

ADVENTURE PROBE

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ADVENTURE PROBE

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

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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

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

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HALL OF FAME

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

Karen Tyers, John Schofield, Christopher Heppinstall, Dorothy Millard, Edwina Brown,
Laurence Creighton and Bev Truter.

Special thanks to the staff of The Copyshop, Allerton, Liverpool



EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

First, some wonderful news. I am now the proud own of a PC, thanks to a very, very generous benefactor. Those who know me won't be surprised to learn that so far it has been used almost exclusively for playing text adventures (also Solitaire by the family). I am planning, sometime in the future, to prepare the whole magazine on it. I have already obtained the fonts I need, and the logos are being scanned and converted to a usable format, but it is going to take me a lot longer to learn the new software. I would like to collect clipart suitable for illustrating the magazine; by this I mean pictures that will load into Microsoft Publisher, and compliment the text of the magazine. From experience I have found that they look best if they have strong lines and little or no colour/shading so that they photocopy nicely. If anyone has suitable pictures, or knows the best source, I shall be grateful for your advice.

With such a posh PC in residence, I have invested in a new printer, and this should greatly improve the print quality of the magazine, when I get myself sorted out. I can now revise the regular pages such as "Useful Addresses" and "Helplines", which have, until now, been typed up by Geoff, the former printer of the magazine. If you would like your name added (or deleted) from these pages please let me know as soon as possible - it will be good practice for me. I hope to incorporate postal and e-mail addresses on one page. There are a few additions to this month's e-mail addresses, and George Rawson suggests I publish the type of computer owned. I think I am correct in thinking everyone is using a PC except George, who uses an Amiga 1200 and would like to hear from other Amiga owners. If I am wrong, please let me know.

I will also be able to compile the front covers, when I have suitable pictures. Print Artist 4 has some lovely graphics but I haven't yet worked out how to import them to the Desktop, or alternatively, produce the cover within Print Artist, although I think it is possible.

I haven't heard from Phil Reynolds for about 5 months, and know it is the same story for many readers. I understand he has been having trouble with his new computer system, but things are supposed to be back on course and everyone should hear from him soon. I shall be interested to hear from anyone who does. Maybe I will know more by the time I write my next editorial.

It can be most frustration when hardware lets you down, as I found out recently when the internal drive went on my Amiga 600. Does anyone know where I can get a new drive, but it must be cheap?

Now for my usual pleas regarding contributions, plus a reminder. I use a lot of material for each issue, and although I am fairly well off with reviews I can always use more, also I would welcome articles, quizzes and hints for games, or if not, more suggestions for games to be featured. Mary's "Dungeon Master 2" concludes this month, so I am looking for suggestions, or better still, copies of solutions suitable for serialization. The reminder? It is a great help to me and my chaotic filing system if items for different sections are on separate pieces of paper - e.g. Personals on one piece of paper, and In Touch or Review on another. Of course, if you wish to send your contributions on disk, I can print them out myself, ready for the appropriate folder.

That's all for this month. 'Til next month, happy adventuring.

Barbara

LETTERS

From Dorothy Millard in Australia

While reading the February, 1998 edition of Probe my attention was drawn to the article written by John Ferris regarding the 1997 Interactive Fiction Competition. Many of the views expressed by John are echoes by myself.

I too read the long reviews and thought many of them overly critical and harsh. It was as though they *had* to find something to criticize. I wonder if it is possible to please the reviewers. I would certainly think twice before submitting a game in the competition. I also agree that the Interactive Fiction scene on the Internet is moving more and more towards fiction than puzzle-orientated text adventures.

Thanks Barbara for the invitation to the Adventurer's Convention to be held in Birmingham. I know you are trying to persuade people from outside the British Isles to participate, but Australia is just a little too far!!!

Referring to the letter from Roger Staff (February, 1998), the other good Spectrum Emulator is the X128. This works well but doesn't allow you to save your position in order to play multiple part games. I'd be happy to send Roger a copy of this if he would like to contact me. Additionally, I have successfully emulated Amstrad, TRS 80, Dragon, Oric, C64 and Apple games. I haven't got a BBC emulator working because I have been unable to obtain the necessary ROMs.

With regard to which PC adventures are best to start with, that very much depends on your taste, but I enjoyed John's Fire Witch, Humbug, Uncle Zebulon's Will and Oklib's Revenge.

I read with interest the problems sent in by Ellen Mahon and managed to solve a grand total of 1 (one). I await with interest the solutions in due course. No wonder I never win the competitions! I did, however, do a little better with the stage names sent in by Lee Morrall.

I am placing the C64 games written by myself in the Public Domain. Please note that PC emulated versions are now available. If anyone would like copies please contact me. I will also forward them to the Probe office.

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I would like to add "Son of Stagefright" to the list of recommended games. I started this game a very long time ago on the Atari, but have since finished it, with help, on the PC. "John's Fire Witch" will be reviewed by Karen Tyers in the next issue.

I didn't have room in the February issue for all of Ellen's Problems, so the remaining five are in this magazine, and the answers will be published in the April or May issue.

Dorothy has indeed sent me a copy of her games to be played under emulation. They require unzipping, but after that all you need is there, including a read me file, the emulator and, of course, the adventures. "Convention Blues" will be reviewed by Bev Truter in the next issue. (Barbara)

REVIEWS

ANCHORHEAD

Written by Michael Gentry

Reviewed by Karen Tyers on a PC



This is another game I downloaded from the Internet and is available at <ftp://ftp.gmd.de/if-archive/games/inform/Anchor/Z8>

The if-archive site is an absolute must if you have access to it as there are a lot of very good text adventures available there. The introduction to this game is almost a short story in itself but I will reproduce it here because it will give you an idea about the quality and atmosphere of the game.

".....Raindrops spatter down onto the pavement. You take a deep breath of salty air. And the swollen, slate coloured clouds that blanket the sky, mutter ominous portents amongst themselves over the little coastal town of Anchorhead. Squinting up into the glowering storm, you wonder how everything managed to happen so fast. The strange phone call over a month ago, from a lawyer claiming to represent the estate of some distant branch of Michael's family, was bewildering enough in itself, but then the sudden whirlwind of planning and decisions, legal details and travel arrangements, the packing up and shipping away of your entire house, your entire life..... Now suddenly, here you are, after driving for the past two days straight, over a thousand miles away from the familiar warmth of Texas, getting ready to move into the ancestral mansion of a clan of relatives so far removed, that even Michael has never heard of them. And you've only been married since June, and none of this was any of your idea in the first place, and already it's starting to rain. These days, you often find yourself feeling confused and uprooted.

You shake yourself and force the melancholy thoughts from your head, trying to focus on the errand at hand. You're to pick up the keys to the house while Michael runs across town to take care of some paperwork at the University. He'll be back to collect you in a few minutes, then the two of you can begin the long process of settling in. A sudden belch emanates from the clouds, and the rain starts coming down harder — fat cold drops, smacking loudly against the cobblestones. Shouldn't it be snowing in New England at this time of year? With a sigh, you open your umbrella. Welcome to Anchorhead....."

Well, with an intro like that I could hardly wait to get into the game. Reading the "about" section so thoughtfully included by the author, you find out that the game is divided into "days" with various puzzles needing to be completed during a particular day. Time does not pass as such, but when you have completed all necessary tasks for one section, the day turns into evening and you will need to go back to the house to sleep. Armed with this information I found myself outside the Real Estate office where I was supposed to pick up the keys, but it was locked and obviously empty. Off I went on walkabout to discover an alley leading round the back with a window which was too high to reach. Having solved that one I managed to get hold of the house keys and I then proceeded to explore the town and found several very interesting places, such as a courthouse that was closed on that day, a church

I couldn't get into, a vacant lot, complete with mattress, a locked door under a bridge, and several other places, but couldn't seem to do a lot at the time.

I found the University and library where Michael was reading, waiting for me as the car had broken down. From there, we walked to the house, and went inside. The info bar at the top told me it was now evening, so I went to bed and had some very strange dreams...

Waking on the morning of Day Two, I decided some exploration was in order so after getting dressed I started looking round the house. Immediately accessible was a library with a couple of useful books, a study where Michael was working and didn't want to be disturbed. Venturing a little further I found a child's bedroom and discovered an attic, but since I didn't have a light with me, and we had been told there was no electricity, I decided to leave that and go downstairs. All the luggage was in the foyer of the house, so I had a quick look through that, and found the dining room, kitchen and pantry, and cellar. Having by now located a torch, I went down into the cellar, and found a storage room where a poisonous spider was lurking, and a wine cellar absolutely full to the brim with bottles. Nothing doing there, so into the attic I went, only to be confronted with a locked door. Something was blocking the keyhole, but there was a light shining out from under the door...

Several puzzles later, and a visit to the town, I then found that Michael was missing, but had left his computer running. However, I had to somehow find a passcode to enable me to look at it. I also found a secret set of passages running between the walls of the house, and a safe for which I hadn't yet found a combination. However, after a lot of headscratching and running around, I managed to solve the problems of Day Two and went to bed, only to find I was having really weird dreams again...

On waking to Day Three, Michael was asleep beside me, and getting up, I looked at him, only to find that his feet were covered in mud! however, I disturbed him while getting dressed, and he was really irritable and wandered off (to do his own thing presumably). However, I managed to keep an eye on him, and spotted him mucking around in the cellar with the bottles. On entering the cellar I found the bottles he had been playing around with, and found several dates on them. By now I had acquired a whole heap of names, dates and objects, so decided to visit the records office in the courthouse where I was able to look up several names and dates which provided quite a lot of information. I also visited the library to check up on what Michael had been reading that first day, which also proved to be a mine of information. By this time I had managed to open the door in the attic (an old trick this one and I nearly missed it, but was talking to someone else who was playing who had got past this point).

I could go on and on about the things to do and see in this game but it would take up far too many pages. Suffice to say the rest of Day Three and Day Four are jam-packed with puzzles, some fairly easy and some very difficult, but I did manage to finish it finally.

The atmosphere of this game is unbelievably good, very Infocomish, and draws you further and further into the plot as the tension grows and you uncover even more of an horrific mystery. The sense of relief when it is all over is overwhelming. This game has to be one of the best I've seen in many a long year and has to be an absolute must for any adventurer. If you don't have a PC, try to find a friend who has, just for the pleasure of playing this one. The game is freeware, so if you have a PC but no access to the internet, just contact me, and I'll be more than happy to pass a copy on - I really don't think anyone should miss this one.

I believe this is the author's first offering, and I found no bugs or spelling mistakes. If this is any indication of the quality of games he is going to write, I can't wait for the next one.

KNIGHTS (v2.24)

Written by Kalle Marjola

Reviewed by Paul A. Hardy and Stephanie L. Rhodes on an Amiga

"KNIGHTS" is a two-player arcade adventure written in AMOS by Kalle Marjola from Finland, and what a well-written piece of software it is!

The game requires 1Mb to run and, as its name suggests, allows you and a friend to take on the role of two Knights. They're rival Knights, in fact, and explore a dungeon complex hoping to complete a pre-determined quest before their opponent. The winner will get to hold his arms high in exultation, whilst the loser will be left to hang his head in shame...

When "KNIGHTS" first loads, you are greeted with the Game Menu, from which all aspects of the dungeon to be explored in the game can be modified. Which quest you will participate in; whether the dungeon will be pre-mapped (or whether it will map automatically as you explore); how many keys, gems and other items you will be able to find; whether some doors and chests will be trapped or not; the size of the dungeon to be explored; even the colour of your Knight's armour can be modified from this screen, with just a click of the joystick button. The game is controlled solely with joysticks. You can use the keys if you would prefer, although we found joystick playing to be definitely easier!

There are a number of pre-set quests for you to participate in, each with a suitably atmospheric name, such as "The Lost Book of the Gnome King", "The Tomb of the Liche Lord" and "The Ancient Wand of Death". Each quest has a certain number of objects, monsters and rooms to be explored, and the number of monsters and objects encountered can be modified, making it either easier or harder to complete the quest as desired. Or if you prefer, you can customize your own dungeon – what about a huge tunnel network, with plenty of objects, traps and brimming with monsters? Either player can change any attribute of the game, but they both have to select CONTINUE to proceed, once they are in agreement of the game parameters. Consequently, both players strive to complete the quest first, and so win the game.

It is in the dungeon itself where the heart and soul of the game lie. The screen is split into two sections down the middle, with Knight #1 on the left and Knight #2 on the right. The main portion of the screen shows the Knights' view windows (showing the sections of dungeon each Knight is currently in) below which are listed items carried, with the Knights' Health Rating and Map icons below that at the bottom of the screen.

The view windows are 2-D from a perspective above the Knights, and display the current room sections or corridor the Knights occupy, rather like in the "Ultima" series of games. The map sections do not scroll but flip from one screen to another when the edge of the map is reached. This can be either exciting or annoying, depending on your outlook: personally I found it a little of both, to flip to a new screen only to appear next to a Zombie which would inevitably strike me before I could react.

The view windows themselves are a decent size and we had no difficulty determining what items were or how far away monsters were, etc.

Items collected in the game are displayed as icons below the view windows. When a new type of object is picked up – a dagger, for instance – its icon appears for you and subsequent daggers collected appear as icons below the first in a stacking motion. This effectively allows you to swiftly determine how many objects of each type your Knight has.

