

AMTIX! CPC

**ALL THE LATEST CPC
GAMES REVIEWED!**

HYPERDRIVE!

THE AMTIXCPC TEAM GET TO GRIPS
WITH JUAN J MARTINEZ'S NEW
VERTICALLY SCROLLING SHOOTER.

ALTERNATE CPC HEROES

WE ALL KNOW SUPERMAN AND
BATMAN BUT WHO ARE THE LESSER
KNOWN HEROES ON THE CPC?

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE!

SAKIS KAFFESAKIS DROPS BY THE
ADVENTURE TAVERN FOR A CHAT.

GAME COVER CRACKERS - 1990
COMPILATION CORNER
AMTIXCPC ADVENTURE TAVERN
LATEST PREVIEWS

AM-TECH

THE MAGNIFICENT 7 - NOVABUG
TALKS CPC MONITORS

AMSTRAD ART

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MICRO ACTION AMTIX! CPC

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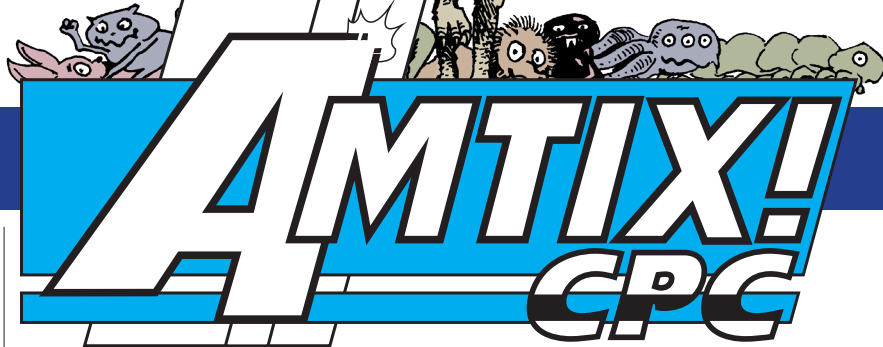
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AMTIX!

CPC



Ready



Happy New Year, my fellow Amsters! Welcome to Issue #7 of the greatest Amstrad CPC magazine in the world! A bold statement one might say, but who else brings you all the very latest in news, reviews, and features for the greatest 8-bit system ever made?

Last issue it was *Toki*, this issue it's *Hyperdrive!* Novabug & Zoë put Juan J. Martinez's latest vertical shooter to the test.

As well as *Hyperdrive*, we'll also be reviewing all of these new fantastic CPC titles: *Tenebra*, *Darkula 64*, *Missile Command* for the GX, *Guntus*, *Panda Raid II* and *Ramiro IV*. The team will also looking at two more of their favourite #CPC RetroDev entries,

Droid & Druid and *Tiny Deathmatch*.

In homage to this issue's amazing cover art that depicts the mighty Redhawk from Melbourne House's *KWAH!*, we take a look at the CPC's Alternate Heroes, the lesser-known individuals that keep the world and the streets safe from evil. Love old hand-held LCD games? Good, then you'll enjoy Zoë's review of several classic LCD titles that have found their way onto the CPC.

Over at the Adventure Tavern we have something a little different for you all this issue, with an exclusive interview with Sakis Kaffesakis, Greek interactive fiction author and creator of several CPC adventure titles. I'll also be taking a look at another fine compilation box set over in 'Compilation Corner', where this issue it's 'Chart Attack' by Gremlin Graphics. Our resident historian Paul Davies is again on hand looking back at the original Issue 7 of AMTIX magazine, while cover connoisseur Graeme Mason returns with several more game cover crackers, this time from the year 1990. And just wait till you see the amazing artwork that Zoë has in store for you all inside this issue's gallery. Thought

a monitor was just a monitor? Think again! Novabug reveals all in this issues AM-TECH.

IN MEMORIAM

Many of you may already be aware that 2022, especially the latter half, was a sad time for the retro community as we lost several fantastic human beings including Oliver Frey and Roger Kean, the two main men responsible for bringing the AMTIX, ZZAP! & CRASH publications into being. Both were undeniably responsible for shaping the landscape of computer games journalism as we know it and in doing so have touched the lives of so many readers over the years. Roger & Oli, we will miss you.

I'd also like to touch on the recent sad passing of computer coding legend Archer Maclean. Most will remember him for games such as *Dropzone* and of course *IK+*, both of which have endured the test of time. As a small tribute to Archer we'll be taking a look at *IK+* on the CPC next issue.

Anyhow, that's enough sadness for one issue. Let us all now look forward unto 2023 and the CPC delights it will bring.

Ready?





RUN "A" -TEAM. BAS

COLIN BELL

Has been a massive fan of the CPC ever since his dear old Mum bought Dad one for Christmas in 1986 to use for his electrical business – that never happened! He has fond early memories of playing *The Custard Pie Factory*, *Super Gran* and *Rig Attack!* and has a passion for



adventure games. A serious collector of all things Amstrad, he currently has over a whopping 2,300 games in his collection along with various CPC systems and hardware. Colin also writes for other publications under the Fusion Retro Books banner and is very honoured to be taking on the role of editor for AMTIXCPC.

GORDON KING

Or Kingy as he is known in the retro community is one of the hosts of RGDs Podcast. He's one of those strange creatures that love all of the 8-bit home micros and won't get involved in a 'which is better' debate. He is no stranger to the Fusion Retro Magazine house and currently



writes reviews and some articles on CRASH. His personally owned Amstrad is the 6128, and by the time you've read this, he's modified it with a Gotek drive. No Amstrads were hurt during this daring mission.

ZOE KIRK-ROBINSON

Is a talented artist and comedian who makes games for old computers live on YouTube. Zoë got her first Amstrad when she was four, a decision her parents almost instantly regretted. She didn't stop playing on her CPC until the age of forty, and even then, only stopped to write



something for this magazine. Zoë also produces CPCine, a YouTube documentary series that charts the life of the Amstrad CPC and she very kindly provided the artwork for all the lovely faces you see here. She lives in Bolton, in a cocoon made from retro games.

CHRIS WEATHERLEY, AKA "NOVABUG"

is a retro gaming YouTuber and writer contributing to various websites such as *The Pixel Empire*, *RetroUnlim* and *Indie Retro News*. A self-confessed CPC fanatic, 'Novabug' is well known for his Saturday live streams where he tests real CPC cassette games on real hardware,



to much amusement and sometimes disappointment. He is also the product of a hybrid breeding project, to splice a human and an alien to create the ultimate Amstrad guardian. Funded by Lord Sugar, the project wasn't a success.

BEN HONEBONE

Spent the late 1980s and early 90s huddled around a green screen playing *Arkanoid*, *Wizball*, and other colour dependent games on the CPC 464. From this self imposed isolation there emerged a lifelong Amstrad enthusiast and video game connoisseur. Ben can



also be found working at Fusion magazine, making music with bands and as a solo artist, making music videos and content, and generally roaming around the Welsh countryside looking for fighting game players.

SEAN McMANUS

Got an Amstrad for Christmas 1984 and wrote his first Amstrad program that same day. Sean contributed type-ins to Amstrad Action (AA) and Amstrad Computer User (ACU), and wrote the Sprite Definer that appeared on AA's cover tape. He wrote a couple of



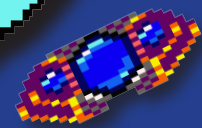
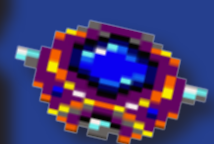
tutorials for ACU too, and a BASIC programming book called *The Basic Idea*. Today Sean works as a technology copywriter and writes books about programming in Python and Scratch to inspire the next generation. Visit Sean's website at www.sean.co.uk to read his Amstrad book and play his games.

GRAEME MASON

A video games fan from a very early age, Graeme Mason grew up in the arcades of the late Seventies before embracing the home computer boom of the Eighties. Today, Graeme writes about retro games for *Retro Gamer*, *Eurogamer* and more, and while a Specy



fan at heart, he will always have a special place for Amstrad CPC. The colourful graphics and incredible sound of games such as *Sorcery+*, *Tau Cet!* and *Commando* represent some of his finest memories of the iconic computer



feeds into the “just one more try” factor that will see you playing long into the night.

You have free movement all over the screen and you’ll need it because the enemies have movement patterns you may not predict. It’s very easy to accidentally glide into their flight path if you’re not careful; and the fact that you can only have one shot on screen at once will mean you can’t simply rapid fire your way out of a sticky situation.

There are five stages, each with an end boss. These bosses aren’t that tough but getting to them is a fair slog. You’ll pick up improvements to your weapon’s power level along the way but don’t

Author: **Juan J. Martinez**
Released: **2022**

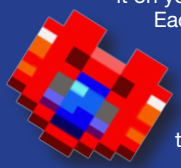
If *Slap Fight* and *Uridium* had a baby, it would be *Hyperdrive*. Right from the start, it’s clear this is one of those titles that, had it been released during the CPC’s heyday, would have had the cover of every magazine; plus news and updates about it for months prior to its release.

This vertically-scrolling shooter is smooth-scrolling, colourful, and the upbeat music is catchy. The levels are a challenge, too - don’t expect to breeze through it on your first few tries.

Each level feels like it’s split into individual sub-stages so even if you struggle to get through a

level, you’ll at least see that you’re making progress. This helps not only to keep you motivated to push on, but also

Review by Zoë Kirk-Robinson





Above & Below: Wave after wave of relentless enemy action!



expect to see all that much effect from them, since most enemies die with one hit. Whenever you die, you lose a power level but any extra bombs you collect persist.

Bombs clear the screen of enemies and enemy fire, which is great for those situations where you find yourself stuck

Zoë



Hyperdrive drew me in from the very first go. It's the kind of shoot-'em-up that I adored during the CPC's commercial days. It's not an easy game by any means but each time you get a little further in it, you feel great. Having a good run on a level is a reward in itself. I felt like I was back in the arcades of old. This is one game you shouldn't miss.

CRITICISM

Chris



Classic Amstrad shooter action here, with influence from the likes of Alcon and Xevious, with a little Mission Genocide thrown in. Upbeat and finely composed music, lots of SFX, sharp but sometimes slow controls, there is a lot to like here. Reminds me of Red Sunset but in space, but less of a frantic challenge and more methodical. Bosses and long levels give it a great arcade feel, and it's very reminiscent of a CPC shooter from the heydays, but in recent times, shoot em ups on the CPC have advanced a bit, and I feel this needs a little more speed to get the juices flowing. Lovely game however.

CRITICISM

in a tight spot. At times the game veers into Bullet Hell territory, so bombs are great for sorting that out. On the whole though, you'll probably want them to knock down a boss' health before going in for the kill.

If you think finishing off the final boss is the end of your worries, think again. There are bonuses for how many times you can kill chains of 9 enemies in a row, plus a bonus for a no-death run on each level. If that doesn't keep you coming back for more, nothing will.



PRESENTATION 90%

This looks, feels and plays brilliantly.

GRAPHICS 90%

Great use of colour and lovely, smooth sprite movement.

SOUND 85%

Great music with a catchy hook.

ADDICTIVENESS 95%

Can't talk, playing Hyperdrive.

LASTABILITY 95%

Five long stages, plus extra objectives. Wonderful!

OVERALL 91%



TENEBRA

Review by Gordon King

Author: **Haplo**
Released: **2022**

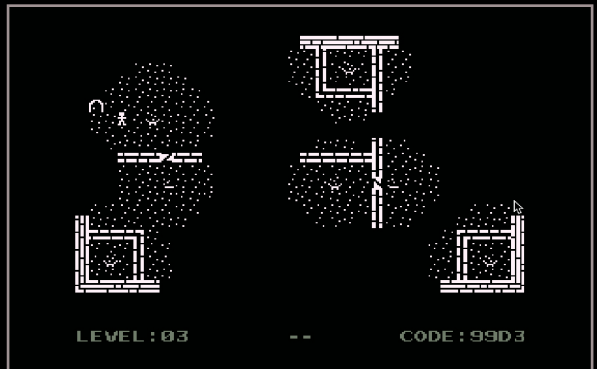
Whereas *Darkula* (reviewed in this very issue) is all about putting the lights out, the juxtaposition of *Tenebra* is to keep the darkness away. Set in an atmospheric, rogue-like environment, the player finds themselves lost in darkened caverns where they can only see within the radius of sources of illumination.

The premise is simple; guide your nyctophobic protagonist to the exit door, hidden within each level. Your character cannot walk beyond the circular radiance projected from the light-emitting objects - chiefly torches (they look like cigarettes) and braziers. When the torches are picked up, the player can walk around confidently with a cocoon of light around them. However, this reassurance is short-lived as to go through doors and interact with other objects, they must be dropped back on the floor.

