

ADVENTURE PULSE

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HALL OF FAME



My sincere thanks to all the following readers who took the time and trouble to send in contributions over the past month.

Allan Phillips, Paul Brunyee, Andy Nisbet, Roger White, Allan Batchellor, Dicon Peeke, Brian Pell, John Ferris, Dorothy Millard, Jenny Guthrie, Nic Rumsey, Carol Yeats, Claus Nygaard, Ron Kilbride, Philip Pendleton, Paul Cardin, Anthony Melville, Chris Wood, Margo Porteous, Pete Simpson, Gordon Inglis, Val Jesson, Larry Horsfield, Alf Baldwin, Vince Barker, Barbara Gibb and June Rowe.

The lovely cover picture this month is by Allan Batchellor.

EDITORIAL



Welcome to Volume 3 Issue 4 of Adventure Probe.

The very first thing I must do this month is to happily eat my words! In my last editorial I was bemoaning the fact that Tony Bridge wasn't appearing in Computer Games Weekly and saying how I would miss him but I am delighted to see that he has his column in Popular Computing Weekly. I am so pleased that my fears were unfounded.

The letter from Roger Barrington in the last issue has generated quite a response but if you want to write to Roger, please address your letters to 21 Sovereign Court to ensure they find him. I forgot to put the number under his letter.

This time last year I was all a-tremble with the prospect of taking over as editor of Probe. It is amazing how time flies, it hardly seems twelve months. I hope I have managed to keep Probe going in the way you wanted. I would like to thank you all for all your help and support, without you I couldn't have managed it. With your continued support and contributions I hope we can keep Probe going for years to come. Don't forget to send me your ideas and suggestions for Probe. As I have said before, this is your magazine so please let me know what you want and I will do my very best to oblige.

I am writing this whilst surrounded by a hoard of Easter Eggs, the temptation is awful but so far I have managed to resist it. I keep thinking that nobody would notice if the odd chocolate button went missing but my kiddies have eagle eyes and they are bound to count every one of them! Everyone remembers my New Year's resolution except me. Oh it isn't fair, one button just found its way into the dog! Think I'll retaliate by raiding the doggie choc drops when he isn't looking.

My Commodore disk drive went phutt early this month and has gone off for repair. John reckons it was playing Infocoms that wore it out. He is only grumbling because I am making raids on his drive when I need something or other. I am just grateful that I managed to transfer all the Probe stuff over to the Amstrad before it went wrong as I have found that it had been playing havoc with my disks before it finally conked out. Whilst on the subject of poorly computers I would like to wish Joan's Arnold a speedy recovery as I know she will be lost without it.

To end on a very sad note this month I have to announce the tragic loss of one of our readers. Sadly, Rita Maloney died very suddenly two weeks ago. Rita was a subscriber to Probe for a very long time and gave help and advice to many adventurers. A very kind and lovely lady, she will be very sadly missed. I know you will join with me in sending deepest sympathy to her family in this sad loss. As a very small tribute I would like to dedicate this issue to Rita. God Bless.

Well that's all from me for this month. I do hope that you all enjoy this issue.

See you all again next month,

Mandy

SOFTWARE REVIEWS

THE BALROG AND THE CAT

Available for Spectrum. See advertisement section for details.

Reviewed by JUNE ROWE

A strange scratching noise at the door caused the Balrog to pause in mid-bite and as he put down the green-cheese sandwich, brushed the crumbs off his lap and shambled towards the door, he could not help wondering as to who or what was causing the noise.

Peeking around the edge of the door, he noticed a small ball of smoke lying on his doorstep. As he gazed in wonderment, the ball suddenly moved and a voice said "Don't just stand there gawping, you gonna let me in or not..."

Stuck for words, all the Balrog could do was to open the door and step to one side. The ball of smoke drifted past and settled beside the small carpet.

To his great amazement, he found a small cat amidst all the smoke and quickly snuffed out the fire burning at the base of its tail.

"Thanks, fatso, the old bum was getting a shade warm just then" purred the cat, beating out yet another blaze just behind its left ear. Settling down, the cat began to clean itself and when it finished, it began its tale...

"I live with that old coot the "White Wassock" and of late his eyes have been failing him. In fact each time he casts one of his stupid spells I usually end up on the receiving end. So far this month, I have lost EIGHT of my nine lives and now to cap it all, he's gone and transported me here! Geez, I wish he would either improve his aim or buy some ???!*?? specs."

For a moment or two the Balrog was quiet, then with a smile he said, "An old gypsy lives on the far side of the bridge, perhaps he might be able to help us..."

* * * * *

That's the introduction to Zenobi Software's latest game - anyone who plays adventures will know that Zenobi Software is John Wilson of Rochdale and that John Wilson is "The Rochdale Balrog", a nickname bestowed on him by Mike Gerrard, many moons ago.

There are several locations available, and it doesn't take long to find the bridge and to discover that it is guarded by a rather ugly Troll, who won't let anyone cross without giving him at least one gold coin first.

Well, there isn't one in the cottage where you start - perhaps you can obtain a gold coin by winning the cockroach race you saw advertised in the "Goblin Gazette"? That is, of course, if you have found this newspaper, which the Balrog uses in his smallest room. Even that is hidden! Next, find your cockroach! Then you have to train him, but you can't enter the race unless you find a writing implement to sign the entry form...

And so it goes on, with puzzles coming fast and furious what is the meaning of the mysterious word in the tatty notebook? Where is the donkey? Where do Lemin-Rats go, when they jump over cliffs? How do you cross the river?

There are clues, sometimes, in the text, with a HELP page built in (if you can find it!) but the trick is to examine and search everything.

True to form, there are a few red herrings, but they are so cunningly disguised as genuine clues and useful objects that I doubt if you will recognise them until after you have finished the game!

This game is well up to the standard we have come to expect from Zenobi Software, and a worthy buy at the bargain price of £2.49.

READ ALL ABOUT IT!

READ ALL ABOUT IT!

GET YOUR GOBLIN GAZZETTE HERE!

That is, on the reverse side of THE BALROG AND THE CAT. Not only do you get a darned good adventure game for your money, but you get items of news which are for privileged readers only!

By the way, don't bother to question the extra "Z" in the name of this highly amusing "newspaper" - we all know that goblins are queer folk, and have a language all of their own.

Talking about language, you also get a lesson in the language of Lancashire on the first screen!

There are eight pages; news and scandal (what has Ekim Drarreg, the adventure reviewing dwarf, been up to in Greece? And where was the Vicar, missing since last Friday, eventually found?). It even contains the programmes on Trollovision, issued by the BBC (Boggit Broadcasting Corp.) - are you watching "Beastenders", an everyday story of trollish folk?

You can find out all about the entertainment laid on at "The Dancing Ogre", and yes, for those who just like to look at the pictures, there IS a Page Three Elf!!!

READ ALL ABOUT IT!





PYRAMID



Available for Spectrum 48K/128K on Cassette at £2.00 from Walter Pooley, 46 Exeter Road, Bootle, Liverpool, L20 7BL.

Reviewer - BARBARA GIBB.

In this text adventure, written on the Quill, your task is to cross the desert to the oasis, enter the pyramid, find the treasure, and escape with it. Sounds easy! Don't be deceived; often the simplest of storylines hide the most interesting adventures.

The desert and pyramid theme is a well-tried and tested subject for adventures; it is the puzzles that rejuvenate it and hold the players attention.

I wonder if Roger White and his disciples would like to try their hand at mapping the desert? It takes four compass moves to get out and has 256 possible permutations. It was written as an exercise in how to write a maze, use very little memory, and try to destroy an adventurer at the same time. Maze haters, don't despair - help is at hand.

When you find the oasis, don't forget to visit the tent before entering the pyramid, as once inside you cannot escape until you've solved all the problems and found all the treasure.

There aren't many locations, but nearly every one has something of importance and will keep most adventurers amused for quite some time. The boat and wall of fire are very interesting, also the one way system of steps and chambers, and you must get the co-operation of the inhabitants.

For those of you who can watch the screen during loading, there is a stylised picture of some pyramids before you are given an explanation of the adventure ahead. Unlike some adventures I have seen lately, you won't have any trouble reading the clear black print for the location descriptions, red for important names and compass directions and green for the treasures and objects, all on a white background.

SCORE gives your progress as a percentage, plus a move counter for those who like to find the shortest possible solution. More useful, to me at least, was the RAMSAVE and RAMLOAD.

I think this adventure is ideal for less experienced players, but there is something for everyone. If you follow some basic rules of adventuring you will soon be hooked on this one.

=====



INGRID'S BACK - ATARI ST VERSION
Level 9 Computing - Price £19.95



Reviewer - TRACY TATTUM

The game is a follow-up to GNOME RANGER, starring Ingrid Bottomlow, it starts when Ingrid has come home to find that the landlord, Jasper Quickbuck is going to demolish the Dribble Valley and turn it into Gnorsegnome marinas and luxury masonettes and the local folk are being

evicted. So Ingrid decides to get together a protest petition.

Part one finds Ingrid in the Village Hall with a petition and an invitation. Flopsy, her dog is also there to help her. Ingrid can wander all over the town of Little Moaning, trying to get people to sign her petition. Some of the residents are a bit reluctant as to whether they should sign the petition or not and it is up to you to get them to sign it.

In part two Silas Crawley and a bunch of trolls are intent on steamrolling Gnettlefield with their steamroller, as they have already evicted the other residents of Dribble Valley. You must steal the plans and stop the steamroller, although that is not all there is to part two, as the trolls, one by one, come after you and you must find a way to get rid of them.

In part three, Ingrid has obtained a job as a maid at Ridley's End, where the landlord Jasper lives. You, along with your cousin Daisy, who is supposed to help you, must collect evidence about Jasper that will put him in prison for a long, long time!!!

This is one of Level 9's most humorous adventures I've played yet!!! And what IS Seamus Sosmall doing in Mrs Tackhammer's wardrobe when you break into her bedroom and find her lying on the bed red-faced? Begorrah, he isn't having trouble with his teleport spells and being somewhere he shouldn't be? As you leave the house together he suddenly remembers he has left his wand upstairs and insists you do not wait for him.....

This is certainly the most enjoyable game I've ever played from L9

Graphics 9/10 Playability 8/10 Value 8/10 Overall 9/10

*
* Contributions are urgently needed for the review section please! *
*

DEFINITION OF A GOOD ADVENTURE by PAUL CARDIN

An adventure which, after you load it in for the first time and type:

SLAY ORC
WAVE WAND
RUB LAMP
WAVE CROSS/GARLIC AT VAMPIRE
DRIVE STAKE THROUGH DRACULA'S HEART
KILL TROLL UNDER BRIDGE
SET PHASER TO STUN
ZAP DROID

Responds with:

THEY DON'T EXIST!

