



ADVENTURE



PROBE

VOLIV. ISS IV.

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT

ADVENTURE PROBE

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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 took the time and trouble to send in contributions over the past month, ie. between 14th February and 14th March:

Graham Wheeler, Alan Davis, Jack Higham, Jim O'Keeffe (Letters Editor), Ben Isba, Allan Phillips, Paul Hardy, Jim Struthers, Nic Rumsey, The Antcrusher, Stuart Whyte, Yvonne Cooper, The Wayfarer, The Balrog, The Grue!, Liz Ahmedzai, Paraskevas Tsourinakis, June Rowe, Jack Lockerby, Neil Shipman, Alf Baldwin, Steve McLaren, Amanda Oliver, Tony Rome, Ron Rainbird, Rod Whannell, Barbara Gibb and Dave Havard.

A special thanks to Ben Isba for this months cover picture.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Contributions are always needed and all readers are invited to send in items for ALL sections of the magazine. Anything from a single hint or tip to a full blown article are all very welcome. Probe relies on YOUR contributions to be able to continue. Don't worry if you cannot send items in ready typed up for inclusion in the magazine as handwritten items are just as welcome, although it does save a lot of time if they are nicely typed. If you send in contributions for more than one section then please make sure that use different sheets for each and please make sure you include your name and what computer you used. If you would like to send in items ready for the pages of Probe then please use A4 with a nice margin all round with text being approx 70 characters across and 60 lines per page. If you prefer to send contributions on disc I am able to print out from Amstrad CPC6128 using Tasword or Protext, Commodore 64 using Easyscript or Atari ST using First Word Plus. Unfortunately I have no print facilities from the Spectrum. Discs will be returned. If you send in advertisements for software for the In-Touch section please ensure that adventures, utilities and arcade games are separated and inform me which are which so that someone doesn't buy an arcade game when they were expecting an adventure.....Mandy

EDITORIAL



Welcome to Volume IV, Issue 4 of Adventure Probe.

Would you think it possible that someone could spell someone's name in three or more different ways and all within six lines of text? No? Well check out the Infocom Swap 'n Buy on page 41 of the last issue! It is a prime example of "Once something goes wrong - everything goes wrong!" One day I'll surprise you all and produce a PERFECT issue of Probe - promise! Anyway, my profound apologies Stuart.

I have discovered the delights of gardening this month! I've been digging and delving all over the place. I have found it all (apart from the backache) very enjoyable. I am just hoping that the pets (or should that be pests?) will leave everything alone and let it all grow. I did find them playing tug-of-war with a newly planted rose bush yesterday. Funny though, I'm sure I didn't dig a three foot deep hole to plant it - but there it was. I did find some time this month to do some playtesting for Incentive though and was delighted to discover that their new Freescape system can be successfully turned into an adventure! You all have a treat in store soon, Amstrad adventurers included, I'll be able to tell you more about it in the next issue.

I heard some wonderful news on Mothers Day! Our Allan and Anita Phillips had a new arrival in the shape of an 8lb 10oz bouncing baby boy called Matthew Leslie. I am sure you will all join with me in sending heartiest congratulations to them both. If he is anything like his Dad then we have another future avid adventurer to join the ranks. More good news is that from the May issue of Your Sinclair, Mike Gerrards adventure column will return to FIVE pages instead of four which is a relief after hearing of the takeover by Future from Dennis Publishing.

As many of you will know, I won a Level 9 T-shirt in a recent competition in Amstrad Action. I am wearing it proudly right now. If any of you would like to get hold of your very own L9 T-shirt then Level 9 are now selling them for £3.75 each (post paid). Available as Small, Medium, Large and Extra-Large so write or phone with Credit Card and you too can proudly wear one.

Jack Lockerby of River Software has asked me to inform you all that his new Spectrum adventure MISER and the Atari ST compilation of CHALLENGE and THIEF are being sold exclusively by Zenobi Software so please apply to Zenobi instead of River if you wish to order. You will find the address on the back page of Probe.

Would anyone like to join the Official Secrets team on a full-time basis? Well John Trevillian is looking for someone to join him at Confidential. The lucky applicant will have to work in Harlow. Anyone interested should write, enclosing CV, to John at PO Box 847 Harlow, Essex, CM21 9PH. Now that's an opportunity not to be missed!

Once again I find myself having to apologise to anyone who is awaiting a reply to a letter. I love receiving your letters but finding time to answer all of them can be a little difficult so please be patient until I can catch up. One last word before I run out of space - do you know that I have absolutely NO reviews for the next issue? Can somebody help please? Well that's all from me for this month. I do hope you all enjoy this issue. See you all again next month.

Mandy

REVIEWS



DEMON'S TOMB

By Virgin Mastertronic, 2-4 Vernon Yard, Portobello Rd, London. Available for Amiga and Atari ST. Reviewed by The Wayfarer on the Amiga. Shop around for the best price.

A very unusual adventure from Virgin Mastertronic which should appeal to all types of adventurers. It is possible to play the game as either an Icon driven or Text input game. The graphics when played as a text adventure are not intrusive, indeed F1 must be pressed to access them. Repressing the key defaults it back to text input. Also unusual is a text output ability, beloved by all who like to take printouts of involved scenes, and ways of customising the output to your requirements. There is also an ability to define certain keys to perform actions, this saves a lot of typing in one sequence in particular near the endgame.

For those who play while they should be doing other things (don't we all?.....Ed) there is a useful panic button F2, which displays a flashing prompt. If any input is attempted the machine displays a "This terminal is busy" message, F2 toggles it back to the game.

Puzzles are excellent, although the game uses only N, S, E, W as directions (I suppose others would be confusing in Icon drive), there is a rather obscure puzzle involving a biro which no one I know who has played the game has found a reason for. Suffice to say that if a certain action is not performed it is fatal at another point.

The pictures are beautifully done, and I particularly liked the picture of Sam, "a dog of very little brain", which reminded me of a dog which my family owned (and which also fell into this category). Not being an expert I believe that the pictures are digital imports rather than drawings. I leave comments on this to others more qualified in the field than I.

All in all this is a game that should appeal to adventurers of varying abilities. It is a funny thing to see the text adventure arriving in this format when we have been told that it is as dead as the proverbial Dodo. Remember that man's ignorance killed this bird, has that also proved to be true of the text adventure. If the reason that all adventures have gone icon driven is to make them marketable world wide without language problems (after all if you only spoke a little holiday Spanish how would you like to play an adventure in it?), then I applaud this new style as a way of keeping the interest of the dyed-in-the-wool text adventurer who is not really into graphics.

LONG MAY IT CONTINUE...LET THIS ONLY BE THE FIRST OF A SERIES, VIRGIN.

ESSEX

By Bill Darrah. Reviewed by The Wayfarer and played on Commodore 64 (disc).



Another real time adventure, similar in handling to Mindwheel. For those who have never experienced the concept, real time means that the adventure is continuously playing, and only pauses when the player wishes it. Merely sitting in front of the screen does not, and those who are unfamiliar with the keyboard, or tardy in their responses, run the risk of having the character that they are about to speak to walk

off in between inputs.

Unlike Mindwheel the interaction and puzzles are of a simpler nature, the hardest problem is to get certain characters to the correct location when you want them. That is without them walking off whilst you are talking to them.

Essex is a starship, and you have elected to take the conducted tour of her as part of your holiday. Within a few moves you have discovered a dying agent and been entrusted with the mission to rescue professor Klein from the carnivorous Hampsters of Malphornalleh. (Yes, Bob, HAMPSTERS not Amsters... You know, the funny little things which run around in a wheel at night making strange noises. Not SO dissimilar on reflection.)

Like Mindwheel it has a marvellous endgame, which makes it well worth buying if you see it lying neglected somewhere. Sadly this type of real time adventure has died a death... Come on Infocom and Level 9, lets get get back to some real adventuring instead of these graphic comics which draw the pictures for you. An adventurer's mind and imagination is as much a game writer's tool as the programme he writes in, after all.



THE HOLY GRAIL

Written by Jim MacBrayne and available for the Imeg Amiga. If you want a copy of this adventure then send a formatted Amiga disk with return postage to Jim MacBrayne, 27 Paidmyre Cres, Newton Mearns, Glasgow, G77 5AQ.

Reviewer THE GRUE!

Jim MacBrayne at last unleashes his latest adventure for the Amiga and it has been well worth the wait. Upon booting up the disk you are greeted by a professional looking loading screen, then a full screen of text which nicely sets the scene for your adventure. As with The Golden Fleece, Jim parts from the original story of the Grail and once again it is the player who benefits from Jim's imagination. You start in a small dungeon deep inside a castle, upon exploring the castle some locations are very intriguing such as Merlin's room with sparks of pure magik seeping out from the trapdoor and occasionally bouncing off the walls, the Strategic Planning room with a strange carved decoration set into a table. Not finding much to do as yet in these locations you venture outside the castle walls into the village. Here you'll find the alchemy shop with the most amazing description of an alchemy shop I've ever seen. Also in the village the surgery of the local doctor who, according to the locals, is very popular. And the curious magik shop with nothing inside except for a counter with a slot in it and three buttons. Various signs, notices and missives are dotted around which should help getting you started. One states that "When one door closes, another opens?" Not that shouldn't be too difficult, except the correct door to close is not the obvious one. Even when you do realise which door it is, your problems have only just begun, as when it is closed you quickly realise that you are now on the wrong side of it.

The Magik shop had me very confused at first. It all seemed so simple, put the coin in the slot and press the buttons ... nothing happened, until I returned outside back into the village when I heard someone shuffling around inside. Quickly returning to the magik shop I found a silver ingot had appeared on the counter. But let me warn you, it definitely isn't that simple! Once you've learnt how to operate the

"door" and solved the magik shop your adventure is really only about to begin!

The game hinges around a secret door through which various scenarios can be visited by placing different jewels in the correct place. Each of these scenes has its own atmosphere, some being fairly easy to solve but the Opal location I thought was very difficult because of the lift set inside of the tree. The Sapphire locations are quite brilliant, the idea is so simple that it works extremely well. I'm amazed that I've not seen it done in a game before. Then there is the Emerald scene where if you drop anything it is immediately swallowed up within the thick dense dust covering the floor, the problem is that you need to drop the item you want before you are able to take it!

It is also nice to see a game with some humour in it. Try standing on the drawbridge as it closes. The author obviously has a madcap sense of humour. Who else would put a comfy cushion in a torture chamber, probably the same person who puts a dragon in a game and leads you right up the garden path with the solution! The Grail has a great atmosphere, good logical puzzles and will provide more than a few hours of enjoyment. Isn't this how Infocom started? Jim has a great ability to write wonderful text descriptions that will draw the player into the story but he can construct puzzles to match.

I would recommend the Holy Grail to anyone with an Amiga, its just what the doctor ordered. If you are fed up with these new high tech graphic/icon games that make you spend hours frustratingly searching for the correct pixel to click on, remember you are supposed to be enjoying yourself. So go spoil yourself and send for The Holy Grail, you won't be disappointed.

The parser, although it was already quite sophisticated, has been improved and the scoring routine works this time. Now you can also define the function keys and use the scripting option if you so wish. These improvements though do have a price, you will need a 1MEG Amiga to play The Holy Grail but if you can buy a ram extension for Dungeon Master then surely it's worth it for The Grail, considering it is free. Yes, what more can you ask for a free game that is full of text, magik spells and potions, humour and atmosphere - I know, I was there!!



AGATHA'S FOLLY

By Linda Wright and available from Zenobi Software, 26 Spotland Tops, Cutgate, Rochdale, Lancs. For Spectrum on cassette price £2.99
Reviewer - MARGO PORTEOUS

"This morning, you become the owner of Bluebell Cottage. It is greatly in need of modernisation, but the surrounding grounds compensate, as you now possess your very own lake, semi-derelict mill and folly. You had fallen in love with the place as soon as you had seen it, declaring it your "dream" cottage. It has been empty for years, but couldn't be sold before because the previous owner, Agatha, mysteriously disappeared, and no-one could sell it until she had been declared dead.

Although your furniture isn't due to arrive until tomorrow, you have decided to stay here tonight. Having put a Z bed in one of the bedrooms, you have wandered downstairs and plan to examine the furniture that you bought with the cottage, before exploring the

grounds. You also find yourself wondering what happened to the previous occupant - you love mysteries, and are half hoping that perhaps you will be able to unravel this one."

Agatha's Folly was written by Linda Wright. I love her other adventures for the 48K Spectrum, so send for it right away and it came by return mail.

To play, you can just type normal sentences like GET JOURNAL AND READ IT THEN DROP IT, or GET THE PEN THEN WRITE ON THE PAPER AND PUT IT IN THE ENVELOPE. You can also use simple VERB/NOUN commands. Examine can be X or EXAM and there is a RAMSAVE and HELP/VOCAB, LOOK IN, LOOK AT, LOOK UNDER, LOOK THROUGH, GET ALL, DROP ALL etc. The text being white on black with commands in yellow and special messages in blue. One time-saver is that if you have the correct key there is no need to bother with UNLOCK DOOR, OPEN DOOR - the direction is all you need. If you don't have the correct one then you will be told so.

