

ADVENTURE PROBE



Vol IV Issue 7 July 1990

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ADVENTURE PROBE

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All back issues are still available from Issue 1 (June 1986). There are 19 issues in Vol 1. Vol II started Jan 1988. Subsequent volumes begin each January (12 issues each). Prices as above.

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

CONTRIBUTIONS

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

POSTAL ADDRESS

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HALL OF FAME



My sincere thanks to all the following readers who took the time and trouble to send in contributions for Probe during the past month:

Lorna Paterson, Kez Gray, Graham Wheeler, Ken Bond, Tom Frost, Jim Struthers, Claudio Balzi, Martin Leverton, Keith Burnard, Tony Kingsmill, Nic Rumsey, Allan Phillips, The Wayfarer, Faraskevas Tsourinakis, P.G.Clark, Dave Havard, Sharon Harwood, Larry Horsfield, John Wilson, Ted Bugler, Alf Baldwin, Christopher Hester, Ian Dowdall, Ron Rainbird, Neil Shipman, Brian Pell and The Grue!

Special thanks to Allan Batchellor for this months cover picture.

EDITORIAL



Welcome to Volume IV, Issue 7 of Adventure Probe.

Summer is here and the World Cup is here too and there are a thousand and one things happening to keep us away from our keyboards. This is the time of year when things tend to quieten down on the Adventure front but please do try and make time to rattle those keys a bit as I have absolutely no reviews for the next issue! So, if you have played an adventure that you would like to share your views on then please send them in. It has been suggested to me that it might be a good idea not to restrict adventures to just one review as it might be helpful if conflicting opinions on a game were available to the readers. What do you think? It would certainly help to keep the review section well padded.

You will find a questionnaire enclosed with Probe this month and on the other side a nominations form for the proposed awards at the Probe Convention. Please do fill them in and return them as the information gleaned will be invaluable. There have been one or two letters asking for more of certain items in Probe and less of others so if you can let me know your views I can ensure that the majority rules as far as the content of Probe goes. As I have said before, many times, this is YOUR magazine, so let me know what you want to read.

Arrangements for the Convention are going ahead nicely. Many thanks to Larry Horsfield for all his hard work in organising this. If you haven't sent your questionnaire about the Convention to Larry yet, then please do so as soon as possible. Even if you are just thinking about attending but prefer to wait until you know the date and venue, please send it in anyway as it is vital that we know the numbers to cater for. In this day and age it is unfortunate that many women do not feel safe travelling on their own, and sadly, with good reason on many occasions. If you are worried about this then please let me know as some very kind gentleman Probe readers have offered to either give lifts to the ladies or to arrange to travel with them on public transport. Just let me know your area and I will do my best to put you in touch with a kind travelling companion. I would also like to take this opportunity of thanking those thoughtful gentlemen for their kindness and understanding. If you would like to help out in this way then please let me know. Adventure widows and widowers are also very welcome at the convention and we will try and find some suitable form of entertainment for them so that they are not bored so please feel free to bring along your long suffering spouse. You never know, we might just get them interested in adventuring! I am getting quite excited at the thought of meeting you all at last.

If any of you responded to an advertisement for Armageddon and Cream in the April issue of Probe and are a bit worried then I would like you to get in touch with me please.

Oh dear, here we are at the bottom of the page again. All my gossipy bits and pieces are going to have to wait for another month again. But still, I expect you would all rather be reading the rest of Probe than reading through all my wafflings. So I will leave you in peace again. I sincerely hope that you enjoy this issue.

May your swords always stay sharp and your lanterns always gleam!

Mandy

REVIEWS

MOONMIST

Infocom. Available for most machines. Shop around for the best price.
Reviewer - THE GRUE! Played on Amiga.

After spending most of the day driving, evening draws near as you reach Cornwall. The moors stretch out, filled with bogs and heather, the fading light turns the craggy rocks into mysterious silhouettes. At last you arrive at your destination, an ancient castle, perched on the granite cliffs by the sea. A full moon rises above the castle turrets as you pull up to the gate. Fog shrouds the old stone walls. Is that a ghostly figure in the tower window or merely your weary eyes playing tricks on you?

You have been summoned to Tresyllian Castle by your friend Tamara, a series of terrifying events have led her to believe that someone is trying to kill her. Tamara seems to think the culprit is the White Lady, a spectral figure that haunts the medieval tower.

Inside the castle you will meet the rest of the guests, even the overly helpful butler is not above your suspicion. Most of them have seen the ghost and some say it looks like Deirdre, the former lover of Tamara's fiance, Lord Jack. Deirdre was supposed to have drowned shortly after Jack ended their romance. Could it be that she is still alive? You also learn that a valuable object is hidden somewhere in the castle and this treasure rightfully belongs to Lord Jack but he's not the only one searching for it. If it's not found family heirlooms will have to be sold to pay off debts. So you find yourself on a treasure hunt as well as the mystery of the White Lady.

The trouble with introductory level games from Infocom is that they're not usually up to much. Moonmist is another of these, like Seastalker, written by the same authors, Stu Galley and Jim Lawrence. Moonmist has four different variations, each with it's own puzzles, treasure and solution to the mystery, this is undoubtedly where Infocom went wrong. It would have been far better to concentrate on just one story with one solution and make it a good one. What they achieved was really four games each far too weak to really stand up on its own. When you arrive at the castle you are asked what your favourite colour is and this determines which of the four games you will play and the game will respond differently to a male or female player.

There are notes and clues left lying around to help with your investigation but most of them are in the same place no matter which version, once you've solved one, the others are fairly similar and even solving the first one isn't all that difficult. The text and atmosphere are all you would expect from Infocom but something with a bit more bite even for a novice would have been better.

The packaging includes an illustrated copy of Legendary Ghosts of Cornwall, a Moonmist iron-on logo for your T-shirt and a visitors guide to Tresyllian Castle.

Grossly overpriced at the time, poor gameplay, but still has that remarkable Infocom quality stamped all over it. I would think Stu Galley's first game, Seastalker, is the better of the two, for the beginner only.

BOG OF BRIT

Storabringer Software, 1 Amanda Rd, Leicester, LE2 9HW.

Written for the Spectrum 48/128K by Ian Brown.
Priced at £1.99.

Reviewer - ALF BALDWIN

This is the second mad adventure from Ian Brown, the first being MENAGERIE. You are Bog the Brit, feared and despised for being kind and considerate. One day you are forced to flee from your village as the children have decided to use you to exercise the warhounds. Your first aim, therefore, is to escape the hounds before they rip you to shreds. The hounds are very fast, so you have a limited number of moves to find the escape route before they catch up with you.

If you are successful in escaping the hounds, you can then go on to your other aims, which are to acquire a vast fortune and to find your lost family heirloom, the bloodthirsty Blade of the Bogs. Also, on your travels, you will be seeking to slaughter hundreds of misunderstood beasts or sorcerers because "That is what Barbarians do".

Being a mad adventure, the game has to be played in the spirit to which it is written and nothing must be taken too seriously. All but one of the objects which you see laying around are red herrings and totally useless. The number of items you can carry is severely restricted by their weight, so you couldn't carry them all anyway. The one essential item, which you will need to search to find, is a credit card. Pedestrians are not allowed on the main horseway, so you will not get very far if you do not have the means to rent a horse.

Once mounted on the horse, you will be able to reach the village, although you will need to tell a fib to get past the sentry. You will find the one useful item in the castle and it will enable you to visit the cabin of Hugh the Axe. Help him with his crossword and he will reward you with a gift, something that someone else needs. Thereafter, it is a case of helping other characters by giving them something they need until eventually you are given items which you need to find your family heirloom. Each time you help someone, a glowing archway will be created somewhere in the game to transport you past blocked routes, and finally when you have the family heirloom, back to your village.

There are so many red herrings and blind alleys in this game, that it can become quite confusing, and it is quite a problem sorting out which moves are relevant and which are not. However, once on the right track, a bit of careful thought and examination of the characters should enable you to deduce who needs what, and lead you to the next archway. In the end, of course, you will not have achieved all your aims. You won't have slain anyone or anything because you have no weapons. Your family heirloom turns out not to be a sword, and you get a bit of a shock when you arrive back at your village.

The game is written in a humorous vein and, although the humour falls a bit flat occasionally, I quite enjoyed playing it.



LAST DAYS OF DOOM from Topologika
 PO Box 39, Stilton, Peterborough PE7 3RL (Tel: 0733-244682)
 Available on disk only for a variety of micros - £14.95 to £19.95.

The planet Doom is showing increasing signs of instability. Its whole solar system is moving erratically almost as if something was trying to attract attention. Doomquakes, eruptions and the like are breaking up the surface and a third artefact has turned up not far from a ruined, walled city. The experts reckon it will explode in a few days. As an adventurer who has already survived two trips to the planet and has many memories of it you somehow feel you want to help. Accompanied by your trusty robot dog and a crew of three you attempt to land near the new artefact but your ship's navigation is thrown off and you crash some distance away.

Last Days Of Doom is the long-awaited final part of Peter Killworth's Doom Trilogy. If you've played the first two adventures (Countdown To Doom and Return To Doom) you'll know what to expect - and you won't be disappointed. There are screenfuls of descriptive text, scores of innovative, often tricky but always logical puzzles, touches of wry humour and a marvellous story from a scientifically trained author adept at writing sci-fi adventures.

You have your work cut out right from the start in order to escape from your ship before it disappears down a crevasse and then save your friendly pooch from following in its wake. If you can deal with renegade robots which home in on you, sort out an angry sabreboog and find a way through an electrically charged cave you'll eventually reach the city. And all the time the planet is cracking up around you and the peculiar Doom fauna are frantically seeking refuge.


Within the city you'll meet many old acquaintances like the metallic nibbling decapods, a slow silica creature, a dangerous droffid and even the poor old giant rat. But there's much, much more besides. Can you work the ancient sprinkler system and put it to good use? What do the jelly blobs want? Are you able to finish the operation on a Parafug or help a dying Elagordian? How do you leave the city for the artefact? All these problems will have you scratching your head for a long time. Particularly clever, too, are the Muu birds' solid living environment and the sandstone caverns in which your dog gets lost.

The ending is quite simply a triumph. You will have your whole system of ethics questioned and will undergo a series of tests to determine your intelligence. If you're successful you'll not only discover what has happened to Doom but you'll also manage to save the planet - and be changed yourself in the process!

Last Days Of Doom features Topologika's usual on-line help facility and comes complete with a sealed envelope of clues, your very own cut-and-fold robot dog construction kit and, last but not least, a free bonus game, Hezarin.

Peter Killworth considers Last Days to be the most challenging of his three Doom adventures and it certainly lived up to my expectations. From a purely personal point of view I enjoyed Return To Doom slightly more, but Last Days rounds off the saga superbly. I rate the trilogy as a masterpiece of science fiction adventure and one that should feature in everyone's collection.

Reviewer - Neil Shipman - BBC



ISLAND OF CHAOS

By Tony Kingsmill. 202 Park Street Lane, Park Street, St. Albans, Herts.
AL2 2AQ. For Amstrad CPC on disc for £3.95.

Reviewed by Ken Bond

This is graphic adventure written with the Quill and illustrated with the Illustrator. A sheet of instructions sets the scene which is as follows. Brael Ti was a prosperous island set in the sea of Karzenia and ruled over by a rich and benevolent leader called Kansith. This of course caused envy among some of the surrounding lands and the island was invaded and taken over by a nasty piece of work called Bakron who murdered many of the inhabitants and enslaved the rest. You have volunteered to land on the island and to assassinate Bakron before going home for dinner.

There are about 70 locations on the island which are very easy to map out. You start on a beach and soon find a weapon and some coins. You need to find a password to get into the walled city where Bakron lives but this is not too difficult. Being written with the Quill there is only a verb noun input which I found rather tedious after using the more advanced parsers but plenty of the early adventures were written like that and I soon got used to it. The island seems to be infested with all sorts of queer monsters ranging from elves to dragons and all attack you without any provocation and this is a serious health hazard. Luckily when you get into the town you can buy herbs and healing potions which you can munch and restore your strength. You appear to have to destroy every monster to reach the full score of 200 but you can avoid most of them and still finish the game if you are a bit worried about your health.

