

ADVENTURE PROBE

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If you write in it will be assumed that the letter is for publication in Probe unless it is clearly marked NOT FOR PUBLICATION or obviously just a covering note with a subscription or order etc. If an interesting point is raised, and you probably didn't intend it to be published I will always seek your permission before publishing.

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BACK ISSUES

Back issues may be ordered at the current price. Most issues are in stock, but some may have to be reprinted. Volume 1 comprise 19 issues (June 1986 to December 1987), subsequent volumes are 12 issues, January to December .

ADVERTISING RATES

All advertisements in the magazine are free for regular subscribers, i.e. 3 issues or more in advance. Trade price is £5.00 per full page.

DISTRIBUTION

Adventure Probe is distributed during the third week of each month. Copy date for contributions and advertisements is 1st of the month.

CONTRIBUTIONS

All contributions are gratefully accepted. Please keep me well supplied with computer and adventure-related material. It doesn't matter how brief it is - it may be exactly the information someone needs. 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. Contributions can also be submitted on disc, which will save me a lot of typing.

POSTAL ADDRESS

Please send all correspondence, subscriptions, and of course, contributions, to:

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HALL OF FAME

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

Laurence Creighton, Colin Steele, Dorothy Millard, Kez Gray,
Bev Truter, Doreen Bardon, David Hebblethwaite,
Jenny Wheeler, Peter Brown, Steve Clay
and Hilary O'Connor

Special thanks to:

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EDITORIAL

Next month will be Probe's 14th Birthday. Will a total of 169 issues be a record for a specialist magazine? I may ask the people who run The Guinness Book of Records. Any contributions containing 14 will be most welcome, if not, maybe some reminiscences, thoughts on the future, or just general comments. I am, as usual, desperately short of reviews, hints, getting you starteds and especially objects and their uses/locations. I will have to start the June issue early so please send in what you can ASAP.

Have you visited the Convention2000 website? Those of you unable to view this site, full of information on past and future conventions, won't have read Larry Horsfield's excellent article about the Megapoints competition (maybe he will allow me to reproduce it in the next magazine!). He lists all the adventures used in the 10 Megapoints competitions held so far, with the names of the winners. I thought it would be a good idea to publish a compilation of all 10 games, and when I spoke to Larry a few weeks ago it seems he had the same idea, and would like to offer them for downloading from his website. I may offer them on Spectrum tape and +D disk, as well as the 48K games on the Amiga and all 10 on the PC under Spectrum emulation, but I will have to charge a nominal fee. As three of them (Run, Bronwynn, Run; The Spectre of Castle Coris and The Fortress of Fear Pt 1) are by Larry, and There's A Hole In Your Bucket and Ten Little Adventurers are by authors who I could contact for their permission, we were off to a good start. I understood 25 by Jon Scott (as mentioned in David Hebblethwaite's letter this issue) was going to be published by Zenobi Software, so clearly something will have to be arranged if we go ahead with the project. Another adventure, The Curse of the Serpent's Eye, is/was published by Dream World/The Adventure Workshop. This left three which, as far as I know were never released. After two thorough searches amongst all the software I have accumulated over the years I eventually found playtesting copies of Exploits In A Wheelie-bin, The Long Journey Home and Tattoo. So, all 10 Megapoints adventures are together for the first time, but is there a demand? Will players want to accept the challenge of seeing how many points they can get in the first 20 minutes of play? I have no idea; maybe you can let Larry or myself know before we go any further with the project?

Since my Internet server changed to Blueyonder there have been numerous intermittent problems, especially with incoming mail. If you have sent me an email and not received an expected reply try sending it to editor@adventureprobe.freemove.co.uk - I will check the mailbox several times a day. That's all for this month.

Barbara

LETTERS

From Peter Smith of Waterbeach

Some more interesting stuff from Kez Gray. The Chinese story is quite in keeping with other Chinese ghost etc stories I've come across. Useful source material here is a book "Strange Tales of Liaozhai" by a Chinese author Pu Songling. English translations of this book are available in London's Chinatown. A good starting point if anyone wants a foreign supernatural background for a game.

Nice lot of stories and jokes - in some ways it is the non-Adventure stuff in Probe which I enjoy reading as much as the Adventure stuff. Which is useful for reference don't get me wrong.

From Hilary O'Connor of Sheffield

In response to your editorial I think it would be a sad loss if Probe were to cease as a magazine but should this happen one could only blame non-active subscribers like myself.

Every month I read the pleas for people to send in their contributions and every month I promise myself I will, but seldom do.

I know a lot of your time is taken up writing reviews, gys and hints of games you presumably have played. This along with actually putting Probe together must leave you short of time for yourself. Would Probe on the net make any less demands on your time?

*

I don't know how long it would take to prepare a typical magazine for uploading each month. As you may have noticed I try to keep Probe at least 52 pages long, but some of these pages are duplicated each month, and rarely require updating. I may be wrong, but I feel an Internet version could contain a varied amount of material without it being too obvious. Also I wouldn't have to get it photocopied and then staple, fold, put into envelopes, take to the post office and then wonder if the Royal Mail were doing their best to deliver to subscribers. However, that time is a fair way off, so a few more trees will have to be sacrificed before Probe goes exclusively online. (Barbara)

From Doreen Bardon of Slingsby

I do hope that AP will still remain a printed book in the years to come. I know technology has got better, but you still can't beat the written word on paper.

I wonder how many people there are out there, who after a hard day of adventuring, turn their eyes to the 'games/accessories' dept of the PC, especially the card game FreeCell.

There are one or two of us from the Hamilton Halls gang, who talk about this game, to see how far on we are and if any games have not been done.

To those people who have not got a PC. this letter will be of no interest at all to you, and I apologise.

There are as you may, or may not know 32,000 games to complete. When I first got the PC I played these card games randomly, but have since started to play at No. 1 and am continuing to play in order.

At the moment I'm on No. 2251, with No's. 617, 1136 and 1941 still unfinished. Apparently there are some games which cannot be solved.....

It would be interesting to know what other people have done.

*

What do other readers play (when not playing adventures)? I'm hooked on Lineup from Microsoft's Entertainment Pack. (Barbara)

From Colin Steele of London

As I have said before, I really enjoy reading Probe, but I must admit that I didn't enjoy reading the March issue.

There was nothing wrong with the actual magazine. It was whilst I was reading your editorial and realized that after so many years the end is slowly coming into sight. It had to come eventually, but just owning up to the fact saddened me. I am sure a few others probably felt the same.

Please find enclosed my list of "Castle" and "Treasures", loads of castles but not many treasures, just like life.

Those two problems with "A Hero For Sorania" that I spoke to you about on the 'phone were solved. I went back to the game and started from scratch again, and hit the same snags not once, but three times. So I decided to sleep on it and try again today, if I did not get a result I would give Doreen Bardon a ring for an answer, straight from the horse's mouth, so to speak.

I did try it again, same brick wall - could not fill pot with water from cobwebs. Then I saw what I was doing wrong. I was inputting TAKE CORK FROM POT because if you X POT the reply is "It's a tiny china pot with a cork in the neck". Input REMOVE CORK, the reply is "You gently remove the cork and see the pot is empty. Carefully you replace the cork.". That's the reason that you can't fill the pot if you remove the cork. Maybe you could use this as a handy hint.

CASTLE

Castle Adventure

Castle Blackstar

Castle Dracula

Castle Dungeon

Castle Eerie

Castle Elsinore

Castle Frankenstein

Castle Master 1

Castle Master 2

Castle of Mydor

Castle of Riddles

Castle of Terror

Castle of the Skull Lord

Castle Thade Revisited

Castle Warlock

Castles & Kingdoms

Fire Hawk Castle

Magic Castle

Sorcerer of Claymorgue Castle

Sorcerer's Castle

Spectre of Castle Coris

Terror Castle

Voodoo Castle

Wizard's Castle

Zargo's Castle

TREASURE

Fabled Treasure of Koosar

Five on Treasure Island

Five Treasures of Rysor

Magic Treasure Adventure

Nether Poppleton Treasure Hunt

Spanish Treasure

Treasure

Treasure Hunt

Treasure Hunt on Jersey

Treasure Island (Anon)

Treasure Island (J.Lockeryby)

Treasure Island (J.Wells)

Treasure Isle

Treasure of Santa Maria

*

My comments certainly caused a record number of readers to put pen to paper, and not one said they would prefer an Internet-based magazine to a paper-based one. So, business as usual for as long as I can.

Regarding A HERO FOR SORANIA, providing you in the correct location, and carrying the pot, GET DROPLETS is all that is needed. (Barbara)

From Peter Brown of Seaford

I note with interest your editorial comment in the April issue concerning lack of sale of software. Perhaps this could be due to many readers purchasing the Zenobi CD when all of their text adventures became available on one disk (enough games to last a lifetime).

Perhaps also due to the popularity of the Sony PlayStation, I myself find I play very few text adventures because I use the PlayStation more, maybe this is the case with many of your readers.

I look forward to some comments in future issues.

*

Zenobi's CDs certainly contain a vast number of text adventures, but not all. I am very annoyed that certain adventures are still unavailable due to the extended closure of The Adventure Workshop. If I gave up obtaining any more adventures because I had "enough to last a lifetime" I would have stopped collecting them years ago, what do other players think?

Probe is not exclusively text adventures, it just seems like that as the vast majority of contributions cover text adventures. Peter doesn't mention Steve's PlayStation articles (see this and April's issue) which is a shame because I am sure Steve will welcome some feedback. His review of Soul Reaver (played on a PlayStation) is also in this issue. (Barbara)

From Steve Clay of Ellesmere Port

Regarding the Internet debate. I for one am against Probe moving to an Internet-only publication until such time as I am on the net, which is the selfish attitude most people secretly adhere to. The truth of the matter is that I prefer the paper-based printed word. I used to subscribe to Syntax. As well produced and informative as it is I did not enjoy reading from the computer screen. I suppose the idea is to print out the magazine and read it when the time is opportune.

Small point! When computers first exploded onto the scene the media predicted the end of the printed word. No more books, magazines or newspapers! What are the most common non-fiction books on sale? How to use your computer or application. How many computer magazine titles are on sale? 30-40 monthly? Alongside the DIY stores what product is advertised most in your weekend paper? No not the ones at the back!

Regarding the idea of solutions on a database. Sounds like a good idea. My knowledge of a database is more than a little dated (Access about six years ago) so I stand to be corrected on my information. I think the way that a database is constructed would mean that every solution contained on it would use up the same memory as the largest solution on file. So a three line solution would consume the same amount as a three page solution. If this is the way a database still works then would it not be better to save all the solutions on disc (floppy, zip or compact) and use the database to store the volume and filenames under which they are stored. This could save eating up great chunks of memory of your hard drive while the database could be used as a small management system.

One last thing. As a big Queen (as in the band not her majesty) has anyone played Queen - The Eye, an 'adventure' based on their music? It was available for the PC but I never managed to read a review.

Many thanks for the Discworld 2 tips.

*

Sue now gives Syntax subscribers the choice of disk (via post or email) or paper.

I don't have any technical knowledge of database, so any advice and help will be most welcome.

I found one retail outlet (£34.99 - PC only) and a couple of websites offering a downloadable demo (40.7Mb) and reviews for Queen: The Eye. It seems to be either an adventure or an adventure/rpg depending on who is writing the review. I've forwarded printouts of some of the reviews to Steve but if you have any more information please let him or me know.

If someone can help with hints for Discworld 2 please send them in asap.
(Barbara)



From Dorothy Millard of Croydon, Australia

Following is a list of games, which have been bugging me for quite some time. Any help that you can give would be most appreciated. My e-mail address is dmillard@tig.com.au or let Barbara know.

