

RHETORIC

ISSUE #4
CHRIST-
MAS
SPECIAL

PAYO

STUFFING
MIX



Sage & Oric

PERFECT WITH RHETORIC

**STUFF YOUR ORIC
FULL OF FESTIVE
GOODIES!**



Serving
Suggestion

**TAKING THE ORIC
INTO A NEW MILLENIUM!**

RHETORIC

INTRO:

Y2K and BEYOND...

I don't know about you, but I'm bloody sick of hearing about this new millennium stuff. It's all everyone seems to be talking about – how much more money they can demand, or how much money they can get away with charging for stuff. Taxi companies are complaining that triple the usual rate isn't enough, and some pubs are charging £100 to get in. I know Christmas is more commercialized than it's ever been, but this is just diabolical. Bah! Humbug! But enough of my complaining.... At least we're safe in the knowledge that our Orics won't crash when the date changes. Maybe this Christmas we might spend some free time on our machines, and come up with something for the next Rhetoric disk?

I've just got hold of my Rhetoric disk – and what a good one it is too. All credit to the Muso and JB for all the effort. I think you'll agree that it was well worth it.

Also, the very last OUM was posted through my letterbox this morning. It's sad to see it go. I found out about the magazine late on in the Orics life – around 1992, when I responded to an ad in Micromart (I think?) - and at the time thought it was a joke. That sounds cruel – but even when I bought my first Oric-1 in around 1984, no-one else had one, and getting software for it was hard. I really couldn't believe that someone was still supporting it. But luckily there was, and I feel fortunate to have been a part of it (if only a reader sending in the odd letter). It's nice to see an element of optimism for the future of the machine from the letters printed in the magazine. It's nice to hear that so many of you have decided to give us a try. OUM is a hard act to follow – especially as I am new to this, and don't have the knowledge, organization or experience that Dave has, but I'll give it my best shot. Sorry if some of you thought there was too much Sinclair related stuff in Issue #1 – I hope things have improved since then. If you have any criticism, please help me out by telling me – otherwise, I have no idea what people are thinking.

Thanks to the dudes who have sent stuff into the magazine this month – especially Jim Groom – who has sent loads of great stuff in – and JB who has supplied loads of really smart stuff to keep the mag filled for the next 97 years! If you have sent something in, and it's not been printed in here – don't worry! It will most likely be printed in later issues. I hope that we will soon see some of the regular articles carrying on from OUM soon, from people like Jon Haworth and Peter Bragg.....please!

Keep the letters, programs and articles coming. OK – that's a wrap I think... Have a happy Christmas and a great new year, and hope to hear from you all in the very near future.

-CHAOS-

CONTENTS:

- 3 ORIC IN INDUSTRY
- 4 TCP/IP FOR THE ORIC
- 6 BIRTH OF A GAME
- 7 TIPS & CHEATS
- 7 GAMING HELP
- 8 THE MAIL BAG
- 10 RETRO-REVIEW
- 11 PROGRAMMING
- 13 HALL OF FAME
- 13 NEW ON THE WEB
- 13 ADVERTISEMENTS
- 14 ORIC DREAMS



The Beginning of the Fall...

ORIC

in

Industry

By Jim Groom, 1999

How many of you remember those heady days of the early eighties? When men were real men, women were real women and computers were, well, lets face it, crude and primitive (but exciting). In those days, the humble 8-bits that were fighting it out for supremacy had to fight hard for survival - it was real Darwinian evolution in action. Computer manufacturers adverts were keen to point out that their machines were not only good at games but could manage your personal finances or help you run your business. Now, I don't know about you but I don't think I would have trusted any of my important finances or company details to the fickleness of the Oric tape interface (for in those far off days of yore, disc drives were either very expensive or non-existent). Anyway, back then, who used their Orics for business use? Er, not many hands being raised out there are there?

No, of course not, we were all too busy playing Rat Splat or Defence Force....

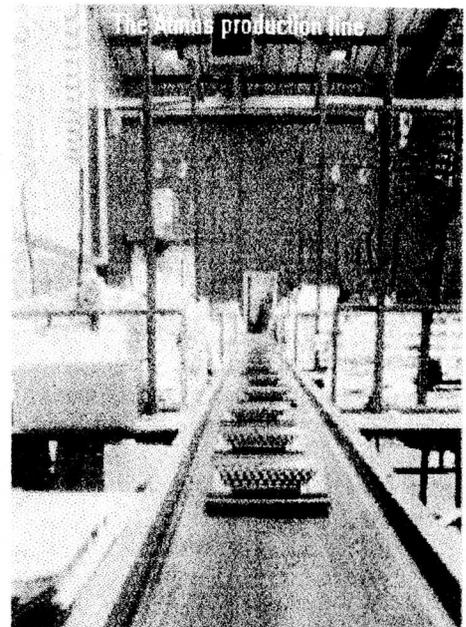
Lets wind the clock forward a bit to 1997. Now, computer evolution has led to one species dominating all, with the other survivors forced to eek out a pitiful existence in niche areas, knowing that one day the dominant one will come and take even that away from them and they will face extinction. The mighty PC stands tall (except when it crashes for the umpteenth time) and no business is complete without several of these fine thoroughbreds chugging away in every department. Spreadsheets, word-processing, accounting, stock-control, process control, Management systems - the PC runs them all with speed, accuracy and little fuss (except when it crashes for the umpteenth time). And what of our humble Oric? Did it ever leave its mark anywhere? Did it help keep the wheels of industry turning? Well, in the corner of a chemicals company in the heart of England, the ghost of an Oric program still works on....(except when it crashes for the umpteenth time).

I work in a very busy Quality Assurance department for a company that makes speciality chemicals for the electroplating industry. The main focus of my job is to test that these chemicals have been manufactured correctly and to make any adjustments that may be necessary. Most products are made by adding known amounts of chemicals together, like making a cake, but several cannot be made this way. They are manufactured by a more complicated electrolytic method to produce an intermediate. This intermediate then has to be analysed and the levels of some components raised and others diluted to produce a chemical that is in all the right proportions. Because the amount of intermediate drawn off and its composition always varies, a large number of calculations (one A4 side of paper) had to be performed to ensure the final product had all its components between quite tight limits. These calculations were performed by a calculator and pencil and took a while to do, during which you were always aware that the slightest error would cause disaster later. Fed up with performing these boring calculations, I realised that this was just the job computers were designed for...

