COSMIC WARTOAD

THE SETTING
The Queen of the Cosmic Wartoads has been abducted and imprisoned by THE RYGELLIAN SLIME BEASTS, their deadliest foe.

Chained beneath the murderous Sludge Saw in the King's chamber and transformed into an apparition of horror to the Wartoads (namely a human female), her fate is measured by the descent of the blade, which unless stopped will slice her in two!
The task of rescue has fallen to you, the most heroic Cosmic Wartoad, to traverse the Rygellian Time-Void, reach the Slime King's lair and dismantle the deathly machine with your Cosmic Tool Kit.
The eight pieces of the Tool Kit are scattered around the Time-Vacuums of the Void and must be collected en-route to your goal.
They are: Intergalactic whisk, Chronosynclastic stanley knife, X-Ray Specs, Stellar fish, Death-ray smutt gun, 3 million megawatt light bulb, Cosmic axe and a Zippo lighter.
The reward for success is the hand of the Queen and all her Kingdom, the penalty of failure is death!

LOADING
Type LOAD "" <ENTER> [Note there is no space between the two quotes]. The " is obtained by pressing SYMBOL SHIFT and the P key simultaneously. For further instructions consult chapter 6 of your manual. Now press PLAY on the recorder. The screen message should appear and the game will load automatically. If this does not happen try adjusting the volume and tone controls up until loading takes place.

THE GAME
The various elements and objects in the game are described in the following notes, read thoroughly for maximum playing power.

TIME VOIDS
In the Regellian Void, time and space do not operate and traversing must be achieved by moving between Time nodes (Oases in time). There are 64 of these Nodes in the Void interconnected by Vacuums where the monsterous servants of the Rygellians lurk . . . bent upon destruction.

THE TIME PARADOX
The only real measure of time and space is in fact your destination – the King's lair. This contradiction is demonstrated on screen by the use of "Time Windows," superimposed upon your "Real" when and where.
You traverse the Void by moving from one window to the next and during the transition between windows will be afforded a moment to survey events in the King's lair, in particular the progress of the Sludge Saw as it moves inexorably towards the Cosmic Queen!

TIME GRID WINDOWS
This is a map of the Rygellian Void in the form of a grid, each square representing a Time Node.
The grid is colour coded to demonstrate the different properties of different Nodes.

Green: The time node currently occupied.
Purple: Power node at the end of the time vacuum [leading to one of these is a Lilly Power Window: for recharging your weapon . . . see under "Constant Recoil Alpha-Pellet gun"].
Yellow: The bottom left-hand corner of grid – your destination (the grid next to the Slime King's lair.)
Red: Locked time tunnel.
White: Unlocked time tunnel.
Cyan: Ordinary "Node".

COSMIC WILLY
In the Time-Grid window you control Cosmic Willy (a tadpole which acts as a cursor) allowing you to select your next Time Node – move Willy over your chosen Node and press fire (or key equivalent) and you will be thrust into the Time Vacuum between your present Time Node and the selected one.
[N.B. You cannot travel to any Node at will however, only those in immediate proximity, Up, Down, Left or Right of your current Node (Green grid square) or Willy will voice his displeasure!]

TIME VACUUM WINDOWS
The path between the Time Nodes is a "TIME VACUUM." There can be one, two, three or four separate Time Windows and each of these contains one of 3 different foes, ["The Rygellian Nasties"].
In each Time Window you must engage the nasties and fight to the death . . . yours or theirs. If you succeed you will be transported to the next window in the Time Vacuum, or if its the last one back to the Time Grid Window at the node you have reached. If defeated you'll be transported to the Time Grid window at the Node you tried to leave (and also lose a life). If you lose all 3 lives you'll be returned to the beginning of the game with 3 new lives, but remember the Sludge Saw has been descending continually so now you'll have to be that much faster!

COSMIC TOOL KIT
The eight elements of the vital kit are to be located in the Time Vacuum Windows as are the keys for the Road to Nowhere and Somewhere (see explanation later).

CONSTANT RECOIL ALPHA-PELLET GUN and THE LILLY POWER WINDOW
The main defence against all enemies is your Constant Recoil Alpha-Pellet gun; to operate simply press fire (or key equivalent).

The weapon must be periodically recharged and your ammunition status is displayed at the bottom of the screen. When your firepower reaches a critically low level the status strip will flash – if the gun's charge runs out completely you suffer the loss of 3 lives simultaneously! However there are Power Nodes where you can replenish your weapon (these are coded purple in the Time Grid).
The Time vacuum leading to a Power Node always ends with a Lilly Power Window and it is here that the gun is replenished (there is no restriction on the number of times you may visit a particular Power Node.)

NASTIES
There are 3 types of enemy which are colour-coded for their grade of nastiness (4 catagories) white, yellow, magenta and finally the most nasty, red. [The higher the grade the more difficult to defeat since you must reduce its power, grade by grade until all nastiness is gone].
However their task in defeating you is much easier; they merely have to up their level of nastiness to the one above.
The philosophy of survival in the Time vacuums is therefore quite simple – if it moves shoot it – if it doesn't move shoot it anyway; above all avoid contact with the nasties or anything they may send at you for its through these collisions that they will defeat you.
Here are your 3 principal foes:–

SLIME MASTER
Small but deadly, a single contact may be enough to bring you down. They are escorted by their fawning cohorts (Slime Pawns) who both protect their master and attack. These pawns will be reproduced should you dispose of them and vary in number depending upon the nastiness of their master. The status of the master is monitored on screen by a bar chart to the left of the Time Window.