ADVENTURE #1 QUEST FOR THE CAVES (Diamond Quest) by Jim Farone (PC Basic) - You have been chosen to find the lost treasures but I can't find them!

ABYSSAL ZONE by Jeff Grey (Apple) - I have a problem in this game because I keep running out of air. In a part solution, which I obtained, the author had the same problem!

BRAVE AFRICAN HUNTRESS by Twilight (C64) - I cannot enter the monster's town gate!

CAN I CHEAT DEATH? By Simon Avery (Amstrad) - No matter how hard I try I can only get down the manhole once and cannot repeat the action. The game keeps telling me I'm too scared.

CATACOMBS REVISITED by Brian Cotton, Supersoft (PC) - How do I get past the spider?

CHIPS ARE FOREVER by Matthew Wilson (Spectrum) - According to the solution I found for this short game you must **TURN TAP**, the water sweeps away the monster and you end up outside, but it doesn't work!

CONCH by Alan Scully (Amstrad) - Entering the garden you can examine the flowers and hedge to discover an opening just big enough for you to crawl through, however if you do you just finish up on the golf course where after a few moves a ball hits you and the game ends!

CRYPT OF MEDEA by Alan Lamb & Arthur Britto II of Sir-Tech Software Ltd. (Apple) - At the west end of the ravine if you **THROW ROPE** it catches on the sharp rocks above your head and you can swing across, but you need the candle to see and the rope on the other side and cannot carry both.

DEMON'S FORGE (Apple) - No matter how hard I try I cannot climb the ladder.

DER RING DES NIBELUNGEN by Michael R. Harris (PC AGT) - When you meet the cockatoo he says to say the magic word and according to some

hints I found this is PLEASE, but it doesn't work for me!

GHOUL MANOR – Spectrum – I am really sick of getting killed in this game but it interests me.

KNOT TO BE UNDONE – 1999 Wacky Competition (PC) - I've missed something in this game! Has anyone completed it?

LOST PROPERTY (SCHOOL) by Edward McArdle (PC and Amiga) - I've obviously missed something as I just can't work out what to do next.

NOAH by Mike Young (Spectrum) – Need more information.

ROBIN HOOD by T. S. Software (Spectrum) - I'm stuck.

RUINS AT TIME'S EDGE by Anthony Wood (TRS 80) – I've come to a dead end!

SEARCH FOR THE LOST DUTCHMAN GOLD MINE by Ray Johnson (PC) - I haven't got very far in this one. I have mapped it successfully but now what?

From David Hebblethwaite of Nottingham University

It's been ages since I've had a letter in Probe, so I thought it was about time I wrote one. And now that somebody (Steve Clay) had mentioned my name, what better excuse do I need?

Steve, I've just (literally this morning) finished THE FIFTH ELEPHANT, and I have to say I agree with you about it and CARPE JUGULUM.... but the other way round. I thought CJ was OK but TFE is the best thing Terry Pratchett's written in years (not his best, sure, but a darn sight better than anything since Hogfather). Funny how people can disagree like that, isn't it.

I don't know if this is of interest to anyone, but here's some Discworld news I've picked up here and there:

The 25th Discworld novel, due out in November, will be called THE TRUTH and will be about Ankh-Morpork's first newspaper, which means (at last!) we'll get some new characters! (And I bet the wizards will have something to say about moveable type....)

The one after that is currently called THIEF OF TIME, due out (if all goes well) in May 2001.

Terry Pratchett is also working on something called THE LAST HERO, which is going to be the same sort of thing as ERIC, e.g. an illustrated novella; except this time the artwork will be provided by Paul Kidby (who did The Pratchett Portfolio, which I reviewed in Probe some way back). I think I heard that it will be published in hardback in 2001. It'll no doubt be ridiculously expensive, but by the time the paperback comes out (if Eric is anything to go by), the illustrations will probably have disappeared.

Moving on to other things, it's great to hear that Jon Scott is back with us. If I remember rightly, this is the second time Jon has tried (and failed) to give up adventuring - I think you're stuck with it, Jon ☺. Now, please can we have a commercial release of 25 (the 1998 Megapoints game?) I still want to find out what to do with a grand piano and a whoopee cushion (two objects in the game - yes, really!).

I was interested to read in Peter Smith's article that some people thought BROKEN SWORD 2 didn't have the same depth of background as its predecessor. I started BS2 just the other day, so I've barely scratched the surface. My first impressions are:

It's a relief to be able to move between locations instantaneously.

The French accents aren't as strong, so I don't need subtitles.

I can't ask people about the objects I'm carrying as much as I'd like (I'd love to hear the response to "What does this worm mean to you?").

I might change my mind as I play through the game, so we'll see what happens.

Finally, while I remember, a small correction to John Ferris' report on the last Convention. Whatever my Mum told you, this is the truth: I did not (I repeat - NOT) go into a nightclub on a fork lift truck. It was the tail-lift of a normal van.

That's all. Keep adventuring.

PS - LATE NEWS: I've just heard that Terry Pratchett is finally going to get round to writing a non-Discworld book (and about time too)! The book (probably due after Thief of Time and therefore maybe out Nov 2001) will be a new take on the Arthurian legends, with a Queen in the main role. Pratchett promises that the book (which may be the first of a series, I don't know) will not be just a straightforward replay of Arthur with a woman in charge. Sounds interesting.

From David Dewberry of Dunmow

I read your editorial in the March issue of Probe with great interest. In fact all issues are avidly devoured from cover to cover, and in my opinion it will be a very sad day when you are no longer able to continue.

With regards to your comments to everyone eventually owning a PC, I have had mine now for some eighteen months but I have no interest in going on the Internet. Perhaps I am the exception, or maybe not? I still have my Spectrum as I have quite a few adventures that are not available for use on the PC.

Anyway I digress, back to your editorial in which you say that Probe, if it continues, will probably be a freely-accessed website. I am sure many of your readers prefer a printed magazine, I know I do. As you may remember, many years ago there was a tape magazine for the Spectrum, but it did not give the same pleasure.

One of my pet moans is that many adventures are now unavailable, so it was good news to read that Larry Horsfield has give you permission to publish all of his adventures. Perhaps there are other authors out there who would consider doing the same. On the same theme, maybe there are Probe readers with old titles they no longer require and would consider selling them through Probe. Or perhaps Barbara you have some that you could make available to run on the PC under emulation.

I recently purchased two old adventures for the PC, namely Arthur C. Clarke's "Rama" published by Sierra and "The Dig" under the White Label. Perhaps these could feature in the solution or hints section of Probe.

*

I have some software that readers have passed on to me and from time to time I have mentioned that they may be borrowed by readers. I also have quite a large collection of my own. I can convert the Spectrum games to run on the PC under emulation, and providing it is considered "abandonware" I see no reason why I should not pass on Spectrum, Amiga (e) and PC(e) versions to anyone who wants a copy, so just let me know what you would like. I have recently converting some Atari games to run on the PC under emulation (e.g. WYSIWYG, Flipping the Lid, Asteroid Adventure) - more on this in the next issue.

"Rama" is the serialized solution which started last month, and I will publish Jill Nott's solution for "The Dig" in a future issue, probably next month. (Barbara)

REVIEWS

CRYSTAL OF CHANTIE

Pelagon Software

Review by Dorothy Millard (Spectrum GAC Version)

Hidden in the Tibetan mountains is the country of Senavie, and it was to here one day, from the midst of a violent storm, that a sick stranger arrived. The impish inhabitants of Senavie nursed the stranger back to health, and in return he gave them the Crystal of Chantie, a powerful gem with eternal life force. But the gem has been stolen by the evil Count Vulgar and his servant Puck. Senavie is now a desolate, icy waste and it is your quest to find the gem and return it before Vulgar uses it to conquer the world.

Written with GAC I understand that it originally sold at a budget price of £2.99. Problems are encountered right from the start. You have only ten moves to find some warmth before freezing to death. My memories of playing GAC games on the C64 were of graphics drawing, but playing this Spectrum version under emulation this was not a problem and the graphics drew instantly. However, on some occasions, the text scrolled off the screen before I had time to read it. One way around this was to use the TEXT command to switch off the graphics. The pictures are reasonable considering the age and type of game and the background colour changes according to your location.

Making your way through the frozen enchanted land of Senavie you will need to find the means to make a fire, find a way out of a deep icy cell, fish through a hole in the ice and deal with a deformed bear, before you reach the top of a mountain where you will meet Puck. A violent storm will be encountered next and when it has passed you see sheer walls of living ice surrounding you and a huge ice face watching you from the north wall. Once past this face there are ledges to climb and crevasses to cross in order to arrive at the abbey. Before going further it is necessary to visit Forton the Evil Warlock who is asleep and you must be extra careful not to wake him, as he isn't pleased if he catches you stealing his things. The next problem involved persuading a troll guard to part with his sword and if he catches you the game will end. There is still lots to do and some tooting and froing in order to find and store the five treasures, as you can't carry very many items at a time.

On the whole Crystal of Chantie is well presented and the problems are tricky but logical. I enjoyed playing it.

FAULTY TOWERS

Written by R & D Jones (C64), R Corbett (Spectrum 48k)

Reviewed by Bev Truter on a PC(e)

Yes! This is indeed an early (1984) text adventure based on the marvellous series "Fawltly Towers" starring John Cleese et al. It would be an advantage to have viewed some of the episodes, but not vital, for solving some of the puzzles in this game. The puzzles are fairly simple, but as with most of the early two-word-input adventures, finding the exact wording to make the parser understand you seems to be more of a challenge than the puzzles themselves. However, the prospect of playing a game based on Fawltly Towers cheered me up no end, especially the prospect of playing the role of the luckless Basil, the archetype of surly and inept hotel proprietors everywhere. So...on with the plot, as told in the introduction:

"This adventure follows the fortunes of hotel owner Basil Faulty. Your task is to help him keep his hotel open (and his sanity!) for a week. Trying to close you down are various characters who arrive and demand service at odd intervals [footnote: not evident in the Spectrum(e) version - only the Health Inspector arrives]. You are expecting the arrival of the Public Health Inspector, and it is essential to ensure that you have disposed of anything to which he might find objection. You can score points by disposing of these objects, and you can get a bonus by hitting Manuel, or by insulting your wife Sybil. From time to time Sybil will request you to do something, which more often than not sounds like an order! To retain your sanity you must complete these tasks within a set number of moves, which varies with each task."

Although Faulty Towers has not got the size or flexibility of larger, more recent games it still manages to capture that authentic "Fawltly Towers" feel. I became quite immersed in the plot and action, dashing furiously to and fro, trying to carry out Sybil's instructions before time ran out and I was carted off to the funny farm by those men in white coats. You cannot EXAMINE anything, bar a few objects, but Sybil's orders pop up at regular intervals on the screen, sounding extremely Sybil-like, everything prefaced with "BASIL!!!!..." The layout of the locations appeared to resemble Basil's hotel in the series, and room descriptions were terse, but adequate enough.

The most positive thing about Faulty Towers was the atmosphere it managed to generate, despite being extremely sloppy with regard to spelling - for example, the single screen of instructions contained three silly errors, which surely even the most casual playtesting should have spotted and corrected. ('redescibe', 'map a map' and 'was witten'). The first two

locations I visited were the 'hotel's office', and Reception contained a 'couter flap'. Further on into the game things seemed to improve slightly, with fewer spelling bloopers, and the pace and action more than made up for atrocious spelling and, to be honest, poorly-programmed puzzles.

