RESET 64

THE MAGAZINE FOR ALL THINGS C64!

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RESET 64

THE MAGAZINE FOR ALL THINGS C64 !

Reset – The Next Generation!

Well, we finally made it! The almost fabled Reset 10 marks a milestone for Reset and the team and it is a fitting way to usher in a new era of the magazine, with our new look, more focussed approach and the professionally printed issues being delivered before the free PDF. It's been quite a ride and looking back at the earlier issues until now, it has been wonderful to see Reset grow and mature into the magazine that it is now. What's incredible is that the majority of team members and contributors who were with us in those early issues are still with the magazine today (with a few exceptions, who have moved on to other projects but still remain good friends), which is testament to the amount of fun we have, our passion for the C64 and the friendships we have all built upon while creating Reset.

There are two other noticeable observations that I have made since the first Reset was released back in November 2013. The first being that the C64 games scene hasn't slowed at all. In fact, it's stronger than ever, with new quality games being released on a consistent basis and even more on the horizon, helped by the various game creation competitions, a strong desire for physical copies of games and a glut of successful C64 Kickstarters. Secondly, the zine scene is stronger than ever, with a number of printed and pdf retro computer and C64 specific zines coming into existence (and, we love them all) which is further evidence of just how healthy the Commodore community currently is!

Platformers, hey? The C64 is strong in platformers and there is no way we can do the genre justice in one single issue, but we've given it a go. No doubt there are many, many great C64 platformers that didn't get a mention, however, we only have 72 pages to play with, not 6000! Seriously though, platforming is one game genre that the C64 really excels at, with the forthcoming Sam's Journey looking set to knock Mayhem off its perch as greatest C64 platformer ever (yes, I am aware of just how subjective and presumptuous this statement is but heck, I'm going to go with it). It's a genre that isn't anywhere near finished on our beloved breadbin, with quite a few new platformers on their way as well as the recent release of the stunning 'The Bear Essentials'. Exciting times!

2017 is going to continue being another big year for the C64 and for Reset. We have some more themed issues in the pipeline, another possible special issue to be printed especially for a certain Kickstarter project, and some amazing games on the horizon that we can't wait to play and review. On top of that, we will continue to record our companion podcasts for each new issue and will likely run another 4kb game creation compo sometime in the near future. We do it because we love it, and we hope you do too.

Sincerely,

Kevin Tilley

Sam's a Comin'!

an interview with
Knights of Bytes

by Kevin Tilley

The Past

Knights of Bytes (KoB) is a small indie developer which was founded in the mid 90's by programmer Chester Kollschen, and also currently consists of Stefan Gutsch (graphics) and Alex Ney (music). The developer's first C64 release was Ice Guys (1995), a charming single screen platformer with similarities to the arcade game, Snow Brothers. It was a great start for KoB, with Ice Guys being an extremely polished production featuring colourful bitmap backgrounds, simultaneous multi-player gameplay, hi-res overlaid sprites and stunning sampled music and sound effects.

KoB quickly followed up with Bomb Mania (1998), once again producing a highly polished and fun Bomberman clone with colourful graphics and fun gameplay. It was the first game to utilise the 4 player interface, which is an adapter that squeezes into the C64's user port and allows a further two joysticks to be connected to the C64. This made Bomb Mania a unique gaming experience on the C64 with the game excelling with its multi-player deathmatch gameplay. Bomb Mania remains a much loved C64 game to this day and is often played at C64 events, meetups and demo scene parties.

Metal Dust, KoB's next game, wouldn't see release until 2005 after what was a long development cycle. It was a ground-breaking game, remaining the only game to be programmed specifically for CMD's SuperCPU hardware accelerator add-on. A traditional horizontally scrolling Euro space shooter, Metal Dust featured amazing graphics, massive end of level bosses and a fully digitised soundtrack by the German electronic 'bitpop' band Welle: Erdball.

The Present

This brings us to 2015, when on the 1st April Knights of Bytes announced their comeback to the C64 gaming scene with Sam's Journey, a fast paced platformer with huge multi-directional scrolling levels. Announcing the game on none other than April Fool's Day, the developer left many people thinking the game was an elaborate prank. Thankfully, it wasn't!

Two years later and KoB are still hard at work on the game and making fantastic progress. A beta version was even shown at Gamescom 2016 in Germany and received an overwhelmingly positive response. Like their previous efforts, KoB are making sure that Sam's Journey will be a ground-breaking C64 release. Featuring 27 massive levels to explore, 14 graphical settings, 19 different tunes, hidden items, secret passages, checkpoints, save game options, end of level bosses and the option of purchasing the game on disk or cartridge, KoB are pulling out all the stops to ensure that the game lives up to the massive amount of hype it has gained to become what could be the C64's greatest ever platformer. We caught up with Chester to have a chat about Sam's Journey, its progress and C64 gaming in general.

> "Announcing the game on none other than April Fool's Day, the developer left many people thinking the game was an elaborate prank..."

Welcome to Reset, Chester, and thank-you for taking the time out to participate in this interview! First of all, can you please tell us a bit about yourself and your history with the C64?

On paper, I'm a certified computer scientist, but I've always seen myself as a game developer with heart and soul. It all started at the age of six when I spotted a strange new device in the shop window of a local toy store. It was connected to a television set and you could move a character across the screen using buttons. Deeply fascinated by what I saw, I began saving my money, and in 1985, I bought my first computer which happened to be a C64. At first, I played games like probably everyone else did, but very soon, I started to write my own small games using the built-in BASIC programming language. As this quickly turned out to be a limiting factor for the creation of bigger, faster and more professional games, I began learning the C64's machine code. When I got the hang of it, I eventually founded the Knights of Bytes and released Ice Guys and Bomb Mania in the 90s. This attracted the attention of the guys at Protovision who contacted me and we teamed up for the development and distribution of Metal Dust. After its completion in 2004, my team and I ceased our C64 activities and we moved on to new platforms. However, due to the growing public interest in retro-computing and retro-gaming, I revived the Knights of Bytes in 2015 and we're now creating Sam's Journey, our first C64 game since more than a decade.

Why now? The C64 is a long 'dead' machine. Why choose the C64 for development over other modern platforms?

From the industry's point of view, the C64 is of course long dead and so are all the other classic computers and video game systems. But if you look beyond the borders of the mainstream, those platforms are still pretty much alive! Many of them developed a stable fan base in their heydeys, and with the help of the Internet, their fans connected world-wide and built these vivid communities that we know today. In one point, fans of old systems are no different from fans of modern platforms: they're all longing for new games. However, as new games for old systems are quite rare and hard to come by, I consider this a small but promising niche. When I repositioned Knights of Bytes on creating new games for old computers, it was a natural decision to debut with a game for the platform we once started on.

Why do you think retro-gaming in general has become so popular? Is it purely driven by nostalgia or are there 'new' retro fans as well?

Actually, I identified at least three different types of retro gamers and each type is driven by its own reasons. First, there are the nostalgic retro gamers. They grew up with the first generations of computers and video game systems and followed the development all the way to the devices that we have today. However, gaming itself changed a lot over the years, it got more complex and time-consuming. The nostalgic retro gamers remember the times when games were instant joy and pure fun instead of DRM and hours of updating. They play their favourite classics to bring back those good memories. I think, products like THE 64 or Nintendo's NES Mini target this audience. Second, there are the curious retro gamers. They usually grew up with modern platforms, but want to know more about the history of gaming. I met some young adults of that kind in the retro section of the Gamescom exhibition in Cologne, Germany, where they really enjoyed themselves playing games on the Sega Master System, the Super Nintendo and others. I had the

The in-game map screen

Sam the Ninja. He's not the first and won't be the Last...

P-P-P-P-P-Pummel a Penguin

impression that they had a far better time here than in the halls of the mainstream companies. I even heard of people in their twenties or thirties who, after the event, subscribed to retro magazines or purchased old consoles at ebay. So yes, there are new retro fans as well. Third, there are those platform fans that I referred to earlier who kept the faith to their favourite machines in all the years. They are neither new nor driven by nostalgia, they just never stopped playing. They form the third group of retro gamers in my book, and they're also the primary audience that I intend to target with the Knights of Bytes.

KoB is well known for ground breaking C64 games, pioneering tricks and features in games that haven't been seen or done on the C64 previously. What are some of the ground-breaking features of Sam's Journey that haven't been done on the C64 before?

My team and I are great fans of classic platform games. Our favourite titles, however, have never been released for the C64, but for consoles like the NES, the Genesis or the SNES instead. So when we decided to create Sam's Journey for the C64, we wanted it to be a console-style platformer with colourful graphics, great music, cracking sound effects, smooth gameplay, a versatile protagonist, huge levels and plenty of features. While each of these aspects may not be ground-breaking by itself, I think their combination in Sam's Journey definitely is.

Can you tell us about the custom cartridge that you will be using for Sam's Journey? How did this come about and what are some of the technical features of the cartridge?

To complete the "consolesque" experience, we decided to create an additional edition of Sam's Journey on cartridge. However, the existing hardware solutions were either too small in capacity, too expensive to be produced in large numbers or lacked the possibility to store data such as savegames. So I teamed up with Jens Schönfeld of individual Computers to design a low-cost cartridge that fulfils the above requirements. The result is basically an Ocean-style 512 KiB ROM cartridge with an additional 2 KiB of EEPROM as storage.

What have been some of the technical challenges in creating a game like Sam's Journey on the C64? Alternatively, what are some of the advantages of using the C64 as a platform for games creation?

Three things come to my mind that were quite a challenge. First, we needed to implement secret passages that cannot be seen, but that reveal themselves and their contents when being discovered. We achieved this using clever charset manipulation. Second, we needed to deal with a hero who completely changes his appearance. We achieved that by replacing his sprites at runtime. And third, we needed a free-directional camera as the levels in Sam's Journey extend both horizontally and vertically. At first, we tried a classic 8-directional camera, but it looked weird when we had it follow an agile hero such as Sam. And above all that, we constantly ran out of RAM and CPU cycles. The beauty of the C64 as a platform is that, somehow, you always find a way to make things work.

KoB have worked with Protovision for distribution of your previous releases. How did this relationship come about?

When I finished Ice Guys in 1995, I was under the assumption that there were only very few C64 users left out there. At that time, the remaining C64-related print magazines slowly vanished from the shelves. So I put an advert in one of those last magazines in order to distribute my game. To my huge surprise, not only loads of orders came in, but also a written letter from the guys at Protovision. They told me about their endeavour to keep the C64 alive, to bring together coders and artists, and to run a development and publishing house for new C64 games. I decided to team up with Protovision for the distribution of my games so they could reach a larger audience. As this worked out very well, Protovision and I eventually joined forces for the development of Metal Dust. This project was quite huge, and over the years, many guys at Protovision became real friends.

The fantastic box art, and the even more fantastic C64 version of it.

How is Sam's Journey unique on the C64? What are some of the exciting gameplay features that us hungry gamers can look forward to?

If you like games like Super Mario Bros. 3 (NES), Kirby's Dreamland (NES), Kidd Chameleon (SMD) or the Donkey Kong Country series (SNES), then Sam's Journey is definitely a game for you. Sam is a very versatile hero. He has many basic moves such as running, jumping, climbing, swimming, picking up and carrying items and using them or throwing them around. In addition to that, there are six different costumes that completely change Sam's appearance and give him special skills! There'll be secret passages, puzzles and a lot of hidden items for you to discover. 14 different graphical settings, 27 huge levels, tons of enemies and three bosses will keep you entertained. As the game is quite large, there are no such things as limited lives or even a game over. Instead, you can explore the levels, advance in the game and save your progress at any time.

You debuted the game at Gamescon 2016. How was the reaction? What kind of feedback did you get from the audience? Did this effect any development decisions in any way?

The reactions were overwhelmingly positive. Some people even told me how they watched our teaser videos of Sam's Journey on YouTube, and now came all the way to Gamescom to see the game with their own eyes. One guy even took photos to prove his friends at home that Sam's Journey really isn't an April Fool's prank. Many people asked the guys at the Protovision stand about pre-order options. And some wanted to take just a small glimpse at the game to not spoil it for themselves before its release. As the feedback on the exhibition was so great, there was no need to reconsider any development decisions.

How is development progressing for Sam's Journey?

After so many months of development, we are glad that the end is finally in sight. We still have to complete the bosses and polish a bunch of levels based on the feedback of our testers. Also, we need a nice ending picture. The focus, however, started to move from the development stage to the manufacturing stage. Cartridges are being assembled, boxes are being ordered, labels are being printed and so on. As you can see, things are very much in progress.

What's next for KoB after Sam's Journey has been completed?

As we intend to try crowdfunding for our future projects, we need to apply some changes to our design process first. Instead of fully working out the details of a sketched idea, we're going to develop a prototype. This way, we can sort out the ideas that don't work at a very early stage. On the other hand, if an idea works, we can create a campaign fairly quickly as we already have something to present to the crowd. There are actually some project ideas for the time after Sam's Journey, and one or two of them might even be C64 material. They may be prototyped one day, so stay tuned! :)

The prototype cartridge of Sam's Journey. We can't wait to see the finished object!

Sam's Journey will be available for purchase from Protovision (http://www.protovision.games/).

You can keep up to date with the development of Sam's Journey by visiting the KoB homepage (http://www.knightsofbytes.games/) from which you can access the various KoB social media accounts.

You can give KoB financial support by supporting them on Patreon (https://www.patreon.com/chesterkollschen) or making a donation via the KoB homepage.

NEWS

POND

Pond is set to release Graham Axten's The Bear Essentials as a physical tape edition, which will also feature his 2016 Reset 4kb Compo entry, Bonkey Kong, as a b-side.

The disk edition, which was released early 2017, is already on its second print run.

More information about ordering the physical editions of The Bear Essentials, as well as current and upcoming Pond releases, can be found at their homepage.

www.pondsoft.uk/
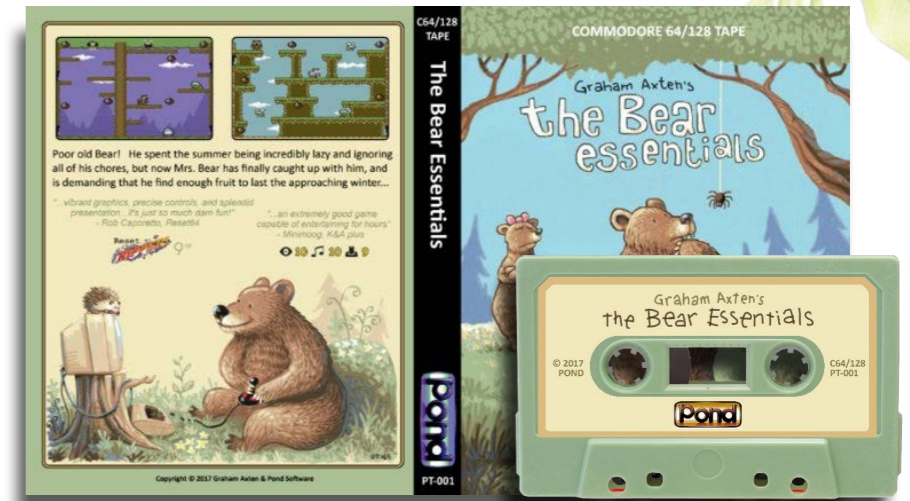
PROTOVISION
Creating the Future.

Protovision have been very busy getting ready for the release of Sam's Journey. A pre-order option has been set up on their homepage and it's the best way to ensure you receive a disk or cartridge copy on release.

The Protovision Game Competition 2017 is in full swing and registrations have been closed. This year's compo theme is 'sports games', with the competition running until the end of May 2018.

Protovision have also sneakily announced a brand new game by the name of Wormhole, which is being produced by TRS. The game is a sprawling action platformer consisting of 15 levels, set across 15 worlds. Suffice to say, the screenshots look stunning!

Protovision have a number of other in development projects, including 8 Bit Civilizations (Fabian Hertel), which is an ambitious C64 port of Civilisation 2. The game's playable demo is available as a free download. Protovision leader, Jakob Voos (JTR), is still working hard on Pac It, which should see release sooner rather than later. We spoke to Jakob in Reset 8.5, which has just been released for the first time on the Reset homepage as a free download.

www.protovision.games/

After a short hiatus, RGCD are back in a big way. To start with, some out of stock cartridges such as Jam It, Moonstone and Powerglove are now available again, complete with professionally printed manuals and improved cartridge labels. They look fantastic and RGCD also plan to restock further cartridges in the near future.

Even more exciting is the imminent release of Paul Koller's Luftrauserz, which is itself a conversion of the recent indie game, Luftrausers (notice the subtle name difference), by Vlambeer. The game is set to be a ripper. Paul Koller had the following to say:

"With the game itself, it has almost all the content of the original. So 125 different playable rauser combinations, 60 different missions, full-screen high-speed 50fps scrolling engine with an independent camera system, multiple soundtrack variations, full statistics, on-chip progress saving, etc."

Paul also spoke to us about his brand new project.

"This will be a Roguelike-like or Rogue-lite game with procedural level layouts. Again an official demake of a 'recent' indie game. I don't think something like this has been done on the C64 before! I'm currently working on the various player control schemes, while (part of) the procedural level generation and smooth scrolling code is already in."

We will have a full review of Luftrausers in Reset 11.

www.rgcd.co.uk/

PSYTRONIK SOFTWARE

Kenz has been super busy at Psytronik, with the label releasing a number of titles so far in 2017, with even more in the pipeline!

Recently released games are Shoot 'Em Up Destruction Set 4 (Alf Yngve), Space Trip 2086 (Achim Volkers), Sleepwalker (John Darnell), Platman Worlds (Andrea Schincaglia aka Wanax) and The Sky is Falling (Stuart Collier). All of these games are reviewed in this very issue of Reset. Platman Worlds is disk/digital download only, while the others are also available to buy on tape.

Coder Stuart Collier spoke to us about The Sky is Falling just before its release.

"The Sky is Falling was originally released on the mobile devices by Ovine by Design (www.ovine.net) from which I based the C64 version on. Trev and I have done a lot of remakes over the past 14 years so when he suggested we actually write a C64 game I obviously said no! C64 coding is hard work and should not be ventured into lightly! - both challenging but also FUN!"

Psytronik are also set to release a further 5 games in the near future. These are Pains 'n' Aches (Widepixelgames), Hammer Down (Jason Kelk), Slipstream (Bauknecht), Planet Golf (Antonio Savona) and Argus (Trevor Storey/Achim Volkers). Of these titles, Pains 'n' Aches, Argus, Planet Golf and Slipstream have been earmarked to be released as Ultimate Editions.

Slipstream is already available as a free download and has been reviewed in this issue. The Psytronik release will have further enhancements. We spoke to the game's coder, Stefan Mader, and he has informed us that the new release will be fully compatible with the SD2IEC, contain further bugfixes, and even a new level.

Planet Golf has now been completed and released as a digital download. It will be reviewed in Reset 11. We spoke to coder Antonio Savona who updated us on the game's changes since the preview from last year.

"There's a 2-players mode, 99 levels on 5 planets, all new presentation, a galactic hall of fame, more objects/actors/enemies, different live commentaries for each planet and a revamped physics engine which fixes the glitches of the one that I had implemented in the preview. There are also several extras stuffed on the b-side of the disk, such as an FMV intro that tells the story of the game and a juke-box to enjoy all the sids! Oh, maybe there are even Easter Eggs! All in all, 2 floppy sides fully stuffed with extra-terrestrial golf goodness. I really hope people will enjoy this and have as much fun playing it as I had putting it together."

www.psytronik.net
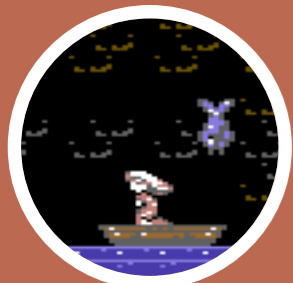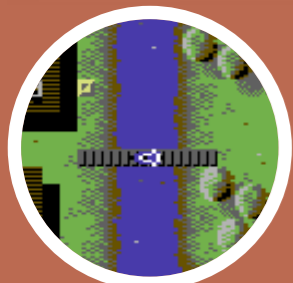
poly.play

German retrogames publisher have big plans for the Commodore 64, including a number of software and hardware projects.

They have a professionally produced and boxed version of the Tapecart in production. This piece of hardware is a flash storage unit which plugs into the tape port. They also have the MSD2IEC in development, which is a cartridge version of the SD2IEC which includes a file browser in ROM and will come boxed with a case and manual.

The multi-player top-down racer, Race, was first released in the 2015/16 RGCD cart competition and now Poly.Play have released an enhanced version of the game. Titled Race+, It is the first game to offer gameplay for up to 8 players at once utilising their new SuperPad 64 adaptor. The adaptor connects 8 SuperNES controllers to the C64 and plugs into the C64's userport. Race+ also comes in a 'SuperPad 64 Edition' which comes packaged with the adaptor.

Rescuing Orc is a new flip screen platform/arcade adventure game by Juan Martinez, which has reached beta status and is currently in the testing phase. The game is slated for release from Poly.Play on tape, disk and cartridge. Juan spoke to us about some of the features of the game.
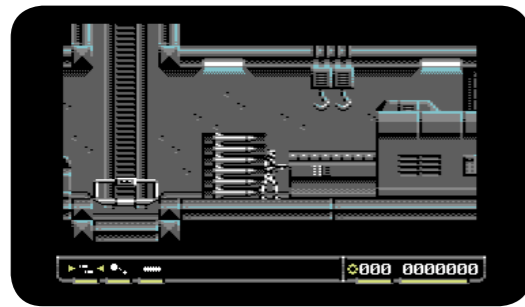
"Rescuing Orc is a jump & slash game; or a mixture of platformer and action (not sure which genre), inspired by classics like Castlevania, Wonder Boy III or Zelda 2, with lots of screens to explore, different types of enemies to fight and, hopefully, an interesting story!"
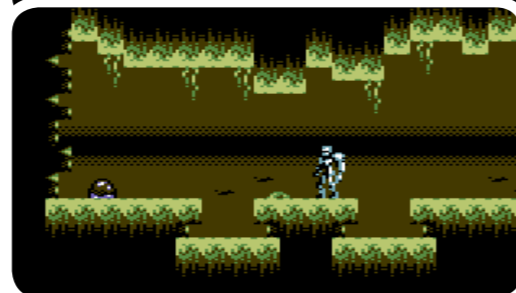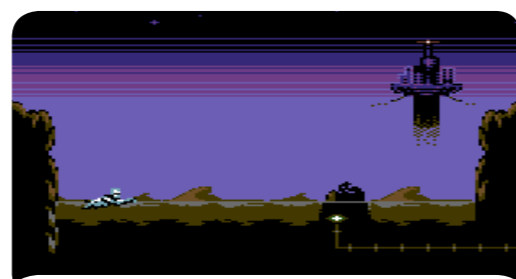
www.polyplay.xyz/
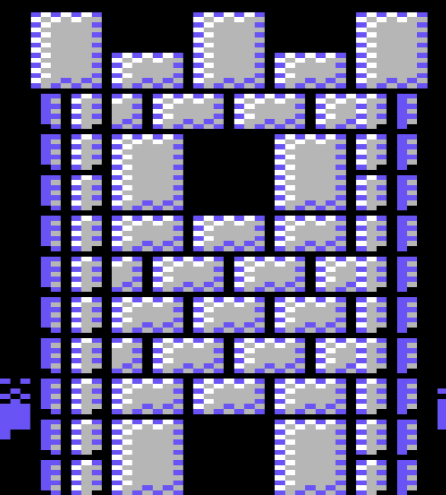
Steel Ranger is Lasse Öörni's follow up to last year's Hessian and is already well into development. The game is a sprawling arcade shooter taking inspiration from games such as Turrican and Metroid. Currently, the game world consists of 661 screens spread over 17 levels. Lasse is keeping a development blog for the game over at the Cadaver homepage.

https://cadaver.github.io/

Andrea (Wanax) is hard at work on a conversion of Sydney Hunter for the Canadian retro games publisher Collectorvision (The game is a neat flip screen platformer in the same vein as Pitfall 2 and Montezuma's Revenge). According to Andrea, the game will have both multicolour and hi-res graphics modes and a full soundtrack from Saul Cross. Andrea is currently coding the game engine and indicated that he is making steady progress!

www.collectorvision.com
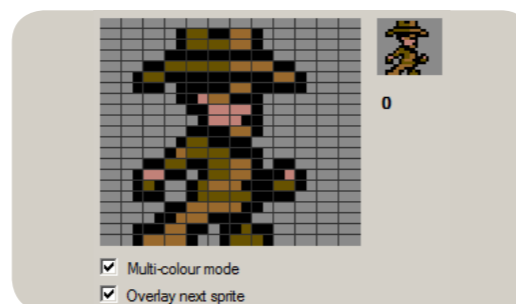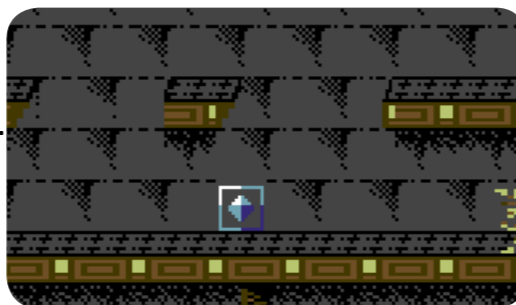
Magic Cap, developers of the recently released Maze of the Mummy (8/10, Reset 9.5) are already working on the sequel, Maze of the Mayan Temple. According to Federico Sesler, the game is one of four currently under development at Magic Cap.

