

ORIC

USER
MONTHLY

Number 27 November 1989

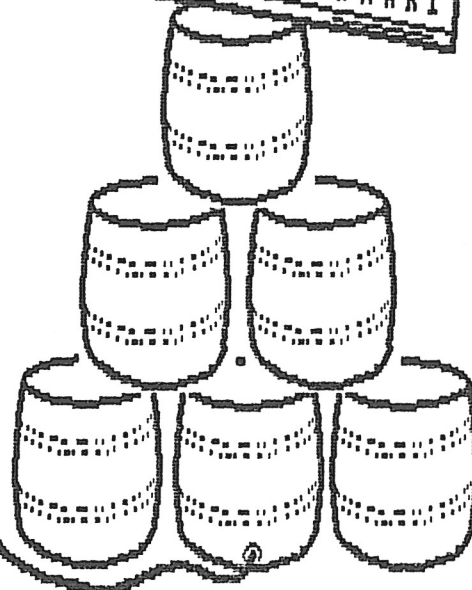
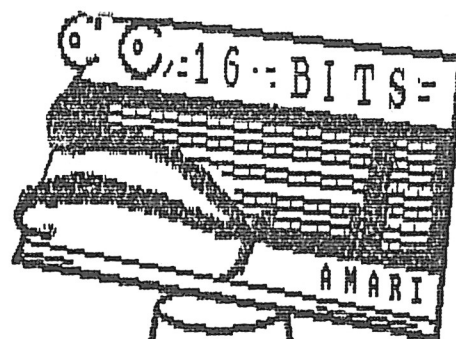
8 - BIT RULES, O.K!!!

THE ALTERNATIVE MICRO SHOW

Saturday, 11th November, 1989

Bingley Hall, Stafford

M6 - Junctions 13/14



- O . U . M -
 Oric User Monthly

Issue 27 : November : 1989 : Edited & distributed by Robert Cook : 65p

Last month I broke a tradition that OUM has had (more or less) since issue one - sending out OUM on time. OUM was sent out last month at about the fifteenth of the month, later than any previous issue. There are two main reasons for this, firstly I am very pushed for time. In the daytime I am at college studying for A-levels, and in the evenings and weekends I am working at a part-time job, plus running OUM and it's software as well as revising for the college-work. Overall it all adds up to needing 30 hours a day. This is also causing delays in software orders, all orders have now been despatched and I can only apologise for the delays. Continuing contact with readers has also been affected so if you were expecting a letter with last months OUM you'll get it this issue probably.

The second reason for delays is a massive financial crisis OUM is in. Because of the cheap price before the price increase a couple of months ago, added to the increase in pages OUM had, the funds of OUM just decreased each month. A couple of months ago I told you that OUM had made a loss of about £ 30, that was actually a great under-estimate. Last month, OUM's funds totalled the grand sum of under £ 7. When you consider that OUM needs approximately £ 35 - £ 40 to produce and distribute one months issues you can see that it wasn't very promising, a couple of new subscriptions did arrive which helped out but most was paid-in by myself and I'm currently paying money each week to try to meet the next issue.

If your subscription is coming to end please re-order, or consider buying a subscription if you just buy each month as it will help me greatly, also if you buy our new software you will be contributing to the funds, I've been very disappointed with the orders (or the lack of any) for 'Cricket', our new game (Atmos only) for just £ 2.99 inc. P&P. If this situation does continue then 1990 could see the end of the last British Oric magazine.

On a brighter note - our new music section begins this month and you will find a map to the Alternative Micro Show on the flip-side of RAMbling in the ROM.

Robert Cook

OUM issues

1 issue: 65p + an A5 s.a.e. or £ 1.00 inc. 1st class P&P
 5 issues subscription: £ 3.25 + five A5 s.a.e's or £ 5.00 inc. P&P, 1st class
 Years subscription: Just £ 11.00 inc 1st class P&P.

Back issues are 65p each, please add a total of 30p for P&P.

Payment in cash, postal orders or cheques: payable to " O.U.M. (R.Cook) "

All orders for next issue should arrive by no later than 23rd of Nov. 1989.

Wanted: Machine-code programmers for OUM software productions, royalties paid.

* Our adventure software title 'Krystal Worlds' is still being delayed as I'm very short of time (myself being the programmer) and so it may be quite a few months until it reaches you.

* HGC (Hailorder) has managed to obtain the software titles in the 'Mysteriou-s Adventures' range by Digital Fantasia, also known as Channel 8 software. All those in the range are adventure games are available except for 'Arrow of Death pt II' which should be available in time. The range includes the classic "Wizard of Akyrz" - still, in my own opinion, the best ever graphical adventure made for the Oric. The costs are just £ 4.99 inc. P&P in the UK.

