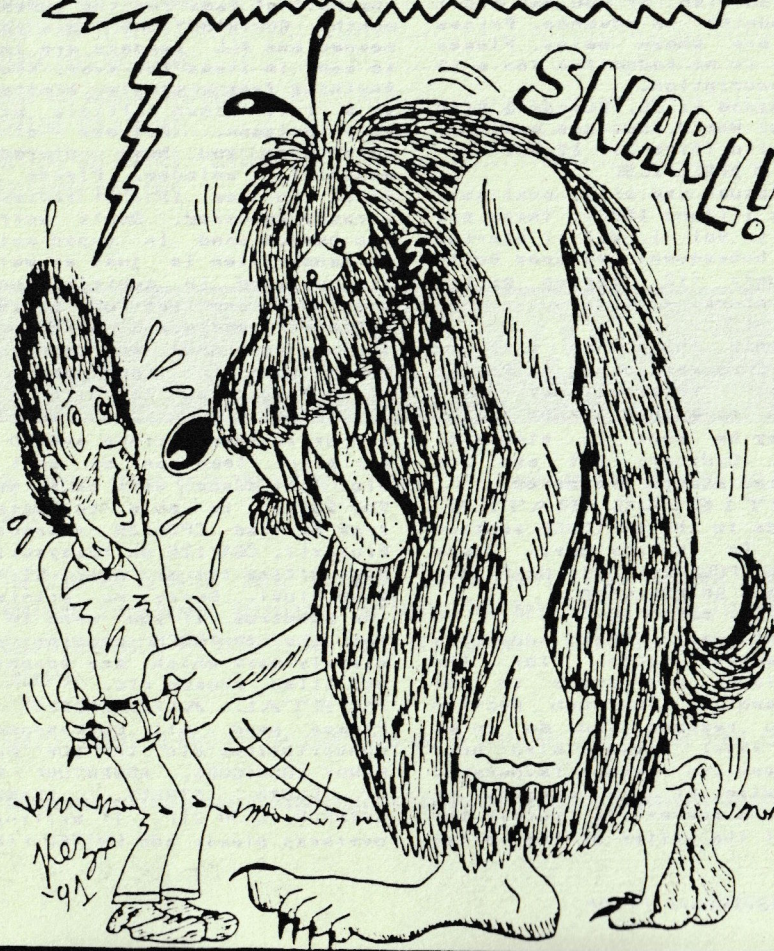


Adventure Probe

vol. 5 May 1991 Issue 5

AAARGH! GRUE!

SNARL!



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

CONTRIBUTIONS

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

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

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HALL OF FAME

My sincere thanks go to the following readers who kindly sent in contributions during the past month:

The Grue! Ron Rainbird, Margo Porteous, Jim Struthers, Robin Matthews, Jeremy Smith, Ann Robinson, Vince Barker, Paraskevas Tsourinakis, Tony Melville, Allan Phillips, H Knott, Barbara Bassingthwaighe, Alf Baldwin, Tom Frost, Neil Shipman. Reynir Stefansson, June Rowe and Jack Lockerby.

Special thanks to MerC for the cover logo and to Krazy Kez Gray for the great cover picture.

EDITORIAL

Welcome to Volume 5, Issue 5 of Adventure Probe.

This, as many of you will know, is a very special issue for me as it was exactly three years ago this month, that I wrote my first (very tentative) editorial! I really do owe each and every one of you a debt of thanks for putting up with me for so long. You all know the mistakes I make, all too well, but it was only when I challenged you all to discover what the April Fool was in the last issue that so many "boobs" were brought to my attention. Especially when I drop such clangers as to print a Getting You Started for ZZZZ and plonk it under the heading of ROBO CITY! My apologies to anyone who has been struggling to make sense of that with the wrong game! As the closing date for this competition isn't until 14th May, I can't tell you what it is but lots of you have already spotted it. Next month, also is a very special issue as it marks Probe's FIFTH birthday! Yes, for those newer readers who don't know, Probe was launched in June 1986 by Sandra Sharkey and Pat Winstanley who, I am delighted to say, both still read Probe and keep in close touch with everything that is going on. Sandra was able to attend the last Probe Convention and I am delighted to say that, all being well, we will have Pat with us this year to help us celebrate. On the subject of the Convention, May I remind all the new readers that this event will be held on 26th October this year in Birmingham and that all readers are cordially invited to come along and join us there. Tickets costs just £5 each for the best time any adventurer could have - guaranteed! Ticket applications were sent out with the March issue so if you have missed yours then please do drop me a line and I will send you one. Lots of applications have already been received but there is still room for a few more so please, if you have not already done so, do send in your applications early. All applications have been forwarded to Larry Horsfield who is in charge of printing and sending out the tickets which will be sent out in about a months time so don't worry if you haven't received yours yet.

Many of you have been wondering what I have been busy with over the past couple of months. Well I have been privileged to playtest and write the instruction manual for one of the most exciting software packages to have been released to date! This is the 3D Construction Kit by Incentive/New Dimension International/Domark. Most of you will have seen Castle Master, The Crypt, Driller or Total Eclipse which were written using Incentive's Freescape System? Well this month the system will be released on both 16 bit and 8 bit computers to allow everyone to create their own 3D adventures. I have never been so excited about a utility before! Just to be able to create your own 3D environment and to be able to enter it and explore and view it from all angles is a wonderful experience. That, coupled with a very simple language to enable animation, movement from area to area and so many things too numerous to mention here make it a package that I can recommend without any reservations whatsoever - it's fantastic!

Well, I am rapidly running out of space again. I sincerely hope that you all enjoy this issue which I think is packed with some real goodies - check out the article/interview by Paul Rigby and the Wizard Works by Tom Frost and you'll see what I mean. See you all again next month.

Mandy

REVIEWS

HATRACK II

AN INTERACTIVE ADVENTURE GENERATOR FOR THE AMIGA

Available from Havley Software, 27 Winnington Rd, Marple, Stockport SK6 6PD

Price £29.92 inclusive.

Reviewer - THE GRUE! on Amiga

It has been a long time coming but at last someone has developed an adventure creator for the Amiga, of course there are PD creators but this is the first commercial one that I know of. Well, what do you get for your money and how easy is it to use?

What you receive for your money is a rather daunting 100 page manual, quick reference card and a disk. A quick glance through the manual will at first have you wondering what you have let yourself in for! but if you take the time to read it a few times and follow the tutorial which covers about 20 of the 100 pages, you'll soon start to believe that anyone can write their own game using Hatrack. The manual is really well written and for the most clear with its instructions, having programming experience is not necessary but it would help you to get to grips with some of the more trickier elements of creating your own game at a faster rate. The manual covers almost everything you'd need to know about the system but because the system is so flexible in some cases it can't tell you what to do exactly and will offer the general principle involved and from there you will have to do some work of your own. After I had typed in the tutorial a lot of the manual which seemed beyond me started to make some sort of sense and my confidence was growing rapidly.

The system will work with the standard 512K Amiga but in my brief experience with it I would recommend 1MB to get a fuller use of it and you might find you need 1Meg to write a game that will run on a standard Amiga. That is because the generator uses about 22K and you must allow for any memory that your game takes. Hatrack II uses a windowing system with pull down menus and it is so easy to shift from the location windows to the message window but the best thing about Hatrack is that as you edit your adventure the changes and additions are effected immediately. The location window has various fields, the Summary is the brief description of the current location where you'd type in something like, IN THE DUSTY ALCOVE and then beneath that is the Description, where you can type in the full or verbose description of the dusty alcove. All descriptions begin with "You are" automatically with the generator so you can omit that part of each description. Below the description of the current location are all the compass points including in/out and up/down. If you are editing location 1 in your game and going NORTH will take you to location 2 then all you have to do is to type "2" next to north. If by going north you would come across a blocked exit then all you would have to do is type "999" instead of "2" and the game would respond with "That way is blocked", by what I hear you ask? Well it could be a locked door that depends on you and your game. So once you have typed in your description to your first location just click on the next arrow and you'll be presented with a new window which will be location 2, what could be simpler?!

Now the OBJECT WINDOW. Each object has two descriptions, a formal and informal one, the formal description is the one the player will see and the informal is the word the player will have to type in to refer to the object in the game. This is where one of the first nice features of Hatrack appear. The informal name of the object is automatically added to the vocabulary list for you. There is also a multiobject field if you wish to include objects with similar names such as RED KEY and BLUE KEY. Once this has been entered, click on the message gadget and a small window will appear allowing you to write your "examine message" for that particular object without having to go to the message section. The remaining fields in this screen are for the location, weight, bulk and carry status of the object, all very simple and straightforward.

The WORDS WINDOW is just as simple as the previous two, just type in the word then tell it whether it is a verb, noun etc or whether it is an object. The generator will automatically number them for you unless you wish two words or objects to have the same meaning such as GET and TAKE. Verbs 1 to 21 are predefined and you can scroll quite rapidly through the words list using the gadgets at the bottom of the screen.

The MESSAGE SCREEN is very easy, type in the message you want then click on the NEXT gadget and the next message screen and number is displayed ready for your message to be edited. If you wish to edit a particular message that you previously did but can't remember what number it was then there is a very helpful FIND facility where a small window opens up displaying all the current messages held by the system. Just scroll through to find the one you are looking for then click on the GOTO gadget and type in the number and it is instantly displayed on screen ready for editing.

The VARIABLE screen is also nice and easy to edit. The left hand field is for your variable name then it's initial state, its current state and room for a small description to remind you what the variable is used for. For instance, a variable name could be DOOROPEN and the initial state would be ZERO meaning the door is closed and the current state would be altered if the player opened the door. The description can be whatever you want such as "Flag set if door open".

So far everything has been, and is, very easy to follow. All the various edit windows have good search, find and goto gadgets which make life a lot easier as your game starts to grow and, don't forget, as you've been working your way through the various edit windows you can quit them and return instantly to the game and see the effects of your hard work (or rather easy work). The hard work comes next with the puzzle windows.

The PUZZLE EDIT window is the most complex of all, in fact it is probably the only complex edit window. There are 23 puzzles already defined as default for actions such as DROP, GET, INVENTORY, MOVING and printing location descriptions. Editing the puzzles is where a little programming knowledge would be helpful but it is not essential. The puzzles use a simple formula of:


```

IF VE=SEARCH AND OB=DOORMAT AND LC=2 THEN
IF UV(KEYFOUND)=0 THEN
ME(57):OC(KEY)=3:UV(KEYFOUND)=1
ELSE
ME(58)
ENDIF
ENDIF

```

This puzzle translates as, if the player has typed in SEARCH DOORMAT and is in location 2 then carry on, otherwise skip this puzzle and move to the next. VE refers to the verb and OB to the object. If the user variable KEYFOUND is set at zero then the key has not been found yet, to do three things: 1. Print message 57 to tell the player they've found it. 2. Give the key to the player (Object carry OC for key is set to three, which means the player is now carrying the key). 3. Set the user variable KEYFOUND to 1, which means the key has been found and can't be found again. If the user variable KEYFOUND is set to 1 then the key has already been found so print message 58 which tells the player there is nothing under the doormat.

Once all this has been typed in you have to click on the PARSE gadget, the generator will then attempt to interpret what you have just typed in, if everything is as it should be then the message PARSED OK will appear and you can then move on to the next puzzle. If you have not typed in everything correctly the generator will give you an error message and the cursor will move to roughly the place where the problem is in the puzzle. If you have missed out the end of a bracket or some other symbol then the error message will tell you exactly where the missing symbol should go and what symbol the generator is expecting to make the puzzle correct. This makes the system very user friendly but what really makes the puzzle window speed things up is that you can add messages and variables without having to return to their respective edit windows. You can also clear a whole puzzle to clipboard or just a single line from a puzzle. The benefit of this is that you can clear a line in a puzzle and see instantly how it effects that particular bit in the game, if it doesn't do what you want then simply return to the edit window and re-insert that particular line and try inserting a new line within the puzzle to give you the desired effect. The system is so flexible and open ended you can alter, edit and experiment and see the results instantly.

The puzzle edit window also has SEARCH, GOTO and FIND facilities, the latter is really good, where suppose you wanted to find a KEY it will then come up with a list of any puzzle with a KEY in them, all you have to do then is click in the GOTO gadget and the desired puzzle will be displayed for you to edit if you wish.

The last window is the GAME OPTIONS. This allows you to say what type of screen the game will be displayed on, the text colours, compass file, title bar etc. You can run your game as a workbench window or choose a custom screen, you can have a hi-res screen or a lo-res one. Screen choice should be made carefully as a two colour custom screen is only half as memory hungry as a workbench one. The difference between hi-res and lo-res is that the text in lo-res appears about three times the size of the hi-res screen.

