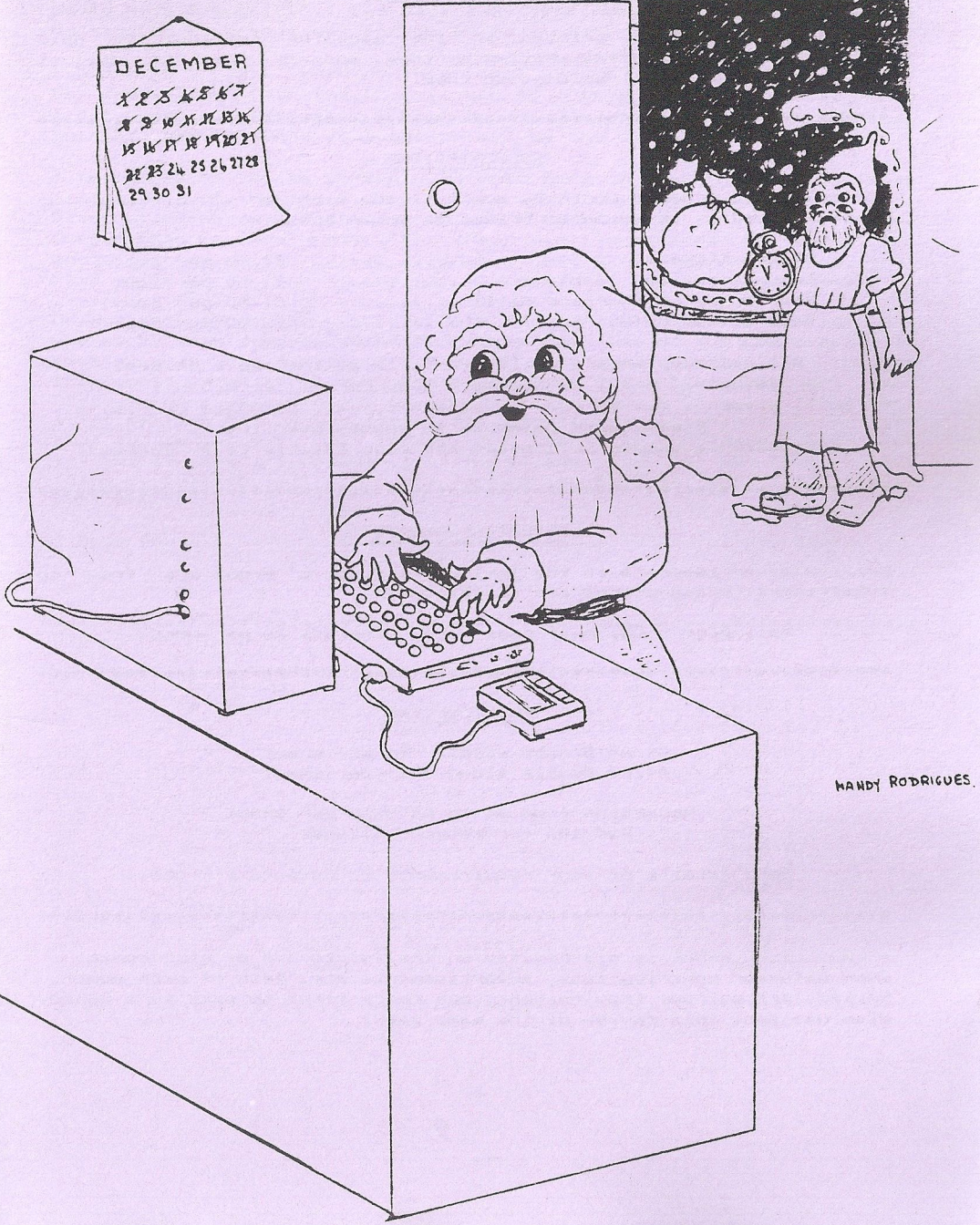
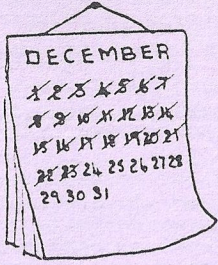


ADVENTURE PROBE

EDITOR SANDRA SHARKEY ©ADVENTURE PROBE, 78 MERTON ROAD, WIGAN. WN3 6AT
£1.00 ISSUE 19 DECEMBER 1987



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United Kingdom	£1.00 per copy
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Rest of World (Surface Mail)	£1.50 per copy
Rest of World (Air Mail)	£2.00 per copy

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Issues 1, 2 & 3 at 50p each (75p Europe, £1 R.O.W.)

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EDITORIAL

Welcome to Issue 19 of Probe.

You may have received your copy a couple of days later than usual. This was caused by circumstances beyond my control (honest!). Who would have thought that two days away from home would result in the backlog of work that was facing me on my return.

I had more or less typed up this issue before I went to Sutton for the convention, thinking that it wouldn't take long to complete when I returned. I'd forgotten that I'm also launching my game on the 1st December and I hadn't done the inlays by the 29th of November!

I travelled as far as London with Pete Gerrard (a knight in shining armour if ever there was one). The train journey was uneventful. After standing on the station in the freezing cold for thirty minutes longer than we should have, the train finally arrived. We spent the whole journey in the buffet (I must stress that this was not so that Pete would be as near to the bar as possible!) which was unheated.

On our arrival in the big city Pete shepherded me to the nearest pub where, by some strange coincidence, he knew one of the customers. In fact he knew this particular customer very well indeed! "I thought this would be an ideal opportunity for you to meet big brother," said Pete. Being a well brought up young lady I didn't lose my cool and start calling Pete names (well, not many anyway!). Thanks Pete, you kept the secret very well indeed. And thanks to you as well Mike for sparing the time, I enjoyed talking to you. I've not got room in this issue to tell you all about the convention so that must wait until next month.

I hope you all have a lovely Christmas and a wonderful new year.

Sandra

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MISSION TO THE EAST!

OR

GOLLY GOSH! IS IT REALLY THAT

TIME OF YEAR AGAIN ALREADY?!!

It had been almost twelve months since last I'd heard it, but I recognised the voice on the 'phone immediately. The SHARK, legendary head of the shadowy organisation known only as PROBE, had need of my services again. Our meeting place this time was to be a secret basement at PROBE HQ (a technologically advanced complex concealed deep within the catacombs under Wigan Pier). I made my way there at once. When I arrived, the SHARK was not alone.

The person who stood alongside her was tall ... really tall ... about seven foot and twelve inches tall! And broad too ... this guy had the kind of chest and shoulders which would make Swarzenegger look wimpish by comparison! I carefully sucked in my spare tyre, and tried to appear casually macho, as I looked him over. He was dressed in a hooded cloak of a deep royal purple colour, which fell, in carefully tailored folds, right to the floor, and thus covered him completely. His hood was up, and the shadows within it masked his face from my view. But I could see his eyes ... twin glowing orbs surrounded by darkness ... deep, almost fathomless ... full of wisdom, knowledge and great power. They held me spellbound for several long moments, and then I managed to wrench my gaze away.

"Ah, Jim!" said the SHARK, "Good of you to come ... what took you so long? ... have you met the CHIEF EXAMINER?" She indicated her companion with a wave of her arm.

"Uh oh!" I thought, "this is where I start paying for all those sarky comments I made about the SPIDERMAN game."

But, the purple clad colossus didn't seem interested in dismembering my body at that particular moment. He bent slightly at the waist, bowing towards me. I attempted, somewhat awkwardly, to return the gesture.

"Now Jim" continued the SHARK (who never was one for beating around the bush), "we have a mission for you. A very important mission. The CHIEF EXAMINER will explain."

Once again, those shining eyes were brought to bear on me, and the temptation to let myself drown in their mesmeric depths was strong within me ... but somehow I managed to resist.

"There is evil at large", began the EXAMINER. "Not great evil ... not world destroying evil ... but evil nevertheless! It seeks to create mischief in a time and place distant from here. It does this in the belief that such acts will please its Dark Master ... as well they might! If it succeeds in its intent, it will irrevocably alter the manner in which certain events are perceived in this world, at this time. This cannot be permitted to occur. The evil must therefore be stopped. Its selfish, malicious purpose must be frustrated."

I wondered, in my own vague way, just what it was he was getting at ... but the SHARK allowed me no time to ponder.

"You're just the guy to foil this dastardly deed, Jim" she breathed, in her most huskily persuasive fashion, "we all have great faith in you. Besides which, everybody else seems to be out shopping or something at the moment, so it's got to be you! You will leave immediately! I shall, of course, try to enlist other agents to provide you with assistance along the way."

"Come!" commanded the EXAMINER, "we have little time". He opened his arms wide, spreading his cloak to create a large black gateway around him. He then turned his eyes on me again, but now they seemed to burn with a greater brightness, with a greater intensity, than before. They flamed through me with infinite ease, and I found that I no longer wished to resist their hypnotic pull.

The black space between the EXAMINER's outstretched arms seemed to grow even larger, even deeper, even darker. At the same time, it grew to be even more fascinating, even more mysterious, even more irresistible. I took a very deep breathe, held it, then took a step into that yawning, great abyss ... and promptly fell about a million miles.:

*

I awoke to find something damp pressing against my face ... and something else scratching my ear: I opened my eyes and, after a few minutes, I was able to focus on my surroundings. I was lying on the side of a gently sloping hill. Its stubby, coarse grass (which was what had been scratching my ear) was wet from either rain or dew ... I knew not which: I could see a few flickering lights in the valley, far away at the bottom of the slope, although the night seemed bright enough (unusually so) to make any artificial lights unnecessary. I was also quite alone:

I stood up and brushed myself off, idly wondering what to do next. I was not allowed to wonder for long ... because an exasperated shout soon floated down to me from further up the hill.

"Mr Jim! Mr Jim! Oh, do come along Mr Jim! We've still got a little way to go yet. Surely you can keep up with old Sam? Mr Jim!:"

"Coming." I called back, although I had no idea of who I was talking to, nor of where we were supposed to be going. Even so, I began to climb up the hill. It wasn't long before I came upon the source of the mysterious voice. He stood by a small bush, his arms folded across his chest, waiting patiently. He was short, yet very solidly built. He was dressed very simply in a green jerkin and brown breeches, and around his shoulders he wore a grey elven-cloak. His feet were bare and leathery. The hair on his head was mostly grey now, and the wrinkles around his eyes were too numerous to count ... and yet, I knew him now! I could see in those eyes the same quiet strength and determination which had enabled him to drag, bully and carry Frodo Baggins across the land of Mordor to the Cracks Of Doom. He was still the same old Samwise Gamgee that he had ever been ... and he was more than capable of bullying me, if he had to.:

"Sorry Sam" I panted, as I came up to him, "I must have slipped behind a bit."

"Don't you worry none, Mr Jim. Old Sam'll wait for you ... but you don't want to go and get lost now ... it might take me a little time to find you, and we don't have a lot of time to spare."

"How much further have we got to go, Sam?" I asked, as the old Hobbit set off up the hill again.

"Only a littleways now, Mr Jim" he replied, "we're nearly at the top."

As we climbed, I asked Sam about events in the Shire in order to take my mind off the slope which, gentle as it was, was still beginning to make me breathless. He told me that it was now fully restored to its former pastoral peace and beauty, following the devastation it suffered during the War Of The Ring. Merry and Pippin still lived and prospered ... each was now the head of a great family with many children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. The best beer in the Eastfarthing is still to be found at the "Golden Perch" in Stock ... although there are those who claim that the ale served in the recently opened "Waving Trees" in Whitfurrows will soon take that title for itself.

