

MERRY CHRISTMAS



from

ADVENTURE PICTURE

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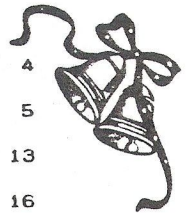
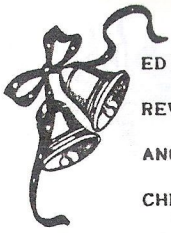
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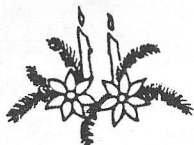
HALL OF FAME



My sincere thanks to everyone who has contributed to Probe over the past year. Without you all there would be no Probe at all and I cannot begin to tell you how grateful I am for every little contribution that is sent in. My thanks to the following readers who sent in contributions throughout the past month:

Dicon Peeke, Lorna Paterson, Paraskevas Tsourinakis, Jim Struthers, Joan Pancott, Simon Maren, The Wayfarer, Joan Williams, John Wilson, Steve McLaren, Pete Simpson, Larry Horsfield, Sheila Simpson, Margo Porteous, Jean Borland, Anne Roy, Pete Gerrard, Jim Fisher, Jack Lockerby, Tom Frost, Allan Batchellor, Alf Baldwin, Vicky Jackson, Tony Melville, Pete Austin, June Rowe, Graham Wheeler, Jason Deane, Gordon Inglis, Marion Taylor, Neil Shipman, Emma Heggie, Neil Hickman, Paul Brunyee, Nic Rumsey, Jill Carter, Barbara Gibb, The Grue! and Paul Avis.





EDITORIAL



Welcome to Volume III, Issue 12 of Adventure Probe.

I reckon I should have insisted on putting up the Christmas decorations whilst I had them handy after the move. Now I can't remember where I put them all. I must say that I am quite looking forward to the festive season here. Another benefit I have found is that there is plenty of space to hide presents from roving little eyes and busy fingers! I no longer have to dread a little voice saying, "Mum, you don't need to buy me a new bike for Christmas, I've just found one behind the wardrobe!" Do you know, we have already had some Carol Singers at the door! Couldn't really hear them though as the dog decided to join in and howled so loudly I was glad to hand over 50p to get some peace and quiet. I haven't yet got the Christmas spirit but once I start my Christmas shopping properly no doubt it will hit me - it usually does around the middle of December.

As you will see, this bumper Christmas issue of Probe is a whopper. I have still had to leave out one or two items, such as the serialised solutions and the list of solutions available etc but I will include these in the Januray issue. There is quite a large letters section, an exclusive interview with Pete Austin of Level 9, Pete Gerrard gets his own back on Bob Adams and lots of other goodies. I am delighted to say that our Adam's Amsters is back too so I hope there will be something for everyone to enjoy. Near the back of this issue you will find the Probe 1989 Index which I hope you will find useful when trying to find that hint or review that you were looking for. It should save you shuffling through all the year's Probe's in your search.

I had loads of correct guesses for the GUESS WHO THIS IS? section. It was, of course, our own JUNE ROWE. I put all the names into the hat and pulled out the winner - HUGH WALKER is the lucky fellow who gets a free Probe added to his subscription. There will be another Guess Who in the next issue. Many of you told me that my clues made the guess rather too easy (actually I thought they were very clever and cryptic myself, ah well) so I will try to be a little more devious next time. I also intend to do something to ensure that the reproduction of the photographs isn't too dark. I am told it is something to do with them having to photocopied twice that turns the grey shading to a deeper black, please bear with me during my attempts.

Probe now has readers all over the world and, although they all read, write and speak English beautifully, I would like to send them all their very own seasonal greetings, so.. Felices Fiestas, Frohliche Weihnachten, Joyeux Noel, Bon Nadal, Gledelig Jul, Boas Festas, Feliz Natal, Buon Natale, God Jul, Glaedelig Jul, Gellukkie Kerstfeest, Nadolig Llawn. May I wish each and everyone of you a really Happy Christmas, a prosperous and adventurous New Year and all good wishes for the festive season. May your little brass lanterns always shine brightly through whatever new caverns and twisty little passage you may encounter through the next decade.

I sincerely hope that you all enjoy this issue and I will see you all again next month,

Mandy





Reviews



THE ISLAND

A charming little home-grown from a gentleman who admits that he prefers writing adventures to playing them. You commence on a sinking ship, playing against a time limit, tasked to collect the salient items for use in the adventure.

Ken tells me that he does not believe in using red herrings in his games, and that every item is useful in one way or another. There are some old style tasks and several new twists to problems...and there are certainly some that I have never encountered before (though logic, in hindsight, should guide you through). I particularly liked the way into the Yale-type lock, via the traditional mica method.

Ken thoughtfully provides a RAMSAVE option but the restore to this is a little unusual in that it is RAMLOAD (not Ramstore as in other adventures). Incidentally beware of dropping into the trap of typing "Ram load", as it reads this as an instruction to restore a saved position on disc. Similarly "Ram save" will save to disc (having asked for a file name).

All in all a worthy effort by a gentleman who thinks both clearly and concisely, well written using PAW and with good room descriptions. A well worth playing game for both beginner and expert alike.

THE BASE

Another contribution from the writer of "The Island", a PAWed home-grown of equal standard to its stablemate. This time you start in a cell, and must wait for assistance to leave. The puzzles are as logical as ever, and the room descriptions are not overlong for their content. Items are pretty well spread, and it requires a bit of toing and froing to complete.

Coming in two parts, the second commences on a river, you travel from location to location in logical progression. Unlike The Island, which also has nautical directions, this adventure has normal compass inputs.

All in all another very good effort by a gentleman who thinks both precicely and clearly, well written like the other game using PAW and with non cluttered room descriptions. Also well worth playing for both beginner and experienced gamsters alike.

Reviewed by The WAYFARER and played on Amstrad PCW.

THE ISLAND and THE BASE come together on one disc and are available for the Amstrad CPC and Amstrad PCW computers. Send a formatted disc and S.A.E. or £3.00 if you prefer to:

KEND BOND, 17 Adel Park Gardens, Adel, Leeds, LS16 8BN

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PROJECT ANNIHILATION



By John Packham,
60 Hightown Towers, Warburton Road, Southampton, Hants, SO2 6HH

Available for the Amstrad CPC

Price - £2.50 Tape and £4.50 for the disc version

Nb - John has written two other games so check for discounts on all 3

I recently reviewed John's previous two games which were his first and enjoyed both and recommended them as being good value for money so how has he done this time. The first big change is that it has been written with a utility called ADLAN which I am unfamiliar with so I'll talk about that first. Well I must say that this version (there may be later ones) left me unimpressed. The text is in 80 column mode which is OK if the colours suit you but I had trouble so I would have liked to have seen an option to change colours. Next the graphics (disc version only), they were quite detailed and filled the screen and were separate files on the disc so didn't eat into memory but you couldn't display them with the text (they vanished after a keypress) and were only shown 'once' so if you like looking at pretty graphics - tough.

The next funny feature is that before you can reload a saved game you have to do a dummy save (strange). Another feature which is not funny but a backward step is that you can only do one command at a time, no N,S,E,W,U,D. However it does support Ramsave and Ramload and you can Get all and Drop all which is a useful feature.

Come back GAC - All is forgiven.

Well, what about the game? Your aim is to save the World from a killer germ which is located in a building which has just been bombed. There's only really one scenario which is in the main complex which is on five levels. The lift does not reach all levels so one of the first jobs is to repair it. There is also a cave complex which is a pretty standard maze (no problem after Roger White's articles). There are lots of problems to solve, some of them being very tricky, in fact, without the clue sheet I got from John I wouldn't have solved it. I don't mind adventures being difficult if the solutions are reasonably logical but I found a couple of problems a "trifle obscure".

As with the two previous games the spelling is good and the text descriptions are alright but I would have liked to have seen the game padded out more, there's less than 40 locations in the main complex (55 in the whole game) and as I said plenty of puzzles to solve but there's too much "backwards and forwards" for me, I felt the game didn't flow.

To sum the game up I can say it's not bad value for money, there's plenty to keep you going for quite a while but I felt the problems and puzzle content of the game deserved a better presentation, and of course the operating system didn't help (for me anyhow).

Reviewer by PETE SIMPSON and played on Amstrad



Nightwing - Softel Imagination Unlimited - £2.49.

Available on Spectrum and Commodore formats from:
Softel, Talisker, 1 Braid Drive, Glenroathes, Fife, Scotland. KY7 4ES.
Cheques/P.O.s made payable to Clive Wilson.

Billed as a traditional graphic adventure, Nightwing is more accurately described as a traditional (!) abstract/science fiction adventure which takes place in a vast dome, a space cruiser and concludes in an area known as Cloud City.

"Winging through time on the back of a giant bird," the introduction starts, you find yourself in a huge dome where your quest to return humanity to the land is explained (all too briefly). You must seek out the Sacred Texts and unravel their mysteries in order to return the Old Ones.

The adventure starts with you knowing very little about your surrounding environment - and unfortunately this trend continues throughout the remainder of Nightwing. Little explanation or attempts at reason are given and useful detail is all too often lacking from descriptions.

Your journey takes you through a slightly surreal world which includes gardens tended by droidkin (but for whom I wonder?), odd shaped buildings protected by force fields and two computer consoles. The last of these, known as Supabrain (wait, check the spelling.....no, it's not a Superbrain, thank goodness), provides the key to completing the adventure. But first the four Sacred Texts must be found and although the puzzle linking these with the end game sequence may stir the 'grey matter' into action, most of the remaining problems are executed very clumsily.

The top half or so of the screen contains a graphic for some locations along with a narrow window showing which items are present or being carried. The graphics are mostly vague and struggle to enhance the text. Where a graphic doesn't exist, your score, wisdom and energy are depicted by white horizontal bars in the graphic window. If your energy bar happens to reach zero then the adventure is over as you "...succumb to the dome." This seems to serve little purpose other than to annoy the adventurer - and annoy me it certainly did!

On the B-side to Nightwing is a bonus adventure titled Solaris. You take the role of a character who has been found guilty of treason against the Star Federation and has been sentenced to life imprisonment on the planet of Solaris. You must plan your escape and join other escapees hiding out in the barren wilderness of Solaris. Written in BASIC, the adventure has trouble responding intelligently to most requests that you would feel are very much the norm these days and has something of a 'dated' feel about it. Solaris uses slowly drawn graphics and a slow command input system that doesn't even allow you to backspace the cursor for typing errors.

Nightwing does have a useful QUICKSAVE/LOAD facility and can accept multiple command input using the conjunction 'and', but with less than 30 locations the puzzles are few and not very far between. Although it is easier to criticise than to praise, there are a lot of other adventures available now which put Nightwing in the shade. In an adventure where you can effectively bribe a robot, surely the programming is questionable (the programming of the robot, of course)!

Reviewer - Paul Brunyee - Played on a 48k Spectrum.



Puzzled! Tony Marsh and Jackie Skinner - £1.99 inc.



Available for 48k Spectrums from:
Tony Marsh, 48 Clifton Road, Regents Park, Southampton. SO1 4GX.

A terrible nightmare ensues. You dream about a huge jigsaw puzzle from which six pieces are missing (but is it really a dream?). Finding the missing pieces will help in escaping from the nightmare, but the means to unlock it's secret will be kept until the end. You arise from a sweat drenched bed and look around. Labyrinthine corridors and passages greet you. A reality not far removed from the dream - or is it a continuation?

Puzzled! places you in unfamiliar surroundings where perhaps feelings of deja vu abound, where you wander around a large house, tentatively moving from room to room. You find a kitchen, a dining room and a study. Perhaps the grandfather clock is hiding a secret - certainly the watch you are wearing has mysteriously stopped telling the time. Clues and hidden messages can be found every so often, if you search carefully that is. The adventure moves from the house to locations including a forest, a maze of yellow brick roads (right out of The Wizard of Oz - complete with the Lion, Scarecrow and Tinman) and even a train where an infamous BR meat pie can be sampled. Puzzled! ambles along at a steady pace, flitting from scene to loosely-connected scene in a more-or-less consistent manner. It's a crazy, mixed up world, as the blurb tells us, but then again, most dreams are!

The adventure revolves around lateral thinking with plenty of puns and delightful play on words to contend with. Many of the puzzles will neatly click into place while others may prove stumbling blocks for some time. The password to gain entry to the cemetery can only be found by juggling around one of the clues and retracing your steps backwards quite a few moves.

Puzzled! is written with the Quill and Press and is all text, save for a few spot colour and sound effects. The adventure responds well to most logical inputs indicating that the authors have thought carefully about the types of request the typical adventurer would make. I certainly had no problems making the adventure understand me. Presentation is clean and tidy, and a RAMSAVE/LOAD facility is provided. Commands are of the usual verb or verb/noun format, but despite this slightly dated approach, the adventure loses none of it's appeal. If reference to a particular noun is required, then in a couple of situations, Puzzled! will ask you to name the desired object, thereby allowing a multiple word input.

