so many!

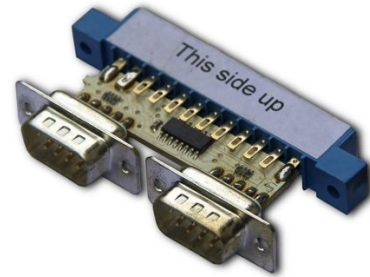
The obvious ones are Hot Rod and Dragonbreed from Ash & Dave. Creatures and Mayhem from Apex. Turrigan, Katakis and Enforcer from Manfred Trenz, as well as M.U.L.E. from Ozark Software.

But I also love these rather unknown titles:

- Acia/Weaver (a two player action/puzzle blend that's been a stark inspiration for my own game, Pac It.)
- Ultimate Tron 2 from Oliver Stiller (a *six* player Tron game - although the gfx are very simple, this is my favourite C64 game of all time, because 6 people have to cluster around one breadbox to play the game!)
- Kings of the Beach (I would have never thought it possible to translate the feeling of beach volleyball to a computer so well!)
- Lupo Alberto (one of the best platformers for the C64, with two simultaneous players and scrolling!)
- Traffic (see cars, busses and motorbikes crowd the screen and try to manage them before the traffic collapses)
- Boom (one of the last commercial games for the C64 and one of the best shooters ever made)
- Batty (simply the best two player Breakout game)
- Bug Bomber (a 4 player Bomberman game with tons of special features - sadly the C64 version plays worse than the PC version - a rare thing!)

I could go on, of course... Nebulus, Gribbly's Day out, Spherical, Oil Imperium, Mario Bros, Wizard of Wor... I love creative game new concepts and I always focussed on games that you can play with multiple players simultaneously. I

just love it when people crowd around one computer! Online multiplayer games can never match up with the wonderful chaos coming from playing on one and the same computer!



Protovision also sell some hardware, including the brilliant 4 player adaptor. Most recent multiplayer games support the device.

Q. Why do you think there is still so much interest in C64 gaming?

The C64 has a special feeling to it. The style of graphics and especially the sound still amaze me, they strike me as exceptionally beautiful and sympathetic even today. But it is the whole package that sums up to the winning composition: I don't know if it can be attributed to individual features like the C64 scrolling, the exact controls or else, but as a whole most games on the C64 just play well. Say what you will, but there is hardly any games that could keep up with the tension of Wizard of War, the perfection and intense feeling of C64 version of Turrigan and the fun in Creatures.

People remember how great playing the C64 felt and they all come back sooner or later and bag for more ;-)

The other side to it is that creating for the C64 is fun, too. It is more fun to produce a game within defined limitations on a computer system that is well researched and where you have a real chance of understanding everything that happens instead of being at the mercy of a certain compiler or operating system or plugin.

Q. How important are C64 physical releases? Why do you think people still want the physical copies of new, modern C64 games when digital distribution is fast becoming the accepted medium now for modern systems?

I personally buy most of my games as downloads, even though I'm not using an emulator. I love my 1541 Ultimate and I am not at all sorry if I never need to use my error-prone 1541 disk drive anymore at all. But holding in your hand a physical game box with a nicely labelled C64 game disk produced in this millennium has a very special feeling to it. It is something that you can really be proud of and that you can show around.

Putting aside the marketing and showing off effects, physical copies also feel different. Opening up a package is just more fun than opening up a folder (imagine a x-mas tree with no wrapped gifts but a list of links underneath it.) We humans are not only intellectual beings. We sometimes need to hold and feel things. As well, I find it much more natural to remember a physical spot where I had put something compared to remembering in which folder I had dumped a file. The virtuality of digital things can get really tiring at times.



Protovision's latest release, Heroes & Cowards (Hero Edition) came packaged in a high quality tin box, bundled with all sorts of goodies!

Q. What are some of the major challenges of C64 games publishing in this modern era?

The "market", if you want to call it this way, is very diverse today. Some people just want to play. Some use emulators and expect support if they don't know how to do that. Some expect even telephone support, which is absolutely not doable for a hobby activity run entirely in the free time after work. And the expectations for physical copies have risen dramatically. People nowadays expect highest production quality, many of them being collectors of deluxe packages. It is not easy to meet expectations of so divergent nature.

Another challenge for us nowadays is the rise of casual gaming, small apps and in-game offers. I think that the whole gaming industry (not only C64 gaming) is running into a crisis. The old concept of producing a great and complex game that a person would buy and spend months, if not years, playing it, is becoming obsolete. We are probably the last generation of people willing to dedicate time, effort and money into finishing a complex game. Since there are so many games available for free and also the priced games come in masses you can hardly comprehend, the willingness to put sweat into one game deteriorates dramatically, having impact on the game concepts and the way games are offered. I believe that the C64 games even have an edge over e.g. mobile phone apps, because the amount of new games is so that you have a chance to keep yourself informed and read reviews on all major releases, while in the mobile mass market there could be a fabulous new game without anyone noticing it. C64 stands out. And we try our best to highlight the games that we believe should be highlighted (in our newsletter we also sometimes advertise games from Psytronik/RGCD if we think they are great, like the excellent Guns 'n Ghosts or Knight 'n Grail games). We believe that a publisher also has a kind of "sorting out" function, just as it traditionally has in the book business.

Another major challenge is legal requirements. Due to a new EU law that

handled how VAT for digital products is collected depending on the country of origin of the buyer, we had to stop selling downloads to customers within Europe but outside Germany. Psytronik has closed down the sale of downloads entirely due to the same reason. We also had to stop selling certain hardware in order to stay compliant to new laws. Once we were charged for an illegal sentence in the terms and conditions and had to use some trickery not to go to a law suit. This really spoils the fun. It sucks away a lot of our energy that we would like to put into creative products instead.

Q. What can you tell us about the 'culture' of the modern C64 gaming scene?

RGCD has brought new life into the gaming scene for sure! The format of the RGCD compo "very small game and the winner gets to be on cartridge" was a perfect recipe to get talented people interested who would not engage in the long and tiresome journey of creating a huge game - but a 16kb game? That's a different story! Brilliant people like Paul Koller and Lazycow got activated and the whole scene got a lot of fresh air this way.

Most people nowadays don't expect to make money on games they produce. They are just part of a creative and vibrant scene that likes to produce what they produce and it is OK to them if their games can be downloaded for free. However, we made the experience that "it can be downloaded for free as well" downgrades the games emotionally. It just feels less valuable. That's OK if you've spent a couple of months on your game, but if you worked on it for 5+ years it feels very bad if the game gets emotionally degraded simply by being free. The gaming scene today has to struggle between the worlds of mass freebee-ism and high-quality complex game production and find its way through it. In this regard, RGCD, Psytronik and Protovision all have a different approach and it is great to see that! Protovision is the lame traditionalist holding up the flag for the good old way of producing

complex non-casual gaming titles. RGCD is pure fun and the 16kb compo releases have reached extremely high quality standards over the years. And Psytronik is somewhere in between and specializes on distribution, and not only on the C64. Is it not wonderful to see that we are all different? I am proud to say that Protovision has definitely shaped the C64 gaming market. We gave the gaming scene a new hook when it was at its lowest and we are not at the end of our journey. My personal dream would be to shape a small but actually profitable market for C64 games that could nourish a few game developers. Currently it's all just hobby projects. But we might soon see the release of the first truly commercial C64 game of this century. Yes, it would be a wonder, but let's see if it works - we are working on it!

Q. What is the process of getting a C64 game published in 2015?

At first we discuss the price level and which editions to produce for the game together with the authors. How sophisticated the packaging will become also depends on the wishes of the authors, because it may impact how much money can be earned per copy. Protovision itself does not aim for profit, so from each copy sold we mostly deduct fees to cover our costs (payment/shipment costs, taxes, indirect costs for adverts and stuff and production costs, production costs always being the biggest part) and the rest goes to the authors. Protovision usually takes all the production risks, i.e. financing the production costs.

Once these details are settled, we try to help wherever needed (proofreading manuals, package design, whatever) and get in touch with printing houses to start producing. The latter sounds easy, but is in reality a hell of a job. Think of printing houses as asylums housing the worst kind of mentally distorted personalities. Really, throughout the many years of our existence, we never had a single hassle free production run. But what do I say! In the end we have a great product and that is what counts.

Q. Tell us about the first release. How did it feel to get that first game out?

Our first game out was Strokeworld. But that doesn't really count, because we released it with the covermount of an issue of Go64! and then as freeware afterwards. Next we released Bomb Mania and Ice Guys, and it was just wonderful to see these games becoming real hits on parties. Everybody was playing them. However these two games were already almost finalized when the programmer, Chester Kollschen, entered the team. The game that felt as the first huge joint effort was Metal Dust for the SuperCPU. Getting this thing out was an enormous experience. The game was delayed for more than a decade and nobody knew if anyone would really buy and play it, because of the extra hardware required. But it was taken up by the gamers very positively. Making this huge game was a tremendous effort and having it out finally was both a big relief and a real motivator. It gave us and still gives us a feeling of accomplishment that is hard to describe!



Protovision's ambitious and brilliant euro-shooter, Metal Dust, released exclusively for C64's equipped with the CMD Super CPU. Read about the game's interesting development story over at the Protovision website.

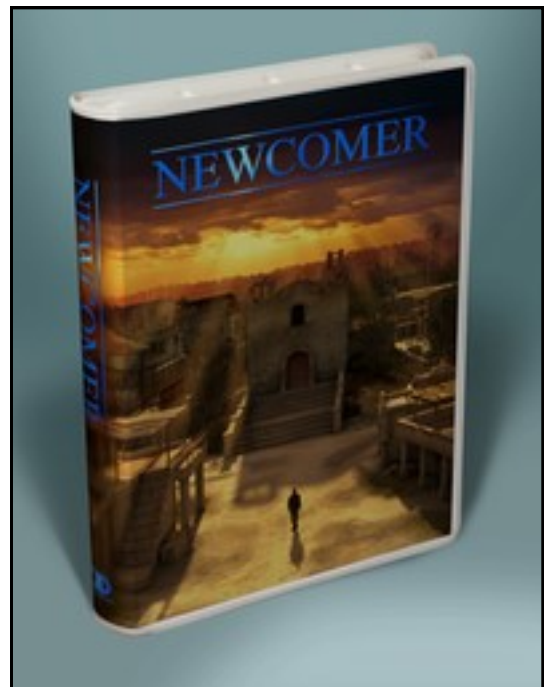
Q. How important are competitions such as the RGCD cart game development compo and the Forum 64 adventure game compos?

They are extremely important. It seems that those competitions mobilize unknown

powers in talented people. They bring us both suspense during the compo and freshness in releases and releasers. We are considering to set up one or two competitions ourselves as well.

Q. Thank-you for your time Tim. To finish things off, what can we expect from Protovision in the future?

You can expect new high quality C64 game releases from Protovision like in the past years, and hopefully in even more professional packaging. We have learned to be very cautious about naming release dates and announcing games, because hobby projects like ours are simply not plannable... it's not like in business, where people are paid to deliver to a specific date and timeframe. After all, we do it for fun and not for being nailed to deadlines. Keep an eye on our webpage and new sites. Just hang on for some big stuff coming!



One of Protovision's most anticipated games, the massive hybrid Adventure/RPG, *Ultimate Newcomer* by CID. Despite the slow progress, Tim assures us that the project is very much still alive!

Reset would like to thank JTR for his participation in this interview.

Freeware! Game Review



If you could buy Ghosts 'n Goblins Arcade in the shops, it would look something like this.

“As I often say, it’s a wonderful time to get into retro gaming. The sheer amount of talent and dedication in the community constantly impresses.”



Previously, this machine would give you the most authentic GNG experience.
Not any more!

Game: Ghosts 'n Goblins Arcade
Developer: Nostalgia/Chris Butler
Release Date: June 2015
Available: <http://csdb.dk/release/?id=139257>
It's a bit like: The arcade version, much more so now!
Score: 8.5/10

What is there left to say about Ghosts 'n Goblins? Known for its insane difficulty level, high frustration inducing, yet endearing gameplay. The original C64 conversion by Chris Butler was a great game, but was missing levels and that special polish. In come Nostalgia, fresh from their Commando remake, here to rectify things again. They must really love us!

Game Overview

Scene group Nostalgia strike back with their improved version of Ghosts 'n Goblins. Originally released by Elite Systems in 1986 and coded by the legendary Chris Butler, it was a fine conversion of the original Capcom arcade game. Unfortunately, like so many C64 conversions, there was something missing. Probably due to both deadline pressures and the fact that it all had to fit in a single load, the game was missing entire levels and always felt incomplete.

Nostalgia have slaved away over the past year, trying to right the wrongs of the original conversion. Using Chris' original code as a starting point, they have improved upon, re-written and enhanced the original conversion to come up with Ghosts 'n Goblins Arcade, a true conversion of the arcade original.

The list of enhancements is impressive. Most importantly, the game now includes all six levels from the arcade as well as extending the four levels

that were already present. The graphics have been completely overhauled by Steven Day and Carl Mason, as well there are various improvements to the presentation, including adding in the intro sequence at the beginning of the game. Each level now has its own 3 channel music as well as sound effects courtesy of GNG and Laxity, while the original Mark Cooksey theme has been retained on the title screen. Various bugs have been fixed and controls tweaked to make this version of the game much more playable than the original.

For those of you that aren't quite up to the game's infamous difficulty level, Nostalgia have kindly included various trainers such as infinite lives, invulnerability and level skip to help you get through the game.

Ghosts 'n Goblins Arcade is available as both disk and cartridge images, playable on a C64 emulator such as Vice, or transferrable to use on a real C64.

Gazunta - 7/10

OK, let's get this out of the way first: I have never been a fan of Ghosts 'n Goblins. In fact, I'm of the opinion that with its player-hostile level design and enemy movement patterns, coupled with an unwieldy and restrictive control system, it's actually a pretty badly designed game. However, boy oh BOY is this a fantastic conversion of it.

The attention to detail bestowed upon it by the new developers shows that these people really do care about the game, and wanted to see a C64 version that does the original justice. I never thought Chris Butler's effort deserved any widespread derision - by all means, it certainly was as good an arcade conversion as you could expect in 1986 - but it's just plain fantastic to see what an extra 30 years of community C64 coding knowledge can bring to the table. I love the new intro sequence, the richer backgrounds, the extra little flourishes shown in all of the sprites. It really does feel all polished and fresh.

What surprised me was how much better it plays than Elite's effort. It just feels nicer to jump, and not every death makes you curse an unresponsive joystick input. The pace has been sped up too, which is good for a game that demands constant rote learning of previous levels in order to stand a chance with later ones. Yes, it's still frustrating for so many wrong reasons (so many leaps of faith in level 2...) but it's not always like that now.

I just love the fact that this was made at all, and so I'm hesitant to bash the game for, frankly, Capcom's initial mistakes. However for my money (hang on, wasn't this a free release? -ed), it's an incredible display of the modern C64's abilities, but it's actually also a great game to play.

Ant - 10/10

As I often say, it's a wonderful time to get into retro gaming. The sheer amount of talent and dedication in the community constantly impresses. Ghosts 'n Goblins Arcade is no exception, and it's AMAZING.

There's not enough room here to go into all of the spit and polish that has been done to this already great game (sorry, Cam!). Everything added to this new version of GnG is like loads of extra icing on an already delicious cake (that a zombie then erupts out of). Arcade quality sprites. Gameplay changes. New and expanded levels! Options galore!

Honestly, we're just being spoilt here.

While the enhanced graphics are one of the first things you'll notice (now shown off as part of the newly added intro scene) it is the improvements to the controls that really make this a gem for me. Arthur no longer gets stuck on the bloody tombstones all the time and he can change the direction of fire in mid-air. Zounds!

Despite these new improvements the game is still cruel in difficulty. Tweaks have been made to make enemies deadlier (in line with the arcade version) and, yes, you will still fall to your doom over and over in the damn Ice Palace level.

Oh, the music! Each level now has a new tune and each one sounds wonderful in it's own right (thankfully the iconic original music by Mark Cooksey, is still there). The new music for the Underground Passage level is particularly chilling, reminiscent of Ghouls 'n Ghosts.

The amount of love poured into this work strikes me as something quite incredible. That people use their free time to make something like this. That's inspiring. Time to don that armour once again!



They Were Our Gods!

By Paul Morrison



John's cover art for Crossfire, published by Atlantis Software in 1991.

"This is the kind of design request that I dream of now - make up a fantasy figure completely to your own preferences. Wow! Another one for which I still have the original."



John did the cover art for Necronom on ST/Amiga. The game is a C64 GTW!

Have you ever heard of John the Brush? No? What about John Smyth, then? Still no? Well, he might not be one of the biggest names in 8-bit gaming... in fact, he never programmed a computer game in his life. Despite that, though, I guarantee you that his work probably compelled you to spend some of your precious pocket money on a game, purely out of impulse. You see, John Smyth drew computer game cover art.

I've long felt that cover artists have been somewhat neglected when it comes to praising our Gods and Heroes of the time. The game cover was an integral part of the package. Who didn't pull their latest, freshly-bought gaming masterpiece out of its bag as soon as they got on the bus home and scrutinised every detail, including the cover art? In several cases, cover art was directly responsible for a purchase... in my case, John Smyth's work seduced me into buying the Commodore 64's worst game ever. But more of that later...

I talked with John recently about a great many things... how he got started, how he ended up in the world of computer games and also about specific works. Many of his pieces adorned the covers of Spectrum-only games, but you'll have seen a fair few of his multi-format pieces and bought the games, too. Here's an exclusive excerpt of what was a much longer chat.

