

# ADVENTURE PROBE

AUGUST 1996 £2.00

VOLUME 10 ISSUE 8



## EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT

# ADVENTURE PROBE

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Copies can be ordered monthly or in multiples up to 12 issues: sorry no discount for quantity. Prices per issue: UK £2.00, Europe & Eire £2.50, Rest of World (Surface) £2.50 (Airmail) £3.00. All payments in pounds sterling please. Cheques/Crossed Postal Orders or International Giro payable to **ADVENTURE PROBE**. Please do not send cash, but small amounts (i.e. up to £4) may be in the form of 19p, 25p, or 29p stamps to save on poundage/bank charges.

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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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Short, private advertisements in the In - Touch section are free to subscribers. Trade prices are: **FULL PAGE** £5.00, **HALF PAGE** £3.00 but one page per issue free (subject to available space) for regular subscribers i.e. 3 issues or more in advance.

### **DISTRIBUTION**

Adventure Probe is distributed during the third week of the month. Copy date for contributions and advertisements is 23rd 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**

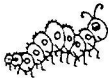
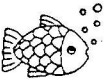
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## HALL OF FAME

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

Dorothy Millard, David Hebblethwaite, Ellen Mahon, Neil Ashmore,  
John Schofield, Larry Horsfield, Derek Dooley, Phill Ramsay,  
Edwina Brown, Karen Tyers, Damian Steele, Jonathan Scott,  
Phil Reynolds, Laurence Creighton, Mary Scott-Parker,  
Joan Williams, Roger Dowdall  
and Wynne Snowdon.

Special thanks to :

WoW Software and Philip Richmond for software and  
Geoff Lynas for his usual great printing job.

## EDITORIAL

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I have to begin my editorial with some very sad news. Harold Dixon passed away a few weeks ago. In fact it was while the July issue of Probe was being published but I didn't want to make the announcement via a piece of paper slipped into the magazine at the last minute.

Harold was a wonderful man. Softly spoken with a delightful Lancashire accent, he was a religious and very generous man, always calm, helpful and enthusiastic despite personal problems. Readers will know him from his contributions to Probe, and also as the author of "Clear-up in Cloggieland", his first Amiga adventure. This was his "learning-CAT" adventure, and just before he went into hospital for a heart by-pass operation he completed "ITMUS - BE A MISTAKE", his second game - a far better and more complex adventure. He knew there would be a longish convalescence after the operation and just to show how much he loved adventuring I will tell you that he wrote from his hospital bed to ask Phil Richmond and myself to see that "ITMUS" is given a final playtest and then published. Alas, he didn't come round after the operation, but Phil and I will see that "ITMUS" is released as he would have wished, and I know it will be a fitting epitaph to a lovely gentle person. R.I.P Harold, we miss you.

I advise you to read Phill Ramsay's letter before reading on, so that you will know what I am talking about..... Okay. I am *always* sorting out and planning material for the next magazine(s), trying to spot any obvious deficiencies, e.g. nothing for Amiga or Amstrad owners. Even I was amazed at how little was left after I'd destroyed everything that referred to adventures written by Phill and set on one side any reference to adventures by all the other authors currently subscribing to Probe! This meant quite a scramble to find replacement material, I hope the result is adequate.

(The sharp-eye Martin (Bela) and others will notice I have retained hints for Dorothy Millard's games. I left them in as most of them were supplied by her, and I didn't have time to replace the others.)

May I appeal to all authors to let me know as soon as possible if they want me to refrain from publishing help for any of their games, or if they wish any restrictions such as a delay. I try to wait 3 to 4 months after release, but the odd one may sneak through. Letters from anyone on this subject will also be welcome.

Further to the previous paragraph, some of you may have noticed that only a review has been published in Probe for the Grue's latest game "Trinity". This is by special request from the great hairy monster himself and I fully understand his reasons. He welcomes the chance to offer help personally as it gives him good feedback on what players think of his game(s), but not all authors like or are in a position to do this, although I'm sure a letter via Probe, publishing company, etc. will *always* be appreciated. By the way, the last time I heard the sales of "Trinity" were only ONE short of the magical 20. Come on, whoever you are, BUY IT!

Our Royal Mail is in the middle of a series of one-day strikes (which distrupts mail for longer than 24-hours) and which always seems to coincide with magazine business, so if this issue is later than usual, you know one more reason why. After a difficult three months I was looking forward to a trouble-free issue. Maybe next month?

All the best to everyone,

*Barbara*

## LETTERS

---

From Martin Bela of Alvaston .....

Dear Barbara and Probers, with reference to Hilary O'Connor's letter from last month, I'm sure that the "hardened" adventurers at the convention would make her more than welcome; attracting newcomers to the adventure scene can only be to the good, can't it? Anyway, I bet Hilary isn't the only one to consider themselves novices; I know I do, I've got far too many games on the "Waiting to be played" pile, and not enough on the "Completed" pile (I've still got about a dozen Infocoms that I haven't played yet!).

Now then Barbara, remember last month I mentioned a word missing from your Editorial? Well, I noticed that *that* letter has a whole sentence missing! Do tell me if I'm rambling on too much won't you? Never mind, I'll forgive you this time, but next time I'll have to take that Brownie point back!

Whilst I'm in "Turbo Nit-Picking" mode, did anyone notice the "No Insults Intended" typo error in the Contents page last month? A bit of a Freudian slip eh? (Or has someone been swapping the computer keys around, Barbara?)

As for the request for "games you would like featured"; I would like to see a serialized solution for an old game called "Bloodwych".

One little idea I had for attracting new Probe readers; how about swapping advertising space with other fanzines? i.e. You place an advert for Probe in their mag. and they advertise in Probe. Perhaps this could be done for free, as it would be beneficial to both sides. If this was done just occasionally, the extra space needed in Probe could be gained from moving the Contents page onto the front cover, and would therefore not cost any extra in paper and postage etc. ....just an idea....

Finally Barbara, you'll find two discs enclosed, with this letter (as an ASCII file) on each. The discs have different double density formats on them. Can your Atari read either? If not, perhaps you could re-format to your format, and include an ASCII file, and send them back in the enclosed SAE and I'll see if I can read and reproduce your format. I know it sounds like a lot of bother just for a letter, but I believe it would help you in three ways:

- 1) It saves you a lot of typing
- 3) No bits go missing

Sorry about that, just my little joke...

It's a pity that "We All Fall Down" has come to an end; I did enjoy that.

\*

Sorry about the missing line. The paragraph should have had "Could I just add one word to your editorial?" before "That word is Title". I'm the world's worst typist. You'd think that spending 7 days every month word processing and desktop publishing, and 2, 3 or more hours most other days, I'd be an expert!

The letters tend to be one of the last sections to be finalized as I can sometimes receive an important letter at the very last minute. The contents page is the very last page to be typed, for obvious reasons. I blame the spell checker for the mistakes - it just can't read my mind! It picks up on misspelt and genuine words it doesn't recognize but not words that should or shouldn't be there.

I don't have a solution for "Bloodwych". If a reader can supply one I will certainly publish it.

During the last few years I've had a couple of enquiries from fanzines and software houses regarding advertising, and I've offered "swaps" or to simply just publish their advert. in Probe free of charge. All I asked was for it to be on white A4 paper or for them to supply the required wording to be made up into an advert. For some reason I never heard from them again. Perhaps "free" wasn't good enough, or maybe they ceased trading? I don't remember who they were except the last one, WACCI. Not hearing from them again was a bit of a surprise.

I tried both discs. The drive wouldn't even acknowledge one of them and it couldn't find any folders or files on the other. I've returned them to you and included a disc with "that letter" on just in case your machine can read it. My word processor, First Word Plus, doesn't seem to have a facility for saving ASCII files, unless a kind reader knows to the contrary and can tell me how to do it.

I also enjoyed Stephen Boyd's story, and had the advantage of reading it in one sitting. With a little more encouragement perhaps he can be persuaded to write another story. (Barbara)

### **From Phill Ramsay of Blackley .....**

.....let me confess I've never been a fan of "hints and tips". Not just in Probe, but in *any* computer magazine. More so, when it's *my* games being honoured in this way.

It leaves me wondering what is the point of thinking up a devious problem only for the solution to be published as a hint or a tip? I'm left thinking that I may as well not have bothered writing the game in the first place if multiple clues are going to be provided without any reference to my thoughts on this, as the owner of the copyright on my games.

Over the last two Probes, lots of hints and tips have been given for "Guild 1". Whilst it might be flattering to receive this recognition, I would much prefer *no* hints or tips of *any* of my games for any format be published in the future. Indeed, as I recall, the amount of hints given for "Eunuch's Ball" was, I thought, particularly excessive.

If people playing my games get stuck, they may, of course contact Phil Reynolds or yourself for a hint or a clue: and I have no objection to this kind of help.

As "Guild 2" has just been published, I would also request that no hints or tips be given for this game. I have no objection to a *brief* entry in the "getting you started" section.

It might seem unsporting of me to take this stand, but after seven months of programming to get "Guild 2" finished, I'd rather no part of the solution to the problems be published as hints or tips.....

\*

I was a little surprised at the above letter, especially as I deliberately waited until "Guild 2" was nearly ready, hoping to encourage players to complete "Guild 1" and then go on to buy and play "Guild 2". I will, of course, respect Phill's wishes. From now on please apply to The Adventure Workshop for help with Phill's games. My playing time is strictly limited, so "playing for fun" comes a long way behind "playing for the magazine". If a reader sends me a review and/or a "getting you started" I will, of course, publish it.

In fact the request not to publish hints got me thinking if the other 33 authors who currently subscribe to Probe felt the same way, therefore NO help is given in this issue for any of the games written by present subscribers. (Barbara)

### **From Damian Steele of Paignton .....**

Yes Ron, a PC will need what seems to be a ridiculously large amount of RAM to perform to the same standard as an Amiga whilst running graphically intensive programmes. Regrettably the PC lacks the impressive architectural engineering present in the Amiga in the form of custom chip-sets for graphics, sound etc..

However, the PC has the Lion's share of the home computer market (some estimate this share to be up to 70%) and with the ever lowering support for what are now becoming minority platforms, many will be forced into purchasing a new system which will more than likely be a PC.

It is a continually chaffing point that the PC appears to be doing so well when the machine itself often performs like a poorly constructed building on sandy foundations in an earthquake zone. The hardware was not originally designed to make this a games machine and has, over time, been forced into a mould that it doesn't quite fit.

However, for running text adventures the machine is perfect. A perfect £800 Speak 'n' Spell that is.

\*

Thank you for the letter, Damian. I imported it as an ASCII file, no tribble at all. Larry Horsfield has written a guide to PCs (see elsewhere in this issue). If it is too simple it is my fault - I asked him to explain in plain language so that I could understand it. (Barbara)

### **Now for some replies to Dot Vaughan's "No Insults Intended".**

#### **From Edwina Brown of Newmarket .....**

Well, Dot, I am afraid you are a bit out with the age, I am sixty eight but early thirties sounds good. Short and plump, yes I'm five foot three and weigh ten stone. Hair, at the moment short and straight but colour right, though starting to go grey at the front.

Eyes, well I peered closely into a mirror (this was a bit tricky as for close work I wear glasses but could not see my eyes when wearing them). Anyway I decided they are a sort of grey. I then asked Frank (my husband) what colour they are. He too peered intently at them (obviously he'd forgotten) and came to the conclusion they are blue. So there you are, probably a bluey grey.

Personalitywise, well I think I am a bit past the bubbly and bouncing stage, though I suppose, being plump, if I were dropped I might bounce.

I don't think I have ever been the centre of attention and although people make me laugh I don't know about the other way around. I asked my youngest daughter and she said I made her laugh, probably biased!

I like to think I am good with children having had quite a bit of practice with six children and six grandchildren, whom I am told I spoil. My first great grandchild is now on the way so I've more cuddles to look forward to.

Always on the go, I'm afraid so as it sometimes annoy Frank who tells me I'm not as young as I used to be. Cheek!!

Lastly, do I put everything into what I am doing? Yes, that's true with most things. So I think a score of five out of ten will be about right. Not bad, as we have never met. Thanks Dot.

### **From Ellen Mahon of South Stanley .....**

Thank you for your "insight". I have to admit your description of me was pretty close to the mark.

The slightly overweight, was slightly(?) understated! My hair, as you guessed was (once) light brown in colour, though now there's a lot more grey strands than light brown ones. And, "life began for me" two years ago. The only thing you got wrong in your description was the glasses. I don't wear them – well not unless I'm in disguise!

If I'm playing a good adventure, then, as you say, I don't worry about the day to day routines. I'm quite happy for them to take a back seat. Always laughing? Hmm, I don't know, maybe you should ask my family, or friends, about that one. Actually, when I'm stuck in an adventure, (which happens quite a lot, in my case) I do quite a lot of crying – in frustration. I think I must be one of the world's worst when it comes to adventuring, but at least I keep on (and on, and on..) trying.

Oh, and one other thing, I KNEW Wynne had been lying to me all this time about her age, and the fact that she dyes her hair!

### **From Wynne Snowdon of Consett .....**

Thought I'd reply to Dot Vaughan's "No Insult Intended". Must admit that most of them made me giggle – not least of all my own.

Well Dot, you're about 10 years out on age. My hair was very fair when I was younger but has now settled into a standard, mediocre mouse colour and I don't find much grey. My physical description is 50% correct. To sum up I'm short, fat and 52 years old.

I have a place for everything which is usually the floor or chair backs or, in fact, anywhere but where they should be. I suppose 22 years in HMF taught me to be routined (is there such a word?) and I do tend to be logical whenever I get my brain switched on. I have my own peculiar sense of humour which some people like and some absolutely hate – well, you pays your money etc.

Next I thought I'd say I'm pleased to hear we're gaining a new recruit for the convention this year. I would have asked Ellen to meet Hilary at the coach station and guide her to the hotel. Unfortunately, by the time they'd been to London, Cornwall, Newcastle and possibly Edinburgh they'd be on time for the 1997 convention. Not that I'm maligning Ellen's navigating skills because she doesn't really have any for me to malign.

Anyway Hilary, I'm sure you'll find the hotel alright. Try one of the Birmingham taxis if you're feeling really brave. Once you get to the hotel you should find some of us in the bar/coffee lounge. Just look for the ones who appear to have had little sleep the night before.

I'm sure you will have a great time and I'm looking forward to seeing you. I'm not sure whether you'll feel the same if you read the above reply to Dot.

Finally, Barbara, I've enclosed my subs for Probe. Keep up the good work as Editor. I thoroughly enjoy the magazine especially the letters. You've also no doubt noticed that I've now been drawn into the personal messages page. This is a complete turnaround as I used to hate it.

That's enough of my drivel so I'll move over and make way for some really interesting letters.

## From Jon Scott of Kilfennan .....

Regarding Steve Clay's remarks about pot-holers, I am pleased to say I wouldn't clamber about in dark tunnels.

However, I have done a spot of caving over the past few years and I must admit that there's nothing more enjoyable than coasting along with an underground river or fighting its current. The sight of the magnificent calcite formations in the caves simply must be seen to believe. Cavers face no danger from bats, as these marvellous creatures do everything to avoid people – especially if said people are jumping about screaming!!!