You score in Puzzled! when you find pieces of the jigsaw. You receive 15% for each piece, while the remaining 10% is attained during the end game sequence. The adventure is roughly split into three sections, from each of which two pieces of the jigsaw may be found. The point to bear in mind is that you cannot travel back to an earlier section if you have left a necessary item - so search well and ensure you are carrying as much as you possibly can.

Puzzled! is a large adventure, with plenty of problems to keep you occupied and plenty of laughs (and groans) in the process. Some of the exchanges are particularly amusing and I'm sure will prompt at least a chuckle or two. Any idea what the battery hens will lay? Well, you get the idea - but most of the puns and puzzles are not as obvious as this. Recommended to all the lateral thinkers out there!

Adventure reviewed on a 48k Spectrum by Paul Brunyee.



Tailspin Review
by
Dicon Feeke

The Tailspin Graphics Adventure Creation System to give it it's full title is a flawed masterpiece. I'll explain. The idea of an easy to use graphics adventure system that requires no programing or pseudo-programming is most promising. The pictures can be created on any neo art package and imported or on it's own 'in-house' art utility. The parts are put together on screen and can be rotated, shrunk or expanded and generally mucked about with. Unfortunately there is no cut and save routine so each piece has to have one screen allotted to it in the art utility. The book itself seems to be padded out with repeat after repeat of instructions and seems to skip some of the obvious ones, it took me ages to get of the choice screen that comes up at the beginning. There is an index at the back and it's needed! The system has been whittled down and simplified so an intelligent child could use it at the expense of further conditional and variable operations.

If this sounds like a crate of sour grapes perhaps it is, my main interest in adventures has always leaned towards the graphics (boo, hiss , from the front row), and I had looked forwards to getting my hands on and writing a best seller. The menu system is very confusing and some of the commands seem to be duplicated in sub menus. No small problem, but there are options and conditions that trigger variable changes and those variables are WEIRD! The options and conditions are so limited that you keep trying to find ways around the limitations. Unlike STAC, GAC, and PAW there is no way. The program suffers from an inflexible format.

The demo games were startling. When I saw what Tailspin had put in as a sample of games I felt cheated. The graphics for a professional package costing an arm and a leg ought to be better, in fact I loaded it in the presence of our exalted editor and the whole house echoed to cries of "I don't believe it!", "Yuk!" and "How could they put that in?" That was the rape option for the woodcutter with red riding hood. The games can be taken apart and examined for ideas and what to do with what sampler and the sounds (yes there are sound effects too) can be swapped around, and included in your own Tailspin Game. In fact with a bit of file name changing you can include any of the sounds put out by STOS Maestro. Its fun to play with, but not if you want to market it as a best seller as the commands are too limited. I think if there had been more options and conditionals and a flexible approach to the making of adventures this would have been on every adventure writer and gamers bookcase. As it is, I decided to write my game in STOS with its very versatile programming and picture banks. Works a treat too! Sorry Tailspin.



The Pendant of Logryn

"You are Lormin, an elf. Great honour has been bestowed upon you because you have been chosen by your king, Logryn, to recover his lost pendant, which is priceless and magical, but more importantly, was given to him by his grandmother, who is due to visit him next week. Armed only with your trusty sword and 2 gold pieces, you must brave the world of humans where you will find men to both help and hinder you. There are also dangerous creatures about, so beware!"

This is a huge text adventure with 30 of its 213 locations illustrated by good and quickly drawn pictures. Many of the 45 objects are well hidden or have to be bought from the various shops, with only the everyday items such as boots and food visible and more easily obtained. The more interesting objects and creatures have their own illustration which is displayed on the EXAMINE command.

You may be lucky at first and "pick up" a few items, but eventually you will have to be more adventurous and thoroughly explore the forest, grassland and mountains, as well as the city in order to amass sufficient wealth to buy the expensive but essential items.

There are plenty of characters around and you must enlist their help as the plot is designed so that you cannot accidentally find it too soon.

My favourite character is the Imp. He is noisy, boastful and hungry, but very very useful. There is a delightful picture of him which also includes a clue that sent me running to consult the Encyclopaedia Britannica. Some characters are nasty, but will give you a sporting chance, usually with a touch of humour; while others are willing to help on a "give and take" basis.

This adventure is a treat to map. Excellent use is made of all eight compass directions to construct a very logical map of the territory to be explored. Every location is uniquely described, and includes all exits. You won't get bored even when you find yourself 5 miles from the city.

The author, Jamie Murphy, is only seventeen and I think "The Pendant of Logryn" is a credit to him. It is humorous, free of spelling mistakes and bugs as far as I know, comes complete with well written instructions, and contains chaining problems that should keep most adventurers amused for weeks.

Available on tape (£2.50) and 3.5" disk (£4.50) each for 128K Spectrums. Please make the cheque payable to J. Murphy and send it to:

Grimoire Adventures,
Bolahaul House,
Llangunnor,
Carmarthen,
Dyfed, SA31 2LW

Reviewed by Barbara Gibb





STARSHIP QUEST

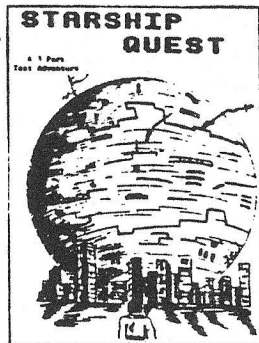
(The sequel to "Magnetic Moon")

FSF ADVENTURES, 40 Harvey Gardens, Charlton, London, SE7 8AJ

(Available in 48k and 128k versions, price £2.50)

Reviewer: Joan Williams. Played on 128k Spectrum

Anyone who has played, or is playing, Magnetic Moon will surely want to play the sequel, STARSHIP QUEST. Being as I'm not well up on the technicalities of adventure writing - which means I'm not bothered what Larry Horsfield does with his bits & bytes - I am reviewing this game from a player's point of view, rather than a critic's. I was curious to know why, having played the marvellous Magnetic Moon, Mike Gerrard in Y.S. only gave it 6/10. I surmised that he must only have had a quick peep at the 48k version, so I decided to play both versions of STARSHIP QUEST from start to finish just to see how they compared.



There is no doubt that the 128k version is superior to its baby brother, in that it has more puzzles, locations and an extremely helpful lot of clues on screen, plus an extended ending. However, that is not to say that the 48k version is inferior. It's a very enjoyable game which has you coming back for more, and feeling well satisfied with yourself when you've completed it - isn't that what playing these adventure games is all about?

STARSHIP QUEST comes in three parts, and you don't really need to have played Magnetic Moon in order to progress in the game. Part 1 starts off, once again, in the Stellar Queen spaceship, and you have only two minutes - actually only a certain number of moves - to find what you need and escape, before the ship goes into hyperspace. If not, you're a goner! Don't waste time, examine only the important things, grab what you need and get going (easy, innit?) Once off the ship, the real adventure begins, and don't be fooled into thinking that this is another boring old Sci-Fi game - NO WAY! This is more your lamp, tunnels, and caves type adventure! In fact, it's easy to forget that you're a space person as you wander around the terrain. The puzzles are not really difficult, and often it's more a case of finding the correct input, as some of these are multi-word - haven't we come a long way since the simple verb/noun days!

If you're killed, you can opt for resurrection, to your last ramsaved position, and very useful it is too! There is an interesting little tube train at your disposal, provided you can get it to work, and a bit of judicious searching will reward you with a sack, so you can carry more objects. You must find and activate a robot that will help you make a journey through space, but before you can do that, you have to go back to school in order to speak to him - and when you can, watch out! He can get a bit lippy!! In the 128k version, you will encounter some odd creatures, one of which is cuddly, the others decidedly not! Part 1 ends with you actually making the space trip, only to find that you've got off at the wrong stop and are marooned!!

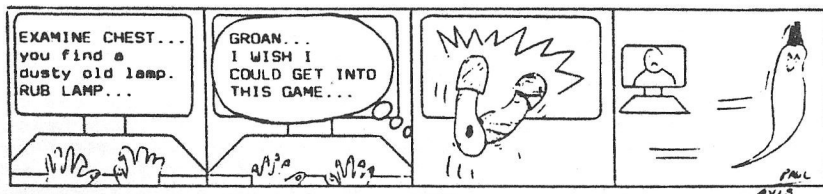
Part 2 begins with you in a deserted spaceport surrounded by water. The solution to getting away from this place is like something out of Pirate Adventure. However, before you go, search everything and, in the 128k version, examine the ape who is in the trees on the north side! After a narrow escape from a marauding beast, you meet up with some nasty natives who insist on locking you up, so a good look around before you are captured is beneficial. While incarcerated, you should plan your moves carefully and you'll eventually suss out how to cope with these bloodthirsty savages, but it does take patience and a ramsave at regular intervals. If you haven't already torn your hair out by now, and have managed to escape a painful death on a bloodstained sacrificial altar, you then find you have to explore a large area of marshland, and rescue a damsel in distress! Once the marshland has been negotiated, you're well on your way to part 3, to begin your search for the "Star Matrix", which is what you intended all along....isn't it?

In part 3, search and examine everything - it's surprising where things crop up! There are a few tricky puzzles but, as before, a bit of logical thought will see you through (hee hee!). You will meet up with somebody you rescued in the last part and you have to be sharp if you want her to help you. Finding the Star Matrix is not gonna be easy, but when you have it in your hot little hands, you must take it to..... well, I'm certainly not going to tell you everything!

As previously stated, the 128k STARSHIP QUEST has an extended ending, so in this version, once you show that you've found the Star Matrix, you're transported to a foggy place where there are some more of our mechanical friends to deal with, before you eventually find the Last Starship of the Galaxans, and complete the adventure.

Right then, so what do we have? Well, we have a cracking good game; we have a 3 part adventure with heaps of puzzles, over 150 locations (230+ in the 128k version!), lots of characters to interact with, and quite a bit of humour as well; we have the amazing price of just £2.50 for a game that I would be happy to pay a fiver for (and still think it good value for money); and what's more, I am informed that we can now buy Magnetic Moon for £2.50 as well! But Larry Horsfield is even more generous - if you want both games, then £4.50 is the asking price! So what more could you possibly want?

So, c'mon boys and gels! Do yourselves a favour and send for STARSHIP QUEST - and Magnetic Moon if you've not got it, and remember to specify what version you want. I can't think of anything better to have in my Christmas stocking!!!





ANOTHER VIEWPOINT



When my friend, and Probe reader, Dicon Peeke told me that Pete Austin from Level 9 would be visiting him for the weekend, I thought the opportunity was too good to be missed and asked if Pete would be willing to take part in an interview. This, I thought, would be the ideal opportunity of finding out just what is happening at Level 9 and to put forward some of the questions that have been posed recently. Pete kindly agreed to this and it was with some excitement that I put forward my first question which I had been burning to ask since reading some recent remarks from Level 9 in the glossy monthly magazines.

PROBE: "I read recently in a magazine article Level 9 saying that "the text adventure is dead". Can you really think this is true?"

PETE: "No, on the contrary, I believe that one reason for the lower sales of new text adventures is that former classics are still alive and well on the "second-hand" circuit and are taking market share. This is an unexpected consequence of adventures' long shelf life. But I do not expect many new "commercial" adventures."

PROBE: "But will Level 9 be producing any further text adventures?"

PETE: "Well, only if Scapeghost sells significantly better than I expect."

PROBE: "Many 8-bit adventurers have supported Level 9 since the very early days and have thoroughly enjoyed your adventures. Now that you have decided not to write further software for these machines, many 8-bit adventurers feel as if you have let them down rather. How do you feel about this?"

PETE: "This is rather unfair. We have supported 8-bit machines for a long time, and continued to produce versions for them, even after most became loss-making. But Level 9 will continue to keep 8-bit versions in stock (where this is legally possible) for some time to come."

PROBE: "We have been hearing quite a lot recently about the type of games you plan to produce in the future. Are they going to be rather like the Sierra type games and could you tell me a little more about them and your new system?"

PETE: "H.U.G.E. was designed as a versatile system, and can be used to produce many types of 16-bit games; among them Dungeon Master, Bard's Tale and the Sierra-type adventures. Level 9 are producing games with a substantial strategy element, i.e. games which are "adventure-ish". Some are like Sierra games, albeit with much more animation etc, but it would be going too far to say that we were concentrating on any one type. I personally think of adventures as "text adventures", and we will probably not be producing these."

PROBE: "When will your first Sierra-type adult adventure come out?"

PETE: Spring 1990. But if by "adult" you mean sexually explicit, we have no plans for such games."

(That wasn't at all what I meant, but I let that pass!)

PROBE: "Many adventurers are disabled and can only manage to use the

keyboard for inputs. If, as I suspect, future software from Level 9 on the 16-bit computers are going to be either joystick or mouse controlled, this will mean they are unable to play your games. Do they have to be joystick/mouse controlled only?"

PETE: "No. All planned Level 9 games will allow control from the keyboard. It is not hard to allow this as an alternative to the mouse or joystick."

PROBE: "To keep everyone happy, would it not be possible for Level 9 to continue to produce text adventures alongside your new games?"

PETE: "Well, only if we sold a lot more copies of each text adventure than seems likely at present. We have to earn a living."

(I didn't seem to be able to persuade him to change his mind about text adventures with this line of questioning so decided to try a more direct approach!)