The snag with the problems/puzzles facing you in Faulty Towers is that although you can work out exactly what to do, it's an uphill battle discovering the exact input the game requires before it understands what you are trying to do. There seemed to be no synonyms or alternative ways of doing things at all, and objects change names in a very baffling way after you have fiddled with them. For instance, when you sharpen a knife, it suddenly becomes a "sharp", and the word "knife" is not understood at all. The torch was the worst in this respect, as once lit the parser does not understand "lit" or "torch" - you have to type TORCH OFF to turn it back into an unlit torch if you want to manipulate it in any way.

Three of the seven puzzles simply require you to GET XXX, then DROP XXX somewhere else; two puzzles needed some quite obscure verbs to be used; and the remaining two puzzles were a bit more complicated, one of them requiring several objects and quite a bit of running backwards and forwards, up and down stairs, to solve.

Manuel and Sybil appear and disappear randomly from their initial locations; and once you have made Polly "appear", she just stays there. None of the characters can be interacted with in any way, or even examined - they just trot out their set piece of conversation or action, and that's that. The Health Inspector has to follow you around at one stage of the game, and this is achieved by typing GET INSPECTOR. Thereafter he appears as an item in your inventory, which seems a rather clumsy way of dealing with character's movements. Similarly, to drive a car, GET CAR is all that's needed - and there was I, trying ENTER, IN, DRIVE CAR, all quite unnecessary, I found out eventually.

Faulty Towers reminded me of that old C64 game HAMPSTEAD, in that very similar, simplistic inputs are needed to progress through the game. But then I shouldn't carp too much, as Faulty Towers was written in 1984, for a 48k Spectrum; and bearing that in mind it was an enjoyable romp through the 60-locations gameworld of Basil and Sybil's hotel. I was hoping to see the "Fawilty Towers" sign at the Entrance Gates location - the one that kept on getting rearranged by hooligans to read "Fatty Owls" and "Farty Towels", etc. Pity it wasn't there, but there "were" two garden gnomes!

Download from The World of Spectrum (<http://www.void.jump.org>) or send a blank PC disc and return postage to the Probe office.

GOLDEN ROSE

Written by Stephen Parkins & Peter Day (1984)

Reviewed by Bev Truter on PC under Spectrum emulation

The storyline of Golden Rose is that you are out for a stroll one sunny Sunday afternoon, where you can visit many interesting places and meet some unusual people. If you do the right things you will find yourself in the middle of a magical adventure to rescue a beautiful princess.

Well, my first thoughts when I loaded up this game to play and read the introduction was - Oh no!!! Not yet another silly quest for a missing Princess; collect treasures, find princess, get rewarded by her dad the King, etc. But I was pleasantly surprised by this fairly ordinary-looking text adventure, for various reasons. First of all, no spelling errors! No grammatical blunders! Then there were the quite pleasant locations to amble through, with interesting geography and a logical layout to the scenery - none of those maddening illogical twists and turns in the directions.

Still on the subject of locations and geography, I am definitely not a lover of mazes, so I was pleased to discover that there is a magical object in this game which becomes very useful in a maze near the end of the game. Somehow I find floundering about in mazes, dropping objects and trying to make a sensible map of the place rather irritating, although I know that plenty of people just love mazes, and all the mapping they usually entail. Ah well, each to his/her own thing...

About half the locations in Golden Rose are accessible from the beginning of the game, but you will eventually have to find a way of entering that imposing castle, locked and barred by a portcullis. You can finally gain entry in a rather unusual way, if you have first performed a series of actions elsewhere.

Definitely the nicest thing about playing Golden Rose was the number and variety of puzzles throughout the game. None of the puzzles was startlingly innovative or difficult, but there were plenty of them. Having recently played/plodded through several short Specy(e) games that were almost devoid of problems to solve or obstacles to overcome, I was pleased to find so many puzzles scattered all over the place in Golden Rose, no matter how cliched or mundane.

Golden Rose may be dated and out of fashion, but it is one of those delightfully busy games to play. There are about 80 locations, making it

quite sizeable for a Spectrum game, plenty to do and think about, and many characters to meet and help in various ways. Obviously a lot of thought and care went into the writing and programming of this game, and if you haven't yet played Golden Rose, I'd recommend it as one of the more enjoyable Spectrum games to play.

Download from The World of Spectrum (<http://www.void.jump.org>)

I can also offer it on Spectrum (tape or +D disk) and PC and Amiga under Spectrum emulation - send tape or disk and return postage or £1.50 to cover costs. (Barbara)

THE MYSTERY OF OLD ST JOSEPH

Written by Rick Lamberson

Reviewed by Bev Truter on a PC under ST emulation

Thanks to Barbara's efforts, I was finally able to play this very early ST text adventure programmed with AGT. The author (an extremely youthful American teenager, by the looks of it) has used his real-life hometown as the setting for his game, and has invented a strong plot that sounds as though it could develop into a ripping yarn with several exciting ingredients - long-dead pirates and double-crossings; buried treasure, a secret logbook, a piece of paper in a bottle...

To give you an idea of the game's content, I'll quote the brief introduction verbatim: "This text adventure is centred around the actual places and landmarks of Port St. Joe, a friendly little community on the northwest coast of Florida. The town is rich in history, which is reflected in it's (sic) museum and libraries. You have mysteriously found yourself here with no idea as to why. With nothing else to do, you decide to explore."

However, although all the necessary ingredients for a good text adventure are there, the skill needed to program the whole caboodle together into an interesting game is evidently not. The author has chosen to use the "standard" version of AGT, which means there is no command or message file, just a fairly primitive data file. This in turn results in a game which understands only a few verbs - for example, you can't swim, jump, dive, climb or even "wear" something that should definitely be wearable - and ultimately STJO becomes just a tedious plod around the gameworld (about 60 locations in total). Most objects are not even hidden or disguised in any way, but are simply scattered about in full view, and most of the locations are just there as padding. The author could have comfortably written the game to fit into 15 or 20 locations, and omitted many of the most boring locations.

Spelling and grammar are definitely not the author's strong suit either. I think the Americans do actually spell "medallion" as "medalion" and "jewellery" as "jewelry"; but captain and buoy are consistently misspelt as captian and bouy, and apostrophes are merrily scattered about hither and thither in several inappropriate places. But I've seen worse than this, and the author was obviously a rather youthful teenager or pre-teenager at the time of writing.

Puzzles are almost non-existent, and most of the time you'll find nothing more taxing than unlocking a couple of items, digging in the appropriate place, and reading several clues written on a piece of paper, in a library book, and in a logbook. There's the usual "dying" problem in AGT, where you disappear in a cloud of orange smoke, and are then given the option of being resurrected - choose YES, and then RESTORE a previously-saved game if you don't want to be tossed out on your ear back to the desktop. In STJO there's mercifully only one "hostile" creature to deal with - i.e. you have to find the appropriate weapon to kill it with, before it kills you. Many early AGT games of the same vintage were peppered with a plethora of ridiculous hostile creatures, which you had to battle your way through by typing in KILL xxx WITH yyy, while desperately hoping you had the correct weapon with which to do the dirty deed.

There were some unintentional howlers in STJO, mainly due to the lack of a command and message file which would have made this a more logical and intelligible game. For example, you can only go DOWN to the cabin below the yacht deck while the yacht is moored in St Joseph's harbour; once you have started the engines and sailed anywhere else, it's impossible to get to this cabin, as typing DOWN only results in a very indignant "YOU CAN'T GO DOWN FROM HERE!" Similarly, if you try the perfectly obvious action of WEAR SCUBA GEAR, you are faced with the puzzling response of "THE GEAR CLEVERLY RESISTS YOUR TOUCH" - unless you are in the correct location to go scuba-diving; and even then, although you apparently don the scuba gear, it still pops up in your inventory as being carried, not worn.

It's a pity the author never went back to STJO a few years after releasing the original, as I'm sure with more programming experience, a more recent version of AGT, and a bit more maturity, he would have made a much better job of this game. As it stands, I have the feeling that there's the potential for a good game lurking in there somewhere, but it's certainly well hidden.

You may find this game on the Internet, if not send me a blank Atari or PC disc and return postage or £1.50 to cover costs stating which format and if an emulator is required. (Barbara)

LEGACY OF KAIN: SOUL REAVER

Reviewed by Steve Clay on a Playstation

I want to deal with a couple of things before I begin this review. Firstly I have mentioned this game in a previous issue in the Playstation news column and if I should repeat myself then I apologise. Secondly I have not completed this game, indeed I am only just over a fifth of the way through and while I would prefer to review a game I have completed or more than half completed the time is now! If in the future I discover this review is wide of the mark I will definitely inform Probe readers.

Soul Reaver is the second game in the Legacy of Kain series, with the third part in production not only Playstation but also Playstation 2. As a point of interest the third part was originally scheduled for a Playstation 2 release only but the publishers have seen the error of their ways.

Soul Reaver begins 1000 years after the first game (no need to have played that, by the way). Lord Kain set up his base in the Pillars of Nosgoth from where he began to conquer the world. Kain brought six souls from the underworld and made them his lieutenants of whom Raziel- the character you play- was one. The six lieutenants then spread forth through the land, each, raising an army of vampires to pillage Nosgoth. The kingdoms of the humans were inevitably as they provided victims for and then became vampires. Only one hundred years had passed before humanity was domesticated with odd bands of wild humans scattered about. These feral humans continued a vain holy war against Kain and his legions. They were tolerated as they provided good training for the younger vampires. Once the humans were enslaved they were put to work creating a glorious shrine around the Pillars. The sun was blotted out by huge furnaces belching out black smoke to smother the landscape.

With the vampires so dominant in the world the lesser vampires became the playthings of Kain. He allowed, even began, conspiracies and intrigues, upon which the leaders gambled on the outcome. The vampires need blood to survive but it is the soul of the reanimated corpse that makes a vampire. The blood feeds the soul. As the vampires matured the human bodies they inhabited evolved. The leaders became Dark God, losing interest in the affairs of lesser vampires and humans alike. Always Kain would evolve first. A decade or so later one of his lieutenants would change. Bad day then for Raziel when he queue jumped and evolved wings before Kain.

Kain took this queue jumping like the evil demon he was. Raziel had his wings broken and was thrown by his companions into the Lake of the Dead. Water, as in all those Hammer horror films, is like acid to the skin of a

vampire. The Lake of the Dead is where traitors were executed. Raziel fell for a long time before coming to rest on the bed of the lake, here the voice of an Elder told of how, once, it had fed on the souls of Nosgoth before Kain had arrived and starved it of food. The elder, as is the way with these hungry ethereal beings, got the right hump. The Elder offered Raziel a deal. Raziel can go forth into the Material realm and slay his former brethren. The cup final being a pop at Kain himself. An offer a sunken vampire can't refuse.

One other thing that needs explaining is that the game takes place in two realms. The Material realm is the world of the living. The Spectral realm is the world of, you guessed it, the dead. These worlds are the same place but Raziel has different powers and abilities in each, such as not being able to carry things in the Spectral, at least at the start and moving in the material realm takes more of Raziel's strength. While in the Spectral realm time stands still in the Material. This offers some opportunities for some clever coming and goings between the realms. In particular solving certain puzzles and ambushing enemies.

So, finally, to the game itself. Anybody who read the earlier brief overview of this game will know I love it. The graphics for a start are constantly being loaded from disc so there is no stop and wait. This gives the game a big feel and also the feeling that you are constantly working in a game and not heading for a 'Load next level' point. The main character is so well created and animated you feel he is alive (adead? given he is a vampire)?

