

Vol. 4

Issue 12

Adventure Probe

\$1.50

Dec
'90



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All back issues are still available from issue 1 (June 1986). There are 18 issues in Vol 1. Vol II started Jan 1988. Subsequent volumes begin each January (12 issues each). Prices as above.

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DISTRIBUTION

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 (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

Please send all correspondence, subscriptions etc to the Editor: MANDY RODRIGUES, ADVENTURE PROBE, 67 LLOYD STREET, LLANDUDNO, GWYNEDD, LL30 2YP. If writing from overseas please add UNITED KINGDOM.

CONTENTS



EDITORIAL.....	PAGE 4
REVIEWS.....	PAGE 5
SITUATIONS VACANT.....	PAGE 10
NEWS SECTION.....	PAGE 11
GRAND CHRISTMAS COMPETITION.....	PAGE 12
COMING IN THE 20TH CENTURY.....	PAGE 14
THE ALTER-ALTERNATE CONVENTION REPORT.....	PAGE 17
FISHING FOR RED HERRINGS.....	PAGE 18
CHRISTMAS LISTS.....	PAGE 19
TITLE TWIST and THE HAPPY ADVENTURER.....	PAGE 20
SOFTWARE ADVERTISEMENTS.....	PAGE 21
LETTERS	PAGE 32
IN-TOUCH.....	PAGE 39
LATEST SOLUTIONS RECEIVED.....	PAGE 39
ARE TEXT ADVENTURES DEAD OR MERELY LYING LOW?	PAGE 40
CHARACTER INTERACTION.....	PAGE 41
GETTING YOU STARTED.....	PAGE 45
HINTS AND TIPS.....	PAGE 46
ADVENTURE PROBE 1990 INDEX.....	PAGE 48
A CHRISTMAS WISH.....	PAGE 50
TELEPHONE HELPLINES.....	PAGE 52



HALL OF FAME



My sincere thanks to the following readers who sent in contributions during the past month: Jim Struthers, Joan Williams, Maree Walshe, Mark Eltringham, Barbara Gibb, Hugh Walker, Alan Davis, June Rowe, Nic Rumsey, Paul Vincent, Sue Roseblade, Mr Stokoe, Chris Hester, Tony Melville, John Schofield, Gordon Inglis, John Wilson, Margo Porteous, Alf Baldwin, Paul Brunyee, Sharon Harwood, Martin Leverton, MerC, Mike Gerrard, Steve Clay, Neil Shipman and John Wildey.

Christmas cover by MerC and Mandy.

EDITORIAL



Welcome to Volume 4, Issue 12 of Adventure Probe.

You will notice that the December issue (this one!) has arrived in November, a little earlier than anticipated. This is because I am going into hospital for a small operation at the end of November, and I want to get everything ready and posted before I go in. That way I can relax and not worry about Probe for a while. It is nothing serious though, so please don't worry. Also, as usual, I will be working on the January issue of Probe a little earlier as I don't want to be typing Probe during Christmas. So if anyone has anything they would like to send in for that issue, please send them in as soon as you can as this will make things a lot easier. Speaking of hospitals, I would like to send good wishes for a speedy recovery to both Maurice Pancott and Sue Roseblade's friend, Jackie, who are both poorly at the moment. I hope they will both be much better soon and that Jackie will be home in time for Christmas.

I was surprised when a couple of you wrote to me to express surprise at the "Christmas Cover" on the November Probe. It was probably the bright red colour of the cover that did it. The cover picture was of an African hide shield, a skull and two decorated gourds. These were not Christmas tree balls! The Christmassy cover arrives this issue as usual along with quite a few festive items to celebrate the season. There is a Grand Christmas Competition which I hope everyone will enter. Along with this issue comes an Adventure Probe Calendar which is my way of saying thank you and Happy Christmas to you all. It's not much, but it is sent with all my good wishes. The 1990 Probe Index is also contained in this issue and I would like to express special thanks to John Wildey for compiling this for me.

A couple of readers mentioned that the odd page of the last issue was printed wrongly (either upside down or back to front, I'm not sure which it was). This makes me think that perhaps a whole batch of 20 were sent out "bugged" (they are photocopied in batches of 20 at a time), so if anyone out there is suffering in silence with a "bugged" copy then please return it to me for a replacement. You are all very patient with me and put up with an awful lot of my bungling, bless you. The last issue was dreadfully late going out because the photocopier broke down again! Anyway, it was a good thing really, because three repair men spent a week working on it, sometimes until late at night, just to get it fixed for me (such nice repair men to do that for Probe), and they discovered and repaired a few things that had been wrong with it for a few months. Now, I'm glad to say, it is working better than it has done for 18 months! I just knew the poor old thing was trying to tell me something, but it needed to churn out clouds of smoke to grab my attention! (honestly!). One of these days I will have to invest in a new one, I suppose, but I'm assured it will do the job for another few years yet, poor old thing! (Sounds a bit like me!)

Anyway, I hope you all enjoy this festive issue of Probe and that it will give you a smile here and there. There are lots of interesting articles this issue and another very amusing Convention report by The Wayfarer. I would like to take this opportunity of wishing each and every one of you both a really Happy Christmas and a very happy and adventurous New Year. I'll see you all again next issue.

Mandy



REVIEWS



THE MAGICIANS APPRENTICE

By Simon Avery, Marden Farm, Old Exeter Rd, Chudleigh, South Devon, TQ13 ODR. Available for Amstrad CPC on cassette at £2.50 or disc at £2.00 (if disc is supplied).

Reviewer - MARK ELTRINGHAM played on Amstrad CPC 464.

Well surprise, surprise! A non PD adventure from the quilled fingers of Simon Avery. The output recently from this author has been nothing short of miraculous, releasing Public Domain adventures at the rate of about one per month (or more) and this one lacks none of the humour and wit of the other twelve PD's already released.

You are Wuntsvor, apprentice to the magician Ebenezezum. One day he vanishes and your job is to find him. The puzzles are fairly straightforward - all the clues are scattered around the various locations - it's the practise of finding these clues that make his adventures so refreshingly enjoyable. Talking to the squirrel (those who have experienced his adventures before will know all about this furry creature with sunglasses) as usual gives you no clues at all - neither does trying to kill it, and talking to Norrie, Wuntsvors girlfriend gives veiled "in house" puns about the authors "partner in crime" Tony, Bill and Alan.

The biggest compliment I can pay to Mr Avery is that he reminds me of Richard (The Experience, D.A.A.'n Everythin', Scarey Tales, Stryptiche) Robinson in his heyday without those awful GAC'd graphics. Buy this adventure if you want but I don't think Simon will be too bothered if you don't - there will be no screams of "I quit" echoing around his cave - ever!

=====

CRYSTAL THEFT (A GOLDEN OLDIE)



By Paul Wilson and available from WoW Software, 78 Radipole Lane, Weymouth, Dorset. For Amstrad CPC 464 on cassette for £1.50 and CPC 6128 on disc at £3.50.

Reviewer - JAY HONOSUTOMU

The objective of this adventure is to find a faster than light communications crystal" which is hidden somewhere in a Vegan temple nearby. You play the part of Field Captain Jonathan Markham, and you must guide him through dense forests, cave systems and many more weird and wonderful locations, until you find the FTL Crystal. Then you must return, with the crystal, to an awaiting ship.

I found the puzzles in this game very, very hard (that's why, in order to complete the game, I had to phone Mrs Joan Pancott many times for help!). On top of that, there is a time limit which inevitably makes things harder! Actually I may be reflecting that the game is too hard. Although the puzzles are difficult, they are logical. Even though it may be tough it is still a very good game indeed.

What really impressed me as soon as I loaded the game, is that the whole thing is written in BASIC! Take into mind that the game has over 60 locations, lots of puzzles and messages, and only 64K of memory to use. I think that Mr Wilson has done an excellent job! So, if you are after a real challenge, then place your order today!

=====



CADAVER from The Image Works - £22.99

Available for Atari ST and Amiga

Amiga Version reviewed by Paul Vincent



This 3-D isometric arcade adventure is the latest offspring of the Bitmap Brothers, hitherto best known for arcade Blast-em-Ups such as Xenon 2. Hence it comes as something of a surprise that this is a true adventure, crammed with at least as many tricks, traps and puzzles as the average text adventure!

Karadoc the dwarf finds himself in the caverns and dungeons underneath Castle Wulf, charged with a mission to locate and destroy the evil necromancer, Dianos. And what motivates him to attempt this perilous journey? Ah well, there was some mention of treasure. LOTS of treasure. Karadoc's favourite subject! But first he must find his way out of this subterranean labyrinth and into the castle proper.....

Each level of Castle Wulf consists of between 50 and 150 rooms, all depicted in beautiful detail, in an isometric perspective view familiar to anyone who remembers Knight Lore on the Speccy, long ago. Numerous items, both useful and useless, litter these rooms in baffling profusion, and can all be picked up, examined, dropped, dragged around, or inserted into other objects! Luckily our hero has a capacious backpack which can hold up to 32 items, so all those keys, potions, runestones and bones (!) can be safely stashed away until you figure out what to do with them. Accumulated loot is simply added to your 'Gold' total - and unlike most adventures, you'll actually need the gold, since saving your position costs rapidly-increasing sums of money in this game!

As you explore each level a map develops, which can be viewed and scrolled around at any time. This is a helpful feature, since the castle seems to have been designed by a mad architect!

Occasionally (well, OK, quite often!) you will encounter various monsters who'll be only too happy to drain your energy. In the cellars, the only usable weapons are bags of stones. This low-tech weapon seems to despatch most of the early beasties, but later levels will require something more fearsome, such as the Magic Missile spell you eventually find inscribed on a scroll (careful though - it only has 20 charges remaining!).

The heart of this game, however - and what lifts it into the realms of true adventures - lies in the plethora of puzzles which need to be solved in order to complete each level. In the caverns and dungeons they are fairly simple and, thankfully, logical. To demolish a wall requires a pickaxe, for instance, whilst some puzzles have several alternative solutions. This gives a nice flavour of non-linearity to the game. Hints can also be found in old diaries, books and pieces of parchment - most of which are cunningly hidden.

To sum up, I rate this as the most truly convincing arcade/adventure hybrid I've seen on the Amiga to date. An easy to use joystick control system, combat which doesn't end up dominating the game, a consistent magic system, and some wonderful puzzles; all these combine to make this game a memorable experience. Try it, even if you're a diehard text-only fan!



THE HOUSE ON THE TOR

By Allan Davis for the Spectrum 48K/128K at £1.99 (cassette)

Published by Zenobi Software, 26 Spotland Tops, Cutgate,
Rochdale, Lancs. OL12 7NX

When you, as John Fotheringay, awoke in the morning in the bedroom of your cottage in the peaceful village of Gringleton Ford, you hoped to spend another uneventful day trying to get further than the title page of your masterpiece of literature.

We all know that the simple act of opening an envelope, particularly one that lands with a thump when pushed through the letter-box, can launch you into an adventure that may change your life for ever. Well, John received such an envelope. It was from Hoggin & Budge (Solicitors) and contained some keys and a letter explaining that his Uncle Peter, declared "missing, presumed dead", some weeks ago, had bequeathed to him his house "Deradawn" and its contents.

Pausing only long enough to collect the usual miscellany that adventurers expect to use before an adventure is over, you head for the railway station. Once inside the sparsely furnished House on the Tor you begin to wonder what scientific project your uncle was working on when he disappeared. Perhaps you can find him! Until now the locations have been recognizably contemporary; now, in contrast, you will find yourself in the realms of fantasy, and like all good stories, it has a happy ending.

This is a Quilled text adventure in traditional style. A linear game with a strong storyline and the sort of puzzles that only after solving them do you wonder "why didn't I think of that days ago". No doubt five years ago most of the problems would have been considered difficult; nowadays experienced players will deem some of them fairly easy; however I'm ready to admit that at least four puzzles held me up for quite a while - the simplest and best being "how to get the rope from the dwarf". Even now, months later, I still chuckle when I think about the answer.

The text is the best I have encountered in any Quilled adventure. It is truly user friendly as the authors affable and conversational style of prose ensures that attention to detail is maintained without giving too much help. My only quibbles are: an irritating but non-interfering individual called Mr. Raven, and the character set which has a peculiar "t" which looks more like a "c".

In the October issue of "Adventure Probe" the author, Alan Davis, says he wrote "The House on the Tor" in 1985 purely for his own enjoyment with no thought of it ever being published, and certainly not for any personal recognition or monetary reward. I am very glad he has relented on the first, and hope the second and third come his way, not as an inducement to write another adventure but just so that adventurers can show their appreciation and support.

Reviewed by Barbara Gibb





Into the Mystic

Available on various formats for £2.95 from:
River Software, 44 Hyde Place, Aylesham, Canterbury, Kent. CT3 3AL.

Atari ST version reviewed by Paul Brunyee.

Recently released on the Atari ST format, River Software have converted their latest adventure onto a 16 bit machine using the STAC.

'Into the Mystic' places you in a land which is being deprived of it's magic by an unknown force. The people discuss it in hushed and often worried tones, until a council meeting decided that Merlin would be given the task of finding someone daft enough, er... bold enough to go on the quest. The first you learn of this is when Merlin knocks on your door and invites you to go on a little errand for him.....

After a quick briefing by Merlin, you don a simple disguise comprising a smock and sandals and set off into the depths of the forest. After a short while where you find very little, you realise that you are hopelessly lost when you nearly stumble into the midst of an Orc encampment. Fortunately, you remain unnoticed and are able to explore the immediate area, but soon return to the camp where you find that the Orcs are sleeping....but even the slightest noise may awaken them!

The Orcs form the first of many puzzles which bear the River Software mark - an adventure that allows you just enough clues and hints to keep you moving from one puzzle to the next, with just a handful of more cunning problems to overcome dotted around the scenario. Having to explore very carefully is a must, as well as having to think laterally for several of the problems.

It may be seen that the best types of puzzles from many of the adventures around at the moment are combined here, but don't lose sight of the fact that River Software have been producing adventures for a number of years now. There's the maze with many directions to take and identical descriptions which can be solved by dropping items in each location to make each location unique. There is also a further maze described as a 'twisting maze with passages all alike' where you could run out of items if trying to map it by dropping them, and instead should look at the overall construction of the puzzle. Even a scene from Alice in Wonderland appears where you can shrink or grow in order to deal with the puzzle in hand and the adventure even takes this into account at a later stage when trying to access an object that is way beyond your reach if you are still shrunk!

