

ADVENTURE PROBE

JANUARY 1995 £2.00
VOLUME 9 ISSUE 1



EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT

ADVENTURE PROBE

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All back issues are available, at the above prices. Volume 1 comprises 19 issues (June 1986 - Dec 1987), subsequent volumes are 12 issues Jan - Dec.

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DISTRIBUTION

Adventure Probe is distributed during the first week of the month (but will be a little erratic until I get back on schedule). Copy date for contributions and advertisements is 14th of the previous month.

CONTRIBUTIONS

All contributions are gratefully accepted. Please keep me well supplied with computer and adventure-related material. It doesn't matter how brief the entry is. It may be the very information someone has been waiting for. It will be **very** helpful if items for different **sections** are on separate pieces of paper. It doesn't have to be printed or typed but best handwriting will be appreciated, as I am not familiar with every detail. When you submit an entry for the IN-TOUCH section please mark which are adventures, utilities, arcades, etc.

POSTAL ADDRESS

Please send all correspondence, subscriptions, etc. to:-

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HALL OF FAME

Many thanks to the following readers who have sent in contributions since the last issue :

Barbara Bassingthwaighte, Dorothy Millard, Ellen Mahon, Peter Clark, Jean Child,
 Steve Clay, Ray Clayton, Joan Williams, Damian Steele, Chris Lord,
 Reynir H. Stefansson, Mary Scott-Parker, Barry Scannell,
 Terry Taylor, Jenny Perry and Mark McDermott.

Special thanks to :

Geoff Lynas for his usual excellent printing job and
 Barbara Bassingthwaighte for the seasonal cover picture.

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the first issue of 1995. First, a huge thank you to everyone who send me a Christmas card – they certainly brightened up the living-room/office walls.

After the nerve-racking and very hectic last two months, I've now got the magazine almost on schedule. I'm hoping most of you will receive this issue by the third week of January, and I'm planning a permanent distribution date of the *second* week of each month, therefore the deadline for contributions will be the 21st of the previous month. I know this contradicts the information given on the "Know All" page on the inside front cover, but that will be amended in the February issue. Of course this doesn't apply to late news items, which can be slotted into an odd space, or even incorporated into my Editorial which is always the last page to be written, typed and printed.

It is also subject to having enough material to publish each month, so please send in **anything** you think will be of interest. I prepared most of this issue between Christmas and New Year, putting the finishing touches to it on 6th January, therefore regulars, like the next part of Steve Clay's AMOS Programming series, and his Amiga Column are missing – well he is entitled to a brief holiday – will be back next month.

I didn't win the national lottery. Personally, I think £17 million is far too much for a single winner, 17 winners, each receiving £1 million, would be better. Peter Clark's idea may yet become a reality – see The Adventurers' Home For The Bewildered. Mary Scott-Parker has challenged you to complete her poem about Probe, which reminds me to remind you that the 100th Issue Monster Quiz closing date is/was 17th January, so you are probably too late if you haven't already entered.

My very grateful thanks to Lorna Paterson, Edwina Brown, Jonathan Scott and Stephen Boyd who sent me batches of tourist brochures for their areas of the country. I've had a great time reading them before passing them to Heather. They have opened my eyes. The United Kingdom really is a marvellous country, and I almost wish I was able to travel to see the wonderful features mentioned in the leaflets.

Due to back, leg and shoulder problems, I spent the run-up to Christmas housebound, and had to give Ray and Heather shopping lists each day to ensure we had everything necessary for Christmas. After delivering the last of the cards on Christmas Eve and putting up the decorations, we then relaxed and enjoyed a festive holiday. I wasn't really in the mood for most of what I had planned, but still managed to complete a few easy adventures on the Amiga, and got thoroughly stuck in others, notably Talisman (can't do anything with the onyx idol), Life After Death (doesn't seem anywhere else to go, 20/63 suggests quite a bit still to see), and Imbrium (I've got the wizard bouncing up and down on the cushion, but he won't stay on the floor, I think I need the wand and pendant from the shelf but I can't get them). The Amiga has now been put into Heather's room so that she can play the Red Dwarf Trivia Quiz while at the same time checking the answers on the video tapes! How is it youngsters are very good at remembering minute details about their favourite TV programmes, but can't remember capital cities, names of rivers, etc.?

I'm now off to find the Spectrum so that I can catch up on some much belated work.

All the best for 1995.

Barbara

A.F.I.O. Hon. Member

REVIEWS

COMPANIONS OF XANTH

Reviewed by Jenny Perry on a PC

You are Doug, an unwitting pawn in a wager between two demons. Your task is to cross the magical kingdom of Xanth and reach the Prize before the other innocent player – a girl called Kim.

To begin the game you must choose a companion who will guide you through the land and will advise you when you need help. You are given 4 choices but only one is the correct one – if you select unwisely you'll have to restart.

Because you're a sceptical person who doesn't believe in the magic of Xanth, you start the game in the form of a TV screen, carried by your companion. However this doesn't bog you down too much. You enter a town where you meet a woodsman who asks you for help. This is the beginning of a long series of excruciating puns – my favourite kind.

The town is being plagued by a Censer-Ship, emitting huge clouds of incense and causing the townsfolk to be unable to speak freely. You must get rid of it and in order to do this you must talk to a fairy. (Fairy Nuff, and they get worse) who lives beyond the Pail. On encountering the Pail I tried to kick the bucket with a marked lack of success. When he woodn't let me pass I got board of this and discovered the correct procedure to get round him (a hint!). Now you need to mix up a weird variety of ingredients including eye scream and cough drops. I had terrible trouble obtaining the drops until I remembered my guide, who came in useful. When you return to the fairy, he gives you a short cut which lands you in the middle of a vast desert with no exits in sight. Whoops. After hanging round for a while an exit appears so you step through it to discover the Love Springs. As your companion is female and nubile and you're a hot blooded young man you may feel that the game could become a bit more exotic here – but talk to your companion before you make a hasty decision.

Eventually you enter an underground barrow containing a large maze. Then the lights go out. After resisting temptation yet again you learn that your companion has been imprisoned and it's down to you to secure her release. I found lateral, as well as literal thinking useful in this adventure – remember it's a magical land especially when you meet the door that's ajar.....

Soon you're in the Region of Fire with a fireman (literally) and a Hot Dog. Sadly there's also a wall of fire blocking your way, which you can overcome if you've brought that insignificant item from another region.

After this is the Water Region, where you're greeted by a fierce Troll who looks and sounds like my ex in a bad temper. When I finished laughing at him (and had been eaten alive a couple of times) I discovered that he will let you live if you perform a small task for him. The first time I attempted this I caused a major flood and had to restart, but water turned out to be the key to the puzzle. The Troll also lets you play with 3 mindbending games which will add to your enjoyment of the game and also to your final score.



The puns were becoming catching by now – just like the virus you have to introduce to the cheating Com-Pewter who crops up next. He'll set you a little test but isn't happy when you give the correct answers. You then meet an ugly lady who wishes to be beautiful and a beautiful lady who wants to be ugly. Some people are never satisfied!

After disposing of an awesome dragon you arrive at the magician Humpfrey's castle. To enter you must be extremely literal – try anything and everything and listen carefully. Humpfrey will explain about the Demons wager and will transport you to the final stage of the game. There's a wonderful sequence here, when you stumble around in a dark cellar encountering useful and gruesome objects, then you'll be ready to make a dash for the Prize.

This is one of the first graphic adventures I've played and I was much impressed. The graphics were beautifully drawn and imaginative, the story was fun, the puns would appeal to anyone with a smidgen of a sense of humour (or anyone who's a glutton for punishment) the characters were appealing and it was user-friendly to play.

CURSE OF CALUTHA

Written by Laurence Creighton

Reviewed by Joan Williams

Calutha, an ancient Mystic, spent his life gathering treasures and depositing them in a place known as the Caves of Light. Many have tried to find this hidden wealth, but all have failed, rumour has it that Calutha had put a curse on all these treasures – are you brave enough to disregard the curse?

Okay then, load up and tackle the initial problems. You have a priest demanding a donation, a hungry tramp, an interesting tree, a pit to descend and a man in a pub – quite a selection of problems to solve in the first of the two-part game. (The second requires a password.) With infinite patience and logical thinking, all these problems are solvable of course, but this is one of the trickiest beginnings to an LC game that I've encountered. (So far.)

You must think of a way to prevent yourself from dying of hunger, but the tramp is hungry too, and you need his help. There is a ladder to be collected from a tree, but how? Well, you've got a pole, maybe you can dislodge it. Then again, maybe not! You've got some loose change, but who do you please first, the priest or the man in the pub? And what about the poster?

Each solution to these problems require very severe cerebral effort, it's not as straightforward as find object, give object and collect reward, oh no, you've really got to work at it. You can even cross the lake in a boat, but of course, the boat has a hole in it. You'll be rowing back and forth across this lake, all very tiresome at times, but that's the way to make progress.

Part two is in a similar vein, devious problems and if anything, even tougher than part one, but perhaps I was just making hard work of it, the curse didn't seem to loom over me though, so it seemed that I could struggle on without being doomed, actually, once the treasure is found, it's a doddle, you can just help yourself without retribution (I didn't believe in the curse anyway!)



This is a tricky game, packed with all the usual devious puzzles, but there's nothing easy to encourage you, LC at his most perverse methinks!

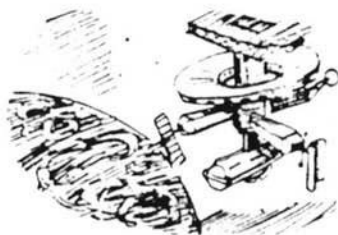
Available from Zenobi Software - **Spectrum** £2.49 (tape), £3.49 (+3 disc), £5.99 on Jenny's Next Big (+3) Disc. **Amiga/PC** under Spectrum emulation £5.99 for Jenny's Next Big Disc. Please add 25p postage per item.

ECLIPSE

Written by Laurence Creighton

Reviewed by Joan Williams

From the deepest part of outer space, superior beings decided that the planet Earth was worth colonizing. They built a giant solar screen between the Sun and Great Britain, thereby cutting off the sunlight and thus preventing the human race from thriving. Your task is to locate a shuttle and launch it into orbit and make the hazardous journey to the screen and destroy it...



For once, getting on this early LC game isn't fraught with too much frustration. You might need a couple of attempts to pass the guard, but plain common sense dictates the method of doing so. Location wise, not very big, but there's plenty to see and do in almost every room that you visit. Experienced players will recognize the problems and more than likely be able to deal with them without too much hassle, the less experienced and newcomers will learn a lesson in a basic LC game, read the text carefully and don't assume the obvious. Search and examine do not always mean the same thing.

Finding the shuttle involves solving a collection of problems, ranging from how to open a nailed up cupboard to how to finely balance a spacecraft. Along the way, you'll find a gardener who wants a spade, a maze in which there's something very useful hidden, and even a library which contains a journal with valuable information.

All the methods on how to make progress are to be found by careful attention to the text, or with clues, and although I wouldn't go as far as saying this is an easy game, it's not the most difficult either, a good one to encourage players to buy more LC games.

Available from Zenobi Software - **Spectrum** £1.99 (tape), £3.49 (+3 disc), £5.99 (on Jenny's Big (+3) Disc with Behold Atlantis, Lost Temple and Treasure of Santa Maria - all by LC), **Amiga/PC** under Spectrum emulation £5.99 on Jenny's Disc.

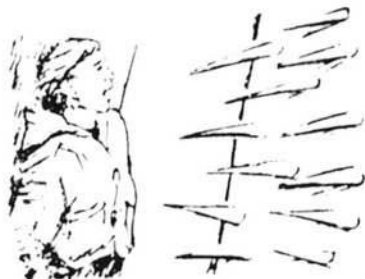
Please add 25p postage per item.

DR. DEATH'S HOUSE OF HORROR

Written by John Olsen

Reviewed by Damian Steele on a PC

The game begins with you in a medieval-style dungeon. The limited light from the single window high in the wall only reveals a somewhat out of place dressing table



The door is closed and locked and the walls are grinding inward.....

In just a few turns the players will have discovered a way to escape or will have redecorated the walls in a strawberry hue. Assuming the former, they will soon see that the house, in which most of the game is set, is a living waxwork museum.

Most of the puzzles are of the "find and use object" variety with only one or two requiring any real thought.

The carry limit is annoying at the beginning as you easily discover quite a number of objects which don't have an immediate or obvious use.

That aside, it isn't a bad game and should take most players some hours - if not days - to complete.

Available on an Olsen games compilation from The Round Corner Shareware Library.

RINGS FOR BONY FINGERS

Written by John Olsen

Reviewed by Damian Steele on a PC



You lie in a silk-lined coffin. You can hear the sound of a hammer as it pounds nails into the heavy lid, sealing you inside this black chamber of death. There is no light. Your hands explore the smooth silk-lining of the walls, but find nothing.

The hammering stops. You feel a swaying motion as your coffin is lowered into a six foot deep grave.

From outside the walls of your coffin you hear the sounds of mad laughter: "The only way to escape your nightmare is to place the ten rings of Zoltan on the fingers of his headless skeleton. But you'll never get the chance now! Ha ha ha ha! Rest in peace."

You feel a thudding as spadefuls of heavy dirt are thrown on your coffin. It fades as the layer of earth grows. Then silence.....

So there you are, lying inside the coffin and your air is fast running out. In fact you have less than four turns in which to escape. So what do you do? Panic? Scream? Do nothing as you believe that this is what fate wanted for you so you're not going to try and change it? No, you push at the lid until the bottom falls out and you tumble into a hole. Having temporarily escaped death you find yourself in complete darkness. Discovering the exit is by trial and error but thankfully you don't have to go far before the way is lit.

Now you are met by an apparition who tells you to say his name to receive a gift. That's all very well, but you don't know his name. So you explore and collect an item or two before returning to a previous location where the name is written. The game has a number of good and difficult puzzles as well as some in an easier vein. Location descriptions tend, as with nearly all Olsen adventures, to be short but adequate. In general there isn't too much that will produce a message when examined but you need to look at everything carefully as a few clues are given.

Unlike a number of his other games, this one held my attention for some time as it offered a real, and realistic, challenge. Like other reviewers of John's games, I feel that the \$20 registration fee is too high. That said though, you should receive maps, hints and solutions for several of his games for the one fee.

Available on an Olsen games compilation from The Round Corner Shareware Library.

SAVE YOUR SISTER

Written by Phillip Ramsay

Reviewed by Ellen Mahon on an Amstrad CPC464

Someone has kidnapped your sister, as far as you're concerned whoever's got her can keep her. In fact, they're more than welcome to her! The rest of the family, however, don't share your point of view, and you have been sent off to find her, and rescue her. You have ascertained that your sister is being held captive in some caves.