SLUDGE SLUG
They always occur in regimented ranks and will throw sludge as well as hurling themselves at you. In their Time Windows you can only move left and right, so you must wait until they attack and then respond instantly shooting their Sludge and then the Slugs themselves.

The progress of battle is monitored by a large "Status Slug" below the Time Window, to the far right you have won; To the left, ignominious defeat!

FRENZIED FLY

The buzzing pests attack in swarms and have the same suicidal tendencies as the Slime Pawns, but with more vigour, making them very difficult adversaries. However sometimes they swarm together seemingly uninterested in your presence – then is the time to move in and annihilate them en-masse.
Status is monitored by a "Fly-in-the-Tube" to the right of the Time Window.

TIMES ULTRASONIC ROBOTIC DEFENDERS

These are your second line of defence against the "Nasties" roaming the Time Vacuums. One of these defenders is dropped automatically each time you score 1000 Toad points.
They delay the enemy who adhere to them for a certain time and are immobilised. There are 4 time grades denoting how long each defender lasts; green 10 seconds, red 20 seconds, cyan 30 seconds and white 60 seconds.
[N.B. The grade depends upon the difference between the Toad points and the Slime points accumulated so far].
The defender doesn't operate with every "Nasty," however, Slime Masters and Sludge Slugs are too powerful, in fact Slime Masters eat them as they pass over releasing any Pawns that may be attached!

ROAD to NOWHERE and SOMEWHEN

(A hitch-hikers nightmare)
This strange phenomenon of the Rygellian Time Void gives rise to the travelling paradox – namely to travel along the Road gets you nowhere but uses up time. The significance of the Road to your goal is that crossing it (rather than going down it) you are transported from one Time Vacuum to another allowing you to "Leap Frog" to another Time Node some distance away.
There are 8 occurances on the Road in the Time Void providing links between 4 pairs of Nodes. When you start the game the linked Nodes are coloured red in the Time Grid Window, before you can cross the Road and make use of the link you must find a key to the parked car which will move away as you approach the road allowing you to cross it.
[Like the pieces of the Tool Kit, the key to each of the links will be found in the Time Vacuums; simply pass over to pick up].
Next time you visit the Time Grid Window the key will be displayed on the right and the Time Nodes which have an "Unlocked" link will have changed colour from red to white. Once a link has been "Unlocked" by finding the key it will remain so throughout the game even if you run out of lives or Alpha-Pellets and are sent back to the start Node.

STATUS and SCORING

Dual points totals are constantly displayed:-
On the left are the points you have gained, Toad points; On the right are the points you have lost, Slime points. The greater the difference between them the higher wil be your grade of Timed Ultrasonic Robotic Defender. [N.B. Points are only gained and lost in the Time Vacuums between the Time Nodes].
On each side of the Grid Map is status information. To the left are displayed the 8 pieces of the Tool Kit – the pieces so far collected will be coloured, the ones not yet located will be black.
On the right are displayed the four keys from the Road to Nowhere and Somewhere; again coloured if they've been found, black if not.
Below the keys, your remaining lives are shown (you begin with 3) and on-screen information includes the progress of the Sludge Saw on its deathly descent! All elements of the game are colour coded to indicate their status as described in each section, including bar charts for the different "Nasties."

JOURNEY to SUCCESS

You begin at the Time Node in the top-right hand corner of the grid, and initially can only move down or to the left – your ultimate destination is the yellow Node in the bottom left hand of the grid the minimum number of moves to traverse the Void is therefore 14, though there is no restriction upon the number of times you may visit a particular Node.
Time is of the essence – You have 1 hour 30 minutes of Real Time to complete your mission,
[N.B. The space/break key will pause the game and restart when pressed again].

CONTROL INSTRUCTIONS

The game can be operated by either Joystick or Keyboard. Most Joystick interfaces are compatable and the Keyboard is user definable – the control selection is displayed on a menu before the start of the game.
The Joystick will move The Cosmic Wartoad ... UP, DOWN, LEFT and RIGHT as appropriate – [moving in a different direction to that which he is facing will turn him to face that way].
The fire button operates your Constant Recoil Alpha-Pellet Gun in the direction you are facing.
[Note. You **cannot** move and fire simultaneously.]
THE SPACE/BREAK KEY allows you to pause and restart the game.

HINTS and TIPS

1. The fire and movement control operating independently can prove an advantage. It means you can halt and fire by operating the fire control only and avoid collision with your foe (which as you know can prove fatal).
2. When battling with the Slime Master and his Pawns, it is most effective to out flank the Pawns defensive wall and shoot the Master himself (a bigger and slower moving target).
3. Clues to the location of Tools – Each time you complete 8 combat screens in succession (i.e. 8 without defeat) you wil be shown the location of one of the Tools next time you return to the Grid Window. At the top the word 'Tool' will flash as will one of the Grid squares (it will be useful to make a note of this for future use).
4. Some Time Vacuums are easier to traverse than others and there are more, or less, difficult ways to achieve your objective. It would be useful to map the different paths to build on experience you have gained, the chances of succeeding at random are remote.
GOOD SHOOTING!

COSMIC WARTOAD

Software designed and produced by Denton Designs from an original idea by Simon Butler.

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SPECTRUM 48k

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