

RESET 64

THE MAGAZINE FOR ALL THINGS C64

syntax '21
sample issue



RESET64

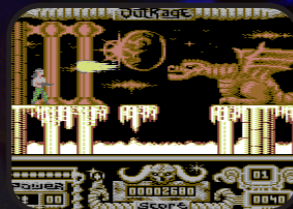
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CONTENTS

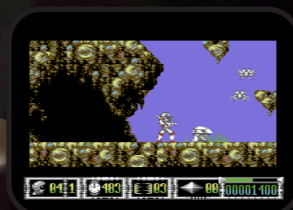
- 3 **Editorial**
Shooting missives from the hip - it's Reset's editor Kevin.
- 4 **We Are Stardust**
Chipwave composer LukHash has a chin wag with Reset.
- 8 **News**
Read all about 8-Bit! Read all about 8-bit!
- 14 **The Making of Alien 3**
The team bang on about themselves.
- 18 **Reset Reloaded**
Martin Grundy gets all dewy eyed as he looks back at October 1986.
- 20 **5 Reasons to...**
Richard Tappenden re-assesses Midnight Resistance and Turrigan and invites you to join him in doing so.
- 28 **Games That Weren't**
Frank Gasking takes a look at Run 'n' Gun games that either didn't get out of the starting blocks or completely missed their target.
- 32 **Reset Rewind**
The Reset crew re-visit Arnie. Will it be a case of Hasta La Vista Baby or will they be back for more?
- 36 **An Interview with Antonio Savona**
A Reset Bytes special - Andrew reviews Antonio's Activision remakes and Kev in chats with Mr Savona himself.
- 40 **Blow the Cartridge**
Turrigan gets his knickers in a twist.

REVIEWS



22 **Outrage**

24 **Metal Warrior Ultra**



26 **Turrigan 3**

27 **Runn 'n' Gunn**



Reset #14 Syntax Sampler - November 2021

Welcome to our new issue... Well, almost! Reset #14 certainly has been a long time coming and isn't quite ready yet. However, we also really wanted to be a part of the Syntax 2021 celebrations. If you aren't familiar with Syntax, it's a demoparty held in Melbourne each year, consisting of competitions (various categories), demonstrations, music and plenty of catching up between like minded people. Consider this issue as a Syntax Sampler Edition of the full issue which will, all going well, be released in a few weeks time. The full issue will contain almost double the page count, meaning there are even more reviews, interviews and juicy articles still to come!

Can you guess the theme just by looking at the cover? You guessed right! The run 'n' gun is one of our genres (and certainly one of my personal favourites as well!). It's also one of the oldest, with Green Beret, Gryzor and Midnight Resistance being classic examples of ancient run 'n' gun arcades that we've been playing now for decades. For me, it wasn't until Turrigan hit the scene that the genre was completely revolutionised on the microcomputer. With metroidvania influences, Turrigan offered massive, multi-directional scrolling worlds that encouraged exploration, as well as a large assortment of weapon upgrades, enemies and formidable end of level guardians. Metroid may have really kicked things off in a big way on the consoles, but Turrigan has also been massively influential as well. Contemporary C64 releases such as Metal Warrior Ultra and Steel Ranger have continued the legacy in modern times, offering fresh ideas to the genre.

Whether it's famous, or maybe infamous (for a few reasons), Hawkeye, a divisive but well produced late 80s run 'n' gun from Thalamus, directly influenced an entire crop of clones and 'heavily inspired' games on the C64, notable examples being Flimbo's Quest, Rubicon and the recently released (and reviewed in this very issue) Outrage. Andrew Fisher explores the Hawkeye legacy further in an upcoming article that will be published with the full issue. It's a cracking read and we can't wait to show you. Meanwhile, Rob invites us all to take cult classic Arnie out for a spin. Programmer Chris Butler's C64 swansong in the dying days of the machine's commercial life, Arnie is almost an isometric Commando, albeit slower paced, which also takes inspiration from games such as Mercs and perhaps even the WW2 themed isometric The Great Escape.

As usual, a big thanks again to all of our contributors, especially the amazing Reset staff. I'd also like to welcome Louie, owner of Retro Gamer Nation, to the Reset team and he's been a terrific help, as well as being a great sounding board for ideas. It's also great to have Del back, sprucing things up with his amazing page layouts and designs. We're still having an absolute blast making Reset, and as long as that continues, we'll continue. We hope you enjoy the sampler, and we hope you enjoy the amazing talent on display at the Syntax Demoparty (Melbourne, November 2021) even more!

Sincerely,

Kevin Tilley

We Are Stardust

An Introspective

By Kevin Tilley

Illustration Del Seymour
Inspired by Roy Widding

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Impact Event contains a variety of melodies, including an