Having identified that a computer would do the job a lot better than me, the next problem was that I couldn't program a PC and the computer department was too busy to deal with it (even though it would be a small job). It was then I thought about Euphoric. Endless nights of typing in programs from books and magazines on the Oric had given me a sufficient grounding in BASIC to be able to consider the task, so the next day I bought in my copy of Euphoric and installed it on the lab PC. Because the calculations were already worked out, it was very easy to run up a program to perform them, ask for key information and return the desired results. The program ran first time and gave the same results in a second (I ran Euphoric at a high clock speed) that it had taken several minutes to do by hand. From then on the program became a regularly part of work activity, but trying to get my colleague to run and use Euphoric was more difficult. Later, I added a few zaps, pings and explodes, just for fun. Pity the machine didn't have a sound-card ...

Six months later and the Oric setup was ousted. Despite its excellent performance for the company, it was sacked. The company had had a close shave with a (mostly harmless) virus brought in on a floppy disc containing word processed documents. In the ensuing, but understandable, paranoia that followed, most of the PC's floppy discs were disabled and only certain approved software was allowed to remain on the company computers. Sadly, this did not include Euphoric (despite the fact that it has, in some ways, a Microsoft operating system!) and it had to go. Before it was wiped, however, I used BAS2TXT to make a text file copy of the program - all was not lost yet.

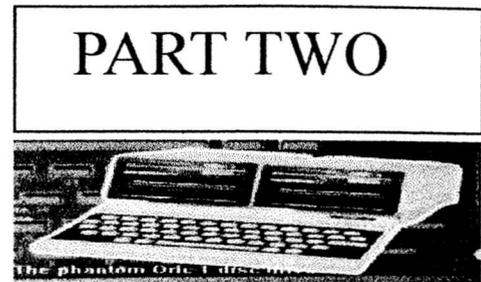
With the Oric gone, I had one more chance to resurrect the program (and save myself some work). I hoped that hidden away on the PC would be a copy of QBASIC, a version of BASIC that until recently was supplied with DOS/Windows. I didn't know much about QBASIC, except that it didn't use line numbers, but I hoped there would be enough similarity for me to get it up and running. Luckily, this was the case - QBASIC even accepted the line number format. I don't recall changing anything, except removing the ZAP, PING and EXPLODE commands. I was even able to set up a desktop icon to automatically run the program, so my colleague could use it too. And that brings us up to date, the program is still in use, virtually unchanged from the Oric. Not exactly the fully integrated business tool Oric Products had in mind, but it certainly has saved me hours of work. So, as you can see, after 16 years, the 'obsolete' Oric was still earning its keep.



Just in time for the 3rd Millennium: TCP/IP FOR THE ORIC



Getting ready for BIP: The Hardware Level



This is the second part of the series, and BIP's full release is closer than ever, so this part is dealing with the things I can't do for you: buying a modem, connecting your Oric to it, subscribing to an Internet Service Provider (if you don't have one already) and making your modem dial its phone number. So, here is the quick checklist, each point will be detailed thereafter.

- 1- an Oric computer with "debugged" Atmos ROM
- 2- a modem
- 3- a "special" cable you will have to build yourself in order to connect (1) and (2)

And here are the details:

1- BIP interfaces to the Atmos ROM, not the Oric-1 ROM. BIP takes care to not interfere with Disk Operating Systems (read this as BIP is compatible with OricDos, CumanaDos, RanDos, FTDOS, Sedoric), so the following hardware configurations are accepted:

- Oric-1 or Atmos with BASIC 1.1, with or without disk interface (Jasmin, Microdisc, Cumana...)
- Telestrat with Stratoric cartridge, in Atmos mode.

Please note again you don't need a serial extension, and the standard serial interface of the Telestrat is not used (the RS232 emulator is as fast as the hardware chip !!).

Important:

I've talked above of a "debugged" Atmos ROM. Although BIP can run with the usual 1.1 rom, I strongly recommend you replace your Atmos ROM with an updated one that fixes two problems:

1. - the 1.1 ROM sends spurious pulses on the STROBE pin of the printer port (one when booting the Oric, and everytime a tape program is loaded or saved).
- the 1.1 ROM doesn't correctly make use of the VDU vector when printing to screen as it is intended to do. This is not a problem with BIP but it is a problem for Oricmail : Oricmail cannot easily use an ISO8859-1 character set with the 1.1 ROM since VDU redirection does not work. So, I strongly recommend you replace your Oric ROM with a debugged ROM like Pascal Leclerc's ones.

2 - BIP should work with any modem that is able to communicate with the local computer at a speed of 19200 baud. Some people on the Internet might remember I talked about speeds of 38400 baud and even 57600 baud. That's right, I've written some really powerful routines that allows the RS232 emulator to send and receive bytes at the amazing rate of 38400, 57600 and even 76800 baud... I used the two first sets of routines (38400 and 57600 baud) to connect to a PC running hyper-terminal, and was thus able to type characters on the PC and see them displayed on the Oric, and conversely, characters sent by the Oric were displayed in the PC window... I couldn't really test the set of 76800 baud routines because the PC cannot cope with this speed (Hehe... is the Oric too fast for a PC ?

Well you know that the standard serial chips on the PC do 115200 baud, but they aren't as versatile as a 6502 so the next available speed is 57600 baud). Anyway, working at 38400 baud was not possible with BIP because there are checks to do for every byte received (we will see that with the Data Link layer description), and when two bytes are sent in sequence, the Oric only has a few microseconds (during the stop bit that separates the two bytes) to do this work. So, I was obliged to resign and work at 19200 baud in order to achieve reliable operation when receiving a continuous flow of bytes (a frame, as it will be called in Layer 2).

Anyway, every modern modem can work at 19200 baud. Also, it helps if your modem recognizes the Hayes standard commands (AT syntax). This is not mandatory but it will be easier to configure your modem if you have one that is "somewhat" standard. There are tons of modems available and each modem has a different command

set: BIP doesn't know of any, so YOU will have to tell it how to configure your modem. This is done by using the BASIC instruction !PRINT DIALSTRING\$.

DIALSTRING\$ is any string expression, and the whole string is sent to the modem as is. Although the main pur-

pose is to specify the command that makes the modem dial a phone number, you can prefix your dial command with some modem initialization commands.

E.g. most modems will dial number 0123456789 with the following command:

```
!PRINT "ATDT0123456789"
```

As I said, initialization strings are dependent of the modem brand name and model. I hope some kind soul will have the patience to provide a database of initialization strings for use with BIP.

