

ATARICRYPT COLLECTION

VOLUME ONE



A COLLECTION OF ATARI ST GAME
REVIEWS FROM THE ATARICRYPT
ARCHIVE



A GREYFOX
DIGITAL PUBLICATION

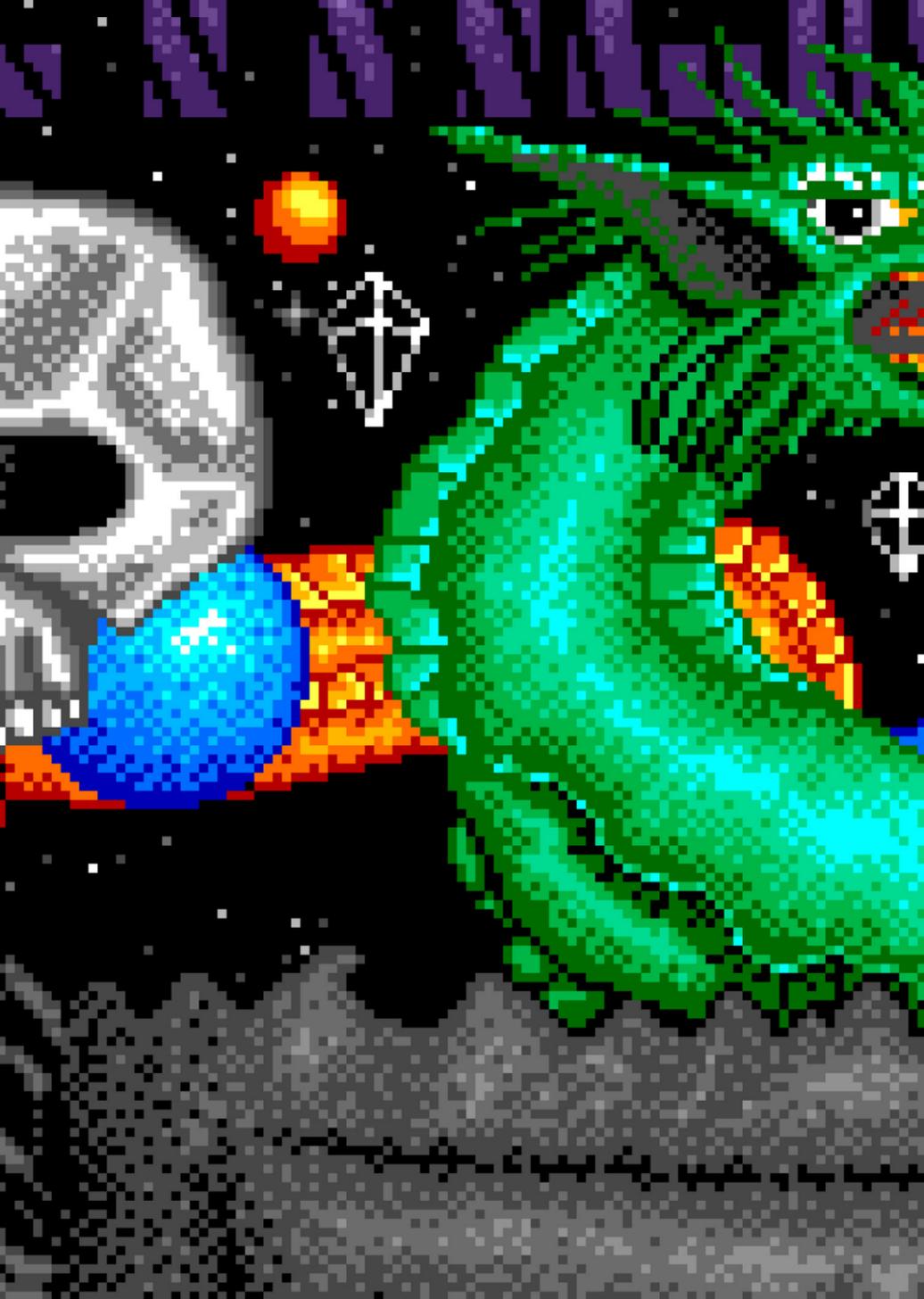
ATARICRYPT



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Atarimania aims to offer a complete historical tour to the new or experienced Atari user. From the company's humble beginnings to its demise as a hardware manufacturer in the nineties, we hope to provide you lots of original content in all forms: databases, catalogs, magazine scans and much, much more!

While there are a number of American-based Atari sites, few have appeared in Europe. As well as concentrating on the Atari phenomenon in the US, we will also bring you fresh content from the "old continent" and other parts of the world.



In addition to the unique material on the site, Atarimania also hosts two massive on-going projects: a highly detailed listing of ALL 2600 cartridges and a gigantic database of ALL Atari 8-bit & 16-bit software, complete with all the information you can dream of!



WWW.ATARIMANIA.COM

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The sole purpose of our group is to preserve memories of days past.

intro

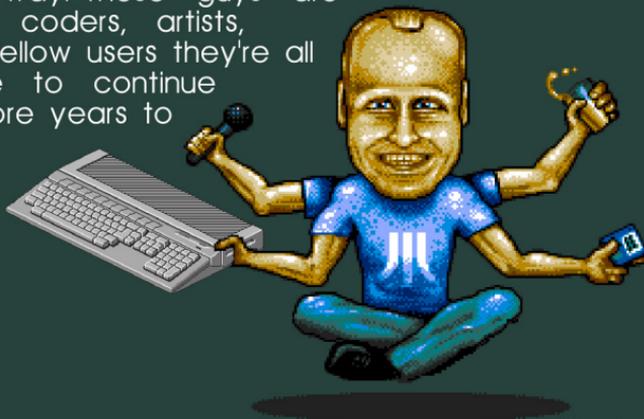
My name is Steve Gregory and I have been running with AtariCrypt for over two years. Initially, it started off as a humble YouTube channel dedicated to the Atari ST/STE for both games and demos but it wasn't long before I came up with the notion of creating a website.

I wanted this to be dedicated to the Atari ST/e for two reasons: 1) I regard this as my first real computer and is very close to my silicon heart. 2) most of the multi-platform websites, social media and forums sadly overlook the ST in favour of the usual computers and consoles. I personally find this offensive and thus begun my journey to rectify that with everything you see at AtariCrypt.

My plan is to show the retro gaming world just how brilliant our two computers are by showcasing as many features and reviews I possibly can. Many are completely unknown to a world that's chosen to forget about the Atari ST/e and I plan to change that!

As somebody who flunked English, I actually find myself having fun writing for AtariCrypt and waffling on about my love for the Atari ST/e and has turned into a passion. However, the best part are the people which I met along the way. These guys are everything from coders, artists, musicians and fellow users they're all brilliant. So I hope to continue on for many more years to come.

Steve.

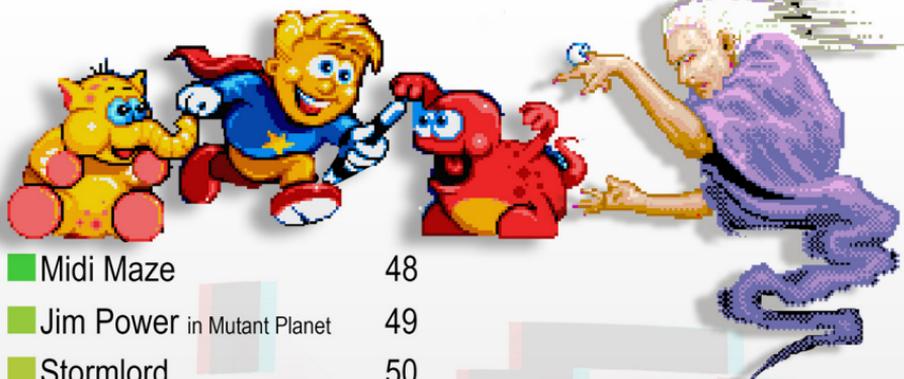


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FROM THE MAKER OF

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100+ VINTAGE
LECTURE EDITION



CARVUP

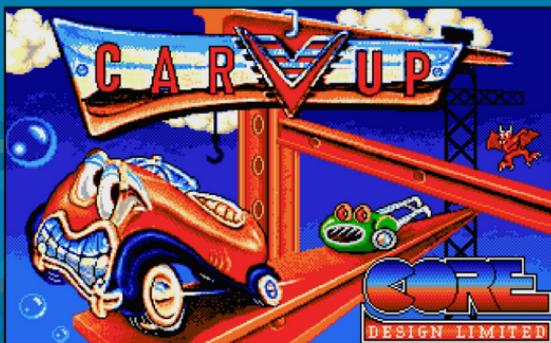
■ Core Design ■ 1990 ■ Atari ST/Am/STe

CarVup is a scrolling platformer released back in 1990 by Core Designs. You get to play the part of a cheerful car that appears to love painting platforms by driving over them. It's pretty simple and will certainly feel instantly familiar to the ... well, more mature gamer! Each screen has many paint-forms in need of a new coat of paint but this task soon becomes tricky because of the numerous baddies that carelessly populate the playing field.

Don't think about shooting your way through because there are no weapons without power-ups, so they must be avoided, which will become troublesome seeing as your car has no breaks and is constantly driving kamikaze fashion. This mechanic forces you to constantly flip direction to find an alternative route to frantically complete your task. Many platforms are difficult to reach so require precise timing plus the enemy can often be blocking your path so you will need to immediately react to avoid losing a life.

CarVup would sink like a lead balloon if it had anything less than perfect controls so I'm grateful to say they are indeed responsive and well thought out without any lag. Core has also done a pretty nice job with the scrolling but there are technically better on the ST. The sprites are some of the cutest critters and each level looks superb with lots of colours and a great design. Sound effects are nice and do their expected job very but I love the chiptunes which are all foot-tappingly superb. (press key 'M' to toggle)

I'm not so sure CarVup will appeal to everyone but I do recommend you give it a try. It is an enjoyable painter with a high level of addictive gameplay across some amazing levels which keep you coming back for more.



TIME BANDIT

PROGRAMMING: Bill Dunlevy GRAPHICS: Harry Lafnear

(VERSION 2.1)

BANDIT 1'S CONTROLLER: JOYSTICK 2
BANDIT 2'S CONTROLLER: (FOR TWO PLAYER GAME) JOYSTICK 1

PRESS F1 & F2 TO CHANGE CONTROLLERS
PRESS "1" OR "2" TO START THE ADVENTURE



TIME BANDIT

Microdeal 1985 Michtron Atari ST™

I have to admit to being a Time Bandit virgin as I had never even heard of the game until recently! Which is quite sad because it dates back to the glory days of home computing when the Atari ST was a new and fresh faced 16-bit baby born into an aggressive 8-bit world? Interestingly, it was first released on a Tandy before finding its rightful place on the Atari ST.

First impressions aren't good. I felt that it was a cheap and nasty Gauntlet rip-off. But thankfully a pinch of sanity came over me and I took the time to play Time Bandit again. Thankfully, you should ignore my first impressions because this is a cool game and although it's actually very simple it soon becomes a hefty challenge. There are numerous worlds to explore, from a Gauntlet style top-down perspective, and it's up to you where you choose to travel. From ancient Egypt to a bomb-making factory and surprises like a Pac-Man land, each world is completely different and comes with its own unique styles and many baddies, all of whom are waiting for you! But this is certainly the fun part which any Gauntlet fan will love.

Each level has an exit, which is blocked until you find a key. Thankfully, you have an unlimited supply of ammo which (I think) is a rocket! Curiously, each time you complete and re-enter into the same level, the difficulty increases which is kind of awesome! I noticed the lurking adventure element, which adds even more to Time Bandit and this increases its already addictive gameplay. Time Bandit is a cracking game and one I'm addicted to. An Atari ST classic.



microdeal

CREATURES

■ Thalamus ■ 1992 ■ WJS Design ■ Atari ST - STe

Somewhere in the far reaches of the universe is a remote planet called Blot. Much like Eden, this is a wonderful place and also home to the friendliest of creatures, the Blotians. However, for some peculiar reason, they got a little bored and desired to be cooler and thus came up with the daff notion of a brand new identity on a different planet.

Now they're called Fuzzy Wuzzies, but what these sad creatures didn't realise was that demons already lived here and this lot are an evil bunch and very bad tempered too! Needless to say, everyone has been captured and await a cruel and bloody fate. You are Clyde Radcliffe, your breath stinks and it's your job to rescue all your friends from these fiends and save the day.

Creatures is a platformer released by Thalamus in 1993 and contains some of the most beautiful visuals you could ever imagine. It looks tremendous with such detailed and colourful artwork and character animations. Audio hasn't taken a backseat and features support for the hardware lurking inside the Atari STe to produce gorgeous quality effects. Clyde is the cutest little thing and the game employs this theme throughout. He is equipped with a rapid firing weapon, which is handy because many of the baddies can take numerous hits before they die. Power-ups are available, I love the 'wiggler' effect the most and there are much more to choose from. However, your super power is the funniest weapon of all, press and hold the fire button to breathe bad breath over anything that gets too close. Whoever said brushing your teeth was good for your health? Fire breath is just what those horrid demons deserve!

In fact, horrid is just the word. Creatures might look cute and cuddly but it also features an underlying evil personality. At the end of each level is a puzzle screen where you are required to rescue a fellow Fuzzy Wuzzy from the clutches of a sadistic demon. Be quick because it's usually a shocking scene of hilarious cartoon horror!

Creatures is a good game but I often noticed a little slow down. I can live with that but what I find difficult to swallow is the lack of proper scrolling, which is instead pushed. It might work for a game like Rick Dangerous but it's disappointing here. I enjoyed Creatures, it has a fun and balanced gameplay style which never tires. A good game.



FRONTIER - ELITE II

■ Gametek ■ 1993 ■ Gametek ■ Atari ST - STe

After a worrying delay, Frontier Elite II was finally released back in early 1994 by Gametek and was unlike most other games due to its sheer size. A whole universe of countless stars to explore which basically meant many long gaming nights are ahead (well, over the decades and through to the present day!)

Commander Jameson has sadly left this realm and you came along just in the nick of time to reap the benefits of his will reading. Being his favorite grandson, he left you 100 credits with strict instructions to stay clear of Vegas. He also left you his pride and joy, an Eagle Long Range Fighter - so be careful and don't scratch it. You now have the means and opportunity to explore the heavens so jump into your shiny new spaceship and begin the journey of your lifetime! After watching the awesome intro, various menu options are available to begin your first adventure and I advise selecting Option 1 which places you safely in the Ross 154 System. Or more precisely, at the Sirocco starport on the planet Merlin. You have 100 credits and a rather funky piece of 3D called your space ship so starting at Sirocco is a great place to learn the ropes of the GUI and basic trading skills along with brushing up on your piloting skills.

Frontier is an open world (space!) sandbox game which doesn't restrict you in any traditional sense because you are free to travel almost anywhere and do almost anything you like. However, even gaming folklore doesn't come free and this style of living costs money so use the space ship to provide yourself a good living by means of contracting and trading goods. Everyone needs something, so this is where you come in to make your hard earned cash! Frontier's universe has two major factions, and this is the Trekkie part, for me. Firstly, we have the Federation who are based in the Sol system and then we have The Empire which is based in the Achenar system. Both offer a haven to live and trade but aren't exactly the best of friends and, outside the safety of their space, you chance a greater risk of running into pirates. Dog fights with these are probably the most difficult part of the game to master. Gone are the arcade style controls in favour of realistic Newtonian physics that affect the control of your spacecraft. Momentum first needs to be compensated in order for you to slow down, stop and change a direction. Perhaps now I should advise saving your game at regular intervals? Learn its physics because the pirates are tough cookies! Ultimately, Frontier is about living a lucrative and adventurous lifestyle by means of trade across the heavens. Use your galactic map to explore a 3D perspective of creation and plan your first route, dig for information to find out what they need, buy in bulk and begin your journey (there is nothing quite like making your first hyperspace jump - very exciting!) This will automatically end once you are within the vicinity of your destination, but the distance to your destination is still huge, so don't forget to use the Stardreamer buttons to pass the time quicker! Auto-docking is (finally) supported so once you're boarded get the goods sold and reap the profit. Before you begin looking for another trade route, remember to refuel your ship, otherwise, you won't be able to make another hyperspace jump!