Your search begins outside an entrance to a cave, which lies to the south. After picking your way through a dimly lit passage you find yourself in a room containing a long table upon which sits a Ming vase. (Hmmm, maybe you can "save" more than your sister?)

Soon you'll discover the "Harem", and you can hear the sound of laughter from within. Here you'll meet the obligatory(?) guard who's employed to prevent you from discovering just who's doing the giggling. Finding something to please him will make him leave his post – and you can enter the Harem. At your entrance, however, the laughter turns to screams, and many of the maidens flee in terror. Now why would they do that I wonder? Strange or what?

When you find your sister she's feeling rather cold – which isn't really surprising as she's only wearing her birthday suit! Instead of being pleased to see you, she tells you that she's not going anywhere until you find her something to wear. Talk about gratitude!

Returning with something to cover her modesty has a very strange effect on you sister. Still, as you've had your usual three Weetabix that morning you're more than able to complete your rescue mission.

This adventure is aimed at novice players, and therefore the problems aren't difficult. There's not even a maze to contend with. (Hoorah!) There is, however, a "sudden death" lurking in the adventure.

Available from the Adventure Workshop – Price £4 (disc) £2 (tape) together with "The Weirdstone", (see below for review). Cheque/p.o. payable to P.M.Reynolds

THE WEIRDSTONE

Written by Phillip Ramsay

Reviewed by Ellen Mahon on an Amstrad CPC464

The object of your quest in this adventure is to discover the whereabouts of "The Weirdstone". Recover it, and return "here" with it. "Here" is a green field, outside a castle, with exits going East or South.



Going East will bring you to the East (where else?) wing of the castle. This wing it seems is the domain of the "lady" of the house – or should that be the "lady" of the castle? – and contains her music room, sewing room, and her bedchamber.

Her maid also resides in this wing of the castle – and it seems as if she's in the habit of "borrowing" items from her mistress – either that, or she's a very well paid maid, as I found a very expensive bracelet in her sleeping quarters. One thing's for sure, she's not a very attentive maid 'cos I rang the bell that I found in the lady's bedchamber for ages – and I'm still waiting for her to make an appearance! (You just can't get good staff nowadays, can you?)

Whilst in the lady's bedchamber, I had a slight touch of dropsy, which led to half of a Talisman that promised, once made whole again, would lead me to the Weirdstone – being revealed! Just the break I needed, talk about "luck", this adventure was going to be a doddle! (Hmm, famous last thoughts....)

Upon entering the South wing of the castle, you'll discover the keep (which wasn't "keeping" anything!), the library, in which sat a poor plant suffering from greenfly – seems the gardener's just as attentive as the maid! You'll also find the study, which has an exit to the east, unfortunately the exit's guarded by a more than attentive guard. The spoilsport, why couldn't he take a leaf out of the maid's or the gardener's book? He will, however, desert his post, providing you can overcome his "sense of duty". That's a task in itself, as items abound in this adventure, and just to make matters worse, there's a really mean carry limit. (Boo, hiss, shame on you Phill!)

After dealing with the guard you'll find the Great Hall, armoury, and the Chapel. Discovering the "other half" of the Talisman didn't turn out exactly as I'd expected, in fact, if truth be known, I was more than a little shocked at the outcome of making the Talisman whole again. Talk about broken promises – if it knew where the Weirdstone was, it certainly wasn't telling me! (Not only (mean) carry limits in the game, but broken promises as well!) Maybe my touch of dropsy hadn't been so lucky after all?

Being kind to the plant will put you on the right track to discovering the whereabouts of the elusive Weirdstone, and a little later on, praying for inspiration will be a real eye opener.

When I finally found the Weirdstone I started off on my journey back to the green field from whence I came – just like I'd been told to do, Phill, however, had yet more tricks up his sleeve – there goes yet another broken promise. (Did I complain? Of course I did!) And I found myself having to answer three questions before finally being able to make my way back to the green field.

Weirdstone has loads of red herrings, a few surprises – and a couple of nasty shocks! I even managed to "die" a few times in the adventure – not as many time as I did in "Hades" though! (Must be getting better, eh Phill?) Despite being stumped a couple of times, Weirdstone was a really enjoyable game to play. Best of all there wasn't a maze for me to get lost in. The only thing I didn't like in the adventure was the (very mean) carry limit – more boos and hisses!!

Available from The Adventure Workshop – Price £4 (disc) £2 (tape) together with Save Your Sister, also by Phill Ramsay, please see review above. Cheque/p.o. payable to P.M.Reynolds

FUTURE REVIEWS : Golden Pyramid, Marooned, Impact, Lost In Time, House Out Of Town, Final Demand, 'Twas A Time Of Dread, RJ's Ultimatum, Lost In The Amazon, Harboro', St. Jives, Tale of Taliesin, plus many more.

APPEAL : If you wish to send in a review (or hints) for *any* game please do so, as all information is appreciated. You don't have to be experienced to offer a view or hint about new and golden oldie adventures.

SOUTH AMERICAN TREK

Published by Buttonware as shareware

Reviewed by Richard Batey on a PC



There has been a question raised in Probe recently of what adventures are suitable for beginners. Well, I am definitely recommending this game as a contender for the easiest adventure to solve for beginners, bar none. The reason being that the game was part of an experimental line called "Educational Text Adventures" aimed at junior school children in an attempt to teach them a little about geography. There are three such games in the series, The Asian Challenge, African Safari and this one. The idea, I suppose, is that kids would play the game while at the same time reading a map of the continent.

During the game you will travel through different countries discovering the names of the capital cities, chief exports, native animals, etc. I am not sure how beneficial this is as the location descriptions consists of one short sentence e.g. grassland of Uruquay. You would need a vivid imagination to be able to visualize something special with location descriptions like that. In fact as a teaching aid I would advise you bought a good atlas instead.

What makes the game such a good one for beginners is that the problems are easy and even if you did become stuck asking for help will give you the answer anyway. The parser is strictly two words which might cause a problem for a second or two ("ride llama" and "dig pit" the most likely to cause a momentary halt) though not for long. In short, if you are relatively new to the world of adventures give this game a go because:

- 1) It is easy to complete
- 2) It will give you a slight ego boost in completing a game
- 3) It will not take more than an hour to finish it.

TAX RETURNS

Written by Steve Clay

Reviewed by Phill Ramsay on an Amstrad CPC



No sooner have you completed your task in "The Taxman Cometh", you return to your office to discover that you are required, once more, to persuade eight more characters to pay their taxes. This time, you must pit your wits against Snow White and the seven short guys.

Snow White has not been seen for some time. Has she been poisoned - or is there another reason for her absence? Blotto is drunk as usual. Gadget is the inventor of teleport and transport devices. Potboy owns the local nightclub. Nomarks is the dunce of the diamond mine. Banker is, of course, notoriously tight with money. Parser is a trainee trap builder. Trapper, finally, is away at a conference but is unlikely to have left his money unguarded.

The first problem which I encountered in this game was how to obtain some light in a mine which leads to all the various places which you need to visit in order to meet the citizens and gain their taxes. Not far from the entrance to the mine is a room with a panel of lights. Initially, each light shows red. The lights refer to the states of nine rooms nearby, and by visiting the rooms, one can change the lights from red to green. When the panel shows all green lights, then the mine is lit and can be entered with no further problems.

If this problem sounds easy to solve, it is if you are logical about it, but a little though has to be taken since if you enter a location twice, you may change the light from red to green to red again.

I found the mining truck which would, eventually, take me all over the mine and become a constant in a very strange world. First, I visited Blotto. He wouldn't let me in, and having said hello to me, promptly closed the door. The way to deal with him is to use his addiction to your advantage, and be a little sneaky with it. This will yield dividends in that you'll leave with the first of the taxes collected.

Visiting Nomarks eventually yielded an object which was of assistance in gaining entry to Gadget's domain. After being teleported, along with two objects, (a gadget and the taxes), we got separated and guess who had to start looking around for the two missing items? Eventually the device was found, with a little help from hay, and not long afterwards I managed to find the taxes. Unfortunately a large and irritable hawk was sitting on them, and it took a little persuading to fly off. Indeed, if you stay in the vicinity of the nest for too long, you may find yourself having to reload a saved position.

Having retrieved the taxes I returned to Gadget's domain, and from there I wandered North and found myself in front of a door with a keypad next to it. Having made a note of a code obtained elsewhere, I soon entered what I discovered to be Banker's dwelling. I found some interesting objects, a desk (always worth looking at), a grub and a mechanical bird. There is also a greased pole crossing a vast chasm. How do you cross it? And how on earth do you manage to get back? Problems, problems, as they say.

Eventually, you may be able to find a key (the logic of this sequence, I confess, escapes me. I don't understand why you have to drop an item and manipulate it at a specific location before you can enter another location and obtain the key) and then you may be able to confront the Banker and collect his taxes.

Almost immediately after this notable success I was able to add Nomark's name to the growing list of citizens who had paid their taxes.

On entering Potboy's club, the Glitz, he immediately wandered over to me and offered to pay up - as long as I tidied his cellar. This is quite a tricky problem in that several barrels have to be stored in specific locations, and it's very much a case of moving one barrel before attempting to move another and eventually manipulating each barrel into its correct place. Once this is achieved, Potboy makes no bones about giving you his taxes, and you get a feeling that the worst is over.

Parser requests you to solve his latest puzzle before he'll cough up his dues, and the puzzle is this: if LOCKED - 2 then OPENING THIS PANEL IS STRAIGHTFORWARD.

I reproduce the puzzle only to give a taste of the nature of the problems set, and the amount of thought which must go into their solutions. Indeed, once the idea has "clicked" the solution becomes painfully obvious. Having solved this problem, you will move on to several groan-generating plays on words, and one or two terribly corny solutions. If you manage to groan your way through these, Parser will admit defeat and pay up.

Now, not a million miles away from Parser lies a door marked "Snow White". Being a polite kind of person, I knocked, and instead of the aforementioned Snow White, the door was answered by the handsome prince. He informed me that Trapper had captured and incarcerated Snow White, and he gave me a gold coin. The prince is, apparently, suffering from terrible piles, and this limits his adventuring exploits more than somewhat.

Swashbuckling is out of the question!

Inserting a coin in a door will lead you to a glass tomb inside which is the unconscious Snow White. At this point you will be presented with several algebraic equations, which are simultaneous. One of these is a simple cubic equation, the rest are purely linear. Having solved the one, a simple matter of logical back-substitution of variables from one equation to another provides valuable solutions.

These solutions are the key which will aid you in avoiding the alarms which protect the tomb from being opened. If you'd rather guess which alarms should be dealt with in what order you'll be stuck there for a long time, believe me. If you solve the problem correctly, Snow White will wake, have a row with her handsome prince, pay you her taxes and give you a hint for the parrot which you will shortly meet.

Trapper was the final person to pay up. I found a sign (but no sign of Trapper) which proclaimed that I should "Mix my condiments and make peace". Make of that what you will. As with the other problems, a little thought yields the (perhaps not so obvious) solution. However, when you have made peace, you'll find that you can both have your cake and eat it, and collect the final taxes in the process. It's then a simple matter of returning to the start to complete the game.

When I started it, I wondered if this sequel could live up to the promise of "The Taxman Cometh". I need not have been concerned, because the game is easily up to the high standards set in the original game. I find that I have to reiterate a point I made in my review of the original game in that the problems set are a little more cerebral than many you will come across in your adventuring career. Personally, I find this quite refreshing, but mathematical type problems have always appealed to me, so I must admit personal bias in this area.

Apart from the one problem which I have mentioned, associated with obtaining a key, I found the game logical and very playable. In some areas it becomes quite frustrating - but that's all part of the fun. I found myself quite enjoying getting each character to pay up, and enjoyed the game more and more as my list of debtors reduced.

I hesitate to gauge the difficulty level of the game because some people will find the mathematical problems easier than others, but all in all I'd say it's around intermediate difficulty. Novices shouldn't be put off trying the game, but be prepared to ask for lots of help. More experienced adventurers should relish the challenge which this game presents.

I played the PAWed version of the game which is available on disc and runs under CPM. I have been asked to point out that 464 owners are catered for as there is a GACed version of the game, although, not having played that version I cannot comment on its content. I assume it to be broadly similar to the 6128 version.

The game is well thought out and well presented. For those adventurers who like a touch of deviousness in their adventuring problems, "Tax Returns" is more than well worth playing.

Amstrad version available from WoW Software. Price : £4 (disc) £2 (tape) Special offer : any two Taxman games in trilogy on one disc £5, all three games on one disc £6. Cheque/p.o. payable to J.G.Pancott

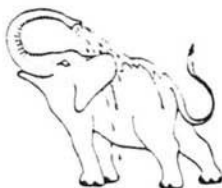
Spectrum version available from Zenobi Software. Price : £2.49 (tape), £3.49 (+3 disc). All three games in Taxman trilogy £4.99 (tape or +3 disc). Please add 25p postage.

Amiga/PC versions (under Spectrum emulation) available from Zenobi Software. Price : £2.99. Please add 25p postage.

TOTAL REALITY DELUSION

Written by Simon Avery

Reviewed by Damian Steele on a C64



"You are a normal person, somehow transported to a most abnormal place. You seem fated to wander around this strange place unless you can find a way back to your more sane world."

TRD is a game with an apt title. The "world" Simon has created is exactly what the introduction says - strange!

In a variety of eloquently described locations you meet characters such as a Startled Staring, a pink heffalump, Frosty the Snowman, some dancing trees and a well-armoured woodlouse that comments on your bad hair style, your appalling dress sense and does complicated dance routines on your hand.

The puzzles range from the slightly obvious eating of a chocolate door to the wacky but oddly logical (at least to those who remember what mother used to say about finance) money tree.

TRD isn't the most challenging of games but, as it contains a list of most of the commands needed, it should be suitable for most novice adventurers. Well worth a look if only to see another side of Simon Avery's adventure writing ability.

C64 and Spectrum versions available from The Adventure Workshop - Price : C64 - £2.00 on tape or disc, Spectrum - £2.00 (tape) £4.00 (+3 disc). Cheque/postal order payable to P.M.Reynolds

Amstrad version available from WoW Software - Price : £2.00 (tape) £4.00 (disc) Cheque/postal order payable to J.G.Pancott

BALROG'S DAY OUT (BCD4)

Written by George Hoyle and The Cat

Reviewed by Barbara Gibb on a Spectrum & Amiga



After five years of rumour, polite and rude requests, and fear, a fourth Behind Closed Doors has been let loose on the adventure-buying public. This one has been written by George Hoyle, with additional messages by The Cat (aka John Wilson).

