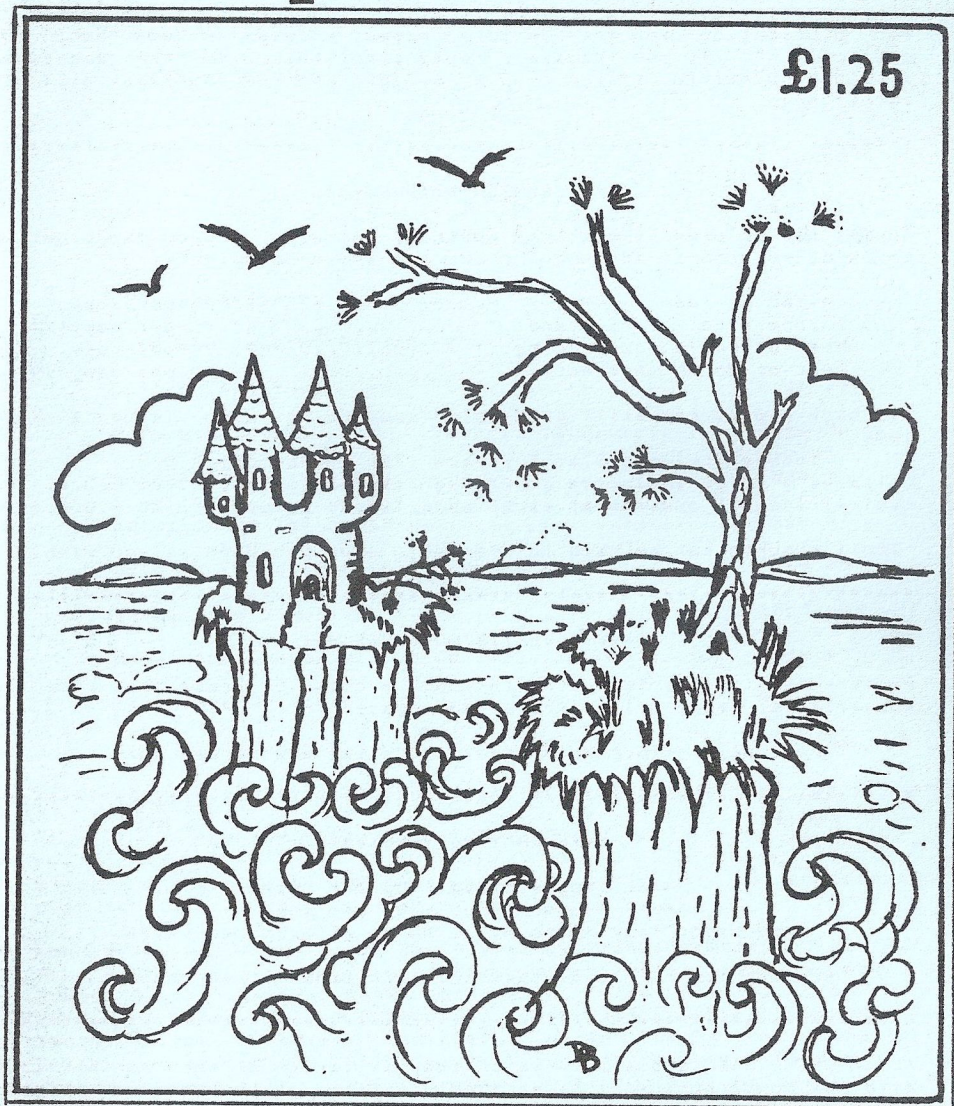


ADVENTURE PULSE

£1.25



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September 1988

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*** HALL OF FAME ***



Sincere thanks to the following readers who sent in contributions over the last month.

Sandra Sharkey, June Rowe, Walter Pooley, John Barnsley, Dave Perry, Paul Brunyee, Dorothy Millard, Allan L. Phillips, John Wildey, Bob Adams, Silvia Janssen, Kenny Kennington, Terry Roberts, Chris Banks, Margo Porteous, Mike Brailsford, Tony Bevan, Nic Rumsey, Joan Pancott, Jenny Wheeler, Sam Dart, Allan Batchellor, Christopher Hester, Joyce Furlong, Brian R. Pell, Doreen Bardon, Barbara Glob, Sharon Lowndes, The Grue, Graham Collier, Alf Baldwin and Pat Winstanley.

The lovely cover picture this month is by Doreen Bardon.



EDITORIAL



Welcome to Vol 11 Issue 9 of Adventure Probe.

I should imagine that you have all heard by now of the sad demise of our sister magazine Soothsaver, I was very distressed to receive the final issue and will miss Soothsaver very much indeed. Our John Barnsley has had a very rough time recently and I sincerely hope that things will start going well for him once again. I know you will join with me in wishing him all the very best. I hope that we will continue to see John in the pages of Probe and I know that he would love to keep in touch with all his friends.

Dr Chris Banks and his lovely wife were delighted with the birth of a beautiful baby girl a few weeks ago and I know that you will all join with me in wishing them well and sending our congratulations.

This month sees the very interesting results of our first questionnaire by Paul Brunyee. The results of the second questionnaire by June Rowe will be published in next month's Probe and I am sure you will be as fascinated as I was to read them. My thanks to both Paul and June for all their hard work on our behalf. My sincere thanks also to all of you who have sent in your lovely contributions for the pages of Probe. As long as there are such wonderful readers giving their encouragement and support Probe will go from strength to strength. So please keep them coming in as contributions are always needed for all the sections of the magazine. Thanks also to all who have sent in solutions which are very much appreciated by your fellow readers, not only for the list of solutions available but also for the telephone helpline, thanks to your kindness you have helped to rescue a great many lost adventurers this month.

Following the letter by John Wildey in the August issue about the availability of Infocom adventures I have received a great many interesting letters showing your concern about this. I would love to have had space to publish all of them. Both John and the Grue are investigating and there is information in the letters pages about the situation.

I am still hopeful that we can do something about the situation and would ask that you keep those letters coming in so that we can continue the campaign to save our Infocom adventures. We will keep you posted with all the latest news.

You will perhaps remember my mentioning in the last Editorial that, due to a mishap whilst walking the dog, we were due for an explosion in our canine population? I am happy to report that we have five adorable pups! All visitors can relax now because they already have nice homes to go to!

Amstrad readers will be pleased to know that due to a wonderful surprise birthday present I have joined the Amsters! Now my CPC6128 sits merrily alongside the Commodore and Spectrum just waiting for me to get to work. Special thanks to Sandra, Bob, Nic and Joan for all the help and advice they are giving to help me get to grips with the strange workings of Arnold. Aren't computers wonderful?

Well, although I could rabbit on for hours (sorry Pete) I think that's quite enough from me for this month. I do hope you enjoy this issue. See you all again next month.

Mandy



*** REVIEWS ***



IN SEARCH OF ATAHUALPA

Reviewer BARBARA GIBB - BBC

In this two-part text only adventure you undertake the hazardous journey to a secret Inca site to recover the gold statue of Atahualpa.

A balloon is provided, and after a very up and down trip you eventually find the city of Cajamarca which you must explore thoroughly to find a rosary, which, when given to the correct person, will allow you to start part two. Once your guide has raced away in his jeep after promising to return later, you are on your own. (Return without the statue and you will learn what he thinks of you as an adventurer.)

Ahead lies a rainforest, a tribe of headhunters, some very unfriendly wildlife, the Amazon river and eventually the secret chamber and statue. Your entire journey is shadowed by a swarthy stranger who can be very deadly, and extremely difficult to dodge.

There are two mazes which appear in context, that is, a maze of streets in the city of Cajamarca, and a rainforest maze. However, if you can find the correct "keys" to unlock the mystery of the mazes, they are very easy to map. I hate mazes, yet thought these not only logical but almost necessary.

All items found are useful which is great advantage when carrying capacity is restricted.

Some objects are cleverly hidden, and I considered myself lucky to have found one of them without too much trouble.

The combining of items could be tricky and sometimes only obvious when solved.

Within the confines of the Quill, this adventure has all I expect and desire. It's exciting, and addictive, and pushed all others to the bottom of the pile until I'd completed it.

The only playing hint I will give is to read very carefully the background notes and instructions at the beginning of each part.

Highly recommended. Not for beginners but I would advise them to buy it now and keep it until they are ready to attempt it. Everyone else - get buying and get playing.

Good sales now will encourage Anthony Lee to write a sequel. At £2.50 it is worth every penny (or sol).

Available for BBC/ELECTRON, on cassette, from:

ANTHONY LEE, 35 OSPREY GARDENS, WORLE, WESTON-SUPER-MARE, AVON, BS22 6UN.

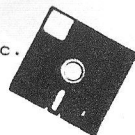
Cost £2.50 Including postage and packing.

=====



INFIDEL - INFOCOM

Available for most computers which have access to disc.
Shop around for the best price.



Reviewer - THE GRUE!

Set in the vast desert of Egypt, somewhere near the banks of the Nile. Infidel challenges you to find the buried entrance to the last great pyramid and once inside, sieze the priceless treasures that have remained hidden for thousands of years.

As the ruthless, determined explorer, you make your men work on a religious holiday. They revolt and desert you, leaving you without tools or supplies. Although trapped in the desert, you are still possessed by the thought of fame and riches and decide to continue your quest.

Finding food and water are paramount for without them you will leave a tasty snack for the buzzards. While searching the camp for supplies a plane flies high above in the sky and a package dropped from it. Inside is vital equipment to enable you to find the entrance to the great tomb. Who would think that vital equipment would be needed to find a pyramid, how could you miss such a huge monument, but this long forgotten tomb has been buried deep beneath the sands of time.

Your adventure really begins when you enter the cavernous pyramid, with death licking at your heels and mystery shrouding every step. Puzzles within the game could be described as linear but perhaps that is just what you would expect in a pyramid, solving one problem to unlock the next step forward or should that be downward. Do not expect a difficult game with difficult puzzles but a game with masses of text oozing with atmosphere.

Along the way you will have to decipher hieroglyphics and the more you can decipher the easier the puzzles will become. You won't have to decipher all of them but by the time you are settled into the game translating them will have become almost a compulsion. Secret panels and passages abound, tilting hallways and rooms, most of which are booby trapped, all must be overcome if you are to reach the treasury and collect your life's desire.

Not a large adventure with only 77 locations and 49 takeable objects but surely a true adventure. This was Infocom's first game in their Tales Of Adventure series and might have been titled Pyramid though uninspired it remained the title throughout testing. Infidel was then suggested, not impressed by this because it sounded more like a game from the crusades than an exploration for a lost pyramid but with its distinctive logo and package design and a few alterations to the game to make it work better, they relented.

What we were left with is a truly atmospheric game. I swore I could feel the searing heat of the desert, the coolness once inside the great Tomb, more than once I wiped off the grains of sand that had stuck to my sweat sodden body. The challenge between you and perhaps the most clever architects, builders and murderers of all time is one not to be missed.

The packaging contains an expedition log, the hand written diary of your search for the great pyramid and your personal correspondence complete with authentic Egyptian stamp. Also a map of the Nile River Valley with latitude and longitude coordinates to help you find the tomb. A rubbing of some hieroglyphics and a partial translation.

For some unusual responses try drinking water about four times, wearing the parachute or typing help.

=====



Also on side B is LETTER BOMB

Available for Spectrum 48K/128K

To start with I have to say that Jack sent me this to playtest, so I said I would write a review for Probe at the same time.

Domes of Sha is yet another PAWEd game from the Lockerby stable. It has very quick response and the vocabulary and presentation are excellent. Anyway, more of that a little later, here is the story behind the adventure...

Long ago in a far off corner of the Galaxy (I'd rather have a Bounty) an event was taking place that would effect not just the tiny planet of 'Olaxas' but worlds not even born yet.

Olaxas was once a thriving agricultural planet, relying on the Yander Forests for its needs. Then came the great war. No records have ever been found and it is as though the past has been erased. The only people who have survived are the Sha Tribe, a proud race, they live in a valley but all around is barren and devastated. They seemed to be the only people on Olaxas.

They knew the planet was dying but a dreadful fear stopped them from leaving the valley and none have been strong enough. Maybe you can!

The game starts in the Yander Valley and you see a dome with a '1' marked on it and if you explore the top area you will see that there are six of these domes. You have with you a pouch which contains a Throw-blade and a Time-brace (sort of new/old fangled clock), also around is Grunt, your Mugret (and grunt is right cause it don arf smell a bit). Anyway your search around the valley should bring some rewards especially when you go and see Kroll, a sort of Sage. He will tell you a bit more but not much. Your next task is to find a light source which is rather different from the normal lamp/torch. And don't forget that Grunt can do things as well.

The game features most words you will think of and the now necessary Ramload/Ramsave option. I found the puzzles ranging from the very logical to I'm afraid very easy, so I would put this game in the Beginner/Moderate class. I think the experienced adventurer would sail through this (maybe I'm just getting better, I don't know!) The help part of the game I think gives too many hints but this is only a personal thing with me! All in all, a very well thought out game though.

