

AKETORIC 18



**ORIC VIP DEMO + COLLECTOR'S
CORNER + BOOK REVIEW + STUFF**

RHETORIC

Hi All,

Greetings to everyone. Firstly, I've a confession to make. I've hardly touched an Oric in the past month. Things are really bizzy here at the moment, as myself and wife have just celebrated the birth of our daughter Alice, so we're bogged down in stinky nappies. I thought about making this issue a scratch and sniff special, but that would just be too cruel.

There seems to be quite a lot of stuff going on at the moment. Jon Bristow is busy with his TIMES OF LORE game (see later in this issue), which probably explains why we haven't heard much from him recently. Personally, I think he'd get on faster if he wasn't moonlighting and doing SPECTRUM games ... (see picture below). I know it say's

TWILIGHT instead of TWILIGHTE... but we know it's you ;-)



I don't think I got a chance to mention the ORIC MEGADEMO in the last issue, but it's here, and it's very impressive indeed. All those responsible should be very pleased with themselves.

This should be appearing on a forthcoming Rhetoric disk for all of you to ogle at.

Right. OK that's it. Bye for now,

SIMON

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RHETORIC is brought to you each month by a bunch of 1970s looking weirdo's who should really grow up and act their age.

If you too are a bit weird, and like playing Zorgon's Revenge, look a bit like JEFF MINTER, maybe enjoy a bit of a smoke, and like Deep Purple, then why not send something in.

You know where...

Chaosmongers@yahoo.com



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UNITED STATES OF ATMOS™

Once upon a time in a land far far away (well actually it was the USA but lets not get into trivial details about that just yet, lived a regular guy called Bob and he was handsome and rich and really really..... Er yeah okay I lost the plot there! we venture forward to learn about Bob's amazing struggle with getting the mighty Telestrat working in the good old US of A (which stands for Under Scottish Authority!) .

Back in 1997 when I was still living on the lovely Isle of Man (A place I highly recommend people go visit :) I finally decided that it was time for me to add a Telestrat to my collection of Orics (when I say Orics I mean, 1 Oric 1 and an Atmos) loading from tape drive was driving me crazy (crazier?) and I knew that the Telestrat came with a Disk drive. Also anybody who is anybody in the world of Orics has to have a Telestrat so they can brag about how great their Telestrat is!. I sent off a couple of Emails to our friends in France and eventually I was offered a Telestrat for roughly 100 UK Pounds which at the time I thought was okay since I had never seen up to that point any Telestrat's for sale on the net. Come to think of it has there ever been a Telestrat for sale on Ebay?

Meanwhile back in Gotham city, er I mean the Isle of Man I was waiting for the Telestrat to arrive when I was offered one of those opportunities that you cant say no to! (in other words I said Yes) and took up a job offer to move to the USA. Now this is all fine and dandy and I was thinking about all the cool stuff I would be able to do in the States, such as eat McDonalds 24 hours a day and drink a watery drink called Bud (which they still tell me is beer!!! ha ha ha ha ha ha Beer!!! ha ha he he ho ho ho please stop it your killing me,, ha ha ha he he). So there I am ready to leave when the Telestrat lands on my doormat and all I can do is place it in a box and send it off

to the States (I really didn't even have time to open it and check it as it came on the day that all my stuff was being taken away to be put into a container to be sent off to the USA).

Well I finally arrive in the States and spend the next month living in a Hotel waiting for my stuff to arrive. It finally arrives and I get settled into the house and unpack all my stuff as well as the Telestrat. The first thing I realize is that the power cable is not gonna work as in the States its 110 and Europe its mostly 220-240. At this point I think "Rats!" and "Oh Bugger" Like everything else electrical I have to buy new in the States and replace all my stuff like TV, Stereo, Microwave, Iron, Lamps, Alarm clocks, VCR, (trust me on this but it got to be quite expensive!!!). For some things like my Bread maker and Kitchen appliances I decided to buy a voltage converter which basically takes a 110 input and turns it into a 220 output. Tandy to the Rescue (Radio Shack to the Brits) they have several models available and weight an unbelievable amount!! these things are damn Heavy!!

So now I have a means of powering up the Telestrat with the correct voltage (220) I then proceeded to hook it up to my Television. Hmmm what have we here I ask myself? A telestrat cable with a Euro Scart connector and nothing to plug it into on my Television!! oh yeah its got everything you could ever wish for from a telly! SVHS, Composite, Cable, Surround sound, digital screen, Triton picture, on/off button, I mean it just had everything you could need apart from a SCART socket!!!! aaarrrrrggghhh (that's me screaming but wasn't sure how to type the sound of a scream so that's as close as it's gonna get!) So here I am with no way to get a picture from the telestrat as I sold my UK television which had a lovely rather spiffy SCART connector on it before I left for the States.

UNITED STATES OF ATMOSPHERE

So I have to do some thinking here and figure out a way to display the picture from the Telestrat. Well I have this brilliant brainwave of using my Apple Mac computer to display it!!!! But how Bob ? How can you do this magical thing? Well it's all really a bit of a fudge but this is how I did it!!! My Power Macintosh had a TV input card which could accept a PAL/ NTSC/SECAM signal (remember folks the USA uses NTSC for its display) and the Telestrat was giving out a PAL signal.

Now I still had the problem of getting the SCART connector to work on the TV input card which only had a Composite and Cable connector!!! I came to a dead end and thought damn I'll never get this thing working and left it alone for a few months.

After a time here in the States I got a little homesick so decided to play some of my Video tapes of "Blackadder" and "Mr Bean" to remind me of dear old blighty. Well as soon as I stuck the tape into my american VHS player what do I get !!! nothing but sqiggly lines and black dots fighting white dots (the blacks ones seemed to be winning by the way!) once again I thought "Oh Bugger" and "Well that's just bloody brilliant!" when I had another brainwave I'll use my old UK VHS player and watch them that way. Now I knew that I couldn't get it to display to the US telly but thought I could take the composite signal from the the UK VHS player and feed it into the TV input card on the Mac and set the card display to accept a PAL signal and hey presto it worked!!!! I could now watch the jolly goings on of Mr Bean.

While I was doing that I began to think about my Telestrat and thought hmmmm maybe I can use the UK VHS player as a conduit (yeah I watch Star trek!!) to display the picture from the Telestrat!!! Imagine

this if you can a room with a desk and on it are the following.

A Telestrat with Diskdrive , A huge big Heavy Power converter, A UK VHS player, A Power Macintosh and a 21' Display and a gazillion cables!!! okay the Telestrat is connected to the UK VHS player Input Scart Connector which is then converted to the composite signal out connector which is then connected to the TV input card in the Mac and the picture is finally displayed on the screen! Now folks the wife thought I was crazy doing all this and to make things easier I finally bought an old Amiga monitor from the UK which accepts scart connectors to display the telestrat picture. So sometimes you just need to keep trying before a solution is suddenly made clear to you. When I realized how I could make it work I said the immortal words of my Homer Simpson !! "hmmm Donuts" or something like that!!!

