VectrexMad!'s News Corner

A fanzine dedicated to the MB/GCE Vectrex
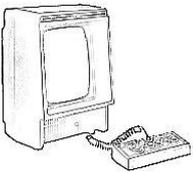
Visit www.vectrex.co.uk for more Vectrex related info!

Welcome

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Greetings Vectrex fans and welcome to the first edition of this fanzine. Although I regularly update my website with news summaries concerning all that happens in the Vectrex world, I try to never write too much text on the website for fear of saturating the general reader.

In the past I used to make reviews for retro gaming magazines which gave me the luxury of two or more pages to fill in detailed information. However, I'm not actively submitting to any magazines at the moment. So this little newspaper is a way for me to supplement the information on my website and to write as much as I want.

To cover the first quarter of this year I have repeated but also expanded on some of the website news items for this fanzine.

From my nickname you can guess I'm mad about the Vectrex. If you took the time to download this fanzine, then I think you are the audience I want to reach ☺. I hope this first issue fanzine is able to spread the word about our beloved console. I'm not sure if and when the next edition will come out, it has all to do with time. Any comments, news or words of encouragement for future fanzine editions please feel free to email me at info@vectrex.co.uk

VectrexMad! March 2014.

The aim of vectrex.co.uk is to help keep the Vectrex alive by generating interest in the console. If you have any news relating to the Vectrex that you think would be of interest to other Vectrex owners, I would gladly present primarily through the website and occasionally via this fanzine.

What's so special about the Vectrex anyway?

The Vectrex is the one and only games console that employs vector scan rather than raster scan technology to generate images. This means that the game graphics are represented by line drawings rather than bitmaps. As such the graphics are very distinct. The appearance of the sharp white lines on a black background make the Vectrex look as though it comes from another world.

As a result of the Vectrex display being black and white and due to a limitation of the 80's micro processor used, the graphics cannot be detailed and appear simpler and almost cartoon like compared to later games consoles. But faced with these restraints programmers were able to make up for this by writing games that were quick to play and very addictive.

The Vectrex was released to the video game market in 1982. However, this was just prior to the video game market crash, and the Vectrex was therefore short lived being discontinued in 1984.

Although more than quarter of a century has passed since its conception, this unique gaming system is still able to "hold its own" in the 21st century!

There is an active Vectrex user community and new software and hardware continues to be developed.

YASI Overlay nearly ready!

Following on from the success of my last two screen printed overlays reproductions, MineStorm and Pole Position, I recently commissioned a local screen printer to produce a batch of 50 YASI overlays.

These overlays will capture the spirit of the original Space Invaders arcade artwork. They'll look very similar to the ParaJVE Vectrex emulator overlay for YASI. ParaJVE author Parabellum has given me approval to base my overlays on his design and he also kindly assisted by modifying his original design artwork. After a lot of back and forth communication regarding the final art work and testing of different glaze samples I have finally signed off the proof with the printers.

The printers have informed me that they hope to manufacture very soon. This means that all going well I can start shipping the overlays in March. As soon as I have the overlays in my hands I'll be contacting everyone who emailed me, to inform them of the final price and to invite them to pay if they want to purchase.

If you haven't already been in contact and are interested in an YASI overlay please email sales@vectrex.co.uk . I'm not taking orders yet, but once produced I'll be contacting those on the mailing list first.

Vectrex game high scores

Is your Vectrex feeling naked?

Vectrex wrap producer Michele has announced that the printing work for his new YASI, Protector and Scramble wraps has begun, with shipping expected in March. These wraps will cling to the Vectrex and can be removed many times without any residue left behind. First off, he is giving those who expressed interest back in 2012 the chance to finalise their order. If you weren't on that pre-order list (i.e. you didn't receive an email recently) then best to get in contact with him directly and as soon as possible. He want's confirmation of order by 28th February!

Michele has stated on his website that every two/three months he aims to release new wraps dedicated to the new and old vectrex games. The next one will be for Berzek.