When you switch off your torch, it really ~~is~~ dark and when you stop, despite the flowing river, it is a silence that no underground location could match....

Maybe I'm mad or just eager to feel different experiences.....?

\*

Has anyone else a real life adventure to share with us? (Barbara)

## TEN ADVENTURERS' SURNAMES (AND THEIR MEANINGS) compiled by DAVID HEBBLETHWAITE

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1. GIBB – a pet form of "Gilbert", a familiar name for a cat in Middle English.
2. HEBBLETHWAITE – "meadow by a plank-bridge"
3. CREIGHTON – "rock/cliff place"
4. RAMSAY – Scottish form of Ramsey, which means "wild-garlic island"
5. VAUGHAN – "little"
6. MAHON – "bear"
7. MILLARD – form of "Millward", which means "mill-keeper"
8. SNOWDON – "snow hill, hill where snow lies long"
9. BOYD – "yellow(-haired)"
10. McLAREN – "son of Laurence"

## A PUZZLE FOR LATERAL THINKERS by STEVE CLAY

---

Jim and Bob were professional golfers. They were playing a game and had both scored thirty. Jim hit an awful shot and Bob added ten to his score. Bob then hit a wonderful shot and claimed victory.

Why?

# REVIEWS

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## BLACK DAWN 5

### Reviewed by Steve Clay on an Amiga.

"Black Dawn 5" is the latest instalment in the Black Dawn series and I would assume that the '5' indicates that it is the fifth release. The recurring plot behind the "Dawn" series is inspired by the 'Alien' although the authors may deny too close an affinity with the films.

For those who have yet to meet a "Black Dawn" game you are presented with a 3D view of your current location and you move along the passages via mouse clicking on direction arrows. As you explore the various tunnels you will occasionally hold out your hand of friendship and blast numerous alien creatures with the laser pistol that you grip tightly in that hand of friendship. Therein lies the gameplay.

The shareware version has five or six missions. These should be more than enough for you to decide whether you like the game or not. The presentation in all the "Black Dawn" games that I have encountered has been very good indeed and this latest release is no exception. There is one-user unfriendly moment that is on the mission selection screen. You will need to move the cursor over the red patches on the screen, as message will reveal the mission title or 'not available in demo'. I mention this as the on-screen information is lacking here. Also the mission screen scrolls revealing other red patches; to scroll the screen move the cursor to the edge of the screen and it will bring any uncovered part of the screen into view. Having selected the mission the game commences.

The earlier "Dawn" games used the standard flick screen method to show your moves but this latest game has had an 'improvement' made to it. If you wish to rotate left or right you click on the relevant arrow and this is followed by a pregnant pause. The new view then scrolls into the game window giving the player a feeling of actually turning around. All very nice and what have you but it only manages to slow the play down. Not really an improvement in my opinion.

Mapping this type of game can be lots of fun and very rewarding if you are a bit loose upstairs, for the rest of us there is a jolly handy Map option that takes all the headaches away.

The main aim of the game is obviously to rid the area of alien nasties. To do this you need to engage them in combat and the best way to go about this is to be well armed. You start with a fairly measly pistol but by collecting various gold balls from around the complex you will receive credits that can be used to purchase far more destructive, and also far more entertaining, weaponry. This can be bought at what look like cashpoints that appear at least once on the level. The graphics are most suitable for the game. The dark passages mingled with the small viewing screen give the game a claustrophobic feel. The aliens are much improved from the first instalment although one of the aliens I met looked a lot like a creature I last encountered in "Black Crypt".

"Black Dawn 5" comes on two disks and is recommended for those who like blasting aliens in a 3D environment. The gameplay in all the "Dawn" games is 'fair' in that you don't feel cheated if you die - just determined to try harder next time.

Available from Zenobi Software. Price £2 (per 2 disc set) including p&p.

## A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A TUPPERWARE SALESMAN

Written by Grimwold (Simon Avery)

Reviewed by Ellen Mahon on an Amstrad

This is a two part adventure in which you play the role of Horace Hugglethwaight, a travelling Tupperware (what else?) salesman, who wants something more than Tupperware to fill his remaining years.

Horace was on his travels late one stormy night when he found himself in a small hamlet. Deciding to spend the night here he books himself a room at the local (and only) inn. Later that evening whilst sitting in the bar Horace accidentally overhears a conversation about the fabled "long lost treasure" hidden deep in the Greystone Hills. Now if there's one thing our hero loves even more than his Tupperware, it's treasure! The mere mention of the word sends Horace's pulse racing, and he quickly decides that he simply must go off in search of it, and sooner rather than later....

We begin our adventure in Horace's room and find him carrying a suitcase containing, yes, you've guessed it, a Tupperware container, which he must sell to some poor unsuspecting soul. Mission accomplished, Horace then finds himself on a dusty road beside a sign to Part-y-Grydle. When Horace fixes the sign an eastern gentleman appears by the name of Tau-Lin Chirt, who tells Horace he will join him on his quest. Tau-Lin, from here on, tries to impart some of his wisdom on Horace, by telling him some wise proverbs - all of which are really funny, bearing the famous Avery humour and wit. Only one problem, they're wasted on poor Horace!

In order to enter the castle Horace has to fill the order left in the milk bottle on the castle doorstep. Once inside, amongst others, our hero will meet a very sad Jester, who also decides to accompany them, and a mad monk. Plenty of problems for Horace here, which include an angry mummy, an even madder dragon (who's only too pleased to make Horace his dish of the day), oh, and I nearly forgot, an acid-pouring Pixie (nasty little chappies, Pixies).

Should Horace manage to survive all of this he will be propelled onto an island surrounded by some very "fishy" ducks. Escape from here brings you to the end of part one.

Access to part two is by way of a password. Be careful here, as if you fail to enter the right word three times the computer re-sets and you've to load part two again. This happened to me and is very frustrating.

Our intrepid trio are now on a small path and they find that whilst Horace has somehow managed to lose all he was carrying, Tau-Lin and the Jester have managed to find something. The Jester will also find love in this part of the game, but it won't last, and come to that neither will he, but if you're lucky, before he snuffs it he will help you out with a big problem, proving that whatever else, he was no chicken! A criminal must be apprehended in order for you to "see the light" in the later stages of the game.

As well as the usual commands you can put objects in some other objects, on things, and by things. You can even look in and on items. You are also offered the chance of a certificate of completion if six hidden words are found. By typing these hidden words on the final screen at the end of part two you will be given a final password. Just send this to Grimwold at this usual abode, along with an SSAE and he will send you your free certificate.

Just a couple of tips. Don't drink the wine, or eat the biscuit.

I'm a great fan of Simon Avery's games, and I really enjoyed playing this game – his best in my opinion, closely followed by "Dances with Bunny Rabbits" and "Danger! Adventurer at Work! 2" though I had to ask Simon for help a couple of times. I only wish my poor Amstrad had a disc drive to have seen the graphics, but that's life.

As well as this excellent adventure, full of funnies like the missing person's desk at the cop shop, and the old man in the graveyard, you also get a second adventure "free" – "GRIMWOLD'S BIG ADVENTURE". What could be better than that – TWO Simon Avery games for the price of one. C'mon, what are you waiting for?

**Amstrad version available from WOW Software. Price : £3 (tape) £5 (disc). Cheque/p.o. payable to J.G.Pancott**

**Spectrum version available from The Adventure Workshop. Price : £3 (tape) £5 (disc). Cheque/p.o. payable to P.M.Reynolds**

## **ELFINDOR**

**Written by Sigmasoft**

**Reviewed by Dorothy Millard on a Spectrum**

Long ago there was a violent battle between the Orcs and the Dwarfs. Although victorious, the Dwarfs lost their leader Krane, who fought with the legendary Golden Bow and Golden Arrows of Gondor. The weapons were hidden in the depths of Elfindor. Only you can find and return these sacred weapons.

On starting this game the first thing that frustrated me was that I was being killed every couple of minutes, making mapping difficult and time consuming. This improved once I found the sword with which to defend myself, but killing creatures did not diminish their numbers and after a while constantly tying KILL ..... became boring. While playing "Elfindor" I became hungry and died. In fact I died regularly while playing this game and must have died scores of times, so it is recommended that you save regularly.

On the programming side I suspect that playtesting was minimal as there are a number of inconsistencies throughout the game, for example trapdoor is sometimes spelt as one word and at other times as two words. As this is an input which is necessary to complete the game I will tell you that when typing it you must use one word. A lot of memory seems to have been wasted on unlocking, opening then going through doors, then closing and locking them again. I find it a little frustrating to be told a door isn't there when I try to enter it, because I had forgotten to open the door first. There are a few typos, for example the spelling of "perculiar" and "bug" instead of "big", but these didn't detract from the game. On the plus side there were lots of very helpful messages.

On the whole I enjoyed playing "Elfindor" once I had a map established. Remember that you must UNLOCK, OPEN then ENTER doors, etc. The game took me an evening to complete, most of the time being spent dying and establishing a map. The puzzles aren't very hard once you get the wording right and the game relies heavily on the characters which roam around to frustrate the player.

Available from Zenobi Software. Price : **Spectrum (tape and +D disc), Atari(e), Amiga(e), PC(e) and MAC(e) versions £2.99, Spectrum +3 disc version £3.49.**

## THE ENCHANTED COTTAGE

Written by Jack Lockerby

Reviewed by Edwina Brown on a Spectrum

"The Enchanted Cottage" is another of Jack Lockerby's brilliant adventures so don't expect it to be easy.

You play the part of Niki, a trainee sorcerer. The Chief Sorcerer tells you that as you have been on a government-sponsored training scheme for the past five years this test will promote you to an official sorcerer. It is also your last chance. He says he is going to put you in an Enchanted Cottage and you must uncover the secret of the green door in order to escape. If you do he promises you will be given a position in the Civil Service with an index-linked pension. Surely that must be your heart's desire, so what are you waiting for?

You are now in the Enchanted Cottage and there is the Green Door! On examining it you find it has three locks, one gold, one silver and one bronze. As the text says, you don't have to be Einstein to figure out you need three keys to open it. It also states that if you don't find them you will have to take out a private pension policy, which could be expensive.

Looking around you notice the ceiling and floor giving off a strange vibration. The only thing in the room is a large cube. Read the label attached to the bottom and you will get a very good hint as to what you must do. Work this out and you will soon be on your way.

There are three location areas to visit and plenty of goodies to find. One of the first things you should look for is a magical bag. It weighs nothing and any object placed inside it also weighs nothing. This means there is no limit to the number of items you can carry. You can even climb in it yourself should the need arise.

On your journey you will meet a number of people including a guide who will lead you on the mountain if you can wake him, a stranger who needs your help, Ben Gunn, and an ugly giant. There are also animals, a mountain goat, a snake and a vicious dog. He caused me the most trouble, I don't think he liked me!

Finally the spells, a mite tricky but with a bit of mixing and matching and careful thought they came together nicely.

Yes, altogether a really enjoyable game. Not tried it yet? Well, as I said earlier on, "What are you waiting for?"

**Spectrum tape and +D disc, Atari(e), Amiga(e), PC(e), and MAC(e) versions** - Price : £2.99, **Atari STFM/STe version** - Price : £2.49 available from Zenobi Software and Adventure Probe Software.

**Amstrad (disc only) version** - Price : £4 available from The Adventure Workshop. Cheque/p.o. payable to P.M.Reynolds

**C64 (tape and disc) version** - Price : £2 available from Adventure Probe Software.



## SETTLERS II

Published by Bluebyte (PC CD-ROM only)

Reviewed by Larry Horsfield on a Pentium P75 PC (16Mb)

Many of you will have played the original "Settlers" game and may be interested to learn what this new version is like. I have been eagerly awaiting its release and did not bother buying the original game when I got my PC.

"Settlers II" is very much like the original but the graphics are much better and there are a number of new buildings and tradesmen, these being a Hunter, Well, Brewery, Donkey Breeder, Lookout Tower, Catapult, Harbour Building and a Shipyard. In the latter, a shipwright can build ships, which you can use to explore and settle other islands. The Hunter will hunt the wild creatures you see in the wooded areas and you now need wells to supply water to the Pig Farm, Donkey Breeder, Baker and Brewery. This last building is necessary to recruit and motivate your soldiers, in addition to gold coins as before. The Donkey Breeder, as the name suggests, raises donkeys which supplement the carriers on the roads. In the campaign scenarios all unexplored land is blacked out and you have to build a Lookout Tower or send out a Scout to find out what lies beyond your borders.

The catapult is a new military weapon which can be built on your borders to bombard the enemy's barracks and guardhouses, etc., which are in range. Each time your catapult hits an enemy military building one of the soldiers inside is killed and when the last one is killed the building burns down. Unfortunately, the catapult has a slow rate of fire and I found that the enemy could often send out a replacement soldier in between shots. It also will not bombard the enemy headquarters.

The game can be played in either campaign or free game mode. In the former there are 11 missions and the objective in each is to reach a "gateway" which is usually beyond the territory of the enemy. Unlike the original "Settlers" game, the enemy consists of 4 different races, Romans (which you play as in the campaign games), Vikings, Samurai and Tribesmen, each having a different architectural style. Each campaign scenario requires a particular approach, as the land size and geography are different in each. For example, one scenario consists of various islands, large and small, which you can only reach if you have built ships, and in another, where you are up against two allied Samurai enemies, you cannot defeat the enemy by attacking their military buildings, as immediately you do swarms of Samurai warriors counterattack and you lose lots of territory. The only way to get anywhere is to build catapults to bombard their installations and push them back this way. Strangely, if you attack this way their soldiers do not come out to attack your catapults (nor can you attack their catapults).

In the Free game mode you can choose from 18 different scenarios, selecting which race you play as and the races of your enemy. You can vary the amount of stores you start out with and other factors including whether you are allied to any of the other races. If you choose this (people v people) if you are attacked by any of the others, or your attack any, your ally will also attack in support.

All in all, "Settlers II" is every bit as enjoyable and absorbing to play as the original version, the new buildings and features adding to this. Well recommended!

Available from most software outlets, shop around for best price (my copy came from Software First and cost £26).

## TEN GREEN BOTTLES

Written by Karen Tyers

Reviewed by Joan Williams on an Amiga under Spectrum emulation

Hot on the heels of the delightful "Curse of Nimue", Karen Tyers now turns her attention to a gentle romp through the village of Bottieton. The children have finally broken all the green bottles in the area whilst playing their particular version of "Ten Green Bottles". You volunteer to find and replace another supply for the little hooligans ... though why they should be encouraged is never quite explained.

With a rucksack and rope in your inventory, you can set off on your adventure and look forward to a pleasant couple of hours or so. Mapping couldn't be easier, any objects found or are in view need very little explanation as to their purpose and there will be no chance of you getting yourself killed, so you can concentrate on the task in hand without any unnecessary distractions.

It's all deceptively straightforward, and I very quickly located 5 bottles before I had finished my mug of coffee. The sixth one, however, proved a little more difficult. As far as I was concerned, I had been everywhere and done everything that I could, yet no way could I work out what to do next. With nowhere to go and nothing to do, I made a quick phone call to Barbara who patiently put me back on track and I then completed the rest of the game without any trouble. Should you find yourselves in that position, if you bear in mind that it's possible that Karen has been reading Laurence Creighton's Book of Amazing Mazes and has clearly paid attention to the chapter on "Unmarked Exits", then perhaps you'll do better than I. There is also a rather sneaky problem involving a brick but I won't spoil it for you by telling you the solution, you will have to ring Barbara!

