ORIC USER MONTHLY

I ♥ O.U.M.

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No. 20 April 1989

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Oric User Monthly

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Issue 20, we made it. OUM is still becoming steadily larger and I promise that I'll try to give an acurate readership figure as soon as possible. You don't know just how lucky you are to actually be reading this now, I don't think that you have any idea of just how difficult it has been to get this magazine ready on time ! I've had multiples' of problems, which leads me onto a couple of apologies, firstly from myself. I would like to apologize to everyone who ordered 'The Haunt' and had to wait over two or three weeks to receive it, despite OUM (Issue 19) stating that it would be sent off within 7 days maximum. Shortly after issue 19 was sent out my faithful cassette-deck gave a dying splutter and finally broke-down on me. I tryed to buy an Acorn Alfø3 (Oric recommended) but over 5 places I tried were out of stock, as it isn't made anymore. I 'phoned over 20 places trying to obtain a cassette-deck for the Oric, and finally bought one. It didn't work so I returned with it, and got a new one, which also didn't work, all the time the people were waiting for 'The Haunt'. Then I bought an ALBA c190 cassette-recorder which works perfectly, and finally orders were sent off. Orders available to be sent off now, so if you want a copy of the game send £ 1.99 to us and it WILL arrive within 7 days maximum. Second apology is from Allan Whitaker who would like to aoplogize to all people who had to return their copies of HGC's new release, "Football".

Talking of software...who's not doing their fair share then ? I hear that HGC has yet to sell 25 copies of 'The Last Warrior', which I find very surprising as it is a very professional adventure (from France, converted to English) that received a very good review in OUM and IOU, and costs just £ 4.99 inc. P&P, please order a copy today or you may convince Allan that there isn't enough people willing to cover the production costs. I myself have only sold about 15 copies of 'The Haunt', which I find equally stunning, it only costs £ 1.99, and is a great adventure !! I'll say no more.....

We plan to review all the latest releases,two are looked at this month and more will follow soon. Despite the fact that OUM has nigh on doubled in size (5 to 9 pages) since starting, we are still short of space, and so COMPUTER FILE will have to be omitted from the magazine, you can't have anything now, can you ?

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Review: Indiana Smith
Supplier: HGC (Mailorder)
Price: £ 3.50 inc. P&P

I haven't reviewed an Oric adventure for quite a while, so this is a nice change. Indiana Smith is a Quilled adventure that places you as a character who has returned home after drinking one too many of the old lager pints, and you've awoke at an unfamiliar location. You have to find your way to civilisation or wander on lost forever.

This fairly original scenario leads onto a game with little puzzles which didn't give me much of a chance to explore as I couldn't get very far into it, which surprised me a little as I'm usually quite decent at adventures.

The game is not bad, and has nice humourous touches, for example, try typing SCORE and you see the latest world-cup England result ! The vocabulary is a little weak at places, but it shouldn't be an unwelcome addition if you lack a number of adventures in your collection. The price is decent and represents a fair adventure.

Vocabulary: 5   Atmosphere: 6   Graphics: N/A   Overall: 6

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You probably remember that last month's news section looked extremely promising, with the Oric name being under consideration for purchase, and the re-release of the Telestrat, since then I haven't heard anything else about the situation, but this sort of business is often slow so be patient and as soon as anything happens you'll read it hear.

News is good with Simon Houlton being able to supply just about everything ever created (and a few besides) for the Oric. Simon is selling (take a deep breath): Organ Master, Drum machine (not Mick Poats, their own device), Speech Synthesisers (+ software), Numeric Keypad, Datarecorders, Power supplies, disk drives, discs (all sizes), cassettes, dust covers, light pens, Atmos's, Oric 1's 16k/48k, and so much more ! Enough ? No ? Okay then, he can also supply loads of cheap software titles including many French classics such as Vortex, Talisman, Lorigraph and Hyperball. Simon says that he can probably obtain <u>any</u> software title, why not take the chance and contact Simon Houlton on:

Tel: (0604) 890821 (day) 412690 (eve.)

Write: Mr Simon Houlton, c/o Pioneer Aggregates, Clifford Hill, Little Houghton, Npton, NN7, 1AL.

I haven't seen all of the prices but hearing a few then I have to say that you won't find cheaper anywhere else. Demand is high and some stocks are already selling-out, so write/'phone today.

There is a new software title available for ATMOS owners on <u>disk only</u>, it is a great drawing-aid called SKETCH written in BASIC/machine-code by Robert Bray & Neville Clark. It features draw/erase single-lines, arcs, circles, and boxs, clear screen, change paper/ink colours, fill shapes, change pattern value, write characters to screen, save/load screens to disk, store screens in memory, swop screen with one already created (in memory), copy/double the size of any part of screen, etc.

