

DEADWOOD



MOOMINTROLL™

WINTER'S WARMTH

IT'S A TROLLVINTER TELL ALL: THE STORY
BEHIND THE BIGGEST MOOMINS GAME YET



#14

Editor
Daniel Crocker

Games Editor
Nick Crocker

Features Editor
Vince Pavay

Art Editor
Kate Munday

Retro Editor
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Contributors

Dan Morris
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Dean Mortlock
James Oakwood
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Theo Lancaster
Tom Hardwidge

Columnists

Danny Wadeson
Quang DX
Robby Bisschop

Cover Art

Moontröll: Winter's Warmth

Special Thanks To

GameMaker for making the Debug Games Festival and Indie Game Awards possible, and everyone who supported us through last year's logistics chaos.

Corrections

Debug #13 news incorrectly stated that Blue Prince was not accused of using gen AI. This has been corrected in the Digital Edition

The Fine Print

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ISSN 2976-7180



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Special Thanks To
GameMaker for making the
Debug Games Festival and
Indie Game Awards possible,
and everyone who supported
us through last year's
logistics chaos.

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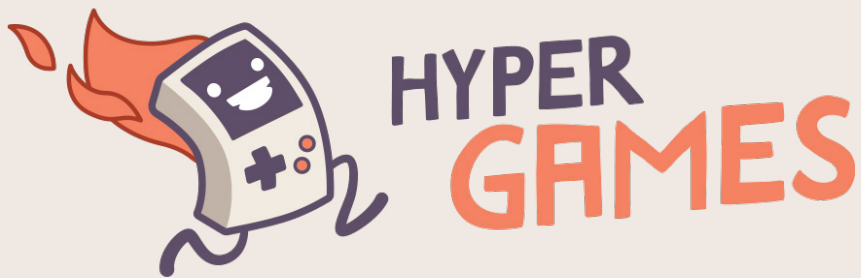
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THE DISCIPLINE OF NARRATIVE DESIGN

Danny Wadeson explores how games craft memorable journeys through mechanics, characters, and movements

Are Sundnes, David Skaufjord, Joar Renolen, Kristoffer Jetmundsen, Marcus Kjeldsen and Maria Engell from



have gathered around the Great Winter Bonfire with **Vince Pavey** to tell him all about the next big Moomins video game adventure...

MOOMINTROLL™

WINTER'S WARMTH





Anyone got a spare moment for a quick game of poo sticks? Sorry, wrong cartoon franchise.

ROAD TRIP

When we're stuck indoors for too long then we get decidedly cranky, so thankfully there are regular gaming events we can attend. From packed showcases, to industry conferences and sweaty game jams. We'll go, take pictures and report back.

This time: PGC, The Retro Collective

What: Pocket Gamer Connects (PGC)

Where: London, UK

When: 19th to 20th January 2026

What is it? Pocket Gamer Connects has always been a little bit of a different kind of show. It's less about the spectacle, which let's be honest is usually a waste of money at B2B events, and is more focused on conversations in the line for coffee. This year we were asked to judge the BIG Indie Pitch, which saw our Games Editor Nick listen to a number of really interesting concepts, and ultimately choosing his top three – alongside various other judges from across the industry. Roughly 3,000 industry professionals attended this year, and we can see why. It's a truly fantastic networking event.



Photo credits: Pocket Gamer Connects, The Retro Collective - Daniel Crocker





The Retro Collective have just about every retro computer and games console you could ever imagine

What: The Retro Collective

Where: Stroud, UK

When: 25th January 2026

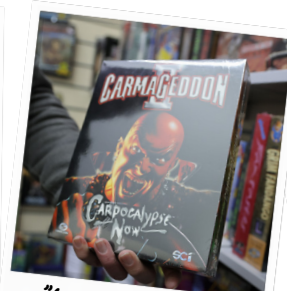
What is it? For those unaware of what The Retro Collective does, it is truly our pleasure to introduce you to one of the most important museums in the UK. Over the last decade, this space – formerly known as The Cave – is part museum, complete with a dedicated hand-on game development space, and part exhibition space. The entire building is literally packed wall-to-wall with lovingly restored computers, games consoles, arcade cabinets, and most excitingly for us, shelves upon shelves of magazines.

We happened to visit while Bitmap Bureau were giving a talk about their newly released retro inspired game *Terminator 2D: No Fate*, and after trying to track the team down for quite some weeks it was a pleasure to finally catch up with them in person.

