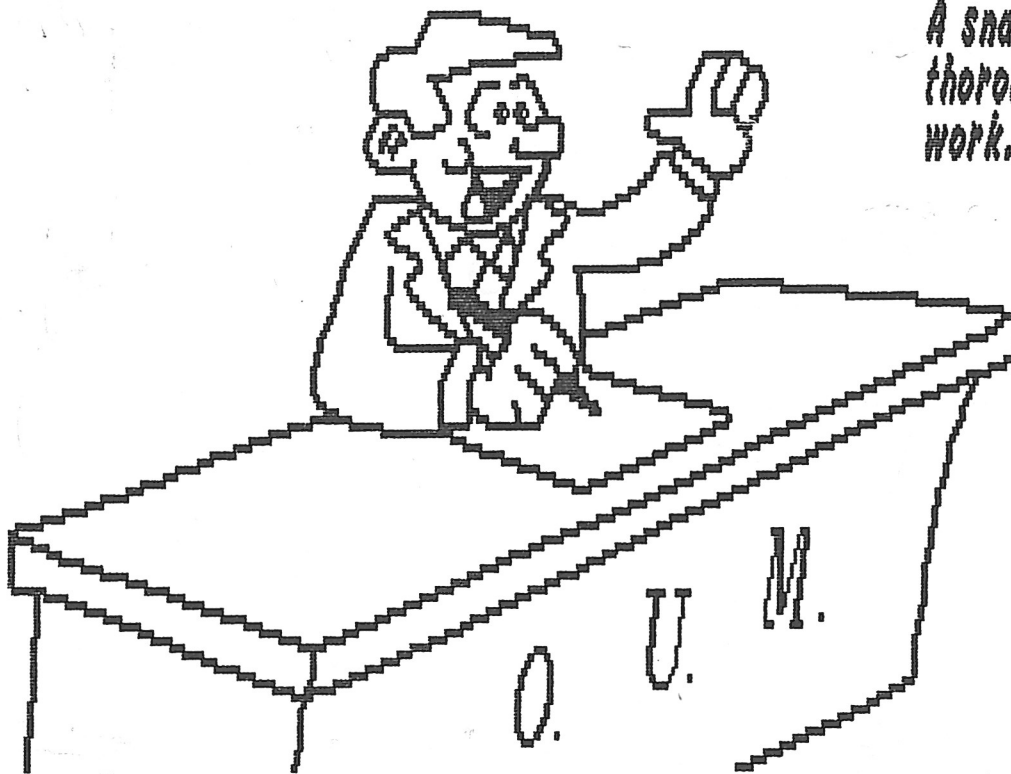


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*A snapshot of the editor
thoroughly enjoying his
work.....*

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(O ~ U ~ M)
 Oric User Monthly

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Last months issue (May 1989, issue 21) must have been a pretty good one judging by the number of letters that I've had saying that it was one of the best yet, in particular the interview with Andrew Moore (author of Don't Press The Letter 'Q' and others) went down very well. The report on the Alternative Micro Show also went well, in it's weird way (you'll have to read it to understand what I mean) !

About a year or so ago I had to make a desperate appeal to OUM readers to send in contributions to keep OUM going. Recently contributions had been flooding in but the flow has gradually slowed into a trickle. What I need is hints & tips, problems, pokes & dokes, etc. The situation isn't really too threatening at the moment but I don't want it to get any worse. The people who I am appealing to is the readers who have hardly or never contributed, who I never hear from - all contributions are gratefully received. Recently 'Readers Helpline' had to be scrapped because no-one sent in enough problems to last more than a couple of months, although a good few people sent in help and answers to these problems. Anyway, enough moans - for the moment.

Very shortly I'll be sending out a 'questionnaire' with OUM for you to fill in - more details about that next month. On a final point, if you have any ideas for an OUM cover design then please write to us and we'll pass on your suggestions to Jon Haworth, who is becoming quite an excellent graphics artist as this months front cover shows.

Best wishes to all.

