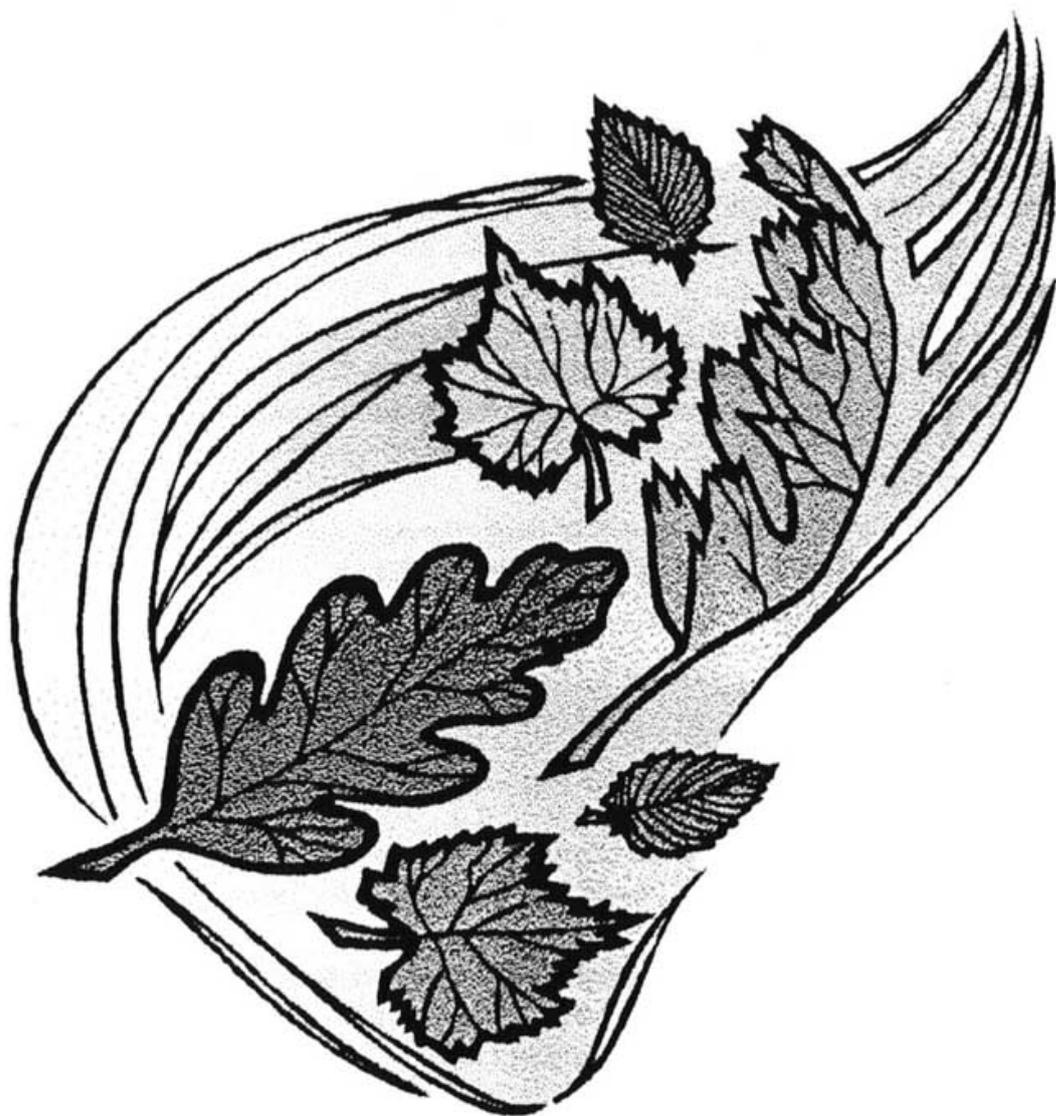


ADVENTURE PROBE

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If you write in it will be assumed that the letter is for publication in Probe unless it is clearly marked NOT FOR PUBLICATION or obviously just a covering note with a subscription or order etc.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

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Copies can be ordered monthly or in multiples up to 12 issues, sorry, no discount for quantity! Prices per issue:

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BACK ISSUES

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

ADVERTISING RATES

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

DISTRIBUTION

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

CONTRIBUTIONS

All contributions are gratefully accepted. Please keep me well supplied with computer and adventure-related material. It doesn't matter how brief it is - it may be exactly the information someone needs. It will be very helpful if items for different sections are on separate pieces of paper. It doesn't have to be printed or typed but best handwriting will be appreciated. Contributions can also be submitted on disc, which will save me a lot of typing.

POSTAL ADDRESS

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

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52 Burford Road, Liverpool L16 6AQ, U.K.

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HALL OF FAME

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

Frank Fridd, Bev Truter, Dorothy Millard, Marco Polo, Kez Gray,
Peter Clark, Edwina Brown, Laurence Creighton
and Peter Smith

Special thanks to:

The Copyshop, Allerton, Liverpool for printing the magazine

EDITORIAL

Welcome to another issue of Adventure probe.

I begin with some very sad news. My thanks to Karen, Larry, Dorothy and Jon for forwarding Ellen Mahon's message to me.

It is my sad task to tell readers that Wynne Snowdon died suddenly a few weeks ago. Although she hadn't subscribed to Probe for a while, she kept in touch via emails, and only a few days before her death she sent me a joke and a promise to lend me some adventure games.

Wynne gave up a promising career in the Royal Navy to look after her mother, and since her death, had suffered poor health herself and years of uncertainty and changes in her job. She had a very strong personality, and needed it to overcome all the problems life slung at her. Her most recent emails indicated that she was beginning to recover from her own health problems and was looking forward to the rest of her life. I was extremely shocked when Karen telephoned me with the news, and when I logged on there were 4 emails from Probers telling me the awful news.

Wynne will be missed, as even when things were at their lowest ebb (to use a naval phrase) she always had a joke and a witty comment. She deserves to Rest in Peace.

In the space left I would just like to ask readers to keep sending in contributions as I would like to distribute the December magazine as soon as possible, and the January 2001 issue mid-January, if possible. New text adventures are being playtested at the moment, and with a bit of luck there should be one or two ready before Christmas, and more soon after, so there's lots to look forward to.

All the best to everyone,

Barbara

LETTERS

From Kez Gray of Sankey Bridges

I read with interest some of your readers comments with regards to some of the problems concerning the Freeserve ISP. I can understand their worries as I myself have experienced a few problems with this particular ISP as I am one of their Freeserve Time Unlimited customers.

One particular thing that I find EXTREMELY annoying is that Freeserve now seem to have started a trend of disconnecting people from the internet if there is no sign of them flipping to another web page or site after ten minutes - which is a REAL pain in the bum for those of us who tend to do a lot of downloading (especially if the file you happen to be downloading is "non-resumable" once you finally get connected and end up having to start from scratch!). Another annoying thing Freeserve have seemingly been starting to do as well - is disconnecting clients after 2 hours of continual surfing regardless of WHAT package they have. As I said I took up with the Freeserve Time Unlimited from when it first started (N.B. - this package is suppose to give you exactly that - UNLIMITED access to the internet, day OR night, 24 hours, 7days a week - etc..). EXCUSE me Freeserve guys - er, hello? Is there anybody in there? - To my knowledge UNLIMITED means like we are allowed access 24/7 any time we like day or night preferably without being continually DISCONNECTED.....ARG! IT'S SO ANNOYING!!!

Ps: A note to any other Freeserve Time Unlimited customers who are having similar problems.....just get one of the neighbourhood cats into the habit of sleeping on your head when you venture into the streets - that way no-one will really notice all the bald patches where you've been tearing out your lovely locks!

*

I came across the following article about Freeserve. Although it is dated 1st November, I haven't noticed any improvement, and I'm glad they are not my first choice server. (Barbara)

Freeserve Continue To Improve?
Wednesday November 1, 2000

We are aware that many of you are still struggling with the UK's largest ISP, but is the situation starting to improve?

Freeserve have updated their status page again with the following:

As stated in our service update on Thursday 19th October, we are currently undergoing an extensive programme to implement further capacity upgrades to our network over the next few months.

The impact of this work is that Freeserve members will experience a gradual improvement in service levels as we complete capacity upgrades on a weekly basis. Members who currently have problems connecting to our service should experience a significant improvement in the next nine weeks.

This week we have completed the following work as part of our capacity upgrade programme.

4,000 additional modems have been installed on our core network. The final testing will be completed over the next few days and they will be fully operational by the end of this week. The modems can be used by No Ties, Off Peak and Unlimited Freeserve Time members.

We are continuing our programme of moving Off Peak traffic onto a dedicated Internet only network (CVX IP network). Last week we successfully implemented an additional 2,160 modem sports onto the CVX IP network. This will benefit all members, as migrating Off Peak traffic onto this network will free up capacity on our core network for Unlimited and No Ties members.

Freeserve are currently recalculating staff share options because a prolonged slump in the company's share price has made the options virtually worthless.

The shares have fallen from a peak of 921p in February to 155p this week. Freeserve will become the first high-profile UK company to recalculate share options. The move suggests that Freeserve does not expect a share price recovery soon.

*

At the time of writing this (3.00pm on 21st November) Freeserve shares are £1.42, down 4p from the start of the day. (Barbara)

From Bev Truter of Carnegie, Australia

Probe arrived this morning, and I have just finished browsing through it. Loved the "Bill's Windows Swills" poem, as in the Cat in the Hat books! Also was interested to read the article by George Rawson, and his problems with Freeserve. Ash has always used one of the non-free service providers, as he reckons there are almost always problems with using the "freebie" ones. Although I know plenty of people who use hotmail.com with no complaints, but then I think there's a limit to the amount/size of stuff you can send or download, I'm not sure, though.

Barbara, I noticed that both my games are selling for about 50p less than the other games you've advertised; it's probably my fault for not making it clearer, but I meant you to make a small profit, if possible, and offer them for £2 - is it too late to change "Cardi" to £2 now?? I have almost finished playtesting Lyn's new game, and when I send that to you, perhaps you can offer it together on the same disk as "Cardi", for £2, without upsetting anyone who might have bought "Cardi" at the cheaper (£1.50) going rate. Anyhow, I just felt rather mean, being the only person without the "all proceeds donated to Probe Fund" banner across the bottom of the ad!!

Aha! Everyone likes a nice challenge, and I'm pleased to have recognized the text game you mentioned having the clues for in a .TXT file; the one where you start with a red shirt, but there's a green one in your backpack. As several people have probably already told you, the game is an old ST one called WORLD, which was rewritten in at least 2 versions for the PC in about 1988. I'm sending you the PC version, together with a review of it, and some hints, in case you'd like to use them for Probe. It was rather fun, playing detective for a while, and persuading my memory to come up with the title...I remembered playing it about 3 or 4 years ago, and being rather impressed by it, which was probably why I ultimately remembered the title.

Oh yes, and a final tit-bit; I noticed a few issues ago (possibly last issue??) in Probe that there was a lovely list of howlers sent in by Laurence Creighton, I think, re sports commentators and some of the amusing blunders they came out with. Well, just before the Olympic Games started here, I was listening to the pre-Opening Ceremony hoo-hah on telly while ironing; and heard the following classic:

"....and globally, world-wide, it's estimated that 3.8 BILLION people will be watching this Opening Ceremony on television all over the world!!! That's more than 3 billion people!!!....."

*

My thanks to Joan Williams and Bev for telling me the mystery file is for World. Joan said she didn't managed to complete the game (it stumped me, too!) so Bev's review and especially the hints will be much appreciated.

