



A BOY AND HIS BLOB

It is the twenty-first century and a crisis faces the rotund blob-like beings of Blobolonia. The Emperor has suddenly become a rather evil tyrant bent on force-feeding the inhabitants a staple diet of marshmallows and chocolate. This may sound fine to most people, but in reality not a lot of blobs like marshmallows and chocolate, preferring the lovely taste of jellybeans.

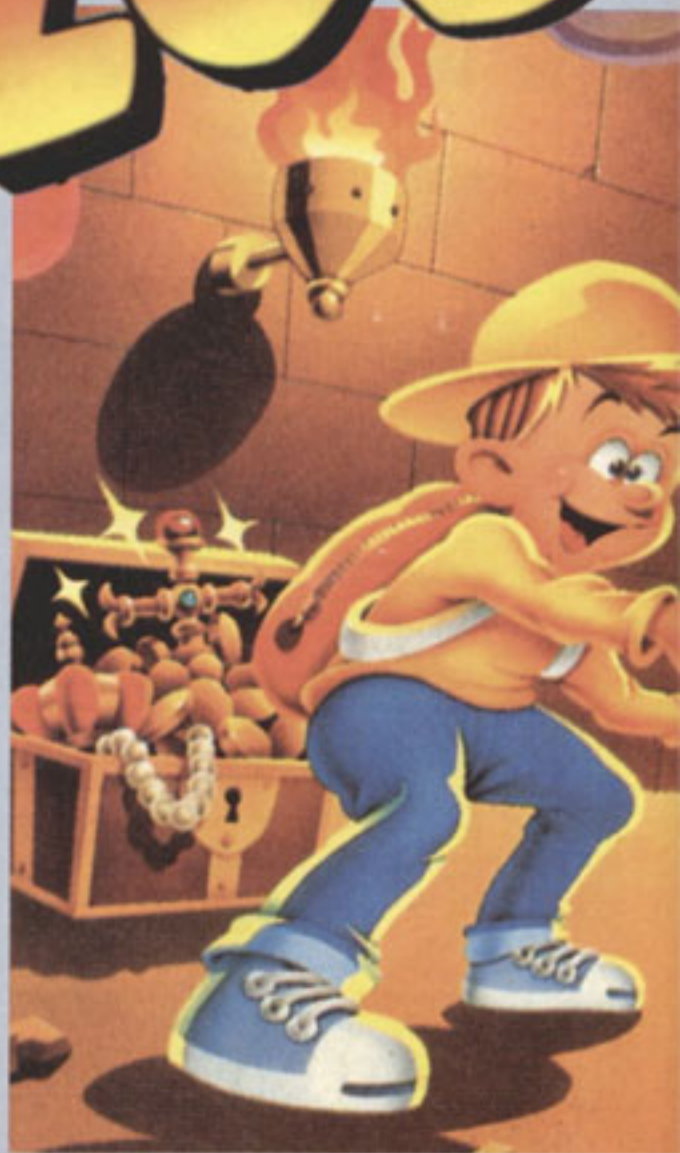
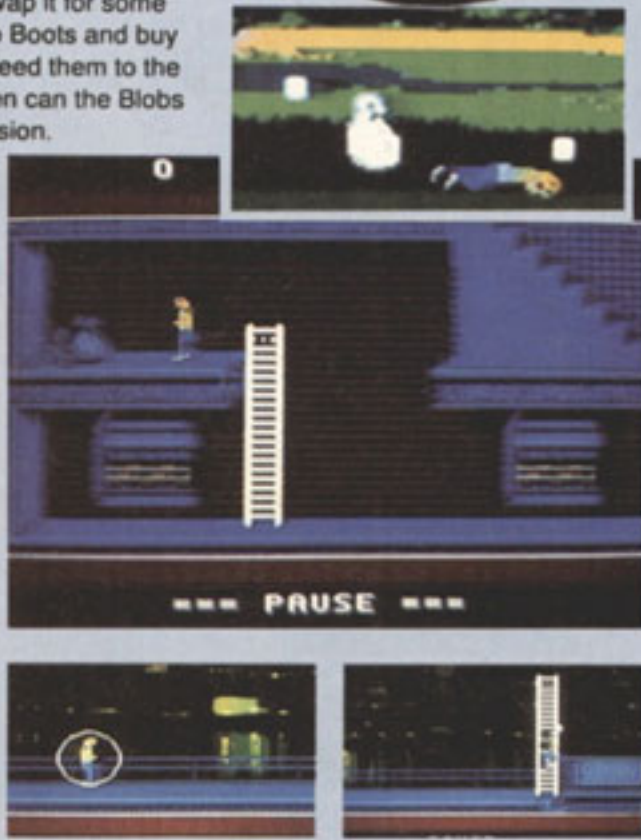
One such Blob (named Blobert, but he prefers to be called Blob by his friends) has escaped to Earth and has made friends with a young boy (draw your own conclusions about this). This young lad is pretty upset about the treatment his chum is getting and decides to brutally murder the Emperor and liberate the inhabitants of Blob. Hurrah!