And that's all folks..... Tune in next time for a guide to Using the Telestrat as a central command and control system for the new USA starwars defence system!!!!

Kind regards

Bob
Defender of the telestrat!!!



*'More of our imports are
now coming from overseas'
GEORGE W. BUSH*





THE MAILBAG

Hello Simon, or is it Muso I am talking to, I am never sure who is running Rhetoric these days.

I used to eat, sleep and breathe on the Atmos. Now I never even turn the machine on, although it sits alongside my PC on the desk. There are many reasons why I have stopped using the Oric, apart from lack of time which is the single most important reason.

Firstly, the machine with its essential disk drives was never all that reliable. On its own, with just tapes for storing programs, it never gave any problems, although it was often time-consuming to get commercial programs to load from tape. The disk drive was a fantastic advance for my computer, and all credit to Steve Hopps for building a workable system. But I have taken that black box apart so many times, in despair of getting it to work reliably.

For a time, certain equipment turning off or on in the house was causing the computer to crash - it just froze and had to be re-booted. My first attempts at removing what I believed to be a mains spike involved firstly attaching a spike protector plug to the mains lead. When that did nothing, I put a choke in the supply to the drive's board and a capacitor across it, but while it helped it did not end my problems. I eventually solved the problem by putting the spike protector on a clock radio on the other side of the wall!

The second reliability problem was getting disks into or out of the drive - they would not

go in because the button would not come out. I had to oil the mechanism *very carefully* to get it to function correctly. The third problem was with Sedoric, and it is now so long ago that I can't remember which error message was reported .. but the older DOS's, while slower, seemed to suit the drive better.

Secondly was the Oric's limited graphics capability, and I say that while admitting I have not yet programmed a PC for graphics - or anything! I could only plot Hires in black and white, while I could see that with just a tweak to the electronics, a little rewriting of the Basic and sacrificing 10K of RAM, we could have had all 8 colours in Hires. Attributes, while useful for Text and blocky graphics, are an abomination in Hires. The Oric designers sacrificed quality (many colours) for quantity (more RAM to fill with games routines), and maybe that was not a bad trade-off for the games market at the time. But for the maths enthusiast, it was a barrier to useful development. Although, I should add with no false modesty, I have managed to create some really useful graphs in b/w on my Atmos, and probably will again, until I learn to come to grips with GW Basic or QBasic on the PC. I kind of hope that some day another Fabrice will take an interest in the Oric, and create a wonderful, although virtual, upgraded Oric on the PC, switchable between Oric-1, Atmos, Telestrat and..... whatever it was going to be called before Oric International got the chop.

Lastly, the speed in Basic was pretty slow, in fact it was slower than my previous computer, a Superboard. Why they chose a 1 MHz clock when there were 6502s running at 2 MHz I cannot guess - maybe they received a job lot of outdated ICs. It was possible to increase the speed by removing interrupts, but by the time I found out how to do that my interest was

WAVELIBAG...

already waning. The Atmos manual is still a great resource for the programmer, but it did miss out some vital stuff that had to wait for Leycester Whewell to write his own more complete study. While I think of it, the Sedoric manual is also very good, but what it really lacked was some good programming examples for the various functions. It is a dry read! I don't think I ever really understood the more sophisticated screen functions like making boxes for text entry, and the USING function is just daft - my programmable calculator had a better one!

So my Oric gathers dust and will probably not work when I try to boot it up next time. Yet I can't quite bear to part with it just yet - it is still the quickest and easiest way of generating graphs that I know of. PC programs suffer from overkill (you need a PhD to understand them!). If it's just lines I am after, the Oric still has all that I need, in a space smaller than the keyboard I am typing this on. And I haven't even begun to study its wonderful musical capabilities, a pleasure I look forward to. (Sorry about the prepositions at the end, Frank, but after all I live in Essex!)

Colin Cook

Hi Colin,

Nice to hear from you. I think for all or many of us, using the (real) Oric these days is something which we all should do more often – but the ease and speed of using a PC or a PC running Euphoric more often than not is what we end up doing.

Maybe that's a bad thing – maybe not. The fact that anyone has any interest in a (near) 20 year old computer – whether real or emulated – is something worthwhile. Every now and again though, something comes along which rekindles that interest – whether it be the new Giga demo, or if it's just a useful programming article, like the Scrolling routine in last month's magazine.

As long as these things come along every now and again, then things will be OK :-)

- SIMON -

CONTACT US!
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BOGGLE

My son who is really into computing first found a spectrum emulator then just surfed around to see if there was any oric stuff. He has Euphoric running under Linux and so I have just got it running under windows.

Actually Luke (my son) was into machine code programming on the Oric and wrote one nice little program, a version of Boggle. Basically the Oric simulated the lettered dice and board and could check for 3 or 4 lettered words, but at first had no vocab.

So the first games went to Luke. But in every game Luke typed in the words he had spotted and the computer remembered them. Very quickly the computer was hitting scores of 50 and taking about 10 seconds to get all its words whilst Luke had the allotted 3 minutes to get scores of 10 to 20.

Since then he wrote a macro version for in Word on a PC. This obviously had a dictionary so could check against that, but is was no where near as fast as the Oric, progress hey.

Regards
Rob Plant

This letter was passed onto me from Muso. I know he knows some famous music bods.. But I didn't know he was in contact with Led Zeppelin! ... Only joking :-)

- SIMON -

Quack A Jack by Severn Software

Press the pause key & work out your route to the next egg. This enables you to make maximum use of your limited time.

Quest Over Cairo by ??????

Type the following TELEPHONIERE, N, UNTERSUCHE BRUNNEN, NEHME MUENZEN, O, UNTERSUCHE TOTEN, NEHME ZETTEL, LESE ZETTEL, W, W, W, FAHRE BUS.

To see some more pictures type 'E' and then 'N' to quit the adventure and then type:

19:GOTO" 844 or

21:GOTO" 846 or GOTO 446

Sorry! This last bit is cocked up! This will be corrected in due course when I find out what it should say.

Rat Splat by Tansoft

Disregard the 1st file and use the 2nd file.

Enter: POKE 10117,9 for 9 lives, or POKE 11240,165 for infinite lives. CALL1533 to start the game.

Retour du Dr Genius by ??????