John was born in Woolwich, London in 1946 and spent much of his childhood in Blackheath where his main memory of growing up is of "gazing upon

the shells of bomb damaged houses and, more peacefully, of feeding the ducks in Greenwich Park". From our chat, it's fair to say that artwork and imagery were also a large part of growing up. I wondered how and when he'd developed an interest in art.

"Saddled for years from age four with twisted knees for which I had to wear leg irons day and night, I used to travel by way of 'the Rupert Bear Express' to far off lands of story and wonder (also, incidentally, of joyous political incorrectness). The books were illustrated at that time by Alfred Bestall and that artist was one of the first to make me excited about art and fantasy."



Ruuuu-pert, Rupert the Bear. Everyone knows his naaaaaame.

"My uncle, Jack, drew the occasional cartoon for 'Punch' (no less) and one day, perhaps when I was about five or six, I copied a cartoon of Pinocchio and showed it to him and he liked it! So I did more drawings and more people liked them."

Having left school at eighteen with a glowing report - *"John has coasted his way through this last term and shown no interest in anything whatsoever"* - John clutched the Art 'A' level qualification which proved that statement wrong and set off to make a career out of his natural ability. He knew it was pointless doing anything more academically - *"had I attended art college ...I would have just sodded about"*, and so it was with that he headed into the world of commercial art.

Starting out at an art studio - *"they warned me with some prescience that I would find working for them dull... they were right"*, John fell into commercial artwork from the heady world of shelf stacking. Drawing a cartoon sign as a one-off to advertise dog food for a rep in the warehouse led to a full-time job in that area before going self-employed and specialising in illustrated signwriting.

Signwriting and computer game covers are not exactly closely-linked, though... so how did the move into cover art come about? *"Despite my absolute ignorance of computers (I only bought one about three years ago) I found myself designing game covers for Mastertronic through a studio called 'Words and Pictures' for whom I'd done illustration work previously."*

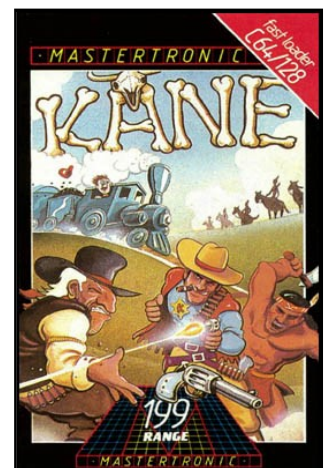


Mastertronic were obviously happy with John's work as they charged him with the task of coming up with their own mascot! "Mistertronic" was a character who adorned the covers of many a game, usually from the M.A.D range and often on the back

cover. I wondered if Mastertronic had given John any specific brief for the character they wanted.

"This is the kind of design request that I dream of now - make up a fantasy figure completely to your own preferences. Wow! Another one for which I still have the original."

Naturally, before talking to John, I tried to make myself as familiar with his work as possible. When poring through someone's body of work, you tend to notice themes cropping up. That was certainly the case here and I was able to put John's pictures into a number of groups. For example, I spotted a couple of covers with a Western theme... one of which is probably more well-known than the other. The two covers in question are Atlantis' Gunfighter and Mastertronic's Kane.



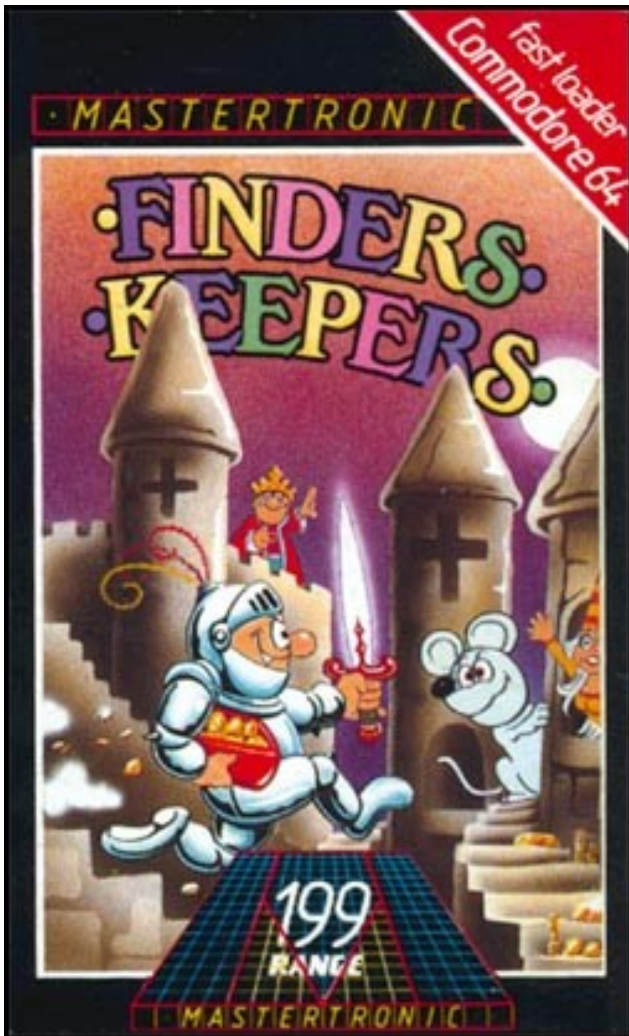
Which is your favourite?

Everybody I know owned Kane. In fact, I think I still own two copies of it. But which of the two did John prefer? *"I remember Kane and Gunfighter. [Of the two] Gunfighter was the more satisfying but only because, I hope without immodesty, I had the cartoon work pretty well in hand but the realistic figure work for Gunfighter was a challenge. It's still one of my favourites."*

John's most famous work, at least for us games buyers, is undoubtedly his cover for Mastertronic's classic Finders Keepers. That game sold so many copies and I own

both the Commodore 64 and Spectrum versions of it. I asked John if he had any specific memories of it, forgetting that to a non-gamer like himself there would be no particular significance to that picture...

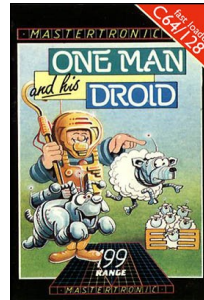
"How embarrassing", he said, "I've no recollection of that particular cover : I may even have it as an original artwork but without a title it's ..er..just another cover. Oh, dear." Fortunately I was able to jog his memory with a picture of the game's cover: "Finders was a nice, lively design - I'm glad it was popular!"



I bet you're all humming the tune now!

Another Mastertronic game that many will be familiar with is One Man and His Droid. It was a tricky little game of intergalactic herding and the C64 version was also notable, as were many Mastertronic games, for a great Rob

Hubbard soundtrack. How many of you, though, took a punt on the game or were drawn to it because of John's cute cover?



"The title leant itself to the picture and ... ' SHEEP IN SPAAAAACE !' Hardly any detail in the brief as usual, and that's how I like it. The looser and less specific the brief, the better."



Jason Statham was beginning to regret his latest choice of role!

I had to bring up a subject which is close to my heart. I remember one shopping expedition where I was drawn to a Mastertronic game with a striking cover. It featured a wrestler in a cage, grappling with a green alien while a blue alien climbed over the top of the cage to fight him. I'd loved Rock 'N' Wrestle and was quite into American wrestling at the time, so the prospect of fighting aliens with otherworldly special moves was quite exciting to me. The game was called

Intergalactic Cage Match, and on the strength of that cover and the game's premise, I bought it. Wrong move... it was the worst game I've ever played. Thanks, John.

"I have the original for this one and I still like it after all these years", says John. *"It was a great subject - cage fighting aliens! I like the weird perspective angle that I chose for the action."* Yeah, I still like it too. Pity, then, that the programmer completely failed to do the premise and the cover any kind of justice whatsoever!

I asked John if he'd been aware of games having loading screens which copied or were influenced by his cover art. Not being a computer user at all until a few years ago, he hadn't known about them at all.

"I'm a big fan of digital art. I can't believe it's not easier to work with than traditional painting - after all, if you were starting out today as a budding artist would you glue the hairs of a Russian ferret to a stick, make mixtures of gloopy pigment and smear it on paper? Probably not. Go digital and you have a fabulous array of tools at your command BUT the artist still needs the vision to see his art on the screen before he/she begins the picture."



"Clever sods, these compootaah chappies", said John, on seeing C64 renderings of his pieces.

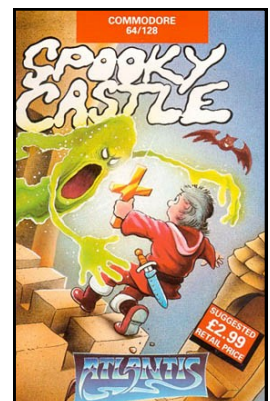
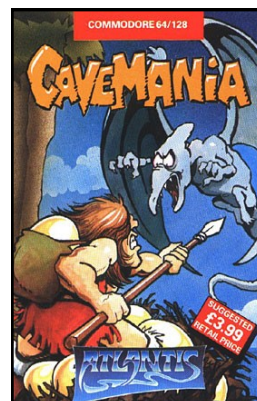
I wondered if John was surprised that people still remembered his game covers with such affection.

"When I discovered that there is a whole world of nostalgia and love of retro games I was astounded. Then, look at my endless and sometimes very expensive expeditions to find again the illustrated books of my childhood, and the interest, indeed the obsessions of gamers makes sense. If I've contributed in however modest a way to their remembered and treasured enjoyments I'm genuinely delighted."

Trust me, John, you have.

Fans may well be interested to know that, having spent twenty-five years in the murky world of greeting cards, John is getting back to doing what he truly loves... fantasy art. Covering all aspects of the genre, he's in the process of setting up a website (Scary to Fairy is its intended name) and will be up and running for all to peruse soon.

John also still owns a number of original pieces of his cover game art... and as they're doing nothing more than adding to the clutter he's interested in selling them. Again, more details will be forthcoming soon but if you're interested in purchasing a John Smyth original you can contact him at smiggysmyth@gmail.com and he will be happy to discuss this with anyone. This is your chance to own a genuine piece of gaming history!

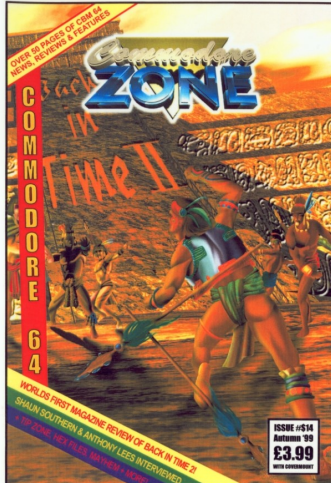


Visit Paul Morrison's website/blog,
They Were Our Gods! - A Celebration of
British Computer Gaming in the 80's

<http://theywereourgods.com/>

Blast From the Past: Oo'er Magazines!

By Alex Boz



Fan produced magazines, such as [Commodore Zone](#), kept the C64 spirit alive long after the final issue of Commodore Format... And now you have Reset, you lucky things!

Video gaming magazines may become a thing of the past, but in the 80s and 90s they were thriving publications, full of information for gamers hungry for news, interviews, reviews & previews. The words contained within these magazines were the lifeblood for readers wanting to be connected and up to date on the goings on in the industry and their particular system(s) of choice.

The magazines were household titles and the British seemed to have had a monopoly on churning out quality publications – from their mesmerising covers to their ribald humour, there were many ingredients that endeared us to their magazines. I vividly recall rushing to the newsagent every month to grab the latest Zzap!64 (or simply just, Zzap!), Your Commodore, Your 64, Commodore Format and C&VG (Computer and Video Games). The cover price wasn't cheap and they were three months old by the time they reached our Australian shores, but goddamn they were worth every cent (and the wait)! Who could forget Yob ripping into the punters that dared to send in mail – absolutely priceless! I tried reading a few US based magazines, with the exception of RUN, I found the rest to be too serious, too dry and devoid of humour and fun, so, for me anyway, the British magazines reigned supreme in this part of the world in the 80s and early 90s.



Go64! From [CSW Verlag](#) in Germany. The last commercially produced C64 magazine, which ceased production in the mid 2000's. There was even an English language version for a while!



Zzap! and Commodore Format, the two British heavy weight C64 gaming mags of the late 80's and early 90's. Never had there been such a rivalry since Rocky and Drago!

I knew it was going to be interesting when I posed the question of “what was your favourite C64 related magazine” to the Reset team. Once the dust settled and the passionate discussions quietened down, this is what each of them had to say about their favourite old school magazines:

Rob Caporetto: As a kid, I missed out on the golden age of C64 magazines (considering, I'm only a few years older than Zzap!, that shouldn't be a surprise), so coming into things later on did make for a unique perspective.

I started out by borrowing a fair few issues of RUN from my local library. With its angle being less games, and more general Commodore usage, it was great to see a wider angle of the landscape (including more exotic peripherals), as well as learn some programming bits and pieces.

Games-wise, the first mag I really got into was Zzap! - even though it was way after its heyday (and in fact, probably at its lowest point, though it recovered a bit before changing into Commodore Force). It was solid enough, and whilst there were features I liked more than others (mainly the roundups covering genres or highlights in the C64's history), it was solid enough reading each month.

I got into Commodore Format a bit later (mainly as it was trickier to find for a while) and overall, I think it was the better read at that point. Having regular columns devoted to programming tricks was great when starting to try and get a grip on C64 programming, along with Gamebusters (hey, I appreciated having cheat listings for the cover tape games for a change). Though, I do remember seeing the start of its descent as the C64 market died off - and of course was shocked to see how long it eventually survived for!

Kevin Tilley: I was a bit late to the party for the UK gaming magazines. By the time I discovered Zzap! and Commodore Format, they were already in decline and

their best years were well behind them. But before that, my father used to religiously buy ‘Compute’s Gazette!’ - which is the magazine I remember most fondly. Originating from the US, I grew up with this magazine, its type-ins and Gazette Disks (which I could also use with my VIC20!). I spent countless hours typing in many programs in BASIC and machine code via Automatic Proofreader and MLX respectively, with my father. Not just games, but other programs such as Speedscript, which I went on to use for many years to publish school projects.

Compute’s Gazette was a wealth of useful information, not just a collection of cheap gags, innuendo and mediocre game



reviews which plagued the later era of UK gaming magazines. The articles were informative and challenging. It had depth and substance, and will always be my favourite of the many different C64 publications I purchased over the years.

Merman: The first C64 magazine I saw was Zzap! issue 18, with the gory Beyond The Forbidden Forest cover. 25 years later I got to interview the artist Oli Frey and publisher Roger Kean at the Replay retro event, talking about the history of their magazines.

After buying a few issues of Your Commodore (which swallowed up Your 64), we subscribed to Zzap! from issue 31, getting a free Quickshot Joyball with the subscription. Zzap! became our guide to buying good games and it rarely steered us wrong. What made it special was the way there was more than one opinion on a game.

My first brush with publications came through Commodore Disk User. Starting out bi-monthly, this publication came with a disk full of programs (to save you typing

them in) then became monthly and asked for reader submissions. I sent several programs, got signed contracts for publication - and then suffered the heartache of seeing the company fail.

Then in 1993, after a brief gap when Newsfield became Europress Impact, two things happened - I wrote to Zzap! suggesting a technical column, after their reader survey had asked if people would be interested. My letter went to Phil King, but it was Steve Shields who wrote back telling me about the other big news - Zzap! was rebranding itself as Commodore Force, and my technical column would feature from the first issue.

I wrote for all 16 issues of Commodore Force incorporating Zzap! as Professor Brian Strain (the Mighty Brian, so-called because of Commodore Format's Mighty Brain). In fact, I wrote an extra 3 pages for issue 17 at 48 hours notice - but with deadlines close, that text became part of issue 16. I was a freelancer, writing my text using a C64 word processor (Word Writer v5) and printing it out to send in. After the magazine closed, I wrote for several issues of Commodore Format before it too closed and years later I became a regular on Retro Gamer. It was Retro Gamer that gave me the chance to be a Zzap! reviewer, appearing in the incredible Definitive Guide to Zzap! Supplement.

I will always remember Zzap! for giving me the chance to be a professional writer, even if it can be a precarious profession at times.



Frank Gasking: In a typical UK answer, my favourite two magazines were both Commodore Format and Zzap! (later Commodore Force). I had previously read Lets Compute! and Your Commodore, which were shockingly bad at the time, but the main pull for Your Commodore was the free tape on the front.

Commodore Format caught my eye due to its brightly coloured red and white banner head. I spotted it in my local newsagent when I had popped down to get some sweets. I ended up buying issue 11 (with the Terminator 2 cover) due to it not only having a fantastic tape with two full games and two demos, but also a map of Fantasy World Dizzy, which was one of my favourite games at the time. It was aimed at a sort of teenage market, so the magazine was up my street. I loved it due to the regular excellent tapes, which were great for someone with not a huge amount of money to even get budget games. The tips section was fantastic, and reading about new games was a great thing. It sadly declined, in my opinion, after the redesign (and certainly when it shrank down in page size), but I have many fond memories of getting up at 7am to get it at the paper shop and dreaming what was on the tape!

Then comes Zzap!/Commodore Force - ironically, I first got the magazine with its Terminator 2 issue (78) - which was almost its last when Newsfield went under. The tape pulled me in, but it wasn't as great as the Commodore Format tape. At the time, I didn't feel the magazine was as good as Commodore Format, but it was different enough to be enjoyable. Once Mrs. Whiplash was rid of, the magazine actually got better and more so when they put two tapes on the cover each month, which was just amazing. I actually liked the transition to Commodore Force at the time (the quality of games were unbelievable as the market died - like Blues Brothers on one issue only a year after it first came out). Looking back, I would have preferred to have started with Zzap! in its heyday - but I was far too young!