PREVIEW SECTION

This month I have been having a sneak preview of two adventures soon to come your way. The Gordello Incident by Tom Frost of Tartan Software (address in the advertisement section of Probe) absolutely amazed me with its novel approach. I mentioned Gordello once before in the editorial but this time I was able to play the completed part one and boy are you Spectrum owners in for a treat! The infamous Gordello has produced two 'clones' of yourself and it is imperative that he be stopped and the clones destroyed. Fortunately, via a computer you are able to penetrate the clones brains and instruct them via the keyboard. Your first task in this three part adventure is to guide the clones into the Clonetron, all very well you might say, until you discover that one of the clones is not doing what he should be doing. In fact he has the annoying habit of doing exactly the opposite! This really adds to the fun and enjoyment, especially when you are in a situation where a quick move is essential - I got all 'fingers and thumbs' many times. There are the most devious puzzles to be solved including a beauty at the very start of the adventure. I thought I had solved it loads of times and rang Tom to tell him so. A chuckle on the other end of the line told me that I hadn't! That's the trouble with playing an adventure written by such a clever programmer who really does manage to anticipate your every move! In this adventure I got the definite impression that I was being led up the garden path because everything I tried got a positive response - none of that 'You can't' business with Tom, more of a case of 'Well if you really want to...' This led me to become stuck in the most humorous situations. The adventure is filled with the most unusual objects but which are red herrings and which are useful? Just to make life even more interesting the adventure is peopled with various characters who seem to be a rather tidy lot and like to pick up and pocket any odd item they see lying around and the clones themselves soon get bored with standing around, they like to explore and if you don't make a move, after a while, they will decide to wander off somewhere else. They also like to flash information to you on what is going on around them and are even rude enough to interrupt you when you are halfway through typing in an input! A very clever piece of programming there. It usually happened to me just when I spotted a key I needed and was just typing 'get key' when the message flashed on the screen that 'someone had entered the room, that someone was looking at the key' and, worse, that 'that person had picked up the key and headed off to the north!' I got round that one though by a little foresight so that I was ready for the blighter before he arrived.

The screen is divided up neatly into two sections so that you can see exactly where each clone is at any time and transfer of instructions to the clone you want is simply a matter of typing in either AB for one clone or BA for the other. There are some wonderful responses and loads of humorous remarks from the clones as they travel about, you could, if you wanted, just sit back and watch what is going on around you and still have loads of fun. I have never played an adventure quite like this one before and I am so very glad I have tried it. I just can't wait for the other two parts to continue my quest. I had a great time and so, I'm sure, will you.

Another sneak preview I have had this month comes from Patrick Walsh who sent me the first part of his adventure 'Sherlock Holmes: The Case of the Beheaded Smuggler', a two part text adventure for the Spectrum. There is an introduction giving you the story, which is very cleverly done, and part one itself was quite amazing. I was quite unprepared

for the amount of atmosphere generated by the lengthy location descriptions. Patrick has cleverly managed to capture the style of the Conan-Doyle novels beautifully. One thing that never fails to give me a thrill is the discovery of hidden locations and in this adventure you can, if you are diligent enough, discover loads. Clues are hidden around every corner, if you manage to spot them that is. It is quite a large adventure with over thirty locations in the first part. Patrick says "Part one is really intended as an average level where you as Sherlock Holmes are examining the house and grounds where the murder was committed. There are not so many problems here as there are in part two." All I can say to that, after discovering so many problems in part one, is roll out part two - I can hardly wait.

Details about release dates and prices etc will be published in Probe when these are available. Watch this space!

POETS CORNER

A computer bereavement is terrible,
It effects the whole families lives,
Where is the cheery "Good Morning"?
Where is the sleepy "Good Night"?
Instead we've a cheery, "I've got it!
Perhaps I should try this or that,
I dreamed out the whole solution,
And I know how to get shut of that rat."
And then there's the sleepy mumbles,
Of solutions tried and failed,
No "Goodnight GOD BLESS", just "I'll go right not left,
Perhaps then we'll get shut of that rat".
Then all through the telly programmes
There's the rapid fire clicking of keys,
And "Could you just tell me which way,
I go to get back to the Quays?"
Turn off the telly, sew, read a book, do the ironing instead,
Draw out a plan for the garden and wall,
Course half way through there's an anguished call,
"Where's my dagger, I'm pinned to a wall!
No, it's alright, don't bother, I'm dead!"
Our friends when they call get roped in as well,
I bet they think life with a computer Queen's HELL!
The best thing to do when an adventure is on,
Is to try to get in, while she flies through where she's gone,
"I've done this bit and I've done that,
But I still can't get shut of that dirty old rat!"
Who said the life of a family is dead?
Get shut of the telly, do adventures instead.

By VAL JESSON.

ADVENTURING IS... By MARGO PORTEOUS.

A game that won't load - until you've only got 10 minutes left to play it! Or you spend an hour trying to load a game, then get so excited when you finally see it has loaded you press the wrong key and it crashes!

WHEN YOU'RE ALREADY GONE

By DON MACLEOD

It was a sharp-edged night after a blunting day. Thin shadows grew from my footsteps as I passed under the street lamps. I saw them pull me forward and seemed to feel them tug me back. It felt like a race, one I was not sure I wanted to win. I had a suspicion that the prizes would be taken, not given; that I would find myself girtwrapped before long. In a shroud. I felt better, almost happy. Gloomy thoughts will do that for me every time. It ain't happened yet, that's my sustaining motto. When French Annie sees me smiling she always smiles herself. "It will," she's saying. We've talked from time to time, like runners in a long race will. She left words on the 'net for me this morning, and I left words for her. Not talking, just an exchange of words like business. "So what," I put. That's all. But I was thinking. So what now, is what I was thinking. Her words glowed fuzzily on the smoke-dulled screen. "Joe the Horse has a new saddle," her words said. He's riding it down in Storecity.

What now was Storecity. But not for Joe, he was long gone. The malls were empty. I dialled a clerk and it told me French Annie wasn't just blowing kisses. The clerk knew Joe all right, he'd filled an air duct here so long you could still smell him. No, he didn't know how a vineman could have all that tin but as long as he had it, he could hand it over.

- Sure he can, I said.

Clever work those clerks, know just the words to keep the customers happy. The clerk called after me, anxious to tell the whole truth. It knows me too.

- Joe left in a hurry, it said. He had a call, here's the solid.

The plastic slid from a slot in the clerk. I grabbed it. "Joe," it read, "Better drop that bundle or take the weight." The from was French Annie's. So much for clever work: I left unhappy. Damn French Annie.

I went to Needletown. A stupid place for Joe to go and Joe was stupid. Sure he told me some clever things but only other people's clever things, and only his own until they were mine. He had some clever stuff now.

The junk was sailing in Needletown. There were plenty of passengers as always. I found Joe the Horse in the Point, a bar on the wharf. He looked saddlesore.

- Did Frenchy send you? he asked, pitifully eager. I knew she'd see me, I knew she'd sort it, I knew...

His voice stopped working. Something in me started a little. I think it was then this sickness began, this feeling. Perhaps French Annie could talk me out of it. Perhaps she had it too.

I made the feeling go away.

- Sort of, I said. What you got?

He gave it to me. It was a good saddle. It could take you far. It was a million bucks that saddle and I'm not talking metaphor. I asked the obvious question.

- Up in Delitown, he said. I was mining the bins, bellyflat, you know. And there it was, a whole chicken!

He paused, waiting for a grin. I gave it to him.

- Course I coped it and offed to a safety of mine nobody knows. I was cleaning it up a bit when I saw this bit of plastic sticking out. Some freak's gone and 'waved the juicies too, I thought! Didn't know how juicy until I opened it!

- And this juice is too strong for you, I said.

- That's right, that's right, he said. You're big, you can take care of it. You know people, and...

- I know, I said. Take care of you too. Don't worry, I will. But you'll have to off further than one of your safety's. There are plenty eyes with tongues attached. We don't know who saw you, or who they are talking to.

I bought him a drink, and told him to meet me late near a safety or his by ShShuttleport Seven. He was not too surprised I knew about it. I would bring him rull docs and some tin and he could moon it for a while. I felt hot and sweaty, something was lurching inside me. Probably the rotten wharrier's rum. I would be all right outside, breathing the natural ionised air. I let him have one more drink and we left. I knew there would be a

trail outside. that was all right, that was planned. Then the sick reeling swelled inside me. I had a bad attack of intuition. What I had planned for Joe the Horse, it was just a bit of elbowing in the race. Someone had to do it. Nothing to get sick about. Now it was different. When Joe and I parted the trail stuck with me, not Joe. It was going to be nasty.

It was good. If I had not expected the trail I would have known nothing about it. As it was, all the way home I felt as if I was being measured for my prize. So I was quite cheerful when I waltzed in the door.

— It ain't happened yet! I yelled, and slammed the door.

— It will! said French Annie.

Talk about timing. There's no-one quite like French Annie. She had a couple of blades with her. Big of course.

— I want my keys back, I said.

— I'm sure you can afford to install new locks now, she said. Word is Joe paid up to you, bagman.

Bagman! Now that hurt.

— Search me in all your favourite places! I have nothing on me!

I was yelling again, without the same sang-froid it has to be said.

— I know, she said drily. Try and find something anyway, girls. The blades turned me out. In a few seconds there was a pile of me on the floor. All those little things that seem to multiply in pockets and pouches, and one big packet right on top of the pile.

— That all seems to be in order, French Annie said.

Her blades giggled, as only blades can.

— Listen to me bagman. You play your part. You do it well. Keep on playing it, or stop. But don't ever think of trying another role. It would never get past the first night.

It was a good speech. She had fun with it. The audience was transfixed. She looked at the packet and stepped over it with exaggerated care.

— Something valuable?

I thought I was falling into her huge dark pupils. My mouth opened.

— Ah, I said.

— Never mind, she said. I'm sure you can manage to ad-lib something in your next little improvisation.

— It's a two-hander with Joe the Horse, said one of the blades.

— We'll be the critics, said the other.

— So get it right bagman! they chorused.

When they left and I was alone on the stage the scenery began to shake. I climbed the rolling floor towards the toilet. I knew I wouldn't make it and I didn't.

Scene change. I know my lines. I tell myself it has happened already. I have a very bad feeling it will happen again and again. As I begin to feel quite cheerful I understand just what I am. And I think that is where I started.

The shadows of my steps pulled me forward. Now I felt no backward tug at all. I saw Joe crouched in an alley, waiting for his prize. He ran to meet me.

— I knew Frenchy would see me! Said you were coming. She was right here, said you'd play your part, Inspector.

— I will, I said.

A glidecar slid around the corner and stopped. Shadows got out. Shadows with calculators: calculators that cannot add, only take away.

— Is that my transport? Joe asked.

— Yes, I said. You can go.

He stared at me. Over my shoulder he saw the shadows coming the other way as well. Joe looked at me and seemed to crumple until he looked like a wrecked car, a write-off. His eyes went dead. There was water on my face and I could hardly see him. His voice came to me faintly from a very great distance.

— Where can you go when you're already gone?

I put the saddle back on Joe the Horse and walked away. I walked, past one lot of shadows into my own shadow as light flickered behind me, not really hearing the sound of calculators subtracting. Not hearing it at all. Not hearing it now.