After earning lots of money, you might want to consider checking out the Bulletin Board where you can upgrade your ship or search for extra jobs like transporting passengers, help to find a missing person, mining, military work or information. Heck, there is even a black market for those without a conscience, where you can trade slaves, weapons, narcotics or even be an assassin. However, this dark lifestyle will definitely take you into dangerous waters and will almost certainly attract the attention of the law. Are you ready for that heat, bad boy?

Frontier is one heck of a game and one with immense potential and I'm hoping this feature will regenerate your interest to restart playing? Frontier is all about progression and making the right choices to build up your own little empire. Do not expect to jump into the pilot's seat and see the entire universe in one sitting, this will take time, money and commitment. Oh and several months of your life because Frontier is quite literally one of the best games, ever.



GAMETEK®

CYBERNOID

Hewson Consultants ■ 1988 ■ ID2 ■ Atari STfm

Cybernoid is a game developed by a legend. Someone who repeatedly rocked the 8-bit world, Raffaele Cecco. I was a Spectrum over back then and it seemed everyone was crazy about him and his games, rightly so. However, there have been too many dodgy 16-bit conversions so I was more than a little dubious upon first loading up Cybernoid.

Thankfully, it's amazing and offers the same level of thrills as the original 8-bit version. Gameplay is smooth and the controls responsive throughout the spruced up levels. Graphically, it's head and shoulders above what I expected with eye-popping colour and lovely smooth animation. The sound effects are a joy with a fantastic chiptune theme. Be warned, this is tough and could put off some but take the time to learn its finicky ways and little secrets. It will most certainly take several attempts to master but that only means the replay aspect is huge. Cybernoid is awesome, highly challenging and addictive.



MENACE

by

Dave Jones
Brian Watson
Tony Smith

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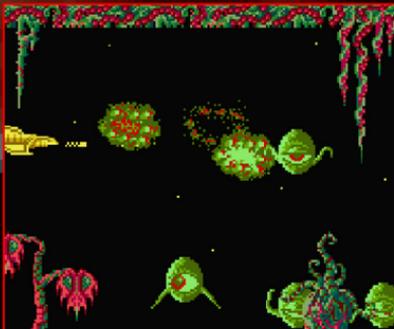
MENACE

■ Psygnosis ■ 1988 ■ DMA Design ■ Atari STe / STfm

Menace was released back in 1988 by Psygnosis and is a game that often makes Atari ST owners cringe with embarrassment and I literally do not know why. People are often quick to blame the computer for a poor title but if the programmers weren't capable then that is where the finger of blame should be directed. Horizontally scrolling shooters are plentiful on the Atari ST, yet they aren't usually as smooth to scroll compared to their vertical cousins.

This is because the earlier ST's had no hardware scrolling and thus relied upon the talents of a committed programmer and I personally find Menace fits nicely into this category with its beautiful scrolling, without slow down. It also looks great with huge enemies and colourful backdrops with a tune that instantly gets you tapping your feet.

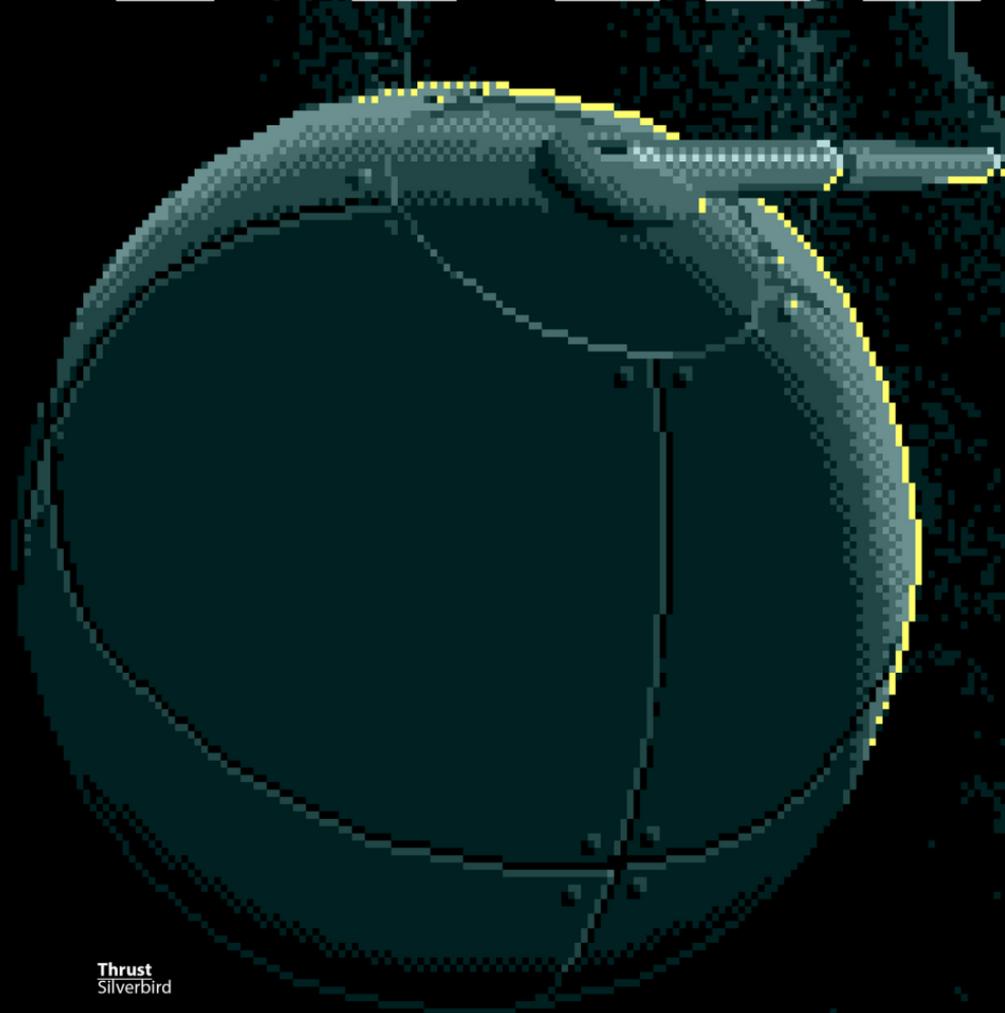
Overall, I think they did a splendid job with a 16-colour palette, however, I must object to the yellow ship and I've often wondered over the years just what they were thinking! The controls are perfect to feel responsive and precise. I love all the level designs and the baddies are varied and an enjoyable kill. Menace is thrilling and addictive, I love it.



PSYGNOSIS

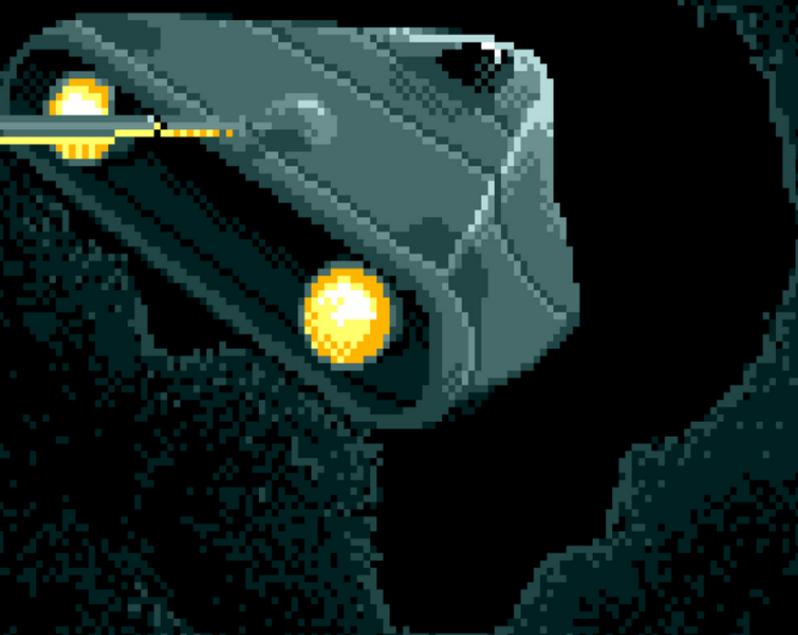


THAR



Thrust
SilverBird

UST





MARKO LATVANEN of ATARI MANIA

AtariMania is a website which has catalogued and detailed almost every Atari ST game. Most of us regard it as the go-to guy whenever we need any information! Marko Latvanen currently handles all of the administration, which must be a massive undertaking and one he is committed to finishing.

What is your role within the world of AtariMania?

Atarimania is a huge project which tries to preserve and catalogue the golden memories of gaming but also demos and utilities over 9 different systems (Arcade coin-op, 2600, 5200, 7800, Lynx, Jaguar, Atari 800-series, Atari ST-series and Falcon030 / TT. A lot has been done but also a huge amount of work is still ahead for a small team like us. Our headquarters is in France and we have 5-7 active members for the whole Atarimania website.

My role is mainly Atarimania ST database moderator. So I'm basically doing a lot of "household" work with our custom built software. It includes building database records, correcting information based on our own research, adding screenshots, hunting down unreleased games and their creators, helping them with utilities to save precious ST productions before they break down, doing a lot of cross reference checking, game archiving and research which is the most interesting part. I like being a software archaeologist for the digital dawn of 16bit computing.

In the last 12 months I've been also building a database for Atari's last beast, the Jaguar.

Oh and I'll update the Atarimania Facebook page as well. What else, surely missed something (grin emoticon). I get of course a lot of help from Stefan_L and Champions_2002 who also do the database moderation, background research and are equally as important part of Atarimania ST-section.

What does the Atari ST platform mean to you?

It was the first computer I bought with my own money after working hard the whole summer

1990. My parents really didn't dig computers so we never had one when I was a kid. That's why I jumped straight to the 16bit wagon. Played a lot with Philips VideoPac G7000, C64 and Amiga with my mates though. After seeing an ST in Finland's leading computer magazine Mikrobitti I knew what I wanted. I had to wait for a few years but when I finally was old enough for the summer job, oh boy! There they were side by side at the computer shop – an Amiga 500 and Atari 520STfm. I still remember it like yesterday. My choice was clear and I never regret it (wink emoticon)

So I grew up with my ST, it offered me thousands of hours of fun with games and some jaw dropping demos, I learned English (sort of anyway!) by using an ST and it helped me to secure my job in Desktop Publishing business (thanks to Calamus and TimeWorks Publisher). For a while I even got paid using an ST as a workhorse in mid 90's.

I do this because I want ST and its memories to live forever. It's also my way to say huge thanks to all those game, demo and serious software developers, graphics artists, musicians and designers who offered me so much fun over the last decades. Their work should not be forgotten. It's also a most rewarding feeling to get unreleased stuff dug out of peoples attic to save them from destruction.



We hope you are in this for the long haul?

Been into the Atari ST everyday since 1990 so I'll be there as long as most of my fingers and senses are working! And of course as long as Franck keeps the site up and running. Retro computers just keep getting better every year, don't they!

How do you envision AtariMania 10 years from now?

In 10 years it should be a top research quality database for the future generations of computer historians, journalists and the people who want to see and feel what Atari was about in its golden years. Hopefully it will also feature a lot more videos, music files and a capable online ST / Falcon emulator to try out the games and demos.

What Atari computers do you own?

Erm.. Well they sort of started to pile up since 1996 when people practically gave them for free or for very little money... I think it's better to just click here: <http://www.gameberry.net/user/kokoelma.php?1503211172>

What are your favourite Atari ST games?

I've always been a big fan of racing games from the day one so Vroom, Microprose GP, Stunt Car Racer, Crazy Cars III, Toyota Celica GT Rally, Lotus and Super Cars series were the ones I've played most back in the day. For the other genres I guess I'm still playing Kick Off, Phantasia III, Obsession, Pro Tennis Tour, Fire & Ice, Elite and most part of the awesome Power Pack bundle in the retirement home if they allow computers!



Are you planning any changes to AtariMania?

As I'm only an ST moderator it is really up to Franck to decide where the future of AtariMania is heading. I think there's so much work ahead in most of the databases itself. We should concentrate on that until the work is done.

Is the Atari ST database close to completion?

I would say something like 45-50 percent. We have most of the commercial releases in as well as the biggest demoscene productions from ST's commercial years. We are still missing many hundreds of PD / shareware games, huge amount of Falcon stuff and utilities.

From the artist credits part it really is not yet in such shape it should be used for research purposes without double checking first. The problem originates mostly from the imported list AtariMania used as a basis of the database. It unfortunately had a lot of errors in it. Other part is caused by me as doing too many 10-11 hour AtariMania days at the start of the project wasn't maybe wisest move after all!

It's an extremely slow task to check everything, but we'll publish the correction progress on the AtariMania news page a bit by bit.

AtariMania's ST games are not playable on real hardware?

It's because we try to preserve games as originally as possible. Most cracked version had title screens or even digital music tracks removed or altered so the originality was gone. As we want to give the full credits and support to the original authors

who did the hard work in the 80's and 90's, we don't use cracked versions on ST section if it's avoidable.

However I must point out that game crackers did a very important job historically speaking if you look it nowadays. Majority of the classic games would have been lost without people spreading them back in the days, and there probably wouldn't be commercial interest in retro gaming nowadays without crackers who kept the software alive. So they really deserve the credit for their work but we just like to do things unedited when possible.

You have so many aliases on Demozoo! Why?

Hmm. There seems to be some errors. The ones I used were mostly related to Jean-Michel Jarre's recordings. Not sure where the Beatdrum or Squish came from... Probably from some lazy editing of my crappy MOD-files.

I guess I just couldn't make my mind. First we had a little user group called The Atariga Crew. We did some 40+ compact disks mostly for our own use and had a little gaming parties. We also toyed a bit with STOS Basic but I soon found out I had no character of a coder. My highlight was to get a UFO sprite bouncing around the screen (grin emoticon). My cousin was a bit better but he never got much running either. So we used an util called Intro Concept to run our menu disks. I concentrated mostly on swapping and graphics.

After my cousin got bored on ST I started Alien Nation to do some graphics work. In later stages we finally got a real coder from the UK. Under that name we released 10 MOD disks and some 40 more compact disks, again mostly for internal use. I used some of the ... graphics in them. I did with Canvas and Deluxe Paint ST. I also did a new set of VW Buggy themed graphics for PD racing game called Hot Wheels but the disk is unfortunately lost. After a while our coder went to iMac and we had some plans to make a game for but it got nowhere.

In the meantime a crew called "Depression" asked me to do

some logos for them. One of them is actually painted using Amigaarghh (don't shoot me, my STe was collecting dust at a computer shop for memory expansion) and others with 68030 powered Apple Macintosh IIfx in PhotoShop 3. Shame on me!

What makes Marko tick?

Having two under 10 year old daughters, a Collie dog and doing mainly working hours from 3pm to 11pm does unfortunately rule out most of the social hobbies.