The occasional proverbial solution, a spot of digging in the right place, a fair bit of climbing – provided you've got a ladder of course, a smattering of fishing and giving people the correct object/objects and there you have it – ten bottles for the little hooligans to start all over again. All this adds up to a pleasant little game, nowhere near as absorbing or complex as "Curse of Nimue", or as large come to that. I would recommend it for beginners in particular, more experienced players who have a couple of hours to spare may find it less cerebral than they would like but it sure is fun to play, so I reckon that's good enough reason to have it in your collection... just think of the "feel good" factor when you polish this one off.

To round off this review, there is an odd little quirk, but the man from Zenobi KNOWS I love finding the odd quirk, so he'll be very pleased for me (?). If you drop objects in the river they disappear forever, but if you THROW them, well.... By the way, I should remind you to look behind, under, in or on things, you never know what you'll find.

Available from Zenobi Software. Price : £2.99 Spectrum tape and +D disc, Atari(e), Amiga(e), PC(e) and MAC(e). £3.49 Spectrum +3 disc.

## TEN GREEN BOTTLES

Written by Karen Tyers

Reviewed by David Hebblethwaite on a Spectrum

How many of you lot out there have sung this little ditty at some point in your life? Let's have a show of hands? Come on, don't be shy? OK, please yourselves. The main idea of this game is to scour the village of Bottleton searching for ten green bottles to replace those smashed by the kids of the village during their last rendition of that famous song ("hands-on" entertainment indeed). Sounds easy, doesn't it? Well, as you probably guessed, it isn't.

The game begins in the middle of Bottleton with buildings to the north and south, and the road continuing to the east and west. The first thing to do is pay a visit to the mayor, who tells you what to do and gives you a couple of extremely useful items. It's then your job to go out, explore, and find the bottles.

I quickly ran into the doctor, who told me he wanted something to eat on his rounds. I was unable to help him at the time, so I explored a bit further. I found a woman who needed some light, and a cloud that was stranded on a hill, amongst other things. There were also several high places that I needed a ladder to reach. Finding one took a little bit of logical thinking, and then I found my first bottle, in the most unlikely place.

You'll quickly amass a huge hoard of objects, all of which were needed to complete the game. Unfortunately, you can't carry everything around with you, so you need a container. You'll find one in one of the shops, but you need money to buy it, and you can't steal anything. A word of warning, save before buying the battery, as you need to find TWO other objects in that shop, and you only get one chance to find them.

A map of the game is very straightforward: a road running east to west with turnings-off to the north and south. You'll find a river at the end of the road, which hides two important objects, but you can't go in without something on your feet. Across the river is the wood which, wouldn't you know it, is a maze which has a farm at the other side, and a few secrets of its own. There are several puzzles to solve at the farm, more than are apparent at first.

Having looked at what I've written so far, I don't think I've indicated what I think of the adventure. Well, I really enjoyed it. It's a lovely, gentle game with no sudden deaths (and next to no deaths at all, actually), and no time limits, and so no pressure. But it's no pushover. Some of the objects are extremely well hidden, and some are hidden in the location text, so read carefully. The puzzles aren't too difficult really, as long as you have the objects, but there are some occasions where you may find you've missed an object that you can't go back and get.

As the first person to buy this game (several days before it was released...Thanks John), I hope you all order a copy while you can, because it's a great little game to play, even though the kids come out and smash the bottles as soon as you put them on display. Let's hope they never learn about the song which features 99 bottles.....

Please see previous review for ordering details.

## TROUBLE WITH TROLLS

Written by George E. Hoyle

Reviewed by Karen Tyers on a Spectrum

This is the next saga in the life of Brian – poor chap! It appears that Grandad has died without leaving the wherewithal to even pay for the funeral. The only thing he left behind was a small chest and what Brian finds inside is to lead him into his most exciting adventure yet ...

Thus it is that you start the adventure (as Brian of course!) in your bedroom, armed with a key, sitting beside a chest on the floor.

There is a lot to do in here, and you must do everything in order to progress beyond the first nine locations. One priority seemed to be finding a container of some sort. Now I have used the same technique to hide a container, and I still missed it! However, having sorted the bedroom out I proceeded to explore the rest of the house and the streets outside. You will need to interact with several characters in order to progress, but as I said before if you haven't done everything correctly you won't get far as you are ignored.

You can either ASK character for HELP, or TALK TO character, so having spoken to Rodney and got some assistance in translating a map my next problem was how to get out of the village. This wasn't too much of a problem as there is a convenient coach stop, so having hung around for a while, a coach arrived. I told the driver where I was heading and paid over the dosh. I found myself deposited at the top of the hill with no apparent means of getting down. However, this was entirely my own fault for missing something at the beginning, so back to square one.

Okay – down the hill to find myself on an icy ledge overlooking the very place I wanted to get to. With a bit of quick thinking I managed to get down and found myself exactly where I wanted to be – except the whole valley is populated by trolls and signs warning that humans are not allowed.

Working my way past fighting trolls and dwarfs and negotiating a sewer, I found myself in the troll city, still looking unfortunately like a human, so a disguise was necessary. However if you look around before you move, and examine everything this shouldn't present too much of a problem. One thing I would say, through the whole game, if in doubt, LOOK first and act afterwards.

Wandering round the city was great fun. There are several things to find and do here. Try eavesdropping – you might learn something useful. One problem that had me stumped for a while was a locked door. Now there are several tried and trusted methods of getting through a locked door, but trying to find the right object proved more difficult than you would think. Again, my own fault for not reading things properly!

Having finally got to the king with what I thought was important information I was taken to the treasury where I found the object of my quest. Great – wasn't too difficult was it? Wrong!! The king informed me that while he was very grateful, I couldn't have it unless I undertook a small quest for him, namely to rid the valley of the Giant Nerk, so armed with a magic detector gun and a royal pass card, off I went.

Finding the Nerk was not too difficult, but if you haven't worked out how to use the gun, or if you haven't got the correct ammunition hard luck. Even when you have managed to get rid of the horrible thing, you still have to find your way back

This wasn't a huge game, but there is plenty to see and do. Hardened adventurers will still find something to scratch their heads over. There is a fair amount of humour throughout the game - I especially liked the conversation with the coach driver.

Available from Zenobi Software. Price : £2.99 Spectrum tape and 3.5" +D disc, Atari(e), Amiga(e), PC(e) and MAC(e). £3.49 Spectrum +3 disc.

## **TALISMAN OF LOST SOULS**

**Written by Tony Kingsmill**

**Reviewed by Dorothy Millard on a Spectrum**

Starting in the deserted village of Katweige where buildings are in ruins having been ransacked, you meet a five year old child dressed in rags. On talking to her she reveals that she was the only person from her village who wasn't turned to stone, as she was away at the time. Her brother and parents are all under a spell and she prays that you find the talisman. She also gives you a piece of gold before running off.

Going north you meet a Gnome who will give you information in return for gold. From here you visit a tribal village, avoiding the traps, followed by the misty paths (a small maze), then on to an ancient burial chamber with a secret room. Once inside the great Forest Palace you are well on your way to the final meeting with Zorcon to obtain the talisman.

This is a well planned game suitable for beginners. The puzzles are straightforward with nothing devious and there are plenty of hints and help along the way. So long as you remember to use the examine command most things can be found relatively easily and their use is obvious. Plenty of hints are given before you get to the various traps so it is easy to avoid them and directions are given to get you through the small maze. The game is easy to map.

One thing I really enjoyed was the location description stating "Upstairs closed due to lack of RAM". I related to this! Location descriptions are well written and the game enjoyable. Perfect for the less experienced adventurer.

**Spectrum and Amstrad versions available from The Adventure Workshop. Price : £2 (tape) £4 (disc). Cheque/p.o. payable to P.M.Reynolds.**

## **DARK PORTAL 2 (P.D. disk magazine)**

**Reviewed by Steve Clay on an Amiga**

"Dark Portal" is the second collection of horror stories released by Andrew Campbell. There is plenty of material to read, although whether you will want to is a point of contention.

Upon loading you are presented with a suitably eerie backdrop upon which the main menu is printed. There is a musical backing track that while suitable for horror stories tends to get on the nerves after very few minutes. The main menu lists the contents. Being a newcomer I selected "About Dark Portal" which gives information on the stories in this issue. These little pieces of text are actually a great deal more interesting than the stories.

"White Ravens" : a young poorly child listens to his father's tale of how he met the woman he loves.

"Screaming Express" : this seems to be a bit of a Clive Barker copy in that a train runs beneath a city and the passengers are not the usual commuters.

"Snow Girl" : This is a tale about a loner, who, having ignored the pleas of a girl the previous summer, encounters her frozen ghost on the moor (Honest). This is, thankfully, one of the shortest stories in the collection but is to my mind disjointed and the ending is not very good at all.

"Dial 666" : A phonebox is connected to one place and one place only. Anyone who thinks that dialling 666 will bring the police standing on their heads shall go to the back of the class.

There are several more, two of which I'll detail soon. There are also serials that continue from issue one and doubtless continue into issue 3.

The first story I attempted to read was "Behind Locked Doors" and is set in a supermarket where the appalling weather means that no customers come to visit. Somebody however does come a-calling. The author has obviously been influenced by Ramsey Campbell but fails to deliver any kind of interest. There seems a desire to fill many of these stories with unnecessary details that break up any atmosphere that might have been created. "Locked Doors" also uses the authors attempt to write in dialect that makes the initial argument almost painful to read. I quickly lost interest with this story and thought I'd have a look at the story marked Humour!

"Peeps Hits The Big Time" is another piece of awful writing. The story seems to rely, solely, on the 'joke' that the storyteller's wife is overweight and the crudeness of the descriptions of the wife make Slag on a Nag look like flattery. I don't know whether the wife actually gets her own back on the storyteller as I couldn't force myself to read through to the end. The tone in which this story is written lends me to believe that there is no way the wife gets her own back. A sad piece of fiction that says a lot more about the author than he probably realises.

The letters section is the usual issue 2 type of lots of letters praising issue 1. What worries me is that the editor thinks issue 2 is a vast improvement on issue 1. Lord help us! There is also a piece by the editor discussing some comments a correspondence course tutor made about his work. The editor writes off much of the criticism by implying he knows better. She gave a C+ for one of his stories and he didn't like it. I think if his later stuff is anything to go by, she was being kind.

"Dark Portal 2" is written by teenagers and therefore suffers from unnecessary swearing and some very immature ideas about sex. This disk is definitely for 16+ although I am sure readers a few years younger than that would get more enjoyment from seeing 'naughty' words in stories that would be better if the authors had worked on the tale rather than the offensive side.

"Dark Portal" is a good idea and maybe if more readers supply material there will be an improvement in the content. At the moment though it consists of some very sad and immature tales.

P.S. In the interest of fairness I finished reading the "Peeps" story. The lady in the story does gain some revenge, but still suffers badly. The fact is that the story is dreadful!



...A note  
from Teacher....

## **VALHALLA AND THE FORTRESS OF EVE**

**Story and design by Lisa Tunnah**

**Programming and graphics by Paul Hale Carrington**

**Reviewed by Larry Horsfield on an Amiga A500**

Believe it or not, I took a week off work to play this game! My 18 year old son, Chris, now has my old A500 and he is forever playing Sensible Soccer on it. So the only way I could get on it to play this new Valhalla game was to take a well-earned week off work – I was due one anyway!

The disks for "Valhalla and the Fortress of Eve" (FOE from now on), 6 of them, come in a small box as did Vulcan's last release, "Timekeepers", and even with the outer carton it fits easily into any letterbox. The instruction booklet is tiny, just 70mm x 100mm and is 14 pages long. Mind you, there isn't much at all on each page!

The plot in FOE is as follows: the King of Valhalla has reached the age when he is interested in ladies, and he has decided to find himself a wife. Trouble is that all the eligible ladies have been kidnapped – for a reason that reveals itself in level 3 – by the evil Queen Eve and imprisoned in her fortress in Evesland. You must guide the King through 4 levels to free the ladies of Valhalla and eventually select a wife.

The graphics in FOE are much improved and the first thing you notice when you start level 1, Forest of Evesland, is that the original looking-down-from-above view has been changed to a 3D viewpoint. This makes for much more detailed surroundings and when walking around the King is seen from in front, behind or to the side rather than just a view of the top of his head!

The control method has changed as well, from joystick to mouse, although I was quite at home with the former (I used a joypad) and would have liked a choice. While in the main display screen the mouse pointer is an arrow and you guide the King around by pointing the arrow and holding the LMB down, whereupon he will follow the arrow until he bumps into something or you take your finger off the button.

There is the usual "rucksack" of nine items above the main screen and the "action icons" below it which open when you move the mouse pointer into that area. These are as in earlier games, i.e. Take, Operate, etc. with the addition of a Talk icon. If you click on this the King will say "Hello" to the square in front of him (whether there is someone there or not) and if there is a character there, they will reply. I laughed out loud the first time I heard the King say "Hello!" as it sounded just like Bob Adams does when he answers the telephone (I wonder if he did the voice-over?)

Another new feature in this game is a text option, where everything the Kings says is shown as text in a window above the main display. This is an excellent feature for the deaf and hard-of-hearing (as I am) and Vulcan must be congratulated for including this. Having said that, the speech was a lot clearer than in the previous two games. You can turn the text off if you wish, as you can the King's rambling chat (e.g. "I've got it!" every time he picks up, etc.) and the atmospheric music.

The "map" icon on the left changes the main screen into a miniature depiction of the area of the level around the King, and you can scroll around to view the whole level. This is extremely useful for mapping, as objects and characters are all shown in quite good detail and indeed I spent a good amount of time drawing a map before actually playing each level.

The game play is very much in the style as the earlier Valhalla adventures, heavily object-orientated. You find an object, give it to a character or place it somewhere to get another, etc., etc. You might have to talk to a character to get clues as to what they want and there are "speech plaques" dotted around which the King looks at to say the words. Being used to the earlier games, I found most of the puzzles fairly easy to solve, although there were a couple of occasions where I was on the point of telephoning Vulcan for help having got stuck.

One of these problems occurred at the start of level 2, the Village of Evesland. I won't give too much away, but if you want to get something inside out, put it on the left not in front! Thankfully, there are no chess problems in FOE, those of you who played "Valhalla - Before the War" will know what I'm talking about!

There are, as mentioned, four levels in FOE, the Forest of Evesland, Village of Evesland, Fortress Courtyards and the Fortress Tower. I found level 3, the Fortress Courtyards, to be a bit macabre, as there are various shrines to real-life characters of some notoriety, e.g. Jack the Ripper, Burke and Hare, Adolph Hitler, King Herod and even Ruth Ellis. A little knowledge of these characters is required in order to place the correct object on each shrine, some objects being more obvious than others. There are some objects about which, on instructing the King to look at them, he tells you "I'm not quite sure", and you have to guess as to what they are and what to do with them, which is either an educated guess or simple trial and error.

