

ADVENTURE PROBE

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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:

Frank Fridd, Doreen Bardon, Chris Heppinstall, Bev Truter,
Dot Healey, Peter Brown, Mandy Rodrigues,
Edwina Brown and Dorothy Millard

Special thanks to:

Peter Brown for software
and
The Copyshop, Allerton, Liverpool for printing the magazine

EDITORIAL

It is nearly the end of August, and I have just realized how close we are to the Convention. Have you booked your ticket, and accommodation? By the way, Margo Porteous tells me that the contact for booking accommodation at the hotel venue is now Mandy Mills.

As I have already mentioned in Probe, there is a website dedicated to the annual adventurers' convention - please check it out at

www.adventureconvention.fsnet.co.uk

I know some of you don't have a PC and some that do don't use the Internet, so I thought it would be great if I could publish some of the best material from it. Larry didn't hesitate in giving his permission when I asked, and I am very pleased to publish The Megapoint Competition article in this issue.

A letter from Margo arrived just too late to be included in the Letters section. It is also too long to publish here in full, and too detailed to abridge. She says the Coventry Tourist Board sent her the relevant bus timetables but these must be used with caution as they are the Summer timetables, and also frequency and identity numbers change at weekends. Margo has done a wonderful job of sorting them out, and there are two buses which actually pass the hotel where the convention will be held. Please let me know if you would like a copy of her letter.

Last time I appealed for material for the magazine I got a wonderful response, but once again I am desperately short of reviews, hints and tips, and other material for the magazine because I use a huge quantity each month! The family business I expected in June did not happen; it now looks more likely to be September (or October), so please bear with me, and send what you can so I can prepare as much in advance as possible, and therefore reduce the magazines' lateness to a minimum.

Even if you can't write a full length review, why not just a few lines, as suggested by Mandy in the Letters section? It is also getting more difficult for me to decide which adventures to feature. I still love the PAWEd Spectrum games, and it is nice to root out old maps and try to write a solution and/or hints, but is this what you want? The PC specific adventures seem to have improved in quality, or is that my imagination? Your thoughts, and the titles of a few games you would like to see featured would be appreciated.

'til next month, all the best to everyone, *Barbara*

LETTERS

From Bev Truter of Carnegie, Australia

Probe arrived yesterday, and as usual it was a good read. Loved Laurence's limerick about the puma! Also found Kez Gray's article on cults very interesting. However, the cherry on the cake (for me) was Dorothy's hints on saving and restoring games when using the CCS64 emulator. Hooray! At last I can save several games when playing old C64(e) games as .T64 files.

Doreen's review of TALISMAN OF LOST SOULS sent me scuttling off to my old Speccy(e) diskbox to dig it out and play it, and I spent a very enjoyable morning (3.5 hours) being completely unproductive and playing through TALISMAN. Oh yes, and WHAT did the Princess say (in the Brain Teaser) to avoid marrying either of the sons???

I've already contacted Dorothy to let her know that there are two more "Battune" games, called CAVERNS CITY and THE MUSEUM; which brings to mind the struggle I had in playing the former. Is "Caverns City" finishable? Are there any hints, or better still, a solution for it anywhere? I did hear that it was fatally bugged and therefore couldn't be finished, and to make matters worse, it's one of those games where the locations keep on shifting about whenever you start a new game, so you have to SAVE right near the beginning if you intend using the same map for finding your way through it. And that reminds me, on a related topic, (locations keep changing about), has anyone any hints, tips, etc. for that old PC text game called HOUSE AT THE EDGE OF TIME? And while I'm on the subject of pleading for hints, would you know if there's anything available on another old PC game (this time one with stable locations!) called SKYLAND'S STAR. I remember getting *almost* to the end in both House at the Edge of Time and Skyland's Star, but never quite completed either. I might even have ye olde maps I made for both games lying around somewhere (hopefully).

I've just finished playing a rather nice, newish TADS text adventure called Strangers in the Night, so here's a review and some hints for it.

My planned "rewrite" of "Space Aliens" will have to wait - I've lost interest in it, after spending 3 solid weeks rewriting all the locations, characters and nouns, I'm now severely daunted by the task of rewriting the entire command file and message file. Groan. Perhaps next month?? Cheers for now,

From Mandy Rodrigues of Llandudno

Thanks for the email. I know exactly what you mean about the readership being just sufficient to make you keep going. But there is never sufficient to make any headway in getting a fair balance between the "pure readers" and the "contributor readers". I was in exactly the same position for years. I can only thank people such as yourself who always kept me well supplied with material for the different sections. Of course I never expected everyone to be a contributor. Not everyone likes to write.

I know only too well how hard it can be to get the balance of Probe contents just right. But you have got the balance just right you know. As a past editor I have always felt that I should keep my nose out of your business in case anyone thought I was interfering but I have wanted, many times, to write and tell you just what a great job you are doing.

As far as Contributions are concerned, may I make a small suggestion? It may help. A lot of readers feel unable to write a full review of a game but may perhaps be persuaded to write a mini review, even if it is a paragraph contained within a letter. Just perhaps mentioning that they have just played/are playing such and such a game and if they find it frustrating, fantastic or just plain 'orrible. If there was a little page of these mini's them perhaps tentative readers might find themselves encouraged to go for the "biggie" sometime in the future. Just thought I would toss the idea into the pot in case it helps.

By the way, I have just discovered Might and Magic VII. My first ever of the series. People have been telling me for years that I should try these. They were right, I am thoroughly enjoying myself. I am finding even the first island a bit of a slog though. It is learning all the new spells, how to cast them etc. I will get there in the end. One thing I find frustrating is that, in the middle of a battle I select my Sorcerer to cast a spell and, before I can select another spell for her to cast I find that the Knight has been selected. This seems to happen very often and I have been killed off four times because I didn't notice. Has anyone else noticed this? Anybody got any suggestions? Come to think of it, has anyone got any cheats?

I know, I know, shame on me. Fancy a past editor asking for cheats. Still, I would be grateful, honestly. I keep running out of food in the Temple Of the Moon whilst fighting all those bats, rats and spiders. I retreat to sleep to recover from my wounds and they tell me they are too hungry to sleep so I have to go all the way back to the tavern to get supplies. I know I am taking too long to complete that bit but I enjoy taking my time as I learn how to handle the workings of the game. I just wish that players were allowed to take more than six days supply of food at a time.

Oh yes, before I forget. Twice I had to restart the game because the dragonflies killed some characters who were vital to the game, The peasants who sell the instrument and the Firestaff and also poor old Boris who was killed before I could get something vital from him. I did have luck the third time though, the guards somehow wandered in front of me into the dragonfly glade and killed them all off for me! I had great fun wandering along behind collecting all the loot!

Well must go. Have got some pesky rats to kill,

*

Mandy, you can interfere all you want. I think it is a very good idea for readers to send in mini-reviews. Just a couple of lines about ANY game or utility is useful, and it all helps to fill out the magazine. I don't expect a masterpiece, it is the sentiment that matter. (Barbara)

From Chris Heppinstall of Didcot

Some interesting information about Microsoft Freecell for all of those Probers that are addicted to the solitaire game:

~ Only one game of Freecell is impossible (despite high-powered computers trying to solve it, three times). That game is number: 11982

~ Excluding game 11982, number 1941 is thought to be the hardest game to complete.

~ Isla Donaldson is not the only one to find game 10692 difficult. It is considered the second hardest game.

~ There are 64 deals which can be completed using no freecells at all.

~ Game 27245 has the most amount of cards at the beginning which go straight to the homecells: 8.

~ Games 22574 and 18492 can be completed so that all 52 cards go to the homecells on their own at the end of the game.

~ The Windows 95 version of Microsoft Freecell includes two 'joke' games numbered -1 and -2. Try them out!

From Doreen Bardon of Slingsby

Just received the latest edition of A.P. what a really good read, the letters and special features have really been interesting.

Re Derek Shaw's review remark about A Hero for Sorania being my second release, I have to say that it is my third release, My first was The Fabled Treasure of Koosar, originally on cassette for the spectrum 'A' side, and a 'freebie' game on the 'B' side Birthday Surprise. If Derek is attending the Adventure 2000 convention, he will get to play the next game I have written for the Megapoints competition again programmed by Karen

Just for the record I have found another 2 Battune adventures:
Caverns City The Museum

That's all for now..... just watching the rain and mist surround the house

*

I asked Doreen if she would allow me to publish her other two games, and, of course, she said yes. We both think they were also available for the C64, so I will search my collection. Some time in the near future I should be able to announce their availability for the C64 and Spectrum plus the Amiga and PC under emulation. (Barbara)

From Peter Brown of Seaford

This article may be of interest to your "Amiga Adventurers". Whilst browsing Amiga Format disk AFCD52 I came across 2 programs called ASPV073 & ASPV071, these are Spectrum emulators for 48K & 128k. They require the mmu.library in libs.

I have tried both programs and they are the fastest emulators I have used on the Amiga. I also read in the magazine that these programs + a patch for saving snapshots can be downloaded from the Aminet website, but I cannot confirm this. These emulators will also run the QDOS programs on the Zenobi games disk. Hope this is of interest.

*

Until Peter wrote to me I didn't know there was a Spectrum emulator for the Amiga that would take 128K games. He has kindly sent me a copy of the emulator on disc and I hope to look at it before the next magazine is due. This means that when I get round to offering the Megapoints compilation I can offer the full selection to Amiga users, whereas I thought only those that were 48K could be included. (Barbara)

REVIEWS

CREATIVE ADVENTURE TOOLKIT

Written by Philip Richmond

Reviewed by Frank Fridd

For a long time now I have wanted to see my game, Colditz Escape on the P.C. but due to the movement within the game Amstrad emulators for the P.C. are not suitable and I had almost given up hope. I then heard about Andrew Clarke's adventure game utility A.C.E. I thought, ha, just the job, I will be able to programme my game for the P.C. at last. Unfortunately time passed by and there was no sign of the utility coming onto the market and I was getting disheartened, but in January 2000 Philip Richmond's Creative Adventure Toolkit (CAT) for the P.C. came available. I was ecstatic. I downloaded CAT and after a good look at it I decided that it was the programme for me and I sent off my registering fee.

As I had only programmed in BASIC before, I started to use CAT with much tribulation. I shouldn't have worried, CAT is so easy to use. CAT uses Windows and has 13 editors, each with their own pull down menus together with a Help file and external programme menu for 'Paint', 'Notepad', 'File Manager' and 'Calculator'. It is also possible to create pictures and sound using the 'gfx' and 'sfx' directories.

Vocabulary Editor

In this editor is placed all the verbs, nouns and prepositions needed within the game. Also synonyms and words that are to be ignored by CAT are placed here. All the words can be entered, amended and deleted as the game is developed. Some nouns are prelisted, such as directions, and should not be changed as CAT uses them to process the game. There is a limit of 500 verbs, 500 nouns and 200 prepositions. With the limit of 500 synonyms there should be enough room for all the words needed.

Location Editor

Here is inserted the room descriptions, surroundings and locations. There are three locations that cannot be used for location text descriptions as they are locations that CAT uses for objects worn, carried and not created yet. The commands 'brief' and 'verbose' can be used to restrict or expand the location descriptions. There is a limit of 500 locations.

Object Editor

Here are entered the objects that are to be used in the game. The name of the object, the location number from which the object starts from in the

game (1-500), its weight (0-500), whether it is a wearable object, whether it is a container able to carry other objects and whether it is a static immovable object is recorded. Also entered is the noun word that CAT understands as being the object. In the Help file of CAT it states that it is not possible to have two or more objects with the same name exist in a game. I have found that as long as the objects with same name are not together at the same time in the game it IS possible to have two or more objects with the same name by using the command 'swapobj's'. There is a limit of 200 objects.

