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

CONTRIBUTIONS

All contributors sending in material between 14th of the previous month and up to copy date will have their names entered in the Hall of Fame for the subsequent month. CONTRIBUTIONS are always needed and ALL readers are invited to send in items for every section. Anything from a single hint or tip to a full blown article are all very welcome. Reviews of the adventures you have played are especially welcome. Please check first to see if a review has already appeared. Don't worry if you cannot send in typed material as handwritten is just as welcome. If you send in contributions for more than one section please use different sheets and make sure you include your name and computer. If you do send in items ready typed then please use A4 with a nice margin all round with text being approx 70 chars across and 60 lines per page. Items can be sent in on disc (all discs will be returned). The Editor is able to print out from Amstrad CPC6128 (Tasword or Protex), C64/128 on (Easyscript or Mini Office II) or Atari ST (First Word Plus). Sorry no printer for the Spectrum. If you send in items for the IN-TOUCH section please clearly mark which are adventures, utilities, arcade etc.

POSTAL ADDRESS

Please send all correspondence, subscriptions etc to the Editor: MANDY RODRIGUES, ADVENTURE PROBE, 67 LLOYD STREET, LLANDUDNO, GWYNEDD, LL30 2YP. If writing from overseas please add UNITED KINGDOM.



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HALL OF FAME



By sincere thanks to the following readers who took the time and trouble to send in contributions during the past month:
 JIM DONALDSON, DOROTHY MILLARD, SHEILA SIMPSON, JIM STRUTHERS, PHIL GLOVER, RON RAINBIRD, MERC, ANNE ROY, JOE MOORE, JUNE ROWE, ALAN DAVIS, JOHN WILSON, THE GRUE!, NIC RUMSEY, LARRY HORSFIELD, THE WAYFARER, VICKY JACKSON, PETER TOWNSEND, NEIL SHIPMAN, DENNIS DOWDALL and KEITH BURNARD.

Special thanks to BRIAN PELL for this month cover picture.

 CONTRIBUTIONS in the form of REVIEWS, GETTING YOU STARTED, GOLDEN OLDIES, BUGS AND AMUSING RESPONSES, LETTERS, ARTICLES and HINTS AND TIPS are urgently needed for the next issue please.....Mandy

EDITORIAL



Welcome to volume 4, issue 10 of Adventure Probe.

I am still in a state of euphoria following the Convention on 15th September! I find it difficult to describe to you my feelings upon entering the Convention and meeting so many lovely people. Everyone was wearing a name badge and everyone just glanced at them, gave a warm and happy greeting and immediately launched into conversation as if they had known each other all their lives. Just to be able to put faces to the voices and names that we have come to know so well was a delightful experience in itself. There was a warm, friendly and exciting atmosphere that had to be seen and felt to be truly understood. Usually, when an event of this kind is organised for the first time, there are teething troubles and various things go wrong, but not so in this case. It was an outstanding and resounding success in every way.

There was no mistaking the Probe Convention because as soon as we entered the room we spotted Nic Rumsey who was beautifully dressed for the part. A typical adventurer, he came wearing a cloak, a set of keys tied to his belt, a stout rope around his chest and carrying a brass lantern. He was also armed with a stout staff. Nic says he is going to start a "Quotable Quotes from the Convention" series in Probe and his first is derived from when he wandered into the hotel bar for a spot of liquid refreshment. The barmaid eyed his outfit in some surprise, hesitated for a moment or two, then plucked up courage to ask "Have you come very far dressed like that?" To which Nic replied with great aplomb, "No, only from the next room." The Grue was present at the convention (and we all survived in tact) and present also was Bob Adams. They were actually spotted chatting to each other and it is rumoured that they were actually photographed together! They delighted everyone with a surprise award for Nic in the form of a huge concrete boot! Nic said in his acceptance speech that he had never expected to receive the "order of the boot"!

There were about a hundred of us present and apart from the friendly interaction of those present, there was plenty to see and do. Larry Horsfield had a megapoints competition which was very well received. This was where we all had 20 minutes with an adventure that nobody had seen before and the person who gained the most points in that time won £25. Sandra Sharkey and I were both dubious about entering for this competition as we both realised that our reputations were at stake - well it wouldn't do for Probe editors to get stuck in the first location in front of all the readers would it? But we finally took the plunge and acquitted ourselves moderately well. The winner was Jack Higham who managed to gain a fantastic score of 108 points. Okay, I know you are wondering so I had better come clean and confess that Sandra got 60 points and I got 63 (Sandra would probably have got more but her computer crashed.) I reckon that Jack was made to pay up for beating everyone else as those in the Gruemobile were demanding that he cough up and treat everyone to fish and chips on the way home! He was last seen being dragged away protesting furiously but he was dreadfully outnumbered!

Computers lined the room and everyone had a chance to have a go on any they hadn't tried before. One of the benefits of this, for me, was seeing the expression on the face of a lady Spectrum owner being introduced to her very first Infocom adventure (Ballyhoo). It brought back all my own feelings when I first loaded up Zork. There was

software for sale and many different adventures of all types available for people to try out. In fact it was a delicious haven for any adventurer. Of all the computers there I was surprised to see that the most popular seemed to be the Amstrad CPC's and the Amiga! At one point I noticed a large crowd standing 6 deep gathered around the Amiga with very absorbed faces. I remarked that it must be a very good game and enquired what it was. Much to my surprise it was the latest Sierra game! Now I was under the impression that nobody liked these very much but, judging from the faces of the crowd, I think there were quite a few conversions there!

First to greet everyone as they came through the door was Vicky Jackson who presented everyone with their badge. Thanks Vicky for all your help, you really worked hard for us. Just beside Vicky was the Probe stall with back issues, software and various other bits and pieces. Next was the Guiding Light stall with a bank of computers and loads of software to try out. On the other side of that were a row of Amstrad computers which was also very popular. Then there was the Spellbreaker stall. Mike and his father were kept very busy there and they had brought along loads of solutions which came in very handy. Loads more computers and next to these was Allan Phillips who had come armed with tons of software and literature on all the latest releases from the States and our larger software houses. Allan had Commodore and Spectrum computers together with printer and was able to demonstrate how he had produced the award certificates. Dicon Peeke had a demonstration of Ghost Writer for everyone to try out and this also proved very popular. Next to him was Ian Brown's stall with Stormbringer software. Next to this (well only separated by the rostrum and dreaded microphone (looked just like a bright red witness box!)) was Larry Horsfield and the Megapoints competition stall, the PAW workshop and software stall.

The highlight of the event was, of course, the awards ceremony and I really must thank Allan Phillips for his outstanding work, not just for producing such beautiful certificates but also for announcing the awards so very well indeed. His sense of humour and personality really helped to make the awards so successful. The awards were as follows:

The Most Helpful Adventurer of the year: 3rd was Alf Baldwin, 2nd was Walter Pooley but I presented JOAN PANCOTT who was the winner with her certificate.

The Best Text Only Game of the year on 8-bit: 3rd was Magnetic Moon, 2nd was Starship Quest but Tom Frost presented Ken Bond with the winning certificate for THE TEST.

The Biggest Game Let Down of the year: 3rd was Lancelot, 2nd was Not a Penny More, Not a Penny Less but the winner was MINDFIGHTER. Allan Phillips asked Joan Pancott to accept the award on their behalf as she was the only adventurer present, that we knew of, who had completed the adventure!

The Best Graphic/Text Game on 8-bit: 3rd was Crack City, 2nd was Agatha's Folly but the winner was SCAPEGHOST by Level 9. The award was presented by Dave Barker and Dicon Peeke accepted the award on behalf of Level 9.

The Most Helpful Software Company of the year: 3rd was Topologika, 2nd was Fantasy and Science Fiction but the winner was ZENOBI SOFTWARE. Kez Gray accepted the award on behalf of John Wilson.

The Least Helpful Software Company of the year: 3rd was Armageddon and Cream, 2nd was Activision but the winner was C.R.L./POWERHOUSE. Allan Phillips had attempted to hand over the award at the Computer Show in

London the previous day but C.R.L. had not attended.

The Best Graphic/Text Adventure on 16-bit: 3rd was Whiplash and Wagonwheel, 2nd was Beyond Zork but the winner was ZORK ZERO by Infocom. The Grue accepted this award on behalf of Infocom.

Best Animated Adventure of the year on 16-bit: 3rd was Leisure Suit Larry III, 2nd was Castle Master but the winner was INDIANA JONES AND THE LAST CRUSADE.

The Best Role Playing Game of the year: 3rd was Bloodwych, 2nd was Drakkhen. Dave Barker accepted the winning certificate on behalf of F.T.L. for CHAOS STRIKES BACK.

Best Text Only Adventure of the year on 16-bit: Readers voted THE HOLY GRAIL for this award. The Grue accepted the award on behalf of Jim Macbrayne.

There were also some special awards as follows:

For all his services to Adventuring a special award was presented by Allan Phillips to KEITH CAMPBELL.

A special award for Playtester of the Year was presented to LORNA PATERSON.

A special surprise award was presented to TOM FROST for being the only Author who is unable to complete his own adventure! This is because Tom has never been able to play through the second part of Gordello from start to finish!

Next came the most memorable award, which had everyone laughing. (Now everyone knows what I mean when I say that Grue doesn't laugh, he gurgles!) This was the Frob of the Year award presented by The Grue. He kept us in suspense for the name of the winner as he related the events which had led to the award. He had received a call for help concerning the game SHERLOCK-THE RIDDLE OF THE CROWN JEWELS. In this game there is a wax head with something inside it. But the "person" couldn't discover how to get at that "something" so they tried hitting it, punching it, kicking it. They even shot it six times. They tried to put a top hat on it and then put the whole thing on their head to sneak out of the museum but, not surprisingly, were spotted by the guard. They thought that they could perhaps cut off the nose in order to insert their hand into the cavity (must have had a BIG nose!) but couldn't manage it. After a while they hit on the idea of melting the head. For this they would need some paper but unfortunately they had left the newspaper in Baker Street early on in the game so, inspiration struck again, there was some paper used for brass rubbings in Westminster Abbey so off they went to collect it. Now armed with the paper they placed the head carefully on it and set it all alight... and the whole lot vanished! They had discovered an unusual bug but it meant that they had to restart the game from the beginning. This was all related by the Grue who could hardly speak for gurgling and chortling but eventually the name of the culprit was revealed - The Frob of the Year went to NEIL SHIPMAN. Neil also deserves our thanks for giving us the best laugh of the day with his exploits with the head. Well done Neil, you deserve your promotion.

At this point an award was presented to Grue himself from the readers, it was a smart red and white baseball cap with FROBS RULE OK emblazoned on the front. Grue promises to wear this everytime he works at his computer.

I must express thanks to Kez Gray for the beautiful big cartoons that she drew for the awards. There was one for each category and each was revealed at the right moment. They really helped to make the awards ceremony so successful. Kez kindly presented each one to the winner of each award as a keepsake.

I must also thank Lorna Paterson for taking charge of the raffle. This proved to be a real marathon of a raffle. Thanks also to Bob Adams for picking the winning tickets and to everyone who donated prizes for this.

I did manage to make my welcome speech without too much trouble, it was just a case of ignoring, as far as possible, the microphone which loomed up in front of me like a dreaded cobra. Tom Frost told me that I looked quite relaxed during the speech. Little did he know that when I found my hand was shaking I grabbed hold of the side of the "witness box" to stop this and the result was looking as if I was really laid back and leaning casually on it. I was also very pleased to be able to read out a letter to everyone sent by Mike Gerrard in which Mike wished us all well and hoped that we all had a great time. Mike was in Siberia (I knew he would get his just reward someday) and couldn't make it to the convention. Thanks for your kind words Mike, you don't know what you were missing. I hope that you will come along to the next convention so that we can all meet you at last.

After the speech and the awards there was another unexpected surprise. Tom Frost came up to present a gift to Sandra Sharkey, my husband John (a couple of bottles of his favourite wine) and for me, a beautiful hand crafted and painted dragon and a book of Enchantica. I would like to thank you all for this charming and very appropriate gift which I will treasure as a memento of one of the happiest and most memorable days of my life. To all of you who attended the Convention I would like to say a big thank you to each and every one of you for making the day such a wonderful success and I would also like to say that I have never met such lovely people anywhere, ever! I know that everyone who attended will wish me to give special thanks to Larry Horsfield, Vicky Jackson and Allan Phillips for all their hard work in organising the Convention, you all worked very hard indeed and the credit for its success must go to you.

There were loads of photographs taken on the day and I hope that, perhaps some of these can be published in Probe soon so that you can all see them.

There were about 25 of us who stayed at the hotel on the Saturday night and of course we had another mini convention in the bar in the evening after dinner. Twelve of us descended on the town for a meal. We all marched up to the nearest Chinese Restaurant but, despite there being only two diners in there, they said they were fully booked. Think it was either my face that didn't fit or the other eleven crowding in the doorway that put them off! So we ate Indian instead. They welcomed us warmly and even put a load of tables together so that we could all sit together. In the morning we had another mini convention after breakfast too. You can't keep good adventurers down!

I hope that I have managed to convey some of the atmosphere here so that those who couldn't make the convention will have some idea of it. I hope that others who attended will write in with their impressions too. I have "gushed" rather here but that's because I am still on cloud 9! This has turned out to be a mammoth editorial but there was so much to say and one page just wouldn't do this month.

I hope you all enjoy this issue and that many, many more of you will be able to attend the next convention. See you all again next month.

Mandy

REVIEWS



POLEARN

By Sheol Software, Central Works, Peartree Lane, Dudley, West Midlands, DY2 0QU. For 128K Spectrum only (other versions under way).
Price £7.95.

