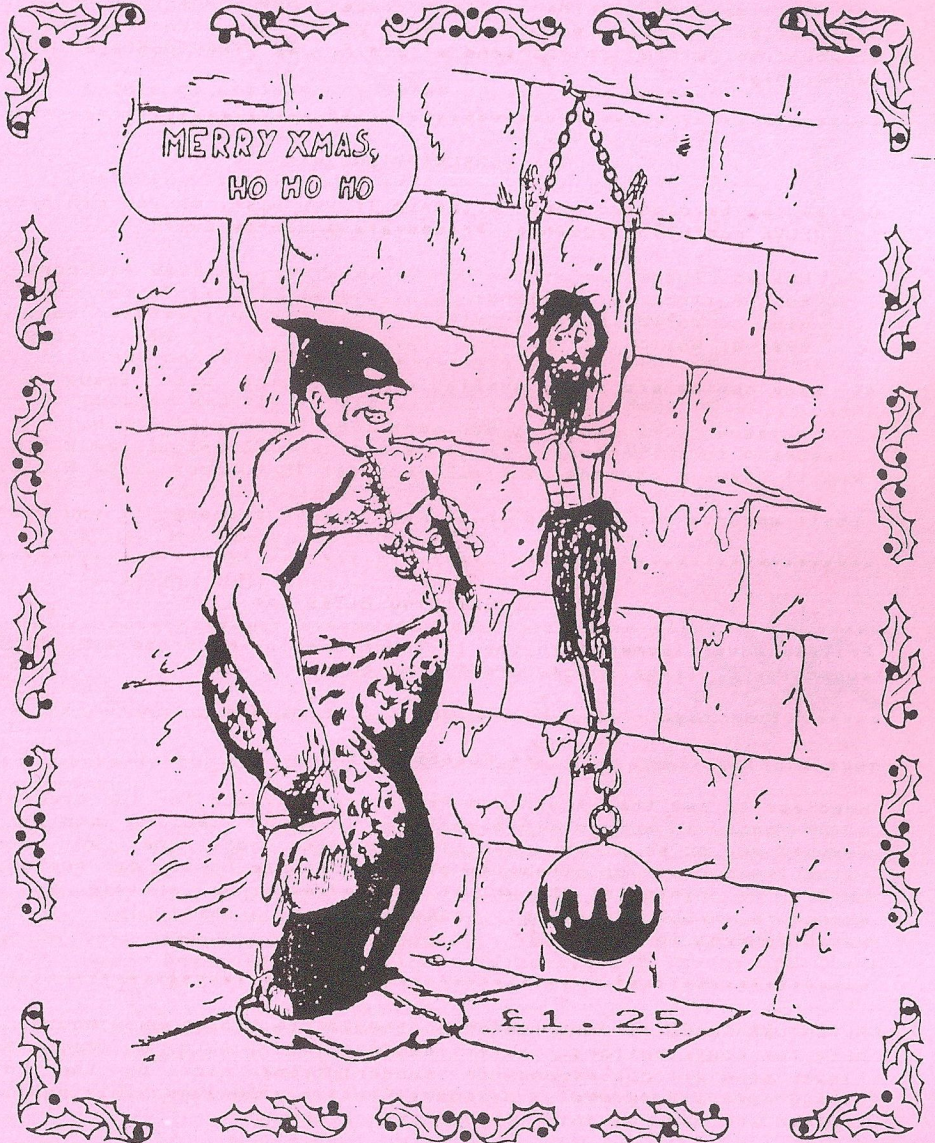


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Vol II Issue 12 December 1988

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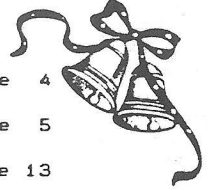
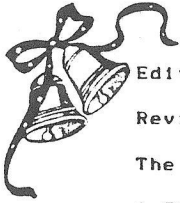
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Editor: Randy Rodriguez, 24 Haes y Cwm, Llandudno, Gwynedd LL30 1JE.

CONTENTS



Editorial Page 4

Reviews Page 5

The Art of the Maze II Page 13

A Christmas Poem Page 20

Adams Amsters IV Page 21

A Tale of Christmas (S)pies Page 24

Frob Of The Month Page 26

Letters Page 27

In-Touch Page 30

Help Wanted Page 31

Christmas Puzzle Pages Page 36

Hints and Tips Page 38

Objects and their Uses Page 40

Getting You Started Page 41

Serialised Solutions Page 42

Kings and Queens of the Castle Page 44

Telephone Helplines Page 45



HALL OF FAME



Sincere thanks to the following readers who sent in contributions over the past month:

Alf Baldwin, Lol Oakes, Andres Samudio, Tony Bevan, Brian R. Pell, Sandra Sharkey, Jenny Guthrie, John R Barnsley, Allan L Phillips, Pete Simpson, A. Melville, Simon Maren, Margo Porteous, Eric Stewart, Silvia Janssen, Tom Frost, Mrs J A Williams, Jim O'Keefe, Allan Batchellor, Maureen Bardon, Rod Whannell, Barbara Gibb, Paul Brunyee, Graham Collier, Jack Higham, Nic Rumsey, The Grue, Clive Swain, June Rowe, Bob Adams, Roger Barrington, Neil Talbott, John Taylor and Steve Coomber.

The special Christmas cover picture (which had me giggling like an insane Prune) is by Allan Batchellor.

Editorial



Welcome to Volume 11 Issue 12 of Adventure Probe.

Thanks first of all to everyone who helped to make this bumper Christmas issue. Quite a few of you have been asking for an index to all the issues of Probe and many others have asked me to compile a list of useful verbs which can be kept handy for use when stuck for an input. With the help of some of the readers who sent in their lists and databases I have at last been able to comply. These are in the form of a separate booklet, which I think would be much more handy, and are sent with my compliments to all readers as a little Christmas Gift (well it is the thought that counts!)

One or two readers have also been asking what happened to the idea of having yellow pages for the advertisements in the centre of Probe. Well despite my good intentions this was not to be as the photocopier decided to take exception to the idea! You may have noticed the awful crinkling of those particular pages? So until a suitable solution to the problem is found I have had to shelve that idea for the time being.

You may also have noticed the appearance of either scrappy little scribbled notes or extremely brief letters in reply to your letters recently. I do apologise for this but it seems that, as Probe grows, so does the amount of correspondence I have to tackle so please bear with me. I would love to write longer letters in reply to yours but I just cannot manage it all the time.

Before we start another year I would like to take this opportunity of thanking each and everyone of you for all your help and support. Taking over as Editor from Sandra was a rather big step for me and I know that I couldn't have done it without all the help you have all given. It would take far too long to list all the names of everyone who has assisted in helping me to keep Probe growing and thriving but I want you to know how very much I appreciate all your efforts.

The January issue (Vol 11 Issue 1) is already under way (well, you wouldn't want me to be typing Probe instead of cooking the Christmas Turkey would you? - well at least the family wouldn't anyway!), so if you have anything for that issue could you please send it in as soon as possible and I will try to include it. I will also do my best to make sure that I get my 4's the right way round and not to write Catabombs instead of Catacombs! (I don't know how you put up with me!)

Well that's about it from me for this month. All that remains is for me to wish each and everyone of you a really Happy Christmas and a peaceful and prosperous New Year. May your little gold keys always fit that rusty lock and long may your lanterns shine!

See you all again next month,

Mandy





Reviews



THE BARD'S TALE 3 : THE THIEF OF FATE
By Interplay/Electronic Arts. Disk only and priced £16.95.
Reviewer: SIMON MAREN Played on Commodore 64/128K

The Mad God Tarjan has wrecked vengeance on the fair city of Skara Brae and its inhabitants, following the defeat of Mangar, one of his servants, in a previous Bard's Tale. The city now lies in ruins, and a few survivors who escaped Tarjan's minions sit and wait in hope for the return of the heroes who previously saved Skara Brae, in a refugee camp a little southeast of the city.

Upon loading the game for the first time, you must make a backup of the character disk, as this has to be written to during the game, and of course the original is write-protected. There are two double sided disks in the package which you should back-up, effectively adding about £4 to the price of the game in blank discs. Alternatively you can get away with just the one and risk using the original dungeon disk during gameplay.

If you have played a previous Bard's Tale, you can transfer across your characters for use in this game, an excellent option which creates a good first impression. And so, eventually you get to play the game. You begin in the refugee camp of Skara Brae where you can create your own new characters or use the in-built ones. It doesn't take too long to create your own and it is more satisfying seeing your creations - as opposed to the games - making steady progress.

For those totally new to the genre, at its most basic Bard's Tale is a roleplaying game in which you control the actions of a group of (up to) seven characters, playing hack and slash against hoards of wonderfully animated monsters (just take a look at that Wind Dragon - Wow!), gaining experience points and gold for each victory, and with enough experience your adventurers can improve levels, receiving higher intelligence or more hit points (amongst others) as a result. But the game at its best is much more complicated. You have to travel seven dimensions in search of the Mad One, hopefully and finally destroying Tarjan himself; however, before you get a sniff of this objective you first have to complete a mini-mission which involves killing another of his servants, namely one very repulsive minion called Brilhasti Ap Tarj. This in itself is an extremely tall order at the start of the game (don't even dream of achieving it until you possess some very experienced magic users), but eventually when your party is good enough, this is SO satisfying that it is well worth all the effort put in beforehand.

It was at this point that I found a bug. Purely out of curiosity, after doing for Brilhasti I returned to Unterbrae and entered his chamber. And sure enough.. You face 1 Brilhasti and 4 Dark Guards! Oh well, another 25000 experience points all round! This is a bug that works in your favour.

TBT3 is a highly entertaining and absorbing romp. It gets its claws into you on first playing, and after that you can kiss goodbye to a lot of sleep. The grading of difficulty is perfect, the first monsters that you meet in the wilderness are real wimpy characters (but so are your newly-created adventurers), slowly getting tougher until you enter the first dimension. Suddenly faced by 50 or so very hard monsters all at once was a real shock to the system. I see that I have a long way to go yet!

This is the first time that I have ventured off the straight and narrow "solve the puzzles to progress" type of adventure, and what a great decision it has proved to be. One review I have seen suggests that the first time roleplayers should plump for Bard's Tale 1 instead. I rubbish that idea, why go for something inferior when this is obviously the best of the trio?
Overall, there is just one major problem with this game - the size of the electricity bill that it creates..

Initial interest 8 Atmosphere 6 Graphics 9
Lasting interest 10 Overall 9



THE DAMNED FOREST
CULT SOFTWARE - SPECTRUM
Price - £1.99

Interesting to see a new software house called Cult Software willing to support the adventure market by releasing amongst their first titles two adventure games. This the Damned Forest was the first one that found its way into my good ol' Speccy.
When I saw this game on the shelf initially it looked and sounded good. Let me introduce you to the plot. You have been hired by the fourteen nobles of the Damned Forest in their mighty castles to find the four diamonds stolen from the Black King's crown and sold to dwellers in the forest. These people fear the king so much that if you find the treasures they will hand them straight over to you rather than be subjected to the wrath of the king. So basically what we have here is your straight forward find the treasures escape plot. However the game is far from straight forward.

Rather than being in the form of your conventional "type it in" adventure, the programmer has decided to create a small (notice the word small) menu down the right hand side of the screen with all the game's verbs. Great you may say... actually it couldn't be further from the truth. You have all of NINE verbs to complete the game in all of which are the basic conventional words. They are LOOK, DROP, PICK UP, TRAVEL, EXAMINE, HAND, MAGIC, REST and SAVE. So as you can see you shouldn't come across any problems trying to find the correct word.

When you start the game, your start location is different each time, therefore thorough mapping is essential. As you begin the game you will find the first drawback of the menu system. Each location consists of a sentence of approx. ten words. So to see what is around you and where the exits are you must type L for LOOK, then which direction you wish to look in. Basically this gets tedious and boring after a very short time. As you move on (you must first type T for TRAVEL then the direction of movement) you will realise that there are very few problems in the game. In fact I would go as far as to say that the only problems are the combat sequences which you are so often sent into. The combat sequences are BAD... let me explain.

T-N-

You see a bear. Do you wish to use Magic/Pocket (a weapon).