The challenge lies in placing your torches in the correct position to give you a visible

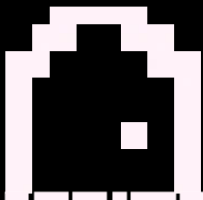


Above & Below: The dark rooms of Tenebra. Keep that torch burning if you ever want to escape!



pathway to collect another. Sometimes you need to use multiple torches, requiring small baby steps where you migrate a pair in tandem - this requires lots of dropping and picking

up. As the game progresses, the maze-like rooms become more devious, and it's more involved to reach the doorway: hidden keys are required, braziers are mobile on rail tracks, and tools are



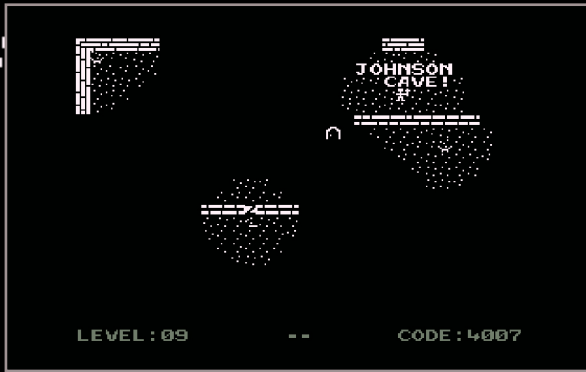
Gordon



CRITICISM

I'm rather fond of stripped-back games where my mind isn't distracted by lush graphics. Like a good text adventure, I prefer to be shown, not told. *Tenebra* oozes something very atmospheric by displaying very little. The only way to play this is in a darkened room. Generally, it's a well-crafted game that captures the core elements of the rogue-like genre. The flicker effect that makes the screen alternate between bright and dull is a nice touch, but it does start to strain the eyes. Sadly this switches back on with each new level, and you have to press the hotkey to disable the mode each time. I like when retro games are made with modern considerations, and the level codes for quick access to the stages are the most welcome feature - who wants to traipse through levels that have already been done? Overall, *Tenebra* never overstays its welcome, and the 31 stages on offer have enough variety for the player not to become bored.

a necessity to break through weakened walls. What started off as a quick scramble for an easily accessible doorway evolves into a terrifying and suffocating ordeal for survival. The game is well-designed for creating a claustrophobic environment with minimalistic graphics and detail - one where the player fills in the blanks with their imagination.



Colin



CRITICISM

With its atmospheric setting, cunning puzzles, and rogue-like gameplay, Tenebra feels like a breathe of fresh air in a scene otherwise chock full of shooters and platforming action. The torch mechanic is very clever and brings the whole game to life. It would be nice to see a few adventure elements added such as monsters and weapons, but that's just me. Perhaps some eerie music, too. You know what they say, It's the simple games that always tend to be the best and Tenebra is no exception. I highly recommend you give this original title a try.

PRESENTATION 85%

Purveyor of a foreboding atmosphere.

GRAPHICS 70%

A marmite graphical style that some may not like.

SOUND 69%

Very few sound effects. No music.

ADDICTIVENESS 90%

A really compelling puzzler that will have you returning for more.

LASTABILITY 95%

Those who like this genre will be sure to complete it in no time at all.

**OVERALL
85%**

DARKULA 64



Author: **Locomalito**
Released: **2022**

Even the top astronomy boffins have been telling us of late - we are polluting the night sky with so much light that we are losing the ability to see stars. But the night doesn't just belong to the celestial bodies; the ghouls, demons and monsters all thrive in the all-engulfing darkness. Coinciding with the industrialisation of every corner of the planet, sightings and superstitions of the supernatural have faded. The last remnants all work in a fairground, and even those poor creatures have forgotten what it's like to be alive under a starlit sky. They are shadows of their former selves. However, on this very evening, Darkula has hatched a genius plan - he intends to remove the hundreds of bulbs that light up the park. If he's successful, tonight will belong to the monsters. *Darkula 64* is a single-screen



Above: Tree top action! *Darkula* features some gorgous sprites and colours.



ladders and levels arcade game where the premise is simple - dodge the enemies and collect the bulbs. Each stage contains five floors which are accessed via various ladders. There are fixed-path baddies, pain-in-the-ass bats that bounce all over the play area, and roving skeletons that cast their bones at you. There are two



ways to play this game: 1 - make a mad dash for it and collect the bulbs on the fly, or 2 - take the bulbs in the order they flash for a higher bonus (similar to *Bomb Jack*). Naturally, the latter is challenging to achieve but ultimately more rewarding when you manage to do so. Each level provides a fresh challenge from the previous,



Review by Gordon King

Gordon



CRITICISM

I've never played the original PC version of this game, but this adaptation is a cheery and very competent title. The spirit of what makes an arcade game good is captured very well, and it makes you determined to play again and again. It's not very fairground-like - I don't know if the names of the areas have been lost in translation, but the levels themselves don't seem to convey this either. Would I say it gets a bit repetitive? Yeah, it does, as the level design doesn't make it interesting enough for me. The music, unfortunately, is the game's biggest downfall - it lacks any melody and is more just a series of cacophonous blips.

Colin



CRITICISM

If you love platform arcade titles then *Darkula 64* is for you. Its fast and frantic action makes for challenging and at times frustrating gameplay. I love the big bold graphics which remind me of early CPC titles, and I have to agree the music becomes irritating after a while. Still, if you're after a bit of classic arcade platform action then *Darkula 64* ticks all the boxes.

with the difficulty curve ramping up in succession. The locations vary, and you can find yourself in inside and outside areas of the park (albeit most of them aren't very theme park named). The premise



never changes though - each level has the same mechanic, and there's just a graphical change and perhaps a new baddie to avoid. This shares this repeated level design with its arcade counterparts, where speed runs and high scores overshadow the sense of level progression. The timer gives a sense of that arcade urgency, and no one wants to be stuck on the same level when the clock reaches zero (I blame the appearance of Baron von Blubba in *Bubble Bobble* for that). Sadly, there are no prompting bosses in this game - *Darkula* only loses a life.

PRESENTATION 80%

Like any good arcade game, it's straight to the business of playing.

GRAPHICS 81%

Lovely use of colours and some rather nicely drawn sprites.

SOUND 65%

Ouch! Not overly nice on the ears.

ADDICTIVENESS 80%

It's addictive in terms of trying to be a better player at the game.

LASTABILITY 75%

This will depend on the nature of the player - some will find it a tad bit repetitive.

OVERALL
76%



Author: **Altanerus Dog**
Released: **2022**

What a difference a few months can make! Developer Altanerus Dog is back and has delivered a sequel to his last game, *Panda Raid Classic Cars*. Simply titled *Panda Raid II*, the game is thankfully a marked improvement on the original with improved gameplay and graphics. The plot is still the same; take on the race of your life and get to the finish line where your friends are supposedly waiting for a well earned dinner. - Wait? No beers this time!

As before, you're in control of your trusty Seat Panda as you race along a



Above: Hi-speed action with much improved scrolling and sprites.

seemingly endless straight road where tiny graphical blips in the distance suddenly appear in front of you as large vehicles, traffic cones, and some rather annoying spiky things. Thankfully the speed

of the game has also been improved meaning it's a lot easier to manoeuvre away from and around the aforementioned obstacles, which makes for more sympathetic and less frustrating gameplay.



At the top of the screen you can monitor your speed, how many crashes or failures you have before your car is wrecked, your current race position (which is out of twenty-five) and the time remaining in which you have to complete the current stage you're on. There is also the road-book, which displays a small directional arrow and acts as a sort of co-driver telling you which direction to move in next to avoid the oncoming obstacles.

Other new features



Review by Colin Bell



Colin



Graphically Panda Raid II has been given a welcome overhaul, with well drawn and colourful vehicle sprites and new background scenery. There's still no music present, and the only sounds to be heard are from when you smash into things and from your car's droning engine noise which sounds to me more like a plane rather than a car. Definitely far more playable and enjoyable than the first game. You'll find it a challenge to complete all fifteen stages but that's if you're willing to play it long enough.

CRITICISM

in Panda Raid II are the changing backgrounds and scrolling colour bars as you progress through



each of the fifteen different stages.

A different

vehicle also awaits you each stage which must be overtaken in order to ensure certain victory. Fail to overtake or get hit too many times and the race is over!



Ben



You can't complain when a sequel improves over the original in almost every way, and that is what Panda Raid II does. Your car is now much more responsive, and your chances of avoiding the oncoming obstacles are more balanced than they were in the first version. While this is still a very simple game, it's much more fun. Kudos to coder Altaneros for his efforts.

CRITICISM

PRESENTATION 75%

A decent digitised loading screen makes way for a simple menu and a much improved game screen.

GRAPHICS 73%

Greatly improved over those of the first game. Well drawn and colourful sprites are far more pleasing to the eye.

SOUND 25%

The droning sound of the car engine soon begins to grate on you.

ADDICTIVENESS 47%

Strangely enough, it has that one more go appeal.

LASTABILITY 52%

Only the diehards will want to play on and complete all the stages.

OVERALL 57%



Colin

CRITICISM

Paying homage to this Issue's cover, Colin Bell dons his cowl and cape and steps into the dangerous world of the Redhawk! A comic book-style graphic adventure game from Melbourne House.



Before we begin, let's just address the fact that actually this should be a review of *Redhawk*, the first game in the series by Melbourne House but it's not, instead it's of the sequel *KWAH!* Why? Because I got them the wrong way around. Released about six months after the first game, *KWAH!* sees the infamous *Redhawk* take on the evil Dr. Lee who apparently holds the secrets to *Redhawk*'s past. Desperate to learn about his past, Kevin - *Redhawk*'s alter ego - heads to the Lee

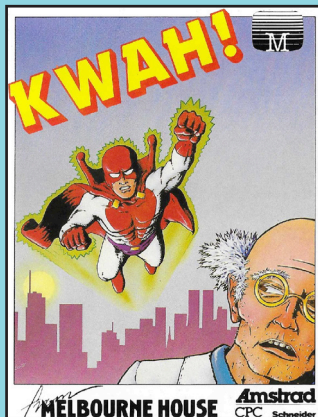
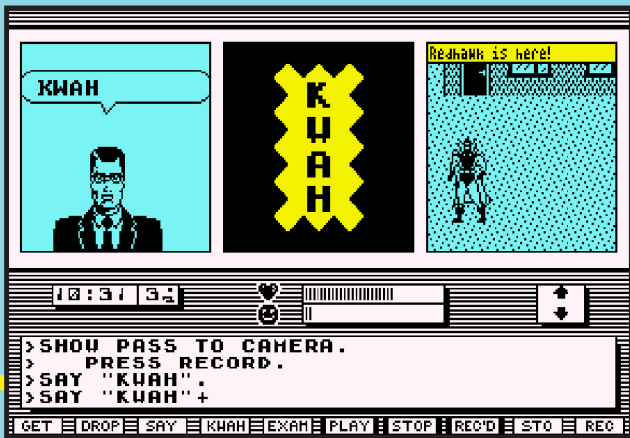
Rest and Rehabilitation Centre and this is where our adventure begins. Armed with only a press pass and trusty cassette recorder you've got to infiltrate the centre, find and free other super hero buddies to join your plight, learn about your own origins and then confront the dastardly Dr. Lee and bring him to justice.

The cassette recorder is one of the more clever features of the game and is used to record conversations and words which can in turn be used to solve puzzles later in the game. Guards are also common a hazard and generally require taking out, which is no problem to the *Redhawk*, but just don't forget to hide the bodies! By saying the magic word *KWAH!* you'll transform into the *Redhawk* which is key to solving many of the game's puzzles, as are the abilities of any other fellow heroes that have joined your cause.



KWAH! is an improvement on the first game with a better text parser, more dialogue, and a well thought out storyline. Sadly the CPC has to make do with a lazy Speccy port, but the graphics are decent and the screen layout, with the aid of speech bubbles, helps to capture the comic book look and feel.

The puzzles are all fairly logical and straightforward but you do sometimes have to think outside the box in order to solve them. Without doubt *KWAH!* is an intriguing and very original game. Along with *Redhawk* it very well may be one of the first ever comic book style adventure games to grace an 8-bit system and for that reason alone, it's worth checking out. But be prepared to put in the work as this a hardcore adventure that will require a lot of patience and willpower to finish.





ADVENTURON

mch

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In Your Browser

Targets ZX Spectrum,
ZX Spectrum NEXT and HTML

Tutorials Provided

<https://adventuron.io>

THE LOVER HALLS



You are in the lover halls of the great
Lover Hall.
Keeping your eyes down, you hear the lady
HERUSA standing before you. It appears that
she is not yet aware of your presence - tread
softly.

> I
You are carrying:
An Adamantine Sword
& Hesperus Shield
The Helm Of Aegis
The Saddle of Hennes (Down)

MISSILE COMMAND



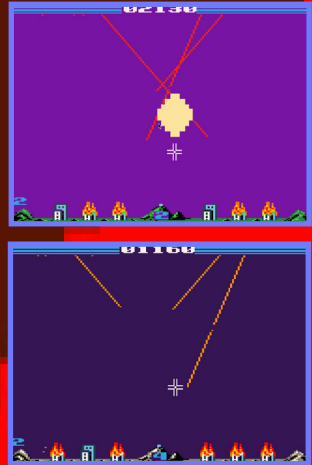
Author: **Ayor61**
Released: **2022**

Often overlooked as a groundbreaking arcade classic, Atari's *Missile Command* is a now-legendary coin-op game in the same vein as *Defender* or *Tempest*, and has been referenced multiple times in pop culture over the decades.

Want to know how John Connor learned his skills as the resistance leader against the machines? He played *Missile Command* of course! Remember the arcade scene in the *Terminator 2: Judgement Day* movie? Of course you do. But for such a famed

game, and much like the aforementioned *Defender*, an official version or port never made it on to the Amstrad CPC.