THE ART OF THE MAZE IV

BY ROGER WHITE

In my last article, I showed how to map a maze if you have too few objects to implement the classical solution in full. The method I outlined there was not essentially more than a simple amplification of the classical solution. But such a method is only practicable if you are only a few objects short - two or three, say. Once the discrepancy between objects and rooms becomes large, then you need to make a radical departure from the simple model of the classical solution. It is to this that I now turn. Can we, in fact, map a maze with far fewer objects than there are rooms in the maze? This question can, in fact, be given an unequivocal answer: it is possible to map any maze whatever, given that we have at our disposal one object. However, the method which I shall outline can become lengthy for certain mazes whose structure is inimical to it. On the other hand, those mazes will characteristically have a structure which makes possible certain of the techniques of maze mapping that do not involve object dropping, which I shall look at in subsequent articles: this point will become clearer as we proceed.

The key to mapping a maze using only one object is, identifying the best room in which to drop our object initially. To make the explanation of this intelligible, I shall take a concrete case, and explain how we identify a suitable room for a definite maze. I will once again outline a solution for the ENTHAR 7 maze, this time, however, on the assumption that we are only permitted to use one object in mapping it:

(N.B. Once again, the method is more complicated and longwinded to explain than to carry out: it may help interested readers, if they use a GAC, or whatever, to programme in the ENTHAR 7 maze, so that you can actually experiment with the procedures I outline. A maze only takes a very short time to programme.)

	N	NE	E	SE	S	SW	W	NW	U	D
1	2	5	4	4	4	8	7	7	X	X
2	3	4	6	4	2	8	7	1	X	X
3	4	6	6	4	2	1	9	5	X	X
4	5	7	8	6	1	3	5	2	X	X
5	6	4	3	7	4	2	2	5	X	X
6	4	5	8	3	6	7	2	6	X	X
7	6	3	2	1	8	4	5	7	X	X
8	7	1	1	4	4	1	4	5	X	X
9	1	4	3	2	7	5	6	1	X	X

MAP III

CLEARING

FLIPPER PLATE

Let us suppose, starting in a certain room in a maze, we select some compass direction (NE, say) and move repeatedly away from the first room in that direction (i.e. go NE, NE, NE, NE ...). It is obvious that only three things can occur: either we eventually encounter an exit to the maze, or we eventually encounter the message

THE ART OF THE MAZE IV

"You cannot move in that direction", or we keep moving around within the maze for ever. Now consider what is happening in the third case: the number of rooms in a maze is finite, so that sooner or later we will be in a room we have already been in before. Once that occurs we will have entered a loop - a set of rooms that we would continue going round in for ever if we continued going NE. Thus, in the ENTHAR 7 maze, if we start out from room 1 going NE, we go first to 5, then to 4, then to 7, then to 3, then to 6, and from 6 into room 5 again. From that point on, we would simply repeat going round the circuit 5,4,7,3,6. So, starting from 1 we have a tail consisting of the room 1 leading into a loop of five rooms.

We may now re-express the possible consequences of going repeatedly in a fixed direction from a certain room: if we start at a given room and move repeatedly in a given direction then:

- either a) We eventually encounter an exit
- or b) We eventually encounter the message "you cannot move in that direction"
- or c) The room we are on is itself on a loop for that direction
- or d) The room is on a tail which leads into a loop.

(I include here as a limit case, the case of a loop consisting of only one room - i.e. a room such that going NE from A leads to A).

Now taking each of the compass directions in turn, we first determine for room 1 which of these is the case, and if (c) or (d) the precise length of the tail and loop involved. In the ENTHAR 7 maze, there are, it so happens, no exits that we will encounter in this way, and we also have no use made of what I shall call "barriers", the message "you cannot move in that direction". In fact, that makes the method we are going to outline particularly well suited to this maze. Mazes which make extensive use of barriers have an altogether different character from those which don't - a maze which uses barriers a lot, as I shall show in my next article, is typically easier to solve than one that does not, but it is typically better suited to techniques which do not involve object dropping at all. The presence of barriers within a maze, although it does not make the method of maze mapping I am here outlining impossible, typically makes it much lengthier.

The first use we make of our object is to find out precisely what happens as we set off from room 1 repeatedly in a given direction, beginning with N. We SAVE our position in room 1, go N four times and drop the object, then we go N four more times, stopping if we find the object again. (If you look at the map you will see that what we have actually done is gone from 1 to 2, to 3, to 4, to 5, dropped the flower, say, then gone to 6, to 4 and then back to 5, finding the flower again). We have reencountered the object, if we had not, we would have RESTORED to 1 and repeated the process this time dropping the flower 8 moves away from 1, then, if necessary, repeated the process with the flower 12 moves away and so on. But, in fact, in this case, we do find the flower again. What this tells us is that moving N from 1 eventually leads us into a loop that is 3 rooms long. Next we find out where this loop begins. RESTORE to 1, this time move N only half as far (twice) and drop the flower, now go N 3 times: this time, we do not find the flower: this tells us that the first three rooms are on a tail which leads to a loop beginning in the 4th or 5th room. placing the object in 4th room and going N three times tells us that the loop does indeed begin in the 4th room. (This all sounds complicated and longwinded, but in practise, it is very simple and the whole process can be carried out very quickly).

Before we repeat this rigmarole for other directions, let us reflect on the significance of what we have found out, to help explain why we are doing it: we have now discovered i) six different rooms within the maze - the first room, the room N of it, the room N of that, and so on (let us call them "1", "N1", "N2", "N3", "N4" and "N5") - these must be different to account for the experiment with the flower; ii) six rooms which we know how to get to; iii) finally and most importantly, six rooms that we can tell apart, in the following way: if we place the flower in N5, 1 is the only one of these rooms from which we arrive at the flower by going N five times, N1 the only one from which we arrive at the flower by going N 4 times, and so on.

We can now record the result of our investigation of the N direction as follows:

N:- 1 => N1 => N2 => N3 => N4 => N5

(That is to say, starting from 1 and going repeatedly N takes us through three rooms and then into a loop 3 rooms long).

The process we have just outlined only sounds convoluted, but it in actual practise takes less than a minute to carry out: provided, that is, that the game has a decent SAVE & RESTORE facility, without which most advanced maze mapping can easily become tedious.

We now repeat the process we have gone through for the N direction for each of the other 7 directions, where what we are seeking is the direction which gives us the longest chain of rooms. In fact, we have already found that the N direction gives us a chain of as many as six rooms, which should be ample for all but the largest mazes. However, it is worth while taking care at this stage, since if we find the longest chain, that usually makes the rest of the process very simple indeed. If, indeed, we are lucky enough to find a chain which in fact contains every room in the maze, the remainder of the task of mapping a maze is just as simple as the classical solution. But, provided we can find one chain which contains the majority of the rooms in a maze, the rest of our task will be plain sailing: and this will, with one major exception, almost invariably be the case. The major exception is that, since barriers break up chains, in a maze which makes extensive use of barriers, chains of rooms of the sort which interest us will typically be much shorter. Because of this, and because mazes which make extensive use of barriers can readily be solved by techniques not involving object dropping, of a kind I shall explore in my next article, it is best to think of the method we are outlining as primarily for mazes, like the ENTHAR 7, in which there are few or no barriers, and explain it primarily for them.

The result of exploring each of the 8 directions may then be summarised as follows ("C" here stands for the clearing):

N :- 1 => N1 => N2 => N3 => N4 => N5
 NE :- 1 => NE1 => NE2 => NE3 => NE4 => NE5
 E :- 1 => E1 => C
 SE :- 1 => SE1 => SE2 => SE3
 S :- 1 => S1
 SW :- 1 => C
 W :- 1 => W1 => W2 => W3
 NW :- 1 => NW1

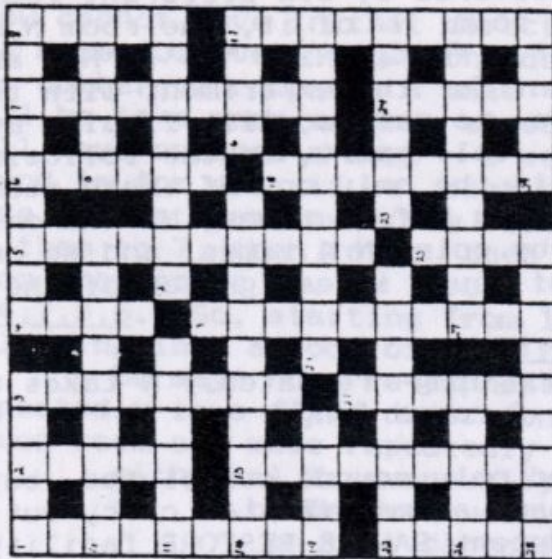
(This table should become clear if it is compared with the map, and you check there the consequence of going from room 1 in any given direction.)

Now, we select one of the directions which give us the longest possible chain - N or NE - giving preference, although this doesn't really matter, to the one among those which contains the longer loop and the fewest designated rooms: here the NE chain which has a loop of five rooms, and contains no designated rooms. Next time I will show how we can build that chain into a complete map.

PUZZLE PAGE

PROBE CROSSWORD 3

by Koschei



ACROSS

- 1,11,8d Warren warring? Sounds a little like it (3,2,6,5)
- 4 I serve Bug Eyed Monster for a long time in musical play (9)
- 9 Airy neon for illumination? (5,4)
- 10 Goes with being up the creek! (2,3)
- 11 See 1a
- 12 Intelligence, stamina, wisdom, agility, charm, _____ (8)
- 14 Religious students make music about one scientific theory reversable in US state (10)
- 16 Doctor, we hear, gets canal backwards. God! (4)
- 19 Hellene lost in home of 14 perhaps (4)
- 20 Intrinsically sound, by 16! (10)
- 22 So some would have us believe computer games are, so vile yet without energy (4,4)
- 23 The last word in RPG? Not really (6)
- 26 Close to treasure one finds listener engrossed in sacred book (4,1)

CROSSWORD 2 SOLN

Across: 1 KILL LUST, 5 AFFAIR, 9 IN THE PEN, 10 FOSSET, 12 HORSE CLAN, 13 SUS FI, 14 BORROWED TIME, 18 FRIED BANANAS, 21 ELDER, 22 EGLANTINE, 24 READ AD, 25 GIVE CASK, 26 MEET ED, 27 MERETSKY.

Down: 1 KNIGHT, 2 LIT ERA, 3 LIEGE, 4 SPELL BREAKER, 6 FOOL'S IDEA, 7 ASSASSIN, 8 RETAINER, 11 SNOWBALL NINE, 15 ORDER GAME, 16 OFFER RUM, 17 MIND WAVE, 19 MIDAS'S, 20 GET KEY, 23 NO EVE.