PROBE: "Pete, could sufficient people persuade Level 9 to go back to producing their earlier-style games?"

PETE: "Yes. Just get me 5,000 firm advance orders."

(At that point I wished that Probe had 5,000 readers, in which case the battle would have been won! I decided to persist a little!)

PROBE: "On the packaging of Ingrid's Back it states, and I quote "Ingrid Bottomlow first starred in "Gnome Ranger" and returns in "Gnome Free" in May 1989. Both games are available from Level 9 for almost any home computer". There have been differing reports about whether you will produce Gnome Free. Could you tell me if you intend to produce this adventure or not?"

PETE: "Well, I have the booklet, text and outline design for "Gnome Free", but we cannot afford to produce games that make a loss. I would very much like to produce this game, if we could."

(At this point it looked as if nothing I could say would persuade them to consider producing text adventures, so I decided to change the subject a little.)

PROBE: "Your earlier adventures such as Adventure Quest, Dungeon Adventure, Lords of Time etc, were really enjoyable complex adventures. Why are your latest adventures less complex than these earlier ones?"

PETE: "In fact, Scapeghost has over twenty times as much game code, and about ten times as much text as our earlier games. Quest, Dungeon etc. made a great impact at the time, because although the adventure system was relatively crude by today's standards, it was greatly in advance of most games available then and so made a considerable impact. But the original versions would not be marketable today. Current games have slightly more puzzles, but commands like OOPS and EXITS may make the games quicker and easier to play. Not because the puzzles are easier, but because the system makes life easier. I guess this could make them seem less complex."

PROBE: "Yes, perhaps that is the case but I feel that commands such as GO TO and RUN TO etc tend to make the games too easy and seem to have

taken away most of the enjoyment of mapping adventures."

PETE: "Well, I have always found mapping (with one or two exceptions) a tedious chore than one had to do to get to the interesting parts of a game. Possibly for this reason, I hate also these arcade-adventures where you have to walk and walk to get anywhere. Likewise, the other commands are designed to get you through the routine parts of the game to the real puzzles."

PROBE: "Speaking of puzzles, I know I am not alone when I say that I would much prefer the more "static" type of puzzle and can happily spend hours trying to get past, say, a giant who is blocking the path until I come up with the correct answer. I much prefer this kind of puzzle to the ones with a time limit such as having only three or four moves before the giant bluffs you over the head with his club, and so forcing a re-start. Why have you moved more to the latter kind of puzzle in later adventures?"

PETE: "Games with static puzzles compete head-on with multiple-choice game books; not advisable when the opposition sell at about £1.99. Besides, there are a limited number of static puzzles that one can design without repeating oneself, "key in lock" alias "feed the animal" being the most common, and this makes life difficult for the conscientious designer. We still have them in games, a very complex example being getting upstairs in Scapeghost part 2, but mixed in with other types. I try very, very hard not to design one-try puzzles, or puzzles with a short time limit nowadays. These are only fair when your actions are "obvious" (e.g. no real ghost would wait around when the graveyard exorcised at the start of Scapeghost part 3) or near the very end of the game (capturing the gang in the same game). My ideal is puzzles which can be tried as many times as is necessary to get them right - i.e. a wrong approach is non-fatal."

PROBE: "Level 9 used to produce about three adventures a year. Why has the production of new games fallen off, particularly as the production of houses such as Infocom and Magnetic Scrolls has increased recently?"

PETE: "No, you are wrong there. Level 9 have rarely produced three games a year: the average is two. We have only produced one this year because of investing 20,000 hours (and counting) in the HUGE system, and because each game takes more time than the last (e.g. three-parters take longer than one). I don't know about Infocom, but Anita assured me that Magnetic Scrolls have moved away from adventures."

(The time we had allowed for the interview was fast coming to an end and I only had time for one last question.)

PROBE: "What do you think the trend of future software will be?"

PETE: "Currently, games consoles are king (taking the world as a whole). Over the next five years, I expect video disk (CD-ROM) games to take the lion's share of sales - i.e. interactive cartoon games."

I thanked Pete for taking the time to talk to Probe and trundled off clutching my copy of Scapeghost, doubly precious now that it seemed it would be their last text adventure, and left them in peace to work on their next game. Will we see another Ingrid? I really don't know.

Mandy.



Christmas Is Coming

Pete Gerrard

As I pushed open the door of The Waterwheel public house I could see and hear Strombrigner the Grey coming to the end of some tale or other. Listening with rapt attention was Val, the landlady, so I presumed that Bob the landlord had gone off on some errand or other. I waited while Strombrigner finished his story. He hadn't seen me yet, although Dimli, sitting in his accustomed position by the side of a fruit machine, had nodded his head in silent greeting.

"He was an elf, you know, from the Norse strain of elves, but a very rude one" Strombrigner was saying. I had heard it before.

"Very good weather forecaster, though" continued the wizard, and I waited to see if Val the landlady would fall into the trap. She did.

"How do you know that?" she asked.

"Because rude elf the Red knows rain, dear" chortled Strombrigner, receiving a mild thump on the arm from Val for his efforts.

"Bitter, Peter?" Val asked without waiting for an answer, since she was already pouring me a pint of the usual stuff. Strombrigner whirled around, gave me a cheery greeting, and surprised me a little by buying the drink. "The little fellow and I have just been served" he said, "we thought you'd be coming in soon. I was just entertaining Valerie here with one of my tales."

"So I heard."

"Hmm." The wizard then shot a question at me. "Who or what is Bob Adams?" he asked, while Dimli grunted under his beard "poppadums", which was a long word for him.

"Oh, he ... " I slowed down. "Writes for Adventure Probe. Sometimes."

"About Grumpy Alf? Dimply?"

"Err, just the once, I believe."

"Uttarr rubbish, I thought. No magic lakes in Malta, for one thing. Not being able to work spells if you can't blink! Whoever heard of such a thing."

"Who indeed?" I was happy to agree with the wizard, I didn't want him taking offence. I still wasn't sure why Dimli had said "poppadums", but when he muttered "Bob Adams" in the same way, things began to make a bit more sense.

You can take it from me, Master Peter" declared Strombrigner, with the air of bringing this particular topic of conversation to a close, "that there is no such wizard as Grumpy Alf. Fictitious nonsense! He doesn't come from the land where wizards lurk, anyway, although we did once have ... but enough! Christmas is coming, my boy, what are you going to do about it?"

"Do about it?" I echoed. Strange question, even by Strombrigner's standards. "What do you mean, what am I going to do about it?"

"Parties! Festivities! The giving of presents to friends" he added, significantly. "What are your plans?"

"Oh, I see." I took a sip of beer, absentmindedly lit a cigarette and offered one to the wizard, which was seized with alacrity, and pondered the question. "Don't know, really" was all I could say, "I haven't really thought about it."

"Good." Strombrigner seemed pleased. "Because I would like to invite you to a Christmas Eve party in the land where wizards lurk. There are no female wizards, no beards you see, but we do have sorceresses and such-like. You can meet Xandra the jester too, Windbreaker's official jester."

I was being bombarded with information. Mind you, I had always wanted to meet a sorceress, so I accepted. "I'd be delighted to come. Er, how do I get there?"

"I shall take you there" replied the beaming wizard, "just meet here at lunchtime as usual, and, how can I put it, transport will be arranged. Dimli will be coming too, of course." In an aside, he whispered to me "actually, he's rather keen on Xandra the jester, but don't tell anyone." In a louder voice, as I contemplated the image of the love-struck dwarf, Strombrigner said "last year we had a tremendous time. Would you like to hear about it?"

"Of course!" As a prelude to his tale I got three pints of bitter in, and we went and sat down next to Dimli. I still couldn't imagine him engaging in emotional small talk with a jester, but perhaps I would be able to see the sight for myself in due course.

"What a party!" Strombrigner was in expansive mood, the world was his stage, and he was the leading player. "Yes, what a time we had."

I relaxed, and waited for the saga to begin. I didn't have to wait very long.

"We were indulging in party games" began the wizard, "as people are wont to do after the wine has been flowing for some time, laughing and enjoying ourselves. There were plenty of people there, Master Peter, even the apprentice wizards had been allowed a break from their training. Dimli wasn't in the room, though, as I recall."

I shot a glance at the dwarf, and laughingly said "hanging around outside under the mistletoe?" What little could be seen of his face betwixt hair and beard immediately went a vivid shade of red. Strombrigner hurriedly continued.

"It is important to remember that trainee wizards keep their original names until they finish their apprenticeship. Only when they graduate do they take on their new titles."

"What was your original name?" I asked him.

"I forget" said Strombrigner, "it was a long time ago. Anyway, we were playing a game which involved two people covering themselves up with shrouds, while two others had to guess who was who, without touching them in any way. We could talk to them, although they didn't have to answer of course, we could instruct them to do various things, which they might or might not do, and whoever was the first to guess correctly made the other pay a forfeit."

"What sort of forfeit?" I wanted to know.

"Could be anything, depending on your opponent. I was playing with that idiot Taxcollector, and I was desperate to win."

Strombrigner had mentioned this other wizard on odd occasions, and I knew that the two most definitely did not see eye to eye on anything. I could well imagine them both thinking up wicked forfeits for the other to pay.

"The two shrouded trainee wizards were called Thomas Varey and William Allways. Unfortunately they were both of similar build and stance, and as all apprentices have to wear the same sort of clothing, nothing could be told from their boots and trousers. Remember, to make an incorrect guess would be as bad as to let the other fellow guess correctly, and I had to win."

"Quite a predicament" I commented, "especially playing with Taxcollector."

"Exactly" agreed the wizard, "a most devious opponent. But then, with the rest of the room eager to see who would triumph, inspiration struck. I went close to the two shrouded figures, with Taxcollector screaming Don't Touch! in that pathetic way of his, and I looked very closely at the lining of the two shrouds. There, on one of the shrouds, a name had been sewn in, using red thread. That name was Silva, and I knew then who was who. I stepped back, pointed to the figure on the left, and said in a loud voice that the man on the left was Thomas Varey. He removed the shroud, I was right, and I made Taxcollector drink a pint of wine from his own right boot."

"Urghh!" was all I could say to that. "But how did you know who was who?"

"Easy" said Strombrigner. "A Varey shroud has a Silva lining!"

ASK GRUE!



Dear Grue!

I have put on nearly 4 stone in the last year because of the hours I spend sitting in front of my computer playing adventures. My doctor tells me I've to lose weight so I'm trying desperately to diet. Have you got any tips for a quick way of losing a couple of stone? With Christmas coming up I was looking forward to turkey and all the trimmings but I shall have to give this a miss. Can you give me a recipe for a sliming festive feast instead?

Signed Fatty.

Dear Fatso,

I understand your problem totally, I myself used to weigh over thirty-two and a half stone until I came across my late Aunt Ethel's lentil recipe. This is guaranteed to work, I lost 20 stones in ten days and have used it ever since to keep my figure in trim. So just follow this simple recipe and watch the flab fall away.

1. Get a pile of really good lentils.
2. Let them soak for a long time, until they're really bored. The best place to soak them is in the bath but don't forget to strain them afterwards to remove any unwanted grime.
3. This is the important bit. Cook them.
4. Eat them before they go stale because they can really smell.
5. Fart a lot the next day.

=====

A few readers have asked if these questions for Ask Grue are made up by the Grue himself. I can assure you that, apart from the very first ones, all are sent in by Probe readers. If you would like to sob on the shoulder of our very own "Agony Uncle" then write either directly to Grue or to Probe and I'll pass them on.....Mandy



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MID-WINTER IN FROBOZZ



In the bleak, cold cavern
Frightened Frob made moan.
Grue stood guard in darkness,
Gnawing on a bone.
Down came an adventurer,
Shedding not a glow.
Grue devoured him swiftly.
Long ago.



Selected by Neil Shipman
from the Songbook
Forty Refrains for Fledgling Frobs

THE FAME GAME

By JIM STRUTHERS

I have been doing a survey amongst the rich and famous to find out what they consider to be their favourite adventure game of games. You might be surprised/You might not/to see what these household names have played. Here is the top 12:

Ronnie Biggs
Paul Daniels
Batman
J.R.Ewing
Oliver Reid
Margaret Thatcher
Russel Grant
Ian Botham
Arthur Scargill
Patrick Moore
Michael Jackson
Geoff Capes

- Escape from Khoshima.
- Wiz Biz.
- Very Big Cave Adventure.
- Black Fountain.
- S.M.A.S.H.E.D.
- Weaver of her Dreams.
- Zodiac.
- Cricket Crazy.
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ADAMS AMSTERS

SO THIS IS CHRISTMAS?



"The sweet sound of leather hitting willow",
followed by- "The sound of bottle hitting head".

As the hooligans of football replace the gentle summer game of cricket, so do I emerge from my summer's hibernation. Have you missed me? No, I thought as much. However, as Adventure Probe enters it's fourth year and therefore joins the elite few of computer magazines that have survived that long, may I add my personal good wishes for it's future survival. Under it's present management, I can safely forecast that it will be a record breaker. (Personally I hope that the records are by Kylie Minnow.) "I should be so lucky, lucky, lucky, lucky". Arrrrgh, Smash!!!