Yes, there were a few PD efforts along the way and of course Alternative Software's clone, *Aftermath*, which was released in 1988 but could never really be deemed official. Fast forward some thirty-five years however and to mark the 50th anniversary of the foundation of Atari in 1972, developer Ayor61 brings us a nice new version of the game for the CPC Plus systems. Still not official, true, but it has the title, the feel and definitely the look. *Missile Command*



by nature has a basic game layout, so there is nothing outstanding visually, but there really is no need. The still images and screens in this version are a joy to behold and fit the game perfectly. No wonder though, seeing

Chris



Again, the talented Titan takes on the artistic duties and unsurprisingly produces some fine work. A nice tune plays on the title screen and it does replicate that arcade-style feel. The cursor used to target moves responsively and smoothly, it's a hardware sprite, and can be controlled with the D-pad accurately, which is the all-important factor in the gameplay. Everything is clearly defined and kept basic, which was the right choice. But, twenty levels pass very quickly, and after a few practices, you will find you can finish the game with ease. It's pleasantly presented and fulfils expectations for an arcade conversion. Ultimately, it's a quick feel-good homage blast which doesn't really utilise the Plus hardware.

CRITICISM

as they were done by Eric Cubizolle aka Titan. The title screen alone is epic and captures the atmosphere perfectly. In terms of the gameplay Ayor61 has done a great job

Gordon



Missile Command is immediately identifiable, and even if you hadn't played this classic - you will pick up the concept in moments and be defending your cities like Matthew Broderick vs WOPR. There may have been many Missile Command adaptations for the CPC, but this is a delight to be released for the short-lived GX4000. The more games for that underdog of a system, the merrier. As far as a defence game goes, this version does what it says on the tin. It delivers the same frantic-paced arcade action as expected, and the difficulty ramps up with each new stage. The colour changes to the skyline do their best to break up the feeling of repetitiveness, but in the end, it is Missile Command - the game where you have to prevent missiles from destroying your cities. It's not going to win high accolades, but it certainly delivers a bit of nostalgia for arcade gamers who fondly remember this era of gaming.

CRITICISM



Above: Burn baby burn! Building inferno!

and the game plays really well. My only minor gripe is that I would have preferred the tracking line for your missile shots to be displayed like they were in the arcade original, but instead we are given a quick shot and a single familiar blast radius to catch the incoming fire.

While basic, the cityscape and surrounding hills are nicely drawn and the animation of the fire burning down one of your buildings looks spot on. That all being said however, does this version have the heart?

PRESENTATION 60%

Lovely promo artwork covers and excellently-drawn full screen images. Arcade style, which is welcome.

GRAPHICS 70%

Lots of work has gone into the detailed loading screens. More vector-style lines would have been more visually pleasing.

SOUND 72%

Whizzes and bangs for missiles and explosions, nice sound effects overall, and a great tune at the start.

ADDICTIVENESS 70%

It's a game which you can pick up and play quickly, that blast of nostalgia fuelling the play. Doesn't get to be much of a challenge though.

LASTABILITY 35%

After the novelty wears off, it's a short game and will not take long for seasoned CPC gamers to finish. Low replayability.

OVERALL 61%

DRUID & DROID

Author: Leosoft
Released: 2022

Taking a not-so-sly dig at the current state of the real world's climate issues, developer Leosoft brings to the Amstrad CPC a fine little game involving the unlikely pairing of a mystical druid and a robot from the future.

Concepts of games often encroach on the bizarre, with usually no acceptable reason. However, a lot of work has gone into this to create a backstory and a reason for this duo to team up. The druid in question is sent back in time to gain the wisdom from the druid, before the world went to hell, and together they will embark on a journey to solve the world's future problems. However, they have to prepare for the task and this is where the player comes in. Using a highly functional and simple control system and set at Stonehenge, you are

tasked to collect the correct items the two protagonists require before their journey, but along the

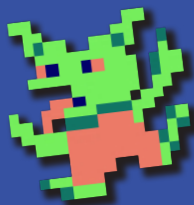


way they must avoid enemies and make sure to only gather the items they need; picking up each other's will result in damage to oneself.

Without a doubt

this is a lovely concept with a unique style, and I found this to be a very enjoyable yarn. I also have to give extra praise to the developer for the imagination and





Chris



A colourful title screen, an excellent menu screen with tons of options, an introduction mode which doubles as a guide, and a game screen which, while using a base template, adapts to each level design remarkably well. Use of split rasters makes things more pleasing to the eye, also. Graphics are not where the strength of this game lies, however; it's the addictive gameplay and the ingeniously catchy and clever music. You move each character independently, and switch between the two by holding fire. It's a simple system, but works so well towards the aim of the game. It's something to easily pick up and play, but also gets progressively tougher. A well-judged difficulty curve, and something all ages can appreciate. Separated into seven missions with seven levels each, there is plenty to keep you returning. Finally, a special mention to the music. Using the strengths of the AY chip, it actually creates an atmosphere for the game, and tells part of the story in its own right, with a blend of smooth, mystery tones offset by electronic blips and beeps. Well thought out and well designed, this fully deserves its 4th spot in CPC RetroDev.

CRITICISM



Gordon



The first thing that stands out in *Druid and Droid* is its insanely unique Mode 1 visual style. It looks like no other game and sets a bespoke mood due to this originality. I think it's bloody brilliant. However, looks aren't everything, and a measure of decent gameplay is critical. Thankfully, *D&D* delivers a challenging symbiotic reaction arcade game. Think *Tapper on acid and steroids* - you may come close to imagining this title. It's rather odd, but I kind of like that.

CRITICISM

detailed presentation that they have put into this title. They clearly have an eye for appearances, and *Druid*

& *Droid* really pulls this off well. The style of the game could be considered somewhat rudimentary but it's pleasant visuals that have been elected for here, and it's consistent throughout. Yet another fine game to out of the CPC RetroDev.

PRESENTATION 87%

Loading screens, extensive menus, game modes and an intro demo. Great stuff.

GRAPHICS 70%

Limited colours, mode 1, very little depth but well defined and perfectly suited to the action.

SOUND 86%

Six effects are minimal, but lots of short between-level noises and jingles, and game tracks are good.

ADDICTIVENESS 90%

Easy to get into. A well-judged difficulty curve and excellent controls make for a game that's memorable.

LASTABILITY 70%

49 levels and a challenge mode, there is lots of getting on with for most gamers.

OVERALL 86%



Author: **F. Alcaucer**
Released: **2022**

Ah, the turn-based artillery genre, more specifically *Gorillas* for MS-DOS - a game responsible for you handing in your college coursework late. Never was there something so simple but so addictive. *Worms* may have commercialised the genre further, but it's the original *Gorillas* game that is most fondly remembered. So it's great to finally see an Amstrad CPC adaptation of this concept, one in which you can play with up to 4 friends or a CPU opponent. For those who have lived under a rock all these years, the premise is simple; each player has a squad of four soldiers, and they take a turn trying to (accurately) throw grenades to lower the energy of their opponents. The randomly generated battle environment is strewn with trees and lethal land-mines, so it's much easier trying to get to a vantage place and



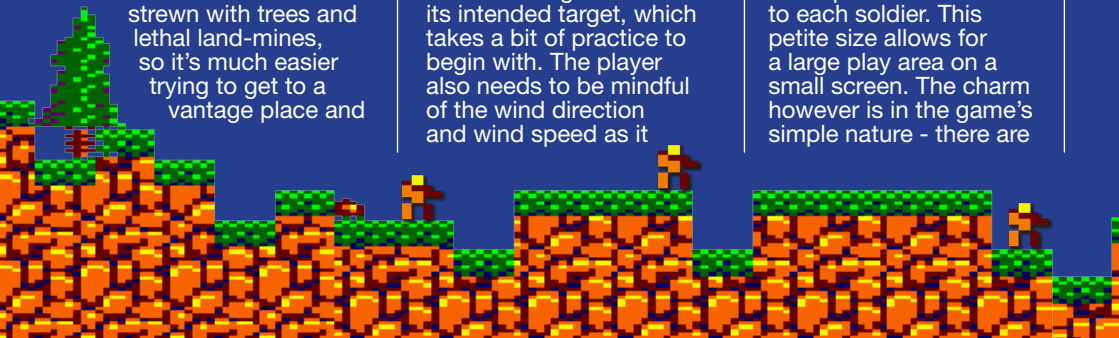
Above & Below: Ready, aim, fire! Carefully position your soldier, take aim and fire. With any luck you might hit an enemy soldier.



try and suss the strength and trajectory required to make the grenade hit its intended target, which takes a bit of practice to begin with. The player also needs to be mindful of the wind direction and wind speed as it

influences the parabolic curve of the throw.

More often than not, poor aiming results in some hilarious mishaps and friendly fire. The victorious team is the player with the last man standing - albeit shell-shocked and war-weary. Like with *Worms*, the sprites are tiny, with only a few pixels dedicated to each soldier. This petite size allows for a large play area on a small screen. The charm however is in the game's simple nature - there are



Gordon



There's a primal charm to these old-school artillery games; it's no different than trying to throw a stone at a signpost when we were kids (there's a statute of limitations on this, right?). There's a deep satisfaction when you have a direct hit. So, even with basic graphics and ultimately repetitive gameplay, each play-through is utterly compelling. It may be repetitive - each game has random terrain and soldier placements, and there's no way a player can be deadly accurate with their throws - so there is not one game that's the same. So how does this game fare for the CPC? It may not appeal to all, as with its stripped-back feel, it may feel lacking. Games of this genre have evolved leaps and bounds over the years, and being in this raw form may not be enough. I had good fun with it, but I did play it with a friend. It plays well, but it's not breaking any new ground.

CRITICISM

Colin



It's been a long time since I've played a turn based artillery game, the last being Worms on my Commodore Amiga. So it was a pleasant surprise to come across Tiny Deathmatch for the CPC which recaptured so many of those fond memories. Sure, this is nowhere near as polished as Worms, in fact it's nothing like it, but the gameplay elements are essentially the same and had this been released by a software house back in the day, it would have been massive. The addition of a 4-player mode is also a great addition. It needs a little refinement but overall Tiny Deathmatch is good fun and very entertaining.

CRITICISM

no multiple weapons, no varying terrain to adjust your eyes to, and it's a quick turnaround between shots with the timer mode on.

As with any game like this, the A.I. experience is limited and playing this with a group of mates is, by far, the best way to get maximum enjoyment out of it. There's nothing better than the banter, goading and general laughter when playing against each other on a computer. The



Above: The random landscape generator. Don't like it? Then simply change it.



box should come with a warning label in bold writing - *Tiny Deathmatch* requires real-world friends to play!

PRESENTATION 69%

There's no fanfare to this game. What you see is what you get.

GRAPHICS 68%

Small, colourful, very basic, but functional.

SOUND 60%

Just basic sounds nothing fancy to be found here.

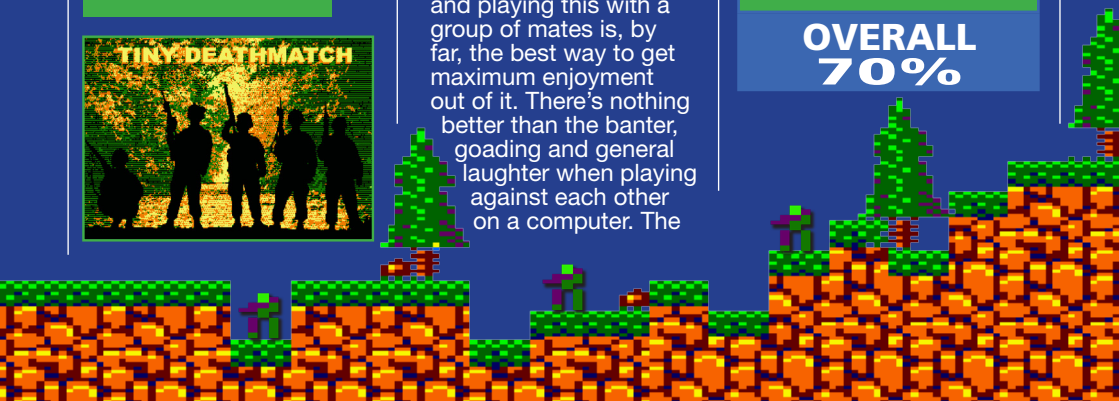
ADDICTIVENESS 80%

The game's strongest feature - it is one of those titles that can consume hours of your time.

LASTABILITY 79%

If you have mates who love a good multiplayer battle - this will be a regular game. With A.I., possibly not.

OVERALL 70%



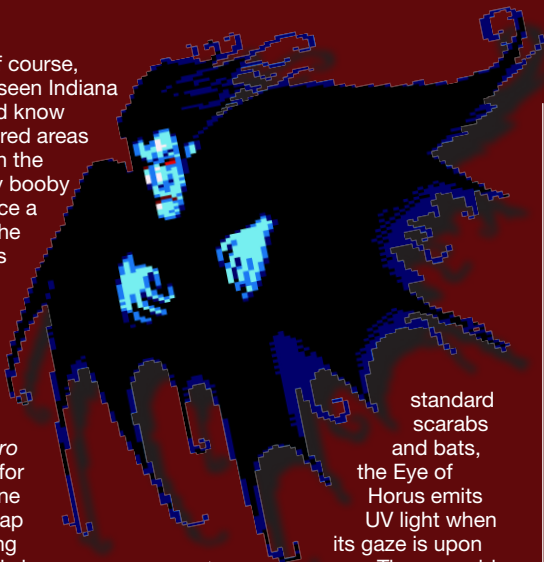
Author: **The Mojon Twins**
Released: 2023

The mystery of the pyramids has lured intrepid explorers for many centuries. It was only a matter of time until the creatures of the night cast their eyes upon such a place. Everyone's favourite vampire has decided to seek out his fortunes, risking the scalding desert sun (factor 666, I hope) and reaching the great pyramid rumoured to contain the legendary papyrus. His first quest is getting inside the place - you surely didn't think the front door was wide open like a Tesco Local? After a bit of tomb raiding (step aside, Miss Croft), it turns out that the papyrus was torn in quarters, and *Ramiro* has a little mission to undertake if he is to reunite all the fragments. There are guardians to each crypt where the pieces of papyrus lie, and these age-old Egyptian monsters have needs like ordinary, everyday citizens. It becomes a bit of a fetch quest for *Ramiro*, and if he fulfils their demands with the items they desire, they will open the way to their respective

crypts. Of course, we've all seen Indiana Jones and know these sacred areas come with the obligatory booby traps. Once a piece of the papyrus is collected, the traps are

triggered, and *Ramiro* must run for his life. One notable trap is the rising water - this is genuinely stressful while you are frantically ascending to avoid being drowned. The antechambers are also fraught with dangers; aside from the

standard scarabs and bats, the Eye of Horus emits UV light when its gaze is upon you. The pyramid environment is an excellent location for a labyrinthian platform game as it lends itself to dead ends and treacherous leaping.



