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M E R R Y C H R I S T M A S



O * U * M
 Oric User Monthly

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This issue contains a number of interesting items, such as part two of the music-tuition series, the new series started this month by Jon Haworth and some software reviews by Dave Dick, covering the recent software reviews.

Last months editorial told of how serious the situation was, OUM's financial situation and my lack of time was really putting a threat to the continuation of OUM. Fortunately the situation has improved by some amount since then, the financial side is still looking poor but it's a vast improvement on what it was this time last month. The funds of OUM have risen from £ 7 up to about £ 100 now, due mainly to new subscriptions and orders. The time-lack situation I talked about last issue is more or less the same, but I'm working on finding more time. OUM looks certain to continue for some time to come, mainly due to the extra orders we've had but not least because of the great help and assistance that Jon Haworth has provided.

That's all I've got to say this month, except of course to wish you a happy christmas and new year - keep writing.

Robert Cook

Subscription details

A years subscription costs £ 11.00.

A five month subscription costs £ 5.00.

A single issue costs £ 1.00, or 65p with an A5 s.a.e.

Where P&P is included in the price, OUM is sent by 1st class P&P.
 Attention: from next month orders will all include P&P !

Back issues cost 65p each, maximum order of 3 each order. If not ordered with an OUM product then please add 30p extra for P&P.

Cash accepted, cheques/postal orders made payable to " O.U.M. (R.Cook) "

Subscription in Europe: £ 14.00 inc. P&P

" " World : £ 15.75 inc. P&P

OUM products

'The Oric Games Guide' - booklet: £ 1.00 inc. P&P

'The Haunt' - Oric 1/Atmos adventure game: £ 1.99 inc. P&P

'League Soccer' - Atmos only football game: £ 2.99 inc. P&P

'Cricket' - Atmos only cricket arcade sim: £ 2.99 inc. P&P

'Galactosmash' - see news section for full details

Anybody owning a faulty original copy of 'League Soccer' should return it now - a final guaranteed bug-free version has just been completed and the faulty copies will be replaced free-of-charge.

THE THIRD ALTERNATIVE MICRO SHOWBINGLEY HALL, STAFFORDSaturday, 11th November, 1989

The Staffordshire Show Ground, Bingley Hall, really did sound rather grand as the venue for the 3rd Alternative Micro Show. As my son and I set off from Cambridge at 6.00a.m. it seemed a long way away. A hearty breakfast at Corley Services on the M6 left us raring to go on our way, and by 9.00a.m. we were turning into.... what looked like a rather dilapidated racecourse. The 'Hall' itself was a very good imitation of an aircraft hangar - concrete floor, huge spanned roof, and a temperature best described as nudging cool. Where was the H.G.C. stand, I innocently asked the suited Master of Ceremonies. "Oh, we've moved it", came the familiar reply. But we found it - one 6' by 2' table! A ten minute expedition produced another table for the knock-down rental of £2.50. Unload the car - and we're beginning to look something like. Suddenly a red car pulls to a halt in front of the stand - Allan Whitaker arrives inside the hangar! All we needed now was Dave Dick's Cortina to descend from the heavens and the scene would be complete.

By 10 a.m. all was ready; Allan had more Oric software on sale than I've ever seen in one place before, and more on his stand than most others at the Show. And from the start the stand was thronged. After a while I asked the time - 2.30 p.m.! The day passed unbelievably quickly. All the old (!) faces were there - from Sunbury and Hitchin, Leamington and Llanelli, Sheffield and Blackpool they had trekked to Stafford. I only had one gripe - the mains supply was so lousy that until mid-afternoon producing disc software was a totally hit and miss affair. Then by 4.30 p.m., the goodbyes - and I suddenly realised I hadn't sat down all day. A final natter with Allan, repack the car, and off south with memories of a hectic and thoroughly enjoyable day. If you didn't go, make the effort next year. And to those friends with whom I didn't find time for more than a brief hello, my apologies.... there's always next year!