As I chose a weapon I bet the beat the bear after three strikes simply getting the message THE BEAR IS DEAD (Don't know where the carcass went to!) My next move brought me to a location where I was confronted by a snake. Again I used a weapon. The snakes strength was 27, mine

was 88. I kept on hitting and hitting but eventually I ended up dying when my strength fell to 0, and the snakes after about twelve strikes was still at 27 - definitely something funny there, I thought, as the YOU ARE DEAD message came up on the screen. I then proceeded to press a key and guess what? The game crashed! Yes it actually crashes after every death hence forcing a re-load. Now that's what I call BAD.

I continued to play several more times but failed to make any kind of progress. I found it a boring and tedious game, where all you could do was wander around aimlessly picking a fight every second move and then re-loading the game. Why the verb menu system has been used I just cannot understand, it simply succeeds in slowing the game down to a terribly slow pace. Even at £1.99 I really cannot see anyone getting any kind of enjoyment out of this game, and as it happens the games best feature is the tiny corner graphic which accompanies each location... and these were done by Shaun McClure.

My advice to Spectrum owners looking around for an adventure to play, is simply avoid this terrible experience and look elsewhere... like Cult's other game The Realm.

Atmosphere: 20% Text: 25% Graphics 69% Value: 34% Overall: 30%

Reviewer - ERIC STEWART - Spectrum



THE DEVIL'S HAND



Reviewer - MARGO PORTEOUS - played on Spectrum.

The Devil's Hand is Demon From The Darkside III - the final conflict. Having thoroughly enjoyed "Demon." and "The Golden Mask", I lost no time in sending for it and it came promptly by return post.

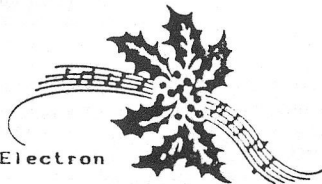
It has been Quilled, Illustrated and Pressed and has the same colourful text and graphics as the other two, on a black background, with the exits marked in yellow arrows; descriptions in green; actions in white, etc.

You can call up the VOCAB, and there is a STORE/RECALL to memory facility, as well as pictures on and off. The SEARCH and EXAMINE commands are also quite different. For example: SEARCH DWARF, and you are told he is holding a knife, but the EXAMINE command tells you "Like many I have seen but they're not normally unconscious!"

The story so far: Drakon, helped by the Devil, escaped Morrack by disappearing into the lands of Gorgon: the mystic lands where the great Wiljerd Zorron crafted the falcon staff. As Morrack you must explore this strange new land and find new friends and allies. Drakon's Orcs are everywhere and his evil arm will soon reach Zorron. You must find and kill Drakon once and for all before the Wiljerd's tower falls to him!

The Devil's Hand costs £2.50 from Compass Software, 36 Globe Place, Norwich, Norfolk, NR2 2SQ and completes the trilogy very nicely, and so far I like it as much as the other two. I can even forgive getting killed off a couple of times!

ANNABEL GREY
Reviewer - BARBARA GIBB - BBC/Electron



In this two part, text only adventure you play Annabel Grey, a southern belle who is working as a nurse in a hospital in Washington during the American Civil War. A letter from your mother, who is living on the family plantation in the south, tells of poor cotton crops and the threat of her having to sell their home to pay taxes. You decide to attempt the perilous journey south, and this is where the adventure actually begins.

In part one you must try to reach your home "Five Oaks". You have no money, and your papers are unacceptable in the north, so you need to avoid the Union troops along the way. It's quite an eventful journey and I think the fact that the main character is female should have been better exploited, given the period of history involved. Anyway, you have to be fairly tough and resourceful, and after a tricky start, the rest of part one is quite straightforward.

Part two starts two years later. The plantation is still rundown, crippled by heavy taxes, and the war is still rumbling on. Unless you can raise two hundred dollars your family could lose everything. Your sister and mother aren't much help, and not everyone else is friendly. In contrast to the first part, which is linear, part two is more a matter of wandering around known locations to find the right order of action so that characters react correctly and more locations open up. Talking to and examining people helps but mainly you are on your own. The difficulty is deciding the right sequence of events.

As with Anthony Lee's first adventure "In search of Atahaulpa", each part has a maze which is easy (and essential) to map if you use your common sense. Most items are easy to find and the puzzles moderately difficult. I didn't notice any spelling mistakes. I'm very grateful for this as spelling is the easiest to get right, yet the most annoying fault if wrong. I found only two minor bugs. To say what they are would spoil the gameplay but I can assure you that they don't interfere much, and you may never find them anyway!

In the beginning the scenario didn't appeal to me but once into the adventure I found it enjoyable. I did get the impression of an incomplete and rather rushed adventure. I hope it wasn't, and that the comments in my review of Atahaulpa didn't cause a hurried release date.

Annabel Gray isn't quite up to the very high standard of Atahaulpa but nevertheless it is interesting, very playable and well worth the asking price.

£2.50 for Tape for BBC/Electron, from
Anthony Lee,
35 Osprey Gardens, Worle, Weston-Super-Mare, Avon, BS22 8UN.

YAK FACTS by THE GRUE!

Did you know that...

Flood Control Gate #3 is as tall as 42 large bull yaks.

A good yak can be purchased for less than 200 Zorkmids.

The word yak can be worth up to 30pts in Scrabble.

A yak can migrate over seven thousand miles in a single day.





BORDER HARRIER

By Sole Solution Software. Spectrum only.
 Price - £1.50. Available from Stuart Lord,
 2 Kendals Close, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP13 7NN.
 Reviewer - THE INNKEEPER - Played on 48K Spectrum.



It is the year 1579 (I remember it well), and you are on a secret mission for the King of England (Hoorah). The details of which are recorded on the message, which you must deliver to Edinburgh Castle (where the Scottish King is). However, you have been betrayed into 'Rebel' hands and now find yourself imprisoned in a cell in 'Galashiels Goal'. Escape seems impossible... but then you are the...

BORDER HARRIER

Right that's enough of the blurb, you start in a smelly dungeon and an assortment of things are here which you will need for your travels. Once you have done some excavations of sorts, you'll be able to sort out your first puzzle. When you find the message again, make sure that you read it as more clues are on the way. A few swift strokes of the sword should get rid of some people but not all and in this game you will also have to eat a bit, but don't worry too much as food can be bought or by being nice to people. One problem I encountered was if I typed "Say Hello" the game thinks that you are swearing so watch what you type in as you are only given two chances at swearing in this game (Bit stupid I think, plus this is a bug, see, I normally find 'em). The help routine is quite extensive if typed so it is quite a good game for beginners. You will also meet a relation of mine but don't get too drunk! If you try to examine people you will get quite a good response of "Scotsmen don't like being tampered with" (haven't they heard of the Gay Gordons!) One puzzle is a bit odd to say the least, but I will let you find that out if you try any climbing or wading any streams. When in Edinburgh itself look out for the 'mugger' (I thought they were only in London Town). Things can be bartered with as in the 16th century.

The game itself is written with the Quill suite of utilities and so called debugged using 'Quaid'. The packaging did not have any introduction to the game on the inlay (maybe they will have one when on general sale), but the commands etc that came inside were very well written and informative.

Criticisms: Why do programmers waste code, and memory on swear words just to crash a game I will never know. Also, considering that the game is set in the 16th century I would have thought a more suitable character set on the screen would have enhanced it more but this game has quite a futuristic character set. On a personal note the graphics are rather bitty and take a while to draw on screen though they can be switched off, also the beep noises are rather yuch.

On the whole this is a well thought out adventure, no superheroes or such, no saving the world from aliens etc. Just a storyline that is very feasible and, at last, some history of sorts which is what I like most of all. I'm surprised that other people haven't written more on our history as there is so much of it. This is also the first game for a couple of months that I have actually played again after completing it, just to see if there was anything else to do.

All in all this is a very good game for a novice adventurer though I think most of the more experienced adventurers will have no problem with the puzzles.

Keep them coming 'Sole Solutions'. I wonder what's next? Maybe a 'Robert the Bruce' or 'Mary Queen of Scots' type game? I do hope so.



The Runestone Of Zaobab - Eric Stewart - £1.99 + 28p p&p.



Another adventure covering the area of pure fantasy comes to the fore from the GAC of Eric Stewart. The plot covers little new ground by casting you as a daring hero intent on searching for a precious stone stolen from your father by a Black Priest of Zaobab. Travelling to Zaobab would be bad anyway, but the journey is made even worse by the hazzards (or is it hazards?) the Black Priest has placed throughout the land.

You are treated to a fairly detailed loading screen by Shaun McClure, and are then faced with four poorly drawn pictures of an axe, a dagger, a staff and a sword and are left to decide which weapon you would prefer to take on your quest. These weapons are detailed in a 6 page booklet included with the adventure as having different combat and magical values.

You start the adventure equipped with your weapon, a randomly allocated strength from 0 to 100, a spell power of 0 (type SPELLS), and a magic level of Novice (type LEVEL). The strength rating is used in determining the outcome of any battles you may enter. As you solve the puzzles your spell power may increase and so allow you to cast one of the four available spells and at the same time moving you up the ranks towards Wizard status. So off you go, collecting several items along the way, until you come to a fork in the path. One exit leads to the iceworld, another to the fireworld. The adventurer may now choose either route to complete the game, although on my copy only one route actually worked.

The somewhat lacklustre descriptions are not the first thing I disliked about the adventure, the spelling and grammer manage to attract attention all too well. Poor spelling abounds throughout the instruction booklet, and gets no better within the adventure itself. There is a mountain side which has a peak jutting out to provide an anchoring point, but in the description it appears as a 'peek'. Fortunately, the programmer was aware of this (I assume) as the vocabulary includes 'peek' as a synonym of 'peak' (or is it the other way around?) ! Badly spelled words appear quite regularly, and even one of the verbs listed in the booklet is misspelt. Further peculiarities include a length of rope you are carrying suddenly jumps out of your grasp when examining a crater and, of course, the ubiquitous GAC error message followed by an adventure reset!

The reverse of the tape includes a bonus adventure titled 'Escape from Magic' in which a spell is inadvertently cast on yourself and sends you to a weird and wonderful land from which you must escape. Similar spelling errors occur even in the introductory text, and although the RAMSAVE/LOAD feature is quite a welcome feature, it would be helpful if it worked!

In conclusion, the adventure is not worth playing in it's present state, and even if the spelling and other bugs were tidied up, you would be left with a fairly small and unsophisticated adventure which contains none of the GET ALL, DROP ALL and RAMSAVE/LOAD commands you may expect. In short, it promises a lot but delivers very little.

Reviewer - Paul Brunyee

Formats - Spectrum 48/128/+2

Available from: Eric Stewart, 18 Vatisker, BACK, Isle of Lewis, PA86 OJS.



THE REALM.
by June Rowe.



If you didn't happen to see Mike Gerrard's piece about this game in the October issue of YOUR SINCLAIR, you may like to hear of a new budget-priced (£1.99) adventure, obtainable from The Cult, D & H Games, 19 Melne Road, Stevenage, Herts. SG2 8LL.

If you did read about it, but haven't sent for it yet - why not?

If you did send for it, read on anyway - you may learn one or two things you haven't yet discovered!

This is a "search and find" game, but it's more original than most. For a start, you don't know at the beginning of the game what you are searching for!

You can only go north from the first location, which brings you to a cottage. Well, no adventurer passes up the chance of seeing what's inside a tempting location like this, and now your quest will be revealed, when you meet the wizard.

The wizard, without prompting, asks you to look after things while he goes off to look for a goblin who has nicked a page from his spell book.

Off he goes, leaving his spell book for you to read - you will notice that Page 5 is missing, and by the way, you need to make a copy of all the spells, because you can't take the book out of the cottage.

It is essential to know what the spells will do, and the objects you need to make them work, or you will get nowhere at all, especially since for two of the most important spells (more of these later) you will need a fwooble.

What? You don't know what a fwooble is? You will, if you examine the cage in the cottage, and read the appendix in the spell book!

First puzzle - fwoobles like honey, and there's no way you can get the fwooble without some. If you search the woods, you will find a beehive with some honey, but the bees, being unsociable, will sting you to death in a few moves, for taking it, unless you have located the pool. They fly away if you jump in, but some mapping is necessary first, because you must not return to the cottage past the beehive, or the same fate befalls you.

