LOAD"9.5"
HOLIDAY SPECIAL

RESET 64

THE MAGAZINE FOR ALL THINGS C64!



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COVER ILLUSTRATION
Del Seymour

RESET 64

THE MAGAZINE FOR ALL THINGS C64!

Happy New Year Retro freaks!

Welcome to the 2016/2017 Reset64 Holiday Special. We hope you enjoy this mini-issue as much as we enjoyed producing it for you. This issue is not a full Reset issue and therefore hasn't been numbered as Reset #10 (which is still in production), but consider it a small Christmas/New Year's gift from the Reset team!

First of all, let me introduce and welcome two new members to Reset Magazine Staff; Del Seymour and Paul Kitching. Del is a long time C64 fanatic and was brought on board as lead designer. The new look is mostly a result of Del's design skills and hard work, we hope you like it! We thought it was time to give Reset a bit of a facelift and freshen up, to coincide with the decision to print Reset as a full size magazine and Del was the perfect fit. Paul comes to Reset with an impressive portfolio of rendered images and graphics. An expert at 2D and 3D rendering, Paul designed our new logo and will be helping us out with graphics and art. You have no doubt seen a lot of his work, particularly if you follow the happenings of the Amiga scene. Both chaps have actually been with the team for a few months now and have been instrumental in implementing our new design, look and feel.

We still haven't finalised the new look and not all of our ideas have been implemented into this mini-issue, but you will get an idea of the look and feel we are going for, which will continue to mature with Reset #10. We do, of course, welcome your feedback!

The big feature for this issue is definitely the 2016 Reset 'Craptastic' 4kb Game Competition results. Congratulations to all of the entrants who made the competition so successful. Your achievements are amazing and it was astonishing to see how you pushed the C64 using only 4kb. Thank-you to Richard for producing the official competition disk compilation which serves as this issue's mix-i-disk and also to the judges, who volunteered their time to criticise, critique and mostly enjoy the various creations. Which was your favourite game from the compo? In any case, if you haven't played them yet, we hope you enjoy them. If you have played the games already, now is a great chance to revisit them!

Reset #10 will be released early in 2017 packed full of game reviews, new and familiar columns, great new features, some special surprises and of course a brand new Anthony Stiller cover illustration. Until then, on behalf of the whole Reset team, we hope you enjoy this little present to the scene and wish you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Sincerely,

Kevin Tilley

RESET STAFF

Kevin Tilley
Editor, Organisation

Paul Morrison
Staff Writer

Rob Caporetto
Staff Writer

Anthony Stiller
Staff Writer, Art

Cameron Davis
Staff Writer, Art

Alex Boz
Staff Writer

Shane Wood
Webmaster

Del Seymour
Magazine Design, Layout

Paul Kitching
2D + 3D rendered art, Additional Design

CONTRIBUTORS
Martin Grundy
Frank Gasking
Lenard Roach
Gavin Greenhalgh
Tim Koch

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Mix-i-Disk

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

http://cloud.cbm8bit.com/resetc64/Reset_9.5_Mixidisk.d64

We are proud to debut our new disk menu, coded especially for Reset by Richard Bayliss. Just type LOAD"*",8,1 and then type run. After this, you need to choose which loader to use; either fastload enabled or kernal (choose the kernal loader if you are using an SD2IEC device). Use your joystick in Port 2 to navigate the menu.

Zap Fight 2

2017 Psytronik/Reset
http://www.psytronik.net/

We are proud to present Zap Fight 2 – Zapped to Oblivion. This SEUCK shooter from Alf Yngve has been fully enhanced and given the Redux treatment by Richard. A follow up to Zap Fight, which originally appeared on Shoot 'Em Up Destruction Set 3, Zap Fight 2 is a traditional vertically scrolling shooter that has even more power ups, action and an even more hard-core soundtrack than the original!
Bring it!

Super Silverfish

2017 TND
http://tnd64.unikat.sk/

Another Alf Yngve and Richard Bayliss collaboration, Super Silverfish was first released on the TND website at Christmas 2016 and now we have it here for you! Heavily inspired by the horizontally scrolling shooter classic, Silkworm, guide your helicopter through five levels to destroy the evil terrorists. With an assortment of power ups to pick up and plenty of enemies to shoot down, there's no time like the present!



The Bear Essentials

2016 Pond Software
http://pondsoft.uk/

We are proud to be able to include Graham Axten's brand spanking new platformer on this issue's mix-i-disk, with kind permission from Pond Software. Guide Bear through the levels to collect the apples in readiness for the cold winter ahead. There's not much more to say that isn't already written in our review and interview with Graham in this very issue of Reset, so get reading and then get playing. You won't regret it! Oh, and please visit the Pond website to download more of their amazing and free C64 back catalogue. You won't regret that, either

Shotgun Xmas Edition

2016 Dr. Wuro Industries
http://shotgun.drwuro.com/

Dr. Wuro Industries has provided us with this special Xmas themed edition of their single screen, deathmatch shooter. Featuring an assortment of playable characters and arenas, Shotgun is also compatible with the 4 Player Interface, available from Protovision and Individual Computers. This Xmas edition allows you to play as Santa Claus, features two additional colour schemes and a brand new map. Grab some friends and get blasting, this game is a hoot!

Mastermind 2017

Software of Sweden's latest C64 game is a conversion of the classic code-breaking board game, Mastermind. For a full list of rules, please refer to the note file packaged with the disk.

Mad Run

Errazking's manic C64 racer produced entirely using Gary Kitchen's Game-Maker. Guide your car and avoid the hazards as you travel down the highway. It's that easy!

Snowball Sunday

Ash & Dave produced this little snow-fight simulator back in the 80's, and we love it so much we had to include it! Have fun and happy holidays!

COMMODORE 64 / 128

MAZE OF THE MUMMY



Actual C64 Screens

Use your wits and cunning to outwit the dreaded MUMMY lurking in his maze! Untold treasures await you, but only if you are brave enough to enter the MAZE OF THE MUMMY!

NOW AVAILABLE ON C64 BUDGET / PREMIUM+ DISK & DIGITAL DOWNLOAD from WWW.PSYTRONIK.NET

PSYTRONIK SOFTWARE

NEWSBYTES

POLYPLAY

PolyPlay is a new retro games publisher from Germany. So far, they have released physical editions of three C64 games; MEGATRON, Speeding on the A81 and Trap Them. They have also released specific hardware add-ons for some of their games.

https://www.polyplay.xyz/



BEAR ESSENTIALS

Pond Software has just released The Bear Essentials. Programmed by Graham Axten, the game is a charming platformer with fun gameplay, colourful graphics and boppy music. Pond also plan to release the game as a physical disk edition, which will be available in early 2017. Email Pond at shop@pondsoft.uk to secure your pre-order.

http://pondsoft.uk/



PSYTRONIK

Psytronik released the Achim Volkers programmed My Life in August. The game was designed by Trevor 'Smila' Storey and has the player taking the role of Eugene, a down and out loser who is trying to make it through his mundane week while working a dead end job. Playing much like the classic Konami arcade game Mikie, My Life features 20 screens for Eugene to navigate, absolutely stunning graphics, as well as music and sound effects by the very talented Saul Cross.

P0 Snake was the winning entry in the 2016 RGCD 16kb Cartridge Game Competition and was later enhanced and expanded upon by programmer Antonio Savano, featuring eight additional screens, an intro sequence and better quality sound samples. Featuring 30 levels in total, P0 Snake is an interesting one-button version of Snake. As well as beautiful hi-res graphics, the game features digitised speech and some very special Easter-eggs!

My Life and P0 Snake can be purchased as digital downloads from Psytronik's ITCH.IO shop (P0 Snake is a free download), or the usual disk and tape editions from the Binary Zone Store.

Coming soon from Psytronik are Hammer Down (inspired by budget Mastertronic titles such as The Last V8 and Action Biker) by Jason Kelk, and Space Trip 2086 (a great looking platform arcade adventure) by Achim Volkers and Saul Cross. Wanax is also currently developing an enhanced version of his RGCD compo entry Platman, which will eventually see release on the Psytronik label.

http://www.psytronik.net/
https://psytronik.itch.io/



SUPER SILVERFISH



TND has released a new game just in time for Christmas. Super Silverfish is a sideways SEUCK shoot'em up from Alf Yngve, which has been fully enhanced by Richard Bayliss using the SEUCK Redux engine. The game is heavily inspired by the classic Silkworm and is available as a free download from the TND website. TND are also running the 2016 SEUCK compo, of which the deadline has been extended to 31st January 2017. More information is available at the TND website.

http://tnd64.unikat.sk/

YOGI BEAR - THE BIG CLEAN UP



Games That Weren't has unveiled its yearly massive Christmas update and amongst the goodies is a complete version of the previously unreleased Yogi Bear – The Big Clean Up. The unfinished game was originally produced by C64 heroes Ash & Dave and was supposed to be released on the Hi-Tec label, but never made it out after the company went bust. The game itself had to be heavily reconstructed and new code was written by Martin Pugh to produce a playable version. The full story and free game download can be found at the Games That Weren't website.

http://www.gamesthatwerent.com/gtw64/yogis-clean-up/

RGCD

The stunning cartridge edition of Caren and the Tangled Tentacles was released and sent to Kickstarter backers in August. The game was especially enhanced for cartridge, featuring extra screens and puzzles, as well as various bug fixes. This particular version of Caren is unavailable for retail purchase. Caren V1.1 (a previous version) was reviewed in Reset #08 and scored an impressive 9/10.

The long awaited cartridge version of Throwback Games' basketball arcade game Jam It was released in October. Featuring 4 player gameplay via the Protovision 4 player adaptor, Jam It also features simple controls (with many different moves at your disposal), challenging AI and various unlockable bonuses. Presented as a deluxe physical edition, RGCD have pulled all of the usual punches to make the cartridge edition of Jam It a must buy for collectors.

November was a big month for RGCD, releasing two new cartridges. C-2048 by P1X3L.NET is a C64 conversion of the much loved sliding block number puzzler, which was previously released in the 2015. Moonspire has been in development for quite a while and is described as a "sprawling flick-screen explaratory sci-fi shmup". Developed by Dušan Milivojević, with sound by Ari Yliaho, the game features six levels and is comprised of a massive 264 screens. Read the review in this very edition of Reset.

Jam It, C-2048 and Moonspire are available to buy as physical cartridge editions from the RGCD shop and the digital downloads can be purchased from the RGCD ITCH.IO page.

http://www.rgcd.co.uk/
https://rgcddev.itch.io/

THE COMMODORE WARS



8 Bit Generation Wars, a film about the home computer explosion, is a Kickstarter funded film which has just been released to the general public. The film features the last interview with Jack Tramiel before his death with many other key Commodore engineers and staff involved as well. Using promo code C64 will give you a 20% discount!

http://www.commodorewars.com/

SHOTGUN - XMAS EDITION



Dr Wuro Industries has released a Christmas Edition of its 4 player arena deathmatch shooter Shotgun. Shotgun-Xmas Edition contains some Christmas themed colour schemes and lets you play as Santa Claus. The original game is available as a free download, or can be purchased as a deluxe physical edition for collectors. Both editions are available from the Dr Wuro Industries website.

http://shotgun.drwuro.com/

PROTOVISION



Protovision have spent most of the second half of 2016 preparing for the upcoming release of Sam's Journey. The game is being released in three editions; boxed disk (45 Euros), boxed cartridge (55.00 Euros) and digital download (19.99 Euros). The game is expected to be released in the first quarter of 2017.

Protovision did manage to sneak out one release, a D42 programmed graphic adventure called The Camp, which is available in both English and German language versions. The Camp: Caravan Edition is a limited physical edition, packaged in a plastic box and featuring an assortment of bonus goodies required for camp, including peppermint tea and toilet paper. There are only a few units left in stock so you'd better go to the online Protovision Shop quickly if you're interested in one. Of course, the game is also available from the Protovision ITCH.IO shop as a digital download.

http://www.protovision-online.com/
https://protovision.itch.io/

SID HERO



SID Hero is a brand new game by Zbych (the coder behind the as yet unreleased C64 version of Yoomp). The game is a music/rhythm game in which the player must use concise timing to collect the rhythm crystals. The game is available as a free download from CSDB as a free download.

http://csdb.dk/release/?id=152331

FROGGER



Hokuto Force has released Frogger Arcade under its game development label Digital Monastery. The game is a faithful arcade port of Frogger and even plays in the correct aspect ratio. It can be downloaded for free from CSDB.

http://csdb.dk/release/?id=152330

Graham Axten's

the Bear Essentials





Help Bear collect fruit for the winter in this new platform game featuring simultaneous music and sfx. Face 60 enemy types while exploring 60 screens spread out over 6 unique areas! Free download from pondsoft.uk - Jewel case disk version £10

"Bear?" asked Hedgehog, "what's that you've got there?"
"It's a new C64 game from POND", Bear said with a big smile on his face, "and it's got a ME in it, look!"
"Oh", squeaked Hedgehog. "Can I have a go?"



Pond

Wish List 2017

Despite all the doom and gloom in the world, there's a lot to look forward to next year! While we roast our toes on a warm C64 power supply and enjoy the Christmas break, we start to think of what 2017 may have in store for us:



ANT

Playing Unknown Realm: I am so excited about Stirring Dragon's upcoming C64 RPG that I can barely contain myself (just ask any of the Reset crew). I may be a little optimistic hoping it gets released in 2017 but hope it will!

More Pond games: I am 100% biased here, being a part of Pond myself, but this little C64 software house is doing some amazing things (in fact, The Bear Essentials was literally just released as I was typing this). 2017 is looking great for new C64 games!

New retro hardware: Recently at the local annual C64 night I had the pleasure of listening to a few chaps talk about new pieces of kit they'd designed and built. This seems like black magic to me and I'm very excited to see what 2017 has in store for new hardware coming out for the C64 to let it do even more amazing things.

Reset getting bigger and better: Everyone's (ok, our) favourite C64 mag continues to move ahead in leaps and bounds thanks to our amazing team and hardworking editor. Things are shaping up to reach new heights next year so strap in your eyeballs lest they suddenly launch themselves out of your head in amazement!

Making more actual C64 time: We're all very busy but it's important to make time for things we love like our C64 and our ... ummm ... (Ed: Significant other and family?) ... significant other and family! Yes! So I'm looking forward to dedicating more time to appreciating this wonderful computer and all the things that amazing people have made and are still making for it.





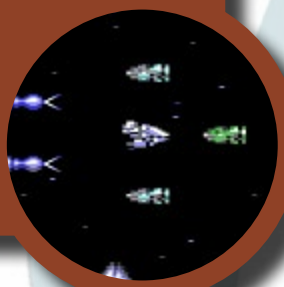
CAMERON

More commercially released C64 games: We're in a golden age of new C64 games being developed and released right now, and thanks to Kickstarter it's easier than ever for commercially-viable games to become reality. Get behind the developers you like and support them!

Game creation utilities: I'd love more easy to use game creation utilities to appear, please! Not all of us are smart enough to be coders, you know. Who wants to take up the challenge of making a platform game construction kit? ;)

Plug & Play C64: I know I'm really reaching here, but geez another one of those C64DTV devices would be awesome to have! The new NES Classic Edition has shown how popular these devices can be, and I'd love a cute little C64 that I can plug into the TV over HDMI.

More demos: I keep thinking the demo scene has pushed the C64 to its limits but every year I've been proven wrong, so I'm super excited to see what magic those guys can make happen at the next 12 months. It's like they all just forgot what a technical limitation was and I love them for it.



Armalyte 2: And finally, I'd love 2017 to bring us all Armalyte 2 finally!



ALEX

Revive the Oskars in 2017: Let's bring back the ole Commodore Computer International (CCI) OSKARS awards to showcase the 'best games of the year' for the C64.

Double Dragon 64: Someone please make the Double Dragon we should have always had! My C64 hasn't been the same (and neither have I) since the Melbourne House travesty. I'd even pledge my right kidney if there was a Kickstarter for it!

Commodore: The Amiga Years: Brian Bagnell's follow-up to 'Commodore: A Company on the Edge' is highly anticipated in 2017! It was due in December 2016, but surely it will happen in 2017!

Chiptunes DJs at Australian events: Imagine having a Chiptune DJ in the Classic Gaming area at PAXAus 2017 (or any other major gaming event in Australia). It would go off! Oh, it would have to be SID chiptunes, of course.



More love is needed for the lovable luggable SX-64: Gotta have a word to our Ed about this one!



ROB

Improved EasyFlash support in the Ultimate II/II+: Being able to handle saving data for EasyFlash games is one of the only things preventing the Ultimate from being a beyond unbeatable device for your C64!

Grander C64 Games: Seeing both Sam's Journey and Unknown Realm go down well with the community means that there is room for the C64 community to consider working on games which are larger in scope than most releases.

More C64 Reloaded boards: The C64 Reloaded was a great upgrade - but being produced in such limited numbers meant a lot of enthusiasts couldn't acquire one (including yours truly). So if Individual could be in a position to produce more, it'd be rad!