The story so far, and I quote from the leaflet supplied with the game "Mrs Balrog and junior have at last persuaded the old sod to get up off his bum and to make an entrance into the "real" world ... or at least as much of it as a visit to the nearest "Theme Park" will allow. To some extent this was a major breakthrough in as much as it was the first time the old duffer had been out of the house in over FIVE years!!! But even the "best-laid" plans can tend to go astray and after a couple of excursions on some of the "hairier" rides Balrog felt the urge to squat. The time had come for him to make his way to the nearest "smallest room" - that is if he could find the damn place! A gentle saunter down the garden path is a far cry from a trek across an enormous "Theme Park" and especially when the "bubbling" behind your belt buckle was enough to drown out the sound of the rock band playing on the nearby stage.

It is *your* task to guide Balrog to the sanctuary he seeks and to ensure that nothing nasty befalls him on the way." It sounds very promising, so safe in the knowledge that my daughter was safely out of the way (upstairs working her way through ALL the episodes of Red Dwarf) I started to play BCD4.

First of all, to state the obvious difference between this and the previous three, it isn't a single-location game - there are actually twenty-nine. However, I'd managed to solve it in ten minutes, then spent the next thirty inputting words that I thought may elicit some "hidden" messages. There are a dozen or so that you can try (e.g. Zenobi, Probe, Cockroach, John, Cat), without to much offence; the rude words are also catered for, if that is what you like to do, and most of the responses seem to have been written by The Cat, for I know we like the same sci-fi TV programmes (input TV), although our taste in music differs considerably. What is printed in The Goblin Gazette is probably libellous, so I'm not commenting; you'll have to read it yourself.

I was very disappointed that there weren't more obstacles (i.e. puzzles) put between the Balrog and the toilet (try "going" in the bushes) and the solution can be written on a quarter of a sheet of cheap, recycled, muddy-coloured toilet tissue. Some of the sub-plots are fairly interesting, although I think much more could have been made of the dragon-burger vendor. I smiled when I encountered the nutcracking rodent, and laughed heartily when I followed the footprints left by the wombat, by far the best bits in the game.

The main game has to be completed within a certain number of moves, but once you have solved it you can restart and examine almost anything mentioned in the text and get a specific answer. There are lots of people to whom you can examine and talk to, and the famous ants make an appearance.

I didn't notice any spelling/typing errors, and the only programming bug I could find was that for some inexplicable reason I couldn't return west from the entrance to the cart park to the path with the footprints, despite the text stating otherwise. That is about it. There's probably not enough standard adventuring to please those who like puzzles, nor enough rude messages to satisfy the rest of you, despite most of the memory being used.

On the reverse side of the tape or on the same disc, whichever is appropriate, is a neat game called THE ELFIN WARS. To quote from the leaflet "This is a small strategy/war-game based upon a series of articles written by Alan Davis and published in ZX Monthly back in the mid '80s. The aim behind the game is to defeat the enemy horde that is advancing from the west"

Play is controlled via menus and single key presses. The map is on a single screen, 32 x 22 grid, showing the landscape (which ranges from water and meadow to forest and mountains), villages, castles, and the enemy armies. The only criticism I can make is that the symbols used to define friend and foe are too similar.

This isn't my type of game, but my husband enjoyed playing it. It kept him entertained for many hours; exploring the countryside, visiting castles to recruit supporters, keeping them well fed and fighting fit.

On the Spectrum this game looked good, worked smoothly, and responses were fairly quick. However, when I tried to play it on the Amiga under Spectrum emulation, the responses seemed to take minutes instead of seconds, and I gave up after half an hour.

Available from Zenobi Software. Price : **Spectrum** £2.49 (tape) £3.49 (+3 disc), **Amiga/PC** under Spectrum emulation £2.99. Please add 25p postage

THE TERROR OF THE TATTOOED GREMLINS
or
WHO'S BEEN CHEWING MY CARPET?
The True (well, nearly true) Tale of an Amiga
as told by ODDBOD

"Here, Fixit, he ses he's going to chuck this lot and buy an Amiga."

"Hang on. Flukey, I'm fixing this alignment screw that he's just adjusted." Click. Twist. Buzz, clatter-clatter-clatter. Silence. Sound of distant curses.

"He ses he's going to buy an Amiga."

"I know, I heard him. Told you the alignment screw would do him."

"Ruddy wasn't! It was me sorting out the read head!"

"Was!"

"Wasn't!"

"Wa ... All right, it was both of us. Gives up easy, though, doesn't he? We never even blew an internal fuse, let alone messed around with the chips."

"Well, we've been at him for three months non-stop. And we have messed up some pretty important stuff, ain't we?"

"True. Especially that master disc he thought was as safe as the Bank of England.

What a pity that that bit of write-protect tag got stuck over the sensing light, in it?"

"And me hand never left me arm! That was a good 'un, that was."

"What do you know about Amigas, Fixit?"

"Not a lot, Flukey. But I'm prepared to learn.

So there was this advert in the Supermarket. 'Amiga 1200, ring

So I did. And should have smelled a rat right there and then. The telephone was answered by a very, very young voice: "Daddy's not here. He's at our other Mummy's and you've got to go there."

Other Mummy's? Odd. Shrug. (Fool!!!) Went there. (Idiot!!!) Knocked. (Won't take a hint, will you?). And came face to face with Look up. Further up. Further. Gulp. Count 'em. Three. Large. Er, ladies. Muscles. And tattoos. (Run!) (Can't, I'm petrified!).

"Yus?" Stand aside, Paul Robeson.

"Er....."

"Computer?" And you, McCormack.

"Er....."

"In." Who's left? Chaliapin.

"Er, right. I mean er....."

I'm in. Don't know how I got in, but I'm in. Surrounded. All smoking and don't even think what. And why do I keep thinking of Bill Tidy?

"He's," heavy, rather reverent emphasis on the 'he', "in there."

Large, horny, tattooed (!?) thumb hooking at a door.

Oh, dear and lumme. What have I been and got myself into? And what are they wearing for perfume, Attar of Musk Ox? Head for the door; anything to get away from that lot, and leave thinking about getting out until it's time to do it.

"Close the door, for goodness sake!"

Look around. No one there, and now I'm beginning to think that I've walked into a nightmare of some sort. (You have, you clot. Trouble is, you just haven't felt the full impact yet!)

"Er ...?"

"Over here. Behind the sofa."

Of course; obvious when you think about it. Walk over to the sofa, noting a certain weakness in the knees, and peer over. Not, thank goodness, a person with severe vertical displacement over-deprivation (what would the language do without those sociocloggs?), but what is to all outward appearances a relatively normal man (and if you rely on outward appearance, treat this as an object lesson!), kneeling. Just finished prayers, perhaps. Fervent ones? Beside him is a shiny Amiga 1200.

"I need a holiday," says he.

I refrain from the obvious retort, just in case they're listening at the door.

"So," he continues, "I've got to sell the Amiga. Only a month old."

Catch me selling my computers for a holiday, even if they have been driving me up the wall with errors recently. But then I haven't got half a Wagner opera lurking outside the door. From whence comes the sounds of small, pattering feet. Lots of them. I remember the telephone call, and the word 'wimp' leaves my mind; I look at this chap with new respect.

I inspect the Amiga. Carefully, 'specially looking for that invisible writing that you can see (you know what I mean) when the light's at the right angle, and even have a play around with it. And drool a bit. He's got a pile of games, too.

"£220." I says, firm-like.

A desperate glance at the door. Another at me, but by this time I've got the notes out, and I'm waving them around. Psychology. (Fool! I should have been climbing out of the window ...).

"All right," he says, and makes a grab for the cash. He doesn't make it, because the door bursts open and the cash disappears somewhere in a warm, moist gale of Musk Ox and something that never paid tobacco tax. About three seconds later, I found myself on the pavement, hugging a large carrier bag and feeling sorry for the poor bloke. If only I knew then what I know now

"You there, Fixit?"

"Over here, Flukey, behind this AGA chip. Different, init? Loads 'a things to get at."

"Yeah! Can't wait 'till he reads the manual and gets going you smell something, Fixit?"

"No. I ... hang on, yes, now you mention it. Odd sort of whiff. Never mind, it'll.... what's that?"

"What's what?"

"That over there. Hey! They'reblimey! It's!"

"Sitting tenants! They they're tattooed! Fixit, they're aaaargh! Help! They"

I was reading the manual, and getting some odd sort of whatchacallem? them shaky things; vibes, that's it. Anyway, I was getting them in trumps, 'cos having been in the manual writing trade myself, I could see that the bloke that wrote these ones had

been in trouble. He hadn't really understood what he was talking about, so had confined himself to writing facts (and getting some of them wrong, incidentally) without putting any meaning into them. That, and the fact that some enlightened, benighted cretin of a marketing man (when things go really wrong with a project, you can bet your knickers that there's a marketing man at the bottom of it. You can bet your spare pair that he'll be covered all the way to Easter, too.) had decided that no one needs an AmigaDOS manual with the 1200. Anyway, all I get out of the manual is that unsettling feeling of inferiority that hits you when you're confronted with something you don't completely understand (well, I do), and not helped one little bit by the fact that the magazines, for each of which you have to take out a small mortgage, are full of it the gentle art of the acronym, that is. You know: 'I know something you don't and I'm not telling. I'll use an acronym instead. Ha Ha.'

None of which detracts from the sheer joy of using this new and wondrous beast. The first program I ran was Curse of Enchantia; I sat and goggled at the picture quality ... and then turned up the volume. Ten minutes later, I'd scabbled through my drawer of bits and made a hook-up from the Amiga to the hi-fi. Sorry, Classic FM, you've been usurped, even if I do trip over the lead everytime I come into the room. But life's just not games, is it? Is it? Not entirely, I mean, even if you happen to know, like me, that that's what computers were invented for in the first place. There was this bloke in Bitchley Park, you see, and but that's another story.

'What were those things. Fixit?'

'Gremlins like us, Flukey. Or I think they were. I didn't hang around to find out.'

'Should have stopped and asked them, Fixit.'

'Oh, yeah. Absolutely. That why you got into the interface cable before me, is it?'

'Yeah, well must have been there when he bought the thing, you reckon.'

'Must have. By the great Murphy. Flukey; I think that he's really in for it now.'

'They looked really rough, didn't they?'

'But what sort of gremkind were they?'

'I think they're gremkyries, Flukey. Nasty creatures. I almost feel sorry for him.'

'Umm. Well, I just hope they don't take it into their heads to move to the printer, too. Let's have a look round, shall we?'

'That's funny,' I said to myself. It was the only time I was going to think the word 'funny' for another six weeks or so. The reason I said it was that I was looking at the Workbench window of the Amiga master MASTER MASTER disc that came with the machine. One of what looked like several dozen, but of five, actually. Now, I'm not going to set off describing the Amiga 1200 (perhaps later), but it's got a thing called Workbench, which is your interface with the operating system. Trouble is, it works with little picture thingies, not words. And that, as you can imagine, doesn't go down too well with me. Oh, yes; you can run it from an operating system so-called Shell, but that marketing man made damned sure you don't get a manual for that. So it's the pictures, or get lost.

The reason I was saying 'That's funny,' while looking at the contents of the master MASTER MASTER Workbench disc was that it looked as if someone'd been mucking about with it. My great-grandad, who taught me everything I know about computing engines (and one or two other things, but we needn't go into my convictions) always taught me never NEVER NEVER to mess around with master MASTER MASTER discs, because they're very VERY VERY rare and very difficult when it comes to grinding and machining a new set. He was talking about Babbage engines, mark you, but the principal's the same. So I was a teeny bit miffed when I saw that my prodigious seller had apparently added a couple of files, and muttered something uncomplimentary under my breath before getting down and copying the things.

I don't know about you, but one thing I do like to get going as soon as I get a new computer is my printer. So, consulting the manuals (full of facts, but short of information), I set out. This involved putting discs into the disc drive and taking them out of the disc drive. Lots of times. A very great number of times. A hugely disproportionate and boringly tedious number of times, which explains why the 1200 is supposed to be used with a hard disc. Mind you, I shudder to think what would have happened if I'd had a hard disc attached to this little beastie. Several hours later, I was scratching my head and muttering dark curses about the manuals, because nothing seemed to want to work the way it was supposed to work. I couldn't even get the Locale feature to work (an endearing little gimmick that's supposed to let you set your language preferences) as an installed feature of my 'configured' Workbench disc. And that was just one of a veritable multitude of things. I was becoming exasperated.

'Ho, ho, bloody ho! Pass me that perfume, please, Minerva.'

I went on like this for several days, wrestling with the beast interminably, and getting more and more frustrated. I actually got the printer working eventually via the word processor (Wordworth). I should explain that many programs can run as 'stand alone' software on the Amiga. That is, they've got their own operating system elements, and don't need Workbench. Just as well, because my faith in Workbench, AmigaDOS and the bloke who wrote the manual was taking a bit of a battering. And there's no knowing what I'd have done if that marketing man had come within strangling range...

But aha! Light and hope: an acquaintance tells me that there are bugs in WB3.0, which is what I've got, and that I have to use RAM (I've got enough of that to start a whole new settlers' rush - 2Mb!!!). This I do, full of relief that I'd at last found the solution to all my problems

'Oh, pass me a toke, Desdemona, or I'll have hystencs in a minute!'

..... only to have that hope dashed, as the veritable cup from the lips. Yes, that didn't ruddy well work, either. So here I am, with a superb multi-tasking computer

system, capable of wonderful sound effects, tremendous graphics manipulation ... and I can't get it to display a pound sign or run a nine-pin printer! Time, I thought, to call in the experts, and what's the point of belonging to ICPUG (Independent Commodore Products Users' Group for the uninitiated) if you don't use the facilities? So I wrote all about my problems, sent off the letter to the appropriate bloke. And waited.

In the meantime, things were going from frustrating to 'I don't care if you did cost over 200 quid. Much more of this and it's the bin!' Things, as you may have noted, were not going well. The things that I couldn't do with Workbench on my new pride and joy (rapidly becoming an embarrassing pain in TPWNSS) were multiplying a pace. I found more information about bugs in the operating system, thanks to little handbooks produced by the various magazines, applied the solutions and nothing changed. Then I found that there were bugs in the magazines' handbooks that described the bugs And then first good thing to happen, picked up Kind Words at a boot sale. Wordworth was all very well, but far too complicated and twitchy to be a working word processor. Kind Words is plain, straightforward and relatively uncomplicated (I speak of version 1.2B), even if it was designed for a 500 and has occasional word-wrap problems.

'You hear that, Flukey?'

'Whassat, Fixit?'

'He's changed word processors.'

'Has he, now? Wondered why we weren't getting any more of those weird fonts to muck up.'

'Yeah. This one's a bit basic, too.'

