

Adventure Probe

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Now in its **SIXTH** Volume

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Adventure Probe is distributed during the first week of the month. COPY DATE for contributions and ads., 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 (Protex), Amiga (Protex) or Atari ST (First Word). Sorry no printer for the Spectrum. FAXIMILE may be used to send items also (same telephone number. If you send in items for the IN-TOUCH section please clearly mark which are adventures, utilities, arcade etc.

POSTAL ADDRESS

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

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HALL OF FAME

Sincere thanks to the following readers who took the time and trouble to send in contributions during the past month:

NEIL ASHMORE, LON HOULSTON, KEITH BURNARD, RON RAINBIRD, TONY BEVAN, IAN OSBORNE, JONATHAN SCOTT, DAVE CHARNLEY, G.J.BAILEY, BARRY DURRANS, TONY MELVILLE, SIMON AVERY, PAUL CARDIN, ANASTASIA, GARY SEVIOUR, THE GRUE!, FLOYD, JACK LOCKERBY, REYNIR STEFANSSON, DAVE MURPHY, KEN BOND, IAN DOWDALL, GARETH PITCHFORD, JAY HONOSUTOMO, PAUL HONOSUTOMO, STEVE McLAREN, RON GUEST, RICK MANCHIP, DEREK SHAW, SUE ILSLEY, AMANDA OLIVER and STEVE CLAY.

Special thanks to BARRY DURRANS for this months cover picture.

EDITORIAL

Welcome to Volume 6, Issue 6 of Adventure Probe.

I am delighted to say that this month's issue marks Adventure Probe's SIXTH birthday! Yay! I didn't receive much in the way of special birthday-like contributions for this issue, but when you think about it, there isn't really any way that you can write special birthday contributions, as you would for Christmas, is there? So it was a bit daft of me to ask for them! Still, I hope you enjoy this issue. It is a bit late in getting to you this month but that was due to matters beyond my control. Well, perhaps not quite beyond my control, I had better explain. This has been a rather unpleasant month at my end. I decided to give the family a real treat and treated them all to a dish called Pork A La King! It tasted beautiful (even if I shouldn't say so myself) but unfortunately something was wrong with it and both John and I poisoned ourselves with it! The kids had more sense than us and decided that they preferred chips instead so avoided the misery that we had. I used one of those packets of mix that you can get to microwave a meal - never again! Anyway, everything had to be held back for a while until I could face the keyboard again. I never realised just how ill a dose of food-poisoning could make you feel! The funny thing is that the water-board vans are, at this moment, racing up and down the streets here warning everyone not to drink or use any water for cooking unless it has been very well boiled first as there has been a problem at the water treatment plant. Believe me, I'm not going to risk even a cup of coffee until it has been fixed as I don't want to go through all that again!

Summer came this month, I notice - and promptly went again. Storms have become the norm these past few days but it has given me a chance to go adventuring and I have thoroughly enjoyed myself. I've been playing a fantastic adventure called Unnkulian - and it is text only! Who says that text adventures are dead? There are about five in the series I'm told and I just can't wait to play the rest of them. They are shareware too!

Another thing happened to me this month. I went on-line with a modem! ("At last!" I hear Bob Adams cry). What fun it is too! I never realised it would be like that. I logged into my first BBS to thank the chap who had sold me his modem and set up the software for me and wanted to leave him a message to say thanks for all his help. Being unused to the PC keyboard I was just in the middle of typing "... I don't..." when I realised I couldn't find the apostrophe! There was a long pause whilst I scanned the keyboard for it when suddenly it appeared on screen for me! It was the sysop on the other end putting it in for me! I didn't realise that he was sitting at his keyboard watching my puny, first stumbling efforts. He must have been grinning to himself. What a strange and nice experience it is to be able to ring up somebody else's computer and have a wander round to see what they have on their machine - feels as if you are intruding at first but I am getting more familiar with it all now. I'll have to watch the phone bills but can't resist stepping timidly into this strange new technical world that has suddenly opened up for me.

Well, before I run out of page again, I had better stop rambling and let you all get on with reading the rest of this issue. I sincerely hope you enjoy it all and I'll see you all again next month as usual.

Mandy

REVIEWS

LEATHER GODDESSES OF PHOBOS II

A graphic Infocom adventure for PC. Available from Strategic Plus import only at present (UK release around Sept/Oct 1992). Price £39 (UK price will be about the same).

Reviewed by *The Grue* on PC

The year is 1956. It's election year in the USA and the Leather Goddesses of Phobos are, for the second time, planning to invade the earth and turn it into their private pleasure world. One of Earth's most renowned scientists, Prof. Sandler, suspects that something is up and the Leather Goddesses are well aware of the existence of a tenth planet in the solar system, called Planet X. The beings of Planet X are peaceful and technologically advanced, perfect pawns for the Leather Goddesses' gameplan.

In LGOP2 you can choose to be one of the three main characters in the story, Lydia, Zeke or Barth the space alien, although Zeke and Lydia games are identical. If you choose to play the Zeke or Lydia character you find yourself on the way to check out the meteor that crashed earlier that evening in the foothills. Upon locating the crash site you discover a spacecraft of some description, deciding to find its owner you head off back into Atom City.

Once back in town, and after a bit of exploring, you find the alien has been almost everywhere. The local sheriff even had him locked up in his cell but the slippery fugitive escaped. Only when you visit Prof. Sandler's house and question Jimmy do you find out that it was injured, hungry and, for some odd reason, wanted the clothes iron. Jimmy also tells you what will heal and feed this creature, so off you go to collect the goodies.

Along the way you find that the research base is under threat of closure and that General Wedgefellow has been duped by the Leather Goddesses into thinking this will save his beloved base from closure. Only by helping Barth to return to Planet X will you be able to travel on to Planet Phobos and thus thwart the evil (but sexy) Leather Goddesses. After all you couldn't let them invade the earth and take all the men to restock their private harems, could you?

Playing the game as Barth is the easiest of the three characters and you will have to find the eight objects that will enable you to repair your craft. Once this has been done and you meet up with Zeke and Lydia then all three games are exactly the same. So Infocom's claims of three games in one are not really true. In reality one could say there are only one and a half games for you to play.

Movement around the game is simple, by moving your cursor around the screen it will change into an arrow illustrating the directions you can travel in, then just click and you will be moved in that particular direction. You can talk to other people in the game by simply clicking on them, this will bring up a close-up of the person and some text. Your cursor will then change into a mouth indicating that you need to click again. After the text disappears some icon buttons usually appear on screen. The use of these other icon buttons

are quite obvious, one showing clasped hands means to greet someone. If you see an icon with the image of another person or object in it, that means you can ask the person you're engaged in conversation with to tell you about the object or other person. An icon showing a pair of lips shouldn't need explaining, especially in a game written by Steve Meretzky. On occasions other icons will appear, these are left up to you to figure out what they are for, but as I said before the game is written by Steve Meretzky and, if pressed, often bring up one of a number of digitized animated screens. This leaves the player in no doubt about the playing mode of the game!!!

Objects are picked up by clicking on them. Your mouse pointer will then change into the object you have just picked up. You can then either put it in your inventory or click it on another object to use the two together - simple. Once the item has been picked up it can't be dropped again unless you need to in order to solve a puzzle, and if you wish to wear or read an object it must be in your inventory first.

LGOP2 is, according to the manual, a really, really large game. Well it might look that way once you've installed the 17 disks on your hard drive and realised that it used at least 15 meg of it! I'm sorry to say that the game is mostly taken up with the graphics/animation (some digitized) and the music and speech. All of the interaction between the characters is shown on screen and heard using digitized speech, although the speech is unnecessary I found it enhanced the personality of each character nicely. The music was nice but I found it obtrusive as it tended to drown out the speech a little much for my taste, but you can turn it off, as you can with the speech. The graphics are nicely drawn and when in close-up the detail was excellent. With the game comes a small interface for people who haven't got a sound card that supports digitized speech, it plugs into the printer port enabling you to plug it into your stereo. This is a nice bonus for those people because this interface will work for most games that support similar devices, like the corvox speech thing or audiobyte.

The main problem with LGOP2 is that it is far too easy. There are not many locations or objects or puzzles. What puzzles we do have can be solved rapidly. For instance, I installed it, solved all three characters, typed up the solution to each of them, wrote this review and painted the kitchen in four evenings. Not much for your money. Having said that, I did enjoy the game, it had humour, a reasonable storyline, good graphics etc and, being the only Infocom game I hadn't got, I would have bought it regardless, but others might want to be more cautious.

It is a pity that Infocom are no longer with us as this being written a few years back shows us that they had the basics of a nice system that could have been developed. Even on this showing they could have taught Sierra a thing or two about how to write a graphic adventure that runs so quickly - you'd be hard pressed to play a text game as fast. At the very end of the game we are told to look out for the final thrilling chapter of the Leather Goddesses. Does this mean they planned to write a LGOP3?

Ratings:

GRAPHICS 8, SOUND 9, VALUE FOR MONEY 4, ENJOYMENT 8, SMUTTYNESS 10.

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FRUSTRATION

By Jim MacBrayne as shareware and available from 17 Bit, Atlas Software, Borphee Computers etc. For Amiga 1 MB only.

Reviewed by *The Grue!*

Damn! Just as you start to read the scrap of paper containing the list of groceries which Aunt Maud asked you to collect on the way home, a wandering gust of wind catches it, tearing it from your grasp, carrying it along the road and fast out of reach. Returning to Aunt Maud with your task uncompleted is not even for a moment to be contemplated and you shoot after it in hot pursuit. Just as you are about to dive upon this defiant scrap of paper you fail to notice an open manhole and promptly tumble down into the pipe system - who would have thought that going shopping would be so much trouble.....

So begins the latest, and perhaps the last, adventure from the pen of Jim MacBrayne. There is not much one can say about the quality of the text in Jims games except it is pretty damn good and Frustration follows the standard set in his previous offerings. Anyway, I digress, once out of the pipe complex a wandering path leads one way to an impenetrable shrubbery and the other way to a magnificent mansion. Trying to enter the shrubbery was fruitless but it is worth a go because of the response (I bet Jim grows lupins in his back garden), but the mansion is much more interesting. The mansion contains a maze deep in the cellar that is almost impossible to map, a flagpole that is far too slippery to climb, a vampire and, to top it all, a Wobbly Pumpkin!!

The most interesting room in the mansion is the strangely disconcerting cubical room, where by placing different shaped objects in an aperture you can walk through the north wall into different scenarios. Among the places you will visit are a theatre, an ice rink and a paddle steamer. I have to say I enjoyed the first of the scenarios best mainly because of the names of the stores found within this odd world. How could you resist going to W.D. Waxwing Candlemaker, Strangecan's Wine Emporium and Winifrid Witches Retreat, the latter having a wand in a cauldron that seems impossible to obtain, must brush up on my magical powers? Then we have R. S. Finebone the solicitors office. Once in this location you realise that this is definitely a Jim MacBrayne game. I can sum this up with one word **BUTTONS!** Yep, Jim loves buttons, in fact Jims love of the shrubbery is only surmounted by his love of buttons. Finebones office contains a desk that you can't open unless you can press different coloured buttons in the right order and an odd cupboard that will transport you to more strange scenarios if you know which button to press and how many times to press it. But I confess I found the solution to the cupboard tough going.

There is no doubt in my mind that this is a typical game from Jim and I know that he feels it is not quite as good as his previous games but, with all the enhancements and additional puzzles that he has added over about five different versions of Frustration, the final version is now an adventure well worth tackling. Frustration is shareware with a registration fee of £5 and will take a good few days to complete (at least). It is just a pity that Jim says this will be his last game. If this is true it will be a sad loss to the world of text only adventures.

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APRIL 7TH

Available from Zenobi Software, 26 Spotland Tops, Cutgate, Rochdale, OL12 7NX. Price £1.99 on cassette for Spectrum.

Reviewed by *Steve Clay*

The storyline accompanying April 7th is a gloom-ridden affair, in which, the world's superpowers are likely to nuke each other at the drop of a hat. One of the chosen few - that's what you are! - chosen to live in an underground shelter where you actually have a room of your own! The boredom of living in the shelter, where there is only so much that you can do is getting to you and the prospect of a statutory 48 hour rest period fills you with dread (buy Dread folks, it really fills you up!). So to avoid haing to suffer the boredom you grab yourself a pack of Somnux and sleep the days away. Just before dropping into the land of nod a mechanical voice informs you it is "1800 Hours April 5th".... When you awake from your drug-induced sleep you discover that someone or something has been through the shelter like a dose of salts. The furniture has been re-arranged into firewood! The personnel have been tampered with as well! For a start they're not breathing! (I don't know, you get your head down for 48 hours and the world goes to pieces!). What should you do? Get the blazes out of the shelter appears a good bet, however you aren't told what it was that caused the turmoil within or wether outside is safe or not. UFO's made a small appearance in the storyline but this appears to be their only showing and bear no relevance to the game. Actually the whole storyline seems only distantly related to the actual game plot, which is to equip yourself and escape from the shelter before it is too late. There's a time limit before the building becomes flooded but this is in no way restrictive and doesn't make you rush your inputs.