When you start each level (apart from the first) a level code appears on the title screen. There is no copy protection and if playing from floppy disk I advise you to make backup copies of the level disks as you save your position directly onto those. As before, you can only save one position at a time, but I found this no problem this time. In earlier games you could often go past a door you'd just unlocked, only to find it close after you, with no way out unless you had the right key. There are none of these traps in FOE, although maybe it would've been a good idea to include one or two as this may have made the game a bit more exciting. While there are a few holes dotted around, the King won't fall down any and, in fact, there are very few occasions when your stamina level is in any way depleted badly enough to warrant eating a stamina pill, again unlike the previous games.

The removal of these "danger" elements in the game has, in my opinion, made the game less exciting, but this didn't detract from my enjoyment of playing what is a very absorbing and addictive game. Valhalla fans will no doubt be very pleased at the news that Vulcan have a further 9 (yes, NINE) Valhalla games in various stages of development for future (and much more frequent) release. PC versions are in the pipeline but still some way off, according to the chap I spoke to at Vulcan a week or so before FOE was released. He told me they had intended to do only two Valhalla games, but it proved so popular that it will turn into quite a saga of adventures. If they maintain the standard already set then we are in for a treat!

Available from Vulcan Software (see inside back cover for address). Price : £17.99 including post and packing.



# Quest News 8

I had watched the dragon fly past me high overhead. I managed to observe it, squinting, until it at last alighted upon a distant rocky crag, and then disappeared inside a concealed cave.

Some two hours later, I entered the dragon's cave with more than a little trepidation. There can be few adventurers who view an interview with a dragon in its home cave with anything other than distinct unease.

I followed the bellows of smoke, and the stench of something akin to sulphur. Eventually, I spotted the object of my quest: the dragon. It lay in the centre of a large cavern, apparently sleeping. But I was experienced enough in adventuring to know that dragons can only rarely be caught sleeping, and that they are always deceptively alert.

Hoping that my boldness would be interpreted in a favourable light - for if it weren't then I would not live to know about it - I stepped out into plain view.

Immediately, the dragon raised its head and regarded me solemnly. Then, in a deep bass rumble, it spoke: "One usually waits until one is on pretty good terms with a dragon before entering its cave without permission. We dragons don't tend to like adventurers who do such things. We become paranoid, you see. We even get the idea - absurd though it might sound - that any who would do such a thing must have an ulterior motive - such as stealing our treasure. Absurd, is it not?"

I opened my mouth to protest my innocence of the implied charge, but then remembered Morana's statement that I would have had plenty of time to consider my response.

"No!" I replied slowly. "It is not as absurd as it might seem. I came here with the express intention of stealing your treasure."

"Hmmm," the dragon muttered, blowing smoke into the air. "Human, you intrigue me, so I won't roast you - yet! Pray continue."

I took a deep breath, and began recounting my tale. Everything from the Conventinn - how long ago that seems! - to chasing after Sapleaf, to Draffan's enchantment. Finding the grumor and yet still being unable to rescue my friend.

At first, the dragon listened with

only vague attention, but as I continued, he stared constantly at me. At times, he panted with excitement, causing me to choke on his thick acrid smoke. He apologised most cordially, and thereafter attempted to keep his enthralment under some semblance of control. I suppose that being a dragon is a somewhat lonely existence, and the opportunity to hear of such a quest as mine must have been a rare occurrence.

As I completed my story, the dragon shook itself. "Thank you, Human, for a most intriguing and diverting story. I can't recall the last time that I've enjoyed myself so much."

I suddenly saw my opportunity. "Would you then, in exchange for my having entertained you, give me some dragon fire so that I may at long last free my friend?" I pleaded.

The dragon grinned at me. "Certainly not!" it retorted saugly. "Dragon fire is very potent magic - and by your own admission, Human, you and your friend planned to rob us of our treasure. There can be only one reward for such audacity, to allow you to live would only serve to encourage others."

As the dragon took a deep breath, I saw my life flashing before me. Without thinking what I would say, I shouted: "Wait! I will trade with you."

The dragon let out his breath with an indignant snort of soot. "What?" he laughed. "What could you possibly have that I would want?"

"The map to your main treasury," I replied. "Give me dragon fire and allow me safe passage, and the map is yours."

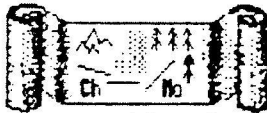
"Show me the map," the dragon demanded. Reluctantly, I did so. "You realise that I could incinerate you now and as you Humans say, kill two birds with one em...snort?"

I nodded and chose my words with care. "You could. But I believe that dragons have a code of honour which is never fully recognised. That code demands you accept my bargain."

The dragon considered what I had said. "You reason things out with very quaint logic," it conceded. "Unfortunately, we dragons have no such code of honour!"

I realised too late what was about to happen. The dragon spat fire at me, and I felt the flame searing my flesh.

To be continued



# HOBBITS ALIVE!

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I.C.A.P.O.O.R.O.U.A.I.P.U.H

The Intergalactic Council of Ancient, Prehistoric and Otherwise Oldish and Really Outdated and Unimportant Although Interesting Parts of Universal History

CompuPrint start \*\*\*\*\*

Date: 01020354 G.S.Y.

Location: ZZ9 Plural Z Alpha Information: When on a routine scan through galactic sector ZZ9 Plural Z Alpha, probe AZ-3 found two items of interest floating around through space in an extremely primitive spaceship. Those items were:

1) A "Hobbit" (alive but in some sort of mental coma). This species of living beings calls themselves kuduk (transl.: hole-dweller). This particular specimen is typical of its type. It has hairy feet with leathery soles, long fingers, and a rather friendly face. This specimen is not known to be of any importance as of now.

2) The hobbit had on it the second specimen. This is believed to be what the Ancients used to call a "book". It contains a number of flat materials made from huge brownish plants. These materials (also known as "paper" (it rhymes with zpfogobeiber)) are loosely strung together, and upon them are some sort of symbols, placed there using some methods unbeknownst to us. We thought these symbols might be of some importance, so they were scrutinized in some detail, and found to be some sort of a primitive time-log belonging to the hobbit.

Translation follows:

1. FeBlueBerry

1990 Anno Hobbit

Dear Diary,

I could say that today has been a strange day indeed! I woke up as usual, and the morning brought itself upon me quite uneventfully and full of promises of a relaxed and comfortable day. After I had put on my new clothes and done the various things related to waking up and facing a new day, I found my way to the good old kitchen and started to prepare my first (and what was to be the last) breakfast of that day.

Then, whilst happily consuming my breakfast and reading "The Daily Hobbit", I heard a loud and sudden scream of terrible outrage and anguish in the living room beside the kitchen. Although this is perhaps something every hobbit should expect to happen once in a while, and it should only cause some mild confusion. I wasn't quite prepared for this to happen, and jumped from my cozy chair like a arrow on its way to an unknown destination who suddenly finds itself smashing to the floor. So, there I was, shaking and trembling on my very own kitchen floor and having a great amount of crazy thoughts going through my mind with something close to lunatic speed.

The most aggressive thought among them was somewhat in the direction of:

"What was this loud burst of outrage I just heard, what was its origin, and what the Gwathlo am I doing lying here on the floor."

I could perhaps continue enjoying the experience of lying on the dusty kitchen floor, but I realised with a startling sensation that if I did so, I would not be able to eat my second breakfast and read "The Rising Hobbit".

When I fully realised the impact of this, I became determined to find the whereabouts of the origin of the inhuman scream, and question it of its sudden intrusion into my relaxed life. So, I slowly crawled to the door, sneaked around chairs and other obstacles until I found it at last. Then I reached with care for the doorknob, turned it with anguish in my heart and slowly opened the door with a rusty sound that echoed throughout the darkness. As silence brought itself upon my dwellings again, I listened closely for any sound that could be from the anonymous intruder.

Nothing such could be heard, so I entered the room with caution. My heart was pounding at an alarming speed as I turned on the magic light. Then...

I saw nothing special. I couldn't believe my eyes and gazed around in wide astonishment. NOTHING had changed!

When I discovered this, I felt a great relief and cursed my hearing for fooling me in such an unorthodox manner. I turned around and showing a sign of happiness, I joyfully began to leave the room. Just as I was stepping into the kitchen, the terror struck. A cold, shaking thing placed itself upon my shoulder. I jumped and turned around to discover

\*\*\* SYS ABEND 1173 — holocube meltdown — translation break

I.C.A.P.O.O.R.O.U.A.I.P.U.H

The Intergalactic Council of Ancient, Prehistoric and Otherwise Oldish and Really Outdated and Unimportant Although Interesting Parts of Universal History

\*\*\* CompuPrint translation now continues:

to discover an unbelievable sight.

Right there behind me was an aged human with a grey staff in his left hand. His right hand, however, was placed upon my shoulder, and it seemed therefore to be what I had felt there shaking like an old man's hand quite recently.

"Erh, excuse me for the recent, quite unexpected outburst. Let me introduce myself. I am the magician Humpfrey, and was sent here by my friend, Gandalf the old chap, or Gandalf, as you may prefer to call him", said the old man, and after regaining his breath, he continued: "Anyway, at your service. But I wanted to ask you two rather related questions. First: What is the time? And second: Is this the Frobozz BBS?"

I gulped loudly at this sight and it took me quite a few seconds to regain my calm and start to ponder about the unusual questions. But at last, I managed to answer them.

"No, these are the dwellings of Bizbo the baggit, eh, hobbit that is. Myself, that is. At your service. And the clock is about to strike 11 am."

"Oh, blast!" he muttered in an angry voice. "Then the kronospatihop spell has failed again. And I suppose you are in no way related to Hilmar the Hobbit? No? Well, I suppose you nevertheless have to do."

"Do for what?" I questioned him quite puzzled at all this nonsense. "And what the lockholes is the Frobozz BBS?"

"Never mind", he laughed. "come on now."

He had hardly finished speaking as he grabbed my hand and waved his staff in some mystical manner. As the world began to go in irregular circles around my head, I asked Humpfrey in a weak voice: "But what is going on? Where are we going? What about my handkerchief? Will I be able to read the evening paper?"

The last thing I heard was Humpfrey laughing in a most unsuitable manner.

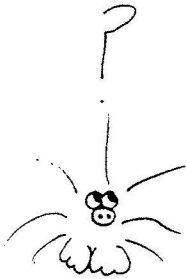
Then I passed out.

\*\*\*End of translation (until next time)

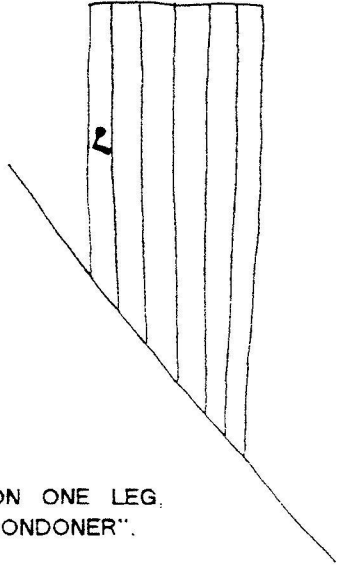
[The above was sent in by Reynir H. Stefansson....Barbara]

## HOW DO I GET THROUGH THIS FLAMIN' DOOR? by NEIL ASHMORE

---



UNLOCK DOOR? NO.  
OPEN DOOR? NO.  
KICK DOOR? NO.  
KNOCK ON DOOR? NO.  
PUSH DOOR? NO.  
PULL DOOR? NO.  
SHOVE DOOR? NO.  
HIT DOOR? NO.  
SAY "OPEN SESAME"? NO.



Ah, of course.....

SLIDE DOOR WHILST STANDING ON ONE LEG,  
SINGING "MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE I'M A LONDONER".

Moral:

If at first you don't succeed, try something wacky.

It might just work!

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by PETER CLARK

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by PHILLIP RAMSAY

You are Tralus. For as long as you can remember, you loved Perina, the beautiful daughter of a local landowner. Only one cloud blighted this idyllic time; your rival for Perina's affections, Grakus. When Perina came of age, both you and Grakus proposed marriage. After careful consideration, Perina chose you, and became your betrothed. However, Grakus was a vindictive fellow. He decided that if he could not have Perina, then no one would. He poisoned her, and then framed you for her murder. Found guilty you were sentenced to death. The priests bound you, and carried out the sentence by throwing you down a ancient deep well, knowing that if the fall did not kill you, you would die of thirst, since the well was dry. You survived the fall, and for hours lay in agony. You resigned yourself to death, when Hades, god of the Underworld, appeared to you. 'Mortal,' he said, 'I sympathise with the injustice which you have suffered. However, I will not interfere with affairs in the Overworld unless you prove yourself.'

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by Phillip Ramsay

You feel uneasy as you enter the Grand Assassin's study, certain somehow that his summons bodes ill for you. At his smile, your feeling strengthens.

"Ah," he says to you. "Last year, I recall I gave you a rather difficult task to perform. This year, I thought I'd try to redress the balance by giving you an easier one."

You begin to stammer your thanks, grateful for the fact that your new assignment will not be too strenuous.

The Grand Assassin waves your thanks away. "I've spoken with your tutors, and they are all unanimous in their praise of your dedication to your studies and your constant hard work. In light of this, I thought you'd like to take a break and see something of the countryside." The Grand Assassin takes a parchment from his desk and passes it to you. It bears his personal seal.

"Take this letter to my brother. His home is to the South of the Guild. Oh, and, whatever you do, don't open it, and DON'T LOSE IT!"

You take the letter and leave the study, with a familiar sense of foreboding suddenly settling in the pit of your stomach.

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## EMULATING THE OLDIES by STEVE CLAY

---

I remember once upon a very long time ago reading a review of the adventure "Castle Blackstar", a game that came highly recommended by the reviewer. What prevented me buying the game was the mention of a maze that made the opening section of the game somewhat tedious. My own dislike of mazes ensured "Castle Blackstar" stayed away from my Spectrum. However I recently came across mention of "Castle Blackstar" and it was pointed out that there was a very good game hiding beyond the maze. So, almost ten years after it was published, I began my search.

Flea markets and car boots were scoured without success. This of course is a fairly common problem when looking for oldies - where do you find them? Well one option for Amiga owners, and probably other 16-bit users as well, is via disks supplied for use with the Spectrum emulator. By chance our local Sunday market has a stall of Amiga/PC public domain disks. While scanning the catalogue I noticed "Castle Blackstar" and several others scattered throughout the emulation section. I was about to strike gold, oldie gold!

Before revealing just how rich this vein was, let me first say that selling emulated Spectrum/C64/whatever games as PD is illegal unless you are the owner of the publishing rights or have the copyright holders permission. Amongst the disks I noted several games that I know to be the property of others. These people have been informed and they can act as they see fit. As to buying these disks I am unsure on the buyers legal standpoint. It is likely that an offence is being committed although the onus would be on the seller. The law would probably treat it as receiving pirate games. However the vast majority of the companies are no longer in existence and unlikely therefore to pursue claims.

The companies who produced the golden oldies are no longer, to my knowledge, in business, so this is one of the few ways to obtain their products. The risk involved in buying these games is yours to take or leave. I am certainly not condoning this practice only pointing out a way of finding old games that you missed first time around and have been unable to find elsewhere.