You are advised to examine every object you find as well as items mentioned in the location descriptions, including everyday things like doors, windows, bushes etc. In this way you can find a notepad and journal that give some clues to Agatha's disappearance, some mysterious writing behind peeling wallpaper and get some snippets of gossip from some callers at the front door, but it would spoil it to mention any more of that.

I found this two part, text only adventure game very atmospheric. I quickly became very interested in Agatha and was eager to find new clues to why and how she suddenly vanished.

=====

THE WIZARD'S TOWER

Reviewed by MERC and played on the Atari ST



If The Jade Stone is an example of what polish and experience can do with STAC, then Wizards Tower illustrates the consequences of their omission. The game appears to utilize only the superficial aspects of the system and many facilities offered by STAC have been omitted to the detriment of the game. This is not to say that promise is lacking - with more imagination and assistance and better preparation a masterpiece could be forthcoming, but sadly this would appear to be some years off. (The writer does admit that this is a first attempt). The game may well appeal to beginners (and not only because it is available as PD disk 6 from Syntax) but it is too simple and too repetitive for the more discerning. It could form a starting point in Interactive Fiction for those needing an easy introduction, though its rough edges and many faults detract even from that.

I have the distinct impression that WT was written by a young person, probably still at school. This is no bad thing in itself, but my advice to budding adventure writers would be this: have your text proof-read by somebody who is competent in English. The many lapses in spelling, punctuation and grammar (obstacles, powerfull, believe, beliver, relive, dispell, it's (for its), practicing, a explosion, helps protects you, and respectively, are some of the more obvious) will often put players off the more positive aspects of your game.

Some of the mod. cons. one has come to expect are conspicuous only by their absence: there is no vocabulary list, and no multiple action (eg. you cannot "drop all" and at one point you have to drop seven

objects at one time). There is no RAMSAVE/LOAD. There are no other characters to offer help (or hindrance), as the various apparitions can only be disposed of (which leaves one with a peculiar thought: what is a dead spectre?). Clues often aren't helpful (examine talisman and then decide where it's needed! A skeleton is one thing a ghou can't be). The parser and its replies are rudimentary and monotonous. It complains, for instance, "Throwing stuff around does not help" if you try to throw things, though you must do this at one point. In the rubble room there is only ONE verb that will work (though a fairly obvious one). If POW, HP and STR are allowed, why not SCO for score? Why include a feature which plays no part in the solution ("Wt carr")? Scant attention has been paid to the way in which text is displayed, so that location titles often appear squashed on the same line as descriptions, word-wrap is incorrect, and punctuation such as a final full-stop may well have a line to itself.

Your task is to find your mentor, the wizard Marek, (who presumably intends to teach you spelling). It is rather tediously linear and, by the expedient of having two irrevocable transportations, divides itself into three parts. Miss something in one of the earlier sections, and back you have to go to a position SAVED before the discontinuity. It involves the traditional finding of useful objects, the judicious preservation of various "points" to kill without being killed and the general removal or overcoming of obstacles. Most of this is easy to the point of being trivial (some would say this of all IF) but there is at one juncture an awkward manipulation of three levers. This has to be done just right, and nowhere does there seem to be a clue to the correct sequence. Later you discover a series of coloured buttons, but there is no clue to the one which gives information about the others. Needless to say pressing one of them is fatal. This sort of trial-and-error solving adds to a game's complexity without increasing its interest. Some of the objects are traps, so SAVE often, because there may be no indication as to those you need, those which are neutral and those you must leave alone. You do, though, have spells and an Oops command to give some help in this direction.

In all fairness, I cannot recommend this particular game, but I am sure the author will eventually come up with something considerably better. Potential IF writers should get it, if only to observe the result of callow under-utilization of a versatile system.

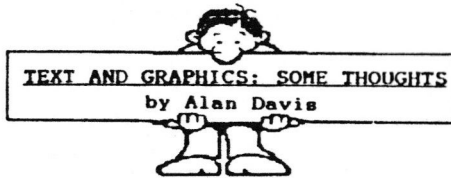
PERSONAL COLUMN



A BIG THANKYOU to those who took part and really made my birthday a wonderful day. I always thought that the Probe readers were a great bunch, now I really know just how great you all are. Once again many thanks, NIC RUMSEY, THE WAYFARER.

To BARBARA WAKLEY, I am glad that the help on KNIGHT ORC saved you from pulling ALL your hair out! GRAHAM.

I would like to say thank you to all the people I have known through Probe for all their help. MANDY RUDRIGUES for being very helpful and understanding, PAUL HARDY because he is a very helpful guy, NIC RUMSEY for good sound advice, THE GRUE for giving me a "guiding light" in Zork I and JIM O'KEEFFE for his invaluable help on Kings Quest I. If I have missed anyone out then thank you all... STEVE McLAREN.



I was interested to read in Paul Rigby's article "Level 9 - Leaving the Sinking Ship" (Vol 4 No 1) the following sentence:
"It is only through text that you can create the correct atmosphere, an atmosphere that will be perfect for everyone as each person, using their own imagination, creates their own."

Now I'd better start by apologising to Paul for dragging his words out of their context - for I freely admit that I am indeed doing so, and that these words alone don't represent a fair, balanced summary of the view he was explaining. However, they do provide me with a perfect starting point to talk about some aspects of the "Text v Graphics" controversy, which has given rise to much heated discussion over the years and which seems to do so still, to some degree. The facts are thus: as long as I've been involved with adventures there has existed a certain school of thought which declares that where adventures are concerned, graphics are bad news and a waste of space which would be better occupied by more text. The implication here is that graphics are, in themselves, inferior to text in some fundamental way, and that no serious adventurer worth his salt should approve of the use of mere pictures as a supplement to (or sometimes a replacement for) text.

This view, I think, mistakes personal taste for fundamental principles - although it's easy to see how and why it arose. Very early in the history of adventuredom graphics were seen as an important marketing ploy - as a way of selling adventure software to people who don't normally play adventures. We might think this way of proceeding to be folly, but folly or not it undoubtedly happened - giving rise of course to those two great laws of Adventure Marketing, laid down in the early/mid 1980's:

- 1) All adventures must have graphics.
- 2) Any old graphics will do.

Well, we can all point the finger at countless examples where poor or mediocre pictures have been splashed upon TV screens as a result of all this and I'm sorry to have to admit that of necessity I've made my own small contribution to this sorry state of affairs too. But since so many of these examples of bad graphics have been foisted upon the adventure player, it's only a short step to the (false) conclusion that ALL graphics are necessarily a waste of space (and even destructive of atmosphere).

Although it's true that poor graphics are atmosphere-killers, it's equally true that poorly written text is no better, and adventuredom is littered with programs which, because of mis-spellings, grammatical blunders, and clumsy expression are quite incapable of generating any kind of atmosphere at all. But this isn't a reason for concluding that text is a bad idea! (At least, I hope not!)

The simple fact is that some people just happen to be more

sensitive to the written word than they are to visual images, and such people naturally prefer to play text adventures, without graphics. It's important to realise that this isn't a considered critical decision on their part - they're just made that way. (Given the choice, they'd probably prefer to read a novel than visit an art gallery. And why not?)

Others (and I include myself among these) have a strong susceptibility to visual images, whatever their response to good writing may be. This means that a good picture (and I mean good, not just any old picture) can play a very positive role in the development of atmosphere. Notice that this too is not a considered decision - it's not something one can help. (Incidentally, to suggest that the capacity for enjoying graphics is due to a lack of imagination - and it's been said, you know! - is to miss the point completely.)

Taking the line that the adventure is some kind of story, in which the player can influence events, there are obvious parallels to be drawn with the development of books. It's interesting to note that, historically, the development of the book goes hand in hand with the wish to illustrate; and many of the world's greatest works of pictorial art were initially conceived essentially as illustrations of some text or other. Words and pictures have always been regarded as happy companions, and it's hard to see why computer adventures should make the exception to the rule.

Don't misunderstand me. I've enjoyed playing a great number of pure text adventures with not a graphic in sight (and written some too) and I expect to go on doing so. But I don't see anything sacrosanct about the text format. It's the spirit of an adventure that counts - not the shape of the package it comes wrapped in. So for example, I don't, myself, find it impossible to accept the idea of successful, effectively text-less adventures - mainly because I was one of those who found TIR NA NOG compelling despite its faults (remember it?). Naturally I'd feel badly robbed if they were all we had, but there's nothing actually wrong with a pictorially-conceived adventure in principle and to suggest that only text is capable of generating atmosphere is to mistake the disease. What's needed is not the elimination of graphics, but the inclusion, where appropriate, of graphics which positively use the principles of design - good art, in other words - to assist in the creation of atmosphere.

Trouble is - and here's the rub for us 8-bit dinosaurs - where are the folk with the talent to do it? And once they're found, are they likely to want to do it for those of us who consider that the adventuring potential of 8-bit machines like the Spectrum has still barely been explored?



FLIGHT OF FANCY
By FRANK GRAY



A fierce wind rushed down the narrow cobbled street, driving a disorganised army of leaves and straw pell-mell before him. Some were imprisoned in crevices between the stones of the weatherbeaten old houses, forming the main, if not quite the only, street in the quaint little village. Others tossed like cockleshells adrift in the Atlantic as they were swept down the gutters in the face of the driving, relentless rain. Even for Ballytuath in late Autumn it wasn't a night for anybody to put the dog out. As a matter of fact, none of the population were to be seen; but a noise like a herd of elephants after scenting a mouse mixed with the more musical strains of a ceilidhe band proved that the locals were still alive and kicking.

Talking about locals, there was another place where the storm went unheeded. Perhaps he resented this, for with an extra violent kick he sent the faded sign of "The Gallowglass" tumbling from its rusty hinges. Inside, ole Mick Sullivan paused for a moment in the act of uncorking another Guinness. "Boys a boys; May the Saints protect us tonight", he muttered, along with a few other phrases somewhat less reverently put, if a trifle more elaborately. Dan O'Rourke peered at him over the rim of his glass. "Wud ye stop yer blathering, Mick, and put a move on with that Liffey water". He gave a heartfelt sigh of contentment and leant back in his creaking chair as the frothing black glasses were placed in front of his friend Pat and himself.

For twenty years now it had been the same. Every Friday evening Pat and he would meet in the old pub and there, stretched out in front of the blazing turf fire, they would swap yarns with Mick until long after closing time. Official closing time, that is, for Mick had his own ideas on the subject. "I once read," he would fondly brag, "of dogs big as horses in a place called Switzerland, and wud ye believe it, but the folk there send them out with barrels of beer tied around their necks, just in case they should meet some poor soul half-dead for the need of a drink! So do you think I could do less when the poor cratures can make it as far as me door?" And nobody there had ever disputed the logic of this!

However, tonight a slight frown seemed to have gathered on Dan's homely face. What's eatin' ye the night, man?" inquired Pat, on observing this unusual phenomenon. "Ach, sure I don't rightly know, but tonight's a Friday as anybody could tell by the fact that we're partakin' of Mick's hospitality, and if I'm not seeing things that calendar says it's also the 13th". "Sure if you aren't right", gasped Pat. "Not a bit o' wonder its such a night." Now I won't be able to get to sleep until I waken for work in the morning! Mick, two more by the neck, please." The old barman deftly poured the drinks, holding the necks of the bottles under the level of the rising liquid in the glasses as he poured, to capture the froth. "Lookit here, Dan," he consoled, "Haven't ye been passing the graveyard every week for twenty years or more and nathin's got ye yit."

As Dan lowered his glass his gaze travelled round the small, cheerful room, and he wondered at the vague uneasiness he felt tonight. In the shelter and warm comradeship of the little bar they seemed isolated from the battered world outside. The turf fire roared away merrily in the corner, sending bright fire-flies of light dancing away from the jig-saw assortment of glass behind the dark oak counter. Mick started to sing "Phil the Fluter" in his rich brogue as he wiped a pool of

gleaming amber from one of the rickety wooden tables. Flickering shadows played amongst the blackened beams of the roof, but they were friendly shadows, shadows that were an echo of the pulsating life below and a background to the life above, where a busy little spider toiled unceasingly at its web.

A shiver ran through Dan as he looked at the web, the shadows seemed to coalesce of a sudden and bring a chill to the room, and he hastily averted his eyes as he drained his glass. "Two half-uns of Irish, Mick," he called. Pat looked at him in astonishment. "Would ye be havin' a birthday party to yourself the night, Dan. Sure I haven't seen ye on such a spree since the week we thought ye'd won the sweepstake?" "Nat at all, its just that I've got a premon... prom... it's just that I've got a feeling about tonight." He downed the whisky quickly, and the fiery liquid sent an answering gleam to his keen blue eyes. "D'ye know, Pat, if I met the de'il himself at the moment I'd laugh in his face and send him packing."

Pat roared with laughter, the tears streaming down his face as he almost rocked from his chair. "Did ye get a load O' that, Mick me boy; we're goin' out to chase banshees, aren't we, Dan?" Mick came over, a sudden serious look on his face. "Whist now lads", he cautioned, "Don't ye know better than to tempt the fates like that? Besides, its just passed eleven, how about a last couple on me and then home to your nice warm beds. If ye ask me that's the best place tonight."