I found no obvious bugs but there were a few spelling mistakes and I thought one or two of the problems were a bit unfair to the adventurer. In one location you are at the bottom of a pit with no obvious way out. A rope is hanging down from the top which you can climb up but for some reason you can't see it until you examine the ground. I thought it would have been more satisfactory if there was some indication that the ground had been disturbed and you dug in the sand and found a rope with a hook on the end which you could throw up and then climb.

There is another minor niggle. If an object like a table is mentioned in the location description I like to be able to examine it to see if it holds something. I don't like being told you can't examine it. Why not? Is it surrounded by a thick mist or has a witch put a spell on it? Why not say "You see nothing interesting." It doesn't take much memory and it is much more satisfying.

This is however just a small point. This is an early attempt by Tony to write a commercial adventure and I hope he perseveres because we want all the new adventure writers we can get with the demise of some of the big software houses.

ULTIMA IV

Reviewer - RON RAINBIRD played on Atari 800XL

I had been a devotee of text-only adventures for years when I first encountered Ultima IV. Until then I was convinced that nothing in the Adventure World could equal, let alone surpass, the satisfaction and involvement engendered by a Scott Adams or, later, an Infocom game. It took Lord British to convince me otherwise! For the uninitiated, Lord British is the High Panjandrum of the Ultima series. To describe the complexities of Ultima IV is a complexity itself, but I will endeavour to give some idea of how and why I became ensorcelled by this game.

Before loading the adventure, it is essential for "The History of Britannia", which forms part of the excellent package, to be read most thoroughly. I tried to play after skipping through the contents only to become hopelessly lost from the start. After loading side 1 (there are four sides altogether) I was led through a series of scenes to, eventually, a Gypsy's Tent, where I had perforce to answer a variety of questions, none of which were of the "Trivial Pursuits" nature, but ones which were aimed at assessing character. This was arrived at by describing several tricky situations, each of which had an alternative solution, and getting my reaction thereto. As a result, a profession was allotted to me, that of a Mage, which I accepted. I could have gone through the questions more than once if I was not satisfied with the allocation to see whether or not I could alter my character by changing the responses. The other professions were a Bard, Fighter, Druid, Tinker, Paladin, Ranger and Shepherd. The game proper then commenced.

For a time I just bumbled around, wondering what on earth it was all about, until I found the court of Lord British. Upon holding converse with him I learnt that it was my Quest to become an Avatar by achieving perfection in the eight virtues, i.e. Honesty, Compassion, Valour, Justice, Sacrifice, Honour, Spirituality and Humility. Just how I could accomplish this and to what end took me quite a while to discover but by talking to people in the eight Towns and various villages in Britannia, I learned that I had to meditate in the appropriate Shrine to each Virtue. I then found out that to enter each Shrine (once found), I had to be in possession of a matching Rune so now I had eight Runes to find. I nearly expired when I next learnt that in order to concentrate my thoughts whilst in the Shrines, I had to know the relevant Mantra for focussing my thoughts. I now had to add eight Mantras to the ever-growing list of needs. To get all this information it is essential that every person is questioned and, if your memory is like mine, a written record kept of the replies, because statements that appear to be frivolous often become significant in the light of information from a different source. Encounters in the open country are many and are essential for building up a supply of the "ready" so as to purchase food, arms, armour, magical reagents, information, healing and even resurrection. At one place it is possible to buy horses which will speed travel on land. Other unlisted items may be purchased on the "black market" but knowledge of these is only revealed in the aforementioned conversations. The aggressive creatures with which battle may be joined are varied and seemingly endless. The encounters are not just another form of "shoot-em-up" but are very such conflicts of a strategic nature and judicious placement of your Adventurers, whom you enlist during the course of the game, can win battles very quickly. Enlisting recruits is almost a game in itself. The dreaded number 8 crops up later in the game when you learn that in

order to obtain a key which will access The Codex (a mysterious artifact), eight stones must be found. These are secreted in eight Dungeons each of which contain several levels and many problems and hazards.

There is much sailing to be done between islands and a ship must be secured as early in the game as possible, normally by overpowering a Pirate crew and once aboard the lugger another facet of this adventure is revealed. You are now open to attack by Winged Daemons and other unfriendly creatures. The wind may change to halt your progress whilst whirlpools may suck your ship under and disgorge you into another part of the ocean. Another mode of travel is via the "Moon-gates". These are portals that appear periodically near Towns, the destinations from which are governed by the waxing and waning of Britannia's twin Moons, which are on display at the top of the screen throughout the game. A few of the towns contain a Guild Shop and finding such a shop is a "must" because then, provided you have the money, you may purchase essential items, both magic and mundane. The essential purchase must be a Sextant if the land and sea are to be properly mapped. A map does come with the package, but is deliberately vague in certain areas, but with the aid of a Sextant, it forms an excellent basis upon which to build a detailed map. There are several other items sprinkled about the Kingdom which must be obtained before your final assault on Evil, things such as The Book of Truth and The Skull, whilst a balloon must be found for travelling to an otherwise inaccessible place, but if I detailed everything even merely as a passing mention, this review would assume the epic proportions of another "Gone With The Wind" (it is beginning to assume that shape already, though not of such a high literary style), so I will end these descriptions by just a very brief reference to the Silver Horn, without which you will not pass the Demons. Oh yes, I must just mention that the final battleground is The Abyss and I shudder at the mere memory of that titanic struggle.

I feel that this is a game which could take many months to successfully finish, but which holds the interest throughout. It is a wonder to me how all of this is contained within the so-called limitations of an 8-bit machine. With the number of 8-bit machines out there, why are there not more games on this scale for the 800 machines? Anyway, I cannot recommend too strongly to any 8-bit player with a disk drive this wonderful adventure. If you are already into RPG and haven't got this game, don't wait a moment longer to get it. If you do not consider yourself a Role Playing Adventurer, then I still say "get it" - but beware, in all probability it will persuade you to become one!

=====

MIDWINTER

Reviewer - HUGH T. WALKER played on Atari ST

MIDWINTER is set in the frozen wastes of the last inhabitable island of a world held fast in the grip of a post-cataclysmic ice age and concerns the (mis)fortunes of the offspring of a mixed bag of settlers who had first struggled ashore, to brave the elements of this hostile environment with such ingenuity that the present generation enjoys a near tolerable level of civilisation. Apart from petty squabbles and local politics the human race looks well set up to outlive the cruel blow which Nature dealt it ... until ... this secret haven is discovered and partly taken over by Outsiders, ruled by the tyrannical General Masters who is not long content to co-exist in his small corner of the island.

The onset of (mini)world domination is presaged by the disruption of radio communications, isolating the various settlements, so that the alarm has to be spread by word of mouth, with the Good Guys under your control physically travelling across the snowy landscape to visit each member of the Free Villages. Local politics raises its head when you discover that each individual may choose to cooperate or not, depending on who is attempting to recruit them, clues to this are contained in the accompanying biographies, as are each person's degree of prowess in the various skills required to operate effectively.

At its easiest (Training) level MIDWINTER presents a pure strategy game in which the enemy do not shoot back, allowing you time to enjoy the winter sports simulations of skiing, snow-buggy driving or hang-gliding (at which I am ABYSMAL, regardless of whatever the biography says about my current character). At its hardest level, General Master's minions not only shoot at you but strafe you from robot planes and subject you to long range mortar-fire. At this level the future of the Free Villages looks very bleak indeed. So far, I have had hours of fun (in Training Mode) and I would thoroughly recommend MIDWINTER, especially if you have an SI (or similar) and have already experienced the delights of Mike Singleton's 8-bit games LORDS OF MIDNIGHT and DOUMDARKS REVENGE. However, in spite of the £30 full-price tag I would be wary of buying it by mail-order unless you enjoy a special relationship with the company as it may be necessary to return the disks to swap them until you get a set that are compatible with your TOS or drive (whatever it is that is incompatible(!)). Furthermore, great care is required on my version to avoid having your vehicle disappear while you visit the various buildings in a settlement. The command icon which should overcome this (viz. MOVE) usually results in the vehicle being stripped of weapons and fuel... this may be a bug! (Why me?!).

ASK GRUE!

Dear Grue. Ever since playing Zork I a large black hair has sprouted from a mole on my chin. Do you think this could be a consequence of trying to kiss the troll?.....Signed, Whiskers.

Dear Whiskers. I wouldn't have thought the growing of a large black hair is anything to worry about but I would be very concerned about your habit of keeping a MOLE on your chin. Try to prise it loose and return it to the garden where it belongs.

Dear Grue. I love Infocom. I play Infocom adventures every spare moment I've got and carry my Wishbringer stone around with me for good luck. My room is adorned with pictures of Dave, Marc, Steve and Brian. My mum thinks this is all becoming an obsession and says I've got to get expert help so I'm writing to you. What do you think I should do? P.S. Can I have a signed photo please? Lots of love.....Anne Addict.

Dear Miss Normal. You can stop your worrying right now, there is nothing wrong with this behaviour. You should try to reassure your mum because there are far more dangerous pastimes such as bird watching, even something seemingly simple like watching a game of cricket could cause you to have a brain haemorage. In fact a recent population survey by a reader in Salisbury has found that 9/10 Infocomies have an IQ of 160 and lead very stable lives. A signed photo is in the post at this very minute!

NOT THE NINE O'CLOCK ADVENTURE NEWS

By MIKE GARRARD

The other day I was going through my back copies of the Adventurers Club dossiers, to see if there was anything in them worth saving before throwing them in the bin, when I noticed some of the news items. The ones that haven't quite happened yet. No offence to the companies concerned, but whatever happened to....

1986

October: A joint project is announced between Delta 4 and Level 9, though the exact details were not revealed.

1987

September: *ENCHANTRESS*, written by Fergus McNeill, will be published by CRL.

November: Delta 4's next adventure will be a spoof of the classic horror movies. It will be released during the first quarter of 1988.

Interceptor will be releasing four adventures for various machines, including the Spectrum, on the revived Automata label.

1988

January: The release of the four new Interceptor adventures under the Automata label will now take place at the beginning of February 1988.

March: Delta 4 are putting the final touches to *THE SMURKING HORROR*, their spoof adventure about horror movies.

May: CRL will release *PYRAMID OF THE SUN* (the sequel to *CASTLE BLACKSTAR*) in June 1988 for the Spectrum.

Delta 4 are working on a sequel to *BORED OF THE RINGS*. Names *B...B...BORED OF THE RINGS (THE REMIX)*, this PAWed adventure should be released during Summer 1988.

August: The CRL release of *PYRAMID OF THE SUN* is now scheduled for October 1988.

December: Activision will soon release *PARISIAN KNIGHTS*, the second adventure written by Abstract Concepts.

.....

BLOODWYCH V DUNGEON MASTER

By HUGH T. WALKER



I finished BLOODWYCH and THE DATA DISK without ringing Jason Deane and before his guides were published. Is this a record? Anyway, the late and lamented letters editor suggested that a review of BLOODWYCH and a comparison with DUNGEON MASTER would be a nice idea but I feel that Jason's guides to BLOODWYCH have more than adequately reviewed the game, apart from the fact that on my ST version the (green) Serpent Slime restores Hit Points and the (red) Dragon Ale restores Vitality, not vice versa as in his guide based on the Amiga version. Could this be a bug?

While comparisons between BLOODWYCH and DUNGEON MASTER are inevitable, they actually have less in common than a casual glance may suggest. It is true that in both we may select our party to suit the mixture of skills which tickles our fancy and that we will guide that party to death or glory as we buckle their swashes through hours of hair-raising adventures... and have great fun doing so. Furthermore, both games use graphics to the exclusion of text so that we may see where we are going and what of interest is around us. However, if this was

all there was to it then BLOODWYCH would be a mere clone of DUNGEON MASTER and nothing could be further from the truth.