Character Editor

This allows up to 21 characters to be created in a game. Characters can be human, creatures, monsters or anything else. CAT will tell the player if a character is in the same location and will report that a character enters the player's location or departs to different location and tells the player which direction the character took. Characters can move within the game independently in valid directions randomly or they can be assigned a preset movement path desired by the game's author. With CAT the player can communicate with the character by asking it something, ordering it to do something and by examining it.

Message Editor

The first 200 entries in this editor refers to an object when the player examines the object, viz object 1 = message 1, object 16 = message 16. CAT allows pictures of objects and characters as well as locations and these are displayed when the command 'look at' is typed providing it is not dark, the object or character is present in the player's location and a suitable bitmap picture exists in the 'gfx' directory. There is a limit of 600 messages.

System Message Editor

These messages are used by CAT to print appropriate responses to player commands. These messages can be changed by the author but care must be taken to maintain the meaning and content of the message. There are 100 system messages.

Introduction Message Editor

This editor is used to print the title of the game and a brief introductory welcome message. This only appears once at the beginning of the game.

Connections Editor

This editor is used by CAT to print the exits to be seen when describing a location. There are 12 values which correspond to the 12 directions that are possible for the player leave the current location. Not all 12 directions need to be used in any one location. Exit listing can be disabled or enabled by

using the 'exits' command which toggles the exit listing off or on. Connections for a location can be changed during the course of a game.

Default Settings Editor. Initial game settings are set here. Strength (0 – 500). If the player tries to carry objects (the weight of which are determined by the author of the game) which would make the total weight exceed the set strength, the player is informed by a suitable system message. Carryable (0 – 200). If the player tries to carry too many objects (set by the author) then the player is again informed by a suitable system message. These values can be changed at any time during the development of the game. Start Room (1 – 500) informs CAT which location the game starts from. Display (1 – 3) These are text or text/graphic display modes. Game Window Title. The title of the game, author of the game, credits etc. are displayed on the title bar. Input Timeout. (0 – 200) This sets the time (in seconds) that the player has to input a command. If the player has not entered an input in time the system message, 'time passes' will be displayed and the player loses a turn.

Response Editor

This is a list of entries that take care of the input commands from the player. The parser examines the phrase typed and extracts the variable for the verb, first noun, preposition and second noun. The parser also removes any deletion word and devises a special string. The information is then passed to the response entries to find a match. If the conditions in an entry matches CAT will then carry out the actions of that entry.

Colour Settings Editor

This is where the background and typefaces can be changed to different colours. There is also a number of different typefaces that can be used.

Tableone Editor

This is a special list of entries which consist of conditions and actions which are checked by CAT after a location has been described but before exits and/or objects visible have been printed. Tableone is useful for adding a message or printing extra information to a location.

Tabletwo Editor

This provides for the computer to have a turn in the game and to inform the player of any events which may have happened such as a car crashing or a bomb exploding.

The Response, Tableone and Tabletwo Editors are used to insert all the entries that CAT will be able to interpret and to devise the problems and puzzles which the player will encounter while playing the game. There is a limit of 1000 entries in each of these editors. In all editors there are full

editing options including a creation of an entry before another, printing to a printer and a 'find' option for finding a particular word easily.

When testing the game a **Diagnostic Editor** can be used. This gives the options of changing locations, checking the value of flags and listing flag and objects amongst others while playing the game. This helps enormously when testing the games for mistakes etc. Authors can create multi-part adventures as well as single part adventures with CAT.

'gfx' Directory

CAT can handle pictures of all the objects, characters and locations in the game as long as the picture is in the 256 colour Bitmap format.

'sfx' Directory

Sounds of all kinds can be included with CAT such as sirens sounding, bombs falling or cars crashing.

Since using CAT I have had to send emails to Philip Richmond to help me to understand CAT and to help me with problems I have encountered. At all times he has helped me he has come up with the solution usually the following day. I have found a couple of bugs in CAT and have made suggestions, Philip has sorted them out immediately. Philip is also improving CAT continuously and his newsletters are very helpful.

I cannot fault CAT in any way and find it a joy to work with. I have no reservations in recommending CAT as an easy and powerful utility for writing adventure games. As graphics and sound is included CAT is a complete package.

Download the shareware version from

www.richmond.freemove.co.uk

or send £1.50 to Adventure Probe for a copy on floppy disc.



THE MILLION DOLLAR GREAT JEWEL HEIST

Written by Dorothy Millard

Reviewed by Edwina Brown

The game starts with you waking, and finding yourself tied, not very securely, to a chair. Getting free from these bonds presents is no problem, remembering how you got there takes a little longer. You have a splitting headache, and putting your hand up to your head, find a large bump on the left hand side. Looking around you see you are in a living room, and it is not your own, so you start to explore the house.

Soon your memory begins to return, and you vaguely remember someone hitting you, but do not know why. Next you recall working in a jewellers shop, when a gang of thieves raided it, taking you hostage. So that must be how you came to be in this predicament.

The house is old and large, with two floors and servants' quarters, which are boarded up. Probably the owners are down on their luck and can not now afford servants. As all the very best old houses have a secret room, there is one here,, also an equally secret passage. There are also places where you will need some form of lighting, a low tunnel is one example.

In the grounds is a swimming pool, which is guarded by a ferocious dog. They do say the way to a dog's heart is through it's stomach (or is it a man's) so with a little careful thought you should be able to tame him. There are a number of keys you need to find, and a plus for me was that you did not have to specify which key, in order to use it. You just needed to be carrying it.

The main object of this game is to find the money and treasures, which are hidden around the house, and then escape. You can finish with just the money, but would any self-respecting adventurer do that? Leaving all those goodies behind! I like the way that at the beginning of the game the puzzles are fairly easy, and grow harder as you work your way through. I always find it so frustrating, to be stumped by a really hard puzzle .before you have got anywhere.

This game had me hooked from beginning to end. There are, as you can see, lots of puzzles, and like all Dorothy's games it is well thought out and very easy to map. I can thoroughly recommend it.

Available for C64 (tape and disc), Spectrum (tape and 3.5" +D disc), Amiga(e) and PC(e) from Adventure Probe - only £2. Also, C64d version is on Dorothy's compilation disc or can be downloaded from the Internet.

PANDORA'S BOX

Reviewed by Dot Healey on a PC

Pandora's Box was my first purchase of software along with my brand new PC. Never having used a PC before, I went on a tour with trepidation, marvelling at the new worlds opening before me. Against the C64 it was certainly an eye opener.

Having first learnt the basics. I loaded Pandora's Box and off I went on my first tour of 'adventure', I managed to complete the first couple of levels, and then life caught up with me and other things took priority, I went live on line and spent a while discovering the internet, another new world. So when a few weeks ago arthritis reared its ugly head once more, I thought I would take the opportunity and knuckle down to it.

Loading was easy but slow, I found, and having had hard drive failure twice and a new mother board, I found my self starting from scratch. I travelled from country to country solving puzzles and releasing various creatures. The hints and solve puzzles came in handy, but I used too many too quickly and soon found my self stuck at the later levels. Although different puzzles were introduce at later levels I did find they became boring, many being repeated at different stages. I also found that some of the types of puzzles that I disliked at the start soon became my favorites and those that I liked at the start I disliked by the end.

I found that to get through to the end takes either a lot perseverance (stubbornness) or a bit of cheating (yes I admit it), which is quite easy by saving after each stage and then using either a clue or solution and then reloading and doing the puzzle again, so you get the best of both worlds, help with solving the puzzles but also keeping the hints and solutions for those puzzles that you cannot solve (or can't be bothered with).

All in all, although I got to the end, albeit with a little 'help' (I wanted to see what the response was when I finished), I have to admit to being disappointed overall and probably would not have purchased it as the 'stunning journey which includes 350 of the most beautiful puzzles ever created' did not in my mind live up to expectations. If, however, you want to while away a few hours with almost mindless tedium do rush out and buy it!

Minimum requirements: P100, 16Mb Ram (32 Mb recommended), 170Mb Hard Drive, Quad speed CD drive.

Shop around for best price. Software First offer it for £13.99 (members), £14.99 (non-members).

STRANGERS IN THE NIGHT

Written by Rich Pizor

Reviewed by Bev Truter on a PC

This recently written TADS text adventure looks, at first glance, like a fairly simple affair to "win", as it contains only a few basic puzzles. But although the plot is straightforward enough, and the puzzles pretty elementary, most of the entertainment comes from the brilliant atmosphere, good writing and novel plot of STRANGERS. The aim of the game came as a bit of a surprise - you play the role of a modern-day vampire, on the prowl for blood during the course of one night, and to finish the game you must find at least three suitable victims to bite, then return to your apartment before dawn. Some of the buildings you will have to visit may be closed for the night, and others only open much later, after 11pm. The game begins at 9pm, and you have until 5am (320 turns) to find your required 3 lots of blood. Stay out later than this and sunrise will cause you to change into a small little heap of ash, in true vampire tradition!

It would probably be essential to make a large-ish map, as the gameworld is a 4-block by 4-block section of the fictitious city in which you live, and when you enter any of the buildings, it tends to muck up your neat E/W and N/S rows of streets, as interior building locations mingle merrily with your street locations. Although this game is time-based, there is plenty of time to find all 5 victims and do what a vampire's gotta do; that's if you have questioned your obliging doorman about the various buildings featured in a magazine lying in your living room, and visit those buildings that are likely to close before midnight first.

Call me bloodthirsty, but I really enjoyed playing the part of a vampire; it certainly made a refreshing change from playing the usual "adventurer" type persona found in most text adventures. There are very few items to pick up or deal with in any way, and most of the problems involve choosing a suitable victim, then ensuring that you are alone with them (can't be caught sinking your fangs into someone's neck in public) before typing BITE

The atmosphere throughout STRANGERS is dark, brooding and very gothic, with well-described locations and believable characters. This game is NOT recommended for children - although there is no obvious blood-and-guts type of violence, there is a very dark and adult feel to the whole game.

The version of STRANGERS that I played was called "Version1.0contest", so I assume it was written as an entry in one of the many I-F competitions run on the Net.

There are a few spelling errors, mainly due to haste while writing, I suspect, but certainly not enough to spoil the effectiveness of this well-presented and fascinating game. Overall, this is a really "different" game to play - not exactly puzzle-less; but not the traditional kind of text adventure either. Altogether an interesting concept, competently programmed.

Download from the Internet (<ftp://ftp.gmd.de/if-archive/games/tads/competition99/strangers>) or send a blank PC disc and return postage to the Probe office for a copy of the runnable game.

1996 & 1997 SPECTRUM CRAP GAMES COMPETITION ENTRIES

Reviewed by Dorothy Millard (Spectrum Versions)

These games were entered in the 1996 and 1997 Spectrum Crap Games Competitions. There were seven "adventures" included and I thought I would have a look to see just how crap they really are. Personally I wouldn't put my name to any of them!

Adventure in Bristol by Garry Lancaster

Set in Bristol you must follow clues to eventually finish the adventure by doing what the last clue indicates. This game is unplayable as it is so slow - it deserves to be in the Crap Games Competition: You can WAIT and a bus arrives then CATCH BUS and PAY FARE, go west and you are at a toll gate, PAY TOLL to a suspension bridge, but then what? You can OPEN CHEST but not look or examine it - there appears to be nothing in it. EXAMINE DRAIN tells you there is a clue and if you read it you are told to find next clue before your ears begin to ring, but the next clue tells you the same thing. There is a timer limit and every time you stop for a short while to map or watch TV (got to spice it up somehow!) etc. "a minute passes." As you have a limited amount of time this is very annoying. I lost interest and gave up on this game.

Get That Emulator by Radovan Garabik

Set in the real Slovak town of Jarok you are desperate to get hold of Radovan's latest Spectrum Emulator, but first you must find him. That game has a limited vocabulary but compared with the others in this competition it was good. I was unable to finish Get That Emulator, but I don't think it is bugged, probably I just missed something.

