HBGAMES.org

The Ezine!

WIN A SHARE OF AT LEAST $100

INSPIRATION
A WALK AROUND MEDIEVAL ENGLAND

THE BIG CONTEST
MAKE SOMETHING PLAY SOMETHING 2021
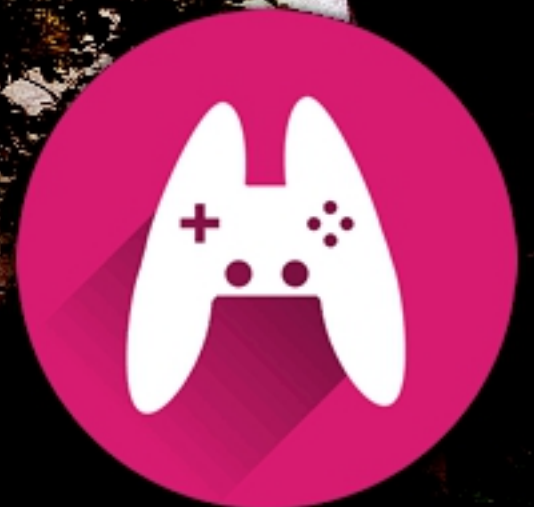
Hello, and welcome to Issue 30 of HBGames the eZine! We are a community of amateur and indie video game developers from around the world, and our mag is used to spotlight the best of the site, while offering tutorials, tips and info on game creation. While we specialise in RPG Maker, any games are allowed on our site, and the best feature in this eZine.

In this issue we will be announcing our new contest, in which you can win a share of at least $100!

We also spotlight a few of the game updates on the site, as well as taking a walk through medieval England in Ellie's inspirational photos.

IN THE MAG...

HALLOWE'EN

ARPGMAKER

MAKE SOME THING

PLAY SOME THING

2021

BEGINS SEPTEMBER 20TH
BE THERE OR BEWARE

MAKE SOMETHING PLAY SOMETHING

Now announcing our new contest and game jam, entitled MAKE SOMETHING PLAY SOMETHING! In this lighthearted, easy going contest we are going to pit you against each other to make Hallowe'en related games – that could be as simple as horror or dark themed games, or something more cutesy and artsy. We don't expect miracles, and you have a month starting from September 20th to create your little projects.

If a game jam isn't your... jam, we have a few other categories for you to enter, and each has a cash prize, rising if we get enough entrants! All money is coming from Ellie's personal pocket as we are a not-for-profit non-ad-supported community, so please, bleed her dry.

The theme is Hallowe'en, which we extend to include anything culturally similar, and really is just a very vague topic to get you rolling. It could be simply a horror game, it could feature costumes, or it could be genuinely spoopy.

Category A: Game Jam

Create a game! It's that simple. Create a game, using a game engine of your choice. Preexisting graphics, scripts and plugins are allowed, though you must start production of the game itself after September 20th.

Your games must be freely available and should be hosted externally for download and then added to our games manager (we can set this up for you or you can use the "Add your Game" option in the Games manager). Teams are allowed but the team leader must distribute any prizes themselves.

The winner will be entirely subjective and based on our personal opinion, however we will back this up with discussion in the official board once that is set up, where you are encouraged to discuss your and other games.

Category B: Graphics

Create graphics for use in other peoples' games! Share your art in the Resources Manager.

Your art needs to be freely available and you give us permission to distribute it in our Resources Manager, our eZine, our Discord and/or our Twitter.

Derivative art is allowed however this will affect how your art is judged as we are judging your personal contribution to the work. You must attribute anyone involved including derivative sources and you must have permission and license to use that art on HBGames, to create a derivative work, and to distribute it freely.

We use a range of game engines on HBGames so anything goes with that regard!

Pretty much the only rule you'll find on our site is *Don't be a Dick* and this applies all the same to this contest. We aren't going to write up a huge list of rules and regulations; if what you're doing seems dickish it's probably not OK!

If you're unsure though just ask Ellie - you can @ her any time on Discord. We don't envisage this being a problem.

Category C: Music

Create music for others to use freely in their games. The same rules apply as to graphical resources. This category has the potential to be a fun one especially regarding the theme!