The complete solution (in French of course):-

E, E, N, D, O, O, O, Ouvr Frig, Pren Tube, E, E, E, M, S, O, N, Pose Tube, E, E, Pren Casq, Mets Casq, O, S, E, Bois Eau, O, N, E, N, M, S, S, O, S, E, N, Pren Bomb, S, O, Pren Glac, O, N, N, N, N, N, E, Pren Lase, E, S, D, S, O, O, Pren Tube, Tube Dans Glac, E, E, N, M, N, O, O, S, S, S, Appu Bleu, Pren Radi, Allu TV, Pose Bomb, Pose Tube, Pose Glac, Acti Bomb, S, Appu Bleu, S, Reti Resp, S, E, E, Appu Manu, O, O, N, N, M, E, E, N, Corr Traj, Allu Ordi, (password is 'Manoir'; write down password for way back - possible codes for the return password are ORIC1, ATMOS, GENIE, ECHEC, ARGON), Etei Ordi, S, O, O, D, N, N, N, E, E, S, D, S, O, O, O, S, E, N, D, O, O, Appu Roug, Entr Vais.

Secret Mission by Adventure International

View the MAP.

START TAPE, GET TAPE, W, S, SIT, PRESS RED, PRESS WHITE, GET UP, GET PICTURE, (Now you'll need to hang around until you hear the saboteur drop to the floor, then go & find his body), FRISK SABOTEUR, GET PICTURE, GET SABOTEUR, (Now go to the White Room), SHOW PICTURE, SMASH WINDOW, WITH TAPE, SHOW PICTURE, DROP PICTURE, DROP PICTURE, DROP SABOTEUR, GO WINDOW, GET KEY, GO WINDOW, PRESS WHITE, S, D, S, SIT, UNLOCK YELLOW, DROP KEY, PRESS YELLOW, PRESS WHITE, GET UP, GET PICTURE, N, D, N, SHOW PICTURE, W, SHAKE MOP, GET KEY, GET CUTTERS, E, PRESS YELLOW, DROP PICTURE, S, U, S, SIT, UNLOCK BLUE, DROP KEY, PRESS RED, PRESS BLUE, PRESS WHITE, GET UP, GET PICTURE, N, W, GET PAIL, E, N, N, SHOW PICTURE, W, GET SUIT, WEAR SUIT, GET WATER, E, PUSH HARD, GO DOOR, E, DROP PAIL, W, D, CUT WIRE, GET BOMB, U, E, DROP BOMB, GET PAIL, POUR WATER.

Snowball by Level 9

To avoid the Nightingales, when you hear a noise, wait until it fades. Saying silly things can result in you being taken to a padded cell, which is another way to get out of the circle of mortuaries, but the best thing to do is to learn the colour code which can help you find your way about.



SPOOKY MANSION by Lothlorien

On screen 1 you do not need to shoot all the Bats to leave the screen. Shoot 7 of them, jump to the top of the stairs, jump right and Hugo will collect the hammer. You may then leave the screen normally. For infinite lives, follow this procedure:

1. Start to load the game as normal.
2. When the screen goes blank stop the tape and turn off the computer.

3. Turn the Oric back on and type:

HIMEM 10000:HIRES:CLOAD"":CLOAD"":CLOAD""

4. Continue the tape; the loading screen will now be drawn as normal.

5. When loaded, play the game as normal, but lose all 3 lives once you have 1000 points.

6. When you are asked to enter your name on the high-score table press the CTRL and C keys to break into the game.

7. Type GOTO880 you now have infinite lives.

If you want to jump a particular screen then follow steps 1-4 as above (or to step 7 if you want infinite lives too) and then:

1. Use CTRL and C to break Into the game.
2. Type POKE 1033, required screen-1.
3. Type GOTO 880

Strip 21 by Micropuce

To undress the girl, add line 3801 T="1", then type RUN or GOTO 6000

Styx by No Mans Land

For infinite lives, load the program, inhibit its auto-run and enter:

DOKE#5BDF,#EAEA:DOKE#5BF0,#31A9:DOKE#3032,#EAEA:DOKE#4D62,#EAEA



RGB to SCART

FOUND THIS ONE ON COMP.SYS.ORIC - Haven't tried it out, but I thought it could be worth documenting!

Hi folks!

I just want to let you know,
finally after a lot of research and frowning, I have made a RGB to SCART
cable that really works.
It is quite simple, no resistors or extra power suply needed.
And the picture on my tv is crystal clear and steady as a rock.
The colors have never been better.

Here it is:

RGB = Oric manual to SCART

1 red	-	15
2 green	-	11
3 blue	-	7
4 sync	-	20
5 gnd	-	13, 9, 5, 17 (together)

Have fun now!

Times of Lore

OK, i should have sent you an email sooner explaining my intentions For this new game, Times of Lore, but i just have been too pre-occupied at Work to worry about hobbies. Oh it's been so busy!!

I really haven't had any inkling to go back to Oric programming, since i'm currently doing EFTPOS (Credit card software for Retail systems), boring to some maybe, but quite interesting except for the inevitable deadline that falls upon me in two weeks time.

Anyway, it's Friday Night, and to not put too lighter word on it, I'm a little tipsy.

Nevertheless...

Times of Lore is one of the all time forgotten classics. It also Featured some of the most glorious graphics i've ever seen on the C-64.

Being primarily based around the idea of mixing monochrome and Multicolour graphics on the same play-area. Obviously this cannot be done on the Oric. However, you can expect to see full colour graphics for the backgrounds whilst the main sprites will be the colour of the backgrounds, much like an awful lot of spectrum games.

Scenario...

The scenario is pretty simple really, a kingdom exists, sprawling lands, Deserts, Sea-shores and desert islands to dream about, Forests that Span for miles, two major cities, many other villages and towns, Rivers, and an ample helping of secret places and magic.

You can play as a Valkyrie, a Knight or a Warrior, each with their own particular characters. You are a hero, set within a world that definately needs one, in order to bring peace again to a soiled land. Soiled by all kinds of beasts. Beasts that now roam a once peaceful land, scaring even the most hardy traveller not to traverse the land any more.

You must venture on various quests in order to obtain a few ancient artefacts and in so doing, bring about a return to order, peace and tranquility to the land and it's occupants.

The view is as from a birds eye, whilst their is also the possibility to communicate with each and every character in the game, through a fairly robust menu system. Eg..

You meet a Rogue, What do you wish to say to the Rogue, being given a choice

of three sentences...

Say Hello..