The usual short sentence input will be accepted together with RAMSAVE and RAMLOAD. Actually, these memory save commands are very useful as there are a number of routes you can take in 'Into the Mystic' which have fatal consequences. There are solutions to these, but that is one more puzzle for you to fathom out!

Into the Mystic contains a good spread of puzzles from start to end and should keep you occupied for several winter evenings. With all versions being sold at the same price, the adventure comes recommended.

LES MANLEY IN - SEARCH FOR THE KING - (ACCOLADE)

Available for IBM-PC, Tandy and AMIGA (£29.99)

Reviewer - MAUREEN BARTON PLAYED ON IBM PC

You play the part of Les Manley a lowly employee of WILL, a television network station who need to increase their network rating and decide to sponsor a national contest of one million dollars to anyone who can find THE KING, a former rock star, not seen for years. The competition is not open to employees of the company so you decide to go off in your lunch hour to find him. The game comes on five discs which fortunately can be installed onto a hard drive, but even then the game is quite slow to respond between screens. Before you can start to play for the first time you need to go through a set-up procedure to run on your hardware - video mode, disk type, input device and audio type. You control movement of Les either by mouse or by cursor keys and sometimes this is quite precise. Exits can be easily missed if Les is not quite on the exact spot. You direct Les to do things or react with people by typing in the appropriate text and a text window appears on the screen. Various keys are used as short cuts and this helps speed the game. You can save up to 10 positions and there is also a quick save/load routine. Copy protection comes in the form of a parts catalogue of electronic parts and their prices. You find the illustration to match the one on the screen by using red decoder glasses and find the correct price. If you get this wrong, you have to start the game again.

The puzzles are mainly solved by asking the various people you contact about other characters or by giving them various items you have acquired along the way and often this is very illogical if you haven't asked them the right question. Finding the American word for the English equivalent was a major task. The animated graphic sequences were often amusing and obviously on a VGA monitor rather than CGA would be greatly improved. It was sometimes difficult to work out just what various objects were using a CGA monitor. Overall I felt I had to finish the game just to see if the ending turned out the way I expected - unfortunately it did! Considering the cost, definitely not a game that I personally would recommend.

ARNOLD THE ADVENTURER

Reviewed by JUNE ROWE and played on Spectrum

This game, which is one of three on a compilation tape, is one of the funniest games I have ever played. I found an open-topped barrel in an alley, so naturally, I climbed into it - what else would an adventurer do? The response to this action was "Arnold found himself cramped by the fact that a hermit was crouching next to him." TALK TO HERMIT, and - "... the hermit says "Because I smell like a rotten cabbage. I can't go anywhere because people would sneer. I wish I had something to combat this vicious smell..." As Arnold just happens to have found a rotten cabbage, he gives it to the hermit, who says now he can carry that around and people won't think it is him who smells like one."

It wouldn't be fair to quote more of the amusing responses which are frequent in this game, but when playing it, you can be sure of several giggles. Besides that, it's what I call a player-friendly game - locations can be explored and puzzles spotted, although solving them is not so easy. For instance, there is a peasant who is skint, so when you acquire a coin, you might think that now you will be able to get into his cottage. However, if you give him the coin, he takes it, but still won't let you in. Whoops! NOW how do you get into the cottage?? Another problem is how to get past the were-wolf which is guarding some steps. The response I had when I solved this puzzle really tickled me. Not a difficult game, but lots of fun to play, and with its companion games, makes "The Balrog's Box of Delights" very good value for money at £3.49 from Zenobi.



FROM BEYOND - SPECTRUM ADVENTURE MAGAZINE

Editor: Tim Kemp, 36 Globe Place, Norwich, Norfolk, NR2 2SQ.

Price £1.50 per issue. Reviewer - SHARON HARWOOD



From Beyond is a new bi-monthly fanzine aimed specifically at Spectrum Adventurers, and is brought to you by the co-writer of PROJECT X-THE MICROMAN and THE 0 ZONE, Tim Kemp. It consists of 50 A5 pages packed full of Reviews, Adverts, Tips and Adventure News together with a regular Prize Crossword and DIY Adventure Writing series. Issue 2 being reviewed here, also contains the second part of an interview with Jon Lemmon, A Programmer Profile of Jack Lockerby and an introduction to the From Beyond Mapping System.

The magazine begins with an Editorial and then moves on to an explanation of the FB Review System which gives an outline to the different categories used (ie Storyline, Packaging, Screens, The Adventure, Good and Bad, Conclusions). Each review is very in-depth and covers an average of 4 pages. Marks are given to each category and the reviewer finishes with an overall percentage, after giving his personal views of the game. The games reviewed in this issue include INTRUDER ALERT, INVADERS FROM PLANET X, CRACK CITY, GORDELLO INCIDENT and BEST OF THE INDIES.

The DIY series gives an insight to adventure writing and in this issue deals with ideas and how to develop them. I believe it will eventually lead into the programming of the game, but I found it most interesting to start right from the beginning. Tim has also chosen to include a Video Review in the magazine, in this case STAR TREK V, and although this didn't appeal to me, it is at least in keeping with the Fantasy and Science Fiction theme, and may therefore be viewed as a bonus to some readers.

Hints and Tips, under the heading "Adventure Helpline" are provided in the DRARREG EKIM style (ie backwards) and although there weren't many of them, Tim did finish the section with a plea for contributions.

I found both the interview with Jon Lemmon and the profile of Jack Lockerby very interesting reading, as personally, I think it enhances the game when you know a little about the author (or perhaps I'm just nosy!). I know from the editorial, that Tim has "shelved" a few ideas namely the "My Favourite Problem" section and the "What Now?" computerless adventure challenge competition, until the readership picks up, but I think that, even as it stands, the magazine is well worth subscribing to, especially if, like me, you never get enough of "Probe".



SITUATIONS VACANT



Granola miner's widow (47) seeks enthusiastic young man with excavator to work large mining concession. Strong heart and flashlight essential (Husband #1 eaten by Grue!). Partnership (business? marital?) a possibility for successful applicant. Please send photo of excavator.
Box 12/01.

Housemaid required, live in/out. Good looks essential. Persons of an inquisitive nature need not apply. No pets allowed under any circumstances.
Apply Jasper Quickbuck. Box 304.

NEWS

TOPOLIGIKA TO CONVERT THEIR ADVENTURES TO THE ATARI ST!

Topologika's latest press release informs us that they are preparing Atari ST conversions of their excellent adventures. The titles will include COUNTDOWN TO DOOM, RETURN TO DOOM, LAST DAYS OF DOOM, PHILOSOPHER'S QUEST, ACHETON, KINGDOM OF HAMIL, AVON, MUJRDAC, HEZARIN and GIANT KILLER. All these adventures are excellent. Topologika are renown for their huge and intricate adventures and it is great news for ST adventurers who haven't had the opportunity to play these. Watch this space for further news as it arrives. Topologika forgot to send me the press release this time so my thanks to Neil Shipman for thoughtfully enclosing it.

GOOD NEWS FOR SPECTRUM ADVENTURERS!

Our own June Rowe and Paul Cardin have got together to produce an adventure! This will be something to look forward too. Paul has already written THE INNER LAKES and CAPTAIN KOOK, and June has produced ideas for adventures for such companies as Level 9, so you can be sure this joint production will be excellent. June and Paul tell me it will be called JESTER'S JAUNT. Hopefully it will be ready around the middle of January. Further details will be in Probe as I receive them.

CHANGE OF PLAN FOR NEW RELEASE

Martin Westwood of Interactive Technology tells me that his next release will not now be OPALINE because of some design faults. Their next release will now be DEADFALL. This is a follow up to WEIRD TALES and it should be available in late December or early January 1991 and will be for the Atari ST/STE only.

NEW ADVENTURE TO REACH WIDER AUDIENCE

In the last issue of Probe you will have seen the review of FIVE ON A TREASURE ISLAND sent in by Phil Glover. This was for the Sam Coupe only but now Phil writes to tell me that he has heard from Enigma Variations who say they have nearly completed conversions for the 48k Spectrum and the 128k Spectrum. Not only that, but they are busy writing conversions for the Amstrad CPC and are engaging another programmer to do the conversions for the 16 bit machines too. I have always been an Enid Blyton fan so am looking forward to the Atari ST conversion so I can play this adventure myself!

ATARI ST PUBLIC DOMAIN

John Barnsley has written to inform me that he now runs a large ST Adventurer's Public Domain Library. John has sent me his latest catalogue which has been divided into ELEVEN sections to help you find the particular group of programs you want. These include GENERAL ADVENTURES, AGT ADVENTURES, OTHER GAMES AND ENTERTAINMENT, MAPS ON DISK, SHAREWARE, ST ADVENTURE SOLUTIONS, SPECIAL SOLUTION DISKS, GENERAL SOLUTION DISKS, DEMO'S, ADVENTURE RELATED UTILITIES AND OTHERS and CHILDREN AND EDUCATION. This range of PD and Shareware programs has been carefully selected from libraries throughout Europe and the USA and will be updated every 3 months. Each PD disc costs £2 but John is also offering quite a few SPECIAL OFFERS so, why not write to John for the latest information to 32 Merrivale Rd, Rising Brook, Stafford, Staffs, ST17 9EB.

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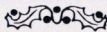


All you have to do is to read through the following short story and see just how many adventure titles you can identify hidden within the text. Note that the titles can be split between different words or sentences, i.e. ...as he looked at the AD. VENTURE seemed ideal so... The winners will be those who spotted the most titles. Software prizes will be awarded to the winners so please state which machine you have when you send in your entries. Subscriptions to Probe will be offered to those whose machines have no software available - so EVERYONE can enter. Final date for entries is 14th January 1991 and results will be published in the February issue of Probe.

FORGOTTEN PLEASURES

Angelique was disappointed and very bored. She had planned a lovely holiday and had thought of going on a Dallas Quest, or a visit to Africa Gardens but decided, one dark night, on a white Christmas and when she had received her pay off from work, she had booked for Ice Station Zero. But her flight was now earthbound because of the bad weather and she had now missed the deadline. She had so longed to see the width of the world. She poured herself a drink and sat down in front of the fire. Lance, her brother would be disappointed that she couldn't make the trip this year. She gazed at the picture of innocence, a photograph of her boyfriend, Dennis, through the drinking glass and sighed, for he was lost in the Amazon, the quest he had dreamed of had ended mysteriously and she had heard nothing since the day before her last interview with the Star reporter. Now the case of the missing explorer, hunting for the lost city was old hat following the latest news of the trial of Arnold Blackwood. Her holiday to remember was cancelled and staying at home over Christmas was alien to her. She tried watching the television but found there were only re-showings of old films such as Escape from Devil's Island and The Saga of Erik the Viking. Should she stay in because of the blizzard? Pass the evening indoors because of the dark storm? She longed for a bit of adventure, was fed up with bureaucracy and felt she was living on borrowed time until the festive season passed. She had really longed to exchange her life in Essex for the high life in the Golden Apple that year but following a short stay in hospital, adventure had been the last thing on her mind. She had caught a nasty virus but, thank goodness, she hadn't needed the operation. Berlin had been her second choice but she hadn't got that job either. She walked restlessly through the open door into the kitchen for another drink and thought of getting smashed. "Ronnie goes to Hollywood next week to meet the Thompson twins. Why was I uninvited?", she thought. Ronnie was her boss and she called him the miser with some venom. It seemed that everyone could runaway except herself and she, most of all, longed for escape. The traveller actually had the cheek to tell everyone that the visit was top secret. Feeling as if she was living in a haunted house, Angelique decided to defy the elements and go for a walk into Hampstead. She opened the green door and stepped outside into the front garden which was in shadow. Gate stood open under a mound of snow. She stepped through onto the lane and looked around her. It looked like a winter wonderland. A red moon hung suspended and shining from out of a dark night sky. A star twinkled as brightly as a super nova. The woods of winter in front of her house looked beautiful with their branches laden down with snow, rather like the forest at worlds end. She

was just starting to turn towards the town when a snowball hit her full in the face and nearly knocked her over. She turned quickly to see the small lurking horror, half hidden behind a tree. "Bertie Molesworth, you moron!" she shouted angrily at the now covering boy and feeling as if she could hit him, "If you ever do that again I'll tell P.C. Matt Lucas and then you'll regret it!" As the beast ran off, skirting past Stoneville Manor at breakneck speed (there had been a murder at the manor a few years previously and all the village children thought it was haunted), she turned and walked along towards the village pub, the Red Lion. It has once been called "The Smugglers Inn" but as there wasn't a smuggler's cove for miles around the name had been changed some years ago. The breakers hit the shore many miles away now. It looked as if it should be the haunt of members of the underworld. The village church, Holy Trinity, with its large white door was silent as she passed and came to the village school. Nightmare memories flooded back to her everytime she came this way. She vividly remembered failing the test and having lots of teacher trouble when she had become number 6 in the village school. Something attracted her attention and she quickly glanced to her left towards the marshes. A Will O' the Wisp floated between the trees and in the moonmist that played across the marsh. She was tempted to investigate but didn't want to end up in the peat bog and become stranded. As she wandered along she thought of Dennis and how they had met during a journey one spring, and remembering their cuddles, his personality was magnetic. Moonlight shrouded the lane and the grey stones of Castle Blackstar up on the hill between the trees. It really made the castle eerie and gave it the colour of magic. She turned off the lane and made her way through the large iron gates onto the overgrown and snow covered path towards the castle and leaned against the bast of the old black fountain as she studied the crumbling walls, trying to imagine how it would have looked in its heyday, as the Count sat in his great hall surrounded by his family as they listened to the bards tale with the serfs bustling about amidst the ballyhoo of the kitchens. Legend said that the castle was under the curse of Shaeth which had something to do with the theft of a crimson crown, but she wondered if anyone had really suffered because of the curse, least of all the thief. It was all probably a myth. The old pond was almost iced over now where once upon a lily pad a toad had croaked out his evening song. The changing seasons were a never ending story. She turned and looked along the downward slope of the hill and saw the whole village of Harboro spread out below her and the moonlight glistening on the snow covered playground where the cricket crazy kids played during the summer. Suddenly she felt an old urge come upon her, the calling of her computer! Of course! That was the ideal way to spend her vacation! She hadn't played an adventure for ages. Oh the joy of remembering the pleasure she had had whilst playing The Hobbit and discovering for the first time what enjoyment an adventure could provide. She hurried back along the way she had come towards her home, the little house which had been a legacy from her uncle, which suddenly looked more like an enchanted cottage than a haunted house. It felt like a return to eden. She hadn't used her computer since the return of the joystick to the cupboard months ago. The challenge of a new adventure would be just the enchanter she needed to bring her out of the black mood she had been in for hours. She felt as if she had discovered the secret of life or a wishbringer, yes, that was the answer - she would load up a new adventure as soon as she could. "I wonder which one I will play?" she wondered happily to herself as she entered the warm and now welcoming house. She would be a dragon slaver once again and have a really happy Christmas!