No one in their right mind could describe DUNGEON MASTER as boring but the graphics, while superior to those of BLOODWYCH, are very repetitive. With its solid walls, each long, dark, dank, dismal, damp corridor in DUNGEON MASTER is just as long, dark, dank, dismal and damp as is should be but it is just as long, dark, dank, dismal and damp as the next long, dark, dank, dis... (get my point?). While the graphics of BLOODWYCH are less sophisticated than those of DUNGEON MASTER, what gives BLOODWYCH the edge is the use of pillars which allow you to see past the barrier into areas which you cannot reach ... yet! ... and which either tantalise or terrify, according to what or whom you glimpse through the aperture.

Both games involve a great deal of hack-and-slay, which is probably why they are so much fun, but DUNGEON MASTER is more of a strategy game where the need to husband resources is a major factor since the weights carried have a significant effect on your party's performance. In fact, towards the end, I was possibly tending towards a teensy bit left-minded myself since I hate packing and the worst thing about going on holiday is choosing what to leave behind (I don't choose to leave behind the computer, Meg chooses that!) BLOODWYCH has more genuine problem-solving and requires less overall planning of resources but more immediate tactical cunning to "turn the pages" and so allow the story to unfold.

In both games, the main reason for going along a corridor is to find out what is there ... then, in DUNGEON MASTER, to KILL it! ... but in BLOODWYCH it may be useful to have a chat or indulge in a spot of trade ... and then kill it!!!

It is just possible to get by without mapping in DUNGEON MASTER but in BLOODWYCH the beautiful symmetry of the maps is one of the game's best features and, although I have learned to hold quite complicated maps in my head and so successfully made rapid progress at first, I found that I was missing out on a great deal of the appreciation of the game, compared with when I started putting pencil to paper. It was much more fun to anticipate what was ahead because my map told me that I was approaching an area which I had previously glimpsed through one of the aforementioned apertures than it was to be muttering, "Oh! so that's why such-and-such happened" in retrospect.

Anyway, enough is enough! I always hated those *Compare and Contrast* questions so beloved of Examination Boards in those ante-diluvian days when it was possible to FAIL an exam. Suffice to say that both game systems are truly wonderful and each has been a source of hours of insomniac enjoyment ... BUT it is difficult, if not impossible, to say which is the better. They are different experiences, like travelling a similar route by train or by car (except that BLOODWYCH and DUNGEON MASTER are pleasant experiences).

One thing intrigues me - I am sure that I have seen advertisements for a Spectrum version of BLOODWYCH. But what on earth is it like? I tried the Spectrum version of *TIMES OF LORE* and found it utterly unplayable while that of *BARDS TALE 1* was an exercise in tape-counting ... I love my ST! Well, I don't have an Amiga so I don't know what I might possibly be in all probability missing.

PROBLEMS OF A PROGRAMMER

By ROY MILLIKEN



Feeling a bit of a fraud, having entered this strange world of adventuring through the back door, so to speak, I write this, therefore with tongue in cheek. I have been studying the first issues of Probe for 1990, to find out what this new world is like, and so far, I rather like what I see. I am particularly impressed with the feeling of camaraderie which exists among the readership, plus the fact that I have received some very nice telephone calls encouraging me to continue with the activity which brought me here in the first place, namely, programming.

Having invested in an Amstrad PCW about four years ago, for the main purpose of its word-processing abilities, (I had always been involved in Society Newsletters for a different type of hobby!), a pass-time from which I have now retired, and consequently began delving into the computer side of the machine, and taking up programming as a main hobby. I attempted once to write a form of adventure for the junior member of the family, but it took too much room in Mallard Basic. So, when Gilsoft brought out the PCW version of PAWS, I invested in a copy and settled down to study hard. I found the system both interesting and rewarding, - the uses to which one can put the various flags is limited only by ones own ingenuity, or lack of it!

As for playing adventures, unfortunately, the very first time my family attempted an adventure on the Amstrad PCW (it was THE PAWN), I was forced to re-format the disc and put it to more mundane use, before someone smashed the screen in. You see, while all you people out there know the LANGUAGE of adventuring, the games generally do not come with any form of instruction or means of telling the complete tyro how to go about the thing. I wonder, therefore, if the Software companies have ever thought of that aspect? In fact I wonder how many people have been put off adventures (as we were), by that simple fact.

The result of that traumatic experience was that, when I decided to attempt an adventure I laid down several criteria; among them being the fact that the game would be logical so that when the game gave a location description mentioning say, a curtain, then if the player typed in "look at curtain", they would not be rewarded with an "I don't understand curtain in that context" - this happened a lot in THE PAWN. Another example, to my thinking, occurs in CASTLE BLACKSTAR where, at the start of the game (and all through it I believe) if you type in East (or West) by mistake you land in a forest. Now try to get out! Logically, if East takes you from location 1 to location 2 then typing West should take you from location 2 to location 1. Or am I splitting hairs?

What I have written so far in the way of adventures, was intended to fulfil two purposes, namely, as an introduction to the main game, but also as an introduction to any newcomer to adventures. Therefore, it was allowed to be fairly easy to solve, hopefully giving encouragement to go on to better things. This was the game which was kindly reviewed in AMSTRAD PCW magazine, which led me here! Thanks to Martin Leverton for telling me of Probe, and also to Joan Pancott for her encouraging telephone call. I'm still working hard, when I can find the time, to finish the present game, Joan.

So what's this all about? Basically, I would like some words of advice from people who enjoy playing adventures, i.e. YOU READER! What makes

a good adventure? I'm afraid that I had formed the opinion that all this magic stuff with which most adventures rely on for their puzzles was simply an easy cop-out. Like the arcade games which I see my young lass playing on her CPC464. They're all roughly the same theme. A good simulation on the other hand I can well appreciate. I suppose that is the difference between writing a game and playing it.

Another problem area I came up against was the inability of being able to test the game out on "live" players. There's only my wife and daughter, (and Sally the dog. - but she's not much good really as floppy discs don't agree with her digestion!). I haven't seen any reference to the Amstrad 8000 series in Probe although according to my PAWS manual my system is suitable for the BBC with Z80 processor, the CPC464 with CP/M 2 and the CPC6128 with CP/M+. However, if writing for any of the other machines I would have to re-install the interpreter for the particular machine it was written for. They are all different! After reading so many issues of Probe I began to wonder if I ought to buy the Spectrum +3 which my daughter has dispensed with in favour of the Amstrad CPC464! - but one kind of gets attached to the feel of one's own machine, especially when it is the one you cut your teeth on.

I hope this little glimpse of the other side of the curtain from the solution of problems of playing to the solution of problems of writing may have proved of interest, always bearing in mind that this writer never used a computer until about four years ago, and had never played an arcade game in his life, let alone an adventure... and, believe it or not, there are many more like me who use their PCW's as word processors, but who go in utter fear of the deadly A> prompt of CP/M.

WELCOME TO DUNGEON

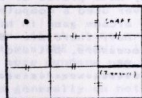
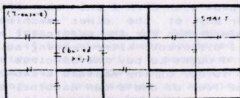
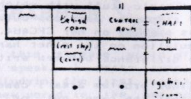
By THE GRUE!

PART THREE

For some time now the Infocom team had been receiving fan mail, suggestions for problems and reports on bugs. The bugs players had encountered were wide ranging, from the totally unexpected to the downright fatal. Zork players found that if they talked to an object in the game it would respond, the best example of this was if you typed AQUARIUM, WEST ... lo and behold the aquarium would leave the room. Other classics found at that time were things like GO painting or any other object would often transport the player to a different part of the game. You could fight the mirror with the sword and the mirror could parry your attack or sometimes die in a sinister black cloud of smoke, or you could give the troll to the troll and be totally amazed when the troll ate himself, then disappeared but still stopped you from leaving the room. Then we had the container bugs, if you put something into a container and shook it the game would often crash or you could put one container inside another then repeat the process to find that both containers vanished. The boat was another source of amusement, if you put the boat into the Frigid river and then entered the boat with the torch you could get completely stranded. What would happen is that the boat would burn to ashes, fairly normal I suppose but the player did not end up swimming in the river, he was just stuck there unable to move. If the player tried the input WEST he got the response "you can't control the boat with words". I'm not surprised since the player had just burnt it to a cinder but if you tried GET OUT OF BOAT the response was "You can't see any magic boat here??".

By this time many people had finished the game, one of these was a former D&D playing Pal of Dave Lebling. He called Dave saying he'd finished the game but wanted to know what he should have done with the jewel encrusted egg which the thief had opened for him? Dave went off immediately and invented the brass bauble! The problem they were now facing was the group was now losing valuable members through graduation and the lure of making some money in the real world. Several members of the group still thought they could produce outstanding computer based products in almost any field, the problem was what sort of product could the group work on together? Even as early as 1976 they had discussed the potential market for various computer games that had been designed by them just for fun, now their attention was on potential products based on mini-computers, some involving hardware as well as software. They at this stage were still ignoring the vast potential of a mass market for micro-computers, not only from lack of experience with them but also serious concerns about software piracy.

Joel Berez had graduated from the group at MIT and was working on his family's business in Pittsburgh, Marc had finished medical school and was in the process of starting a medical residency in Pittsburgh also. These two particular members of the group had been long time friends and often enjoyed an evening of conversation over a Chinese meal. The topic of conversation was often the "good old days at MIT" and one reason that the old days were that good was because of Zork. They wished that Zork could be brought to the attention of a greater audience but very few people had access to the large computers that could run Zork. More and more people were buying personal computers like the Radio Shack TRS-80 Model I or the Apple II but those computers were too small to run Zork, or so they seemed. Joel and Marc embarked on some serious design work to see if Zork could be compressed and if it could, how could they do it in such a way to allow for the different and incompatible personal computers.



They tried using programming tools like UCSD Pascal but it soon became clear to them that Zork had too much text in it, especially when personal computers at this time only came with about 16K of memory and no disk drive. They finally realised that they would have to invent a programming system specifically for Zork, they thought they could fit about half of it into a computer with 32K and one disk drive. Meanwhile the rest of the group still at MIT were in the process of forming a company, one of the reasons for this was to give members of the group somewhere to go after graduation. Infocom was the name they chose and in 1979 the company was launched. They quickly started searching for a project that would generate some income for the newly formed company and some of the projects they considered were systems

PAWS for Thought

by Larry Horsfield



Part four of my latest adventure, "The Axe of Kolt", is set in a castle, and in both versions, a spiral stairway takes you up or down past the various floors of this castle. Rather than have a separate location for each part of the stairway, I thought I would use just ONE location for all of it! In the 48k version, there are six "locations" in the stairway, but only two real exits, but the expanded and enhanced 128k version has 13 "locations", with eight exits!

The way this is done is very simple, and for the purposes of this article, we will use location 20 as the stairway (of course, it can be anything you like, but this technique is best applied to something like a stairway or staircase, where the location descriptions would be very similar) and as the "floor" counter we will use flag 20. The "location" description will be a system message, e.g. SYSMESS 70: "You are on a spiral stairway that twists up and down past the various floors of the castle.". Note there MUST be a blank space at the end of this message. For the very top floor, you'll need another message, e.g. SYSMESS 71: "You're at the top of the spiral stairway, which leads down.". As exits, we will have passages leading off three ways, so we'll need the following system message and ordinary messages:

SYSMESS 72: "From here, a passage leads off " (note space and lack of a
MESSAGE 10: "north. " full stop!)
MESSAGE 11: "east. "
MESSAGE 12: "west. "

As you can see from the map overleaf, we will have six levels to the stairway, with exits leading four ways to locations 19, 21, 22 & 23. You first enter the stairway from loc'n 19, which could be thus: "You're at the north end of the hall, where an archway leads north to a spiral stairway that twists up through the castle.". You'll notice that I've used NORTH and UP as the entrance to the stairway. The movement table entry for Loc'n 19 would contain the following entries: N 20 UP 20. The entry for Loc'n 20 should contain only 1 line: DOWN 19. This is because all other movements from loc'n 20 are dealt with in the response table.