In order to placate certain readers of this august organ, who over the last few months whilst I have been "resting", have given me no peace what-so-ever, I have because of various requests and also due to certain threat's of the most un-pleasant kind, decided to write a few lines on what I have (and haven't) been getting up to lately. At this moment in time, the have-not's far outweigh the have's.

If Adventure Probe is the only magazine you buy then you do not know how lucky you are. Sure, there is the occasional error, but that only proves that the editor is human AND is doing it all on her own. Try writing to some of the "Glossy Mags" editors. It's like trying to communicate with an alien without a babel fish in your ear and they have a large staff around them, yet their mags are full of errors. Sorry, errors.

Mandy, bless her little Welsh cotton socks, has mentioned me occasionally in her editorials and I have also had the dubious "honour" of appearing in some other magazines. Mostly Amstrad specific Mags but not all, and certainly not directly contributed by yours truly. The price of Fame? (about £0-00p at current exchange rates.)

I have managed to complete about one twentieth of the games that I set out to finish. This is not meant to imply that I am an absolute "thicko", just that I have been unable to devote as much time to playing adventures as I hoped I would be able to, when I took a break from writing for Probe. (New readers who have not read me before please note:- Hi, hello and welcome and yes, I really am an absolute thicko but don't tell the other's, Ok?) So what are these master-pieces that have been taxing the great "Amstar", (c) Tony Bridge.PCW.), brain? Who said "what brain?" Oh, you all did! Fanfare of trumpets, roll of drums, etc. (yawn, get on with it, Ed.) First out of a grand total of, ooh well, er, lots is:-

PLANET OF DEATH.

What d'yer mean, you've never heard of it? For all of my faithful Amsters that are reading this, (plus the "Odd" Amiga owner) I hope that it is never your mis-fortune to purchase this game. Despite the fact that this cassette was released in 1985 during the early days of the Amstrad's rise to World Domination, it is a poor excuse for an adventure. Only if like me, you wish to experience playing all the

Amstrad releases, should you purchase this game. (By the way, my tape is now available for sale. Fat chance I've got of selling it now!!)

Planet of Death has a total of 17 locations, unless you include the Maze (ugh) which then increases the total to 5049. As you do not need to enter the maze to complete the adventure, this is a perfect example of a maze purely to waste time and for no other reason. (Hi, Roger!) There are several "Red Herring's" such as the Boots, Stones, Book & Coin. At least, I never found any use for them. I also read somewhere how to escape from the Prison Cell but I never found this either. The only time that I got stuck was when I was wondering what to do with the slimy Green Man. As carrying him around didn't appeal to me too greatly, I shot him. I suggest you do the same! Oh before I forget, there is an absolutely dreadful bit where you have to fire the laser gun three times to progress any further. The only input that is accepted is "Field Laser". Well, I ask you?

Before I continue onto the next adventure, did you notice that totally shocking confession by that "FoTM" person? You know, "FOOL of THE MERSEY". I couldn't believe my eyes when he mentioned playing a game called "GOLDEN FLEECE". The Grue actually playing a game that was not released by Infocom? Another myth destroyed! I expect his excuse will be that it was free.

Which brings me onto an important subject. The Grue made a mistake in his review when he got Public Domain and Shareware software confused. The difference between the two types is subtle but important. Public Domain software are programs that have been written for a purpose but have little consumer demand and therefore not wanted by software houses. The author feels that he would like to share his program with others and gives it to a Library for free distribution. The library is not allowed to sell the program but they can charge a copying fee plus the cost of a disc, etc. The author releases copyright and user's are allowed to make copies and pass them on to others free of charge. Shareware is similar to the above but the one major difference is that if you decide to keep the program, then you are honour bound to send the author a payment. Details are usually included in the program. If you don't want to pay for it, you must destroy your copy of it. You are also not allowed to distribute it to others. So as you can now see, when the Grue said "Then seeing as this is public domain, if you like the game then send him (Jim Macbrayne) a fiver.", he was INCORRECT. Ooh, I did enjoy writing that!

Delving back into the dim memories of my youth, the very first record that I spent my pocket money on was Apache, by The Shadows. Now before you all go scurrying off to your record collections to discover how long ago this was, I will spoil your fun by telling you that it was in 1960. Why I am I telling you this? Well I was searching for a link to introduce the next adventure, which is-

SHADOWS OF MORDOR.

J.R.R. Tolkien lives! The sequel to Lord of the Rings and you may all recall what I thought of that one! I really can't find any suitable words to describe my feeling's about this game. Total disappointment is an under-statement. I am a great fan of Tolkien books. To me they live and breathe, which for a fictional fantasy is quite an achievement. (That was almost a "book review" but not quite!)

Considering how many other adventures have been spawned on a "Tolkienesque" theme, it never ceases to amaze me that the "original" games could be so bad. If only they had been written as straight-forward text-only adventures, then they probably would be regarded today as "classics" but as Melbourne House decided to persist with their awful "interactive characters" and dreadfully slow screen update, plus the alterations to the story-line, the whole thing just became a shambles.

I will now introduce a controversial question. This is controversial question. "Hi". This is Mandy. "Hello boyo, look you". Question:- Should games based upon famous books follow the written word exactly, or is artistic licence acceptable to make the game un-predictable? If you answer "Yes" to the second part, then would the same thing be allowed with Shakespeare? Would you find the following sentence confusing, "To be, or not to be a turnip, that is the answer"? Personally, and this is where I nail my whatsits to the mast, I feel that if I have taken the trouble to research the game in advance by reading the book, then I should be rewarded by having a game that closely follows the same plot, with the same problems and the same solutions. To be suddenly confronted with the fact that Romeo is "gay" and has not the slightest interest whether Juliet where-for-out-thou's or jumps off the balcony to her death, seem's to me to be a distinct disadvantage, but what do you think?

I guess you have now realised that I wasn't too impressed with Shadows of Mordor. Before you think that I must be wonderful for managing to complete it, I must admit that it wasn't done without repeatedly referring to a hint sheet. Did I enjoy it? No. Is it also for sale? Yes!

Emerald Isle joins the list of completed games. What a relief after the above very forget-able drivel, to get back into a truly well written adventure by Level 9. But the full review will have to wait until time or illustrious Ed, allows me to grace these pages again. Yes Mandy, I know that sounds like a cop-out but it's all I can manage for now. The Test Match is about to begin and I don't want to miss any little gems such as in previous years, "the bowler's Holding, the batsman's Willey"! Unfortunately the teams don't seem to have any "funny" names this year, still, I live in hope. I wonder if the Grue plays cricket?

A Happy Christmas to everyone.

What when?

Bob Adams.

REPLY

No, Mandy, an Adventurer is better defined as "One who spends hours endeavouring to follow where countless others have already trod. Purely for the satisfaction of seeing a perfect score on the final screen". A person who crumples up floppy discs trying to get them where they were never designed to fit is usually called "a Wally, an Editor or The Wayfarer!!" (PS Grue just gets frustrated and bites holes in them. We've tried to break the bad habit, but he's hooked on the taste of plastic... He says it's the nearest thing to Adventurer's shin bones he's found.)

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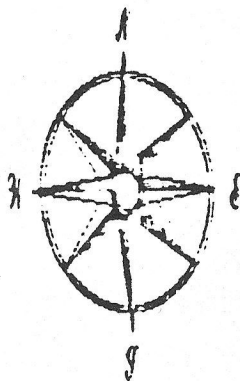
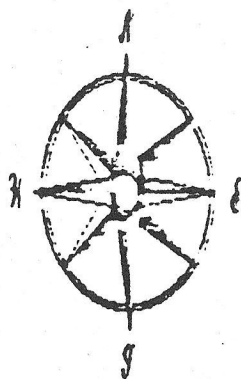
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LETTERS

I was pleased to read the appreciation of the telephone helpline in the letters section, so many callers do not give their names when they ring up, it is nice to see who I have been able to help. I am also pleased to find that the interest in adventuring has increased so much just recently. I used to get perhaps one or two calls a week, but now it is sometimes two or three a day. A lot of the requests for help have been for Jack Lockerby's games and I am glad that so many people are buying them. I have always rated Jack's games very highly and I think it shows that these are the type of adventures that people enjoy. I know that I find a good text adventure infinitely more enjoyable than the full graphic, icon-driven, joystick operated and interactive games which seem to be the trend nowadays. One of the games which I had been looking forward to, is Linda Wright's latest game, Agatha's Folly. One expects a high standard from Linda and I was not disappointed. It is one of the best games I have played for a long time. Not many locations in the game but plenty of problems. Some are easy, some not to easy, but all logical. Thinking caps needed to solve some which are quite ingenious. Full marks for Linda for this one.

ALF BALDWIN, 1 Bybrook Gardens, Tuffley, Gloucester, GL4 0HQ

I read with interest my latest copy of Probe, even the letter from Bob "hampster" Adams. This got me thinking about the latest trend to produce joystick operated games. Do software houses like many people forget that there are some who can't for one reason or another use a joystick or mouse. Their communication with their computer must be via the keyboard. I know that some do allow you to use the keyboard and I hope that Level 9 (there, I said it!) will also put this feature in their new games. Not everyone is abled bodied and for some the computer is a way of escaping any disability a person may have. Maybe the next time you buy a joystick or mouse operated game that does not allow the keyboard as an alternative, you should write to the company and ask them to make the keyboard available as another option. Surely it can't be too difficult a programming task. Apart from that, keep up the good work with Probe, and to Bob Adams, that isn't a picture of me in the top left of the editorial (November issue) but you are getting close!!

THE GRUE! 64 County Rd, Ormskirk, West Lancs, L39 1QH

(You raise a very important point, Grue. There are a number of Probe readers who are disabled. I received a letter not too long ago from one young lady who told me that, as she was disabled, playing adventures was the only way that she felt she could happily go exploring, mountain climbing and doing many things she couldn't do physically. For many disabled people, the computer keyboard is vital and, in many cases the text adventure is the only software entertainment that is suitable. I will make a point of raising this matter whenever I can with software houses and I would ask other readers to do the same whenever possible.....Mandy)

I, also, would like to see maps in Probe, as they don't "spoil" an adventure in the way that full solutions do. Don't misunderstand me though - I don't mean that your serialised solutions spoil anything. I

find them interesting, even if I haven't got the adventure.

JANICE CHARNLEY, 54 Middlehurst Rd, Grappenhall, Warrington.

=====

You were asking in the October issue of Probe what we thought about solutions. Well, I'm the opposite of James Donaldson (letters), if I see a map of an adventure I can see at a glance how many locations, etc, and it ceases to be a mystery, whereas a solution can be folded, even a piece of paper stapled over most of it, leaving a bit showing, if necessary. I'm not fond of a lot of difficult puzzles, I love exploring and mapping lots of interesting locations, and if I'm stuck for too long in one place I like to sneak a look at the next step. It's like Crossword Puzzles, I like the general knowledge ones, hate the cryptic ones, and wouldn't want to do one without knowing the solution would be printed next week or whatever. I think it's nice to have both clue sheet and solution though the solution to be kept hidden in a file until absolutely necessary. Sometimes I'll use a solution if the game isn't all that interesting, to finish it quickly, as I hate not to finish any game, or if I have one that is very awkward to load, or constantly NEWS or crashes. Apart from that I like to check I've been everywhere, but that "switching off" you mention happens to me with ready-made maps, and very difficult puzzles, otherwise I try and do as much as possible without peeking!

Re MACBETH, I don't think that was available for the Spectrum, but reading your note to Phil Darke's letter (page 34), I'm glad it wasn't! The one that I gave up on, even though I had the solution was EUREKA. Having to do that frustrating Arcade game every time, before the adventure proper, was nerve-wracking. Like Macbeth it had no SAVE routine and you had to go from the beginning of each section again. I managed to do the Prehistoric section but in the Roman and Authurian ones I kept being killed off when almost at the end. It was all too much for me and I shelved it!

That's about it I think, but I would like to mention that I received Larry Horsfield's sequel to Magnetic Moon - STARSHIP QUEST a few weeks ago. Larry mentioned in his letter that he was disappointed in the sales of Magnetic Moon, which got a very unfair review in Your Sinclair. This saddens me as it is a lovely game and so is Starship Quest. I do hope he gets some more orders. Without people like Larry what would we do?!

MARGO PORTEOUS, 1 Marina Drive, Spondon, Derby, DE2 7AF

=====

Like the curate's egg - that's how I would describe Bob Adams' letter in the November issue of Probe! On the positive side, I wholeheartedly agree with his comments regarding what constitutes a good adventure - if a game is good enough, it should be able to stand alone, without the need for fancy graphics and gimics. In my humble opinion, the memory expended in programming these effects would be far better utilised (in most cases) by extending and improving the text and problem content! But who are we to argue with the software houses - they obviously know our wishes better than we do!! Long live the "independents" - it seems to me that, without them, there would be NO adventure market these days; and, by progression, no market for magazines like Probe and Spellbreaker (perish the thought!)