At last, in friendly conversation, we reached the crest of the hill, and paused to catch our breath. It was then that we heard the low sound of somebody gently singing a soothing lullaby. But there seemed to be something wrong ... as if the person singing was struggling to hold back tears at the same time. We hurried across the hill towards the sound.

We found a young boy kneeling at the edge of a deep hole. He was crooning softly in order to calm a very young lamb which had somehow managed to fall into the hole, and was whimpering pitifully at its plight. As he sang, tears streamed in a constant flow down his cheeks.

"Oh sirs" he pleaded, as he saw Sam and I approach, "can you help me? There is much I must do this night, but my poor Sonny has fallen into this old well, and I cannot find it in my heart to leave him here alone!"

I took a close look at the well. It was about thirty feet deep and completely dry. The sides were straight and completely smooth ... there was no way of climbing down them and up again without the help of mountaineering equipment. The lamb, Sonny, stood on trembling feet in the centre of a three foot circle at the bottom of the shaft. Even from where I was, I could see that he trembled with fear, and his helpless bleating tugged at my heart.

"Sam" I said "do you have any rope with you?"

"Oh yes, Mr Jim! There's one thing I always say about rope ... if you haven't got it, you'll be bound to need it ... so I usually make sure I've got it."

Sam rummaged in the pockets hidden within his cloak, and quickly produced a long length of silken-grey elven rope. I explained to him what I intended to do, and how. He agreed that it would work, so we quickly set to.

So it was that, a short time later, I found myself moving slowly down the old well shaft at the end of a length of rope, while dependable old Sam Gamgee stood at the top, paying out the line, and anchoring me with his strength. I reached the bottom in no time at all, and scooped the hapless lamb into my arms. I draped it around my shoulders, cradling its feet against my chest with one hand. I could then use the other hand to help Sam pull us out of there. The young boy helped too, and, in little more than a twinkling, the lamb and I were safely back on the crest of the hill.

The boy accepted the lamb from me with tears of gratitude in his eyes, and he hugged the animal with great love and tenderness. The lamb responded by licking

his face thoroughly!

"Oh, thank you sirs! Thank you!" said the boy, "I am at a loss to explain how this has happened. For many years now, I have tended my sheep on these hills, and never has there been a wellshaft at this spot! I do not know how it has suddenly appeared here!"

I glanced at Sam, who frowned deeply as he re-coiled and put away his rope.

"Mischief!" he muttered, "Great mischief!" And then, he snapped back into his old practical self. "We must go" he said. "I shall escort this young master to where he must go, so that I may be sure that no further harm will befall him. But you, Mr Jim, still have other work to do. You must go that way ..." he pointed down the other side of the hill from that which we had climbed up, "At the bottom you will find an olive grove. On the far side of the grove, there is a waterhole. You are expected there."

"O.K., Sam". I acquiesced willingly ... I had long since learned the futility of trying to go against the flow when on these missions. It was easier, and in the end better, if one simply did as one was told. But I was still somewhat unsure as to what was actually going on here, so I tried to get some information out of Sam.

"Tell me" I asked, "just what is this all about, Sam. I didn't get a very full briefing."

"Oh, for goodness sake, Mr Jim!" The exasperated tone was back in Sam's voice, "have you no eyes? Look at the sky! It's all there ... plain as ever can be!"

I looked up ... and immediately saw why the night was ever so much brighter than it really should have been. Then, my heart skipped a beat, and the breathe caught in my throat, as the full implication of what I was looking at, finally sank into me!

"Jumping Jephosaphat!" I gasped, "Sam ..." But Sam and the young boy were already disappearing down the slope of the hill. My questions would have to wait.

*

I found the olive grove at the bottom of the hill without any trouble at all. What did worry me was how ever was I going to find my way through it to the other side? I had never realised that olive groves were so big ... rows upon rows of trees stretching off into the distance ... each row looking exactly the same as the one before it ... the whole place bore an horrific resemblance to a huge maze ... and I don't get on very well with mazes!

Thankfully, help was once again at hand. Hardly had I stepped a foot inside the grove when two individuals hurried towards me. The first was fairly short and stocky, dressed in a crumpled tweed suit, with a tie that didn't match knotted loosely around his neck. On his head was a very battered trilby hat, tipped at a rakish angle, with a card proclaiming "PRESS" jutting out of its band. The second was very different. Tall and elegant ... his suit immaculately pressed and tailored with care ... an Eton Old Boys tie around his neck ... his long, wavy hair combed back from his forehead ... class and privilege stamped all over him.

"Hi!" said the first character, "we've been waiting for you. My name's Lines ... Ed Lines ... maybe you heard of me? This here's Barney Brown. He's with MI5."

"Delighted!" said the tall man, offering his hand. I shook it warmly. "We haven't met yet" he continued, "but one day soon, we shall do." There was a wry, amused smile on his face.

"I shall look forward to it", I replied, trying to conceal my puzzlement.

"O.K.: O.K.:" butted-in Lines, "let's get this show on the road! We ain't got all night! We're here to guide you through this confounded plantation ... " he waved a hand to indicate the olive grove, " ... you come along with me. Brown will bring up the rear, so that we don't get no nasties creeping up on us, unsuspecting like!"

So, we set off at a brisk pace. Lines lit up a cigarette and jammed it into one corner of his mouth. I thought that it might stop him talking ... but it was a forlorn hope! He insisted on relating to me, in the minutest detail, a full account of how he had managed, single-handedly, to send the SUBSUNK message, and then, later on, escape from the SEABASE DELTA! I protested that I was already very familiar with these feats, but it was to no avail ... Mr Lines was not one to be put off that easily! At length, he drew to a close, and I breathed a sigh of relief.

"What about you?" he asked, "you got any stories to tell?"

I started to tell him this amusing little tale concerning an Englishman, an Irishman, and a Scotsman ... but he interrupted almost immediately:

"No! No!" he cried, "I mean real stories ... scoops! ... front page exclusives! ... that kind of thing!"

I had to admit that I was a touch lacking in that department ... not having had a single scoop to my name really. His look of disgust was withering! I felt too ashamed to look him in the face! So, in desperation, I told him about the rescue of the lamb on the hilltop.

He whipped out a notebook and began to scribble furiously as I talked. "This is the stuff!" he breathed hoarsely, "keep it coming. Keep it coming!"

When I reached the end of my story, he lit himself another cigarette, and tucked his notebook away. "Sensational!" he gasped, "I got to file this story straight away! They'll stop the presses for this!"

He turned around and shouted for Barney Brown to join him. After a brief pause, Brown appeared from out of the shadows, where he had been vigilantly watching for any signs of unfriendly pursuit.

"C'mon, Barney! We got to get out of here" said Lines, "I got a real hot story to call in!" Brown nodded a farewell towards me, and then, arm-in-arm with Lines, the unlikely twosome began to stride away. "Hey! What about me?" I called out after them, "where am I supposed to go?"

"There! There!" shouted back Lines, pointing off to my left. Then he turned back to Brown. "I can see it now, Barney" he said, "right across the front page ... MAN AND HOBBIT IN RESCUE DRAMA ... the public will lap it up!" "Oh! No doubt! No doubt!" nodded Brown.

I looked to my left. There seemed to be just a trace of a campfire's warm glow showing above the rim of a small hollow. That must be the waterhole! I hastened towards it.

There was a man sitting at the small campfire, his head cradled in his hands. On the other side of the hollow, a camel lay on its side, panting heavily. The man looked up as I approached, and his eyes were filled with great anguish and sorrow.

"Ah! My friend!" he said sadly, "I fear that you arrive too late to help me. My camel has been stricken by some sudden ailment, and I am too old and arthritic to continue my journey on foot. I have sent my two companions on their way. They did not wish to leave without me, but, in the end, they saw the wisdom of my arguments ... it is better that two of us make it to the place, rather than none at all! So, I am left ... on my own ... with just a sick camel ... all my life I have waited for this night ... searched for the sign that I knew would one day appear ... and, now ... it is here ... but I will not be part of it!"

He shook his head in sad resignation, and raised the hem of his robe (a rich fabric, although stained and dusty from many days of travel) to wipe the tears from his eyes.

I walked across to his camel, and knelt to examine the beast. Its right foreleg, in the area between the knee and ankle, had swollen to more than twice its rightful size. The inflammation looked red and raw. It would be impossible for the animal to walk on that leg as it was. I reached out a hand to explore the infected area. As I touched it, the camel raised its head and its eyes rolled frantically ... but it was too weak to resist me. I moved my hand along the leg, and it took considerable effort not to snatch it away in revulsion. The swollen area looked merely red and raw on the surface, but under the skin, something loathsome twisted and turned and burrowed its way deep into the animal's flesh. I felt like I'd put my hand into a nest of vipers. A cold, clammy, deathly feeling ran down my spine, and raised goosebumps all over my flesh.

"There is something unnatural about this illness" I said to the old man, who had wandered over from the campfire to join me. "Aye!" he replied, "there is demon-work here, that's no mistake. But I do not have the skill to fight it."

I looked around the hollow, expecting somebody to step into the firelight. Surely the SHARK had arranged for someone to turn up and take care of this? But, nobody appeared ... and, after long silent minutes, it finally became clear to me that if I didn't do something, then nobody would. But, could I do anything? Did I have skills that the old man lacked? I doubted it. But, then again ...

I had managed to recover the Red Moon Crystal when it was stolen away ... much lore was required for that! And, I had defeated Myglar when the power of that self-same Crystal threatened to corrupt him, and damn the world! Even more lore was needed there! And then there was Claymorgue Castle! I had learned to master all the magic hidden within those walls ... and recovered all the Stars of Power to prove it. And I'd been down in the dungeons below Collodons Pile ... the most pestilential place of all ... done battle with the dark denizens there, and returned to tell the tale! So, I wasn't completely helpless. I could at least try ...

I put my hands firmly around the camels possessed limb, closed my eyes, and began to concentrate my will against that of the demonspawn within. Slowly, ever so slowly, I searched for my enemy. I ran my hands along the camels leg, but probed with my mind, in the darkness, for the evil that lurked there. I pushed and probed at its defences, circled around it, cast aside the small barriers it erected against me, chased it along twisting corridors, and, finally, forced it into a corner where it was forced to reveal itself and face me!

Sweat streamed down my face, and the blood pounded in my temples as I fought the nameless horror. The camel, alarmed by the conflict, began to thrash its limbs madly. But, the old man threw himself across the beast, and spoke to it kindly. Attempting to calm it with his weight and soft words. I remained oblivious to all this. I concentrated all my effort on the battle within. My pulses raced, my teeth clenched, every sinew of my body cried for release! And then, with a scream, I struck a powerful blow, and my foe fled the battlefield ... defeated!

Smoke began to curl up from the camels leg. Slowly at first ... just a few soft tendrils ... but then quicker ... thicker ... more furious ... until it poured out, acrid and evil-smelling, spiralling up to the sky. I held my breathe as I feared the rottenness of it might choke me!

And then, it was gone ... as if it had never been at all. The old man and I reeled away from the camel, and it staggered to its feet. Its leg was back to normal size, its strength had returned! I opened my eyes and blinked rapidly to regain my senses. I found the old man hugging me and kissing my cheeks. He was overjoyed!

"Come!" he said, "we must hurry along. The hour is late, but, thanks to you, not too late." I nodded dumbly. I was too bewildered to figure it all out. Obediently, I clambered onto the camels back behind the old man and we set off.