The direction strings are also displayed here, allowing you to change them if you wish, this could be useful if you were on a ship and you wanted to alter WEST and EAST to PORT and STARBOARD. The initial and current locations are displayed, the initial is where the player will start the game from and the current can be altered to move around the game quickly for the purpose of testing, you can even alter the game prompt to whatever you want. All of these can be changed in seconds and the changes will be effected as soon as you exit this window. Hatrack also allows you to display an on-screen compass so the player can move around using the mouse, a couple of compasses are included on the disk but if you would like to edit or design your own there is also a MAKE COMPASS program on the disk. I liked this a lot because you can use an IFF picture and turn it into a compass, this meant that I could use the same compass and border as used by Infocom if I so wished.

The PARSER used by Hatrack is very sophisticated, very similar to Infocom standards and by using the up and down arrow keys the player can scroll back and forth through their previous commands. To say that is all there is to Hatrack would be very unjust and the system is so flexible and open ended, all the predefined puzzles, messages and macros can be edited, altered in almost any way possible. You can have up to 998 locations, 499 objects, 399 user variables and 999 words, puzzles and messages so you are more likely to run out of memory before you run out of anything else! At first the puzzles seemed to be used rather quickly but that was just due to my inexperience and as I progressed with Hatrack my puzzles became much more compact. What I had previously been taking two or three puzzles to do was now done in just one.

That just about covers the main features in Hatrack, everything is in the manual and on the screen and is nicely laid out. It even has a build-in OOPS command. One of the other nice things I liked about the program was the save routine, this like most other things with Hatrack is very flexible, giving the player total freedom over what they would like to do with it, i.e. save it to the game disk or a different one or to RAM. The program also contains a MAKEDISK program to prepare a blank disk ready to save your data to, a RUNMODULE program and the STANDALONE program which only works one way and once your data has been run through this cannot be loaded back into the generator. With the RUNMODULE program you can have more than one adventure on a disk but I would think most people would edit the startup sequence of the disk to make it auto-boot because it looks more professional, but it is still a good option to have.

I have very little to gripe about with my use of Hatrack and in my opinion it is the best adventure generator that I've seen on any machine. To give you some idea of how good I think it is, I tried to convert Bob Adams Amstrad adventure on it, I actually managed to do this in 2-3 weeks without a great deal of difficulty! It is great value for money and if you have ever thought of writing your own adventure this could be just the utility you have been looking for. Unfortunately my original version of Hatrack developed a bug. I sent off my disk together with my data disk for Hayley Software to look at and would like to thank Tony Heap who actually rang me up to tell me what had gone wrong and then returned by disks with the updated version almost immediately. Now that is what I call service! Oh by the way, Bobs game now runs perfectly and will soon be available from Mandy's Atlas Software. All I have to do now is write my own now. Lets think, REVENGE OF THE KILLER HAMSTERS sounds like a good title to me.....

ORB QUEST

Written by Paul and Timothy Stitt for the Amstrad CPC464/6128.

Priced at £5 on cassette or £7 on disc and available from NOW Software, 78 Radipole Lane, Weymouth, Dorset, DT4 9RS. Cheques etc payable to J.G.Pancott.

Reviewed by MARGARET CREWSDON played on Amstrad CPC6128

In this four part adventure, you play the part of Caldor Holford (a descendant of Prince Uldin), King Lothar XX's youngest son. The Dark Lord, Kalhazzar, claimed the land of Mandoria, killing the ruler, Lothar, and all his family. Caldor, fortunately was hidden and raised by the good wizard Balan. To overthrow Kalhazzar, the Great Orb of the Old Kings must be found. Caldor, as the only living heir, is the only hope, and Balan points him in the direction of the "Questor's Pit".

You arrive by boat at the quay of Mirekemp, where you have to find your way out of Mirekemp to the Pit. After consorting with dubious characters, eavesdropping, upsetting a lady's husband (if you're not careful), avoiding muggers and even resorting to a bit of crime yourself, you get there! If you thought that was nerve-racking, arriving at the Pit in part 2 creates even more problems. In a claustrophobic underground atmosphere, you need to be no-hydrophobic (water can be a problem) and athletic (to deal with confrontations with a Troll, a Barbarian and a fierce Lizard). Whew! You hardly draw breath (of fresh air even), when in part 3, down you go again only to be imprisoned. Get out of that! If you do, you have to pacify a ghost, free a Barbarian, be crafty with a crook and rescue the Blacksmith's brother. Never mind.....

Fresh air comes in part 4, dealing with Nature and helping a hunter. Just when you think you're safe there is a nasty confrontation with an Evil Wizard and a bridge to cross, but you get there in the end with the help of a friendly spirit! All through the game, digest everything you read and believe all you hear! It all helps as clues are everywhere!

I thought I was going to have trouble with the parser at first but common sense prevailed. Everything was very logical. Talking to the characters was rewarding, once I got the hang of it. You can roam around most of the locations without getting "killed off" right away, which gives you time to think, save your position and try different things.

I really enjoyed this game, and as a first attempt by the Stitt brothers, it is a very entertaining and well thought out production. The graphics every few locations are quite effective and add to the atmosphere. To sum up: Definitely a game to buy, and considering you are getting four games in one, not expensive. Less than £2 a game. It will keep most players occupied and entertained for hours. If this is a taste of things to come - keep it up lads - I look forward to your next one! Well done!

=====

CORTIZONE from High Voltage Software

Available for the Atari ST from Zenobi Software - £4.49

Reviewed by Neil Shipman

Crash! The bars come down in front of you.

"Cortizone," exclaims a voice, and the teletype starts to rattle away.

The Zone is a futuristic maximum security prison for both human and robot criminals based in and around a highly sophisticated, disused hospital. It is patrolled and operated by robotic guard drones which normally keep to their own section, allowing prisoners to roam freely in theirs, so chaos reigns supreme.

Doctor Stevenson is mad about being struck off the medical register for failing to treat racial minority patients properly. But he's not just mad - he's quite insane. Intent on revenge he has developed the adrenal bomb which is apparently capable of wiping out an entire race within days. He planned to hold the world to ransom unless he was given freedom to practise again plus a large sum of unicash. For his sins he has been condemned to the Zone, but it's too late - the bomb has been primed and is ticking away. It seems that its whereabouts and the instructions for defusing it are known only to the doctor.

Details of the bomb then follow...

If detonated it will release huge amounts of cortisone in gaseous form. This will force the release of large amounts of fatty acids and sugar into the bloodstream and the lethal cocktail will surge round the body creating intense high blood pressure, clogged arteries, heart failure, etc. Lucky victims would die instantaneously but for most the agonising ordeal could last for days. The weather would carry the hormone worldwide until everyone is affected!

The teletype continues to scroll...

One non-human prisoner in the Zone is a deep space research ship which has been decapitated for the crimes of droidslaughter and breach of safety conduct. But so super-intelligent is it that its head is still capable of communicating, computing and activating its devastating hydrogen ramscoop generator!

Mention is also made of Gerald "Tax" Mann whose crimes include fraud, arson and manslaughter - but he's out on bail.

All this information is provided in the ZoneFile, a program contained on one of the disks and written with STOS and STOS Maestro. The graphics are very well done, the sampled sound effects realistic, and it is a novel way of providing background information for the adventure. The authors have also thoughtfully included a separate text file which can be shown directly on screen so, if you want to check the information, you don't need to run the program and wait for the teletype to scroll all the way through.

The adventure program comes on the other disk, but so large is it that some files have had to be put with the ZoneFile. You'll be prompted at a certain point in the story to swap disks as necessary. Written with STAC it boasts about 100 well-described locations, nearly half of them accompanied by half-screen black and white digitised graphics.

An excellent, brightly-coloured loading screen graphic leads you into the adventure, at the start of which you are hiding under a pile of refuse in a dark alleyway outside the Zone. The inner building is mainly unguarded, leaving prisoners to fight over resources dropped in by supply chute. All you have to do is gain entry, search out the mad doctor and obtain the information needed to find and defuse the adrenal bomb. Easy, eh?

Well, no, it's not! There's a nice series of problems to overcome before you can get inside, and once you're in you soon find that the place is a mess. Pitched battles between man and machine seem to have taken place and any humans are conspicuous by their absence. A word with the research ship's decapitated head will prove enlightening and allow exploration of the lower floor - but if you fail to repair its spydroid friend without delay it will turn on its ramscoop generator!

Dealing with a number of different robots - which range from a firefighter and a belligerent lift guard to a pathologist and lethal spiders which crawl around the air ducts - is necessary if you are to find any remaining human prisoners. Most of the robots can talk and their manner of speech (or, rather, shouting at you) is often quite amusing, especially that of the ship's head which is definitely suffering from multiple personality syndrome. They're not all bad, though, and you'll eventually meet up with SAM, a self automated manipulator, who'll prove (like Infocom's Floyd) to be a real pal.

The scenes of dereliction in the Zone are nicely conveyed in the text and emphasised by the graphics - although you can, of course, turn these off if you want. The overall impression of metal, grease and all things mechanical is further enhanced by the look of the redesigned character set. A variety of text styles is available including silver, gold and metal (which all have a particularly polished look) and a number of other coloured and shaded options.

Three different ramsave positions can be used and there is a dictionary of some of the words recognised by the parser, plus a help facility which sometimes provides just the nudge you need to set you thinking along the right lines. Even then I must admit to getting stuck, but a plea to the authors met with a reply by return of post.

I did have reservations about the somewhat fanciful logic behind the scenario and felt that the storyline could have been improved, but then in adventuredom anything's possible, isn't it? Other minor quibbles include a few spelling mistakes and the odd splitting of some punctuated text across the ends of lines. Very much on the plus side, though, are the lengthy descriptions and responses and the well-constructed puzzles which lead to an intriguing, albeit somewhat perplexing, conclusion where a real twist in the tail leaves the way open for a sequel.

High Voltage Software comprises Anthony Lees, Gareth Harrison and Tom Green, and typing "credits" will show you just how many other people have been involved in the production of this adventure. (Further humorous information is displayed if you type in some of these names too!) Cortizone is the first of their work I have seen and I have no hesitation in recommending it. I greatly enjoyed the adventure, it represents very good value for money and I now look forward to Cortizone II - Unknown Quantity.

THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND

By Lucasfilm/US Gold. Shop around for the best price.

Reviewed by ROBIN MATTHEWS and played on IBM PC

Having recently completed the huge and wonderful Wizardry VI. I have gone through the usual problems after a "big game", i.e. a combination of boredom, restlessness and desperately trying to find something to amuse myself. What normally happens is that I start another product "on the rebound" and quickly become disillusioned with it - having not really cleared the previous game from my system. I therefore decided to look through a couple of titles that I had passed by. Bearing in mind my general mood at this time it would have taken a pretty good game to make any worthwhile impression. However, The Secret of Monkey Island by Lucasfilm/US Gold has managed to do this.

The product has been released for some time now, and was played on my ageing IBM compatible in EGA graphics. It is provided on eight 5.25 inch disks and takes over 2Mb on a hard disk. On this number of disks a hard drive is recommended, and 16 colours was the highest resolution on my version. The disks are not copy protected as there is a "Code Wheel". The manual is refreshingly brief and enables a very rapid entry into the game.

Secret of Monkey Island is a development of the system used in Maniac Mansion, Zak McKracken, Indiana Jones and Loom. With the exception of Loom I have not been overly impressed with the previous titles. Loom was a beautiful product, but a little short on puzzle solving. Secret does not have this flaw. The game is divided into 4 parts or chapters. The interface is a list of available verbs that are point-selected. Due to some excellent programming and a reasonable storyline this is not as limited as would first appear. An excellent development is that upon moving the cursor onto an object the most likely option is automatically highlighted and can be selected by pressing the right-hand mouse button. The default option that you have chosen can be selected by pressing the left-hand mouse button. This system gives SECRET the edge of previous SIERRA and DELPHINE interfaces. Anyway, the game system is nice, but what about the gameplay? The puzzles vary considerably and one or two perhaps involve a bit too much repetition. The good aspects are that each chapter is "self-contained" so that you do not arrive almost at the end of the game to discover that you should have picked up the third stone on the left - and have to totally replay the game. If you have moved onto the next stage you know (pretty well) that you are on the right track.

