

THE RETRO GAMES NEWS

Issue 7

NODES OF YESOD

CALIFORNIA GAMES

TOOBIN

DRAGON WARRIOR

...AND MUCH MORE!

PLUS:

**YOUTUBER METAL JESUS ROCKS!
& GAME GAVEL - MIKE KENNEDY**

RETRO REVIEWS FOR
COMPUTERS, CONSOLES
HANDHELDS & MORE!

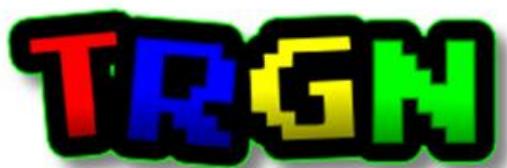
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Editorial:



Hi Gang – Welcome to issue 7. A bit later than planned as it is the holiday season, but I hope you will see that it was worth the wait.

This issue has a summer theme with sizzlers like Summer Games and Toobin as well as more unusual titles like Nodes of Yesod, Pyro 2, Dragon Warrior and more.

We also caught up with YouTuber Metal Jesus Rocks for an exclusive interview and we also take a look at what it is like to run a gaming auction site, thanks to a fascinating interview with Mike Kennedy from Game Gavel. On top of all this, we welcome Shaun Holley who has written a great feature on Android classics, which is something readers have been requesting for some time. Enjoy!

Happy Retro Gaming – Phil Wheatley

The Retro Games News

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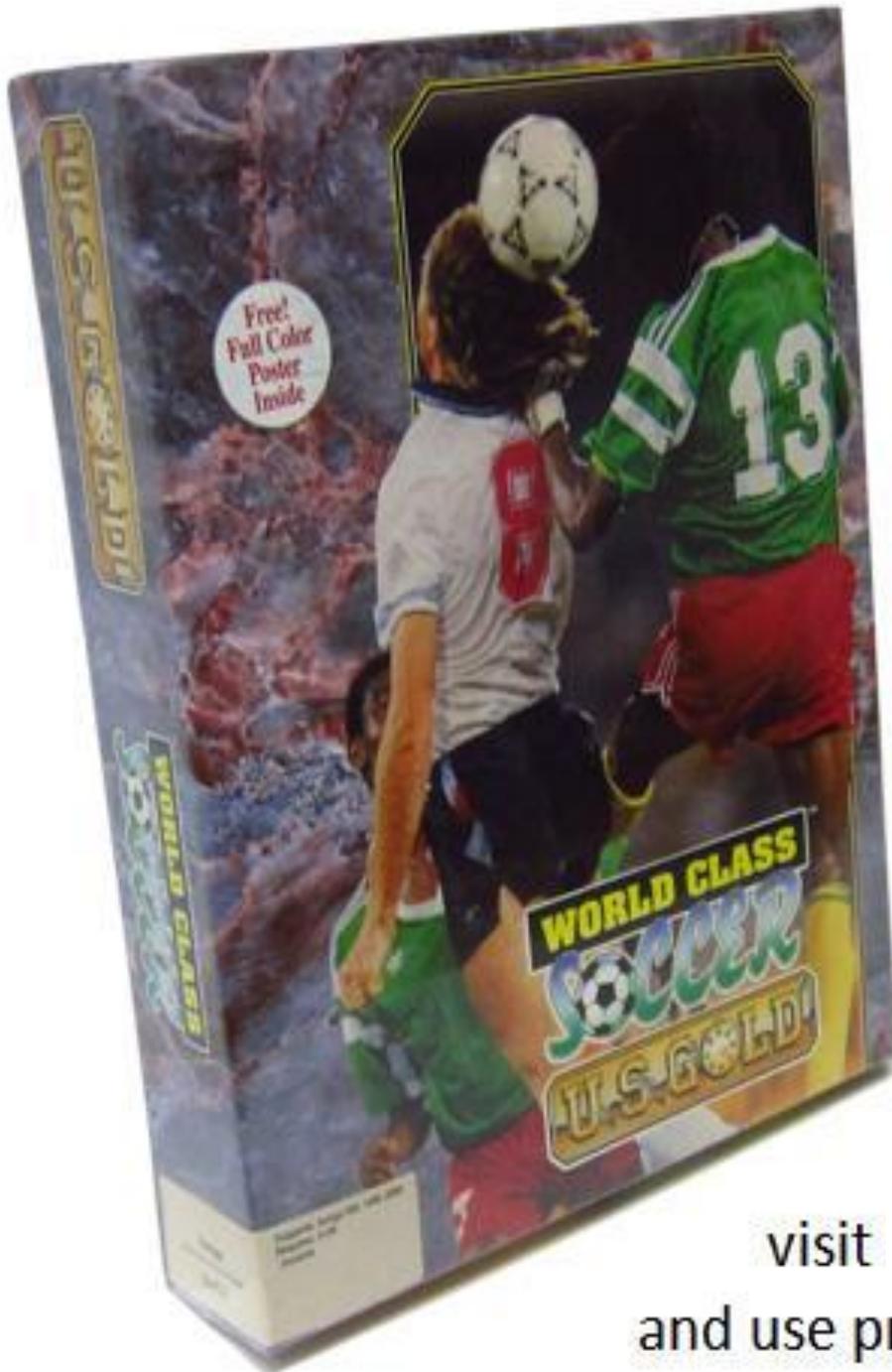
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Back in 1989 the

Atari Lynx was launched. Although marketed by Atari, it was actually Epyx who developed the hand held console originally to be named the Handy.

Where as Nintendo packaged the gameboy with Tetris, Atari decided to package California Games with the Atari Lynx. 4 games vs 1? Nice.

California Games was available for many formats. Spreading from C64 to PC.

**SUMMER GAMES
EPYX
LYNX VERSION TESTED
REVIEWED BY DREW KENAZ**

It consisted of 6 games to keep you on your toes.

So, what did you get with California Games on the Lynx?

Well, Epyx decided that the Lynx version only needed 4 games and to be fair, it worked well.

So, abandoning Roller Skating and Flying Disc, the Lynx version leaves you with Half Pipe, Surfing, BMX and Footbag.

So lets have a look.

The first thing you are treated with is the California Games Numberplate spinning around with some happy music to put you in the mood. The bright Blue sky with white clouds scrolling past also helps set the mood. Hit any button and you are greeted with your choice of games and..... A Palm Tree. Yep! We are in California.

Footbag

I will be honest and say that this is my

least favourite of the games. But there may be a bit of bias there, I have never got the hang or point of any sports that involve a ball of any kind.

The aim of this game is to keep the ball up in the air, using feet, head, knees, shoulders. While you are doing this, you can spin round, aim for a seagull that flies past (which I have to say after the mess they have made on my car in the past is very satisfying).

I do like the San-Francisco type background, it does capture the California vibe quite nicely and the parallax scrolling as you side step after the ball, trying to catch it before it hits the ground.

Control wise, it does feel a little awkward. I have just been playing it for a while, trying to work out what it is that feels wrong. It could be the speed of movement of the character. Kicking the ball up is fine, it is just moving left or right or when you spin round is a little slow. However, this does give you something to work towards and master. Having said that, of all the games, it is by far the easiest to get high scores.

Half Pipe

Ah! Skateboarding. How I remember those scrapes and scars.

This game is all about timing and you really do have to be spot on.

You spend your time simply going forwards and back on the half pipe with your



skateboard and are given 2 ways to change direction, a kick flip or a hand plant.

Hand plants are quite hard, your timing needs to be bang on! But they do score well. However, the kick flip allows you to build up plenty of speed and really get some air but mess up and you may get some quite sarcastic advice.

Surfing

Now we are talking!

Get on your board and try not to wipeout!

This is one of my favourites. I was never any good at surfing in real life but I could make up for it



here. You can choose to surf under the waves or try to outrun them.

You can flip, jump accelerate and brake to give you quite a range of control over your stunts.

Control is fast but accurate. Simply spot on.

BMX

Who as a kid didn't own or want a BMX?

Great big cranks, coloured tyres and spokes, pads to protect your.....

Well, lets be honest, nether regions.

As a kid, I probably



played this game more than any. Jumping, flipping, usually hitting the hay stacks or landing on my head. Maybe I should have sat down while playing this game.

Now, although this was the lowest scoring of the games, you got not only a sense of

satisfaction when you finally pull off that multi flip for the edge of a high drop but also a feeling of wanting to try and try again to get that jump perfect as you needed to be ready for the for the next drop.

Controls feel a little delayed but with a little practice, you can





soon get the timing right.

As a whole

Looking at the game, I would say that it gives just the right atmosphere. It showed the possibilities that were to come with the Atari Lynx. The dithered textures gave the appearance of extra colours and looked as if there were more than just 16 colours on screen. Scrolling was lovely and smooth.

It is easy to see that Epyx did their research too. The pastel colour pallets of California games bring

a reminiscence of Space Harrier and OutRun which was also influenced by the California Area. This gave a softer feel to the graphics which was a nice change from the stark colours seen on the 8Bit computers and games consoles.

Sound is OK but nothing special. Other games proved that the Lynx could handle sampled sound which was never really pushed much. For example, a nice "Wipeout" sample would have really topped off surfing but the 4 games gave a good replay element.

Always striving to top your last top score.

So overall, I would say a great collection to introduce the Atari Lynx to the world. A collection of very different games with some nice colourful graphics. An interesting comparison to the black and white beginning of the Gameboy. Really shows what marketing can do or destroy.

All in all, as much as I love Surfing and BMX, Half pipe and Footbag feel lacking in comparison so I would have to give the game.....

75%



INTERVIEW: METAL JESUS ROCKS From YouTube

Anybody who has been around the retro scene for a while has probably seen Metal Jesus at work. He has nearly 50K subscribers at the time of writing this which is not surprising as his videos are always fun to watch and his enthusiasm is infectious. His

videos range from pickup videos to classic game magazines including items rarely seen on YouTube, such as light up Scooby Doo joysticks!

What was your first experience of gaming and what games really made an impact on you back then?

I got an Atari 2600 as a kid and there was

no looking back. I loved that wooden little beast and all those cheesy simple games. The platforming game H.E.R.O. by Activision was one of my early obsessions on the system. After that, the beige Commodore 64 became my main gaming machine through junior high and high school.

That's where I became obsessed with RPG games like Pools of Radiance, Ultima, Legacy of the Ancients and more.



If you could bring one retro system to a desert island, what would it be?

Well, I'd probably cheat and bring the new Hyperkin Retron 5 because it plays NES, SNES, Genesis, GBA and more...and it upscales to HD and you can use the original controllers. I haven't had a chance to play with it myself, but friends who have at the Seattle Retro Gaming Expo were pretty blown away by it. Oh yeah, and it's only going to cost \$100 bucks! Outside of an emulator system, it would have to be the PS2, because there are so

many great games on that system across every genre. With the console, I'd bring a copy of Burnout 3, Grand Theft Auto: Vice City, Final Fantasy 12, Guitar Hero 2, Jak & Daxter, Ratchet & Clank: Going Commando, Splashdown Rides Gone Wild, Shadow Hearts Covenant, Time Splitters 2 & SSX 3.