Unfortunately, the only detour to avoid the beehive takes you into "The Tangle" which is not your run-of-the-mill maze, because the exits seem to be random.

Coming out of the tangle, you could be in The Woods, The Clearing or The Orchard, but if you know how to get to the cottage from any of these, you will be O.K.

Incidentally, there are several locations called The Woods, but they are distinguishable by different exits named, or by a description or by who is there.

For instance, in one part of The Woods you will meet an old woman, in another there is some long grass, and in another you can hear a buzzing sound. Guess where the bees are???

You should search every location, and more often than not, you will find something. Usually what you find is needed by one of the people you meet, for which you receive something else in exchange. Greet everyone, and you will be told what they need, but not what they will give you, so it is a matter of "try it and see"!

Not all of the characters are friendly - the troll in the cave will eat you if you don't know how to get rid of him, and meeting the spider inside the barrow (a burial barrow, not a wheel-barrow!) is equally fatal if you touch the web before disposing of the creature. The belligerent knight, though, merely chases you out of his location, making it impossible for you (at the moment) to get the Golden Chalice he is guarding.

Again, from the knight's location, the exit may be sort of random, but if you know where you want to get to and you keep returning to the knight, he will eventually chase you out to where you want to be.

The Plains are what I call an ordinary maze - by this I mean that if you have enough objects to drop, to mark the four locations (not counting the one where you meet a nomad, who stays there until you give him what he needs) you can find your way through it to the goblin castle, where the missing page can be found.

Mind you, it's not all that simple! Three spells (and the necessary objects to make them work) are necessary to get in and out of the castle and the cell where you will be thrown by the third goblin you meet. You can't kill the goblins - no axe in this game!

Coming back to the two most important spells I mentioned earlier - I'll let you in to a secret. HABU FRUM, the remembering spell, and IBAT ASHI, the spell of temporal adjustment, will save you a lot of bother with a tape, every time you think you may be entering a dodgy location.

So find yourself a flower, an old hat and a fwooble, and before you enter The Cave, try HABU FRUM!



THE ART OF THE MAZE II

In COLOSSAL ADVENTURE, the Level-9 version of the Crowther/Woods adventure, the "twisty little passages - all different" maze is in fact misnamed. In the original version, slight differences in the room descriptions made all the rooms in fact unique: but in the Level-9 modification, they in fact only employ four different room descriptions, so that apart from the room with the vending machine, the twenty other rooms divide into groups of five rooms, the rooms in each group being indistinguishable from each other. Whereas the C&W version was not strictly a maze at all, the Level-9 version is an interesting variation on the maze idea: the maze is huge and the player is limited to carrying at most 2 objects, besides the indispensable lamp and axe, so that implementing the classical solution is almost out of the question, particularly in a game where objects are not too plentiful, and accumulating 20 objects for dropping is difficult enough, even apart from the task of transporting them 2 at a time into the maze. (Actually, there is a neat dodge worth mentioning here, not strictly relevant to our present purposes: with recent Level 9 games, you can use OOPS to eliminate random adverse occurrences. Here, if whenever a dwarf appears you type in OOPS and take your move again, you will have eliminated the dwarf: if you always do that, you will have no need to carry an axe, and hence can carry three objects at a time besides the lamp: still the classical solution would be an enormous chore).

Hence, you are thrown back on trying to map the maze using only the variation between the four different room descriptions as you move about the maze. This is an ingenious puzzle. But although not too difficult, it takes a long time to produce a complete map, given the sheer size of the maze: in fact, it took me over an hour to make and check a map of the maze, longer than I have taken on any other maze puzzle. However, I imagine very few players actually bother to solve this maze. What one finds is that after a relatively short random search you encounter everything of interest in the maze: the vending room and ways back out again, and, soon after that, by controlled random exploration, you manage to find quick ways in to the vending room and back out again. As a result, what is potentially a neat puzzle is one that noone needs to tackle, and the whole maze becomes a massive waste of space within the adventure. And, if like me, you pay the programmers the compliment of assuming that there may well be more to the maze than is revealed by an initial random search and go ahead and solve the puzzle, you feel more than a little annoyed that when you have a map you find there was nothing more to find out than you already knew from your first experiments. In this way, one of the most ambitious experiments with the maze theme becomes no more than a massive folly.

Clearly, anyone who is interested in constructing mazes must, in the first instance, understand how to avoid this unfortunate situation. There are, in fact, a number of much smaller mazes which form far better puzzles, and which prove to be highly resistant to a random search. This is the next stage of our enquiry into the maze: understanding how to construct a maze so as to prevent its being made futile by the ease with which the naive solution works. In my last article I described the ENTHAK 7 maze I looked at as an ingenious maze, and what I had chiefly in mind was the way in which, by contrast with the maze we have been considering, life is made very difficult for the player who stumbles around at random. If you try to solve this maze merely by random search, you are quite unlikely ever to enter one of the two vital rooms within the maze - the one containing the flipper plate. If we look again at the map of the maze to map

THE ART OF THE MAZE II

understand why, and why, as a result, although a much less pretentious affair than the Level-9 maze, it is a much better puzzle:

	N	NE	E	SE	S	SW	W	NW	U	D
1	2	5	4	4	4	8	7	7	X	X
2	3	4	6	4	2	8	7	1	X	X
3	4	6	6	4	2	1	9	5	X	X
4	5	7	8	6	1	3	5	2	X	X
5	6	4	3	7	4	2	2	5	X	X
6	4	5	8	3	6	7	2	6	X	X
7	6	3	2	1	8	4	5	7	X	X
8	7	1	1	4	4	1	4	5	X	X
9	1	4	3	2	7	5	6	1	X	X

MAP III

CLEARING

FLIPPER PLATE

The reason that you are unlikely to stumble upon room 9 by chance here is easy to understand when you look at the map. First and foremost, only one of the exits from other rooms leads into it. Whereas there are numerous exits leading into room 4, say, you can only enter room 9 by being in room 3 and typing W. That of itself already means that one can spend a long time before finding room 9. But the difficulty of finding room 9 is compounded by the fact that although not tucked away to the same extent, of all the other rooms in the maze, room 3 is the least likely for a player to be in. Whereas in a maze like this with eight working compass directions there will be eight exits leading into the average room, the maze is biased against room 3 in that only five exits lead into it, with the result that one is about half as likely to be in this room as in most rooms of the maze. In fact as one wanders around at random one will be in room 4 almost twice as often as any other room, and apart from the designated rooms in room 3 least often. Hence what you have to do in order to find room 9 - go W from room 3 - is rendered even less likely. I am leaving this at an intuitive level, but it is possible to work out the probability of being in a certain room in a maze like this and the average length of a random search before you enter any given room. If you do work out the probabilities for a maze like this, you will find that it takes on average a random search of over 100 moves before you enter room 9: by contrast, the average length of a random search before you encounter the vending machine in the Level-9 game is only about 20 moves.

I shall call room 9 a "protected" room, where the principle of room protection is simple to understand: the fewer exits that lead to a given room the less likely you are to visit it. And this effect is cumulative: that is to say if the exits that do lead to a certain room are themselves all from rooms the player is unlikely to be in, it is even less likely that the given room will be visited. In this way, you can increase or decrease the protection of any given room at will. Thus, if we destroy some of the exits leading to room 3 on the above map, say, by altering the maze so that going N from 2 leads not to 3, but to 1, and SW from 4 leads back into 4 itself, we will have

THE ART OF THE MAZE II

increased the likelihoods of being in rooms 1 and 4, and substantially decreased the likelihood of being in room 3: as a result, room 9 would be even better protected. By use of room protection, the programmer can exercise almost control over the player: by the degree of protection he gives to a room he controls the possibility of the player entering that room even though the player is conducting a purely random search, and moving about quite freely. In the extreme case you can make the odds against a player entering a given room well over 1,000,000 to 1 with very little trouble as can be seen if we consider a maze like the following:

	N	E	S	W	NE	SE	SW	NW	U	D
1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3
3	1	1	1	1	1	4	1	1	1	1
4	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	1
6	1	1	1	1	1	1	7	1	1	1
7	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8
8	E	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

MAP V

In this limit case, it is obvious that if you move about at random you will spend most of your time in room 1, only visiting 2 when you happen to go W, and then even more rarely visiting room 3 if you happen to go D on one of those occasions, and so on. The cumulative effect of this will be that the probability of ever visiting room 8 and finding the exit ("E") is so slight as to be negligible. Now the degree of protection given to the exit in this maze is far higher than is necessary, but this maze illustrates the underlying idea of room protection graphically. If I had constructed the ENTHAR 7 maze I would have made room 9 even better protected, but, as it is, it should deter any but the most determined random search.

We may now formulate the principle of all good maze construction:

In any well constructed maze, at least one of the features of the maze a player needs to find - either an exit or important room - is well protected.

But the idea of room protection is not exhausted by the idea of making one room difficult to enter, you can elaborate on the basic idea in any of a number of ways. For instance:

i) You can protect not just a single room but a group of rooms: so that there are 3 or 4 rooms within the maze which are readily accessible to one another, but for which there are very few exits from the rest of the maze leading into the group.

ii) You can control not only how often a player visits a certain room, but the order in which rooms are visited: so that e.g. if you want to make it difficult for a player to

THE ART OF THE MAZE II

visit room B without first visiting A, you simply make most of the routes leading to B go through A. B then need not in itself be highly protected, but only highly protected if you exclude routes to B that pass through A.

iii) You can divide a maze into two or more distinct regions. Let us say the maze has 10 rooms, if the player is in any of rooms A, B, C, D or E there will be few exits leading to rooms F, G, H, I or J and vice versa.

Without going into the underlying mathematics, I can best illustrate all this by devising a couple of mazes which set the player quite specific problems. By seeing how these are made, the reader may both see the enormous potential for the maze given by means of the various kinds of room protection and be enabled to construct their own mazes designed to produce whatever effect they like. (If you own a GAC or STAC or whatever, since mazes are so simple to programme, you might be interested in actually programming in the mazes I am constructing here and see by experiment that they do produce the desired result).

A) Let us construct a maze which sets the following problem: the player has to enter the maze, visit a certain room and then exit from the maze, but without visiting one of the other rooms. We could make this concrete as follows, say: one of the rooms contains a torch which the player requires to be able to visit the dark rooms in the adventure; another room is unsafe to enter while carrying the torch - it is filled with gas which explodes on ignition, or, more kindly, there is a wind blowing there which extinguishes the torch. The following maze will make this into a difficult puzzle:

	N	E	S	W	NE	SE	SW	NW	U	D	
1	2	3	4	2	7	6	5	9	3	3	
2	1	2	3	1	9	4	4	3	9	9	
3	1	6	7	4	2	9	9	3	4	4	
4	4	5	6	7	7	4	5	7	6	6	TORCH
5	6	7	4	8	7	4	6	5	7	4	MAP VI
6	6	4	4	7	7	4	5	5	7	7	
7	6	8	9	9	1	2	9	4	8	2	WINDY ROOM
8	4	5	4	7	4	7	5	1	6	6	
9	E	1	2	1	4	3	5	7	1	3	EXIT

You enter the maze into room 1, and exit from room 9 - since finding the exit is not meant to be, in itself, a difficult problem here, we can be kind to the player and incorporate into the room description of room 9 that there is an exit from the maze to the N. Initially - when one is in rooms 1, 2 or 3 - you find no difficulty in finding exits that lead to the main exit - room 9 - or the room containing the torch - room 4. However, the moment you enter room 4 you are trapped in a set of rooms - 4, 5 and 6 from which it is easy to find any of the others, but also which each of them has several

THE ART OF THE MAZE II

exits leading to 7 - the room where the torch is blown out. Hence once you have visited the torch room you are almost bound to visit the windy room, unless you find the escape route - W to 8 from room 5. Even if you visit room 8, that will be of no use to you unless you immediately go SW to 1, otherwise you are plunged back into the group of rooms you are trying to get free of. Even if you succeed in reaching 1, the chances are slightly worse than evens that you will find the exit - 9 - before you are returned to rooms 4-7. The cumulative effect of this is that the chance of the player, by a random search, finding the torch and proceeding to the exit without going through the windy room first is very slim indeed.