The main point of the game is to complete the predetermined objective (quest) before the other player. Quests available are many and varied, such as a duel to the death between the Knights; retrieving an object (usually a certain book or wand) and escaping the dungeon; finding a certain wand to destroy another object (usually a book); or merely being the first to escape from the underground with the required number of gems.

However, you are not pitched into the dungeon totally unequipped; you have your sword and may collect other weapons like an axe, a staff, a crossbow, throwing daggers or a maul (hammer), each with varying degrees of combat effectiveness. Staffs can be used to disarm traps by simply hitting any door or chest you think is trapped with it. Crossbows and daggers are good missile weapons, with the crossbow doing more damage but being slower to fire – and you will need to find some quarrels to load it with. The sword, axe and maul can all be used as melee weapons, and can also be used to smash up dungeon furniture such as tables, chairs, barrels, doors and chests, which often contain treasure.

Other useful equipment available in the dungeon include bear traps, which may be set to injure other players or monsters; keys used to unlock some of the dungeon's doors; picklocks, again used for opening locked doors, though picking locks takes a very long time; gems, which are sometimes required to allow you to escape from the dungeon; and poison needles and spring blades, two types of traps you can set on doors and chests for your own amusement.

There is also a large variety of potions and scrolls on offer in the dungeon, with different effects such as healing for your Knight, temporary increased strength, poison immunity, treasure sense, invulnerability or speed, all of which are beneficial to the Knight using them. Other scrolls and potions are less helpful though, and will teleport you elsewhere (usually somewhere near the other Knight), wipe clean your map so you have to re-explore it, paralyse you temporarily, poison you (unless you have active poison immunity) or turn you into an undead Zombie! Poison kills your Knight outright, regardless of his remaining health rating, and likewise being turned into a Zombie slays the Knight in question, too.

When a Knight dies, whether it's in combat, from a trap, falling into a pit, drinking poison (without immunity), being turned magically into a Zombie or whatever, he drops all his equipment. However, the Knight reincarnates and reappears at his original start position so you may continue with the game, minus any equipment you collected. Only a Knight's sword remains with him, but there is of course nothing to stop him going back to his previous point of death to reclaim his missing equipment – unless the other Knight snatches it first, that is! Fortunately, there is no limit to the amount of times each Knight can be resurrected, which is just as well as you will probably be killed quite often. Another good feature of the game is that dead bodies of both Knights and monsters don't vanish but stay where they are, so you may reminisce about fights past as you re-enter their locations.

"KNIGHTS" (v2.24) is an excellent game which will keep a couple of players amused for hours at a time. It can be played solo, with just one Knight trying to complete the quest whilst fighting Zombies and Vampire Bats – the second Knight will remain motionless at his entrance point as there is no option to switch one (or even both) Knights over to CPU control.

It is as a two-player game that "KNIGHTS" works superbly well. Each randomly created dungeon offers a multitude of possibilities, and setting traps for each other, as well as for monsters, is great fun.

The graphics are good and functional without being brilliant and the sound, limited to weapons swipes, grunts when injured, magical effects and objects being smashed open, is also fine. Lack of any in-game music may upset some, but it wasn't necessary in my view and would have added little to the game's fantastic claustrophobic atmosphere.

THERE'S A HOLE IN YOUR BUCKET

Written by Karen Tyers

Reviewed by Edwina Brown on a Spectrum

You must all, at some time or another, have sung "There's a hole in my bucket, dear Liza, dear Liza" Well, now you can play out that song in this lovely little adventure by Karen Tyers.

You are told that your dearly beloved wants to clean the windows. "Bring me a bucket of water" she orders, and when She Who Must Be Obeyed (SWMBO for short) says jump that is just what you must do. Now on the face of it, getting a bucket of water does not seem to be too difficult. However, there is a snag, or rather two snags. Firstly, you cannot remember where you left the bucket; secondly, and this you can remember, there is a large hole in it.

At the start of the game you are standing by your front door, with paths leading off in all directions. The door is open, so pop into the house for a quick look around. In the kitchen you will see SWMBO, standing by the sink. Speak to her and you will be reminded, tartly, that you are supposed to be getting her a bucket of water. "Sorry!" If later you try to placate her with a nice bunch of flowers it does no good, she just bins them. Probably better to keep a wide berth until you can come up with the goods.

Looking around the house you will find a number of useful objects, not all immediately obtainable. Venturing outside once again you see a gate. Open it and go through and you will find yourself in the chicken run. Try to enter the coop though, and your legs and feet will be pecked by the occupants. Perhaps they are hungry and think dinner has arrived?

Further down the path you will come across Blossom, in the pigpen. She does not mind you going in there but try to get into her sty and she just won't let you. Could you have left the bucket in there? It might be a good idea to take a peek, just in case. Food might be the answer, after all, she is a pig.

Eventually you will find the bucket. Now the problem is, how do you mend it? After much head-scratching this problem was at last solved.

Next, where will you get some water? Your supply has been cut off due to non-payment of rates, and the duckpond has dried up, so no luck there! (Obviously they've had different weather than we have for the last month or so!) The answer to this problem was, I found, a bit tricky, but logical.

Playing "THERE'S A HOLE IN YOUR BUCKET" in the Megapoints competition at Birmingham last October, I only managed to score thirty-six points, so probably came last. I have now played it right through, and found it to be thoroughly enjoyable. There are no baddies to contend with (discounting SWMBO) and no sudden deaths, so long as you don't try jumping out of lofts. It is just a "fun" game which I am sure anyone would enjoy.

Atari(e) and Amiga(e) versions available from Adventure Probe - price £2. All proceeds donated to the Probe Fund.

SEASIDE SORCERY

Written by George Hoyle



Played by Bev Truter on a PC under Spectrum emulation

This is a fairly short one-part text adventure, which has oodles of atmosphere, and which grabbed me from the word go. You play the part of Rodney, an apprentice wizard who has been sent to a sorcerers' awards ceremony to receive an award on behalf of the High Mage. You have been told to travel to the little seaside town of Scarpool and rent a room in the Hotel Royal. You will have one day to prepare before the other wizards arrive for the ceremony. You hitch a ride by coach to the seaside town, and watch as the scenery changes from dense woodland to open countryside. The coach finally arrives in Scarpool, where you step off with a single suitcase and watch as the coach drives away.

There is the rest of the day, and night, to explore your surrounds and discover what strange goings-on are going on in Scarpool. It appears that beneath the surface of this sleepy little seaside resort some peculiar events are taking place. One of the people you will meet is a suspicious character lurking in the Function Room. Examine him, and he scuttles off smartly. The town seems to be inhabited by a motley collection of cute characters, from the surfie goblin on the beach to the dwarf manning the desk at Reception. Everyone can be examined and talked to, and although each character has his/her set little snippet of conversation, the resulting dialogue has been well handled. Talking to people works better if you examine them first, otherwise the resulting conversation could sound a bit odd.

Another thing about the dialogue that has been well handled is the use of the third person – i.e. the game has been written as though you were reading a narrative, with the central character referred to by name. For example, if you TALK TO GOBLIN, the conversation is shown as "Rodney asks the goblin if he" not, "You ask the goblin". I've only played one other game that uses this third-person type of narrative, and that was "Jester Quest". (Just as well too, as in Jester Quest the hero is a right little dork, someone you wouldn't really want to identify with!)

It is essential to wander about the town both before and after nightfall, and looking at the view from a certain vantage point is very helpful. It's important to trigger some events, e.g. examining the suspicious man makes him leave; otherwise some other events won't happen and you might miss out on an important clue or two. Giving something to the troll makes him wander off, but don't be too keen to get rid of him early on in the game.

Puzzles in "SEASIDE SORCERY" are mainly the find-an-item and give-it-to-someone type, but the persistent feeling that something is going on which you have to get to the bottom of is sure to keep your attention on this game for hours at a stretch. The underlying mystery makes "SEASIDE SORCERY" compelling to play, and finding out what exactly is going on in Scarpool ensures an interesting narrative.

"SEASIDE SORCERY" has a lovely, slow-paced feeling about it – there's no frenetic rushing around trying to get things done within a time limit. There are the day/night sequences, but even the slowest player would have ample time to amble around and enjoy the game. And best of all, there's no need to look for food and drink – I *loathe* games which require you to constantly eat and/or drink to stay alive. So take your time wandering about Scarpool and enjoy the game!

Spectrum (tape and +D 3.5" disc), Atari(e), Amiga(e), MAC(e) and PC(e) versions available from Zenobi Software. Price : £1.49 including p&p but you must provide your own tape or disc as appropriate.

THE SONG OF TALIESIN

Written by Dennis Francome

Reviewed by Karen Tyers on a Spectrum

I was prompted to dig this game out after reading a review by Wynne Snowdon in a 1995 copy of Probe. She gave it such a good write-up that I just had to play it. This is the first Dennis Francome game I have played, and I make absolutely no apology for reviewing it again, three years on, as it is a brilliant game and deserves it!

You play Gwion Bach, whose soul is held in spell-bond to the Hag Ceridwen and somehow you must find a way to break this bond and free yourself, to become the real you again.

You start in the Hag's cave where you spend your life tending her cauldrons in the company of the dumb Arwan, and with a little assistance from him you find a way to leave the cave, but make sure you look around it thoroughly first or you won't get very far. Once outside there is plenty to see and do, not the least of which is locating the spells necessary to help you on your way.

In the first part you will need the assistance, in places, of someone called Gwyn, but before he can help you, (assuming you can find him of course), you will have to help him, then together you must free the caged son of a local villager. In order to achieve this you will have to overcome a tricky problem involving a snake, which Wynne didn't mention in her original review, so perhaps she didn't find it too difficult, but I did, and all because I didn't find something early on in the game. You will also have to contend with a particularly vicious goat, and solve the problem of how to get a cable car going again, as you will need it working at the end of this part. However, having overcome all the obstacles, you then find yourself in part two.

Here you find yourself on a Bare Mountain and initially there doesn't seem much around. One of the characters from part one will appear and help you, but you will need to remember a name from part one, and if you didn't find it, tough luck! Having given the appropriate response you can look around, and there really doesn't seem to be a lot to see, apart from a hole in the ground with a key at the bottom, (you can't reach it of course), and some steps down into a cave with luminous fungus growing on the wall, and a locked door. Don't be fooled though because there is an enormous amount to do in the initial 5 locations, almost an adventure in itself, and you can't afford to miss one single thing. I particularly liked the sequence involving the little red devils – horrible things!

I have to say that it was a really ingenious way of getting a key out of a hole – why can't I think of things like that when I'm writing? Having obtained the key you can go through the door, only to be plunged into darkness, so a light source is needed, and even when found, only helps a little. The problems in the cave are quite awkward as the Black Witch is around and one wrong move is likely to result in your very sudden demise. You will need help through this first section of part two from a character called Gwydion, but have you found him, and if so, have you been able to rescue him (and yourself come to that)?

Okay, so you've managed to dispose of the witch and have taken a cup of her blood to the character who wanted it. Gory enough so far? Next you must gain access to a drowned city and work through the problems there before you can gain your freedom. One I liked very much was a chest behind a crystal sheet. Clever way of breaking the crystal, but even better was the method of opening the chest. I don't want to say too much as it would spoil it.

Nevertheless the answer to your quest lies inside the chest, and once found and the spell-bond broken, you are free to return to the village and resume your life.

This game just proves the point that adventures don't have to have loads of locations to be great. Part one of this had 30 and part two only 27. However, there was so much to do, it was like playing a game three or four times the size. I haven't enjoyed a game as much for a long time. It is an absolute gem and you really have missed something special if you haven't played it. Nice one Dennis – when's the next?

Spectrum (tape & +D disc), Atari(e), Amiga(e), PC(e) and MAC(e) £2.99, Spectrum +3 (3" disc) £3.99 available from Zenobi Software.

[Dennis has written another adventure, called "The Nameless One", which is reminiscent of his excellent "The Fisher King". He has offered it to me, with all proceeds going to the Probe Fund. It is being playtested, etc. at the moment, and I hope to have some news regarding its release by next month. It will probably be available for the Spectrum, Amiga(e), and PC(e) plus Atari(e) if current sales warrant the expense of the conversion. – Barbara]

2044: SPACE TROOPERS

Written by Angus A. McLaren (Amsoft Software)

Reviewed by Dorothy Millard on a PC

"Space Troopers" starts with you lying on the cavern floor looking up at the hole you just fell through. There is no way back up through the hole and looking around you see a small ill-lit room to the east, but the doorway has several detonated mines lying around, which suggests that somebody had something to hide. Going west into another room, which judging by the debris everywhere was probably a command centre, you see several battered tactical displays and an old ZX Megabattle computer which is severely battered and looks like it will never work again. Entering the kitchen with rubble everywhere you find a FridgeBuddy which is still working because it was built to withstand a nuclear attack.

Going north from the kitchen you find yourself on a walkway with a sagging roof and cracked floor where something hit it. The barracks to the west contains a desk and reminds you of when you joined up with the Space Troopers. Opening the desk drawer reveals a clipping from the Newsport Space Dock News dated Friday 12th. Apparently the Space Troopers have information that will lead them to the underground resistance. The Commander states that he will flush out the resistance and suppress any attempts at a planetary coup. He won't stop until the resistance is crushed. When asked about Space Trooper defector Durex Lubber he said that when they find him they will kill him on the spot. You suddenly realize that you are in danger of being shot!