LETTER BOMB.

On the B side of the tape is quite a different thing for 'River' than anything they have sent out before (I think) and as a bonus game it is great fun. The game is written in 128 basic with a couple of machine code routines.

Anyway, "What's it all about?" I hear you shouting. Right, it's a sort of Hangman where up to four people can play at once on either just NORMAL 'Guess the letter' type or ANAGRAM type. The maximum points you can score on any one word is ten and you can have a finishing score of up to 999 so you can have a short or long drawn out game.

I found it all fun and kept saying to myself "Just one more go. just one more..."

REVIEWED/PLAYTESTED BY ALLAN L. PHILLIPS

=====



THE QUEST FOR THE GOLDEN EGGCUP - Mastertronic £1.99 (Various Computers)

When I heard that Smart Egg Software had written a follow-up to my favourite adventure "Rigel's Revenge", I was desperate to buy the new game as soon as it was released. "The Quest For The Golden Eggcup" is available now, and the first thing I enjoyed was the fun piece of Rob Hubbard music which accompanies the loading game - a version of space invaders! When the adventure proper has loaded, you can choose to read the introduction. This tells how you were walking along the motorway one day, when you foolishly stepped out in front of a pink C5. You next wake up dead in a Golden Temple, part of heaven! God appears and asks you to find him the golden eggcup that he's lost, in reward for being "reincarnated just in time for World War III". If you fail, God will turn your soul into an egg, "probably poached", and eat it! God keeps appearing throughout the game, giving "help", through some imaginable jokes, but did you know he wears a turban?

Two other characters keep showing up, namely Dandalf and Thoron. Dandalf seeks the great wand, so watch out if you have it! Thoron is also looking for the golden eggcup, which might prove a problem. Mostly you can ignore these characters, though they occasionally show the way ahead if you stand and watch them at the right places.

The first thing to do is explore the rest of heaven, which features only eight rooms, though there are at least 150 locations to discover. Each location is illustrated by a graphic taking up the top two-thirds of the screen, but I have to say these are a complete waste of time. Whereas in "Rigel's Revenge", there was a handful of superbly drawn pictures that changed according to the game, in "Golden Eggcup" each graphic is made from a set of blocks such as part of a wall, leaves, a cloud, and so on. It's not long before you realise every graphic is going to look like this, and a great many have very little to do with the actual location. For instance, a tiled floor in heaven also makes an appearance in an open clearing, flanked by leaves. For a desk, a cabinet, a computer and many other objects all you get to see is a blank white table! The graphics are extremely Spectrumsque for the Commodore 64 I played the game on, and no attempt at all has been made to alter them to make better use of the machine, and remove the dreaded Commodore fringing that occurs with 'shaded' areas.

The parser accepts four-letter abbreviations only, so you have to type EXAMine (there's no friendly "X" version of the command). LOOK fails to work, as does REDESCRIBE, for which you need to use "R"! The game seems to be PAW-based, which means at least you get RAMSave and RAMload, which is good. However, I was annoyed that you can't GET EGG as there's a silver and a golden egg to be found. So you need to type GET GOLDen!

Location descriptions vary, often consisting of no more than a few lines, if not a single line, giving the basic information and no more.

But a few locations do offer some humour. Places vary from the start in heaven, to a deserted village and the caves of hell. Sounds exciting? No way! The caves of hell turn out to be nothing more than a series of bland passageways that form... yes, you've guessed it... a maze! So look out for the "dim", "twisty", "smoky", "smelly" passages that we've all seen far too often before. The exits are, of course, partially illogical, so mapping is essential to get anywhere. Why do programmers insist on wasting memory with useless mazes? And why does hell look surprisingly similar to heaven?

Once through the maze, the game lightens up quite a bit. A ferry offers you one free ride to more stoney, leafy, all-the-same pictures that surround a village. Here is actually the best location I found, namely the white "Network Adventure Tower", which is a giant in-joke for the Smart Egg programmers. Two offices lie at the top of a spiral staircase. To the right is a Small Office, featuring a spotty kid at his computer. EXAMINE KID, I entered:

"It's Paul Cook, who tried to write the game, but just got in the way."

His computer is a ZX81 with a 7K RAM-pack too! Leaving Paul alone, I entered the Luxury Office to the left and found Harvey Lodder (who wrote the game with Nigel Brooks) relaxing on a sofa! This time examining his computer reveals a Commodore 64 and a host of peripherals including an MPS 801 printer and Fidelity TV! But don't try and GET the computer, or you'll set the alarms off!

A puzzling location was the Railway Station. If you wait, a train will (naturally) appear, and on it the dead body of Sherlock! God intervenes, his voice calling down to you from heaven, and as a subplot you have to discover who killed Sherlock. Two verbs come in handy here, INTERrogate and ARREst, and both Dandalf and Thoron deny the blame. But what got me is that the train doesn't go anywhere! I typed in several WAITs, before finding that "Z" will also operate this command, (phew!) but to no avail. Of course, guess what happens when you step off the train? Yep, it moves off without you. Further trains that arrive at the station prove to be nothing more than the same train miraculously returning with the dead body of Sherlock again.

The game is supposed to be funny, though there's little humour to be found in most of the drab repetitive locations. The objects fair better, with a neat sword. Of course, you'd pick it up and examine it, wouldn't you? Only to find it's "made of sturdy plastic"! I quickly put it down again. Then there's the mysterious "under-the-bed object" that reminded me of looking under the bed at the start of "Hitchhiker's Guide" from Infocom.

Perhaps the most humour to be found is when you get stuck and type in a swear word. You are cast into a dungeon with a door and a window. The only means of escape is by a secret trapdoor hidden in the sandy floor. God is quite annoyed when you fall back through to heaven! But try swearing again, and you get the same dungeon, though this time there's no trapdoor!! Just a note, which reads "Try getting out this time."! Nice one! You even get a response if you swear in the dungeon itself - try it!

To sum up, then. I felt that in no way was "The Quest For The Golden Eggcup" as good as Smart Egg's previous adventure "Rigel's Revenge". In the end, there's no real atmosphere and once you've seen ten graphics, you've seen them all. The locations are equally dull, and I thought we'd have seen the last of "twisty" passages all alike! But to be fair, there are some pleasant touches once you find them, and several puzzles to solve, though even I found these a little on the easy side. Not a bad adventure, but neither a stunning one, which I might have expected coming from the same people who did "Rigel's Revenge". When you look at it, "Golden Eggcup" is really just another follow-on from the original "Adventure" game by Crowther and Woods. Let's see some more original games please, that show adventures have progressed a lot more than this.

Reviewer: Christopher Hester

Mindfighter - Activision - Most computers - Price varies, shop around for best deal.

Mindfighter as a book was written by Anna Popkess during late 1986 and early 1987. The adventure has been programmed by Fergus McNeil on a new adventure writing system S.W.A.N. (System Without A Name) which was developed by Tim Gilberts, Graeme Yeandle and Hugh Hamer-Powell.

The package consists of a cassette, paperback novel, poster and a players guide.

Unfortunately, you must read the book to get some idea of the game world you will be entering as the players guide does not really give you much idea of your aim in the adventure. I say 'unfortunately' because, in my opinion, this is one of the most badly written pieces of prose it has ever been my misfortune to read. The text is ungrammatical and even has spelling errors e.g. draw, instead of drawer.

However, I must admit that I liked the storyline, even though I had to force myself to read all the book.

Robin is an eleven year old boy gifted with psychic powers who has woken up on a heap of rubble in the middle of a desolate ruined city. Somehow he has arrived in the future after the big bang and must find a way to return to his own time.

You must guide him through this bleak landscape that is fraught with danger. All around you will see the effects of radiation on the people. Mobs have formed and the whole place is crawling with System Guards and has become a sort of police state. The penalty for most crimes is death.

Along the way you will meet a variety of characters, some of them will be friendly but others you will have to fight.

There are some gory pieces of text in the adventure but I felt they were needed to convey the harshness of life under the rule of The System guards.

Some special commands that the game recognises can either be typed in or you can access an icon screen by pressing 'ENTER'. You can save to or load from disc, tape or RAM - I couldn't manage to get a save to tape to load back but this may be due to a problem with my cassette recorder.

Other commands are script/unscript for those of you with printers who want to keep a permanent record of your progress through the game. You can also choose to play the game in verbose or brief mode. Verbose gives you the long room description of each location and brief gives the short one line description to allow you to move about the game at a much faster pace.

I found the icon screen awkward to use and preferred to use text where possible.

Mapping the adventure is not an easy task as you can enter a location by typing 'EAST' but if you type 'EAST' again you find that you've gone West. I can't see any reason for doing this as it is very annoying and time wasting and could also be very confusing for someone who is new to adventuring.

If you persevere with the mapping however you can then start to play the adventure. Examining everything is a must, but beware as 'EXAM' is not recognised and could be misleading; you need to type 'EXAMI'.

You tend to get 'killed' frequently, another pet hate of mine, but once I started to play the game and made some progress I found that I was beginning to get hooked.

I found this adventure very difficult to review, as initially I couldn't decide whether I liked it or not. I do like the storyline, and I did find myself beginning to enjoy the adventure, however, I do think that it is vastly overpriced. If you can get it cheaper than the RRP then it may be worth a look, but don't pay the full price for it.

Reviewer - Sandra Sharkey - Spectrum

Have you plenty of free time?

Here's a game that will take it all away.

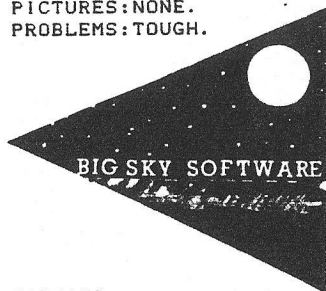
TIME THIEF

Mystery and detection in space and time, on the trail of a supernatural thief. A thief who steals lives. Got one to spare?

A text adventure on disk for CBM64. £5. Cheques/POs payable to D Macleod.

BIG SKY SOFTWARE
35 OLD EVANTON ROAD
DINGWALL
ROSS-SHIRE
IV15 9RB

TEXT:A LOT
PICTURES:NONE.
PROBLEMS:TOUGH.



WARNING:

Persons of a nervous disposition may find certain scenes and events upsetting.

*** PUZZLE PAGE ***

INFOPUZZLE by THE GRUE

Each line below represents the name of a character in an Infocom game. Fill in as many as possible and then answer the question formed in the outline. I have inserted a few letters to get you started.



```

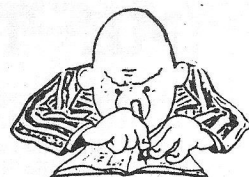
  _ H _   _ Z _ _ _ _ _ B _ _ Z
  _ _ _   _ _ _ _ _ R O B N E R
  _ _ _   _ _ _ _ _
  
```

```

  _ _ _   _ I Z
  _ A _ A _ A
  B _ _ _ _ Z
  E _ _ _ _ N _ L _ _ E R
  _ E _ _ G _ _ _ _ B N _ _
  
```

```

  _ _ _   _ L L _ _ _ E E _ _ _
  _ _ _   _ S A
  Z _ E _ L _ _ _ _
  _ _ _ _ _ C K _ _ _ _ S
  F _ _ _ _ G
  _ _ _ _ _ F F _
  
```



```

  _ _ _   _ _ _ O D
  D R. _ _ _ _ _
  _ _ _   _ L L I _ _
  _ _ _   _ L L
  
```

ANSWER.....

Answers to the puzzle will be printed in next months issue. The answers to last month's crossword will be printed together with the next Probe crossword.

A Questionnaire Revealed - Paul Brunyee.

The questionnaire published in the June edition of Adventure Probe brought in many replies. The following discussion shows these results.

Adventure Types:

Text only	52.6%	Little or no graphics seem the order of the day. The 'Other' category included votes for RPGs and graphics mediated adventures such as The Bards Tale.
Text with few graphics	40.4%	
Text with all graphics	3.5%	
Other	3.5%	

Adventure Features: This section had gradings from 1 to 5 where 1 represented "absolutely necessary" and 5 represented "totally worthless".

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
Mazes	4.0%	8.0%	34.0%	30.0%	24.0%
Character Interaction	8.2%	24.5%	40.8%	10.2%	16.3%
Sudden Death	5.8%	3.8%	19.2%	19.2%	52.0%
Complete Vocabulary	69.4%	16.3%	6.1%	4.1%	4.1%
Complex Parser	23.5%	39.2%	21.6%	11.8%	3.9%
Richness of Plot	65.3%	20.4%	4.1%	4.1%	6.1%
Time dependant events	0%	12.8%	25.5%	29.8%	31.9%
RAMSAVE/RAMLOAD	58.0%	28.0%	8.0%	2.0%	4.0%
Redefined Characters	2.0%	24.5%	32.7%	28.6%	12.2%
Windowing techniques	2.1%	10.6%	27.7%	36.2%	23.4%
Use of Icons	2.0%	4.1%	12.2%	36.7%	45.0%

The majority of people dislike mazes but seem prepared to put up with them. Character interaction was given a luke warm response but swings towards a quite acceptable opinion. Sudden death was given a big thumbs down although not as positively as some may have expected. A complete vocabulary was considered very important and a complex parser found favour with most although not as highly regarded as the vocabulary. A rich plot was considered essential with almost 86% expressing a need for it. Time dependant situations saw little favour from anyone. The use of RAMSAVE and RAMLOAD utilities was supported very strongly while the use of redefined characters was met with widely differing views. For those expressing a liking for redefined characters, 50% were Spectrum owners, 19% used Amstrads and 19% used Commodores. Windowing techniques were generally disapproved of, as was the use of icons. The majority of voters expressing a liking for windows own Spectrums.