Besides Atari things, i'm also a big Mazda Motorsports fan and follow everything Mazda-related racing action closely. They've an amazing racing heritage in the USA thanks to the rotary engine which was something no other car manufacturer managed to get working properly. I even travelled to the UK last year just to see and hear their vintage rotary powered racing cars. I also keep my 1995 323F's and 1992 MX-3 in running order, expanding my 520+ title racing games collection. I try to go to as power metal gigs i can & of course have a beer or two with my friends from time to time and play retrogames.



We wish to take the opportunity to thank Marko for his time and doing this interview with us, Cheers.

Please visit AtariMania over @ WWW.ATARIMANIA.COM

ELVIRA

Flair Software 1991 Atari STfm / STe

Elvira has graced the best 16-bitter twice already with two wonderful adventure games. But there is also a little known third title where we get to play as the Mistress herself in a platformer very reminiscent of another famous Atari ST title by the Bitmap Brothers...

You first choose to play within one of two worlds: Underworld Of Fire or Arctic Earth. Each offers their own monster-infested theme and are absolutely huge. Once completed, you can begin the third and final world, Castle Of Transylvania.

The levels are indeed massive and littered with all kinds of monsters that are constantly wanting to feed on you so it's tons of fun killing them! However, because the worlds are so huge, progress can be quite the crusade due to a lack of checkpoints. Controls are excellent and responsive with one impressive, majestic jumping action flaunted by Elvira. Movement and weapons feel very familiar and perform with so much impressive graphical pizzazz, if little originality...

Flair Software has made good use of the Blitter chip which produces smooth parallax scrolling, which is as impressive as it is a little depressing. Why more developers couldn't didn't make use of this nifty graphics co-processor? Okay, ignoring its Godly rip-off attributes it so shamelessly stolen, I think that you will enjoy playing dress up as the Mistress of the Dark. I adore the glam aesthetics and the task at hand is quite the engrossing escapade which offers a fistful of action to keep you entertained. Not perfect by a long-shot but a fun and highly recommended platformer!



FLAIR
S.O.F.T.W.A.R.E



ESCAPE FROM THE PLANET OF THE ROBOT MONSTERS

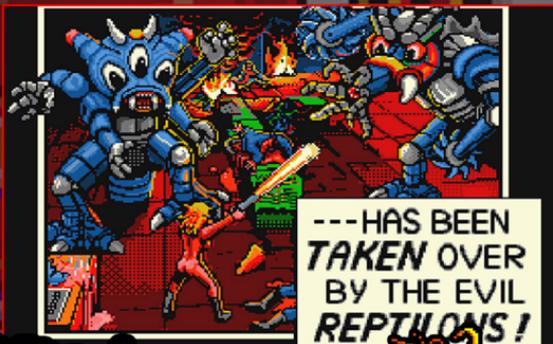
Domark 1990 Teque Software Atari STe / STfm

Winner for best title must surely go to Escape From the Planet Of The Robot Monsters. What a cool name and, I'm sure you will agree, it is such an iconic arcade game from the era. Full to the brim with originality and frantic metallic mayhem! Evil reptilians are hell-bent on destroying us and have also taken hold of Planet X. They have captured and enslaved the human population forcing them to build a massive robot army for an invasion. This isn't good and it sure isn't right, so enter Jake and Duke, two mighty heroes to save us all.

The plan is this: destroy as many robots as you can, trash their computers, rescue the girls and save the day. Curiously, the girls appear to be wearing very little clothing whilst they are enslaved but whatever works, right? Robot Monsters is played in a similar fashion to most other overhead games with a 3D isometric point of view. Imagine a pinch Buck Rogers mixed in with a dollop of Gauntlet or Dr. Who and you get a general idea. Your main goal is to rescue the humans but don't forget about those held in stasis pods! All this is going on whilst Planet X produced tonnes of robots to hinder your progress & ultimately put an end to your sorry carbon-based life. From the start, you discover that the bad guys are relentless because factories are constantly making them, so expect no easy pass through this hoard of metal mickeys. Keep moving, keep firing and try to avoid them whenever possible (they're stupid and will often get stuck behind obstacles). Along the way are various traps designed specifically for us soft fleshy humans, like sharp spikes, rotating chunks of metal and electric floor panels that will shock you silly. There are also simple objectives to advance through the current level, like flipping switches that activate escalators.

The robots come in a variety of models and I love those slow moving biscuit-looking ones, they are quite cute! The red robots are annoyingly fast compared to your own movements, so beware. Almost always, there is a screen of daft robots running on their evil programming and they hate you so enjoy killing the suckers with your laser and zap them back into junk. However, you don't really want to run around frantically zapping everything as your weapon will become less effective. Thankfully, it can be charged with the little green blobs of energy that dead robots usually leave behind. Also, we have bombs - just hit the shift key and they detonate straight away killing anything within your vicinity. Be careful because they may not hurt you but will easily kill the humans you're supposed to be rescuing...

Every few levels is a canal stage where you travel along in your spaceship all in the name of extra bonuses, not essential to your progress and a little lame! Better, is meeting the big Reptilon boss which first seems like an impossible task but there is a cunning way to avoid it if you save up enough bombs. Robot Monsters is demented and I love it with its comical personality, great characters, and exciting gameplay. An extraordinary game!



ERIK

Atlantis Software 1992 Confused Pelican Atari STfm

Erik is a kind and peaceful Viking who happens to keep himself to himself and bothers nobody. Unfortunately, that evil god Loki isn't too pleased about Erik choosing a pacifistic lifestyle over one of pillaging so he casts a spell and turns the world rotten. Erik must now travel these infested lands and battle all kinds of sadistic evil before he can return to a time of peace and quiet.

Atlantis Software released Erik back in 1992 and its a vertically scrolling platformer that features dozens of levels spread over four worlds. Each level contains numerous baddies, lots of cool traps and scary end of level bosses. The graphics are so cute and cuddly with lots of details and super smooth scrolling. At heart, this is a really simple platformer with little to complicate its gameplay. The controls are perfect, very responsive and the mechanics work so well. Erik isn't exactly original but it is so much fun and very challenging, on the later levels. I really enjoy this game!





TURBO CUP

■ Loriciel ■ 1988 ■ Atari ST/Am

Turbo Cup was released back in 1988 by the mighty Loriciel. It's a racer which places you behind the wheel of a Porsche 944 driving a practice run before moving up to a thrilling race against computer-controlled competitors. There are some neat physics at work to prevent it from ever being easy, so learn to slow down when cornering. It's no sim but it is a tough cookie and one that will take a time to master, especially on those extreme bends.

I remember when I first saw pictures of Turbo Cup and I almost drooled over their high quality because it didn't appear bland nor blocky and had a next-gen feel to it. I do love the drivers perspective which really does help better your view down the track. Sound effects are equally gorgeous and feature the roar of that powerful Porsche engine to compliment those lush visuals. Back in 1988, I admit that Turbo Cup's difficulty got the better of me but today I've learned to appreciate the finer details of what is undoubtedly an Atari ST classic racer. It's simple racing and bucket loads of fun, yet without ever being too easy and most certainly a highly recommended trip down memory lane!



SUBSTATION

■ Unique Development Sweden ■ 1995 ■ STe / Falcon030

The year is 1996 and Mitushi Industries have developed a new type of energy that is extracted from under the seas. All seemed well for a few years until communication was lost with their underwater substation base. So they contracted in the help of a Multi-Environment Marine from the American government. In case you are wondering, this is you - so suit up! Upon starting, ditch the knife and hit key "2" which switches to a rather effective pistol. Now collect all the goodies here and exit. Opposite, is another room with more goodies, however, there are a couple of ghouls hiding within. So will you risk it or will you run away scared, down that seemingly empty corridor? I feel that the older gamer, who's lived through the earlier years of first person shooting, will immediately feel at home with Substation. It certainly has a familiar theme, user interface and a style very reminiscent of those golden years to feel more like an old skool shooter, like Wolfenstein. Its gameplay is centred on frantic gun-fun with a sneaky slab of role playing thrown in for good measure - and I love it!

The baddies are an intelligent bunch who won't simply home in on your location. Expect some to use evasive tactics as they shoot a few rounds and then run and take cover! Use that pistol to protect yourself, remembering to sidestep oncoming fire and don't forget to keep searching for better weapons which have carelessly been left waiting for you. I love the various weapons. I only wish it didn't take so long to find them. The chain gun is absolutely superb and one Arnold Schwarzenegger would be proud of. However, I was left deflated by an underwhelming shotgun. Movement is actioned with the keyboard using the arrow keys to walk and also Insert and Clr Home keys for sidestepping. Control key fires your weapon, the Space Bar opens doors and TAB drops a timed bomb. Don't forget to make use of the level map which is conveniently located at the bottom of the screen. It automatically maps wherever you walk and the keypad can be used to examine already explored areas. Graphically, I'm both impressed and unimpressed in equal measure. I love the eerie atmosphere and the use of light sourced sprites with great visual effects and all within a minimum framerate of 25fps on an 8MHz Atari STe. However, the walls have no texture mapping because UDS opted for faster Gouraud shading to maintain the framerate. This is a little disappointing because games like Destruction Imminent and Wolfenstein 3D both prove an ST is more than capable. I feel they also missed an opportunity to have textures as an option, especially for those with faster computers.

Audio is spot on perfect because Substation uses the enhanced hardware so we're able to hear distance and directional sound effects which help to identify just where those baddies are lurking. Equally impressive are the tunes with a 25KHz playback for superb quality so crank up the volume! Technically speaking this is one of the most impressive games ever released on ye olde humble Atari STe. A 3D engine capable of maintaining a brisk 25fps, distance & directional stereo sounds, light source sprites, networking, intelligent AI, over 30 on-screen colours and the faster your computer the higher your framerate. However, if you're expecting this to be our version of Doom then you might be disappointed. Don't misunderstand me, Substation is damn excellent in its own right and it should be treated as such. Pick up that gun and go have yourself some fun!



IT-TRANSMISSION



FROM: RSCOTT@MEMNET.US
TO: 1600.RECON1@MEMNET.US

MISSION UPDATE:

GATEWAY ASUKA IS LOCATED AT 2985 METERS BELOW SURFACE, AND IT HOSTS REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE UNITS FOR THE SUBSTATION TURBINE STATIONS. NOTHING LEAVES OR ENTERS WITHOUT CLEARANCE FROM GATEWAY ASUKA MECHANICS PERSONNEL.

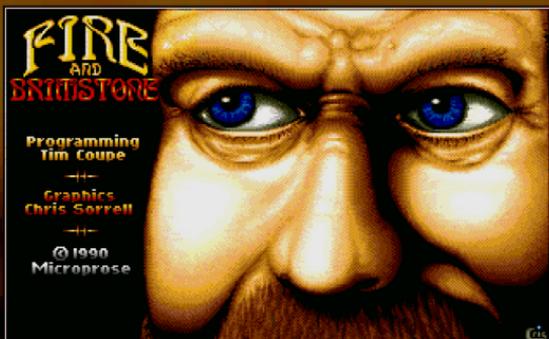
FIRE AND BRIMSTONE

MicroProse 1990 Vectordean Atari STe / STfm

Firebird released Fire and Brimstone back in 1990 and is one of the most visually stunning platformers I have ever seen. Your adventure takes place within a fantasy world of Norse mythology as the mighty Thor whom must battle with the forces of Hel. She has escaped and spread her lust for evil over the nice peaceful Nordic lands with her many minions creating much havoc! So it's up to you to clean up this hellish infestation and get home in time for tea.

Thor has four multi-screen levels to explore, with each being a puzzle in itself that will require careful thought before you attempt to foolishly plunder through. Even the first screen can confuse some with a solution not really making much sense if I'm honest, but this style of gameplay trickery is a constant and one you will soon get used to. Don't forget to search for objects to collect because no level can be completed unless you have found all the fragments of a key. If you happen to reach the end of a level, without finding all the parts, you are punished and sent back to the beginning. Thor doesn't only carry an axe but two individual weapons which you can flip between and power-ups are available to collect to improve your abilities. You will need a decent weapon to battle the baddies, which come in all shapes and sizes with each possessing a cunning personality. They are often difficult to kill, from a magic-throwing witch to goblins, old bats & things hiding in trees - I especially love the ghosts and the witches flying by on their broomsticks!

Visually, Fire and Brimstone offers an exceptional treat with astounding attention to detail with an artistic flair that perfectly complements the ancient atmosphere. Characters are superbly animated and the settings are absolutely stunning for our little Viking's venture. Sound effects are great but they certainly don't come close to the majestic quality of the graphics. This is most definitely one of the most difficult games I've ever played, it is an incredibly tough and your progress will be slow and often painful. It can be frustrating but it's also brilliantly designed for longevity and can be so rewarding. One of the best games I have ever played but only the brave should enter!





RESOLUTION 101

■ Millennium ■ 1990 ■ Astral Software Ltd. ■ Atari STfm

The future is often portrayed to be a grim, crime-ridden hell hole and Resolution 101 presents us with its own vector equivalent of that scenario. Here you are an ex-criminal turned good with an armed cop car that feels more like a hovercraft. This has presented the perfect opportunity to make up for a dodgy past and to make a difference by hunting down evil drug runners. So, just like an 80s Van Damme flick, you should expect fun, thrills, and plenty of action as you clean up the city!

Resolution 101 was created by one of my favourite developers, Astral who also made such awesome titles as Archipelagos and Horror Zombies From The Crypt. This is a first-person shooter released when the genre was still in infancy, and long before we got to shoot Nazi's in Castle Wolfenstein or zombie soldiers in Doom. But don't expect a crude, sluggish or even a dated experience because it features one of the fastest 3D engines you could ever imagine from out of our old 68K! At its heart, Resolution 101 is nothing more than a cracking shoot 'em up and the aim is to kill all the bad guys! During the carnage, they will drop their stash which oddly looks like coloured balls so go and collect them quickly. They will often materialise in random locations so keep an eye on your radar and map, both help to navigate through the urban jungle. Each level has a drug lord who will take lots of hits to be destroyed and, once dead, there is always somebody else higher up the food chain to deal with.

Control is from within the comfort of your anti-gravity squad car which is conveniently directed using your ST's mouse or joystick (mouse is best). Move it to view your surroundings, the left button accelerates and the right is used to fire your weapon. This works so well and controlling your ship to chase the baddies is marvellous fun. I really do enjoy zooming through the city, which is both fast and fluent and always offers a satisfying chase.

After all these years, Resolution 101 still looks great. Frame rates are high and move along swiftly, this is probably the most advanced 3D engine I've ever seen on the STFM. Chiptune music plays throughout and is captivating to a point where you are tapping your feet, I've always enjoyed it myself. However, if you like, it can be turned off and replaced with sound effects by pressing the F7 key.

This is one of the best action-filled shoot 'em ups on the Atari ST. It's brilliant and so much fun with no overly complicated and unnecessary storyline to get in the way. Quite simply, Resolution 101 is one of the best retro games ever and one I am proud to own. If you've never played it before then it's now time to end your stupidity!





ANDREW GISBY

I recently met Andrew Gisby, the creator of a most distinctive game for the Atari STe (and Falcon). Zero 5 is one of the last commercial games ever released for Atari computers by Caspian Software in 1994, a time when most were leaving the 16-bit scene to pursue those silly consoles. A rare gem indeed and it wasn't long before I came up with the notion for an interview!

CASPIAN SOFTWARE

Zero 5 has a wonderful next-gen feel yet is often unknown to many people returning to the scene. Tell us about your game and what it means to you.

I had been trying to get published in one way shape or form for several years. Back in the day, I lived the life of the Indie / hobby / night owl developer. Holding down a job during the waking hours and coming home to hack away on my much loved (at the time) Atari's. I remember buying my first Atari 512STFm in the late 80's.