Above: The adventure begins! Scale the dizzying heights of the ancient pyramids and appease the guardians that lie within.

Gordon



CRITICISM

The Ramiro games have been an enjoyable series and, up until now, perhaps a little pedestrian. This fourth adventure is by far the strongest and most enjoyable to date. The level design is solid and gives breathing space for immersive exploring. I have never been a fan of the floaty jumping mechanic, and it's never more evident than right at the outset with the frustrating gap you need to traverse to open the Pyramid entrance. Casting this quibble aside, everything else in the game is remarkable. The graphics are colourful and detailed, the overall difficulty balance is top-notch, and the accompanying music is rather jolly. You can sense the love put into crafting the game, and it's by far the best Ramiro game out there.

The Egyptian theme evokes exploratory wanderlust, which is a core gameplay element of a quality game in this genre. As with the previous Ramiro outings, the game contains various limerick riddles that give clues as to what items the guardians are looking for. Some of those may not be suitable for younger children



Colin



CRITICISM

I enjoyed the previous Ramiro title that we reviewed last issue but this one takes things to a whole new level. It looks gorgeous, plays well, and features some fine elements of gameplay. One in particular is having to escape some flooding chambers and reach the surface which is tense, frustrating at times, but a great challenge. Yes, the jumping mechanic takes a bit getting used to but I rather like it. Kudos to the Mojon Twins, by far the best Ramiro yet.

due to the adult content. Fans of the previous titles in the series will be right at home on how to play this game effectively and will also be familiar with the floaty jump controls.



PRESENTATION 84%

A very polished title. Another fine effort from the Mojon Twins.

GRAPHICS 85%

Plenty of variety of sprites and gloriously colourful.

SOUND 75%

A pleasant tune, and some nice sound effects.

ADDICTIVENESS 86%

The compelling nature of finding out what's inside each crypt will keep you coming back.

LASTABILITY 80%

With a reasonable difficulty curve, this is no five-minute fix

OVERALL 82%

CALLING ALL THE ALTERNATE CPC



HEROES!



The Amstrad CPC saw many super heroes grace its screen over the years, many of which were well known. But what about the unsung heroes? Those lesser-known individuals who risked life and limb, all in the name of justice or some other wacky cause? Lets find out...

BOMB JACK!

Soaring onto our small screens first it's *Bomb Jack*, the excellent arcade port from Elite Systems. Take on the role of tiny caped crusader Jack, who's out to save the world from a rather strange bunch of invaders who've planted explosive bombs at various major landmarks. In what is essentially a single screen platformer, Jack leaps and bounds around the screen in a bid to collect all the red bombs in order to progress to the next level. In your way are a

whole host of nasty invader types who'll do their utmost to prevent you from completing your task. Bonus points can be obtained by collecting the fizzing bomb first and then all the subsequent fizzing bombs thereafter. Like all good super heroes Jack

does have the odd trick up his sleeve such as the 'P' disk that, when



collected, turns all enemies into smiling



Article by Colin Bell





yellow faces that earn you bonus points and rid you of that enemy for a short while.

Graphically the game is well-detailed, and for an early CPC title the developer has made great use of the of the system's colour palette. So good they even gave it a sequel, ultimately *Bomb Jack* is a very addictive title that captures the gameplay of the arcade original perfectly.

SUPERKID!

New York is at breaking point! The city is riddled with crime, forcing citizens young and old off the



streets. Sadly the police are nowhere to be seen and the mayor is desperate for someone who has the power to stop the gang menace. Wait! Is it a bird? Is it a plane?

No it's Tom Essex aka *Superkid!* With his powers of flight and super strength, he is on a mission to clean



Above: Take to the skies and rescue the poor damsels in distress. Don't forget to deal with the rocket pack hooligans, however!



up these mean streets. Split into three areas of the city, Superkid must rescue young damsels in distress and escort elderly citizens safely back to their rest homes. By daytime this task is fairly easy but once the day turns into the night the gangs become more vicious, making your task that bit more difficult.

For a budget title *Superkid* is well made and looks the



part with its colourful graphics and decent sprites. There isn't much in the way of music or sound effects, but the gameplay is solid and I can remember playing this one for hours as a kid.

Why our kid hero has grey hair is a mystery, but overall *Superkid* is great fun and captures the essence of being a super hero really well.

PHANTOM CLUB!



Phantom Club is perhaps one of Ocean Software's lesser known or remembered titles, and is seen as the unofficial sequel to *Movie*.

In what is essentially an exclusive club for super heroes you play Plutus, the only member of the club who hasn't succumbed to the influences of the evil overlord Zarg. Starting off as a mere Zelator, you must ascend the ranks to the level of Ipsisimus, for only then will you have the right to challenge Zarg and bring him

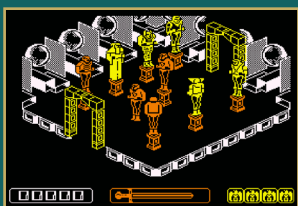


from his head to dispatch their pests. So with a whopping 550 isometric style rooms to explore and a whole plethora of puzzles to solve this super hero caper, you would think, should be the ultimate arcade adventure, but it's not, and

here's why. To ascend the ranks you must complete missions, and in order to access a mission you must first rack up a rather massive 40,000 points. Now you'd think this was straightforward enough but with baddies to shoot that only grant you 50 points per kill this very quickly becomes a tedious endeavour. Missions



down a peg or two. You'll also bump into many of Plutus's former colleagues along the way who'll do their utmost to hinder your progress and



generally just be a downright nuisance. Thankfully, however, Plutus has his special 'Brainstorm' power at his disposal which he can use to fire a deadly psychic bolt



hours exploring and mapping all the 550 rooms, that's kind of it, there isn't much else to do and sadly the allure of the exclusive club begins to lose its appeal.

Phantom Club basically suffers from being far too big, but if you're a diehard fan of exploration games and have plenty spare time then maybe you'll be brave enough to give this one a try.



SUPER GRAN!



Stand back *Superman*, *Ice Man*, *Spiderman*, *Batman* & *Robin*, too! Yes, it's everyone's favourite Scottish granny, *Super Gran!* A television hit from the 80s, *Super Gran* follows the adventures of a grandmother who, after being hit by a magic ray created by Professor Black, gains super powers which she uses to protect the citizens of Chiselton from the dastardly Scunner Campbell!

Software house Tynesoft were responsible for two *Super Gran* games, a text

tend to be repetitive as well, and will usually only involve having to shoot a particular object or character, such as Psi-man who projects himself on screen in the form of a bird and is a bugger to shoot down.

And then, once you've spent many





adventure and an action game, the latter of which appeared on the CPC. Split into four levels, you take on the role of our elderly protagonist who, amongst other things, must fly over Chiselton on her fly-cycle shooting down other enemy fly-cycles, strap on her anti-gravity belt and traverse the scrolling streets rescuing poor moggies from being run over by cars, and then race along an ever-winding road, avoiding old Scunner while escorting the professor to the local science exhibition

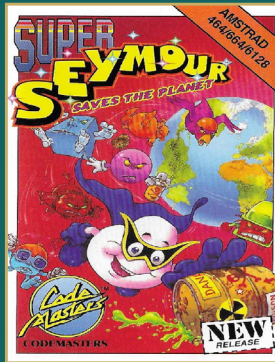


where he plans to display his new invisibility ray. Phew! But wait! There is one last level to go, a frantic single screen platformer in which you have to reach the top in order to retrieve the now stolen invisibility ray. Be quick though, for the water level below you is rising fast!

All in a days work for this 'Serious Granny' who's got more bottle than united dairies! Okay, so it's very basic and yes, it has flickery sprites but it holds a special place in my heart as it's one of the first titles I ever played on the CPC and I love it!



SUPER SEYMOUR!



There was a time in the early 90s where being environmentally conscious was the 'in' thing and to cash on this, many software houses



came up with their take on what it was to be green! Codemasters were no different and took their new hero, Seymour, and turned him into an eco-



friendly pollution busting powerhouse that even Greta Thunberg would be proud of.

In what is essentially a *Bomb Jack* clone, Seymour must rid the world of deadly toxic waste by collecting all the objects, usually metal barrels, located on a single screen. Just like the bombs in *Bomb Jack* the barrels ignite, and collecting them in fizzling order offers up bonus points. In Seymour's way are various weird and wonderful mutants whom he must stomp on to kill. Graphically the game isn't too shabby but the colour scheme leaves a lot to be desired. The graphics are enhanced slightly if playing on a 128K machine, a regular feature of many CPC titles released towards the end of the system's life.

As with most of the arcade style games that Codemasters created with its more popular characters, *Super Seymour* suffers from a lack of variety and becomes very repetitive. Still, if ever we needed a super hero like Seymour cleaning up the planet it would be today!





AMTIX!
CPC





DOCTOR DOOM'S REVENGE!

In our Second 'Flash Back' for this issue, and sticking with our heroes theme, Ben Honebone looks back at the gorgeous looking Dr. Doom's Revenge by Empire, a comic book style VS fighter.



Ben



I'm afraid it really is all too good to be true. Dr Doom's Revenge is one of the best-looking CPC games, but that's where the party ends. The combat is sluggish, with terrible hit detection, and the only challenge it presents is that of actually controlling your hero. The sound is non-existent, save for some unpleasant crunches. While all this is a crying shame, I still have a soft spot for this game. It looked incredible back when it was released, and even though it plays terribly, it still left a lasting impression - a victory of style over substance.

CRITICISM

On its release in 1990, *Dr Doom's Revenge* was an exciting prospect. Not only did it feature our beloved Marvel comic-book heroes, but it also came in a gorgeous 'big-box' format, complete with a collectors comic book and



'Superhero Handbook'. We all know that the real draw was the jaw-dropping graphics for our humble CPC. Those screenshots filled us with anticipation. They were clearly better than the Speccy's efforts for this particular game and gave the C64 a run for its money with



a brighter, more 'comic-book' colour palette. Was it all too good to be true?

Dr Doom and his gang of silly named villains are doing villainous things involving experiments, explosions, and stuff that generally threatens the safety of everyone. No surprise there, then. You take control of Captain America and Spiderman to thwart Dr Doom's evil plans. You'll be



taking on ten opponents; eight super-villains (Rhino, Machete, Zaran, Lobo, Boomerang, Batroc, Oddball, and Dr Doom), and two generic robots in what is essentially a 1v1 fighting game on single-screen stages. Each fight is punctuated by impressive-looking comic-book screens, which convey events



leading up to the battle.

Our superheroes have access to their trademark powers, with Captain America able to throw his shield at opponents, and Spiderman is able to shoot a limited amount of webs and hang from the ceiling to avoid attacks. Other than that, it's just a standing punch or kick or a crouching kick. Positioning yourself at the correct distance from your opponent, then crouching and hammering the fire button is the order of the day here, and your various opponents don't stand much of a chance against you (or this tactic). Other than Rhino's charge attack and Oddball's annoying acrobatics, they're all easy meat for the Super Hero grinder.

CRASH & ZZAP 64 ARE THE SUPERIOR 8 BIT MAGAZINES... HA HA HA HA HA!.....

DREAM ON DOOM!

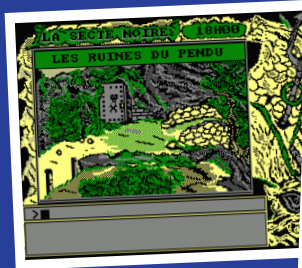


In the latest of this regular series, Graeme Mason looks back at six more of his favourite Amstrad CPC game covers from a particular year. In this issue, he focuses on the year 1990.



Game: La Secte Noire
Publisher: Lankhor

This game from French publisher Lankhor translates as The Black Sect, which sounds delightfully cheery. Set within an idyllic French village, the titular sect is terrorising the locals, and they've asked the player to retrieve a stolen magical book from the religious zealots. *La Secte Noire* was the first cover I chose for this issue – as soon as I saw it, I had to include it, such is its evocative power. A robed member of the sect stands in the foreground, penitently observing whatever foul god they worship. To their right rests the ruins of a church, its summit holding the moon in an invisible grip. A dark, evil-looking tree spikes upward to the left, disappearing against the night sky, except for two branches highlighted by the moon. It's a moody and elegaic image that eloquently hints at the many dangers awaiting the player.