For more info visit **www.vectrexwraps.com**

Review: Mateos Vectrex Burner/Dumper and Vectrex Rewritable Multigame Cartridge
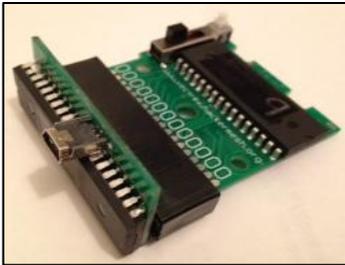
For some years Richard H and his USB controlled VecFlash and more recently his VecMulti have provided the mainstay of reprogrammable multicarts for the Vectrex. But now there is a "new kid on the block". New Vectrex homebrewer Juan Félix Mateos has released a reprogrammable multicart combo called the MATEOS VECTREX BURNER-DUMPER (MVBD) and MATEOS VECTREX REWRITABLE MULTIGAME CART (MVRMC). This solution which offers the possibility to store four 32KB games doesn't offer as much memory as the VecFlash (capability to store 31 games - each up to 32KB in size) or VecMulti (only limited by the maximum SD card of 2GB!), or the ability to play games which make use of extra RAM (e.g. Spike, AnimAction, LogoLite). However, it does allow you to plug in an original cartridge, dump its contents via the MVBD to your computer, and then by connecting the MVRMC save it to one of four selectable 32KB storage areas for later play as a multicart. Alternatively, by plugging the MVBD to the MVRMC it's possible to simply copy game ROM

files from a computer to one of the four storage areas in the MVRMC. Also unlike other programmable multicarts you are not restricted to a Windows PC. Because there is no special connection or download software it also works with Mac OS and Ubuntu.

Cartridge Dumping
I managed to get my hands on the MVBD and MVRMC combo and give it a many a test. To try the system out, I plugged into the MVBD burner the nearest Vectrex cartridge I had lying around which happened to be an Armor Attack cartridge. I then connected the MVBD to my Windows XP computer via USB cable, and within a few seconds a dialogue window popped up showing the MVBD as a storage drive (The external computer just sees the MVBD as a USB stick).
A 32KB file called VECTREX.BIN was listed under the drive contents in the window. This was the memory dump of the connected Armor Attack cartridge. Of course Armor Attack comprises a 4KB ROM, but MVBD always dumps the maximum addressable space of a Vectrex console.

If you were to examine the 32KB file using a hex editor, you would see the address space after 4K is repeated some more times with the same game code. Once you have dumped the cartridge it's just a matter of copying

the file to a folder in your computer for storage and for future downloading onto a multicart.

Multicart
Probably the more useful functionality of the MVBD and MVRMC combo is copying game ROM files from a computer to make a multicart. If you have the game ROM file already (for example you downloaded it from www.vectrex.nl) you can simply copy the file over as you would copy any other file on your computer to a USB storage drive. As mentioned earlier there are four slots of 32KB for storage of Vectrex programs. One Vectrex game ROM goes into each slot.
First you connect the MVRMC to the MVBD. Care must be taken to ensure that the MVRMC and MVBD are both in the right orientation for the correct operation. The printed circuit board (PCB) for both MVRMC and MVBD have "X"s and "O"s marked on them, and by ensuring they are both on the same side of the respective PCBs this guarantees correct orientation. To select a different storage slot you must move a slider switch

The Mateos dumper with cartridge and USB cable

on the MVRMC which has four selectable positions corresponding to the storage slot. Then connect the MVBD via the USB cable to your computer. A few seconds later a dialogue window will pop up on your computer showing as a storage drive.

What confused me at first is if there was already a Vectrex program saved in the selected slot from before it would not show as present in the storage drive – although it is definitely there and will play when the MVRMC is plugged into the Vectrex.

Copying a new Vectrex game ROM into the slot is then just a matter of finding the game ROM file on the computer and copying to the storage device. If you want to copy more game ROM files across you must safely eject the MVBD burner from the computer and pull out the USB cable, change the switch to another position and then reconnect the USB cable and then repeat the above. You can't change the switch selection whilst the USB cable is connected.

When the MVRMC is plugged into the Vectrex cartridge port you can select the game you want simply by changing the position of the selector switch and you don't have to turn the Vectrex off inbetween.

Review: Mateos Vectrex Burner/Dumper and Vectrex Rewritable Multigame Cartridge - Continued

Pause button

A lot of the original Vectrex games were designed to replicate arcade play i.e. fast action for short periods of game play and as such most of the Vectrex games didn't have the feature to pause the game. With the MVRMC there can be no missed chance of high scores if the phone rings or somebody knocks on the door as it includes a pause button. Pressing the pause button simply stops the Vectrex's microprocessor, blocking the screen refresh and the updating of the audio synthesizer. This means that when you pause a game, the screen goes blank and if it's in the middle of a sound, the sound just continues with the last note playing continuously. Pressing the pause button again resumes game play.