This wonderful utility is a HIRES with a help program (17 pages) on the disk, and is available in ORIC DOS V1.1 & SUPER2.DOS. Now, you may already be willing to obtain this and would probably pay about £ 7.95 for it, but the amazing fact is that SKETCH is <u>free</u> ! Just send a formatted disk and 28p in stamps (for return postage) in a padded-envelope (for return post). You can <u>not</u> miss-out on this offer so send off straight away, but remember that it's only ATMOS (not Oric-1) <u>disk</u> users. Address at bottom of page.

As I'm putting this together, it is late March, so the April 1st Alternative Micro Show hasn't taken place yet, so a full report will be printed next issue. The show has many stands and ours features The Haunt, OUM, back-issues, League Soccer, Oric Games Guide, etc. Capri Marketing also have a stand. The stand is run by Dave Dick and Jonathon Haworth, so it should be a hectic day, it'll have taken place by the time you read this.

League Soccer is available now for theAtmos only (oric 1 version in consideration) and is our 2nd software release. It costs just £ 3.99 on cassette inc. P&P. You can send off now.

For SKETCH, write to either:

Mr R.Bray, 117 Brashead, Bonhill, Alexandria, Dunbartonshire, G83, 9NB.   or,

Mr N.Clark, 23 Park Rd, Ashington, Northumberland, NE63, 8DZ.

Top Ten Charts: Compiled by readers

Title	Company	Last Month	
1. Zorgons Revenge	IJK	1	
2. The Boss	Peaksoft	3	* (F)
3. Xenon III	IJK	2	*
4. Maze Rally	FGC	5	*
5. The Hellion	Orpheus	4	
6. The Ultra	PSS	8	*
7. Defence Force	Tansoft	6	
8. Don't Press the letterQ	IJK	9	
9. Karate	Gasoline	7	* (F)
10. Tendre Poulet	Loriciels	NE	(F)

* Reviewed in OUM   (F) French software and/or hard to obtain in GB

Comment: The Boss continues to rise and looks set to rumble the top spot, it hasn't stopped rising since it entered the charts a few months ago. The Ultra and Tendre Poulet both rise a bit, and there are a couple of titles looking certain to enter next month, keep the lists coming in.

'CHARTS'

For sale/wanted:

Wanted: Peach program "COPY" or "HICOPY" for Atmos.

Ron Evans, 157 Lymington Ave, Wood Green, London, N22, 6JJ.

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Miss Judy Simms would like to write to and/or meet other Oric owners, to talk to, swap hints, and possibly swap programs and software.

Judy Simms, Flat 1, 20 Holly Rd, Edgbaston, B16, 9NH.

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For sale: Multigames 1, Invaders and Light Cycle- all Atmos/Oric-1 except Multigames 1 (4 out of 5 are though), £ 1.50 each. Old PCN magazines to swap for other magazines, they include plenty of Oric listings,tips,etc.

Matthew Shakeshaft, 47 Newton Rd, Ashton-on-Ribble, Preston, Lancs. , PR2,1D

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Wanted: 2nd-hand disk drive, either a Microdisc system or an OPELCO drive. Offers no more than £ 70.00.

All enquiries to OUM.(quote ad. no. 000204)

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Wanted: 2nd-hand printer, contact OUM for enquiries-must have 80 columns. Quote ad. no. 000205

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Wanted: Disk-drive (2nd-hand). All enquiries to:

Mr T.C. Brown, 8 Fleming Gdns, Tilbury, Essex, RM18,8SR.

If you want to advertise in OUM then please write out the advertisement in no more than 40 words (exc. name + address) and send it to us. There is no charge. Please state if you wish your own address to be printed or if you wish for OUM to pass on enquiries. There is no charge for us forwarding these advertisements.queries.

Please help to compile the OUM software charts by sending us your top 3 favourite games list, plus the name of the software title you don't like.