As derivative works are allowed this could be a great time to wheel our Audacity or Fruitloops Studio and get creative.
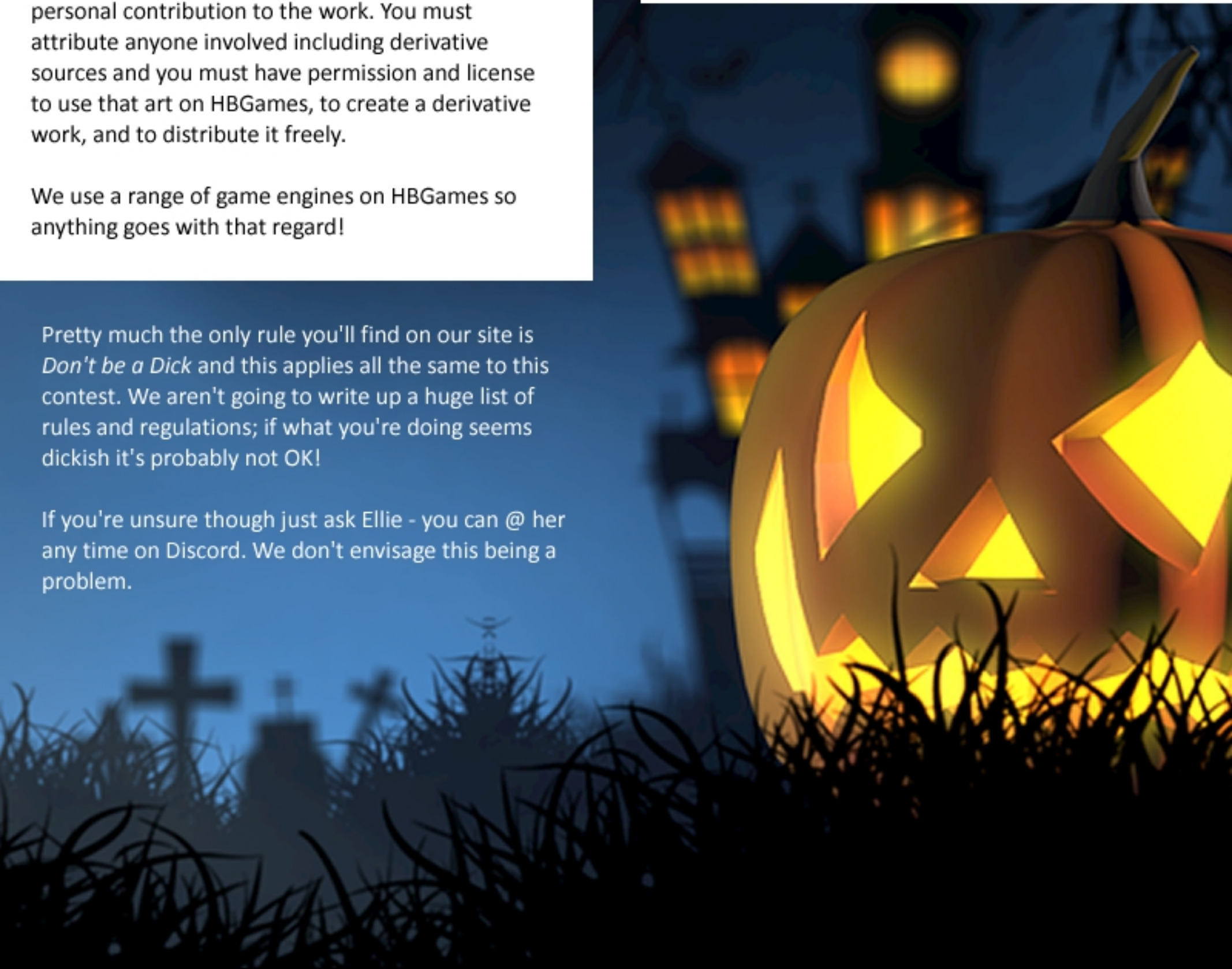
Category D: Reviews

Category D is perhaps the most important one after the Game Jam, and it is aimed at players rather than creators. In this we ask you to play games from our games manager and give an honest, detailed review. Your review must be at least 250 words, must include screenshots as proof of gameplay by yourself, and should ideally be one of our many horror games but can be any title!

This category is designed to generate content for our eZine, in particular, for the Hallo'zine, a planned issue for October following the contest. This will be a special holiday edition of the 'zine and will feature the best reviews. If there are enough, our horror reviews will go in the special ed, and we'll save others for future issues.

By entering this category you therefore give us permission to use your review in the next and/or future issues of the eZine.