Ease of use

Both the MVBD and MVRMC are easy to use. The only issue I can foresee is that there is nothing stopping you from plugging in a cartridge the wrong way round into the MVBD when dumping. However, there is a small drawing on the MVBD PCB that indicates how to plug the cartridges when dumping. You'll know if it's not connected the correct way round because when connected to the PC you won't see anything in the drive dialogue window. Likewise there is nothing stopping you from plugging
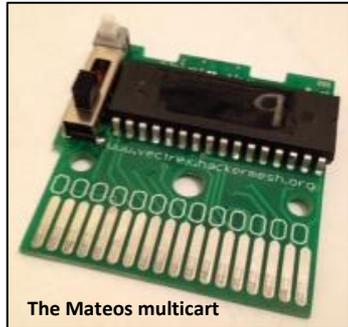
The Mateos multicart

the MVBD the wrong way round with respect to the MVRMC, other than to ensure   the "O" and "X" indicators printed on both the MVBD and MVRMC PCBs are aligned.

And finally there is nothing stopping you from plugging the MVRMC upside down into the Vectrex. Of course common sense tells that the component side (switch selector and pause switch should be oriented on the top side). I did ask Juan what would happen if the correct orientation was not met in any of the above scenarios. He informed that no electronic damage could possibly occur.

For the first lucky few, Juan did supply some home made cartridge cases for the MVRMC. However, for future sales, the MVRMC will not come with a case. Juan did strongly recommend a case because it would protect the cartridge PCB from physical damage. In addition, a case would prevent misalignment of cartridge PCB pads with the Vectrex connector as there is a small gap between the cartridge and the vectrex socket (the cartridge edge

is shorter than the socket). For those who do put the MVRMC into a cartridge case, the top surface of the case does have to be cut in order to make a slot and hole accommodate the selector switch and pause button respectively. Juan has made a "cut out" template available on his website to help show where the slot and hole must be. The retention standoff pin on the top half of a standard cartridge shell would also have to be cut off because otherwise this conflicts with the pause button position.

Final thoughts

Overall the MVBD burner and MVRMC multicart combo is a very useful piece of kit. It does exactly what you want it to do and does not require extra software. One may question how often the cartridge dumping functionality would be required since all the original Vectrex games are available as downloads in the public domain anyway. And the dumping won't necessarily work with the newer homebrews if they are on some modern equivalent storage (as is usually the case these days) rather than an EPROM or PROM. I'm sure there are some users out there who would want to make backups of their game library. But it can also be argued if the newer homebrew games can't be copied then concerns about

piracy can be alleviated for home brew authors.

The price is very reasonable considering the functionality offered. Costs have been reduced by providing basic packaging, online instructions and omitting the USB cable. If you don't have one already you will need to acquire a USB cable which fits the socket on your computer and is terminated with a mini USB connector for plugging into the MVBD. At the time of writing the price for the MVBD and MVRMC is 26€ and 10€ respectively. Postage is extra according to the country with a maximum of 6.55€ for one MVBD and MVRMC. You do need the MVBD in order to copy games onto the MVRMC. But you only need one MVBD and could have multiple MVRMCs if so desired.

For more info visit:
www.vectrex.hackermesh.org

VectrexMad! Rating 4.5/5

!!! Stop Press !!!
At the time of writing the mighty Mateos has just announced a version II of his product. This is offers either a 16-game x 32KB or 8-game x 64KB rewritable cartridge. Mateos informed that the new version wasn't a big step forward for Vectrex owners because there aren't any 64KB public domain game ROMs. He stated that the revision is aimed at getting the burner/dumper ready for use with other consoles!

Flappy Bird migrates to the Vectrex

Although the computing power of a smart phone is considerably more than the first home computers and games console of the 80's, quite a few phone game Apps (especially those written by a single author rather than a full software house) fit the ethos of the early 8 bit games i.e. simple graphics and addictive game play. So it is not uncommon to see some of the popular games get ported to the computers and games consoles of yesteryear.