Jon Haworth

CLUB DISCORIC

As some of you may know, I'm now representing the Club in the U.K. From January, 1990 I'll be handling renewal and new subscriptions, and distributing the Journal on disc or cassette in this country. Available now on disc only is 'Willy' (£6 inc. p&p. to members, £8 to non-members) and CDOSOFT 2, a fourpack containing a strategy game, a dice game, a platform game and a French adventure (£10 inc. p&p. to members, £12 to non-members). And a special trial offer for non-members - send me a blank disc and £3.00 for a copy of Journal No.4, a 60-page magazine PLUS two top French arcade games, music and a superb word-processor! Sorry, but this offer is only available on disc for the moment. Orders to me at 3 Madingley Road

Cambridge
CB3 0EE

- NEWS -

* The Third Alternative Micro Show took place last month with a very successful Oric support - see elsewhere in this issue for a full report of the show by Jon Haworth.

* 'Galactosmash', OUM's fourth and best software release is now available for both the Oric Atmos and Oric-1 (48k). It is our first 'pure' arcade game and has been written by Alistair Way, programmer of other Oric titles such as Cricket, Starwind and Football. It features wonderful graphics, sound, and addictiveness. There will be a review next month (although it was stated last month that it would be reviewed this issue) in Dave's DATA. It is available on cassette-only (at the moment) for just £ 3.99 which includes P&P, instructions, and side two of the tape contains many free audio soundtracks to listen to.

* OUM software to shortly to become available on 3" disk. It's expected that they will just the cost of the disk extra onto the tape price, so the costs should be low. Very shortly, there will also be a compilation tape released of our first three software releases ('The Haunt', 'League Soccer' and 'Cricket') for Atmos owners, the expected price will be between £ 5 and £ 7.

* The CDO has now gone completely legal and Jon Haworth has become the British director and will help in distributing software and the like to members (or non-members) to Oric owners in Britain. The new name of the CDO is the CEO (Club Europe'Oric).

* Next follow a few small items sent by Dave Dick (of Daves DATA):

- The Oric users met in Germany in June, "B.I.T." magazine is now their only support ;
- CDO (now CEO, of course) will continue, after debating the issue, to produce the mag on cassette/disk rather than paper format. British membership is increasing, keep up the good work Vincent ;
- Alistair Way (software writer mentioned above) is due congratulations, he obtained four grade 'A's in his A-levels and will hopefully get to Cambridge University next year.

For sale: Zodiac, Super Advanced Breakout, Teach Yourself BASIC, Welcome to Oric, Oric Flight, Home Finance, Quest, Bandit, Colourmatch, Projectiles, Reversi, all originals on seven tapes in excellent condition. boxed with instructions. Yours for £ 10.99, write to:

Mr X.H. Wu, 18 Cleveland Rd, Uxbridge, Middlesex, UB8, 2DP.
Phone: (0895)-30296 after 4:30pm weekdays, after 12:00pm weekends.
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For sale: software, prices inc. P&P - all genuine original copies.

- Rat Splat - £ 2.00
- Super Fruit - £ 1.50
- Trickshot - £ 2.00
- Light Cycle - £ 1.50
- Harrier Attack - £ 1.50
- Zodiac - £ 1.50
- 3D Maze/Breakout - £ 2

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

Hi there, a merry christmas and a happy new year to all. With new Oric software emerging fast it looks well for the new year. Watch out for 'Galactosmash', 'Escape', and 'Tetris'. Meanwhile, get the following two for your stocking fillers.

Title: CDOSOFT2

Supplier: CEO

Price: £ 9 (members) / £ 11 (non-members) - disk only

Ah ! I hear you sigh, "a long wait from France". No, not true. Just send your money to Jon Haworth (UK Agent for CEO, address in last issue). This is a 4-game package, I'll look at each, two this month and two next issue. I'll look at 'Mluch' and 'Risiko' now.

'Mluch', written by Daniel Duffau, of 'Willy' fame, back in '85. A colourful introduction, nice tune, press 'J' to jouer (play) and off we go to phase 1. You've all seen 'Goldrun' (unfortunatly - ed.), well, this is a variation. Collect the flags, miss the boulders, think for hours. The wife likes it (I've got a head-ache dear !) and she has reached phase 11 - beat that.

All in all, a very pleasing game. One problem - if you get into an undieable position, there is no way out except than to re-load the game.