Ask about Rumours

Ask about Orcs

The Latter would be of a significant nature. For example, after speaking to a Surf, you may capture a significant word, such as Orc, or maybe High king, this may be used to ween more information about that subject from the participant. So their you go, not much at present, their is far more on the web, Try

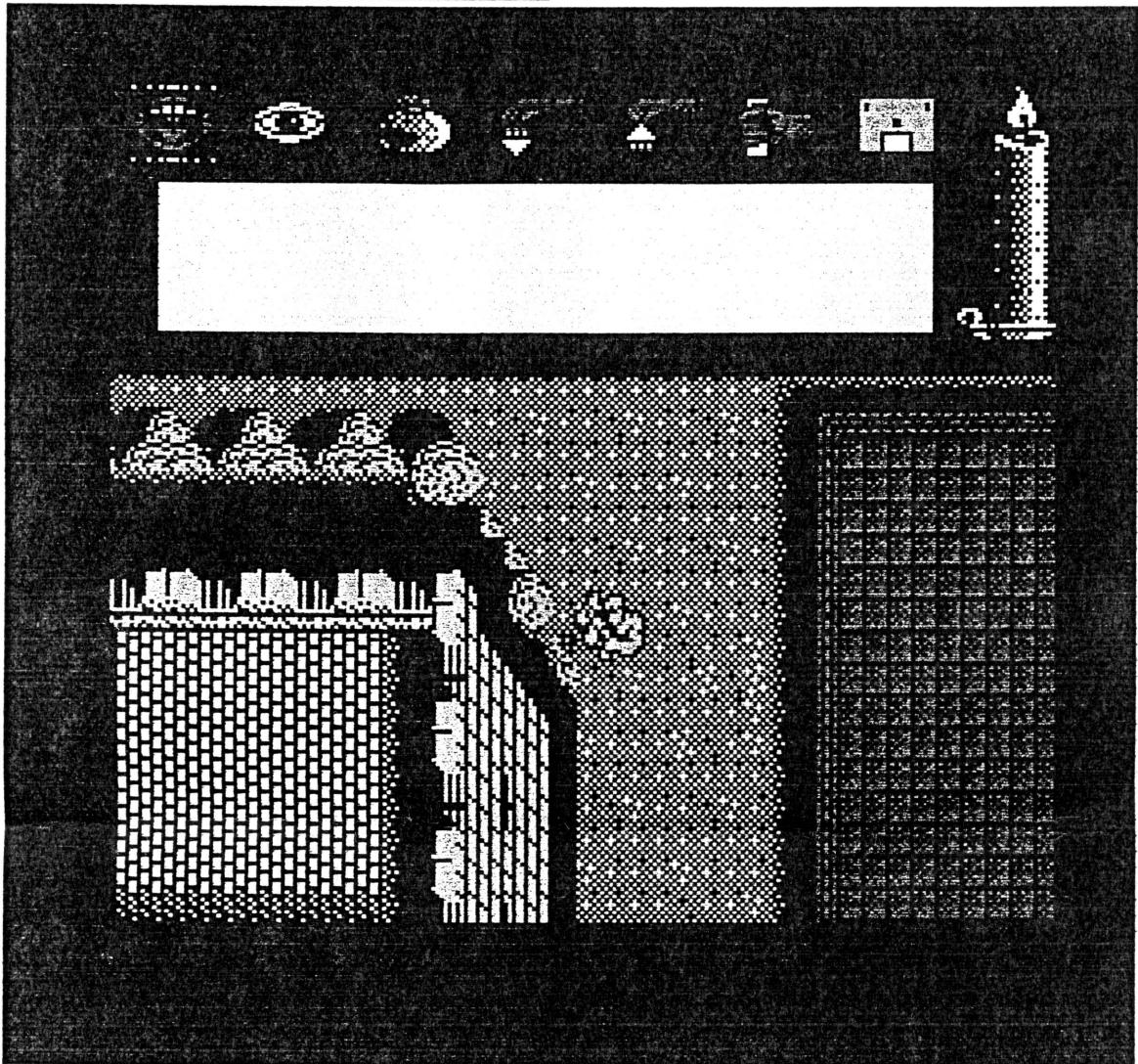
Jedes Site and the Times of Lore Forum which is well underway...

www.oric-international.com

Cheers, Jonathan

Times of Lore

PREVIEW Screenshot



HERE'S THE LATEST UPDATE FROM JONATHAN...

Hi peeps,

OK, still heavily coding Times of Lore, and whilst i'm at it, i have enclosed a document detailing everything you want to know about the game and everything you probably don't want to know. As mentioned in the newsgroup, i want Times of Lore to have new exciting plots. At the tail end of the document is a new format for defining the plot to the game.I am attempting to devise a plot by using Objects and Creatures. To put it simply, you design a creature (Using the Creature Definitions), be it human or otherworldy, and you can attach messages they will use when the hero interacts with them. Objects are things like Scrolls, Keys, Magical items, Weapons etc. These too can have special properties which are defined in the Object definitions.

Take a look at the document, tell me what you think. If you can, think through a plot of your own and see if it can be accomodated with the Definitions in the two lists, then tell me what might be a problem. Their is probably going to be a limit of 99 Objects and 99 Creatures in a single game but since the original game scenario had no more than 80, this should not be a problem.

Respect to all
Jonathan

COLLECTOR'S CORNER

Here we go again, to quote a bit of Whitesnake. Actually it was Here I go again, but never mind. By now I hope some of you have had a ratch through your old collections and send if you've got any odd tapes. The trouble often is with your own collection, that you have only one version of a tape - so how do you know which version you have? It is a bit more obvious with the tapes that were changed for the Atmos. They have things printed on there to help you. Some cassettes had a change in design, but no reference to any change.



Here then is the original Xenon-1 cassette. Just about everyone has this, but you may not have an original version like this.

I'm not sure which version amongst all these various releases I've been listing for you are the most valuable, but going by record collections and the like I would say the original usually is the one collectors go for and so that becomes the most valuable.

Here then, on your right, is a later release of Xenon-1.

The above original is a silver label with black ink. This newer version is a white label with blue ink. I guess this version was cheaper to produce. Some of the other IJK cassettes underwent this transformation with no change in the inlay. I have silver label versions of Reverse, Frigate Commander and Fantasy Quest and Invaders whilst my copy of Candy Floss has a black and white label. I assume later releases had a black and white or black and blue label (?)

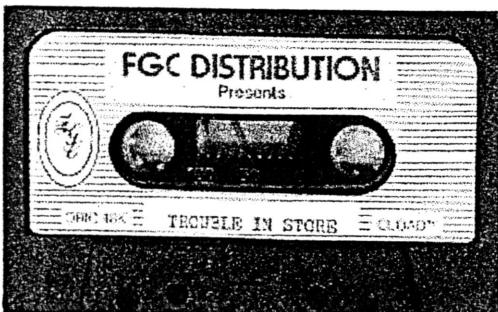


Some IJK always had a colour label. As far as I'm aware Cribbage always has a green label and 3D Maze was yellow and black. If you know different then let me know!

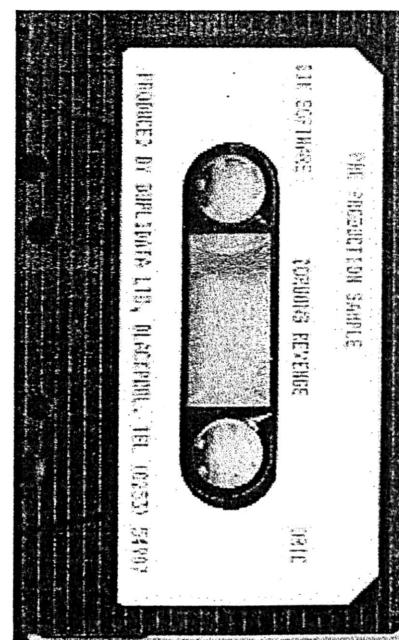
One major difference that is noticeable is with FGC releases of Oric software/ Ken Smalldon's company bought up a pile of inlays to produce Oric cassettes. He, and later Alan Whittaker, when he took over the firm, (renaming it HGC), used FGC labels rather than the originals, perhaps inspired by Orpheus, (See below).