Founder Neil kindly gave Alex, Aimee, and myself (Daniel) a guided tour of the building, walking us around and explaining how the collection has grown over time. One of the highlights was a sneak peek inside their then-almost-finished Pump House workshop, a space dedicated to filming YouTube videos about restoration, repairs, and keeping ageing hardware alive.



Dragon Ball Z!



"I was in the war!"



Rare Aimee Spotting



Bitmap Bureau's Mike

Developer Toukana Interactive

DORF ROMANTIK

How to pick a favourite out of so many great indies? Dorf fromantik is one I keep coming back to though. Chill, addictive town building puzzler with pretty visuals and a soundtrack to match. Great for short play sessions, but so easy to get absorbed into and lose track of time. I love it.

Kisrah



6+



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CLAWS FOR CELEBRATION

BUBSY 4D – IS IT TIME FOR THE BOBCAT’S BIG COMEBACK?

The leap from 2D to 3D has humbled even gaming’s biggest names. Translating speed, precision and personality into an entirely new dimension isn’t easy. For some franchises, that shift becomes a defining triumph. For others, it lingers as a cautionary tale. *Bubsy* has long lived in the latter cat-egory (get it?).

Few characters embody the rocky road to 3D quite like *Bubsy*. Even Sonic, gaming’s most famous speedster, has faced criticism over the years for struggling to consistently capture his trademark velocity in three dimensions. *Bubsy*’s transition proved far less forgiving, though.

The wise-cracking bobcat debuted in 1993 on the SNES and Mega Drive to strong reviews and player reception, even winning *GameFan* magazine’s Best New Character award. But the jump to 3D in 1996 proved less than ideal, with *Bubsy 3D* becoming shorthand for awkward cameras, clumsy controls and squandered

potential. Subsequent attempts to revive the series in the late 2010s did little to

“ *Bubsy 4D* feels less like a relic of the 90s and more like a genuine comeback story. ”

repair that reputation. For many players, *Bubsy* became less a platforming icon and more an unfortunate punchline.

That’s what makes this year’s revival so intriguing. Development duties have been handed to Fabraz, an indie studio with proven pedigree in expressive 3D

INFO

Developer
Fabraz

Publisher
Atari

On
PC, PS4/5,
Xbox One/
Series X/S,
Switch/2

Demo
Yes

Released
22 May 2026

movement and layered level design. Known for *Demon Turf* and its (out-now) follow-up *Demon Tides*, the team has built a reputation for fluid traversal systems that reward experimentation, momentum and mastery.

Early impressions of *Bubsy 4D* are positive, though. Movement appears fast and responsive, built around momentum-based mechanics and a new rolling Hairball mode that lets *Bubsy* curl into a high-speed projectile, encouraging players to chain actions together rather than cautiously pussyfooting through levels.

Perhaps most importantly, the tone strikes a careful balance between self-awareness and sincerity. *Bubsy*’s irreverence is intact, but it no longer feels like the joke is on the player. Instead, there’s a sense that the developers are in on the meme.

It may be too early to declare redemption, but for the first time in decades, *Bubsy*’s future feels less like a relic of the 90s and more like a genuine comeback story. **👍**

Q&A FABIAN RASTORFER

We spoke with Fabian about the challenge of tackling *Bussy 4D*, navigating the character's complicated legacy, and why the thrill of mastering movement remains at the heart of everything Fabraz creates...

How did the opportunity to work on *Bussy 4D* come along? Did you have prior knowledge of the franchise, and how much creative freedom were you given during development?

We all knew of its infamous reputation, but we played through all the games together once the project started to form our own opinions. There's a lot of charming things to be found in them!

We got the opportunity to work with the IP when Atari approached us with a request for a pitch. We saw it as an interesting challenge and sent a pitch back, and the rest is history.

We had a lot of freedom with the development of *Bussy 4D*. Atari allowed us to take some major risks, like redesigning Bussy's look and ageing up his character a bit. A risk that clearly paid off based on the (surprisingly thirsty) public reception, but it was an initial risk nonetheless! We had a lot of fun working on *Bussy 4D* overall.

With the reputation of *Bussy 3D*, and some of the more recent entries, did you feel pressure to 'redeem' the series? Or did you feel confident that your experience in 3D platformers meant you could naturally bring something the franchise needed?

There was some pressure, but not as much as you might think. I have immense confidence in my team's skills and was certain we could cook up something fun! There were some key philosophies we applied to ensure past mistakes in the series weren't repeated.