Graphics: 7 Sound: 8 Addictiveness: 9 Overall: 8

Title: Risiko

Risiko was written by Vincent Talvas of the CEO/CDO in 1988, it is a colourful platform game. On stage 1, you collect 3 objects to get the first number of a six digit combination. Hop on to the lift across to the other side and collect 3 more items. If you miss the lift you fall down a mine shaft to your doom. To get the objects you must avoid flames and pulverisers, etc. Change the lift direction by pulling a chord. Stage 1 is difficult, even though movement is a bit slow. Stage 2 awaits me.

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

Title: Cricket

Supplier: OUM

Price: £ 2.99 (tape) / £ 5.50 (disk) - ATMOS ONLY, see news for disk copy !

From the pen of Alistair Way ('Starwind' & 'Football') comes this animation and simulation of the game of cricket with full printed instructions. This is one of the first things young Alistair did, but is still worth buying if you are a cricket fan. There are plenty of options: black or green pitch, you vs. computer, you vs. a friend, or computer vs. computer, England squad, Australian Squad, define your own team, test match, limited overs, place your field.

The main screen has you facing the computer controlled bowler and you move back, forth, across the wicket, swing the bat, attacking and defending. Hit the ball and you switch to the outfield screen, with the option to run (don't get run out). Screen 'comments' and scorecard help to make up for the weakness of the animation. Still, at this price, it's one for the collection.

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

A note with Cricket, turn the tape over (forget it on disk), wack it in your stereo and listen to some 'Depeche Mode', 'Debbie Gibson', etc. instrumentals arranged by Robert Cook and have a sing song, novel, eh ?

RAMbling in the ROM - 9

Overlay - How a Sedoric disc is organised

For this and the next three RAMROMs I'm giving most of the space over to a detailed look at how Oric discs are organised, firstly when formatted under Sedoric DOS.

Let's start by taking the example of a Master disc formatted in the usual way - 42 tracks and 17 sectors. It thus has 42 concentric tracks, each of which is divided like a cake into 17 sectors, a total of 714 sectors. Since the system programs occupy 6 tracks on a Master disc, we therefore have $714 - (6 * 17) = 612$ sectors free after formatting the disc. Now to examine some of the most important. Tracks are numbered from 0 to 41 (#29), sectors from 1 (#01) to 17 (#11).

The first three sectors (1 to 3) of Track 0 are reserved to allow compatibility with the V1.1 DOS. The DOS version is written in Sector 1. There then follows the DOS itself from Track 0, Sector 5 to Track 3, Sector 14. When booted, the disc loads the DOS into RAM at #1400 to #4FFF, then transfers it into RAM overlay from #C800 to #FFFF. The six utility files (BACKUP, INIT etc) are then stored from Track 3 Sector 16 to Track 5 Sector 9. When they are called, they are loaded into RAM overlay from #C400 to #C7FF. The disc, incidentally, is an easy place to study the code of the DOS itself if you have a disc utility which is capable of disassembling the code sector by sector. I use BD DISC available from Club DiscOric.

The other important track on the disc is Track 20 (#14). This contains the system information, details of the disc itself, and the directory tracks. Figure 1 shows the first System Sector, which is Track 20, Sector 1. This details the number of drives for which the system is set, the keyboard setup, and the RENUM parameters. It also contains the disc name and date, and the initial Basic instruction line that is executed on completion of a boot.