First of all, we must insert the entries needed to print the "location descriptions" on screen and, like the door in last month's article, we do this in Process Table 1. We again use the "star + underline" symbols and the entries required should be inserted with the number following so that they are in the correct place in the table, e.g. I * _ 0

* _ 0	* _ 1	* _ 2	* _ 3
AT <u>20</u>	AT <u>20</u>	AT <u>20</u>	AT <u>20</u>
NOTEQ 20 5	EQ 20 5	EQ 20 1	EQ 20 3
SYSMESS 70	SYSMESS 71	SYSMESS 72	SYSMESS 72
	SYSMESS 72	MES 11	MES 12
	MES 10		

Entry 0 will print SYSMESS 70 in loc'n 20 unless flag 20 is set to 5, whereupon SYSMESS 71 & 72 and MES 10 are printed. Note that we use MES rather than MESSAGE, as we do NOT want a NEWLINE under the location description. In addition to SYSMESS 70, the other entries will print the appropriate exit system and ordinary messages when flag 20 is equal to the values specified.

Movement up & down the stairway is done via two Response table entries, with a third to stop you going past the top level, thus:

UP *	DOWN *	UP *
AT 20	AT 20	AT 20
LT 20 5	GT 20 0	EQ 20 5
PLUS 20 1	MINUS 20 1	SYSMESS 7
DESC	DESC	DONE

As you can see, as you "walk up" the stairway, all that happens is that flag 20 is increased by 1 and the location redescribed. When 20 = 5, SYSMESS 7 will be printed if you try to go UP again. Going "down" is the same, but flag 20 is decreased by one, until it is 0, whereupon the movement table is scanned & we move to loc'n 19.

Movement N, E & W from the stairway is also done via Response, and the three entries needed are:

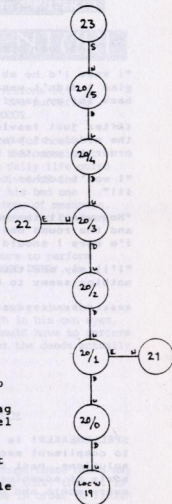
E *	W *	N *	W *
AT 20	AT 20	AT 20	AT 21
EQ 20 1	EQ 20 3	EQ 20 5	GOTO 20
GOTO 21	GOTO 22	GOTO 23	LET 20 1
DESC	DESC	DESC	DESC

Now, the fourth entry shown there would be needed if you could get to loc'n 21 by a route other than via the stairway from loc'n 19. This would apply to the other two exits as well. If you can enter the stairway on an upper level from somewhere else, flag 20 MUST be set to the value appropriate to the level you are entering it from!

The only drawback to this method is that you cannot DROP anything in location 20, as it would reappear as you walk up and down! In his "PAW Prints" article in issue 8 (Feb.'90) of "Adventure Coder", George March details a way around this, but it consumes a lot of memory, and you are better off simply not allowing the player to drop anything at all in location 20. Insert MESSAGE 13: "You think about dropping the , but decide not to.", and include this in the following Response table entry:

DROP *	The underline in message 13,
AT 20	combined with the WHATO in
WHATO	the entry, will print the
LT 51 255	name of the object you are
EQ 54 254	trying to drop.
MESSAGE 13	
DONE	

Well, that's all for this month. Next time I'll be dealing with a method of improving the presentation of your adventure. Bye until then!



FAMOUS ADVENTURING PHRASES

By TED BUGLER

"Not worth saving - I'm sure I can jump across this chasm!"

"I knew I'd be able to jump across the chasm without any trouble - glad I didn't waste time saving - now let me see, I'd better just go back for my lamp! Whoops!"

(After just leaving the room for a moment for personal reasons, in the middle of playing an adventure) - "Which plug did you pull out in order to use the hoover, dear?"

"I won't bother to write down the password just now, I shan't forget it!"

"Now was it the square button that I pressed to activate the teleport, and the round one that destroyed the world, or the other way round? I'm sure I should press the square one!"

"I'll say one thing for this game, it never crashes ... oh dear, nothing seems to be happening!"

*** SPELLBREAKER! ***

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

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Miser

Spectrum 48K/128K+2

ADVENTURE

Down through the years one man's name has conjured up great visions of cold-heartedness towards others and a flagrant disregard for the suffering of fellow human-beings that man's name was EBENEZER SCROOGE.

A lonely and solitary figure of a man, he dwelt in his uncared-for house surrounded by nothing more than memories and dust. With just the occasional cry of "Humbug!" to rent the silence, he went about his daily life quite unconcerned with the plight of others. That is, until the arrival of the ghostly form of his late partner JACOB MARLEY at the foot of his bed one dark and fateful morn. From then on, the man who was the epitome of meanness, was to undergo a change of character the likes of which was never to be seen again.

This is a 'lighthearted' tale of this man and of his endeavours to perform something that was contrary to his beliefs namely a 'GOOD DEED'. In fact not just ONE good deed, but TWELVE of them!!!

Return with us now to those 'thrilling days of yester-year' and relive the struggles of Scrooge as he sets about his task. A task, which in his own eyes, was almost impossible. After all it is bad enough that he should have to perform such deeds, but in order to do so he must first discover what the deeds actually are and then how to perform them!

Zenobi Software

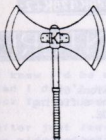
NOTES

To complete your task you must perform TWELVE good deeds, though these deeds may be performed in any order that you so wish. Once you have done this, then it is just a simple task of making your way to your nephew's house in order to finish the game.

To learn of each and every good deed that must be performed just read all the text carefully and question every person you encounter on your travels. To talk to such people merely input TALK TO THE BUTCHER or TALK TO THE SHOPKEEPER or TALK TO TIM and if they have something to discuss then they will allow themselves to be engaged in conversation.

This game will accept all the standard commands such as LOOK UNDER THE BED and CLIMB OVER THE FENCE as well as RAMSAVE and RAMLOAD ... use these last two to record a game position to memory, though always use the standard SAVE and LOAD to make a more permanent record to tape.

ADVENTURE



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THE AXE OF KOLT

Available for the Spectrum in
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In this latest adventure from the author of "Magnetic Moon" and "Starship Quest", you take on the persona of Alaric Blackmoon, a former mercenary swordsman, now a penniless wanderer, forced to either live off the land, or perform odd jobs in return for food and a place to sleep. One day he arrives in a small village called Hengemire, little knowing what adventures he is in store for!

His exploits will include avoiding death in a snow-filled mountain pass inhabited by the dreaded "Dwark", braving the perils of an evil-infested forest, searching a long-abandoned mine for a way back to the surface, and fighting his way by stealth or by strength through a castle full of the fearsome Xixon lizardmen! In between all this mayhem, Alaric finds himself helping ladies, both young and old, providing a meal for a very rude and very ugly dwarf, and going for a joyride in a rusty old mine wagon!

Alaric's ultimate aim is to find the lost tomb of the hero Kolt, wherein he will discover the legendary AXE OF KOLT. Once he has recovered the axe, he must somehow get it to the young King Kelson of Hecate, imprisoned in Domrell Castle, awaiting execution! Can Alaric Blackmoon achieve all this and save the kingdom of Hecate from the evil Xixon lizardmen? Play THE AXE OF KOLT and find out!

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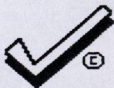
Both these adventures are available in 48k or 128k versions, price £2.50 each, or £4.50 if bought together.

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WEDNESDAY, September 15th, 1941

1941

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

Rain battered at the windows noisily.

DEAD END

A Nightmare waits for Philip Marlowe. Is Miles Dunbar's death the suicide the police believe it is? How much does his widow really know? One thing's for sure; if he doesn't enter the storm that grips Los Angeles - he'll never find out! Though if he does, he'd better be sure of himself - or he'll be dead!

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



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```
Interactive Technology
interactive fiction -- a
science fiction story.
Version 1.1
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The Plastic-Pavement beneath
your feet forms into a
east, west and north crossroads
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The entrance to Security-
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People push past you as they
rush off to their accomodation.
your ID card flashes green
faintly for a moment.
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A DARK SKY OVER PARADISE



(Top) Enter a frightening science fiction world.

(Bottom) A story of intrigue. Buy it now!

What a way to enter MoonBase! You've travelled from Earth at a moments notice for some unspecified task, and now here you are, being interrogated in one of the SecurityBlocks! But it seems there's a good reason; the bombings have the authorities worried - they're looking for the leaders of the terrorists. You'd better get on with your work, and keep out of trouble! But can you?

"... the plot ... is fascinating. The story keeps you guessing and bewildered at times ..." The Games Machine



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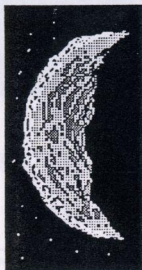
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Version required - Please
tick: Colour [], Mono []

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You are KORMIN, an elf of the kingdom of 'Blue Water' and the one chosen by Logryn to locate and retrieve the missing pendant. Not only was it priceless and more importantly a gift from his grandmother, but it was also rumoured to possess magical properties. Thus armed with only your trusty sword and with two gold pieces jingling in the pocket of your pants, you must set off into the world of humans where it is possible that you may just find the help necessary to locate the pendant. However take care just who you confide in as not all humans are 'honest' and especially keep watch for the dangerous creatures that roam the land of man.

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NOTES

Use the following commands to switch between the various 'settings' of the game.
 PICS ON ... Draws the location graphic every time you enter or redescribe the location
 PICS NORM . Draws the location graphic the first time you enter the location only.
 PICS OFF .. No location graphics are drawn.
 MODES 0 to 4 Will also affect the screen presentation, experiment to find one that suits.

This game will accept such complex commands as "GET THE SWORD, EXAMINE IT AND THEN KILL THE ORC", though the more usual verb/noun will suffice in most cases.

To talk to or converse with any characters you may encounter, simply use the following style ... SAY TO KHARIN "EXAMINE THE SCROLL" or SAY TO IMP "HELLO".

HELP

There are a number of built-in 'hints', so if you should wish help at any point simply input the word HELP and perhaps you may be lucky ... if not you can always try again at some other point in the game. Remember ... SEARCH and EXAMINE are NOT the same !!!!

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LETTERS



A shortish time ago, I enquired about how many Probe readers possessed a Modem and if they also used Prestel. The result was 2 replies from Prestel users, Vicky Jackson and Sue Medley, and one Modem owner, Terry Roberts, who has got one but hasn't got a clue how to use it. I should also mention Tony Walker but as he never mentions me, why should I? Also I knew all about Tony before I asked, seeing as how he guided my hand when I was learning this new science. Now is that it, or are there any more Modem user's out there in adventure land? (Would someone else please explain what a Modem is to the Grue, I couldn't cope with that task!) The reason I am asking is because I was considering writing an article based on an introduction to communications, for the lost adventurer. Now as it appears, I would only be preaching to the converted, then there doesn't seem a lot of point. Terry can always contact me with any queries and so can Mandy, when she finally persuades John to let her go "on-line".

If you fancy the idea of a Modem but don't wish to subscribe to Prestel, then there are several bulletin boards around that you can leave messages on and also download adventure solutions for free! With Mandy on-line I could transmit this letter to her in seconds rather than having to rely on the vagaries of the postal system. Do I sound like a Modem junkie? You betcha. I spend a lot of my time "on-line" these days. It has opened up a whole new world to me. I still haven't come to terms with the reality that I, tapping away at my keyboard in Welwyn Garden City, those self same words that are appearing on my screen (complete with spelling mistakes) are also appearing on the monitor of somebody else, perhaps in Aberdeen or Australia. Then instantly, their reply comes straight back. Modern Science? I love it!

As I said at the beginning, if anybody would like to know more then I would be delighted to write about it but if this sounds too futuristic, like mouse-driven musical adventures and there is no interest, then I will not bore you further on this subject. Please let Mandy know if you are interested. (That should kill it stone dead, eh Mandy?). For any new readers that missed my original letter, you can Mailbox me on Prestel Account No. 011156232. Just leave a message about anything!