Adventure Scenarios:

Science Fiction	19.5%	This was really a three horse race with the Tolkienesque offering just beating the Science Fiction and the Mediaeval supporters. The 'Other' category included votes for areas of 'Modern Times', eg Hampstead, and the 'Occult', amongst others.
Detective	9.0%	
Tolkienesque	22.9%	
Mediaeval/Dark ages	21.5%	
Spoofs	10.4%	
Abstract	13.9%	
Other	2.8%	

The following charts for Budget and Full price adventures were compiled by awarding marks to each adventure according to how people had positioned them within their own charts. For example, an adventure would be given 5 marks if it were placed first, 4 marks if it were in second position and so on, down to 1 mark for fifth position. The percentage figure shows the distribution of marks awarded to each adventure within each chart only. Honourable mention to Jack Lockerby whose several adventures collectively received a large number of votes. Incidentally, 101 budget titles and 92 full price titles were voted for.

Budget Title Chart

1. Rigels Revenge	Mastertronic	43.4%
2. Case of the Mixed up Shymer	S.Sharkey/Atlas	16.0%
3. Subunk	Firebird	14.3%
4. Kentilla	Mastertronic	13.7%
5. The Jade Stone	Marlin Games	12.6%

Full Price Title Chart

1. Snowball	Level 9	23.1%
2= Dungeon Adventure	Level 9	21.8%
2= Gnome Ranger	Level 9	21.8%
4. Mordons Quest	Melbourne House	19.2%
5. Lords of Time	Level 9	14.1%

Adventures with the best and worst features: Due to votes being thinly spread over a wide range of candidates, clear leaders did not emerge all of the time. The following adventures are listed in the order of votes cast.

Best Plot

1. Snowball
- 2= Dungeon Adventure
- 2= Lord of the Rings
- 2= Lords of Time
- 2= Valkyrie 17

Best Packaging

1. The Pawn
- 2= Jewels of Darkness
- 2= Any Infocom
- 2= Knight Orc

Best Parser/Vocab.

1. Gnome Ranger
2. The Pawn
- 3= Any Infocom
- 3= Guild of Thieves

Best Text Descriptions

1. Any Infocom
- 2= Colossal Adventure
- 2= Mordons Quest
- 2= The Pawn

Best Graphics

1. The Pawn
2. Guild of Thieves
- 3= Heroes of Karn
- 3= Jinxter

Infocom, Level 9 and Magnetic Scrolls fill almost all of the places with several people voting simply for "Any Infocom".

Worst Plot

1. Starwreck
- 2= Goblin Towers
- 2= Hulk
- 2= Kentilla
- 2= Price of Magik

Worst Packaging

1. Starwreck
- 2= Any Homegrown adventure
- 2= Play it again Sam

Worst Parser/Vocab.

1. Lord of the Rings
2. Play it again Sam
- 3= Sherlock
- 3= Starwreck
- 3= Zodiac

Worst Text Descriptions

1. Starwreck (a clear winner)
- 2= Any Scott Adams'
- 2= Demon Knight
- 2= Hulk

Worst Graphics

- 1= Red Moon
- 1= Worm in Paradise
- 3= Price of Magik
- 3= Return to Eden
- 3= Starwreck
- 3= The Hobbit

Level 9 take centre stage for the 'worst graphics' accolade, while Starwreck seems something of an all rounder. I assume the votes cast for Sherlock are for Melbourne House's 'masterpiece'.

Adventure acquisitions: as with the adventure charts, a marking system was used to calculate the following figures.

Mail order	34.2%
Small 'ads' in glossy magazines	15.5%
Small 'ads' in specialist magazines/clubs	28.2%
Off the shelf from high street stores	22.1%

Other areas listed were 'swap/exchange clubs', secondhand purchases, gifts, and, of course, pirate copies!

Adventure writing: Readers were asked to indicate which utility, if any, they used when writing adventures.

Quill	6.7%	The 'Other' category included votes for the STAC (5%) and also Tartan Software's ABS , BASIC and people's own code or system.
Quill with add on utilities	5.0%	
GAC	18.3%	
Genesis	0%	
The PAW	16.7%	
Other	11.6%	
I don't write adventures	41.7%	

By far the majority of voters don't write adventures, but for those who do, the main utilities used are the PAW and the GAC, the latter just managing to hold the higher position.

Computers used for adventuring:

Spectrum 48k	26.5%
Spectrum 128k (+2,+3...)	11.8%
Commodore 64/128	20.6%
Amstrad 464	5.9%
Amstrad 6128	8.8%
Atari ST	8.8%
Msx	2.9%
BBC	4.4%
Amiga/PC compatible	4.4%
Other	5.9%

Age Ranges:

<10	0%
10-19	12.8%
20-29	29.8%
30-39	31.9%
40-49	14.9%
50-59	6.4%
60-69	4.2%
>69	0%

Sexes:

Male	70%
Female	30%

The 'Other' category included votes for the Dragon, Electron and TRS 80 to name but three. Total Spectrum usage of 38.3% easily outstrips the nearest rivals.

The open forum section produced many different comments. The majority of these were condemning all bugged adventures, adding that improved playtesting is a necessity in order to wipe out the bugs. Suggestions were made that the larger software houses are the guiltiest parties by allowing the majority of the bugs into their adventures, and that nobody complains loudly enough to resolve the situation.

A lot of people are happy with the way Probe is produced and would not like it changed, but several comments for amendments included calls for more reviews, (especially of full price adventures), more letters, less articles and stories, and more information and reviews covering the older adventures and perhaps people's favourites which, it was pointed out, would be a great help to new starters. A Preview section was mentioned which would show how adventures are developing, but this section would be subject to a company's willingness to send out their half finished masterpieces. Calls were made to have arcade games and arcade adventures clearly marked to avoid them being mistaken for an adventure proper. A further suggestion was to include examples of text and graphics with reviewed adventures, but I'm not altogether sure Mandy's resources are capable of this! Other suggestions were for articles on RPGs and multi-user adventures. Would anyone like to comment or contribute towards this?

Further comments were received stating that the solutions to mazes and other puzzles must be logical. Several 'dislikes' were noted which include incorrect spelling and grammar, tunes or music within an adventure, verbose prose where the text is more of a hinderance, so called 'intelligent characters', and the situation whereby a premature ending to an adventure forces a complete or partial reload.

Several people expressed dissatisfaction with the larger companies for the time delays involved when, for example, returning faulty goods. Others criticised the exhorbitant prices being charged for disk based adventures and called for more Amstrad and Commodore conversions to be produced. A lack of current adventure software in the high street shops was also mentioned and calls were made to the large publishers to take more notice of the better homegrown adventures. A final comment is that despite all the trials and tribulations, despite staying up until the early hours of the morning, and despite swearing to never touch a computer again, we all find adventuring to be a most enjoyable pastime.

This questionnaire has shown many views and opinions from the readership of Probe and I hope it has proved to be most informative. If you wish to comment on anything you have read, I'm sure Mandy would love to hear from you. Finally, I wish to offer my thanks to all those who participated. Thank you.



*** ADAMS AMSTERS II ***

Welcome fellow Amsters and all Probe readers, to the second of my articles based upon adventuring with the Amstrad. Now I am not too sure who is more surprised at my re-appearance in these hallowed pages, you or I. However, as I haven't been given the elbow after the last one, I will continue in similar fashion until you cry "Enough"!

First of all, a news update on my gentle introduction to adventuring. MORDONS QUEST has now been completed thanks to Pat Winstanley, also thanks to Joan Pancott so has THE TRIAL OF ARNOLD BLACKWOOD (Amstrad only I believe). Although she doesn't know it, I relied on Pat to guide me through a tricky bit of MORDONS QUEST thanks to her full solution appearing "somewhere else", and the wonderful Joan telephoned me as soon as my plea for help appeared in Probe. Perry Williams kindly responded with help via the letters pages in Issue 8 also. (This proves that these articles are 'live' and not written months ago).

MORDONS QUEST included for me one of two unique problems that I had not encountered before. The first problem was I thought, a bit sneaky by the programmer. On entering the Shingle Beach part of the adventure, where up to now all available exits had been indicated by the text, ie, N, E, S, W, or NE, SE, SW, NE, you find that the screen informs you that you can go North or East. Then suddenly, you find that the text has omitted to tell you that you could also (have to) go SW! As a novice I hadn't tried any non-indicated exits, so I was very relieved to read Pat's solution when I got stuck. Although I have now learnt an important lesson about trying every exit even if one is not indicated, I am not sure whether it isn't really a bit too underhand. Also, does trying TEN exits at every location help to build the atmosphere???

Another problem that was new to me was the random element when you entered the Drum. This took you either to the Shingle Beach, or the Roman City or the Future Area or back to the Jungle, which is where you started from. Now I don't understand why this had to be random. To get where you wanted to go next you had to enter the Drum, press plate, exit Drum, find out where you were, and if you were in the wrong place, enter the Drum and repeat again and again until you ended up where you wanted to be in the first place. Seemed an unnecessary waste of time to me, but perhaps you may think that I'm too impatient?

However, I am rather getting ahead of myself as I promised to deal with the adventures in the order that I had completed them, so first off it's

MESSAGE FROM ANDROMEDA

First problem, how do you load a cassette into the disc drive? Having sorted that one out, you are in a spaceship and receive a distress call. The screen asks "Do you wish to investigate?". If like me, you answer "No", the game crashes. After reloading, answer "Yes". Right that's got that over with. Pardon? Oh, you want more than that. OK, read on little grueypoos:-

Second, start mapping. A map can be a wonderful thing. It tells you where you are, just like those maps at tourist centres. They have a huge great arrow taking up half the map saying "YOU ARE HERE" and completely obliterating the part of the map you wanted to study. For those who wish to check their mapping prowess, turn to PROBE Issue 10 (March 87) for a part printed map. I say part, because maybe there were different versions released, but on my Amstrad there were extra locations to those shown that were essential to finish the adventure.

I refer to the subterranean area which is south of the Cavern of Mists, where you will find the poisonous fungus with which to kill the slug.

The other thing you need to do is to "Save" your position often. There is the dreaded "random death" syndrome roaming this game. A lot of Alien Guards keep taking pot shots at you without warning throughout this adventure. Most times they miss, but eventually you are informed that you are dead and do you require re-incarnation back at the beginning. The smarty pants amongst us reply "Yes", promptly "Load" the previous location, but then proceed with our fingers ready on the trigger! And then get killed again. Those that didn't "Save" (he he), answer "Yes" to "Do you wish to investigate?"

If you have some brain-power (wish I had as much as that) it shouldn't be too difficult for you to work out what the required action at each location is and make steady progress, but there are one or two places where precise input is required. You know what is needed to happen, it's just a case of making the rather rigid parser do it!

In the Crystal Chamber, you have to rotate the sphere on the pedestal and take it to the Blue Room. Once there, place the sphere in the dish and rotate it again. Upon doing so, the floor opens showing you a stairway going down but have your knife ready, as you are about to be throttled by a vine. I never knew wine making was so dangerous. The location which gave me the most aggro was the East End of Cavern, where you have to blow up the rocks to get through to the Hall of Ancients. You are already carrying a detonator (aren't you?) found in the Control Room but you need to travel through a maze (ugh, thanks Probe map) to the Lower Stores to find the explosives and then back track. Then the fun begins, to find the correct input to detonate the explosives. Go to the eastern end and drop the explosives. Examine detonator. It has a button so therefore it must be operated by remote control. It is not a good idea to stand too close to exploding rocks so retire to the western end and press button. You now have a space axe which is very useful for killing Alien Commanders. By the way, in the maze (ugh) is a password which you need for the teleport at the end. It is "Old" on the Amstrad in case you missed it. (Wonder why?)

Other points to note for a successful conclusion are: Make sure you are wearing the gloves before handling the fungus. Cut down the skeleton to find the stones hidden behind it. Throw the stones at the creature on the bridge. Finally, if you are still stuck, I notice that Mandy offers a solution for 25p! (Usual cheque will do, Mandy).