The company I have dealt with are The Disk Box. Their practice is to supply the emulator separate and then supply a disk with sixteen games on it. There are approximately eighty disks in the catalogue and they are stored in alphabetical order. This means you can't pick and choose your games. You may find that you have chosen a disk with one adventure and fifteen arcade games, but at the price of 1 per disk this is still a bargain. Having said that most disks have four or five adventures and the odd one or two have more.

There are two emulators available one for the 1200 and the other covering the earlier Amiga models. The speed of the games is fairly slow on my 600 but I would assume that the 1200 would offer much faster running. The arcade games are unplayable on the 600 although I did have "Marsport" running (maybe that should be crawling) for a while.

The golden oldies that can be found on these disks include: "Rebel Planet", "Rigels Revenge", "Subaunk" (1 & 2), several Level 9 games including "Dungeon Adventure", "Return to Eden", "Red Moon" and "The Price of Magic", some of the Artic games, "Ship of Doom" (1 & 2), "Invincible Island", also "Heroes of Karn" (the full screen graphics appear instantly); several Scott Adams games including "Circus", "Adventureland" and the "QuestProbe" games, "Twin Kingdom Valley", the Mastertronic games "Journey's End" and "Sinbad": of course "Castle Blackstar", and lots more beside.

So if you have an Amiga and you feel that this is your best hope of finding what you are looking for then the best of luck.

The Disk Box can be contacted at 86 Albert Road, Widnes, Cheshire, WA8 6JT.

Each disk costs £1 and P&P is free. For every five disks you can select one free disk. For every £10.00 spent you can request a catalogue disk.

## THE FINAL FRONTIER by DAVID HEBBLETHWAITE

---

This is Space. You may think that Space is empty. And you'd be wrong. Space contains stars and planets, rocks and satellites. But most of it is just empty. It isn't completely empty though. One thing it does contain is Pablo Pickaxe. A witch has sent him there. Well, to be honest, Space doesn't contain Pablo Pickaxe. Rather, it contains an object which contains Pablo Pickaxe. This object is a spaceship called the Kernschmelze. The crew don't know he's there, and he doesn't know about the vitally important mission that the Kernschmelze is on. He also knows nothing about Space or Space travel. This should be fun..... What's that? Oh. It's the Kernschmelze. Let's take a look inside.....

Pablo held his head to get rid of the pretty lights. He shut his eyes and kept them shut. He opened them. He could still see the pretty lights. Well, light. It was a warm, golden light, and it shone at the end of the dark tunnel that Pablo found himself in. Pablo got up and started walking towards the light. He saw a large, dark shape forming in the light. As he neared the light, he collapsed and fell unconscious.

A little robot on caterpillar tracks appeared from the light and entered the tunnel. It was a Sweepomatic, a toy cleaning robot. It had been made in Taiwan, of course. A dustpan and brush extended from its arms and it tried to sweep Pablo into the dustpan. When it failed to do this, a little red light flashed on its head, a buzzer sounded, and its metallic, synthesized voice said, "Object too big to fit in dustpan. Sending for assistance".

Pablo woke up. He could see more pretty lights. Bright, white lights, shining down on him. So this was Heaven. The Creator stood over him. The Creator looked fairly human, but then he'd always thought that the Creator would look human. And he was dressed in white. A beautiful angel stood in the corner. Strange, thought Pablo. I didn't think Heaven would have corners. The angel looked human, too. And she was dressed in white. The Creator turned to the angel and said, "Pass us the bucket, will you? We don't want him spewing his guts out". Pablo fell unconscious again.

The Medical Officer was called Alan Antiseptic. His assistant was called Gabrielle Gypsummine. Alan said to Gabrielle. "We'd better go and speak to the Captain about what he wants to do with this guy. He must be a nutter. Look at his clothes. Poor guy".

Pablo opened his eyes a little way to see The Creator and the angel leaving the room, and then he closed them again.

"Are you all right?"

"?!" muttered Pablo as he woke up. "Where am I? I thought I was dead....I saw angels an' The Creator an'....."

"Yes, of course you did." said the man who had spoken to Pablo. He looked up at the others and shook his head sadly.

"Go over that again" said Pablo

"OK," said the captain of the Kerschmelze, Laurence Laserbeam. "This is a spaceship in Space, and we're trying to save the Universe from the Xaavan Empire."

"Oh. What have you got to help you?"

"One gram of earwax and a half-eaten curried egg sandwich."

"Could be a problem."

"Yes."

Pablo had needed many days of explaining this to understand it. He was now in a position where he felt even more confused than before.

"Captain! We have an emergency!" came an urgent voice over the intercom.

"What to do," mused Captain Laserbeam.

"We still have an emergency," came the voice.

"Be quiet, I'm talking to our guest."

"Guest?"

"Some guy called Pablo Pickaxe."

"Has he got a brother called Jean-Luc?"

"What?"

"Never mind. Captain, we've discovered a leak in Oxygen Tank 407a."

"Well boil it and serve it with dumplings. I don't know. I'm not a chef."

"No, Captain, not that sort of leek. Leak, sorry. No, leek. No....I'm confused now."

"How big is it?"

"It looks to be just big enough to be plugged by one gram of a soft, smelly, otic substance."

"What a coincidence! We just happen to have one gram of earwax!"

"Perfect! Captain, we have just averted a major disaster."

With Oxygen Tank 407a repaired, the Kerschmelze continued on its journey through Space. Several interesting objects passed it. One was a Space rocket; the only message that could be picked up from it was "Life is like a box of chocolates," whatever that means. Another was a toy UFO; the only message that could be picked up from that was, "@£\$!\*%&^," which roughly translated means, "I knew we should have taken that left turn at Alpha Centauri." Yet another was a huge Xaavan spaceship called the Finsternis which, as all such enemy spaceships do, fired a beam of coloured light at the Kerschmelze (this one was green) and sucked it in through a small hatch. Exciting, isn't it?

"So what do we do now?" asked Pablo.

"I think the general idea is that we explore the ship," replied Captain Laserbeam.

"Why?"

"I don't know. It's the done thing in these circumstances, I suppose."

"Done it before?"

"Oh. hundreds of times....well, a few..... well, never, actually "

"Great. Got that curried egg sandwich?"

"Yeah. Why?"

"I want to end it all now."

"Oh."

About half an hour later, Pablo was still very much alive. Well, just He and Captain Laserbeam had had a run-in with some guards, who had, of course, fired their laser guns at them. Well, they would have had, if they were working. The golden rule of Storytelling is never let the Hero get killed. Resurrection is expensive, and is not very interesting. It does not make for a good story. It is best to make sure that it doesn't have to happen. This, however, makes no difference to the fact that the alarm was raised, there was a thrilling Chase Scene involving hundreds of guards and miles of steel corridors which will give the Special Effects team of your mind many sleepless nights (I will save my Special Effects team the sleepless nights by declining to describe the Chase Scene here), and an even more thrilling Final Confrontation which will put your Special Effects team out of action for a week, it's that good. And yes, I am going to describe it. Here comes Pablo now, followed closely by Captain Laserbeam. Here's a pair of double doors made from shining steel. Pablo and Captain Laserbeam are running towards them. They're opening of their own accord. There's nothing but blackness beyond them. There's a sinister laugh...

Blazing lights filled the enormous steel chamber. Well, it wasn't much brighter than the average neon lamp, but it looked impressive. A tall figure dressed entirely in black and wearing an odd-shaped black helmet stood before them. He was standing because the chamber contained no seats.

"It's Garth Grader!" gasped Captain Laserbeam.

"Who?" asked Pablo.

"I am the Commander of the Finsternis," growled Garth Grader. "And you are my slaves."

"No we're not," said Pablo.

"WHAT?"

"I've had enough of Space," shouted Pablo. "I want to go home!"

"WHAT?"

"Look, take that helmet off. I'm not surprised you can't hear."

Garth Grader took his helmet off. The head underneath was framed with long, curly blond hair, and was wearing glasses. It could only be described as "nerdy".

The figure suddenly collapsed to the floor, raising itself up and down, chanting. "I'm not worthy, I'm not worthy."

"Oh shut up," said Pablo, and threw the curried egg sandwich at Garth Grader. It landed directly into his mouth.

His last words were. "I'm gonna hurl." He did, and his insides landed on the floor....

Pablo got home to Ouch, eventually. How? Sorry, my Special Effects team is on strike. You'll have to work it out for yourself. I'm sorry. NOT!

[Coming soon - "Merlin Mudpie's Apprentice" by David Hebblethwaite]

## SOME PC MYSTERIES EXPLAINED

by LARRY HORSFIELD

---

I was most interested to read Ron Guest's letter in the July edition of Probe, in which he asked for readers who have PCs to write in to explain some of the mysteries surrounding PCs and pass on some tips on what to go for when purchasing a PC. O.K., I'll have a go, but if anyone spots anything wrong in this would they please inform me ASAP.

I will state first of all that while I agree that PCs are not, as Ron says, all they're cracked up to be, and although the Amiga A1200 is an excellent computer (I had one myself) and in some respects can knock spots off even the fastest PC, the simple fact is that there is hardly any new software being released for the Amiga, so in my opinion anyone thinking of upgrading simply has to get a PC. New owners of these computers will at first, of course, know nothing about them whatsoever, but after a short while (as with any new computer) you gradually learn and within a couple of months you'll find yourself doing things you'd previous never thought yourself capable of – believe me, I know!

At Barbara's request, I will start by attempting to explain about the various parts of a PC. A PC comes in three main components: the computer itself, which comes in either a desktop case (which the monitor usually sits on) or various sizes (mini, midi or full) of tower case (an "upright" desktop case if you like), all of which will have an integral power supply; the monitor, which comes in screen sizes from 14" (diagonal) upwards; and finally the keyboard, which is a separate (and very cheap) entity. Inside the computer case you have, at minimum, a motherboard, i.e. the main circuit boards, sound card, video card, floppy disc drive, and hard disc drive. In most up-to-date PCs you will also have a CD-ROM drive.

Barbara asked me why there are separate bits inside a PC, i.e. sound and video cards, which in an Amiga would be a couple of chips on the main motherboard. The simple answer is that the job that the sound and video "chips" are required to do is much more complex in a PC than in an Amiga and need a lot more chips and circuitry – and even extra memory – to do the job, especially the sound card. Hence they are on separate circuit boards which plug into the main board.

The variations in the complexity of the job are also very wide indeed. Most games players will only require fairly basic video and sound cards, but someone who uses a DTP or artist program will need a better video card that is capable of reproducing complex graphics very quickly. Likewise, someone who is into making their own music will require a much better sound card that is capable of faithfully reproducing as many musical instruments as possible. You can, in fact, buy memory chips for sound cards that allow the user to reproduce all sorts of different musical instruments, rather like discs of different text fonts for printers, etc. A survey of 16 sound cards in the current (September) issue of Computer Shopper magazine tested cards ranging in cost from £27 to £354. Video cards are similarly priced.

On the motherboard there are slots (6 or 7) for peripherals such as the sound and video cards – you can also fit internal modems and network cards (for when several PCs are linked together) – four sockets for the system RAM (see later), sockets or a slot for the cache memory (this helps the processor work more efficiently), various other chips with names such as BIOS and a large square socket for the main CPU.

The hard disc or drive, the HD, is where all your games and other programs will be stored. There is no playing direct from floppy discs with PCs. The size of a current PC HD is, compared to the ones we used on our Amigas (mine was 60Mb), enormous, with 1 gigabyte (i.e. 1084Mb) being the current standard – and they are getting bigger all the time, 2 gigabyte models being available.

Barbara told me that although she has an Amiga, she has never used a hard drive. Well, I can honestly say that she doesn't know what she is missing. Programs load within seconds rather than minutes and there's no waiting for the graphics for the next location to load when playing adventures as you would do when playing from floppy disc. The floppy disc drive (FD) in a PC will probably never wear out as you will use it so seldom. Installing a program on a hard drive couldn't be simpler, as full instructions are given with every game. With some PC games you may have to tell the program, via a setup program, which sound card you have fitted, but some automatically detect them.

You will in fact use a CD-ROM drive far more than the FD as not only do you install programs from the CD, a lot of programs access video clips and music direct from the CD as the program is running. You can in fact play ordinary music CDs on your drive as you are using your PC. CD-ROM drives are getting faster all the time and 10 speed versions are now available, although the norm for a games PC is 4 or 6 speed.

The PC also has to have an operating system installed before you can play any games and this is usually either MS-DOS (MicroSoft Disc Operating System) and Windows 3.11, or Windows '95, these all being sort of equivalent to Workbench on the Amiga. I suppose you could compare MS-DOS + Windows 3.11 to Workbench 1.3 and Windows '95 to Workbench 3 in terms of the improvement over the original version.

The various jargon associated with PCs can be a bit bewildering at first, and I don't pretend to know it all. 286, 386SX, 486DX and Pentium refer to the type of CPU, the Central Processing Unit (i.e. the "chip"), of the computer – a Pentium is actually a 586 or 686. The number following this is the processor speed, e.g. P100 meaning a CPU that runs at a speed of 100MHz (megahertz). The higher the number the faster, albeit more expensive! The current fastest Pentium chip is a P166, although a 200MHz chip is due for release soon.

Each PC will come with a certain amount of "system RAM" installed on the motherboard (M/B), the minimum on Pentiums being 8Mb. These will usually be two 4Mb modules known as SIMMS and they fit into two of 4 SIMMS sockets on the M/B. With Pentium PCs the RAM must be installed in matched pairs (in various combinations) for it to work properly. I currently have 4 x 4Mb SIMMS installed on my PC, so if I wanted to increase this I would have to remove 2 and replace them with, say, 2 x 8Mb modules. The price of memory is also dropping fast and any PC owner reading this who is thinking of getting more RAM should do so NOW! Mind you, if the price carries on dropping like it has been, they'll be giving them away soon!

Unlike 8- and 16-bit computers, where software is incompatible between the different makes (i.e. Spectrum, C64, Amiga and Atari, etc.) most PC games will run on your PC, provided your PC meets the "minimum specifications" (or specs) for that game. On every PC game box there is a panel which will give the minimum and recommended PC specifications required to run that game. For example, "Settlers II" will run on a minimum of a 486 DX2/66 with 8Mb of RAM, but the recommended system is Pentium P75 with 16Mb of RAM. Running the game on a faster Pentium PC, say a P133, would be fine, but if it only had 8Mb of RAM you would only get the features that the minimum specs allow. Running a game on a minimum spec PC may mean it won't run quite as fast, certain features won't be available or

you will have to run the game without music and/or sound FX. Trying to run the game on a 386SX/25, however, would be a complete waste of time as the processor won't be able to cope with it.

The thing about PCs is that they are designed to be easily upgraded. If you want to increase the amount of system RAM the computer has, it is simply a matter of taking the cover off the case, clipping in the new memory modules and replacing the cover. I recently upgraded my machine from 8Mb to 16Mb and it took less than 5 minutes to do the job using just a screwdriver. Even fitting a faster Pentium chip is a similar matter. The chip sits in a ZIF (Zero Insertion Force) socket and you just release a small lever, lift out the old chip and drop in the new one, replacing the lever to secure the chip in place. Upgrading hardware, e.g. hard drive, sound card, CD-ROM drive etc., is similarly easy, no soldering is required at all.