The plot - well you're a young pirate trying to make a name for yourself. Add attractive (and rich!) young lady, pirates, treasure, maps, nutty shopkeepers, ghosts, circuses, second-hand boat dealers and lots of drink... what more can you want? There is a pleasant sense of humour throughout the game - and not specifically American! So if you want a pleasant change from all those deep, dank and depressing dungeons - Secret of Monkey Island would slip into my Top 20, if not my Top 10. Now, what am I going to do next.....

INVADERS FROM PLANET X

By Jon Lemmon. Available from Compass Software, 111 Mill Rd. Cobnam Island, St Yarmouth, Norfolk, NR31 0BB. Price £1.99. Available for Spectrum.

Reviewed by SUE ROSEBLADE on Spectrum 48k

Planet X is approaching Earth, where scientists are in the final stages of developing a new weapon system. Meanwhile the aliens have launched suicide ships to destroy the defence domes, and their mother ship has landed at the North Pole, where it is attacking the research centre. As you arrive at the North Pole, you are unaware that you only have five hours before the final attack and the total invasion of Earth.

Your first task is to find the alien bomb and remove it from the base, then you must repair the transporter and rescue the Professor. Breaking through a sealed door, you will find the Dome Defence Computer (DDC) and the polar base robot. Activate the robot and then you are ready to beam yourself aboard the alien ship. The aliens are scanning your movements constantly, and will frequently send individuals to attack you.

By this time you will have been provided with a scanner, which will enable you to proceed with the next part of your mission. Once aboard the mother ship you must locate a number of power packs, which can be sent back to the DDC where the robot will insert it into the laser cannon. You must also shut down the alien battle computer, which controls the number of attack waves of suicide ships. The sooner you do this the better! You must also find the stabiliser unit before beaming back to polar base. This unit must be fitted to the DDC before you can activate the laser cannon defense system.

The scanner is a vital piece of equipment because it will show you a plan of the mother ship. By typing in SCAN you will be able to see the locations of the alien life forms, the power packs and your own location. When you have collected enough packs, and if your own Life Force is not too low, you can man the laser cannon and defend the domes against the suicide ships. This takes the form of an arcade game which is cleverly incorporated at the end of the adventure.

As you can probably tell, on first sight this seems to be a rather complicated scenario. The cassette inlays consist of six pages of extremely detailed information, which sent my mind boggling! I decided to make the uncharacteristic move of starting the adventure without reading the instructions. I was then to be seen sitting faced with a ferocious alien in mid-leap, trying to read the page about alien weaknesses and details of how to operate the laser gun! Fortunately the game will pause if you start to type an input, so it is possible to read the instructions as you go along although I am sure this was not the authors intention!

As you begin to become familiar with the game, (and the instructions!) it all becomes very much easier, and you can settle down to enjoy the atmosphere. The first word that springs to mind when describing this adventure is IMPRESSIVE. The whole thing is designed to sharpen you up and

keep you on your toes throughout.

The graphics are exciting, with many special effects, both sound and visual. The use of colour is excellent and the screen rocks to accompany the sounds of explosions. I found it considerably more exciting than most other adventures, in fact I would say that it might even stand a good chance of converting a few arcade gamers to adventures. Bear in mind that I normally like to sit for ages quietly pondering over some devious puzzle, but this adventure had me hopping about on the edge of my seat. Getting back to basics, the adventure is a sequel to INTRUDER ALERT which I have not played, and has graphics in about half of the locations. It was written using PAW and accepts all the usual commands expected from a PAW'd game. All the special effects, the incoming messages and the arcade section use none of the adventure writing memory, so it is a full 41k adventure. I think Jon Lemmon has shown a great deal of expertise in developing his PIE system for greatly enhancing a PAW'd adventure. The screen shows a display at the top which tells you the time, the number of shots in your laser gun, the number of packs collected and your life force energy. Time is of great importance to the gameplay, which adds to the sense of urgency.

One final word about the arcade game, I found it a bit disappointing. The graphics were pretty basic and there were no sound effects. I don't think it added much to the adventure, although the atmosphere from the adventure carried over and made me determined to wipe out those aliens once and for all! Your chances of success are dependant on the number of power packs that you have collected and on the stage at which you were able to destroy the alien battle computer. This is a useful fact to bear in mind. To sum up, this is a fast moving and stimulating adventure, with lots of atmosphere. Science fiction addicts will love it, I certainly did!

=====

AL-STRAD

By Paul Gill. Available on Amstrad CPC from Recreation Re-Creation, 29 Gargle Hill, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich, Norfolk NR7 0XX (Mark Eltringham). Price £2.50 tape. £4.50 disc.

Reviewed by ANN ROBINSON

Set in the Kingdom of Microchip, the evil Sink has crept into King Kilobyte's castle and kidnapped the beautiful Princess Sally Software. You, the hero, Al-Strad, tempted by the hefty reward, decide to search out Sink's lair and rescue the Princess. You start the adventure in a forest clearing with only a few moves to find food before dying of starvation. Unfortunately you walk straight into a maze in every direction bar one, so avoid the maze and find that food, quick. Fortunately for those who hate mazes, it is only small and seems only for the purpose of slowing down your search for food. Once hunger is satisfied you can get into the adventure proper. The examine command is well supported and you need to examine quite a lot to get on. The puzzles are many and varied and if you get stuck there is a nice help routine which all cryptic crossword lovers will appreciate. There is one more small maze in the form of a Pacman game in which you keep getting killed at random. Don't be put off by this as there is a way of not getting killed, but I'm not telling. Get out your pen and cheque book at once and send for a copy of the game and solve it for yourself. At those prices you can't lose.

FROM HERE TO TRINITY...AND BACK AGAIN

B. PAUL RIGB.

Av. there's the genius and the wonder of the thing! - Sherlock Homes

No prizes for guessing that the above quotation is borrowed from the works of Conan Doyle and that the good Sherlock refers to that devilish man of the criminal arts, Professor Moriarty. I always thought that it was a great pity that Brian Moriarty (when he was resident at Infocom) did not write "Sherlock: Riddle of the Crown Jewels" adventure for Infocom which was completed by Bob Bates. Imagine the mileage they could have extracted out of that.

I know that many adventurers, after playing works such as "Wishbringer", "Trinity" and "Beyond Zork", would consider Brian Moriarty to be a genius of interactive fiction. Brian left Infocom to move to Lucasfilm where he created the animated graphic adventure, Loom. He is now, apparently, knee deep in educational software development at Lucasfilm. Call me selfish, but this move is a bit of a waste for a man of his talent. I reckon. Brian left Infocom just before Dave Lebling and Steve Meretsky departed signalling the beginning of the end of Infocom as an independent development outfit. Effectively, ending a classic era of adventuring - the likes of which we will never see again (but on the other hand - see below).

The Americans are an enthusiastic lot. But they love to organise their enthusiasm in a variety of ways. You may have heard of Star Trek, weird and wonderful Guild conventions and conferences. Well, there is such a thing as a Game Developer's Conference. This is a regular event which tends to attract a great deal of well known designers of "thinking" games. So you might see Chris Crawford (Balance of Power), Brian Fargo (The Bards Tale, Necromancer etc), Noah Falstein (Battlehawks) and, yes, Brian Moriarty! One such conference took place in mid 1989 at the Milpitas Holiday Inn. During this informal gathering (which includes many speakers, a rather tasty meal and friendly chat) Brian spoke on the issue of interactive games and then, later, about his work in general (specifically about his work on "Trinity" but also some points regarding "Wishbringer"). Although taking place many moons ago I thought that Probe readers would be interested in what the great man had to say.

Sitting Brian down and offering him lots of drinks to keep him still I asked Brian how he became a game designer at Infocom.

"Originally, I worked as a technical writer for Analog Computing. Then in the spring of '84 I went to Infocom as a microcomputer engineer, to work on the interpreters for various micros. I got to be friends with Mike Berlyn, Dave Lebling, Stu Galley and all of those people, and I convinced them that I was going to hold my breath until they made me a designer. I also had two adventure games that had been published in Analog, and they were pretty well received, so that helped too."

So where on earth did you get the idea for wishbringer?

"Actually, the first game I did was Trinity. When I became a games designer, Infocom asked me for a synopsis of a game I wanted to do. So I wrote the synopsis for Trinity. They looked at it and they all liked it, but they said it was too ambitious. Of course, at the time we didn't have the Plus system and it would have been very difficult to do that on a normal system. Then the marketing people came over and said "Hey, what we really want is an introductory game". So I said "Okay, I'll do an introductory game. Let's try to think of something neat to put into the box."

So contrary to the majority of games design, Wishbringer was actually designed from the packaging?

"Yea, I said: "We'll put a magic ring in the box, and we'll do a story about a magic ring". But then I said, "Magic rings have already been done, and the ring would probably be a plastic one. Why don't we put rocks in the box? we could get a cartload of rocks, they'd be cheap, and we'd just put one in every box." Later on, after a measure of games planning, the marketing person asked, "Why don't we make the rocks glow in the dark, since the rock in the game glows?". I said, "Okay, we'll paint the rocks with glow-in-the-dark paint." But the marketing person said, "No, the kids will come and suck the paint off". So someone suggested that we make rocks. Meanwhile, I started to write a game around a glow-in-the-dark rock. That's where Wishbringer came from - it came from a plastic rock."

So now you know, Doncha just love trivia? But did Brian enjoy creating Wishbringer, especially with his baby, Trinity, sitting in the wings?

"Oh yes, very much. It was nice and it sold really well. It was '85's biggest seller for Infocom by far."

Intriguingly, though, Brian stated that a Wishbringer follow-up was on the cards - makes you feel depressed doesn't it? However, back to Trinity. Where did the idea for that classic come from?

"Actually, I had the idea in '83, when I was working at Analog and writing adventures there. It's an idea that I'd had in my head for a long time. When the chance came to do it I took the plunge."

So was there anything that set off the specific train of thought that brought you to Trinity and what would happen in the game?

"I'd read a lot about that in the past, and I've always been interested in that subject. When I started working on the game, I amassed a pretty substantial library on the history of the atomic bomb and nuclear weaponry in general. In the course of writing the game, I also did some original research. I went to the Trinity site itself, visited Los Alamos and a lot of museums and I talked to a couple of people who were actually there. So a lot of the stuff that happens in Trinity is pretty accurate. I think it was the first piece of interactive fiction that

attempted to re-create the real place and not just simulate a made-up place."

That's all in the New Mexico section of the game?

"The Kensington Gardens are relatively accurate too, except for the location called "The Wabe". Every other location there is correct and in the right place. I hadn't seen it before I wrote about it but I have seen it since. That part was written based on maps and photographs."

So how long did Trinity take to complete?

"It was started in May of '85 and finished in June '86".

How much of that time went into the design and how much went into programming?

"As usual, most of it was programming. That's usually the case. I'd say that 90% of the time was programming and the other 10% was creative. Our development system was still very programming intensive. It didn't do a lot for you. It did some things but a lot you had to do for yourself. It was quite a bit of drudgery."

So what was the most difficult part of the game to write?

"The hardest part was the fantasy world: the giant sundial and the shadow moving across. There was all sorts of factors involved, moving that shadow, having it in different rooms, and the doors opening and closing, and then having you be able to control it was very tricky."

Was everything mapped out before the coding started?

"I usually do, even today, actually, although not all of the designers did. However, when you're making it all up it's easier to do that. The first thing I did was sit down and make a map of the Trinity site. It was changed about 50 times trying to simplify it and get it down from over 100 rooms to the 40 or so rooms that now comprise it. It was a lot more accurate and very detailed, but a lot of that detail was totally useless. So I tried to boil it down to what was absolutely necessary. That map that comes in the package is made from geological surveys and blueprints and is completely accurate."

Why write a game that could be looked upon, by many, as depressing?

"Well, it wasn't a pleasant experience. I can tell you that. It was not easy to sit down and write that stuff. As I said I talked to some people who were there and I read a lot of books by people who were there and the one thing they all said about it, the one common theme is that it was inevitable. That if we hadn't done it, someone else would. They also say that that's not the only thing that's inevitable. History has a lot to teach us. That's the point of the game, because when you're Wabewalker, going through the game, you're literally creating the Book of Hours, you're writing your own history."

what statements were you trying to make in Trinity? Did you have a personal statement to make?

"I wanted people, when playing the game, to feel their helplessness. Because that's what I felt when I was reading and talking to these people and seeing these places. You could just feel the weight of history on you. Going to the Trinity site and being there and realising what that place means, I just wanted people to feel that weight on them when playing the game. Have it crush them in the end because that's what I got out of my studies and research."