Upon loading, after an excellent loading screen I might add, the title page gives a list of useful commands and credits Quill as the writing system. You are also told that to pass through a door you have opened you must enter GO THROUGH DOOR. You also learn that colours of buttons and passes must be stated, you can, however, get away with PRESS RED or SHOW RED. The game kicks off in your room and you'll have to find your pass. You'll also see a program listing that you've been working on, this however, is too heavy to carry! (Been writing your flowchart on slates again, eh?) Once you have found your pass you can wander almost unrestricted around the shelter. Only areas that require a pass of higher security clearance than yours are out of bounds. The shelter is a mappers delight and objects abound. The items you find generally need no guesswork as to their used, like a spark plug or a Geiger counter. The main problem is collecting them in the right order. It is very easy to wander around collecting everything only to find that one of the levels has flooded and is out of reach. I would recommend that the first few goes are spent mapping the game and noting where each item is, before having a go for real.

The game has a few special effects, including a smart border effect when the rifle is fired. There are beeps when transporters are used and doors opened. There is also an awful beeping fanfare on completion. The location descriptions are functional but don't add any atmosphere. There is no feeling of loneliness that a game like this would benefit from. The map is of good size and on the whole logical. Best of all there is no maze! The game plays well and I enjoyed it, although I couldn't help feeling I was playing the first part of a trilogy or series. Most commands are obvious although there is a difference between EXAMINE and SEARCH. I would conclude that April

7th is a game for beginners to practice their map-making, while more experienced adventurers may enjoy working out the "right order" side of the game they may have something to say about the lack of puzzles. Of late I have played some duff games but this one by Geoff Lynas had me coming back for more. If it is the start of a series I look forward to the others. Perhaps a few more puzzles next time?

(Nb: If you don't find the St Christopher you will discover a maze, if you have it you don't notice the maze at all.....Ed)

THE FABLED TREASURE OF KOOSAR

Plus BIRTHDAY WISH free.

By Doreen Bardon and Arthur Simmons and available from The Guild, 760 Tyburn Rd, Erdington, Birmingham, B24 9NX. Available for Spectrum 48k on tape and priced £2.50. Cheques etc payable to Glenda Collins please

Reviewed by *Gareth Pitchford*

If you were at the 2nd Probe Convention then you may well have seen this game demonstrated. Written by Doreen Bardon, with programming by Arthur Simmons, KOOSAR is a QUILLED game as you will soon see when you press a key on the intro-screen, with the tasteless sub-message "This game is guaranteed free from AIDS (Adventurers Instant Death Syndrome). Being quilled the game isn't as user friendly, or as large as its PAWed counterparts. There is also an absence of a RAMSAVE command. There, that's the bad news out of the way - onto the rest of the review. The intro runs along the lines of: The night before, you had retired to bed with a book entitled the Fabled Treasure Of Koosar. After reading this you go to sleep with dreams of finding untold riches filling your head. When you awake you go out for an early morning stroll along the beach. You see something bobbing up and down among the rocks and decide to investigate...

This is where the story really starts. The object you find is a bottle, though actually picking it up isn't as simple as you would expect - the bottle is well out of reach. An object nearby will help you obtain the elusive container, but how should you get into it? It is tightly shut and smashing it only produces a lot of glass and a piece of paper which blows away in the wind. Drat! Maybe you will catch up with it later, until then a bit of exploring will see you finding a few objects, especially if you remember to SEARCH as well as EXAMINE. By now you'll have found out that some of the location exits are missing - oh well, cursing the programmer does no good. Just try each direction in turn. A quick trip down the pier is momentarily halted by a large hole in the structure. Something on the other side could provide some fun but needs quite a bit of work doing to it first. A trip to the village should help you solve some of these puzzles and you will also find an elderly "sea-dog" there. Getting him to help you is another puzzle though.

Koosar isn't bat at all, though I cursed the parser at times for its unfriendliness. Certainly enough to keep you busy for a few playing sessions. Finally, a word about the free b-side game BIRTHDAY WISH. It is another quilled game in which you must prepare breakfast in bed for the wife! I enjoyed this more than Koosar as it is filled with nice humour and wry observations. The special little touches add to the shine. For instance if you examine the toilet, in the bathroom, you can't leave unless you've washed your hands! The KOOSAR/BIRTHDAY pack isn't bad value for money at all. Not as "flashy" as PAWed games - but fun all the same. Well worth looking at.

THE BIG TOP

By Ronnie Slater. Available from WoW Software, 78 Radipole Lane, Weymouth, Dorset DT4 9RS. For Amstrad CPC cassettes at £2 and discs at £4. Cheques etc. payable to J. G. Pancott.

Reviewed by *Jay Honosutomo*

You look around you. People are mesmerized by your brave and breathtaking act. You set across the tightrope once more. Nearly there.... yes! The crowd break into a thunderous cheer! You're a star! Oh how many times has that scene entered your dreams. Since your parents first took you to a circus, your heart has grasped on the romance and intrigue of it all. So, when the chance to join one comes along, you grab it eagerly. It is not as easy as it all sounds, though, and first you must undertake a series of tasks set by the Ringmaster. Each time you complete some tasks he will give you a few more. When they are all complete you can join in the fun... This another game from WoW that has been written especially with children in mind. The first being "The Last Snowman" by Margaret and Mike Crewdson. One thing I noticed with both adventures is the use of graphics. Nothing unusual, but something which I think is a good idea in children's games. Children tend to be attracted and interested when they see bright, colourful pictures. Once again I will let my brother round off the review with his comments as he is of a slightly younger age than I, so he'll see the game in a different perspective. "This game was harder than "The Last Snowman". The puzzles are more "hidden", if you know what I mean. The storyline is, again, very good. The direction commands are switched back to the compass directions for this game. It took me a few minutes to get to grips with them because I've got used to using left, right, etc from "The Last Snowman"! But I didn't have any real trouble. Even though it took me longer to complete than "Snowman" I still enjoyed it. They are both very good games to start off playing adventures with. Even better if you're a nine year old. So, what are you waiting for?

DETECTIVE

By Alex Gough and available from The Guild, 760 Tyburn Rd, Eerdington, Birmingham, Price £4 (disc).

Reviewed by *Frank Fridd* on Amstrad 464

This is the first of Alex's games that I have played and I enjoyed it enough to want to play more of them. It is programmed using G.A.C. and is text only. In Detective you have to search out a traitor before he can destroy your country with t Doomsday Device. You start in the porch of your own house. In your house you find your butler, wife and daughter. Throughout the game you will find various characters, some will help you, some will hinder and some will do neither. The interaction between you and the characters is very good and the information they give you is very helpful. In fact, the remarks and the descriptions of the other characters they give make the game so much more enjoyable. The only bugs I found were in the EXAM and READ routines. By typing in either you get the same response and you can EXAMINE or READ anything at any time whether you are near the object or not and even before you have discovered it. If you experiment with nouns you can get responses which give you clues about the completion of the game before you have earned the right to do so. Detective is not a large game as far as locations are concerned but to complete the game you will have to travel through each location a number of times, picking up and dropping different objects as and when necessary. The puzzles are excellent and the interaction with the game characters is essential - well worth the money.

STRATEGY PLUS

Magazine review. £1.95 monthly and available from newsagents.

Reviewed by *Steve Clay*

Strategy Plus is an A4 glossy magazine averaging 70 pages and is dedicated to Adventure/RPG/Strategy/Simulations and Sport Simulations for 16 bit computers. Namely, Amiga, Atari ST, PC, IBM and MAC.

The content of the magazine is made up of approximately 70% reviews with the remainder consisting of articles, tips and letters. Considering the magazine is, on the whole, geared up to reviewing games, it seems to me that it's a pity that the reviews tend to be short and lacking in depth. Taking into account that the software on show is costing £25 plus, the reviews lack the detail that prospective purchasers need to make sure the product is the right one for them. Therefore I couldn't see people using this as a reference alone and a second opinion would be advised. The articles that pop up throughout the magazine range from games development to software history (yawn!). The February edition had a useful article on the development of characters for RPGs. The tips section is usually a walk-through solution of the game in question. Adventures are covered quite well, although adventures in this sense refers to Monkey Island and the like. (Someone, somewhere will not class these games as adventures).

The letters page, Rebound, is a real disappointment. Anyone remember the old Crash Forum? That was worth buying the magazine on its own. Strategy Plus should take a look at the letters pages of some other magazines to see what they're doing wrong. As an example; recently a reader wrote to complain about the printing of the advert for Sex Olympics - not exactly an exercise in good taste - the letters editor was very dismissive of the complaint and failed to offer an intelligent reply. This attitude just puts readers off. The sooner they realise it the better. This magazine is okay as far as it goes, but it could be so much better if the reviews were improved and the letters editor could drop the "like it or lump it" style of reply.

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MICROFAIR MADNESS

£4.50 (disc only 128K Amstrad CPC) from The Guild, 760 Tyburn Rd, Erdington, Birmingham, B24 9NX (cheques payable to Glenda Collins).

Reviewed by *Grimwold*

Microfair Madness makes an appearance on the Amstrad!! This three-part game has been converted using PAW by Philip Reynolds and chronicles your journey through the Microfair building. I won't make this review too long as the Spectrum version of this game was reviewed by Barbara Gibb in January's Probe and it would seem that the game has changed little during its conversion. As I have said the game is in three parts, of which not a byte, not a bit has been wasted. The building is chock-full of strange creatures, witty characters, pithy comments on current issues. It seems that you can't do a thing without a message appearing that usually has you laughing most heartily. The puzzles, of which there are plenty, vary in difficulty from easy (some you can solve without even knowing it), to moderate, to just down right hard! The conversion has been carried out with a high degree of competence and manages to retain the atmosphere and humour of the original. All in all a very good adventure. Anyone with an ounce of humour in their souls will enjoy it all the way through. Well worth £4.50 of anyone's money. Well done Delbert the Hampster Software for the original and well done The Guild for converting it!

THE BOYS [AND GIRL!] ARE BACK IN TOWN [Part 4]

by Paul Rigby

This month is the final part of the Infocom re-union with the second informal portion of the conference (see Part 1 for details). We join the conference with Steve Meretzky in a generous mood - offering to buy lunch...

(Meretzky) Let's do lunch.

(Bob Bates) Have your people call my people

(Mike Berlyn) I'll have my girl call your girl.

(Dave Lebling) I'll have my voice-mail call your voice-mail.

(Bob Bates) My voice mail won't be in that day.

(Roger Baird) I'd just like to thank all of the Infocom writers for the fantastic games that they wrote. Thanks for the memories - those classics are still some of the best I've ever played! ga

(Mike Berlyn) For the most part, it was our pleasure.

(Wizzy/Host) (Hear, hear!)

(Mike Berlyn) Where? Where?

(Bob Bates) Har! Har!

(MARC BLANK) [SIGH: Lost connection again. Now back!]

(ToH/Marc Sira) Marc: Do you think you'll ever get a chance to finish the trilogy started in JOURNEY? (perhaps in Audio/text format ga.

(MARC BLANK) No. The original didn't do well. I think the Journey concept was a good one. Are there other games like it which attempt to provide seamless interactive storytelling? ga

(ToH/Marc Sira) The only thing I could compare to it in that sense would be...

(Ted Markley [MPS]) Just think! With Audio output and voice recognition we could play Zork while commuting!

(ToH/Marc Sira) Star Saga: One...ga

(Mike Berlyn) <now?>

(Wizzy/Host) Yes, now <g>.

(Mike Berlyn) I just want to say how disappointed I was on learning that Journey was not going to be continued. I, for one,

felt the interface made the breakthroughs that Marc and I had talked about for a long time. Without the graphics forcing him in that direction it's unclear that FORM could ever have been done as seamlessly. GA

(Dave Lebling) I'd like to see a Journey-style interface done with "modern" technology, such as the Windows interface. GA

(Wizzy/Host) Okay, Kinjite, the ever-patient <g> GA.
(KINJITE) "Listening" in on this conference has really brought back a wave....

(Meretzky) ...of nausea?

(KINJITE) of nostalgia; I played Z1 on a 48k TRS-80, was a beta tester for Infocom I want to know if there are plans for a collaboration between the Implementors and other non-text oriented designers for a new game. It seems to me that we really lack an eclectic, intelligent basis for game design today..it's all so cut-and-dried, so laid out for us that we miss the fun of stumbling upon plotlines and ideas by ourselves, not by reading some setup in a manual.... ga

(MARC BLANK) I think the "market" causes a kind of "least common denominator" mentality that works against creativity and radical change. The same thing, of course happens in other creative media. I think that most of us implementers were somewhat naive about these things. ga

(Meretzky) I think the Legend-style of games also lends itself to that same discovery process. Another factor, though, is just the fact that the industry is older and more mature, and there's an ongoing problem of trying to please the hard-core, experienced adventure gamer, while also trying to be easy and simple enough to attract newcomers. GA

(KINJITE) Are we in the middle of the MTV era for computer games?