* The 3rd Alternative Micro Show takes place in a matter of days, to be precise on the 11th of November 1989, between 10am & 5pm. It's at Bingley Hall, in Staffordshire. Unlike the last show, we won't be there but HGC will be and Jon Haworth will be there to chat to and to buy a copy of his new book. What book???? Read on....

* Yes, Jon Haworth has written a book called 'Oric - the story so far'. It is in binder-type form and is extremely professionally produced with very good quality paper and print. It's basically a complete run-through of just about everything you ever wanted to know about how the Oric came (and went). It's comprised of 8 chapters full of fascinating details and facts that I had no idea about, Jon must have been snooping around for quite a while!

Overall I recommend it completely and at the amazing price of just £ 1.50 (plus 50p P&P) you'd be silly not to get a copy. If you're not going to the show then you can send off for a copy at:

Mr Jonathon Haworth, 3 Madingley Rd, Cambridge, CB3, OEE.

Remember, the book is not an OUM product so don't send money to us (well, you can if you like but you won't get a book!).

* The French disk/tape based magazine 'Club DiscOric' (CDO) has gone legal and formed itself as an 'official' organisation, and so will gain certain legal benefits inc. a board of directors, court benefits, etc.

Still with the CDO, after a voting result with it's subscribers the CDO has decided to remain on tape & disk rather than convert to paper format.

* 'Cricket', last months software release is still available for just £ 2.99 inc. P&P, soundtracks, instructions and VAT.

* Our fourth software release is just around the corner - it is our first pure arcade game, written in machine-code by Alistair Way (author of Cricket). It doesn't mess around with a fancy storyline - just blast the enemy craft to bits and buy up with better equipment, attempting to clear the galaxy of these no-gooders. Is it any good? In my own honest opinion it is one of the finest pieces of software ever to grace the Oric, featuring some great effects, graphics, sound, and addictiveness that is unbelievable. It is up in the same ranks as Zorgies Revenge, Insect Insanity, etc. and is soon to be out for both Atmos & Oric-1 48k for just £ 3.99 inc. P&P. Why the cheap price? Because I've known what it's like not being able to get great titles because of greedy marketing. Review in OUM next month.

* As I just stated, we are about to start reviewing our own software. It will not be a case of 100% ratings because of bias reviews, as I've always been the first to point out flaws in our own products. Dave Dick, our reviewer, will review them and not making money from the software himself he has nothing to lose by criticising them (apart from his subscription!). (Just joking.) I've told Dave to give anything we release a rating which reflects his true opinions and not just what I want to hear from him.

DAVES DATA

4

No reviews this month (sigh of relief from the readers !), instead there is part 1 of the nearly complete A-Z of Oric software (boring, eh ?). I and perhaps others would appreciate it if anyone can fill in gaps and know of any other marketed titles. As my alphabetical other may seem a little odd (eg. 'Hellion' will be under T's for 'The Hellion') please hold your comments 'till about halfway when I give a reminder - some time in 1992.

Next month - if it arrives - a review of CDOSOFFT2 ('Mluch', 'Eye of Zoltec', 'Yahtzi' and 'Risiko') plus if your unlucky some more of the A-Z.

Key/ S-strategy, AR-arcade, U-utility, ED-educational, BO-board game, BU-business and AD-adventure.