We will be improving the Reviews system before the contest begins to make it easier to post a review, including adding rich text support and of course the ability to add screenshots.

It's been a while since we've hosted a contest - they weren't even called Game Jams back then! If anything we've said is ambiguous or problematic let us know! As we'll be the ones deciding who wins what, you're free to talk to us on Discord. Again just @ ellie any time to get her attention.

Though you're playing for money this is intended to be a friendly, light hearted jam.

STEAMED HAMS

But it's RPG Maker 2003

Steamed Hams is one of two projects by Lord Blue Rouge in our games manager, the other being *Final Fantasy Versus Dog*. These are more than just joke projects, rather they are technical demos showcasing how to perform various tasks in RPG Maker 2003.

They are also quite fun to play around with, which is probably why they are so highly rated (for the most part). There is quite a witful usage of various stock RPG Maker functions such that each game just flows as a well designed sketch lampooning both.

Adventure Quest

Where did you start your game making journey? For me life began on the forums for the popular online game at the time, Adventure Quest, more commonly known as BattleOn. The game was a lightweight flash game which made it a prime target for kids on their lunch breaks (or in lessons... shh.) In the early days of 2004 we came across RPG Maker 2000 and the rest is history – from there I eventually found my way to RMRK and then RMXP.net, which became HBGames, and is where I have remained ever since.

The thing about BattleOn was that the graphics were truly terrible and so was the gameplay. You were given a really basic Flash-based battle system. The store was a separate HTML page with DOM elements and a form to submit. The forums were custom designed in ASP.net, and completely non-standard.

BattleOn was proof that to be popular you didn't need to be flashy (pun unintended but welcome). We played the game in our thousands – millions in fact by the end of it. The game eventually spawned some better titles with improved graphics, the latest being Adventure Quest 3D, which is a hugely popular MMORPG worldwide to such an extent that you can buy gift cards for it in every Tesco.

	Xitra			Frogzard	
HP	93			47	HP
MP	100			0	MP

LORE
Lands of Rising Evil

Ultimately BattleOn serves as a reminder that it is not the graphics or even the engine that make a good game. Sure, it had its naysayers. Like the RPG Maker RTP however, it is unnecessary to have amazing graphics, if what you have is an overall enjoyable game, or an easy one to play.

There are two ways to take this. One is that it doesn't matter if you use the RTP if your game is enjoyable. The other is, why use the RTP, when you can create your own graphics, not having to worry about whether they are "good" or not? Some of BattleOn's early imagery was atrocious, so you're on a level playing field.

Many new users to RPG Maker have a lot of fun creating their own graphics and it is interesting to watch it take place. Sure there is a place for really high quality, learned, mastercrafted artwork, but it

is not necessarily needed to create a "good" game, or a popular one. And those low-quality artworks may even be a bonus, if like BattleOn they turn out to be much lower in file size than their equivalents (you could even turn the graphics quality right down on BattleOn to speed it up on slow connections, making the look even worse. And we did, and didn't mind.)

Traditionally HBGames have always had a large pixel art gathering, and so if you do ever want to make higher quality art you will find good company on the Discord and forums, where you can find tutorials and speak to pixel artists from around the world to help hone your craft, whether you are a beginner, or an expert looking to further hone their craft.

