

ADVENTURE PROBE



VOL IV ISSUE 2 FEBRUARY 1990



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ADVENTURE PROBE

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United Kingdom - £1.50. Europe (Including Southern Ireland) £2.00. Rest of World (Surface mail) £2.00. Rest of World (Airmail) £2.50.

All back copies are still available commencing with Issue 1 June 1986 and are priced as follows:

Vol 1 Issues 1 to 3 £1 each (Europe £1.50. R.O.W. £2.00). From Vol 1 Issue 4 up to Vol 3 Issue 8 £1.25 each (Europe £2.00. R.O.W. £2.50). Vol 3 Issue 9 onwards £1.50 each (Europe £2.00. R.O.W. £2.50).

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ADVENTURE PROBE is distributed during the first week of the month. COPY DATE for contributions, advertisements etc is 14th of the previous month.

Please send all correspondence, subscriptions etc to the Editor. All payments MUST be in pounds sterling. All cheques and postal orders should be crossed and made payable to Adventure Probe.

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★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ HALL OF FAME ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

My sincere thanks to all the following readers who sent in contributions during the past month

Jim Struthers, Dave Barker, Antcrusher, Jim O'Keefe, Mike Garrard, Graham Wheeler, Roger White, Alf Baldwin, Neil Shipman, Paul Rigby, Dave Havard, Olav Reinert, Nic Rumsey, Frank Gray, Kez Gray, The Grue!, Hugh Walker, Gordon Inglis, The Wayfarer, Stuart Whyte, John Schofield, The Balrog, June Rowe and Paul Cardin

Special thanks to Allan Batchelor for this months great cover picture

EDITORIAL

Welcome to Vol 4 Issue 2 of Adventure Probe.

I start off this month, once again, with some words of thanks. Firstly, thanks to Gordon Ingils who sent me the lovely flag showing Garfield stuffing himself with a huge cream cake and shouting 'What diet?' I have fixed it on top of my monitor to make me feel better when I am feeling particularly huge! Secondly to Floyd for the large purple crayon. A big thank you to Joan Pancott for the lovely photographs of Probe readers at the Computer Show (I won't say who they are as I might want to use them later in Probe) and, last but by no means least to Tony Bevan for the beautiful pot plant. I am sure I didn't do anything much to deserve it. Tony because I couldn't answer your questions myself, but it was a delightful surprise and it really made my day.

We have a great new look letters section starting this month. Our new Letters Editor is Jim O'Keefe who has kindly taken on this job to relieve me of some of the work. I think you will all agree that the Letters section is one of the favourites and deserves more attention so that it can be expanded. I am sure that after you have read the new DISPATCHES section you will agree with me that Jim has done an excellent job and that that section couldn't be in better hands. Actually, it puts the rest of Probe to shame so I am going to spend this month experimenting with Time Works. First Word Plus on the Atari ST to see if I can improve the rest of Probe to match! There will be a Star Letter each month, the writer of which will receive a small prize for his/her efforts so start putting pen to paper as it could be YOU who writes the Star Letter next month!

Another new section starting this month is the Cartoon Kluges section by Kez Gray. This was originally intended for one of the Glossy mags but Probe has scooped first! The first one is actually a small solution but it was so unusual and original that I am sure nobody will mind just this once.

A few days ago I decided to start Dungeon Master all over again as I didn't get very far last time and I can now announce, with considerable pride, that I have just killed off that 'orrible dragon on level 14! I have also been playing Space Quest III but cannot finish it! I got as far as the last arcade sequence (I hate those bits) and my keyboard froze! Any suggestions (apart from throwing it out of the window!)? I also had a go with Bloodwych so see what it was like. I came face to face with a skeleton on the first level and, following my experiences with Dungeon Master, I promptly zapped it. This raised a chuckle or two when I mentioned it to readers - in the know - about Bloodwych. Apparently he wasn't an enemy, he was one of my party of helpers! Aren't adventures wonderful?

Nic Rumsey has sent me some good news for Amstrad adventures who are looking out for Infocom adventures. K & M Computers (0695) 29046 have between 15 and 20 each of Enchanter, Leather Goddesses and Hitchhikers Guides at £19.99 each and Castle Software (0782) 575043 have about 70 each of Ballyhoo, Cuthroats and Hollywood Hi-Jinx at £6 each. And Robin Matthews has passed on a warning to PC owners. Mindscape, Star Trek V will not run on an Amstrad 1512 or Amstrad 1640. It needs an 80286 chip machine i.e. XT compatible to run. As this game costs around £25 plus, this word of warning could save wasting time and money.

Well, I seem to have run out of space yet again so I will see you all again next month as usual. I hope you enjoy this issue.

Mandy



REVIEWS

WHIPLASH & WAGONWHEEL

Available for Atari STs from:

Zenobi Software, 26 Spolland Tops, Cutgate, Rochdale, Lancs, OL12 7NX

Normal price £7.49 incl p&p

Special price to Probe readers - ONLY £6.49!

You take the role of Johnathon Masterson hitching from state to state in 1958 America. Just as a sudden downpour begins to make itself felt, you gladly accept a ride in a truck driven by a man calling himself McTear. A roadsign announcing the village you enter looms into view and as you read the word 'Hanstville' a shiver runs down your spine and the truck splutters and rolls to a halt.

McTear leaps from the truck, noticing a diner across the road, and leaves you to decide the next move. Not being one to get stuck under a sump, you wait for McTear's return, but after some time with no sign of him you decide to have a look around for yourself.

You bump into several characters almost straight away who go about their daily business. Hanstville seems such a quiet place - even serene. But in the diner where you saw McTear head towards, an upturned chair and a half full cup of coffee look out of place. The owner, an unpleasant, brusque character named Georgio, denies all knowledge of McTear and seems to be in quite a hurry to lock up the diner. The town sheriff listens patiently to your story of a missing person, but seems content to let you do the worrying - and searching.

In Whiplash & Wagonwheel there are many characters to converse with, all of whom can offer information on various subjects - if you approach them correctly.

The adventure contains a usual half-and-half text and graphics screen format, although the graphics are digitized in part and are mostly of a very high standard. From a hazy, tree lined avenue to the closeup of an alleycat rummaging around the dustbins, it is clear that a lot of time and trouble have been spent on the graphics. The image of Wagonwheel, one of the baddies from the title, comes as quite a shock when you are treated (!) to a detailed picture of something akin to the zombies in the 'Day of the Dead' type horror films lunging from the screen towards you.

The adventure starts innocuously enough and gradually builds upon the sinister aspects of this gothic horror scenario by giving you odd pieces of information every so often. Personally, I would have liked a little more description and atmosphere projected from the text which at times moves away from it's role of keeping you alert and inquisitive by chastising seemingly innocent commands and injecting sarcasm into particular replies.

The adventure uses three additional windows which overlay the graphics part of the display. These are used to display lists of objects, people present and directions available and can be displayed or removed by single key entries. One niggling point is that by having these windows display information which is not included as a part of the location description, you have to specifically call up the windows to learn about what else is present. Because the characters in the adventure walk around, you can effectively walk by them without actually realising that they are present.

The adventure is distributed on two disks which can give you some idea of the size of the code involved. Upon loading from disk one, a digitized picture of (I assume) the authors appears, a la Vidi-ST type graphics - nothing like a bit of trumpet blowing, eh? And then onto the adventure proper with disk two. As you move around the adventure, the disk occasionally whirs into action as it pulls in yet another high definition picture.

The adventure can sometimes offer a clue through the use of the HELP command but this is displayed in a coded form, just to make things a little more difficult for you.

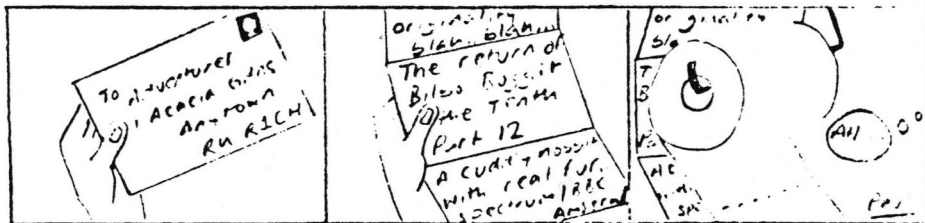
One feature that is just asking for criticism is the use of the EXAMINE and OBSERVE verbs. How often have you strolled around adventures content to cast a searching eye over objects and people with the use of the EXAMINE verb? Well, in Whiplash you have to differentiate between EXAMINING objects and OBSERVING people. If you try it the other way around, such as EXAMINING people, you are simply given a 'nothing special can be seen' type message rather than an indication that the verb is being used in the wrong context.

Extra features found in the adventure are the OOPS take-back command, memory save and load with MLOAD and MSAVE, and the ability to use IT for the last object mentioned and ME when making requests of other people. There are additional commands to control the displaying of the graphics and windows, and you can also program the function keys to return whatever text you want. I found this last feature particularly useful for setting up a key for "EXAMINE" which then saved me typing it in every time.

Whiplash & Wagonwheel is not an easy adventure, and its use of this graphics/windowing system coded by Softel (or is it Ulterior Motives?) takes some getting used to but is very playable once you've spent some time with it.

The text at times seems confused about how it should be supporting the horror side of the story. On the one hand, the text shocks you with its 'slimy, malodorous flesh' type lines, and then moves onto a more humorous style with the characters Bent Willy and his sister Magg the Slag - just try observing Bent Willy to see what I mean. Overall, although it's not exactly cheap by homegrown standards, the adventure fits together well and contains plenty of knotty puzzles. Worth a look.

Reviewer - Paul Brunyee.



IT'S MAGIC from Central Computing

Available for the BBC Model B on cassette for £2.50

Reviewer - Neil Shipman

Back in the summer of 1987 Simon Maren of Central Computing set a competition in Adventure Probe. What you had to do was come up with the name of the friendly tree which would accompany you on your exploits in his next adventure, IT'S MAGIC. Barbara Gibb's suggestion of "Witch Hazel" won her a prize, but nobody suggested "Woody" which was what Simon was thinking of. Well, better late than never, good ol' Woody has finally made an appearance.

It's the late 22nd century and the most popular career for ambitious young school-leavers is that of a recognised magician. To become one you have to be accepted by the International Magicians' Union which considers nominations for membership at its annual banquet, The Magicians' Ball.

In the first part of this two-part adventure your task is to learn 14 basic spells in order to become a worthy nominee. A colourful title screen is displayed as the game loads and you then find yourself coming out of school with your fellow students. A ceremonial burning of your schoolbooks is first on the agenda and, as you haven't got them all with you, a quick trip home is necessary.

Once you've been to the bonfire party there's plenty of time to roam around. You'll find that little seems to have changed outwardly in the last 200 years and the action takes place in a fairly ordinary town setting. But hidden away, mostly on little plaques, are the names of the spells you need to learn. These are shown in capital letters and once you've seen them you can cast them (although they're not all required in part one).

You'll come across an innocent adventurer who will, with a bit of unfriendly persuasion, provide some assistance before running off. Save Woody from the chop and he could prove a life-saver as he and your young friend, Diane, accompany you on your travels. You'll need help from Diane on more than one occasion and she'll stick with you right through the second part of the adventure too. Pity about poor Woody though.....

Part two has a clever loading screen with an animated picture of a magician which you can speed up or slow down by pressing the space bar. Enter the password you've been given at the end of the first part and you find yourself covered with a blanket of darkness, dreaming about universal magic. You've gained nomination to the IMU - now it's a matter of getting to the banquet to see if you'll be accepted as a member.

All 14 spells are needed in this part, but universal magic will have affected how some of them work. For example; BOUNCE doesn't just put a spring in your step - you can cast it at other things too; and the GRAV spell is a bit dangerous to use in the open air! You'll need to experiment with them all to find out what effect they have and when this proves to be useful.

You can't explore as freely as in part one because this part is split into three distinct areas and has a more linear solution. You begin in a strange complex, complete with lunatic asylum and, if you can avoid dying at the hands of the adventurer you encountered earlier, you'll progress through a wood to a brick building. A few simple problems to solve in half a dozen locations here then it's on to the world outside and, finally, to the banqueting hall itself.