New Vectrex homebrewer Michael Simonds has

recently released a free ROM binary download called Veccy Bird for the Vectrex. Veccy Bird is based on the popular mobile gaming app Flappy Bird and although the graphics are of course vector based it's nevertheless a very faithful version.

The idea of the game is to fly a bird between sets of oncoming pipes as they scroll across the screen. Control is simple and requires just one finger. One tap flaps the bird's wings causing it to fly up. Gravity pulls the bird down.

Like the original game, Veccy Bird is quite hard. Scores of 5 to 20 are typical.

Veccy Bird is available right now. Just use Google to find it online.

Vectrex cocktail cabinet

Astute readers of the vectrex.co.uk website will know that I'm plodding along with building my full size Vectrex arcade cabinet and you can see intermittent progress updates on my VecCab blog. A far quicker cabinet builder is Minwah of the ukVAC.com forum. He has been very speedy in the building of his Vectrex Cocktail cabinet! (and he has built it from scratch). He started in the summer of last year and in late December published photos of the completed cabinet on the ukVAC.com forum. In his own words he said "The cabinet is constructed from 18mm MDF, laminated with

Formica laminate (matt black and walnut). The only exception is the table top, which is 12mm MDF, with 6mm MDF on top (at the front and back), and 6mm toughened, tinted glass in the middle, to form ~18mm thickness overall. The 12mm MDF is laminated black so that it looks good through the glass. I have used 3/4" textured t-molding to finish the edges. Inside, the Vectrex remains in its case and is set into a shelf, facing upwards. The front (screen) of the Vectrex is as close to the glass as possible, without de-casing the Vectrex (which I did not want to do). Each side of the cabinet has a handle hole, so the machine can be easily lifted and moved around. One of the handle holes doubles as a cartridge port - which is extended from the port on the Vectrex with a ribbon cable terminated with a male and female edge connector."

New successor for John Donzila's Classic Game Creations

In September 2013 it was reported that John Donzila, the very first video game homebrewer, for the Vectrex and author of many a game over some 17 years, was shutting shop.

Now John has written many great games for the Vectrex including Gravitrex Plus, Space Frenzy, Spike Hoppin'. These games pushed the Vectrex to the limits and included digitized speech and musical scores. So the Vectrex community

was very sad to hear the news that he was no longer going to produce any more cartridges. His website www.classicgmecreations.com still remains online and gives information on most of the games he has made. At the time John did say that he was looking to "pass the torch" to others who have expressed interest in continuing to build Vectrex cartridges. Well, new provider Packrat Video Games has recently stated on their website:

put the following message "Sometime in 2014, Packrat Video Games, LLC will be taking over production of Vectrex games made by John Dondzila. The initial cartridge shell order has been placed, which is a start. More news on this as things progress. Looking forward to keeping John's Games alive and for sale to Vextrex fans everywhere!"

Packrat is a small retailer and repair shop with a web presence, and already

distribute reasonably priced homebrew games for the Atari 2600 and Odyssey[2]. They appear to be a good fit for the Vectrex community!

Visit www.packratvg.com

Review: Madtronix 3D Imager

One peripheral particularly sought after by Vectrex fans is the Milton Bradley (MB) 3D Imager. Released in 1983, and together with the games 3D Mine Storm, Narrow Escape and Crazy Coaster, it offered the possibility of playing games with 3D graphics and in colour on the Vectrex. However, the MB 3D imager was only sold in small quantities (not helped by the Video game crash of 1984 and the phasing out of the Vectrex) and never reached countries outside the USA. As such, for some international collectors ownership of the MB 3D imager has become somewhat like the quest for the Holy Grail. When MB 3D imagers do occasionally appear on internet auction websites, it is not unusual to see 3D imagers fetch prices in the range of 400-800 Euros depending on condition and if the original packaging is included. Where does that leave us

The original MB 3D Imager

Vectrex gamers with more modest sized wallets but who want to try out the 3D imager technology? Well, there are instructions available on the internet showing how to construct 3D imagers. Details are given on the construction

and accompanying electronic circuits, but it all takes time, and requires resources that not everyone has available. Far better, is to purchase the 3D imager from Madtronix. Madtronix is a home brewer, and he builds his 3D Imager in batches. You won't hear from him for a long while, and then suddenly on his website shop are six 3D Imager products for sale. Madtronix has been off the Vectrex scene for a couple of years but now he is back and he is delivering!