Ten minutes later Gerry O'Donnell, the village garda, stopped outside the door to get his nightly half-un before the pub closed. The strains of somebody murdering "The Wild Colonial Boy" came to his ears, the door opened, and there on the step stood, or rather swayed, Dan and Pat fondly supporting each other, physically as well as musically. "Man but yez have been enjoyin' yourselves tonight," grinned Gerry, "I hope ye aren't expecting to enjoy the hospitality of me wee cell." Dan drew himself up to his full 5' 9", and he certainly looked full at that moment, I'm afraid. "If O'im not shober", he started, slowly and with a certain amount of dignity, "May the ground open at me feet an swallow me." Just then, with a suddenness that almost shocked Dan into being as sober as he claimed, there was a terrific peal of thunder and a bright flash of lightning split the sky. "Well", said Gerry, "That appeared to strike just outside town, Dan, maybe you'd better wait a while." "Thank ye, but sure it won't take me long getting home, 'night Pat, see ye tomorra." And with that he started to weave slowly down the street. Just then Pat fell against the wall and started lustily singing again, so the garda forgot Dan as he turned just in time to prevent Pat sliding down into a puddle at the base of the wall.

Dan slowly passed the hall where the local dance was still going strongly, and as he made his way towards the outskirts of the town he became aware of a rumbling of thunder that lent a stronger, more primitive beat to the music behind him. As it died away another flash of lightning from ahead silhouetted momentarily the stark outlines of the tall trees in front, sending a shiver down Dan's spine with their suggestion of gnarled arms stretched forth in obedience to the God of Night. He subconsciously pulled his collar up around his neck as he passed over the stone bridge that separated him from the life behind and plunged him into the world of darkness beneath the trees.

Somewhere in the night an owl hooted. The fierce gale that had raged earlier had spent its initial force, and at the moment a lull that was

charged with static waited expectantly on its renewal. Dan's footsteps rustling in the leaves that lined his unsteady path was the only sound above the soft patter of the cold drizzle that was falling. He paused for a moment to fumble in his pocket for his pipe. He was just filling it when the uneasiness he had felt all that night reached its ultimate peak, the pipe dropped from his fingers, and a strange prickling sensation ran along the back of his neck. He stopped, but the rustling of the leaves hadn't! Cold sweat ran down his face as he stood swaying, gazing with goggling eyes towards where the sound was growing steadily closer, each step seeming to be in unison with, and amplifying, the beats of Dan's heart. "What is it, in the name of God", he thought, wanting to turn and run, but unable to break the paralysis that held him. The steps were too heavy for any animal that might be here, he knew, unless!! Unless it was a special sort of animal, with cloven hooves! He almost collapsed at the idea. Then onto the path ahead stepped the originators of the sound, and Dan almost swooned at the relief of seeing two normal intelligent, and wet human beings.

As Dan's eyes focused again he saw that they were both tall, appeared to be wearing tight black leather suits and grey helmets. "Motorcyclists, probably lost in the gale", thought Dan as he hurried forward. "Boys a boys, but ye'll never know how glad it is I am to see yis". At this the leader of the pair turned to his companion, a puzzled look appearing for a moment in his eyes. Then he enquired in very precise English. "Why should you be so pleased to see us, were you expecting us?" "Some foreign tourists from England", thought Dan, "but did ye ever hear such a silly question?" Aloud he said "Sure will ye have an ounce O' sense, man, and how could I be expectin' ye when I didn't know ye were coming?" "I know that, because this is the first time we have landed," returned the other. "Ach, away wi' ye, but sure I'll have ye know ye're welcome here." "That doesn't make much difference, since nothing can stop us anyway." was the disconcerting reply to Dan's friendly overture. "Oh well, I'm glad of your company tonight, an' if ye like to dander the rest O' the way home with me I'll be glad to offer ye a week drap O' tea to keep the cold out." "Thank you", replied the elder of the two, "The inhabitants are obviously friendly and not too far advanced technologically, we shouldn't have much trouble," he observed to his companion.

"I suppose you're touring, though I wouldn't say its the weather for it", remarked Dan. "No, you could call us surveyors," was the answer. "English?" "No, we come from a land of great cities and machines far beyond your simple comprehension, but unfortunately a land now so over-populated that it is necessary for some of us to take over, before it destroys itself anyway. Most providential, however, since it attracted our attention to this System. From the analysis we have made so far the climatic conditions will be ideal for us. We will definitely be taking over."

The light dawned at last in Dan's slightly fuddled brain. These must be rich Americans, obviously bent on buying more of the country to add to Killarney! Must be careful what I say, he thought. Perhaps if I talk about our folklore, they always love that! "I hope we don't run into any of the wee folk", he remarked. "Wee folk?" inquired one of his companions. "Sure you know what I mean, lephrechauns an' the like, its the sort of night they'll be in a mischievous mood." "But we haven't seen another intelligent species around here," queried the other. "Oh ho, sure you won't see them unless they want you to, everyone knows that," said Dan scornfully. "Don't tell me they have the power of invisibility", was the now somewhat worried answer. Just

then a lightening flash lit up the marshy patch of ground they were traversing, and a sudden wall of the wind sent shivers down Dan's spine. "Sure an' I thought for a tick it was a Banshee," he chattered, "An' wud ye look at those lost souls luring poor folks to their death." The two strangers, now as frightened as Dan by the trend the conversation had taken, followed his pointing finger and saw a couple of wills-o'-the-Wisp dancing on the marsh.

One of them pointed what appeared to be a torch in their direction and pressed a stud. There was a slight humming sound, but no light appeared. The dancing lights out on the marsh wavered, flickered and continued their weird dance. "Looks like your battery needs recharging," observed Dan. The two men stared at one another horrified, "He knows more than we thought and some things out there could only have been saved from disintegration by taking momentary refuge in the fourth dimension," said the elder. "We have more to contend with than we expected." Dan began to get worried, it looked as if the Irish Government would lose a couple of good customers unless he could reassure them! "Don't worry," he soothed, "If you tried any other country you really would have something to worry about, the spirits here are usually harmless enough. Now if you were in Europe you would have trolls, goblins, werewolves and vampires to deal with, and the haggis in Scotland." He shuddered, "Wouldn't it be awful to come face to face with a vampire now, a creature that had been dead for hundreds of years coming back to suck the blood from the living, and worst of all, the Grue, but thats too dreadful to even think about!"

The elder man shivered and looked askance at the other. "That must be the explanation, a superior race exists on this planet, and must have discovered time travel. Even we, with all our resources, have not advanced that far yet. Also, from the obvious fright of this poor fellow, they must be a carnivorous species which preys on his kind, and his structure is fundamentally the same as ours. Obviously this planet is totally unsuitable, and the safest thing is to go immediately and warn our people never to return to this Solar System."

At that moment Dan's little shack came into view. "Ah, here we are at last, now for that wee droppa tea I promised ye." But when he turned to his companions there was no sign of them. As he reached the cottage door the rain abated, the air seemed clear again, and overhead a comet was blazing a trail through the night sky.

COMPETITION RESULTS

The answers to the competition held last month were as follows: 1. AGALIAREPT - Adventure Quest. 2. ARTHEMIN - Shard of Inovar. 3. ASHMEARD - The Golden Mask. 4. BORIS - Fantasia Diamond. 5. CHANTELE - In search of Angels. 6. ELROND - The Hobbit. 7. ELDIN - Prince of Tyndal. 8. ARTAX - Never Ending Story. 9. FATS - Jade Necklace. 10. FINN - Dusk over Elfinton. 11. FREY - Red Lion. 12. FRITZ VON NOON - The Pen and the Dark. 13. JARED - Mindshadow. 14. KHADIM - Hero's of Karn. 15. MORDON - Mordon's Quest. 16. MARIA - Secret of St Brides. 17. MALLUMO - Jade Stone. 18. MYGLAR - Price of Magik. 19. NEZZON - Red Moon. 20. PACHEO - The Challenge. 21. PIPPA - Hampstead. 22. RAMHOTEP - Crown of Ramhotep. 23. STRIPE - Gremlins. 24. ZAEGER - Claws of Despair. 25. TITAN - The Inferno. 26. PUCK - The Crystal of Chantie.

Congratulations to the following winners who each receive a signed copy of Mike Gerrards new book entitled "Adventures on the Spectrum": LORNA PATERSON, JOAN PANCOTT, MARGARET ABBIE, SUE ILSLEY, JEAN SMITH and BEN ISBA. They will all be receiving their prizes shortly.

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE GRUE!

Determined not to be outdone by Official Secrets magazine we sent our very own intrepid interviewer VICKY JACKSON along on a very dangerous mission to find out some gruesome facts about our very own Grue! Armed with a couple of cans of Grue Repellant and a tough Anti-Grue suit our brave Vicky ventured forth into his lair deep in the heart of Ormskirk.

VICKY: As a young Grue gruing up in Frobozz, what if any ambitions did you have?

GRUE!: *My main ambition was to become a vet but I found it much nicer to eat patients rather than heal them. My latest ambition is to find out how many hairs there are on Mike Gerrards chin.*



VICKY: It was reported in a well known magazine recently, that you visited the computer shopper show, however Bob Adams refuses to believe that you were really there. What do you have to say to this?

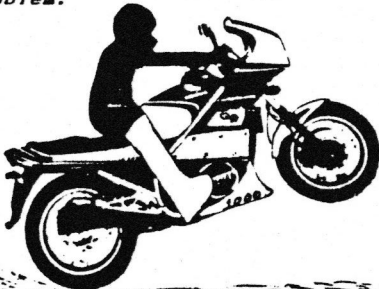
GRUE!: *Of course I was there! Bob Adams doesn't seem to believe anything or anyone connected with the Grue. I believe that Bob has been using the alias of Larry Horsfield lately to try and discredit me further ... You believe me don't you Vicky?*

VICKY: How would you account for the complete lack of barber shops in Frobozz?

GRUE!: *What's a barber shop?*

VICKY: It is well known that Grues live in total darkness and rarely venture from the safety of their caves. When you do have to go out into the big wide world, what sort of precautions do you take?

GRUE!: *It's normally a carbon-fibre hat woven with kevlar and special infra-black glasses to enable me to see in daylight. The longest spell away from the cave so far has been eight hours but I'm working on a new technique to avoid standing out from the crowd which is the main problem.*



VICKY: Is it true that you once won the Grand National on a motor bike with a broken leg?

GRUE!: *I'm afraid that one is not quite true and I wouldn't like people to think I exaggerated. What really happened was that I skidded on a pile of horse muck and got stuck in the fence and all the horses fell over me, I think it was Foinavon that went on to win.*

VICKY: Would you describe for our readers what you wore on your wedding day and would you say the secret of your happiness is that you GRUE on each other?

GRUE!: *I wore a blue sweatshirt, a pair of cowboy boots and a pair of stonewashed Levi's. The secret of our happiness is that I keep well out of her way, she throws a mean dinner plate!*

VICKY: We know there is a baby Grue in your family. What would you like him to be when he grues up?

GRUE!: *Apart from being a big Grue, I guess I'd like him to be anything except a vegetarian!*

VICKY: Can you confirm that you were once an apprentice D.J. for an underground radio station, playing such classics as: Stuck on grue by Elven Proossley, I only want to be with grue by Dozy Sprungaleak and Stand by your grue by Tinny Whynot?

GRUE!: *Yes, this is true but although I did play the above mentioned classics my favourite tunes were: Here comes the night by Them and Dark side of the Moon by Pink FLOYD. I was finally sacked for playing records backwards so I could listen to the secret satanic messages on them.*

VICKY: Is there any truth in the rumour that you managed to get a pair of the Wayfarer's steaming soles and are currently training your three Hellhounds to sniff him out?

GRUE!: *The Wayfarer did once threaten to send me a pair but they never appeared. Probably the postal service refused to send them. I have been training the Hellhounds to sniff him out, though, by breaking stink-bombs over their noses. I sent one out on a trial run the other week but he never came back. All I can presume from this is that he managed to trace the Wayfarer and was overcome by the stench, obviously I will have to use something more potent than stink-bombs in my training techniques.*

VICKY: It is understood that a Grue's staple diet consists of rice, light bulbs and unsuspecting adventurers. Do you consider this sufficient to maintain your mental superiority and awareness and are there enough adventurers to go around considering all the Grues lurking about?

GRUE!: *Probably not, but Grues are very resourcefull and can turn their fangs to just about anything. Once I ate a bowl of salad, three hub caps and a cardboard box but I'm afraid the salad gave me indigestion. I am fairly confident that I will always find enough adventurers willing to wander into dark sinister places, some adventurers actually do it on purpose - just for the pleasure of being eaten by a Grue.*

VICKY: Finally, is there any one person that you revere above all others?

GRUE!: *My word, Vicky, you do think of some difficult questions. After a lot of thought I guess the one person that I revere above all others would have to be The Cookie Monster from Sesame Street. I hasten to add that it was a close run thing between him and Sweep.*

At this point Grue smiled but the effect of actually seeing a row of sharp fangs appearing as his leathery lips drew back to compress a million black and whiskery wrinkles on either side of his broad snout was just too much for Vicky and she fled!

"KARTOON KLUES"

DRAWN BY
KRAZY
KEZ GRAY
1990. (1799#10)

"BULBO and the LIZARD KING"

THE DONKEY IS IN A DARK ALLEY
SW OF THE MARKET PLACE. TO
GET THE DONKEY TO ACCOMPANY
BULBO JUST "TAKE HOLD OF ROPE".



