

Doctor Who and the Mines of Terror

Publisher: Micro Power Ltd
Year: 1985, 1986
Machines: Amstrad CPC (£18.95, disk: £11.95, cassette)
C64 (£13.95, disk: £11.95 cassette)
BBC BASIC (£19.95, disk and ROM: £18.95, cassette and ROM)
Spectrum 48K (May not exist)
Type: Arcade / Platform / Ladders and levels game
Programmed by:
The Acorn versions - Gary Partis
Commodore 64 - Tony Sothcot
Amstrad and ZX Spectrum - Ian Clements

Story: (From the Terrestrial Index) The object is for you (as the Doctor) to infiltrate the mining complex of the moons of Rijar and stop the Master and his monstrous Madrags from using your brain to create a chaos weapon. The Doctor is aided by an invisible electronic cat called Splinx and must halt the production of Heatonite, a time-warping mineral, disable the Time Instant Replay Unit and regain the plans to the complex.

References

ZX Spectrum Magazines

Magazine	Issue	Feature
Your Spectrum	November 1985	News
Crash	April 1986	Preview
Sinclair	User April 1986	News

Other magazines

Magazine	Issue	Feature
Doctor Who Magazine	113	News
Doctor Who Magazine	119	Review
Doctor Who Magazine	124	Letter
The Celestial Toyroom (Official Doctor Who Appericiation Society magazine)	June 1986	Review
Zzap! 64	13 (05 1986)	Review / Competition
Amix	10	Review

Notes: The game came in a massive box (24cm x 18cm) and came with briefing documents (a rather wordy manual explaining the story and character elements), blue prints (a very vague map of the game), decoder device (a card with symbols), sealed secret instructions (useful hints and tips) , and a symbols identification card (pictures of all the objects and characters). It was supplied either on disk or tape, with the BBC versions supplied with an extra 16K ROM chip which had to be fitted inside the computer. This allowed the game to use more memory, and also made the game larger. It features a very good rendition of the sixth Doctor.

The Commodore 64 version was reviewed in issue 13 of Zzap! 64, and in the same issue they ran a competition to win a day at the BBC to watch Doctor Who being filmed. The competition involved spotting the difference between two pictures.



Can you spot the difference ?

Music: The Commodore 64 version features in-game music, one track for each area of the mine. One tune plays in the mine at the beginning (this is a version of a famous battle or marching tune which I just cannot remember the name of !), and a one tune on either side of the lift shaft. Neither the BBC or Amstrad releases use in-game music but the Amstrad version

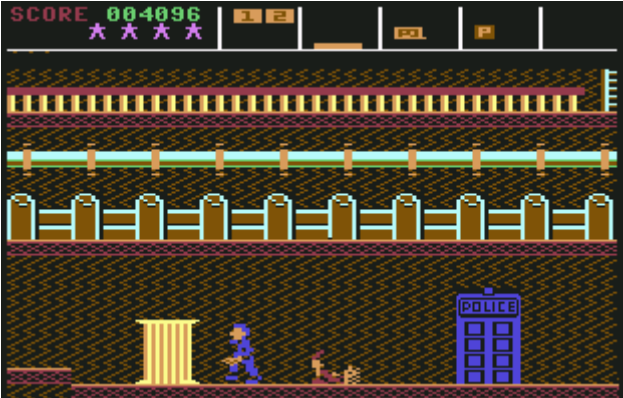
features the Doctor Who theme tune on the main title page if you wait a little while and is the only game which does (and not a bad rendition either).

Versions: The various writers for the different formats had to adapt the game to each different console. In some areas landscapes are different, in others objects can be found in different places. The Commodore 64 version was written by Tony Sothcot, who also wrote the BBC's most popular and famous game Castle Quest which wasn't that different from the Mines of Terror. Gary Partis who wrote the original Acorn versions (and who still writes software) still has the source code on old 100k floppy discs.



The Amstrad and BBC graphics look more colourful then the C64

The Commodore 64 version features very different graphical representations of the Doctor and Controllers, using less colours while the BBC and Amstrad versions (whose graphics are the same) use more colours and detail. The other major difference is the Commodore 64 game utilises a lift which gets you between floors in the mine complex while the BBC and Amstrad versions feature a ladder which you can zoom up or down on.



The Master punches the Doctor and takes back his property !!!

The ZX Spectrum version: In issue 113 of the Doctor Who magazine they ran a feature on the computer games available to fans. The article goes like this -
"A terribly helpful man at Micro Power called Mike informed me that coming soon is the Spectrum version which is supposed to be something special."
After some investigation though it seems that the ZX Spectrum version may not have been released. It was supposed to have been released in January 1986. By April all they had to show for it was an order sheet for the game. The following are the articles from the Spectrum magazines.

Sinclair User Article

TARDY TARDIS Dr Who, from Micro Power, is due to materialise in the high street later this month. The reason for the delay of the program, which was due out last year, is that the programmer originally doing the coding had to work on other versions of the game. Bob Simpson (below), managing director of Micro Power explains: "We have put our top programmer on Dr Who and it should be ready by April." Those who have kept faith will be able to buy the game for £11.95, a lower price than originally stated. Simpson says: "We were going to launch it at £14.95 but now feel that the price might be a bit over the top for Spectrum owners."