(Mike Berlyn) Things in the industry are *not* at all the same as when we were writing text adventures. With the maturity of the industry comes with it ***** M A R K E T E E R S ***** the plague of the creative type. Well, this isn't true, but it is a nice over-simplification of the problem. The more mature the industry, the more the focus is on selling the product to the MOST amount of people, which leaves out the "computer game players" as they're a "specialty" market. Selling adventure games (ask Bob! Go 'head) is a specialty niche market. With graphics, and the more graphics the better, you capture more of the market. And with more of the market, the product and plot lines get more and more lobotomized. You start asking yourself, "But will it play in Peoria?" And then you see these (wait...I'm foaming at the mouth here, a great flame...) people telling you to make the story less complicated, and asking you BUT WHY IS IT A GRUE? Can't it be a dragon? And you just shrug and smile. GA

(Wizzy/Host) (hahahaha) (Flame off, Mike? <g>) Okay, Brian, GA.
(Brian Moriarty) Mike is right. Adventure games are a specialty,

HOBBYIST market.

(Brian Moriarty) A few years ago, several companies started to build adventures that were shorter and easier, hoping to capture some of that "mass market" we keep hoping is out there. We didn't find it. Now the trend is to retrench, make the games harder and longer, and win back some of the hardcore we disenfranchised with games like COLONEL'S BEQUEST and LOOM. GA

(Amy Briggs) Ummm -- I forgot. But didn't Tom Snyder talk about all fishing in the same small pond? GA

(Wizzy/Host) <hehe> Probably at some point, Amy! Okay, Bob, GA.
(Bob Bates) As someone who both designs these things and tries to sell them I have an unusual perspective on the problem. I can tell you that the 'hard core' market has shrunk, and that no company can stay in business trying to market solely to them - they're just not enough of them out there. So what we have to do is design games that appeal both to the hard core crowd, to the reviewers (!), and to the 'shoulder' market as well - people who buy games on impulse. This means that the products MUST have a good <cover your eyes for marketing weasel term> High Concept. You have to do games that are appealing on the face of them to make browsers pick up the box and want to try them. Then you have to supply the traditional quality and gameplay within the box that keeps them coming back for more. Why people keep coming back for more with some of the games that are out there right now is beyond me but thank heavens people are at least willing to try. GA

(Stu Galley) I'm sorry, but my three hours are up. G'night, folks.

(Wizzy/Host) It used to be if it said "Infocom" on the cover, I bought it! <g> GA, Marc.

(Mike Berlyn) Good night, sweet Stu!

(Brian Moriarty) Night, Stu!

(Amy Briggs) May flights of angels and all that.

(MARC BLANK) I think that what's unfortunate is that the computer gaming medium is an interim one. In my mind, it won't (and can't) last. It will be replaced by interactive video/audio, etc. The problem is that the industry has turned the video game arena into a "business", which has caused creativity to flag. It is exactly this sort of creativity that will allow us to make the next step. I wish somehow that we had more time to move forward before we were forced to "sell out". ga

(2-27, Brian Moriarty) (How many megs does YOUR zootrope have?)

(2-28, Mike Berlyn) I wish I had SOME time before I was forced to sell out and I, among others, was looking for the arrival of CD-I as a saving medium. But it is expensive to produce for and so, I fear the gaming business is not only going Hollywood, but literally, going TO Hollywood. Interactive multimedia is the future of the mass-market adventure game. But heir cost, and

their very mass market nature, is going to wrest them from the designers' hands, and put them into the hands of script-writers (witness Les Manley 2, which was done with the aid of a script writer). GA

(Amy Briggs) fahrenheit 451, here we come!

(Wizzy/Host) One last comment from Dave, then we'll call the conference fini. GA, Dave.

(Dave Lebling) And this is going to be another flame, too. The problem is that everything we do is expensive, and expense means mass-market, because otherwise you don't recover your costs. If it costs a half million to do a game, and you recover maybe 5 to ten dollars per unit sold, you have to sell a lot of copies. How much is the next generation going to cost? Well, look at Terminator 2, which had the next generation of special effects; they are said to have spent 40million on the special effects alone. Can a Sierra or and Accolade afford that? No, of course not, which means big money and the mass market. The "boutique" companies can survive only if the tools to build games become as relatively cheap as movie cameras, film, and splicing machines are in that industry. I don't see it happening, because all the tools are trade secrets, and even those are abysmal compared to what the ILMs use to chew up \$40million. In short, Mike is right, Marc is right. We have seen the future and it is Arnold. GA

(Meretzky) That note was so depressing, let's end.

(Wizzy/Host) And with that thought-provoking commentary, this conference is officially ended! Loosen your girdles!

(Mike Berlyn) The truth hurts, eh?

(MARC BLANK) We're all sounding like Marvin, the paranoid game writer.

(Dave Lebling) My lower 64K has been in severe pain for 40 million years.

(ToH/Marc Sira) Hasta la vista, did he say?

(Amy Briggs) Ah, the good ol' days!

(Bob Bates) Oh, I dunno...

(Meretzky) I'm so depressed, I'd even vote for Pat Buchanan.

(Brian Moriarty) So would 40% of NH.

(Mike Berlyn) Ah the mediocre old days!

(Bob Bates) I think there's still opportunities out there...

[At this point most of the Infocom Authors had departed, and the historic conference drew to a close.]

SOAPBOX

THE BEGINNING OF THE END??

By *Floyd*

Something terrible has begun... the beginning of the end of the Atari ST. This aged machine has, sadly, come to that point of decline that is so well known to the likes of the ZX81 and ORIC. It won't be long until the ST breathes its last and then we will watch it lie down and join that great cupboard in the sky - Ye Olde Knackered Computers Home. Yes, regrettably, the old ST has had its day... OR HAS IT??

I DON'T BELIEVE A WORD OF IT!! Unfortunately, the likes of console owners, whose minds and machines are restricted to arcade games, would have us all believe a lie - a whopper, too - that the Atari ST is a "has been" and it's now the turn of greater and more able machines. The evidence against these desperately insecure statements is overwhelming - the main point being that there simply isn't anything to replace the ST as yet. There have recently been whispers that the PC will take over from the ST within a matter of months - RUBBISH! I'm a PC owner, and I love the dear little things, but really, an entry level ST for £300 compares much more favourably than the price of an entry level PC - around £700 minimum. Comparisons such as these are ridiculous, and are reminiscent of the days when businessmen would laugh at the humble ZX81: they had their worthier machines. The truth is that despite the PC's superiority over the ST with regard to speed or resolution, the ST is still a high quality machine that is a worthy adversary, if not conqueror, to the Amiga and not a far cry from a PC. Besides, if you really want a PC you can have both as I explained in my article on ST emulation in the April issue of Probe.

Sadly, the simple fact is that ST owners are losing faith. The Atari corporation seem to hold little interest in fighting back, in telling people the truth. It is widely thought that Atari are simply incompetent. Steve Carey of ST Format magazine wrote to Bob Gleadow, the then Managing Director, in January 1991 saying "The ST is a fine machine that Atari seem incapable of selling properly", and I am inclined to agree. The fact is that people want to play games - not just adventures - on their machine. The ST is now being rejected as incapable of matching up to the consoles or the PC games that make extensive use of the hard disk, and this is most distressing. Not least because it is not true. YES, the entrance level ST has no hard drive, no two megs of memory, no VGA graphics but these things are all well within the reach of any ST owner (money obviously being the only problem!). It is disturbing for me to see the beginning of the end of the ST - not through an honourable discharge, a handing over of the baton, but a neglect, an ignorance coming from the very people who own the ST. What is needed now is for ST owners to reject the stagnation - to make a stand. If a software company is ignoring you by failing to produce software for the ST, claiming that it is not a viable source of profit, or whatever, get on the phone, or grab a pen and paper and tell them. Without input from you and me we cannot blame anybody but ourselves if the ST goes right down the pan. It is a fine machine that is well capable of many different and marvellous things, not least adventure games, so come on, stand up with me and fight. Otherwise we will just sit and hasten the beginning of the end.

*Anyone else got something they would like to get off their chest?
You can use the Soapbox too!*

GRAND BIRTHDAY COMPETITION!

By *Keith Burnard*

See if you can find the adventure titles from the clues below:

Example: Dracula's title - THE COUNT.

1. It's a capital game.
2. I thought this big cheese was yellow!
3. This indians precious metal is yellow.
4. You might find this cheeky bird in a certain forest.
5. Has he got eight legs?
6. I'm going potty stuck in here.
7. Disaster at sea.
8. This warrior never looks pale.
9. Wearing armour, you'll get stuck in this place.
10. This traveller should make progress.
11. That's the price, exactly!
12. I think I've been here before.
13. Pub crawlers.
14. I can't remember that far back.
15. Fed up with circles.
16. Is this spy a twin?
17. Is this strong man giving birth?
18. It goes on and on and on!
19. Could it be the "Tardis" or a clock?
20. Would you play records there?
21. They don't like anglers.
22. Magician's jewellery.
23. The time is 11.56 p.m. OR...
24. Billy the Kid was one of these.
25. You would certainly dig at this place for valuables.
26. This chap is really mean!
27. A glass jumper.
28. I enjoyed playing it, but, I didn't know what it was called.
29. Eve said "go back to the garden".
30. Is he incredible?
31. A gate crasher is this.
32. Windsor... When's a door not a door? Etc.
33. Frankie Vaughan and Shaking Stevens both sang about this.
34. Is this the county for David?
35. Once bitten...
36. Could he be a turtle?
37. You can pull his strings any time!
38. Alice went there.
39. Many things have disappeared at this strange place.
40. His nickname is this in "Top Gun" the movie.

Find the adventure titles and send them to me to arrive by 20th June (closing date). The winner will be announced in the July issue of Probe. Let's make this a bumper 6th Birthday compo with lots of entries to help celebrate.

See next page for winners of last months brain-teasers and for some more items to keep you scratching your heads!

PUZZLE PAGE

Lots of entries to last month's puzzles - more than ever! It seems that you all like the brain-teaser type of puzzles best. But a lot of you wrote to say that the brain-teaser was too easy and wanted me to print harder ones!! Cheeky lot! Right then, it seems we have a war on our hands here! Try these on for size then!:

MONEY PROBLEM by *Tony Bevan*

I have an amount of money. However, if I had as many pounds as I have pence and I had as many pence as I have pounds and then I subtracted 70 pence I would have twice the amount that I have actually got! So how much have I actually got?

EVERYDAY SAYINGS by *Jack Lockerby*

Can you identify the following everyday sayings that everyone must have uttered to themselves over the years?

- | | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| 1. Worl | 2. the x way | 3. word YYY | 4. no ways it ways |
| 5. 1 at 3:46 | 6. wheather | 7. a chance n | 8. you just me |
| 9. timing tim ing | 10. at the . of on | 11. lu cky | 12. Symphon |

AND A SLIGHTLY EASIER ONE:

By *G. J. Bailey*

A man appears and beckons you closer. It is safe to walk towards him, but you are unsure. In your hesitation you miss your chance. The man vanishes. Question: Who was he and where can you find him again. Clue: The hesitation may be attributed to colour blindness.

Closing date for entries is 20th June 1992.

Here is the solution to the Wordsearch by Paul Cardin from last month's Probe:

AFTERSHOCK, A.R.C., AVIOR, CAPTAIN KOOK, CAVEMAN, CIRCUS, CITADEL, COLDITZ, CORRUPTION, CRYSTAL FROG, DARK PLANET, ELDORADO, FISH, FLOOK, HERMITAGE, HEXAGONAL MUSEUM, HIT, HOBBIT, HRH, HUNT, INNER LAKES, KEYLETH, KOBAYASHI AG'KWO, MATCHMAKER, MIAMI MICE, MISSION X, MORON, MURAL, MUTANT, MYOREM, NOVA, ORBIT OF DOOM, PAWN, PHOENIX, PROSPECTOR, QOR, QUANTULLA, RED DOOR, SHADOWGATE, SPOOR, SPYTREK, SUDS, SWAMP, URBAN, WEAVER OF HER DREAMS, WIZBIZ, WOLFGATE, YAWN, YUKON, ZODIAC, ZORK, ZZZZ.

The winner was ALISON SCOTT who wins 6 free issues of Probe!

The solution to the "Farmer at the market" puzzle in the last issue was:

19	HORSES	£ 95
80	PIGS	£ 4
<u>1</u>	COW	<u>£ 1</u>
100		£100

The winner was JACK LOCKERBY who wins 6 free issues of Probe!

Anyone got any real "stinkers" of brain-teasers for the puzzle section? Send them in and see if we cannot confound everyone!