"After releasing Maze of the Mummy, Michelangelo and I started working on its sequel: Maze of the Mayan Temple. Its concept is totally different from the previous one. In fact it's going to be a platform adventure in which the player has to collect a number of gems in order to move to the next level... quite straightforward, right? This time the location of the game is a Mayan sort of environment, with traps, mayan warriors and other cool obstacles. The explorer will have to run and jump a lot if he wants to survive."

Mikael Tillander of WidePixelGames is working on a new action shooter called Geo Six. The game is in the early stages of development, however, Mikael has posted videos of early game builds in action as well as screenshots and the project is looking very promising. Another project, Pains 'N' Aches is now in beta and is slated for a release by Psytronik later this year.

www.widepixelgames.com/

The Brisbane C64 Night is on again! This year, the meet will be held on Saturday, 2nd September at Woody Point Memorial Hall (corner of Oxley Avenue and Hornibrook Esplanade, Woody Point, Queensland). The festivities start at 6:00pm and conclude at midnight. Members of Reset will be in attendance (our very own Ant Stiller is co-organiser), and a whole range of Commodore computers will be set up. There will also be hardware and software demonstrations, game competitions and a whole range of other fun things! Attendees are also asked to bring $5 to help cover costs. Be there or the Spectrum gods will come for you!

www.cloud.cbm8bit.com/resetc64/Brisbane_C64_Night_2017.pdf
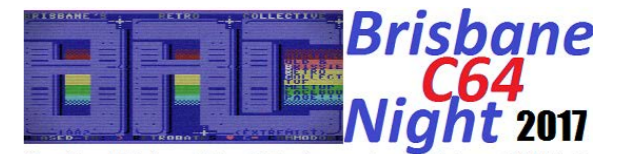
Combined Brisbane Retro Collective meetup & Brisbane C64 Night
Saturday 2nd September 6:00pm to midnight

Please bring along $5 to help cover costs
FUN NIGHT OF COMMODORE & RETRO GAMES, DEMOS, HARDWARE

VENUE: Woody Point Memorial Hall
Corner of Oxley Avenue & Hornibrook Esplanade, Woody Point, QLD
Further information available in the lemon64 forum (www.lemon64.com/forum/)

Martin Piper has started work on Citadel 2, an unofficial sequel to Martin Walker's classic shooter, Citadel. He has already released a preview to the scene, showcasing the concept and game engine, while containing placeholder graphics and music. A diary of the game is being kept over at the Lemon forums and the project is open source.

Simone Bevilacqua of Retream is hard at work putting the finishing touches to Mah 2.0. The game is a significantly enhanced and optimised version of the original release from 2016. Simone is planning both a physical release and digital download of the game. We got in touch with Simone and he told us what MAH 2.0 is all about.

"A quick description of MAH: impossible! The game is just too complex and has such a variety of gameplay that it can't be summed up. The core idea is that the player has to crack a number of layers of a security software to stop the Apocalypser, a weapon that will destroy the whole Earth. But how to do it, as said, can't just be put in a few words - after all, there's a reason why the manual is so massive! One thing that can be said is that, despite what I just said makes it seem a puzzler, it's an arcade action game."

www.retream.com/
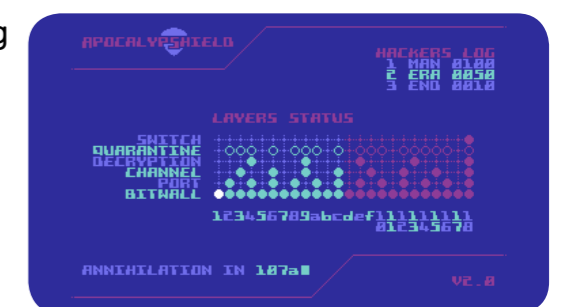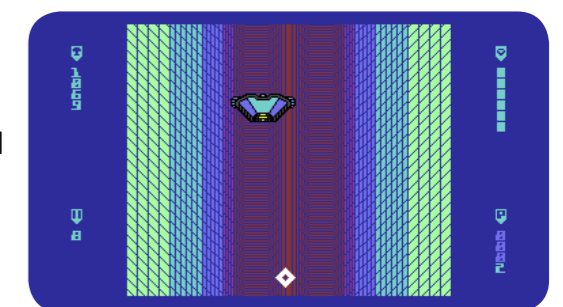
MIX-I-DISK

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

http://cloud.cbm8bit.com/resetc64/Reset_10_Mixidisk.zip

Just type LOAD"*",8,1 and then type run. After this, you need to choose which loader to use; either fastload enabled or kernal (choose the kernal loader if you are using an SD2IEC device). Use your joystick in Port 2 to navigate the menu.

Reset Disk Menu
Code/Character Set/Sprites: Richard Bayliss
Logo: Shine
Music: Richard Bayliss
IRQ Turbo Loader: Martin Piper

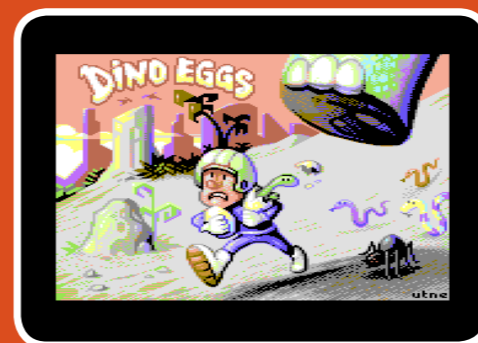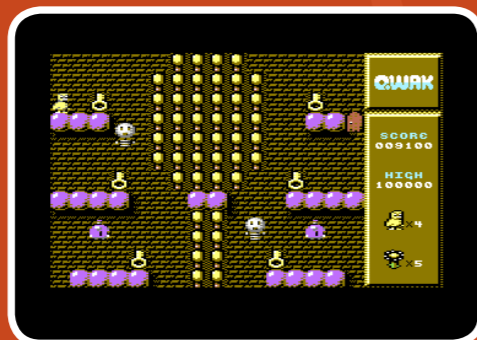The Reset disk menu has been coded especially for Reset by Richard Bayliss, with a logo by Shine and new music titled 'Boing Away' by Richard. Thanks Richard!

Reset #10 Intro
2017 Jesder
Design & Programming: Jesder
Music: Eco
Reset Logo: Shine

Andrew Burch (Jesder) is the coder and designer of our brilliant new intro to celebrate the release of Reset #10. Graphics in the intro are from Shine, with music by Eco. Just sit back and enjoy the show! To accompany the intro, Andrew has written a fantastic 'making of' article which has been published on Ausretrogamer. It's highly recommended reading and a fantastic companion piece to this wonderful intro.

Tombstones
2017 Megastyle
Programming: Docster
Graphics & Music: Rotteroy
Idea: Drumtex
Loading Picture: Sparkler
Loading Music: Rage
Instruction page made by Majikeyric, with Petscii Graphics by Shine and Sprites by Sparkler and Rotteroy.
Advertisment/Flyer: Del Seymour

This brand new game was produced by C64 demo-scene legends, Megastyle, and first released on the Reset Mix-i-Disk. Battle each of the challengers by quick drawing your revolver using the Commodore 64 keyboard. Can you survive the day and retire with your sweetheart, Miss Jigglytits? This lovely game features full instructions, story and built in cheats. If you enjoy it, please let Megastyle know by sending a message to the Reset email address or leaving some feedback on Twitter via @Rotteroy.

QWAK – Reset Edition 1.3
2017 Oziphantom/Saul Cross
Original Concept & Design: Jamie Woodhouse
Commodore 64 Programming: Oziphantom
Graphics & Sound: Saul Cross

QWAK is a fantastic conversion of a game designed by Jamie Woodhouse and originally released in 1989 for the BBC Micro. This cracking C64 conversion was coded by Oziphantom, with graphics and sound by Saul Cross. The first 16kb version of the game competed in the 2015 RGCD compo, earning 2nd place. This special new version features some fixes, built in cheats and a handy level password system. Navigate each level and collect the keys which will enable you to pass through the door to the next level. Remember, collecting 8 flowers awards you an extra life!

Dino Eggs
1983 David Schroeder
http://www.dinoeggsrebirth.com
Concept & Design: David Schroeder
C64 Programming: Leonard Bertoni
New Loader Pic: Vanja Utne/Pond Software

Dino Eggs is a classic platformer originally released commercially way back in 1983 by Micro Fun, and in now on the Mix-i-Disk, with special permission from David to help celebrate the release of Dino Eggs Rebirth. Guide Time Master Tim through each level to collect the eggs and save the dinos from contamination. Remember, you must drop two pieces of wood onto each other to start a fire and ward off the dino mother. You must cage the hatched dinos by jumping over them, but don't touch them! When you have a caged dino (maximum of 3) or collected eggs (maximum of three), return to your time machine to warp them to safety. The game also features various nasties and a special power-up. Thank-you also to Vanja Utne of Pond Software for the stunning new Dino Eggs loader pic made especially for this release. Watch the Rob Plays at the Hellfire64 YouTube channel.

Spyders – Chapter 1
2017 Mr. Nop
nopsoftware@hotmail.com
Programming, Graphics and Sound: Mr. Nop
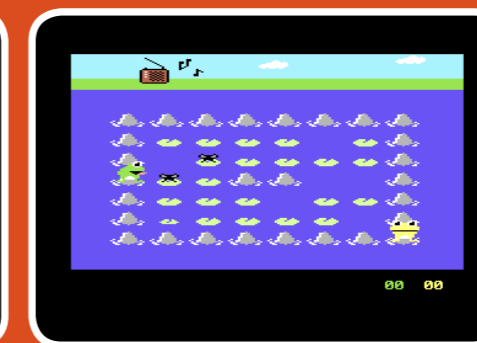*Music/SFX: Richard Bayliss*
Help: Oziphantom & TFG

Mr. Nop returns to the C64 after Slime Deluxe to release his next shooter gem, Spyders - Chapter 1. The game is a lovely petscii take on the classic Space Invaders/Galaga/Gorf formula, featuring fast & furious gameplay with an absolutely thumping soundtrack by Richard Bayliss. Defend Earth from the alien spiders. It's as simple as that – or is it? We hope you enjoy this wonderful hi-score chaser!

Frogs
2017 Dr. Wuro Industries
http://frogs.drwuro.com/
Programming, Design, Graphics and Sound: Christian Gleisner

Frogs is a brilliant multi-player, single screen battle game by Christian Gleisner. Push your opponents into the pond using your super slimy tongue, as well as eating all of the bugs that appear throughout each level. Read our review on page 37, and visit the Dr. Wuro Industries website for more information on how to purchase the physical boxed version of this fantastic game.

Border Blast 3 – Mission to Save America
2017 Alf Yngve/TND Games
Design, Graphics, Sound Effects (using SEUCK): Alf Yngve
Enhancements, Additional Programming & Music: Richard Bayliss
SEUCK Redux Engine: Martin Piper

A cracking new enhanced SEUCK shooter from the Alf Yngve/Richard Bayliss dream-team. Winner of the 2016/17 SEUCK compo, the game is a classic style vertically scrolling shooter that has had the full REDUX treatment! Full instructions and story by Alf Yngve are included within the game.

Misfortune
1996 Everlasting Style/Bad Bytes
Programming & Graphics: Mathew Cox
Music: Dwayne Bakewell
Additional Bytes: Matthew McHugo, Kellie New
New Loading Picture: Del Seymour

This Australian produced full-price platformer by Bad Bytes was originally released in 1996 as a mail-order only game, and we're proud to present it to you today! In this Mayhem'esque platformer, guide Dozer and steal money to collapse Evil Edwin's empire. You must find 5 keys on each world to open the chest and destroy the planet's economy. Dozer is equipped with a protective magnetic force shield and powerful snowball shooting gun. Also check out the great new Misfortune loading/tribute pic by Reset designer, Del Seymour. We hope you enjoy this fantastic game!

Twin Terrors
1995 Everlasting Style/Bad Bytes
Programming: Jolse Maginnis
Graphics: Mathew Cox
Music: B. Reid

This fantastic Bubble Bobble/Rodland'esque single screen platformer was produced by Bad Bytes in the mid-1990s, and we thought it deserved some love from a new audience in 2017! A classic style arcade platformer which is also playable simultaneously with two players. Enjoy!

Fort Django V1.1
2017 Dr. TerrorZ
Programming, Graphics & Sound: Dr TerrorZ

This cool platformer/shooter features massive sprites and cool petscii graphics. Infiltrate Fort Django, fighting your way through the two zones and battling the relentless enemies. We love it!

Name:
Anthony Stiller (Ant)

Job at Reset:
Kev keeps me lashed to the Reset drawing board to produce most of the cover art. Occasionally I'm let out to write a few reviews and taste sweet, sweet fresh air.

Last C64 related purchase:
An EasyFlash 64 cartridge kit *flexes soldering muscles*

Currently playing:
The Bear Essentials (C64), Thimbleweed Park (PC), Resident Evil 7 (PS4)

Favourite part of Reset 10:
Reset 10 is packed to the gills with great content but my favourite part has to be the wonderful layout and design work Del has done, giving the magazine a fresh, professional look. It elevates the entire mag. Also, Cam's comic is always a perfect finisher.

Name:
Alex Boz (ausretrogamer)

Job at Reset:
I pretend to be a wordsmith by smashing out a column each issue and contribute to reviews under duress!

Last C64 related purchase:
I actually purchased Gryzor on tape! It was a bargain on eBay, so I snapped it up. The load times are rubbish though.

Currently playing:
SEUDS 4 (C64) and Resogun (PS Vita/PS4)

Favourite part of Reset 10:
I can't answer this! It is like asking me to choose my favourite child! Ok, ok, if I must, then I always look forward to the awesome covers, and Reset 10's cover by the amazing Ant Stiller is no exception! I love Rob's Reset Rewind, so I can't wait to read about Terry's Big Adventure.

keeping up with the reset crew 64

Name:
Rob Caporetto (Hellfire64)

Job at Reset:
The writing thing. Mostly reviews, the Reset Rewind... and the occasional article. But mainly the Reset Rewind, where I force the crew to play a game, and make them remember it... by giving them more than just a screenshot!

Last C64 Related Purchase:
Complete copies of "Die Hard" and "Vendetta" on disk!

Currently Playing
Alien (Mind Games/Argus Press) (C64) and Mass Effect: Andromeda (PS4)

Favourite Part of Reset 10:
Seeing that new design extended to the max and on bigger pages too! Plus, those rad games on the Mix-i-Disk! And who couldn't get excited for Ant's cover... always wonderful to see what he comes up with!

Name:
Cameron Davis (Gazunta)

Job at Reset:
Do the comic at the end, the occasional review, and create new and inventive ways to make Kev extend the deadlines.

Last C64 related purchase:
Probably Jam It! which was a lovely basketball lark, and the developer kindly offered to make a modified version with unique names!

Currently playing:
I don't know why I'm still playing Buggy Boy but it still gets me for some reason. After that it's far, far too much Rocket League to be healthy on the PS4! What can I say, I am a sucker for games where you drive open wheel cars into balls?

Favourite part of Reset 10:
I have been after a "platform game construction kit" since SEUCK first existed so getting to grips with the Great Giana Sisters Construction Kit has been so much fun. It helps that Giana is one of my favourite games of all time! Seeing how much work goes into constructing a balanced, playable levels has given me a newfound respect for the original developers.
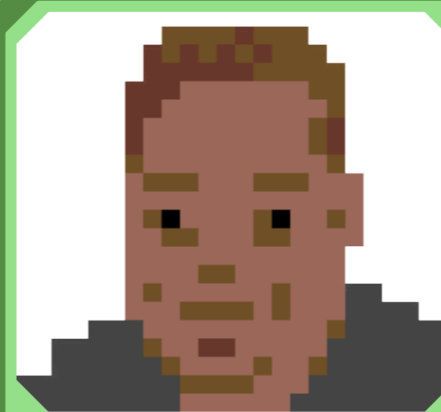
Name:
Kevin Tilley (Unkle K)

Job at Reset:
Setting and then later extending the Reset deadlines like an endless game of cat & mouse!

Last C64 related purchase:
Platman Worlds/Sleepwalker/Space Trip 2086 bundle from Psytronik as well as Frogs from Dr. Wuro Industries.

Currently playing:
Sleepwalker (C64), SEUDS4 (C64), Magica (Amstrad CPC), Halo 3 (Xbox360)

Favourite part of Reset 10:
Del's new design and Ant's cover illustration (as usual). I also really enjoyed Paul's interview with Dennis Caswell. It was a great scoop and we're quite chuffed to have Dennis in our humble magazine!

Name:
Paul Kitching (mrP)

Job at Reset:
Graphics (including the new Reset logo), but also some layout work on the front cover and a lot more to come!

Last C64 related purchase:
An actual C64!

Currently playing:
Not a lot sadly as I'm quite busy, but when I do get a few minutes free, I enjoy Rainbow Islands, IK+ and a bit of Fury of the Furries on the Amiga.

Favourite part of Reset 10:
Everything! I love the way it's shaping up and can't wait to see the finished and printed version! Everyone has done a fantastic job!

Name:
Paul Morrison (PaulEMoz)

Job at Reset:
Hunting out long-lost legends and making them talk.

Last C64 related purchase:
Actually it was a cassette deck on eBay... mine wouldn't load anything!

Currently playing:
Sleepwalker (C64), Rez Infinite (PS4), Polybius (PS4), Bayonetta (PC)

Favourite part of Reset 10:
Must admit it was quite the honour to interview Dennis Caswell. It was brilliant to play Sleepwalker, too... having interviewed John Darnell for my book, I feel like I helped convince him to rewrite it so it's amazing to see it come to fruition.

Name:
Del Seymour (Hank Splendid)

Job at Reset:
Cut n' Pasterer.

Last C64 Related Purchase:
Parallax on disk (beeeeyoootiful) and the wonderful blue clam shell cae version of 'Sleepwalker' from Psytronik.

Currently Playing
Moving House. I guess humping boxes around is kinda like Tetris, so....

Favourite Part of Reset 10:
Ant's sprite heads have been a wonder to behold. Although maybe I could do with a few more pixels of hair....

When Robots Attack isn't a viral video sensation, but rather the next threat for the innocent denizens of the Omikron system. Rob and Kev suit up, and blast off into the fray to stop them in Slipstream!

Slipstream is the debut C64 release by Bauknecht (known for their Plus/4 games Majesty of Sprites and its follow-up Lands of Zador), and was launched at the 2017 BCC party, where it took first place in the Freestyle compo.

It all starts in the Omnikron star system. To ward off frequent system-wide asteroid storms, a system-wide defence shield was constructed, situated above the 4th planet of the system. All was well, until contact was lost with the control station for 10 days.

of the master builder robots. Take this out, and you'll warp to the next system.

Controls wise, Slipstream supports either one or two joysticks. With one joystick, moving your ship to dodge shots is done by moving the joystick around with the fire button pressed. Moving it with the fire button released allows you to move the targeting reticle around.

The two joystick mode allows you to use one joystick specifically for moving the ship, and the second for controlling the reticle for targeting enemies. In effect, this gives you a co-operative mode, allowing one player to handle movement, and the second to handle firing.

Speaking of firing, taking out enemies is quite straight forward - just move the targeting reticle over them. Your ship then marks them, and takes care of the rest, automatically sending a volley of laser
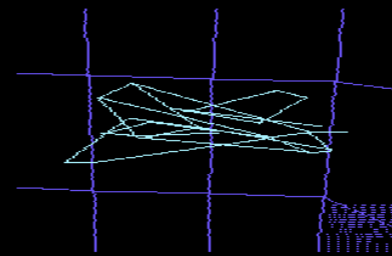
During this period, the robots situated around the station left the region for destinations unknown. After a long search, they were discovered going rogue destroying uninhabited worlds which their systems had misclassified. With several colony worlds in their projected path - it's up to you to take command of the experimental Slipstream fighter, and disable the robot fleets… before peril strikes those colonies.

Slipstream is a rail-shooter (think Panzer Dragoon or Rez) played from a third-person view. Completing each of the four levels involves you blasting away at targets, and avoiding incoming attacks - after surviving a set number of waves, you'll move onto the next phase which has you battling several more waves of robots, before entering a duel with one

I have to say it: seeing teams from the demo scene jump over to making games is always so very exciting. Certainly when watching them push the technical bounds of what the C64 can do in this day and age.

Slipstream's visuals are quite stylish for the C64, including the low polygon in-game objects as well as the title and supporting graphics. The game's music provides plenty of pumping background ambience which suits the on-screen action.

Sadly, I feel the gameplay is what lets things down - at least for stock C64 owners. The framerate is just too rough, and easily drops down to unplayable states with when things get hectic.

The default controls can feel confusing, with the need to alternate between moving your craft and your targeting reticle leading to plenty of confusion in the head of the action. It does support using two joysticks, but I feel this doesn't improve things that much.

For stock C64 owners, Slipstream is a curiosity worth a few plays, though if you're lucky to own a SuperCPU or Turbo Chameleon (or a Plus/4), then it's worth it to see something new pushing the extra hardware power!

ROB

Wow!! Slipstream a slick affair, with outstanding presentation in the form of various cut scenes, game menus and high quality graphics and music. Very impressive indeed and gives the game a real contemporary feel!

Despite all of the candy, a simple shooter lies underneath and as a game, Slipstream definitely lacks depth. But that is not to say it's a bad thing, because 3D arcade shooters on the C64 are as rare as hen's teeth, and what Slipstream does, it does well. The gameplay is frantic and fun. The framerate on a stock C64 is acceptable and it all runs surprisingly smooth considering what is actually happening on screen. It does chug a little at times, but I didn't find it too distracting.

Having the option to use two joysticks (one for targeting, one for flying the ship) is a nice, rarely seen feature in C64 games and is a welcome addition. Twin-stick gameplay on the C64!

As a technical achievement, Slipstream is clearly outstanding. As a game, it's average and remains fun for a while. Slipstream is a very ambitious 8bit title and pushes the C64 to its limits, but still retains just enough playability to be a worthwhile game to play and not merely appreciate on a technical level.

KEV

Plus/4

With a background in producing games for the C64's unloved sibling, it's no surprise that the Bauknecht crew also released a version of Slipstream for the C16 (with 64k expansion) and Plus/4.

This version of the game is essentially the same as the C64 edition, though taking advantage of the extra colours offered by the TED chip, a TED rather than SID soundtrack (complete with sampled speech), along with the slightly faster CPU speed to provide a slightly higher framerate than the C64 version of the game.

death over in their direction!

Stylistically, Slipstream wears its demo-scene influence all over it, with both your craft, and the enemies drawn with filled 3D graphics. To go with those, those lucky enough to own a SuperCPU or a Turbo Chameleon cartridge, Slipstream is one of the few titles out there to be properly enhanced and support them offering an improved framerate compared to a stock C64 system!

Slipstream is freely available to download from the Bauknecht website as a disk image. For those who prefer to hold a physical copy in their hands, Psytronik have announced it as a forthcoming release, as both a Budget and Premium Plus disk. Along with this, it's also slated to be the next Ultimate Edition release - for those who desire a fancier edition.