I spent many hours teaching myself to program in 68000 Assembler. Bulletin boards, books, magazines & chance discussions at shows to pick up game dev knowledge. I'm no mathematician, but a series of articles in (I think) ST World on transformations and 3D math gave me so much. I could finally make the leap into 3D games. Everything had to be done in assembler to keep up the speed and finally reading something that explained techniques to turn formulas into simplified assembler was a revelation. To this day, I still keep a pocket "Signetics S68000 User's Guide" - It was my Bible for machine code programming.

An awful lot was learnt the hard way through trial and error (no instant online answers). I used to look at the latest effects in games (and film) and try to do something similar. So I think Zero-5 marked a highpoint for me. The peak of understanding of what I could personally do with (by then) the STe to make a game. I had built up a large library of routines & techniques to achieve some of the visual and audio effects.

So, in summary, Zero-5 was the realisation of a couple of dreams.....>



I really wanted to see a game I had written myself published.

My fascination of 3D sim & bring to life things you can only dream about.

Was Zero 5 inspired by anything else from your gaming history?

Everything I had developed was an inspiration for the game. A cheap answer, but my whole gaming exploits (to this day) are a sequence of inspirations. However, if I was to list a few things that inspired the game.

Elite (who wasn't). But for me, I learnt programming on an Acorn Electron and playing Elite planted the seed for wanting to understand game writing and 3D.

Carrier Command (an amazing game with a level of automation and sophistication that I was just in awe of)

Captain Blood (The art, galactic expanse and imagination was just brilliant)

Sci-fi films and TV programs had a lot of influence. I'm a bit of a science fiction addict. But to list a few that helped inspire ideas in the game:

The Last Starfighter (I recall a sequence when the hero ship flies through a swarm of enemy ships ... That was the start of Zero-5).

Forbidden Planet (big influence for me, generally)

U.F.O. (Fundamentally, I used the same threat mechanic in the game)

What was your background prior to working for Caspian?

Self taught hobby game dev trying to get published!

Most commercial companies had left the Atari ST by 1994 so what inspired you to carry on during those dark days?

At the time, I thought the Atari Falcon030 and Jaguar was going to save the day. I only knew how to make games on the Atari's and thought that if Zero-5 was a success, I'd move on to these platforms properly. The Falcon030 enhancements in Zero-5 were done in the last few months. I didn't really do it justice (but the extra CPU speed helped push the content level up a bit more).

Zero-5 really was a labour of love and I was under my first proper gamedev contract - Inspiration enough right !?!

Did Zero 5 live up to your expectations?

Technical Stretch: Yes (I used every chip/trick I knew in the STE!)

Creative Achievement: Yes

Critical Acclaim: Yes (at the time)

Commercial Success: No

I put so much effort and creativity into the game. The landfall sequences were a personal triumph. Turning a bitmap (height map) into a 3D landscape on an STe ... yes! - One of those 3D simulation dreams realised.

The lack of commercial success



was tough to take - We had lot of trouble with piracy (it was rife by then). I spoke to a lot of people that had played the game and loved it. As you say though, the sun was setting on Atari home computers - a shame for me at the time. Thinking back, I think the sheer effort involved did burn me out a bit.

Looking back, would you do anything different?

Launch the game 2-3 years earlier?

What happened after Zero 5 and how come you didn't continue on after Caspian's demise? (freelance, etc)

Newly married, we started a family soon after Zero-5. I couldn't commit to working on the Jaguar version of the game (my daytime job in IT paid the bills). Creatively, the console wasn't a copy of the original other than souped-up manic fighting sequences (arguably something I was trying to do when I first started developing the STe version). I was involved on a consultation basis but the Jag was new and it was a steep learning curve for the guys at Caspian. It was pretty exciting to be working with Atari though.

How long did it take you to code this game, what tools did you use, and was it on an actual Atari?

1 - 2 years to develop. I pulled in a lot of previously developed libraries and routines. Interesting memory about this. I used one of the first routines I'd ever dev'ed in assembler to simulate a 3d starfield. Development of the game went to the wire. I had this intermittent bug where the machine was (every so often) crashing! What felt like a few hours (day or so I think) before the game went to press, I found the cause ... That starfield routine (Randomly, I was managing to plot the odd star just outside memory reserved for the screen - d'oh!).

I used a 1Mb STe and laterly Falcon030 to develop the game. I got an HDD sometime through the project that saved doing the floppy / ram disk shuffle (speeded up game dev no end).

I recall using the blitter chip and new audio chip enhancements to great effect. Certainly without them, there was no way I could have thrown so many things around on screen and in your ears. Although it makes me chuckle at what we thought was a reasonable frame rate back then! Recalling the game audio engine I developed as part of Zero-5 - It give me multiple stereo Left / Right channels and a scripted approach to sound effect generation. The upshot was I could chain, stretch, compress and generally mess around with samples without eating too much precious CPU.

8bit samples of course, so sound pretty harsh nowadays.

Were you active in the ST scene elsewhere or was it just Caspian / Zero 5?

No, not really, I had a brief flirtation with demoscene but game dev was always my interest.

I'm aware you now see an Atari ST scene which is still very much alive and kicking. What do you think about this and will rejoin in some capacity or have you left forever?

Never say never. Honestly though - I'm well into Unity 3D and what spare time I have goes into that.

Do you still own an Atari computer? What is it and how often are you using it / what for?

I still have an Atari STe and Falcon030 tucked away alongside a massive trunk of floppy disks (Oh and a back catalogue of ST World). I haven't really used them since the 90's. I had a gamedev break late 90s till the 00's really.

Tell us about your future plans and what you're working on today?

I'd like to bring something made with Unity to the masses. My current project is a game called "Konjitto". With my family more or less grown up, I'm now steadily been drawn back to game dev more and more. A dream would be to give up the day job and spend my days writing games! I get a kick out of doing the coding, graphics, sound and music (although this is my weakest area).

Thanks for getting in touch, it has been fun reminiscing. Seeing people still appreciate those efforts back in the day is wonderful. Certainly made me and the family smile! Keep up the good work on the site.

Answering the questions has been pleasure!

Thanks
Andy

We wish to thank Andy for this interview and hope you've enjoyed it - AtariCrypt.





Cybernoid II - The Revenge
Hewson Software



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DEMOSCENIC

+ Atari ST - STe

The Atari ST Demoscene is one of great lineage spanning from 1985 where bedroom coders worked their magic on doing the impossible on a humble Atari ST machine. So we pay our respects to some of the best demo scene coders, groups, musician and pixel artists that brought us to another world on a machine that was simply seen to do just spreadsheets & business management. Atari ST Demoscene we salute you.....

Drone - DHS 36 ■

Flip-O-Demo - Oxygen & Diamond Design 37 ■

We Were - Oxygene 38 ■

Circus back2STage 39 ■

STreet Art 40 ■

BrainDamage - Aggression 41 ■

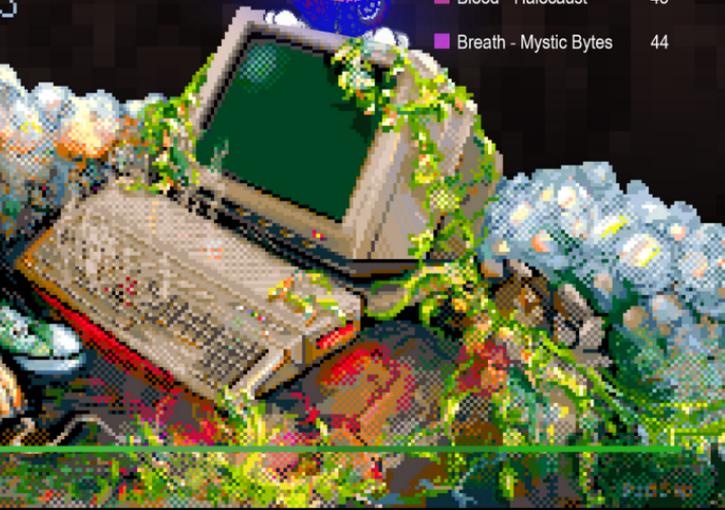
■ Do Things - Cream 42

■ Blood - Halocaust 43

■ Breath - Mystic Bytes 44



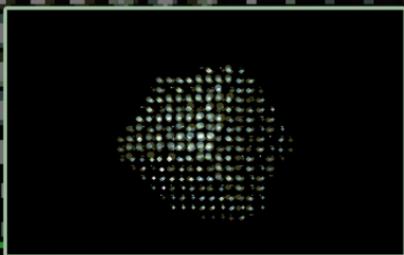
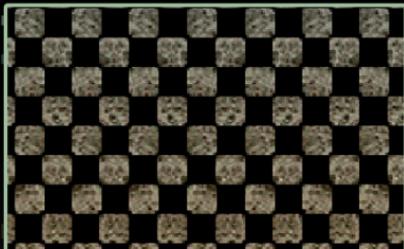
BlaaAtari!



DRONE

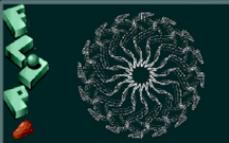
■ Evil - Code, Graphics ■ UltraDialectics - Graphics ■ Cerror - Music

This is a demo I personally feel changed the landscape for all future demos which might be made in coming years. The bar was raised another notch because of the full screen magnificence which gratifies your monitor. The artworks are quite macabre and of a quality I would expect of a Falcon. Audio - compliments everything seen in equal measure.



FLIP-O-DEMO

- Leonard / Oxbab - Code
- MoN / Niko / Spiral / Wilfried - Graphics
- Jess / Scavenger - Music



INTERMEDIA

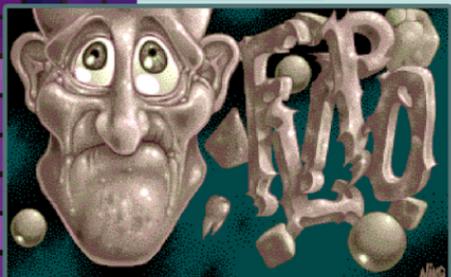


Such a fabulous presentation with a fast paced theme of gorgeous fx. The technical details at the end are a cool insight to just how much talent goes into making any demo.

FLIP DEMO

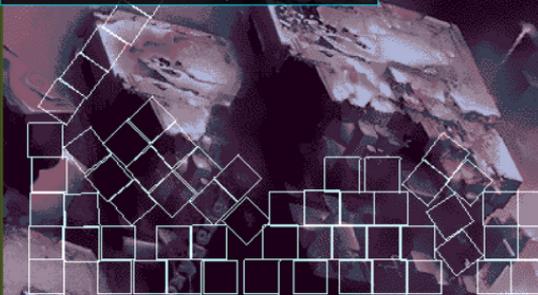


FLIPO

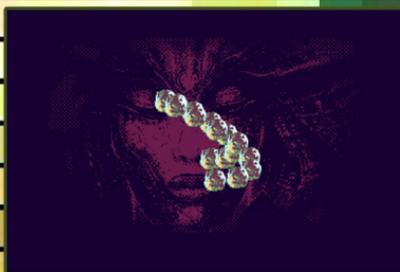
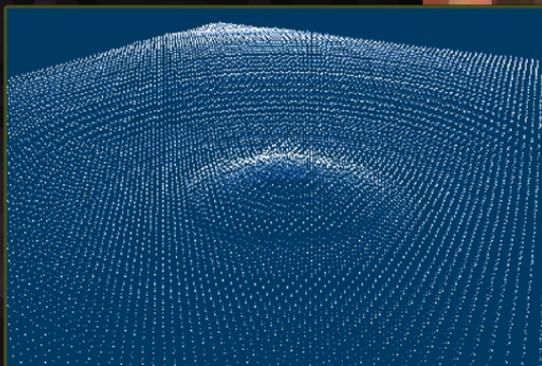
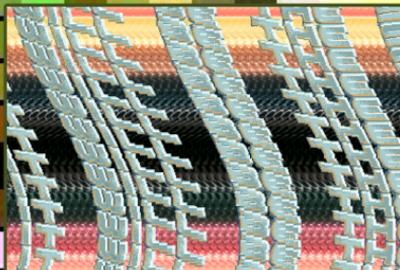


WE WERE

Leonard - Code MoN - Graphic Clawz - Music



Like Drone, this is another demo that changed the scene's expectations. A marvellous demo which truly makes you gasp and the Rotozoom parts especially so. Everything about this demo is pure 16-bit perfection and I dare you to not be impressed.



WARNING

UNLIKE MODERN ATARI PRODUCTIONS
THIS DEMO CONTAINS MANY
50 FPS FULLSCREEN EFFECTS.

IF YOU ARE NOT FROM THE 90's
THE SPEED CAN BADLY DAMAGE YOUR EYES.

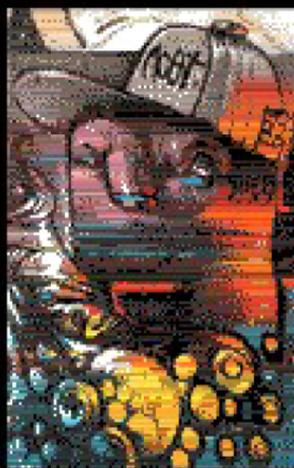
NOW INSERT DISK 2 AND PRESS SPACE



111 years later...

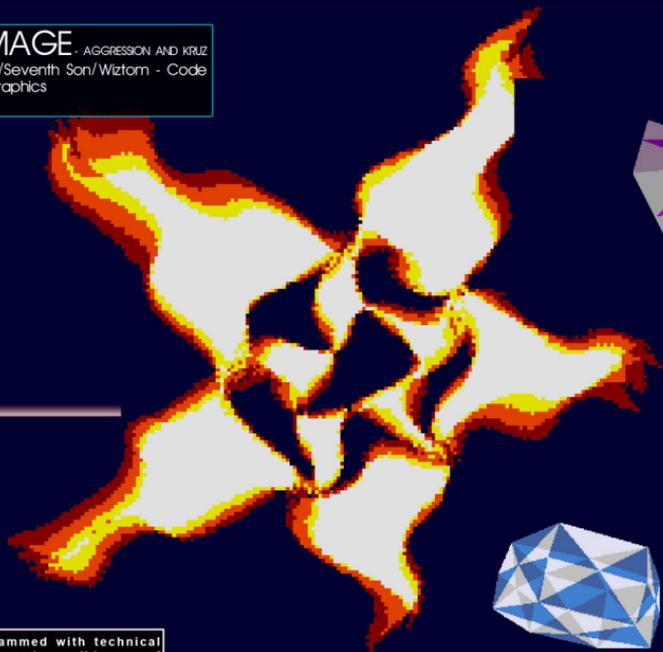


Another demo which is by far and away fabulous and so utterly unique. Something new. Something very different.