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

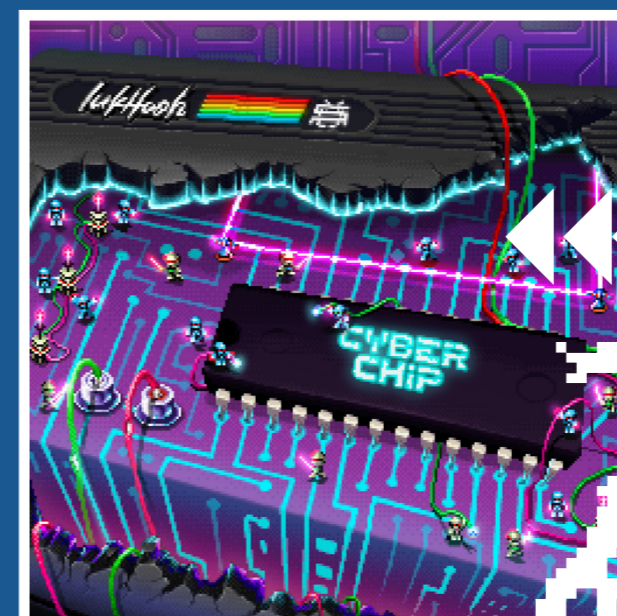
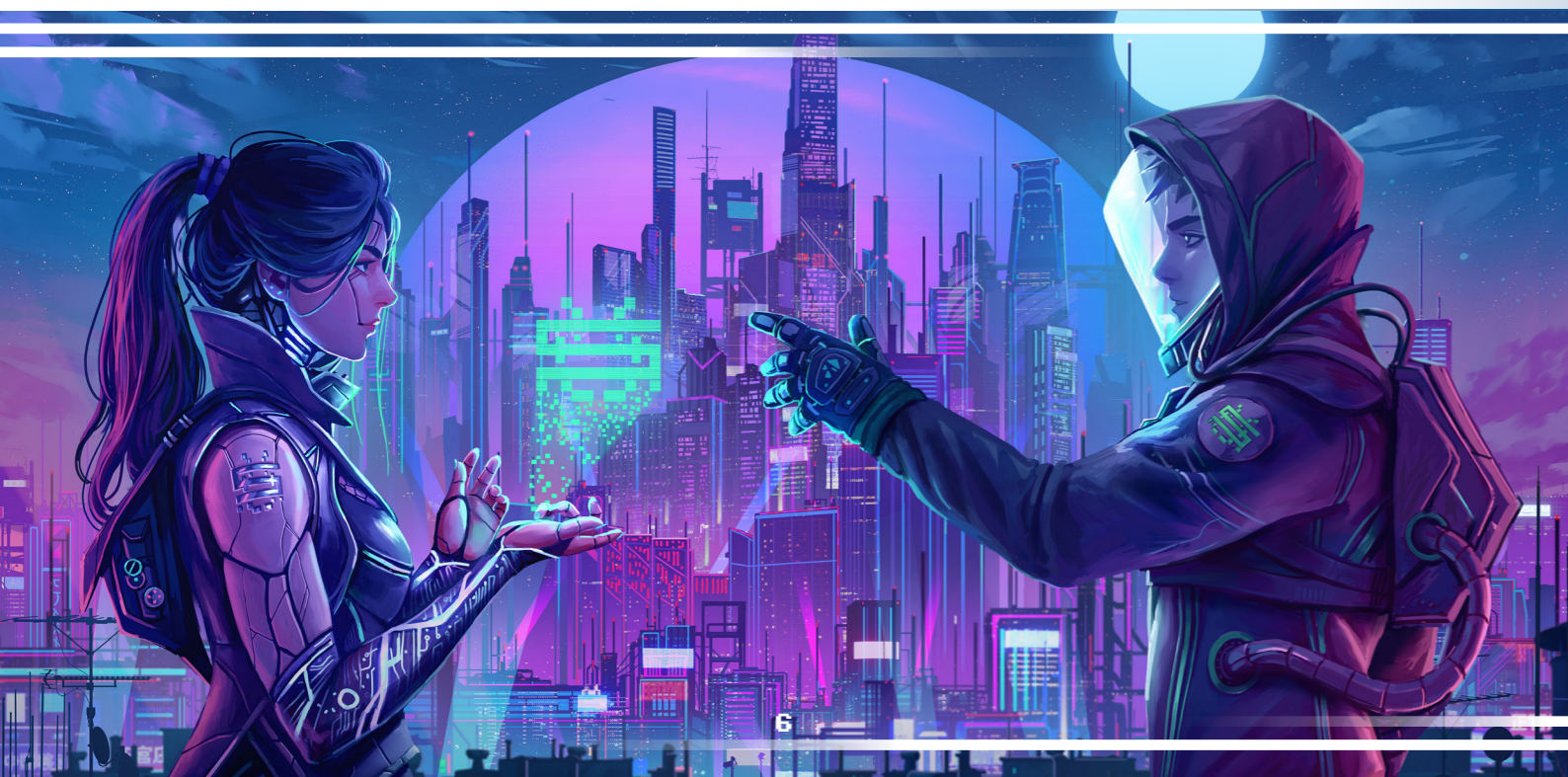
As another bonus and definitely worth mentioning, LukHash has also produced a SID album, titled CyberChip, that features SID renditions of two tracks from We Are Stardust amongst eight other tracks lifted from previous LukHash albums. The SID tracks on CyberChip have been masterfully composed on a real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



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

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

Well played!



Links

LukHash

<https://www.lukhash.com>

We Are Stardust (physical/digital/merch)

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

CyberChip

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



NEWS

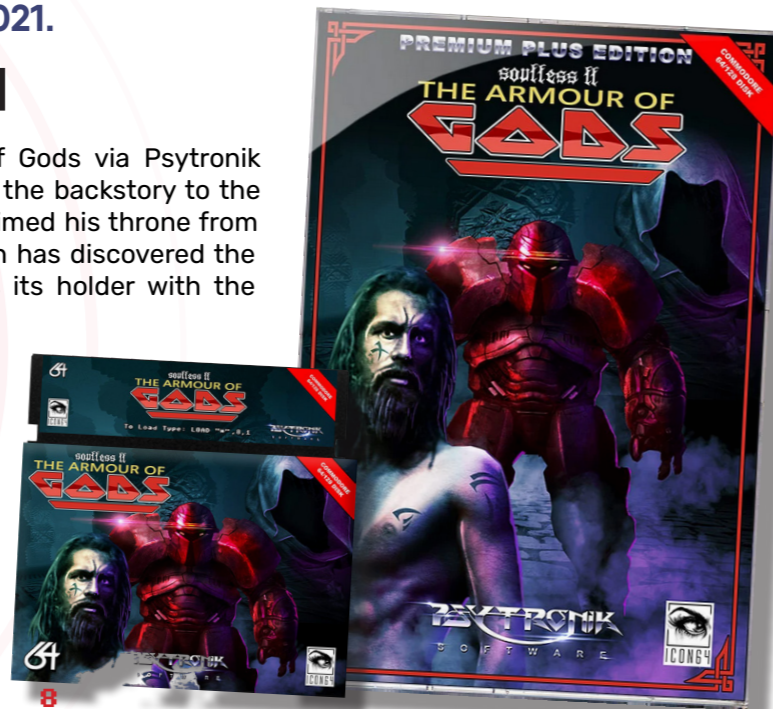


Psytronik Software continues to lead the way when it comes to providing commercial titles for the C64 with their latest announcement of game releases for the second half of 2021.

SOULLESS 2 - THE ARMOUR OF GODS

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

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



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

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

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

POLAR BEARS IN SPACE

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

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

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



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

Polar Bears in Space is expected to receive a disk release through Psytronik Software, and a cartridge release via RGCD.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hefJ5UaEPuw>

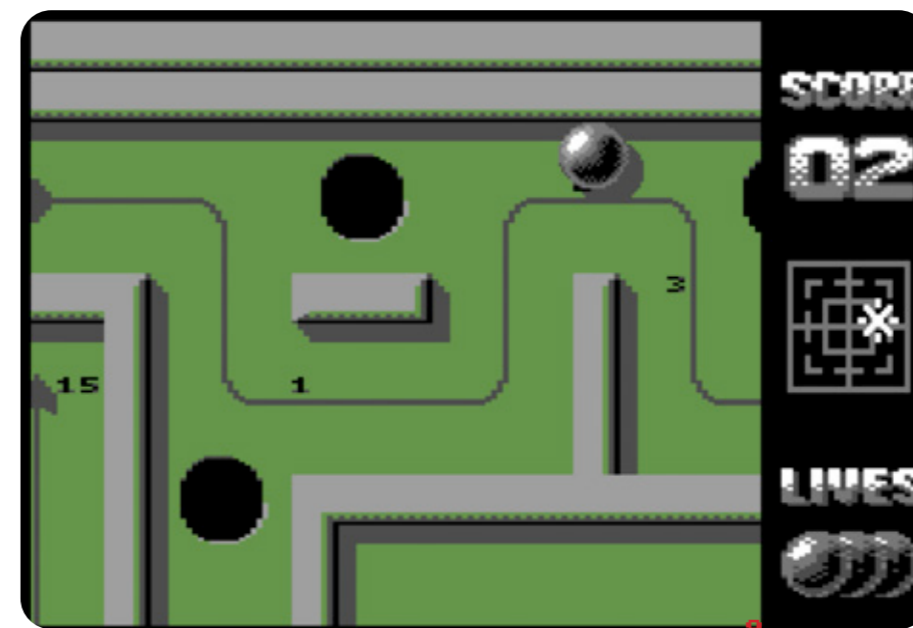
GRAVITON

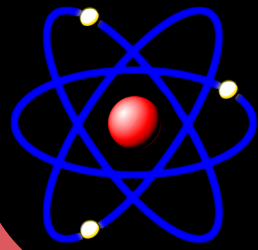
Karl Hörnell, the developer behind many fun C64 titles like Clean Up Service, Fungus, Velocipede and Iceblox Plus is back with another release. Graviton is a tilt maze style of game where you have to use dexterity to guide a ball through a maze.