*

By the time we arrived, I was, more or less, back in control. I also thought that I'd figured it all out now. Another long look at that amazing sight in the sky, and a few questions to the old man (who, it seemed, was called Balthazar) confirmed the suspicions that were already growing in my mind. When we arrived, the old man immediately hurried inside. I saw Sam Gamgee and the CHIEF EXAMINER standing in the shadows off to one side, so I crossed to join them.

Sam clasped my hands warmly and told me that the young boy had completed his journey without further incident. The CHIEF EXAMINER murmured a word of thanks for the part I had played.

"Of course" he went on, "it wouldn't have totally ruined the event if the young shepherd boy with his lamb, and the third king, had failed to arrive in time. But it would have spoiled things ... and destroyed our conception of what this event was like. In that, it would have been a small victory for the Dark One ... and we must do our best to deny Him even the smallest of victories."

I looked up at the sky again ... at the incredibly bright and huge star which blazed there ... like a sun in the middle of the night ... it hung motionless in the heavens ... casting its light upon the small stable directly below it ... a small stable at the back of a large inn ... the inn was totally silent, but lights showed and figures moved and voices murmured from within the stable ... and the star dominated all!

"Can we go in?" I asked the EXAMINER. "No!" he replied, "it wouldn't have been the same without the people you helped tonight ... but also, it wouldn't be the same with us! We must leave now."

So saying, he drew his cloak around us, and the lights began to be replaced by darkness. But, just before the night closed in completely, I thought I heard the faint sound of a baby crying ... and a feeling of infinite peace spreading out over the world!

A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OF YOU!!

Jim O'Keefe

VILLAGE OF LOST SOULS - Robico Software

"Under the spreading chestnut tree the village smithy stands. The smith a mighty man is he..." - or perhaps that should be "was he..." because he seems to have disappeared along with most of the other inhabitants of the village of Dinham - those who haven't been horribly murdered that is!

In the mediaeval world of Albion magic still exists but may only be used by those gifted with the Talent. Its use is controlled by the Order of St. Leofric, Patron of Magic and Discoverer of the Thirteen Realms of the Arcane. The Council of Twelve, each of whom holds a key to one of the Realms of Order, watches over Talents working in the world of the Mundanes to ensure that contact with the Arcane has not caused corruption of mind, body and soul.

As Nathan, a novice cleric and inquisitor of the Order, you have been summoned to the study of your tutor, Father-Magister Alain. He tells you that your task is to investigate the Lord-Talent of Dinham who is suspected of trying to open a portal into the forbidden Thirteenth Realm - The Realm of Chaos!

From the loading screen to the final denouement this adventure is an absolute delight. The Magister's spell sets you down just outside the village and, as you wander around, things soon start to happen. Dogs snap at your ankles and run away with anything you throw at them; an enormous crow (and I really do mean enormous) circles above and suddenly swoops down to steal your possessions; and all the time you can smell smoke.

The interweaving of these sub-plots which run together at the start of the adventure not only demonstrates clever puzzle construction and programming, but is also an indication of the difficult task which lies ahead. Once you have solved these problems you have plenty of time to explore your surroundings and figure out what use to make of the many objects you discover. As you might expect, their use is not always immediately obvious, but you won't have any problem finding the right words because the vocabulary is extremely large and HELP lists most of the recognised verbs.

The playing area is huge and the screen fills with masses of descriptive text which produces a nicely sinister atmosphere. Even though you'll have to visit the same locations a number of times this doesn't feel repetitive because of clever variations in the location and exit descriptions - just type LOOK in the same place four times in a row to see what I mean.

And it's not all doom and gloom either. The aura of evil which pervades the village is brightened by some pretty awful puns. Examining a paddle tells you that it's made of rowan, and that's what it's good for! - and if you make a wrong move you could easily end up as a chipped monk! There are also a lot of very tidy imps (flighty creatures of the Ninth Realm) who will clear up any junk you drop and who don't take kindly to your digging holes all over the place.

The advanced parser is a joy to use and can handle full sentences and multiple commands. It's very fast, deals sensibly with abbreviated inputs and recognises ALL and EVERYTHING. If you do something that turns out to be a mistake then OG (go backwards!) or DOPS will take you back a step. BBC disc and Amstrad versions also include ramsave, a choice of long or short location descriptions and the use of WHAT, WHERE and WHO. No longer do you have to turn to your dictionary to find out what some obscure item is - just ask! WHERE is extremely useful for finding out where you've left a particular object, and WHO will give you information about the various characters - including yourself!

Once you're into the endgame the problems (and the puns) come thick and fast and completing your task is not easy. And when you do you'll probably be disappointed that it's all over. I'm already looking forward to the second part of the Realm of Chaos trilogy and Nathan's further exploits in Albion.

Village of Lost Souls is a superbly written adventure with a real atmosphere of foreboding and very clever puzzles supported by first class programming. I thoroughly recommend it - it could be the best you'll play all year. Treat yourself and send off for it, now!

Atmosphere 9/10 Playability 10/10 Difficulty 8/10
Value for money 9/10 Overall enjoyment 10/10

Reviewer - Neil Shipman - BBC

.....

VILLAGE OF LOST SOULS is available in the following versions:

Electron/BBC B/B+/Master - on tape for £9.95
Amstrad/Atari - on tape for £9.95
BBC B/B+/Master - on disc for £12.95

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Karyssia - Queen of Diamonds - Incentive Software £7.95
A Gold Medallion Adventure.

Gold Medallion Adventures, according to Incentive Software who publish them, are the very best adventures written using Incentive's own Graphic Adventure Creator. Karyssia is such a GAC-ed adventure and comes as a multi-load three parter.

Karyssia, she of the title, turns out to be a complete royal nasty about whom, even before she was born, prophets said evil things would come. True to the prophecies, after Karyssia ascended the throne and attracted the peoples's admiration, she left her role as a decent and trustworthy monarch by diverting her countrys diamond mines' output into her own coffers, and set about disposing of any and all opponents. Thereafter, Karyssia and her two sisters plagued the lives of her subjects and cast fear throughout the land.

Loranin, the rightful heir to the throne of Anduarin, one of the three islands being controlled by Karyssia and her cronies, emmerges from hiding and asks you to undertake a quest to travel to Karyssia's Castle far to the north and dispose of her, thus returning the land to it's former wellbeing and glory. Failure to accomplish this will surely lead to you demise!

When the adventure starts, you find yourself in the 'Sword and Buckler' inn in downtown Mottinan and must meet up with Loranin in a nearby cave before starting your quest in earnest. After a couple of attempts, you meet Loranin using the proper route and gallop off to the next section within part one.

As I mentioned, Karyssia is a three part adventure, parts two and three becoming accessible using passwords gained at the completion of parts one and two. Each of the parts also seem to be divided into three or so subareas which are defined by the actions taken within the adventure. In part one, for example, after chatting to the stableboy, zap, you are taken to another group of locations with no means to return to where you just left. Shortly after this, following an exchange with an Ostler, zap, you are across the river, again unable to retrace your steps. I presume this technique is intended to show your progress of travelling through the land, and for this purpose is very good, yet I can't help but feel that this is too rigourously managed.

On your travels, the characters you encounter generally have two main attributes: the first is the ability to kill you in a fight nine times out of ten, and the second is carrying out the specific task to which they are assigned. This task generally involves giving you an item or service in return for something you have already picked up. Thus, character interaction exists, but only at a somewhat rudimentary level. Most characters respond to you saying "Hello!", for example:

....You see a farmer.

>FARMER HELLO

The farmer says "I've lost my ruby. If you fetch me it I'll give you a such and such."

>GIVE RUBY

The farmer thanks you and thrusts a such and such into your hand.

Then there are those who don't even respond to a civil "Hello!". Instead, certain characters automatically engage you in a fight (which you lose) if you miss your one chance to enter the correct command.

Furthermore, even a wrong direction can leave you writhing on the floor, fatally injured, without a hint or warning! There I was, wandering around a tunnel system, minding my own business, when I came to a junction. I moved west and - wallop - I'm turned into a pin cushion by a dozen hidden bow men. The sudden death syndrome is really (and literally) being used in overkill. Far too often for my liking was I splattered around the scenery rather unfairly.

Combat, as a necessity, rears it's head from time to time. For this, you are given two attributes of skill and stamina. Each has a textual rating, such as 'lethal' and 'energetic', and the process by which you change these variables can be by purchasing better weapons, or having Falcassia cast a spell over you, and so on. On the occasions when you do have to fight, these ratings are used to decide the outcome. If you want to rough up the merchant near the start of part two, then make sure your ratings indicate you'll win!

Magic also plays an important part in solving several problems. Spells exist as items. You find one lying around, pick it up, and then happily cast it at something or someone. The comprehensive instructions with the packaging list numerous spells, not all of which are available, together with instructions on casting them. However, the spells appear none too frequently and are specific to particular problems.

A monetary system also exists, although it only comes into being in part one. Basically, this revolves around you having X gold coins. If you have, great, you can buy the doubleswords, but if you haven't, tough, you can't buy anything until you get the coins!

Graphics exist for certain locations and most of them have an ultimatesque 3D side on appearance. They can be toggled on and off with the use of the GRAPHICS and TEXT commands. The text descriptions are not very detailed. Every so often, as opposed to every location, EXAMINE will uncover something useful. I particularly liked the redesigned character set which gives the adventure a certain 'olde worlde' feel. Karyssia also features LOAD and SAVE commands, although they only operate with tape.

To conclude, Karyssia is an enjoyable and very well presented adventure but lets itself down with the numerous sudden death endings. The combat and magic systems set it apart from most other adventures by adding more angles and providing more approaches for the adventurer, and it succeeds at being not just another GAC-ed adventure. Thankfully it is in three parts. The individual parts are too small to warrant such a price tag.

Atmosphere - 6/10 Playability - 7/10 Difficulty - 6/10
Value for money - 8/10 Overall enjoyment - 7/10
Reviewer - Paul Brunyee - Spectrum.

Professor Wolff, genius-inventor and leading nuclear scientist, has been kidnapped by KGB agents while on a visit to West Berlin!

The bad news he was carrying copies of the top secret plans for a new, prototype submarine engine at the time! This new engine is capable of providing a more than 30% increase in submarine motive power, and would give the Russians a distinct tactical advantage if they were able to fit it to their boats before we can fit it to ours.

The good news the plans are encrypted in a special cipher format known only to the Professor. It will therefore take the Russians some time to decode this valuable information, especially as Professor Wolff has been injured in the course of the kidnap and is in no fit state to provide his captors with any "assistance" at this stage.

The very worst news of all when word of these goings-on begins to seep through to London, you are sitting in the Departure Lounge at Heathrow Airport. In just a few minutes, you will board the flight which will transport you a warm, sunny climate where you intend to spend two weeks lying by the pool, soaking up ultra-violet rays and alcoholic beverages in just about equal quantities!! However, as John Blake, secret Government operative, the cause of national security is going to take precedence over your own, personal, pleasure. In other words, guess whose vacation is about to get cancelled ??

Your task in Part One of this two part graphic adventure is to respond to the message broadcast on the Heathrow public address system, then contact your office by phone, and finally return there in person. This is not quite as straightforward as it might seem ... you will need change and a telephone number in order to contact your office ... you will need money to pay the cab driver for taking you there ... you will need an address to tell the cab driver to go to ... and you'll need to avoid the pesky pickpocket who will grasp any opportunity to relieve you of your cash!