A lot has been squeezed into the meagre 32K memory of the Beeb in this text adventure. IT'S MAGIC has 66 locations in the first part and 42 in the second, all of them being described at reasonable length as are many of the responses to your actions. I should have preferred it to have been smaller and for the space saved to have been given over to providing more information when examining things and casting spells. Without more clues your actions tend to be rather a matter of trial and error and some of the solutions to particular problems are far from obvious.

Typing WORDS will give a list of the verbs you can use and you'll need this because some are fairly obscure and the number of synonyms is very limited. The parser recognises GET/DROP ALL and the use of IT instead of the last noun entered, and it also enables you to string commands together, separated by a comma or full stop. A simple verb/noun input is often sufficient but you can also CAST spells AT something or ASK someone FOR something. The ability to STORE your position to memory and then RECALL it is extremely useful and is something which, although virtually standard on other computers, hardly ever features in adventures written for the BBC micro.

The humour in this adventure brought a smile to my lips on quite a few occasions. Simon Maren has a rather idiosyncratic style which players of "Mystery Of The Lost Sheep" will recognise. Remember the infamous "Eat Prombles" action in that one?! In IT'S MAGIC, though, it doesn't (thankfully) come across as quite so weird - and the ending has a particularly nice twist!

My review copy of the game was accompanied by very comprehensive documentation including a complete solution. I found the adventure quite difficult for the reason outlined above and had to refer to this on a number of occasions. For your money you'll get a "no frills" cassette and basic instruction sheet - but be prepared to send off for a question and answer help sheet giving all the information necessary to finish - I reckon you'll need it!

IT'S MAGIC is perhaps not to everyone's taste but it will keep you occupied - and frustrated - for a few evenings. And for only £2.50 it's worth taking a look at.



THE ADVENTURER

A pure text adventure

By David and Sheila Gray of S.D.L.Adventures with the aid of STAC. For Atari ST. Price £5. Cheques/Postal Orders to:

D.Gray, 34 Hunters Hall Road, Dagenham, Essex, RM10 8JD

Reviewer - Tony Browne

You start this adventure as Jason Kirkwood of Essex (well someone has to live there). You have won through to the finals of a world-wide competition. You are about to go on to Nation Cable TV on the "World Famous Adventure" programme to get your chance of becoming "The Adventurer of the Year" with the last quest. You are sitting in the Green Room waiting to go on to meet the host Adam Venture.

On being introduced to the audience you are tested for the final time before starting your quest. The answers are in the Green Room. After answering the question you are transported to a new world via a portal. This is the real beginning of the adventure.

You find yourself in a field by a wall and all you have with you is a pink card, nothing else (and I mean nothing - no clothes, no tools - nothing). On closer examination you find out just what your quest is and what you need to get back to the real world. So read the card carefully! From then on it is moving around the area of this new world, collecting, buying, selling and swapping things which will be of use to you and finding the thing that you will need to return to the game host and collect your hard earned prize.

The first set of locations are fields of different vegetables and a river, also a grumpy farmer. A deep dark forest which seems to be the place where you end up when things don't go quite according to plan. Then there is the farm from which you can obtain some clothes. There is a village to be explored and this is where the main part of the adventure takes place. You even get a trip to the seaside in this adventure! (and all for a fiver too!!)

The game is interesting enough for you to want to find the different bits and bobs required to get back and will be a mapper's delight as there are close to 200 locations. The atmosphere is just enough to keep you happy. The descriptions are just right. Most items have a use somewhere in the adventure.

I did find one or two problems (adventure type). Watch out for the Booby who can interrupt your progress somewhat if he finds you doing something wrong! This could be permanent too. You cannot talk to anyone or question anyone and as you have to swap or barter this is a shame but if you look closer you can discover just what is required by each person.

The scoring is interesting, for Arsenal fans! (Do they have any?). There are no help prompts but I do not think you will need any with this one. There is a telephone number to call if you are really stuck.

On the whole I really enjoyed this adventure. This is David and Sheila's first adventure for the Atari ST and I certainly hope it isn't their last. I enjoyed the humour in this adventure which comes across nicely. For a pure text adventure this should keep most people very happy. So if you want a little bit of magic for your Atari ST then send for this.

Scapeghost

By Level 9 and available for most computers. Prices £14.95 & £19.95
Reviewer Dave Havard. Played on Amstrad CPC6128 Disc.

The first thing to notice about this adventure was the loading screen. Very nicely done, giving a hint of the graphics to come. A pity then that as a disc version, the title screen is only shown for a matter of seconds. I must say though, that the graphics throughout are very well done and atmospheric. A good example of what can be done by using disc access as this one does. Once the game has loaded simply invert the disc, and graphics accompany many locations, and even certain incidents. Level 9 have certainly "brushed up" their act as far as graphics are concerned, though as I have already said, disc access is probably the reason.



Onto the adventure itself. The first thing to do is to choose which part, 1, 2 or 3 you wish to play. They are entitled November Graveyard, Haunted House, and Poltergeist, respectively. Each part can be played independently, so the old adventurers self-discipline is required here.

You play the part of Alan Chance, an undercover narcotics agent who got too close to the answer and was bumped off for the trouble. At the same time, your girl is kidnapped, and you would have appeared to have messed up completely.

Written in the style of Raymond Chandler, (he of the Big Sleep), you find yourself at your graveside, witnessing your own funeral. Sticking close to those who were closest to you brings quite a lot of information. Whatever happened to the saying "Never speak ill of the dead"?! Don't be afraid to wander around, things can't get any worse can they! I found following some workmen around quite amusing, but they are there for a reason, and nothing should be taken as just pure humour. Before long, help arrives in the form of an old publican, and jokes about spirits. In fact there is a streak of wry humour through the whole proceedings, without it ever interfering with the main storyline. Knowing the Austins, just what they intended.

The old chestnut about character interaction is here again. Use must be made of the many "shady" characters you meet, but they rarely respond to anything but the correct prompts. Still, it roots along quite nicely, and if you make a map of your proceedings, you will soon be picking up a few ideas to try. I found the locations mapped logically, and all the exits tied in together well, and there are lots of exits!

Several early problems include putting out a floodlight, helping a dog, entering a shed, and impressing your new neighbours enough to be

of some help. This makes for an original plot, well up to the best Level 9 standards.

There is a time limit, that of daybreak. As you only have 3 nights in which to complete all three parts. One frustrating point is the way that apparently random encounters can destroy a lot of hard work. This is so unlike Level 9 that I feel sure a logical, well thought out approach will be able to overcome this.

Scapeghost includes Ramsave and Ramload, and the graphics mentioned earlier scroll up and down a la Guild of Thieves. The whole thing is done in mode 1, so the text is a bit blocky, but the graphics are nice and colourful. All in all, well worth the money, especially as a good turn out may encourage the Austins to stay with us 8 bitters for a while longer!

=====

ONCE UPON A LILY PAD

Available for 48k Spectrum from Global Games, 4 Kilmartin Lane, Carlisle, Lanarkshire, ML8 5RT. Priced at only £1.99.

Reviewer - Margo Porteous

"What a lovely day to be a little green frog on a larger green lily in the middle of a muddy brown pond contemplating the verdant pleasures of the forest around you. Not so hot though, if you are in fact a terribly hunky prince cursed to like a froggy existence by an ugly old witch in a fit of pique. Well, there's only one way to remove the curse and that involves a princess so, little froggy knapsack on your back, you hop off into the adventure..."

Once Upon a Lily Pad is a PAWed adventure, written by Andy Brown, and obtainable from Global Games (Castle Thade revisited, etc). It has the usual RAMSAVE and you can input GET ALL and GET MUSHROOM AND EAT IT etc. The lettering is clear "Level 9" type, white on black, with your commands in yellow and other comments in blue or green. There are some lovely descriptions, as per example:

"The pebbles are wet and shiny and are a wee bit slippery under flipper. Despite this, you are able to move up the bank away from the unstable riverside. The forest overhangs the river here providing a deliciously green light which bounces from every pebble making them seem like a million emeralds." As the author says "very poetic!"

You don't get killed in this adventure, but the longer you stay in your frog body the more like a frog you become. The attentions of a couple of lady frogs have also been the source of anxiety, especially Sally, the frogette, whose father has a habit of turning up with a shotgun, and you are forced to go off into the sunset with your froggy bride-to-be, with no hope of returning to your human form.

I would have liked a little more time to explore my surroundings and examine everything, as Sally's irate father catches up with you with alarming rapidity (after about 10 moves), and I haven't yet found a way to evade him and escape the prospect of a shotgun wedding, but I am sure there is a way - if only I knew...

Although I'm not a lover of the "spoof" type game, I love games like "Shymer", and this kind of humorous adventure appeals to me and it makes a nice addition to my collection.

=====

MISER

River Software, 44 Hyde Place, Aylesham, Kent CT3 3AL Price £2.50
Reviewed by June Rowe.

Most readers will know the story of "A Christmas Carol" by Dickens, in which Ebenezer Scrooge, the miserly money-lender, is visited by ghosts and shown the error of his ways.

This new game from River Software is loosely based on that story- in the original, Scrooge is invited to Christmas dinner by his long-suffering but loving nephew, Fred, but refuses on the grounds that Christmas is "Humbug!"

In the game, you, the player, as Scrooge, must perform twelve good deeds to redeem yourself, rejoin the human race and join Fred at Christmas.

You can knock on the door of your nephew's house at any time, but you will be told that there is so much merriment going on inside that no-one hears you.

At certain locations in the game, exits are given as BACK and FORWARD, which refer to time and take you into the past and the future.

Certain items must be gathered from the past and the future, to enable you to do good deeds in the present.

The good deeds are varied, but in this user-friendly game, you will have no trouble figuring out what they are if you read the text carefully. They can be performed in almost any order, so there may be an infinite number of solutions, but this was an aspect of the game which I liked - I find it annoying in games to have to do things in a certain order to succeed. Add to this the useful facility of RAMSAVE/RAMLOAD and the fact that there is no maze in it, and you have a delightful game which is a joy to play.

There are less than 50 locations in the game, but a map is essential, because there is a fair bit of travelling around to find the proper place to drop things if you are carrying too much. You could lose something if it is dropped in the wrong place!



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THE ADVENTURE THAT GOT ME HOOKED!

By EMMA HEGGIE

Back in the days of 19***, when 16k Spectrums were still on the market, I had just been given for my 14th birthday my very own computer, a gleaming 48K Speccy. Most of the first games I bought for it were such arcade classics as Manic Miner and Atic Atac (remember them, anyone?), but after playing them to death, I felt the need for something a bit more intellectual. Going to my local software shop, now sadly defunct, I was directed to a shelf which contained several largish orange cardboard packs, containing such Level 9 classics as Colossal Adventure, Adventure Quest and Dungeon Adventure. Handing over my hard-earned pocket monwy, I rushed home clutching Dungeon Adventure under my arm, and loaded it up on my Spectrum.

Several hours later I was still trying to penetrate the huge maze of rooms in the dungeon, hampered because my torch kept going out and I couldn't find a replacement despite the fact that almost in the first location I found a miners hat with an unlit lamp on it. The adventure had some marvellously stylish touches, including the roaring pillar of flame, which could be seen flickering through the corridors two or three locations away (spectacular way of lighting a torch), and the entrance to the dungeon in the shape of an Orc's head with its tongue as the bridge across the shark infested river. The fact that during the adventure you could wander around the Orc's ears, nostrils and walk around inside its head added a touch of inventive genius which was evident in so many places in the game. One of the most inspired inventions in the game was the packing case, which had an upside-down dining room inside it which could be turned the right way up by pulling the chandelier, and which could, although I didn't realise it for quite a few weeks, be carried around as a sort of portable safe-house and treasure deposit. The game's unique transport system of coloured pedestals and collars also had me biting my nails and tearing my hair out until I hit on the obvious solution.

There were some horrible puns evident in the game - the rat that fled from the rancid fried potato - or stinking chip, the octopus that gave illumination in the dark room because "many hands make light work", the group of lions above the doorway before the pit, because "pride goes before a fall" sometimes made me groan out loud because they were so awful. The wide variety of puzzles, at varying degrees of difficulty, kept me going for several months.