What first gave you the idea of starting your own YouTube channel?

I have always liked making home movies, even long before the internet and YouTube. I would have family visit or friends over

for a party and they would get a DVD of the event a few weeks later. I'm the type of guy who not only watches his favorite movies to figure out how they light the shots and edit the scenes, but I'll listen to the audio commentaries by the director and editors to get an inside look into how the movie was made. But for the longest time I thought YouTube was just filled with silly videos of cats playing with boxes or dudes getting hit in the nuts with baseball bats. However, when I saw dedicated video game channels that tried to bring something real



and genuine to the gaming community, I thought... I can do that too!

Have there been any YouTubers in particular that have influenced you?

I really like channels that put a little extra time and effort into their videos, so I lean towards the channels like RetroLiberty, HappyConsoleGamer, MrGameSack, and SmoshGames. I am also obsessed with the PixelCorps channel which has weekly

video editing tips by two guys who work in the Hollywood film industry.

You have no doubt seen many changes with YouTube over the years. Is there anything you like or dislike about the way YouTube is evolving?

A lot of people recently like to complain about YouTube and the changes they make, but I don't see it that way. I actually think YouTube is generally

trying to make their format and video suggestions better for the average viewer. For instance, almost 40% of all my views come from mobile phones and tablets and recently they made a big change to have your logo look great no matter what screensize you view a site on, which can be important for branding. They've also made some changes away from Flash and towards HTML 5, which helps on low power devices like the iPad (which I use to

watch all my Subscriptions on each morning). I feel like some people think YouTube is out to screw them over, when I don't think that at all.

You have a staggering number of subscribers. What do you think the secret sauce is?

Everybody will find success their own special way, and the great thing about YouTube is that the barrier for entry is relatively low. However, some people only want to get

success by throwing a lucky 80 yard Hail Mary football pass, when true success looks more like hard work & small steps every day. I am trying to keep to a strict weekly release schedule so my fans can expect that every Friday a new video will come out that will hopefully be 1) informative 2) entertaining and 3) worth watching til the end.

Your enthusiasm really comes across in the videos, what is it about the retro scene that gets you

fired up?

For me, video games are an art form just as legitimate as movies, painting, music and books... and it's changing every year. What's fun about retro games is that there are 40 years of games to play and collect and each one is a unique experience.

Are there any of your videos particularly enjoyed making or were pleased with?

My most challenging videos to make are the I HATE U



episodes, where we play good and bad games and then give out a Trophy of Shame at the end. We go into those episodes with a really vague idea about what we're going to do, but in the end it's always weirder and wackier than I could ever imagined. As you can guess, editing those videos from 1 or 2 hours of footage down to 20 minutes is a challenge, but I love it. So those are my favorites...and the I HATE U episode I did with the All Gen Gamers is probably my favorite.

Do you have concerns about consoles moving towards online only platforms?

Absolutely, because I want to be able to play the games I love today...20 years from now and if that game requires a server authentication before it will run, it may not play in the future. That sucks. Games as Art is worth preserving both for the historical aspect as well as the fun factor and I want that to always continue. Also, I much prefer a great single player story than run & gun multiplayer...so online

has very little appeal to me in that regard. **You like to sport a Kiss Destroyer T-Shirt. What's your take on Tommy and Eric wearing the original member's makeup?**

I'm not crazy about another dude wearing Ace Frehley's classic make up. To me he'll never be the original guitarist, no matter how much Gene Simmons and Paul Stanley would fans to believe that. Nothing against the dude. He's probably technically a better player than Ace... but I would prefer KISS would just create original makeup for him, like they did with Vinnie Vincent when he joined in the early 80s.

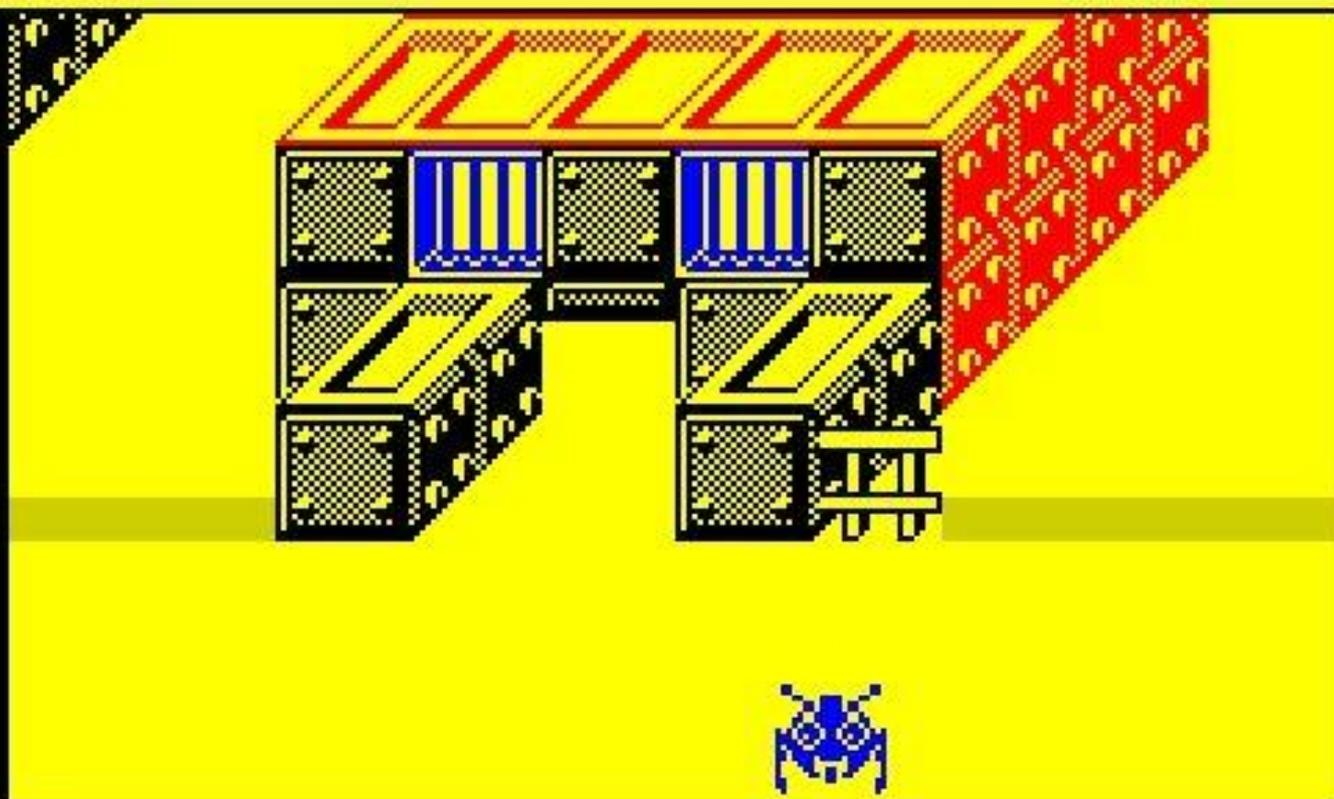
What plans have you got for your channel or future videos?

I like to mix things up on my channel to keep things fresh and interesting for my subscribers as well as myself. I want to shoot two more I HATE U episodes soon ...but Drunken Master Paul is a busy dude in the summer months with martial arts training 3 days a week...so it may be Sept or Oct. I also

want to do more Hidden Gems series on older consoles soon, since those videos are really popular. I'm also going to shoot an updated Game Room tour, but shoot it in a way that I haven't done before...so that it compliments the one that I did last year. Should be cool. Also, music is a big part of my life, so my wife and I are going to do some special music videos soon too!

PLEASE CHECK OUT AND SUBSCRIBE TO METAL JESUS ROCKS HERE:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/MetalJesusRocks>



Colony was released in 1987 by *Mastertronic* under their budget *Bulldog* label for the Spectrum; C64; MSX and Amstrad CPC. It was an odd little resource management cum-arcade strategy game that involved an odd main character along with insects and mushrooms. Following the success of *Feud* some months earlier, this release from *Bulldog* was a bit of a let down at the time of release. The graphics weren't anywhere near as good as what

**COLONY
BULLDOG
SPECTRUM VERSION TESTED
REVIEWED BY DAVID HAYWARD**

could have been achieved, and the overall gameplay was sadly monotonous. That said, it was strangely addictive. The story behind *Colony* involved a dramatic food shortage which was being depleted by the ever growing population of Earth. In order to combat said crisis, a remote planet (or colony) was established for the growing of

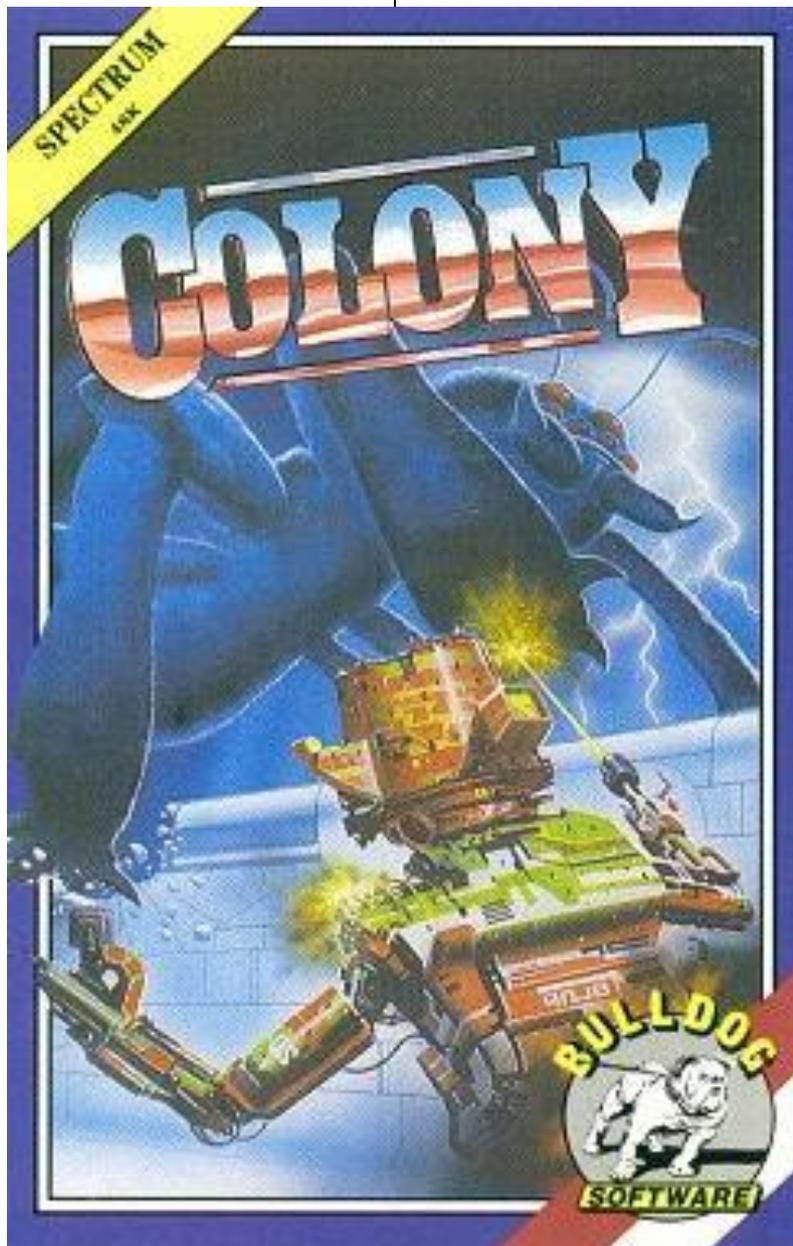
mushrooms which could then be used to feed the starving billions back on Earth. Hardly *Asimov* by any stretch of imagination, but on the whole not a bad concept. The colony is managed by a droid, which is controlled by the player; their task is to plant the mushrooms spores, cultivate them and then send them back to Earth. However this

simple act is inhibited considerably by the local inhabitants of this strange world, an infestation of giant insects.