I am not, however, saying that using a PC is a bed of roses. As mentioned earlier, problems can arise if you don't have sufficient memory to run certain software. For example, Microsoft state that you can run Windows '95 on a PC with 8Mb of RAM, which is perfectly true. However, it runs best on a PC with more RAM, i.e. 16Mb. My PC, a P75, started out with 8Mb but I found I couldn't run some games unless I booted up (i.e. started) the machine using a "boot disk". This was no problem once I got the hang of making them, which requires some knowledge of MS-DOS. Some games include installation programs that automatically detect the set-up of your PC and will make a boot disk if one is required. However, once I upgraded to 16Mb, I found I no longer needed to use the boot disk.

People have also reported problems running MS-DOS games under Windows '95, the latest operating system. I myself use MS-DOS 6.22 and Windows 3.11 and have no problems except for those mentioned above and below. Some new games, however, are designed to be run under Windows '95 only so I cannot play them on my present set-up (not that I'd want to anyway, most of them are "shoot-'em-ups").

Problems can also arise through non-compatibility of the hardware your PC has fitted. Take the soundcard, for example (you need one to be able to reproduce music and sound FX). The industry standard is known as "SoundBlaster" (SB), the genuine SoundBlaster cards being made by the Creative Labs company. Any sound card made by a different company should be "SoundBlaster-compatible" and should work OK with most software. The major software companies will obviously use top-of-the-range PCs to develop their games on, which would have the very best hardware installed, i.e. proper SB cards. If your PC, like mine, has only a SoundBlaster-compatible sound card then this can lead to problems when running certain software. For example, if I try to run the game "Warcraft 2" with the music and sound effects on, the game will almost certainly crash after a short while, so I have to play it with both off. Other games run OK without crashing but the music and sound FX are not very well reproduced, while others run perfectly. The only way I can see out of this problem would be to install a genuine Creative Labs SB card, which I will do quite soon as an SB 16 sound card is only about £60- to £70 at the moment.

The same sort of problem can occur with the video card, which drives your monitor. I recently borrowed Windows '95 from a friend at work to try out on my PC, but it wouldn't recognize the video driver (each piece of hardware in your PC has to have a software program which runs it, known as a "driver") and I ended up uninstalling it because of this. Similarly, a friend was unable to play a new adventure game on her PC due to the game "not liking" her video card and driver. The solution to both problems would be to buy and install a decent video card, e.g. a Diamond Stealth, this costing around the same as an SB sound card.

The main concern for anyone thinking about buying a PC is, naturally, the cost. The price of new "entry-level" PCs is dropping all the time but you are still talking of around £1200 if you are buying new and want a PC that can play the latest software. You could, of course, buy a second-hand PC, but there are all sorts of pitfalls with this, especially if you don't know much about them. If you have a PC-owning friend who does know what to look for, take them along to view any used PC you are considering purchasing privately.

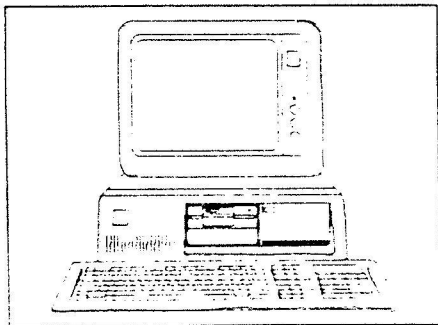
Anyone who is considering buying a new PC should purchase one of the monthly PC "shopper" magazines, i.e. Computer Shopper (£2.25 per month), which have loads of adverts, and test reports every month. Don't do what I did and go to one of the high street outlets (in my case Escom who recently went into receivership leaving me with a six-month old PC with no warranty!), you will get a much better deal from one of the specialist firms, who often also offer a mail order service. Choose one within travelling distance and you can visit them to try out the PC you select before purchasing. There are specialist firms who will custom build a PC for you and you should always inform whoever you are buying from what you mainly want to use the PC for (in most cases, playing games with a bit of word-processing).

The hardware specifications of your PC will vary between suppliers but you should go for at least a Pentium P100 with quad- or six-speed CD-ROM, 1 gigabyte hard drive and 16Mb of EDO RAM - these are standard minimum specs with a lot of suppliers. You could get by on 8Mb of RAM and upgrade later on, the price of RAM is falling all the time, but if you intend running Windows '95 (standard on a lot of PCs now) then go for 16Mb from the start. Also make sure the motherboard (preferably with a "Triton" chipset) has at least 256K of Pipeline Burst cache fitted, as this will ensure the Pentium processor runs at optimum performance. The monitor will be at least a 14" one, but if you can afford it go for a 15" - it should be SVGA with a "refresh rate" of 72MHz. A genuine SoundBlaster sound card and a Diamond Stealth video card are also to be recommended.

It is perfectly feasible, if you felt confident enough, to build your own PC. All the parts are easily available and as most components simply plug or slot into one another, the only tool you'd need is a screwdriver. I worked out that to build a P100 as described in the above paragraph would cost around £1000, buying all the parts from one supplier as advertised in Computer Shopper. If you shopped around the various suppliers for the best prices, you could build it even cheaper, and if you went to one of the many computer fairs that are held every weekend around the county, you could save even more money.

Anyway, I hope all this has been of use to Probe readers who have been thinking about buying a PC. I just hope it doesn't put people off the idea!

[My thanks to Larry for explaining the ins and outs of the PC. If you have any stories to tell or advice to impart please write in....Barbara]



## PERSONAL MESSAGES

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- To Petra – How's about we have a little get together sometimes soon. (The Pink Panther)
- To Uncle Horace – Oh, I see, you're the scripwriter too. Horace. Let me see, what's the film called – "They Shoot Horaces Don't They" starring Jane Fandler, or "A Horace Called Mrs. Ed" starring the Bee Gees? (M.Polo)
- To Ellen – I don't know why it would have bugged him – unless I release loads of my aunts at him – he'd spy them alright (spied her)? (M.Polo)
- To Ellen – I think they'll be good ones – oops, for a second there when you said "good ones", I was thinking of the rifling competition we used to have back in China! (M.Polo)
- To Snowy – wouldn't you like to know, I'll just say it's.....CENSURED..... (Marco, the Over...CENSURED....Plumber)
- To Dopey – Er, try GO NORTH or something ....(M.Polo)
- To M.Polo – I'll bet you are. Remind me never to dine at your place – especially if you're doing the cooking. (Uncle Horace)
- To Damian – Think I'll ask M.Polo to send Conan an invitation to dinner. (Uncle Horace)
- To Damian – Only six numbers off winning my first tenner last week! (Ellen)
- To Wynne – Who cares about the inside of a hairy chest? Not me. I'm only interested in what's on the OUTSIDE. (Ellen)
- To Wynne – It surely was. (Ellen)
- To Wynne – Nope, I don't. My family do though, sheesh! (Ellen)
- To Phill – My calendar now reads Nov.1st – and we both know what THAT means, don't we? (Ellen)
- To Reynir – Never mind. I'm sure the end result will be well worth the wait. (Ellen)
- To M.Polo – Phew, the sun's doing what my sockets didn't. I'm more than frazzled. (Ellen)
- To The Old Zetonian – It was your cake that did the trick. Luckily, Dopey was on guard duty when it arrived. I managed to convince him it was the currants in the cake that were shorting the detector, causing it to buzz. (Grumpy)
- To M.Polo – Course I'd like to know, in fact, I'd LOVE to know. If you really don't want me to fret, then you'll have to hurry up and pay me a visit. (Snowy)
- To M.Polo – The ruler's not bloody, but I am – annoyed that I've still not found it. (Snow White)
- To The Whinger – When my little miners had the same trouble as you, I put "Odour Eaters" in their shoe(s). The pong soon went, when their feet were dry. Maybe you too, should give them a try? But, should they fail, then please don't fret, I'll think of something. so your feet won't sweat. Hmm, if your pong's more than they can handle, then try going sockless, in open toed sandals. (Snow White)
- To The Whinger – Ok, vinegar it'll be. Glad you liked my replies. Tell me though, did your gob cry when it got smacked? (Dopey)
- To Wynne – I think your abacus needs a new battery. (The Witch Of Stanley)
- To Ro-Wan – I'll bet it does! Do the Korn shells do much damage when they land? (The Witch Of Stanley)
- To Mad Cat – Oh yeah. Even when the cauldron's bubbling? (Witchy)
- To Petra – Mine, of course! (Kevin)
- To Petra – Erm, wasn't there an "it" missing in your last message? Between the "is" and the "off"? (Kevin)
- To Ellen – I didn't think you'd stoop as low as watching Eastenders – good job. (Jon)
- To Snow White – "Coy", me? I don't have BSE! (Jon)

To Loobiloo - You are talking "bull". (Matt)

To Ellen - What are those strange noises that keep you awake in the night? (Wynne)

To Gillian - What a lovely thought! (Wynne)

To Kevin - I'm pining for you - though you'd never believe it from the weight I've put on.  
(Petra)

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## IN TOUCH

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WANTED URGENTLY - A double-sided disk drive suitable for an Atari 1040 ST.  
Please contact Karen Tyers - Tel. 01347 838667

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## HELP OFFERED

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I can offer help with RIPPER by Gametek. This is a brilliant game but the puzzles can be difficult if you have missed previous clues.

SAE with details of problem to : Roger Dowdall, 14 Dawley Green, South Ockendon, Essex, RM15 5LW.

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## HELP WANTED

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Does anyone have any information on a 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ " floppy disk drive, EXCELERATOR+ PLUS?  
Also needed is a power supply lead for the above drive.

Please contact Derek Dooley, 17 Lime Street, Eccles, Manchester, M30 0QB

Does anyone know of a C64 emulator for the PC which will allow multiple sequential snapshot images for constant disk access?

Please contact Damian Steele, Flat 2, 4b Fenton, Southfield Rise, Paignton, Devon, TQ3 2NE.

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## ADDITIONAL SOLUTIONS

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The following solutions have been added to the files recently. Subscribers may purchase a solution (providing the adventure has been released for at least 6 months) at a cost of one 29p stamp each, plus a 1st or 2nd class stamp for return postage, regardless of the number of solutions ordered. ADVENTURE 550 (enhanced Amiga version), ADVENTURES OF ALICE, ANGELICUS ANSWER, ANGELICUS SAGA, ASSASSINS' GUILD, COUNTRY CAPERS, CURSE OF NIMUE, DIG, DINOPIA, DR. DEATH'S HOUSE OF HORRORS, ELFINDOR, GABRIEL KNIGHT 1, GABRIEL KNIGHT 2, GYMNASIUM ADVENTURE, HALLOWEEN, IMMORTALITY RULES OK, INFILTRATION OF IBM HEADQUARTERS, JERSEY QUEST, KING OTTO'S QUEST, MERLIN'S GOLDEN TROVE, MERLIN'S MAGIC FOREST, NIGHT AT THE TOP, NOCTROPOLIS, NURSERY RHYME LAND, PHILOSOPHER'S QUEST (enhanced version), QUEST FOR GLORY 4, RED ALERT, RIDDLE OF MASTER LU, SHIVERS, TALISMAN OF LOST SOULS, TEENAGE EMERGENCY, TEN GREEN BOTTLES, TIME SEARCH, TROUBLE WITH TROLLS, URBAN RUNNER, WIZARD OF OZ (Windham Classics), ZEN, ZORK NEMESIS, ZUT ALORS 1.

# THE 1996 ADVENTURERS CONVENTION

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## **Important News from Larry Horsfield (one of the organizers, in case you didn't know!)**

No, we've not changed the date again, this is much better news! We have been delighted by the response so far and have decided to keep the ticket price at £7 per person – it was to be £8 each after 31st July. Anyone who may have already paid £8 will either get a refund or the £1 will pay for their entry fee to the Megapoints Competition.

The latter will this year feature a game by yours truly, adapted from a new adventure entitled "The Fortress of Fear". Entry forms will be sent out with your tickets, which you will receive approximately 2 weeks before the convention.

So far most of those who have bought tickets for the convention are the die-hards who always attend, but we are pleased to see some new names attending for the first time. Looking forward to seeing everyone in Brum in October. Bye for now.

## NEWSDESK

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### **New Adventure by Philip Richmond (of C.A.T. fame)**

"Paranormal Palace" was obviously inspired by one of my own favourite TV series, X-Files. Fresh from "Piggery Jokery", Blake once again finds himself playing the part of a hero, and saving the world, again. However, even if you don't like science fiction you should still find the game interesting. Not a large game, yet full of exciting (weird?) characters. Philip himself describes it as a mini-adventure (I think it is more of a medium one!). Mustn't say any more or I will spoil the surprise. Not a difficult game, but really enjoyable to play.

It will run on all models of Amiga. I understand it is available from Zenobi Software and SynTax at their usual Public Domain prices.

### **New Release From WoW Software**

"Where is Zeus?" by Frank Fridd is a three-part adventure. Zeus has disappeared. This is devastating news for it means he can't send any rain to fill the rivers and make the crops grow. In part one you have to find some important items needed for your search for him and also a way of travelling up to the clouds, where part two starts. Here you will meet some of the gods (but not Zeus) who may or may not be ready to help you in your quest. You are back on terra firma for part three, and if you are clever you will actually find the great god himself.

This is a real delight to play. Please see advertisement in this issue for full ordering details.

### **New Release From The Adventure Workshop**

Last month I told Amstrad owners about Peter Clark's latest adventure "Sleepin' Again" (see WoW advertisement for details). Well, Phil Reynolds has been very quick off the mark and has converted it so Spectrum owners can now play it.

Fly off in a Tardis to the land of fantasy and thoroughly enjoy yourself.

Please see advertisement for full ordering details

## OBJECTS AND THEIR USES

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### KEY TO PARADOX played by Anon on an Amstrad

- Angel .....get her name and remember it  
Book of Calls .....it needs the codeword from idol  
Box .....open it to get pill  
Cage .....needed to catch the butterfly  
Candle .....mix with ice for wax  
Crowbar .....where the dickens did you find this?  
Dark angel .....needs the heart  
Dig (1) .....outside sandcastle for fish  
Dig (2) .....at pillbox to obtain seeds  
Dig (3) .....west of serpent to get casket  
Eye .....replace it in idol  
Fish .....feed to mouse  
Flowers .....give to wolf  
Frog .....are you playing Heroes of Kam or what?  
Fruit .....no obvious usage  
Hat .....will transport you through Paradox from chasm  
Heart .....give it to the dark angel  
Ice .....mix candle with it for wax  
Idol .....will give codeword for book  
Iron Y .....the key to Paradox at the end  
Key .....replace it in idol  
Knife .....to cut the wolf  
Lawgiver .....speak to him  
Master .....speak to him then answer his riddle  
Mouse (1) .....drop in front of the cat at tower  
Mouse (2) .....move around a mat for icons etc.  
Organ .....play to attract the angel  
Parchment .....bears the word of power  
Pill .....makes you smaller to enter (sand)castle  
Sandcastle .....build it at hat location  
Satchel .....at start, needed to carry objects  
Seeds .....tum into flowers by magic  
Serpent .....carry butterfly to lull it  
Snake .....was on holiday when this game was written  
Spell .....read it from Book of Calls  
Staff .....plant it on mountain for tree  
Tree .....climb it to cross fissure  
Wax .....put in ears to dull sounds

## GETTING YOU STARTED

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### **CRYSTAL CAVERN** played by Karen Tyers on a Spectrum – also available on Amstrad

Start at falls. W, W, W, GET VIOLET, EXAM VIOLET, W, S, IN, U, CRUSH VIOLET (you shrink), IN, GET PIE, GET CHEESE, OUT, CRUSH VIOLET (you return to normal). D, GET PIN, OUT, N, NW, IN, GET BOOT, OUT, SE, E, N, N, GET JACK (he flies away), W, N, W, S, WAVE PIN, GET JACK, SE, SE, E, E, E, GET TOAD, E, IN .....