Some of the puzzles were real six cup of coffee jobs, as anyone who has ever gone through the process of trying to escape from the Demon Lord's pit will testify, as this was almost a game in itself. After negotiating the hand room, the video nasty, the black spheres, the salt cellar, the gallows, the acid room and the executioner, the player finally escapes only to find himself in the Wight house, filled with (you guessed it) wights and zombies. Another classic was trying to get across the mushroom cave - a real toughie! All the old favourites from Colossal and Adventure Quest made appearances, including the Dragon, now extremely old, the spices, now rather pongy, the fire pit from Adventure Quest and the clutching hands and staring mask in the swamp from the same adventure, although the swamp had dried up and the hands kept crumbling into dust by the time of Dungeon Adventure. The Will O'Wisp from the same swamp was still around, although shrunk to a couple of inches in height and floating miserably beside the puddle that was all that was left of the soggy morass. One of my favourite puzzles was escaping from the Roc's nest - Dungeon

Adventure must be the only adventure to date in which you have to "hug grub"!

Despite the fact that there were no graphics, a very limited two-word parser and none of the ramsave/oops facilities we now take for granted in most adventures, the inventiveness, sheer size and variety of Dungeon Adventure made it a classic and still immensely playable today. I never did complete the adventure properly, and eventually had to send off for a cluesheet to help me finish it, but from that point I was completely hooked on adventures, and have been ever since.

.....

NEW YEARS RESOLUTIONS

Confided to Probe by DAVE HAVARD

- 1) I will save my position regularly.
- 2) I will say hello to the wife before switching on the computer when I get home from work at night.
- 3) I will make a map as I go, not several weeks later by memory.
- 4) I will not look at any hints and clues for the adventure(s) I am currently on.
- 5) I will stop treating work as a break from adventuring (well, I'll try anyway).
- 6) To write to Probe every month if I can think of anything interesting to write about. (That's the best one yet!...Ed)
- 7) To finally get round to writing MY adventure (*see later).
- 8) To clear out all the titles I know I will never get to play.
- 9) To stop boring people to death talking about how good Infocom titles are (especially people who don't know a Zorkmid from a paddleball!)
- 10) To try and remember the names of my two children without looking it up on a database first.

.....

MORE FAMOUS LAST WORDS

This time from GORDON INGLIS.

"I'm going to the loo ... don't touch that keyboard"
"Don't let the cat push against the Multiface it will make it....."
"It should load the saved position at the same volume level..."
"I'm sure this was where I could JUMP ACROSS last time..."

.....

PERSONAL COLUMN

A message from ANTCRUSHER for the GRUE!: He says, "I always thought grue was what Chinese people used for sticking things together! If you put a lot of grues in water with some tomatoes and boiled it up, would it be called tomato group! Mmmmm tasty! What's this special food that used to be served in Dickensian orphanages? It's usually referred to as "grue 'ell!."

To WALTER POOLEY. "I would like to thank Walter through Probe, and so thank him publically for all his kindness and his generosity to me." From CLAUDIO BALZI, Via Monte Amata 5, Milano, Italy.

.....

DIARY OF AN ADVENTURE PLAYER

By ANONYMUM

October 1

Package arrived from FLS, looks like Starship Quest, goody, goody - I'll have that completed in no time 'cos I've played Magnetic Moon. (I still wish that I'd entered the competition. I'm sure I would have won it). Fed the family on muesli and carrots, dusted the carriage clock then loaded SQ. Couldn't get off the ship so did the Telegraph crossword instead.

October 2

Got off the ship, but forgot to collect my flashlight, felt so depressed so I took a valium and made myself a sardine sandwich. Fed family on last weeks lasagne.

October 3

Bag of goodies arrived from Global today. Hid it from husband and hoovered the duvet. Made progress on SQ, loaded Global games as husband and children munched crisps and mars bars.

October 4

Felt defiant today and ate soft boiled egg, ignored pleas from starving family and carried on with SQ., I'm too good for these games as I completed part one in no time. I expect I'm the first person in the world to do so. Part 2 should be a doddle! Took a look at Thor from Global, this looks easy.

October 5

Have designed a conveyor system to stretch from Sainsburys to my kitchen. I need only to press a button and the food will be conveyed straight into the fridge freezer, it will save me heaps of time, am trying to persuade family to stand open mouthed so that they can be fed on frozen peas etc. Husband threatened to dismantle computer as he thinks I spend too much time with fairies and wizards, I agreed with him, which has unnerved him. I think I'll have to reply part 1 of SQ as I appear to have forgotten something. I don't think Thor is going to be a pushover - I reckon some adventure writers are deliberately perverse, as soon as you get somewhere they kill you off.

October 6

No 1 daughter offered to cook dinner, I record the event only for it's rarity. Junior daughter was disgusted with the idea and went out to buy a Big Mac (whatever that is). I think there must be a bug in Thor as I haven't completed it yet.

October 9

Went down with salmonella, it was either a bug in Thor or the soft boiled egg. Went back to SQ and the natives got me. In my present state I was too weak to cope so I loaded up Once Upon a Lilly Pad from Global. Jolly little game it was too. Felt stronger as I completed it. Refused to feed family as sight of food upsets me, husband is looking thinner these days, daughters have vanished.

October 10

Good day today. SQ has lived up to my expectations. Thor has become addictive so I flushed valium down the loo. Husband has tummy bug, can't be anything he ate though, must have been the beer. Daughters have threatened to leave home unless they get a proper mother. They find it embarrassing to be with a mother who keeps muttering "Where's

the flipping lamp" in the middle of Habitat. Little package from Compass today "Hobble Hunter". Told husband it was a gift from an admirer. I didn't expect him to believe me anyway but he needn't have laughed so loudly. Loaded up Hobble Hunter and got really hooked, will make time for this one. SQ is proving to be quite a challenge.

October 12

Husband confiscated computer today and held it to ransom. He wanted a good cooked meal. Opened can of beans and sausages for him and explained how to use microwave. Am sussing out possibility of hiring a cook. Daughters have gone missing. Thor is quite a good game, once I've finished SQ, I'll get back to Thor. Took a peak at Dreamare, reckon I'll crack that one OK. Decided to have another go at Craldons Creek, the game I won in the Probe competition. Must write to Mandy to ask her if it was the booby prize as I cannot make head nor tail of it.

October 13

Found the daughters under a pile of dust, also found the complete solution to Red Moon! Shudder to think how long it's been there. Hoover went on strike at the sight of the dust, wonder if the cook would do the cleaning as well! Well into part 3 of SQ now, I like swinging on ropes, makes me feel young again. Husband typed rude word on computer today, have threatened to chop his fingers off. Fed family on cauldron of stew and fairy cakes. They're really super my family, never complain, I'm sure I would have heard them if they had! Took a look at No 6 in The Village from Global, it may be my age, but I could really relate to this and polished it off in a few hours.

October 14

Bags under my eyes today, must have been the late night. Read YS, threw away the freebie game, cut out Mike Gerrards column and used the rest to line the rabbit hutch. Husband is looking peaky, as are the girls - I think they'd starve if I wasn't here to get their meals. Loaded SET-UP, took ages to load, I'd done a line of washing whilst waiting, then realised there was a tape loading error. Re-loaded, only managed to see the first few locations before I fainted.

October 19

Feeling better today. Realised I hadn't eaten since the end of September. Have put SET-UP in the "when I can cope drawer", alongside Quest for the Poorly Snail. Hooray, completed SQ today, can't think why it took me so long. Fed the family intravenously in order for me to carry on with Thor.

October 20

Decided to be frivolous today and loaded up Cleric's Quest and Dark Storm, both of which look promising. Am thinking of writing to Margaret Thatcher to see if she can extend the day to 30 hours instead of 24. Husband and girls have gone out to dinner thank goodness, they've left me with a tuna sandwich and coffee. Completed part 1 of Thor, it only took me so long because I'm forever having to feed my family, clean the house, work full time etc etc etc.

October 21

What a clever little game Thor is. I spent 3 hours looking for a source of light - eventually found it. Fancy putting it there! Tells you a lot about what sort of person the writer of the game is...I've finally solved the riddle of how to get out of the net in Rigel's Revenge! I don't know why I didn't think of it before - you just press

the reset button on your computer. I've done it loads of times and it always works! Bought the family a Black Forest Gateau to celebrate.

October 22

Got a big piece of blank paper today to sit down and play Retarded Creatures and Caverns. Can't believe the amount of space I've got left. Could have used a ciggie packet. Must write to John Wilson to congratulate him on this game, to get 9/10 from Mike Gerrard is a real feather in his cap. I don't know how he does it. Husband doodled all over remaining space and left message to the effect that I must have missed something as my maps usually spread all over the desk, onto the floor and out through the kitchen door. Went to bed feeling depressed.

October 23

Decided to go for the big one and play Bounty Hunter. All those locations should satisfy husband, he knows very well that if my maps spread to the kitchen he's got a good chance of getting fed. I'm obviously not going to finish Bounty in one sitting so I have made enquiries as to the cost of having husbands jaws wired up, it will save me feeding him. Daughters are hoping that Bounty Hunter will be finished by Shrove Tuesday as they are partial to pancakes.

October 25

Don't think husband is too well these days, I think the wires in his jaws have gone septic. I wish I hadn't done it now 'cos I think his brains are needed now that I'm playing Diablo. Daughters are too embarrassed to introduce me to their friends now... My family are so antisocial!.....

THE CASE OF THE MIXED-UP SOFTWARE
By JIM STRUTHERS

I think it would be fun if some of the adventures that have been released were written by other software companies or if the tapes had two titles on the package that had interesting meanings. You can see what I mean if you read on.....

- THE VERY BIG CAVE ADVENTURE/TWICE SHY by Virgin.
- PANIC BENEATH THE SEA/FISH by Piranha.
- VOODOO CASTLE by Melbourne House.
- MANHUNTER by Sharksoft.
- PROGRAMMERS REVENGE by Bug Byte.
- SUBSUNK/MURDER ON THE WATERFRONT by River Software.
- NEVERENDING STORY/KINGS QUEST 1 2 3 & 4.
- MAD JOCKS FAMILY by Tartan Software (sorry Tom).
- TOP SECRET by Mental Image.
- INFERNO/FAHRENHEIT 451. THE EXPERIENCE/ZZZZ
- THE PAYOFF by US GOLD. WILL O' THE WHISP by Taskset.
- LURKING HORROR/FOR YOUR THIGHS ONLY. BLACK KNIGHT/LANCELOT.
- THE DIARY OF ADRIAN MOLE/BOOK OF THE DEAD. WOLFMAN/THE CURSE.
- HATCHET HONEYMOON/BEHIND CLOSED DOORS.
- QUEST FOR THE VAMPIRE/ONE DARK NIGHT.
- HITCHHIKERS GUIDE TO THE GALAXY/CLAWS OF DESPAIR.



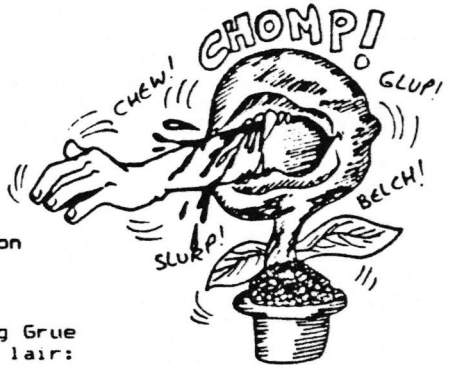
You are all getting the idea now aren't you. Are there anymore classics out there that you would like to tell us about?



GRUESLAYER

or

The Triumph of Entharion



'Twas chilly, and the slaving Grue
Did graunch and grumble in its lair:
And trembling were the venturers
In the dank, night air.

"Beware the deadly Grue, my son!
The claws that rake, the fangs that bite!
Beware the Bloodworm too, and shun
The one-eyed Barrow Wight!"

He took his elvish sword in hand:
Long time the Ormskirk foe he sought -
Down staircase steep to dungeon deep,
His way with danger fraught.

And as he squeezed through mossy crack,
The hateful Grue, (cursed be its name),
Came slithering up behind his back
And gurgled as it came!