- 1815 (Cobrasoft) - S
- 3D Fongus (Loriciciels)-AR
- 3D Hangman (Mellowsoft/FGC)-ED
- 3D Maze (IJK)-S
- 3D Munch (Loriciciels)-AR
- 3D OXO (IJK)-BO
- 4800 BAUDS (???) -U
- 50 Games I (UPS)-AR
- Acherons Rage (Softtek)-AR
- Acrobates (ALP)-???
- Ace in the hole (Wild Electronics) -AD
- Address File Manager (Sector 7)-BU
- Africa (Hebdogiciel)-AD
- Agrenon (IJK-France)-???
- Airline (CCS)-S
- Akyrz-Wizard of. (Digital Fant.)-AD
- Alien Pursuit/Maze (JPG Electron.) -AR
- Andromeda & Persicus (Channel 8)-AD
- Arena'3000 (Microdeal)-AR
- Arrow of Death pt 1/2 (Chan. 8)-AD
- Astrology (Astrocalc)-ED
- Asteroids (Durell)-AR
- As Des As (Isosoft)-U
- Assembleur (???) -U
- Assembler (Superior Software)-U
- Assemble/Disassemble (Microplot)-U
- ASM-65 Ass/Disassembler (OPEL)-U
- Atmos Extended BASIC (Severn)
- Atmos accounts (Jebsoft)-BU
- Atmosstar (Brainsoft)-U
- ATM (Cobrasoft)-AR
- Attack on Kixi (???) -AD
- Author (Tansoft)-BU
- A View To A Kill (Domark)-AD
- 3D Battle-star (Topaz)-AR
- 3D Graph (CDO)-U
- 3D Invaders (Quark Data)-AR
- 3D Hover (Loriciciels)-U
- 3D 'o's & 'x's (Epsilon)-BO
- 3 Games For Children (SCS)-ED
- 4 Games For Children (Kindersoft)-ED
- 6502 Assembler (QED)-U
- Account Book (Softbacks)-BU
- Action 6 (Touchstone)-AR
- Address Book (No mans land)-BU
- Address File Manager (Severn)-BU
- Adventure Quest (Level 9)-AD
- Affaire un or (Sprites)-S
- Agent 013 (Hebdogiciel)-???
- Aide Memoire (SSS)-U
- Alien Fallout (Eltronics)-AR
- Amazea (Quark Data)-AR
- Annuaire (???) -U
- Antre de la Peur (ERE)-???
- Arsene Lupin (Infogames)-AD
- Arcaine Quest (Wild Electronics)-AD
- Astro War (Durell)-AR
- Asteroids (Artic)-AR
- Assimil-Anglais/Espagnol (???) -U
- Assembler (Micrograf)-U
- Assembler/Editor (QED)-U
- Assembly Language (Honeyfold)-ED
- Attack of the Cybermen (IJK)-AR
- Assembler/Disassembler (Lothlorion)-U
- Atmosstar (Kenema)-U
- Athon (?) -U
- Atlantid (Sprites)-AR
- Atlantis (Cobrasoft)-AD
- Auteur (MicroProgrammes)-U
- Awari (Kenema)-BO

More next month.

Dave Dick

PRICE REDUCTION *** 'League Soccer' (Atmos only) our second software release has been reduced permanently by £1 to £ 2.99 inc. P&P.



LET THERE BE MUSIC!

PT.

1

When it comes to music the Oric leaves a lot of the competition behind, despite the fact that the Oric has a serious disadvantage because it has the use of a built-in speaker rather than the use of the television or monitors speaker. Computers that use a built-in speaker usually have a lot of difficulty when it comes to high volume - not so with the Oric, the Oric's speaker blasts sounds out at a volume loud enough for anyone wanting an ear-bashing, something which others such as the Spectrum find difficult.

Unfortunately not too many software titles have taken advantage of the Oric's capabilities, exceptions include the stunning version of 'New Life' on 'Damsel In Distress', and the two-part soundtrack in '3D Munch'. Therefore it is up to you to produce your own masterpiece, and there is no need to have to compose your own piece - simply grab the sheet music for any pop or classical piece and use that instead. You don't need to have a great deal of musical knowledge but a little would go nicely. Next comes the biggest decision - how do you put it together? You have two obvious choices, use a music utility or write your own program. There are some advantages of both; if you use your own program then it isn't very easy to find and edit errors, and it will take longer to enter. You will also have to do a bit of work on paper first, calculating DATA statements (it will be in BASIC, machine-code isn't needed as BASIC will be fast enough: you will need some WAIT commands to slow it down!). What of the good points of writing your own program then? Firstly, you may not have the choice! Music utilities are hard to come by on the Oric. Secondly, a finished product which is totally your own will be much more rewarding. Thirdly, a BASIC program can be sent to other Oric owners to listen to, whereas the friend in mind may not own a copy of the utility you are using. Go away and make your mind up. Done it? Okay, if you want to use a utility then which will you use? There are a few around including Composer, Editeur Musical, etc. 'Composer' (Sector 7) is available from 'The Software Club', it can be hired for a couple of quid but you need to pay £5 to join. So, if you're using a utility you shouldn't have any problems - the manuals will tell you what to do, bye bye.

As you're still with us I assume that we'll be playing sweet BASIC music together. Now, you need to know some musical facts to progress from here. The Oric manual will teach you the basic facts (in the music section) but I'll go over them quickly.

Firstly, you probably know that notes range from A up to G, then back to A again, but at a higher pitch. The second A is one 'octave' higher than the first. The Oric has 6 octaves, so there are now six notes of C, G, B, etc. available for use. The lowest (oct. 1) sounds like a foghorn and the highest (oct. 6) is ear-splitting. Most tunes that I have used and played have contained a melody that uses octaves 4 and 5 (sometimes 3) and a bass-line (the background) using octaves 2 and 3. You have probably noticed that I've omitted octaves 1 and 6, but you will find - although very rare - that they come into use at times.