7/10

Developer
Bauknecht
http://www.bkn-online.org

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

Format
Disk, Digital Download

After taking third place in the 2015 RGCD compo, Platman is back! This time, Wanax has gone off to release Platman Worlds, an extended version of the game, offering new levels and plenty more platforming action for your money.

For those who've not checked out the compo (or the original Amiga) release, Platman Worlds is a flick-screen platforming game, in which you take control of Platman, who has somehow gotten locked inside a warehouse where those crafty ghosts are guarding a rather large number of tasty treats just waiting to be devoured.

To complete the game and escape, Platman must go through each of the screens, eating fruit, collecting keys and avoiding ghosts. Any resemblance Platman has to another yellow, spherical character who likes to munch on fruit (and other food items) and ghosts is only a coincidence *wink*.

Alongside the keys, pieces of fruit and other foodstuffs you'll collect, the ghosts have left a number of power-ups around the place. The first of those are 1UPs, allowing you to increase the number of Platmen you have in reserve. Then there's the classic Energizers, giving you the change to gobble up the ghosts on the current screen.

The ghosts aren't the only hazards standing in Platman's way. There's plenty of tricky jumps to try and master.

PLATMAN Worlds

There's more than one yellow, spherical fruit-muncher in town. Time for Rob and Kev to go scouring a warehouse in search of the mythical Platman in the middle of his next adventure,

Platman Worlds!
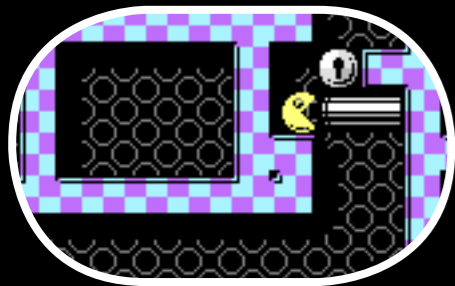
Developer Wanax (with graphics and music by Saul Cross).
Publisher Psytronik
http://www.psytronik.net/
Format Disk, Digital Download

I missed the original Amiga game, so when I first played the 16k version of Platman, I was quite impressed, ranking it in my Top 3 for Issue 9's round-up.

On reading it was going to be developed and extended further? I was quite on board - and now we have the final version, is that still true?

The good news is graphically, the great use of high-res mode for both the sprites and characters has been kept, looking as fresh as ever. Sound wise, the SID tunes on offer provide the perfect mix of tunes to fit the frantic play. As for the controls, they're spot on too - Platman is as responsive as ever to your inputs, which is critical where precise jumps are needed.

The only grip I really have is the difficulty - it starts tough, and the difficulty curve ramps up fast. Despite the time I've spent, I've struggled to clear the first of the worlds on offer, and if it weren't for that, this would be a much easier sell.

If you're up to the challenge, you'll get plenty of it here. Otherwise? Check out the 16k version first and see what you think!

ROB

ROB PLAYS
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OzhrAMWlyP4

Then there's the dangerous spikes which can pop a careless Platman. There's also the water, which will cause a hapless Platman to drown. Finally, there are the cannons which are littered about the screens, firing small bullets which are perfect for popping a Platman in the midst of a mistimed jump!
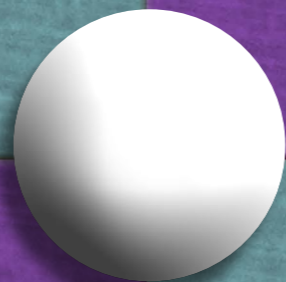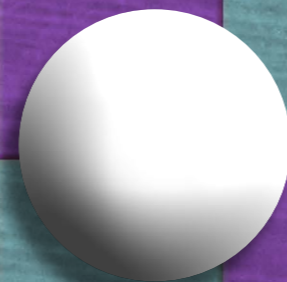
Adding to the original level set of the compo release (now titled Classic World), Platman Worlds offers three additional worlds of platforming adventure goodness: Gothic World, Ancient World and Future World. Moving onto each successive world requires mastery of the previous, which means you totally need to be on board with your platform mastery.

As with any platformer, the controls of Platman Worlds are straightforward - with Platman being moved about using Left or Right on the joystick, and the Fire Button for jumping.

The art-style is unique in that it exclusively relies upon the C64's high-resolution sprite and character modes, with crisp clear sprites, and brightly defined against the backgrounds. Music wise, there's a great soundtrack by Saul Cross which is well suited to the mad-cap platforming action on offer.

Platman Worlds is a disk-only release by Psytronik, and will be available as a digital download, along with a physical release as both a Budget release, and as a Premium+ release contained in an A5 plastic case.

8/10

This is one tough game! Now, I'm no push-over when it comes to joystick controlled retro gaming, but Platman managed to challenge my (not so) well-tuned fine motor skills to the limit. With lots of precise platform jumping action, the game should feel like home for many a retro-gamer!

Despite the initial difficulty curve, with the mindset to push on I was duly rewarded! To be honest, Platman isn't in the same league of difficulty as games such as Rick Dangerous, but in these days of infinite respawns, it's nice to have the 'fear of death' back that we often don't get any more with modern gaming (although, it must be said that you are given plenty of lives). And while frustration plays a part, with Platman it's more a compulsion to keep doing better after you have a brief dummy spit.

The hi-res graphics are gorgeous to look at, the rooms are tough yet fair and I love Saul Cross' boppy tunes - they suit the game perfectly! The three new worlds each have their own graphical theme and it all looks amazing! The game has been lovingly crafted by Wanax et al and is a truly slick production. A worthy purchase for sure, as long as you have the stomach for it!

KEV

SLEEP WALKER

Ever wondered what goes on at the fairground after the gates shut and the sun goes down? No? Well you're about to find out anyway, and trust us, its utter chaos. So we sent in three brave souls; Andrew, Paul and Kev put on their pyjamas and prepare for the afterhours guided tour. They may never be quite the same again!

The cute graphics and music really draw you in to Sleepwalker, and having the tutorial helps to grasp the concept and the controls. The hero is particularly good, and the fairground setting is nicely portrayed. Although it echoes the sparse platform layouts of classic games, the nicely detailed enemies add interest.

After a couple of easy levels they soon become larger and more complex; the onscreen indicators help navigation. I did find a bug annoying, where the game would fail to start after viewing the tutorial. But the gameplay itself is nicely thought out and allows the player to come up with their own tactics on solving the puzzles, once they get used to the control method.

My one concern would be long-term, as replaying the early levels can become repetitive. It's fascinating to see this "lost" game finally completed and now on sale, in the excellent packaging from Psytronik. Everyone involved has clearly put a lot of effort into creating it.

MERMAN

The fairground has closed for the day and now it's really time to party! Unbeknownst to most mere muggles, the fairground really comes alive after closing time and prizes spring to life and let loose to have their own fun! Later on, after dancing and partying and who knows what else, the prizes fall safely asleep, tucked back into their beds and packed safely back into their boxes.

Unfortunately, on this fateful night, the unnamed but ultimately heroic fairground security guard has noticed that Teddy (one of the fairground prizes) is missing from his bed. He's sleepwalking, and this means danger!

Sleepwalker has the player controlling the security guard, with the objective to locate and then guide the sleepwalking Teddy back to the safety of its bed. Unfortunately, the fairground is teeming with danger and both the security guard and Teddy must avoid the many dangerous situations and obstacles that can occur.

In true classic platforming fashion, the fairground world is divided up into levels (single screen, and then multi-room levels as the game progresses). You also have two energy bars to keep track of (one for you and one for Teddy) and a life is lost when either runs out.

The rooms are littered with obstacles and enemies, reminiscent to the grand-daddy of all room based platformers – Manic Miner. There are also lifts, moving platforms and energy recharge areas, included as additional game mechanics. When things really get chaotic in the bigger levels, the on-screen scanner is useful and interchanges between locating Teddy and then the bed, depending on your progress within the level.

A tutorial mode has also been added to the game and must be played through at the beginning of each playing session, designed to help you learn the controls. One important move is the ability to piggy-back teddy over dangerous obstacles, however, you lose your own energy faster when doing this.

Sleepwalker has been published by Psytronik in the usual tape and disk editions and is also available as a digital download from itch.io.

7.5/10

In a way, I feel partially responsible for the existence of this game. I interviewed John Darnell and during discussions, he dug out his old disks and decided to rework his original, unreleased game. I'm very glad he did, as Sleepwalker is a worthy addition to the Commodore 64's library!

I must confess that I struggled with it at first... in fact, I thought it was bugged when the bear seemed to walk in thin air through a wall! But once I got into the game proper, I found a devious little platformer with some great ideas and gameplay elements. Getting the bear into his bed is a rewarding challenge for gamers of any level.

Sleepwalker feels like an old-school game with a 21st century coat of paint, which is technically what it is. It could have been lost forever, but it's great that John revisited and reworked it, and the final product is well worth his time and effort... and yours.

PAUL

There has been some robust debate in the Reset camp about Sleepwalker, with the game proving to be rather divisive. Luckily for me, I've thoroughly enjoyed it and as soon as I realised I could actually piggyback Teddy (typically, I didn't read the instructions), I was hooked!

Sleepwalker is absolutely overflowing with old-school charm. It's not the prettiest of games but the graphical decisions John made do work and the hi-res overlaid sprites look great. Accompanying the game are jolly fairground tunes that are also a good fit.

The first few levels really ease the player into it and from then on, Sleepwalker is brutal. Persistence will reward though and I found myself become quite addicted to the whole thing, compulsively having just one more go to try and get Teddy safely back to bed.

Kudos to John for returning to this long lost gem (starting again from scratch) and seeing his vision all the way through, staying true to himself throughout the entire development. It's an admirable achievement, one for which I am thankful for because Sleepwalker is a blast and a headache, all in one!

KEV

Developer John Darnell
Publisher Psytronik
http://www.psytronik.net/
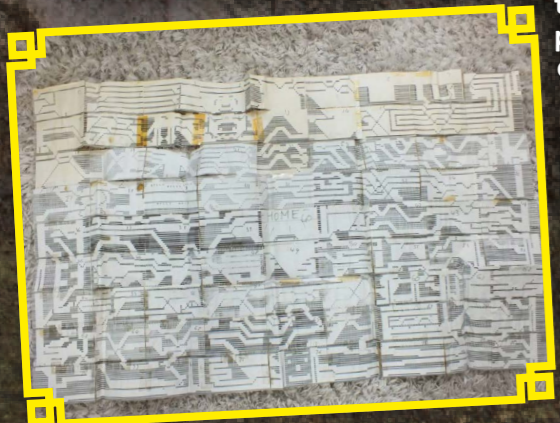**Format** Tape, Disk, Digital Download

JOHN DARNELL

Hi John, thanks for joining us. Why come back to the C64 after so many years? Why did you choose the C64 as the target platform for the new Sleepwalker?

Lovely to talk! I developed a hernia early 2016 which meant I was unable to work. Back in 1984 the very first game I wrote on the Commodore 64 was called Sleepwalker. It was finished but never released. To be honest it was not very good. It looked and played like a first attempt at a game. Because it was never released I have always wanted to revisit it and make it a decent game, and, because I was bored out of mind because of my hernia, I decided to dig out my Commodore 64, unused since about 1990, and revisit Sleepwalker. My C64 was dead, so I bought another, and although all of my old disks still loaded I discovered that I had nothing - zero assets, from the original Sleepwalker. My wonderful wife brightly suggested "You can write it again, from scratch!" I thought that was an absurd suggestion, but, since I had nothing else to do, I began early 2016.

If Sleepwalker has any success on modern platforms then my next project will be something based on Kane

What were some of the technical challenges you faced during development?

I basically had to relearn everything about the C64 and the 6502 from scratch. Having made the decision to write a new Sleepwalker, the first question to answer was "How?"

To my amazement I discovered there were tools that ran on modern computers, and they were powerful. (I could only dream of such tools back in the 80s.) I discovered CBM Prg Studio by Arthur Jordison,

(great guy with an amazing product). As a practice to refamiliarise myself with the C64 I redid a couple of demos I wrote in the 80s, and then plunged in with Sleepwalker 2016. I still had a broad picture of the Commodore 64 but I had to re-teach myself the all intricacies of the hardware. I also had to learn the complexities of the Vice 64 emulator.

You chose to utilise EBCM for the graphics. Why did you choose this? Can you tell our readers more about it?

In 1984 taught myself to program the Commodore 64 by reading the Commodore 64 Programmers Guide. It steps you through each possible screen mode. I played around and felt that individual pixel high resolution graphics looked much better than double pixel wide graphics. Normally a character based game screen has 1000 (40x25) 8x8 pixel squares comprised of up to 256 individual 8x8 patterns (characters). In normal character mode each screen character location is linked the corresponding colour memory location, meaning all pixels switched on in the character can be only one of the 16 Commodore 64 colours. This means that each 8x8 character is limited to two colours, pixels switched on will be the colour held in corresponding colour memory and any pixels which are off will the background colour of the screen. If Multi Colour Character Mode is chosen then instead of 8 pixels per line each character line is now composed of 4 double pixel pairs for each (wide) dot. This means each double pixel wide dot can be one of 4 possible colours, but, we now have a lower resolution. Extended Background Colour Mode (EBCM) makes three more background colours available which are selected with the top two bits of each byte in placed in character memory. This means that the total number of possible characters on screen is held in the remaining 6 bits in each character. This limits the possible number of different characters on the screen to 64. In 1984 I decided to build Sleepwalker using EBCM. I wrote my own editors and I loved the results. By the end of 1984 I had realised that EBCM had limits but I felt the attractiveness of the screens outweighed the limits imposed by the character-set being limited to 64

characters. Last year, wanting to recreate what I had in 1984, meant I was going to use EBCM. To discover that CBM Prg Studio had the ability to paint a screen using EBCM cemented that decision for me. Because so few use EBCM I uncovered a few bugs in CBM Prg Studio, but Arthur's support for his product is exceptional and they were fixed very quickly.

What were some of the technical challenges you faced during development?

I change screen mode from EBCM to normal character mode for the status information (lives, energy etc.) and removing the flicker caused by changing the background colours was a pain. For those who program, there are a few nops in there. The hires title screen is squeezed into the same memory I use to display the game screen and it was technically challenging to calculate the necessary values to write into the VIC chip and I spent many hours figuring out why and removing the flickers caused by reusing the same video memory for hi-res and character modes. Also, it was a minor challenge overlaying a high resolution sprite on top of a multicolour one to give a beautiful looking figure. (Boy oh boy, I wish I had known about or thought of that in the 80s!) Trevor Storey's overlaid sprites are graphically way better than anything I remember from those days. Had I had the time and the available memory I planned to multiplex (reuse the sprite hardware to give more sprites on the screen via raster interrupts). Technically we could have gone much further but in the end I was happy with producing a far better game than I envisaged back in 1984.

You have set up a new development company called 'Another Fine Mess'. Can

you tell us a bit about this? What is next for John Darnell?

In December last year I took a look at Sleepwalker64, compared it to current games, and concluded that I still have the ability to make a great little game that people will love to play. I felt that my time a Christian minister was coming to an end, so, at sixty years young, I made the decision to re-renter the games industry. I rang a good friend who was still very much involved with games and he told of a community/workplace he had recently set up - Gameplus (www.gameplus. com.au). We (my wife and I) took the plunge and set up a new games company - Another Fine Mess, and I took a place at Gameplus here in Canberra, where other start-ups share infrastructure and space and all work on their own projects. I am (fortunately) surrounded by people who love games and are familiar with the tools currently used to produce games.

Most importantly, there is a great atmosphere of help, support and encouragement, and I have been surprised to find that my years of experience is appreciated and I can contribute to the overall atmosphere of creativity and support. I now have Sleepwalker working on IOS and PC (in an early prototype form) and will soon be looking for testers. If anyone has bought Sleepwalker for the Commodore 64 I would be very happy if they wanted to be a tester for IOS or Android. My aim is Retro look and feel, but I am taking advantage of the power which is now available for games. Joachim Wijnhoven (Yogi) who did the music for Sleepwalker64 has done the music for the new version.

If Sleepwalker has any success on modern platforms then my next project will be something based on Kane (my most successful game from the 80s).

Thanks for your time John. Best of luck for your future projects!

It has been an absolute pleasure!!

A Game that nearly wasn't?

Sleepwalker has its own entry at Frank Gasking's Games That Weren't website, and in fact, very nearly never happened at all! Originally created way back in 1984, the original Sleepwalker was never published and all of the source code, graphics and music were eventually lost. In 2016, a mere 32 years later, John decided to revisit the concept to realise his dream of finishing the game, redesigning it all from memory and relearning assembler. Now that's commitment! Luckily for us, John kept a blog while developing Sleepwalker which can be found at http://www.newsleepwalker.com/.
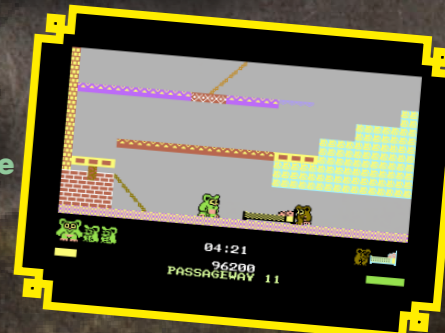
SHOOT 'EM UP DESTRUCTION SET 4

What's better than a Shoot 'Em Up? That's easy, five Shoot 'Em Ups in the one compilation! Psytronik return to dazzle us with their fourth Shoot 'Em Up Destruction Set compilation, featuring Alf Yngve's latest amazing C64 shooters, designed to test our reflexes and levels of endurance. Kevin and Alex buckle up and prepare for the bullet hell onslaught!

EXPENDABLE ARMY

Manic vertically scrolling shooter in a similar vein to Commando and Ikari Warriors. Plenty of levels (split across two files), powerups and end of level bosses will keep you busy while you attempt to infiltrate the bases and overthrow the evil dictatorship.

ALF YNGVE'S GIGABLAST!
MUSIC BY RICHARD BAYLISS

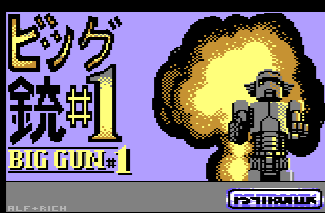A traditional vertically scrolling shooter in which you control your ship (the aptly named Gigablast) as well as a giant protective shield that protects you from enemy fire. Featuring an assortment of levels, powerups and giant end of level bosses.

BIG GUN #1

Horizontally scrolling shooter featuring massive mech sprites. Control your Mech Cruiser NTT-1 against the invading Russian Empire.

Shoot 'Em Up Destruction Set 4 is the latest compilation of shooters created by Alf Yngve using Sensible Software's Shoot 'Em Up Construction Kit (SEUCK). The first SEUDS compilation was released in 1994. Back then, the enhancements were done by none other than Cosine founder and Retro Gamer contributor, Jason Kelk. Since SEUDS 2, Richard Bayliss has taken over the enhancement duties and this time we are presented with 5 brand new Alf Yngve fully enhanced SEUCK shooters. This pack is even a little more special, as it marks the first time that any of the games from this series have been ported into Martin Piper's SEUCK Redux engine, resulting in further enhancements and ridding them of some of the slow-down associated with the original SEUCK engine.

SEUDS 4 (officially!) contains three traditional vertically scrolling and two horizontally scrolling shooters made possible with Jon Wells' sideways SEUCK package. Alf and Richard have pulled no punches in providing us with features and gameplay not possible with the stand-alone SEUCK engine, as well as innovative gameplay that pushes SEUCK to the limit.

7/10

TAU ZERO RELOADED

Traditional vertically scrolling shooter featuring hi-res graphics. Fly the experimental Tau Zero, Earth's last defence against the incoming Firebird assault heading for our planet. You are Earth's last hope! Featuring various powerups, multiple levels and end of level guardians.

EDGE OF TIME
Music by Richard Bayliss

Split screen horizontal shooter in which you control two heroes at one time! Featuring multiple levels, huge mech sprites, various enemies and powerups. You must fight in two parallel realities to restore the balance of time.

Super Silverfish (Bonus):
Fly your helicopter through the horizontally scrolling levels, shooting down an assortment of different enemies. Staying alive is difficult with bullets and enemies coming at you in every direction.

Spy Rider 2 (Bonus):
An innovative SEUCK racer with horizontally scrolling Operation Wolf style sub levels.

First things first, the SID music in SEUDS4 is unbelievably amazing! The variation in chiptunes for each game is just superb, so take a bow Maestro Richard Bayliss. But music alone doth not make a game.

On the graphics and gameplay side of the equation, Alf Yngve has crafted some very cool shmups that not only look good, but play just as well. Just like Kev, I loved Tau Zero Reloaded, Super Silverfish and the Commando and Ikari Warriors mashup, Expendable Army. I didn't understand the control mechanic in the Spy Rider 2 bonus game, so I gave up fairly quickly and went back to playing Expendable Army.

Like previous SEUDS compilations the games are unforgiving, which is exactly the way I like them. The aural feast is coupled with some rock solid shooters, so SEUDS 4 deserves to be in your burgeoning C64 games library.

ALEX

Psytronik has been nice enough to include some special surprises in the compilation, including two bonus games on the tape and disk versions, as well as squeezing a further two games on the disk version (that aren't programmed into the menu) bringing the total up to nine. For the disk version, Richard has also included the option of using either an IRQ turbo loader for those using a 1541 or compatible drive, or you can toggle the kernel loader for SD2IEC compatibility.

Shoot 'Em Up Destruction Set 4 is available now at Psytronik/Binary Zone Store on tape and disk in the usual Psytronik editions. You also receive a digital download for use on emulators or the 1541 Ultimate/SD2IEC with the purchase of either format.

I have always loved Alf's SEUCK creations and as usual, he hasn't disappointed. The difficulty level of most of the games is set just right and it amazed me by just how much was actually going on in some of these titles, in particular Tau Zero Reloaded, Super Silverfish and Expendable Army throwing a constant barrage of bullets and obstacles your way. It also just so happens that these particular titles happen to be the strongest in the compilation and would make worthy stand-alone releases!

Unfortunately, some of the games still glitch a bit, particularly when there is a lot happening on the screen at once, despite the Redux engine being used to full effect. Also, as expected in any compilation, a few of the games aren't as fun to play as others (looking at you, Big Gun #1) despite the innovation that has gone into them.

Overall, SEUDS4 pushes SEUCK more than ever and it's hard to imagine just how much more Alf could possibly get out of the software. The games are challenging, mostly fun, are beautifully presented and look and sound amazing. Oh, worth mentioning is Olli Frey's brilliant cover art which just about seals the deal as well.

KEV

Space Trip 2086 (Psytronik)
Available From http://www.psytronik.net

Space Trip 2086 can be called a remake of Achim Volker's original Space Trip (from 2011).
As Captain Steve Zappa, you've been ordered to re-take control of several transport starships which have fallen into alien hands (or appendages). This entails you docking with each ship in turn, and clearing each of the decks - earlier ships start with a single deck, but as you move further into the game, they'll become far more intricate, requiring you to unlock decks by locating access cards as well.

These, and the other cards you find - such as those giving you access to the ship's gravity controls, and other for accessing the ship's bank accounts, can be used with the terminal you'll find on deck, accessed by pulling down on the joystick.

The platforming and blasting action is solid, with responsive controls and some excellent bas-relief style graphics. The soundtrack comprises some well-fitting tracks and suit the action excellently.

Alongside the game, the disk and tape include an animated instructions guide, along with a runnable soundtrack, and the prequel game in Space Trip 2085, which pits Captain Zappa against the alien forces as he blasts his way to the fleet. **ROB**

8.5/10

ROB PLAYS
www.youtube.com/watch?v=mNDMxMyNJcs
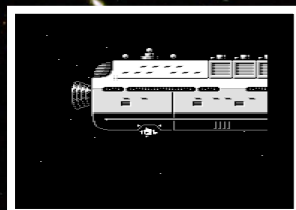
The Sky is Falling (Psytronik)
Available From http://www.psytronik.net

Icon64's The Sky is Falling was originally an iPhone game, but adapts quite nicely to the humble constraints of our favourite 8-bitter.

