



● **LOCK** and load for more shooter looter fun — the first campaign DLC for *Borderlands 3* has landed. Moxxi's Heist Of The Handsome Jackpot sees you

recruited by Moxxi to help take control of the infamous Handsome Jack's casino-slash-space-station The Handsome Jackpot. It's stylish and a blast sensation.



● **SOME** jokes can go too far but, for Conan Chop Chop, it's time to laugh. The game was originally announced as a Funcom April Fool's

joke, but the fan feedback was so strong it now has a release date on February 25. Expect a full-on stick-man hack-and-slash adventure.



BUSY BEES AREN'T ON THE HONEY

WE love a good simulator game — from being a train driver to mechanic to a fisherman and even a bus driver, the sim genre is always bringing something new to the table.

The latest to land will also create a buzz — Polish studio VARSAV Games' *Bee Simulator* sees you shrink down to live the life of a bee.

It's worth noting straight away that while this is a game there is a very healthy hit of anthophilia information so be prepared to learn a fair bit about the black and amber honey-makers.

Joking aside, the game aims to hand out a serious message about the importance of bees to the planet at a time when climate and environmental concerns are at an all-time high.

You start by taking control of a new-born bee that has to help the hive as well as search for a safe location to set up a new home because the current one is under threat from humans. For the most

Bee Simulator

Xbox One, PS4, Switch and PC £29.99

part it is a "nice" tale with a fair amount of heart, but you never really lose the main focus — bees are good and they are very important to our future.

It's an open world affair so you get to fly around a good-sized park complete with a mix of interesting areas.

They range from a fun fair to a boat house and there's even a zoo, so your bee gets plenty of interesting stuff to see as you fly around.

And, of course, because you are a bee, you are in a land of giants.

Everything from humans to dogs and even cupcakes tower over you.

The game is split into a main mission that sees you help to relocate the hive. That will take you a few hours to complete and then there is a selection of side missions such as battling other insects such as

wasps and hornets or a dancing mission where you find the location of rare flowers.

But none of them are really very challenging and that's when the issues start to sneak in. You never feel truly pushed and a lot of the game can become repetitive after a while because you'll spend most of your time trying to complete the side missions once the main tale is complete.

There is some variety in how the game handles each activity — the fighting is based on matching sets of button prompts whereas the dance sees you having to follow the movement of another bee and keep in time. However, things never really evolve beyond that.

When you're not on missions your main focus will be to collect pollen from flowers and return it back to the hive.

That banks you points that you can spend to unlock different

bee skins as well as hats and other collectables. It all adds a little incentive to a slightly boring, if important, activity of collecting pollen.

The game looks OK. There is a great sense of scale but, oddly, there is very little for you to interact with in the world. That is a let-down because, at times, you feel like a ghost floating around a dead world.

Like the look, the sound is OK. The highlight is that the actors put on "fun" voices although it can grate after a while and gives you the feeling that this has been aimed at a younger audience.

The soundtrack does little more than back up the story and keep things upbeat.

This is an interesting title with a solid message that is packed with bee facts. There is nothing wrong with that, but it needs to remember that it is a game and you need decent play. It is all a little overly simplistic.

Younger gamers may get more from it, but it certainly doesn't damage the bee genre. ★★★

● THE rumour mill has been in overdrive after eagle-eyed gamers spotted that Capcom has renewed trademarks on some series that haven't seen action in years.

Dino Crisis, Darkstalkers, Power Stone and Rockman (better



known as Mega Man) all had trademarks filed at the end of November... but they could just be keeping the IPs up to date. However, the success of Resident Evil and fan demand for Dino Crisis all add fuel to the fire.

TOP 5 GAMES THIS WEEK

- 1 Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare
- 2 FIFA 20
- 3 Star Wars Jedi: Fallen Order
- 4 Mario Kart 8 Deluxe
- 5 Luigi's Mansion 3

● GET the leathers on bike fans, as TT Isle Of Man: Ride On The Edge 2 is on its way. Bigben have just released a trailer showing off the sequel's improved physics as well as other tweaks to this rock solid racer.

The main focus of the news is that development team KT Racing have added a new gyroscopic effect to every



bike in a bid to make them handle more precisely. They have also overhauled the brake and shock systems meaning it should feel closer to how real motorcycles handle. Though it's no secret that TT Isle Of Man: Ride On The Edge was on the extreme side of the sim racing world, let's hope the sequel will be a bit more accessible.



NEW MUSIC

By Jim Gellatly

NEON SEAS

WHERE: Glasgow.
WHO: Samantha Kelly (vocals), Davey Purdie (guitar/synthesizer), Calum Brown (guitar/synthesizer), Craig Harkness (drums).
FOR FANS OF: M83, Chvrches, The Naked And Famous.
JIM SAYS: Glasgow genre-shifters Neon Seas announced themselves a year ago with the self-produced single Salt.

But they'd already been slowly building their reputation as a live band by that point. Winners of Rebel Yell bourbon's battle of the bands in 2018, they also graced the stage at the legendary Barrowland as part of the Music Matters, Happiness Matters, You Matter gig for mental-health awareness.

Davey said: "We first got together at the start of 2018 with a vague idea of the kind of music we wanted to write. With plenty of hours spent in front of production software on a laptop, the songs started to come. We put together a live set and began gigging loads in 2018, trying to play as much as we could to get better."

"We were all fairly rusty performers at that time, having all been away from playing in bands for a while. It's been great to grow together as musicians and as mates."

At their core Neon Seas are an electro-pop band, but there are many elements to their music.

Davey explained: "From the start, we've been dancing between genres, dipping our toes in certain textures and ideas from various styles like shoegaze, synthpop and post-punk. As we've grown, the songs have got bigger sounding and we've been more willing to tap into certain ideas you wouldn't normally hear in alternative pop music."

From the accomplished bedroom recordings that resulted in Salt, the band moved up a gear for their next releases. They hooked up with alt. pop production wizard Stephen A. Watkins (aka SAW).

Davey continued: "We worked with him in an amazing church in the Borders for Atmosphere and Dead Cells over a couple of days in the summer. It was very cool to work with someone who cares about your songs as much as you do. He'll pull a 14-hour shift with you no problem."

Dead Cells is the latest single to be unleashed. Selected as a Single of the Week on BBC Radio Scotland's Afternoon Show last month, the band describe it as their "heaviest track yet. The soaring synths, coupled with infectious rhythms, create a captivating sound."

Recently joined by Craig Harkness on drums, the group have high hopes for 2020. They play King Tut's on January 22 as part of the New Year's Revolution showcases supporting Linnithgow's Altinak.

Davey said: "We're really excited to kick off what we hope to be our biggest year yet, by playing in one of our favourite venues. Our plan is to get out there as much as possible and make some new friends. And do what we love doing!"

More: www.facebook.com/NEONSEAS
● Jim presents a weekly showcase of New Music on Amazing Radio, Sundays 2-4pm.

www.amazingradio.com
www.jimgellatly.com
Watch video of band at thescottishsun.co.uk