This article reviews Madtronix's 3D imager. But before going further it's worth explaining how the MB 3D imager works and how Madtronix's 3D imager differs from the original. The 3D imaging and colour technology works by spinning a translucent and opaque multi coloured wheel between the user's line of sight and the Vectrex display. This technology was not new in 1983 (aspects of this had already been applied in the late 50's in attempts to provide black and white televisions with cheap colour), but the particular embodiment of the technology for the Vectrex represented the first 3D glasses specifically for use with a video gaming system. The spinning wheel comprises four segments of colour. The colour segments red, green, and blue are translucent and the black colour segment is opaque. As the wheel spins,

each colour sequentially covers the left and right eye repeatedly. A small hole positioned on the wheel and sensed by an infra-red transmitter and detector is used to tell the Vectrex how fast the wheel is spinning. The motor spinning the wheel is directly under the control of the Vectrex. When the Vectrex draws an image on its screen it is in synchronisation with the colours of the spinning wheel as they successively go past the user's eyes. The timing and length of time an image is present on the screen dictates the colour perceived by the user. Similarly for 3D images, it is arranged by the program running on the Vectrex, for objects drawn on the screen to appear at different times to the left and right eyes. The colour wheel in the 3D imager is spun at approximately 1620 RPM although the speed can be changed by the Vectrex game to accommodate different colour hues. With the wheel spinning around fast enough, the game player's eyes and brain are tricked into thinking that the

multiple images as seen by the eyes are two different views of the same object which leads to the impression of 3D.

The Madtronix 3D imager uses the same methodology but there are subtle technical differences. The most noticeable difference is that the colour wheels are 12 cm in diameter as opposed to the 9.6 cm diameter of the original MB 3D imager wheels. This has the advantage that it allows improved viewing as the viewing range is bigger. The other main difference is that instead of a synchronisation hole on the colour wheel there is now a sticker. Instead of an infrared transmitter and receiver located respectively on each side of the wheel and used to detect the hole when the infrared beam is broken as is the case for the MB imager, both transmitter and receiver are on the same side, and the infrared beam is bounced of the sticker to indicate its position. This is probably for reasons of manufacture. If the position of the
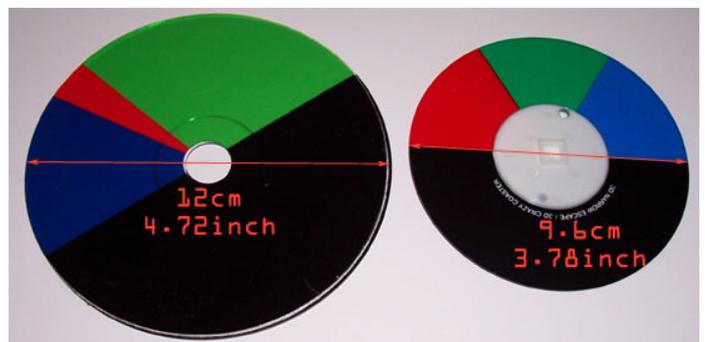
Comparison of the size of the Madtronix colour wheel compared to the original MB colour wheel

Review: Madtronix 3D Imager (continued)

synchronising hole is just a degree off its correct position, poor 3D and colour imaging results. Home brewers don't always have sophisticated manufacturing equipment. Using a sticker allows Madtronix to correctly position the synchronisation mark during manufacture – unlike a hole, a sticker can be easily moved after testing to ensure optimum viewing quality.

The Madtronix 3D imager is definitely homebrew, it's based on a modified welding mask. The implementation works really well and is more practical to wear than the original MB 3D Imager. Different shaped heads can be easily and quickly accommodated through an adjustable hand screw.

Side view of the Madtronix 3D Imager (and girl)

Prescription spectacle wearers are not disadvantaged either as they can wear both spectacles and 3D imager at the same time. A flip-up visor mechanism is also incorporated in the imager. This allows the spinning wheel to be easily pivoted away from the user's line of site thereby allowing normal vision without having to remove the complete imager from the head.