Many days and sleepless nights are spent by the boy and his Blob formulating cunning plans with which to bring down the evil Emperor. In the end, our heroes decide to collect a load of treasure, swap it for some vitamins (why he can't just go down to Boots and buy some isn't explained) and then force-feed them to the Emperor back on Blobolonia. Only then can the Blobs be free from their gastronomic oppression.

► Use the licorice ladder to get the treasure!

JELLYBEAN REMIX

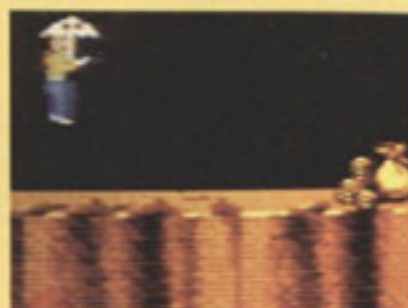
In controlled experiments, it was discovered that Blobs are instantly transformed into useful items by feeding them different varieties of jellybean. Our youthful hero carries a backpack full of jellybeans and since Blobert likes them so much, he's all too pleased to transform himself into various shapes - especially if his blob-like form can be used to solve some of the platform puzzles found in the game.



The first Blob-related puzzle. How can the boy reach the lower level of the subway? Blob can be changed into a hole simply by feeding him a punch jellybean. The boy can now fall through the hole.



Removing those manhole covers would give our youthful hero more access to the underground subway. Feed Blob with an apple-flavoured bean and he'll change into a jack, which should dispose of this problem!



My, what a long fall! Simply feed Blobert with a vanilla jellybean and he'll change into an umbrella. The boy can scoop this up and use it to break his fall!



To reach higher platforms, our hero can either feed Blob a licorice bean to change him into a ladder...





COMMENT



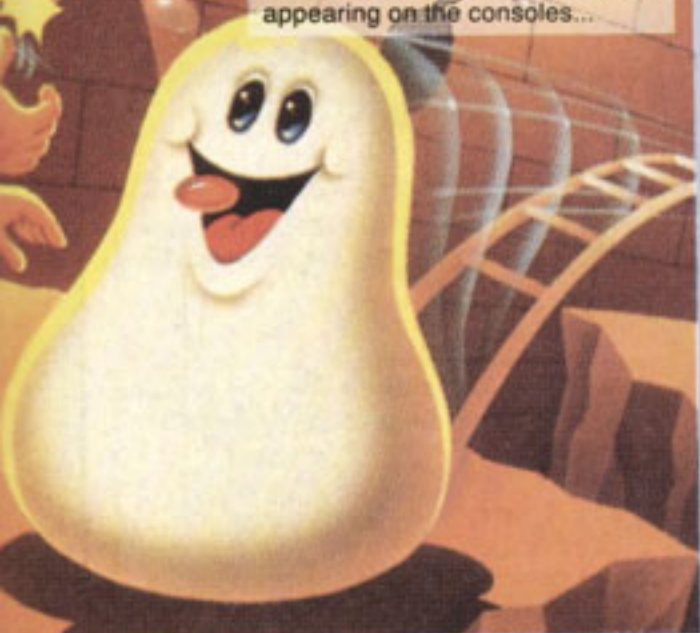
A Boy and His Blob scores no points for pulse-racing excitement. The pace of the game is quite sedate, and you have to get quite a way into the game before your reactions are put to the test. However, A Boy and His Blob is one of the most challenging arcade adventures I've ever played. What I like about it is that there's always more than one way to complete a puzzle. For example, cushioning

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that massive fall can be achieved with either the Cola Bubble or the Vanilla Umbrella. The game also has a superb graphic quality. Some of the backdrops are digitised and superbly coloured, whilst the sprites are fantastic. The boy moves smoothly and realistically and the Blob himself is a masterpiece of animation. He smiles inanely when he sees a jellybean being tossed his way, and has the most pathetic look on his face if you don't feed him for a while! There's months of gaming in this cart, and it's worth every penny. Nintendo owners should go forth and purchase immediately!