From this point in the game it is a simple matter of entering the lift in which you speak your destination (unfortunately it only goes down though) to enter the hangars and find the spaceship which is a tall gray cylinder with a pointed nose cone high above and three large fins at the bottom. Putting the motivator in the socket, entering the ship and pushing the button completes the game with the message that the time has come to set course for 2044: The Sequel. If the sequel is as "interesting" as the first part I won't bother.

I completed this game thinking: "Have I finished already? Where were the puzzles?" The only puzzles consisted opening a few things to find food then putting the motivator in the ship and pressing the button to lift off. Not exactly challenging, even for a beginner. The game is reasonably well written with informative location descriptions, but the lack of puzzles made it uninteresting.

THE LESSON OF THE TORTOISE (release 2)

Written by G. Kevin Wilson – TADS, Freeware.

Reviewed by John Ferris on a PC, also available for Amiga, Mac and possibly Atari ST.

Consider the tortoise...

He is of the earth: slow and ponderous, but very wise. Farmers revere him. Dragons fear him. But set him on his back, and he becomes a thing of ridicule. A helpless, flailing stone.

You have often felt a deep kinship to the tortoise. You've always been short of stature, but you lack the swiftness that nature often gives a small man to compensate. Ever since you were a child, you've been forced to rely on your wits to survive. You smile a little to yourself at that last thought, for you have done more than survive, you have prospered far beyond the larger boys who used to taunt and beat you.

"Ah, Wang Lo, you have grown too proud of yourself," you chuckle, "It is true, you have done well for yourself: a loving wife, a fine, strapping son, prosperous fields, and a home that is the envy of all your neighbors. But remember, the wise man does not take for granted the things that fate has given him."

Tortoise is the second short adventure from Kevin Wilson, the first being "Sea of Night". Tortoise is set in the style of Chinese folklore and works quite well. It does contain one brief situation of an "adult" nature and so perhaps parents may wish to vet the game before letting children play it. Those who watch the soaps won't even notice it.

It's hard to review this game because the plot is very tight and if I describe too much I will spoil the game for those who want to play it. What I will say is that your idyllic lifestyle is soon shattered and you find yourself locked in a cellar with only a puzzle box to play with. The puzzles are good with a couple which were original to me. That is as far as I can go without spoiling the game, except to say that there is a tortoise as well.

Like Sea of Night, the text develops the atmosphere very well. It really felt at times that I was in a Chinese folktale. The whole game has an atmosphere of gentle, contented dignity that I quite enjoyed and the locations are described so as to be familiar to your character:

Outside Your Home

Just to the east is your home, a lovely pagoda, white with a shining red roof. To the south is your garden, where you enjoy meditating and watching the ripples in your pond. You and your son often drop pebbles in the pond together when he returns from the fields.

Technically the game plays very well and is tightly written with every item and place having a function. The parser understood most of what I attempted with no glaring omissions. It contains an adaptive hint system, although most players will not need it plus helpful "INFO" and "AUTHOR" commands. There are one or two American spellings but I found no "real" errors and I found none with the grammar either.*

In summary, Lesson of the Tortoise is an excellent short story, one that I really enjoyed playing. Kevin Wilson is to be congratulated. Experienced players should finish it in an hour.

The game is available for download at <ftp.gmd.de> (or any mirror site) where it is known as "tortoise.gam." Alternatively, contact me on john@frogs.force9.co.uk and I'll email a copy in return.

*My ability with grammar should be evident from this review.

LEAVING ZORK – an Adventurer’s lament

by JANET and BRIAN SEFTON

The Speccy died one awful night, quietly it went, no bang, no whimper.
The Amiga arrived on the day following the funeral, complete with Zork 1, 2 and 3.
The screen lit, no red or blue lines but immediate text. Strange!
We were at the foot of everlasting stairs and before us (S) was a dark tunnel.
INV. A lantern and a sword.
Far away we could hear voices, Dorothy Millard, Karen Tyers, Jack Lockerby.
As we lit the lantern and plunged into the tunnel, the voices faded.
Would we ever hear them again?
Moss dripping from the roofs, water was never far away and menhirs and compass roses sprouted.
Round, triangular and square buttons threatened and we were filched, feebled and fireproofed.
Lowering roofs, dusty rooms and marble halls were occasional breaks in the tunnelled patterns of the underworld.
And there was no relief. The chugging loads and pausing saves of the Speccy were gone.
The Amiga brought Zork back in seconds, to have us toil again in the terrible caves.
For months the only light that shone upon us was that cast by the lantern.
Later, so very much later, we staggered from the final well shaft, aged and wiser.
A part of us would lie in that dark world forever.
The relief! The escape!
But – no afterglow at this completion.
What the devil do you do with your hands when you’re not holding a lantern and a sword?
What are nights without a wizard?
Despair set in, one night, close to the edge, we played “PACMAN”.
It needed the saving touch of the Bayhorse boulder to bring us back from that abyss.
Now the Speccy speaks again and Edwina Brown and Larry Horsfield torment us happily.
But – on stormy nights when the wind howls, the earth trembles, threatening a return to ———



THE DOLL-CHILD – a true story by MARY SCOTT-PARKER

The summers of one's youth were always long and hot and the summer Kay turned thirteen was no exception. Her birthday stood out in her memory, after all, how could one forget being thirteen on Friday the Thirteenth. It was a hot day, almost like any other... almost, but not quite. That afternoon, the sun burned down from a sky so white it made her eyes water, onto dry, dusty pavements that shimmered in the heat haze. In Spain it would have been siesta time but here in England life carried on as usual.

Standing at the bus stop, Kay drooped, half asleep. Sweat ran down her back and into her eyes, and she cursed the lateness of the bus. There were about twenty others in the long, restless queue that sweltering afternoon, all too tired and irritable even to discuss the weather. At last, the bus rounded the corner, bringing sighs of relief as it drew up at the bus stop. The automatic doors 'shushed' open and most of the passengers inside the bus stood up and gathered together bags and children, as they prepared to alight at the town centre.

Kay waited in a half trance as the slow line of passengers inside the bus shuffled lethargically to the front and descended the three steps to the pavement. Her unfocused eyes rested on the thick coating of dust on the side of the once scarlet bus, on which tempting blackboard some juvenile digit had painstakingly scribed 'ALSO AVAILABLE IN RED'.

The seats inside the bus were arranged in two's on either side of the aisle, at the front and rear of the bus, but halfway down the bus, the designer had had a change of heart and the seating arrangement was different. Here, on either side, were two bench-type seats facing the aisle, so that passengers seated thus would face each other and have their backs to the side windows of the bus, instead of facing forwards like all the rest.

Kay was suddenly aware that she was being observed. She allowed her brain to slip back into gear and focused her eyes once more. Looking up, she could see the broad back of a woman passenger, still seated, on the middle seat adjacent to the bus stop. After a second or two, she noticed that the woman was holding a doll. The doll's head was resting, in a very lifelike way, on the woman's shoulder, as if it were looking out of the window. The eyes of the doll stared solemnly at Kay in a slight unnerving way. She stared back at the unblinking brown eyes and shivered involuntarily.

"What an eerie doll to give to a child," she thought, studying it intently.

The doll's face, half-hidden beneath a painted pixie hood had an almost gnome-like quality. Although the face was unlined and unwrinkled, it looked very old for some unfathomable reason, old and immeasurably wise. It was the eyes that were strange, Kay decided. They definitely weren't like normal 'unseeing' dolls' eyes. These eyes were strangely hypnotic and had an uncanny, knowing look, almost as if they belonged to another place, another universe, where time and age didn't exist, she found herself thinking.

"Don't be stupid," Kay told herself sharply. "Another universe indeed, what rubbish! It's only a doll."

The 'doll' blinked and moved slightly and a shiver ran through Kay's entire body. "It's not a doll at all," she thought, shocked. "It's a child." The gnome-like brown eyes continued to survey Kay calmly from the smooth, dark face. "The child knows I'm shocked," Kay thought,

"but how could it, unless it could read my mind. How could I possibly know that it feels sad, and yet I do. I'm quite certain of it." Kay stared ahead, unable to tear her eyes away from the steady, probing, liquid gaze. "It wants to share my thoughts... my feelings. Surely that young, yet incredibly old face couldn't possibly belong to a child.

She was suddenly aware that the departing passengers had all alighted and that the queue in front of her had started to shuffle towards the front of the bus.

"I'll have a good look when I get on the bus," Kay thought, moving slowly forward, finally managing to tear her eyes away from the doll-child. "Then I'll know for sure whether or not it's a real person." Eventually she reached the front of the bus and climbed the steps.

"Now for the moment of truth," she thought.

She followed the slow moving queue down the aisle until she reached the wide middle seats and thankfully she sat down. When the queue behind her had finally shuffled past, she prepared to look at the doll-child, without making it obvious that she was agog with curiosity. On the count of three she would look, she decided.

One... a casual glance to the right.

Two... an innocent look to the left.

Three... She looked straight ahead at the seat opposite, across the aisle. It was empty. There was no large lady and there was most definitely no doll-child. Kay was utterly shocked. There was absolutely no way the large lady could have got off the bus without Kay seeing her and yet she simply wasn't there. Kay hastily scanned the sea of faces, but the lady and the doll-child had vanished as if they had never existed.

"Had they ever existed? Had they slipped through an unseen portal into another dimension... another universe?" she wondered many times on that journey home.

In the years that followed, she often thought about that strange doll-child on the bus that hot afternoon, and thirty years later, she still didn't know the answer.

[Originally published in issue 13 of "Alternatives"]

FADD ON FOOD

(continued from January '98)

HAM - Ham is chiefly used to put eggs on, and to fill up if there's not enough chicken. Chicken comes under

GAME - Game should be kept till it's high, and then you make game of it. Several pages in my books are very gamey.

HARE - Hare should always be jugged, to cook hare otherwise is a very bad rabbit (sorry, I mean habit).

VEGETABLES - Each dish has its own vegetables. For instance carrots are always associated with boiled beef, and red hair. Some people have haricot Veins, I mean beans. In the season you eat asparagus. To eat it properly you require a rubber nose, a nose bag, and cotton wool in the ears.

[The above has been taken from a little book sent to me by a reader. I think it is quite funny. Next month - SWEETS, JELLY, DESSERTS, etc.Barbara]

A BILL OF PLAYER'S RIGHTS by GRAHAM

Abridged for Probe by JOHN FERRIS

Introduction

Graham Nelson is a well-known and sometimes even respected name on the Internet adventure / Interactive Fiction (IF) circuit. He is perhaps most widely known as the author of "Inform", the popular adventure programming language. He has also written a series of essays under the collective title "The Craft of Adventure." The third essay was titled "A Bill of Player's Rights" and listed seventeen annoying things that a game could do to the player. A number of these will be familiar to readers.

Graham has kindly given permission for me to abridge the "Bill" for Adventure Probe, although a lot of it appears unaltered. I have also added my own comments but have endeavoured to keep them distinct from Graham's work. While breach of copyright is a major problem on the Internet, plagiarism and having the original meaning twisted are perhaps equally annoying.

For those with Internet access, the original text is contained at the following website:

<http://www.gnelson.demon.co.uk/craft/>

Along with lots of information on the Inform language.

A Bill of Player's Rights

In an early version of Zork, it was possible to be killed by the collapse of an unstable room. Due to carelessness with scheduling such a collapse, 50,000 pounds of rock might fall on your head during a stroll down a forest path. Meteors, no doubt.

— P. David Lebling

W. H. Auden once observed that poetry makes nothing happen. Adventure games are far more futile: it must never be forgotten that they intentionally annoy the player most of the time. There's a fine line between a challenge and a nuisance: the designer has to think primarily like a player (not an author, and certainly not a programmer). With that in mind, I hold the following rights to be self-evident:

1. Not to be killed without warning

At its most basic level, this means that a room with three exits, two of which lead to instant death and the third to treasure, is unreasonable without some hint.

2. Not to be given horribly unclear hints

Many years ago, I played a game in which going north from a cave led to a lethal pit. The hint was: there was a pride of lions carved above the doorway. Good hints can be skilfully hidden, or very brief, but should not need explaining after the event. (The game was Level 9's 'Dungeon', in which pride comes before a fall. Conversely, the hint in the moving-rocks plain problem in 'Spellbreaker' is a masterpiece.)

John – Probe readers will recognise sudden death locations which are still occasionally found in new games. They have never been even remotely popular with players because to be killed for no reason or with no warning is unfair and frustrating. Sometimes the player does something stupid, flying in the face of common sense. Those who go swimming in piranha infested waters or insist on crossing rickety old bridges are, in my opinion, asking for trouble. As for the “pride of lions” hint in “Dungeon,” I expected to be eaten, not to fall down a pit. I’m sure there are players out there who got the hint first time. It’s very hard to gauge what is obvious and what isn’t.

3. To be able to win without experience of past lives

This rule is very hard to abide by. Here are three examples:

- (i) There is a nuclear bomb buried under some anonymous floor somewhere, which must be disarmed. The player knows where to dig because, last time around, it blew up there.
- (ii) There is a rocket–launcher with a panel of buttons, which looks as if it needs to be correctly programmed. But the player can misfire the rocket easily by tampering with the controls before finding the manual.
- (iii) (This from ‘The Lurking Horror’.) Something needs to be cooked for the right length of time. The only way to find the right time is by trial and error, but each game allows only one trial. On the other hand, common sense suggests a reasonable answer.