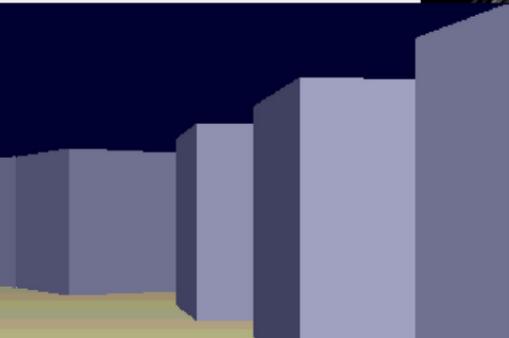
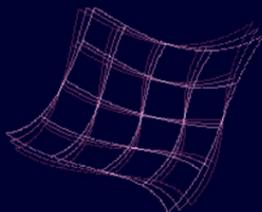
BRAINDAMAGE - AGGRESSION AND KRUIZ

- Jackdaw/Lancelot/Seventh Son/Wiztom - Code
- Lancelot/Owl - Graphics
- Teque - Music



Short but crammed with technical achievements and possibly one of the best demos there is for the Atari STe

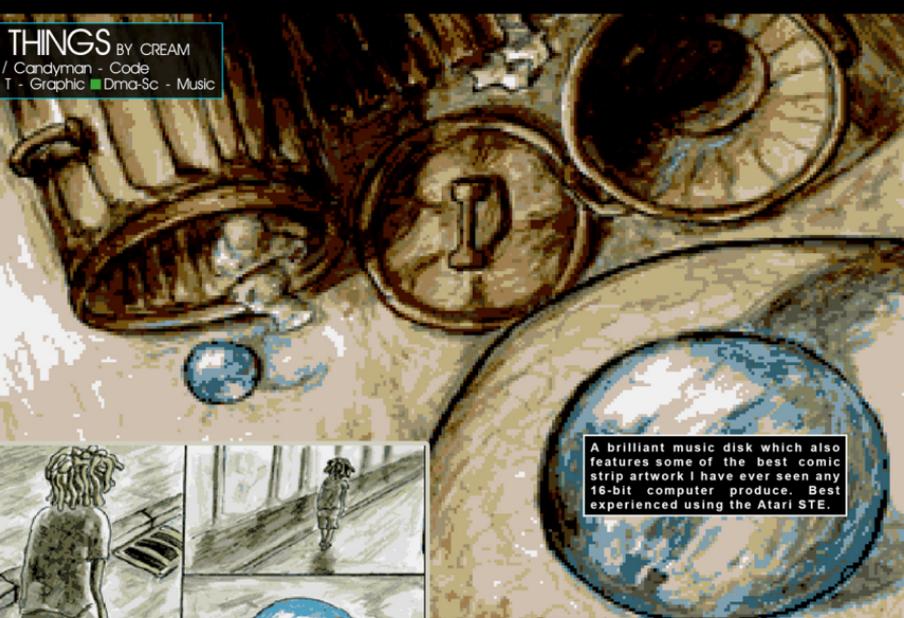
BRAINDAMAGE
PROGRAMMATION & GRAPHICS: LANCELOT OWL
MUSIC: TEQUE



BRAINDAMAGE

DO THINGS BY CREAM

■ Abyss / Candyman - Code
■ Agent T - Graphic ■ Dma-Sc - Music



A brilliant music disk which also features some of the best comic strip artwork I have ever seen any 16-bit computer produce. Best experienced using the Atari STE.



lost
birth
toxygen
intensity
the care
airwaves
sunshine
nostalgia
magnetic
...do things.
one on one
stella polaris

*and maybe a few
will be surprised
to waste their
time reading
some trash here.*

...do things.



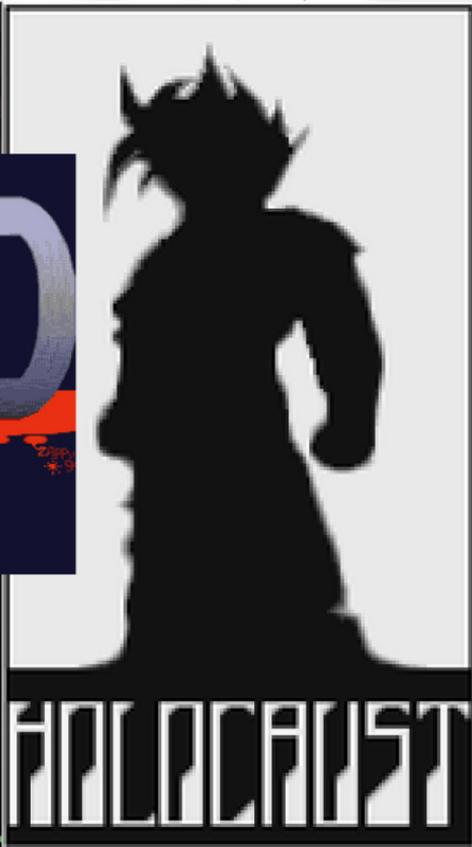
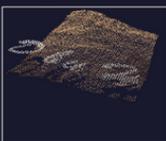
...confusing

CREAM

BLOOD BY HOLOCAUST

- Elic/Zappy - Code
- Mic/Zappy - Graphics
- Big Alec/Mad Max/Tao - Music

Such a blood curdling selection of wonderful effects and sweet audio. Makes this demo a great entry here.



WE LIVE FOR HER!



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distribute it to anybody.
P.D. can do what they want.

(c) copyrights 74-1994 for
the discs 74-30-1994

BREATH BY MYSTIC BYTES

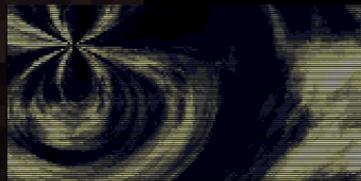
■ MaM / Sqward - Code ■ Tao - Music
■ Sqward/Simon King/Grey/ST Survivor - Graphics



Such a massive range of gorgeous effects and cool artworks galore with the most intense chip tune you could ever desire.



I'm hanging on your words
living on your breath
feeling with your skin
Will I always be here?





ROBERT HC LEONG

A much-respected name from the Atari ST homebrew scene and creator of the wonderful game "Annihilator". He has actually developed four games which were all released under the Budgie UK label and each title was a hit.



Hello Robert, please tell us a bit about the guy behind Annihilator?.

I am originally from Malaysia. I moved to Ireland in 1980 to further my studies. I bought an Atari 520STFM in 1988 while in Ireland, after graduating. At that time, I had already owned a BBC Micro model A for a few years and was looking for a new home computer to upgrade to.

I was impressed by the plethora of colours that the ST could produce, and the increase in speed and memory. I tried to program the ST in Fast BASIC initially, but that was way too slow, so it was a natural progression for me to move on to 68000 assembly language using HiSoft Devpac, especially since I was already familiar with 6502 assembly language from my time with the BBC Micro.

Tell us about the days when you made your 4 awesome games?.

I have always enjoyed playing shoot-em-up games, so the first game I programmed was Space Invaders in 1989. I tried to keep the game as close to its original playability as possible, to include the sprites and even its logo colours. It made the cover of the December 1989 issue of Atari ST User magazine.

I then moved on to do a simplified, 2-player version of Missile Command just for the fun of it – it wasn't anything spectacular. After that, I challenged myself to do a playable version of Pacman. Many home computer versions of Pacman at that time had very small sprites. I decided that, for the cuteness factor alone, the sprites needed to be larger, and the way to implement this was to do a vertically-scrolling screen to increase the size of the maze. I tried again to keep to the original version and came quite

close. I was not good at producing music so Gary Wheaton, a fellow programmer and musician, was kind enough to provide the music for version 2 and it sold quite well.

Annihilator was my final game for the public domain / licenceware label. It was a Galaxians clone, but this time, I drew my own sprites and provided power-ups and end-of-level guardians to spruce up the game as it was the trend in shoot-em-up games at that time.

After this, I started programming a horizontal scrolling shoot-em-up but I did not progress much further because of a lack of time; I was spending many weekends and nights on-call while pursuing my medical career. This was the simple reason why I did not have a chance to release any new games for the Atari ST after that. In addition, the Budgie UK Licenceware scheme ended in December 1994.



Which of your games is your favourite and why?

I had no clear favourites but, looking back, I thoroughly enjoyed programming and play-testing Pacman ST because in my mind it was a step above the other Pacman clones at that time with a gameplay approaching that of the original arcade version, and cute to boot!



All of your games were released through Budgie UK, Did you rake in enough cash to buy a sports car!

Budgie UK Licenceware was a public domain label started by Camy Maertens in 1987, where a group of software programmers shared joint royalties on all the games sold. It was a fun concept, gave us some camaraderie, and made us some pocket change, but certainly not enough to buy an inexpensive car, let alone a sports car!

Will you boot up Devpac and get coding again?

Unfortunately, when I left Ireland for the US, where I am now based, I sold off and gave away all my Atari ST stuff! Hence, it is unlikely that I will ever code anything new for the ST again.

Do you retro game?

From time to time, I still reminisce about the good old days of the Atari ST, when I'll try running an ST game or two on Steam, an excellent emulator on the PC. Of course, I still check Atari ST websites like AtariCrypt and Facebook.

What do you think of the ST world today?

I am frankly amazed, but pleasantly surprised, that the Atari ST scene is still so resilient, considering that the machine was discontinued in 1993, some 23 years ago! For me, the ST had always been an integral and fun bit of my life, so I hope the community lives on! However, the ST presence appears much greater in Europe, compared to the US, though there is still an active Atari club near me in Davis, California, but it tends to cater more to the 8-bit Atari consoles than to the ST. Check out: <http://newbreedsoftware.com/atariparty/2016/>.

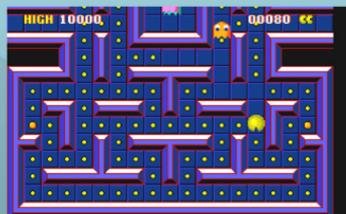
GAMES CREATED BY ROBERT HC LEONG AND BUDGIE UK



What are your future plans?

I'm now based in the San Francisco bay area where I work as a consultant in the biotechnology industry. I remain interested in IT and programming, especially since Silicon Valley is just a short drive down the road for me. Facebook, eBay, LinkedIn, Google, Apple, Cisco, and Oracle are all around me. IT executives of all ages are driving their Teslas here. When driving around in Mountain View, I give a wide berth to the autonomous vehicles that Google is testing out here. Even Atari had its corporate headquarters here on Borregas Ave, Sunnyvale, but that closed down in 1996 (<http://www.atari.io/back-to-borregas-ave/>). I have visited the location once or twice to reminisce, and to imagine how it would have been here during Atari's heyday...

We wish to thank Robert for taking the time out for this interview, it was a pleasure speaking with him. thank you.



HIGHWAY ENCOUNTER

■ Vortex Software ■ 1990 ■ Atari STfm / STE

Here we have one of my all-time favourite 8-bit games from the brilliant mind of Costa Panayi, Vortex Software. It's an understatement to say I was flabbergasted when I recently read an old post on Atari-Forum concerning the finished ST game, developed in 1990 by the late Mark Haigh-Hutchinson. However, Vortex were unable to find a willing publisher so that was that and it was left to gather dust for many years...

I always loved Vortex and fondly remember playing Android, Cyclone and Revolution but Highway Encounter was definitely my favourite. Back then, isometric games were pretty much the in-thing and this was one of the most beautiful examples of the genre. It is set on a stretch of highway, populated by lots of crazy baddies, tricky puzzles and many other obstacles to get in your way. Aliens have invaded and your robot convoy has the task of merrily pushing a bomb down the highway in order to destroy their mothership, which is at the other end of the road. However, your droid colleagues are rather daft and will soon become stuck by any objects left lying around. This is actually a good thing because you can leave them behind - in safety - so you are free to clear the highway ahead from both aliens and any obstacles. I find joystick control the best and if you've ever played a similar game then you'll be right at home - left and right to rotate your turning, forward to accelerate and pulling back slows you down or stops you dead. Your weapon is a type of energy bolt and this can be improved upon thanks to power-ups lying along your road trip journey.

Sounds and visuals certainly live up to all my expectations and I feel it will appeal to both new and older retro gamers alike. It's worth noting that Highway Encounter is a finished product, ignore the "demo version" text on the title screen because all screens are 100% playable. Only the music is missing but I cannot remember the original Spectrum having any, so this is a feature I didn't miss! Listen up folks, we have an Atari ST version of Highway Encounter and its marvellous with gameplay faithful to the original without being a dull carbon copy. Highway Encounter will always be a Crash Smash and its brilliant to see such an exquisite Atari ST game. It's a perfect 10 from me!





MIDI-MAZE

Hybrid Arts, Inc. ■ 1987 ■ Xanth F/X ■ Atari ST / STe

Ask most people (my age) about their favourite happy memories of first person gaming in the early days and they will probably say Wolfenstein 3D, Doom or Duke Nukem. But it all started way before those classics, my recent ZX81 article proves that shockingly very well. For us ST nutters a game called Midi Maze hit the shelves in 1987 thanks to a company called Xanth FX. This was our taste of the first-person shooter genre that had us battling smiley faces. That's right, you won't find any tough zombie soldiers, robots or even a scary alien nor will you see any blood and gore. Instead, huge smiley faces are your enemy which makes for a peculiar and most certainly an unexpected experience, if I'm honest.

Midi Maze features support for up to 15 computer controlled bots or, better still, why not connect 2-16 Atari ST's for some real multiplayer action? Yes, you heard correctly, up to 16 computers can be linked via their midi ports to feature a mind-blowing multiplayer escapade! Whether any of us still know a local ST user is another matter, but I intend to buy a couple of midi cables off eBay. As with older fps game, the controls are rather straightforward, two-dimensional, easy to learn and you can play with either the joystick or mouse control (I loved joystick!).

Don't be put off by the humble visuals. Yes, the maze walls might very well be paper thin, without any texture or ambient lighting but do remember just how old it is. Frame-rates are great with exceptionally smooth movement throughout and I was impressed to see the baddies have a shadow, thus giving that extra 3D perspective.

There is nothing I enjoy more than a first person shooter and Midi Maze certainly packs its own unique retro-themed punch. Single player is welcome and works very well but Midi Maze comes into its own when linked with other Atari computers and multiplayer is a fascinating glimpse into the genre's beginnings. One of the best games I have featured here on AtariCrypt, Midi Maze is a true hero and certainly an Atari ST retro gaming legend!



JIM POWER

IN MUTANT PLANET

Loriciel 1992 Atari STfm / Ste

Jim Power In Mutant Planet is a little-known title released by Loriciel in 1992 where we are a member of the Special Warfare Unit who are in charge of the President's security. Of course, his daughter was kidnapped by evil beings which infest a Mutant Planet so it's your mission to kill everything and rescue her!

You begin your adventure in a rather funky looking environment. A strange world of whacky colours and populated by stupid enemies aimlessly wondering back n' forth. I first thought this was going to be easy but it soon picks up the pace to become quite the challenge with superbly designed levels and great mechanics. Controls feel spritely to suit the game style perfectly and I love the way you can easily hop from platforms without ever feeling that uncertainty of plummeting to your death. Weapons are fully upgradable and if your joystick has an autofire option then selecting that is bound to be a great idea!

The box art may look like it was ripped from a bad 80s action flick but thankfully the visuals are all of a level I would describe as simply outstanding. I'm reminded of Enchanted Land or Elf with colours galore as Loriciel mock the ST's limits with ease. Scrolling is fast and smooth with sprites that are as cute as they are creative. Audio will not dishearten and you will see why once you view the credits. Quite the thumping title tune with even more stunning in-game chiptunes to drool over. Also, the option is available to play with sound effects but I personally thought this wasn't nearly as good as the boppin' tunes. Overall, this is an easy recommendation for platforming fans because it looks and sounds great with interesting and entertaining gameplay. Jim Power might not have much originality but its well made and easy to pick up and play!





STORMLORD

■ Hewson ■ 1989 ■ Atari ST / STe

Set within a wonderful world of myths and legends, you are the Stormlord a muscle-bound Viking dude with the odd responsibility of rescuing trapped fairies from the clutches of a wicked queen. Occasionally you might even find yourself blowing romantic kisses at these scantily clad fairies and they return your favour with fallen tears. Aww, this sounds far too girly, right? You couldn't be more wrong! Beginning in a spooky forest, this eerie Hewson platformer is host to various creepy monsters like man-eating plants, wibbly worms, egg hatching demons and loads more which all need killing.