FLORIEN
KEALBORN

CHRIS
KALEIDO

OLD
MAJOR

SPECIAL GUEST
RIVERS

AN OLD PAT FEATURE FILM

Karma Flow

DIRECTED BY
OLD PAT

SCREENPLAY BY
OLD PAT

STORY BY
OLD PAT

OLD PAT PRESENTS A OLD PAT PRODUCTION IN ASSOCIATION WITH RPGMAKER.NET "KARMA FLOW"
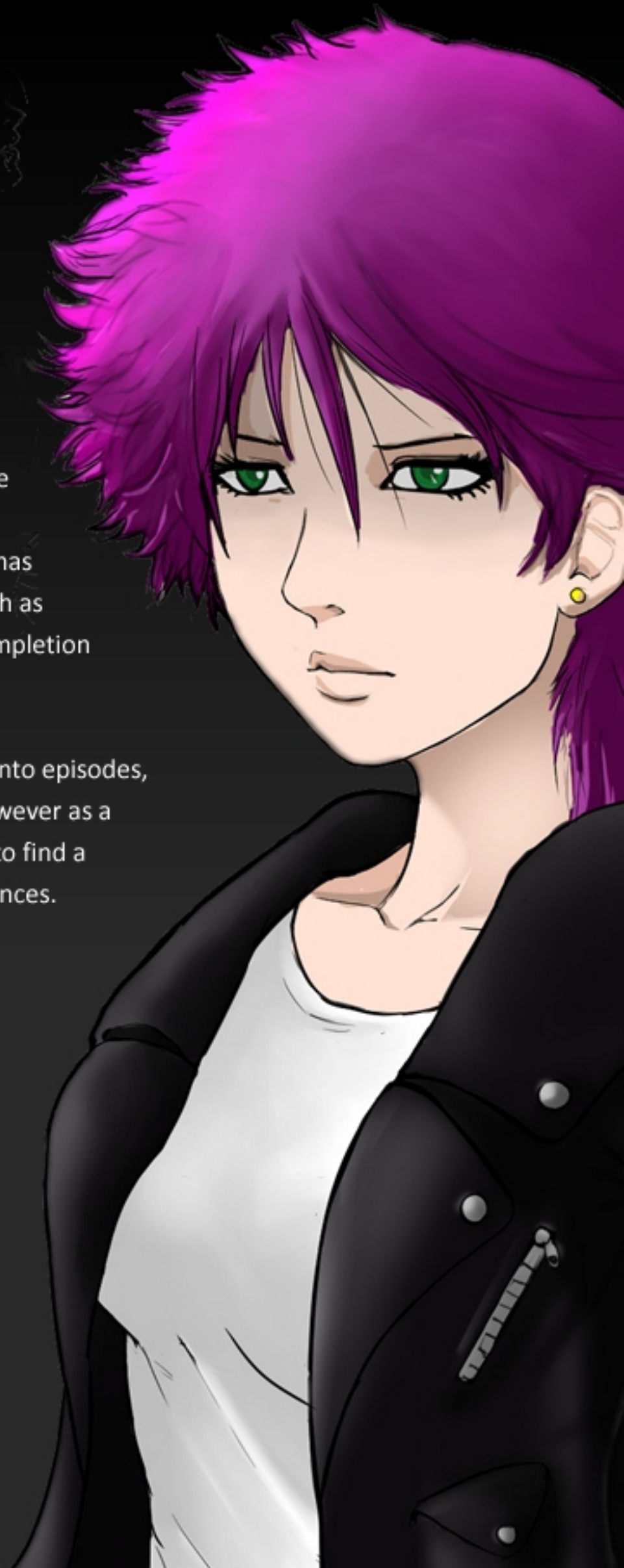
CASTING BY CASTING CREW   MUSIC BY COMPOSER   COSTUME DESIGNER COSTUME DESIGNER   EDITED BY EDITOR   PRODUCTION DESIGNER PRODUCTION DESIGNER   PRODUCED BY OLD PAT
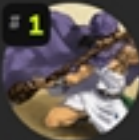
ART CREATED BY ARCHEIA.MOE   CO-EXECUTIVE PRODUCER CO-EXECUTIVE PRODUCER   EXECUTIVE PRODUCER EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Karma Flow

Competitive gaming and speedruns in particular are one of the latest trends in indie games, particularly RPG Maker. OldPat's **HBGames Game of the Year** award winning *Karma Flow* now has a high scores table, featuring various aspects of the game, such as defeating bosses in the fastest time, or getting the highest completion of the game.

Karma Flow: The Prototype is a Noir Open-Stealth game split into episodes, each one leading to the assassination of a specific target... however as a hinted twist, killing has consequences. It is your job as player to find a way to complete the mission without paying for the consequences.

#1 **3180**
Daemond @Daemond
about 5 years ago

#2 **2900**
OldPat @OldPat
over 4 years ago

#3 **1990**
ZioShirosaki @ZioShirosaki
11 months ago

#4 **1270**
ConnorBS @ConnorBS
almost 5 years ago

#5 **860**
RiaKare @RiaKare
almost 5 years ago

#6 **740**
HROT @HROT
almost 5 years ago

#7 **550**
Saul_Is @Saul_Is
almost 5 years ago

#8 **430**
crazyvanezia @crazyvanezia
almost 5 years ago

#9 **370**
Waxius @Waxius
over 3 years ago

#10 **300**
kaine87 @kaine87
almost 5 years ago

Settting is important and above you can see how St Peter's, Wolverhampton, is more than just the church, but is an entire scene. Top left, Shrewsbury, shows an interesting medieval stairwell leading through wooden beamed buildings.