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

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

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





PROTOVISION

Creating the Future.

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

MUDDY RACERS

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

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

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



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

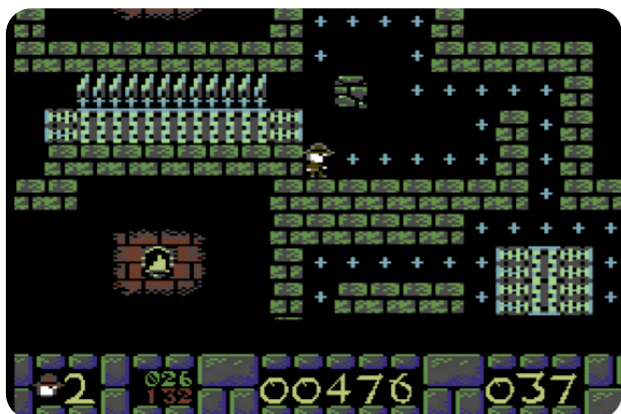
CURSED TOMB

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

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

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

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



ICON 64

TERRESTRIAL

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

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

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

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

RVG SQUAD

CASSETTE 50 PLUS CHARITY COMPILATION

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

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



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

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

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

TND SEUCK COMPO 2021 RESULTS

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

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

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

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

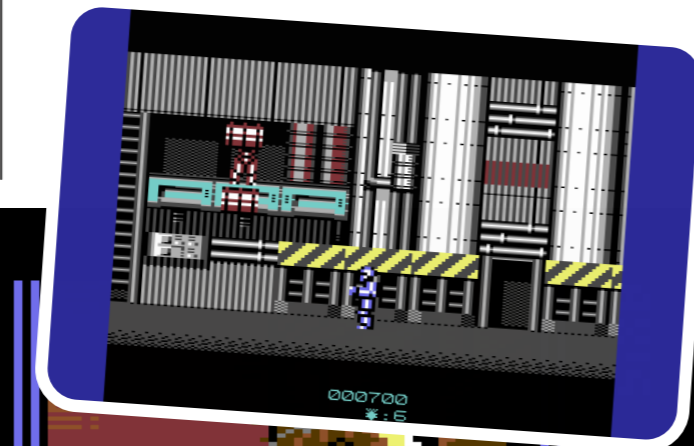
An enhanced version of Droid Rumble featuring an intro presentation, high score table, in game enhancements and much more can be downloaded from <https://richard-tnd.itch.io/droid-rumble>

BITMAP SOFT

FUNGUS II

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

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



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

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

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

EWE WOZ 'ERE DX

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

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

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

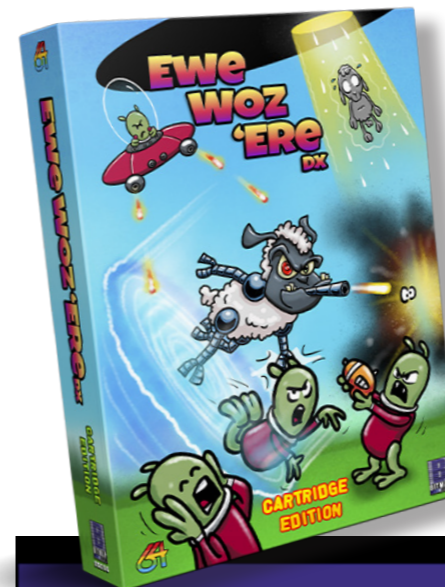
Chris Page - designer, coder at Design/Chaos reflected: "We weren't originally going to do Ewe Woz 'Ere DX at all; that came about after I archived some of our old development disks from the 90's and came across a set of mountain graphics that Bop did years ago - I touched them up and put them into the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

But Chris informs us that Ewe Woz 'Ere DX is more than just a graphical enhancement as additional gameplay elements have been added and that he is quite pleased with the results: "Originally the DX game was just going to be a graphic overhaul but after the graphic updates it sat around for months until we decided to add the

gateways and the charges that need to be collected which transformed the gameplay and the rest came together relatively quickly. Ewe Woz 'Ere is our take on Moon Patrol (with strong influences from Iridis Alpha), and I am very happy with the game that we ended up with!"

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

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



The Making of

ALIEN 3

on the Commodore 64

By Kevin Tilley

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

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

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

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

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

Wait, what?

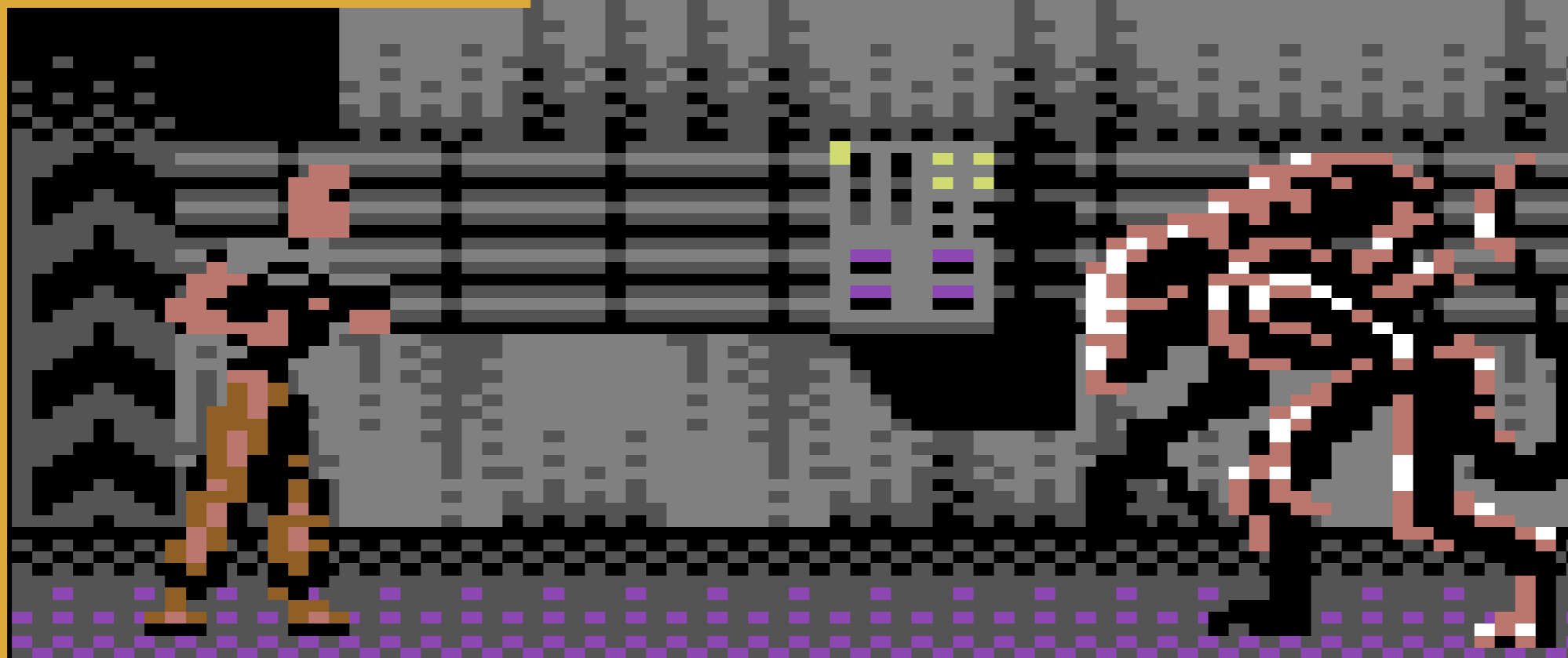
"The reason why C64 was first I think is mostly because I was first on the scene ready to start, I don't recall 100% this fact... So the graphics and maps were done firstly on the C64 and then transferred to other formats."