Bob Simpson with all they had to show for the Spectrum version

Your Spectrum Article

WHAT? WHERE? WHEN? Who'd have thought it? Cliff Richard clone, Dr. Who, immortalised on silicon? Yeti is - in a new Speccy game from Micro Power. But exterminate all thoughts of getting it in your hot little hands el prompto - 'cos Micro Power says it's a long way off. The biggest horror awaiting you in the game, called Dr. Who - Mines of Terror, must be its attempt to emulate the View To A Kill scrolling window. I'm afraid to say, Who's old mates, the Daleks, don't appear to get a beep in! The game's all about the good doctor's efforts to destroy the Tiru (Time Instant Replay Unit) and nab the plans for the machine from the clutches of arch-enemy, the Master. Micro Power's Time Lord seems powerless to reveal a release date for the game, but it should be some time before Christmas and at a price of £14.95. Phone (0532) 458800 for more info.

Crash Article

(part of the Merely Mangram news section - no article title) Michael Baxter of Solutions Public Relations slips an interesting phrase into a press release which arrives moments before press time. He describes a game as being "entirely scrolling". He's referring to the long overdue release from Micro Power, Dr Who and the Mines of Terror, which was launched before Christmas (our man in London, John Minson, attended the launch but lost his copy in a drunken haze - the sort of common occurrence you expect from a big city Lounge Lizard). As per usual, the Doctor is fighting the Master, who's out to dominate the Universe - this time by building a time-instant replay unit. The Time Lords have asked the Doctor to nip along to the planet Rijan, where the Master has his workshop, and they've thoughtfully provided our here with a programmable droid cat called Splinx. March 17th is the appointed day, and providing there are no more problems with the Tardis, Dr Who, the Splinx and you should be able to explore the hundred plus screens, which include a mine-works, a reactor, a lift shaft and a monorail - all entirely scrolling, of course.

However, the others definitely exist, they are all floating around on the Internet (in fact the BBC Basic version has only just recently become available). The Crash Article suggests that a pre-release version was made, but obviously not commercially released.(If any one knows the where abouts of the pre-release version let me know)

Advertising: It is said that it had a £25000 advertising scheme behind it but they didn't put any of it in the one place it was really needed, the Doctor Who magazine. (Once again i must thank Jon Green for the following scans) Here we have some of the promotional material, a scan of an advert for the game and also a poster. Micro Power hoped the game would be a big seller and so put a lot of effort into its release. It wasn't and after Doctor Who, Micro Power never really recovered and went out of business some time later.



It seems most fans rate this game as being pretty lousy. The thing is, where as it may be a lousy Doctor Who game, it's really not a bad adventure game. People moan about it being harder then reinforced concrete, but that makes it all the more challenging (It certainly keeps me playing). People have judged it without really playing it. The Commodore world liked it to, it received 86% in issue 13 of Zzap! 64. The Amstrad version didn't do quite as well, scoring 48 out of 100 in Amtix issue 10.



The Master and the Doctor finally meet face to face

Hints: I'm pretty close to cracking the game, there are some things that are still evading me. Here's what I know so far

Object	Use	Helps you to..
Spanner	Open hatch covers	Access to control center
The Air Mask	Go through air locks	You can get the box
The Pick Axe	Dig through rocks	Get past Madrag, get air mask
The Chemicals	Dropped into vat of chemicals in Green house	Contaminate the Cryostan coolant supply, stops Controllers in TIRU area.
CSC Chambers (dotted around the mine)	Stand in them	This will increase your score and will also take you back to that point if you should die (A sort of save game device)
Mat/Rag	Snag/stop controllers	Get the pass card
Anti-Grav unit	By stepping onto it, it allows you to travel up and down through levels	Get the pass card (see cheat below)
Dynamite and detenators	If activated they seem to just crash the game	Something to do if you get annoyed with the game !
Activator	Activates escape pods	Ends the game

(these work mainly for the Commodore 64 version but can be applied to the other versions)

To get the pass card you must use the decoder card provided with the instructions. Outside the cell where the pass card is kept are three symbols, which when used rotate giving different symbols. In the game there is a device located a few floors above the pass card which gives out a code when the button is pushed. This code is a number, shape and letter (i.e. 1, triangle, W) using this you look at the decoder card and then rotate the symbols outside the cell. Unfortunately that is all I can summarise, how you actually relate the two is a mystery.

Now Matt Jeffery has finally shed some light on to the more trickier parts of the game. Thanks to Matt for sending these to me.

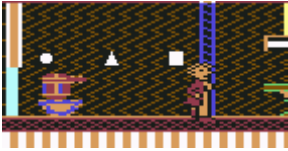
Get the Pass card by cheating: If you want to avoid the decoder device you can use the Anti-grav unit to pass though the floor and door to get the pass. Place it under the level where the pass card is (close to the lift shaft). Stand on it and levitate up to the next level, but don't go all the way



(just so the Doctor's head and shoulders are above the floor), because the controller will turn and start to chase you. Go back down under the floor, wait 'til he passes, and go up again quickly, but don't go all the way up stop

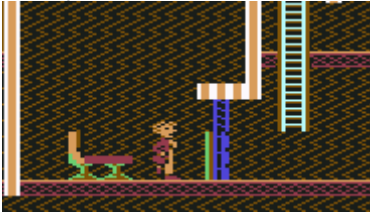


so that the Doctor's feet are half way into the floor, and walk to the right.



This allows you to walk right past the blue door. Once inside the pass card room jump so that you actual touch the floor again, pick up the pass card and press R to regenerate. This will take you out of the cell and back to the last CSC chamber you stepped in.

Immunsing against the Controllers: Near the Escape pods, in the Security block is a Controller guarding a hatch way and an enclosed area with a chair and table. This Controller will not kill you if it sees you but will escort you to the chair and



a door will appear trapping you in the room. If you use R to regenerate you are taken back to the last CSC chamber you stood in. Now for some reason the Controllers will not chase you or shock you (except for the Controller outside the Pass card cell) Perhaps the Controllers think you are locked up.

BUT WHERE IS THE STOOL ???!!

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