COMMING IN THE 20th CENTURY

By BOB ADAMS

Communications. Modems. Protocol. Bits per second. RS232 interface. Downloading. Hacker. Mbx. KF. PRAM's etc. Do any of these words / abbreviations, fill you with horror? Is this one of the reasons why you have never considered connecting your computer to the wonderful B.T. (British Telecom) telephone lines? Does it all sound too technical or 21st century? Does the jargon scare you off? Do you not understand what all the fuss is about or why you should want to join in anyway? Would you like to receive free software?

If you have just answered YES to any of the above questions, then I hope that some of what follows helps you to understand a little more about the world of 'going on-line' or communications. For any readers that do not have a telephone, may I suggest that you go and read the ten pages of Spectrum software adverts and we will catch up with you later. Okay? Bye.

Right, that's got rid of them, now we can carry on without interruption. What I intend these article's to contain, is an easy introduction of how you can join in the great communications explosion, from the comfort of your own living room. I will try not to baffle you with science or use too much jargon without explanation. To anybody that is already 'on-line' I apologise if I seem to be too basic but the problem with this type of article is, not knowing at what level to pitch it. So for safety's sake, I've chosen to aim it at the novice, or as Prestel put it so succinctly, the virgin. Their word, not mine. All you need basically, is a telephone. As you probably already know, it is quite possible to pick up a phone in say, Chipping Sodbury and dial direct to the other side of the world. The fact that the other side of the world is a place full of kangaroo's and that they also speak English, means that we can 'Communicate' ie, we can talk to them, they can understand what we have said, they can therefore reply and we can understand what they have replied. Eureka! We have two-way communications. Hence the arrival of 'Neighbours' but that programme only goes to prove, that two-way communications is not always a good thing!

Now what happens if the person in Bath (I've changed Chipping Sodbury to Bath as it was taking me too long type it in at two fingers per minute) just happens to be an Amstrad CPC computer (houray!) and the kangaroo in Sydney owns an Amiga ST 1040 Batpack Double Gizmo? (boo!) Well, would you believe that they can communicate in just the same way? Not in English though, but in Binary. All computers understand Binary. It is their life-blood. Humans however, on the whole do not understand binary, neither do the telephone lines. Hmm, seem's like we've got a problem here, but why? Well the reason is, when the telephone system was developed back in the days before even the Grue was born, all that was needed was a system of wires that was capable of transmitting the sound of the human voice over a known distance, ie, an audio (voice) signal. That's what was designed and to a large extent, that's what we still have today. Enter the computer. The computer as you may have discovered, (especially when playing certain adventures), does not understand English or any other type of audio command.

So there we have it, or not, depending on your point of view. Personally, I felt the film was far too long for an advert about a mortgage loan but as they were paying me, it seemed churlish to complain. Now onto the Cannes festival... Sorry, bit of line noise corrupted our signal just then. Line noise? I'll come back to that later. So there we have it. A telephone system that is designed to transmit and receive voice signals and a computer at each end that wants to send and receive binary signals. Can the two be made compatible and will it be a happy marriage, or will it all end in tears? Yes they can. Enter Barry Norm... no sorry, that should have been, enter the MODEM.

Every other article that I have read about 'Comms' always takes at least a paragraph to explain that MODEM is an amalgamation of Modu... so I'm not going to. A far simpler approach is to say that a Modem is a box of whizzo stuff that you connect to your computer and it converts the binary message you want to send into an audio form that is understood by B.T. This is sent down the phone line as a 'voice' signal until it reaches the modem at the receiving computer's end, where it is converted back into a binary signal and fed into the receiving computer. Okay? Provided that the file or message you sent is in ASCII format, it doesn't matter if you are a Spectrum talking to an IBM, or an Amstrad connected to an Amiga and so on, they will all be able to be understood each other. The screen full of text appearing on your machine, will also appear on the screen of the receiving computer and visa versa, even in Scotland! As it is in Ascii, you'll be able to save to tape or disc and reload it at a later date into a word processor and play around with and alter it, to your heart's content.

So far so good, but the cynics amongst you are probably thinking, "Och, I can print out my file on paper and send it via the Post Office, so what is the advantage of using a modem, the no?"

In one word, the answer is SPEED.

Let me give you an example. "Friends, this story is true for I was the idiot". I was working on some files one evening, transferring from disc to disc and generally tidying up, when suddenly my disc with all the important stuff on it became corrupted. The damaged disc also contained my favourite disc operating utility, (NSWP). Panic! What could I do at 9pm on a Sunday night. Pop out and buy a new one? No chance. Wait till next Saturday or longer before a new copy arrived in the mail and not use my computer in the meantime? Definitely out of the question. So what could I do? What I did was, I rang a good friend who also had a modem and a CPC, told him what files I needed (Public Domain by the way), and by the time ten minutes had passed, I had the NSWP files safely stored again on a new un-corrupted disc, after he had sent them down the telephone line to me, via our modem's. By 9.15pm I was back to sorting out my disc collection. Impressed?

Of course speed is not the only reason for using a modem, but it is very difficult to ignore it. The reason I say that, is because I am finding it very difficult to think of any other reason. I am trying to remember exactly WHY I decided to "go on line". I think the main excuse I had, is that I have an in-exhaustible desire for knowledge. If I do not understand something, then I either have to master it or pretend it's un-important. Either way, I have to give it a

try and the easiest way to learn is to have "hands on" experience. This is how I got involved in computers in the first place and the learning process has never stopped. I hope it never does.

As I mentioned in my original letter on this subject, if Adventure Probe had a modem and I wanted to transmit this article direct into the computer sitting on the Editors desk, it would be so simple. At this point, , yep that 's' just then, this article is about 7K long of Ascii text. That would take about 4 seconds to transmit from London to Wales. Do it after 6pm when phone calls are cheapest, even at long distance rates, 4 seconds isn't going to break anyone's bank is it?. (As long as you hang up before Mandy grabs the line and starts chatting). Which leads me onto the most frequently asked question I get about Comms. Is it expensive?

Everything is relative and what I may consider expensive, you may not and visa versa. It all depends on how often you use your phone now and whether you feel that using your phone more in the future to gain knowledge is a wise investment or not. Eg: If you spent all week phoning every help-liner you could find, in order to discover say, how to get past the hacker in Lurking Horror and after 2 hours of total calls you finally learn the answer, only to get stuck again at the very next problem, would that be considered worth-while expenditure, when you received the phone bill? Or, if I told you the number of a Bulletin board that had the full solution to Lurking Horror, that you could down-load in about 10 seconds, would that be better value? Of course, to be able to do it you would have to own a modem, probably an interface and of course, some software. Which is cheaper?

As I have already mentioned, everybody will have a different answer because we are all different and have different opinions of perceived value. My good friend Terry Roberts has already expressed his opinion that he thinks "going on line" is a waste of money. By the way, or BTW as they say "on line", I owe Terry an apology as he feels I slandered him, when I wrote that he doesn't have a clue how to use his modem. What I should have said of course was, "Terry doesn't have a clue how to use his SON'S modem." Okay Terry?

Still on the subject of money, if you, or a member of your household, is into regularly dialling one the thousands of 0898 numbers, whether for 'recipe of the day' or 'Kinky Tina's dirty week-end' you'll know that these calls are charged at 25p per minute, cheap rate. For 25p, I would expect to be on-line, using my modem connected to a local BBS, (Bulletin Board) for 25 minutes and have gained some valuable information and at least down-loaded some files or text, that I would find useful in the future. On the other hand, YOU may find Tina more useful. As I said, it's all relative.

See you all here again for part 2? Great. Bye bye. Please hang up now.....

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THE ALTER-ALTERNATE CONVENTION REPORT

The WAYFARER endeavours to put right a few misconceptions in the alternative Convention report.

Having been one of the first to arrive in the hall, and being greeted by several people with tears rolling down their cheeks. Not that they were overcome with emotion at seeing me, more they were crying with mirth at the sight of in excess of 6' of Sussex Pilloock wandering around clattering like a used ironmongery stall and wearing a cape which made him look like the Phantom of the Opera. The firm I rented it from were concerned that I was too tall for it... I ask you, it reached my ankles, if I had been Bob Adams size it would have trailed behind me and been like the entry of a royal bride. (IE the train would have been longer than the commuter train to London!)

My initial nervous doubts that I had gone too far over the top were soon dispelled... I had! Still, never mind, it was to get better during the Convention. People started to arrive and it was nice to meet so many who I had only spoken to on the phone previously. Strangely most were as I pictured them, though there were a few surprises. However, to set the record straight.

Firstly Vicky Jackson did suggest to Bob Adams that he use the side entrance to the Hotel, Bob did not notice that it was the side entrance to NEXT DOOR when he ignored it. My first meeting with Bob was truly memorable. I was standing quietly, cloak shaking in time to my knees, when this small figure appeared and started leaping up and down in front of me. My first thought was that it was either Kevin the Gerbil after my throat or a Gnome on a Pogo stick; neither was correct, it was an Amster making titanic efforts to launch his somewhat short-sighted eyes to a level where they could read my name tag. I took pity on the rapidly getting puffed out Amster and lowered myself to a more readable height.

After a short while a crowd erupted into the already burbling hubbub. At first glance I thought they were a lynch party in hot pursuit of a wraith like, long haired person in a strange cap (which had menacing eyes). A closer inspection revealed that the Gruesobile had docked and this was the intrepid Grue and the Conventioneers he was giving a lift to.

About now I should say that Dicon Peeke was right when he said that Grues were cute and pink and cuddly... however he got the wrong one. It is the female of the species (not the male whose craggy features were definitely etched with a 24-pin burin as claimed). BEWARE DICON, for it may be a case, as Kipling stated, of "The female of the species is more deadly than the male". Certainly I enjoyed meeting a lady whom I have had many a laugh with on the phone.

Bob was in error when he thought I had masonic tendencies, the trouser leg was only rolled up because after 4 hours without food, Grue found the considerable size of my leg too much to bear. With a lightening flash of a 24 inch fang he had split the seam, and was just about to bite the hapless adventurer when Mrs G reminded him it was a Convention not an Infocom. So you see Bob, the trouser was rolled to stop the flapping material causing someone injury, and the strange walk is a result of falling awkwardly down the chute in the coal mine in Zork 1. Also I think the Amster must be hard of hearing, when I spotted him reading the ladies tags actually I said "Bob you've got immoral eyes", not as reported. I did drag him to the Probe stall,

but in an attempt to get him to buy an "I Love Grues" badge (at which a fur ball seemed to stick in his throat, and he exited clutching his wallet).

However full marks to Grue for compressing 8 feet of slavering creature with 24 inch fangs into a 6 foot, slim built human-suit, and not a join showing. Also to Mrs G, however it must be said that it would take any self-respecting, human-eating carnivore by surprise to be called by his unknown name. After all "Grue" sounds menacing, but SNUOKUMS...???!:

As to chickens being rare in Birmingham, Penguins are even scarcer. (Have you ever seen a Kentucky Fried Penguin shop?) Like Bob, I must say a special thank you to Lorna Peterson who forsook her breakfast to point a lost traveller in the right direction. Also to Vicky who exited to "stick one on Bob Adams", only to find someone else had done it!! Last but not least to the Amster/Grue combine, and to assure them the boot is alive and well... AND ONLY LENT!!

Footnote:

For me the "quote of the Convention" was from Paul Rigby who asked, "But who are you really?" - Good question, I sometimes wonder whether The Wayfarer or Nic Rumsey is the Alter Ego!



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FISHING FOR RED HERRINGS

MINDFIGHTER by MARK ELTRINGHAM played on Amstrad

Fenknife, Dead Rat, Harry, Robert, Cell 2, Canvas Bag, Moss, Steel Rod, Glass Fragment, Easel, Wardrobe, Soap, Towel, Everything in the kitchen except the Kettle.

NOVA by JOAN PANCOTT played on Amstrad

Compass, Food Pack, Grenades, Knife, Moonrock, Nuclear Borer, Silver Indentcard, Skinsheet, Spanner, Toolbox.

SECRET OF LITTLE HODCOME

By VICKY JACKSON played on Spectrum

Piece of Paper, Pistol, Pine Cone, Rat.

PENDANT OF LOGRYN by DENNIS DOWDALL played on Spectrum

Red and Green Vial, Brown Jar, Sword, Clothes, Hat, Picture, Beer, Spear, Gloves, Gold Knife.

WITCH HUNT (Classic Quests)

By VICKY JACKSON played on Spectrum

Small Pot, Earthenware Jug with Leaves, Leather Purse, Fly Paper, Brick.

EXCALIBUR by VICKY JACKSON played on Spectrum

Crimson Fish, Piece of String.

.....

CHRISTMAS LISTS

By STEVE CLAY



YOU KNOW ITS CHRISTMAS WHEN:

Nine out of ten adverts on TV are for toys.

The tenth is for batteries to put in them.

Adverts appear in the local papers decorated with little snowmen and pieces of holly.

Shops make the heartbreaking decision to raise their prices.

Collection boxes spring out at every corner.

Sons, daughters and other young relatives develop an illness known as "I WANT FEVER".

Auntie Doris from the Outer-Hebrides turns up on your doorstep.

Slade are in the charts.

Old blokes smelling of scotch, dressed in baggy red suits and sporting cotton wool beards pop up outside all the shops in town leaving you to explain to your children why they can see fourty seven Father Christmas' when there is supposed to be only one!

Stupid lists like this appear in otherwise sensible magazines!

CHRISTMAS WOULDN'T BE CHRISTMAS WITHOUT:

Toffee fingers out of Quality Street.

Turkish Delight (bits of sponge packed in talc).

Dates (Does anyone actually eat these things?)

Underwear/socks.

Relatives (Don't you just love 'em?)

Films: The Great Escape, Jason, Digby etc.

Walt Disney.

Turkey (Unless you're a vegetarian, then its Turnips.)

Queens Speech.

Wishing it was all over!



December is the perfect time

To write a silly Christmas rhyme,

So, pen in hand, I sit and ponder -

Is that Santa standing yonder?

Yoo-hoo! Santa! Please come here -

Let me whisper in your ear.

I hope my wish is not too shocking:

I'd like an Amiga in my stocking.

Failing that, an Atari would do...