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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



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

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

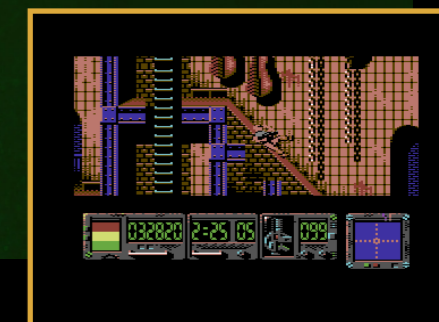
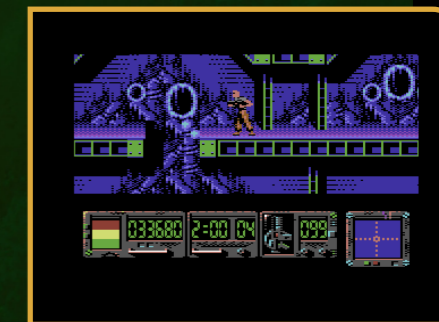
"I used PDS for the development, in which I had re-programmed the C64 bios with a boot link which had the communications code copied to zero page and executed all from a PC."

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

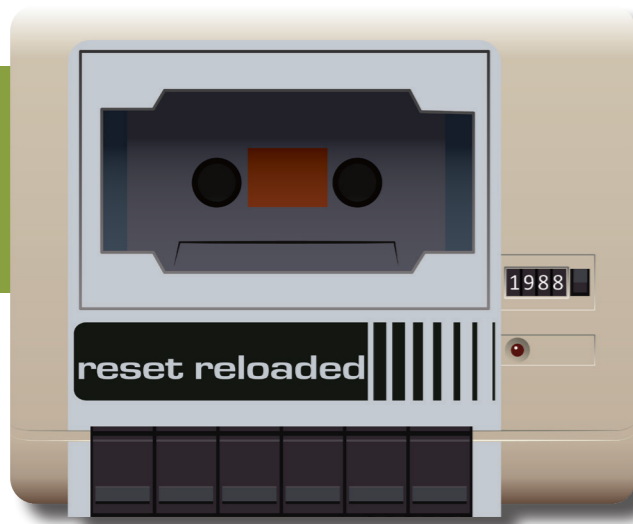
Alien 3 is a game that very nearly wasn't. A well polished run and gun, released at a time when full price games on the C64 had all but disappeared. Michael enthusiastically looks back on his early development days. Cryptically, he hints at some kind of return to the retro gaming scene.

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

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

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

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



OCTOBER 1986

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

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

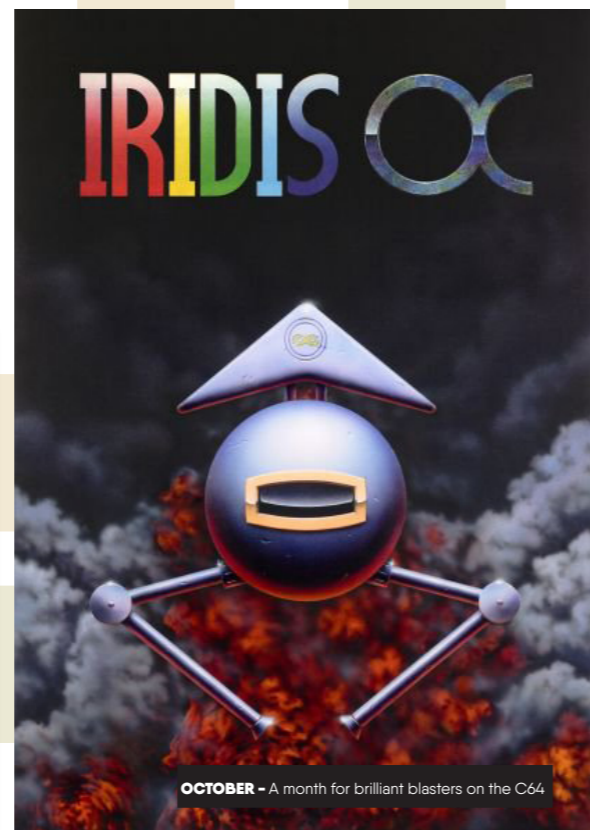
Top of the podium that autumn was World Games. Epyx had already smashed the sports sim genre out of the park in 1985 with the amazing Summer Games 2 and Winter Games, but World Games took things to a whole new level. Eight ace events all fantastically innovative and hugely playable, it was awesome and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

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

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

earned 93% Sizzlers

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

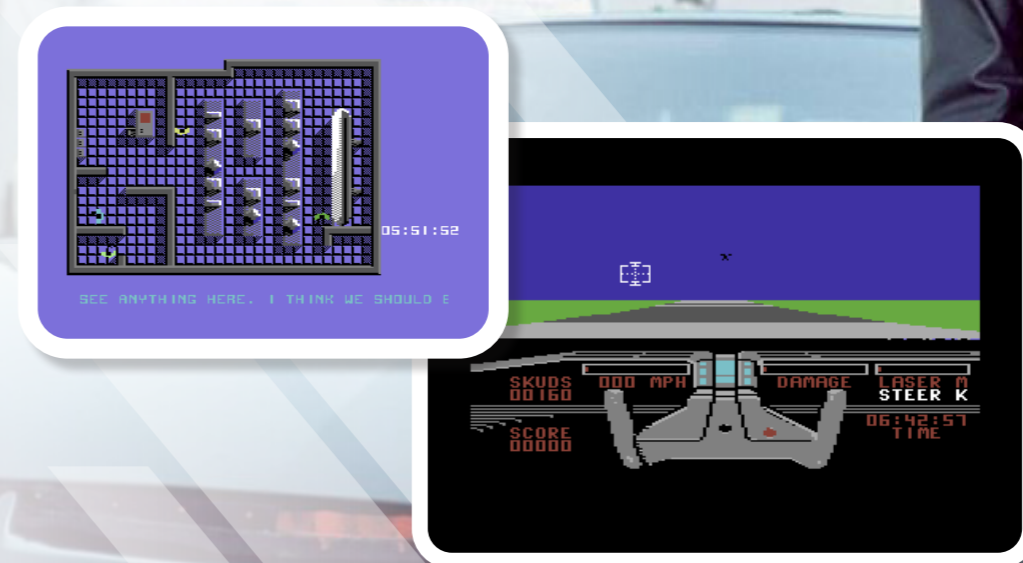


ABOVE - Cliff Diving, Caber Tossing, Sumo Wrestling and more in WORLD GAMES.
BELOW - The Hoff pondering how KNIGHT RIDER went from KITT to S**T.

duly awarded a paltry 16% in ZZAP! More shite rider than Knight Rider.