Once back at your office, a meeting with your boss will fill you in on what has occurred in Berlin ... and prepare you for what is to come next. The missing plans must be recovered, and a false set planted in their place, so as to confuse the enemy. Professor Wolff must be rescued, if possible ... or terminated, if it is not ... he is too valuable a man to be allowed to remain in Russian hands. Time is of the very essence ... it will be 19.00 hours before you arrive in Berlin, the mission must be completed before midnight!

Part Two starts with your arrival in Berlin, where you check in to a quiet hotel. Your first task will be to shake-off the KGB "tail" who picked you up as soon as you entered the city. Then, it's a rush across town to a rendezvous with a double-agent on the platform of an Underground station. Shortly after that, you'll find yourself crossing over to East Berlin, through the famous Checkpoint Charlie, followed by a little breaking-and-entering, before finally penetrating KGB Headquarters for the climax to this operation!

OPERATION BERLIN is the second adventure in the "Operation Series Trilogy" from Wrightchoice (following on from OPERATION STALLION, released earlier this year). There is a price of £500 on offer to the first adventurer to successfully complete

all three games in the Series.

The adventure has been created using the QUILL and its various offshoots, so it possesses many of the features which we have now come to expect. However, it also contains a couple of touches which are a little more unusual. The commands VERBS and NOUNS will display two lists, each containing over 50 entries, of words which are "understood" by the game ... and HELP will give you the address and telephone number for Wrightchoice Software. I think that it's very heartening to see the producer of a game exhibiting such a positive attitude towards helping people stuck without a clue, particularly as there is a substantial prize at stake! Well done, Wrightchoice!

The game itself follows, fairly closely, the format established by OPERATION STALLION, but boasts several improvements in technique over that adventure. The first part is little more than a scene-setter, at the end of which you will be allowed to select items of equipment to take with you into Part Two. In STALLION, you were allowed to choose about 12 items from about 24 on offer ... this meant that a fair bit of backtracking was required when you eventually discovered that one of the items you left behind was required after all! In BERLIN, there are only 12 items on offer ... of which you may select 11. Therefore, there is much less chance of getting it wrong, and much less backtracking required!!

In Part Two, the adventure proper begins, and it takes place against the "clock". You have "5 game hours" in which to complete your mission, and each move is deemed to occupy "1 game minute" (i.e. 300 moves maximum available). However, you are not penalised for "non productive" moves, like "INVENTORY" or "REDESCRIBE", so the game is much more flexible, from that point of view, than its predecessor. In addition, if you die in Part Two (and you probably will), you will find that you are automatically restored to your last Ramsaved position ... provided that you have Ramsaved a position, of course! This works very well, and helps to maintain the pace of the adventure.

On the less endearing side, the game has a fair few "instant death" locations. Many of these can be justified, on the grounds that if you satisfy a certain condition, or carry a certain object to protect you, the "instant death" will not take place. Others however, simply represent an expedient method of preventing the player exploring in directions which the programmer does not wish him to go, and are therefore nothing more than a nuisance! I am also a little unhappy about some of the conditions and input constructions which the writer has chosen to use. For instance, in Part One, you must input "PHONE CJ" before you input the number to be dialled. If you attempt to input the number straightaway, the line is always engaged! Also, in Part Two, it is necessary to "CAREFULLY SEARCH" in a particular location, or you will not find a vital piece of equipment.

All in all though, I'm quite pleased with OPERATION BERLIN. It represents a significant improvement over the first "Operation" game, and, if that scale of improvement is continued, the third part of the Series, and other future releases from Wrightchoice, are going to be well worth checking out!

NOTE: It has recently been brought to my attention that I made an error in my review of an earlier Wrightchoice release, "THE CROWN" (Probe No. 10 in March 1987). I stated that the Pawnshop was only open for one visit ... it, in fact, remains open just as long as you continue to have the Purse in your possession. My apologies to Wrightchoice, and to anyone else who may have been misled.

Reviewer - Jim O'Keeffe - Spectrum

WRIGHTCHOICE SOFTWARE, P.O. Box 100, 159 Welbeck Crescent, Troon, Ayrshire, KA10 6BD.

Nova and Haunted House are both Graphic/Text adventures written with the aid of GAC and released by Incentive on their Double Gold label. Nova is by Jem Myer and Haunted House is by Jason Twigg.

NOVA

In this adventure you are the Chief Engineer in charge of mankind's exodus from Earth. The sun is going Nova so the only hope for the survival of humanity is to journey to another Solar System. Your fellow humans are already stored in Cryogenic Chambers on the Moonbase, awaiting the Stella Launch. Everything has been going smoothly until suddenly you are attacked by Cyborgs. These deadly creatures have a paranoid hatred for all humans and will stop at nothing in their efforts to destroy them. You survive the attack, but are left with a concussion which is hampering your memory, nevertheless you do recall the need to kill all the remaining Cyborgs and to take a vital circuit board to the Moonbase. Armed with only a small laser you set off to brave the dangers, knowing that if you fail then mankind is doomed, as there will be no-one left to initiate the Launch which will set humanity on its 1000 year journey to a new home.

This, in my opinion is a very good adventure, the plot although not new contains a certain amount of originality, the graphics are well up to the normal GAC standard and the author has made good use of colour to give them added atmosphere. The text descriptions are a little on the short side at times, but they are clear and easy to read. The parser is mainly verb/noun with the occasional extra word being necessary for some inputs.

This game is by no means simple to complete as it contains a high random death element, until all the active Cyborgs have been destroyed. Now I am not normally in favour of random deaths as it tends to make solving an adventure more of a chore than a pleasure, but in Nova although I found it rather frustrating at times, I felt that it was an essential part of the plot and therefore acceptable. I can honestly say that I really found Nova enjoyable to play and I would recommend it highly.

ATMOSPHERE 7/10 PLAYABILITY 6/10 DIFFICULTY 7/10

HAUNTED HOUSE

In Haunted House you are a tramp who is searching for somewhere to spend the night, suddenly you come across an empty and somewhat derelict house. Hardly able to believe your luck you decide to take a look inside. As you step into the hall you are immediately struck by the eerie atmosphere, but before you can retreat the door slams shut and you are trapped inside. The thought of spending the night inside the house sends chills up and down your spine, so you decide to search for another exit. As you make your way from room to room your fears are soon justified, because you find that you are definitely Not Alone.....

This is not a very large adventure, but it's packed with enough monsters to rival a Hammer House of Horror movie, and you soon find

that almost every location has some sort of problem to overcome.

The graphics are a little basic but they are quickly drawn and not uneffective, the text is clear and well laid out, but as is common with GAC quite sparse. The parser is verb/noun and the puzzles fairly logical to solve. The thing I really found enjoyable about playing this adventure was the humour that runs throughout the game and gives interest to a somewhat standard plot. I think the game is possibly more suited to a novice adventurer than the more experienced player, but I found it fun to play.

ATMOSPHERE 5/10 PLAYABILITY 5/10 DIFFICULTY 3/10

Conclusion

Nova is definitely the main adventure of the package and could easily stand on its own, so the inclusion of Haunted House as an added bonus certainly makes this Double Gold offering good value for money. I think Incentive are to be congratulated on the high standard of both games and I look forward to more Double Gold releases for the Amstrad soon.

Reviewer - KAY WHEELER - Amstrad

MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM INCENTIVE SOFTWARE

Incentive have kindly offered a discount of £2 on all their Medallion Adventures for readers of Adventure Probe.

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In this game you play Morrack, the person everyone is depending on to overthrow the dreaded Drakon, before his demon army arrives from across the lake.

You will need help before you finally kill Drakon and this is provided by a number of characters on the way. Some will help if you ask or call their name, but others will need to be given objects of one kind or another.

I found this a very enjoyable game to play mostly due to the presentation and the sense of direction that is given. In other words, you are not wondering which way to go next, as too often happens in games nowadays.

As is usual with all Compass games there is a vocabulary that shows all the verbs that might be out of the ordinary. It also shows an example of how the verbs should be used so that you are in no doubt about what input is required (I wish Tartan Software would take a leaf out of their book).

There are a few useless objects floating about including a "useless spell", which when cast produces nice sound and visual effects but nothing else.

You should be warned at this stage that about half way through, you have to drop any objects you don't need so that you can pass through a hole.

If you make the wrong choice here you won't complete the game, as there is no leeway whatsoever.

The only real difficulty I had was with Stodge the dwarf. I didn't half kick myself when I finally discovered what to do.

Finally I would just like to tell you of the nice anti-climax at the end. When, having disposed of Drakon, you are transported to a door which opens to a green, peaceful valley and all is right with the world.

Reviewer - JACK HIGHAM - Spectrum

COMPASS SOFTWARE, 11 Mill Road, Cobholm, St. Yarmouth. NR31 0BB

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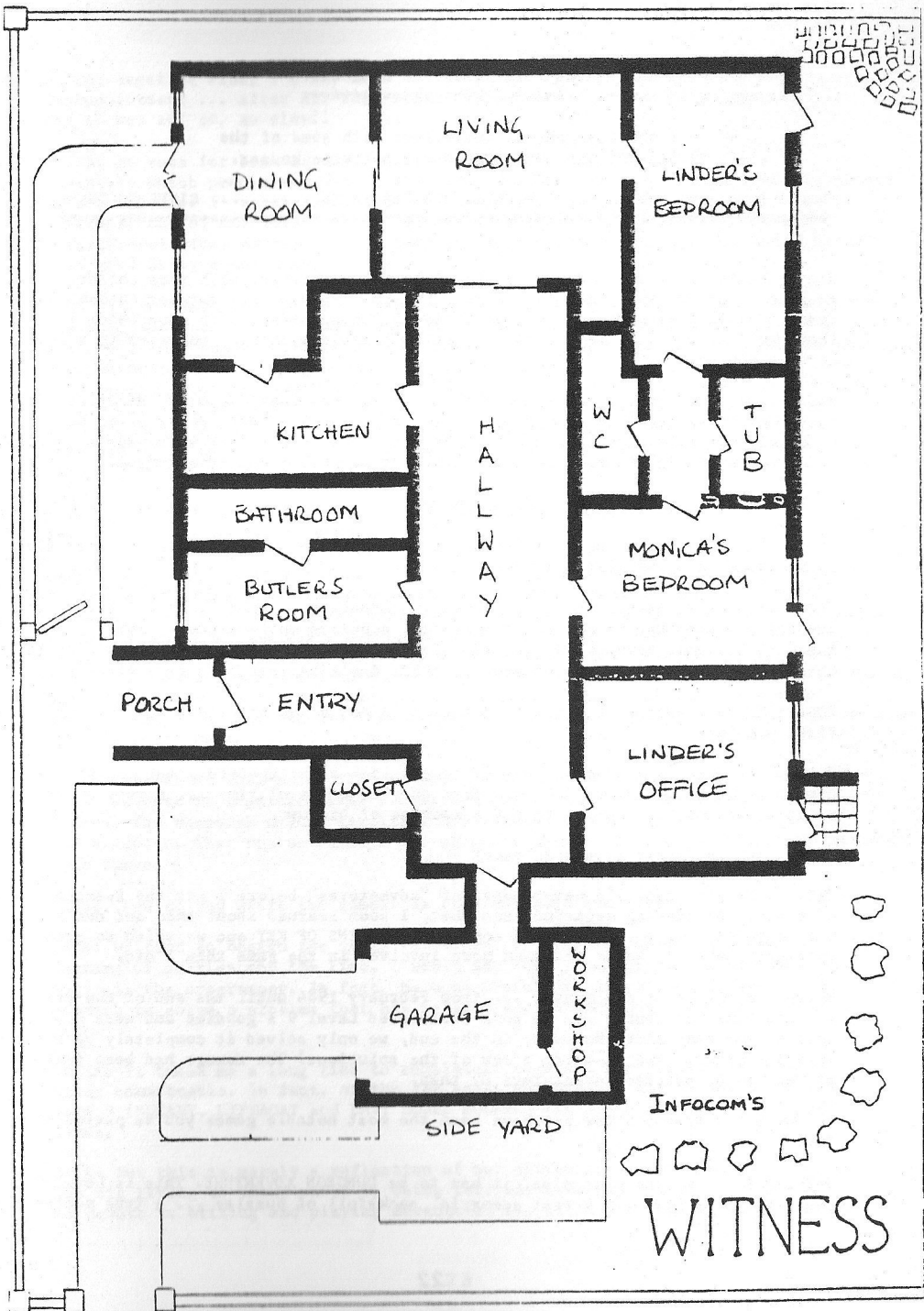
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START

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CHATTING WITH THE WARLOCKS!