Cameron Davis (Gazunta): Now I know it sounds a bit hyperbolic to say that my life would be not the same without Zzap! 64 - it's the magazine that inspired me to get into the games industry, and through it I made lifelong friends and a great career - but today I want to shine the spotlight on a truly under-appreciated Commodore mag: the one and only Commodore Computing International (CCI).

CCI looked different from the likes of Zzap!, Commodore User or C&VG. It was hard bound, for one thing, and considerably more drab looking than its competition. If there were any artistically-inclined people on the magazine layout team, I would be surprised. Every cover looked like it was laid out by a high school art student with scissors and glue, made from whatever promotional pamphlets were laying about the office at the time.

Inside, full colour screenshots were rare, and in fact the majority of each issue was spent on full-page text pieces sometimes paired with blurry, monochrome images taking up minuscule space in the corner.

It wasn't uncommon to see 10 pages of BASIC listings just...sitting there, waiting to be laboriously typed in. The news section had page after page of stories about new printers, mice, modems and dodgy light pens that cost a fortune but never worked right. It was not a visually enticing publication by any stretch of the imagination.

But there was...something that lured you in. Scribbles of the magazine's mascot, Felix, adorned the pages with little sarcastic quips about the editors. He was not as funny as Rockford and Thingy, but he had more character, helped by the fact he had his own column in the magazine where he talked about the latest happenings in the software industry. All the writers were largely anonymous, and they were clearly just writing about what interested them, rather than what was considered 'hot' at the time. This ended up making the magazine feel really enthusiastic even if a lot of it went over my head.

One of the things that appealed to me about it is that it was obvious the magazine was aimed for (and made by) people much older than the Zzap! / CU crowd, who were not really the typical gaming demographic. I'd hazard a guess that many of them were just interested in the serious side of computers and just put games stuff in there as an afterthought, but their heart wasn't really into such frivolous activities. With the exception of their keen interest in the latest role playing games (their monthly column devoted to exploring every inch of The Bard's Tale was a must-read), even the best action or arcade games were afforded passing reviews, in a "I guess this is OK if you're into this sort of thing, have fun with it" kind of way. You know, the way you might talk to your kids after they pressure you into playing the latest Pokémon game with them or whatever.

But that was kind of the appeal, at least for me: If Zzap! was the cool older brother who you idolised, then CCI was the slightly weird uncle who never moved out of his parent's place and everything he said was a bit out of your comprehension but he was awesome anyway.

And speaking of weird but cool uncles, the jewel in CCI's crown for me was the monthly column by Jeff Minter. While Zzap! pioneered the 'diary of a game' feature with Jeff, CCI just gave him a page (often more) to just let loose on any subject that took his fancy. His development antics (by this point he had well and truly moved on to the Amiga and Atari ST, and was heavily into the evolution of Colourspace) were often mentioned briefly if at all, and columns would instead be focused on the latest Pink Floyd gig, or the hot new exotic imports like Super Mario Brothers or the fabled PC Engine. Reading these really opened my eyes to a world beyond my own. There was one article in particular where he wrote about the future of computers, and predicted Google Earth and monitors with retina displays - it was pretty mind blowing stuff!

While CCI never got the fan following that the usual suspects enjoyed, I urge you to seek out a couple of issues and see a different side of the world from that era. You might just get a taste for it.

Roberto Dillon: In Italy we actually had a rather lively scene regarding C64 magazines back in the day. Needless to say, the Italian edition of Zzap!64, simply named "Zzap!", was the favourite of many. Published from May 1986, it was a high quality localisation that left all the great content of the original British magazine intact and also added a few original articles, making the likes of JR (Jaz Rignall) and GP (Gary Penn) well known to a new crowd of fans.

But Zzap! wasn't the first, and those like me who were also keen to tinker and mess around with their C64, had other resources as well: "Commodore Computer Club" for example, was a very good magazine, officially endorsed by the Italian branch of Commodore, that started publication as early as 1982. Besides game reviews, it featured technical articles including a few type-in listings. The latter also had magazines entirely dedicated to them, like the "Paper Soft" weekly series started in June 1984. Only listings there, nothing more, nothing less, for those who really wanted to spend the whole weekend at home by typing new games and programs that never worked at first but could provide a true cathartic experience when the last bug and typo were finally fixed!

Mat Allen: Superplay? Oh right, it's C64 magazines we're talking about!

It's quite hard to look past Zzap!64 really, especially the early years within, say, the first 30 issues or so. Newsfield took the formula found to work with the fledgling Crash magazine (which was just over a year old at the time) and transposed it, with the odd tweak here and there. What really helped was the hiring of two legends, Julian Rignall and Gary Penn. Not only were they excellent gamers in their own right, but they had the nous and enthusiasm to convey their opinions with the written word on the pages of the magazine. They were soon to be joined by Gary Liddon, providing his own take on Commodore life. Helped by various features, editorials and the infamous Scorelord challenge, you trusted



what they said because you saw them as mates, not faceless critics spouting their opinions and views.

While 1985-87 were arguably the golden years, and thereafter the magazine lost its way occasionally (such as with the Amiga coverage), it's hard to argue that the teams of Houghton/Hamza/Evans and Wynne/Hogg/King didn't keep a lot of the same spirit and belief with their content, even if some of the readership had moved on, to be replaced by a slightly younger generation. Only at the end really did the quality drop and the tone become more puerile, and that was only out of necessity to move with the times, and supposedly cater for an evolving audience. The Oli Frey covers did rather help too, which is probably why I own a few of them...

Anthony Stiller: When Alex suggested that we do a short write-up of our favourite magazine from the old days I responded with "Won't everyone just write about Zzap!?"

This is expected. Zzap! was seminal and touched a lot of lives back then. However as I thought about it, I realised that there was another mag that I held very dear.

In late 1982 the Personal Computer Games magazine launched in the UK (Chris Anderson and Bob Wade worked on this mag and would later move on to Zzap!). At some point its Australian cousin emerged. The Australian PC Games included articles from its UK cousin but changed art and layout. It also had great localised content with features about the Australian computer scene. A little digging revealed PC Games had the same publisher as Australian Personal Computing.

PC Games was a multi-format magazine covering most of the popular 8-bit computers at the time (including the VZ-200). It had an interesting double-spread layout for reviews and a Game of the Month, funny cartoons, a high score section and a rather neat games chart.

(The UK mag had a competition where you could win a bust of Vivian from The Young Ones holding a broken joystick.)

It also had useful type-ins. One series of articles provided a powerful C64 BASIC extension called PCG-64. I thought it was arcane sorcery and I couldn't wait to see what new functionality they would add each month.

But, while all these are excellent, the real reason I loved PC Games was for an article that appeared in the August 84 issue (March 84 issue of UK version).

The article's title is Do-It-Yourself Designing. The intro of that article is a wonderful, passionate plea asking that you should embrace originality in games, let your imagination guide you and how we should avoid stagnation. A cry that we hear just as loudly today. This article made such an impact on me that I often thought about it long after I'd lost the mag (I'm looking at the article right now as I once again own a hardcopy of that issue).

That article captured everything that I loved about the idea of making games and have now finally started to realise.

Did I mention the subtitle? *"Make your own games - just for the fun of it! by Jeff Minter"*





Lenard R. Roach: By far my favourite Commodore magazine to read and use was "Run." "Run" was nice enough to take my first real attempt at Commodore programming and put it in the last issue they made on page 22. I got to learn how the magazine world worked in the way of editing, contracts, and payment to their contributors. Also, "Run's" articles were written with as little technical dialogue as possible. It catered to the beginner and intermediate programmer and explained exactly what was going on in the story.

I also enjoyed looking at the programs found in "Compute's Gazette" magazine, but "Compute" was written mainly for the advanced programmer who has had several hours of keyboard time under the belt. It was hard for me to understand all the jargon tossed around by the writing staff and contributors.

I never got to look at issues of "Commodore" or "Ahoj," or any of the other Commodore magazines that were out during the glory days of Commodore. I personally am thankful that here in the 21st century Commodore users have magazines like

"Commodore Free" and "Reset" to glean new information and technological Commodore advancements. I am glad to have an online friendship with the editors and publishers of these magazines, and they seem to enjoy what I put down on the word processor - it's either that or those men are seriously stoned. I can't tell.

Just joking! Thanks to all in Commodore for keeping our machine alive, well, and competitive with the open market.

It is saddening to see magazines going out of print or confining themselves to an online presence. Going to the newsagent isn't what it used to be - nothing can replace flicking through magazines and having dog-ears on pages for future reference. For those that had foresight and kept their old magazines, I commend you - please ensure they never end up in landfill! For those of us that threw them out and are now wanting to rebuild their magazine library, I salute you! Nostalgia is a powerful force - it is great to see that our loyalty for certain publications was, and still is, as fierce as our loyalty for our chosen system(s). Let the schoolyard argument of which magazine is best, begin!

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

You owe it to yourself to check it out!

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



The Mighty Brain

Game: Flappy Bird

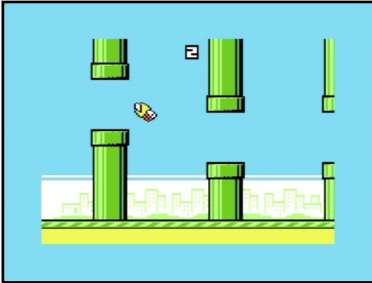
Developer: SOS

Release Date: February 2014

Available: <http://sos.gd/flappy64/>

It's a bit like: Happy Flappy, Spike C64 Dislike

SCORE: Any negative integer will suffice.



The ability of your primitive, jelly-like species to create forms of entertainment as intricate and involved as that of a race 10,00,00 years more evolved astounds me. Wait...you don't and it doesn't.

"Flappy Bird is a port of the original, released for the archaic and unwieldy piece of equipment you meat-bags call 'Mobile Phone.'"

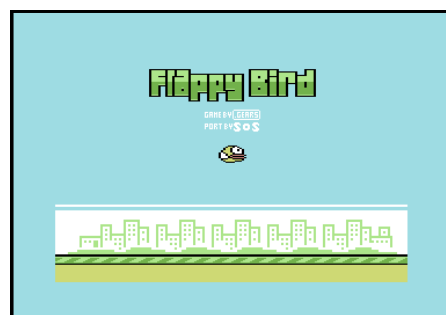


I imagine this picture makes many of you feel weak. I would pity you if it didn't do the same to me. Ugh.

"Rejoice at the sight of my cerebral majesty and cower in the shadow of my undeniably knowledgeable super-form, for it is I...THE MIGHTY BRAIN!"

Once again I bless you with my presence upon this sphere of slurry you so affectionately call "Earth", for I have been called upon to cast my unequivocal judgement over a game entitled 'Flappy Bird'. What ever else should I expect from your race? Nothing.

'Flappy Bird' is a port of the original, released for the archaic and unwieldy piece of equipment you meatbags call 'Mobile Phone'. Such disgustingly antiquated technology was discarded by the race of Mighty Brains in the 2nd epoch, along with extraneous limbs. It was replaced with 'Being amazing at everything'. It



requires humans to tap at a key with a repellent appendage of their choice. I recommend one of your foul fingers.

It strikes me that some may find this game a challenge. I was able to finish it on my first go. In fact, I looped it. After loop number 14,033, I got bored and continued with my studies of finer examples of this crude entertainment form. Such as 'Dr Kawashima's Brain Training'. (One of our more subtle attempts at gifting humans with enlightenment. The other being 'Commodore 64' of course).

My time here is thankfully coming to an end, so some words about the game are necessary I feel. The graphics are in the spirit of the original, colourful and simplistic. Anything else would spoil it. The gameplay, whilst proving whimsical to a multi galaxy spanning entity such as myself, may cause the average human cortex to involuntarily collapse upon itself. The sound? It is there.

Unreleased Oldie!

Game Review



The Adventures of Scooby Doo intro screens. Get your Scooby Snacks and notepad ready!

“In hindsight, doing an arcade adventure about those pesky kids (and meddling dog) seems obvious.”



Mystery Inc. featuring (left to right) Scooby Doo, Velma, Shaggy, Fred and Daphne. Out to get pizza from a haunted pizza shop, probably.

Game: The Adventures of Scooby Doo
Developer: Sculptured Software/Peter Ward
Release Date: August 2014
Available: <http://www.gamesthatwerent.com/gtw64/scooby-doo/>
It's a bit like: Maniac Mansion meets Decathlon!
Score: 7.5/10

Do you fancy yourself to be highly observant and a solver of mysteries? Do you enjoy exploring haunted castles, finding secret rooms and being chased by ghosts? Are you a connoisseur of the finer pleasures in life, such as obsessive eating and dry dog biscuits? Then we may just have the job for you...

Game Overview

Scooby Doo was produced by Sculptured Software and was to be released by Micro Illusions, way back in 1990. Unfortunately, a costly error of judgement from the publisher (see developer interview) saw Hanna-Barbera void the contract. The game was cancelled after it was just about finished and the publisher eventually went under.

Luckily for us, coder Peter Ward kept backups of his disks and the game has been saved, and finally released to the C64 community in 2014.

The Adventures of Scooby Doo is an arcade adventure, which has the player taking control of those four pesky kids and the greatest Dane of them all, Scooby Doo.

There are three full mysteries to solve, each with their own plots, locations, characters to interact with and puzzles to solve. There is also an arcade element to the game, with an assortment of arcade

mini games, such as the famous chase sequence from the original cartoon. If these are not completed, your players can be imprisoned or separated, making progress in the adventure more difficult.

The gameplay area is viewed in isometric 3D, with each room and location having depth. Locations can be searched for items and clues, and contain a variety of characters that you'd expect to see in such a game, such as Jeeves the Butler and various other investigating types.

Interaction with characters and scenery is achieved through a menu system that contains a variety of commands. These are easily accessed by hitting fire on the joystick.

The Adventures of Scooby Doo is available for download at Games That Weren't. Included in the ZIP package is a brief instruction manual and a few other interesting bits and pieces related to the game.

Ant - 7/10

"Ruh-roh, Raggy!"

When I signed up to be part of the Reset crew the last thing I expected to be doing was playing an adventure game based on Scooby Doo and the gang. Will this game be better than the terrible Scooby game by Elite? Let's jump into the Mystery Machine and find out!

In hindsight doing an arcade adventure about those pesky kids (and meddling dog) seems obvious. The Scooby cartoon suits that genre perfectly with its heavy investigatory elements.

Of the three adventures available, I played the Daymen Mansion mystery because haunted houses just ooze "Scooby".

Set in a forced isometric view, you guide the gang around (occasionally getting stuck in the scenery), talk to other characters, get clues and find objects and secrets to help you crack the case.



I immediately liked that you can split the gang up because IT'S EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENS IN THE CARTOON. "It's perfect!" I thought until I realised it was a bit of a gimmick, with it rarely mattering who is in the current group.

Chatting to other characters opens up more dialog options as points of interest are revealed. This does mean a bit of backtracking as you talk to previously met characters about something you've just discovered (I took great pleasure in drawing a map on actual graph paper) but that kind of adds to the Scooby-ness of it all.

Dialogue is surprisingly well written with lots of different topics and distinct personalities. Detective Shafer is typically overenthusiastic. Ms Wuxley, the psychic, is suitably obtuse.



Like any good adventure there a plenty of items to find and then use haphazardly until the thing works with the other thing.

Inevitably there are action sequences. Successfully navigating through these scenes requires different feats of manual dexterity - joystick waggling, careful timing, etc. While these are jarring, the actual implementation isn't bad.

Fortunately you do get a warning when an action scene is about to happen so at least you have time to prepare yourself and, living up to the cartoon's thematic, no-one actually dies in the game. Fail at an action sequence and you can end up locked in a dank room somewhere or deposited at a random location.

Instructions are a little sparse (how to split up the gang isn't obvious and I did spot an error or two) but forgivable given this game was never officially released.

I am a little concerned about how much I liked this game. Slightly naff graphics (Scooby genuinely looks like a horse) and you'll turn the music off almost immediately but the game is clever in its execution and really does capture the feel of the Scooby Doo cartoons. With three mysteries to solve there's plenty to come back to (which I did).

Now, how about a Scooby Snack?

Gazunta - 8/10

This game is like a meatball sandwich.

Now, hear me out: Like a meatball sandwich, Scooby Doo doesn't look that appealing on the outside: screenshots do not make this an attractive dish. And, also like a meatball sandwich, you have much more refined things on offer for your gaming palate. I mean, Scooby Doo? Surely just another naff kids license, right?



But one bite will show you that this is rich with flavour and so very, very filling.

In hindsight, it's ridiculous to think we've lived so long without playing this game. I mean, three Maniac Mansion style adventures with Scooby Doo characters, AND a plethora of action sequences to break things up? What a fantastic idea! There's so many mysteries to solve, characters to interact with, and action sequences to survive that you're going to be puzzling over this one for weeks to come.



I particularly like how you can split the team to not only save time traversing around the environments but garner different reactions from the characters you encounter. It's a neat touch that adds a lot of complexity to an already deep adventure game.

Not to say it's perfect - there's a lot of backtracking you have to endure to move items around from one end of the map to the other, and the basic visuals mean the characters are a bit indistinct. The action sequences - while they offer a nice change of pace - are a bit clunky to control and you'll end up dying repeatedly because of a badly timed button press.



Most importantly though, this totally captures the feel of the classic cartoons, with mysteries that make sense once you've seen them through to conclusion and characters that are all a bit shifty and could easily be pretending to be ghosts.

Now if you'll excuse me, I'm off to for another session, and of course ol' Scooby needs a meatball sandwich...





Scooby Doo C64 Fun Facts!