THE CRANE FILE

A Boy And His Blob was designed by almost legendary David Crane. This is his first Nintendo game, but he's designed and programmed countless hits in the past, the most famous being Activision's computer versions of the massive Ghostbusters film. Crane also worked on Pitfall, Pitfall 2 and HERO, versions of which may be appearing on the consoles...



▲ A visit to the drugstore!



▲ Partners in crime!



▲ Good party trick, eh?



When all the necessary vitamins have been collected, it's time to journey across the cosmos to face the Emperor. Use the root beer bean to change Blob into a rocket. Climb aboard for a first class ride to Blobolonia!



...Or give him a tangerine jellybean. This changes him into a trampoline, which the boy can use to jump higher and higher!



But the poor old Blob cannot join the boy on the higher platform. No problem! Simply throw down a honey-flavoured bean to change Blob into a hummingbird. He can now fly up to join his friend!



That gap in the scenery is too long for a jump, but Blob comes to the rescue yet again. Toss him a strawberry bean and he'll turn himself into a convenient bridge!



To protect him from long falls or to breathe underwater, the boy can give his blob-like friend a cola jellybean. This turns the blob into a bubble, which the boy can enter. Watch out for spikes, though!



COMMENT



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A Boy and His Blob is every bit as strange as it sounds. The gameplay is very unusual, with elements of arcade adventuring and puzzle-solving thrown together in a highly original way. The way the problems are presented is neat, requiring you to use your blob to the best of his transforming abilities. Some situations are quite tricky, and require plenty of lateral thinking to see them through, but they're never so tough that you give up completely - just try out a few beans and see what comes up! As well as being great fun to play, A Boy and His Blob looks and sounds brilliant. The graphics are tremendous, with superb sprite animation and stunning backdrops, and there are a variety of excellent tunes and effects adding a great atmosphere to the game. Put them together with the amazingly addictive gameplay and you've got a game that'll keep you playing for ages.



▲ Loadsa treasure!

GOING UNDERGROUND



The place to find your treasures is a vast, sprawling tunnel network located far below the city streets. Getting there is the only problem, or is it? Using Blob's special shape-shifting powers it shouldn't be too long before you're exploring the dangerous caverns. Watch out for the evil snakes though - they're pretty possessive of all the treasures that they guard. Also, look out for an underground water channel. There are bound to be loads of treasure in the watery depths. It's a shame the boy can't swim. Maybe Blob can help?



HEALTH FOOD HIJINX

Once you've collected some treasure, travel to the health store to buy some vitamins. There are several different types on offer. Not only do they come in handy for butchering the evil emperor, they are also used later on in the game to dispose of some of the nastier enemy sprites!



GAMEBOY BLOBMANIA

A version of this great Nintendo game is available for the handheld Gameboy. The object of the Gameboy version is much the same, except that the map is completely different. All of Blob's powers are in there and the graphics are quite nice, but unfortunately, the game's only available on import. If you're desperate to buy it, try to get an American version because all of the text on the Japanese version of the game is indecipherable (unless you can read Japanese, that is).



David Crane's



TROUBLE ON ELOBOLONIA

BY: NINTENDO
 PRICE: £34.99
 RELEASE DATE: JULY
 GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM
 LIVES: 3
 CONTINUES: 0
 SKILL LEVELS: 1
 RESPONSIVENESS: SUPER



PRESENTATION 91%

Helpful hints are present during the game, and the game itself is polished to perfection.

GRAPHICS 92%

Some of the best animated sprites yet seen in an NES game, coupled with excellent backdrops.

SOUND 80%

A nice selection of effects and a suitably inane theme tune.

PLAYABILITY 93%

The puzzling aspect is superbly presented and instantly addictive.

LASTABILITY 92%

A huge map to explore and loads of treasures to collect make this one that'll have you puzzling for ages.

OVERALL 91%

A superbly executed, very original, fun arcade adventure that demands a place in your NES collection.