Thankfully, you're equipped with a magical weapon that can also double as a super huge sword, if you hold down the fire button. Using the joystick, Stormlord plays like any typical platformer as you walk, jump and duck your way through the scary places whilst looking for the fairies which have been encased in wacko's oxygen tent. Interestingly, springboards are scarcely scattered about the levels and act like a crude wormhole flinging you far into those distant places. Plus it saves your legs and is also a lot of fun!

Stormlord has an added puzzle element which involves collecting objects to progress, but these are rather simple to figure out. For example, find a key and unlock a door, use an umbrella to walk through acid rain and grab a handy jar of honey to distract killer bees. The difficult part is figuring out their order which will involve several attempts. Sadly daytime doesn't last long, so don't dawdle ye olde bubble popper because you only have until sunset before its game over! Because of this, each level needs to be learned and you can only do this by planning out a route based on your previous experience. Each level appears linear and, once mastered, is far easier but will take several attempts which can be either a blessing or a curse depending on the player! Stormlord oozes that marvellous quality we always came to expect from a Hewson title, it's gorgeous. The graphics are beautifully drawn with lovely animations and smooth screen scrolling. Music is tremendous throughout, read the credits to see why, and I can never begin a game without first thinking of the SoWatt demo! Sound effects are excellent but sadly a little sparse, it's a shame both together aren't an option. Stormlord is awesome, a brilliant platformer which is both entertaining with lasting appeal. However it does have a few niggles, I think the time limit is a little restricting and the ability to only carry one item at once is a little awkward, at first. Overall, Stormlord presents a gruelling mission with a massive replay factor and I personally love it.



HEWSON

LURE OF THE TEMPTRESS

Virgin Games ■ 1992 ■ Revolution Software ■ Atari STe

The story begins with you waking up one day, only to find yourself locked away in a creepy dungeon. You are a peasant called Dermot who was previously part of an attempt to free the village of Turnvale from Selena and her army of Orc lookalikes, called Skoris. Sadly, that campaign ended in tragedy and everyone was killed! Whilst the bloodshed reigned, you bumped your noggin and was knocked unconscious only to be easily captured. Upon waking, you find yourself banged up in jail with a rather bad tempered Skoril as your guard!!

Lure Of The Temptress is something with which to become lost in as you immerse yourself within this wonderfully crafted adventure. It's setting place within a gorgeous Olde English setting and is a point & click adventure fully controlled using your mouse, which works incredibly well. Left button guides your character around the screen but can also display status and object information. With the right button, you can issue commands that easily allow you to interact with characters and much more I must admit, this system is well designed, intuitive and very easy to master. Gameplay is experi-

enced in real-time with the populous merrily going about their daily business to help set the atmosphere perfectly. Having woken up in jail, your first task is to escape so it's fortunate Skoril's aren't the brightest bulbs in the box and easily fooled. Throughout, your progress will be down to careful exploration, examination, and communication so pick up every object because you never know when you might need it. Do also talk to everyone and see what information they can reveal and sometimes somebody might ask you to do them a favour before divulging helpful information.

The world is populated by some of the most entertaining characters, a delightful characteristic which will certainly win your heart. There are so many fascinating people to meet and all help make your adventure enthralling and utterly addictive. Just start a chat with someone in a tavern, for example, a dialogue guaranteed to entertain! This charm and charisma are displayed early on as you rescue a fellow inmate called Ratpouch who immediately becomes a loyal friend. He is such great company and will often try to help, but watch out because he doesn't half love getting into trouble by saying the silliest of things to other people. Such a mischievous guy - I like him! My advice? Talk to everyone, listen to all information provided and get ready to make lots of notes. Remember, chat to everyone you come across. Yes, even those that may resemble a street bum or a wacko in a pub, knitting! This is a big adventure with lots of twists and turns interwoven into the storyline. Heck, you may even fall in love... :x

Lure Of The Temptress is one of the most visually stunning games I've ever played. The artwork is an absolute joy and perfectly sets the mood for a medieval scene. The characters move and walk with smooth animation and I just love those intricate details, like the bird which sits on the fence for a few moments before flying off. A simple mechanic but it's so impressive. Sound effects are the only weakness, now don't misunderstand me because their quality is beautiful and made up of high quality sampled sounds. However, there are a few screens which don't have any sound effects and this was disappointing.

Overall, Lure Of The Temptress is most certainly an impressive adventure and one you will love getting to grips with. It's funny, it's entertaining, it's got a great storyline and it could take over your life. Personally, I would rank it as one of the best adventures on any computer, and is but only a pinch away from perfection!



B · L · A · C · K · L · A · M · P



By Steven Cain and G. P. 'Kenny' Everett. ©1988
Music and Sound by Fred Gray.



BLACK LAMP

Firebird Software ■ 1988 ■ Atari STfm

Let's cut to the chase : you're a clown!

Yes, you are plucky Jack The Jester who happens to also be in love with the Princess, Griselda. Sadly, she will never look at you with the same lovestruck passion (which is probably because of that silly costume you are wearing!).

Fortunately (for you) the kingdom of Allegorid was attacked by dragons and they stole the magical lamps that somehow protect everyone in the kingdom from evil. This also includes the most acclaimed lamp, a cherished and powerful Black Lamp. So evil monsters lurk everywhere! Your task is a simple one - get the lamps, save the day and be rewarded with your dolly bird princess even if she is called Griselda. Fail and death await you... great! Black Lamp is your typical flip - screen platformer with ledges to hop onto, ladders to climb, items to collect, monsters to kill and hundreds of rooms to visit as you undertake that honourable lamp quest. An interesting feature is during the outdoor regions that will instead scroll along as you walk the castle walls or streets. Various bonuses are offered for points and special abilities like increased firepower and invincibility and you will be thankful for all!

The monsters reign supreme since those lamps were taken and this is perhaps the game's greatest most annoying characteristic. They are countless and relentless. Wherever you go, they will appear and certainly don't require an open door or window because they walk through walls! So there is no safe place offering a quiet moment of refuge. Throughout your exploration, the graphics are constantly awesome and their detail feels like a cartoon chronicle of England's medieval age. I have always thought that the monsters were the most alluring - they are so incredibly charming! My favourites are the Imps and Trolls which are bewitching to watch and I don't think there is another retro game with such gorgeous & nicely animated baddies!

Sadly, it's this animation which is also a curse for controlling Jolly Jack. Imagine you are walking right and need to turn left to kill oncoming monsters. This action cannot often immediately happen because of the walking animation first needs to finish. Of course, nothing is perfect and I am very happy to finally feature Black Lamp on AtariCrypt because it offers tons of fun and challenging action. The kingdom of Allegorid offers you an excellent game!



firebird

MAGIC BOY

Empire Software 1993 Blue Turtle Atari ST / STE

You are little Hewlett, a young boy with a magic wand who accidentally turned the animals into monsters! So it's your job to restore everything back to normal which means travelling four beautiful levels to tag and bag all the little nasties!

Magic Boy is a platformer released late in 1993 by Empire and, in some ways, has always reminded me of Rainbow Island with its colourful and cutesy theme. Gorgeous bright, radiant graphics with so many comical characters and ultra smooth vertical scrolling which is accompanied by perfect, fun-themed high-quality music with some sweet sound effects (all of which are best experienced when played on an Atari STE). Magic Boy is most definitely one of the sexiest Atari ST games ever!

There are four massive worlds to explore (Sand Land, Wet World, Plastic Place, Future Zone) with each offering eight levels. These start off relatively easy before introducing you to lots of cunning tricks and traps to keep you on your toes and coming back for more. You know folks, this game is so easy to pick up and play - shoot the critters to send 'em packing whilst collecting the usual power-ups along the way and that's about it. The concept isn't exactly bewildering but instead, we have a fun and entertaining platformer with such glamorous aesthetics to boot. If you enjoy platformers then make time to play Magic Boy - it's one of my favourite Atari ST games and I absolutely love it.





MOUSE TRAP

Micro-Value 1987 Atari ST / STe

Billed as "old in style but brilliant in design" is Micro-Value's 1987 platform-ming hit, *Mouse Trap* where you take on the role of Marvin The Mouse who desperately wants to win back the heart of his ex-girlfriend that left him for another. She must be quite a materi-alistic female because he has had to come up with a cunning plan to get her back - scrounge dozens of rooms looking for precious items. Yes, that's bound to work!

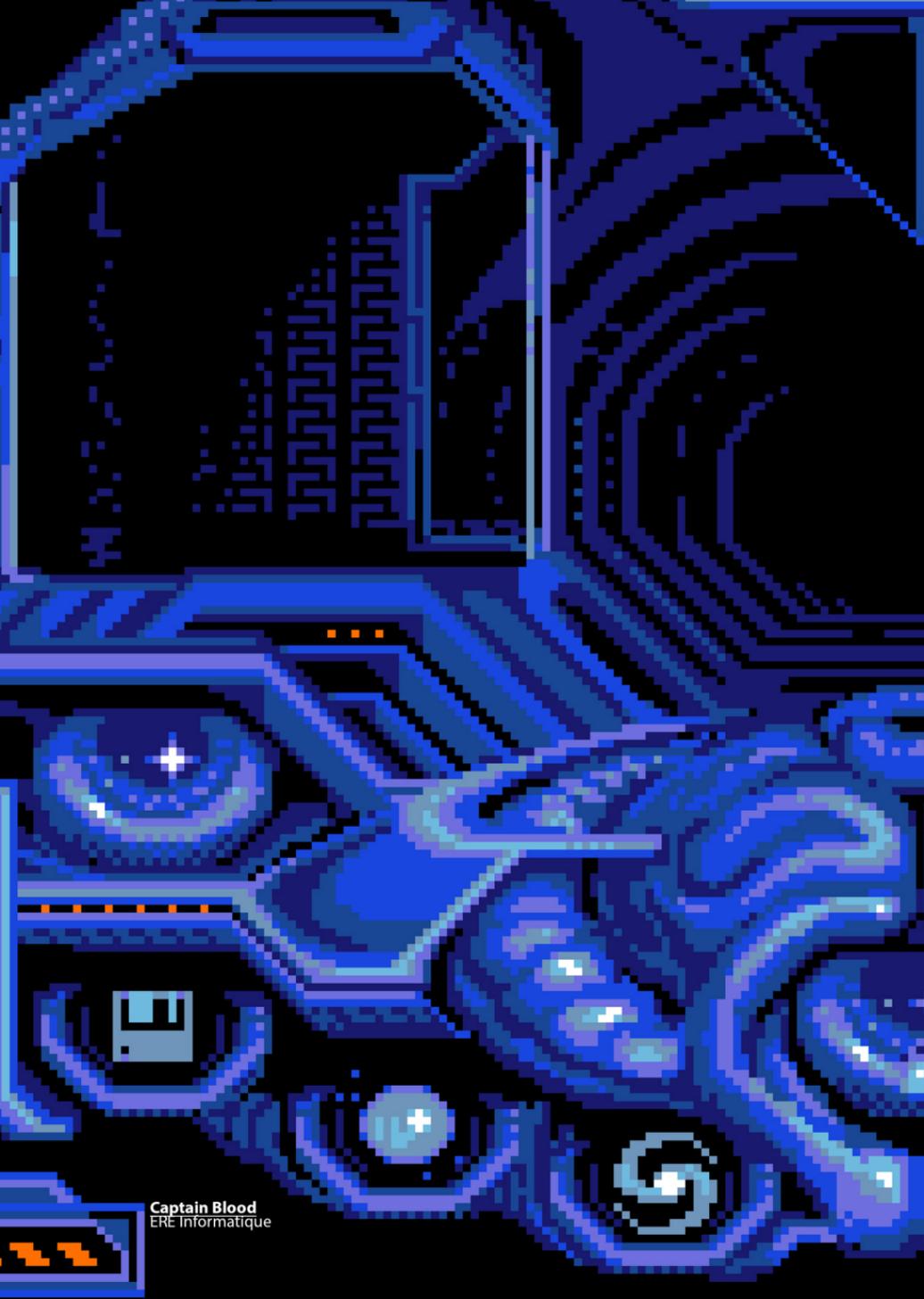
The first thing you notice are the ever so ancient visuals which almost feels like a step back in time to the 8-bit days. And it is, because little Marvin's roots date all the way back to the Acorn Electron and, like many platformers of that era, we get have the most retro of retro graphics. I love this, the theme works well with the extra capabilities of the Atari ST to ultimately produce the best-looking version. Each screen is a separate room and you cannot progress to the next until all items are collected, only then may you scurry away to an exit via a nifty mouse hole. This is a cruel and unforgiving game, if you make a mistake, then it usually too late to go back and often results in a life lost! Completing any screen is a matter of working out the best route rather than what simply looks like the quickest. And, because of an ever-decreasing time limit, I advise hitting the 'F' key to pause so you are free to examine your environment.

Mouse Trap has some of the most curi-ously weird baddies I have ever seen in a platformer. Check out the old man with the big nose, I hear you should hide behind a wall and avoid him at all costs. Some are just plan crud, like the floating skulls, awful design yet it works! Of course, require absolute timing to bypass and this is where *Mouse Trap* scores to produce some of the most difficulty entertaining screens. Initially, I found the joystick controls a little fiddly and perplexing. For example, if you're facing left and then turn to the right, little Marvin will not only turn around but he also annoyingly walks a couple of steps in that direction. Another oddity is falling diagonally off a ledge, another minor issue but which takes some getting used to.

Mouse Trap is a crude yet charming platformer that makes you stop and think. The controls take a little getting used to but the lack of a save game progress is its only downfall. *Mouse Trap* is a blummin' excellent platformer!



MICRO VALUE



Captain Blood
ERE Informatique





DARREN DOYLE

CREATIVE DESIGNER



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evoking memories of the Atari ST

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ATARI ST RETRO GAMING

MOON PATROL

Atari (USA) 1987 Andromeda Software Atari STfm

Apparently, the moon is under attack from a legion of aliens and it's my job to stop them. Me and my cool Space 1999 buggy that is! Unfortunately, the wheels aren't too great at going over potholes and the slightest gap causes my buggy to violently explode! So dust off your spacesuit in anticipation of the Atari ST version of an olde arcade classic, Moon Patrol.

There are two difficult modes, a beginners and champions. The latter is great fun and certainly more interesting to play with its extra enemies. Once you have jump inside your buggy, the landscape begins to scroll by and is sectioned off into alphabetical segments that turn out to be handy checkpoints. With your foot always on the gas, you have control over the level of acceleration as potholes and obstacles appear to get in your way. Pushing up on the joystick allows you to leap over any potholes but this often requires precise timing. Aliens will appear frequently and can be defeated by hitting the fire button which simultaneously releases two weapons - on top is a machine gun blasting upwards and the other is a front-mounted rocket launcher.

Keep one eye on the road ahead and another on those aliens above, if there was ever an unforgiving game this is it - the slightest mistimed jump over a pothole and KABOOM - your vehicle explodes into moon junk! Graphics and sound effects are heavily dated and exactly what you would expect of the early 80s. Scrolling is silky smooth, supporting a three-layer parallax effect which is pretty amazing for such an early ST game. I love the little details, such as how your buggy moves over the bumpy terrain, a neat animation. Moon Patrol will work in ST High (640x400) to produce a gorgeous and crisp display! A funky chiptune bops away in the background, accompanied by vintage bleep and blop sound effects.

This is as retro as retro gaming gets. We know that the Atari ST is technically capable of far better so please ignore what you see and remember it comes from 1982 and is extremely authentic conversion. Simple, but has rock solid gameplay and that is what matters. Moon Patrol is a groovy step back in time!