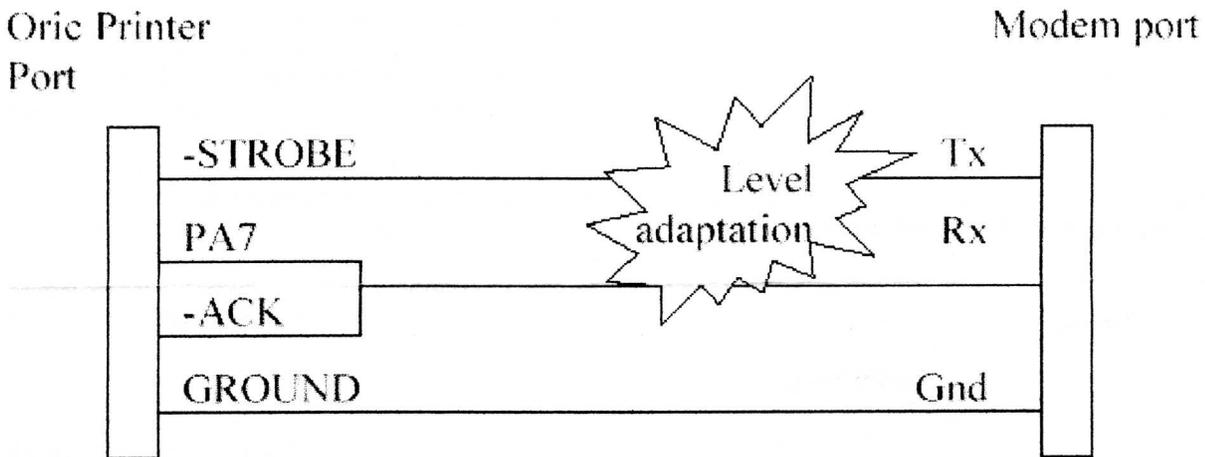
Note:

a speed of 19200 baud between the Oric and the modem does not imply the same speed on the phone line. Modern modems use compression and can thus multiply the throughput by a factor of 4. So, a 9600 baud modem with V42bis compression can perfectly handle a 19200 baud local speed.

3- the hard part: you do know that you don't have a serial connector on your Oric, so this is no surprise the cable is "special". This requires some soldering, but French people have it easier because they can adapt a PC-Minitel cable.

The special cable connects the printer port of the Oric to the modem, but only three/four wires are used. Here is the end-to-end connection diagram:

Two remarks about the picture:



- only one data line of the Oric printer port is used, the others might serve for a joystick or a mouse (I'm working on this too)
- level adaptation transforms the voltage levels from EIA (+12V/-12V) to TTL (0V/+5V) levels and vice-versa.

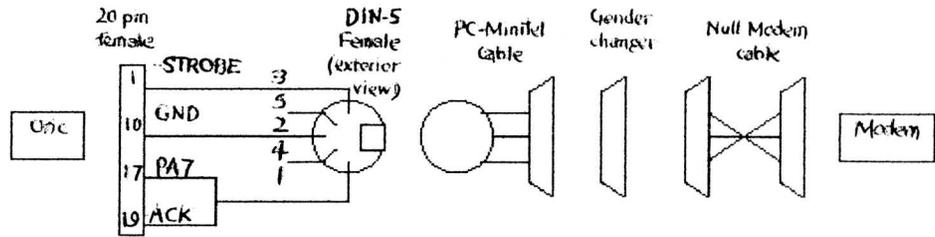
This is already done in PC-minitel cables, usually with two transistors and some resistors, so if you use such a cable, your job is eased a lot: you can either cut the minitel DIN-5 plug and connect the wires to a 20-pin female connector you will plug to the Oric printer port, or you can leave the minitel cable intact and build a small adaptor

cable to interface between the Oric and the minitel cable. If you use a PC-minitel cable, of course, it is intended to plug in a PC, not in a modem, so your cable has a female plug instead of a male one, and it is intended for a DTE (Data Terminal Equipment, e.g. a PC), not a DCE (Data Communication Equipment, e.g. a modem).

So, my suggestion is : leave the PC-minitel cable intact and connect the DIN-5 side to the Oric with a self-made adaptor (wiring below). To the other side of the cable (DB25 side), connect a gender changer and a null-modem cable (you might also have to had a DB25 to DB9 converter if your modem has a DB9 port). The following picture summarizes the recommended connection:



Of course, you end up with at least 4 elements between your Oric and your modem. Please note however that BIP can be used to build a point-to-point link with another computer: in this case, you just need the PC-minitel cable and the Oric adaptor.



This way, you can attach an Oric to a PC or another computer and thus build your LAN (Local Area Network) !

If you don't like chaining cables or if you don't have a PC-minitel cable (I guess this cable is pretty hard to find outside France, and with the lost of interest in Minitel, it will soon be hard to find in France), you can still build a single cable with the required level adaptation. As you can see, I haven't detailed the schematics needed for this level adaptation: I am no electronics expert, so, I hope others will fill the gap and propose schematics for the best level adaptation.

Now, for those interested in the inner working of BIP, here is what the hardware layer consists in. In the OSI definition, the hardware layer is responsible for the transmission of a single data element, that is to say: a bit. By using the standard RS232 encoding, data is transmitted asynchronously, one byte at a time. As I mentioned in the first article, BIP contains my RS232 emulator (or "software serial device" as I like to call it). This means that our poor 6502 is not assisted with a serial chip, so it has to do all the work. I already talked about RS232 emulation in "Life in the fast lane", but it was focusing on tape operation. For network applications, there is a major implication: the 6502 cannot handle both emission and reception at the same time. In other words, BIP is half-duplex: it cannot receive data while it is sending a byte. You might say "What? this is catastrophic ! we are going to lose data !" but please trust me: proper flow control will make this limitation disappear (flow control is introduced at level 4: (Transport Layer). Moreover, I am using local flow control between the Oric and the modem in order to handle the physical media as an half-duplex link. That is to say, incoming data will be blocked inside the modem buffer until the Oric signals it is ready to receive it. As the physical cable consists of only 3 wires (ground, transmission, reception), there is no hardware control flow possible, this is why software flow control is used (this is also known as the XON/XOFF protocol).

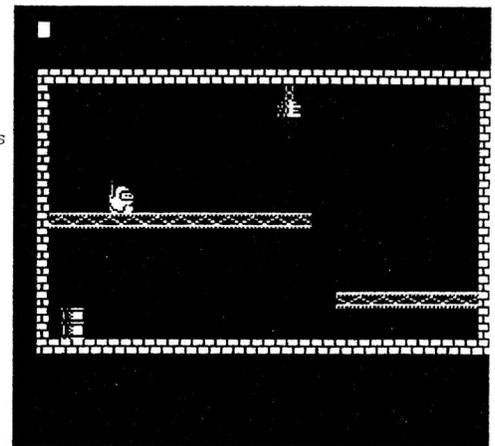
Next time, we will step up to level 2: the Data Link layer, or how to connect to your provider using PPP.