'He thinks he's going to sort us out as easily as that, does he? Hand me that hacksaw, would you?'

I was in real trouble. I knew it, and a lot of my friends knew it (I'd spent time with the word processor, slagging off Commodore, AmigaDOS and almost everything to do with the Amiga - except its abilities as a Sega clone for playing games (shock, horror!)). There was something, I was sure, desperately wrong with the operating system, or with the way I was using with it, but there was absolutely nothing I could do to sort things out; I didn't have the knowledge. Even when I managed to lay hands on a book from the library, I was still no better off. I learned a lot about Russian submarines and the library filing system, but absolutely nothing about the Amiga. There was the Workbench disc, with masses of files on it, all in their own neat little drawers, and all known to the operating system as to location, function, etc.. But not to me. And then, several weeks later, a reply from ICPUG.

'You nearly done, Flukey? He's got the answer, apparently.'

'Almost. Wonder what the problem was, anyway? Must have been a beauty, the way he's been carrying on.'

'Dunno. You could always go and ask them, I suppose.'

'Har bloody har. Now shuddup. I'm concentrating.'

I couldn't believe my eyes. What I'm seeing is the biggest, sickest joke of almost all time, surely. What sort of idiot, cretin, moron what sort of absolutely bloody thrice - damned LUNATIC from the pits of hell deliberately goes and shuffles the files on a master MASTER MASTER disc around? Which is what my 'normal' seller had done. The operating system no longer knew where things were, because he'd done a wonderfully comprehensive job. And then compounded it by screwing up the script file that's supposed to direct the system's start-up routines! I never had a chance of sorting things out, I'd been DOSmugged!

'Smashing, Desdemona. I felt the Amiga move.'
'Yes, really great. Let's get back and tell the Lord of Lies.'

'You all done, Flukey?'
'Hanging by a thread.'
'Great. Let's sit back and watch the fun.'

But at last I have the answer! No wonder nothing worked! And a new disc, copy of a new master MASTER MASTER. First of all, finish of the letter I'm writing, print it, and then get down to start doing all the things that I did over six weeks ago with so much hope and anticipation. After that, I can start finding out about the Amiga. There, all done. Print it. Good. Now, then; a new Workbench disc All done, and only seven hours in the doing. The moment of truth comes enter the command, for the printer to burst into total silence. Total. Silence.

'Hold my sides, Fixit! I think I might burst!'

It worked. It did, honest. I used it from the word processor, just before I started all this clarting about with the new operating system. And it doesn't work now. After all that work and hope, the printer still doesn't work. All right; take several deep, deep breaths and try it from the word processor. Perhaps it's blown a fuse, or something. No, it works. It's just printed a whole page of pure ASCII!!!! Don't don't scream. Think. All you've done is change the entire operating system, then loaded and run the word processor, which is entirely independent of the operating system. And the printer either doesn't work, or prints rubbish, respectively. What happens if I pull everything apart and put the printer up on the old 128?

'Get hold of that end, Fixit! Now, hold it, and don't worry about the sparks ...'

And it works on the 128 system. Let's put it back together with the Amiga and try with the word processor. And it prints perfectly good, formatted English. Hang on. Don't break down! Now try with the new operating system and there's a considerable lack of discernible motion. A new acronym - LDM. Back to the word processor - nothing but ASCII gibberish! Help!!! Write back to the ICPUG bloke and accuse him of black magic.

'Ho-ho-ho-ha-ha-ho-ha-ha-ha-ho-ho-ha-ho!'

'Ha-ha-ha-ho-ho-ha-ho-ho-ho-ha-ha-ho-ha!'

In the meantime, talk dirty to the printer. Tell it that it'll be locked up in a small room with Radio 1 playing full blast and with non-stop Eurovision Song Contest repeats on the television unless it behaves itself.

'I think he means it, Fixit!'

'He'll never do it! It's cruel and unnatural punishment!'

'Well, I'm not taking a chance. I'm off. You stay if you like.'

'Not likely! Which way's the Stock Market?'

The ICPUG bloke writes back in some indignation, saying that he's not licensed for black magic, and besides it won't work on an Amiga because the system's architecture was designed by Christopher Wren. However, I have, in the meantime, noted that the Centronics plug looks a bit iffy, and have opened it to discover that the mice had been at it. Nibbling, that is; pin 14, to be precise. Half an hour with a soldering iron, muttering things about gremlins and other totally imaginary beings, and then reconnect everything. It works.

Fantastic machines, Amigas. I love mine.

PERSONAL MESSAGES

Thank you to everyone who sent the adventures I needed. (Karen Tyers)

To Mad Cat - Is that MAD as in Non Compos Mentis - loopy, insane, or MAD as in Hopping, - irate, annoyed; and is it CAT as in Cool - groovy, swinger, or CAT as in Purr - miaow, here kitty kitty? As to the recycler - well, watch this space. Not exactly THIS space you understand, but another similar space, well not exactly similar, erm, a lot bigger actually.

(M S-P)

To Ellen - Will do! (M Polo)

To Snow White - No, I'm not *that* tall (and I don't come from the Home Counties); why, who did you think I *really* was? (M Polo)

To Mad Cat - Erm, OK then, I'll try anything once! (Ellen)

To M Polo - What adhesive? I wasn't wearing any at the time - it don't suit me y'see (Ellen)

To Reynir - Was the wombat **really** golden? (Ellen)

To Mad Cat - If you really want to know what "cower" and "tremble" mean - just ask Grimwold! (The Witch of Stanley)

To Dum *uynd* - You mustn't do that, it's rude (Fry-them-with-one puff)

To Kasar - I have a problem with offspring, I like fried eggs (Fry-them-with-one-puff)

To Jenny - We get every little bit out! (The Marmite Soldiers)

To Damian - I'll take the mention as a compliment: but it wasn't a beer advert, it was a paint advert. What strange drinking habits you have? (Miss Demeanor)

To Uncle Horace - The wanted signs are up in Woolies (Miss Demeanor)

To Peter - It wasn't you who let on, was it? (Miss Demeanor)

To Sharon - Has the blond a particular dislike for ST owners? (Miss Demeanor)

To East Anglian Admirer - My mistletoe's waiting (Uncle Horace)

To Grimwold - C'mon, return my mine - or else! (Uncle Horace)

To Damian - Brrr, winter's sure cold up here in Stanley. My chin's got frostbite! (Uncle Horace)

To Damian - At least we hold the record, for having seen the hotel from so many different directions! (Ellen)

To Phill - Have you got your new shirt yet? (Ellen)

To Peter - Now, what was it was supposed to say again??? (Ellen)

To Wynne - I sure was - 2p's worth of desperation, in fact! (Ellen)

To Wynne - Sure I can, I've been "legless" before (Rudi)

To Custard - Happy Christmas(luv Rudi)

To Jenny - Sorry, but you got it wrong. I made my debut in "Uncle Horace And The Search For Grimwold's Trousers" (Rudi)

To Pete - Ain't that right? (Rudi)

To Uncle Horace - My maths are fine. In fact I can count up to twenty one - no problem! (Doc)

To Tweepwold - Managed to re-attach your nuggets yet?? (Doc)

To Pete - "Hi there, yourself" (Loobiloo)

To Ellen - Hello mummy (Love Rudi)

To Boo Boo - I'll keep mum about your troubles (Peril)

To Ellen - I've lost my mummy (Tutankhamen)

To Grue - Call Grimwold for Parody Zork (Pork) 1.5 (Mad Cat)

To the Welsh Sector - Have the Eisteddfodau drained you? (Mad Cat)

To Horace - If she gains sense, there's no worry, ne? (Mad Cat)

To Witchy - Careful, baby! Or would you prefer that the necromancers at Microsoft got to subvert the world without opposition? (Mad Cat)

To Grimmy, Tweepy and that gang - Keep away from the Witch of Stanley. I hear she's got a new grimoire (Mad Cat)

To Mad Cat - Now you're DFing tea kettles again (mte)

To M.Polo - Your time is up, Polo, you will be lynched. Go ahead make my day. (*Dirty Harriet*, Deputy Head of Maze-hoppers' Association)

To Ellen - I will not be intimidated by these insects. Mazes will be disassembled. (M.Polo - Running for my life)



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What a weird place. You've done it again. This time everything is yellow. Oh, you feel sick. Not Yellow!!!! After turning everything purple in Land of the Purple Sea, and eventually succeeding in returning home, you have continued with your experiments in an effort to find out what went wrong. For several years you have been careful but this hasn't led you to discover what happened. You are standing on a lonely beach, but this time everything has turned yellow, even the sea. But something else is different too - you appear to be in a different place!

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LOST IN TIME

In the realms of possibility .. or so the scientists who deal in quantum physics would have us believe ... one day man will be able to travel through 'time' and 'space' at will. However that time is not yet upon us and we will have to content ourselves with small but poignant glimpses of what is yet to come.

This tale is about one of those moments and of one man's struggle to attain the impossible.

THE STORY SO FAR ...

It is the year 2193 and in the dusty laboratory that has been his home for longer than he can care to remember, a young scientist perfects the machine that will enable him to achieve his goal. Many years of endeavour and hard toil have finally reaped their reward and the 'Sonic Mobilizer' has been perfected. With it he will be able to travel back and forward to the time-zones of his choice. With it, he will be free to see history made and to view the people who took part in the events that made the Earth what it is.

After the painstaking task of building the 'Sonic Mobilizer' all that is left is for the young scientist to write a thesis on his work before setting out on the first exploratory journey through 'time' and 'space'.

To his great delight the device proves to be successful and the scientist finds himself in the year 1993 but true to the times that he has entered, he is 'mugged' on his arrival and the device known as the 'Sonic Mobilizer' is stolen. Without he is totally unable to return to his own time and as of yet, technology is not far enough advanced to enable him to construct a second device. The only method of escape is to recover the stolen device !!!

Spectrum 48K 128K+2NOTES

The game will recognise all the normal commands such as **EXAMINE**, **OPEN**, **ENTER** and **LOOK**. Use the commands **RAM SAVE** and **RAM LOAD** to store and recall a game-position in **MEMORY** but always use the commands **SAVE** and **LOAD** to make a more permanent record of your progress on **TAPE**.

If things get too tricky there are some **glasses** to be found that will come in very useful when **HELP** is required. Also remember that strong winds can blow away bits of paper and if they do, you cannot always recover them ... so make sure you keep a tight hold of anything you might find.

TALK to anybody you might meet on your travels ... you never know what you might learn !!!!



ADVENTURE

DRAGON - QUEST

Some dragons are bad and it is even rumoured that some dragons are good but in this kingdom the only 'good' dragon is a 'dead' dragon! Or so the local inhabitants would have you think. For they were the unfortunate ones who had to share their kingdom with one of the 'baddest' dragons of all times ... the infamous **SMÆGOR**.

SMÆGOR, the mightiest of dragons, had the nation in a grip of terror. Not only had he stolen the King's 'Staff-of-Office' but he was also doubling his demands in regards to the yearly tribute that was paid to him. This tribute (to use the word very loosely) was normally paid in gold but this time around **SMÆGOR** wanted TWICE as much of the stuff as normal. Failure to agree to his demands could only lead to the destruction of all crops and the burning of many fine homes .. for this was always how it went when the demands of a dragon went unheeded!!! Not only that, but **SMÆGOR** had vowed to do some totally 'unmentionable' things with several fair maidens of the kingdom.



Spectrum 48K/128K+2.

Naturally many brave men volunteered their services in an attempt to thwart **SMÆGOR**'s plans, in fact **YOU** were one of the first to approach the King. However you were not considered to be a serious candidate for the position — lacking in moral fibre, were the words used some of the courtiers'. However all this was to change in the space of a few short weeks and you were ordered to appear in front of the King. It seemed that **YOU** were now the only able-bodied person left in the kingdom ... **SMÆGOR** had disposed of all the others!!!

The King informs you that **YOU** are the last hope of the nation and that if **YOU** fail then the future would indeed be bleak. For there was simply not enough gold in the Treasury to satisfy the greed of **SMÆGOR** and without that gold all would be lost. Glancing down at the floor the King mumbles something about **YOU** needing to return with the lost staff in order to prove you had defeated the beast and then shuffles away to leave you to embark upon your journey.

So with a brave face you set out the very next morning. You soon find yourself at the northern gateway — ahead lies uncharted territory. Your only possession being a cloak that the King had thrust into your hands before he shuffled off into the shadows



NOTES : The game will accept all the standard inputs such as **EXAMINE**, **LOOK**, **SAVE**, and **LOAD**. However it will also accept one or two more obscure commands **TRANSLATE**, **RIDE** and **LOOK BEHIND**. Use the command **PUT ALL INTO RUCKSACK** to save on space. Whilst a routine to save your position to ram is included in the game it is advisable to save to tape or disk if you wish to keep a permanent record of your progress through the game.