Note how the notion of room protection has been subtly modified in this example. When one enters the maze, all the rooms are freely accessible to the player and hence none are well protected: it is only after the player has entered room 4 that room 9 becomes well protected, and even then there are plenty of routes leading to 9 if you go through room 7: it is really routes from 4 to 9 that don't pass through 7 that are well protected here. That is the kind of protection you always have to aim at in constructing a maze: not simply that it is easy to get to a certain room, but is it easy to get to a certain room by a random search, given that the player begins that search in such and such a location?

B) The other maze I will devise has the following property: the maze contains two rooms of interest: it is easy to visit either but almost impossible to visit both. We could make this concrete as follows: the exit to the maze is a door which is doubly locked. To get out the player has first to collect two keys from within the maze, from two different rooms. There is no difficulty in finding either one of the keys, but finding both proves almost impossible:

	N	E	S	W	NE	SE	SW	NW	U	D
1	2	4	5	5	7	4	6	3	2	7
2	4	4	2	3	3	9	3	8	4	2
3	4	4	2	2	2	8	8	9	3	4
4	2	3	8	9	9	10	2	8	3	3
5	6	5	8	8	9	6	6	7	7	5
6	5	8	8	7	7	6	5	5	9	10
7	9	9	10	6	7	7	5	6	5	5
8	9	8	10	10	8	8	9	9	8	8
9	8	10	8	8	E	9	8	10	8	9
10	9	9	8	9	8	8	10	11	10	10
11	8	10	9	9	12	8	8	10	10	9
12	8	10	8	9	8	8	11	10	1	9

GOLD KEY

MAP VII

SILVER KEY

LOCKED DOOR

How does this maze work? Here you enter the maze into room 1,

THE ART OF THE MAZE II

and to leave the maze, you have to go through the locked door "E" in room 9, having first obtained both keys to do so. The player will find no difficulty in finding one of the keys, from room 1 you will either, if you go N, E, SE, SW or U, move into a group of rooms (2, 3 and 4) in which you will soon encounter the gold key, or else into a group of rooms (5, 6 and 7) where the silver key is readily accessible. There is, however, no direct route from either of these groups of rooms to the other. Once you are in one of these groups the only way forward - which is also easy to find - is to move into a third group of rooms (8, 9 and 10) in which the door is to be found. But this group of rooms is a flybottle: once there, you will stay in them for ages. The only way to get out of these rooms is by going SW from room 10 into room 11, then in room 11 instantly go NE to room 12 - if you choose any other route than NE in room 11, you will be thrown back into rooms 8 - 10. Once in room 12 you have similarly to go U instantly. If you do all that, you will be back in room 1 and have a 50-50 chance of finding the other key. Clearly, the chance of finding a key once you have found the other involves a routine the player is not going to hit upon by a random search: even though there is little problem initially in finding either key.

These two mazes will amply illustrate the kind of possibilities that room protection opens up for maze construction, and the reader will be able to devise a whole range of other twists and developments, but the basic idea is simple: if you want to make it difficult for the player to move from one room or set of rooms to another within a maze, so as to construct the maze that very few routes lead between them: conversely, if you want to make it difficult for the player to avoid a certain room, make a lot of routes which lead there.

Other twists are possible: e.g. you can make it difficult for the player, not to get from A to B, but difficult to get there quickly. So that if there were a time bomb in A which had to be made safe by putting in water in B, and the time bomb goes off after being carried for 3 moves, then you can have lots of routes from A to B which take 4 or more moves, but very few which take only 3. The reader will be able to think of a host of variations, but they all find their roots in the basic idea of room protection.

It is room protection and not the size of a maze which gives it interest and difficulty. It is possible to devise a 2 room maze which is more resistant to a random search than the Level-9 21 room affair:

	N	E	S	W	NE	SE	SW	NW	U	D
1	1	A	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1
2	1	1	1	1	1	B	1	1	1	1

MAP VIII

This maze serves as a barrier between rooms A and B, you enter from A into 1, and have to find the exit from 2 to B. Here, where we have made maximal use of room protection in such small space, we have a maze that will hold up the player who tries to get through by moving at random: by comparison, the Level-9 maze is a minor hiccup.

Let us try to summarise this stage of our enquiry by outlining the shape of the "ideal" maze: obviously, enormous variation is

THE ART OF THE MAZE II

possible, and, depending on the effects the programmer wishes to achieve, considerable departures from the following sketch will make sense

I. The ideal maze has about 8 - 12 rooms. Although it is possible to find larger mazes which are excellent, 12 rooms should be ample for the subtlest effects. A maze like the maze W of the troll room is, to my mind, justified by the consummate skill with which it is designed - as always, INFOCOM come near to perfection - but a maze involves the player in a lot of work, and 20 rooms will usually make a maze, drudgery. On the other hand, whereas it is possible to construct a tough maze on smaller scale say with 4 or 5 rooms, the programmer will find little space in which to create the most interesting maze effects.

II. The maze should contain at least one feature - an exit or designated room which is well protected. Probably ideal here is to have one feature which is protected but not too highly, and another feature which is highly protected. In that way the player is doubly rewarded - first as you begin to make real progress with a systematic search you find the first of these, but the other only emerges when you have nearly completed mapping the maze.

III. The maze should contain 3 designated rooms alongside the normal rooms. There are many reasons for this:

a) a maze is a desert landscape and unless there is some variation in the messages the player receives on the screen, it is easy to be put off by a maze: alternating between normal rooms and designated rooms lends interest to the maze.

b) If all you ever see on the screen are normal room messages you never receive the kind of clues necessary for solving the maze. When we come to advanced maze solving, we shall find that one unprotected designated room is precisely the kind of thing we need to make the maze soluble at all.

c) A good maze involves the player in a lot of work. No adventurer will mind putting a lot of work into solving a puzzle, provided the puzzle is sufficiently ingenious, and the final reward is great enough: my final grudge with the Level-9 maze is that even when you have solved it, all you have found is a room that you don't really need to visit anyway. If I put work in, I want my reward. In the case of a maze, the rewards are of two kinds: gaining access to a fresh region of the adventure that is only accessible through the maze, and finding useful objects or messages within the maze. These will be contained in the designated rooms. To my mind, if you put in the work necessary to solve a really good maze, you deserve to come away with at least two useful objects and a treasure, say. This is proper compensation for your effort, particularly if one of the useful objects is only to be found in a highly protected designated room, and so there is a feeling of triumph when it is found.

This is the main outline of the principles of good maze construction. But, given the ruthless efficiency of the classical solution, all our work in constructing an elegant maze is wasted, if the maze can be crushed by the classical solution. This is the fate of the ENTHAR 7 maze we have looked at, and I have a great feeling of waste, as I look at a highly workmanlike job, whose craftsmanship will be wasted upon the player who can simply ignore it and reduce the puzzle to stupidity by object dropping. What I want to look at in my

THE ART OF THE MAZE II

next articles, is: now that we have disposed of the naive solution, what happens when you put obstacles in the way of the classical solution. How you rescues the maze puzzle from being ruined by the classical solution, and even more how the player solves a maze when the classical solution is made difficult or impossible. There is not point in eliminating the classical solution if all you are left with is a maze that can never be solved!

.....

A CHRISTMAS TALE
By Brian R Pell

The turkey thinks he's got problems, sitting there warm and snug.
People outside my window rushing with the Christmas bug.
Tiny faces waiting for that Xmas gift,
Far away people, praying for not another snow drift.
Which Christmas card shall I send, which present should I choose,
Is there really no end, God, where is that bottle of booze.

You've got it all made, the agony will soon be gone
But this blessed adventure goes on and on and on.
Dear Father Christmas hear my plea,
I'm not asking for such under the Christmas tree,
Just a parcel, small and letter shaped,
Inside a piece of paper, this my Xmas will be made.

Then the New Year will be fine, if it arrives in time,
Before the old year leaves and I'm still in my prime,
Because this adventure has plagued me through '88
And a solution would be just great.
Then the year of '89,
Fresh and new and clean and fine,

Resolutions I will make,
And promise never to break.
New adventures start afresh,
I know they will end up in a mess.
But I have all year to sort them out and I'm sure with no doubt,
Some kind soul will help me out.

So all my fellow travellers along that adventure trail,
I wish you a MERRY CHRISTMAS and keep sending in the mail.

.....





Bring back the pigeons!

And so it came to pass, that on the first Wednesday of September the letter sorters sealed up the boxes. No letters shalt be delivered, nay nor parcels either. Throughout the land the sound of junk mail thudding on the doormat ceased to be heard. Furtive glances out of the window to see if the postie was coming became a thing of the past. Dogs throughout the nation started to starve through lack of trouser leg to chew. When will it all end we wailed? Are the computers at Readers Digest suffering from withdrawal symptoms? Will Soothsayer ever return? Would the strike end earlier if they could hold a Postal Ballot?

The only good thing about the current strike which I hope has ended by the time you read this, come to think of it, it must have or Mandy couldn't have sent Probe to you, and I couldn't have sent this article to her for typing and.....is that it has given me some time off from writing letters, so that I have actually been able to do some adventuring. "No!". Yes honestly.

I often wonder what attracted me to getting involved in playing adventures, as I have never had lots of spare time to kill and as we all know, adventures are not completed at one 60 minute sitting, are they? You did? Oh! As I have a full-time job and I leave the house at 8am and do not return until 7pm or 8pm depending on how well the M.25 is holding up the traffic, we then have our evening meal, put the kids to bed, wash up (yes I do help) and then finally at about 9.30, it's time to relax in front of the television. (not a Fergie).

5 minutes later, and I'm sitting in front of the computer. First of all I type any outstanding letters. (I don't mean that my letters are "Outstanding", just that people are waiting for replies!). Then I decide what adventure I am going to play, load it, sort out my maps, find the correct saved game, sharpen my pencil and then decide that it's too late, switch off and go to bed!

The above probably explains why I do so much of my adventuring on Saturday and Sunday afternoons, except when there is shopping to do, cricket or American football or snooker on the tele, or relations to visit or 1001 other things that the family just "know" that I would rather be doing! I wonder why it takes me so long to finish an adventure? Do any of you find this familiar? To give me more time I think I'll give up watching snooker and also the relations. Especially the latter.

Now then, what was I supposed to be writing about this month? Ah yes, Jewels of Babylon. Lets see a show of hands to see how many readers want to hear about this one.

Help! I've just realised that if I write an article about every adventure that I play and that as I own over 100 of them, that's over 100 articles!!! Can I stand it, or more importantly, can you? At the rate of one per month this series will continue until 1997, but during that time I should have purchased a few more, so we could still be going beyond 2000. I should retire in the year 2013 and that will give me more time so I can play them faster and so.....

Why is Mandy screaming in the corner with a "Do not disturb" sign hanging round her neck? Right then, not many hands up so lets have instead Dungeons, Amethysts, Alchemists n Everything. Ur...

DUNGEONS, ALCOHOLICS, BOOTS (THE CHEMISTS, n' ENNERY COOPER.

D.A.A. by Atlantis, is a first rate spoof that is not difficult but gave me loads of laughs. My biggest complaint with this game is that I finished it too quickly. I was enjoying myself so much that I was really disappointed when I came to the end. WARNING! You do have to be broad-minded to find the humour in this game acceptable. There are not any swear words used but the text is "saucy" so if this is not your scene then please avoid D.A.A. as I would not want you to be offended by one of my recommendations. If like me however, you enjoy the unique humour of Monty Python, then you will enjoy this. I played D.A.A. out of order in my "play the games in the order that they were released list" and I am very pleased that I did. I was told that it would appeal to my warped sense of humour, so I couldn't resist and loaded up.

If you have ever wondered what gooseberry jam looks like sliding down a dungeon wall, well now you know. Ignore it. It's only a green herring! Just explore to begin with and you will be well rewarded. Some of the locations are well worth visiting just for the jokes but do not actually help you in completing the adventure. But as the good Amsters that you are, follow my advice and visit every location. Save your position before swimming in the lake and then dive in. As above, before jumping across the crevasse. Right, got the message? If it's dangerous, Don't do it! But do it anyway, 'cos it's funny. You should have by now found the imitation ming vase which if you smash it, reveals the whereabouts of the chunky key, which unlocks the large door and lets you enter the adventure proper. But before you leave make sure you have visited the secret hide-out and the cell (just for laughs) and, that you are carrying the sword.