The environment the game is set in is suitably arcane. Underground tunnels look like solid rock and glistening moss hint at dampness. The abandoned cathedral is awesome as are the huge furnace vents. Fallen stone blocks tower above Raziel giving the player the size of the world Kain built and getting up to higher ledges form a couple of early puzzles. The puzzles are shared with the combat at about 45:55 in favour of the combat, but given other games of this ilk this a massive bonus.

First the combat. This is always a bone of contention with adventurers but in this game it is vital to the story. Raziel needs to absorb the souls of those he slays to give the strength to return to and survive in the Material realm. The animation of Raziel absorbing these souls is superb and I have yet to tire of it. The combat has not been too difficult so far and often rewards creativity. Combat can even be avoided in many cases if Raziel does not require energy. Apart from his claws Raziel will soon find rocks and metal spikes to help get his food. Killing an enemy and then absorbing the soul results in the body burning away to ash. This is another animated display that I have yet to tire of.

The puzzle solving early on is of the moving blocks, pulling levers type but they expand well beyond the normal 'adventure' fare. One puzzle had me stumped because I underestimated the quality of the design. I am used to pulling a couple of levers to open a door or shifting a block to reach one of said levers. The big puzzle near the start of the game involved shifting two blocks across ledges and into shafts. This opened a gate that meant I could reach another part of the room in the Material realm. From here I had to leap onto a beam to lower another block to make another part of the level available. This is about half of the puzzle and things continue in a similar vein. Even killing the first lieutenant is all about using your brain, not the attack button. Having killed this first lieutenant opens up the story even more and offers Raziel new powers and a spectral accomplice.

The sound throughout the game is of the highest quality and adds to the atmosphere generated by the wonderful graphics. This game reminds me in a way of Exhumed, a game set in ancient Egypt. I often felt I would like to just look around the landscape and in Soul Reaver I get the same feeling. Above the abyss with waterfalls plunging all around and broken rope bridges hanging over the deep water is wonderful. Little touches like birds alighting on gates or blocks and just watching adds to the suspense of the game.

The controls are as instinctive as you could wish and I can't find anything to fault with the whole thing. I have heard the end is a little disappointing but only as it makes way for Part 3.

There are hundreds of things I would like to add but just typing up this review makes me want to get on with playing it. If you see it, buy it!

Shop around - the best I could find was from Electronic Boutique
<http://www.eb.uk.com>
Playstation - £16.99, PC - £14.99, Dreamcast - £17.99 (Barbara)



GHOSTS, GHOULS & THINGS THAT GO "WOOOAAH!" IN THE NIGHT by Kez Gray

WEREBEASTS

These creatures were generally as a rule (although there are some exceptions) thought to have been real human beings at certain times who turned into animals either (a) at their own will (b) through an outside catalyst. Werebeast category "a" are generally known as "Shapeshifters" and are usually defined as witches, warlocks or wizards who change into an animal through magical transmogrification - usually in order to spy on enemies, take part in magic rituals, travel a distance at greater speed or various other tasks that people of their magical status get up to. Werebeast category "b" are usually known to be people that have been "cursed" or had a "spell" cast on them by a vengeful (or in some cases just downright evil) practitioner of the magical arts. They generally do not have the power to control their shape-changing abilities (as Werebeast "a" can do) and at a set time or upon a certain 'trigger' (certain folk tales would have us believe "the night of the full moon" or "upon seeing the full moon") the poor accursed person would change from human to animal - until the set time when they would be released from the spell and change back again. One Irish folktale tells of a priest who met two wolves by a fire in a forest and was amazed when the male wolf asked him to perform the "Last Rites" for the she-wolf (his wife) who was dying. The wolf went on to explain that due to a family curse, for seven years two people of his family must live as wolves - at the end of which time, if they had survived, they would be returned to their human forms. The priest would not believe this strange tale - until the she-wolf ripped open her fur to reveal the human features underneath. Another sad folk tale from Norway tells of a "Prince Bjorn" who was "cursed" by his evil step-mother and turned into a bear. He ate so many sheep of the land that his father the King ordered the bear to be hunted and killed, not knowing it was his own son. The evil step-mother had the bear/Prince Bjorn cooked and served as the main dish at a following Banquet!

The Japanese are very 'superstitious' where foxes are concerned - almost to the point of terror! One story tells of how some soldiers in World War two came up with an ingenious idea of how to use this 'quirk' to their advantage! The soldiers took normal foxes and painted them with a florescent (glow-in-the-dark) substance, then released them on the borders of the Japanese territory - the majority of the Japanese soldiers fled in terror believing them to be "Werefoxes". Werefoxes are thought to be an evil spirit (returned through the body of a fox) intent on causing evil, harm and injury to living humans. According to the Japanese lore, to qualify for this - a fox had to be at least five hundred years old and live in a graveyard.

There is actually a category "c" Werebeast. One fine example of which is "Jean Grenier". Jean was a 14th Century French boy who lived in the forest with wolves. He was captured and tried in the courts for a series of crimes which included attacks on human adults and children, and a number of cases of cannibalism - one of which (sadly) included a baby that he stole from its' cot, dragged to the forest and ate, sharing its' remains with real wolves that turned up while Jean was partway through through his gruesome feast. Jean told the Magistrates that a strange man claiming to be "The Lord of the Forest" had given to him some magical ointment and a magical wolf-pelt that changed him into a Werewolf. Upon hearing Jeans' full testimony, the Magistrate thought that he was a "dullard" and that any child half Jeans' age would have more sense! The Magistrate ruled out all accounts of magical wolf-transformations and declared that Jean was suffering from "Lycanthropy" (a mental illness whereby the patient is under the illusion that they have the power to change into a wolf) and ruled that Jean must spend the rest of his natural life living in a monastery. Upon arriving there, Jean still ran around on all fours, behaving like a wolf and attempting to eat all and any raw meats he could find. After several years had passed the Magistrate paid a visit to Jean and (thanks to the care of the Monks) found him less wild - although still claiming to have been a Werewolf!

SNAIL'S LAMENT by Mary Scott-Parker

Take the speed of a Snail
And the brain of a Mite.
Then team them both up
With a whet appetite.
For Dungeons and Dragons
And difficult plot.
What does it add up to?
FRUSTRATION.... THAT'S WHAT.

When the dragon won't die
And you can't find a key.
The door won't unlock
And you cannot get free.
Help is at hand,
You're never alone...
Thank Heavens that someone
Invented the PHONE.

BLOOPERS

sent in by Laurence Creighton

It pays to proofread... These announcements were found in synagogue newsletters and bulletins. Even spell check wouldn't have helped!...

Don't let worry kill you. Let your synagogue help.

Join us for our Oneg [tea and cookies] after services. Prayer and medication to follow.

Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our congregation.

For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.

Thursday at 5:00PM, there will be a meeting of the Little Mothers Club. All women wishing to become Little Mothers, please see the rabbi in his private study.

The ladies of Haddassah [a women's service/fund-raising org'n] have cast off clothing of every kind and they may be seen in the basement on Tuesdays.

A bean supper will be held Wed. even. in the community center. Music will follow.

Weight Watchers will meet at 7 PM at the JCC. Please use the large double door at the side entrance.

Rabbi is on vacation. Massages can be given to his secretary.

Mrs. Glodblum will be entering the hospital this week for testes.

The Men's Club is warmly invited to the Oneg hosted by Hadassah. Refreshments will be served for a nominal fee.

Please join us as we show our support for Amy and Rob, who are preparing for the girth of their first child.

If you enjoy sinning, the choir is looking for you!

The Associate Rabbi unveiled the synagogue's new fundraising campaign slogan this week: "I Upped My Pledge - Up Yours."

AN AMUSING DIVERSION by Jenny Wheeler

I have an ever increasing number of friends getting online both at home and abroad and greatly enjoy keeping in contact with them by sending e-cards for just about any occasion you could think of and then some!

Here is a brief review of some of my favourite sites; there are also quite a lot of Tourist Information sites around where you can send e-postcards of local scenery which is rather handy. I will soon be arranging in advance for some views of Canada to be e-mailed out to friends on the appropriate dates, it saves all that stamp licking!

HYPERLINK <http://WWW.123greetings.com>
WWW.123greetings.com

This is a pleasant, easy to use site with a vast range of card topics on the first screen and special sections such as New Things to Try Out, Everyday Cards, Always There and Cool Cards. Anyone receiving their first card from 123.greetings simply enters their card number in a box and gets their card at once.

Almost every day of the year has it's own 'subject' to send a card for ie April 24th is Plumbers Day, 25th is Anti-Nuclear Day, the week of 22nd-28th is Teacher Appreciation Week etc each with its own selection of appropriate cards to choose from. Sections containing new cards have a yellow highlighted NEW by them and there is a section listing the current TOP cards sent for interest.

The pages of card choice feature good-sized pictures and many of the cards are animated. After choosing a card it is easy to add your own message and choice of accompanying music. The final card is then assembled for your perusal and it is easy to go back a stage and change anything you want. A very handy facility is the choice of when your card will be sent out, I think up to several weeks ahead. You can also choose whether or not to be informed when the recipient receives their card which is very handy.

HYPERLINK <http://www.e-cards.com>
www.e-cards.com

Apparently every card sent from this site generates a donation for either the World Wildlife Fund or The Nature Conservancy for which there are links at the bottom of the page. Once again there is a big range of card categories to choose from suitable for all ages of friends and family and the cards are easy to select and prepare for sending. You can also register at this site to get an e-mail address book and reminder calendar etc. The sample

pictures are a nice size and when the full sized picture loads there is often an interesting paragraph accompanying it with an explanation of the scenery or info' about the animal etc. The 'final choice' page shows your card looking like the front and back of a real postcard and you even get to choose a stamp for it and the background colour. There is no choice of sending date though, it goes immediately.

HYPERLINK <http://www.bluemountain.com>
www.bluemountain.com

I've only recently started using this site but it's proving a favourite. There is rather a lovely selection of cards here in the usual wide range of subject headings and they are suitable for all. It's an easy to use site with options of language choice and the chance to send a card in your own voice if your computer has the capability. It's a well set out site and music seems to come automatically with most cards, many of which are animated. Not just with a few waving arms or buzzing bees either but great sequences of animated/ interactive action rather like a mini cartoon movie. My current favourite is the Strange & Wonderful Animals of the World card where clicking MORE on the penguin scene causes them to dive into the water. There were some lovely Easter cards here. You do get a choice of sending date here for your card.

HYPERLINK <http://www.messagemates.com>
www.messagemates.com

I only received my first one of these at Easter so have barely started using the site yet and am currently finding it a bit more 'unwieldy' to use than the others mentioned. This is because I have found I have to actually download (I use a Zip disk) the cards to view them and as an AOL user I have only been able to send the cards by going back to the Messagemates page to use the Send options, I can't actually link to send it from viewing the card.

This is a much more 'risqué' site than the others with some rather less than family friendly options/links and unexpected endings or language to innocent seeming cards/animations. Definitely check out each 'card' fully for its suitability for the recipient before sending it and I wouldn't let a child have free access to the site. Some cards are actually labelled "Potentially Offensive". Having said that though it does contain some fantastic fun animations that are quite easy to prepare for sending & delightfully funny to receive. I have sent some great ones featuring a character called Cupid over Easter who floats in on your screen and 'lays' an egg. There are also screensavers here, a calendar to use and other many other options and links. There doesn't seem to be any choice of sending date.

Do you have any favourite card or other amusement sites? Please tell us about them.

THE CASE OF THE PROMIS SOFTWARE SCANDAL!

An allegedly true tale of treachery and software piracy at the highest level!

Researched/written by Kez Gray.