Of these (i) is clearly unfair, most players would agree (ii) is fair enough and (iii), as tends to happen with real cases, is borderline. In principle, then, a good player should be able to play the entire game out without doing anything illogical.

4. To be able to win without knowledge of future events

For example, the game opens near a shop. You have one coin and can buy a lamp, a magic carpet or a periscope. Five minutes later you are transported away without warning to a submarine, whereupon you need a periscope. If you bought the carpet, bad luck.

John – This is a difficult subject as any author would tell you. A lot of games rely on the trial and error of example (iii) and it seems to be widely accepted, after all, what is a save game feature for? An ideal game would allow the player to work through it by logic alone and not having to make guesses. There seems to be a movement in IF on the Net to give the player a better chance of doing this, such as providing more than one thing to cook and having a recipe somewhere to hand. Perhaps if the player incinerates the dish at the first attempt, the reserve is hidden in the freezer or needs buying from a shop. I like games when there is more than one way to solve a puzzle; the game is big enough for the player to make some mistakes.

As for knowledge about the future, this is one thing that really gets to me, especially the example given. Sitting there with the input cursor blinking at me as I try to guess which item I will need to buy can really dull my enthusiasm. I know in real life we have to make guesses sometimes, but often we have some idea of the answer already. In multiple–part games you can imagine the uncertainty when the player saves at the end of part one, hoping that they have the right inventory to complete part two or even the end of part three... I’m sure a number of people like these sorts of problems but I find them frustrating not entertaining.

5. Not to have the game closed off without warning

'Closed off' meaning that it would become impossible to proceed at some later date. If there is a Japanese paper wall that you can walk through at the very beginning of the game, it is extremely annoying to find that a puzzle at the very end requires it to still be intact, because every one of your saved games will be useless.

In other words, an irrevocable act is only fair if the player is given due warning that it would be irrevocable.

John – This is linked into several earlier points and has again being dealt with by a number of the 1997 IF competition entries. In some of these games it is impossible to put the game into a no-win state. In "Zero Sum" the game is supposed to warn the player when they have achieved a no-win situation. I say "supposed to" because at the time of writing the author has a few bugs to fix in this respect. Some games even refuse to kill off the player, like "Edifice". All this helps the player to some extent but perhaps at the expense of realism. Do you really want to wrap the player in cotton wool? Do you want them to think that they can try any insane thing and some benevolent force will keep them safe?

Personally I like the idea of not being able to no-win a game and I have no problems with being killed off for doing silly things as long as I'm told the river is full of piranhas.

6. Not to need to do unlikely things

For example, a game that depends on asking a policeman about something he could not reasonably know about. Another unlikely thing is waiting in dull places. If you have a junction at which after five turns an elf turns up bearing a magic ring, a player may well never spend five consecutive turns there and will miss what you intended to be easy. ('Zork III' is very much a case in point.) If you intend the player to stay somewhere for a while, put something intriguing there.

7. Not to need to do boring things for the sake of it

In the bad old days many games would make life difficult by putting objects needed to solve a problem miles away from where the problem was, despite all logic – say, a boat in the middle of a desert. Or, for example, a four-disc tower of Hanoi puzzle might entertain. But not an eight-disc one. And the hackneyed puzzles – restricted inventory, fumbling with a rucksack, finding new light sources – can wear a player's patience down very quickly.

John – The more you play adventure games the easier it is to recognise certain types of puzzles and "unwritten rules", especially in games written by the same author. One of them states that you should always try waiting around at junctions or crossroads because someone or thing is bound to turn up. It would be nice for the player to be given the motivation to type "wait" ten times at the crossroads.

As for the "hackneyed puzzles" I would also add having to eat, drink or sleep after every 100 moves just for the sake of it. In "The Obscene Quest of Dr Auurdvarkbarf" I believe it is possible to starve to death within one day, which is absurd. On the other hand, "Infidel" has you suffering from thirst because it's set in the Egyptian desert. In "Sea of Night" the player is slowly succumbing to his injuries and must find medical attention.

What about that famous feature which is either greeted with delight or utter loathing? Yes, I mean the maze. I will qualify that last statement with the word "gratuitous". Mazes really annoy me and including one in a game for the sake of having one is hard to justify these days. A maze can be used to hide an object or a location but why not try and use some other (novel) device? However, some scenarios can require a maze, such as a hedge maze in the grounds of some manor house or palace.

8. Not to have to type exactly the right verb

For instance, "looking inside" a box finds nothing, but "searching" it does. Or consider the following dialogue (amazingly, from 'Sorcerer'):

unlock journal (with the small key) No spell would help with that
open journal
(with the small key)
The journal springs open.

This is so misleading as to constitute a bug, but it's an easy design fault to fall into. Consider how many ways a player can, for instance, ask to take a coat off:

remove coat / take coat off / take off coat / disrobe coat / doff coat/ shed coat

(I was sceptical when play-testers asked me to add "don" and "doff" to my game 'Curses', but enjoyed a certain moment of triumph when my mother tried it during her first game.)

9. To be allowed reasonable synonyms

In the same room in 'Sorcerer' is a "woven wall hanging" which can instead be called "tapestry" (though not "curtain"). This is not a luxury, it's an essential. For instance, in 'Trinity' there is a charming statue of a carefree little boy playing a set of panpipes. This can be called the "charming" or "peter" "statue" "sculpture" "pan" "boy" "pipe" or "pipes". Objects often have more than 10 nouns attached.

Perhaps a remark on a sad subject might be intruded here. The Japanese woman near the start of 'Trinity' can be called "yellow" and "Jap", for instance, terms with a grisly resonance.

John – No-one likes playing "guess the verb" with an adventure game. It is really frustrating to know what to do but not being able to guess the obscure phrase that the author demands you use. The player is constantly trying to communicate his or her own ideas to the game. It's these ideas which are important and the player should be given every chance to express them. Finding the exact phrase to remove the coat isn't solving the puzzle, it's knowing that you have to remove the coat that counts.

Regarding the "Trinity" example, I don't condone the attitudes suggested by those particular nouns but I suppose they are there because some people will use them. A similar theme is the use, or recognition of potentially offensive language such as four letter words and the like. I can remember a letter in Probe where someone had typed a four-letter word instead of an innocuous one by mistake and they received a line or two of abuse back. The best way of avoiding this I can think of is not to include any of this type of vocabulary as verbs or nouns unless specifically required by the plot. Those who are looking for cheap thrills will get bored quickly.

10. To have a decent parser

(If only this went without saying.) At the very least the parser should provide for taking and dropping multiple objects.

John – I'm in a game and I am carrying a key, an umbrella and a tin of rice pudding. I find a locked door so I type "Unlock Door" to then be asked "With What?" Well it's unlikely to be the pudding, is it? A little intelligence goes a long way.

The remaining points are more matters of opinion than evident rights.

11. To have reasonable freedom of action

Being locked up in a long sequence of prisons, with only brief escapes between them, is not all that entertaining. This is particularly dangerous for adventure game adaptations of books (and most players would agree that the Melbourne House adventures based on 'The Lord of the Rings' suffered from this).

12. Not to depend much on luck

Small chance variations add to the fun, but only small ones. The thief in 'Zork I' seems to me to be just about right in this respect, and similarly the spinning room in 'Zork II'. But a ten-ton weight that fell down and killed you at a certain point in half of all games is just annoying. Also, games with random elements are much harder to test and debug.

A combination of one or more low-probability events might damage the player's chances. For instance, in the earliest edition of 'Adventureland', the bees have an 8% chance of suffocation each turn carried in the bottle: one needs to carry them for 10 or 11 turns, which gives the bees only a 40% chance of surviving to their destination.

There is much to be said for varying standard messages (such as, "You consult your spell book.") in a fairly random way, for variety's own sake.

John – My personal opinion is against random game elements altogether. Varying standard messages on the other hand is a great idea and really adds to the game.

13. To be able to understand a problem once it is solved

This may sound odd, but accident or trial and error solves many problems. A guard-post which can be passed if and only if you are carrying a spear, for instance, ought to indicate somehow that this is why you're allowed past. (The most extreme example must be the notorious Bank of Zork, of which I've never even understood other people's explanations.)

14. Not to be given too many red herrings

A few red herrings make a game more interesting. A very nice feature of 'Zork I', 'II' and 'III' is that they each contain red herrings explained in the others (in one case, explained in 'Sorcerer'). But difficult puzzles tend to be solved last, and the main technique players use is to look at their maps and see what's left that they don't understand.

This is frustrating when there are many insoluble puzzles and useless objects. So you can expect players to lose interest if you aren't careful. My personal view is that red herrings ought to be clued: for instance, if there is a useless coconut near the beginning, then perhaps much later an absent-minded botanist could be found who wandered about dropping them. The coconut should at least have some rationale.

An object is not a red herring merely because it has no game function: a useless newspaper could quite fairly be found in a library. But not a kaleidoscope.

The very worst game I've played for red herrings is 'Sorcerer', which by my reckoning has 10.

15. To have a good reason why something is impossible

Unless it's also funny, a very contrived reason why something is impossible just irritates. (The reason one can't walk on the grass in Kensington Gardens in 'Trinity' is only just funny enough, I think.)

Moral objections, though, are fair. For instance, if you are staying in your best friend's house, where there is a diamond in a display case, smashing the case and taking the diamond would be physically easy but quite out of character.

John - This point touches on the limitations of the game environment. Adventure games pretend to simulate an environment, just as they pretend to understand what the player is typing. Imagine the scenario where the player is walking along a road towards a junction (where he or she is expected to type "wait" six times) and the sides of the road are described as "rolling fields". The player may wish to explore those fields but the author has to find a reasonable way of preventing that. A blanket "I can't go that way" is nonsense because there is nothing to stop the player.

There has been discussion in the newsgroups about morality in adventure games. The concept of wandering around, picking up things that don't belong to you, attacking people, breaking into buildings and so on. In real life this behaviour is illegal and this to me is the main issue. Adventure games are not real life so I don't understand the fuss. Has any player finished a game and then had the desire to go out and do these things in real life?

Games should be consistent within themselves. The player shouldn't be able to do something out of character, unless this is part of the plot. The horror genre may be an interesting exception. Do you limit the "horror" to the descriptive text or do you force the player to do things they'd rather not?

16. Not to need to be American

The diamond maze in 'Zork II' being a case in point. Similarly, it's polite to allow the player to type English or American spellings or idiom. For instance 'Trinity' endears itself to English players in that the soccer ball can be called "football" - soccer is a word almost never used in England.

John – I think for most Probe readers this is a minor point, but authors of games distributed on the Net need to seriously consider this point. There are phrases we use in the UK that can have other meanings in other parts of the world, or even no meaning at all. This must be true all over the world. It can be true even within a country. My brother once went into a chip shop and asked for a “chip batch,” meaning a circular bread product divided in two with chips in the middle. What he got was a blank look. The correct phrase was “chip bap.” A silly example but I think you catch my drift (understand my meaning).

17. To know how the game is getting on

In other words, when the end is approaching, or how the plot is developing. Once upon a time, score was the only measure of this, but hopefully not any more.

John – Sometimes the “endgame” is self-evident, for example when you actually confront the Evil Wizard Garglenspit in his lair. Have readers any suggestions how you could keep the player informed of his or her progress?

I'm sure Probe readers will have some comments on the above which I await with interest.

PROBLEMS sent in by ELLEN MAHON

1. How can you physically stand behind your father, while he is standing behind you?
2. What does no man want, yet no man wants to lose?
3. In Oklahoma, you cannot take a picture of a man with a wooden leg. Why not?
4. How many cubic feet of dirt are in a hole 6 metres long, 2 metres wide and 1 metre deep?
5. What five letter word becomes shorter when you add two letter to it?

TEN WORDS NOT IN GENERAL USE sent in by EDWINA BROWN

BEEZER – fellow

CHUNTER – mutter

FRIBBLE – fritter away

FRIPPET – frivolous young woman

GRUNTLED – contented

GUBBINS – object of little value

SCABBLE – shape roughly

SPARGE – sprinkle

SPELK – wood splinter

WHERRIT worry

TESTING YOUR OWN ADVENTURE

by LAURENCE CREIGHTON

What is more difficult – the programming of a new adventure, or playtesting it?

I once wrote an article glorifying the unsung heroes and heroines of adventure-writing: the playtesters. I will never forget my first submission to John Wilson; it was something I called "MOONQUAKE". He wrote back immediately (as he is wont to do, bless him) and told me he will send the game to the playtesters so that they can quote tear it to shreds unquote. This the playtesters did, so much so that I almost gave up. This was because I had not thoroughly tested my own game. So, a new word entered my vocabulary and my life wasn't the same after that. If my English teacher ever damned me for my lack of knowledge of word order and structure – June Rowe and Terry Taylor soon sorted me out quick style! From June I learned apostrophes and from Terry, hyphens!

But having said all that, how do I test my own adventures before placing them under such high-definition magnifying glasses? The worst part of self-testing is you know what to do, where things are hidden and more or less in what sequence to do the puzzle. In other words, you don't play it as would a player off the street.

What I do, is test in blocks or segments. For example, say there is a locked door and the key has to be found later on. If necessary I flag the computer to show that the key has been created and that I am carrying it. It is important to set the flags to fool the computer into thinking that earlier puzzles have been solved. Make copious notes – especially on resetting said flags back to normal, whatever THAT is!!