There are a couple of spots in the game where you have to do some unpleasant things. Why did you put that in?

"That was deliberate. I was amazed to see how many people were actually bothered by the scene with the lizard, because it was them doing it. It's nice to know that interactive fiction could do that, make you feel uncomfortable about killing things. In no other media could I make you feel bad about killing something. Because there is only one medium where I can make YOU do it, and make you feel empathy for a thing that doesn't exist. It's only with interactive fiction that you can explore these emotions."

When the game was finished how did you feel about it?

"Relieved. As usual. We usually felt that way when a game was finished, but I felt especially relieved. It was hard to live with that game for a year. But I didn't want people to be scared away from the game. A lot of people took a look at the cover and said, "Oh, God, a gloomy game." It isn't gloomy, but it does have a dark undertone to it. It's not like it's the end of the world. But I'm glad I did Trinity. It was nice to know that interactive fiction could make you do things besides give you puzzles and make you laugh. It could also make you think and it could deal with big issues."

Brian certainly did make us think with the release of Trinity. Nowadays I know many of you are thinking, and pining, because we may never see the like of Trinity again. However, there is a way to access new material with that essential Infocom feel. You'll need a PC or a PC emulator (for those with Amiga/ST/Archimedes machines), though. The source is a company called Legend, recently created by two ex-Infocom men, Steve Meretsky (creator of Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy, Leather Goddesses of Phobos, Planetfall etc) and Bob Bates (Sherlock and Arthur). The first release, from Steve Meretsky, owes much to Leather Goddesses of Phobos. Called "Spellbreaker 101: Sorcerers Get All the Girls" it is a text/graphic adventure. The game is big. The PC version I have contains nine (count 'em!) disks taking up a little under four megabytes of code! After loading, the initial screen is divided into three sections, although this can be customised, to some extent, to your satisfaction. Initially, though, a graphic screen, a text message window and a third window chock'a block with verbs, nouns etc appears. You can play the game as a straight text adventure, text/graphic or as a menu driven adventure (mouse support is given), you can also click on the graphics to invoke actions. Function keys call other routines such as a beautiful on-screen, auto-map routine, a help feature and so on.

The plot tells us we have just joined Sorcerer University, the game revolves around your studies and social activities during your stay there. Studies include lessons from the masters themselves, including your new found skills in the Simulation Lab. You've also got a mission to complete. As Legend say though, ...it's not some cheapo, Find-The-Missing-Magic-Sword quest either, were talking END OF THE WORLD type stuff here... You'll go on field trips to the Island of Horny women and The Restaurant at the End of the Ocean. With your time off you'll meet interesting people, in the students union, and go to social clubs such as the famous Tappa Keggia Bru. It runs in two modes "Nice" and "Naughty". Legend say that the game is R-rated in Naughty Mode.

The game has been selling in the States for a few months, on the PC. Microprose USA are distributing it. I believe that Microprose UK will be bringing it over here. I have heard no specific news of an Amiga version, although rumours say that an Amiga version is "under consideration". Bob Bates will be writing the second Legend adventure using the same interface. The essence of the story being that you chase a villain through time, from 1361 BC through to 1940AD. There are nine time periods involved and six cities serve as relevant backdrops. Bob Bates, talking from the States, commented about its design. "One of the game's attractions is that you'll be able to interact with historical characters such as Mussolini, Churchill and Hitler. These are the kind of puzzles I like to write, putting objects in their native environments, but finding unexpected ways to use them. You can go back into the past and do things that will enable you to solve a puzzle in the future. That's really a neat part of the game, which is not going to be easy (though it will be fair)."

Finally, another piece of Infocom trivia. Many Infocom enthusiasts will have heard of the newsletter sent to all registered game owners. Initially known as The New York Times and, following protests from The New York Times, to be later known as The Status Line, it was filled with news and articles relevant to the games, the company and the people in it. However, how many of you were aware that another Infocom newsletter existed? This particular publication, though, was intended solely for private distribution within the company, known as "InfoDope" it was an underground newsletter that came out once and a while with very sarcastic humour. It's irregular publication normally being caused by a change in the company. Various company people had been lampooned at various times.

Finally, an update on where some of the other Infocom lost sheep have disappeared to. Many of the staff are still unaccounted for. Dave Lebling was reported to be working on serious software (spreadsheets and the like) but what happened to Mark Blanc?

We know that Elizabeth Langosy (an unsung hero in the Infocom team) has joined Legend with Steve and Bob at the moment, to do a bit of Quality Control. Elizabeth was reportedly working on a Hypercard text/graphic adventure when Infocom crashed so maybe the chaps at Legend could use her talents for future productions. Also ex-Infocom man, Mike Moore has joined Joe Ybarra and Karl Buitter to form a new software house called Sunami Productions.

WIZARD WORKS

By TOM FROST of TARTAN SOFTWARE

At last I have found the time to respond to the plea from Bob Adams regarding "where the ideas come from and how it is done"... writing an adventure I mean. Well here goes... These days the ideas come with great difficulty wherever they come from. But they have come from some strange places in the past. Discussions during family walks in the country on a Sunday afternoon previously provided the outline of some puzzles to be incorporated into an adventure and sometimes a story-line to be followed. With daughter now at University this source had dried up but the inspiration (is that the right word?) for some of Tartan's recent releases has come from a variety of sources. I never deliberately set out to come up with an idea of theme as under these circumstances nothing of any worth seems to appear.

DOUBLE AGENT was dreamed up after reading a technical article about how to create windows on the Spectrum by Alan Davis in the long departed ZX COMPUTING MONTHLY. The article produced the germ of an idea but it was many months before this had grown to a viable proposition. It is also perhaps worthy of mention that the end result bears only scant resemblance to the original concept as additional puzzles always suggest themselves when the coding is being entered at the keyboard and small sections are playtested as they are completed (Lorna will think that is a joke!). Nowadays I keep only minimal notes, with for instance all of the notes for THE LOST DRAGON being on one A4 sheet whereas several years ago it seemed like a small book was required for all the detail BEFORE going near the keyboard. Another article by Alan, this time concerning background characters with some sort of individuality was the basis for the GORDELLO series. This was supposed to be the last TARTAN adventure using the vertical split-screen approach, BUT the fact that there was no THIRD FLOOR in the hotel in which last year's Convention was held, provided the basis for THE LOST DRAGON for which the split screen format was ideal.

ALL of the adventures which I have penned in the last four or five years have used THE ADVENTURE BUILDER SYSTEM or in the later stages (DOUBLE AGENT, GORDELLO and DRAGON) a customised version of it. As I also wrote this utility, the process of coding the adventure was relatively simple as I was aware of the limitations and quirks of the utility. However, TARTAN's first Amstrad adventure (THE LOST DRAGON for PC6128 and the PCW series) will soon see the light of day and this is being written using PAW. If this is a success then other TARTAN adventures may also be converted. So, Bob, THAT will mean that I do not have to think about NEW adventures for some time!... BUT..... I have this idea in the back of my mind about an adventure where at the start all the locations are described as LOCATION 1, LOCATION 2 etc and all the objects are OBJECT 1, OBJECT 2 etc and by a process of trial and error the player will have to establish the identity of the locations and the use of the objects. To make matters more interesting, the true identity of the objects could change for each game, ie OBJECT 1 could be a ROPE the first time the game is played, but a LADDER the next time!

ATTENTION

Q: Who said the following about 'From Beyond'...

"When I saw the first issue of the new bi-monthly Speccy adventure fanzine, 'From Beyond' I gave it a hot welcome. That's like a warm welcome only better. There are a few adventure fanzines around, and jolly good they are too, but 'From Beyond' is the only one that's devoted to the Speccy, so double-hurrahs all round. I thought it worth mentioning again as the next two issues have since appeared, and it's got even better."

A: Mike Gerrard in the FEB issue of YOUR SINCLAIR.

Q: Who said this of 'From Beyond'...

"The magazine ('From Beyond'), as the editor tells us, is laid-out using a Desk Top Publishing program, and this goes a long way to giving it a very polished and professional look."

A: The Sorceress in the FEB issue of SINCLAIR USER.

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Larry Horsfield is proud to announce that the first of the conversions of my existing Spectrum adventures to Amstrad CPC/PCW format is now complete and that the 3 part science fiction adventure "MAGNETIC MOON" is now available. This new Amstrad version has been enlarged and improved, with more puzzles and an extended ending to part 3. There is also a new points scoring system.

This new Amstrad version of "MAGNETIC MOON" costs £6.00 or, if you supply your own formatted 3" CF-2 disc, £4.00. These prices include P/P, and you should state which model Amstrad you have when ordering. Make cheques payable to FSF ADVENTURES and send orders to the address above.

I have also been working non-stop on an Amstrad CPC/PCW version of the highly acclaimed 4-part fantasy adventure, "THE AXE OF KOLT", and this will be available very soon. Like "Magnetic Moon", the Amstrad version has been improved and enlarged, and also features a points score. An Amstrad version of "Magnetic Moon's" sequel "STARSHIP QUEST" will follow in the not too distant future.

STOP PRESS NEWS!!! Also available in the near future will be a version of "THE AXE OF KOLT" for the **Atari ST**! It is hoped that this will include, for the first time in an FSF Adventures game, high-resolution graphics. Atari ST versions of "Magnetic Moon" and "Starship Quest" will hopefully follow soon.

I have not, of course, forgotten all of my Spectrum-owning customers, and now that the first two Amstrad conversions are finished, I am able to return to the Spectrum adventures I was working on before I got my Amstrad CPC6128. The first new adventures to be released will be "THE KRAZY KARTOONIST KAPER", written by Krazy Kez Gray, and a Spectrum version of the hilarious spoof adventure "GRUE-KNAPPED", written by Bob "Amster" Adams. "KKK" will be available in 128k only, and will be released on the same tape/disc as "Grue-Knapped". The latter will be available separately to 48k Spectrum owners.

Once those are released, work will continue on my own adventures "THE SPECTRE OF CASTLE CORIS" and "RUN, BRONWYNN, RUN!" I'd like to apologise to all those adventurers who played part one of "RBR" at last year's Adventure Probe Convention, and who have been nagging me with "When's Bronwynn coming out then?!" ever since (Yes, you know who I mean, Sharon!), for the delay in releasing this adventure! These two adventures will certainly be converted for the Amstrad CPC/PCW, and hopefully for the Atari ST as well.

TV DETECTIVE EXPOSES ADVENTURE GAME STORYLINE AS A SHAM!

Our roving reporter, Mister Scoop, brings Adventure Probe readers the sensational news that "The Axe of Kolt" has not been "lost", as in the storyline of the adventure of the same name, but was last seen in the hands of Inspector Taggart of the Glasgow CID! He was seen by millions of viewers tuned into "TAGGART" on Saturday, April 13th, confiscating the Axe from a hooded stranger (rumour is rife that it was THE WAYFARER!) who was about to behead the Dungeon Master of an RPG group - poor soul must've thought it was Bob Adams!

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.....

RIVER ADVENTURES

New for the Commodore 64. Bounty Hunter. This time not with 1500 locations but 125. However, all the problems of the Spectrum game are there, except that there is no teleport system.

A map, documentation sheet and a hint sheet are all included in the price which is two pounds fifty pence for the tape version and two pounds ninety five pence for the disk version.

New for the Atari. Davy Jones Locker. The sequel to Lifeboat takes place in the so called Bermuda Triangle and your four companions are taken below the Sargasso Seas by creatures from outer space. To rescue them you must outwit the huge catfish, hoodwink the blushing mermaid and cure Long John Silver's cold. This game costs two pounds ninety five pence.

Please make out your cheque/postal order to J.A.Lockerby and send them to 44 Hyde Place Aylesham Canterbury Kent CT3 3AL. All orders in the U.K. are post free. Elsewhere add one pound sterling to your order.

* * * SPELLBREAKER * * *

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

NICK BRAILSPORD

19 WAPIER PLACE, SOUTH PARKES, GLENROTHES, PIPE, KY6 1DI

* * * SYNTAX * * *

The disk Magazine for ST and Amiga Adventurers

SynTax is a bi-monthly disk magazine packed full of reviews, solutions, hints, information files and many other items of interest to adventurers and RPGers.

The ST version is STB-compatible and comes in colour or mono versions and also contains screenshots of some of the games featured.

The Amiga conversion runs using an emulator (provided FREE with your first issue) but doesn't yet contain screenshots.

