

THAT WAS THE

THAT WASN'T

Ever wondered why a C64 game that was advertised yonks ago still hasn't hit the shelves?

IAN 'CRYSTAL BALL' OSBORNE just might have the answer...

Life goes on, wheels turn within wheels, and games come and go... but some never arrive at all! Why is this, I hear you ask? Who goofed? Who lied? Who's nicked my bloomin' pen again? (oy, Shields...)

In the battlezone that is the Commodore software market casualties are inevitable, but some troops never even make the battlefield. Here's just a few of the games that went AWOL before release.

● **ALLOYRUN** — The sprites and backgrounds looked really good.



ALLOYRUN
■ **Starline**

Programmed by ace coders Ashley Routledge and Dave Saunders, this 1987 outing hit the rocks when the publishers ran into financial difficulties. The game was never produced, and it isn't clear who actually owns it.

We couldn't track down a complete copy, but we did find a demo version, featuring parallax backgrounds and a few sprites.

State Of Play — If anyone intended to sort this mess, they'd have done so by now. It's extremely unlikely to emerge.

DEADLOCK
■ **System 3**

Another potential Cyberdene sensation, *Deadlock* featured a well-ard geezer in a space suit blasting seven shades of shrapnel out of anything and everything — a sort of cross between *Hawkeye* and a very violent *Impossible Mission*. Four month's hard work resulted in a demo that was virtually unplayable, and designer and graphics guy Robin Levy was pulled off the project to work on *The Last Ninja III*. *Deadlock* was shelved and the team never got around to finishing it.

State Of Play — It *could* come out I suppose, but the longer it sits doing nothing the less likely this is, and it's almost three years old already.

● **ARMALYTE** — The sequel to this ace blaster will never be released.

ARMALYTE 2
■ **Thalamus**

Stunning sequel to one of the best C64 blasters ever, *Armalyte 2* was due to be programmed by Cyberdene. They put together a few ideas (the main ship was to be more colourful, the aliens more intelligent, and a power-up shop was to be included. Unfortunately the programmers were contracted to System 3 as well, and in the end they just didn't have the time to program Thalamus's game.

State Of Play — Programming was never started, so there's nothing to release. *Arma* 'fraid it'll never see the *lyte* of day.



DR WHO AND THE MINES OF TERROR
■ **Micropower**

I can't understand why this one was never released. Okay, it's a bit slow, and the shoddily animated main sprite looks nothing like Doctor Who (any of them), but at the end of the day it was a reasonably neat platform arcade adventure — it even had a 'save game' feature! Scheduled for release way back in 1986, what happened to it is anyone's guess.

State Of Play — The licensing agreement has probably expired by now, so it's extremely unlikely that it'll hit the shelves.



ENFORCER — FULL METAL MEGABLASTER
■ **Double Density**

What's a potentially ace game like this doing on an obscure continental budget label? No one seems to know who Double Density are, let alone how to contact

IT...

EYE OF THE MOON

■ Mike Singleton

The third part in Mike Singleton's legendary *Lords Of Midnight* trilogy, *Eye Of The Moon* had Morkin searching for the Eye, a device used to look into the future, so the dying Luxor could see what would become of his kingdom. Twice as big as *Doomdark's Revenge*, the game featured twelve kingdoms, each with its own sub-game. Mike intended to write it back to back with *Quake Minus One*, but the latter proved a more mammoth task than expected.

The release of *Quake* coincided with BT's buy-out of *Lords/Doomdark's* publishers Beyond, and Mike was asked to write their *Star Trek* license, and after that *Dark Sceptre* — *Eye* was put on ice.

State Of Play — Many of the ideas in *Eye* were used in Mike's 16-bit classic *Midwinter II* — *Flames Of Freedom*, so the original game is unlikely to emerge.

LUXOR THE MOONPRINCE
He stands at the Tower of the Moon, looking North to the Doors of Shadows.



● LORDS OF MIDNIGHT — Part One of an uncompleted trilogy.

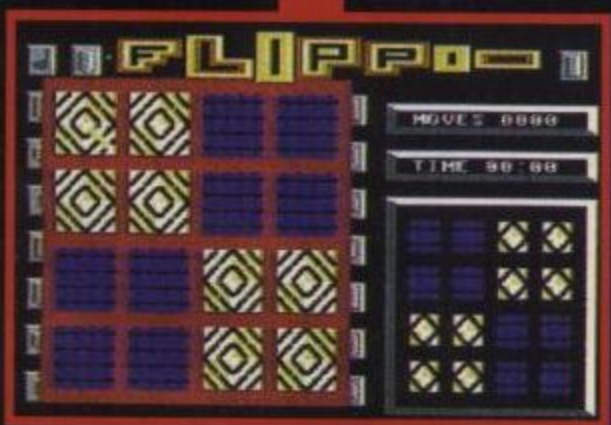
them!
Unofficially known as *Katakis 2*, rumour has it that the programmer was none other than *Turrican*-creator Manfred Trenz, though there's no mention of him in the program. Packed to the brim with amazing power-ups, great backdrops, epic soundtracks and incredible parallax scrolling, it's a real shame this one never made the shelves.
State Of Play — Unless someone knows how to get in touch with Double Density, we'll never see it released over here.

FLIPPIT

■ Soundware

A curious little puzzler, *Flippit* had you turning squares one at a time in order to reproduce a given pattern. Of course, life wasn't that simple, as each square you turned also

affected several others — fans of the Rubik's Cube would've felt right at home. *Flippit* wasn't a bad game, but its memory-test gameplay would hardly have set the world alight. Soundware have no immediate plans for the game, but haven't ruled out a release.
State Of Play — It might come out, it might not.