Once you have ascertained that everything works, you can go where you are supposed to, can't walk through walls or can't walk on water, this is the right point to cudgel a friend into running through the game for you. I never subject poor Andy to more than about two hours of playtesting: he doesn't even draw a map. I tell him you can go west or south and let him choose. I really want him to solve each puzzle as they crop up: believe me THAT is when odd inputs are typed and sometimes bringing forth unwanted responses. Once he has played the game through and I have 6 or 7 sheets of A4 paper full of notes, ideas, amendments..... and a creepy-crawlie or two, I get stuck in and do the revision and revision and revision.

Once the game is up and running and I can think of no more refinements or inputs I print out all the locations, messages and objects. I then scan every single word looking for typos or grammatical errors. For some reason (??eyestrain) it is easier to peruse a printed page than miles of text on the screen flickering away at 50cps.

Then it's play-one-more-time time. Finally I sit back, can think of nothing more to add or refine, and utter the most beautiful three words I know, "It's a wrap".

I would post it off and dare and defy Terry or John or the late June to find anything. They usually did. I think I swung it with FIRE RUBY, it was never revised and no one has had the game crash or found even a spelling error.

At last!

ADVENTURE PROBE SOFTWARE

presents

THERE'S A HOLE IN YOUR BUCKET

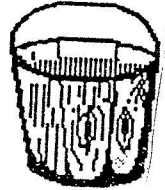
by Karen Tyers

You must all have heard the old song "There's a hole in my bucket, dear Liza, dear Liza"

Well, your dearly beloved wants to clean the windows and when **She Who Must Be Obeyed** says "JUMP", you always ask "HOW HIGH".

Unfortunately your bucket (if you knew where it was) has a hole in it, but all you have to do is find it, mend it, fill it with water and hand it to SWMBO

Feeding the farm animals and filling the duck pond are just a few of the tasks facing you before making SWMBO happy.



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FELINE SLEEPY

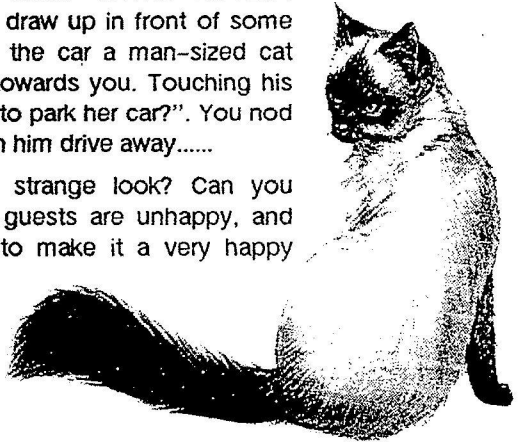
by Edwina Brown

Your name is Jenny and you are taking a holiday touring England.

Suddenly, in a quiet country road a deer dashes across in front of you. Shaken you pull into a layby to calm your nerves. You must have fallen asleep as a whole hour has passed. You decide to check into the next hotel, so start driving.

Before long you see a sign which reads "CATNIP HOTEL". Turning in through the gateway you draw up in front of some imposing steps. As you get out of the car a man-sized cat dressed in porter's uniform comes towards you. Touching his cap he says "Would madam like me to park her car?". You nod dumbly, hand him the keys and watch him drive away.....

Why does C. Ustard give you a strange look? Can you discover the reason why so many guests are unhappy, and then solve a lot of tricky puzzles to make it a very happy ending to the day?



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THE DRAGON DIAMOND

by Kenneth Pedersen

You are Bash the Barbarian, in another world which is ruled by your wife, Queen Drana. She is very beautiful, but also very evil. You are her 13th husband – the twelve other husbands she had are now all stuffed. Queen Drana wants you to find the fabled **DRAGON DIAMOND** or else you will end up the same way!

Leon, her chauffeur, drives you in a carriage to the outskirts of the Forest of Fear, where, it is said, the Dragon Diamond can be found. The two of you alight – you know Leon hates you because he is in love with your wife.

Your adventure begins here

This is a two-part text adventure written using the Graphic Adventure Creator. The adventure was originally written for Commodore Force's Megatape, and the main character is named after the writer of the magazine's Adventure column.



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NEWSDESK

Not much news this month, at least none that has reached me, so this page will be E-Mail dominated.

Karen Tyers kindly telephoned to say that anyone looking for text adventures on the Internet should try **ftp.gmd.de** then **if-archives** where a lot of emulators and games reside, but you will have to browse to find the best of the bunch.

By the way, Karen says that **aol** subscribers can use keywords - i.e. type **ftp** then click on **go**.

The list of readers E-Mail addresses is getting longer, and I have been told how beneficial it is to readers who contacted other adventurers. As mentioned in my editorial, I will be revising the permanent pages, especially the inside back page (Useful Addresses) to include E-Mail Addresses, so if you wish to be included in the list (postal and electronic), please let me know as soon as possible so that I have plenty of time to try to squeeze everything onto one page.

E-MAIL ADDRESSES

DOREEN BARDON - KABVENOM@aol.com

PETER CLARK - clarkpg@btinternet.com

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PHIL GLOVER - pglover43@aol.com

CHRISTOPHER HEPPINSTALL - Hobbes1683@Aol.com

LARRY HORSFIELD - alaric@larryhorsfield.demon.co.uk

DOROTHY MILLARD - dddmillard@hotmail.com

GEORGE RAWSON - george@arturo.u-net.com (Amiga 1200)

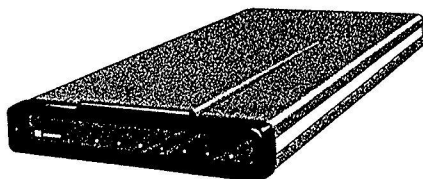
PHIL REYNOLDS - phil@darkmoon.force9.net

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EDMUND SMITH - edmund@zetnet.co.uk

BEV TRUTER - atruter@cyberspace.net.au

KAREN TYERS - ktyers1951@aol.com

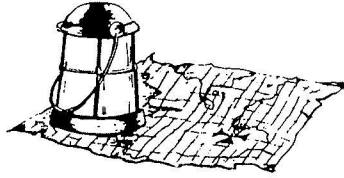


OBJECTS AND THEIR USES

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

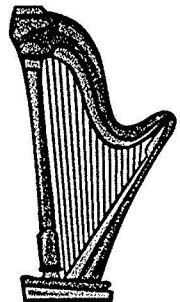
PART ONE

- Battered boatsail it upon the Sea of Serpents
- Big bearfeed it so that it moves away
- Branfor company in part two
- Bundleloaf wrapped in a cloth
- Cloak of Carriancewear it, button up to be transported
- Close-woven netthrow it so that you can help a creature
- Clothmagical provider of food
- Curly-horned ramhelp it then learn its name
- Curved shielduse as a scoop and container
- Golden eaglehelp it then learn its name
- Great white wormguards entrance to cave
- Handful of crumbsfeed to bird
- Honeycombgive it to a creature
- Large salmonhelp it then learn its name
- Lump of raw meatred herring
- Mummified bodywas wearing boots
- Pair of bootswear to cross stepping-stones
- Red-bearded manchanges into a little red bird
- Rockthrow it
- Sea chestcontains cloak
- Sheepskin jerkinprotects you against the cold
- Small kerchiefGrainne's, needed in part two
- Strange fruituse to make poisonous liquid
- Swordweapon
- Tridentweapon
- Two tired soldiersdistract them so you can sneak past



PART TWO

- Armed sentryblocks your way up the NE Tower
- Baelthe ram you helped in part one, he will return the favour
- Branlarge dog, very good at scaring and tracking
- Bucketholds water, also a useful object
- Cloak of Carriancemagic transporter
- Col the Redcraftsman, red bird, etc.
- Crystal daggerweapon, used to finally kill MacMorna
- Curved shieldprotects you
- Flickering torchlight source for lower levels
- Grainneyour betrothed – see Harp
- Group of guards sorting weaponschase you out of the armoury
- Handle (bent)won't fit well
- Handle (straightened)will fit well
- Harpthe imprisoned Grainne
- Hatdisguise, and useful for bribing someone
- Large keyopens a door
- MacMorna ...the evil prisoner of Grainne
- Long boxcontains Col the Red in his true form
- Nazulthe fish you helped in part one, will return the favour
- Pair of bootsremove when swimming
- Pitchforkhelps you search the hay and straw
- Rockblocks the entrance to a secret room
- Small kerchiefhelps Bran to track down Grainne
- Smithyhe will straighten something
- Smouldering torchalmost your light source
- Swordcan get you thrown into the dungeon!



GETTING YOU STARTED

ANCHORHEAD played by Karen Tyers on a PC

Day One

You have arrived in Anchorhead, and if you do an inventory check, you find you are wearing your normal clothes, a trenchcoat (this has wonderfully large pockets which can hold a multitude of things), your wedding ring and you are carrying an umbrella. You are told that your husband Michael has gone to the University to sort out some paperwork and he is supposed to be collecting you shortly. In the meantime you are supposed to go to the estate agents and collect the house keys. You start outside the Estate Agent's office, which is mysteriously closed and locked so your first task is to find another way in. Enter the ally to the SE and you find some rubbish bins. Also you can find a window above you which is too high to reach. Move one of the bins so that it is under the window and stand on it. Open the window, close the umbrella (it is open as it is raining), and enter the window. You will find your self in a File Room where there is an interesting looking cabinet. You find you can look up things in the cabinet, but you have no idea what to look for, so leave that for the present and head west into the main office. Here there is a desk with a telephone answering machine. If you examine the machine, you will see a Play button

FELINE SLEEPY played by Barbara Gibb on a Spectrum – also available on Atari(e), Amiga(e) and PC(e)

Start outside a hotel. I (nothing), U (reception), X DESK (see a bell and nameplate), READ NAMEPLATE, RING BELL (receptionist appears), X RECEPTIONIST, SAY HELLO, X PEN, X REGISTER, SIGN REGISTER, I (have a red key), U, E, N (corridor), N (way blocked by two Burmese cats), LISTEN, SAY HELLO (note details), N, W, W, W, X DOOR (red), UNLOCK DOOR (you enter the room and slide down a chute into the laundry room), SR BASKET (now have a white key), E, S, E, S, W (alcove), SR ALCOVE (find a holdall – very aptly named)



WAYSTATION played by Barbara Gibb on an Atari and PC

Start in a cell. I (empty-handed), LOOK UNDER COT, TAKE SLAT, AGAIN/G, TAKE SPRING, X FLAGSTONES, MOVE FLAGSTONE (reveals a hole in the floor), D, E, E (end of tunnel), X CEILING, MOVE FLAGSTONE, U (another cell – see a white-haired man), TALK TO MAN (says his name is Zarin, and he is here to help you right an ancient wrong he pushes you through the east wall).

You are now in the coatroom. TAKE BOOTS AND UNIFORM, WEAR THEM, TAKE UMBRELLA, E, N, W (study), X TABLE, TAKE PAMPHLET, READ IT (how to make a bomb using ketchup* salt, tengin and hirst), E, E (worker's bathroom), LOOK IN CABINET, TAKE SPONGE (other items not needed), W, N (okay if wearing the uniform), N, E (by dispenser in cafeteria), X DISPENSER, PRESS BUTTONS (it dispenses the 4 condiments), TAKE ALL EXCEPT BOX, MAKE BOMB, S, SIT, X TRAY, X POTATO (foil-wrapped), OPEN POTATO, TAKE FOIL, DROP TRAY, STAND, N, W, X METAL DOOR, THROW BOMB AT DOOR

NECRIS DOME played by EILen Mahon on an Amstrad CPC464 – also available on other computers

PUSH LID, ENTER CASKET, TAKE GLOVES, PUSH LID, EXAMINE GLOVES, TAKE AXE, WEAR GLOVES, EAST, EAST, PUSH CASKETS, LOOK, EXAMINE MANDROID, SEARCH MANDROID, LOOK, TAKE ORANGE TRANSROD, TAKE GREY TRANSROD, EAST, EAST, DOWN, WEST

RETURN TO DOOM (Topologika) played by John Schofield on a Spectrum +3 – also available on Amstrad, Atari, BBC and PC

Start in the control room of your spaceship. N, GET helium EXTINGUISHER, NE, W, SHOUT (one of the sets of teeth will close). If it is the southern set, go SW into the mouth, if the northern set, go NW and GET ROD. To leave, you must go the opposite way you entered, i.e. if SW now go NE, if NW leave SE. E, E, GET TANK, E, GET TECTONOMETER, W, W, S, E, KNOCK (on the door), N (note the word PRONA), OPEN TANK (the chlorine sinks down the shaft and kills the grobber), DROP TANK, D, N, GET PILL, S, U, S, W, N, E, SE, PUSH ROCK (the Spongy Area is tilted), NW, E, GET ROCK, W, THROW ROCK. You fly over the trap to the cleft which is unsafe to pass through until you OPEN TECTONOMETER (which gauges when it is safe), OPEN EXTINGUISHER, EAT PILL, E. If you are in time, you are grabbed by robots, your possessions taken and are held in a cell by a forcefield. You are, however, given a clue as to how to open the safe and the Ambassador gives you the password for the Black Tunnel (random). N or WAIT (for the pill to take effect), N (now escape the cell. Before the effects of the helium wears off (from the extinguisher) WHISTLE to open the safe, N, GET ROD AND MACHINE AND COMPUTER, S, GOZZO (opposite of OZZOG, or whichever code the Ambassador gave you), NE, E (to a junction which will be your "centre of operations" for much of the game

SON OF STAGEFRIGHT played by Barbara Gibb on a PC and Atari [*]

Start in the balcony of a theatre. I (wearing a pocket pager), TAKE PAPER, READ PAPER (advertisement for the A.G.T.), E (storage closet – dark, TURN SWITCH ON, LOOK (note message – it is one of several clues found during the game), TAKE BULB, EXAMINE BULB (it is a light source for some, but not all, of the "dark" locations), W, W, D, S (restroom – note message on the wall), TAKE BOOK, N, E, E, E, N (coat room), MOVE COAT (now in a store room), EXAMINE BOX, N (closet – see a packrat), EXAMINE RAT (at various locations during the game he will appear and expect you to swap an "unwanted" object for a new one), GIVE PAPER TO RAT (he leaves after throwing something towards you), TAKE LAMP, EXAMINE LAMP, RUB LAMP (genie appears, then goes to Regen Moor, which means the Green Room – the lamp is your other source of light, so hang on to it), S, D, W, N, N (homonym closet), MARRY MARY (she gives you a statue of Pluto), EXAMINE STATUE, S, S, E, U, S, S, S (main exit), W, N, W, N, N (centre of audience – see a secret; remember the clue? You will have to come back for it), N, W (by fire door), EXAMINE DOOR, READ LETTERING (that is an open invitation!), PUT BOOK UNDER DOOR, W, W, TAKE SCRIPT, READ SCRIPT (clue), E, E, E, E (by stairs), U (north end of hall), S, GIVE PAGER TO RAT, TAKE SKATE, E (pun closet), SHAKE SPEAR, TAKE BUCKET, W, W, PRESS BUTTON (curtain rises – giving you access to a lot more locations)

[*] The paper in the start location is not present in my Atari version, so I gave the pager to the rat for the lamp, and the apple (found in the Upstage Area) in exchange for the skate.