Tetris – The Adventure by Stephen Smith

What can I say about this one? It is original. Great if you like typing SPIN LEFT, even QUIT doesn't work!

Castle by R. G. Hallas

The object is to find the hidden treasure in the castle into which you have just wandered. Contained in the treasure is the key, which you need to escape, as the door through which you entered slammed shut, trapping you. There are many items left behind by the Alchemist and your mission is complete when you return through the door. Again a limited vocabulary but compared with others in this competition it was good. I actually almost enjoyed playing this game, even though I came across several bugs and a couple of wonderful spelling mistakes. On one occasion you are told you can go south and north, but the south exit doesn't exist. Returning to the dungeon you have to use a rope, even though the chair which you used last time is still there, but these are minor quibbles, after all it was finishable! If you feel the urge to play any of these, this is the one you should play.

Escape by R. G. Hallas

You must escape from your house, however you have forgotten where you put the door key. The game has a VERY limited vocabulary and you can only carry one item at a time, which isn't a problem as most of them are a waste of time anyway. If you are carrying the key you can enter the toilet, but why? You can do absolutely nothing in this room, and on this occasion, you didn't even get killed! This game is crap. It is however completable and that is a plus. You are killed for silly reasons, eg. the budgie scares the living daylights out of you when it goes for the millet you are carrying - I was only going to feed it, honest! I was killed five times, which is a lot when you consider that the game only takes ten minutes (if that) to play!

Pi Week The Quest by Harvey Lodder

You are supposed to discover the secret of life, but I was unable to get anywhere in this game. You can EXAMINE STATUE, EXAMINE GRAVE, EXAMINE GATE (told you must enter through it), but that appears to be all. You are told at the start that the answer lies in the sewers, but if you enter the sewers there are only two locations and no way out! I could do nothing with the objects.

The Mighty Sword of the Dark by Alan Moore

You take on the role of a mythical hero as he tries to retrieve the Mighty Sword from the forces of darkness. There are only four locations and you cannot do anything! Forget it.



A PIECE OF HISTORY

by Dorothy Millard

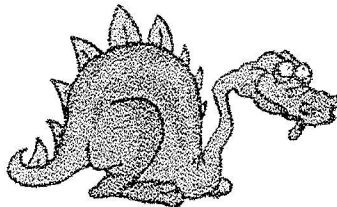
While surfing the Internet recently I came across a game which brought back lots of memories. It was called simply ADVENTURE (not to be mistaken for the early Crowther & Woods game of the same name) and was available for the Atari 2600 console. This game had a dragon on the front cover and was very popular in its time. I downloaded a 2600 emulator and the game, but I have had trouble getting the emulator up and running. However, I also managed to find a rewritten version by Greg Chance for the PC called "Indenture." Apparently this is the same game given a new name.

The story goes as follows "Once upon a time an evil magician stole an enchanted goblet and hid it somewhere in the kingdom. Now you must find it, but it won't be easy. Three deadly dragons and a black bat will try to stop you. Have no fear, your magic sword will help protect you. Cross the bridge, if you can, and get the magnet that will attract the goblet. Watch out! The dragon is waiting to eat you!

The Evil Magician has created three Dragons to hinder you in your quest for the Golden Chalice. There is Yorgie, the Yellow Dragon, who is just plain mean; there is Grundle, the Green Dragon, who is mean and ferocious; and there is Rhindle, the Red Dragon, who is the most ferocious of all. Rhindle is also the fastest Dragon and is the most difficult to outmaneuver.

There are three castles in the Kingdom; the White Castle, the Black Castle, and the Golden Castle. Each castle has a gate over the entrance. The Gate can be opened with the corresponding colored key. Inside each castle are rooms (or dungeons), depending at which Skill Level you are playing. The Castles are separated by rooms, pathways, and labyrinths. Common to all the skill levels is the Blue Labyrinth through which you must find your way to the Black Castle. Skill Levels 2 and 3 have a more complicated Kingdom.

If anyone is interest in this piece of history Barbara has a copy.



THE MEGAPOINTS COMPETITION

- FOND MEMORIES

by Larry Horsfield

This game, a feature of every single convention since the first, was the brainchild of Jim O'Keeffe. The idea is that contestants are given 20 minutes playing time at a specially-written text adventure, with the object of scoring as many points as possible. The first game used for Megapoints was a specially adapted version of part 1 of my own text adventure, "Run, Bronwynn, Run!", a game which was eventually finished and released a few years later! This game was written using "P.A.W.", the Professional Adventure Writer utility. Winner of the first-ever Megapoints was a chap called Jack Higham, who won mainly because of his incredibly fast typing - his fingers flew over the keyboard so fast we swear we saw smoke!

One fascinating aspect of the Megapoints Game for me, as the author of the text adventure being used, was watching all those different people playing my game in front of me. I couldn't believe the things they were inputting, or the way they were tackling a particular puzzle, and was constantly taking notes - it was like a great big playtesting session. We thought we'd eradicated all the bugs in the game, but a few more were found - fortunately they didn't prevent anyone from continuing - as well as a few spelling and grammatical errors. Very often, when bugs have been found by one or more of the Megapoints contestants, the author of the game has had to warn each contestant not to input a certain command, or even the correct command for a certain action, etc, before they commence play.

Various text adventure authors have contributed games for the Megapoints Competition over the years. At the third convention, young Scott Denyer, proprietor of "Delbert the Hamster Software", wrote a game called "Exploits in a Wheelie-Bin" for the Megapoints. As I had provided the games for the first two years, it was a pleasant change to actually be competing in the competition, instead of running it. When it came to my turn we had, as usual, three Spectrums in use, but I didn't notice that I was asked to sit at one particular machine, rather than choosing one of the three at random, as everyone else had. Once I started, I found it incredibly hard to score points, even though I seemed to be solving the puzzles in the adventure. Whenever I did manage to score any points, they were swiftly taken away a few moves later! Total score after 20 minutes: 0 points! Everyone else managed to score at least a few points, and I put my failure to score any points down to the fact that I was much better at writing games than I was at actually playing them.

Afterwards, when I was discussing the game with some other competitors who had already had their goes (we were under strict instructions not to talk to anyone who hadn't had their turn, of course), they were mentioning things in the game that I had not seen..... and I began to smell a rat! Sure enough, when the winning trio was announced, Scott admitted that I had been the victim of a wind-up and the particular version of the game I'd been playing had been doctored so that any points I scored were deducted a few moves later! It turned out that this plot was hatched at a meeting of The Hamilton Halls Gang in London which I had been unable to attend. This caused much merriment amongst the people at the convention, and I was rather embarrassed, to say the least, although I did take it all in good heart.

I was, however, determined to get my own back, but the next year all but one of the co-conspirators were, for various reasons, unable to attend the convention. The only one who was there was Martin Freemantle, but as luck would have it, he was doing the Megapoints game that year. I suddenly had a brainwave - if they made it so I couldn't score any points in the last Megapoints competition, then I would score MAXIMUM points at the next one! I knew that Sharon Harwood (another of the conspirators not at the convention) was playtesting the adventure, so I phoned and told her what I was plotting and she readily agreed to send me a copy of the final version which would be used in the actual Megapoints Competition. I played that game to death during the weeks before the convention, learning all the points scoring inputs so that eventually I was able play through the whole game, scoring the maximum number of points (250) without referring to a solution.

On the day of the convention, all went according to plan, and I played the game, "Curse of the Serpent's Eye", all the way through, although I did make one mistake near the end and missed a few points. Jenny Perry was supervising the running of the game when I took my turn, and when she saw how many points I'd scored after 15 minutes play (it was over 200), she rushed over to Martin and told him. He was busy attending to customers who were buying games from his "DreamWorld Adventures" table and I remember that it didn't seem to register with him that I'd scored so many points. Afterwards, when word went round of the incredible score I'd achieved, people asked me how I'd managed it. I told them - quite truthfully in some respects - that solving a certain puzzle, involving a letterbox I seem to remember, opened up the whole adventure and I was just plain lucky!

When it came to awarding the certificates (I had to let a couple of people in on the secret so that a certificate wasn't completed with my name on it) I stepped up and, instead of taking the winners certificate and retiring gracefully, I asked to say a few words. I told the conventioners about the

previous year's wind-up and revealed, to howls of laughter, how I'd been able to get my own back on the only conspirator present. As I said all this, Martin just sat with his head in his hands, absolutely squirming with embarrassment. Oh sweet revenge! Afterwards, he phoned Sharon and said a few choice words to her, most of which are unrepeatable here. The 1st Prize Certificate did, of course, go to the person who came second, but who really came first....if you see what I mean?

This year's Megapoints game is being written - for the first time ever - on a PC for the PC, using ACE, the Adventure Creation Environment, created for the PC by Andy Clark. The game we will be playing is by Doreen Bardon, is being programmed by Karen Tyers, and is entitled "Seek, and ye MAY find....". I hope we have as much fun playing this game as we have done with all the other Megapoints games over the past 10 years.

For those of you who may be interested, here is a list of the games, authors and winners of 10 years of Megapoints Competitions:

1990: "Run, Bronwynn, Run! (Pt.1)" by Larry Horsfield; Winner: Jack Higham
1991: "The Spectre of Castle Coris (Pt.1)" by Larry Horsfield; Winner: Scott Denyer
1992: "Exploits in a Wheelie-Bin" by Scott Denyer; Winner: Mark Oulaghan
1993: "Curse of the Serpent's Eye" by Martin Freemantle; Winner: Gareth Pitchford
1994: "The Long Journey" by Sharon Harwood; Winner: Nancy Finnighan
1995: "Tattoo" by Martin Freemantle; Winner: Wynne Snowden
1996: "Fortress of Fear (Pt.1)" by Larry Horsfield; Winner: Jon Scott
1997: "There's a hole in your bucket" by Karen Tyers; Joint Winners: Sue Roseblade & Jenny Perry
1998: "25" by Jon Scott; Winner: Jill Nott
1999: "10 Little Adventurers" by Edwina Brown; Winner: David Hebblethwaite

The full-sized versions of the games that featured in the first two Megapoints Competitions, "Run, Bronwynn, Run!" and "The Spectre of Castle Coris" (as well as other games written by myself - look for any published by "FSF Adventures") are available for download from "The World of Spectrum Text Adventures" website, as listed on the Adventure Links page. Note that these games must be played via a Spectrum Emulator program, in this case Z80, which can also be downloaded from the "World of Spectrum" site. Note that if you download this emulator, it will be the "shareware" version and you should therefore make sure you download the shareware version of the adventure files. Happy Adventuring!

EMULATORS OR THE REAL THING? by Steve Clay

This article was to be a brief reply to Bev Truter who mentioned having trouble with an Atari ST emulator. My advice was to have been: "Go to a car boot or flea market buy an Atari St and use it."

However two things changed my mind. Firstly Bev is from Australia and I don't know if these examples of our cultural heritage have reached that far and if not then the expense of flying to Britain may well make the project uneconomical. Secondly I saw a small advert in a local free paper for a computer from a time gone by and the price made me think I might get an article out of it for Probe, actually I got two.

The small advert read as follows: "Vic 20 with 18 games, good working order. £7. Tel. etc."

Also on the same page was: "Amiga 500 with lots of games and accessories. Good working order. £20. etc."

Had not the emulation thing been on my mind I would no doubt have ignored these adverts, however I had an idea for an experiment. Giving myself an imaginary budget of £50 I would set out, using car-boots, flea markets, classified ads, cards in the newsagent window and the good old second hand shop, to see what kind of bargains are available. I won't include PC's in this test but as an aside I have seen a 486 PC with monitor and printer for £75, although this exceeds my 'budget' I can recall not to long ago a 486 would set you back £700-£800! I will not be looking for Playstations either. Incidentally a brand new one with four games is retailing at £100. Get one now!