Surprisingly, The Adventures of Scooby Doo is actually the third game featuring Scooby on the C64.

The first was a completely naff effort released by Elite in 1986 (top left). An arcade platformer, which according to ZZAP! 64, was in production for over a year. However, they were not impressed, awarding the game a paltry 42% in issue #22.

A later game, by Hi-Tec in 1992 (left), was received with a slightly better, luke-warm response. Scooby and Scrappy Doo is a traditional left-right scrolling platformer, with much better production values than the Elite release. It still only managed 62% in ZZAP!64 issue #75. Also worth mentioning is that the game was produced by legendary C64 duo Ash & Dave, of Compunet and Slicks fame.

The Adventures of

SCOOPY-DOO

Play along with Scooby as he sniffs' out three of his spookiest adventures ever! Scooby Doo is an action packed *arcade style* game of sleuthing fun and adventure

for the whole gang, its' fully explorable 3D worlds are filled with mysterious suspects, while exciting arcade sequences liven the mysteries with hair raising rides and chases!

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The Making of Scooby-Doo

In celebration of the release and review, we had a chat to Peter Ward, the original developer of the C64 version of Scooby Doo, who thankfully decided to preserve his previously unreleased game via Lemon to the C64 public in early August, 2014.

What can you tell us about the development of Scooby Doo? How many people were on the team? How long was the game in development for?

The project started in early 1989, and finished around Aug that same year. We were doing C64, AMIGA, PC versions. PC version was the lead platform, meaning all assets were made for PC quality... and then down sampled for C64. Amiga started up last, and was the least completed when the project was cancelled. There were four programmers on the project: Myself on C64, two on PC (John & Anneli Motter, and one on the AMIGA (Mark Butler). From the credits, it looks like we had four artists.

Was the game developed at the same time as the other versions on other platforms? How much input did you have into its design?

PC was the lead platform. You always want your most capable system as the lead. C64 started up a little later, and Amiga later still. We had a writer who came up with the mysteries. I don't recall how the general game design (screen layout, GUI) came about though.

MicroIllusions were to publish the game, but you mentioned on Lemon that you were working for a company that got contracted to develop the C64 version. Who were you working for at the time?

I was working under contract for Sculptured Software.

What kind of challenges did you face when programming a game of this type on the C64? Were there any features that had to be left out due to technical limitations from the other versions?

No features were left out. Biggest challenges with C64 (and Apple][) were usually memory constraints, and processor speed. Fitting the game into memory was probably the largest challenge. For example, due to the large amount of text dialog used, we could not fit it into memory. Instead we stream from disk all the NPC response strings as they get spoken. We also load from disk different room tile sets as you walk around the world.

How did you enjoy working on the C64 compared to other platforms?

C64 was a very capable system, with very good graphics and sound. 64k of memory was also a lot at that time. For development, we used some AMIGA's for writing the dialog database, and of course art tools on the PC. I believe all the C64 projects I have done went quite smoothly with very few problems.

Do you have any fun anecdotes relating to its development?

It was too long ago to remember anything specific. Here's an example of how long it's been.

I've done 3 games on C64 (Black Magic, Main Frame, Scooby Doo), yet when I brought up my C128 from my basement, I couldn't even remember how to get the directory of a DISK. I had to google for OS instructions! I've got a BOX of disks (both 5¼ and 3½) with all sort of Scooby Doo assets on them... but I don't have any of the resources to look at them anymore.

Why was the game ultimately not published?

This is the answer we were given at the time -

MicroIllusions made a fatal error with their product release... which would ultimately lead to the demise of the company. Included with the Jetsons product, was a Jetsons comic book serving as instructions, and game story background. Hanna-Barbera NEVER approved this comic book, and were furious with MicroIllusions for releasing it (they are VERY protective with their licenses!). Shortly later, they cancelled all their contracts with MicroIllusions. All projects were cancelled.

Were you aware at the time that the game was never released?

Yes of course, we all were, and were quite disappointed. But we just had to move on to the next project. For me, that was moving on to the Nintendo 8 bit system.

What triggered you to preserve the game in the first place? Can you tell us about the efforts that went into its preservation?

I was curious if any of my old backups were still in working order. I'm not sure what the lifespan of 5 1/4 inch floppy disks are, but though 25 years might be pushing it. So I dug out my old C128 and 1541 drive, and tried booting up a disk (as I mentioned early, I had to google how to get the directory from C64 OS, and run a binary file. I guess my brain cells aren't quite as good as floppies!). Anyhow, to my surprise, Scooby Doo booted up to the title page! Amazing! I thought I should do something to preserve this before it's gone forever. Thus, it was released.

I usually made weekly backups of the game I was working on. This is simply one of those backups. It's been in storage for 25 years on 5 1/4 inch floppies. It's quite surprising they held the data for so long.

How does it feel to have people finally being able to play your game? What kind of feedback have you received so far?

It's fantastic to just see the game after so long. Having it finally released to others means that our work was not a complete waste of time and effort. It's great to see it finally being played!

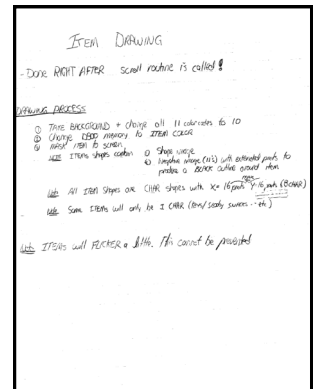
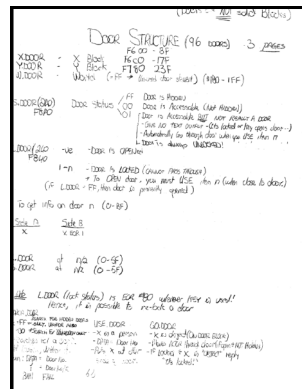
Do you still follow the C64 scene? What do you make of the current resurgence and interest in the C64? Why is there such an interest in unreleased C64 games?

I do not follow the C64 scene. Only stumbled upon these web sites when I was looking for information on how/where to release the Scooby Doo binaries. I must admit at being very surprised with the level of activity on C64 forums. It's also fun to download these old games and to play them on PC's. When I look at any old game I've done, I'm shocked at how crude they look. Video games have come so far since those times.

Did you work on any other titles that never quite made it on the C64?

Just Typhoon Thompson and the missing sea child. I'm still trying to get a working copy of that game running. If and when I do, I'll release it.

Read the full interview with Peter Ward at [Games That Weren't](#).



Peter also very kindly sent us a PDF file containing some of his Scooby Doo developer notes. These can also be downloaded from GTW.

Games That Weren't

By Frank Gasking



A flyer advertising the unreleased 8-bit ports of Mega Twins. The 16 bit ports made it out, so you can see what we missed out on!

“Once the announcement was made, we were treated to regular adverts each month across 1991/1992 (with even a slightly scary interpretation of the twins by US Gold!) to whet our appetites.”



The planned but unreleased sequel, titled The Mega-Millionaire Twins, also never saw the light of day. The Olsen's thought they were too big for the C64!

Game: Mega Twins, ©1991 US Gold

Code: Mike Ager

Graphics: Wayne Billingham, Ste Watson (sprites)

Sound: Mike Davies

GTW Link: <http://www.gamethatwerent.com/gtw64/mega-twins/>



Mega Twins (known as Chiki Chiki Boys in Japan) was a popular and sickly cute platformer produced by Capcom in the early 90's. The game consisted of you controlling two twins who carry swords and had to cross various platform levels to kill the dragon, which killed their father. The game was predominantly a sideways scrolling platformer, but a later castle level would have you climbing vertically to mix things up a bit.

Considering that US Gold, at the time, were busy getting conversion rights for the likes of Strider and Dynasty Wars (both Capcom titles), there was a very good chance that they

were going to convert Mega Twins to all the formats as well. And that they did, with US Gold obtaining the licence to produce the game across the home formats, including the C64. Once the announcement was made, we were treated to regular adverts each month across 1991/1992 (with even a slightly scary interpretation of the twins by US Gold!) to whet our appetites. One of the game's first mentions was on Commodore Format's Early Warning scanner in June 1991.



After some months, the conversions started to peek into daylight, starting off with Commodore Format previewing the game in December 1991. Interestingly the game was expected to be in the shops the very same month. Already in the preview screens, the C64 conversion was looking solid, and even included the original two player mode from the arcade.

Graphically the main character looked a little odd, but overall all the potential was there - especially with the cave level looking particularly good. However, many were wary still - as US Gold had already tainted many of their C64 conversions, including Strider - but there was hope after the recent conversion of Alien Storm, which was actually converted by Tiertex (and was pretty darn good too!)



Lucky Mega Twins on the C64 was in safe hands all along - the developer was Tiertex, but the coder was none other than Mike Ager, who was the brains behind the recently released and successful Alien Storm conversion and had a strong track record from his Software Creations days. He was teamed up with the same artist as on Alien Storm, Wayne Billingham, and they both looked very much on target to repeat the success with Mega Twins. "Tiertex had an amazing ability to do shit games, the only things they did that were good was due to a few individuals who wanted to do something good", Wayne reflects.

Mega Twin's development had started with much enthusiasm and drive in early 1991 (developed in tandem with Alien Storm at the time). With both Mike and Wayne also being massive fans of Capcom's work, something special was potentially brewing. From the previews, it was clear that at least the first 2-3 levels were complete, but Wayne confirms that the game was actually pretty much complete. "I remember we did the vertical scrolling bit that ends up in a big circular castle bit in the sky. I liked doing Capcom conversions, I loved their style, and many of the

little creatures were ideal for the c64, but I wasn't happy with the main character." Possibly the option wasn't there to have a hi-res overlay to improve proceedings with the main characters to keep the enemy sprite counts up.

Interestingly it seems that sprite work was initially done by a chap called Ste Watson, before Wayne took over proceedings - possibly as Ste was a little inexperienced at the time, and according to Simon Street, was struggling a little. Graphics by Wayne were not directly done on the C64 - "I used to draw all my gfx on the Amiga and squirt them into the c64 using a serial cable", he reveals.

November/December 1991 passed and for months afterwards, Mega Twins got stuck in the centre area of the Early Warning Scanner of CF. The 16-bit versions were released by now and were fairly well received, but the 8-bit conversions were still nowhere to be seen. Eventually in issue 21 of Commodore Format (June 1992), reader Mark Wyatt asked directly where the heck the game actually was. Commodore Format, after all, had been promising a review every month for a few months on their back pages. CF responded to Mark's enquiry as follows:

"Every month we ring US Gold and they tell us that the game is in final testing. So we put it on the innermost ring of the scanner. Then it doesn't show for review and we ring the Goldies and they say that it is still in final testing. The result of this is that the game has been virtually ready for review for three months, a position the scanner has mirrored.



This is in no way a criticism of the Goldies though. They want to make sure that Mega Twins is as good as possible and won't release the title for review or sale until it meets their high quality standards. It's annoying to have to wait for so long, but when the wait is for the sake of improved quality, it can only be for the best in the long run. So we'll review it when USG are happy with it"

Clearly something wasn't right and US Gold were stalling Commodore Format, but why? Did US Gold suddenly feel the 8-bits were done for? Mega Twins last appearance on the Early Warning scanner was in October 1992, well over a year since the conversion was first announced.

Interestingly, US Gold hadn't fully pulled out of the C64 market by this point. As late as February 1993, they released a conversion of Street Fighter 2 at full price. It is possible that the reason for Street Fighter 2 to get a release and not Mega Twins, was down to feeling that only blockbuster titles would make a good profit for them on the C64 at this time. Street Fighter 2 was so popular at the time, that even with an average conversion it would sell loads based on the strength of the name - and they were proved right!

There was a brief mention in the press that Mega Twins was to be released directly onto the Kixx label, but this never happened in the end either, for reasons unknown. A compilation called Raving Mad was later released too, and teasingly including C64 based instructions for all the games including Mega Twins. It seemed that US Gold WERE trying to release the game, but something kept stopping them. With all the constant delays and failed attempts to release maybe there was a development issue after all?

Unfortunately we may never find out exactly what happened - developer Mike Ager has never responded to any contact attempts or questions regarding any of his C64 work. It's got to a point now where it is clear that he doesn't wish to speak about his past development work. Wayne, however, confirmed that he had completed

all of his graphics before he left Tiertex, and he believes that Mike had completed the coding side too. Contact attempts with ex-Tiertex members, staff at the magazines of the time and even staff from US-Gold directly have proved fruitless in trying to work out what happened and to see if the game has survived.

However, Wayne dug out all of his development disks in 2008 for Games That Weren't to examine. Sadly just graphical assets were recovered in the end. We did at least manage to get a sprite demo constructed and a reconstruction of the preview screenshot - using the character assets that we found. Interestingly we found a disk dated February 1991 - which had quite advanced graphics - the game was certainly in development for some time it seems, even before magazines had initially announced it.



The Spectrum and Amstrad users fared better, when amazingly a set of disks turned up at a boot fair containing demos of both conversions - believed to be as complete as possible before they were cancelled. It is still hoped that this Capcom classic will appear, but it may take miracles of Solar Jetman proportions for it to happen on the C64.

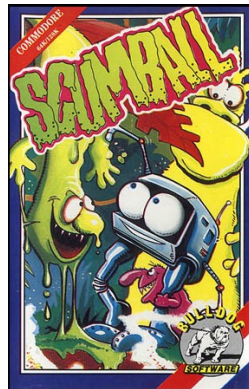


Visit Games That Weren't 64 for information on many more lost and unreleased Commodore 64 games.

<http://www.gamesthatwerent.com/gtw64/>

Format Wars!

By Last Chance



Game: Scumball

Publisher: Mastertronic/Bulldog Software

Year: 1988

Written by Peter Gough for the ZX Spectrum.
Converted for the Commodore 64 by Martin Howarth, with graphics by Tiny and music by Tim Follin.

“Considering Scumball was basically a good, cheap clone of full price titles Underwulde and Starquake, you certainly got your money's worth for two quid.”



Spectrum Vs Commodore 64.
Two classic computers
battling it out once again!

GAME STATUS

Budget game publisher Mastertronic's final release under the Bulldog sub-label has to be one of the most memorable budget titles of all time. Although clearly a cousin to Ultimate's Underwulde from 1984 and Bubble Bus' Starquake from 1985, Scumball was more accessible due to the initially much lighter price tag and a more easily memorisable map. At the time of release, Crash gave the Spectrum version a very respectable 81%, and shortly after, Zzap!64 gave the C64 version 79%. Today, the Spectrum version has a score of 7.53 from 32 votes at World of Spectrum, and the C64 version has been given a 7.1 by 25 Lemon64 voters. Perhaps it's not the most popular game of all time, but I think it's a fine farewell to a fine budget sub-label.



Spectrum loading screen.

DESCRIPTION & REVIEW

As suggested by the other comparable game examples, Scumball is another one of those flip-screen action platformers in an immense maze-like environment. You control an android named L.I.N.D.A. (the Laser Incorporated Nasties Disposal Android) through a maze of sewers, shooting an assortment of all sorts of little nasties. These nasties are headed by a monstrous green slime creature, who likes to keep to himself in a certain corner of the map. Your ultimate mission is to kill the green slime monster with eight grenades that are scattered around the maze, but you can only carry one grenade at a time, so you've got a fairly time consuming job ahead of you. Your android has a reasonably tough shield, but considering the amount of work you have, the amount of damage you can withstand while at it is relatively small. The shield can be recharged at the designated charging stations, or by collecting spare batteries. Falling into water will kill your android immediately, however, as will collision with a flying spike pod. Happily, the sewer maze is inundated with other helpful



C64 title screen.

items as well, such as laser refill packs and invulnerability shields, so you will be given a fair chance at completing your mission. At the end of the game, your performance is reviewed and given to you in a report. The end results will depend on your shooting accuracy, time spent on the mission, times you have died and the number of collected extra lives. You can also view a status report during the game with the report button, which also pauses the game.

Whatever your success of performance with the mission is at the end, it is a nice feeling of achievement when you actually get through the game. It is one of the rare titles of this kind that I have managed to beat fair and square, and I still come back to it often enough. Still, it's an above average game at best, and your enjoyment mostly will depend on your preference to the skill level required from each version, as well as the soundtrack that you are more likely willing to listen to for hours.

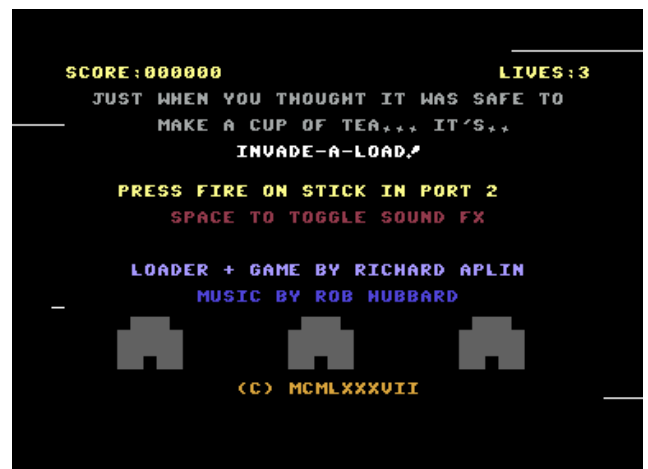
LOADING

For a change, we have some sort of a believable excuse not to skip this section, because Scumball was only released on tape for both machines. In addition to that, the loading itself is drastically different for each version. Anyway, here are the loading times:

SPE - 5 minutes 14 seconds

C64 - 2 minutes 31 seconds

So the C64 has a strong starting point. It doesn't have a proper loading screen, but instead you can play a version of Space Invaders - it's Richard Aplin's *Invade-a-Load*, which was often used for Mastertronic (and its sub-labels) games at the time. It is a rather playable version of the game, so it's a very good option for a normal loading screen. That said, the original loading screen is very nice, and I do think at least the original version of any game should have one if possible. But hey, each to their own.