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Last month we printed details of where to obtain details of how to join the DISC'ORIC group in France, if you wish to see details then you can also send a s.a.e. to:

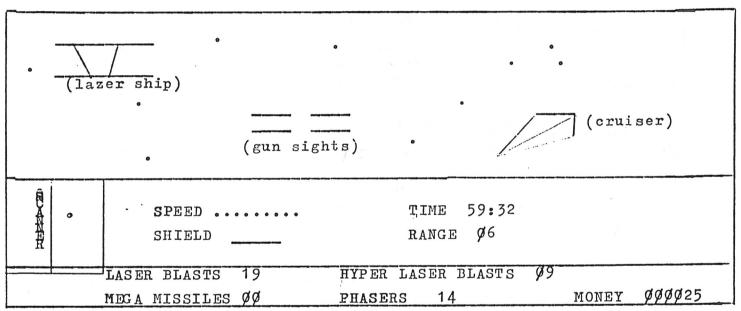Dave Dick, 65 Barnard Crescent,Aylesbury,Bucks, HP21 , 9PW.

[DAVE'S DATA!]

Game: Starwind
Supplier: HGC (Mailorder)
Price: £ 6.50 (cass) / £ 9.10 (disk)

Written by Alistair Way, this takes 3 minutes to load and initialize.
You are at the controls of your space craft and have one hour to save your
planet from the KROUTON ship. To get near the KROUTON ship, you must fight
through a squadron of different fighter-ships each denoted by string
drawings. You set your speed, line up your sights and when in range, shoot
with a specific part of your artillery. The manual tells you the name of
your attacker and iit's strangth, etc.
When you hit one you are awarded money, which you can use to improve your
weaponry. To trade, you go into 'hyperspace' and dock. When in the 'Galactic
 Shop' you can buy, sell, or pass. You then return to whence you came from,
or alternatively you can try to avoid the many mines and do battle with
the KROUTON mother-ship.

Cursor keys control your movement, whilst SHIFT, SPACE & RETURN fire various
weapons.
Set out below is your cockpit view, but please note that your screen
display will be more detailed and much more colourful.

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          (lazer ship)                                           .
                   .
                              ___   ___                     _____
                              ___   ___                     \         /  (cruiser)
                            (gun sights)       .             _____/

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 |S|         |                                                               |
 |C|    o    |    SPEED .........           TIME  59:32                      |
 |A|         |    SHIELD ____               RANGE  Ø6                         |
 |N|         |                                                               |
 |N|_____|_____|
 |E| LASER BLASTS    19      HYPER LASER BLASTS   Ø9                          |
 |R| MEGA MISSILES  ØØ       PHASERS     14          MONEY   ØØØØ25           |
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Note: as this is not a screen-shot, there will obviously be screen-copy
      errors, but it simply represents the type of display you will see.

In conclusion, £ 6.50 is a bit pricey for what you get,you might say ; but
what about the games you paid £ 8.50 for ? Some of those were alot worse
than this. This NEW (1989 copyright !), loads easily and has a manual with
it. Graphics & sound are adequate. Although not a classic, it could become
quite addictive.

Graphics: 7   Sound: 6   Addictiveness: 8   Overall: 7

PS: If you attended the OUM stand at the Alternative Micro Show in London
on April the 1st 1989, then you could've made up your own mind.

Next month, I'll look at another new release.

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'The Oric Games Guide' : Over 25 reviews in one booklet, from OUM: £ 1.00

CHIT-CHAT!

Chit-Chat

We had a great reply to this topic, many thanks to everyone who took the time and effort to vote. The topic was how Oric should now be marketed, the options were:

(i) Oric needs new software, it would stir interest in Oric, and it would lead to more titles being released.

(ii) Oric now needs more computers sold, so that software houses would notice the Oric.

The results:

Option1: 84%
Option2: 16%

Now, the results may look pretty convincing for a No. 1 victory, but it is amazing just how many of you actually stated that option 2 should be followed up.

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HINTS + TIPS

You too can be like Ben Johnson, with this tip for Zoo-Olympics from Dave Dick, Aylesbury. Before starting a sport press D and your animal is now doped ! The dope probably wears off after a little while so use it to cheat in Swimming, 100m dash & long jump and play normally on javelin.

A not-so-sneaky way to cheat is to use 'infinite lives', and these one's come from Jonathon Haworth:

Breakout (IJK) : POKE #0DAC,#32: POKE #0DAD,#32

Fragg Chase   : POKE #2F71,#EA : DOKE #2F72,#EAEA : CALL#2F05

Honey Kong   : DOKE #51FC,#90

Also from Jonathon, a way to slow down Acheron's Rage.

DOKE #306,#950 : CALL#900

You may have noticed that the solution to 'Wizard of Akyrz' has suddenly been deleted, well there just wasn't room in the last couple of issues. I've decided that any readers stuck in this adventure can write to me and I'll solve the problem. So, write if you have trouble with any adventure and I'll try my best to help you.