Like the MB 3D imager the Madtronix imager plugs into the second joystick controller port connector on the Vectrex. When initially plugging in the 3D imager and switching on the Vectrex, not a lot happens. Booting into the game though, can be quite worrying for the un-initiated. All of a sudden

the motor of the 3D imager powers up and the wheel begins to spin at higher and higher RPM accompanied by a mechanical whirring sound. At this stage, those with well endowed noses might become a bit worried. Unlike the official 3D imager glasses where the coloured wheel is fully enclosed, on the Madtronix design it is exposed, and one's nose is approximately half an inch from the spinning wheel. However, there's no need to worry. Since the design is based on a modified welding mask which is of sturdy construction, the space between the wheel and the nose remains constant. When removing the mask during a game. Either flip up the visor or better still turn off the power before removing the imager from your head – in that way both your nose, fingers and colour wheel are saved from accidental damage. During game play the whirring sound reduces. It seems the speed of the spinning wheel is ramped up high during the beginning of a game so that it gets its speed up quickly. Once the optimum speed has been reached the noise reduces and the user soon forgets about this sound during game play. This effect where more whirring noise is heard at the beginning of the game start sequence is identical with that of the MB 3D imager.

In operation the 3D imager performs as good as the original MB 3D Imager.

With the 3D imager in action you really feel immersed in the 3D games. The Madtronix 3D Imager is not supplied with any 3D games. If you don't have the three officially released 3D games cartridges (3D Mine Storm, Narrow Escape and Crazy Coaster), Madtronix can also sell you a cartridge with the games on one cartridge. Alternatively, the binaries are available on multi-carts and are also available for download from a number of websites. Two different colour wheels are provided: One specifically for 3D Mine Storm, and another wheel for Narrow Escape and Crazy Coaster. This mimics the situation for the MB 3D imager where the respective cartridges were supplied with different colour wheels.

One thing that should be mentioned about this technology is that a small percentage of people do not see the 3D and colour effects to the same level that the vast majority do. Some also claim that they get headaches when using a 3D imager. For the purposes of this article I spent several hours playing the 3D games with the Madtronix Imager. I typically played the games in half hour bursts. After half an hour of game play I would remove the imager and do something else, then come back and have another go for half an hour. I am pleased to say I didn't suffer any ill effects the games.
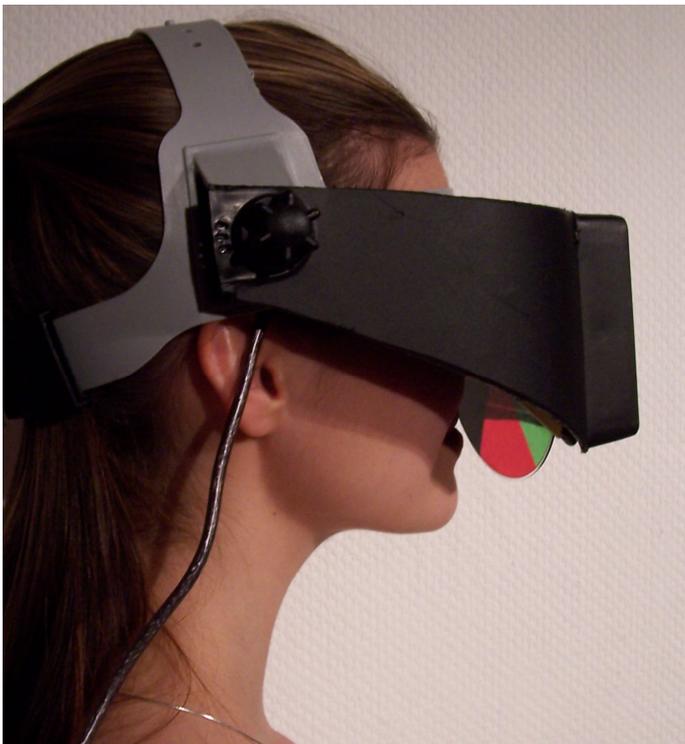
count

Review: Madtronix 3D Imager (continued)

This article is primarily a review of the imager rather than the games but a quick mention of the games and their game play is worthwhile. I enjoyed playing 3D Mine Storm the most, followed by Narrow Escape. In 3D Mine Storm the 3D representation is excellent and fully justifies a 3D Imager purchase. With Narrow Escape, the 3D effect is not so effective and there appears some double imaging. This is an original issue with the MB 3D imager too and probably also depends on the player. The colour is fantastic though. For me Crazy Coaster was the most disappointing of the games,

3D games available which shows off the true 3D capabilities in the best way possible. 3D Sector X is a more recent 3D game by Fury which also is reportedly a very good 3D game.