In the beginning, a computer software program was created by developers Bill and Nancy Hamilton. The software named PROMIS - which is short for Prosecutors' Management Information System - was originally created with the intention of keeping track of the U.S. Justice Departments' vast caseload. Having been promised ten million dollars for this software in the form of a 1982 Government contract, Bill and Nancy Hamilton formed a company named INSLAW to complete the software package. Unfortunately, once PROMIS had been installed in the U.S. Attorneys' offices, the Justice Department simply refused to pay - which forced INSLAW and the Hamiltons to have to file for protective reorganisation under "Bankruptcy Chapter 11". To make matters worse, the Justice Department officials pressured the Inland Revenue Service to force INSLAW into a "chapter 7 cut-rate liquidation of assets" - which included PROMIS!

It was later revealed that a company named HADRON (which was mostly owned by Attorney General Edwin Meese's friend, Earl Brian) had tried to purchase PROMIS. If HADRON owned PROMIS, it could be leased for five hundred million dollars to the very same Justice Department that had refused to pay INSLAW ten million dollars - the department run by Meese, whose wife (funnily enough) held a financial interest in HADRON. Although the Hamiltons refused to sell, the PROMIS software nevertheless found its way into "Foreign Law Enforcement Computers" - including the computers of the Royal Canadian Mounties. If it hadn't been for the fact that the Canadian officials had trouble with using the PROMIS software and innocently turned to the Hamiltons for help with it - the Hamiltons would never have realised what was actually happening! Basically, INSLAW's stolen software was being illegally peddled around the world!

Novelist and Journalist Joseph Daniel "Danny" Casolaro planned to write a book exposing the INSLAW scandal. Originally his manuscript had been entitled "Behold A Pale Horse", but as he uncovered one conspiracy after another, reaching out like tentacles from the body of the INSLAW affair, he decided to re-name it "The Octopus". Bear in mind that PROMIS merely stores and manipulates data - which of course - is determined by the USER. Danny Casolaro found out about one unintended PROMIS application from his main informant, the electronics genius Michael Riconosciuto, who claimed that he 'modified' the software, installing a

"Back-door Access Feature" for the C.I.A.. Also (according to Riconosciuto) Meese's pal, Earl Brian, had helped future and past C.I.A. bosses William Casey and George Bush to pull off what was known as the "October Surprise" of 1980, in which a "few strings were pulled" to ensure that Jimmy Carter lost the Presidential Election and their "puppet" Ronald Regan was sworn in as President. Allegedly having earned the Regan teams' eternal gratitude, Earl Brian was made chairman of a White House Task Force - reporting to none other than his good buddy - Ed. Meese! And to top it all off, when the "chapter 7 liquidation" attempt on INSLAW failed says Riconosciuto, the Justice Department simply stole PROMIS and gave it to Earl Brian in April 1983. Riconosciuto testified before congressional committees that PROMIS was then sold to some 88 or so foreign countries - including Libya, South Korea, Iran and Iraq. But it wasn't necessarily the PROFIT that was wanted - a far more sinister motive apparently came into play! This being that Riconosciutos' "Back-Door Access" installed into the PROMIS software allowed the C.I.A. to tap into Military, Law Enforcement AND Intelligence files all over the world - at just a touch of a button! PROMIS had been effectively turned into an electronic "Trojan Horse" smuggled into different countries - who in turn became victim countries who had PAID to be plundered!

Iraq was reputedly compromised by PROMIS throughout the whole of the Desert Storm Gulf "War". Riconosciuto alleges that he made the C.I.A. "Back-Door" modification on PROMIS software provided by Earl Brian while working at the Cabazon Indian Reservation in the California desert. In his March 21st, 1991 affidavit, Riconosciuto explained that projects that would be "subject to stringent controls off the reservation" could be developed there because of "the sovereign immunity accorded the Cabazon". Among these black- budget operations were forbidden chemical and biological warfare weapons and secret "fuel-air explosives" stated to rival nuclear devices. The punch packed by the fuel-air process supposedly derives from molecular polarization via alterations of the electrical field.....based on the suppressed 1950s research of T.Townsend Brown. Brown reputedly discovered the bridge between electric fields and antigravitation through his experiments with levitating floating disks. Technology researcher Colin Brown (no relation) also links T. Townsend Browns' work to current experiments in gravitational lasers, the "dismantling of atomic structure" and even teleportation! Commenting on the secrecy of this exotic technology, Colin Brown was alleged to have said "If junior can destroy the north American continent with this knowledge, perhaps we'd better kill a few Journalists to keep it quiet". (It was not Journalists however - but no fewer than twenty-one SDI Scientists who suffered bizarre and violent deaths in the 1980s!). Back on the Cabazon Reservation, Riconosciuto and others cite the deep involvement of the "Wackenhut Corporation" - a private security firm with extensive C.I.A. connections. It is the Wackenhut

Personnel who are apparently the thugs who also guard the notorious "Area 51", where Physicist Robert Lazar claims he reverse-engineered captured U.F.O.s!

Riconosciutos' March 1991 affidavit charges the Wackenhut-Cabazon axis with supplying the needs of "Forces and Governments in Central America and the Middle East". The Contras in Nicaragua represented one of the most important priorities". (Journalist Casolaros' "Octopus" brushed against OTHER Iran-Contra connections too numerous to detail here!). Another Casolaro "tentacle" reached from the C.I.A. right into the heart of the BCCI (Bank of Credit and Commerce International) - home of the worlds' worst banking scandal. (In fact, C.I.A. honcho Robert Gates once stated that BCCI stood for "Bank of Crooks and Criminals").

All this was enough to make Journalist Danny Casolaros' head spin, nevertheless he just wouldn't quit and continued to dig for even more information.....and on August 10th 1991, Danny met the last tentacle of his sinister "Octopus". Author Rodney Stich and his "Deep Cover C.I.A. Sources" allege that Casolaro had a restaurant rendezvous with a former C.I.A. 'spook' connected to the INSLAW affair. The ex-C.I.A. man arranged a Martinsburg, West Virginia meeting between Casolaro and Bush Justice Department official Peter Videnieks.

The very next morning Danny Casolaro was found in the bath of his Martinsburg Hotel room. He was dead - his wrists slashed at least a dozen times. Despite the fact that Casolaros' Manuscript, notes and briefcase were all missing, the death was promptly ruled as "Suicide". More than once before his death, Danny had informed his brother that if anything happened to him - and it looked like an accident - not to believe it. And prior to Dannys' death his housekeeper reported Casolaro had received a threatening 'phone call - she also noted the post-death disappearance of papers from his desk. NOT missing from the Hotel room were personal effects that identified Casolaros' nearby family - despite this the West Virginia authorities ordered immediate embalming without the permission of the family. Nor was any autopsy performed, nor did the coroner search for the possible prescience of incapacitating drugs, or any other cause of death. Bloodstained towels were discovered under his Hotel sink - being dead at the time, it's unlikely Casolaro put them there - so who did? F.B.I. Agent, Thomas Gates, reported that the extent of injury to Casolaros' arms/wrists was NOT consistent with "self-infliction", as the wounds were slashed and hacked - rather than slit - Gates concurred that "There is cause for suspicion". It appears that Danny Casolaro was in all probability murdered - a victim of the very "Octopus" he sought to expose!

He was not the only one!

ALAN STANDORF: A Defense Analyst and one of Casolaros' sources, who worked at a secret Military Listening Post in Virginia, was found dead under luggage in a car at Washington National Airport. ANSON NG: The reporter who helped Casolaro investigate INSLAW scandal connections with the Cabazons and Iran-Contra, found dead in Guatemala, bullet wound to chest, ruled suicide. DENNIS EISMAN: Main Casolaro informant Michael Riconosciutos Lawyer - another bullet to the chest, also ruled suicide. MICHAEL ALLEN MAY: Former Nixon Aide implicated by the NAPA Sentinel in the "October Surprise", found dead four days later with drugs in his system. BARRY KUMNICK: Inventor of a computer program designed to work with INSLAWs' PROMIS software - mysteriously disappeared after completing program - still missing! VALI DELAHANTY: Friend of Riconosciuto - her skeletal remains were found in a ravine, not far from where Riconosciuto Investigator LARRY GUERRIN was also found dead. MARY QUICK: Schoolteacher Riconosciuto claimed was to give him a secret ATM card related to the Cabazon Reservation wrongdoings - she was murdered in the course of a robbery, no ATM card was ever found. JONATHON MOYLE: British Journalist investigating (like Casolaro) the secret U.S. arming of Iraq before the Gulf War - found dead, hanging from a noose in Santiago, Chile Hotel room. PAUL WILCHER: Attorney who allegedly received video-taped proof that George Bush was flown to a Paris "October Surprise" meeting, found murdered on the toilet - no videotape! ALFRED ALVAREZ: Cabazon Indian Leader who protested Wackenhut Operations on the reservation, found murdered with two other Indians behind his home in Rancho Mirage. PAUL MORASCA: Business Associate of Cabazon Reservation Director John Phillip Nichols - found hogtied and strangled in San Francisco condominium. IAN SPIRO: Casolaro contact and alleged British Spy implicated in the Iran-Contra and INSLAW scandals, found dead of cyanide poisoning in California desert exactly one week after his wife and children were shot dead in their San Diego home. The list goes on! As Sherman Skolnick (Chairman of the Citizens' Committee to clean up the Courts) stated, "Nearly FORTY witnesses in the INSLAW/PROMIS case have been murdered!"

And what of electronics genius Michael Riconosciuto? He ended up serving time on "drug charges" - which he claims were trumped up by the Justice Department and C.I.A. to discredit and silence him. He claims that he was threatened by Justice Department official, Peter Videnieks, not to testify about the PROMIS theft and C.I.A. "Back-Door Access" or Riconosciuto would have "Legal trouble". Trumped up or legitimate, the drug bust was the "Legal trouble" - and it was with Videnieks you'll recall - that Danny Casolaro supposedly had his last (and very final) meeting!

It just goes to show how things can get somewhat crazy - and it all started with a little bit of software piracy!!!

PLAYSTATION NEWS

by Steve Clay

It's nice to see, in the wake of the Final Fantasy success (mentioned previously in this column), that Sony and other publishers are finally releasing previously unavailable RPG's from Japan. I should think the job of translating all the text is that is slowing up the conversions. All the same at this traditionally slow time of the software year it is nice to see some interesting titles.

Starting with Star Ocean: The second story. As with Final Fantasy 7 we could well be asking what happened to the first story? Or in the case of Final Fantasy 7, what happened to Final Fantasy 1-6? The story behind Star Ocean is the usual limited affair and kicks off with a space cadet being sent back in time to a planet whose inhabitants are a bit backward. this dodgy plot device is used to allow the player to have a role-playing romp through space with fantasy elements thrown in for good measure. The standard RPG ingredients of building a party, taking part in battles (with options available to make the battles more technical or more straightforward whichever tickles your fancy) and of course going off on quests should add up to some summer gaming fun. one thing to look out for is the cover artwork of Star Ocean. It will not catch the eye of the casual purchaser. Not very impressive at all.

Looking more like Alundra is Grendia. The plot is as thin as the one in Star Ocean. Justin and Sue decide to investigate the secret of their spirit stone. This, as with the above and 90% of all RPG plots, is it. A very basic plot giving rise to numerous battles, puzzles and plot twists. As said this looks like Alundra but the rooms are displayed in true 3D giving the game a more realistic setting. The realism is lost when you see the blue and purple hair of the cartoon characters that are the main player characters, ah well nice wallpaper. The whole game hangs together well and the learning curve seems about right. This information is gleaned from a couple of nights loan from the local video shop. This or Star Ocean should keep you happy for hours.