I replied to Bev, apologizing for the misunderstanding about the cost of the adventures - I thought they were Public Domain. She sent me the following email, clarifying the situation and I have now increased the price (Barbara)

Ta for the e-mail; and no, I've only sent my games to you and Sue, so that doesn't count as "PD!" I might eventually bung Lyn's 2 games, and my last two on the .gmd site on the 'Net, but only after a couple of years or so - no rush to see my name up in lights. So I'd be delighted if you can manage to make even a measly 50p from selling them; and the same goes for Lyn's latest game (To Catch a Rainbow), which is *almost* finished.

From Mary Scott-Parker of Carlisle

I have now read both Carpe Jugulum and The Fifth Elephant and, between the two, I have to come down on the side of Carpe Jugulum - although it is never going to be my favourite. I was delighted to see that the witches featured again and they are undoubtedly my favourite Pratchett characters. He just "does" old women so well! He has their speech patterns, thoughts and feelings off to such a fine art that I suspect he himself must have had a granny very similar to Granny Weatherwax - without the broomstick, of course. His understanding of "old women" and their ailments, funny ways and sayings is downright uncanny.

The Fifth Elephant, while I enjoyed the "Scone of Stone" joke, I found some of the characters' names too similar and I kept confusing them - but then I'm easily confused these days. As to the best Pratchett book of them all well, I'm still reading. I have to be honest - if I had read The Colour of Magic [the first one] first, I might never have gone on to read the rest of the series. It seemed to me that he really hit his stride with the appearance of the witches in Equal Rites, the fourth Discworld book, and I would advise anyone wondering where [of if] they should begin, to start with this one. His books aimed at children [literarily not literally!] as once pointed out by Steve Clay in a much earlier article, are well worth a read too. I, too, Steve, still smile at the thought of "Wobbler" who could be seen for miles, because of his camouflage trousers.

Robert Rankin, while undoubtedly a very witty and amusing writer, has a much darker and saucier sense of humour, that some might just find more offensive than the gentler "family" humour of Terry Pratchett.

From Peter Smith of Waterbeach

Just to mention (if I haven't bored you with this already) that I have done a stab at a graphic Adventure game database at:

<http://www.alofmethbin.com/advgamedatabase.html>

I'd appreciate any feedback if anyone's interested in looking at it. An equivalent database for text adventures is beyond me ...

It was good attending the Convention this last weekend and meeting some faces behind names. You're probably up to date on events I assume from other people.

*

If you can help Peter compile his database, I'm sure he will be delighted to hear from you. If/when I have the time, I would really like to compile a list of all text adventures. (Barbara)

PUZZLES by Edwina Brown

1. A light bulb is enclosed in a black box, Outside there are two switches, and neither, one or both could control the bulb. The bulb is currently switched off. You can use the switches as often as you wish but you're only allowed to open the box once - after which you must close the box and decide which switches (if any) control the bulb. How do you do it?

2. With one stroke of the pen, can you make this sum add up?

$$1 + 2 - 3 = 139$$

3. "How much does one cost?" asked the customer to the shopkeeper.

"£1," was the reply.

"What about 10?"

"£2."

"O.K, I'll take 250, please."

"That will be £3."

Can you explain this?

REVIEWS

ESCAPE FROM THE ARBORETUM

Written by "Nik"

Reviewed by Bev Truter on PC

You live in a drab, unexciting world called Arboretum, where fun and enjoyment are totally alien concepts. Therefore your aim in this game is to contact an outside force and escape the evil mind-numbing powers of the Arboretum. As the story opens you find yourself alone in the living-room of your house.

This is all the introduction you get before plunging headlong into Arboretum, a freeware TADS game of medium-level difficulty with a wide range of fairly easy problems to solve and obstacles to overcome. Although many of the puzzles / problems are unoriginal and obviously recycled from other old text adventures they are still fun to tackle; and the torch problem had me stumped for ages. The torch is easily found, as are the batteries for it - but it obstinately refuses to work when switched on. Hmmmm. This obviously required some more thought on my part.

Much of the game is spent wandering around your strangely-deserted neighbourhood, with most of the population absent altogether. There's your own house to explore, a neighbouring house, the church and graveyard, the local pub, and a few shops. You'll have to work out a way of getting across the canal which eventually bars your progress to the west, and how to get past a dog in the beer garden of the pub. The few signs of habitation you find indicate that this is a suburban hippy community in which you live, and you do stumble across one semi-comatose example of the species - too stoned to either provide help or be a hindrance.

Some of the live "problems" you will have to deal with are a slug, the dog, a colony of fleas and a rather sweet zombie. Examining everything usually gives a clue about how to overcome the present problem or how to deal with a particular animal or creature; and it helps to read all signs, labels, pieces of paper, etc. Finding a nice assortment of hardware would be handy too.

Wandering about in some of the outdoor locations reveals a strangely-shaped patch of scorched grass - aha! Could this be a sign of the "outside force" you must contact? A thorough search of the indoor locations will provide you with a possible means of contacting the aliens, but there are a few problems involved with physically getting this object.

Arboretum is a very busy game, with plenty of puzzles for you to think about and tackle all at once, so it's fairly non-linear and you can progress quite rapidly to a healthy score. I found it interesting and entertaining, and although the location descriptions and writing are only average, Arboretum nonetheless manages to hold your attention with its many and varied puzzles. There's a strange compulsion in playing Arboretum - you can work out most of the time what item you need to solve a particular problem; but where the heck is it?

I couldn't find this on the Internet, but I have a copy of the PC version so if anyone would like a copy please send a formatted blank disc and return postage, or £1.50 to cover costs. If anyone does find a site offering it please let me know. (Barbara)

ESPIONAGE ISLAND

Adventure 'D' by Artic Computing

Reviewed by Steve Clay on an Amiga under Spectrum emulation

Artic was a prolific producer of 8-bit software in the early eighties. Among several arcade games they released a handful of adventures. Espionage Island is one of the better of that handful. I hope to review 'Ship of Doom' in the future.

You are a special agent and your mission is to find the secret hidden by the enemy on the island and return that information to your leaders. The enemy are guarding there secret closely and follow the shoot now, ask later policy of security.

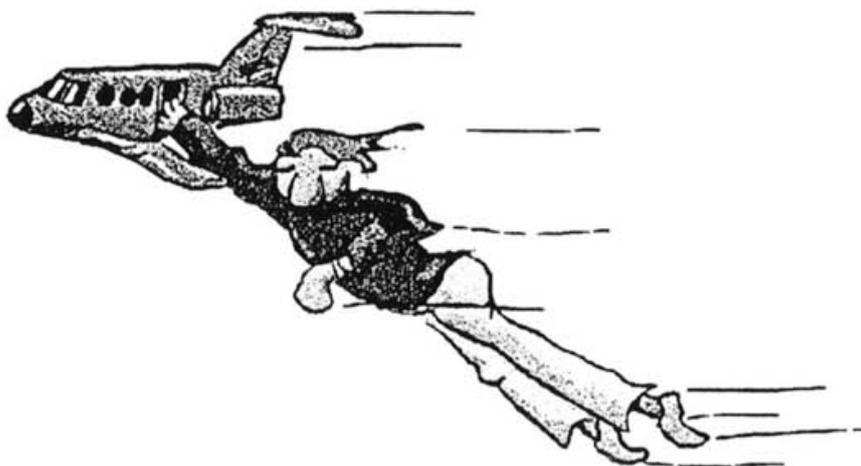
Espionage Island throws the player into the thick of it right from the start and is quite unforgiving in the early moments as you try to enter the correct sequence of inputs. You begin in your plane that is on a collision course with the ground. You are alone apart from a parachute and a door lever. Leaving the plane safely and untangling your messy landing gets the game off to a flying start, no pun intended. Once on the ground you should quickly find your plane, in a rather crumpled and charred state and a good look around here is useful. Each half of the game covers around twenty locations. Towards the middle is a 'MAZE' actually it is the 'Stitched Swamp' and is closer to a puzzle than a maze as it turns out. As is the way the solution is obvious once you have it. Beyond the swamp is a truck which helps get you into a mine system and the enemy camp beyond. The ending is a bit tricky thanks to the writers being nasty rather than providing a big puzzle to finish.

The game system is incredibly simplistic. The presentation - on the Spectrum - is a basic white screen, black ink, bog-standard Spectrum font jobby. Location descriptions are brief, seldom taking up a line on the screen. "You are in a jungle thicket. Exits: South, West" is one of the more lengthy descriptions to be had. Anything that can be manipulated is then listed under "You can also see:" I can't remember any useful response from the examine command. There are lots of annoying things about the parser that go with the territory of adventure games from nearly twenty years ago. The program seems reluctant to give you any information regarding your actions whether successful or not. A good tip is to describe again your location after trying things just in case. All that said there is something intriguing about this game. I treated it as a distant relative of modern text-adventures and if you can do that then the challenge becomes quite interesting. Guessing games with the parser are not always my cup of tea but at least in this game when you hit on the right response you know about it.

If you like good in-depth plots with luscious location descriptions then forget this. If you like to pit your wits against a game that relinquishes its secrets with barely concealed disappointment then try and find this somewhere, out there!

Espionage Island can be downloaded from the Internet (ftp://ftp.gmd.de/if-archive/games/spectrum/artic.zip) for A to F inclusive. These are for the PC under Spectrum emulation. If you don't have access to the Internet, or want a different format, I can offer them on tape or +D disc for Spectrum, also Amiga and PC under emulation - send a blank tape or formatted disc and return postage, or £1.50, to the Probe office. I will also include Ground Zero on request.

Also available on Peg-Leg-Pete CD from Zenobi Software. (Barbara)



FABLE

Reviewed by Peter Clark on a PC

I have had this game for some while now and only got around to playing it recently after upgrading my computer. That was not necessary to play this game, as it only requires a 486 machine and 2 Megs of memory.

It is what I would call a gentle game with plenty of time to wander around looking at things before entering into the game proper. It is in the same mould as the Kyrandia and Simon the Sorcerer games but not so large and without the sense of humour. The game falls into a well-worn scenario.

"The Mecubarz had come to this forgotten planet to create a civilisation filled with beauty, wisdom and power. A superior race, capable of taking or conceiving any form, particularly useful working forms such as the simple and naïve little humans in the village of Balkhane. In those days Ismael was a young priest with seemingly good intentions. As a High priest in the Cult of Mecubarz, Ismael was the only Balkhanian to know the secret to the great powers of Mecubarz. He and four other people set out to mastermind a treasonous plot that would radically change the apparently simple course of Balkhanian history. It was on this dark winter night that the four conspirators were condemned to rule the destiny and damnation of the people of Balkhane. Ismael's treacherous plan was doomed to failure, as he had seriously underestimated the vigilance of the Mecubarz.

The whole planet was split into four separate worlds. On each of these lands reigned a never changing dominion of Ice, Mist, Water and Fire. The four conspirators were caught and sentenced to exile in the four different lands. Before their final exodus, the Mecubarz placed four jewels in possession of each of the four conspirators. Koreez claimed the emerald. Angor claimed the diamond. Vivern took the sapphire. Chax took possession of the ruby. Ismael escaped an almost certain execution and his whereabouts to this day are unknown. The adventure in which you embark is the story of how, once upon a time, a young boy named Quickthorpe set out on a journey through the lost worlds of Balkhane."

The first land that you visit is the Frozen Lands where your quest is to kill the Ice Giant. You will need to interact with several characters before this becomes possible. A thief needs a fair amount of bribing before access to the whole land is possible and making friends with Simbeline, the Goddess of the Lake is a must. Meetings with bandits and Ogres are all part of this section of the game before succeeding in your quest, obtaining the emerald and being transported to the Land of Mists.