Robert Cook

Title: Tyrann

Supplier: No Mans Land

Price: Originally £ 8.50 : £ 1.99 from HGC : Hired from 'The Software Club'

Tyrann comes with a well illustrated manual and is basically an attempt at a computer version of 'Dungeons & Dragons', the classic RPG. Being an avid D&D fan myself, I was looking forward to Tyrann. My first job was to create 6 adventurers (or characters) selecting their names, and type (or character class) which can be warrior, druid, magician or thief. Each class has it's own advantage. For example:- warriors can fight well, druids and magicians have spells, but magicians have less armour. Thiefs can fight fairly well, but can open chests well without setting off traps. Then you must load the rest of the game: once load you buy the items you'll require for the adventure, some you'll only be able to afford after much adventuring.

There is so much I could say about this game but it would need at least two pages to give all details. Tyrann includes battles, traps, treasure chests, magic spells, etc. , etc. I've played avidly now for about three months without losing the slightest interest. I fully recommend you to order this today, it's a bargain.

Graphics: 4 Sound: 4 Playability: 8 Overall: 8

Oops section

Last month we printed the address of Mr J.Chaplin for his Prestel section for Oric owners: a couple of errors found their way into the address - thanks to David Goodrum for pointing this out. The correct address is:

208 Dereham Road, New Costessey, Norwich, NR5, OSW.

If your copy of League Soccer has the 'seasons played' always on zero then you've got a seriously bugged copy and you should return it for a free new recording: send the cassette only (ie. not the packaging) please.

Competition time again: double offers this month. The prizes up for grabs are (i) A free copy of League Soccer & (ii) back issues 6 and 7, of OUM. So, what do you have to do ? Simply state which of the following are true and which are false, if you don't know have a guess. Remember - there are two winners - when entering state whether you'd like the 1st or 2nd prize - and the first entry pulled out will have first choice. Both inc. P&P, normal cost over £ 5.00 !

- (i) There is a French Atmos ;
- (ii) Loriciciels released a game called L'Chien d'Or ;
- (iii) A follow-up to Tyrann was written quite a while ago.

Entries in by no later than 19th of June 1989 please.

Title: Composer

Supplier: Sector 7

Price: Difficult to obtain for purchase ; hired by The Software Club

Composer is a program which allows you to compose and play your own music. The tape comes with instruction sheets and the tape includes two demonstration pieces plus one built into the program. This built-in demonstration program is a Mozart piece - and is played very clearly and well.

After listening to the demo's you'll really want to start your own work, you select volume, name of tune, time tempo, key signature, etc. It really does seem to be a little complicated at first. Once everything has been selected you'll be shown three music staves on which to place notes. You are then asked to enter details of the notes, ie. whether they are sharp, flat, natural or just normal to the key signature, plus of course the length. It's all too easy to enter a mistake but you are allowed to correct these.

When you've decided that you want to hear your masterpiece you press M to return to the main menu then P to play the piece - the built in demo will have been deleted by now. The soundtrack is played very clearly, but my own efforts seemed to sound almost as bad as Bros. For some reason I failed to get anything acceptable to the ear. The author has included many features such as delete bar, copy from bar-to-bar, modify sound control, stop the tune, re-start at end of tune, etc.

Sector 7 have tackled a difficult job well, and the save tune facility means that you'll be able to send your creations to friends to laugh at or listen to - although I personally won't be letting anyone hear my results !

'The Oric Games Guide': OUM's great software booklet, just £ 1.00 inc. P&P It includes over 25 reviews of British Oric games.

Send your top 3 favourite software lists plus the name of your worst title, to help to compile the software charts, thanks.

Cassette loading problems can often be very annoying, and more so if you know that the guilty tape contains a great game or utility. So this feature has been written to help readers who are experiencing problems to load in tape which won't load, or that often load incorrectly.

One major problem is the one that causes the program not to load at all, in other words the 'searching' message doesn't change to 'loading'. This is usually caused by incompatible cassette-recorders (ie. the program is recorded on one recorder but won't load on another). We had several of these problems when selling OUM software which had been recorded on a Lloytron recorder. The solution to this is to adjust the head-adjusting screw, once you've found it. A program that loads fine will usually sound sharp and clear, whereas one that refuses to load usually sounds very faint and muffled. Turn the head-adjusting screw a half-turn in one direction, if the sound is no clearer and sharper then turn it in the other direction. Then try to load again, and you should find that it loads perfectly. Of course you should be playing the faulty tape whilst turning the screw. The screw may be difficult to find, but all recorders have got one. Some have a little hole under the location for inserting cassettes, and the screw is housed within. You'll then need a thin (or jeweller's) screwdriver to reach and turn it. If you can't find it, then you may have to remove the lid of the cassette recorder.