THE LIFE OF GRIMWOLD

By *Grimwold*

We join the notable Dwarf, name of Grimwold, in his search through the ancient caves of Chudd-lee for the fabled treasures of Noorluk...

Grimwold raised his weary head and glared at the Rock Goblin he was facing. They had been engaged in mortal combat for three solid days now and the strain was beginning to tell on both of them. Muscles quiver as Grimwold raises his hefty arm to table height and slams it down onto the roughly hewn surface leaving something there. "There!" shouts the Dwarf, adding up the scores on the small, square pieces of bone that rest on the Scrabble board scratched into the top of the table, "Let me see now, triple word score as well. That brings my total up to two hundred and one! You can't win now Scrofflux, I expect you'll be giving up eh?" The Goblin's brow creases in concentration as he reads the word the Dwarf has just laid on the board, "XYSSY? That's not a proper wor...!" Scrofflux doesn't reach the end of his sentence before vanishing, leaving behind only a very surprised expression which gradually fades away. "Ha!" shouts Grimwold, "Works every time! Now let's see what he has in that nice little bag..." He rummages through the leather rucksack that the Goblin forgot to take with him, muttering softly through his beard and occasionally throwing a worthless object over his armoured shoulder.

Sometime later, the Dwarf wakes from his slumped doze against one of the rocky walls, scratches himself through his armour and pulls something from his pocket and begins to eat it. An attentive observer at this point would hear Grimwold's lunch squeaking softly over the wound of small bones crunching in the Dwarf's powerful jaws. Pushing a scaly tail through his lips with a stubby finger, Grimwold slings his sack over his shoulder and, picking up his sturdy war axe, stumps out of the cavern down a dimly lit tunnel.

Soon, the darkness folds around, but the Dwarf pays it no heed. His black eyes, although small and button like, make the most of the shadows. Centuries of Dwarves have learned to tell the difference between wall shadows, roof shadows and floor shadows, Dwarvish language has no less than thirty four words for darkness, but, alas, only one for Gold. It is of this metal that Grimwold sings softly as he trundles along the smooth floor of the tunnel.

Perhaps it was the singing, or perhaps the smell of unwashed Dwarf that told the creature of Grimwold's approach. We will never know, but when confronted with a large pair of hairy shins that loomed out of the darkness, Grimwold knew exactly what he had found. A Grue. Grimwold thought quickly as the monsters sliva dripped wetly on his rust spotted helm, he racked his brains for a way to get past.

"Bingo!" he thought, "just the job!" The Grue watched with amazement as its prospective dinner started to act in a most unusual way, the Dwarf was running in circles, stopping only to jump up and down and bang his head against the rock wall. He was gibbering too, saying something that sounded suspiciously like "I knew I shouldn't have had those radioactive worms for breakfast!" The monster scratched its thickly thatched head with a scaly yellow finger, trying to stimulate its thought lobes. Unfortunately Grues were never equipped to deal with prolonged mental processes and the effects were beginning to

show. Grimwold saw the creature's pupils dilate, watched the huge frame sway back and forth and took his chance.

Dashing between the bow legs of the Grue, he ran down the tunnel as fast as his short legs would go. Feeling the hot, fetid breath on his neck, the Dwarf shot down a narrow side tunnel, bouncing off the walls as he took the corner too fast.

The grue stomped to a halt outside the tunnel entrance and tried to squeeze into it. No good, the Grue simply wouldn't fit! It roared, saliva splattering against the rock wall. The bloodcurdling sound echoed down the tunnels, filled caverns and washed over the still running Dwarf, making him clutch at his ears to try to stop the pain, it was filling his head, making it feel as if it would explode. Mercifully, Grimwold folded to the floor and passed out.....

We will find out what happened to Grimwold next month.

YOUR STARS FOR JUNE

By *Anastasia*

Sign of the month: GEMINI

The Gemini adventurer never has just one adventure on the go - more likely they will have five or six! Geminis also have that certain warped imagination that allows them to complete really weird puzzles and mazes with ease! The Gemini month ahead will be a lively one, particularly for younger Geminis. For single Geminis there is a likelihood of meeting someone attracted to you on the 5th to the 10th. Married Geminis will have a peaceful month, but problems may occur on the 15th. The second half of the month will bring financial matters to the fore, with positive results.

CANCER

June will be a month of obstacles overcome and new beginnings. Creativity will hit a high note this month and you will find many people will be on your own wavelength. Try to avoid confrontations on the 10th when you may come off worst! A solar eclipse in your sign on the 30th may bring about domestic changes.

LEO

Team work is emphasised in June, when much can be achieved. This is a good time to make long term plans concerning your personal future. A very favourable aspect on the 5/6th may bring about the realisation of a dream! You may hear from a forgotten friend around the 20th.

VIRGO

This would be a good month to let your ambitions be known at work. Best dates for this would be the 9th and 27th. The lunar eclipse on 15th signals a good time to clear out any rubbish you have kept over the years and get minor DIY jobs done.

LIBRA

If you are going on holiday in June then far-off travel is well aspected and will be beneficial. Business trips are also likely for

some though closer to home. Social life will be satisfying during the first ten days of June and any tension you may have felt recently will fade after the 14th. However, you may feel that relatives are taking up too much of your spare time!

SCORPIO

Don't sign or buy anything important this month until you have scrutinised the small print. If you are planning any business or financial venture, then double check all the information given. The 11th is a good day for Scorpios when travel is well aspected. There will be some connection with marriage in the latter half of the month - either your own or a close friend's.

SAGITTARIUS

Personal relationships are well aspected this month. The lunar eclipse in your sign on the 15th may bring any tensions and insecurities to a head however, the best thing to do is to discuss them openly, and try not to gloss over the problems. You may receive a letter around the 20th with good news about financial affairs. The end of the month will leave you feeling optimistic.

CAPRICORN

You may find an increased amount of domestic activity this month and family relationships could be a problem on the 4th and 10th. If you are thinking of changing jobs or applying for promotion then this is the best time to do it. You may feel more adventurous (no pun intended) in June - don't worry about taking a few risks! Anything important started in the latter half of the month is bound to succeed!

AQUARIUS

Writing letters, meetings and seeking information will be the keypoints of early June. Social pursuits will also occupy much of your attention. You may have an offer around 20th that you feel may be out of your league - consider the offer carefully and don't underestimate yourself!!

PISCES

The first half of June will see you thinking about making changes to your home, either in decor or maintenance work. There could be a bit of an atmosphere in early June, when relatives could be difficult or a child may be caught red-handed. The lunar eclipse points to a change in your career, but after some re-adjustment you will find this will be of advantage to you.

ARIES

The new moon at the start of the month may cause some change in your routine. The eclipse of the moon may cause you to abandon some long term plans in favour of new ideas. The solar eclipse, however, signifies some change in your domestic situation. A favourable aspect from Venus will smooth over any problems caused by this.

TAURUS

The first week will be favourable for any financial or business affairs. However, beware of the 15th when you may overlook an important matter - definitely do not gamble on this date. From the 14th Mars enters your sign, increasing your drive and ambition. A long standing worry or difficulty will gradually fade away in the first ten days of June.

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BY FRANK OLIVER

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LETTERS

Dear Mandy

There has been quite a bit of debate lately in Probe about 8 bit and 16 bit machines, graphics vs text etc. Well, let's face facts, 8 bit machines aren't going to be around forever, the same will eventually happen to 16 bit machines as computer technology is advancing all the time. I cannot agree with Larry Horsfield that the reason why people who have upgraded to 16 bit still contribute material about 8 bit games is that they've simply not found anything worth playing. There is a lot of good stuff around on 16 bit machines but it is more likely to be a graphics based game. Now before all you 8 bitters get up in arms and start saying graphics are useless, not required, crap etc, I'd like to say that I still prefer a good, well-written text adventure, but if I had a Speccy and played graphic games on that then I'd say they were crap also. The fact is that graphic games on 16 bit machines these days are quite good and in some cases - such as the Lucasfilm stuff - it is outstanding. Not only are the graphics and animation superb but the graphics are an integral part of the gameplay and puzzle solving. The graphics are not there just to fill up a space on the screen. After having just written a text adventure on the Amiga I am more convinced than ever that the text adventure is a dying breed. 16 Bit owners sometimes complain about the lack of text games for their machines but if one is written nobody really wants it anyway. Yes, the text adventure is thriving very nicely but only if you've got a Speccy and one day it will die too. Even Infocom - just before their demise - had introduced graphics and now Legend continue where Infocom left off producing text/graphic games. I wonder how long before they produce their first RPG or Strategy game? I'd like to think I am NOT biased in my view, just a realist... by the way, I am currently playing a wonderful game on the PC which is called UNKULIAN ADVENTURE and it is text only! As Bob Dylan once sang "The times they are a-changing".

The Grue!

Dear Mandy

Thank you for the help on the phone the other week, it was much appreciated. I've read and re-read my first (May) issue of Probe. To be honest at first it felt like standing on the edge of a party without knowing anybody, but after a couple of times it grows on you. It must have as I'm writing already. In reply to Philip Reynolds letter - I've got an Amstrad CPC6128, and have just started adventuring. So please don't write us all off yet. I'm gradually ordering catalogues to find out what is available, so The Guild will hear from me sometime soon. As an idea for Probe, would it be possible to print a list of games which would be suitable for a novice (ie. Me) to tackle with some chance of success? Also in the reviews would it be possible for the reviewer to give a rating, ie. Novice, Intermediate or Advanced. I know it would be the reviewers own opinion, but I think it might be helpful to novices like myself. Thanks again for taking the time to help and I look forward to the next issue.

Bob Ramshaw, Kings Lynn, Norfolk.

Dear Mandy

Having read Philip Reynolds letter in May Probe I am a little dismayed to hear he will be slowing up his conversions to the Amstrad. I have played many of Philips PAWED conversions and have had some very enjoyable evenings playing them, especially the River Software games. His reasons are quite reasonable, why SHOULD he spend a lot of time

and electricity converting games when there are no orders to make it feel worthwhile? The solution is simple, support The Guild and other small software companies or the adventure scene will die a very sudden death. The small companies like this, especially in the 8 bit market, are responsible for keeping alive old adventures and releasing most, if not ALL new adventures. Now the "big" companies seem to have given up with Amstrad, Spectrum, Commodore etc, at least in the adventure scene we need these home-based companies. If, like Philip suggests, some people may be wary of such advertisers, which is maybe not surprising after Mr Eltringham's disappearance last year, the only way to find out if these companies are genuine is to order from them. Mail order is risky in some respects, but since you will be hard-pushed to find an 8-bit adventure in a computer shop, there doesn't seem to be an alternative. I can vouch for The Guild and WoW Software in every respect, I've had no cause for complaint in any way with those two companies. They both dispatch software quickly and efficiently and I have yet to hear a bad word about them as far as reliability goes. If you don't want to see 8-bit adventures disappear then please do support the efforts of small companies - they are not in it for the money as their prices will testify, but purely for the enjoyment. We need each other to survive. Did you know that our June Rowe was on the telly the other night? I was typing away on the computer with my back to the TV when I heard the word "adventure"! Swivel chairs can be such a blessing can't they? Unfortunately I missed some of it, only catching the last minute or two when June's daughter was trying to explain her mother's "hobby"! At last adventuring is brought to the Masses! It was on TSW on their regional news programme at around 6.15 Thursday night. Before I close can I ask you please to point out to your readers that MERLIN is not written by myself, I merely helped a little with the programming and not as written in the News Section of the May issue. It is, in fact, written by a new author, Michael Hunt!

Simon Avery Chudleigh, S Devon.

It is unfortunate that, from time to time, some mail order companies let everyone down and spoil things for the other mainly reputable companies such as WoW, The Guild, River, Tartan, Zenobi, F.S.F. and many more too numerous to name here. A company vanishing and leaving their customers without either goods or refunds makes everyone wary of ordering by mail but please remember that the majority of companies are extremely efficient and helpful. My apologies to everyone and especially Michael Hunt for my misleading comments in the News section. I really do make the most awful blunders sometimes! Yes, I did hear that our June was featured on TV. I think it is wonderful and thanks to June thousands of people will know about adventuring now. There are some comments from June herself in the following letter on that very subject.....Mandy

Dear Mandy

I would be pleased if you would print this letter in the next Probe, just in case anyone in the Television South West area saw the bit about JESTER'S JAUNT on Thursday 7th and ended up being confused, as Joan Pancott did. Joan 'phoned me on Saturday about it - she couldn't figure out why a photo-copy of a cheque for £1,000.00 was shown, together with a Zenobi tape, but no explanation. Having video'd the programme, and looked at it again, she saw that the cheque was from Level 9 and was dated 1984. (The article in the Western Morning News was misleading, too - that gave the impression that I had sold the same game twice!) The cheque was one I received for the design of a game called TROUBLE IN STORE which was never published by Level 9, and

JESTER'S JAUNT is, of course, an entirely different game. I just hope that the TV programme won't cause John Wilson any embarrassment, by causing lots of amateurs to flood him with games, thinking that they might get paid that amount of money for it!