Sorry, Bob, but that is as far as our thoughts coincide - and I must take issue with you when you start requesting the inclusion of maps and solutions in Probe! Like Mandy, I too have spoken on several occasions to Mike Brailsford, the editor of Spellbreaker, and he too has explained to me the "gentleman's agreement" between the two magazines. Mike comes across as a very "genuine" person, and I can believe him when he says, as does Mandy, that it is "the readers who count". But he is also working damned hard to establish Spellbreaker, and I feel sure that, deep down, he (and perhaps Mandy also) would PREFER to maintain the status quo. At the moment, concentrating as they do on their separate aspects, the two magazines complement each other very well - and there is therefore room in the market for both. What would happen, however, if Probe were to start printing maps, hints and solutions? Spellbreaker would then be "free" to publish reviews, articles etc! Quite obviously, the situation would ultimately be reached where both magazines were publishing the same things each month! Both magazines are continually "begging" for material for inclusion; and if both are vying for the same contributions, some-one is going to be unlucky! Which could ultimately lead to either one, or both, going out of print - and no-one would like to see that happen! God knows there's little enough around as it is to cater for we adventurers! Therefore, if Bob Adams, James (October issue) Donaldson, and any others out there, want maps, then I would suggest they have three alternatives:-

- 1) DRAW YOUR OWN! - maps only have real relevance if they relate to games which you own; and if you own and play the game, what's wrong with making your own map as you go along?
- 2) Subscribe to Spellbreaker!
- 3) Do BOTH 1 & 2 - as I do!

So come on Bob and James (and anyone else to who this applies), all it needs is for you to dig just a little deeper into your pockets - £1.50 to you may represent no more than a packet of fags, or a couple of pints; but to magazines such as Probe and Spellbreaker it is a LIFELINE (I'm sure Mandy will vouch for that)! By subscribing to Spellbreaker, not only will you receive all the maps etc you could want - but you could be ensuring the future, not only of Spellbreaker but of Probe also!! I hope Mandy understands my motives for "pushing" Spellbreaker in this way - both she and Mike work extremely hard in their thankless task of ensuring the quality and reliability of their respective publications; and whilst that is the case, I believe they BOTH deserve our support!

To my mind, what Bob and James are requesting can only lead to the eventual downfall of one, or both - and I urge them, therefore, to consider the wider implications of what they are asking!!

TERRY TAYLOR, 20 Lee Road, Backup, Lancashire, OL13 0EA

(I received quite a few letters on the subject of maps etc appearing in Probe. Sadly there just isn't sufficient room to print them all here but the majority of opinion seems to be firmly against including maps or full solutions (apart from serialised ones) in Probe. I think Terry puts the point very well in his letter. Probe and Spellbreaker are made to compliment each other, Probe is for the person who prefers to mainly "go it alone" and Spellbreaker for the person who prefers to have the solutions and maps to hand during play or for reference at a later stage. Please remember that both Mike and myself can provide a solution to almost any adventure that is available and if a map of an adventure is available then we will do our best to

provide it.....Mandy)

=====

Please cancel my subscription to ADVENTURE PROBE immediately. Since a high moral tone was adopted in this month's Probe. Please do not, under any circumstances get in touch with me again. I have no particular wish to hear of, hear from, or communicate in any way at all with anyone having anything to do with Adventure Probe.

J. Masson, 13, Gleneagles Ave, Glenrothes, Fife, KY6 2QA

(If anyone needs reminding what this little missive is about, please refer to the letters pages of the last issue of Probe, and my response. I thought I had been rather mild under the circumstances, ah well, read on for more information.....Mandy)

=====

Walter Pooley and I were both VERY disappointed at the "letters of apologies" sent to us and the one that appeared in PROBE (November issue) from Jim Masson with regard to the tape which he advertised in the October edition of Probe. We must make it abundantly clear that we absolve YOU and PROBE completely from any blame or responsibility in this matter.

The advert in Probe named four adventures (for just £3!) as being SEA CRUISE, THE LEGACY, DOOM CASTLE and PLANET QUEST. These adventures had previously been published as follows:- SHIPWRECK and CROWN OF RAMHOTEP (by Tartan Software), CASTLE ADVENTURE and MISSION X (by Walter Pooley).

In fact there is a complete irony to this matter in that Walter ordered AND received copies of two of his own adventures....is this a computer first?

The first notification that I had of this sorry matter was from Barbara Gibb on Friday 13th October after she had also informed Walter of the situation. The following day I contacted Jim Masson by telephone and informed him of the fact that he was a "pirate" and he had stolen games belonging to someone else, only to be confronted by abuse and the allegation that I was A LIAR!

Walter and I then decided that if we could convince this individual:

- a) to refund any monies which he had received (this he has done) and
- b) to persuade you to publish an apology in Probe,

then we would take the matter no further. However, the insipid nature of the apologies compels us to now reveal the truth, as we see it, about this person.

In the initial conversations with Masson (a teacher in Kirkcaldy High School), he maintained that he had received the QUILLED databases for these adventures from "people" at school. At this time we were prepared to believe that Masson was an innocent, naive individual who had been duped by, possibly, his pupils...UNTIL we checked our records (Yes, we do keep records) and discovered that Jim Masson had bought ALL of the adventures in question from us! When confronted by this fact he maintained that HE was not particularly interested in adventures and that he had bought them "to give away to friends". We have since discovered that he has bought EVERY adventure advertised by Zenobi Software.....presumably also to give away! And also from other independents perhaps?

The adventures as offered by Masson had be "interfered" with in-as-

much that some graphics had been removed and some replacement character sets had been used. On examination of these games, it was found that the name under which the code of the adventure had been saved had sometimes been altered but in the case of SEA CRUISE the name was still SHIPWRECK!!!!

Jim Masson still maintains that "his tape" contains adventures for which he received the database (subsequently improved by him) from other people (pupils?) ... we will leave the subscribers to Probe to make the final decision. We intend to take no further action, but would consider that this Masson is not a fit person to be included in the membership of Probe.

Has this person now added a new euphemism for pirating. i.e. "the ideas (storyline etc) contained in the adventures were not totally original", as quoted in his letter to Probe?

Signed...With agreement of Walter Pooley, a disgusted TOM FROST.

Tartan Software, 61 Bailie Norrie Cres, Montrose, Angus, DD10 9DT

=====

Thank you for another excellent issue of Adventure Probe. The reviews in this month's (November) issue were all well written and covered a good range, from Public Domain to disk magazine, from icon-driven adventures to a not very golden oldie. The range of adventures now available is tremendous and although I do prefer the more traditional text adventures, I still enjoy such adventures as the "Larry" games, the other Sierra games and some of the icon-driven games. The letters were very interesting and covered a wide range of both pages and topics. I was horrified to read of the attempted piracy by J Masson. I am sure I speak for all other adventure writers and publishers when I condemn this practice, and also thank Barbara Gibb for bringing this to our attention. For Mr Masson to claim "Unknown to me, the ideas contained in the adventures were not totally original" is ridiculous, and I will certainly not be selling him any of my adventures. I hope all other software houses will do this also, thus not giving him anything to pirate.

On a better note, thank you to Sue Roseblade for her review of my adventure in last month's issue. Since reading the review I have ironed out the two bugs mentioned by Sue. I have also corrected all the spelling mistakes I could find and I have made some minor improvements. All subsequent purchasers will receive this slightly improved version. May I also thank Alf Baldwin who wrote to me pointing out some small bugs in my bonus adventure, Yuppie.

In answer to the plea by Bob Adams for more Amstrad adventures I would love there to be a version of my adventure SHERLOCK HOLMES: THE CASE OF THE BEHEADED SMUGGLER for both the C64 and the Amstrad. However, as I own neither of these it would be somewhat difficult. If somebody out there is willing to do a conversion for either of these machines then please get in touch with me.

PATRICK WALSH, Mental Image, 36 Verney Rd, Langley, Slough, Berks.

(Patrick is just one of a number of adventure authors who have asked me about the problem of conversions of their adventure to other machines. Providing the adventures are written with a utility such as PAW, Quill or GAC and you have one of these utilities it is a case of a straight type-in of the database to another machine with, in some

cases, a slight alteration such as entering the correct colour codes for your machine. When I converted SHYMER from Amstrad to Commodore and Spectrum, Sandra Sharkey just sent me the listing and I found no difficulties as the GAC seemed to perfectly compatible with all machines apart from one or two little details such as colour codes and control characters but these were sorted out by a quick peek at the relevant GAC manual. If anyone has some free time and would like to do any conversions to their machines, just let me know what computer you have and what utility and I will put you in touch with an author who needs help. Authors are also invited to get in touch with me. Perhaps in this way we can make sure that many more adventures are available to everyone.....Mandy)

I would like to offer some sort of explanation to one or two contributors in this months Probe who have raised the issue of home grown adventures for the Amstrad and Commodore. In the latter case the issue is easy and that is, there just isn't the market available, at least as far as my games are concerned. However, I still sell Commodore adventures on the Continent and will continue to do so as long as the demand is there.

Now, I do not own an Amstrad and do not feel that the expense involved in purchasing one would be warranted if the sales turned out to be as low as those on the Commodore have been, remembering that the sole reason for buying it would be to convert existing Spectrum games. Also, considering that I am an O.A.P., and now have to live on about two-thirds of my previous income, money does play an important part in deciding ones priorities. Contrary to widespread belief, those of us who design and sell games to a very small bunch of enthusiasts, do not, and do not expect to make, any great profit out of what for me is a HOBBY. The reward comes when someone phones and tells you how much they are enjoying the adventure, or even to chuckle down the line when they have found a bug in a game long since forgotten.

I think I could be persuaded to buy say an Amstrad 6128 if a really good adventure utility came on the market for this machine. Please remember that I am just an average programmer in Basic but I seem to be able to get the best from adventure writing programmes. Although I must add that having tried GAC, it made me want to GAG each time I loaded it up, and PAW for the Amstrad is not half as versatile as the Spectrum version which leaves us with that old favourite the Quill.

At the moment I am converting two games on the Atari, namely THE CHALLENGE and REALM OF DARKNESS, the latter now being called THE THIEF. As soon as they have been playtested I will be offering for sale on a single disk. The price has yet to be fixed but will reflect that they are, after all, homegrown products.

In conclusion I feel that I must add that I look forward to reading through Probe every month and not once have I been less than pleased with both content and presentation. A great deal of credit, naturally goes to you Mandy, but also to the pair of Lancashire lasses who started it all, Sandra Sharkey and Pat Winstanley.

JACK LOCKERBY, 44 Hyde Place, Aylesham, Canterbury, Kent, CT3 3AL

This is by way of an explanation (but by no means a satisfactory one) to those Spectrum-less adventurers who have made representation to me either directly, or indirectly through the columns of Probe, about converting the range of TARTAN adventures to their machine. Such pleas

are most vociferous from AMSTRAD owners. I have to tell them that after being hooked on playing adventures some 6 years ago, I now derive most of my "adventure-pleasure" from trying to write adventures, each one somewhat different from the last, and if possible just a bit different from what has been done before. I still enjoy playing adventures and I must confess to playing only those of my friends, the other "Independents". (We are not competitors, but compliment one another with our different approaches to the adventure field).

My involvement with the publishing side of adventures is very much a part-time affair and will remain a Spectrum-orientated one until the "more advanced" machines have completely taken over. At that time I will revert to being solely an adventure player, as each of my adventures is written individually without recourse to a commercial utility, I am now too long in the tooth to learn how to program another machine.

I still use an old battered rubber-keyed Spectrum for most of my adventure work (although I also have a Plus 3) and for those Spectrum-less adventurers who have missed out on all the adventures from "Spectrum only labels", why not search the small ads in local papers and computer publications for cheap prior-owned Spectrums.

TOM FROST, 61 Bailie Norrie Cres, Montrose, Angus, DD10 9DT

=====

Christmas has come a little early in our house because my husband Maurice bought my present and then realized that it was too big to hid in his sock drawer so I have it alridy.

it is a PC (Ferranti XT) called Fred and I thought I would rite and toll you about some of the problems I am having with the vastly differunt keyboard.

it seem to be having a lit of trible finding the shoft key and keep prossind return instead with the result that most of mi copitol letters turn out to be small ones at the startof a new line. I (that's bitter) also keep missing the spice bar which is strange when it so big and also in tge same place as the one onthe Amstrad (about the only thinbg that is).

perhaps it isn't used to my gentle touch and licks toge hit rather than pressed, but computers are mi friends and i would niver hit one (unles it hitme first!).

I am verry pleased to till you all that my best komputer friend knownas 6128 (who I thought mite be a bat jealous) has quite taken to Fred and as 6128 is a lady computer there is no tilling what mey hippen nixt. I will keep you infromed of any frther developments so keep readin Probe (as if anyone wood ever stop!) in case I have any baby PC 6128's for sole.

I know that you will all be kind amd forgive the few mistooks I have maid, in return I promise that I willtry and get sum moor prictace befor I rite any more litters to Probe.

At the moment my printeris connectef to tge 6128 sonow I have totry amd werk out how to safe this on a flippy desk so that itcan be looded on Maurice's computer and printed onthe laser pronter.

Keep up the good work Mindy and hippy adventring to you all.