Grand stone bridges are great spanning the widest rivers. In Shrewsbury are the English Bridge and the Welsh Bridge, each crossing the same river as the town sits in a sweeping meander. Churches add to the setting greatly.

Spot the difference... Above is genuinely medieval and you can tell by the sloping facade. Below is merely mock tudor, which is nice, but is merely a pastiche probably created by the Victorians nostalgic for the lost past.

Buildings don't have to be monochrome! Some of the best medieval looking facades are a slightly peachy yellow dictated by the pigments available at the time. This looks great when matched with climbing plants.

Now that's a real medieval street, and you can see the point of the jutting out upper floor here. The street would be very narrow if the facade carried on down - space is maximised and there is no Right to Light.
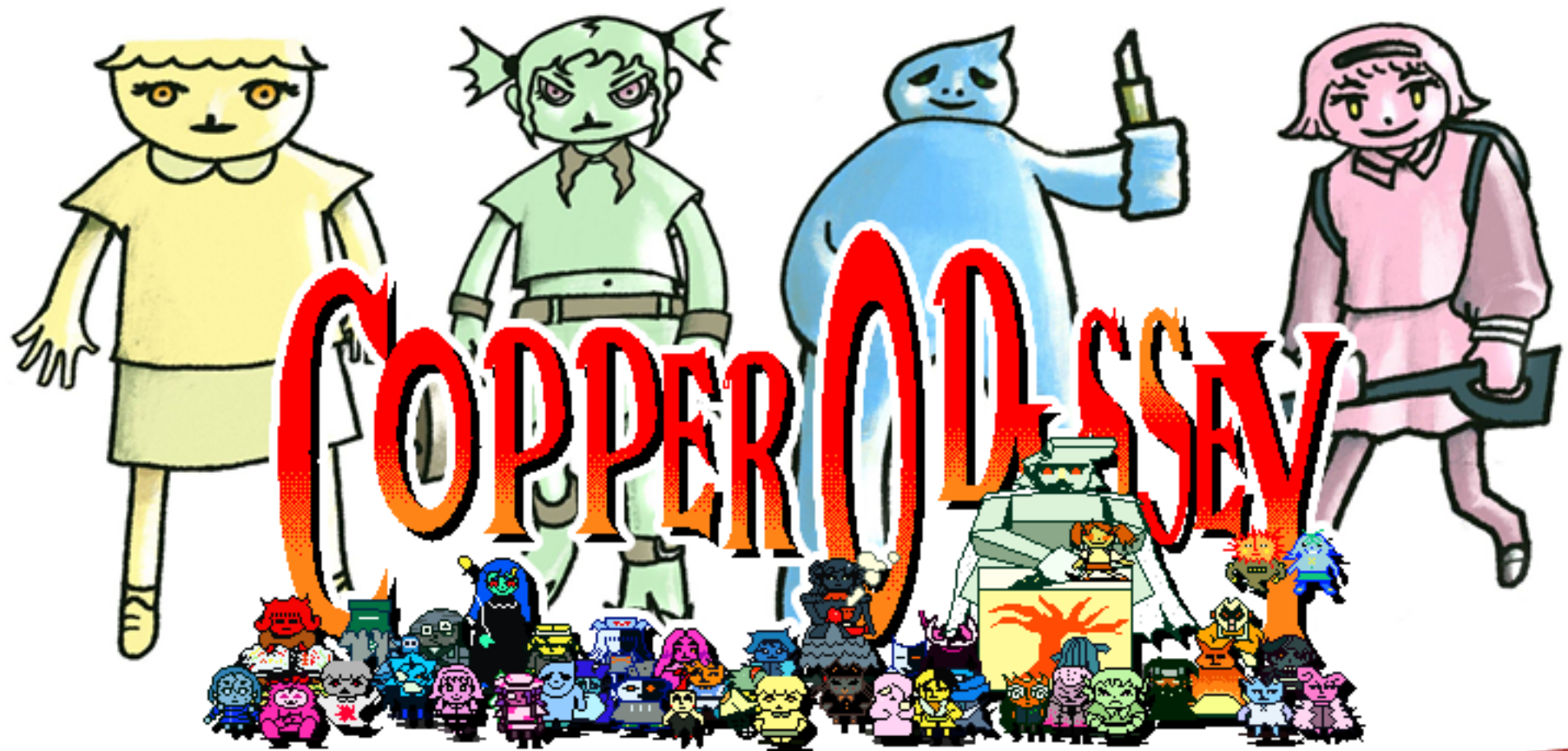
COPPER ODYSSEY

Trending this month has been one of our newest games which is quickly becoming one of our most highly rated jaunts. Copper Odyssey is based in a print shop and is full of all sorts of terrible puns combined with great, unique art. Starting life as a comic it has grown into a game that is well played on Itch and trending on Steam.