BOB ADAMS, Welwyn Garden City, Herts

(Well I, for one, would be most interested to know more about Modems and the mysterious world of communications, Prestel and so forth. It's up to you folks, let me know what you think.....Mandy)

On the subject of piracy, I don't think the Infocom debate is that important, anyway. The Infocom warranty allows you to make copies of the game for personal use, and that should stretch to other similar computers. Although it would be wrong to buy a copy on an 8-bit computer and then obtain a pirated copy on a 16-bit machine, thereby getting an expanded game cheaply. What is important, is the swapping and selling of software by private individuals. Those games that aren't available any more, or are difficult to obtain, can be distributed in such a way. But software currently available should not be. A copy of a game that finds itself on that circuit is a lost sale for the publisher.

MARTYN WESTWOOD, Interactive Technology.

On the subject of piracy of games, I cannot condemn or condone anyone about this, but all those who say shocking! shocking! can they really, with hand on their hearts, say they have not got one single copy of a game or utility of some sort? If they say not then do they have a copying utility and if so WHAT DO THEY NEED IT FOR? COPYING, that's what so caught ya! Now one solution that I thought about is that the software companies seem to put a lot of effort into the packaging. Well, why not go a step further and do what most business software already do. You buy the disc/tape etc and can copy it as many times as you want but you have to buy the actual booklets for each user. So why not take a lead and sell the disc as PUBLIC DOMAIN say at £3.00 or £1.50 sending in a disc to the software firm and then charge say £5.00 per person for the book that goes with the game or utility with protection as in the NOVELLAS from Level 9. As a last word on this, no software company, be they large or small, will ever stop copying of their products or the protection being taken out, just as no amount of legislation by any government will stop the hardened hacker.

Now on to other matters, I have come across a batch of ORIGINAL Atari ST Infocom adventures and am wondering if it is worth trying to do a deal with the supplier. The titles are BALLYHOO, HOLLYWOOD HIJINX, LURKING HORROR, PLANETFALL, PLUNDERED HEARTS, SEASTALKER, SORCERER, SPELLBREAKER, STARCROSS, SUSPECT and WITNESS. If anyone is interested please write to the address below within one month of this being published in Probe or the deal could go amiss. There is a batch of around 330 games (11 titles) so if all is OK I will sell all 11 games for around £65.00 plus postage and packing and will send by registered post or each game at around £8.50 plus postage and packing. Do not send any money with your order as I will need to know what is wanted then buy in bulk then I will get in touch with you by telephone or letter to let prospective buyers know that all is well. If this deal comes off ok then I might be able to sort out one for the rest of the C64 titles and the Amiga ones too.

ALLAN PHILLIPS, 70 Campbell Drive, Gunthorpe, Peterborough, Cambs

=====

I was particularly interested to read the break-down of readership into age groups a couple of issues ago. I've always tended to think that computer users were mainly young, especially when used as entertainment, rather than home finances or whatever. Some people seem to think that if you play games on a computer it only means zapping aliens. Hopefully as more and more people start using computers they'll realise that they can provide stimulating entertainment. I'm sure many people who do puzzles, quizzes and crosswords would love adventure gaming. At least, when you're playing adventures you are using your brain, which is more than can be said for watching some of the programmes on TV.

PHIL GLOVER, Hall Green, Birmingham

=====

I have one small problem. You see, when I mortgaged my soul to buy my shiny new Amiga, wanting something with a bit more power than my battered old Speccy, I thought I'd be entering a bold new world with bigger, better, more atmospheric adventures than the old 8-bit standards. Well, OK, DUNGEON MASTER is so atmospheric it gave me nightmares, and, OK, the world of Infocom adventures was there for the taking after years of having to sneakily play them on the IBM PC at

work. But I get the distinct impression that when it comes to choice, adventure has an 8-bit flavour. We Amiga owners just don't have that profusion of cottage-industry adventures which Speccy owners can wallow in, courtesy of such products as Quill and PAW. To my knowledge, the only "cottage industry" adventures for the Amiga are the brilliant PD works of Jim MacBrayne. If the commercial games software companies continue to find traditional adventures insufficiently profitable, we're going to need more heroes like Jim. Otherwise it'll be the ludicrous situation of having to buy another Speccy in order to continue adventuring. Do you have any ideas as to why the DIY adventure genre is so poorly represented on the Amiga? After all, it's now outselling the ST, but there are more ST adventures advertised in your magazine. Oh, and if anyone is writing Amiga adventures and they need playtesters, I would happily offer my services!

PAUL VINCENT, Walsall, West Midlands.

(The main reason why there has not yet been a large number of "cottage industry" adventures for the Amiga is probably the lack of a good Adventure Creator Utility. Once one is available then there is sure to be plenty of adventures to keep Amiga owners happy. Many adventures written for the ST have been written with the aid of STAC and many are now being written with the aid of STOS. Now that the Amiga version called AMOS is available things should look up for you. Our Sandra Sharkey runs an extensive PD library for STOS and AMOS so if anyone would like to obtain a catalogue then send S.A.E. to Sandra Sharkey, 78 Merton Road, Hightfield, Wigan, Lancs, WN3 6AT.....Mandy)

It is a long time since I have written anything for Probe, the main reason as many of you will realise is the fact that I am so busy with running Spellbreaker! so much so that I have only played a couple of games in the last 15 months that the mag. has been going! I am really writing this letter to all those people out there who have yet to sample Spellbreaker! and I know there are many of you as I believe Probe has over 400 subscribers now, whereas Spellbreaker! has only around 130. Ok, I hear many of you say, well Probe has been going for a lot longer, true, but even Soothsayer is reputed to have had over 170 and it only lasted 11 months. I intended to replace Soothsayer as far as possible, and I think I have for the most part succeeded, although I have probably had more readable material, i.e. a short story, the occasional review and fewer maps.

It is true to say that Spellbreaker! does print full solutions, however, most of the full solutions done, have been for the shorter games, and any solution that covered more than a couple of pages was split up and serialised in two or three issues. I have just finished printing the solution to Maniac Mansion (Lucasfilm), and this one covered 6 issues. As I firmly believe in not giving too much away, especially for the newer games. Look at the glossies over the last few months, within days of games appearing they were running the full solutions, "FUTURE WARS" is one example I think I saw the full solution to this very expensive game in about three different magazines! "CHAOS STRIKES BACK" and "INDIANA JONES" are two others that spring to mind, and all within a couple of weeks of the games appearing in the shops! Over the last 15 issues I have covered (counting hints and solutions only) over 300 games, for all formats, that's an average of 20 games per issue, only Probe can boast similar figures, although possibly not quite as many. Meanwhile the national

glossy mags are dropping their adventure columns, C & VG is a prime example.

I was very disappointed with the response to the SPECIAL OFFER leaflet that Mandy kindly sent out for me a couple of months ago, out of the 400 that were sent, only 18 of you wrote back for a sample copy. I had hoped that by offering the magazine for only £1 (that's a third off!) including first class postage that I might have encouraged a few readers to try it for themselves. Mind you it is reckoned that if you receive a 5% response to any mailing campaign then you are doing well. However I don't think this "rule" should apply here as we adventurers are considered a different breed, we are considered ny many to be wierd, but are also considered friendly and thought to "stick together", I can tell you now that this may not be the case - too many of us are quite willing to cry out about how we adventurers are badly supported (by the major software houses in particular), and then sit back and not do anything about it.

This was one of the main reasons that I started Spellbreaker! I felt that if the other glossy mags weren't interested in supporting the adventuring community, then I certainly was, the other main reason was that I just couldn't wait a full month for the next issue of Probe to appear, and so Spellbreaker! was born. Ok, so I have probably just made you sit up and take notice with what I have said in that last paragraph, but I must admit to getting upset, annoyed even when I hear or read that people are wanting more hints and tips or maps whatever in Probe, or less of something else, when this is exactly what I supply in Spellbreaker!, bearing in mind of course that both magazines try to compliment each other - and they certainly don't compete! I can probably count on the fingers of one hand the number of times that material has been duplicated in mags, and talking about 15 issues.

Well I think I've gotten everything off my chest, I hope this letter makes sense, as all I am really trying to say is why not try Spellbreaker! for yourself (I can hear you saying "Why didn't he just say that right at the beginning?" - well what editor do you know who says what they mean in just a few lines when they can fill a page with waffle?!) All I can say to finish off this - that offer of a sample issue (the current one) still stands, just mention this letter when you write, and I'll send you one pronto. I need all the support I can get, without its readers Spellbreaker! cannot survive, other fanzine failures are testimony to that! So come on all you Probe readers help me out, remember I'm only here to put together a magazine for all adventurers, and I, like Mandy put you the reader first and foremost!

MIKE BRAILSFORD, Spellbreaker! 19 Napier Place, Glenrothes, Fife.

=====

Having just received Probe and the questionnaire from Larry Horsfield, I was delighted to know that he is arranging a Probe convention in September/October. I have sent a reply to him with one or two suggestions, as follows: A visitors book, with room for names, address, computer/s owned and perhaps a column for "remarks" i.e. "would like pen-friends", "can/need help with ?????", "have ????? for sale" etc. Or perhaps the "remarks" column might be better as a notice-board item, if a noticeboard was available. I thought it would be a good idea for all those attending to wear a name badge - these can be bought for a few pence from a stationer, or a bit of card on a safety pin would do! As Larry is planning an all-day event, the venue should be somewhere with a snack bar/cafe/restaurant reasonably handy. I would prefer that it was not a pub (although they do bar snacks) because most people will be driving, I expect. I hope other Probe

readers make suggestions, too - everyone then will have a really great day and hopefully, it will become an annual event.

JUNE ROWE, Launceston, Cornwall.

=====
Alan Davis' excellent article, THE PUZZLED ADVENTURER made me think back to my original attempts at adventures nearly ten years ago with a selection of Scot Adams on the University's mainframe. For the life of me I cannot remember the titles but recall that they involved pirates and Western ghost towns respectively. Initially whilst playing, I became engrossed in each game's atmosphere until BANG! I hit an unsolvable problem and consequently could not progress any further. Fascination quickly descended into frustration and finally boredom resulting in a prompt execution of the QUIT command. I suppose it was a shame to have given up so quickly because I was fortunate to have limited access to a mainframe at the time. The mainframe seemed to have "unlimited" memory and power in comparison to my humble unexpanded ZX81 and I thought that adventures were limited only to large mainframes. On my final visit to the Computer Laboratory I abused my privilege and explored the other types of computer contained elsewhere in the complex until eventually I discovered another adventure, the original by Crowther and Woods. Many hours ensued in a tranced state heightened by the tension of being discovered in a NO-GO AREA. The atmosphere generated was immense, Dragons and Trolls permeated my consciousness and even the v.d.u. contributed, radiating an eerie green glow. So it was with a shock when I was finally rumbled by someone in authority. The man was annoyed that I had disrupted the initial task of the computer but softened somewhat when he saw that I was playing ADVENTURE. His enthusiasm was evident as he rambled on, giving a short run down on the game being played and other similar adventures. (On reflection I am sure that he mentioned ZORK, a name hard to forget, in that context and this is an adventure I would dearly love to play!) Back home, I naively searched through borrowed ZX81 UK listings with the vain hope of discovering a mini "miracle" adventure, but to no avail!

McGILL GIBNEY, Hunts Cross, Liverpool.