For example, we knew we had to give everything a fresh coat of paint while still making sure we don't erase the series' past. We also decided very early on that we wouldn't go down the self-deprecating route. Bussy is aware of his past, and his friends pick fun at him, but the overall narrative isn't reliant on meta mockery of the whole franchise.

And for the gameplay we focused on what the original game tried to be: a fast, momentum-based platformer. Using that as a basis we then applied

our own Fabraz spin on it and voilà, you got *Bussy 4D*!

What is it about 3D platformers that keeps drawing you back? Freedom of movement and expressive mechanics are such key pillars of your work. What excites you most about designing in this space? And how did it differ working within the design constraints of the *Bussy* universe?

I just love the expressiveness of it. That feeling when you get lost in the flow of the movement and it starts to become like an extension of yourself. It's a deeply satisfying experience and a feeling we keep chasing. So in that regard, our design philosophy between our *Demon* series and *Bussy* wasn't very different. What feels sick to pull off, and how can we naturally incentivise the player to get addicted to doing it?

In the case of *Bussy 4D*, it's all about the Hairball mode. Initially you'll just use it in designated sections, and maybe even feel uncertain of its physics-heavy momentum, but eventually it will click and you'll weave in and out of it constantly. Once you do, it's exhilarating.

If *Bussy 4D* connects with players the way you hope it will, what would you personally love to see next for *Bussy*? Do you see this as a one-off project, or the beginning of a longer-term evolution for the character?

Whether we remain attached to the series or someone else takes up the mantle, I hope that the new foundation we laid down gets continued onwards. At this point, everyone at Fabraz – me included – is very attached to the bobcat and his wacky shenanigans. We care about this series now, because we poured our love into it. The same love previous teams have poured into it as well.

I think the fact that the *Bussy* series is still around and kicking, after exchanging so many hands over so many decades, is quite inspiring. *Bussy* keeps on coming back and I hope that never changes! ▣



THE BACK CATALOGUE

Demon Turf – Fabraz has plenty of experience with expressive platformers thanks to *Demon Turf*. And its recently released sequel, *Demon Tides*, keeps that momentum going. See our coverage on page 70.

Who says Smoking is bad for you?



AVAILABLE NOW FOR STEAM AND DREAMCAST



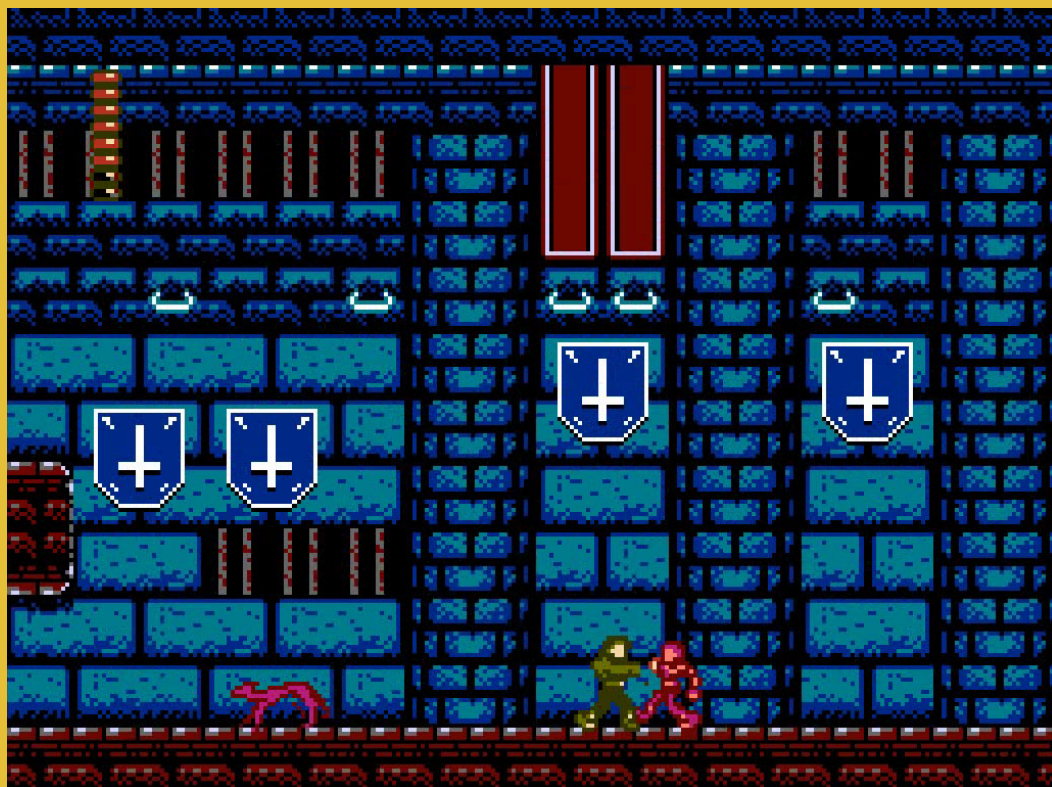
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rushrush.co.uk