More Reworkings of flawed C64 Arcade Conversions: Commando & Ghosts 'n Goblins are only the tip of the iceberg for flawed C64 arcade ports. I'd love to see some more being worked on... so many deserve an upgrade or fixed version, starting with the likes of R-Type, or Out Run...

More Paddle Games: Paddle inputs are underrated. 'nuff said.





KEV

Sam's Journey: A most anticipated C64 game and has a massive amount of hype surrounding it. Probably the first truly commercial C64 game in years. Can. Not. Wait.

Unknown Realm: This massive, sprawling cRPG is set to become a smash hit, having just reached its Kickstarter goal of around US$66k. Proves that there is plenty of life in the ol'64 yet. Oh, and a massive RPG on cartridge and a box full of goodies, just wow.

Reformation: Matt Gray's opus is nearing completion and I'm really looking forward to receiving the physical boxed album and vinyl. I know this is coming very soon so anticipation is high!

The 64 and Spectrum Next: The jury is open on both of these projects but hopefully we can see something more concrete this year and I can give both projects my money. Both companies need to prove themselves first with a product on the virtual shelves, but after that I'm all in!

Individual Computers: Having just secured the Commodore brand name, Jens has some exciting plans including a new Reloaded board. So much potential to do something really special!





PAUL

More C64 SID reworkings: Matt Gray's Reformation is an excellent project. Uncle Art's was also a lovely project, albeit less C64-related. Now I'd like to see more C64 musicians rework their SID tracks in this vein, or at least announce their intentions to do so.

The Bard's Tale 4: Not strictly C64 or retro, but The Bard's Tale on the C64 was my first RPG love and after the success of Wasteland 2, I can't wait to see how BT4 turns out.

The continued growth of the C64 scene: Frankly, it astonishes me that so many high-quality new games are being released for the machine. Whether they be remakes of arcade conversions, brand new original games or even those produced for challenges such as Reset's 4K Craptastic competition, the amount of new games we're treated to is frankly more than we deserve. Long may it continue and continue to grow... with all the talented coders now working on the machine, I think that is guaranteed.

New-look Reset: This mini-issue is the shape of things to come, and in my opinion it's a stunning step-up. It's a look that complements the content very well and is a real statement of intent from the Ed. Lovely!

Why I'm 64/They Were Our Gods: I will be completing not one, but two books this year. I really need to get my long-term project, They Were Our Gods, finished and out there. I'm also working on a C64-only side project, called Why I'm 64, which I've worked on when I've had moments of writer's block on the main book. It should be a fun read for C64 fans, not that I have any idea how to get it to you once it's finished!





DEL

Sam's Journey: What was originally written off by some as an April Fool's Day joke has gone on to become THE most looked forward to Commodore 64 release in a long, long time. Don't let us down Knights of Bytes.

Reset going from strength to strength: It's been a blast getting to know the team, and I'm loving being involved with the redesign of the magazine. I've been working on some of the stuff that's been put together by Kev and the team for Issue 10 and I can't wait for it to be released into the wild.

More and More C64 games: What a year 2016 was for releases! 2017 is already shaping up to astound and amaze us. The C64 scene seems to be on a roll at the moment - long may it continue!

Getting involved: I got back into the C64 a couple of years ago and since then have slowly immersed myself more and more in the scene, and this year I want to get involved in creating graphics for a game. If anyone wants to take a chance on me - get in touch! Keep your eyes peeled for one of my images on a forthcoming Reset disk.

Paul's Why I'm 64 Book: Clearly I'm biased, but this is a great looking project that I can't wait to see reach fruition. I also want him to finish They Were Our Gods at some point.





Okay, so it's not Christmas yet, but around about now 30 years ago the games industry was hoping for its best Christmas ever and C64 owners everywhere were hoping that Santa would deliver something special.

What did you ask Father Christmas for back in 1986? A BMX? A few games for your 64? Maybe a cool new Transformer robot? Whatever it was, it probably wasn't an Amiga. Despite Commodore's lavish launch and multi-million-dollar investment, sales of the new 16-bit wonder machine had been disappointingly slow. Due to the huge price tag, dreadful marketing, lack of games and the fact that most of us were too busy having lots of fun on our C64s, the Amiga wasn't selling and Commodore decided that something had to be done.

To give sales a boost Commodore UK came up with the '£500' offer for existing owners of other Commodore machines. In effect this meant that you could trade in your C64 for an Amiga (with a disk drive and monitor) for just £1170. Bargain. The scheme proved to be a success and Commodore UK boss Chris Kaday claimed that in the run up to Christmas the Amiga was selling 'like a bat out of hell'. However, Kaday was quick to scotch rumours that a new cut down Amiga would be available in the new year which would retail at a more consumer friendly price of around £500.

'While the Amiga was desperately lacking software support, C64 gaming was in better health than ever'

While the Amiga was desperately lacking software support, C64 gaming was in better health than ever. 1986 had been a superb year with the likes of Mercenary, Uridium, Spindizzy, Leader Board, Ghosts n Goblins and World Games hitting the shops. As Christmas approached, fans waited with baited breath as magazine ads promised more and more great games. Many pending releases were licenses and tie-ins as, despite the fact that most of the best games of the year were original ideas, the biggest sellers were those linked to popular movies or arcade games.



He may be The Law, but he has a low score... Zzap!64 scored the future lawman's game only 13%.

Unfortunately, many of these highly anticipated releases turned out to be rather disappointing. Most of the arcade conversions weren't awful, they were just average. 1942, Crystal Castles, Marble Madness, Paperboy, Space Harrier and Terra Cresta were okay but nothing more. Only US Gold's Gauntlet could be considered to be a really great game and Dragons Lair 2: Escape from Singe's Castle was a decent effort and a big improvement on its predecessor. The worst conversions (both from US Gold) were Xevious and Breakthru. These were truly terrible affairs and are, in the words of Steps, better best forgotten.

Yet although the arcade conversions may have been a little disappointing, the tie-in games were the real Christmas turkeys of 1986. Whilst Flash Gordon bucked the trend, narrowly missing out on a Zzap!64 Sizzler, the rest were given short shrift by Britain's favourite C64 magazine. Tarzan was the best of a bad bunch scoring a mediocre 50%, placing it a few percentage points ahead of Elite's hugely disappointing Scooby Doo on 42%. It's a Knockout earned just 34% while Ocean's Highlander did worse with 30%. But if you thought that's as bad as it got, you'd be wrong. Howard the Duck was awarded 19%, Judge Dredd 13% and another Ocean tie-in Cobra also 13%. These were truly awful games which lacked any care from the publisher. Software houses were desperate to get anything out in time for Christmas knowing that the license would sell the game rather than the quality of the game itself.

As was the case for the whole of 1986, the best releases of the year's final few weeks were original titles. They Stole a Million, Bobby Bearing, Championship Wrestling, Lightforce, Park Patrol, The

Bard's Tale, The Pawn, Trailblazer, The Sacred Armour of Antiriad and The Sentinel were all excellent games. The Sentinel in particular was so original that nobody was sure exactly how to classify it. Its brilliant and absorbing (pardon the pun) gameplay captivated gamers and earned it a Zzap! Gold Medal. Yet Zzap! decided not to score the game stating that its greatness placed it above their scoring system. Gary Penn described it as 'mind-blowing' and declared that it was 'the computer game equivalent of chess'.

Outside of the Commodore world rival company AMSTRAD was having a bit of bother regarding both its CPC computers and its newly acquired Sinclair range. Sales of CPC software had plummeted in the second half of 1986 and by Christmas sales were so bad that a number of major software houses had decided to discontinue support for the machine. To make matters worse, Boots announced that it would stop selling the Spectrum +2 due to the computer's reliability issues. Not a happy Christmas for Mr Sugar. Over at Atari, new man in charge and Commodore founder, Jack Trammel announced a new machine – the 16-bit 520 STFM. It was a clear challenger to Commodore's Amiga but availability of the Atari machines was extremely limited and only a few made it into UK shops in time for Christmas.

In non-computer news, the world's first heart, lung and liver transplant was carried out at Papworth Hospital in Cambridgeshire on 17th December 1986 whilst on Christmas Day the highest audience of all time for a British TV drama watched the Christmas Day episode of EastEnders. More than 30 million viewers tuned in to see Den Watts serve the divorce papers on his wife Angie after discovering that she had feigned a terminal illness to try to stop him from leaving her earlier in the year. Merry Christmas!

The biggest selling UK singles of December 1986 were an eclectic mix. Soft rockers Bon Jovi and Europe had huge hits with 'Livin' on a Prayer' and 'The Final Countdown'. Dance act Erasure's 'Sometimes' was a popular floor filler while The Housemartins' acapella 'Caravan of Love' also sold by the bucket load. However, the coveted UK Christmas number one spot however went to a re-release of Jackie Wilson's Reet Petite. The song was reissued in 1986 following the showing of a clay animation video on the BBC Two documentary series Arena.



Some of 1986's Christmas crackers!

December '86 was a pretty good time to take in a movie. Three very different but very successful films - ¡Three Amigos!, Little Shop of Horrors and Platoon - all hit the silver screen in time for Christmas. Almost inevitably, the latter would become yet another Ocean software tie in however thankfully, unlike so many that went before it, Platoon would be an absolute (Christmas) cracker.

'The Sentinel... so original that nobody was sure exactly how to classify it'

MARTIN GRUNDY
@C64Reloaded

Happy New Year Everybody! See you later in 2017 for more Reset Reloaded!

the Bear Essentials

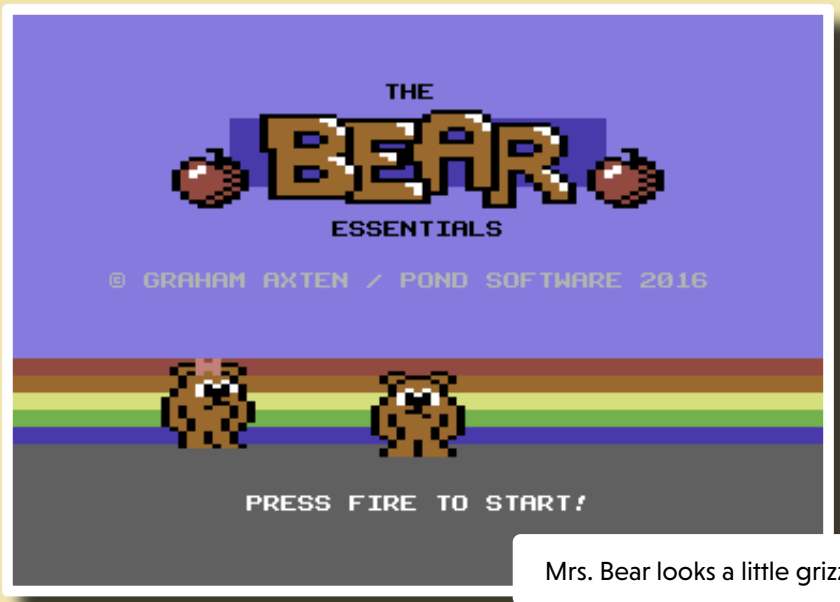
"Poor old Bear!"

It's a harsh world out there, and things aren't any better for Bear. A lazy sod, he's been playing too much Commodore 64 and as such has avoided all of his chores. His bedroom is a mess, the rubbish hasn't been taken out and the dishwasher is full. At the end of her tether, Mrs. Bear (Bear's wife) has had enough. Cracking the whip, she orders Bear out the door to collect enough fruit for the upcoming winter (326 apples, to be precise).

Bummer....

With the Commodore 64 locked in the cupboard, Bear has no choice to comply. It's a situation we've all been in and getting back to the Commodore 64 is all of the motivation one really needs.

"Get off that damned Commodore 64 and do your jobs!"



Mrs. Bear looks a little grizzly...

The Bear Essentials is the latest game from coder Graham Axten, who has toiled away on it for the past few years. Released by C64 game coding supergroup Pond Software on Christmas Eve 2016,



You could say I'm not the biggest fan of collect 'em up platformers - from the infuriating difficulty, to the pixel-precise jumps, they just never did it for me.

I wasn't expecting that Bear Essentials would try to follow in their footsteps. Except, that instead of copying those tropes, it'd rip them to shreds all in the aim of making for quite a fun C64 game!

Starting with being able to find extra lives, then the opportunity to earn continues, and finally, the presence of passwords means it can be enjoyed by those of us whose joystick wrangling skills are more tuned for blasting than platforming.

As a whole, Bear Essentials is incredibly well put together - in fact, this could easily have be a 90s era release! From the vibrant graphics, precise controls, and splendid presentation – it's one that could easily have sat alongside the best platform games on the market at that point!

There is an innate joy to exploring Bear's world, finding those apples and avoiding the critters getting in your way. Then there's cameos from Bear's friends consisting of C64 gaming icons, the varied map, and it's just so much darn fun! Very highly recommended!

ROB



Wow! I can't remember when I last played a game with a main character so full of, err, character. You know you're in for something special when you're greeted with the cutest of cute dance numbers by our friend Bear during the title screen.

Bright-eyed, delightful sprites and cartoon-like backgrounds add an important level of visual appeal and I dare anyone to not start bopping away to the in-game tune. Wonderful stuff.

Like all good platformers you rarely feel that death is caused by the game working against you, and practice and exploration definitely pay off as you steadily improve and grab those elusive apples for the encroaching Winter. Collision detection is precise and tight controls mean that Bear is surprisingly nimble.

The Bear Essentials also benefits from a number of solid game conveniences: level passwords, a central "hub" to explore the world, well-balanced difficulty, and neat little touches to keep things interesting.

Everything is polished and lovely and The Bear Essentials is one of those very special games where you want to go back and have just one more go to. Again and again.

After all, no-one wants to see cute little bears go hungry in the Winter.

ANT

the game is a non-scrolling multi-screen platformer at heart in which you must collect the fruit and make your way through each screen. It contains five different themed 'levels' to explore, representing the different areas around Bear's neighbourhood, which are separated by special checkpoint rooms. Each level can be explored in any order from the checkpoint room (except for the mine, which only opens after the other levels have been completed). Each level is also relatively non-linear with screens often having multiple exit points, sometimes making backtracking necessary to reach the exit.

Graham has also included both a handy password system and a continue system, allowing the player to continue from the last



Core! Look at all them apples.

Developer
Graham Axten

Publisher
Pond
http://pondsoft.uk/

Format
Disk (coming soon!) & Digital Download

ROB PLAYS
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eu7sIrIXG-Q

checkpoint room visited with all fruit maintained all lives have been lost. Alternatively, passwords are provided throughout the game which allow you to begin a new game from various locations.
Bear also contains quite a few Easter Eggs and nods to past C64 (and other 8 bit) game characters. Bear also pays tribute to other C64 titles in various ways which you will find in everything from the title screen, music, graphics and level layout.

The Bear Essentials is available as a free download from the Pond Software website. Pond also plan on releasing the game as a physical disk version for collectors early in 2017. £10 (plus shipping) will get you the game on a blue 5,25" disk, an A5 jewel case, cover inlay, instruction booklet and some bonus goodies. Pond can be contacted at shop@pondsoft.uk (subject: Bear) if you're interested in obtaining one.

Reset... RIPPER! 9/10



Bear contemplates divorce.



A daunted Bear wonders if **Just Eat** deliver apples.

AN INTERVIEW WITH GRAHAM AXTEN

We had a chance to have a quick chat with Graham Axten, author of 'The Bear Essentials' and all round good bloke.

Congratulations on the release of Bear. Can you tell us a bit about the idea behind the game? How did it all come together?

I had the character of Bear in my head for a couple of years before I started work on the game. My original idea was to make a tribute to Manic Miner, but with the C64's multicolour graphics. It was going to have 20 rooms where you collect all the items and then the exit opens. Once I started developing the rooms, I realised that it might be nice for it to be more 'open world' and that seemed to work well. I did manage to squeeze that original Manic Miner idea back in though.





The game has a rather distinct 'Thalamus' feel to it in terms of presentation, style and aesthetics. What is so special about the Thalamus games?

I'm really glad that shows in my game! I own all of the C64 Thalamus games, which are all very unique and highly polished. There were some awesome characters that I would love to see revived. I also really like the white packaging and Oliver Frey's artwork of course.

You have done an incredible job taking on coding, graphics and music for the game. Was there a particular element that you found more challenging? What were some of the difficult hurdles during development and how did you overcome them?

Making the music was definitely challenging. I found I had to be in a very specific frame of mind. This was one area of the game where I was thinking maybe I would get somebody else involved to help out. There is so much to learn about the SID chip, but perseverance and determination paid off I think. In the end though, I think I managed to get some simple, catchy melodies into two sound channels. My main aim was for a nice bass line and beat to function as background music to the game, something that wouldn't be too annoying when repeated.