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

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



5

REASONS TO... LOAD UP MIDNIGHT RESISTANCE

by RICHARD TAPPENDEN

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



1 THE MUSIC!

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

2 THE WEAPONS!

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



3

THE GRAPHICS!

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



4

THE ACTION!

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

5

THE ENDING!

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



5

REASONS TO... LOAD UP TURRICAN

by RICHARD TAPPENDEN

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



1 THE FIREPOWER!

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

2

THE WEAPONS!

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



3

THE ADVENTURE!

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

4

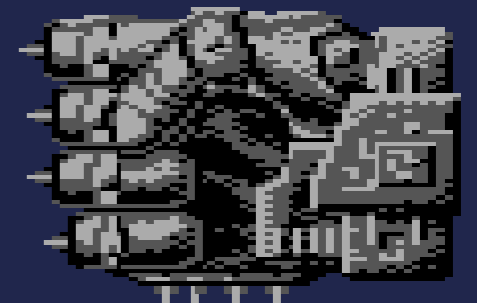
THE ENEMIES!

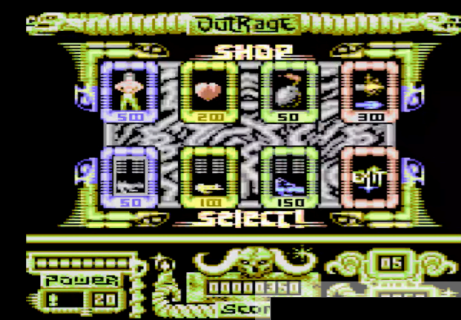
It seems that every time you make some progress (either in a level or from one level to the next) you come across something new (animal, mechanical or mineral) that wants to sap your valuable energy. There's a huge variety of different enemies and even parts of the scenery want to kill you too. Then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

5

THE LEGACY!

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





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



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

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

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

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

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

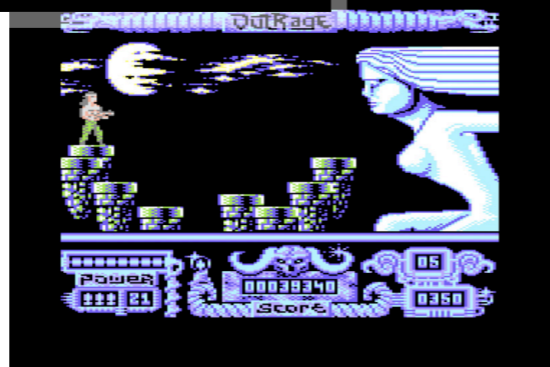
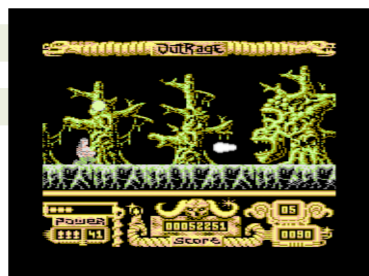
As you make it through to the end of each level, don't think it's a time for you to rest as you have a Boss Battle to contend with before being able to move on to the next world.



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

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

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



OUTRAGE

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

R

Developer
Cosmos Designs

Publisher
Protovision & Psytronik Software

Game credits
Game concept, Code & GFX
Bernd Buchegger

Additional Development
Sidney Arbouw

Original title & doc music Karl Sommer
In-game music & SFX Roy Widding
Loading picture Steve Day

Icons for social media and a download icon.

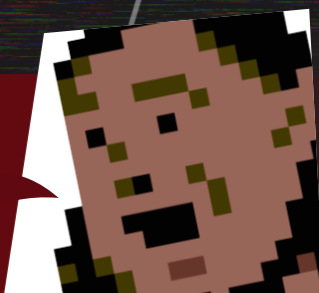
MW ULTRA represents the ongoing evolution of Lasse Öörni's C64 gaming development skills spanning in excess of 20 years to deliver what is a fantastic blend of interactive objective based gameplay, engaging storytelling and fluid combat controls.

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



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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



