

Oric User Monthly

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The end of 1988 could prove to be a good time for Oric owners, or it could make the final decision to keep it as a strictly minority micro. As I said last month there will be two shows for the Oric, although one is a show for minority micros in which Oric will have a section, see the news for more details. If these shows go down well then things could look up, as new software is already on it's way, with thanks to Allan Whitaker for his work. Even if new software did appear, it would take alot more to get it up and going again. For a start, there MUST be more Oric micros sold. Even though the Telestrat did sell a few micros, most of these were to people who already owned Orics, not new owners looking for new software. At these Oric shows there will be alot of interest for Oric owners, but hopefully computers could be sold. OPELCO are selling Atmos's (see the news section) but there should be others. Oric had a good comeback a while ago, and I'm sure that most Oric owners were excited about the new Telestrat, and the mass of new software that appeared, eg. Maze Rally, Snake Venom, A View To A Kill, etc. All these would have sold better if there were more owners, and more people willing to sell it. Then the distributors started to stop selling Oric software, such as FGC, OJ Software and Phildata. And now WE. Software are having alot of trouble selling Oric software, as HGC is selling it next to nothing. There is a new mailorder company who is thinking about selling Oric products called Capri Marketing who has let me know that they haven't made the final decision yet, if they do decide to give Oric the go ahead then you'll know as soon as it happens. I've strayed off the main point a little but next year could give Oric a much needed boost of new software and owners, with Atmos's declining in price. Of course the main problem with selling Atmos's is that no-one makes them anymore, Eureka fell through which was a large company, but with no decent business sense. Let's just see how these Oric shows go and hopefully a few more people will start to sell software for the Oric.

Back to the present time, I want contributions ! Tips, pokes, letters, programs, anything interesting will do ! OUM can't keep 7 pages filled a month with nothing in it, so next month I want more. There are some tips this month but hardly anything from you, do something about it.

Robert Cook

Inside: News . Top Ten Charts . Chit-Chat . Hints & Tips .
 Reviews of Skramble, Battle Flight & more . COMPUTER FILE .
 Results of free issues, and more on offer . More .

To compile the charts, send up a list of your favourite 3 games, and name the game you most dislike, arcade only please (do you want adventure charts ?)

'The Oric Games Guide' booklet, just £ 1.00 inc. P&P.

Wanted: Original copy of Macadam Bumper, up to £ 7.00 paid.

'The Quill' : Just £ 4.49 inc. P&P. Contact OUM for details, unlimited stock.

Advertising is free, up to 25 words.

NEWS

Here you are, the most up-to-date news section you can read. And what a month! I've got so much to tell you and so little space, so I'll be quick.

I've received full details about the Alternative Micro Show that caters for minority computers, including the Oric, MSX, Texas TI99/4A, and a couple others. The show will include books, magazines, software, etc. Allan Whitaker should be sending out details, if not already. The date for the show is : November the 12th (a Saturday), 1988. Time : 10-AM to 5-PM, cost : £ 2.00 for adults and £ 1.50 for children. It is organised by Emsoft. Address: Emsoft, 80 Dales Rd, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP1, 4JR. It'll be held at the 'Aston Villa Leisure Centre' in Birmingham. Emsoft phone numbers : 0473-49507 or 0206-540540. You'll see a report of the show in a future issue. Allan Whitaker has bought a stand at the show so you've got to say hello to him, under his strictest orders.....

A couple of reminders, Allan Whitaker wants to hear from you if you have any self-written software for his Public Domain software, you'll get paid for each copy sold, it can't be bad. Address: HGC, Freepost, 8 Staley Hall Rd, Staleybridge, Cheshire, SK15, 3YA.

Another reminder: The 1st Oric User Show is to be held in December in Wrexham, and promises to be a great event. Full details went out last month, but you can write to: Mr Kersey-Smith, 'The 1st Oric User Show', 8 Bluebell Estate, Pandy, Gwersllyt, Clwyd, LL11, 2UG. Maps are also available (of Wrexham) from the same address.

Now, here come the loads of other items (could someone give me another page ?) Allan Whitaker has got the rights to a new software title, It's a British version of a French title, it is called 'The Last Warrior'. Expect to see it out soon.

