

Bring Back Nightmare: the future

The Past

Years and years ago, Paul McIntosh - through the medium of TES - started the Bring Back Nightmare campaign. Yeah, there were only 16 readers of TES, and so the campaign was fairly unsuccessful, but the concept of BBK started and was fuelled.

This website, along with other Internet resources - such as NKTP, The Homepage of Nightmare, and perhaps most importantly, bringbacknightmare.co.uk - gave the BBK campaign new life, with the relaunch of BBK, as well... much more and widespread interest than before. The original petition, which ended up gaining 2000+ signatures, got absolutely nowhere, despite all our hopes that it would.

Then along came Elessar and thegreatestquest.co.uk, which evolved into Mystara and bringbacknightmare.co.uk, which re-re-started the whole campaign, again with new hope and a much more realistic goal: get Nightmare back onto our TVs, in whatever form.

Okay, eventually we sort-of achieved our aim; Nightmare got repeated on Challenge? and Televirtual started making Nightmare-VR. This appeased both parties: people who wanted old KM repeats and people who wanted a new series of KM (even if the KM-VR pilot wasn't all that great, it was better than nothing at all).

But now we are stuck.

1. The Present Situation

The way I see it, we have three BBK-related aspects at the moment:

- (i) *Repeats*. One of the main aims of the original BBK campaign was to get repeats of the original Nightmare shown on UK Television. To some extent, that has been achieved. Agreed, Nightmare has not been shown on terrestrial television (barring a short appearance on Channel 4's *The 100 Greatest Kids' TV Shows*), but all eight series have been repeated and re-repeated on Challenge?. This was our first triumph.
- (ii) *Future Nightmare*. Our second triumph was the announcement that Televirtual reacquired the rights to Nightmare, and that they started work on a new version straight away. Admittedly, the reactions to KM-VR were mixed; some people liked it, some people didn't. The pilot was probably mediocre at best, but what it did do was showcase the new technology that Televirtual were using for KM-VR. It wasn't what we had expected, but it was something.
- (iii) *Fan-Made KM*. During all this, the Nightmare RPG was still being made. A series has not been broadcast since 2001; however, every year the RPG group met up and filmed another series. We now have 4, 5, 6 and 7 in the reserves.

What's a shame is, there is a fundamental flaw in all these plans. Challenge?'s repeats of all the series is good, but their license is bound to run out soon. KM-VR has been cancelled by Televirtual, and the RPG is currently on hiatus as we decide what's going to happen to it (and with it).

2. BBK's Presence, 2000 – 2005

While all of this was going on, BBK still existed. As I write, bringbackknightmare.co.uk is still up and running; the petition was slowly being added to, and even though there was not much activity, BBK was still in existence (after all, it is in many ways the glue that holds the community together!) Although with the announcement of KM-VR and the Challenge? repeats, the BBK board was deleted from the Knightmare Discussion Forum (and replaced by a What Knext? board), BBK remained in existence, but sadly its presence was not widely published any more. Very few of the Forum's newbies said anything about BBK, the focus had shifted more onto tape trading... it was a saddening sight. Yet the petition was still being sent out periodically, but the responses were standard, and they all said the same thing: politely but firmly, no.

3. Future Plans

We must give BBK a kickstart. Whatever your views on Knightmare at the moment and/or in the past/future, BBK is the unifying force behind the Knightmare community. BBK must return and in full force.

We were oh-so-very close to achieving our aim in 2004. We had repeats and a new series in development, but both are rapidly slipping through our grasp. When I consider the state of KM resources available (RPG excepting), I see this:

- a) *Repeats*. Originally, this was the primary aim of BBK... but we've had it. Over the past three years, we've had Challenge? doing us a great service by showing Knightmare (and a documentary!). That's fine, but it's done. The main problem with this is that once Challenge?'s rights to Knightmare expire, it'll go.
- b) *Future Knightmare*. Admit it, KM-VR was cancelled. We don't know the reason why; Televirtual did obtain a Lottery grant which went, mostly, into creating a pilot which, sadly, was rejected by all the TV companies. If it had been successful, we could be watching Knightmare Series 9 now! However, I have to admit, Televirtual appear nothing but uninterested at the moment.

So what can we do about it then?

I propose a four-pronged plan of attack. We may have to focus on long-term aims, but if we achieve at least one of them, then we can begin to consider the new BBK campaign something of a success.

4. Target 1: Knightmare's Back Catalogue

This is an aim that has been talked about for some time, but has never been achieved... and, to be honest, probably won't be achieved, but we can at least try. I almost hate myself for typing this... but we need Knightmare on DVD. The debate about DVD vs. VHS has been sparking for a long time, but there is no other way of viewing Knightmare's back catalogue (plus, we could have a DVD and VHS release). There is perhaps not enough interest for this, but here are the reasons why a Knightmare box set would be a good idea:

- It's the only really reliable way of viewing Knightmare's full back catalogue. TV channels will lose their license after a while.
- It would generate more interest for a future Knightmare.