A thrust, a slice, and chippy-chop!
The flashing blade cut through to bone.
It screeched and fled, he thought it dead
And strode victoriously home.

"And hast thou slain the fearsome Grue?
Fast to the fayre, Entharion, Come!
O joyous day! Hoorah! Hooray!
The dark, dread deed is done."

'Twas hot now, and the vanquished Grue
Did lick its wounds, deep in its lair:
And happy were the venturers
In the bright sun's glare.

by Wabewalker



(With apologies to Lewis Carroll - and The Grue!)

FICTION

QUAD PRO QUO

By ANTCRUSHER

Allow me to introduce myself. My name is PRO. I am an old Viking, and would like to recount to you some of the tales of our lands before they pass into obscurity.

Firstly, my name, Short for a Viking, I know. But then so am I. I spent quite a while in France a few years ago, and having tarred my hair, (as sailors do), the Frenchies called me Pro ie Tarry Hat. I didn't like it though. It sounded too working class.

The tale I am going to recount for you here includes a great old friend I used to have, called Quad.

It all began on the eve of an election for the village leader. As you know, we Vikings favour roundness. Round shields, round pointy hats, barrel chests, etc. The election was to be decided by the two main protagonists rolling down a hill. Hence the expression, electoral roll. The first one wins, the loser is burnt.

Anyway, Quad was the hot favourite. He was a huge guy, standing about 15' tall, and nearly as high when he lay down. His main rival was a man from Germany, called Munchen. He always used to wear a t-shirt with a smiling face on the back. We called him Munchen glad back.

I was proud to be asked to second Quad, and another friend of mine, Quo, was to second Munchen. Quo was a bit of a revolutionary, always going on about rowing rates, limiting water skiing to Sundays only, each man having his own drinking helm for health reasons, and so on.

As the two competitors lay down to begin the roll everyone was nervous. The giant, Quad, was everyone's favourite, as we all liked him. Munchen was a real misery guts. Always moaning about something. A right sour-kraut.

As it turned out, Quad won, Munchen was sacrificed, and we all had a good time. Even Munchen made a joke as he died. We called that Munchen's glad crack.

The next day I spotted Quo walking towards the church with some flowers, wearing his horned beret. I called to him, "where are you going?" He pointed to Munchen's pyre, then the church, and called back, "Flowers to the steeple!" As he did this he raised his fist, a sign that he would meet me in the pub at lunch time.

With Quad as leader we all knew we would soon be going overseas, so we all started to prepare. Quad didn't have an easy time of it. Like many huge men, he quietly accepted the incessant nagging of his wife. She was a Norsewoman, sworn enemies of us Vikings, but fairly taken in a raid. She was blind, but coped well and Quad loved her in his way. I heard

her berating Quad at the quayside as we prepared to sail. "Bring me back a new sink", she wailed, looking in the wrong direction. "I'm sick of the old one, it leaks, and the handle is broken!" Quad shouted back that he would, and then promptly forgot.

Well, what a voyage that was. We went everywhere from Hull to York and back. Hardly any casualties, lots of new young barmaids, and plenty of looting. As we were about to board the longship for the journey home, I reminded Quad of the sink. "Lucius T. Thor on a skateboard!" he bellowed. "I've forgotten!" He dashed off the ship and headed towards a nearby building site.

He returned just as we weighed anchor, (6lbs 7ozs), and sailed with the tide. The sink was covered in hessian, and all the way home Quad refused to show us his new sink. Whenever his true love's gift was mentioned, this giant of a man blushed and gently smiled. Aahh! True love. (I thought).

We returned home safely to a joyous reception. I followed Quad home after a late night showing the new barmaids how to pull pints and things.

Quad carried the sack covered sink all the way up the hill to his house. He kicked the door open and called out, "Hogface! I'm home and I'm hungry!"

To which she replied, "You filthy great cretin! You stink! Where's my sink?" Such endearments. Such devoted love.

"Shut yer gob", he said, "I've got yer sink. I'll put it in the kitchen for yer". He bade me follow him, put the object in the corner and uncovered it.

I looked from it to him, aghast! It was not a nice new shiny sink, it was a bricklayers hod!

"But....but....but....but it's... it's a... "I stammered. He silenced me. As I came round, his wife, the Norsewoman who was to remain blind all her life, fondled her new sink with loving care.

"I suppose it'll do", she said, and kicked Quad lovingly in the shins.

As she bustled out, Quad picked me up and carried me back to the pub. He chuckled to me as he said, "Just as I thought, an hod's as good as a sink to a blind Nurse!"

Courtesy of Curly Canine Publications.

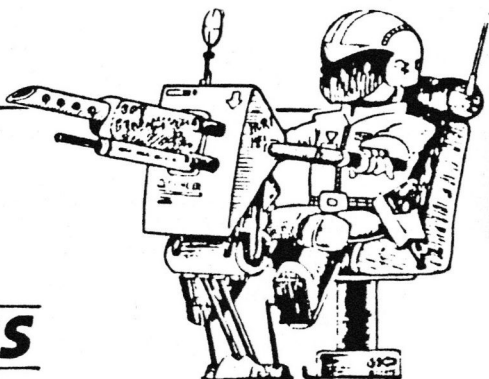
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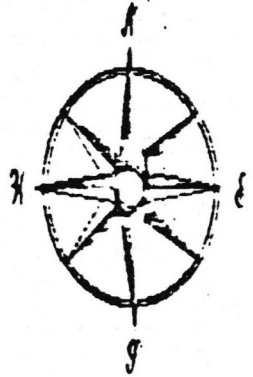
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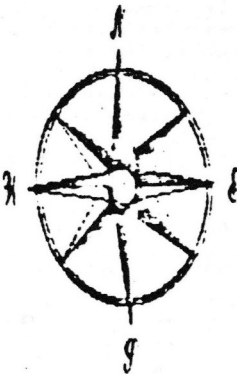
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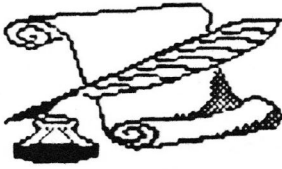
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17 ADEL PARK GARDENS ADEL LEEDS LS16 8BN**

PLEASE STATE WHICH COMPUTER YOU HAVE.

THE NIGHT SHIFT A TRUE STORY by JIM STRUTHERS

I was wondering if other adventurers ever does anything like me. I went to bed with a problem and got up with what I thought was the answer. I loaded up and typed in the input but it didn't work so I persevered until 3am then switched off as I was getting nowhere. Finding myself now wide awake I decided to go for a walk on the beach to try and tire myself out. Arriving on the beach I strolled along the sands in the dark when suddenly I thought I heard a spook! So I bolted for the safety of the well lit road. Running along I was suddenly stopped by two burly policemen who demanded to know what I was doing running about at that time of the morning. I told them I had been playing an adventure on my computer before I went to bed and got stuck. To my horror one of them said "C'mon son, you're nicked! Nobody runs along beach roads at this time of the night. You've got a story to tell me and it had better be the truth." I was taken to the local constabulary to offer a satisfactory explanation. Having told the officers the same tale time and time again they decided to bring me home to follow up my dubious story. The time was now 5.30am. Imagine the look on my wife's face when she was woken up by two policemen enquiring about me. "I thought he was in bed!" says she (thanks luv!). "It isn't unusual for him to get up during the night though, if he thinks he can complete a puzzle."
"Show me what you mean," one of them said "as I am getting my son a computer for Christmas." So my wife, two policemen and I end up playing an adventure in my living room at 6am in the morning! They must have been convinced as they eventually left after warning me not to go out during the night anymore, for my own safety. My wife turned to me and said "If you have a problem then talk it over with me first. You can't be trusted to think for yourself!" You know what, when I became hooked on adventures I never knew that Dungeon Adventure would almost turn out to be a reality!



DISPATCHES

ADVENTURE PROBE LETTERS SECTION

A new look for adventuredom's brightest letters pages . . . but still retaining the same enlightening and entertaining mix of fact, opinion and comment. This month brings discussions on Infocom, Level 9, the state of the market, homegrown writers, the Computer Shopper Show and the art of making good maps. A few other topics also manage to sneak in . . . so let's get to it, shall we ?

Infocom-ing, or going . . . ?

Mr R. Cousens, Vice President (Europe), Activision (UK) Ltd

Dear Mr Cousens,

I have heard a number of rumours concerning the conversion of the later Infocom adventures to formats other than IBM or Amiga.

As a keen adventurer, who has an Atari ST, I am writing to ask you whether there are any plans to release ZORK ZERO, JOURNEY, SHOGUN, ARTHUR, BORDER ZONE, SHERLOCK, QUARTER-STAFF and BATTLETECH for this computer?

The adventure reviewer in October's ATARI ST USER promises a review of ZORK ZERO next month. Does he know something that we lesser mortals don't?

I've also been told that the decision on whether or not to request Infocom to convert titles for a wider range of computers rests in your hands. Is this true? If so, would you please treat this letter as a plea for conversion of all the above adventures so that they'll run on the Atari ST?

Yours sincerely,

NEIL R. SHIPMAN, 1 Heath Gardens, Coalpit Heath, Bristol, BS17 2TQ

Dear Mr Shipman,

Thank you for your letter.

Infocom products are developed in the United States Of America and are targeted at the hardware formats in that territory which are most appropriate to support.

The Atari ST computer has achieved greater success in Europe rather than in America and, as such, it is not always a consideration to produce Infocom titles on this system.

This can be influenced by projected sales levels in Europe and, where it makes sense to do so, then selected items may warrant conversion. If this proves to be the case then, clearly, we shall make it widely known in the computer press.

In the meantime, I cannot give you any commitment beyond this, other than to say "keep in touch"!

Your kind interest in Infocom is much appreciated and I hope sales develop to justify Atari ST conversions and we are then able to regard you as, hopefully, a satisfied customer.

Yours sincerely,

RODNEY P. COUSENS, Vice President (Europe), Activision (UK) Ltd, Blake House, Manor Farm Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG2 6JN

Well, Neil, thank you very much for your efforts, over several months now, in attempting to establish exactly what was going on re: Infocom. We are most grateful to you for keeping us in the picture.

It would seem that Activision (like most large companies) are quite willing to produce the goods . . . as long as they are sure that there is a substantial profit to be made! Therefore, if ST owners want to see future Infocom adventures appearing on their machines, they might like to write to Mr Cousens, at the above address, and make their feelings known to him. If enough letters arrive on the gentlemen's desk, he may decide there's money in the ST after all.

... going ...

Now that we have seen the demise of Level 9 adventures, I can't help but think that, in a way, they have brought it upon themselves. They say that they will continue to produce text adventures only if SCAPEGHOST sells in huge quantities. I don't think that this is likely to happen.

In the early days of adventuring, Level 9 were the best for a long time. Nobody else could touch them. The stories ... the atmosphere ... the content ... they were all brilliant! So what happened? I can sum it up in one word ... COMPLEXITY!

Level 9 decided that the way forward was to have an extra large parser and (worst of all) character interaction!

Now, I don't go much for this "role playing character interaction" business. I think that, overall, it detracts from the main aim of the adventure ... which is solving puzzles! With character interaction, you tend to spend too much time typing in commands only to be rewarded by stupid, trivial or completely irrelevant responses. Who needs it?

So, by attempting to improve their games by creating complex parsers, interactive characters, complex commands like OOPS, REDO, GOTO, etc., I think that Level 9 have actually achieved the opposite and made them worse.

It's not that I dislike Level 9, it's just that I do believe that the games they produced in the early days were so much better! Perhaps, if they returned to producing that kind of game, Level 9 might be surprised at the volume of sales that result. Who wants RPG's, characters, complex parsers and bugs, anyway? Bring back the old Level 9 that we know and love!

JIM STRUTHERS, 112 Disraeli Street, Cowpen Quoy, Blyth, Northumberland, NE24 1JB

Bouquet Box
I would like to thank DOREEN BARDON for all the help and advice she has given me. Without people like her, beginners like me would have given up playing adventures, and gone back to playing arcade games. Many thanks Doreen.
SUSAN KAY
A big thank you to NIC RUMSEY, GRUE, VINCE BARKER and MANDY RODRIGUES who have been very helpful and friendly. I couldn't have done without them in my adventuring times of despair.