Game: Wings Of Fury
Publisher: Broderbund

I feel sorry for Stateside fans of this game, who got a cartoon-style cover that pales compared to this excellent piece of work. *Wings Of Fury* is more shoot-'em-up than serious flight simulation, and that's made pretty apparent from the cover. The location for this action-packed image is an aircraft carrier, its cannons spitting fire as crew members rush across its deck. But that's the backdrop; as you'll have noticed, the central part of this image is the fantastic fighter plane that's bearing down on the viewer. Although I cannot confirm its historical accuracy, I love the plane's anthropomorphic properties. Two flared and insane eyes brace the engine cowlings, and the smile beneath is red and white, suggesting this murderous aircraft has just enjoyed a bloody meal. A squadron of planes is behind it – are they chasing or following? Is the plane attacking or defending the carrier? Who knows, but it's a stunning picture nonetheless.

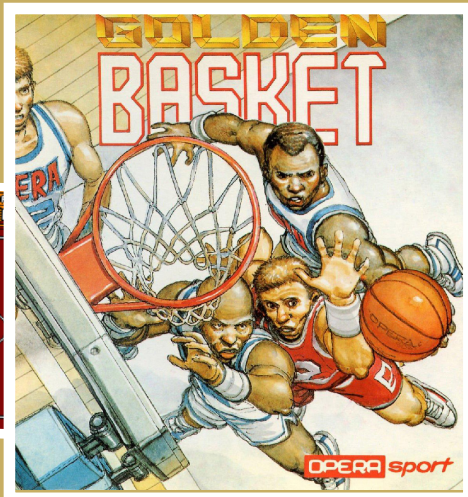


Game: Golden Basket
Publisher: Opera Soft

Time to move away from religious cults and World War II sea battles to the more friendly scene of a basketball court. Well, I say friendly; looking at the expressions on

the four basketball players on this cover, this looks more like a snarky grudge match than a sociable afternoon with mates. As regular readers of this series will know, I love it when an artist conjures

a unique perspective. Here, we are looking down from above the basket as three players battle for the ball. It's difficult to discern who's defending and attacking – either way, all the players are beautifully rendered, their faces grimly focused and determined. Published by Opera Soft – under its Opera Sport brand – *Golden Basket* is an excellent 5-on-5 basketball simulation that's well worth checking out whether you are a fan of the sport or not.



Game: Grand Prix Circuit
Publisher: Accolade

Next up, I'm sticking with the world of sport but an entirely different type of cover. This Accolade racing simulation is undoubtedly a looker in the graphics department, although some jerky scrolling rather lets the side down once the race gets started. The publisher opted for a photo instead of the usual artwork for its cover.

Glamorous women have long been associated with the sport of F1, so it seems appropriate that we should have a winsome young lady dominating this cover. All

putting lips and long blonde hair, she's observing the race with a somewhat disinterested and insouciant air. The photographer has brilliantly caught the racing cars in the reflection of her bright yellow sunglasses, and somehow, this simple photo portrays the glamour, speed and heat of an F1 race better than any picture of racing cars ever could.



Game: Rescate En El Golfo
Publisher: Opera Soft

Rescate En El Golfo is another game from Spanish publisher Opera Soft. Its title translates to 'Rescue In The Gulf', and once I'd gotten over the fact this wasn't another sports simulation, I had fun with this beat-'em-up. There's a real-world frisson to its theme: Iraqi terrorists have hijacked a plane, and one of the passengers is the protagonist's girlfriend. What a coincidence that this game was released in 1990, just as the first Gulf War was erupting! As with most Opera Soft games, there's an excellent comic book-style cover to *Rescate En El Golfo*. The Rambo-like hero takes centre stage, and it looks like he's already rescued his girlfriend and is trying to make good their escape. The jumbo jet looms behind them, shrouded by a sullen and appropriately crimson sky. But my favourite part is the villain, his steely gaze portraying his grim determination perfectly.

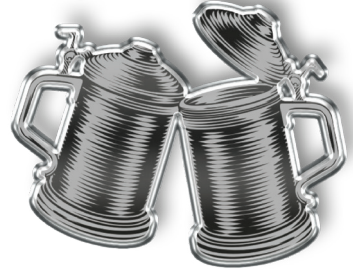


Game: Stormlord II: Deliverance
Publisher: Hewson

Finally for this issue, we have the busy and magnificent cover of Hewson's *Stormlord* sequel, *Deliverance*. I was never a fan of these games (sorry, Raf!) as I found them a bit too tricky for my poor gaming skills, but I adore this finely detailed illustration that adorns its cover. The central figure is the player's Viking-esque character, his gnarly face housed within a gloriously flowing blonde beard. Stormlord is rescuing fairies again, and if you look closely, there's one to the right, bound tightly to a rocky outcrop. Evil green goblins surround the hero as he attempts to free the fairy, and their hatred for each other is palpable. *Stormlord* holds one goblin aloft, its face pained as he crushes its throat while its colleagues look on nervously. Lightning arches down, lending the scene a mystical vibe, and I feel that that axe will not remain shiny and clean for much longer...



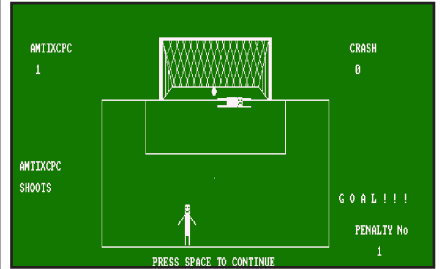
Interview Special



welcome back, fellow fans of CPC adventure, and a very happy new year to you all! We kick off proceedings this year with something rather special for you all, an exclusive interview with Greek author Sakis Kaffesakis. Sakis has been responsible for several CPC text adventures over the last few years, including *Budrumi*, *Art War* and *Battle of Leningrad*. An active member of the CPC scene, I caught up with Sakis to discuss his love for adventure games and the Amstrad CPC.

Colin Bell: Welcome to the AMTIXCPC Tavern Sakis! When did you first come across the Amstrad CPC, and what systems, if any, did you have before it?

Sakis Kaffesakis: Thank you! It's great to be here. It was around 1990, when my aunt bought my older brother and me an Amstrad CPC 6128 with a colour monitor. At the time, we also had a Game Boy and a NES. A close friend of mine who was living in the same apartment building also had a CPC 6128, with a green monitor, so we exchanged disks very often and tried to learn how we make copies using discology or ICPM disks. That's when we opened the Amstrad handbook for the first time. Then, I tried programming in the late 90s (when I was 15-17 years old), and I had managed to make two programmes: one that was similar to *"Heads or Tails"* (with a cheating option activated by pressing a secret combination with the joystick!) and another game similar to



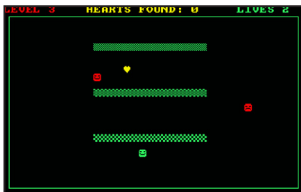
Above: The rather excellent Penalty Kicks.

"Penalty Kicks". Then, unfortunately, the drive belt had the usual problems, both for me and my friend, so we were unable to work with the Amstrad again. Due to my love for the Amstrad, I kept it in a storage room. I started dealing with the Amstrad again in 2016, when I discovered the emulators, and I managed to fix my old machine again in 2021!



CB: What made you want to write an adventure of your own?

SK: To be completely honest, I have played very few text adventure games. I am not a professional programmer, my knowledge is very limited, and most times I try to find a clever idea for a game that can be created despite my limited knowledge. If you try my games, you will realize this, and I have to say that in almost all my games, there is no character movement (except for the “Heart Chaser” series, with which I



Above: Collect the hearts and avoid those red faces in Heart Chaser 2.

tried to experiment and develop my abilities in that field). So, as I was running out of ideas, I thought that I could try to make a text adventure game, using just images, some text, and multiple choice questions, based on a story. Through this, I found out that creating a text adventure can offer a lot of fun even for the creator.

CB: What inspired your love of interactive fiction and adventure games?

SK: I believe that, in general, creating something is much more fun than “consuming” it. The creative process activates many elements of your character, which sometimes you don’t even know exists. Creating a detailed story makes you use your imagination and I believe that the most fun part in making a text adventure game begins when you have already created a basic story,

and you then start adding all of the fun extras. At this point, you are not anxious about fulfilling the goal of making the game, and the ideas for improving it or adding fun things such as clever puzzles.

CB: What were the inspirations and influences that led to the creation of the games you have written?

SK: Great question! I remember that the reason for creating “Penalty Kicks” was my love for “Match Day II”. “Match Day II” did not have a penalty kicks option when a match ended in a draw, and you just had to play the game again. So, why not create a game where you were able to just do the penalty kicks! As for “Capital Quiz”, I used to often play a game with my brother where we had to learn all the world’s capital cities and we then tested each other in remembering them. “Stroopie” was inspired by a lecture on cognitive psychology (perceptions, optical illusions, etc) at the University of Crete, as I have also explained in the game. “Retro-Loadsheet” (which isn’t a game, but rather a program which tries to calculate the weight and balance data of an aircraft so that it is safe for take-off) has to do



Above: Escape the prison and your captors in Budrumi!

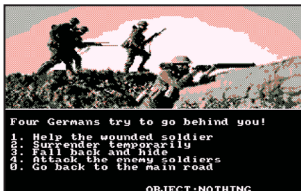
with my job at the airport where I worked for many years. “Budrumi” was inspired by a Greek TV series

called “Agries Melisses” (“Wild



Above: Art War! Retrieve the stolen painting and return it to the ASU.

Bees”), that described the difficult life of poor farmers in the 50s, 60s and 70s in Greece. In “Art War”, I thought that I could make a Cold War-like story, while in “Battle of Leningrad” I was influenced



Above: Get the much-needed supplies to the people in Battle of Leningrad.

by documentaries and historical books that I had read about this battle, which isn’t as famous as other battles.

CB: Was writing the game in English, not your native language, a challenge?

SK: Yes! It actually was quite a challenge. My English is not perfect, so it was tough to make the story and the multiple choices in English in my first text adventure “Budrumi”. But then, I realized that it was easier for me to make the first edition in Greek and then translate it into English. I had to make a point of avoiding local fun words or local puns in the English edition, as that edition would be the basis for translating



the game into Spanish and French. A perfect example that shows clearly the difficulty in translating is my newest game "Amstaboo". It is available only in Greek and it is a classic Taboo game using the Amstrad platform, where I had to create the database of 110 words, as well as the 5 taboo words that must not be said for each one, myself. The words were selected so that they can offer fun and laughter for Greek players, but a direct translation to other languages would be a nightmare, as the connection between the words would end up unrelated and difficult to understand. That's why I added some instructions in the manual, so that if any person wants to try to make an edition in their language, he or she is free to do so.

CB: Are you the sole developer or do you have others that help you?

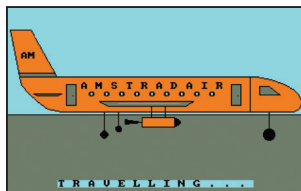
SK: I am the sole developer of all my games, except for the text adventure games. For the latter, I have to thank Manossg, who composes the music, proofreads the English versions and gives many new ideas. I have to mention that even though Manossg lives 10 km away from me, I actually met him on the internet through the CPCwiki forum! Also, I have to thank Roberto Carangelo and Miguelsky for their translations in French and Spanish, as without their help, the games would have been played by much fewer people. Also, Brundij helped us very much by dealing with the digitized images on our last game "Battle of Leningrad" and I believe that due to his contribution, the images were of much higher quality than in my previous games. I also have to mention Frederic Bezies

for testing all French translations, as well as Animalgri1987 and Skulleater for testing the games and giving us useful feedback. I have to mention also Phanee and Eleni who, even though they know nothing about Amstrad, have helped me with the trailers and with editing the English and French texts! At any case, I am impressed with how people can do such professional and good quality work, considering that we are all doing it for free, without any financial motive, due to our love for creation and the Amstrad.

CB: Am I right in saying all your games are written in BASIC?

SK: Yes, they are all in BASIC, as I don't know how to use any other language. The only non-BASIC element is, in the text adventure games, the Arkos Tracker for music, as the music is very important for text adventure games.

What I most enjoy in BASIC is drawing pictures, using the MOVE/DRAW/PLOT/FILL commands.



Above: One of the many pictures Sakis draws in BASIC.

This is the part that I most enjoy in programming. Even though you need quite a bit of space for a nice drawing (2-3 kb), I always try to include 1 or 2, especially in the text adventure games.

CB: Are there any other tools/editors did you use to create the games?

SK: Other than the Arkos tracker that

I mentioned earlier, I have used ConvmgCPC for converting the digitized images and Managedsk for importing files in the disk. I mostly use the Winape emulator. I also use the original Amstrad handbook a lot, in both Greek and English. I would like to add that I have received a lot of help in forums like CPCwiki or other Greek forums, and without that help, the games could have not been created.

CB: How long did it take you to develop the games?

SK: It depends on the type of game and on the free time I have available. Usually, when I start coding, I get quite addicted to it, so I tend to be quite quick. For a non-text adventure, I usually need 2-3 weeks, but for a text adventure I usually need more time (1-2 months). This happens due to the fact that we need time for the translations, extra testing etc, and also, I don't like to put pressure on all the other people involved, as this is a free project and everyone involved in the creation has to enjoy the process. This cannot happen if you tell them to hurry up – they have to be free to finish it when they have the time and inspiration.

CB: Were there any challenges developing the game for the Amstrad CPC?

SK: So many! I believe that problems in coding always occur, even if you are sure that you can make a game easily. I knew very few things five years ago, and there is still much I don't know. During the development process, I have learnt how to use the SYMBOL command, how to add images and



music, how to add a timer, how to make a character move and so much more. The good thing is that when you learn something, you can use it again in future projects.

CB: How have the games been received within the adventure community?