RETRO WORLD

Marc Jowett brings us a whole load of **new stuff** to play on **old stuff**



The Mariana Sequence

Developer CGT GAMES **Publisher** CGT GAMES
Retro NES **Modern** ITCH.IO **Released** 2026

***The Mariana Sequence* is an experimental platform game where the action changes depending on how you fare and the responses you give. So far so intriguing, so time to find out a little bit more about the game and how this original gameplay element works...**

You are a participant in a software programme run by Apeks Technologies, and the goal is to repeatedly play it in order to determine the correct sequence that it should be played in.

Essentially I'm playing a game that's inside another game, to see how the game should play out. And doing that repeatedly.

Still following?

I played the demo to get a feel of how it all works in practice, and I thoroughly recommend playing the demo yourself to understand it all, which you'll find online here: www.theretroverse.com/product/the-mariana-sequence.

On my first attempt at the game I'm armed with some knives and sent towards a castle via a woodland area.

It's a tough game from the start, and I die pretty quickly. This is not wasted on the narrator, who questions how I'm able to die in my story, and yet still able to chat to him. I'm then sent back into the game, but this time it's from a graveyard. I'm wearing a cloak, and throwing bones instead of knives. Throwing bones is a tad more complicated, as they're not thrown in a straight line.

A fair few of the narrative choices seemed to come down to whether you had died previously, and some of them didn't appear to change the outcome of the following level that much though, as the narrator wasn't convinced with the story you were weaving.

The Mariana Sequence was originally released as a demo for a competition, and in its current state, that works well.

To release this as the ultimate storybook adventure game though, CGT have got some work to do. I would like to see some extra enemies and a greater range of dialogue. Get this right, and *The Mariana Sequence* could be a truly unique game.





WE LOVE **MEWGENICS**, A SCIENCE EDMUND MCMILLEN INVENTED

Mewgenics is the long-awaited game by Edmund McMillen and Tyler Glaiel, and sees players work with local madman Doctor Beansies on experiments to further “his important research study in cats”. You are given a rundown shack, two starter cats, and a brief tutorial, and then you and your cats get right to work.

As a complex field of science, *Mewgenics* studies involve a variety of activities, the most important of which is probably **breeding progeny from the best cats in your shack [1]**, with new cats taking on a mix of good and bad traits from their parents. You also need to prevent inbreeding, or you will encounter birth defects, the majority of which will hinder your success. You can manage this in a variety of ways, which include (but are not limited to) taking in strays, using furniture to influence the cats' behaviour, or sending cats to neighbours for rewards.

To make sure you only have the very best cats at your disposal, you send expedition parties of daring cat adventurers out into the world. These expeditions (which double up as food runs, and as **chances to gain abilities that can be passed on**

LIKE THIS? TRY THESE...

Super Meat Boy

A classic rock-hard platformer that's just about as close to indie game bedrock as you can get.

INFO

Developer

Edmund McMillen,
Tyler Glaiel

Publisher

Edmund McMillen,
Tyler Glaiel

Price

£24.99

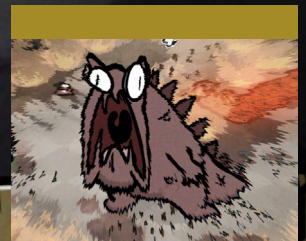
Released

Out now

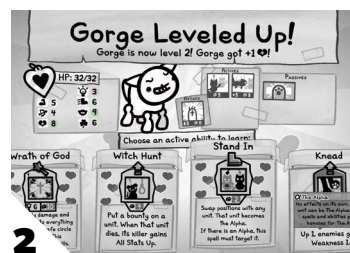
On

PC

“ If you improvise and give in to the chaos, you’ll have a lot more fun. ”



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THE OLD STOMPING (NEW) GROUNDS

Mewgenics often has the look and feel of a big budget Newgrounds flash game from the mid-noughties, and that's one of the things we like most about it. McMillen and Glaiel got their start on the site back in the day, and now sit alongside other prominent creators from the site like Dan Paladin, Tom Fulp and Brad Borne as some of the best indie developers to ever indie.