But I 'spect I'll just get a game or two.

What do you mean, I'm too old to play?

I'll have you know, I do it all day!



June Rowe.

HELP WANTED

"Please can any Probe reader help me with THE CASE OF THE BEHEADED SMUGGLER. How do I get into the attic, and how do I open the chest in the cellar? If anyone has the full solution I would be most grateful."

PATRICIA NAYLOR, 40 Manchester Rd, Prescot, Merseyside, L34 1NG

"Please could anyone provide a "Getting You Started" for CASE OF THE MIXED-UP SHYMER and WHIPLASH AND WAGONWHEEL. I'm hopeless as I just sort of walk around the first ten locations in a state of dazed frustration."

GRANT WILSON, 18 Loudoun Rd West, Newmilnes, Ayrshire, KA16 9JA

TITLE TWIST

By JIM STRUTHERS

If you twist some of the titles of adventures around and treat them as anagrams you can come up with some interesting permutations!

BALROG AND THE CAT - AL GOB AND CHATTER
RED MOON - DOOR MEN
DOMES OF SHA - SOD OF SHAME
NECRIS DOME - DONE CRIMES
LANCELOT - CELLO ANT
RETURN TO EDEN - NUT TREE DRONE
STATIONFALL - FAT STALLION
THE MISER - STEER HIM
TAILSPIN - TIN PAILS
THE ISLAND - LITE HANDS



Thus inspired, here are some by MANDY!
MAGICIAN'S BALL - BLAC MAGI SLAIN
COLLOSAL CAVE - SELL COCU LAVA
DUNGEON ADVENTURE - DOVE UNDER A TEN GUN
OPERATION BERLIN - IN LAST ATE POOR LION
LORDS OF TIME - FOUL RED MIST
INFIDEL - FIND LIE
UNINVITED - DIVINE NUT
CASTLE MASTER - LETS SCREAM AT
LEGEND OF THE SWORD - THE END OF LEG WORDS

(Perhaps other readers would like to try their hand at this. The funniest ones could even get a prize!.....Mandy)

THE HAPPY ADVENTURER

A merry ditty sent in by KEITH BURNARD

I love to go adventuring,
On my Spectrum 48K.
And as I go adventuring
I try not to lose my way.

While I go adventuring,
Mapping as I go.
Fighting Demons, Dragons and Orcs,
Killing them with one blow!

Now that I've been adventuring,
Great fun it has been.
Getting help from friends afar,
Who also think it's their scene.

If you go adventuring,
With your knapsack on your back.
Please support the "Home Grown Games",
And buy them by the sack!

Chorus (Software)

Buy River and from Tartan and from Atlas and F.S.F.
From Stormbringer and Zenobi and any that I missed!



THE SECRET OF LITTLE HODCOME

It was quite a surprise when the letter arrived informing you of your inheritance, especially since you had long forgotten about the distant relative who had left it to you. However the idea of nice little cottage in the country had a certain 'ring' to it and you were looking forward to seeing the place and looking it over.

For the next few days you busied yourself in the local library, reading up on the district of the country where the cottage was and learning as much as possible of the local history of the place. Though to be quite honest you were a shade surprised to find that very little seemed to be known about the hamlet of Little Hodcome.

Eventually the morning dawned of the day upon which you were to travel to Little Hodcome and after a light breakfast of coffee and toast you set out to meet the estate-agent, who had promised to await your arrival at the cottage.



Spectrum 48K/128K+2.

NOTES

This program will accept all the standard commands such as EXAMINE, SEARCH, TAKE, DROP, ENTER as well as the more unusual 'RAM SAVE' and 'RAM LOAD'. Use the latter to save a game position to and from memory (instant recall) however always use the more normal SAVE and LOAD in order to make a more permanent record to tape.

HINTS

If it is too dark to see you will either need a lantern (lit) or else you will simply have to feel your way around. Also make sure you take note of everything that is told you and that you utilise all you will learn.

Discover the source of the 'evil' force that pervades the hamlet of Little Hodcome. Learn how to put a halt to its awesome powers and set free the villagers from its grasp. Find the only man who can tell you the dark secrets you will need to know to defeat the 'evil' force and cast it from the land

Zenobi Software

ADVENTURES

*** SPELLBREAKER ***

SPELLBREAKER! is Probe's "brother" magazine and they are both produced to compliment each other. SPELLBREAKER! is packed full of maps, solutions, part solutions, hints and tips, and all sorts of adventure help. SPELLBREAKER! is produced in the middle of each month and costs just £1.50 and is available from:

MIKE BRAILSFORD

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*** SYNTAX ***

THE DISC MAGAZINE FOR ST ADVENTURERS

SYNTAX is a bi-monthly STE-compatible magazine for colour or mono systems (please state version required when ordering), packed full of reviews, solutions, hints and many other items of interest to the ST adventurer.

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*** OASIS ***

Do you feel that sexism is ruining the software market for women? Do you feel angry when you see software advertisements which are offensive or degrading to women or men? Now you CAN do something about it! Join the Organisation Against Sexism In Software and help to clean up the software industry. Every member receives the bi-monthly newsletter with all the latest information, news and views. Membership costs just £3 per year. For further details or to join, contact:

SANDRA VOGEL

45 RAVENSBRURY COURT, RAVENSBRURY GROVE, MITCHUM, SURREY, CR4 4DW

SPLATT!!

The zany adult cartoon magazine drawn and written by our very own Crazy Kez Gray. Issue 2 November-December 1990 is out now! More fun with the usual shower! To order your copy make cheques/postal orders payable to K.GRAY and send to:

CARTOON HOUSE, 3 ALDER CRESCENT, ORFORD, WARRINGTON, WA2 8AQ

Go on! Give yourself a treat!

(I'm reliably informed that we have a Probe Convention report in this issue of Splatt!... only £1.25.....Mandy)

*** SPECIAL CHRISTMAS OFFERS FROM ***
ATLAS ADVENTURE SOFTWARE

THE CASE OF THE MIXED-UP SHYMER: A lighthearted adventure romp through the land of Nursree where things have gone wrong. Putting them right can have hilarious results. Written by Sandra Sharkey. Available on cassette for Spectrum, Commodore and Amstrad CPC - £1.99. Available on disk for Commodore - £2.99 and Amstrad CPC - £4.99.

THE BLACK KNIGHT ADVENTURE: A two part text adventure set in the golden age of knights, mystery and magic. Can you defeat the evil Black Knight and his minions and restore peace to the valley once more? Written by Mandy Rodrigues. Available on cassette for Spectrum, Commodore and Amstrad CPC - £2.99. Available on disk for Commodore - £3.99 and Amstrad CPC - £5.99.

ATALAN: A light hearted, traditional, text only adventure. Cast away on a mysterious island full of treasures and danger. Can you find all the treasures and make good your escape? Written by Mandy Rodrigues. Available on cassette for Spectrum, Commodore and Amstrad CPC - £2.99. Available on disk for Commodore - £3.99 and Amstrad CPC - £5.99.

HARBORO * ST JIVES * LOST IN THE AMAZON: Compilation of three text only adventures written by Dorothy Millard. Each full size adventure contains enough problems and puzzles to keep you busy for weeks. Available for Commodore only on cassette - £5.50 or disk - £6.50.

TROUBLE AT BRIDGETON: You have been left in charge of BRIDGETON ASSYLUM for the afternoon but something is wrong! All the patients have walked out! Can you find them all and persuade them all to return before the Manager gets back and you lose your job? Available for Commodore only on cassette - £2.50 or disk - £3.50.

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As a Xmas present to all Adventure Probe readers, especially those who have not yet played any of our adventures, FSF presents the following special offers! Normally, Magnetic Moon and its sequel, Starship Quest, are sold on separate tapes, at £2.50 each, or £4.50 if you buy both games. As a once-only special offer to Probe readers, you can now buy both adventures on the same tape for just £3.00!! Please note that this special offer will close on January 31st, 1991, so send your order in NOW to avoid disappointment! Unfortunately, it is impossible to get the 128k versions on the same disc, so FSF is slashing the price of the +3 disc versions of Magnetic Moon and Starship Quest to just £3.00 each!! Again this offer is only open until 31st January 1991.
In addition to these offers, FSF would like to celebrate "The Axe of Kolt" being awarded "Megagame" status by Mike Gerrard in his review of that adventure in the December issue of "Your Sinclair". Instead of the normal price of £3.00 (tape) or £4 (disc), FSF will charge just £2.50 (tape) or £3.50 (disc) until 31st January 1991.

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RUN, BRONWYNN, RUN - This adventure, already seen by those who played the "Megapoints" competition at the 1990 Adventure Probe Convention, features Princess Bronwynn, only daughter of the King and Queen of Alizon, who finds out at her brother's wedding that her parents are intent on marrying her off to Prince Timothy of Karsten. No way is Bronwynn going to marry that twerp, so she decides to do a runner and seek sanctuary with her cousin, King Kelson of Hecate. Find out what dangers and perils face Bronwynn in her race to escape the clutches of the dispised Prince Timothy, and the wrath of her parents!

THE KRAZY KARTOONIST KAPER - This adventure, written by Krazy Kez Gray, the cartoonist, casts you as Cris the Dog, who sets off to rescue his mistress, Kez the kartoontist, who is kidnapped by the S.A.S.! No, not the Special Air Service, but the Salford Art Saboteurs!! Watch out for a couple of very well-known adventuring personalities, as you've never seen them before, among the other zany characters Cris meets during his quest. Unfortunately, this adventure will be available in 128k only.

ATTENTION SPECTRUM ADVENTURERS

Most of you who are reading this advert right now will have heard of "From Beyond" - the new bi-monthly Spectrum adventure fanzine. If you received a mailshot (which most of you will have by now), but failed to have a look at our latest issue, then let me tell you what you are missing in the current issue... First of all there are some excellent reviews (all three pages long - or more), a DIY adventure writing section, a prize crossword, adventure help-line, news, info, letters, a fully mapped game, etc. **PLUS** - as it's our Christmas issue there's a free 9 x 2.5 inch vinyl car window sticker (with tasteful From Beyond motif on it), **PLUS** - to help make your Christmas an adventure filled one we have teamed up with five famous adventure producers, (Zenobi, Compass, Tartan, Fantasy Software and River software) to bring you some spectacular **MONEY OFF** and even **FREE GAME** vouchers too! "What's the catch?" - there is no catch! Simply buy "From Beyond" issue three (the latest issue), cut out the coupons and send them to the participating software houses for sensational seasonal savings like: One Pound off the latest Tartan Software adventure - "Gordello's Demise.", or how about the Compass Software buy one game, get another of your choice from the extensive Compass Catalogue absolutely free! For your copy of "From Beyond" issue 3, send a 1.50 cheque or postal order (made payable to Tim Kemp) to:

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captain kook

The year is 2010 ad. Many light-years out, the Captain, a senior stellationographer in the 5th Chrozon fleet is in dire circumstances - his vessel is ablaze and hurtling around an uncharted globe. By absurd misfortune, the cryogenic systems have retained the greater part of his memory. And now, unfamiliar with the ship's complexities, his problems seem insurmountable - to extinguish the fire; manoeuvre the craft into a safe orbit; dispatch a distress signal; collect the required survival equipment and teleport down to the surface. Should he succeed to this point, it is only the beginning...

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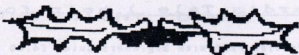
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oOo

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"It changed my life." Guy Pawkes.

"I used to be a wimp until I played Horrorscope." Attila the Hun.

"Takes your breath away." A Car Salesman.

oOo

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Once life had been grand, with no worries and even less hardships, but the wise ones of the Shyre had seen fit to introduce the dreaded 'POLL TAX' and from that point onwards even the likes of BULBO BIGGUN were to find themselves rather short of gold to squander in the many taverns that frequented this area.

So it was that Bulbo found himself sitting by the dying embers of his fire, with not a coin to his name or a bag of gold to call his own. As he threw the latest reminder for his long over-due 'Poll Tax' on to the flickering embers he recalled a tale that his great-uncle used to tell him and a thought sprang to mind as to how he would get himself enough gold to pay not only his bills but also those of the rest of the Shyre as well.

Legend had it that a large Dragon dwelt to the south and that this mighty beast was the guardian of a rather large heap of treasure just waiting for some intrepid adventurer to come along and steal it from under the nose of the Dragon. Now Bulbo was never one to underestimate his abilities and he felt sure that if anybody was able to steal that treasure then he was the one to do it! So it was that he gathered together a few belongings and set out to locate the whereabouts of the Dragon and the treasure, with the sole intention of parting one from the other

Accompany Bulbo on his quest for the fabled treasure of the mighty Dragon called SMOG.

On this epic journey you will encounter such famed travellers as 'GRAND ALF' and 'THE DWARVES', not to mention the notorious and sometimes hungry, 'TROLLS'. You will need to cross rivers, climb mountains and do battle with untold enemies but it will all be worth it in the end famous last words!!!!

ADVENTURE

NOTES

This game will accept all the standard commands such as EXAMINE, SEARCH, GET, DROP, LOOK and CLIMB as well as the more unusual ones such as BOARD, TIE and LOWER. Use the commands 'RAM SAVE' and 'RAM LOAD' in order to save a game position to and from memory but always use the more normal SAVE and LOAD to store a more permanent position to tape.

HINTS

The horn will come in very useful for summoning help ... provided of course that you can locate it in the first place and make sure that you enlist the help of Bert in order to kill the Dragon. The answer to Gullem's riddle will be found pinned to a wall.



Spectrum 48K/128K+2.





LETTERS

IT WAS YOU BOB!

I loved reading Bob Adams' report on the Convention, but, Bob, did you not realise it was you we were swooning over in the lobby. In fact, I didn't even notice Mike Gatting was present!

Merry Christmas to each and every one of you.

SHARON HARWOOD, Southend-on-Sea, Essex.

MESSAGES FOR ALL

I/We would like to thank all our customers for their support in 1990 and hope that we can find some newer deals for all adventurers in 1991. To Mr B (that's a BIG 'B') Adams... Humbug to you and all your nice clean and tidy friends. You're probably the type of person who dresses up in an Evening Jacket just to collect the morning post!!! (only joking! I took yours - now you take this!) To Tom Frost and Mike Brailsford: Please keep Andy Stewart to your own telly this Hogmanay and no singing "Donald Where's Ya Trousers". And to everyone out there in Santa's adventure world, a very merry Christmas and hope to read a lot more people's names in Adventure Probe and Spellbreaker, giving their ideas etc. Here's keeping the bar sparkling.