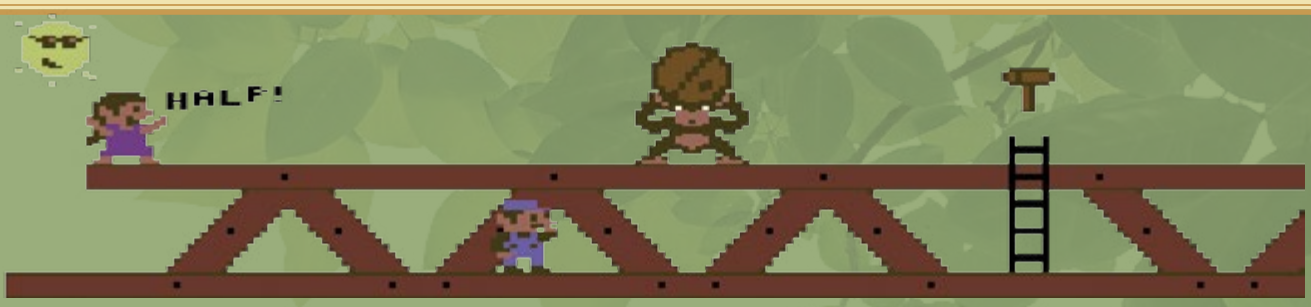
You reached out to the C64 community for feedback during development. Was that helpful?

In the early days, it was really helpful and I got some great advice which really helped the project to take off. There were some brilliant suggestions. Towards the end of the project I just relied on the beta testers for feedback as I didn't want to be overwhelmed by differing opinions!

Tell us about the process of designing Bear. Were there lots of changes made along the way? Were there any particular tools you enjoyed using in the production process?

I designed a map for the game very early on, and this was something I had by my side the whole time. It was really important to refer to





it, and to look at how the different areas were fitting together. The map and areas changed a few times - the mining area was originally a construction site with a big crane to climb, and cloudy was just the Bear Stalk but with rooms sprouting off the sides. I think the most important tool for the project was 'CBM .prg Studio'. Arthur Jordison has created a really nice development suite, and he is always happy to help with problems.

During development you joined Pond Software. Did this have an effect on the development of the game?

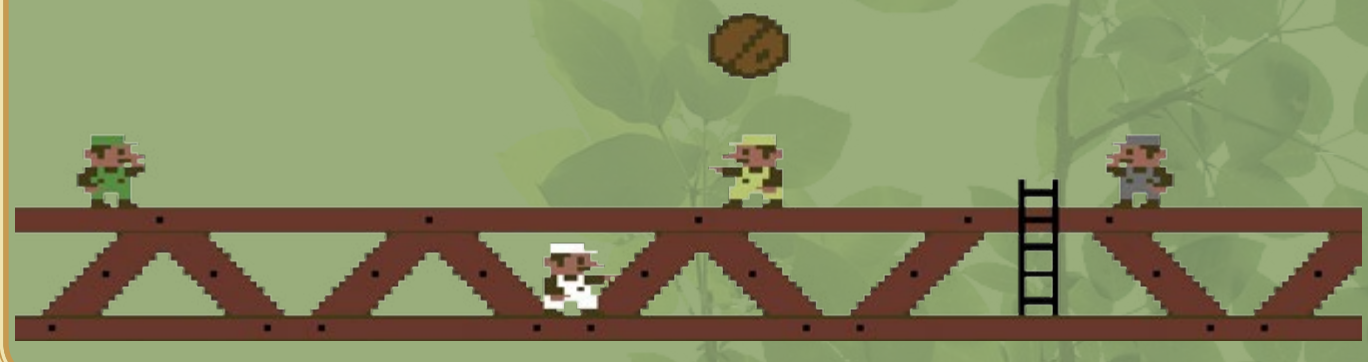
It was just nice to know that Bear had found a home, and to have a reassuring feeling of being part of a team. I found it helped to motivate me! Vanja set up the Pond forums so we can chat to other people and also chat amongst ourselves and show our projects to each other, and help out with testing. I'm really proud to have that Pond logo fade in at the start of my game.

There are lots of little Easter Eggs to be found in the game, including a rather brilliant last level. It must have been fun coming up with those ideas and implementing them? Were there any ideas that you couldn't put in?

I wasn't sure about that last level at all for a long time. It's quite a pace change, and splits the game into two parts really. Vinny really helped out here though, he was brilliant at testing the game and giving me feedback, and gave a few suggestions that improved the game. It was fun adding the cameo Easter Eggs, and it was nice to get the proper permission to include them! I think in all, I managed to get all my ideas implemented, but the upcoming disk edition will have a few extras hopefully – we're planning on packing as much onto the disk as we can!

You also coded Bonkey Kong, which placed 3rd in the Reset 4kb Game Compo and was a rather clever twist on Donkey Kong. How did you come up with the idea for that game?

Bonkey Kong was a really fun game to make and I'm chuffed it went down well! I was trying to think of a popular game where the whole thing could be turned on its head, and I just woke up one morning with the idea of playing the Donkey Kong villain. I was also thinking about the Donkey Kong 2 Game & Watch, where you control Donkey Kong Jr, and have to rescue your Dad from Mario's cage.





What's next for Graham Axten on the Commodore 64? Are there any other plans to experiment on other platforms?

Next will be the disk version of The Bear Essentials – working on a few extras and the manual and artwork with Vanja and my niece Charlie. After that, I have lots of ideas I would like to try out, either on the C64 or the Spectrum (which I have just started researching). I have another project that I have shown to the rest of the Pond team, which is a deluxe version of an old game I am a big fan of, so will carry on with that too.

Favourite biscuit?

Does Jaffa Cake count? Those things are awesome. Either that or a Malted Milk!

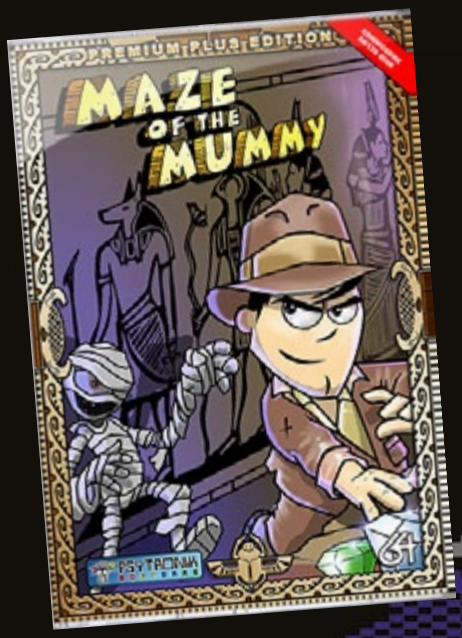
Reset would like to thank Graham for his participation in this article.







MAZE OF THE MUMMY



Maze of the Mummy has been one of those C64 games which has been in development for what feels like years. With a preview appearing in 2014, there's certainly been plenty of anticipation for its release since then.

Taking more than a few cues from an old PopCap game known as Mummy Maze, in **Maze of the Mummy**, you're an intrepid explorer (looking somewhat like a rather famous adventuring archeologist) tasked with exploring the mazes of a series of cursed pyramids, all in an attempt to locate the Pharaoh's treasure buried deep within.

Each of the mazes is presented on a single screen consisting of an 6x6 grid - and here you'll see your explorer, an exit, a series of walls, along with various creatures and traps. Starting out with the titular Mummy, as you move through the game, they'll be joined by others such as deadly scorpions.



Developer
Magic Cap

Publisher
Psytronik
http://www.psytronik.net/

Format
Disk, Digital Download

ROB PLAYS
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-PWiznel-Xo



It's refreshing to see a different style of puzzle game hit the C64! Whilst it may have taken a heck of a long time to finally arrive, Maze of the Mummy is well put together, with some lovely artwork, presentation, music, and plenty of levels to play through.

I found the controls worked nicely - very responsive, and easy to use. The difficulty curve is reasonably well balanced - starting off easy, and getting tricky within a few levels as more elements and enemies get introduced.

One of the things I found really handy with this one is the save system - being able to jump in, and complete a pyramid in a (relatively) short session to have it all saved to disk is a great way to be able to enjoy it in moments when I've only got a small pocket of time available!

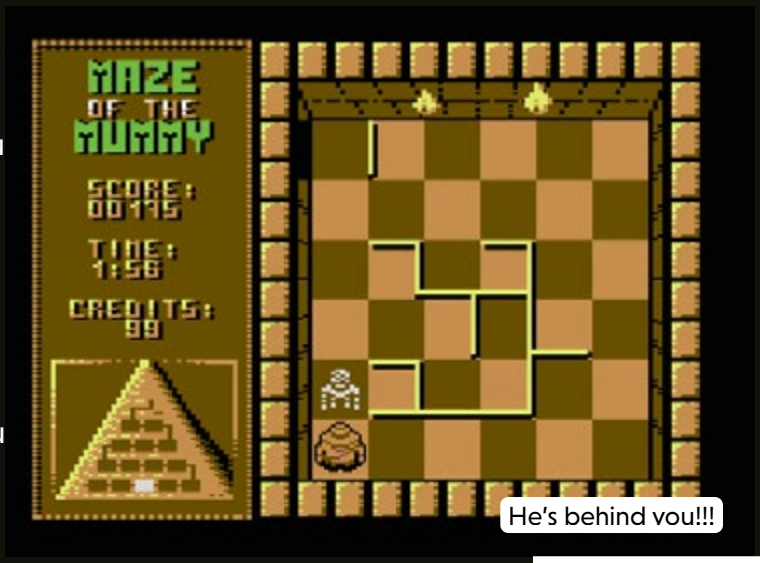
ROB

Completing each of the levels involves you making your way to the exit before time runs out, in a sort-of-turn-based way. You move the explorer (using a joystick in port 2) in any direction. Once he's moved to the next square, the enemy creatures will follow suit. Each creature has its own movement patterns - the Mummy always moving towards you on one axis, whilst adjusting its position on the other as an example.



The map screen - abandon hope all ye who enter here!

Thus, solving a puzzle requires you to carefully plan out your moves in order to lead the enemies into a trap, or in such a way that you can reach the exit before they reach you.

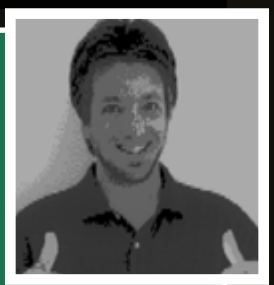


If it starts to go wrong, you do have one handy feature - taking back a move by pressing Space. However, you can only use it a limited number of times, deciding when you really need to use it can be tough. There's also the ability to hit Fire to skip a turn, which can come in handy when you're in a tight position. If you're caught, the screen will reset and eat up one of your lives. Thankfully you start out with 9 of them, so you'll get plenty of chances in your quest to solve every maze.

Maze of the Mummy has quite a large amount of content - 225 levels all up, with those being spread across 15 pyramids to explore and puzzle your way through. Before you start tacking them, you're presented with a map showing those you've conquered, along with those now available to you. What's most handy is that you can tackle them in any order, and they're kept that way when you start a new game - at least until the C64 is powered down.

Maze of the Mummy is available for purchase in premium and budget disk editions from Psytronik and also as a digital download from the Psytronik itch.io shop.

8/10



Now, this is a true brain buster! I had heaps of fun guiding my little tomb raider through each of the levels in the first few pyramids.

The block based movement works well and while I found most of the initial levels fairly easy, there were a few tricky tombs in there that had me scratching my head for a while. Once I got the feel for the movement of the mummy, I was able to plan ahead and become much better at the game.

The additional hazards and enemies in later tombs add to the challenge and I particularly enjoyed the little dust filled fight when two baddies are led to the same space.

Everything is there – cool game mechanics, serviceable graphics and brain busting puzzles. The save system works extremely well and is well thought out, making you work to complete each pyramid before saving. Maze of the Mummy is not a game you will finish in a single session, however it is certainly good enough to warrant a complete play-through. Great stuff!

KEV

Moonspire



Moonspire reminded me so much of Martin Walker's Citadel I wanted to go and read the "Walker's Way" Zzap! Diaries (and I would have if Moonspire wasn't so great!).

Thumping good music, the shining chromed pipes and beautiful metallic sprites, deep exploration, and most importantly the different fire modes -- it's all there, sending familiar signals to my brain.

The great news is that despite these similarities Moonspire is a wonderful game unto its own. Those exploration elements really kick in as you desperately try to find the last few Orbs. Difficulty levels seem well balanced, too, which leads to some nail-biting moments as you juggle weapons systems while your health gets sheared away from enemy fire.

Things do get a little samey -- there's only a limited number of defencecraft and scenery changes aren't huge. And sometimes engaging the correct fire mode was a little tricky, but ultimately Moonspire is all class.

Oh, and enemies don't respawn. Gaze upon Moonspire and be ... errr ... inspired, future C64 devs!

ANT

It's a funny old life, innit? One minute you're enjoying a hot chocolate and a bit of telly on your homeworld of Arcturus 7, and the next you're manning a retrofitted Extra-Vehicular Activity pod, all plasma cannons and jury-rigged rocket launchers, and belting towards the towering Moonspire of the dreaded Draxx empire in a desperate bid to restore warmth (and 724 free-to-air-channels) to your planet. Rob and Ant love new C64 games AND exploring cavernous spires filled with deadly enemies, so let's see what they have to say.

Spread over six large play areas, Moonspire launches the player into a far-flung, futuristic, flick-screen exploration adventure, navigating a total of 264 rooms deep within the titular Draxx stronghold.

After selecting the difficulty setting, audio, and controls, the game begins. You steer your heavily armed and armoured EVA pod with either a joystick in Port 2 or the keyboard and must move about the rooms of each level either avoiding or destroying the various Draxx defences.

Your ultimate goal is to collect all of the Control Orbs (stolen from your planet's thermal-boosters by those nefarious Draxx). Collect all of the Control Orbs on a level and the exit opens up, allowing you to move to the next.

The Orbs are scattered about each level, some stockpiled in storerooms, others cleverly guarded by the defence craft. This means that thorough exploration is required to ensure you uncover all of the Orbs. To root them all out you'll also sometimes need to activate teleporters that squirt your atoms to a different area on the same level.



Your EVA pod is an a-maze-ing piece of machinery.

Your EVA pod is a versatile, if homely, beast, and has multiple fire modes. Move and fire and your weapon systems lock into that direction allowing you to deftly strafe. Alternatively, holding down fire while stationary deploys anchors that lock you in place but allow you to fire in any direction - handy for holding a defensive position to do a tactical sweep of the room.

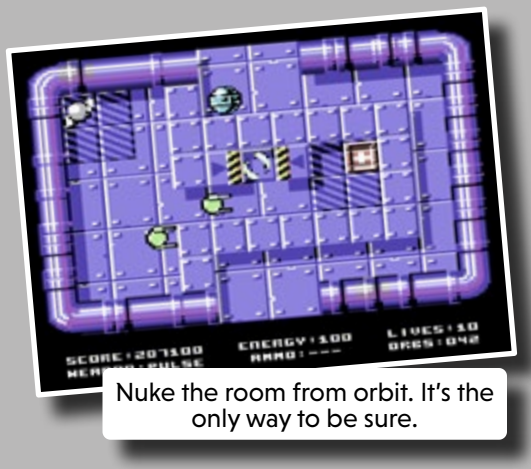
ROB PLAYS

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PW8cX-Zngxo

Developer
Dušan Milivojević & Ari Yliaho

Publisher
RGCD
http://www.rgcd.co.uk/

Format
Cartridge, Digital Download



Nuke the room from orbit. It's the only way to be sure.

Despite the onslaught of the Draxx defence craft you can give as good as you get. Using either the relevant number key or the spacebar you can select from or cycle through a range of ordnance: plasma cannon, homing missiles, or room-clearing mini-nukes. Clever use of these weapons is needed based on the type and number of enemies in your vicinity.

Health and ammo packs are also scattered about the levels, replenishing your EVAs health lost due to collisions with the enemy and their assaults, or filling your weapon's magazines with the relevant ammunition (your plasma cannon has infinite ammo, fortunately).

When your health hits zero you lose one of your five lives (Fear not! You get a bonus life every 1000 points). Lose all of your lives and Arcturus 7 is doomed to a frozen fate as the Draxx empire chortles into their own mugs of hot chocolate.

9/10





Moonspire really came as a total surprise to me! I'm quite the fan of blasters with a bit more bolted onto them, and the level design here offered that in spades.

From thoroughly searching each level for pods, to picking the right weapon to clear out a room of enemy drones, or even balancing your ammo supplies - it offers lots of action to battle through as you search each level of the Moonspire for the stolen pods.

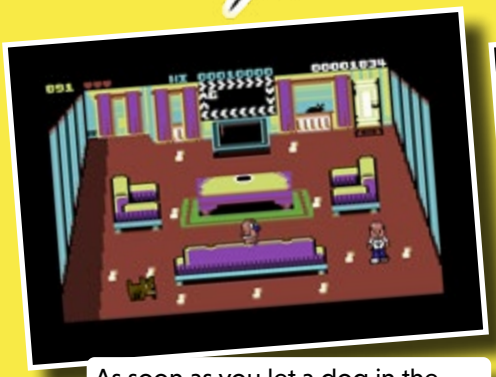
It might take a bit of time to get used to the alternate moving and firing modes, but once you do - you'll be cleaning up those enemies like nobody's business. Joystick controls are tight, and I never felt I was fighting the game. Offering keyboard controls is one of those little bonus that shows how the polish through and through.

Then there's the SID music which offers some rocking music to battle out to, and feels more than well suited to the exploratory action gameplay.