- 27 Politician took muddled file losing quarter when chased by an editor getting loud (9)
- 28 I have the engineer: 'Och, what is it noo Captain?' (3,6)
- 29 Be she ranging or at home, gno gnews is good gnews (5)

DOWN

- 1 Middle of a ripping three-parter, NOT Jack's (6,2)
- 2 Argued terribly without propriety (5)
- 3 Rising or falling, is this the speed of replicating DNA? (8)
- 4 Crossed and wrecked - Rats! what a trek (4)
- 5 What every playtester needs or they get troubled, lacking some quarters: 'Please mate, tea!' (and that's not all) (3,2,5)
- 6 "A _____ with the strange device." (Longfellow) Or Bruce (Shortfellow) (6)
- 7 Me! Me! Me! (3,3,3)
- 8 See 1a
- 13 War treaty almost confused sexy wet girl from Melbourne house of ill-repute (6,4)
- 15 Five point, it follows you have to justify (9)
- 17 Overturn desk, mixup - flee! (9)
- 18 A magician's art is the downfall of many a programmer (8)
- 21 Trouble charge for short rating in charge (6)
- 22 Briefly: IN, UP, NORTH, NORTH, EAST...turn back...oh the boredom...EAST etc (5)
- 24 Ingrid's front got going going gone back - Jones appeared! (5)
- 25 Active spy gets taken inside (4)

THE PROBLEMS, PITFALLS AND PERILS OF ADVENTURE PROGRAMMING WITH PAW



(OR: PAWS FOR THOUGHT)

By Larry Horsfield



This month I thought I would give a few hints and tips on routines that will, one hopes, improve any PAWed adventure.

The standard "I" or Inventory command with PAW uses the INVEN action, which prints the objects you're carrying in a column, with any that are worn having the system message "(worn)" tagged on. The alternative to this is to list your inventory as a sentence, with separate messages for those objects carried and those worn.

First of all, alter System Message (SM) 9 to read "You are carrying " (not forgetting to put a space after the last word), and SM 10 to read "You are wearing " (SM10 is redundant if you are not using INVEN, as is SM11) The required Response table entry will utilise the LISTAT action, flag 53, the "locations" 253 & 254 and the two altered messages, thus:

```
I _ LET 53 64 SYSMESS 9 LISTAT 254 SYSMESS 10 LISTAT 253  
      CLEAR 53 DONE
```

Setting flag 53 to 64 makes PAW print the lists of objects as a valid sentence, so when you press I, you will see something like this:

"You are carrying a flashlight, a shovel and a bubble helmet.

You are wearing a backpack and a uniform."

If you weren't carrying or wearing anything, you'd just get "nothing." instead of a list. You have to include CLEAR 53, otherwise if you didn't, the objects visible in any location will also be printed as a sentence.

You could go one stage further and have a message for when you are wearing nothing at all. To do this, you must keep a count of the number of objects worn in an unused flag - say Flag 11 - and if the adventure starts with objects being worn, you must allow for this in Process table 1. For example if location 0 is a title screen, with a keypress to go to the first location, and you start the adventure wearing three objects, the Process table 1 entry might be:

```
START * AT 0 ANYKEY GOTO 1 LET 11 3 DESC
```

You MUST also allow for wearing and removing objects, so in the WEAR _ and REMOV _ entries in the Response table, you must include the lines PLUS 11 1 and MINUS 11 1 respectively, e.g. WEAR _ AUTOW PLUS 11 1 DONE Now, change SM11 to read (for example) "You're as naked as the day you were born!", putting an empty line underneath by pressing EXTEND MODE then 7 then DELETE (what's known as an ESCC 7). The first Response table entry is exactly the same as last time, except for one line:

```
I _ NOTEQ 11 0 LET 53 64 SYSMESS 9 LISTAT 254 SYSMESS 10  
      LISTAT 253 CLEAR 53 DONE
```

If flag 11 is anything other than 0, the two messages are printed along with the lists of objects carried and worn as sentences. Now the entry for when we are carrying objects, but not wearing any:

```
I _ EQ 11 0 LET 53 64 SYSMESS 9 LISTAT 254 SYSMESS 11  
      CLEAR 53 DONE
```

Having seen how that's done, you could go the whole hog and have another message for when you're carrying nothing, e.g. "Your hands are

empty". However, this would entail FOUR different I _ entries, 1 for when you're carrying and wearing things, 1 for when you're carrying objects but wearing none, 1 for when you're carrying nothing, but wearing objects, and a last one for when you're carrying nothing and wearing nothing! You'd also have to keep a count of objects carried in another flag, and put appropriate PLUS/MINUS lines in the GET and DROP entries, as well as in the PUT _ and GET _ from container entries, etc.

As mentioned earlier, you can also list the visible objects as a valid sentence, and if you wanted to do this as well as have it in the I _ command, you'd need to include the LET 53 64 line in the START * entry in the Process 1 table, deleting the lines, plus CLEAR 53, from the I _ entries.

One thing that occurred to me only the other week, when I was going through "Magnetic Moon", is when you turn on or off a source of light. The way I originally did in all my adventures was to redescribe the location when you SWITCH ON or SWITCH OFF the flashlight. However, it looked a bit silly if the location was light anyway, so I included a further two SWITCH ON/OFF entries to cover when you did this in a light location. You have to take into account whether flag 0 is 0 or 255. The response table entries I put in were as follows (dark locations first):

```
SWITC FLASH    PREP ON    CARRIED 15  NOTEQ 0   SYSMESS 15  PAUSE 75
                  SWAP 15 0   DESC
```

```
SWITC FLASH    PREP OFF   CARRIED 0   NOTEQ 0   SYSMESS 15  PAUSE 75
                  SWAP 0 15  DESC
```

Those egg-heads among you may already have guessed what the entries for light locations will be, but for the rest of us, here they are:

```
SWITC FLASH    PREP ON    CARRIED 15  EQ 0 0   SWAP 15 0   OK
```

```
SWITC FLASH    PREP OFF   CARRIED 0   EQ 0 0   SWAP 0 15   OK
```

Theoretically, you could leave out the EQ 0 0 in both the last entries, as PAW would ignore the first two if flag 0 was 0, but it's safer to put them in.

A couple of the guys who playtested "Magnetic Moon" for me, and, indeed, one of the Probe readers who bought a copy, commented that they couldn't read the character set I had selected for the adventure. This was SET 3, futuristic computer-type characters that I considered to be most appropriate for the science-fiction scenario. However, I like to make my adventures as user-friendly as I can, and if the player can't read the text, it's not very user-friendly after all! One of my friends suggested that I offer the player the option to change character fonts, as in many other adventures. I realised that this would be quite easy to do with PAW, so I included a "FONT" option in the adventure.

Unfortunately, due to lack of spare memory, I couldn't include the FONT option in the 48k version of "Magnetic Moon" (Although it will be standard in all my others), but easily included in the 128k version. I decided to offer 4 different character fonts (including the computer-type SET 3 already present), although it is possible to have a total of 6. First of all I entered the word FONT as a verb then the numbers 1 to 4 as adverbs. I found after a little experimentation that I needed to get PAW to "remember" what character font had been selected when one loaded in a SAVED or RAMSAVED position, so I used a flag, e.g. flag 13, to store what Font had been selected. This avoided the player having to re-select the desired Font every time he/she loaded a saved position.

I had to put entries in the response table and Process table 1, and the Response table entry for FONT 1 (the computer-type characters) was thus

```
FONT _ ADVERB 1 CHARSET 1 LET 13 1 DESC
```

The entries for the other three fonts were the same except for the ADVERB number, CHARSET number and value of flag 13. The Process table 1 entry for FONT 1 was as follows:

```
* * EQ 13 1 CHARSET 1
```

Again, the other three entries were similar except for the flag 13 value and CHARSET number. There is one more FONT _ entry you must put in, and that is if the player just types "FONT" without a number. You must insert a new message, e.g. Mess 15 "Please give a number from 1 to 4, e.g. FONT 1", and the response table entry, which must be the LAST of the FONT entries, will be simply:

```
FONT _ MESSAGE 15 DONE
```

One strange thing that I did find, and which I couldn't find any way to avoid, is that when you load in any SAVED or RAMSAVED position, other than at the start of parts 2 & 3, if you have selected FONT 2, 3 or 4, the location description remains in FONT 1, while any objects present and/or messages are in the selected FONT. You have to redescribe the location, by typing "R", to restore the selected FONT.

Now a tip about CREATING objects. Although you have plenty of flags to use in PAW, you can use the conditions ISAT and ISNOTAT when you CREATE an object. For example, if we have a locker which when examined, causes a Shovel (object 10) to be found, the appropriate entry would be:

```
EXAMINE LOCKER ISAT 10 252 CREATE 10 DESC
```

"Location" 252 is where objects are if they are not-created, so if object 10 "ISAT" 252, then the next line will CREATE it and the the location is described, with the Shovel now visible. If you try to EXAMINE LOCKER again, object 10 is now created - i.e. ISNOTAT 252 - and you get a message like "You see nothing special". Now, if you are a devious adventure writer (...like I am, so people tell me!), you might want to put another object in the locker that can only be found if you examine the locker a second time, after the shovel has been found. We can call this object an Axe, object 11. The required entry would be:

```
EXAMINE LOCKER ISNOTAT 10 252 ISAT 11 252 CREATE 11 DESC
```

If object 10 is created, and object 11 is not created, then object 11 is then created and the location redescribed, complete with the Axe. By the way, PRESENT and ABSENT would not serve the same purpose, because these conditions only apply to the current location.

Incidentally, I made a slight error....about 5000 bytes worth....when I mentioned the free memory available in the Spectrum version of "Quill", in last month's article. On loading up, there are 29,831 bytes free, not 25,000 as I stated. My thanks to "eagle-eye" Walter Pooley for spotting this!

Finally this month, I would like some help myself! Firstly, I need to know what interface I can buy that will enable me to print out from PAW on a 128k Spectrum ZX+ (the pre-Amstrad, black keyboard with "heatsink" type). I have a Timex/Sinclair 2040 Thermal printer which I can use on my 48k ZX+, or the 128k ZX+ in 48k mode, but I want to print out from my 128k databases. I also have a Panasonic KX-P1061 printer.

Secondly, I have just started to convert "Magnetic Moon" for the Commodore 64, having bullied my brother into lending me all his gear! I'm using the C64 version of "The Quill", due to the lack of a Commodore version of P.A.W. (Gilsoft! Pull your socks up!!). I would like some volunteers to playtest the C64 version of "Magnetic Moon" when I finish all three parts, so if you are interested, please write to me at the address below. I would like to keep everyone happy, and avoid being labelled sexist, by having an equal number of male and female playtesters. So, all you C64 users, get your pen and paper out and write in now - Your Adventure Writer Needs YOU! Note that I would prefer volunteers who have NOT played either the Electron/BBC or the Spectrum versions of the adventure.....talking of which, I'd like a couple more female playtesters for my forthcoming Spectrum adventures as well! Anyone mad enough, please write!

If you have any problems, programing with PAW, please write giving full details and enclosing an SAE, to:

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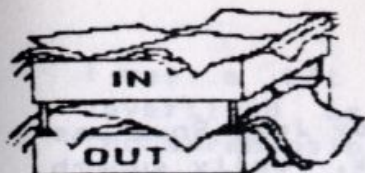
CLOUD 99: 48K and 128K versions on one tape. Save the weather - if Jack Frost will let you! RRP £2.95.

THE JADE STONE: 48K version, in two parts: Find the Stone and rescue your fiancée. RRP: £2.95.

** SPECIAL PRICES FOR PROBE READERS (Spectrum games) **

The Jade Stone/Cloud 99 - only £2.50 each: The Beast - only £4.00.

All prices include P&P. Send cheques/PO's to MARLIN GAMES, 19 BRIAR CLOSE, NAILSEA, BRISTOL BS19 1QG.