As a first adventure I thoroughly enjoyed Message From Andromeda, and felt very proud when I had completed it. To begin with I was getting nowhere fast, but once I had learned the basic rules of adventuring ie Explore everywhere and Map, Examine everything and Save frequently, I became quite proficient at solving the mostly logical problems of this game. Just think though, if I hadn't liked it you wouldn't be reading this article, because by now, I would probably have let my daughters have their computer back and have taken up part-time brain surgery! Must get one sometime.

The game is over once you have returned to your space ship and taken off and you vow never to answer a distress call in outer space again, or at least, not without a freezer on board.

As the advert stated for ALIENS. "In space, no one sells ice cream".

> What now?

Bob Adams.

PS Next month could either be HEROES OF KARN or depending on demand, maybe a book review!



FICTION

Lullabies for Wallabies

Our little group was still touring the outback of Australia: Mandy carrying the rabbit, Sandra and Dimli in earnest discussion, and Strombrigner the Grey and I bringing up the rear, with the wizard nevertheless managing to lead us all in a particular direction. After some half hour's walking it became apparent that we were heading towards a large shack that had appeared on the horizon and which we were now rapidly approaching.

"Yonder shack" began the wizard, turning to me with a smile on his kindly old face, "is where we shall find some liquid refreshment. In this heat one cannot walk for long without it. If nothing else, it will keep the little chap happy."

The little chap, Dimli Gloing, legendary dwarf of great thirst, had been becoming increasingly irritable as our walk progressed, but at this news he perked up a smidgin and aimed a friendly glower at the wizard for referring to him in that manner. "Stout heart" he grunted, patting his axe fondly.

"Indeed yes, master Dimli, indeed yes." The wizard lowered his voice and whispered in my ear. "And the dwarf shall have another surprise 'ere long, I fancy." In spite of my questioning look he would explain no further, and with a chortle urged us all to "tarry forth" towards the shack.

"I'll be glad when we get there" muttered Sandra, "I hate walking." Dimli immediately offered to give her a piggy-back, but the prospect was so ludicrous that she turned him down with a smile and a polite "no thank you. I'll survive."

We reached the shack a few minutes later, and Strombrigner rapped sharply on the wooden door. "Open up!" he cried, "we are travellers in thirst."

The door creaked slowly open, and to my astonishment I saw a character so like Dimli as to be his twin. The same long beard, short stature, close fitting helmet, I don't know what I had expected the owner of this place to look like, but it certainly wasn't this. "G'day" grunted the dwarf, in an Australian accent that seemed curiously out of place in one of his appearance.

I could see that Dimli was staring in open-mouthed astonishment, but the wizard was, as ever, the master of the situation. "Dimli, meet your long-lost cousin Boldli." He led the way into the shack, and noted with some satisfaction the large light fitting in the ceiling. "As you can see" he said, smile on his face, "Boldli Gloing has boldly glowed where no dwarf has glowed before."

I raised my eyes to the heavens. It was typical of Strombrigner to travel all this way in order to make a remark like that.

"Help yourselves to a few tubes, boys, Sheilas" said Boldli, waving an arm airily in the direction of a small bar that stood in one corner of the shack. The shack, as it turned out, was an Australian pub. "Me and the little fella here have got some catching up to do." He escorted the "little fella" to a table, where Strombrigner hastily bought them several cans to drink, while the rest of us settled down on stools at the bar and, having assuaged our immediate thirst, turned our attention to the wizard after he had himself returned to one of the bar stools.

Sandra was busily muttering Australian phrases to herself in a bizarre accent and occasionally laughing in delight. "Billabong, koolibar tree, wallabies, kangaroos, koala bears, g'day Sheilas" and a whole lot more, and we got very little sense out of her for quite some time.

"How did you know" I said, slowly and deliberately addressing the wizard, "that he was here?"

Strombrigner considered my question. "I am a wizard you know" he said at length, as if that explained everything, "and have you the courtesy of a smoke?"

"Only if you promise to tell me how you knew that Boldli Gloing would be here" I retorted, holding a cigarette out tantalisingly.

"Oh, very well then" sighed Strombrigner, "give it here." I handed him the cigarette and waited with ill-disguised patience while he went through the ritual of filling his pipe with the tobacco.

"Huwvy up Stwombwigner, do" snapped the rabbit, now perched happily on the top of the bar and gingerly sipping beer out of a little bowl that Mandy had somehow managed to find for him. "I cannot wait for these wevelations."

"It was like this" began the wizard, glancing at five smoke rings that had now, Olympic-fashion, formed themselves into a group above the bar. "Dimli, as you are all aware, is well known to the guild of wizards in the land where wizards lurk. The leader of our clan, Windbreaker, keeps a special interest in his affairs. And, I might add, those of his relatives. Dimli has been able to assist us on many an occasion, and his two great ancestors, Feebli and Vagueli, have often been important allies in the past. Thus, should some member of this very special family behave in a, shall we say, untoward, fashion, we keep an eye on them. Boldli was one such dwarf."

Strombrigner paused for breath, and drew reflectively on his pipe. "Of course, we had no reason for knowing that Boldli would behave in quite the fashion that he did. The Gloings are an interesting family."

The two members of that family currently present were deeply engrossed in conversation, and paid little heed to the story that was slowly being unfolded by the wizard. Dimli seemed quite excited for once, animated almost, and was listening to something that his long-lost cousin was relating. The grunt of Dimli and the Australian accent of Boldli made a fascinating contrast as we sat at the bar in this old wooden shack.

Outside, the sun beat relentlessly down on the open plains, and what little wildlife there was stirred only as much as was absolutely necessary for survival. For miles around, the scorched terrain gave evidence of the harshness of the environment, and it was hard to believe that a place such as this, an aged shack miles from anywhere, could enable Boldli to make a living.

I switched my thoughts back to the wizard as he continued his tale.

"Our attention was first drawn towards Boldli when he set off for this great land after winning a bet on an English horse called Rory. It was running in an Australian race, Boldli had a tip, and from a long distance away he put the bet

on and it won. He came over here to collect his winnings and set himself up as a pawnbroker on the outskirts of Melbourne. Fast money, was the promise, and under the slogan of 'The Loan Arranger, and Pronto' he managed to make a creditable salary. However, a matter that we have been unable to unearth caused him to leave that employment and settle on something else. One senses the hand of Harry the Fence in this, but one cannot be sure. Eventually Boldli came here, to this old shack so far from any other habitation, and began selling ale." The wizard smiled. "A worthy occupation" he noted, "but an unusual one for a Gloing. They normally drink it, not sell it."

The rabbit looked at Strombrigner. "I twust that this is a twuthful account?" he said. He looked agitated, and Mandy stroked his ruffled fur.

Strombrigner's face momentarily clouded over, but soon regained its former sunny disposition. "Of course!" he said, benignly, "have you ever known me otherwise?" He hurried on with his tale before anyone could contradict him.

"And that brings us to the present day. The only point in dispute is exactly what made our little friend leave his pawnbroker business and set up selling ale in this somewhat unusual building, but that is of no great importance."

Dimli and Boldli continued to swap stories of bygone days with great gusto, amid much laughter and back-slapping. I knew that Harry the Fence was a great tipster, and had indeed helped the wizard out on a number of occasions, but I had yet to hear of a horse called Rory winning a race in Australia when the bet was placed a long, long way away. Especially when it wasn't a racing certainty, merely a tip. I glanced at Boldli, whose keen eyes gave nothing away, although he must have been conscious of my stare. Perhaps Harry the Fence had given the tip to Boldli for some reason that we were destined never to discover? I didn't know, and could only surmise that I was thinking along the right lines.

Sandra, by now recovered from her outburst of Australian phrases and sayings, had been listening to the end of the conversation with interest, but from the shake of her head it was obvious that she didn't have any great idea as to why Boldli should be over here. Mandy, too, was looking somewhat blank, and continued to stroke the rabbit's fur in an absentminded fashion.

I turned back to look at Strombrigner again, who merely smiled. "I know what you may be thinking, master Peter, and you are quite correct."

"And what precisely am I thinking?"

"Why, that a dwarf should place a bet on a horse called Rory that was running thousands of miles away, and on a mere racing tip at that."

"Something like that."

"Or, to put it another way," The wizard paused, drew deeply on his pipe, and leant back in his chair before saying "it's a long way to tip a Rory!"



PAT'S (Other) PATCH

Having got out of the cell the next step is to make your way through the castle without being seen, or rather noticed. Now just to the south is the great hall while to the west is an anteroom containing a length of rope. To get through the great hall the player needs to disguise himself as a monk by wearing the blanket and rope.

Wearing items can be a little awkward in GAC but a little thought about the way the system works allows us to produce a simple routine for this. What we need is a spare room (I usually call it the wardrobe) which we'll call 500. Items which are currently being worn are taken out of the player's inventory and placed in the 'wardrobe' as follows:

```
IF ( NO1 > 4 AND VERB "wear" AND CARR NO1 ) NO1 TO 500 OKAY END
```

Oops! Forgot to define the rope, just make it object and noun 9 and start it off in room 3!

The above condition should go in LOW PRIORITY as the player will want to wear items at different points in the game, not just here. You can also see that I've used the same grouping technique as with the GET and DROP conditions to save time. All the wearable objects have numbers higher than 4 so only wearable objects will be affected by the condition and then only when carried at the time.

To remove a worn object we needn't check whether or not it is wearable since ONLY wearable objects can be in room 500. So the condition for removing an item is:

```
IF ( 500 IN NO1 AND VERB "remove" ) NO1 TO WITH OKAY END.
```

Don't forget to enter the verbs "wear" and "remove" in the vocabulary!

But what if we take an inventory while wearing something? The inventory condition only lists those objects currently carried ie. at WITH, and our worn objects are elsewhere in room 500. You will need a new message on the lines of "You are carrying". I think that would be message 14. Then the condition for inventory should be modified to read as follows:

```
IF ( VERB 10 ) MESS 239 LIST WITH MESS 14 LIST 500 WAIT END
```

This will then show both carried and worn objects.

This same technique can be used to create containers such as rucksacks, buckets, ponds etc. Simply set aside a room to be the inside of your container and place there any relevant objects.

That's all I have time for this month..... Bye!

SOFTWARE

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LETTERS



With reference to John Wildey's recent letter on Infocom, I strongly feel that Activision/Infocom should declare their marketing policy on machine formats. As an Amstrad owner I was very disappointed when Activision gave up supporting the CPC format because of poor sales figures. As I was writing a column for CPC User magazine I chased around (by phone and letter) to find out what was going on, and nobody gave a clear answer. Soon afterwards it transpired that not only were Activision no longer converting new games to CPC format, but they were also deleting all the earlier titles from their list. There followed mass mail order ads for old Amstrad titles at lower prices, but many of the companies advertising had so little stock that it went in no time at all.

Earlier this year I bought an Atari ST for several reasons including the need for another computer in the family, better availability of software etc. However, the prospect of a continuing supply of Infocoms was a part of the justification. It now appears that Infocoms for the ST are on the decline. I say "appears" because when new titles such as SHERLOCK are released, the reviews state IBM, Commodore and Atari formats being available, but (surprise, surprise) the Atari version has not been released. Now, whereas a number of software houses were pulling out of the Amstrad market, the Atari scene goes from strength to strength AND it is US based so it just does not make sense.

With this situation can I urge Probe or the friendly Grue to get to the root of the problem and flush the Infocom marketing policy out into the open. At present my feelings are "Thank goodness for Magnetic Scrolls". At least they are writing excellent stuff - even if Rainbird have a touch of the Activision disease of releasing games on different formats over a very long period (e.g. CPC6128 version of Jinxter just released after the most protracted trailer in living memory). I don't believe letters from individuals have any influence on software houses policy and even the combined voices of a special interest group such as Probe or Soothsayer may fall on deaf ears. However, at least we should be able to find out if future Infocom releases will be available for the ST as well as other formats. Surely THEY must know!

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

(We will do our best to get to the bottom of the matter, Terry. Read on for more information. Sherlock was released on ST format in the USA on 1st June so it should be available here very soon now.....Mandy)

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Re John Wildey's letter in Issue 8, I have noticed for some time that fewer and fewer firms were selling Infocom games for my C64. Recently I have found no-one selling them and would be very interested to know why. I suspect firms have stopped selling them because they probably only had a small turnover of what is quite an expensive minority interest area and of course, sadly to say profit is the name of the game. There are however still several Infocom games that I want to buy for my C64 and I hope within the next year to upgrade to the Amiga and am looking forward to getting such games as Bureaucracy and Trinity which can't be played on a c64. As far as I can remember the last firm I ordered Infocom software from was Post Haste Software, if they are still trading I'll write to them and ask if they still sell these games and let you know.

JENNY WHEELER, 115 Hythe Crescent, Seaford, East Sussex, BN25 3TZ.

I read with great interest the letter from John Wildey in Issue 8, now although not an Atari User I still have found obtaining Infocom games not the easiest of tasks. I have been known to travel 80 miles to a shop which had in stock the latest Infocom game. I have also bought games direct from Infocom but they took about two months to arrive. I want the latest game the same day it is released, mainly because I have an unhealthy mania for Interactive Fiction.