Moonspire sums up the best of what the C64 scene offers in 2016 - an excellent release which takes a simple concept, expanding it to create a unique entry into the library!

ROB

MY LIFE



As soon as you let a dog in the house, there's a mess.



Vacuuming was always a real chore for Eugene.

Poor Eugene is a lot like you or me. Much as it pains me to make the comparison, his best years are behind him. He can't complain too much... as a young lad he had a good life, being a popular and attractive fellow. Now he can scarcely recognise himself when he looks in the mirror. Gone are the lustrous locks, replaced by a shiny dome. The six-pack now bears more resemblance to a barrel. Those carefree days of fun and no responsibilities are distant but fond memories.

These days, Eugene is settled into a life of drudgery. Every morning through the week he has to force himself out of bed and drag himself to do a job he hates, for a boss who hates him. How did life ever turn out like this? Like the rest of us, Eugene

I must admit, I was surprised to hear about this game. I mean, of all the games to pay homage to, Mikie never struck me as one that would be high on anyone's list. It was a strange, little-known arcade game and its C64 conversion was more or less swept under the carpet. Still, the people behind My Life obviously have a lot of love for it and have written a real love letter here.

You can't knock My Life for its presentation. Graphically, it's really good, for the most part. The sprites are superb although some of the backgrounds could possibly be a touch clearer. Sonically it's also excellent, with some great music and decent sound effects. As far as gameplay goes, well, it plays a lot like Mikie. Whether you like this game will depend a lot on whether you liked that game. I was never a big fan but I must admit I did quite enjoy this.

As an homage, My Life is really good. The love for the original comes through loud and clear and it really could be a sequel if you didn't know better. As a game in its own right? It's good, but it does suffer from the same problems that Mikie had. That said, I would say it plays better than the original which is probably the greatest compliment I could pay.

PAUL



ROB PLAYS

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m7TdVO3AsB0

Developers
Achim Volkers, Trevor Storey & Saul Cross

Publisher
Psytronik
http://www.psytronik.net/

Format
Cassette, Disk and Digital Download

is living for the weekend when he can finally have the lie in he deserves and the chance to do things he actually likes, such as grouting the bathroom or unblocking that drain in the garden. What a joy.

Seeing his way through the week is never easy, though. Eugene's life is riddled with bizarre situations which he must overcome purely to get through each day. Even getting to work is an exercise fraught with danger. Before he can leave an area he has to complete a phrase, obtaining letters by stomping on objects lying on the ground. Unfortunately, life is conspiring against him and he'll find anything from postmen, dogs and babies to rogue vacuum cleaners hell-bent on stopping him in his tracks. Luckily, Eugene still has a nifty turn of pace so he is able to outrun these menaces, if he keeps his wits about him.

Will Eugene prevail and make it to the weekend? His life is in your hands!

7/10



There's no doubting that My Life is easily one of the most visually engaging Commodore 64 games to be released in many years. I love the detail in the characters and the dazzling backdrops, and there's a huge amount of colour and movement on offer thanks to the charming sprites. My Life is a great showcase of what the C64's VIC-II chip does best.

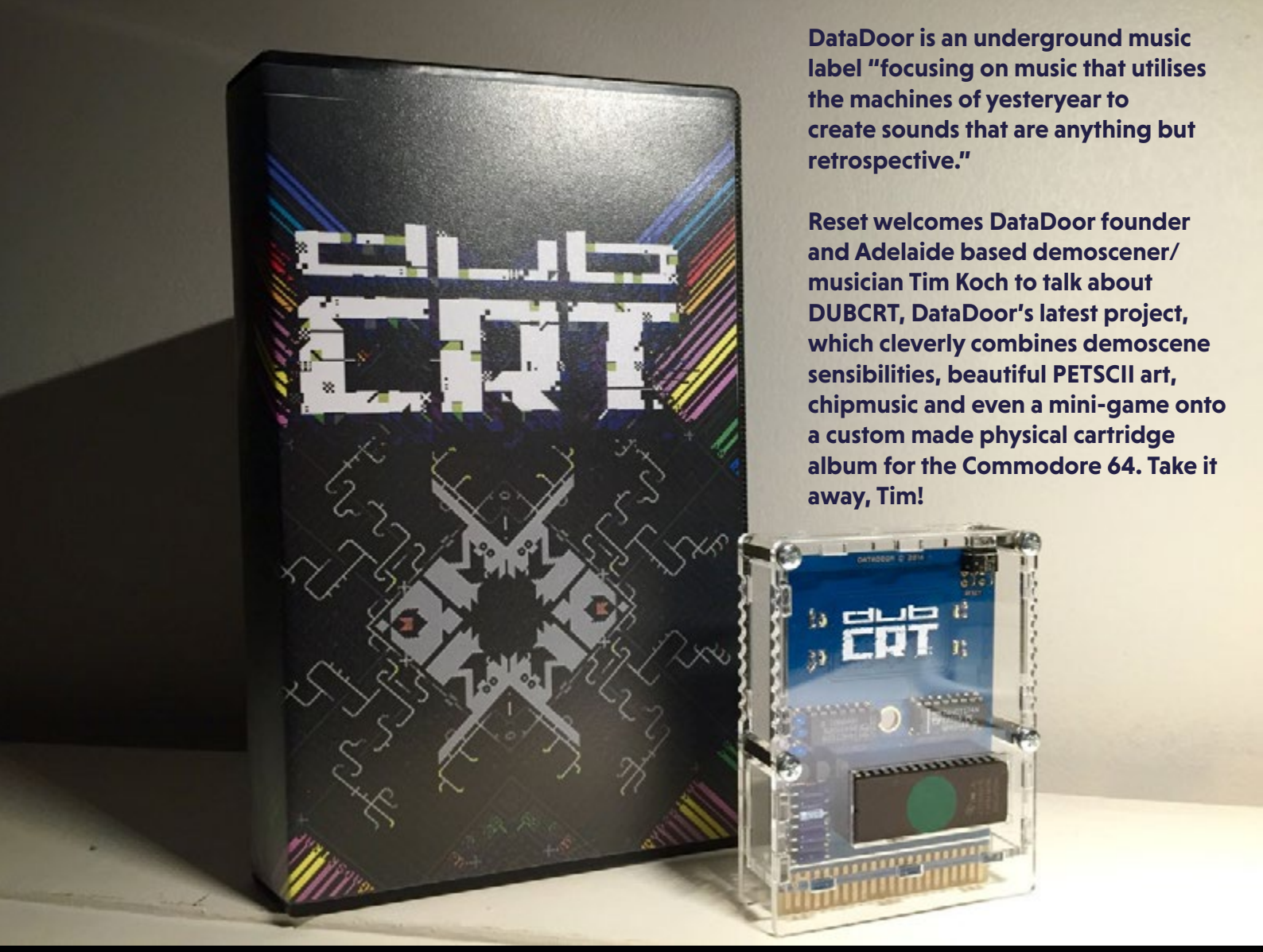
The relentless difficulty on the other hand drives me mad. Completing each stage is more of an exercise in frustration than anything else. I hate getting stuck in place for valuable seconds because some tiny lightning bolt hit me, and jumping up and down in place to collect letters is incredibly annoying when you have Terminator-esque enemies bearing down at you at high speed.

I just feel like I'm constantly under attack at all times, and some maps have dead-ends that are all-too easy to get stuck in. I get that My Life is, at its heart, a maze game where you have to put care into where you position yourself, but the overwhelming pace and small field of movement prevents such forethought.

Or maybe I'm just getting too old for these kinds of games... that pretty much sums up my life too :)

CAMERON





DataDoor is an underground music label "focusing on music that utilises the machines of yesteryear to create sounds that are anything but retrospective."

Reset welcomes DataDoor founder and Adelaide based demoscener/ musician Tim Koch to talk about DUBCRT, DataDoor's latest project, which cleverly combines demoscene sensibilities, beautiful PETSCII art, chipmusic and even a mini-game onto a custom made physical cartridge album for the Commodore 64. Take it away, Tim!

HISTORY

Quite some time ago I had a discussion with Goto80 in regards to a zany idea of releasing a Commodore64 hardware cartridge that featured his music combining SID songs with some form of glitchy visuals to accompany an album's worth of material (ten songs or near enough). We threw around a whole swathe of ideas around in regards to outlandish features and mutual inspiration that formed a basis for what would end up being close to two years of gradual development.

Goto80's music has always appealed to me in that his stance on chiptune / chip-music is that of a progressive outlook in favour of vacuous nostalgia-ridden arpeggios and 'conventions' that only succeed in keeping the genre hidden and obscure. Goto80 suggested 4Mat (Matt Simmons) as a potential coder since he had been active in terms of assembly coding and was eager to sink his teeth into something more considerable than smaller demos. iLKke had worked with 4Mat previously on a PET demo and he was therefore quickly nominated for the role of any incidental PETSCII logos and other graphics. Similarly 4Mat's coding efforts had to that point been pointed at more of a glitch / progressive approach with his demo groups ORB and Atebit.

The basic ground rules were that all content of the cartridge (visually) was to utilise the PETSCII (or CBMSCII) character set and to hopefully avoid using too much conventionality in regards to menus or instructional text. Complete with all of its odd flaws, the Commodore character set (PETSCII or CBM ASCII) provides a quirky yet cool vocabulary for interesting graphics (with potentially low memory usage).

Somewhere along the way I released the Goto80 album | | on the label (DataDoor) and we decided to release a cut down version of the code that had been thus far written for DUBCRT on CSDB with three tracks from

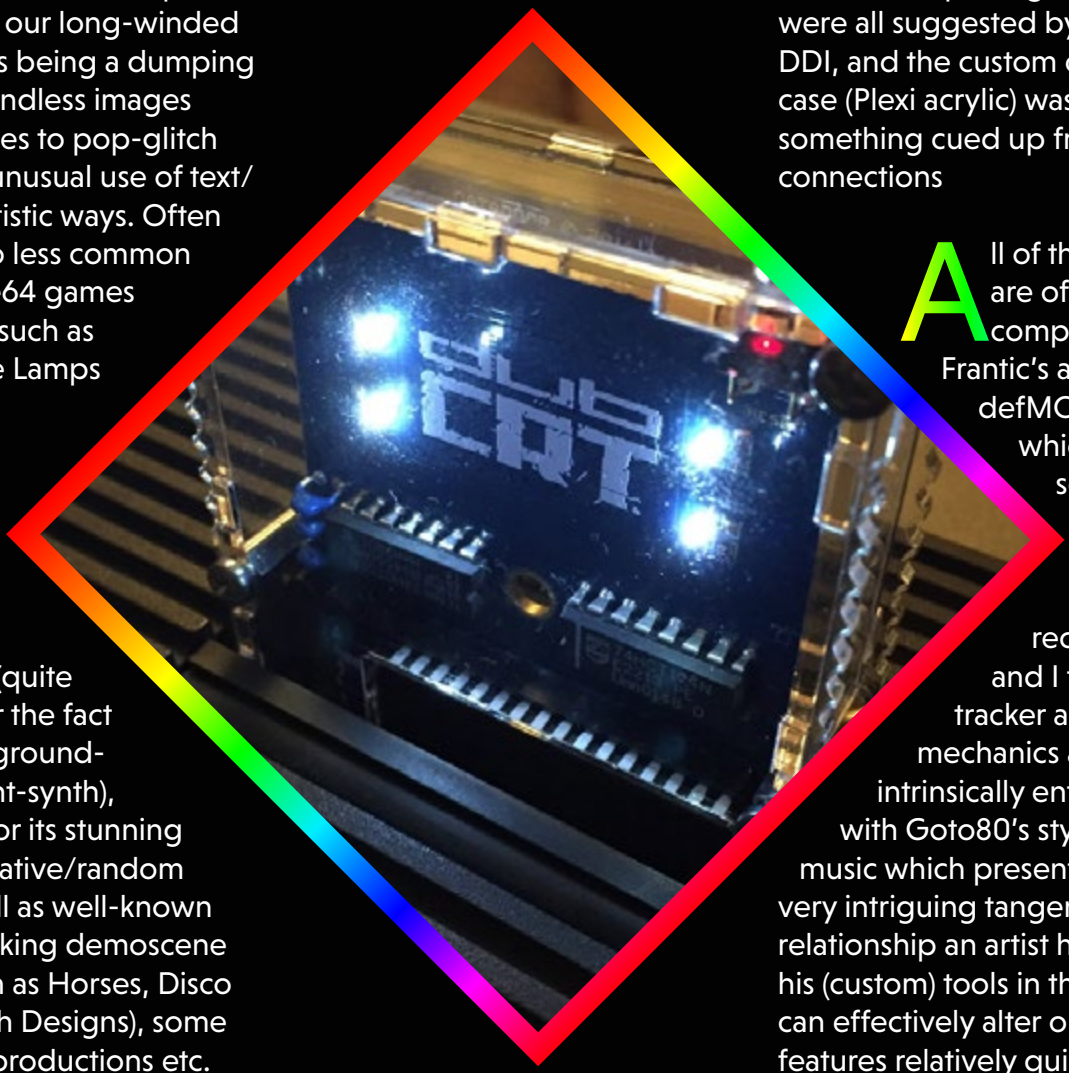
the album, using three visualisers to match each track. The response to that small promo / music-disk was very good, so it was on with development of the DUBCRT proper (interesting trivia – for 95% of the development time the cart was called Mega-kart!).

...for 95% of the development time the cart was called Mega-kart!

Endless inspiration was drawn from 1960s optical art, with our long-winded email threads being a dumping ground for endless images and references to pop-glitch culture and unusual use of text/PETSCII in artistic ways. Often references to less common Commodore64 games were made, such as Master of the Lamps (for its music and puzzle elements), Frankie goes to Hollywood, Jeff Minter's Psychedelia (quite obviously for the fact that it was a ground-breaking light-synth), Moondust (for its stunning use of generative/random music) as well as well-known ground breaking demoscene releases such as Horses, Disco Calculi (Wrath Designs), some AteBit/ORB productions etc.

In regards to visual style and aesthetics, personally I have a huge fascination with geometric and optical art from long gone decades, and directly tried to influence the overall visual output by mostly force-feeding endless pictures into our email threads of artists such as Victor Vasarely, Bridget Riley, Josef Albers, Richard Allen etc. but also with huge head nods towards innovative video synthesis figures such as Stephen Beck, Eric Siegel, Daniel Sandin, Bill Etra etc. etc.

Some outlandish features were considered such as a slot for a second SID that could be added, an audio input that could control the visuals from an external sound source, a mini LED screen that endlessly produced weird text variations and gibberish for each song, however expense rapidly became an issue and we just settled for a nice custom designed case as the standard CBM style cartridge cases (whilst sturdy) are god-awful ugly.



The PCB itself was designed by DDI in the States, who have been incredibly helpful in relation to the logistics of the hardware of the entire project. The fine etching of the DUBCRT logo on the PCB itself, the LED array and the red pulsing reset switch were all suggested by Dale at DDI, and the custom cartridge case (Plexi acrylic) was also something cued up from his connections

All of the songs are of course composed in Frantic's amazing defMON tracker, which has now somewhat received a public release recently and I think this tracker and its mechanics are so intrinsically entwined with Goto80's style of music which presents the very intriguing tangent of the relationship an artist has with his (custom) tools in that Frantic can effectively alter or amend features relatively quickly to meet his needs. Also keep an eye out for Scannerboy's updated midi-sync user-port dongle that is currently being updated to more of a legitimate midi-interface / controller for use with defMON! (Previously it was just a midi/DIN clock-sync for defMON / MSSIAH to sync with external midi gear etc.).

In regards to the actual content, the cart boots into a cryptic puzzle that acts as the main menu - the operator can choose one of eight songs with an accompanying visualiser. Each visualiser can be altered via keyboard input to tweak certain features, with one visualiser being an interactive game of sorts with a joystick in Port #2. Upon exit from each visualiser / song, the main puzzle or 'menu' reflects a change in the puzzle pieces that the player has gained. If the puzzle pieces are arranged correctly, then new features are unlocked, and once a second puzzle is solved, a whole new section is revealed! (HINT SID remix module).

In closing, the whole process has been an amazing journey from big-talk concept to an actual piece of hardware, and enormous thanks to Goto80, 4Mat and iLKke for their expertise, endless ideas, and amazing implementation. I am planning on doing a big blog post complete with endless pics and vids at some stage, and who knows, we may remix the whole concept and do a DUBCRT V2 next year!