disposal a built-in laser and shield, along with the ability to order from stock an automated attack droid that will wander

many command buildings in the complex. From within these for example, you can order more mushroom seeds; fencing of varying strengths (in order to keep the insects at bay); batteries to power the aforementioned attack droid; solar panels to keep the power levels up and a plethora of other sundries. These buildings are also where the supply ship can pick up the mushrooms you have harvested and where you'll be rewarded with the in-game cash that allows you to purchase further stock.

The other command buildings have varying functions that are dependent on the types of supplies that the player chooses to purchase: The solar panel command building will allow you to pick up solar panels, or repair half-eaten ones. Likewise, the fence command building will offer fencing and other barriers, and again repair any damaged ones. Finally, the



The insects will eat pretty much everything in sight, excluding buildings, so keeping them off the prized mushrooms can be difficult. However, you have at your

around randomly and shoot any enemies it sees.

The ordering of goods and supplies can be accomplished by visiting one of the



DROID CHARGER

TOTAL POWER LEVEL: 451

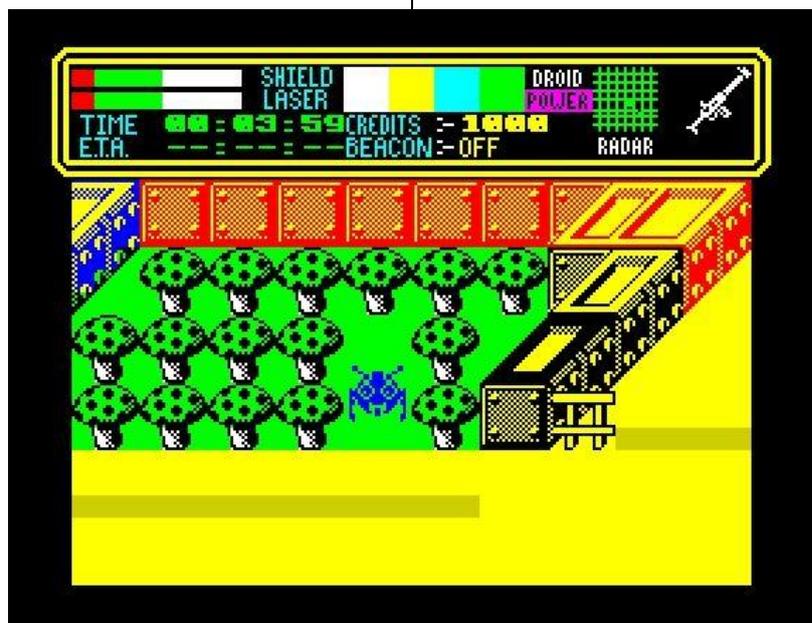


droid repair bay will replenish your limited reserves of laser and shield power.

Each of these buildings and the player's character are reliant on the overall power available to the colony. Using the solar panels will increase the power levels available to the colony, but too much power will result in the generator exploding and inevitable death; too little power will stop the player from being able to repair items within the colony that have been damaged, or prevent them from activating

the beacon that summons the supply ship - which will also eventually lead to death, or a game over due to the insufficient number of growing mushrooms

It's this fine balance between the different aspects of the game that draws you into it. Yes the graphics are bland, yes the sloppy 3D isometric like screens are dodgy at best and yes the





The reviewer in me puts Colony at a 45% rated game, but the retro loving enthusiast part of me makes it at least 70%. Problematic and annoying as it may

attraction will wear off pretty quickly, but there's something maddeningly playable in here. Working for a good hour and creating a Zen-like balance between keeping the nasties away, managing the power requirements, and harvesting the huge mushroom crop is strangely rewarding. The constant running around, checking on fences, barriers, solar panels, mushrooms, and blasting stray insects before returning to the droid repair bay for more energy becomes a repetitive mantra; only one that keeps

you wanting to carry on; to just hold out until that next supply drop when you'll consider quitting, yet when it comes to the crunch, you won't.

It's a highly flawed game that much I'll admit to. If I recall, the original reviews in the magazines at the time had it around the 40% mark at best and in all honesty it hasn't improved that much with age. But the draw to this odd, happy little mushroom game is ultimately present in its quirky look and feel, even if it's just a flashback to a more simplistic era of gaming.

be, *Colony* would make an ideal modern port to one of the many smart devices available, or am I just being too nostalgic? Either way, it's a fun blast from the past and one that's well worth a re-visit if you haven't played it in the last twenty six years.

TRGN Rating 70% - purely because I love the fact that it's so odd!



INTERVIEW: MIKE KENNEDY From GameGavel.com

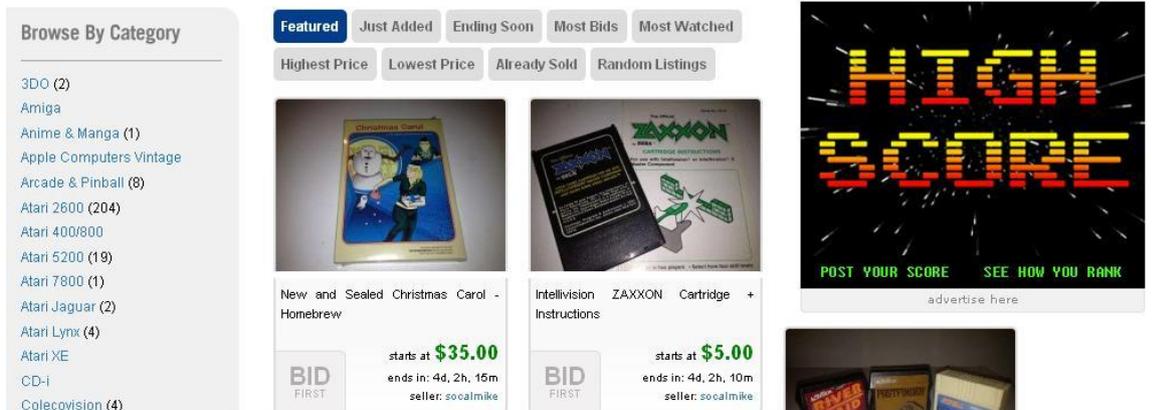
What first got you into gaming and are there any classic games that you still like to play today?

Gaming got me into gaming. I know that sounds strange, but that is how it happened. I grew up in the 70's and early 80's and started playing games in the arcades; first the mechanical ones and that of course led me into "video" games (and pinball). Once I discovered the Atari 2600 and the ability to play all these great arcade games in the home I was hooked, and am to this day. I still have all the

classic systems hooked up in my home game room/arcade. The Atari 2600 is always my favourite but I also enjoy playing my Colecovision, Intellivision, Commodore 64, Apple IIc and Vectrex. Of course, I have most of the 16 and 32 bit era consoles as well right through the current generation with the PS3 (and a Wii before it bit the dust).

My favourite classics that still get play to this day are probably too many to list. I have consoles hooked up in nearly every room in the house

with a NEO GEO-X Gold in the bedroom, a PS3, Dreamcast, Gamecube and Ouya hooked up to the main big screen in our living room, an Atari 2600, Intellivision, Colecovision, SNES, Genesis, Vectrex, Jaguar and N64 hooked up in my home arcade/man-cave. I also have a MAME arcade cabinet along with a few arcade games like Midway's Stunt Pilot mechanical game (the first game I remember playing as a child in the mid-70's), Sega's Turbo mini cab, Super Moon Cresta and a Midway Touchmaster. Oh, and a juke-box



laced with 70's and 80's pop and rock 45's.

What brought you to the decision to start your own business?

I moved to Southern California back in 1999 and discovered they had these awesome college parking lot swap meets every weekend, all year around. This turned into a great place to hunt for classic games and soon my collection grew out of hand. So, like many of us, I turned to eBay to sell the stuff I didn't want and to use that money to buy more of the things that I did want. I started actually using eBay in 1997 and then in 2008 I decided I was tired of their escalating prices and seller dictatorship.

I figured video gaming was a large enough niche to deserve a dedicated gaming auction site so that is when I decided to start my own auction site, ChaseTheChuckwagon.com (which later evolved into GameGavel.com) and used it to buy and sell myself while also inviting others in to use the site as well. I can't believe that was over five years ago!

What benefits do people have listing their items on your site vs. Ebay?

I am trying to give gamers a better and more gaming targeted alternative to eBay and even to Amazon to some extent. I have always wanted to give back to this hobby that has brought me so much enjoyment and I think

creating a venue that ultimately will grow into the largest dedicated C2C gaming marketplace online is a great way of doing it. I think tons of enjoyment comes from selling unwanted items and using the money to buy items you want. And giving gamers a place to sell that isn't going to ding them to death with fees is a big advantage. GameGavel will always cost significantly less for sellers than the larger competitors. For buyers, I think GameGavel is nice because we have a marketplace only consisting of things they are interested in . . . no clutter. This makes finding items easy and you can usually count on buying from a fellow gamer that will treat

you right. Our sellers have treated buyers extremely well since we launched and all have been building up lots of positive feedback.

Another big advantage for sellers with mega rare gaming items to sell is we actually help promote these items through a large gaming media network. We have had rare auction listing get picked up by IGN, Kotaku, Yahoo, Polygon and more and that brings in thousands of "eyes" to watch and many times bid on these rare items. We also run a story along-side rare item auctions and tie them together. Often times we interview the seller to find out where they got such a rare item and why they are

Your Seller



Welcome shopper! I am So Cal Mike, GameGavel founder and also co-host of the RetroGamingRoundup.com podcast. I launched GameGavel back in 2008 to be a less expensive alternative to eBay for gamers. Thank you for shopping with me and on GameGavel.com.

socalmike (783)



selling it. Last year GameGavel sold one of the most expensive commercially available video games in online auction history when a complete-in-box Atari 2600 Air Raid sold for over \$33,000.