SynTax costs £3.50 an issue or £20.00 for a year's subscription (£5.25/£30.00 outside UK/Europe by airmail). Don't forget to say which version you require! Cheques/PO's should be made payable to S Nedley and sent to:

SUE NEDLEY, SYNTAX, 9 WARWICK ROAD, SIDCUP, KENT, DA14 6LJ

* * * 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 RAVENSBURY COURT, RAVENSBURY GROVE, MITCHUM, SURREY, CR4 4DW

* * * SPLATT!! * * *

The sassy adult magazine drawn and written by our very own Krazy Kes Gray. Issue 3 January-February 1991 is out shortly. More fun with the usual shower! In this issue there will be a report/debate on COMPUTER PIRACY written by the infamous computer pirate "LEGION" of Intersecta! This should be of interest to all computer adventurers who wish to join in the debate. SPLATT!! costs just £1.25 an issue. To order your copy make cheques/Postal Orders payable to:

K.GRAY, CARTOON HOUSE, 3 ALDER CRESCENT, ORFORD, WARRINGTON, WA2 8AQ

ADVENTURERS ARE SO FRIENDLY

A few months ago I only owned one adventure game (SCARY TALES), knew nothing about any others and had very little interest. Then in a well known computer magazine I saw a "Lord of Adventure" offering help on many games including SCARY TALES. I decided to drop him a line, expecting a short list of hints in return. But to my surprise I received a friendly, helpful letter also offering me one or two free PD games. The "Lord" in question is Mark Eltringham of Norwich and since that first letter we have become quite friendly through letters and phone calls, we are hoping to meet at the Adventure Probe Convention. Mark has recently released a number of adventure games on his own label RECREATION RE-CREATION. I have three of them so far. CASTLE WARWICK, DRUIDS MOON and AL STRAG, all of which I would recomend to anyone. There are quite a few more adventures to be released shortly. If anyone is interested I suggest they drop Mark a line at 39 Gargle Hill, Thorpe St. Andrew, Norwich, Norfolk, NR7 0XX (not forgetting SAE), they will be assured of a quick, friendly reply from a real enthusiast whose games are well worth investing in. I am still very much a novice but thanks mainly to Marks enthusiasm I have become quite addicted and have quite a library of adventure games, all of which I enjoy (text or graphics!). I have been in touch with other adventurers and what a helpful, friendly lot they are. It was certainly my lucky day when I decided to write to Mark, and I wish him deserved success with Recreation, Re-Creation.

DAVE COX, Market Harborough, Leicester

=====

STRANGE INVENTORIES FOUND

Recently, while playing REALM OF DARKNESS, due to an error on my part I came across an occurrence new to me. I had previously played THE CUP and in both these adventures there is a hyena. I had saved a position from REALM OF DARKNESS, just outside the hyena location and wanted to reload that position. I couldn't remember the filename (I should have written it down), so I consulted the directory on the disc used for saves. There was a file named "hyena" which I reloaded. I found myself in a new location which I hadn't then visited with a strange inventory. I then realised that the file "hyena" had been saved from THE CUP. I tried this with other files from THE CUP and JACK AND THE BEANSTALK and each time arrived at a new location with a different inventory. I assume this came about because the same utility was used to write all these games. Could someone who understands what has happened please write an article to explain this. Is this interchange possible with all games written on the same utility? One side effect of this interchanging is some very strange inventories. I have found myself carrying a NOTE (WORK) and A SMALL CLEAR TRAIL. I look forward to an explanation in a future copy of Probe.

WILL ORTON, Broughton Astley, Leicester

=====

I SYMPATHISE ENTIRELY WITH HIS FEELINGS

I agreed with Margo Porteous regarding the inclusion of arcade style sections in an adventure game. I consigned a few adventures to the attic purely because of such inclusions. Regarding Graham Wheeler's letter, I sympathise entirely with his feelings. The party created by a player does, I have found, after sometimes months of adventuring together, become old friends in one's mind. This is why, when possible, when creating characters for a fresh game, I give them the names from the previous adventure. (When, as is normal with me, I have several games going, I have identically named parties). For me, a Paladin will always be GRAYLE for obvious reasons, whilst a Cleric/healer will always be named PAKSE, a female, and short for Paksenarrion, the heroine of the wonderful Elizabeth Moon books. I also have special names for my fighter and mage, but after that certain games have different classes such as a Monk, Rogue, Bard, etc, so I use alternative names but always from my own permanent short-list. That way, as soon as the name appears on the screen I can identify him/her and that person's class and attributes.

RON RAINBIRD, Holmes Chapel, Cheshire

=====

THE LETTERS INTERESTED ME

Ken Bond's letter giving an explanation for the bell tied to the wrist of a corpse interested me, as I had never heard of this custom. However, it reminded me of another custom which might also have been the reason for the bell, and that is the leper bell. In countries where leprosy was prevalent, sufferers carried a bell, which they rang constantly to warn people to give them a wide berth. This was used to good effect in one of Jack Lockerby's games INTO THE MYSTIC, where the use of a leper bell enabled the player to deter robbers and travel safely through a forest.

Still on the subject of letters, I would like to agree with Margo Porteous' letter about arcade sequences in adventure games. I was recently very disappointed to find that MICRO MUTANT, from Compass Software, cannot be played without first playing an arcade sequence to build up strength. As I thoroughly enjoyed the first two "MICRO" games, I was looking forward to enjoying this one also, but the discovery of the arcade sequence condemned it immediately to my 'out of use' shelf. This was the same with a friend of mine, who had also bought it, in expectation of a good adventure. If sales of the game are low, I'm sure it won't take Jon Lemmon long to figure out why!

JUNE ROWE, Launceston, Cornwall

=====

SINCLAIR SPECTRUM ON THE AMIGA!

Some readers may be interested in a little software package which lives on the 16th "UPDATE" magazine disk produced by 17-bit Software. It is, believe it or not, a Z80 Spectrum emulator for the Amiga! Yes, really! It has modes which allow you to read in Speccy software through one of

the Amiga's ports (for which you'll need something like a cheap midi interface connected to a cassette player), and then save it to disk. Once you've transferred your Speccy faves to disk, you then go into emulator mode. It's an uncanny feeling seeing the screen turn black and then clear with the familiar "Sinclair Research 1982" legend at the bottom of the screen. Even wierder is trying to remember from those long-lost days of Speccy ownership which key corresponds to which BASIC keyword! I can't personally vouch for how well the emulator works, since firstly, I don't have the necessary midi interface, and secondly I sold all 150 of my Speccy games when I sold the Speccy itself 2 years ago. Boo Hoo! Had I but known that this emulator would come along, I could be rediscovering the joys of Dun Darach, Fairlight, and, er, The Hobbit. Or maybe not! If anyone wants to get their hands on the emulator, it resides, as I said, on Update Disk 16, which costs a measly one-and-a-half-quid from those wonderful people at 17-Bit Software, PO Box 97, Wakefield, WF1 1XX.

PAUL VINCENT, Walsall, West Midlands

(That's one of the best things about the Amiga, it supports emulators for Commodore 64, Spectrum, PC, Atari St and more. All those Amiga owners who grumble at not being able to play all those home-grown text adventures really have no excuse, they are lucky enough to play them all! And best of all, most of these emulators are Public Domain!.....Mardy!)

=====

ANOTHER ADVENTURE RECOMMENDED

As many readers will have seen in a recent issue of Probe, I was the fortunate recipient of the £50 prize on Paul Cardin's game CAPTAIN KOOK (actually the first thing I have won in my life!). Anyone out there in Probeland who has not yet tried Paul's game should not be put off by the fact that the competition is no longer open - you'd be missing out on an excellent, professionally produced and brain-teasing game. If you haven't already done so, I suggest you send off for it straight away - especially as I see the price has now been reduced (that's the plug, Paul - do I get the other £50 now?). And no, all this isn't a load of rubbish (those who've played CAPTAIN KOOK will know what I mean!).

TERRY TAYLOR, Bacup, Lancashire

=====

PC PD OFFER FROM ICELAND

It's very unlikely I'll be able to show up to this year's Convention any more than last years. Nope, SnoFalcon doesn't like that prospect either - it's much too far! It seems odd to be admitting to using his PC for adventuring. I see loads of Spectrum, Amstrad, Commodore and Atari adventures, but nearly nothing for PC-class computers and what little does exist usually also costs the whit outta my eyes. Looks like I'll have to fix up my Spectrum and see if I can't get a new C64 and the others somewhere. I have a good collection of public domain/shareware adventures and quests for IBM PC computers. If any readers would like to get in touch with me and supply 5.25" disks, their addresses and maybe some compensation for the return postage I will be happy to do so. Please get in touch for more details.

RAYNIP STEFANSSON, Managata 11, IS-730 Reydarfirdi, Iceland

=====

IN TOUCH

AMSTRAD SOFTWARE FOR SALE: MOONMIST, PLANETFALL, BALLHOGS, ZORK I and ZORK II all at £12.50 each. JINXTER at £10 including postage. Write to DAVID McELHONE, 44 Greenways, Belves Lane, Gossett, Co Durham, DH6 7DG.

AMSTRAD SOFTWARE FOR SALE: PROTEXT (disc) £10. Contact: PETER CLARK, 459 Bramford Lane, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP1 5JH. Tel: 0473 749987.

SPECTRUM HARDWARE WANTED: Any printer suitable for use with the ZX Spectrum Plus 2. Any condition considered providing it is in full working order and not too expensive. Please write with price required to: ALISON MARTYN, 20 Millbank, Burgess Hill, West Sussex, RH15 8DD.

AMSTRAD SOFTWARE WANTED: All Infocom adventures wanted. Please write with price required to: AMIR MANSOUR, 31 Tenterden Gardens, London, NW4 1TG.

PC SOFTWARE WANTED: ZORK ZERO (Infocom) wanted. Please write with price required to: TONY DILWORTH, 10 Dovehouse Lane, Harbury, Leamington Spa, Warks, CV33 9HD.

AMIGA SOFTWARE WANTED: Any Infocom adventures wanted (not particularly the budget versions, although I may consider these). Please write with price required to BEN ISBA, 11 South Road, Bowdon, Cheshire, WA14 2JZ.

AMIGA SOFTWARE: KINGS QUEST series WANTED. Also FOR SALE: FISH £5 and IMMORIAL £10. Please write to STEVE McLAREN, 6 Mere Gate, Margate, Kent, CT9 5TR.

AMSTRAD SOFTWARE WANTED: KNIGHT ORC on either disc or tape. Please write with price required to TOM LEAHY, 88 Holtby Street, Blackley, Manchester, M9 1AR.

INFOCOM SWOP 'N' BUY: This month we have: STEVE ROLLASON, 1 Wall Croft, Aldridge, Walsall, West Midlands (0922 52159) who would like to swop INFIDEL for Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy for the Amstrad CPC 6128.

ALEX McEWAN, 39 Warbleton Road, Chineham, Nr Basingstoke, Hants RG24 0RF (Home 0256 475906, Office 0256 475050 ex 8146) looking for MOONMIST for either IBM or Atari ST.

RICHARD JAMIESON, 79 Land Street, Rothes, Abertour, Banffshire, Scotland (03403 450) looking for HITCHHIKERS GUIDE TO THE GALAXY to buy rather than swop for Amstrad CPC6128.

DAVE MANNING 52 Burrage Place, SE18 7BE (081 854 2526) looking for HITCHHIKERS GUIDE TO THE GALAXY but interested in other Infocom and Adventure Games for the Amstrad PCW.

HELP WANTED

"I have just acquired a second hand copy of HITCHHIKERS GUIDE for my Amstrad CPC6128. This came complete with the original Vagon Eviction Orders, small bit of fluff etc, but minus the "Peril Sensitive Sun Glasses". I had played the opening scenes of this game with my brother on the IBM PC a few years ago so some of the moves came back to me but by no means all! I have listed my moves up to BUY SANDWICH. This is where things start to get interesting! On my copy of the software the program can be made to "hang" and either return to CP/M or lock-up the whole machine requiring a power off/on/ The offending commands (discovered so far) are GIVE THING TO BARMAN (in Pub), GIVE AUNT'S THING TO BARMAN and GIVE SANDWICH TO DOG (in the Lane). Has anyone else experienced such a response from their copy of Hitchhikers? I have managed to get further into the Hold of the Vagon Ship but I can never seem to pick up the Babel Fish as they float elusively out of the dispensing machine. I tried plugging all escape routes (with towel and fluff) but no sooner had I blocked one route than another one appeared. Am I missing something fundamental here?"