There were quite a few titles that had those labels. I suppose that although the FGC releases were legal they weren't the real thing from a software house, so they may not be collectable. To me, it's another one to keep hold of.



Finally a real rarity. On the left is a pre-production release of Zorgan's Revenge which came in a normal sized cassette box. I don't know how many such releases there were, but they will be very rare indeed. This is the only one I've ever heard of!



COLLECTOR'S CORNER

Time now for a look at the software house Softek. One of my favourites this ! Back when I only had a handful of tapes I owned Dracula's Revenge. A great game that had me on the edge of my seat as the nasty vampires chased me around and there was no daylight to shine through the windows to get rid of them. Run, run away ! Ahem....

Softek cassettes underwent a bit of a change. First their titles had nice sci-fi pictures with yellow letters and a logo, also in yellow with sort of 3D lines moving away from the letters.



At some point they decided on a more vibrant, colourful logo. It's basically the same one but with 'gold' fronts to the letters and an added red diamond behind. The words "Masters of the Game" finishing off the new look. They also changed the titles from yellow to orange (as in Dracula's Revenge, right. It certainly stands out more !

Then the Atmos arrived ! As we have seen , the black and red chappie altered many designs. Softek added a red stripe on the spine with the word Atmos across it, as in the Acheron's Rage tape in the middle of the above image. As you can see they decided at this point to make the title variegated from the original yellow to orange, which stands out all the more.

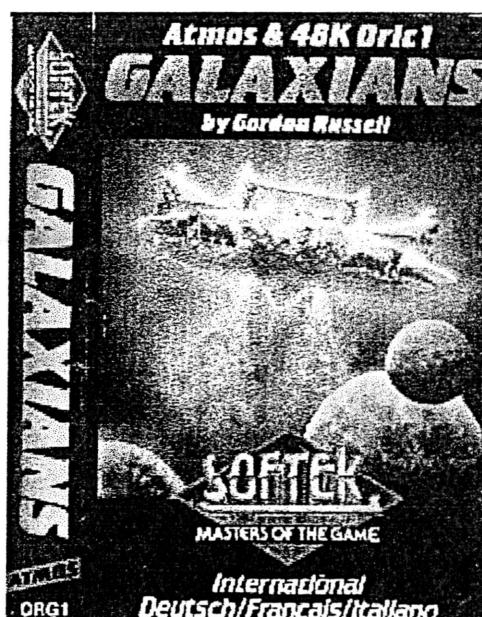
Now here's the thing. Softek went back and redesigned the older tapes with the new livery. Take a look at this !



Without doubt the biggest difference found on an Oric cassette - unless you know different, of course.

Now the thing is I'm not sure how many of their titles changed. This was the first one, (going by the serial number ORG1). ORG2 is Super Meteors, which is in the yellow livery on my version. It must have been redone. ORG3 is Acheron's Rage, and my version is the Atmos version so I suspect that should have come in yellow.

ORG4 is Dracula's Revenge. Mine is the Oric 1 version but this is orange, as above. It may not have changed at all, or there may be a slight change for an Atmos version. Please let us know what yours is like.



Finally I thought I'd show the cassettes themselves. Softek originally used black cassettes with black labels using the yellow ink. I guess they must have decided to cut costs a bit and print the text directly onto the cassette so white ones were used instead.

Atmos cassettes should be white and Oric-1 versions black. Dracula's Revenge has the newer colour scheme, but as it is for the Oric-1 it has the back cassette.

Well there you are. I hope that hasn't bored the pants off you. If it has then send something better in for us to print.. Go on ! Give it a try !!!!!

ORIC VIP DEMO REVIEW

I'm a bit late in reporting it, but in the past few months, I was lucky enough to get my hands on the VIP demo.



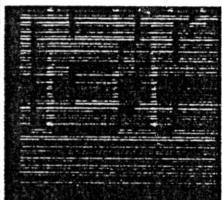
I must confess that I'm not very well informed on the Oric 'demo scene'...if in fact there is one? But this is a collaboration between DBUG, JEDE and TWILIGHTE which sneaked out, and took everyone by surprise. Before I go on, I've gotta say that this demo is extremely colorful, and relies a lot on the mixing of red, green and blue light to achieve a pseudo-full color display. This looks awesome when viewed on a TV or monitor, but just doesn't work when printed. The demo starts with a few credits.. Nothing outstanding here, and leads on to a



quick picture. The first major demo part is a spectacular effect made up from several circles and rings zooming about the screen, over the top of each other. This is a common effect I've seen in a lot of Amiga demos, but instead of the rings being on different 'bit-planes', this is done using alternate horizontal lines on the Oric screen. It works well, and gives a real cool effect, especially when the color comes in later on.



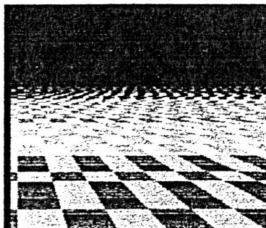
The next part of the demo starts with a basic chunky text scrolling message, that advances, and starts bouncing around, until full color rainbow effects flow thru' the text. The special effects really start to get impressive when a parallax scrolling background rainbow starts to move around the background. Very clever.



Next up is one of my favorite parts... It's a wonderful plasma effect, which flows and pulsates, again in fabulous full color... none of the standard 8 color rubbish here!! It's fast and smooth, and makes you wonder how the hell they did it. This effect doesn't show up very well at all in print... you must see it to believe it.

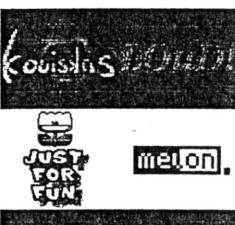


Next up is a small interlude with a fast moving 3D checkerboard effect, similar to that seen on the game 'Space Harrier'. Quite a nice effect, but a bit more could have been done with it I think...



Next come

the mandatory greets of other groups, cracking companies, and other such dodgy people with spiky logos (hehe!). Rhetoric gets a mention too... not that they need to curry my favor in giving this demo a great review.



Next comes a full color, larger than full screen picture of a large chested woman without many clothes on. I would print a picture, but I'm afraid that due to the frailness of some of our readers, I can't be held responsible for any hospitalization or over-

Finally, we've got perhaps the most impressive thing ever seen on the Oric (Yes... it's even better than DINKY KONG!).