LETTERS



Having almost finished my text adventures for the Dragon (except for a few of the role playing, combats/strength etc factors which I dislike) and then reading Don Macleod's article (Feb 89) has thrown me into a depressive trance.

I still have a few MSX and all the Atari ST Infocom (except Deadline) to go at, then nothing except graphics. These latter type adventures do not impress me, and a return to full text (preferable verb/noun) would be a welcome return to sanity. Some Dragon adventures I frigged (accepted computer term) to rid them of random killings (hate 'em so I cheated - don't care what you think, Sunshine!)

A few adventures for the Dragon I would like to obtain - Waxworks/Golden Baton/The Count/Shenanigans/Mystery Funhouse/Franklin in Wonderland, and if anyone has these for sale then I'm all ears (OK, some of you who know me are thinking "all mouth too - if you could see it for his nose!" well mind your own business, I didn't write this letter to suffer your insults!)

In your January issue Clive Swain complained of bad service from Mail Order Companies. Well I've referred my complaints against such firms to the Trading Standards Officer and may need to take legal action. Only if complaints against mail order firms are made known will we be able to pick the good from the bad (and in some cases the ugly). For instance, if you order by post your bank/credit card account will be debited before you have finished spitting the taste of the stamp from your mouth. Even worse! - order by telephone. Well, Einstein's theory is wrong! Your credit card account will be debited at four times the speed of light (it is not unknown for a salesman to be rushed to hospital after colliding with himself on the return trip - in his eagerness to fleece the next sucker).

The items you order will take a little longer - like months to almost never, depending on whether or not it is in stock. We all know that a salesman never lies (I used to be one!) - CUSTOMER "Do you have such-and such in stock?" SALESMAN - "Of course sir! We do have one of those in stock" ASIDE "Although it's already been allocated to twenty other customers, er, twentyone now."

So you complain-

By telephone? - Never happened once the receiver has been replaced.

Normal post? - These letters have the mysterious property of never arriving at their destination.

Recorded Delivery? - These letters cannot be deciphered unless accompanied by the original Rosetta Stone.

What? Who's bitter?! - I enjoy being conned - its the only hobby I'll have left after the demise of the text adventure!

RON KILBRIDE, 265 Gibson Lane, Kippax, Leeds, LS25 7JN.

=====

I was very interested to read Roger Barrington's letter in the March edition of Probe as I too have had difficulties with Mail Order firms. I freely admit that I have received several adventures quite satisfactorily by this method but the problems seem to arise when there is a query and it is necessary to go back to the firm. In my case I was not happy with one of the games I ordered but despite several letters, received neither acknowledgements nor reply. Low prices are not an excuse for bad service.

LON HOLLISTON, 3 Pritchett Drive, Littleover, Derby, DE3 7AX.

Many thanks for the March issue of Probe - the story by June Rowe was especially delightful. I've been playing Ingrid's Back, really superb run from the Austins. Also Lancelot isn't really all that bad. But Oh I wish Time Thief would come out on the ST.

NEIL TALBOTT, 31 Chadcote Way, Catshill, Bromsgrove, Worcs, BG1 0JU.

=====

THE GRUE CHALLENGE

I am pleased to see my little article on Infocom created a little bit of indignation and I would like to respond to my critics (how dare they).

First MR GRUE! I'll happily accept your challenge with wands at ten paces but with my ramsave and oops weapons I'll have you ZORKed in no time at all, and judging by other letters I've read I've no doubt Mrs GRUE will act as my second and manager so with all this against you I SUSPECT you'll have the LURKING HORRORS.

Your comments were quite fair though and as you guessed I am a Level 9 fan, and as you also suggest I could find faults with their games but with all 8 bit machines compromises have to be made so it's a question of which compromises we each prefer to live with and whilst INFOCOM have better descriptions and parser I still feel happier with the Level 9 trade offs. We'll have to wait until 10 years hence when we've all got our Super duper 100 Meg talking machines then nobody has got any excuses.

Who's next. Yes, young Nic Rumsey (well he must be younger than me) Well Nic I think you took me a little bit out of context, not only did I not complain about the length of descriptions in Leather Goddess I did say they were very good and one of Infocom's strong points. What I did say is that long flowery descriptions don't always mean a good game, they're very good the first couple of times round but when we get to the real puzzle solving it's pictures off (no matter how good) exits off, superbrief or whatever, at least they are with me. I've just spent an hour tonight trying to get past this shark and the last thing I wanted was long descriptions no matter how good. As I said before, if I want atmosphere I'll read Lord of the Rings not play the game. It's finding the right level Nic because as you suggested if all the location descriptions were Micky Spillane stuff they would be very boring.

INGRID 2 - ARTHUR DENT 0

PETE SIMPSON, 5 Kelstern Close, Leven Park, Yarm, Cleveland, TS15 9SX.

=====

Well the day is drawing near. It's coming, the great Amiga. This must be my last chance at normality so I felt I must write to thank whoever was so kind as to send me the lovely bouquet of flowers. The Grue was only allowed one quick look as, of course, any lingering glance from him would have withered them in minutes. They were really lovely and greatly appreciated.

If anyone would like to make further donations, light bulbs would not go amiss as I'm fed up bumping into things it's so dark in the house. On a serious note I should also like to express my sympathy at the death of Rita Maloney. I met her through the Grue and apart from adventuring she also read books and we had quite a few swaps. The sad loss of a very nice lady.

MRS GRUE, 64 County Road, Ormskirk, West Lancs, L39 1QH.

I was a bit dubious about getting MAGNETIC MOON, when it was advertised as SF, because I thought it might be filled with incomprehensible SF jargon and names for objects, but I decided to get it anyway, and I'm glad I did, because it has given me hours of playing and brain-batting. It's a player-friendly game - lots of clues in the text and in the EXAMINE responses, but some of these are cryptic, which gives you another puzzle, figuring out what it means. There is humour, too - if you EXAMINE the theodolite you can find in the equipment store, you are told "It's no good to you - you don't know how to work it." Or, on examining the extension lead - "Someone's pinched the plug off the end!" There are lots of objects to be picked up, in the first few locations, so the highly-expandable backpack is a necessity, then you have to find a helmet and an oxygen supply before you can leave the ship. That is, if you have figured out how not to be caught by the scientific officer to help in the engine room. The first really "Oh-heck-how-on-earth-can-I-do-that?" puzzle comes after landing on the surface of the planet and entering a wrecked space-ship, which you have to go through to progress. Picture this - you are in a doorway high above the hold of the ship. If you move to port, then aft (or west and south to earth-bound land-lubbers!) you are told that the deckhead plates above you look loose, and sure enough, if you go aft again, they fall and crush you. Now, down in the hold is a girder, which you could use to prop the plates, yes? The only trouble is that to get down into the hold, you use (as a ladder) a broken handrail, and you can't climb back up carrying the girder. So what now?

Solving this puzzle takes a bit of thought and precise timing, but it gives you a wonderful feeling of "I did it!" if you manage it. This is only one of many well-designed puzzles - I have had to appeal for help from FSF adventures, but this was forthcoming with alacrity on receipt of a stamped envelope. I am now stuck halfway through part three and still enjoying the game, and I shan't at all begrudge the cost of another stamp to appeal for more help. Anyway, I think game producers enjoy this sort of feed-back on their games. Hope they do anyway - they get a lot of it from me! I bought this game for the original price of £3.50 and think it's worth every penny. Now that it is advertised at a special offer price of £2.99 to Probe readers, I would recommend it as a very good buy!

JUNE ROWE, 46 Hurdon Way, Launceston, Cornwall, PL15 9HX.

=====

Thanks for the latest issue of Probe - again something to look forward to each month. It seems as though the argument for and against full solutions still goes on so I thought I would take this opportunity of getting my views known. I personally am for them and agree with John Ferris regarding using full solutions to get through a game, you've just paid good money for, in a few hours, I, like many others, invariably get stuck during a game and it can prove quite expensive phoning or frustrating sending letters in an attempt to "get out" of these predicaments. A perfect example being a game I am involved with now called Odyssey. I have spent a small fortune phoning round trying to solve a particular problem I have at present and still no one can help. Maybe the solution to the problem is instead of having full solutions available why not have a list of objects, their uses and where they can be found for each game (as you have featured in Probe from time to time). This way the game will still have to be played

but reference can then be turned to, the objects etc, when barriers are met. I started off adventuring with Level 9's Lords of Time and because I was new to this adventuring world I duly sent off for their hint sheet. I found this to be a brilliant piece of work in itself, helping you out without giving too much away. In fact, with Level 9 clue sheets finding an answer to a problem is really like a mini adventure itself. These kind of hint sheets are an exception to the rule as a great deal of work must go into providing them so they are really out of the question for every game but it proves there are ways of helping adventurers without giving a full step-by-step solution. Keep up the good work - looking forward to the beginning of April.

VINCE BARKER, 4 Brae Head, Eaglescliffe, Stockton, Cleveland, TS16 9HP.

HELP WANTED

"In LABOURS OF HERCULES, what do you do when you find the Minotaur in the centre of the Labyrinth. I have tried playing the Lyre but just end up getting killed. In HAMMER OF GRIMMOLD (PAWEd version), what do you do with the Sleeping Orc and where is the onion I need to get the dragon's scale? If you can help me I would be grateful."

TONY FLECK, 17 Queens Ct, Stanhope St, Newcastle-u-Tyne, Tyne and Wear.

=====

"Please could someone tell me where the cliff is in SEARCH FOR TERRESTRIAL INTELLIGENCE as I can't find it. I've tried mapping it but still cannot find it?"

JAMES DONALDSON, Connelly, 132 Stamford St, Barrowfield, Glasgow, G31 4AU

=====

"I would be very grateful for help with the following adventures: POLICE QUEST-I have stopped a car with a drunken man but do not know how to get any further. What do I have to do to the man? SPACE QUEST-I have tried to pick up a translator in a cave but everytime I try a creature is treating me like a ball! DETECTIVE(Argus Press)-I do not have the key for Bentley's room (the man strangled with the tie). The Cook, the Butler and the guest who murdered his wife and the crazy Major are the only persons left! What is my next move please?"

CLAUS NYGAARD, Adventure Posten, Vestergade 25A, 4930 Maribo, Denmark.

*

*** CONGRATULATIONS ***

*

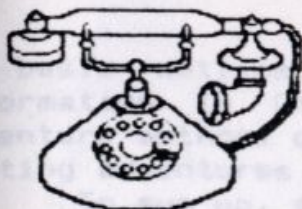
* To Perry and Jill Simm: Many congratulations on the birth of your *
* son, Mitchell. May the silver dove of happiness watch over him on *
* life's long voyage. Forever in our hearts and minds. *

* With much love. *

*

* Abe Perelman and Emily Warren, Frobneil Gardens, Rockvill, Dakota. *

*



IN-TOUCH



ADVENTURES:

ATARI ST SOFTWARE FOR SALE

Deja Vu £6. Legend of the Sword £8.

ARCADE:

Skull Diggery £5.

SPECTRUM 48K/128K SOFTWARE

Mint condition P.A.W.S. The Professional Adventure Writing System. £10

MR D GRAY, 34 Hunters Hall Rd, Dagenham, Essex, RM10 8JD.