=====
I am just writing with some tips for Amstrad adventurers (PCW & CPC 128). The first thing concerns unconfigured Infocom games. As everyone will know the dreaded Infocom's are supposed to run with an inverse video status line at the top providing the location and the score. However a lot of the earlier games and a few of the newer ones were often supplied in the generic CP/M format. This meant that they would run on a large number of machines but were not configured to any one in particular. The result of this is that many of the Amstrad games will play but without a status line. Infocom provided (sometimes!) a set of programs which would help the user configure the game if they fancied dabbling in machine code! Often they never even included these. For my sins, I have had a crack at it and am now fairly sure that I can configure most games to run with status lines on Amstrad PCW and 128 machines. I will be happy to help anyone that cares to give me a ring. Also if there is enough demand I could prepare a disc with programs to cover all the Infocom games prepared for Amstrad (would this be legal!) On another matter I noticed some correspondence some time back about format compatibility between

Amstrad PCW and 128. Readers might be pleased to know that there is a dainty little program called "PCW 9512 Rescue Kit" which allows a PCW 9512 to produce discs in PCW 8256 format (180K) as well as its own format (720K). In addition it can produce discs which can be read by a CPC or even a Spectrum +3. This means that a PCW 9512 owner can now write to discs which can be read by all Amstrad formats (all other things being equal!). The producing company is Three Inch Software (081-546-2754). It will set you back £9.95.

Finally a tip from 8000PLUS magazine for all PCW9512 Magnetic Scroll fiends. You will find to your horror that except for FISH and MYTH, the games will choke on a 9512. The reason is that the master disc is in A drive format with each side meant to be read separately. The programmers put files of the same name on each side of the disc so when both sides are read together by a back-up made on the 9512 it will get very confused as the 9512 reads both sides together on its own discs. There is fortunately an abundance of solutions.

1. Play the master disc. This will work as the 9512 will read each side of a 180K disc separately. Saves can be made in the usual way on a disc formatted on the 9512. Only problem is that if you ruin the master disc you've had it.

2. Copy the master on a friend's PCW 8000 A drive. This will produce an identical disc to the master and can be played as above.

3. Use the PCW 9512 Rescue Kit to produce a 180K copy of the master disc on the 9512 then proceed as above.

4. If you haven't got access to these weird and wonderful gizmos then an easy solution is to use the 9512 to copy each side of the master disc to two different discs. Then when the game tells you to turn the disc over, just swap discs.

Obviously as the 9512 is such a macho machine it will have bags of spare disc space on each disc which can be filled up with backups of other games (don't try to put two mag scrolls games on the discs as this will not work). Sorry for going on so long but I hope that some poor adventurer somewhere will find all this useful. I am very happy to explain a bit clearer to anyone who cares to contact me.

MARTIN LEVERTON, Manor Farm, Little Gidding, Huntingdon, Cambs, PE17 5RJ. Telephone 08323-393

=====

After finishing the second part of KARYSSIA on the Crash freebie I wrote to them to say how many adventurers there were and why didn't they do a few more reviews or regular features and then this month, lo and behold - an Adventure Special! A whole two page spread. Larry Horsfield was featured saying how he'd got into adventuring and the Editor enclosed a copy of Confidential with his reply in case it was of any use to me and there was an interesting article by Linda Wright as to why she'd left off writing adventures and was now into PBM's. So that gave me another view to add to my growing knowledge of adventures. Some of the articles in Probe are rivetting. Personally, I would like to know just how many people, like myself, updated to a 128K Spectrum to find they had a +2A on their hands. I think it very cavalier of Amstrad to dump machines like this onto unsuspecting buyers and if I'd known about it beforehand I wouldn't have bothered. It's just eaten my copy of AGATHA'S FOLLY. To say I'm not amused would be putting it lightly! I suggest we all join forces and complain. I'm thinking of having my 48K Spectrum repaired.

SHEILA SIMPSON, Redcar, Cleveland.

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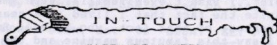
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Sincere thanks to GRAHAM WHEELER for his very kind words about my
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A big thank you to all who sent congratulations messages on the new
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I would like to say a big thank you to JIM STRUTHERS and to ROGER
DOWDALL for their kind help when I was stuck in Golden Mask. I
couldn't have completed it without their help.....SHARON HARWOOD

A big thank you to JOAN PANCOTT HPilg. HAnt. for providing the sort of
help that only adventurers can provide. A curled up cheese sandwich
has never tasted so good!.....DAVE HAVARD



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THE ADVENTURE THAT GOT ME HOOKED

by ANN POTTER



It was a sunny Saturday afternoon in the August of '83 when, accompanied by a bored husband and an equally bored daughter, I was wandering through town and happened to bump into some friends who very proudly informed us that they had just been to buy a computer. "Oh, very nice," said I politely, secretly thinking - well I won't tell you what I was secretly thinking. Suffice it to say, I wasn't too impressed. I didn't even know what a computer was never mind what you were supposed to do with one.

It was a couple of weeks later when we were invited round to the house of the afore-mentioned friends, that I finally discovered what a computer looked like and some of what you were able to do with it. You see, having led a very sheltered life up to that point, I wasn't even familiar with Amusement Arcades and that, despite the fact that I lived in a seaside town (or maybe it was because of that fact, who knows). So, you can imagine when I saw this fabulous machine and the wonderful games that came free with it.....yes, you've guessed it straight down to the shop to buy one! And what was this fab machine? None other than a VIC-20 together with 4 free games. Wow! Well, I didn't know what 3.5K meant did I. Neither did I know anything about software or how little was available for the VIC. Anyway, this is all beside the point, let's get on to the object of the exercise.

Having recommended my new toy to all and sundry, another friend of mine had bought one for her husband so that he could do his business accounts on it. Ha! Ha! how often have we heard that one! Then came his birthday and some inspired person bought him a game for his computer. I was told all about this game - "It's all writing, no pictures and you just type commands in so that you can move around from place to place. It's really good, fairly makes you think." This all sounded very mystifying so round I went, loaded it up and typed in my first command, probably something like "GO NORTH". Well, that was it - not a peep out of me for the rest of the afternoon. I didn't get very far but I couldn't have cared less, I was in another world. I never ever did finish that game even when I took it home to try. Mind you, what a game to start your adventuring career with - Mission Impossible from the Scott Adams stable!

Needless to say, the VIC was soon given the old heave-ho and was replaced by a 48K Spectrum for which there were, and indeed still are, countless adventures written. Still, there's never anything quite like the first is there and yes, I am still talking about adventures!!

***** NOMINATIONS

Nominations are now being accepted for a FROB of the YEAR award at the forthcoming Probe convention. To remind you, a FROB is someone who has done or tried to do something really dast in an Infocom Adventure, possibly with fatal consequences or forcing the player to start the game from the beginning again. You can nominate yourself or an unsuspecting friend (or enemy). Please send nominations to The Grue! as soon as possible. Rumour has it that The Grue! might appear in person to present the award!!!



GETTING YOU STARTED

HAMMER OF GRIMMOLD

By GRAHAM WHEELER played on Atari ST

From the start: E, NE, E, EXAMINE WOODSMAN, SAY GRIMMOLD (he tells you to find his sharpening stone and he will give you an axe), W, N, IN, SIT DOWN, EXAMINE LANDLORD, SAY GRIMMOLD (he tells you Troll dust will help you defeat Vaik), EXAMINE TABLE, READ MESSAGE (it is a clue about gigantic orcs liking diamonds), STAND UP, OUT, N, N, N, STEADY TRAVELLER, LOOK, GET CORKSCREW, S, S, EXAMINE STONES, KICK STONES, GET COIN, E, NE, E, UP, EXAMINE TREE, ENTER TREE, GET CROWBAR, LEAVE TREE, D, W, MOVE ROCK (with crowbar), IN, EXAMINE BEGGAR, SAY GRIMMOLD, PUT COIN IN CUP (he gives you a strength pill), OUT.....

DOMES OF SHA

By GRAHAM WHEELER played on Atari ST

From the start: DOWN, DOWN, SAY TO GRUNT GET PAPER, GET PAPER (from Grunt), READ SCROLL, SOUTHWEST, SAY TO GRUNT GET OBJECT, GET OBJECT (from Grunt), EXAMINE OBJECT (Icehawks egg), SOUTHEAST, IN (Kroll gives you a Cube), NORTHWEST, UP, CLIMB YANDEE, GET SUNOWLS EGG, PUT ICEHAWKS EGG IN NEST, DOWN (mother Snowl sees her egg seems to be still in the nest and flies away), CLIMB YANDEE, GET ICEHAWKS EGG, DOWN, DOWN, SOUTHEAST, NORTHEAST, PUSH BUTTON (on cube and the door crumbles), IN, DOWN, NORTHWEST, NORTHWEST, NORTHWEST, NORTHEAST, JUMP IN BUCKET, UP, GET BLADE, DOWN, JUMP ON CLIFF, SOUTHWEST, SOUTHEAST, SOUTHEAST, SOUTHEAST, UP, OUT, SOUTHWEST, UP, CLIMB YANDEE, CUT VINE, DOWN.....

THE CHALLENGE

By GRAHAM WHEELER played on Atari ST

EAST, NORTH, IN, GET FLINT (you are told you must bring the Flint Maker a flaky stone before you can have the flint), OUT, EAST, NORTH, NORTH, WEST, SEARCH REEDS, GET FLAKY STONE, EAST, SOUTH, SOUTH, WEST, IN (Flint Maker takes the stone and gives you a flint), OUT, EAST, NORTH, NORTH, NORTH, EAST (you hear a noise), HIDE (you enter a shelter), GET TORCH, WAIT (you see Packeo hide something in the stump), OUT, EXAMINE STUMP, GET AXE, GET SACK, EXAMINE SACK (it contains an apple), NORTH, SEARCH ASHES (you find and get a hook), WEST, WEST, SEARCH BUSHES (you find and get a lion skin), SOUTH, SEARCH LEAVES (you find and get a brass key), SOUTH, EAST, SOUTH, SOUTH, SOUTH, SOUTH, UNLOCK DOOR, IN, GET RAFT, OUT.....

FROM OUT OF A DARK NIGHT SKY

By CLAIRE DYARD played on Spectrum

Soon after the beginning of the game, the small bridge is hit by an object. It will burn so you have to extinguish the fire... and quickly. So, in the car, FEEL DASHBOARD twice, GET KEYS and PULL HANDLE then OUT. After that it is a question of correct mapping and timing; enter the ditch, search the ditch and get the bucket, throw it on the road where you will retrieve it later then jump on the bank (where the willows are). Get the bucket, find a hole in the hedge, (this is situated at the south end of the hedge where you find a sign, remove the nails from the sign to make a way through...Mandy), find the standpipe and fill the bucket. It drips but if you are quick you can extinguish the fire so don't waste any time!.....

THE GORDELLO INCIDENT Part Two
BY LURNA PATERSON

Movement of the two clones is determined by giving a command to whichever clone you are controlling, who will move first and then the other clone will make his move. Commands given to Clone AB will be carried out exactly as given but Clone BA will do the opposite, wherever possible.

Items which must be stolen from the various characters in the game when the opportunity arises are: DISC, PAPER, CARD.

MOVEMENT HINTS

AB - get the codeword for the lights, use the computer to lower the drawbridge and turn on the lights, collect the cue, go to the south bank of the moat.

BA - get the codeword for the lights, use the computer, go to the courtyard.

AB - insert card in the slot, go to the boiler room, type first number on keypad, go to the sick bay, type second number on keypad, go into the cell area, go through the gymnasium into the shower room, get the key from the box, go into the north-easterly cell.

BA - as AB but also collect the cue from the rest room and stop at the shower room before taking the key.

PRECISION FINISH to get both clones into the Clonotron at the same time.

AB - from the cell, W, N, N, REMOVE JACKET, N, N, N, W, DROP KEY, W to the library.

BA - from the shower room, S, S, S, S, S, WEAR JACKET, S, S, E, S, GET KEY, S to the Clonotron entrance.

AB is now in the computer room, BA is at the Clonotron entrance.

AB - N, LOCK DOOR, DROP KEY, S, E, UNLOCK DOOR, E, E, GET PASS, N, W, W, W, DROP PASS. You must now wait until someone enters the Admin. office and takes the pass, STEAL PASS.

If AB runs east with the pass - W, S, W, E, N, E to Clonotron.

If AB runs south with the pass - W, S, E, N, E to Clonotron.