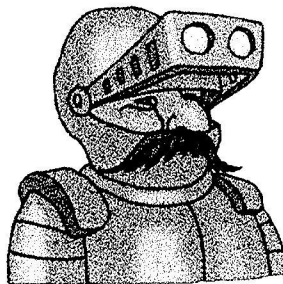
Another RPG not getting the coverage it may deserve is Suikoden 2. However unlike Star Ocean and Final Fantasy the British player has had the chance to play the original game and even has the chance to load in characters from the first game to carry on playing with a party they have developed. I know a lot of roleplayers like options like this. The second installment promises more of the same and looks like your usual set up for RPG's. Any RPG with deep pockets out there then this is your time to buy. There is certainly a lot on offer.

Supposedly an adventure, Fear Effect actually looks like a Tomb Raider/ Resident Evil hybrid. However the game apparently has enough original ideas to make it worth a look. By the way calling these things adventures is a bit mis-leading. Fear Effect contains lots of puzzles and ever evolving storyline the main meat of the game involves shooting the enemy and defeating the big bad bosses! Worryingly one of the glossy magazines expects this to be the type of game that the PlayStation 2 concentrates on. Let's hope that solving of puzzles moves more to the fore in later releases rather than picking the best time to shoot the baddy. Am I being cynical in thinking it is easier to program a bigger weapon with glorious visual and sound effects than it is to construct a logical and satisfying puzzle.

In the pipeline from the producers of Broken Sword comes In Cold Blood. With a state of the art graphics and play arena. The game comes on two CD's and you play a James Bond type character in game based on nine missions? Unusual word to use in an adventure. Oh no!! Fooled again.

Fans of Medieval will be pleased to know that a second game is due for imminent release. Medieval 2 promises an original name. The game hopefully more of the same in gameplay terms, maybe getting into the puzzle solving a bit quicker.

Snippets: Black and white is a conversion of a popular PC game apparently. This is another of those Civilisation/God games that I know many of you like. Alundra 2 is on its way although the main character will be different and the graphic display will be true 3D. So nothing to do with the first game at all then. I hope they manage to maintain the gameplay of the original, a game I have played off and on for over twelve months. Alone in the Dark is finally being converted to the PlayStation. Years after its original release this ground-breaking piece of software reaches the console. Ripe for criticism for being dated I for one am looking forward to it. Blockbuster video are offering members the chance to hire certain PlayStation games at £1.99 per week.



NEWSDESK

VULCAN LAUNCHES COMPANY SHARE OFFER

The following is taken directly from Vulcan Software's website!

"Vulcan Software Ltd has been a privately owned company since January 1994. After developing and publishing 15 award winning titles for the Amiga platform, in January 1998, Vulcan began an extensive research and development phase devoted to advanced 3d development tools and entertainment software for the PC platform. The year 2000 sees this phase coming to fruition and building up for the launch of their advanced 3d projects.

Director, Paul Carrington states: For the last 2 years, the development period has certainly been financially tricky as title revenue had ceased and our entire operation has been funded by past glories, however we did consciously choose this route, as we believe remaining a private company 'throughout this development phase' is essential to our creative freedom and individual project goals.

To generate more working capital, at the millenium Vulcan increased it's company shares to 1 million and at the same time made a proportion of shares available to external investors. Currently there are now 199,000 shares available for public consumption with a set value of £5.00 per share. Dividend payouts for January 2001 forecast a 40% return on investment for Vulcan share holders.

To apply for Vulcan private shares contact **Paul@vulcan.co.uk**
Live Long & Prosper! Paul Carrington Director Vulcan Software Ltd"

I understand there is a minimum of 500 shares (£2,500) which puts it well out of my reach; pity, I would have liked to own a minute piece of a company that produced the Valhalla series of games, and, of course, there is no need for me to remind you that you buy shares at your own risk. By the way, Valhalla 4 (for the PC) is in production, but no other information is available at the moment.

WORLD OF SPECTRUM

Please note that their new website address is <http://void.jump.org>

AUREUM TREASURE HUNT CANCELLED

The following is the message displayed when I tried to access the website.

"May 12, 2000 It is with great regret that Attica Interactive Ltd announces the cancellation of the Aureum treasure hunt. After monitoring entries to the competition and exchanges on the Aureum forum, Attica has reached the regrettable conclusion that the competition has been compromised, and therefore, in accordance with Rule 22, hereby cancels the competition. Treasure hunters who wish to complete the game for its own sake will be able, over the next few weeks, to retrieve the answers to the four sections and the final solution by following the links below. "

I am not too surprised, but very disappointed that we won't see the finale, which, as I said in an earlier issue, Attica were hoping to show on the Internet.

IN TOUCH

WANTED: A **Spectrum +3**, must be in full working order, either to buy or borrow for a weekend. Please contact Larry Horsfield (email - lazza@cafc2010.demon.co.uk) or the Probe office.

FREE: 2 Unused black ribbons for CITIZEN dot matrix printer (ABC/124D/224/Swift 200/200C/24/24e/240/240C). Please contact me at the Probe office.

ANSWERS TO "DO YE KEN OR DO YE NO?"

1 (ee)	13 (m)	25 (i)
2 (u)	14 (l)	26 (aa)
3 (e)	15 (z)	27 (ff)
4 (bb)	16 (b)	28 gg)
5 (a)	17 (n)	29 (ii)
6 (d)	18 (s)	30 (v)
7 (cc)	19 (j)	31 (dd)
8 (t)	20 (f)	32 (hh)
9 (r)	21 (x)	33 (c)
10 (jj)	22 (q)	34 (h)
11 (g)	23 (y)	35 (k)
12 (p)	24 (w)	36 (o)

GETTING YOU STARTED

CRYSTAL OF CHANTIE played by Walter Pooley on a Spectrum - also available on PC(e) and Amiga(e)

There are 5 treasures to find and store, then return with the Crystal of Chantie.

The first problem is to find some warm clothing before you freeze to death. So from the start go N, W, N (takes you into an igloo containing a fur coat and a wolf, ignore the wolf), GET COAT, S, WEAR COAT, E, S, S, E, GET STICK, W, N, N, N, N, N, N (takes you into a cave), E, GET FLINTS, W, W, N, DROP FLINTS, S, E, S, E (into an icy cell containing a block of ice and no obvious way out), GET BLOCK, EXAMINE CELL (you will see footprints leading to the north wall), PUSH NORTH WALL

THE GOLDEN ROSE played by Dorothy Millard on a PC(e) - also available on Spectrum and Amiga(e)

Scenario

You are out for a stroll on a sunny Sunday afternoon. While you are walking you will see many interesting places and some unusual people. If you do the right things you will find yourself in the middle of a magical adventure to rescue a beautiful princess.

Walk Through

(Start in a leafy lane), E, E (dark wood), E, N, N (clearing), U (oak tree where you meet a sleeping dwarf), WAKE DWARF (he's grateful because he is late for work and gives you something for your trouble), INVENTORY (a penny), D, N, N, W (gypsies rubbish heap), EXAMINE HEAP (find a long wooden staff), GET STAFF, E, N, W, W, W, W, W (outside a charming thatched cottage), W (wizard's cottage), EXAMINE DRESSER (see an open bottle of wine), GET BOTTLE, EXAMINE BOTTLE, EMPTY BOTTLE, N (garden where you see a birdbath), MOVE BATH (a hole in the ground is revealed), EXAMINE HOLE, GET SPECS, EXAMINE SPECS, WEAR SPECS, S, E, E, E, E (east/west path), S (spring), FILL BOTTLE, DRINK WATER (you are refreshed), FILL BOTTLE, N, E, E (wood), S, S, S, S, S, W (to where an old man is being berated by an ugly old crone), HELP MAN (he runs off, but the old crone captures you... you are inside a cold stone building), EXAMINE GUARD (he marches to and fro barring your path), TRIP GUARD (using your staff), W (path outside), DROP STAFF

**LEGACY OF KAIN: SOUL REAVER - available for PC,
PlayStation and Dreamcast**

UNDERWORLD

This level is your introduction to Nosgoth and a tutorial on how to play the game. Listen to the voice as you are instructed on how to move around and perform various actions. When you are ready, move forward through the first door. Continue through the twisting passage until you arrive at the Underworld Gate. Approach the Gate and stand on the symbol to activate it and also lower a force field blocking the next door you need to go through. Ignore the Gate for now and continue on down the passage until you reach the altar. Drink five Souls to fill your health coil. Proceed down the passage until you arrive at the giant stone steps. Jump/climb the stairs and jump over the gaps. Continue up the next larger steps and use your wings to float across the larger gap. The next room has Sluagh wandering around the lower area. The passage leading out is across this large chamber and is blocked with a force field until you eliminate and feed on the Sluagh. Drop down and claw the beasts. They will try to run so chase them down. When they turn transparent you can feast on their essence and they will be drawn into your body. Climb up the opposite side of the room and exit through the door. When you reach the area with the pillars and the Portal you will learn how these portals work and that you must have a fully charged health coil to shift to the Material Plane. However, you can shift back to the Spectral Plane anytime you wish. Feed on any nearby souls if necessary then use the portal to shift planes. Continue on through the next opening and down the tunnel

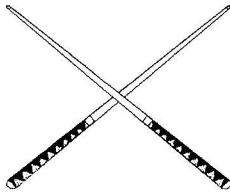
**THE UNWANTED GIFT played by Barbara Gibb on a PC(e)
- also available on Amstrad**

I (nothing), W, W (you rush back to the house as Horace pours rain on you), E, S, E (dining room), OPEN GLASS DOORS (of cabinet), TAKE VASE, X VASE (note description), N (kitchen), LOOK IN CUPBOARD (find a bulb), TAKE BULB, N (utility room), LOOK UNDER SINK (find a candle and box of matches), TAKE ALL (candle and matches), S, W (top of cellar steps - note switch in ON position but do not go down yet), SWITCH OFF LIGHT, PUT CANDLE INTO VASE, OPEN BOX (of matches), TAKE MATCH (repeat until you find an unused one), STRIKE MATCH, LIGHT CANDLE (okay if candle in vase), D (okay if carrying lit candle in vase), D (in cellar which is still gloomy as the only light is the candle, but you see a stool and the blown bulb), TAKE STOOL, PUT STOOL UNDER LIGHT BULB, DROP ALL (carefully), STAND ON STOOL, TAKE BLOWN BULB, GET OFF STOOL, DROP (blown) BULB, TAKE (good) BULB, STAND ON STOOL, PUT (good) BULB INTO SOCKET, GET OFF STOOL

OBJECTS AND THEIR USES

MADCAP MANOR played by **Barbara Bassingthwaighte**
on a **Spectrum** - also available on **Amiga(e), PC(e)** and
others(?)

Alarm clock	Wind it up
Axe	Give to Amazonian Indian
Bike	Helps you open steel door with mirror
Billiard cue	Play billiards then give to Mary
Black ball	Pot it to reveal secret passage
Book	Helps you translate Latin
Cartridge	Load it into gun
Chalk	Need to play billiards
Clothes	Wear them
Coin	Insert it in slot in billiard room
Corkscrew	Give to Butler
Cycle clip	Wear to stop rat biting you
Dog food	Feed Bess with it
Key	Unlock door
Knife	Give to Mrs. Crumble (cook)
Mirror	Use with bike at the door
Newspaper	Read it
Red ball	Pot it
Rest	Play billiards then give to Sophie
Ruby ring	Give it to Algenon Stingy
Shotgun	Load it and shoot nest down
Threadbare teddy	Horatio takes it
Tin opener	Open dog food - give to sparrow
Whistle	Blow it to get Bess
White ball	Play billiards with it



HINTS AND TIPS

A HERO FOR SORANIA played by Barbara Gibb on a PC(e) - also available on Spectrum and Amiga

Can't find the fairy's reward for reuniting her with her wings? - It is in the toadstool.