Reviewer: SHEILA SIMPSON

Great stuff this! Written using Gilsoft PAW system, the writer has managed to squeeze an awful lot of gameplay into this adventure. Essentially an interactive ghost story, it has managed to keep clear of contrived problems and provides more than one mystery. You assume the character of Marcus Thornton, a young novelist, seeking solitude after the untimely death of his fiance. He arrives at the tiny Cornish fishing village of Polearn one early autumn afternoon. Soon after arriving, mysterious and supernatural events start taking place. Who is the fisherman - why are the locals reluctant to talk to Marcus and what of the abandoned mine and its secrets? Sleep brings no respite. Past and present intermingle through nightmares and you slowly become drawn into what is at times quite a disturbing story. Entering "time" will tell you the time within the program. This can be slowed down or speeded up (usually to help solve a particular problem), and you eat and sleep as in real life. The accompanying small, but very comprehensive, booklet sets out no objectives, only detailing events leading up to Marcus' arrival in Polearn. A short history of Cornwall is included and a dedication. An Atari version is under way, as is a Plus 3 disk based version. It comes with all the usual commands but the game will not be released nationally until all versions are complete. There is also no hint sheet available at present but specific problems can be dealt with by sending a SAE to the company.

At the time of writing, I am nowhere near completing this game, but am already looking forward to the sequel. A very good game with a surprising amount of depth. I found it very absorbing and at times disturbing. A must for anyone who likes the supernatural. I hope the price will not be off putting. The graphics are few and far between, being in monochrome for Spectrum but still very detailed and adding to the atmosphere.



SIMPLY MAGIC

By Michael and Jane Trewella and available from WoW Software, 78 Radipole Lane, Weymouth, Dorset. Available for Amstrad CPC464 and CPC6128 and priced at £2.25 on cassette or £4.25 on disc.

Reviewer: MANDY, played on CPC6128



This adventure was written using Incentive's GAC program and is one of the very few that has used the graphics to their full potential. Stars that actually twinkle are a most surprising and unusual touch. There are only about 20 or so locations but don't let that deter you as there are plenty of puzzles in those locations to keep you busy for a long time.

The main of the adventure is to gather the ingredients to form a magic potion. Sounds simple but it isn't. You will have to unravel plenty of riddles and puzzles and these are certainly original in content. The names of the different locations can hold clues as to what the problem is about as in the Room of Wisdom, Room of Unhappiness, Room of Happiness etc. In the Room of Bewilderment you get some very odd responses to various commands, don't get frustrated, take note of what

happens and you may glean more clues to help you on your quest. The location descriptions are rather brief but tell you all you need to know and the graphics are very good indeed. There is the facility for turning them off but I wouldn't advise that as a great deal of atmosphere is generated by them. All in all I found this to be a very addictive little adventure and I am sure you will find it so, too. It represents good value for money and should provide you with quite a few hours of entertainment.

=====

THE MISSION

By Jim MacBrayne, 27 Paidmyre Cres, Newton Mearns, Glasgow, G77 5AQ.
Available for the 1Meg Amiga. Price £7.50.

Reviewer: THE GRUE!

"Relax Braithwaite, our money's perfectly safe. I grant you it was a reckless wager, but who knows if Quetzicoatl's toothpick ever existed, let alone its present whereabouts?" "I wish I had your faith, Blenkinsop but he's a strange one right enough. Surely you remember his quest for Guinevere's shoelace. Nobody expected him to succeed in that either, but succeed he did and it ruined poor old Sowerby-Jones."

Once again Blenkinsop has succeeded in goading you into accepting one of his ludicrous challenges, and Jim MacBrayne offers you the chance to get even with these two characters. The Mission seems to have been a long time coming but it has been worth the wait. Some of the features from his previous games are also to be found in The Mission, the tree lift is here, although it uses a different method for its operation but equally as tricky. Then there is the Misty Room where once again you must pass through to find different scenarios.

You will end up in all sorts of strange places, such as a Tibetan Monastery and somewhere else you will visit a place similar to Stonehenge. The first thing to work out is how the tree lift works, but you will have to be careful otherwise you could easily become trapped in a scenario found through the Misty Room. The text descriptions are as good as we have come to expect from Jim's games and the puzzles are strong and logical. If you've played any of Jim's games before you might find this slightly easier than his previous ones but it will still take more than a few hours of your time.

The game has about 160 locations but for some reason the game seemed much larger than that and people who enjoy exploring and mapping will love it. Surely finding a toothpick couldn't be a difficult task? It shouldn't be, but then can you work out the meaning of all those different buttons. Some are different shapes, some different colours and then we have the different coloured rods, the solitary shimmering button and the secret of the wheel room. The Mission doesn't have as many red herrings as Jim usually puts in a game but he makes up for this within the text descriptions. Often you are convinced that you need to do something in a certain location and in others there seems very little to do, when really you have got it the wrong way round!

You even get a chance to visit Toad Hall with its strange notice in the library. Then there is the Alice in Wonderland bit. Where does the White Rabbit go? Why does the Cheshire Cat disappear with a POP! What does the effigy of the Clown mean and what does he want? Will Blenkinsop have the last laugh??

The Mission is a very enjoyable game and great fun to play. The parser

is excellent as is the text and atmosphere. You can define the function keys, ramsave, script out a hard copy and change the screen colours etc. With Jim now attempting to market his games himself, The Mission will cost £7.50 and that seems pretty good value for a game of this standard. He is now looking into the possibility of converting for the Atari ST.

For some amusing responses try standing on an opening that's in the ceiling or try to sit on the fence. Or how about examining your teeth!

=====

DRAGONS BREATH

By Palace Software: Available for Amiga and Atari ST and priced at around £29.99 so try to shop around for the best price.

Reviewer: THE GRUE! played on Amiga.

Far away in the land of Anrea stands Dwarf Mountain. Since the beginning of time the mountain has been the source of evil forces. Whilst some parts of Anrea have prospered the surrounding countryside of the mountain has always been beset by war and famine. Legent has it that in the Throne Room of the great castle at the top of Dwarf Mountain lies the secret of immortality. There are three people who crave this secret and the Great Lord permits them to fight, the winner obtains the right of entry into the Great Castle.

There are three parts of a Talisman scattered throughout the land surrounding the mountain and these can only be found by Dragons. The parts cannot be moved until all three are guarded by one player's Dragons all at the same time, so a player must have at least three Dragons to win the game. Your first objective will be to breed Dragons and to try and create an income to do so, for breeding Dragons can be expensive.

Dragons Breath is a Fantasy/Strategy type adventure and has a very simple to use icon operating system. Once you have clicked on your chosen character you will be taken to his castle screen, where you will be able to carry out various tasks and make your decisions. Then by returning to the main game screen you can move the game on a month as everything runs in monthly cycles. At the bottom of your castle screen are various icons by which you can make your decisions. There is the Library where you can reveal your monthly accounts, current affairs and your magic stock. Your monthly spending is crucial to your success and you can keep a check on your Dragons and their whereabouts, also if part of the Talisman exists in a village under your control. The current affairs tells you of any ongoing battles or events which may influence your position in the game and may help you supplement your income, telling of one village holding a hostage from another, therefore giving you the opportunity to go to the rescue and gain a reward.

You can monitor your Dragons and their attributes, although you start off the game with only one Dragon you can end up with eight. Then there is the Egg incubation screen where you can incubate up to four eggs at a time. It is important that you start to breed your dragons as soon as you start the game but don't go wild as the eggs need heat to hatch and the more heat you use the more money it will cost you. Should an egg fail to hatch because you ran out of money then you have just wasted an egg and you only have twenty.

Traders will visit the castle from time to time and they offer you the chance to buy further stocks of ingredients for casting spells. You don't have to buy anything and even if you've very little money left you can still obtain ingredients by sending a dragon to search a certain part of the land. If you wish to raid a village or town on your map screen, you have the option to return after the attack or to conquer and keep. You can send a Dragon to a location or village guarded by another player's Dragon, then the two Dragons will fight and the stronger of the two will win. Once your orders have been given you can control the Dragon by using the joystick or you can decide to let the computer simulate the action for you. The mission and any other options you have chosen will not take place until you return to the main game screen and move time on a month. If the player owns a current village you also have the option to raise taxes but if you raise them too much you can end up with a revolution on your hands. However a village cannot rebel if a Dragon is guarding it, so a useful ploy is to raise the taxes very high while your Dragon is there and get some extra money fast.

You can cast Magic Spells on towns and villages owned by you or the other players. You can cure a village of disease or increase its population among other things. You can also cast spells on your Dragons to increase their attributes, without using Magic you will be far less likely to win the game. It is with casting of spells that the game seems to make things a bit over complex. Using your spell book you have to find the best way of making a spell with the most positive effects. You are able to do all sorts of things with your ingredients to create a potion. You can cut them, grind them, mix them, heat them, condense them, use them without anything or use a combination of all of them. There is a chart in your book to help you recognise whether it is better to cut or grind an ingredient with or without heat etc, to enable you to gain a more favourable response to your spell, but it is not particularly easy to get to grips with this. I felt as if this part of the game could have been simplified (of course it is also possible that I am just thick!).

As you progress through the game you may have discovered parts of the Talisman. If you can't locate them in villages or towns then you'll have to search the countryside. For this your Dragon will need excellent eyesight and you will need the patience of a saint as this can prove to be a long and tedious task. When a player has all three parts of the Talisman guarded he will be automatically taken to the Throne room for the end sequence.

The graphics in the game are extremely well drawn and are complimented by nice sound effects. The operating system is excellent and very simple to use. It's a very enjoyable game but I'm not sure I would call it a strategy game, more of a RPG than anything else. Dragons Breath will run quite happily on a 512K machine but it will take advantage of any extra memory that you have, which speeds the gameplay up considerably. I certainly enjoyed this game and became very fond of my Dragons. It's very sad when one of your Dragons die in battle, especially when his name was Floyd! Not everyone will like this game but for something a bit different it is definitely worth a look.

REVIEWS ARE URGENTLY NEEDED FOR THIS SECTION PLEASE



NEWS



THE COMPUTER SHOPPER SHOW

This will be held at the Wembley Conference Centre (moved from Alexandra Palace to a bigger venue) from Thursday 6th December to Sunday 9th December. To cope with the extra large crowds expected they have added an extra day to this event this year. Admission fees will be £5 for adults and £3.50 for children (under 16). There will be £1 off for advance tickets and pre-paid family tickets (for two adults and two children) will be £12. The opening times are as follows: Thursday and Friday - 10am to 6pm; Saturday- 9am to 6pm and Sunday - 10am to 5pm. There will be displays and demonstrations of all the latest hardware, software and peripherals for all popular makes of home and business computers. I am told that the estimated number of exhibitors will be 280 so it should be quite an interesting event. For more information contact Mike Cowley on 061 480 9811.

ACCOLADE OBTAINS RIGHTS TO NEW RPG ADVENTURE

ELVIRA, MISTRESS OF THE DARK will be released in October and will be available for the IBM PC, Atari ST and Commodore Amiga. In this game Elvira's recent renovations to an ancient castle have aroused her long-dead relative, Queen Emelda, from the grave and opened a portal into the underworld, admitting hundreds of her evil servants into the castle to prepare for her arrival. Calling on your ghostbusting skills, Elvira informs you that Queen Emelda is in search of "The Scroll of Spiritual Mastery" which will give her immortality and the power to control all the minions of Hades in her ambition to rule the world. Your objective is simple yet difficult. You must scour every corner of the castle in search of six keys which will open a chest, locate the chest and ward off all the demons who now roam the castle. There will be nearly 800 graphically brilliantly detailed locations, icon driven and fully interactive and will be a combination of exploration, combat, intriguing puzzles and comedy.

GOOD NEWS FOR ATARI ST OWNERS

Jim MacBrayne informs me that he is working very hard trying to convert his excellent Amiga adventures for the Atari ST. Although the set up for the games works, Jim has hit a few problems with the compiling of the games but assures me that he is going to persist in his efforts, and will eventually succeed. Watch this space for further news. I can hardly wait to play these games for myself and find out what all those Amiga owners have been raving about!

NEW P.D. ADVENTURES FOR THE AMSTRAD!

AMSTRAD ADVENTURE P.D. A newly formed Public Domain specializing in adventures only is seeking home-brew adventures to include into the collection. Don't let your adventures collect dust - let your work be seen!!! Send your tape or disc to ADVENTURE PD, 10 OVERTON ROAD, ABBEY WOOD, LONDON, SE2 9SD. If you would like more information then just send a SAE to the above address.

ANOTHER P.D. LIBRARY FOR AMSTRAD OWNERS

SCULL PD LIBRARY, run by Alan Scully, 119 Laurel Drive, East Kilbride, Glasgow, G75 9JG. Alan tells me that he can supply adventures and is also looking for readers to send in their adventures for the library.

YOUR COMMODORE WILL REPORT ON THE PROBE CONVENTION

Paul Rigby has informed me that there will be a report on the Probe Convention in Your Commodore Magazine soon. Paul attended the convention so he knows everything about the event. Incidentally, Paul

writes adventure columns in RAZE (The Games Machine), Your Commodore, Your Amiga, Amiga Computing, ST Format, Commodore User and Confidential as well as for three American Computer magazines dealing with PC, Amiga and Atari ST. Well done Paul and many thanks for all the help you give to Probe with the favourable mentions in your columns.

Speaking of adventure columns, why is it that there is no adventure column featured in CRASH magazine? Perhaps it is because the editor doesn't realise that there is a demand for this type of column. Perhaps if Probe readers wrote to him to ask for this, he would oblige us so that adventuring is brought to the attention of the thousands of Crash readers out there. Thanks to Probe readers we know that our views have been listened to in the past so please put pen to paper once again and see what we can do about it.

NEW ADDRESS FOR HELPLINER

Doreen Bardon has recently moved to a new address and has asked me to let everyone know in case you need help. Doreen's new address is Rivendell, 24 Sycamore Close, Slingsby, York, YO6 7BG. As with all postal helpliners, please don't forget to enclose a SAE when writing for help.

THE CASE OF THE MIXED-UP SOFTWARE
By KEITH BURNARD

- JACK THE RIPPER / DON'T PANIC - PANIC NOW!
- JACK AND THE BEANSTALK / GIANTS ADVENTURE
- 1942 MISSION / OPERATION BERLIN
- BLOOD OF THE MUTINEERS / CUTTHROATS
- WEAVER OF HER DREAMS / SPIDERMAN
- DENIS THROUGH THE DRINKING GLASS by THATCHER SOFTWARE
- THE GORDELLU INCIDENT by B.A. GONE CRACKERS



ADVENTURE POSERS
By JIM STRUTHERS

- Where do all the old games go?
- Why do some people complete adventures easier than others?
- What is a Grue, Wayfarer, Antcrusher, Innkeeper, Merc etc?
- Why does someone always want me when I'm at an exciting part of an adventure?
- Why do some games load perfectly on other people's computers but not on mine?
- How come, when you drop buttered toast, it always lands face down?
- Why do some companies send games to you straight away, others weeks later and some not at all?!
- Why don't ALL adventure games play on ANY computer?