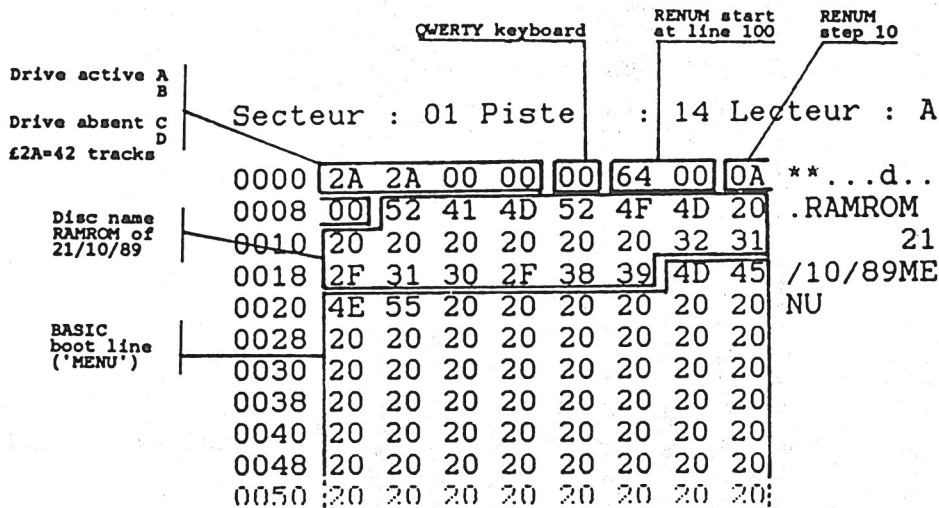


Figure 1

The second System Sector, the following sector, is shown in Figure 2. This contains the number of free sectors, the number of files on the disc, drive information, and BITMAP. This latter is literally a map of the disc, each bit representing a sector on the disc. If the bit is set to 1, the sector is empty; if 0, it is full. Note that you must read each byte from right to left - thus #02 represents a bit pattern of 00000010; the relevant 8 sectors would therefore be full, empty, full, full, etc. Finally Track 20, Sector 3 is reserved for system use.

		<u>£23C=572 free sectors</u>	<u>3 files</u>	<u>£2A=42 tracks</u> <u>£11=17 sectors</u>		
	Secteur : 02 Piste : 14 Lecteur : A					
Single face drive	0000	FF 00	3C 02	03 00	2A 11	..<...*
	0008	01 2A	00 00	00 00	00 00	.*.....
£2A=42 tracks	0010	00 00	00 00	00 00	00 00	.....
Master disc	0018	00 00	00 00	00 00	00 00	.....
	0020	C0 FF	FF FF	FF FF	FF FF	.....
	0028	FF FF	FF FF	FF FF	FF FF	.....
	0030	FF FF	FF FF	FF FF	FF FF	.....
	0038	FF FF	0F DB	F6 FF	FF FF	.....
	0040	FF FF	FF FF	FF FF	FF FF	.....
BITMAP	0048	FF FF	FF FF	FF FF	FF FF	.....
	0050	FF FF	FF FF	FF FF	FF FF	.....
	0058	FF FF	FF FF	FF FF	FF FF	.....
	0060	FF FF	FF FF	FF FF	FF FF	.....

Figure 2

Crucial to our use of discs is the directory. A knowledge of how this is arranged and incorporated into the system is not only fascinating in itself, but of great use in manipulating files on disc, especially if you have access to a good disc editor. My own best buy here is 'Nibble', also available from Club DiscOric. It will edit any format disc, not just Sedoric.

But since I've run out of space for this month, we'll start Part Two of the saga with the directory sector in next month's issue. Together the sequence of articles should provide a comprehensive guide to the format of Oric discs.

Tail-ender....

A great time was had by all at the Alternative Micro Show on the 11th November. It was a hectic day, spent in a large hangar that would have done Dave Dick's Cortina proud (yes, it was the world's first drive-in computer show!). Thanks to all who did introduce themselves, who bought my book, and who bought Club Discoric software. A fuller report should appear elsewhere in this issue.

P.S. On the Figures, '£' is used for '#', 'lecteur' means 'drive', 'secteur' means 'sector' and 'piste' means.....'track'!!
All numbers are in hexadecimal.

Jon Haworth

LET THERE BE MUSIC!—PT. 2

We left last month just after looking at the duration of musical notes, which if you remember lasted from 1 up to 16 (in the steps of 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 12 and 16). A final note on lengths is that you must remember that every bar will contain the same value of lengths. To simplify what I mean, imagine that your bar of music is empty at the moment, and you have a variety of note lengths to fit into the bar. Most pieces have 16 as a total value (a 4/4 bar), so you could fit an 8, a 4, a 1, a 3, into it. This was simply to tell you something about what you'll be working with, you don't need to worry about making a mistake about the total lengths in a bar - a utility wouldn't let you make a mistake and your own piece of music will be calculated already if you are copying from sheet music.

We are nearing the moment of truth - the actual programming of your little ditty, but first a little more about music for the unenlightened. If the words 'key signature' means nothing to you then read this paragraph carefully.