What I found from my enquiries is that there are many makes and models available. So what could £50 you in old computers. I'll begin with a quick look at consoles which are available at very low prices. Most adventurers will find little use for a console but RPG fans are well catered for with the SNES. A SNES with 3 games was going for £20. The much heralded Sega Saturn, the loser in the war with Playstation, is going for a measly £18 or with nine games for £50. Finally more role playing fun to be had with the Nintendo 64 at £25. Watch out for the price of games though!

Moving on to computers. There seems to be a glut of Commodore 64's in our area. I've seen three light gun packs today alone and the prices range from £8 with 24 games to £35 for the light gun pack alone. The Atari ST and STE (What's the difference? I don't know) are also numerous but the ones I have

spotted all look a dirty grey colour and looked a bit grubby. Is this the colour they came in? An Atari ST with 10 boxed games would have set me back £20 while the STE with a box full of copies and blank disks was going for £12. Do they come with a power pack? Are mice easy to obtain? Anything else the second hand buyer should look for?

The Amiga is more my thing. Any potential buyer should check there is a power pack with the machine, that the floppy drive works, that a TV/Aerial cable and mouse are supplied. The price these are going for range from £15 - £30 for an A500/A600. The A1200 is going for £30 upwards. The 1200 is the better machine by far but if you wanted an Amiga just to catch up on certain adventures then a 500/600 would be more than suitable. The price of an Amiga nearly always includes a stack of disks and games. Another aside. I was offered an A1200 in a tower case with 8 meg memory, two hard drives complete with 040 accelerator board and CD ROM drive for the bargain price of £150.

One machine notable by its absence was the humble Spectrum. Only one was on offer and that was an Amstrad 128 tape version still in its box for £25. I accept the fact that most people don't want more computers cluttering up already precious space and to some people having mouldy old machines hanging around isn't worth thinking about. But as a last resort it is nice to know there are bargains out there and the occasional step back in time with a tape recorder and Spectrum 48+ can lead to all sorts of fun.

Finally buyer beware. If at all possible see the machine working. If buying from a car boot can you get home to try the machine and back if it doesn't work before the car boot packs up? A knowledge of older machines will certainly help you when it comes to making sure all leads are supplied.

ANSWER TO BRAINTEASER - JULY 2000

Marriage

The Princess said "I will marry Midget Mike".

She cannot marry Tiny Tim as the statement is false, and she only marries Tim if it's true. However, she can't marry Mike because if she did, the statement would be true, and she only marries Mike if her statement is false.

A NEW WAY OF THINKING by David Hebblethwaite

Sunday 14 March, 1999

My name is Alison Mancini. I am 29 years old, a journalist working for *Starspray*, a science fiction magazine. Yesterday I was contacted by a local eccentric, Harry Lydon, who claims to have invented a device which grants people psychic powers by stimulating certain parts of the brain. The device is a patch worn on the arm, not unlike a nicotine patch for smokers. Only it's bright red. According to Lydon, it allows the wearer to influence probability, effectively controlling events with the mind. How it does so is something he won't say. He asked me to test it and keep a diary of what happens.

Why Lydon asked me, I don't know. Perhaps he thinks that, because I'm an SF journalist, I must believe in ESP and other paranormal garbage. Still, I went along to humour him. Nothing untoward happened when I put the patch on, though I did get the feeling I was being watched as I walked down the street. Obviously all in the mind as the patch was covered by my jacket.

14th March. Hi, I'm Jed. Old Mr Lydon from down the road has given me his new invention to try out. Calls it a Thinking Patch. Says it will unlock the human brain's psychic potential, and he wants me to be the first to use my brain to the full. I can't wait to give it a go. At long last, people will have no choice but to accept that ESP is real.

Monday 15 March, 1999

Today I had to review a video of an animated movie, *The Shield of Justice*, the usual fantasy quest with dashing hero, feisty princess and evil wizard, you know the sort. (Still, it was better than the latest Everett Gladstone pot-boiler I had to review the other day).

Anyway, I sat down to watch the video, still wearing the patch (which I'd forgotten I still had on), and I remember thinking there was a really annoying talking dog sidekick in this film, and wishing he'd vanish in a puff of smoke. And when the dog first appeared on screen, two seconds later, a wizard appeared and blasted it to ashes! Now that didn't happen in the film!

I immediately rewound the tape. This time, no wizard and no dead dog. I checked again and again, but each time the movie continued as I remembered it at the cinema. So I must have imagined seeing my wish acted out on the TV screen...and yet it seemed so real. Could it be that this patch actually works? Or perhaps it just alters one's perception of reality. But no, surely it was just my imagination...

15th March. I knew the patch would work! I tested it when the post arrived today. There was a letter from Davison Supermarkets, who I'd applied to for a job as a shelf stacker. I saw their name printed on the envelope and realised that this was going to tell me whether I'd be going for an interview or not. I was sure I'd be turned down yet again, but then I remembered the patch. I concentrated hard on the letter, willing it to say I'd got an interview...and sure enough, when I opened it, I had! A week on Thursday! To celebrate, I bought a bottle of wine. I poured it all down the sink and didn't feel even a twinge of regret.

Tuesday 16 March, 1999

Remember on Sunday I wrote that I felt I was being watched? Well, now I know why. When I returned home from a trip to the shops this afternoon, there was a man in my living room. He said he was my biggest fan, he'd been reading my stuff for years, thought I was very attractive...and he'd been following me for the past month.

I asked him what he wanted. My voice sounded somewhat less courageous than I wanted it to. This guy looked harmless enough - middle aged, glasses, not much taller than me - but he had a knife I recognised as one from my kitchen, and a nervous look in his eyes. I didn't know what he'd do if provoked. I'm not sure he did either.

He said he wanted a signed photo of me. "But I'm a journalist," I said carefully. "I don't have any signed pictures."

The wrong thing to say. "Get me a signed photo!" he shouted, threatening me with the knife. "Find me one of your family snaps and sign it!"

My legs were frozen with fear. Some detached part of my brain commented on how ridiculous the situation was, being threatened with death over something as trivial as a signed photo. Another part dimly wondered how the man had got in when the door was locked. Probably forced a window, it offered. I ignored both of them.

I struggled to think of something to say. "Look," I managed, "just put the knife down and we can talk about this."

The man shrugged. "Yes, of course," he muttered and dropped the knife on the floor.

I stood there incredulously, then bent down to retrieve it. "Now go away and leave me alone!" I told him.

And he just turned and walked out of the open door I'd come in by.

For a long time afterwards I just sat still, my mind reeling. The whole episode seemed more like something from a TV show than an actual, physical experience. I hugged myself for comfort, and felt a slight bulge on my arm. The patch. There was no doubt this time; what had just happened wasn't my imagination. There was only one explanation for the man's sudden departure: he'd done what I'd told him. Lydon's patch worked.

Wednesday 17 March, 1999

After I'd come to terms with yesterday's 'encounter' and the fact that I could control events with this patch, I had an idea. Today was the midweek Lottery. I could buy a ticket and use the patch to influence the draw! If I could change the contents of an animated video, surely I could control the Lottery numbers?

I bought a ticket, putting any old numbers on the playslip. It didn't matter: it was the draw itself I'd have to influence. Then I did something I'd never normally do and watched the draw live. After the usual waffle, and dreadful miming from some identikit boyband, the numbers were drawn. I concentrated on the figures displayed on my ticket...but not one of them came out of the machine!

I got straight on the phone to Lydon, demanding to know what had gone wrong. It was then that he told me someone else had a patch, a young man called Jed Hanson. The only explanation he could think of was that he'd had the same idea as I did, and the two of us had cancelled each other out. Well, thanks for telling me there's someone else with a patch, Harry!

Thursday 25 March, 1999

I haven't had any problems with the patch since the 17th, but then I haven't tried to influence the Lottery again either. Let this Jed Hanson win the jackpot if he wants (then maybe he'll stop playing!).

Had a strange experience today. I was in the *Starspray* office today when I was called in to see the editor, Steve Ryman. Now, Steve and I have never got on - the man's a pain in the posterior, in my opinion - but I've always been capable of holding my own with him. So I was surprised to feel extremely nervous waiting outside his office, like he was my Headmaster at school, as well as the irritation I felt at having to see him.

I knocked on his door and went in when he answered, and sat down on the other side of his desk, still with that feeling of immense trepidation. Steve was there, leaning back in his swivel chair, hands clasped behind his head, the usual smug grin stamped on his face. "Alison," he said, "about your review of the new Everett P. Gladstone novel."

"What about it?" I asked.

"Don't you think it's a bit...harsh?"

That took me aback. "Harsh?" I queried. "What makes you say that?"

"Well, you called it '600 pages of unremitting tedium, an experience comparable to cleaning a filthy public toilet with your tongue'," Steve read from a paper on the desk. "It's a bit strong, wouldn't you say?"

"It's what I thought of it. I hated the book, I mean really loathed it beyond words. What am I supposed to do, lie and say it was wonderful?" Something was up here. Even though we didn't see eye to eye, Steve never questioned any reviewer's opinions, even mine. "What's going on, Steve?" I asked.

He sighed. "All right, you win. Everett Gladstone has invited the *Starspray* team for dinner tomorrow night - including you. He's bound to ask what the review says, and - well, you know he's always supported us..."

The low-down creep! Trying to use me to score a few brownie points... "Surely even he doesn't have that fragile an ego?" I said.

"But he's Everett Gladstone." Steve was almost pleading. "He's one of the most influential people in the field. He could ruin us, you'd lose your job."

"Do you really think Gladstone's fans are that blindly attentive to his every word?" I asked. From the look on Steve's face, I could see that he did. I relented. "OK, but just this once. Don't make a habit of this sort of censorship."

I left Steve's office without another word. The despair I felt gave way to anger at the way he'd treated me. *Sometimes I wish I could wring his neck*, I thought.

Later that day, the depression returned with a vengeance. Obviously a reaction to thought of having dinner with Everett Gladstone; not even Steve deserves that!

26th March. After the Lottery disaster last week, I took the patch off and didn't wear it again until yesterday. I realise now that I was fooling myself over that letter: I didn't make it say I had an interview, it was like that already. Stupid of me to believe all that crap about psychic powers.

I decided yesterday that I'd make a really good go of the interview. I put on my best clothes, a suit and tie that was my dad's when he was alive - it didn't fit but it was better than nothing. While getting changed, I noticed the patch on the dressing table. 'What the hell' I thought and put it back on - just for luck, mind. I checked myself in the mirror when I was done, then caught the bus into town.

I was nervous as hell waiting to go in the interview room, in a part of the supermarket that few people ever see. But I also felt annoyed that this was taking up my valuable time, a feeling I still can't explain.

When they called to say they were ready for me, I went in and sat down. On the opposite side of the table from me sat my inquisitors, two women and a man. I think one of the women was the manager, called Mrs Fisher or something; I didn't catch their names because while they were introducing themselves, I butted in with "Yeah, yeah, get on with it, you're wasting my time." I didn't want to say it, it came straight out with no intervention from my brain. Of course, I apologised straight away, but the atmosphere was still clouded.

And it all went downhill from there. Mrs Fisher and the others were tolerant, and asked me questions, but every time I came out with an insult to them or their company. I made a total hash of it. Eventually, Mrs Fisher stood up and said in a level voice, "Mr Hanson, I'm afraid I must ask you to leave. We don't think you are a suitable employee for this company."

I could hardly blame her. I wanted to explain that it wasn't my fault, tried to explain that I'd said all those things accidentally. But you know what I actually said? "Suits me, you low-down creep! I don't want to work for your crappy little shop anyway!"

Then I stormed out of the building, where I broke down and cried.