### **DANGER! ADVENTURER AT WORK!** played on a C64 – also available on Amstrad and Spectrum

Start inside a pub with no visible exits. I (nothing), TAKE STOOL, THROW STOOL (at window, which breaks), CLIMB through WINDOW (into street outside), E, IN (to phone box), TAKE ROPE, OUT, N, E (field), TAKE BULL (need rope), W, S, E, S (into china shop). The shopkeeper produces a pair of boltcutters, the bull takes fright and gallops out of the shop, closely followed by the shopkeeper. LOOK, TAKE CUTTERS, N, W, IN, X TELEPHONE, CUT WIRES (need boltcutters), DROP CUTTERS, TAKE RECEIVER, OUT, E, E, S, GIVE RECEIVER .....

### **FORESTLAND** played by Dorothy Millard on a C64 – also on Amstrad and maybe other computers(?)

Start on a shady woodland path. N, GET TORCH, EXAMINE TORCH (not alight), N, N, E, E (to dead tree), SW (to clearing), S, W, S (to Fairy Ring), EXAMINE STONE (could be something under it), MOVE STONE, GET ornate KEY, W, W, U (into Oak Tree), SE (to end of a huge bough), EXAMINE BOUGH (in a small niche are some golden acorns), GET ACORNS, NW, D, N, NE, W, W, S, E, N (to Oak Tree with Door), UNLOCK DOOR WITH KEY, OPEN DOOR, ENTER .....

### **INVINCIBLE ISLAND** played by Edwina Brown on a Spectrum – also available for various other computers

E, E, E, N, IN, TAKE NECKLACE, OUT, S, W, W, W, W, TAKE KEY, N, TAKE FOOD, IN, TAKE POTION, OUT, E, OPEN CHEST, UNLOCK CHEST, OPEN CHEST, DRINK POTION, LOOK, TAKE PARCHMENT, EXAMINE PARCHMENT, DROP KEY, N, TAKE AXE, N, N, GIVE NECKLACE TO NATIVE, S, S, EXAMINE SIGN .....

### **LOST PHIRIOUS Pt.3 (Falkrhanon)** played by Ellen Mahon on an Amstrad

SOUTH, EAST, SAY 1, EAST, EAST, NORTH, WEST, GET ROPE, EAST, SOUTH, EAST, EAST, SOUTH, SOUTH, GET KEBAB (now you have a skewer), NORTH, NORTH, NORTH, UP, GET BALLOON, SOUTH, SOUTH, WEST, WEST, SOUTH, SOUTH, GET BED, NORTH, EAST, SOUTH, EXAMINE GRILLE, GET KEY (with skewer) .....

### **JERSEY QUEST played by Barbara Gibb on a Spectrum**

Note: You must score 100% in less than 256 moves.

Start in Jersey Airport. TAKE MATCH, TAKE WINE, E (you catch the coach to the wartime underground hospital), N, N, E, N (guardroom). CALL GUARD (you release him from the curse and he fades away), TAKE KEY, UNLOCK CELL (to release the wounded prisoner who asks you to free others, then he too fades away), DROP KEY, TAKE GUN.

U (crossroads), E. Sergeant Bergerac should be here and if you are carrying the Luger pistol he will ask to see your licence. Do not talk to him, instead GIVE GUN (+5%), EXAM STONE (note details), N, TALK FARMER (do not try to do anything with the cow), W (St John's Church). If your score is 20% or more you can TAKE SWORD, W (St. Mary's Church)  
.....

### **NOCTROPOLIS played by Jill Nott on a PC**

Start in your bookshop and enter your office. Get the sweepstake papers from your desk, look at the comic on the stool and get it. Goto Bookstore. When the doorbell rings, approach the door and talk to the girl there - she has a parcel for you. Tell her your name and that you have sweepstake letter, get package which contains a silver and a gold token. Use the silver token and you are transported into the main game in which you emulate your comic book hero Darksheer and defeat the forces of evil.

MAIN STREET - Talk to newsvendor - swap your comic for a newspaper to get him to co-operate. Ask him about every subject available. Then goto

CATHEDRAL - Talk to young boy and learn a gargoyle is keeping the good Father Desmond imprisoned inside. To defeat the gargoyle, get the wire from the left of the screen and take a loose railing. Open panel on right pillar, attach wire and attach railing spike to the wire, then use on gargoyle to electrocute him. Enter cathedral .....

### **SHADOWS OF THE PAST played by Edwina Brown on a Spectrum**

EXAM DWARF, GET STAFF, CAST SMOKE, SEARCH DWARF, GET GLOVES, S, GET RUBY, EXAM STATUE, READ SYMBOLS, N, SAY ALCEM, E, EXAM STATUE, GET ARROWS, S, EXAM SLIME, GET BLOB, D, EXAM PUDDLE, GET OWL, EXAM WALL, RUB SLIME ON LEVER, PULL LEVER, N, CAST LIFE, GET KEY, CAST FIRE AT WALL, E, CAST LIGHT, N, GET COIN, E, E, CAST SMOKE, SE, D, D, D, CAST EARTHQUAKE .....

### **ZUT ALORS 1 played by Dorothy Millard on an Amiga**

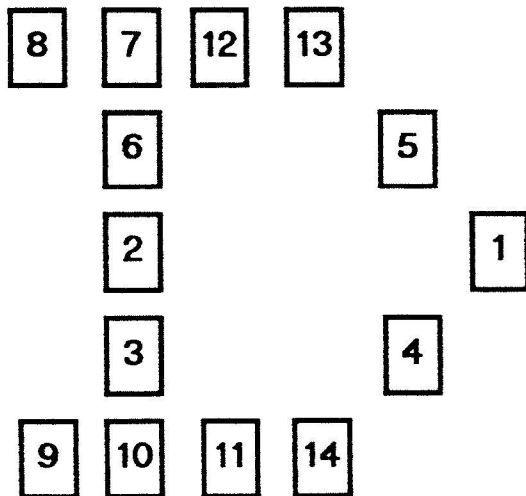
Start just inside the historic south gate of Paris. INVENTORY (carrying Buttercup's reins and your purse containing 10 crowns and wearing travelling clothes and a sheathed sword). N (a street vendor is here selling lamps), BUY LAMP (for three crowns), W, W, N (to stables where the owner asks if you wish to stable your horse), YES, S, E, N (to the notorious Avenue Erd - note if the newspaper vendor isn't here look for him in surrounding locations), BUY PAPER, READ PAPER (you see an advertisement for a reporter at Le Soleil), S, W (to Le Soleil Offices), KNOCK ON DOOR, N (into office where you are given your first assignment and two crowns coach fare), E, IN (coach - you arrive in Marseilles, OUT (to coach terminus), E (to outside theatre where you see a doorman who won't let you pass). DRAW SWORD (he runs off), SHEATH SWORD, E .....

## HINTS AND TIPS

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### 7TH GUEST played by Jenny Perry on a PC

Click on the cards in the order given below to solve the puzzle.



### BESTIARY played by Barbara Gibb on an Amstrad

To find the Phoenix, travel west from the city gates until you reach the middle of the desert.

Light the Phoenix's fire with the glass ball.

To finish – return to your dying father and TELL (him your) STORY then sit back and watch it on screen.

### COSMIC ADVENTURE played by John Schofield on a Spectrum

The following are some of the notes at the end of John's solution.

1. You are limited to carrying 4 objects maximum.
2. Attempting to land on KROBLONE means you are captured. To escape SAY "HELLO" and then SAY "EXPLORING" to the leader's question.
3. Don't attempt to land on RHIJO – it's atmosphere is acidic.
4. A lazer gun can be also found at the northerly scrap metal location on GJUNO. Just X METAL/SCRAP/RUBBISH.
5. Don't hang around after getting a diamond on LUNOD or you will be shot.
6. Get clear of the bomb after setting it. It explodes in 6 turns.

(more next month)

### **THE CALLING played by Barbara Gibb on a Spectrum – also available on the Amstrad**

You need the gloves to protect your hands from the rusty key.

To find the entrance to the cellar, insert the charm into a hollow and say "confidence".

The strange helmet will protect you against spirits but not lightning.

Wear the robes to get past the forcefield.

The boots will put a spring in your feet.

Unlock the machine to release Jenny then go to the attic study and wait until Jenny arrives.

### **CLEAR-UP IN CLOGGIELAND played by Mystic Maggot on an Amiga**

The shopkeepers name could be Fletcher so ring the bell, then making a purchase will enable you to reach your aim later on.

Wave your way north and roll easily past the bull.

You need something on a plate for more help from the old woman. Don't forget to search Connie—for something.

### **CROWN OF RAMHOTEP played by Barbara Gibb on a Spectrum**

To get the ladder up to another level – tie the rope to the bar across the hole in the dark alcove, then lower the rope (into the lair Room), go S, W, N, E, N to the small chamber to get the ladder which you can now tie to the dangling rope. When you return to the dark alcove you can pull the rope and ladder through the hole.

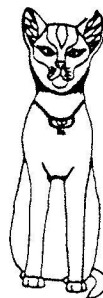
You can fill the cup with oil from the tall jar more than once as a cup of oil in the lamp does not last long.

Put the statue on a slab to beat the trap at the mouth of a tunnel.

Put the disc into the slot in the box to get some leaves. Burn these in the bowl in the vaulted room for a vision and a scroll.

Blow the trumpet in the burial chamber to open the panel leading into the tomb.

When you awaken Ramhotep he will follow you. He will help you find the crown and escape from the pyramid.



### **FORGOTTEN PAST available on Spectrum, C64 and Amstrad**

You need the orchids, herbs and short pole to make the poison.

To kill the Priest, make sure you have the sword, meat and tray.

Only fill the jug at the CLEAR pool.

The goat will eat the meat if you give it a chance.

If you don't wear the robes the villagers will kill you.

**THE GLADIATOR played by Barbara Gibb on a Spectrum – also available for the Amstrad**

Hit Petrinea with the club so that her husband drops something.

Tie the rope to the goat then go to the tavern.

Make a special cup of coffee (need mug, hot water, milk, coffee and crystals) then give it to the jailer.

**GOLDEN MASK played by Edwina Brown on a Spectrum**

After going west climb out of the boat.

Examine the giant cross then pull it.

Pull the bell rope to summon Drakon (you must be wearing the hood).

Go back over the lake and up the tree, then go down three times.

Climb the tree which drips blood to find the life spell.

Examine the large ugly grey rocks to find an opening.

Get Sid and cast the life spell.

**GREAT AUSSIE ADVENTURE played by the author, Dorothy Millard, on a C64 – also available on Amiga(e)**

PART ONE – CANBERRA

The torch is in the Tasmanian Garden.

To obtain the ticket in the dinosaur museum you will need the stick and torch. Exit the museum a couple of times until the small boy is present, examine him and the curator will follow in hot pursuit. Use this time to get the keys and change the clock. When the curator returns and starts packing up you must hide.

PART TWO – TREASURE HUNT

Don't drop the penny or money – if you do someone else will pick them up and you won't see them again.

Blow that dingo!

Having trouble with the bats? They hate noise.

**HERMITAGE played by Edwina Brown on a Spectrum – also available on Amstrad and C64**

Throw the crucifix at the woman lying in bed.

Wear the wet blanket to drag the body from the burning hut.

At the dead end say hello to the woman.

Examine the leaves in the first clearing to find a staff.

To cross the bridge give coins to the man.

When lost in the mountains, use map.

**JESTER QUEST played by Edwina Brown on a Spectrum – also available on Atari(e), Amiga(e), PC(e) and MAC(e)**

- Eat the biscuit to reach the toilet chain.
- Squeeze the bane and then dip the arrow into it.
- Drink the ale at the base of the cliff to be transported upwards.
- Pull the candlestick to reveal a secret passage.
- The mica will protect you from the dragon.
- Use the soda syphon to put out the dragon's pilot light.

**LANDS OF LORE played by Steve McLaren on a PC**

- To board a ship at the Marina, show the writ to the blonde babe who will get safe passage one way.
- When you have docked you must find the Grey Eagle Inn where you will find Tim. Recruit him and he will help you on your quest.
- Once you find Roland's Manor you will find it has been destroyed by Orcs. Kill the Orcs and search the manor for Roland.
- When you get back to Gladstone and you see King Richard, tell him of your adventure. Dawn will set your new quest and Tim will leave. Baccta will join you since he knows the Darracies Cave really well.

**LOST DRAGON played by Edwina Brown on a Spectrum**

- Cast spell on pipe to lengthen it.
- Get sandwich before coffee bar closes.
- Prise board from floor in almost bare room.
- Lay plank between balconies and tie with twine. Lay pipe on plank and tie it.
- Cast spell on box to open it, then take it out onto the balcony.
- Unroll blanket over hole in floor to stop key falling through.
- Do not take orb into bare room before getting Yale key as it will be de-magnetised.
- Insert orb into pipe on Lanky Larry's balcony.
- Raise orb on other balcony to get key.
- Cast spell to shorten red door. Push paper under door then poke keyhole with pen.

**MENAGERIE played by Barbara Gibb on a Spectrum**

- Search the cornfield to find a hat (W, S and S from the edge of the field).
- Go up the hillock to learn your quest.
- You need a badge to access the Blue Level.
- You need the XIS Guide from the Red Level to help you SCAN ALIEN and the Commlink in order to SAY "HELLO" TO <character>.

### **MICRO MUTANT played by Edwina Brown on a Spectrum**

Dig in burnt-out area to find a weapon.

A leaf will protect you from the wasp for a while.

In the shed turn the handle.

Don't forget that when you mutate you drop all you are carrying.

Mind link with the ant and the spider for clues.

Take the pin and thimble with you when you climb the leg.

Throw all you are carrying up to the shelf.

Make sure you are ant-size before climbing the web.

The can is wasp repellent so spray yourself with it.

Push the ruler over the gap then weight onto ruler. Stand on one end of the ruler and jump.

Cut the string to free the plane.

### **MISTY ISLAND played by Barbara Gibb on a C64**

You need a match to get enough light to see what is in the cave.

The list of tides is most important.

Leave the flare and notebook on the rocky beach so that they don't get wet.

The number on the paper is needed for the door in the secret tunnel.

Use the oilskin to protect the torch when it falls into the moat. You need the net to retrieve it.

Untie the rope before climbing down the ladder.

### **OZONE played by Edwina Brown on a Spectrum**

To get money and travellers cheque open wallet. Answer phone for instructions.

To get key and letter climb the toilet and examine the cistern.

Switch switch on handle of briefcase to turn off alarm.

Do not board the jumbo jet.

The password is "Freddie Laker".

When the plane is out of control - stick back.

Throw the snake at the security robot.

Use the crowbar to open the door of the silo.