John states that there may be some doubt as to whether discs produced for the American market would work on British computers, well non l've bought have failed to work other than 100%. As to the constant rumours that Activision are no longer going to market Infocom games for certain computers I cannot confirm as yet (still investigating) but as to the marriage of Infocom to Activision, it has been a complete failure. The people at Activision do not seem to know anything about Infocom or their products and what's more I don't think they care! For instance, Beyond Zork was due for release in America about mid October 1987 and due for release in the U.K. about December. Now I rang Activision in December about when I could get hold of the game for the Commodore 128D. Their reply was, as far as they knew it wasn't available on the 128. Funny that because I knew that it would be and how much it was going to cost me, also I asked about Border Zone due for release in January 1988. At the time they didn't know anything about that one! I knew my information was correct because I had a copy of Infocom's catalogue which was effective through to 1st June 1988. This is typical of the attitude of Activision, I don't know why they bought Infocom, I don't believe in the company or its products. Like so many when the takeover occured I thought Infocom games would be easy to get hold of and released dates would be very much closer to the U.S.A. dates. How wrong can you get! We might possibly be over-reacting to the situation but better now than when it's too late! So to Activision I would say, your PR for Infocom games is useless, your marketing strategy for Infocom games is a complete failure. Maybe if Infocom released a megadodo arcade game for the Amiga you'd then be happy. If you should destroy the greatest adventure company in the world..... Beware of the Grue's..... WE WILL GET YOU!!!!!!

THE GRUE, C/O 64 County Road, Ormskirk, West Lancs. L39 1QH.

(The Grue is continuing his investigations both directly with Infocom in America and with Activision here. Hopefully there will be further information on the situation before the next Issue so watch this space and do please continue to write in with your views on the situation. Meanwhile, John Wildey has come up with a piece of very useful information. If you write to TRITON PRODUCTS COMPANY, ORDER CENTRE, P.O.BOX 8123, SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94128 9986 this most helpful company will be happy to send you a list of Infocom titles available for your computer. John sent me a list for Commodore and I must say that the prices are almost half that you would have to pay over here. The prices are in dollars but Triton will gladly accept cheques in pounds sterling so just check the current exchange rate before you make your cheque out. I was amazed to find that, even with postage added, you still save a lot.....Mandy)

I read with interest Tony Bevan's comments in the July Issue, after playing Gnome Ranger and the time it took loading in the various parts. A solution to this problem for those who own a disk drive and Freeze Machine or similar cartridge is to 'freeze' your position. It is then possible to carry on where you left off. I found this system very useful when playing Never Ending Story.

DOROTHY MILLARD, 69 Dunmow Road, Bishops Stortford, Herts. CM25 5HF.

I was very interested to read Perry Williams' definition of "graphics" (letters, August) as I have always found the description puzzling and was not sure whether or not "graphics-mediated" were considered to be adventures. I have only come across two of these and I enjoy them very much although I have no hope (unless someone out there can help me!) of completing them. One is TIR NA NOG as converted for Commodore 64 cassette. The instruction for stunning foes does not appear to work in practise and I have no idea how to map a game of this sort. The other is THE CURSE OF SHERWOOD, unfortunately this is played with a joystick and I am hopeless with them, as there are only three lives to start with, I don't progress very far. If anyone knows of a poke for more lives (c64 cassette) I would be most grateful to hear from them and also from anyone wishing to sell any "graphics-mediated" adventures for Commodore 64 cassette only. My pet hate, apart from mazes, is to enter a room (or whatever) and then be unable to leave it, presumably because I am not carrying the "right" object(s). At my age I feel I haven't the time to waste trying to find non-existent exits, and having to quit is even more annoying than "sudden death"!!

JOYCE FURLONG, 73 St James' Crescent, Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex

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I feel I must put pen to paper - not to complain, but in praise! Recently I decided to try some of the smaller software companies. May I praise both Jack Lockerby (River Software) and Tom Frost (Tartan Software) on their very fast mail order service. All the adventures I ordered were back in 6 days or less. Also they are proving very enjoyable to play. When I wrote to you earlier I commented about adventures suitable for beginners. Well the SIX-IN-ONE compilation looks ideal for this when I tried it last night. Please find space in Probe to mention at least part of this letter to encourage other Probe readers to support these smaller, but superb companies.

DR CHRIS BANKS, 105 Ross Close, Saffron Walden, Essex, CB11 4DU.

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I wonder when Precision Games are going to give us another game? Their last game ENERGEN ENIGMA, which was a sequel to THE EXTRICATOR, was most enjoyable and had me battling my brains for quite a while. Any reader who hasn't played these games should get them - from 33 Holst Close, Stanford-le-Hope, Essex, SS17 8RB, at £3.20 and £3.70 respectively. The first one entails rescuing a professor from the enemy, who are trying to steal his invention, and the second is about finding four crystals which the professor needs for this same invention. ENERGEN ENIGMA has everything an adventure should have, in my opinion - pictures which can be turned off (but look well at them first, because one of them contains a clue) and Ramsave which is quite useful, because you can get into precarious situations but you usually have a bit of warning. An added plus is that if you get stuck, as you surely will, Precision Games will supply a clue sheet in return for a stamped addressed envelope. I do hope Precision Games will produce a third game - maybe they will tell us what the wonderful invention is, or will they continue to keep us in suspense?

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

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I am an 18 year old student and will hopefully begin studying Computer Science at Manchester University in October this year. I have been programming on a BBC micro for several years in machine code and I have just completed a number of routines required in adventure games. My software runs on ANY BBC micro (B, B+ and

Master) in 80 column scrolling text format. The text compression I have developed will compress any text to 55% of its original length. It is my intention to complete the parser by the end of this week and begin entering puzzles, data etc as soon as possible. As the game will run from disc it is possible to store 173K of text on a single side of a 40T disc. In theory the game should also run on an Archimedes under the 6502 emulator! I could store over 500K of text on such a machine. However, before this may begin may I ask you if you know of any adventure writer who has an idea for a game, has worked out the room descriptions and puzzles etc., but not found anyone to code it? I am willing to code an adventure for anyone, and if it is of the required standard, send it to an established publishing house for publication. Any royalties would be split 50/50 between myself and the person who developed the idea. I hope you can help as I just cannot think of an original idea for a game and it would be a shame for my programming efforts to go to waste.

STEFAN BATES, 107 Greenhill Road, Coalville, Leicester, LE6 3RL

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I thought Probe readers may be interested in a few facts about the Adventure Helpline which I started in November 85 and how it has changed since that time. One of the first things I noticed was that there were very few female callers, but there has been a gradual increase, particularly in mothers who use their children's computers during school hours and after the children have gone to bed! Also at the start I had male callers who were surprised to find a female who could use a computer, let alone play adventures and understand them well enough to be able to help others. I am pleased to say that particular attitude had changed by the end of the first year as many more ladies appeared on the adventuring scene, some of whom were writing their own adventures. I still had some male callers who expected me to be a very young lady and were therefore surprised to discover that not only was I old enough to be married, but that I had three children. It didn't end there, some callers, male and female this time, have been even more surprised to learn that I also have three grandchildren. One thing that hasn't changed is the fact that adventurers are usually very friendly people, no matter what their sex or age, and after 190 letters and 3696 phone calls I am happy to say that I have made a lot of friends both here and overseas. When I first offered help with adventures that was all I expected to be asked about, but as anyone who does a helpline will know there is more to it than that. I am frequently asked which adventures people should buy and where to buy them, and occasionally for help with loading, saving or restoring difficulties, tape to disc transfers and even what computers and printers to buy. I have also had a few calls from people when their computers have developed problems, those I handed over to my 'Technical Department', better known to some as my husband Maurice.

With actual adventure help I am sometimes expected to be a mind-reader, someone will ring after what could be hours, days, weeks, or even months and when I answer the phone I hear, "Hello Joan, it's me again, how do I get the sword?", or maybe some other question which could equally apply to any number of adventures. The final and most important fact. The helpline, rather like playing my very first adventure, opened up a whole new world, and I thoroughly enjoy doing it.

To Mandy and John, congratulations on the great job you are doing, I wish you continued success, and to everyone, Happy Adventuring.

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

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For a while now, I have been getting more and more fed up with the increasing amount of sexism in computer software and advertising. It seems to me that the 'objectification' of women (that is making them, or specific parts of their anatomy into objects of male pleasure) has recently become a standard part of the computer industry. I am an ST owner, and see the trend clearest in this format, but it seems to be even stronger in 8 bit user bases, and is growing at an alarming rate. There are usually two reasons that I feel the treatment of women as objects is such a bad thing. The first is that it destroys the idea that women are individuals, and creates, instead the idea that we exist only to please men. There is a good deal of evidence to suggest that violence against women is at least in part caused by this kind of treatment. The use of women in this stereotyped way exists throughout the media, in fiction, in jobs, in fact in all walks of life, but in the software industry it is particularly harmful as it is operating on the young, many in their early teens, whose ideas about the world are still being formed. (I am also against the stereotypical male image presented of the muscular, hard hero who always saves the world/girl/universe).

The second reason is that women make up a large part of the home micro user base - in fact there are many more of us than either software houses or magazines care to admit. Many feel the same as I do about the current state of software, and think their needs and wishes are ignored by software houses, and want to do something about it. So, the user group has been born. Specific campaigns will be run as and when members indicate something they're not happy about. There will be six newsletters a year, whose contents will be decided by you, and we will form a nationwide network for programming help, gaming help, airing our grievances, and taking positive constructive and well coordinated action. Hopefully we will be able to sell non sexist software at cheap rates (I have some contacts already). You don't have to be a woman to join the group - I am aware that a good many men don't like the way software is going, and barring you from membership would be doing exactly what the industry is currently doing to women, so the group is open to anyone who is committed to the idea of non sexist software.

Membership fees will depend on the amount of response, but the group will be non profit making, and the more of us there are the cheaper it will be to join. Suggestions, enquiries, etc, should be sent with S.A.E. to:

SANDRA VOGEL, 3 Alden Court, Stanley Road, Wimbledon, London, SW19 8RD



HELP WANTED



"Can anyone please help me with KNIGHTMARE? I am stuck in the dungeon at the bottom of the steps leading up to the courtyard, but no way can I ascend. There is a 'wall monster'. Do I have to do him in first, and if so, how?"

If anyone can help Tony then please write to:

MR TONY PARKER, 1 Woodbury, 6 Elton Road, Clevedon, Avon, BS21 7RA

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PATRICK WALSH needs help in an adventure called FOR YOUR THIGHS ONLY by Zodiac.

"Can anyone please tell me how to get past the rats in the cupboard so as to get the mole thing?"

If you can help out then please write to Patrick at:
36 Verney Road, Langley, Slough, Berkshire. SL3 9NX

LATEST GRUE NEWS!

Since the letter in Issue 8 from John Wildey about some Infocom games being almost impossible to obtain for the Atari and constant rumours that Activision are no longer going to market Infocom games, some detective work was called for. First of all Infocom will not be producing games for the 8 bit Atari computer and once current stocks of old titles have been sold, then you will not even be able to buy them. There was worry that the Zork and Enchanter trilogy's would not be available as separate items and you would have to buy the trilogy pack. Well Infocom tell me that this is not the case and you will always be able to buy them as separate items, although considerable savings are available if you do buy the trilogy pack. Mandy asked if I could find out about Border Zone for the Amiga, well Amiga owners will have to down grade to a C64 if you want to play it, Infocom will not be converting it for the Amiga.

Finally as regards to Activision not marketing Infocom games. TRITON PRODUCTS are now the authorised Infocom products marketing centre. This company has been a leading name in the states as a direct phone and mail order company for some time and now Activision have bought them out. They will become Activision's and Infocom's direct marketing specialist, so at last we might have a company that will sell and market Infocom like it should be. This should mean that the delay between games being released in the States and in the U.K. will now be much shorter. The prices of Infocom games have also changed with only their newer titles being expensive, older titles are now very cheap such as Infidel which should now cost about £7.50. The next game due out from Infocom should be the follow up to Hitchhikers Guide but as to release date I would expect it to be about the end of September.

Infocom are going through big changes at the moment with game development, within the next twelve months expect some role playing games and some graphic adventures ... Yes you DID read that correctly 'Graphic'.

Watch this space.....

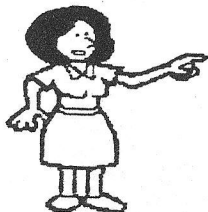
THE GRUE, With special thanks to Sgt.Duffy.

If you would like to write to the Grue either for further details about Infocom or to take advantage of the postal Infocom Helpline then his address is 64 County Road, Ormskirk, West Lancs, L39 1QH. If you need help on the helpline then don't forget to enclose a S.A.E.

HELPFUL HINTS

GUILD OF THIEVES

By LON HOULSTON played on ATARI ST



Want to enter the mill?
Shout your instructions to the Miller!

Bet on the winner in the Rat Race.
The truth is not always black or white.