There really isn't much more that I should need to tell you about how to solve this game, the problems are just not that difficult. but if you are stuck then here are a few hints. Kill the dragon with the sword. Take the potion from the Knight. Give the bull-whip to the Nun. (My favourite part of this adventure, try also hitting Nun with whip!). Give the wrench to the Man. Climb the ladder to get into the cottage, (down the chimney). Examine pan to get the Amethyst. Drink potion to turn handle. Give the Amethyst to Faracelsus.

I've just had a look at the map I made when I played this game and started laughing again at the titles of some of the locations. For those of you who have not tried it yet, the following should give you some idea of what to expect:-
Fiatulence Rock: Heights of Absurdity: Monastery of Admonastrative Affairs: On a Sandie Shaw. If you do not collapse into a fit of hysterical laughter at the (several screens) or response that you get to "Give whip to Nun" then I have obviously misjudged you. I hope you enjoy this game as much

as I did but if you don't, well after all you have only wasted 11-94. And you can't say fairer than that, can you?

Uh, all right then. If you absolutely insist then I suppose I will have to talk about Jewels of Babylon, but don't blame me if Mandy runs out of room!

JEWELS OF BABYLON

This adventure failed, to get me interested for some indefinable reason. It might have been the graphics, or the FUUK mazes, or the illogical problems, or the strange layout of the map, or the roaming Pirates that randomly appear and shoot you. Whatever it was, I didn't really enjoy it.

Strangely enough, I thought the game started off well and one of the first problems was (I thought) very clever. You arrive off an island and have to get ashore. So after climbing down the ladder and rowing the row boat North, (South just takes you out to sea), climb out of boat and explore. You will quickly find a plank which you will need much later. There are lots of Dunes and cliff paths to map but they do not contribute to the solution. The clever bit which I referred to above, is when you meet a large crab. Now this crab has decided to take revenge on you for turning all it's mates into Frozen Crab Sticks. If you try to escape then it follows you into your current location. That is until you reach the one with the boulder teetering on a ledge above you. The problem is, how do you make the boulder fall down and crush the crab? I tried pushing it, levering it, all to no avail. The answer is to make the crab follow you and then SHOOT! Result, one ex-crab.

At this point in the game I was full of admiration for the programmer but I'm afraid it was down hill all the way from here (No pun intended). Examples:- To get past a bunch of Natives you have to give them a watch? To get past a Lion you throw it a fish? To kill a Crocodile you feed it gunpowder and then throw a lighted match at it? Before you can discover the Jewels, you have to shoot, or are shot by, numerous random Pirates.

Now those of you that read my original article, know that most of the things that appeared in my DISLIKES paragraph, have been mentioned in this review such as, Mazes, Random Death and illogical puzzles, so this game was bound to annoy me! It's such a shame that it didn't continue with the high standard it set for itself at the beginning. The final chore of having to return to the starting location before receiving the "Congratulatory message" was the final straw for me.

If anybody reading this has played and enjoyed JOOLS then I would love to hear from them. Perhaps I missed something, but personally I did not feel exalted after my experience and I had no desire to reload it to help me write this report. But, if I have just rubbished your favourite adventure, well...er...um. Well that's me finished for another month. Two for the price of one this time. How's that for value? This article was originally intended to appear in the October issue but Postman Pat and his "helper s" put paid to that. So as this is the December issue, I would like to wish my fan a very merry Christmas. Have a great 1984 also! Final thought. Will the January Probe be late due to over indulgence by you know who?

Now what? Bob Adams.



A TALE OF CHRISTMAS (S)PIES

By TOM FROST



The waiting room in which Jeff sat was cold, dim and decidedly damp. He sat patiently, waiting for the rasping sound of the buzzer which would signify that his presence was required in the DEN. The DEN indeed! Who did HE think he was! In days gone by HE would have been at Jeff's beck and call, he thought, but how the situation can change in a few short months. He was not bitter, just a little disillusioned with an organisation which extracts its pound of flesh for such a minor indiscretion as being found "slightly inebriated" on duty. Well perhaps a little more than "slightly", but he consoled himself with the thought that he was not the first nor would be the last to be found in such a state at the DUTY OFFICER'S DESK in a BRITISH EMBASSY on CHRISTMAS DAY. He then realised that as today was CHRISTMAS EVE, almost two years had elapsed since his "indiscretion". On the coffee table in front of him was a motley collection of dog-eared magazines and periodicals and the one on the top had a photograph of the KREMLIN on its cover. That, indeed brought it all flooding back.....

The British Embassy in Moscow was no different from most Embassies, inasmuch as most of the innocently named positions were filled by highly trained agents from the "Secret Service". Jeff was an under-secretary of trade with special responsibilities for Agriculture but actually his main duties were to befriend as many "Russians-in-high-places" as he could. Under the influence of alcohol, at the many parties which he would arrange, he was adept at extracting "secrets" from these people. But on Christmas Eve two years ago, the party had been a bit special. One of the guests, well THE guest (who was to provide information so important that he was sure it would expedite his return to London), was a certain DR. ALEXANDRA IGOR NATOLOVIC. The good doctor was involved in the development of a "truth drug" so powerful and undetectable that unless the British (and the Americans) could also make use of it, the Russians would have the lead in interrogation techniques.

The party was well under way when the doctor made his appearance. His passion for malt whisky was not well known but Jeff had been made aware of it at a previous party by an inebriated minor official from the Research Laboratory where the doctor worked. This sort of cross-reference use of information was a vital factor in his "party-operation", as he had an excellent memory for such trivia. The doctor had a better capacity for the whisky than he had anticipated and it was well into the early hours of Christmas Day before the information was obtained. His shift as DUTY OFFICER was due to start at 7 o'clock and he only just arrived in time without the benefit of a sobering cold shower or a change of clothes. At 8 o'clock he was discovered slumped over the desk, fast asleep and the rest, as they say, is history. Sent back to London (that part he didn't mind), demoted and re-assigned to section 47A which operated solely in London.

At this point in his reverie Jeff became aware again of his surroundings and shuddered at his recollection of his first day here many months ago.....

The BOSS of 47A was not known to him but his type certainly was. A jumped-up little upstart of an administrator who had been positioned out of harm's way until retirement. Nobody paid much attention to how 47A was run but several important sections relied upon the information which it provided via a computer data base. The Section had about 15 operatives whose only task was to follow the personnel of the Russian Embassy and file reports on their activities. It was dull, routine work but he had hopes that his "sentence" here would not last for long. Wrong! On that first day the BOSS had great difficulty in hiding his delight in having an agent of such importance assigned to his insignificant Section and treated Jeff accordingly. One of the BOSS's little foibles was his annoying insistence on the use of cover names, both for his own agents and the Russians. He must have spent some time in WALES as he had the predilection of handing out handles such as TOM the PIPER or WILL the WINKIE (Tom Tom the PIPER's son and Wee Willie WINKIE being the not too subtle source for these particular cover names). The only other agent that was known to Jeff was ALF the READ. He was unsure as to whether the READ should have been RED as Alf had bright red hair or if it referred to the fact that Alf had a first degree in economics. No matter, Alf was the only employee at Section 47A that he could call a friend as he had been in Moscow with him and had indeed helped Jeff with the extraction of the truth drug formula from DR ALEXANDRA IGOR NATOVLOVIC. In fact it was only the reaction of the doctor to Alf's natural rudeness that elicited the information in time for Jeff to at least arrive on duty not late.

The buzzer went. Well actually didn't GO anywhere, it just sort of buzzed. Jeff slowly dragged his weary bones in to see the BOSS (BOSS the BOSS as he liked to be called). In private the other agents referred to him as BOSS the WIMP as he was more than slightly effeminate in appearance and manners. Jeff helped to perpetuate this by addressing the BOSS as "dear" or when provoked or frustrated even as "dearie".

Once in the office and seated opposite the BOSS, Jeff was informed of the reason for the urgent call which had brought him here. A certain DR. ALEXANDRA IGOR NATOVLOVIC had arrived at the Russian Embassy only yesterday and the agent designated to follow him had lost him, but it was known that ALEX would be attending a Charity Concert at the Albert Hall later that evening so could Jeff pick up his trail. The operation regarding this doctor, like every other surveillance was to be given a CODE WORD but the BOSS had not yet come up with a suitable one. He was doodling away on his scratch pad and suddenly noticed that he had scribbled down the doctor's initials as DR.A.I.N so the CODE WORD became DRAIN!

Just for once Jeff decided to dig his heels in and said "Not tonight, dearie! You know that I am going on holiday and I will NOT change my plans for anyone."

"But you are the only one I have that can pick up the trail! I have no photograph of DRAIN (the BOSS did like using his CODE WORDS) and you are the only one I can call on who will recognise him". He paused. "Please, Jeff."

A saving thought then came to Jeff and he uttered these immortal words, "You can use Alf because although you obviously do not know this....."



LETTERS



May I take this opportunity to thank you on behalf of all Probe readers for the excellent quality of the magazine. It was a hard act to follow Sandra as Editor of Probe but you have done a superb job and I hope you will continue to do so. I have only been a Probe regular for about 12 months but have bought many of the "back issues" and re-reading these I thought how much Probe has improved over the years, that is not to imply that it was ever anything but excellent but rather to praise you and Sandra for the ever improving way you have presented the magazine.

Whilst I am giving you a pat on the back I would also like to give all the readers and contributors to Probe a well earned thanks. Everytime I have written to one of the readers regarding help etc. I have always received a prompt and courteous reply and for this I am very grateful. So, my message to everyone is CARRY ON THE GOOD WORK.

LOL DAKES, 7 Clarke Cres., Little Hulton, Worsley, Manchester, M28 0XL.
=====

I think Pat Winstanley's articles on using the G.A.C. were wonderful. As a late developer and a relative new comer to writing one's own adventures, I can honestly say that without her encouragement, I would not have even begun. Having started and got stuck because of the unusual style of the instruction manual, (it doesn't answer half the questions you want to ask, (not that unusual really)), I am turning to Pat to guide me through the difficult bits, via the back issues. However, I now understand that Pat has had to discontinue her articles for Probe. What are we to do now? Is there anybody out there to take over from where Pat has left us, or is my G.A.C. to become dust covered yet again and my MEGA adventure never to be finished? Pity really, just as Infocom were getting worried as well!

Can I offer some guidance to Mike Brailsford regarding his query about a starting point for Role Playing Games (Board Games). We have one at home that I think would be ideal. Like all good games of this genre, you have to first of all define your character. This is done by putting your hand into a bag and pulling out a token. I usually get "The Boot". There are various "spells" that you can use or can be cast against you. They fall into two categories, "Chance" or "Community Chest". Knowledge of these is essential. Like all good RPG's, travel around the board is controlled by the throwing of dice, During your travels you can acquire property or pay dues, whichever the dice indicate. If you run out of strength, then you have to visit the Grand Wizard or the Banker, for a mortgage. Also, passing "Go", has healing properties. I have hacked into the programming code for this game and can offer the following "cheat mode". If you call your character "Sir Robert Maxwell-House", then you will receive infinite lives and be able to buy up the "entire City", without anybody being able to stop you. This poke should only be used in emergencies however, as the rest of the players tend to sulk and refuse to play if used too often. Unusually, this game can be played without the computer being switched on. I hope this has been of some use to Mike. What's is called? If you haven't already guessed...Monopoly!

BOB ADAMS, 81 Uplands, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL8 7EH

(Don't put away your G.A.C., Bob, starting in the New Year there will be more articles on G.A.C. programming and we already have experts on G.A.C and THE QUILL standing by waiting to answer readers questions.

We are on the lookout for an experienced PAW programmer to join the team also so I hope someone gets in touch.....Mandy)
=====

May I say how nice it is to have Jim O'Keeffe back writing for Probe - I've missed his reviews but hope his "Missus" and "nipper" are doing very nicely, which I'm sure they are!

I don't know who wrote The Ramblings of a Dedicated Spectrum Adventurer, but more please... it was wittily written (try to say that Johnathan Woss!) and informative too. I kept thinking, YES! I totally agree with that, this man (or lady) knows what they're talking about... except "atmosphere" - here it's obvious that the author provides the atmosphere, a player recreates it within his own mind. I understand his point that if the player is drawing a map he's not going to write an elaborate description suffused with adjectives; also that the player does not need to read a description more than once when he first visits a location, but a long description can be substituted by a short one for subsequent visits, if correctly programmed by the author.