Wear the bucket to fool the robot leader.

Examine the files then transfer 3.

A bucketful of acid will enable you to pass the robot guard.

Throw the hook to reach to top of the rockface. Drop the screwdriver from a height to short out the electric field.

Use the voice code given in the letter.

## **PHILOSOPHER'S QUEST (enhanced version) – available for BBC, CPC, PCW, IBM, Nimbus, Atari and Archimedes**

Put some heavy objects in the bucket to counterbalance your weight.

You will have to play "leapfrog" to move the slab to another location.

You'll need the gasmask to give you limited protection from the cheese.

The elephant is scared of the mouse.

"Bury" the cheese to save the first dog.

The second dog is north of Piccadilly Circus.

## **RUNAWAY played by Barbara Gibb on a C64**

The combination for the suitcase can be found on the calendar, paper from waste bin, hand on Mickey Mouse clock and the painting of fruit.

Examine the curtains to find a magnet.

Wear the knickers to get some elastic.

Tie the magnet to the broom handle (need the elastic)

In the cellar you can TAKE BLACK key WITH HANDLE, providing the magnet is attached, of course.

Wear the glove when you try to TAKE SILVER KEY from the fish tank.

You need the broom handle (minus the magnet and elastic), nails and hammer to mend the ladder.

On the landing, drop the (repaired) ladder then CLIMB UP LADDER to reach the hatch.

The drawers in the desk are unimportant.

## **SEABASE DELTA played by Barbara Gibb on a Spectrum – also available for various other computers**

Search the pockets of the dead man to find a travel pass – valid for only six journeys. Travel along the line, leaving the car at each stop, explore for clues and objects. Note the name of each station, they are on a circular line in alphabetical order. Start exploring seriously when you reach Station Beta.

The means to fix the button in lift 1 is in the DDDDeep Ffffreeze. Chew it then STICK BUTTON so that you can go up to the third level at Station Beta.

Press the switch in the Power Distribution Centre. The rock 'n' roll song is a clue on how to reach the warhead of the nuclear missile.

Fire the speargun at the giant octopus then fill the pen with its ink. Don't forget to re-take the pen.

You need the dental pincers to pull the nails to free the plank.

Read the message in the Communications Room for a clue concerning the conveyor belt. Note the fork has a prong missing.

### **SIMPLY MAGIC played by Barbara Gibb on an Amstrad**

To get a sunbeam, ear the ring and carry the bottle in the room of Sunshine.

To hold down a button, put a block of ice on it.

You can only "see" in the room of darkness if carrying the sunbeam in the bottle.

To get a star you will have to perform the Indian rope trick.

### **SMASHED played by Barbara Gibb on a C64, also available on the Amstrad and Spectrum**

Could the white, round, shiny pills be mistaken for pearls when drilled and strung onto catgut?

The real McCoy can be sold for \$200.

To help the guy who seems to have swallowed a live grenade – search under the seat of the jeep.

Lubricate the locker hinges with the French fries.

When you try to ENTER MESS (S is not recognized) you will be asked for a password. Call Rancid on the Tanoy (note spelling) then bribe him to get the password.

You have to CHEAT at cards until you have enough money to buy back the still (\$245).

### **SNOW QUEEN played by Edwina Brown on a Spectrum – also available on C64, Atari(e), Amiga(e), PC(e) and MAC(e)**

#### Part Two

In the pit – to get the ladder, file it.

Climb the tree to reach the vaulted chamber.

There are candles in the crates.

Drop the book (it is a very dry one) in flooded chamber.

A candle will light your way up the spiral staircase.

Look behind the picture in the attic tower.

### **TEARS OF THE MOON played by Edwina Brown on a Spectrum – also available on Atari(e), Amiga(e), PC(e), MAC(e)**

Slide wall to enter compound. Examine building three times.

Cut wax to find a screwdriver.

Crawl through to avoid bullet.

Move the bed to disclose a panel. Get metal box from hidey hole.

At chasm eat the berry then jump chasm.

On the shore examine and be guided by the text.

Open door of car and release lever.

## **TIME THIEF played by Barbara Gibb on a C64**

### Part 1

Examine the vegetable garden to find a makeshift mortar. Use the fork handle as a pestle.

Mix charcoal, saltpetre and flowers of sulphur to make gunpowder.

The "white object" disappears when approached unless you have a feeling of magic.

Examine the parasol for a hint.

Fill the skull with gunpowder. Insert and light the fuse, then go W and WAIT. When you return to the lawn you only have one more action (but 2 inputs) to complete part one.

## **VALHALLA 3 (Fortress of Eve) played by Barbara Gibb on an Amiga**

### Level 2

The key found in the bucket opens the door between King Arthur and the woodcutter.

You need to drink the strength potion in order to take the log to the woodcutter. He will turn it into a plank which you can use to cross the hole to open up more playing area.

Florence Nightingale can "help" the man with toothache. After giving the "wrong" homework to the school teacher, return to where you met him. He has now disappeared, leaving a key behind. This key unlocks the door to the west of King Arthur.

Put the pepper on the key that "you can't have" – this is the key that unlocks the door to the west of the journalist.

The key by the engaged couple opens the chest near the AG symbol stone. Ask your ancestor about what you find in the chest.

You can duplicate the bi-lingual pill. Eating one will enable you to converse with the French tourist. Give the love letter to the journalist – you can now wreck a marriage before it even started.

Put a ring on King Henry VIII's tomb.

Eat the clever pill to get the attention of the mathematician. He will correct your homework for you, which will please the school teacher so much he gives you a key to unlock the door which is down the steps near the villager you made sneeze.

King Arthur needs something to find his way around Avalon.

To catch a fish, drop the rod in the angling pool.

## **YELLOW PERIL played by Barbara Gibb on a C64**

A magic word will gain you access to the very tall tower.

When wet, remember where you saw a fire.

Climb a tree to gain a branch. Another tree has something equally useful. One will help you, get the other.

Push the Yellow Whatsit, he goes away, but only for one move.

You need the ladder to enable you to climb into the pit.

To finish – remember the advice in the bible.

# SOLUTION OF THE MONTH

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## CORPORAL STONE

Written by James Taylor

**Solution by Barbara Gibb on a Spectrum – also available on Atari(e), Amiga(e), PC(e) and MAC(e)**

Start in a carpark beside car and body of Ivan. MOVE BODY (find a spade), TAKE SPADE, TAKE BOTTLE, X CAR, IN CAR, TAKE RAGS, SEARCH GLOVE compartment, TAKE TUBING, OUT CAR, SIPHON PETROL (into bottle using tubing), DROP TUBING, PUT RAGS (into what?), IN BOTTLE (now have petrol bomb), PRESS BUTTON (doors of lift open), N (into lift), X PANEL (numbers 1 to 5), PRESS 2.

S (in hall of shopping mall), W (clothes shop) X ASSISTANT, TALK TRACEY, X CLOTHES, E, E (garden centre), X MANURE, SEARCH MANURE (find token), X MAN, TALK MAN, X PLANTS, W, S, W (betting shop), X SLIPS, SEARCH SLIPS, TAKE SLIP, GIVE SLIP (won £5), TAKE FIVER, E, E (toy shop), R or any input, HIT KID, GRAB KID, SHAKE KID (now have pullover), X CLOWN, INSERT TOKEN, UNWRAP PRIZE (got disguise), W, N, W (clothes shop), GIVE PULLOVER (given anorak), S, S (meet group of yobs), WEAR ANORAK, WEAR DISGUISE – can now go W (book shop), X BOOKS, READ FRENCH book (now understand French), E (sports shop), X MAN, X GOODS, BUY RACQUET (need at least £3), W, N, N, E (garden centre), TALK MAN (you can converse, he gives you a wedge of cheese), S, E (toy shop), TALK MAN, X MAN, X TRAIN, X PASSENGERS, PUT CHEESE (where?) ON TRACK (train crashes, killing the little people. If you don't do this you will get a nasty surprise at the end of the game), W, N, E, BUY FUCHSIA (need at least £2), W, S, S, S, NW (by building), TAKE HERRING, X WALL (clue), PUSH WALL (now in Hell). The devil asks you a riddle – SAY SQUARE (it means 64 squares on a chess board) – you are given a key and ejected from hell. NE, NE, NE, X LION, REMOVE THORN (note what lion says), SW, SW, UNLOCK DOOR (need skeleton key – now in fire engine), FASTEN BELT, START ENGINE (need key again), DRIVE (crash into building but OK if you fastened belt).

You are now approaching a point of no return, so drop key, and anorak; you should still have disguise, racquet, fuchsia, herring, petrol bomb and spade. NE, U (top of engine), X PANEL, PRESS SWITCH, PRESS BUTTON (ladder extends), CLIMB LADDER (now in gymnasium), RIDE BIKE (to get fit before you go south), S (lobby – alien approaches and challenges you to a game of squash; you will win if you are fit and carrying the racquet), DROP RACQUET, E, E, X POOL, FEED SHARK (need herring), ENTER POOL (now have oil can), S (changing room), SEARCH CLOTHES, TAKE TUB (of weed killer), N, W, N (gym), X TAMPOLINE, OIL WHEELS (need oil can), DROP CAN, PUSH TRAMPOLINE (it goes south), S, PUSH TRAMPOLINE (it goes west), W (squash court), BOUNCE (through hole).

X PLANTS, GIVE FUCHSIA (to starving aphid), CLIMB BEANSTALK, TAKE CORD, CLIMB BEANSTALK, TAKE MATCH, D, D, N, X BILL. Redescribe until Bill runs towards you, now SAY OXO (Bill killed by lion), X VENUS, R until venus fly trap say "feed me". STRIKE MATCH, LIGHT RAGS, and THROW BOMB (kills venus fly trap and blows hole in north wall).

N, READ SIGN, N, X ALIEN (sitting in chair), X DRESS, X CHAIR, TIE DRESS, TO RING, HIDE, SHOUT (trapdoor now open), X HOLE, TAKE PACK, X PACK, ATTACH LEADS, TO CHAIR, SWITCH ON (fries alien), DETACH LEADS, DROP PACK, NE, X BED, R (alien enters and attacks sleeper), REMOVE DISGUISE, PUT DISGUISE, ON ALIEN (a fight will start, allowing you to go northwest), NW, X CUPBOARD. When alien goes north, TIE CORD, TO CUPBOARD. R until alien returns then PULL CORD (contents bury alien), X DOOR, FORCE DOOR, WITH SPADE, N, THROW TUB (OK if given fuchsia to aphid as a swarm of them enter and attack the aliens). THE END

## SERIALIZED SOLUTION

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### KING'S QUEST 6

#### Solution by Terry Taylor on an Amiga

(continue from last month)

#### THE CATACOMBS

*(The Catacombs are on two levels – and the only safe way through is to map them out)*

#### LEVEL ONE

There are 4 "trap floor" rooms *(where, without warning, the floor gives way beneath Alexander)* – 3 of these rooms lead to his death; 1 is the entrance to Level 2.

The Floor Tile Room – use the following rhyme from the manual to work out which tile to walk on:

Three roses laid upon the bower,  
A scythe for he who cuts the flowers,  
A crown, a dove, most noble race!  
Try bones make sacred this dread place.

*(From the entrance to the room – Rose(N); Rose(SW); Rose(SW); Scythe(N); Crown(N); Dove(NW); Bones(SW); Blank tile(S); Exit)*

As Alexander enters, the doors close and the ceiling starts to descend.

USE THE BRICK ON THE COG WHEELS to jam the gears and stop the ceiling descending. The doors will also open.

There are 3 objects to be found on Level 1.

PICK UP THE SKULL (SE corner of Level 1)

*(From the first location in the Catacombs – N, N, E, E, N)*

PICK UP THE SHIELD from the wall (Middle of Level 1)

*(From the Floor Tile Room – W, N)*

USE THE HAND ICON ON THE SKELETON in the alcove to find the two coins (NW corner of Level 1)

*(From where the shield is found – N, N, N, W, W)*

## LEVEL TWO

There are 2 "trap floor" rooms on Level 2 – both deadly.

The room into which Alexander falls from Level 1 is in darkness – he cannot move without light.

USE THE TINDERBOX ON ALEXANDER – in the half-light provided by the tinderbox, Alexander notices that the torch in this room has gone out – he uses the tinderbox to re-light it.

Find the Dead End room

*(From the start location on Level 2 – W, W, W, W, W, S, S, E)*

On entering, Alexander hears the sound of a wild beast "so loud that the creature itself seems to be in the same room with him". The noises are coming from the other side of the East wall.

USE THE HOLE-IN-THE-WALL ON THE EAST WALL – Alexander sees the Minotaur in the next room, opening a secret door behind the tapestry.

Find the room with the tapestry

*(From the Dead End Room – W, W, W, S, S, E, S, E, E, N, E, N, N)*

USE THE HAND ICON ON THE TAPESTRY – Alexander finds a hidden latch and opens the secret door.

*(Alexander can only open the secret door if he has previously seen the Minotaur doing it through the hole-in-the-wall)*

Go East through the opening in the wall.

As Alexander enters, the Minotaur is struggling with Celeste. Celeste notices Alexander, and calls to him for help. This alerts the Minotaur to Alexander's presence. The Minotaur turns and approaches Alexander, who backs up to the fire.

Quickly, before the Minotaur attacks, USE THE RED SCARF ON THE MINOTAUR. The Minotaur charges at the red scarf; Alexander dodges, matador-style, and the Minotaur falls into the fire. Alexander uses Celeste's dagger to free her, and she GIVE HIM THE DAGGER as a gift. They leave through a secret exit at the top of the Cliffs.

The winged guardians take Alexander back to Lord Azure and Lady Aerial. For rescuing Celeste, Alexander is granted an audience with the Oracle.

Take notice of the Oracle's words. She tells Alexander that if he is to save Cassima, he will have to do battle with a dark force, in the shape of a black cloak. *(i.e. the black-cloaked man from the village, who we now know to be Alhazred's genie)*. She also tells of two restless spirits crying out for revenge. *(i.e. King Caliphim and Queen Allaria, Cassima's father and mother, who were killed by Alhazred)*, who could help Alexander if brought back from their spiritual form. She advises Alexander to seek counsel from the Druid on the Isle of Mists in this respect, and GIVE ALEXANDER A VIAL OF WATER from the sacred pool. The winged guardians return Alexander to the Beach.

(more next month)

## USEFUL ADDRESSES

- Adventure Probe** - 52 Burford Road, Liverpool L16 6AQ
- Adventure Workshop** - 36 Grasmere Road, Royton, Oldham. OL2 6SR
- Amster Productions** - 81 Uplands, Welwyn Garden City, Herts. AL8 7EH
- Binary Zone PD** - 34 Portland Road, Droitwich, Worcs. WR9 7QW
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- Vulcan Software Ltd.** - Vulcan House. 72 Queens Road, Buckland, Portsmouth,  
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BARBARA BASSINGTHWAIGHTE	01935 26174	SUN - SAT 10am-10pm Spectrum & BBC
BARBARA GIBB	0151 280 5616	Afternoon & Evening Various
SUE ROSEBLADE	01480 380608	Any day 10am to 10pm All computers
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Ring **GRUE** on 01695 573141 between 7.30pm and 9.00pm Monday - Friday  
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