Our hero Orangeman finds himself in a predicament - avoiding collapsing cave roofs, giant boulders - it's not quite the way he'd want to be spending today! All he can do to stop it is throw his tools up at the stalactites, and hope he knocks them all out before the roof reaches his squishy head!

At its core, you're just using the fire button to fling up tools - birds will fly by to mess up your shots, and occasionally you'll get a gift box with a temporary upgrade to help you clear those stalactites faster. Each subsequent cave gets increasingly more frantic, and it won't be long before you're feeling under pressure!

Graphics have a very old-school charm to them with some chunky sprites and bright colours. This is also conveyed with the audio, helping this game feel like it could have been a solid budget release from the mid 80's.

The Sky is Falling is a simple, short score-chaser, but sometimes, that can just be what you need! **ROB**

7.5/10

ROB PLAYS
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MzGvaSD5qSA
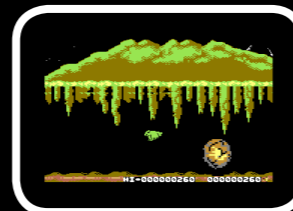
Gunfright (Rod & Emu)
**Available From** http://csdb.dk/release/?id=155861

Having converted Pentagram to the C64, Rod & Emu have now turned their hand to another of Ultimate's celebrated Filmation games: Gunfright.

As Sheriff Quickdraw, you must patrol the town of Black Rock and rid it of outlaws. Finding them in the streets of Black Rock is made easier by excitable snitching kids who will jump up and down when you walk past, pointing in the direction of the bandit in question. Track him down and shoot him and you'll end up in a draw where, if you're fast enough, you'll defeat him and move onto the next bad guy. Lose and... well, you know what bullets do.

Unlike Pentagram or those earlier Ultimate games, there's no jumping in Gunfright. Instead, it's all about exploring the town and finding the bad guys. That sounds fine but in all honesty, removing the jumping and the magical item-finding of those games makes it somewhat dull to play in comparison. As a technical achievement on the C64, Gunfright is fantastic. As a game... not so much. I'd still recommend you play it, though. Now... can we have Knight Lore next, please?

PAUL

7/10
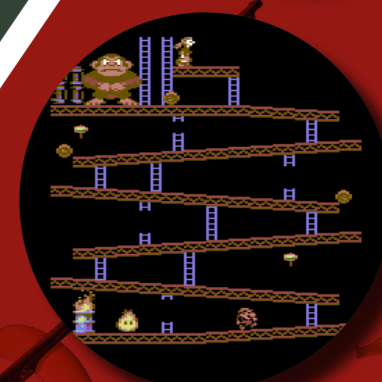
Donkey Kong (Oxyron)
Available From
http://csdb.dk/release/?id=151272

I am absolutely loving this trend of highly-polished arcade conversions for our beloved C64! Donkey Kong keeps the highly polished gameplay of the coin-op original intact, and adds some nice graphical flourishes that make everything seem fresh.

It's the little visual touches that I really appreciate - the great climbing animation, Kong's huge sprite doing his thing and the smartly animated flames. The sound is a nice treat too, with arcade-authentic jumping and dying SFX that you will hear quite a lot, because this game is hard! Shame there's no speech samples of the Pauline character screaming for help, but you can't have everything in 64 kilobytes!

It feels right, too. I'm a stickler for the feel and precision of Mario's jump in the arcade Donkey Kong, and this is a pretty darn good approximation of it. Take time to master the subtle nuances of the control system and before long you'll be bouncing around the platforms with ease.

I'm so happy this exists. Donkey Kong remains a must-play game, and this C64 conversion is brilliant in its own regard. You'll go ape! (you're fired - Ed)

CAM

7/10

Akalabeth: World of Doom
(Dungeoneer Games & Simulations)
Available From http://csdb.dk/release/?id=149981

Deep in the proto-mists of time, before Computer Role Playing Games ruled, there was Akalabeth. The story being Lord British's first commercial game (and what is hailed as the first CRPG) is fascinating and warrants a search on Ye Olde Internet. I won't go into game mechanics here (again, Internet) but will focus on the conversion itself.

The recent port of the original Apple II version has fared well in the Realm of Commodore. Draw speed for overland and dungeon exploration, while not blisteringly fast, matches that of the original (unsurprising given the program is only partially written in Machine Code).

A direct comparison between versions does show minor differences. For example, the C64 version seems to be missing a CHEST! notification when you see a chest full of goodies, and is completely silent in-game (at least the Apple II version lets out a bleep every so often when something of interest happens). On the positive side, the C64 version has some rather nice multicolour bitmap art that you get to see in the instructions.

Akalabeth on the C64 captures the essence of the original game beautifully. System aside, Akalabeth is an important game historically, easily dismissed because of its simplicity and (seemingly) archaic design. These are its virtues, however, and I had a great deal of fun killing beasts and mapping dungeons in the land that would become Britannia.

7/10   **ANT**

The Camp (Protovision)
Available From www.protovision.games

The Camp is a surreal adventure game created using the D42 engine, translated and enhanced from the original German version. It contains actual toilet humour. Set in a youth camp, you awaken to find your friends missing and the place abandoned. So off you set to explore the surrounds and attempt to solve the mystery (I think it has something to do with mint tea). Art and sound design hook you in with wonderful scenes and atmospheric effects for many locations. Quality fluctuates, but initial impressions had me hoping for some dark, Lurking Horror-esque exploits.

I was disappointed.

While there's inevitably something lost in translation, the childish jokes and shoe-horned pop culture references that are everywhere (and I mean everywhere) grow tiresome. Hints are abundant (and sometimes blatant) but there's little joy in solving puzzles. Referencing Alice in Wonderland doesn't excuse illogical solutions or behaviour of objects (I am still angry about the boots). Map layout is chaotic. I almost summoned Great Cthulhu as I created non-Euclidean geometry while trying to draw a map. Possible game-breaking bugs were the final straw. I abandoned The Camp, leaving my friends (and mint tea) behind.

The Camp is obviously a labour of love (full marks for the "feelies" that come with the physical version). It's a nostalgic trip for those who attended the camps it parodies, and I won't criticise it for that, but for those of us just wanting a fun adventure game, we'll have to pitch our tents elsewhere.

5/10   **ANT**

34

Frogger Arcade (Digital Monastery)
Available From
http://csdb.dk/release/?id=152330

As if it was the first time you popped in those quarters and played it in the arcade, it's Frogger just as you remember it. The sounds, that tune, and those graphics!

Coming in from Hokuto Force is an almost arcade perfect version of Frogger. Controls are using the second joystick port to move the prodigal frog. Tapping number 5 on the keyboard gives you more credits which you're going to need. This is fast and frantic just as the arcade. Graphics are pretty spot on albeit not as bright as the arcade but quite picture perfect. The sound effects and music again follows suite and is pretty spot on.

You all know how this game plays out. Guide your frog to your safe spot over the river, but first you need to get past a busy freeway, and crossing a river via logs and turtles. Only downside I can see is the lack of centering with the on screen image, where offset to the left of the screen. But apart from that, this is well coded, fast, frantic and a real test of your reflexes. Just the way it should have always been!

If you only want to play one version of Frogger, this is the definitive version on the C64. Load up a credit, have some fun, feel the frustration of just missing that final log before safety. And then put some more credits in again and go for it over and over again to reminisce the early days of gaming.

8/10   **RAJ**

Frogs (Dr. Wuro Industries)
Available From
http://frogs.drwuro.com/

Frogs is ZeHa's follow up to the fantastic 4 player 2D arena shooter, Shotgun. It's an even more polished multi-player/party game featuring my favourite amphibian. Compatible with the ever popular 4 player adapter, Frogs is another competitive lick'em up that is sure to be a blast at any C64 get together! Featuring 4 game modes, 6 ponds and selectable music/sfx, there is plenty of variety to keep players amused for many a game.

Frogs is played on a single screen, tile based arena of lily-pads and rocks. Each frog can only move in 4 directions, with the lily-pads liable to disappear and cause death, however, the rocks are solid and always safe. It actually plays like a slimy, wet combination of Shotgun and Bomberman, with each player able to push their opponents around (and preferably into the pond) by engaging the tongue. You can also eat bugs, delicious!

With charming music and graphics, top notch presentation and genuinely fun gameplay (my daughter and I regularly fire the game up), Frogs is a winner and its simplicity is absolutely endearing. To top things off, it's available as both a nice boxed version and a free download. A big, fat, juicy YES from me!

8/10   **KEV**

BLAST FROM THE PAST

When it comes to video game genres, the venerable platformer is the most recognised and loved by all gamers, well almost all gamers (not looking at you Mr. Ant Stiller!). Platformers have been around for a long time, so the task of picking a favourite is made even more difficult – how can you narrow it down to one? It's like picking your favourite child - impossible!

With this impossibility in mind, the Reset 64 crew and I racked our brains to undertake the impossible task of picking our favourite platformer. Before passing on the baton to the crew, I better let you all know what platformer tickled my fancy on the Commodore 64.....

There were heaps! Geez, even at this stage, I am still wrangling with picking one from either Impossible Mission or The Great Giana Sisters! How do I split these two sublime platform games? Aha, only a flip of the coin will split these two beauties - with that said, the coin comes up 'tails', so Impossible Mission gets top honours as my favourite C64 platformer of all time. As Professor Elvin Atombender best put it, "stay a while, staaay forever!"

For me, it has to be Creatures II: Torture Trouble. I remember lusting over it when I got Zzap issue 81, and when I finally did get my hands on a copy, it was more than worth it. With Creatures II, the focus was shifted towards more of the Torture Screen elements. By offering a smaller playfield, the sluggish movement of Clyde became far less of a problem, and served to help drive the tension of these stages wonderfully, resulting in a tense puzzle-platforming experience, with both navigation, and problem solving being the key to save one of Clyde's kids from the heinous demonic plans.

As you'd expect from an Apex game, there is some utterly sparkling presentation on top of it as well - from the colourful graphics, to the slices of presentation throughout the game. I know some people find the focus on Torture Screens a tad monotonous, but I always found them refreshing. Besides, you've got the bonus interludes, boss battles and swimming sections to break up the flow.

ROB CAPORETTO

A game I have played for many hours is one of Tony Crowther's earliest C64 games, the Manic Miner inspired burglar-em-up, Blagger. I loved this game so much and although it seems a staid affair (even back then), there's a lot to be had.

Atmosphere is top notch. The silence and plodding footsteps fit the theme perfectly, as does the occasional celebratory fanfare as you collect keys (just like real life!). These keys are for the safes fiendishly placed within the complex puzzle of disappearing platforms, conveyer belts and, errr … deadly grass?

And a puzzle each screen is - delightfully difficult though progress comes with perseverance and pattern study. Firing the game up now, I can complete the first handful of screens almost by rote. So, yes, it's that kind of game.

Importantly, those weird 80s video game nasties you love are there (that box art!), attempting to thwart your thieving ways as giant lips gnash, mad hatters mill about and killer sweets assure a sticky end. A classic!

ANT STILLER

Those who know me would surely bet I'd start talking about Impossible Mission. Indeed that game is usually my top pick for its perfect blending of cinematic action, careful platform design and puzzle elements but this time I decided to focus on something different: Bruce Lee!

The seminal 1984 Datasoft title, while not that impressive graphically, could provide some truly exciting fun thanks to the mix of platforming and combat against two opponents, a ninja and a sumo wrestler who were as dangerous as they were clumsy: with a little practice and some smart manoeuvring, they could in fact be lured into traps and even be tricked into hitting each other with hilarious results! Last but not least, the option of having a friend taking the role of the green Yamo sumo fighter, who could then side with or against us at will, made the adventure even more memorable. A true classic!

ROBERTO DILLON

Impossible Mission; Dennis Caswell's masterclass in programming and design is rightly heralded as one of the Commodore's best ever games.

Describing the hook actually isn't easy, "that" being why every so often a game holds your attention and you become one with it, getting to know it inside out, what makes it tick, and thus eventually you are able to beat the program at its own game.

Is it because the room designs are cunningly planned even if not all were deliberately so? That the robot behaviour keeps you forever on your toes, not quite knowing how they will react? The sublime animation of Agent 4125 and his metallic adversaries? That if you die, it is always your fault and not a flaw in the programming? The fact you can search toilet paper and vending machines for passwords and puzzle pieces? That said puzzle piece game mechanic is ludicrously simple in concept but agonising in execution to complete?

It's likely to be all of those factors and more, combining to produce one glorious whole. The stunning speech synthesis throughout and one of the most memorable openings of any 8-bit title are the icing on the cake.

MAT ALLEN

There is one platformer which holds a special place in my heart – Dennis Caswell's Impossible Mission.

I'll never forget the impact it had on me. Already dazed by the game's amazing speech, I almost fell off my chair when Agent 4125 ran and then somersaulted across the screen. The animation was breath-taking and the echoing sound of the agent's shoes on the steel floor as he ran along the corridor of Elvin's underground lair was outstanding.

Impossible Mission had it all – it was a supremely polished piece of programming which showed what the C64 was capable of. Amazing animation, superb sound, absorbing gameplay, excellent presentation and even a good dollop of humour (the manual notes about Elvin's background are highly entertaining). It provided me with my very own impossible mission - getting my parents to buy me a C64 - and after months of nagging, I was the proud owner of one by October 1985 (my 12th birthday). So I owe Impossible Mission a great debt of gratitude. Not only was it an outstanding game which gave me hours of fun, it also opened the gates to the wonderful world of the Commodore 64.

MARTIN GRUNDY

My favourite platformer is the tower toppling masterpiece that is Nebulus, by Hewson. I wasn't actually a huge fan of platformers back in the day, finding most of them too difficult and therefore frustrating of which Nebulus was no exception. Hence it was given short shrift at the time. It's not since I've reloaded Nebulus many years later that I have seen it anew. The character, Pogo, was always cute and well animated whilst the graphics have stood the test of time well with the 3D rotation of each tower looking as effective today as it did back in '87. It is also full of clever touches such as the mini-game between towers; again featuring superb parallax scrolling. More importantly though is the gameplay, with previous frustrations giving way to a sense of achievement and accomplishment; although admittedly progress is aided by infinite lives and help from YouTube!

Nebulus has also become my nemesis and, having successfully toppled four towers, I am determined to get Pogo up to the top of that eighth tower if it's the last thing I do.

GAVIN GREENHALGH

My fave C64 platformer? There really was only one game in my mind - the incredible Great Giana Sisters. Not owning a NES I was only tangentially aware of the mania surrounding Super Mario Bros., but I knew that Great Giana Sisters was the game I had always wanted to play.

Cute, colourful characters moved gracefully around the scrolling environments, and there was so much to discover along the way. Secret rooms, hidden warps, and a dazzling array of power-ups gave life to the fantastical dream world Giana and Maria inhabited. Even years later I was discovering new things, and still having fun exploring the game's challenging 32 stages.

Giana ushered in a new age of bright "console style" platform games for the C64 and, while many of them may look nicer and may be more original in terms of source material, nothing can take Giana's place in my heart.

CAMERON DAVIS

Giana Sisters was a game that inadvertently made us choose a side in a legal matter, and perhaps exactly because we lost the battle, it made us cling on to our side even more. For no seemingly proper reason, Nintendo is responsible for making one of the most famous platformers for the C64 also one of the most coveted collector's items for it.

As if that weren't enough, it also happens to be one of the most enjoyable C64 platformers of all time, particularly when compared to all its conversions. The jump mechanics and just slightly loosened collision detection give a more analogue feel to the controls, the soundtrack is clearly tailored for the SID chip, and the graphics manage to rival the 16-bits. The differences to Super Mario Bros. are quite clear to anyone who has ever played both games. This is not a Super Mario clone, but a perfectly executed variation on the same theme, which is something game developers have been doing since the dawn of time.

JARI KARJALAINEN

I remember the first time I loaded up Turrican 2, waiting to see if the game was anything like the impressive screenshots on the back of the box. I hadn't played anything like this on a C64 before, with a large character, superb weapons (including the lightning feature) and a huge multi-scrolling map to navigate around. There were tons of hidden blocks and features to find, and then part way through level one you encounter a truly massive bad guy to try and destroy, with the screen shaking as he jumps.

The more you progressed through the game, the more impressive it got - especially the mind-bogglingly fast SEU sections. Changing into a gyroscope at will was great to bounce around the map and destroy enemies without getting killed. But it was the Super weapon which really blew me away when first discovering it, a brilliant firework display to destroy any enemies on the screen. It was one of those games I felt privileged to have seen at the time of release - a superb game and not really bettered since on the C64.

FRANK GASKING

There are many great platformers on the C64 but one that I only discovered recently, after hearing Daz speak very highly of it several times on the Press Play On Tape Podcast, is Hook by Ocean Software, released in 1992.

So what is so nice about this game? The graphics, the sound and the gameplay are all good, but none of these are absolutely incredibly amazing on their own. The nice thing about Hook is the way that it all comes together with slick presentation to be a fun game, and that's what is so nice about Hook - it's enjoyable to play.

Moving the character around an island to select which order you will attempt the levels in gives you more control and adds to the feeling this game has of slick presentation and overall completeness. Give this game a try, it's a nice, fun platformer.

STINGRAY
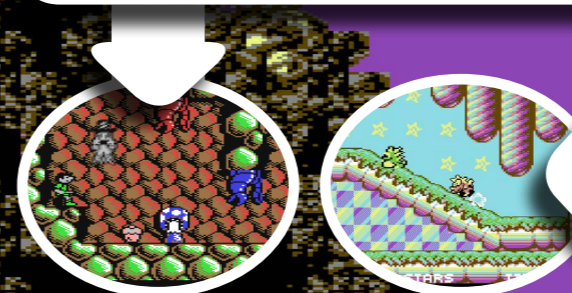
My all-time favourite platform game has to be 'Mayhem in Monsterland' by Apex. At the time I followed the game diary of the making of Mayhem in Monsterland. I tried out the playable demos that the magazine had placed on the cover tape, and I was stunned. This game was a must have. The graphics were well crafted, and the gameplay was pretty much pure retro goodness for the good old Commodore 64.

Mayhem has two adventures in one. First, the protagonist has to gather enough magic dust to reach the waterfall where a magic dinosaur turns the land into a sad world into a colourful world. Then the happy stage, in which the goal is to collect enough stars and reach the checkpoint to teleport on to the next level. Each level got exponentially harder. Mayhem in Monsterland has a neat presentation, and was much loved by many C64 gamers back in 1993. The C64 commercial market had finished by then, so the game became mail order only. Mayhem was a real wonderful treat.

RICHARD BAYLISS

With Giana (and sis, Maria) and Agent 4125 getting the lion's share of the vote for the best C64 platform game, it was great to see a mix of other top platform games mentioned by the crew, including Blagger – thanks Ant! As we have always maintained, a game should be fun and enjoyable to play for the gamer that is playing it, and this is where platform games shine the most. Now go and bust some blocks and avoid those pesky electrocuting robots! Mission accomplished!

GREAT GIANA SISTERS CONSTRUCTION KIT

I love The Great Giana Sisters. I mean, really really love it. It's one of my favourite Commodore 64 games, and one of my favourite games of all time, so the idea of being able to make my own Giana levels is incredibly appealing.

Here's the thing about level editing utilities though: it turns out that making and tuning levels that are actually fun to play is really hard! People do this kind of stuff for a full time day job! I used to do this for a full time day job! I don't miss it at all! Many professional game development level editors are buggy and horrible to use so I was prepared for this home-grown tool to be even worse.

Thankfully, the Construction Kit is remarkably solid. You can get something up and running within a matter of minutes, even though it will probably not be any good, and work up from there.

It's broken up into two main modes: background editing and sprite positioning. They kind of overlap each other because some game elements such as smashable blocks are both background elements and sprites, but you get the hang of it after a while.

With the background editor, you can change the colours of both the sky and objects, so there's nothing to stop you if you really want to change your blue skies and brownish blocks to a hellish lava on the surface of the sun. That's not totally recommended though, because a yellow background makes Giana's hair disappear and you can't edit the sprite colours.

(That's a shame, I would love the chance to have edited Giana to be a different character. I'm sure if I was smarter I could figure out how to do this, but if I was smarter I would have made my own platform game engine and be living on a yacht.)

Other background editor options include adding secret treasure rooms, level warps (which can be configured to warp a specified number of levels, rather than the original game's default three), or making clouds appear in the sky and move in a parallax fashion - something that looks cool but is not recommended for 'underground' levels!

The sprite positioning tool is the other half of the toolset, and it's here that you place enemies, collectables and hazards such as fire or spikes. You can't, like in SEUCK, edit the path these enemies travel, but the enemy behaviour has been improved over the original Giana. For example, some enemies can be set to follow Giana instead of just move along a path. It's enough to add some variation and increase the difficulty for later levels. There's some new additions to the enemy list, including a funky owl creature that features in the modern Giana remakes, which is a nice touch.

I liked how there are dozens of sample levels to try out and muck around with, giving the first-time editor insight into what makes a good level work. The documentation is staggeringly comprehensive, but there's a good quick start guide to get you up and running in a few minutes with some trial and error. I wish the editor was in English though: many of the options are easy to work out but some had me reaching for the German to English dictionary and still coming up stumped! (Hint: the selection to erase background elements is "Nichts", you'll end up using this one a lot)

I am so grateful for this program. It's a fantastic technical achievement, and the more tools we can give the next generation of game developers, the better. It's not only giving new life to The Great Giana Sisters, but it could also spawn a new era of C64 platform games. **Bring it on!**

CAM

Starter Guide To Making Your Own Giana Levels

First of all, it's not a bad idea to sketch out some ideas on paper. That gives you the ability to see an entire level at a glance, because the editor (like the game) only shows you one screen at a time. Having perspective is key!

Lay out the backgrounds first. Use a standard brick tile just to rough out the shape, and you can go over existing blocks with more detail later. Test the level out without enemies in it so you can see if jump distances and the position of collectables are right.

Add enemies, bearing in mind the technical limitations of the engine and how hard you want that particular level to be. You don't even have to have that many enemies in order to make your level feel alive. Try placing collectables near or after enemies to give a nice risk / reward balance to the flow of the level.

In later levels, try repeating earlier setups but make them a bit harder. For example, you may have had a section where you had to jump over a pit to reach a diamond. Now, use the same situation but add an enemy on the far side of the pit, so players have to time their jump to avoid getting hit.

Once you're happy with your creation, you can save out the level. Just remember to add a level number to the end of the filename, and make them sequential so levels are loaded in the right order. Now share your levels around and fame and fortune await!

A great many people wrote a great many games for the Commodore 64, but there are very few who wrote a game that would come to define the machine. Dennis Caswell is one man who holds that distinction. His name is not one you hear mentioned often in conversations about favourite programmers; indeed, he only actually wrote one full game on the Commodore 64. But what a game it was! Its name? IMPOSSIBLE MISSION.

CBS ELECTRONICS SOFTWARE

ACHIEVING THE IMPOSSIBLE

CASSETTE for COMMODORE 64

EPYX COMPUTER SOFTWARE

It's a game that truly holds iconic status, loved and revered by almost every Commodore 64 fan. With its combination of groundbreaking graphics, sound and gameplay, all wrapped up in a single load, it's pretty much the perfect game. It's also one of the best platform games of all time.

I've always wanted to know more about the game, and the man behind it. With this issue of Reset having a focus on platform games, I figured that now was the perfect time, so I got in touch with Dennis who was more than happy to discuss the game, and himself, at length.

As is my tradition, before ploughing into the game in question, I wanted to know a bit about Dennis himself, starting with his formative years... where did he grow up, and did he have any idea what he wanted to do when he was growing up, or was he as clueless about his future as most of the rest of us had been?

"I grew up in northern California, just across the Bay from San Francisco. I had no idea what I wanted to be when I grew up, and I hated it when grown-ups kept asking me. Once, when I was probably ten or eleven, a woman who was kind enough to give me a ride home from a scout meeting asked me the hated question, and, just to shut her up, I said, "A

frustrated artist." Apparently, the gods were listening."