Before you can get the second of the gems you must kill the Snake Demon and then persuade the captain of the ship in the harbour to take you to the Engulfed Fortress that lies beneath the sea. Here your adversary is a Gorgon. You must enlist the help of crabs and sea horses before this task can be completed. It is in this part of the game that you find the one and only maze in the game. You will have to negotiate this maze on several occasions and I managed to do this just walking about and not making a map but, if you like making maps of mazes, this is your chance. Having despatched the Gorgon you make your way to the final land, The Land of Shadows. The problem here is in the form of the Fire Demon and it was in this part of the game that I thought that I had blown it as I was captured and thrown into a prison cell. It proved possible to escape from here, however and go on to chat to the Grim Reaper before finding a way of crossing the River Styx and going on to the final confrontation. Lastly, you have to make your way back to the caves where you killed the Gorgon and complete the game.

I found the game very enjoyable to play although it is not very big. It has the usual point and click method of control with a central map for each land rather in the fashion of the Monkey Island games. I thought these maps were a little awkward in some parts and found myself going back and forth several times before getting to where I wanted to be. It is possible to be killed in several parts of the game but when this happens there is no screen prompt for starting another game. The game just froze and left it to you to work out that you were dead. The only other complaint that I have is the rather weak ending. However, I would recommend this game for a bit of light entertainment when you don't feel like taxing the brain too much. I believe that the game was first published by Telstar in 1996 and I 'm not sure if it is still available but you may find it in a sale or on a cheap re-issue.

I can't find a copy anywhere. If someone knows a retailer, please let me know. (Barbara)



GO WEST YOUNG MAN

Review by Dorothy Millard played on a PC under Spectrum emulation

It is hard to know, but I assume there was a story and instructions on a cassette inlay that originally came with this game and maybe this also gave the author's name. I have no idea whether it was commercially released or whether it was just a game someone produced for fun. I suspect the latter. My copy was downloaded from the Internet. The objective appears to be to find Old Jake Samson's treasure and bring it back to the outskirts of Deadwood (the start location) for a reward. Along the way you will kill MANY people. Other than increasing your score I cannot really see the purpose of killing most of the characters, other than the gunfighter who challenges you. You must kill people like the shopkeeper, the gravedigger, the gunsmith, the carpenter, a squaw, the tailor, the hardware assistant, the cashier in the bank and the undertaker, although after killing the undertaker and the gravedigger I'm not sure who is going to bury all these people you keep killing. Most of the characters appear innocent enough and don't try to harm you in any way, but you must kill them anyway if you want to get full score. Talking of the score, it isn't actually possible to get full score (I added it up) unless you cheat and pick up several objects more than once. I know you shouldn't be able to do that to increase your score, but you can.

There are lots of locations and you will need a large sheet of paper in order to map the game. However, it is easy to map and most locations branch off from the main street which runs through Deadwood. The puzzles are relatively easy and most of my time was spent mapping. It is necessary throughout the game to eat regularly but this isn't a problem as there is heaps of food and drink which is easily obtainable. You are allowed to carry up to 20 items but there are a large number of red herrings, also all the food and drink found isn't necessary to complete the game. You must make sure you don't purchase too much, otherwise you won't have enough left at the end to shoe the horse which is necessary before crossing the desert.

There are some parts in Go West Young Man which are just begging for a puzzle, i.e. in the sheriff's office you meet a man in a cell who is crying out in pain, but there is nothing you can do for him, nor can you release him. What's the point? At another part of the game I met a priest and as I was carrying the bible and rosary beads, I really wanted to give the bible or the rosary beads to him, but it isn't possible. The only purpose the priest seems to serve is to lose you points if you are unfortunate enough to try to kill him. There is a safe which kills you if you open it. It would have been nice if you found something first and had to find a way to prevent yourself being killed.

You have to kill the carpenter, but it would have been a better story if he had to make you something first. There are many instances like this. Despite the above, it's not really a bad game, but not enough thought has been put into the story and puzzles. The game could have been so much better.

WORLD (version 1.06)

J.D. McDonald (1988)

Reviewed by Bev Truter on PC

Apparently this text adventure has been around for ages (for the ST originally), but this version for the PC certainly doesn't show its age. WORLD is a gloriously long and complicated text adventure with a sci-fi flavour that should keep you occupied for months - real heavy-duty adventuring required on this one! There is none of the usual amateurish feel to WORLD, and it will draw you into the gameworld from the word go with vivid descriptions and good atmosphere. Problems and puzzles abound, most of them quite complicated, so this is not a game for beginners or the chronically impatient.

Since I'm not overly fond of text adventures with a SF setting - stuck on a strange planet and can you get back to your ship type of theme - I wasn't expecting much from WORLD when I first loaded it on the old computer about 3 years ago (yes, it HAS taken me that long to finish, and with lots of help too!). But I was hooked from the beginning, despite my pathetic scores - 15/450 after one month's play; then a quantum leap to 35/450 after another fortnight. At this rate it was going to take me ... umm ... about 53 years to complete the whole game. However, thanks to some help via the Internet the end is nigh, and I've thoroughly enjoyed the time spent playing it.

The plot is apparently dead simple - you are part of a scientific expedition which has landed on a strange world, and you have been sent ahead to scout around and collect anything interesting. Your mother-ship orbiting this planet is unable to transmit or receive any information, due to the thick layer of mist which permanently covers the alien world. So off you toddle on your lonesome, with a knapsackful of essentials on your back and high hopes. The aim of the game then is to collect objects, observe things, and find a way out of the valley where your adventure begins.

WORLD looks good visually, with white text on a blue screen, red status line; and location, score and moves in yellow. The game consists of one short .EXE file, and it loads, saves and restores in the blink of an eye.

Typing HELP at any point during the game brings up 3 screensful of help and hints on how to play, and my only gripe about the technicalities of WORLD is that the word EXAMINE has to be entered in full. I scoured all the files and help screens, positive I'd overlooked something, but EXAMINE it is - no shortcuts or abbreviations. But don't let this very minor detail put you off, overall WORLD is a beauty of a game. And to cap it all, it's free - no payment requested.

Points are given for collecting certain items, for solving problems, and for entering some locations. There are about 190 locations in all, divided into 6 distinctly different areas. The valley that you begin the adventure in seems to have odd barriers or force fields at its extremities, through which you catch glimpses of different worlds. You can get through most of these force fields by using "run <direction>", but eventually you have to find an appropriate way of entering each world, with the necessary equipment to overcome different problems encountered in each.

The first area you'll discover after leaving the valley is a huge underground alien-made complex, with some familiar and not so familiar equipment to fiddle about with, including a rather nice robot. It's obvious you can command him (it?) to do certain things - but can you speak his language? Or is it possible he might be able to speak English? There's also an awful lot of ordinary-looking equipment in a Darkroom that you'll have to discover how to use - but what do you insert, and where? (No rude comments, thanks; that was rhetorical).

The Mars-like world is particularly enjoyable, and if you travel around it at night you'll bump into some of the local inhabitants, as well as having a chance to observe their favourite sport - a type of ice-hockey, minus the ice. There's a light source somewhere here as well, which means you can race off to explore the underground caves that were too dark to enter earlier.....

WORLD has an immensely satisfying endgame and conclusion - some real food for thought there. Another likeable feature of gameplay is that brains are definitely superior to brawn here, and you have no opportunity (or weapons) to kill anyone - so tough cheese if your idea of fun is playing "Doom", and your hero is a cross between Arnie Schwarzenwotsit and Jean-Claude van Damme. This is generally a hugely appealing and entertaining game, and I'm amazed at how well it compares with even the best of recent text adventures, Jigsaw and Theatre being two that spring to mind immediately. Considering WORLD is more than a decade old now, J.D. McDonald deserves a huge round of applause for creating a game that has worn so well.

MY FOURTH CONVENTION by Edwina Brown

As Frank, my husband has had a number of strokes since last year, and is now housebound, there were times when I thought I would not be able to get to this years convention. The family however thought differently. They persuaded me that it would be best for both of us if I were to take a break, and organised the weekend so that I could. Gary, number three son, would be here from Friday morning until Saturday lunchtime, when he himself was going away. Rory, eldest son, would get here during that morning and stay until Sunday morning, when Fiona, elder daughter, would take over until I got back. David our next door neighbour, had promised to pop in from time to time, to make sure all was well.

Friday morning arrived and Gary drove me to the outskirts of Cambridge where I was to meet up with Sue Roseblade and John Roscoe, who were taking me, and soon we were on our way. At times the traffic was slow, but we had a pleasant journey and, as Sue knew the route. no problems in finding the hotel.

After booking in, we went to our rooms to unpack. This done I went down to the lounge, where a group of Probers had already gathered. Soon others joined us, and before long talk turned to where we would dine that evening. Some of us wandered over to where menus were displayed, to see what the hotel had to offer. As a three course meal was just £10.95, we decided to eat in, instead of making the usual foray into town.

This decided, we made our way to the restaurant, where a table big enough to seat us all was provided. I enjoyed the meal, especially the slice of strawberry cheesecake, which was very big, very creamy and very fattening! I sat between Colin Steele and John Roscoe, which turned out to be a very good choice of companions. Colin, the perfect gentleman, held my chair for me, every time I returned from the buffet, and John gave me tips on how to make a Yorkshire pudding, which, he assured me, would turn out light and crispy every time. Since getting home I have followed them, and he is right. Thanks John.

Back in the lounge we gathered in an ever widening circle, and the fun began. Frank Fridd was volunteered to write next year's Megapoints game, and Jon Scott had us in stitches suggesting puzzles for it. The evening passed too quickly and gradually or numbers depleted, until I too decided to call it a day, and went to my room.

Morning arrived, and breakfast over I wandered in to the Kenilworth Suite, where computers were just beginning to be set up. Doreen Bardon was collecting pound coins, and handing out the necessary papers for her Megapoints game. I paid up, then sat down to read what it was all about. Soon it was my turn to play. It was a great game, which I thoroughly enjoyed, in spite of the fact that I found Ace's small font difficult to read. I ended up with the rather dire score of 76 out of 500.

Some old friends were missing this year, but to counterbalance that a few new ones turned up. I met Peter Smith, who was here for the first time, and we had a very interesting chat. Then later Hilary O'Connor introduced me to her husband Mick. At one point David Hebblethwaite (my favourite teenager) came over and we sat talking for a while. Then I watched him play Frank Fridd's Colditz Escape until it was time for the Megapoints result to be announced. Jenny Perry was the winner, with David Hebblethwaite a close runner up. I am afraid I cannot remember who came third. Then Vicky Jackson had an announcement to make. She told us that this was going to be her last convention, as she and her husband David were moving to Spain to live. I felt really sad about that, but wish them both well.

All too soon it was time to pack away the computers, and say goodbye to those who were only there for the day. Then I went to my room to get ready for the evening.

Once more we ate in, and after the meal, gathered in the lounge for our last evening together. Lorna Patterson had brought two photo albums with her, full of pictures taken at earlier conventions. In one, there were two photos of our dear editor, Barbara. For anyone who has never seen her, I can assure you she looks as nice as she sounds. Now I feel almost as if I have met her in person. The merriment went on until the early hours of the morning, when the last of us took ourselves, reluctantly, off to bed..

Next morning, bags packed I once more wandered down to breakfast. Colin and Larry were already there and soon we were joined by others. Then it was a case of 'The condemned woman ate a hearty breakfast', condemned that is, to have to wait another year before the next convention. Making the most of our last few hours, we once again congregated in the lounge until it was time to pay our bills, and make our way home.

The journey was uneventful, and took a lot less time than the outward one, as the traffic was quite light. We arrive to find Fiona, her husband Jim, and little grandson Joshua, with Frank, who was just finishing his lunch. When Sue and John had to leave it really was the end of the Convention 2000. Well, the next one is only a year away.

MY SECOND ADVENTURE CONVENTION

A report by Frank Fridd

My trip to Coventry started badly as my coach was twenty minutes late and then the driver could not shut the coach door. Apparently it is illegal to drive a coach with its door open so we had to wait another twenty minutes until a second coach came to take us to London, arriving over half an hour late. Luckily I still had plenty of time before catching the Coventry coach. That journey was uneventful and I got to Coventry in reasonable time. There I found a helpful bus driver who dropped me off near the hotel.

