

## I.O.U.

The Voice of the Independent Oric Users' Group

ISSUE No. 6 - late November 1985

### EDITORIAL

I'll keep this as short as possible to make up for issue 5 in which I necessarily had more to say than usual.

I didn't get a reply from O.P.E.L. . I asked them questions about Tansoft's disappearance and their appearance on the U.K. market e.g. did the two companies share any common directors ?, did O.P.E.L. acquire any of Tansoft's stock and if so at what percentage of the market wholesale price?. I didn't lose any money to Tansoft but nevertheless would have been just as interested as most of you to know the facts.

On a much pleasanter note are the new software releases from Gilsoft and IJK (see NEWSFLASH for details). I don't see much prospect for a revival in software production for the Oric in this country. I think that IJK's ability to market in France probably explains their continuing support. Let's hope that some of the quality French software finds its way here. No Man's Land software ranges between very good and very poor in quality.

On I.O.U.G. matters the limited subscription service has proven to be very popular. I'm glad that so many of you think that I am trustworthy enough to risk your money with after your previous experiences with Tansoft etc. I would like to make a couple of points clear. Firstly, as mentioned in issue 5, the subscription covers a maximum of six issues, production and postal costs permitting. I will use any discounts obtained through bulk production to protect subscribers as much as possible but if costs rise too much then the number of issues covered by the subscription will be decreased as appropriate. Secondly should the I.O.U.G. have to fold at any time whilst I am running it then all unused funds and materials will be returned to you less the costs incurred in doing this. It is unlikely that this will happen because when the time comes that I can no longer give time to the I.O.U.G. I will try to hand its organisation over to another person or persons whilst remaining in financial control for an intermediate period.

Finally there are a couple of points that I would like to make about ordering I.O.U. . Firstly orders should be sent to arrive at least one week before the first date mentioned in the planned range of distribution dates for the issue. Late orders are liable to face a considerable delay before I get round to photocopying them. Secondly some of you still sent me cheques made payable to me. As mentioned in issue 5 cheques/P.O.'s should be made payable to 'Independent Oric Users' Group', which should not be abbreviated. This applies to people ordering individual issues as well as subscribers. It makes administration far more difficult if you don't cooperate so from now on I will not accept any cheques/P.O.'s made payable to me but will instead return them.

I hope that you all enjoy your Christmas' and that you will continue to support the I.O.U.G.

Gary Ramsay.

### NEWSFLASH

#### Software Releases

Gilsoft have brought out an Oric version of the 'Quill' - their adventure game writing utility. The list price is £16.95 , FGC have it for £15.00 . Let me know if you see it any cheaper.

IJK have brought out three arcade games - Gobble (£7.50), a maze game; and Playground 21 (£7.50) and Damsel In Distress (£ 8.50), both platform games (I think). All three cost a pound less each from FGC.

I will try to get review copies of these programs (no pirate copies please!) but if any of you can spare 20-30 minutes to write a detailed review then I would gladly consider it. I strongly urge you to buy these programs through firms like FGC and O.J. Software because it is in our interests to keep them in business. Buying direct from the software house ultimately endangers our future range of choice.

Ronald Croft from Glasgow has informed me that Dudley Langmead Enterprises told him that the the distribution deal with Bureks has fallen through.

J.W. Haly has sent Dave Cheeseman another DOS for the microdisc which has all problems corrected except the printer problem for which a fix was published in issue 3. To get a copy send a blank disc plus return post and packing to Dave at 13 Huntingbrooke, Great Holm, Milton Keynes. MK8 9DF. Dave has also sent me an article on converting tape software to disc which, at four pages long, won't fit in I.O.U. . To get a copy send me 40p plus an A5 stamped, addressed envelope and I'll get it to you as soon as I have time.

Dave's DISKED disk sector editor is still available if you send him a blank disc plus £3.00 (includes postage and manual). This is for the Atmos, Oric 1 owners should write first. He has also converted Forth to make full use of the microdisc. Write to Dave if interested.

Allan Whitaker has told me that Phildata is still selling Oric software. I've seen their price list and some of the prices are very competitive so if you want a copy send a s.a.e. to Phildata, 8 Richmond Terrace, Pudsey, West Yorkshire, LS28 9BY, not forgetting to say what you want.