===== ROY HARBOW, Pressell, Deendene Avenue Road, Dorking, Surrey, PH14 1ST. =====

"Please could someone help me with BARDS TALE? I am currently on the last level of Mangars Tower and I've come across a place where I think I need the 3 Silver Shapes (Triangle, Square and Circle). I've found the Triangle and the Square, but not the Circle. Could someone help me please?"

===== AMANDA OLIVER, 7 The Hassocks, Waterlooville, Hants, PO7 8QG. =====

"I am desperately seeking the solution and/or hints for THE DAMNED FOREST. It is the only one of my PD games that I can't help anyone with... so I must rectify that as soon as possible!"

===== GORDON INGLIS, 11 West Mayfield, Edinburgh, EH9 1TF. =====

"Please could anyone supply me with the current address for GILSOFT? I have version A04C of PAW for the Spectrum (which I am running on my Sam Coupe with the aid of Specmaker), and would like to upgrade to the latest version (A16?)."

===== ALBERT F OLIVERA, 5 North Pavilion, South Barracks Parade, Gibraltar. =====

SOLUTIONS & HINTS

===== COLDITZ ESCAPE and GOLDEN SWORD OF BHAKHOP. =====

PERSONAL COLUMN

To THE BALROG of Amstrad Action. Thank you for the mentions of the Infocom Swap and Buy in your column.....Nic Rumsey.

To BOB. Good luck with your new job..... from all your friends at Adventure Probe.

To THE WACKY WELDER OF MURKEYSIDE. many people know that sciuridae favor not Soviet arms. but prefer to use a Chefs Special for Adventurer-wasting. So view Smith and Wessons with extreme caution in adventureland..... Regards from the Apprentice of Perfection.

My thanks to Jason. Sue and Grue!
I kept on asking "What do I do???"
But now I'll leave you all in peace
'Cos I've finally got that GOLDEN FLEECE!

LIZ

KINGS AND QUEENS

SIMON AVERY. Marden Farm, Old Exeter Road, Chudleigh, S.Devon TQ13 0DR can offer help with the following Amstrad adventures:

BLACK KNIGHT, JEWELS OF BABYLON, SEABASE DELTA, BOGGIT, DUNGEONS AMETHYSTS ALCHEMISTS 'N' EVERYTHIN', BLACK FOUNTAIN, SPACED OUT, ROOG, WELLADAY, MAGICIANS APPRENTICE, DUNGEON, TIZPAN, BORGDOM, CASE OF THE MIXED-UP SHYMER, QUEST, FOREST AT WORLDS END, GHOST HOUSE, HOBBIT, SCARY TALES, NITE TIME, CAVES OF BEW BEWS, PRISON BLUES, TRD, LABARINTH, FIRESTONE, JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS, CAN I CHEAT DEATH, ADULT II.

VINCE BARKER. 4 Brae Head, Eaglescliffe, Stockton, Cleveland can offer help with Commodore 64 adventures. Vince sent in a list but it is much too long to be included here. Suggest you ring him to find out if he can help on the game you are stuck on first - number is included in the telephone helplines on the back page of Probe.

PLEASE DO NOT FORGET TO ENCLOSE S.A.E. WHEN WRITING FOR HELP

THE 1991 ADVENTURE PROBE CONVENTION

My thanks to everyone who has applied for tickets. These have all been passed on to Larry Horsfield who is printing and sending out the tickets. Larry has asked me to let you know that tickets will be sent out within a couple of months time. Anyone who has not yet received an application form for tickets for this spectacular event, please drop me a line and I will include a form within their next issue of Probe. Numbers are going well but there is still room for a few more so please do let me know if you wish to come.....Mandy

NEWS

BARGAINS TO BE HAD

Pat Winstanley tells me that Infogrames will be releasing Sim City and Populous in a boxed set for the Amiga and the Atari ST at £29.99 and for the PC for £34.99. The expected release date was 10th April. They are also releasing a boxed set of Sim City, Terrain Editor and Architect One giving a 25% saving on the individual prices at only £44.99. Pat also asked me to tell you that she would like to hear from anyone working on educational software for the Atari ST and the Amiga and would like to hear from Primary School teachers especially (please enclose telephone number and address). Also for her column in ACE. Pat would like to receive home-grown adventures for Atari ST, Amiga, Spectrum and Commodore 64 (disk). So come on all you authors, let Pat have a copy of your games and if they are reviewed you could get a lot of publicity and sales.

CONFIDENTIAL MAKES CHANGES

In a recent press release, John Knight of Confidential magazine informed me that the magazine would be changing to another magazine which will be a full colour magazine with dazzling full colour layouts and pages packed with news, reviews and graphics and will be entitled XS NRG. This 32 page magazine will replace Confidential. Although the new replacement magazine promises to offer all sorts of goodies, I was saddened that the good old Confidential magazine will be no more. If the new magazine is like the NRG cartoon type magazine then I will be very sad indeed. I wish the Confidential Team all the very best for the future but do wonder if they are making a mistake in changing their successful format like this. Ah well.

SOFTWARE COMPANY CLOSES

I heard from an unofficial source that Global Games ceased trading a few months ago. I had been receiving many letters of complaint of orders not being received etc for some time so I can't say the news came as a surprise. It is a pity that so many people will be left dissatisfied though and I hope that the proprietor will make every effort to come up with the goods that were promised.

AMSTRAD PUBLIC DOMAIN NEWS

If you run, or know of anyone who runs a PD Library with Amstrad adventures then do please get in touch with Bob Adams, 81 Uplands, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL8 7EH as soon as possible. This could be to your advantage! Bob will give you the details but I do urge you to get in touch with him. Why not enclose a sample or two of your software and lists - the publicity could be very useful for your Library! I assure you that this is a chance not to be missed.

FICTION

RETURN OF THE SON OF COLOSSAL ADVENTURE THE REVENGE

(Or: The Valley of the trolls)

A short story by Kylie the Wombat Slayer

PART FOUR

Some time later they were still following the dusty passage. "I suppose we just keep on going until we come out into somewhere that looks familiar," Flossie told Bernard. "Yes, but I forgot to mention one thing," Bernard remarked, "It's probably not important, but in these mazes of secret passages, it's a good idea to look out for triggers activating secret doors, slippery chutes leading down to undiscovered areas of the dungeon and so forth."

"What, like this button I just found, you mean?" Dick asked, tapping it absently with one finger. "Don't press that button!" both Bernard and Flossie cried, but it was too late. The floor opened. The only thought in Bernard's mind as he plunged down the slippery chute that had suddenly opened, was that whatever else inhabited the dungeon, there sure were a lot of corny plot devices. At last the chute ended and they were deposited in a small featureless room, of the kind so beloved of adventure writers who run out of ideas. From a short way, voices could be heard, arguing angrily. Apart from the chute there was a small door on the opposite wall, which looked as if it hadn't been opened for centuries. Without even listening to the voices from behind the door, Bernard knew that they had accidentally stumbled on a secret passage leading to the boardroom of the mysterious A.V. Inc., which by an astounding coincidence happened to have a board meeting taking place at that very moment!

"You fool!" cried a harsh, thundering voice from the other side of the door. "With our plans for the domination of the adventure world so nearly complete how could you be so stupid as to actually recruit good characters into the ranks of Amalgamated Villains Incorporated. You're an idiot, criminal mastermind or no criminal mastermind. If they learn what we're trying to do..." "It's all part of the plan, you imbecile!" rasped another voice. "My dear Dark Lord, if we don't recruit good characters, our victory will not be complete. Just imagine, we, the ones responsible for snatching away the jobs to which they are most suited, will also be responsible for condemning them to a life of misery, toiling away day after day, their whole lives reduced to trying to sell Puppi-Snax pet food!"

"Be silent, both of you!" cried a third voice. "I agree that that was the original plan but it seems that the introduction of good characters has been sadly premature. One in particular, a robot working in accounts has been nearing the truth and a dragon from the same section has been poking around in the filing department. It seems that we have underestimated these creatures. However, it is no longer of any concern to us. They will never discover the truth before the FINAL PLAN reaches fruition, and then - then, it will be too late!"

"I agree wizard!", said a voice which was familiar as that of old Mr Hartlev from personnel. Bernard was shocked to hear how much that voice had changed from that of the seemingly friendly old man. "Next week the last property will have been purchased - the Old Forest itself will belong to A.V.Inc. That will be the point of no return. It will be a work of weeks to ensure

that no creature will ever be able to adventure in Middle Earth again. Soon the last tree will be cut down, the last merry halfling evicted from its hole and put to work in the mines, the last dungeon filled in or turned into offices!

"But what of those meddling fools from accounts?" thundered the first voice, sounding slightly more conciliatory.

"Rest assured," a sinister new voice replied. "Zey will be dealt with." Dick gave a gasp of shock. "I haf placed my best operative in accounts to vatch zeyr every move. One Mr Zucchini will tell me of everyzink zey do. To zink zat all zis time, zat fool Dick Hazard has been vatched vizout even suspecting it. But no-von, not even Hazard himself, would look twice at ze seeminkly harmiess Mr Bean!"

At that moment, a door slammed open, and running footsteps were heard within the boardroom. "Doctor Zed!" said a familiar voice. "The robot SFX-351-X, your old enemy Hazard and the dragon from the job centre have found one of the secret passages leading to this very room. Even now they may be listening to every word you say!"

"Quickly!" cried Doctor Zed. "Summon my gangsters and haf zem search for ze spies!"

"Where are my orcs and trolls?" demanded the deep thundering voice.

"My killer robots will soon flush them out!" the oily voice cried.

"Send for my demons and bring me my staff!" commanded the wizard.

"Gargle-argle-argle!" uttered a strangled-sounding alien voice. A close translation would probably have been "Bring on the slime creatures from Planet X!"

"Most deadly of all," said Hartley, "call the Puppi-snax sales team!"

In the distance the sound of running footsteps could be heard, accompanied by the whirring of robot treads, clumping of trolls and the flapping of demon wings. However the most terrifying of the noises that drew rapidly closer was none of these, but the bleeping portable phones and the snapping shut of personal organisers as the Puppi-snax sales team drew near. It took a particularly evil and twisted sort of creature to actually dedicate its life to the promotion of something as vile as Liver and Tripe Chunky Chunks.

The battle was short and unequal. The ancient door had soon been discovered, and Bernard and the others soon discovered that there was no way out of the room, the slippery chute being too slippery to climb back up again. It had been the work of moments for the demons and killer robots to break the crumbling stonework into dust, and the three had quickly been overwhelmed by the slime creatures, orcs, trolls and wild-eyed dog food salesmen, despite the brave resistance they had put up between them. Orcs had been crisped by Bernard's jets of flame, but the weight of numbers had been too great. Dicks' trusty .45 had put paid to a couple of the salesmen before he had been struck unconscious by a portable phone and Flossie had used her laser cannon to some effect amongst the killer robots but had been stunned by a well aimed filofax. Soon they had found themselves securely held, and dragged into the boardroom to face those behind A.V.Incorporated.

TO BE CONTINUED.....

OBJECTS & THEIR USES

BEHOLD ATLANTIS - SPECTRUM 48K

OBJECTS AND USES - BY ALF BALDWIN

JEANS	There's money in the pockets. to buy things and hire mule.
T-SHIRT	You can take it off when you go swimming.
WARDROBE	Your suitcase is inside.
SUITCASE	Holds your belongings. Examine it twice.
BOX OF MATCHES	Useless.
BATHER	Garment worn when swimming.
GOOGLES	Protect your eyes from salt water.
SANDALS	The sand on the beach is very hot. Swap your jeans for them. There is another pair in Atlantis for when you come back.
KNIFE	Will cut kelp when sharpened.
TORCH	It is dark on the sea bed.
MULE	Ride down to the beach. Mark the Greek's words.
SPACE (on beach)	To dig on the sea bed.
WHEYSTONE	To sharpen the knife on.
SPONGE	Makes a good trampoline to enable you to jump higher.
POOL	Source of water to soften hard ground.
WINESKIN	Fill it with water at the pool.
HOLY RING	Needed to wake Leukos.
JAR OF ACID	Dissolves the severed finger so you can get ring.
HOOK	Hook the ring out of the jar of acid with it.
HYMN PAGE	Clue to use of cloak.
GOLD CLOAK	Stops you freezing to death in Ice Chamber.
LEVER	Loosens bars holding cloak.
AXE	Useless, falls to pieces when you pick it up.
SPACE (in well)	Use it to dig the garden. Also acts as lever to start the ball rolling.
ROPE	Old but enables you to swing across abyss before disintegrating.
WOODEN STICK	Useless.
ICEPICK	To chop the ice mound.
DOCUMENT	Authority to pass guards.
FLINT	To light candle.
CANDLE	To see in dark gloomy cave.
WOODEN KEY	Useless.
DAGGER	To cut ropes binding Queen.
COIN	Rub it to make bridge real.
KING'S CROWN	Makes King.
NECKLACE	Makes Queen.