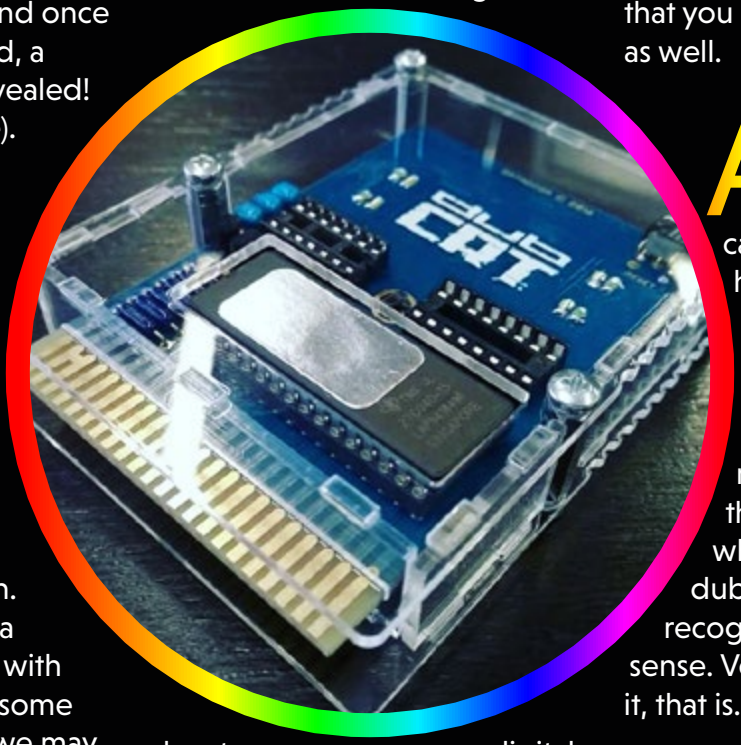
Whilst in the process of writing this article, the DUBCRT order page (via bandcamp) went live, and it proceeded to sell out in the space of about 2.5 hours, but the good news is that a new batch of DUBCRTs will be available later in the year via a UK based C64 hardware vendor who has licensed the product

PERSONNEL

Goto80

Dub is an all-encompassing term, a concept more than a genre or an abundance of heavy bass frequencies. How do you think a dub mentality applies to older micros and their associated sound capabilities?

Someone once wrote that dub is the only genre that went digital without an effort. Most other genres went to war in the 1980's to fight about digital this and digital not that. But dub just kept on dubbing. Even if it was really techno-centric with effects and mixers and instrumentation, the societal change in technology didn't really matter so much.



It's a similar thing with chip music. There's some kind of basic approach that stays the same, regardless of technological changes. Making music with text, with sounds from basic mathematics. Not wasting resources. I mean, you can do that without computers, too. And maybe it's these things that will define what chipmusic is in 20 years and not the aesthetics of it, like today.

Anyway, for me it's important that dub has a feeling of non-control, of being a bit out of order. Unpredictable. And with the C64 it's easy to bring that forward. There's a lo-fi unpredictability in the hardware that you can amplify in the music as well.

And then to bring all of that into a cartridge that you can plug into an old home computer, and navigate in a mysterious interface that doesn't really make sense. That is kind of dubby, to me. And then of course there is the remix mode, where you can really dub out the song beyond recognition and beyond sense. Very dub. If you can find it, that is.

iLKke

Your PETSCII work is featured in the DUBCRT and you also had a large amount of input in regards to the planning of the design of the cartridge, what thoughts do you have on the PETSCII character set and how you approach using it in a refreshing and creative way.

I feel what gives the PETSCII character set its lasting artistic

"I never learnt assembly, this was always some 'unfinished business'" for me.

relevance is that it was only moderately successful at being universal and generic. Much like the 16 colour palette that accompanies it, it is universal enough to allow a breath of expression, yet limited enough to provide a fun and constructive creative restraint.

As for the way I'm using it personally, I think I've mostly just transplanted a couple of styles I've developed elsewhere that just happen to work with PETSCII. In this regard I've done little to explore the limits of what the character set offers.

"There's a lo-fi unpredictability in the hardware that you can amplify"

4Mat

You have had a large history of being regarded as a scene / game composer Matt, what inspired you to begin coding in assembly for the C64 or otherwise.

When I had a C64 in the '80s as a child I never learnt assembly, this was always some 'unfinished business' for me. So when I got back into old machines in the late '90s I made a real effort to learn it, which was considerably easier with the resources we have available now. C64 gets a bad rap for its BASIC but in hind-sight the lack of dedicated commands for the custom chips means learning assembly is a much easier leap to make, because a lot of the things you'll be using day to day are pretty much done the same way as in BASIC.

Initially when Goto80 approached you in regards to coding the DUBCRT framework, what attracted you to the project?

Goto80 had originally seen a few of my 1k demos, particularly "In a loop" I think and he had similar ideas to what I'd been working on in there. Obviously the thing with doing small programs is you don't have a lot of room for data, so finding ways to generate interesting data is going to increase the quality of the production. I was using the SID registers to generate data and that lead to some interesting things because the waveforms can produce a variety of results, from more natural objects using sinusoidal waves to chaotic or binary items which seem more industrial.



Even though the size limits are gone with DUBCRT the basic premise of using the SID to generate the visuals remains.

Can you outline how your code allows the SID activity to determine the nature of the visualisers in DUBCRT?

The usual approach is to dig into the music driver and find interesting variables there to attach to. However with the SID you can also read out some of the registers directly which I tend to prefer, because it's the actual output of the music rather than the output of the player before it gets to the SID chip. Attaching your visual variables to that in a few different ways can throw up different kinds of visuals, I like to get the routines to a point where they'll produce a complete 'performance' for a track that I think sums up the track that is playing. Unlike more traditional demo coding that won't necessarily come from optimized code, in fact, there's some pretty inefficient routines in there which produced a more satisfactory visual result for me than when I improved them, so the originals stayed in.

GENERAL PROMO INFO

DUBCRT is a music album, interactive light synthesizer and remix gadget released as a Commodore 64 cartridge. With music and visuals from some of the most prolific experimentalists of the 8-bit scenes, DUBCRT taps into 1960s modernist forms, 1970s dub, 2000s glitch aesthetics, and 2020s sustainable computing.

DUBCRT features:

- Eight songs ranging from ambient to IDM and drum n' bass
- Visualisers that react to the music, and that are user-controllable
- A secret remix module that allows you to re-interpret all the music on the cartridgeuses only 64 kilobytes

All of this uses only 64 kilobytes – equivalent to 1.5 seconds of MP3-audio. This is possible thanks to clever use of resources, and by making all the graphics in PETSCII, the colourful and quirky ASCII-variant of the Commodore 64.

THE CAST

Everyone involved has a background in the so called demoscene, an underground creative computer subculture around since the 1980's.

Goto80 (audio, Sweden) was one of three nominees for best C64-composer at Commodore's 25 year anniversary, and regularly performs live around the world. He also does academic research on text mode graphics and retro computer cultures.

4-mat (programming/design, UK) makes tiny audio-visual art for various 8-bit computer systems, and works with game audio. He was also one of the first in the world to make chipmusic on the Amiga in 1990.

iLKke (graphics/design, Australia) is a notorious pixel artist and composer, who started in the Amiga demoscene in Serbia.

Ray Manta (concept/design, Australia) is the alias of veteran electronica producer Tim Koch, who initiated and organized the project.

The Bandcamp-release also includes remixes from Julien Mier (Finland), Datassette (UK), Mesak (Finland), Ssaliva (Belgium), Jellica (UK), Faderunner (Canada), Tim Koch (Australia), Ioeb (Sweden), Sqein (Sweden)

FACTS

DUBCRT is released by DataDoor in mid-2016 as a hardware cartridge for the Commodore 64 and as software that can be run on modern computers with emulators such as VICE.





The world's first music album, interactive visualizer and remix-tool on a C-64 cartridge. And it's all in just 64 kilobytes!

DUBCRT plugs straight into you Commodore 64 and offers 8 songs with reactive and interactive visuals in a 1960's modernist style.

Hidden in its mysterious interface are functions to control the visuals and transform the music beyond recognition.

With music by Goto80, code by 4mat and graphics by iLKke, you are in for a computer ride into the unknown!

DUBCRT also comes with 11 remixes from artists such as Datassette, Julien Mier and Mesak.

New edition of cartridges available for pre-order at: sales@sharewareplus.com







Very limited edition!

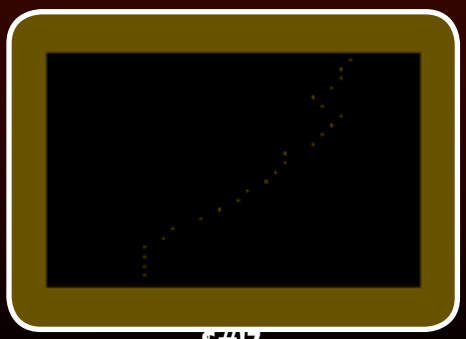
DATADOOR

CRAPTASTIC

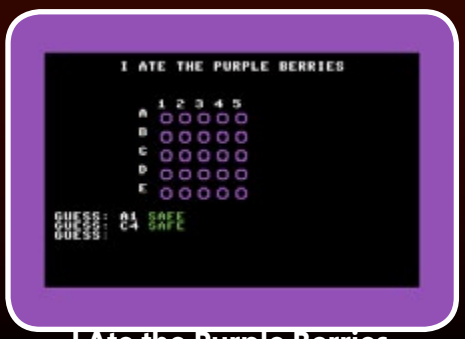
The 2016 Reset 4kb 'Craptastic' Game Competition was a great success with 21 amazing entries! Here, the team of judges (Unkle K, Ant, Rob, Merman, Cam, Paul & Richard) take you through each game with their reflections, words of encouragement and constructive criticisms!



M4573RB4G3L5



$#!7



I Ate the Purple Berries

21
M4573RB4G3L5 (7.14)
By Cout Games

Game comment:
A number guessing game based on "Pico, Fermi, Bagel". A random two-digit number is selected with no repeating digits. After each guess, the C64 will respond with the answer pico, fermi or bagel to determine the accuracy of the guess help you find the secret number. Not quite as it seems though, as the C64 is quite moody in this one!

"The coding is handcrafted from the best 12-year old script kiddies that are known to exist and spelling of equal value if you look at the listing." - Cout

Judges' Comments:
Unkle K: Cout has his own unique brand of humour, on display here by making a game that makes the C64 hate you (and you it).

Merman: Artificially unintelligent... A strange mix of spelling mistakes, difficult to decipher presentation and a way to cheat (if you spot it).

Richard: Terrible use of spelling, which literally made me laugh. The deliberate PC programming style mistakes inside the C64 program also had me in stitches. Hilarious, but naff. Definitely not Craptastic!

20
$#!7 (8.14)
By Cout Games

Game comment:
A game where you're in control of the flow! Venture through 10 levels of crap as you try to prevent the flow from hitting the sides of the toilet bowl (screen). Use you left and right cursor keys to keep the flow in the centre. But be quick to react, the flow is fast and random!

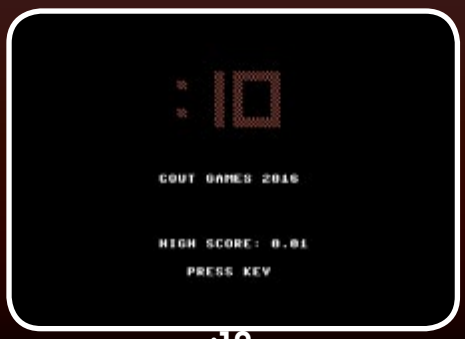
Judges' Comments:
Ant: A mostly non-interactive "canyon runner" is not fun. Lots of "options" though? Hmm.

Merman: The Bristol Stool Chart turned into a non-game. The longer it falls, the higher it scores. Very basic indeed.

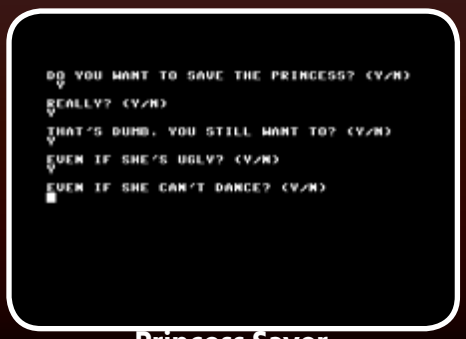
Cam: Well, it certainly lives up the 'crap' in the 'crap game compo'! Not sure if there's much of a 'game' though.

19
I Ate the Purple Berries (9.71)
By Cout Games

Game comment:
A Minesweeper-style game with a difference! Based on a real news story, you select berries out of a punnet of 25 which may be poisonous. The C64 will select 5 random berries and if you eat one of those berries, the game is over. Survive eating 5 berries to win the game.



:10



Princess Saver



Valentine's Day Shopping Simulator

Judges' Comments:
Unkle K: In Australia, there are lots of berries that want to kill you, this time they were in the supermarket. This game mirrors the real life event quite accurately!

Merman: Bonus points for using a Simpsons quote, but a very basic grid-based guessing game.

Cam: It's a shame there's no actual test of skill here, this could have been a good Mastermind-esque game!

18
:10 (10.43)
By Cout Games

Game comment:
A reactive response game. The aim of the aim is to hit the key at exactly 10 seconds based on the C64 CPU clock. A 10-second clock will be displayed initially and will begin to fade to black. The best score is the lowest time without going over the 10 second limit.

Judges' Comments:
Ant: A bare bones but a bit fun "Beat the Bomb" game. My favourite COUT game in the comp.

Rob: :10 is a simple enough reaction tester - watch the clock count down, and try to hit a key as fast as possible when you think it reached 0. There is no variation here - after a few goes, you'll be able to time the countdown precisely, and after that, there's no reason to go back to it!

Richard: Nothing original here. Although it does remind me of one of those sub games on a well-known UK TV game show, The Cube. It's also faster on NTSC, which makes guessing the time before reaching 0.00 harder.

17
Princess Saver 2000 (11)
By Freakin Frankie

Game comment:
More than a game, Princess Saver 2000 is a journey if you will. A perilous adventure in which you own psyche and strength will be tested. Are you strong and brave enough?

Judges' Comments:
Ant: Frankly, my dear, I just wanted to keep saving that beautiful princess. A very silly "game".

Rob: Do you think you can be the right kind of hero? Can you save the Princess? Well, this one is less about saving the Princess and finding out if you truly have the mettle for saving her. Answer enough questions, and you may be in with a chance!

Cam: What just happened here? Did I just suffer a stroke?

16
Valentine's Day Shopping Simulator (18.57)
By Karmic

Game comment:
Can you find the perfect gift for your slightly picky special someone? Valentine's Day Shopping Simulator will test your Valentine's Day shopping skills... Just make sure you make the right choice!

Judges' Comments:
Ant: A deep reflection on the futility of modern relationships and the rise of consumerism. Actually not that deep, but you struggle on, regardless.

Cam: I was on board with this game until I offered my partner a $1,000,000 dollar bill and they didn't like it! AS IF.

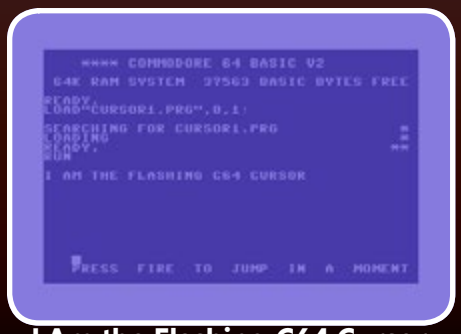
Paul: This genuinely cracked me up and I had to keep playing it to see if there was ever a different outcome. Thankfully, it appears to stay true to its concept in that regard, but that does mean that you'll probably only ever load it once, maybe twice. Brilliant idea, though.



Watschinator



Firefighter Jenny



I Am the Flashing C64 Cursor

15
Watschinator (20.29)

By Endurion

Game comment:
Watschinator is a little game in which you participate against an opponent in 'SLAP FIGHT'. You battle against your opponent trying slap him. You can also block his slaps as well. A 4kb slap fest, yay!

Judges' Comments:
Unkle K: Slapping is easier and you can't hurt your knuckles. It's a win win!

Rob: Sometimes, all you need to do to chop a concept down is to go for the minimalist approach, which has certainly been done here in Endurion's fighting game. Fire to hit, Down to block - and simply try to see how many individuals you can defeat. Some nice presentation and large sprites do add a bit of character to this one, and it's good enough for quick plays now and then.

Richard: I have never actually seen this type of game made in 4KB before. It is probably the first time I ever seen a 'SLAP 'EM IN THE KISSER' game on the C64 in a bout of matches. You'd be used to seeing this very late at night up the pub, a nightclub or school. Absolutely hilarious. This game really had me laughing out loud!

14
Firefighter Jenny (21.14)

By Oziphantom with sound by Saul Cross

Game comment:
You are Firefighter Jenny. Your mission is to climb up a high building and rescue who, or whatever is on the very top of the building. Don't let the bird knock you down, and also don't get burned by the flames.

Judges' Comments:
Ant: Simple variant on Fire Trap with some good potential. Gameplay needs to be tightened.

Merman: I wanted to like this a lot, for attempting vertical scrolling and the way it gradually becomes more difficult. However, I was put off a little by the repetition of the level layout and no visual representation of what you are saving. It needed a bit more polish and variety to challenge the best games in this competition.

Cam: A nice little take on the Crazy Climber formula, but too easy for my taste.

13
I Am the Flashing C64 Cursor (22.29)

By Craig Derbyshire (Privy Software) with music by Vanja Utne.

Game comment:
I am the Flashing Cursor is a single button reaction test. The C64 cursor has to try and keep itself on the scrolling message, and avoid getting hit by other characters near it. The game requires perseverance and patience, but give it a good go and be rewarded.