Did you wash the sand off the bottle? If so you gained 5 extra points.

Break the shell with the rock to find a pearl.

A sapphire can be found in weed at the bottom of the sea.

When in the eerie cave in the sea cliff, say a magic word and wave the rod.

Another magic word and a wave of the rod is needed to open the casket.

Can't get into the run-down hovel? Whistle to summon a friend then point towards your problem.

Can't get everything to the top of the cliff because you are not allowed to wear the crown? When all 7 of the jewels are in the crown you will be transported to the throne room.

Put the crown on the dais for the king to appear and remind you about the princess.

Go to the tower in the southwest corner of the courtyard. A magic word and a wave of the rod will open the trapdoor. Did you read the spell book?

Throw the dirty/clean bottle at the witch.

Another magic word and a wave of the rod is needed to free the princess - did you realize the spell book had more than one page?

CASTLE BLACKSTAR played by Barbara Gibb on a PC(e) - also available on most other computers

Checkerboard Room - Note the M-shaped entrance! Move around the "board" to mark out the letter M (drawn backwards). If you get it wrong it returns you to the entrance, so make a note of the correct moves as you go.

THE DARK FOREST played by Dorothy Millard (C64 version)

WOODCUTTER'S HUT

If you have been down the well and have the gold figure the answer is DRAGON, otherwise just ignore the request for the code and type in anything. You can always go the other way around anyway.

TROLL

When you meet the troll and are asked to guess the amount, it is usually around 50 but might be less, so start low and work your way up.

THE CREATURE

You will need as much money, strength and spells as possible before entering the cave where you will meet The Creature who you will have to fight. If you win, you also win the game.

FAULTY TOWERS played by Bev Truter on a PC(e)

- 1) Each time Sybil orders you to do something you only have a limited number of moves/time in which to complete the task, so get cracking on carrying out her requests immediately she voices them, and SAVE often!
- 2) You have plenty of time near the beginning of the game to make a map (essential) and explore, so use this time to get rid of the 3 items which will cause the Health Inspector to shut down your hotel later on in the game.
- 3) You get bonus points if you HIT MANUEL and if you INSULT SYBIL (when they are present). Hit Manuel twice, and insult Sybil twice, for full points; otherwise you'll end the game with less than 100%.
- 4) If you enter the Honeymoon Suite when the suitcases are not there, the couple will be in bed, and Sybil will come storming in, assuming you are spying on them.
- 5) If you ring the bell at Reception, Polly will appear and ask for help with a crossword. The word she's looking for is 'examine', and this is just a clue for you to type in EXAMINE while in that location.

(Does anyone have this Spectrum game on tape? If so, can you send me a copy?...Barbara)

**THE ELEVENTH HOUR (Terry Braverman) played by
Barbara Gibb on a PC(e) - also available on Spectrum
and Amiga(e)**

Ink Bottle Bomb (in Stationery Department on 5th Floor)

You need:-

INK BOTTLE from Stationery Dept. of 5th Floor
DRILL BIT from Iron Mongery in Basement
HAND DRILL from Do-It-Yourself on Ground Floor
TWEEZERS from Cosmetics on Ground Floor

Actions:-

TAKE INK bottle, EXAMINE INK bottle (note description), put BIT IN drill,
TIGHTEN CHUCK (to secure bit), make hole in CAP with DRILL, INSERT
TWEEZERS, GRIP LEAD (with tweezers), PULL LEAD (to defuse bomb).

Umbrella Bomb (on Umbrella Department on Ground Floor)

You need:-

UMBRELLA from stand in Umbrella Dept. on Ground Floor
SAW from Do-It-Yourself Dept. on Ground Floor
SCISSORS from Ashley Fabrics Dept. on 3rd Floor
WIRE CUTTERS from Electrical Dept. in Basement

Actions:-

EXAMINE STAND, TAKE UMBRELLA, EXAMINE UMBRELLA, UNDO
STUD, CUT FABRIC (need scissors), SAW STEM (need saw), CUT LEAD
(need wire cutters). Bomb defused.

**GOLDEN ROSE played by Bev Truter on PC(e) - also
available on Spectrum and Amiga(e)**

In the Dark Woods, don't HELP MAN until you have found a wooden staff,
or you will be captured with no means of escape.

Don't attempt to buy a drink in the Bar until you have helped the man.

HEDDA'S REVENGE played by John Schofield on a Spectrum (128K only) - also available on PC(e)

Derelict Cottage

In the Kitchen TAP or FEEL the wall after reading Hedda's book to reveal a doorway east into a Garden.

You should notice Belinda on the Balcony.

In the Garden, use the Sickle on the weeds to find a Trophy.

To reach the Balcony, you need to become Jack and the Beanstalk. Having cleared the weeds, dig the soil with your fork and plant a Bean. To make the bean grow, mix the Fertilizer in a Pail of Water and use that. A little patience is then required. You should then be able to get to Belinda.

JEWEL OF KNOWLEDGE played by Barbara Gibb on a PC

Obsidian Door - It has an ebony lock so maybe the ebony key will unlock it! It does, and falls off to reveal a smaller lock. You need Ariana's lockpick to open this one.

Black Dragon - he won't kill you immediately, so ask him questions and learn as much as you can. You know from The Book of the Dragons that his breath is acidic, so to protect yourself, PUT LYE ON COAT. Ensure you have the sword, and when he has attacked you, WAIT (to see he is still in shock because you have survived his attack). When you try to KILL DRAGON WITH SWORD you manage to chop off one of his claws. Go to the top of the ramp and PUSH BOULDER so they all roll on top of him, leaving only his head and one claw visible. If you have the loaded crossbow he will be more forthcoming with information, so ASK DRAGON ABOUT THE TRINKET he is playing with. He says it is the ring of heat resistance and gives it to you. Wear it.

Do not go east, otherwise the dragon will free himself and kill you when you return, Note he is wary of your crossbow, so ask the dragon to open the (obsidian) door. Now, if you ask him about the jewel he says he will take you to the Red Dragon via a secret passage. SIT ON DRAGON's head - he goes east and then stops. WAIT three times until he takes you to a well-lit passage. WAIT and repeat until arrive at a steep cliff face. More WAITing is required until you arrive at the Red Dragon Gate.

LIGHTMARE played by Kez Gray on a Spectrum - also available on Atari(e), Amiga(e) and PC(e)

Get the book in the Inn. At first you will be told to leave it alone, but try again and you will be allowed to have it. Examine it for useful information.

Visit the Innkeepers' daughters' room. She is your contact and will help you when you have found the ruby.

The Blacksmith tells you to get out when you enter the Smithy, so you will have to hit him with your bludgeon to knock him out.

In the small dry cave, get the rock and drop it to one side, so you will be able to get through the tunnel from the other end.

In the Courtyard, you will need to climb over the gate to get into the gardens, and get the skull.

Return to the Inn with the ruby. The Innkeepers' daughter will ask you to meet her in the gully.

Get the talisman from the storeroom. Someone will lock the door behind you so you will have to climb out of the window.

PROJECT NOVA (Pt.2) played by Barbara Gibb on a PC(e) - also available on Spectrum, Atari(e) and Amiga(e)

REMOVE HELMET should be your first action, otherwise you will suffocate in a couple of moves.

Use something as a club to hit the alien, then pick him up and put him *into* the flesh-eating plant.

Kill the alien at the corner of the road to obtain a disguise.

WAIT at the queue waiting to enter the city until a hay cart appears. HIDE IN CART or CLIMB IN CART to enter the city.

You will soon be feeling ill. Put some poisonous fruit on the fruit stall then go to the doctor's office. As you arrive the doctor is called away (to see to the patient who has eaten the poisonous fruit). Go N into the surgery where you can inject yourself with the serum and so be cured.

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

Try going east into the Armoury and then accept the dog's offer.

DROP SPIDERBOMB to get rid of the first wave of robots.

Make use of the mirror to deflect the laser beams.

Throw the nodules into the furnace in the Laboratory.

Input PRONA in the Chamber.

WEAR CAP to make the gobbler help you.

Tell the dog to FETCH at the landing area for the jungle animals to help you.

From the Northeast Corner in the Pyramid, the following is what should be done:

E (the dog offers to go), YES (the dog throws you a spiderbomb, but is killed), DROP SPIDERBOMB, W. Before you actually see any lasers THROW/WAVE MIRROR, S, E, THROW NODULES, GET AMBASSADOR, N, D, N, PRONA, S, A (grabber is here!), WEAR CAP (it attacks the robots and you rise up the shaft - your dog is here as good as new!), S, W, N, FETCH (the dog fetches the objects near the spaceship and the animals follow and attack the robots), SW to complete the game with a score of 100/100.

SEASIDE SORCERY played on a PC(e) - also available on Spectrum, Atari(e) and Amiga(e)

How do I get into the staff room?

Tell the dwarf at the reception desk to make the bed. He goes away to do so and you can now go east. You will have to repeat this if you need to enter the staff room more than once.

How do I reach the nest on the ledge?

Tie the cord (from the curtains) to the drainpipe on the east wall of the hotel, then CLIMB (down) CORD.

SOLUTION OF THE MONTH

DRAGON DIAMOND

PART ONE

N, EXAMINE BUSH, (something under it), W, W, DIP HANDS IN MUD (sets hard), E, E, EXAMINE BUSH (you get an axe), W, W, NW, WASH HANDS, SE, U, CUT BRANCH, D, EXAMINE MUD, GET BRANCH, E, E, E, N, ENTER BASKET, EXAMINE BASKET (find blade), MAKE SPADE, LEAVE, S, W, S, HIT LEON (he will follow you), N, N, KILL LEON, EXAMINE BODY (you get a rope), EXAMINE LAKE, EXAMINE CROCODILES (hungry), THROW BODY IN LAKE, EXAMINE CROCODILES (satisfied, but don't swim across as you won't get back), S, E, N, MOVE BASKET (it turns over), EXAMINE BASKET (you see a hook), TIE ROPE TO HOOK, S, GET STRING, PULL STRING (you raise the basket), TIE STRING TO TREE, DROP STRING, N, CLIMB ROPE (you just make it to platform), ENTER COTTAGE, MOVE BODIES (you see locked hatch), JUMP THROUGH WINDOW (you land on other side of lake without attracting the crocodiles), N, N, W, NE, N, NE, EXAMINE EDGE (see ledge), EXAMINE LEDGE, FELL BIRCH, MOVE BIRCH, D, S, TALK TO DWARF, SHAKE HANDS (must be clean, he gives you a ring which enables you to fly), N, U, SW, N, S, W, EXAMINE CRACK, LISTEN, THROW RING IN CRACK (a pixy rises up and thanks you. He returns the RING and gives you a KEY),