In the original advertising of the time for the MB 3D imager, mention was made of a 3D version of Pole Position. However, to date no fully working prototype is known to exist. Its worth mentioning that there is a binary claiming to be 3D Pole Position that can be found on some multi-carts, but this one does not function beyond the initial start screen.

seeing double imaging. The Vectrex FAQ states that sitting further back from the Vectrex screen gives an improvement to the image quality. The long lead of the Madtronix imager can help to facilitate this.

The Madtronix 3D imager product is not new. The first imagers were developed in late 2005 but were plagued by unsatisfactory colour wheels. In 2008 the second generation 3D imager was released together with the fourth generation colour wheel. The current 2014 product represents the state of the art and is now technically mature.

All in all, the Madtronix 3D imager is an interesting product. It allows the user to play 3D colour games just as well at the original MB 3D imager, but at a significantly cheaper cost. For the Vectrex fan who enjoys new experiences I would recommend this product. In fact if anybody is lucky enough to own the original 3D imager, and still wants to enjoy 3D Vectrex games, it is probably preferable and more sensible, to leave the MB imager safely in its box, and wear out the Madtronix imager instead!
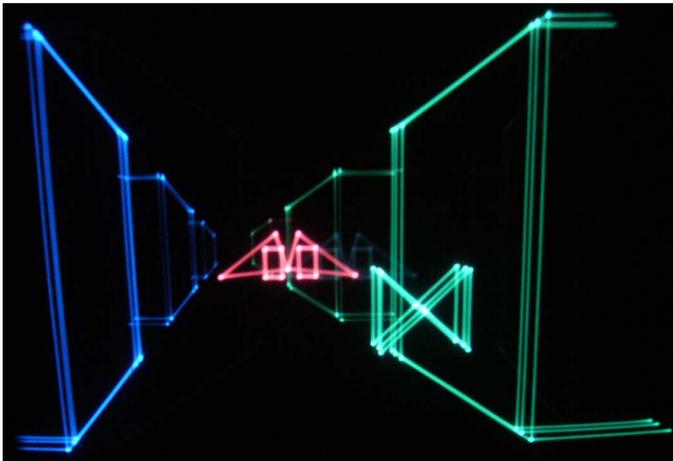
The 3D imager with two colour wheels (one for 3D Mine Storm and the other for 3D Narrow Escape and Crazy coaster) is currently 79€ but Madtronix says the price will rise once he has honored existing orders.
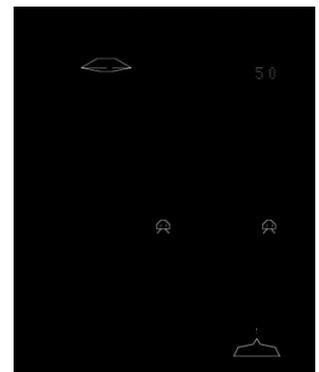**VectrexMad! Rating 4.5/5**

Narrow Escape (as viewed with the 3D imager). Of course what can't be captured in this picture is the sense of being in the game, with objects flying into the player's face and behind their head.

not so much for the 3D effects but rather the lack of game play.

There are a couple of other games/demos available (3D Lord of the Robots and Sledge 3D) but I did not have access to these. 3D Lord of the robots is a modern homebrew by Fury Unlimited and has been reported as one of the best

The Madtronix imager must be the only Vectrex peripheral to have a cable length greater than 1.5 m (at least my one did) that connects to the joystick port. However, this is useful because it ensures that the user can optimize their viewing position. That's important because some users of the original MB 3D imager have complained of

Homebrews in development

Since mid last year there seems to be a Vectrex renaissance going on and there have been a lot of new homebrewers announcing new software for the Vectrex scene. Some of the games have been released as early demos and some are expected to be released in cartridge form. Keep your eyes peeled for the following:

Nagoya Attack by KidQuaalude – this is a different take on the well known Space Invaders theme. Basically you have to shoot at growing numbers of aliens in each level before they reach you. The game is a beta version at the moment. The game appears simple but it's actually quite addictive and playable. Take your eye of the game and in later levels it's all to easy for the game to end:- The player only gets one life!