What advice would you give to people wanting to sell games on GameGavel?

I think the main thing is to price your games to sell. Overpriced games are commonplace not only on GameGavel but also on eBay. The fact is you need to educate yourself on the items you are selling and price your "Buy Now" or "Reserve Bid Amount" accordingly. Overpriced items aren't going to sell anywhere. We have many new sellers join GameGavel and list one or two items. Nine times out of ten they are simply overpriced and they don't sell. They blame GameGavel's traffic when, in fact they are pricing themselves out of the market. Right now eBay has everyone fooled. Look at all the items that go unsold on eBay each and every day. Tens of thousands of items have to be relisted daily. eBay

isn't what it used to be.

Another thing you must do as a seller, whether it on GameGavel OR eBay, is self-promote your auction listings in your favourite gaming forums and through your social networks. The competition for items has NEVER been as fierce as it is now. GameGavel gives all sellers a FREE branded storefront and unique store URL you can use to promote your GameGavel store to your friends and gaming peers. It's free so sellers may as well use it. eBay charges anywhere from \$20-\$200/month for a similar feature!

Why do you think interest in classic games has increased so much in recent years?

We as adult gamers still urn for the simpler days of our youth, and playing these games that we once played back then bring back great memories and feelings. The games we all grew up with, regardless of your gaming generation, are timeless. Most of us now have the ability to finance collections of games that we had (or



wanted) back in the day. Also, the media has helped by reporting on the history of gaming with a constant stream of stories about game and console anniversaries and interviews with past gaming programmers and designers. There is much lore and history that we as older gamers find interesting as it reveals lots of things about the companies we grew up with but were too young at the time to understand the business side of things. Couple this

with the internet and the ability to share ones passions for classic gaming with other like-minded gamers on classic gaming websites like AtariAge, NintendoAge and Digital Press. And classic games are still f'ing fun and that is really the bottom line!

Are there any games in particular that tend to hold their value?

There are always games that will hold or increase in value over time. Many of these games are

getting expensive because they are rare, but some more common games are just so good collectors rarely give them up once they have them in their collections and that slowly removes them from the marketplace and their prices rise. It seems now JRPG's are all the rage from the 16-bit and 32-bit eras. Games like Earthbound and Chrono Trigger for SNES come to mind, but there are dozens of JRPG's across a variety of classic consoles that are escalating in price. Prototypes often leak out and these will always continue to rise in price. Especially, if they were for games that for some reason were never commercially available. And of course, Nintendo and their "competition" games will always be on the wish lists of the more wealthy gamers who grew up in the Nintendo era.

Were you concerned about Microsoft's initial plans regarding second hand games?

Of course. I am a huge proponent of a gamer's ability to buy AND sell used games. Not just because it is beneficial for



GameGavel's business model, but as a gamer who has grown up with this privilege since the dawn of the industry. If you think about it, the removal of used games from the marketplace and ultimately the removal of "physical" games altogether would have a devastating effect on gaming culture. Gone would be the days of trading games with friends and playing your games at a friend's home. Gone are the days of wall-covering collections of games and fan-boyism bragging. The culture we as gamers have grown up with and deserve to pass on to younger generations of gamers will be gone when physical gaming goes away. And that saddens me a great deal. Adult gamers need to stand up and vote with their pocketbooks and tell

video game publishers and console manufacturers we still want to "own" physical games so they can be played, enjoyed and collected for ever as we and our gaming children grow up through our lives.

What are your views on gaming moving towards online only?

Oops, I think I covered that above. I think there is a place for online gaming and mobile digital gaming. But nothing can replace owning your favourite game and maintaining the ability to play it on an original console years down the road when you want to reminisce and enjoy a simpler time in one's life. And frankly, there are very few, if any mobile games I could really care about playing

down the road. You get what you pay for and a \$.99 game isn't going to hold any memories for me later on down the line. If games go all digital than life as a gamer will officially suck!

Do you get any time to play modern games yourself and if so, which ones?

As I mentioned earlier, I do have a PS3 and had a Wii until it decided to crap out. I also just purchased an OUYA which I think the jury is still out on. Sadly, I don't think I've turned on my PS3 to play a game for about 6-months. I and my gaming posse did go through an online "Worms" phase but that died out and I haven't turned it on since. Most of my modern day gaming comes from play on my Nintendo 3DS – currently addicted to Animal Crossing: New Leaf.

What are your plans for GameGavel in the future, or any other projects on the horizon?

We are currently in the process of hiring an executive team built from game industry and retail execs and then going

out to seek our first official round of funding since I launched back in 2008. The future of GameGavel will lie in a new commerce+content+community business model where we combine gaming media (current gen and classic game reviews, news and editorials, podcasts and video entertainment) with the auction marketplace and gamer community. We are now in talks with many ex-1UP and IGN editors, writers and personalities to reunite them back here at GameGavel. These are some of the most prominent gaming journalists from the past decade and they will be supplying a constant stream of media, which will tie back to relevant auction listings promoting buying and selling. And moving forward, sellers can count on GameGavel to really promote itself on a larger scale bringing in more bidders and buyers.

If we can secure our first round of funding for a structured GameGavel marketing/growth plan and media team addition the second

phase of funding will be for a new online retail site – <http://www.MailAGame.com>. Our plans here to take on GameStop by offering gamers an intuitive and fast online trade-in system and give them 50% more trade-in credit vs. GameStop. With this model, we plan on giving gamers instant online credit for their trades and fast 24-hour shipping on their next order. You can go to MailAGame.com to get some initial information.

Finally, GameGavel will be “relaunching” with a 100% revamped user interface. Our category search function will be vastly improved and streamlined making it easier for shoppers to find what they are looking for. Our bid interface will be upgraded and improved as well as an option for shoppers to save searched and get notified when an Item they are looking for is listed. This “relaunch” should be completed by mid-August.

In addition to GameGavel, gamers can also visit GamerSpots.com (still in beta), a kind of a

shop-local site for gamers around the world to discover, rank and review local gaming hangouts like small mom-and-pop retail stores, arcades and gaming centers. RetroGamingRoundup.com is a podcast I started with two of my best friends in gaming and we are in our fifth year of producing the show. It is a monthly 5-7 hour show that features top-10 debates, interviews with classic gaming gurus, programmers and developers, gaming news and more. I also run RetroArcadeRadio.com which is a 24/7 live streaming radio station dedicated to classic gaming and arcade inspired music. We also air a large collection of classic gaming television and radio commercials in between the song line-up.

I want to thank you for your interest in interviewing me and wish your readers a continued long-life of retro gaming!

Please Visit Mike’s Site at:

gamegavel.com



This month we continue with our award section where we salute somebody for making a notable contribution to the retro gaming community. This

award is a token of our thanks to those who have spent many hours making other people happy and providing value and entertainment.

This month we would like to award **Darren Jones**, editor of the UK magazine *Retrogamer*. To my knowledge, he was the first person to manage to get a physical publication into the shops solely on the subject of retro games, and continues to be successful to this day. The magazine, inspired somewhat by *Zzap!64* and *Crash*, is always packed with exclusive interviews, features and of course, retro reviews.

So, without further ado, Darren we present you with this month's TRGN Award for your contribution to the retro gaming community.

You can see his videos at:

www.youtube.com/user/RetroGamerDaz

Website: www.retrogamer.net



FEATURE: ANDROID CLASSICS

by Shaun Holley

Hi kids! Way back in the mists of time something pretty damn awesome was going on called the 1980s. The 1980s were an era of Frankie Goes to Hollywood tee shirts, deeley boppers and Armani-suited cretins called 'Yuppies'. It was also a boom time for the humble platform game, a genre that hooked a generation of teenagers on classics such as Jumpman, Manic Miner, Impossible Mission, Donkey Kong and Billy Look Out For That Large Spikey Giraffe For Christ's

Sake (one of those I made up). Some say it all began with Space Panic in the arcades in 1980. That game featured an albino guy with a large blue spoon with which he dug holes in the platforms in the hope that scampering red tomato bugs would fall into them. Then he'd whack them on the head with his spoon to drop them to the platform below. It all makes perfect sense if you think about it... for a long time... whilst drunk. It was actually a pretty hard game and if you completed two or three screens

in the arcades you'd get kisses from girls. Well, maybe not. Lode Runner was a game similar in concept to Space Panic, and I recently spotted a remake of it in the Google Play Store. That game was the inspiration for this article. So here's my mini review of four retro platformers that you can play on your slightly scratched mid-range smart phone.

Lode Runner Classic. Tozai Games. £1.99.

Ah, it's the age-old story: boy meets girl, boy kisses girl, boy





and girl fall in love, boy grows a beard following a single 170 hour gaming session trying to beat Lode Runner, girl gets stubble rash on chin, girl leaves boy, boy doesn't notice. Based on the Apple II version, this seems a faithful reproduction of the classic stick-man adventure. There's 150 screens of fast-paced climbing and digging action on offer and it's fairly addictive. This game really shines when it comes to options. There's three available control methods: tilt and swipe, tap and swipe, and a visible D-pad (my weapon of choice, although it does make the action

smaller). You can change the game speed from fairly slow to Usain Bolt, start at any level, enable a magnification feature and even change the colours if you can be bothered. A decent game and well worth the money.

Willy's Great Adventure. Elite Systems Ltd. £1.49.

If, like me, you've played Jet Set Willy to death but still hanker for more of that cute little guy leaping over creatures born in the deranged mind of a mental genius, then this game is for you. While not officially a Matthew Smith creation, this, in my opinion, has more

imagination and invention than Jet Set Willy II ever had. It's running on a Spectrum emulator I think, and was written by Terry Lloyd in 1985, only to see the light of day this June. I have no doubt that I will never finish this game, as it is pretty hard, but the 30 or so screens I've seen so far are very well done. Although sometimes I can't get it to start because the 'play' button doesn't respond.

Keystone Kapers. LSF Apps. Free.

Keystone Kapers was one of my favourite games on the Atari VCS. I remember my mate renting it for a

week from a guy who used to come round to your house with a boot full of games. He also had some of those adult entertainment VHS video cassettes, but let's not go there. This version (there are two on Google Play) looks exactly like the original, and plays the same as far as I can remember. The play area does look a bit squashed on my slightly scratched mid-range smart phone, but it's free so who cares. A simple run / jump / duck game with a nice difficulty curve.

Chuckie Egg. Rob Edwards. Free.