Walking into the hotel I saw that there were people already there including Edwina Brown, Bob Adams, Colin Steele and Jon Scott. After finding my room I freshened up and returned to the others in the lounge, which was part of the reception. I was pleased to find that Jon Scott and introduced myself to him. We had never met before even though he has converted two of my Amstrad games to the Spectrum. We all chatted together, with people like Larry Horsfield coming to join us, until just after seven.

I was the only one who wanted a bar meal so I went to the bar to have it while the others went to the restaurant. Before I could have it Vicky Jackson came into the bar and said that she had asked the restaurant staff whether it was alright for me to have my bar meal in the restaurant with the others and was told that it was okay. I thought that it was very kind of Vicky to do that. During this time Jon Scott kindly volunteered me to do next year's Megapoints game. Afterwards I think he felt a bit guilty as he then suggested that we did one together. Slowly our group got smaller as time passed by until it was gone one o'clock in the morning when Jon and I came up together to our separate bedrooms.

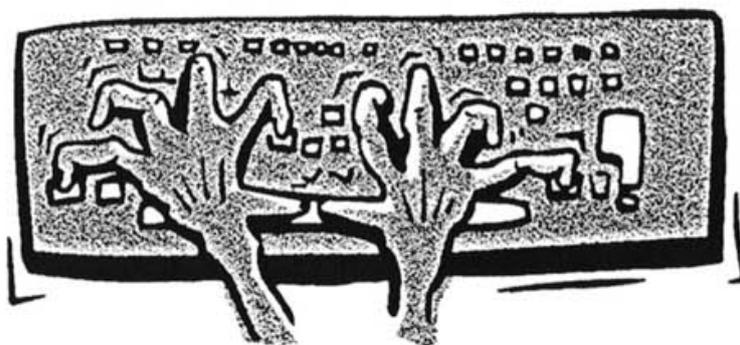
Saturday dawned grey, wet and windy but I got up anyway and went down to breakfast. After the meal I went into the convention room about nine fifteen and was disappointed that there were not many of use and only three computers set up although more turned up in a little while. Doreen Bardon kindly loaned me one of her computers and I loaded Colditz Escape into it. I then walked around the room looking at some games that were for sale. Vicky appeared with a clipboard taking names for the Megapoints game. When my turn came I, as usual, didn't do very well. I collected fifty-three points. Jenny Perry won it with a hundred and fifty-two points and David Hebblethwaite came second with a hundred and forty points. I loaded Colditz on any and all computers whose owners wished to have it. David Hebblethwaite again this year played my game and he almost finished part one (with my help).

On one of the computers was a game using Peter Clark's son's A.C.E. I was very impressed with the speed that the programme interpreted the game but I found that the wording on the screen a bit small for me. I also missed having Windows to work with although I was told there was a Windows version planned. During the day I ambled around the room playing on any computer that was free.

The day passed by quickly and soon it was time to pack up. Some of us returned to the lounge while the others went to their bedrooms to freshen up. After staying chatting for quite a while I went up to my room for a shave and wash before returning for more chat. It was gone seven o'clock before we all went to the restaurant. After the meal we returned to the lounge to talk. At twenty past two I decided that I had had enough, saying goodbye to the people left I went to my bedroom.

Sunday started bright and sunny. Going to breakfast I met some of the adventurers who had stayed the night at the hotel and afterwards we again went to the lounge for some more serious talking while we waited for the time to go home. As my coach was not leaving Coventry until one thirty there was only Colin Steele left at the hotel when it was time for me to go. Saying goodbye to Colin I walked to the bus stop for the buys to the coach station. As I arrived at the station in plenty of time I had a bite to eat before catching the coach to Victoria coach station. Twenty minutes in Victoria and I was on my way home, arriving in Margate early evening.

To me, for the second time, the adventure convention was roaring success and I enjoyed every minute of it. It was brilliant to meet fellow adventurers again and especially meeting Jon Scott for the first time. It was a pity that there were not more of us but it did not spoil my enjoyment and I will go again - in fact I have got to go if I am to do next year's Megapoints game!!



SENT TO COVENTRY by M.Polo

The eleventh convention of adventurers and fellow travellers took place on the three hundred and second day of the year of Our Lord two thousand. The prior day (the three-hundred-and-first, Julian like), however, the 'virtuous circle' of adventurers was formed in the Windy Chamber of the Hostel of the Coventry Hill (at Coventry in the County of the Western Midlands, that is near the City of Brum). Aforesaid circle spoke of things that would warm the heart. And make the stomach rumble. It was a merry occasion as, one by one, new travellers – weary and thirsty – made their way to the tavern within the hostel. Countless tankards of ale were drained. Victuals were consumed from the repertoire of the Chef with the White Hat. Culinary delights a-plenty there were as the night progressed.

But earlier, three guests – one from the Garden of the City of Welwyn, one from near to the City of York, and t'other from near to the City of London – were surprised as their sanctuaries within the hostel appeared to be not what they had requested. An adventurer and adventuress found that their sanctuaries was non smoking, while another adventuress' chamber was most definitely smoking: the situation remedied, some treats – of wine, sweetstuffs and fruit – were found to be in the new room. These were soon consumed.

Utterances of 'that dratted door keeps opening' and 'what are you having?' were interspersed with the polite conversation of the adventuring fraternity, who were nearly all assembled. Some folks were sadly missing, and would not be able to attend the convention. But they would perhaps next year, the year of our Lord two-thousand-and-one; when the knitting-circle would reconvene. But what of this knitting-circle? Who were these knitters and circlers? To be sure, there was no wool within the circle of chairs that had impromptu-ly formed in the Windy Chamber. Apart, that is, from woollen garments that were wrapped round the persons of the personages in the person-circle in the person-hostel. No one appeared to be knitting, although it could be said that there was a granny-knot.

Platters of sumptuous delicacies that were consumed that night by the Knights of the Round Circle. (Although rumour has it that it was a Round Oval by its flatness at some ends). An adventurer tried to eat a sprig of rosemary – without success.

Post-meal and post-my-stomach's-bursting-and-I'm-going-to-explode the party of weary but well-overmoulished travellers returned to the Windy

Chamber. It was suggested that they could ask for something for the wind, but judging by what had happened to another adventurer at a previous convention it was not considered. (Basically, as related by one of the travellers attending: an unnamed fellow-adventurer had been miffed by the storms blowing outside. He/she had gone down to the Room Down Below and asked the receptionist wench for something for the wind. To which he/she was told, 'Sorry, luv, you should try the apothecary down the lane...'). Some travellers simply relied on the heat generated by their nicotine-injecting-devices. The gathering continued basically until it stopped. Until no one was left. Until the room was empty – apart from 'that dratted door keeping opening'!!

After the dawn of the three-hundred-and-second day of the year of our Lord two thousand, sleepy-heads began to resurface: *id est*, from their sanctuaries, not from underwater. The well-slept and less-well-slept travellers began to consume the wonderful morning-feast that lay before them. And no one had dreadful hangovers. And the convention began in the Kenilworth Suite of the Hostel on Coventry Hill. Karen and Doreen collected one gold coin from each traveller, to enable them to partake of the highest-score competition: the fabled 'Meg a'Points'. 'Seek and Ye Shall Find' was not written on traditional vellum – the 'Spectrum vellum' – but rather on a new, stronger parchment known as *ideo bottilus mediculous parchenticus cordellius* (IBMPC). Needless to say, the usual suspects won the game. And I didn't.

Among the other delights was a new interactive-book by Frank also written on the IBMPC parchment. Larry had purchased a new machine. One that was small, compact and it was a laptop machine. And rumour had it that Larry was using it up a hill somewhere in the County of Yorkshire. Pandora's box was opened by Martin and Vicky. Said game went down well as did the numerous others that were on display at the convention of adventurers and fellow travellers.

As noon approached, some starting-to-get-a-bit-hungry adventurers partook of nosh from the warm-hearted wandering waitress who, when we warbled the watchword, we would wager would willingly wheel-in what we wacky wanderers wanted to wangle within the wickerwork wagon with the wares (without wastage) what would widen our waistlines in its wake. We forsook the 'spot-the-spelling-mistake' competition that had been done the evening before, and continued with our deliberations. It was shaping up to be another excellent convention; apart from the unfortunate reoccurrence of the annual practice of 'Balrog Bashing' that this author overheard.

Some adventurers disappeared for a while, presumably to find out what all this was about the Annual Meeting of the Coventry Naturist Club in one of

the upstairs suites (the Birthday Suite, presumably). Others forsook voyeurism, and sat outside or in the tavern to chat. The hardcore adventurers and fellow travellers inside the Kenilworth Suite continued to strive towards completing the games that they so desired to complete.

The Pattersons, Lorna and Danny, arrived after their long and tiring journey from the Land of the Scots. The Scotsfolk were welcomed to their umpteenth convention, and the innkeeper (forewarned) had the crate of Scotch whisky open and waiting for the inevitable surge in demand for the liquor: as more and more adventurers and fellow travellers would say, 'yes, Danny, we will try this Scotch that you are imbibing.' Later the same fellow-travellers were heard to say to Mr Patterson, "Svery nice . . . hic!" Some moving pictures of the convention that took place in the year of our Lord nineteen-hundred and ninety-one were viewed by some of those in attendance at the convention of the year of our Lord two thousand. Forsooth, those were the days.

Another convention nearly over but the highlight of the calendar for many, (this author included), and maybe not quite the first one of the twenty-first century. As we know, the calendar is reckoned from the year of our Lord one, (first century), and so the second century began in the year of our Lord one hundred and one. Therefore, the convention of the year of our Lord two thousand and one would be the twenty-first's first convention. Comments to M.Polo@nosuchemailaddress.com please.

And here's the customary poem (with tearful eyes), to explain what happened next:

DOYENNE OF THE CONVENTION (by M.Polo)

And when they had reassembled,
To the podium ambled,
Laz Horsfield and Vicky Jackson,
They told us by whom game was won,
Each winner collected their prize,
The smiles you should have seen the size,
Then came the end of an era,
Vicky Jackson couldn't be clearer,
She's retiring as organiser,
To Spain she's goin', fair play t'her,
All these years she's done a great job,
All's gone well, not a single prob,
So we salute Vicky Jackson,
The doyenne of the Convention.

It's strongly suspected that the new Organiser, Karen of Aldwick, will do a superb job too.

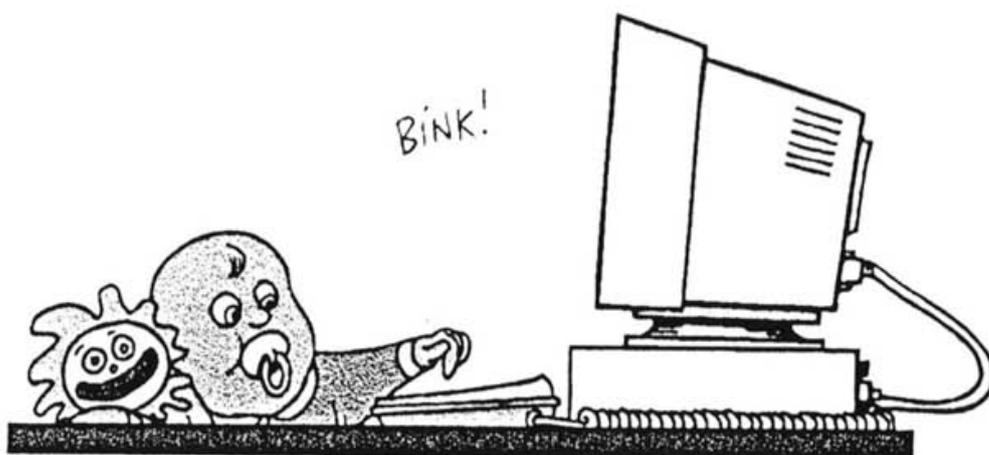
Jill said *au revoir* as she headed for a birthday journey to the Land of the French. The Kenilworth Suite eventually emptied, and to the Windy Chamber they all retired. It was time for the annual tradition of where-do-we-go-but-I-don't-want-to-go-there-and-they-won't-go-where-I-want-either. A number of adventurers and fellow travellers remarked that they would not wish to venture outside the Hostel for victuals 'because of the wind'. Others were rather tired. Therefore, we all ate in. The victuals were well appreciated. A variation on the School sports-day potato-and-spoon game was enjoyed by some adventurers and fellow travellers – 'kick the potato around the dining room and out the door'. Others were not amused.