AND SOME POSERS BY MANDY

- How come when trying to find a solution to help someone on the telephone it is always found at the back of the file?
- Why can't I find anything I need for days after tidying up my desk?
- Why is there always a teaspoon left in the bowl after washing up?

(Anyone else got any interesting posers?.....Mandy)

THE UPS AND DOWNS OF ADVENTURE-WRITING

by
Alan Davis



There was some sorry reading in the letters section of the September Probe: the bitter cries from adventure writers Simon Maren and Ian Brown; the dreadful tale of Jim Macbrayne related by The Grue; and the anxious cries of the stalwart Jim Struthers. It all raises a big question: what makes an adventure worth writing? The fun of doing it? The satisfaction of knowing that others have enjoyed playing it? Fame? Financial reward? Or some combination of all these and maybe more? I suppose it must vary from one person to another according to their own personal priorities - but I do know that there is nothing more defeating than the thought that one's hard-wrought efforts are ignored or not valued. Those writers who are considering giving up writing have all my sympathy. However, there's nothing actually new in their plight. Selling adventures (as opposed to merely writing them) has always been a precarious business, and over the years I've had to come to terms with these problems myself. Now I don't know if what follows is of much interest to anyone else. But I think there's a moral in the tale, which will emerge at the end - and if any of this helps to persuade a dispirited author not to give up, then it will have been worthwhile. What I propose to do is briefly to review my own adventure-writing experiences and see what conclusions can be drawn from them.

My first adventure game was written in 1982, for my two daughters. It was based on the Enid Blyton "Faraway Tree" stories and the programming was appalling! Of course the plot and characters were copyright material so this was a program only for family and close friends. I never even thought of the possibility of publication. So what did I get out of this? Well the girls quite enjoyed it; my wife enjoyed it a lot; and I enjoyed the fun of writing it (all in Spectrum BASIC of course) during the few weeks it took. That was enough, then. I moved on.

The next game was "The Golden Chalice". This was somewhat more competently programmed - though not by much - and this time I felt it might be good enough to launch upon an astonished world. ZX Computing published it as a listing in two monthly episodes for the startling sum of 47 pounds 50. Well gosh, I thought, and was really thrilled. And yet the thought niggled... how many people would really be willing to type in all that stuff? Maybe no one? And then one day, some years later, I had a letter from Margo Porteous - who clearly had typed it in - with a query about the game. Even then, long after the event, that knowledge brought a warm glow. So I know only of three people who have played "Chalice": my wife, Hugh Walker, and Margo Porteous. There may have been more, but it doesn't matter. An audience of three seemed enough.

The next was really no more than an experiment in character interaction called "Dungeon". Again it was published as a listing in ZX Computing - but this was really only a tryout for the full-blown adventure which followed: "The Journey". And here we enter ground which will seem very familiar to the current discouraged writers. The first draft of the game was finished in perhaps three months, and provisionally accepted for publication by Temptation Software, subject to further polishing and improvements. There then followed an exhilarating (if sometimes frustrating) period of 3 or 4 months during which, with Tony Meyer's encouragement, the game was improved out of all

recognition. It wasn't the game to end all games, but it was better by far than I'd thought I could do, and I was proud of the end result. It would be bound to sell at least reasonably well, wouldn't it? It had reviews ranging from good to very good. Tony Bridge even reviewed it twice! But it flopped. Utterly. Total royalties from sales of "The Journey" amounted to less than 20 pounds.

20 pounds for over six months work? Well it was disappointing - but the point is this: it wasn't really work at all. I'd have done it anyway for my own satisfaction, regardless of publication. And in any case by this time I was intrigued by Mike Singleton's "Landscaping" system. The big question was: could I do this, and could I incorporate it into an interactive adventure? Eight months later I discovered the answer was yes, and the result was Runestone. Now I loved writing that game. There were about 40 characters in it, and I had a detailed mental image of every one. When it was finished, I played it over and over again for two months, making slight changes which seemed just to add that little extra something each time. I've explained elsewhere how the subsequent publishing history of the game went badly wrong, but looking at it rationally I did at least get a reasonably substantial financial reward, and I did have the thrill of reading some very nice reviews. What really niggles me, though, even after this gap of time, is the stupidity of the changes which Firebird Software made to the game. I still feel the need to apologise to those who bought it, for failing to protect the program, contractually, against such incompetent tinkering!

The only other full adventure I wrote was a Quilled game, back in 1985, called House on the Tor. This has been recently released from the Zenobi stable, and was written originally with no thought of publication at all. The whole thing was done just for the fun of it, and to explore the possibilities of the Quill. And I think this brings me ("at last!" sighs the tired reader) to the moral of this tale, as promised at the outset. Looking back over my own experience one thing stands out. It's this: the only safe reason for writing adventures is for the love of it. Everything else - financial reward, public acclaim, or whatever - these are only bonuses. Nice if you get them, but not to be expected. It's the only way to stay sane in this uncertain software world. It's so easy to be bitter - I know, I've been there. There were times when I felt quite angry about the pathetic sales of The Journey. Paranoia can set in: "Can't they see it's a good game? They ought to buy it." But it's not on, and I always knew it wasn't, at bottom. I have every right to publish a game; and the public has every right to remain indifferent. This is not defeatism; it's common sense. If you want to write an adventure, fine. Go ahead, enjoy yourself. If you want to publish it, then fine also. But if a writer's main pleasure isn't in the writing, and perhaps also in sharing that pleasure with a few friends, then he is, and always has been, on dodgy ground. And I'll end this on another personal note. I'm currently writing a new adventure after a gap of 5 years, and enjoying it. If I continue to enjoy it, I expect it will get finished and even (who knows) offered to the public. If not, it won't. For me it's as simple as that.

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

First of all, I must thank everyone who took the time and trouble to return the completed questionnaires. The results will give me a much better idea of what you, the reader, wants to see in Probe and, what you don't want to see. Thank you also for the suggestions you sent in, well, the "clean" ones anyway (thanks Bob (nice try) you provided a good giggle anyway!).

EDITORIAL. 84% said they were satisfied although 16% wanted more (flatterers!) So I think we can safely leave that as it is although in this issue, because of the Convention report, I have gone with the minority!

REVIEWS. 25% said they wanted more but 75% said they were quite satisfied. (You are easy to please there). It is difficult to determine the amount of reviews in Probe as so much depends on you, the reader, as Probe relies on you to send in reviews of games you have bought. Very few of the larger software houses remember Probe when sending out review copies. One way round this shortage of review material is for Probe to publish more than one review of a game. That idea seemed to go down well with the readers providing that the reviews were not just "clones" (sorry Tom) of the previous views expressed. So if you don't agree with a review, send in your own!

PREVIEWS. 28% said they wanted more, 4% said they wanted less and 38% said they were satisfied. Others were undecided and didn't vote on this one. Although the majority are satisfied, I think that we should try to cater for the 28% by printing the odd one or two whenever possible.

GOLDEN OLDIES. 73% said they wanted more, 5% said they wanted less and 22% said they were satisfied. Considering the long life of adventures compared to arcade games and the amount of new adventurers arriving all the time, I agree with the majority that Golden Oldies should be covered much more in Probe. Readers please start hunting out their old favourites for this section please: Reviews, Hints and Tips etc should be clearly marked GOLDEN OLDIES (just in case I haven't heard of a particular game and think it is new (ahem!)).

SERIOUS ARTICLES. 20% said they wanted more, 4% said they wanted less and 76% said they were satisfied. So I think we will leave things as they are, after all, THIS is a serious article too isn't it and I hope you are enjoying it so far?!

AMUSING ARTICLES. 20% said they wanted more, 7% said they wanted less and 73% said they were satisfied. Things will therefore stay the same here to please the majority.

NEWS. Some surprises here! 73% said they wanted more, 1% said they wanted less and 26% said they were satisfied. It looks as if the News Section will have to expand quite a bit. Help wanted here. If readers hear of any items of news please send them in. Keep up the good work Gordon Inglis (he keeps me regularly supplied with the latest Infocom news.

GUESS WHO THIS IS? 12% said they wanted more, 15% said they wanted less but 73% said they were satisfied with that section.

UTILITY PROGRAMMING TIPS. 16% said they wanted more, 14% said they

wanted less but 70% said they were satisfied.

BUGS AND AMUSING RESPONSES. 56% said they wanted more, 5% said they wanted less and 39% said they were satisfied. So more contributions are needed to keep the majority happy here please.

LETTERS. 48% wanted more, 2% wanted less and 50% said they were satisfied. This one was very close so a compromise is called for here. I think that if the Letters pages are increased to around 10 each month that should keep everyone happy.

HELP WANTED. 17% said they wanted more, 3% said they wanted less but 80% said they were satisfied. No change here then.

IN-TOUCH: 18% said they wanted more, nobody said they wanted less and 82% said they were satisfied. Here again there will be no change.

MAZES. 9% said they wanted more, 46% said they wanted less and 45% said they were satisfied. This result has obviously left me with something of a problem. I think the best thing would be to have items on mazes on a bi-monthly basis. I hope that this will keep everyone happy.

OBJECTS AND THEIR USES. 37% said they wanted more, 11% said they wanted less and 52% said they were satisfied. No changes here then.

SOLUTION SERVICE. 9% said they wanted more, 4% said they wanted less and 87% said they were satisfied. Definitely no change here.

FISHING FOR RED HERRINGS. 14% said they wanted more, 16% said they wanted less but 70% said they were satisfied.

GETTING YOU STARTED. 69% said they wanted more, 2% said they wanted less and 29% said they were satisfied. This section will definitely have to be increased so please send in plenty of contributions as I am very short of them for this section!

HINTS AND TIPS. 76% said they wanted more, 2% said they wanted less and 22% said they were satisfied. Here again the section will have to be enlarged to give you more of what you want. I'll do my best.

SERIALISED SOLUTIONS. 15% said they wanted more, 16% said they wanted less and 60% said they were satisfied. We will go with the majority again here and make no changes on this section.

PUZZLES AND COMPETITIONS. 27% said they wanted more, 18% said they wanted less and 55% said they were satisfied.

STORIES, FICTION. 24% said they wanted more, 44% said they wanted less and 35% said they were satisfied. My apologies to the writers of the stories I have been sent but it looks as if the majority of readers would like me to cut down on these, so I will print them only occasionally from now.

ROLE PLAYING GAMES. 11% said they wanted more, 72% said they wanted less and 17% said they were satisfied. A very definite decision here. It looks as if there is a big thumbs down to RPG.

THE NEW SUGGESTIONS

PLAY BY MAIL. 14% would like to see a section on this but a whopping 86% would not. There is no question that PBM articles will appear in Probe folks so you can relax!

BOOK REVIEWS. 50% said they would like to see book reviews in Probe and 50% said they wouldn't! Now that makes life difficult for me doesn't it? I guess that a book review article every other issue should keep everyone happy! (I hope so! Whew!)

MAPS. 35% said they would like to see maps in Probe and 65% said they would not. So no maps in Probe and we can leave that to Spellbreaker.

SOLUTION OF THE MONTH. 76% said they would like to see this section back in Probe and 24% said they wouldn't. From next issue there will be a solution of the month again!

IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS

This section of the questionnaire was very useful in giving me some idea of what new items you might like to see covered in Probe. Some that I was a bit doubtful about were: Page 3 Girls!, Exposes of Corrupt Software Houses! an Up-Yours Corner! Other more sensible suggestions included: More Letters from New Readers, Less "In Jokes", A Software Lending Library, Sources where Older Games can be obtained, Readers Top Ten lists of favourite games, Pen Pal Column. I see no reason why these cannot appear in Probe from time to time but I would have to rely on you for help in supplying contributions for these.

One person wanted articles on Strategy/War Games and another asked for complete lists of the Kings and Queens of the Castle's games. This could be done, I suppose, but as I have received lists from readers with over 700 games, I don't quite know how this could be achieved without taking up an awful lot of room in Probe. Any suggestions on how this could be done? Also, anyone else fancy Strategy/Wargames articles?

There were quite a few people asking for more Frob Of The Month's, Articles on Micronet (come on Bob!), and More reviews of the same game (dealt with earlier).

I was very surprised at the amount of people who asked for Interviews with Adventure Authors and Interviews or Profiles on well known people who appear in Probe. Something like an Adventurer of the Month Profile and I was surprised at the amount of people who would like to know an awful lot more about little old me! I don't mind that at all and have no objection to starting the ball rolling with something about myself. I could waffle away quite merrily for quite some time but perhaps it would be better if someone asked me some questions. Better still, why don't any interested readers send in a question or two and I will print the answers in Probe?! Could be a kind of "mass interview" by the readers - that has to be a first! Perhaps you would like to nominate an interviewer such as Bob Adams, The Grue, Vicky Jackson, June Rowe - the list could be endless so I will wait and see what develops!

Once again I would like to thank you all for taking the time and trouble to return the questionnaire and the nominations for the awards. I'm told that if you get 5% of the readership to respond it is quite good. Well over 200 of you responded (that's about half) so that should say something about the friendly, clubby, atmosphere of Probe.

THE ADVENTURE THAT GOT ME HOOKED

By JIM STRUTHERS

In the early days I was an arcade player (oh the shame!) until one day I acquired CASTLE DRACULA. The title had appealed to me because I was rather keen on horrors. As soon as I loaded it up I realised that an adventure was quite a different kettle of fish! I didn't have a clue (who said I still haven't?!). "How do you play this?" I thought to myself. "With great difficulty", I replied to myself. After many frustrating attempts I finally enrolled my wife and my sister to assist me.