I think you've hit the nail on the head, Jim. Level 9 seem to have paid too much attention in the past to what the glossy mag pundits "claim" the public wants ... and not enough attention to finding out what adventurers really would like. To a certain extent, it would seem that they're still doing it. I wish them all the very best for the future (in thanks for all the pleasures they have given me in the past), but I can't help but feel that HUGE probably won't be huge, and that we have seen the last of Level 9 as an adventuring force to be reckoned with.



... gone ...

As Level 9 seem certain not to release any more text adventures, I'm sure that most PROBE readers would agree with me in saying that it would be great to see them release their writing system on a commercial basis. Any chance, Level 9?

I also noticed that, although you sent seasons greetings out in a variety of languages, you missed this one out ...

"Nollaig Math agus Bladhna mhà Uir!"

Translated from the Gaelic as "Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!"

ERIC STEWART, 18 Vallisker, Back, Isle Of Lewis, PA86 0JS

Somewhat, I doubt that we are ever likely to see any of Level 9's programming tools released for public consumption. A-Code is probably too old now ... and their present system seems to produce more bugs than anything else. Hardly a recipe for commercial success! Activation sure wouldn't market it!

However, as hoary old Coffs ourselves, we send greetings from DISPATCHES to our blood brothers across the border ... and thank you for that brief taste of the "acid tongue". Can't imagine how the Editor could have missed it out!

... but not forgotten!

I have read with great interest some of the letters which touch upon the piracy issue, and I have a point to raise on this myself.

I can see that, with so many authors of adventures gracing your pages, there is bound to be a lot of self interest in stopping piracy and, indeed, when I finally get my adventure finished, I shall doubtlessly join you. This is not to say that I condone piracy at the

moment, because I don't feel that if you want a game, and it can be bought, then it should be.

This raises a problem with deleted titles, such as Infocom, however. Does the panel think ... that it is O.K. to copy Infocom titles as they are such rare gems? Some titles appear to be unavailable anywhere for the Amstrad. Infocom themselves have absolutely no intention of ever re-releasing them, so there would be no loss of sales involved, and it would be criminal to deny people the pleasure of experiencing them. So, what do people think? Would it be alright?

Then again, piracy is piracy ... theft and all that. Patience is a virtue ... all things come to he who waits ... money can buy anything (if you have enough) ...

and, after all, they are only games!

So, if anyone knows where I can get hold of PLANETFALL, WISHBRINGER, ENCHANTER, SPELLBREAKER, MOONMIST, TRINITY, DEADLINE, STARCROSS and SEASTALKER would they please let me know, as I will be happy to pay a good price for originals with full documentation (all for CPC 6128). I suppose this could even be called "piracy", as buying software secondhand is denying the author the price of an original?

DAVE HAVARD, 21 Belvoir Close, Fareham, Hants PO16 0PJ

All, Dave! You give a new twist to a long-running debate. Piracy is theft ... agreed ... however, is it piracy if you copy software which

Comment Box

Down here at DISPATCHES, we spend some of our spare time, at weekends, answering calls on a telephone adventure helpline. This is a terrific way of making the acquaintance of other adventurers and discussing lots of adventure related topics - and we enjoy every minute of it!

Just a few weeks ago, we had a call from a young man asking for some help on LAST NINJA 2. Well, we tried to dig out the information required, but had no luck. So, we explained to the caller that we were very sorry but we were an "adventure" helpline and didn't really cater for arcade games.

"Oh!" came the cheerful reply, "What's an adventure game then?"

Well, we opened our mouths to clarify matters ... then closed it again ... then opened it again ... then closed it again!

We thought about telling him that adventures were games that required you to type commands in at the keyboard, but realised that there were a number of games available which didn't meet this criteria (e.g. THE UNINVITED, SHADOWGATE and DUNGEON MASTER).

We thought about telling him that adventure games were usually set in fantastic fantasy scenarios ... then realised that the scenario set for the average shoot-em-up made most adventures look about as ordinary as an episode of "Terry and June".

We thought about saying something about the

emphasis being on "cerebral dexterity" in adventure games, but on "manual dexterity" in arcade games. But anyone who has played a SIERRA game will tell you that "manual dexterity" is not only helpful in completing these quests, but, at times, absolutely essential!

We finally mumbles something about there being "problems to solve" in adventure games. "Yeah!" game back the reply, quick as a flash, "LAST NINJA 2 has got a lot of problems in it too!" We couldn't help but accept that this was probably so.

Eventually, the young man went away, undoubtedly convinced that the person he'd been speaking to suffered from some severe mental debilitation (probably from playing too many adventures)! However, his question continues to bother us ... mainly, because we still can't answer it!

"What's an adventure, then?"

What is it that tells you that, when you sit down to play LEISURE SUIT LARRY 2, you are sitting down to play an adventure ... but when you sit down to play LAST NINJA 2, you most certainly are not!

We were, and still are, unable to define that "indefinable something"? We wonder if any of the PROBE readership might have handled the answer better. How about it folks... anybody care to make an attempt at telling us what we already know ... but can't put into words?

We look forward to hearing from you.

is otherwise unobtainable?

Legally, we're not sure ... but instinct tells us it probably is. Morally, we see no real harm in it ... nobody is losing a sale ... the bread isn't being taken out of the programmer's mouth, so to speak ... so where is the theft?

We're probably on very dodgy ground here ... and the next instalment of DISPATCHES may well be written from a FAST prison cell ... but we're just not sure on this one. It would be interesting to hear the opinions of other PROBE readers?

However, we're fairly certain that re-selling an authentic copy does not constitute piracy. When you buy your copy, you acquire all rights to that copy, including the right to resell it at a later date.



Homegrown 1

On the "AMSTER's" plea for more Amstrad homegrown conversions, I do sympathise, but I must agree with Tom Frost and Jack Lockerby that it is not practical for them to convert games across several formats. I think that PROBE's offer to act as "honest broker" between parties in order to get other people to do the conversions is an excellent compromise.

If Bob is keen to play the Spectrum ones, then he can, as suggested, pick up a cheap machine. But this does assume that there will be a steady, and continuing, supply from existing sources. Those who have been let down by Activision/Infocom know how frustrating it can be to see supplies drying up (thanks to Neil for keeping us up to date).

The market seems to be clearly polarising between text-only adventures (limited to 8 bit machines) and the more fancy stuff on the 16 bits! Still, Jack is supporting the ST, as are a number of STAC users. It seems a mystery as to why some machines are well supported by the homegrown authors. Having said that though, the answer must have something to do with pricing policy. If homegrown games are in the £1.50 to £3.00 range (whether tape or 3.5" disk) then sales must surely follow. But, when priced at £5.00 plus, prospective buyers may think twice!

I can only encourage the adventure writers to continue producing the goods (even if it is for just the one machine) as, in the majority of cases, they offer such good value.

TERRY ROBERTS, Woodlands, Church Road, Harrietsham, Kent ME17 1AP

We've got to agree with you about the price of homegrown software for the sixteen bit

machines. Quite frankly, it's ludicrous! We are quite willing to risk a couple of quid on buying a homegrown game which may turn out to be total rubbish ... but we are certainly not willing to risk £5, £8 or more in order to find out if a homegrown game is worth the money!

The price of sixteen bit software is grossly inflated, and that inflation is maintained by the software companies (just like the price of music on compact disc is kept artificially high by the record companies) in order to line their pockets. Some games are undoubtedly worth between £20 and £30, but these are few and far between. The vast majority are worth nowhere near that price and, indeed, are little better than their eight bit counterparts.

This policy of inflating prices will eventually backfire on the software houses and somebody will make a huge killing out of marketing sixteen bit software at acceptable prices (remember how they all laughed when Mastertronic launched a £1.89 range ... they didn't laugh for long, however). In the meantime, the homegrown producers are being unbelievably naive in jacking up their prices just because the game is for the ST and not the Spectrum. People simply will not pay above the going rate ... if you want your game to SELL, keep it on or below the £4 level, otherwise ... forget it!



Homegrown 2

I was recently disturbed by a letter from Larry Horsfield telling me that I was only the second person to order the 128k version of STARSHIP QUEST. In my humble opinion, MAGNETIC MOON was the best adventure written for Spectrums in 1989 (closely followed by BOUNTY HUNTER from Jack Lockerby), and the follow-up looks just as good. I urge Spectrum adventurers who have not yet played these games to ignore Mike Gerrard's review in YOUR SINCLAIR and order them!

I'm not too familiar with adventures available for other micros these days, but I do know that, following the publication of Level 9's last game, Spectrum owners will be almost entirely dependent upon COMPASS SOFTWARE, F.S.F. ADVENTURES, RIVER SOFTWARE, TARTAN SOFTWARE and ZENONI SOFTWARE for producing reliable, quality games in future. Please support these people, or we shall soon be reduced to playing games like CLERIC'S QUEST (a two part game which can be completed in 18 moves), or finding another pastime!

JOHN SCHOFIELD, 33 Westfield Avenue, Skelmanthorpe, Nr Huddersfield, West Yorkshire HD8 9AH

shop around for the best discounts on software and hardware, but I can't help thinking that last year's Atari Show had a greater variety of stands to browse around. Anyway, I picked up ZORK 1 to see what the Grue really does to you, as well as POPULOUS (what? not an adventure?). A friend has this game as well as an Amiga, and we plan to link the two machines through the serial port and have a real-time game against a real opponent!

PAUL BRUNYEE, 17 Campion Close, Narborough, Leicester, LE9 5WQ

It seems that an awful lot of PROBE readers would like to get together in order to put a few faces to names. It appears that we've been talking to each other through these pages for ages, but have never met. DISPATCHES would dearly love to remedy this situation a little. So, if anybody living within commuting distance of Manchester and/or Bolton would like to get together for a spot of liquid refreshment (purely medicinal) and a boat of adventure tall-tale telling, then write in and let us know and we'll try to get something organised.



Finding Your Way

I was very interested in reading the letters concerning mapping as this is one aspect of adventuring which I enjoy. After reading June Rowe's letter, I thought I would add a couple of suggestions of my own, based on the way I do things.

Firstly, forget about the High Street shops, and find a good commercial stationers. The two I use sell damaged A4 pads of 200 sheets of good quality blank paper for under £1. By damaged, I mean ripped covers. These I use for rough mapping as I go along. When I have completed a section of the game (i.e. inside of the castle, or route through the maze), I transfer the locations to a 'master map' on A3 size paper. This is duplicating paper from the same source, and the supplier is happy to split a box and sell 50 sheets at a time. Again, for under a £1. This may seem expensive at 2p per sheet, but used as a master map, you only use one or two sheets per game.

Secondly, forget about ballpoint pens and, again at the commercial stationers or an artists supplies shop, look around for graphic liner pens. These are the ones used by graphic artists, and they write very fine and very clearly without running or smudging, so you can get more map into less space! They cost about 70p or 80p each, but are well worth it I think. I use three colours (red for direction, blue for location description and green for what you see there. This makes the map very clear. I also use a very fine

pencil with replaceable leads when rough mapping, and at each location, I write the 8 compass points plus in/out and up/down. Then, when I have checked each direction, I erase it from the square, and not until. This way, when you arrive at a dead end, by studying your map, you can check that you have tried all possible exits from all locations, since not all exits are always listed in the location description.

I hope that this proves to be helpful to someone.

WILL ORTON, 55 Main Street, Broughton Astley, Leicester LE9 6RE

It's always good to find out how other people go about their adventuring activities, and compare notes. We're sure lots of readers will have been helped by hearing about your methods, Will, and we thank you for taking the trouble to share them with us.

For ourselves, we prefer to use A4 sized squared paper (available from W.H. Smiths at about £1.29 for 50 sheets) for our maps. We simply stick sheets together with Prittstick when the map gets too big. This works well for us. However, we use fine felt-tip pens for writing and we really aren't too pleased with these. They tend to smudge, and the writing gets less "fine" the more the pen is used. Many thanks then for the tip about the graphic liner pens. We shall try those out.



Reward Box

Each month DISPATCHES will award a small prize to the sender of the letter which appeals to us most ... for whatever reason.