Iron Bars between Junction and Circular Chambers are not what they seem, Try pushing.

An ICE Snake will feel more relaxed in a warmer environment!



IN-TOUCH



MIKE BRAILSFORD has the following Spectrum Software for sale:

ADVENTURES: Eureka £2. Seas Of Blood £2. Inca Curse £1. Planet Of Death £1. Legend Of Craldons Creek £1. Star Wreck £1. Werewolf Simulator £1. Beautiful Dreamer £1. Lords Of Midnight £2.

ARCADE: Solid Gold (Gauntlet, Leaderboard, Ace Of Aces, Infiltrator, Winter Games) £4.

ALL INCLUDING POSTAGE AND PACKING

19 Napier Place, South Park, Glenroths, Fife, KY6 1DX. Phone 0592 757788

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ELIZABETH HARRIS has the following Spectrum Adventures for sale:

Double Agent, Rigel's Revenge, Play It Again Sam, Jade Stone, Shard Of Inovar, Cloud 99, Dangermouse in the Black Forest Chateau and Storm Bringer at £1 each and Book Of The Dead and Terrors Of Trantos at £3 each.

Briards, Langsfield, Croyde, North Devon, EX33 1QD.

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LON HOULSTON has the following Amstrad 464 tapes for sale:

ADVENTURES: Mountains of Ket/Top Secret, Winter Wonderland, Neverending Story at £2.50 each

UTILITIES: Mini Office 11, Laser Basic (Games Programming) Electric Music Utility (put music into your own programs) £6 each

3 Pritchett Drive, Littleover, Derby, DE3 7AX

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SANDRA SHARKEY has the following Amstrad software/hardware for sale:

Green Screen monitor for Amstrad CPC6128 £40 incl p&p
Starcross Disc £9. Hacker 11 Disc £5. Also the following Amstrad cassette software: Armageddon Man £6. Vera Cruz £4.50. Outrun £4. Nosferatu The Vampire £3. Nova/Haunted House £3. Terrormolinos £3. Bored Of The Rings £2. Seas Of Blood £2. Forest at Worlds End £1.50. Necris Dome £1.25. Escape From Khoshima £1.25. Easiamsword £1.25.

78 Merton Rd, Highfield, Wigan, Lancs, WN3 6AT

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ELAINE GILES has the following software for sale:

FOR COMMODORE 64

Sherlock £2.50. Hampstead £2. Macbeth £2.50. Very Big Cave Adventure £3.50. Escape From Pulsar Seven £1.50. African Safari £1.25. Cracks of Fire £1.50. Empire Of Karn £1.25. Token Of Ghall £1.25. The Rats £1.75. Treasure Island £1.50. Zim Sala Bim £1.25.

FOR SPECTRUM

G.A.C. £5.50. Inca Curse £1.50. Inspector Flukeit £1.50. Espionage Island £1.50. Golden Apple £1.50. Planet of Death £1.50. Murder at the Manor £1.50.

1 Parklands Drive, Sale, Cheshire, M33 4NE

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ELECTRON ADVENTURES WANTED

If anyone has any Electron adventures that they wish to sell please write enclosing a list of titles and prices required to:

ANN POTTER, 45 Millar's Pace, Crossens, Southport, PR9 9FU

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MOIRA EVANS would be pleased if anyone could supply a copy of BLIZZARD PASS or supply information on where she could obtain one please.

18 Okebourne Park, Liden, Swindon, Wilts, SN3 6AH

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FOR SALE

Complete collection of Egyptian relics. Present owner Emigrating, comes with full Mummy's curse. Buyer must collect. Call at Second Triangular House On The Left, Nile Basin and ask for THE GRUE!

*** PRECISION CORNER ***

HITCHHIKERS GUIDE TO THE GALAXY - SHARON LOWNDES

TO GET BABEL FISH

Put gown on hook, put towel over grating, drop satchel near panel, drop mail on satchel, push button

JINXTER - SHARON LOWNDES

TO MAKE MAGIC SQUARE

Slide 5, 8, 1, 6 - top line
Slide 7, 2, 9, 5, 3 - middle line
Slide 4 - bottom line

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WITCHHUNT - JENNY WHEELER played on Commodore 64

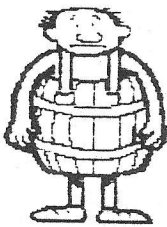
MAZE. From Top of Steps: UP, to manhole cover, NE, E, SE, S, TAKE BOOTS, W, D.

*****  *****

BUGS AND AMUSING RESPONSES

SUSPENDED - JENNY WHEELER played on Commodore 64
(Taken from the Infocom Invisiclude Handbook)

Turn all the Hydroponic levels down to zero!
Get a robot to attack the people with the wire cutter!
Ask the Robots to kiss one another!
Have Auda wait with the people while they wait for the car!



Objects And Their Uses



CASTLE BERTIE - OBJECTS AND USES. BY A.W. BALDWIN.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 1. Beam | Lift it when you have crossed to cut off pursuit. |
| 2. Book | Read it to learn of the secret passage. |
| 3. Bottle | Fill it from the dripping tap. Pour the water into the hole in the top of the control panel. |
| 4. Button | Press it to open the secret passage. |
| 5. Broom | Sweep the floor in the dark cellar. |
| 6. Coat | Hang it over the TV Camera. |
| 7. Floorboard | Lay it across the tables to pass the photo-electric beams. |
| 8. Haggis | Give it to the dog. |
| 9. Hammer | Use it to break open the metal box in the cellar. |
| 10. Handle | Has combination on it. Fit it to the safe and turn it. |
| 11. Iron Bar | To lever open the trapdoor, and break open the cupboard in the bedroom. |
| 12. Key | Unlocks the door in the corridor. |
| 13. Ladder | Extend it and lay it over the hole in the stairs.
Use Lift to get back down after you have turned on the power. |
| 14. Levers | Green - Pull to turn power on, Push to turn power off.
Blue - Pull to turn off alarm, Push to reset. |
| 15. Matches | Strike match to light signal rocket. |
| 16. Newspaper | Clue to gang's activities. |
| 17. Oil | Oil the rusty saw. |
| 18. Overalls and Identity tag | Wear them to pass the guard in the office. |
| 19. Plank | Lay it over the rotting floorboards. |
| 20. Rubber Boots | Wear them to cross the electrified grid (remove shoes first). |
| 21. Saw | Saw through the chain on the steel gate. |
| 22. Signal rocket | Signal the police helicopter when you reach the beach. |
| 23. Silencer | Fit it to your gun before shooting the guard in the rest room. |
| 24. Switch (boss's office) | Turn it to open the steel doors. |
| 25. Telephone | Lift receiver and dial 999. |
| 26. Torch | Has limited life. Essential to conserve battery by extinguishing it immediately you leave dark locations. |
| 27. Wire | Pick the lock of the desk in the study. |

HELPFUL HINTS

JINXTER - by SHARON LOWNDES played on Commodore

Warm the plastic key twice for a change of shape!
Don't let the oil run away, put bottle in cello case first!

Sock it to bung up a hole!

Worms love mounds of earth!

You can get in the clockmakers shop if you make him run out quickly!

Take the hat before you get on the beam.

Busk to obtain a hlf price ticket!

Saddle the Unicorn for a flight to the castle!

=====

SHIPWRECK - by ALF BALDWIN played on Spectrum

Wear a wet towel round face to get through smoke to the oil store.

After siren has sounded the Purser leaves his office. Go in and
examine desk.

Sign the permit with the captain's name in the writing room.

Examine the chart on the bridge for the ship's position.

You will have to oil the lock of the chest before you can unlock it.
When the order to abandon ship is given, go to your cabin, open the
porthole and jump out, but make sure you are wearing the lifejacket!

=====

EXCALIBUR (Alternative Software) by JOHN R. BARNESLEY-Spectrum.

To get up the tree - LEAN LADDER.

To cross chasm - BREAK LADDER, INVENTORY to see you have pole and
rungs. DROP RUNGS, CROSS CHASM using pole to balance!

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BLIZZARD PASS by WALTER POOLEY played on 128K Spectrum

To find the secret cellar, go down the well, EXAM WELL to see
passage, GO PASSAGE.

To move statue, go outside WET ROBE, back to statue. EXAM STATUE it's
on runners. WET RUNNERS. PULL STATUE.

To pass hooded figure WEAR ROBE.

To progress from Library, PUSH BOOKCASE.

=====

GOLDEN APPLE by JACKIE HOLT played on Spectrum.

To find a rug examine the dust.

Pull the plug to get a diamond.

Feed the beggar & crocodile on salmon.

Roll the sphere to find a ring.

Take note of what the parrot says for the input on the computer.

Spray the glass and hold the mirror to pass the medusa.

=====

DAVY JONES LOCKER by JACKIE HOLT played on Spectrum.

Eels make good torch batteries!

Have a shave or the catfish gets you!

Examine the palm before entering the hole.

Lobsters are good cable cutters!

GOLDEN OLDIES

SHREWSBURY KEY,
by June Rowe.

The object of this game is to get yourself from York to Shrewsbury and find a diamond-encrusted key, so you start off outside York Station, with nothing at all in your inventory.

Someone has dropped a packet of Rennies under your nose, but ignore these - they are unnecessary. To the north, you will find a lobby and ticket office. How to buy a ticket? You will find some money in the rubbish bin. Do not be tempted to buy coffee in the refreshment room! Show your ticket at the barrier, and you will find yourself beside a train.

Open the door and CLIMB ABOARD TRAIN, then SIT DOWN, or you will find yourself suddenly dead when the train starts off with a jerk!

WAIT until some football hooligans get on the train, then you will be thrown off with them at Huddersfield, where some careless person has dropped a credit card thingy. This card will get you some money later, but only if you visit the toilets here and examine the graffiti to find the password, which is PILOT. Before leaving this area, you must also find a newsagent's shop, where you must read a book which teaches you how to drive a car. There's a rubbish bin here, too, in which you will find a sneaker, essential to the completion of the game.

As you have no money, you leave the station in a westerly direction, but going west again leads to the motorway and sudden death! From outside the station, head north-west to the countryside, then south. Beside the motorway you are told that you might catch a lift, so do exactly that to get yourself to Oldham.

The first move south takes you to Manchester, outside a shop. Go IN to find a dopey-looking shop-keeper - he sure is dopey! If you give him the sneaker, he eats it! Anyway, not stopping to wonder at this phenomenon, you get the trowel you need, then go out and return to Manchester. South-west from here, you will find a car, unlocked, with the keys in it. This is why you had the crash course in driving! Maybe "crash" course is an unfortunate choice of words, because after you get IN the car, the police chase you and you MAY crash! Not if you know the correct route, though, which is E,S,E,E,E. You manage to lose the police car, but your car breaks down.

When you get OUT of the car, you will see a piece of A4 paper. Get this, then go east to a square with a deserted house. IN and UP the stairs, you will find a bedroom with a child's rope swing fixed to the ceiling and a bed to the east. Do not go directly east to the bed, or the ceiling falls through and you are dead again. Which is a bit of a nuisance, as there is no Ramsave in this game! Avoid this fate by SWINGing EAST. Then you can safely examine the bed and obtain a sheet before SWINGing WEST to safety. You will need the rope later, so PULL it to break it.

From the square, go south to a fork in the road, south-west to a residential area, then south again to a factory with iron gates. USE ROPE to climb the gates, and after collecting a pencil, find an office with a file marked TOP SECRET. If you read this, you are told that it is important enough to copy, so USE PENCIL (you already have a piece of paper) to do that. You can now drop the pencil and the paper, or you won't have room to carry the saw and nylon cord, which are to be found in a tool-box in a workshop.

Return to the wall where you found the pencil, via the entrance hall and the factory yard, and south-east from here is a wide pavement. Go east through a smelly alley, then north-east to a cash-point. USE CARD, then USE PILOT to get a £50.00 note.

South-west and west of the wide pavement, you will find a DIY shop and a DIY lumber store. Buy a wheel-barrow and some logs, then make your way back to the factory gates, and from there, go south-east to a clearing by the canal.

If you have all the necessary items (wheel-barrow, logs, saw, nylon cord and sheet) you can MAKE BOAT, then USE SHEET as a sail.

You will eventually end up on the outskirts of a city, where, guess what? Someone has left an American Express card for you to pick up! You can now drop the wheel-barrow, the saw and the sheet.

To the south-west, you will find yourself outside Crewe Station. There are several platforms here, but the one you want is (from inside the station) west, south, east and south. Climb aboard the train and look for a compartment with a luggage rack, where you will find a walking stick. Further along the corridor is a toilet door - opening this is the signal for the arrival of a guard, who wants paying. USE your EXPRESS card to satisfy him, then find the door where you get on and off the train. Leaving the train is a case of opening this door, then WAITing until the train stops at Whitchurch.

South-east of the station, you will be on a roundabout, then you need to move south-ish, zig-zagging to SW and SE occasionally, through Lee Brockhurst, Grinshall and Hadnall - these may be real places, but I don't know - to a fairly large town, which is your destination.