There are a number of general rules that you should follow (some quite obvious) for perfect loading, which are:

- (i) Frequently use a cleaning & demagnetising cassette, such as those produced by TDK and WHSmith.
- (ii) The very lowest volume that will cause 'searching' to change to 'loading' will be the most reliable.
- (iii) The message 'File error/Load aborted' usually indicates to low volume or faulty tape.
- (iv) Never touch the tape-head with any metallic object.
- (v) A faulty DIN jack-plug will very often prevent the data from reaching the Oric.

If you are looking for a new recorder then you'll want one which you know will load well. The ACORN ALF03 loads just about every Oric tape that has been professionally produced, but recently we've had problems with people returning our tapes which were saved using it. One recorder which I fully recommend is the ALBA DR-160, which I use myself. It loads every program I've tried, and has an easy to find head-adjusting screw (although I've never needed to use it). We now use it to record OUM software and we have never had a return of a cassette used with it. It should be available from usual electrical shops, but Argos also sell it, for the bargain price of just £ 14.95 ! So it's cheap as well as reliable.

One point I should mention is that you should always try to load the slow saving (if there is one) on the cassette. I know that it can often be a pain waiting for it to load, but once loaded you could save it at fast speed. And a slow saving is quicker than returning the cassette to the supplier for a new one.

So, hopefully we've helped out anyone in trouble, but if you still have cassette-deck related problems then write to us and explain the problems.

Title of book: Machine Code for the Atmos and Oric-1
 Publisher: Shiva Publishing Ltd
 Price: £ 6.95 (paperback)
 Author: Bruce Smith



Published in 1984, this book tries to carry the reader past BASIC and into one of the most complicated aspects of computer programming. Myself, I have mastered BASIC and only know a little machine-code, so I welcomed this opportunity to learn the whole language. After a months work of studying the book I haven't got any further into programming in machine-code, so I suppose it's back to BASIC. Okay, so I learned a little more about the theory of machine-code, and now know more about logic, addresses, and the accumulator, but the main problem that I found in the book was that it just didn't explain how to write a machine-code program. If you were told the functions of a car, you wouldn't be ready to drive one without lessons, and it's the same here.

I was initially hopeful, the book seemed to be making sense of a couple of points that I was puzzled about, but it fell into the system that the Oric's manuals machine-code sections did, which is basically unhelpful and assumes that you've joined MENSA and know more about M/C than the author !

I do understand though, that the job the author set himself is not an easy one, and Mr Smith has tried to incorporate some humour in the book, at a couple of points.

Would I recommend it ? If you don't know machine-code then no, but if you already have understood a good deal of M/C but just need a little touching-up on a couple of matters then this book could help you along.

Obtaining this book: you may find it difficult to buy this book unless you can find a bookstore selling it, but if you ask your local library to obtain it (unless they already have it) then you'll probably find that they'll obtain and reserve it for you, for the charge of a few pence, which also goes for any other book we've reviewed.

 Game: Roland Garros
 Supplier: Sprites

Roland Garros is a tennis simulation from the supplier who have also made other Oric arcade games, including Big Baston (boxing) and Drive-Point. Being the only one of it's kind on the Oric, Sprites could easily have saved time by cutting corners on animation, graphics, etc. but they've made it look very professional.

It is a one or two player game in which you control a little tennis player on a court which occupies most of the screen, you run to and fro whacking the ball around the court, which re-bounds realistically.

The graphics are crisp and fine, and make RG very pleasing to look at, the sound effects are slightly less inspiring (a rather dull one-channel rendition of 'Popcorn!'), but can be turned-off at will.

Sprites have done a great job in this conversion, and is about as good as you'd expect it could be, very playable.

Graphics: 8 Sound: 4 Playability: 7 Overall: 8

RAMbling in the ROM - 3

My thanks to Dave Utting for responding to RR-1 on the subject of the later V1.1 ROM changes and error-checking when loading a programme from cassette. I dealt in that article with the resetting of the error flag after the computer and tape were synchronised. One other change was made, to the main CLOAD routine which starts at #E85B. Once the programme sought is found, the "Loading...." message is printed on the status line, and the programme itself is loaded. The CLOAD routine then checks for any parity errors (through a sub-routine at #E651-#E65D) and whether the programme is Basic or machine code.