Invade-A-Load! (C64)

PLAYABILITY

Scumball is relatively simple in terms of controls. You can only go left or right or jump. Down is not an option. LINDA's jump is by default a fairly high one - three full platforms high. LINDA can also shoot some sort of projectiles, which look nothing like Laser, which it is supposed to be, although I do have a theory about this one, which I will get back to later on. The projectiles are able to destroy any other sort of nasty creature, except for the giant white spiders and the great green slime monster. Then there's that key that you push when you want to see a report of your current progress, but that has too little to do with the game itself for me to dwell on it.

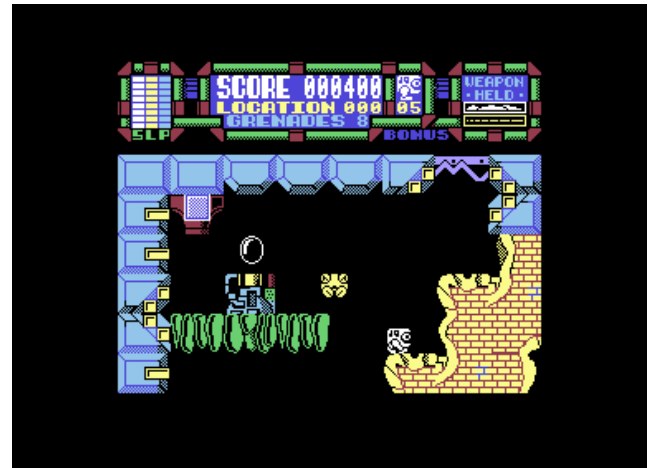
To be brutally honest, Scumball is not a particularly well designed or programmed game. Controlling LINDA is easy enough and will become a part of your DNA in no time, but it's the collision detection, particularly with some of the platforms, that never quite reached my required

standards. You see, there are some of these trapezium-shaped platforms with the narrow side down, that would clearly leave some space for you to jump below from. But no. All the platforms are strictly squares or rectangles in terms of collision areas, but are only stylized to make them look like there's more room for error than there really is. This is exactly the sort of little thing that makes my blood boil. Another well known point of irritation in the game is that room that you shouldn't go down from, which is number 118, but who would ever remember that unless you had a good number of hours behind you with the game? Yes, the room below 118 brings an inescapable Game Over. But it has to be said that Scumball also has some very good points to it as well, the most particular one being that it never really feels too difficult. Once you find the slime monster's "lair", and figure out a good pattern to relatively safe adventuring around the underground maze, the game becomes dangerously addictive. Of course, I wouldn't be writing this comparison if there were not some important differences between the two versions. There is a sense of difference in difficulty in the two versions, for various reasons. For one, there are some screens in the game that are re-designed for the C64, very likely simply for the reason of making the game easier. Secondly, the C64 version offers collectable extra lives - the Spectrum version doesn't. In both versions, you will come across these diagonally moving mines of sorts; on the Spectrum, they kill you instantly, while on the C64, they will drain your energy much like any other enemy. Then again, the green tentacle things that grow on the floor in random places and wiggle around, drain your energy quicker on the C64, and some of those watery platforms don't work in all places as they should, and will kill you instantly, so there is a different sort of balance in both games.

I'm sure I missed a few details there, but I think that's enough to come to the conclusion, that each version has its merits in playability. If we were to oversimplify it, the C64 version would be the light mode and the Spectrum version would be the heavy mode. I prefer the C64

version, because I don't need to focus on it that intensely, but I can understand if someone preferred the original. So I'll give them a tied place.

SPE - 1, C64 - 1



First screen - C64 (Top), Spectrum (bottom)

GRAPHICS

For a long time, I never really took the time to really see the differences in the two versions, mainly because I didn't have to, even though I have played both versions quite a lot across the years. For the most part, the two versions do have a very similar look.

It is clear throughout the game that the C64 version is graphically a very straight port of the Spectrum original in many ways, but when it comes to the special effects in the game, most of them didn't make it onto the C64. You can already see this on the title screen: the original has

a title logo that flashes red, blue and yellow, while the conversion only has a simplified yellow Scumball plaque. The Spectrum version is more colourful in this case anyway, which is not something you can say very often. When you start the game, you get a brief "get ready" sort of a screen, in which LINDA is being charged up. Again, the original text is more flashily animated, and feels more colourful than the one in the conversion. Also, the charging animation is a bit different: the white cylinder at the top of the charging contraption circles around, which is indicated by a black line going around; and the left thing going to LINDA's back flashes through the Spectrum's palette. On the C64, the cylinder is rolling a bit quicker, but is the same colour as the pipes connecting LINDA to the machine, and both of the things going into LINDA's head flash through the C64's colours. But you'd really have to be a nihilist or something to think this actually has any worth or meaning in the end.

All the location screens look as close to each other as you could ever wish them to, except for the few rare exceptions where the screens have been slightly redesigned for the C64 version. Apart from the differences in palette, there is nothing worth noting here.

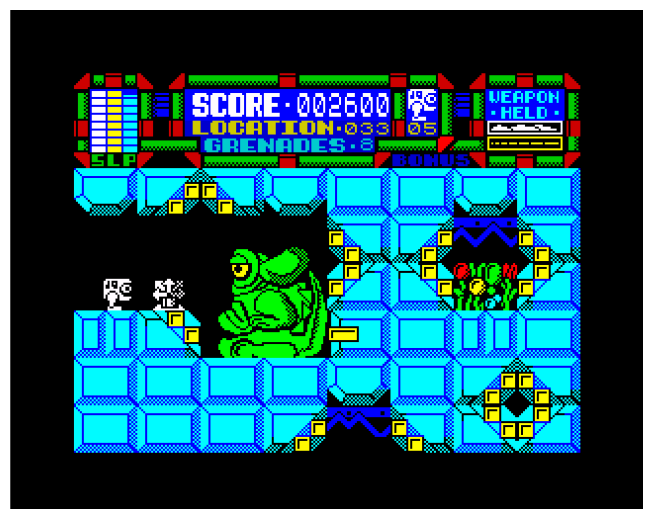
One of the rare occasions in this game, which features the inevitable clash of attributes, is in connection with one of the weird 'S' boxes, the purpose of which escapes me completely. Since the item inside the box is so nicely masked behind the grid on the box, it is next to impossible to decipher what the item within the 'S' box is. On the C64, I have never seen an item inside one of the boxes, but there is no problem of showing items of two different colours simultaneously in the same space.

Something that the C64 users can boast of here are the differently coloured collectables. All the items on the Spectrum are white, which of course is necessitated by the attribute clash thing, so because LINDA is white as well, you will have as little of clashiness as possible.

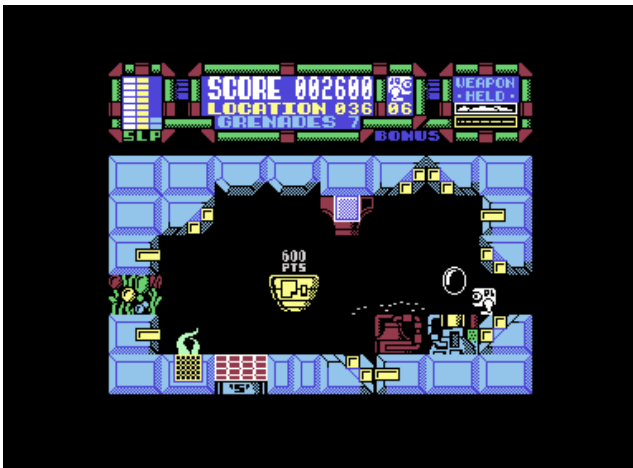
Contrarily, some of the nasties look better on the Spectrum original because of the usage of flash effects. On the C64, you can't really tell the killer mines apart from all the other monsters at first, but then again, they don't instantly kill you on the C64 anyway. Also, the green tentacle thingies flash cyan on the Spectrum, while on the C64, they are just green.

Finally, the great green Slime Monster is animated to move his lower lip on the Spectrum, while on the C64 he doesn't do anything. I don't think we really need to take a further look into all the details, because it just doesn't serve a purpose. Although the graphics are very similar in basics, the special effects earn the original version an easy win here.

SPE - 1, C64 - 0



Green slime monster - C64 (Top), Spectrum (bottom)



Power charger (C64)

SOUNDS

This time, the sound bits are impossible to explain and compare as extravagantly as I would wish to. The Spectrum crowd might have a say about this, but a relatively short (1 minute and 10 seconds) but sweet Tim Follin tune on repeat is infinitely better than an array of really farty sound effects that are indiscernible from each other for the most part. An option would be nice, but neither version offers one. So I can only declare a win for the C64 on this one. I suppose there could be some people out there who listen to random blurping for hours on end just for entertainment, and this is just my opinion, but I seriously hope I'm of a vast majority with this. Otherwise, my faith in humanity will be lost forever.

SPE - 0, C64 - 1

OVERALL

Personally, I grew up with the C64 version of Scumball, so I might be a bit biased towards it. But seeing as the game isn't too much different from each other on either machine, you are only left to choose between visual effects over a brilliant soundtrack, and also between easy mode and hard mode. If we take loading out of the equation, like it has been done for quite a long time now, we'll get a tied score. If, however, we choose to give an extra credit for being able to play a Space Invaders clone for a short time while waiting for the game to load,

the C64 version wins by a hair's width, but I have always thought a game should have a proper loading screen. It's really a personal choice.

SPE - 2, C64 - 2 (or 3)

Considering Scumball was basically a good, cheap clone of full price titles Underwulde and Starquake, you certainly got your money's worth for two quid. Once you get to know the map, on a good day you might easily complete it under 15 minutes. Once you complete it, though, it will not likely hold much reason to play it very often in the future, unless you're hell bent on achieving the highest rating possible.

For those of you, who wish for a slightly more advanced version of Scumball, Paul Jenkinson made a PC remake of it in 2002. Instead of a flip-screener, the game is now a 4-way scroller, and features enhanced music and graphics, which are mostly very pleasing and not overdone, and I do recommend it for all of you who enjoyed the original.

<http://randomkak.blogspot.co.uk/search/label/Scumball%20-%20PC>



Scumball Remake (PC)

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

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

COMMERCIAL RELEASE!

Game Review



Bomberland Deluxe
Packaging, 100% guaranteed
not to self destruct or your
money back.

*"The gameplay is
spot on, with
everything
moving exactly
as it should and
the controls
feeling natural
and responsive."*



**Play as Nick Brody from
Homeland, rumoured to be
an unlockable hidden
character!**

Game: Bomberland
Publisher: RGCD
Release Date: October 2013
Available: [RGCD](#)
It's a bit like: Bomberman, surprisingly.
Score: 10/10

Bomberland, apparently 10 years in the making. Heavily inspired by the classic Bomberman series by HudsonSoft, it's certainly not the first game of its kind, not even on the C64. Will you be blown away by it all, or will it fail to have an impact? Either way, hopefully you have a blast finding out!

Game Overview

Bomberman, published by Hudson Soft, first appeared on the MSX platform and a few other Japanese computers in 1983. It was even ported across to the Spectrum as 'Eric and the Floaters'. A NES version was released in Japan in late 1985 (not in North America until 1989) and a true legend was born. Since then, ports and versions have been released on almost every home computer and console, with a couple of notable exceptions. Us C64 users received zip, nothing! A re-imaged game was released in 1990 and released in Europe as [DynaBlaster](#). Sadly, it was never released on the C64 even though it was announced. But that's about as close as we got. We did get a few fantastic unofficial versions though, including the recent [Bomberman C64](#) released in 2007, also by Samar. Now, in 2013, we get Bomberland by Samar Productions and RGCD. Despite some silly backstory about elections and

saving Bomberland, this is Bomberman at its core. The gameplay revolves around navigating a single screen or scrolling maze while planting bombs to blow up enemies and obstacles. Along the way there are various power-ups to collect and enemies to defeat. This is a very simplified explanation, because there is a bit more to it than that (including many ways to score and bosses to fight) but suffice to say, once a level has been cleared you need to locate the exit and off you go. Bomberland supports both the Protovision and Hitmen four player adaptors, as well as keyboard support so you can have up to five human players playing at once in manic death matches. RGCD have released Bomberland as a physical release (cartridge only) and download. Both packages include a manual, code sheet, monster sheet and poster.

Unkle K - 10/10

No amount of expletives can give my excitement towards this game justice. Perfect in just about every way, Bomberland is a truly exceptional release. It's the best Bomberman variant on the C64 and does the unformentioned series true justice. The attention to detail is superb, with the consoleseque presentation, the super stylish graphics and Bomberman inspired + original SID themes. My 8 year old daughter and I had a great time, and any c64 game that can hold the attention of a kid in the days of Android, iOS and consoles is proof in itself that gameplay continues to reign supreme. We always knew it, didn't we!

There's a fantastic assortment of power-ups and maps. The gameplay is spot on, with everything moving exactly as it should and the controls feeling natural and responsive.

I haven't finished Bomberland but so far have thoroughly enjoyed playing it. Those of you that like discovering hidden features will have loads of fun.

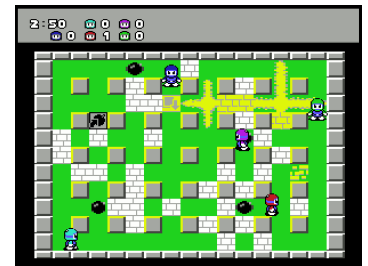
Bomberland is a game for everyone. It truly is a game that shows off the C64's capabilities. Brilliant!

Vinny - 10/10

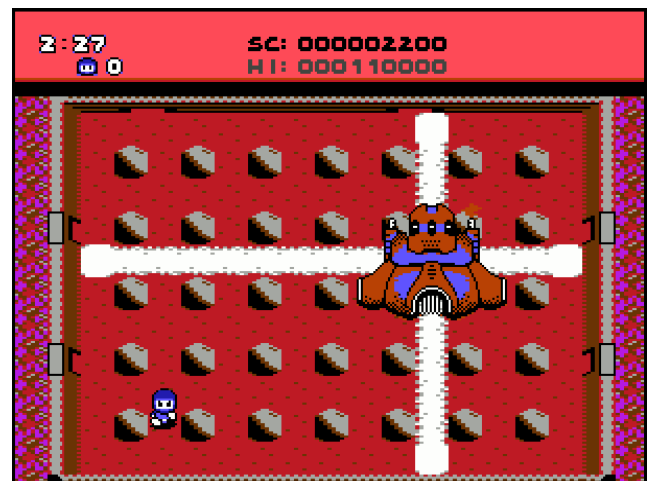
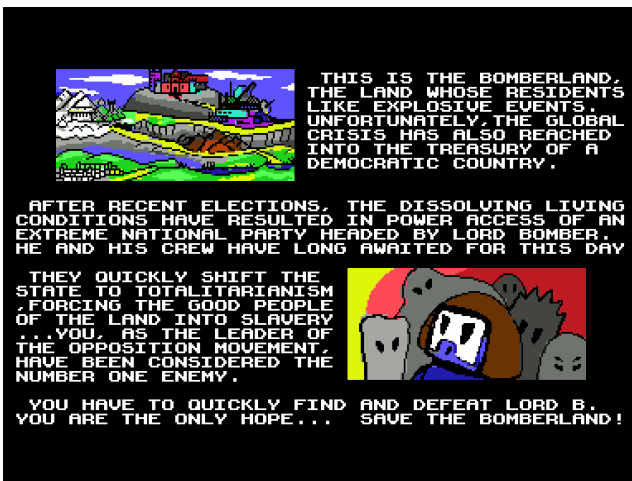
There are certain game styles throughout your lifetime that you naturally avoid. For me, it has always been RPG games, and also anything that resembles Bomberman. It's very much to do with personal taste, and also what your mind is comfortable with. But then along came Bomberland published by RGCD, and all that seemed to change.

Bomberland for the Commodore 64 is an exciting breath of fresh air. It's very much in the style of the old Bomberman games, but at the same time it's also very different. It's fast, it's furious, it's colourful, it sounds brilliant, and most of all it's a lot of fun. I've been fortunate enough to play every level and complete the game, and I must say, I wasn't bored once and still go back for more - especially with the hidden features.

A MUST-HAVE for any Commodore 64 gamer!

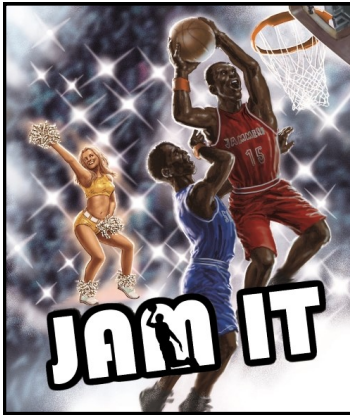


"Bomberland for the Commodore 64 is an exciting breath of fresh air."



COMMERCIAL RELEASE!

Game Review

**Game:** Jam It**Developer:** Throwback Games**Release Date:** July 2015**Available:** Throwback Games (digital download), RGCD (Cartridge), Psytronik (tape/disk)**Website:** <https://www.throwbackgames.net/>**Score:** 8.5/10

"If it's one thing that defines the 8-bit (and even the 16-bit) era of gaming, is having friends around, joysticks in hand and battling head to head for the thrills."

Tweeters Vs Slackers... As the tension mounts, the players warm up their fingers and the pre-game sledging begins. With weapons in hand and teams selected, four warriors tough it out in one of the biggest, most anticipated battles of the year. This is no game, this is basketball, on the Commodore 64. After all, winners are grinners!