Compumart are selling 3" disk cleaners for £ 9.95. They work quick and very well, but £ 9.95 is a fair bit too expensive, they're usually out for about £ 6. Still, you might like to clean your disk-drive.

OPELCO are selling Atmos's for £ 40.00, not bad. Whether or not that includes P&P, Beads, Power pack, etc. I don't know. They also sell disk drives. Ask for full details.

Mick Poat has built several interfaces for the Oric 1/Atmos. One is a drum machine that allows around 7 tracks to be played at one time (which could create some fantastic sounds), usable from BASIC or machine-code. Mick Poat has also put together a nifty little prototype interface that will allow Oric 1 owners to load the ATMOS ROM from cassette, and then switch between the Oric 1 and Atmos ROM's at will.

Many Tandy stores are now selling MCP40 (the Oric printer) paper and pens. If your local store isn't stocking them, ask them to get supplies in, all major stores will have them soon.

Toby Simpson has designed and built a BBC Micro userport which plugs directly into the Oric's printer port. It will give the user the use of tracker balls, mice and joysticks, and all are useable in BASIC ! It also has a Ram-disc facility and all together about 20 devices can be plugged into the interface, not a bad collection for a micro with previously little accessories.

Mr Kersey-Smith is to run an ORIC SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP on Toby Simpson's new bulletin board, from late September, so it should be up and running now ! If you have anything that could be included in it, write to his address above. I knew it, I've run out of space. I'll just add that WE Software have had a massive reduction in Oric software sales, let's hope the shows bring more interest.

News content is massive this month. Many, many thanks to Mr Kersey-Smith & Allan Whitaker for their help in the news, it was appreciated. Let's hope the Oric revival Attempt no. 3 works.

CHIT .. CHAT ..

Welcome back to Chit-Chat, after a months absence due to no topic for the voting. Regular readers know how to take part now, if so then just flick through to the options. If you don't know what to do then read this.

There are three options, each giving a different view on a topic. You must decide which of the options best suits your personal views, then write in and name the option number that you think you agree with, and the following month (November '88 in this case) the results will be printed as a %.

The options

This month the topic is on the selling of the Telestrat, and the lack of ads.

- 1) Eureka Inf. was correct in not advertising the Telestrat, as if other micro owners had seen that it was an Oric micro (it would have had to be mentioned, saying that it was compatible) then they would have been put off buying it because most people have low opinions of the Oric.
- 2) There should've been alot more advertising as no-one knew about it, so how could they buy one ? The only people who knew about the Telestrat were Oric owners.
- 3) The advertising style was fine, but it was the price that ruined it. It cost £ 414.00 which is alot more than an Atari ST ! It should have cost at maximum £ 250, even though it is a powerful machine. The Oric doesn't have enough software to back up a large price.

Please get your answers in by October the 21st, and quote number 1,2 or 3. Of course, you might not be able to express your views in any of the three options so if you have a different opinion let us know.

A few months ago we said that we were trying to get hold of some French software, WE. Software have given up on this idea again after another attempt. The titles came from Tansoft, Loricels and Cobrasoft, but now the Cobrasoft and Tansoft titles seem impossible to get. Hopefully we can still get some Loricels games, including Video Flipper, Frelon and Star (all reviewed in OUM). We'll let you know when the final decision is made.

Comp. Results

RESULTS

A bit tricky last month, but with a little common sense it was quite possible. So unless you were stupid your name went into the draw for issue 15 free, inc. P&P normally 90p. The two winners were Darren Kinnear & J.Reynolds (twice a winner). The answer was a maths questions. We said, add the amount of pages OUM had when it started (5) to the amount of Oric sound commands not including SHOOT,PING,ZAP & EXPLODE (3) and then add on the number of issues OUM will have sent out in January 1989 (17). The total is 25.

If you though that was easy then try this was. Or if you thought it was hard then I'd give up ! This offer is for three readers to win issue 16 of OUM free including P&P (normally 90p) by 1st class postage. Results in by October the 21st please, they'll be printed in issue 15.

Question: Clue;are all the address mixed up?