The final straw came on my bus trip home. I was still depressed at having cocked up the interview so spectacularly, but I still couldn't work out why - I'd really wanted that job.

There was a pensioner sat beside me, asleep and snoring. He wasn't doing any harm to anyone, but I suddenly felt really angry towards him. How dare he interrupt my self-pitying with his snoring? Irrational, I know, but I couldn't help feel that way.

I reached out, gripped his neck in my hands and shook hard. He woke up and tried to scream, but it turned to a gurgle in his throat. Dimly I saw that everyone on the bus was watching in horror. Two young guys came up and

tried to pull me away, but it was too late. The old man was sleeping again, but a different kind of sleep, the kind you don't wake up from. While everyone was frozen in horror, I managed to force open the emergency exit and jump off. Somehow, I didn't hurt myself. I got up and ran, and didn't stop till I got home.

That was yesterday. Now it's Friday night. The police haven't got me yet - not many people know me well, I've never broken the law before, and the bus was in the countryside when it happened - but I know my luck (if you can call it that) won't last long. So I'm going to do the right thing. I'm going to leave this diary on the table, so people understand that I didn't mean to do what I did - if anyone can believe me.

And if you're reading this, Mr Lydon, I'm sorry to have to tell you that the patch doesn't work.

The following account was given to police by Steve Ryman, editor of Starspray magazine.

It started out innocently enough. Me, Alison - Miss Mancini, I mean - John Ridgeway, Simon Castle and Gareth Pollard - the editorial team at *Starspray* - had been invited to dinner at the house of Everett P. Gladstone, the author. I'll grant you it was an unusual invitation, and Gladstone knew well that Alison wasn't exactly a fan of his - she hated his books, in fact - but he had nothing to do with it. Gladstone wouldn't risk his career like that.

He welcomed us, and showed us in to the dining-room - very nice it was too, candelabras on the ceiling, paintings displayed proudly on the walls, but of course you don't want to know about that. Um.

The first course was a choice of tomato and basil soup or prawn cocktail. Alison chose the latter - she's always loved prawns. No, it wasn't anything in the prawn cocktail: I had it as well, and I'm fine. Alison was the model guest, which certainly surprised me - I knew she didn't want to be there, but she wasn't going to let it show. She and Everett were chatting away, you'd think they were the best of friends. There was no hint as to what was going to happen, no hint at all.

Alison had lamb for the main course - look, why do you need to know that? It was nothing in the food - Gladstone himself had lamb, and we all drank the same wine.

Sorry. Anyway, everything was going fine till after the main course. While we were waiting for dessert, Gladstone asked about our review of his latest book. Alison had wrote it, and it wasn't very complimentary, to say the least.

I'd had a word with her the day before: I was worried about Gladstone getting upset if he knew we'd given him a bad review. That was when Alison announced that she needed to use the toilet; well, I just thought, *Thanks Alison, leave me to deal with it, I don't mind.*

Where was I? Oh yeah, she asked Gladstone for directions to the bathroom; he said the nearest was on the first floor. I thought no more about it - it's a perfectly normal thing to do, after all. And we didn't suspect...

Halfway through dessert, we noticed Alison still wasn't back. Simon joked about women spending ages in the bathroom...then we heard a loud bang coming from directly above us. I went cold. Gladstone said the room above us was the guest bedroom.

All five of us rushed straight upstairs, Everett leading the way. I was dreading what we'd find in the bedroom. I was trying to reassure myself that it wasn't Alison; she had no reason to be in the bedroom, we weren't staying the night.

Alison had torn up the sheet on the bed into strips and knotted them together into one long length. One end of that was tied to the bed-post, and the sheet-rope was thrown over a beam near the ceiling. The other end was around Alison's neck. The bang we'd heard was a stool hitting the floor.

I already told you: I don't know why she did it! I can see what it looks like: Alison was the only woman in an office full of men, and she and I weren't the best of friends, but there was no harassment - Alison was part of the team. As far as I know, she had no problems in her life whatsoever; she loved her job, had everything to live for. I can't understand it, I really can't.

THE END

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

LAMIA

A vampiristic demon with the face of a beautiful woman but the body of a snake. Greek legends state that Lamia fattened up young men before she devoured them.

SPORTS COMMENTATORS GAFFES OVER THE YEARS! Compiled by Kez Gray

1. "There is Brendan Foster, by himself with twenty thousand people..." (DAVID COLEMAN).
2. "He is going up and down like a metronome!" (RON PICKERING).
3. "Here we are in the Holy Land of Israel - a Mecca for tourists." (DAVID VINE).
4. "Harvey Glance, the black American sprinter with the white top and the black bottom..." (RON PICKERING).
5. "...and Magri has to do well against this unknown Mexican who comes from a famous family of five boxing brothers." (HARRY CARPENTER).
6. "This ring really does look small although it's standard size. Mind you, we're watching the fight in a huge stadium so Einstein's theory of relativity must be working here." (REG GUTTERIDGE).
7. "...this series has been swings and pendulums all the way through." (TREVOR BAILEY).
8. "It's a unique occasion, really - a repeat of Melbourne in 1977." (JIM LAKER).
9. "And we have just heard, although this is not the latest score from Bournemouth, that Hampshire have beaten Nottinghamshire by 9 wickets." (PETER WEST).
10. "Tonight, the same as usual, a dartboard with a difference." (JIM BOWEN).

(More next month)



REAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS IN COURT **sent in by Laurence Creighton**

These are things people actually said in court, word for word, taken down and now published by court reporters who had the torment of staying calm while these exchanges were actually taking place:

Q: What is your date of birth?

A: July fifteenth.

Q: What year?

A: Every year.

Q: What gear were you in at the moment of the impact?

A: Gucci sweats and Reeboks.

Q: This myasthenia gravis, does it affect your memory at all?

A: Yes.

Q: And in what ways does it affect your memory?

A: I forget.

Q: You forget. Can you give us an example of something that you've forgotten?

Q: How old is your son, the one living with you?

A: Thirty-eight or thirty-five, I can't remember which.

Q: How long has he lived with you?

A: Forty-five years.

Q: What was the first thing your husband said to you when he woke that morning?

A: He said, "Where am I, Cathy?"

Q: And why did that upset you?

A: My name is Susan.

Q: And where was the location of the accident?

A: Approximately milepost 499.

Q: And where is milepost 499?

A: Probably between milepost 498 and 500.

THE AGENTS OF PENZANCE (with apologies to Gilbert & Sullivan)

Mulder:

I am the very Mulder of a government conspiracy
I know they're hiding something but they'll never keep it hid from me
I know of Rozwell and I've seen the Star Wars movie trilogy
And "I want to believe" has been my motto since antiquity.
I have a partner, Scully, but she won't believe my rhetoric,
Preferring to put all her faith in God and matters Catholic
And though she's cute we'll never date 'cause Carter fears a ratings flex,
And that'll never happen while the fans have cable and FX.

Chorus:

But that'll never happen while the fans have cable and FX...(etc.)

Scully:

I am the very Scully of a government conspiracy
My cancer's in remission and the Cancer Man has died for me
But he'll be back for season 6 or season 5's big finale
'Cause we all know that he's not dead, just missing temporarily.
My partner Mulder's quite a guy for matters supernatural
One day he'll meet his aliens both government and actual
Perhaps he'll meet his sister somewhere dining out there with ET
I don't believe but I've got hope in his ineptetudity.

Chorus:

She won't believe but she's got hope in his ineptetudity...(etc.)

S & M:

We are the very models of a TV team so popular
From merchandise and fan club sales the profit's astronomical
And though our time was stolen by that crappy show Millenium
Our ratings have increased which makes the networks smile againium
(cough, cough)
We're sure to make the Annals of a television history
We are the very models of a government conspiracy.

Written by Andrea English (1997)

(I pinched this from the Internet ... Barbara)



ADVENTURE PROBE SOFTWARE

ADVENTURES FOR SPECTRUM 128K and PC(e)

THE LOST CHILDREN

by Larry Horsfield

In this one-part text adventure you play Duke Alaric Blackmoon who is concerned about the disappearance of children from farms and villages surrounding a vast desolate moor in the far north of your demesne, now renamed the Duchy of Corwyn. A mad hermit, known as Raving Richie, told you about an ancient dolmen known as "The Devil's Gateway" used by minions of the Devil. When you visited to dolmen you realized its powerful magical force, so you consulted Magor the Sorcerer. He said the gateway is closed from this side but he can open it briefly to allow one person to pass through, but only one as it would take all his power to do so. You equipped yourself with weapons, food and money to cover every eventuality, and Magor gave you an amulet which you must wear as protection against certain forms of magic.

Magor cast a spell at the gateway, which flickered and disappeared - the landscape on the other side changed, and, taking a deep breathe, you stepped through the gateway. After a moment of disorientation you looked around at your new surroundings..... the rest is in The Lost Children.

Find and help a variety of characters to gain sufficient knowledge to discover where the children are being taken, and then free them to bring joy back to your land. This is a massive 128K game in the best tradition of text adventures. Lots of characters to interact with, objects to obtain and use, a variety of locations to visit (some, as usual, difficult to access), and lots of atmospheric text.

Available for

Spectrum 128K (tape and 3.5" +D)

PC (under Spectrum emulation)

Only £2 from

Adventure Probe
52 Burford Road
Liverpool L16 6AQ

LARRY HAS KINDLY DONATED ALL PROCEEDS TO THE PROBE FUND

ADVENTURE PROBE SOFTWARE

ADVENTURE FOR SPECTRUM 128K and PC(e)

THE NETHER POPPLETON TREASURE HUNT by Edwina Brown

The village is buzzing with excitement as a treasure hunt is about to start and the competitors are congregating in the village hall. You have been told that every contestant completing the requirements laid down in the rules will win a small silver cup. In addition, the first ten to return will win a weekend break for two.

The setting is the village of Nether Poppleton, parts of which are based on a real village and includes a park, windmill, village green, river, farm, shop, library, school, various cottages, and a public house with the picturesque name of "The Bee and Butterfly".

Your fellow competitors are familiar to Probe readers, maybe you will meet yourself? So open the large envelope containing the first clue and collect the eight butterflies on your way, and you may win a short holiday in a certain hotel in Birmingham - shame it is not for real!

Another delightful adventure from Edwina. Meet an assortment of villagers and treasure hunt helpers and enjoy the lovely setting of an English village.



Only £2

Spectrum (tape and +D 3.5" disc)
and PC(e) under Spectrum emulation (supplied)
from
Adventure Probe
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Liverpool
L16 6AQ

EDWINA HAS KINDLY DONATED ALL PROCEEDS TO THE PROBE FUND

ADVENTURE PROBE SOFTWARE

ADVENTURE FOR SPECTRUM, AMIGA AND PC(e)

A HERO FOR SORANIA

by Doreen Bardon

It's summer at long last, and a perfect day for a stroll in the country. You set off down the lane, when suddenly from around the bend, come several motorbikes. You jump out of the way, and land in a roadside ditch. Muttering rude things under your breath, you scramble out and brush down your clothes. When the dust has settled, you look around, only to see a crossroads which you are sure wasn't there before....

Exploring, you find a castle and a very unhappy King sitting on his throne. He says "Welcome to the kingdom of Darnia. I am king Aldred. Have you come to my rescue young sir? I need a hero to find my crown and its jewels, which have been scattered throughout the land by an evil witch. She has also sealed up my daughter, Princess Sorania, in one of the tower rooms. Will you heed my plea for help? If you do, the hand of the Princess will be yours in marriage."

A lovely traditional adventure with lots of puzzles. Can you solve them and become a HERO?

As this is a 128K adventure it won't run on the Amiga or Atari under emulation, however Philip Richmond has programmed it for the Amiga using his C.A.T. utility, so it will run as a stand alone adventure on any Amiga with 1 meg of memory.