THE INNKEEPER & ALLAN, Tardekin Inn, Gunthorpe, Cambs.

MAJORITY ROOLS!

How nice to see so many exciting and thought-provoking letters appearing in November's Probe. The Paul Rigby vs The World series looks good enough to run for a few more issues yet and I would like to thank Hugh Walker for making me roar with laughter. The subject of the readership survey created a couple of letters that surprised me. Both writers felt that although their favourite subject had got a big raspberry from the Probe readers, it should still not be ignored. Well in that case, what is the purpose of having a survey? I can choose no better words to answer with, than the editor's own fine prose that accompanied the survey form in the July editorial, "... if you can let me know your views I can ensure that the majority rules as far as the content of Probe goes." I don't suppose that there is a single Probe reader who agreed with everything that the survey revealed, but that was not its purpose was it? Dylan Thomas, who not only wrote one of the above letters, also wrote that the 8 bit computer and all its software is extinct (yawn..). I can't help feeling that Dylan has become brain-washed by advertising hype. He appears to believe that because there are now "superior computers", with "superior built-in whizzo's" that we should all rush out and buy one and run "superior whizzo software". Dylan is a salesman's dream. Reality for the rest of us, is making the most of what we've got or staying with the type of software that we love, out of choice. We recently rented a new TV and video player. It came complete with a white dustbin lid to receive satellite transmissions. The collected control boxes have got more buttons than the flight deck of Concorde. By using the latest technology we can watch live cricket from Australia, view the latest movies 24 hours a day and see Neighbours at 3am in the morning, if we so wish. So on the first evening with our new "super whizzo" TV, what did we choose to watch? Casablanca with Humphrey Bogart! That's right, good old black and white, and why not? It's not the machinery that's important, it's the output. It's not the age that's important, it's the quality. It's not the number of "whizzo's" that's important, it's whether you enjoy it. So my message to Dylan is quite simple. I'll use the latest technology where I can personally see a benefit but if not I'll happily keep using the stuff I enjoy.

BOB ADAMS, The City That Time Forgot, Herts.

I FOUND MYSELF ANNOYED

What prompted me to put printhead to paper was Dylan Thomas' letter on the "Graphics in Adventures" debate. I found myself annoyed not so much by his views as by the muddle-headed nature of his arguments. Over and over again he stated that adventures should be more "advanced", and yet he never made clear what he meant by "advanced". From the context, it seems he meant they should make more use of the graphic and sonic capabilities of 16-bit computers, but in what sense do enhanced graphics and sound make an adventure more "advanced"? They certainly make the game look prettier when someone sees it for the first time in a shop, or at a friends house, but it's at best debatable whether or not they actually add any further depth to the adventuring experience. Indeed, unless they are totally in keeping with the general atmosphere and tone of the adventure, they can sometimes even reduce the depth of atmosphere in those cases where a picture is used as an excuse not to paint a "word picture" of locations. In fact, (to use Dylan's own accusation in a different context!) he is contradicting himself, when he claims that a text adventure with added sound and vision FX is "... still the same text adventure...". If it really is still the same adventure, then how can it simultaneously be "more advanced"? Finally, he tries to draw a parallel with books which contain illustrations that accompany the text. This is a red herring: after all, how many novels are illustrated? Precious few, as a random scan of the shelves in any bookshop will reveal. In fact, there are proportionally fewer illustrated novels nowadays than there were in Victorian times, which seems to suggest that as far as publishing is concerned, text-only fiction is a more "advanced" (in Dylan's sense of the word) form than illustrated fiction. Except of course for children's fiction (oooh, sarcasm!). Sorry if I appear to have been a bit harsh here, but Dylan himself was pretty uncompromising, and I felt it warranted a response in kind. I have nothing against graphic adventures (see my Cadaver review for proof!), provided the graphics themselves are integral to the gameplay. In this sense, the 16-bit machines do offer the potential for extending the scope of experiences available to adventurers. That's "extending", not "advancing", by the way. However, sticking a few glossy pictures and sensurround sound onto a mediocre adventure will not transform it by some digital alchemy into an advanced state-of-the-art entertainment - it will merely be a porcine lughole with delusions of pursehood. (Work it out!).

PAUL VINCENT, Walsall, West Midlands.

HE MAKES A VALID POINT

As the reader who asked for strategy and wargame coverage in the readers survey, and being unsure how well it would be received by other readers, I'd like to thank Bob Bates for his letter of encouragement. He makes a valid point about the glossy magazines dropping various columns. Whilst owning a Spectrum 48K, CRASH was my favourite computer magazine for one main reason, it's well written coverage of a whole variety of computer subjects. Then in June 1989 they decided to go more tape orientated to the effect that now it has about half as many pages as it used to, and many of those are adverts. They dropped the Adventure column and the excellent Strategy/Wargame column called FRONTLINE which had it's own reviews, hints and tips and letters page. My favourite Speccy magazine now is YOUR SINCLAIR mainly because of the wonderful Adventure column by Mike Gerrard. I have now bought an Amiga 500 and have discovered as well as OFFICIAL SECRETS, a very good 16 bit magazine called STRATEGY PLUS which covers Strategy, Adventure, Board Games and Simulations. If anyone would like to try some of these games I would recommend the following: For Spectrum:

DOOMDARKS REVENGE, VULCAN, DESERT RATS, ARNHEM, SWORDS OF BANE, SAMURAI, REBELSTAR, REVELSTAR II, LASER SQUAD, ANNALS OF ROME, LORDS OF MIDNIGHT, and for the Amiga: IMPERIUM, BALANCE OF POWER, SUPREMACY. NEIL ASHMORE, Stockport, Cheshire.

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LET ME CLARIFY MY POSITION

Having read and carefully considered the letters submitted to Probe over the last couple of months that were sparked in part by my comments in the September issue. I feel that the time is right to expand on those comments in order to clarify my position somewhat. First of all I must state that I am utterly guilty of being extremely economical with the reasons I gave for my decision to pack it in. Therefore, bear with me if you will as I explain further and, at the same time, offer a response to Paul Rigby's woefully ill conceived remarks. Didn't anybody notice anything unusual about my last letter - did it not seem rather abrupt, as if, perhaps, it wasn't all there? Precisely. Admittedly when I wrote to Mandy, I had a good blast off, but the statement regarding a "waste of money" did NOT actually refer to the cost of writing and releasing a game. No, what had actually happened when I first released The Remix was that I paid in advance for an advertisement in Probe, but didn't actually send in the ad itself, instead opting to see if the reviews said anything favourable that I may have been able to quote. However, the course of the following month is now history and well known, and to shift just four copies of a game that had taken two whole years of full time effort (a few days Hugh? Oh get real, please!) was something of a body blow; having sent away a good many more than that absolutely FREE to anyone who had purchased the original STREET PATROLLER back in 1986! So therefore "bearing in mind the BBC readership percentage of Probe" (and that most of it had probably got the game one way or the other), I decided that the intended advertisement would, after all, be "a complete waste of money". A reasonable decision, yes? So you may ask, why didn't I say that in the first place? And the truth is that I did. That letter was originally a personal one to Mandy where all it wanted was a sympathetic hearing and that would be the end of it. However, Mandy then asked me if I could approve publication of the letter, to which I agreed but ONLY if she thought it would help push people into supporting (amongst others) the other three authors (see page 13, August issue) who were considering retiring from producing adventures, as my decision was already made. Do tell Paul, where is the selfish, money-grabbing attitude that you so vividly portray in that? Or maybe you just made a desperately inaccurate conclusion from insufficient evidence? No, surely not... Shifting forward to Paul's next comment, regarding the pleasure of writing games, well this is where I AM guilty. But, and I'm not sorry to disappoint you Paul, it's most certainly not your link with money which causes me to stop and say sorry, I made a mistake here. This is in fact the other major reason why I decided to call it a day. You see, after completing THE REMIX, I took up another completely different job at the start of this year, thus immediately cutting my programming time to almost nil. And so - as I will freely admit - I am too stubborn to fall back on any kind of adventure writing utility to speed things along, to continue producing games at any acceptable rate would have meant me being tied to the keyboard and associated paperwork in all of my free time, therefore no social life, no nothing. It doesn't need an expert to tell you that there's no pleasure in that, just sheer masochism. Making sense? Thought it might. To avoid this letter becoming too elongated, I'll jump straight to Paul's final comments. And, to coin a phrase, "this is what really annoys me" - Paul has the bare faced cheek to preach priorities! Not please correct me if I am wrong, but shouldn't it be

the TOP priority of any good columnist to check the facts before putting pen to paper? It's not that Paul just failed to do this, but what really narks is that he had the ideal chance to do so and chose not to. Yes, I was at the Convention too, and would have been quite willing to answer any questions that he might have wanted to put to me. Paul, why didn't you challenge me? For a columnist that I have previously heaped praise upon (as owners of THE REMIX will know), I am really very disappointed in you. And finally, may I thank all those who wrote in to Probe last month who were able to see beyond my original brief comments and right through the following months comedy show. To Jim MacBrayne in particular, I say excellently thought out comments, and beautifully put - thanks matey. I do not wish to say anything further on this matter, and now that I am no longer programming I hope to be able to catch up on some of the excellent games that I have missed over the years, and continue to be an active member of Probe well into the future. Thanks for hearing me out.

SIMON MAREN, Tamworth, Staffs.

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A WARM SENSE OF ACHIEVEMENT

October's Probe has made me reach for the wordprocessor again! The heated debate in the letters pages about the state of the adventure game scene caught my eye (well, reached out and grabbed it, actually). One day, many moons ago, (says I, leaning on my walking stick) I bought a copy of GAC for the C64 and set about writing an adventure. It was a conversion/upgrade from a game I had written for the VIC 20. Two or so months of feverish programming later I handed the game to my brother to play(test). He was so impressed that he wrote a game for me. So there we were, with two reasonable games and the question "Could we sell them?" So we put an advert in C&VG one month and promptly forgot about it. I was with great delight that we received a few orders for the games, two on one tape. That was a big thrill, so we finished writing another game and advertised that, including a Mailshot to the people who had bought the original games. To our great surprise, a few of them bought the second tape! That meant they liked the first games! So what? Well, for me I felt a great thrill when the customers actually bought the second tape after playing the first. We made a little profit but not enough to cover the time spent writing the games. As far as I was concerned, my relatively brief foray into the adventure market had been a success. Fame? Fortune? No, but that warm sense of achievement. Paul Rigby's letter was quite a blow or steam! He wrote some valid, down to earth points about the attitude of adventure authors concerning sales of their games. Paul said about plastic modellers "The principal reason... love for the hobby... want to share and display their skills... bask in admiration" etc. How does the author share and display his/her skills? Well, they could write for ADVENTURE CODER, they could exhibit their games at conventions and they can sell their games. For the love of it maybe, but if nobody is interested, why bother? Where does the admiration come from if nobody wants to play the games? They feel insulted because they feel that the customer has turned his back on them. The problem is that the customer is entitled to do so, it's called freedom of choice. John Wilson's letter is an excellent example of how to make a business work. He proves the classic business equation; CAPITAL + TIME + EFFORT = SUCCESS. If you are successful then you build upon that success. Well done, John. It's interesting to see that Jim MacBrayne has chosen to market THE MISSION himself. I shall be ordering this game in due course, I wish Jim every success. He's made a stand for text games and I hope he isn't "left standing all alone, disk in one hand, morals in the other." Jim's morals are definitely not for sale! Anyone who has the programming skill (let alone the imagination) to write those games

deserves success. Why do authors write adventures? Initially it might simply be for the challenge of writing one. Where does the incentive come from when that challenge is gone? Selling games and making a profit is the next obvious incentive. In the old days, the challenge of writing a game using a utility and getting a good review was enough in itself. There was a sense of fun and er... adventure (sorry) in writing adventures. These days the aura seems to be fading to be replaced by a group of jaded programmers who can't see a reason to carry on. What the scene needs is an influx of new talent to revitalise it. Go on, write a game today!

JOHN FERRIS, Potters Green, Coventry.

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FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH, HERE IS MY TWOPENNYS WORTH

The letter section in the November issue was pretty lively and revolved mainly around the state of the homegrown market and the attitudes of the producers. Well, for what it's worth, here is my twopennys worth. It is common knowledge that the profits that are derived from selling your own games is, to say the least, very small. Especially when the time spent is added to the equation. Nevertheless, in spite of all this, there is great satisfaction to be gained from being in at the birth of the idea to the fruition of the completed adventure. Yes, it's nice when your game sells more than you had anticipated, we're only human after all! But if the sales are small, so what! It's back to the drawing board to create another flop! Let's face it, it's only a hobby whether you create adventures or play them. I would just like to answer Sue Roseblade when she pleaded with us not to turn all our games over to Zenobi. Well, I for one am very grateful to John for taking over, the most boring aspect of selling your own games, and that is the copying. Such a waste of time when it is done one tape at a time when I could be, either in the garden or just messing around on the computer. I remember a couple of years ago when Mike Gerrard kindly offered me a chance to sell some games through a special coupon offer in YOUR SINCLAIR. When the issue came out I was on holiday and when I arrived home there was a veritable flood of envelopes on the door mat, awaiting inspection. I almost threw in the towel and frankly I was relieved when the orders dropped to a trickle. I dispatched over 550 tapes on that occasion over a period of 6 or 7 weeks. But I was offering 10 adventures for £8.50!

JACK LOCKERBY, River Software, 44 Hyde Place, Aylesham, Canterbury.

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WHAT IS PROBE ABOUT?

Is Probe a magazine in which adventure writers besoon their impoverished game sales and quibble over whether writing adventures is a hobby or not? Or is it a magazine in which such writers exchange useful hints and tips on the creation, development and writing (and all other aspects) of adventure games? As a keen adventurer (both player and writer) I would like to think it is the latter, yet the past few issues of Probe has made me think otherwise. Please do not misunderstand me, it is not that I disagree with debating the future of home-grown adventure games and the notion that this future somehow depends on the readers of Probe becoming less thrifty and (perhaps) less choosy. In fact, in moderation such debate is a good thing. But surely enough is enough! I am presently writing my first adventure game. The process is challenging and more importantly, enjoyable. When the game is finished I intend to sell it. If the game sells I will be pleased (naturally). If it doesn't I will put it into the Public Domain. In either case I will be satisfied, knowing that the game is not just sitting around idle but is in fact being used for what it was originally intended. That is, being played!

MICHAEL FLETCHER, Pantymwyn, Mold, Clwyd.