TO DISMISS A MEMBER
OF YOUR PARTY JUST
"FIRE" THEM.



TO PASS THE ORCS JUST
"HIDE" IN THE BUSHES.



TO PASS THE DRAGON EITHER
KILL IT OR CURE IT!



TO GET THE DONKEY OVER THE WALL JUST BE KIND AND "LIFT DONKEY OVER WALL" OR ELSE BE CRUEL AND "THROW DONKEY OVER WALL".



TO PASS THE RAT IN SAFETY GO TO THE LOCATION NW FROM THE DRAGON AND "ROLL BOULDER".



WITCH ... EXAMINE THE COINS IN YOUR POUCH TO LEARN THE NAME OF THE "GOLDEN BIRD"!



YOU WILL NEED SOME MAGIC TO PASS THE GUARDIAN - THIS CAN BE FOUND IN THE CAVES OF THE HERMIT.



HINTS AND TIPS

CHAOS STRIKES BACK by SANDRA SHARKEY played on Atari ST

You begin the game in the dark so cast a light spell and immediately stock up on fireball spells. You are standing on a spot that regenerates worms so be careful not to stand on it once you have defeated the worms that are waiting for you.

Unlike Dungeon Master it is essential that you try all the walls as there are many that conceal items, keyholes and access to other areas.

You will need a flask as soon as possible and also a water bag. The skeleton key can be re-used, unfortunately you may only find it towards the end of the game as it appears to be random. The first time I played I found it near the Dark Lord by the skull in the wall, of course this was the only place that the key disappears! Second time though I found it after killing a Giggler early on in the game.

I found a combination of fireball and poison cloud to be very effective against the dragons. Look carefully at the floor as there are many concealed pits shown by a broken line. You can also be teleported and not realise it.

SHADOWS OF THE PAST by BARBARA GIBB played on BBC

Don't be in too much of a hurry to seek refuge inside the cave - you may miss something vital. WISE has something for you - the plank is a red herring. SID tells "porkies" - so do some symbols! You'll never "carry" the bottle up from the deep pit. The ruby is useful if dropped in the correct location!

VENOM by AMANDA OLIVER played on Commodore 64

After you have got the parchment and cowl of venom go to the temple where Harg is standing. Say to Harg West, W, say to Harg get orb, say to Harg give orb to Virrol, THEN GO TO THE COUNCIL ROOM (THE ORB SHOULD BE FLOATING OVER YOUR HEAD), Give Ragar parchment, Move tapestry, THEN GO TO TRILANS ROOM, give Trilan parchment, give Trilan token, E, S, W, W, Say to Herbal orb examine Arrel, get arrowhead, THEN GO BACK TO THE TEMPLE, give Variol arrowhead.

SCAPEGHOST PT1 by GRAHAM WHEELER played on Atari ST

To get Edna and Bert to join you - first you must make friends with the dog. RUN TO DOG, STROKK DOG, N, EXAMINE DOG, GET FISHBONE (it's caught in his throat, he will then run off) RUN TO DOG, STROKE DOG (he will now come with you, RUN TO FADED WREATH, GET YELLOW CARD, RUN TO MY GRAVE, GET WHITE CARD (you drop the yellow card), GET YELLOW CARD, PUT YELLOW CARD ON WREATH, WAIT FOR DOG (if he has not arrived), GET WREATH (you will be to weak but the dog carries it for you), RUN TO EDNA, WAIT FOR DOG (when Edna sees the wreath, she will stop arguing with Bert and you can ask them to follow you).

DRACULA PT2 by GRAHAM WHEELER played on Amstrad CPC

To get a cross (in coach): EXAMINE WOMAN, EXAMINE EYES (you see a horrible vision), WAKE UP (the woman gives you a cross), WEAR CROSS. To avoid freezing in the second coach: LOOK AROUND, LIFT SEAT, REMOVE CROSS, PUT CROSS IN SLOT, TURN CROSS, OPEN DOOR, GET BLANKET.

PHANTASIE 1 by RON RAINBIRD played on Atari 800XL

The three pools are situated near Pineville, near Trollport and the third can only be reached by swimming from Phantasia. To get off Phantasia, swim away from the pool in the opposite direction and when you are on the next screen, swim to the shore. To get the nine Rings, go to J.R.Troikin's Castle for three of them, the Bleebs' dungeon for a further three, the Dosnebian Cleric's Temple contains two more and the final Ring is in the Phantasia armoury. To get inside the Temple of the Dosnebian Clerics, ensure that you enrol a Minotaur into your group.

RICK HANSON by JIM STRUTHERS played on Amstrad

To escape from the Train Station : Go to the bridge, wait for a train and jump on the roof of the Guard's Van. To enter the Tavern: Pay the Barmaid with the Qunut (coin). To escape the Guard on the train: Kill him with the spanner. To get rid of the mouse: Drop the pork pie. Keep the floor polish as it is useful. Examine the brass frame below the Church pulpit. Sleep in the Tavern bedroom. Use the tyre to cross the river.

BEYOND ZORK by PAUL HARDY played on Amiga

To heal the Pterodactyl you will need a Limp Weed and Rod of Anesthesia. Then: POINT ROD AT PTERODACTYL, GET ARROW, RUB WEED INTO WOUND, GET WHISTLE. On the clifftop, answer the riddle with: LIGHTENING. To escape from the cellar you will need the bottle from the top of the stack and the skeleton's amulet. Then go to the trapdoor and try to go UP the door will slam shut in your face. So: READ AMULET THROUGH BOTTLE to see a word on this amulet. Now input this word (eg BOK) and then BREAK TRAPDOOR, UP. The answer to the riddle on the boulder is YOUTH. Hit the baby Hungus and then go to the idol, climb up the maw and WAIT for the mother Hungus to storm into view. When it steps onto the idols bottom lip GET JEWEL, LIGHT LANTERN, SQUEEZE MOSS, POINT STAFF OF EVERSION AT WALL, EXTINGUISH LANTERN. In the stable KISS UNICORN HORN (for luck), and then say the word on the amulet once more, in the same way as above. Then BREAK DOOR to free the unicorn. To evade the Dorn Beast in the lighthouse CUT ONION WITH DAGGER. In the ruins, kill the Ghoul and throw the vial of Holy Water at the Undead Warrior! Sell the jewel to buy hourglass.

A-MAZE-ING ESCAPES
ADVENTURE QUEST By RON RAINBIRD

THE FOREST MAZE

From Building - Out to the end of road, then West into the forest. Go West, West, South, South, drop the Stick, climb the tree, get the Silver Ball, go down, collect the Stick. Then go North, North, East, North, North back into the building.

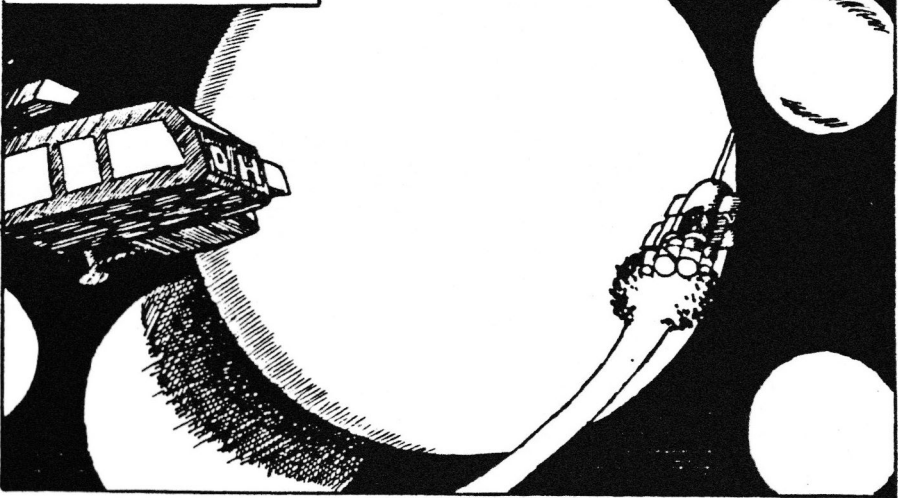
THE DESERT

From the edge of the fertile land (having already filled the bottle from the Stream), go North, North, North, West, LOOK on hearing sound, North, East, East, East to Pyramid and Sphinx, then East once more when Giant Worm should arise from sand and dispost of the Sphinx, leaving you free to return to the Pyramid in safety.

A

Zenobi Software

ADVENTURE



"STALKER" Imprisoned on the planet CRAMOS, Holden lies forlornly in bare 'Iso-Cube' and reflects on his slim chances of freedom. In his 'heart-of-hearts' he knows he is innocent of all charges levelled at him but on CRAMOS narcotics is a 'dirty' word and the authorities have been know to vapourise suspects on the spot, so all things considered perhaps life in an 'Iso-Cube' ain't too bad after all.

Meanwhile, back on EARTH , a top-level diplomat by the name of ANDI STALKER is being briefed on his task and presented with the evidence that will clear Holden's name. However things are never that simple and Stalker knows that there is only a short period of time before the authorities on CRAMOS will tire of providing Holden with 'free board and lodging' and execute him for his so-called crimes, so it is imperative that both he and the evidence reach CRAMOS before Holden becomes just another statistic in the fight against narcotics.

Just as Stalker's ship is passing through the SOWOD galaxy a saboteurs bomb disables the ship rendering it inoperable and disabling the communications system. As the ship is pulled into the orbit of a small, uninhabited planet Stalker manages to escape in a life-support pod and crash-lands on the surface of the planet. The ship meanwhile breaks up upon entering the atmosphere and scatters both wreckage and the vital parts of the 'evidence' all over the surface.

Stalker's task and ultimately yours, is to locate this evidence and proceed to CRAMOS in time to save Holden from execution for a crime he never committed ... can you do it?

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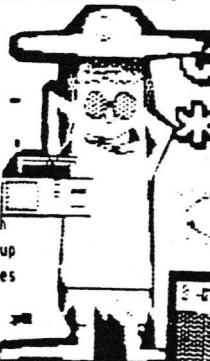
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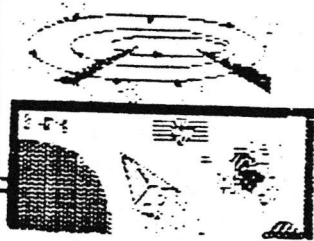
"The puzzles are so diverse and abstract you
are left wondering how the author, Matthew
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have the same"- ADVENTURE PROBE

"...the third section, which is occupied by,
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Back before the passing of the last of the great lords, back when pale-blue dagrets hovered in the crimson sky, there had been a great peace and tranquility in the land. In those joyful years much faith was placed in the hands of 'The Keeper' and those four objects of power that he stood guard over. As long as the scribes could remember, there had been a 'Keeper' and his sole task had been to preserve the 'Power of numbers' that the four objects lent to the land. Without this power the very essence of what was MATHEMATICA would crumble surely to dust and be blown away on the wings of the chilly eastern winds.

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YOU are that chosen hero, so prepare yourself for the task in hand and see if you are wise enough ... nay, brave enough, to find and recover the lost.

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THE OBJECTS The objects you seek are ...
The STAFF OF ANGLES, the CROWN OF POLYGONS,
the SCROLL OF TRIGONOMETRY and the ROD OF
LINEAR POWER find them all and there is
a chance that the 'Power of Numbers' will
once again dominate in the land of Mathematica.

NOTES

This game will recognise such commands as GET ALL as well as the more standard ones such as EXAMINE, LOOK and SEARCH. It will also accept such complex commands as PUSH THE SPEAR THROUGH THE OPENING, though the standard verb/noun input will suffice in most cases.

TIPS

A comprehensive help-sheet does come with the game, so if you type in help just note the number you are given in reply and then check that out on the enclosed hint-sheet.



DISPATCHES



THE ADVENTURE PROBE LETTERS SECTION

The launch of DISPATCHES brings forth a few howls of protest. The argument as to whether it's piracy to copy unavailable games continues. Letters from France and Australia give the section an international flavour. One game writer bids farewell, another asks for a fairer shake, and yet another makes a welcome return to adventuredom. All this plus an invitation to the Bugblatters Ball plus more! Read on for full details!



I Don't Like It

I received the February PROBE this morning and have just finished trying to read the new letters section. Please, please, please go back to the old style of doing things. It is awful, illegible and squashed. I also don't like the format and all those boxes. I really looked forward to reading the letters pages, but today it's made me really cross (can you tell?)!

Apart from the design, etc. I do think Jim O'Keeffe should be a little less free with his own opinions. I know a Letters Editor is supposed to comment on letters, but your own style was much friendlier and less opinionated. He seems to be using it as his own vehicle (or something like that anyway. Sorry, I'm a bit incoherent with rage)!

The main reasons for my objections to Jim are, as you probably guessed, in relation to the letter from Phil Darke (re: the ACL). Of course, Phil's letter is fair comment, although it's been said a lot of times already. It is the Letters Editor's comments that I take exception to. How dare he insult those of us who have chosen to rejoin ACL! Does he realize that quite a lot of PROBE readers have done so, and will not take kindly to being called potato-heads or

whatever. For example, Joan Pancott has offered to run one of the ACL new regional helplines. I'll leave it to you to research how many other people do. In fact, still belong to both clubs.