Ahhh, the Gods. Little did Dennis know that, for a generation of teens, he would become one of them. As luck would have it, fate, and technology, would soon show Dennis the path he would want to take... and that path would be lined with wooden cabinets. "Video games were in their infancy when I was a teenager. I remember seeing Atari Space Race in a bus station when it was brand new and feeling like the astronauts who discovered the black monolith in 2001. I was already addicted to arcade games. My father took me to Disneyland every year, where, in those days, they had truly excellent arcades, full of electromechanical shooting games, baseball games, bowling, golf, whatever (no pinball, though; pinball was considered a form of gambling and was only found in bars and other places that excluded children). When video games started to appear, I was more than ready."

We all have those memories... the flashing lights, the wonderful sounds, the amazing games. They were mesmeric, almost hypnotic, and they could be impossible to resist. For many of us, we were hooked for life, but fewer went on to actually write the games. How did Dennis make the transition from the arcades to home machines?

"I'd had minimal exposure to computers in my early teens, but I didn't really begin to program until college. I had no social skills and found computers more tractable than people. I got a bachelor's degree in computer science at Berkeley, then a master's at UCLA, barely, having found it increasingly difficult to understand why I was still in school or what I expected to accomplish by completing the eighteenth grade. After leaving school, I was at a loss as to how to turn my degree into rolls of quarters to take to the nearest arcade, until I heard that the brother of an ex-roommate of mine was starting up a video game company in Silicon Valley (along with everyone else's brother). He needed programmers and had no money, and I already had my own Apple][, which was what he was using for development stations, so he didn't need to buy me one. My other principal qualification was that I had reached the top of the fourth building in Crazy Climber."

See, now that second qualification I can relate to. I had a few arcade games that I was more than decent at. I just couldn't do the other bit.
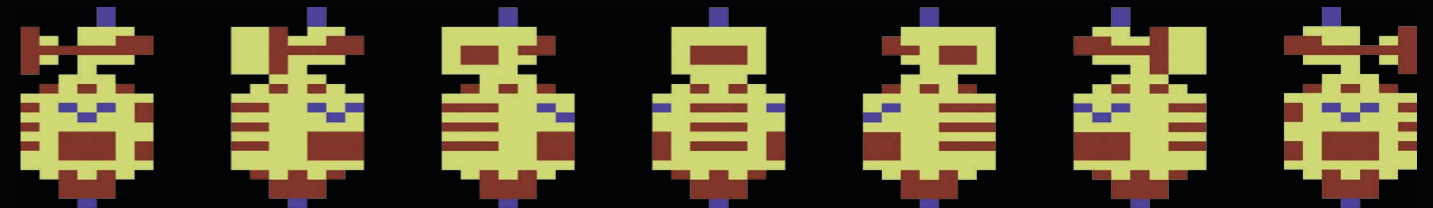
I'd never played Crazy Climber before now... it's pretty tricky! Obviously Dennis was a real gamer at heart, rather than being one of those programmers who'd

stumbled into computer games almost by accident. In fact, Dennis' gaming background stretches right back to the true classics.

"Back in the seventies and eighties, I was a fairly ardent gamer, which, in those days, meant going to the arcades. There was a great arcade in Berkeley called Silver Ball Gardens that featured mostly pinball but had lots of video games as well, from Breakout to the old vector game Space Wars. One of my favorites was a perverse variation on Breakout called "Clowns," which you can see here:"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xCtXm3Ftxmo

"By the time I got to UCLA, Asteroids had arrived, which I played more than I'd care to admit, along with Missile Command, Space Invaders, and, of course, Crazy Climber. I never much cared for Pac-Man or Centipede." Clowns, of course, was the basis for one of the Atari 2600's classic games, Circus Atari, which even retained its smashed protagonist when the see-saw was missed.

programmers (except me, because I was doing Impossible Mission). By the way, have you noticed the similarity between the torch-bearer in Summer Games and the hero of Impossible Mission? As I recall, they're not identical, but there's a certain family resemblance."

Indeed, I'm pretty sure that most of us, at the time, presumed that the same graphic artist had worked on both games, seeing as they were both published by Epyx. As you'll find out later, that was not the case.

As we know, this issue is themed around platform games and Dennis created one of the most iconic of all. But he also had a hand in another of Epyx' legendary games, as he went on to explain.

"Since you mentioned Pitstop II, I'll sound my own horn and note that I was involved in that game as well. The game proper was done by the redoubtable Steve Landrum, but he was too busy to do the pit sequence, and I had just finished Impossible Mission, so I was brought in to fill the gap, supplying both the code and the graphics

pitstops!

As we've discussed, Dennis' games programming began with the Atari 2600, a machine that most of us know and loved. We could probably all reel off a long list of our favourite VCS games, made all the more remarkable by the extreme memory limitations programmers were forced to work with (even if Dennis, with Starpath, did circumvent that problem a little!).

The Commodore 64 was a massive step up from Atari's console in so many ways. I imagine that it must have been something of a luxury to work with after suffering the Atari's relative restrictions, but what actually drew Dennis to the 64 in the first place?

"My employer. The decision to support the C64 was a business decision made by Epyx, albeit one that I wholeheartedly supported. It was indeed orders of magnitude more capable than the 2600 (or the VCS, as it was originally known), and it was cheaper than the competition. It was just sprites and characters—there was, as I

There would be uproar over that today!

Dennis had written a few highly-regarded games for the Atari 2600 himself. Escape from the Mindmaster, Party Mix and Phaser Patrol were all written for a company called Starpath, for their memory-expanding peripheral, the Supercharger. So Dennis had a game-making pedigree, but as we know, Epyx in its early days was one of the most prestigious Commodore 64 games publishers. With titles such as the Games series, Pitstop II, Jumpman and the Temple of Apshai Trilogy, Epyx was a name that pretty much guaranteed quality. How did Dennis end up working for them?

"I arrived at Epyx quite by accident. Starpath, the company my ex-roommate's brother helped found, was failing (as most game companies did), and Epyx needed to expand their development staff, so Epyx bought Starpath for a song (or so I would assume). Summer Games was written by pretty much all of the ex-Starpath

(does it seem to you that the crew members are a bit too big?). I also did the title screen (it was my slightly egotistical idea to say "with Dennis Caswell"). One of our artists didn't like the font I created for the credits, telling me my W looked like an M, but I wouldn't change it, so she started calling me 'Mr. Casmell.'"

It's nice to know that childish humour is something that happens all across the world, although it's never quite as funny if you're on the receiving end. Anyway, if you've ever wondered exactly what the programmer of Impossible Mission's role was in the creation of Pitstop II, now you know... although the game almost shipped without one very important feature...

"Just before the game was due to ship, somebody pointed out that the one-player version of the game needed to have an automated pit crew, which had never occurred to me, so I had to pull an all-nighter to squeeze that in."

Just as well he did... you couldn't have Pitstop II without any

recall, no actual bitmap—but you could switch character sets part-way down the screen (one reason, I expect, that so many C64 games had split screens) and achieve almost as much complexity as you could with a genuine bitmap. There were actually fewer colors available than with 2600, but you could use them so much more effectively that it hardly mattered. The limited color palette was sometimes an advantage for programmers like me who did their own graphics. When somebody asked me why that shade of green was so ugly, I could say, "Leave me alone, that's the only green there is!" (Actually, there may have been two greens.)"

Interestingly to me, as a non-programmer who knows nothing about the workings of computers, I have talked to others who have mentioned the bitmap mode in the C64. Maybe they're different things? I'm not technically able to comment. Regardless, the relatively large memory and advanced features made it a computer which appealed to many, and Dennis certainly made great use of them.

"I MADE IT MY GOAL TO CREATE A GAME WITH BETTER, MORE REALISTIC ANIMATION THAN I'D YET SEEN IN A GAME."

In 1984, when Impossible Mission was released, platform games were in their relative infancy. British programmers, probably still under the influence of comedy such as Monty Python's Flying Circus, laced theirs with surrealism and as a result we were used to being assaulted by flapping toilets and giant chickens, and helping misunderstood moles in their fight against oppression. American platformers were markedly different in style, and our experience of them came from games such as Miner 2049er, Lode Runner and Epyx' own Jumpman.

When Impossible Mission made its way out of the States, it came as something of a shock. Gone were the comedy assailants and odd "collect all the things" objectives. In their place came a gritty, real-world doomsday scenario which wouldn't have seemed out of place as a feature film. It was an evolutionary leap for the genre as marked as the protagonist's own stylish in-game somersault, but how did Dennis come up with the idea of writing what was effectively a spy thriller in platform game form?

"At the time I was casting about for the idea that would become Impossible Mission, one of Epyx's most successful games was a platform game called Jumpman. I liked the puzzle-solving aspect of figuring out how to get from A to B while avoiding obstacles and threats. I was also an animation fan, and I made it my goal to create a game with better, more realistic animation than I'd yet seen in a game. I coded up a demo of the "running man," as we called him, together with his aerial somersault, without knowing what I was going to do with it, but hoping that the animation would be compelling enough to justify building a game around it. The animation, by the

way, was lifted from a book about athletics and gymnastics. I can't really draw."

It's fair to say that Dennis achieved his goal, with Agent 4125 being the best and most memorable "leading man" on the system to that point and arguably through its entire life. But how many of us could ever have imagined that he had such origins? Not quite as glamorous as we might have expected, that's for sure! Still, it was unbelievably effective which is all that counts.

The world was in something close to political turmoil back then, which explains a lot of the war games and Cold War thrillers we played. Speaking of war games, Dennis went on to explain (sort of) how the whole premise of the game came to be.

"The game's setting was inspired by the movie "War Games," though I'm not sure I can explain exactly how the one became the other. All I know is that I went to see "War Games" (by myself, my social skills not having improved much) for the express purpose of fishing for game ideas, and somehow Impossible Mission was the result."

I understand what he's saying… it's definitely "loosely" based on that, at most… more the scenario than the actual game, of course.

When it came to the game itself, I always wondered how Dennis went about designing it. Was it a platform game from the outset, which changed to fit the storyline as that evolved? Or did the story come first with the game written around it? As it happens, it wasn't really either of these, as Dennis explains…

"I just dumped in every idea I had ever admired or envied. Virtually everything in Impossible Mission was stolen from somewhere. The platform idea came from Jumpman. You've probably noticed the resemblance between the little robots and R2D2, and, of course, The Orb, as it was officially known, is an appropriation of Rover from The Prisoner, one of my all-time favorite TV shows. Changing it from white to black was my idea of being creative. The randomization of the game map was stolen from Rogue; the memory challenge is just Simon, the jigsaw puzzles are just jigsaw puzzles—you get the idea."

It turns out, then, that Impossible Mission was a mongrel of a game, but in taking the best bits of all those pieces of inspiration it became so much more than the sum of its parts, with everything like the puzzle pieces in the game, fitting into place to create the perfect game.

Now, you might be surprised at the number of people who can recall the agent's code number at will. Agent 4125 is a "name" that has gone down in gaming history, and for devoted fans it is a thing of legend. With other famous agents such as James Bond having carefully-considered code numbers, I was sure that there must have been some clever process behind the numbering of Impossible Mission's operatives. Apparently not…

"That one has me stumped. I don't remember the agents having numbers."

What? All this time I figured there was a carefully-constructed logic behind the agent's code number, and it turns out that it might just be something that someone at Epyx made up at the last minute! Oh well…

One thing you would surely have appreciated if you bought the game (you did buy the game, didn't you?) was the humorous writing. The instructions were comprehensive and amusing, and the setup of the bad guy was hilarious. Knowing that Dennis is something of a wordsmith himself, I wondered if he had a hand in writing the scenario.

"I didn't write the instruction manual, but I believe I did write the villain's backstory, or at least a draft thereof. After that, I don't recall having anything to do with the production of the manual."

Ahhhh yes, the villain. Any good story needs a great villain, and Impossible Mission had one, namely Professor Elvin Atombender. It was a great name, which in itself was enough to convince you that the man could be an unhinged megalomaniac. Couple that with his crazy, robot-filled underground lair and you have one very dangerous individual. And yet, we gamers could empathise with him, as he snapped in pursuit of a high score on his favourite game.

"I don't remember where the name Elvin Atombender came from or who thought it up. "Elvin" sounds like something I would have considered amusing, but "Atombender" sounds less like me. It's possible that I picked the first name and someone in sales or marketing supplied the surname, but I don't really remember. The backstory, I presume, was just an attempt to satirize the kind of super-villain backstory that you might encounter in a James Bond story. I was raised on comedy, so, when asked to create a story, my first impulse is usually to try to be funny. So I tried."

You'd have to say he succeeded. That sense of humour added a touch of levity to an otherwise deadly serious situation, which is something that's maybe appreciated more in other parts of the globe such as the UK.

Now, if there's one thing we know about megalomaniac professors, it's that somewhere in their underground lair they're going to have a room that sticks out like a sore thumb because of some crazy

contraption they own or, more than likely, have built themselves. Impossible Mission had two such rooms, where rather than having furniture placed on precarious platforms, a large musical checkerboard was the outstanding (and only) feature. "Playing" this instrument gave the player a chance to earn bonus passwords to help make the trickier rooms a little easier, but why did Dennis include these rooms in the first place? Did it simply strike him as the sort of thing a mad professor would have installed in his hideout?

"I'm not sure I can tell you the real reason. Was it because I just liked puzzles and wanted to toss some in? Was it because Epyx was trying

IMPOSSIBLE MISSION

Everything about Impossible Mission reeks of quality including the amazing box art.

to brand itself as the inventor of a genre it called "action-strategy" games, and this was my way of conforming to that mold? Probably both. I had previously made an Atari 2600 game called Escape from the Mindmaster that was, as far as I know, the first first-person maze game ever made for the 2600. In that game, you had been captured by an alien, who ran you through a series of mazes like a rat in order to find out how intelligent humans were. Every once in a while, you would pass through a door and find yourself in a room with a mini-game in it. That dynamic does seem to foreshadow Impossible Mission."

Whatever the reason for it, those

rooms were a welcome diversion from the task at hand. It gave you a chance to gather your thoughts after struggling past Atombender's robots and odd choices of room layouts… or, if you were lucky, you might find one early and be able to stock up on passwords before making your assault on the complex.

That randomisation of the game's rooms added much to its longevity. If every game was the same, players would have figured out how to tackle it much more easily and there would have been a danger of it becoming boring. Giving the player a different configuration every time kept it fresh and interesting. That seemed like quite a revolutionary idea at the time, so how did Dennis come up with it?

"During my years at UCLA, I was addicted to the game Rogue, which made extensive use of constrained randomization. It randomized the sizes of rooms, how they interconnected, and the monsters and treasures they contained. When you found, say, a potion, you were told, "You found a blue potion," and even if you had played the game a thousand times and knew every potion and its effects, you didn't know which potion was the blue potion, because the correspondence between colors and potions was randomized at the start of each game. I used this idea (which, years later, was recycled with considerable success in the game Toejam and Earl) every chance I got. The rocks surrounding the shafts and corridors were also generated randomly from tiles that could be set down in any configuration."

The passwords you earned in the music rooms came in handy, especially the robot snoozes. Those dastardly robots seemed to have personalities of their own, with some appearing furious from the second you entered the room and others appearing to be dead… until you happened to stray into their line of vision, at which point they vapourised you. This relative unpredictability was yet another feature which elevated Impossible Mission above its competition. Was it difficult to program these different robot behaviours? Far from it, explains Dennis.

"The robots weren't all that complicated. I just came up with a basic set of actions for them to perform (move, turn, follow, zap,
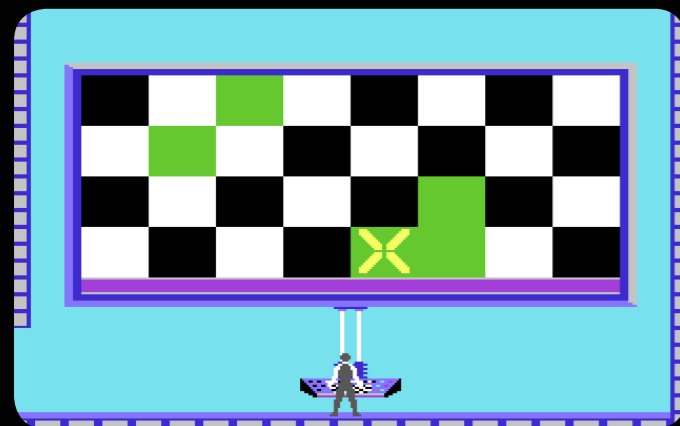
etc.), then combined those actions into a fixed repertoire of scripts that were dealt randomly to the various robots like cards at the start of the game (another idea stolen from Rogue). They were controlled by what you might call a baby programming language, although that's a bit grandiose for something so simple."

However it was done, it was very effective and made sure that players concentrated on what they were doing for the entire game.

Once you had successfully negotiated the rooms and obtained the puzzle pieces, or at least, a good number of them, you could have a crack at putting them together to solve the code which would gain you access to Atombender's room. This did not involve the agent sitting on the floor or at a table, pieces strewn around in front of him as he tried to figure out which piece went where. No, like all good world-saving agents, you were given a pocket computer with which to manipulate the pieces into place. It was yet another brilliant addition to the game and added to the feeling of immersion into the game's world. I don't recall seeing anything like it in a game before, so I wondered where Dennis found the inspiration for that particular item.

"I'm not sure where that came from. Like most young males, I was mesmerized by gadgets, especially miniature gadgets. I was in high school when the pocket calculator appeared. I believe I was the last class in my high school that was taught to use a slide rule. I remember one of my math teachers showing up in class with her brand new HP-35, the first scientific pocket calculator, and feeling, again, like those astronauts in 2001. When I was in college, I had a cousin who worked for HP, and he got me a deal on an HP-25, which

was programmable, and I wrote all kinds of programs for it, including a game or two. Somebody I knew in college actually had a Sinclair calculator, which was the holy grail of electronic miniaturization. Maybe it was inevitable that the control panel in Impossible Mission would be rendered as a miniature gadget."

Hang on a minute... Sinclair? This is a Commodore 64 magazine! Still, that all makes perfect sense as we all lapped up any new technology at the time. Still do, in fact.

There could have been any number of ways of getting the code to Elvin's stronghold, when you think about it. Maybe searches could have revealed the numbers to a combination, or possibly just the letters themselves. Having to actually crack a puzzle code to obtain a word code is such a great idea, though. You really felt like you'd earned your way in when you finally solved the puzzle. Again, though, Dennis' recollection of how he came to add that is not entirely clear.

"That too was probably stolen. My memory is hazy, but I know I'd seen implementations of jigsaw puzzles on the Atari 800 and found the idea intriguing, especially when I realized that it wouldn't be difficult to reflect the pieces horizontally and/or vertically and make the puzzle that much harder."

It was yet another seemingly small element which added a lot to the player's experience. You simply can't imagine Impossible Mission without that final push to crack the puzzle, especially if time was short.

Of course, you can't talk about Impossible Mission without talking

about... the talking. Or, more accurately, the in-game speech. Until then, we'd been "treated" to scratchy or stilted speech, mostly simulated but occasionally through poor-quality samples. It was still enough to impress, but it was never truly convincing. That changed with Impossible Mission... forever. It seems like the most natural of inclusions now, but at the time, sampled speech was a memory-draining novelty. What gave Dennis, or Epyx, the idea to include it?

"The opportunity to add speech to the game was a happy accident. Epyx was approached by Electronic Speech Systems, who had digital audio software for the C64 and were looking to license it to game companies, and it just so happened that Impossible Mission was the game that was at the appropriate stage of its life cycle to serve as the guinea pig."

It doesn't get much more fortuitous than that. The rest, as we know, is history, with those famous lines now iconic in gaming history. Of course, without the right voice, and the right words, it might not have worked... take the example of Darth Vader in Star Wars. Did Dennis write the script for his own game, and what did he have in mind for the voice of Professor Elvin Atombender?

"I did write the script, which was performed by somebody at Electronic Speech Systems. When they asked me what kind of voice I had in mind, I told them I was thinking of a 50-ish English guy, and they said, "We've got one of those!" They went away and recorded the script and presented me with the results. It was perfect. There were no retakes."

Indeed, that voice is just right... cool and calm, yet sinister. Exactly what you would expect of an unhinged genius hell-bent

on revenge against the world. I've often read about how difficult it was to add speech to a Commodore 64 game due to its memory restrictions, but Dennis didn't have any such problems when it came to Impossible Mission.

"Adding the speech to the game was easy, since Electronic Speech Systems had already done the hard work. I just had to call their driver and tell it which clip to play. I did have to help them find a bug in their interrupt handler, though, which was failing to preserve the X register."

Programmer... artist... bug basher... Dennis was on fire!

Just as a final aside, regarding that speech, did you know that if you type "another visitor" into Google, its first suggestion is "another visitor stay awhile stay forever"? I only found that out quite recently. I mentioned it to Dennis who had also been unaware of this.

"That's amusing. I had no idea. If only that would happen with one of my poems."

When you play Impossible Mission, everything about it just feels right. Every room is a challenge, the puzzle is a head-scratcher and the time limit is just the right length where it can impart panic into even the most experienced player. It feels like everything was tested to the nth degree, making sure every aspect of it was as it should be. Dennis doesn't feel as though that was necessarily the case...

"The game was probably not play-tested as much as it should have been. I do know that I was able to complete it reliably, but few other people seemed to be able to, and I eventually concluded that it was probably too hard. I don't remember enough geeky details to be able to say how plausible a hypothesis this is, but I wonder if part of the reason that the game was more successful in the UK than in the US was because PAL ran at 50 Hz, while NTSC ran at 60 Hz. If the game time was measured in frames (and that's what I'm not sure about), it would mean that UK

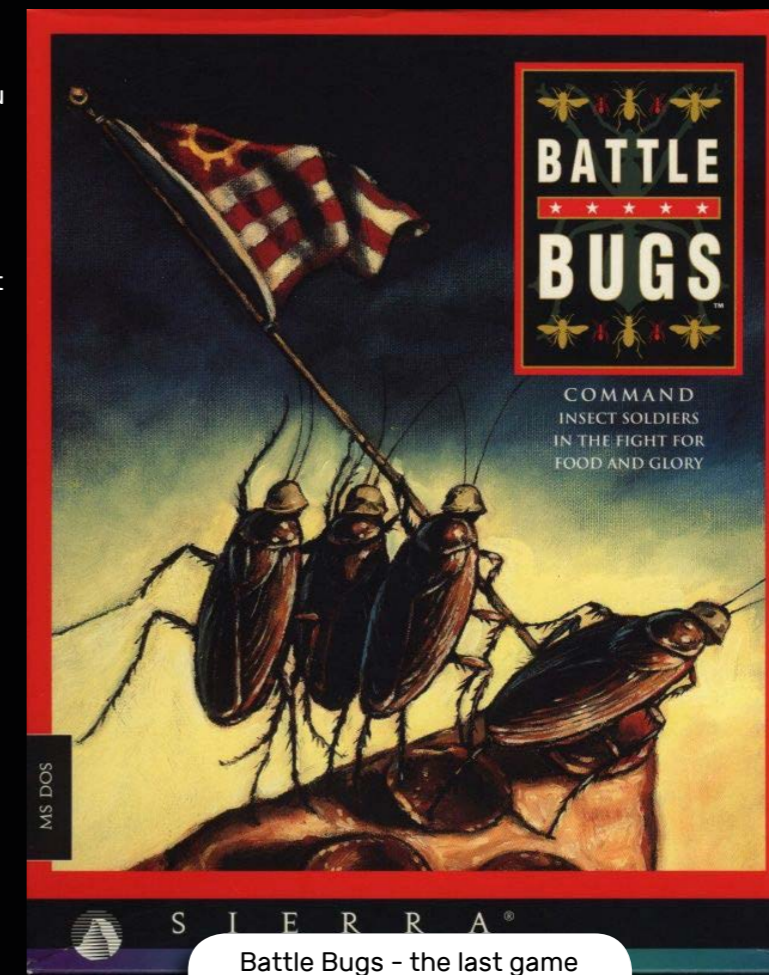players were given 20% more time to finish, which may have been just about right."

I dunno if that's true or not. I reckon maybe Dennis didn't surround himself with good enough gamers. Or maybe US gamers didn't play games to death like we did. Whatever the case, Impossible Mission endeared itself to us right from its opening burst of Atombender speech and never let go.

We loved the game, of course, but having spent ages writing it, was there any part of it that Dennis particularly pleased with?

"I think the parts I was most pleased with were the running/jumping animation (even though I stole it) and the way the game randomizes itself (which, as previously noted, I also stole from Rogue)."