A short series of interviews with some of the best of the small adventure software houses.

No. 1 in a set of 4: JACK LOCKERBY and ROGER BETTS RIVER SOFTWARE.

JACK LOCKERBY is a retired mining official. He is married, with four children (three daughters and one son). Although born a Cockney (in deepest, darkest Fulham), he spent over 30 years working deep below the Earth's surface. "An experience I thoroughly enjoyed" he says, "due to the incredible spirit of comradeship which exists between mining men."

ROGER BETTS is Jack's son-in-law, married to his youngest daughter, Margaret, and they have three children (two sons and one daughter). By day, Roger earns his living as a self-employed electrician. By night, he plays guitar in a very popular local band. Somewhere in between, he finds time for computers and adventuring:

PROBE: Let's start at the very beginning how did you first become interested in computers and computer adventuring?

JACK: Well, I've always had an interest in computers ... partly due, I think, to the solid background in Maths and Science I acquired while studying for my Mine Managers Diploma. However, it was my wife who bought our first computer ... a 16k Spectrum ... as a Christmas present in 1983. She's regretted it ever since!!

ROGER: Then, a couple of months after that, I got a 48k Spectrum. That was my first machine.

JACK: Roger came around the house to take a look at my Spectrum, and caught the computing bug straightaway! It was then only a matter of time ... a very short time as it turned out ... before he got a machine of his own.

PROBE: And the first adventure game?

JACK: I bought that! I'd never heard of "adventures" before I got the Spectrum, but, of course, by reading magazines and that, I soon learned about them and decided to have a go at one. So, I bought a copy of MOUNTAINS OF KET and we tried to crack it together. However, Roger got much more involved in the game than I did.

ROGER: We played it for months ... from February 1984 until the end of the year! Not all the time, of course ... we soon discovered Level 9's goodies and were playing them at the same time! However, in the end, we only solved it completely by breaking into the program and learning a few of the solutions! The damage had been done 'though we were both addicted adventurers by then.

PROBE: So, what would you say have been the most notable games you've played since then?

JACK: For me, on the plus side, it has to be DUNGEON ADVENTURE. This is Level 9 at their absolute best ... a vast scenario, sacksfull of puzzles ... a true masterpiece.

On the negative side, I'd say LORD OF THE RINGS because it was such a huge disappointment ... after all that media fuss, I expected something special ... and it was so, so, so slow!!

ROGER: My vote for best adventure would go to TWIN KINGDOM VALLEY. It's an adventure which people seem to have divided feelings about ... some love it, others hate it! I like it a lot because of the character interaction and the logical problems. As for the worst, well, you can select any one of those early Brian Howarth Mysterious Adventures ... they had absolutely no atmosphere, and I hated them all! Sorry about that, Brian!

JACK: If you want to talk about the consistent production of high quality adventures however, you really can't beat Level 9! Their adventures are always playable, with only the occasional hiccup, and they'll supply you with a hint sheet so that you can actually finish the game! I know that they've come in for a bit of flak just lately, but they are still, far and away, the best adventure house in the country ... and if stuff like ADRIAN MOLE earns them the money needed to spend time producing more good, solid adventures ... then, I for one will not be complaining! I only wish some of the other top-ranked companies would follow their lead.

PROBE: Can we talk a little more about RIVER SOFTWARE now ... what led you to set up your own software house?

JACK: THE HAMMER OF GRIMMOLD was the first adventure I ever wrote, and I sent it to The Adventurers Club for an appraisal. Due to my inexperience in using the QUILL at that time, that first version of the game was awfully messy. Henry Mueller (then Secretary of the Club, now Managing Director) was kind enough to write back, pointing out all my glaring errors in a nice and friendly manner. He felt that the game showed promise and intimated that the Club would be willing to offer the game for sale on my behalf. However, by the time I had a saleable version of HAMMER ready, The Adventurers Club had entered into a limbo of litigation and no-one could contact them.

ROGER: It was at that point that we decided to give it a go ourselves. We placed a few adverts in magazines like P.C.W. and C&VG and waited to see what would happen. The response wasn't terrific, but I think we made a little profit on the exercise. That was us 'though ... up and running ... it's just built up steadily from there.

PROBE: How do you write the games? Is it a co-operative effort?

JACK: We tend to design the games individually, and then have long talks over the setting of puzzles and the like. I would say that I am more the ideas man, and Roger is the programmer. In fact, he much prefers to sit down and work out a routine to solve a problem that has me stumped, rather than design and write a game.

ROGER: It takes me a long time to completely create a game, mainly due to my other commitments. In fact, of the ten games which RIVER has released to date only 3 (MUTANT, LIFEBOAT and DAVY JONES LOCKER) are actually mine, the rest are Jacks.

JACK: But this is merely a reflection of our different circumstances. Roger has his living to earn, while I, being retired, have all the time in the world to devote to writing and playing adventures ... as long as I keep the garden up

to par, otherwise my wife pulls the plug on me!

PROBE: Are there any features which you particularly like to put in, or keep out of, your own games?

ROGER: I like to get humour into my games if I possibly can, and I make a point of keeping mazes out of it, as I hate them! I tend to be against the inclusion of graphics also but have usually used them as it seems to be expected.

JACK: Unfortunately, I don't have a lively sense of humour like Roger, so if you find anything funny (or punny) in my games, it must have crept in while I wasn't looking! My pet hate is "random death" features and I'd never use such a device in my own games. As far as graphics are concerned, I'm fairly indifferent to them, but, like many writers, I resent the quantity of memory that they eat up, and I therefore tend to avoid using them. For instance, the PAW manual tells you to set aside 2000 bytes if you wish to include a loading screen with your game. Well, I wasn't willing to give up that much memory and so I originally wrote our PAW'd games with no loading screens. However, Roger soon found a way around that.

ROGER: It was fairly simple really, once I found it! All you need to do is, when copying a saved adventure to tape, after your loading screen and short loading program, just leave out the small loader that PAW uses ... and voila! You can now have loading screens with your games that do not cost 2000 bytes.

PROBE: Seeing that you've brought up PAW, can you tell us what you think of this new writing utility? Is it the best yet?

JACK: Some people say that the GAC is more versatile than both the Quill and the PAW. In our experience of all three utilities, PAW is far and away the best, with the Quill second, and GAC a very poor third.

ROGER: You see, with GAC, the amount of memory available to you, even at the very start, is pretty poor. Add to that, the fairly awful way in which GAC compresses text. Some words that you delete from the database, stay in memory just the same. Finally, the use of the various tables can be a major headache because everything is in terms of numbers rather than words!

JACK: With PAW everything is just so easy. You can compress the text and, bingo!, no tokens. You can use Ramsave and Ramload while testing the adventure. Also, when testing, you can move around the locations

- *****
* THE RIVER RANGE *
* * * * *
* 1. THE HAMMER OF GRIMMOLD *
* released July 1986 *
* * * * *
* 2. MATCHMAKER *
* released July 1986 *
* * * * *
* 3. THE JADE NECKLACE *
* released July 1986 *
* * * * *
* 4. REALM OF DARKNESS *
* released August 1986 *
* * * * *
* 5. MUTANT *
* released August 1986 *
* * * * *
* 6. WITCH HUNT *
* Quill release Sept 1986 *
* PAW release July 1987 *
* * * * *
* 7. LIFEBOAT *
* released December 1986 *
* * * * *
* 8. THE CUP *
* Quill release Jan 1987 *
* PAW release June 1987 *
* * * * *
* 9. THE CHALLENGE *
* released June 1987 *
* * * * *
* 10. DAVY JONES LOCKER *
* released June 1987 *
* * * * *
* Titles 1 to 8 are for *
* the Commodore 64 and the *
* Spectrum at £1.75 each. *
* * * * *
* Additionally, titles 9/10 *
* and 3/8 are available for *
* Spectrum at £2.50 per pair *
* * * * *

simply by altering the location flag. You can code in as many different inputs to a specific problem as you like, not by including long lists of synonyms, but by manipulation of the Verb and Noun Flags (Nos. 33 and 34). This is an excellent facility.

ROGER: In fact, the only annoying thing we have found about PAW is the necessity to use overlays when writing a game on a 48k machine. This is a real bind, and we tend to avoid it whenever possible.

PROBE: You've used adventure writing utilities to create all your games ... are either of you, what might be termed, "proper" programmers?

JACK: We both program in Basic. In fact, Roger has just completed writing a smashing game in Basic called LETTER BOMB. Up to 4 people can play, and the object of the game is to discover a word, given out at random, about a specific subject. There are ten different subjects, and words can be between 4 and 9 letters long. The players take turns to input a letter, and each time a wrong guess is input, the fuse on the bomb gets shorter. Seven wrong guesses ... and the bomb explodes! It's great fun!

ROGER: However, if you're asking if either of us are proficient machine code programmers, then the answer must be "No".

PROBE: How do you feel then about claims that the use of adventure writing utilities stifles creativity, since the users are forced to adhere to a basic, and fairly rigid, formula for all their games?

JACK: This just isn't true ... and is becoming even less so with the advent of the PAW which allows great flexibility and room for creativity. I think that people who voice these "they're all the same" ideas must suffer from some kind of inverted snobbery!

PROBE: How successful have you been in selling your games?

JACK: We manage to sell a steady stream of games ... we've received orders from locations as diverse as Limerick and Denmark, but, for some reason, the largest market seems to be Scotland! This, for us, is quite a bonus because we only produce the games for the fun of doing so. If we sell some copies and other people enjoy them, that's terrific! But it's not particularly important ... we'd still write the games even if it was only for ourselves. As you'll appreciate, we're not in this business to make money ... we'd have starved to death long ago if we were ... we just want to have some fun!

PROBE: What about advertising?

JACK: Apart from those first couple of adverts in P.C.W. and C&VG, we haven't really done very much. None of the small producers can afford the prices the monthly mags charge, and small ads, although cheap, have a limited appeal. We've tried advertising in PROBE fairly regularly, but response there has been fairly patchy. A good review helps, of course!

ROGER: Tony Bridge once gave us a little plug in P.C.W., and Roger Garrett did likewise in YOUR COMPUTER. Those were nice. Incidentally, we no longer buy P.C.W. since they disposed of Tony Bridge's services. It's a real shame he's gone. All small adventure producers are going to miss his help and advice. We feel he'll come bouncing back, somewhere, before too long however!

JACK: For some reason, Spectrum versions of our games outsell the Commodore versions by about 12 to 1. Perhaps this is because there are more Spectrums around than Commodores. I don't know. Or perhaps, it's because all the Commodore owners have disc drives and, therefore, only play Infocom games!