And then, later on in the magazine, I read The Saga of Macdon. Quite frankly, I didn't know what to make of this piece. I couldn't take it seriously because it was full of Pete Gerrard's playful zest for punning, but there again it wasn't funny enough to be taken as a piece of comic writing. It seemed to fall between two stools, so sorry-but I think I'll go back to reading Brian Aldiss or Douglas Adams. Talking of Adams ahem... when is Bob going to get an Apple?

NEIL TALBOTT, 31 Chadcote Way, Catshill, Bromsgrove, B61 0JU
=====

I have just read in Probe that Neil Talbott is stuck at the tunnel in SKELVULLYN TWINE, I have completed this adventure and would be very happy to help anyone out, in return for a S.A.E. and would be happy to oblige.

I must tell you that after playing and thoroughly enjoying THE REALM I sent for THE DAMNED FOREST from D & H Games, and was very - no, VERY, VERY! - disappointed with it. I don't like to slate a game, but this is not at all comparable to THE REALM. I sent it back, complaining about various things, and to their credit, I will admit that D & H Games did reply within a few days. I will list my complaints and their replies:

1. The method of play not explained on inlay card or in game - Answer - nothing.
 2. The magic doesn't always work, which caused me to die. - Answer - The magic only works if you have enough stamina - this was not explained.
 3. Computer performs NEW function when you die, so you have to reload the game again. - Answer - because there is no way of starting again unless you load the information it needs in a new game.
 4. Eating food (which happens when you use the command REST, which wasn't explained - had to figure that out myself) does not increase stamina. Answer - Strength and stamina don't go over 99, so only eat when you have less than this. (This again, is not explained.)
- Their last sentence was... "Please bear in mind that this is only a budget £1.99 game".

This annoyed me, because I had sent a cheque for £3.99, which was the price in the catalogue they sent with THE REALM. Besides this, I told them that I was stuck in THE REALM and ordered playing tips - listed in their catalogue at £1.00 - and they sent me tips for one of their football games. To add insult to injury, their letter started off

"Dear Sir" in reply to my letter with my name and address printed at the top. I shall definitely cross this firm off my list of people to buy from!

Well, I feel better now I've had a good moan - hope your ear isn't too bent!

JUNE ROWE, 46 Hurdon Way, Launceston, Cornwall, PL15 0HX.
=====

I thought it was about time that I dropped you a few lines so as to let my fellow PROBE readers know that, despite my absence from these hallowed pages over the last few months, I haven't died, emigrated nor given up adventure-gaming! As you know, most of this year has been a time of some disruption in my personal life ... new job, new home in a new city, and a new baby (many thanks, by the way, from Hazel and myself to all those kind people who sent us messages of congratulations on the birth of Laura Ruth. Your good wishes were much appreciated. LATEST BABY BULLETIN: At five months old Laura is adorable. She has two teeth, eats like a gannet, sleeps like a log, and giggles a lot between times!). As a result of all this upheaval, my adventuring activities were sorely disrupted (but not altogether stopped) and my contributions to PROBE dried up (What d'you mean? No-one noticed!).

However, I have continued to closely follow the happenings in PROBE and I am very impressed with what I have seen. It would appear that you haven't missed me at all (short pause while I gnash teeth and read a few garments!). The magazine has gone from strength to strength which is really great... besides, it's nice to see my faith in you justified ... there's nothing quite as nice as being able to say "Told you so!"

Talking of strengths, isn't it remarkable that a three week local postal strike in June prevents the publication of the Adventurers Club's latest Dossier for a full six months (Well, that's how long it's been since I received the last one), and yet a nationwide postal strike in September results in October's PROBE coming out one week early!!!! I suppose it depends on how much you really want to get the mag out, doesn't it? I think you deserve a long round of applause, Mandy, for your dedication to the mag. Well done, and long may it continue ... and that goes for everybody who contributes to PROBE's success too. Whether you write for the mag or simply just buy it each month, you are helping to keep it going strong and your efforts are much appreciated. PROBE is now (as far as I am aware) the only monthly adventure fanzine left. If we all stick with it, it might last forever!

Finally, if I may, a quick message to JOYCE FURLONG. I read your letter in September's PROBE Joyce, about your problems with TIR NA NOG. This was the first adventure I ever played and I still rate it highly. I intended to write to you and offer you my assistance, but a million other things got in the way. If you still need some help, I would be delighted to lend a hand. Please get in touch. That goes for everybody else too ... if you've written to me before ... or even if you haven't ... I'd love to hear from you again. My new address is printed at the bottom of this somewhere.

In the immortal words of the bunny rabbit "That's all folks!" Many thanks for keeping me entertained month after month ... I don't know what I'd do without you.

JIM O'KEEFFE, 3 Beauchamp Close, Moredon, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN2 3DT.
=====



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=====
!!! FOUND !!!

Last night on the floor of the Alchemy Lab - A Brass Hyrax class ring. Obviously dropped off someone's finger. Will it fit yours? At the moment it's on my hand for safe keeping.

Contact: Abe Walker, Dorn W, G.U.E. Tech. (Anytime up to 3 a.m.)
C/O Neil Shipman.



HELP WANTED

"Please could someone give me some help with WIZ-BIZ and FARMERS DAUGHTER - NAUGHTY NAUGHTY?"

BILLY POMEROY, 18 Netherwood Road, Norris Green, Liverpool 11.

=====
"I am quite stuck on KINGS QUEST III. I have changed the Wizard into a cat and gone onto the pier expecting to see a ship, but there was nothing there! What do I do? I am also stuck on JINXTER, after putting the worms on the mound of dirt I still can't get past it. In SPACE QUEST I when I land on the planet a big red thing eats me! Please can anyone help me out?"

TRACY TATTUM, 68 Alver Road, Fratton, Portsmouth, Hants, PO1 5HW.

(A special welcome to Tracy in the pages of Probe, although it is a pity that she is stuck, as Tracy is our youngest subscriber at only 11 years old. I hope someone can help her out.....Mandy)

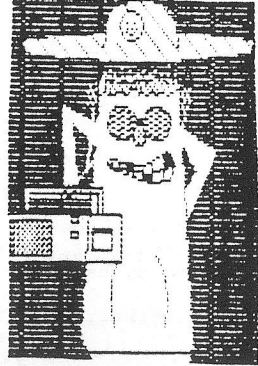
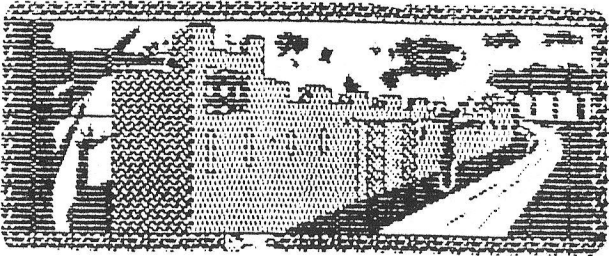
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"Please could someone offer me some help on SHADOWGATE, THE UNINVITED AND ARAZOKS TOMB. I am playing them on the Amiga 500."

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By JOHN
BARNESLEY.

1. In which adventure would we encounter the Trans Middle Earth Autobahn?
2. In 'The Golden Baton', how may we obtain more oil if the lamp runs dry?
3. In which adventure would we wear a hat to render ourselves invisible to idiots?
4. In which adventure would the dropping of a bladder in a certain location consequently cause it to swell with swamp gas?
5. In 'The Hulk', Dr. Strange has two functions. One is to indicate the existence of the ring in the baseboard.....what is the other?
6. What is the purpose of the balm in 'Pilgrim'?
7. In which adventure would the adding of the 1812 Overture to the date of the Battle of Hastings, give us a useful number?
8. In which 2-part adventure would we meet Arnid Corrista?
9. In 'Zim Sala Bim', what fate befalls us if we choose to open the jewel box?
10. In 'Kentilla', why is Timandra a good friend of Zelda the Dragon?
11. In 'Inca Curse', what happens if we return to the start location with any treasure during the game?
12. In 'The Snowqueen', what is the 'unending' word given to you by the Old Lady in Finland?
13. How do we deal with The Beholder in 'The Boggit'?
14. In which Tom Frost adventure are we subjected to either a Tap, Rap, Ring or Knock by a Goblin?
15. In which adventure would "Beechwood 7173 please" ring a bell?
16. In 'Excalibur-Sword Of Kings', how do we deal with the Ice Creature?
17. In 'Shard Of Inovar', how is the problem of the Naslava overcome?
18. What word do we trace in the water in Jack The Ripper (Pt.2)?
19. In which adventure are we knocked down by a bus at BOTH ends of the game?
20. Where would we sail on The Banshee?
21. How do we activate the laser cutter in 'Diamond Trail'?
22. In which adventure would saying "Bowel" land us in a mess?
23. In 'Prince Of Tyndal', how do we effect our escape from the draughty cell?
24. In Jack Lockerby's 'Witch Hunt', how do we locate the torch battery and with what object?
25. Castle Eerie's counterfeeters are churning out forged notes.....in what denominations?
26. In 'Star Wreck', what is the name of the first planet we orbit?
27. In 'Demon From The Dark Side', how do we freeze the moat?
28. What is the purpose of the cat in 'Smuggler's Cove'?
29. How do we sober up the drunken Rory in 'Football Frenzy'?
30. Why must we remove our boots before obtaining the wire cutters in 'The Doomsday Papers'?
31. Before using the spray can in 'Rigel's Revenge', what must we do to it?
32. In '1942 Mission', we will find three parts of a four digit number in a book, located in the General Office.....where is the fourth digit to be found?
33. In 'Shadows Of Mordor', why won't Sam be willing to enter the dark tunnels near the end?
34. The 'Sidney Affair' tells us that Sylvie Sidney had a brother.....what was his name?
35. In 'Sinbad & The Golden Ship', what is the purpose of wiping away the slime from the wall on the ledge?

36. In 'The Big Sleaze', what happens if we dare to venture north of the dotted line in Central Park?
37. In 'Leather Goddesses Of Phobos', how do we learn of the silly words and actions needed to safely traverse the Catacombs?
38. In 'Guild Of Thieves', what are the bars, leading to the circular chamber, really made of?
39. In which adventure would we find the 'Jang-Y-Ryn' gem?
40. In 'Shipwreck', how do we gain access to the Purser's Office?
41. In 'Hollywood Hi-jinx', how do we know which tune to play on the piano?
42. What happens, in 'Dodgy Geezers', if we don't switch the crate in the vault for the one in the warehouse?
43. What is the Devil's throne made of in 'The Pawn'?
44. How many Thracian dollars are in the safe of the Crew's Quarters in 'Life Term'?
45. How exactly do we deal with the leaking boat in 'Frankenstein'?
46. What is the name of the escaped lunatic in 'Dracula'?
47. In 'The Shrewsbury Key' why does the train stop at Leeds?
48. There are two relevant books in the Library of 'Munroe Manor'.....one is entitled "King Solomon's Mines"....what is the title of the other one, and what object do you find when you read it?
49. In 'Velnor's Lair', to what length does the piece of wood extend when you utter "EXTENDERE"?
50. In 'Hunchback-The Adventure', what is the magic word given to you by the Demon when you deposit the gold?

(Answers will be published in the next issue of 'Probe'!!).

 This quiz is just for fun....if YOU would like to submit a selection of questions (don't forget to provide the answers!!) then maybe we can persuade Mandy to make quizzes a regular feature?!!.....who knows where this will lead?.....The North versus The South!.....England versus Wales.....Scotland versus Ireland!.....Mandy versus The World!!

*** CHRISTMAS WORD SEARCH ***

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

BY DOREEN BARDON

- CHRISTMAS CARDS
- CAKE
- CAROLS
- TINSEL
- BAUBLES
- SNOWMAN
- ANGEL
- ORANGE
- STAR
- SNOWBALLS
- PRESENTS
- TURKEY
- MISTLETOE
- HOLLY
- IVY
- FOOD
- APPLE
- PANTOMIMES
- MESSIAH
- CARROTS
- BELLS
- CRACKERS
- YULE LOG

- PLUM PUD
- DRINK
- ROBIN
- SNOW
- POSTMAN
- BETHLEHAM
- SANTA
- FAIRY
- NUTS
- KISS



Now take all the letters not used, and make them into a sentence starting at the top left hand corner!