SK: I believe that my games may not have been played by too many people, but I think that whoever has played them has been fair in their evaluation. My games are simple and short, but I put in a lot of effort in order to make them without bugs, and to add some fun elements. I believe that my games are not of high quality, but they are carefully designed and they can offer fun to the player, so I believe that they enjoy them. Furthermore, they are all free!

In general, I am mostly proud of the fact that, despite my limited knowledge, I have managed to create some little games that have offered some enjoyment to the Amstrad fans.

CB: What advice would you give other developers looking to create their own adventure games?

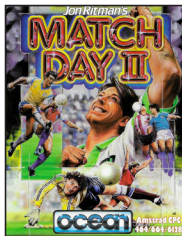
SK: I believe that creators should make a carefully designed plan of what they want to make during the first stages of creation. They must not try to do something beyond their abilities just to impress the public. First and foremost, a creator must enjoy the creating process. Secondly, they have to try to make something simple, that works nicely without bugs or problems. In addition, it is important to use all their imagination and creativity by adding a bit of fun and some clever elements. Furthermore, they

need to be respectful, not put any pressure on their partners, and just let everyone take their time. We are talking about free retro projects, after all!

CB: Do you have any more plans for any future adventure titles?

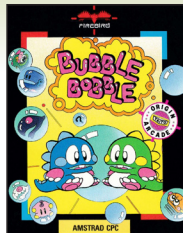
SK: I have to say that in almost all the games I have created, I feel that "this was my last game, I cannot think of any others to make". And suddenly an idea comes up and then, I start searching, designing and coding. For now, I don't have something planned, but I believe that an idea will come up soon. To be honest, it would be nice if we could co-operate with a person who is good at writing text adventure stories but, at the same time, can understand the technical limitations of programming and adjust all these for a story in a nice way.

CB: Favourite three Amstrad CPC games and why?



SK: My favourite game is definitely "Matchday II". I have spent hours playing it, alone or with friends, and I still play it. It is quite a slow game, but when I get used to it, I find that it has a calming effect on me. I also really like the headers in this game, and furthermore, the ways you can perform a quick counter-attack by pressing the kick button. I always play it on the "hard kicks" mode.

The second place of my favourites I think belongs to "Bubble Bobble". A classic, fun game, even when playing alone, though it is better with 2 players.



To be honest, I am not sure for the third place! Maybe "Gryzor", "Ping Pong" or "Army Moves"? I cannot decide! "Gryzor" is one of the best adventure games, in graphics, gameplay and difficulty. "Ping Pong" I still play on level 5 and it's really fun.

As for "Army Moves", I have spent far too many hours on it and I really enjoy it, especially the level when you are at the final house.

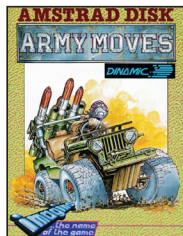
CB: Where can people find out more about you & your games?

SK: They can visit my website at <https://amstradsakis.blogspot.com>

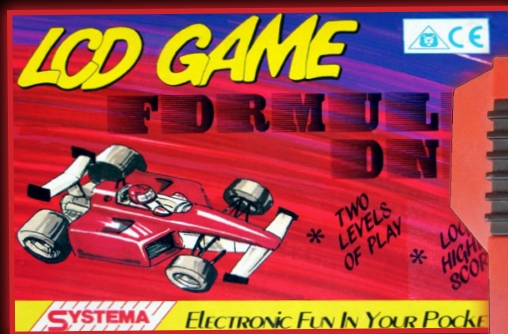
Or there is a twitter account at <https://twitter.com/AmstradSakis>

CB: Thanks for your time, Sakis!

SK: Congratulations on your great work with the magazine! I want to thank you very much for the invitation, as well as thank all the people for spending time to read this interview! Let's keep the Amstrad CPC alive!



LCD ON CPC



IF YOU WERE A CHILD OF THE 80S AND 90S THEN YOU'LL NO DOUBT HAVE OWNED OR COME ACROSS A HANDHELD LCD GAME. NOW THANKS TO CPC DEVELOPER ALTANEROS YOU CAN RELIVE SOME OF THESE CLASSICS ON YOUR CPC.

THE WACKY WORLD OF LCD GAMES

In the 1980s, layering a bunch of simple graphics on thin liquid crystal sheets and lighting them up in a preprogrammed sequence was the height of technology. Using the power of plastic, the video game equivalent of shadow puppets would keep gamers occupied while they were away from their computers. They were cheap, they were moderately fun, and they were everywhere.

The frontrunner in the world of LCD gaming was Tiger Electronics, but they

were far from the only ones in the business and some manufacturers, such as Radio Shack and SystemA, produced simple, pocket-sized games that used as few buttons as possible; ensuring their time killers were cheap to manufacture at pocket money prices.

With a simple logic circuit, a bleeper to produce a few sounds, and the same plastic housing produced in a variety of colours; it was possible to crank out game after game, to keep the kids occupied. In fact, the games were often so simple you could clone them on your computer if you wanted

to; which is what Altaneros has done for three of these classics.

SPACE RESCUE

It's raining men, hallelujah! You are part of an elite group of rescue rangers and your mission is to rescue all the spacemen who are leaping from a ship at the top of the screen. Catch each one in the back of your vehicle, or they will hit the ground and burst. You get three lives and if just one guy hits the ground, that's a life lost.

Occasionally a vehicle will appear on the edge of



the screen. Visit that vehicle to rack up extra points by rescuing more men. The longer you can stay docked, the more points you'll get but don't ignore the men falling from the sky because they'll keep falling while you're docked!

The game sounds simple because it really is. You have two controls: left and right, which is all you'll need. Control is via the cursor keys, while Space starts the game and A/B selects which game mode you want. Game A starts out slow, which is great for beginners, while Game B starts much faster; so it's a challenge for the more experienced.

This is an excellent clone of the original game. The LCD graphics are nicely replicated in solid blue, which makes them stand out very well against the replicated game background. It's a basic set of graphics but they all work very nicely and you'll know exactly what everything is at first glance.

What is very nice to see is the game border. It's big, it's very colourful and it's clearly a scan of the original game, converted to CPC colours.

This means a few dithering effects are present here and there, which don't quite look the part. A straightforward replica of the original game made in a paint program would have produced a cleaner effect but you can't fault the end result. It's the original game, literally, right there on the CPC screen.

As ports of games go, it's hard to beat a complete replica of the original experience. The LCD game is right there on the screen!

CAR-RACER

If there is anything simpler than the standard "car race" game, it would be Pong. You control a car at the base of the screen and other cars come toward you as you race. The amount of cars is endless and your goal is to pass as many of them as possible before you inevitably crash. It's a

perfect idea for an LCD game, which is no doubt why there are so many variants of it.

Car Racer features decent graphics for the cars, replicating the original game's varying levels of detail for the vehicles as they get closer to your car. You can only drive in one of four positions on the bottom of the screen and you need to keep your wits about you because as the cars move toward you, they can switch between those four positions. It's a very simple idea but it's surprisingly fun while it lasts.

There are two game modes, which are differentiated by the colour of the track. Game A is a nice, reasonably slow game that's good for beginners and features a standard grey track. Game B is much faster-paced, with the oncoming traffic far more likely to switch lanes on you. This one is naturally more challenging but the use of a turquoise track is a little confusing.

The title screen features a short, upbeat tune that's repeated when the game starts, and when you



lose a life. During the game, all you hear is a beep; which is either replicating the screech of car wheels or just there so kids playing the original LCD game couldn't play it under the bedsheets when they were supposed to be sleeping. Either way, it's annoying.

The border is a scanned copy of the original LCD game, complete with artifacts from the conversion to CPC graphics. It's nice to have the complete LCD game experience like this but removing some of the artifacting and colour dithering would give a far cleaner look to the whole thing.

BASEBALL

Baseball is one of those games you'll either love or hate, because the real game is quite slow and technical. Don't worry when playing this version however, as it has nothing to do with baseball. In LCD Baseball, a man throws a ball at you and you have to move to connect with it before

the ball hits the bottom of the screen. That's the whole game.

It's a very simple premise but that's usually what works best with an LCD game. Also, the pitcher isn't going to wait for you to "hit" the ball, he's going to throw multiples at you - what a cheat! He'll start out pitching just one ball but as you score more points, he'll start throwing more balls. By the time you get a good run going, you'll be smacking

balls left, right and centre. It's quite frenetic!

As with traditional baseball, you have three strikes then it's game over. Games A and B are much the same, although Game B is a lot quicker from the start; which actually makes it more fun, so experienced gamers may want to start with that.

A decent LCD game with surprisingly good game start music and some fun gameplay.



SPACE RESCUE

PRESENTATION 90%

It's like you're playing the original game.

GRAPHICS 70%

Very simple but they do the job well.

SOUND 50%

There's no music but the bleeper effects are perfectly replicated.

ADDICTIVENESS 80%

You'll want another try.

LASTABILITY 75%

It will get old after a while but so did the original.

OVERALL
73%

CAR-RACER

PRESENTATION 90%

It's like playing the original LCD game, on a CPC.

GRAPHICS 70%

Simple but effective, with a nice scanned border.

SOUND 50%

The bleeps are annoying and the music will get old.

ADDICTIVENESS 60%

It's a very simple game.

LASTABILITY 60%

You're unlikely to keep coming back to this one.

OVERALL
66%

BASEBALL

PRESENTATION 90%

A great reproduction of the LCD game.

GRAPHICS 70%

Simple stick figures but the border is nice.

SOUND 75%

Decent music but the in-game bleeps will eventually annoy.

ADDICTIVENESS 80%

You'll quickly find yourself wanting just another try.

LASTABILITY 80%

Good to come back to for a quick blast from time to time.

OVERALL
79%



GUNTUS

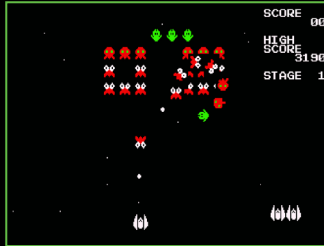
Review by Colin Bell

Author: **Inufuto**
Released: **2022**

I rather enjoyed Inufuto's last offering, *Ascend*, so was excited to hear that he or she had released a new vertical space shooter by the name of *Guntus*. Sticking with a classic colour palette of reds, greens and whites, the game is essentially an homage to the arcade classic, *Galaga*.

You know the formula by now; wave after wave of enemy alien space craft fly towards your ship at the bottom of the screen in some obscure attack formation, taking pot

shots at you as they pass. Survive the attack wave then it's your turn to return a volley of deadly shots, taking out as many of the pesky invaders as you can before the next lot fly into the screen.



Above & Below : Fire! Blast those damn aliens!



I had high hopes for this little vertical shooter but these hopes were soon dashed by the immediately apparent on-screen flickering, which is really off putting. Still, if you can put up with the flickering then what you get here is a decent enough arcade shooter that runs at a reasonable pace. There's even in-game music and some decent sound effects for the shots and explosions. Graphically it's basic, but the sprites are nicely drawn and the alien craft each have their own unique character. Overall with a little work and refinement that Guntus could be an excellent vertical shooter, just sort that god awful flickering and up the pace!

Gordon



With being released on multiple systems, it's hard to tell which computer Guntus is optimised for - if any. It's a competent, old-school arcade shooter with enough charm to make fans of the genre get a kick out of it, but it lacks finesse. The sprites are a tad flickery on the eyes, and the movement of the spacecraft is a bit stiff. We all know the Amstrad is infinitely better than this.

CRITICISM

Colin



CRITICISM



PRESENTATION 58%

Simply presented but in an old school arcade style. An "insert coin" screen would be a nice inclusion.

GRAPHICS 58%

Basic, but functional. Simple colour palette of reds, greens and whites.

SOUND 57%

In-game music and decent sound fx.

ADDICTIVENESS 60%

Good at first, but the on screen flickering soon becomes an issue and is off-putting.

LASTABILITY 65%

Only determined arcade players will return to play again and again. Improvements would help.

OVERALL 59%

AMSTRAD Art

by
Zoe Kirk Robinson

The demo scene is a hotbed of amazing Amstrad talent, not just in coding but also music and, most importantly for this column, art. Your guide on this tour of the CPC graphical jungle has undertaken a long and arduous journey to bring you the finest fruits of the artistic forest for your

viewing pleasure. Please, take a seat and we can begin to feast our eyes upon four more pixelated pleasures (are you quite finished torturing metaphors now? - Ed).

1: BriXen : LeZone (2020)

It's difficult to decide whether this woman is a cyborg, a twitch streamer, or a princess from a fantasy world - she could be any and all of these things. Her enormous headphones and unnaturally pink hair suggest she's a streamer, yet her blue skin and strange glasses, combined with the neon lines on her arms, suggest she's a cyborg. Her outfit is straight out of fantasy, however. Maybe she's a cyborg princess from a techno-magic future who's not streaming at all but instead watching television on that orb in her hands, and the headphones are just so she doesn't wake the rest of the palace? Who knows.

What we do know for sure is this piece by LeZone is absolutely stunning. As art, it's great. As the opening screen for a puzzle game, it's a surprising, yet welcome, sight.



2: Debris : Toxic (2022)

Meanwhile Toxic's Debris uses bold colours for both the foreground and background, turning the entire screen into a celebration of vivid Amstrad colour. Here it's an expert knowledge of colour theory that pulls our focus to the foreground character and makes him stand out. He's depicted in a series of natural, warm colours, while the background makes strong use of magenta and other tones not often seen in nature. The effect is one where the entire image fights for your attention, yet the eye is still pulled to the figure in the centre.