Tel: 01 517 0190

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AMSTRAD CPC CASSETTE ADVENTURES FOR SALE

Silicon Dreams £4.99. Message from Andromeda £1. Seas of Blood £1.50.
Warlord £1. Price of Magik £2. The Experience £1. Lord of the Rings
£2.50. Seabase Delta £1. Necris Dome £1. Subunk £1.

Please add 40p per tape to cover postage.

JOHN PACKHAM, 60 Hightown Towers, Warburton Rd, Southampton, Hants, SO2 6HH

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PADDED ENVELOPES FOR SALE

Jiffy Mailmiser bags, gold coloured, size MM00 (145mm x 250mm) 10p
each plus carriage. I have 150 of them for sale.

ALAN COOK, 272 Mearns Rd, Newton Mearns, Glasgow, G77 5LY.

Tel: 041 639 1308

=====

WANTED

ZX81 plus Ram Pack (With or without Wobble) plus games.

Phone DICON PEEKE with price wanted Tel: 0407 730881.

=====

SILLY SECTION!

The God of Thunder took a ride upon his favourite filly. "I'm Thor!"
he cried. The horse replied, "Forgot your thaddle thilly!"

=====

CONTRIBUTIONS

Contributions are badly needed for all sections of the magazine.
Please send in something for Probe as soon as you possibly can.

Many thanks.....Mandy.

WRITING ADVENTURES

By JOHN FERRIS

As Probe appears to be taking a greater interest in adventure writing I thought I would put pen to paper (finger (!) to keyboard) and write a few lines on the subject. Since the demise of Adventure Contact the subject has been neglected. Actually the best reference material for anyone thinking of writing a game is the back copies of Contact, which are generally full of articles. I don't know if back copies are available but if not perhaps some of the authors would consider submitting some material to probe. Without, of course, treading on anyones toes, if you see what I mean.

Okay, if you are like me, you sat down in front of a empty computer on a dark winters night and thought "I know! I'll write an adventure game!" You then spent the rest of the evening staring at the cursor wondering what on earth you were supposed to do. To be honest I gave up after ten minutes and loaded in an arcade game!

You may have realised by now that I like to ramble on for a few pages before making a point, ramble a bit more and make another point and so on.

First thing you need to write a game is an imagination. Some of us are blessed with wonderful imaginations, some with not so wonderful ones. Generally, judging by the standard of some games that have appeared on the market (both adventure and arcade, especially the latter) imagination and originality are not vitally important. (They are if you want your game to be remembered.)

Okay, so your fertile imaginations are firing away on both cyliders so think of a story! Any story! Actually for your first game the smaller the better! How about a very simple two location game to start? Yes, okay I know the computer has progressed a lot from the ZX81 in eight years but it's best to learn using simple examples. Choose a story that uses a lot of object manipulation, like finding objects inside each other, open and closed doors and someone who follows you about! The latter is not hard to program.

Right, you have a story, now try to write out all the steps, counters markers and programming steps for all the problems in English on paper. It helps to be neat. This is quite hard to do at first, but as you write more games it becomes easier as you familiarise yourself with the utility or whatever language you are using.

Now, turn on your computer and load your utility/language and take a deep breath. Hopefully you have some idea how to use the utility, if not then read the manual. Incidentally, I've heard that the best test of user-friendliness of a program is to try the program without using the manual! Don't try this with GAC, PAW or whatever or else you will end up playing arcade games.

The rest is quite straightforward, in theory. Following the manual for the correct procedure for programming, go through each problem, possibly in the order in which they appear, reading from your handwritten notes. Don't try too much too soon. Do one or two problems, then save and quit for the session.

At this point there's not much point in thinking about masses of text, mind-blowing descriptions and suchlike. Wait for the next game, it should be bigger, but not big enough for sale. Run through some classic problems from bygone games, like the plant in Colossal and others that I cannot think of! When you feel that you can program confidently, then go for the biggie! Incidentally, your test games needn't just sit there and gather dust, try getting them into a Public Domain library. This way you spread your name about for free! Don't ask me how to get into a library, as I haven't tried. Perhaps a reader would enlighten us all!

That's about it. Yes, I know there wasn't much to it but that's

the basic outline of what you do. As I said before, there's a wealth of information in Contact, if it can be accessed. Anyway, if any of you adventure authors out there can think of a better way for someone to start writing adventures then let Probe or me know!

To sum up, start small then let the games grow with your experience.

SENSATION!!

GRUE AWARDED FROB OF THE DECADE

The Grue has not given the complete story in the March Frob of the Month. Whilst I agree that it does display a remarkable degree of Insane Adventuring to sit in a cabinet and wait for a crushing experience, the cabinet provides a way of thwarting the Guards if one is unwise enough to not have memorised the Blorple spell. From the cabinet you can both lock the cabinet and Rezrov the cell door before Blorpling to the sand cube to tackle the upper room problem. If you try to Blorple out before solving the puzzle you will die exactly as if you were in the cell. However you can sit in the cabinet and watch the Guards leave the cell not having found you...they do, however, return.

Pia's mistake was in staying in the cabinet awaiting extinction, Grue's was in assuming that you cannot Blorple from the cabinet, or at least in not telling her to try doing so. Both are equally erroneous!! Nice to see that even an expert can get it wrong sometimes isn't it folks?

On behalf of The Editor, and his peers, The Wayfarer has sent The Grue a Frob of the Decade of his own as a reminder that even Grues aren't immune from making what is known on TV as a "Kickup".

Goad Oddventuring,

The Wayfarer

Solution to Dungeon Cell, up to end game (490 to 550 points).

From Sand Room, D. LEARN BLORPLE, G, G. LEARN LISKON, GET KEY FROM ZIPPER (if it is in there), UNLOCK CABINET WITH KEY, OPEN CABINET, GET VELLUM, PUT BOOK IN CABINET, GET BURIN FROM ZIPPER, LISKON ME, CLIMB IN CABINET, CLOSE CABINET, LOCK CABINET WITH KEY, REZROV CELL DOOR, BLORPLE (however you have named the Sand Cube), FROTZ ME, U. GET SACK, OPEN SACK, GET FLIMSY SCROLL, WRITE GIRGOL ON FLIMSY SCROLL, EMPTY ZIPPER INTO SACK, PUT FLIMSY SCROLL IN ZIPPER, CLOSE ZIPPER, DROP ZIPPER. BLORPLE (however you have named the magic cube). You are now in the Magic room with a score of 550 out of 600, and the normal ending gives you a final score of 600 out of 600.

Objects And Their Uses

WITCH HUNT - OBJECTS AND USES. (BY A.W. BALDWIN).

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 1. Bones | Search them to find THE RED BOOK. |
| 2. Bottle | Turn it to reveal an opening. Give it to Sorcerers Apprentice. |
| 3. Broom | Sweep the chimney to find torch battery.
Ride it to escape from the Vast Cavern. |
| 4. Bush | Examine it twice to find broom and sunglasses. |
| 5. Button | Push to raise and lower chandelier. |
| 6. Cauldron | Put potion in it, add pellet and stir rapidly with wooden spoon to magic up the wand. |
| 7. Chair and Settee | Relax in them to see a floor safe. |
| 8. Chandelier | Search it to find a knife. |
| 9. Climbing boots | To climb slippery path to site of old tin mine. |
| 10. Coin | Give it to the Sorcerers Apprentice. |
| 11. Dial | Fit it to the safe and turn. |
| 12. Dresser | Search it to find large key.
Move it to reveal passage. Move it twice more to find Witch's hat. |
| 13. Key (tiny) | Unlocks wooden chest at dead end. |
| 14. Key (large) | Unlocks front door. |
| 15. Key (rusty) | Unlocks tin box in hut. |
| 16. Kid Gloves | Needed to carry potion safely. |
| 17. Knife | Opens stuck drawer in bedroom. |
| 18. Matches | To light fire on beach. |
| 19. Mirror | Look in it to see yourself on the beach. |
| 20. Nails, hammer, horseshoe. | Fit shoe to limping horse. |
| 21. Rags | Examine them to find a spade. |
| 22. RED BOOK | Throw it at the witch when you meet her in the Vast Cavern. |
| 23. ROPE | Tie it to the railing to climb down dry well.
Tie it to the stump to climb down wet well. |
| 24. Sack | Contains the dial and will hold many objects. |
| 25. Spade | Dig three times at dead end to find torch. |
| 26. Sunglasses | Wear them to see the coin in the pool. |
| 27. Tomahawk | Use it to chop wood for the fire in the woodshed. |
| 28. Wand | Dispels illusions. Wave it at the indian and at the shapes in the marquee. |
| 29. Well (dry) | Get loose brick, when it falls it breaks to reveal a pellet. |
| 30. Well (wet) | Wave Iron bar (magnetic) to attract some nails. |
| 31. Waterproof skin | Enables you to swim in the sea. |
| 32. Witches Hat and Cloak. | Need to wear hat to pass the cat.
Need to wear hat and cloak to pass the Sewersaurus. |
| 33. Wood | For fire on beach. |





Bugs And Amusing Responses



APACHE GOLD by JIM DONALDSON

Did you know there is a short cut to completing Apache Gold? After being caught take blanket, wear blanket, east, south, south, say Monigore, sit on log, north, push boulder hard - and that's it! Game over! As you can see you don't have to go and find everything but it's not as exciting as doing it the way it should be done!

=====

INGRID'S BACK by Philip Pendleton

When playing Ingrid's Back I typed "Examine House" to which I received the response, "You can't see Mr Underlay"!

=====

MUTANT by STIJN SCHUTT

Try for once, not to escape the crocodile in Mutant but to get eaten by it. Makes you feel fine on a cold winters day. (Amusing response).

=====

AMUSING RESPONSES by LORNA PATERSON (Amstrad)

RED DOOR

Examine Carpet. Examine Velvet. Examine Skeleton. Listen (in the funeral parlour). Examine Walls (in the 5 sided room). Examine Spider. Examine Concubine. Examine Plants.

GREEN DOOR

Examine Soap. Wash Hog. Get Umbrella. Sleep in Cave.

=====

BUGS by LORNA PATERSON (Amstrad)

BLACK FOUNTAIN

Kiss Witch. This crashes the game with "Message not found" error.

VILLAGE OF LOST SOULS

Put Gauntlets in Sack. But you cannot get them out again!

=====

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS (THE SEQUEL) by MANDY

Input a few rude words for some fantastic responses and please don't forget to kiss the frog! Attacking the rhubarb with something sharp brings a wicked response too!

CONTRIBUTIONS ARE NEEDED FOR THIS SECTION PLEASE.....Mandy.

Precision Corner

VILLAGE OF LOST SOULS

By LORNA PATERSON played on Amstrad.

To find a hidden door in the buttery - THUMP THIRD BARREL WITH Mallet

In Lord's laboratory

- BREAK STAFF, GET CHALK, DRAW PENTACLE WITH CHALK, then SAY AZAPHAS.