June Rowe, Launceston, Cornwall

I think it is fantastic that you have done so well, June and that all the helpful publicity will generate plenty of orders for your new game. It is a great pity that Level 9 never published your idea for Trouble In Store as, having heard a lot about it, it sounds like a great game. It is a pity that you cannot buy back the rights to it and publish it yourself. Ah well, I am sure that J.J. will do extremely well as I have already had a lot of favourable comments about it - mostly in calls for help (unfortunately not having a solution for it I couldn't help out). Thank you for sending me the Western Morning News and the article. I just wish that I lived in your region so that I could have seen the TV programme myself....Mandy

Dear Mandy

Many reviews and letters in "'Probe" and "From Beyond" contain moans and groans about mazes. I appreciate a good maze myself as, to me, mapping seems as much a part of the adventure as problem solving. The square grid or even one room adventures have their place, but taking an interesting track North, only to appear thirty nine steps back South is all part of the fun. With magical RAMSAVE (the most important advance in adventures), even the most foolhardy adventurer is quickly brought back to life. I recently reloaded STRANGE ODYSSEY and RUNES OF ZENDOS and quickly realised why I hadn't completed them before. Without RAMSAVE they were simply too tedious to bother with. My greatest dislike is too many red herrings. The odd red herring, especially if it has some slightly confusing purpose, is all grist to the mill, but a surfeit of useless objects adds boredom not interest or depth to the game. Another little annoyance is the input for answering riddles. Some need punctuation marks, some not, many need one word, some two or three. Sometimes at a second attempt a correct answer is not even understood. The answer to the riddle should be the problem, not the type of input! In MACBETH one riddle even needed a space before the punctuation marks, probably unintentional but very confusing and frustrating and spoiling an otherwise excellent game. Perhaps at the next convention or before, Probe could suggest a norm for such inputs.

Ron Guest, Sheffield

You deserve a medal, Ron, anyone who can play through MACBETH and enjoy it, especially as it has no save facility whatsoever and is played in REAL TIME deserves praise. I remember gathering the herbs and getting the meal prepared for the arrival of the king in about five minutes flat then having to wait for 30 minutes at the keyboard for the King to arrive, giving him the stirrup cup and preparing everything for his murder and waiting another hour in real time for the moment to arrive when I had to go and get the knife, making a mistake and getting killed off and having to start all over from the beginning once more. It nearly had me tearing my hair out in frustration! Of course I gave up in the end, I just ran out of patience. If only there had been a save facility. It just shows that we all have our pet hates. If any other readers have any (or favourite bits of adventuring for that matter) do write in and let us know about them. Also, any readers got any helpful suggestions regarding Ron's final remarks?.....Mandy

Dear Mandy

I have AGT for the Amiga and it is a very powerful program. It is very similar to PAW in the way it is implemented and I had no difficulty in getting to grips with it. In some ways it is better than PAW and it falls down in others. One great difficulty is that instead of having nouns and separate objects as in PAW, every noun has to be an object. If you describe anything at a location you have to make it an object and strangely enough you have to make it invisible otherwise it would show up twice and you also have to make it unmovable or you could pick it up. There are only 100 nouns and this is very limiting. I started converting THE TEST but found I would not be able to finish it for lack of nouns. Isn't it silly that a game that was written for a 128K computer can't be converted to a 500K one? Another silly thing is that you can have 100 creatures in a game. What is the point of that unless you are going to do a text version of DUNGEON MASTER? If they had put in 195 nouns and 5 creatures it would have been enough. I sent away for the up to date version and the manual nine weeks ago but so far have received nothing in spite of two long-distance calls to California. I have just finished KNIGHTMARE with lots of help from Jason Deane. What a game! The puzzles are really fiendish.

Ken Bond, Adel, Leeds

Wouldn't it be great if there was an easy to program adventure creator for 16 bit that allowed you to select the amount of memory to allocate to various parts of your game on a pull down option screen? That way you could decide how many nouns, creatures, messages, locations etc you wanted and the available memory could be distributed accordingly? Something along the same lines happened to me when I tried to convert BLACK KNIGHT to the Amiga using Hatrack II. I had only just finished typing in the location descriptions, verbs, nouns, objects for part one of the game - not even entered any puzzles or messages etc when I got the message NOT ENOUGH MEMORY. I was as disgusted as you were Ken, that I couldn't even fit in part of an adventure that was written on an 8 bit machine. I gave up in disgust as even trying to up the memory on the options menu wouldn't work. However, I have since found that I had a bugged version of the program so perhaps it will be possible after all. Only problem is that I lost interest in it after the initial disappointment! Maybe some day. I have always maintained that if Incentive produced a version like STAC for the Amiga (perhaps AMIGAC?), they would have done extremely well with sales.....Mandy

Dear Mandy

Many thanks for your recent correspondence and solutions. However I have problems with OCEAN DANCER. I would love to know how to load the tape - either side - play the adventure "as per the solution" and find out how to get the KEY!!! in order to continue? Is there a bug in the game or am I at fault? This game was a "freebie" from Mike Gerrard late of Y.S. and I obviously cannot send this back to be exchanged. I have endeavoured to find out the address of Kings Software, but having been programmed in 1984, I would imagine that they no longer exist and have joined the "used to be" a la Eighth Day!! This is not the first adventure I have come across with bugs! In FEIRIE (Eighth Day) despite having a solution one cannot find the "fairy gold" nor the "wych Hazel". I have three more such adventures but will not bore you with them inasmuch as I am thinking of "binning" them. While writing, may I ask your assistance in obtaining a complete solution to ONE OF OUR WOMBATS IS MISSING as advertised in Your Sinclair in October 1991? In spite of two letters to them (December and March) I have had no reply. I must admit to becoming rather disillusioned and apprehensive lately

since, having written to no less than nine addresses, it would appear that, together with yourself the only other persons who do acknowledge are John Wilson and Jack Lockerby. The others know who they are therefore no names - and it is obviously not the cost of the postal orders and stamps that niggles me - but the principle involved.

Major Beardwell 16 Manor Park, Norton Fitzwarren,
Taunton, TA2 6SG

I am sorry you have had so many bad experiences with your adventuring. I am sure that someone will be able to come to your rescue with the help you need or perhaps know if Kings Software still exist. It is a pity that many of your letters have gone unanswered but I am not surprised that Jack Lockerby and John Wilson replied - they are both extremely reliable. I owe Jack my thanks for telling so many people about Probe recently as I have had loads of letters asking for subscription forms and details about Probe because of this - thank you Jack.....Mandy

Dear Mandy

Just a quick letter to let you know how my booklet BARE-BONES SOLUTIONS is doing. It is taking a while to take off but I have quite a few loyal supporters of my efforts. By the time this letter reaches you, you should have had chance to look through BARE BONES 3 where you will have seen my plea for hints, tips, maps, games to review etc, to enable me to produce some type of Spellbreaker magazine. After giving this idea a second thought I have decided to make the booklet an all formats fanzine, providing I get enough reader input. I wonder if you will allow me, through the pages of Probe, to appeal to the many adventurers who read your publication each month to send me everything they can on adventuring on the 8 bit machines, Spectrum, Amstrad and Commodore for inclusion in the booklet? Also if there are any adventure writers out there who are looking for playtesters on any of the above computers then please contact me at the address below or ring me on 0482 445438 after 6pm any evening. Finally, may I make the following offer to your readers: Bare-Bones 1, 2, 3 normally cost £1 50 each but as a special offer I can now offer all three booklets for £3.50. Anyone taking advantage of this offer should make cheques payable to L. Mitchell. Am I right in thinking that Chris Hester's Adventure Coder is a distant relation to Adventure Probe?

Les Mitchell

10 Tavistock Street, Newland Avenue, Hull, HU5 2LJ.

It is funny you should ask about the relationship between Adventure Coder and Probe, as for some reason quite a few other people have asked about it recently. Shortly after Probe was started in 1986, the then editors, Sandra Sharkey and Pat Winstanley decided to split the magazine into two magazines, Sandra became editor of Probe and Pat started an adventure writing magazine, ADVENTURE CONTACT. Following the demise of Adventure Contact, Chris Hester decided to revive the magazine and started ADVENTURE CODER. This is published by myself for Chris who is the editor of Coder and also ADVENTURE WORKSHOP which is for 16 bit adventure writers. Just before I took over as editor of Probe in May 1988, Sandra decided to start another magazine, devoted to maps and solutions, to compliment Probe and this was called SOOTHSAYER. John Barnsley took over as editor of Soothsayer and I took over as editor of Probe. Sadly Soothsayer ended after a year and that was when Mike Brailsford decided to start another "Soothsayer" but called it SPELLBREAKER. Due to ill-health Mike had to end Spellbreaker. Thanks to Sandra and Pat, many adventure related magazines followed their original ideas. Thank goodness the original founder magazine, Adventure Probe, is still going strong but you can see how the two mags are "sort of" distantly related.....Mandy

Dear Mandy

The committee of H.A.S. were really upset by Paul Rigby calling us an "organisation", and his plea to the Home Secretary to bar H.A.S. from playing adventures for twelve months was most horrid and a bit over the top. H.A.S. is a purely benevolent society and would never make death threats or abuse anyone (except of course to those people who disagree with H.A.S.). In any case we sent a counter deputation to the Home Office and, after some skilful political bargaining and the complete solution to "Hampstead", the Home Secretary was persuaded to appoint H.A.S. as a government Quangor. We are now working on a white paper designating THE HOBBIT as a national monument!

Signed **The Dead Warg**
(Chairthing of the Hobbit Adulation Society)

Dear Mandy

I have recently upgraded my computer from a Commodore 64 to an Amiga - what a great machine! I've managed to find and buy POPULOUS, BEYOND ZORK, WAR IN MIDDLE EARTH, DEMONS TOMB, FOUR SYMBOLS and ZORK ZERO. Zork Zero and Four Symbols are my favourite. I don't suppose anyone can recommend adventure or strategy games for the Amiga for me. I'll be eternally grateful. When I go into my local computer shop, I look at the prices and nearly fall over with disbelief. I don't want to buy a game for £30 or so and get home to find it was a waste of money.

Amanda Oliver
7 The Hassocks, Waterlooville, Hants, PO7 8QG

I hope that other Amiga owners will write to you with their recommendations for suitable software. I had exactly the same problems as you every time I got a new computer! I found that demo-games on coverdisks of many magazines helped me decide which games I wanted and also reviews of adventures in magazines like Probe helped. Some excellent adventures are available at very little cost that give you the same enjoyment as an Infocom adventure would. THE FOUR SYMBOLS which I notice you have already got only costs £5 and there are some excellent PD adventures available such as HOLY GRAIL and GOLDEN FLEECE by Jim MacBrayne which only cost around £1.50 and shouldn't be missed! I made a plea along the same lines in the last issue regarding the PC and Grue recommended a fantastic Shareware adventure called UNKULIAN which has kept me engrossed and thoroughly enthralled for days. It is also hilariously funny. No PC adventurer should be without it!.....Mandy

Dear Mandy

As soon as Probe arrived I flicked through to the letters pages and noticed you had published my letter. I do believe your comments were right - perhaps a little kiss on Sue's cheek would go down better before I asked her if my Probe had arrived. Thanks for putting in my plea for help, I was delighted when Sue Roseblade rang me to help out and I also received a letter with help from Sue Medley. Grue also rang me to help out with THE FOUR SYMBOLS. He has some marvellous ideas for another game and we were laughing for ages about them. I did feel sorry when he told me that he hadn't sold many copies of his game - I thought that people would be longing for such a great adventure. For just a fiver is is fantastic value. I've spent a fortune on some adventures that were absolute rubbish compared to Grue's great game! Come on all you Amiga owners - treat yourself!

Steve McLaren, Margate.

I couldn't agree with you more! Grue's address is on the back page!- Ed

PERSONAL COLUMN

Well done Liz on winning the Sun Valley Creative Cuisine competition. That's another step toward your catering career. I'm proud of you and "love ya loads".....Mum

Commiserations to all adventurers who played Largo Grann with the vain hope that it would be a logical and half-decent game.....Spock

Dwarf looking for attractive lady dwarf to share long evenings of romance and small animal baiting. Must have reasonable share in large Gold mine. Possible view to marriage and little Dwarves. Please enclose lithiogram of Mine.....Grimwold, PO Box 123

I would like to thank all the nice people who responded to my sale of Spectrum software. Most of the games have been sent to good homes as a result. I was sorry to have to disappoint a couple of people over Ten Little Indians, there were three requests for it, so if anyone else has a copy, two people are still searching for it.....Anna S Parker

I would like to thank the following people for all their help and kindness. I wish I could meet them in person at the Convention but my work has to come first. So to Mandy Rodrigues for producing the best fanzine, Sue Roseblade for coming to my rescue in time of dire need and Sue Medley for giving a helping hand. Last but not least to The Grue!, thanks mate for the help on Four Symbols - nice one - how is Fidget doing in the market.....Steve McLaren

Dear Norie,

Norie, Norie, don't be mad
'cos I sent someone games, (finished with 'em I had),
He's been kind and trying to help others,
Not a misery like some people's grandmothers,
My love darling you have not lost
Thought selling them would help with his postage costs.
I'll prove that my love, you'll always win
If I can get out of this flipping "Nobody Inn".