PROBE: Do you have any personal preference between the two machines?

ROGER: I must admit that I really do like the 40 characters per line set up on the Commodore ... but, as far as writing adventures with an utility is concerned, the Spectrum is by far the easier machine to work with. In fact, our first Quilled game on the Commodore almost put us off it forever! The adventure took 15 minutes to load and the screen remained blank the whole time ... you couldn't even tell if the game was loading or not!

JACK: After that, we bought a fast loader copier which reduced the loading time to 3 minutes and gave you nice blue and yellow lines to look at while it was doing it! By the way, did you know that you need a knowledge of machine code in order to incorporate a loading screen into a Quilled Commodore game? Incredible, eh?

PROBE: And what can we expect to see from RIVER in the near future?

JACK: Well, as you know, we are currently in the process of converting the Spectrum versions of our games from the Quill to the PAW. After which, we will permanently withdraw the Quilled versions from sale. Originally, I expected to have all the conversions completed before the end of the year. However, my 128k Spectrum has had to go into the repair shop for about 4 weeks after it developed a fault in a bank of keys. So, it will now be early new year before all the conversions are finished.

ROGER: As far as new adventures are concerned, I've got a design for a space game in mind ... but it's at an early stage. It needs a lot more work yet. In the longer term, Jack has a little pet project he's working on which may, or may not, see the light of day eventually.

JACK: It's a plan for a murder mystery to be written using the PAW on a 128k Spectrum. It will be text only, and feature about ten different characters. I have most of the locations on tape now, but the game is proving a little harder to implement than I thought it was going to be. You see, I want the game to be like reading a murder mystery thriller ... you have to find all the clues, gather them in, and, finally, solve the murder. Therefore, I don't want to introduce any problems which are not in some way associated with the murder. It's not easy. However, if the game ever gets finished, it should occupy about 126k, which would be quite something!

PROBE: Any plans to publish games written by people other than yourselves?

JACK: No! As we said, we're only in it for fun. We don't want the responsibility of handling other peoples' games. It might stop being fun then ...

PROBE: Jack ... Roger ... thank you very much!

Jim O'Keefe

RIVER SOFTWARE, 44 Hyde Place, Aylesham, Canterbury, Kent, CT3 3AL

IN-TOUCH

I have four AMSTRAD INFOCOMS for sale:

Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy - £10, Lurking Horror, Spellbreaker and Stationfall - £12.50 each, or all four games £45.

Phone 01 527 8426 to check availability or write to:

PETER BROWN, 57 Ropers Avenue, Chingford, London. E4 9EG

SPECTRUM SOFTWARE FOR SALE - All originals in near-mint condition.

Play it again Sam - £2.25, Doomdark's Revenge - £3, Faerie - £1, Subunk - £1, Imagination - £1, Life Term - £1, Moron - £1, Rifts of Time/The Traveller - £1, Murder at the Manor - £1, The Planets - £3, Runestone - £3, The Patch - £2, The-Fix - £2.

Phone 0527 71612 evenings to check availability.

Cheques/PO's to NEIL TALBOT, 31 Chadcote Way, Catshill, Bromsgrove, Worcs. B61 0JU

SOFTWARE FOR SALE - ALL ORIGINALS.

AMSTRAD

ON DISC: Jewels of Darkness - £8, The Pawn - £10, Hacker II - £5, Suspended - £10, Infidel - £10, Solomon's Key - £5.

ON CASSETTE: Forest at Worlds End - £1, Stormbringer - £1.50, Necris Dome - £1, Vera Cruz - £3.50. Incentive's Nova/ Haunted House bought by mistake still in sealed package - £5.

COMMODORE - Lords of Time on cassette - £3.50.

SPECTRUM - Lords of Time - £3.50, Kentilla - £1, Spiderman - £1.50.

Tel: 0942 217044 to check availability or write to:

SANDRA SHARKEY, 78 Merton Road, Highfield, Wigan. WN3 6AT

TAPE ADVENTURES FOR THE BBC B:

I have the following adventures for sale:

Adventureland, Pirate Adventure, Secret Mission, Voodoo Castle, The Count, Mystery Funhouse, Pyramid of Doom, Ghost Town, The Golden Baton, The Time Machine, Escape from Pulsar 7, Circus, Feasibility Experiment, The Wizard of Akryz, Perseus & Andromeda and Ten Little Indians - £2 each.

Tel: 0454 773169 to check availability or write to:

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

LETTERS

I recently bought two new Mastertronic adventures. The more expensive one on the MAD label "Play it again Sam" was a bit disappointing considering the standard of some of their recent games, but the new one on Bulldog called "Rigel's Revenge" is absolutely brilliant in terms of programming, intelligent responses, plot etc., and an absolute bargain at £1.99 - think it's also available for Amstrad and Commodore as well as Spectrum.

NEIL TALBOT, 31 Chadcote Way, Catshill, Bromsgrove, Worcs. B61 0JU

(Thanks for the information Neil. However I feel I must point out to Amstrad users that the Amstrad version may be bugged. I know of at least two copies where it was impossible to begin part 2 so be careful. Has anyone else got a game they would like to recommend? I know of one that I always recommend to Spectrum owners and that is VALKYRIE 17, I loved it! For Amstrad users there are the ARNOLD games from NEMESIS, on which I cut my adventuring teeth and THE LOST PHIRIOUS QUADRILOGY (trilogy at the moment!) from VIDIPIX ... SANDRA)

In a recent letter to you I mentioned that my copy of "The Guild of Thieves" was not giving the full colour graphic illustrations as advertised. In actual fact, so far the pictures I have viewed have been mostly black and white, whilst one was a single washed-out blue-ish shade, which blurred the picture and another was all in a yacky shade of brown, again making the scene fuzzy. I took the package back to Manchester ("Atari World") and the owner immediately exchanged it for a fresh, sealed, box.

Unfortunately, when I got the game booted up at home, the same result occurred. Yesterday I went back to the shop in Manchester where the owner without ado telephoned Rainbird Software in London. After an unsatisfactory exchange of questions and answers, he handed me the 'phone so that I could make a personal complaint, hoping that an "aggrieved customer" approach would elicit a satisfactory response. The lad to whom I spoke airily told me that the Atari 8-bit version could not take the colours of the original graphics because the 800XL and 130XE Atari machines did not have sufficient memory and there was nothing he could do about it. I have written formally to them to express my inability to understand why no such warning was given on the package which, on the contrary, stated that the game contained "Graphic illustrations to blow your socks off" (who thinks up such charming phrases?). So, if any Atari 8-biters out there are thinking of this game for Christmas, 'caveat emptor'.

If you have any Atari members who have been similarly disillusioned, perhaps they could be persuaded to write to Rainbird Software and protest. After all, it is not a cheap game! Should I get a reply from my namesakes, I shall let you know.

RON RAINBIRD, 62 Coniston Avenue, Holmes Chapel, Nr. Crewe. CW4 7LB

(Doesn't that contravene the Trade Descriptions Act? ... Sandra)

I would like to say that the story solution of 'Cutthroats' by Mandy Rodrigues (Issue 18) was excellent which, seeing that I don't usually like the story solutions, goes to show that if a solution is done well enough it can convert even the most biased member.

I look forward to many more story solutions by Mandy in future issues of 'Probe'.

GRAHAM WHEELER, 2 Burford Close, Southdown, Bath, Avon. BA2 1JF

I have a tape with saved positions for the adventures listed below. As I no longer use the tape I am willing to send it to one of your readers for just 20p postage.

Side 1. LUDDIDS, FINAL MISSION, FANTASIA DIAMOND, MAGIC MOUNTAIN, EYE OF BAIN, INVINCIBLE ISLAND, QUEST FOR HOLY GRAIL, HEAVY ON THE MAGIC.

Side 2. JOURNEY TO THE CENTRE OF EDDIE SMITH'S HEAD, TIME OF THE END, KNIGHT'S QUEST, PLANET OF DEATH, REBEL PLANET, RETURN TO EDEN, GROUND ZERO, TEMPLE OF TERROR.

Write to ROBERT SHIRLEY, 8 Delmar Gardens, Brock Hill, Wickford, Essex. SS11 7NA

FISHING FOR RED HERRINGS

DEMON FROM THE DARKSIDE - Jack Higham
Horse shoe, useless spell, nail, saw blade, knife, feeding dragon with Sid's body.

ZORK I - Mandy Rodrigues
Leaflet, nest, leaves, label, manual, gunk, timber, guidebook, rusty knife.

ZORK II - Mandy Rodrigues
Teapot, rose, blue book, green book, club, brick.

INFIDEL - Mandy Rodrigues
Padlock, map, sticker, foil packet, crate, note, shim.

HOLLYWOOD HI JINKS - Mandy Rodrigues
Letter, photograph, business card, status line, dusty pillar, dirty pillar, brick.

SPELLBREAKER - Mandy Rodrigues
Opal, treasure, shears.

Christmas Wordsearch

Perry Williams

Find the 23 adventuring words hidden in the grid below. They may be placed horizontally, vertically or diagonally, forwards or backwards. There's also a seasonal greeting (5,9,8)!

Clues

- Aaaagh! Twisty little passages all alike (4 letters).
- Beam me up, Scotty (8).
- Dwarves sit down and sing about it (4).
- Gets rid of vicious snakes (4).
- The right way to cross a crevasse (4,4).
- The wrong way to cross a crevasse (4).
- Throw it, climb it, pull it, tie it (4).
- They come in different colours, and you press them (7).
- Useful for containing fluids (6).
- Useful for dealing with locked doors (3).
- Useful for handling hot or poisonous things (6).
- Useful for killing people (5).
- Usually contains a message, sometimes a spell (6).
- Way of the rising sun (4).
- Way of the setting sun (4).
- What have you got? (9)
- What the Kings and Queens of the Castle offer (4).
- What you do before something dangerous (4).
- What you do to strange objects (7).
- What you need in dark places (4).
- What you say to strange people (5).
- Witches and wizards are good at this (5).
- Your favourite adventure magazine (5).

W	I	N	J	X	C	R	E	I	M	T	O
D	H	K	B	U	T	T	O	N	S	M	D
K	C	I	G	A	M	A	W	V	I	P	R
I	R	W	Q	Y	E	P	F	E	O	E	O
D	T	A	T	A	R	E	U	N	Z	X	W
E	T	V	C	H	R	I	S	T	M	A	S
L	S	E	K	E	Y	A	W	O	G	M	M
G	E	W	L	B	V	I	Y	R	L	I	H
O	W	A	O	E	V	E	R	Y	O	N	E
L	E	N	M	N	P	T	C	E	V	E	L
D	A	D	S	C	R	O	L	L	E	G	P
E	S	M	A	O	O	T	R	J	S	T	A
K	T	U	P	A	B	O	T	T	L	E	C
O	H	E	F	H	E	L	L	O	E	D	O

TIPS FOR BEGINNERS

Here is a checklist of things to try if you are stuck in a game - before you write or phone for help or look for a published solution!

Try typing HELP. Not many games have a built-in help facility now, since helplines are so common, but some of the older ones do. Usually you have to type it at the location where you are stuck to get much of a response. Some games, such as "Heavy on the Magick", have characters who you can ask for help; make use of them! Again, it may be necessary to get them to the right location first.