Eventually we got going and all was going well until we came to the first snag. The snag in question was... the FIRST puzzle! Well, we tried and tried but just couldn't get the answer to a question that you need to type in to progress any further. It should have been a simple question - but not for us. Then my sister had a brainwave (her first since the game was started a week before). She works for the D.H.S.S. and she said "I know, I'll ask the great Pilgrim in the D.H.S.S. and his many followers. So we settled down to wait results. The following day, at work, she started to interrogate her workmates and "Pilgrim" (they all thought she was mad!) but each one had a suggestion to make so she jotted them all down to try that evening. We waited for her to come home eagerly and out came the game and we started feeding in all the suggested answers. Do you know that out of all the people who work out our pensions to feed and clothe ourselves, not one managed to get it right! Many hours later I was stumped, this kind of behaviour went on for about a fortnight. I had never heard of the great Joan Pancott at that time (mores the pity) so I had no choice but to write to the person who made the game and promptly got a simple reply. Two words, that's all and we were off!

Well from that moment I was hooked. I thought, "What good value for a couple of quid, all that fuss and bother, half the northeast of England involved and many a flask during the nights! I'll have to try again with another adventure, I can only improve!". Yes, I still get stuck but I'm getting better. I wonder if Joan Pancott ever gets stuck? Now I think I am a wiser and more patient adventure player.

THE ADVENTURE THAT GOT ME HOOKED

By STEVE McLAREN

We decided to get my son a C64 for Christmas in 1982. With it came some shoot-em-ups and an adventure called RING OF POWER. So after shooting all the aliens, I got bored and loaded the adventure (that took 15 minutes - enough time to make numerous cups of tea and sandwiches). Then to my amazement, there it was! I messed around for ages though. "How can I keep track of where I've been?". So I thought and came up with mapping the game out which was very crude at first.

I felt I had to crack the game and I soon found that I was hooked. Even my sons had to wait to get near the computer. There were quite a few things I couldn't do but thank goodness my good old Zzap magazine was at hand so I rang the helpline in that and soon got the answer to my problem. When I finally completed that game I was disappointed with the end message, which was just YOU WON. Looking back on this adventure it wasn't very good but it did get me hooked. Since then I have played lots of them but my all time favourite is LORDS OF TIME.

OBJECTS AND THEIR USES

MAGNETIC MOON PART ONE

By ALF BALDWIN



BACKPACK.....Will hold unlimited number of small objects.
HEADSHIELD.....Wear it to avoid being recognised.
FLASHLIGHT.....To see in dark locations.
FORCER.....Combination screwdriver and spanner.
SHORT ROPE.....Tie it to short rope on grapnel to make long rope.
LASER CUTTER...Cuts metal.
GRAPNEL.....Throw it and climb rope to reach locations.
SPACE AXE.....Use it to smash glass in port of freighter.
OXYGEN BOTTLE..Attach it to bubble helmet.
BUBBLE HELMET..To breathe on surface of the moon.
GIRDER.....To prop up loose plates.Use cutter to get it
WIRE.....To pull up girder from hold.
KNOB IN NICHE..Push and turn.

OBJECTS NOT REQUIRED: SONIC DRILL, VIBRO SAW, THEODOLITE, TEST METER, TRIPOD, EXTENSION LEAD, SHOVEL.

OBJECTS YOU NEED TO TAKE WITH YOU INTO PART TWO:

BUBBLE HELMET, BACKPACK, FLASHLIGHT, CUTTER, FORCER, GRAPNEL.

MAGNETIC MOON PART TWO

BUBBLE HELMET..Put it in crate until ready to leave.
LASER CUTTER...To cut through grille in tunnel and cut hole in pipe in air recycling plant.
CRATE.....Push hard to move it, then climb on it to reach the grille.
SUPERGLUE.....Stick grille in place again to avoid leaving signs of entry.
PIECE OF WIRE..Will pick a lock.
PIECE OF PAPER.Examine in ventilation ducts to see which way the wind blows.
FORCER.....Use it to unscrew grille into luxury cabin and replace grille after entry.
OVERALLS.....Wear them to hide your uniform.
BOX.....Empty it and put it on your head, then fill it with oxygen to serve as bubble helmet.
WRENCH.....Hit the medic with it to knock him out.
KEY.....Opens locker in operating theatre.
DICTAPHONE....Record pirates voice as he speaks into microphone.
RED CYLINDER...Contains anaesthetic gas, insert it into hole in pipe.
GREEN CYLINDER.Contains oxygen, fill box then turn off valve, you will need oxygen later.
NOTEBOOK.....Read it for computer commands.
SECURITY PASS..Opens security doors.
CLIPBOARD.....Notepad attached to it with further computer commands.
COMPUTER.....Enter commands to shut down power.

OBJECTS YOU NEED TO TAKE WITH YOU INTO PART THREE:

BUBBLE HELMET, BACKPACK, FLASHLIGHT, GRAPNEL, OXYGEN CYLINDER, CLOTH, TIN OF POLISH, SUPERGLUE.

KINGS AND QUEENS OF THE CASTLE

BARBARA BASSINGTHWAIGHTE, 70 Coronation Avenue, Yeovil, Somerset, BA21 3DZ can offer help on the following (updated list) of adventures played on BBC: ALIEN FROM OUTER SPACE, BLOOD OF THE MUTINEER, CAVEMAN, DENNIS THROUGH THE DRINKING GLASS, DRAGONS TOOTH, FIVE SPHERES OF GULIATH, FRENCH ON THE RUN, GREEDY DWARF, ISLAND OF XAAN, LOST IN XANADU, PERSEUS AND ANDROMEDA, RUHAK THE SWORDSMAN, SORCERER OF CLAYMORGUE CASTLE, STREET PATROLLER, THE HUNT, MYSTERY OF THE LOST SHEEP, WYCHWOOD, XANADU, XANADU COTTAGE.

PLEASE DON'T FORGET TO ENCLOSE A S.A.E. WHEN WRITING FOR HELP!

A-MAZE-ING ESCAPES

By NEIL SHIPMAN played on BBC

THE LAST DAYS OF DOOM (TOPOLOGIKA)

THE MUU BIRDS' SOLID LIVING ENVIRONMENT

GET GUN, FIRE GUN N, N, FIRE GUN E, E, FIRE GUN NE, NE, FIRE GUN NW, NW, FIRE GUN NW, NW, SE, FIRE GUN NE, NE, FIRE GUN E, E, GET PILL, FIRE GUN N, N, N, N through Portal.

THE SANDSTONE CAVERN PROBLEM

From the location where you find the metal shapes: GET TRIANGLE, SQUARE, PENTAGON AND HEXAGON then go W and DROP TRIANGLE. Go N, W, DROP PENTAGON, S, S, W, W, N and DROP SQUARE. Then E, N, N, W, W, DROP HEXAGON, W, S, S, S to find Dog. Call Dog to HEEL and retrace route N, N, N, E, E, E, S, S, W, S, E, E, N, N, E, S, E.

MURDAC (TOPOLOGIKA)

THE BLACK HOLE MAZE

D, S, GET BREAD, DOZELUMNY, N, U, NE, SW, E, S, NW, W, D, SE, GET MYRRH, D, NW, NW, E, E, N, NE, NE, N, D.

LATEST SOLUTIONS RECEIVED

DOCTOR'S DEMISE. DUTCHMAN'S GOLD. EMERALD ISLE. KEY TO TIME. ORIFICE FROM OUTER SPACE. PIRATE ADVENTURE. QUARTERSTAFF. WITCH HUNT (Classic Quests full score).

Solutions cost 30p each to cover costs. If you would like the full list of solutions available from Probe then please send S.A.E.

*** NOTE ***

This issue of Probe has extra pages because of the number of extra advertisements this month. I think you will agree that this is only fair to ensure that readers don't lose out on any of their favourite pages.....Mandy.

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SPELLBREAKER! is Probe's "sister" magazine and they are both produced to compliment each other. SPELLBREAKER! is packed full of maps, solutions, part solutions, hints and tips, coded hints, mazes and all sorts of adventure help. SPELLBREAKER! is produced in the middle of every month and costs just £1.50 per issue.

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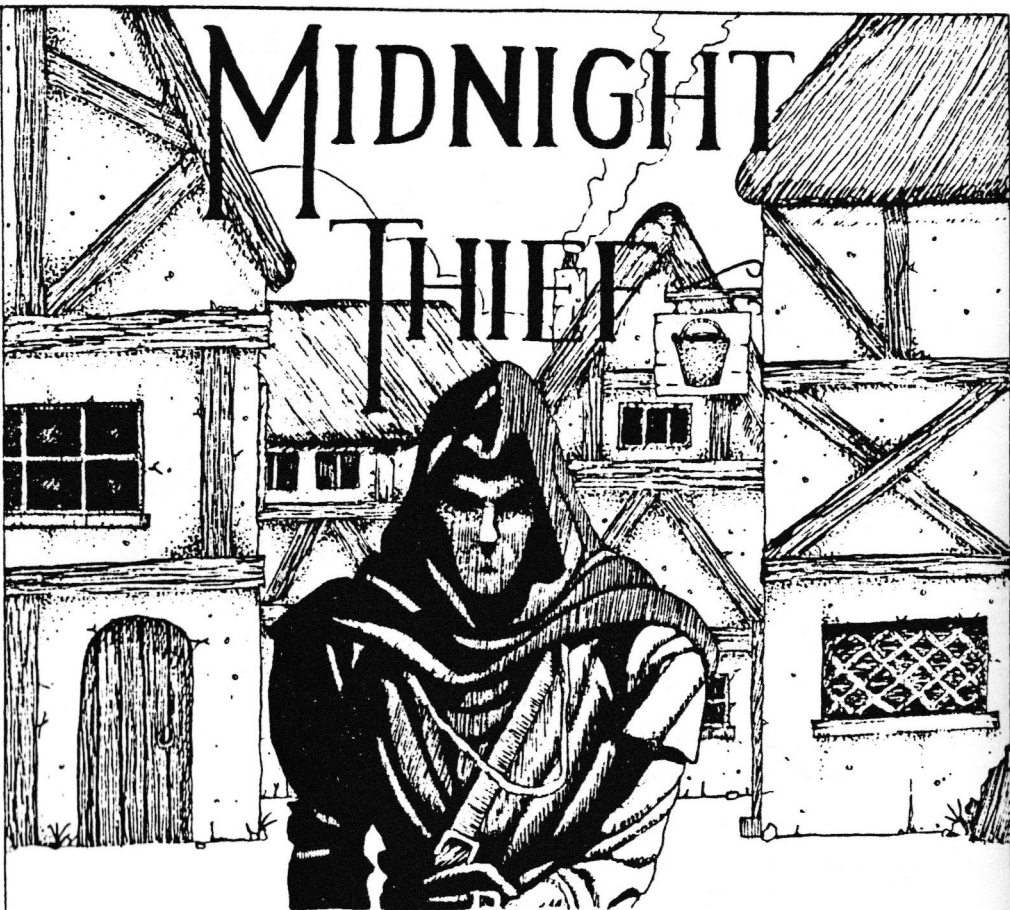
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You, a thief born in a small town on the southern coast of Harlon. Thieving of all kinds are everyday sort of events to you. A professional is what you could call yourself, earning a living by carrying out jobs for people who don't have the ability. The man who approaches you in the 'Iron Bucket' tavern seems normal. He asks you to bring a number of items to an address in Wind Street. What could be wrong with that? What starts out as a simple task quickly turns into a twisting tale of murder, treachery and demonology with you at its centre.

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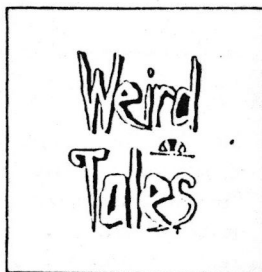
5:58PM Wednesday, September 15th,

1941
Office

A window behind my desk blinked
a neon message for a moment,
then dulled, the office pausing
in darkness only to reappear
like a rabbit pulled out of a
magician's top hat as the neon
blinked again.

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noisily.

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psychic detective, Jules
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stories of Horror, Weir
Mysteries, you'll love We
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Los Angeles - he'll never find out! Though
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he'll be dead!

"... the game has all the atmosphere of an old
private eye movie..." C+VG.

Dead End



(Top) The world
of Marlowe
comes to life in
Dead End.

(Bottom) The
reclaimed
story *Dead End*

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Version 1.1

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Block 2 is before you, a small
slot in the wall beside it.
A Security-Cam floats above you

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Your ID card flashes green
faintly for a moment.

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A Dark Sky Over Paradise



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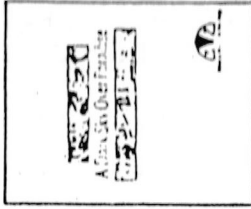
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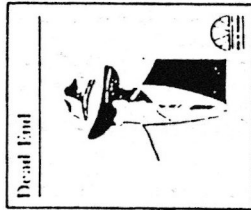
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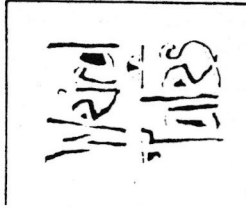
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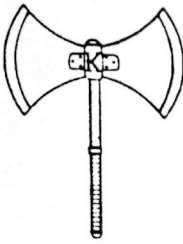
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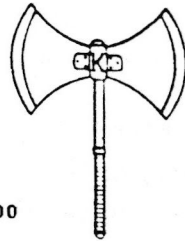
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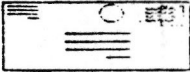
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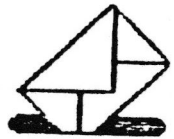
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ADVENTURES



LETTERS

IF I DON'T LET OFF STEAM - I'LL SCREAM



I love adventures, but I do have other hobbies that I enjoy. Anyone remember those plastic model aircraft kits from Airfix? Well I spend a lot of time making these kits to the highest possible standards. I try to duplicate the correct paint scheme, simulate the look and feel of the rubber on the tires of the aircraft, the oil stains around the engine, the complexity of the undercarriage (complete with umpteen wires and cables). In short, I have a fine old time as do many others. Magazines and fanzines are published for the modeler's benefit, readers send in hints and tips, local clubs around the country encourage and inform and so on. However, since the dreaded oil crisis in the mid-seventies, with the rise in the price of plastic, the major manufacturers have found it increasingly difficult to stay afloat. Consequently, we have seen, during the eighties, the enthusiasts themselves take the reigns. Using relatively cheap equipment they produce items made from low quality plastic, brass resin, etc. Now all you have to do is turn to the advertisements in these magazines and you will see Joe Bloggs selling this accessory, that conversion kit, this decal (or transfer) or that complete kit. Most of these products are produced from a person's own home, with their own money, in their own spare time. No-one is silly enough to believe that they will become rich out of what they do - although one or two have struck it lucky. No-one moans they are not making enough dosh to cover their costs. No-one jacks in their project because they are not receiving the accolades they think they deserve. The principle reason these enthusiasts do what they do is because of their love for the hobby. They want to share and display their skills, to bask in a bit of admiration, meet new people, they want to - enjoy themselves!