In the first version of the V1.1 ROM, a further check was included, at #E8E0-#E8E4 for machine code, #E8FB-#E8FF for Basic. The relevant code was:

```
LDA 0281      (the error flag)
BNE E8E8/E903 (if set, exit).
```

Thus, if the error flag was falsely set, as it invariably was, the programme did not autorun.

For the second version, as if to make doubly sure that the earlier fault did not recur, this test was omitted by replacing the 'BNE' command with two NOP (no operation) codes at #E8E3/4 for machine code and #E8FEE/F for Basic. What that means is that on the later ROM, an error will be noted by printing 'Errors Found' on the screen, but the programme will still autorun, since the final check before doing so is now omitted! Thanks Dave!

Of bugs and bytes...

We all know that V1.0 was full of bugs which were sorted out in V1.1.....but what of the bugs that are around in V1.1??? A couple of quickies to start off a surprisingly long story....

While using PRINT@, the routine (at #CC59) which calculates the cursor position on screen fails to set the TAB flag (#30) with the new cursor position. As a result, if TAB is used after a PRINT@, things can go horrendously wrong.

The RECALL routine at #E9D1 makes no provision when loading a string array for checking if it will fit the available free memory. If it won't, an 'Out of Memory' error is generated, and the keyboard hangs up! To be fair, there is no easy solution to this one.

To be continued.....

Tail-ender

RND, as we all know, is not random at all. Indeed the first value used is in Rom at #ECB4 (V1.1), #EA3C (V1.0), and is 0.811635196!

Jon Haworth

'Infinite lives' pokes from Jon Haworth, Cambridge.

Ghost Gobbler: POKE#16EE,10 : POKE#10,127

Trident Neptune: POKE#16C6,32 : POKE#16C7,32 :
POKE#1BF9,32 : POKE#1BFA,32

Psychiatric: POKE#783B,234

'Readers Helpline' may now be cancelled but still answers are coming in, a problem was sent in asking how to detect two keys being pressed at the same time. I didn't know a great deal about this so my answer was fairly flimsy, here is more help from Lee Akrill, Hull.

The following line should be typed in:

```
REPEAT : PRINT PEEK (#208): UNTIL FALSE
```

When the program is running press every key that you will need in the program, all except the SHIFT keys, FUNCT (on Atmos) and CTRL. So, you are now ready to detect keys being pressed, but for the moment only single presses. To detect it, enter (in the required program):

```
IF PEEK (#208)=131 THEN PRINT "OUM IS GREAT."
```

The PEEK (#208) is compulsory, but the action (a PRINT in the example) can obviously be what you like. The 131 is just the code for K. With this method you will not have to wait for the key to repeat itself, as it will happen as in a POKE#30E,1.

Onto the multiple key presses: with that method you may, at the same time, also detect if you have pressed the CTRL, SHIFT or FUNCT keys with them. It is done as in the same way as before but with PEEK (209) instead.

The codes for those keys are:

CTRL :#A2 Left SHIFT :#A4 Right SHIFT :#A7 FUNCT:#A5

That was difficult to explain but try it on your Oric and you'll soon get the hang of it.

Another problem that cropped-up in the Helpline was how to save variables, I answered it correctly but Mr T.C.Brown from Essex has wrote in to show Oric users how to re-load variables even after NEW has been used (or after re-loading another program):

Routine 1 (Store variables)

```
FOR N=0 TO 10 : POKE 1024+N, A(N) : NEXT N
```

In that routine the 10 used is just how many variables there are to save in the array, the array is A in our case.

Routine 2 (Re-loading variables)

```
FOR N=0 TO 10 : A(N)=PEEK(1024+N) : NEXT N
```

Once again, the N is the number of variables to save (11 in our case, as the loop begins at 0), and the A is the array name.

Space has ran out again, so more tips next month. Cheats & tips to look forward to are more 'infinite lives' pokes & dokes, how to get onto the second side of Tyrann without playing for hours, and possibly a map or two.

Wanted: Program writers for OUM releases, royalties paid.