The prize will be a free issue of PROBE or, if the winner prefers, the equivalent value in "full solutions" from Mandy's extensive archives.

A small token ... but a heartfelt one!!

It is therefore with great pleasure that we award the very first of our WRITERS REWARDS to ... JIM STRUTHERS ... for his efforts in attempting to analyse just where Level 9 went wrong, and for being brave enough to swim against the tide in saying he dislikes RPG's!

Congratulations, Jim ... and thank you!!

(Be sure to let Mandy know which prize you would like).

Credits Box

Dispatches is produced on an Atari 520STFM computer, using Timeworks Desktop Publisher, 1st Word, Fontkit plus 2, and a variety of public domain fonts and clipart, and then output on a Star LC10 9 pin dot matrix printer. Several gallons of strong, black coffee helped lubricate the process!!

Rip Off Corner

I see that our "freind", Henry Mueller has re-surfaced and is now trying to sell a re-vamped version of the Adventurers Club Ltd, for which he is asking a further £6 00. In addition to any money he already owes I personally will not be joining and I suspect that very few others will either. I have only one regret and that is the loss of the GOLDEN CHALICE awards which were worthwhile and which I would like to see continued under different management.

PHIL DARKE, 244 Beaulieu Gardens, Blackwater, Camberley, Surrey GU17 0LQ

Now, let us make this quite clear.

Anybody who has anything to do with Henry Mueller or The Adventurers Club Ltd, is not in need of a brain transplant ... because they don't have a brain! ... what they have inside their heads is a sack of potatoes (and probably not King Edwards either)! Keep well clear of this man and his schemes ... he cares little about adventurers or adventuring ... all he wants is your money ... and, once he's got it, he becomes very flexible about what he supplies in return. DO NOT TOUCH WITH A BARGE-POLE!!!

It's That Man Again!

I've got every PROBE right from the very first issue and they've all been most enjoyable - but the last two were particularly good. With a great mixture of reviews, articles, stories, interviews, funnies, puzzles, hints 'n' tips and serialised solutions, there's something there to suit everyone. But, apart from all the contributions sent in by readers, it's the large and lively letters section which shows just how many people really care about their adventuring (and their fellow adventurers). The interesting letters in the last two issues alone cover a wide variety of topics and it's this feedback which helps to give the magazine its unique, friendly character. A big "well done" for all your hard work, Mandy ... and thanks from one

reader to all the others who've sent something in, however small, over the past year. Happy New Year to everyone - and may ADVENTURE PROBE go from strength to strength in 1990.

P.S. to Floyd - If you're really intent on capturing a Grue, try baiting your trap with Newcastle Brown - they can't resist it!!

NEIL R. SHIPMAN, 1 Heath Gardens, Coapit Heath, Bristol, BS17 2TQ

A touch of the "I've started, so I'll finish" here, I think. Many thanks for your kind comments Neil, and I would echo your sentiments twofold. Well done, Mandy! Well done, everyone! ADVENTURE PROBE has now entered its fourth volume, and there's lots of life in it yet. Stick with us ... you won't regret it!

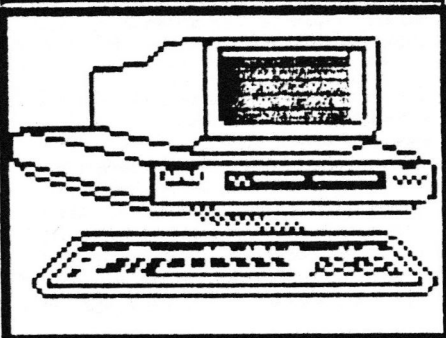
May we also say that we here at DISPATCHES are fairly partial to Newcastle Brown ourselves. Why waste it on Grues, who are well-known for having very little taste ... after all, they'll eat just about anybody!!

Last Box

The best part of adventuring is the sharing of knowledge, ideas and experiences between fellow adventurers. This is how we get to know each other, how we get to make new friends, how we learn to overcome the tough spots! By pooling our resources, we add to the pleasure each of us receives from our hobby.

DISPATCHES is YOUR Letter Section in YOUR Magazine! Without you, neither would exist. So, please, write in to us at the usual PROBE address.

We are waiting to hear from you!



HELP WANTED

"Even with the clue sheet and full solution I've been stuck on KNIGHT ORC for the past six months or more. Despite following the solution faithfully I cannot get the glittering card from the mousehole. Every time I type in "Eye look in hole" no card is seen and "Take Card" only produces "You can't see a glittering card". What must I do, please, to get this card? Please could somebody help me - before I tear out ALL my hair?!"

BARBARA WAKLEY, 3 Acre Cottages, Stoke, Plymouth, PL1 4QS

=====

"Could someone please help me to get back to the harbour in IN SEARCH OF ANGELS? I have just armed the missile warhead and the alarms have alerted the guards. I've instructed Chantille to go and pull the green lever (is this correct?) but the guards keep killing me as I try to escape."

ROGER DOWDALL, 14 Dawley Green, Sth Ockendon, Essex, RM15 5LW

=====

"Please could you print a plea for help in the next issue for a game called THE CODE by Soft Concern Ltd (1984). A full solution would be ideal but any help at all with this game will be gratefully received."

SIMON JOHNSON, 29 Langford Way, Kingswood, Bristol, BS15 2PD

=====

"I have sent off to Jim McBrayne for his shareware adventure, GOLDEN FLEECE. The adventure really is excellent, but unfortunately I keep getting squashed by a piano, and seem to be stuck. Could somebody please help me?"

EMMA HEGGIE, 16 Riverbourne Rd, Milford, Salisbury, Wilts, SP1 1NS

=====

"Could someone please help me to find out if EYE OF BAIN, GOLDEN APPLE, GOLDEN BATON, INVINCIBLE ISLAND, ORACLES CAVE, PERSEUS AND ANDROMEDA, TEMPLE OF VRAN and VELNORS LAIR are available on the Amstrad please?"

DAVE HAVARD, 21 Belvoir Close, Fareham, Hants, PO16 0PJ

KINGS AND QUEENS OF THE CASTLE

ROGER DOWDALL, 14 Dawley Green, Sth Ockendon, Essex, RM15 5LW is willing to give postal help on Magnetic Moon, Starship Quest, Nightwing, Demigod, Lightmare Pt1 and A Legacy for Aleric.

ROBIN MATTHEWS, 44 Fairwater Grove West, Llandaff, Cardiff can give help on the following (update to last list) Wizardry IV and Wizardry V.



IN TOUCH
SOFTWARE FOR SALE

FOR COMMODORE 64

Tapes: JACK THE RIPPER £3. LAPIS PHILOSOPHORUM £3. PORTAL £2. THREE MUSKETEERS £2. INGRIDS BACK £5. KNIGHT ORC £7. LANCELOT £7. GNOME RANGER £3. MORDUNS QUEST £2. ZIM SALA BIM £2. SHERLOCK (Melbourne House) £2. EUREKA £2. SECRET MISSION (Scott Adams) £1. VOODOO CASTLE (Scott Adams) £1. QUEST FOR THE HOLY GRAIL £1. BORED OF THE RINGS £1. HEROES OF KARN £1. SECRET DIARY OF ADRIAN MOLE £1. TEN LITTLE INDIANS £1. VERA CRUZ £1. VERY BIG CAVE ADVENTURE £2. WINTER WONDERLAND £2. KENTILLA £1. FRANKENSTEIN £3. SNOW QUEEN £3. Disks: THE PAWN £5. CASE OF THE MIXED-UP SHYMER £1.

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LEGEND OF THE SWORD £7. SCAPEGHOST £7.

SHARON LOWNDES, 54 Blackberry Lane, Four Marks, Alton, Hants, GU34 5DF

=====

FOR AMSTRAD CPC

PANIC BENEATH THE SEA £1.99 tape £4.50 disc

CITY FOR RANSOM £1.99 tape £4.50 disc

PROJECT ANNIHILATION £2.50 tape(text only) or £4.50 disc(graphics)

JOHN PACKHAM, 60 Hightown Towers, Warburton Rd, Southampton, SU2 6HH

=====

FOR AMSTRAD

AMX ACTION REPLAY - £10

But would prefer to swap for JEWELS OF DARKNESS or INGRIDS BACK
(both for Amstrad)

DAVID EVANS, 3 Dalkeith Close, Bransholme North, Hull, HU7 5AS

=====

SOFTWARE WANTED

FOR SPECTRUM

ERIK THE VIKING. CUSTERDS QUEST. EXCALIBUR. MATT LUCAS. MURDER OFF MIAMI. ROBIN OF SHERWOOD. SERFS TALE. MONSTER. NEVER ENDING STORY.

Please write with price required to:

FRANK GRAY, 25 Richhill Cres., Belfast, N. Ireland, BT5 6HF

=====

FOR AMSTRAD CPC 464

GNOME RANGER. INGRIDS BACK. SMUGGLERS COVE. QOR. BOOK OF THE DEAD. SNOW QUEEN. HUNCHBACK. PROJECT VOLCAND. QUESTPROBE III. SOULS OF DARKON and JACK THE RIPPER.

Please write with price required to:

JIM STRUTHERS, 112 Disraeli St, Cowpen Quay, Blyth, Northumberland,
NE24 1JB

=====

BUGS & AMUSING RESPONSES

WEREWOLF

By JIM STRUTHERS played on Amstrad

In part one you come to a coffin in a network of caves:

Input: HIT COFFIN.

Response: ITS COAL BLACK EYES FLARE RED WITH RAGE.
I AM NOT STRONG ENOUGH FOR HIM!

Input: KICK COFFIN

Response: IT GROWLS SPATTERING YOU WITH HOT SLIME!



You've got to admit these coffins are a bad bunch - meaner than a werewolf!

MYTH

By DLAV REINERT played on Spectrum +3

Here is a fascinating little debate I had with the (in)famous Magnetic Scrolls parser about getting out of a shack (it was equipped with a door):

Input: LEAVE SHACK

Response: THERE IS A WALL IN YOUR WAY

Input: GO OUT

Response: WHAT DO YOU WANT TO LEAVE

Input: THE SHACK

Response: THERE IS A WALL IN YOUR WAY

Input: GO OUT THROUGH DOOR

Response: I THINK THERE IS A WORD MISSING IN THERE SOMEWHERE

Input: W

WOODEN JETTY.....

So much for advanced parsers that can't deal with expressions working with Quilled adventures!

THE CASE OF THE MIXED-UP SHYMER

By HUGH WALKER played on Atari ST

Input: REPAIR BOAT

Response: THE PLANKS ARE TOO LONG

Input: CUT PLANKS

Response: YOU MUSTN'T CUT THAT!

Input: DROP PLANKS

Response: YOU SHORTEN THE PLANKS OF WOOD

Input: GET WOOD

Response: YOU CAN'T DO THAT FOR ONE REASON OR ANOTHER!

Input: GET ALL

Response: YOU PICK UP SOME WOOD

SORCERER

By DAVE HAVARD played on Amstrad

I am reading with interest the solution to Sorcerer, as I completed it just before Christmas, and would like to see if I missed anything. One point to mention is that although the river bank can be fatal, if you cast izyuk, you can avoid it altogether. Just as was suggested for the drawbridge. Some more funnies for the game, which haven't been mentioned yet are: Try mixing potions, drink the flazo potion, and cast Yomin on various N.P.C.'s.