Game Overview

Jam It is a brand new, arcade style basketball game by C64 newcomer Throwback Games.

The game is played with two players on each team, over half a court. When a defensive player rebounds or steals the ball, they have to return it over the half court line to be able to score again.

The single player game is playable against four computer skill levels, ranging from hopeless to brutal. With two players on each side, you can either select for the computer to control your team mate, or you can control both players yourself, switching between the two when you pass the ball.

Jam It has an assortment of offensive and defensive moves at the player's disposal.

Shooting is possible from anywhere on the court by holding down the fire button and releasing it at the jump peak. Slam dunks and alley oops can be also possible, as well

as posting to trick opposition players. Passing is a quick double tap on the fire button. Defensively, players are able to steal the ball of their opponents and block shots. Each player has an energy bar that decreases when the player is moving with the ball or attempting to steal. Energy is regained by quickly pressing your joystick buttons at half time while being entertained by the lovely cheerleaders.

Fouls are possible when attempting to steal or blocking shots, resulting in repossession of the ball or foul shots. Amazing plays are rewarded with replays.

The game is stat heavy, with plenty of numbers to keep track on and various types of plays to make.

Jam It is available at itch.io as a digital download. RGCD will also be releasing a cartridge version, while Psytronik are releasing the game on tape and disk.



There is a really nice interview with Jam It creator, Leigh White, over at [Ausretrogamer](http://Ausretrogamer.com). Go take a look!

Unkle K - 8/10

Great basketball games on the C64 are few and far between, so it was with great anticipation and high hopes that I play tested Jam It.

Presentation is minimal, with a nice title screen (complete with an animated players and cheer leaders flying through the titles) and options menu (including game instructions). Graphics are simple, but work well. The player sprites are blocky although they move and animate nicely. The backgrounds, once again, are sparse but work. Everything is recognisable and looks like it should, although there is nothing there that will blow you away. The sound is there, the usual whistles, cheering, bouncing ball noise and simple title screen ditty.

But even if the presentation is sparse, Jam It excels in the most important area, gameplay! The game is a stunner and particularly great fun to play in multiplayer. The three single player levels make it accessible to play for beginners and will still provide a challenge for experts. We actually play tested a pre-release (but complete) version of the game at a Commodore Club meeting in Melbourne, and there were lots of laughs to be had.

Adding in the option of simultaneous 4 player action using the Protovision Interface was a stroke of genius and this is where games like this excel. As playable as the single player mode is, the most fun is to be had in multiplayer, which really applies to any sports game on any system. The half court gameplay itself is well thought out and implemented.

Another thing that impresses is the amount of stats available. Everything you need is there and trying to beat your stats is good fun. Unlockable moves and Easter eggs are present and you'll have a great time finding and unlocking them.

The only criticisms relate to customisation. I would have liked to have been able to input my own team/player names, as well as have the ability to change how long each game goes for.

Jam It is probably the best basketball game on the C64. Fun and challenging arcade style gameplay makes the single player mode worthwhile, while in multiplayer the game is an absolute hoot! Highly Recommended.

Rob - 9/10

Sports games and I don't exactly share much common ground. At least ones which aren't Speedball anyway. So when I was asked to take a look at Jam It, I wasn't entirely sure I'd enjoy it.

I'm happy to admit, I was totally wrong with that train of thought as Jam It is easy to pick up and play for those who aren't into sports games. The controls are tight, and incredibly nicely thought out, meaning it's easy to move around the court, pass the ball to your teammate, and line up for a winning shots.

Whilst the front end is simplified - this means there's more room for in-game presentation, ranging from the mid and post-game stats screens, the intermission (giving you time to recharge), as well as the optional instant replays. All of these details add to the experience, bringing it above what most other sports games on the C64 offer.

If it's one thing that defines the 8-bit (and even the 16-bit) era of gaming, is having friends around, joysticks in hand and battling head to head for the thrills. That experiences is not just replicated in Jam It, but enhanced thanks to the support for Protovision's 4 Player Adapter. Teaming up with one friend against an opposing duo provides ample opportunity to show who is the best on the court, and makes it one of the top games worth firing up at your next C64 multiplayer party.

As a single player game, Jam It is well put together and will provide a lot of polished fun, but grab a Protovision adapter, and play multiplayer with some friends? It's an essential C64 experience.



Reset Rewind: Pastfinder

By Rob Caporetto



Pastfinder creator, [David Lubar](#). David even sent us a few words about his game, see below!

"I'm thrilled to discover that Pastfinder is considered to be a classic in some parts of the world. That was the only game I designed and programmed while I was working as an employee for Activision (later, I did some freelance work for them, translating existing games. But I never designed another game for them). It didn't get much attention in the USA, so it is especially nice to hear from people who still remember it, and it is amazing to learn that it is still being played. I think it is a good example of my basic game philosophy. A game should be fun. A game should be challenging, but also fair. A game should ask the player to make meaningful decisions."

David Lubar,

July 2015

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

With the focus on this issue being a celebration of Zzap 64, we felt it was best to go through the games covered in the first issue, and take a look at one of those. After a bit of deliberation, it was decided that Activision's Pastfinder (with a sizzling 91%) was the game of choice. Read on, and see what the Reset crew think of it after all this time!



Rob Caporetto (Hellfire64):

I didn't grow up playing Pastfinder, so when I originally discovered it when I started getting into emulation in the 90s. At the time, I remember not really thinking much of it - struggling to click with it,

which really was down to not having a copy of the instructions.

Flash forward ~20 years? It's a whole other story. After managing to get a copy of it and giving it a real play - it clicked with me, and it clicked hard. Whilst it may not look (or sound) like much, the gameplay here is incredibly tight. From navigating the environment, to locating and depositing the artefacts, all the time carefully managing your radiation levels - the way in which the gameplay operates on these levels provides quite the challenge.

As for the review? I totally think it stands up with the 91% rating (along with the Silver Medal it got on the rerelease) - if you're a fan of action games with a bit more to them, then it's one you totally should be trying to get a hold of!



Kevin Tilley (Unkle K):

Way back then, when my old man bought our first C64, he also came home with three Activision tapes. One of them was Pastfinder, so it is one of the three games that actually introduced me to the world of video gaming and computers. To be honest, it never really had me hooked. I used to load it up and have the occasional blast, but I don't get that nostalgic warm feeling when I hear its name. The reason: it contains strategic elements that were a bit over my head as a small child. The trouble was, I never really knew how to play it properly. Pacman was about the level of sophistication I was after back then!

Luckily, now I do understand what it is all about, and what a wonderful game Pastfinder is. In the early days, Activision was a name synonymous with quality and Pastfinder is a prime example of that legacy. That familiar early Activision presentation, the beautiful pseudo 3D graphics with those stunning shadows, continuous beeping sound effects and most importantly, good, honest and fun gameplay. Exploring those uncharted lands, attempting to keep radiation levels low and collecting the various supplies that will help along the way is a true pleasure. Revisiting Pastfinder now, as a mature gamer, has allowed me to see it with fresh eyes and appreciate why it was so highly received when first released all those decades ago. I love it, and I get it!

Paul Morrison (PaulEMoz):

Activision released a slew of quality games back in the early to mid 80s, so when I saw Pastfinder's lovely clamshell case sitting in my local second hand shop I had no qualms about buying it without a second thought. It was one of my better decisions. From the second I started spider-crawling across Pastfinder's irradiated wastelands, I was hooked. Although the game was nothing more than a treasure hunt, it was an incredibly addictive journey, helped by an open-ended map which you could plot your way around.

This sense of freedom to explore elevated Pastfinder above your average shoot 'em ups and arcade adventures. In fact, it was quite an unusual game concept for the time, and a beautifully designed one at that. There was a great sense of satisfaction at dropping off a box of "artefacts" and obtaining a well-earned promotion. Lengthy play sessions led to a greater grasp of the game's mechanics and an urge to try and push further into the map. ZZAP! were absolutely right to give this a Sizzler, and to this day it remains something of an underappreciated gem.

**Cameron Davis (Gazunta):**

Three things stick out in my mind when I think about Pastfinder.

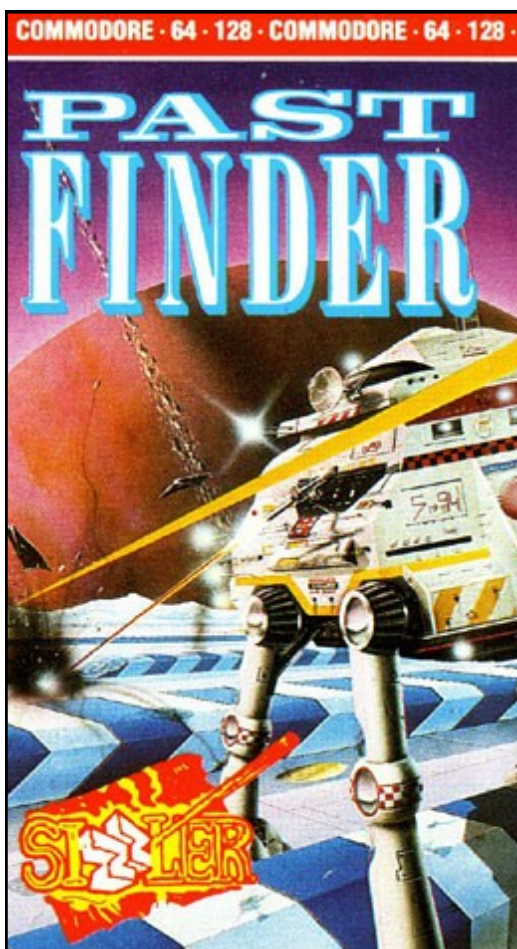
Firstly, that main sprite. The way its legs move give the game a real alien feel - in an era where you're always playing as a soldier, or a car, or a soldier in a car, piloting a giant mechanical spider always felt so intriguing and fresh. And the way it twisted when you moved left and right gave a sensation of actually piloting a vehicle instead of just moving a sprite around the screen. The unique visual style (45 degree viewpoint with shadows) also added to the feel of exploring a barren, desolate landscape.

A big part of the game, for me, was the map screen. You had to chart your own path through the radiated world, and each choice led to consequences for the difficulty of the level, chances of finding artefacts, and cost to your radiation meter. Having that freedom to explore felt so liberating and it had a

big impact on every game I made. I wanted that feeling of being able to take on a game on your own terms wherever possible.

Finally - I had no idea the game got reviewed in Zzap well after I got the game! I was lured in by the cover. The colourful Activision branding instilled a sense of confidence (boy, those were the days, huh?), the screenshots looked fantastic, and I loved the idea of having another cartridge game so I could play the game quickly. For some reason, the "BY LUBAR" credit on the front was especially intriguing - who was Lubar? He must be a super famous game designer because people could recognise him by one name, I figured. Like Madonna or Prince!

Pastfinder's the very definition of an under-rated classic in my mind. Very cleverly designed and expertly executed!



The re-release cover art of Pastfinder, from the M.A.D. (Mastertronic Added Dimension) budget range. An absolute bargain!

Andrew Fisher (Merman):

Budget re-releases were a brilliant way to build a collection, and Pastfinder was a bargain. I got it on its Mastertronic release, and thoroughly enjoyed it. The rising radiation level adds an intensity to the action, the add-ons make you pick and choose strategically and the large map area (gradually revealed as you reach the "edge" of the known area) warrants repeated exploration. Reading the instructions pays dividends, and the Leeper craft gives a unique control method.

Two things remain with me. The varied sound FX add a lot to the atmosphere, and the clever random background generation portrays the alien landscape brilliantly. And I've often wondered if Andrew Braybrook played Pastfinder, inspiring him to try something similar for his "racing" game Alleykat. Both games have several different styles of landscape feature, both allow you to fly over or under structures using sprite priority tricks.

David Lubar performed great tricks with the Atari hardware to create the original, and on the C64 it is one of a consistently excellent range of releases from the original Activision. Well worth playing.



Anthony Stiller (Ant):

So, what's this all about then?

OK, so I've never played Pastfinder before. Maybe once. Without instructions. I mean, I know that Zzap! loved it (I can recall the review clearly) but there are a lot of games out there, you know?

But playing Pastfinder now with fresh eyes makes me realise what I've missed.

Those lovely, crisp graphics and smooth animation hit you immediately. That LEEPer, all gorgeous and spidery. Menacing scenery and stark shadows.

What also strikes you (and this is what makes Pastfinder great) is the promise of strategy: equipment choices, artefact collection, resource management, a map that you can search as you wish, and risk/reward for heavily irradiated zones. Lots of longevity in this game.

It's all very Activision in style and appearance. And you know what else it reminds me of?

Braybrook's Morpheus. Trust me on this: that learning curve, inertia of the main ship, those resources, upgrades. I can see it.

So, yeah, I'd agree with Zzap! This game is all class. A true great.

Now if you'll excuse me I think I'll have another go.



Alex Boz (Ausretrogamer):

Why has it taken this special Reset issue celebrating Zzap's 30th anniversary to play Pastfinder for the first time? I mean, I love shoot'em ups, so this game should have been on my radar back then. Anyway, it is never too late to enjoy a great game, and let me say from the outset, Pastfinder is a beauty.

What's there not to like, you are thrown thousands of years into the future on a

barren planet with high radiation, you have an awesomely powerful spacecraft that is able to walk the landscape (the articulating legs look great!) and fly high to blast enemies and also drop-off supplies to the bases that desperately need them. Pastfinder is a classic vertical shmup with a twist - the clever gameplay of flying and walking the landscape to avoid obstacles together with the tight controls makes this an absolute blast! Yep, pun was fully intended!



All in all, it looks like it's unanimous: Pastfinder is totally a classic amongst the crew. Taking its shmup basics, then adding in the collecting and dropping off of artefacts, as well as uncovering the map, and managing your resources? It makes a title fondly remembered, and one that's well worth checking out.

In particular, if it's one you've never tried - then you owe it to yourself to grab a copy, dig up the instructions, fire up your C64 (or emulator of choice) and give it a play. If you happen to be a fan of shmups, or action games with a little bit of depth, you should get a kick out of it!

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

<https://www.youtube.com/hellfire64>



COMMERCIAL RELEASE!

Game Review



The limited boxed edition of Jim Slim. It's very nice and will look great on your shelf!

Game: Jim Slim
Publisher: Protovision
Developer: Argus Designs
Release Year: 2011
Available: [Protovision](#) (disk, digital download)
It's a bit like: Fred's Back, Cloud Kingdom
Score: 9/10

"Jim Slim's movement is effectively tile based. Jim rolls into the next "tile" in defined movements and this takes some getting used to."

Balls. We've all got them, and we seem to play with them a lot on the Commodore 64 too. We've had Bouncer, Wizball, Head the Ball, Cloud Kingdom. I'm pretty sure Microprose Soccer had a ball in it. Now, Jim Slim makes his entry into that coveted category of C64 games, with, you guessed it, balls. And this ball has an attitude to match. Let's go play!

Game Overview

Jim Slim is a 15 world, 45 level "jump n roll" which has you navigating various unexplored worlds in order to rescue the beautiful (and slightly inappropriately named) Candy and bring back the treasured magic skull.

Along the way, you will encounter demons, monsters and other nasty henchmen of the evil Gothur, who are all hell bent on stopping you reaching your goal. Throughout the land you will be able to find hidden coins, keys and other treasures to help you along your way.

Once you reach Gothur's castle, his evil servants and then Gothur himself must be destroyed before you can rescue the lovely Candy and retrieve the treasure.

The game itself features various tubes and teleporters to help you get to where you want to go much quicker, and in style!

Jim's movement is unconventional in that it is

effectively tile based and not free flowing as is the case with most other platform games. Jim can move in only four directions and jumps are performed by pressing the joystick directly up, and then in the direction you want to go in.

The game features a full introduction and end sequence beginning and concluding the story, lush worlds and colourful scrolling graphics, many varied enemies and locations, and a soundtrack by renowned SID musician and programmer Glenn Gallefoss.

Jim Slim is available from the Protovision Shop as a limited boxed edition (3.5 and 5.25 inch floppy versions), and digital download. The game is PAL only. We recommend you download and play the two level [preview](#) of Jim Slim before purchasing, due to the game using a scrolling routine that causes some C64's to crash (emulators should be fine though).



Musician Greg Gallefoss released his Jim Slim music to the scene in 'Jim Slim - The Music Demo'. We highly recommend you check it out.

<http://csdb.dk/release/?id=101598>

Vinny - 9/10

Okay - so I hold my hands up and admit to never buying a game from Protovision. I've purchased a joystick and leads, but never a piece of software. I did toy with the idea of buying an original of The Adventures of Jim Slim in Dragonland, but for some reason I just never got round to it... and what a fool I was!

Right from the opening this game exudes excellence. It's obvious that these guys are really proud of their work and want to ensure that the quality shines through from beginning to end. Even the opening Protovision logo lets you know that you have a quality product in your hand.

But hold on a sec... it's multiload! I always have a pre-set frown when I read the words, multiload, but on this occasion Jim Slim is a disk game and so the loading isn't really any bother - especially if you play it via an emulator and pump up the emulation speed.

Once loaded, the title screen is very polished, and offers items such as starting the game, viewing the instructions, seeing the highscore table, SFX/music select options, password entry, and the credits. All very neatly presented and accompanied by a suitable SID tune by Glenn Gallefoss.



Upon starting the game, I realised that I would need a bit of patience because it's not a game that you can simply whiz around collecting items and then heading straight for the exit. Oh no - this game needed some effort and skill, and so it took some time to get used to - which was actually fun. I mastered the jumping, which at first appeared annoying, and then within a

few minutes I'd conquered the first level. Only another 44 to go. Gulp!