If you can't read music then I suggest that you learn quickly, you will need the basic knowledge. Middle 'C' on the keyboard is the first note of octave 3. 'C' is always the first note of any octave, right up to 'G', 'A', 'B' and then 'C' at the next octave up.

And here is the last part of the music lesson for this month, note lengths. Each type of note has a length value, ranging from 1 to 16 - the higher the value the longer the note's duration. The lengths are as follows:

♪ = 1 ♪ = 2 ♪ = 3 ♪ = 4 ♪ = 6 ♪ = 8 ♪ = 12 ♪ = 16

 } = Rest for 4

 ♪ = Rest for 2

 ♪ = Rest for 1

We'll continue next month, meanwhile it would be a good idea to sort out the music you want to enter or compose.

RAMbling in the ROM - 8

Envelope

The book list in RAMROM 6 has produced the biggest postbag yet. Thanks for unearthing further titles are due in particular to Dave Utting and to Ron Evans of Wood Green. As a result I can add the following titles to the list:

The Companion to the Oric 1			Ian Adamson
Pan	1983	0 3302 8270 0	
Beginner's Assembly Language Programming for the Oric-1			
Glentop	1984	0 9077 9222 7	P.Holmes/J.H.Watson
The Atmos Book of Games			James, Gee & Ewbank
Granada	1984	0 2461 2534 49	
An introduction to programming the Oric-1			RA & JW Penfold
Babini	1983	0 8593 4104 6	

Any advance on 40?!

A request from Dave Utting - he is seeking two items:

- 1) a program to send a specified block of data via an RS232 serial interface from an Oric to a serial port on a different computer, e.g. a B.B.C.
- 2) A copy of the circuit diagram of the Oric U.L.A. chip.

The second is particularly interesting. The ULA (uncommitted logic array) covers a multitude of tasks including timer output, video output and RAM refreshing. Its design was always a closely guarded secret. Perhaps now that Oric is no more, someone with the knowledge will be prepared to divulge it. Incidentally, can anyone help with the current whereabouts of Dr. Paul Johnson, the designer of the Oric? Do let me know if you can help Dave, who is willing to pay for services rendered.

Overlay

Now to business. When you read or store data in memory, the 6502 microprocessor in the Oric has 2 bytes, i.e. 16 bits, to indicate the address. With 16 bits you are limited in binary to the decimal numbers 0 to 65535, a maximum memory address of 65535, or 64k of directly addressable memory (remember, 1k=1024 bytes).

Inside your Oric there is 64k of RAM and 16k of ROM. Usually the Oric addresses (uses) the first 48k of RAM and the 16k of ROM. The last 16k of RAM is therefore in a sense 'covered' by the ROM, whence the term 'RAM overlay'. One of the BUS, or data, lines of the Oric is ROMDIS, reserved to allow you to disable the ROM and recover the RAM overlay. So, depending on the state of this line it can be the ROM that is addressed, or the RAM overlay, in

addition of course to the normal 48k RAM. Both ROM and RAM overlay are addressed from #C000 to #FFFF.

There is thus at our disposal 16k of RAM usable without affecting the user RAM. A disc drive interface can change the state of the ROMDIS line, through memory location #0314. So to use a DOS routine it will access RAM overlay, and then return to the normal ROM when a ROM routine is called. When RAM overlay is accessed, the ROM is masked, and all operations which use its routines cannot work. In particular this creates problems with interrupts - you can neither do a RESET nor read the keyboard. Also, obviously, you can't use Basic, nor will a JSR instruction in machine code or a CALL work - it's as if the ROM has disappeared! The disc interface EPROM, and the DOS itself, contain some nifty routines to overcome this, enabling full use of all the 80k of memory inside an Oric.

And hence the title 'Overlay' for RAMROM's disc section!

Tail-ender

Not a program this time, but a nice little story from Gavin Williams of Cardiff. Despairing of finding a suitable power supply for his Microdisc, Gavin wrote off more in hope than anticipation to ITL Kathmill, erstwhile makers of the Byte Drive. They of course went into receivership shortly after Oric in 1985. However, Gavin did get a reply from the present occupiers of ITL's old premises, a company called 'Astrosyn'. And the reply included the gift of a free Byte Drive power supply unit! Apparently, at the back of one of the shelves in the store room at Astrosyn are lying some 10 Byte Drive 500 P.S.U.'s, and what is more they are now, thanks to Gavin's efforts, for sale to readers of O.U.M. for £17.25 including V.A.T. If you are interested, contact:

Mr. J. Melville,
Astrosyn International Technology Plc,
The Old Courthouse,
New Road Avenue,
CHATHAM,
Kent ME4 4QJ Tel: 0634 815175

I wonder what else is lying at the back of various shelves around the country?