- Seeing it in the shops or advertised would remind people who have forgotten about it of its existence and affect on their childhood life! Mere mentions on the radio and TV have created much more interest in Knightmare, so why not this?
- Despite what the companies say, people would buy it. Rather a lot of people, in fact.
- It would enrich the Knightmare community; more discussions would be sparked if we actually had the episodes to hand.
- It would bring about an end to the illegal tape trading. Although this has softened in recent years, the idea of tape trading really has caused a massive blow to the Knightmare community since Tim Child requested that we ceased it (despite his assurance, a few years hence, that “we cannot stop you”!).

Also in Knightmare’s back catalogue is the original pilot, *Dungeon Doom*. This has never been seen by any of the Knightmare community; if there was a way we could get a hold of this...

5. Target 2: Televirtual – Future Knightmare

Knightmare VR wasn’t to everyone’s taste, and to be realistic, the pilot was disappointing. However, it did spark an interest in the community because, disappointing though it may have been, it was a new series of Knightmare. It was flawed, but it was a potential new series. This was what we were aiming for! And yet, it vanished.

The project was cancelled like Knightmare was axed: for very little good reason. Perhaps Televirtual ran out of money, perhaps they lost interest in the project, perhaps they just plain didn’t like it. But the project was cancelled.

If the company developing the programme don’t have enough interest in it, then how much interest are television companies going to take? This is why our target needs to change. We don’t need to keep pestering television companies for it. We need to get the attention of Televirtual. We don’t want to attack them, we need to show them just how much interest for Knightmare there is. We must bear in mind that Televirtual are the only company with the rights to produce Knightmare.

If anyone can do it, they can – and they should.

6. Target 3: Televirtual – KM-VR back catalogue!

Vaguely linked to the past two points:

- Only one episode of KM-VR was made available to the public: the pilot.
- Judging by official press releases, more than one quest was made, and definitely more than one episode, judging by what we saw in the pilot. Dungeoneer Arthur started the episode in Level 1, and hadn’t made it to Level 2 by the end of it. There must have been a complete quest somewhere along the way, unless the children were actors (which I don’t believe they were).
- It’s doubtful that Hugo Myatt and Mark Knight would have provided voiceovers for one episode. Plus, as Tim Child stated, “Treguard was on hand to offer advice to the teams.”
- New characters (such as Despair and Eli) were seen in the pilot as were old characters (Treguard, Fear and Lissard). There were even new floor puzzles (such as the Slice Me Dice Me room); surely all this can’t have been used just once?

- All of the above seems to suggest that a miniseries was made of KM-VR. Even if it only contained one quest, at least three episodes must have been made.

Three possible conclusions from this are:

1. There was no raw footage captured; the quests took place but only the pilot was filmed, and the voices overdubbed afterwards.
2. There was raw footage captured; the pilot was engineered and the rest of the quest was captured on tape but not generally released.
3. The entire quest/s was/were made into episodes of KM-VR.

As Tim Child has not revealed anything about this to the community, it's a possibility (albeit a very small one) that there may be a (small) Knightmare Series 9! It may very well have happened...

One prong of our campaign could be to get hold of this footage. Even if none of the TV companies accepted KM-VR, we know the demonstrations happened. If Televirtual realise how passionate we are, we may well get what so far has been an uncharted bit of Knightmare's history! We can only hope...

(Nota Bené: I have written to Tim Child asking for details about existing KM-VR footage. Answer pending.)

7. Target 4: Television Companies

Another admission.

This didn't work, it has never worked and it won't work until we get more interest. I hate to put it that bluntly, but the only channel that has ever shown any interest in showing Knightmare since the conception of the BBK Campaign has been Challenge?, and they've shown it!

Yes, we can – and should – continue to badger television companies about showing Knightmare, but until Televirtual actually have something to produce, there's no Knightmare to show!

8. Plan, Strategy, Target, Aim... Fire!

This is my proposition of our new campaign, in the order it should run:

1. Pursue the route of possible KM-VR footage.
2. Pursue the route of Televirtual making a new Knightmare.
3. Pursue television companies until they show a new Knightmare.
4. **Side Aim:** Get Knightmare's back catalogue released on VHS and/or DVD.
5. **Side Aim:** Acquire unreleased Knightmare footage, such as *Dungeon Doom*.
6. **Side Aim:** Keep getting people to sign the petition. We will never achieve anything if we do not have more support.

These aims are large. There is no reason why any of them should work, and I'm not expecting them to! However, if we do not try, we'll never know. Knightmare fever has never been so strong, and it is our time to strike while the Dungeon is hot!

So I urge you to heed the call: Bring Back Knightmare!

“Who knows, this could be the beginning of a national institution!” – *Paul McIntosh*

~ Pooka
22 October 2005