Issue 23 costs 55p with an A5 s.a.e. or 90p without the s.a.e.
 A 5 month subscription costs £ 2.75 + 5 A5 s.a.e.'s or £ 4.50 without them.
 A years subscription inc. P&P costs: UK = £ 10.00
 Europe = £ 13.00
 World = £ 14.75
 Back issues: 50p each

Notes:

- (i) All orders for issue 23 should arrive by no later than 21st of June, '89.
- (ii) Payment can be in cash, cheque or postal orders, made payable to:
 " Oric User Monthly (R.Cook) "
- (iii) When P&P is included in payment, OUM will be sent by 1st class post.
- (iv) Back issues can be bought at a maximum order of 3 each time, if it isn't ordered with OUM then please enclose 30p for P&P.

For sale/wanted:

Wanted: Disc-drive, Modem, Interface, Software, or complete system for Oric, reasonable price.

Krister Karlsson,
 Norrbergavagen,
 590 54 Sturefors,
 Sweden.

Sell/swap/W.H.Y.: Two programs ;

- (i) Toolkit (Oric 1 48k) = great utility, inc. restore line No, Full renumber, Def Char; STRING : VERIFY : APPEND : CATALOG : WRITE : READ (Saves & re-calls data), etc.
- (ii) Composer (Oric 1): Music processor (reviewed this issue)

Write to: Mr T.C.Brown,
 8 Fleming Gdns,
 Tilbury,
 Essex,
 RM18, 8JR.

For sale: Downsway programmable joystick interface with Quickshot 1 joystick, original packaging, instructions, v.g.c. Accept offers around £ 20 inc. P&P.

Write to: Matthew Shakeshaft,
 47 Newton Rd,
 Ashton-on-Ribble,
 Preston,
 Lancs,
 PR2, 1DY.

Last months competition for a free copy of either 'The Haunt' or a free issue of OUM (both inc. P&P) was won by Matthew Shakeshaft, Lancashire. The problem was to name three Oric games containing peoples names, entries included: Indiana Smith/Jones, Mr Wimpy, Johnny Reb, Don Juan, Canada Jim, Stanley ; highly risky one's were: Macadam Bumper, Q*Bert, Dracula's Rev, etc

Got something to sell ? Swap ? Buy ? Then get a free ad in OUM, state whether you want your address printed, or enquiries to be c/o OUM.

DAVE'S DATA

Title: Football
Supplier: HGC
Price: £ 6.60 (cass) / £ 8.80 (disk) - ATMOS ONLY

From the author of Starwind (see 'next month') comes this arcade soccer game. This is no strategy game ; it's action all the way. The loading screen is a dead give-a-way that Alistair Way wrote the game. The options within the game are tremendous, a resume of options are:

- (a) Change team control - take on the computer or a friend at various speeds for up to 10 minutes, duration varying on pitches & with or without midfield tackling.
- (b) Change team/player names.
- (c) Change player colours, eg. yellow head, red body, blue legs.
- (d) Change colour of pitch.

Onto the game: the player nearest the ball is the one you control, he is denoted by a white highlight around his head, other players move randomly but the one you control can move left, right, up or down, can dribble with the ball as well as kick it along the ground or chip it, and at varying strengths.

All the time the screen displays the name of the player with the ball so that you can add your own commentary (Colemanballs and all that). The only other arcade soccer game that I've seen is for the dreaded Electron but this is far superior. The graphics are good and far better than in Football Manager. Once you get used to the style it becomes quite addictive and I no longer get beaten 17 - 0 as I did in my first match, mainly because the lodger we had has gone back to the blind school. With the game comes a full instruction leaflet, it's certainly worth the money. Thanks to Allan Whitaker for the review copy.

Graphics: 8 Sound: 6 Addictiveness: 9 Overall: 8

There is no news section this month as there isn't enough room, it has been a fairly quiet month anyway - it's back next month.

Top ten software charts: Compiled by readers

1. Zorgons Revenge	IJK	1 *
2. Xenon III	IJK	3 *
3. The Boss	Peaksoft	2 *
4. The Ultra	PSS	4 *
5. The Hellion	Orpheus	6
6. Don't Press The Letter 'Q'	IJK	8
7. Maze Rally	FGC	5 *
8. Defence Force	Tansoft	7
9. Karate	Gasoline	9 * (F)
10. Insect Insanity	Tansoft	NE

Next Month

News section, interview with Alistair Way, reviews, charts, hints & tips, more free offers, etc.

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