If you still don't know what all of this is leading up to then take a look at the letters page in the September issue (Vol IV Issue 9) of Probe. I must admit that I had to turn to the front cover to make sure I was reading the right mag. Yes, it was pink in colour but - no - I couldn't find the words FINANCIAL TIMES anywhere. But hang on, what's all this rubbish I'm reading?

"...following appalling recent sales", writes Simon Maren, "I feel it would be a complete waste of money." Hmm? Does Simon refer to his ventures in the Property business or the Stock Exchange? No, he is referring to something else. "...sales of REMIX have been absolutely nothing short of an insult." It is his adventure that Simon is referring to, but what does he mean by "insult"? "...if no-one gives a toss then why should I bother?"

Of course we "give a toss" Simon, but then maybe you're not talking about displaying appreciation or admiration. Simon then goes on to say "...there is no longer any pleasure to be derived from writing the games." What in tarnation is Simon on about? I'll tell you, dear reader, MONEY. The bane of the sane man, money. Our Simon has Pound signs swimming before his eyes, it seems. His "insult" exclamation means he didn't make enough money for his liking from the sales of his adventures. He feels it would be a complete "waste of money" to carry on because he wouldn't make enough return. Oh dear, this IS beginning to sound like the Financial Times isn't it? But why does Simon's letter make me want to reach for the sick-bag? Because he equates "pleasure" (his own word), not with the enjoyment he derives from simply producing an adventure, or the satisfaction he derives from learning how to implement a piece of code, not from the pride he derives from the admiration of his peers. No! Pleasure in this case means one thing - money! Aaarrggghh!!

But leaving Simon's letter for a tick we move on to another letter in that enlightening and formative letters page. Enter, stage left, Ian

Brown. What a fine fellow he is too. Ian says, "During the past two months I have sold 9 copies of my game (Bog of Brit) to Probe readers". Really Ian? How nice. You've created your own adventure, which I'm sure you enjoyed doing just for the pleasure of the act itself. But look! You've capped that pleasure with a handy bonus of nine sales. Useful pocket money, buy a couple of pints, can't be bad. But hang on, what's this Ian says about readers reactions to the reviews of his games? "... but what do we do if the response borders on the pathetic? Do we say never mind and devote more time, effort and money or do we call it a day?" Well, Ian, that's up to you, after all, didn't you write the adventures because you enjoyed it? You didn't do it with the aim of making money did you? No, surely not.

But who's this penning the very next letter? Why, tis young Grue, with his pal, Jim MacBrayne. Jim is the author of a couple of excellent PD Amiga adventures. Little gems, they are. It appears that 17 Bit Software agree, for they have proposed to distribute Jim's third game. Well! A lucky break if ever I saw one. Here is an occasion when a hobby can earn a few pennies more than was first expected. 17 Bit want to add graphics and sound to Jim's latest creation, The Mission. Fine, if they don't tamper with the game itself - which, as long as Jim retains his intellectual property rights, will never happen. Maybe they could put the graphics and sound on another disk? 17 Bit say that the game would be a risky product as a text-only adventure. True, it is risky. Graphics are not necessarily the answer to the "risk" but 17 Bit are basically correct. However, as long as Jim has a say in the game's production and makes sure the heart of the game stays intact then it sounds like a good deal. Hell, it may even appeal to a wider audience, bring in more income for 17 Bit and Jim and encourage an upward spiral that leads to who knows what?

Why then, is the Grue moaning his socks off? What's Mandy doing lending vocal support? Mandy, you say you don't need graphics? Fine, turn them off. Don't need sound? Turn it off. However, many people love graphics, many others love atmospheric sound. We're talking about the Amiga in this case aren't we? So the "high pitched, tinny squeek" effects you mentioned don't really figure in this argument. Both of these additions are one of the principle reasons Dungeon Master was so popular (a game I believe, you yourself Mandy, enjoyed very much). If 17 Bit are good enough to lend a helping hand and are brave enough to have anything to do with text/graphic adventures, never mind offer to put time, money and effort into graphic/sound production, then surely we should welcome them with open arms!

So what's the punch line to this irate retort? Well folks, I believe we have lost our way. We have lost sight of what this hobby is all about - and it is, to most of us, a HOBBY. Ian Brown? You are not Level 9. Simon Maren? You are not Infocom. Jim and Grue? Can't you see, if you don't work with 17 Bit you'll be left standing, all alone, disk in one hand, morals in the other. I repeat, this is a hobby. No individual should be so naive as to write adventures with the aim of making money, any money, unless they have taken the serious step of creating their own software company, with the aid of good financial backing produced by a well designed business plan derived from detailed and thorough marketing. No individual should moan when sales don't cover costs. For God's sake all hobbies "cost". Take fishing. You spend a bomb on equipment, travel fares, licenses etc and never see a penny of it again! It's all done for enjoyment. You never see fishermen cry out, "Bloody hell! Spent out 400 quid on a new fishing rod so how come I didn't catch 35 prime Salmon to cover my costs? Right I'm jacking it in!"

For crying out loud Ian and Simon, who the hell do you think you are? Face reality and realise that you do not have a God given right to

sell anything to anyone. Worst of all, and this really annoys me, you have the bare-faced cheek to complain that Probe readers are not buying your games! As if Probe readers are under contract to buy the things! I dunno, maybe I should go back to my world of plastic model making and stay there. At least people there have got their PRIORITIES right.

Support? I'll give adventure authors support, sure. But know this, adventure authors should NOT need a constant flow of money to help them produce adventures. Money is a bonus, no more. Adventure authors shouldn't NEED to depend on this income, unless you have sunk thousands into a highly complicated and advanced programming system as Magnetic Scrolls have done recently. Any adventure author who is considering packing in adventure writing just because he/she's not making the readies should go now - and good riddance!

PAUL RIGBY, Tuebrook, Liverpool.

=====

A FRUSTRATED READER

Reading the Letter Section in the last Probe upset me. Having been corresponding with Jim MacBrayne a bit it is very frustrating to read the Grue-report about 1/ Bit Software telling Jim, and the rest of us, what an adventure should actually look like! One can only say that if they'd tried playing a Sierra-on-Line adventure they can't be serious saying that they want to make graphical adventures too? Music and sound effects do not fit in adventures. Even if you do buy Christmas cards with sound-chips playing the same tune over and over again, you don't buy books with built-in sound-chips! And as I see adventures to be a new literary medium you don't spoil that with graphics, painted inventories and sampled doors creaking! If you cannot imagine the scene yourself while playing then stick to "Batman"! A shame that I do not have the address of that firm as there are quite a lot of us over here and would like to tell them what a good adventure should be like. I just hope that Jim will not give in to their pressure and start dancing to their tune. If it wasn't bad enough to see how they are dancing to ACE's tune already! Nice to see a company that's already afraid of the magazines comments. It seems to me that 1/ Bit do not know that it's extravagant to blaze a trail and go ones own way! I certainly hope that they'll find themselves smothered under all those pictures and sound effects. I also hope they are not waiting for a helping hand from the Scandinavian adventure scene. We've enough to do handling our business to Jim!

CLAUS NYGAARD, Editor: Adventure Posten Magazine, Maribo, Denmark.

=====

WE ALL HAVE OUR PROBLEMS

A long overdue thank you for the advice on PILGRIM. I haven't used the tips yet but they are stored away for future reference. Pilgrim isn't relegated to a dusty shelf to be forgotten, just set aside until I get myself sorted out! I play too many games at one time and I'm up to the knees in saved positions! One game I have confined to a dusty shelf is BLOODNYCH or should that be BUGWYCH? What a load of old twaddle it is! I threw it to the cat but he didn't want it either. Using the icon system in that game is like using two pans, three bowls and a cutlery set to fry an egg!

If young Master Jay Honosutomo would care to drop me a line, I can offer a fair amount of help on BARDS TALE, certainly enough to get started.

The letter regarding text/graphics in adventures seems to inflame the passions somewhat. Like you, I need no help with my imagination, but a thought did cross my mind. I played LORDS OF TIME on the C64, is it any less of a game on the Amiga because of a few pictures? Just a

thought Mandy, I don't want to start world war three!
A final thought. The letter from Simon Maren confused me a little. I may be terribly wrong, but I get the distinct impression that he is blaming the entire readership of Probe for his lack of success in selling games. People will only buy what they want, and I speak from bitter experience! If he is looking for reasons for failure, I suggest he looks elsewhere. (inward perhaps?) and leave the readership alone to sort out our own little problems, we all have them!

JOE MOOKE, Amble, Morpeth.

=====

IT'S HARD TO STAY LOYAL

The reason I've been moved to write a letter is your plea of support for the home-produced games writers. I have enjoyed a lot of those purchased; most are well-written and have all the requirements looked for in an adventure. But some are not my kind of game, i.e. Science Fiction and therefore I don't wish to purchase them. Some have titles that simply do not appeal. "Bog of Brit" springing immediately to mind (sorry!), though probably on playing it, I would enjoy it. The most irritating aspect of Spectrum owning at the moment is the total lack of games being produced by software houses. When was the last time a game other than home-produced was reviewed in YS, SU or Crash? It must be years. I feel that home-grown games are keeping the Spectrum adventure scene on its feet only for as long as lovely people care to produce them, but unless something radical occurs, the games will not advance in any way, only supply a need. If people cease writing, I feel we'll have to throw our Speccys away through lack of support. Sad, but true, to be so dictated to. The Spectrum is still capable of much more than it's given credit for, but until - if ever - someone has the breadth of vision and know-how to do so, we've got a dinosaur here.

I know nothing about programming but feel that with bigger k's, programmers are happier doing it on a bigger machine (good title for a car window sticker!) without the added worry of not being able to fit it all in. Therefore most Atari/Amiga games are not bigger, they just have more graphics.

It's hard to stay loyal (which I have been a little) to home producers when outside forces dictate and offer what you really want. To read about Infocom games and others in Probe and be unable to play them is the most frustratingly unscratchable itch in adventuring. Even to have a choice of commercial or home-grown (they will come!) is bliss. So it is for these reasons that I have upgraded to an Amiga and once again recaptured the excitement of reading reviews of games which you really can't wait to play! I hope I haven't offended anyone with my remarks, no malice intended.

ANNE BORLAND, Canvey Island, Essex.

=====

PUTTING A FEW POINTS STRAIGHT

Zenobi Software have sent me a copy of their letter to Ian Brown, for publication, following the letters in the last issue.

Dear Ian,

I have just read your letter in issue 9 of Probe and felt that I had to contact you in order to put a few points straight.

ZENUBI has been trading for a number of years now, nearly FOUR as a full-time organisation and a couple prior to that as a "part-time" hobbyist. During this time it has grieved me to see the way the "adventure market" has become neglected by critics and buyers alike and you are not alone in your feelings with regard to your "Why only four sales from a review in Y.S.?" It may be no consolation to you but reviews have never brought in sales for me either. The only way seems to be to offer the customers "something for nothing" and if you care

to glance at any Zenobi advert you will see that there is ALWAYS a "special offer" listed. It is this, coupled with good service that has enabled Zenobi to survive and not the "excessive" reviews featured in Probe - honestly. The vast majority of our sales are from "established" customers, people with whom we have dealt with for a fair period of time - in some cases as many as six or seven years. Fair enough the adverts (not the reviews) in Probe do bring a couple of dozen sales each month but weekly sales of Zenobi games number in the hundreds so where do all the rest come from? In the initial years I used countless "mail-shots" to generate interest in the games I was producing, some of which were in the region of 500-750 outgoing letters at a time. This I did at least four times a year or whenever a new game was released. It was through this medium that a solid customer base was established, one that has served us well over the years and one that we hope will serve us in the years to come. Mike Gerrard might not quite agree but the "special offer coupon" in YS came from an original idea of mine, but even that is not enough if you only have ONE game to offer. My policy has always been to be able to offer a second game to a satisfied customer - that way you keep their interest and more importantly their trade. There is nothing more off-putting to a customer who writes to say "Really enjoyed your game, what others do you have for sale?" than for them to be told "Sorry but that is the only one I have". They are on the look-out for another game to play and you cannot provide one, so naturally they take their trade elsewhere and they do NOT always return to you. Therefore you have to ensure that you have more "product" to offer them in order to retain their business. Our way round this has been to bring "outsiders" games into our catalogue. It is a far quicker way than trying to write a new game.

Another reason for the addition of games written by other authors was because I personally felt unhappy at the way everybody was talking about the "death" of the adventure and I thought that if I could bring the attention of the games-playing public to the work of more authors, then perhaps this would stimulate the market in some way. With this in mind I decided to spend 1980 in this pursuit and devote my time to promoting the work of other authors rather than to write any other games of my own. This I have done and so far this year have paid out nearly £3,000 in either royalty payments or advance payments for the various publishing rights and not all of it has been recovered yet as most games tend to sell in the region of a couple of hundred copies before levelling out and settling down to sell one or two copies a week. It is the "sum" of these one or two copies of more than THIRTY games that Zenobi can now offer the general public, that produces the weekly sales of hundreds - NOT any one game!