In a small narrow street, you will meet an old man who can hardly walk - give him the stick, to be rewarded with a diamond-encrusted key. All you have to do now is to find a church, walk through it to the church garden and DIG, to find a large heavy chest which evidently contains jewels of priceless value. This completes your quest.

SOLUTION OF THE MONTH

QUESTPROBE

A solution by Joan G Pancott on the Amstrad

- Torch. Talk to the examiner and press any key, enter shack, get candle, s, fly, enter tarpit, give candle to Thing, get watch, leave pit, flame off, change.
- Thing. Hold breath, wait 15, wait 10 (sinking down tarpit), feel around, smash machinery, w, n, n, e, (wall of fire), light candle, examine fire, w, s, s, e, s, change.
- Torch. Throw high flame at tarpit (for a smoke screen which will stop Torch being shot down when flying), fly hills, fly hills, flame off, enter cave, examine boulder, shoot high flame at boulder, flame off, get pebble, drop pebble down shaft, n, change.
- Thing. Look, get pebble, throw pebble hard up shaft, change.
- Torch. Examine watch, wait 50, (to restore energy), examine watch, enter cave, enter shaft, d, d, (or any two commands will make you fall), flame on nova, look, n, w, n, n, e, examine watch, absorb flame 4 times, (to restore energy), enter fire, e, e, e, feel around, enter hole, flame on low, (ignore the door), examine lever, push lever left, (the hurricane blowing down the shaft is now a strong wind), flame off, enter hole, w, w, w, examine watch, enter fire, w, s, s, e, s.
- Torch. Get candle, extinguish candle, get Thing, flame on high, enter hole, fly up shaft, fly up, fly up, fly up, flame off, n, wait 50, fly valley, fly castle, flame off, dig, (you find a red herring heavily disguised as a purple worm!!), s, s, drop Thing, change.
- Thing. Close eyes, enter tent, get cannon, leave tent, open eyes, n, n, drop cannon, enter cannon, change.
- Torch. Enter Latveria, enter shop, get gunpowder, e, e, n, n, load cannon, aim cannon at Blob, fire cannon at Blob, shoot high flame at Blob, flame off. (Change and you will see that Thing is in the castle entrance where he must stay for now, so save the game before exploring the south), fly hills, fly hills, flame off, examine watch, wait 15, wait 10, enter cave, enter shaft, d, d, flame on nova, fly down shaft, light candle, n, w, n, n, e, absorb flame, enter fire, e, throw high flame down tunnel (or east), CHANGE.
- Thing. Earthquake causes statue to fall, s, get Alicia Masters.



GETTING YOU STARTED & GAME HELP

ERIK THE VIKING By Sam Dart.

When the Dragon appears, up, up to Dragon's nose, e, n, get feather, s, w, d, d (there is now a whistle on the deck, blow it once only on Smooth Beach), drop feather.

On Deck examine anything that has a picture, rub it, then open the bag to go to the location shown (if not there open bag again).

Examine the medallion, repeat rub until it shows the location you want then open the bag (if not there open bag again).

In Maelstrom throw the plug, in Mist wave the tube.

When at sea some of the early land locations appear to be random so the compass directions are not necessarily correct and are given as a rough guide only. Once you have the bag to use the directions seem to work very well.

Start - Mountain. Look, d, w, s to Barn, get kindling and whetstone, n, w, w, n, w to Kitchen, examine stewpot (a picture, East to Grassy Isle, West to Hot Rocks), get it, empty stewpot, look, get mutton and sinews, wear helmet, e, n, n, w.

Shore. Drop kindling, whetstone, stewpot, mutton and sinews, e, s, s, w to Kitchen, s, e to Platform, examine rushes, examine blueblade (a picture, East to Gravel Beach, South to Slimy Rocks), get blueblade, rushes and table, d, examine furs, get horn, up, w, n, e, n, n, w, ne.

Boathouse. Blow horn (friends arrive), pull boat, in (to board Golden Dragon), drop blueblade, d to Hull, drop rushes and horn, up, out (to leave ship), e, s, to Smithy, get hammer, nails and scales, n, w, in.

Golden Dragon. Down to Hull, break tables, look, get plank, mend leak, drop hammer and scales, up, out, get everything, in, drop stewpot, d to Hull drop mutton and sinews, examine medallion (a picture that can be changed), get it, up, drop medallion, w, n, (if not at Iceberg try e and then repeat n).

Iceberg Ledge. D to hull, wear skates, get rushes, up, out (icicles), drop rushes, light rushes, n, n, n, n, w, d to Cold Cellar, get plug (taken up), e, s, s, s, s, in, drop plug, d to Hull, drop kindling, whetstone, and skates, up (try s, s, w, w).

Deep Fjord. W to Shore, out, w to Forest, n, n, n, n, in to Cave, w, get chalice, throw chalice (to kill the Enchantress), look, get mirror (needed for Dogfighters), e, out, s, s, s, e, e, in, drop mirror, e, (try s and repeat w).

Rocky Shore. Out, up, w, w, to Hall, pull tapestry, n, e, n, n, w, s, open door, s to Enchanter's Study, open cupboard, look, read scroll, wear spectacles (may help to detect magic objects), eat green bean (you are now able to carry more), get rag bag and tube (on deck wave to clear mist), pull lever (floor opens and you fall to In Ground), d, in, drop tube and bag, s, rub blueblade, open bag, s.

Slimy Rocks. Out, e, search haystack, get needle (to mend sail when it tears), e to Stone Room, examine tools, get spade and clippers, w, w, in, drop needle, d to Hull, drop spade and clippers, up, w, w, s (if East to Slimy Rocks, s, w, s, s, se, sw, w).

Stone Quay. Out (Spell Hound), n, n, n, n to Throne Room, open chest, yes (to Spell Hound), look, get JAR (carrying bell and Cat, "tie Cat"), FLASK (when the Dolphin appears, leave ship and "fill flask"), and SPITTOON (at Eagle, "get spit"), s, s, s, s, in, drop everything (including items being worn), d to Hull, get mutton, up, get SPITTOON, e, rub blueblade, open bag, e.

SOLUTION TO BLACK FOUNTAIN
by EMMA HEGGIE - PLAYED ON AMSTRAD

PART THREE

I spoke the password, "VENTURE ONWARD FRIEND", and found myself in a well lit tunnel with a gravel covered floor. Searching my surroundings more closely I found a map of the caves hidden beneath the gravel. Cautiously, I crept north, uncertain of what I would find. To my surprise, a large and ugly toad leapt onto my shoulder. Well, tradition must be followed in these matters, however disgusting it seems, so I gave the toad a kiss. Yukk! I was even more disgusted when, instead of the usual princess, the toad turned into my elder brother, Fulisto. He declared himself bored of all this adventuring, and turned back home to the city of Leosp. Typical! I continued by exploration of the caves by going east into a green and mossy cave. Searching through the thick green moss that covered the floor, I found some glittering emeralds. Returning west, I went north further into the caves, and arrived at a four way junction. I decided to continue north, and soon came to a cave lit by green flickering torches. There was a deep pit in one corner, and an ugly old woman sat beside it. When she saw me she gave a toothless cackle and began to cast a spell. A witch! I had to act quickly else I would be turned into a toad like my brother! I threw the emeralds at the greedy old hag, and in her rush to grab them, she tripped over her long and ragged skirts and fell into the pit! I decided not to investigate the pit more closely and was about to leave the cave when I noticed something glittering on the floor. I picked up a silver pendant on a long chain that the witch must have dropped and left by going south. Back at the four way junction, I went east to another junction with four exits. I went north into a fantastic cave of stalagmites and stalagmites. Lying on the floor was a poster. On this were the words "My mother's a jester, my father's a clown, to cure all your fear I'm the best around." "Aha!", I thought, "This is obviously a riddle of the sort often found in underground cave systems." Pondering on the solution I went south again, back to the second junction, and then southeast into a weird cave. A happy sprite sat in the middle of the cave. "Hello, happy sprite" I said. The sprite grinned and replied, "I've something you need, but I need an answer first." Obviously the sprite was responsible for the awful poetry on the poster. "Laughter" I said in answer to the riddle. The sprite laughed, dipped his hand into his pocket and gave me a gold bangle before dancing away, still laughing. The bangle was too small to wear however, so I put it into my pocket and continued on my way. I returned to the northwest and went east from the second junction. After going along a bright east-west passage I came to a very bright cavern. The walls were embedded with glowing crystals, and in the middle of the floor was a large, bright crystal. I tried to pick it up but it made my fingers tingle, and I couldn't hold it. As I wondered what to do next, I absentmindedly rubbed the bangle and to my surprise it began to glow! I tried to take the crystal and found that I was immune to its effects and could pick it up quite easily. I quickly put the crystal into the black bag before the effect of the bangle wore off and returned to the first junction. I went west again, and then south to the edge of a large, clear, underground pool. The water was not tainted by the Black Fountain, so I filled my flask and returned to the north. I left through the southwest exit and eventually came to a slimy tunnel. In the centre of the tunnel was a horrible slimy creature. I threw the meat at it, which it ate and slithered off to a dark crevice in the side of the tunnel, and let me pass. I climbed upwards and found myself beside a door. I opened this and at last escaped into the open air.

TO BE CONTINUED.....

PART ONE

You start the day in total darkness with the grand-daddy of all hangovers (medically known as Hangover Vulgaris). TURN ON LIGHT is a good start, even though the light hurts your eyes. GET UP and you are out of bed, albeit somewhat shakily; GET GOWN and your attention is drawn to something in the pocket. It seems to be a buffered analgesic, an asperin to you and I. TAKE TABLET and the world calms down enough for you to behave more normally, you have also gained a 10 point score for curing the headache. In the bedroom are a toothbrush, a screwdriver and a telephone. GET TOOTHBRUSH AND SCREWDRIVER, ignore the telephone. D takes you to the front porch where a pile of junk mail lies on the mat GET MAIL, S, as you leave your house you see Mr Prosser from the Council, with a bulldozer, advancing to knock down your beloved house. What can you do? LIE DOWN and WAIT secure in the knowledge that he can only advance over you, and that he won't do that. (You hope!!!!) WAIT and keep WAITing until Ford Prefect (your friendly neighbourhood Alien) arrives and offers you the towel that you lent him. Don't take the towel or Ford will go away and you will have to restart! Also Ford is the only one who can get Prosser to lie in front of the Bulldozer while you go for a drink. Don't leave until Prosser is lying in your place, or you will be killed by a piece of flying brick as your house is demolished. When Prosser lies down in the mud, Ford goes down the lane calling for you to follow him. FOLLOW FORD, IN and you are in the pub where Ford has bought lots of beer and gives you half. He urges you to drink saying that it is "Muscle Relaxant", DRINK BEER three times as Arthur and get an additional five points each time, EXAMINE SHELF behind bar and BUY SANDWICH. You now have a totally uneatable cheese sandwich. In the distance you hear a crash and fearing the worst for your home OUT, to the country lane where a dog barks hungrily at you. Thinking that it is a shame to waste a sandwich you could not eat (because if you did you would discover that you had lost 30 points!), you give it to the dog who eats it with joy and ignores a microscopic spacefleet which is passing by. N, and you are at the ruins of your house where a triumphant Mr Prosser is standing. At this point a Vagon Constructor (or should that be Destructor) Fleet arrives to demolish Earth to make way for a new space highway. Through the noise and gales you see Ford shouting and waving to you, then you notice that he has dropped a device with flashing lights on the ground in front of you. GET DEVICE, EXAMINE DEVICE and you discover that it has flashing lights, and a green button marked to Hitch a lift. PUSH GREEN BUTTON and you awaken in the Dark. WAIT until one of the 5 senses disappears, and SMELL DARKNESS. You can only make out a shadow moving in the dark. EXAMINE SHADOW and you find Ford standing waving mineral water under your nose. The extra-terrestrial equivalent of smelling salts. Ford gives you some peanuts, telling you that it will replace the protein lost in transfer. EAT PEANUTS, L and you find yourself in the hold of a Vagon Vessel. You can see a Babel Fish dispenser and a glass case with a plotter in it. Look up the Babel Fish entry in the Guide and you find that it is a translation device. Could be very useful to have one of those, PUSH DISPENSER BUTTON, and fish shoots out of the slot and through a small hole previously unseen. TAKE OFF GOWN, HANG GOWN ON HOOK, PUSH DISPENSER BUTTON, and the fish slides down a drain you had not seen. GET TOWEL, PUT TOWEL ON DRAIN, PUSH DISPENSER BUTTON, and the fish is collected by a small robot which shoots through a panel in the wall. GET SATCHEL, PUT SATCHEL OVER PANEL, PUSH DISPENSER BUTTON, and the fish is collected and thrown into the air by the force of the crash. Unfortunately a flying robot collects it and flies away with it. PUT MAIL ON SATCHEL, PUSH DISPENSER BUTTON, hooray the fish lands in your ear just in time to hear the captain say that he is going to read you some Vagon "poetry".