All in all a very enjoyable platform game that's atmospheric, polished, and fun to play. It'll keep you going for days! Oh - and it has a very cute game ending.



Ant - 9/10

Modern C64 games, forged upon the anvil of years of collective experience, can push the old breadbox into amazing realms of unsurpassed beauty.

Jim Slim, a platform/puzzle/shooter, certainly holds true to this claim -- it looks and sounds exquisite -- but is it a flawless work of art?

First impressions are highly favourable as you're greeted with a wonderful hi-res title screen that tells the tale of poor Jim, the fate of his world and that of his dearest love (plots having not progressed very far in the last 30 years).



Jim himself is a charming, determined, roly-ball (just try pressing Fire while

unarmed). The bad guys (Blizzies) and backgrounds all have a wonderful, menacingly cute air about them.

The graphical quality is simply lovely and is perfectly complemented by the music which is fantastic, rich and varied with lively tunes to suit each world.



So ... flawless, then? Ah, now on to the gameplay ...

First, let's get this straight. Jim Slim definitely has that mystical quality that I often harp on about -- it compels me to go back for just one more go, despite some niggling issues.

Jim Slim's movement is effectively tile based. Jim rolls into the next "tile" in defined movements and this takes some getting used to.

Unfortunately, even after considerable practice, sometimes death was caused by battling with the controls as I tried to get Jim to roll where I thought he should be able to. Moving when I didn't want him to (or not moving when I thought he would) was very frustrating and I'm glad my kids weren't listening to me during those particular moments.



The control system also meant I often collided with the Blizzies and their firepower, particularly in tight spots or mid-jump.

Fortunately, despite some core issues, Jim Slim still remains addictive which says a lot for the amount of polish on this game.

Solving a screen is often a trial and error process so you will lose lives trying to determine the route to escape (likewise if you want to collect all of the possible bonuses). Some screens provide pickups that allow you to launch a volley of missiles and the Blizzies, which is surprisingly satisfying. Watch that weapon timer, though!

I particularly liked the delicious evilness to some of the item placements ... teasing you to leap (roll?) to your doom for an extra life or a healthy score boost as the counter ticks down.

The game itself can get very difficult very quickly, but there's a great password feature that eases the sting.

As you progress, trampolines, moving platforms, teleporters and tubes are introduced adding new twists to the screen navigation as you try to find the right sequence of pickups to reach the exit. All of this variety, along with the stunning music and graphics, ensures that Jim Slim will keep you rolling happily for a long time to come.

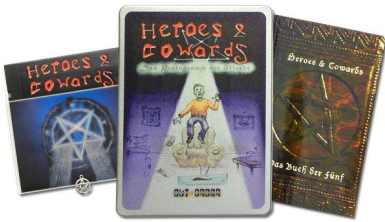


The Evil Gothur. The awful flowing brown robe hides his skinny little chicken legs.



COMMERCIAL RELEASE!

Game Review



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

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

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

Game Overview

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

Swept up by an arcane maelstrom you...

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

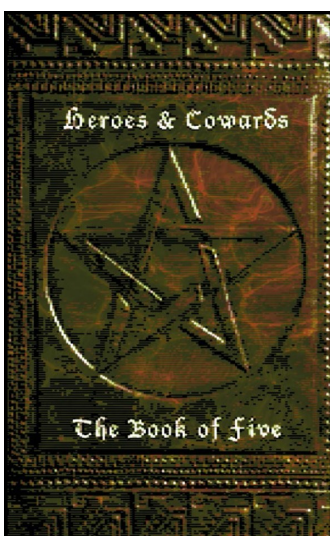
Control is via a joystick and you can select verbs and nouns from the list provided. The game conveniently separates items in the current location and those on your person.

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

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

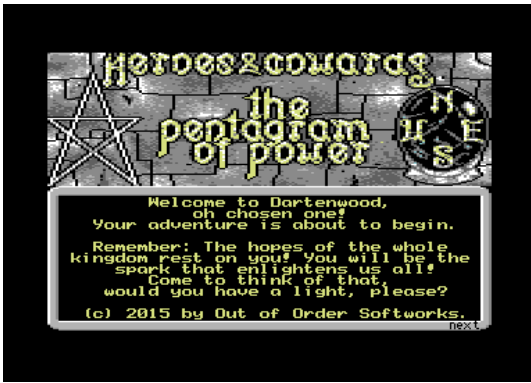
With all that help this adventure should be a right walk in the park! Go on! What are you waiting for?

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



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





Unkle K - 9/10

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

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

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

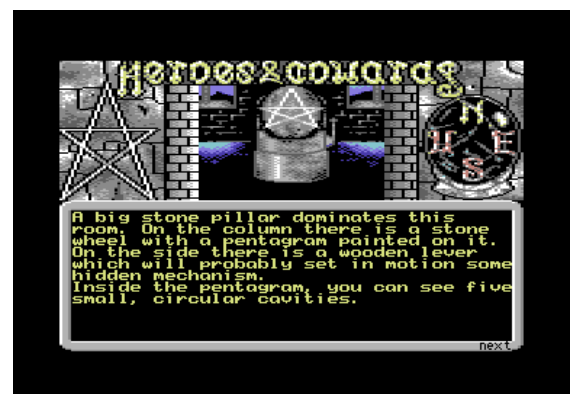
The interface is intuitive and well

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

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

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

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





Ant - 9/10

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Hero Edition

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





Freeware!

Game Review



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

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

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

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

Game Overview

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Welcome to the scene, PriorArt!



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



Mayhem - 8/10

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

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

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



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

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



Uncle K - 9.5/10

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



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

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

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

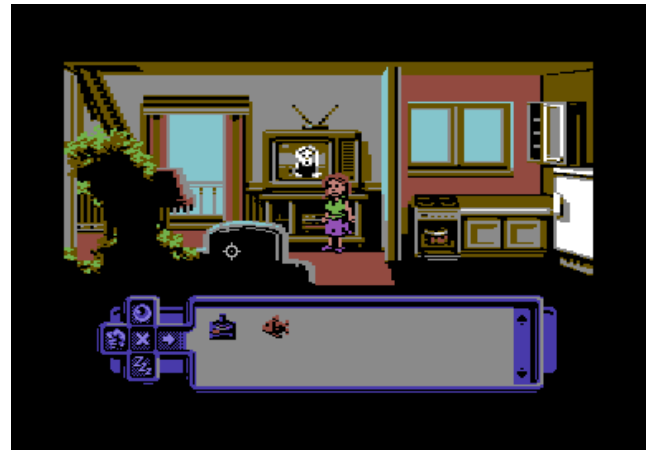
The interface works extremely well and is immediately accessible and intuitive. The double clicking is a handy feature too. The only drawback I noticed was with the inventory icons. Initially, I forgot what some of the items were and with no descriptions, I had to go back and start again to re-familiarise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



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

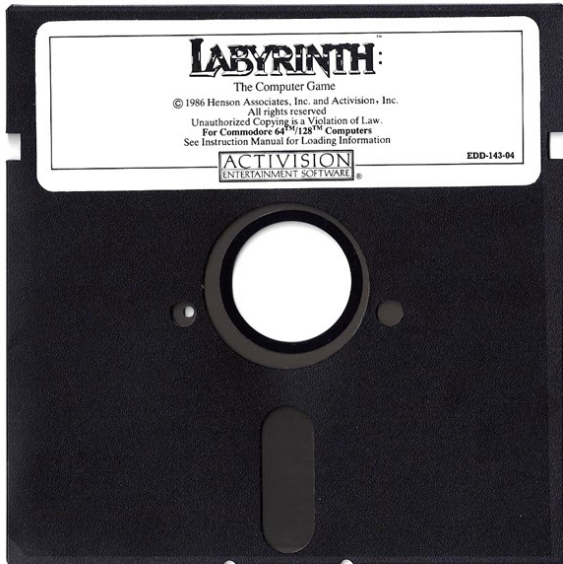
The story? Let's just say it's a fun ride. The difficulty level is fairly easy so hopefully that aspect of the game is ramped up a few notches in any sequel. The game only took me an hour or two to complete - but it was an absolute blast! The save and load feature works a treat, too.

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



Deep Thoughts

By Merman



Disks are an important part of my Commodore 64 history. It's 25 years since my older brother Chris and I saved up pocket money and money from a paper round towards a 1541 disk drive. We still had to ask our parents to contribute some of the asking price. It had been used as a demonstration model in an electronics shop and was refurbished before we bought it.

Many C64 users in the UK never got a disk drive. Tape was more common here, especially with the cheap budget games available in many shops. But getting a disk drive opened up many exciting disk-only games - for example, Origin's epic Space Rogue - and much more. We got GEOS and started using its word processor to print out homework. We got the Advanced Music System and used it to enter and play back sheet music. And with the help of Commodore Disk User, the magazine that came with a disk full of programs each month, I became interested in learning machine code programming.

When I started writing for computer magazines I got two sorts of 3.5" drive - Commodore's 1581 and the CMD FD-2000. The

extra capacity was great for GEOS, and I even submitted articles on PC-formatted disk thanks to the brilliant Big Blue Reader.

Of course, these days the disk image is more important. Not only is the D64 vital for emulation, it is also handy to archive and store collections of games, utilities and other software. If you have a large collection, it is worth looking into the ways you can preserve your software. The G64 may be harder to create but it is worth it to keep all the data (including errors that were often used as protection) on the disk. Software pirates may have been harmful to software companies, but by removing protection they have helped catalogue and retain many important titles.

And who knows? Maybe among your collection is a rare game, demo or program that the wider community is looking for. Take the time to search and preserve your disks before it is too late.



The Commodore 1541 disk drive. If you didn't have one, you wanted one!

Visit Merman's SEUCK archive, **SEUCK Vault**, for hundreds of downloadable SEUCK creations.

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

The History of Commodore Format

By Neil Grayson



Commodore Format launch editor Steve Jarratt. He would stay at the helm of CF for 14 issues.

“Andy was portrayed as the magazine’s dimwit, relentlessly taunted through the pages by Steve’s “misery guts” persona – and readers lapped up the double-act.”



Roger Frames art was created by Mike Roberts. You can see lots more of his Roger Frames art work at his website.

<http://miketoons.com/roger-frames/#gallery>

The Commodore 64 is known for having an abundance of legendary magazines to choose from in its heyday. Two popular UK publications focusing largely on games were ZZAP! 64 And Commodore Format. Commodore Format arrived a bit later in the life of the C64, but it’s influence can still be seen today. Neil Grayson joins Reset to tell us the story of this iconic magazine.

Adverts for Future Publishing’s new Commodore 64 magazine began appearing in the summer of 1990. And they took everybody by surprise. After all, this wasn’t exactly a machine in the first flushes of youth.

“That’s true”, remembers *Commodore Format*’s long time publisher Greg Ingham. “But there were legions of C64 fans still out there. And we thought they weren’t being well served by the existing magazines.”

Launch editor Steve Jarratt, speaking to us from his home in Bath, agrees – recalling the pitiful demise of the once radical ZZAP! 64.

“It had been losing its way for some time. It had lost so many of the things that had made it great. And we knew we could do better.”

And so it was to be, with *Commodore Format 1* appearing on British newsstands in the third week of September. Joining Steve on the magazine were Sean Masterson, Gordon Houghton and Kati Hamza. They’d all worked on ZZAP! in its heyday, but it was unknown teenager Andy Dyer – hired direct from an insurance company – who was to prove the real star.

“Andy just had so much enthusiasm”, remembers Steve. “He gave us the impression in

the interview that if we didn’t hire him as *Commodore Format*’s staff writer, he might die.”

“Ha!”, laughs Andy, who’s now an author based in Cornwall. “I wouldn’t have died. But yes, I would certainly have gone insane. I shudder to think about what would have happened had I not got the job.”

Andy was portrayed as the magazine’s dimwit, relentlessly taunted through the pages by Steve’s “misery guts” persona – and readers lapped up the double-act.

“We wrote some funny stuff. It was exciting getting a great game in to review”, remembers Andy. “But far more entertaining was the, er, less accomplished stuff. *Dick Tracy*, wow. We gave it the cover and it turned out to be awful. It was unfinished! I could have written a better game in BBC BASIC. But we still wanted to generate some excitement”, he says of the atrocity that they eventually awarded 11% – pointing out that just because a game was crap, it doesn’t mean you have to relegate it to a corner on page 90.

Completing the writing team was Scouser Andy Roberts, who’d been up against Andy Dyer for the staff writer’s job. So impressed was Steve with his contributions to the

ZZAP! 64 tips section, he was offered the job of mapping, cracking and cheating the latest games for what would become the legendary *Gamebusters* section. For the first time, games would be mapped in full using bolted together screenshots – just one of the many ways *Commodore Format* changed games magazines forever.



Commodore Format #1 cover and the power of hindsight. Interestingly, a C64GS will probably cost you a lot more now than it did back then!

Issue 1's cover announced the arrival of Commodore's ill-fated console machine, the C64GS. "I was hopelessly misinformed and naïve there", laughs Steve Jarratt. "Like, I really thought it would usher in a new era of C64 gaming! Like, duh. It was overpriced and underpowered, as we all now know."

Given Steve's optimism for the "futuristic" GS, it's perhaps ironic that what really sealed *CF*'s success was what readers found cello-taped to the cover's bottom left hand corner. A good old fashioned cassette tape full of games.

"Future made its fortune and reputation on covermounting magazines", Jarratt explains. "And *Commodore Format* was no different. It was utterly crucial to our success".

CF weren't the first magazine to give away software, but there was one unique difference: Steve Jarratt, with his years and contacts in the C64 industry, was able to pull favours and do deals that ensured full, well known games got an Indian summer. And not just naff ones, either: *Park Patrol*, *Beyond The Forbidden Forest*, *Bounder* and more all appeared on the *Commodore Format Power Pack* when other publications were still using their cassettes for playable demos and public domain. These were games rating 90% and above in magazines just a few years before, and *CF* readers got them for next to nothing.



Steve Jarratt was able to secure strong titles for the *Power Pack*, which became a major selling point for the magazine.

Image Source: [Moby Games](#)

This difference was important says *CF*'s final editor, Simon Forrester.

"The reality is, most *CF* readers were getting two games a year. One at Christmas, one for their birthday. Maybe pocket money would buy budget games. But their main source of new stuff was through our cassettes. And so they bought us, month after month".

To dwell too long on the *Power Pack* is to downplay the significance of just how much issue 1 of *Commodore Format* changed everything, though. Not just for the C64

market – but the games magazine sector as a whole.

If you look at *ZZAP! 64* from the same month that *Commodore Format* launched, it's like comparing titles from different ages. *CF* was one of the first handful of titles at Future Publishing to be produced using the new wave of Mac software, with designer Lam Tang creating what third editor Trenton Webb called a “tangential look...it was like comic books mixed up with old films”.

Crucial to *CF*'s feel was the “layered” approach to almost everything. You didn't have to read a whole review if you didn't want to, for example. You could tell at a glance how good a game was and even whether it was multiloader or two player just by the icons dotted around the page. The famous *Power Test* “barometer” – which would push towards the top or bottom of the page depending on how good a game was – also made it pretty obvious within seconds whether or not something was worth buying. It was utterly unique at the time – but copied far and wide ever since. Sister titles *Your Sinclair* and *Amstrad Action* were both borrowing from *CF* within a year – and its influence is obvious in titles for the Playstation and X-Box even today.

“Haha, true!”, laughs Steve. “The *CF* Scanner keeps cropping up in Future titles, too!”, he tells us – referring to the full page submarine style graphic that let readers keep a tab on how near to release new stuff was.

Such was the impact of *CF*'s clean new look, a relaunched *ZZAP! 64* looked a little, er, familiar.

“We couldn't believe they'd copy us so blatantly”, sighs Steve.

“And the thing is”, remembers Andy Roberts, “Lam Tang did specific things to make the *CF* text look like that, it took a lot of time and effort. *ZZAP!* copying it must have been premeditated; it's not something you could do by accident by picking a similar font.”

“But we didn't think it was worth going legal”, continues Steve. “The magazine was already on the shelves. We just made do with outselling them month after month. And if I remember, we wrote to them and told them exactly how to get our look right!”



The earlier Commodore Format *Supremacy* review (top) and the later *ZZAP! 64* *Supremacy* review (bottom). Spot the difference!

Within months, *CF* was outselling *ZZAP!* from a standing start – shifting over 50,000 copies a month. The magazine would eventually peak at over 60,000 sales each issue. Almost immediately, distributors wanted to ship it to Canada, Australia, the US and Germany. “People just flocked to *CF*”, remembers Greg Ingham.

But the Commodore 64 market was changing. The SNES was on its way to Europe, and almost everyone wanted one of the new Amigas for Christmas 1991.

If only *Commodore Format* had launched five years earlier.

No sooner had it arrived, than it was going to have to adapt and change.

Read part two of *CF*'s story in Reset #05. All Commodore Format journalists mentioned here spoke exclusively to Neil Grayson for the www.commodoreformatarchive.com website and Reset, with the exception of Greg Ingham. His contributions are taken from a 1992 reader Q+A session about the magazine.

Why I Use My Commodore

By Lenard R. Roach



Lenard loves the Commodore.
He's a true believer!

"Also, what really blows the balding skull of this out of work comedian is that right now while you are reading this, someone somewhere on our planet is developing more games and productivity software for the Commodore."



Still the best computer to use
in 2016? You bet!

Sometimes a person has to think as to why they do the things that they do. For some people, they do things out of habit; others do things because that was how they were taught; still others do because they seemingly have no choice. This is not so when it comes to the Commodore brand of computer. Those who still use the machine use it for various reasons. This piece is about why I personally use a Commodore even now in the 21st century when there are faster and higher memory machines on the market.