Check your equipment. Not just the objects you are carrying, but all the ones you've encountered so far. Do any of them seem relevant here? Have you examined all of them? They may have hidden properties. Is there anything obvious you should do to them? Of course you'll have opened all the boxes and envelopes you've found, but "Black Fountain" requires you to pluck a chicken to get feathers and play a lyre to get a (broken) string. Some games require you to combine two or more objects together (e.g. "Theseus": INSERT REED INTO TUBE to make a syringe) or simply to be carrying them simultaneously (e.g. "Red Moon": carry gas mask, tubing and flask to swim underwater).

Look for unused features of the game so far. Programmers often put in objects which are just red herrings and have no use at all, but memory limits being what they are, they won't usually waste a large number of words on a feature such as a statue or a tree if it plays no part in the game. Statues are for examining, climbing, turning and maybe bringing to life; trees are for climbing, shaking and chopping down. (Vandal!) Characters who just stand there doing nothing must have some significance in the game!

Retrace your steps, and do all the things which you should have done to begin with, but if you're like me you'll have failed to do perfectly. Are you sure you got all the exits from all the locations? Even in games which apparently list the exits for you, this is worth checking. Don't forget NE, NW, SE, SW, U, D, IN, OUT, CLIMB and CLIMB INTO. Are there any signs of a hidden or temporarily blocked exits? Locked doors are obvious, but a blank wall might conceal a magic door, and rock falls, grating and flat stones in the ground generally have to be cleared, opened and levered up. Are you sure you've examined all the features of the landscape mentioned in the text? Of course you found the contents of the desk without trouble, but some programmers love hiding crucial objects in long grass. Remember: any interesting feature is likely to have some significance!

Re-read the instructions, check the loading screen. In some games, there are important clues hidden here; in others, you get sample commands or a partial list of the vocabulary. These are provided to help you, so use them!

PERRY WILLIAMS

(Have YOU got any tips for beginners?)

SUE'S NEWS
by Bunny

Well it's time to venture out and let you know that I'm still around causing havoc and bugging people. Golly wizzle have I been bugging them?

As you know (or do you?) I went to the Amstrad show. It was great. Not so much the show more the people I met, Sandra for one. You should have seen her face when I met her at the station, she started laughing at me. I did warn her that I'd be carrying a twelve inch Bugs Bunny, I lied it's fifteen inch.

I got my freebies off friends (well, they're friends now), free butties, saved a man's life by taking his butty off him. He was just about to shove the last part of it in his mouth when I shouted, "No! Don't put all that in!" So he asks, "Why not?" and I said, "Cos you won't be able to give me any if you do." It worked. He gave me some, but Sandra walked off and left me. In fact she kept walking away from me, I still can't think why. I must have impressed him 'cos he went and gave me a full butty later. I stopped going when there were no more butties.

At another stall they called me a vandal, but it wasn't my fault! I'd pick up a game and open it to read the inlay and end up with two pieces of case, an inlay and a cassette in my hand. I tried fixing one back together without anyone seeing me, but they caught me.

I was going to buy a plonker box, but it wasn't what I thought so I never bothered. I got a free tee-shirt off a very pleasant man, it was supposed to be £4.95 but I flashed my eyes and talked him round. Yes, it was a really good day and I'm looking forward to going to Sutton for the convention.

Just before I finish writing about the show, I'd like to mention the piece Sandra wrote in her editorial last month. For some unknown reason everyone seemed to assume that it was me that spent all the time in the bar, 'cos Sandra had put about her not touching ALCOHOLIC (I CAN spell ALCOHOL ... Sandra) beverages. I began to wonder if I had spent a lot of time in the bar and I came to the conclusion that I might have done after all! I think it was because as soon as I started to walk to the bar the barman was already pouring the drinks. I felt like a regular. But it wasn't just me, yes, I know he had to go and get another crate of cider - but I don't think the crate held many anyway. (I can testify that it certainly wasn't just Sue knocking back the ALCOHOL!!!! - THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO SPOTTED MY DELIBERATE SPELLING ERROR IN LAST MONTHS EDITORIAL I WAS JUST TESTING YOU ... Sandra)

There was even a manic fly in the bar that kept attacking a certain person, not mentioning any names, but how'd ya like your present Pete?

Well, it's almost Christmas again so I've put my tree up. I know it's early but I like to be different. In fact it was extra early, the 6th November to be exact, but I had to make up for lost time. Remember last year when I had to keep carrying it from room to room.

One of the kids said to me, "I only want one thing for Christmas." I double checked and it really was one of my kids. Well they don't usually ask for just one thing, then I found out why. It cost over £200, so I told him to think again.

I'm dead excited. I stopped writing this letter to go to Middleton, went in Tesco and finally managed to get a bottle of Bananes Bols. So tonight it's off to my sister's, drinking, putting ceiling tiles on, drinking, another tile, more drink so by the time you read this I'll have poured it down and brought it back and be back to normal. Whatever normal is.

Two good days on the run, I can't believe it. One tonight and one last night.

I'm afraid I'll have to finish this now as I'm still thinking about my night out and looking forward to tonight. I can't concentrate. The next time I write will most probably be just after Christmas. I'll let you know how I survived that and what presents you all sent me. Wonder if I'll get a MODEM!?

Well, have a good Christmas, I intend to. That's if I find my way back from Sutton.

See you,
Love Bunny

BUGS AND AMUSING RESPONSES

THE PAWN - Linda Wright
In the Spectrum version, if you buy something with the coin and the coin is in the pouch, you buy the object and keep the coin!

STATIONFALL - Sandra
Turn Floyd off. Search Floyd. Ask Floyd to turn off welder. Shoot Oliver - but SAVE game first! Look behind the dryer. In the Amstrad version, The Studio and Junk rooms are a bit mixed up!

DEFINITION OF STUPIDITY

Getting so engrossed in the Hobbit that when you mistakenly tell Thorin to 'swim river' and helplessly watch the poor thing drown, you input wildly 'SAVE THORIN' and get the response 'PRESS RECORD AND PLAY ON TAPE'!

Mandy Rodrigues

GETTING YOU STARTED

DEMON FROM THE DARKSIDE - J. R.

NE, GET RUBY, EXAMINE BODY, PULL ARROW (body now disappears), SW, S, GET SWORD, EXAMINE STATUE, READ SYMBOLS, SAY MECLA (the statue moves), EXAMINE STATUE (gap now leads East), E (the statue seals you in!), GET LIFE SPELL, S, EXAMINE SLIME, GET MASK, D, EXAMINE WATER, GET RAT, CAST LIFE SPELL (the rat comes to life, his name is SED and if you need any help, call his name), WAIT (until you see the message: "WALLS ARE CLOSING IN"), USE PLANK (to wedge the walls), CLIMB PLANK, (you are catapulted out of the pit), N, EXAMINE STATUE (eye missing), INSERT RUBY (intense light strikes the wall and you fall through), S, D, BREAK STAIRS (to reveal a previously hidden chamber - you can now go in and obtain the torch, rope and bone).

SMUGGLER'S COVE - J. R.

LOOK, TAKE TORCH, LIGHT TORCH, E, TAKE MUNCHIES (which are attached to a lifebelt), FLOAT MUNCHIES (they disappear down a hole - the relevance of which will be made clear very soon!), E, TAKE HAMMER, W, W, S, SEARCH GRAVEL (you will locate a barrel), SMASH BARREL WITH HAMMER (inside the barrel are a rope and some spiked shoes), TAKE SHOES, TAKE ROPE, N, E, E, THROW ROPE (it now hangs down from the ledge), WEAR SHOES, CLIMB ROPE (the spiked shoe prevents you from slipping), TAKE LADDER (it falls to the floor), D, DROP SHOES, TAKE LADDER, W, W, S, DROP LADDER (it now spans the trench), S (ignore hungry cat at this stage), D, READ MESSAGE (for an important clue), N (your lifebelt/munchies are here!), TAKE KEY (the monster rises but is more interested in the munchies!), S, E, SMASH PADLOCK WITH HAMMER.....

PROSPECTOR - J. R.

E, S, GET BAG, EXAMINE BAG, UNDO BAG, N, W, S, E, BUY CANDIES, EAT CANDIES, W, W, W, W, E, E, TIE STRING, N, PULL STRING (you ring the bell and the Sherrif and his men run into the Fire Station), DROP STRING, S, W, W, N, N, N, E, GET HAT, TROW HAT (through the window), E, GET HAT, WEAR HAT, S, S, E, GET RAZOR, W, W, GET BAR, S, SEARCH STRAW, LOOK, GET HAMMER, STEAL HORSE, E, N, N, N, E, S, GET NAILS, N, E, S, MOUNT HORSE, S (any direction now until the horse goes lame and you dismount), REMOVE STONE, MOUNT HORSE, S, W, S, E, E, S, S, S, DISMOUNT, DROP HORSE, W, W, S, S, EXAMINE COACH, EXAMINE SEAT, BREAK SEAT, GET SAW, N, N, E, S, U, E, OPEN WARDROBE, EXAMINE WARDROBE, LOOK, GET HOOK, GET MATTRESS, N, THROW MATTRESS, JUMP, E, E, E, S, EXAMINE HUT, SHARPEN SAW, SHARPEN RAZOR, N, HELP MAN, SAW WOOD (he gives you 40 dollars).....

MAGIC CASTLE - J. R.

GET MITTENS, WEAR MITTENS, E, E, S, E, GET TORCH (it has no power source as yet), W, U, GET BATTERY, USE BATTERY (your torch is now serviceable), D, N, GET SCREWDRIIVER, W, N, GET KEY, S, GET AXE (this item needs sharpening), W, S (to avoid minefield!), E, E, LIGHT TORCH, R (to see where you are!), E, E, E, E, E, SHARPEN AXE, N (you will now become thirsty), S, W, DRINK, E, N, DROP AXE, DROP MITTENS, GET AXE, OPEN SUITCASE, WITH KEY, DROP KEY, GET CRUCIFIX (you must carry this through the church or you will be bitten on the neck), S, W, W, S, S, S, D, USE AXE (the door is now open and you have no further use for the axe).....

FAUSTS FOLLY - J. R.

Carry the compass at all times. TICKLE the Sad Warrior with the FEATHER. BLOW FLUTE at the Bony Wretch. THROW NET at the Giant Bat. TURN WHEEL at the clearing to reveal a hole leading down. (Treasures dropped here.) THROW BOTTLE at wall of fire created by the Fire Demon. In the library WHISPER then enter the direction you require. In the Bank Vault, when you take either COINS or INGOT you replace them with something else to prevent the ceiling coming down!

IN SEARCH OF ANGELS - J. R.

In Berlin SEARCH the Bar for the RUSSIAN NEWSPAPER then READ it to find the KGB report. The way through the maze of gas pipes in Casablanca is SE, SE, SE, UP. When flying to Tokyo EXAMINE the seat for find a PARACHUTE then, after WEARING it, JUMP when told the plane is going down. SWIM in the sea or you'll drown!!

ZORK II - Graham Wheeler

Throw sword at aquarium for a smashing time. Lizards like candies. Oddly Angled Room - make a baseball Home Run.

ZORK III - Graham Wheeler

Be patient by the chest, then trust the stranger. Get Hood to defeat the Shadow.

STATIONFALL - Sandra

Vandalise the mirror in the Barbers. Look to the ceiling in the Pet Shop for a way to get the ostrich. When Plato turns traitor, ask Floyd for help; he'll come good - eventually! Those dots look delicious, taste them! A thermo bottle will keep things cool as well as hot. Keep your ID away from the magnetised boots. Shoot the strongbox to find some pocket money. Don't vandalise the dispenser the ostrich will stick his head up the hole if you tempt him. Don't forget to turn the lamp off when you return to a light location.