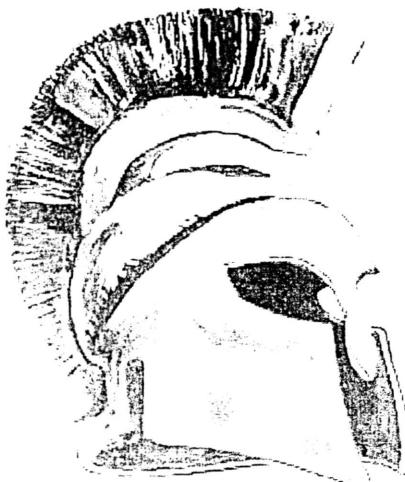
A larger than life load of eyes and 'Defense Force' logo with realtime scaling and rotation



effects, that would make a NEO GEO sweat with effort. ABSOLUTELY AWESOME! The best bit by far. Get hold of this demo now! Hopefully it will be on a future Rhetoric coverdisk, but if not, then start hassling people for it.

The only downside, is that there isn't any sound, but that's not a big problem. It just shows what can be done with 1Mhz! I really hope the programmers of this demo use the amazing scaling and rotation engine again, and maybe put it to some use in a game?

96% CHAOS



THE KEYBOARD WARLORDS

A profile on M.C. Lothlorien
From Spectrum Mag, 'Crash'

From the earliest days of the Spectrum, the name of **M. C. Lothlorien** has been synonymous with computer war games. Two of their titles, **Johnny Reb** and **Redweed**, are still firm favourites when it comes to voting on the CRASH HOTLINE. But M. C. Lothlorien's history goes back further than the Spectrum, right back in fact to the misty days of the ZX81.

CRASH took a trip north to meet the people behind the software house with the intriguing name...

THE DISHWASHER IS LAUNCHED

For a company that has unleashed the fury of Greek, Roman and Japanese wars on us, beset us with American struggles for supremacy, and swamped us in red Martian vegetation, M.C. Lothlorien operates from a curiously sedate street in Poynton, verging on Stockport, not quite Manchester. The day of our visit was stunningly hot and sunny until we reached the outskirts of Manchester when, of course, it began to rain. It was the day before Imagine collapsed - portentous weather perhaps. But Lothlorien should be used to portents since their earlier games were entrenched in a period of history well used to reading auguries and divining the meaning behind omens.

As if to underline this point the first object to catch the visitor's eye in the outer offices is the large bronze Grecian warrior's helmet - the living flesh, so to speak, behind Lothlorien's well-known logo.



Roger Lees, Geoff Street (on phone)
and Mike Cohen

Who is M. C. Lothlorien and why the unusual name are two questions with one long answer. There are three partners, **Mike Cohen, Roger Lees and Geoff Street**. Geoff is a relative newcomer but he has known the others from when they were all at school together. Both Mike and Roger came to the software field from a background of finance and Mike has some legal experience, being a student barrister. For Mike the rot set in around Christmas 1981 when his wife bought him a ZX81 computer. At least, that's Mike's story. Roger Lees tells it slightly differently, Mike bought the computer as his wife's present to him for Christmas. The truth is lost to history, as was Mike. History was and remains a major passion as it does for Roger. War games is another. The computer seemed to offer wonderful opportunities for developing war games and Mike set himself to learn BASIC programming, and the first result was *Tyrant of Athens*.

"Lots of people who looked at the result thought it was pretty good," says Mike. "They said I ought to try and sell the game."

The obvious choice of action was to take out a small advert for mail order and almost immediately an argument sprang up between Mike and his wife, who thought £95 for a quarter page in 'Your Computer' would be throwing money away. Geoff Street, who joined the team long after the incident smiles as Roger recalls the battle. "The game became known as *Dishwasher* because it was dangled as a bribe: 'If it makes any money I'll buy you a dishwasher out of the profits'."

Mike won the argument. "We expected 20 replies," Mike goes on, "which would have covered the cost of the ad. We got 200 replies within two weeks!"

Fired with enthusiasm, Roger bought himself a ZX81 as well and began work on *Samurai Warrior* and *Warlord*. They started placing quarter pages together in several magazines and business expanded. Of course it was just a sideline, almost a hobby, and at the time Mike Cohen was trading under the name of M. C. Associates Trading while Roger Lees was using a long-established family trading name - Lothlorien Trading. Later, when the Spectrum arrived, they realised that producing games was a full-time occupation and thus M. C. Lothlorien was formed between them.

As Lothlorien expanded it became clear that they needed someone else and last summer Geoff Street joined the partnership. Geoff has considerable programming experience having worked for some years previously in the commercial field as a jet-setting trouble-shooter for banking interests around the world, flying to exotic locations like Hong Kong and the States bug shooting.

WAR GAMES AND PRESENTATION

When the Spectrum opened up the home computer market in a big way, Lothlorien transferred the war games to the new machine and added *Johnny Reb* to the Spectrum catalogue. This strategy war game based on events in the American Civil War has proved enduringly popular, although by the standards of later games like the *Confrontation* series of scenarios, it is very simple.

Talking about *Johnny Reb* brought up the subject of reviews for their games. We mentioned that Lothlorien war games hadn't on the whole received very kindly reviews from CRASH, largely due to a lack of reviewers sympathetic to the type. Roger says, "There is a problem. Generally the magazines aren't into war games and we do expect mixed reviews, who doesn't? But we see good and bad ones, and those where the reviewer clearly didn't understand the game at all. We never write in to comment on reviews though."

We did remark that despite less than enthusiastic reviews in CRASH, the Lothlorien war games tend to sell consistently well on mail order. "Well I think that's true," says Geoff. "Retailers find that they have a sales explosion on a new game but if they haven't got rid of it within a month they're stuck with the stock. But that

...ne case with ours - the war games that is - and they say they can sell them for much, much longer."

Tackled on the fact that the type and presentation of the graphics used in war games might put off garners used to arcade-style graphics, Mike says, "Maybe we let ourselves down over the presentation of games, preferring to let the game idea sell itself. Now we want to concentrate more on presentation and execution. We're very conscious of the need to improve on that side of things and we're also in a position to dictate the state of the art in our own area."

Roger Lees adds, "As machines get bigger, we believe it is absolutely essential that the game element is developed. If you pinch too much for graphics you can spoil the game, and you also have to make sure that the graphics don't get in the way of playing the game."

Mike's feelings about Lothlorien's position to dictate the state of the art in war games is echoed by a young programmer who works with them, **Steve Hughes**. He also thinks they need to improve the look of the games, and is currently working on one for the C64, a game which he describes loosely as "Sophisticated like a Lothlorien war game but with a raised visual standard."

ACTIONMASTER

With M. C. Lothlorien established as a full-time working software house, games started coming in for consideration from hopeful programmers. "We get good and bad stuff through the door," says Roger, "but we haven't always got the time to check it out! It's easier with arcade games. After twenty minutes or so, you know whether you like it or not. Not so with war games and adventures (very much the problem reviewers have). Sometimes we have to make a favourable response to the author before it's all properly played through."