HINTS AND TIPS

INFOCOM HINTS BY THE GRUE! Played on Commodore 128K



TRINITY

Put the skink in your pocket.
Go to top of the Vertex to stop icicle melting.
Only feed one pigeon.

BUREAUCRACY

In the bank fill out a withdrawal slip for \$75 then go to deposit window and give withdrawal slip to teller. Fill out another withdrawal slip for \$75 and give it back to the withdrawal teller. You can now take your money.

BEYOND ZORK

Let the Monkey Grinder kill the Nymph before you give him the chest.
Rub the rug before you touch the Dust Bunny.
The Hurdy-Gurdy can turn back the clock?



BALLYHOOD

Crack the whip at the smooth lion three times.
Clap hands before asking roustabout to get the safety net.
Tune the radio to 1170 and take it to a high place.



STATIONFALL

Put the explosive in the Thermos.
Turn the jammer off to get rid of the forklift.
Lick the dots in the Alien Ship.



ZORK II

In the oddly angled room : from the baseball bat go SE, NE, NW, SW.
To get blue crystal put place mat under door and poke key with letter opener.



SORCERER

In the sooty room : Open the orange vial, E. Drink Orange Potion.
Give book to older self, E, Turn dial to combination, Open door, E.
Get rope, U, SW, Get timber, NW, W, Tie rope to timber. Throw rope down chute. Drop all, D, Get Scroll, Golmac myself, Open lamp, Get Vardik scroll, D. Tell younger self combination. Ask younger self for book, Down chute to Lagoon Shore.



ENCHANTER

In the Translucent Room: Go to Room M then connect P+F, M+P then erase M+V. P+F then go southeast to room P and take scroll.

SHADOWGATE

I found a use for the sword. Use it to polish off the Cyclops, otherwise you have to deal with him again, next time you want to pass him (and you may not have the required armament then, if you've left it in the wrong place).

BERMUDA PROJECT

The FISH LIKE GOLD is not a GOLDFISH so don't spend too much time searching the pools for it. This is quite a clever clue as I believe GOLDFISH must first be bred in the Orient (although I'm not sure that they cooked them?)

A quick dash round the Cavemen's Village is essential if you want to get very far.

CORRUPTION

Make sure you read the CONTENTS of the Envelope that Margeret Stubbs types for David.

Ask your cellmate about X before you escape and he will give you something and tell you its use.



JOHN TAYLOR played on ATARI ST



=====

MINDFIGHTER

By MRS J A WILLIAMS played on SPECTRUM

To go into a trance - Inhale. Hold. Exhale, then you can change into an eagle. (repeat process to leave trance.)

Weapons in order of importance are: Samurai sword, Steel rod, Wrench, Chisel.

Good places to sleep are the Ruined House (taking care of the entrances first), Crates and Industrial Wasteland.



Loosen stairs with wrench and chisel.



Try brushing the cobwebs aside.

Once you have the trust of your friends from the other side, all will be well.

Darvl would like a snowstorm.

=====

BARDS TALE 11 - SNARE ONE

By ROD WHANNELL played on COMMODORE 128D



On entering Snare One you get the very welcome message of death and destruction about to be wrought upon your brave party. Don't worry this snare is an easy one. First you must defeat the TOXIC ONE so receiving a lamp. There is no need to drink from the Poisoned Fountain. Accept the OLD WARRIOR into your party and give him the lamp. Remember the party making the OLD WARRIOR lead. Then back to the entry point of the snare to face the CLOUDY ONE who says you've escaped death and destruction for the moment and you can leave the SNARE. Look around and you will find a door that wasn't there before. Through the door and on the way out you will find SGM T ONE.

=====

THE DOMES OF SHA

By MRS J.A.WILLIAMS played on SPECTRUM



Collect Vine and Sun-Egg from Yander Tree. Tie Vine to Beam, then to the Wheel in Alcove, then roll the wheel.

Use beam to cross crevasse.

Slide down Ice Cave.

Throw Blade to avoid gas.

Put beam in bucket for extra weight.

Place shards in hole.

Drop baby Ice-Hawk in Howlers Cave.



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MISSION X - OBJECTS AND USES. (BY A.W. BALDWIN).



1. SCROLL Explains your mission.
2. BUCKET Contains pig food. Feed the pigs and exam bucket to see Gold Cross in the bottom. Search the sty.
3. SMALL KEY Under pillow in bedroom. Unlocks wardrobe and also wooden chest in boxroom of old house.
4. DYNAMITE To blow a hole in the wall.
5. CLOAK Wear it to keep from being killed by cars when you are transported to middle of alien road.
6. LAMP To see in dark locations.
7. MATCHES To light lamp and fuse.
8. POLE Use it to vault chasm.
9. FUSE Attach it to stick of dynamite, light fuse and throw the dynamite at the wall.
10. LARGE STONE Move it to find a large key, and take it to throw at the glass door in the kitchen, so you can go through to the garden.
11. LARGE KEY Unlocks door to old house.
12. AEROSOL Spray the robot's eyes with paint to blind it.
13. WOODEN CHEST Unlock it with the small wardrobe key to find gloves.
14. LEVER ON ALTAR Pull it to reveal steps down.
15. COFFIN Open it with the iron bar.
16. GOLD CROSS Wave it to destroy the skeleton in the coffin.
17. ALIEN DEVICE Wear rubber gloves to pick it up. After you have examined the gazebo, insert the device in the machine to disengage the magnetic lock securing the gazebo.
18. BUTTON IN GAZEBO Push it to be transported to alien road.
19. MEMORIAL PLAQUE Read it to discover earth's co-ordinates.
20. GUARDS OFFICER Hit him with the iron bar (you must not be wearing the cloak). Search him and strip him. Wear his uniform and take his I.D. card and laser pistol.
21. I.D. CARD Insert it in the slot to gain access to the locker room.
22. LOCKERS Open the two which are not locked to find a space suit and a space manual. Read the manual for take off command.
23. COMPUTER Read message on screen and examine the button. Push the button to reset the computer and input earth's co-ordinates.
24. POWER CABLES Fire the laser pistol at them to sever them and release the clamps holding the space ship, to the launch pad.
25. SPACE SUIT Wear it in the space ship (it was captured from a methane breathing race).
26. SPACE SHIP Activate drive to return to earth.



GETTING YOU STARTED



APACHE GOLD The first half

By Jay Gee - Amstrad

Start: In Wagon. Feed horse, examine reins, repeat flick reins until captured by Indians and put in wigwam.

Wigwam. Examine and get blanket, wear blanket and you are in the centre of the Apache settlement, examine totem pole, s, get pipe of peace (is piece of pipe), s, get tomahawk, n, n, w, n, examine and get handbag, examine water barrel, examine and get lid, s, s, get spirit stick, n, e, e.

Horse Enclosure. Examine wagon, put lid on wagon, enter wagon, flick reins.

Hot Dry Desert. E, talk to Doctor Dodgy, given free sample, examine and get jar, e, talk to Jake, get sack, n, get bottle, n, get rope, read tombstone, up, cut branch (it falls into the rapids and floats to the shallow pool), d, s, s, w, w, s, throw rope, up, give cure to the eagle (makes it's wings get sticky which stops it flying and stealing the corn), d, n, enter wagon, flick reins.

Horse Enclosure. Get manure, get sack, w, w, w, examine fern, put manure on fern, drop sack, get tomtomato plant, e, e, n, get branch, s, e, n, show handbag to crocodile, enter canoe, paddle canoe.

NECRIS DOME The first half

By Jay Gee - Amstrad

Start Reception Chamber 1, in casket. Inventory, examine HOMING BLEEK, and then AT-LAN, search, open, enter casket, get then examine gloves, wear gloves, open, get axe, e, e.

Reception 3. Push casket, look, search MANDROID, look, get and then examine ORANGE and GREY TRANS-RODS, e, e to Reception 5, d.

Engineering. W, kill MAINTO-ROB with AT-LAN, look, examine MAINTO-ROB, search junk, get then examine MULTI-FUNCTI, e, e, e, e, get and then examine suit, spray suit (are wearing it), drop aerosol, e.

Refrigeration Plant. Get ice, w, up.

Reception 15. W, w, w to Reception 9, examine circuit diagram, use MULTI-FUNCTI (panel opens), look, press buttons one, two, three, four (to turn off Re-energiser pads in Reception 13, Africa 4, America 15 and India 4), e.

Reception 11. Dispose of MANDROID, look, get BLUE TRANS-ROD, n.

Reception 10. Burst pipe with AT-LAN, look, search MANDROID, look, get GREEN and BROWN TRANS-RODS, w, w, w, w to Reception 2 (an arrow on the wall points up and with the GREY ROD you are moving between floors).



SERIALISED SOLUTIONS

IN DEPTH SOLUTION TO HITCHHIKERS GUIDE TO THE GALAXY - INFOCOM
By THE WAYFARER played on AMSTRAD PCW 8512

PART FOUR

EXAMINE ARTHUR and you discover that he has a fluff ball on his jacket. DROP WINE and OPEN HANDBAG by which time the hostess is pestering you to pick up your glass of wine. Ignore her and GET FLUFF, PUT FLUFF IN HANDBAG and GET WINE. Arthur will talk to you about all sorts of boring subjects, but not until you take the fluff off his jacket. Phil will not notice you until you have been spoken to by Arthur, and will not come anywhere near the hostess so do not wait too long before picking up the wine and losing her presence. She will only stay as long as you have dropped something (you can only hold three items at once at the party) or if you are unwise enough to speak to her. If you do she will keep on talking to you and you will find out the real meaning of being bored to death. Eventually Phil will come over to you and ask you to leave with him, all goes Dark and you gain 25 points for leaving with Phil.

WAIT for hearing not to be listed and then check that the drive sounds above you, LISTEN, S, S, U, and you are back on the bridge of the Heart Of Gold. The jacket fluff is in the handbag where you placed it. GET JACKET FLUFF, DROP JACKET FLUFF, MOVE SWITCH, WAIT until the prompt says you can't see anything. LOOK AT DARK, the light should hit the front of your eyes, EXAMINE LIGHT. You find you are on Earth as Ford Prefect. You must do everything that he did at the start of the game, N to the front of Arthur Dent's house, where Arthur is lying in front of a bulldozer. Knowing that time is short you endeavour to return the towel that he lent you, Arthur seems more concerned that a Mr Prosser is going to knock down his house, in a fit of madness you decide to take him with you when you leave Earth. OPEN SATCHEL, GET TOWEL, GIVE TOWEL TO ARTHUR (who ignores it. Doesn't he realise the significance of a towel?) The game prompts you to give the word IDIOT, WALK AROUND BULLDOZER, PROSSER, LIE DOWN, S down the lane to the pub, IN, BUY BEER, DRINK BEER gaining 15 points for enjoying beer as Ford, BUY PEANUTS, (if Arthur didn't feed the dog on his own then BUY SANDWICH, GIVE SANDWICH TO ARTHUR), WAIT until you hear the sound of Arthur's house being demolished. OUT, N, LOOK IN SATCHEL, GIVE FLUFF TO ARTHUR (the only way that you can remove the contents of the satchel is when you are Ford) who takes it and puts it in his pocket. WAIT and keep WAITing until all goes Dark.

WAIT for hearing not to be listed and then check that the drive sounds above you, LISTEN, S, S, U, and you are back on the bridge of the Heart of Gold. The satchel fluff is in the pocket of the gown, GET ALL FLUFF, GET POT, PLANT ALL FLUFF IN POT, WAIT until a small shoot emerges from the pot, W into the sauna, where you emerge a changed man clutching a changed plant. The shoot has blossomed and now bears a fruit. Your score is increased by 25 for blooming the plant. EAT FRUIT. You are treated to a vision of Marvin the Farnoid Android opening the hatchway to the planet with a tool that you give him. It will be one of ten and it is impossible to get the correct one without eating the fruit of the Tree of Foreknowledge as you can only take one thing into the access hatch, and Marvin will not ask for any tool that you have taken in with you without seeing the vision. If you take the wrong tool (or are later than 12 moves after asking him to open the hatch) beware the wrath of a Farnoid Android scorned. In this case

he asked for a vacuum awl in the dream.