Available for
Spectrum 128K (tape and 3.5" + D disc),
Amiga 500/500+/600/1200
PC (under Spectrum emulation)

Only £2 from
Adventure Probe
52 Burford Road
Liverpool L16 6AQ

© Doreen Bardon

DOREEN HAS KINDLY DONATED ALL PROCEEDS TO THE PROBE FUND

ADVENTURE PROBE SOFTWARE

SOFTWARE FOR THE AMIGA 500, 500+, 600 & 1200, and PC

All the following have been written by Philip Richmond, and are available for the **Amiga (1 meg)** as stand-alone programs, and also for the **PC** as ADF files to load into a PC Amiga Emulator (NOT SUPPLIED).

CREATIVE ADVENTURE TOOLKIT (CAT)

Why not create your own text adventures? Similar to PAW, and easy to use, with a very comprehensive tutorial document included on the disc.

TEXT ADVENTURES - written by Philip to demonstrate CAT.

Gory Story

Can you find the serum to help Azzan and his people live above ground? Survive the sinister characters and vicious dog that roam the house and grounds near the village of Little Zorning, and you can truly call yourself an adventurer.

Hazardous Holiday

Whilst on a walking and fishing holiday in the country you find the ring that had belonged to a recently-deceased friend. Can you solve the mystery of his death?

Paranormal Palace

You are on holiday at a quiet seaside resort when you see an Unidentified Flying Object crash into the sea. Can you help the stranger you "meet" on the beach? Do you believe the truth is out there?

Piggery Jokery

This is a delightful adventure in which nearly all the characters are animals. You play Peregrine, a pig, and will meet such creatures as Ronnie the rat, Harry the horse, and Boris the beaver.

Only **£1.50** each
(please state whether for Amiga or PC)

from

Adventure Probe
52 Burford Road
Liverpool L16 6AQ

GETTING YOU STARTED

AGATHA'S FOLLY played on a Spectrum, Atari(e), Amiga(e) and PC(e)

Note: Starting location is random - could be living room, dining room, entrance hall or kitchen.

From start in kitchen :- X WINDOW, GET HAIRGRIP (you fumble and drop it), X SINK (hairgrip has fallen down narrow gap between sink and wall), E, E, X HALL, OPEN CUPBOARD, LOOK IN CUPBOARD, GET NOTEPAD, READ NOTEPAD (notes about meeting with Alien called Kaz), DROP NOTEPAD, GET BOAT, X BOAT (a rubber dinghy), DROP BOAT, E, X DESK, X DRAWERS (one you can't open), FEEL DESK (you find a hidden button), PRESS BUTTON (you hear a click), OPEN DRAWER, LOOK IN DRAWER, GET JOURNAL, READ JOURNAL ("...have built a stone circle and crystal is in place"), DROP JOURNAL (you hear the sound of a car on the driveway), W (there is a knock on the door), S (a young lad has brought groceries you ordered earlier in the village), GET BOX, N, W, W, X GROCERIES (food supplies and brown bread), DROP BOX, E, E, U, X LANDING (see loft door in ceiling), E, X BATH (you see a sponge), W, W, X SAMPLER (letters A to I in square and noughts and crosses symbols), X WALLPAPER (two layers with scribbles under top layer), E, D, N, X FIREPLACE (you see some bellows), X MANTELPIECE, GET KEYRING, X KEYRING (house and car keys), W, S, W, UNLOCK DOOR (you open it and go through), GET ROCK, X ROCK (has sharp edge), S, E, E, U, E, GET SPONGE, WET SPONGE, W, W, SOAK WALLPAPER

DER RING DES NIBELUNGEN played by Dorothy Millard on a PC

(Start in a clearing), INVENTORY (carrying matchbox and fear), EXAMINE MATCHBOX (has writing on it), READ WRITING (waterproof), S (clearing where a bag is nailed to a tree and you meet a crazed opera volunteer), GET ROCKS (volunteer is getting angry), THROW ROCKS AT VOLUNTEER, OPEN BAG THEN LOOK IN IT (see opera program), GET PROGRAM THEN OPEN IT, LOOK IN PROGRAM (find a coupon), GET COUPON THEN EXAMINE IT, READ COUPON (an invitation to meet the composer), W (cubicle), GET SKELETON KEY, EXAMINE KEY, E, S, SE (rock shelf where you see an iron door), UNLOCK DOOR WITH KEY, OPEN DOOR, DROP KEY, LOOK (see some lumps of black and a straw whiskbroom)

MILLION DOLLAR GREAT JEWEL HEIST played by Edwina Brown on a Spectrum - also available on C64, Amiga(e) and PC(e)

X STRING, BREAK STRING, N, E, TURN RADIO ON (you hear about the jewel heist), W, S, X FIREPLACE, X CHIMNEY, GET BOX, X BOX, OPEN BOX (it's locked), X MANTELPIECE, GET JAR, X JAR, X MANTELPIECE, GET TIN, X TIN, X MANTELPIECE, GET CUP, X CUP, X CURTAINS, GET KEY, UNLOCK BOX, UNLOCK DOOR, W

NIGHT OF THE VAMPIRE BUNNIES played by Dorothy Millard on a PC

(Start in a carrot field in the middle of a graveyard), INVENTORY (carrying a quill pen and an apple), EXAMINE PEN, EXAMINE APPLE, DROP PEN, DROP APPLE (there is no use for them in the game), S (graveyard), GET PAPER, READ PAPER (says pushing is better than pulling), DROP PAPER, EXAMINE GRAVESTONES, N, E (note if you enter the stream to the north you will die because it is poison), JUMP OVER STREAM, W, GET LAMP, EXAMINE LAMP, E, JUMP OVER STREAM, W, W (by well), EXAMINE WELL (you see a rope and a wooden crank), EXAMINE ROPE, EXAMINE CRANK, TURN CRANK (the rope descends into the well), LIGHT LAMP, D (make sure you aren't carrying anything other than the lamp or the rope breaks), EXAMINE WELL, S (crevice), GET BUCKET, EXAMINE BUCKET, N, U (too heavy to climb up), DROP LAMP, U

OPPRESSED LAND played by Barbara Gibb on a Spectrum - also available on Atari(e), Amiga(e) and PC(e)

Start outside an ancient castle. I (a blunt sword), X LOG. Do not sit on log until you have SEARCHed LOG, TAKE WAND, N (gates locked), S, S, SW, W. A warlock should appear, if not wander around until he does. X WARLOCK, GIVE WAND (you are offered a flask of wine), TAKE FLASK, E, NE, N, N, E, S (in forge), SAY HELLO (to worker - he wants a jug), N, E, N, N, E (farm track), ROLL ROCK (piece breaks off), TAKE STONE, SHARPEN SWORD (on small stone), DROP STONE, Note that a villager is wandering around looking for his dog. W, S, S, W, W (outside castle), S, SW, N, W (by bridge), LOOK UNDER BRIDGE

OBJECTS AND THEIR USES

LOST CHILDREN played by Doreen Bardon - available on Spectrum (128K) and PC(e)

Amulet	wear it
Bag	contains money
Beeswax	an ingredient for a potion
Buttercup	an ingredient for a potion
Carnation	an ingredient for a potion
Chisel	useful tool
Crowbar	prise bracket and a floorboard
Felt	for roof repair
Floorboard	for repairing roof
Food	give to boy
Hammer	for roof repair, and hitting items
Helmet	buy, then wear to protect head
Key	for opening door
Kit	buy, then give to seaman
Ladder	for climbing up
Lantern	buy, your light source
Nails	for roof repair
Net	for trapping a troll
Potion	get it made, for drugging wine barrel
Rope	buy, can be tied to a crowbar
Saw	borrow it, then return
Seashells	give to someone
Shield	buy, use it to slide down a hill
Slates	for roof repair
Sword	buy, a weapon
Tinderbox	buy, use to light lantern
Tobacco	gift for someone
Tunic	buy, then wear

DIARY

28th OCTOBER - ADVENTURE2000 convention at Kenilworth Suite, Coventry Hill Hotel, Rye Hill, Allesley, Coventry, West Midlands, CV5 9PH, U.K. Saturday, 9am to 6pm.

HINTS AND TIPS

AURA-SCOPE (aka HORRORSCOPE) played on a Spectrum (128K) and PC(e)

SAGITTARIUS (arrow)

Go to the castle NW of Meeting of the Ways. In the chapel, east of the courtyard, close the shutters and then examine the chapel to see a cross. Pick it up and wear it. Go to the Dragon's Dining Area (the cross protects you from the dragon). Push the corpse to find a shield.

Go to the shepherd's hut and give the shield to Bootes who will help you when called. Now go S, SW, N and N to a stony path. Call Bootes so you can get the honey pot from the glade NE of here.

Go to the village and when "by door" go IN to enter a long hall then S into Berenice's bedroom and find her hot water bottle. You are now equipped (cross and hot water bottle) to venture onto the Snow Fields. Find the bear's cave. Wake the bear, say YES then say THERMOMETER to obtain it.

Go the Mercury at Aurora Cross and give him the thermometer to obtain a potion. You can now go S along the Southern Highway to Busy Junction.

At the Roadside Cafe, sit on the bench and drink the Weasel's Pee to obtain a cup.

Go E, S, S and SW to the well and fill the now empty cup with water. MIX WATER WITH HONEY to make a cup of mead.

Return to the village and from the centre of the green, go S, SW and E to the front garden, then go IN to Jupiter's cottage. GIVE MEAD (note you retain the cup). You are told an awful joke and given other on a piece of paper.

Go to the Northern Arch (just north of crossroads). Examine the arch and read the inscription(see a name backwards).

Go north to Parting of the Ways to meet Auriga and SAY JOKE (need paper from Jupiter) to be allowed NE and NE to end of road.

SAY ASUDE (m not necessary) to undo the spell so you can PULL ARROW from the tree.

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

How do I get passed the Troll guarding the bridge at the Fissure (west)?

WAVE STAFF to turn him to stone. Now you can cross the bridge (eastwards) and pick up the star-shaped gem at the dead end.

Duel-Dual Rooms/Hydra

Note there are two rooms with the title Duel - but the description of one reads "dual" so they are different. From the "duel" room go Down, then Up to the "dual" room.

Now go SE to the Brink of a Smelly Pit. THROW GINGERBREAD before going Down into the pit. The many-headed Hydra is now a single-headed Hydra because the other heads have lost the battle for the morsel of gingerbread. KILL HYDRA

Go N twice to find a necklace.

CONFESSOR'S SAPPHIRE played by Barbara Gibb on an Amstrad

How to get rid of the Bookshop owner

Buy a pie and give it to him. He likes it so much he may go out to buy another one. If you are not in the shop at the time, he won't return, so you can explore the shop further. You must find an old map.

How not to be bitten by the rats

Find a railing and use it to push the crates in the alley.

How do I climb the wall at the end of the cobbled street?

You need the spike from inside the Black Boar Inn. Insert the spike into the hole in the wall then climb over.

Is there anything interesting in the backyard of the Inn?

A trapdoor, which leads to the Inn's cellar.

GATEWAY TO KAROS played by Barbara Gibb on a BBC and PC(e)

Abandoned Mineshaft

It is dark after going Down so LIGHT LAMP to see you are at the bottom of the mineshaft.

Go W and S to a dead end and pick up the TUBE (described as a copper tube bearing a hinged lever), then go N, W and W to a small room. Take the HAMMER and ANVIL then go E and N to a large square room where you see the end of the ladder is out of reach. Pick up the gloves then STAND ON ANVIL to reach the ladder and go U . You can see a blue gem and find yourself surrounded by kobolds. PULL LEVER (on copper tube) to create a loud bang which scares the kobolds away.

Enormous Dragon

Drop the berries so the dragon eats them and dies. MOVE DRAGON so you can pick up the DISH and CHAIN.