Simon Cobb and Steve Hughes

In addition to the range of war games, Lothlorien have added adventures and arcade games. The first two arcade games were *Bedlam* and *Beetlemania* by Steve Hughes. Originally these were marketed by Steve's own firm A.W.A. Steve, who is 24, ran the company with a partner, an airline pilot, who has now retired from the software business. In addition to the two games they marketed *Orion*, a monitor/assembler for the Oric computer. At the time Lothlorien were doing some Oric versions and wanted *Orion* so they went to visit A.W.A. in their Manchester offices. Steve says that things were not going too well with A.W.A. but Mike Cohen and Roger Lees were impressed by the arcade games. A deal was struck and Lothlorien

repackaged *Bedlam* and *Beetlemania* and released them under their new **Actionmaster** banner.

"I was very chuffed with the games at the time," says Steve. "But they're very dated now. *Jetpac* came out at the same time as *Beetlemania* and put a stop to that sort of game."

Steve Hughes is not a full-time employee, preferring to remain freelance, but everything he writes is marketed by Lothlorien and he spends a lot of time in their offices working. The latest release is *Chock a Block Charlie* for the C64. "I don't have a favourite computer. I like chopping and changing between the Spectrum and the C64." At 24 is he over the hill as a programmer of games? "No!" he replies, shocked at the question. Has he any programmer heroes? "There's so many good programmers around now - hard to choose one. Don Priestly perhaps (*Maziacs*) and he's in his forties!"

Steve blames Sir Clive Sinclair for his introduction to computers (who doesn't!) and programming. He won a competition in the Manchester Evening News sponsored by Sir Clive. The first prize was a ZX81. "So the rot set in and the eyesight's getting worse," he says cheerfully.

Unlike Steve, **Simon Cobb** is a full-time Lothlorien employee. 17-year-old Simon was responsible for *Grid Patrol*, the game that broke a CRASH joystick! The first version of *Grid Patrol* he sent to Hewson Consultants and they renamed it *Di-Lithium Lift*. "I wrote a second, more complicated version of it but they said it was too similar to *Di-Lithium Lift*. However, Lothlorien were interested. Luckily they wanted to expand their in-house programming and they offered me a job. I took it!"

Before *Grid Patrol*, Simon had written a game for the Aquarius called *Astranoids*. "I had a friend who worked on the Aquarius for C.C.I. and I got mixed up in it. The game wasn't much good but I wrote another one for the Spectrum. After months, C.C.I. paid me £100 for it, but it wouldn't work on series 3 Spectrums. I made some corrections and sent it back but it never got released anyway."

Simon is now at work on a new arcade shoot em up provisionally titled *Lifeline*. Simon showed us some screens of what looked like a hard and graphically attractive game. It has three phases with 14 screens in all. No release date yet.



AFTER THE BRIDGEHEAD

M. C. Lothlorien are in the midst of expansion plans. Including the three partners, there are now ten people working together in offices bursting at the seams. More space is available to them soon and they can't wait to get into to. Even as we were taking photographs another young hopeful programmer arrived for an interview with Geoff.

Johen says, "We're planning to release three new titles each month for eight months of the year, plus translations of existing games to other machines."

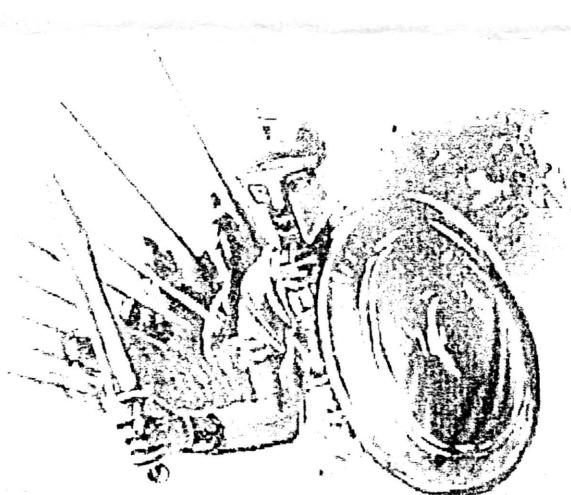
On the list is *Redcoat*, a war game set during the American War of Independence. Described as a cross between *Johnny Reb* and *Confrontation*, it will accommodate different scenarios like the latter game but is designed to be much simpler in concept and playability like the former.

Another new game is *Masters of Serebal* (its working title) from the same author as *Special Operations*, a strategy/adventure role playing game with arcade elements. There is also an interesting project, two separate games based on the Battle of the Bulge. Written by two different authors, the games look at the battle from both points of view, German and Allied. "We're looking at how to present them both," says Roger.

On top of that there is a naval Greek war game, a strategy simulation. They are looking for a name although the game is described as being similar to the well-known board game *Trireme*. All these games will be graphical and incorporate Lothlorien's new thinking on visual presentation.

As we left Lothlorien to the rest of their busy day, the rain came down afresh and stayed with us all the way to the M6. As soon as the car turned south the rain stopped and the sun came out. It was Roger Lees who explained the phenomenon. "Everyone says it rains more in Manchester than anywhere else in England, but it isn't true. We get just the same amount of rain as anyone - it just does it more slowly and for much longer in Manchester."

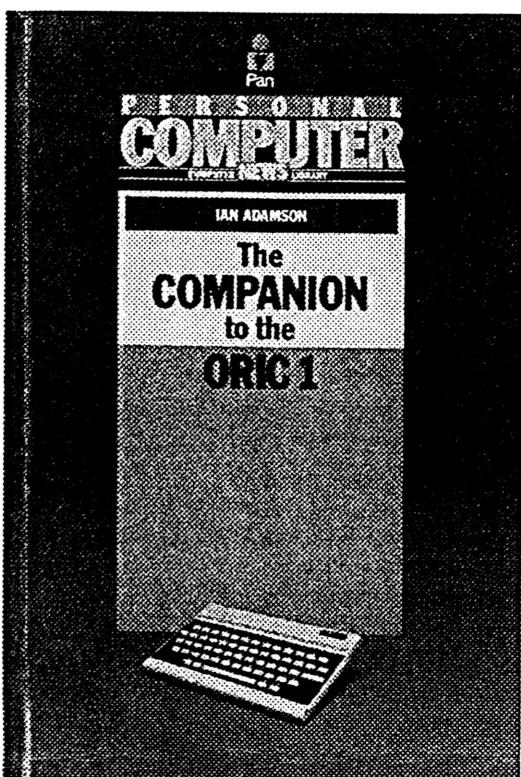
Whatever the weather, it's doubtful the staff of M. C. Lothlorien have much time to worry about it - they're too busy at the keyboards planning more wars.



BOOK REVIEW / COLLECTORS CORNER

Another book review - but what's this about Collector's Corner ? Well this time it's a two-in-one article as we look at a book that has different variations and will be of interest to collectors who probably aren't aware of the difference.