At the well near the arbor

- DROP MATTRESS (which falls down the well)
- TIE ROPE TO WELL
- DROP ALL (anything you wish to take with you)
- DOWN, DROP ROPE (land safely on mattress)

At the bottom of the well

- GET LYRE, PLAY BAGDAD, DROP LYRE, WEAR GAUNTLETS, OPEN DOOR, DROP GAUNTLETS, GET CHALICE, THROW WATER, GET ALL, IN

To gain entry to the arbor

- SMELL CHEESE, IN, GET ALL, OUT

To stay alive in the crypt

- CUT CHAIN (with pliers) D, D, EAT GARLIC (Vampire is very disgusted when he bites you).

To get the holy water

- INSERT CHALICE IN FONT



FISHING FOR RED HERRINGS



COMMANDO by CAROL YEATS played on Spectrum

Ignore the lorry, log, bread, books, picture, chair, beds, window, chest, wine, cows, gate, bush, cups, mugs, plates, racks, rope, gun, hut, haystack, tanks, mouse, stubble, sand, anti-aircraft gun, net, barbed wire, bath, box, chocolate, driver, newspaper, empty boxes, ammunition, guages, ledge and dust!

It seems ages since we had some other "Fishing for Red Herrings" in Probe. Anyone got any contributions to revive this section?.....Mandy



HINTS AND TIPS

VILLAGE OF LOST SOULS by LORNA PATERSON played on Amstrad

When the bird appears in the sky, drop all your possessions, move in any direction and then return to collect them. If it does manage to steal an object from you, it can be found in the crow's nest at the top of the bell tower.

Feed the pack of wild dogs with the hams.

To get key from the crack under the bench, rub the rod with fleece.

To extinguish the fire in the hut throw holy water at it.

To light the forge, wave the staff and connect the bellows.

=====

LANCELOT PART 3 by TRACY TATTUM played on ATARI ST

To get rid of the maiden that offers you cakes make the sign of the cross. You can also do this to the preacher.

When you get to the stage where there is a maiden being chased by a dwarf to the south and your brother Ector being taken north by some knights, you MUST save the maiden first.

=====

COMMANDO by CAROL YEATS played on Spectrum

You will need to dispose of the dinghy before leaving the beach.

Don't start shooting in the pill box.

Don't drink the coffee.

The Guard can be bribed.

Find a route around the soldier who won't let you pass.

=====

YELLOW DOOR by CHRIS BANKS played on Spectrum

Solarium - Stuck in here? Dial for help!

To get ET you need spring and just spring up!

Take hail from Weather Room and hail various statues in Museum.

To make rocket you need rock and ET!

Safe combination - Examine sundial.

Boxer - Give him some traditional English food.

Wear Sunglasses to go into Dazzle Room.

Dazzle Room - Drop the various rays here.

Boulder - Examine the pan in the kitchen.

=====

A FISTFUL OF BLOOD CAPSULES Pt 1 by ANDY NISBET

Fire gun at floor.

Give vest to Bonehead.

Wait for the gang to rescue Gringo.

To get key from chastity belt - wear gloves and pull string.

Wear Hat in Saloon.

Remove mask (when Gringo goes to the loo) Swap Guns.

Give sugar lumps to horse.

=====

LIFE TERM by JACKIE HOLT played on Spectrum

Send out an S.O.S.

To trap the pilot bolt the storeroom door.

You need dolls hair & glue to make a beard - dig top of refuse!

Bribe the officer with the money from the safe.

The pirates lock you in the hold - pick the lock with wire.

The wax is for your ears.

Operate the generator to get rid of the pirates.

Save a mans life to clear your name.

CLAWS OF DESPAIR by JACKIE HOLT played on Spectrum

You need all the cubes in the temple, take them in this order - Red, Violet, Yellow, Blue and Green.

Strangle the woman in the mire.

The combination of the safe is 78119.

Smear potion before taking the wand.

JINXTER by JACKIE HOLT played on Commodore

Make sure Jannedor is distracted before you enter her sanctum.

Take the crystal ball and hide up the chimney.

JACK THE RIPPER PART THREE by MIKE BRAILSFORD

Climb the column to find the key then open egg to reveal golden yolk.

Wear the wooden mask to pass the Ghoul.

Don't drop the pyramid or it will shatter.

Examine the fountain to find the gold ball.

FROM OUT OF A DARK NIGHT SKY by ANDY NISBET

Stuck in car? Feel dashboard twice!

Pull bonnet catch from inside car.

Examine a sign for nails.

In boot - lift carpet.

Stand pipe - search nettles.



SEARCH FOR TERRESTRIAL INTELLIGENCE by ANDY NISBET

Just take walking stick, silver nuggets and glasses from plane.

In the chemists melt silver.

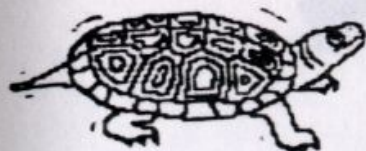
Get bowl from restaurant.

Examine the raincoat for some smelly cheese.

You need a lens to read the eyechart for code to read green book.

Wear riding hat and crash helmet for a reinforced hat.

To pass pole in road wear reinforced hat and ride horse.



Getting You Started



JACK THE RIPPER PART THREE by MIKE BRAILSFORD

Kerugma, S, climb column, get key, examine key, D, look in crack, N, N, examine carvings, examine arch, open door, N, look through gate, W, examine statue, read lettering, E, N, examine statue, read lettering, S, E, examine statue, read lettering, move statue, examine cavity, examine object, close egg, open egg, W, examine pedestal, put yolk on pedestal, take mask and examine it.....

SKELVULLYN TWINE PART 1 by JOAN WILLIAMS

Start at Skerrig Green: W, W, N, take armour, N, examine window, take shard, examine cupboard, cut rope, take jar, examine pig, break pig, take coin, S, S, E, E, N, buy sickle, S, S, S, wear armour, stroke hedgehog, S, S, take book, read book, drop book, read parchment, S, U, SW, SE, say hello.....

SKELVULLYN TWINE PART 2 by JOAN WILLIAMS

E, E, exam stumps, chop stump, E, E, E, fill bowl, W, throw water (to free beetle), E, E, E, E, E, E, exam pfrump, light pfrump (you will then be surrounded by fire. The beetle you saved will come along), ride beetle, U, U, chop wall (to get firewood), chop skeleton (to get cloak), D, W, N, light fire.....

FISH by SHARON LOWNDES

ENTERING SMOOTH WARP TO CLEARING:

SE, SE, E, open cage and cupboard, take hammer, tongs and crucible, W, NW, NW, wait until Mickey leaves, take disc, S, S, E, E, take mould, wear gloves, put disc in crucible.....

ENTERING SMALL WARP TO LOUNGE:

(You will be continually interrupted by producer yelling for coffee when he does go to loounge and ask Rod to make coffee). Look in waste bin, take ferric cassette, W, W, turn on switch, open wooden door, S, look in tape bin, take chrome and metal cassettes, N, open secondary door, N, open cupboard, take cleaner.....

ENTERING JAGGED WARP TO BACK OF VAN:

Wear jeans, S, search rubbish, take torch, E, E, E, S, take pew and turn off torch, N, N, drop pew and turn on torch, D, S, yes, move lid, D, examine altar, take cord, U, N, U, stand on pew, W, tie cord to gargoyle, D, pull cord, take gargoyle and untie cord.....

Getting you started by Sam Dart.

AFTERSHOCK

Start - In Your Office. Take chair and radio, e, e, examine lift, drop chair, climb on chair, remove panel, climb out of lift, d, s, w to Utility Room, switch off isolator, examine bench, take torch, e, e, e, up to Alley, e, s, e, n, e, e.

Zoo Entrance. N, e, s to Park Area, examine bin, take bottle, n, w, s, w, n to wrecked tanker, fill bottle with oil, s, w, s, s, s to Scott Street, d.

Storm Drain. Switch on torch, e to Sewer, s, e, e, take handle, n, w, w, s, fit handle to sluiceway, lubricate mechanism with oil, open sluiceway (the water in the underground station tunnel will now drain away), drop bottle, s, n, w, n, up, n, d.

Cook Street Underground Station. E, up to Byron Square, s, e, s to Filling Station, enter kiosk, take screwdriver, n, climb over rubble to Waste Ground, take beam, w (the looters see the radio and leave you alone), drop radio, w (soldiers searching for looters), s, open gates, look, w to Garden, open door, look, w.

Hallway of Derelict House. Support stairs with beam, up, w, n, w, s, w, up to Roof of Old Building, climb down to parapet, jump onto roof (Apartment Block), d, s, e to Castle Road, drop torch and screwdriver, take buns, w, n, up to roof, jump onto parapet, climb up roof, d, e, n, e, s, e, d, e, e, n, e, e, climb over rubble.

.....

Sorcerer

NOTE. Often the command "read" will pick up the object you wish to read, so some "get" commands have been omitted. Sleep when prompted.

Start - Twisted Forest. Inventory (you wake up in bed and it is pitch black), Frotz me, inventory, read Spell Book, get out of bed, w, read note (it is from Frobar), drop note, s, s, w to Store Room, get Ochre Vial and matchbook (the calendar is not needed), examine matchbook, read it, examine Ochre Vial, read it - BERZIO Potion, open Ochre Vial, drink potion, drop Ochre Vial, e.

Lobby. Open brass receptacle, put matchbook in receptacle, n, n, w to Belboz's Quarters, examine desk, open drawer, examine box, open box, get magic amulet (you are now wearing it), examine amulet (jewel is dark), examine journal, examine wall hanging, look behind it, get key, open journal (with the key), read it (make a note of the random code), examine infotater, drop key and journal, e, s, w.

Helistar's Quarters. Read shiny Scroll - GASPAR Spell, Gnusto Gaspar, e, s, e to Library, read dusty Scroll - MEEF Spell, Gnusto Meef, w to Lobby, open receptacle, read Orange Vial - VILSTU Potion, d to Cellar, (read the infotater included in your game package), push buttons in the correct order to match the code in the journal, read moldy Scroll - AIMFIZ Spell, up to Lobby, Aimfiz Belboz.

.....

SHARPES DEEDS

By EMMA HEGGIE played on the Amstrad

PART TWO

Back at the narrow lane I ignored the road to the west and walked south. The quiet country road seemed peaceful until I was stopped by an angry hissing. Blocking my way was a large and angry swan. Every time I tried to get past it flapped its powerful wings and hissed even more loudly at me. In desperation I threw the bread I had saved for breakfast at it, which the bird snapped up and then waddled happily off to the river to the south. At that point the road turned southeast, and ended on the northern river bank. A path ran east to west alongside the river, and I walked along to the west for a short way. The path ended at an old mill. To the south I could see the swan I had fed earlier swimming happily on the river. Trying to forget how hungry I was I entered the mill to the west. Inside was a dusty room with flour sacks thrown onto the floor. A hammer lay to one side. I took the hammer and before I left I poked around in the old sacks. Underneath them I found a torch, but it was of little use as it had no batteries.

I returned eastwards along the path, and continuing east soon arrived in a soggy marsh. Treading very carefully I travelled north, then east and south. On a small hummock in the centre of the marsh was a clump of bushes. As I searched through these I found an old oar half hidden under the leaves. Taking this I retraced my steps back to the northern bank. It only took moments to inflate the dinghy using the bellows. With the oar to help me I crossed the river, but as I scrambled out on the other side the boat slipped away from me and sailed off downstream. I threw down the oar in disgust and dropped the bellows before continuing on my exploration.