- FABRICE -

Birth of a game ... maybe... Part two

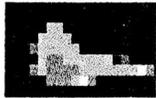
After doing some graphics and having a few ideas last month, I've been doing a bit more to this game. I must have spent a good 4 hours so far...whoo-hoo!! Taking the screen mock-ups that I did before, I started programming a basic game engine. I started doing a screen drawing routine that just places the platforms and objects on the screen. This routine holds information on where objects are placed too. The idea is that the program calls this level setup procedure, which holds all of the screen and object info for each level - So that further levels can be done exactly the same way, and the main game engine routine treats any level the same - without the need for different code for each level. I hope that makes sense?

OK - So the object of the game is now decided. To progress through the game, you have to obtain an object which allows you to progress to further levels. Sometimes these objects are usable - sometimes not. For the first level, you have to pick-up the fuel barrel (which then generates an exit point). The next level will contain a jetpack which you can pick up. The next level uses both of these items in order for you to perform a certain task. By not having a standard way of completing each screen, I could make the game a bit more interesting. As you can see from the pic, the game is very sparse at the moment. I have platforms, an object (which when picked up generates a teleporter to the next level), a magnet (which zips the player up in the air) - but at the moment - no hazards. In it's BASIC form, the game is extremely slow, but having compiled it and got rid of the odd bug, the game is quite fast and surprisingly slick. This will probably change when I start adding more stuff to it! My big problem at the moment is running out of graphics. I was going to have a different load-in character set for each level, but alas - the compiler won't accept it. Got to find a way round that! I may have to load some sets in before hand and do some relocating in memory. I may need to hassle JB... ;-)



Stuff to add.. Hazards, Further Levels, Sound, Color, loads!!!!!

-CHAOS-



Last months issue included a cover disc for those who have taken up that offer. One of the programs featured was the Golden Baton. I am sure some of you out there are stuck so here are a few clues for the more tricky parts. Mind you, they may not help you much as some are very cyptic! I have completed this adventure, so if you really are stuck on this or any other adventure, don't hesitate to write to me at the address below.

GOLDEN BATON TIPS

To get going, you are going to need a few items that aren't obvious, even if they are just lying around! Make sure you have a good LOOK at everything, and it may be time to do some pruning!

Problems with matches getting wet while crossing the moat? A lob is just the job!

Can't pass the Knight? Concealment may be in order.

Can't read the runes? Put your thinking cap on!

Quartz too hot to handle? A magic item, a magic act and a magic word should help.

To open a padlocked door may require a bit of breaking and entering.

The crab likes his delicacies seasoned.

Pin down your handicap to get the Baton.

The address to send your hints, tips and cheats to is:

7 Debdale Avenue,
Lyppard Woodgreen
Warndon Villages,
Worcester.
WR4 ORP

or email: james.groom@virgin.net

Don't Press The Letter Q by IJK

From Simon Guyart:

"I'm trying to finish Don't Press The Letter Q with the cheat given in The Oric Cheats Directory, the cheat works fine but 255 Q jumpers are not enough to finish the game :) An Euphoric memory dump allowed me to have again 255 Q-jumpers, but I've now passed the 30th beacon, I'm scoring more than 52000 points and nothing special happens. Is there an end? (I edited the game and saw a message "the author is amazed, please write me at..." and the address, so I guess there's an end :) Did anyone ever write to him? And, as I sadly never had DPTLQ as an original (so I don't have the manual), how do we EARN Q-jumpers in the game?"

Well I must admit I was never very good at this game, even with the cheats. I don't know how you earn Q-jumpers myself! I know that the author was contacted and that an interview was on the cards, but I don't think it ever happened. I can't find any reference to it in the OUM Index anyway. One thing I do remember is that the author wanted to re-write the game for the Amiga.



Zebbie by IJK

From Simon Guyart:

"Has anyone managed to finish Zebbie? There's a place I'm always dying, where I have to do a jump that is almost as large as the screen. I must have died 4353 times here, always FAR from the platform I had to reach."

If anyone knows how to get over this part of the game write in and let us

RHETORIC...

ORIC



THE MAIL BAG

Rhetoric c/o Simon Ulliyatt. 32 Peter Paine Close,
Butterwick, Boston, Lincolnshire PE22 0HA, UK

Email: CHAOSMONGERS@YAHOO.COM



Word Gets Around....

I've not recieved much in the way of Rhetoric related stuff, not that I was really expecting that great a response, since OUM still hasn't arrived. But did get this e-mail from Glyn Harper, Isle of Man blokey, maybe stick it in next Rhetoric in the letters bit?

Hello!

Like many of you, I used to own an Oric Atmos years ago...I am really trying to get hold of 2 things..

- 1.. An Oric Atmos. Working or not, to add to my collection.*
- 2. I have the Euphoric emulator.. Can I get the original demo that came with the Atmos that played 'the Entertainer' and had the flying tweety pie on screen? I would love this..*

Regards,

Glyn Harper.

Isle of Man.

My reply...

Hi Glyn,

Great to hear from an Oric user!

These days although Oric is on the NET in many forms, we rarely get a newbie to the group! Are you interested in subscribing to Rhetoric? Not that that makes a difference to info from this end. I am willing to help you in whichever way I can.

To get hold of the Hardware, you can follow two avenues.

First, there is our (As in Rhetoric) own Hardware Guru and supplier (A bit limited these days though!). Try contacting MUSO, alias Steve Marshall at this address...

steve@marshallmcgurk.freemove.co.uk

The second avenue is our Disc-System supplier. He has (As far as I am aware still) some Oric systems. His name is Steve Hopps and can be contacted on...

steve@stevhopps.netlineuk.net

For your second request, you might try Alexious's site. He hosts almost every known title for the Oric. The title you are looking for is the "WELCOME" program.

This SHOULD be on his site at...

<http://www.tardis.ed.ac.uk/cgi/alexios/Oric-Soft/menu?frames=on&UK=on&enter.x=58&enter.y=15>

Bit long, but kind of cut it out of the link on my favourites list!
Have fun!

Respect

Twilighte

PS:There is still new software written, you can see some of my

own work at my site....

www.twilighte.demon.co.uk

His reply...