Wunty

SOLUTION SERVICE

The following solutions are available from Probe at 30p each plus S.A.E. Please send S.A.E. for complete list. Latest solutions received this month:

APRIL 7TH, AUNT VELMA'S COMING TO TEA, CASTLE OF DOOM, CAVERNS OF DOOM, FIDICEN, FISHER KING, GORDELLO'S DEMISE, HOUSE OF THE DEAD, LEOTROPE, MURDER, RAID ON LETHOS, SABAT OF MILTON GORDON, SEFTON MANOR ASSIGNMENT, SEMI-DETACHED, SHIMMERKIN, SIX MILLION DOLLAR GREAT JEWEL HEIST, SPACE DETECTIVE, V-THE SILVER SAUCER.

JOKE OF THE MONTH

By *Floyd*

There was a young creature called GRUE!
Who didn't know what to do,
With all the young braves,
Who entered his caves,
So he cooked them all up in a stew.

IN-TOUCH

AMIGA SOFTWARE TO SWAP: I have the following Amiga games that I am willing to swap on a one to one basis. All are originals in excellent condition with full documentation: DEUTEROS, MEGA-LO-MANIA, ZAK McKRACKEN, SHADOWGATE, MIGHT AND MAGIC II. Contact LOL OAKES, 7 Clarke Cres, Little Hulton, Worsley, Manchester, M28 6XL. Tel: 061 799 6696.

AMIGA SOFTWARE FOR SALE: LEGEND OF FAERGHAIL, CARDINAL OF THE KREMLIN, MOONBASE, FISH, LEATHER GODDESSES OF PHOBOS (Infocom original), all games £10 each including p&p. Also for list of mostly old Spectrum 48K games send an S.A.E. to NEIL ASHMORE, 5 Park Cres, Furness Vale, Stockport, Cheshire, SK12 7PU.

SPECTRUM SOFTWARE FOR SALE: BEHIND CLOSED DOORS/THE DAMNED FOREST, CLAWS OF DESPAIR, CASE OF MIXED-UP SHYMER, CASTLE ADV, DANGER MOUSE IN THE BLACK FOREST CHATEAU, DREAMARE, EL DORADO, EARTHSHOCK, HOBBLE HUNTER, INTO THE MYSTIC, JESTER QUEST, LOST TEMPLE, LIGHTMARE, MINDFIGHTER, MINES OF SATURN/RETURN TO EARTH, NEVERENDING STORY 128K, NO 6 IN THE VILLAGE, ONE OF OUR WOMBATS IS MISSING, PENDANT OF LOGRYN 128K, PAWNS OF WAR/INFILTRATOR, PLANET OF DEATH, Q/F/ETERNITY, ROBYN HODE, RETARDED CREATURES AND CAVERNS/LEGACY FOR ALARIC, SINBAD AND THE GOLDEN SHIP, SOLARIS, SHIP OF DOOM, SHADOWS OF THE PAST, STARSHIP QUEST, TOOT N COME IN, THOR 128K, VENOM, WIZARDS SPELL all at £1.50 each inc p&p. Contact JACKIE HOLT, 13 Montague St, Bulwell, Nottingham, NG6 8EU.

REVOLUTIONARY BREAKTHROUGH IN TOBACCOLOGY! Introducing AQUA-FAGS! Say goodbye to "I can't have a smoke because I'm going underwater misery!" Now for the first time you can light up on the ocean floor. Whenever you feel like a puff, if you're scuba diving or if you've simply fallen off your windsurfer, just open a packet of AQUA-FAGS and light up and - Hey Presto! - Lungs full of rich tobacco flavoured smoke! Packet of 20 only £99! Underwater lighter extra (when invented). Jaques Cousteau says: "J'adore les Aqua-Fags!".

AMSTRAD SOFTWARE FOR SALE: CPC/PCW version of PAW £10. **WANTED:** Amstrad version of ADLAN. **TONY TUPMAN:** I know of a Corruption (disc) for sale, if you get in touch with me I can give you the address. Contact SIMON AVERY, 71 Fore St, Chudleigh, S Devon, TQ13 0HT.

FOUND! One pair of socks, believed to have been laughed off by the editor of a popular adventure fanzine - Apply, Unhurried Hero.

SPECTRUM SOFTWARE FOR SALE: Over 100 48K adventures, plus THE QUILL/ILLUSTRATOR and some Football and Cricket strategy games. Prices from 50p! Please send S.A.E. for complete list to GEOFF WALLIS, 119A Fairbridge Rd, London N19 3HF.

HARDWARE FOR SALE: COMMODORE 64, PRINTER, DISK DRIVE, SEQUENCER/STEINBERG SOFTWARE. Phone 0492 596708.

ADVENTURE HELPLINE: Having trouble selling old adventures or finding second hand ones that are no longer being sold commercially? Drop me a line (with a SSAE if you're looking for a game(s)) along with a list of adventures that you wish to sell or buy and your address. This is a free service so why not take advantage? Contact: SIMON AVERY, 71 Fore Street, Chudleigh, S. Devon, RQ13 0HT.

BACK SUFFERERS! At last, bedtime relief from those crippling aches and pains, thanks to the Dr Butler-Sloss... ORTHOPAEDIC PYJAMAS! The specially stiffened nightwear is designed to prevent the sleeper from assuming harmful nocturnal postures and has helped thousands overcome nighttime stiff back misery. Made from reinforced asbestos and yet surprisingly comfortable, the orthopaedic pyjamas come in the following colours: Striped, Paisley and Seductive Black. Only £279 per pair.

AMIGA SOFTWARE FOR SALE: Adventures: BLACK CRYPT, HEIMDALL, LEATHER GODDESSES OF PHOBOS, GALDREGONS DOMAIN, DUNGEON MASTER, CHAOS STRIKES BACK, KEEP THE THIEF, BLOODWYCH (no box), CADAVER, BARDS TALE III, CAPTIVE, LEGEND OF FAERGHAIL, MANIAC MANSION, KNIGHTMARE, EYE OF THE BEHOLDER, ROCKET RANGER, SWORDS OF TWILIGHT, OBITUS, S.M.S.A. FROM MARS, Arcade type games: WRATH OF THE DEMON, MEGA-LO-MANIA, JUMPING JACKSON, NEW ZEALAND STORY, SPELLFIRE THE SORCEROR, NETHER WORLD, CUSTODIAN, ROCKSTAR ATE MY HAMSTER, GODS, SKRULL, MARBLE MADNESS, SHADOW OF THE BEAST, DRAGONS BREATH, TV SPORTS FOOTBALL (no box), LOMBARD RAC RALLY (no box), PIONEER PLAGUE, DEFENDERS OF THE EARTH, SUPER SPACE INVADERS, X-OUT, TREASURE TRAP, FIRST CONTACT, GOLDEN AXE, STRYX, TRIAD VOL III, DRAGON SPIRIT, COSMIC PIRATE, ARCADE FEVER, BLOOD MONEY, Simulations: F-18 INTERCEPTOR (FIGHTER PILOT), LAS VEGAS (CASINO), CONQUEROR (TANK), HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER (SUBMARINE), Puzzle/Brain Drain: POLULOUS + PROMISED LANDS, ELITE, POPULOUS II. Please telephone MARCUS on 0707 276918 (evenings only) for prices.

AMIGA SOFTWARE FOR SALE: Infocom/Mastertronic versions of ZORK I, ZORK II, PLANETFALL, WISHBRINGER, LEATHER GODDESSES OF PHOBOS, HITCHHIKERS GUIDE TO THE GALAXY, ENCHANTER. £4 each. GNOME RANGER £3. DUNGEON MASTER (no box but has 4 help discs) £6. B.A.T. £8. Also have some original music videos for sale in excellent condition: BLACK N BLUE (Black Sabbath and Blue Oyster cult), ERIC CLAPTON IN CONCERT, RONNIE JAMES DIO IN CONCERT £5 each. Contact: STEVE McLAREN, 4 Mere Gate, Margate, Kent, CT9 5TR.

COMMODORE 64 SOFTWARE FOR SALE: Large selection of adventures for CBM64 for sale. Mostly cassette. Send S.A.E. for complete list to AMANDA OLIVER, 7 The Hassocks, Waterlooville, Hants, PO7 8QG.

AMSTRAD 464 COLOUR TV MODULATORS WITH POWER SUPPLY: These are no longer commercially available but they can be made to order. £35 each (could be cheaper if the demand is high). Order through Probe.

HELP WANTED

"I have ground to a halt quite early in MISSION X. Could anyone please tell me how to get rid of the Skeleton and how can I blow up the wall without getting bumped off?"

JENNY PERRY, 5 Orchard Rd, Hampton, Middx, TW12 2JJ.

"I'm playing KINGS QUEST 5 on PC and am stuck at around 48 points. I've thrown the old boot from the desert at the cat outside the bakery, given the dog, tormenting the ants, the stick lying in front of the bees but I can't find the gold coin to give to the fortune teller and Ribbit keeps turning me into a toad! A grateful rat has bitten the rope around me in the cellar of the Inn but I can't get out - seems I need the key for the padlock. Please can anyone help?"

JORGEN RIBER CHRISTENSEN, Geskevej 34, DK-9000 Aalborg, Denmark.

"Please can anyone help me? I loaded up my new ST Emulator on the Amiga, inserted a game disk and double clicked on the second diskstation which in turn opened up a window with the games program on it. But when I double clicked on the program it started to load then the screen flashed and a message came up which I interpreted as disk A was defective - it is a German emulator. Can anyone help me out? Have I done something wrong or is the emulator defective? I used to have a C64 emulator which worked ok."

STEVE McLAREN, 6 Mere Gate, Margate, Kent, CT9 5TR. Tel:0843 299819.

NEWS SECTION

NEW SOFTWARE COMPANY ARRIVES

A new software company called QUEST SOFTWARE has been created by David Ledbury, 10 Westerkirk Drive, Fairways, Madeley, Telford, Shropshire TF7 5RJ. David will be known to many people as the creator of the popular Spectrum fanzine ZAT and as editor of SAM Newsdisk. Quest Software has been created to convert software for the Spectrum and SAM Coupe and will be concentrating on producing Spectrum software on the +D disk system with tape versions of Quest titles being available from Delbert The Hamster Software. The list of software titles which will be on sale looks very impressive so why not write to David and ask him for further details?

NEW RELEASE FROM JACK LOCKERBY

All fans of Jack Lockerby's adventures will be delighted to hear that his latest game called "The Mines of Lithiad" will be released by Zenobi Software on 26th of this month. This will be available on both Spectrum and Atari ST so I suggest you get your orders in early! For anyone who doesn't know the address to write to is Zenobi Software, 26 Spotland Tops, Cutgate, Rochdale, Lancs.

GOLDEN CHALICE AWARDS

The Adventure and Strategy Club have announced their Golden Chalice awards for 1991/1992. The winners were as follows:

- Golden Chalice for the best Overall game went to
KNIGHTMARE by Mindscape.
 - The Golden Amulet for best 16 bit Adventure game went to
THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND by US Gold/Lucasfilm.
 - The Golden Shield for best 8 bit Adventure game went to
THE AXE OF KOLT by Larry Horsfield/F.S.F.
 - The Golden Sword for best R.P.G. went to
EYE OF THE BEHOLDER by US Gold/SSI
 - The Golden Orb for best Simulation Game went to
RAILROAD TYCOON by Microprose.
 - The Golden Talisman for best Strategy Game went to
MIDWINTER II by Microprose/Rainbird
 - The Golden Crown for the best Utility went to
THE ADVENTURE GAME TOOLKIT by Softworks.
- Software company of the year was won by
MICROPROSE

SOFTWARE COMPANY COMPLAINTS AND PRAISE

I have recently received letters of complaint about certain software companies (and also some letters of praise for others). As you may know, I am not allowed to publish details about bad companies unless the police or Trading Standards Departments are involved and give me the information, as I may find myself being sued for damages as nearly happened once before when details of a company were sub-judiciary I wanted to warn readers about possible problems but came a cropper! But it has been suggested that we could have a list of recommended companies or perhaps a list with star ratings which would be available through Probe which would be a useful guide. If you think this is a good idea then let me know and also send in any names you may feel should be on the list. I am not sure of quite the best way of handling this so suggestions would be appreciated. Initial thoughts I had could be something like this example:

SOFTIE LIMITED Spectrum/Atari ST/Amiga F A R

Key: F - Fast delivery. A - Good aftersales service. R - Recommended.
If you think this is a good or a bad idea let me know.