At the start of any piece of music (and every new line) you will see a number of sharps (#) and flats (b) unless the musical piece is in the key of C major. If, for example, there are 2 flat signs at the start of the piece then every 'B' and every 'E' note that you come across will change to B flat (Bb) and E flat (Eb) respectively. If the piece has 2 sharps then every F and every C turn into F# and C# respectively. To help you to remember which notes change into sharps or flats, for which key signature, here is a chart (bbb = 3 flats, ### = three sharps, etc.):

b = B	# = F
bb = B E	## = F C
bbb = B E A	### = F C G
bbbb = B E A D	#### = F C G D
bbbbb = B E A D G	##### = F C G D A

So looking at the chart we can see that if the piece is in four flats then all B's, E's, A's, and all D's will become flats. That is, of course, unless the piece tells us different - by placing a sharp (#), flat (b) or a natural (♮) before the note. A sharp/flat simply changes that note accordingly, a natural turns the note to a normal one, ie. not a sharp or a flat. And finally, if a note is changed to a sharp, flat, or natural, then any further notes that are the same as that one will also be a flat, sharp, or natural. For example: we are in 3 sharps, and we come across a G, because of the key signature it is a sharp. But we then see a G flat, in the same bar. All following G's in that bar will also become flats, unless of course a following G is a natural or sharp.

And that is a quick (!) summary of what you'll need to know on your musical travels, if you have any problems check out a music book or write to me. And so we finally reach the Orics keyboard.

You already know now that there are 6 octaves, and notes range from C up to B, then again at a higher octave. Your manual will tell you that the Oric will not recognize a letter 'C' for the note C, but needs a number to represent each note. 1 for C, 2 for C sharp, 2 for D, etc. right up to 12 for B, then back to 1 for C at the next octave up.

This part of the music feature may have mainly been obvious and not at all useful for those amongst you who can read music well, and know a fair bit about music, but it was necessary to help the rest along. Next month we will get to grips with the programming, so sort out the music piece you want to enter, make it a simple piece if it's your first attempt, and try to get one that's in the time signature of 3/4 or 4/4.

Don't forget, write before next month if you've got problems already.

HINTS + TIPS

Late News

*OUM software is now available on disk, two titles are currently available:

'Cricket' - £ 5.50

Both inc. P&P

'Galactosmash' - £ 6.30

All orders for disk software from OUM should be sent directly to:

Mr Dave Dick (OUM orders), 65 Barnard Cres., Aylesbury, Bucks, HP21. 9FW.

Cash accepted, cheques/PO payable to Mr D.Dick.

* From CDO/CEO, the JEO4 has been made available from Mr Jon Haworth. The disk contains a word-processor, Psychiatric and others.

For JEO4 send £ 3 + a disk.

Jon Haworth is also distributing Willy on cassette, the price is £ 2.50 for members and £ 4.50 for non-members.

Jon can be found at:

3 Madingley Road, Cambridge, CB3, 0EE.

* Dave Dick is willing to sell English version of French games to people, these are on disk and you must of course already own the French version, so when ordering send proof-of-purchase (the inlay will do). At the moment he can do S.A.G.A. for £ 5.50 inc. P&P.

To members of the C.E.O. only, Dave will sell MASQUE D'OR - £ 5.50 again.

For either details about 5 1/2 disks, or details about a disk-compilation then write to Dave and include an s.a.e.

Well, after that extended news section there isn't much room for the hints & tips, nevermind - here we go.

Here's a tip from Alistair Way from Belgium (he's English though). The tip is for "Don't Press The Letter 'Q'". Select a two-player game and enter for player one's name, 1978 WAS FUN. The screen will now turn black. Type INK 7 and press RETURN. Then EDIT 1009 and press CTRL-D, change the POKE (the final one) to POKE 638F,255. RUN it and you'll start the game with 255 Q-jumpers which allow you to skip games by pressing Q. Using this cheat you can reach the 30th Beacon and complete the game.

Here is a small tip from Allan Whitaker from Cheshire. In the Atmos manual it incorrectly states that function names used in FN and DEF FN are only significant to one letter. In reality, however, they are significant to two letters - in the same way that variables behave.

Not the largest tips section we've ever had, eh? Not to worry, I've got pages upon pages worth of hints and programs that have been sent in, they'll be appearing in the new year.

Next month: usual items inc. news, reviews and the rest, plus all of OUM's sales figures of our software see you next year.

ATTENTION: 'Galactosmash' - ATMOS ONLY !!!

Editor: Robert Cook

RAMbling in the ROM/Disk-drive matters: Jon Haworth

Dave's DATA: Dave Dick

Printing: T.Cook