Hello!

Thanks for the message..

I spoke to Steve Marshall and he is sending me an Atmos next week.. A bargain too! I never really did much programming on mine when I originally had it, so I fear that the Rhetoric subscription may be a bit over my head. I want an Atmos again simply to recapture my youth, but mainly, as the icon in my life it has become, seeing as though my life now revolves around computers, and the Atmos being the first one I had.

I managed to find the welcome program, thanks! I got it working with the superb Euphoric emulator. I just need to track down Wizards Lair and Classic Racing now, and I can become 12 again! :))

Great to see their is still an interest. I have a webiste dedicated to the Sinclair Spectrum. That was the computer I had after the Atmos.. It is at <http://homepages.enterprise.net/glynharper> if you want to see it..

Thanks again for the info!!

Glyn..

Thats it!!

Bye

Jonathan Bristow

Hi Jon

It's a shame we couldn't tempt this guy into a subscription! But - who knows? He may be back once he gets a taste of what the Oric has to offer nowadays. -CHAOS-

SAUSAGES....

Hi Chaos,

Just got the Rhetoric numero 3. Good stuff. Haven't typed in the progs yet, but I'll have a go. The two-liner idea is a good one which other computer mags have run. Their machines allow longer lines than Orics so maybe we should try for 5 lines?

Could you print the software rates that I sent and the repair/ spare parts details that I've sent? I want people to know we can offer a backup service when their machines are failing. Most software is available - if I have it !



The MAIL BAG...

It's not me that says Cumberland sausages are the best, just the general consensus amongst the populous. It's like getting a Croissant in France or a Cornish pasty in Cornwall.

The "MANIMAL" WRITES...

I don't care what you say about the sausages, W.A.S.P are sh*tte. All fancy dress and blow-dries ! I'm not into all that ponsing about nonsense. I just like good music. Metallica and WASP both seem to have gone more for proper rock nowadays, so stuff like 'Damnation Angels' from WASP is not too bad. You'll be listening to ManOwar and Spinal Tap next. I've done for you of rock (a bit punky) from the Classic Rock cover disks and Tygers of Pang Tang. None Alice Cooper mimicry here !



Liked the cover idea. Can you send me a copy of the Led Zep Muso bit ?



Darn it ! I was going to send the Ankhseamon instructions but I can't find them. (I think the controls are in the game intro ??) You need to go around the side of the museum and go and collect a couple of coconuts before entering the building where the map starts. You are viewed at from different sides so you go in a room from one side

and then enter the next screen from the wrong side. The map should help with this as the views are 'straightened out'.

No I'm not a bloody closet Speccy fan. Get those crap Sinclair pictures out of our lovely Oric Publication. I like games and stuff and some of them happen to be on the pukey little black plastic object that tends to overheat and burn a hole in peoples tables.

Oh well must be getting on.

Steve M

Hi Steve!

Glad you liked the programming challenge. OK - good idea - 5 lines it is then. To be honest with you, if anyone sends ANY programs of ANY length in, I'll be happy. Regarding the sausages - we'll call a truce there and say no more about it. I don't know why I started defending Lincolnshire sausages anyway - I don't even particularly like sausages of any kind! And as for croissants.... We're so behind the times in Lincolnshire, that we don't know what they are. Are they bread rolls that posh people have for breakfast in hotels? W.A.S.P.? Fancy Dress? Blow Dries? Hairspray and Lycra you mean!!! And don't forget the raw meat and tactically placed firework. Hey - I remember those days when I had hair like that.. If I keep going the way I'm doing, I end up looking more like Right Said Fred. Incidentally - W.A.S.P. did a song called 'The Hellion' - which is also an Oric game I believe (Well - I've got to keep this a bit Oric related you know...)

Hi Simon,

I have settled on a few ideas for regular sections for me to do for Rhetoric.

These are as follows:

1. Retro-review (I have completed a review of Skramble for the Dec. issue).
2. Modern review (new Oric or PC programs - working at getting PC Hires to work!)
3. Hints and Tips (assuming there are any new ones that month).
4. Hi-scores (see other e-mail)
5. Gamers Questions (forum for stuck gamers requesting help from readers)
6. Whats New On The Web? (All the new and updated Oric pages we come across that month).

You'll get something for each of these sections for possible inclusion in the December Issue so you can see what they are like. Its up to you of course if they are worth putting in or not, or if they should continue every month. Feedback, good or bad, welcomed. Obviously, items 3, 4 and 5 are facets of the same thing and could be sub parts of a larger section.

Regards, Jim --

Currently listening to: Radio 5

Hi Jim

I can't wait to see some of those articles - I'm sure they will be great - just what we are looking for. That version of Skramble... Is it the Microdeal version? Well - I don't know if I mentioned this before, but the person I bought my Oric 1 from many years ago claimed to have 2 programs accepted by the Interceptor Micros software house. (I know one of his friends had a game released by that house called Cuddley Cubert on the Sp*ctr*m). One of the Oric games was Frogger and the other was Skramble (spelled with a 'K'). Of course - as far as I know - these games never appeared - but must be lurking around somewhere...

-CHAOS-

Currently listening to wife saying "Are you coming to bed? It's twenty past two in the bloody morning!"



Mr Bostik writes...

Hello,

I must bring some precisions to Muso's letter about the pictures of John H's toys. (page 7 of November issue).

There is no Minitel on the first picture, as Minitels are video terminals (9-inch monochrome screen and keyboard) equipped with a modem. On the second picture, the "transparent Oric" was not made in Norway but in Belgium by Rudi Staumont.

I hope that the Oric set that the Muso got from Dave is working fine, I connected the 3.5 disc drive at Dave's, but was it 2 o'clock British Summer Time or 2 o'clock continental time ? (I do not mean 14.00 !)

Amities orciennes,

Jean "super glue" Boileau

Hi Jean,

Nice to get some email from afar... Tsk.tsk... The Muso must be going mad - you know - it must be all of the British beef that goes into those S***AGES... Oh- damn - I promised I wouldn't mention that again....

Anyway - You'll be pleased to know that Peter's hands are safely unstuck now!