VENUS

THE FLYTRAP

INSERT CREDIT



(C) GREMLIN GRAPHICS 1990
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PLAYERS 1



CREDITS 0




A FAST MULTIPLYING POPULATION COUPLED WITH A GREATER DEMAND ON AGRICULTURE LED TO THE OVERUSE OF PESTICIDES AND THE DESTRUCTION OF THE RAIN FORESTS

VENUS THE FLYTRAP

Millennium 1990 Astral Software Ltd. Atari STfm

Earth is dying because of mankind breeding like bacteria and a raping the planet of all its natural resources in order to serve our gluttony. The over-use of pesticides has finally killed off all the bugs and left mother nature rather unbalanced. Thankfully, the lab boys have come up with a last ditch attempt to save us all from their mess by creating cybernetic bugs to compensate our stupidity. Of course, they soon went postal and must now be eliminated before it's too late!

Whatever the story, this is a running kill 'em all platformer spread over fifty levels ranging from the green forests to Death Valley and much more. You're a mean-looking bug equipped with a cannon to fight off metallic foes, this can be upgraded using the power-ups left behind by those crazy insects. These consists of a wide range of improvements like better firepower, silly reversible controls, and even antigrav upside-down walking being possible - and that only serves to give me brain ache! Bonus rounds appear each way through a level and flip the game into an exciting shoot 'em up all played to grab yourself extra points and is very exciting.

Graphics are pretty darn beautiful with smooth scrolling, nicely animated sprites and it's worth noting all those many extra colours which spruce up what would normally have been a boring background. Music is perfect, something I can listen to all day and the sound effects aren't too shabby either. Controls are bang on perfect and this is what makes Venus a great game, with a style that is clean and responsive without every lagging. It can be a little repetitive at times but the gameplay is superbly balanced and so much fun with lots of interesting features. Overall, an extremely enjoyable platformer which has always been on my favourites list.



BUT AN ERROR IN THEIR GENETIC MAKEUP CAUSED THEM TO GO INSANE



KILLING ANY LIVING CREATURE THEY FOUND AND WIPING OUT THE REMAINS OF THE EARTH'S

PAC-MANIA STe

■ Namco ■ 2015 ■ Samuel_a, James Tripp, ■ Atari STe
Pete Harrap, Shaun Hollingsworth

As a kid, I was never the biggest Pac-Man fan, so when Pac-Mania came along in 1988 I wasn't exactly eager to play it. A bit of an odd one this I thought, it seems to play similar to the original yet the little yellow fella can now jump, genius! They also dropped the 2D for a new 3D perspective that looks amazing but I also felt a little robbed by that reduced screen size which was disappointing!

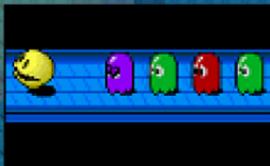
Don't get me wrong, the original STFM game is a great game. However, the play area was too restricting, for me and would often feel like the ghosts could appear from out of thin air. All due to that status panel taking up almost half the screen! Gee, I wonder how the enhanced Atari STe would have handled Pac-Mania?

Well, entering the arena is Samuel (aka Samuel_A) with his version that is specifically designed to make full use of the enhanced hardware often sitting idle. Gameplay now takes place in overscan, flowing along at 50fps thanks to the hardware scrolling, the Blitter chip handles the sprites and the DMA hardware plays the sound samples with the good ol' YM2149 playing superb chiptunes. It would be an extreme understatement to say this is a slight upgrade over the original. Jaw dropping is one such description I would feel comfortable using!

PacMania has literally been transformed for the 21st century and it's impossible not to be blown away by Samuel's hard work. I personally feel he's taken a good game and made it a million times better by using every ounce of power from within the Atari STe. A fascinating revamp of the arcade favourite and now far more enjoyable than ever before.




GRANDSLAM





ELF

■ Ocean Software ■ 1991 ■ Arc Developments ■ Atari ST

You are little Cornelius, a cool looking dude who's girlfriend, Elisa, has been kidnapped by the evil Necrillour. Armed with his magic ring (stop it) you must travel eight gorgeous landscapes, avoiding wacky creatures and solving simple puzzles in order to rescue the love of your life.

Elf was released in 1991 by the mighty Ocean Software and is a gorgeous platformer with a simple adventure element spread over several massive levels. Gameplay is stuffed full of relentless action with an onslaught of baddies constantly popping up to cause you grief and slow you down as you search for pieces of the puzzles. And it's these puzzles which reminded me of the David Jones games on my old ZX Spectrum as they involve trading items with the silly characters, which is an interesting aspect to Elf. There are other items, even animals, to collate as "pets" which is essentially your currency used to purchase an assortment of power-ups including firepower, extra lives, the ability to fly (click on the image) and much more. Each is superb and certainly, help to increase longevity.



Elf is jammed packed with humorous touches. Some animals have cute expressions and there are also many integrated novelties, like rock eyes that watch your every move. I like how one of the baddies followed me, by using a ladder, a simple but impressive mechanic. Also, in true Atic Atac style, a tombstone is erected when you lose a life and it is rumoured to be haunted! If Elf has a weakness, it's the number of allotted lives which is too few and should have been greater considering the task at hand. I also found it a little annoying when some critters would walk onto the screen just as I was about to walk off, thus zapping valuable energy but this is minor.



The graphics are tremendous with such an outstanding attention to detail for both the scenery and characters. The baddies are some of the most detailed sprites I have ever seen, killing them almost makes me feel bad (almost). Sound effects are excellent but it's the music I love, by Matthew Cannon who also worked on Navy Seals. Awesome chiptunes throughout, which are quite bewitching and (for once) I prefer playing a game with the music on!

Elf is a game to be experienced and it's not one to pick up and play a game for a few minutes. Shoot and kill everything that moves, trade with people, and hopefully, you shall discover how to bribe your way onto the next level. I feel this is one of the best platform adventure games I have ever played and I cannot recommend it highly enough.



SABOTEUR III -

THE EGYPTIAN MISSION

Shadow Team 2012 Atari STe / Falcon030

Saboteur 3 was released in 2012 by Shadow Team for the Atari STe and Falcon. It's an unofficial fangame which is obviously based upon the 8-bit classics by Durell Software and is programmed in (wait for it) GFA Basic. Quite incredible! This third mission takes us into Egypt looking for fragments of a key that will unlock a treasure-filled sarcophagus.

However, somebody has rigged most rooms with killer spikes and lots of scary creatures are freely on the loose, like mummies, bats, and scorpions. Control is responsive and I'm impressed with the fluency of movement which makes the game very enjoyable. Movements are more or less what you would expect with a few changes - down/fire now makes our ninja hit under the belt without the kicking mechanic. Curiously, falling off ledges will kill you instantly, rather than simply draining you of some replenishing strength. I also failed to see the point of the spikes that pop-up to impale me each and every time - even when I am in mid-jump - which is particularly annoying and not very fair. The graphics are brilliantly retro in style and follow the original theme quite well with a familiar palette and lots of nicely animated creatures - which you will enjoy kicking to death. The in-game music is by Dma-Sc and is a beautiful example of his extraordinary chiptune talent, however, even I would have liked the option of sound effects.

Yes, Saboteur 3 is far from perfect and I feel hardcore fans will enjoy picking at it, just like I once did. But I regret that now because this is a good game in its own right, even if many expected Saboteur characteristics are missing or strangely altered. Give this a chance, it's a great platformer and I think Clive Townsend might even enjoy playing it.



WHERE TIME STOOD STILL

■ Ocean Software ■ 1988 ■ Denton Designs ■ Atari STfm



Where Time Stood Still is one of those games that bridged my transition from the ZX Spectrum to Atari ST. It was developed by the legends, Denton Designs and published by Ocean Software in 1988. For those too young to remember, Denton Designs came out from the ashes of the famous Imagine Software and I spent much of my youth playing (and mapping) many of their excellent games. I still miss playing The Great Escape, which I personally rate as pure retro gaming gold.

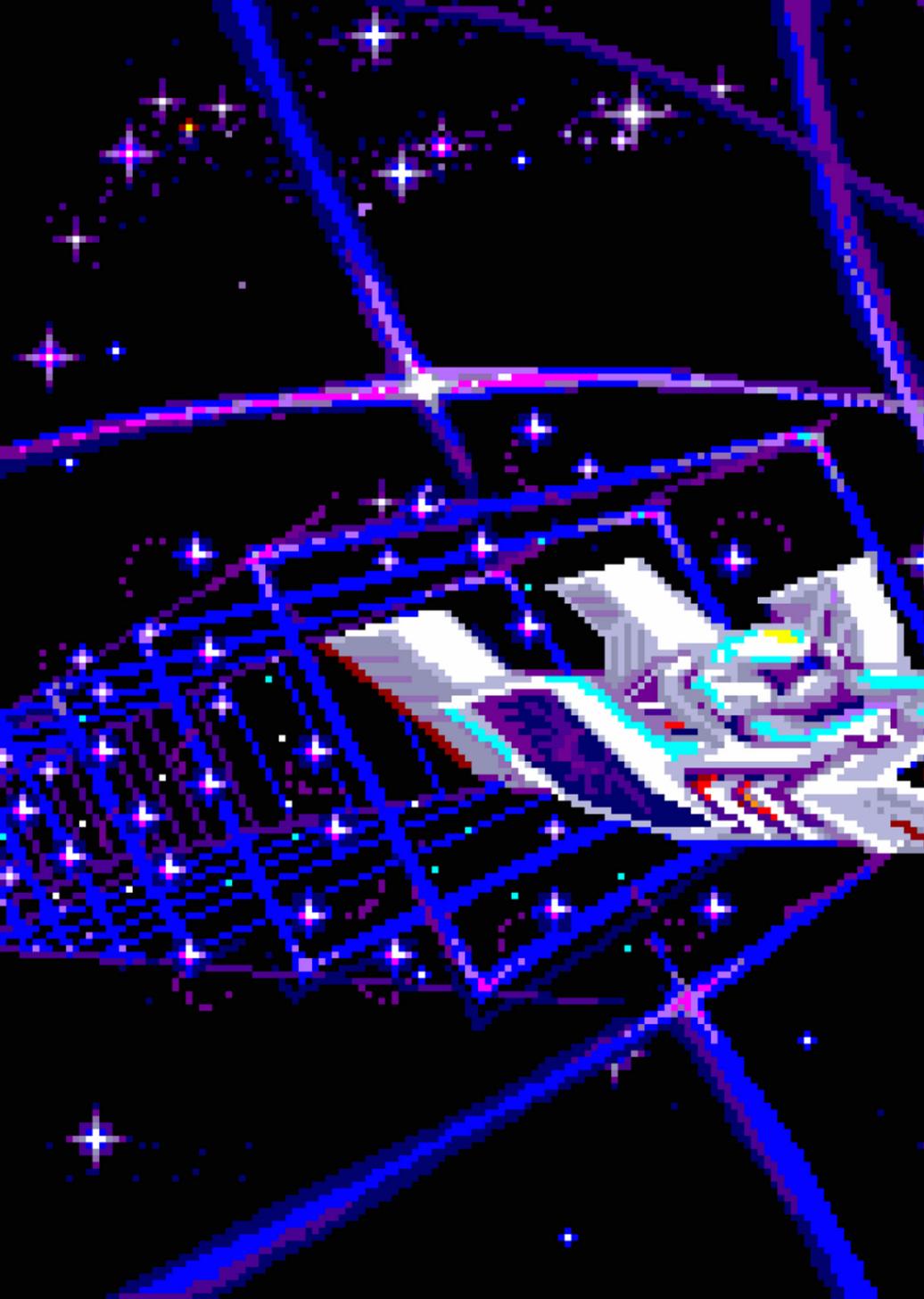
Your plane has crashed on a remote plateau somewhere in the Himalayas. Thankfully you and your three passengers survive the wreckage but find yourselves in a land inhabited by prehistoric creatures, dodgy bridges, quicksand slutch, killer rock hands and even strange tribal dudes who anger easily at their new white friends. Your name is Jarret, the classic hero type who probably has a chiselled jaw and an expensive designer stubble! The other characters are mostly controlled by the computer and follow you wherever you go, so long as you keep feeding them! They have their own unique personalities - Clive is a rich fat man who can moan a lot and tires easily, Gloria and Dirk are a couple in love and I hear Dirk has some rather nifty language skills under his belt. Well, so long as he has Gloria to keep him happy..

The world is viewed from an isometric perspective and scrolls along vertically. Music is by Fred Gray (of Black Lamp fame) and it is truly amazing, however, if you so prefer, sound effects can be used instead. Controls are with either the mouse or a joystick (I prefer the latter) with a user interface that is both simple and intuitive. On screen information for health and ammo will assist during the times when you consider eating, drinking or resting. Exploration is the key to success so take your time and make notes of the areas you visit and examine everywhere for useful items.

Don't forget about team morale and I'm sure your group will let you know when they are in need of rest, food, water or suffering with an injury. However, don't be too eager to waste supplies pondering to their very need because sometimes it's good to make them wait. But don't be too much of a slave driver because grumpy, tired people tend to make daft decisions like splitting to go it alone! Coming face to face with a dinosaur is scary and I always use cowardly stealth tactics when I can, which usually means walking a longer and wider route or simply taking cover in the trees. This game has it all and I feel I should be wearing a butchered animal skin when playing I've been playing Where Time Stood Still throughout "summer" and it's a satisfying feeling when you begin to make progress. We've made it through the swamps, found a box of dynamite, ran like a girl when I saw a scary T-Rex and even chatted to the nice locals over a cup of tea. However, later on, a nasty hand came out from nowhere and choked me to death! That forced me to rethink my strategy before advancing across the river, only to later wrestle with unfriendly (and hungry) natives. I'm enjoying Where Time Stood Still and I can sense that victory is close!



Ocean **DENTON**
DESIGNS





STARQUAKE

■ Mandarin Software ■ 1988 ■ Bubblebus ■ Atari STfm

Today, I thought that I would descend deeper into the realms of retro gaming with an old great that I've not played since I was 14 years old, Starquake by BubbleBus / Mandarin Software.

Like most people, I did not own an expensive Atari ST in 1985 and instead using a ZX Spectrum. Yup, I've not played Starquake since the mid-80s! You're a BLOB (BioLogically Operated Being) which has crash-landed on a planet and it's your job to save it before it implodes! Each screen is filled with cutsie, yet annoying baddies that can zap away your energy or kill you outright. Thankfully you have a weapon but they are relentless with their swarm-like attacks. Curiously, you have no jump ability but instead can build temporary platforms that help you reach those higher places. Also, dotted about the map are hover-pads which you can use. Starquake is a big game and one which will instantly appeal whilst you somehow get yourself completely lost as you wander from screen to screen. There are tasks to complete, like collecting objects and computer codes, which is a lot harder than it sounds. Oddly, you cannot collect items when using a hover pad...

Overall, I found our Atari ST version to be a little harder than the original Speccy game. It is most definitely a brilliant conversion of an 8-bit classic and one which presents a massive and long-term challenge which is both enjoyable and very addictive. Highly recommended, if only to see ZX Spectrum owners drooling over the graphics!



MANDARIN
SOFTWARE



Electronic Arts presents

The Immortal™

© 1990 Will Harvey



THE IMMORTAL

Electronic Arts 1990 ■ Sandcastle ■ Atari ST / STE

You are a wizard and have been asked to help out another wizard that appears to be in a spot of bother. He is called Mordamir and somehow thinks your name is Dunric, which it isn't. So will you still help him? Of course, you will but it involves exploring creepy dungeons infested with numerous nasty creatures. Venture forth into the realms of myth, sorcery, and brutal horror! The Immortal is a scrolling isometric adventure set within a creepy labyrinth full of unforgiving traps and ghastly horrors. In fact, it's these characteristics which will torment even the most experienced adventurer along his journey and you will most definitely witness the bloodiest of deaths. This isn't a game you can pick up and complete in a few attempts, its very design dictates you will play it over and over, falling victim to many gruesome deaths.