R

Developer
Covert Bitops

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

Design, Code & Graphics:
Lasse Öörni

Music & Sound FX
Kamil Wolnikowski & Lasse Öörni

Story Assistance
Marja Kuipers

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TURRICAN 3

REVIEWED BY KEVIN TILLEY

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

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

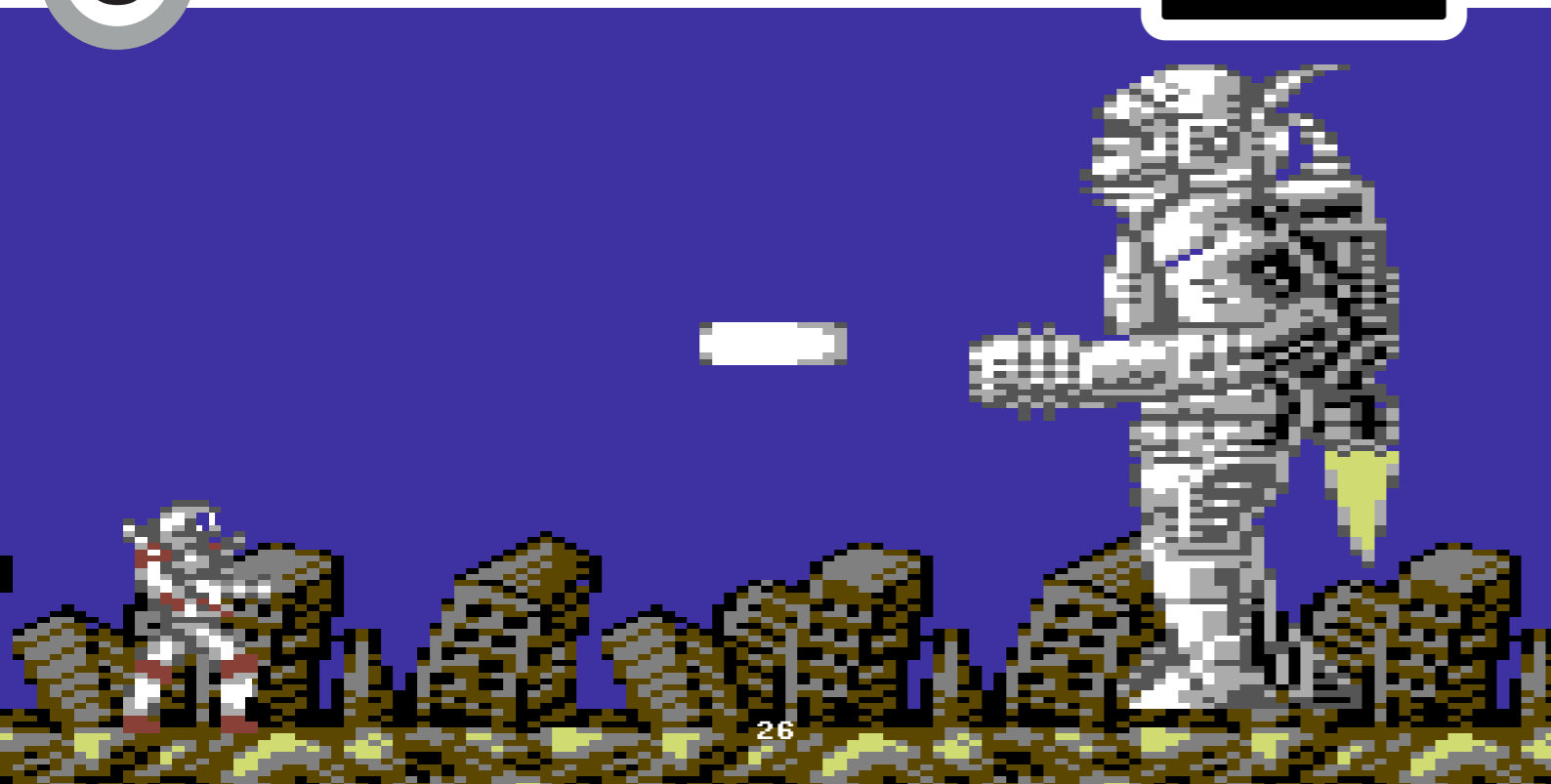
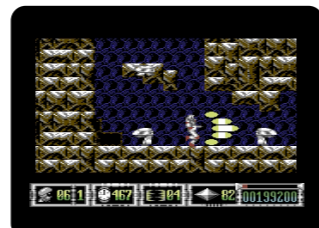
Unfortunately, Turrican 3 is far from perfect, with various bugs taking their toll. When things start getting hectic, the screen occasionally stutters and glitches momentarily, but I can live with that as the added soundtrack is well worth the raster time it eats up. I'd love to know if it could have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

Overall, I'd nearly go as far to say that Turrican 3 is a flawed masterpiece. The amount of effort and dedication that went into making the game is admirable and the skills on display by the are team quite incredible. Unfortunately, a probable lack of adequate testing, proofreading and bug fixing diminish what is otherwise an incredible experience playing through the game. Turrican 3 is highly ambitious and otherwise impressive. Definitely worth a playthrough, just have those glasses tinted to the slightly rosy spectrum to help ignore the deficiencies.

8

Publisher
Freeware

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



RUNN 'N' GUNN

REVIEWED BY RICHARD TAPPENDEN

Soldiers Runn & Gunn were involved in a failed military experiment that resulted in them being fused together into a single super soldier. Runn is the faster, more agile of the two and can jump better, whereas the slower Gunn has stronger firepower. Your mission is to blast through the base on Bantaya preventing an attack on Earth. You'll be confronted with many enemies and obstacles, as you collect key cards to progress past electrified force fields.

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

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

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

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

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

8.5



Publisher
Below The Tower

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

GTW 64 RUN 'n' GUN

by FRANK GASKING

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

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

Hawkeye 2 1989 Thalamus

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

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

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

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

Who Dares Wins 1985 Alligata Software

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

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

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



Rubicon 2 1992 21st Century Entertainment

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

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

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

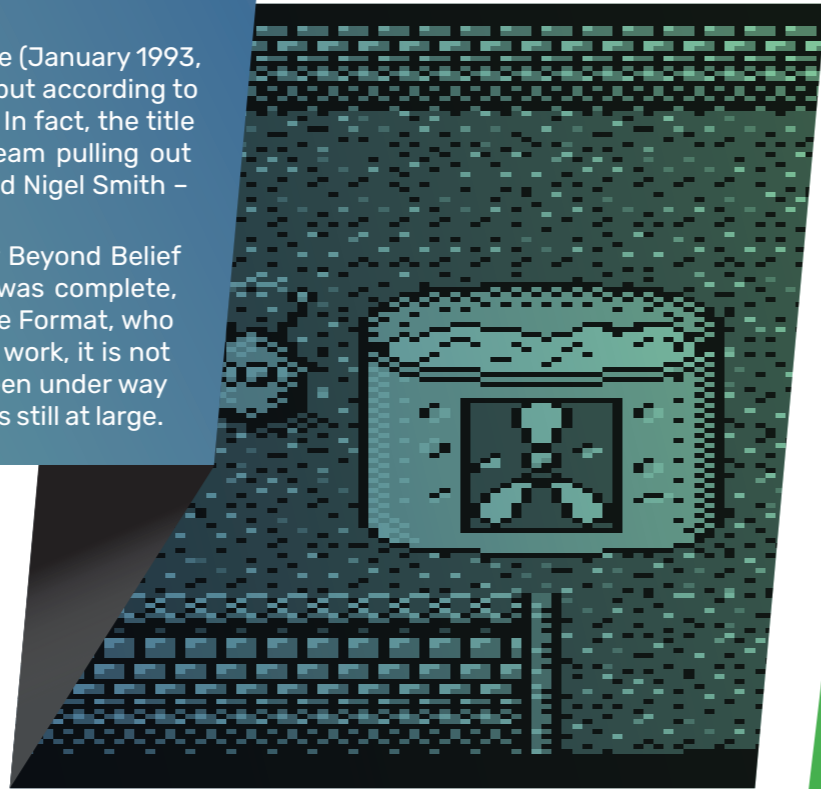
Shellshock

1993 Beyond Belief

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

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

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



Heavy Barrel

1988 Sales Curve and then 1989 Data East

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

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

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

Victory Road

1988 Imagine Software

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

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

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



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

Scorpion

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

Liberation

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

Gung-Ho!

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

Undead

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

Trooper

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

Outrage

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

Sturmtruppen

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

R.I.O.T

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



Arnie

BY ROB CAPORETTO

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

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

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

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

As a later budget release, Arnie had no right being as solid as it is. But with the experience and talent of Chris Butler, it's no surprise it turned out how it did. Run & gun games tend to be brutal - and many on the C64 do fit that category, but Arnie is tuned enough to be tough, but fair. Which it absolutely needed to with its single stage to master.

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

The arsenal you'll acquire might not be as fanciful as in other games, but it certainly doesn't stop you from getting the job done. Which sums Arnie up to a tee - straightforward mechanics, tight presentation and something which doesn't overstay its welcome.

Sounds like perfect budget fodder to me!