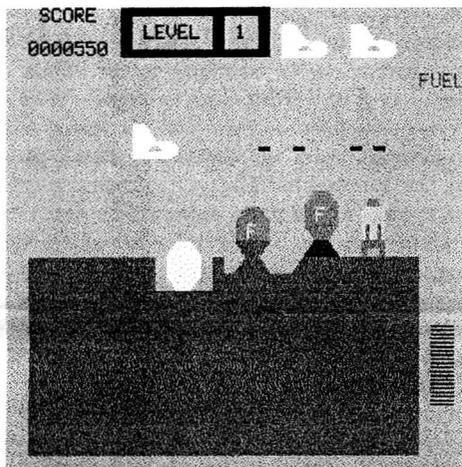
-CHAOS-

Retrogr@de

Retro - Review
Skramble
(Microdeal)

 Microdeal were a company famous for their support of the Dragon and to a lesser extent, the more uncommon machines such as the Oric. For some reason they chose to ignore the vast Spectrum and Commodore 64 markets, only releasing a few titles for these machines. Skramble was one of the few programs they released for the Oric and was programmed by Rita Jay. On loading, the game enters a demo mode reminiscent of an old arcade machine, alternating between the Hi-Score table, a view of the game itself and a screen showing the scores obtained by destroying the enemy objects. Pressing the Space Bar starts the game.

Skramble was also released on the Dragon and the graphics are very reminiscent of this machine. For a start, the main colour on the screen is green, which made a significant appearance in



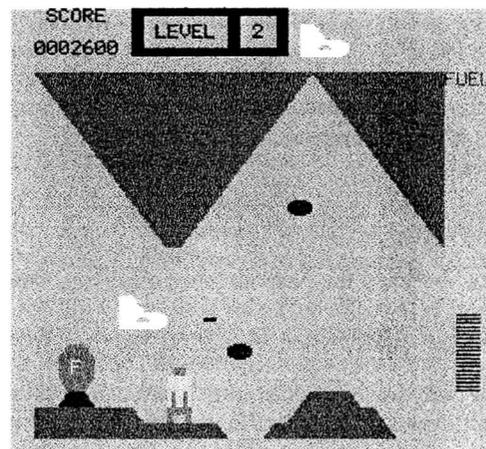
most Dragon games. The graphics are also rather blocky in appearance and lack detail, especially when compared to say, Lone Raider or Krillys. The blockiness of the game pieces is also emphasised

by their relatively large size. As the name of the game suggests, this is a Scramble clone and as the game starts, your craft makes its way across a red landscape which scrolls from right to left. The scrolling is perfectly acceptable but not completely smooth. Movement is via the cursor keys and you can move in the standard eight directions with ease. You have two weapons, a laser (press B) which can have up to 5 shots onscreen at once and bombs (press space), of which two can be onscreen at anytime. The bombs are nicely drawn, although simple, and fall in a diagonal trajectory making a whistling sound as they go. Anything that is destroyed explodes in a large yellow explosion (a simple octagon - again, nothing fancy). It is possible to collide with your bombs or any explosions so be careful. Across the top of the screen from left to right are displayed your score, the screen number and the number of craft you have left. Fuel status is shown down the right hand side and when the tank empty, its game over, regardless of how many lives you have left. Every time you destroy an enemy fuel dump, you are rewarded with a little extra fuel (see, I told you it was like Scramble). If you lose a life, you fuel status remains the same - you don't get a nice new full tank!

The game is split into a number of stages which are seamlessly joined together. Level one involves you flying over the enemy terrain bombing fuel dumps and destroying rockets, which lift off as you get close. Level two is similar, but at times you find yourself having to cope with a roof as well - the slightest contact with the terrain and your craft is destroyed. Small blue blobs

also hover around the landscape and must be shot or dodged, but the rockets no longer take off. Fuel is a bit thin on the ground on this stage. Level three is very much like level two, except that the blue blobs are replaced with indestructible yellow fireballs. You have no choice but to dodge these. This level is very hard as you are likely to be low on fuel and desperately need to destroy every one of the precious few fuel dumps that appear. At the time of writing I have not got any further.

Although the game looks a bit dull to begin with, once you have played it for a while you realise that you are playing a half decent version of Scramble. The biggest flaw is that the game is initially quite difficult. Because of the size of your craft and the enemy obstacles, you have very little room to manoeuvre in order to avoid a collision. What makes this problem worse is that the explosions are quite large and contact with them is deadly. Imagine you are faced with an obstacle in your way, you blow it away only to find it replaced by the even bigger and harder to avoid explosion. It is a good idea if an enemy gets close to try and slip past it rather than destroy it. Fortunately, there are a few safe places for you to find, where you can travel a fair distance with relatively little hassle. Add to all that the scarcity of fuel dumps on levels two and three and the fact that running out of fuel means game over and you have a tough but not impossible game. If you want to try and beat my Hi-score, its 6500.



Final Conclusions:

- * Graphics not very polished.
- * Good sound effects but no music.
- * A better game than first impressions suggest, but very challenging
- * A fair effort for its time but overshadowed by later releases.





"Programming"

Game Development Package

Part II

In the first instalment of this massive project, we delved into Screen scrolling with the result of a useful general Scroll Routine for HIRES and TEXT. A couple of months later, having reminded myself of my duty, I bring you the next chapter of this Epic.

Scrolling in the first chapter was accomplished Byte-wise. That is to say that it followed a simple scrolling of bytes. In text mode this is not noticed but in HIRES, a scroll in the X-direction scrolls in steps of 6 pixels (one byte).

This next chapter concentrates on scrolling the HIRES screen in single pixel steps. To accomplish it in Machine Code, we need to understand the "Nature of the Beast".

HIRES is arranged as 40 bytes across by 200 bytes with an additional 3 text lines at the bottom. Each byte can represent 6 pixels, therefore giving us an X-resolution of 240 (6*40). Each byte may hold Pixel data or Attribute Data. In this chapter, we will put down some constraints to simplify the proceedings...

- No Attributes/ Inverse Bytes
- Full screen Scrolling
- Scroll Left only
- Scroll in a step of one pixel
- Scroll out only (Rather than Wraparound)



A byte containing pixel data lye's in the range #40 (64) to #7F (127) and will look like this at bit level...

BIT 7	BIT 6	BIT 5	BIT 4	BIT 3	BIT 2	BIT 1	BIT 0
0	1	Pixel	Pixel	Pixel	Pixel	Pixel	Pixel

So lets look at the machine code that will do the job...

```
LDA (00) , Y
ROL
CMP #C0
AND #3F
ORA #40
STA (00) , Y
DEY
BPL LOOP
```



The Carry bit (Which cannot be easily seen here) is used to pass the pixel that falls off the first byte to the pixel that is added to the next byte otherwise the byte would scroll out and not take in more data.