TO BE CONTINUED.....

SOLUTIONS

The following solutions are available from Probe at 25p per solution. This is to cover the costs. New additions in Capitals.

Angelique. An Everyday Tale Of a Seeker Of Gold. Altair Four(H). Aztec Tomb Pt 1. Arrow of Death Pts 1 & 2. Arnold Goes Somewhere Else. Atalan. Amazon. Apache Gold. Alien. Aftershock. Adventureland. Adventure Quest. Adventure 100. Bureaucracy. Bulbo and the Lizard King. Book of the Dead. Beetle Quest. Ballyhoo. The Boggit. The Beer Hunter. The Big Sleaf. Blade of Blackpool. Borrowed Time. Buckaroo Banzai. Brawn Free. Black Fountain. Barney Brown and the Chicago Connection. The Black Knight. Bugsey Pts 1 & 2. Cursed by the City. Crown of Ramhotep. Colossal Cave Adventure(H). The Challenge. Castle of Riddles. Classic Adventure. Crystals of Carus. The Cup. THE CASTLE. CASTLE OF TERROR. CRYSTAL CAVERN. CITADEL. CLAWS OF DESPAIR. The Curse. Custerds Quest. The Crystal Frog. Cracks of Fire. Colour of Magic. The Count. Castle Colditz. Colditz. Cloud 99. Castle Blackstar. Cutthroats. The Case Of The Mixed-Up Shymer. Castle Thade. Castle Adventure. The Calling. Crimson Crown. Circus. The Canasto Rebellion. Castle of The Skull Lord. Crystal of Chantie. DOUBLE AGENT. Devil's Island. Desert Island. Dragonscrypt. Dr Jekyll & Mr Hyde Pt 1. Dodgy Geezers. Dragon's Tooth. Demon from the Darkside. Diamond Trail. Danger Mouse in the Black Forest Chateau Pt 1. Denis Through the Drinking Glass. Dragon of Notacare. Dungeons, Amethysts, Alchemists 'n' Everythin'. Dracula. Deadline. Dungeon Adventure. Dragon Slayer. The Dallas Quest. EARTHSHOCK. Escape. Escape from Khoshima. Emergem Enigma. Espionage Island. Excalibur. Eye of Bain. EYE OF VARTAN. Eureka (5). The Enchanted Cottage. Empire of Karn. Erik the Viking. Enchanter. Escape from Devil's Island. Future Tense. Football Frenzy. Fuddo & Slam. Fantasia Diamond. The Fourth Sarcophagus. Four Minutes to Midnight. Final Mission. The Forest at Worlds End. Fistfull of Blood Capsules Pt1. Gnome Ranger. The Guild of Thieves. Gremlins. Green Door. Golden Baton. Ground Zero. Golden Voyage. The Golden Mask. Golden Apple. HEROES OF KARN. Hollywood Hi-Jinks. The Hulk. Hammer of Grimmold. Heavy on the Magik. Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy. Haunted House. The Hobbit. The Hobbit Delux (Disk Version). He-Man and the Masters of the Universe. Hunchback. House of the Seven Gables. Hospital Adventure. The Helm. H.R.H. Hexagonal Museum. Inspector Flukeit. Infidel. Imagination. Invincible Island. The Inferno. Inca Curse. Ice Station Zero. Jade Stone. Jolly Duplicator. Jewels Of Babylon. Jack and the Beanstalk. Jack the Ripper. Kentilla. Karyssia. The Knights Quest. LAPIS PHILOSOPHURUM. Lifeterm. The Lurking Horror. Leather Goddesses of Phobos. Lord of the Rings. The Lords of Time. The Lost Crystal. The Lost City. Lords of Midnight. Loads of Midnight. Legacy. MURDER ON THE WATERFRONT. MURDER OFF MIAMI. 1942 Mission. Matt Lucas. Merhownie's Light. Molesworth. Myorem. Monster. Mordon's Quest. The Mural. Mystery Funhouse. Mountains of Ket. Monroe Manor. Miami Mice. Message from Andromeda. Marie Celeste. Magic Mountain. Mafia Contract II. Moron. Moonmist. Necris Dome. Nine Princes In Amber. Nythyhel. Nova. Neverending Story. Orbit Of Doom (H). The O Zone. One Dark Night. The Odyssey of Hope. The Pen And The Dark. Pharaoh's Tomb. Pirates Gold. Project X/Microman. Planet Of Death. Pirate Adventure. The Pay-Off. The Philosophers Stone. Play it Again Sam. Prospector. Plundered Hearts. The Pawn. Planetfall. Pilgrim (H). Perseus & Andromeda. Prince of Tyndal. The Quest Of Merravid. Quan Tulla. Questprobe III. Quest for the Golden Eggcup. Red Moon. Rescue From Doom. Ring Of Power. Return To Ithica. Rigel's Revenge. The Rising of Salandra. Rebel Planet. The Runestone of Zendos. Return of the Joystick. Return to Eden. Robin Of Sherlock Pt1. Robo City. Rogue Comet. Ruby Runaround. SUDS. SPOOF. SKELVULLYN TWINE PT1. STAINLESS STEEL RAT SAVES THE WORLD. THE SWAMP. The Shard of Inovar. The Snow Queen. Ship Of Doom. Satcom. Se-Kaa Of Assiah. Sea Of Ziron. Seabase Delta. The Secret Of Bastow Manor. Secret Mission. The Shrewsbury Key. Sinbad And The Golden Ship. Spiderman. Suspended. Seastalker. Starcross. Stationfall. The Secret of Life.

Stoneville Manor. Sorcerer. Sorcerer of Claymorgue Castle. Souls of Darkon. The Serf's Tale. Spellbreaker. Sherlock (Melbourne House). Secret of St Brides. Savage Island Pts 1 & 2. Snowball. Spytrek. Star Wreck. Scroll of Akbar Khan. Search for Terrestrial Intelligence. Shadows of Mordor. S.M.A.S.H.E.D. Sharpes Deeds. Serpent from hell. Treasure. Terrormolinos. Top Secret. Temple Terror. Ten Little Indians. Temple Of Vran. Theatre Of Death. Theseus And The Minotaur. The Time Machine. Time Quest. Tracer Sanction. Transylvania. Treasure Island. Trial Of Arnold Blackwood. Twin Kingdom Valley. Tower of Despair. Trinity. Twice Shy. Ulysses and the Golden Fleece. Urban Upstart. Upper Gumtree. Velnor's Lair. Volcano Of Raka Tua. Voyage To Atlantis. Valkyrie 17. Vera Cruz. Voodoo Castle. Wizard's Challenge. Wizard's Orb. Worm In Paradise. Wishbringer. Winter Wonderland. Wychwood. Wolfman. Woods Of Winter. Will O' The Wisp. Wise And Fool Of Arnold Blackwood. Wizard Of Akyrz. Witness. Xanadu. The Zaracon Mystery. Zork I. Zork II. Zork III. Zodiac (Incentive Software). Zodiac (Tansoft). ZZZZ.



KINGS AND QUEENS OF THE CASTLE



BARBARA BASSINGTHWAIGHTE.70 Coronation Ave,Yeovil,Somerset,BA21 3DZ
Arrow of Death I, Axe of Kolt, Hex, Jungle Drums, Magnetic Moon, Puppet Man, Starship Quest and Village Of Lost Souls.

SILVIA JANSSEN.Wilhelminastr.1, 6049 Aj Herten, The Netherlands
Aftershock, Apache Gold, The Castle, Crown of Ramhotep, Golden Apple, Golden Baton, Hampstead, The Hobbit, The Hulk, Lords of Time, Mafia Contract I & II, Mandion Quest, Mission X, Microman, The Mural, Prospector, The Pyramid, Rebel Planet, Red Moon, Green Door, Red Door, The Snowqueen, Snowball, Ten Little Indians, Terrormolinos, Time Machine and Urban Upstart.

G.D.(KENNY) KENNINGTON.9 Cockington Walk,Egguckland,Plymouth,Devon,PL6 5QF
Colossal Adventure, Adventure Quest, Dungeon Adventure, Snowball, Return to Eden, Worm in Paradise, Knight Orc, The Pawn, Gnome Ranger, Legend of Apache Gold, Wiz Biz, Custerd's Quest, S.M.A.S.H.E.D. Rigel's Revenge, The Colour of Magic, The Price of Magik, Seabase Delta, Kobayashi Naru, Matchmaker, Witch Hunt, The Cup, Mutant, Realm of Darkness, Lifeboat, Davy Jones Locker, The Challenge, Mansion Quest, Mission X, Desert Island, Castle Adventure, Message from Andromeda, Jewels of Babylon, Spiderman, The Hobbit, Wolfman 1 + 2, Excalibur and Blizzard Pass.

DOREEN BARDON,Lendel Cottage,High St,Slingsby,York,YO6 7AE
Evil Realm, Jade Stone, Fortress of Keler, S.M.A.S.H.E.D. Gnome Ranger Pt 1, Hexagonal Museum, Castle Thade Revisited, Picture of Innocence, Return of the Joystick, Time Line, Cloud 99, Ziggurat, Sorcerors Mountain, Football Frenzy, Last Will and Testament, Canasto Rebellion, Behind Closed Doors, Supergran, Mutant, Rescue from Doom, Fuddo and Slam, Jack and the Beanstalk, Earthshock, Crystal Caverns, Red Lion and Mahownie's Light.

BARBARA GIBB.52 Burford Road.Liverpool L16 6AD
Axe of Kolt, In Search Of Atahaulpa, Ring of Time and Ten Little Indians.

SHARON LOWNDES.Windemere.54 Blackberry Lane,Four Marks,Alton,Hants,GU34 5DF
Black Knight, Case of the Mixed-Up Shymer, Knight Orc 1 & 3, Gnome Ranger, Jinxter, Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy, Snow Queen and Jack the Ripper.

*** MANDY'S HOTLINE ***

If you have any queries about Probe, Subscriptions or would just like to chat then give me a ring on 0492 77305. I will be available at all reasonable hours and will be happy to help any stuck adventurer if I possibly can. Please try to ring before 10pm if possible.



TELEPHONE HELPLINES



SPECTRUM

Alf Baldwin	- Tel: 0452 500512 Mon to Sat 10am to 5pm
Mike Wade	- Tel: 0642 763793 Mon to Fri 6pm to 7pm
Jack Higham	- Tel: 0925 819631 Fri to Mon 7pm to 10pm
Walter Pooley	- Tel: 051 9331342 Any reasonable time.
Doreen Bardon	- Tel: 065 382509 Sun to Sat 3pm to 10.30pm
Mike Brailsford	- Tel: 0592 757788 Sun to Sat 10am to 10pm

MORE THAN ONE MACHINE

Graham Wheeler	- Tel: 0225 26919 Sun to Sat 10am to 12pm
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AMSTRAD

Doug Young	- Tel: 01 6815068 Mon to Fri Evenings Weekends/anytime.
Joan Pancott	- Tel: 0305 784155 Sun to Sat Noon to 10pm
Isla Donaldson	- Tel: 041 9540602 Sun to Sat Noon to 12pm

BBC

Barbara	
Bassingthwaighte	- Tel: 0935 26174 Sun to Sat 10am to 10pm
Barbara Gibb	- Tel: 051 7226731 Any evening from 7pm

COMMODORE

Reg Lilly	- Tel: 0392 215521 Thu to Tue 6pm to 12pm
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THE INNKEEPER'S HELPLINE

The Innkeeper together with his slave Allan will help struggling adventurers on a rota basis. Telephone: 01 482 6209 times as follows:

THE SLAVE (Allan)	THE INNKEEPER
Tuesday - 8pm - 10pm	Monday - 8.30pm - 10pm
Thursday - 8pm - 10pm	Wednesday - 9pm - 10pm
Saturday - 4pm-6pm & 8pm-10pm	Sunday - 8.30pm - 10pm

!!! THE ULTIMATE INFOCOM HELPLINE !!!

If you need help with an Infocom adventure then who better to help you than A GRUE! Ring The Grue on 0695 73141 between 7.30 to 9pm MON to FRI.

Please remember that The Grue will give help on INFOCOM ONLY!

PLEASE ONLY RING AT THE TIMES SHOWN

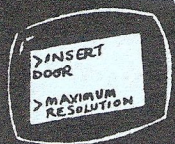


JACK the Hacker!

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PART 3!

THIS'LL STOP THE HACKER IN MY PROGRAM!!



HE HE!

?

LUNK!

WHAT WAS THAT SOUND?

A DOOR?



IT'S LOCKED!



WALLS! NOW I'M TRAPPED ... IN A LOCKED ROOM !!



LET'S TRY SOMETHING... THE COAT-HANGER FROM PART 2 SHOULD COME IN USEFUL HERE!! IF I BEND IT, THEN...



CH'88

JACK UNLOCKS THE DOOR AND PULLS IT OPEN TO SEE ...

... A VAST MATRIX ... LEADING TO A CITY !!

WOW...