What you're to do is to sort out these companies with the right address's. Match up the companies carefully, it isn't that hard, just look them up.

WE. Software	=	Blackpool	Your Oric	=	Surrey
OPELCO	=	Wores.	IJK	=	Cheshire
H.G.C.	=	Wentworth,Surrey	I.O.U.G.	=	Manchester

Adventure solutions : Captains Log,waxworks,Wizard Of Akyrz, Lords Of Time, Zodiac,The Hobbit,A View To A Kill (Part 1), and any other Channal 8 adventure. Just ask for them, they're free !

Game: Skramble
Supplier: Microdeal
Price: £ 6.95

This is one of the few Microdeal games that were eventually converted to the Oric, including Space Shuttle & Arena 3000. It is one of quite a few skramble-type games for the Oric, my personal favourite being Lone Raider. In Skramble (also 16K compatible) you must play it as a normal scramble game, flying over mountains, past rocket silo's, and through caves. You must shoot UFO's as they fire fireballs at you, you must also bomb fuel dumps to increase your fuel supply that drops quite quickly. There is also ammunition dumps to help you too.

Skramble plays well, and is written in 100% machine-code so it's fast, often a bit too fast. The graphics are large and the screen seems a bit too-filled. The sound effects are good, much the same as other Microdeal games. It is a decent version of scramble but nothing special, although it is fun.

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

Game: Battle Flight
Supplier: Stour Computer Software
Price: £ 6.95 (not available easily in the UK, but 'The Software Club' hires out copies for £ 1.30 each).

Battle Flight is the first of Stours Oric games that I've seen, and isn't much of a good start. You take the role of a lone pilot, who much rid the skies of evil bandits. You start off by taking off from the runway, trying to keep your speed and height up, once mastered I found the take off easy, although my first few attempts left alot of scrap metal.

Once in the air you must find out what height the bandits are at, by now your screen display is not like a normal flight simulator, more like Flight, although the game isn't as bad as Flight (what is ?).

Once you fly off the screen you are on another part of a large map, each screen is pretty boring though, and it takes about five or six minutes to get off the screen. If you get behind a bandit plane then your screen display turns into a proper flight simulator where you'll see the enemy insight. Pound him with bullets and you'll run out of ammo on the next plane, you must spare your bullets by taking careful aim. This takes a very long time and out of at least twenty attempts I only ever got to this final screen once, and even then my ammo run out before I got him, then my fuel run out, then I added to the pile of scrapped planes again.

Battle Flight is a brave attempt at a game that hasn't been converted well to the Oric micro, and is another poor failiure. The game is slow, graphics are small and boring. The sound effects sound like a lawnmower, but there isn't much noises that a plane can do, unless it gets shot down.

The game isn't joystick controlled, the keyboard is your only means of play, which is fairly normal for the Oric, but at least most games have decent keyboard controls. The keys are set in awkward places so that you think that it'd be easier to fly a real plane. Miss this one.

Graphics: 3 Sound: 4 Addictiveness: 3 Overall: 3

WANTED: Somebody to program written software, who can take a game design and use machine-code to program it. The programmer must have enough time to complete the game, and is required to make games for OUM releases.

<u>Top Ten: Compiled by readers & HGC (Mailorder)</u>	<u>Company</u>	<u>Last month</u>
1) Xenon III	I.J.K.	1 *
2) Zorgons Revenge	I.J.K.	3
3) Defence Force	Tansoft	2
4) The Hellion	Orpheus	4
5) Fireflash	No Mans Land	7 *
6) Karate	Gasoline	5 * (F)
7) Maze Rally	F.G.C.	NE *
8) Frelon	Loriciels	5 * (F)
9) Lone Raider	Severn	NE
10) Damsel In Distress	I.J.K.	9

NE: New-entry RE:Re-entry *:Reviewed in OUM (F):French software

Comment: There wasn't room for a comment last month, but last months new entry - Ultima Zone - has fallen out again, to no. 12. The charts have been compiled with you but also with the sales of HGC's budget stock, with many thanks to Allan Whitaker for his help.