HINTS AND TIPS

By MARGO PORTROUS played on Spectrum

Examine ceiling and JUMP to get parchment (in secret room).

The notebook always returns to the secret room and the ruby, when rubbed, to the bath.

PULL FANG of small gargoyle for access to the garden.

West of the fountain have shiny ruby with you and REDES to see hidden doorway to secret garden.

HOLD BREATH to get the black rose.

After using spell in attic, go to the recess where the cloak was and GO PASSAGE.

Use the second spell and CUT HAND.

To finish, return to the courtyard and gates.

THE ALIEN

By BARBARA BASSINGTHWAIGHTE played on BBC

Break the test tube with the hammer to get the plastic.

Drink the can of beer but save the can for later.

The scalpel will wound the mutants.

TEMPLE OF VRAN

By BARBARA BASSINGTHWAIGHTE played on BBC

Give the peanuts to the elephant.

The ladder helps you to cross over the lava bed.

The mechanic needs the wrench.

Put the topaz in the yellow room.

THE GOLDEN SWORD OF BHAKHOR

By ALP BALDWIN played on Spectrum

The starting location is random and you may have to restart if it is outside the south gate.

Do not leave the city, death awaits you in the desert.

First make your way to the alcove on Westway. Examine the alcove and the body of the beggar.

Wear his headband and close his eyes to find a bag of coins.

Visit the house of the lady on Westway, carrying the bag of coins you will be allowed to enter.

You will be mugged and robbed but don't worry you will recover the bag of coins later.

Wearing the headband, beg for money in the market. You may beg twice receiving one coin each time. Buy spice (pepper) with one coin and a wineskin from the tavern with the other. Give the wineskin to the sentry on Eastway. Wait until he has drunk all the wine and falls asleep. Then you can enter the barrack room and get the uniform. Wearing the uniform the sentry will allow you to enter the armoury and get the sword.

CURSE OF THE SEVEN FACES

By JOAN WILLIAMS played on Spectrum

Say SLAB to move about.

Maze from mirror: S, S, E, NE, S, SE, NW, SW, E, NE, then S, N back to mirror.

Look in mirror.

Dig in garden to find sword.

Insert pole, turn pole.

Give crown to cross rickety bridge.

Move rock, go hole.

Pull lever to find screwdriver.

Lift metal plate to find petrol.

Pour petrol on wooden box, strike match.

Smash oak door with axe.

Give necklace to guard.

Rub lamp to find coin for wishing well.

Pull book in library.

Say "ABRACADABRA" in spell room to find lamp.

Chew gum in swamp.

Lift rag in cave.

COMMANDO

By JOAN WILLIAMS played on Spectrum

Sink dinghy on beach.

PART GRASS to find shovel.

Climb a tree to find a paddle.

GO HUT to get rope, lower rope, GO ROPE to find uniform.

Stab soldier in pill box, to get torch.

GO HOLE in hedge.

Drug coffee to give to guards.

Scale wall to escape.

Cut barbed wire to reach canoe, give money to guard.

PLANETFALL

By RON RAINBIRD played on Atari 800XL

After explosion in FEINSTEIN, enter pod, get into webbing and wait and wait and wait...

When pod lands, leave webbing, get survival kit, open pod then leave - but don't wast a moment.

Find laser and eject dead battery.

Put flask under spout - but not in the kitchen.

To get a key, hold metal bar over crevice.

Use key to unlock padlock.

POLICE QUEST (Park, Map B1)

By STEVE McLAREN played on Amiga

F4, Open door, F4, Close door, Walk into park, Hide behind bushes. CTRL D, Wait until deal done. CTRL D, Freeze, F8 Cuff Man, Follow Me, Walk to car, Read Rights, Search man, Talk to man, Open door for prisoner to get in, Close Door, Open door, F4, Close door, F4, Drive to County Jail. (Map D3)

ADULTIA

By JACKIE HOLT played on Spectrum

Climb into a jug to find a sword.
Blow through bamboo in tomb of flame.
Search borders to find a key.
Tip a vase to find a cross.
Read the book to speak Elving.
Give Mars Bar to Gabbit.
Drop droppings on blue rose.

CADAVER

By PAUL VINCENT played on Amiga

To get the Read Magic Spell, drop blood on the altar in the Inner Sanctum.
To open last door (after killing dragon) you must have the real (not fake!) crown of Wulf III.
The Dispel Trap Spell is in a canopic jar in the room E, E, E, from Great Chapel.
Simply push jar off the stone block to smash it.
To get the real crown, carry Wulf III's breastplate (which you'll find in the armoury) and press the button outside the Treasury room. This will teleport you to the real treasury, where you'll find lots of loot together with the real crown.
To get the blood, return the alchemist's ashes to their rightful place in the Crematorium.
Can't go through the door leading East from the Great Chapel? Simply jump on top of each of the two flaming bowls to put the flames out. Click! The Eastern Door is now open.

GEMS OF STRADUS

By SIMON AVERY played on Amstrad

Use the plank to bridge the gap.
Use the stilts to beat the nasties.
Give the bored guard the book.
Give the miserable guard the happy pill.
Give the dog a bone.
Wear the blazer.

SCARY TALES

By SIMON AVERY played on Amstrad

Cut open the mattress with the knife from the kitchen.
Dig with the spade in the garden, buy the cow and get the beans before planting them in the garden.

Get the bucket and fill it with water from the well.
Climb the beanstalk and in the giants kitchen tie his shoelaces together.

Give granny the current cake then give her the golden egg.

Wear the wig and go to the empty tower and look out of the window.

To get rid of Faggy, push him into the oven.

After collecting the potion from Mary, go to the thorny patch and drink it.

Kiss the princess and give her the chocolates.

THE SLAUGHTER CAVES

By ALF BALDWIN played on Spectrum

Extinguish the torch immediately or it will burn away before you need it.

Break the web blocking the exit west.

Untie the rope and fill the bucket with water.

Give some water to the man chained to the wall and ask for his help.

Don't collect any treasure on the way or there will be no fire to relight the torch.

Examine the skeleton to find a bone.

Examine the long corridor and push the rock. Give the bone to the dog and take collar.

Use the pot to wedge open the door in the rectangular room.

Wear the dog collar to protect yourself from the attack by the snake holding the hanging man.

Tie the rope to a stalagmite and hold on before going west. The snakes are just an illusion.

Close your eyes before pulling the blanket off the cage holding Medusa.

Hole the mirror in front of you before opening them again.

CASTLEMASTER

By DAVE HAVARD played on Amstrad

To escape from the Catacombs... They are not easy to map, as distances are misleading. However, to get out from them having fallen or wandered in...

There is only one stepover place, and there is only one crawl place. From the stopover, Approach it from a T junction: Take the first right: Continue until you have to turn right or left: Turn right and continue through the next doorway: Stop and turn right: You should now be at the end of a short passage. Walk along it and you enter the Stairwell. (Make sure you have the key from the Lobby table at this point. From the crawl place: Approach it from a T junction: Turn left at the corner once you've passed it: Go straight past the crossing: Take the next left: You should now be at the passage leading to the stairwell.

SERIALIZED SOLUTIONS

DARKNESS IS FOREVER

By NEIL SHIPMAN played on Atari ST

PART TWO:

EXAMINE WAXWORK, GET GLOVES, W, N, N, PRESS BOX WITH THUMB, E, EXAMINE PANEL, PRESS YELLOW BUTTON, W, W, S, W, THROW PEPPER AT GUARD, SMASH CASE, EXAMINE CASE, GET DISH, GET DAGGER, E, N, E, N, W, W, W, WEAR GLOVES, EXAMINE PATCH, EXAMINE WOODEN BOX, E, E, E, E, E, E, N, N, EXAMINE DESK, UNLOCK DRAWER, OPEN DRAWER, GET FLASHLIGHT, GET CROWBAR, S, S, W, W, W, W, W, W, N, ENTER SHELTER, READ MESSAGE, READ HISTORY BOOK, SAY TO PORTAL, CTKULI, SAY TO PORTAL, SAVE ME GREAT DARKNESS, ENTER PORTAL, E, E, POUR ACID ONTO DISH, GIVE PRIEST DISH, W, S, GET PAPER, BLOCK TOILET WITH PAPER, N, E, GET LARGE KEY, GET WATER, W, W, S, S, GET BOOTS, N, UNLOCK DOORS, E, E, E, GET CROSS, EXAMINE CARPET, PULL SWITCH, W, LIFT TOMBSTONE WITH CROWBAR, INSERT BATTERIES INTO FLASHLIGHT, TURN ON FLASHLIGHT. WEAR BOOTS, D, D, W, S, S, S, W, W, W, POUR WATER ONTO CREATURE, STAB CREATURE WITH DAGGER.

ADVENTURE COMPLETED!

THE AXE OF KOLT

By JACK LOCKERBY played on Spectrum

"This is an adventure in four parts from FSF Adventures, 40 Harvey Gardens, Charlton, London, SE7 8AJ. The 128K version. Having just sent my latest 2 part adventure, Treasure Island, away for playtesting I decided to have a try at solving Axe of Kolt. Not being in the same league as Alf Baldwin, Lorna Paterson, Jack Higham, Joan Pancott, Hugh Walker or Barbara Gibb, to name a few, when it comes to playing adventures, Larry Horsfield kindly supplied me with a hint sheet. I must state, here and now that without it, I would not be writing this "walk through". Before I start I would like to congratulate Larry Horsfield on a well structured and absorbing adventure. I haven't had so much fun as when I first loaded up "Dungeon Adventure" by Level 9 a few years ago."

You are a roving, mercenary swordsman. You chance upon the small village of Hengemire on a cold Sunday afternoon in mid November. Walking around, you soon come across a long neglected graveyard. Searching the uncut grass reveals the clapper of a small bell. Someone has not had many visitors lately, that's for sure. You travel all over the place but danger lurking in the forest halts your progress that way and there's no route through the mountains either.

The Inn was closed on your first visit so you decide to see if they open a little early on a Sunday evening. Darn it, they're still not open but the brewer's cart has arrived. Walking over to the cart you see the poor old landlord struggling with the casks of ale, being a considerate

sort of a chap, you offer to help him. He certainly showed his gratitude cos' before you could say hello he whisks you inside and leaves you in the company of his wife, a comely wench called Lorna. Putting on your best smile you commence to chat her up, but all she seems interested in is a pass through the mountains, so jus to pacify her you ask her to tell you about the pass. Apparently this is another route to the next village instead of risking the forest, which seems alive with outlaws. She also mentions a creature called, Dwark who lives in the mountains. To learn more about this creature's habit she urges you to ask the Trapper about it. Whilst you are in the Inn you spot the drawing of a dragon on a beam with the name "Zorak" printed underneath. A tapestry in an adjoining room depicts a warrior wielding a double headed axe fighting some lizard men called Xixons.

After a time a traveller enters the Inn bringing the news that the Xixon are once more on the warpath and are at this very minute laying siege to the city of Dormreil. The King has asked for a volunteer to find the fabled axe and return it to him. Only then can the Xixon be defeated and the city saved. A magician, called Magor knows the secret of the axe and he would be the best person to see, if anyone wanted to take up the quest. As nobody else seemed interested, after a good nights sleep you set off on Monday morning to seek out this Magor. Travelling North and Northwest up the mountain you come to the east end of a pass, as you attempt to go westwards a very large dragon flies out of a cave, high above, and stops you in your tracks. He seems pretty friendly and only wants to know if you've remembered his name. Quick as a flask you say Zorak! He flies off, a most satisfied dragon. A little further west is Magor's Tower, sitting on the top of a pinnacle. You ring the little bell but nothing happens so you fit the clapper that you found in the graveyard. Ting-a-ling and the huge slab of rock rolls to one side. You are soon in the presence of the magician and you tell him about the invasion of the Xixon. He is most upset and when you mention that you are going to seek out the axe he gives you a bag of gold coins. You ask him one or more questions and then make your way back to the village.