Zenobi Software

ADVENTURES

TEXT ADVENTURES BY JACK LOCKERBY

BOUNTY HUNTER – you have been chosen to seek and destroy Viroids, an unstable lifeform accidentally released on a planet called Karakata. [C64, Spectrum, Amstrad]

CHALLENGE (THE) – you play an experienced hunter and trapper, skills needed when you are chosen to challenge for the vacant position of Chief of the Tribe. [C64, Spectrum, Amiga(e), PC(e), Atari]

CIVIL SERVICE – times have changed and you must pass the new entrance exam, now in the form of a survival exercise involving the solving of brainteasers as well as more standard adventuring puzzles. [Spectrum, Amiga(e), PC(e)]

CUP (THE) – after attending the annual dinner and prize giving at the Liars' Club you are awoken from your sleep by a scream and see, at the foot of your bed, a mass of red hair and a back covered in claw marks. So begins your adventure to "save yourself from the lion". [C64, Spectrum, Amiga(e), PC(e), Atari]

DARK TOWER – The orcs have ransacked the monastery of its treasures, and also stolen the horn from the white unicorn. You must journey to the Dark Tower, explore it and recover these items, then return them to their rightful owners. [C64, Spectrum, Amiga(e), PC(e), Atari]

DAVY JONES LOCKER – begins with you and other survivors in a lifeboat. When it drifts close to a hulk your companions scramble on board, and then disappear. You follow and find a secret world, and maybe an explanation for the Bermuda Triangle. [C64, Spectrum, Amstrad, Amiga(e), PC(e), Atari]

DOMES OF SHA – you are a member of the Sha tribe which the Cold Fear has restricted to a single valley on the planter Olaxas. Can you break this hidden force and escape from the valley? [C64, Spectrum, Amstrad, Amiga(e), PC(e), Atari]

DRAGON QUEST – your task is to defeat the dragon that is terrorizing the land. Explore the village, cross a desert, get out of the town jail, and enter the volcano if you dare! [Spectrum, Amiga(e), PC(e)]

ELLISNORE DIAMOND – can you save your village by recovering the diamond reputed to have been hidden by Blackbeard. [C64, Spectrum, Amstrad, Amiga(e), PC(e), Atari]

ENCHANTED COTTAGE – in order to become a professional Sorcerer you must find the secret of the green door in the cottage. [C64, Spectrum, Amiga(e), PC(e), Atari]

ESCAPING HABIT – sent to a prison camp in northern Italy, you only have a short time to plan your escape. [C64, Spectrum, Amiga(e), PC(e)]

HAMMER OF GRIMMOLD – can you recover the fabled Hammer of Grimmold, stolen by Valk, an evil magician? [C64, Spectrum, Amstrad, Amiga(e), PC(e), Atari]

HOUSE (THE) – for £5 you get the chance to locate certain objects and place them in a designated place. The game is set in a big house and grounds, which you win if successful. [Spectrum Amiga(e), PC(e)]

INTO THE MYSTIC – magic has disappeared from the land. Merlin is worried and calls on you to find the cause of the problem. Could it be those orcs again? [C64, Spectrum, Amstrad, Amiga(e), PC(e), Atari]

JACK AND THE BEANSTALK – an adventure based on the well-known traditional fairy-tale. [C64, Spectrum, Amiga(e), PC(e)]

JADE NECKLACE – you play Philip Mallow, a private eye hired to find the fabulous necklace before the owner's husband learns it is missing. [C64, Spectrum, Amiga(e), PC(e)]

KIDNAPPED – is based on the famous novel. You play David Balfour who, recently orphaned, sets out to visit his wicked uncle. After being press-ganged, then shipwrecked, can you avoid the redcoats long enough to claim your inheritance? [Spectrum, Amiga(e), PC(e)]

LIFEBOAT – although this adventure begins with you on a lifeboat, you soon find yourself in the fantasy world of nursery rhymes. [C64, Spectrum, Amiga(e), PC(e), Atari]

MATCHMAKER – your task is to get the Prince and Princess to the church, complete with wedding ring, bridal gown, bouquet of flowers and a page boy dressed in a sailor's suit. [C64, Spectrum, Amiga(e), PC(e)]

MINES OF LITHIAD – Cavilan is the last dragon, and her egg has been stolen and hidden deep in the mine inhabited by orcs. Ensure dragons don't become extinct by rescuing her egg. [C64, Spectrum, Amiga(e), PC(e), Atari]

MISER (THE) – based on Charles Dicken's A Christmas Carol, you have 12 good deeds to perform. Some tasks are in the present, but for others you will have to travel back to your childhood and forward to the future. [C64, Spectrum, Amstrad, Amiga(e), PC(e)]

MURDER, HE SAID – you play a policeman, sent to a mansion to investigate a murder. You have to find evidence and arrest the guilty person or persons. [Spectrum (128K only), PC(e)]

MUTANT (THE) – track down and destroy the beast that is roaming a South Sea Island [C64, Spectrum, Amiga(e), PC(e), Atari]

REALM OF DARKNESS – you have been asked to recover the fabled treasures stolen from a small island kingdom, and return them to the treasury. [C64, Spectrum, Amiga(e), PC(e)]

THEME PARK UK – no monster rides in this park. You have to explore the grassland, lakeland area, spider's cave, native village and ruined castle to find a special object in each before leaving the park. [C64, Spectrum, Amiga(e), PC(e)]

THEME PARK USA - set in North America, find the five special plants whose initial letters spell a state. You can visit Hollywood, New York, Rocky Mountains and Yellowstone National Park. [Spectrum, Amiga(e), PC(e)]

TREASURE ISLAND - based on R.L. Stevenson's famous story, you have to sail to the island and find the treasure before the pirates, led by Long John Silver. [C64, Spectrum, Amstrad, Amiga(e), PC(e), Atari]

WITCH HUNT - innocently picking up and wearing a witch's hat, you turn around three times and find yourself transported to the dark cellar of a big house. Can you return home? [C64, Spectrum, Amiga(e), PC(e)]

(e) = played under Spectrum emulation

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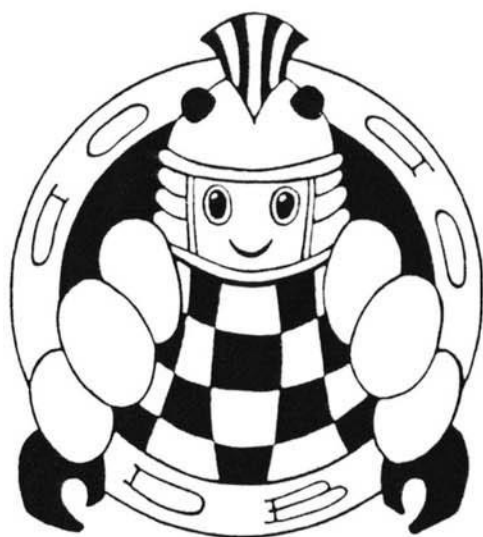


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THE ADVENTURERS' HOME FOR THE BEWILDERED

by PETER CLARK

Whilst in conversation with Barbara a few weeks ago the subject of the very first national lottery came up. This, naturally, provoked the question, "What would you do with a million pounds if you won?" Here is one idea:—Many years ago, more than I would like to remember, when I was just knee high to an average-sized grue, I developed an interest in English Folk Dancing and Folk Songs. I became a member of the English Folk Dance and Song Society who had their head office in Cecil Sharpe House in Regents Park. I was privileged to visit this establishment on several occasions. It housed libraries, dance studios, lecture rooms etc. and I wondered if, with the funds available, a similar headquarters could be established somewhere in the land for the refuge of weary and bewildered adventurers and what it would be like?

The headquarters of SPLAT (Society of Poor Lost Adventuring Travellers) is situated in the centre of a maze of twisty little passages somewhere in the quiet countryside of rural England.

Admission to the establishment is free but donations towards the running of the society are gratefully accepted and the collection of such *voluntary* donations is the responsibility of The Chief Grue! (THE ONE WITH THE TEETH!)

Upon entry, you will find yourself at the Reception Desk. Here you will be able to check in and collect the key to your overnight accommodation in the musty basement cell of your choice. Cells with slime running down the wall are few in number and should be booked in advance. All cells/rooms are supplied with a daily change of straw in which various objects may be found. Your first problem will be to get out of your room because as soon as you enter the room, the key that you were given mysteriously disappears and the door shuts and locks itself!

Early each morning, your Jailer/Room Service will knock gently/hammer upon your cell door and ask you if you would like the morning paper and a cup of gruel. It will make no difference what you reply as the jailer always runs away howling with laughter!

Assuming that an escape is eventually made from your room you will be free to explore the building and grounds.

The Ground Floor houses the Lounge and Rest Rooms where adventurers of all ages can rest their tired bones upon an assortment of furniture varying from soft armchairs in which you are able to lose your keys and money, to hard-backed chairs and three-legged stools which, when sat upon, you find are not very comfortable and you are forced to stand up again. Also on the Ground Floor you will find the Dining Rooms. A variety of food is usually available from a plain loaf of bread which is too hard to eat to large feasts of succulent sweetmeats etc. Drinks vary from a small bottle of water to potions of different colours. The tops of all bottles are difficult to remove. (The management will accept no responsibility for any effects that might be felt from drinking coloured potions.)

Finding your way up to the First Floor you come to the Great Halls. There are many of these Great Halls, each one having long oaken tables lining the walls and rows of leather-padded seats, each seat facing a computer screen.

In Hall One you will find Spectrums of all varieties. Hall Two houses a collection of Amstrad computers, while Hall Three is filled with Commodores. If you have the time to make a thorough search, you will find that there is a Hall for every make of home computer that has ever been produced. (The Small Hall has a small collection of ZX81s - Ram Packs can be supplied at your own risk.)

In the centre of each Hall is a large machine that resembles a Juke Box. It contains lists of all the adventure games that have ever been written for the computer in that particular Hall. Selecting the game of your choice and pressing the appropriate button delivers a copy of the game to your allocated terminal ready for you to load and play. When completed, the game is returned to the Central Library via the Auto Return Tube which is found alongside your terminal. Each terminal is supplied with a telephone. This is connected to the Help Library where a panel of Lords and Ladies of Adventure are able to give the weary adventurer hints and tips when stuck in tricky problems. (This service is supposed to be free but it has been noticed that the best results are obtained by crossing the palm of the appropriate Lord or Lady in the Bar during licensing hours.)

Returning to the Great Staircase and going up to the Second Floor you discover the Lecture Rooms. The whole country has been scoured to find the most evil, devious and twisted minds to provide tuition for those requiring to learn how to write adventures. The school has, in the past, produced some of the most twisted and convoluted adventure problems of all time. (You will note that most of the walls in the Lecture Rooms are padded.)

This just leaves the grounds to explore. Here we find that there are many mazes. On one side of the Great House we find Twisty Little Passages, on another, Lines of Tall Green Hedges. There is also a whole area devoted to Tiny Tunnels. For a small extra charge, to cover the cost of purchasing gold and silver, a shovel can be hired from Reception and a search made in the grounds for buried treasure. At the far end of the grounds that is a river. This is controlled from the Great House and can be made to vary on a daily basis from a small trickling stream to a raging torrent. A search of the bank will produce, in many locations, vessels of many kinds, all with a hole in them! The management has thoughtfully provided a selection of hidden materials from which rafts, bungs and bridges can be constructed. One ingenious inmate some years ago spent the whole summer weaving a rope out of small pieces of dry grass which he found in the Lower Meadow. Unfortunately, on the day that he tried to tie it to a convenient tree and swing across the river, the management had turned off the raging torrent and he broke his ankle in the Dry River Bed!

What I have written above is in the humorous vein but just think.... If the money were available, wouldn't it be great to have some sort of place like that with a full time staff where adventurers could go to play games, learn to write games or simply to meet old friends and have a great time.

Ah well!!!! Must dash. Got to buy another lottery ticket!!!



SOLVING ADVENTURES by LAURENCE CREIGHTON

When I bought my first adventure EVER, it was INCA CURSE, the salesman said it was easy to play - I must just type in "things". After I loaded it in I typed sentences, phrases and best avoided four-letter words and I just got the famous "You can't" response. I went mad trying to make something - anything - happen.

What I do when I load an adventure for the first time is to "mess about" with it for a while. Wander about aimlessly: see what is where and read the location text. Get the feel of the game and most importantly, get to know the parser. That is, get to know and understand the manner in which you will "communicate" with the game. Using a hypothetical case :- if you try TAKE a coin, and the programmer has ONLY allowed for GET the coin you are in for trouble! So suss out the lingo, whether or not you can input complex sentences or only verb/noun, and get an idea of the layout of the game - where there is a chasm or a fiery dragon. Once you are even vaguely familiar, get a sheet of blank paper (I use A3) and place your first rectangle somewhere in the middle and give it a one-word name, from the location text, eg. field, or small clearing, etc. Next put a little tag on the rectangle in the directions you CAN go. If you can go north and east place tags on the top and right hand side. You will soon have dozens of rectangles interconnected and LO you have a map.

If there is a maze don't be like Tim Kemp: enter it with impunity, but I suggest you save your position to tape first! (Sorry Tim: no offence intended, but I know your love of mazes!) Mazes usually consist of only five or six locations. It always appears larger, because if you go north from a location you arrive back at the **same** spot! That is why you should enter a maze with the maximum number of objects. I name each location in a maze with the object I have dropped. So ultimately I can see that north from the coin takes me to the jug, but south from the jug takes me back to the jug. Don't forget NE NW SW & SE and some evil sods even use up and down. I suggest you use a separate sheet of paper for a maze, as after a while it starts to look like a dog's breakfast!

If a command in an adventure doesn't work and you know what to do but can't figure out the parser, try hard to think of synonyms. I am playing a game right now where you have to make an impression of a key in some wax. I knew what to do but went totally round the bend trying to do it. I tried "press key onto wax" and "press wax onto key" and so on. Finally I relented and peeked at the solution some Samaritan had printed, and the answer was to "press key *into* wax". I think that is evil as in my opinion into and onto should be synonymous. There is no technique to all this, except to employ my earlier strategy and fiddle about with the game before you start mapping to suss out the parser and the vocabulary.

Characters in games usually want something. They wouldn't want an old bone (unless it's a dog) nor would they want a worn out toothbrush, but don't we all love money....?? Guards, besides loving the folding stuff also want passes, ropes can be used for binding something or for ascending and descending. Bottles and containers could transport water and any sort of food would be hung onto - sooner or later you are going to become hungry!

Remember to EXAMINE and SEARCH every single noun: that will produce hidden objects and for G-d's sake save your game regularly either to tape or use the Ram Save facility.

One last suggestion to the beginners in our fraternity: when I was a student, I found it imperative (especially in Maths) to go through worked examples. By so doing I could dissect

the problem, see the solution all worked out, and fully comprehend it. Then I'd take another problem and work it out for myself. To really come to grips, why not get hold of an adventure, procure the full solution from one of the clubs or publishers and play it through from start to finish from the solution sheet. Yes, I know it's like painting by numbers, but you'll be amazed how you'll start to see the daylight.

As a game progresses, and you can only carry "so much" jot down where you leave things - sure as God made apples, you'll need that icpick again....somewhere!

COMPETITION POEM by MARY SCOTT-PARKER

Such a splendid achievement is Probe
It circulates clear round the globe.
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They love it becoz
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For puzzles and mazes
We all sing your praises,

Can you supply a suitable (printable!) last line?

Example : Coz some of us ain't very bright!

Mary says 'entry is compulsory - especially for those whose competitions I have entered - eh Geoff? Steve? etc. The prize is a 3 month subscription to Probe, and if no one enters I'll use the cost to buy lottery tickets, and with the £17.8 million I'll take all Probers on an adventure cruise' around the world!'

That should put you all in two minds, but in the end I hope you decide to send your entries to the Probe office asap, i.e before **28th February 1995**. (Barbara)

SOMETHING FROM NOTHING by STEVE CLAY

And now for something a little different. I take it that most people reading this are adventure writers [*]. (I'm in trouble if they're not!) So, accepting I'm correct, have you ever drawn a blank when trying to create new puzzles? Of course you have!

Here is a little challenge! Take a mail order catalogue or similar. (Something with lots of pictures. No, not the Sun.) Randomly pick three or four pages and from each select an article.

Using the current Index catalogue I picked: Page 111 - an electric carving knife, Page 185 - a bathroom cabinet, Page 282 - a wall clock.

Right! Now try and create a puzzle using those three items. For starters, we use a bit of artistic licence. The knife now becomes a small sword with rotating blades, operated via a switch on the side. The cabinet now becomes a tall mirror-fronted closet. The clock is okay! Here we go.