See you there....??

There will be an Oric stand at the Alternative Micro Show, Staffordshire Show Grounds, Bingley Hall, Stafford on Saturday, 11th November. Drivers should exit the M6 at Junction 13 northbound, Junction 14 southbound. There will be a special coach service from Stafford Bus Station for those using public transport. Allan Whitaker will be there with all his HGC goodies, and I shall be attending - don't forget to introduce yourselves!

Jon Haworth

"HINT + TIPS"

Okay, let's kick-off this months section with a tip from myself, the best cheat from me yet in my opinion. The cheat(s) is for Tansofts 'Oricmunch'. The pokes/dokes are:

DOKE # 009, #EAEA
DOKE # 1004, #EAEA
DOKE # 1026, #EAEA

Enter those and you'll find that you have gained two advantages:

- (i) Once they have appeared, the prizes will not vanish until collected ;
- (ii) When you eat two ghosts the remaining two double their speed, using this cheat you will also speed up, allowing you to keep away from them.

Not enough ? Okay then, you can add the following if you wish:

DOKE # 1674, #EAEA
DOKE # 1679, #EAEA

With these there are another two advantages, which are:

- (i) You have infinite lives ;
- (ii) when you eat the first power-pill, the effects never wear off.

Thanks to those cheats you shouldn't have any problems with the game.

.....

James Groom from Halesowen, west Midlands has sent in the map and solution to the adventure 'Arrow of Death pt. I'. The map is a bit of a problem because it is very colourful and without adding a large price-increase onto OUM's price we cannot use colour printing so if you would like to borrow the map please write to me, but here is the complete solution:

examine courtyard	n	s
exam messenger	give coins	s
w	get note	get amulet
w	read note	n
exam bed	drop note	e
turn coat	get orb	wait
turn coat	w	n
turn coat	w	give amulet
go passage	hook armour	wait
get sword	go ledge	s
w	pull rope	e
get pillow	drop rope	cut chains
cut pillow	get armour	s
drop pillow	wear armour	s
exam purse	rub orb	u
get coins	rub orb	move boulder
get armour	go cave	go cave
e	kill serpent	read scroll
s	kill serpent	n
e	kill serpent	drop orb
exam kitchen	get arrowhead	d
get hook	s	w
w	remove armour	get toadstools
n	drop armour	e
e	d	n
tie rope (to hook)	e	go cookhouse
get rope	e	drug broth
		w

go building s
 climb ladder n
 get log w
 w n
 go flume exam debris
 wait go trapdoor
 go beach open chest
 u get book
 pluck feathers wear specs
 n read book
 n drop book
 n u
 n s
 n e
 go hut s
 exam hut go hut
 exam dwarf get medalion
 get spectacles s

n
 e
 go marsh
 e
 n
 throw medalion
 cut willow

NOTE: 'Cricket' is still Atmos only, Oric-1 testing was found to produce crashes but it's being worked on.
 The 'music soundtracks' offer mentioned for the previous two issues is now over, you'll have to buy our software to hear the great soundtracks now !

That'll keep you busy for a while.

 Last month there was a feature printed, written by Matthew de Monti based on the state of the Oric situation today. I said that I would discuss the article this month but I seem to have left myself a little short of room to do so. Therefore I'll just quickly make a couple of quick comments. Firstly, there actually is an English version of the Club Disc 'Oric mag. Secondly, there are no light-pens available for the Oric despite being advertised as 'available'.

FOR SALE / WANTED

Wanted: The whereabouts of Steve Hopps, who ran OPELCO. Alternatively the circuit diagram of the OPELCO disk-drive is wanted, or the address of any place that will repair the drive.

Contact: Mr F.Marks in the evenings on (0703)-692138.

Wanted: Another contact. Someone out there wrote to Dave Dick a few months ago asking about 'Forth' on disk. Dave, being organised and all, lost the letter but has recently found details of how to convert 'Forth' to disk. So, if it was you that wrote please write again to:

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

Next Month

The continued music section, loads more 'For sale/wanted' & 'Hints & Tips' items that wouldn't fit in this issue, reviews, more of the A-Z list, details about 'Galactosmash' (don't miss it) and more, just 65p.

Editor and distributor: Robert Cook
 RAMbling in the ROM, Cover design and Disk-drive matters: Mr Jonathon Haworth
 Reviews/DAVE's DATA: Mr Dave Dick

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