HINTS AND TIPS

ACHETON played by John Schofield on a Spectrum +3 also available for BBC, PC and Atari

To take the coat safely OPEN CASKET, GET COAT. Some moths will deal with the ferrets.

The eye can be taken from the stone idol to become a treasure (aquamarine). However, after this the blind idol reappears at random and will kill you. Make this the last treasure you obtain (save the game before action).

Note the word ZOOGE on the way to discovering the sapphire. This operates a teleport system to convey objects from the rooms containing various coloured stars to the safe. Note that the objects must be dropped for this to work – be careful not to teleport your lamp!

There are 55 treasure to be found. A few points are scored as you enter a location with one, and you also score either 8 or 12 points when one is stored in the safe. The safe is a good place to store the 10 weapons as this is where the end game starts. Note that some treasure have other uses.

A full list of treasures can be (laboriously) obtained from HINT 167 on disc. HINT 166 helps with the use of objects in the game.

ALL IN A DAY'S WORK played by Barbara Gibb on a Spectrum – also available on Atari(e), Amiga(e), PC(e) and MAC(e)

Ensure you take and wear Zimmerman's bullet-proof vest.

Search him, then drag him down the stairs.

Release Wauchope (need the key to unlock the door).

Dress up for a "posh" evening, then wait until the casino opens at 7.00pm. Give the password to Schultz to be shown to the poker table.

You will have to mark the cards using the pen found in your desk at the very beginning of the adventure.

WAIT until 9.00pm, then Malone and Schultz should enter.

Wearing the shades means you can cheat and win.

Malone will shoot you when Wilder arrives and informs him of the deception. Wearing the vest will ensure you survive.

CITADEL (Jack Lockerby) played by Barbara Gibb on a Spectrum – also available on Atari(e), Amiga(e), MAC(e) and PC(e)

To cross the lake safely – trail sword in lake.

To cross the misty marsh – wave the wand at each location to disperse the mist and see a safe route to the next location.

Something is buried in one of the marsh locations.

Dazzle the troll so that you can enter his cave – but don't loiter in there.

BEGINNING OF THE END played by Barbara Gibb on a Spectrum – also available on Amstrad, Atari(e), Amiga(e), PC(e) and MAC(e)

Find the psychic killer and give him a flower to obtain an optical sight.

The Crystal of Death is aptly names – careful how you handle it – it is your weapon against the manticore in the crypt.

PUSH PANEL in the panelled corridor to discover a recess and a power power pack. Don't worry about Matilda and Bas Hodgkins running away.

To make a zapper – connect/fit optical sight to (laserbeam) emitter, then the geiger counter to the emitter, now insert the power pack into the emitter. You are ready to ZAP WALL, which collapses, filling in the pit.

The skeleton has a red key.

CASE OF THE MIXED-UP SHYMER played by Edwina Brown on a Spectrum – also available on Amstrad, C64, Atari and probably Amiga(e) and PC(e)

Give seeds from the garden centre to Mary Mary.

Wear gloves to get the spider.

Climb tree by Miss Muffet and drop the spider.

Examine the rocks to find your case.

Give your nightie to Wee Willie Winkie.

Talk to Baa Baa then paint him using the tin of black paint and the toothbrush.

Get springs from mattress and give them to the cow.

There are three things to be found in the woodcutters' hut.

FLIPPING THE LID played by Barbara Gibb on an Atari

Computer

When told to Logon by entering a password – remember what was written on the grey paper.

Okay, if you didn't keep a note of the name of the evil knight, he is called GARLON.

Now you will be asked for all sixteen words of Power, in numerical order, which you will have to translate from the runes using clues scattered around the adventure.

GREAT ARCHAEOLOGICAL RACE played by Bev Truter on a PC

Thief in Clearing

Take shovel from the shack, then climb tree in the Clearing and open the trunk. Take mailbag, climb down, then SAVE.

The Thief attacks you with a knife, and you have to hit him with the shove, but you seem to come out the loser more frequently. Persevere until you wound him and he runs off in disgust, dropping an EMERALD RING as he leaves. Return to office and give mailbag to Vargas – he unlocks the safe and gives you a GOLD WATCH.

HILLSFAR

Fighter's Quest – Mission One

- A. Locate the Fighter's Guild where you should approach the Master for your first hint.
- B. Attend the Archery Range where you'll need to improve your skills by two levels in order to gain another clue.
- C. Return to the Guild and have a word with the Master.
- D. Head for the Arena and defeat the Red Minotaur for a clue.
- E. Again, visit the Master of the Guild.
- F. Enter the Cemetery and open the chests until you receive another clue.
- G. Break into the Jail where you should search the chests until you discover the Documents.
- H. Take the papers to the Master of the Guild where you'll be rewarded for your troubles.

ISLANDS OF SINBAD played by John Schofield on a Spectrum – also available on Atari(e), Amiga(e), MAC(e) and PC(e)

Dig anywhere the ground is disturbed.

If you're the correct colour, the Roc won't kill you and the dark men delay doing so.

Tie yourself to the Roc.

Tie the meat on your back, then lie down.

You should have found something to wear like the dark men – but be careful how you get it there.

Throw something small at the monkeys.

JERRICK BONESNAPPER I : THE DUNGEON OF DOOM played by Paul Hardy on an Amiga

To bypass the Spectral Minion, tell him the password given at the end of part one.

The metal door cannot be unlocked normally, but you may find a trigger to unlock it somewhere in the dungeon.

Take a close look at the statue to find something useful, but be careful how you take it.

Beware of your fellow adventurers, particularly the Elven Bowman and the Sorcerer. Remember, they are also hoping to be winners.

Dead ends are great places in which to hide things.

LEGEND OF THE SWORD played by Barbara Gibb on an Atari

Accept the gesture of the hunter (note Borgalius also does) and give him the snare. He will give you some advice, and some nuts. Examine the hunter (may have to re-enter the location) to see he has a ring.

When bitten by the snake – ASK DAVILLE FOR the BOTTLE of antidote and drink it.

KARYSSIA played by Edwina Brown on a Spectrum

Part One

Pawn the sapphire. Buy doubleswords and skill ringlets.

Outside the Mayor's home – cast growth spell at sapling, then climb tree.

Buy a horse with the diamond.

Examine dead forester, then cast darksight spell.

Kill fighter to save Mayor. Throw knife at thief. Give emerald to ferryman.

LEGEND OF FAERGHAIL played by Paul A. Hardy on an Amiga and PC

To heal your wounds – drink from the fountains in the wilderness.

To stock up on provisions – slay Deer, Bears and Buffalo when you see them.

In the SW corner of Faerghail Valley is a sword embedded in stone. Your weakest character can pull it free without any difficulty.

In a clearing in Faerghail Valley is an old, distinguished Priestess. When you meet her, USE the Amulet you were given when you first left Thyn. She will give you a Healer Staff which may be used up to ten times; each time it is used it will resurrect all dead characters and restore Hit Points of all characters to the maximums.

Slay Tradesmen when they approach, in order to steal their wares.

MONSTERS OF MURDAC played by Barbara Gibb on an Atari – also available on Spectrum +3, BBC, Amstrad and PC

At the Deserted Railway Platform, the sounds of passengers comes from an Invisible Ghost Train north of you – approach it.

When you return to the cellar, pick up any treasures and take them to the Keep.

Black Hole

When in the Black Hole Room go D then S to an Alternative Universe – pick up the crust of bread.

The word you see will return you to the pitch dark Black Hole.

If you go N, U, NE, SW, E, S, NW, W, D and SE you will enter a Grisly-looking Cavern. To return to the Black Hole Room go D, NW, NW, E, E, N, NE, NE, N and D.

MYTH (Magnetic Scrolls) played by Barbara Gibb on an Atari – also available on Amiga, Amstrad, C64/128, Spectrum and PC

Outside Hades' Palace

Find a rope that passes through a slot and is hanging down the wall.

Tie the Hydra's head to the rope then drop it before moving east.

The birds lift the head, pulling the rope taut so that the portcullis is raised.

Go N to enter the Palace.

MUTINY played by Barbara Gibb on an Amiga(e), also available on Spectrum 128K and PC(e)

Part Two

You should have chosen the ebony key from the three items offered by the curate.

When you board the fishing boat, take the whisky bottle. Lawrence will chase you, so lead him to the hut. If you prepared in advance, you should be able to trap him.

You need your rope to moor the boat when at the island.

Note the marks on the slab in the ravine.

If you do everything correctly at the slab location, you should see something very important in the distance.

Before returning to the harbour, visit the wreckage – find three bodies and an important object.

PIRATE ADVENTURE played by Barbara Gibb on a Spectrum – also available for most other computers

Pick up the rug to find a bunch of keys.

Re-visit the attic to collect an empty bottle and see a sleeping pirate.

You need the water wings in order to enter the lagoon. You need a bottle of salt water to catch the fish.

You can't take the lumber through the crack – you will have to go via the pit, so feed the crocodiles and unlock the door leading to the hallway.

You can dig (with the shovel) in the lagoon when the tide is out – listen to the parrot/keep entering and leaving the lagoon.

THE PORTAL played by Barbara Gibb on an Amstrad

Put something in the nest, then retreat. When you return you should find a gold key.

You won't be able to access the large building to the west from here, wait until later in the game.

The gatekeeper may open the gate if you look like a genuine villager, and can prove it.

Note the information when you examine the shield found in the armoury.

The suit of armour has the "key" to opening the door on the SE side of the courtyard.

RED ALERT played by Barbara Gibb on a Spectrum – also available on Atari(e), Amiga(e), PC(e) and Amstrad

Pulling a branch will reveal an exit.

Safety depends on whether your tummy rumbles.

Use the diamond to cut glass.

Throw the sneezing powder at Basil.

At the missile, open panel and cut the red wire using the pliers.

RHYME CRYME played by Barbara Gibb on a Spectrum (128K only), also available on Amiga(e) and PC(e)

To get the bone for the dog

Take the sacking Tom leaves behind to find some cheese.

Feed the cheese to the mouse so that the butcher gives you the bone.

Don't alarm Old Mother Hubbard by taking the mouse into her house.

Give the dog the bone to get the boots.

To get a spider for Miss Muffet

Examine the roses and trellis outside Old Mother Hubbard's cottage to find a drainpipe. Climb up the trellis, whilst wearing the boots, and pour a bucket of water down the drainpipe to clear it – it “washes the spider out”.

SANCTUARY played by Dorothy Millard on a PC

Hit mutant with baseball bat.

The pack at Snoqualamie Pass allows you to carry more in your inventory.

Unlock the boathouse door with the key from the locksmith's shop.

To cross the river you need the canoe from the boathouse and paddle from the north shore of Spirit Lake.

To enter the area where the geiger counter starts clicking you must be wearing the radiation suit from the control room of the nuclear power reactor.

Turn the knob in the radio station to hear a message from a group of survivors.

SHIPWRECK played by Barbara Gibb on a Spectrum

You will probably have to wrap a wet towel around your face (WEAR TOWEL) before going down into the oil store.

You need a permit to visit the bridge. Try the Purser's office while he is absent for a blank permit. Sign it (you need to know the name of the captain) whilst in the writing room.

Examine the chart on the bridge and note the position of the ship.

You need a bottle of oil to lubricate the lock on the chest.

When you are advised to abandon ship, wear the life-jacket and jump out of the porthole in your cabin.

There is a compass in the small boat. This will give you the directions to an island, if you have the map.

TODDLER TROUBLE played by Barbara Gibb on an Atari(e), also available on Spectrum, Amiga(e), PC(e) and MAC(e)

Part Two

Make the strongman think you are stronger and search him before he is taken away.