People are quite entitled to be as rude as they like about Henry, although it's getting a bit boring after all this time, but he thoroughly deserves it and can well look after himself. However, I don't think I've ever heard him insulting members of his club or any other club in print. It's interesting to note that I was far less angry at his "disappearance" than I was at reading Jim O'Keeffe's comments (page 34 "Rip-Off Corner").

In conclusion, and now I've got that lot off my chest, please don't take all this too personally Mandy. I know you're trying a new experiment and if I'm the only one to complain then I'll bow to the view of the majority. As for ACL, it's really partly my own fault for trying to stand with one foot in either camp. However, I'm not the only one who is, although we are keeping fairly quiet about it.

SUE ROSEBLADE, 79 Ridgeway,
Eynesbury St. Neots, Cambridgeshire
PE19 2RA

..... I Don't Like It Either

Thanks very much for February PROBE. I am a reasonably new subscriber and usually look forward to reading the magazine, which I think is usually so excellent. It's with some regret and trepidation that I now write to say that I was disappointed with the new Letters Section (DISPATCHES). Apart from being very small and hence a little hard to read, I must say I found Mr O'Keeffe's style rather arrogant not to say "regal" (If you see what WE mean), and I was disappointed at such a brash approach in a magazine I had always previously found so friendly.

Once again, I'm sorry if I seem to be complaining but how else will you know how we feel if we don't write in. I so enjoyed the way the letters were done before. Call me a stick in the mud!

**MARTIN LEVERTON, Manor Farm,
Little Gidding, Huntingdon, Cambridge-
shire PE17 5RJ**

..... Nor Me

Please, please, please return your desktop publisher and let us have our old PROBE back! I'm afraid I didn't like the new layout and it was very difficult to read some of it. My Mum just couldn't make out some parts of it at all. I thought that I'd received an imitation SPELLBREAKER this month. It just didn't feel like PROBE at all.

As you know, we each have our own little circle of contacts/friends within the larger PROBE membership and over the last few months everyone I have spoken to has been praising the quality of the magazine and enjoying the various topics covered in the Letters pages. From the comments I have heard over the past few days, a lot of people are disappointed that you have changed such a winning formula.

I try to write you a letter nearly every month which is a mixture of personal news, comments on PROBE and adventuring snip-pets, from which you occasionally select a piece and print it in PROBE if you think it will be of interest to the other readers. I can always rely on you not to print anything which has been said in confidence. I am afraid these letters will have to stop if they are going to be passed on to someone else. I have never written a letter specifically to PROBE. All my correspondence has been addressed personally to you, Mandy, because I feel we have become friends over the last couple of years and, in my eyes, you are PROBE.

It is your personal touch which has helped the magazine flourish since you took over as Editor, and is going to be sorely missed if Jim continues to do the Letters pages. I don't know him at all except as a contributor to PROBE and, as a subscriber to ACL, I strongly object to being told that I do not have a brain.

I subscribe to 3 adventure-related magazines and 2 computer "glossies" every month. I enjoy all of them or else I would stop my subscriptions. They are bought with my money, which I am entitled to spend as I choose, and although I have grumbled about Henry (Mueller) myself, I am always willing to give someone a second chance and I defend my right to do so without being insulted. If Jim wishes to make comments on any subject then let him write a letter to PROBE and have it published in the same way as everyone else. That way the readers will not be misled into thinking his opinions are PROBE's (i.e. yours)!

**LORNA PATERSON, 17 Ochil
Street, Tillicoultry, Clacko FK13 6EJ**

..... Me Too

As a long time reader of PROBE, I have

seen it grow under a most able editorial hand into an eminently readable and much looked forward to adventure magazine. In particular, the readers letters section has really taken off and is in such a healthy state that there appears to be quite strong competition to get one's own letter in print. This I believe is due almost entirely to the friendly, amusing, informative and encouraging treatment given to all who wrote to PROBE.

I was therefore all the more concerned to find such a major change not only in the layout but also in the style and content of replies on the letters pages in this month's magazine. I should hasten to add that I have no real complaint against the new format, pages are quite professionally laid out and the end result should have been more pleasing. Unfortunately, the combination of a two column style layout, proportional and bold italic fonts, an A4 page layout that failed to take into consideration the effect of reduction to A5 and the use of a dot matrix printer for "camera copy", all conspired to produce an almost unreadable end product. Please can some more thought be put into this aspect of publishing PROBE before any more letters and answers are spoilt by being illegible.

Moving on to the actual replies themselves, of those I was able to read I am not sure that I like the obvious new style and content. Distinctly at odds with previous editorial replies, to my mind they were lacking in those qualities of friendship and encouragement previously mentioned and admired. Maybe it is the letters editor's intention to provoke further response to his replies. If so, he has succeeded but it should be done without trying to force personal opinions down the throats of his readers.

MAURICE PANCOTT, 78 Radpole Lane, Weymouth, Dorset DT4 9RS

.... And Me

When I read the editorial in the February issue of PROBE I wasn't too keen on the idea of someone other than Mandy editing the letters pages, but knew that I must keep an open mind on the subject until I had seen the results. I realise that the obvious problems with the print can be corrected, but quite apart from the difficulty I had in reading the Letters Editor's comments, I am sorry to say that I do not like the new layout with its double columns and boxes, and would much prefer to see PROBE continue in its previous format.

Everyone has the right to their opinion and the right to voice that opinion in letters to PROBE. This applies equally to Letter Editor Jim O'Keeffe. However, in his comments on Phil Darke's letter concerning Henry Mueller and the Adventurers Club Ltd (ACL), I think he abused his position. Not only did he give us his views of ACL, but without even knowing to whom he was referring, he also gave us his opinion of those members who have opted to remain within the ACL. As one of the many people who are still ACL members, I object most strongly to being told that I have a sack of potatoes where I should have a brain, particularly by someone who doesn't even know me!

I have no idea, and I am sure Jim O'Keeffe doesn't know either, just how many ACL members also subscribe to PROBE and will have read his remarks, but I do know of quite a few, including two, TOM FROST and JACK LOCKERBY, who actually write adventures. Not for the Amstrad unfortunately, so I haven't been able to try them myself, but talking to fellow adventurers I have had nothing but good reports of their games. Adventures which, if we are to believe Jim O'Keeffe, were written by two people who were brainless because like many other ACL members, they were pre-

pared to give Henry Mueller another chance. I hope that, in the future, the Letters Editor will give a little more thought to what he writes about people.

I close with an item of news for Phil Darke. He needn't regret the loss of The Golden Chalice Awards as voting is taking place right now. In fact, I have just sent my votes in.

JOAN G. PANCOTT, 78 Radipole Lane, Weymouth, Dorset DT4 9RS

.... And Finally, Me!

Being one of the people with potatoes in my head (according to your new Letters Editor), I must say that I was a bit put out, to say the least, by Jim O'Keefe's response to Phil Darke's letter about ACL and Henry Mueller.

Yes, I agree that ACL did not appear for several months, and yes, Henry was very remiss in not telling subscribers what was going on and why there was no issue, but I think it is only fair to give him one more chance and not kick him when he is down, as it were.

Jim, I think, perhaps was a little indiscreet about his strongly worded comment, and I hope he hasn't let PROBE in for a libel suit.

JUNE ROWE, 46 Hurdon Way, Launceston, Cornwall PL15 9HX

Is It Piracy (1) ?

The letter in the last issue from Dave Havard poses a good question on the subject of piracy. If you can no longer buy the game you want in the format you need, is it piracy to obtain a copy? Should you buy a computer compatible with a format you can obtain? Well, I doubt whether anyone would buy a new computer on that

basis, so I suppose a copy might suffice, but it's still piracy. Also, with regard to Infocom products, their games are sold only for the intended use of the original purchaser. You are allowed to make one backup copy and it is a violation to sell the game without prior consent in writing from Infocom, so even reselling the game once you've finished with it is a violation according to Infocom.

Let me put a hypothetical question to you: If a person bought an Infocom game for the Macintosh and converted it to A-Max so they could run it on their Amiga, is that piracy, even though they had bought the original Mac package in the first place?

THE GRUE, 64 County Road, Ormskirk, West Lancashire L39 1QH

Is It Piracy (2) ?

I would like to comment on DAVE HAVARD's letter in last month's edition (DISPATCHES, February issue) regarding the legality of copying deleted games such as Infocom's.

I agree that it is probably technically illegal to do this, but as the companies involved, particularly ACTIVISION, seem reluctant to reissue old titles, what other recourse is there for those who wish to experience these excellent games? Short of bashing the plastic to get American imports (now also scarce), copying a willing owner's collection is the only way to get these games. I know that I wouldn't part with the few Infocom's that I have managed to buy, and I presume from the number of "Games Wanted" ads that I see, that other owners feel the same.

So why don't the companies who produced these "golden oldies" recognise that there is a demand, and reissue even a limited edition of the games? After all, new

Not everybody liked the first edition of DISPATCHES. A small, but very vocal, group took exception not only to the poor printing but also to some of the replies (well, one reply in particular really) and to the idea of having a Letters Editor at all.

We would like to emphasise that it is a small group the letters published here represent well over 50% of the "bad reviews" received. So why, you ask, give such extended coverage to a minority view? Well, mainly, because the letters raise a few points which we feel need to be clearly addressed.

For instance, ADVENTURE PROBE does not belong to one individual or to one particular group not even to Mandy Rodrigues (as she will be only too willing to testify) ADVENTURE PROBE belongs to its whole readership equally. Whether you've been subscribing for years, or you're reading your first issue, this is YOUR magazine and you have as much right to your say in it as anybody else! People come, people go, but PROBE's strength lies in the fact that it does not depend solely on anyone in particular but on many people in general, and thus it continues, despite the comings and goings.

We would also like to draw your attention to the inside front cover of your favourite magazine. It states there that letters not meant for publication need only be marked NOT FOR PUBLICATION and the writers wishes will be honoured. Furthermore, it also states that the opinions expressed in PROBE's pages are not necessarily those of the Editor. It is therefore crystal clear (If you care to look) that it is quite possible to carry on a private correspondence with Mandy if you so wish, and it is not possible to confuse Mandy's opinions with those of the Letters Editor.

Comment Box

Which brings us to that reply (the one about having potatoes for brains for

those who haven't been paying attention)!

The sharpness of our reply was quite deliberate. It was designed to accomplish two things to indicate very strongly to anyone new to adventuring (and therefore unaware of the ACL's history) that they should consider very carefully before sending any money away and to, hopefully, provoke a response from ACL's proprietor. The gentleman has never been backward in coming forward to defend himself in the past, we hoped he would adopt a similar attitude this time. Unfortunately, he has chosen to remain silent. A pity.

We must admit we never considered for a moment that anybody with any knowledge of the ACL would be foolish enough to subscribe to it again. However, even if we had, we would not have changed a single word of our reply and we do not change a word of it now.

However, we did get slightly annoyed about these references to giving the ACL a second chance. It would seem that some adventurers have exceedingly short memories. So, for those who weren't around at the start, and for those who seem to have forgotten, a short history lesson is to be found in the ACL Box on the page after next.

Like most people, we are usually willing to give someone the benefit of the doubt and hence, a second chance. However, following three six-month disappearances so far, do you really expect us to give out a fourth chance? No way!

So, we felt obliged to issue a warning.

Comment Box (Contd)

and we did. Having issued that warning however, we would fully accept that each person has a right to spend their money as they wish, and if they wish to subscribe to ACL they are quite free to do so. However, as several correspondents have pointed out, everybody has a right to express their opinions in the letters pages, and that includes the Letters Editor too and if you send money off to the ACL, it's our opinion that you have just got to be a couple of sandwiches short of a picnic! But good luck to you anyway!!

Apart from that, we hope you are all enjoying DISPATCHES. Some interesting discussions seem to be developing. Remember, it's YOU that makes the section so if you have anything you wish to say either to join in an existing discussion (all discussions will continue for as long as people want to carry on talking about the topic under discussion) or to start off a new one or just to pass an odd comment or two then do write in. We're all waiting to hear from you!

adventurers are added to the fold all the time, and I feel sure that if such games were only available, the result would be a steady sales graph. A good game will always be sought after, and I'm sure that the majority of adventurers, including myself, would be perfectly willing to shell out for an original in preference to a free copy. Especially, with Infocom, the accompanying documentation is often as entertaining as the game itself.

Having said this, we all know that copying does exist, and will continue as long as the deleted titles are unavailable. So come on Activision et al, don't bleat about piracy,

give us the games that we want, the demand does exist. (Of course, this could all be a ploy by the producers to create a demand, and then hit us with inflated prices!)

ANONYMUM's piece was excellent, and struck more than a few familiar chords! As I keep telling my daughter, there are more around like me!

ANNE ROY, 6 Meadowside, Crookedholm, Kilmarnock, Ayrshire KA3 6LU

Is It Piracy (3) ?

When a product is no longer available, I cannot see any harm in copying a game or even re-selling a game. The authors and publishing houses have had their moneysworth, so if they will not re-release a game, I cannot see what harm it does to them. On the other hand though, when a product is available in the shops but gets copied then I call that piracy, especially if the person is making money out of it. Companies are bound to go broke if their games are continually pirated.