GENERAL HINTS

Open the door twice to learn a codeword.
Wear a white coat in the sick bay and a blue jacket in the prison.
Wait in the boiler room for information to appear on the paper.
Visit the sick bay for help with a second number.
Tie the rope to keep the door to the shower room open.
Throw the bag to raise the water level in the tank.
Poke the box with the cue to get it off the shelf.

AGATHA'S FOLLY - PART 1 (SPECTRUM 48K)

OBJECTS AND USES - BY ALF BALDWIN



NOTEPAD	Notes on meeting with Kaz.
JOURNAL	Information about folly.
BOAT	Rather dinghy to cross lake.
BELLOWS	To inflate dinghy.
CHAIR	When broken, pieces tied together with string make rough oars.
KEYRING	House and car keys.
SPONGE	Wet it and soak wallpaper in small bedroom.
FLAT ROCK	Scrape off top layer of wallpaper in small bedroom.
SAMPLER & SCRIBBLES	Clues to help you construct alien alphabet.
BED	Stand on it to examine beam in alcove.
PARCHMENT	Certificate of membership of F.I.T.
FLASK	Contains hot coffee.
FEATHER DUSTER	Dust cobwebs in pantry.
HAIRGRIP	Use it to pick padlock on door to store room in mill.
CARDBOARD BOX	Tear it into strips and use them to push out the hairgrip when it falls into gap between wall and sink.
HOUSE DETAILS	Estate Agent's blurb. Mentions generator for lighting.
GATEPOST	Use as lever to start generator.
SAW	Hacksaw to cut off gatepost.
TROWEL	Use it to dig away the leaves in the folly.
SWAN	Feeding it with the bread doesn't help. Bypass it by going through gap in bushes.
STREAM	Clear debris to make it flow and turn waterwheel.
LARGE KEY	Brought in envelope by Estate Agent. Unlocks door to cell.
SWITCH	Switches on light in cellar.
STOOL	Stand on it to reach loft door to attic.
RAFTERS	Examine them to find some string.
CHEST	Feel it to find hidden switch.
BOOK	All about stone circles.
PHOTO	Of Kaz.
PICTURE	Shows stone tower. Symbols on back give name of planet.
FOLLY	Dig away leaves with trowel to reveal mosaic floor.
MOSAIC FLOOR	Stand on crystal and wait for full moon. Then say words on the back of the picture.

HINTS AND TIPS

CASTLE MASTER

By DAVE HAVARD played on Amstrad CPC6128

To enter the castle, throw rock at doorplate.

To escape from stairwell, the first thing to do in the castle is go to the Lobby and get the key from the table.

To enter the Smithy, look behind the stable building to find door.

To get to the chapel roof, stand on drawbridge and throw rock at doorplate.

Throw rock at the flag to release spirit then throw rock at spirit.

Action the crossbar of the box at far end of pool to empty water. In the kitchen, crawl under cauldron in fireplace and keep going to enter the larder.

To WALK into the catacombs, go down the stairwell. The septs down are oposite the passage to the Hospital.

To enter Dragon's Hoard, action top left book in the Library.

Don't touch the saw in the Carpenters room - it's sharp!

To get more strength, eat any food lying around or action the large potion bottle in the Stores. The stores can be found off from the Carpenter's. The potion bottle seems to be limitless.

(If you drink the other potion, found in the Guardroom, you will save oodles of time as you just need to aim a rock at a door to pass through it - no more walking down long corridors and you can really get around fast. Even aiming at a door on a higher floor will save you climbing the stairs.....Mandy)

AGATHA'S FOLLY PT 2

By SHARON HARWOOD played on Spectrum

Drinking the water makes you feel better.

Wrap your hand with the scarf, before picking up the shards.

Drop the nuts in the passage before pulling the staactite!

Put your hand in the crevice to find a secret room.

Crush the berries in the shell to make ink.

THE BEAST

By SHARON HARWOOD played on Spectrum



Give the letter to the editor!

Make sure you don't miss the bus

Help the reverend!

Ask the waitress about tea.

Shout at the doctor, he's deaf!!!



MINDFIGHTER

By TONY KINGSMILL played on Amstrad CPC

Get the gas mask and jerry can (from the remains of the shelter in the Civic Centre).

Wear the gas mask in the industrial area.

Break the cob webs to reveal something.

Give the dead dog to the foxes.

Collect the Snowstorm and give it to Daryl.

THE ISLAND (KEN BOND)

By TONY KINGSMILL played on Amstrad CPC

From the start the following can be found:

Go Down and Forward to find A BIRD CAGE. Go Port to find A DINGHY. Go Down, Aft, Aft, Starboard to find A CAN. Go Down, Aft and Starboard to find A CARD. Go Down, Port, Look under clothes and GET BELT. Go Down, Aft, Aft, Aft, Look under junk and lift junk to find A MOTOR. Open cage to free parrot and it will fly onto your shoulder.

THE BARDS TALE

By TONY KINGSMILL played on Amstrad CPC

Don't equip the monk with a weapon, he fights better without one.

Say TARJAN to enter the catacombs.

Drink the wine to enter the cellars.

Let the Bard sit on the Throne in the castle.

As soon as a wand is found, equip a spall-caster with it to create special characters. The best special characters are Old Men and Greater Demons.

THE ADVENTURER

By GRAHAM WHEELER played on Atari ST

To get the barrel: when the men fight in the Inn, go WEST, GET BARREL, NW, THROW BARREL OVER FENCE. You may then just collect it later without the Innkeeper taking it back and throwing you out.

To enter the Farmhouse: OPEN DOOR (to chicken coop), HIDE (the farmers wife comes out of the house), SOUTH, WEST, OPEN DOOR, IN.

To get the Finger Nail: GIVE EGGS (to crow), INVENTORY (she has given you a crook and at the same time one of her nails break and she throws it outside), OUT, GET NAIL.

DOMES OF SHA

By GRAHAM WHEELER played on Atari ST

To clean up Grunt: EXAMINE SHELF (in storeroom), GET SACK, W, EXAMINE BEAM (Grunt falls down a hole), E, E, NW, D, D, S, EXAMINE SKIN (the skin you are wearing has a thread loose), PULL THREAD, EXAMINE SACK, INFLATE SACK, TIE THREAD TO PROTRUSION, LAUNCH SACK, JUMP ON SACK, W, W, W, (Grunt is in the water), GET GRUNT (he is now clean), E (you float back to the shore).

To get a vine: (at cliff top) JUMP IN BUCKET, UP, GET BLADE, DOWN, JUMP ON CLIFF, SW, SE, SE, SE, UP, OUT, SW, UP, CLIMB YANDEE, CUT VINE (with blade), DOWN.

THE PAWNS OF WAR

By ALF BALDWIN played on Spectrum

Get the rope from the jeep and leave quickly before it blows up!

Climb over the fence and get the hubcap.

Tie the rope to the parapet of the bridge, lower it and climb down.

Jump to the bank from the shallower part of the river.

Search the railings on the cliff top for a loose piece of wire.

Kill the soldier guarding hut with knife. Strip uniform and wear it.

Turn the wheel in the hut to bring up the cable car.

Search seats in cable car for a blank pass. Press button to start it.

When cable car stops, climb out of window onto the roof.

Bend the wire into a hook and slide down the cable.

Enter the cubbyhole and get the hand grenade.

HOUND OF SHADOW

By THE GRUE! played on Amiga

Sept 19th: Go to seance, help Lady Saunders.

Sept 20th: Meet friend for a meal, ask him about the woman.

Sept 21st: Go to museum and meet your friend. Go to 49A Museum Street, ask about Mr Talbot, leave your card. Go to museum, go to Admissions office, fill in form, go to reading room, read about Hecate, Hound, Hound of Annwyn and Barguest. Get Chambers, read page 229. Get the Everyday book, read about Blythburgh.

Sept 22nd: Write letter to museum (to get library ticket). Go with woman to see Harry Pelham. Go to 49A Museum St, ask about Mr Talbot. Read the address. Go to 34B Dean St, open side door. Examine seal on letter.

Sept 23rd: Go to 49A Museum St, show note to Mr Marcus, explain about Harry Pelham. Go to your fiat and collect your mail. Go to Museum, go to admission office and present letter to clerk. Go to Harry Pelham, help Harry Pelham, give first aid.

ULTIMA IV

By RON RAINBIRD played on Atari 800 XL

From the Altar Room of Dungeon Deceit, entrance may be made into Dungeons Shame and Hythloth.

From the Alter Room of Dungeon Destard, entrance may be made into Dungeon Covetous, as well as those mentioned above.

Visit the Guild Shop in Vespers and Buccaneers' Den, where you may purchase Skeleton Keys, Magic Gems and, providing you ask to see item D, a Sextant. This latter is a must.

To speed travel, horses may be purchased at the village of Paws.

The Dungeon Shame is at the end of the Lost River.

Dungeon Deceit it by Dagger Island.

From the Castle, it is rumoured, there is a secret entrance into Dungeon Hythloth.

Find Sloven, who lives near Lock Lake.

Mentorian knows the Gate Travel Spell. He lives in a hidden village on Lock Lake, which can only be reached by ship.

The Mandrake Root is found in the Fens of the Dead and the Bloody Plains, where the ground is always damp.

The Book of Truth is in the Library of the Lyceum in Verity Isle - but it is not filed in alphabetical order!

The Dungeon Covetous is on the Eastern Shore of Lost Hope Bay.

Ask for the Skull in the Buccaneer's Den.

The Smith names Zircon in Minoc knows of the Mystic Arms which are needed for the final battle in the Abyss.

SHARD OF INOVAR

By AMANDA OLIVER played on Commodore 64

If you are stuck in the pit, blow the Kalcut knife.

Beside pool: examine pool, examine shrubbery, throw amulet in pool.

When you are by the stone needle: First kill Chograk, break Telavark, Place the inovar into the stone needle to free Kiron. Invoke release when you are alone with Kiron.

In Mantieon you must examine Dusty once you have the plant from pond then after that go N, N, E, E, Use Vial of Equat, N.

Place inovar on the chest of Kiron.

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SERIALISED SOLUTIONS

LANCELOT - LEVEL 9

By THE WAYFARER

PART ONE

GAME ONE. A short game which has the sole object of getting Lancelot to the Royal presence and having him knighted by Arthur. From the start position go E to a ford, where a Black knight challenges you to fight. **ATTACK KNIGHT** and keep **ATTACKING** until the knight yields. Accept his surrender and discover that it is King Arthur in disguise. He invites you to Camelot where he will make you a probationary knight of the Round Table. You have scored 20 points.

Go E, E, E, E to the Serf's Gate of the castle, where you meet Sir Kay (and gain 10 points). He tells you to go and sleep in the Mews, but if you do you will arrive at the Royal Presence in such a filthy state that the king will refuse to knight you. Rather **GO TO MERLIN** and the game will take you there. You will arrive on a road which has giant plants growing beside it, an entry is to the N. N and you are on stairs, U and you are at the top in Merlin's study. Here you meet Merlin and get 10 points. Exits are to the N (the guest room), and E to the library which contains some interesting books giving hints to the game. You have scored 10 points for entering the library and a further 20 for reading all the books. The books tell you, (i) A selection of well-known pieces for the Harp, (ii) The sound of the horn can be heard in the distance, (iii) A knight is always true to his lady, (iv) The Legends of wounded king Pelham in the marsh, (v) Turquin's prison cannot be entered by one knight alone, (vi) Only a knight free of sin shall reach the Grail, (vii) The key to the key is cancellation and much help, (viii) Elaine is cursed yet blessed, for she will bear the best of knights, (ix) Orkney shrubs can hold a multitude, (x) Arthur's missing knights are found in 9 places.

GO TO ARTHUR and you will be taken to the castle. From the lawns by the castle, N and you are in the castle at the round table. N and you are in the throne room. **KING, KNIGHT ME.** Arthur knights you and you are sent out on a quest to rescue his knights and prove yourself worthy. You have scored 10 for entering the castle door and a further 10 for being knighted. Before setting off to game 2 explore the rest of game 1 for mapping purposes. Note that you cannot take the gold out of the offertory bowl, and that where you find the Damsel who is picking flowers you will find archers when you return. At this moment you cannot enter castle Meliagaunt, so not its location only.