The Windy Chamber filled with other guests and seats were at a premium. It was looking as if many of the adventurers and fellow travellers would not find seating. But soon, for one reason or another, the fellow guests disappeared. The virtuous circle was complete.

The next day the usual, tear-inspiring goodbyes-till-next-times were said. And then the adventurers and fellow-travellers headed off and said goodbye.

Another meeting of the Hamilton Hall Tavern knitting-circle will occur also this year, or on the year of our Lord two thousand and one. Its exact date depends on when the fellow travellers can agree to go. And when ----- and ----- (names deleted to stop blushy-blushes) agree to disagree.

One final word, if you do not know what is going on in this narrative, you should attend the convention of adventurers and fellow travellers. The next one of which is happening on the two-hundred and eighty-sixth, or two-hundred and ninety-third, or three-hundredth, day of the year of our Lord two thousand and one.



PERSONALITY QUIZ

The following quiz has been whizzing around the ether and I have received a dozen or so. I thought it would be an ideal way for Probers to learn a bit about me, so here are my answers. Please feel free to send in your own answers for publication, as some of you are still just "names" to me.
(Barbara)

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS?

1 husband, 1 daughter, lots of computers.

WHAT BOOK ARE YOU READING NOW?

Sadly, I don't have time for reading since I started to edit Probe.

WHAT'S ON YOUR MOUSE PAD?

Captain Kirk and lots of Tribbles.

FAVOURITE MAGAZINE?

TV Zone.

FAVOURITE SMELLS?

Fried bacon, toast.

FAVOURITE SOUNDS?

Signature tunes for favourite TV programmes.

WORST FEELING IN THE WORLD?

Travel sickness.

WHAT IS THE FIRST THING YOU THINK OF WHEN YOU WAKE UP IN THE MORNING?

Is the bathroom free!

ROLLER COASTER, SCARY OR EXCITING?

Scary

HOW MANY RINGS BEFORE YOU ANSWER THE PHONE?

Only one if possible.

FUTURE DAUGHTER'S NAME?

One is enough, and she has my favourite name, Heather.

WHAT IS IMPORTANT IN LIFE?

Family, health and Adventure Probe.

FAVOURITE FOODS?

Fried egg on fried bread, cauliflower cheese.

CHOCOLATE OR VANILLA?

Chocolate.

DO YOU LIKE TO DRIVE FAST?

If I didn't suffer from travel sickness I would love to drive a very fast car.

DO YOU SLEEP WITH A STUFFED ANIMAL?

No need.

STORMS - COOL OR SCARY?

Cool.

WHAT TYPE WAS YOUR FIRST CAR?

Never had one.

IF YOU COULD MEET ONE PERSON DEAD OR ALIVE?

The person who designed my house and made the kitchen too small.

FAVOURITE ALCOHOLIC DRINK?

Vodka and orange, on the few occasions I do drink.

WHAT IS YOUR ZODIAC SIGN?

Virgo.

DO YOU EAT THE STEMS OF BROCCOLI?

No.

IF YOU COULD HAVE ANY JOB YOU WANTED WHAT WOULD IT BE?

Scheduler of programmes for the BBC.

IF YOU COULD DYE YOUR HAIR ANY COLOUR?

I would look silly if it was anything other than grey.

EVER BEEN IN LOVE?

Wouldn't have married my husband if I didn't love him.

IS THE GLASS HALF EMPTY OR HALF FULL?

Half full.

FAVOURITE MOVIES:

Deep Rising, original Body Snatchers, Evil Dead.

DO YOU TYPE WITH YOUR FINGERS ON THE RIGHT KEYS?
Sometimes.

WHAT'S UNDER YOUR BED?
Dust and more dust.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE NUMBER?
22.

FAVOURITE SPORT TO WATCH?
Anything except football and rugby, love tennis.

SAY ONE NICE THING ABOUT THE PERSON WHO SENT THIS?
They put my email address in their address book.

PERSON YOU SENT THIS TO WHO IS MOST LIKELY TO RESPOND?
Pass.

PERSON YOU SENT THIS TO WHO IS LEAST LIKELY TO RESPOND?
Pass.

EARLY IMPRESSIONS by Ellen Highwater

Given the size of games these days I thought it may be a good idea to complement the mini-review idea to have a small early impressions section telling readers about the way a game plays initially mentioning any obvious good or bad things as an example I have included one on Resident Evil.

Resident Evil played on a Playstation. This is a game I purchased nearly a year ago. I had read of how it was wonderful and an all-time classic. I am always wary of high praise. Anyway I have just started playing it. My initial feelings were not good, the control seems awkward and this definitely needs patience early on.

The story is set up with a good movie sequence and you are soon walking around a seemingly empty mansion. I had always thought Resident Evil was basically a kill everything type 'adventure' and as such I 'died' several times by trying to kill everything in sight. The secret I have found is early on avoid all contact with the zombies who inhabit the obviously not empty mansion. There are objects to be manipulated and puzzles a plenty. The atmosphere is top notch and right now I am looking forward to lose myself in this game.

THE CHICKEN OR THE EGG? by Laurence Creighton

One of the most common questions I am asked in reference to my games, is whether I write the puzzles or the map first. Firstly, let me admit that I never plan more than four to five locations ahead. I never plan my puzzles, neither in my head nor on paper. I know some writers who jot down all their intended puzzles and write the game around them. I prefer to write on an "ad hoc" basis. Freewheeling.

I get the skeleton of an idea in my head and sketch out about five locations in whichever order the pencil takes me. It makes no difference really. Let us say one of the locations is a hut. At first draft, entry will be as "ENTER". Before I proceed to the next batch of locations, I say to myself "How can entry be made more difficult?" so I create a key. This object I carry until much later when I can find a suitable place to conceal it. The key could be bent, and the player would need to find a way of straightening it.... And so on. One thing leads to another.

One of my favourite stunts is to "blind" a player into not consciously seeing something - let me to illustrate:

"You are standing at the end of a hacked-out path before the mouth of a forbidding and dark cave. Just beyond the darkness, you can make out the shape of a large white statue whose eyes are glowing in the dark"

The player's focus is on the cave and the statue within. I would conceal an object on the path, a place likely to be overlooked due to the obsession with the cave and the statue.

Most objects I carry around until the map is large enough to either make them visible or find a suitable spot to conceal them. This requires tremendous annotation, as later, and I mean some weeks, I can forget (a) what some objects were for and (b) where I intended to put them. I am walking around memorising location numbers, object numbers and message numbers. My brain has become a veritable hard drive!

One of the areas where I often go wrong and needing rethinking, is placing an object that will get you to a destination - in the destination itself! For example the key to a house is inside that very house!! This is not easy to rectify, as one thing is often dependent upon another. As the map grows I keep on easing up and tightening up on the puzzles - always remembering the all-important phrase "The game must be playable."

Another important area is the parser; the commands. What seems obvious to me at the time of writing, could very likely not be obvious to a player. And that is why I try to insert as many synonyms as possible. In my latest game there is a situation where the command is decidedly "iffy" - yet I'll be blown if there is a synonym for it...

Now you all know how my mind works. Enjoy "BLACKOUT" soon to be released by Barbara and Probe. I consider it a "romp in the park." But that's a matter of opinion!!

STATE OF INDEPENDENCE

REUTERS - NEWS FLASH LATEST FROM WASHINGTON DC

NOTICE OF REVOCATION OF INDEPENDENCE

To the citizens of the United States of America, In the light of your failure to elect a President of the USA and thus to govern yourselves, we hereby give notice of the revocation of your independence, effective today.

Her Sovereign Majesty Queen Elizabeth II will resume monarchical duties over all states, commonwealths and other territories. Except Utah, which she does not fancy. Your new prime minister (The rt. hon. Tony Blair, MP for the 97.85% of you who have until now been unaware that there is a world outside your borders) will appoint a minister for America without the need for further elections. Congress and the Senate will be disbanded.

A questionnaire will be circulated next year to determine whether any of you noticed.

To aid in the transition to a British Crown Dependency, the following rules are introduced with immediate effect:

1. You should look up "revocation" in the Oxford English Dictionary. Then look up "aluminium". Check the pronunciation guide. You will be amazed at just how wrongly you have been pronouncing it. Generally, you should raise your vocabulary to acceptable levels. Look up "vocabulary".
2. There is no such thing as "US English". We will let Microsoft know on your behalf.
3. You should learn to distinguish the English and Australasian accents. It really isn't that hard.

4. Hollywood will be required occasionally to cast English actors as the good guys.

5. You should relearn your original national anthem, "God Save The Queen", but only after fully carrying out task 1. We would not want you to get confused and give up half way through.

6. You should stop playing American "football". There is only one kind of football. What you refer to as American "football" is not a very good game. The 2.15% of you who are aware that there is a world outside your borders may have noticed that no one else plays "American" football. You will no longer be allowed to play it, and should instead play proper football. Initially, it would be best if you played with the girls. It is a difficult game. Those of you brave enough will, in time, be allowed to play rugby (which is similar to American "football", but does not involve stopping for a rest every twenty seconds or wearing full kevlar body armour like nancies). We are hoping to get together at least a US rugby sevens side by 2005.

7. You should declare war on Quebec and France, using nuclear weapons if they give you any merde. The 98.85% of you who were not aware that there is a world outside your borders should count yourselves lucky. The Russians have never been the bad guys. "Merde" is French for "shit".

8. July 4th is no longer a public holiday. November 8th will be a new national holiday, but only in England. It will be called "Indecisive Day".

9. All American cars are hereby banned. They are crap and it is for your own good. When we show you German cars, you will understand what we mean.

10. Please tell us who killed JFK. It's been driving us crazy.

Thank you for your cooperation.



ADVENTURE PROBE SOFTWARE

ADVENTURE FOR THE PC

COLDITZ ESCAPE

Written by Frank Fridd
Graphics by Jonty Jones

Originally written for the Amstrad, Frank has rewritten and extended it using Philip Richmond's Creative Adventure Toolkit utility.

You are a British Air Force Officer during the Second World War. You were shot down and captured while on a bombing raid over Germany. After some attempted escapes from other P.O.W. camps you were sent to Oflag IVC, Colditz, the "bad boys" camp. You must now find items needed for your escape from the castle and to travel through hostile countryside to Switzerland and so home to England. To do this you must think and act as a prisoner, be always on your guard and make sure that the Germans do not find any escape materials on you and do not leave them lying around.



The **text-only version** can be downloaded from the CAT website. If you don't have access to the Internet, you may send a blank formatted PC disc and return postage, or £1.50, to the Probe office.

However, if you wish to **see the full version with Jonty Jones' stylized and very effective graphics**, you will have to buy it from Probe Software. It is large, and therefore comes RAR'd on 2 floppies which will self-extract after copying onto a hard drive.

Only £2 from

Adventure Probe Software,
52 Burford Road,
Liverpool, L16 6AQ
United Kingdom.