I cannot understand companies not re-releasing the great adventures at budget prices to combat piracy. There is a market for adventures that are very hard to get hold of. There must be a lot of people holding adventures when they have completed them, so why don't they sell them?

STEVE McLAREN, 41 Irvine Drive, Margate, Kent CT9 3XS

The copyright notice on Infocom games reads as follows:

"The distribution and sale of this product are intended for the use of the original purchaser only and for use only on the computer system specified. Lawful users of

this program are hereby licensed only to read the program from its medium into memory of a computer solely for the purpose of executing the program. Copying (except for one backup copy on those systems which provide for it), duplicating, selling, or otherwise distributing this product is a violation of the law."

This would seem to indicate that any attempt to alter/enhance/adapt the original game from its intended state should be considered to constitute software piracy. This would also seem to include reselling the game at a later date (which contradicts our previously held beliefs).

However, there is a big difference between putting fine legal phrases in the small print and getting those same phrases to stand up in a court of law. This is probably the reason why nobody (as far as we now) has ever been prosecuted for attempting to resell their software collection. However, it still seems to be very dodgy ground....



Anyone Can Express Ideas

I loved your idea of sending us a Christmas card and, even if I'm a bit late, I send you my own best wishes for 1990.

My favourite section of the magazine is the Letters Section (now DISPATCHES) because anyone can express his/her ideas. And here I want to say to JOHN SCHOFIELD that I don't agree with him: I think he's a bit unfair with MIKE GERRARD, who is always doing his best to help the small software companies, as all of us YOUR SINCLAIR readers know very well. (But, of course, John, if you don't read YS, you couldn't know about it!) Oh, Mike Gerrard gave MAGNETIC MOON only a 6, but, if you read the review carefully, you can see that it wasn't so bad.

ACL Box

April 1985 - first issue of ACL dossier produced

April 1986 - thirteenth issue of ACL dossier produced

Oct 1986 - fourteenth issue produced

The six month gap was blamed by ACL on an internal takeover battle. Subscribers were left high and dry with no word of explanation for all that time.

May 1986 - thirty second issue of ACL dossier produced

Oct 1988 - thirty third issue of ACL dossier produced

The six month gap was blamed by ACL on postal strikes. There was a strike at their local sorting office in June, and a national strike in September. Enough to justify a six month absence? Once again, subscribers were left high and dry with no word of explanation until a "flyer" turned up following the end of the national postal strike.

Jan 1989 - thirty eighth issue of ACL dossier produced At this point our subscription lapsed.

May 1989 - Shortly after the Awards ceremony in London, the ACL goes all quiet yet again

Nov 1989 - ACL resurfaces with talk of a relaunch (at greatly increased prices).

The only explanation as to the six month gap seems to be some vague mumblings about not being "profitable".



First, Mike explained what the game was about with the following comment: "The plot might be a bit rusty but the author's made a pretty good adventure from it the problems, like the plot, might be nothing

new but they're well thought out and kept me coming back for more".

Secondly, he pointed out some "irritating responses" (some of them have been removed now, which is fine) and then he concluded: "In spite of these (faults) I kept wanting to play the game as there was also a hell of a lot to enjoy about it. Some nice humour, good character interaction and plenty to explore. I certainly look forward to the follow-up I don't think anyone who buys it will be disappointed".

I must add that I bought both MAGNETIC MOON and STARSHIP QUEST (128k version) after I had read the review in YOUR SINCLAIR because I found the review very interesting and I was not disappointed! So, I can only suggest this to Larry: send STARSHIP QUEST to Mike for a review (and tell him that you have reduced the price of your games):

CLAIRE DYARD 6 rue Waslet, 05320
Aubrives, France

Bouquet Box

Can I just say how nice MANDY and others on the helpline have been when I have been stuck in some fiendish adventures. Particular thanks also to JOAN PANCOTT, NIC RUMSEY, ROBIN MATTHEWS and the slaving GRUE (I like to spread my misery around!). Thanks everyone.

MARTIN LEVERTON

I'd like to say thanks to PREMIER MAIL ORDER of BASILDON, ESSEX who replaced a faulty copy of CHAOS STRIKES BACK for me without a single quibble not once, but twice!! Smashing service folks! Thank you!

JIM O'KEEFFE

Apology Box

It would appear that we were struck by a bout of temporary colour blindness in our reply to Frank Gray's letter (Probe IV Issue 3). We referred to the Spectrum +2 as being cased in a black box and the Spectrum +2A as being cased in a grey box. This is, of course, completely the wrong way around. The original Spectrum +2 comes in a grey box and is largely compatible with the original Spectrum 48k. The newer Spectrum +2A comes in a black box and suffers from certain incompatibilities with the earlier Spectrums.

We apologise to any readers who were inadvertently misled.

Fond Farewells

My thanks to all those who have written pleading with me to continue writing adventures. Whilst I appreciate all your comments, I'm afraid that there is very little chance of me writing another game. My decision was reached with much deliberation and I can assure you that it was not easy, especially knowing that there were those who wished me to continue. There were several factors leading to my change of direction: these included a feeling that I had begun to find it difficult to do what I wanted within the limitations of the Adventure Writing Systems; a waning of my own interest in programming; and a burning desire to design and run my own play-by-mail game. However, if GIIsoft eventually release PAW for the ST, there is a possibility that I might convert one or two of my Spectrum adventures to that machine. Also, if anyone out there could produce a system that would allow me to write something like GALDREGON'S DOMAIN (but better!!), then I'd love to try; unfortunately my own

programming skills are virtually non-existent!

Apologies then to all those who have written, but running the PBM is taking up nearly all of my time and I have to confess that I'm enjoying it more than programming adventures. I've made many friends during the past two or three years, despite my husbands attempts to limit my phone-time (I now wait until he's out - oh, sorry darling, honest, I don't really just teasing!) and I've enjoyed your company. Hopefully, I'll be able to keep in touch with you all as a player, though I don't seem to get a chance to play much anymore (aaah!). I'd like to publicly thank all those who have supported me in the past, with special mentions to JUNE ROWE, SANDRA SHARKEY, PAT

WINSTANLEY, IAN ANDREW, JOHN WILSON (and CAT), all the playtesters (you know who you are) and last, but definitely not least, MIKE GERRARD, TONY BRIDGE and the other reviewers.

Talking of Mike G. (well, someone has to!), his book is a brilliant read. If you haven't got a copy, then do: even if you don't own a Spectrum there are still some reasons to buy it, as Mandy pointed out in her review. Just browsing through mine brought back happy memories of the games I used to play. (Mike: now you owe ME a drink!)

To Cat, Tartan Tam, Jack Lockerby and all you other adventure writers: keep up the good work and my best wishes to everyone

LINDA WRIGHT, Marlin Games, 19
Briar Close, Nailsea, Bristol BS19 1QG

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, nevertheless, a heartfelt one!

It is therefore with great pleasure that we announce that the winner of this months WRITER'S REWARD is CLAIRE DYARD, for being sensible enough to realise that, even if the review isn't 100% favourable, if you like the sound of the game you should go ahead and buy it.

Congratulations, CLAIRE and thank you!

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

Cheerio, Linda! Thanks for all the games! Remember to keep in touch we'd quite like to hear how things are going in ARCANIA from time to time.



Artistic Interpretation (Revisited)

My name is Ian Brown, I am the writer of THE MENAGERIE which Mr Gerrard wrote about recently (DISPATCHES, February issue). It appears that I have upset him by quoting what he wrote to me. That was never my intention and so I apologise wholeheartedly to him.

No, Mr Gerrard never reviewed my game in his magazine. What I quoted, possibly naively in retrospect, was from his letter to me dated 9 May 1989. He wrote:

"I've had a look at your adventure and as you can see, I'm having to return it to you. I thought it was very professionally written, very well done - nicely laid out, sensible responses, no spelling mistakes (!) or bugs

that I could find. The graphics were good too. So why aren't I hanging onto it for review. Well, if I had a bit more space in the magazine then I'd probably review it, but I wasn't too wild about the storyline - It offered nothing new in settings and problems, so far as I could tell, and when you've seen similar space-type games for several years, how do you pick one out from the bunch and single it out for review? I know you tried to make it a bit different with the menagerie idea, but it didn't work for me. Please don't be too disheartened, as I'm sure your game will pick up some reviews, such as adventure fanzines and maybe the other Spectrum glossies. It all comes down to personal taste, and your game is certainly well written so it isn't let down on that score. But it does suffer a bit in comparison to some of the other adventures I've just received".

Bearing this in mind, I was extremely puzzled and hurt by his letter. I did not think he

Bugblatters Ball

It gives us great pleasure to announce that there is to be a small gathering of the PROBE clans. Following our request for fellow adventurers to get in touch (DISPATCHES, PROBE IV Issue 2) a cultural soiree has now been organised. This will take place in a pub in Wigan (birthplace of PROBE) on Saturday 21 April 1990, and will be known as the 1st Bugblatters Ball! An evening of alcoholic indulgence and extremely tall tale telling (not to mention a few downright lies) is guaranteed!!

Anybody wishing to attend this social event of the year should contact THE GRUE immediately, if not sooner!

No Jacket required!

would object to me quoting what he had said. He has my address and telephone number and could easily have informed me of his displeasure. Instead, he chose to write an open letter to PROBE.

Also, to compare my game to an advert/newspaper review "This is the worst film to be released this year, etc." implies that my game could be considered similar. I am puzzled by this change of opinion.

If I have done wrong, I again apologise, but did it warrant his letter throwing mud at my character and game? For those interested in the opinions of other reviewers, it was mentioned last year in SINCLAIR USER, ADVENTURE PROBE and, more recently, in the December Issue of COMPUTER AND VIDEO GAMES.

IAN S. BROWN, 1 Amanda Road, Glen Parva, Leicester

We appreciate what it is that you are saying Ian, but don't you think you're over-reacting just a little. The fact remains that you sought to gain some kind of advantage by selectively quoting from Mike's remarks (after all, you didn't include the bits about "it offered nothing new" or "it didn't work for me" in your advertisement, did you?) and Mike decided to pull you up for it. Why not just chalk the whole thing up to experience, eh?

Aussie Adventuring

There does not appear to be many (any?) organised groups of adventurers in Australia although the only Commodore specific magazine has a two page adventure/RPG/wargames column. The writer has been able to get one of the BB's in Melbourne to run an adventure sub-board which I log on to frequently. Unfortunately, while it is keenly

used by mad adventurers, there does not appear to be many of us around who have modems.

I'm afraid that I have advanced no further with Infocom's SORCEROR. My problem was that after solving (?) the slime puzzle, I went down the chute to be outside the mine but with no belongings. Anything dropped inside the mine (to be picked up later) is lost amongst the loose coal on the floor. Do you know how I can keep my belongings, either on me as I use the rope to go down the upper chute. Or safe in the mine for later collection? I can't drop them down the lower chute as the program won't let me.

MAREE WALSH, 55 Wairoonga Crescent, Greensborough, Victoria 3088, Australia

PROBE is lucky to have a number of Antipodean readers, so wouldn't it be a good idea if they all got in touch with Maree and started an informal adventure support group down under? What do you say, folks drop the girl a line right now!



Runestone Writer

My learned and persistent friend, Hugh Walker, has recently been urging me to write to you, and since he's bigger than I am, I've decided to obey. I confess that I feel somewhat dinosaur-like, having been out of touch with the adventuring scene for 2 or 3 years. I'm not sure if a few lines of nostalgic wallowing are likely to be of interest to the readers of PROBE but here goes, regardless.

I bought a Spectrum back in 1982 (supposedly for scientific work), and at the same time bought a copy of THE HOBBIT out of mere curiosity. I didn't know what I'd

let myself in for! Within no time at all my wife Daphne and I were completely hooked. That first year of discovering the world of adventuring was simply terrific, and I still remember how thrilled we were to get our names in Tony Bridge's HOBBIT HALL OF FAME! There were only a few really outstanding games, though: QUEST (written by Kim Topley and published by Hewson Consultants) was comparable in stature to THE HOBBIT, but apart from KNIGHTS QUEST (from Phipps Associates), truly high quality, imaginative and literate games seemed hard to find. There were the early Level 9 games of course - LORDS OF TIME was a beautifully crafted game which kept us happily occupied for weeks, but the other Level 9 adventures disappointed us: we found it frustrating to be repeatedly killed off, and sometimes we seemed to spend more time operating the tape recorder than playing the game!

Much of the pleasure at that time came from things largely peripheral to adventure playing: Tony Bridge's ADVENTURE CORNER in Popular Computing Weekly was a continuing source of stimulating comment, and then there was the glorious but tantalisingly short period of MICROADVENTURER's existence. As for the games themselves well, with a few outstanding exceptions, these didn't seem to live up to the early promise. After such a long wait, SHERLOCK finally arrived and proved almost unplayable nearly a masterpiece, but nevertheless an unplayable failure. From there onwards it was downhill all the way for Philip Mitchell and Melbourne House: how they squandered the licence to produce Tolkien games, and how unforgivable it was of them Kim Topley, after the wonderful QUEST, produced FANTASIA DIAMOND: carried away with the idea of independently acting characters, this game also fell into the trap of being nearly unplayable too much of a good thing.