Orpheus finally got around to replying to my letter, saying, as was published in issue 5, that they would bring out some new software if something definite was said about the future U.K. support for Oric.

Owe Fransson wrote to tell me that his tape to disc transfer utility is available from him for two pounds which includes tape, post and packing. Send him two pound notes/pound coins.

Personal Computing Today has ceased publication so it's goodbye to the only magazine that had been providing a decent level of support for the Orics in recent months. I am also fairly sure that its sister magazine, Home Computing Weekly has gone the same way. We are fast approaching a situation where the only surviving computer mags provide support only for Spectrum, Commodore and Amstrad.

Trevor Shaw informs me that Micromend are now called Albany Computers. The telephone no. is the same as before and the address is The Albany Works, Queens Road, Thames Ditton, Surrey KT17 0RE.

John Dibnah has found a supplier of cheap (top brand) disos in bulk. 3 inch disos cost £2.89 each for packs of 10 with p+p at £1.00 for 10 and £1.50 for 20, v.a.t. at 15% to be added to the total cost. Contact Abacom Computer Supplies, 225 Walton Road, Woking, Surrey GU21 5EF tel. 04862 71563 for more details.

#### RESPONSE

Joleon Caparros wrote to inform us that Hopper (reviewed in issue 3) does have crocodiles, insects and diving turtles on later screens.

Barry Drake of 17 Bournemouth Park Road, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS2 5JQ has some questions. Is there any way to change the speed of flashing characters?. Is there any way to CLOAD data on the Oric 1 without loading twice?. The data is hi-score and players name stored at £400 onwards in a game. Anyone in the southern area wishing to exchange ideas on programming?.

Martin Bateman has a music utility program from Loriciels called 'Editeur Musical' but all the instructions are in French. Can anyone help him with translation - 25 Henry Road, Aylesbury, Bucks. HP20 1NP.

D. Waller, 19 Laygarth, Rothwell, Leeds LS26 0TW has found a mistake in the 'Cabbage Patch' listing in the August '85 P.C.T. . Subroutine £1640 contains a jump to subroutine at £1155 which is within the BASIC area of the program. Let me know too if you have the answer. He also wanted to know if any corrections had been published for 'Creep Castle' from Your Computer. The answer is yes:- in the instructions for saving CASTLE 3 the start address should be A6912.

Two users would like to know how to implement multiple key responses ie more than one key being pressed at a time. If anyone knows how to do this then how about an article.

Mike Tilley, 19 Robinsons Lane, North Thoresby, Lincolnshire DN36 5QY would like to know what changes are needed to make the 'River Rescue' program from an issue of P.C.T. run on the Atmos.

## ATMOS TRACE.....by John Stubbins

If you have found the need to use the trace function you will probably have discovered the bug in this facility. According to a member of Oric's technical staff (before they were disbanded) this bug could not be corrected because it was a fault in the software design. In order to make use of this function there is a solution, although cumbersome, to overcome this bug.

On using TRON certain line numbers overflow off the edge of the screen (between 18/20 characters) and it is impossible to identify a program route. For a specimen program the line numbers might look something like this:

### Displayed

```
[ 100][ 105][ 110][ 120][ 300][ 300][
20][ 130][ 130][ 140][ 150][ 400][ 410
440][ 160][ 170][ 180][ 190][ 120][ 1
50][ 400][ 410][ 420][ 430][ 440][ 450
```

### Overflowed

```
120][ 180][ 190][ 1
][ 420][ 430][ 440][
30][ 130][ 140][ 1
][ 450][ 160][ 170][
```

In order to reveal the missing line numbers the TRON instruction should now be placed after the fifth program instruction, even if it means breaking into a line between two instructions. If in this case line 300 (middle) was used the result would be:

### Displayed

```
[ 300][ 120][ 180][ 190][ 120][ 130][
00][ 410][ 420][ 430][ 440][ 440][ 160
120][ 130][ 130][ 140][ 150][ 400][ 4
40][ 450][ 450][ 160][ 170][ 180][ 190
```

### Overflowed

```
130][ 140][ 150][ 4
][ 170][ 180][ 190][
10][ 420][ 430][ 4
][ 120][ 130][ 130][
```

However it is important that the line number sequence of the first trace is noted down, otherwise it will be impossible to compare the second trace to establish the missing line numbers without starting again.