Lets go back through the Machine code in a little more depth...

```
LDA (00) , Y
```

Ok, Load the accumulator from the memory location held in zero page (00-01) plus the contents of the Y-Register.

```
ROL
```

Rotate the byte to the left and pass the carry into Bit 0. The carry will then hold the contents of what fell off the end of Bit 7 that in this scenario is guaranteed to be zero.

At this point, the byte can be guaranteed to hold some values...

BIT 7	BIT 6	BIT 5	BIT 4	BIT 3	BIT 2	BIT 1	BIT 0
1	?	?	?	?	?	?	?

So when we...

```
CMP #C0
```

We are really only looking for Bit 6 (#40) since bit 7 (#80) will definitely be set.

Bit 6 will in effect be transferred to the carry flag.

Now we...

```
AND #3F  
ORA #40
```

Now we have Bit 6 safely tucked away in the Carry flag, we can return the top bits to 01 which is what they should be for displaying purposes.

```
STA (00),Y  
DEY  
BPL Loop
```

We can then store the byte back into screen memory and move onto the next one (On the Left). Simple huh?

Well, this is OK for starters but we need scroll a screen, not just a single line. So we need to know the locations and dimensions of the scrolled area. Going back to the beginning of this article, we are going to scroll the whole of the HIRES screen out so we need to clear the carry flag before every new line.

Locations

The HIRES screen starts at #A000 or 40960 as shown on page 242 of the ORIC ATMOS user manual. Let's code that bit then...

```
LDA #00  
STA 00  
LDA #A0  
STA 01
```

The HIRES screen is 200 pixels high so...

```
LDX #C8
```

#C8 as with all other codes starting with "#" is the hexadecimal number that represents 200 in decimal

The HIRES screen is 40 bytes wide so...

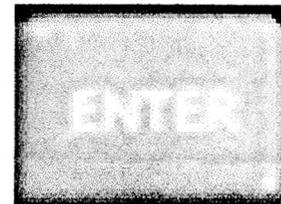
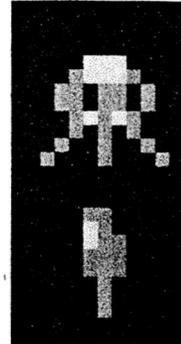
```
LDY #27
```

#27 is hexadecimal for 39. We use this since later on, we shall check if the content of Y is negative or not. The range therefore is from zero to thirty-nine (which makes a total of forty). You will find a lot of this logic in machine code though the loading of X with 200 is because a comparison is made later on with zero, so therefore the range is from one to two hundred. It will make sense why we have chosen this later.

"Programming"

Putting it together we get...

```
LDA #00  
STA 00  
LDA #A0  
STA 01  
LDX #C8  
  
Loop 2  
CLC  
LDY #27  
  
Loop 1  
LDA (00),Y  
ROL  
CMP #C0  
AND #3F  
ORA #40  
STA (00),Y  
DEY  
BPL LOOP1  
LDA 00  
CLC  
ADC #28  
STA 00  
BCC 02  
INC 01  
DEX  
BNE LOOP2  
RTS
```

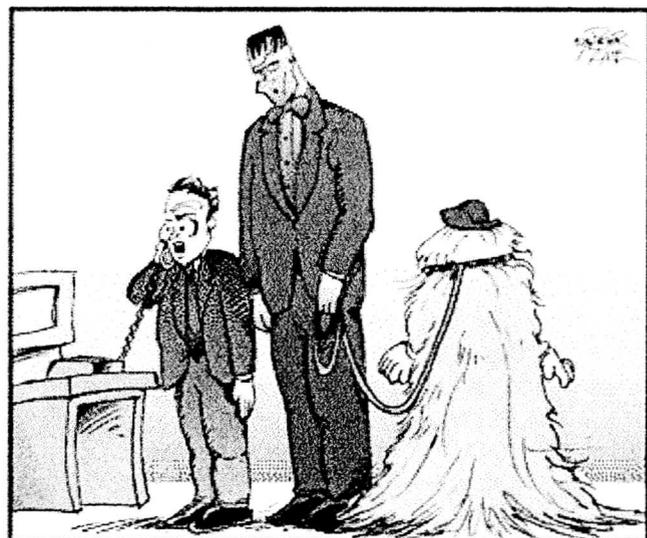


Notice that we also add #28 (40) when we move on to the next line otherwise the program would keep repeating on the same line.

Finally, lets put this in a machine code loader program. (This will be available on the next Rhetoric Disc) with an example.

NEXT MONTH: SCROLLING THE SCREEN TO THE RIGHT

TWILIGHT



"I said I wanted an I. T. Manager... I...T..!"

What's New On
The Web...

By Jim Groom

Your monthly guide to new and updated webpages.

Oric World

<http://members.xoom.com/oric2000/>

Fabrice has added the manual for FT-DOS to the site courtesy of Roger Barbier. For Microtan 65 fans Microtan World Issue 4 has been scanned in courtesy of Geoff MacDonald.

The deadline has been lifted on the 1K programming contest, come on, someone have a go!

Defence Force

<http://www.defence-force.org/>

Dbug has added a new hardware page, featuring scans of motherboards and an article on the Multicoloric video card - a 4096 colour palette on your Oric!

Andrews Oric Page

<http://www.gardner83.freemove.co.uk/oric.html>

Andrew Gardner wrote a lot of type-in programs for the Oric that appeared in computer magazines in the eighties. I remember typing in many of these as a young boy! He is now transferring these programs to his website for you to download. Some have been updated to run with QBASIC, the BASIC supplied with DOS.

Oric - The Next Generation

<http://www.cs.joensuu.fi/~jtiai/oric.html>

The page for ideas about a new generation of Oric hardware.

Jedes Oric Page

<http://www.ifrance.com/oric-jede/>

Not sure what has been updated, but it happened on the 5th October!

The address to send your web updates to is:

7 Debdale Avenue,
Lyppard Woodgreen
Warndon Villages,
Worcester.
WR4 0RP

or email: james.groom@virgin.net

Jim Groom's
**HALL OF
FAME**



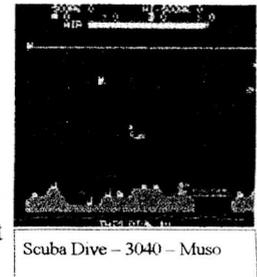
With a new magazine, we have a new high score table. Send in your scores and get your name up in lights (well, ink).