Across this background one game strode like a giant: LORDS OF MIDNIGHT. There was much discussion at the time about whether this was actually an adventure or not, and most folk these days would describe it as a strategy game, but frankly I couldn't care less what its classification should be, and still can't. I thought then, and I still think now, that this was the finest game of any kind to be written for the Spectrum, and it had a profound influence on my own activities.

Having written several traditional adventures by this time, I found myself wondering if it might be possible to combine the landscaped graphics style of Mike Singleton with the text input of a traditional adventure, and the character animation of THE HOBBIT. The wondering turned into action, and all my spare time for about six months was devoted to an attempt to achieve this aim. The result was RUNESTONE, finished early in 1985. Accepted by Games Workshop for publication, it had good reviews and, to my delight, achieved CRASH SMASH status, when disaster struck. Games Workshop pulled out of the software market and sold the publishing rights to Firebird. Firebird, bless them, took it upon themselves to "improve" the game by destroying the true perspective of the landscape graphics, adding a set of irritating bugs, and providing it with a loading routine incompatible with the 128k Spectrum. Well, you can't win them all! I still enjoy RUNESTONE myself, but it didn't really make much impact on the games-playing world whether this was my fault, Games Workshop's, or Firebird's, I'm not sure! I spent the next year supplying ZX Computing magazine with articles on various aspects of adventure writing, and related matters, until the magazine collapsed in June 1988. Along with ZX Computing, my own enthusiasm collapsed too. Where were the wonderful programs which

should have followed on from, and developed the potential of THE HOBBIT and QUEST? Nowhere. It began to look very much as though the Marketing Men had moved in, and the men of vision had moved out. I ran to ground, and spent the next few years out of touch, doing other things. But recently there have been new stirrings. Daphne and I found that it was so long since we'd played some of our old favourite adventures that we could actually play them again (VALKYRIE 17 was just as good the second time around)! Perhaps it was time to emerge from the cocoon to discover what had happened in the intervening years.

At this point Hugh Walker took me in hand, told me about the stalwart efforts of ADVENTURE PROBE and sent me some back issues. So here I am, emerging from near extinction, and here's my question:

There are enormous quantities of bad and mediocre adventures available for the Spectrum. There are quite a lot of good adventures, and a few very good ones. Like everyone else, I can enjoy these and I'm grateful to their authors for writing them. But I wonder whether we've allowed our expectations to diminish over the years: where, oh where, are the truly GREAT Spectrum adventures that we were led to expect? (Someone is bound to suggest here that the answer lies in the potential of the 16 bit machines, not in the 8 bit Spectrum, but this is to miss the point. The missing ingredient isn't technological, but conceptual). Where are the adventures of today which, like THE HOBBIT or QUEST of old, were capable of becoming almost the most important thing in your life for a period of several weeks? Why has no-one written them? And if they HAVE been written, please tell me!

**ALAN DAVIS, 46 Sycamore Road
Brookhouse, Lancaster LA2 9PB**

HELP WANTED



"I would be very grateful if someone can give me some help or provide the solutions to THE MYSTERY OF ARKHAM MANOR by Melbourne House and EMERALD ISLE by Level 9. I will be very happy to pay for the cost of the solutions."

KEN DEAN, 63 Elmhurst Ave, Oulton Broad, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 3AR

"I am stuck in HEROES OF KARN. I have scored 98% and have collected the wooden box, jade flower, sapphire, diamond, pearl, pillow, ruby, the dwarf, Istar, Beren, the Minstrel. I have been to Anton who told me he saw me playing music with an instrument in a room with columns. I have killed the vampire, the bat, the pirate, the hydra, the black knight. I have put the spider to sleep. I have the hawk, the black potion but don't know what to do with it, does the meat have anything to do with the kestral or hawk as when I give the meat to it, it becomes more friendly. Please can somebody help me?"

BEN ISBA, 11 South Rd, Bowden, Cheshire, WA14 2JZ

"Can anyone please help an 8 year old with a couple of queries? He has a secondhand NEOS Mouse and Cheese (Commodore 64), unfortunately a page of the instructions, the one explaining the icons, is missing. He has managed to work out how to use most of them but has come up with a couple of problems which no-one present at the time could solve. First he drew a picture of a very smart car, clouds in the sky etc and then saved it. On re-loading found, to his surprise, he had a picture of two half cars on opposite sides of the screen! The other problem seems to concern the "Mirror" icon. He drew a random line which then repeated itself over the screen in a symmetrical pattern, and each line added subsequently had the same effect ending with a lovely all over lacy pattern. The main problem in this case was that he could not "Undo" it. Any suggestions to overcome these problems, or a copy of the missing page of instructions would be most gratefully received"

JOYCE FURLONG, 73 St James Cres, Bexhill-on-Sea, E.Sussex, TN40 2DL

"I am stuck on MINDFIGHTER, FAERIE and MYSTERY OF ARKHAM MANOR and would be very grateful for any clues, tips or even solutions for these adventures. Any help would be greatly appreciated."

KEN GREEN, 65 Meadow Lane, Moulton, Northwich, Cheshire, CW9 8QQ

IN-TOUCH

SOFTWARE WANTED

I am looking for BOXED packaging, Commodore 64 ORIGINALS of the following Infocom games: WISHBRINGER, HOLLYWOOD HI-JINX, SPELLBREAKER, ENCHANTER and CUTTHROATS. Also any original American C64 adventures i.e. BRODERBUND, TELARIUM software. I will also pay postage and packing for them. Please write with price required to:

ALLAN PHILLIPS, The Tardekin Inn, 70 Campbell Drive, Gunthorpe, Peterborough, Cambs, PE4 6ZL

Wanted for AMSTRAD CPC464 cassette only: INGRIDS BACK, BOOK OF THE DEAD, SNOW QUEEN, HUNCHBACK, QUESTPROBE III, HACK THE RIPPER and ADVENTURE QUEST. Please write with price required to:

JIM STRUTHERS, 112 Disraeli St, Cowpen Quay, Blyth, Northumberland

Wanted for SPECTRUM: KNIGHT ORC, MONSTER, THE BIG SLEAZE, CUSTERDS QUEST, BORED OF THE RINGS, WITCHES CAULDRON, RUNESTONE, DIABLO, THE BEAST and THE PAWN. So come on, clear your shelves out and let somebody else play those adventures you've enjoyed so much. Please write with price required (I will go up to original price if in good condition) to:

EDWIN FRY, 6 Birchdale Ave, Wrockwardine Wood, Telford, Shropshire.

Wanted for COMMODORE 64: TWICE SHY, DEATHSHIP, CIA ADVENTURE, JOURNEY TO THE CENTRE OF THE EARTH, LAPIS PHILOSOPHORUM, DOOMSDAY PAPERS and WARLORD. Please write with price required to:

VINCE BARKER, 4 Brae Head, Eaglescliffe, Stockton, Cleveland, TS16 9HP

AMSTRAD INFOCOM SWOP 'N BUY

This month DAVE HAVARD of 21 Belvoir Close, Fareham, Hants, PO16 0PJ (0329) 234569 is looking for either buy or swop any of the Zork boxed adventures (any format) for Amster "paperback" types of same. Dave is also selling the original DISKS ONLY for the following: PLANETFALL (ST), SPELLBREAKER (ST), INFIDEL (ST), WISHBRINGER (ST) and SEASTALKER (C64). NB. as they are without packaging they are not part of the swop 'n buy, but are all original Infocom disks.

SOFTWARE FOR SALE

For COMMODORE 64 on cassette: STARTREK, SMASHED, ZODIAC, GRANGE HILL, FANTASTIC FOUR, SPIDERMAN and TERRORMOLINOS £1 each. BUGSEY, MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE £3 each. Disks: SHYMER, BARNEY BROWN, DANCE OF THE VAMPIRES, BLACK KNIGHT, DEAD END, ATALAN and MYTH £1 each. TIME THIEF £2.

VINCE BARKER, 4 Brae Head, Eaglescliffe, Stockton, Cleveland, TS16 9HP

SPECTRUM 48K+ Software tapes: URBAN UPSTART, MORDONS QUEST, THE QUILL, TRANSYLVANIAN TOWER, CLASSIC ADVENTURE, SNOWBALL, DUNGEON BUILDER, ERIK THE VIKING, SHERLOCK, RETURN TO EDEN, RED MOON, PIMANIA, THE WARLOCK OF FIRETOP MOUNTAIN, SIR FRED, ROBIN OF SHERWOOD, CHESS, BACKGAMMON, VU3D, IS COMPILER, MAKE A CHIP, MONOPOLY, TASWORD TWO, SCRABBLE, CHEQUERED FLAG, RIGELS REVENGE - £24 the lot plus p&p. 55+ Assorted 15 minute tapes all used as back up's etc (what's on them? Your guess is as good as mine) £14 the lot plus p&p.

1 Pro Joystick and Kempson Interface £3 plus p&p

Books: THE BEGINNERS COMPUTER HANDBOOK (Hardback), SUPERCHARGE YOUR SPECTRUM, SPECTRUM ADVENTURES (Guide to playing/writing), INTRODUCING MACHINE CODE and INVENT AND WRITE GAMES FOR YOUR SPECTRUM £5 the lot plus p&p.

DAVID GRAY, 34 Hunters Hall Road, Dagenham, Essex, RM10 8JD

AMSTRAD CPC adventures for sale (cassette only): SUBSUNK, SEABASE DELTA, MINDSHADOW and NEVER ENDING STORY £6 the lot incl p&p.

MSX ADVENTURES for sale: EMERALD ISLE and JEWELS OF DARKNESS (3 cassette in a box) £5 for both incl p&p.

JIM STRUTHERS, 112 Disraeli St, Cowpen Quay, Blyth, Northumberland

AMSTRAD SOFTWARE for sale: Adventures: SNOWBALL, EMERALD ISLE, DUNGEON ADVENTURE, PRICE OF MAGIK, WORM IN PARADISE, RED MOON, MINDSHADOW, SHADOWS OF MORDOR (cassette) £2.50 each. Arcade Compilations: TRIPLE PACK: DOPPLEGANGER, DEFEND OR DIE, SUPER SAM. BEST OF ELITE VOL1: BUMBJACK, FRANK BRUNOS BOXING, COMMANDO, AIRWOLF. BEST OF ELITE VOL

U: PAPER BOY, GHOST 'N GOBLINS, BOMB JACK II, BATTLESHIPS. KONAMI'S COIN-OP HITS: GREEN BERET, MIKIE, HYPERSPORTS, PING PONG, YIE AR KUNG FU (Discs) £7 each. Serious: MINI OFFICE (cassette) £2.50, MINI OFFICE II (cassette) £6.00.

JIM HAZLETT, 24 Walnut Close, Thornby-on-Tees, Cleveland, TS17 8NQ

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AMIGA adventures for sale: SCAPEGHOST £7 and CHRONO QUEST £9

STEVE McLAREN, 41 Irvine Drive, Margate, Kent, CT9 3XS

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When my game RUNESTONE was released in 1985/6 I was given half a dozen copies of the Amstrad version as presentation copies. As I only have 5 Amstrad owning friends and don't have an Amstrad myself, one of these is gathering dust in the attic. It is compatible with CPC 464, CPC664 and CPC6128. So, if you are an Amstradian and you'd like this spare copy completely free - no kidding! - then drop me a line. If two or more people write then I'll pick one of their names at random from a hat.

ALAN DAVIS, 46 Sycamore Rd, Brookhouse, Lancaster, LA2 9PB

KINGS AND QUEENS OF THE CASTLE

DAVE BARKER, 10 Lismore House, Linden Grove, Nunhead, London, SE15 3LG can offer help with over 384 adventures played on Spectrum, Commodore and Atari ST.

ALLAN PHILLIPS and THE INKEEPER, Tardekin Inn, 70 Campbell Drive, Gunthorpe, Peterborough, Cambs, PE4 6ZL can offer help with over 400 adventures on Spectrum and Commodore 64. Postal help only at present.



SUE ROSEBLADE, 79 Ridgeway, Eynesbury, St Neots, Cambs, PE19 2RA can offer help on the following updated list: RED DOOR, REALM OF DARKNESS, RETARDED CREATURES AND CAVERNS, LEGACY FOR ALARIC, STARSHIP QUEST, SHERLOCK HOLMES - THE CASE OF THE BEHEADED SMUGGLER, YUPPIE, BEHIND CLOSED DOORS (The Sequel). BOUNTY HUNTER, BEHIND CLOSED DOORS III, BALROG AND THE CAT, OXBRIDGE, PLAGUE PLANET and STRANDED!