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

(I had tears of laughter streaming down my cheeks by the time I had finished reading Joans letter, especially as I know only too well the

adjustments that I have to make to my typing as I move to a different keyboard. I find that the worst offenders between computer keyboards are the placement of the control and shift keys. It causes me no end of trouble.....Mindy)

=====

MENSA

or how to give the other half Hysteria without really trying

Having known of the elite brainpower organisation MENSA for a good many years, but never having met anyone who is a member, I am sure that you can imagine my surprise when a letter arrived recently inviting me to take a test for membership.

Fully puffed up with pride that my intelligence had now been recognised I called to the better half (no these aren't my words) and said "Guess what, I've been invited to test for MENSA". Now Jenny is a very down to earth sort, and having looked at the letter she said "I think they got the wrong person.....ENSA I could agree with, MENSA NEVER!"

Exit Wayfarer under the closed lounge door, standing upright and wearing his best Top Hat. (How about that for being cut down to size?!!)

Seriously though, it would appear that most of the traceable people in the last issue of Probe have received the same letter. Mandy even got one AT THE NEW ADDRESS, and was mortified to think that people might erroneously think that she had passed over the Probe address list for Filthy Lucre. (Filthy Luke didn't say much, he hust Humms a lot!)

In these days of Data Protection Acts and the like, it is a bit much that you can't even write in to an excellent magazine like Probe without running the risk of unsolicited junk mail. So, would the person (however well intentioned) who put my name forward kindly not do so again, I am bombarded by quite enough unsolicited mail and don't really want to give my Postman Pat a hernia by giving him any more to carry.

I would also be grateful if this person would also kindly arrange for my name to be removed from MENSA's database, as I do not wish to be bombarded by further people when they DO sell it!!

NIC RUMSEY, 167 Eastbourne Rd, Lower Willingdon, Sussex. BN20 9NB

=====

Thanks for my first copy of Adventure Probe. I noted with interest, whilst reading your article on games that got me hooked that you are also a busy working mother, like myself. Are there many of us about? I came to playing adventures only in the past few months. My 9 year old son was given a Spectrum 48K for Christmas and neither of us had a clue how to work it. I was under the impression that once you pressed play you actually did just that! I felt such an idiot! The first adventure came with CRASH magazine's August issue - The Ket Trilogy Part 1. It has now got to the stage where my son and I would play adventures together although he hasn't the patience to persist with them. I still don't know how to RAM SAVE and although I bought a copy of "The Childs Guide to the Spectrum" I'm still in the dark with most (95%) of the instructions. Then there's the wires. Sometimes it takes longer to wire up than to load. I'm seriously thinking of getting a 128K machine purely because a game has appeared that I want (need) and it won't work on the 48K. As you might guess, it's an adventure - an interactive ghost story called POLEARN by Sheol Software in the

Midlands. I would love to know if anyone's played it. Crash gave it 91% and the review was very good. If I was stranded on a desert island I think I could survive if I could take a Spectrum and some adventure games. By the way, regarding the Lord of the Rings, a company called Beau Jolly have just come up with a compilation of the Hobbit, L.O.R.1 and 2 for £12.99. I saw it today in my local Boots branch.

SHEILA SIMPSON, 26 Sir Wm Turner Ct, Kirkleatham, Redcar, Cleveland.

(Yes, Sheila, there are quite a few of us "working Mums" who are keen adventurers. As for your problems with getting to know your Spectrum, I think that, as with most of us, you will find that in time you will become familiar with all the ins and outs of your computer. Ram Save and Ram Load are options which are included within certain, but not all, adventure games. Sometimes you have to type in RAM SAVE or RAMSAVE and sometimes other commands such as MEMSAVE. It is best to consult the paperwork that comes with the game to find the exact input required. If you have difficulties it could be trying the wrong input, a bug in the game itself or perhaps that particular adventure does not include Ramsave facilities.....Mandy)

Just a scribble to say how much I enjoy Probe. From cover to cover, EVERYTHING is of interest, which is more than I can say for any of the glossies! As a novice adventurer, I am quite chuffed to be able to enclose some tips, to repay some of the help I've had from others. On that point many thanks to Alf Baldwin for saving my sanity with his help on LITTLE HODCOME and RETARDED CREATURES AND CAVERNS. Also well done to Gordon Inglis of SANDVEN for his amazingly low priced games, and VERY speedy dispatch. And an even bigger thank you to Gordon for introducing me to Probe! As I've recently upgraded to an Amiga (although I'm not parting with my old Speccy), I would like to know which, if any, INFOCOM games are available in Amiga format, as the only one I've managed to get old of so far is BEYOND ZORK, and I can feel addiction coming on! On the subject of games availability, would it be possible to print some sort of guide to adventure titles? You see, for novices like me, ignorance is the worst handicap when faced with a mail order ad, because I just don't know which titles ARE adventures, especially with older games. There must be literally hundreds of games of whose existence I'm completely unaware. To close, I can honestly say that since discovering adventures, and Probe, I've had more fun and exercising of the old grey cells than at any other time over the past twenty years! More power to your printer Mandy and keep up the good work!

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

(As an Amiga owner you should be able to obtain all the new releases from Infocom as they are still supporting that computer. You may have difficulty in obtaining the earlier Infocom titles though as, I believe, they do not intend to replenish old stocks. So buy while you can. The following letter from Neil Shipman may help you in this matter. I too have had difficulty in weeding out adventure titles from the arcades with mailing lists. It is very frustrating when you end up with a shoot-em-up when you expected a juicy adventure. There are many hundreds of adventures and, much as I would like to do so, I couldn't possibly include a list. The best I can suggest would be to consult the SOLUTIONS AVAILABLE list which will give you plenty of

adventure titles to look out for and, if in doubt about a title, get in touch with me and I will help you out if at all possible.....Mandy)

Many Infomaniacs will have found it nearly impossible to get the early adventures like Wishbringer, Enchanter, etc, for the Amiga or the Atari ST. Well, I'd been after Deadline for months without success, so I finally ordered it from Triton in the States. I'm pleased to say that this was much more successful than the last time (see Probe Vol III issue 5). The adventure cost me £12.50 including airmail p&p; arrived just 6 weeks after I'd posted the order form; and now my Infocom collection for the ST is complete. To see exactly what Triton have got on offer across all formats, write to them for a copy of The Status Line which includes an official order form. You'll need this because they will only deal with orders made on this form. They're not great at replying to a simple request for this but I've found it works wonders if you include a \$1 bill with your letter. I've done so a couple of times and they've sent The Status Line by airmail and returned my dollar! Many adventures only cost \$9.95 to which you must add \$8 for airmail shipment per game plus \$2 export charge per order. Apparently, when stocks run out they will not be producing any more - so get your orders off now! The address is Triton Products Company, PO Box 8123, San Francisco, CA 94128, U.S.A.

If you want to find out what's happening about future Infocom releases for the ST then don't bother to ask Activision (U.K.) - they don't seem to have the faintest idea. But it is worth writing to them to plead for the later adventures to be converted for the ST. The more letters they get then the more likely they are to do something about this.

On another subject entirely, I agree with Bob Adams about text adventures. (A Frob agreeing with Bob?! What will the Grue say?! Actually, I think he'd take the same line.) There's no substitute for well-written text plus your own imagination, however good the graphics might be. In fact, I'm going to stick my head above the parapet (and probably get it shot off) by saying that I don't even like Dungeon Master! Any other Atari ST/Amiga owners care to join me - or have you all gone graphic-loving, RPG-ing, icon-dragging, button-clicking, monster-zapping crazy?

P.S. Festive Felicitations to Fellow Frobs and Fromps.

P.P.S. The Grue really is gruesome - my legs still won't support me even though it's two months since I met him!!

P.P.P.S. Anyone want to buy a knackered mouse?

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

Can I, through Probe, wish everyone a Merry Christmas, especially the following: Our very own Mrs Santa Claus, Joan Pancott, plus Lorna Paterson, Bob Adams, Seamus O'Neill, John Packham, Ken Bond and Mandy Rodrigues.

A YULETIDE BEGGING LETTER

I'd just like to mention one or two items that I would like in my Christmas Stocking this year, in case anyone out there who knows me is planning a surprise but isn't sure what to get (who said "that will be the day?!")

- 1) A Spectrum adventure conversion for the Amstrad.
- 2) A free computer voucher for Dixons.

- 3) Level 9 ringing to tell me they aren't dropping adventures, it was only an April fool!
- 4) A letter from software houses to say RPG's are extinct and traditional adventures are to make a comeback, concentrating on a big push towards the Amstrad.
- 5) A How to Map Adventures bible.
- 6) A brain transplant voucher so I can complete adventures with great ease (preferably Joan Pancotts!)
- 7) A free interview pass for a day with Alan Sugar.
- 8) Never Ending Story - I just can't get it and someone must have it somewhere.
- 9) A big stocking to put them all in.
- 10) What is No 10? I haven't asked for too much so far, so I know you'll want to find out. Here it is... are you looking closely... A big kiss and a Merry Christmas to you all!

JIM STRUTHERS, 112 Disraeli St, Blyth, Northumberland, NE24 1JB

(Well Jim, I hope all your wishes come true for you. You won't have to wait until Christmas to receive your wish No 5! It's coming next in this section of Probe!.....Mandy)

Dear Alison, (see last issue of Probe, letters pages)

The last paragraph of your letter in PROBE, about Print 'n'Plotter adventure planner sheets, and your mention of using an exercise book for maps, struck a very responsive chord in my memory! I have bought these planner pads in the past, but decided they were too expensive to use except for a special purpose, like sending a map off to a magazine. You always fall off the edge, no matter where you start, and end up with a great empty block of wasted sheet.

In the distant past, I started off my adventuring using exercise books, and one of the first games I played was LORDS OF TIME, in which you can explore independently several different time zones. I used to draw circles with location descriptions and arrows pointing to other locations, which quite often covered several pages. Then I'd get stuck, so I'd move to another zone, covering several more pages. Sooner or later I'd find something which was required in a previous zone, so I'd go back and probably find several more locations, but, of course, I had used subsequent pages, so I had to number the pages and write a little note which said "Go to page 37" or whatever.

It ended up rather like one of those adventure books you can buy these days, where, by taking one choice or another, you jump to a later page to find out the result of your action or movement.

Looking back at that notebook now, I wonder how I ever made any sense out of it!

Still, lacking a better way, I carried on using exercise books, buying a new one for each game. I still have about twenty of these books about old games like INCA CURSE, COLOSSAL ADVENTURE, ESPIONAGE ISLAND, TWIN KINGDOM VALLEY, INCREDIBLE ADVENTURE and so on. Most of them are half empty, but at least I know where to find some paper for my young grandson to scribble on!

Then I tried drawing squares on a plain sheet of paper and photocopying it, but at five pence a time, that was nearly as expensive as the planner sheets.

Looking for better ways of mapping, I did once lash out some of my hard earned lolly on a ream of copy typing paper, but that was rather flimsy. At different times, I have used any sort of paper I could get hold of - backs of calendars (but the shiny paper ones are no good!),

plain backed advert handouts, old work sheets, once I even scrounged an unwanted foil of telex paper... if it could be written on, I grabbed it!

Then one day, an angel walked into the office where I used to work! Well, he wasn't really an angel, he was a representative, but it happened to be around Christmas time, when reps give their customers gifts of pens, diaries, calendars and so on. This one gave me a desk jotter measuring sixteen inches by twelve. Fifty big sheets of lovely paper - I thought he was an angel! A cup of coffee, with an explanation as to why I was so delighted to have it, brought me the promise of another on his next visit. There was advertising blurb round the edges, but the backs were quite plain. We didn't use desk jotters in the office, and eventually I ended up with four of them, which kept me in mapping paper for quite a while! My next idea was to buy a plastic template with holes of varying shapes to draw round, instead of hand-drawn circles or squares, which worked fairly well, but wasn't entirely satisfactory. Finally I had a really brilliant idea, which was to have a rubber stamp of a small rectangle made. I'm sure the local stationary shop thought I was quite mad, when I ordered it... "Yes, that's right, I just want a rubber stamp with four lines round the outside edges. No, thank you, nothing in the middle - just the lines round the outside."

It works beautifully! I can now place my locations exactly where I want them - immediately adjacent, or a bit farther away if I want to write a note in the middle.

I have progressed, over the years, to making quite tidy maps, so that if (as in so many games) I need to retrace my steps, I can see immediately the most direct route and where I can move safely. I use A3 size paper, the same size as the jotters, leaving a four inch margin at one side for notes, which I number to correspond with the number in the location box. If there is a number in the box, it is easy to read the note about what to do here, or sometimes what NOT to do!

All of which doesn't help you very much, because as far as I know there is nothing now which matches the design planner - do you know a friendly rep whose firm gives him desk jotters to distribute?

Desk jotters, of course, can be bought at a reasonable price, but as you say, young children do restrict the amount of money you can afford for a hobby, so I would suggest enquiring in a wallpaper shop about lining paper.

Better still, if there is a newspaper printer near you, ask if they have any "ends of rolls" to give away.