I was a shade annoyed at the use of the term ZENOBI GAME as there is no such thing as a ZENOBI GAME. There is a ZENOBI LABEL and on it we feature dozens of different "styles" of game, all written by other authors - some of them who have been writing adventures for a great deal longer than I have and have earned a considerable amount of respect from the adventure-players of this world. It was with this in mind that I first put together the compilation tape known as "MIKE GERRARDS BEST OF THE INDIES" in the hope that offering so many good games at such a low price would entice some hitherto non-adventurers into the fold. It has been a relatively successful project and one that I hope to repeat in the very near future, if only to stimulate a bit more interest in the adventure-game we all love so dearly. Despite how it may seem, I am not in this just to gain control of the "adventure-market" but to provide the adventurers of this world with an ample supply of the product they require and considering just how large a range of games there is now available on the Zenobi Label I

think I have succeeded in doing just that. My resources are limited and I can only offer so many authors so much for their games and if I have overlooked you and yours then I apologise. However, rather than see some quality games end their days lying abandoned in some dark corner of a cupboard I am willing to make you the following offer... (Details of the offer are withheld by request...Mandy) ... perhaps this will allow your games to reach a greater percentage of the public and thus enlighten them to your talents as an "adventure-writer".

By the way, Y.S. and quite a few other magazines were reviewing Zenobi games back in 1986 and 1987 - long before Zenobi started advertising in Probe or receiving reviews in said magazine. Perhaps the 55% share of the available reviewing space in Probe was down to the fact that Zenobi was responsible for the vast majority of the independent adventure games released so far in 1990 - especially when you consider that the reviews are normally sent in by people who have bought, played and enjoyed the game they prepare the review on. I hope this letter clears up a few of your points raised and I will look forward to hearing from you concerning the possible inclusion of your games in the Zenobi catalogue.

JOHN WILSON, Zenobi Software, Cutgate, Rochdale.

=====

WHAT EXACTLY IS AN INTERACTIVE CHARACTER

Probe gets more interesting every month. Alan Davis's article about character interaction certainly made me think! I've always been firmly on the side which says "I want just me playing - I don't want other characters wandering around making a nuisance of themselves" but when he makes a troll into a character by the addition of seemingly sensible responses, rather than just "You can't" it alters the picture a bit. The question is, though, if the programmer makes the troll act in a realistic manner, does this really make the troll a character? I don't think so - Alan says, the puzzle is still there, and once it is solved, the troll no longer exists, or if it does, it no longer matters. So, although it would add to the pleasure of playing a game if the troll DID growl or pace around or snarl, in between inputs, it would still be just me trying to solve a puzzle, which leaves me still on the same side.

Which brings me to another question - what IS an interactive character, exactly? Is the woman who gives you a warm cloak if you mend her leaky roof an interactive character? Is the snake which ignores you after you play a tune to it an interactive character? Is the vicar who unlocks a door for you after you have found his bible an interactive character?

I've never played an adventure yet which didn't have something like that in it, but I didn't regard them as interactive characters. I'd be very interested to read Alan's views on this!

As a lover of the English language and someone who browses through a dictionary like some people read novels, I had to admire Wabewalker's poem. To find all those words beginning with the same letter, and tell a story at the same time, was a work of art, in my view.

The Grue's letter, with the copy of the letter from 17 Bit Software, made me wonder what that firm uses for brains! What makes these people think they know what adventurer's want, when they don't even ask them? In every questionnaire I have ever seen, text adventures are the favourites. Some graphics are tolerable, although unnecessary, but when it comes to noises and music, in my book these are definitely OUT!! Usually, any adventure with noises in it gets very rapidly delegated to a shelf where it stays. I have only ever played one game where the noises did actually fit, but even that could have been just as good without them. I wonder if 17 Bit Software would take heed, if lots of Probe readers wrote to them and told them that graphics and

noises are NOT requirements for a good adventure? I'm going to write to them, anyway! One last word on this - if Jim MacBrayne does publish THE MISSION himself, I hereby promise to buy it!

JUNE ROWE, Launceston, Cornwall.

=====

PRAY SILENCE FOR YOUR CONVENTION ORGANISOR (muted applause...)

I think that everyone who attended the Adventure Probe Convention in Birmingham on the 15th of September will agree that we all had a really fantastic time. When I first thought about volunteering to organise the Convention, I had the "what am I letting myself in for" feeling. However, it has given me immense pleasure to see what a great success it was and I'm really glad that I took the plunge. I said, at the start of my somewhat short speech after the awards, "...unaccustomed as I am to public speaking...". Well, this was an understatement of the first kind! I knew exactly what I wanted to say, and beforehand was not in the least nervous, but once I stood in front of that microphone, my mind went a total blank!! (I know EXACTLY how you felt Larry!...Mandy) Because of this, I didn't thank everyone I had meant to, so I thought I would set this right via the pages of Probe.

I must, first of all, thank Vicky Jackson for all her help in organising the Convention, greeting people as they arrived, and making sure they were issued with name badges, etc. Without her efforts I am sure things wouldn't have run as smoothly as they did. Everyone was most impressed by the name badges, and I thank The Wayfarer (Nic Rumsey) for his help in printing them. I actually made them up - I was pleased "Tartan Tam" liked his coz it took me two days visiting EVERY cardshop around where I work in the City of London to find the cartoon of the Scotsman!! - but I can hardly thank myself - can I??!!

Thanks also to Allan Phillips for doing such an excellent job as Master of Ceremonies during the Awards Ceremony, and to THE GRUE! for giving us all such a big laugh during his "Frob of the Year" award. Crazy Kez Gray is next on the list for her excellent and very funny cartoons, which must have taken her ages to draw, and thanks to all the people who took the trouble to bring along computers, including Ann Potter and Phil Powell who provided theirs for my Megapoints Competition (more about that later). I'd also like to thank Bob "Amster" Adams - Convention "Roadie" Extraordinaire - for running me (and Debby Howard) up to Birmingham. Bob lives in Welwyn Garden City and had an hour's journey to pick us up! Thanks again, Bob!

Penultimately, thanks to all those who attended, especially the Scottish Clan (i.e. Tom Frost, Lorna and Danny Paterson, Isla Donaldson, and Mike and John Brailsford) and the two Cornish Pixies (June Rowe and Angie Cobbold - well, sort of, coz Angie is really a refugee from just down the road from me in SE London!) for travelling the vast distances involved in order to attend the Convention. Everyone got on so well and it is much nicer that we are now not "a voice on the other end of the phone".

Finally, the biggest thanks of all go to those two lovely ladies, Sandra Sharkey and Mandy Rodrigues. As Tom Frost said when presenting them with their Special Awards, if it wasn't for Sandra starting Probe ("my baby", as she so fondly called it) in the first place, and Mandy's hard work (aided and abetted by husband John) over the last couple of years, the Convention would never have happened at all!

I must apologise to all those who took part in my "Megapoints" competition, because I forgot to announce the winner over the P.A. The winner of the £25 first prize was Jack Higham, with the incredible score of 105. I thought Jack was going to set fire to the keyboard, the speed he was typing away at it! In second place, with a score of 102, was Sue Roseblade - she wins a copy of "Computer Adventures - The

Secret Art" by Gill Williamson - and in third place was Angle Cobbold, with 101. She wins a copy of "Run Bronwynn, Run!" (when it is eventually released, of course). As a matter of interest, the average score among the 25 entrants was around 50 points. Mandy and Sandra even had a go, actually playing at the same time - I've a photo to prove it! I won't tell you what they scored, except to say it was above average in both cases! I also won't tell you what Paul Rigby's final score was - except to say that just before the bell sounded at the end of 20 minutes, he got killed (or rather captured by the guards) - and guess who hadn't used the RAMSAVE at all....? Anyway, I think it goes without saying that we are now all looking forward to the 1991 Adventure Probe Convention!! This will be planned a lot earlier than the rush job of this year, and I think will be held in October to keep it clear of the holiday period - quite a few people were unable to attend because of their holidays. Thanks once again to EVERYONE for making the 1990 Convention such a success, and I look forward to seeing you all again in 1991.

LARRY HORSFIELD, Charlton, London.

(I too would like to add my thanks to yours, Larry, and to thank you on behalf of everyone for everything you did to ensure the Convention was such a success. You forgot to mention Larry, that twelve of us had the pleasure of eating Poppadoms with Bob Adams (lovely fellow!) that evening - pity Pete Gerrard wasn't there to see that great moment. If Pete comes to the next convention we'll buy him some. I'll also dare him to take a spoonful of that "hot Indian pickled-stuff" that I dared you to try - poor Larry, you didn't deserve that but what a good sport you are!..... Mandy)

A DAY TO REMEMBER

I just want to say what a great day it was on Saturday 15th September and how much I enjoyed meeting you and John and all those that I have spoken to on the phone but never met, it was nice being able to put faces to names. As it was the first Probe Conention I thought it was a great success and I do hope there will be another one next year and even bigger, once those who did not attend hear how great this one was. It was certainly a day to remember.

VICKY JACKSON, Yarn, Cleveland.

PUT ME DOWN FOR A TICKET FOR NEXT YEAR PLEASE!

I expect you'll be getting a lot of letters in similar vein - but I just had to write and say how much I enjoyed the Convention. It was marvellous to be able to put faces to names and voices and, indeed, to meet many other fellow adventurers whom I hadn't previously been in touch with. And, to cap it all, a promotion from Frob of the Month to The Frob of the Year! I still keep laughing every time it springs to mind. First pigeons, then wax heads - what next I wonder? Anyway, congratulations to absolutely everyone who had anything at all to do with making it such a great day. I knew it was going to be good - and I'm pleased to say that it certainly lived up to my expectations. I, for one, reckon that the Probe Convention has got to become a regular occurence. Put me down for a ticket for next year! It was great to meet you at last.

NEIL SHIPMAN, Coalpit Heath, Bristol.

ROUND THE TABLE CHAT

I thought the Convention went off very well. Everyone seemed so relaxed and mixed together very well. I bet it is a long time since FOUR BBC owners had a round-the-table chat. Now that we know each other even better, I can't wait for the next one. I don't know if it is intended to be an annual get-together, but I think 6 months is long

enough between meetings!

BARBARA GIBB, Burford Road, Liverpool.

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THE WAYFARER

Would like to thank his friends.. The Grue!, and Bob "The Amster" Adams... for the stone boot (now filled with a pot plant) which is residing on his stairs. On the occasional dark and early morning when he stubs his toe on it (and hops down the stairs clutching an outsized throbbing toe, howling curses and profane language) he would like to assure them that they will be never far from his thoughts!!

To the more sane Probe conventioners - See you next year, folks!

=====

THREE CHEERS TO THE ORGANISERS

This is just a short letter to say how much I enjoyed the first Probe Convention. It was great to be able to put faces to names. Strangely enough, of all the people I saw only Bob Adams looked anything like I thought he would! As for the Grue!... is he really bald under that hat? Does anyone really want to find out?

Everyone I talked to was very friendly and it was interesting to play some games which I haven't got. After playing Infocom's Wishbringer on Vicky Jackson's PCW (and falling off the cliff) I've decided to buy the game for the Amiga. I think I gave Vicky rather a fright, after loading up Guild of Thieves I managed to get the program to crash! (*In my experience, that isn't the most difficult thing to do - Ed*) The look on Vicky's face when I told her! "It's never done that to me!" was her reply. I was rather relieved when it worked after the reload! After all that I didn't really like the game...

A quick thank you to the gentleman, whose name I didn't catch, who helped me in the Quest for The Name Tag when I first arrived. (*I think that was hubby John, he can be quite useful for things like that - Ed*) Another thank you is owed to an Amstrad owner who let me loose on Lurking Horror and guided me through the start. (No, the game didn't crash!) I have forgotten his name (typical of me!) but next time I find an Atomic Canine (I can't spell the breed, but it lives in Hollywood Hi-Jinx!) I'll know what to do (stamp, swat, stamp...!) Congratulations to all the award winners, and three cheers to everyone who organised the event. When's the next one?

PS. I thought the little dragon figure that Mandy received was dead cute.

JOHN FERRIS, Coventry.

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THERE IS A SPECTRUM CLUB IN GERMANY!

Thank you very much for my first two issues of Probe. I enjoyed them very much. Subscribing to Probe seems to have been the best I could do because your mag gets more interesting from month to month (and this is Summer - I can't wait to read the Winter issues when people REALLY are occupied with adventures during the long dark evenings. Okay, enough compliments, it's problem time again. There is an adventure for the Spectrum 128 called Myth (rainbird) that is exclusively sold by Official Secrets on disc. Does anybody know if this was ever available on tape for the Spectrum 128 and how to get hands on it? Can anybody tell me how, and if, I can upgrade to the newest version of The Professional Adventure Writing System on tape. I have got a version called A04. I have also had a problem with an English adventure software company in Birmingham. I sent them a cheque for a copy of The Hermitage in January and despite writing three letters to them have had no reply. Perhaps "Big Momma" can help?

It would be nice if you could inform Peter Bergmann and all the other German readers that there is somebody who cares about the Speccy in Germany, in fact it is a club - the Spectrum Profi Club, Wolfgang

Haller, Ernastrasse 33, 5000 Koln 80.

Finally, I would like to say a big, cheerful THANK YOU to all those nice people who wrote to me despite the fact that I live in Germany.

LINUS STAEFFLER, Postenweg 24, 3452 Kirchbrak, W.Germany.

=====

A MESSAGE FROM BEYOND

I just thought I'd drop you a line to say thanks for the encouraging remarks you made to me about setting up and publishing my fanzine "FROM BEYOND"... they were much appreciated, as was your kind offer to send out my order forms to your subscribers. Hopefully some of your readers will want to have a look at what "FROM BEYOND" has to offer, and I couldn't agree with you more when you said that the more adventure fanzines there are on the market the merrier things will be! I look forward to developing a useful dialogue with you over the coming years... All the best.

TIM KEMP, Editor of "From Beyond".

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MIXED FEELINGS FROM TARTAN

Once again Probe has been read from cover to cover, but this September issue has left me with some mixed feelings after reading the letters section. I was saddened to read of Ian Brown's decision to "retire" after his surprising lack of sales. I feel particularly bad about this as I had advised him to "go it alone" when I had told him that the chances of ANY software house taking up an adventure these days are virtually nil. Except for Zenobi, Ian... how about offering them to John "Balrog" Wilson, then your games can also be known as ZENOBI GAMES. The subsequent royalties may coax you out of retirement.