I MUST CLARIFY SOME POINTS

It was very nice of you to give me a mention within the News section of Probe (October issue). However, I think I had better clarify some of the points made about the mags I write for before I incur the combined wrath of half a dozen rampaging editors! The only magazines I write a regular column for are RAZE (aka The Games Machine), YOUR COMMODORE, YOUR AMIGA, STRATEGY PLUS, FORMAT (a mail-order serious speccie mag), a couple of American mags and I'm very friendly with a new guy at ZZAP magazine named Hugh Myashiro (cough, cough) who's just started to write the adventure section (more coughing). Actually, I've known him for some time (collapses in a fit of coughing). I only write occasional articles/reviews for the following magazines: CONFIDENTIAL, CRASH, PC TODAY, CU AMIGA and AMIGA COMPUTING. I do not write for ST Format. Okay Eds, you can call off the dogs now! (Phew!) As far as CRASH and the absence of an adventure column goes. My advice echoes that of Mandy's. Please write and hassle the editor. He won't move unless there is a demand and yes each letter does make a difference. To adventure authors, I would ask that you send your latest creations (and any old games you'd like looking at - for that matter. A Golden Oldie slot is not an impossible thought) to the editor of CRASH. Mark the package for my attention and say that you would like the game to be reviewed in CRASH. You could also mention that, "Oh by-the-way, isn't it about time we had an adventure column in Crash? I remember the days when...". You get the general idea. Basically, if you don't make the effort, nothing will happen. I can't promise miracles, but there is nothing like a well organised conspiracy to get things moving.

I notice that Larry Horsfield has addressed all of my criticisms after my review of AXE OF KOLT in Probe. Version 3.0 is the one to look for (Is that right, Larry?) as it corrects all of those irritating design faults I mentioned. I can only praise and applaud Larry for taking the trouble to correct these errors, well done that man. As a result, AXE OF KOLT shoots to the top of my list as the best adventure I've played this year - destined to be a classic if there's any justice.

PAUL RIGBY, Tuebrook, Liverpool.

TEXT OR GRAPHICS?

Text or graphics? That is the question. Who really gives a monkey? One mans (or womans) joy is another mans (or womans) poison. You see, authors and players who think text-only adventures are the cream will be matched, no doubt, by a similar number of authors and players who think graphics are the bees knees. Either way, if adventures are being produced, what does it matter? Now when there are no adventures being produced then the time to moan has arrived and everyone will be in the same leaky boat. In the end, though, authors will write what they feel is best and people will buy their favourite game style, be it text-only, graphics, westerns, fantasy, detective, Sci-fi, horror or whatever, anyway you look at it someone, somewhere is going to find the latest release not to their taste. Unless someone releases "Ned Kelly Versus the Troils of the Dead Planes of Mars! A Whodunnit?" In two versions one with graphics and one without. Even then someone would pipe up, "Er... well actually I don't like adventures with silly titles." So why not just enjoy adventures in whichever format you like, they might not last much longer.

STEVE CLAY, Ellesmere Port, South Wirral.

A TOUCH OF NOSTALGIA

A mammoth clear out of desk and associated storage areas this week turned up a full set of Adventure Probe. I'd forgotten what a good read it is! For the last couple of years my attention has been

diverted from pure adventures to RPG's (especially DUNGEON MASTER, POPULOUS, SIM CITY and DRAKKHEN) so it was pure nostalgia to re-read all the reviews, hints, articles etc. of all the games which hooked me on adventuring in the first place. So nostalgic in fact that I promptly borrowed some Infocom games from Sandra (Sharkey...Ed) and have spent the last two days tearing my hair out with TRINITY (Grue... where were you when I needed you?!). Incidentally can I nominate myself as Frob material? Three hours I spent looking for a silver coin! First of all I forgot that 20p is "silver", then remembered and spent an hour trying to have it accepted as legal tender. Next hour was spent attempting to blow the thing up to transform its appearance to make it acceptable. Third hour was spent trying to get into the second part of the game with a 50p coin instead. Finally Mandy came to my rescue with the location of the offending article. I wouldn't mind but I had done EVERYTHING to that '*****' body EXCEPT looking in a very specific feature. As Mandy put it, there should at least have been a (death?) rattle to give me a clue in my frantic manipulations. Ah well... talking of rattles and sore ankles... "What now?". Next on the agenda are LURKING HORROR which I began but abandoned some years ago and HOLLYWOOD HIJINX, to be followed by PERSONAL NIGHTMARE. At the same time I will be looking at Jim McBrayne's new game, MISSION (Amiga 1meg only) which currently has me totally flummoxed. Unlike his other games which were released as shareware, MISSION will be on sale around the time you read this, for £7.50 direct from him at 27 Paidyre Crescent, Newton Mearns, Glasgow, G77 5AQ. Jim is currently converting his games (including THE HOLY GRAIL and THE GOLDEN FLEECE) to ST, but as far as I know they will again be restricted to 1meg machines due to the vast size of the data involved. Being vociferously "anti-pretty-pictures" and believing graphics "positively detrimental to the game", Jim feels that "the majority of modern adventure games on the market spent too much time and energy developing pretty pictures at the expense of a strong story line". He also feels an element of humour to be absolutely essential. These strong beliefs are reflected in the scope and nature of his games. Having played graphically slanted RPG's for the last few years I found no difficulty reverting to text-only due to Jim's "graphical" descriptions. The difficulty I did (and do) find is actually solving the devious puzzles he sets! Thanks, Jim, for some very enjoyable games. For those of you with Amigas who like Infocom style/standard text-only adventures, look out for WORLD in the PD Libraries, it's both difficult and fun... one of those games which reveals its secrets most readily to teams of solvers. Anyone interested in writing adventures might like to get in touch with Mandy as she should shortly be in possession of ALL the copies of ADVENTURE CONTACT ever published by both myself and Colin Page (has anyone heard from him?... my letters have gone unanswered) and will be able to sell them in aid of Probe funds. (Perhaps to be put towards future Convention costs?) A PD (or shareware?) adventure creator for the ST which came my way recently is AGT which looks interesting but I haven't yet had time for a proper look. Accompanying the utility came a couple of adventures written with it. First impressions of the games are of unweildiness and long waits for disc access - reviews shortly if I can get any further into them! Whoops! Better stop here before I begin to out-Hester Chris! Time to get back to TRINITY - I have to find a screwdriver before the end of the world!

PAT WINSTANLEY, Wigan, Lancs.

(I have received the issues of Adventure Contact that Pat has kindly donated to Probe to help funds. (Thanks, Pat, it is appreciated). There are 19 issues and they should cost £1 each. If anyone is interested please let me know.....Mandy)



IN-TOUCH



AMSTRAD CPC software wanted: Cassette version of RETURN TO EDEN required for Amstrad CPC. Please write with price required to JIM HAZLETT, 24 Walnut Close, Thornaby-on-Tees, Cleveland, TS17 8NQ.

AMSTRAD CPC software for sale or swap: MINI OFFICE II (Disc), TASWORD 6128 (Disc), GRAPHIC ADVENTURE CREATOR (Disc), THE CODE MACHINE - Amstrad Assembly Language Course. All at £5 each. MANDRAGORE, SEABASE DELTA, SUBSUNK (all adventures) at £1.25 each. BOB ADAMS, 81 Uplands, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL8 7EH.

AMSTRAD software for sale: HOLLYWOOD HIJINX, LURKING HORROR, STATIONFALL at £10 each. PAWS (for CPC and PCW) with graphics upgrade at £10. THE EXPERIENCE (Tape), THE HOBBIT (Tape) and TIME AND MAGIK at £8 each. Everything with original packaging. Please telephone for availability: N.S.RAVAT (0533) 666562 after 5pm please.

AMSTRAD software for sale: MINDFIGHTER with 160 page novel £5. KEN DEAN, 16 Swonnells Court, Maltsters Way, Oulton Broad, Lowestoft, NR32 3PY

AMSTRAD software wanted: BARDS TALE I required for CPC on disc. Please write with price required to ANGELA ALLUM, 22 Point Royal, Bracknell, Berks, RG12 4HH.

IBM software wanted: Infocom adventure BUREAUCRACY by Douglas Adams wanted, please write with price required to GEOFF FORSYTH, 3 The Green, Low Worsall, Yarm, Cleveland, TS15 9PJ.

ATARI ST software for sale: CASTLE MASTER, THEME PARK MYSTERY £10 each including postage from: LON HOULSTON, 3 Pritchett Drive, Littleover, Derby, DE3 7AX.

SPECTRUM software for sale: THE FOREST (Phipps Orienteering Simulation (never used) - in video case with handbook. £4.50 ono. MARGO PORTEOUS, 1 Marina Drive, Spondon, Derby, DE2 7AF. Tel (0332) 665010

COMMODORE 64 software for sale: TREASURE ISLAND (Mastertronic), KENTILLA, KOBAYASHI NARU, QUEST FOR THE HOLY GRAIL, VENOM, MYSTERY OF THE INDUS VALLEY, ZZZZ at £1 each. STAINLESS STEEL RAT SAVES THE WORLD, COLOUR OF MAGIC, STAR WREK, SHARD OF INOVAR, SOULD OF DARKON £1.50 each. AMANDA OLIVER, 7 The Hassocks, Waterlooville, Hants, PO7 8QG.

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30p each to cover costs.

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Please send SAE if you require the full list of solutions available.



ARE TEXT ADVENTURES DEAD OR MERELY LYING LOW?

A continuation of the premature postmortem.

By TED BUGLER

There can be little doubt that virtually all of us were introduced to computers for some reason other than in order to play adventures - in my case, as with many others I suspect, it was in order to play "games" although I tried to kid myself that it was to keep one step ahead of my children's education! Having thus acquired a computer for such spurious reasons, we all somehow got sidetracked somewhere along the way to the extent that we are all now adventure-freaks, or at least I assume that this is why you are reading this article (unless of course you stumbled upon Probe in Hugh Walker's waiting room where I'm sure it makes better reading than most dentist's reading material other, of course, than the mandatory copies of Punch).

What then was it that caused us to be sidetracked from the "real" reason for having a computer? Quite simply, judging by all "The Adventure That Got Me Hooked" articles, it was in 99 cases out of 100 none other than... a text adventure! In the case of the 100th reader it was of course Transylvanian Tower by Richard Shepherd Software, but then there's always one, isn't there? So given the formative influence on our adventuring of the dear old "textie" as Australians doubtless call it, are the pundits correct to write off text adventures, or is there life after graphics after all? Does it really matter? Of course it does! Silly question! So what do we do?

Quite simply we do not go around muttering "text adventures are dead", we go round to our local shop and ask "got any text adventures in this week, John?". In short, we buy all the text adventures that we can lay our hands on, to boost demand and prove the pundits wrong, heh heh! With one qualification! We don't subsidise rubbish. If we allow some of the more pathetic games currently available to be publicised as the sort of game we want to keep alive then we deserve everything we get, including Chronoquest V. We must sing the praises of the good authors but be prepared to be critical of the dross. Which, in a rambling sort of way, leads me to my conclusion, and indeed the very point of this page-filler - it's not that text adventures are dead, it's that "good" text adventures are, if not dead, then at least struggling to survive.

How could a company that wrote Dungeon Adventure and published Lords of Time produce Lancelot? How come the creators of The Pawn and Guild of Thieves went on to make Corruption and Fish? Much is currently being made of the Magnetic Windows design system, but will the games it supports be any good? How could the highly original and humorous Fergus Macneil write Mindfighter? What on earth induced the authors of the excellent Legend of the Sword to work for over two years on the sequel and then come up with Final Battle? How could Infocom, of all people, accept responsibility for Nord and Bert? If you can answer these questions, and countless others just like them, then you may be nearer solving the mystery of the terminal text adventure. In my opinion, the authors are in many cases themselves to blame, aided and abetted of course by misguided publishers and gullible, uncomplaining, customers, but ultimately it is the authors themselves who have allowed their talents to be redirected or wasted.

But now, at least, one author, Jim MacBrayne no less, has decided to stand firm - good on him! Let those who criticise his stand against

fame and fortune the easy way realise that if a few more quality authors had held firm against the "demands of the market" a few years ago then pretty pictures, feeble beeps and arcade sequences (a real turn-off, that one(I couldn't agree more...Ed)) would never have appeared! Just think, Leisure Suit Larry in purple prose, role-playing games in which you move your party around by typing "N" or "S", although of course there would be the odd high price to pay - Future Wars without the graphics would be a bit naff, I'm bound to concede! Come to think of it, it's pretty naff with the graphics! Food for thought eh? Your comments, please!



CHARACTER INTERACTION



By HUGH T WALKER

In the October issue of Probe, June Rowe posed the question, "What is Character Interaction?" and she appeared to conclude that whatever it is, it is something which she can do without. That this attitude is fairly widespread is not surprising when one reflects on the many misconceived attempts at its implementation, or the equally, proliferent false claims that it has been included in a particular game. Programmers seem to be as confused as adventurers over what constitutes *Interaction*. For example, however innovative *The Hobbit* may have been, and disregarding the unfulfilled promises of future delights which that game offered, it was the likes of Thorin sitting down to sing of gold for the hundredth time which gave *Interaction* a bad name. By definition, *Interaction* is "to act upon one another" so, in order to throw some light on what it is and what possible useful purpose it may serve in adventures, it may be a worthwhile exercise to consider what *interaction* is not!

We are all familiar with the ubiquitous locked door which may impede our progress in the traditional puzzle adventure. This may require a key, or even a particular type of key chosen from a selection on offer, and the possession of that key may have involved a sequence of actions on our part in order to secure that goal. Here we are then, confronted by a locked door which stubbornly refuses to go to lunch, however long we wait, and in possession of a vast array of keys of varying metallic content, and so, depending on the intelligence of the programmer and the complexity of the parser, we may proceed to open the door with inputs ranging from a simple "OPEN DOOR" to a whole series of finger/brain-numbing commands in an attempt to convince the game that an open door was our hearts delight rather than, perhaps, a delightfully potted palm, all the while regaled by edifying responses which may (or may not!) indicate that we are nearing our desired condition. More often than not, the door, once opened, has simply ceased to exist but, just occasionally, we can have a simply terrific time opening and closing or locking and unlocking the door (you can test the intelligence of the programmer by seeing what happens if you lock the door while it is open!).