I stand in a small, dimly lit room. A clock hangs on the eastern wall. Opposite this is a full length closet with mirrored doors. Also visible: A small sword.

X MIRROR : It is made of melodic glass! There is a small inscription at the foot of the right-hand door.

READ INSCRIPTION : In tune at 4!

LOOK THROUGH MIRROR : I can only see my handsome reflection!

GERT KNIFE AND X IT : I take the knife. It has a pad on the grip. The blade gives it a savage appearance.

PRESS PAD : The blade whizzes around! All right!

X CLOCK : The fingers move!

MOVE FINGER : Hour or minute?

HOUR : Enter number 1-12!

4 : Okay.

MINUTE 12 : Okay. The clock chimes and then strikes; 1-2-3-4. There is a huge crash as the glass explodes, showering the room. Something stirs from within..... A huge troll appears amid the ruins.

ATTACK TROLL : I attack with knife. Unfortunately it is low on power and does little damage. Which isn't the case with what the troll does to me.

I admit it won't win prizes and it could be greatly improved. However, the fact that there is something to be improved on shows how easy it is to get something for nothing!

[*] The above article was originally published in Adventure Coder (Barbara)

NEWSDESK

New Year Release from Zenobi Software

LABOUR PAINS by Jonathan Scott and Stephen Boyd is a two-parter and begins with Rosie, nine-months pregnant, telling Pete she thinks the baby is on the way. After a brief exchange of misunderstandings, Pete walks out, leaving Rosie to collect all the items necessary for her stay in hospital. Price: Spectrum - £2.49 (tape & +D 3.5 disc), £3.49 (+3 disc), Amiga/PC under emulation £2.99. Please add 25p postage. A review will, of course, be in Probe as soon as possible.

HELP WANTED

From Jean Child, 24 Waverley Road, Bagshot, Surrey, GU19 5JL.

I friend of mine is having trouble with her Citizen Swift 24-pin printer. She recently changed the ribbon and it's been slipping paper ever since. She has tried all the adjustments for paper width (I think she means thickness) but it's still slipping. Can anyone help?

(I hope someone can suggest a remedy as I've searched the manual to no avail, and even tried to reproduce the problem on my own Citizen Swift 24, but can't. The likely culprits, the paper-thickness lever and the paper-select lever shouldn't be affected when a ribbon is changed, which I think is not as easy as it is on the 120D model. Barbara)

IN TOUCH

AMIGA GAMES FOR SALE : At £6 each (or 3 for £15) MIDWINTER (not 1200), PERFECT GENERAL (wargame), EPIC (space game), TANK PLATOON (control tanks on a battlefield), A-TRAIN (train sim.), DUNE 2 (strategy/adventure), HARPOON (naval game). At £4 each (or 3 for £10) KAMPFRUGGE (tank sim.), ARMOURGEDDON (vector graphic space game), FULL METAL PLANNETTE (futuristic tank battle), JOAN OF ARC (rpg), CARRIER COMMAND (strategy/sim.) All games are 600 compatible. Cheque payable to S.J. Clay. Contact Steve Clay, 17 Stanlaw Road, Ellesmere Port, South Wirral, L65 0EY.

ATARI GAMES FOR SALE : WORLD CUP YEAR 90 (compilation with 3 football games - Kick Off, International Soccer and Tracksuit Manager), also available MULTI-PLAYER SOCCER MANAGER. Both games available at £4.50 each or £8 for them both. Cheque payable to S.J. Clay. Contact Steve Clay, 17 Stanlaw Road, Ellesmere Port, South Wirral, L65 0EY.

WANTED FOR THE C64 : HUNCHBACK THE ADVENTURE and THE COLOUR OF MAGIC. Contact Ray Clayton, 39 Staverton Road, Bilborough, Nottingham or telephone 061 962 8315.

FREE FOR THE SPECTRUM : A dozen Rotronics wafers for a Spectrum 48K. Please telephone Mark on 0161 737 6249.

GETTING YOU STARTED

FLIGHT OF THE UNICORN played by Dorothy Millard on a C64

Start sitting on a lily pad. EXAMINE LILY pad (if it bows under your weight as a prince it isn't safe to swim), WAIT (until you become a frog), SWIM to shore), DRINK POTION (you are a prince again), GET POTION, W (to drawbridge), RAISE PORTCULLIS, W (courtyard), S (inside tower), U (small room), EXAMINE DOOR (see a bunch of keys in the lock), GET KEYS, UNLOCK DOOR, DROP KEYS, W (top of tower), GET wise RAVEN, EXAMINE RAVEN (note the raven will give you clues if you type HELP), D, S (small alcove), GET SPADE, N, D, N, W, S (servants' quarters), GET HORSESHOE (it's nailed to the wall), PULL HORSESHOE (it falls to the ground), GET HORSESHOE, N, E, N, N (granary), GET tiny SEED, S, W (closet), DROP HORSESHOE (you see something glitter in the sand), R (see ring), GET RING, WEAR RING



OUT OF THE LIMELIGHT played on a Spectrum, also Amiga & PC under emulation.

Start at 7.30am. The pawnshop opens at 8.00am. I (have a cane), X CANE (note description), WAIT HOUR (owner of pawnshop arrives), N (into shop where Septimus Crashaw is watching you), PAWN CANE (he goes into the back room to get some money), STEAL PINCETTE (Septimus must *not* be present). You now have 5 silver coins and the pincette. S, LISTEN (hear Septimus telling someone he will sell the cane for half the price), W (see Ralph), TALK TO RALPH (lost his parents and asks if you will help him find them), BEFRIEND RALPH (he will now do as you say), SAY RALPH "FOLLOW ME", E (outside pawnshop), GIVE COINS TO RALPH, SAY RALPH "N, BUY CANE, S", WAIT, WAIT (Ralph should come out the shop), X RALPH (should have some coins *and* the cane), SAY RALPH "GIVE COINS, GIVE CANE". HAIL COACH (the driver locks both of you inside and then flees after setting the coach off at a steady pace), FORCE DOOR WITH CANE, E (clinging to side of coach - see railings above), HOOK RAILINGS WITH CANE (now on top of coach), PULL REINS (horses pull up), D (north end of road - Ralph should still be with you), S (outside lodgings), READ NOTICE (advises you to post letters at the railway ticket office). You don't have a key, so SAY RALPH "CLIMB THROUGH WINDOW, OPEN DOOR". He climbs in and eventually opens the door. E (now inside your lodgings)

RELICS OF DELDRONEYE Pt. 1 played by Neil Currie on an Amiga

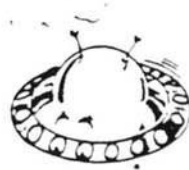
Talk to Old Man, Talk to Sheprat, Use Boot on Sheprat, Take Sheprat, Give Sheprat to Alfred, Move to Magic Staircase, Open Cell Door, Move to Prison Cell, Take Spike Stick, Poker and Pincher, Talk to Prisoner, Use Poker on Prisoner, Move to Exit, Move to More, Look at Laser Beam, Talk to Prisoner, Offer Spike Stick to Prisoner, Use File on Poker

SOUTH AMERICAN TREK played by Richard Batey on a PC

GET RAFT, S, S, I, READ PAPER, DROP PAPER, W, GET MATCHES, S, W, GET BAUXITE, W, N, W, W, GO TRADING POST, READ SIGN, GIVE BAUXITE (given torch), N, W, S, S, S, E, S, W, S

STUCK IN SPACE played by Dorothy Millard on a C64

Start in the airlock. EXAMINE PORTHOLE, EXAMINE AIR, EXAMINE HATCH (but don't open it as you will be sucked out into space and die), EXAMINE WALL, U (control room), GET strange alien DEVICE, EXAMINE DEVICE (an interstellar radio and while you are carrying it you will hear various messages of no real significance throughout the game), S (into stasis room), EXAMINE PEDESTALS, EXAMINE BEAMS (suspended in the beams are various animals), LOOK (you now see a bowl of goldfish, a ferret and a frog), GET BOWL, EXAMINE BOWL, EXAMINE FERRET, EXAMINE FROG, E (into battle station), GET CANISTER



WHO DONE IT played by Dorothy Millard on a C64

Start in a small office. EXAMINE DESK (you find some money), GET MONEY (leave the handcuffs until later), OPEN DOOR, W, TALK LADY (she says the file is in the filing cabinet), E, S, W (filing room), OPEN filing CABINET, EXAMINE FILING cabinet (one catches your eye), GET FILE, EXAMINE FILE (about the murder of Mr. Smith in Bond Street), DROP FILE, E, N, W, W (outside Detective Agency), READ SIGN, W, W, READ SIGN, W (inside Hardware Shop), TALK TO man (he has a wide range of torches), BUY TORCH (funny that this is the last one considering it has such a wide range!!!!!!), E, E, S, W, W (Newsagent), TALK TO lady (we have today's paper), BUY TODAY'S paper, READ NEWSpaper, DROP NEWSpaper, E, E (to Taxi Spot), S (inside taxi - where to?), BOND STREET

ZORK 3 - available for most computers

The third Zork in the series starts with you at the bottom of a seemingly endless staircase. You are carrying nothing. The first thing to do is TAKE LANTERN. It is dark to the south, and you are likely to be eaten by a grue if caught in the dark, so LIGHT LANTERN and then go S (junction), S (creepy crawl), S (foggy room), S (lake shore), DROP LANTERN, JUMP INTO LAKE, W (western shore), S (scenic vista). You see torch and an indicator which shows I), TAKE TORCH, WAIT (now see indicator reads II), TOUCH TABLE (transported to room 8 in Zork II), TAKE CAN of grue repellent), E (back at scenic vista), WAIT (indicator now shows III), TOUCH TABLE (now in damp passage), DROP TORCH, WAIT (back in scenic vista), N (western shore of lake), JUMP IN LAKE (you drop anything you are carrying), D (underwater - see the can, plus something shiny), TAKE ALL (can and object which is in fact a golden amulet). Repeat if you don't have both objects. U, S (southern shore with, hopefully, the can and amulet). There is a very dark passage to the south, and you don't have a light, so SPRAY CAN ON SELF (will care off any grues lurking in the dark), S (dark place), S (detect light to the east), E (key room - see a single key), TAKE KEY, I (it is a strange key), MOVE (manhole) COVER, D (aqueduct). The grue repellent is starting to wear off, so you can't go back! N (high arch), N (water slide), N (back at the damp passage where you prudently left the torch), TAKE TORCH, W (back at rock with sword embedded in it), S (creepy crawl again), SW (land of shadow). Now wander around the Land of Shadow until a cloaked and hooded figure appears. The sword from the rock miraculously appears in your hand. SAVE your position as you can lose the fight which follows. ATTACK FIGURE WITH SWORD and repeat input until the hooded figure is badly wounded but *not* dead. TAKE HOOD (figure disappears - leaving the cloak behind)

OBJECTS AND THEIR USES

THE CHAMELEON KEY compiled by Vicky Jackson

- Spade Dig in sand to reveal secret room
- Camera Photograph rock, tramp and Chelsea
- Card Contains code for mother's headquarters
- Suit and tank Wear on Theoron
- Stethoscope Use it on vault
- Leaflet Contains code for Spod
- Bottle Give it to the tramp
- Overall Wear it in pub, also put it on Chelsea
- Keys Use them to open cabinet and vault
- Iron and chisel .. Use them on bank wall
- Porrish Whistle when in trouble with the law
- Money Take it to warehouse
- Laser Shoot Chelsea
- Catsuit Wear it to avoid henchman
- Chameleon key Insert it in panel



MAN ABOUT THE HOUSE compiled by Vicky Jackson

- Manuscript Take it to the publisher
- Hoover Give it to Robin
- Jar Contains cheque book
- Cheque book Go shopping
- Tin Contains provisional licence
- Licence Driving instructor needs to see it
- Yellow page Look up the A.A.
- Change For a bus ride into town
- Ticket For a coach trip
- Ladder Climb the wall at the dog pound
- Guitar Play it to earn some money
- Kay Nign Use it to keep other dogs at bay
- Coin Make a telephone call
- Charger Recharge Kay Nign
- Car Pick Rosie up from hospital



HINTS AND TIPS

THE ADVENTURER played on an Atari

The key opens the door to the dingy cellar. Move a rack to find a hidden wine store.

The spell book is in the conservatory.

Push the back of the wardrobe to access the room at the top of the tower. Use the rope from here to access the "kitchen" where you can make the potion.

Read the tome, put the silver pot on the grill, pour in the wine, put the objects into the pot, one at a time (and where was the eft's tail – in the pie of course!) then stir with the stick.

The lever opens a secret door under the stairs in the large hallway.

Dig in the garden of the cottage with the neglected roof. Return to the end of the track and follow instructions per papyrus – ensure you have the necklace, feather and black book.

CASTLE BLACKSTAR played by Richard Batey on a Spectrum (also available for various other computers)

Wear the glove to pick up the red hot steel bar.

Drop the red hot bar in the Rocky Bay to cool it down.

Drop the steel bar down the crack in the Crevice Cave.

Throw the gingerbread to the Hydra to distract it, then kill it.

Read the scroll in the pentacle.

FABLED BLACK ROSE played on a Spectrum (also on an Amiga under emulation)

Search the mud on the ledge down from the pipe outlet to find a solar-charged lamp.

Go down the spiral stairs five times and unlock the gate with the steel key.

Examine the mountain and then what you see. Wake it up, and say hello. Give it something to eat.

You need the sticks from the clearing to escape from the end of the (holey) ledge.

Clean the lamp so that the sun can charge it. Examine it before going east from the pit – if less than 30 it is worth while returning to the clearing for a recharge.

Use a trowel (not your hands) for digging in the rat's droppings.

HITCHHIKERS GUIDE TO THE GALAXY played by Richard Batey on a PC (also available for various other computers)

- 1) Lie down in front of the bulldozer.
- 2) Feed the dog.
- 3) Consult the guide about anything.
- 4) There is no hint number 4.
- 5) Have fun.

GERBIL RIOT OF '67 played by Ellen Mahon on an Amstrad (also available on C64, Spectrum and PC)

In X-Ray Johnson's room, push the North wall to reveal a secret room.

You need the picture of your cat to get past "ratty" Ralph.

Make a battery to give to the squirrel. He will give you a tissue.

Pull the rope in the lake, then examine the mud to find the wire to attach to the battery.

Spill the ink onto the tissue to get a reward from the Psychiatrist.

Whistle at the electric sheep to find a way through the wall.

HOUNDS OF HELL Pt.2 played by John Schofield on a Spectrum (also available on an Amstrad)

The bush is dangerous - there's some protection for your hand in the boulders.