Unfortunately this is not the only problem with the bug. The trace cannot be removed simply by TROFF or by inputting the trace line number with [return] to clear it. The easiest way to remove this is to use the following procedure (assuming line 10 was used for TRON):

```
INPUT 1 TROFF [return]
INPUT 10 [return]
RUN
CTRL-C to break
INPUT 1 [return]
```

If TRON has been included in the middle of a multi-instruction line then it is advisable to list this line immediately before removing the trace, so that by using CTRL-A and the cursor-right key the line can be edited back in again correctly without TRON, following the advice given on page 14 of the Atmos Manual. However do not forget to use the TROFF routine again, as follows:

```
EDIT line 300
INPUT 1 TROFF [return]
RUN
CTRL-C to break
INPUT 1 [return]
```

A little frustrating perhaps, but I do not think it detracts from the otherwise excellent facilities of the Atmos.

As a matter of interest I am employed as an accountant with a borough council in Kent. I have written a 32k financial program on my Oric which has now been transferred onto the office mainframe - the system is up and running and in daily use.

(Printer users - please help me by ensuring that listings and articles are on paper at least the same length as A4:- 297mm or 11.75 inch. That way I don't have to paste it onto A4. )

files of the program supplement will be in the next issue. Keep the programs coming - a cassette with slow and fast versions essential for games and the like.

```
0 REM *****
1 REM ** COLOUR MIX & PROTECTED PATTERNS **
2 REM *****
3 REM #####
4 REM ## 1--COLOUR MIX,PATTERN & 'EXCLUSIVE OR' PLOTTING ##
5 REM #####
9 POKE#30E,64 'Switch keyboard interrupts off.
10 PAPER3:INK1 'Colour text area of HIRES screen.
15 :
20 HIRES:INK0:PRINT CHR$(17); 'Initialise HIRES screen.
24 :
25 REM Set background colours.
30 CURSET0,0,3:FOR Y=0TO100:FILL1,1,19:FILL1,1,17:NEXT
34 :
35 REM Print pattern on text area.
40 FOR L=1 TO 3
50 : FOR C=1 TO 36:PRINT CHR$(126);:NEXT
60 : IF L<3 THEN PRINT " ";
70 NEXT L
80 PRINT CHR$(30); 'Home text cursor.
84 :
85 REM Print pattern on HIRES screen.
90 CURSET12,0,3:FILL200,36,#6A
94 :
95 REM Draw circle in 'exclusive OR' mode.
100 CURSET120,100,2:FOR R=1 TO 99:CIRCLE R,2:NEXT
110 POKE#30E,192 'Switch keyboard interrupts back on.
120 :
130 WAIT400
140 :
150 REM #####
151 REM ## 2--INVERSE COLOURS & PROTECTED PATTERNS##
152 REM #####
155 POKE#30E,64 'Switch keyboard interrupts off.
160 :
170 CURSET0,0,3:FILL200,40,64 'Clear HIRES screen.
175 :
180 REM Set background colours.
190 CURSET0,0,3:FOR Y=0TO100:FILL1,1,16:FILL1,1,17:NEXT
195 :
200 REM Change colour of pattern on text area.
210 FOR N=1 TO 3:POKE#BF68+40*(N-1),16:NEXT
215 :
220 REM Print pattern on HIRES screen.
230 CURSET12,0,3:FILL200,36,#6A
240 :
250 REM Set up protected pattern in inverse colours.
260 CURSET174,36,3:FILL32,4,#AA
270 :
280 REM Set up unprotected pattern in inverse colours.
290 CURSET174,136,3:FILL32,4,#EA
300 :
310 REM Draw circle in 'exclusive OR' mode.
320 CURSET120,100,2:FOR R=1 TO 99:CIRCLE R,2:NEXT
330 POKE#30E,192 'Switch keyboard interrupts back on.
340 WAIT600:TEXT:LIST
```

his program demonstrates: 1) the use of colour combinations to produce shades; 2) the use of patterns on the HIRES screen with which to 'exclusive-or' plot circles or other graphics onto; 3) the use of inverse colours; and finally 4) protected bit patterns ie they cannot be overwritten by the graphic routines of DRAW and CIRCLE.