Lurking within the labyrinth are trolls, goblins and lots of other scary creatures with some have exquisite names - like The Shades, that you encounter early. A life form that hides in the darkness, only casting a faint shadow under firelight - are you scared yet? Each room is unique and has its own battles, treasures, and pitfalls to solve, so think first, be vigilant and always on your guard. The good news is that you can often avoid a confrontation by being stealthy, but brave warriors can always use their weapon or even conjure magic spells to beat their foe. Expect your endurance to be tested to the full with each level's cruel traps, thankfully each isn't overly large so they are within eventual reach of learning. Exploration is the key to success so examine everything that may help later on. Finally, don't forget to rest, if you see a straw bed then take the time for forty winks, gain a little health and maybe even an enlightening dream. There is no save game function instead you will be awarded level passwords which first seem disappointing but it certainly forces you to tread carefully thus creating a more knowledgeable adventurer.

The Immortal is a ground breaker due to its gripping storyline, eerie atmospheric and a captivating adventure. Mix that in with both RPG and arcade elements and it's apparent why I love this game. An extremely excellent game offering hours of agonising pleasure as you uncover its secrets. The Immortal is a cruel yet highly addictive adventure.

ELECTRONIC ARTS

STARDUST

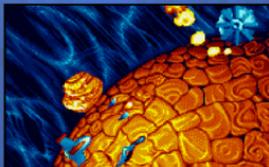
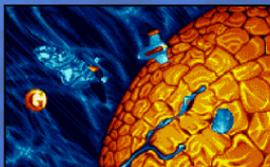
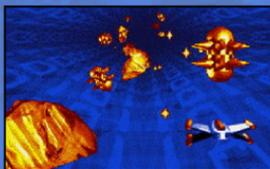
■ Daze Marketing ■ 1994 ■ Bloodhouse Ltd. ■ Atari STe

Stardust was released in 1994 for the Atari STe by the same guys that gave us Utopos, the mighty Aggression. It's a modern twist on the popular Asteroids format with a dollop of ludicrously awesome graphics and sounds to compliment its awesome gameplay.

There are five levels set within six missions and all are host to a variety of rocks and dangerous baddies. End of level bosses guard each mission and will take time and much perseverance! After each level is completed, you are required to travel through a worm-hole-like tunnel to the next part of the galaxy. As you would imagine, these are filled to the brim with oncoming rocks for you to dodge or destroy and this is definitely no easy task! Bonus levels pop up regularly and feel similar to a certain Thrust clone, they are optional but you will be daft to ignore the fun.

Game mechanics are pretty much as you would expect and remain more or less the same as in the arcade which is awesome and you can jump straight in and start playing Stardust without much of a learning curve. Controls are familiar too, of course with left and right turning your craft whilst pushing upwards thrusts you forward. A shield will aid you during those sticky moments and you have your main weapon for lots of gratifying rock-blasting! The graphics are glorious. Bold and colourful with stunning animations and jaw-dropping 3D renditions, all whilst running in overseen. Equally impressive is the audio with beautiful thumping music accompanied by BAM BAM BAM sound effects to blow your socks off. Take my advice and crank up the volume!

Fundamentally, this is obviously an Asteroids clone and, with that in mind, some might think there isn't much here that could impress? Wrong! Aggression didn't just rehash an old idea but unleashed one which feels both fresh and very exciting. Stardust is a spectacular showcase of just what the Atari STe is capable of. Far beyond enjoyable, this is a joyride of thrills and retro gaming delights. One of my favourite games ever and I dare you to play a game without immediately thinking, "I need another go".





CHRONICLES OF OMEGA

■ Atari UK ■ 1990 ■ ARC Developments ■ Atari STfm

The lands of Omega have always been peaceful until the day a demon came and captured the children of the village. Playing as either Alwin or Irma, you must battle your way through five evil infested lands, killing all in your wake, defeating Demon Champions (aka end of level bosses) and ultimately saving the day.

Chronicles Of Omega was released by ARC/Atari in 1990 and is probably the first commercial game to feature support for the enhanced Atari STe. It's a stereotypical platformer in looks and gameplay however it has quite a steep learning curve because of the fiddly control mechanics. This is mainly due to your magic wand which only fires two shots at a time, therefore leaving you defenceless in certain situations. The levels are interesting and well designed but aren't too big so could be completed very quickly, if it wasn't for that two-shot wand you carry... Each end of level guardian is rather lame and quite easy to defeat but they somehow have an annoying ability to materialise right where you stand. Not very fair at all really so it's a good job power-ups are available from a Good Witch who pops up halfway through a level to make a profit out of you and your noble crusade. Her prices aren't cheap so it's lucky that slain monsters leave behind pennies for you, however, all power-ups are lost after losing a life!



Visually, this is such a treat with lovely detailed characters and scenery which is both rich in colour with smooth-as-silk scrolling (only on the Atari STe). Audio is played using the DMA hardware but sadly sounds poor and I prefer the chip sounds from the STFM version. Having said that, I am a chiptune junkie so perhaps it's just me and my bleep blop addiction?

I love platformers but even I must admit to being disappointed by this gaming enigma. It looks great and also makes great use of the enhanced Atari STe but all that glitz and glamour doesn't automatically make for a great product. I must admit to pushing myself through the fluffy controls pain barrier and, eventually, I strangely began to enjoy myself. Chronicles Of Omega isn't terrible but it isn't great and there are far better titles in our library to pick from.

ATARI UK



WOLFENSTEIN 3D

TSCC 2005 Atari STe / Falcon030

Rub your eyes in disbelief all you want, Wolfenstein 3D is indeed available for the Atari ST. Developed by Reimund Dratwa of The Sirius Cybernetics Corporation with the latest version released in 2005.

You are B.J. Blazkowicz, an all-American hero battling his way through Castle Wolfenstein and killing every bad guy along the way. Played through an early first-person engine and controlled using the keyboard, Wolf 3D might first appear old hat? Well, you should stop right there because this is a historic title and it's running on an 8MHz Atari STe. If this wasn't impressive enough, our version features 32 on-screen colours, authentic texture mapping and, best of all, there is no need for a 386 upgrade! Joking aside, it looks wonderful and can be further started up by pressing asterisk on the keypad to enable high details for those with a faster computer. High detail mode works beautifully on my 16MHz Mega STe but a stock 8MHz computer may wish to remain with low details enabled. Music is by Mathieu Stempell, thus truly outstanding as we would all expect. In-game sound effects are surprisingly good on the STFM and thankfully the coprocessor within the Atari STe has been utilised for far better rendition.

Wolfenstein 3D may very well always be in "beta" but don't let that disappoint because it's an accurate port which features a complete and perfectly playable encounter. In all honesty, I feel this is a professional conversion of one of the most formidable retro games and, technically speaking, it's breathtaking to see it running so fast and smooth. I'm positive Reimund has scraped together every last droplet of power from this old Motorola CPU to recreate an unforgettable gaming experience. This is Wolfenstein 3D on the Atari ST which is utterly mind-blowing!





VIKING CHILD

Electronic Zoo ■ 1990 ■ DMA Systems ■ Atari ST / STE

Viking Child is a tale of a young boy thrown into an adventure that will take him through several medieval lands in search of his friends and rescue them from the clutches of the evil god, Loki. Looking spookily familiar to certain console platformers, Prophecy 1 takes us through similar environments in search of our loved one. Anyone familiar with Nintendo will instantly feel right at home, Viking Child shares more than a passing resemblance to certain games.

There are 16 levels to plunder and 8 bosses to battle long before you even think of reaching Loki. Walk and leap over all obstacles and use your weapon to kill anything that looks likely to hurt you and, as each is slain, coins are left behind to be used as currency in the local power-up store. Better weapons and the usual assortment of goodies are available, I love my new fire purchase. However, I advise upgrading your main weapon, a dagger because it's a little too short for and I always go for a big sword!

Graphics and sounds are amazing. Scrolling is super smooth and proves once again that the STFM is more than capable when in the hands of a programmer with talent. I love the gorgeous cartoon-like scenery and the sprites are well drawn, even if the animation is quite basic. Sound effects work well and you can flip between these bleeps or excellent chiptunes. Whilst it might not appeal to all, Viking Child is technically a masterpiece and what it lacks in originality it more than makes up for in playability. Fun, interesting and challenging gameplay throughout with aesthetics to drool over and you soon realise why this is one of my favourite platformers.



OPERATION: ZERO-5

■ Caspian Software ■ 1994 ■ Atari STe / Falcon030

I recently met Andrew Gisby, the creator of a most distinctive game for the Atari STe (and Falcon). Zero 5 is one of the last commercial games ever released for Atari computers by Caspian Software in 1994, a time when most were leaving the 16-bit scene to pursue those silly consoles. A rare gem indeed and it wasn't long before I came up with the notion for an interview! Set in the year 2044 with a silly storyline of an alien race which are about to invade Earth and (shockingly) you are the only hope for mankind. It will be a bumpy ride taking you into the darkest regions of space so jump inside your spaceship and head out into the heavens. Humanity is depending on you, yes YOU! Set amongst the stars, with some missions taking place upon the surface of remote planets, Zero 5 is a 3D shoot 'em up. It feels an artful mix of Star Wars clones with a dollop of Frontier or Stargate for good measure. Your spaceship is a cool slab of old skool 3D, Perseus which you must pilot it through several missions. This might involve attacking an alien strike force, defending allied ships, and much more.

Graphically, Zero 5 is a bombshell. It displays more colours and makes use of the Blitter co-processor within the STe to produce amazing 3D visuals. Faster computers are also supported, so if you've upgraded or are lucky enough to own a Falcon or TT, then the framerates are far smoother. Audio is outstanding, for both music and the effects, all which use the DMA hardware ticking over at a sweet 25KHz. Control with the mouse is precise, responsive and feels very natural but a JapPad is also supported if you have one. Momentum provides a necessary learning curve but you'll soon get the hang of it. It's worth getting to grips with the GUI and its instruments as they provide a wealth of information, otherwise, it's easy to find yourself in a muddle.

I always enjoy playing Zero 5 because it is so fast and frantic with exciting missions. The style and presentation are unique and its booming sound effects compliment the overall experience nicely. Zero-5 is a slick 3D space shooter with a wide-range of demanding missions to keep you busy for many hours. If I had to moan, it would be the number of missions - I wish there were expansion packs! Overall, a fantastic shoot 'em up that incorporates many astonishing technical achievements which puts most other developers to shame. One of the best Atari STe games you could ever play.

CASPIAN SOFTWARE





POWER UP

Empty Head 1998 MC Soft Atari ST/STE # Falcon

I stumbled upon Power Up many, many moons ago and I was most impressed to find a game which I hadn't previously heard of. At some point in time, Power Up appears to have become freeware and with nifty support for the Atari STe's audio and the Blitter coprocessor. As you can imagine I was a giddy kipper and, shaking like a kid on Christmas morning, I clicked the download links and awaited instant racing pleasure! First impressions, Power Up feels like a cheap & cheerful homebrew clone of Super Cars or maybe even Nitro. If I'm honest, its pretty much a Super Cars rip-off but this isn't necessarily a bad thing. Fans of that game now potentially have another to enjoy, for free too, which can't be bad. Okay, first things first, do not allow my first impressions to sway you, take the time to configure the options and then have a few practice games. Once setup and configured to taste, I found myself beginning to enjoy this little racer and eventually I was hammering it around the tracks like The Stig. Well, maybe not but I was still having fun!

Weapons are supported and every car fires out the slowest moving "rocket" ever, which is actually a cunning feature that often results in someone's destruction! (well, usually mine). Oil spills are common with the other cars dumping "lots" to make you slip and slide like a crazy fool, thankfully they only last a few seconds before evaporating. Heck, you can even honk your horn to get through the crowd of lunatic drivers! Controls may take a little time to fully master. Acceleration is automatic through three gears, which you will need to manually select. One is reverse but the other two are forward with the top gear allowing you to hammer by all other vehicles. Strangely, the weapons are activated using the keyboard, which may be awkward for a joystick player? Power Up features lots of cool tracks, often with a variety of different conditions. I really enjoyed the wet ones for slipping and sliding around the bends, hardly Ridge Racer but it's still great fun. Being homebrew always comes with curious design oddities and Power Up is no exception, I dare you to not get annoyed after a bump because I felt almost glued to the other car. Successful racers will be rewarded with glory and a massive golden winners cup before strangely being sucked down into the ground... I know, I know please don't ask why - but it is ludicrously funny!

I actually preferred the DMA samples over the chip sound effects, but these are also extremely nice. Musically, Power Up also supports the Atari STe's hardware to bang out aged tracked-tunes. (I'm sorry, but most of the old Amiga toons haven't aged well) Power Up isn't perfect and has its fair share of quirks but it is free and I'm happy to say it's one of my favourite homebrew games. An STFM without a Blitter Chip will struggle but one with, and the Atari STE, will be perfectly fine. Lots of Super Cars-esque thrills await and I'm sure you will love slipping, sliding and racing around Power Up's courses like Dale Earnhardt. I really love Power Up!





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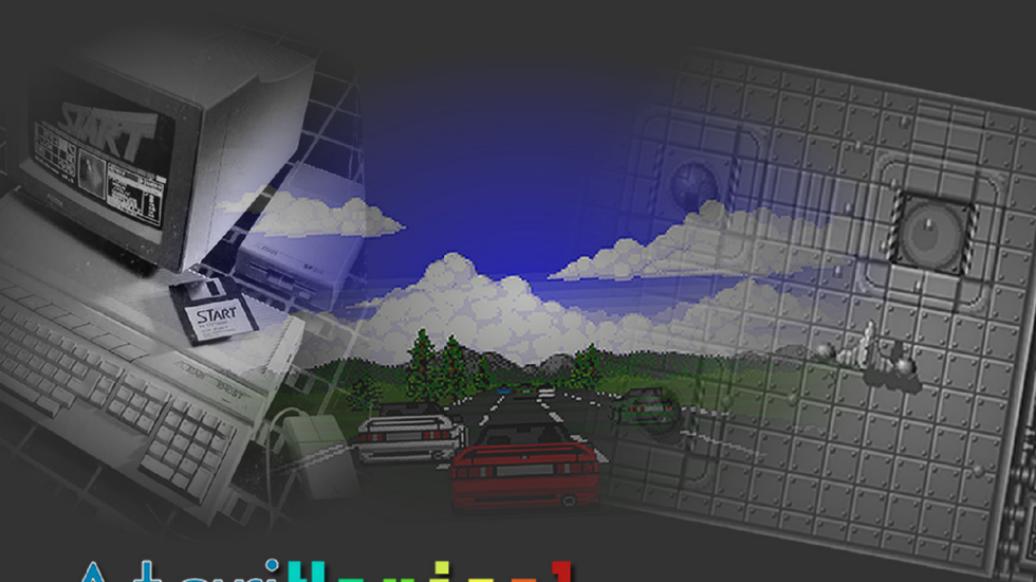
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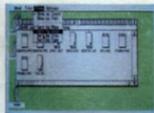
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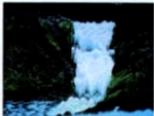
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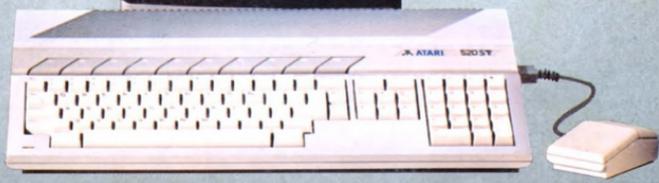
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