The feelings generated by Jim Struthers letter were different but no less strong! Basically Jim's letter calls for adventurers to support the small independent Software houses by buying their products. Fine, even laudable. But how about putting your money where your mouth is, Jim? Some time ago, you (and several others) asked me if Tartan's adventures could be issued on the Amstrad as well as the Spectrum. I considered buying an Amstrad for that very purpose but rejected the idea as I do this Tartan thingie for fun and I was possibly too long in the tooth and set in my ways to properly learn how to program another computer. Then I heard that Jim had taken possession of a Spectrum. I awaited his order(s) with some anticipation. The first one was the coupon from Your Sinclair for the free copy of PRINCE OF TYNDAL (plus part one of JEKYLL AND HYDE from Zenobi). Silence. Perhaps he did not enjoy TYNDAL and had decided that Tartan's adventures were not for him. Fine, except that I happen to know that Jim bought most of Tartan's adventures second hand! I can have no real quibble about that as once a cassette is bought, then the purchaser is quite at liberty to re-sell it. However, I would not really consider that such an action is "supporting the efforts of the small software houses. Think on Jim, I believe that the only current Tartan adventure of which you do not have a copy is THE GORDELLO INCIDENT. It costs only £3.99 for a three part adventure that actually consists of four parts plus a bonus adventure in the "golden oldie" category! The publication of the GORDELLO follow-up, GORDELLO'S DEMISE, is also imminent. Go on Jim, treat yourself to a brand new adventure and as an extra incentive I can tell you that EVERY copy of GORDELLO INCIDENT is "personalised" by having the name of the purchaser (dare I say ORIGINAL purchaser?) on the loading screen of part 1.

TOM FROST, TARTAN SOFTWARE, Angus, Scotland.

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(My apologies if your letter hasn't be published in this issue of Probe, space was a little short this issue so it will be in the next issue.....Mandy)



HELP WANTED



"Please can somebody offer your silly editor some help? I fell down a pit or two in CHAOS STRIKES BACK (and now don't have the faintest idea where I am!) and find myself standing between two hidden traps in the floor, there are three or four doors nearby leading into rooms with pressure pads on the floor. There is a button on the wall exactly over the other side of the trap in front of me so anything I throw at it vanishes through the floor. I am surrounded by a hoard of hissing mummies and am slowly going insane! I can't find my way back as the stairs just lead me into another enclosed area so presume that to progress I must hit that silly button! Help! I would also give my right arm for a map of this game!"

Mandy

"Please could somebody help me? I am playing PHANTASIE I and have now found that my data disc is faulty and as a result I cannot complete the game. Would somebody be willing to supply a good data disc? Also can anyone tell me how to close the pits in the Demon Director level of the game CHAOS STRIKES BACK?"

FREDERICK DARLINGTON, 33 Winckley Rd, Broadgate, Preston, Lancs.

"I am having some problems with PENDANT OF LOGRYN. I am trying to map it. Up to now I've covered five sheets of A4 and they are currently held together with sticky tape. I still haven't mapped it completely. It is becoming an obsession. Each time I reach a new location and realise I haven't got the right objects with me I could scream. How do I tackle the Orc? How do I get information from the woman at the house? Please can somebody help me?"

SHEILA SIMPSON, 26 Sir William Turner Ct, Kirkleatham, Redcar, Cleveland, TS10 4QU.

Here is a plea from the heart of a desperate Amiga owner! "Instead of copying KINGS QUEST I to my backup disk, I reversed the process and have completely obliterated the original! Would a very kind soul, nay, an angel, who has this game be willing to copy it back on to my original disk? I am willing to give King's Quest II, I'm that desperate!"

ANNE BORLAND, 2 Daarle Ave, Canvey Island, Essex, SS8 9EN



AMSTRAD ARCADE GAMES FOR SALE: Prices from 75p each including postage and packing. Lots of old and new games, all originals. For details phone C.BURY on (0432) 274169.

AMIGA ADVENTURES WANTED: JEWELS OF DARKNESS, KNIGHT ORC, SILICON DREAMS, please write with price required to: RICHARD JONES, Maes y Garreg, Conwy Old Road, Penmaenmawr, Gwynedd.

AMIGA SOFTWARE FOR SALE: All originals with full documentation: SPACE QUEST I, SPACE QUEST II, BALLYHOO, UNINVITED at £8 each. ZORK ZERO, OOZE, HOUND OF SHADOW at £10 each. Total price £62. Will sell the lot for £58. Arcade games: NEBULUS, ROGER RABBIT, RVF HONDA, BATTLE SQUADRON, STAR RAY at £5 each. Total price £25 but will sell the lot for £20. STEVE McLAREN, 6 Mere Gate, Margate, Kent, CT9 5TR.

AMIGA ADVENTURES WANTED TO BUY OR SWAP: Please sent list and prices to HARRY DAVIES, 93 Church Rd, Urmston, Manchester, M31 1FJ (061 748 3784).

SPECTRUM ADVENTURES WANTED: GNOME RANGER (Level 9), LORDS OF TIME (Level 9), DOMES OF SHA (River), also anything by EIGHTH DAY SOFTWARE apart from Harvesting Moon and Weaver of her Dreams. Please write with price required to: SHEILA SIMPSON, 26 Sir William Turner Court, Kirkleatham, Redcar, Cleveland, TS10 4QU.

SPECTRUM PLUS 2 SOFTWARE WANTED: SKELVULLYN TWINE on cassette (Spectrum 128/+2A) desperately wanted. Please write with price required to NEIL PARR, 22 Carlton Close, Woodley, Reading, Berks, RG5 4JS.

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INFOCOM SWOP 'N' BUY

These adventures are accepted on the understanding they are ORIGINAL and with all packaging, and advertised for ONE month only. No responsibility can be accepted by either Probe or Nic Rumsey for any which are either copies or damaged. It is up to the individual to check that the swop will run on their machine (please note that the majority of Infocoms will run on either 6128 or PCW, but a few early ones are machine dedicated).

This month: STEVE BIRTLES, 29 Grosvenor St, Prestwich, Manchester, M25 5ES (061 798) 7279 is looking for any PCW Infocoms except Hitchhikers Guide, Leather Goddesses, Wishbringer, Stationfall and Ballyhoo. Particularly wants DEADLINE, STARCROSS, SUSPENDED, ZORK III, LURKING HURROR, MOONMIST. (has C64 versions of these to swop - wants PCW equivs. NB Lists are sent on SAE basis only as this service is free.

HINTS AND TIPS

THE MISER

By DENNIS DOWDALL played on Spectrum

To find the sheet of music, exam the floor where you used to live.

To get the fiddle, exam the paper and remember Sir Roger.

To get the book, exam the blackboard and remember 1826.

To get in the builders yard, throw the bone over the gate.

CASTLE THADE REVISITED

By DENNIS DOWDALL played on Spectrum

Sit on the throne to open up an opening in the floor, then tie the rope to the anchor and lower anchor in the opening to get a crown.

THE PENDANT OF LOGRYN

By DENNIS DOWDALL played on Spectrum

Free the imp from the chest and he will get the arrow for you.

Cut the rope at each end of the bridge.

To get some money, search the stream in the mountains to find a sapphire, then sell it.

Answer to the first set of riddles:

ALCHEMIST, LOGRYN, KING, ORC. Say the first letters, "ALKO"

Second riddle:

BEGGAR, IMP, DRAGON, URGE. Say the first letters, "BIDO"

Search the orc once he is dead to find the skull.

Wear the glasses to read the words on the blue vial.

ONCE UPON A LILY PAD

By JUNE ROWE played on Spectrum

How to get a spine from Harry?

He won't approve while he's awake!

This is a question to make you tarry -

The hog must sleep before you take.

Bring the cup from the bunny bar -

There's just a drop left in...AHA!

Follow Harry 'til he's dry,

Then drop the cup in the water nearby.

The hedgehog quickly falls asleep -

You'll get the spine without a peep!



STOWAWAY

By DOROTHY MILLARD played on Commodore 64

Get the mouse in the bird cage.

Clear the debris with the axe.

NINJA

By DOROTHY MILLARD played on Commodore 64

Do not attack the Samurai, pay gold instead.

Climb vines to get over the wall.

Feed the frog with the flies.

Crush the flower with the stones then insert powder into the bamboo.

Blow the bamboo to drub the gray ninja.

LUCIFER'S REALM

By DOROTHY MILLARD played on Commodore 64

At the pit you must jump it to widen the crack then climb down.

Talk to Eichmann and when he asks you who you want to see say Hitler to join army.

Throw the skull over the cliff to break it.

LORDS OF TIME

GOLDEN OLDIE by TONY KINGSMILL played on Amstrad CPC
In Zone 3, go east. When you reach the Tyrannosaurus Rex, go west and keep going until you get to another dinosaur. The two dinosaurs kill each other. Give the leaves to the Brontosaurus to get out of the pit. Wave the mirror to capture the Brontosaurus. Drop the mirror to scare off the cavemen.

FANTASIA DIAMOND

GOLDEN OLDIE by TONY KINGSMILL played on Amstrad CPC
OPEN GATE, E, W, GET THE ROD, OPEN DOOR, S, W, EXAMINE CUPBOARD, GET BATTERY, E, S, OPEN DOOR, E, PUT BATTERY IN THE ROBOT. You can now talk to the robot. Go back to the pool. CAST the ROD in the pool and eventually you will catch a fish. EAT FISH. OPEN the SIDEBOARD. GET the SANDWICH. In the small house, OPEN the CURTAIN to go south.

BEYOND ZORK

By PAUL HARDY played on Amiga

To increase attributes: STRENGTH: Drink the potion of strength. Eat the Morgia Root. INTELLIGENCE: Eat the fish cake. Drink the potion of Enlightenment. Wear the Helmet. DEXTERITY: Squeeze the moss in the idd and in the cellar. COMPASSION: Cover the tracks of the Minx. Rescue the Baby Humus from the quicksand. Free the unicorn from the stall. LUCK: Kub the Rabbits foot. Kiss the Unicorn Horn. ARMOUR CLASS: Wear the best available armour. ENDURANCE: Slay or outwit all the evil creatures you meet!

ADVENTURE QUEST

GOLDEN OLDIE by RON RAINBIRD played on Atari 800 XL
To get the orchid, stand on table.

Eat the onion to make you untouchable by Dracula.

Follow the unicorn, but first give it a floral tribute.

Throw the stick whenever the wolves appear.

Climb tree for a silver ball.

When crossing the desert make sure you have plenty of water.

Look when slithering is heard in the desert.

The giant worm will swallow the sphinx if you lead it there.



CASTLE MASTER

By DAVE HAVARD played on Amstrad CPC6128

(the 8-bit version is different from 16-bit!)

In the chapel, walk up to the chest with the open top (the pulpit). Walk into it and you go down. Here you find the key to the Dragon's Lair.

Walk into the well while looking down. Here is the key to the Guardroom (ground floor of the Ballroom), and some treasure.

Having emptied the pool in the Hot Bath, crawl through the hole in the pool. Here is some food and a difficult key to reach. To reach it you must face the steps square on, walk onto the second step, turn right 90 deg. walk up to the wall, turn left one position and look up until the cursor is on the niche. Action the niche.

BLIZZARD PASS

By GEORGE KERSEY played on Spectrum

Roll pillar to bridge the fissure and you will awaken the snake. Cross the fissure and then push the pillar and the snake and the pillar will drop into the fissure. To get through the window GET SNOW before going up to the ledge. Put slush in cracks to break the window. GO WINDOW.

GETTING YOU STARTED



THE HOLY GRAIL By NIC RUMSEY played on Amiga

From the start position in a small dungeon. GET ALL (a lamp), LIGHT LAMP. N, GET SWORD. NW to a courtyard of a castle. E, N to a chapel, SE, E to a broom cupboard where a knapsack lies. GET KNAPSACK, W, NW, E, NW, E to Merlin's room. NW, E, E to castle armoury where a cannon ball lies. GET CANNON BALL. D to torture chamber where a note lies on the floor. This note asks one of 5 random questions which are answered respectively: Smallest 3 digit number which equals the sum of its digits - 407. $a^3 + b^3 = 1729$. Next largest perfect number - 8128. 4 Largest prime numbers under 1,000,000. Add the 3 largest and subtract the smallest - 1999964. What is the smallest number which can be expressed as a factor of itself - 1. GET NOTE, READ NOTE and make notation of the answer. U, W, W, SW, N, N to a narrow track. EXAMINE HOOKS.....

HIT

By ALF BALDWIN played on Spectrum

From the start in Down-Town Office: READ LETTER (Rick, I'm in trouble! Can you help me? Cherry xxxx, EXAM DESK (address book), READ BOOK (Cherry lives at Yellowknoll), E, N, GO YELLOWKNOLL, OUT, S, GET BILL, READ PAPER (Ritzberg Hotel), N, N, GO RITZBERG, OUT, N, E, GET FILE, PRESS 1, W, GET PEN, E, PRESS 2, W (Cherry is here, drunk), READ NOTEPAD (One of Macdowell's speaks is the "Shanghai Speak-easy"), E, PRESS 0, W, S, S, GO OFFICE, OUT, S, W, GIVE PEN.....

KEY TO TIME

By DOROTHY MILLARD played on Commodore 64

From the start in the Tardis Control Room: GET CRYSTAL, GO ARCHWAY to the Tardis Library, PUT CRYSTAL in the hologram player (the white guardian of time says "Doctor I need your help. You must recover the five fragments of the key to time. The time scanner will help you to find them!"). GET SCANNER, HELP SCANNER (fragments of the key to time are able to disguise themselves as any object. The scanner will tell you if one is in the vicinity. Take each piece to the Tardis Library and touch it with the scanner to restore it to its proper form). LOOK MIRROR (you are wearing a Victorian frock coat.) GO ARCHWAY, LOOK SCREEN (Tardis dematerialised), EXAMINE CONSOLE (there's a large red lever and a black button), PUSH BUTTON, PULL LEVER (activates the door mechanism), GO DOOR. (PART ONE): You are in a dusty storeroom. E, N to Old Food Store, GET TIN of baked beans, S, E, S to Metalwork Shop, GET HACKSAW, OPEN TIN.....