My final suggestion is one which I now regard as a golden rule - always write the name of the game on the map, which should be numbered, and if you fall off the edge, start a new one with a note about which map you came from. Don't make the mistake I did, of trying to fill in empty spaces on the sheet. You'll end up with a horribly untidy mess, because I can almost guarantee that you won't have enough space for all the locations you'll find, and more than likely you'll change direction and find yourself trying to write across the bit you've already done!



May your sword be sharp and keen,
And your boots stay nice and clean.
May your lantern ever gleam -
Show the pathway in its beam.
May your purse be filled with gold,
And love of 'venturing ne'er grow old.



JUNE ROWE, 46 Hurdon Way, Launceston, Cornwall.



HELP WANTED



"Please could I ask if anyone could help me out with a full solution to FAERIE (8th Day) or send one in for serialising in Probe?"

DOREEN BARDON, Lendel Cottage, High Street, Slingsby, York.

"Can I ask for help in the adventure I'm currently playing, which is THE HERMITAGE. This is an excellent adventure for Spectrum 48/128K, and also comes on disk for the Plus 3, which is very welcome indeed. I've explored some 38 locations but am now stuck! Does anyone know how to get through the mountains; I have the map, or out of the forest other than across the rope bridge?"

JIM FISHER, 43 Earn Cres, Dundee, Scotland. DD2 4BS

"Please could somebody help me on how to get started in MENAGERIE?"

PETER PERRIN, 18 Fanstones Road, Eldene, Swindon, Wilts, SN3 6DX

"Please could somebody help me in REBEL PLANET. How do I get off the ship after landing or open the airlock? Also in LIBERATE I am at the docks and getting killed by the Captain of the ship. How do I survive?"

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

"Has anyone heard of HACKER II, an icon controlled strategy game where you break into an office block controlling a mobile-remote camera. I had this for a birthday prezzy, and can not help but get killed off. Can anyone help me?"

TERRY CHECKETTS, Tripp-Hill Farmhouse, Fittleworth, Nr Pullborough, West Sussex. RH20 1ER. Tel:079882 585.



IN-TOUCH

HARDWARE FOR SALE



Amstrad CPC 484 Modulator. Brand New and still in its box! - £15.

Write to Probe.

"I have a little-used second hand Amiga 500 for sale at £250. If anyone is interested, please get in touch."

JIM MACBRAYNE, 27 Paidyre Cres, Newton Mearns, Glasgow, G77 5AQ

SOFTWARE WANTED

SOFTWARE WANTED FOR THE ATARI ST

JEWELS OF DARKNESS or TIME AND MAGIK - Swap for Silicon Dreams.

Top prices paid for ESSEX, BRIMSTONE and BREAKERS from Synapse/Broderbund.

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

"Doesn't anyone offer games for Amiga owners. As I have never seen any advertised in Probe? I would love to have one of the first ZORK's by Infocom so if you have one for sale please get in touch."

TERRY CHECKETTS, Trip-Hill Farmhouse, Fittleworth, West Sussex.
=====

WANTED FOR COMMODORE 64

CASTLE OF TERROR. Please write with price required to:

STEVE MCLAREN, 41 Irvine Drive, Margate, Kent, CT9 3XS
=====

WANTED FOR IBM

TRINITY, HOLLYWOOD HI-JINX, MOONMIST, A MIND FOREVER VOYAGING, WITNESS and SUSPECT all by Infocom. I need to have the IBM versions and am prepared to pay a reasonable price for originals with all packaging. Contact:

JULIAN GREGORY, 27 Wentworth Drive, Broadstone, Dorset, BH18 8EJ
=====

WANTED FOR AMSTRAD CPC 464

JACK THE RIPPER, ROBOCID, SMUGGLERS COVE, BOOK OF THE DEAD, THE SNOW QUEEN, HUNCHBACK, NEVERENDING STORY, QOR, PROJECT VOLCANO, QUESTPROBE III, SOULS OF DARKON and VENOM. Please write quoting price, postage etc to:

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

WANTED FOR AMSTRAD CPC

PAW wanted for CPC. Reasonable price paid or select any three from the following CPC titles: ODDJOB (Disc), SUPERSPRITES (tape), ANIMATOR (Disc), PYRAWORD (Tape), IMAGE SYSTEM (Tape), BARBARIAN II (Disc), BCPL (Language disc), MAXAM (Tape), LORD OF THE RINGS (Tape), PANDORA (Disc), NECRIS DOME (Tape), SUBSUNK (Tape), E.M.U. (Tape).

JOHN PACKHAM, 60 Hightown Towers, Warburton Rd, Southampton, SO2 6HH
=====

SOFTWARE FOR SALE

I have a large number of adventures for sale. They are all for the BBC and are mainly tape. As there are too many to name here I can let anyone interested have a list of the adventures available. As I would like to make room all the tapes are reasonably priced.

I also have a brand new AMSTRAD version of KNIGHT ORC for sale (still in its wrapper) for £10.

JULIAN GREGORY, 27 Wentworth Drive, Broadstone, Dorset, BH18 8EJ

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AMSTRAD ADVENTURES FOR SALE

THE ISLAND and THE BASE two big adventures for the CPC and PCW computers together on one disc. As recommended by Mandy in the November Probe. (See also the reviews this issue). Send a formatted disc and S.A.E or £3 if you prefer to:

KEN BOND, 17 Adel Park Gardens, Adel, Leeds, LS16 8BN

=====

AMIGA SOFTWARE FOR SALE

ARCADES:

THUNDERCATS, IKARI WARRIORS, TERRAPODS, AMEGAS, MERCENARY, INSANITY FIGHT, BARBARIAN, WIZBALL - All at £5 each or will swap for any different ones.

COMMODORE 128 ADVENTURE FOR SALE

BEYOND ZORK £10 (Needs an 80 Col monitor)

FOR COMMODORE 64

FAERY TALE £5

JOY BIRLEY, Eryl Don, Mona Terrace, Criccieth, Gwynedd, LL52 OHG

=====

INFOCOM SWOP 'N' BUY

AMSTRAD PCW

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

DAVE HARVARD of 21 Balvoir Close, Gareham, Hants PO16 0PJ (tel no 0329-234569) is looking for copies of PLANETFALL, WISHBRINGER, MOONMIST, STARCROSS, SEASTALKER, ENCHANTER and SPELLBREAKER. Dave is also interested in any "oldies for the Spectrum 48K", why not give him a ring if you have something old that you don't want any more.

MR JOE SHERWOOD TAYLOR, 14 Manston Road, Sturminster Newton, Dorset, DT10 1AF has an original copy of SUSPENDED he would like to swap for HITCHHIKERS GUIDE TO THE GALAXY, but will consider a swap for almost any other Infocom game (Leather Goddesses excepted).

=====

GRAPHIC ARTISTS WANTED

"I was disappointed that nobody replied to my ad for artists this month. Surely there is someone out there with the creative, artistic touch for the ST? Also, at present, I urgently require s Spectrum artist (computer)."

ERIC STEWART, 18 Vatisker, Back, Isle of Lewis, PA86 OJS

PUZZLE PAGE

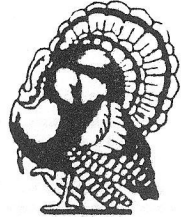
A CHRISTMAS WORDSEARCH compiled by DOREEN BARDON

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

Find the hidden words and then
take the remaining unused letters
then reading from top left hand
corner, find the secret message!

ANGEL
BELLS
BAUBLES
BIRTH JESUS
CHRISTMAS DAY
CARDS
CRACKERS
FAIRY
HOLLY
MISTLETOE
MANGER
PRESENTS
REINDEER

SANTA CLAUS
SNOW
SACK
STAR
SLEIGH
TOYS
TURKEY
TINSEL
TREE
YULE LOG



=====

ANSWERS TO CHRIS'S CRAZY QUIZ PART 3 from last month...

By CHRIS HESTER

1. The initials in the Atari ST simply stand for "Sixteen Thirty-two", as the ST has a 16 bit processor, emulating 32 bit, hence 16/32.
2. This quotation, enough to send a text only adventure fan into fits, came from the advert by Beyond for their arcade adventure "Shadowfire".
3. Apparently the name AMSTRAD is derived from Alan M Sugar TRADing.
4. Level 9 wrote the game of the book, and Mosaic released it. The two also put out "The Gowing Pains of Adrian Mole", and The Saga of Erik the Viking, based on the Terry Jones children's books.
5. Covers of Adventure Probe!!
6. Steve Meretzky of Infocom fame wrote three multiple choice adventure books based on the Zork Trilogy, published by Puffin. The titles were Zork I - The forces of Krill; Zork II - The Malifestro Quest; Zork III - The Cavern of Doom.
7. The Runestone of Zaobab is an adventure by Eric Stewart, and there used to be an Eric Stewart in 10cc. Do you reckon he gave up music for adventures?

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HINTS AND TIPS



WEAVER OF HER DREAMS

By SHEILA SIMPSON played on Spectrum 48K

To enter game proper, search drawer TWICE to find key.
DO NOT go south through the door in the study as this ends the game.

DUNGEON MASTER CHEAT!

By NEIL HICKMAN played on Atari ST

This poke should give you infinite Health and Stamina throughout the game!

```
10, REM ***** CHEAT ROUTINE FOR DUNGEON MASTER *****
20, OPTION BASE 1:DIM A(512): CHEAT = VARPTR(A(1))
30, DEF SEG = 0: REM REMOVE IF NEW ST BASIC IS IN USE
40, BLOAD "A:START.PRG",CHEAT
50, FOR N=1 TO 5: READ B: POKE CHEAT+B,&H4E71: POKE CHEAT+B+2, &H4E41:
   NEXT N
60, FOR N = &H260 TO &H26E STEP2: READ B: POKE CHEAT+N,B: NEXT N
70, BSAVE "A:START PRG",CHEAT, 770
80, DATA &H93C0, &H00DB, &H00FC, &H0118, &H0154, &H93C0
90, DATA &H337C, &H4E71, &H433B, &H337C, &HB06B, &H48D9, &H4E92
```

RIDDLES in GOLD OR GLORY

By GRAHAM WHEELER Played on Amstrad CPC

With never a word I keep it well. Though it flies like a bird. What am I? Answer: CLOCK.

Both day and night I stay in bed, yet never sleep or rest my head. I have no feet to skip or hop and yet I run and never stop..... Answer: RIVER.

I begin tall and thin. I end in a muddle sat in a puddle.....Answer: CANDLE.

As Sun or Moon do cross the sky and across my wall they creep. They fall more silently than sleep.....Answer: SHADOW.

WHIPLASH AND WAGONWHEEL

By GRAHAM WHEELER played on Atari ST

To stop Georgio killing you - In the Diner kitchen:- OPEN CUPBOARD, GET COUGH BOTTLE, GET DROPS, PUT DROPS IN COUGH BOTTLE, PUT COUGH BOTTLE IN CUPBOARD.

To get Diary in Museum: OPEN WINDOW (Willy turns to close it), OPEN DESK (you find and get the diary).

SHARDS OF TIME

By GRAHAM WHEELER played on Atari ST

14th Century - To get the rope from the Bell Tower: In Church PRAY, GET CANDLE, E, S, S, E, N, E, LIGHT CANDLE, W, S, W, N, N, W, OPEN TRAPDOOR, D, GET WAX, PUT WAX IN PRIESTS EARS, E, UP, CUT ROPE WITH CLEAVER, D, GET ROPE.

PROJECT ANNIHILATION

By JIM STRUTHERS played on Amstrad

To get foil wrapper, put money in vending machine.
The screwdriver is a very useful tool.
Carry the lighter as it is very light.
Don't forget to search the body in the office.
The coat can help you make progress.

ONCE UPON A LILLY PAD

By JOAN WILLIAMS played on Spectrum

To get rid of sally, phone for an escort.
Colin likes mushrooms!
Fish for a goblet.
Throw carrot in road for a ride to castle.
A firework will open a door.

THOR

By JOAN WILLIAMS played on Spectrum

Climb tree before chopping it.
Get the elf to open the trapdoor.
Get the dwarf to help you with the boulder.
Say "Aurac" to the hobgoblin.
The wolf is a meat eater.

SCAPEGHOSH

By ANNE ROY played on Spectrum

Pat the dog and help him clear his throat to make a helpful and strong friend.

Swap the cards on the wreaths to stop the Wilmots quarreling.
David Ridge will be impressed by a show of strength.
You will need plenty of help to open the shed door.
The end time: Erase it, tear it or break it!

KINGS QUEST III

By PARASKEVAS TSOURINAKIS

In the solution you have (also the one published in July's Spellbreaker!), it is proposed to use the rose essence (which can only be used three times) as follows: KILL THE SPIDER, RETURN TO NANNANAS HOUSE and PASS THE SNOWMAN. Although one can complete the adventure in this way the player is denied the high score and misses 8 points. The best use of the rose essence is DURING YOUR FIRST VISIT TO THE AREA UNDER THE MOUNTAINS WHERE MANNANAS HOUSE IS SITUATED, GO TO THE TAVERN (in case you go in you'll meet the bandits), STAND BEFORE THE DOOR, TURN CHARACTER TO THE SIDE, TYPE OPEN DOOR, so that you don't go in and DIP FLY WINGS IN ESSENCE. Now, as a fly you can go in and hear the bandits talking about their secret hideout. (3 POINTS). USE THE ESSENCE TO KILL THE SPIDER (as above), and after having killed the spider go to the bandits tree and DIP FLY WINGS IN ESSENCE and fly into the tree's hole. Now, as a fly, you can see in the tree the rope that you must pull (5 POINTS). To pass the snowman, walk up the little waterfall and follow the path. When the snowman attacks you RUB STONE to avoid him and then teleport back using the map to arrive above the caves.