THE SERF'S TALE - Bob Astley

After finding the map DO NOT drop it until AFTER you have visited and left the WAYSTATION.

THE CASTLE - Jackie Holt

Catch the insect in the jar to pass the animal. Flap arms to cross chasm. Pray at the altar. Move the rock with the stick. Carry the head to escape from the bottom of the chasm. Carry the shield to get the eyes. Pour the liquid on the block of lead. Type 'Score' in Strange Room.

STRANGE ODYSSEY - Jackie Holt

Stun the Ice Hound then drop it in the snow storm. You need the pick to find a diamond. Break the rod to get ships power. Open the hatch with the twisted metal. Examine the sculpture to find a belt. Plastic must glow 1, 2, 3, 6, 7 times.

THE CHALLENGE - Jackie Holt

The monkey likes bananas and the bats like apples. Can't cross the gap - chop the tree down then look behind it.

ADVENT ODE

* Twas the night before Christmas and, all through the house,
* One creature was stirring, and it wasn't a mouse.
* Mum was playing adventures, very late and yawning
* 'Cos it would all have to stop from early next morning.
* The stockings, had been hung up with a great thrill
* Mum was hoping that hers Santa would with Infocom fill!

* But tomorrow she couldn't even give them a glance
* She'd be that busy in the kitchen she wouldn't have a chance.
* The kiddies would be waiting with stomachs a growl
* While shue loaded stuffing up the rear end of a fowl!
* And then, while the family flopped with paper hats askew,
* She knew even then that she'd have too much work to do.

* 'Cos for tea they all wanted some jellies and trifles
* And her head was pounding from hearing toy rifles.
* With mum coming round she'd have to sit and chatter
* And keep up a smile or they would ask "What's the matter?"
* But all the time, deep inside she'd be itching to get
* Back to her micro with an adventure not seen yet.

* And when in the evening they all wanted to snooze
* She'd be back in the kitchen washing up from the booze!
* Then Boxing Day comes with the same kind of doddle
* If they ate much more turkey they would all start to 'gobble'!
* You see, Christmas for Mums with the work to be done
* Isn't anything like other folks' Christmas fun.

* "But the day after that," she thought with a titter
* The old man could moan and the children could witter,
* She'd take no notice and to her computer she'd be glued
* And not give a damn if they said she was being rude
* And all of their talk would waft over her bent head
* They would soon leave her alone and glide off to bed.

* Well a lot of nice things about Christmas is said
* 'Cos people don't frown much, they all smile instead.
* So she supposed she could muffle her adventuring itches
* And make sure they all had their fun without hitches.
* For Christmas she'd make them so full of good cheer
* They wouldn't dare stop her adventures during next year!

Mandy Rodrigues

SANDRA'S CHATLINE

If you have any queries about your subscriptions or you fancy a chat then give me a ring on 0942 217044 between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. on a Saturday morning and you'll be sure of catching me at home.

TELEPHONE HELPLINE

(Spectrum)

ALF BALDWIN Tel: 0452 500512 - Monday to Saturday - 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
MIKE WADE Tel: 0642 763793 - Monday to Friday - 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.
JACK HIGHAM Tel: 0925 819631 Fri, Sat, Sun, Mon. - 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.
WALTER POOLEY Tel: 051 933 1342 - calls at any reasonable time.
DOREEN BARDON Tel: 065 382 509 - calls at any reasonable time.

(Amstrad)

LINDA FRIEND Tel: 0278 428641 Monday to Friday - 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
JOAN PANCOTT Tel: 0305 784155 - Any day - Noon to 10 p.m.
DOUG YOUNG Tel: 01 681 5068 - Evenings Mon to Fri anytime weekends.

(BBC)

BARBARA BASSINGTHWAIGHTE Tel: 0935 26174-Mon to Fri- 10a.m. to 10p.m.

(Commodore)

MANDY RODRIGUES Tel: 0492 77305 - Mon. to Sun. up to 10.30 p.m.

(More than one machine)

GRAHAM WHEELER Tel: Bath 0225 26919 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. any day.
SUE BURKE Tel: 061 653 0005 - Monday to Sunday - 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Please make sure you only ring at the times shown.

If you would like to volunteer for the telephone helpline then send in your name, telephone number, make of machine, and state the days and times when you would be available.

KINGS AND QUEENS OF THE CASTLE

ALAN ROBSON, British Frontier Service, JSLO, BFPO 34.
Dungeon Adventure, Emerald Isle, Heroes of Karn, Subunk, Seabase Delta, Smugglers Cove, The Hobbit.

RICHARD BATEY, 34 Sycamore Rd. South, Sebastopol, Pontypool. NP4 5AW
An Everyday Tale of a Seeker of Gold, Bimbles, Castle Blackstar, Island (Crystal), H.R.H., Jewels of Darkness, Pawn, Runes of Zandos, Seas of Blood, Se Kaa of Assiah, Silicon Dreams Trilogy, Special Operations, Twin Kingdom Valley, 10 Adventure Game Pack Vol 1 (all games completed), 10 Adventure Game Pack Vol 2 (7 out of 10).

BARBARA GIBB, 52 Burford Road, Liverpool. L16 6AQ
Blue Dragon, Dodgy Geezers, Dragon's Tooth, Oxbridge, Survivor.

(DON'T FORGET TO SEND A SAE OR IRC WHEN REQUESTING HELP!)

KINGS & QUEENS CONTINUED

PARASKEVAS TSOURINAKIS, 85 Botassi Str., 18537 Piraeus, Greece.
Adventure Quest, Arrow of Death 1 and 2, Ace in Hole, Aftershock, Adventureland, Alter Earth, Buckaroo Banzai, Buggy, Bored of the Rings, Colossal Adventure, Circus, Curse of the 7 faces, Castle Eerie, Classic Adventure, Cuddles, Castle Colditz (K-Tel), Crystal Quest, Castle Adventure, Colour of Magic, Castle Blackstar, Custer's Quest, Crystal Frog, Commando, Dungeon Adventure, Desert Island, Dracula, Dragon Slayer, Danger Mouse in the Black Forest Chateau, Escape from Devil's Island, Emerald Isle, Erik the Viking, Espionage Island, Eye of Bain, El Dorado, Eye of Vartan, Escape from Pulsar 7, Earth Bound, Forest at World's End, Final Mission, Fantasia Diamond, Feasibility Experiment, Four Minutes to Midnight, Golden Apple, Gremlins, Ghost Town (Virgin Games), Giant's Adventure, Golden Baton, Goldseeker, Hampstead, Hobbit, Heroes of Karn, Hulk, Hunchback, Imagination, Inferno, Invincible Island, Ice Station Zero, In Search of Angels, Inca Curse, Jewels of Babylon, Jason and the Golden Fleece, Jade Necklace, Journey to the Centre of Eddie Smith's Head, Kayleth, Knight's Quest, Kentilla, Lords of Time, L'Affaire Vera Cruz, Lord of the Rings, Lifeboat, Mafia Contract I & II, Matt Lucas, Mutant, Mordon's Quest, Mission X, Mansion Quest, Malice in Wonderland, Mindshadow, Mad Martha I & II, Marie Celeste, Mountains of Ket, Magic Mountain, Message from Andromeda, Matchmaker, Masters of the Universe, Orbit of Doom, Orc Island, Perseus and Andromeda, Pharaoh's Tomb, Planet of Death, Prince of Lyndal, Prospector, Pirate's Gold, Pirate Adventure, Quan Tulla, Return to Eden, Red Moon, Robin Hood, Robin of Sherwood, Return to Ithaca, Rifts of Time, Robin of Sherlock, Rebel Planet, Realm of Darkness, Snowball, Ship of Doom, Shipwreck, Seas of Blood, Secret Mission, Seabase Delta, Spiderman, Smuggler's Cove, Sherlock Holmes, Subunk, Savage Island 1, Sea of Ziron, Scoop!, Strange Odyssey, Shrewsbury Key, Souls of Darkon, The Price of Magic, Ten Little Indians, Twin Kingdom Valley, Temple of Vran, Terrormolinos, The Sorcerer of Claymorgue Castle, Tower of Despair, The Boggit, The Very Big Cave Adventure, The Hexagonal Museum, Theatre of Death, The Neverending Story, The Helm, Tangled Tale, The Key to Time, Trail, The Keeper, Time Quest, The Sidney Affair, The Amulet, The Ring of Dreams, The Secret of St. Brides, Time Machine, The Curse, The Zacaron Mystery, The Legend of Apache Gold, Terrors of Trantos, Temple Terror (Atlantis), The Serf's Tale, The Cup, The Hammer of Grimmold, The Golden Rose, The Sealed City, Urban Upstart, Urquahart Castle, Valhalla, Valkyrie 17, Voodoo Castle, Worm in Paradise, Witch's Cauldron, Warlord, Winter Wonderland, Witch Hunt. (All Spectrum)

Zork I, Borrowed Time, Gateway, Forbidden Quest, Fahrenheit 451, Wishbringer, Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy, The Pawn, King Quest II (All Atari 1040 ST)

And last but not least a fine selection of little known games from: PAUL BRUNYEE, 38 Gynsill Lane, Anstey, Leicester. LE7 7AG

Jamie and his Magic Orb, Invasion of the Souped-up Bunnies, King Arthur and his Amazing Technicolour Armour, Bilbo and the Really Horrible Scary Black Monster from the Swamp, The Guild of Pawns, Santa Claus Nukes the Gnomes.

!!!!!!!!!!!! CHRISTMAS COMPETITION !!!!!!!!!!!!!

A nice easy one for you! All you have to do is provide a caption for the cartoon on the front cover of this magazine. Entries should be in by February 10th 1988 so that the winners' names can be published in the March issue of 'Probe'. You are limited to twenty-five words for your caption. Please make sure that your name, address and make of machine is printed on your entry.

!!!!!!!!!!!! PRIZES !!!!!!!!!!!!!

ATARI - no software has been received for me to offer as a prize so our Atari members can win a 3 months free subscription to 'Probe' or 'Soothsayer' - state choice of prize.

BBC - Thanks to Incentive we have a prize for our BBC members. You can win Incentive's new release THE ALIEN FROM OUTER SPACE and DRAGON'S TOOTH.

COMMODORE - You can win Incentive's new release ZODIAC and THE SECRET OF LIFE.

SPECTRUM - You have the chance to win a bumper package of games including Incentive's KARYSSIA and CRL's ADVENTURE BUILDER SYSTEM. If I get enough entries from Spectrum owners I will split the package and give a second prize as well!

AMSTRAD - BLACK FOUNTAIN/SHARPE'S DEEDS, MOUNTAINS OF KET/TOP SECRET and NOVA/HAUNTED HOUSE all courtesy of Incentive. There will also be a second prize for Amstrad users as I have two copies of some of the games courtesy of INSIGHT's Ron Dawson.

There you have it! A nice easy competition! So ENTER IT!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Please mark your envelopes "GRAND CHRISTMAS COMPO" and send to the address on the front cover of Probe. Closing date 10th February 1988.

HALL OF FAME

Thanks to the following readers for sending in contributions during the last month:

Alf Baldwin, John Barnsley, Dave Brown, Graham Collier, Jack Higham, Jim O'Keeffe, Neil Scrimgeour, Neil Shipman, Kay and Graham Wheeler, Perry Williams.

And thanks to everyone who has sent in contributions over the last year. I couldn't produce the magazine without you! Sandra

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO EVERYONE

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