DROP POT, MOVE SWITCH, LISTEN the sound of the drive comes from below you, S, and you are in the War Chamber of a space fleet speeding to avenge the insult you unintentionally delivered. The awl is here, GET AWL, PUT AWL IN THING, EXAMINE THIRD PLANET the destination, EXAMINE CREATURES, EXAMINE VL'HURGISH, LISTEN TO CONVERSATION, WAIT and keep WAITING until your simple act of kindness in feeding a starving dog saves Earth. You are transported back to the Heart of Gold, where you find you are in a maze. The maze is Arthur's brain, where you have a very important task. You must remove the particle of common sense which would otherwise prevent Arthur from completing his mission. After 3 random unchecked moves the particle appears, READ MARKINGS confirms that it is the particle of common sense for Arthur Dent, REMOVE PARTICLE and get 25 points on the score. Removing the particle makes it all go dark. WAIT for hearing not to be listed and then check that the drive sounds above you. LISTEN, S, S, U, and you are back on the bridge of the Heart of Gold. You are now ready to complete the game.

GET TEA, GET NO TEA, REMOVE DANGLY FROM TEA, D, S, SHOW TEA TO DOOR the door is unimpressed and refuses to open saying that anyone can have tea, SHOW NO TEA TO DOOR, the door is suitably impressed and opens. This gives you 25 extra points. Do not enter until after you have DRINK TEA. This gives you 100 points bonus and more important the satisfaction of drinking a good cup of tea cushions you against the wave of depression emanating from Marvin. W, GET CHISEL, PUT CHISEL IN THING, MARVIN, OPEN HATCH, Marvin agrees and says that he will meet you in the access space to the hatch in 12 moves. He also reminds you to bring the right tool with you. E, D, GET AWL, DROP THING, E, REMOVE GOWN, DROP GOWN, E, GIVE AWL TO MARVIN who opens the hatch, W, D, and as you step on to the lost planet of Magranthes Zaphod, Trillian and Ford appear and urge you onto the planet. You hear the ships computer saying that "someone has broken open the hatch and that it will all end in tears". However it won't for you as you have achieved a perfect 400 out of 400 in one of the most frustrating games ever devised.

The game is totally unique in that it lies to you, it will tell you that a place is harmful when it is not. Also the fun of the game is its total non logic. I did feel that the game could have been extended a bit by not giving a quarter of the score just for drinking tea in the correct time and place.

LIST OF TOOLS THAT MARVIN COULD ASK FOR:

Screwdriver, Toothbrush	- Arthur's Bedroom
Tweezers	- Trillian's handbag
Pincer	- Heart of Gold, Bridge
Rasp, Pliers	- Heart of Gold, Engine room
Chisel	- Marvin's Pantry (behind Intelligent door)
Wrench	- Presidential speedboat tool box
Vacuum Awl	- War Chamber, Microscopic fleet
Asteroid Chipper	- Held on return from Traal, with Interface for Nutrimat

ADVENTURE COMPLETED!

Please don't forget to enclose a S.A.E. when writing for help to the kings and Queens.

LÖL ÖAKES. 7 Clarke Cres., Little Hulton, Worsley, Manchester, M28 0XL.

Prospector, Crown of Ramhotep, Shipwreck, Castle Eerie, Matt Lucas, Urban Upstart, Hobbit, Sherlock, Holy Grail, Golden Apple, Helm, Flukeit, Seabase Delta, Eye of Bain, Bored of the Rings, Hampstead, Secret of St Brides (+ Amulet), Devil's Island, Valkyrie 17, Claws of Despair, Subsunk, Buggy (Pt1), Temple Terror, Lord of the Rings (Pt1), Never Ending Story, El Dorado, Sinbad and the Golden Ship, Mafia Contract 1 + 2, White, Green and Red Doors.

ALAN STEWART. 46 Fiatt Road, Largs, Ayrshire, KA30 9EB.

F.A.W.E.. Warlord, Jewels of Babylon, Heroes of Karn, Return to Eden, Lords of Time, The Lost Phirious Pt 1, Terrormolinos, Nova, Haunted House, Message from Andromeda, Mordons Quest, Subsunk and Ship of Doom.

MAUREEN BARTON, 122 South Esk Road, Forest Gate, London, E7 6HD.
Tel: 01 472 6531.

'Legend of the Sword, Chrono Quest, Return to Doom, Lancelot and Ingrid's Back Pt1.

STEVE COOMBER, 6 Maysfield Close, Portishead, Bristol, BS20 9RL.

Shadowgate, Deja Vu, Uninvited, Terrormolinos, Hollywood Hijinks, Lurking Horror, Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy, Return to Eden, Twin Kingdom Valley, The Three Musketeers, Wishbringer, Hobbit, Jinxter, Flundered Hearts, Dallas Quest and Golden Baton. Help also offered with Amiga DOS.

BUGS AND AMUSING RESPONSES
By NEIL SHIPMAN.



LURKING HORROR - Amusing Responses.

Eat Rat!
Put Rat in Vat.

FLUNDERED HEARTS - Amusing Responses.

Ask Cookie about himself.
Listen to orchestra.

LURKING HORRÖR - BUG!



Although you're not supposed to be able to get the elixir out of the vat, you can if you **THROW ELIXIR AT HACKER**. You can then **GET ELIXIR** if you want to carry it around. While the vat is empty go and drop it somewhere else, then return to the computer room and **FUT RAT IN ELIXIR**. Although you get the response **DÖNE**, the rat has in fact, disappeared. Now go and have a look in the vat and, hey presto, there it is!

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 but please try to telephone before 10pm.



TELEPHONE HELPLINES



SPECTRUM

- Alr 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 Fooley - Tel: 051 9331542 Any reasonable time.
- Doreen Bardon - Tel: 065 382509 Sun to Sat 3pm to 10.30pm
- Mike Brailstord - Tel: 0592 757788 Sun to Sat 10am to 10pm

ATARI ST

- MERC - Tel: 0424 434214 Any reasonable time.

AMIGA

- Jason Deane - Tel: 0492 622750 Any reasonable time.

AMSTRAD

- Doug Young - Tel: 01 6615068 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
- Nic Rumsey - Tel: 0323 822737 Sun to Sat 6pm to 9pm

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

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)
 Tuesday - 8pm - 10pm
 Thursday - 8pm - 10pm
 Saturday - 4pm-6pm &
 8pm-10pm

THE INNKEEPER
 Monday - 8.30pm - 10pm
 Wednesday - 9pm - 10pm
 Sunday - 8.30pm - 10pm

Please do not ask Allan or The Innkeeper for full solutions!

!!! 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. Or write to 64 County Road, Ormskirk, West Lancs. L39 1QH. Please remember that The Grue will give help on INFOCOM ONLY!

PLEASE ONLY RING AT THE TIMES SHOWN



SOLUTIONS

The following solutions or hint sheets are available from Probe at 25p per solution (this is to cover the costs). (H) Indicates hint sheet only. New additions in Capitals. Small amounts can be sent in stamps.

ALTER EARTH. A.R.C. Aztec-Hunt for the Sun God. Avior. 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. THE BARD'S TALE 1. The Beast. Bureaucracy. Border Harrier. Bulbo and the Lizard King. Book of the Dead. Beetle Quest. Ballyhoo. The Boggit. The Beer Hunter. The Big Sleave. Blade of Blackpoole. Borrowed Time. Buckaroo Banzai. Brawn Free. Black Fountain. Barney Brown and the Chicago Connection. The Black Knight. Bugsey Pts 1 & 2. THE CURSE OF CRAWLEY MANOR. CRICKET CRAZY. CUDDLES. CORRUPTION. CHRONO QUEST. Castle Eerie. CASTLE THADE REVISITED. Castle Thade. Computer Adventure. Crystal Quest. Cursed be 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 Adventure. The Calling. Crimson Crown. Circus. The Canasto Rebellion. Castle of The Skull Lord. Crystal of Chantie. DARK LORE. THE DEVIL'S HAND. DRACULA'S ISLAND. DRAGONWORLD. Dusk Over Elinton. Deja Vu. Don't Panic - Panic Now! Dungeonmaster. Domes Of Sha. Dark Planet. Double Agent. Devil's Island. Desert Island. Dragonscrypt. DR JEKYLL & MR HYDE. 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. Earthbound. El Dorado. 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. FUNHOUSE. THE FORGOTTEN PAST. FROM OUT OF A DARK NIGHT SKY. Frankenstein Pt1. Firelance. Fairly Difficult Mission. Forgotten City. Flook Two. 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. THE GOLDEN ROSE. The Gods Of War. Galaxias. Ghost Town. Greedy Gulch. Gnome Ranger. The Guild of Thieves. Gremlins. Green Door. Golden Baton. Ground Zero. Golden Voyage. The Golden Mask. Golden Apple. A HARVESTING MOON. THE HOLLOW. HOLIDAY TO REMEMBER. The Hermitage. Himalayan Uddyssey. 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. THE ISLAND. THE INNER LAKES. Introduction Adventure (Tartan 6-in-1). The Instituté. Inspector Flukeit. Inridel. Imagination. Invincible Island. The Inferno. Inca Curse. Ice Station Zero. Jinxter. Jade Stone. Jolly Duplicator. Jewels Of Babylon. Jack and the Beanstalk. Jack the Ripper. KING'S QUEST 1. Knightmare. King Arthur's Quest. Knight Orc. Kentilla. Karyssia. The Knights Quest. LANCELOT. LEGEND OF THE SWORD. The Labours Of Hercules. Lapis Philosophorum. Lifetime. The Lurking Horror. Leather Goddesses of Fobos. Lord of the Rings. The Lords of Time. The Lost Crystal. The Lost City. Lords of Midnight. Loads of Midnight. Legacy. MADCAP MANOR. THE MOREBY JEWELS. Mindwheel. Mansion Quest. Matchmaker. Mutant. Mindbender. Mindshadow. The Mutant Spiders. Mystery Island. Mandarin Murder - Ferry Mason. Murder on the Waterfront. Murder of

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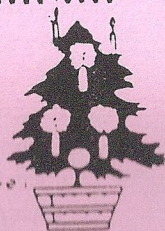
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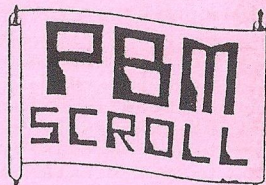
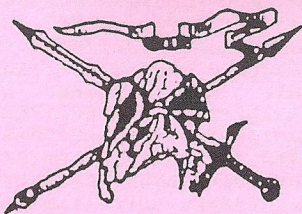
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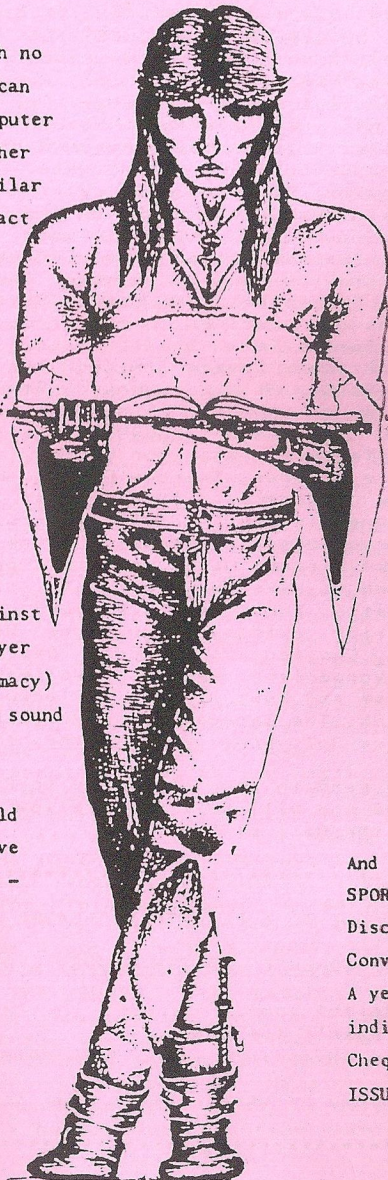
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