It's probably fair to say that the animation on the main character was the most immediately impressive feature and stuck in the memory of all who played the game. Well, along with the speech. And the sound effects. And the amazing gameplay. What am I talking about? it's all great! I wondered, though, if Dennis had

any idea how much of an impact Impossible Mission made on the gaming public, at home and abroad.

"I never had much of a sense of it at the time. I knew the game was successful enough to warrant a sequel, but I never had the feeling that it was some sort of big hit or classic. I'm ashamed to say that we didn't pay much attention to the overseas market in those pre-globalization days. It was only years after the game was released that I became aware that it was well thought of in the UK. It's long been my understanding that the game was much more successful and influential in the UK than it

Battle Bugs - the last game Dennis was working on.

was in America, and that part of the reason for that had to do with the fact that, at the time Impossible Mission was released, most American C64 owners had disk drives, but most British C64 owners were still using cassettes. American publishers were moving on to disk-based games, but Impossible Mission had been designed to be fully memory-resident, which meant that it worked just fine as a cassette game. The fact that many other games were being sold on disk meant that there was less competition. Impossible Mission was probably one of the more advanced games ever sold on cassette, and the UK market appreciated that. That "analysis" is a combination of guesswork and hearsay, but it makes sense to me. Does it sound plausible from your vantage?"

That does sound like a reasonable possibility. Impossible Mission did seem way ahead of its time, although multiloads were still something of a rarity at that point, so maybe that aspect of it didn't play such a big part. It did receive rave reviews across the board, but I think that word of mouth probably had a lot to do with its popularity. Everybody knew about it!

Impossible Mission has remained very popular with gamers of the era and has endured tremendously, even receiving remakes for more recent games consoles such as the Playstation 2 and Nintendo

DS. From my experience, programmers didn't expect their games to have a lifespan of more than a few months, let alone decades. Dennis is no exception.

"I TOLD THEM I WAS THINKING OF A 50-ISH ENGLISH GUY, AND THEY SAID, "WE'VE GOT ONE OF THOSE!"

"Imagining what might happen thirty years in the future is not easy when you're not yet thirty years old. I was probably thinking that everything I made after Impossible Mission would naturally be better and more successful than Impossible Mission. One rarely knows when one has peaked until well after the event."

I'm not sure if 'peaked' is the right term, as I'm sure Dennis has put his skills to considerable use since then. It's just that it's been in fields that either are less well-publicised or less appealing to us gamers.

Somewhat surprisingly given his obvious skills, Dennis wrote very little on the Commodore 64. With hindsight, that's obviously a loss to us, but things happen and people move on. Dennis explains his reasons for not doing more Commodore 64 programming.

"I had a falling out with Epyx management and left the company. After taking some time off, I decided I wanted to try my hand at educational software and would up at The Learning Company, and they didn't support the C64, nor did any of my subsequent employers."

So it goes, but as far as we're concerned, Dennis left an indelible legacy, writing one absolutely fantastic game and having an important hand in another brilliant one. Of course, the programmers themselves often don't see it that way or maybe don't even realise it. After all, I don't really think about what I was doing thirty years ago, so why should they? I wondered how Dennis felt, knowing that

Impossible Mission is regarded as one of the best games of its era and by some, one of the best of all time.

"I really think it was mostly luck. I had no idea what I was doing. I just dumped things into the stew and hoped it would come out all right."

If that's typical of how Dennis cooks, I want to go round to his house for dinner! With Impossible Mission he got every single ingredient right, resulting in the most delicious gaming stew imaginable.

We know that Dennis moved on from the Commodore 64, so in wrapping things up, I wanted to know what he'd done since then, what he was up to now and if he was involved in anything that he'd like us to check out.

"During the nineties, I got married and became a parent, which may have had something to do with my flaming out in the game business. The last game I worked on that saw the light of day (if only just) was Battle Bugs, my only PC game, which I programmed during my second stint at Epyx (under new management), but which ended up being marketed by Sierra, since Epyx had more or less failed.
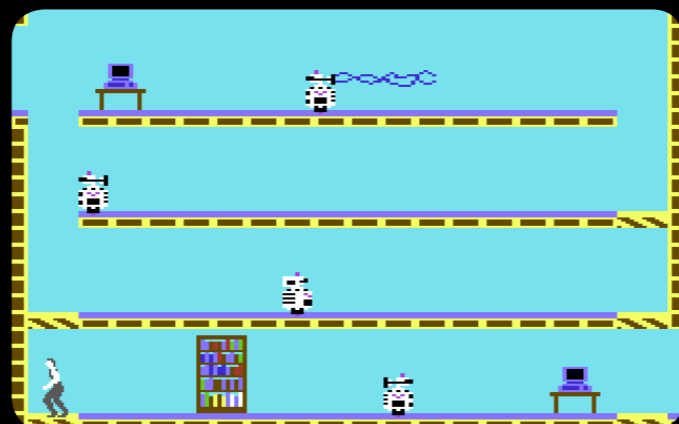
At the end of the nineties, I moved north to the Seattle area with my family, where I have been working since as a software engineer in the aviation industry. I wanted to try having a job that was just a job and that left me time for my family and to pursue other interests. Since moving north, I have endeavored to re-engineer myself as a poet

(I'm not kidding). I published my first book in 2012 and am hoping for a second, and I've managed to appear in a small handful of reputable literary journals. The book is called Phlogiston, and you can find used copies on amazon. I also email a poem every day (except weekends) to anyone who wants to receive them (not a poem of my own, but a [usually] serious poem selected from the general literature). Anyone who wants to subscribe can send an email to denniscaswell@comcast.net or himself@denniscaswell.com. I try for variety, so, if you don't like today's poem, tomorrow's will be different. It would be a treat to have an international subscriber or two. Most of the poems are American, but I do include British poets. (Of course, if you've been to my website, you already know most of this.)"

You can also have a look at what Dennis is up to on his website, http://www.denniscaswell.com. Sign up to his mailing list if you fancy a bit of daily culture, too… it's a small way to repay the man who gave us (arguably) the greatest platform game of all time, and it'll add a bit of variety to your day!

I'd like to thank Dennis for taking the time to answer my questions… I'm sure it's a long time since he was asked so many questions about Impossible Mission, if at all! But hey, if you get an opportunity, you have to take it. Impossible Mission is a true classic of the Commodore 64 and it's one of my favourite games of all-time. I still enjoy playing it today, which is a testament to its superb design and perfectly (if accidentally) judged difficulty level. It's very much a product of its time, and yet it's timeless, infinitely playable and a real icon. Dennis Caswell, we thank you from the bottom of our 8-bit hearts. **PAUL MORRISON**

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*** SECURITY TERMINAL 25 ***
      SELECT FUNCTION

      RESET LIFTING PLATFORMS
         IN THIS ROOM.

 ==>  TEMPORARILY DISABLE
         ROBOTS IN THIS ROOM.



      LOG OFF.
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RESET64 MAGAZINE PRESENTS
A GAME BY MEGASTYLE

TOMBSTONES

You are EL GRINGO — infamous for being the fastest and most dangerous gunslinger in the wild, wild-west.
Tired of winning and wanting to retire from your gunslinger career, all you want is to settle down with your true love.
However, your stellar reputation tempts outlaws from the whole wild-west to seek you down for duels.
Will it be possible for you, EL GRINGO, to survive your retirement day and get to your true love?

1987

The first half of 1987 was a barren six months for C64 gamers. 1986 had been an outstanding year with releases such as Uridium, Mercenary, Leader Board, World Games, Ghosts n Goblins and The Sentinel but 1987 had started slowly and great games were few and far between.

Gauntlet, Arkanoid, Gunship, Into the Eagle's Nest and Delta were arguably the pick of the bunch from January to June but none of these could be described as true classics and only Into the Eagle's Nest, Gauntlet and Gunship picked up a Zzap!64 Sizzler. In fact, top quality games were so scarce in the first half of the year that Zzap! failed to award a single Gold Medal between January and June 1987.

Some worried that the lack of quality C64 software was due to the arrival of the 16-bit Amiga A500. The A500 was announced at the winter Consumer Electronics Show in January 1987 and, in a bid to attract the mass market and compete with the Atari ST, Commodore's new machine was priced at an attractive £499. Compared to its predecessor (the £1000 Amiga 1000) the A500 was not only a much more affordable machine, it was also easier to buy. While the Amiga 1000 had been available in specialist computer stores only, the A500 was sold in the same high street retail outlets as the Commodore 64. This no doubt had some impact on the C64 as, next to the amazing graphical capabilities of the Amiga, the old breadbin inevitably looked a little dated. By the summer of 1987 the C64 was reaching its 5th birthday and some wondered if its days were coming to an end.

They say that a week is a long time in politics, but the saying could equally be applied to the 1980s games industry. Things shifted at a rapid pace and just as we'd began to fear that the C64 wasn't long for this world, it suddenly leapt from its deathbed full of life. Within a matter of days, a flurry of outstanding new games pumped fresh blood into the ailing old machine's veins and signalled the start of another era of superb C64 gaming. Were we back to 1986 and the glory days of the C64? Was it simply a false dawn? Could it be a dying machine's swan song? Nobody knew. But what was beyond doubt was that the games that arrived that summer were some of the greatest titles ever to grace an 8-bit home computer.

June 1987 brought, not one, not two, not three, not four but FIVE (yes FIVE!) brilliant games. That's as many as the previous five months combined. Killed Until Dead was an ingenious murder mystery game with its tongue planted firmly in its cheek which narrowly missed out on a Zzap! Sizzler with a score of 86%. Controversial hack 'em up Barbarian caused a stir not only due to its bloodthirsty decapitation scenes but also because of its racy magazine advertisements in which a before-he-was-famous Wolf from Gladiators glowered next to scantily clad 80s Page 3 model Maria Whittaker. Barbarian did slightly better than Killed Until Dead, scoring 87%, but again not scoring quite enough for a Sizzler.
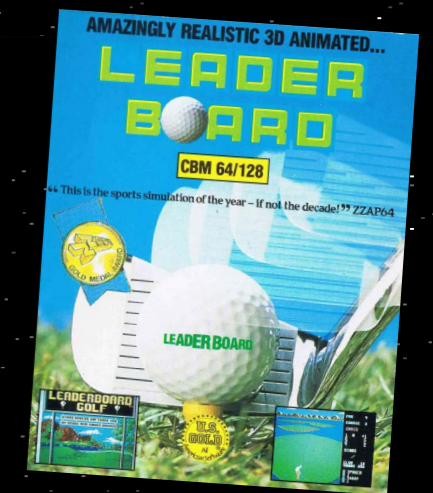
Indeed Zzap! seemed to be getting somewhat stingy with the Sizzlers only handing them out to a small selection of titles. Ocean's The Great Escape did even better than Barbarian but also just missed out on Sizzler status with a score of 89%. Following a number of uninspiring licence games such as Knight Rider, Miami Vice and Street Hawk, the Manchester-based software house finally came up trumps with The Great Escape. This atmospheric arcade adventure set in a World War 2 prison camp was a tense and absorbing affair which (along with Killed Until Dead and Barbarian) really should have earned a Zzap! Sizzler. However, as good as The Great Escape was, it wasn't Ocean's best release in June by any stretch of the imagination.

June's jewel in the crown (and Ocean's best C64 game by a mile) was Sensible Software's psychedelic shoot em up, Wizball. One of the greatest C64 games ever made, Wizball managed to get everything right. It had amazing graphics and stunning sound (thanks to Martin Galway), and showed off the coding brilliance of its creators. It was technically outstanding but at its heart – and the essential element in any great game - was brilliant gameplay. Sensible Software believed that a successful game needed to be "easy to play but difficult to master" and have "enough hidden depth to keep you coming back for more" and with Wizball they managed to hit the nail squarely on the head.

Wizball has been repeatedly named as one of the greatest Commodore 64 games ever made. However, upon release it was only awarded a Sizzler in Zzap! with a rating of 96% - just missing out on the deserved Gold Medal. In a 2005 Zzap! tribute publication, Gary Penn (editor of Zzap!64 at the time) described Wizball as "distinctive, distinguished, highly playable, audibly accomplished, witty, challenging, satisfying" before admitting that "I must have been really pissy. It should have gotten a Gold Medal."

Apart from not getting a Gold Medal, the only other disappointing thing about Wizball was that it didn't sell as well as it deserved to. Sensible attributed its relatively low sales to Ocean Software's poor marketing campaign but maybe it was just another example of great games not converting into great sellers. Mass market appeal and the very best of any art form often don't go hand in hand. If you look at sales of singles in June 1987 you'll discover that the songs at the top of the charts included Under The Boardwalk by Bruce Willis and Star Trekkin' by The Firm.

Back in the domain of Commodore computer games there was one final great game that completed the breadbin's summertime revival. World Class Leader Board was the third Leader Board game (Leader Board – the Executive Edition was the second) and was adjudged to be the best one so far. Zzap! awarded it a hefty 94% and Sizzler status describing it as "quite simply the apex in golfing simulations. Tough, demanding, challenging and requiring far more skill and strategy than previous versions."

1987 was a year of two halves and June was the beginning of another great gaming era for C64 owners. While the first six months were pretty forgettable, the second half of the year saw a C64 renaissance and some of the machine's greatest games arrived on the scene. Head Over Heels, The Last Ninja, California Games, Maniac Mansion, Nebulus, IK+ and Bubble Bobble all came out between July and December and this flurry of fantastic software let the world know that the C64 may have been getting on a bit by 1987, but it certainly wasn't GAME OVER just yet.

Thanks for reading – see you next time.

MARTIN C GRUNDY
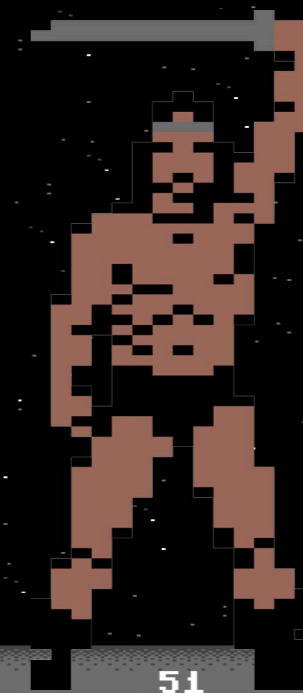
FORMAT WARS

Seeing as RESET magazine is already celebrating its 10th issue, I decided to choose something truly special. As the magazine specializes in all matters related to Commodore, contrary to previous occasions, this time we'll be seeing three Commodore machines put against each other in one man's battle to get in grips with each Commodore machine's difficulties in coding. I guess it's an almost universally acknowledged fact, that the C16 version rewrite is the best one, but let's see what's what, and why.

At the time of writing this, the C64 version has a score of 6.2 from 9 votes at Lemon64, while the C16 version has a much more respectable score of 9.1, voted by 21 clearly more eager Plus/4 World voters. There are no ratings to be found for the Vic-20 version, but that only makes it more interesting to see how well does it hold up to the other two.

The thing about Tom is, while the most common nominators are the theme, the main character and the most basic genre, all three games are quite a bit different from each other. The C64 and C16 games are maze-platformers in notably different ways, with notably different game mechanics, and the VIC-20 game takes away the platforming element completely. So, other than bearing the same title and having been written by the same person, I don't really think this threesome even calls for a proper comparison, but they do require some heavy examination. Therefore, I'm refusing to give any scores in this article, at least until the very end of it.

Considering the C64 and C16 versions of Tom were written in 1984, they were somewhat rare beasts at the time, since they used multi-directional scrolling - as such, they were among the first platformers made strictly for home computers to utilise this. Only Hoei's arcade game Jump Bug from 1981 came clearly earlier. As for the VIC-20 Tom, it reminds me more of Pac-Man than anything else, but it's a side-scrolling wider version of Pac-Man with less gobbling and more variety in level design.

Even by 1984 standards, I can't really say any version of Tom was a particularly playable game. Nowadays, all of them feel awkward at best, look weird and sound awful, but they share something not too many A-list games today can claim to have: personality. To make up for the lack of finesse in aesthetics, all versions of Tom in their own right can boast of being very large, particularly for the time. Even the C16 version has a map of 178 screens. Most importantly, any version of Tom will offer an unforgettable experience, in both good and bad, and they all have that "one more go" element to them.

PLAYABILITY

Since only the C64 and C16 versions are really comparable in any way, we shall separate them from the VIC-20 version, and start with that.

VIC-20

The VIC-20 version of Tom is a horizontally scrolling maze-action game, in which all mazes are three times the screen's width. The object is to find and pick up 9 boxes (by merely walking past them) within each maze with some help from a compass pointing left or right, while avoiding collision with enemies. You can shoot the enemies with a short-range laser weapon, but only when they are conveniently approaching from your left or right. There is an energy counter, which will go down a bigger chunk, if you shoot your weapon, and since there's only energy to last for about one minute, you should only use the weapon as a last resort. Besides, not all enemies even die from a shot from your weapon. However, collecting a box will replenish your energy meter back to full 60, and will give you a score multiplier bonus.

Although navigating the mazes calls for a small amount of memorizing for efficiency's sake, there are also some sort of teleportation points scattered around the top and bottom edges of the maze, similarly to Pac-Man. If you happen upon one, press the joystick towards the teleport and push the fire button to get to the opposite side of the screen. It also should be pointed out, that apart from the first one, each maze has its own specific hazard that requires specific maneuvers from the player, such as a full screen-width laser beam that appears and reappears in rows, and loops the map from top to bottom, as well as a giant spider taking a large segment of the map.

While there's nothing particularly wrong about the playability here, apart from the collectable boxes being sometimes invisible, the animated "Get Ready" screen will make your head fall off sooner or later, as it takes about 12-13 seconds to get through, and there's no way to skip it. But I do think the game is more enjoyable when you turn your emulator's speed knob up to about 150%.

C16 vs C64

Both of the platforming versions of Tom take place inside a multi-leveled maze-like tomb or a pyramid filled with monsters, traps and treasure. The first glaring difference is, the C64 version features six different pyramids, all of which are possible to complete, while the C16 version has a single, seemingly endless tomb to lose yourself into. Therefore, the second glaring difference is, while your sole mission in the C16 version is to collect as much treasure as possible, in the C64 version, you also need to collect keys in order to escape from each pyramid.

How we accomplish each task is another matter entirely. Each version of Tom controls fairly differently. On C16, Tom can jump low jumps and higher jumps, but only if he's running. By default, you walk slowly, but press down the SHIFT key, and you're running. Naturally, pressing the SHIFT LOCK key allows you to keep away from the keyboard for most of the time. On C64, Tom has no separate walk and run speeds, but is capable of ducking. The necessity of ducking, of course, comes from hazards above your head that you can avoid, which is absent from the C16 version. But then, large spaces are not very common in the C64 version. Not only does the C64 version feature a barely useful beam-type weapon, not featured on the C16, but it also features a map system you can access by hitting F5. Obviously, the C16 version doesn't need one, because its single map is such a vast thing that it wasn't probably even meant to be completed. At least more than once, since the harder version of it has a badly placed spike on top of a ladder, making it impossible to beat the game on a higher difficulty setting. But what the C16 version does have instead, are checkpoints - any item you pick up or door you open acts as one, and if/when you die, you can continue from the last such spot.

The way I see it, both versions have their pros and cons, although I have to agree with most others who have commented on the differences of these two games, that the C16 version is the more playable one. It is less buggy to begin with, and it isn't more complex than it needs to be. And this, I think is a shame, because the C64 version has more good ideas in it - most of them are just spoiled by bad gameplay and needlessly long waiting periods.

GRAPHICS

None of the three Tom games feature actual loading screens (at least, nothing worth mentioning), so logically, we would have to start from the title screens. The problem is, though, all the games look so different that there's very little to compare, so we shall have to deal with each version on their own.
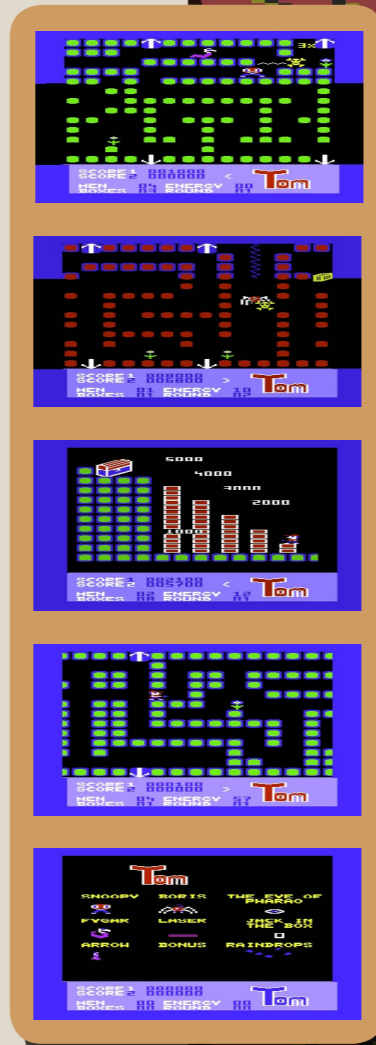
For starters, the VIC-20 version has a singularly animated, if not exuberant, title screen. At the very beginning, the blue-and-red flashing game logo is displayed at the top area of the screen, as well as the low right corner in the info panel, which is displayed throughout the game. The info panel also shows your scores, lives, collected boxes, amount of energy left and which round you're on. However, what's so animated about the title screen is: all the other text bits in the black area arrive in a different manner. Under the title logo, "by Udo Gertz" arrives in a snake-like wriggling manner, taking its time to move around the unoccupied black area as it comes. As the snake settles to its rightful spot, a text scroller of credits starts rolling just above the info panel, and all the rest of the text bits are typed in one letter at a time. The wandering snake-animation is also used later in the game for "Get Ready" and "Game Over" messages. It should be probably noted, that if you smash the F5 key to see your opponents, you can also see some specifically crafted level screens to show all the opponents in action.

The in-game graphics are fairly simplistic, but nothing less than expectable from a VIC-20 game. Everything looks wide and blocky, and all the character animations have no more than two frames. However, the very clear and varied colouring and the no-nonsense style of the graphics really works in the context. There's just enough unnecessary detail to create an atmosphere, and the atmosphere is good, even if it's quite a bit different from the other two Tom games.

The C64 version has so many different sorts of screens to show, that I have no option but to separate the intro sequence from the rest of the game. As the game has loaded, you will be greeted by a... well, honestly, a quite badly drawn title screen, which, apart from Tom himself, looks like the screen was drawn by an 8-year old. I'm not sure if Tom is horrified of the giant snake or is he trying to scare the snake away. Either way, it's still better than what comes after you press the button to start the game. That little barely animated sequence shows Tom heading into the badly drawn very brown pyramid, as the non-chalant sun is shining on the right side of the pyramid, while the left side is occupied by a badly drawn monster, larger than the pyramid, looking like a mix between a huge dog, a huge kangaroo and a bad-haired blue-faced witch. Somehow, though, this doesn't bother as much as it should, because these images still have some odd charm to them, and will stick in your mind like bubblegum. All this cheapness is also reinforced by the borders, which are rhythmically looping through all 16 colours of the C64 palette during the title and options screens.

Unfortunately, graphically the most interesting bit in the game is the map screen, which shows all the necessary elements in clearly different colours. The graphics during play are sadly lacking in colour and variety, with a heavy emphasis on grey, turqoise and white. Only Tom himself and the more mobile enemies wear any differing colours. At least the animations are just about as good (or bad) as on C16, but really, one would expect a lot more from a C64 game.

Tom 16 starts off with a bunch of garbled graphics sealed by a spirallingly built brick wall, after which the camera moves to your starting point. Once it reaches that point, the camera halts and a simple text scroller appears at the top of the screen, which includes the title, the credits and some plotline. Not very impressive, but seeing as most of the C16's memory is taken by the huge map, no wonder Udo had to cut down on some other things.

Once you start the game, the text scroller is replaced by the info panel, which includes all the necessary and even some unnecessary information related to the game's proceedings, just to fill the space. Tom himself looks a bit different from the VIC-20 and C64 versions, since he's wearing a red cap on his head in those two, while here, he has a blue top hat, making him look more like a distinguished gentleman adventurer. The camera follows Top Hat Tom in a very restricted manner, always keeping him in the middle, but then again, you wouldn't expect anything more from a 1984 game. In case you were wondering about the black and blue borders, the blue borders are activated by picking up a key, and they turn black again after using one.