OBJECTS & THEIR USES
ORC ISLAND
 By MARGO PORTEOUS

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>USE</u>
ACID-----	COPPER PIT-----	THROW AT HILL TROLL
ARMOUR-----	ARMOUR SHOP-----	KILLING ORC KING
AXE-----	AT PILE OF LOGS-----	CHOPPING TREE
BARREL OF GUNPOWDER----	IN MINES(GOLD PIT)-----	LIGHT IN LOCKSMITHS
CLOAK OF INVISIBILITY--	LUCKY CHARM SHOP-----	TO PASS ORC & GREMLIN
COIL OF ROPE-----	STONY BEACH-----	TIE TO TREE, TOP OF MINE SHAFT (OLD MINE)
GEM-----	IN DOOR OF HOUSE-----	TO FIND WHICH GRAVE TO (PRISE GEM) DIG
GOLD PLATED SKULL----	GUARDS DORMITORY-----	TO COMPLETE SKELETON & GET STAFF(FIX SKULL TO SKELETON
HAMMER AND NAILS-----	IN HOLE NEAR-----	REPAIR BRIDGE
	BROKEN BRIDGE	
KEY-----	GLASS CASE LOCKSMITHS--	LOCKED DOOR WEST OF ORC KIN'S BEDROOM
KNIFE-----	PEPPER STREET-----	TO GET GEM FROM DOOR
LEATHER BAG-----	EAST OF GRAVEL PIT-----	TO CARRY WATER
LOGS-----	CHOP TREE IN DARK AREA--	TO MAKE RAFT
MAGNET-----	ATTIC/MINERS HUT-----	TO GET HAMMER & NAILS
MARSH BOOTS-----	IN BEACH HUT-----	WEAR IN MARSHES!
MEAT-----	BUTCHERS SHOP-----	TO PASS LION AND GET TINDERBOX(FEED LION)
MINERS HELMET-----	BOTTOM MINE SHAFT-----	PROTEXT HEAD IN MINES
ORB OF POWER-----	STRONG ROOM-----	FOR STAFF
ORC UNIFORM-----	GIVEN BY THIRSTY-----	WEAR TO PASS ORC GUARD
	BEGGAR IN BLEAK LAND	AT VILLAGE GATE
RING OF ILLUSIONS-----	CAPTAINS CABIN ON SHIP--	WEAR TO AVOID CAPTURE - CASTLE MAIN GATE
SHOVEL-----	GRASSY FOX TRAIL-----	DIG AT GRAVES
SILVER COINS-----	LONELY FOREST PATH-----	PASS KINGS DINING ROOM
STAFF-----	CEMETERY YARD(SKELETON--	NEED TO COMPLETE GAME WILL GIVE IF SKULL IS FIXED ON SKELETON
STAR SHAPED BROOCH----	SMUGGLERS CAVE-----	SCARES KRAKEN IN MARSH
STRING-----	MARSH OF KRAKEN-----	TIE STRING TO MAGNET
SWORD-----	IN GRASS NORTH OF START--	TO KILL ORC KING
TINDER BOX-----	WEST BANK OF RIVER-----	TO LIGHT SUNPOWDER
WATER-----	WATER HOLE-----	GIVE TO THIRSTY BEGGAR
WRIST BAND-----	GUARDHOUSE-----	WARNING-SAPS STRENGTH!
WROUGHT IRON CUP-----	WOODMANS CABIN-----	TO CARRY ACID

THE CASTLE
 By JACKIE HOLT

STICK-----	TO MOVE THE ROCK
HEAD-----	TO GET OUT OF THE CHASM
KEY-----	TO OPEN THE THRONE ROOM DOOR
SHIELD-----	CARRY IT IN BLACK CHAPEL
JAR-----	TO CARRY THE INSECT AND THE LIQUID
KNIFE-----	TO REMOVE EYES
SHOVEL-----	DIG TO FIND TORCH IN THRONE ROOM
HAMMER-----	TO OPEN THE CHEST

HINTS AND TIPS

DUNGEON ADVENTURE

By EMMA HEGGIE played on Spectrum (A Golden Oldie!)

To avoid the thief, carry the mirror to reflect his sleep spell, then sneak up on him and steal all his equipment.

Throw things at the tree until it runs out of arms.

Shake the pod to frighten the bird, and to deafen yourself to the young girl's song.

Take the thief's die up to the hilltop to survive the Rakshasa!

To avoid the goat, fill the cracked pot with slime and drop it by the goat. You will then be able to steal the horn.

Leave no stone unturned to enter the mossy cave!

The carnivorous jelly will be kept happy with a corpse!

To get rid of the skeletons, wave the skeleton staff!

To avoid the rolling stone from the hilltop make sure you are in a gully when it passes.

Blow the stick to open the door of the tower.

REBEL PLANET

By GRAHAM WHEELER played on Amstrad CPC

Hints on how to leave the ship: examine lincon, note it has four buttons: IH - Inner Hatch, OH - Outer Hatch, PS - Personal Status, SS - Ship Status. Go to the airlock. Press IH, enter and ask the Valet for help, you will be given a Card, Ticket and Ampoule, leave airlock. Press IH, go to the dispenser; and insert card into dispenser, this will give you some food, next say NO to the message asking if you wish to take evasive action, then collect the Lite Kube and the Sword. Next Drop Sword into Kube so that it is not seen when you land, now wait to land, then go to the airlock. Press IH and enter airlock. Press IH to close it and then Press OH to open the outer hatch and leave the ship.

SCAPEGHOST

By ANNE ROY played on Spectrum

Violet Conwy may be blind, but she's not deaf!

The Vandals are scared of a light!

Not an art lover? Hit the statue!

Topple a wall to hide the dope!

FAERIE

By GEORGE KERSEY

Tie the wood and rope together to make a besom to give to the witch for the Spell Book and a treasure.

In the attic (and the Witches Chimney), you will need the box to be present, but not carried, before going up.

Do not take the fairy gold until the Score Monster is in the cave as you can't drop it anywhere else.

To enter the Underworld you will need the boots, a lit lamp, the sweater and the knife. Search rucksack for the knife. Do not take the sand ring, water glass or the Black Queen into the Underworld.

The Sandman cannot touch you if you are wearing his Sand Ring!

Say Checkmate to the Game Master. Drop the rook at the Quiet Place on the board for a treasure.

In the Underworld, you will need the leaf to go both up and down the chasm.

Give the lump of coal to the Snowman.

GUILD OF THIEVES

By DAVE HAVARD played on Amstrad

In the junk room, move the junk to make a new exit. It leads to the moat, where there is a night safe. You can put the castle's valuables in it without having to get them past the gatekeeper.

While at the moat, if you have the maggot, (from the tin, under the gatekeepers bed), the billiards cue, and the needle and cotton, (from the sewing box in the small bedroom), then tie the cotton to the cue, put the maggot on the needle, then lower the needle. This gives you a fish with which to feed the bear.

Before you feed the fish to the bear, sprinkle it with rat poison found in the kitchen cupboard.

The rat poison isn't needed to kill the rats. Simply hold the pipe at the top of the cellar, behind the door, and it will break. Open the valve to drown the rats, close the valve when the water is getting a bit high.

When inside the caves, the bars are easily broken.

Go as far as you can past the bars and lower the rope ladder you find there. It will help you later. Make sure you do this before you.....

VILLAGE OF LOST SOULS

By JEAN BURLAND

The solution sheet provided by Probe gives a final score of 1100/1200. To get the final 100 points you must return the last two objects to the altar. Here's what to do: After getting the Gauntlets in the Barrel, go out, out, E, (you fall in the pit), drop all, wear gauntlets, push stone, remove gauntlets, wear band, in, get circlet and sceptre from Manor Treasury, up, S, take circlet and sceptre to altar, put them on altar - Score 100 points. Now continue the game to the ornamental well as in the help sheet.

CLOUD 99

By JOAN WILLIAMS played on Spectrum

Undo hook in garage.
Clean card with water.
Use collander to sift sand.
Give spring to Father Time.
Don't forget your anorak.
Give film to Tourist.
The garden needs fertilizer.



DEMON FROM THE DARKSIDE

By JOAN WILLIAMS played on Spectrum

Examine slime and you'll find a mask.
Wear mask and light torch.
Break stair to enter chamber.
Kill Dragon with sword.
At oak door, say help.
Take owl with you to get coin.
Throw bone at Cerebus.
Give sword to spirit to get root.
Call sid to cross bridge.
Freeze moat.
Use charm to enter boiling water.

- And now - from the FOX-Jail of Ardyz Koz Graz -

"THE KARTOON KLUES SOLUTION TO 'BEHIND CLOSED DOORS'"

(N. HARRIS' CHITIZ → KSA)

(EAT YOUR HEART OUT 'MURDERMENSCHEN')

(Written by John Wilson @ Zenobi Software - 1988.) - so NYAH!!

1) In this game you take the part of the "Rockable BACROG" (not a pretty sight, eh?)



2) First of all - stand up and examine the right & left walls...



3) ... Then get the nail..

@!! @#&@!!
Artist!!



4) Straighten the nail



5) Unfold the gazette (Read it if you like!!)



6) Examine the door and push gazette under the door...



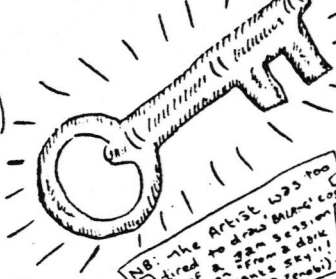
7) ... and insert the nail in the keyhole!!



8) Pull the gazette from under the door.



9) Get the key



10) unlock the door to confront the culprits - but before you do....



11) ... don't forget to pull up your trousers!!!



The End!
© Mhp 1988

PSST: APOLOGIES TO ALL THE LADIES IN THE MAG. - FOR MY 'MOMENT' ACCIDENTAL REVEALATIONS WHEN I STOOD UP!!
ALL THE LADIES ONLY!
- DON'T APOLOGISE: IT'S THE BEST CAR I'VE HAD IN A YEAR!!



GETTING YOU STARTED

A GUIDE TO ACHIEVING BLOODWYCH

By JASON DEANE played on Amiga



Select Murlock, recruit Zothern, then leaving Blodwyn and Astroth for the time being, recruit all other Bloodwych in turn. It's a nasty trick but relieve them of their food, keys and money then dismiss them. Don't kill them - you might have need for them later. Anyway, save your killing instinct for the real baddies. There are enough of those to satisfy anyone's blood-lust. Complete your party of four by finally recruiting Blodwyn and Astroth. You should now have 80 keys, 160 gold and enough food to feed an army, so leaving your fellow Bloodwych behind, open the main doors from Treihadwyl and begin your quest for the four Crystals of Storing.

Buying weapons and armour from the shop is unnecessary as you'll find plenty if you stay alert and observant. The foodseller is preventing you from finding the key to open the bronze door, so waste him and take it. Next you find another bronze door also locked so open the wooden door at the top of the keep and kill the occupant. On the shelf among other things you'll find the key you need. When you unlock the door the Amazon that comes at you won't be as easy a kill as the two men. So here's the time to practice a fighting technique that will enable you to defeat practically any adversary Zendik throws at you. If you stand eyeball to eyeball with any creature and try to defeat him, her or it, and they are tougher than you, they're going to win every time. So what you have to do is get them off their guard. Retreat to an area where you have four clear squares. They will follow you as their instinct to kill is even greater than yours. Now by moving quickly around and behind them, attack from all sides. Nimbly step out of their line of fire and you should be able to defeat them. Just don't get surrounded if there are too many of them. When this happens use "terror" to thin down the numbers or fight them from behind a portcullis or door.

After the Amazon has been killed the next obstacle you encounter will be the locked iron portcullis. So retrace your steps and scout the area to find a pair of locked wooden doors. Open one and off the skeleton. Pressing the grey and red buttons you will discover removes the walls blocking the two passageways. You will need a bit of space to defeat the small army of tough blue guards behind the last set of double doors. When you're ready open one of them and engage them in battle. Defeat them all and this section is secured. Locate the small bedroom and there on the shelf is the iron key. Press the yellow button and this opens a shortcut to the forge and the iron portcullis. Unlock this and kill the two men then the crab that lurks in the chamber beyond. Ahead you find a wooden door. Unlock this and you guessed it - more bloodletting. Ignore the warning on the tapestry and step on the green floor pad. This triggers a switch that opens the black portcullis and releasing the blue meanie. Dance with him a while then slit his throat. In his lair you will find the key necessary to exit this chamber and a flask of serpent slime. If you drink this (ugh!) when your vitality is low it will increase it to maximum.....

THIS GETTING YOU STARTED WILL BE CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE!

Meanwhile if anyone needs help on this, Jason will be happy to help.
The number is on the telephone helpline page.

WAIT until your spell wears off. GET ALL, S, S, to the end of the highway. E and you are in the stone but where your scroll rests in the fireplace. GET PARCHMENT SCROLL and READ PARCHMENT SCROLL and you find that you have the swazo spell to exorcise an inhabiting presence. You also have 25 points for getting the scroll from the fireplace.