Chuckie Egg was one of those gems where almost every version for every computer was fun to play. I grew up with the Commodore 64 version, but have since played a few others. My favourite incarnation was written for a little known Japanese console called the Yukasawa Mega Organ 64X DX. Hang on, no, I made that up. But if it did exist then I bet

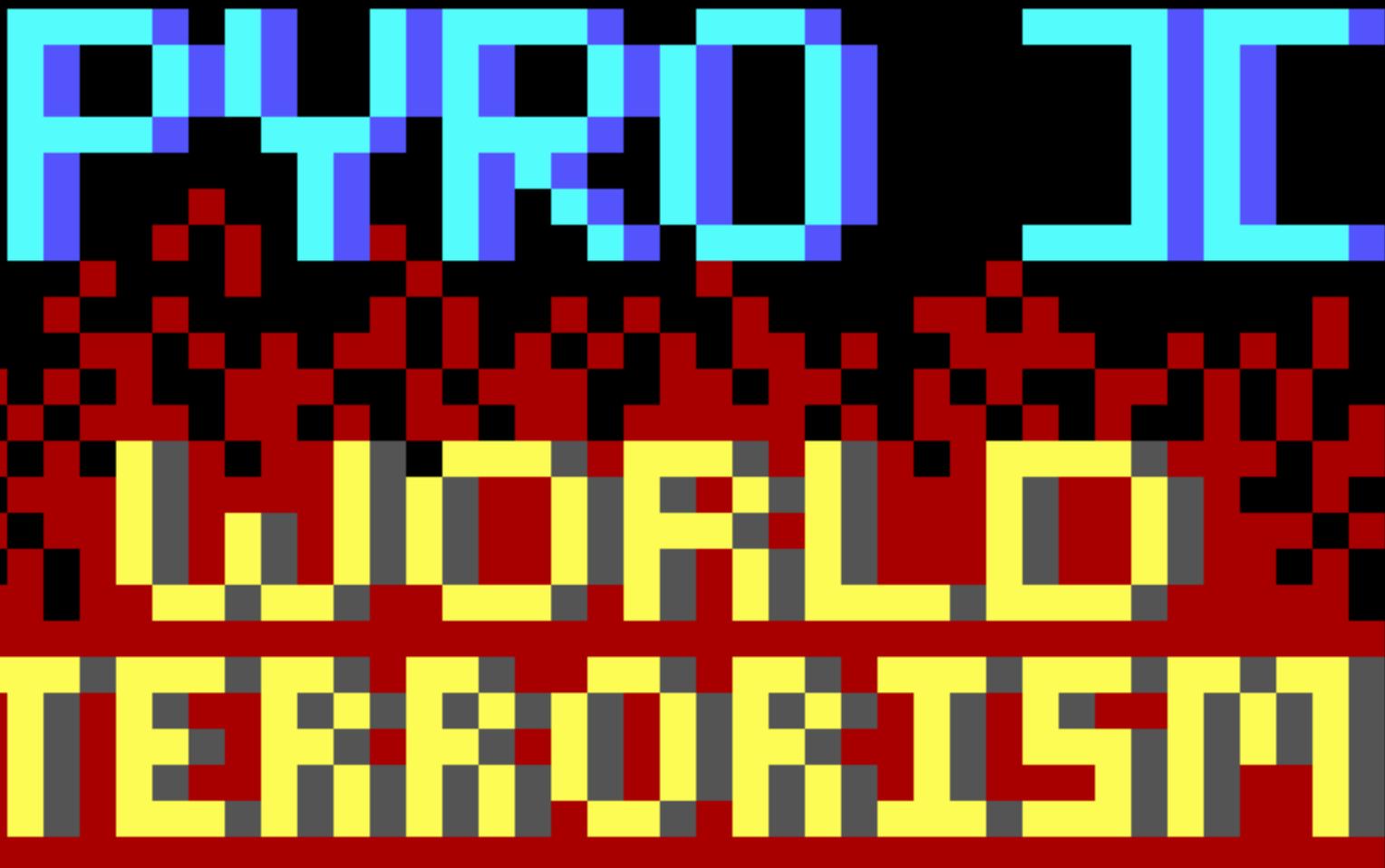
it would have substituted those hideous chickens for smokin' Japanese babes and you would have been a Transformer or something. Or Godzilla. That would've been ace. Where was I? Oh yes, Chuckie Egg has nice clear graphics and is fun to play. The control scheme is unusual. You tilt to run left and right, tap the right side of the screen to jump, and tap the top and bottom of the left side of the screen to go up and down ladders. It takes a bit of getting used to, but with practice you'll soon be able to deftly traverse the play area without saying swear words.

Some game genres transfer well to phones and tablets,

but I find it difficult playing games with virtual D-pads on touch screens, such as those mentioned above. Maybe it's my age. Maybe it's because I'm crap. But, nonetheless, the 4 platformers reviewed here are still worth the effort. So if you get fed up with slicing melons in half or catapulting parrots at pigs then give 'em a go.

By SHAUN HOLLEY





Pyro II was released way back in 1990 for DOS and, with a little fudging around with the settings, under Windows 2.x/3.x. It's an unusual game, developed and designed by Michael O'Brien (who went onto development work with Sierra Online, Activision and Buena Vista Games before he became executive producer for Guild Wars and Guild Wars 2), which has you playing as a pink-suited enterprising pyromaniac who's planning to burn down notable buildings and famous world-wide landmarks.

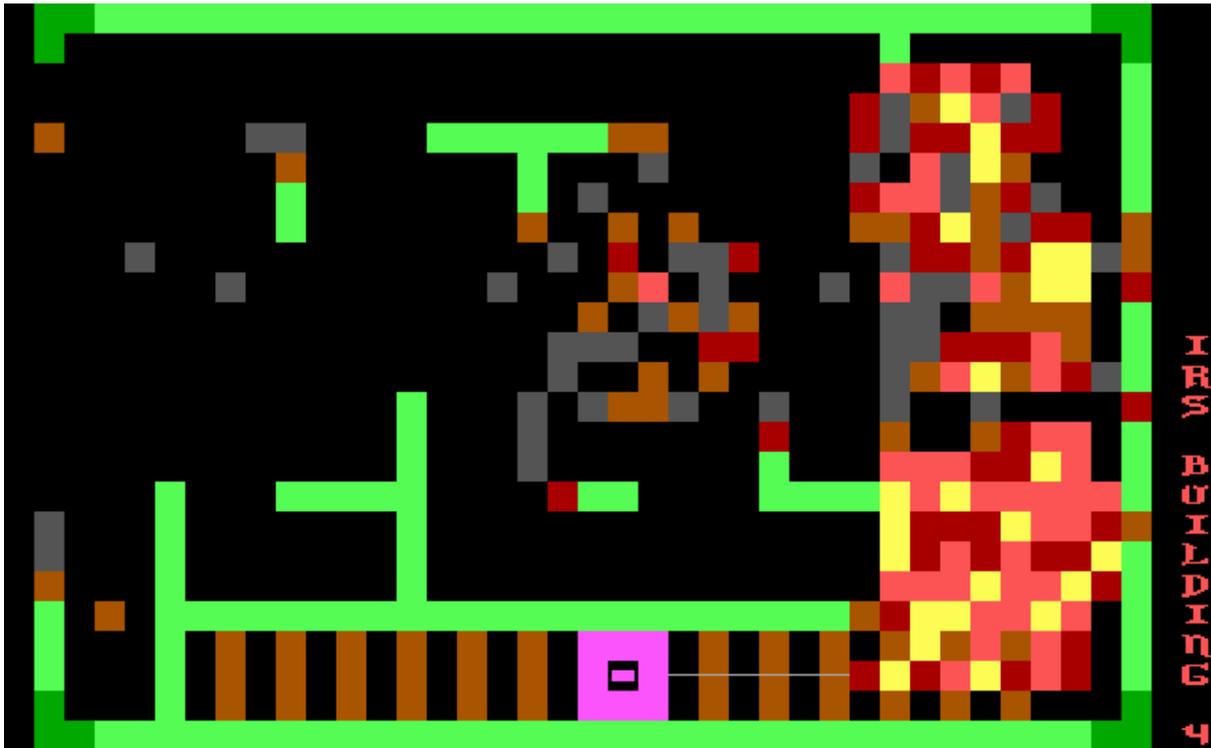
This enterprising fire starter has a unique

PYRO 2
FREEWARE (MIKE O'BRIEN)
PC VERSION TESTED
REVIEWED BY DAVID HAYWARD
PROOF READ BY GRAHAM ROBERTS

way of commencing the ensuing conflagration. The night before, apparently, the pyromaniac stashes cans of petrol in various locations on each floor of the building. Then, on the night of the deed, he enters the building, takes the lift to the top floor, runs a line of string at a set distance behind them and light it. The result is the character leading the burning string around the floor, over the cans of petrol, which then

explode and set fire to the floor, while they make good their escape via the stairs to the floor below.

The player's character (the pink square) has a few extra tricks up their sleeve. For example, a can of petrol can be picked up, then spilled further on, which of course will ignite and set fire to an area of the room that wouldn't normally catch. Likewise, there are also other goodies available in the form of potions, that will



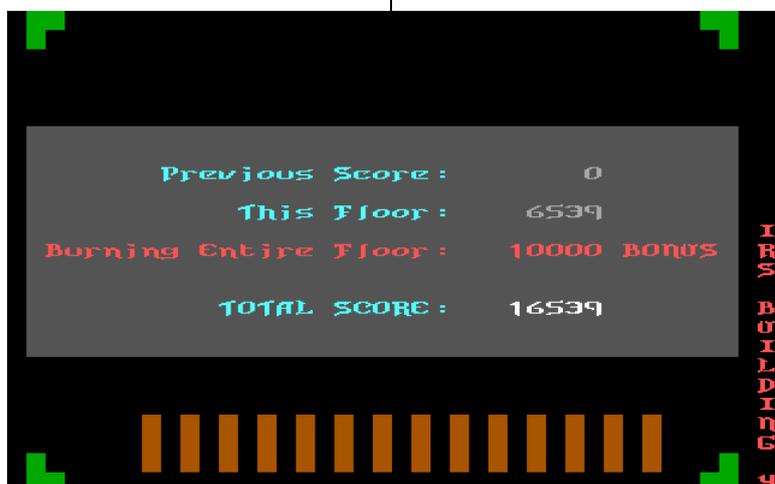
offer temporary immunity to fire when consumed, or speed up the character as they plod along the floor.