GAME TWO. From the market square, go N, N, at which point game 2 will load automatically. N again and you are at a crossroads where a damsel asks you to help to break the siege at castle Lyonesse. **GO TO CASTLE LYONESSE** and the game takes you to it stopping at various places. The first place is Turquin's manor, where you are invited to fight but decline (remembering the book reference) and are called a coward by the lady for your pains. N, N and you are at a main road by a tree. A lady is begging you to rescue her hawk which is trapped by its lynes in the top of the tree. U, U and you have reached the hawk. **UNTIE LUNES** and the hawk bites you for your trouble. D, D and you are at the foot of the tree where the lady looks ashamed and her husband tries to take advantage of your undress (your armour was removed to climb the tree) to attack you. A piece of dead wood is to hand, so **GET WOOD.** **THROW WOOD AT KNIGHT** which kills him immediately. You have scored 20 points.

N and you are in the Black lands, where a black knight invites you to fight. ATTACK KNIGHT and keep ATTACKING until he is defeated. N, to the Leafy lands where a green knight invites you to fight. ATTACK KNIGHT and keep ATTACKING until he is defeated. N and you are at the Red lands, where a Red knight challenges you to fight. ATTACK KNIGHT and keep ATTACKING until he is defeated. Unlike the last two, who have departed for Camelot, this knight will help you on your quest. You have gained 10 points for defeating the green knight, 20 for the red knight, but none for the black knight. N and you are at castle Lyonesse, where an army has laid siege. A horn hangs here. TAKE HORN, BLOW HORN and the army realises who has challenged them and gives up. IN and you meet the Lady of Lyonesse, who expresses her gratitude by allowing her daughter to accompany you (with this lady's acid remarks this is no thanks at all). GO TO MAIN ROAD and the game takes you there, S and you are at a country junction. E, N, E, S, E, E and you are outside the ruined manor of Sir Meliot. IN and you find him and his lady. You are told that only a piece of the cloth from witch who cursed him can effect a cure, so S, S, S, S, S to the inside of a chapel where a witch warns you that you are in danger. Ignore the witch, who vanishes when you go S to the inner chapel. TAKE CLOTH, FIND SIR MELIOT and you have saved him and scored 40 points.

GO TO CROSS ROADS and then N, N, N, N, N to a glen in the Orkneys. There are bushes here, remember the book? U, U and you find yourself at a beacon. HIDE IN BUSHES. RED KNIGHT, GO U, U AND THEN LIGHT BEACON. WAIT, A, A and when the beacon is lit the sentry goes to see what is happening. W, W and you are in the Broch (scoring 10 points), D and you are in the basement at the foot of the stairs. UNBOLT DOOR (scoring 20 points), E and you find Sir Lamorak. LAMORAK, FOLLOW ME. W, LAMORAK, WAIT THEN PUSH TRUNK. PUSH TRUNK. D, E, NW and you are outside the Broch where the red knight joins you. E and you are back in the Glen. GO TO ROMAN ROAD and when you arrive, W, W, W, W and you are at the turret. You are attacked by an invisible enemy when you go IN, so to nullify his advantage CLOSE SHUTTERS and ATTACK UNSEEN ENEMY until he is dead. Score is 10 points. OUT, W, W, N, E, E, E, N, N and you are at Walling castle where Sir Pedivere is held captive by Breunis. ATTACK BREUNIS and keep ATTACKING until you have killed the captor. PEDIVERE, FOLLOW ME. You have scored 30 points for rescuing Sir Pedivere.

GO TO MARSH ROAD, where you GIVE HORN TO PEDIVERE. PEDIVERE, WAIT THEN BLOW HORN. N to a point where further travel is shrouded in mist. WAIT until the horn sounds, whereupon you can see your way. N, N, IN and you find yourself in the castle of Sir Pelham, who tells you a tale of the Grail. You have scored 10 points. GO TO MARSH ROAD, E, E, E, E and you have arrived at some briars. These grow back as fast as they are cut. LAMORAK, WAIT 2 THEN CUT BRIERS. PEDIVERE, WAIT THEN CUT BRIERS. CUT BRIERS and you have a way through. N and you find that you are under an apple tree outside castle Chariot with four Queens, who are insisting that you choose one of them as a lover. WAIT until they get angry and throw you in a cell. When the maiden comes. TAKE FOOD but do not eat it. When the Queen comes, TAKE WINE but do not drink it. When the maiden returns, GIVE WINE TO MAID who drinks it and falls in love with you. She leaves the door open, go W, N into a cell where is Sir Gawain. GAWAIN, FOLLOW ME, S, S and you are once again by the apple tree. S and you are back on the road having scored 10 points for cutting the briars and 20 for getting out of the dungeon.

To be continued.....

SERIALIZED SOLUTIONS

KINGS QUEST I - SIERRA ON-LINE

By JOHN K. BARNESLEY played on Atari ST

King Edward's domain has been ravaged. Through trickery, three of the King's items of power have been stolen from him. The kingdom lies in ruin. Its downfall is imminent. It is up to you, Sir Graham, to recover the King's treasures. Succeed and you shall be crowned King of Daventry! Fail and the worst of fates shall befall you. One word of caution before you start: Never drop anything until you're told to do so. Once an item is dropped in this game, you cannot pick it up again. For some reason, you're never weighed down by too many items; so you should be able to pick up and carry every item with you at all times. Also, in order to get maximum points, you must pick up everything you can and look at it, read it, or whatever is required.

Begin your quest by going northwest to the garden. Once there, pick a carrot and go west to the other side of the garden, south to the left of the castle and west to the rock. Stand on the north side of the rock and move it. Doing so reveals a dark hole. Look in the hole and then get the dagger. Then go west and swim across the pond (both screens). Once out of the pond, go north to the well and west to the gate in the corral. Open the gate and enter the corral. When you see a goat, show it the carrot. Now he'll follow you wherever you go. This is important as you'll soon see. Exit the corral and head west twice. You may or may not see a fairy godmother handing out blessings. If you do see her, she'll give you a short lived protective spell. If you don't see her, no problem. She'll pop up every now and then.

Now go north to the clover patch and get a clover. This is a four-leaf clover and will protect you from Leprechauns if the need arises. Go north to the wooden bridge. (Goat still with you?). As you start to cross the bridge, an ugly troll bars the way and refuses to let you pass unless you throw him a treasure. However, your goat, which hates trolls, rushes the troll and butts him off the bridge! The troll is swept downriver, never to be seen again. The goat, having fulfilled its use, strolls away. So wave goodbye and cross the bridge and continue north. You've found a chortety old gnome and when you talk to him, he informs you that he has something to give you that might be useful ... but only if you can guess his name! The crusty old fellow gives you three chances. Type "IFNKOVHGROGHPRM" and the gnome, in amazement, says "That's right!" and leaves a handful of magic beans laying on the ground. (The gnome's name, by the way, is a cryptogram. The alphabet's been reversed and the new letter set has been substituted for "Rumplestiltskin!".

Get the beans and go east to another wooden bridge. Be careful you don't fall in the gorge! Cross the bridge and go east to the flower patch. Plant the beans here and all of a sudden, a huge beanstalk stretches up out of sight into the clouds! Don't climb it yet, though. Go east and swim east across the lake. When you exit the lake, continue east. Look in the hole in the big rock as you pass ... what an odd green glowing! Go east again. A little dwarf may come and make a quick inspection of your possessions to see if there's anything of value. You don't have anything of note and he leaves. No go east once more to the little beach by the river. Get the pebbles you see laying here and then go west back to the beanstalk. (CAUTION! Save your game here. Climbing the beanstalk is a risky business and you'll most certainly fall off it many times before you reach the top!).

Climb the beanstalk until it enters the clouds. Leave the beanstalk by going east into the clouds and continue east until you enter an area of trees. When you reach the first set of trees, head south then east twice until you come to a tree with a hole in its base. Look in the hole and get the sling. Go back west twice to the fruit tree then north. Now this is a bit tricky. There is a tree on the upper right edge of the screen that you should go to before you go east to the next screen. This area will give you the most amount of time to evade the giant before he kills you!

Go east - there he is! Go as quickly as you can and hide behind the centre tree. Make sure Graham is completely hidden behind the tree. Now just wait there. Eventually, the Giant will become tired and lie down under the tree and go to sleep. Now's your chance...!! The chest he's carrying is King Edward's Magic Chest! Get it and head west back to the beanstalk. Make sure you walk in the right places or you'll fall out of the clouds. (It would be a good idea to save your game before you descend). Go back down the beanstalk and head south three times then east to the well. Stand on the north side of the well and cut the rope. Cutting the rope gets the bucket for you. Now lower the rope into the well and climb down the rope. When you get to the end of your rope (so to speak!), dive under the water and head southwest into the hole. Careful not to become tangled in the weeds!

When you exit the hole, you're face to face with a fire-breathing dragon! Stay in the middle of your screen and go only as far as the second rock. Throw water on the dragon's fire and he's vanquished! In fact, he's so embarrassed that he moves a boulder blocking the western exit from the cave and skulks away! On the northern side of the cave is the Kings Magic Mirror! Take the mirror and leave the cave by going west twice. Outside the cave, you see a large, friendly bird flying back and forth. We'll get to him later, though, so head south twice to the stump. Look in the stump and you see an old canvas pouch. Get the pouch and look inside it. When you do so, you see it is filled with sparkling diamonds! Go east and swim east across the lake twice, then continue east to where you found the dagger and north to the big tree. Climb the tree and go to the nest. Cradled in the nest is a large golden egg! Get the egg and climb back down the tree and go north twice to the tree.

Lying on the ground under the tree are walnuts. Get a walnut and open it. On the inside you find a solid gold walnut! Go east and get the bowl you see, then go south. Running around the banks of the lake is a friendly little elf. Talk to the elf and he's so impressed by your manners that he gives you a magic ring! Wearing it will make you invisible - but only once! So save it until you need it! Go north, east twice and north twice to the back of the woodcutter's house. Now go west and enter the front door. Inside you see a deplorable sight. A starving woodcutter and his wife sit dejectedly at an empty table. Too bad you can't help them... say perhaps that bowl? Look at the bowl and you see the word **FILL** written on its bottom. Give the bowl to the woodcutter. He looks at you wondering why you'd give him an empty bowl. Say "FILL" and the simple ceramic bowl fills to the brim with hot stew! For this precious gift (an unending supply of food!), the woodcutter gives you his only other possession, an old fiddle lying in the corner. Get the fiddle - (careful you don't fall through the floor!) - and leave the cottage.

To be continued.....



HELPLINE

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 1.PM TO 10PM	Amstrad.
ISLA DONALDSON	041 9540802	SUN TO SAT NOON TO 12PM	Amstrad.
NIC RUMSEY	03212 2737	MON TO FRI 8PM TO 9PM	Various.
BARBARA BASSINGTHWAIGHTE	0935 26174	SUN TO SAT 10AM TO 10PM	BBC.
BARBARA GIBB	051 7226731	ANY EVENING FROM 7PM	BBC.
DAVE BARKER	071 7321513	MON TO FRI 7PM TO 10PM	Various.
STUART WHYTE	061 9804645	ANY REASONABLE TIME	Amstrad.
ROBIN MATTHEWS	0222 569115 OR 0642 781073		IBM PC EVENINGS AND WEEKENDS

• • • THE ULTIMATE INFOCOM HELPLINE • • •

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

ADVENTURE PROBE

If you need to contact Probe please telephone 0492 77305. I will be available at all reasonable times any day apart from Sunday, but please try to telephone between 10am and 10pm. If you are telephoning for help on an adventure then please try to phone during the day as the solutions are on hand during that time. But please try the helpliners for help first as above.

PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT YOU ONLY RING AT THE TIMES SHOWN



ADVENTURES

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