Judges' Comments:
Rob: Talk about a weird one to round this compo up. Here, you take control of the C64's Cursor as you go platforming across the text mode screen. It mightn't look like much, but the fact an 8x8 block of pixels can induce challenge in this way certainly means this game is a little more than meets the eye!

Merman: I'm impressed with this for its very original premise, and it is surprisingly taxing too. It takes a few goes to get into the swing of things but there is a real challenge here to get a good score.

Richard: Simple PETSCII. Good use of the smooth scrolling, and hiding of the ugly $d016 split. The game over screen 'YOU



Picross


Antarctica


Zombie Massacre

SUCK' is quite insulting though. Atmospheric music. Quite addictive but very hard.

12
Picross (22.86)
By Oziphantom

Game comment:
A Commodore 64 conversion of the popular pixel puzzle game from Japan. Work through the matrix to find the hidden image. A neat and well converted game from Oziphantom, crammed into 4kb and even includes a built in high score saver!

Judges' Comments:
Unkle K: A solid 4kb conversion. The built in high-score saver is a welcome bonus too. I would have preferred joystick controls though, but beggars can't be choosers!

Rob: Another classic puzzler gets brought over to our humble C64's, and it's quite a nice one. Match the counts for each row and column, and try to reveal the picture without making too many mistakes. Plenty of puzzles on offer as well, but truth be told - the WASD control scheme doesn't really suit playing on a C64. It's not enough to ruin it, but it certainly is cumbersome as a result.

Cam: I love Picross, and it's about time there was a Picross game on the C64! I'd love it if there was an updated version taking advantage of all that extra memory.

11
Antarctica (23.29)
By Antarctica

Game comment:
Antarctica is a simple little game, written by the oldie cracking legends, Antarctica. This is a game which you need to try and take control over a swirling sledge around the Antarctica. Pick up as many supplies as you can against the clock. The game is lost if the player either runs out of time, or falls into the icy water surrounding the iceberg island.

Judges' Comments:
Unkle K: Reminds me of Stars & Rings Deluxe, but with a funny back story! Antarctica is a nice little one button game that plays quite nicely. A lovely little effort from Antarctica and a perfect fit for the compo.

Merman: This is a different idea to all the other entries and earns extra marks for having the choice of four difficulty levels. The time limit on each game makes it good to come back to for a quick blast. Graphics are nice but simple.

Richard: Although the idea reminds me of Stars and Rings the game idea is quite original. The sleigh is constantly spinning, and using the fire button to move the sleigh forwards then let go fire to stop works quite well. This is a really funny game. It may look crap, but it certainly doesn't play crap. It is a good one button wonder.

10
Zombie Massacre (23.57)
By Wanax with graphics & music by Saul Cross

Game comment:
Zombie Massacre is a single screen shoot 'em up. Based in the desert, the idea of the game is to blast the zombies before they have 'brains' for lunch. It's a tough battle out there. Dare you survive the onslaught of Zombies?

Judges' Comments:
Rob: Nothing spells Zombie Apocalypse better than being stranded out in the desert with a whole bunch of the blighters on your tail, when all you have is a mere pistol. Run around, and blast 'em without being bitten - the challenge comes from the sheer numbers, all well animated. There's some tense gunplay here, with the music providing great atmosphere as well!

Merman: The odds are definitely against you in this zombie game. The wrap-around



Granny's Teeth



Winky Blinky

screen layout is confusing and at a quick glance it is difficult to tell your player from the zombies. However, the spooky music sets a good tone and there is some satisfaction in blasting away.

Richard: Love the graphics, music is quite good. Not much else to see, but it is a 4K game after all. Very funny, and quite good. After the compo, I would love to see this become a full scrolling shoot 'em up.

9
Granny's Teeth (23.67)

By Richard Bayliss with graphics by Saul Cross

Game comment:
Classic platforming action from Richard Bayless, straight from 1982! Written from scratch, but in the style of a games creator game. You control Granny Hegarty who was babysitting her grandchildren the other night. Only to find out the next morning, her house has been ransacked. Also her false teeth had gone missing. The idea of the game is to simply get Granny Hegarty up the staircase and retrieve her teeth. As each level progresses, things inside the game will change.

"After seeing loads of terrible games, created with Creations / Mastertronic's / Mirrorsoft's Games Creator, I thought it would be pretty funny if I actually created something that sort of simulated it, and squeeze it into 4K." – Richard Bayliss

Judges' Comments:
Ant: An almost perfect amalgamation of the old dodgy Mastertronic platform games. Lovely sprites and surprisingly more-ish gameplay.

Rob: There is something to be said for deliberately emulating the feel of the Darling's Games Creator here - a package that's certainly known for its share of truly crap games. But here, Granny's Teeth isn't as terrible as you'd expect. Sure, the music is dire, and the progression is rather simplistic as each level introduces a new hazard - but I have to give props for deliberately mimicking that style. So much so that I thought it was actually produced with said tool on my first glance!

Merman: As an homage to Bionic Granny, Richard nails the look & feel of that terrible game. It's a real shame that the controls are let down by the awkward stair-climbing, else it would have been a bit more fun to play.

8
Winky Blinky (25.29)

By Roy Fielding (Privy Software) with music by Vanja Utne

Game comment:
Doh, watch those eyes as they spin. Press left or right to select whether the game is a WINK or a BLINK. Get it right, score a point. Get it wrong, it's all over. A charming game with a simple yet challenging concept from Roysterini!

Judges' Comments:
Ant: Mind-blowing audio and visuals and a perfect example of finely tuned gameplay. Once you're "in the zone" you could be lost for some time. Excellent!

Rob: Forget your rhythm games, with Winky Blinky, it's about making the right movement of the joystick to match the eye movements of the dapper fellow on screen. Did he wink, or did he blink? You might not think it's much, but it makes for some intense gaming in my books!

Richard: Remarkably funny. Had me laughing at first load of this game. Could this be heading towards the Craptastic category?

7 Attack of the Mutant Cabbages (26.4)

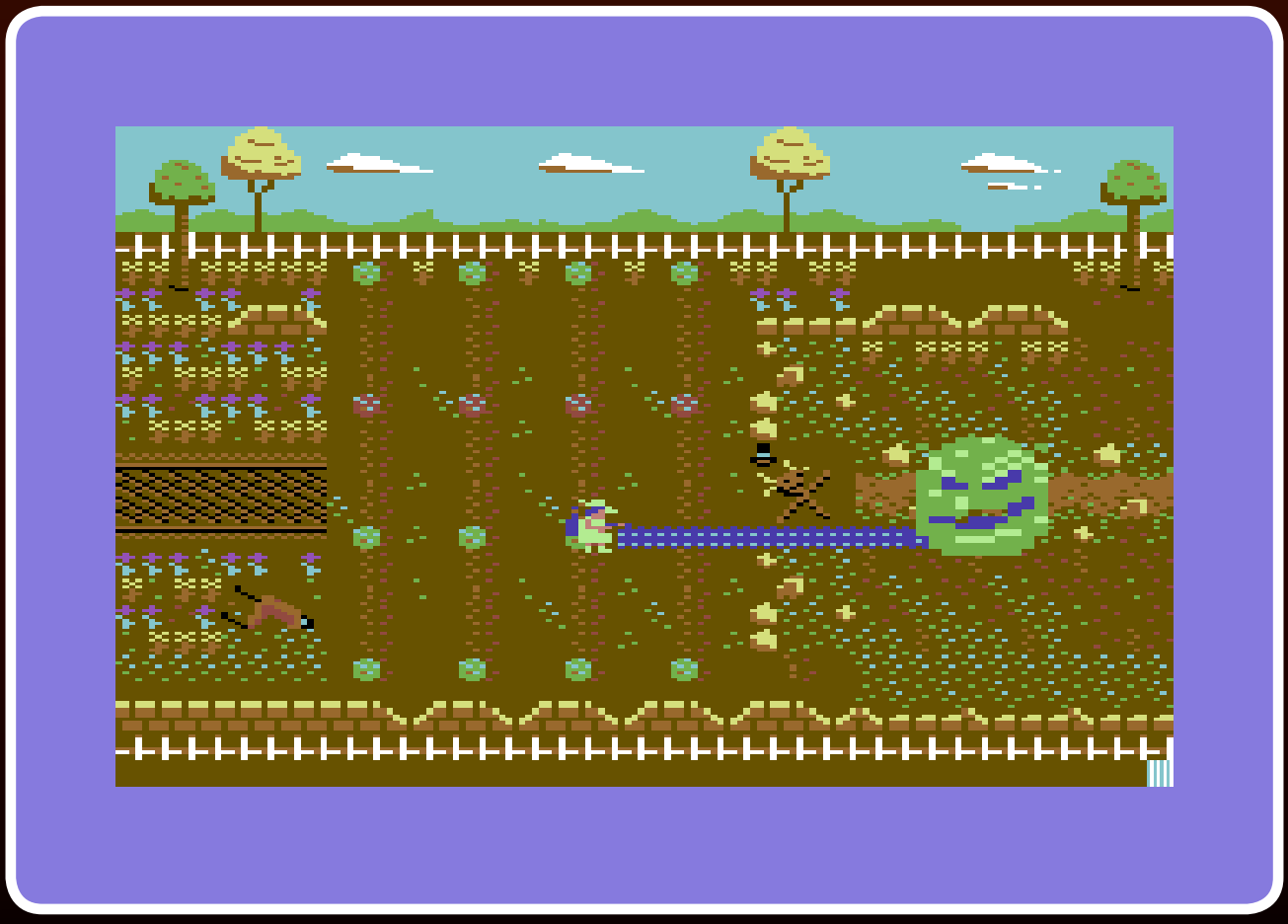
By Anthony Stiller with music by Vanja Utne

Game comment:
Help old Gertie save her cabbages from evil, mutated cabbages by beating them back with her handy spray backpack. A lovely little game from Anthony Stiller, made even more special considering it's his first attempt at coding on the C64!

Judges' Comments:
Rob: Oh no! Granny has to fend for herself against the onslaught of mutant cabbages. Thankfully she's armed with a water backpack that'll cause 'me to grow and burst. The growing mechanic adds some real challenge here - as you learn to prioritise the smaller ones and grow others to slow them down. Very frantic, and very intense... which is amazing coming from a first time coder!

Merman: Ant succeeds with his first programming effort, a really great looking game thanks to the help of Vanja. There is something satisfying about seeing the cabbages expand and explode, and the difficulty ramps up as those bad guys rip up your allotment.

Paul: Hard to be objective about this one as it's Ant's game, but in all fairness it's really well put together and a lot of fun to play. It reminds me of an Atari 2600 game in some way, but I can't remember which one, although there are obvious hints of Dig Dug and The Empire Strikes Back in there. Excellent effort!





6 Rise and Shine Professor Miggles (26.57)

By Paulko64

Game comment:
Rise and Shine Professor Miggles is a conversion from the Pico 8 virtual console. Get out of bed and get yourself organised for the day before the time runs out. Earn extra points by snoozing for as long as possible after the alarm goes off, just like real life!

Judges' Comments:
Unkle K: This game mirrors my life I as I already do this every morning. The adrenalin rush of hitting that snooze button to see how far you can push your sleep in is intense, in real life and this game. An amazingly charming title that is loads of fun and unsurprisingly a fine conversion from Paulko64.

Ant: Very clever, fun and original collect-'em-up. With a cute bunny! An absolute hit at our local C64 night!

Rob: Can you get Professor Miggles ready for work in time? This lovely adaptation of a game devised for the Pico-8 is really well put together, and makes for a great score chaser as you try to stay in bed as late as possible and have enough time to collect all your items of clothing to get out the door on time.

5 Super Ski (27.29)

By Andreas Gustafsso with graphics and music by Vanja Utne

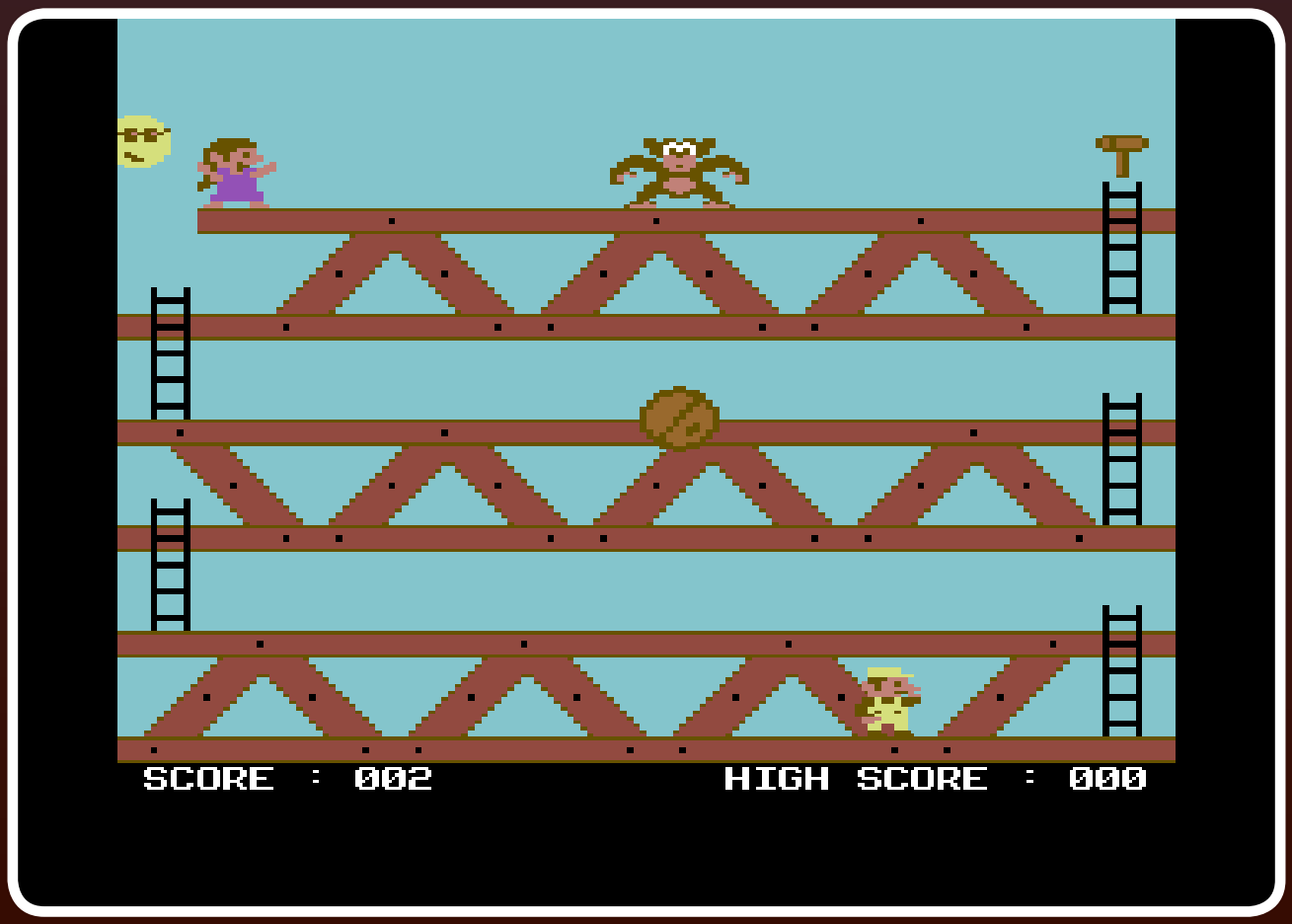
Game comment:
Downhill slalom skiing from Andreas. Collect all the flags and avoid the obstacles in this charming arcade game.

Judges' Comments:
Cam: This is great fun! With multiple courses to master and a great feeling of movement, this will keep you coming back for more. A solid effort!

Paul: This is my favourite game of all the entries, and one I can see myself playing on a long-term basis. I didn't think it could win because of the way the competition's scoring system worked but it's excellent nonetheless. Even if it had only one course to master I'd love it, but with three levels it's so much better.

Richard: The game concept is quite clever. The control of the skier is very hard to handle and was intended that way. It also makes me laugh where the player can also crash into the side borders and lose the game. It plays well and you probably might want to have a few more tries to keep beating your score. This makes a good party game.





4 Bonkey Kong (27.57)

By Graham Axten (Privy Software)

Game comment:
Graham's take of the original Donkey Kong, with a twist! Instead of controlling the world's famous plumber, you play the role of the gorilla, Bonkey Kong. The idea of the game is to simply drop barrels on to the plumbers before they get hold of the mallet and knock you off the scaffolding.

Judges' Comments:
Merman: A clever twist on an age-old idea, well presented and playable. It soon becomes tough but it is addictive.

Cam: This is very playable and a great spin on an old classic! I ended up playing this a lot more than I expected. It looks a treat, too.

Richard: Although I have been used to Donkey Kong being the villain, it is original and quite funny to see the gorilla as the hero for the change. The barrel dropping concept is very simple, but for this game it is original. Quite an easy score attack. Player is controlled quite well. Speed of enemies vary, giving a more challenging appeal. Remarkably funny and ludicrously crazy. Brilliant!

3 Lumberjack (28)

By Eric Majikeyric (Protovision/Megastyle) with graphics by Roy Widding and sound by Vidar Bang

Game comment:
Chop down that tree but don't get hit by the falling branches. A wonderfully playable game from Majikeyric that just begs for one more go!