AFORDABILITY - When it comes to the Commodore in the 21st century, the machines affordability instantly comes into play. Many a person are willing to dispose of their perfectly good working Commodores for a mere pittance, and in many cases, the units, drives, and other peripherals come absolutely free. Many former Commodore owners only want the units out of the house to make room for more modern computers or, in more humorous cases, the fiancé or wife wants the unit out because it is an "eyesore." Whatever the case may be, Commodore computers are affordable and in big supply in many areas of the world; a person only has to know where to locate these units and then collect them for whatever use can be planned.

SAFETY - The Commodore seems to be the most safe computer on the market. With computers, mainframes full of personal information, or any

other modern computer problems, the Commodore seems to be devoid of such infections. When I was writing "Run/Stop-Restore," I wanted to add a chapter on viruses that exist for the Commodore 64 or 128. When I put the request out on FIDOnet for such information, nobody answered me. Even if someone were to be able to sabotage the Commodore by way of software, a quick shut down of the machine and reboot will clear any infections. I did encounter a piece of software back in the 90's that was given to me from a collection that had a Trojan horse protectant, which, when I booted the disk on my personal 128, a message appeared stating that this disk was not allowed to be booted on my machine, suspected that I pirated the software, and went into disk reformatting procedures. However, hacking computing machines was active way back in the 80's, for I had from the same collection a disk containing a list of credit card numbers for anyone to use. Naturally, these numbers were stolen and people were suppose to use the stolen card numbers to buy more Commodore products. I took that copy of the disk to the local police department, who investigated the numbers and luckily all the numbers on the disk were already turned in to the associating credit card companies and subsequently had the accounts they belong to and shut down.

Also, I consider the Commodore (especially the stock models) Internet safe, meaning that I

don't have to worry about children getting onto the Commodore and looking at sites that they shouldn't be on. A person has to physically load a pornographic disk into the Commodore disk drive and boot it in order to look at the scenes, and these disks can be put away under lock and key and the key put in a safe place before a child can get to them. When it came to my own children playing on the Commodore, I had no worries even though the computer had a modem for BBS browsing; there were no places the kids could go to look at any suggestive material. I could leave them alone to play any games or use any educational material I had in my collection. With today's computers it's a simple game of point and click for a person or even a child to look at pornographic or other suggestive material.



Big Blue Reader allows you to transfer your Commodore Documents onto PC as a text file.

COMPATIBILITY - You read that word right, dear reader, compatibility; and this coming from the comedian who has written in the past that Commodores and PCs will never be of any use together. This was before I was introduced to the IBM/Commodore translator program, "Big Blue Reader," and any other styles of software that do the same thing. This program will, literally, transpose information (in my case, manuscripts, texts, and other writings) out of Commodore word processors and into a readable text format easily understood by today's modern PCs and, if necessary, back again. During my early years as editor of the Fresno, California Commodore User Group's newsletter, "The Interface," I used "Big Blue Reader" to

take all the PC word processed text and convert them to Commodore GeoWrite for cutting and pasting into a Commodore created newsletter. Now in these recent years, I make "The Interface" on a PC by taking my Commodore GeoWrite text and converting it to PC, but believe me, it is easier to use and understand the Commodore set up than the PC for making newsletters as I am still learning how to make the papers into an eye catching, informative publication using the more modern machine.

PANACHE - Do you want to impress the younger generation, especially those who are in their pre-teens and younger? Tell them about how you use a computer that existed well before they were born. This is fun to do when you can show them an actual example of the computer and how it works. In my opinion, most children are drawn to the complexity of how to use the older machines when all they have to do today is either click on an icon or tap on an app. Most kids are not aware of megabytes and gigabytes but only that there is enough room on the hard drive to store the new upload. This fun I got to experience when I got three working Commodore 128s along with the necessary cables and peripherals. I thought I could make a gag gift out of one of the C128s and a couple of drives and give them to a co-worker whose family happens to be up to date on all the latest electronic gadgets. When she got the C128 I told her that if she didn't want it she could sell it on eBay for about \$100 if she marketed it right. I was surprised when I found out she actually loved the C128 and her family couldn't wait to hook it up and start having fun with all this old technology. Her husband, a true man, tried his best to hook up the Commodore without instructions but has failed time and time again to get everything hooked up and the machine to boot. It looks like I'll have to make my very first Commodore house call and show them how to assemble the Commodore and all its drives and serial bus cables. It's been a long time since I taught Commodore BASIC to anyone, but it should prove to be interesting.

The second Commodore went to the church that I attend as a prize the kids in children's church could "buy" with Sunday

School Bucks. The Sunday School superintendent was totally interested in getting the C128 from me and promised to put a low price on the machine so the kids could afford it. I don't know if the kids are interested in such technology but it will be interesting to see the reaction of all those children as they gaze upon such a device and ask the teacher, "What is that?" The kids know that I write most of the skits we adults do for them on the Commodore computer so now they have a chance to have a copy of that unit for their very own.

The third and final Commodore 128 will be going to the son of a very dear friend of mine who has already passed from this world. This friend was the one who started me into Commodore way back in 1990 and has taught me a lot of things about the machine before he died. I found his son through Facebook and we started talking. He has a lot of questions about his father, but one thing he remembered about his dad was the fact that he operated a Commodore 128. When I told him over the Internet that I a machine in my house sitting around doing nothing, he was interested in seeing what a real one looked like. I told him he could have this unit as a gift from me. He wasn't ecstatic about getting the unit as the co-worker was, but it's more of a nostalgia thing for him as he will be handling something that his father once had. He has no memory of his father since his dad passed when he was three, so anything this kid could get about his dad is something of a connection with a man long gone but not forgotten.

VERSATILITY – Never have I used something that with just a simple swap of the disk you can change the machine from a word processor into a gaming device. Sure, today's computers can do the same thing and all from one or more windows, but when it comes to the best computer ever made, it seems like more of a miracle that this one machine, with its 64K or 128K of memory and space, can do so much, and here in the 21st century it is so affordable that it's not even funny. Games and productivity software is selling on many websites for a large fraction less than what the products were when they were new.

Also, what really blows the balding skull of this out of work comedian is that right now while you are reading this, someone somewhere on our planet is developing more games and productivity software for the Commodore. Reports are all over the Internet and in various newsletters and magazines that still support the machine of these new developments. This is a great time to discover or rediscover the Commodore computer all over again.



Tiger Claw is a brand new game, coming soon to your Commodore 64 in 2016. Unbelievable!

I'm sure there are many more reasons that lots of people can think of as to how groovy it is to be a Commodore user in the 21st century. I've only listed a few in the above paragraphs, but a lot more has not been said, but for whatever the reason, Commodore still is the best computer on the market bar none. I'm thankful to be a part of the Commodore universe.

Visit Lenard Roach's Homepage

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

Getting Online With Your C64

By Craig Derbyshire



The VicModem was one of the first Commodore Modems. At up to 300 baud, she wasn't quick!

"If you get the chance I thoroughly recommend watching a documentary aptly titled BBS The Documentary."



The Commodore Rotary Phone. Thankfully, you won't need one of these!

Getting your C64 online in 2015 is easier than you think. With a little know how and the right tech, Craig Derbyshire will have you dialling up your favourite BBS in no time. Let's dial!



Yes, non-retro heads may find this hard to believe but people (including myself) are still actively getting online with their trusty old Commodore 64's, albeit with the aid of some modern tech. There are some wonderful people out there still creating new tech that can be attached to your retro computer to help leap frog it into the 21st century. A lovely specimen from this available modern tech that I will be using in this article is the "64NIC+ Network Card" available from Retro Innovations at:

<http://www.go4retro.com>

As quoted from their website "64NIC+ allows the Commodore

user to experience online connectivity in true 8-bit glory. Play online Ethernet games, telnet to your favourite BBS's, and tweet from your Commodore!"

When I say "online" in this particular case, I don't mean surfing the web. (Although it is definitely possible). What I do mean is connecting up with BBS's, specifically the ones that are hosted on real Commodore 64's. The BBS (Bulletin Board System) in many ways can be considered a precursor to the modern form of the World Wide Web.

Back in its day BBS's were extremely popular and got many

a teenager into hot water over huge phone bills, due to the fact that you had to dial into the BBS's over the telephone network which sometimes involved long distance calling. If you get the chance I thoroughly recommend watching a documentary aptly titled "BBS The Documentary". Here's a link to a collection of clips taken from the documentary.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A85RJMb8_s

Sadly, these days very few active BBS's exist and the ones that do are run and maintained mainly by hobbyists purely for nostalgic reasons. They deserve a big pat on the back for keeping the BBS following alive. Today we are going to connect to an active BBS that is currently being hosted on a real Commodore 64 and luckily for us it will be done via Telnet over our existing internet connection, so no hefty phone bills to explain!

We will be doing this in two ways:

1. A real Commodore 64 computer with a 64NIC+ and KipperTerm 2 software
2. Emulation via WinVice and KipperTerm 2 software

Both methods work equally as well as each other, but of course real hardware is much more satisfying!

Method 1 – Real Hardware

We need to set up our real Commodore 64 with our network cartridge plugged in and connected via Ethernet, in this case the 64NIC+. Next we load up a copy of KipperTerm 2. The disk image is available here:

<http://retrohackers.com/download/file.php?id=224&sid=4e93c67470910dc04ff006b96c1d261d>

In my case I normally use an Ultimate-II for loading disk images, but because the 64NIC+ occupies the cartridge slot and as far as I am aware the Ultimate-II and 64NIC+ can't be used simultaneously on a cartridge expander card, I used my SD2IEC solution on this occasion which worked

perfectly.

Once KipperTerm 2 has loaded up we will be presented with an options screen like the one shown in figure 1. Press "F1" to select Telnet. We will then be presented with something similar to what can be seen in figure 2. We need to type in the address of the BBS we want to connect to, in this case "**madworld.bounceme.net**". There's a list of active Commodore 64 BBS's here at the c64 BBS outpost:

<http://cbbsoutpost.servebbs.com/>



Figure 1 - Options Screen



Figure 2

Next we will be asked to input the port number, this should be shown in the BBS listing on the c64 BBS outpost website which in this case it is 6400. Type the port number in and press "RETURN". We will then be prompted as to whether we want **vt100** mode or **petscii** mode, press "P" for **petscii** mode. PETSCII (PET Standard Code

of Information Interchange), also known as **CBM ASCII**, is the character set used in Commodore computer including the Commodore 64.

If all is ok we will be presented with a screen like the one shown in figure 3. The green border indicates that we have made a successful connection to the BBS address. After a few seconds we will be presented with a screen confirming that we have connected to a centipede BBS system, press **"RETURN"** and we will be presented with another screen asking us if we would like to use commodore graphics mode and whether we want 40 or 80 column mode. Press **"Y"** for graphics mode and **"4"** to select 40 column mode.

The BBS welcome screen should then load up for us to admire all of its glorious PETSCII artwork as shown in figure 4.



Figure 3 - Successful connection to the BBS



Figure 4 - BBS welcome screen in glorious PETSCII!

Before we can start using the BBS we need to apply for membership, we will be asked for our membership **HANDLE**, **NUMBER** or **NEW**. Type in **"NEW"** and press **"Return"**. After this we will be asked enter a Handle/Name, this can be anything as long as it isn't already in use by someone else, type in a name and press **"Return"**. We will then be asked for a password, type in a password we will be able to remember and press **"Return"**.

Next we will be presented with a screen with a welcome message and details of our membership including our membership number which we need to remember, we will be asked if this is all correct, if so press **"Y"**. That's it! We have now joined the BBS and are free to use its facilities, the next screen will be the main menu screen as shown in figure 5.

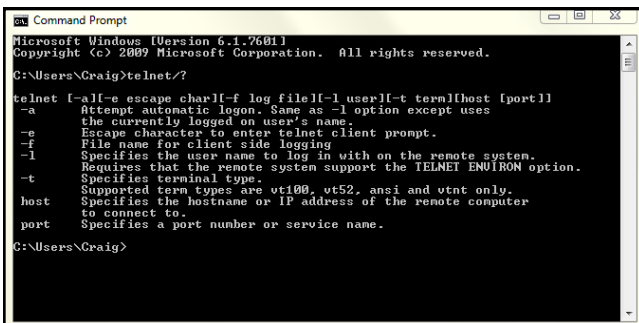


Figure 5 - BBS main menu

From the main menu we can select to view new messages, play games, download files etc. I suggest the first thing we do is go to the messages area and leave a message introducing ourselves and have a read of some of the other messages. It's a great way of chatting with other likeminded Commodore enthusiasts, but don't expect any instant replies as not everyone connects every day. After that it's worth playing some of the games that the BBS's have to offer, I suggest Nuke 'Em, which is a great turn based strategy game.

Method 2 – Windows PC running WinVice c64 emulator

Just before we get started we need to make sure that our Windows installation has the Telnet feature enabled, this is especially true for Windows 7 users as the telnet function is not normally enabled by default. Open up a command prompt and type in `telnet/?` Then press enter.



```

Microsoft Windows [Version 6.1.7601]
Copyright (c) 2009 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

C:\Users\Craig>telnet/?

telnet [-a|-e escape char|-f log file|-l user|-t term|host [port]]
-a      Retempt automatic logon. Same as -l option except uses
        the currently logged on user's name.
-e      Escape character to enter telnet client prompt.
-f      File name for client side logging
-l      Specifies the user name to log in with on the remote system.
        Requires that the remote system support the TELNET ENVIROM option.
-t      Specifies terminal type.
        Supported term types are vt100, vt52, ansi and vtnt only.
-h      Specifies the hostname or IP address of the remote computer
        to connect to.
-p      Specifies a port number or service name.

C:\Users\Craig>

```

Figure 6 – telnet enabled

We should see similar to figure 6 if we have telnet enabled, if not we need to do the following:

1. Click on Start and select “Control Panel”
2. In Control panel select “Programs”
3. Under “Programs and Features”, click on “Turn Windows Features on or off”
4. From the “Windows Features” window scroll down and select “Telnet Client” by clicking in the check box beside it, then click “OK”
5. Wait for Windows to install the telnet feature, once installed the window will automatically close.
6. Once again within command prompt type in `telnet/?` And press enter to confirm that the telnet feature is now enabled.

Next we need to make sure that we have the latest version of WinVice installed. WinVice can be downloaded from here:

<http://vice-emu.sourceforge.net/>

Once WinVice is installed, start the WinVice program and once running select “Settings” > “Cartridge I/O Settings” > “Ethernet settings...”

In the Ethernet drop down options select “RR Net” and in the Interface drop down options select your system Ethernet port as shown in figure 7 and click “OK”.

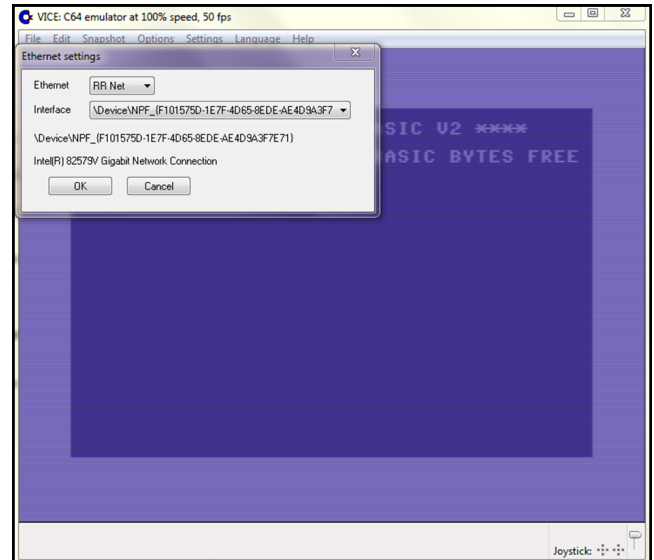
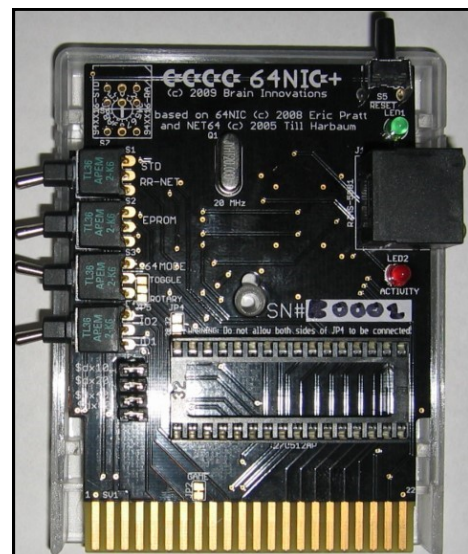


Figure 7

Once our Windows telnet has been enabled and WinVice Ethernet setting have been set the next steps are exactly the same as when we connected with a real Commodore 64. Note that we should not have to go through this set up process again unless we use a different Windows computer.

Hopefully this little guide will encourage some of you to take a nostalgic trip into the wonderful world of BBS on the Commodore 64. Happy BBSing!



C64Nic+ Network Card and case.
Available now from [Retro Innovations](http://RetroInnovations.com).

Reset Q&A

What is Reset Magazine?

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

Who produces Reset?

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

How often is Reset released?

We are aiming for Reset to be quarterly magazine. Keep an eye on our [website](#) or [Facebook](#) page for information about release dates and you can also subscribe to our news and user support mailing list via our homepage. Reset #07 should arrive mid June if all goes well!

Why bother?

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

Can I contribute to Reset?

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

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

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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.

Blow the Cartridge

By Cameron Davis

DONKEY KONG JR.