PART TWO

UP, ZYLKTYBAG, LOOK, U, GET REINS, DRIVE (you are attacked and captured), TALK TO TROLL, TALK TO TROLL, SHAKE (you are given a blanket), EXAMINE ROPE, EXAMINE STONE, (sharp), THROW BLANKET AT STONE (you drag it close and pick it up), CUT ROPE WITH STONE (you escape), ENTER SHED, EXAMINE SHELF, LOOK, GET NAILS, GET HAMMER, GET STICKS, EXAMINE TOOLS, LOOK, GET SAW, GET BOARDS, LEAVE HUT, W, MAKE LADDER, EXAMINE LADDER (could be a sled), S, S, DROP LADDER, SIT ON LADDER (you set off and shoot through ice wall), GET LADDER, W, W, EXAMINE BEDS, ENTER BOX, READ INSCRIPTION, LEAVE BOX, E, S, EXAMINE IDOL (eye missing), W, STAND ON SAND (some sticks to your boots), E, N, E, ENTER HOLE, U, N, N, SAW HOLE IN ICE, N, E, EXAMINE CABIN (you see a window), DROP LADDER, CLIMB LADDER, N (voices), EXAMINE FLOOR (find hatch), OPEN HATCH, EXAMINE HOLE, GET DIAMOND, D, W, S (chasing dogs fall through hole), S, S, D, ENTER HOLE, W, S, INSERT DIAMOND IN IDOL, N, E, ENTER HOLE, U, N, N, E, EXAMINE

SNOWDRIFT, PULL LEGS, EXAMINE ICETROLL, GET TANK, W, GET WATER (in tank), S, S, D, ENTER HOLE, W, S, GET DIAMOND, N, E, ENTER HOLE, U, N, N, N, N, N, U (into coach), GET REINS, DRIVE (to road fork), SAY BASH (told you the cause of all the problems), E, N, TALK TO MAYOR (wants beats head and gold bar), S, W, W, W, S, EXAMINE DUSTBIN, LOOK, READ POSTER (wanted for theft-keymaster), N, E, E, N, TALK TO MAN (it is the man you pulled out of the snow and he gives you a gold bar), LISTEN TO MEN (talking about LOUNISS), TALK TO TOME, SAY LOUNISS (not seen for a while), SAY KEYMASTER (now known as DA MON), S, E, N, GIVE BAR TO MAYOR, S, W, EXAMINE GARBAGE, CATCH RAT, W, EXAMINE HOUSES, SEARCH FOR LOUNISS, OPEN DOOR (locked), W, SEARCH FOR DA MON, D, TALK TO DA MON (he will only give you a picklock for a gold bar, so you must get rid of him), DROP RAT (he chases after it), GET PICKLOCK, U, E, OPEN DOOR (using picklock), ENTER DOOR, EXAMINE TABLE, READ BOOK (foreign), EXAMINE SHELVES (potions), U, EXAMINE LOUNISS (talking in his sleep), LISTEN (whispers PSKLOM4), D, GET PSKLOM4, U, POUR LIQUID IN MOUTH (Louniss recovers and gives you the APPLE OF FORCE), W, W, TALK TO GUARD, SAY YES, WAIT (something is approaching at high speed), EAT APPLE (there is an explosion and you come to in the tavern. The beast is dead and the men have got it's head for you), S, E, N, GIVE HEAD TO MAYOR, TALK TO MAYOR (he gives you a sealed envelope. DON'T open it), S, GIVE ENVELOPE TO GUARD, (he lets you through), GET REINS, DRIVE CARRIAGE.

CONGRATULATIONS

SOME INTERESTING WEBSITES

THE 10th KINGDOM - the official site for the excellent mini-series recently shown on Sky One. Details about the cast and fantasy land of fairytales and rhymes. You even have a choice of three games to play online. Check it out at

<http://www.tlok.com>

THE ADVENTURE GAME - a site dedicated to the early 1990's BBC television program that inspired DROGNA, one of my favourite computer board games.

<http://freespace.virgin.net/j.lutwyche/tag/advgame.htm>

SERIALIZED SOLUTION

RAMA (Sierra)

Walk over near the Beam. Pick up matrix puzzle piece PL11z- Bad, which will also go to the trash bin on the second pass through the region, and then to the trash pit with gunk afterwards.

Discover the route to London. Leave the Beam Region in that direction. Encounter Dr. Takagishi on the way. Determine, with his advice, the timing of the ray. Pass the barrier and turn off the ray switch. Pick up two map pieces (one Central Plains and one New York) and one matrix puzzle piece (PL32z) near the ray barrier. If the player returns to the Beam Region, or enters the first tier of London, without acquiring these three pieces, then they are taken by Dr. Takagishi and can be found in the specimen tray at the tent site at each subsequent time in the game.

Notice the strange fixture on the top of the ray switch. Approach the outside of London. Open the gates to the first tier of London by inserting PL11x-Good, from Francesca's locker, in the proper place on the matrix next to the gate. If two improper pieces are tried by the player, then the gate puzzle changes and becomes the matrix originally set for the second tier of London. If this occurs, PL22x- Good, which would have been located in the first tier of London in normal circumstances, immediately appears in the specimen tray at the tent site. For this situation, to enter the first tier of London the player must backtrack to the tent site.

Enter first tier of London. Door to second tier is in front of player, RAMA display to the left, a pair of covered puzzle boards to the right. Approach RAMA display. Activate different elements using controls. When RAMA model flies through solar system model, sound effects announce uncovering of puzzle boards. Pick up two matrix puzzle pieces around display (PL22x- Good and PL31z- Bad).

Pick up remainder of map pieces scattered around room. Assemble maps of Central Plains and New York on puzzle boards. Pick up matrix puzzle piece underneath puzzle boards (PB22y- Bad). Notice hint about inventory medallion and items on map of New York. Entire Central Plains map will be lit forever on navigation view after CP map is assembled in London first tier.

Approach door to second tier of London. Insert two proper matrix pieces, PL21x and PL22x, one having been obtained from centipede (or Nicole) and the other in London first tier (or from the specimen tray). If two improper pieces are inserted, door to matrix closes and will not open again until

player leaves first tier. This process repeats if additional wrong pieces are inserted.

Enter second tier after door opens. Go down ramp onto elevated platform around giant trash pit. Discover a matrix puzzle piece on platform (PL31y-Bad).

Explore walkway around to left, where door to London third tier is located. Explore walkway around to right, which triggers mantis biot emerging from door, shining red light on elevator, raising elevator, and then later causing elevator to descend.

Explore on far side of elevator, pick up box with mystery contents in out of way spot. Notice that box has sculpture of ray barrier on its top. Take box out to ray barrier, match with fixture on ray switch, remove PB32x- Good from open box.

Return to London second tier. Place red glass shard on flashlight and use on target on elevator. Elevator will come up from below. Then use red light again to make elevator descend to floor of trash pit.

Descend ramp from elevator platform to walkways into and around trash pit itself. Discover critical good puzzle piece, PL32x- Good, in unusual location (opposite look direction from grate) on one of these walkways.

Also discover in specific corners, near grates, matrix puzzle pieces that have been gunked with blue material. At the beginning of game, gunked pieces include PB21x- Good, PB31x- Good, PB11y- Bad, and PB21y- Bad. These are all in separate locations. Pick up all these pieces. Note: six other matrix puzzle pieces may migrate here, depending on how the game is being played. Specifically, one or all of PL31x- Good, PL11z- Bad, PL22z- Bad, PL32y- Bad, PB11z- Bad, and PB31z- Bad may end up gunked in the trash pit, each in a different spot.

Return up elevator to platform around trash pit. Approach door to third London tier and insert PL31x and PL32x. If two improper matrix pieces are inserted, puzzle will change to a new one requiring different puzzle pieces. The three Bangkok progressive matrices and the London third tier matrix rotate together as a group of four.

Enter London third tier. The player is now in the biot display room, showing mantis, crab, and centipede biots engaged in animated activities. There are no puzzle pieces in this room. Around the corner to the left, however, the player will find a crane biot, a menacing spider biot protecting an alcove area of the room, and a laser gun.

Do not approach the spider biot. He is hostile and will kill you. Walk up the ramp to the laser gun emplacement. Activate the crane biot by firing the laser gun. The crane will hoist the spider biot off the floor and keep it there as long as the player stays in the room.

Quickly throw the switch below the monitor in the alcove. The picture will change from static to the inside room of the wheel puzzle. Then pick up the inventory medallion, also in the alcove, and leave the room. If, for any reason, the player returns to the room, the spider biot will be active again, guarding the alcove, and must be restrained by the crane biot.

Leave London altogether. Along the way, notice that none of the elements of the inventory medallion are yet illuminated. Upon first exit from London with the inventory medallion in the player's possession, a distressed Nicole des Jardins will be encountered. Nicole tells player about death of Reggie Wilson and hands him a data cube of Francesca's news broadcast following the tragic end to the crab biot hunt. Watch the news broadcast.

Return toward the Beam Region. If the player takes the other path away from London, not toward the Beam Region, he will be stopped by astronaut Heilmann, who will tell him that he must turn around and go the other way. After passing through the Beam Region, but before finding the Wheel Region, the player may again encounter either crab or centipede biots. Unless the critical matrix puzzle piece PL21x has already been moved from the second centipede to Nicole des Jardins, no astronaut encounters on the Central Plains will occur until BOTH the Beam and Wheel Regions have been entered and exited.

Find the Wheel Region and enter it. Pick up matrix puzzle piece (PB31z-Bad) from trash biot bin (if by any chance the Wheel Region is entered before the Beam Region, then the encounter with Reggie Wilson will take place here).

Walk over to mechanical corn field. Pluck sole mature piece of mechanical corn from field. Discover matrix puzzle piece (PB11x- Good) among the rows. Pick up this piece. If not acquired before leaving Wheel Region first time, this puzzle piece will be moved to the specimen tray at the tent site, carried by another astronaut.

Proceed to giant ruined biot. Observe sparks, discharges, and finger twitch. Pick up matrix puzzle piece (PB11z- Bad) and crowbar that is adjacent to ruined biot. If not picked up on first pass, puzzle piece will move to trash bin, and thence to gunk in trash pit. Crowbar remains fixed in this location throughout the duration of the game.

Move across to pedestal in center of region. Pick up chassis on ground and mount on pedestal. Observe that the lens holders are automatically extruded. Insert lenses from Heilmann's locker and one picked up beside paraffin cube in Beam Region. Also pick up matrix puzzle piece (PB21z-Bad) near pedestal. This puzzle piece will subsequently move to the specimen tray in the tent site if the player does not pick it up during first visit to Wheel Region. Chassis will always remain in this site-- it is too heavy to be carried far by astronauts or crab biots.

Continue across to machine that looks like a still. Turn knob to start flow of fluid into still. Insert one piece of mechanical corn. Return to tent site for fermentation agent.

While traversing Central Plains encounter Richard Wakefield. Take lens that he offers you. Soon thereafter encounter Nicole des Jardins. She is just being friendly and giving advice, but she mentions that there are interesting articles at the tent site. Continue to tent site and obtain fermentation agent from refrigerator. Pick up other game pieces, if available, from specimen tray and refrigerator.

Return to Wheel Region with agent and lens. Insert final lens in instrument. The instrument will animate and automatically fire a laser, aimed toward the Beam Region, where it will melt the paraffin cube, exposing the progressive matrix piece PB22x- Good. This critical piece can be picked up on any subsequent visit to the Beam Region.

Put fermentation agent in still. Gauge now shows full. Turn knob and liquid comes out, cleaning blue gunk off sink area. Clean as many as four of gunky matrix pieces. Gauge now shows empty. Each time player leaves and subsequently enters the Wheel Region, for whatever purpose, one piece of mechanical corn, good for the cleaning of five items at the still, will have grown and be available for plucking. If a piece is plucked during a visit, the next entry will produce a new piece. Each piece unplucked during a visit to the Wheel Region remains in position from visit to visit.

Approach wheel puzzle. Arrival on wheel puzzle ramp for the first time is trigger for Francesca Sabatini to suddenly appear next to the player. Francesca gives player decryption card and suggests the player take it back to the tent site for her. If player inserts card into computer, then all encrypted memos (including Heilmann's first one about Trinity, that was found in his locker) can be read.

(More next month)

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