HINTS AND TIPS

THE UNINVITED

By *Lon Houlston* played on ATARI ST

To light the fire - OPEN MATCHBOX, OPERATE MATCH ON MATCHBOX, OPERATE LIT MATCH ON LAID FIRE.

OPEN "NO GHOST", OPERATE "NO GHOST" ON MENACING LADY (she melts).
SPRAY SPIDER CIDER ON RAILINGS - come back later for paralysed spider for use further on.

OPERATE FLOWERS ON GRAVE in Maze to open up a secret tunnel.

DEMON'S TOMB

By *Lon Houlston* played on ATARI ST

In tomb, PUT SLEEPING BAG IN HOLE to gain more time.

At clearing, MOVE SMALL BOULDER to get spike, WEDGE DOOR OPEN WITH SPIKE.

In house, KNOCK ON PANELS, EXAMINE PANEL, MOVE LOOSE PANEL.

In grounds, GIVE SANDWICH TO DUCK.

NYTHYHEL

By *Amanda Oliver* played on COMMODORE 64

PART 1: TAXI - CALL TAKI, TALK TO DRIVER, (then your destination - offices of occult, Library, Station etc..).

STATION - EXAMINE MACHINE, INSERT COIN, TYPE OAKHAMPTON, GET TICKET, N, GIVE TICKET TO GUARD, E, E, BOARD TRAIN, WAIT, WAIT.

VILLAGE GREEN - EXAM GREEN.

CLEARING - DIG, EXAM COFFIN, READ SIGN, OPEN LID, FIRE REVOLVER AT WITCH, EXAM BOX, GET CANDLE, EXAM CANDLE, EXAM DESIGN (no go back to your office).

AEROPLANE - EXAM RAGS, GET PARACHUTE, WEAR PARACHUTE, SIT (your journey begins). OPEN DOOR, JUMP OUT, PULL CORD, TALK TO FARMER.

PART 2: WINDING COUNTRY ROAD - EXAM FOLIAGE, GET Magnifying GLASS.

PETROL STATION - FILL CAN, E, TALK TO GIRL, PAY GIRL, EXAM WINE.

VAN (by Petrol Station) - FILL VAN, ENTER VAN, TURN KEY, DRIVE VAN, OUT TALK TO GEND, SHOW CERT TO GEND, ENTER VAN, TURN KEY, DRIVE VAN, OUT.

BOUNTY HUNTER

By *Amanda Oliver* played on COMMODORE 64

At Mylaks Hole - wear the cape.

At the Well - DROP ROCK in well so water level rises.

Karaken Whiffet - Smell it in Kracka and in the rest of the city.

Give it to the old lady.

Mat - use it to cover dwelling.

Light Source - Get Ghostwood branch, DROP BRANCH where you need light.

Handblower - squeeze it to get rid of mist.

Orgh Depression - E, E, NE, SE, DROP BRANCH, IN.

To get out again - OUT, GET BRANCH, NE, N, W, W.

FIRE SPIT PLATE - fill pot at ford and THROW WATER over the door and it will shatter.

THE ISLAND (KEN BOND)

By *Dave Murphy* played on AMSTRAD CPC6128

Look in landrover to find a pump.

Look under landrover to find the tube.

Look under clothes in mates cabin to find the belt.

Look under bushes to find spade.

Use Spade to dig the sand first (in the ironstone maze) then use it to lever the hatch on the submarine.

Use the broken handle to open the statue.

UNNKULIAN UNDERWORLD

By *Mandy* played on PC

In the SIDE CAVE you are told that you couldn't move the debris even with the aid of a forklift truck - don't believe it!

Something warm could shed some light on the problem of the Guardian!
Nobody has fed that beast for ages!

The Droll is extremely short-sighted but don't let him collar you!
The glass casket cannot be opened - a boulder approach would be best!

The ground by the molten river is hot enough to fry breakfast.

The monk is a real egg-head - he is also hungry.

The altar plate could be a holy problem!

KINGS QUEST V

By *Steve McLaren* played on AMIGA

At weeping willow tree, talk to the tree to find out what she wants.

To get rid of the witch give her the brass bottle.

If you help the rat he will help you out.

Rattle the tambourine to get rid of the snake.

A bit of slapstick comedy will help you out with the Yeti.

OPERATION STEALTH

By *Steve McLaren* played on AMIGA

In the airport lobby, walk over to the newspaper machine, examine return coin slot to find coin, use coin on coin slot, examine newspaper, this will tell you what country to put on your false passport. Walk into the toilets and into a cubicle, operate briefcase, take pen, operate calculator, examine passport falsefier, use unused passport on opening on passport falsefier, pick out what country it should be by the newspaper, enter button.

LEATHER GODDESSES OF PHOBOS I

By *Floyd* played on ATARI ST/PC

If you have trouble getting anywhere on the barge, try adding some more power. The robot baby required cliched thinking. You'll have to be specific about where you put it though.

BARSOOM

By *Sue Ilesley* played on AMSTRAD CPC

This game mainly entails searching an ancient Martian city for the control knobs needed to fly an abandoned "hopper" and get back to civilisation. Here are the locations and means of obtaining some of the knobs:

BLACK - Behind the gargoyle - pull statue with chain.

WHITE - In lump of goo - fill bowl with water, drop bowl, drop goo.

BLUE - hidden among the sapphire jewelry.

YELLOW - In the hole in skeleton room - drop sand in the courtyard with the sticky ground to find a brick, push the brick and go down to a maze. Find your way through the maze by extinguishing different torches with the cup. When you come to the skeleton room, probe the hole with the Sceptre.

PURPLE - in the roc's nest - if anyone can tell me how to get it I'd be very pleased to hear from them!

THE BASE

By *Dave Murphy* played on AMSTRAD CPC6128

PART ONE:

In the gymnasium, climb the rope, look in gap and get crowbar.

In the workshop, look behind the counter to find the hacksaw blade.

In the attic, search the rubbish to find the broom handle.

Play the cassette in the car stereo (not the hi-fi). To do this: ENTER

CAR, EXAMINE DASHBOARD, TURN ON DECK, PUT CASSETTE IN DECK, PRESS PLAY BUTTON.

PART TWO:

In the surgery, force the cabinet with screwdriver to get the pills. Put the pills in the meat (which you find in the saucepan in the kitchen) and throw meat to the dogs in the courtyard.

In the ammunition store, examine chain, unscrew nut with spanner and tie rope to hook.

Look in jeans pocket to find spanner.

FUTURE WARS

By *Steve McLaren* played on AMIGA

WASTELANDS: Examine rubble (bottom right) take blowtorch. Walk right onto the next screen, examine rubble, take fuses, operate rubble, operate manhole cover.

SEWERS: Use blowtorch on tap, when you have walked around a bit in the sewers you will find a woman, when you get too close a creature will appear from the sewers, use filled blowtorch on creature.

THE DARK TOWER

By *Gareth Pitchford* played on SPECTRUM

Go for a paddle.

Don't let the cottage door block your way, be a fiddler on the roof! What's inside the bag - or rather what can you put in the bag?

BRIAN AND THE DISHONEST POLITICIAN

By *Gareth Pitchford* played on SPECTRUM

Remember to look behind things!

A bit of fishing is a good idea, but make sure you use the thing that doubles for a rod in the right place.

It is best to take the toyshop problem the opposite way round. Just don't wake the shop assistant.

The Town Crier likes a bit of hot gossip, can't find any? Then remember to examine under things!

THE TREASURE OF THE SANTA MARIA

By *Alf Baldwin* played on SPECTRUM

When you reach the site of the wreck and put on the diving suit, ask Wally to strap the oxygen cylinder to your back. You will find Wally very helpful, but he is a bit forgetful. He has forgotten to refuel the boat, he has forgotten that you will need a lamp, so you must ask him for one, and you must search the boat for a crowbar he forgot to tell you about.

When you dive to the wreck, go to the captain's cabin and open the wardrobe there with the crowbar. At this point a giant octopus tries to attack you. It can't get through the door so it fills the cabin with ink and you can't see. Squirt the fluid from your syringe and the water will soon clear. You can then search the wardrobe to find a tin of gunpowder.

THERE IS A BOMB UNDER PARLIAMENT

By *Alf Baldwin* played on SPECTRUM

Lift the fallen ladder so you can climb up through the hole, but don't climb it yet or you will not be able to get down again. Get the aluminium sheet and bend it to form a slide and take this with you up the ladder. Also take with you the camera which you find by searching the lounge. Get battery from room at top of ladder and replace it in the torch. Go to darkroom, switch off torch and develop film. Get rod from empty room, lower the slide and slide down.

GETTING YOU STARTED

UNNKULIAN UNDERWORLD

By *Mandy* played on PC

You start in a Hut and your former master lies dead at your feet:
EXAMINE MASTER - (you find and take a scroll) - READ SCROLL - EXAMINE
MASTER - GET POSTCARD - READ POSTCARD - EXAMINE MASTER - GET IRON KEY
- EXAMINE KEY - LOOK - GET LAMP - EXAMINE LAMP - N - W to lake shore
- WAZZUM (the word you found on the scroll) - LOOK - GET BLACK ROD - N
- NE - N - TAKE CHEEZ KEY - EXAMINE ALL - TAKE BRONZE PLATE - LOOK
UNDER MACHINE - GET VELLUM SCROLL - READ IT - UP - SEARCH LIGHTHOUSE
LAMP - SEARCH BRICKS - GET BRICK - GET GLOVES - D - S - SW - E -
EXAMINE BUSH - EXAMINE RADBERRIES - CLIMB TREE - TAKE FEATHER AND EGG
- D - S - NE - UNLOCK GRATE WITH IRON KEY - D - DROP ALL - UP - SW - N
- NE - E (inside Inn) - TAKE SNUFFBOX - TAKE PRETZEL - LOOK BEHIND BAR
(you find and take a health notice and a one Acmid piece) - NE - TAKE
BUCKET - SW - W - SW - S - NE - D.....

PYRAMID OF MUNA

By *Lon Houlston* played on ATARI ST

GET ALL - S - GET AND READ PAPER - ASK DESK CLERK ABOUT BUS TO MUNA -
E - ENTER BUS - GIVE MEXICAN COINS TO DRIVER - EXIT BUS - GREET JOSE -
E - E - OPEN WALLET - USE WALLET - GET MONEY - GIVE MONEY TO JOSE -
CLOSE WALLET - REMOVE MOSS - EXAMINE IMAGE - STUDY IMAGE - NE - REMOVE
MOSS - EXAMINE AND STUDY IMAGE - SE - REMOVE MOSS - EXAMINE AND STUDY
IMAGE - SW - REMOVE MOSS - EXAMINE AND STUDY IMAGE - NE - PUT STONE
STAR IN RECESS - GET STAR - W.....

BIRTHDAY SURPRISE

By *Derek Shaw* played on SPECTRUM

S - W - OPEN BOX - GET TRAY - E - E - GET ROBE - WEAR ROBE - EXAMINE
ROBE - EXAMINE POCKET - OPEN DOOR - E - SEARCH LINEN - GET SERVIETTE
- W - W - D - W - EXAMINE DESK.....

AMULET OF DARATH

By *Derek Shaw* played on SPECTRUM

INVENTORY - BUY MEAD - GET MEAD - DRINK MEAD - N - SEARCH LEAVES - GET
GLOVE - W - N - EXAMINE POND - REMOVE MUD - EXAMINE POND - GET RUBY -
NW - E - EXAMINE BOOK - MOVE BOOK - E - GET KEY - W - W - W - S - W -
W - EXAMINE SOLDIER - KILL SOLDIER.....

DANGER! ADVENTURER AT WORK

By *Derek Shaw* played on SPECTRUM

EXAMINE DOOR - GET STOOL - THROW STOOL - CLIMB WINDOW - GET HEAD - E -
EXAMINE BOOTH - IN - GET ROPE - EXAMINE PHONE - OUT - N - E - GET
TORSO - EXAMINE TORSO - EXAMINE BULL - GET BULL - W - S - E - S - GET
BOLT - N - W.....

FABLED TREASURE OF KOOSAR

By *Derek Shaw* played on SPECTRUM

S - EXAMINE ROCKS - GET BOTTLE - N - U - W - GET STICK - E - D - S -
GET BOTTLE - DROP STICK - EXAMINE BOTTLE - BREAK BOTTLE - N - U - NE -
E - S - EXAMINE LEDGE - NE - EXAMINE BENCH - SEARCH BIN - GET PURSE -
EXAMINE PURSE - SW - N - W - NE - N - N - N.....

SERIALISED SOLUTIONS

THE GOLDEN PYRAMID

A walk-through by *Jack Lockerby* - Spectrum.