The game is unusual for Vectrex games in that it manages to play music on two channels of the Vectrex's sound chip during game play, leaving the third channel for sound effects. A demo file is available.

# Homebrews in development (continued)

NOX by Marblemad - NOX is a top down racing game not looking too dissimilar from the original Atari arcade game called Gran Trak 10 which was released in 1974. So you drive a car with an over head view at the course that your car has to race through.

Not a lot more information is known about this game so far other than it will allow either one or two player modes, has music, will offer support for VecVox and will have multiple racing tracks. The game is approaching 32KB in size, and the author going by the name of Marblemad hopes to make a cartridge release. This cartridge is likely to also include a game, from his mate Chris Malcom, author of the Nagoya game.
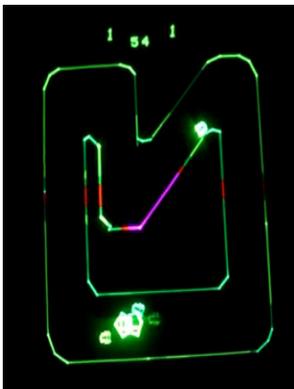
Bloxorz by Frank Buss – Bloxorz is a a scaled down port of a modern flash based PC game puzzle game called Bloxorz. Like the original, the aim of the Vectrex game is to get a moveable block to fall into a square hole at the end of each stage. The block is moved around the stage by the joystick and you have

to avoid the block falling of the edges. All this takes place in a pseudo 3D environment and the block appears to "roll" along.
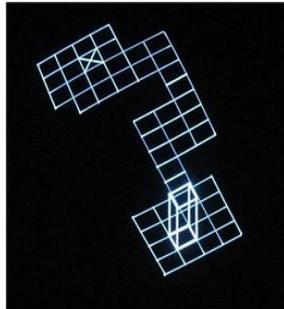

The game is not finished and was actually written as an entry to a 2013 Summer games Retro -challenge competition. A ROM file has been released.

I've played this game and although at the time of writing it is not finished (only three stages), there is something strangely satisfying when managing to get a block through a square hole.

P1X3L-pushr by Alex Kazik – this is a puzzle type game based on a game with the same name for the Commodore 64 and written by the same author. The game shows a birds eye view of a floor plan. You must move your player around the floor and push boxes into target areas. When the player is moving forward, the boxes can be pushed; the goal is to move all boxes to the target areas.

There are six floors to complete. At 2KB the game is very much a demo and as such lacks sound and after completing all six floors

there is nothing further to do. The game was created for the Coding Compo at the DoReCo-Party 2013, Germany. For budding game developers not only is the ROM file included for free download but also the full source assembler code.
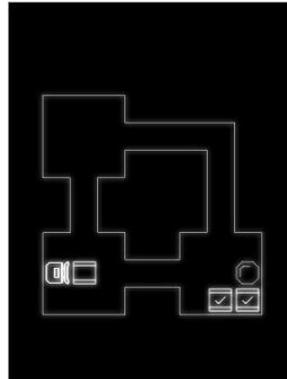
N.B.Z. (Niemand Bleibt Zurück) by Der Luchs – At the time of writing N.B.Z is very much a work in progress with the author giving regular video updates on YouTube You have to guide a little man across various screens avoiding contact with a lot of projectiles. Der Luchs is employing cut scenes in-between the screen levels. He will also be employing the VecVox speech synthesiser in the game.

AVE MARIA! by Der Luchs – in this game, you must steer your ship through

approaching asteroids.

The game is very much like that of the Revival Studios Vectrex game called Astro Dodge. However, there are some twists to the game. For example as well as dodging asteroids the player must also collect free souls that are floating in the space. Development is ongoing.

Bombbenhagel by Der Luchs – in this game bombs come falling down the screen, and the player must move the cross hair over the falling bombs to eradicate them. It's a simple little game but looks to be really playable. The game is completed and will only available on the next Multicart by MADTRONIX.

All of Der Luchs' games are accompanied by really fantastic musical scores

I ran out of space to include more homebrews here. But the one that I am most looking forward to is Vector Patrol by Kristof Tuts (author of Vectrexians and Vector Pilot). I've been lucky enough to try out the beta and it's awesome.

That's all folks, VectrexMad!