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Yet again OUM gives you something for nothing ! Here you have the chance to pick up a free copy of 'The Haunt', just for answering a simple question. One lucky reader will win this game inc., P&P, but if you already have it then ask for the next issue (issue 22 after result is printed) instead, inc. P&P. The question is:

" Oric, to my knowledge, has only ever had one game released from a film licence, what was this game called, and who released (NOT programmed) it ?"

Remember, Severn programmed it, but didn't sell it. Please send all entries to us by no later than April 20th.

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Last month I appealed to readers to send 50p to OUM to help fund the stand at the Alternative Micro Show. About 4 readers kindly contributed (there was no obligation) which totalled about £ 5.00 as more than 50p was sent by some. It did help a little to the funding, and many thanks to everyone who helped.

RAMbling in the ROM

Welcome to the first of an occasional series in which I hope to illuminate some of the darker recesses of the various Oric ROMs. It will not all be serious stuff! Just to introduce myself, I bought my first Atmos in April, 1984, and latterly wrote on matters French in 'Your Oric' under the pen-name "Archimedes". It was only after I used the name that Acorn pinched it, honestly!

Just to bring matters French up-to-date, Oric International continues to trade spasmodically in receivership. Alan Whitaker (he of HGC fame) is attempting to introduce here some of the splendid French Oric software, suitably translated where necessary. I hope he can - of the 160 French titles I have, many are equal to or surpass the best English software.

To business, then, and for my first offering - hands up those who knew that Oric U.K. introduced a second version of the V1.1 ROM before they went bankrupt? Everyone is well aware of the spurious loading 'Errors Found' message that attracted such adverse publicity when the Atmos was launched; we all know the purpose of the '*' programme at the start of commercial tapes. The routine responsible is that at #E4AC which synchronises with the cassette and reads the programme header. The error flag is location #02B1, which is 0 unless errors are detected, in which case it contains 1. If the synchronisation process involves a parity error (as it frequently will) then at #E6F2 in the read byte routine starting at #E6C9, a ROL #02B1 instruction sets the error flag. The first version of the 1.1 ROM omitted to reset this flag to zero after synchronisation and before reading the header, programme name, and the programme code. A perfect load therefore still produced a false error message and prevented autorun.

Original V1.1		Later V1.1		
E4AC	JSR $E735	E4AC	JSR $E735	Get in synch with tape
E4AF	JSR $E6C9	E4AF	JSR $E6C9	Get byte from tape
E4B2	CMP #24	E4B2	CMP #24	Seek start of block
E4B4	BNE $E4AF	E4B4	BNE $E4AF	If not '$', try again
		E4B6	STX #02B1	Zero error flag
E4B6	LDX #09	E4B9	LDX #09	9 byte header
E4B8	JSR $E6C9	E4BB	JSR $E6C9	Read a byte
E4BB	STA $02A7,X	E4BE	STA $02A7,X	Save header in memory
E4BE	DEX	E4C1	DEX	
E4BF	BNE $E4BB	E4C2	BNE $E4BB	
E4C1	JSR $E6C9	E4C4	JSR $E6C9	First letter of name
E4C4	BEQ $E4D3	E4C7	BEQ $E4D3	End of name: jump
E4C6	STA $0293,X			Store filename chars
E4C9	INX			
E4CA	CPX #10		(15	16 chars read?
E4CC	BNE $E4C1		bytes)	No, repeat
E4CE	JSR $E6C9			Yes, load rest until
E4D1	BNE $E4CE			00 is found
		E4C9	CPX #10	16 chars read?
		E4CB	BCS $E4C4	Yes, load rest but
	(12			don't store
	bytes)	E4CD	STA $02903,X	Store the name
		E4D0	INX	Index next charac
		E4D1	BNE $E4C4	

```
E4D3    STA $0293,X     E4D3    STA $0293,X     Store terminator (00)
E4D6    JSR $E594       E4D6    JSR $E594       Print "Found.."
E4D9    JSR $E790       E4D9    JSR $E790       Correct name found?
E4DC    TXA             E4DC    TXA
E4DD    BNE $E4AC       E4DD    BNE $E4AC       No, start again
E4DF    RTS             E4DF    RTS
```

A comparison of the two routines above shows how Oric optimised the
routine to gain three bytes to insert the necessary instruction to
zero the flag (STX 02B1). The only section of code that differs in the
two versions is that between #E4B6 and #E4D1. Those with the later
version 1.1 ROM should have noticed the lack of 'Errors Found'
messages when loading programmes without the "*" programme ahead.