QUARTERSTAFF (THE TOMB OF SETMOTH)

By NIC RUMSEY (Apple Mac)

From the start at the entrance: GET OLD RING, COIN, PARCHMENT, SMALL LEATHER BAG from the skeleton. OPEN SMALL LEATHER POUCH, GET BRONZE KEY, S, READ INSCRIPTION, UNLOCK DOOR WITH BRONZE KEY, S, BRIBE (or SMILE) at BRUND until he agrees to join your party. S, CLOSE MANACLES ON CHIEF TORTURER. ATTACK AND KILL CHIEF TORTURER, GET ALL FROM CHIEF TORTURER, ATTACK AND KILL DRUID GUARD. GET SCARAB of Insanity and Redwood STAFF from him. MOVE PLAIN WOOD CHEST, GET RED GARNETS from chest. UNLOCK s DOOR WITH IRON KEY. S to the Guest Room. BRIBE/SMILE AT EGLENE until she joins the party.....

THE ADVENTURER

By MANDY played on Atari ST

EXAM SOFA, TAKE CUSHION, TAKE MAGAZINE, READ IT, ANSWER QUESTION, TAKE CARD, TAKE ALL, WEAR RING, WEAR BRACELET, N, TAKE CORN, N, TAKE BEET, E, WAIT, EXAMINE MAN, TAKE ALL, W, WEAR BOOTS, N, TAKE CARROTS, W, S, TAKE CABBAGE, S, TAKE POTATOES, S, W, DROP ALL, TAKE CORN, POTATO, CABBAGE, N, N, OPEN DOOR, HIDE, IN, DROP CORN, TAKE EGGS, OUT, NW, S, IN, UP, EXAMINE HAY, TAKE ALL, D, OUT, N, NW, PULL LEVER, NW, THROW POTATO IN PEN, SE, PUSH LEVER, SE, OPEN GATE, DROP CABBAGE, IN, EXAM TROUGH, TAKE COIN, OUT.....

DAEMON

By JIM STRUTHERS played on Spectrum 48K

SW, E, EXAM FENCE, PULL BAR, PULL BAR, PULL BAR, GET BAR, W, NE, OPEN DOOR, ENTER DOOR, W, EXAM FIREPLACE, EXAM ASHES, GET PARCHMENT, READ PARCHMENT, NW, EXAM FLOOR, OPEN TRAPDOOR, N, EXAM FLOOR, GET SALT, S, E, E, S, UP, W, N, E, N, E, EXAM PANELS, PUSH BUTTON, ENTER DOORWAY, EXAM TABLE, GET NOTEBOOK, READ NOTEBOOK, ENTER DOORWAY, S, W, N.....

PIRATE ADVENTURE

A GOLDEN OLDIE by THE GRUE! played on Commodore 128D

Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of Coke (or whatever). It's time for Pirate Adventure! So, don't just stand there, grab the crackers, sneakers and rum, then GO STAIRS. Hmmm, wonder if there is anything interesting to read in that bookcase? Let's find out. GET BOOK. Aha! A secret passage is revealed! GO PASSAGE then EAST. GET TORCH and DUFFLE BAG then EXAMINE the BAG. Some matches will fall out. DROP the BAG (you won't need it) and GET the MATCHES. Now head back WEST, WEST. READ the BOOK which tells you that the magic word is "Yoho". Next GO WINDOW and say the word. Amazing! You're now on a sandy island beach. DROP the BOOK and SNEAKERS then GO EAST. There's a shack here so lets see whats inside. GO SHACK. Hmmm a Pirate, a chest and a parrot, Maybe the pirate is thirsty so GIVE him the RUM. Ah, he takes it and runs off! Now it's your turn to run off since you don't need the parrot right now, and you can't open the chest yet either. GO WEST then EAST.....

SHERLOCK HOLMES

(THE RIDDLE OF THE CROWN JEWELS)- INFOCOM

By MANDY played on Commodore 128K

From the start outside Holmes' Lodgings: REMOVE HAT, EXAMINE IT, GET STETHOSCOPE, KNOCK ON DOOR, Go to Holmes' room, GET TOBACCO, GET PIPE, GET NEWSPAPER, READ NEWSPAPER TO HOLMES. A visitor arrives and following some dialogue gives a piece of paper to Holmes who gives it to you. READ PAPER. ASK HOLMES ABOUT PAPER, Go into the bedroom, GET LAMP, GET MAGNIFYING GLASS. Go back to parlour and GET MATCHBOOK. Now you go outside. LIGHT LANTERN. GO TO WESTMINSTER ABBEY, WAIT and keep WAITING until it opens. Once inside GET PACKET, GET CRAYON.....

THE ISLAND (By Ken Bond)

By MANDY played on Amstrad CPC6128

From the start: P, GET DINGHY, S, A, DROP DINGHY, F, D, SWING PHOTO, GET BRASS KEY, P, P, LOOK UNDER PILE, GET BELT, S, S, GET CARD, P, P, PUSH BUTTON, S, A, S, GET CAN, P, F, F, F, OPEN CAGE, A, U, A, DROP ALL, F, D, A, A, A, A, GET MOTOR, F, F, F, F, U, A, DROP MOTOR, GET CARD, GET KEY, F, UNLOCK DOOR WITH BRASS KEY.....

SERIALISED SOLUTIONS LANCELOT - LEVEL 9

By THE WAYFARER



CONTINUED.....

If you ignore the damsel you are branded unchivalrous and lose 50 points. MAKE SIGN OF CROSS to remove her and the pavilion. E to a ford where a black knight challenges you. ATTACK KNIGHT and keep on ATTACKING until he is defeated. E, E, U, U, U, U ignoring the entreaties of demons claiming to be disciples of Nacien and go IN to the real one who gives you a chalice. GO TO BASE OF CLIFF having gained 10 more points. S to where a pilgrim begs for water. GIVE CHALICE TO PILGRIM who drinks and returns it to you. (Lancelot isn't pure enough to draw water from the well). You score 20 points for this. S and you are in the Abbey (10 points for entering first time) where lies Galahad's shield. GALAHAD, TAKE SHIELD and go E to a stoney road. E again and you will see Sir Ector in trouble with some bandits to the north and a maiden in distress to the south. S and you rescue the maiden. N, N and you have rescued Sir Ector. You score 20 points each for saving them in the correct order. S, E and you see Galahad's sword. GALAHAD, GET SWORD. GO TO WHITE ABBEY. OPEN COFFIN and a fiend emerges and is defeated by Galahad (20 points). TAKE BODY and when you find a priest GIVE BODY TO PRIEST. (The priests follow a set route so you may have to WAIT FOR PRIEST.) Your score at this point should be 770 out of 100.

GO TO BOAT and GET IN. Galahad is the only one who can steer the boat so GALAHAD, GO E, GALAHAD, GO S to the Isle of Thurnace. Here you will find two dragons but they mustn't be left alone as they wander off so S, S, S, S of the Hillock to find the first. Go N, N, N, N back to the hillock with it following you. GALAHAD, WAIT WITH DRAGON. N, N, N, and when the red dragon follows you go back to where the other dragon and Galahad are waiting. The dragons kill each other and the fishermen reward you with a tin cup filled with mead and you gain another 20 points. GO TO BOAT. GALAHAD, GO N. GALAHAD, GO N. GALAHAD, GO N. To an island with a wall of flame. EMPTY CHALICE, EMPTY CUP, GIVE CHALICE TO GALAHAD. To combat the fire needs the work of two. GALAHAD, WAIT, FILL CHALICE, THROW WATER, FILL CHALICE, THROW WATER, FILL CHALICE. (Lancelot) FILL CUP, THROW WATER, FILL CUP, THROW WATER, FILL CUP, THROW WATER. When the flames are dead go N and FILL CUP WITH SAND. 10 points for getting to the wall of flame and 10 points for getting the sand. Now for the endgame.

GO TO BOAT and GET IN. GALAHAD, GO S. GALAHAD, GO E. GALAHAD, GO E to a dark shore. E, E and you are in an antechapel. Bors and Percival wait for you and you gain 10 points. This puzzle is character/object related, only the persons and objects here will complete it. GIVE HORN TO GALAHAD, GIVE CUP TO PERCIVAL, GIVE CHALICE TO BORS. BORS, WAIT 3 AND THROW WATER. PERCIVAL, WAIT 2 AND THROW SAND. GALAHAD, WAIT THEN BLOW HORN. TAKE KEY. 20 points for getting the key and a further 20 points for UNLOCK DOOR. E, E two lions spring at you and miss (10 points). E and finally E into the Grail Chamber where Joseph of Aramathea is saying mass. He looks good for being over 1000 years old but you gain the last 100 points and go off to become a hermit for the rest of your days.

Your score should be 1000 out of 1000!

ADVENTURE COMPLETED!

AVON - A Shakespearean tragedy of our time.

Played by NEIL SHIPMAN on BBC.

The adventure takes place on 3 dates - January 6th, March 15th and June 24th. This solution begins on January 6th.

Start on Stage (with 10 points). N to Blasted Heath, answer EYE, then GET EYE, S, E, E, GET DAGGER, E, N, GET BASKET, W, N, NE to Enchanted Forest and CUT TREE (15 pts). SW, E to Graveyard and note password (which differs every time) e.g. "Golesida" (referring to Gold, Lead and Silver in a particular order), N, GET WORM.

S, W, S, S, W, W, S, SW, W to River Bank and KILL SCOTSMAN (20 pts). GET SHIELD, E, NE, N to Stage, DROP DAGGER, DROP SHIELD. W, NW, W to Lady's Boudoir, OPEN GOLD casket (or whichever came 1st in password) then answer LEAD (or whichever came 2nd) and GET PORTRAIT (24 pts). N, E, KISS STATUE, GET NECKLACE (30 pts).

S, SE, E, N, NE to Edge of Ice (Constable cries "Havoc"), N, N, E, N into Church, GET COLLAR, S, W, W, W to Cul-de-Sac where Moor leaves Letter (37 pts). Note position of repeated letters in word (differs every time), e.g. "Standard" where "a" appears at posns 3 & 6 and "d" at 5 & 8. E, S to Lake and note word said by Spirit (differs every time), e.g. "Brandy" (45 pts). N, E, S, SE to Edge of Vasty Deep and call spirits by saying this, BRANDY, GET TOFAZ (49 pts).

DROP COLLAR, NW, N, E, E, E To Illyria Court. Note posn of repeated letters in names and go in direction where these correspond with Moor's Letter, e.g. "Malvolio" (where "l" is at posns 3 & 6 and "o" at 5 & 8) is S, GET VIOLA (53 pts). Then W, N, E to Baker's, GET BREAD, EAT BREAD, W, S, W, W, N into Inn, answer YES, GET TROPHY (57 pts). OPEN BASKET, YES, PORTRAIT, YES, NECKLACE, YES, TOFAZ, YES, VIOLA, YES, TROPHY, NO, NO, GET BASKET (107 pts).

W, N, SHAKE SPEAR (112 pts) and N to Cellar. Note writing on wall which gives anagram of name of one of King Lear's daughters, e.g. "Goneril", GET AGATE (116 pts). S, S, E, E, E, N, N, W into Palace and answer with name, GONERIL, GET ROBE (120 pts). Then E to Farm, say HAVOC and GET TOUCHSTONE (124 pts).

N into Maze of Mountain Paths with exits always ne, nw and s. Go NE - If Cassandra appears then retreat S and go NW - and continue like this until you find the Iliad, then GET ILIAD (138 pts). OPEN BASKET, YES, AGATE, YES, ROBE, YES, TOUCHSTONE, YES, ILIAD, NO, NO, GET BASKET (178 pts).

S, S, S, S, S, S to Edge of Town, S, S, W, S and look at sign at Gaol entrance. Then N, W and S when you're arrested and put in Gaol. Sing ARNE to get out (188 pts), GET ALL, S, SW, S, W, SW to Friar's Cell. Then GET POTION, DRINK POTION to take you on to the next date (March 15th).....

GET BASKET, NE, E, N to Blasted Heath, answer TOE, GET TOE, EAT TOE, S, W, W into Kitchen and note Mistress's name (differs every time) e.g. "Legosind" (198 pts). OPEN BASKET, NO, YES, YES to be thrown in river and get out at Waterfall. N, GET BASKET, NE, N, W, NW, W to Lady's Boudoir, OPEN LEAD casket (or whichever came 1st in name) then answer GOLD (or whichever came 2nd) and GET RING (202 pts).

E, SE, E, E, E, N, E, E, S to Moor of Venice. GET PIE. Try to go SE, say FATHOM, SE into Hovel and GET GOBLET (211 pts). Then NW, N, W, W, S, W, W, SW to Cell, GET POTION and DRINK POTION to take you on to the final date (June 24th).....

To be continued.



HELPLINE

ALF BALDWIN	0452 500512	MON TO SAT 10AM TO 5PM	Spectrum.
JACK HIGHAM	0825 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	Alert BT.
JASON DEANE	0492 822750	ANY REASONABLE TIME	Amiga.
JUAN PANCOTT	0305 784155	SUN TO SAT 1.PM TO 10PM	Amstrad.
ISLA DONALDSON	041 9540802	SUN TO SAT NOON TO 12PM	Amstrad.
NIC RUMSEY	03212 2737	MON TO FRI 8PM TO 9PM	Various.
BARBARA BASSINGTHWAIGHTE	0935 28174	SUN TO SAT 10AM TO 10PM	BBC.
BARBARA GIBB	051 7228731	ANY EVENING FROM 7PM	BBC.
DAVE BARKER	071 7321513	MON TO FRI 7PM TO 10PM	Various.
STUART WHYTE	081 9804845	ANY REASONABLE TIME	Amstrad.
ROBIN MATTHEWS	0222 580115 OR 0842 781077	EVENINGS AND WEEKENDS	IBM PC

• • • THE ULTIMATE INFOCOM HELPLINE • • •

If you need help with an Infocom adventure then who better to help you than A GRUE? Ring GRUE on 0695 573141 between 7:30pm to 9pm Mon to Fri. Or write to 64 COUNTY ROAD, ORMSKIRK, WEST LANCs, L39 1QH.

ADVENTURE PROBE

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 that day as the solutions are on hand during that time. But please try the helpline for help first as above.

PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT YOU ONLY RING AT THE TIMES SHOWN



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