FRANK HAS KINDLY DONATED ALL PROCEEDS TO THE PROBE FUND

ADVENTURE PROBE SOFTWARE

ADVENTURE FOR THE PC

STILL LAUGHING AT MY CARDIGAN by Bev Truter

(based on the original AGT game "Space Aliens Laughed At My Cardigan"
by Andre M. Boyle, **but radically transformed**)

Once again Bev has rewritten a mediocre game and come up with a superb adventure.

You are sitting in the garden on the swinging seat, on your birthday, reflecting on all the presents from your relatives when out of the blue (literally!) a spaceship landed in your back garden and two small green aliens emerged. They pointed towards you, and made odd snorting noises of mirth while slapping each other on the back with undisguised hilarity. Apparently your brand-new cardigan was the source of all this merriment; and one of the aliens finally pulled out a miniature laser gun, aimed it at the offending garment, and FIZZBRTZZZ; a beam of concentrated light caused the entire cardigan to fade away, leaving not a trace behind. Horror of horrors! How will you explain this to your mum?

You don't personally mind the loss of the cardigan, but your mother bought it for you, and you foresee much anguish and wringing of hands ahead if you don't find a replacement for the vaporized cardigan. You explain this to the aliens, with some difficulty, adding that you need another cardigan, or incur your mum's everlasting wrath. They smile contritely and confer with each other in a whisper. A brilliant beam of light suddenly hurtles from the spaceship, dazzling you completely. When you rub your eyes a few seconds later and gaze around, you realize that you are somewhere else Can you find a new cardigan?

Buy a copy of "Still Laughing At My Cardigan" and get "Aliens Laughed At My Cardigan" free. Only **£2.00** from

Adventure Probe
52 Burford Road
Liverpool L16 6AQ

BEV HAS KINDLY DONATED ALL PROCEEDS TO THE PROBE FUND

NEWSDESK

ANOTHER DEMO CD FROM ZENOBI

The leaflet says "Whilst emptying the waste-basket BALROG came across some nice little demos that "somebody" (who shall remain nameless) had flippantly discarded. So being the "conservationist" that he is, they were soon "re-cycled" for YOUR delectation.

This time around there are a couple of STAR TREK related epics (for the "trekkies" amongst you), a little "sim" that will allow you to take control of an entire city's transport arrangements, a very atmospheric "adventure" and a truly excellent "arcade-adventure".

On the CDROM are:

STAR TREK : NEW WORLDS
DEEP SPACE NINE : THE FALLEN
TRAFFIC GIANT
BLAIR WITCH : THE RUSTIN PARR INVESTIGATION
ARABIAN KNIGHTS

The price is the usual **£2.99** and ALL postage and packing is included. Just send your order to the usual address.

If you like the demo(s) then buy the full version(s) ... okay!!"

(Please see inside back cover of Probe for Zenobi's address)

MEGAPOINTS COMPETITION

This year's adventure was SEEK & YE MAY FIND ... written by Doreen Bardon and Karen Tyers. It will be ready for you to buy very, very soon.

The Megapoints results were as follows:

1st Jenny Perry - 159 points
2nd David Hebblethwaite - 140 points
3rd Jim O'Keefe - 124 points.

Congratulations to the winners, and everyone else who took part.

OBJECTS AND THEIR USES

KINGDOM OF KLEIN played by Barbara Gibb on a PC under BBC emulation

Arrow	End of north side of chasm	Shoot it (need bow)
Bible	Chapel	Not needed
Bird's egg	Small forest	Break it
Boat	Hut by lake	Row it across lake
Bow	Alcove (Mysterious Cavem)	Shoot with it (need arrow)
Box of refill spells	Under arch	Ignore
Box of spells	Spell-chamber	Needed when wave wand
Brass key	On beach south of lizard	Unlocks wooden hut
Broomstick	Witch's sitting room	Fly across chasm
Bucket and spade	Loft in wooden hut	Build sandcastle
Cauldron	Witch's cavern	Throw voodoo doll into it
Cube	Loft in wooden hut	Drop in room 6
Dodecahedron	Top of tree on plain	Drop in room 12
Dog	Narrow passage	Throw bone to it
Gold coin	Safe	Hire boat
Icosahedron	Store-room	Drop in room 20
KLEIN bottle	Alcove (Mysterious Cavem)	Take to Pedestal room
Lizard	Beach	Throw sand at it
Luminous gem	Corridor	Not needed
Octahedron	Pool	Drop in room 8
Old bone	North-South road	Throw to dog
Portrait	Chapel	Move it to reveal safe
Scroll	Top of tree	Read to open a door
Small key	Palace road	Unlocks safe
Sphere	Ravine	Not needed
Sword	Base of mountain	Ignore
Table	Kitchen in wooden hut	Push it then stand on it
Tetrahedron	East end of ravine	Drop in room 4
Torus	Narrow tunnel in mountain	Throw to raise portcullis
Umbrella	Antechamber	Open when jump off cliff
Voodoo doll	5-pointed stars room	Throw it into cauldron
Wand	Brightly-lit corridor	Wave to be transported, also enlarges something.
Witch's hat	Large room in wooden hut	Put on voodoo doll
Zombi	Under arch	Ignore

GETTING YOU STARTED

COLDITZ ESCAPE (PC version) played by Frank Fridd

Start in the middle of the castle's courtyard. Find Hauptmann Eggars in the courtyard and talk to him as he will give a hint that the player can go direct to some places, but be careful, he will confiscate any escape items that the player is carrying.

S, GET WIRE, E, S, S, GET SCREWDRIVER (quickly, before it is too late), GO BRITISH QUARTERS. Move around the British quarters until you find Pilot Officer Harris. TALK TO PILOT (he will tell the player about German lessons), GIVE SCREWDRIVER TO PILOT (for German lesson 1), GO COURTYARD, S, W, W, W, GET HAMMER (quickly), GO BRITISH, N, N, W (given a pair of pliers), S, S

FABLE played by Peter Clark on a PC

PART ONE – The Frozen Lands

As Quickthorpe, you start at the gates of the village of Balkhane talking to the village elder. Talk to him until he gives you a talisman. Go to the Bridge and talk to the Hunter. He reveals nothing but talk to him anyway. Do not try to cross over the bridge or you will fall and die. Go to the stones in the river and use them to cross over. Go to the Old House and into the cellar. Take the rope and the statuette. Leave the cellar and try to open the door to Welda's House. A ghost appears but is you use the talisman on him and he will disappear. Go into the house and pick up the bag of seeds.

Now go to the Frozen Lake and look at the chair in the boat. Look closer and talk to Simbeline, the Goddess of the Lake. She will give you an orb containing part of her spirit. Go to the Forest and talk to the thief. Give him the statuette then go to the Well and talk to the Hunter again. Go to the Path of Sculptures. Look at the figures and talk with the crow and the boy. You will find a shield buried in the snow. Now go to the Hollow Tree and talk to the Little Drim. Look at the tree stump the look a little closer and you will see a lever. Use the lever and the tree door will open. Use the bag of seeds on the bird in the tree to get him away from his nest. When he has flown, look in the nest and take the necklace. Now return to the thief at the edge of the forest and give him the necklace. He will give you some gloves. Now go back to the Hollow Tree and go inside

FIVE DOCTORS played by Dorothy Millard on a PC(e) - also available on Spectrum

Note: If playing under Spectrum emulation, use the Z80 emulator as, when played on the X128 Emulator, the game crashed when trying to up the steps near the end.

(Start on a hillside on the Eye or Orion), D (bottom of hillside), GET MIRROR, LOOK MIRROR (you are wearing a long Edwardian jacket with deep pockets), LOOK POCKETS (find a key), U (to where the Tardis is), UNLOCK DOOR, S (Tardis console room), DROP KEY, LOOK CONSOLE (see a button and a lever), PULL LEVER (outer doors close), PUSH BUTTON (the console core rises and falls), PUSH BUTTON (it stops), PULL LEVER (outer doors open).

N, N (corridor where you meet a Dalek), LOOK DALEK (facing the north wall), PUSH DALEK (it fires wildly destroying the north wall and itself), N (death zone on Gallifrey), READ SIGN, E, E (the mirror reflects the laser bolts), N, E, S (Cyberman camp), GET SPHERE, LOOK SPHERE (a transmit recall device – it has a button), PRESS BUTTON (you are transported to the conference room of the High Council of Time Lords), LOOK

GO WEST YOUNG MAN played by Dorothy Millard on a PC(e) - also available on Spectrum

(Start on the outskirts of Deadwood), INVENTORY (carrying various money and a pistol), N (beginning of Main Street), E, N (grocery store), BUY COOKIES, BUY SAUSAGE MEAT, BUY BEANS, BUY RICE, KILL SHOPKEEPER, S, W, W (alley), GET NECKLACE, W, W (locksmiths), GET RUSTY IRON KEY, E, N, E (open area), N (ramshackle hut), W (by coral in livery stable), KILL MAN (a horse breaks free), GET HORSE, E, E, N, E (saloon), N, E, N (toilet), GET MAP, S, W, N (card room – regulars only), S, S, U (landing), N (maid tells you the room is not in use), S, W (there is a locked door here but you don't have the key), E, D, W, N, GET NOTE, N, N (meet gunfighter who challenges you to a fight), KILL GUNFIGHTER.....



HINTS AND TIPS

ATLANTIS 2 played by Barbara Gibb on a PC

In this section you play Master Wei, sent to find out what has happened at the monastery, The Abode of the Purple Deposit. When you try to leave the monastery, a giant shadow will prevent you. Talk to the old monk, Master Wu, about all options.

Enter the building and talk to Master Lo until no more options. He will suggest Grand Master Tan Yun is the only exorcist who may know how to get rid of the shadow. Unfortunately, he disappeared many years ago, but maybe Master Wu (the Master of Directions) can put you on the right path.

Return to Master Wu and ask him about Tan Yun and then the Turtle Chamber. He agrees to meet you there. Before re-entering the building, pick up the gong stick from the base of the frame - it is best viewed from the steps of the monastery.

Go to the Turtle Chamber - it has dragons on the walls and a magnificent sculpture on the middle of a "grid". Master Wu will give you 2 objects, a black turtle and an engraved medallion, ask him about them, then ask him about the "grid" marked on the floor. Put the black turtle in the water - it will always face the same way, so turn the rim of the basin until the red picture (mountains) is at its head. This places the yellow picture (pagoda) on its right, the white picture (river) on its left and the green picture (plain) at its tail.

With your back to the door, go forward 4 paces and turn right so you are standing on the corner of the "grid/map" with the window on your left. It is advisable to save your position here.

Talk to Master Wu who will begin to direct you.

Go forward once (to leave the lake). Talk to Master Wu again.

Turn right and go forward once (towards the pagoda). Master Wu will now automatically give you directions.

Turn right and go forward once (towards the plain).

Turn left and go forward once (towards to pagoda).

Turn left and go forward once (towards the mountains).

Turn left and go forward once (towards the river).

Turn right and go forward once (towards the mountains).

If your path is correct you are told you have arrived, so go forward twice and a secret door in the wall will open, leading to the Dragon Room.

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

SCORPIO/THE STING

Go to the Royal Bed Chamber and pull the rope - hear a noise below castle so go to the kitchen and pick up the triangle which should have appeared.

Go to the Long Hall in the village and give the triangle to Bernice and pick up the comb she drops.

Find the puppy (somewhere around the outskirts of the village) and try to CATCH/TAKE PUPPY. It will run away, so follow and repeat until successful (third attempt).

Go to the King's Kennels (from Meeting of Ways go NW, NW, NE, NE and GO IN (if carrying puppy). A flea jumps into your hair, so COMB HAIR (need comb from Bernice) and catch the flea.

Now go to the Science Laboratory (from City Gates go SW. SW, S. SW and E). Say MICROSCOPE (anagram of COMIC PROSE) - you can now X FLEA UNDER MICROSCOPE to find a sting.