Let's look at the book first :-



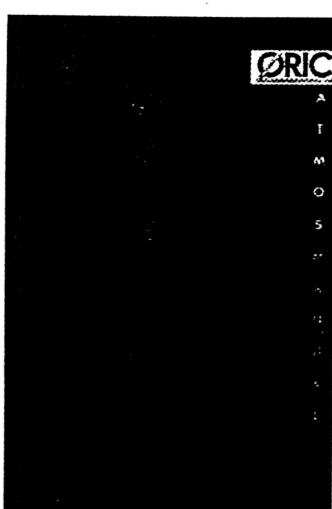
This is The Companion to the Oric 1 by Ian Adamson. Some will begin to understand, as this is a book that was rewritten as the Atmos manual.

It must be quite a decent book then ? Yes, this is one of the best which is why it was chosen to base the Atmos manual around. As a manual it has pretty much everything you want. It takes the beginner through from plugging the Oric in, to an introduction to machine code programming.

What makes it particularly good is the information is here that was left from the original Oric-1 manual. All the numbers and references that programmers need to get decent programs up and running.

Content What's in it ? Well there are 11 chapters and 12 appendices, just like the Atmos manual - but remember this is for the Oric-1 ! It is therefore a great book if you have both computers. You can compare one against the other to see the differences.

The useful information comes where the BASIC keywords are described and the BASIC token, syntax and example program showing the usage is listed. And then in the appendices there is all the information about control codes, escape codes, ASCII codes, error messages and soon. You now also get details on how to operate the new Oric printer/plotter. Then there is more circuit details and input/output details and 6502 opcodes that they kept a bit quiet about in the original manual.

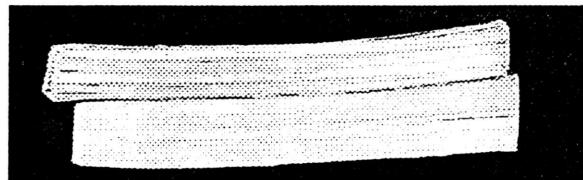
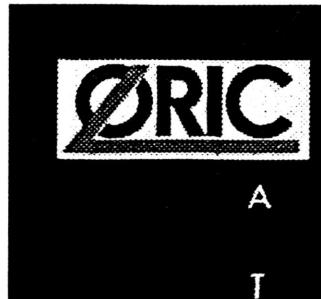
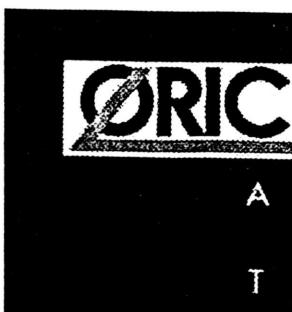


The Manual This then, was a great book. The people at Oric liked it so much they got Ian Adamson to update it for the Atmos - (though I believe they forgot the bit about paying him for his troubles).

Now what I never realised was there were two versions of the Atmos Manual. The content is the same in both - at least I can't find any difference !

The difference lies in the paper used to print the manual. The first - I assume - was printed on the type of paper used for novels. The second is on thin bright white paper and the book is somewhat thinner as a result. I've tried to scan the two to show you , but it ain't too easy holding books on end over a scanner !!!

The other difference is that the first version has the logo printed up to the edge of the cover whilst the other has black around the right of the logo, with the novel version having the number '98765' printed inside and the 'bright white' having '9876543' which begs the question - is there a '987654' ? Let me know if you have one of those !!!



Brian's Poser Pages

Rhetoric# 18
 Brian Kidd (b.kidd@ntlworld.com)
 49 Harlequin Drive , Allt-yr-yn, Newport , S.Wales. NP20 5GJ

Answers to last issues posers are given below . This months posers are to be found on the next page . The prize fund still exists , but with no one entering , the prizes are still up for grabs , so enter....!

1) Grid Fit

T	A	N	G	O
M	A	G	M	A
L	Y	M	P	H
K	E	M	P	T
U	V	U	L	A

2) In common .

All can have 'en-' placed in front of them .

3) Is to ? Answer : 6512

$$3694 : \frac{63}{7} \frac{49}{7} = 97$$

$$5384 : \frac{36}{7} \frac{28}{7} = 54$$

$$6512 : \frac{56}{7} \frac{21}{7} = 83$$

Apology !

Rhetoric

The Magazine that continues to support the Oric. We carry on where OUM left off.

Dear Member,

On behalf of the Rhetoric Team, I must most strongly apologise for the delay in bringing you the November issue of Rhetoric #18.

The Final Master copy of the magazine was dispatched on time to our Welsh Distributor, but then the Postman decided to lose it.

Fortunately , Santa Clause intervened , and the lost copy was found in time for Xmas delivery to Brian .

Xmas holidays meant a further additional delay of 5 days before reproduction could be completed and delivery to you made .

Normal service should be restored with the production of the next issue.

Jonathan Bristow (Rhetoric Chairman)

Brian's Poser Page

Rhetoric# 18

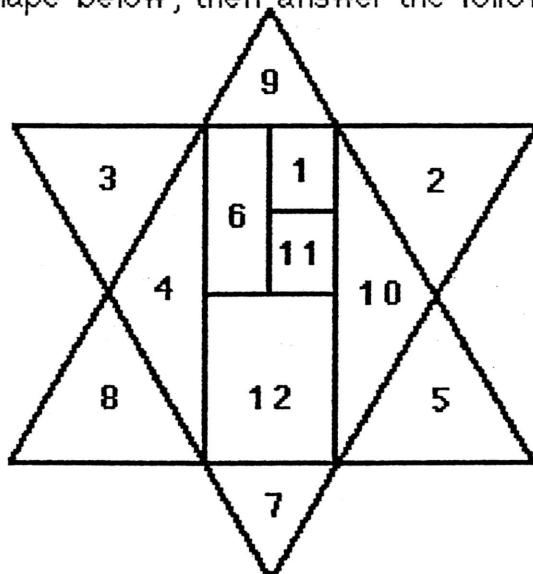
Brian Kidd (b.kidd@ntlworld.com)

49 Harlequin Drive , Allt-yr-yn, Newport , S.Wales. NP20 5GJ

- 1) Remove one letter from each of the 1st words and place it into the second word , to form two new words . You must not change the order of the letters as found in the words (addition excluded) . Plurals are not allowed , eg : SALLOW ; BAIL would become : ALLOW ; BASIL .

PITCH ; SALE =
 PRIDE ; SLOW =
 SWAMP ; CLAP =
 STILL ; FACE =
 THREE ; NICE =
 VALUE ; CASE =
 WHEAT ; FAST =
 MONTH ; GLAD =
 METAL ; HOLY =
 WRING ; FIST =

- 2) Look at the shape below , then answer the following questions :



- a) How many triangles are there in the diagram ?
- b) How many rectangles are there in the diagram ?
- c) How many hexagons can you find ?
- d) deduct the sum of the numbers in the rectangles from the sum of the numbers in the triangles . What do you get ?