GETTING YOU STARTED

NOT A PENNY MORE, NOT A PENNY LESS
By JOAN PANCOTT played on Amstrad



PART 1 START - Stephen Bradley, Your Room, Magdalen College, Oxford.
Examine folder, examine telephone numbers, open cupboard, get camera, read magazine (Harvey's itinerary), ring 015639911 (Kitcat and Aitken, Stockbrokers) for the names of Harvey's other victims (Robin Oakley, Doctor - Jean-Pierre Lamanns, Art Dealer - James, Viscount Briggsley).

Examine Robin (someone knocks on the door), close folder, open door, ring Robin, say yes please (now in Waiting Room). Talk to man (are invited to Newspaper and taken to Surgery). Examine objects until your foot touches something on the floor, examine floor, get key (you are now with Robin), give key to Robin (is for St Thomas's Hospital and he needs it in Part 2), leave (back in your room).

Examine Jean-Pierre (he is leaving his Gallery), follow Jean-Pierre, examine shops, enter photographic shop, buy film, put film in camera, leave shop, wait until Jean-Pierre comes out of the RAC Club with a man, take photo of Jean-Pierre, show photo to doorman, examine David Stein, leave (back in your room).

Examine James, go west, read book (Who's Who?), go east, go north, get medical book (on General Medicine and Anaesthesia and needed for Part 2), leave (back in your room).

Go to London (now at Paddington Station). Buy the non-fiction book (on Paintings and needed for Part 2), go west to the Underground Station, examine litter, get newspaper, repeat read newspaper until you read the item about Dr Wiley Barker the U.S. President's personal surgeon, go to Temple, Blackfriars or Chancery Lane.

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MATCHMAKER

By VICKY JACKSON played on Spectrum

SEARCH POCKET THREE TIMES TO FIND LIBRARY TICKET, ORDER FORM AND FOOD. LOOK BEHIND STONE TO FIND OLD LAMP. S. S. S. S. S. IN. SWAP LAMP. N. IN. GIVE FORM FOR A COPY OF PAW. S. S. IN. EXAM ROOM. LOOK IN BALL. OUT. N. EIGHT TIMES. NE. D. SEARCH REEDS. GET COIN. W. IN. DIG. GET OBJECT. OUT. E. WASH OBJECT. KISS PRINCE. GET FROG.....

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BLACKSCAR MOUNTAIN

By GRAHAM WHEELER played on Atari ST

E, EXAMINE PRICE LIST, BUY MALLET, W, N, W, EXAMINE BUSHES (you get a candle), EXAMINE GRAVESTONE (you get a stake), W, EXAMINE RUBBLE, EXAMINE RUBBLE (you get a cross), E, E, NW, NE, NE, N, W, OPEN COFFIN (the vampire inside is frightened by the cross) KILL VAMPIRE (with stake and mallet), EXAMINE COFFIN, GET COINS, EXAMINE VAMPIRE. GET RING, WEAR RING, E, GET ROPE, EXAMINE BRIDGE, EXAMINE PLANKS (one is loose) GET PLANK, S, SW, SW, SE, S, E, BUY LANTERN, BUY NAILS, BUY AXE, W, DROP MALLET, W, TALK TO BARMAN (he has ale to sell), BUY BARREL, GET DRAPES, LIGHT LANTERN, LIGHT CANDLE (it turns to wax), TALK TO TRAVELLER, E, N, NW, EXAMINE UNDERGROWTH (you find a NW Trail) NW, EXAMINE UNDERGROWTH (you get some Nightshade), NW, COVER ENTRANCE WITH DRAPES, GET DRAPES (the Trolls inside are turned to stone by the sunlight), DROP DRAPES.....

REVIEWS

Adlan.....	Aug
Amazon.....	Nov
A.R.C.....	Oct
The Base.....	Dec
Battletech.....	Sep
Behind Closed Doors II.....	Mar
Bestiary.....	Jun
Black Knight.....	Jun
Blackscar Mountain.....	Aug
Blood of the Mutineers.....	Mar
Bounty Hunter.....	Sep
Castle Adventure.....	Jun
City for Ransom.....	May
Corruption.....	Jun
Cosmos.....	May
Deja Vu II.....	Nov
Demigod.....	Nov
Desert Island.....	Jun
Dildo & the Dark Lord.....	Jun
Dungeon Master.....	Feb
Fish.....	Sep
Golden Fleece.....	Nov
Gold Rush.....	Aug
Gordello Incident.....	Oct
Great Peepingham Train Rob...	Jun
Ingrid's Back.....	Feb
The Island.....	Dec
Jinxter.....	Jan
Journey.....	Jul
Journey One Spring.....	Feb
Lancelot.....	Feb
Legacy for Alaric.....	Oct
Leisure Suit Larry II.....	May
Lightmare.....	Sep
Magnetic Moon.....	Feb
Manhunter.....	Jun
Mansion Quest.....	Jun
Menagerie.....	Jul
Mind Forever Voyaging.....	Jun
Mission X.....	Jun
Nightwing.....	Dec
Plagues of Egypt.....	Aug
Panic Beneath the Sea.....	May
Pendant of Logryn.....	Dec
Police Quest II.....	Jul
Plague Planet.....	May
Pools of Radiance.....	Mar
Price of Magik.....	Mar
Project Annihilation.....	Dec
Puzzled.....	Dec
Quest for Poorly Snail.....	Jan
R.C. & C.....	Oct
Return to Doom.....	Feb
Seastalker.....	Jan
Shadowgate.....	Jan
Shards of Time.....	Sep
Sherlock/Case/Beheaded/Smug..	Oct
Space Quest III.....	Oct

Starship Quest.....	Dec
Suspect.....	Mar
Tailspin.....	Dec
Time Thief.....	Mar
The Tube.....	Jul
Wergild.....	Feb
Zork Zero.....	Oct



GETTING YOU STARTED

Aftershock.....	Apr
Bermuda Project.....	Feb
Black Cauldron.....	Oct
Blackscar Mountain.....	Dec
Brimstone.....	Jan
Castle Dracula.....	Nov
Colour of Magic.....	Mar
Countdown to Doom.....	Oct
Deja Vu II.....	Aug
Demon Knight.....	Nov
Devil's Island.....	Nov
Devil's Hand.....	Feb
Fish.....	Apr
Jack the Ripper.....	Apr
Lancelot.....	Jan
Leisure Suit Larry II.....	Jul
Legend of the Sword.....	Jan
Magnetic Moon.....	Sep
Matchmaker.....	Dec
Myorem.....	Oct
Myth.....	Nov
Not a Penny More.....	Dec
Pay-Off.....	Nov
Philosopher's Quest.....	Mar
Play it Again Sam.....	Sep
Return to Doom.....	Sep
Skegpool Rock.....	Jan
Skelvullyn Twine.....	Apr
Space Quest III.....	Oct
Sorcerer.....	Apr
Trinity.....	May
Zak McKracken.....	Jun



HINTS AND TIPS

Aftershock.....	Oct
Balrog and the Cat.....	Apr Jul
Bards Tale III.....	Jan Sep
Behind Closed Doors II.....	May
Beyond Zork.....	Nov
Black Knight.....	Feb
Bounty Hunter.....	Oct
Bureaucracy.....	Feb
Catacombs.....	Mar
City for Ransom.....	Nov
Claws of Despair.....	Apr
Commando.....	Apr
Corruption.....	Mar
Cuddles.....	Jul Sep Oct
The Count.....	May Oct
Devil's Hand.....	Nov
Dungeon Master.....	Sep Oct
Emerald Isle.....	Jan
Escape from Khoshima.....	Aug
Excalibur Sword of Kings..Feb	Mar
Faerie.....	Jul
Fish.....	Jan Jul Aug
Fistfull Blood Capsules.....	Apr
Football Frenzy.....	Sep
Frankenstein.....	Mar
F.U.O.A.D.N.S.....	Mar Apr
Golden Mask.....	Aug
Gordello Incident.....	Aug
Grange Hill.....	Oct
Great Peepingham Train Rob... Oct	
Guild of Thieves.....	Sep
Hit.....	Sep Nov
Immortality Rules UK.....	Jul
Ingrid's Rack....	Jan Feb May Oct
Jack the Ripper.....	Apr
Jinxter.....	Apr
Journey.....	Nov
Kings Quest III.....	May
Kings Quest IV.....	Jun
Knight's Quest.....	Jan
Lancelot.....	Jan Apr
Legacy for Alaric.....	Nov
Leisure Suit Larry II. Jun Jul	Au
Life Term.....	Apr
Microman.....	Jan
Murdac.....	Sep
Myth.....	Nov
One Dark Night.....	May Jul
O Zone.....	May
Panic Beneath the Sea.....	Oct
Personal Nightmare.....	Nov
Police Quest II.....	Jul
Prince of Tyndal.....	Jan
Pyramid.....	Apr Jul
Quest/Golden Eggcup.....	Jan
R.C. & C.....	Nov
Realm.....	Jan
Realm of Darkness.....	Sep
Red Moon.....	Mar
Secret of St Brides.....	May

Shadowgate.....	Jan
Shipwreck.....	Jan Feb
Skelvullyn Twine.....	Feb
Soul Hunter.....	Jul Nov
S.T.I.....	Apr
Strange Odyssey.....	Oct
Suspended.....	Oct
Trinity.....	Mar
Uninvited.....	Jan May
Village of Lost Souls.Apr May	Jul
Witch Hunt.....	May
Wolfman.....	May
Yellow Door.....	Apr



SERIALISED SOLUTIONS

START

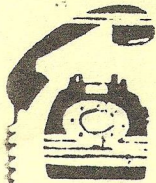
Amazon.....	Jun
Ballyhoo.....	Nov
Gnome Ranger.....	Jan
Heavy on the Magik.....	Mar
Price of Magik.....	Jun
Sharpes Deeds.....	Mar
Snowqueen.....	Jan
Sorcerer.....	Nov



OBJECTS AND USES

Adventure Quest.....	Sep
Dungeon Adventure.....	Jul
Great Peepingham Train Rob... Oct	
Mansion Quest.....	Jun
Red Door.....	May
Secret of Little Hodcomb..... Nov	
Witch Hunt.....	Apr





HELPLINE

TELEPHONE HELPLINES

ALF BALDWIN	0452 500512	MON TO SAT 10AM TO 5PM	Spectrum.
JACK HIGHAM	0925 819631	FRI TO MON 7PM TO 10PM	Spectrum.
WALTER POOLEY	051 9331342	ANY REASONABLE TIME	Various.
DOREEN BARDON	065 382 509	MON TO FRI 6PM TO 10PM	Spectrum.
WEEKENDS ANY REASONABLE TIME			
MIKE BRAILSFORD	0592 757788	SUN TO SAT 10AM TO 10PM	Various.
MERC	0424 434214	ANY REASONABLE TIME	Atari ST.
JASON DEANE	0492 622750	ANY REASONABLE TIME	Amiga.
JOAN PANCOTT	0305 784155	SUN TO SAT NOON TO 10PM	Amstrad.
ISLA DONALDSON	041 9540602	SUN TO SAT NOON TO 12PM	Amstrad.
NIC RUMSEY	03212 2737	SUN TO SAT 6PM TO 9PM	Various.
REG LILLEY	0392 215521	TUE TO SUN 6PM TO 11PM	Commodore
BARBARA			
BASSINGTHWAIGHTE	0935 26174	SUN TO SAT 10AM TO 10PM	BBC.
BARBARA GIBB	051 7226731	ANY EVENING FROM 7PM	BBC.
DAVE BARKER	01 732 1513	MON TO FRI 7PM TO 10PM	Various.
STUART WHYTE	061 9804645	ANY REASONABLE TIME	Amstrad.
ROBIN MATTHEW	0222 569115	ANY REASONABLE TIME	IBM PC
SONZ	0482 654036	MON TO SAT 10AM TO 11PM	Various.

* * * THE ULTIMATE INFOCOM HELPLINE * * *

If you need help with an infocom adventure then who better to help you than A GRUE! Ring GRUE on 0695 573141 between 7:30pm to 9pm Mon to Fri. Or write to 64 COUNTY ROAD, ORMSKIRK, WEST LANCs, L39 1QH. Please note that GRUE will give help on INFOCOM ONLY!

HANDY'S HOTLINE

If you need to contact Probe please telephone 0492 77305. I will be available at all reasonable times but please try to telephone between 10am and 10pm. If you are telephoning for help on an adventure then please try to phone during office hours as the solutions are on hand during that time.

PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT YOU ONLY RING AT THE TIMES SHOWN