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

NARROW TUNNEL/HOLE

READ MESSAGE and then do the opposite to what it says - this enables you to move through the windy pit.

CONFESSOR'S SAPPHIRE played by Barbara Gibb on an Amstrad

WAREHOUSE

To gain access, use the file on the padlock.
Inside, push the crates, then push them *harder*.
Sweep the floor to find a useful hook.

JETTY

Find a piece of string and a pair of gloves.

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

MUSICIAN'S PHOTOGRAPH - transports you to a Country Estate.

Opening the Gate

Search the leaves in the glade to find a tent peg. Examine the leaves in the forest to find a very large one. Return to the gate and examine it, then look through the keyhole - blocked. Put leaf under the gate and insert the peg into the keyhole. Pull the lead to see a bronze key. Now you can unlock the gate.

How to Deal with the Dog

Get the raw meat, cheese and peanuts from the kitchen. Go to the fountain, examine it and then enter to see the light is coming from an underwater green bulb protected by a plastic casing. Stop the flow of water by inserting the cheese into the cobra's mouth. Lever the casing with the tent peg. Exit the fountain and remove the cheese so the water flows again. Go W then back east and when the dog is present, throw the meat into the fountain.

Window/Alarm

Examine the window then break it but do *not* enter yet. Return to the glade and show the peanuts to the squirrel then go back to the window and throw the peanuts at the button. You miss, but the squirrel goes in and manages to press the white button for you. It is now safe to OPEN WINDOW and go IN to the library.

Inside House

Drawing room - pick up the can and note the contents of the box on the mantelpiece.

Entrance Hall - slide the can under the sofa to find a remote control.

Security Control room - guard is busy watching sport on a tv, so point the remote control at the tv and press the middle button (to increase the sound volume). WAIT until he is "as absorbed in the events depicted on the screen as anyone can possibly be" then GET KEY WITH CANE.

Library - read the note. Point the remote control at the book shelves and push the top button to reveal a secret door in the west wall. Unlock it with the large iron key.

Front Drive/Inside Car

Throw the iron key into the shrubbery then ENTER CAR (in fact you hide in the trunk/boot). Drop everything (not needed again) and pick up the violin. WAIT until the bodyguard is "almost right on top of you now" then OPEN TRUNK.

Hangar

Pick up the first aid kit, open it and take the bandages and stethoscope. Search the unconscious female bodyguard and get the tie and hairpin. Tie her up with her own tie and cover her mouth with the bandage.

Rifle

Examine the violin (from trunk of car) and unscrew the screws with the hairpin - a high powered snipers rifle falls to the floor. Pick it up and examine it to see it has a telescopic sight. Examine sight (off-centre) so CENTRE SIGHT.

Roof

WAIT until the man in dark glasses takes something from the other man then SHOOT MAN WITH RIFLE.

Opening the Briefcase

Pick up the briefcase and examine it - has a combination lock. Examine lock (4 digits). WEAR STETHOSCOPE and PUT IT ON THE BRIEFCASE. You have to SET LOCK TO XXXX (XXXX being 4 numbers) and the number of clicks indicates how many numbers are correct. I could not find any clue and the number could be random - 4683 worked for me.

Kiss the Hexagon to return to the Memorabilia room.

DREAR CLIFF MANOR played by Dorothy Millard on a PC

When you hear an ominous rustling noise behind you type SHOOT (direction). Sometimes you miss and are killed. If this happens you have no choice but to restore from your last saved position. When you kill the attacker they will drop a brass key which you should get.

Once you have the brass key from the attacker you can unlock the door of the room south of the study and east hall. This is a safe place to leave treasures – make sure you lock the door when leaving.

Until you have shot the invisible attacker anything dropped will be stolen and dropped in another random location.

If the "Omery Man" picks up any valuable items they can be retrieved later in the bedroom where you find the gold ring.

Do not shoot the "Omery Man", as he has to be alive to solve one of the puzzles.

JACK OF HARTZ by Bev Truter on a PC

Sunlit Chamber - examine the altar and notice how hot it is. If you wait here for a while a Sage appears.

The horn is clogged with a lump of dirt, and needs to be cleaned before you can play it properly.

Garlic keeps vampire bats at bay. You can X shadows, attempt to get behind the stalagmite, and to the top of it.

Dig in the Muddy Cave to find something useful.

In the Pit - X those protruding roots.

STRANGERS IN THE NIGHT played by Bev Truter on a PC

Nightclub (opens after 11pm)

This is located on Clay & 9th. Make your way across the dance floor, and up to the Goth Room, where you see a girl. Wait until she leaves to go to the Ladies' Room, then follow her there. Ignore the Japanese girl on the dance floor.

Church

Don't try to bite the pastor - he will deal with you very effectively! Go up to the Choir Loft and read the book there to find out about some vampire lore. The number of candles which are lit in the Sanctuary tells you how many victims you have bitten. The game ends when you return to your apartment.

UNWANTED GIFT played by Bev Truter on a PC(e) - also available on Amstrad

Part Two

I was puzzled by the "riddle" on the piece of paper found in part.

The "swimming swans" refers to seventh day in the song "The Twelve Days of Christmas"

Doctor's Orders is associated with the number 9 (*see next issue for possible reasons why...Barbara*)

The 4-digit PIN number you need is 4975. Enter it by typing PRESS NUMBER FOUR, etc.

THE LONGEST JOURNEY played by Terry Taylor on a PC

THE FRINGE CAFE

Pick up some candy from the candy jar on the bar.

Talk to Charlie – April learns more about Charlie, his background and what he thinks of various people. When she asks him about Cortez, Charlie says "*He's been around for as long as I can remember*", adding "*...there's more to Cortez than what he wants us to believe*". He mentions that Cortez loves old movies, and that he seemed very interested in the poster by the jukebox.

Charlie reminds April that she is due to get paid today.

Go to the Inventory, and **examine the diary** – April's timesheet is tucked into the diary. **Take the timesheet**.

Move into the main café bar area. **Talk to Stan** – the owner of the café, who is sitting at the bar. **Ask to be paid** – he asks for April's timesheet.

Give the timesheet to Stan. Stan is one of those "careful" people with his money, and after a bit of grumbling says he will pay April next week. **Insist on being paid now**, and when Stan refuses **threaten to resign** – he will eventually pay up (nothing goes into the Inventory, but the cashcard can now be used).

Stan then asks April if she would like to work an extra shift that night, as one of the staff is off – **get April to accept**. She could say "No", but not working the extra shift means she will miss a happening at the café later.

Take some bread from the bread basket on the table, and **talk to Emma** for some more general chit-chat.

Examine the poster by the jukebox for a close up. It's advertising an exhibition, aimed at children, at the Roma Gallery – could this be "*where children visualize their dreams*"? **Take one of the complimentary tickets** from the bottom of the poster; then, in the Inventory, **examine the ticket** to learn the address of the Roma Gallery.

Leave the café, and return to April's apartment.

Look out of the open window. Remembering that the seagull is hungry, **use the bread on the rubber ducky**. April drops bread crumbs onto the rubber duck, the seagull flies down to get them and, in so doing, pecks and bursts the duck, which floats off down the canal. April also hears a clanking noise – the grille is now submerged, and the clothes line has fallen into the water. **Use the chain** to hoist up the clothes line.

Leave the apartment and head back to the Fringe Café – as April approaches the Bridges, she sees the rubber duck floating down the canal. At the café, April finds the duck caught up in the metal grille there – **pick up the rubber duck**.

In the Inventory, **examine the duck** for a close up, and **take the Band Aid** which is stuck to it.

SOLUTIONS OF THE MONTH

HOUSE OF ORION

Written by D. Newton (1984)

Walk Through by Dorothy Millard (Spectrum Version)

Scenario

Set in the Land of Orion, so long as the crown is working the king lives, but the Lord of Dark has tricked Rigel into parting with the crown and now rules with a hand of fear.

(Start on hillside), U (top of hill by stone cairn), TAKE BELL, EXAMINE BELL (can only ring twice, in moments of greatest need), RING BELL (wizard tells you of your quest), D, D (great northern road), TAKE COIN, N, N (freemans village), ENTER SHOP, TAKE PAINT, PAY (shopkeeper gives you some change), EXIT SHOP (village square), E, E (old Sams), CRAWL HOLE (dark room where you can't see anything), FEEL AROUND (find door), OPEN DOOR (reveals steps leading down to the cellar), D (cellar is also dark), FEEL AROUND (find a small box with a slit), INSERT COIN (lights come on and you see a meat pie in the dust), TAKE PIE, U, TAKE BOOK, READ BOOK (old Sam's diary), MOVE TABLE, U (standing on table and can now reach the trapdoor), OPEN TRAPDOOR, U (attic), TAKE SWORD, N (find a patch of new mortar), REMOVE MORTAR (find a portion of the Shield of Orion), TAKE SHIELD, READ SHIELD, S, D (hear a scratching noise from outside the house), THROW PIE (where?), THROUGH HOLE (hear screams – it was poisoned and something has eaten it), CRAWL HOLE (the stone gryphons had come to life but are now dead).

N, N, W (cemetery), EXAMINE TOMB (see stone figure with something missing from his hands), INSERT SWORD (lid slides back and you see stairs leading down), D (burial chamber), W, EXAMINE DRAWING (hints), E, OPEN COFFIN (which one?), 5, TAKE ORB, EXAMINE ORB (in a small bag), OPEN COFFIN (which one), 6 (find long bow), TAKE BOW, OPEN COFFIN (which one?) 7 (find a quarter of the Shield of Orion), TAKE SHIELD, READ SHIELD, U, TAKE SWORD (crypt closes), N (abbey ruins), U (crumbling stairway to top of tower), TAKE FLUTE, D (note if the masonry crumbles restore and try again), N.

N (mound of earth by huge doors), READ MESSAGE (must name the beast to enter), SCORPION (doors open revealing steps leading down), D (tunnel... doors shut trapping you in the guardian's lair), N, TAKE ROPE, N, N, TAKE LOG, N (path ends at a chasm), DROP LOG (forms a bridge over

the chasm), N (dusty ledge), MOVE DUST (discover a golden key), TAKE KEY, TIE ROPE (to what?), TO LOG (it hangs down the chasm), D (see tunnel north), SWING (land in the tunnel), TAKE ROPE, N (cavern where a voice asks who dares to disturb the guardian – he must be defeated but is invisible), THROW PAINT (can now see him), KILL GUARDIAN, N (junction), E (guardian's quarters), UNLOCK CHEST (find two treasures, a lamp and a quarter of Orion's shield), TAKE SHIELD, READ SHIELD, TAKE LAMP (leave the treasures), W, N (completed half the game).

(After many miles underground the path rises and you see steps leading to a trapdoor), OPEN TRAPDOOR, U (clearing in forest where a man tells you he has lost his family's heirloom), GIVE LAMP (the pixie grants you a wish and transports you by magic – see shield and arrow encased in crystal), D (you are in a volcano), U, PLAY FLUTE (be patient you must now wait for 2 minutes and 25 seconds! – crystal shatters), TAKE ARROW, TAKE SHIELD, READ SHIELD (now have all of it), U (top of Fire Mountain), RING BELL (Bellatrix takes you away from danger and drops you south of the castle).

N, N, N (front of castle), THROW ROPE (lands on one of the animal horns that adorn the drawbridge), SWING (across avoiding the poisonous spikes below), CLIMB ROPE (into castle), W, W, N, N (five sided room), U (armoury), W, U (guard's quarters), EXAMINE BEDS (see guard asleep), KILL GUARD, EXAMINE GUARD, TAKE KEY, D, E. D (ground floor by locked gate), UNLOCK GATE (see stairs leading down), D (torture instruments), OPEN IRON MAIDEN (see hidden stairway east), E (walls are lined with lamp holders), PULL HOLDER (nothing happens), PULL HOLDER, PULL HOLDER, PULL HOLDER (this time a secret door opens to the east), E (eight sided room), U (great hall), RETURN SHIELD (back of the fireplace lifts to reveal a passage upwards).