Mountains

Find the SPEAR and STAR and pick them up.

Hidden Valley

At the location where "a narrow shaft bores vertically into the ground" TIE ROPE TO ROCK *for later in the game.*

At the northern branch of the Hidden Valley you should see a rock precariously balanced. BLOW HORN so it falls, just missing you. Now go N and pick up the BRACELET.

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

On the Beach - Swap the tin of wax for the Goblin's spanner.

Getting rid of the Troll - Pour the bleach onto the candy pebbles and give them to the Troll at the theatre entrance.

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

BIRD - he'll eat the bread.

SNAKE - you will need the sword.

LION - you will need the sword and the shield.

BOOK - you will need the spectacles to read it.

ELF - gives you a wand after you have read the book.

WIZARD - gives you a ring.

IN WITCH'S TOWER - get her knitting (it's a ball of golden wool) and

CLIMB ROPE to go down to the kitchen.

POTION - in witch's kitchen.

DOOR IN FOREST - try drinking the potion...

CREVASSE - you'll need the floorboard - LAY BOARD.

DARK CAVERN - you'll need a light (match and torch).

FINDING GROTTO ENTRANCE - go up from Dark Cavern and drink the potion again to grow in size, then go west from the tunnel.

GNOME - he wants the emerald.

WITCH - wave your wand, remember the transformation spell?

OWL - a nice juicy rodent will do the trick!

GOLDEN LABYRINTH - only golden items allowed...U, N, U, S, W (must be wearing the amulet).

IN ROSE ARBOR - pick or cut the rose - must have shears.

MARBLE COURT - examine the statues for a clue...

RETURNING TO THE CASTLE - turn a statue.

HEIST by Barbara Gibb played on a PC - also available on Amiga

Inside Secret Room - X MODEL, TAKE MONA LISA (falls to floor), TAKE MONA LISA (can't), TAKE SILVER FRAME (from bag), PUT FRAME ON HOOK (the photo changes and a skyscraper is illuminated), KISS PHOTO (you sense this is the last one to "enter").

BOY'S PHOTOGRAPH

Put it in the frame and kiss it to be transported to a luxury cruise liner.

Get a pole from the unsecure railing on the port deck. Enter the lifeboat, pick up the black cloth then swing the boat and climb the ladder to return to the port deck.

Use the black cloth to cover the light from the lamppost. Take the waiter's uniform (need pole).

Get a piece of wire from one of the sunbeds. Use it to pick the lock on the steel cabinet on the starboard deck.

In the cocktail lounge, pick up a silver tray. Put this under the table in the lounge. Sit down and try picking up the champagne. The man will say it belongs to him, but he is will to wager it. Say YES for him to deal a card which you can see if you LOOK IN TRAY (if it is under the table). Tell him the suit (e.g. MAN, SPADES). He will twice more and give you the champagne for getting them all correct.

Find an urn and put the champagne into it. Ensure you are wearing the waiter's uniform and knock on the First Class Cabin door. When inside, put the urn on the table, then hide under the bed. When the passenger is asleep on the bed, open the wardrobe silently (need can of oil) and get the frock. Leave the cabin with it.

When wearing the frock, enter the dance floor. Wait until the lady who is dancing with the captain decides to go to the bar for a drink. Follow her and spill the drink onto her dress - the way is now clear for you to meet the captain and be taken back to his cabin.

When in the captain's cabin - wait for the telephone to ring, then find a pill and syringe. Use the pill to spike his wine, which he returns with. Find a pen and use it to reveal a safe. Open the safe (need flare and syringe). Kiss the square to return to the memorabilia room.

MONSTER played by Barbara Gibb on a PC(e) - also available on Spectrum (128K)

Pick up the gold and silver nuggets found in the Purple Tunnel system.

Go up into the Purple Mountains and enter the Temple of Tudaw to meet the Wizard. Note the task he gives you.

Before leaving the temple, pick up the money belt.

Return to the Magic Circle then go N across the desert to the gates of Aurum. Give the password to the sentry who will open the gates. You are thirsty and don't have much time, so go N and DRINK WATER from the fountain before you die.

Sell the gold and silver nuggets - you now have 90 mulae.

Enter the Dancing Ogre Inn. Pick up the bottle and buy food (30 mulae) and a room (50 mulae). EAT FOOD for strength.

In your room - unlock the chest with the small key (found in the park) and open it. Take the map and staff out of the chest.

Hide the map and staff in the rucksack otherwise when you leave the Inn Gordo will attack you.

Fill the bottle with water from the fountain before crossing the desert again.

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

TEMPLE

Ensure you are wearing the skin so the dogs think you are an alien. Go IN and SHOUT INTO MICROPHONE in the small Alcove. Go to Sacrificial Chamber and SAY TO PILOT "FOLLOW ME" (sirens must be activated).

Go S and S to Niche and TAKE CURTAIN DOWN. Now go E to Dark Musty Passage and pick up the torch. Go E to outside the Treasure Room (need torch as protection) then IN to Treasure Room. Pick up and look inside the bag to find a lump of gold which you need. Keep the bag.

SOLUTION OF THE MONTH

DRUID'S MOON played by Dorothy Millard (C64 Version)

(Start in bedroom), INVENTORY (you are carrying nothing), WEARING (you are wearing a gold pendant, a pair of shoes, trousers, a shirt and a signet ring), EXAMINE PENDANT (gold and has a curious design), EXAMINE TROUSERS, SEARCH POCKETS (find a small silver key), EXAMINE RING (a gold band), EXAMINE CHEST (has two drawers), OPEN DRAWER, LOOK IN DRAWER, GET FLASK (ornate), EXAMINE TABLE, EXAMINE CHAIR, EXAMINE BED, LOOK UNDER BED, GET MONEY, EXAMINE WARDROBE, OPEN WARDROBE (it's locked), TURN KEY (something falls out), LOOK (it was a suitcase), OPEN SUITCASE (using the key... the contents spill onto the floor), LOOK, GET JUMPER, EXAMINE JUMPER, WEAR JUMPER, GET COAT, EXAMINE COAT, WEAR COAT, GET SCARF, EXAMINE SCARF, WEAR SCARF, GET SPECTACLES, EXAMINE SPECTACLES, GET TORCH, EXAMINE TORCH, GET BOOK, READ BOOK, OPEN BOOK, LOOK, GET PAGE, READ PAGE (it's an article about Druids and their connections with Avenbury), GET MAP, EXAMINE MAP (of a small village), DROP BOOK, DROP PAGE, DROP KEY, DROP MAP, N.

D, D (hallway), GET STICK (walking), EXAMINE STICK, EXAMINE CALENDAR (20th March 1987), EXAMINE TELEPHONE (it's a coin box with buttons), GET RECEIVER, GET COIN, INSERT COIN, PUSH BUTTONS (a voice says "Mr. Mailer is on vacation and will be home in two weeks time), DROP HANDSET, S, E (kitchen - leave the bread knife), W, N, W (country road), U (hillside - you hear rustling nearby), LISTEN CAREFULLY, LOOK (you see a man all in black), SPEAK TO MAN (he lays something on the ground at your feet), LOOK, GET PARCHMENT, EXAMINE PARCHMENT (old and weather beaten), READ PARCHMENT (curious symbols), U, (standing stones), N (centre of circle), EXAMINE ALTAR (a slab of stone set into the ground with a surface worn smooth by time), LAY ON ALTAR (your head spins and you lose consciousness... when you come to things are strangely different).

S, D, D, S, E, E, E, E, E (small oak wood), GET HERBS (wild), W, N, W, W, W (field), ENTER BARN, W (river), EXAMINE PIKE (it has great gaping jaws and sharp teeth), SWIM (the pike is hungry and chases you... it cuts your flesh), TEAR SHIRT, INVENTORY (you now have a strip of material), BANDAGE CUT (using the strip of material and wild herbs... that's better), WEDGE JAWS WITH STICK (the pike's jaws are stuck and it swims angrily away), FILL FLASK, N, D (path), S, E (a young boy is here), EXAMINE BOY (he seems scared), E, E (small oak wood), E, GET WATCH (digital),

EXAMINE WATCH, PUSH BUTTONS, E, GET MISTLETOE, EXAMINE MISTLETOE, SQUEEZE BERRIES INTO FLASK, SQUEEZE BERRIES INTO FLASK (you now have a fine witches' brew), N, N (hut where you see a blind dog and the hermit), EXAMINE HERMIT (ragged and none too clean), SAY HELLO (he smiles and offers you a drink), TAKE DRINK (you lose consciousness... when you awake you are pinned in a corner by the dog), EXAMINE DOG (large and none too pleasant of temper), PAT DO (it has never known affection before and is startled allowing you a chance to get past it).

E (group of rough buildings), ENTER HUT (Celica the wise is here), EXAMINE CELICA (her eyes are closed but she is aware of all that takes place), GIVE RING (she accepts and says "The sun will be high soon"), GIVE HER DRINK (she accepts), LOOK (she is unconscious), EXAMINE SKINS (a strange picture), GO OUT, N, S, W (field), EXAMINE MONUMENT (ignore the goat), U (top of small mound - you see a Celtic cross and have a burning sensation around your neck), EXAMINE CROSS (a stone monument inscribed with pagan symbols), PUT PENDANT IN CROSS (you find yourself in an area where reality seems distorted), EXAMINE PENDANT (it seems to be at the centre of the disturbance), REMOVE PENDANT (the disturbance is over), GET CROSS, TOUCH CROSS (you find yourself in an underground chamber), GET PENDANT, W (it's dark), SWITCH ON TORCH, S, E, EXAMINE TABLET of stone (carries strange words), READ TABLET (it says "When the sun and moon come together the way ahead will be clear"), N, WAIT (there is cool air coming in from somewhere), WAIT (after a while a shaft of sunlight shines through a hole in the rock and falls upon a crescent symbol on the wall and reflects upon the far rock face), PUSH ROCK (you find yourself in a small oak wood).

W, N, W, W, N, N, N, N (forest), EXAMINE REFUSE (dry leaves and twigs), U (hillside), W (depths of forest), W (clearing where you meet a group of forest folk), EXAMINE FOLK (a rough bunch), SAY HELLO (you feel pain... then darkness... you awake with your hands bound in a tree-top dwelling with an open window), DROP SPECTACLES, LOOK (they are broken), CUT BONDS WITH SPECTACLES, LOOK OUT WINDOW (it's a long way down to the river), D (rover), N, U, N (to where the air is electric with anticipation - people should now be here), EXAMINE PEOPLE (they are looking up... a strange light fills the sky), GAZE PEOPLE (the people fall to their knees in awe as a blinding shaft of light falls upon you... you feel light and rise into the air... you find yourself in a spacious room with a man dressed in gold), SAY HELLO (he tells you he is Eluvians and that he has been trapped on Earth), OFFER PENDANT (he takes it and gives you a small tablet.... you find yourself back in the bedroom where you started but now at peace. THE END

Dorothy Millard has informed me that Part One of DRAGON DIAMOND, published in the MAY 2000 issue, was incomplete - the following is the correct solution. (Barbara)

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).

E, S, SWIM, S, E, N, EXAMINE STICKS, GET ROPE, WEAR RING (you rise to platform), ENTER, UNLOCK HATCH, ENTER HATCH, SW, EXAMINE TABLE, GET BOOK, READ BOOK (tells about dragon), LOOK UNDER BED, GET SPEAR, N, E, S, THROW SPEAR (kills archer), S, GET TWIGS, N, N, SE, EXAMINE POOL (tree on other side), THROW ROPE (hook catches on tree), JUMP ONTO ROPE, NE, U, S, D, E, DIG (make big hole), W, SE, S (can't), LISTEN, EXAMINE MOUNTAIN (see smoke from chimney), WEAR RING (up to roof), DROP TWIGS INTO CHIMNEY, WEAR RING, EXAMINE MOUNTAIN (no more smoke), WAIT (goes dark as dragon overcome by smoke comes out and falls in hole), LISTEN (heartbeats), KILL DRAGON, U, EXAMINE DRAGON, GET DIAMOND, W, W, JUMP ONTO ROPE (even though you can't see it), NW, ENTER HOLE, LEAVE COTTAGE, WEAR RING, S, W, S, UP.