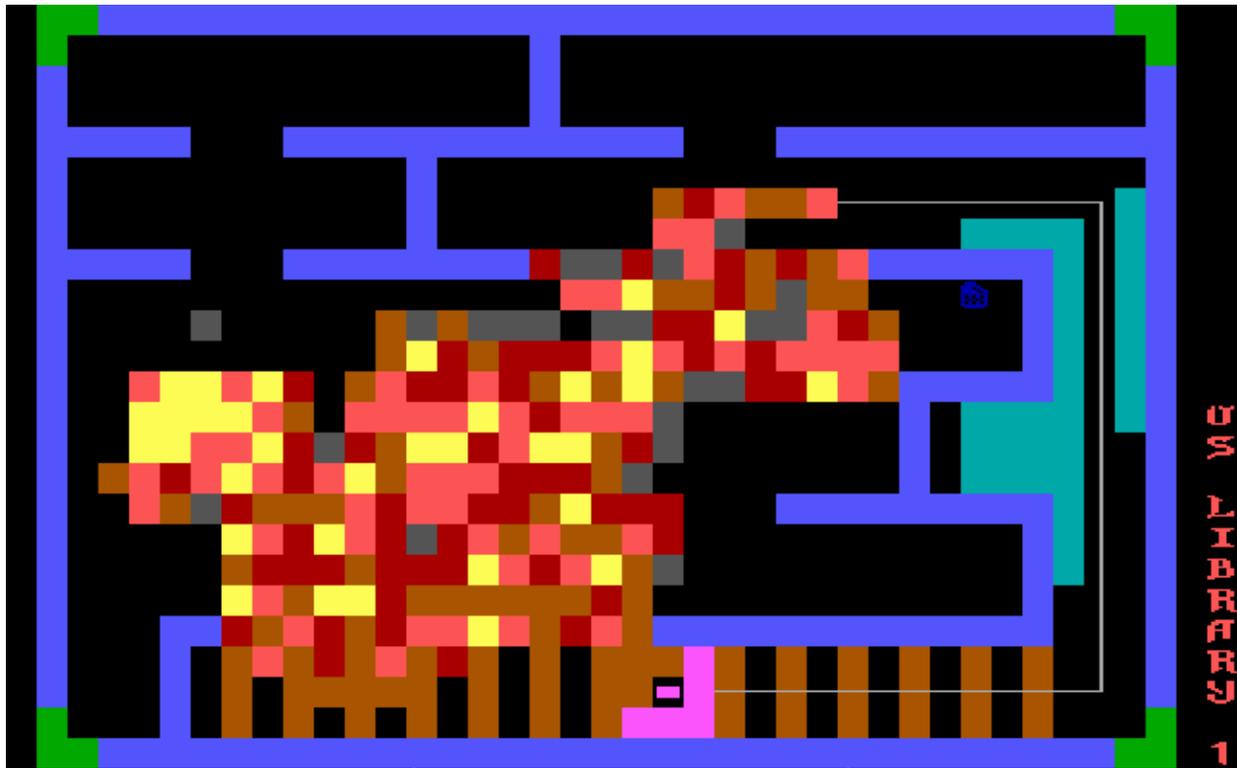
Graphically, Pyro II is the most basic offering you're going to get. Each floor is a top-down plan view in a maze like format with small blue cans of petrol and, when you spill the contents of one, an expanding blue puddle of fuel. In brief, the ASCII appearance of the main character, the sparks from the lit string behind you, and the all-consuming flames are drenched in nostalgic bliss, yet are surprisingly effective in their approach. The sound effects, running as they are from the PC

speaker, depict the roaring of the flames, the dramatic explosions of the petrol cans and although extremely primitive by today's standards, do provide the player with a sense of panic as they attempt to outrun the fireball they've just created.

Now, the game itself has questionable morals - naturally this

is a game that you won't let your five year old play. However, it's also strangely addictive and thanks to some added bonus levels, beyond the further questionably named 'World Terrorism' campaign mode, the 'Secret Agent' mode offers you the chance to gain entry to some of the more interesting buildings from around the





world.

Normally an archaic game such as this would be buried under a number of complaints from Mary Whitehouse like pressure groups, and although it did at the time generate a sharp intake of breath from those who judged computer gaming morals, it somehow managed to slip generally under the radar by being freely distributed via the many Bulletin Boards that were around at the time. Also, the backlash from Drugwars/Dopewars was still being ranted and raged over, having been released some years before, so a lot of the heat (excuse the pun) was directed successfully away from Pyro II.

Pyro II is, to all intents and purposes, a remake – or rather a port of the Apple II classic, Firebug, by Sials Warner (of Castle Wolfenstein fame) and MUSE Software. Although crude in its appearance, you have to remember that a 386 with a monochrome XT monitor was the dominant PC model at the time, and only the privileged few owned a 486.

The game is huge, with fifty odd levels, each containing numerous floors and many secret levels as well as hidden paths to previous and generally inaccessible levels. In addition, there are also many modern ports of Pyro

II, some of which still bear the name, for a variety of devices and online play. However, you can't beat the good old ASCII pink square and the feeling of being chased by the fire you've just started that the original game provided.

If you own a copy of DOSBox then have a Google around for the original files, they're out there, and enjoy the blistering pace of a game that was designed to run under 140KB of conventional memory.

TRGN Rating: 80%



Phil Wheatley
Editor

IT Trainer by day, and editor through the long hours of the night, has long had the dream of putting a computer magazine together. Currently playing Lords of Midnight, Uridium and Skooldaze.



Shaun Holley
Artist & Writer

As a baby, Shaun was found abandoned in a hollowed-out Pong cabinet just off the A6 and raised by goats. He's a lifelong gamer, with a passion for 1980s arcades and gaming history.

Current favourite tippie is Gyruss. And goats milk.



David Hayward
Writer

David Hayward is a freelance technology writer for web and print. A regular contributor to Micro Mart, Linux Format, CNET, TechRadar and formally, PC Utilities. He's also never completed Fairlight, although he

keeps trying.



Duston Justice
Writer

He's been playing video games since the age of 4 when he first played Donkey Kong on the Coleco Vision. He got his NES the following year, and the rest is not quite history yet, but managing to rack up many hours of gaming..



Drew Kenaz
Writer

Uni Lecturer in a range of subjects including Games Hardware programming. Creator of the Thor Games console used for teaching. CEO of Hexfreq HexSweet Design currently working on a few retro IOS

games. Fave classics: Arcade, Chase HQ and Space Harrier. At home Chucky Egg and Streets of Rage 2



Graham Roberts
Sub Editor & Proofing

Graham is an English teacher by trade. His passions include retro gaming; gaming in general; tinkering with consumer electronics and making PCs. He doesn't really have a favourite game of all time as it often changes. However, at the moment he is particularly enjoying revisiting the Lucasfilm series of games on the Snes (Super Star Wars etc) which he is playing through an emulator.



Robert Joy
Writer

Current employment: Global distribution company, Staffordshire. U.K.
Hometown:- Tamworth, Staffordshire. U.K.

Favourite classic: oooh, surely all.. However has to be Phoenix

by Taito. Reason being it has all the essence of a classic. Quote: "Follow your passion and it will find you."



Alex Reeves
Writer / Blogger

His name is Alex but his friends call him Roly and has his own blog retrogamesnow.co.uk. Along with his reviews of classic arcade, home computer and console games, he is building a database of retro game stores in

the UK.



The Sega

Megadrive was never short of great games, but developer Treasure managed to create a smash with Gunstar Heroes, it's very first commercial release in 1993. Back then the name Treasure was relatively unknown, well before they received worldwide acclaim for games such as Bangai-O, Sin & Punishment and Ikaruga.

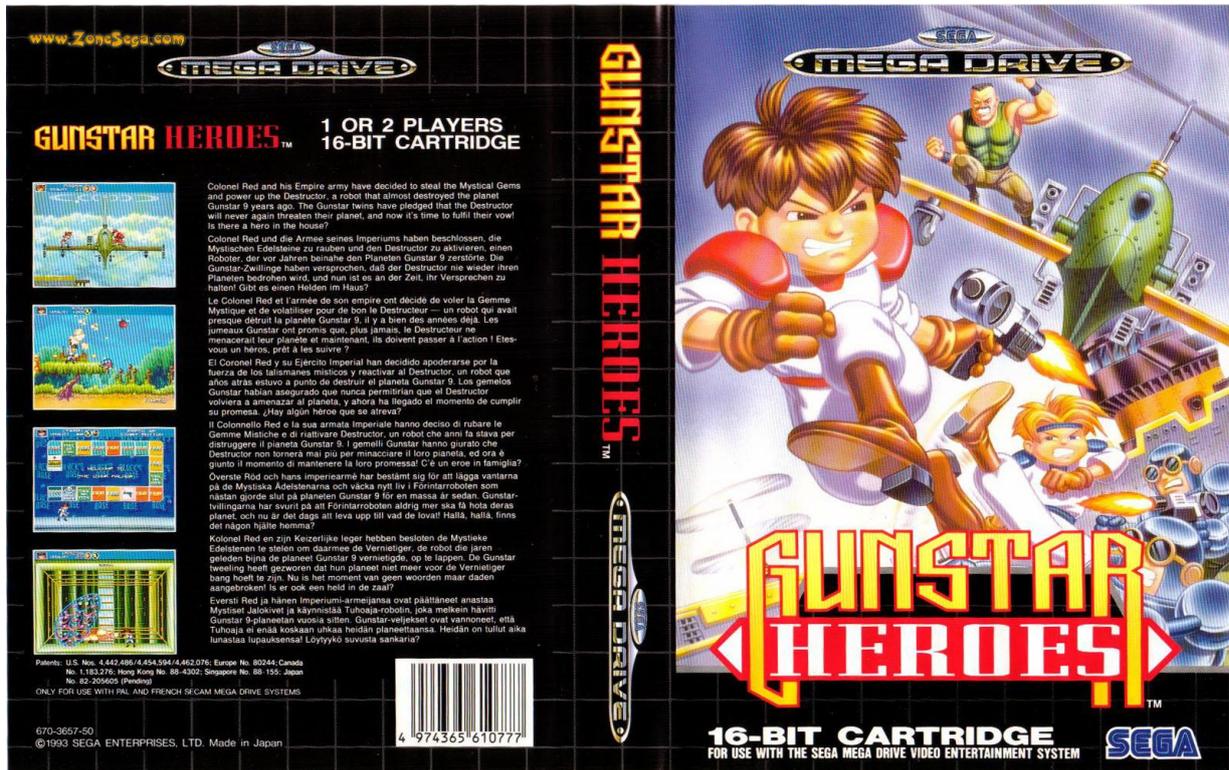
Gunstar Heroes uses the horizontal run and

**GUNSTAR HEROES
TREASURE
SEGA MEGA DRIVE VERSION TESTED
REVIEWED BY ALEX REEVES
PROOF READ BY PHIL WHEATLEY**

gun format familiar to players of Contra, Metal Slug and Forgotten Worlds, scrolling left to right with multiple platforms and routes through each level. An over-complicated game intro establishes that your heroes "Red" and "Blue" have to cross deserts, aerial platforms, caverns and huge battleships on a mission to rescue

Red's brother "Green" from the evil "Black".

There are 7 levels to complete, each featuring unique locations and level bosses, and a whole bunch of minor enemies and mini-bosses to defeat along the way. In fact so many that the screen sometimes seems filled with sprites, projectiles and huge blooming explosions,



all of which don't seem to incur any kind of slowdown from the 16 bit heart of the Megadrive.