U (king's bed chamber), EXAMINE BED (the canopy descends to crush to unwary person), JUMP (you are propelled into a room above the bed chamber where you meet Scargull wearing Rigel's crown), SHOW ORB (light is so strong it puts him off his guard), SHOOT ARROW (he is defeated, the castle starts to shake and collapse), TAKE CROWN, D, S (courtyard but you see no way out), EXAMINE WELL, EXAMINE WATER (feel a metal ring), PULL RING (water drains from the well revealing steps down), D (you have escaped from the castle), S (devil's chasm where you see a boat), ENTER BOAT (several miles south it grounds in a small cove), W (passage ends at a metal door with a handle), TURN HANDLE, W (back of burial chamber where Rigel's coffin is open), REPLACE CROWN. (Rigel's dust begins to stir... he body quickly becomes whole as does his family). Bellatrix congratulations you on completing your quest.

THE END

INCA CURSE

(Artic Software)

Notes.

- 1)The game will automatically end when you re-enter the start location with any treasure.
- 2)Follow the solution exactly to avoid losing the Blue and Red stones to powder before you've finished with them.
- 3)If you do try to get the golden knives then it may be useful to point out that the program does not accept "GET KNIVES" only "GET KNIFE".
- 4) You can carry only 6 items. Don't bother with the Thumbscrews and Knives (100 points each) as they have the lowest values.
- 5) Treasures – Eagle (2,500), Coins (500), Brush (500), Statue (400), Chandeliers (200), Bowl (150).

GET BRANCH, REMOVE LEAVES, R, GET STICK, S, BREAK LATCH, WITH STICK, DROP STICK, UP, GET ROCK, BREAK LOCK, WITH ROCK, DROP ROCK, GO DOOR, E, E, GET BLANKET, E, GET KEY, W, W, S, E, GET CHISEL, E, GET MATCH, DOWN, DOWN, GET BLUE STONE, UP, UP, W, W, N, W, W, S, S, DOWN, CLIMB BOAT, (ignore the oars because if you pick them up then you CANNOT drop them again!), W, GET LAMP, SMOTHER FIRE, (it's all gone dark now!), LIGHT LAMP, WITH MATCH, DROP BLANKET, GET FLINT, REMOVE RING, WITH CHISEL, DROP LAMP, DROP CHISEL, UP, E, E, E, E, S, DOWN, W, GET ROPE, DOWN, OPEN PANEL, WITH KEY, GO OPENING, GET RED STONE, W, DOWN, DROP KEY, DROP RING, DROP ROPE, (don't drop the Red or Blue stones anywhere until you have passed this location again with all your treasures safely collected as they will turn to powder!), W, GET EAGLE, DOWN, GET COINS, S, E, N, S, W, E, N, GET CHANDELIER, N, DROP EAGLE, DROP COINS, DROP CHANDELIER, S, S, S, S, N, E, W, (you should now be in the Mirror Room).GET BRUSH, E, W, S, N, S, N, W, E, (at the Traitor's Hall), S, S, N, W, E, (at the Hall of Halls), S, GET STATUE, DOWN, GET BOWL, UP, N, W, E, N, S, N, N, W, E, (at the Traitor's Hall again), N, N, GET RING, UP, DROP BRUSH, DROP STATUE, DROP BOWL, DOWN, GET EAGLE, GET CHANDELIER, GET COINS, UP, DROP COINS, DOWN, GET ROPE, UP, DROP RING, DROP RED STONE, DROP BLUE STONE, (they will become powder now), GET STATUE, GET BRUSH, GET BOWL, CLIMB UP, WITH ROPE, DROP EAGLE, DOWN, GET COINS, CLIMB UP, WITH ROPE, DROP ROPE, GET EAGLE, W, N, CLIMB INTO BOAT, W, UP, E, N, N, N.

CONGRATULATIONS

You have successfully completed this adventure.
Well done.

SERIALIZED SOLUTION

BLUE ICE

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

THE RED HERRINGS AND THE NUMBER GRID PROBLEMS

The Hope Colours: (There seem to be two errors in this puzzle.) Hope calls out colours in nine rooms, as follows: Dining room yellow-violet; Cellar orange-yellow; Library orange-yellow; Pond red-green; Mouth red-blue; Hall red-orange; Music room red-indigo; Chimney orange-indigo. In the Drawing room, she calls out violet-orange but this is a mistake and should be orange-violet. The colours are a code that can be cracked by using Base 7 maths. List the colours of the rainbow in order and assign them Base 7 numbers, thus Red=0, Orange=1, Yellow=2, Green=3, Blue=4, Indigo=5 and Violet = 6.

Base seven and decimal number equivalents are

1 2 3 4 5 6 these numbers are the same in base seven and ten.

10 11 12 13 14 15 16 Base seven
7 8 9 10 11 12 13 Base ten

20 21 22 23 24 25 26 Base seven
14 15 16 17 18 19 20 Base ten

Then list the colours thus:

Room	Colours	Base seven Equivalent	Base ten Value	Alphabet Letter
Dining	Yellow/ Violet	26	20	T
Cellar	Orange/Yellow	12	9	I
Drawing	Orange/Violet	16	13	M
Library	Orange/Yellow	12	9	I
Pond	Red/Green	3	3	C
Mouth	Red/Blue	4	4	D
Hall	Red/Orange	1	1	A
Music	Red/Indigo	5	5	E
Chimney	Orange/Indigo	15	12	L

(Red-orange = 0,1, red-green = 0,3; red-blue =0,4; red-indigo =0,5

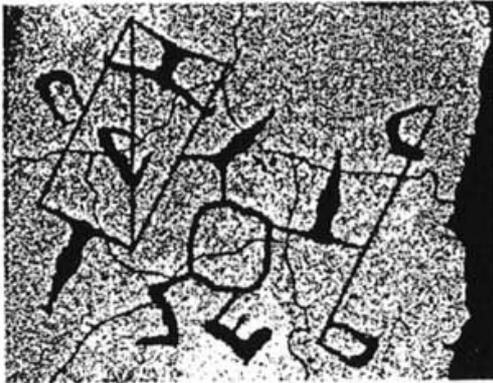
Orange – yellow = 1,2 or 9 in decimal; orange-indigo = 1,5= 12 decimal

Yellow-violet = 2,6 =20 decimal

Orange-violet = 1,6 =13 decimal)

Now we come to the second error – the missing letter. There should be another E to give us 10 letters of an anagram of the solution – ICIA MELTED.

THE PARCHMENT



This is another blind alley. The letters on the parchment are meaningless in themselves; it is the position of the hands that are important. Join the hands of the figures on the left to form the letter N. Joining the hands of the remaining figures produce a small O and the line of an exclamation mark. Follow the line of the fist of the E and draw in a point (see screen shot) to produce the solution – No! in other words another red herring and not the U.S.

THE MAP

Countless hours have been spent on the map, which seemed significant because most of the place names are anagrams of facial features, because it looks like a face, and because it appears to transpose east and west. However Rik assures us that the map should be taken at **face value** only i.e. it is another red herring and of no further significance.

THE PAPER PLANE

Yet another red herring, this was Rik's own favourite problem in the game but he admits it is impossible to solve. When flown in the Chimney, the Win Room and the Sky, circular markings and dots can be seen. The circles represent a dartboard and the dots numbers on the board. The idea was to work out which numbers the dots represented then translate the numbers into letters. An anagram of these letters would give a word that would indicate this was another dead end. Rik realised that it would be impossible to work out the positions from the angles shown so the plane is merely a diversion whose only use is to produce a parchment piece.

THE NUMBER GRID PROBLEM

Every screen contains a 4 x 4 number grid. Some are easy to read, some very difficult, some are difficult to spot in the first place and some even disappear as the game progresses. Here are some pointers to the trickier ones:

Mousehole: the numbers are on the cheeses;
Secret garden: numbers flash in sequence on the flowers – if you draw the layout of the flowers you can record the numbers as they flash;
Bedroom: switch on the lamp to expose the numbers;
Video: reverse the numbers;
Bathroom: the numbers disappear when you clear the condensation;
Dining room: numbers are on the menu but disappear when you complete the food challenge;
Cellar: look at the markings on the floor – you don't count the dots but join them up to make 4 sets of 4 numbers;
Mouth: numbers flash in sequence in the picture that later accesses the Video room;
Painting: count the markings on the edge of the picture frame;
Drawing room: translate the Roman numerals along the mantelpiece;
Chimney: the numbers to use are the 4x4 block in the grid on the wall and
Music room: the numbers are on the piano keys.

To attempt to solve this section your first step must be to write out all the quotations, etc. which appear on the scrolls after you have successfully identified all the Sparklies and number each letter in sequence, ignoring the spaces.

E.g. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19
20 21 22 23
Loo (01) S H E I S V E N U S W H E N S H E S M
I L E S
Bedroom D R E A M Y O U R D R E A M S A W A Y
(Feb 02)

ETC. ETC

Now put all the grid numbers you found into February date order, keeping each line separate: e.g.

Room	Loo (Feb 01)	Bedroom (Feb 02)	Pantry (Feb 03)
First grid line	17 12 4 9	12 10 3 19	4 12 13 16

Next use the letters in the following day's quotation that corresponds to these numbers.

I.e. W E A R P E T A L S A B

Follow the same procedure with the second and third lines of the grids and you should end up with three pieces of prose. However these are not essential to the game. Our joint efforts plus those of a wider group of players, failed to find the ends of these pieces so there would appear to be errors in some of the numbers. Below are the translations as far as the Mousehole where sense seems to have disappeared into the skirting board along with the mouse...

Wear petals above thy head while taste and clear sky lie heavy in thy heart.
Say not the bitter...

Say drop a star that shone down like so much desire, quiet and lovely with a shower of glitter to...

Read the parts that do throw lite o'er man and all the kindness lost inside thy wan design.

Meet ...

After the Mousehole, Mouth and Picture some of the numbers begin to make sense again.

The fourth line of numbers completely baffles us still, in spite of the joint efforts of many people. Rik said this line should be handled differently from the others. The room's year date should be subtracted from the last line of numbers in each room's grid and the translation made from these new numbers. The words that should appear give a clue to what the mouth in the Video Room is saying and is another way of arriving at the words Perfect Ice Cube.

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Any suggestions for the next Serialized Solution? (Barbara)

WEBSITE OF THE MONTH

<http://www.rdanderson.com>

A website dedicated to Richard Dean Anderson, with sections on Biography, Films, Photo gallery, Archives (articles and interviews), Features (facts and stories), Interactive (chat, forum, postcards, guestbook), Updates (FAQs, links, etc) and STARGATE SG-1 which is the best site I have found for the great series, with superb illustrations and an excellent episode guide.

One of my favourite features is Memorable Remarks, for example, here's a quote from Watergate:-

Markov: "The sub is Swiss."

Daniel: "So they occasionally catch fire, but they keep perfect time. Sorry, I think I've been hanging around Jack O'Neill too much."

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BARBARA GIBB (Various)	0151 280 5616	Afternoon and Evening
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SUE MEDLEY (Various - especially PC)	0181 302 6598	Any day 9am - 9pm
MANDY RODRIGUES (Various) (Mobile)	01492 877305 07776 413293	Mon - Fri 10am - 9pm
KAREN TYERS (Golden Oldies)	01347 838667	Mon - Fri 6pm - 11pm Sat - Sun Any reasonable time

THE ULTIMATE INFOCOM HELPLINE

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

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

MAKE SURE YOU TELEPHONE ONLY AT THE TIMES STATED
PLEASE ENCLOSE AN S.A.E WHEN WRITING FOR HELP

Some helpers also have an e-mail address -
please check the previous page for details.