The title, written on blocks falling from the sky, is similarly eye-catching and for similar reasons. The sides with writing on are all presented in a bright, warm yellow while dithering of bright colours is paradoxically used to make shadows appear. It shouldn't work but it does and that's why it's so cool.



3: **Space Lemming** : RSX (1994)

Sometimes you just need some amazing, bright and fun pixel art and that's what RSX has provided here. This is Space Lemming, from the 1994 demo 'Odyssey'. The demo is little more than a slide show of super-vibrant images with kick-ass music to

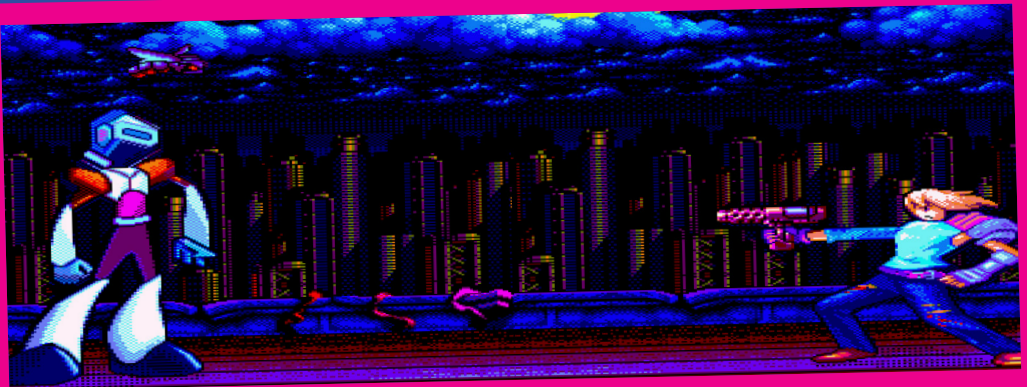
accompany it, so the very cartoony drawing style works perfectly in this instance. I'm not sure what I like most about this: the dopey look on the lemming's face, those ridiculously chunky red fuel tanks, or the lemming's cartoonish enormous feet. It's really fun to look at, and the way RSX has limited the colours to only three points on the image (face, backpack, flames) serves to balance the composition by pulling the eye to the top of the frame, against the large mass of the lemming's white space suit.



4: **Can Robots Take Control?** : Voxy (2021)

Created for the 2021 Revision party, Arkos and Benediction's 'Can Robots Take Control?' features an amazing piece of art that is so wide it needs to scroll in order for you to see it all. This is an eye-popping piece of urban art that makes full use of the CPC's vibrant palette. The bold colours of the foreground characters contrasts perfectly with the darker hues in the background; making them stand out so well.

The expert use of progressively bolder dithering finishes off the piece by giving it a palpable sense of depth. There's a proper feeling that you could step into this piece; although all those storm clouds massing in the background probably means you'll need an umbrella if you do.



COMPILATION CORNER



Welcome to our new regular feature, 'Compilation Corner', where we celebrate the fantastic big box compilations of yesteryear. This issue, we look at *Gremlin Graphics Chart Attack*, a compilation that featured some of the best racing and platform games ever released for the CPC.

CHART ATTACK

In 1991, Gremlin Graphics released an exciting compilation pack called 'Chart Attack' that consisted of five 'heart stopping' hits covering various genres and even featured Capcom's decent arcade port of *Ghouls & Ghosts*, which is rather unusual as the original game was a U.S. Gold release and not a Gremlin one, but still a nice, welcome addition, nonetheless.

The other four games were by Gremlin and included *Shadow of the Beast*, *Super Cars*, *Lotus Esprit Turbo Challenge* and *Impossamole*.

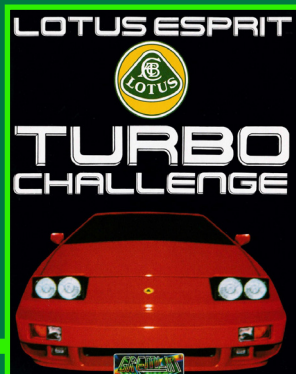
The compilation



came packaged in a large black glossy box with 'Chart Attack' emblazoned across the top and the words '5 Heart Stopping Hits' above. Electrocardiogram-type white and green jagged lines were also added to help emphasise the heart-stopping theme, and across the box were the front covers of each of the games, along with a modern Gremlin Graphics logo at the bottom in the centre. The back of the box featured much of the same, with short descriptions of each game and, for once, various screenshots depicting the actual 8-bit formats instead of the usual more advanced 16-bit or arcade

screenshots.

So, were the games as heart-stopping as the pack suggests? Did they set pulses racing? Well for the most part, yes, they did, but when it came to *Lotus Esprit Turbo Challenge* and its 'wheelie' fast-paced racing action we Amsters had to sadly



Above: Lazy Specy Port - Lotus Turbo

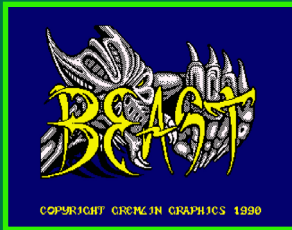


Above: Defibrillator on standby! Five 'Heart Stopping Hits' a fine selection of Gremlin Graphics' top games!



put up with yet another lazy ZX Spectrum port, which is a real shame as had this game been given the CPC colour palette treatment it could have looked outstanding. Still, it ran okay and featured some nicely detailed graphics along with a decent 2-player option.

Taking your pulse up a notch next was the superb platform beat 'em up *Shadow of the Beast*, with its beautifully detailed fantasy setting and a storyline that oozes atmosphere and playability. With its



fast-paced, well-animated action, and well-drawn cut scenes, it's no wonder that this still is an absolute 'beast' of a game!

Next, setting your pulse rate truly soaring, is the non-



Gremlin offering, *Ghouls & Ghosts*, Capcom's excellent sequel to their 1985 arcade smash *Ghosts & Goblins*. It's fair to say, however, that the Amstrad port is quite average, with graphics that are only marginally better than its predecessor. The game also lacks decent music which is a shame, but the gameplay is sound and there are some nice bosses to deal with.



Steadying the heart rate next is 'Super Sprint' clone *Super Cars*, which features armour upgrades and weapons that can be used to dispose of your opponents.



Above: Is it a bird? Is it a plane? No, it's the one and only Impossamole!

Graphically it's not half bad, especially on the garages and sales screens. Whilst good, the gameplay of the Amstrad version is let down by jerky scrolling but redeems itself with a

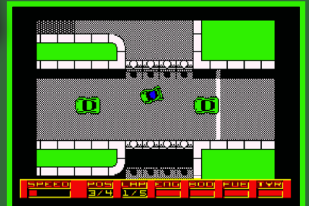
sending us into cardiac arrest, is the last Gremlin offering, *Impossamole*.

Despite the bold colours and decent graphics, the game is fairly linear and dull across all levels, and is often viewed by many as an unnecessary update on the Monty Mole franchise that fails to capture the fun and gameplay of the originals.

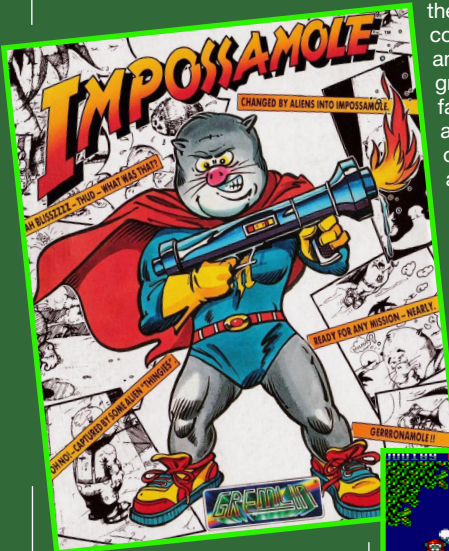
Overall 'Chart Attack' features a good and varied selection of gaming genres that cover



Above: Good graphics - shame about the jerky scrolling gameplay!



some of Gremlin's top hits, with the bonus of U.S. Gold's *Ghouls & Ghosts* thrown in for good measure. So if you love a good mix of highly playable games then embrace your inner beast, grab your sword, rev up your engines and take to the skies in what promises to be a pulse-racing, and heat-stopping experience!



prettier and well-drawn shop assistant.

Finally, and bringing our heart rate crashing back down, but not





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THE MAGNIFICENT 7 THE CPC MONITOR HISTORY



The success of the Amstrad CPC was in part thanks to it being sold as a complete and ready to use package. Unlike many other 8-bit systems of the time, the monitors played a key role in the CPC's success. Chris Weatherley takes a look at the seven different monitors that spanned the system's lifetime.

CPC Vision

We all know the Amstrad CPC was a bit late to the party of the European 8-bit micro surge of the eighties; some would say fashionably late. Aside from Lord Sugar seeing the success of Sinclair and Commodore and wanting a slice of the cake, he

approached the market in a different way to the others. One of the most obvious differences between the CPC and the Spectrum was in the way it was packaged to the consumer; the most notable part being a rather hefty but bespoke designed and dedicated monitor accompanying the Amstrad. Sugar's vision was to sell a

complete, ready to go, easy to understand, full computer set up, and the monitors that came with the package were a vital part of this idea. Many people in the eighties never had a second television set in the home, so if you wanted to use your Speccy or C64, you would have to commandeer the household TV. A monitor dedicated to the computer avoided this, while also providing the power source for the computer, giving the CPC a unique and attractive selling point. It also gave the buyer a choice of what they wanted to pay out for a full computer system. Seven monitors were released alongside the Amstrad range, and all are often overlooked on how important they were to the CPC's success. So, we here at AMTIXCPC towers will take a deep dive into these CRT cubes and look at what they had to offer the user of Lord Sugar's new machine.

With Colour Monitor - CT19640
AMPC464
the complete computer...

- Complete system including RGB Colour Monitor of Class 1000
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- A complete expansion bus convenient for sideways ROMs, serial interfaces, disc drives, modems
- Three voice, 7 channel, stereo ch. stereo output board socket with volume and tone envelope shaping
- Comprehensive software support covering business and educational programmes plus power services games

Above: The complete all-in-one CPC package - easy to use and ready to go!

Article by Chris Weatherley

Mean & Green

With a 12" mono screen and sitting at the lowest price point, the infamous "green screen" monitor of the Amstrad line up was rather well accepted, mostly for business use of course. Amstrad did market the CPC as an all-rounder after all; it wasn't just supposed to be a gaming machine, it was also a serious business tool. It is rumoured that Lord Sugar chose the green display over others, such as black & white/amber, which IBM's and UNIX's utilized in the day, to make the CPC stand out and provide a clearer, more comfortable display for viewing data and figures. With picture adjustment facilities and an anthracite finish, the green screen monitors performed their function well enough, often making the whole package considerably cheaper for smaller businesses to



Above: Going Green - The classic GT64 monitor.

afford. The original CPC464, which came with the GT64 released in 1984, entered the market at £249, with some introductory prices

as low as £199. At the time, this was incredible value for a full computer system. Revisions to the monitor followed; the GT65 had a 12v output to support the CPC664 and 6128's disk drives, and the final version, the GT65-2, made it more



Above: The more portable GT65-2 complete with handles.

portable with a set of carry handles. Also, if you did choose the green screen over the colour monitor, you had the option to include the MP1/MP2 TV modulator, which enabled you to use it as a TV too. Over the years, the green screens dwindled as technology improved, and most CPCs sold after 1986 were the colour option, which brings us to....

The Colour in CPC

For an extra £100, your Amstrad could be treated to a CTM640 or a CTM644, a full RGB colour monitor which could really showcase the talents of the CPC. With a 14" screen, folding carry handle, and the same anthracite finish, it had remarkable robustness but was also quite heavy. While not as portable as the smaller green screens, these monitors were, and still are

great to use and to view. Using the 644 is actually crucial when using the CPC 664 or 6128, as it had the 12v output socket needed for the disk drive, much like the GT65. Without an alternative 12v source, the disk systems become almost unusable, so the GT64 and CTM640 were not an option back in the day. While providing a wonderful picture and being exploited to the full by the CPC's CRTc, the price point for a 6128 with CTM644 reached £400! Several optional additions could be made to the two colour units also. An MP3 TV tuner could be used to get TV signals, but you could also turn it into a radio alarm



Above: The CTM644 complete with additional 12V output socket to help power your disk drive.

clock with the CT1 add-on. In fact, with the latter added, it made the CTM's look very cool. Connections to the computer were made using a 6-Pin DIN, and up until this point, if an external 12v power source was acquired for the disk systems, all monitors would work with all three CPCs. But come 1990 with the relaunch of the range, that was to change.



Above: The 6128 Plus was massive in Europe, especially France, Spain & Germany.

Bring the Noise!

By the time the decade came to a close, things had shifted significantly in the home computer market. The sleeker looking Amiga and Atari ST were storming and the gaming consoles had taken a strong foothold. Amstrad's response to this is often debated, but instead of creating a new machine to compete, the CPCs were reworked and upgraded to create the 464 and



Above: The rarer MM12 now with the inclusion of loud speakers.

6128 Plus machines, as well as the GX4000 console. This meant the monitors also got an overhaul. Sticking with the previous formula of two choices, the monochrome MM12 and the colour CM14 were released, both as separate units or a package. Moving away from the green, the MM12 was a black and white display, much like many of the mono Atari monitors. High clarity yes, but a little dull. Not many of these units are around today, as they didn't seem popular. The CM14 was the far superior option. Colour was even more important to the Plus range with its expanded abilities, this was the only option

to choose. Sporting a cream coloured body, the picture was on par with its CTM predecessor, but for me, not as sharp. The big improvement however was the inclusion of loudspeakers in the unit, which was a huge step up from the CPC's often weak-sounding single speaker. Other changes included neither monitor requiring a 12v output for external devices, as all three Plus hardware-based systems stood alone on their own power. The only downside however was that the changes resulted in a redesign on the DIN connection, making the previous 5 monitors unusable on the Plus range without adaptors, and vice-versa. Since the life of the Plus range was incredibly short, both of these monitors are uncommon today, which is a shame as the CM14 for me is the best all-round performing monitor of the entire range.