Rob Caporetto

As I load up Arnie for the first time, I am instantly intrigued as it mixes two of my favourite graphical styles - isometric view and mini characters. Kicking the game off, I quickly realise that hanging around and trying to clear enemies on screen will get me nowhere as they respawn at a relentless rate and that Arnie represents the true nature of what a run'n'gun game is about - constant movement, careful timing, fast reflexes and memorising major enemy locations and behaviour. I found progressing through Arnie to be a tough affair but the unfolding nature of its long singular multi-directional level had me hooked. I really enjoyed the proxy boss battles that come in the form of doing battle against an armoured vehicle, helicopters and heat seeking missiles and the constantly evolving game environment just pushed me to have another to have another go after my little commando met his untimely demise. More of this please!

Louie Dimovski

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

Alex Boz

There is something very satisfying about playing Arnie, even years later. At a budget price it was irresistible, and I snapped it up before I read the review. At the time I did not know it was coded by Chris Butler, but it seems obvious - it is an isometric take on the classic Commando formula, a game Chris converted to the C64. I love those dinky little sprites and the larger, menacing vehicles. The way the path round the map winds back on itself makes the play area feel much larger, and there is a logical progression through different areas as the layout and difficulty becomes tougher. From the helicopter dropping you off to the high-score table, it is also a well-presented game. In fact, the only thing it really lacks is music. Barring the odd annoyance (being shot through barbed wire, or the pink guys running away before you can shoot them for the weapon upgrade), it remains so much fun to pick up and play for a few minutes' blasting.

Andrew Fisher



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

Neil Grayson

Arnold squeezed the trigger of his semi-automatic Armalite AR-15. The powder in the chambered 5.56mm round ignited, launching the bullet out of the AR-15's muzzle at a velocity of over 1000 metres per second. Hot lead and steel slammed into the enemy causing extensive soft tissue damage. Subsequent bullet fragmentation and hydrostatic shock disrupted vital organs beyond repair.

"B-I-I-n-g!" went the little man in his death throes. Arnie is a lot of fun. A tight, almost claustrophobic affair, with plenty of blasting as tiny-sprite Arnie wends his way through the cleverly designed isometric playfield. The weapon power-ups work well and are a handy counter to the strategically placed military vehicles that hinder your progress. Collision detection is a little ropery but this often works more in your favour than against it. There are copious baddies to wade through and the action is frenetic even if the atmosphere is eerily subdued due to the lack of music. Another Rewind game I'd not played before and one well worth the investment (I still prefer Commando though!).

Anthony Stiller

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

Cameron Davis

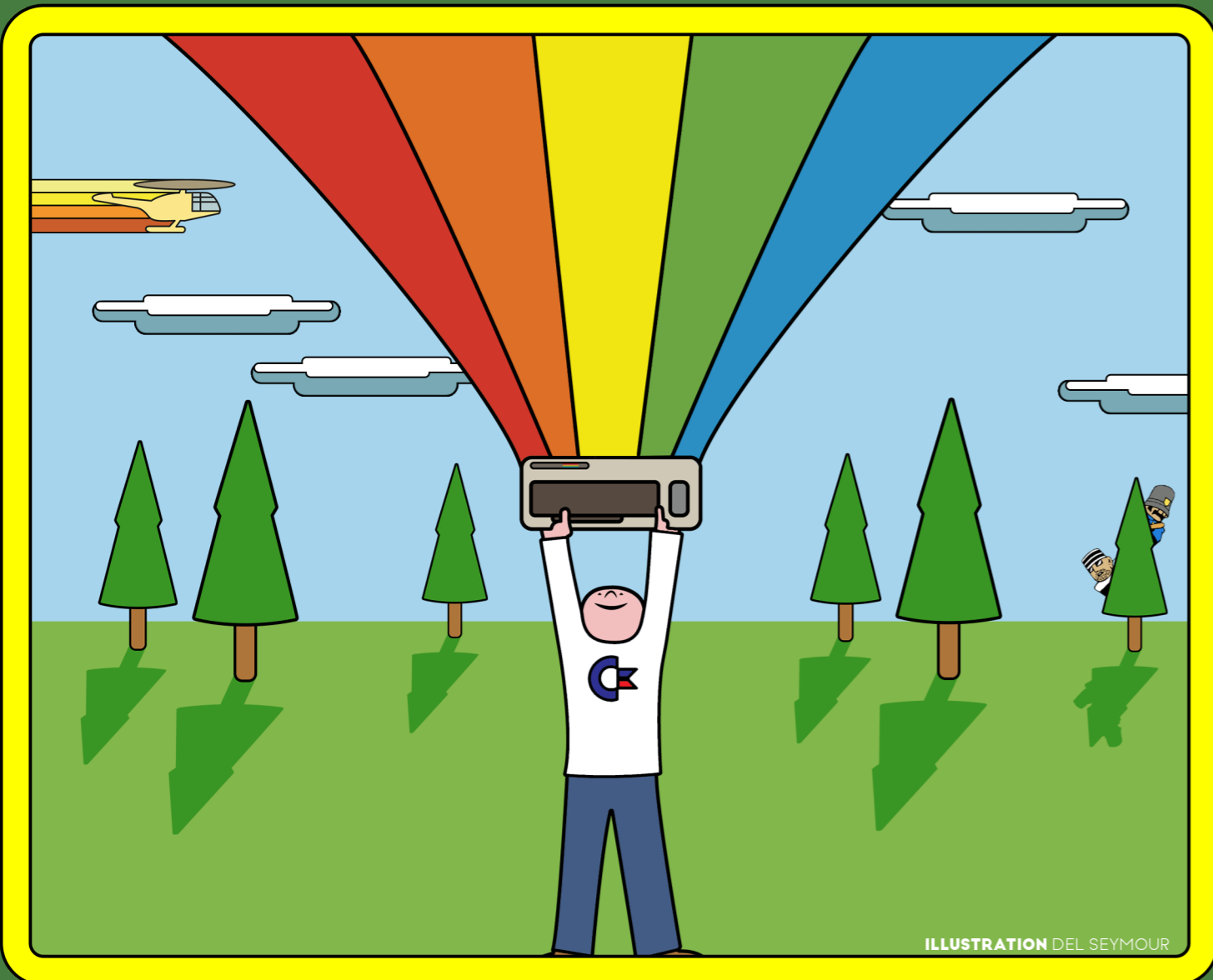
An enigma! Arnie seemingly appeared from nowhere in 1992 and I clearly remember playing (and loving) the Commodore Format covermount demo. It's classic Chris Butler; technically accomplished, fun, but short and leaving you wanting more. No doubt Butler wanted to keep it in a single load, hence it's just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

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

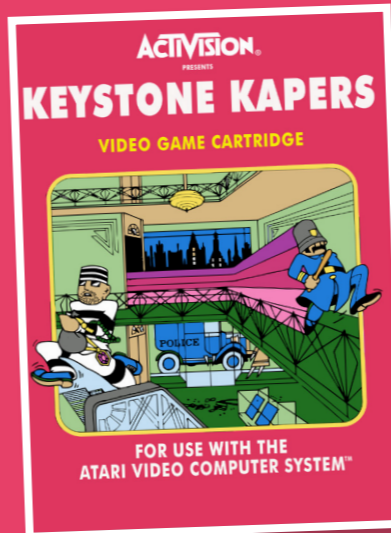
Kevin Tilley

ANTONIO SAVONA!