You can choose from 4 weapons, Force, Lightning, Fire and Chaser, which can be combined to make hybrid weapons, giving different perks and allow for different play styles. In two player mode you can even work in tandem, throwing each other at weaker enemies, another way of destroying them as well as the huge bosses.

Bucking convention, you can pick from any one of 4 levels to start, allowing you to take different routes through the game

should you get stuck, which due to the advanced difficulty levels, often happens. Death would come when you took a certain number of hits and drained your power bar, giving you the opportunity to quit the game or return to the start of the current level.

As with all Treasure games to follow, the sprites were incredibly detailed, and they used every last ounce of processing power from the Megadrive, with the kind of graphical scaling and rotation normally associated with the FX chip augmented Super Nintendo.





Some of the stand out moments include the 'sand' boss, created from shifting blocks of sand forming different shapes including a running man, a Treasure hallmark, with this character also featuring in a later shoot em up Radiant Silvergun. There is also a board game level full of bosses, and a mine level featuring an Indiana Jones style mine cart chase.

Getting hold of Gunstar Heroes these days is hampered by its relative rarity and cult status, but you can still obtain a copy on ebay for around £20, and you can also find it on the Sega

Megadrive Classic Collection, with 3 other games – which bizarrely is cheaper. 360 owners can also download from XBOX Live Arcade.

Whilst not selling in the volumes it deserved, due to Treasures' lack of previous form at the time, and any kind of marketing muscle – it just couldn't compete with the kind of money being spent on the Blue Hedgehog. For lucky gamers who did stumble upon it, they got to experience one of the great games of the 16 bit era, and the birth of a developer who would go on to be recognised as one of the greatest.

95%



"F eelin' hot hot

hot!"

Summer has finally arrived... and what better way to spend it than to head down to the water, throw in a giant inflated inner tube, jump aboard and go with the flow.

Here we have a classic that allows you to do just that. As soon you jump in, the current takes you on a wild adventure, it's calm at the beginning as familiarize yourself with the very original method of steering, your hands. Both hands dipped in the

**TOBIN
MIDWAY
ARCADE VERSION TESTED
REVIEWED BY ROBERT JOY
PROOF READ BY GRAHAM ROBERTS**

water at the same time (in the game of course) by hitting the left and right buttons in sync powers you faster giving more straight line speed, take one hand out, or hit just the one button, rudders your tube left or right, which hysterically sees you splashing for control.

Things are never that straight forward, so to speak, when you realise it's a race, and not a fair one either,

bumping into each other is one sure way of sending the other guy over one of the many sharp rocks that break the surface, which if not quickly avoided by furiously splashing in the opposite direction can leave your inflatable punctured and speeding round and round till the air has depleted.

Rocks aren't your only hazard in the river as further down stream you'll come across

fishermen casting in sharp hooks forcing you to take another route over fast rapids through the narrow rocky canyons, bouncing you out of control and straight into a floating tree trunk, bursting your ride once again and allowing your opponent to zoom past, mocking you on the way.

Gates are situated down the ever meandering river, giving point bonuses if steadily navigated through, bumping up the score. Inevitably there's only room for one of you so bouncing out your opponent or throwing a soda can at him, which can be found and picked up downstream can give you the advantage and get you there first.

Falling from the many waterfalls, the scenery



begins to change the further downstream you get, throwing a whole new array of obstacles and perils in your path to avoid, leaving you wondering what could be around the next corner. This and the sheer fun factor is what will keep you coming back for more.

The game comes into its own when you hit two player. This is where the fun begins with both of you speeding down the

river, bouncing in all directions just to get ahead.

Graphically a pleasing game with simplistic game-play, this mid 80s gem is sheer funtastic, soaking, mayhem so dive in! Bring a friend and prepare for a wet and wild ride.

Rating 75%.



"Do you have

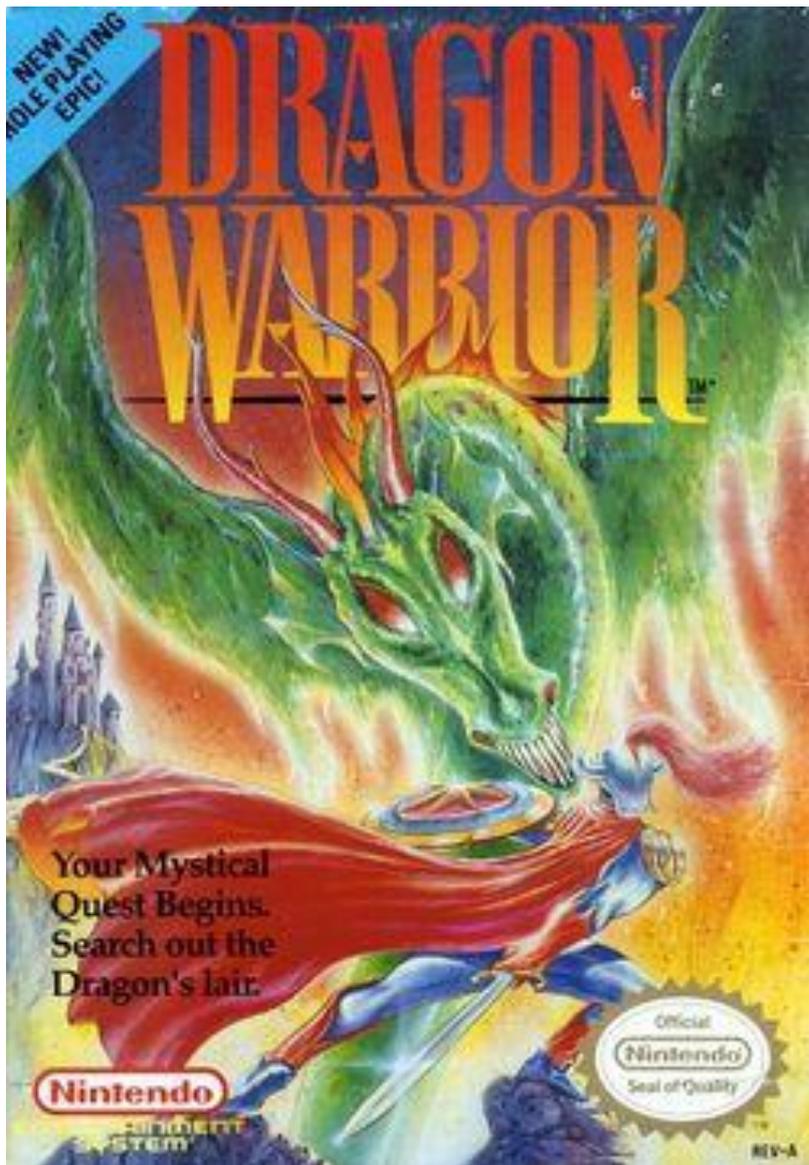
the balls to retrieve the Balls of Light?"

Every gamer has or will have several personal firsts as part of their gaming experience. We all remember the first time we saved Princess Toadstool in Super Mario Bros, or

**DRAGON WARRIOR
NINTENDO / CHUNSOFT
NES VERSION TESTED
REVIEWED BY DUSTON JUSTICE
PROOF READ BY PHIL WHEATLEY**

the first video game we ever completed. Some of us remember the first time we played a game that was unlike anything else we had ever seen before. For many gamers, that game was Dragon Warrior.

You are the descendant of Erdrick. Your coming was foretold by the great seer Mahetta. King Lorick XVI summons you as soon as you arrive at Tantegel Castle. He recognizes your lineage and



charges you to retrieve the Balls of Light from the Dragonlord who has stolen them. His daughter Princess Gwaelin has also been kidnapped. You are hereby sent forth to save the land of Alefgard from the evil Dragonlord and his many minions.

You begin the game with not even clothes to wear. The king

allows you to take a torch, a magic key (which will be used immediately), and 120 gold for equipment. You have nothing more to go on than what the people of Alefgard know and are willing to tell. Only through trial and many battles will you gain the strength and wealth needed to explore every corner of the land and destroy the creatures

that would bring about its ruin.

Dragon Warrior is the very definition of a console role-playing game. Your player begins the game quite weak. You must defeat monsters to gain experience which increases your strength and abilities. These monsters also drop money which is spent on items and better weapons and armor. It is not solely the items you obtain that help to overcome challenges, nor is it the reflexes and reaction time of the player. Instead it is the growth of the player character and the wits of the player that will see you through to the end. I will go as far to say that without these key elements, a game cannot truly be called an RPG.

Speaking about firsts, this was the first RPG many had ever played. Rarely before had we seen a game where the character improved over time. Most games only grant temporary improvements, such as power-ups or new



items and weapons. The heroes in other games we were playing at the time were almost useless without their fire-flowers and sack full of boomerangs, bombs, and other magical items.

Besides that for a first, how many other games of the era (spoilers) had you save the princess in the middle of the game? How many other princesses told the hero, "I love thee."

Once you depart the castle you will find that as you walk about the land of Alefgard you will encounter

enemies at random. The encounter rate depends on what terrain you are passing through. Plains have the fewest encounters, the rate increases a bit in the forests, and mountains have the highest rate of all. Craggy mountains and water cannot be traversed, and bridges mean enemies will be more powerful on the other side.

The farther away from Tantegel Castle you go, the more powerful the enemies encountered. There will be many battles fought to increase the player character's

strength so that you can go a little further with each trip out.

You will eventually learn that three items are needed to reach the dreaded lair of the Dragonlord, Charlock Castle. Once these are retrieved, the way into darkness will be opened, and you can delve into the dungeons and finally face the most terrible of foes.

To say that you will have to spend quite a bit of time grinding levels is almost not worth mentioning of a game of this type. Level-grinding would become a staple of the genre. To a gamer who has only played modern role-playing games, or even some of those on the SNES, it may seem excessive and tedious. It is for this reason that I recommend this title for two types of gamers: those new to the genre and hard-core RPG fans.

You cannot find a better game to introduce a young gamer to the RPG genre. It has all of the key elements and a

simplicity that makes the game very easy to grasp for someone unfamiliar with all these experience points and statistics. All you really have is strength, agility, hit points, magic points, attack, and defense. Arguably these are the bare minimum required for an RPG, and not at all that difficult to handle. The spells are equally easy to understand having names like HEAL, HURT and OUTSIDE allowing little confusion as to what they do.