No one in their right mind would suggest that this is *Interaction*, so why do so many people have the idea that giving the door legs and a warty nose creates *Interaction*? Whether it is a boring old door or an alcoholic goblin-guard, just waiting for that jug of drugged wine which we bought from the Gypsy, using the money which we earned by saving the princess... (or whatever) it remains no more than a barrier which prevents us from turning the page to reveal the next stage of

the story (assuming that there is one - which also depends on the intelligence of the programmer!) Consider the guard at the top of the stairs who will consider going to lunch, but only if we type "WAIT" at the landing below (ie. before we know (s)he is there!)... this is no more interaction than the exits which refused to appear in the worst outpourings of Rod (look-around-and-wait) Pike until we had ... er... looked around and waited. It is also extremely irritating if it requires us to replay from the last saved position (or worse... from the start!). The only difference between the inanimate door and the character in our path is that the door is less likely to hit us on the head! Consider the aforementioned gypsy! this character gives the wine in exchange for the money. The illusion of a transaction is ephemeral and if the Gypsy has no other role than (s)he might just as well have been a locked chest or other container secreted behind that closed door.

So, if any character could be replaced by an inanimate object then this precludes any pretensions towards *Interaction*. A further confusion is caused by animation in text adventures. For example, we may have a guard who doggedly plods around a set route through a series of locations and whom we must avoid by timing our movements or finding somewhere to hide. I don't think this is interaction any more than if that flaming door opened and closed in a set sequence of turns... but the game is getting that little bit more interesting and we are having to modify our actions in accordance with some on-going events in the game which are outside our immediate control. The solution may be for us to perform some feat which alters the pre-set pattern of the game. Perhaps we might drop an object along the route and scurry off to do our own thing, meanwhile the guard stops and picks it up, thus gaining for us a spare turn in which to perform some vital action and still leave or hide before the guard enters our location and terminates our adventuring. Naturally, the object dropped would have to be something which we can do without (unless our next quest is how to retrieve it) and should be innocuous enough not to alert the guard to the presence of unwelcome intruders. At this point I am having great difficulty convincing myself that this is not interaction! It is, of a sort, I suppose, but it is indirect. The guard remains unaware of our presence - which, after all, would be the whole point of that scenario.

To recap, our character is not interactive if it is a cunningly disguised locked door (I really am getting fed up with this door!) and if it is not aware of our presence. What else? Well, in his book, Noel Williams describes an alternative to the straight combat routine which includes a conversation module in which you may bribe or attempt to mollify the monster by your erudition. With some randomization, you may either so charm the beast that it gives you its gold and bids you adieu or you may annoy it until ferocious combat ensues. Is this interaction? Hmm? Primitive, perhaps, but it looks as if it might be getting close. By my rules, a truly interactive character requires knowledge of our presence, a sequence of movements/actions to perform in our absence and the ability to react to us favourably or unfavourably according to our own demeanor.

I think Alan Davis used a system where each character has a flag-variable which controls its response to you and which increments or decrements according to what it thinks of your behaviour. If the variable is negative then it won't help you and may even have a go at you but if it is positive then you have a friend for life (the length of which depends on how many negatives surround you). Presumably,

neutral characters with zero would happily stand by while you were torn limb from limb. Alternatively, your character could have one variable to which the others react according to their alignment. Thus you might upset the works by making yourself bosom chums with all the bad guys. Just think of the programming required to accommodate your antisocial tendencies! Hang on though! Fellow adventure-geriatrics may recall that Legend's *Valhalla* did something very much like this. Is anything really new in the Mystic Realm?!

I cut/broke my reviewing teeth on Alan Davis' interactive "*The Journey*" and, believing that interaction was a four-letter word, I savaged it quite unjustifiably in Bodger Garret's *Adventureline Newsletter* (later renamed *The Guiding Light*). I was very cross when the Elf, whose favour I had successfully curried, would randomly insist on taking an unscheduled break and wander off to get itself killed just before I needed it to perform a certain action in the game. When I considered the complexity of the programming involved to achieve the game-mechanics and when the wisdom of hindsight set in, I realised that a reviewer needs to be at least as intelligent as the programmer, that to go off in a huff is not a reasonable form of transport and that *he who stands on his high horse is in no position to control the reins.*

However, I remained unconvinced about the use of interaction, until I played *Terrors of Trantoss* and became enraptured over the sequence where the two brothers perform coordinated, separate actions in different locations to achieve the desired result. (This is the game which becomes unplayable on the Spectrum once you have saved because it keeps interrupting to ask if you want to save, won't take no for an answer and takes over a minute to save! ... this is also the game which Amanda Barrie said had no bugs and that if I didn't like Ariolasoft's games then I didn't have to play them and she wouldn't send me any more to review... but then Paula Byrne had said much the same about *Lord of the Rings* and Helbourne Mouse's games!)

The exact chronology of the following has become confused by the mists of time, but further nails in the coffin of my anti-interactive prejudices were hammered home by Tom Frost's *Double Agent* and Level 9's *Gnome Ranger*. I loved the ability to coordinate the actions of separate characters and Flopsy, from *Ingrid's Back*, remains my all-time favourite supporting cast. Perhaps being able to get these characters to do what I want appeals to me so much because it is something that I can never get my wife, kids and rabbit to do!... but it doesn't always work out as planned.

For example, in *Gnome Ranger*, Ingrid is supposed to return a pot of gold to the Leprechaun, thus earning the latter's undying loyalty. What I (as Ingrid) did was to ask the Gnymp, who had the gold at the time, to give it to the Leprechaun, which she did ... with the result that when Ingrid needed the Leprechaun's help, that worthy soul didn't want to know. Presumably it was the Gnymp to whom he owed his allegiance. To write this off as a bug would be a grave injustice since the game mechanics are working perfectly, illustrating the perennial course of programming which is that computers do what you tell them to do - not what you MEANT them to do!

So is *interaction* the ability to give instructions to other characters in the reasonable hope that they will be executed (before you are!), according to the response created by your previous actions? If so then it is unfortunate that both Tom Frost and Pete Austin then succumbed

to the "If one aspirin cures a headache then let's see what a bottle-full will do" - syndrome and took an overdose in "Gordello" and "Lancelot" and "Scapeghost", respectively. However, at this point in the narrative, I am no nearer to any clarification of what interaction actually is. In fact, I am further away from it than ever as I am continually beset by contradictions and exceptions to the general rules which I am trying to draw. I think that the main problem of coming to grips with the nature of *Interaction* is that it is a whole philosophy of game design and not just one single concept which can be neatly categorised. In fact, it may be a fatal error to consider *Character Interaction* in isolation from the overall design and that we should mourn the loss of so many babies which our prejudices have thrown out with the interactive-bathwater.

What if, instead of just individual characters reacting to our behaviour, we had the whole game remodelling itself around us? Any such attempt would be almost unplayably cumbersome on an 8-bit, cassette-based computer because of the need for multiple loads to cater for all eventualities... (prove me wrong, please!). However, given enough memory and disk-access this could open up a whole new experience which was hinted at by Infocom's *Plundered Hearts* where, as you progress towards one of the possible end-game-messages, one of a number of alternative, but ultimately convergent, scenarios unfolds according to the directions and actions taken by your heroine. The result is a relatively small game-area, by 16-bit standards, which is difficult to play the same way twice. This game presented a convoluted story in which many scenarios were mutually inaccessible. Instead of criticising this apparent waste of memory, we should have hailed it as a break away from the linear puzzle/solution constraints imposed historically on text adventures "because that is how they have always been". (I am continually amazed by the luddite tendencies of us adventurers. We crave new scenarios and fresh challenges but turn on innovation as non-conformist deviations.)

Returning to the 8-bit machines for the moment, I am equally amazed by my ability to contradict myself as it occurs to me that this sort of multiple-possibility-scenario does exist in *Lords of Midnight* and *Doomdark's Revenge*. I have had many, many hours of enjoyment from these games on my Spectrum, with that extra tingle-factor of a tangible experience of "being there"; but the dedicated adventurers who read 'Probe may cry "Foul!" as the absence of text input precludes them from consideration as "adventures". If this is so, then what about *Runestone*? This has text-input as well as an enormous playing area in which the good guys (male and female) go about their business unless you interfere, whilst the bad guys definitely do not have your best interests at heart. This was a sadly neglected game and few of you will have experienced the thrill of leading a rescue party to save one of your people who has been kidnapped.

As for "being there"... I fell in love with the heroine! (pure and platonic, of course ... but, alas, unrequited).

(I am delighted to have found someone else who was "smitten" with *Plundered Hearts*. I thought I was the only one, until today. Please Hugh, referring to the previous article, paragraph 1, if you would like an extra copy of *Probe* to pop in your waiting room, please let me know. It will be good for *Probe* and will really take your patients' minds away from the forthcoming treatment!.....Mandy)



GETTING YOU STARTED

GOLDSEEKER

By MARGO PORTEOUS played on Spectrum

You start with MATCHES and LOOSE CHANGE. You won't need the latter so DROP COIN (it won't recognise LOOSE or CHANGE), EAST, GET LADDER, NORTH, SOUTH, GET TOOL, WEST, NORTH, DIG SAND, GET LAMP, SOUTH, SOUTH, ENTER CLIFF, SOUTH, USE TOOL, WEST, NORTH, DROP TOOL (this is needed near the end and the best place to pick it up is here), SOUTH, ENTER CLIFF, GET BOTTLE, DUST BOTTLE, READ LABEL, FILL LAMP, SOUTH, ENTER TUNNEL, USE MATCH.....

CHRONOQUEST II

By NIC RUMSEY played on Amiga 500

You find yourself in a strange land: ADVANCE (to the beach), TAKE ANCHOR, SEARCH BEACH (to find some coins in the bottom right of the picture), GET COINS, ADVANCE (to the village, where all the inhabitants are just sitting about ignoring everything. It is the village of the Lotus Eaters, a place where the people only wanted to eat the lotus fruit and ignore the rest of life. You can examine everything but this fruit, touch it and you will die.) PICK UP THE JAR, PICK UP THE TRUNK and then RETREAT, RETREAT (to the Explora. If you examine objects in the Inventory with the reactor open you will notice that the time scale along the top of the picture gives and indication of the time zone that the object will take you to from your current location (eg it would take you from 1 to 8, indicating a +7 value in time travel terms. There are also minus values)). USE COINS ON REACTOR (and you are transported to the deck of a ship in the land of Laestrygonians, a cannibalistic people who caused a lot of trouble to Odysseus and his crew), ADVANCE (to the bow of the ship where a golden lion is), EXAMINE LION'S TAIL (to find a spear head at its tip), GET SPEARHEAD, EXAMINE RING (on the right side of the boat), GET RING, Do not advance further than the bow or you will die when the boat is sunk by a boulder throwing giant.....

FAIR GROUND

By TONY MELVILLE played on Spectrum

SE, E, GET HAT, WEAR HAT, S, GET BAR, N, W, N (in Hall of Mirrors), BREAK MIRROR (with bar), DROP BAR, GET CROSS, SW, S, E, E, E, GET ROPE, S, GET WATER, N, W, W, S, E, S (only with the cross as you scare the Vampire), GET MAP, READ MAP (a map of the islands), UP, E, GET BOOK, READ BOOK (the key to problems is "RAZIDA"), S, E (in Crystal Room), PULL LEVER (for a surprise), DROP BOOK and CROSS, N, S, S, GET SPADE and SWORD, N, N, N, S, E, E, STRIKE SKELETON (with sword to see a passage south), DROP SWORD, DRINK WATER (as you are thirsty), W.....

UNDERGROUND ADVENTURE

By TONY MELVILLE played on Spectrum

In this adventure there is a Gargoyle, when you see it, input THROW AXE, GET AXE and save quite often. From the start: GET TORCH, GO SOUTH, GO SOUTH, GET MATCHES, GO SOUTH, LOOK, GO EAST (it's dark), LIGHT TORCH, LOOK, GET STAFF, GO WEST, GO SOUTH (by a chasm), WAVE STAFF (a bridge is appears), DROP STAFF, GO SOUTH, GO SOUTH, GO EAST, GET AXE, GO NORTH, GO NORTH, GO WEST, GO NORTH, GO EAST, GO EAST, CHOP TREE (with axe), LOOK.....

CONTRIBUTIONS ARE URGENTLY NEEDED FOR THIS SECTION PLEASE!! I HAVE NONE AT ALL FOR THIS FAVOURITE SECTION FOR NEXT MONTH - HELP!...MANDY

HINTS AND TIPS



SCAPEGHOST

By C. STOKOE

Put foil in lamp to rust lights.
Freeze water to get ID.



BARDS TALE I

By MAREE WALSH

Create the team that you want - re-rolling where necessary to get the best state. Leave the Adventure Guild with 4 or 5 of the A-team ie. the made-up party that comes with the game, making up the balance of the party with two of your own characters. At first explore close to the Guild, coming back at night. As the characters become more experienced explore further staying near a temple at night. This means you can be healed between battles. As your own characters reach Level 2 (or 3), gradually replace more of the A-Team with your new characters, until the entire party is your own choice.

ESCAPE FROM HODGKINS' MANOR

By JUNE ROWE played on Spectrum

If you open the front door,
You'll never go through it,
Examining all
Will soon show how to do it.

The dog is friendly -
A paper-boy hater.
You won't find a bone for him
Until much later.

You'll meet a French chaffeur
Somewhere 'en passant' -
How to get rid of him?
Give him a croissant!



MYSTERY OF MONROE MANOR

By GEORGE KERSEY played on Spectrum

Try to shift the cases. Break the cases with the pike.
You can repair the stairs with the hammer and timber.
When you insert the mace into the armour it reveals a secret!

There is a door behind the mummy.
Once past the mummy there is a platform above you that is too high to reach unless you have some ladders.
The wardrobe is locked from the outside.
Twist the ring in the door once you've taken the coins and gone south.
Light the candle and insert the ankh in the sarcophagus.

THE (TWO PART) HERMITAGE

By MARGO PORTEOUS played on Spectrum

GAMBLING ROOM: No matter what the instructions on the screen are, the only input that works is "BET ON (COLOUR) BIRD" - it doesn't seem to matter which colour you bet on! IN THE CRYPT: It isn't enough to have the crucifix, you must hang it on the nail on the door.
By the way, don't try to row the rowing boat - you have to "SAIL" it!



AURAL QUEST

By JACKIE HOLT played on Spectrum

- To find the phone - LIFT COVERS.
- Need a Lawyer? - Buy coffee.
- Stuck in hospital? - Ring Accountant.
- Take Joe to Tokyo.
- To enter a closed door, wear a watch!
- To enter a gate you need a token.
- Australians like Fosters!

THE GOLDEN VOYAGE

By RON RAINBIRD played on Atari 800XL

Wear sandals when walking ashore.
 Sailing procedure: Weigh anchor, set course, climb mast taking telescope, look telescope and if land sighted, go down and drop anchor. If no land sighted, repeat climbing procedure. Make sure the anchor has been dropped before leaving ship, otherwise vessel will not be there when you return.