INTERVIEW KEVIN TILLEY | REVIEWS ANDREW FISHER



Formed in 1979 by a group of disgruntled Atari employees, Activision quickly became synonymous for their high quality games, as well as giving programmers and designers well deserved credit for their creations. Massively successful on the Atari VCS, Activision churned out one high quality game after another to become one of the console's most respected 3rd party developers. They continued this run into the early days of the Commodore 64, porting some of their most beloved VCS hits to the computer, as well as a string of other successful titles made especially for early computer platforms, in the spirit and vein as their earlier VCS releases. Unfortunately, some of Activision's most notable (and maybe less well known) VCS titles never made the transition over to the breadbin. Alas, more than 35 years later, Antonio Savona, Steve Day and Saul Cross had an idea! Between 2019 and 2020, four more titles from the Activision VCS catalogue made their way to the Commodore 64, ever so slightly enhanced to suit the C64's capabilities but with the gameplay, as well as the classic Activision look and feel of the games, remaining true to the originals. Chopper Command, Keystone Kapers, Frostbite and Crackpots were finally released on our favourite 8bit with amazing success. We had a quick catch up with programmer Antonio Savona to have a chat about the projects.



KEYSTONE KAPERS

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

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

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



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

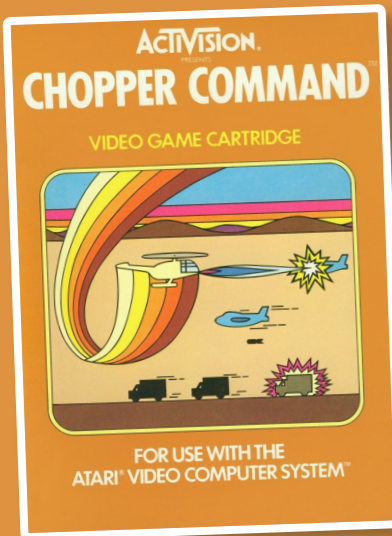
ANTONIO: The spark came from Steven really. He had been in conversions for a few years already, and approached me with the idea of porting Chopper Command and said that Saul would also be on board for the music. I had worked with Saul on a number of projects before and loved every minute of it. To be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

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

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



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



CHOPPER COMMAND

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

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



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

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

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

ANTONIO: Very important. We took it as a team mission to leave the gameplay as faithful to the original as possible. I personally went as far as to reverse engineer the carts and study the code to try and replicate even the little bugs that we were initially willing to fix. Initially, in fact, the temptation was clearly there, but the more you play the originals (and we had to play them a lot), the more you realise that they are perfect as they are. You just need to give them some time to shine and then gone is that itch to alter this perfection. In fact, whenever we felt that the gameplay would have used some improvements, we just scrapped the project and moved to something else. In the end our mission was to make these games more accessible, which means that graphics and sound can and should benefit from the more capable hardware of the Commodore 64, but, from a fan's perspective, a game should play exactly like the original. This doesn't mean that you can't put

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

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

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

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

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

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

CRACKPOTS

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

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



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

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

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

coding.

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

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

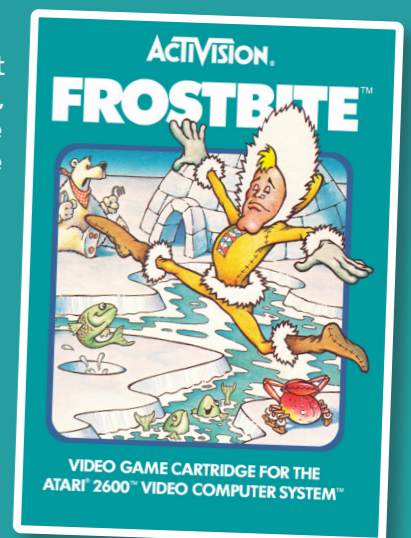


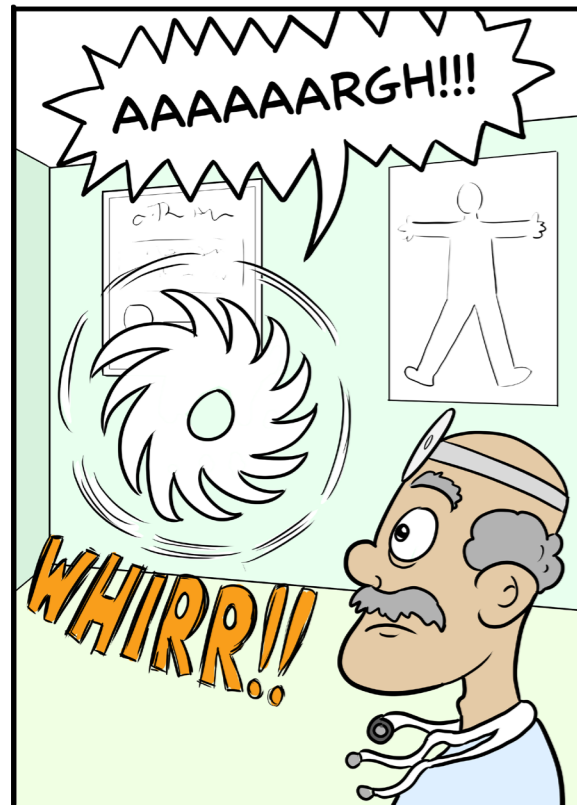
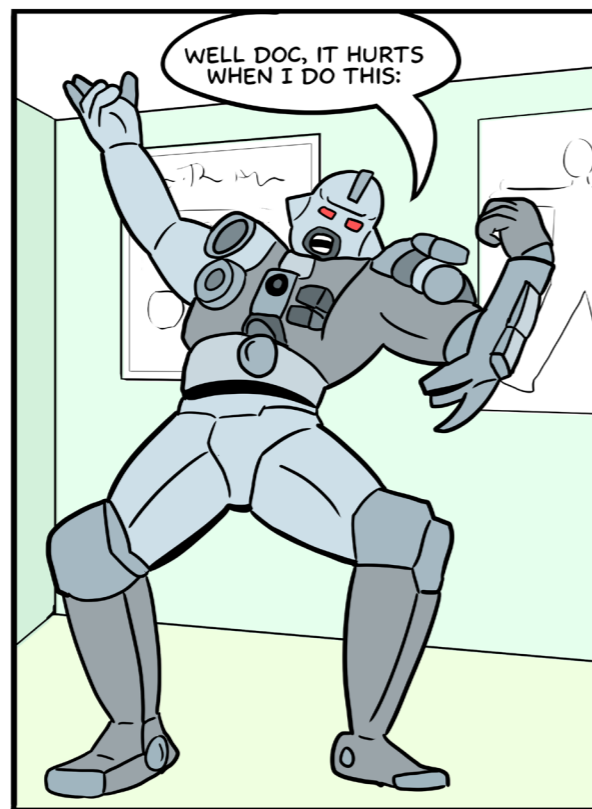
• Pig Quest – coming soon from Antonio.

FROSTBITE

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

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





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