When in the roller-coaster cart, search it to find a key.

SPANISH TREASURE played by Barbara Gibb on a C64

At the start, search the plane. The rucksack can be opened to reveal your means of escaping from the plane.

The pilot won't kill you if you hide of the parachute in the field.

Check out the container in the boathouse. SHOW TICKET at the entrance to the mansion.

When in the large room inside the mansion, LISTEN to overhear an important word.

You will need the chicken leg from the kitchen.

Examine the lift to find a useful tool.

In Drago's office, switch on the lamp and note what you see – it will help you open the safe.

Search the uniform, then wear it.

STARSHIP QUEST Pt.1 played by Edwina Brown on a Spectrum – also available on Amstrad, Amiga(e) and PC(e)

Search the console and wear the headset.

Look under the console and cut cables with the wire cutters.

Connect cable to the energy cell, press button.

Oil the droid, switch it on and say REFUEL JEEP.

Take with you into part two – the gold disc, flashlight, empty bottle, charger, mask, spade and wire cutters.

Insert silver disc into slot on panel to complete part one.

VALHALLA 3 played by Barbara Gibb on an Amiga

Level 3

Put the boat in Percival's bath, then take the Titanic sign from him.

Put the chocolate on Ezmerelda's bed.

Eve doesn't look like a cat lover, but that saucer of cream must go somewhere.

Complete the suit of armour to obtain Cinderella's slipper.

Put the fairy in the obvious place to obtain some knitting.

Put the knitting on Aunt Violet's bed.

Give the Mother's Day card to Uncle Augustus – now you can get that lovely nightgown you could see but not reach until now.

THE WIZARD OF OZ played by David Hebblethwaite on a Spectrum – also available on Atari(e), Amiga(e), MAC(e) and PC(e)

Take the spring from your step on the Yellow Brick Road.

Dig to the north and south of your house.

Take note of the words the witch uses to summon the winged monkeys.

Don't forget to untie Toto.

SERIALIZED SOLUTION

DUNGEON MASTER 2 – THE LEGEND OF SKULLKEEP

Played by Mary Scott-Parker on a PC

PART 8

Lock the door again and take the Onyx Key back to the niche, through the Lightning Rods, and exchange it for the Skull Key. Go back down the ladder into the Reflector Room and then into the room where the teleporters are [hopefully] trapped in a corner, and climb the now lowered ladder.

Go through the room with the crystal and find the Skull keyhole. Using the key will activate a teleporter, which teleports you into a nearby room with tables. Send a fireball West and a table will be destroyed with the aid of a reflector. Then a tall burner can be moved and other tables hacked to gain access to the door. Open the door and move the two reflectors out into the big room with the crystal. The two round grids on the floor mark the correct positions for the reflectors. Angle them towards the crystal.

Pull the handle in the niche to the South and then pull the other two handles to activate fireballs. These will strike the reflectors and hit the crystal together to open the portal to the north, giving access to Dragoth.

Make sure the boiler is still on – if not go back down the ladder in the valve room to the furnace and kill the minion there. Throw more piro's on the fire and place a guard minion in front of it.

When I first played the game I could not get the portal to open, even though the fireballs seemed to be striking the crystal at the same time. However, timing is crucial, and the fireballs must strike the crystal at exactly the same time.

Stand to the left of the first fireball source, beside the switch, and activate a Scout Map. Send the scout eyeball a couple of squares nearer to the other fireball source, so that both fireballs are visible on the map, along with the reflectors and the crystal, then you can monitor the fireballs and operate the switch until you get them to hit the crystal at the same time. The portal should then open. Save the game

Through the portal is a cloud walkway leading to Dragoth. Head South until you see a bit of the walkway that moves away. Cast Accelerate and time a walk on to it. The same with the next one and the best of luck. I never managed to finish off Dragoth, sorry to say – I found it too frustrating and difficult to keep falling off the clouds and trying to fight Dragoth and minions at the same time. Apparently only spells work, fired at point blank range, and guard minions to help you – so GOOD LUCK – you're on your own now!



SOLUTION OF THE MONTH

LEOPOLD THE MINSTREL

Written by Jamie Murphy

Solution by John Schofield on a Spectrum 128K – also available on Amstrad, Amiga(e) and PC(e)

[Inventory] (the Lute of Lyranth and purse [worn]), X LUTE (in ruins), X PURSE (0 crowns), N, X BARMAN (has a dirty rag), TAKE RAG FROM BARMAN, X RAG, SING (4 crowns now in purse), N, X DWARF (has trouble reaching things!), TALK TO DWARF, S, E, SIT, X MENU (meal for 1 crown), BUY MEAL, WAIT, WAIT (the maid returns with the meal), X MAID (tired), X MEAL, SAY TO MAID "SIT" (she will help you with the Lute if you get rid of a drunk who has just entered), EAT MEAL (not essential), STAND, X DRUNK, TALK TO DRUNK, KNOCK ON DOOR (to a dark room), X FIGURES (you notice Caldwin the thief), SIT, GAMBLE (you need 10 crowns – you are shown out), W, S.

W (hear squawking in tree), U, X NEST, X BIRDS (crows attacking an eagle), D, S (a talking-singing pillar!), X PILLAR (made by dwarves), SING TO PILLAR, W, SW (The Oxe), SING (4 more crowns in purse), N, X BARRELS (have lids), REMOVE LIDS (you have a lid), X LID (smooth circle), S, NE, S, X MAN (waiting for someone), SW, E (Music Shop), X OWNER, W, S, E (Fletcher's Shop), BUY ARROW (out of your price range), X MAN (huge!), W, S, E (the shoe shop door is closed and locked), X DOOR (has a hole in it), N, N, W, X GUARD, W (town square – don't go south into the Thieves Quarter until you have a cloak to wear), SING (3 more crowns in your purse), W, X WELL, TURN HANDLE (rusted), LISTEN (shrill voice calling for help), E, N, X MAN (waiting for someone), NW, SING (3 more crowns in purse), E (man sitting on floor), X MAN ("Play a game of chance for 1 crown?"), YES, TAKE CARD, RUN (you can't win the game here, but you need the card in the Inn – so you run off with it!), E (two shifty men), X MEN (shaking hands), X HANDS (funny kind of handshake – you can now answer "yes" to a question asked by a gang of thieves later), E, X STALL (swaps clothes), NO (nothing to trade).

S, E, E, N, E, E, S, X CAMPSITE (remains of a fire and rubbish), SEARCH RUBBISH (you now have a flask of oil), X OIL. Don't go further south into the Bear's Cave until you have a medallion to wear. N, E (something like a snake hangs from a tree), X SNAKE (not moving), PULL SNAKE (some rope falls to the floor), X ROPE (a ladder), GET ROPE, E, E, SEARCH BRANCHES (now have a bow), X BOW, E (see a sword embedded in a tree stump), X SWORD ("Speak name and pull"), W, W, NE (a man appears and his cloak gets caught in a bush), X MAN, REMOVE CLOAK FROM MAN (he walks off), X CLOAK (a Thief's cloak), WEAR CLOAK, N, NE, X LADY (friendly), X GARDEN, X WINDOW (open), X BROOM, GET BROOM (she won't let you).

SW, NW (Gateway to Pygmy Village), N, X PYGMIES, TALK TO PYGMIES, W, X CAULDRON (oily liquid), DIP RAG IN CAULDRON (it soaks up some liquid), E, N, X POLE (image of man-like Leopard – legs yellow, a rainbow top and a carved head almost falling off – from this you are to deduce that if you wear the head and a couple of items of clothing the Pygmies will think you are their god! Don't wear the head without the necessary clothes or you will be added to the contents of the cauldron!), REMOVE HEAD (from pole), X HEAD.

E (you need a lit lantern to progress further here), W, S, S, SE, S, SW, W, W, W, W, S, W, S, SW, W, W, W (back at the well), SQUEEZE RAG ON HANDLE, TURN HANDLE (the bucket reaches the top – you have rescued Filgo Brumleson who climbs on your shoulder), X FILGO (6 inches tall), X WELL, GET BUCKET, X BUCKET (hole in bottom), PUT LID IN BUCKET, E, S, S (or W – you meet a gang of thieves (must be wearing the cloak) – will you hand over your money?), NO (do you know special handshake?), YES (they walk off – you can now re-enter this area without the cloak, so this can now be swapped in the market), N, N, N, NW, E, E, E, X STALL, YES (to swap – anything in particular?), YES (what?), RAINBOW TOP (you are handed one), X TOP, WEAR TOP, S, E, E, N, E, E, E, SE (you hear a cat mewing), SE (bank of river – the ferry is at the far bank), FILL BUCKET, NW, NW, W, W.

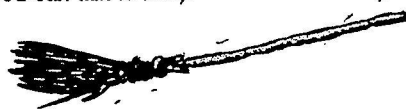
W (back at Inn), N, E, THROW WATER AT DRUNK (“Must remember Flamingo” says the drunk as he leaves – the maid thanks you and tells you her brother-in-law owns the Music Shop – he will now help), KNOCK ON DOOR (back in the dark room), SIT, GAMBLE (you are dealt 5 cards), CHEAT (using the card from the market – there is a fight and you leave with Caldwell who thanks you and will be in The Oxen if you need him), W, S, W, S, W, SW (in The Oxen), X CALDWIN (he has a knife), SAY TO CALDWIN “FOLLOW” (he joins you), NE, S, SW (while Caldwell is with you, you occasionally get the message “Leopold suddenly felt a little lighter” – this is to indicate that he has stolen an object from you), E (Music Shop), SAY TO OWNER “LUTE” (he can’t repair the lute but his partner Duggie could, unfortunately he has argued with a witch and disappeared! He gives you a medallion to give if you find him), X MEDALLION (to wear), WEAR MEDALLION, W (while Caldwell has been in the shop with you, he has stolen a lyre and hands it over), X LYRE.

S, E (Fletcher’s Shop), SAY TO CALDWIN “STEAL ARROW” (you leave the shop while he does so), N, W (outside the Reeve’s Building with the guard – Caldwell is nervous here. You need to get rid of Caldwell here, after he has got you the lyre and arrow – while he is with you, he keeps stealing objects and will also cause you to lose an egg when you get it from the eagle), SAY TO CALDWIN “GIVE ARROW”; SAY TO CALDWIN “GIVE KNIFE”, X CALDWIN (to check what he has stolen from you and take these as well. He may steal when you are doing this – so recheck that he has nothing), SAY TO GUARD “CALDWIN” (the guard tries to arrest Caldwell who runs away), X KNIFE.

E, NE, TALK TO MAN (“Aren’t you George the Ale?” he asks), YES (“Prove it!”), SAY FLAMINGO (“I’m Joe the Hand, The new password is Albatross”), SW, W, W, N, TALK TO MAN (“Aren’t you Joe the Hand?”), YES (“Prove it!”), SAY ALBATROSS (“I’m Dave the Sock. The new password is Turkey”), NW, E, E, E, S, E, SW (in The Oxen), SIT, WAIT (until a drunk asks you for a drink), YES (“Aren’t you Dave the Sock?”), YES (“Prove it!”), SAY TURKEY (“The word on the door is Armadillo” – this is the password for the Tower in the Thieves’ Quarter later in the game), STAND, NE, S, SW, S.

S (outside Shoe Shop), SAY TO FILGO “UNLOCK DOOR” (you enter the shop), X BIN (“Sooper Boots”), SEARCH BIN (now have a pair of boots), X BOOTS (soles 8 inches thick), W (don’t stay at the shop long or you are arrested), N, N, NE, N, E, N.

U (in the tree), SHOOT CROW (need the bow and arrow – the crow drops into the undergrowth below, the eagle gives you her egg to keep safe and will help if you whistle), X EGG, D, SEARCH UNDERGROWTH (you find the arrow, E, N, N, GIVE BOOTS TO DWARF (you now need a book before you can talk to him).



S, S, E, E, E, NE, N, NE, SAY TO LADY "DOUGGIE" ("Douglas the Fixer? I turned him into a bear!"), SW, S, SW, W, W, S, S, S (you hear a growling. Do you really want to go into the Cave?), YES (must wear medallion - or death!). The bear snatches the medallion and temporarily becomes Douglas. "Travel to the witch in the woods and get the antidote. I will be forever grateful"), N, N, N, E, E, NE, N, NE, SAY TO LADY "ANTIDOTE" ("My cat is missing, bring it back and you can have the antidote"), SW, S, SW, SE (cat mewing), WHISTLE EAGLE, SE, FILL BUCKET, NW, WAIT (the eagle always take 4 turns to arrive - you must have the egg!), SAY TO EAGLE "GET CAT" (it drops the cat and flies off), GET CAT, X CAT, NW, NE, N, NE, GIVE CAT TO LADY (she tells you to follow her for the antidote - don't delay too long or she changes her mind), HIDE BROOM (in the bushes), E (the lady opens a trapdoor and you both go down into the cellar - you see an open book. She gives you the antidote, writing on a label and takes you back outside the house. She goes back inside after noticing her broom is missing), GET BROOM, X BROOM, X ANTIDOTE (dilute to taste), PUT ANTIDOTE IN BUCKET (you must have water in or you burn a hole in the bucket!), SW, S, SW, W, W, S, S, S, GIVE BUCKET TO BEAR (it becomes Douglas the Fixer, he gives you a list of things needed to repair the Lute - Golden Horse Hair from the gnome kingdom, Oldine Wood, Hoskill Water from the Reeve and Dragon Fire - one lives high above the caves. He tells you to ignore the Reeve's scribe).