Xenon 3 has remained at no. 1 for yet another month and there are two new entries in the top ten this month, they are Lone Raider and Maze Rally by FGC, which is good to see one of their games back. Keep the top 3 games lists coming, every list goes towards the charts.

C.O.M.P.U.T.E.R. F.I.L.E.

No.

I.J.K.

IJK is without doubt the most popular software house for Oric owners in British owners opinions, further proved in last months questions polled by OUM readers. There most famous games were the Xenon range, and the best selling game was Zorgons Revenge, still brilliant years on.

IJK went out of business about a year ago. They had released titles in France to try to halt declining sales but the French market was self-contained. IJK then tried to get hold of French software but they didn't get any results. They had four great titles ready to be released but none of these looked ready to reach the mailorder houses. In an attempt to save itself IJK released other titles on other micros, mainly the BBC micro/Electron, but IJK was unheard of outside Oric, which caused bankruptcy.

Titles released include: Draughts, Invaders, Don't press the letter 'Q', Zebbie, Dambusters, Attack Of The Cybermen, Trickshot, Superfruit, Xenon 1, Zorgons Revenge, Frigate Commander, Gubbie, Playground 21, Pole Position, Agrenon, Ghost Gobbler, Damsel In Distress, Xenon 3, 3D Maze & Breakout, Green X Toad, Backgammon, Chess, Chess 3, Fantast Quest, Cribbage, Flight 401, Germain-Anglais, Moria, 3D noughts & crosses, Probe 3, 3D OXO/Backgammon, and a couple others easily forgotten and one or two hardly ever seen.

Only available in France: Pole Position, Flight 401, Germain-Anglais, Chess 3, and Agrenon.

Reviewed in OUM: Attack Of The Cybermen, Zebbie, Dambusters, Trickshot, Xenon 3, Pole Position, Playground 21, Gubbie and Cribbage.

Do you want to see a particular software house featured in C.O.M.P.U.T.E.R. F.I.L.E. ? If so then drop us a line and we'll list their details.

ADVENTURE

Adventure Review

Game: Golden Baton
Supplier: Channal 8
Price: £ 6.95

This is yet another game from Channal 8's range of 'Mysterious Adventures.' Unlike most other micro's versions, the Oric version has some graphics, which are drawn fast and are quite good.

The game has some interesting puzzles but an experienced adventurer shouldn't find them too hard. The screen layout is neat and the input response is quick. The only thing that I disliked about Golden Baton is the show key response. All the games in this range have this problems, it suffers because the input is printed on the HIRES screen which makes the printing slow. At one time I tried to type GO NORTH and ended up with GNTH !

The vocabulary is fair, and the game as a whole is not too bad. It isn't very atmospheric and is no way as good as The Hobbit or Snowball. Nevertheless, Golden Baton is okay for the price.

Graphics: 7 Vocabulary: 6 Atmosphere: 5 Overall: 6

Game:	Supplier:	Graphics:	Sound:	Addictiveness:	Overall:
Probe 3	IJK	8	7	6	6
Operation Gremlin	Wintersoft	6	5	8	8
Chess	IJK	7	N/A	7	7
Dracula's Revenge	Softtek	7	6	7	7
Manic Minor:	Software Proj.	8	9	8	9

Probe 3 : Graphically great, but it does get repetetive.

Operation Gremlin: An four-directional scrolling arcade/adventure.

Chess: A typical version, well converted.

Dracula's Revenge: Kill the enemy whilst it's daylight, a great arcade game.

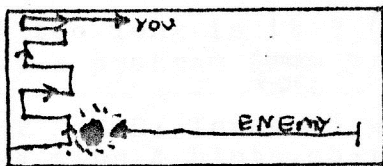
Manic Minor: Sound is great, so are the graphics. The game is brilliant, but it's too hard !

Hints & Tips

Help wanted on: Island Of Death, Operation Gremlin, Kilburn Encounter and Special Operations. Maps wanted for any game !

Stanley: When dropping discs, make sure the bases of the discs are not red. If you drop a red based disc it'll destroy all other discs on that pole.

Snake Venom: Follow this route (not exactly, just follow the pattern) with your snake. By the time you reach the top of the screen there is a 60% chance that the enemy snake will have killed himself by then. Try it for a while, you'll master the moves with practice. It's worth it.