You'll find some money for a paper in the graveyard. Read the inscription and more than the front page of the newspaper.

The vicar's gift is an antedote for the Inn's beer! There's a table to be found in the Inn with something vital on it.

The crystal ball told you where to drive to.

Did you read the gravestone inscription on how to deal with Demons?

The way into the church is via the grave.

INDIANA JONES/FATE/ATLANTIS played by Neil Currie on an Amiga

Colony

Explore the area until you find a statue of a Minotaur.

Whip the statue's head and walk to it. You will go down to Sternharts body.

Examine Sternhart's body and get the staff and worldstone.

Examine the waterfall and climb up the chain.

Go back to the entrance and pick up the three heads. You should be able to get through the door before the gate closes - if not put the heads back on the shelf and collect them in a different order.

Use the three heads on the other shelf and enter the gate.

Use the staff to free the stone blocking the counterweight.

Get the gold box and examine it. Put the beads in the box.

Talk Sophia into climbing through the hole to open the last gate.

Put Sophia's necklace in the box and use the amber fish in rooms until it points to the wall. Use the ship's rib on the wall to escape.

Use the stones on the spindle then give them to Kerner when Sophia is captured.

LYCANTHROPY Pt.2 played on a Spectrum (also Amiga & PC under emulation)

Whip the "bad" merchant so that he runs away and acts as a decoy.

Be careful what you give the second merchant.

you must gain entry to the Caves of Respendence where you have to make the cure for your lycanthropy.

MYSTERY OF ARKHAM MANOR Pt. 1 played by Nancy Finnighan on a Spectrum

In the old mill, drop corn then go up and use wheel. When you go back down you will find a bag of flour.

Give the bag of flour to the barman who then allows you into the previously locked cellar where you find a bottle of wine and a bag of saltpetre.

At the blacksmith's you can use the knife to get a bag of charcoal (from the anvil).

As time passes things appear at night in the graveyard. I found a rag and a wallet which seemed to belong to the Colonel, owner of Arkham Manor. Scattered around I also found a feather, a newspaper and some chalk.

(My thanks to Nancy for sending the above information in response to my recent appeal. Apart from a couple of reviews, I've been unable to find anything on this adventure. Unfortunately I've only got a copy of part one and that doesn't seem to work with any of my Spectrums. Does anyone know if it is only compatible with the 48K machine? Barbara!)

OG THE GREAT! Pt.2 played by the author, Damian Steele, on a C64

Check INFO and INVENTORY at the game start.

Wear the gloves before budging the dog.

Wear the apron before entering the western hut.

Before climbing, test the vine.

Kill the castle occupants before entering.

Greed will kill you. Search and examine are different functions.

SERENDIPITY played by John Schofield on a Spectrum (also on the Amiga under emulation)

Find an object in the sawdust and then use it. "Frisk" the dwarfs to get it outside. The arcade machine uses brass bits.

The garage door combination is found on the lawn and the box room door on the cistern.

Get into the car boot via the back seat. Use the object there to smash the front door to the house. The potato contains a useful object. Use the same method on the mattress.

The drawers hid as well as contain something useful.

The springs will help you get behind the locked door if used in the correct place

ORB QUEST played on a Spectrum (128K only) and Amstrad

The painting is hiding a secret location.

The Blacksmith will help you if you first find and free his brother, Halgar.

Dig in the mine with the shovel to find an "attractive" piece of rock.

DRAKNAT GURD with the potion found in the infirmary, then give the "draknat" to the cook who will now fall asleep. Note you have some of the potion left.

You need the key from under the grating to open the door to the pantry.

Remember the old joke about what the prisoner found in the cake – so ask the guard to deliver a special pie to the prisoner.

Use the rest of the sleeping potion so that Halgar can escape. He gives you a medallion as a reward which is proof that you have released him.

Negotiate the sewers until you meet a Balrog. You'll need the sword here.

SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND played by Damian Steele on a PC (also available for the Amiga and Atari)

The troll on the bridge is looking for a red herring.

When you are thrown into the water, pick up the heavy idol to escape.

Use the yellow flowers with the stewed meat.

Use the meat and condiment on the vicious pirhana poodles.

Pour the grog from mug to mug whilst walking.

Stamp on the loose board outside the kitchen to move the bird. Repeat several times to gain enough time to get the fish.

Use the grog on the jail cell lock.

Work at the circus to earn some money.

Follow the storekeeper to find the Swordmaster.

Give enough bananas to the monkey and it will follow you.

Remember: Monkey see, monkey do.

When held captive by the natives, examine the floor for a means of escape.

Give Toothrot his banana picker to get the Monkey Head key in return.

Give the small idol to the natives.

Use the map to find your route through the forest.

Stan won't be at the ship-yard until you've completed the three tasks.

The storekeeper sometimes offers credit notes. If he won't, steal one. Use gunpowder to blow up the dam.

Make the noxious stew on board the ship to find your way to Monkey Island.

Use the gunpowder, a piece of rope and the burning mass on the cannon on board the ship. Climb into the cannon when the fuse is lit.

RUNAWAY played by Damian Steele on a C64

The ten keys required are:-

1. Short key – under rug in first bedroom – opens box in bedroom
2. Large key – in box on shelves in first bedroom – opens west door in bedroom
3. New key – in left tea chest in store-room – open south door in bedroom
4. Clean key – in cistern in bathroom – opens bathroom cabinet
5. Long key – in spare room under blankets – opens wardrobe in bedroom
6. Small key – in cloakroom – opens cabinet in robe in bedroom
7. Black key – in acid jar in cellar – opens patio door
8. Silver key – in fish tank – opens shed door
9. Shiny key – in briefcase – opens treasure chest
10. Grey key – in treasure chest – opens red door.

TORQUEST played by Dorothy Millard on a C64

Don't give gold to the cripple or gypsy or you won't have enough later.

After swimming the river, to continue north you must be carrying the map.

At the bottom of the well you must dive three time for gold, each time putting it in your leather pouch. However, don't be tempted to get too much or you'll be too heavy to swim back across the river.

To enter the door you must knock and have enough gold for the monk.

After you get the elven cloak if you check your health you will have blisters covering your body (this is wuzz-wuzz plague). You must now REMOVE CLOTHES, EAT CHERRY, HOWL MOON at the end of the tunnel where you see the full moon and you should now be cured.

The Hauberk will protect you if worn, when fighting the fuzzballs. When you have killed enough of them, go to the round room where you will see a pair of pale protruding eyes which will disappear and a note will flutter down giving clues for the next part.

BARDIC RITE played by John Schofield on a Spectrum [128K only] (also available on the PC under emulation)

Warn the captain about the Goblins. He'll need the telescope – just like you. The grateful Captain will return the telescope – on request.

Send the guard on a wild goblin chase to get Fred a helmet.

Move some stones and pull a ladder.

Blodgit's shrub eats insects.

Return Hubert's pipe when you've got what you want.

Pray in the Monk's Room and then look at the clock.

BLACK CRYPT played by Mary Scott-Parker on an Amiga

Level 9

- 20.01 Push lever then turn and kill monster
- 17.01 Push button
- 23.01 Open door and remove skulls 3, 7, 12 and 6 [in that order]
- 12.22 Potion of Cure Disease
- 12.14 Quake Scroll
- 19.13 Open door
- 21.09 Hot from here, proceed quickly
- 20.03 Get Iron Key and retreat quickly [opens door at 14.14]
- 14.14 Open door with Iron Key
- 14.13 False walls, route to Rectangle Key [to door at 23.17.9]
6S, 2E, 2N, 2E, 6S, 2W, 2N, 4W, 4S - route back 4N, 4E, 2S, 2E, 6N, 2W, 2S, 2W, 6N
- 23.16 Open gate with Rectangle Key, Wait and kill monsters
- 26.19 Go South [dark area, have 3 light spells or Sightgiver ready]
- 31.07 Fire Wand
- 31.13 Face West and push little button [opens wall at 31.10]
- 29.13 Get Iron Key [opens door at 23.21]
- 23.20 Open door with Iron Key
- 21.22 Read Rune : Answer OAKRAVEN
- 25.22 Read Rune : Answer WHITEOAK
- 28.19 Get Sun Key + Wisdom of the Druids
- 30.20 False wall, face East and proceed forwards
- 32.20 Displacer Shield
- 34.20 Enter haze [teleports to 12.20.6]



Level 6

- 05.18 Put Moon and Sun Keys in the corners of the panel. First Key opens wall at 5.18, second key opens wall at 4.18
- 04.18 Front Razor [right mouse for Freeze spells]
- 01.18 Helm of Triton [water beathing, multiply it, you need 4]
- 02.19 Black Horn
- 04.15 Go down the stairs

Level 10

You need to find the three Idols of Temin and put them into the three altars to open the stairs and exit the level. To contain the idols you need the chest of Temin and to pick them up the Cleric needs to wear the Gauntlets of Temin.

- 18.09 Face East and push little button
- 18.11 Scroll of Detection [activate detect trap]
- 13.11 Face North and push little button
- 12.13 Face West and push little button
- 16.11 Remove Trap with Remove Trap Scroll
- 14.15 Face East and push little button
- 14.15 Enter haze
- 12.13 Go North
- 12.15 Remove belt from altar
- 18.15 Face East and push little button
- 18.15 Face North and wait about 15 secs. When wall moves, quickly go N2 W3. If you're not quick enough, push button at 16.17 to remove pillar at 17.17 for a couple of secs. and repeat previous steps



- 15.17 Face North and stand on floor studs
- 15.19 Use Dispel Magic Spell on haze. Explore rooms to North and kill crabs.
- 17.21 Tome of Life + Dragon Key [to door at 18.6]
- 12.17 Face South and push diamond button. Return to big room
- 17.06 Open door with Dragon Key
- 24.10 Enter South haze
- 05.05 Push diamond button
- 06.02 Scroll of Dispelling [level 15]
- 05.06 Go East
- 09.06 Open gate and return to big room
- 21.13 Enter West haze
- 30.28 Push diamond button
- 27.28 Enter haze
- 24.16 Enter North haze
- 29.33 Scroll of Dispelling [level 15]
- 30.32 Push diamond button
- 28.33 Enter haze
- 27.13 Enter East haze
- 29.23 Push diamond button
- 30.25 Scroll of Dispelling [level 15]
- 32.23 Enter haze
- 28.13 Go North
- 32.13 Push lever
- 24.13 Chest of Temin + Gauntlets of Temin + level 23 Glyph Scroll + Cleric Spellbook Book of Retribution
- 09.07 Open door
- 09.12 Use level 23 Glyph Scroll on Skull Glyph
- 09.14 Open door
- 05.15 Open door
- 05.17 Push diamond button 5 times
- 05.18 Go West
- 02.10 Enter haze
- 02.07 Stronghold key [to door at 10.17]
- 03.07 Enter haze and return to 05.18
- 05.18 Go East
- 10.18 Open door with Stronghold Key
- 07.16 Night Key [to door at 16.32]
- 05.18 Open door
- 05.21 Use level 15 Scroll of Dispelling on haze
- 08.27 Use level 15 Scroll of Dispelling on haze
- 16.29 Open door. Use light spell or Sightgiver [activate by clicking with RIGHT button]
- 19.25 Stronghold Key to door at 26.06
- 22.23 Get Chest of Temin. Return or teleport to 25.06
- 25.06 Open door with Stronghold Key
- 30.06 1st Idol of Temin [must be picked up by Cleric wearing Gauntlets of Temin - make him leader] + coffer containing 2 Cure Poison Potions and 1 Potion of INVINCIBILITY
- 29.04 Dragon Key [to door at 10.22] Return or teleport to 05.18
- 07.18 Open gate
- 10.23 Open gate with Dragon Key



- 12.19 Enter haze – teleports to 24.32.10 – kill large crab
- 23.32 2nd Idol of Temin
- 25.32 Enter haze – teleports to 12.19 – return to 05.18
- 03.18 Open gate
- 01.25 Remove Glyph with spell
- 15.32 Open door with Night Key
- 20.32 3rd Idol of Temin. Teleport to 15.26 [should have been explored earlier and cleared of crabs]
- 15.27 Put Idol into altar
- 18.26 Get Teleport Scroll and put Idol into altar [make sure you have some high level spells ready]
- 12.26 Give Potion of Invincibility to two front men! Put Idol into altar and immediately turn to face south. Kill Dragon Lich.
- 12.25 Go down stairs (more next month)

GATEWAY TO THE SAVAGE FRONTIER played by Ron Rainbird on an Amiga (1 meg)

PART 1 – A general guide to the town of Yartar

Map Ref.

- 1 – 9 Glowing Gem Inn. You can rest here
- 3 – 6 Armoury. Buy your fighting equipment here
- 4 – 1 Fishmarket
- 4 – 0 }
 - 11 – 2 } At one of these locations, save Krevish and let him join your party.
 - 2 – 2 } Act upon his advice from time to time.
 - 11 – 12 }
- 7 – 0 } Boat store for repairs
- 9 – 4 } Boats for rent
- 13 – 0 } Possible encounter
- 13 – 4 }
- 15 – 8 Guard HQ
- 11 – 7 Get information from Waterbaron
- 9 – 5 Vault
- 3 – 8 Training Hall – the place to advance your levels.
- 8 – 13 Shop of Magical Items – well worth making selected purchases.



RONNIE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD played by Jonathan Scott on a Spectrum

- Enter the bath to clean off the rotten eggs.
- Wear the wig or the CIA lady won't recognize you.
- Open Nancy's wardrobe for your trousers.
- Squeezing the toy submarine launches a toy nuclear missile.

SERIALIZED SOLUTION

GOLDEN WOMBAT OF DESTINY played by Reynir Stefansson on a PC

Man, this was getting too heavy for me! Nevertheless, I figured I might just as well look inside. At least I wouldn't have to worry about being run over by some drunk motorist. I stepped inside the room and gawked. Before my eyes stood this huge, evil-looking machine with a big spike, just like those on the B-movie death-ray machines, pointing towards the ground. I touched the spike and got a sharp rap over my knuckles.

I walked closer to the machine and saw some kind of control panel with a lever, a button and a slot under the lever. I pulled the lever. It was well and truly stuck, so I pressed the button instead. The machine hummed, and then an orange-red ray flashed between the spike and ground, giving me a heavy case of the tingles. It was just as well I wasn't anywhere near this blast. Impressive though it was, it looked of no use to me. I left the room and walked south towards the sign again. This time I'd follow the westbound alley towards the end. This turned to be outside a highly odd building. I entered it and promptly stepped into a mangrove swamp. I glimpsed a pearl and promptly dove for it. You can imagine my surprise, when my hand went straight through the pearl and hit something instead. Was I tripped or what? Then the swamp faded and left behind a rather dull-looking room.