X DOUGLAS, GET BUCKET, N, N, SIT ON BROOM, U, X BAR (embedded in ground), TIE ROPE TO BAR, THROW ROPE OVER CLIFF, S, X PEDESTAL (giant set of teeth), X DISK (steel bowl), X TEETH (a forcefield throws you back "This is the property of Theodore the Ice Wizard"), N, E (cave entrance, a dragon's head protrudes - don't try go east again yet!), X DRAGON, THROW BOW AT DRAGON (any object will do - the dragon wakes), SAY TO DRAGON "HELP" ("Step closer"), E (inside cave), GET BOW, SAY TO DRAGON "HELP" ("I'm the one who need help"), HELP DRAGON (the Ice Wizard has stolen its teeth and chained it up. It hasn't enough strength to move. "All you have to do is destroy the forcefield around the teeth for which you'll need a magical weapon, then kill the Wizard. Simple!"), X CHAIN (enormous padlock), SEARCH RUBBLE (now have a golden coin), X COIN, SAY TO DRAGON "MAGIC WEAPON" (there is a magical sword called Johnnie).

W, W, D, N, N, W (at the Inn), SIT ON BROOM, GET LANTERN, X LANTERN (good working order), E, E, E, E, E (at the Sword), SAY JOHNNIE, PULL SWORD (it comes free), X SWORD, W, W, NE, N, NE, E (the witch is searching for her broom), GIVE BROOM TO LADY (she gives you a pouch of Fairy Dust - it makes people stronger. She follows you out of the cottage and flies away), CLIMB WINDOW, D (to cellar), X BOOK (you can't understand it), GET BOOK (it's too heavy but a paper falls to the floor), X PAPER ("Mushrooms in garden. Strong sunlight. Magic properties. Shrink?).

U, CLIMB WINDOW, SEARCH GARDEN (you find some mushrooms), GET MUSHROOMS, X MUSHROOMS (soft and blue), SW, S, SW, E, NE (a clearing where the sun shines strongly), DROP MUSHROOMS (they need 15 turns to change so come back later for them), SW, W, W, W, S, S, U (rope ladder), S (light lantern), POUR OIL IN DISK, BREAK FORCEFIELD (with the sword - Theodore the Ice Wizard appears), THROW LANTERN AT DISK (Theodore melts and all that is left is a pair of yellow trousers!), GET LANTERN, GET TROUSERS, X TROUSERS, SEARCH TROUSERS (now have a key), X KEY, WEAR TROUSERS, N, E, E, UNLOCK CHAIN, DROP KEY, GIVE DUST TO DRAGON (it sprinkles it on itself and ask you to follow it. At the pedestal it takes its teeth. the dragon picks you up and you return to the foot of the cliff - it will return when needed).

U (the rope falls at your feet), GET ROPE, N, N, E, E, NE, N, NW, N (Filgo doesn't go with you to the Pygmy Village), WEAR HEAD (wearing the trousers, rainbow top and totem head, the pygmies think their god has arrived), N, E, LIGHT LANTERN, D, E (several large pygmies are guarding a cage), X CAGE (a gnome sits behind the bars of the cage), X PYGMIES, GET CAGE (only allowed to if wearing the 3 items), W, U, W. When you go south from here, the Pygmy Chief confronts you. The only way of escape is to whistle for the eagle, but this takes too long and the chief has you killed – so before going south WHISTLE EAGLE, WAIT until you hear the beating of wings, then go S, X CHIEF (the eagle joins you and you escape out of the village while they are distracted. You rejoin Filgo. OPEN CAGE (can't), BEND BARS, BEND BARS, BEND BARS (the gnome escapes. It is Filgo's brother Fafty, he wants to go home. You throw the cage away), REMOVE HEAD, DROP HEAD, SE, S, SW, E, NE, GET MUSHROOMS, X MUSHROOMS (brown and wrinkled), SW, W, SE.

SE (the ferry is at the far bank), WHISTLE EAGLE, WAIT (until it arrives), SAY TO EAGLE "CALL FERRY" (it flies across the river, talks to the ferryman who brings the ferry to this side), CLIMB FERRY, X FERRYMAN, GIVE COIN TO FERRYMAN, SAY TO FERRYMAN "CROSS", GET OFF FERRY, E ("Home at last" says Filgo and rushes into the undergrowth. Fafty thanks you and says if you were small enough to follow, the King would like to meet you – if you waste moves here he leaves you), EAT MUSHROOMS (you are blindfolded and led through a maze and left – dark!) The only input here is REMOVE BLINDFOLD, N (to the Throne Room. The King asks you to name your reward for rescuing his sons), GOLDEN HORSE ("You must call the horse in the world of magic and the world of reality". You go to a place of darkness. "This is the first test, you are in the place of magic, of force, of pure imagination". IMAGINE GOLDEN HORSE (a small pony arrives), X PONY (shiny mane), RIDE PONY (you need a saddle), IMAGINE SADDLE, PUT SADDLE ON PONY, RIDE PONY (it take off at lightning speed but then fall off in a field. The Kings says "You have passed the first test. This is the place of reality. You must use your talents to call the true horse. If you succeed it will let you cut its hair"), SING, PLAY LYRE (a small pony appears), X PONY (shiny mane), CUT HAIR (you need Caldwell's knife), X HAIR (made from solid gold), X BLINDFOLD (length of cloth). From inputting "Golden Horse" to start the two tests, you have 34 turns to complete them before returning automatically to the Dead End where you at the mushrooms, so WAIT until this happens, W.

CLIMB FERRY, SAY TO FERRYMAN "CROSS", GET OFF FERRY, FILL BUCKET, NW, NW, NE, N, E (a wall of flames prevents you going southeast), X FLAMES (could be put out with not too much water), THROW WATER (from bucket – you put out part of the fire. No matter how many times you fill the bucket at the river you can never douse the fire completely. WHISTLE EAGLE, WAIT (for it to arrive), SAY TO EAGLE "FILL BUCKET" (she is quicker fetching the water and puts the flames out), Southeast of here is a Gurgle and you do not have the information yet how to deal with it. W, S.

About now the Eagle returns for her egg. SW, W, W, W, W, S, W (a brawl erupts from The Oxe. If you had been carrying the egg, it would have been smashed).

S, SW, W, KILL GUARD (must be carrying sword – he runs away), S (the scribe, mentioned by Douglas, is here – any other input except "south" and you are thrown out), SOUTH, KNOCK ON DOOR (the Reeve will give you the Water of Hoskill provided you bring the thieves' leader, bound, to him. You go back outside), W, S, S, W (outside the Tower), KNOCK ON DOOR ("Password"), SAY ARMADILLO (you are dragged inside), W, LISTEN ("To talk to the guy upstairs – there is a special catch under the doorknob").

E, U, OPEN DOOR/PUSH CATCH (you enter the room and are attached by a man), HIT MAN (the man falls unconscious), SEARCH MAN (now have a small book), TIE MAN (need the rope ladder) [Note - to find the book, you must search him first], GAG MAN (with the blindfold), E (you are dragging the man with you. You break the door catch to give you more time), D (a huge man here wants to know what is happening), LIE/TELL STORY (to get out of the Tower. You have now only just enough moves to return to the Reeve), E, N, N, E (the thieves race up in pursuit but then notice the guard, who is back. You go inside and are given the Water. You leave.

E, NE, N, E, N, E, N, N, X BOOK (how to speak and understand Dwarfel), SAY TO DWARF "PILLAR" (must be carrying the book and have given him the boots - "You must sing to the Pillar for lots of knowledge"), S, S, W, S (at the Pillar), SING BLUES (the Pillar stops singing and listens to you), SING TO PILLAR "OLDINE WOOD" (it is guarded by a Gurgle), SAY TO PILLAR "GURGLE" (you need the sword - if you are carrying it the Pillar goes on to say "Say Hazark to start the magic in the sword. Get the Gurgle on the floor and kill it with the fiery blade"), N, E, E, E, E, NE, N, E, SE (the Gurgle dives out), SHOOT GURGLE (need bow and arrow - it crashes to the floor), SAY HAZARK (the sword bursts into flames - lasts for only one turn), KILL GURGLE (it burns away to ash), E, X TREE (very old and gnarled - it has a face), SAY TO TREE "GIVE WOOD" ("You can if you can tell me my name"), (any input) then W, NW, W, S, SW, W, W, W, S (back at pillar), SING TO PILLAR "NAME" ("The lute is the same wood"), X LUTE CAREFULLY (you see the word "Frimble"), N, E, E, E, E, NE, N, E, SE, E (back at tree), SAY TO TREE "GIVE WOOD", SAY FRIMBLE (the tree gives you some Oldine Wood), W, NW, W, S, SW, W, W, S, S, S, S (Douglas the Fixer is preparing his tools), GIVE WOOD TO DOUGLAS, GIVE HAIR TO DOUGLAS, GIVE WATER TO DOUGLAS, GIVE LUTE TO DOUGLAS ("You have arranged for the Dragon Fire?"). The dragon arrives and Douglas finishes the Lute a few hours later. "An excellent job," said Douglas, "even if I do say so myself." The Dragon gives Douglas a lift and they leave.

Congratulations!!! You have succeeded in repairing the Lute.

Leopold had scored 250 out of 250.

Notes

1. There does not seem to be any limit to the number of objects carried.
2. Don't re-enter the Music Shop with the Lyre.
3. Don't return to the Shoe Shop after getting the boots.
4. Don't return to the Pygmy Village after rescuing Fafy and don't remove any of the 3 parts of the totem pole disguise while in the village area.
5. You can't talk to anyone while wearing the head.
6. Don't enter the Bear's cave unless wearing the medallion.
7. Don't go east into the Dragon's Cave before waking it up.
8. If the Eagle gets the cat, brings the ferry and puts out the fire, she will come for her egg and won't respond to rescue you from the Pygmies if you leave that till last.
9. Don't try to Steal Arrow from the Fletcher. He locks the shop up so you can't return with Caldwell.
10. You can only pass The Oxen safely once carrying the egg. The second time it will be broken.

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

Borphee Computers - 64 County Road, Ormskirk. L39 1QH

Dream World Adventures - 10 Medhurst Crescent, Gravesend, Kent. DA12 4HL

Elyzium Software - 50 Chadswell Heights, Lichfield, Staffs. WS13 6BH

Fictitious Frobisher - 1 Heath Gardens, Coalpit Heath, Bristol. BS17 2TQ

First Rung Publications - 32 Irvin Avenue, Saltburn, Cleveland. TS12 1QH

Format Productions - 34 Bourbon Road, Gloucester. GL4 0LE

Jack Lockerby - 44 Hyde Place, Aylesham, Canterbury, Kent. CT3 3AL

Jean Childs - 24 Waverley Road, Bagshot, Surrey. GU19 5JL

Laurence Creighton - 603 Hillside Heights, Wessels road, Green Point, 8004

South Africa

Motivations/SAFE - 16 Montgomery Avenue, Beith, Ayrshire. KA15 1EL

Peter Hague - 32 Chancet Wood Drive, Meadow Head, Sheffield. S8 7TR

Special Reserve - P.O. Box 847, Harlow, Essex, CM21 9PH

Spectrum Software Hire(Softsell) - 32 Dursley Road, Trowbridge, Wilts, BA14 0LQ

SynTax - 9 Warwick Road, Sidcup, Kent, DA14 6JL

Topologika - Islington Wharf, Church Hill Penryn, Falmouth, Cornwall, TR10 8AT

Vulcan Software Ltd. - Vulcan House, 72 Queens Road, Buckland,

Portsmouth, Hants. PO2 7NA

WoW Software - 52 Burford Road, Liverpool L16 6AQ

Zenobi Software - 26 Spotland Tops, Cutgate, Rochdale, Lancs, OL12 7NX

ADVENTURE PROBE HELP LINES



ISLA DONALDSON	0141 9540602	SUN - SAT Noon - 12pm Amstrad
BARBARA BASSINGTHWAIGHTE	01935 426174	SUN - SAT 10am-10pm Spectrum & BBC
BARBARA GIBB	0151 280 5616	Afternoon & Evening Various
MANDY RODRIGUES	01492 877305	Mon-Fri 10am - 9pm Various
PHIL GLOVER	0121 777 7324	Mon-Thurs 6pm - 10pm & Sun 11am - 5pm Sam Coupe
JENNY PERRY	0181 9794851	Any evening except Monday before 10pm PC & Spectrum
STEVE CLAY	0151 200 5861	Mon-Fri after 7pm Sun - any time within reason Not Saturday PAW & AMOS
KAREN TYERS	01347 838667	Spectrum Golden Oldies Any day - 10am - 10pm
DOREEN BARDON	01653 628509	MON-FRI 6pm - 10pm WEEKENDS Any reasonable time Spectrum

THE ULTIMATE INFOCOM HELPLINE

If you need help with an Infocom adventure then who better to help you than A GRUE!

Ring GRUE on 01695 573141 between 7.30pm and 9.00pm Monday - Friday
Or write to 64 COUNTY ROAD, ORMSKIRK, WEST LANCS. L39 1QH

ADVENTURE PROBE

Telephone 0151 280 5616 Afternoons and Evenings
or write to: The Editor, 52 Burford Road, Liverpool L16 6AQ

PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU ONLY RING AT THE TIMES SHOWN