I followed a rough track southeast and came to the end of the track with a field to the west and a high wall to the east. In the field was a sign which read "Beware of the Bull". As I could see nothing in the field I opened the gate and went west towards some woods in the distance. My eyes had deceived me, however, as there was a bull in the field which was now pawing the ground and preparing to charge! Remembering the stories about bulls being attracted by the colour red, I took out the red flag from the station and waved it for all I was worth. The bull charged towards me and I barely managed to jump out of the way in time. The bull, however, was going too fast to stop and fell headlong into the river! The way was now clear for me to cross the field into the dark and creepy woods on the other side. I walked south, west, west, north and west until I came to the old ruined folly I had read about in the guide book. A pile of rubble lay beside the folly, and as I kicked it around I found that someone had dropped a key there. Taking this I returned through the woods to the wall I had seen at the end of the rough track.

The wall was too high to climb, but underneath the ivy that covered it I found a gate. I carefully opened this and went east onto an overgrown drive. To the east I could see a large grey stone house, which looked very neglected. Nearby to the south I could see some outhouses, and decided to investigate them first.

I walked south into what seemed to be the stable yard, surrounded by near-derelict stable buildings. To the east was a sagging old barn in which I found a length of rope that did not seem too rotten. Back in the yard I went southwest, but all I found in that direction was an empty paddock. To the south of the yard was the main stable building. As I entered I could see a ladder rising into the hay loft, but my path was blocked by the stable's occupant, a large stallion that reared up every time I came near it. Leaving the stable for the time being, I returned to the yard and went southwest. This was the orchard, and on the ground underneath the trees lay some apples, blown down by the wind. I picked these up as I still had not had any breakfast, but closer inspection showed that they were cooking apples, and not eating apples. I took them along anyway and went back to the yard. To the west was a shabby tennis court and an old tennis ball lay on the cracked surface. I picked up the ball, and bounced it a couple of times, but it fell to bits in my hand, leaving me clutching a hard object that must have been hidden inside. It was an Amethyst, the first of Uncle Ferdinands twelve treasures! Delighted by my find, I returned to the drive and continued east towards the house.

I soon stood outside a wooden door. A plaque beside the door confirmed that this was Sharpley Court. Uncle Ferdinand's home. The door was locked, but I quickly opened it with the key from the folly, and went east into the main entrance hall. The hall was in need of redecorating, and had a scruffy appearance. To the north of the hall was the dining room, the table riddled with woodworm. I went east from there into the music room, which seemed to have survived quite well. In the centre of the room was a piano, and nearby stood a Lyre. I sat down at the piano and let rip with a few bars of Chopsticks, but the tone of the music was rather stringy. Opening the piano to see what was wrong, I found the cause - a string of pearls, the second treasure.

Taking the Lyre I returned to the dining room and went north, into the kitchen. An antique range dominated one wall of the kitchen but in the centre of the room, blocking my way ahead, was the cook, a rather plump lady. Thinking quickly, I gave her the cooking apples from the Orchard, and smiling at me, she vanished into thin air! Feeling a shiver run up and down my spine I went east into the pantry. There was nothing suitable for my breakfast in the larder. In fact all there was to eat were some sugar cubes. I picked these up and put them in my pocket, and went east back into the kitchen. From there I returned to the entrance hall and dropped the two treasures I had found before leaving the house and returning to the stable yard. Going south into the stable, I fed the sugar lumps to the stallion, who neighed and cantered off into the paddock, leaving the way clear for me to climb the ladder to the hay-loft. Here I found a huge pile of straw. I dug into this with my hands and found something hard and cold. Pulling it out, I found it was a gold ingot!

I returned to the entrance hall and dropped the ingot with the rest of the treasures. Then I went south into the living room, where the wallpaper was peeling from the walls with damp. Ignoring the door to the south I walked east into the library. The shelves were empty apart from two books. The first was a bible which had an inscription saying that it belonged to the Vicar of Sharpley. The other was a copy of "The Wind in the Willows". I took the bible in case I ran into the Vicar again and went south through the library into the study. All there was in this room was an old wooden desk which I opened to find a shopping list and some batteries. The list read

"apples, sugar, walnuts and cider". I had already found the apples and sugar, and I made a mental note to look out for the other two items, especially the cider! I took the batteries and put them in the torch and returned north and west to the living room.

This time I went through the south door into the parlour. This was a cozy room, with an unlit fireplace in one corner. The fireplace was surrounded by panels, and as I leant against these to try to work out my next move, I heard a grating sound, and a door opened in the back of the fireplace! I carefully crept through the tiny doorway to the west and found myself in a little room containing only a wall safe with a dial. I turned the dial and to my surprise the safe opened to reveal an ivory elephant. Wishing that all safes were as easy to open I took the elephant and returned to the entrance hall where I left it with the other treasures. I went back north to the kitchen, and then went eastwards into the conservatory. The only plant left was a rubber plant in a pot and that was dead. I also noticed some steps leading down to a cellar, but decided to leave this until later. Picking up the pot, I returned to the entrance hall.

Having explored the ground floor pretty thoroughly, I climbed the stairs to the first floor to the landing, where a suit of rusty armour stood. I went south along the landing to a narrow corridor, with doors to the west, east and south. I checked the east door first, and found a bedroom with a mirror and a pair of shoes. After checking in the mirror that I was as beautiful as ever, I examined the shoes, which had special non-slip soles. They seemed to be in my size (coincidence, huh?) so I slipped them on and returned to the corridor.

The south door led into a green painted bedroom, which contained an old dresser. I tried to open the dresser, but it was firmly locked, so I left it and went back north to the corridor. The western door opened onto a bright yellow bedroom. A bed stood in the centre of the room, and as I examined it carefully I found a Diamond Necklace hidden between the sheets. I returned to the landing and continued north into a red painted bedroom. To the west was a balcony, from which I had a good view across the river to the village in the distance.

I found nothing else so I returned to the landing and climbed the next flight of stairs to the second floor. To the east of this landing was a blue bedroom, but this had a portrait of my uncle on one of the walls. I looked closely at the picture and found a note tucked into the frame. This read: "Such Capital Treasure". Pondering on this I returned to the landing and went north into a purple bedroom. Weird! There was an alcove to the west which contained a seat and the Sharpe family crest. Under the seat was a note which read "Dropping from heights has a shattering effect". This gave me a sudden idea, and I rushed down the stairs and went north to the room with the balcony.

Standing on the balcony I threw the pot with the dead plant onto the drive far below. Then I rushed downstairs, out through the front door and west onto the drive. There lay the smashed remains of the pot, the dead rubber plant and a gleaming emerald. Taking the emerald, I returned to the entrance hall and dropped all the treasures I had found then went north to the kitchen and east through the conservatory onto the terrace.

To be continued.....

HEAVY ON THE MAGICK

The First Exit to Philosophus Grade. By Jay Gee - Amstrad

NOTE - To reduce journeys to some areas items have been collected while passing and then dropped at a convenient spot for later use.

"Door, ELEVEN, n (EXIT), s, e, ne, s, e, e, e, n, n, nw, s, w, n, r, examine jar, pick up jar, examine object, pick up shell, w, s, sw, drop slat, pick up flask, n, n, ne, e, ne, s, e, n, n, nw (Agile Stair Level 1), s, n, sw, w, examine rock, drop shell, pick up egg, e, ne, se (Agile Stair Level 2), sw, s, w, w, s, s, w.

Start. S (to centre), drop nugget and garlic, r, examine table, pick up key (COBALT), e, n, pick up clasp, s, w, w, s, e, sw, e, drop flask, call Apex, "Apex, water (answer is, "Talk Down To It), "Apex, thanks. "Water, fall. E, e, examine table, drop key (COBALT), n, e, s, e, "Guards, door (answer is, "Seek Fire Bird To Enter Door), w, n, w, s, w, w, "Water, fall. W, ne, w, n, e, r, Invoke ASTAROT. "Astarot, Nidus. S, e, n, se, sw, w, call Apex, "Apex, Phoenix (answer is, To A Full Nest Say The Name), examine nest, drop egg, "Apex, thanks. E, "Nest, Phoenix. "Phoenix, door (answer is, "Laza" To The Door), e, ne, nw, e, s, w, sw, n, w, w.

Start. E, n, drop clasp, w, nw, w, ne, nw, e, ne, e, blast Wraith, r, examine object, pick up snake, w, sw, w, ne, e, e, pick up key (MAGNUM), w, w, w, pick up key (BRONZE), w, se, w, blast Wyvern, l, examine object, pick up MANTIS, e, sw, se, e, se, e, s, w, l, examine table, drop mantis, w, drop key (MAGNUM), l, drop key (BRONZE), e, pick up mirror, pick up key (NICKEL), w, s, e, sw, e, pick up flask, "Water, fall. E, e, n, e, s, e "Door, Laza. N (PRACTICUS), s, w, n, w, s, w, n, nw, e (Hydra), e, se, e, sw, nw, ne, w, sw, se, w (Medusa), w, n, examine table, drop key (NICKEL), s, e, e, nw, ne, pick up bag, sw, se, w, w, n, ne, w.

Chasm. W, w, ne, e, ne, n, examine table, drop bag, s, sw, w, sw, se, s, e, "Water, fall. E, n, nw, pick up key (BRASS), e, e, se, e, sw, nw, ne, w, sw, se, w, w, n, ne, w, w, ne, e, ne, n, n, nw, pick up bone, w, blast wyvern, w, sw, s, s, s, ne, examine table, drop key (BRASS), n, e, ne, pick up bone, s, s, w, call Apex, "Apex, Rabak (answer is, "Talk to Rabak), "Apex, thanks. "Rabak, water. Sw, sw (Crypt), l, "Guards, door (answer is, "No South Door What A Shame Seek Erlistone For The Name). Ne, ne, "Rabak, water. E, n, n, sw, w, s, sw, n, n, n, ne, e, e, se, s, s, sw, w, sw, se, s, drop flask, mirror and snake, ne, w, n, e, r.

Start. Invoke MAGOT, "Magot, Erlistone (answer is, "Seek It In The Pit). E, n, n, n, e, n, ne, se, n (Agile Stair Level 3), s (Agile Stair Level 4), w, s, e, pick up key (IRON), s, s, pick up bone, n, n, w, n, e (Agile Stair Level 4), n (Agile Stair Level 3), sw, n, w, pick up key (LITHIC), e, e, pick up key (ALUM), s (Agile Stair Level 2), sw, s, w, w, s, s, w.

Start. Drop key (LITHIC), w, l, pick up key (BRONZE), e, e, n, n, n, e, n, ne, se, s, s, sw, se, w, nw, w, nw, examine table, drop key (BRONZE), n, sw, s, sw, drop key (IRON), s, pick up bone, s, e, examine table, drop key (ALUM), n, se, e, r, "Guards, door (answer is, "The Great Sign I In Free). Use the sign that you copied to find the password, "Door, Soronoros, n (PHILOSOPHUS).



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