'The Oric Games Guide' booklet has been ~~revised~~ ^{revised}, it's in a new neat format at the same price, just £ 1.00 inc. P&P. It features over 25 reviews of UK arcade games, the reviews are under 4p each.

Here is an interesting program from all time contributor Robert Bray. It will find out what day a certain date is, from 1900 to 2000. It also provides a calendar for these years. It is very useful for seeing what day you were born on, what day you're to go to the dentist, so you can emigrate. The program is called "Calendar".

```

20 DIM E$(12),D(12),F(14,12),G(100)
30 FOR A = 1 TO 12 : READ E$(A):NEXT
40 FOR A = 1 TO 12 : READ D(A):NEXT
50 FOR A = 1 TO 12 : READ F(1,A):NEXT
60 FOR A = 2 TO 7 : FOR B = 1 TO 12:
  F(A,B)=F(A-1,B)+5: IF F(A,B)=36 THEN
  F(A,B)=1
70 NEXT: NEXT
80 FOR A=1 TO 12: READ F(8,A):NEXT
90 FOR A=9 TO 14: FOR B=1 TO 12: F(A,B)
  =F(A-1,B)+5: IF F(A,B)=36 THEN F(A,B)
  =1
100 NEXT : NEXT
110 FOR A=0 TO 100: READ G(A):NEXT
120 CLS: ? : POKE 618,3
130 INPUT " ENTER YEAR (1900-2000)";H
140 H=H-1900 : IF H<0 OR H>100 THEN 130
150 INPUT "ENTER MONTH (1-12)";E
160 IF E<1 OR E>12 THEN 150
170 IF G(H)>7 THEN D(2)=29 ELSE D(2)=28
180 POKE 618,2: D=D(E):A=F((G(H)),E)
190 CLS: ? : ? SPC(16-LEN(E$(E)))/2;E$;H41900: ?
200 PRINT " SU MO TU WE TH FR SA": PRINT : REM 3 spaces between
the characters.
210 PRINT SPC(A);: FOR B=1 TO D:C=1: IF B<=9 THEN C=2
220 ? SPC(C);B;: IF PEEK(269)>=37 THEN PRINT : PRINT : PRINT " ":REM 1 space
space
230 NEXT : FOR A = 1 TO 4 : PRINT : NEXT
240 PRINT SPC(6); " PRESS RETURN FOR NEXT DATE"
250 REPEAT:GET A$: UNTIL A$=CHR$(13)
260 GOTO 120
270 DATA JANUARY,FEBRUARY,MARCH,APRIL,MAY,JUNE,JULY
280 DATA AUGUST,SEPTEMBER,OCTOBER,NOVEMBER,DECEMBER
290 DATA 31,28,31,30,31,30,31,31,30,31,30,31
300 DATA 1,16,16,31,6,21,31,11,26,1,16,26
310 DATA 1,16,21,1,11,26,1,16,31,6,21,31
320 DATA 8,3,4,5,13,1,2,3,11,6,7,1,9,4,5,6,14,2,3,4,12,7,1,2
330 DATA 10,5,6,7,8,3,4,5,13,1,2,3,11,6,7,1,9,4,5,6
340 DATA 14,2,3,4,12,7,1,2,10,5,6,7,8,3,4,5,13,1,2,3,11,6,7,1
350 DATA 9,4,5,6,14,2,3,4,12,7,1,2,10,5,6,7,8,3,4,5
360 DATA 13,1,2,3,11,6,7,1,9,4,5,6,14,2,3,4

```

Be very careful with the DATA lines, one mistake could prove fatal.

'USEFUL UTILITY'

Not too long is it ? (General agreement from background murmurs). If you have a program ~~from~~ printing send it in with full details.

 NEXT MONTH: Issue 15 will be just as good as this issue (ie. great) with more tips & hints, charts, reviews, news (really hotting up now), results of free issues offer and maybe more on offer, Chit-Chat, C.O.M.P.U.T.E.R. F.I.L.E. and loads more. Just 55p for the best mag available.

Don't forget, contributions !!!!!!!