"Rip off your grey and boring suit and reveal the red flannel shirt you are hiding under you clothes. Let your beard grow and equip yourself with a big axe and enter the woods. Just admit it, you've always wanted to be a LUMBERJACK!" – Majikeyric

Judges' Comments:
Unkle K: Perfect execution and a simple yet compulsive casual game. Beating a score of 200 seems to be the challenge and is gonna be tough. Wood chopping isn't this much fun in real life, that's for sure!

Merman: And now for something completely different... With the Monty Python song ringing in your ears, it is great fun to chop down that tree. Great graphics and music, and it fits that old template – easy to pick up, hard to master.

Cam: Seriously if this was released as a Game & Watch game back in the early '80s it would have gone down as an all-time classic. It's a great example of packing a simple but effective gameplay mechanic into 4K





2 Dog

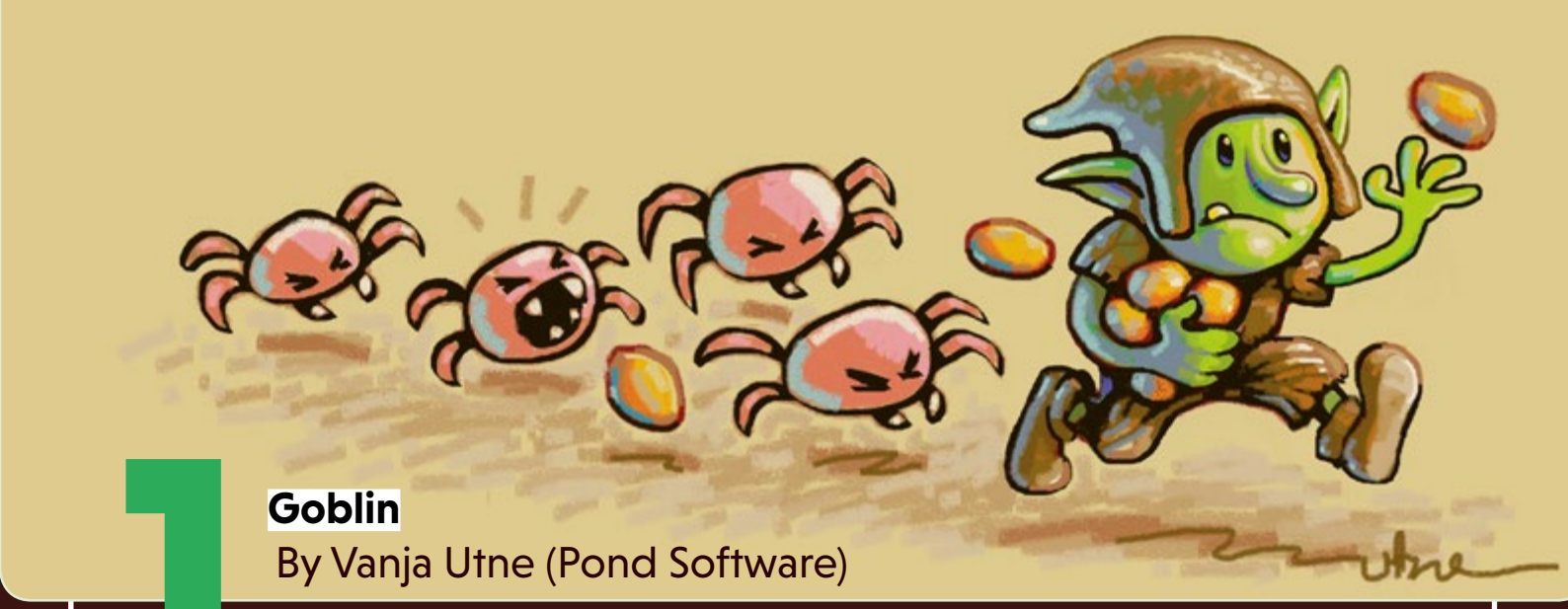
By Vanja Utne (Privy Software)

Game comment:
Run around in Shouty Human's garden and poo as much as possible without getting caught. A very 'craptastic' entry from Vanja and a fun game to play in its own right. Thoroughly recommended and a great high score challenge.

Judges' Comments:
Ant: The kids genuinely loved it! Fun and silly and you poop on a lawn. Seriously great. Best match for the comp theme.

Rob: Forget shoot 'em ups - this is a poop 'em up! In Dog, you play the titular beast as you aim to run around your owner's lawn, and poop on as many squares of grass as possible. The controls are simple enough, and the tension from having to charge your poop bar make for some intense score chasing gaming.

Paul: A game about crap, rather than a crap game. That's an important distinction because Dog is actually really good! Fits the brief perfectly, appears way more complex than you'd expect from a 4K game, is very funny and very playable. This one was my winner.



1 Goblin

By Vanja Utne (Pond Software)

Game comment:
The Goblin Town potato cellars have been invaded by giant potato bugs! It's up to you to salvage as many potatoes as possible.

Judges' Comments:
Unkle K: A stunning entry from Vanja! Graphics and sound are of an extraordinary quality in Vanja's own unmistakable style. What also impresses are the perfect controls and variety offered in only 4kb. A wonderful effort!

Ant: A highly playable and adorable platformer squeezed into 4k! I'd happily pay money for this game. Not crap in any way so damn the rules!

Rob: This hands down as to be one of the most polished efforts in this competition. A simple platformer, where you're tasked with salvaging the goblin's potato supplies. Run around, collect them all and avoid the nasties is what the goal is. And, truth be told? It's put together incredibly well - charming graphics, lovely music and tight controls to make a wonderful package, that certainly would have made for a nice budget release back in the day!

Merman: I was looking forward to this platformer from the first preview shot, and it did not disappoint. Full of great presentation touches and fun to play. Very cute work from Vanja.

Cam: A smart, clever and fun game that works within the 4K limit very well. I love the cute sprites and the feel of the character's jump. Having an energy bar instead of a one-touch death system is a nice touch too.

Paul: This looks lovely and plays very nicely. I found it a little on the easy side, though, and I tend to lose interest in games that are a lesser challenge. That said, it's a brilliant effort for a 4K game.





The competition was extremely close and tough to judge, but every single entry brought a smile to our faces. Like any competition, there could only be one winner, and this time it was Vanja Utne of Pond/ Privy Software with her game, Goblin – an amazing achievement for a 4KB game! The staff of Reset Magazine send out our congratulations to Vanja for her incredible effort! We would also like to thank all of the competitors for their participation and hard work and amazing games. Also a big thank-you to the judges and competition sponsors, Retro Computer Scene, Bitmap Books and Protovision.

You can play the games on the official compilation disk (available as a free download: **http://cloud.cbm8bit.com/resetc64/craptastic_compo_final_2016.d64**) which was coded and compiled by Richard Bayliss (thanks Richard!) with some fantastic logos from Simon Quernhorst (thanks Simon!).



Thanks again for a fantastic competition and enjoy the games!

COMMODORE 64

MY LIFE

PSYTRONIK

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Actual C64 Screens

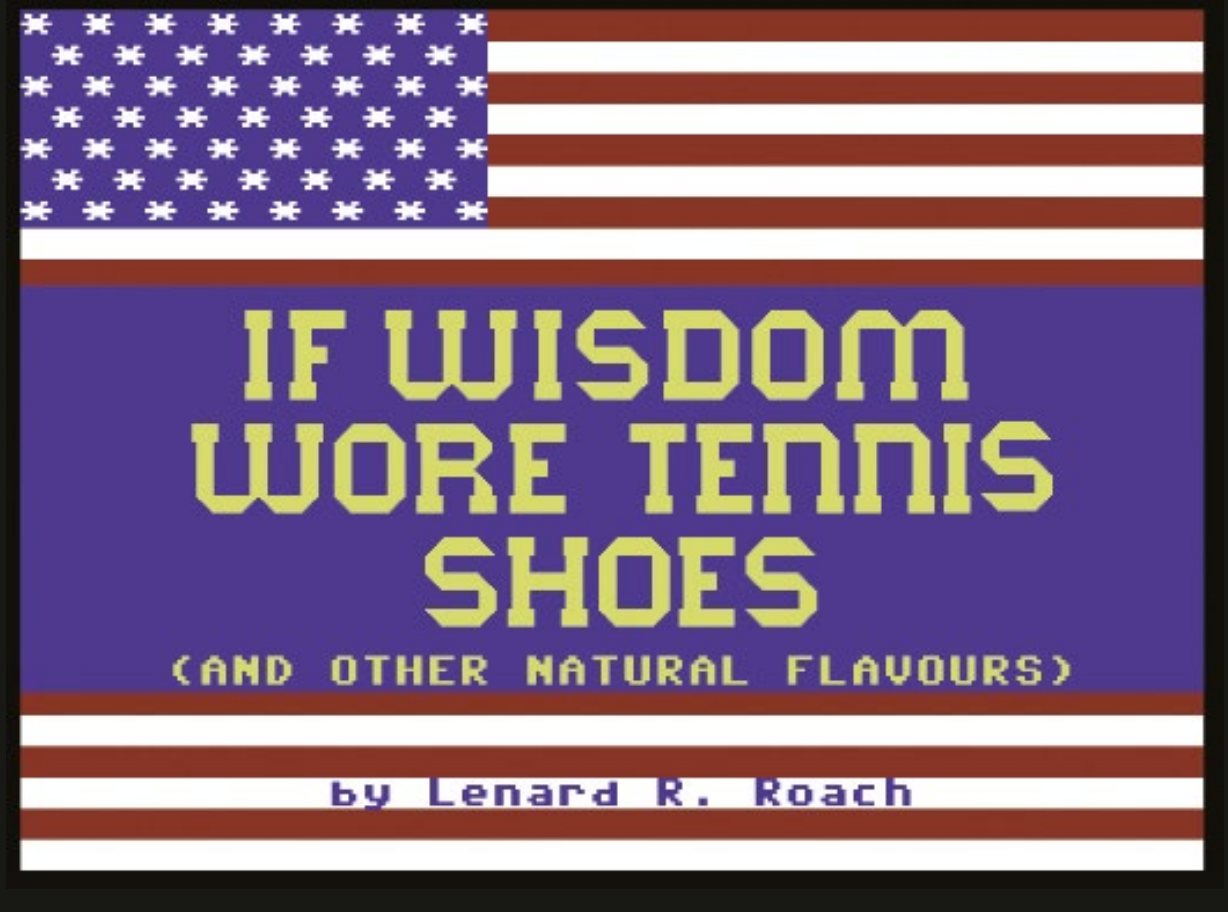
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As I sat back in my office chair, I stared at the Commodore 128 that was before me and thought, "What infinite possibilities have been given to us who live in the Free World, with just the simple design and construction of such a machine." When you think about it, after thirty years since it's release in the very early 80s, the Commodore computer still has new and innovative software and hardware coming out for it. I don't think a month has gone by without some ingenious person coming out with something new. I still lay in bed once in a while and try to think of either what I can write in the way of new software or re-code an already existing piece of software.

There was a time back in the early 90s that I honestly thought I could stop working outside my little shanty in urban Kansas City, Kansas (aka: God's Country) and do nothing but sit at home in my underwear and code programs for the Commodore. This was an adventurous idea that was fueled by my first successful sale of a 26-block program called "Check It Out" to a nation wide Commodore magazine. Yeah, I was thinking, "Three or four programs a month, sell them to a magazine will more than pay the bills, put groceries in the pantry, and put some aside in savings, will more than suffice this dude!" I should have known that "Providence suffereth him not to live" as my main source of a purchaser of new Commodore software went dry the very next month and with it my hopes of being an independent writer and coder for the machine. Thankfully I was wise enough at the time to not quit work so I went back to the 6 am to 2 pm bump and grind with no loss of pay, but with the loss of a dream.



'Where is Commodore going? There's a question to ponder.'

Moving forward from '92 to now, it seems that, despite the fact that Commodore is no longer mainstream, it still seems to slowly grow in popularity again. Some of this generation's gaming community want to step back in time and play some of the 80s style of video games that were indigenous to the Commodore, and even some gamers were adventurous enough to get the actual hardware and software to run these games to get the entire "retro" feeling. I sometimes think it's silly to be fifty plus years old and still play video games on occasion, but I'm from the era when video games were first introduced. Everything that the modern day gamer has got its nucleus from games and coders like me. Now I have to admit that my kind of

programming revolves around more of productivity software right now with my personal fascination with budgeting and finance, so any "luxury" programming like games and video puzzles escape me, but before I get to that state where the ground hogs deliver your mail I'd like to learn "freestyle" Commodore game programming. As I have said in many different articles in the past, I have a small collection of game "construction sets" where all the user does is enter bits of information and the program does the coding for you. I think the downfall of such software is the user could not sell his pre-packaged creation to a software company because the coding mechanics was already copyrighted, thus making whatever the programmer made an instant ownership of the corporation holding said copyright. Here in the 21st century, Commodore users still using pre-packaged game coding software may not give a feline's flatulence about copyrights, but simply want to have fun on the Commodore. Rumors have reached this Ancient One's ears that today's retro programmers are using Commodore emulators on the laptop or PC to code and taking the finished product out of emulation and either putting it on disk or directly uploading the image to the Internet. I've tried doing that with my Commodore word processing and the felgercarbing emulator crashed and I lost half a manuscript that I battled to write and finish, with no hardcopy or soft copy backups. Retard! So, I must stand in a very old schoolhouse where only real Commodore machines are the best for doing Commodore work; emulators can bite the big red potato!

Where is Commodore going? There's a question to ponder. With the creation of better and faster PCs there comes the destruction of the old to make way for the new. Commodore also fell this way when its processor became too slow and the memory inefficient to keep up with the demands of the times. But someone, or a group of someones, must have decided that this aging 8-bit still had capabilities that would make it useful in the 21st century and beyond. All one had to do was increase on board memory capacity and a faster processor. This innovation came to fruition as accelerators, attachments, and internal upgrades made it possible for the Commodore, who at one time was the big dog, to keep up (though taking up the rear) with demands for more onboard space and a rapid processors.

'I don't think that since the invention of the automobile has one such machine has had a bonding effect on the end user.'

What about stock units? Are they still viable in such a fast paced world? As a user of stock Commodore computers I can tell you, "Yes they are". All of my article writing and coding are done primarily on the Commodore 128 with no Jiffy DOS or other speed and memory enhancements. As for extra on board memory I still use good old fashioned 5.25 DSDD disks that still are holding up after all these decades. I find it quite an accomplishment when some of my writings fill both sides of a disk and I get to move on to the next one. When I run out of 5.25s to fill I have some beat up 3.5s that can hold a byte or two.

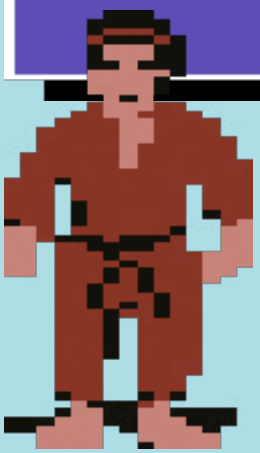
With all this written down on paper (or whatever medium you prefer) it still comes down to the out and out fact that the Commodore brand of computers are just plain fun to work with. I don't think that since the invention of the automobile has one such machine has had a bonding effect on the end user. Commodore was made to help man achieve greatness and help him in life while today's PC more or less tells man what to do and how to do it, which means the coder sitting in the cubicle at some IT conglomerate in a remote part of the earth really runs the world, and what's really scary is ... I think that they know it.

To finish up this prattling of a Mid Western redneck, I want to leave you with a thought to ponder: The enemies of the Free World supposedly have some sort of computer dampening device that, when activated, is suppose to scramble all the data in large mainframes and hard drives, making them useless, thereby virtually crippling, if not totally shutting down, governments, military, and big business that relies heavily on technology. If this conspiracy theory is true, where will this leave the Commodore? My guess is that it will leave Commodore out front as the only computer around that doesn't rely heavily on such support, but Commodore, with its stand alone capacity and its storage on removable mediums, will become the computer of need in such an apocalyptic digital nightmare.