PAINBALL TRAINING

Colin



CRITICISM

Graphically the game is colourful and drawn reasonably well. What lets the game down big time however are the flickering sprites, especially in the drone stage. The game's crying out for the option of being able to use the Magnum Light Phaser but I don't imagine thats an easy addition to implement. Fun for a few goes but the novelty soon wears off.

Author: Altanerus Dog
Released: 2022



Not content with just releasing racing games such as *Panda Raid*, programmer Altanerus Dog has also developed a *Paintball Training* simulator. So grab your weapon, load up those overpriced coloured pellets, and let's get shooting!

Loading the game, we're presented with a simple title screen



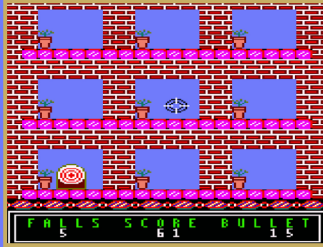
Above: Drone Hunt. Shoot those pesky drones!

that displays a small score table, the controls, and an option for either difficulty A or B. Split into several stages, the game begins in the courtyards where you essentially work you way down a hi-rise tower, taking aim at any targets that appear on screen within the many windows. The bottom of the screen



Above: Look out! Watch out for the live targets down at the shooting range.

displays your bullets, score, and falls, although I think this should be fails as it's technically your lives which go down each time you hit a wrong target



such as a flying bird, human, or cat, so be careful!

Get through all this and it's onto stage two which is titled 'nephew's drone' and involves, yep, you've guessed it, shooting pesky drones out of the sky. Finally, or at least I say finally as it's as far as I got, it's off to the live range for stage three where you have more targets to contend with, as

well as a live shooter who appears from time to time at either side of the screen. Bullets aren't unlimited and you do have to make your shots count, but thankfully there are opportunities to get a top up by shooting flashing ammo packs when they appear. Ready, aim fire!



Gordon



CRITICISM

Games like this make you long for your long-lost Magnum Phaser. In the absence of a tactile light gun (I doubt this even supports this), target practice games with a cross-hair are somewhat limited. There are a few pop-up targets and a few animals too. A game shouldn't excite you about shooting cats and birds because the static target boards are so bland. I'm just saying.

PRESENTATION 63%

Simple and basic. A nice decent shooter but needs refinement in places.

GRAPHICS 61%

Basic, colourful, and big. Just the way we like CPC graphics to be. Terrible sprite flickering though.

SOUND 51%

No music but a decent shot sound effect with other beeps and boops.

ADDICTIVENESS 62%

Definitely has that 'one more try' appeal. You'll play it more than you think.

LASTABILITY 57%

Good fun for a while but just like the real thing you'll soon be out of ammo and have had your fix.

OVERALL 57%

AMTIX! Back

CPC

AMTIX Issue #7

Our resident CPC historian Paul Davies looks back at the original May 86 Issue #7 of AMTIX magazine.



version, we'll find out on the inside pages. There are other reviews and features of course, including previews of Shadowfire, Moon Cresta, Nick Faldo's Golf, and, amongst others, a competition to win a £1000 Go Kart. Count me in!

Blood, sweat, large weapons, and a slain monster. No this is not the aftermath of a party at my house - it's the theme of this issue's cover. More specifically, it relates to the game Fairlight, a well-received and respected game on the Spectrum but now its presence could be found on the Amstrad. Whether it could reach the heights of the Spectrum

This month's editorial focuses on the recent Amstrad Computer Show in Manchester and more specifically, the lack of attendance from many of the software houses producing Amstrad games. The likes of Design Design, Mikro-Gen, and Incentive

receive praise from Amtix for turning up, though those who didn't bother have left a rather bitter taste in the mouth. 'They must remember that, without the support of Amstrad owners who buy their games, they would be out of business. They must make the effort to have a presence at future shows. At the end of the day, it's in their own interest to do so!'. Indeed, AMTIX. Indeed!

A rather brief letter received and printed in On The Spot this month gets a rather brief and to-the-point response. Keith Lawrence, Billingham, Cleveland, is having issues with his

MARSPORT WILL NOT LOAD!

Dear OTS, I need HELP. I bought *Marsport* about 2 months ago. I tried loading but it would not. I played around with the volume. It worked. No it didn't, when I left the menu I found the top half of the screw was missing. I have tried EVERYTHING! I can think of but no luck. CAN YOU HELP?
Keith Lawrence, Billingham, Cleveland

Yes. Go to shop of original purchase. Say 'Excuse me Mr/Mrs shop assistant, I bought this game and it doesn't load. Give me a new one please'. Beetle home with new copy and try it out - your original definitely sounds faulty.
OTS



copy of Marsport as it won't load properly, and he sought the assistance of AMTIX to help him out of his pickle. The advice given is that which anyone else would give him, surely? You'd hope so anyway. 'Go to the shop of original purchase. Say 'Excuse me Mr/Mrs shop assistant, I bought this game and it doesn't load. Give me a new one please'. Yeah, that should do it, Keith. Now get out of

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SAVE A HEAD!

Left: The Amstrad Computer Show - Get those tickets booked now!

here. Now, have you ever read a letter or heard a statement and wondered, 'Well, what do you want me to do about it?'. Here's one that got me thinking exactly that. I'm looking at you, Simon Clegg, Heaton Norris, Stockport who goes on a long rant about the game Lord of The Rings. Happily, he's been playing and making friends (in the game) with Pippin and Sam and has had a lovely adventure searching for a ring or something (I haven't read it) when all of a sudden, he's tried to go East - as this direction was an option - only to be met with the message 'You try to go east but 7'. This could either be a bug or is it some kind of code word/number? Honestly, as far as codes go, it's not the most complex or sensical but it could mean something, though it's more likely a bug. That's the answer, Simon - it's a bug. Erm, what would anyone be able to do about this? He'd already written to Melbourne House about this problem but they've not got

back to him yet. I'd wager they're too busy bathing in all the money they're making from churning out bug-ridden programs to answer. But I could be wrong.

Enough of all that. How about some games? Before that though, there's an



advert for the game Shadowfire which features a lady in quite the outfit. I mean, is that spray painted on or what? Does your dad know you're going out dressed like that? Go put a jumper on! Anyway. What was I doing? Oh yes, games. That was it.

First up and it's Ocean's latest release N.O.M.A.D. No, this isn't about someone who isn't



mad, it's about a droid (Nemesis Organisation Mobile Attack Droid) whose job it is to take on the rather nasty Mr. Gross, whose list of nasty doings includes murder, arson, gun-running, and being head of an intergalactic criminal network. Sounds like a busy man, to be honest. Nonetheless, the federal police have decided this ne'er do well needs stopping and this is where you come in. Equipped with twin calibre blasters and twin thrusters, there's nothing that should stop you from navigating the man-made asteroid Mr. Gross has ensconced himself in, and weeding him out. Of course, there are many other nasties you'll find along the way that you'll have to blast away, but that just adds to the fun, surely? Well, it must be fun or why



else would Amtix be awarding it its Amtix Accolade? With only the sound a bit of a let-down, N.O.M.A.D. goes down a storm and gains a score of 92% overall.

Ah ha. Now, here it is. The cover game that we're all excited about - Fairlight. How would the Amstrad version fare against the others? Before we get that



far, a little about the story of what Fairlight is all about. Fairlight used to be a happy place, though a succession of increasingly bad rulers put paid to that. You take the role of Isvar who, against your better judgement,

decided to go for a walk through Ogri's Wood, a place which has a reputation for more people going into it than coming out of it (why would you do such a thing, Isvar?!). Unsurprisingly, you come a cropper to Ogri's ways and are captured by her and taken to her cave. Upon waking from your enforced slumber, a mysterious old man takes you by the hand and leads you out of said cave and into Castle Avars. Before the man mysteriously disappears, he explains that he was King Avars' magician who's been trapped in the castle for thousands of years. To free him from this predicament he finds himself in, you must find the Book of Light and in doing so, it means that you will be also able to leave the castle. Equipped with just a sword at the start of the game, there are guards to take on as well as some other not-too-friendly beasts. Fun. A 3D game

in nature, Fairlight retains its lovely looks from its other iterations, namely the 1985 Spectrum release, and it also retains the same playability. The one takeaway comment from the review that makes me realise that this is one to play? 'Going around beating up the guards is fun, let alone getting into the story itself.'. Yep. Sold. Fairlight on the Amstrad is a triumph.

Amstrad always seemed to be the last of the home

computers to get their version of games that had already been released elsewhere. The same goes for this next game, Rambo. I guess good things come to those who wait and good things - well, to me anyway - involve running about shooting and destroying anything, whether it moves or not. You'd say Rambo would fall into that category and you'd be right, but is it one of the best for

that kind of escapade? Your mission is to infiltrate a camp and rescue a POW or something but enough of that, the most important thing is to blow the crap out of everything and if you're good enough to get that

far into the game, there's a rocket launcher to help with said destroying things. Is there anything else you could want? If you're an Amtx reviewer,

then yes there is. Scrolling is poor, so they say, and the game overall is disappointing. I find this hard to believe. I mean, what more do you want? Rambo - tick. Machine guns - tick. Hundreds of bad guys to kill - tick. Rocket launcher - BIG TICK! 73% say Amtx, though play the game yourself and you be the judge.

After getting praise in the editorial for actually turning up to the Amstrad Computer Show, Design Design's latest release is reviewed in this



Rambo's Back! His mission - find missing American POWs



issue. Forbidden Planet is the name of the game and it seems this one is of a similar ilk to one of their previous releases, Dark Star. Also set in space and

PREVIEWS

Previews by Colin Bell

Colourful vertical shooter on its way for the GX4000 by French developer TITAN.

For those of you who didn't know, because I certainly didn't, *Goldorak* is the name of the French adaptation of Japanese anime series UFO Robot Grendizer. Originally released in the mid 1970s, the show follows the story of main protagonist Duke Fleed and his powerful super robot Grendizer, who are out to put a stop to the evil Vegan Empire. No, not that kind of vegan!

Anyway, flash forward some 45 years or so, and the ever talented Eric Cubizolle aka TITAN has begun work on a new vertical shooter based on the cult anime series.

Eric's goal is to

bring a an arcade style experience to the GX4000 similar to that of the likes of *Galaga* and *1942*.

The game also looks set to feature comic book style into screens which look fantastic. We can't wait for this one, more as we get it.

You can check out more screens shots and artwork here: <https://tinyurl.com/y83psnex> simixperincec



Volcano Bytes tease further footage of highly anticipated *Revenge of Trasmoz*

Volcano Bytes have recently teased further footage from their upcoming CPC title *Revenge of Trasmoz*. The story, according to

the website, goes: "*The curse of Trasmoz has been broken, but the evil Mutamin is still plotting his revenge. Now, two new heroes must join forces to face him once again in an exciting battle.*"

Based on the original *Curse of Trasmoz* that came out on the ZX Spectrum, *Revenge* is essentially a sequel featuring all-new levels designed in CPC Mode 0 graphics, hidden

secrets, and a frantic two player co-op mode which looks great fun. There's even a gorgeous looking physical edition available to pre order now over at Poly Play. <https://volcanobytes.itch.io/revenge-of-trasmoz>



Gates to Heaven! New game from ESP Soft is coming along rather nicely.



Those talented folks over at ESP Soft have released further news and screenshots of their new upcoming game, *Gates to Heaven*. The game follows the exploits of main hero Ruperto Gonzalez, who fifteen years prior saved the world from Mr Gates of

Microchoft who attempted world control through his W2H operating system.

Thought gone for good, Microchoft has re-emerged and joined forces with a new company called Amsoft+, who are having trouble deploying their new AMSDOS+ operating system

and in turn have looked to our hero for help.

So far the game is coming along nicely report ESP Soft, with the main game engine now complete and level design well underway. The process is taking longer than usual however, as with many of their other titles ESP plan to release *Gates to Heaven* on cassette, which means saving as much space as possible without compromising on quality. More on this intriguing title as we get it.



Bestial Girl is here! - Beta version released

Spanish programmer Cayetano Torres has released a Beta version of his new game *Bestial Girl*.

Created using the AGD engine, the game is an arcade-style platformer in which you must reach the end of the cave. Sounds simple, but be assured there are a whole host of dangers awaiting you. Currently the graphics have been presented in Mode 0



and the game lacks any sound. However, being that this is a Beta version we can only hope the finished game will feature improved graphics and some sound.



AMTIX! CPC

Sign Off



Having reached the final page of this Issue I'm sure a few of you may have noticed something missing from our regular line up. Yes, I'm afraid it's true, Lloyd has retired and won't be answering any more letters. It's a well earned retirement I'm sure you'll all agree, and from all at AMTIXCPC towers we wish him well.

Please do feel free to keep on sending in your letters as we will still post them from time to time and while we may not have Lloyd anymore, the keen Towers staff will be on hand to lend a response. Well, it's been yet

another jam-packed issue and the CPC scene, I'm pleased to say, shows no



sign of slowing down, just look at the previews alone!

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Colin Bell



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