You have finished part one.

Password for part two = ZYLKTYBAG

SERIALIZED SOLUTION

BLUE ICE

Walkthrough by the Three Jays, with many, many thanks to Rik Yapp

Blue Ice is a unique game, or, in reality two games. The main game is traditional adventure fare, rather quirky, often lyrical and quite beautiful, which with patience and experimentation can be solved by any reasonably experienced player. The real challenge only begins after the adventure game ends and the search for the Ultimate Solution begins. This challenge is definitely not for the faint hearted or those who like quick answers and the reward of a pat on the back end sequence heaping on the congratulations. Nothing in the deeper game tells you that you are even working along the right lines and the only way we could confirm that we had indeed found the Ultimate Solution (U.S.) - after literally hundreds of hours of communal work - was to check it out with the author himself. The U.S. comprises two words and two not very exciting words at that. Whether the tortuous route to find them is worth the hours of research, trial and error, hair tearing and frustration is a matter of opinion. We were frequently ready to throw in the towel on this incredibly difficult game (we defy anyone to name a harder one) but something about it kept drawing us back and we are glad we persevered. An explanation is called for before the walkthrough proper begins ...

When the authors, Rik Yapp and Carol Nudds conceived the game they planned to launch it as a competition. They designed it to be played on two levels -the adventure game and the deeper game. They envisaged that a lot of players would solve the adventure and that those who moved on to the deeper game would be helped by a series of staged clues to reach the U.S. and a hefty prize. To prevent hacking into a final screen and illegitimate claims to the proposed prize, they did the obvious thing - they didn't put one in. Instead players were to be invited to submit their U.S. to a competition address and await a big cheque or a letter of regret.

Unfortunately the hoped for competition didn't materialise but Rik kindly issued his cryptic clues via e-mail and phone to an ever-decreasing group of BI aficionados. Even so, a few of the game's minor mysteries have still to be solved as the author himself has forgotten the minutiae! These minor mysteries largely involve the many red herrings inserted by Rik to further confuse the poor adventurer and to make the prize all the more elusive to reach.

We have divided this walkthrough into three sections:

The Adventure Game

The Path to the Ultimate Solution

The Red Herrings and the Numbers Grid Problem

THE ADVENTURE GAME

There are several ways to play the game and the following is just one suggested route. We have taken what we think is probably the most direct route but it is worth taking time to absorb the lyricism and atmosphere of the game. Enjoy the music that fits in seamlessly and adds to the magic, and look out for Orseppro and her daughter Hope. One or both of them is present in every screen, guiding the player to free Icia from its oppressive laws. Remember to save the game often as some clues disappear in the course of the game.

You start the game in the **Eye** screen. Right click on the mouse and find three icons – a magnifying glass for inspecting things and for clicking on characters to read their thoughts, a hand for picking up and moving things, and an arrow for movement. Have a look around, take the crown from the King's head and try to give it to Edward- he refuses it in no uncertain terms. You will notice three things that are common to every other room in the game. The first is a grid to the top left of the screen. Click the hand icon on it to expose four lines of four numbers. Numbers grids appear in every room, sometimes well disguised, and form a problem that is explained at the very end of this walkthrough. It is not essential to solve it for the adventure part of the game, but make a note of the numbers as you find them (hints on the more obscure ones appear on the final page of this walkthrough)

The second common feature is a Law scroll and storyboard at the top of the screen (read them all) and the third is a question mark, also often well hidden. Click on them as you enter each room to get an audio clue This one says, "At twice midnight I give you life" so use the hand icon to change the two clocks to show midnight and move through the now open eye into the

House screen. The ? here says "A key cannot unlock a door that is blocked by ice." Grab the sun from the sky and use it on the pond to melt it. You can also grab the paper plane from the sky (it will fly in several of the locations and eventually forms a parchment piece in a puzzle that is not essential to the adventure game). Enter the

Pond (? Clue "A warm maggot helps catch a cold fish"). Pick up the five coins and the key in the tail of the fish. There is a parchment piece in the clam but leave it for now. Leave the Pond and use the key on the front door, entering

The Hall (? "In time you will find the right door. Be patient, think about it.") This indicates that reading characters' thoughts will give keys and that a glance at the grandfather clock will give a clue as to which door the keys will unlock. You are only allowed to carry one key at a time so it is a good idea to use the keys as you find them. So we'll start by collecting and using all the available keys. Click on Mrs Scraggend to receive the Pantry key and see a picture of the Pantry door appear on the face of the clock. Enter

The Pantry (door to the right of the hall). The Pantry contains salt, sugar and pickled onions that you will need later in the game. At the moment you have nothing to carry powders in but take a pickled onion. Clicking on Mrs Scraggend gets you another key (hear the clock chime) so reenter the hall and unlock the door to the

Dining room. Glance at the menu to find out what's for breakfast. Click on Mrs Scraggend to get the Kitchen key. Unlock the left-hand door and enter

The Kitchen. There's lots here you need. First try to get the bottle. Mrs S. will stop you so use the hand icon to drag the bottle towards her. A quick drink satisfies her so the bottle is now yours. This will be your container for liquids during the rest of the game, just as the salt cellar is your container for powders, so pick that up as well. Get the knife and use it on the bread to take a slice to toast later. Check out the recipe book to find you need to make blackberry jam. Take a match from the box and strike it (you can carry the lit match with you until you need to use it.) Finally, clicking on Mrs S. gains you the key to the **Bedroom**. Go back to the hall and take the stairs (to the right of the screen) to the Bedroom (you can also travel from location to location via the thumbnail pictures at the bottom of the screen, which appear after you've entered a room once.)

In the **Bedroom** use the hand icon on Mrs S to grab her hairnet. While her mouth is open enter it and take her gold tooth. Clicking the arrow on to the spider door gets you into the **Attic** but it's too dark to see anything yet. Return to the bedroom and read Mrs S.' thoughts to gain the **Garden Key**. The door is in the kitchen so return there and open it up. Reading Olly's thoughts in the Garden gives you the **Loo** key but leave it for a little while. Return to the Hall, click on Edward to get the **Library** key, unlock the door (left side of Hall), enter and click on him as he sits at his table to get the key to open up the **Music room**, also off the hall. Once you've unlocked this door, get the Loo key from Olly in the Garden and open that room up too. The door to the Loo is in the Music Room.

The Loo is in darkness but the ? audio clue –"A golden opportunity laid open for you"- and the writing on the law scroll give hints for lighting it up.

Use the gold tooth to power up the generator. The ? audio clue on the mirror and the pickled onion in your inventory point to the method of getting wind. Feed the onion to Olly. Notice the icon becomes a hand? Use it on Olly's bottom to get some wind (get another onion if you fail first time). Now squeeze the toothpaste tube, get the toothbrush and click it on the toothpaste. Clean Olly's teeth with it and you'll keep the brush for later use. Go back to the Music room and get the **Drawing room** key from Edward's thoughts. After unlocking that room, click on Pollyanna in the Garden to get the **Bathroom** key. The door to it is in the Bedroom and, after unlocking it, click on Mrs S. in the Library for the **Laboratory** key. Find this room off the Stairs and unlock it too. While on the Stairs have a good look at the map – more about that later.

Now its time to start educating Edward about the joys of life to free the kingdom of Icia from the thousands of meaningless laws that have frozen the land. As each of the five joys are discovered you can check your progress in two ways. The books in the Library turn colour from red (Laws) to green (Joys), while a dove appears in the Chimney to indicate the end of each task. Edward needs to discover the joy of food (a special breakfast does the trick), the joy of love (uniting Olly and Pollyanna), the joy of music (learning to play forbidden instruments), the joy of nature (fishing, smoking fish and fly catching) and the joy of colour (brightening up his paintings).

We'll start with breakfast. Empty the wine bottle in the Pond or sink in the Loo. Go to the front of the house, fill the bottle with water from the Pond and click the sun on the bud to turn it into a flower. Pour the bottle over the flower to produce a green berry then click the sun on it to ripen it. Pick the berry. Unfortunately you need three and the only way to collect three at once is to bring a mouse in on the act. Return to the Library and place the berry on the floor in front of the Mousehole for the mouse to carry off. Repeat this procedure twice more, refill the bottle with water then enter the Mousehole and scoop up the three ripe berries. Pick up a piece of cheese while you are there. Call in at the pantry to get some sugar then place the blackberries, water and sugar in the saucepan in the Kitchen to make blackberry jam.

Now to make toast. Enter the Drawing room and use the lit match to light the candle. Take the candle. Drag the coalscuttle into the hearth then use the lit candle to light the fire. It needs a good draught to keep it alight so use the wind on the fire. Click the arrow on to the fire to enter the **Chimney**. Notice the small star at the top? This grows in size and brightness as you complete the quests. The five doves also congregate here. Back in the Drawing room, click the slice of bread on the fire to toast it, then place the toast on the small plate in the Dining room. Go to the Garden and milk the cow by placing the hand icon on the udder and dragging it down.

Three squirts of milk fill the bucket. Collect the milk in the bottle and pour it into the butter churn in the Kitchen. Use the knife on the churn to get butter for the toast. Spread it on then use the knife on the pan to get jam. Put this on the toast too, then put the toast on the plate in the Dining room.

While in the Dining Room, check out the door to the right (no key needed for this one). It leads to the Cellar. You'll spot a parchment piece among the cobwebs. Leave it for now, then go look at the recipe book in the Kitchen again to find you now need to make Cheese of Edam Sauce.

Go back to the Garden to milk the cow again and collect a bottle of milk, collect some salt from the Pantry, then put the cheese, milk and salt into the saucepan in the Kitchen to make the sauce. Use the knife to scoop it up and click the knife on the jug in the dining room to fill it with the sauce. You can't yet make the smoked eel but can make the prince's tea.

Go to the House and take the moon from the sky (you lose your sun icon but gain a sickle for cutting). Fill your bottle with water and stop by the pantry to get some more sugar. Use the sickle moon to cut a leaf on the left of the Garden near Oly's shoulder. Checking the flashing book in the library tells you the leaf is to make tea and the addition of milk and sugar turns it into Royal Yerba Mate. Put the bottle into the fire in the Drawing room to boil the water and place the leaf and water into the teapot in the Dining room. Drag the pot to the cup to fill it with tea. Milk the cow again and collect a bottleful. Pour the milk into the cup then add the sugar. Another task completed.

(More next month)

WEBSITE OF THE MONTH by Dorothy Millard

Everyone has used a search engine at some time or other. Try the following site called SEARCH ENGINE for search engine submission tips, web searching tips, search engine listings, reviews, ratings and tests, search engine resources and the search engine newsletter which is free.

<http://searchenginewatch.com/>

There are many search engines which I didn't realise existed. Did you know that apart from the major search engines, there are search engines for kids, news, regional specialty, multimedia and metacrawler?

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BARBARA GIBB (Various)	0151 280 5616	Afternoon and Evening
PHIL GLOVER (Sam Coupe)	0121 7777324	Mon - Thurs 6pm - 10pm Sun 11am - 5pm
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THE ULTIMATE INFOCOM HELPLINE

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

Call GRUE 01695 573141 - 7.30pm - 9pm Mon - Friday
or write to
64 County Road, Ormskirk, Lancs. L39 1QH

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PLEASE ENCLOSE AN S.A.E WHEN WRITING FOR HELP**

Some helpers also have an e-mail address -
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