Game:	Company:	Score:	Scorer:
Cabbage Patch	?	61516	Steve Marshall
Dig Dog	Taskset	39370	Steve Marshall
Insect Insanity	Tansoft/Mirage 7900		Steve Marshall
Loch Ness Monster	Romik	5952	Steve Marshall
Scuba Dive	Durrell	3040	Jim Groom
Skramble	Microdeal	6500	Jim Groom
Tyrant	Your Oric	640	Steve Marshall

The address to send your scores to is:

7 Debdale Avenue,
Lyppard Woodgreen
Warndon Villages,
Worcester.
WR4 0RP

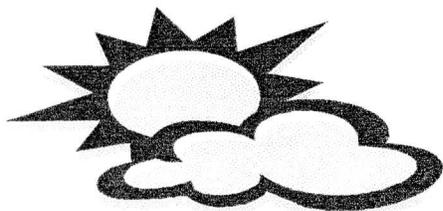
or email: james.groom@virgin.net



ADVERTISEMENTS

For Oric systems, Disk systems, repairs, parts and supplies, contact Steve Hopps on (0118) 932 8251, or you can email him at: Steve@stevhopps.netlineuk.net

For Sale: games: NINTENDO N64: Forsaken (unboxed) £9 * ATARI 2600: Space Invaders, Seaquest, Robot tank, Galaxian, Gorf, Moon Patrol, Hero £1.50 each, ATARI JAGUAR - Wolfenstein £5, NINTENDO NES: Mario Bros £1, Kung Fu Master £2.50, Black Manta £3, Adventures of Bayou Billy £3, SEGA GENESIS: (NTSC) Williams Arcade £8, SEGA MEGADRIVE (PAL) Mega Games 2 (3 games) £4, Madden 97 £2, Fifa 96 £2, Tazmania £3. SNES - Sim City £7, Postage at cost. Contact Simon at Chaosmongers@yahoo.com

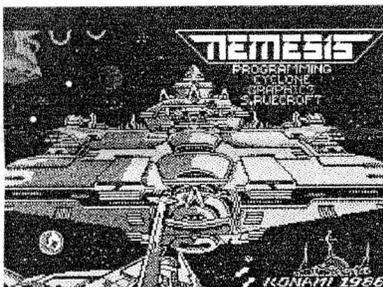
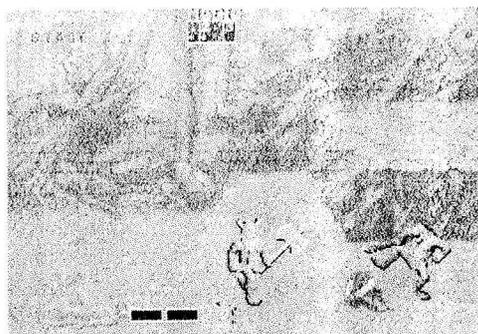


ORIC DREAMS... GAMES FOR YOUR ORIC.....

Ever seen a game on another format and thought "I wish I could play that on my Oric"? Ever seen a classic arcade game and thought "The Oric could do that - and much better!". Well this article is about games I'd like to see converted for our favorite computer beastie.....

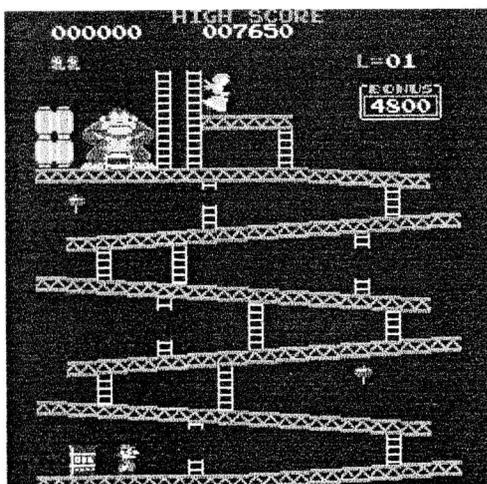
GAME: GOLDEN AXE
PUBLISHER: SEGA
FORMAT: ARCADE, GENESIS, MASTER SYSTEM, AMIGA, ST, SPEC, C64, AMSTRAD
DATE: 1988?
ELIGIBILITY: 88%

What is really lacking in the catalog of Oric games, is a really good beat-em-up, and they don't come much more popular than the classic GOLDEN AXE. Venture your way through nice scenery to defeat the mighty DEATH=ADDER, as one of 3 characters, chopping baddies to bits, and kicking elf type things to get energy and magic. Of course Golden Axe features wonderfully colorful sprites and backgrounds, but the playability shines though. If the Spectrum can make a decent stab at this game, then the Oric can too. The game engine is relatively simple and fast smooth scrolling is minimally used, and any conversion could easily feature the catchy ingame tune and short speech samples. Graphically hard to reproduce, but in monochrome, would look just fine - and after all - it's the gameplay that counts...



GAME: NEMESIS/GRADIUS
PUBLISHER: KONAMI
FORMAT: ARCADE, SNES, NES, PC ENGINE, SPECTRUM, AMSTRAD, MSX, C64, GB
DATE: 1985
ELIGIBILITY: 96%

The Oric has a plethora of good old shootemups, but few of the new breed, that appeared in the mid to late eighties. Scrolling, attractive shooters with power-ups like Nemesis/Gradius series from Konami, R Type by IREM, Dragon Breed etc. NEMESIS is probably the most widely converted of this shoot em up genre, and featured attractive but sparse backgrounds, and neat alien formations, along with a user selectable array of weapons. Of course, there were horrendous conversions of this game, namely the SPECTRUM and MSX versions, but the other versions were slick and well received, especially in Japan, and spawned many imitations. Orically, this game should be easy to convert - I may even have a go myself! The best versions of this game on the 8bits are the 6502 versions (although the PC ENGINE version is by far the best). The C64, and NES versions are excellent, and retain all of the frantic playability of the original. And the gameboy version is a masterpiece of monochrome graphics definition. One of my all time favorites - in a genre somewhat neglected on the Oric. GIVE ME THIS GAME!.....



GAME: DONKEY KONG
PUBLISHER: NINTENDO
FORMAT: ARCADE & EVERY OTHER SYSTEM KNOWN TO MAN
DATE: Err.... ABOUT 1981 I THINK?
ELIGIBILITY: 100%

Admittedly, there are one or two Donkey Kong games about for the Oric, but ... lets face it...they're pretty crap really. What the Oric needs is a really good version. Even such machines as the Dragon have got a good playable version (even if it is very green looking!). As far as I can see, there is no reason why the Oric isn't capable of an arcade perfect translation of this game! What do you think?

-CHAOS-

OK then mates... that's your lot for this month. I hope you enjoyed it... Rhetoric wishes all of our readers a happy Christmas and a great new year.