GNUSTO SVANZO and as you are starting to feel tired, SLEEP. W, V, V to the toll gate where the fat old Gnome is still sleeping soundly. SEARCH GNOME as you will need the Zorkaid coin again elsewhere, W, V, SV, G to the crater once again. This time take the passage which leads S to a winding tunnel, SV to the entrance to an amusement park. W and you bounce off an invisible barrier. A Gnome in a gaudy plaid outfit appears and demands a zorkaid entrance fee (lucky you got your coin back wasn't it?). GIVE COIN TO GNOME and you are free to pass. You are now at the east end of Midway. W is a haunted house, south is a flume (a sort of waterchute ride). W and you are at the west end of Midway, E is a rollercoaster, S is an arcade. For the moment go W.

You are in the Casino, with a coin-op machine which pays 1 zorkaid coin out on average every 16 goes (but only if you haven't opened the toll gate). Every 54 pulls (roughly) it gives you 3 gold pots and buries you in wealth. E, S, to the arcade (which is the only essential place to visit assuming that you have opened the toll gate). You are offered the chance to throw a ball at some mechanical bunnies to win a prize. GET BALL. OPEN AQUA VIAL. DRINK AQUA POTION, you feel your muscles ripple under the effect of the potion. THROW BALL AT BUNNY and you win a glittering scroll as a prize. Also 10 points for the score, which should be about 215 out of 400 at this point.

READ GLITTERING SCROLL and you find that it is Malyon, a spell to animate objects. GNUSTO MALYON, and it is copied to the spell book. E, E, E, WE back to the winding tunnel. Now go S to a hall with carvings on the walls. The most impressive is that of a dragon. LEARN MALYON, YONK MALYON to increase its power, MALYON DRAGON. The dragon comes to life, but instead of being grateful for its release it rears its head to breath fire at you. It really is just as well that the ungrateful creature re-solidifies before it can, leaving a tremendous hole in the cavern wall.

At this point it is very important to sleep before continuing. In a non totally fresh state you cannot complete the next part of the game as it limits you to time. If you are not sleepy you would be well advised to wait until you are. Also you would be very wise to save before going on as timing and possessions are critical after passing through the hole.

SLEEP and you are ready to commence the end-game. S and you find you are in a sooty room, which is an annex of a coal mine. E and you are in the coal bin room, and an avalanche of rock has blocked the exit to the W. You have no option but to go on! The air is very bad and it will not be long before you pass out through lack of Oxygen, but remember the amber vial the messenger left in exchange for the matchbook at the Guildhall? OPEN AMBER VIAL. DRINK POTION, at this point a person looking remarkably like you emerges from the upper chute.

To be continued.

SERIALIZED SOLUTIONS

The Wayfarer's guide to BALLYHOO, Intocom. Played on Amstrad

.....continued.

it belongs to Andrew and chases him away in a rage. U, to the wardrobe closet, GET COMBINATION AND COMBO. EXAMINE COMBINATION. LOOK IN POCKET which you discover. GET VEIL. U, W, V to the midway entrance. S, SE to the menagerie nook. The old front is not all it seems, so PUT TICKET UNDER FRONT, a secret panel opens allowing you to go E.

You have entered an illegal gambling room called the Blue room. GET TICKET, BET \$2 and follow the instructions until you either win or lose. OPEN DOOR (10 points for getting in and out safely the first time). W, NW, SW to near the white wagon. Thumb taps your foot again babbling in his native tongue and pointing back to the Blue room. He obviously thinks you should go back and look under the table. Ignore it for the moment.

EXAMINE TRAILER to find a ladder leading on to the roof. DROP ALL, U, the office door opens and the the owner looks out. You can see a panel and a crank here so, ROTATE CRANK (or OPEN PANEL). KNOCK ON ROOF and the owner steps out, closes the door and walks off into the darkness. Time is short now so, CLIMB IN WAGON, LOCK DOOR, EXAMINE DESK to reveal a spreadsheet. GET SPREADSHEET, MOVE DESK UNDER PANEL, U back onto the roof (10 points, 150/200 at this time) just in time to bear entry being forced below. D, GET TICKET. WE, SE, PUT TICKET UNDER FRONT, E and you are back in the Blue room.

LOOK UNDER TABLE. GET SUITCASE, OPEN DOOR, but you are overpowered and the suitcase is taken away by one of the thugs. W, U, U to on the tent, still being pursued by the thugs. E, E, E across the tent to where an elephant prod is thrust through the canvas at you. GET SHAFT, PULL SHAFT, this causes the thug to fall off his ladder and injure himself (leaving you free to escape and with a further 10 points.). D, D, NW, SW, GET ALL, V, READ SPREADSHEET.

The spreadsheet appears to be the wages of someone called Eddie Smalldone. ASK HARRY ABOUT EDDIE and you learn it is Chuckles real name. V, S, E, Chuckles is standing here outside the aluminium trailer. SHOW CARD TO CHUCKLES. SHOW RIBBON, SHOW NOTB, SHOW SCRAP, SHOW SPREADSHEET TO EDDIE. (NB if you just SHOW SPREADSHEET or SHOW SPREADSHEET TO CHUCKLES he simply denies it and walks away.) WEAR COMBINATION, WEAR COMBO, WEAR VEIL, KNOCK ON DOOR.

The occupants mistake you for Andrew, and invite you in (10 points, E), CLOSE DOOR. GET CROWBAR, MOVE MOOSE HEAD which drops to the floor revealing a hole. This hole is too small for you, so you must find Thumb and get his help. OPEN DOOR, W, V, LOOK, PRY DOOR WITH CROWBAR. S, GET THUMB. W, E, E, PUT THUMB IN HOLE, WAIT and when you can see her, GET GIRL (10 points, 180/200).

V, W, E, WE, where Mahler in true KING KONG fashion grabs the girl and heads for the high wire. W, to midway entrance. GET RADIO, W, W, W, V to the lions' den. DROP ALL BUT RADIO, GET STAND, E, DROP STAND. CLAP HANDS to hypnotise the roustabout (10 points). ROUSTABOUT, GET NET. REMOVE COMBO, REMOVE COMBINATION, REMOVE VEIL, DROP ALL BUT RADIO. GET POLE.

GET ON STAND. U, U to the rigging above the West platform. This action drives Mahler and the now unconscious girl to the East platform. Mahler does not seem soothed by the classical music coming from the radio, E, E, E (with him making threatening moves at each step), suddenly the announcer interrupts the classical music to remind the listeners that this is Pledge Week on WPDL and that she will not play a Vivaldi Piece until someone makes a pledge.

V, V, V, V back to the platform, DROP RADIO AND POLE. D, S, S, S, E to the office to use the telephone. CALL WPDL, V, W, W, W, GET ON STAND, U, GET ALL, E, E, E, E, E, fortunately you are close enough to Mahler that the music can soothe him. Mahler drops the girl who falls into the net and you are left hanging from the wire (having gained the 10 points for rescuing the girl). LET GO and you fall into the net, having gained a perfect 200/200 score.

Points for actions:

10 points each for:

Successfully walking the tightrope. Examining the garbage. Getting the key (with the pole). Waking up on the hypnotist's couch. Getting the radio/cassette recorder. Inhaling the helium (and passing the guard). Getting the scrap of newsprint. Getting the stool and whip to the lion cage (with the meat). Getting the cigarette case from under the stand. Catching the mouse. Stomping the elephant. Soothing Mahler and opening the trap door. Showing the cigarette case to Jenny. Getting in and out of the blue room. Getting into the white wagon. Defeating the man with the elephant prod (the shaft). Entering Katzenammer's trailer. Getting the girl (with Thumb's help). Hypnotising the roustabout. Rescuing the girl from Mahler (up in the rigging).

Total score 200 out of 200. (20 action at 10 points each.)

ADVENTURE COMPLETED!

THE LURE OF THE ADVENTURE

By JIM STRUTHERS

In the not to distant past I used to play platform games but in the end I had to give them up as I found I could not get past Level 9. Then I found my salvation, yes, the adventure! When I first started to play adventures I was not very good. When I became stuck I lacked the Incentive to continue but then I discovered the helplineers were on hand to help people like myself. The lines were run by adventurers who were Capable Reliable and Level headed, unlike me. So I used to spend a lot of my time ringing people up for help on my Infocom. Now I am beginning to get the hang of adventuring and don't spend so much time as I used to doing this. However, just when I seem to be getting the hang of it I find out that Amstrad adventures are starting to disappear like the lost city of Atlantis, all because of the need of software houses and their never ending search for Double Gold. I now believe that these people are Piranhas and don't think that Sharks can be Soft! I now have a large collection of mags, letters, notes, hints, tips, solutions etc, where on earth will I put it all? I might think of buying a bigger Melbourne House. Just a minute, I can hear the postbox rattle ... yes, it's the postman putting another Magnetic Scrool through the door!

.....



HELPLINE

TELEPHONE HELPLINES

ALF BALDWIN	0452 500512	MON TO SAT 10AM TO 5PM	Spectrum.
JACK HIGHAM	0925 819631	FRI TO MON 7PM TO 10PM	Spectrum.
WALTER POULEY	051 9331342	ANY REASONABLE TIME	Various.
DOREEN BARDON	065 382 509	MON TO FRI 8PM TO 10PM	Spectrum.
		WEEKENDS ANY REASONABLE TIME	
MIKE BRAILSFORD	0592 757789	SUN TO SAT 10AM TO 10PM	Various.
MERC	0424 434214	ANY REASONABLE TIME	Atari ST.
JASON DEANE	0492 622750	ANY REASONABLE TIME	Amiga.
JOAN PANCOTT	0305 784155	SUN TO SAT NOON TO 10PM	Amstrad.
ISLA DONALDSON	041 9540602	SUN TO SAT NOON TO 12PM	Amstrad.
NIC RUMSEY	03212 2737	SUN TO SAT 6PM TO 9PM	Various.
REG LILLEY	0392 215521	TUE TO SUN 6PM TO 11PM	Commodore
BARBARA			
BASSINGTHWAIGHTE	0935 26174	SUN TO SAT 10AM TO 10PM	BBC.
BARBARA GIBB	051 7226731	ANY EVENING FROM 7PM	BBC.
DAVE BARKER	01 732 1513	MON TO FRI 7PM TO 10PM	Various.
STUART WHYTE	061 9804645	ANY REASONABLE TIME	Amstrad.
ROBIN MATTHEW	0222 569115	ANY REASONABLE TIME	IBM PC
SOMZ	0482 654036	MON TO SAT 10AM TO 11PM	Various.

• • • THE ULTIMATE INFOCOM HELPLINE • • •

If you need help with an Infocom adventure then who better to help you than A GRUE! Ring GRUE on 0695 573141 between 7:30pm to 9pm Mon to Fri. Or write to 64 COUNTY ROAD, ORMSKIRK, WEST LANCS, L39 1QH. Please note that GRUE will give help on INFOCOM ONLY!

HANDY'S HOTLINE

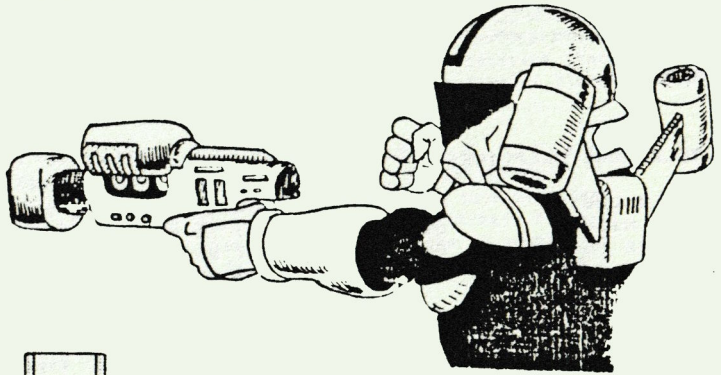
If you need to contact Probe please telephone 0492 77305. I will be available at all reasonable times but please try to telephone between 10am and 10pm. If you are telephoning for help on an adventure then please try to phone during office hours as the solutions are on hand during that time.

PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT YOU ONLY RING AT THE TIMES SHOWN



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