

Game on. Dan Fineberg, left, and Greg Kythreotis work on *Cloud Critters*. Photo Luz Mosquera

Games makers grow their business in the back garden

By Luz Mosquera

Advances in technology allow for easier access to video games-making tools for the average person, and digital distribution now provides a direct line between developer and consumer. So, small groups of like-minded individuals have cropped up across the globe creating exciting new video games with little or no outside financial support and operating completely outside the confines of the traditional video games industry.

One such independent company, based in East Finchley, is Shedworks, named for the garden shed the team of four shares as their workspace. The team consists of James Valencia (sound designer), Greg Kythreotis (designer), Ed Davis (programmer) and Daniel Fineberg (programmer).

With a focus on app-based games available to download for Android and iOS, they have already released one game, *Weird Orb*, available free to

download, and are currently in the process of creating a new game, *Cloud Critters*, an arcade-style video game with traces of *Flappy Birds* and *Crossy Road*.

Democratised and flexible

Asked about this new independent movement in games developing Greg said: "The industry as a whole is more democratised; anyone can make progress, anyone can make games now. It's a young industry which makes it exciting because you can inform the discourse."

With no formal game design education, and their roles and duties within the company all fairly flexible, the team provides a unique approach through skill-sets developed from other training. This feature is what makes the independent games community exciting and innovative, providing a unique approach to games development.

More information on both *Weird Orb* and *Cloud Critters* can be found at www.shedworks, along with a development blog and further information on the new upcoming company.

Bin quest takes me right around the houses

By Diana Cormack

When *THE ARCHER* was asked to find out what had happened to the row of recycling bins at the junction of Elmhurst Gardens and East End Road it seemed quite an easy request to deal with. So I phoned Barnet Council and was told they would put me through to the relevant department.

After I'd pressed various numbers and listened to several needless messages, a pleasant young lady proceeded to ask a series of questions regarding my identity, prompting me to wonder if I should offer to send a copy of my birth certificate. It then transpired that I couldn't speak to anyone or even email my query direct; she would pass on my message.

Arms' length

I told her what was amiss. When she questioned me about the location of the bins, something told me I was not talking to a local. Far from it!

"Where are you speaking from?" I asked. "Warwickshire," she replied. But she assured me my message would be given to Barnet Street-based Services, who would contact me within 48 hours.

...and hands on

And they did! The next morning I had a call from a man in a van who was driving along East End Road. "About these bins. I can't see any. Where are they?"

My original message must have got somewhat garbled. Helpfully he told me he could see some recycling bins by the flats but none at the junction of Elmhurst Gardens and East End Road.

"That's because they're not

there," I wailed. Only when I began to describe what they might have contained did the penny drop. Not only that, but this Barnet employee was immediately able to tell me what had happened to the bins: they had been "used and abused".

Apparently people had put non-recyclable items in them and, as in other areas where bins were being mis-used or proving to be inefficient, the borough was removing them. Eventually they

will be re-sited at places where they are used efficiently. Residents will now have to use other recycling outlets such as Summers Lane.

Seed and plant swap day

This spring, the East Finchley Community Trust will be staging another Seed and Plant Swap event where you can take all your surplus plants and seeds and swap them. There is no entrance charge and no money changes hands.

Note that your perennial plants will benefit from being divided now so put some root cuttings in pots and take them along to swap.

The event takes place at Martin Primary School in Plane Tree Walk, off the High Road, N2, from 11.30am to 1pm on Saturday 18 April.

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