The effect in 4) is caused by an anomaly in the routines for drawing on the HIRES screen:- The ULA video generator looks at each screen memory location to determine whether it is an attribute or character. In LORES a character is the ASCII code for a standard or alternate character. In HIRES the character is a bit pattern to be displayed in the 6x1 pixel cell.

The ULA treats the location as an attribute if bits 5 and 6 (l.s.b.-bit position 0) are both 0. The routine that draws graphics is supposed to look at screen memory locations to look for attributes. If it sees an attribute it will not plot over it. However, instead of checking bits 5 and 6 it only looks at bit 6, therefore locations that have values between 32 and 64 inclusive produce patterns on the HIRES screen but are not overwritten by the DRAW and CIRCLE commands. Allan Whitaker.

Issue 7 will come out between the 4th and 18th of January, if everything goes as planned. The expected cost of issue 7 is 40 p. People ordering it individually should send payment plus an approximately A5 s.a.e. (ie approx. 210x148mm or 8.5 x 6 inch), no other size envelopes please. For people who want to subscribe the terms are as in issue 5 except that your sub. will start from issue 7. Second class rate subscribers should send the full amount. I don't know when 2nd class post will go up again and everyone sending different amounts only complicates matters. Orders to:-

Mr Gary Ramsay, 1 Kingsway Crescent, Burnage, Manchester. M19 1GA

REVIEW - Battlestar by Paul Sparks (Oric 1 only).

Battlestar is a hybrid BASIC and machine code arcade game with a Starwars scenario. When loaded you are shown the high scores table whilst a three-voice arrangement of the Star Wars music plays, perhaps slightly slowly (a definite possibility of copyright problems I think G.R.). Press the space bar and you exit to the game, after first being offered a choice of four levels of play.

There are four screens to shoot your way through, each with its own feature. You can move your ship up, down, left or right, and can fire at alien ships before they collide with, and destroy you. You have three lives and there are five different types of alien ships which progressively appear. Your mission is to fly through space until you reach the planet. You must then guide your ship along the trench until you reach the wall. The wall steadily approaches you and you must try to shoot the marker cross to destroy the base before you collide with the wall. If you succeed (which is not that easy) you are rewarded with a picture of your ship flying home over the planet's surface accompanied by the Star Wars theme.

Altogether quite a good game. Perhaps the most interesting feature is the 3-D effect as the alien ships approach you - they start off small and grow as they get nearer. My only real criticisms are that greater use of sound and colour could have been made during game play, and that the scores awarded for each alien ship could be higher (the highest being 8 points). Paul hopes to market Battlestar under the 'TS Soft' banner for around £4.00 which I feel is a little high. Trevor Shaw.

As a result of the review Paul has made the following changes:- 1) additions to the sound effects during gameplay; 2) more colour for the player's ship; 3) the theme tune has been speeded up; 4) the graphics and sound effects of the ship explosion have been changed; 5) the price is now £3.50. Paul Sparks, Lower Fyfe Farm, Otterford, Chard, Somerset TA20 3QP.

#### I.O.U. Exchange

WANTED: Oric Atmos magazines, A. Dickinson tel. Sunderland 286020.

IJK joystick compatible game to swap permanently for 'Don't Press The Letter Q' - John Gray, 52 Lalebrick Road, Plymouth, Devon PL9 9RW. PCN issues 1-70 and 90-100 - David Goodrum, 23 Bone Road, Drayton, Norwich, Norfolk. Word Processor prog. by David Nowotnik or info. on other WP progs - A.H. MEESON 41 Roebuck Rd, Walsall, W. Midlands.

OFFERS: Mushroom Mania (Oric 1 only) £3.00 M. Bateman, 25 Henry Road, Aylesbury, Bucks. Books - Games For Your Oric and Oric 1 User' Manual £1.00 each plus 30p p+p or swaps - D.Foster, 193 Raynville Road, Bramley, Leeds LS13 2TJ.