Thanks for reading this column during your time with your morning coffee, afternoon tea, or evening brew. I look forward to sitting across the table with you again and discussing with you all items that are Commodore. Until next time,

LENARD R. ROACH

IMPOSSIBLE MISSIONS and exploding fists

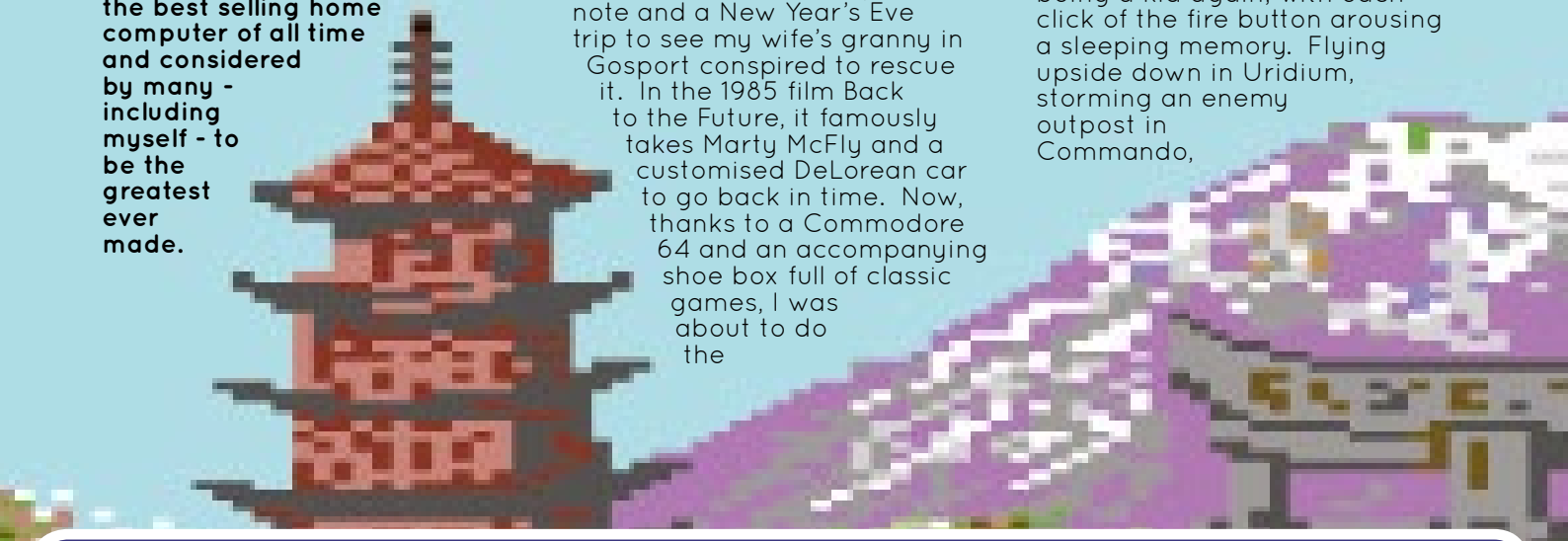


'Great Games and Good Times on the Commodore 64'

From Pitstops and Pitfalls to Ghosts, Goblins and Green Berets, the Commodore 64 and its games were a big part of my childhood growing up in the 1980s - and I wasn't the only one. It inspired and entertained millions of people across the world and, together with other machines, helped shape the games industry we know today. Long after its official demise in 1992, the Commodore 64 is still to be eclipsed as the best selling home computer of all time and considered by many - including myself - to be the greatest ever made.

After receiving a C64 as a Christmas present as a 12 year old boy in 1986, I bought another one recently when I hit 40. Ironically, I got it from a guy named Kane who was relocating from Hampshire to Texas and clearing his loft of the items deemed unworthy of the trip. Caked in a decade's worth of dust, the C64 had sat up there with the spiders and the old rolls of wallpaper, unwanted and unloved, until ebay, a £20 note and a New Year's Eve trip to see my wife's granny in Gosport conspired to rescue it. In the 1985 film Back to the Future, it famously takes Marty McFly and a customised DeLorean car to go back in time. Now, thanks to a Commodore 64 and an accompanying shoe box full of classic games, I was about to do the same, because - in my eyes - the Commodore 64 isn't just an old computer I used to have back in the '80s but an 8 bit time machine to take me back to my childhood.

They say you can't get your childhood back but you can recreate it and the C64 was going to help me do exactly that. Firing it up and playing all my favourite games was like being a kid again; with each click of the fire button arousing a sleeping memory. Flying upside down in Uridium, storming an enemy outpost in Commando,



Impossible Missions and Exploding Fists is the introduction to a book I am writing all about growing up around the Commodore 64 as a kid in the 1980. I have been writing the book on and off for about a year now alongside running a business and juggling a wife and two kids - you know how it is! I hope to have it finished...sometime soon!

The book begins in the present day describing the moment I decided to buy another Commodore 64 as a 40 year old man after last owning one as a kid. It then transports back to the early 1980s and covers my childhood memories and experiences with the Atari 2600, BBC Model B, ZX Spectrum and the Commodore 64. As well as games, it is interspersed with personal observations and anecdotes throughout, covering everything from An American Werewolf In London to Astro Wars and most things in-between.

A large part of the book also covers a rekindled childhood friendship with a good mate, Martin Grundy and it was hooking up with Martin after a twenty year gap that got us both interested in the C64 again. Like me, he is now well into the retrogaming scene with shelves full of games, magazines, etc and is a regular contributor to Reset. I hope you enjoy this introduction which is meant to give you a taste of what will be in the finished book and please contact me or follow me @**TheGavNinja** for any updates.

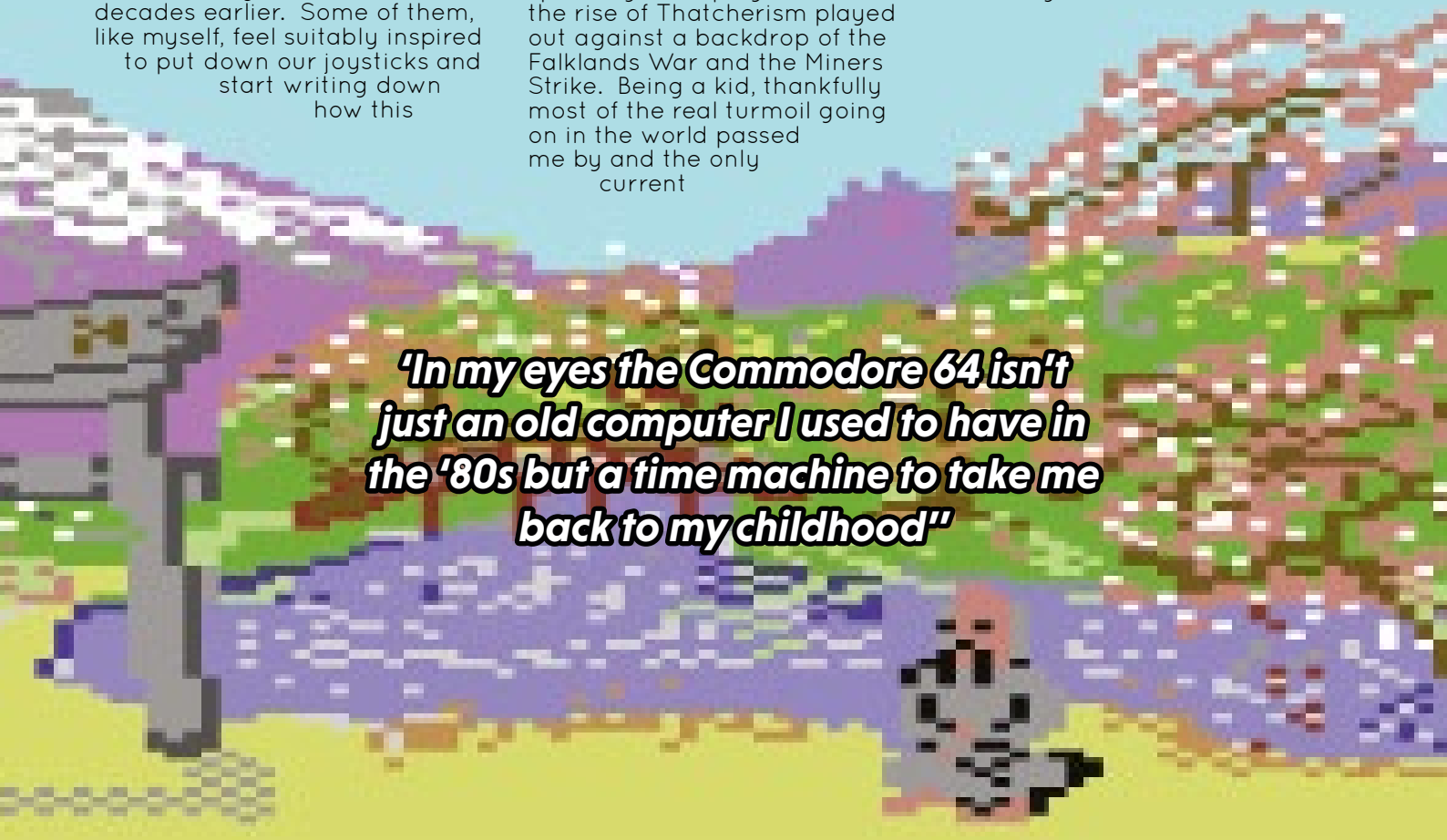
undertaking an Impossible Mission or landing a perfectly executed roundhouse in Exploding Fist all felt as wonderful as I remembered. The next thing I know I am filling shelves with as many classic games I can cram onto them, bidding on a Competition Pro on ebay and setting up my very own 'retrozone' - a permanent home for the C64 in the corner of a spare bedroom. Although I am taking over the space, my wife is happy to leave me to my own (8 bit) devices and looks upon it, sympathetically, as a harmless midlife crisis of sorts but centred around an old beige computer as opposed to the more predictable two-seater sports car. I think she is thankful I am not taking up golf but who needs that when you have Leaderboard!

As I stuck a Nodes of Yesod poster to the wall of the retrozone and carefully arranged my recently acquired copy of Crazy Comets on the bookshelf, I reflected that I had been bitten by this 'retrogaming bug' pretty badly; it's influence coursing through my veins like the fluid flows through the pipes in Super Pipeline. I also soon discovered that I am not the only one to have been 'infected' and that there are an army of people who, like me, are digging out and dusting down their old C64s or re-buying all the stuff they discarded three decades earlier. Some of them, like myself, feel suitably inspired to put down our joysticks and start writing down how this makes us feel. Welcome to my book - a personal account of what it was like growing up in the 1980s with a Commodore 64 as your best friend and, more specifically, the great games and good times I had playing on it.

'After being weaned on the Atari, I quickly moved onto 'solids' and the more robust BBC Model B...'

However, this nostalgic trip down memory lane doesn't begin and end with the Commodore and there are a few more important and defining stops along the way. Thanks to an older brother with a job in a video shop and a love of Defender in the arcades, I cut my gaming teeth on the Atari 2600 VCS (Woody) and counted Frogger and Chopper Command amongst my favourite games. Together with some of the video films I shouldn't have been watching at the time - such as An American Werewolf in London - the Atari offered an exciting diversion to growing up in a rainy town rife with disillusionment and petty crime in the north west of England. Remember this was the early 1980s and a Britain dominated by unrest, uncertainty and spiralling unemployment as the rise of Thatcherism played out against a backdrop of the Falklands War and the Miners Strike. Being a kid, thankfully most of the real turmoil going on in the world passed me by and the only current affairs I showed any real interest in was the last five minutes of John Craven's Newsround as I waited for Grange Hill to start!

After being weaned on the Atari, I quickly moved onto 'solids' and the more robust, BBC Model B Microcomputer. The BBC was my first experience of a real computer, so to speak, as it was for a great many schoolkids in the early '80s as they began to pop up in classrooms around the country as part of a government campaign. I was also fortunate enough to have one at home sat under the 'big telly' - a giant Sony Trinitron inherited from my grandad. The BBC was a serious looking machine that could actually do things and wasn't just for playing games on like the Atari was. That said, the memories of the BBC I hold most dear are the ones playing Yellow River Kingdom and Granny's Garden at school and Planetoid and Sabre Wulf at home. This was much more fun than my failed attempts to learn BASIC or type up a listing for an



'In my eyes the Commodore 64 isn't just an old computer I used to have in the '80s but a time machine to take me back to my childhood"

underwhelming Asteroids clone from the pages of Computer Spacegames. Sandwiched in the middle of all this, there is also a cameo appearance in the book from the ZX Spectrum. Purchased for the princely sum of £2.50 my encounter with the Speccy was a fleeting one but, as the main protagonist to the C64, it has a key role to play in the narrative of any Commodore story.

As stated, I arrived a little late to the Commodore party and didn't get my hands on one - the re-styled C64C - until Christmas 1986. That said, I probably couldn't have timed my entrance any better as 1986 was a vintage year for the C64. International Karate, Thrust and World Games had all been released whilst Gauntlet, Wizball and, in my opinion the best ever budget game on the C64, Park Patrol - appeared in 1987. My good friend Martin, wooed by an earlier encounter with The Staff of Karnath on a mate's computer, got his C64 'breadbin' over a year before me and had showed me the light.

Swapping Repton for Rockford, I never looked at my 'boring old BBC' the same way again, spending more time down at his house than I did at mine. Sitting in the kitchen / diner of his terraced house, about 10 mins walk from my own, Martin and I used to play on his C64 for hours on end often whilst the rest of his family ate dinner! After much berating from his Mum, Martin would reluctantly wolf down his corned beef, new potatoes and peas whilst I had an extended go on whatever we were playing; his eyes straining to look over my shoulder to see if I'd beaten his score. As well as some of the classic two player games we used to enjoy on International Soccer, Bubble Bobble, Ikari Warriors, etc, I also recall so many humorous stories playing the likes of



Little Computer People, The Last Ninja and Starquake, one of which nearly resulted in his house burning down! There is so much to remember and write, I hope I do it justice.

In addition to playing games our other favourite pastime used to involve visiting the various shops in Bolton town centre, a short bus ride from where we both lived. Boots, WH Smiths, Tandy and the smaller independents, Microtrix and Peek and Poke - where you could hire a game for 50p a week - were all regular haunts of ours. We never used to spend much as money was tight, hence the appeal of Peek & Poke, but that didn't stop us eulogising about the latest releases as they blazed out of Boots' telly. I do remember once splashing all my pocket money on the Spy vs Spy trilogy as did Martin on a copy of Ultimate's Blackwyche after being talked out of buying the superior Thing on a Spring by Frank, the grumpy custodian of Microtrix. I didn't appreciate it fully at the time but they were great days and I'd give anything to go back and have a chat with Frank, or his sidekick Joe, and browse around the shelves of Microtrix or Peek and Poke again. Unfortunately, the building which housed Microtrix has been demolished and Peek and Poke has been converted into a house so 'going back' on my C64 is the nearest I will get to it.

Now separated by 200 miles of motorway, one thing that hasn't changed is that Martin and I still text, tweet and talk all things Commodore like we did over a quarter of a century earlier on the bus or in the school yard. With jobs, families and much more complicated lives than we had when we were kids, we both still love going back in time on our C64s and telling each other about the trip. Like Gribbly, we've even been on a 'special day out' to Ludlow, the Commodore equivalent of Mecca, and home of legendary magazine Zzap!64. With its iconic Oli Frey covers and legendary reviewers Julian Rignall and Gary Penn, Zzap! makes regular appearances throughout this book. Martin and I both used to buy Zzap! prior to actually owning a Commodore 64 and I was thrilled to have a letter and some pokes printed in a couple of issues. We have also recently spent a small fortune re-collecting all the issues we gave or foolishly threw away back in the day. Flicking through them now and reading the articles and reviews from back when we were kids makes it worth every penny. Zzap! was brilliant in its heyday - and still is today - and I don't begrudge having to buy them all again. How much would you pay to go back and spend a few moments as your childhood self when all you had to worry about was whether Dropzone was going to load without crashing!

So - if, like me and Martin, your C64 transformed you and your mates into somersaulting secret agents or space pilots, black belts or Bruce Lee himself, this is my personal 'impossible mission' and the overriding aim of this book. A nostalgic trip back in time to try and put into words the thoughts and feelings induced by switching off the Commodore 64 as a boy and turning it on again as a 40 year old man. I hope you enjoy it.

GAVIN GREENHALGH
@GAVNINJA

'Martin and I used to play on his C64 for hours on end often whilst the rest of his family ate dinner!'



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Reset Q&A

What is Reset Magazine?

Reset Magazine is a free, non-profit fanzine dedicated to the Commodore 64 computer. Our target audience is the casual Commodore 64 user and retro computer enthusiast. Reset is distributed on the internet as a free PDF from our homepage. We do other things too, such as record C64 related podcasts and run coding competitions.

Who produces Reset?

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

How often is Reset released?

As a hobby project, the release schedule is dependent on time that the team has available to produce each issue. Needless to say, we'd love to release at least 3 full issues of Reset in 2017.

Why bother?

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

Can I contribute to Reset?

If you would like to contribute to Reset, please get in touch. New ideas are most welcome. If you have a product that you would like featured, some news to submit, or feel you have something else to offer we'd love to hear from you.

Can I buy a physical version?

A limited number of physical copies of each issue are printed as Special Editions and are available for a very short time at the time of publication for each issue. These are sold on a first come, first served basis. You can join our subscriber list to receive information about when we are taking orders for each issue.

Can I advertise in Reset?

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

What is a Reset Ripper?

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

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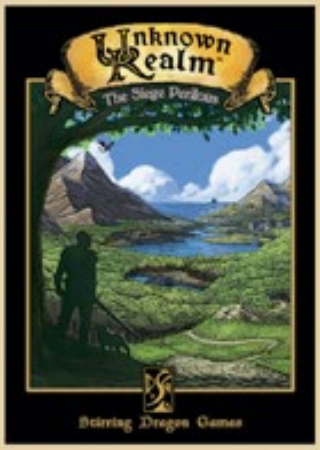
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