PART TWO

Throwing the hook it sails up the sheer side of the pit and attaches itself to something at the top. Climbing the dangling skin you reach the south side of the pit. Travelling south you soon find yourself on the outskirts of a native village. You explore the village and talk to the Chief who gives you a falcon's feather and implores you to bring him the Elixir of Life so that he can prolong his life long enough so that he can father a son to carry on the dynasty. The witch doctor wants the falcon's feather that the old chief gave you but heeding the chief's words you decide to hold on to it a while longer.

You find a cauldron hung over a roaring fire - in the cauldron is a lump of flesh cooking in the boiling water. You know that it is boiling 'cos you can't put your hand in it. Suddenly a thought strikes you! Why not put out the fire with some water and then it should be possible to get the cooked flesh. So you travel back to the small river just south of the village, fill your hat with water and then throw it on the fire. It works! Taking the flesh you wander around but finding nothing useful you head back to that steel trap in the foliage. This time you mean to do something about it! You throw the flesh north and sure enough, it triggers off a steel trap whose jaws were just waiting to end your little adventure. Heading north past the trap you find yourself opposite the Golden Pyramid with a tiny door in its base. The only thing you have is the falcon's feather so you place it onto the depression and the tiny door swings open. You hesitate about entering the pyramid just yet - it's bound to be dark and so far you haven't found anything resembling a torch. There might be something in the witch doctor's hut so remembering what he said you remove the feather and head back to the village.

The witch doctor is overjoyed when you hand him the feather and once inside his hut you soon find a torch and a tropical fruit. As you leave a mighty flash of lightening strikes a nearby clearing and rekindles the fire, thus enabling you to light the torch that you found. You then head back to the pyramid taking the makeshift grappling hook with you. Once inside the pyramid you are confronted by a closed door, an iron panel and an air duct. You soon shake out the dust from the duct but at the moment the door and the panel are a mystery to you. Going down you enter a chamber with red hot coals on one side and a quicksand on the other. Obviously further exploration is needed before we tackle those two threats. You travel on until you arrive at the crystal room, heading north you enter a burial chamber which has a low slung bunk against one wall. You lift the bunk and reveal a skeleton wearing a talisman. You take the talisman which has a single elephant's hair threaded through a tiny hole in the centre. Travelling back south you soon come across a chamber hewn out of solid granite. The route east is protected by long barbed spikes. Near the eastern exit is a large slab of ornate granite which you attempt to push onto the spikes - it won't budge - at least not at the moment. A little further south brings you to the shore of a vast underground lake. Fortunately someone has left a raft nearby so you decide to go for a sail and soon land on the opposite shore.....

TO BE CONTINUED

R.P.G. SECTION

BLACK CRYPT

Reviewed by *Ken Bond* played on AMIGA

This is a role playing game very similar in the way it is played to Dungeon Master. One difference is that you click on the face of a character rather than on the weapon when you want to attack. This takes a bit of getting used to and at first you are inclined to find yourself waving a sword instead of wielding it. The game can be installed on a hard disk with the advantage that it gives you five save positions instead of two. One strange thing when playing from a hard disk is that even if you have 3 meg. of memory it says you have not enough until you turn off your external disk drive.

The scenario follows the usual conventions. A mystical land called Astera has banished a character called Estoroth Paingiver for practising black magic. He then gathered together a hellish army and tried to conquer the realm. Four champions were sent forth who managed to trap him into another dimension but now the magic has begun to weaken and Astera fears another war. Four characters must be sent into the Black Crypt to defeat him.

The party consists of a warrior, a cleric, a magician and a druid. Each one can use certain weapons and all but the warrior can use spells. Each magic user starts off with a spell book and other books will be found in the dungeons, also spell scrolls that can be used a certain number of times. Spell casting depends on the experience of the user and when they reach an experience level of ten all spells can be used. By clicking on the warrior's tablet you can find exactly where you are in the crypt, especially useful when you have been teleported somewhere. Another useful item is the teleport spell where you can travel quite long distances but only to where you have been before. This is used in conjunction with Wizard Sight or a Ring of Location. Magical weapons can be invoked by clicking with the right mouse buttons which greatly increases their power.

When you get to location thirteen you will find that there are four quests taken from here to find the four magic artifacts that alone will defeat Estoroth in the deepest dungeon. One quest is under water which puts you under rather a lot of pressure as your trident helms and water breathing rings only last a certain time. However, when you find the other helm and ring you will find you can manage. This game has not the devious puzzles of Knightmare, but it is a good hack and slash adventure and well worth playing.

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CONQUESTS OF CAMELOT

A guide by *Ron Rainbird* played on AMIGA

PART TWO:

After disposing of the Boars (which gets easier with practice), travel NW and you will see the remains of a deceased Knight and a live Crow. This bird will issue a challenge which you should accept. Inspect the Skeleton and take a Lady's Sleeve.

Go east and meet the Black Knight who challenges you to a Joust which you must accept. To beat him, he must be unhorsed three times. Save the game immediately prior to the combat - you will probably need to return to the Joust, via the LOAD/SAVE a few times before you get the

hang of beating him. Try aiming your lance to the middle left. When victorious, you will see Sir Gawaine. Dismount and release him from his bonds with your sword. Talk to him, then give him your horse so that he may return to Camelot.

Now head east to meet the witch of the forest. Give her the Lady's Sleeve and watch the transformation. After she leaves, go to the Pedestal and read the Runes. Go NW to the Riddle Stones which bar your way. You must stand in front of each stone and ask for a riddle. Only by answering each riddle correctly may you proceed up to Glastonbury Tor. There are more than two dozen riddles from which each of the stones can choose to ask, so from the following answers, pick the ones which you feel to be the most appropriate:

KEY. WATER. FIRE. HEART. SIEVE. ICEBERG. BOAT. WINE. GLOVES. MIRROR. TONGUE. RIDDLE. GOLD. SNAIL. ICICLES. CANDLE. SONG. SHADOW. ECHO. WHEEL. SEA. PEARL. WIND. TIME. BLUE.

With these responses, it shouldn't be too difficult to answer the riddles. Go on, put on your "little grey cells" Cap and have fun!....

TO BE CONTINUED

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EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

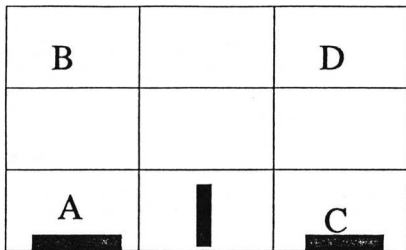
By *Ken Bond* played on AMIGA

There is a system of portals in the dungeons which allows rapid transit from one level to another. These are triggered by stone keys and save a lot of walking when you have to take something back to an early level.

SITE	DESTINATION	STONE KEY	KEY LOCATION
Level 4	Level 7	Medallion	Level 5
Level 5	Level 7	Necklace	Level 5
Level 6	Level 10	Ring	Level 6
Level 7	Level 11	Holy Symbol	Level 11
Level 7	Level 5	Necklace	Level 5
Level 7	Level 9	Dagger	Level 2
Level 7	Level 4	Medallion	Level 5
Level 8	Level 10	Sceptre	Level 4
Level 9	Level 7	Dagger	Level 2
Level 10	Level 8	Sceptre	Level 4
Level 10	Level 6	Ring	Level 6
Level 11	Level 12	Orb	Level 11
Level 11	Level 7	Holy Symbol	Level 11
Level 12	Level 11	Orb	Level 11

Don't eat all the kenku eggs on level 6 as you need some to trade with the Drow on level 7. On no account attack the Drow Elfs or you will be slaughtered. The only way into level 11 is by falling down a pit. You will find yourself in three concentric squares each one of which has one exit. These squares have to be rotated by pressing buttons on the walls until all the exits are aligned to the north, south etc. On level 12 you will find the Beholder, don't tackle him until you have the Wand of Silvias which the dwarves will give you when you give them a potion to revive their dying King.

The Dizzy Room Puzzle from Nightmare by Ken Bond with help from Jason Deane



A B C D

LADDER

One of the most difficult puzzles in Nightmare is the Dizzy Rooms puzzle. When you enter the room you find yourself facing two doors. If you enter the one marked A you will find an interconnecting door into room C. Behind you are 4 buttons on the wall. What you have to find out is that each button when clicked on turns the corresponding room 90 degrees clockwise. If therefore you click once on button A nothing seems to have happened but when you enter A you will find that the interconnecting door is now to the front and the other door is to the left allowing you to enter the lefthand room where you will find a key. You will find that if you enter room C that the interconnecting door has gone. Click now on button A 3 times and things will be as they were at the start. Now click on button C 3 times and you will find that you can get into the room to the right.

The best thing is to make a working model with counters for the doors and you will see how by clicking on the different buttons you can get into the 6 surrounding rooms. Be warned though keep the doors shut as there are monsters in every room except the first one. You will realise that any interconnecting door in the space between two doors will be borrowed by the room you rotate. You must understand how this works because later on you will find a puzzle with 6 rotating rooms and 8 buttons in 3 different locations. Some rooms are controlled by 2 different buttons. Have fun !

STRATEGY SECTION

DEUTEROS

Reviewed by *Neil Ashmore* on AMIGA

You play the newly appointed commander of Earth City and your mission is to explore and colonise other planets. To do this you have a finite number of recruits with which to train in any of three departments.

1. Research: Designs all your ships, equipment and weapons. 2. Production: This department builds anything you've researched to 100%, depending on your mineral stocks. Most items can only be built at orbital stations. 3. Marines: Plot your space ships and shuttels. They also operate equipment carried by your ships, depending on their rank. When you colonise a planet you have resource rigs (Derricks) erected to mine the various minerals. As you accumulate more and more minerals, you can build up your stocks of ships and equipment. It is a great feeling watching your empire expand as you construct each orbital space station, and gain more and more precious minerals in the process. One of the best aspects is that you are never left thinking "I can't do anymore!!", because as you progress, different things happen and new equipment becomes available for research.

The sound is very atmospheric and the graphics excellent, even down to a light switch in the training area. The game is always played at your own pace because you decide when to advance the game time.

I can't recommend Deuteros highly enough, so if you want a long-term tactical struggle look no further than this. If you have a 1 meg Amiga or more then there are extra cockpit views of planets and orbitals.

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IMPERIUM

Available from Electronic Arts at a cost of £25.

Reviewed by *Dave Charnley* on AMIGA

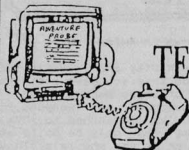
Power? Manipulation? Wealth? Millions upon millions of loyal followers? These are all attractive ideas to your average gamesplayer and all part of the oldish strategy game, Imperium. Just to give you an idea of how old this game is, a sticker placed on the box front represents an award won at the European Computer Leisure Awards of 1990 so it is getting on a bit now. However, I feel for all budding world leaders out there this still shines.

You take the role of a newly-elected leader of Earth's galaxial empire struggling to become the strongest force in the universe by economical, diplomatic and aggressive military means. Not only must you contend with the opposition's attempt to ruthlessly attain supremacy but also internal obstacles to leadership such as elections, inflation and AGING!

The game is initially difficult but this can be rectified by appointing computer ministers. These will deal with the economy, military and/or diplomacy so you can concentrate on one area and have a strong empire built for later when you feel ready to compete.

Graphically, there's not a lot to look at. A basically inactive screen of windows, menus and bars with various shades of grey. Musical interludes when new items arrive are optional; this being the only thing in the way of sound. This is a great game which will give much enjoyment and satisfaction - and power to blitz the whole planet at your fingertips!

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TELEPHONE HELPLINE

ALF BALDWIN	0452 500512	MON TO SAT 10AM TO 5PM	Spectrum
WALTER POOLEY	051 9331342	ANY REASONABLE TIME	Various
DOREEN BARDON	0653 628509	MON TO FRI 6PM TO 10PM WEEKENDS ANY REASONABLE TIME	Spectrum
MERC	0424 434214	ANY REASONABLE TIME	Atari ST
JASON DEANE	0492 622750	ANY REASONABLE TIME	Amiga
JOAN PANCOTT	0305 784155	SUN TO SAT 1.PM TO 10PM	Various
ISLA DONALDSON	041 9540602	SUN TO SAT NOON TO 12PM	Amstrad
NIC RUMSEY	0323 482737	MON TO FRI 6PM TO 9PM	Various
BARBARA BASSINGTHWAIGHTE	0935 26174	SUN TO SAT 10AM TO 10PM	BBC
BARBARA GIBB	051 7226731	ANY EVENING FROM 7PM	BBC
DAVE BARKER	071 7321513	MON TO FRI 7PM TO 10PM	Various
VINCE BARKER	0642 780076	ANY REASONABLE TIME	CBM64
STUART WHYTE	061 9804645	ANY REASONABLE TIME	Amstrad
ROBIN MATTHEWS	0222 569115 OR 0642 781073	EVENINGS AND WEEKENDS	IBM PC

*** 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 ***

Fax and Phone 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 helpliners for help first, as above.

PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU ONLY RING AT THE TIMES SHOWN