The environment is mostly made of large bricks and other elements that mix mostly red and small amounts of light brown, giving it all sort of a fake orange look. Happily, there are some passages that feature water, fire, vegetation and collectable items to make the game look occasionally acceptably colourful. The animations are certainly a step up from the VIC-20 version, and there are plenty of new enemies and structures to see here. While I'm not a big fan of the colouring in the game, I can only agree with the consensus, that on the whole, it's one of the more impressive older games for the C16.
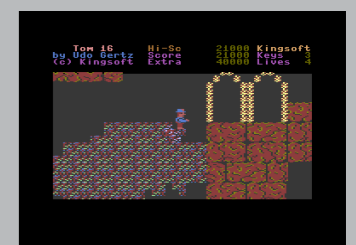
SOUNDS

Udo's sister Brigitte was given the responsibility of writing the music for the C64 and VIC-20 versions. For the VIC-20 version, she programmed a few fittingly arcadey sound effects and two children's songs, or more precisely, piano etudes that might be some of the first tunes a young pianist might practice. The title screen features a song known by different names in different countries, but the English-speaking world knows it as "Chopsticks". The in-game tune is something not I nor my select group of musician friends have been able to recognize, but it's likely some German children's song. It plays for about half-a-minute, before it stops, and lets the sound effects take over, and after another half-a-minute, the song plays again. Both tunes feature two beepy channels in use - the melody and a bass line, so it's not as cheap as it could have been.

The C64 version features just one song, which I don't even care to investigate further, because it's most likely an original tune. It's basically made of two melodies - one low and one high - with quite a lot of loops in both cases and slight variation on both the main instrument and the bass line, which is often considerably off the scale and out of key. At least it has some similar feel of belonging here as the soundtrack in Cosmi's Caverns of Khafka has, and the music sort of fits the nightmarish quality of the game's general cheapness. The sound effects here are, of course, played on top of the forever looping music, but you will only hear some quiet tap-noises of different pitches, depending on whether you're walking or climbing.

Again, the C16 version takes the cake, as it has the least badly programmed music, and the tune is more in tune with the theme of the game than in either of the other two versions. Still, two channels and a full minute of gloomy tomb music on the C16 is the best any version of this game has to offer. Actually, that's not entirely true, since there is also music to be heard while the actual theme song is on pause, and sound effects are on. Your walking sound is based on the melody of Udo Gertz's earlier C16 game, Ghost Town's theme tune. There are other, more particular sound effects made for sliding down slopes, jumping over things and collecting items. This all you will be hearing to your heart's content for 2 and a half minutes between each time the theme song is played.
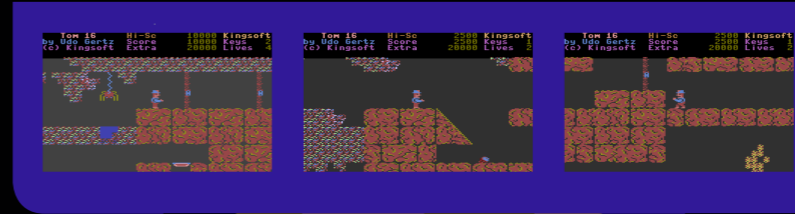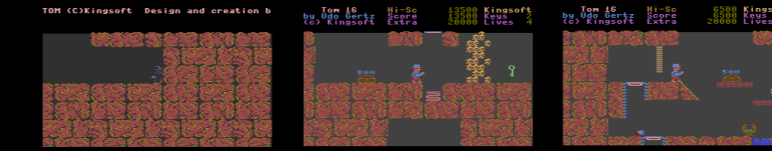
Playability **7**
Graphics **7**
Sounds **6**
Replay value **8**

Overall **7**
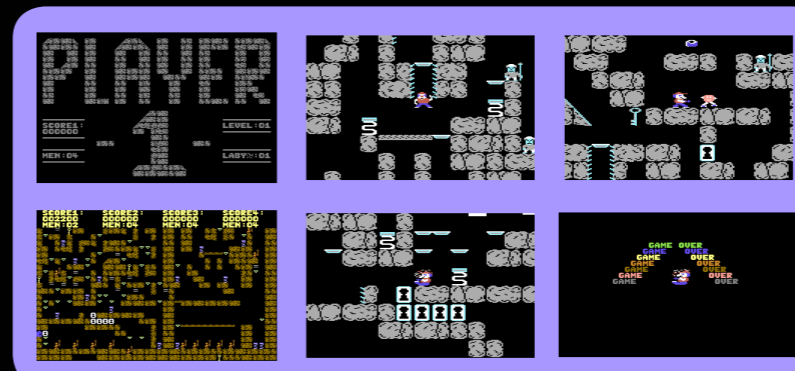
Playability **4**
Graphics **4**
Sounds **4**
Replay value **4**

Overall **4**

Playability **7**
Graphics **6**
Sounds **5**
Replay value **8**

Overall **6.5**

OVERALL

Let's recap, shall we. All three versions of Tom are different enough to call them basically different games. Apart from Tom's look on the C64 and VIC-20, and the basic genre similarity of the C64 and C16 versions, there isn't much to connect here. The graphics have similar a thematic, perhaps, and certain sprites and styles have been used for all three versions, and all the animation is minimalistic in a similar manner. The music and sound effects, however, are different in all versions, although their execution is similar. Also the atmosphere is different in all versions due to the differences in gameplay, music and graphics. In the end, I am practically forced to give scores for the three versions of Tom, based more on intuition and opinion, rather than plain and simple comparative scores.

That's how I feel, and I guess these scores are still rather optimistic, even considering the game was made in 1984. In the end, all three versions deserve to be taken a look at, if you have managed to miss them so far somehow, if only for the reason that it really was the game that established Udo Gertz's talents most suited for the C16. Concerning that: the game wasn't originally compatible with the Plus/4, so a fixed version for it was made in 1986, and released through Anirog. Now, let's end this on a challenge: if someone wanted to make things more interesting regarding this game, perhaps a remake of any of the other versions for any Commodore - I believe the C16 version would be most particularly welcome on the C64.

JARI KARJALAINEN

People have emailed, called, or come up to me in person and asked, "Pops, how do you come up with things to say about the Commodore line of computers after all this time?"

STARS AND SPRITES

FRUIT LOOPS AND CORN DOGS

by Lenard R. Roach

How does anyone write anything about anything? You have to sit down with what you are doing and study it. I've been writing off and on about Commodores since 1995 when I was first asked by Frank Scott, then the president of The Commodore Users Group of Kansas City, to describe in an article style format about what a visitor to my BBS, "The Pulpit", would find. I said, "Sure. Why not?"

I wrote the article in precise detail, throwing in commentary on each sub-board. My command of the Queen's English (and my own redneck slur) was rusty, but despite that I put a lot of heart into the piece and, when done, it was sent to the editor of the club's newsletter, Ryte Bytes. What went in was, what I thought, a masterpiece of literary art; what reached final publication turned out to be a chopped down form that, to the editor, was more "reader friendly." The problem? "The Pulpit" was a religious BBS, which may prove to be "offensive" to some of our readers. Offensive?! What he did to my article was offensive to *me!*, did he ever think of that? I took my free copy of the newsletter (my "fee" for being a contributor), and sat down for the meeting to begin, my ego severely bruised, beaten, and knocked down but not destroyed. I sat there the whole meeting licking my wounds. This was it. No more for me.

Next month Frank approached me again to ask a favour:

"Lenard, you program in BASIC, right?"

"A little."

Three years ago I got a $150 check in the mail from "Run" magazine for a program called "Check It Out" and Frank knew that so yeah,

I do a little programming.

"Are you working on anything right now?" Frank asked.

"I'm farting around with a couple of projects." What was he driving at?

"Can you write a column in the newsletter each month about what you're working on and your progress? It might prove of interest to our readers."

I glared at Frank and told him rather vividly and very brashly of what the editor did to my last piece.

Frank apologized.

"That was my fault," he confessed. "I didn't know your BBS was on a controversial subject. Just write one article about what you've been working on and submit it. I'll look at it with the editor and we'll decide together how to handle it."

I was apprehensive, but with the person wanting my submission and the guy trying to butcher what I write working together something might come out of it. I went home that night and looked over a project I was working on. I wrote in detail on what the program was supposed to do, what hurdles I had to jump, problems I was looking at and possible solutions. I drafted the piece, polished it, and sent it in. The article came out at the next meeting with nary a word changed. This was a surprise! I was sure that the editor would proverbially emasculate my writings again, but there it was almost word for

word. The reason? "You put nothing in this article that was controversial. You talked about programming and kept God out of it. It flew."

Sometimes you have the choice of doing what you want over doing what you know to be right. The Bible calls this a "passing pleasure." Yeah, even though I knew better, I enjoyed the accolades of men over the accolades of God. So for next eight years I wrote fantastic articles about whatever I could find that would associate with the Commodore computer: My cat and the Commodore, my dog and the Commodore, my kids and the Commodore, flatulence and the Commodore, taking the Commodore to work, taking the Commodore to church, buying Commodores, selling Commodores, and on and on.

The articles ideas came flowing so fast that I had to start my own newsletter in 2000 that ran for two years just to get all the ideas out on paper. "The Secret Organization of Commodore Users" it was called, and it was met with praise and a slap of the hand both at the same time. Some big Commodore clubs didn't want anything to do with SOOCU because it didn't appeal to the advanced user; however, smaller clubs appreciated the fresh ideas and good natured writing, but cost and time became a factor so I dropped the project. My most famous and still the most reproduced article was my story of two of my cats attacking my Commodore stand in the middle of night. It was entitled "Raiders at Midnight". Those animals who starred in
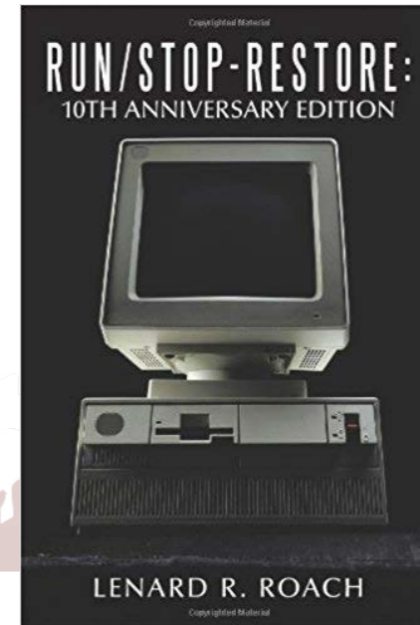
that article have long since gone to pet heaven.

In 2006 or thereabouts, the CUGKC, with me as its last president, shut its doors after a vote from its presiding membership, so there I sat from 2006 to 2010 with no outlet for my Commodore programs and articles. I decided to mess around on the Commodore anyway and basically code programs that I saw I needed for myself to make life easier at the house. I might even try my hand at game coding. From those short years I didn't master much, and nothing I coded was worth the disk I saved it on.

I'm getting my timeline mixed up here for somewhere along the line I sent a query letter to Dave Moorman of Loadstar over "The Envelope Addressor" and his publication shot me quickly back up into the eyes of the Commodore public. I remember the CUGKC critiquing the work in Loadstar thus promoting

me to code another version of it called "TEA 4.2". I also know my son Gabriel went through his battle with leukaemia (and won) and that was in 2004. I also remember 100% self-publishing my first Commodore book, "Run/Stop-Restore" in 2000 which only sold two whole copies.

I met Robert Bernardo and the Fresno (California) Commodore User Group and became a long distance member. I quickly became the club's newsletter editor of which I still occupy that post as of this writing. I know that in August 2010, my wife of 26 years divorced me to marry the man she was having an affair with. After this, in December 2010, I re-released my first book with some new writing and essays on the Commodore and re-titled it, "Run/Stop-Restore: 10th Anniversary Edition", using Author House of Springfield, Illinois as my publisher, and, with new contacts from FCUG and "The Village Green" (Astoria, Oregon), this book was widely accepted and continues to sell copies today.

Let me be honest, the people of Commodore were some of the high elite of folk that really assisted me in the years of healing from a devastating divorce as everyone read my material and were nice enough to contact me and thank me for writing that piece, or they didn't see that Commodore function, or that Commodore command in that way. Did my church family help?

[...all I can suggest is that, if you want to write for Commodore you must sit down and just -- do it!]

You bet! They, like the people of Commodore, loved me to death while I was dying inside. After this, I realized that, even though I kind of "phased" God out of my work on Commodore, that crazy, four goose bozo Heavenly Father was right in the middle of my entire Commodore endeavours and escapades, gently prodding me on towards the future building of my skills as a Commodore writer, commentator, and coder.

So, to answer the question first posed at the beginning of this article, all I can suggest is that, if you want to write for Commodore you must sit down and just -- do it! Don't know where to start? Don't punish yourself. The first sentence is hardest to write, but put something down either on paper or in a word processor. One phrase I read in a Commodore magazine once was about a free type in program to turn your Commodore into a precursor of today's Kindle e-book called, "It Was a Dark and Stormy Night ..." Try that title for a start. There's also, "It's funny to me when ..." or "While using my Commodore one day I noticed ..." The universe is your tablet and the Commodore is your premise. Please remember something my writing teacher, Trinka Enell, taught me: "Everything is publishable and worthy to be read by someone."

Now a word about critics, and you *will* have at least one or two, trust me. A wise pastor and author once said to his congregation about this subject, "Everyone who puts words to paper will receive criticism. You cannot avoid

it. If you can't handle the criticism then get out of the writing business.

It's not for you. You've got to have a thick enough hide to take the chewings and gnawings that a critic will do to you, your work, your family, and your lifestyle. The best way to toughen your hide to deal with a critic is to just let them rant. Chances are likely they are trying to build for themselves a reputation and they want to use the rubble they try to tear you down into as a stepping stone. When it comes down to the point where you must answer a critic, don't react emotionally or without thinking, first and foremost. Use a medium you are best familiar with, like, for me, it's the printed word. Be short and precise. Try to give them as little ammunition from your stockpile of supplies as possible. Let them shoot off their mouth as much as they can. A wise saying from my bygone days is: "A person is considered wise until he opens his mouth and removes all doubt." Summary: Ignore critics and move on to your next subject.

This reminds me of my first story I ever submitted to Reset. I wrote a rant about Commodores being permanently way sided and even girlfriends are asking their men to end the "love affair" with our machine of choice. Unkle K was nice enough to print it and he got a critic's response to it in his email. He forwarded it to me asking to respond to this reader. The critic asked me, "What cave do I live in?"

and proceeded to give his personal examples to my "flawed" reasoning about Commodore's stand in the dedicated user's household. My first response? You guessed it: Nyet. In fact, I got about half way through a soon-to-be new submission and even scribbled out a couple of skits for some local church clients before I sat down and studied the critic's note. I read and re-read the letter until my eyeballs bled. I knew that whatever I said to this person was only going to start a whole new firestorm. I don't remember what I told the reader but Unkle K said my response took up 1 1/2 pages in the next issue. He also forwarded my response to his letter to the critic and he sent another 1 1/2 pages back. Unkle K said that, between the reader and myself, we could possibly fill a whole issue of Reset with our tete a tete, so he made a wise decision and dropped the letter and my response. The reader was articulate, well mannered, intelligent, and well versed in the Queen's English. I have to confess that when it comes to a battle of wits, I am an unarmed man.

Please don't feel like I'm trying to deter you from writing about Commodore and putting it in the pages of Reset, your local club newsletter, or anywhere else; I just want you to know what you may go through in doing so. I look forward to reading about *your* Commodore adventures in the pages of Reset.
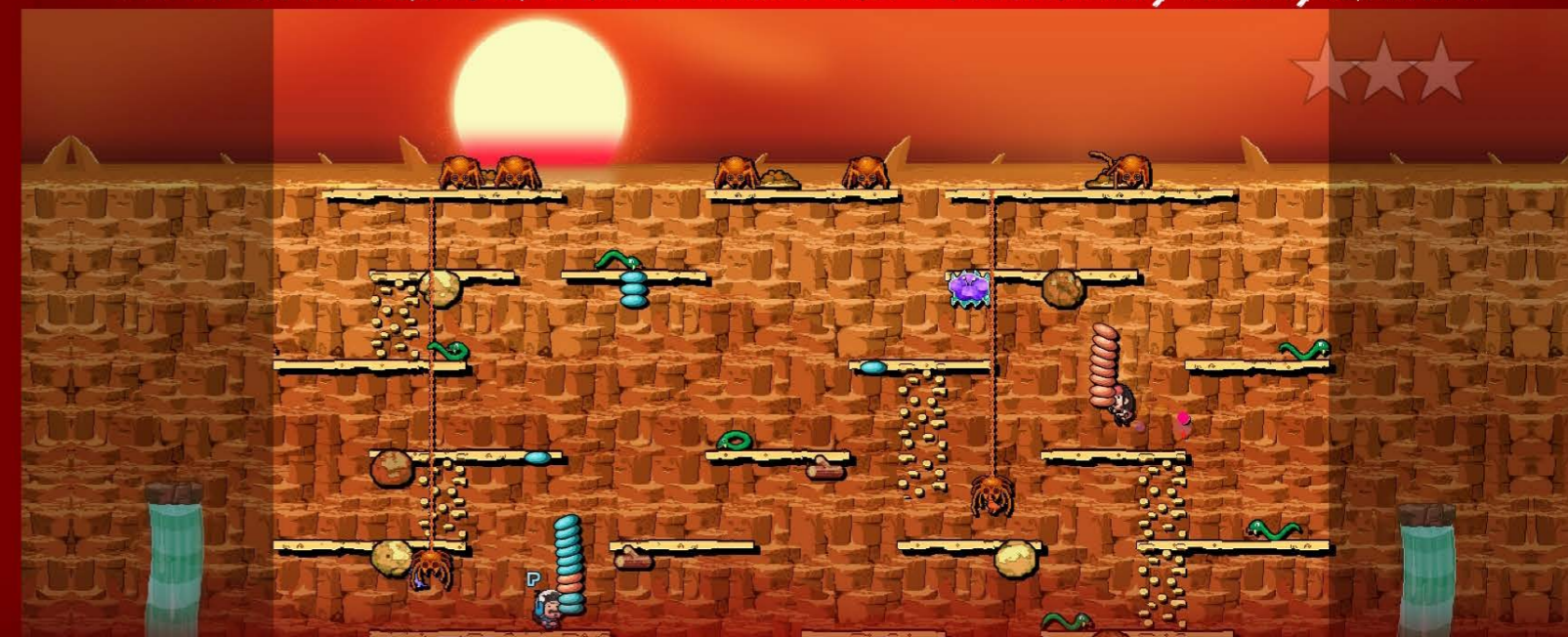
John 20:31,

LENARD "POPS" ROACH
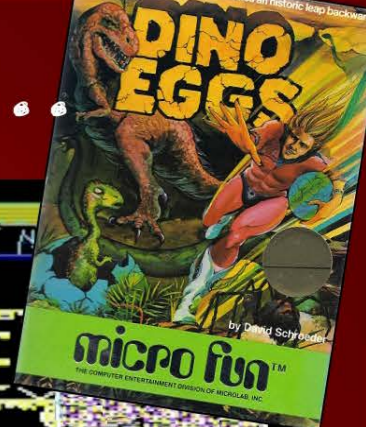
The Sky is Falling (Psytronik)

Tape Listing

```
0 REM THE SKY IS FALLING TAPE CHEAT BY MARTIN PUGH
1 FOR X=51200 TO 51271:READY:C=C+Y:POKEX,Y:NEXT
2 IF C<>7412 THEN PRINT"DATA ERROR":END
3 INPUT"SKY NEVER FALLS Y/N";A$:IF A$="Y"THEN POKE 51248,0
4 INPUT"ALWAYS HAVE DYNAMITE Y/N";A$:IF A$="Y"THEN POKE 51255,0
5 POKE157,128:SYS 51200
10 DATA 032,086,245,169,019,141,189,003
11 DATA 169,200,141,190,003,076,167,002
12 DATA 072,077,080,169,032,141,023,035
13 DATA 169,200,141,024,035,076,000,032
14 DATA 169,170,141,127,049,169,154,141
15 DATA 128,049,076,000,004,169,000,240
16 DATA 003,141,127,075,169,128,208,013
17 DATA 141,114,089,169,089,141,115,089
18 DATA 169,002,141,196,089,076,000,004
```

Pokes

Sky Never Falls
POKE 19327,0

Always have Dynamite
POKE 22898,128
POKE 22899,89
POKE 22980,2

Eye of the Gods (Psytronik)

Tape Listing

```
0 REM EYE OF THE GODS TAPE CHEAT BY MARTIN PUGH
1 FOR X=49152 TO 49268:READY:C=C+Y:POKEX,Y:NEXT
2 IF C<>13042 THEN PRINT"DATA ERROR":END
3 INPUT"INFINITE HEALTH Y/N";A$:IF A$="Y"THEN POKE 49233,0
4 INPUT"INFINITE AMMO Y/N";B$:IF B$="Y"THEN POKE 49240,0
5 INPUT"START WITH ALL POWERUPS Y/N";C$:IF C$="Y"THEN POKE 49247,0
6 POKE157,128:SYS 49152
10 DATA 032,104,225,169,020,141,192,003
11 DATA 169,192,141,193,003,076,167,002
12 DATA 096,072,077,080,169,033,141,014
13 DATA 035,169,192,141,015,035,076,000
14 DATA 032,169,047,141,066,008,169,151
15 DATA 141,067,008,076,000,004,169,002
16 DATA 141,034,102,162,080,189,065,151
17 DATA 157,255,001,202,208,247,076,013
18 DATA 008,169,013,141,239,148,169,002
19 DATA 141,240,148,076,000,064,169,001
20 DATA 208,005,169,173,141,071,112,208
21 DATA 005,169,173,141,148,111,208,018
22 DATA 238,112,072,238,117,072,238,127
23 DATA 072,238,122,072,238,132,072,238
24 DATA 137,072,076,000,064
```
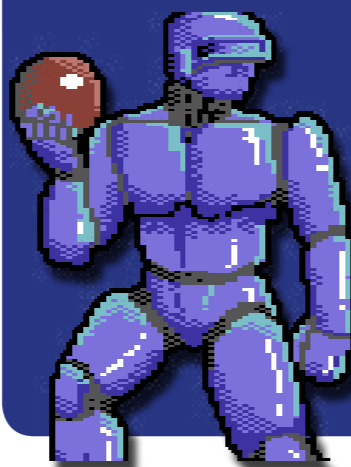
Pokes

Start with All Powerups (Ensure you poke these before you press fire to start a new game)
POKE 18544,1
POKE 18549,1
POKE 18554,1
POKE 18559,1
POKE 18564,1
POKE 18569,1

Infinite Health
POKE 28743,173

Infinite Ammo
POKE 28564,173

PETER POKER

In a freak accident while trying to use a paper clip as a reset switch, young Peter Poker was bitten by a radioactive 6510 and gained the ability to break Commodore 64 games with the latest tips and tricks! Now he saves innocent people from dying at the hands of difficult C64 games...while trying to keep his secret identity!

Hi everyone, it's me, your friendly neighbourhood Commodore 64 tips editor! I'm here to save the lives of C64 gamers around the world, with these handy tips and my incredible super powers. After all, I have the proportional strength and agility of a 30 year old computer processor!

Worried about having to type in some of these disk listings, like some kind of chump? Never fear! We have the disk listings ready for you to use on the Mix-i-Disk.