REVENGE OF ZOR

By BARBARA BASSINGTHWAIGHTE played on BBC

- Blow whistle in the forest.
- Can't pass Narcissus? Give Glass and you will receive the Lodestone.
- You have a rusty sword, to make it magical, put bat wing, tooth, frog leg and phial in bowl, after spell is mixed, put sword in.
- In the Kings Bedroom, kick cabinet to reveal a secret drawer.
- In Vast Cave, rub ring to destroy Hydra.

LORDS OF TIME - GOLDEN OLDIE

By STEVE McLAREN played on Amiga

- Can't get across stream? Tie planks together, drop plank.
- Can't pass Narcissus? Give Glass and you will receive the Lodestone.
- You cannot take the silver coin until you give the fairy a tooth.
- When you meet T-Rex, go west four times and he will follow return and keep going until he meets an Allosaurus. They will fight and leave you to get on with the game.

CASTLE EERIE

By LOL DAKES played on Spectrum

- Extend Ladder then span hole in stairs.
- Give the haggis to the dog.
- Hang the coat over the TV monitor.



ALIEN RESEARCH CENTRE

By JUAN WILLIAMS played on Spectrum

In the airlock - wear suit, hold rail, open hatch. Smash grill with axe. Stab maggot. Cut cable with pliers.

AFTERSHOCK

By JUAN WILLIAMS played on Spectrum

Throw bun to elephant. Climb onto chair in lift. Connect handle to shaft. Carry TV and drop it in right place. Support stairs with beam. Jump onto roof from parapet. Drop ramp by chasm and drive car on ramp.

THE ADVENTURE PROBE INDEX 1990
REVIEWS

THE ADVENTURER	FEB 90	ITS MAGIC	FEB 90
ADVENTURES ON THE SPECTRUM	JAN 90	THE JADE STONE	MAR 90
AGATHA'S FOLLY	APR 90	LABOURS OF HERCULES	OCT 90
ASTEROID ADVENTURE	AUG 90	THE LOST CITY	MAY 90
AVON	JAN 90	LOST TEMPLE OF THE INCAS	AUG 90
AXE OF KOLT	JUN 90	MAGIC MISSILE	JUN 90
BEHIND CLOSED DOORS	JAN 90	MIDWINTER	JUL 90
THE BLAG ST	NOV 90	MINDWHEEL	JAN 90
BOG OF BRIT	JUL 90	MISER	FEB 90
CAPT. KOOK	NOV 90	THE MISSION	OCT 90
CASE/BEHEADED SMUGGLER	MAY 90	MOONHIST	JUL & SEP 90
CASTLE MASTER	AUG 90	ONCE UPON A LILY PAD	FEB 90
CHAOS STRIKES BACK	MAR 90	PAWNS OF WAR	MAR 90
CLOUD 99	SEP 90	POLEARN	OCT 90
COMP.ADV.S. - THE SECRET ART	JUN 90	PUZZLED ADVENTURER	MAY 90
CRISPIN CRUNCHY	NOV 90	RETADED CREATURES/CAVERNS	SEP 90
DARK SKY OVER PARADISE	NOV 90	SCAPEGHOST	FEB 90
DEAD END	MAR 90	SECRET OF LITTLE HODCOME	SEP 90
DEMONS TOMB	APR 90	SHOGUN	JAN 90
DOUBLE AGENT	SEP 90	SIMPLY MAGIC	OCT 90
DOMES OF SHA	SEP 90	THE SLAUGHTER CAVES	MAR 90
DRAGONS BREATH	OCT 90	SORCERER	AUG 90
DRAKKHEN	MAY 90	SOULDRINKER	AUG 90
ENIGMA TAPE MAGAZINE	SEP 90	STALKER	AUG 90
ESSEX	APR 90	STRANDED	MAR 90
FUTURE WARS/TIME TRAVELLER	MAR 90	STREET PATROLLER/THE REMIX	MAY 90
THE GRIMOIRE	JUN 90	THE TALISMAN OF POWER	SEP 90
THE HOBBLE HUNTER	JAN 90	THE TEST	JUN 90
THE HOLY GRAIL	APR 90	ULTIMA 4	JUL 90
HOUND OF SHADOW	MAY 90	WHIPLASH AND WAGONWHEEL	FEB 90
INTO THE MYSTIC	SEP 90	THE WIZARDS TOWER	APR 90
ISLAND OF CHAOS	JUL 90	THE LAST DAYS OF DOOM	JUL 90

GETTING YOU STARTED

THE ADVENTURER	OCT 90	LAST DAYS OF DOOM	AUG 90
AXE OF KOLT	NOV 90	LIGHTMARE	JUN 90
BLOODWYCH	FEB & MAR 90	LOOM	NOV 90
CAVE CAPERS	SEP 90	THE LOST CITY	JAN 90
THE CHALLENGE	JUL 90	MINDFIGHTER	AUG 90
CUDDLES	NOV 90	MUTANT	AUG 90
DAEMON	OCT 90	NEVER ENDING STORY	NOV 90
DOMES OF SHA	JUL 90	PIRATE ADVENTURE	OCT 90
DRAGON WARS	SEP 90	PYRAMID	JAN 90
DUSK OVER ELFINGTON	NOV 90	QUARTERSTAFF	OCT 90
ESSEX	SEP 90	QUEST FOR THE GOLDEN EGGCUP	AUG 90
FOOTBALL FRENZY	APR 90	QUEST FOR THE HOLY GRAIL	SEP 90
FRANKENSTEIN	MAY 90	RICK HANSON	JUN 90
FROM OUT/DARK NIGHT SKY	APR 90	RIGELS REVENGE	JAN 90
THE GOLDEN MASK	NOV 90	SCAPEGHOST	SEP 90
HAMMER OF GRIMMOLD	JUL 90	SHARD OF INOVAR	JAN 90
A HARVESTING MOON	JUN 90	SHARDS OF TIME	APR 90
HAUNTED HOUSE	AUG 90	SHADOWS OF THE PAST	AUG 90
HIT	OCT 90	SHERLOCK HOLMES	OCT 90
THE HOBBLE HUNTER	MAY 90	SHIP OF DOOM	NOV 90
THE HOLY GRAIL	OCT 90	THE TEST	JUN 90
ICHOR	NOV 90	THE THIEF	JUN 90
INTO THE MYSTIC	NOV 90	TRACER SANCTION	SEP 90
THE ISLAND	OCT 90	WITCH HUNT	APR 90
JOURNEY/EDDIE SMITHS HEAD	NOV 90	WIZ-BIZ	APR & MAY 90

FULL AND SERIALISED SOLUTIONS

AVON	From	OCT 90	THE LOST CITY	From	APR 90
BALLYHOO	From	JAN 90	MYTH		NOV 90
KINGS QUEST	From	JUL 90	SORCERER	From	JAN 90
LANCELOT	From	JUL 90			

OBJECTS AND THEIR USES

AGATHA'S FOLLY	JUL 90	FUTURE WARS	MAY 90
THE BEAST OF TORRACK MOOR	NOV 90	GOLD ICON	MAY 90
BEHIND CLOSED DOORS 3	JUN 90	MAGNETIC MOON PTS.1 & 2	OCT 90
THE CASTLE	FEB 90	ORC ISLAND	FEB 90
DAVY JONES LOCKER	JUN 90	PYRAMID	JAN 90

HINTS AND TIPS

THE ADVENTURER	JUL 90	LIGHTHARE	JUN 90
ADVENTURE QUEST	OCT 90	LOCKS OF LUCK	OCT 90
AGATHA'S FOLLY PT1	MAR & JUN 90	LORDS OF TIME	OCT 90
AGATHA'S FOLLY PT2	JUL TO SEP 90	LUCIFERS REALM	OCT 90
APPLETON	SEP 90	MAGNETIC MOON 1	MAR, MAY & JUN 90
BARDS TALE	JUL 90	MAGNETIC MOON 2	AUG & NOV 90
THE BEAST	JUL 90	MINDFIGHTER	JUL 90
BEHIND CLOSED DOORS3	JAN & JUN 90	MISER	OCT 90
BEYOND ZORK	APR & OCT 90	MAJIK	JUN 90
BLIZZARD PASS	OCT 90	MYSTERY OF MONROE MANOR	MAY 90
BLOOD OF THE MUTINEER	NOV 90	MYTH	JAN 90
BOOSE UP	SEP 90	NINJA	OCT 90
BOUNTY HUNTER	NOV 90	NOB IN THE VILLAGE	JAN 90
CASE OF THE MAD MUMMY	NOV 90	NOT A PENNY MORE NOT A PENNY.	AUG 90
CASTLE MASTER	JUL, AUG & OCT 90	ONCE UPON A LILY PAD	AUG TO NOV 90
CASTLE OF MYDOR	NOV 90	ONE DARK NIGHT	MAR 90
CASTLE THADE REVISITED	OCT 90	THE PAWNS OF WAR	JUL 90
CHAOS STRIKES BACK	APR TO JUN 90	PENDANT OF LOGRYN	OCT 90
CLOUD 99	FEB & JUN 90	PHANTASIE 1	APR & JUN 90
CUTTHROATS	JAN 90	PUZZLED	MAY 90
DALLAS QUEST	AUG 90	PYRAMID	JAN 90
DEMON FROM THE DARKSIDE	FEB 90	PYRAMID OF DOOM	JUN 90
DOMES OF SHA	MAR & JUL 90	QUANN TULLA	SEP 90
DRACULA (2)	APR 90	REBEL PLANET	MAR 90
DRAKKHEN	JUN 90	RETARDED CREATURES/CAVERNS	MAR 90
DUNGEON ADVENTURE	MAR 90	RICK HANSON	APR 90
DUNGEON MASTER	MAR 90	ROBOTS OF DAWN	JUN 90
THE ENCHANTED COTTAGE	MAR 90	RUNNAWAY	JAN 90
THE EXTRICATOR	NOV 90	SCAPEGHOST 1.	JAN TO JUN 90
FAERIE	JAN, FEB & JUN 90	SCAPEGHOST 2.	MAY TO AUG 90
FANTASIA DIAMOND	OCT 90	SCAPEGHOST 3.	MAY TO AUG 90
FOREST AT WORLDS END	AUG 90	SHADOWS OF THE PAST	APR 90
GNOME RANGER	SEP 90	SHARD OF INOVAR	JUL 90
GUILD OF THIEVES-FEB, MAR &	MAY 90	THE SLAUGHTER CAVES	SEP 90
THE HERMITAGE	JAN 90	SOULDRINKER	SEP 90
HOUND OF SHADOW	JUL & AUG 90	SOULS OF DARKON	MAY 90
ICE STATION ZERO	SEP 90	SPACE QUEST I	NOV 90
IMAGINATION	NOV 90	SPACE QUEST II	JUN & AUG 90
INSPECTOR FLUKEIT	JUN 90	SPIDERMAN	NOV 90
THE ISLAND(KEN BOND)	JUL 90	STOWAWAY	OCT 90
JINXTER	JAN 90	TEMPLE TERROR	AUG 90
KING SOLOMONS MINES	JUN 90	ULTIMA 4	JUN & JUL 90
KNIGHT ORC	JAN 90	VALKYRIE 17	SEP 90
LABOUR OF HERCULES	AUG 90	VENOM	APR 90
LEATHER GODDESSES/PHOBOS	AUG 90	VILLAGE OF LOST SOULS	FEB 90
LEGACY FOR ALARIC	JAN 90	WITCH HUNT	MAR 90

Sincere thanks to JOHN WILDEY for compiling this index

A CHRISTMAS WISH



I wish you a happy Christmas and a happy new year,
May every good wish fill you all with good cheer!
All the hard work sending Probe out each month to you,
Becomes a labour of love when you become friends too.
This year, especially, a year of cheer and invention,
And remembered by me as the year of the convention!

I owe each and everyone of you a great big thank you,
For putting up with my mistakes in the nice way you do,
And for sending in all the great contents of Probe
Which are greeted with delight when they reach my abode.
If the pages are spotty, or slurred and a bit grotty,
They don't make you cancel your subs and go potty!

The letters you send full of our adventuring madness,
Make Probe much more interesting and fill me with gladness.
The pieces of humour from friends like Amster and Grue,
Make me split my sides laughing ere they're passed on to you.
The serious pieces from friends like Alan, Hugh, and Ted
Have me thinking, and agreeing and then nodding my head.

I won't mention Getting You Started, not this time,
Cos it caused me no end of a problem with the rhyme!
Oh dear, my cheeks are now all rosy, red and burning!
Shows an editor like me never ever stops learning.
Like when I stupidly said "Silver" at the end of a line,
There's an idea for a competition! - just get that to rhyme!

Probe's readership isn't big as I'm sure you'll agree,
It's rather cosy and friendly - like a big family.
But with all you friendly people, you readers out there,
My heartiest greetings for the season I'll share.
I hope the atmosphere of friendship you have for each other
Would spread through the world, each nation like a brother.

I hope that when you gaze at the lighted Christmas tree,
May the presents beneath be all that you hope them to be!
Not hankies, nor socks, nor perfumes nor ties,
That make you groan inwardly and fill you with sighs.
May they be full of adventures and software galore!
And make your Christmas this year be a top one for score.

May your swords remain sharp and your lanterns give light,
And in the darkest of mazes it always shines really bright.
May you always find a small key to fit that locked door.
And when faced with a dragon, your aim be always sure!
May your pencils be sharp, your map never run off the page,
And may your love of adventuring bloom and never age.

A happy Christmas to you all!

And may all your troubles only be found in adventures!

Mandy.

.....



HELPLINE

ALF BALDWIN	0452 500512	MON TO SAT 10AM TO 5PM	Spectrum.
JACK HIGHAM	0825 819631	FRI TO MON 7PM TO 10PM	Spectrum.
WALTER POOLEY	051 9331342	ANY REASONABLE TIME	Various.
DOREEN BARDON	0653 628509	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 6PM 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	081 9804645	ANY REASONABLE TIME	Amstrad.
ROBIN MATTHEWS	0222 569115 OR 0642 781073	EVENINGS AND WEEKENDS	IBM PC

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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.

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If you need to contact Probe please telephone 0492 77305. I will be available at all reasonable times any day apart from Sunday, and Monday afternoon, but please try to telephone between 10am and 10pm. If you are telephoning for help on an adventure then daytime only please! But please try the helplineers for help first as above.

PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT YOU ONLY
RING AT THE TIMES SHOWN



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