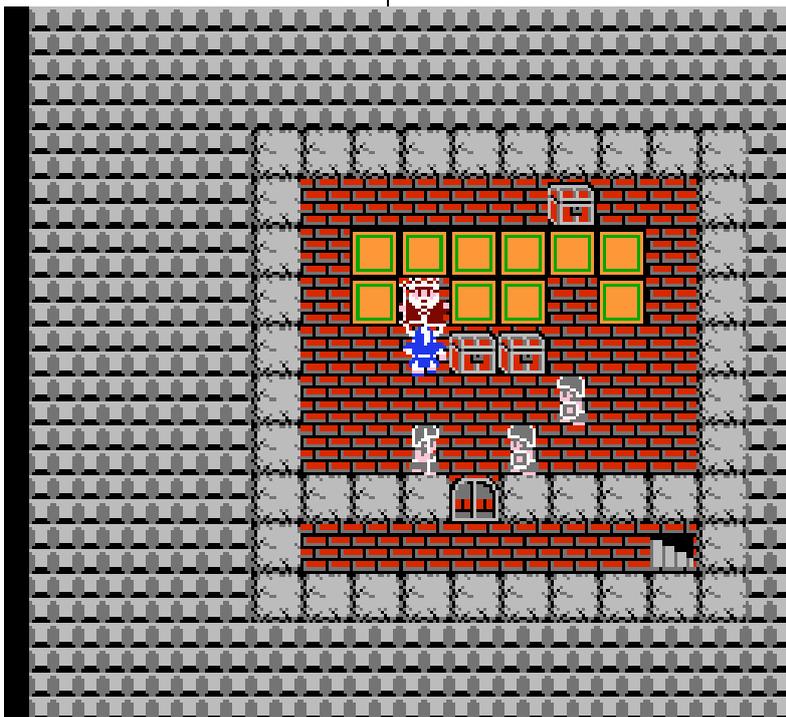
The challenge of this game comes from a lack of information. That is not to say that

the information cannot be obtained within the game. You begin knowing very little, but after exploring throughout the land and talking to everyone you can you will eventually learn all you need to know to complete the game. This is made possible by perhaps the greatest achievement made by the people at Enix: the English Translation.

Not only is the translation useful and easy to understand, but it does a lot in adding to the atmosphere. Every bit of dialogue uses archaic language that one might come to

expect from Arthurian legends. People speak the way you might expect them to speak in a western fantasy world. They even sometimes have harsh or annoying personalities in their one or two lines of dialogue. One girl says, "I hate people! GO! LEAVE ME!" and you will find a man and a woman waiting for each other on opposite ends of a town wondering why the other is so late. This is a translation that not only helps you solve the game's riddles, but sets the stage in a way I have not yet seen in any other game or series. Toshiko Watson for translating and Scott Pelland for revising truly deserve recognition for making what could have been a fatal and all too common flaw of the era into something that makes the game shine to this day.

It is expected of the music to create a game's atmosphere, especially when graphics may not be able to. Dragon Warrior does not





disappoint. Though there are few different pieces of music in the game, each one works perfectly. I find myself humming the overland theme when I am walking alone outside. It is just the perfect tune for getting out and exploring. The castle theme is perhaps the best. It sounds regal and important. It really helps picture it as a scene in a big-budget movie.

The graphics are solid and serve their

purpose well. Everything represented on the screen is clearly what it is meant to be, although I can't shake the idea that the characters look like they came from a medieval Lego set. The battle screen graphics are colorful and detailed. It depicts the enemies large and bold, and the landscape is beautiful and has a strangely effective bit of depth to it, even if it is the same one you

see anywhere regardless of the terrain.

If you have never played an RPG and are interested in getting into the genre, you can't find a better place to start than Dragon Warrior on the NES. If you consider yourself a hard-core RPG player and you haven't completed this game then don't be a noob and play Dragon Warrior! "Your mystical quest begins. Search out the dragon's lair."

96%



As the years pass

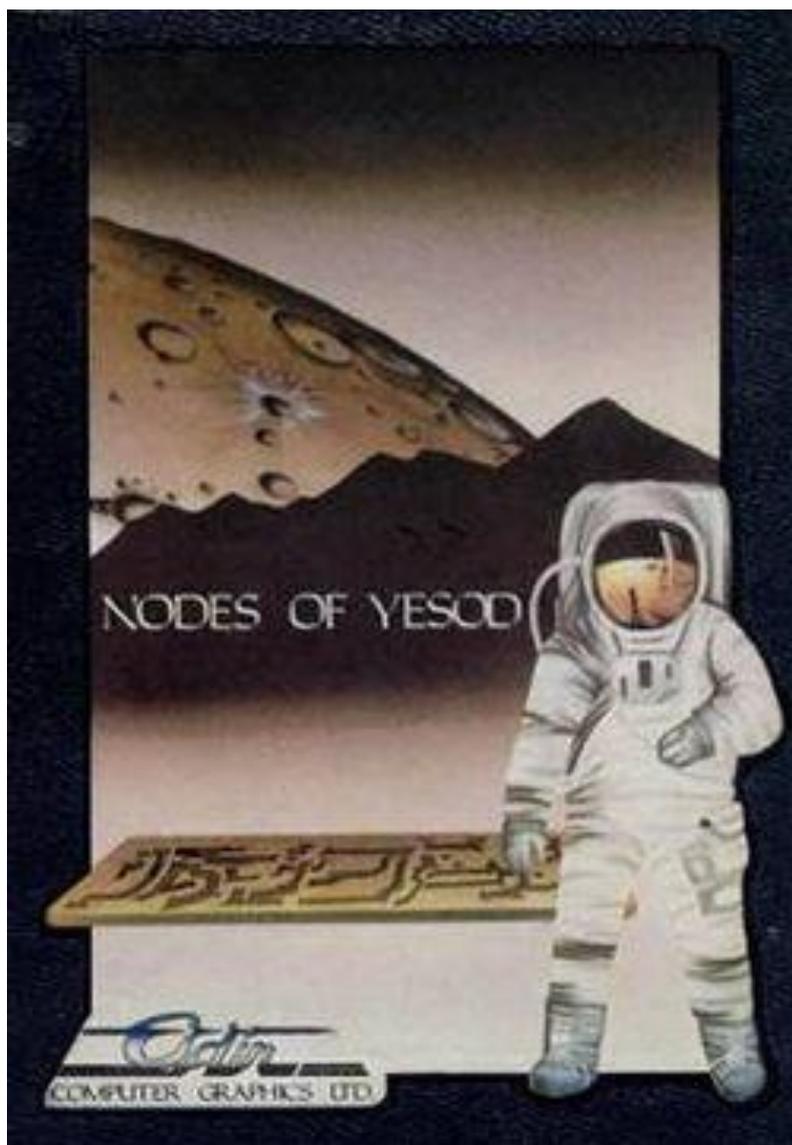
by, this lesser known gem is becoming a bit of a cult classic. The game was first released in 1985 by Odin Computer Graphics, a software house which was enjoying the fact people thought they were a sister company of Ultimate Play the Game. It was easy to see why because the packaging and artwork was similar, and the graphics also resembled that of the Ultimate's later titles.

**NODES OF YESOD
ODIN COMPUTER GRAPHICS
C64 VERSION TESTED
REVIEWED BY PHIL WHEATLEY**

The game was available on a variety of systems such as the C64, Amstrad CPC, the ZX Spectrum (48k/128k) and the rare Elan Enterprise 64. It's worth noting that the 128k version of the Spectrum game had better quality music over the 48k, and also included synthesised speech. The music was composed by Fred Gray who was also

responsible for the music in Shadowfire, and the similarities can be heard which isn't such a bad thing.

Onto the plot. Some strange signals have been intercepted from the Moon, and an astronaut by the name of Charlie Fotheringham-Grunes has been given the task of locating the exact location of the signal's source. Charlie's eccentric



surname was in fact an amalgamation of the lead developer's surnames; Stuart Fotheringham and Colin Grunes.

Once you landed on the moon, the first thing you had to do was capture one of the local friendly moles, once under your command, the mole would happily burrow through the Moon surface, giving

you access to the underground complex. Once below ground, you were faced with a series of rooms, caverns and wind tunnels. Traveling around whilst trying not to fall to your death would be tricky enough, but was made even more dangerous by the many weird inhabitants that got in your way.

Thankfully you don't die instantly when you touch a meanie, but your life force would quickly deplete if you get caught in a tangle with one. You also had lives which could be replenished with spaceman symbols dotted around the network. However, your main focus should be on collecting a series of Alchiems which ultimately would lead you to the final destination, the Monolith from which the signals are coming from.

What gives this game a great replay factor, is the Alchiems are found in a different location each time. With that said, there are certain rooms where you are more likely to find them. Already the difficulty factor is racking up, but there is one further problem...the red kleptomaniac spaceman. He will appear at random times in the game and steal one of your Alchiems. He is quite difficult to avoid, however you can drop a limited number of gravity sticks which



will temporarily render him helpless.

Occasionally you would come to areas that appear to have no logical way out, at this point it was worth grabbing your mole (that sounds odd!) and directing him to the wall's perimeter, if you were lucky he will find a weak spot and tunnel his way through. This was quite a unique feature in 1985!

Another great addition to the game was the wind tunnels. You can either slowly descend to the bottom, or you can wave your arms frantically to float back to the surface. Make sure you are facing the right direction though when moving up, otherwise

you may find yourself taking a much quicker route to the bottom again!

Once you had collected all the Alchiems in the correct order and have found your way to the Monolith, you have completed the game, something I still haven't achieved nearly 30 years on.

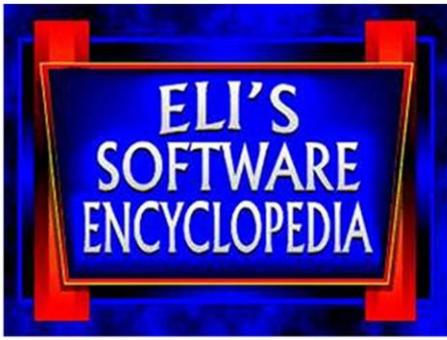
In 2010, there was an

anniversary edition created for iOS devices, which sported updated graphics and an orchestral version of the music but all still in keeping with the original.

This game has truly stood the test of time and really worth checking out, especially if you are a fan of the Ultimate Play the Game titles.

TRGN Rating 94%





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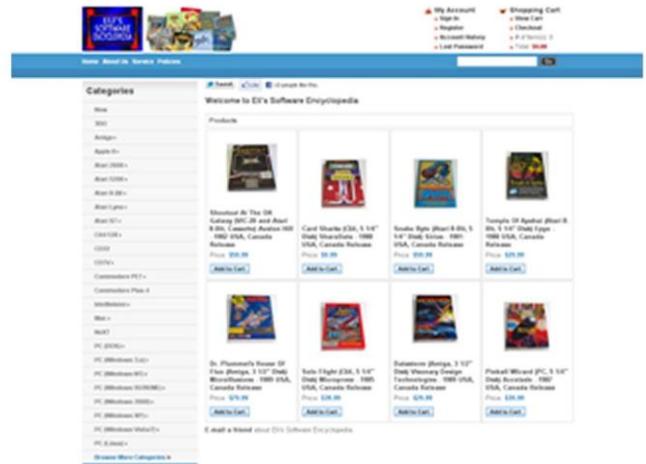


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