My Life (Psytronik)

Tape Listing

```
0 REM MY LIFE TAPE CHEAT BY MARTIN PUGH
1 FOR X=49152 TO 49267:READY:C=C+Y:POKEX-,Y:NEXT
2 IF C<>13007 THEN PRINT"DATA ERROR":END
3 INPUT"INFINITE TIME Y/N";A$:IF A$="Y"THEN POKE 49220,0
4 INPUT"INFINITE LIVES Y/N";B$:IF B$="Y"THEN POKE 49227,0
5 INPUT"INVINCIBILITY Y/N";C$:IF C$="Y"THEN POKE 49234,0
6 INPUT"MINIMUM STOMPING REQUIRED Y/N";D$:IF D$="Y"THEN POKE 49259,0
7 INPUT"COLLECT ONE ITEM TO OPEN EXIT Y/N";E$:IF E$="Y"THEN POKE 49241,0
8 POKE157,128:SYS 49152
10 DATA 032,104,225,169,020,141,189,003
11 DATA 169,192,141,190,003,076,167,002
12 DATA 096,072,077,080,169,033,141,195
13 DATA 034,169,192,141,196,034,076,000
14 DATA 032,169,047,141,066,008,169,151
15 DATA 141,067,008,076,000,004,169,002
16 DATA 141,249,122,162,080,189,065,151
17 DATA 157,255,001,202,208,247,076,013
18 DATA 008,169,001,208,005,169,173,141
19 DATA 066,046,208,005,169,165,141,075
20 DATA 040,208,005,169,096,141,252,039
21 DATA 208,016,169,234,141,232,015,141
22 DATA 219,009,141,220,009,169,208,141
23 DATA 221,009,208,005,169,000,141,093
24 DATA 014,076,000,004
```

Pokes

Minimum Stomping Required
POKE 3677,0

Collect One Item to Open Exit
POKE 4072,234
POKE 2523,234
POKE 2524,234
POKE 2525,208

Infinite Time
POKE 11842,173

Infinite Lives
POKE 10315,165

Invincibility
POKE 10236,96

I like this game because it is just like my own life! Except instead of being chased around the room by household objects, I'm chased around the city by evil super villains! It's still easier than some of the harder levels of this game though, so these cheats come in handy!

Barnsley Badger (Psytronik)

Tape Cheat Listing

```
0 REM BARNSLEY BADGER TAPE CHEAT BY MARTIN PUGH
1 FOR X=49152 TO 49286:READY:C=C+Y:POKEX,Y:NEXT
2 IF C<>15369 THEN PRINT"DATA ERROR":END
3 INPUT"INFINITE LIVES Y/N";A$:IF A$="Y"THEN POKE 49231,0
4 INPUT"NO SPRITE/SPRITE COLLISIONS Y/N";B$:IF B$="Y"THEN POKE 49238,0
5 INPUT"NO SPRITE/BACKGROUND COLLISIONS Y/N";C$:IF C$="Y"THEN POKE 49250,0
6 INPUT"ALWAYS HAVE CATAPULT & AMMO Y/N";C$:IF C$="Y"THEN POKE 49257,0
7 INPUT"ALWAYS HAVE INFINITE JUMP BOOTS Y/N";C$:IF C$="Y"THEN POKE 49275,0
8 POKE 157,128:SYS 49152
10 DATA 032,104,225,169,020,141,192,003
11 DATA 169,192,141,193,003,076,167,002
12 DATA 096,072,077,080,169,033,141,119
13 DATA 242,169,192,141,120,242,076,000
14 DATA 240,169,004,141,204,182,169,048
15 DATA 141,186,013,169,050,141,187,013
16 DATA 162,080,189,061,192,157,004,010
17 DATA 202,208,247,076,013,008,162,064
18 DATA 189,018,001,157,015,004,202,208
19 DATA 247,076,013,008,169,001,208,005
20 DATA 169,173,141,104,054,208,010,169
21 DATA 133,141,186,053,169,053,141,187
22 DATA 053,208,005,169,173,141,066,051
23 DATA 208,016,169,000,141,075,052,141
24 DATA 080,052,169,173,141,091,052,141
25 DATA 096,052,208,008,169,000,141,233
26 DATA 050,141,252,050,076,016,008
```

Pokes

Or, if you have one of those fancy reset cartridges, try these POKEs out. I'll be able to afford one of these as soon as my poor old aunt stops being so sick!

Infinite Lives
Poke 13928,173

No Sprite/Sprite Collisions
Poke 13754,133
Poke 13755,53

No Sprite/Background Collisions
Poke 13122,173

Always have Catapult & Ammo
Poke 13387,0
Poke 13392,0
Poke 13403,173
Poke 13408,173

Always have Infinite Jump Boots
Poke 13033,0
Poke 13052,0

Fellow super hero Martin Pugh is here to save the day with this great cheat menu for Barnsley Badger! I wish I got bitten by a radioactive badger instead of a computer chip. It would have made saving those hostages much easier. Anyway, type this in before loading the game on cassette:

Space Trip 2086 (Psytronik)

Tape Listing

```
0 REM SPACE TRIP 2086 TAPE CHEAT BY MARTIN PUGH
1 FOR X=272 TO 410:READY:C=C+Y:POKEX,Y:NEXT
2 IF C<>15939 THEN PRINT"DATA ERROR":END
3 INPUT"INFINITE LIVES Y/N";A$:IF A$="Y"THEN POKE 350,0
4 INPUT"INFINITE HEALTH Y/N";A$:IF A$="Y"THEN POKE 355,0
5 INPUT"ALWAYS HAVE MAX LASER Y/N";A$:IF A$="Y"THEN POKE 366,0
6 INPUT"ONE HIT KILLS Y/N";A$:IF A$="Y"THEN POKE 381,0
7 INPUT"EXIT SHIP AT ANY TIME Y/N";A$:IF A$="Y"THEN POKE 386,0
8 INPUT"SWITCH OFF GRAVITY WITHOUT CARD Y/N";A$:IF A$="Y"THEN POKE 391,0
9 INPUT"UNLOCK DECK WITHOUT CARD Y/N";A$:IF A$="Y"THEN POKE 396,0
10 INPUT"WITHDRAW CREDITS WITHOUT CARD Y/N";A$:IF A$="Y"THEN POKE 401,0
11 POKE157,128:SYS 272
20 DATA 032,086,245,169,035,141,189,003
21 DATA 169,001,141,190,003,076,167,002
22 DATA 072,077,080,169,048,141,177,035
23 DATA 169,001,141,178,035,076,000,032
24 DATA 169,173,141,248,143,169,128,141
25 DATA 252,143,169,255,141,253,143,162
26 DATA 080,189,076,001,157,127,255,202
27 DATA 208,247,076,001,008,162,072,189
28 DATA 141,255,157,063,001,202,208,247
29 DATA 076,064,001,169,165,208,003,141
30 DATA 244,014,208,009,141,050,013,141
31 DATA 074,013,141,066,047,208,011,141
32 DATA 205,014,141,251,014,169,008,141
33 DATA 106,007,169,000,240,003,141,180
34 DATA 032,240,003,141,141,024,240,003
35 DATA 141,103,024,240,003,141,117,024
36 DATA 240,003,141,169,031,198,001,088
37 DATA 076,000,004
```

There's so many choices in this great listing for Space Trip 2086! The hardest choice in my life is choosing between the sexy model Mary Jane Watson and the alluring cat burglar Felicia Hardy! Neither of them are interested in me but THE DILEMMA KEEPS ME AWAKE AT NIGHT.

NOTE: Pokes for disk version and tape version differ

Pokes (Tape Version)

Infinite Lives
POKE 3828,165

Infinite Health
POKE 3378,165
POKE 3402,165
POKE 12098,165

Always have Max Laser (Enable before starting game)
POKE 1898,8
POKE 3789,165
POKE 3835,165

One Hit Kills
POKE 8372,0

Exit Ship at Any Time
POKE 6285,0

Switch Off Gravity without Card
POKE 6247,0

Unlock Deck without Card
POKE 6261,0

Withdraw Credit without Card
POKE 8105,0

Pokes (Disk Version)

Infinite Lives
POKE 3858,165

Infinite Health
POKE 3408,165
POKE 3432,165
POKE 12128,165

Always have Max Laser (Enable before starting game)
POKE 1928,8
POKE 3819,165
POKE 3865,165

One Hit Kills
POKE 8402,0

Exit Ship at Any Time
POKE 6315,0

Switch Off Gravity without Card
POKE 6277,0

Unlock Deck without Card
POKE 6291,0

Withdraw Credit without Card
POKE 8135,0

Bonus Pokes (Space Trip 2085)

Infinite Lives
POKE 11806,173

Invincibility
POKE 11806,96

One Hit Kills
POKE 14068,0

Sleepwalker (Psytronik)

One of these cheats gives you infinite time - a super power for which I would gladly trade in my ability to climb walls just like a Commodore 64! It is not a good super power, please help me off the floor.

Tape Listing

```
0 REM SLEEPWALKER TAPE CHEAT BY MARTIN PUGH
1 FOR X=49152 TO 49243:READY:C=C+Y:POKEX,Y:NEXT
2 IF C<>10275 THEN PRINT"DATA ERROR":END
3 INPUT"INFINITE TIME Y/N";A$:IF A$="Y"THEN POKE 49216,0
4 INPUT"INFINITE LIVES Y/N";A$:IF A$="Y"THEN POKE 49221,0
5 INPUT"INFINITE ENERGY Y/N";A$:IF A$="Y"THEN POKE 49232,0
6 POKE157,128:SYS 49152
10 DATA 032,086,245,169,019,141,189,003
11 DATA 169,192,141,190,003,076,167,002
12 DATA 072,077,080,169,032,141,023,035
13 DATA 169,192,141,024,035,076,000,032
14 DATA 162,080,189,045,192,157,096,154
15 DATA 202,208,247,076,000,004,180,001
16 DATA 169,193,141,115,008,169,001,141
17 DATA 116,008,076,013,008,169,000,240
18 DATA 003,141,053,152,240,009,141,118
19 DATA 008,141,144,008,141,239,205,240
20 DATA 008,141,228,205,169,096,141,214
21 DATA 204,076,000,128
```

Pokes

Infinite Time
POKE 38965,0

Infinite Lives
POKE 2166,0
POKE 2192,0
POKE 52719,0

Infinite Energy
POKE 52708,0
POKE 52438,96

Thanks for reading, gang! Stay tuned next time, when I use my Commodore 64-related powers to fight crime! It involves me throwing 1541s at bank robbers until my back gives out.

Reset Rewind

Shades
C64/128 DISK
TERRY'S BIG ADVENTURE
SHADES

TERRY'S BIG ADVENTURE

Each issue, the Reset crew takes a journey back into the mists of time to look at 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 this issue celebrating C64 platformers, one had to be the pick... and some internal discussion led to Terry's Big Adventure being the game of choice. In its Zzap review, it was praised for being a mid-price release, and for being a solid game, despite not being much new to the formula, receiving a score of 82% in issue 56.

Time to see what the crew thinks of this one!

ROB

For the Rewind, I typically get to stump the crew with the chosen game, but this time? I got stumped - as Terry's Big Adventure is quite the surprise. After giving it a whirl, it's quite fun - like Giana Sisters, taking cues from a certain plumber and his adventures. I found the controls infuriating initially - the inertia takes time to get used to, and I messed up the initial jumps enough times to want to hurl my Zipstik across the room! Though giving it a bit more playtime one evening, it finally started to click for me. There's a good bit of challenge here, between collecting mushrooms, whomping critters with your yo-yo, and spelling out the T-E-R-R-Y letters on each stage. Plus, plenty of fun finding the hidden bonus screens amongst the stages. I can totally see how it's an overshadowed game - it's fun, but when you look at other platformers? I found it lacking that spark which makes you want to go back for more.

KEVIN

When you think of classic platformers on the C64, Giana and Mayhem are the two which come to mind first. Terry's Big Adventure is one of those lost in the vastness of the C64's catalogue, and it's a shame. Two things set Terry's apart: the inertia and the yoyo, which will make or break it for players. Terry huffs and puffs either as he gets up to speed, or slows to a stop. His main weapon is a yo-yo, clobbering the inhabitants to death instead of trampling on their backs. It's unfortunate that by the time it was released, most people would have played and fallen in love with Giana without giving the foul-mouthed Terry a look in. The thing is, it's not as good as Giana and despite the unique offerings, Terry's will always be compared to it. But, stick with it, you'll find a lovingly crafted, charming game with plenty of neat little touches. It's fair to say Terry hasn't aged quite that well, but it's worth a play at least once, if you haven't done so already.

It's behind you!

ANT

Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaagh! *plop!*

Oh, Terry! He's gone and spread grease all over his Teflon-soled shoes and then tried to collect a bunch of mushrooms and pop killer snails and prawns and other greeblies with his yoyo.
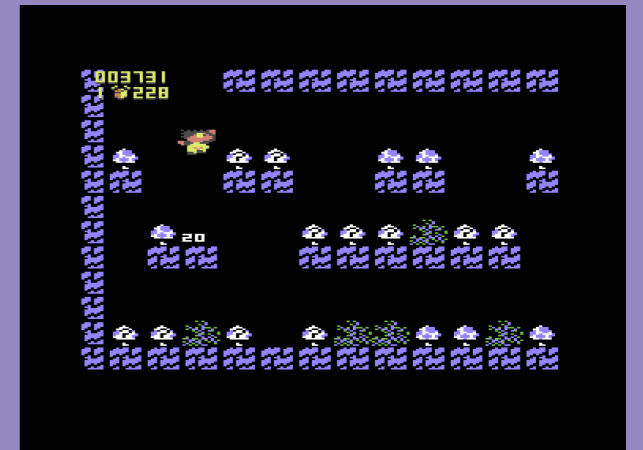
Aaaaaaaiieeeee-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e! *slip!* *die*

Look, it's gorgeous. Terry could be the Giana Sisters' lost brother and I love using the yoyo to bop the bad guys. That tune gets right into your brain and it's so jovial and repetitive and jovial. Once you've got the hang of the crazy inertia in "Everything is Covered in Ice" world it's enjoyable platforming fun. It's compelling, in a frustrating way. There's something there... like the clever mechanic of collecting mushrooms to keep your timer up, hidden special mushrooms, or collecting the letters of your name for some sort of mystery thing as you strive to get the key to the tower for the next level... where you'll slide off a ledge and drown in water for the 27th time.

"$*&#!", indeed Terry.... "$*&#!", indeed.

Must... resist... fun guy... caption ...

MAT ALLEN

From the start, one thing in Terry's favour was that it was sold at a mid-range price. Whether that led to more sales or not, I don't know, but it certainly can't have hurt. I've debated whether this was meant to be a "Super Mario Bros" clone. Whilst there are similarities, it also feels like it's also in an unholy union with "Frak!", given aspects of the art (especially the look of Terry himself) and the yo-yo. All that was missing was some swearing when you died. And die you would. Like many "cute" looking games, it's not easy, but the level design was fair, the time limit not too restrictive, and the game mechanics allow you flexibility in beating each level. Then there's dealing with the enemies. Although most of the time you hit them with a yo-yo. Its rebound was interesting, and something you had to account for when attacking. It didn't light up the world stage, but I had a fun time with it back in the day.

CAM

I have fond memories of Terry's Big Adventure. My sister and I spent a lot of time as kids playing this Super Mario Bros-esque platform romp, competing to get the furthest through the game's levels. It was a nice way to pass the time at home instead of doing things we hated like homework, chores, or being outside. Playing it again for this Rewind brought those initial back memories in full force. The charming visuals, with cartoony sprites and a comically big-nosed protagonist, are still great. Throwing a yo-yo remains an original and satisfying way to trounce enemies. The music's plinky-plonky piano riffs continue to please the ear drums almost 30 years later. It's a delightful couple of minutes of nostalgia. Then I started noticing things that I never noticed when I was a kid. Things like the frustratingly weird inertia, or how tediously long the levels are, or how there's no real sense of exploration or adventure.

Maybe you really can't go back home again...

Terry's clearly very keen on mushrooms.
Good thing really...

MERMAN

Terry has many similarities to Mario – hidden rooms, mushrooms, bonus blocks and so on. He's armed with a yo-yo, which reminds me of the classic Frak. The frustration comes from being knocked back when the weapon hits an enemy, as it becomes all too easy to fall off a platform. Certain enemies leave behind bonus letters to spell Terry for an extra life. The graphics are quite good, although Terry himself seems a little squashed. Backgrounds are perhaps a little basic but there is some variation. It's also clever to have more than one type of mushroom. Yellow ones kill you and those with a question mark add seconds to the timer. This can be vital as a life is lost when the timer reaches zero. A jolly tune plays during the game, but oddly there is no music on the title screen. I played it several years ago after obtaining a secondhand copy and felt it was quite good. I still do, although time (and playing more Mario) makes it seem less fun than before. Still worth a look for platform addicts though.

FRANK GASKING

I loved playing Super Mario Bros a lot on the NES in the early 90's, and was sad there wasn't anything similar on the C64. I finally got Giana Sisters later on, but before then it was a constant struggle to find anything comparable. When a game shop was selling off their stock, they had a budget copy of an interesting looking game with a character wearing shades. I wasn't expecting much, but for a few quid you couldn't really go wrong. I was presently surprised to find a cool Super Mario Bros style game when loaded up. Although the sound and graphics are weak, give the game a chance - you'll find a hearty platformer tucked away. It has only a vague hint of SMB about it, and isn't as blatant a clone like Giana Sisters, and includes a yo-yo weapon similar to Frak. I suspect for many, this is one which has gone under the radar, and if you haven't played it before, then it is a title certainly worth checking out

It's a me! It's a... er... Terry....

Terry misses the boat.

Concluding Thoughts
It's certainly not the most innovative of platformers, nor has it aged gracefully, but it's one which the team certainly feels it worth checking out. Even if that is only to have a quick play just to see it in action.

PAUL

This was an interesting one for me as I'd never played it before. So much for my encyclopaedic knowledge of C64 games! At first glance it seemed very Giana-esque, and that thought held true throughout the game. That's not a bad thing though... if you're going to be influenced by a game, make it a good one! It's actually quite a nice game. It looks decent, although Terry is a bit of a scruff. There are a couple of gameplay irritations... Terry is a bit floaty (much like Giana) and it's annoying how you get knocked back when you yo-yo a critter. It's kind of compulsive though... I found myself wanting to see what came on the next level every time I died, so I kept going back to it. TBA wears its Mario and Giana influences brazenly, with mushrooms and bonus rooms galore. That's OK though, it keeps things interesting and gives you constant scope for improving your high score. I don't think it's as good as either of the games it apes but it's still a fine scrolling platformer.

Reset Q&A

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

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

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

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

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

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

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ACROSS 2-Nifta, 5-Gerald, 6-Fred Gray, 7-Singes Castle, 9-Sir Arthur Pendragon, 11-Combat School, 13-Elvin Atombender, 18-Infiltrator, 19-David Crane, 21-Alligata, 22-Bob Wakelin, 23-Revenge of Doh, 25-SuperSunday, 29-Imagine, 30-King Street, 32-Percy, 33-Pyranha. DOWN 1-Dan Dare, 3-Uchi Mata, 4-SID, 8-Sensible Software, 10-Targ, 12-Sir Galahead, 14-Elite, 15-Wilma, 16-Psyclapse, 17-Special, 20-Tower Toppler, 24-Paradroid, 26-Saboteur, 27-Zinc, 28-Heels 31-Traz.
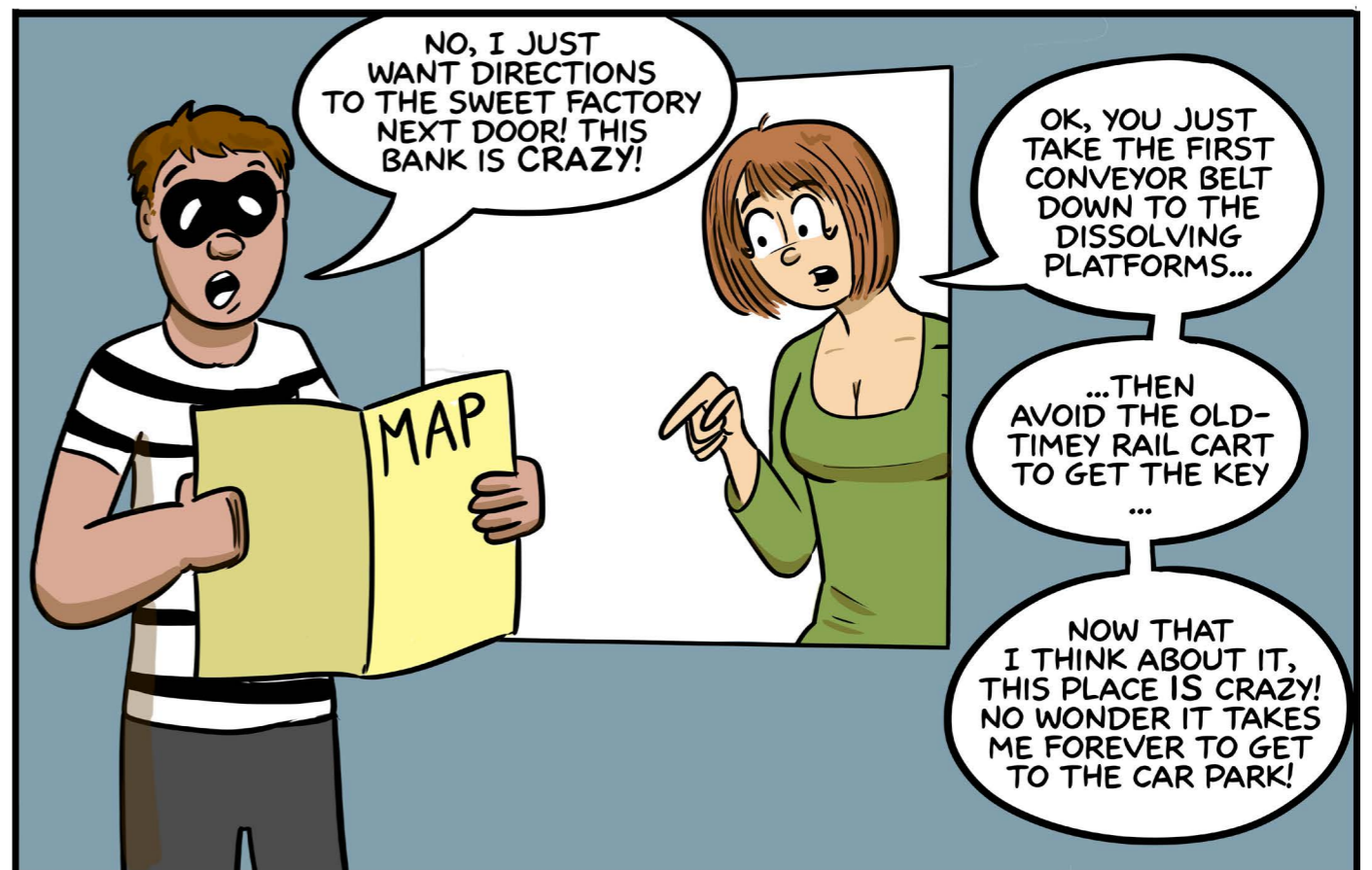
COMMODORE CROSSWORD

Across

2. Wizball's feline friend (5)
5. Star of Spindizzy (6)
6. Composer of Mutants and Mission AD music (4,4)
7. Where Dirk the Daring had to escape from? (6,6)
9. Swashbuckling star of Entombed and Blackwyche (3,6,9)
11. Ocean's military training game (6,6)
13. Evil professor who wants you to stay a while... (5, 10)
18. US Gold game that 'rocked America' (11)
19. Creator of Ghostbusters and LCP (5,5)
21. Reptilious software house, creator of WDW2 (8)
22. Ocean's cover artist (3,7)
23. Arkanoid sequel (7,2,3)
25. Nexus' american football sim. (5, 6)
29. They 'played the game'...until they went bankrupt (7)
30. Home of Zzap!64 (4,6)
32. Potty Pigeon's first name (5)
33. Daniel was explosive (8)

Down

1. The pilot of the future? (3,4)
3. Martech's judo game (4,4)
4. Iconic C64 music chip (3)
8. Creators of Parallax (8,8)
10. Planet escaped from in Mercenary sequel (4)
12. Star of Hewson's Firelord (3, 9)
14. Zzap!'s first Gold Medal game (5)
15. Wally Week's wife (5)
16. Imagine's mega game for the C64 (9)
17. Gribbly's second day out (7)
20. US name of Nebulus (5,7)
24. Only game to score 100% in Zzap! (for presentation) (9)
26. Durell's anonymous ninja (8)
27. Name of first dreadnought in Uridium (4)
28. Head's pal (5)
31. Cascade's Arkanoid clone (4)

Crossword compiled by Gavin Greenhalgh @TheGavNinja.
Answers at bottom of page 69

BLAGGER