I went east into another alley. High up on a wall, a bit east of me, I could distinguish the outlines of a small room with a narrow slit for a window, just like a guardroom. Towards my south was a HUGE glass-covered dome. I entered the dome. One of the first things I saw inside was a sign, reading "Do not go South!" Why? I went south.

I must have awakened something, because I suddenly heard the flutter of large wings, followed by the thump of something heavy hitting the ground. I went closer. I could make out an archway and a huge, white sack. A sack indeed! When I came nearer, the sack *moved!* It was the largest bloody termite I've ever seen! *NOT* only was it several times larger than me, it was heading towards me as well! I beat a hasty retreat out of the dome. The termite didn't follow. After leaving the dome and turning left, I came across a wombat basking in the open, enjoying itself. Without thinking twice I hit the deck so I wouldn't scare the critter. Thump! This grass was hard! Then the picture cleared and I saw I was in the same dull-looking room I was in earlier.

Heading north and then east, I couldn't stop thinking about that archway. What was beyond it? I figured I'd somehow have to get shut of that termite, before I could find out. Deep in thought I stuffed my hands in my pockets - and hit a bottle. I pulled it out and looked at it. It was the one I'd found near the ray machine. It had an orchid figured out in the glass and indeed smelled of orchid. There was a dark liquid in it. I was just about to pull the stopper out, when I thought of something and hesitated. Didn't the Adventurer's Guide To The Earth's Flora mention an orchid whose smell was so potent it could kill? If this was it, opening the bottle would be a disaster. I suddenly had an idea. Perhaps I could smack two flies at once: Find out what it was and maybe get rid of an obstruction. I thought of the guardroom. Its window should be just about over the termite.

I ran up onto the landing and into the guardroom. After catching my breath, I steadied myself, hefted the bottle, aimed at the window - and let go. The bottle sailed in a beautiful arch through the slit. A few seconds later I heard a dainty crash as it hit the ground below.
(continued next month)

SOLUTION OF THE MONTH

THE GODS OF WAR – Spectrum 48K Zenobi Software version

Written by Mark Cantrell and Ted King

Solution by Barbara Gibb based on one by John Schofield

NOTES : 1) EXAMINE can only be shortened to EXAMI.

2) For extra story detail type MENU, note words in capital letters, then type DATA followed by one of these words – not available in part two.

3) The character set can be changed by typing CHARS A, CHARS B, or CHARS C – the latter is a good bold font.

PART ONE

Start at entrance portal [hatch] of the Ancient Ones underground citadels. I (sword, coil of rope, rusty hatch key). SW, TAKE ALL (life mask and gastaff), EXAMINE MASK (protection against gas), EXAMINE GASTAFF (fires poisonous gas), NW, E (camp of Druid tax collectors), EXAMINE DRUIDS, WEAR MASK, KILL DRUIDS WITH GASTAFF, SEARCH DRUID, TAKE MONEY, EXAMINE MONEY (nuggets, coins and plastic jewellery), W, SE, NE, NW (abandoned village), W (wood store), TAKE BRANCH, EXAMINE BRANCH, NE (tar pit), DIP BRANCH INTO TAR, I (now have a tar-coated stick), SW, E (by smouldering village fire), LIGHT STICK (now have lit torch). SE, OPEN HATCH (need rusty hatch key), DROP KEY, LOOK (see metal ladder – however it isn't safe to use), TIE ROPE TO HATCH. You can't descend carrying the torch, so DROP TORCH INTO HATCH then CLIMB DOWN ROPE (dusty corridor), TAKE TORCH, E, E (power control room). EXAMINE SWITCH (it will activate magical power source of the citadel to bring light and power. PRESS SWITCH, W, W, NE, NW (by rockfall), READ NOTICE (Danger! Petrol store – no naked flames), DROP TORCH before proceeding E, N, W (to Way Station Platform 01), EXAMINE CHARIOT, BOARD CHARIOT (you are taken to Platform 09 at the Sellafield Complex). E, READ SIGN (welcoming message). IN (old Office), TAKE BLUE CARD, EXAMINE BLUE CARD (Northern Military Transport System Security Clearance card – personnel not cleared for S.M.T.S. should exchange this card at the pass card control office). OUT, N (locker room), TAKE SUIT, EXAMINE SUIT (woven in metallic fibres, protects wearer against effects of Godsmetal), WEAR SUIT. S, W, BOARD CHARIOT (to platform 01). Chariot should still be waiting for you, if not CALL CHARIOT. E, E (to platform 02), CALL CHARIOT, BOARD CHARIOT (to platform 05 of Central Way Junction). SE, OUT, N (to Large Plain), EXAMINE TUBE, SEARCH TUBE (to find some Godsmetal), TAKE GODSMETAL (this is the part of the game where you must be wearing the radiation suit). Go N, N, NE, NE, S, SE, W (large forest clearing), Ignore firegun, it is of no practical use. TAKE TWIG, EXAMINE TWIG (a fairly straight piece of wood about the length of your forearm – it has been completely charred to charcoal i.e. a carbon rod), Return E, NW, N, SW, SW, S, S, S, IN, NE (to Damp Corridor), EXAMINE REMAINS (wearing uniform of ancient soldier), SEARCH REMAINS (an ancient Thunderstaff falls from his hand), TAKE THUNDERSTAFF, EXAMINE THUNDERSTAFF (it still holds one flame bolt), E (where a Mutt is guarding office), EXAMINE MUTT, KILL MUTT WITH THUNDERSTAFF (the Mutt becomes a mass of tangled limbs), EXAMINE MASS, SEARCH MASS (you find a black staff), TAKE STAFF, EXAMINE STAFF (it is a thin charcoal rod about the length of your forearm i.e. your

second carbon rod). W, SW. W (control room). OPEN DOOR. IN (shielding chamber), EXAMINE CHAMBER (it will generate magical energy the ancient ones used to power their machines and give light. it hold nothing at the moment). INSERT STAFF INTO CHAMBER. INSERT TWIG INTO CHAMBER. INSERT GODSMETAL INTO CHAMBER. OUT. CLOSE DOOR then PRESS BUTTON - the machines come to life. Go E (junction), NE, E, IN (small office), INSERT BLUE CARD INTO SLOT (if you have turned the power on you should now have a green card), EXAMINE GREEN CARD, OUT, W, SW (by rusted slot), INSERT GREEN CARD INTO RUSTED SLOT (you must include the word rusted). The steel door to the east now opens, REMOVE SUIT, DROP SUIT (no longer required). When you go E you are asked to save your position for part two. Make sure you have carrying the sword, money [both carried] and gas mask [worn].

PART TWO

Start at junction on other side of door which won't open again. SE (to SMTS Platform 00), CALL CHARIOT, BOARD CHARIOT (to Platform 02), N (purification room), N, W, SW (resting chamber), TAKE WINDMILL, NE, S, SW (another resting chamber), EXAMINE CORPSE, SEARCH CORPSE (piece of paper drifts to the floor), TAKE PAPER, EXAMINE PAPER (safe combination - note details), NE, S (library), READ BOOK (note details), S (cubbyhole). Ignore the dagger, it isn't needed. TAKE [sun]STAFF, EXAMINE STAFF (contains one magic sunburst), N, N, N, E, IN (dingy damp office - see closed safe), L2R1L4 (as per paper), DROP PAPER, OPEN SAFE, EXAMINE SAFE, TAKE CARD FROM SAFE, EXAMINE CARD (security clearance for missile base), WEAR CARD, OUT, S, S (Platform 02), BOARD CHARIOT (now back at Platform 00), DROP WINDMILL (for the moment as it is needed in part 3), NW, SW (Platform 06), CALL CHARIOT, BOARD CHARIOT (to Platform 68), UP, S (ancient workshop), TAKE ALL (spanner and axe), N, OUT, E, E, N (trading post), TAKE ARROW, S, IN (another trading post), TAKE TWINE, OUT, W, S, W (burial sites), EXAMINE TREE, CUT TREE (need axe), DROP AXE (not needed again), TAKE TRUNK (of yew tree). You now have the twine and trunk to MAKE BOW. E, SW, DOWN (musty cellar), TAKE CANISTER, EXAMINE CANISTER. [Note: you can't go IN, it is in fact SW to old dungeons {exit by going NE}, but there isn't anything of interest] UP, NE, N, W, IN, DOWN (Platform 68), BOARD CHARIOT (to Platform 06), NE, S (Platform 09), CALL CHARIOT, BOARD CHARIOT (to Platform 75), UP, SW, E (entrance to the Temple), EXAMINE SENTRY (probably greedy), GIVE MONEY TO SENTRY (using the money you got from the Druids in part one), IN, E (cleansing room), TAKE UNIFORM, EXAMINE UNIFORM, WEAR UNIFORM, W, S, DOWN, SW (cold, dry store-room), TAKE WINE, EXAMINE WINE (potent), NE, E (see sargeant - note spelling), EXAMINE SARGEANT (must be this spelling), GIVE WINE TO SARGEANT (he takes it to the guard room and soon they are all drunk). E (dark passage), E, N, N, W, N, IN (High Mutt Sorcerer's office), EXAMINE SORCERER You can't kill him here, so go OUT and W (dark passage with grille), EXAMINE GRILLE (can see High Mutt Sorcerer), KILL SORCERER WITH ARROW (also need bow of course), DROP BOW, E, IN, READ TOME (note details of how to make a bomb and what to do with it), OUT, S, E, S, S, SW (interrogation room), TAKE POISON, NE, N, W (shrine), TAKE MAP, EXAMINE MAP, E, S, W, W, W, UP, N, OUT, W, NE, DOWN (Platform 75), BOARD CHARIOT (to Platform 09), N, SE (Platform 00), DROP MAP, DROP POISON (all three items here now are needed in part 3 and can be collected later in the game), NW, SW (Platform 06), CALL CHARIOT, BOARD CHARIOT (to Platform 68), UP, OUT, E (ruined city), SE, IN (spacious hall with low roof), NE (workshop), DROP ALL, TAKE FIRETUBE, EXAMINE FIRETUBE, TAKE SPANNER, REPAIR FIRETUBE (need spanner), DROP SPANNER, TAKE ALL 1 (you should have sword, sun staff, firetube, canister [all carried], plus uniform, mask and card [all worn]), SW, E, E (old kitchen), TAKE GLOVES,

WEAR GLOVES, W, W, SE (small road with magical barrier), EXAMINE BARRIER (Danger! 100.000 volts). Ensure you are wearing the gloves before you CUT BARRIER WITH SWORD, REMOVE GLOVES, DROP GLOVES. S (encounter pack of Rad Hounds), KILL HOUNDS WITH STAFF. As you can now carry more items, return N, NW, SW (cavernous hall), TAKE CROWBAR, NE, SE, S, W (crossroads), IN (cold, damp storehouse used by the Mutt Army), EXAMINE CRATE, OPEN CRATE (need crowbar), DROP CROWBAR, TAKE FIREBIRD, EXAMINE FIREBIRD, LOAD FIRETUBE (with firebird), OUT, S (underground road where gang of Mutts block your way). Ensure you are wearing the mask before you THROW CANISTER AT GANG (they run away from the noxious fumes), IN (damp cavernous storehouse), REMOVE MASK, DROP MASK (not needed again), EXAMINE SAWDUST (soggy), SEARCH SAWDUST, TAKE THUNDERCLAY, EXAMINE CLAY (explosive), OUT, E. A Mutt prevents you entering another storehouse. EXAMINE GATE, EXAMINE WALL (of Mutt muscle), KILL WALL WITH FIRETUBE (you miss the Mutt but hit the gate and some of the roof which falls onto him), DROP FIRETUBE, IN, TAKE SUNDIAL, OUT, W, N, E, IN, TAKE BOX. You now have all the items you need for the bomb. OUT, N, NW, OUT, NW, W, IN, DOWN (Platform 68), BOARD CHARIOT (to Platform 06), NE, SE (Platform 00), TAKE ALL (map, poison and windmill), NW, E, E (Platform 12 - leading to the Charred Hills and Halls of the Gods). Check that you have sword, sundial, clay, box, map, poison, windmill [all carried], plus uniform and card [both worn], CALL CHARIOT (must be wearing the security clearance card).

When you BOARD CHARIOT you will be asked to save your position to load into part 3.

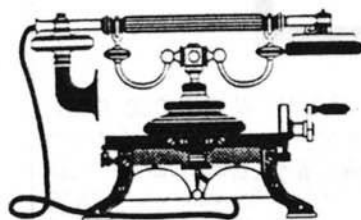
PART THREE

Start at Platform 20 and can see a sign which reads "No normals beyond this point by order of the Mutt Army". Ensure you are wearing the Mutt uniform before going S (entrance hall), SE (junction of passages), E, E (downward sloping passage), KILL SOLDIER WITH SWORD, EXAMINE SOLDIER (just thought you would like to read the response). Don't go northeast to the service shaft - you will be killed; also you will be pushed, kicked, punched and thrown out of the Elite Mutt soldiers' guard room so don't bother trying to enter. E (dimly lit passage). You can go IN, EXAMINE GODS (so that you know what is here), OUT. The location description tells you that the p[assage is unsafe and therefore probably a good place for your bomb. MAKE BOMB (need sundial, clay and box of wires i.e. timer, explosive and detonator), I (now have an ancient "bomb" spell), DROP SPELL, SET SPELL (get away quick!), W, SW, E, OUT, WAIT. The bomb explodes blocking the entrance, and more cave-ins can be heard. WAIT, WAIT (that is the end of the Mutt plan to destroy the Northern Kingdom!). E (on road), SW (cold, damp metal building), TAKE CAN, EXAMINE CAN (a Duracell battery), INSERT CAN INTO WINDMILL, EXAMINE WINDMILL (hand-held fan, now working), NE, E, SE (large area of land), TAKE COMPASS, EXAMINE COMPASS (yes, it points to the north!), NW, W, S, IN (to bushes overlooking a pool), S (by pool). Do not go west into the camp yet, it is fatal, instead PUT POISON INTO POOL and go N (back to bushes), WAIT three times, then go S and W into the camp where you see the bodies of dead Mutts. TAKE HARPOON, W (outskirts of cannibals' camp), EXAMINE BONES, W (in village), EXAMINE CANNIBAL (a fair size and better fed than the other cannibals), KILL CANNIBAL WITH HARPOON (the other villagers jump on his corpse and begin to devour him), W, W (wharfe), EXAMINE FISHERMAN, GIVE WINDMILL TO FISHERMAN (he runs off to his village waving his prize), EXAMINE BOAT, IN (boat), SAIL BOAT (need map and compass). You sail into the sunset, around the Cambrian coast to a northern port, where you are given a hero's welcome.

GODS OF WAR COMPLETED

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