THE GRUE! 64 County Rd, Ormskirk, W Lancs, L39 1QH has bent his rule about Infocom help only and can offer help with the following: APACHE GOLD, MINDSHADOW, NINE PRINCES IN AMBER, PILGRIM, ZIM ZALA BIM, TRACER SANCTION, QUAN TULLA, ICE STATION ZERO, INSTITUTE, EMERALD ISLE, ESSEX, MINDWHEEL, MANDARIN MURDER, DUNGEON QUEST (not Level 9), GOLDEN FLEECE, EMPIRE OF KARN, DALLAS QUEST, SORCERER OF CLAYMORGUE CASTLE, DARK LORE, GREMLINS, CIRCUS, BORROWED TIME, ARROW OF DEATH 1, LUCIFERS REALM, HULK, MASK OF THE SUN, HELM, GRUDS IN SPACE, MORDONS QUEST, THE COUNT, GOLDEN BATON, NEVER ENDING STORY, FOREST AT WORLDS END, PHAROAHS TOMB, EYE OF BAIN, PLANET OF DEATH, ESCAPE FROM PULSAR SEVEN, PYRAMID OF DOOM, QUEST FOR THE HOLY GRAIL, FEASIBILITY EXPERIMENT, GHOST TOWN, PIRATE ADVENTURE, GOLDEN VOYAGE, PERSEUS AND ANDROMEDA, CRYSTALS OF CAROS, MYSTERY FUNHOUSE, BRIMSTONE, HAMPSTEAD, MOUNTAINS OF KET, HEROES OF KARN, MISSION ASTEROID, INCA CURSE, WAXWORKS, JEWELS OF BABYLON, MAGIC MOUNTAIN, ADVENTURELAND, AMAZON, BUCKAROO BANZAI, COLDITZ, GREEDY GULCH, ROBIN OF SHERWOOD and ESPIONAGE ISLAND.

PLEASE ENCLOSE S.A.E. WHEN WRITING FOR HELP. NO S.A.E - NO REPLY!

GETTING YOU STARTED

SHARDS OF TIME - ICE AGE

By GRAHAM WHEELER played on Atari ST.

Start inside Timb Bubble - N, N, N, EXAMINE MOUND, EXAMINE LUMP, PRESS BUTTON (time capsule opens), GET ARMOUR AND DAGGER, GET GAUNTLETS AND HELMET, WEAR ARMOUR, WEAR GAUNTLETS, NE, DIG SNOW WITH HELMET, DIG SNOW WITH HELMET, (you get a cloak), DIG SNOW WITH HELMET, DIG SNOW WITH HELMET, (you get boots and diary), WEAR BOOTS, READ DIARY, DROP DIARY, SW, NW, EXAMINE SERPENT, (its a Holographic image), COVER EYES WITH CLOAK, N.....

WIZ-BIZ

By AMANDA OLIVER

GET CAN, OPEN CAN, DRINK LAGER, CALL TROOL, U, N, E, GET KEY, GET TOKEN, W, E, D, E, GET POKER, GET PIPE, W, U, E, GET SYPHON, EXAMINE GARGOYLE, INSERT TOKEN IN SLOT, EXAMINE WELL, E, GET PAN, GET VACUUM, SUCK UP SPECTRE, S.....

FOOTBALL FRENZY

By AMANDA OLIVER

SEARCH DESK, SEARCH DESK, GET STATEMENT, READ STATEMENT, EXAMINE BILLS, PAY ELECTRIC BILL, PAY PRINTERS BILL, PAY WATER BILL, PAY MA BILL, PAY ALL BILLS, PAY ALL BUT MA, CALL SECRETARY, GIVE HER BOOK, READ CALENDAR, LOOK, READ INDEX, EXAMINE COUCH, LIE ON COUCH, SEARCH SELF.....

WITCH HUNT

By LOL OAKES played on Spectrum

TURN BOTTLE, PULL RING, UP, PUSH, BUTTON, EXAM CHANDELIER, GET KNIFE, UP, N, GET MATCHES, OPEN DRAWER, GET SACK, LOOK IN SACK (DIAL), S, D, W, GET KEY AND ROPE, E, UNLOCK DOOR, E, E, S, E, EXAM BUSH, EXAM BUSH, GET BROOM AND GLASSES, WEAR GLASSES, W, EXAM POOL, GET COIN.....

FROM OUT OF A DARK NIGHT SKY

By LOL OAKES played on Spectrum

FEEL DASHBOARD, GET KEYS, FEEL DASHBOARD, PULL HANDLE, W, (you are now in a ditch), SEARCH GRASS, SEARCH GRASS, GET BUCKET, N, N, THROW BUCKET, S, S, S, S, JUMP UP, E, N, UNLOCK BOOT, SEARCH BOOT, LIFT CARPET, SEARCH BOOT, GET MATCHES AND TAPE, E, S, EXAM HEDGE.....

FISHING FOR RED HERRINGS

HOBBLE HUNTER by TONY MELVILLE

PENCIL, HANKIE, NAIL, SAW-BLADE, FLINT, BELLOWS, BROKEN SWORD, TWIG and PILE OF BROKEN GLASS.

FROM OUT OF A DARK NIGHT SKY by LOL OAKES

SCREWDRIVER, GRILLE, HAMMER, BRANCH, CLOTH and AXE

CROWN OF RAMHOTEP by LOL OAKES

JAR (IN SHOP), BEADS, BREAD, CHISEL and TROWEL

CONTRIBUTIONS ARE NEEDED FOR BOTH THESE SECTIONS PLEASE

SERIALISED SOLUTIONS

The Wayfarer's Guide to SORCERER (Infocom). Final part.

.....CONTINUED.

Actually he is what you will become if you follow instructions to the letter. You will be the user of a time warp and will actually meet yourself as your "older self" is meeting you. Everything you do for him will be done for you by your "younger self" when you emerge from the chute. DROP ALL EXCEPT BOOK DOWN LOWER CHUTE. Your "older self" will tell you a combination (mine was 339), you must GIVE TWIN THE BOOK when he looks at you expectantly.

He dives down the lower chute and vanishes from view. You must put all your belongings down the lower chute (even the amulet) as if you don't you will not be able to climb down the upper chute later. Likewise if you entered the endgame half fresh or a little tired you will not have the strength that is needed to climb down the rope.

E and you find that you are confronted by a door with a combination! Time is of the essence as the amber potion will wear off in a few moves, so SET DIAL TO (339) and gain a 20 point bonus for this. OPEN DOOR, FROTZ ME as you have lost your light source (the book). E to the bottom of a shaft where a coil of rope lies. GET ROPE, U, NW to where a piece of wooden beam lays. GET TIMBER, NW, W to the top of a chute. If you see a Troglydte just ignore him as he is harmless.

TIE ROPE TO WOOD, PUT WOOD ACROSS CHUTE, PUT ROPE DOWN CHUTE and D to a room which is slanted off the chute and contains a shimmering scroll. Now you can see why it is essential to drop all items down the lower chute in the coal bin room as if you have one item when you climb down the rope or are tired you will lose your grip and slide down the chute and only see the slanted room as an orange blur passing you. You have gained 20 points for getting into the slanted room.

GET SCROLL, READ SCROLL and you discover that it is the Golmac spell for temporal displacement (going back in time to you and me). The clue is in the lamp which lights the room. You notice that it has an open door in a compartment in the base. GOLMAC ME and nothing seems to have happened except that the door is now closed.

OPEN LAMP which reveals a smelly scroll, GET SMELLY SCROLL and a 25 point addition to the score, and as the amber potion has almost worn off don't bother to examine it but go D to the coal bin room.

You are now the elder twin that you saw so you must do and say exactly as your older self did and said, "YOUNGER SELF, THE COMBINATION IS (339). YOUNGER SELF, GIVE ME THE BOOK". Your younger self gives you the book just as you did to your older self. D and you slide down the lower chute clutching scroll and book and land on the Lagoon Shore. DROP ALL. You are understandably tired so SLEEP, GET BOOK, LEARN MEEF, G, LEARN GASPAS, GASPAS ME, DROP BOOK this is essential as you are going swimming and water renders the book useless.

E takes you to the surface of the lagoon. D takes you to the floor of the lagoon. You can see all the items that you dropped down the chute in the coal bin room, GET ALL, MEEF WEEDS and you see a chest. U to the surface for more air. D, GET CRATE, U, W to the shore and OPEN

CRATE. You gain 15 points for opening it and it reveals a tin of Grue Repellent (which should be used with caution as it only lasts a few moves) and a Grue suit which can be worn and protect indefinitely, WEAR SUIT.

The lantern that you found in the crate has no use whatever. GET SCROLL AND BOOK, NE to the north of the ocean shore, N to the Mouth of the river (the one which flowed past the river bank that you had to be so wary of). You find that you are drawn towards some vines, and when you realise and stop you can sense annoyance, MEEP VINES and they shrivel away to reveal a cave entrance.

It would be a good idea to look at the scroll you went to such efforts to get from the slanted room. READ SCROLL and you discover that it is the Vardik spell to shield a mind from an evil spirit. W and you are in a cave filled with a mutant type of grue which is not frightened by light. (Good job you put on the grue suit you found wasn't it?). The grues are totally ignoring you so it is safe to go W into the mammoth cave (for entering the cave you get 20 points).

This cave has exits to the nw, w, sw. Respectively these are a black marble door leading to the Chamber of Living Death, a shiny silver door leading to the Hall of Eternal Pain (which is also reached if you are killed without the gaspar protection during the game). The door that we need is the white door which leads SW. Things could get pretty nasty in there so LEARN GASPAR, GASPAR ME, LEARN SWANZO. Most essential of all is VARDIK ME. You should now be protected against most things so it is safe to proceed.

OPEN WHITE DOOR and you find that you are drawn into Belboz's hideout. (For making the right choice of door you get 20 points). The old Mage is lying on a bed looking like he is in a trance. Don't be fooled, you have very little time to spare.

If you have Yomin committed to memory, YOMIN BELBOZ and you will find out that something nasty lurks in his mind. On the wall is a jewelled dagger, you can't use it to kill Belboz as your mission was to free him. (If you kill him, or if you are possessed by the demon yourself your score is removed and a 100 penalty points are added. Your score of -100 gives you the rank of Menace to Humanity.)

SWANZO BELBOZ, (gaining a further 25 points), the demon rises from Belboz in response to the Exorcism, fully expecting to take over your body and mind. Too late it realises that you are protected by the Vardik spell and with a horrible scream it vanishes.

Belboz regains consciousness, and after questioning you about the affair, mutters an unfamiliar spell and you are both transported back to the Guild Chamber. Belboz tells the Guild that you are his successor, you have scored 400 out of 400 and gained the rank of.....

LEADER OF THE CIRCLE OF ENCHANTERS!

ADVENTURE COMPLETED!

SERIALISED SOLUTIONS

THE LOST CITY a guide to completion by JUNE ROWE

PART ONE

First a word to map-makers - if you start in the middle of an A3 sheet, you will quite soon fall off the edge to the west, because this is the direction in which you will mainly travel and there are only two locations east of the start. The whole map covers 22 location spaces from east to west and 12 location spaces from north to south, so if you start your map almost at the right-hand side and about halfway down, with a bit of luck you may get it all on to one sheet.

So... going north, you will find a dead body, which you must UNDRRESS to find a toga to WEAR. Then, southish, you will enter a bath house. You now need to DIVE INTO BATH to find a disc, but the game won't allow you to do this with your clothes on!

If you forget to GET and WEAR the toga before leaving, you will discover dire consequences..... use RAMSAVE and try it, just for fun! However there is a time-saving illogicality after finding the disc: you needn't leave bath or get out of water or anything like that - just GET ALL AND WEAR TOGA. The ALL includes the book you were carrying at the start. You will find this book useful when you meet a mermaid, later.

Now proceed in a zig-zaggy north and west direction until you come to a gate, which can be opened with INSERT DISC. (In the slot which you will see if you X GATE - useful abbreviation for examine in this game!)

Pick up the conch shell on the way west, then BLOW it and LISTEN TO IT for a cryptic message.

The mermaid you meet will not let you pass until you say a magic word, but do not on any account try to kill her - this ends the game. X BOOK to find the word, then SAY TO MERMAID MIRANDELLI.

A short way further west, now, to find yourself in the courtyard of a villa, which is locked. X FOUNTAIN CAREFULLY for the key.

There are a few things to collect, in and around the villa, but you can only carry six items, so it is quite safe to drop the book and the conch in the courtyard, or anything else you find which you may not immediately want to use.

You will find a trident in a cupboard in the kitchen, a tinderbox in a part of the cellars area, a phial on the table in the bedroom, a carpet in the lower level of the tower and an elixer which you can TAKE OUT OF CHEST at the top level of the tower. (After OPENING it and LOOKING IN it, of course). This tastes delicious if you drink it, but don't do it yet.

At some point when you are wandering through the villa, you may get thrown out, but worry not - drop your non-breakable items in the courtyard, make sure you have the key and go in again, because apart from things already mentioned, you also need an hour-glass.

TO BE CONTINUED.....



HELPLINE

ALF BALDWIN	0452 500512	MON TO SAT 10AM TO 5PM	Spectrum.
JACK HIGHAM	0925 819631	FRI TO MON 7PM TO 10PM	Spectrum.
WALTER POOLEY	051 9331342	ANY REASONABLE TIME	Various.
DOREEN BARDON	065 382 509	MON TO FRI 6PM TO 10PM	Spectrum. WEEKENDS ANY REASONABLE TIME
MIKE BRAILSFORD	0592 757788	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	MON TO FRI 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.
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If you need to contact Probe please telephone 0492 77305. I will be available at all reasonable times any day apart from Sunday, but please try to telephone between 10am and 10pm. If you are telephoning for help on an adventure then please try to phone during the day as the solutions are on hand during that time.



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