Their continued success fills us with a warm glow, just like our old LCD monitor used to make...

to future generations [2]) start out fairly simple, and then eventually turn into multi-stage D&D-style quests that can last for up to two hours. As you might expect, the areas you visit get pretty wild, with cats going up to places like the moon and down into the bowels of hell.

The turn-based combat when cats are out on runs is accessible but deep, **landing somewhere between *Fire Emblem* and *Baldur's Gate*** [3]. *Mewgenics* has 1,200 abilities and 14 assignable RPG classes (which influence both what a cat can do in a battle and what it will learn as it levels up) so no two cats, even if they're related, end up that alike. You also shouldn't get too precious about your weapons and gear, as those break over time. Fortunately, the most bizarre, random builds can also be some of the most powerful.

Runs are consistently challenging, and are regularly introducing you to new enemies, skills, mutations, and

loot, as well as turning into good stories to tell your similarly obsessed friends over breakfast or at the pub. The game can be punishing, and one wrong move or bad roll can end your whole run, but you'll always feel like doing another one. If you improvise and give in to the chaos, you'll have a lot more fun.

Mewgenics is an absolute mountain of a game, and with so much to do and see (and multiple endings to achieve) we definitely haven't seen all it has to offer just yet. We had to write this review eventually (print deadlines wait for no man) but we wouldn't be surprised if we were still playing this one by the time Christmas rolls around. Honestly, just go and buy *Mewgenics* already - it's ace! ★★★★☆

★★★★☆

Vince Pavey

The Binding of Isaac: Rebirth

Universally adored roguelike action RPG from Mr McMillen.

Wargroove 2

The magnificent *Wargroove 2* is an SRPG inspired by Nintendo's hit series Advance Wars!



THE BACK CATALOGUE

McMillen is known for *The Binding of Isaac*, and is behind *Super Meat Boy* and its follow-up *The End Is Nigh*, the latter of which was co-created with Glaiel.



Photo credit: Jesse Lawrence / Hannah Kenyon

debug

WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED

BACK ISSUES

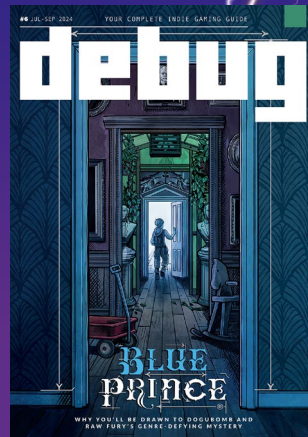
Think you missed an issue? Yeah, not on our watch. We've got everything from the scrappy debut with barely-dry ink to the latest release. No bidding wars, no dusty racks, no collector's guilt. Just pure, uncut **Debug**. Order your missing fix, complete the set, and pretend you've been here since day one



#04 Snufkin



#05 Broken Sword



#06 Blue Prince



#07 Mewgenics



#08 OFF



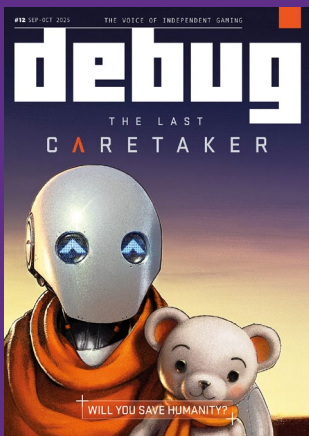
#09 to a T



#10 DELTARUNE



#11 Quantum Witch



#12 The Last Caretaker



#13 I Hate This Place

Everything you love. All killer, no bin filler. Every **Debug** back issue is still in stock from **Debug** #1's scrappy debut to the one where we let **DELTARUNE** melt our collective brains. You've seen the covers. You know what to do

Fast shipping? Yeah. Worldwide? Obviously. And no surprise customs fees either. We're too classy for that. You get the digital version free with every print copy, because it's 2026 and we're not total dinosaurs, and we wrap your mag like it's sacred, because honestly, it kind of is

So fill the gaps in your collection, stack them proudly, and tell everyone you've been here since the beginning. We'll back you up



debug



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