Feeling pleased with yourself now that you have some money you pop into the inn and have a jug of ale. You talk to Lorna for a couple of hours and when you emerge the Monday market is in full swing. Walking round you talk to all the various stallholders and also ask the Trapper about the Dwark. Apparently he escaped by diving in the snow. You buy a lamp, a tinder box and a fur coat for your journey in the snow. You had to wait around at the cross before the oil vendor appeared to fill your lamp, another gold coin gone. The armourer stall was a dead loss, everything was so expensive. Wearing the fur coat you set off up the mountain again. Going up again it becomes pitch black and you are forced to light your lamp. At the very top you are greeted by a hideous wailing coming out of the pass to the east. Taking a deep breath and pulling in your stomach you proceed east. Ye Gods! What's this creature you think as you dive into the snow. After a few seconds you emerge and go east again and immediately dive into the snow as the creature is not far behind you. This time when you dive your hand closes on a rock. When you emerge you throw the rock at the Dwark and head off southeast and then east into a small cave.....

TO BE CONTINUED

BUGS AND AMUSING RESPONSES

The following contributions were sent in by JEREMY SMITH played on Commodore 64.

SNOWBALL

"I found out that strangely enough, you could go in instead of out when you had opened the door, west of the control room. You then enter a room where all the used objects were stored such as Paint Spray, Flask of Air, Cup of Lentil Custard, and strangest of all there was a previously unmentioned object called a Memory Rope which had no use in the game. I also discovered that you could also put things in any word, i.e. In the Snowdozer you can Put Keys In Slot and they disappear!"

RETURN TO EDEN

"Type SAY ALL and you get a list of all objects and a Pod, Pinapple and Anesthetic Spray."

ZORK III

"In the Treasure Room there is a bug. If you type in UNLOCK CAGE WITH ALL, you will take all the objects within your weight range! The objects will not be listed in your inventory but you will be carrying them!. Also in this game, for a very amusing response try burning the rope with the torch!"

STARCROSS

"When you have given your spacesuit to the alien chief you can still enter your ship... enter the airlock, but the blue disk outside the airlock, and leave the red disk inside, die in the vacuum of space and stand on the blue disk. You may now leave the airlock and enter the ship.

Also, if you put all your objects in the nest in the zoo and blast it with the gun it says that the nest is destroyed and all the object, but they are still there!"

THE HOBBIT

"At the beginning of the game, tell Thorin to "open the door, E, E, get key, W, W, drop all, E", and he will bring you the key. This is a funny way of overcoming the WAIT UNTIL SUNRISE routine and it shows that the program is really too clever for its own good!"

KNIGHT ORC

"When you know the teleport spell, cast teleport at moon (or any treasure) and you may find yourself in a room called ". Weird eh? It is a bit like the Memory Rope business!"

GETTING YOU STARTED

The following contributions were sent in by PARAS-EVAS TSCOURINAKIS of Greece

CODENAME ICEMAN (Sierra On-line)

LOOK TABLE. LOOK CHAIR. READ NEWSPAPER. STAND. WALK LEFT. TALK WOMAN. PLAY BALL. when she calls for help go after her. You carry her on the beach. SHAKE AND SHOUT. CALL FOR HELP. ESTABLISH THE AIRWAY. LOOK. LISTEN AND FEEL. GIVE TWO BREATHS. LOOK. LISTEN AND FEEL. CHECK PULSE. BEGIN COMPRESSIONS. WALK RIGHT and WEAR SHIRT. WALK NORTH. LOOK STAND. OPEN DOOR. Inside walk near clerk. LOOK WOMAN. TALK WOMAN. GET KEY. Walk a little to the right. READ SIGN. (555-6969). Enter bar. walk to the right hand table. LOOK WOMAN. ASK HER NAME. TALK STACY. TALK STACY. DANCE. After a while LEAVE. BUY DRINK FOR STACY. SIT. Answer YES. Outside Stacy's room. KISS STACY. YES. Inside. SIT. TALK STACY. TALK STACY. KISS STACY. KISS STACY. KISS STACY. KISS STACY. KISS STACY. Next morning: STAND. LOOK TABLE. GET NOTE. READ NOTE. leave. walk down the stairs and walk left. After 5 or 6 steps LOOK GROUND. LOOK GLIMMER. GET EARRING. LOOK EARRING. OPEN EARRING. LOOK INSIDE EARRING. GET MICROFILM.....

KINGS QUEST V

Walk two screens south. Enter the town at alley: LOOK BARREL. GET FISH. Walk inside tailor shop. TALK MAN. leave and enter toy shop. TALK MAN. walk outside and enter shoe shop. TALK MAN and step outside. LOOK at the ground near the wagon and GET SILVER COIN. walk four screens west. GIVE FISH TO BEAR. GET HONEYCOMB from tree hole and GET STICK from the ground. walk north one screen and THROW STICK TO DOG. Walk east and then south SEARCH HAYSTACK. The ants find for you a golden needle. walk six screens left. At the Oasis DRINK WATER. Walk two screens north and three screens west. Quickly hide behind the rocks. when the bandits leave. DRINK WATER from the pool. Now walk east three screens and south two. DRINK WATER again. walk two screens west and one south. GET OLD SHOE. continue two screens south and DRINK WATER from the oasis. walk one screen south and four screens west. You are inside the bandits camp. DRINK WATER from the jar at the middle of the screen and enter the right tent. At the north wall LOOK STAFF. GET STAFF. now leave the tent very carefully and don't awaken the sleeping bandit.....

CONQUEST OF CAMELOT

In your room: LOOK AROUND. LOOK CLOTHES. LOOK TABLE. WEAR CLOTHS. GET PURSE. Queens Bower: LOOK AROUND. LOOK QUEEN. TALK QUEEN. TALK QUEEN. TALK QUEEN. ASK ABOUT LANCELOT. KISS QUEEN. LOOK ROSE. GET ROSE. ASK ABOUT THE MESSAGE OF THE ROSE. Treasury: LOOK AROUND. LOOK BUNDLES. ASK ABOUT BUNDLES. ASK ABOUT GAWAIN. LOOK MAN. TALK MAN. GIVE PURSE. GOLD. SILVER. COPPER. GET PURSE. Merlins room: LOOK AROUND. LOOK SCROLL. TRANSLATE SCROLL. ASK ABOUT LANCELOT. ASK ABOUT GAWAINE. ASK ABOUT GALAHAD. ASK ABOUT SYMBOLS. ASK ABOUT GRAIL. Courtyard: Walk near the SW Guard. LOOK GUARD. TALK GUARD. ASK ABOUT GALAHAD. GIVE 1 COPPER. Chapel: LOOK ALTARS. walk right and KNEEL. GIVE 1 SILVER. GIVE 1 GOLD. STAND. walk left and KNEEL. GIVE 1 SILVER. GIVE 1 GOLD. STAND LOOK SYMBOLS.....

GETTING YOU STARTED

THIS MONTH WE FEATURE SOME GOLDEN OLDIES

Starting Pistol fired by RON RAINBIRD riding an Atari 800XL

GOLDEN BATON (A Golden Ancient)

Start in dense forest: GET CLOAK, WEAR CLOAK, LOOK LEAVES, GET SWORD, SOUTH, CUT BRIARS, GET ROPE, go NORTH, NORTH, WEST, NORTH then GO CABIN, EXAMINE BARREL, GET SALT, GET RAG, then WEST and SOUTH, THROW ROPE, CLIMB ROPE, LOOK HOLLOW, GET RING, WEAR RING, GO DOWN, then EAST and NORTH, KILL WOLF, DROP SWORD, go SOUTH and WEST, GET ROPE, go EAST then NORTH, GO PATH then NORTH three times, DROP MATCHES then SWIM.....

GOLDEN VOYAGE (Another from the days of Yore)

Start in a Persian City: Go WEST and NORTH, GO PALACE, GET GOLD then EAST and SOUTH, BUY COMPASS, GET COMPASS, BUY TELESCOPE, GET TELESCOPE, BUY TABLET, GET TABLET, go EAST, BUY SANDALS, GET SANDALS, WEAR SANDALS, go WEST twice, BUY SHIP, GO SHIP, WEIGH ANCHOR, SAIL WEST, CLIMB MAST, LOOK TELESCOPE, GO DOWN, DROP ANCHOR, DROP COMPASS, DROP TELESCOPE, DROP GOLD, GO ISLAND, go NORTH, GO HUT, GET BOX, LOOK BOX, GO EAST, GO MOUNTAIN, GET SWORD, GO DOWN, SOUTH and WEST, GET SHOVEL, GO EAST, GO SHIP, WEIGH ANCHOR, DROP BOX, GET COMPASS, GET TELESCOPE, SAIL EAST then SAIL SOUTH, GO MAST, LOOK TELESCOPE, GO DOWN, DROP ANCHOR.....

MORDON'S QUEST (A contender for the all-time greats)

Start in bedroom: GET BLANKET, go SOUTH, EAST, WEST, WEST, NORTH, GET NEWSPAPER, READ NEWSPAPER, go SOUTH then EAST, CLIMB DRAINPIPE, go NORTH, SOUTH, NORTH, WEST, SOUTH, NORTH (Mordon should appear), SAY "YES", go SOUTH, EAST, NORTH, SOUTH, GET TRANSPORTER, GET TORCH, go NORTH, ON TORCH, go NORTH twice then EAST, DROP BLANKET, go EAST, GET TUSKS, GET BAMBOO, TRANSPORT TUSKS, go NORTHWEST twice, GET BERRIES, then NORTHEAST, SOUTHEAST, EAST, GET THORNS, NORTH, NORTHWEST, NORTH, EAST.....

MYSTERY FUNHOUSE (A Scott Adams "must")

Start in front of Funhouse: WEAR SHOES, DROP WATCH, go EAST, EXAMINE TREE, GET BRANCH, EXAMINE GRATING, CHEW GUM, STICK GUM, TO BRANCH, GET COIN, WITH BRANCH, DROP BRANCH, go WEST, GO COUNTER, GIVE COIN, ENTER FUNHOUSE, go NORTH, NORTH, EAST, then WEST three times, PULL BLUE, GET SIGN, GO DOWN, PULL GREEN, GET TRAMPOLINE, go SOUTH, DROP SIGN, GET SPECTACLES, go NORTH, UP, WEST then UP four times, GO LADDER.....

(CONTRIBUTIONS ARE URGENTLY NEEDED FOR THE GETTING YOU STARTED SECTION PLEASE!)



TELEPHONE HELPLINE

ALF BALDWIN	0452 500512	MON TO SAT 10AM TO 5PM	Spectrum
JACK HIGHAM	0925 819631	FRI TO MON 7AM TO 10PM	Spectrum
DOREEN BARDON	0653 628509	MON TO FRI 6PM TO 10PM Weekends any reasonable time	Spectrum
JOAN PANCOTT	0305 784155	SUN TO SAT 1PM TO 10PM	Anstrad
ISLA DONALDSON	041 9540602	SUN TO SAT NOON TO 12PM	Anstrad
STUART WHYTE	061 9804645	ANY REASONABLE TIME	Anstrad
MERC	0424 434214	ANY REASONABLE TIME	Atari ST
JASON DEANE	0492 622750	ANY REASONABLE TIME	Amiga
VINCE BARKER	0642 780076	ANY REASONABLE TIME	CBM 64
BARBARA			
BASSINGTHWAIGHTE	0935 26174	SUN TO SAT 10AM TO 10PM	BBC
BARBARA GIBB	051 7226731	ANY EVENING FROM 7PM	Various
ROBIN MATTHEWS	0222 569115	OR 0642 781073 EVENINGS AND WEEKENDS	IBM PC
WALTER POOLEY	051 9331342	ANY REASONABLE TIME	Various
MIKE BRAILSFORD	0592 757788	SUN TO SAT 10AM TO 10PM	Various
NIC RUMSEY	03212 2737	MON TO FRI 6PM TO 9PM	Various
DAVE BARKER	071 7321513	MON TO FRI 7PM TO 10PM	Various

*** THE ULTIMATE INFOCOM HELPLINE ***

If you need help with an Infocom adventure then who better to help you than a GRUE! Ring GRUE on 0695 573141 between 7.30pm to 9pm Mon to Fri or write to 64 County Road, Ormskirk, West Lancs, L39 1QH.

*** ADVENTURE PROBE ***

NEW TELEPHONE NUMBER FROM MARCH 21ST!

0492 877305

Between 10am and 9pm any day apart from Sunday please

If you need to contact Adventure Probe then I will try to be available during these times apart from shopping and the occasional evening meeting. If you are telephoning for help on an adventure then please try to call during daytime hours but please try one of the helplineers for help first, as above.

PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU ONLY RING DURING THE TIMES SHOWN