The latest update comes from a player of the game from Itch and it comes in the form of a Fandom Wiki, revealing secrets learned while playing the game and giving insight into the cast of characters, the locations and maps, and the story of the game.

copper-odyssey.fandom.com

THE STATE OF HBGAMES

Since launching HBGames Xen three things have happened. The first is that the forums have dropped so far in activity that they may as well be declared dead. Though every support topic remains answered we have not had any lately to respond to. Discussion seems to have ceased, and even artwork is scarcely posted. This is largely due to #2 on our list:

Secondly the Discord has shot in activity. It is now the most active part of the community, and is where you will find all of the conversation. This makes sense, since the Post What's on your Mind thread of old was often referred to as HBGames' de facto Twitter. We have some new faces and some great art being posted.

Thirdly however in happier news for HBGames Xen itself, the game pages section of the site has continued to be popular, with downloads and reactions streaming in. Games are now downloaded more times than under the old system and they are receiving higher views. We still need more games, and while we have been successful in inviting some new faces to the site we have a lot to give for your projects!

The eZine is also going strong and the latest issues are much better received than the old stock. Under HBGames Xen we are now able to track precisely how many times an issue is downloaded and so we now know that issues 27, 28 and 29 have around 70 readers each, for example, and that the latest issue, released only a week ago, has had 33 downloads so far. This is largely due to reaching out to Twitter which has quickly become a third weapon in our online arsenal.

It is probably glaringly obvious that the intention of the Make Something Play Something contest is in order to attract more plays and more reviews for our games, and also to create some buzz and discussion on the forums when the official board is set up for that. Whether it works is another thing, but it is about time we had a genuine well-ran event on the site, our last real one being a decade ago. We had great times in the Pixel War, with many learning pixel art for the first time and others honing their skills amongst friends.

Either way, things are currently looking up for HBGames.

664,760
POSTS

43,914
TOPICS

38,128
MEMBERS

- 161 GAMES
- 41 GAMES IN DEVELOPMENT
- 35 REVIEWS

- 58,758 COMMENTS
- 154 SCREENSHOTS
- 12 VIDEOS

- 105 RESOURCES
- 1,539 SCRIPTS & PLUGINS
- 36 EZINES

A R T B R E E D E R

One of the more interesting online apps out there this year is Artbreeder, which uses a neural network to generate new art from seeded batches of photos. You can tweak various sliders, going as far as changing the gender of an image or choosing how arty or realistic the picture is. As these inspiratonal pics from Spoo show, it can be used to create some quite recognisable characters, and with a little work can create great art to use as placeholders at least.

Artbreeder is not just limited to faces however and you can also use it to generate new buildings, such as castles, again from seeds and children of other images.

Here at HBGames we have always had a following for the popular construction game, Minecraft. For a while we maintained an official server, and fellow staffer Xilef even ended up working for them. In a small but friendly nod at our community the phrase Envision, Create, Share, which has been our motto since the early days of .org in 2006, now features as Splash Text 403, added in the "Nether Update".

And another thing...

Due to a hectic work schedule, and the need to announce the upcoming contest, this issue was written, compiled and edited in... one and a half hours! It's been a long time coming though especially since the Inspirational Photos have been sat on a phone and some of the games around the site still needed mention.

Spot the spelling and grammar mistakes - they're easter eggs!

Oops - We're Controversial

While issue 30 has been well received one particular article hasn't gone down well – while it was marked as an opinion piece it seems to be an opinion which has divided the wider community!

Ellie didn't have time to write up a fitting rebuke and does want to write a follow-up to showcase the opposing opinion because she feels that both sides are equally right, and both are wrought from frustration and problems.

The intent certainly wasn't to offend, however, and the article was written from a good place, just from the perspective of a frustrated programmer.

Upgrade!

Finally, after seventeen years of using it, I have ditched *Macromedia Fireworks MX 2004* for eZine development. Yes, I have finally moved on, and have upgraded to 2005's *Fireworks 8*.