A quick PRINT PEEK(#E4B6) will tell you which version you have. The
original ROM will give 162 (=#A2), the later version 142 (=#8E). As to
the date when the change was made, it is shrouded in mystery.
Presumably it was after the original batch of ROMs were used up. All I
can contribute is that when my first Atmos developed a fault just as
Oric U.K. went under, the receiver sent me a brand new one complete
with box, manual, leads, etc. for 15 which had the later ROM. Can
anyone throw anymore light on the date the later version first
appeared?

Just so V1.0 owners don't feel neglected, try CALL #E70E. The routine
at this address is never called by the ROM, but in fact prints on the
status line "Software by PETER HALFORD and ANDY BROWN", then waits for
a keypress before deleting everything but "ANDY BROWN"!! Clearly Andy
Brown felt himself worthy of more glory than Mr. Halford!
Incidentally, the message itself is stored at #EB8D to #EBB5. V1.1
owners have been deprived of this little nugget.

Enough for the moment. If Robert approves of my ramblings, more may
follow!

                                        Jon Haworth

Approval given. You can all expect to see more ramblings from Jon in
the near future, as long as Jon has the imagination to continue, and
if he hasn't then I'll cancel his subscription!

Changing the subject, I can recommend the ACORN ALFØ3 data-recorder sold
by J & N Bull (see last issue for address), HGC and Simon Houlton, for
about £ 16.00. It has a lead which takes power from the Oric and is a
superb loader. I can also recommend the ALBA DR-16Ø which I know loads
all titles that I have, except one, which wouldn't load on any. It is
available from many shops and Argos for around £ 15.00, comes with
lead (no plug, as normal).

Software bargains from:HGC (Mailorder): (Ø61)-3Ø3-7369
                      :Software Cellar: Luton 4ØØ861
                      :Capri Marketing Ltd (Ø6285)-31244

OUM have 3 more titles in the pipe-line, HGC also have more planned, so
please support your Oric and buy these titles.

[READERS HELPLINE]

Last month I said that we had too many questions for "Readers Helpline", well some of them were not really suitable for the sections, as some were really better suited to the 'For sale/Wanted' section, and some simply required a yes or no answer, which I answered by post. So, if you have any problems with programming, queries about OUM, software, hardware, etc. then get writing.

Problem: How do you save & re-load variables, for example, in a game you may have £ 220,000, and you can save it. Then, when you play again, you can load in the saved details and have the same money.

From: Arnt Erik Isaksen, Norway.

Answer: " The answer is fairly simple actually, first of all, you must decide which variables you want saving. In our case, lets take them as X, Y and Z. You must then put these variables into an array, which can be any letter, we'll call it B. So, enter the variables values that you wish to save, and to save them, enter:

B(1)=X : B(2)=Y : B(3)=Z

Then you can enter the saving command, which is STORE B,"Filename"

To re-load them, enter RECALL B,"Filename".

Remember, your variables probably won't be X,Y & Z. If your array is more than 9 (if you have more than 9 variables in it) then you'll have to DIM it.
- -
Now, to put the array back into variables, enter X=B(1):Y=B(2):Z=B(3)

Helpline response: Last month Arnt Isaksen asked how to detect multiple key presses, Pete Canning has wrote in to say that there is a section on this subject in the book "Oric Atmos and Oric 1 Graphics and Machine Code Techniques" by Geoff Phillips,published by McGraw-Hill ISBN 0-07-084743-6.

Issue 21 costs 55p + A5 s.a.e. or 90p without the s.a.e, 1st class postage.
A 5 month subscription costs £ 2.75 + 5 A5 s.a.e's, or £ 4.50 without the s.a.e's, 1st class postage.
A 12 month subscription inc. 1st class P&P costs just £ 10.00,a discounted price.
Back issues: 50p for 1 ; £ 1.00 for 2 ; £ 1.40 for 3
All orders for issue 21 should arrive by no later than April 20th.
Only cash/postal orders & cheques accepted, payable to: " O.U.M. (R.Cook) "
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Late news: Simon Houltons mailorder company (called Wolsoft) is buying all the Oric stock from WE (Software), and will soon buy all the stock from HGC as Allan Whitaker hasn't the time, after taking on more responsibilities at work. Wolsoft may also buy all the Loriciels titles from Elite Ltd. They sell Oric-1 ROM's for £ 5.00, normally £ 22.95 !!!
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Next month: Review of Winter Games, report on Alternative Micro Show, news, interview with the author of Don't Press the Letter 'Q',Hints & Tips, etc. , etc. Just 55p, the only Oric magazine in Britain.

Editor: R.Cook   Dave's Data: Dave Dick
Printing: T.Cook   Cover: Jonathon Haworth

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