GAUNTLET 3 — THE FINAL CHAPTER

■ US Gold

The final part in the *Gauntlet* trilogy was to be a 3D affair, the perspective owing more to *Pacmania* and *3D Ant Attack* than the previous overhead offerings. Due for release in the Summer of 1991, the game suffered massive delays when the original programmer fell ill and US Gold couldn't get the game off the development system and onto the tape.
State Of Play — Due to the delays, when ready it will be released on the KIXX budget label, and never as a full-price game.



HARD 'N' HEAVY

■ Rainbow Arts

Eye-popping follow-up to *The Great Giana Sisters*, a complete change of graphic style didn't save *Hard 'N' Heavy* from the wrath of Nintendo's lawyers. At the end of the day it was still a *Mario* clone — the console company put the kybosh on this one even before it hit the shelves.
State Of Play — Forget it!



JUDGE DEATH

■ Pirahna

A 3D *Op Wolfish* blaster featuring 2000 AD's Barbie lookalike Psi-Judge Anderson gunning down the evil Judge Death's zombie hordes. Unlike previous games of this genre, *Judge Death* actually showed your hand clasping the lethal Lawgiver (gun favoured by Mega City One Judges), though aiming and shooting was via the usual crosshairs.
State Of Play — As far as we know, Pirahna are no longer trading, though as the game was started five years ago and never finished, it's unlikely to start shooting up the charts.

THE GREAT GIANA SISTERS

■ Rainbow Arts

This game was in fact released, but was quickly deleted with more than a little help from Nintendo's legal eagles. *The Great Giana Sisters* was basically a rip-off of *Super Mario Bros*, featuring an almost identical layout and power-ups that differed only graphically (eg *Mario's* mushroom became *Giana's* beach ball, but they served exactly the same purpose). Nintendo are very precious about their games, especially the *Mario* series, which they won't even license for conversion — lawsuits were inevitable.
State Of Play — If you're lucky you might find a copy at a car boot sale, but this one will never return to the shops.



KATAKIS

■ Go!/ Rainbow Arts

One of the best blasters ever, it's not too hard to see where the inspiration for *Katakis* came from — a blatant *R-Type* clone, it featured almost identical backdrops and power-ups, right down to the bolt-on/send-ahead drone that does your dirty work for you (or at least some of it). Official *R-Type* licensees Activision were outraged, and took out a copyright injunction preventing its release. They went on to release an inferior version of the coin-op (but at least it was called *R-Type...*).

State Of Play — The game was re-written and released under the name *Denaris*, but it was nowhere near as good.

● **MANIC MINER** — His zany quests ended with the sequel, *Jet Set Willy*



MINER WILLY MEETS THE TAX MAN

■ Matthew Smith

Incredibly rich as exploits in *Manic Miner* and partying away in *Jet Set Willy*, the third instalment was to see our intrepid hero up against the banes of the *nouvelle riche*, the tax office! Featuring yet more cutesy collect-'em-up action, it would've been interesting to see if *Miner Willy Meets The Tax Man* took the platform genre to new heights, as did the first two. Alas, it was not to be, and all that remains of the game are a few tantalising references in various interviews with *Willy* creator Matthew Smith.

State Of Play — Since the extremely disappointing *JSW 2* (more of a light tweaking than a sequel), nothing has been heard of ol' Matt (I wonder what he's doing now...).

PARASOL STARS

■ Ocean

Following on from the brilliant *Bubble Bobble* and the radical *Rainbow Islands*, *Parasol Stars* was one of the most eagerly awaited games of 1992. However, just as it was nearing completion, Ocean's out-of-house programmer suffered a burglary in which his computer, monitor, and all his disks were stolen — including the ones with the *Parasol Stars* source code!

This caught everyone by surprise, including several mail-order software firm who, anticipating its release, had included the game in their adverts.

State Of Play — Re-writing the game from scratch would take ages, by which time the big advertising push would be lost — *Parasol Stars* will never be released on the C64.



● The dungareed duo won't be making a third appearance on the C64.



RACE DRIVIN'

■ Domark

This rubber-burnin' coin-op conversion, sequel to Taito's classic *Hard Drivin'*, was expected around Christmas 1991. After the miserable attempt to get its predecessor onto the Commodore 64 (the filled polygons moved slower than London traffic), the programmers dispensed with the own-eye 3D perspective favoured by the coin-op, and gave the game the same perspective as the crash replays in *Hard Drivin'*. It didn't really work. The nail-biting immediacy was lost and the main sprite's animation defied the laws of physics. Domark wisely decided not to release it.

State Of Play — You'll never see it on the C64, but you're not missing much!



WILDFIRE

■ Author & Publisher Unknown

Wildfire is an ace horizontally-scrolling shoot-'em-up in the *Armalyte* mould. Unfortunately, during programming an early version was cracked and pirated so heavily that no software publisher would touch it. Rumour has it that the original programmer, unable to sell the game, put it into the public domain. We're not sure whether or not this is true, but if anyone has any further information, let us know.

State Of Play — your guess is as good as ours.

So there we have it — some of these games are no great loss to the Commodore scene, but others promised to be real corkers. Do you know of any more? Write in and let us know — maybe we'll do a follow-up feature, *Return Of The Game That Wasn't...*