

FROM beyond



Sep-Oct 1991

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The address to send your contributions,
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CONTENTS

FROM BEYOND ISSUE 8 SEPT/OCT 1991

ROLL OF HONOUR :

Many thanks to the following folk who helped create this issue by sending in various contributions...

STORM and Bessie Bug Hunter for their reviews, Gary 'Nutty' Naylor, Sandrunner, John Wilson for review copies of all this issues adventures, Laurence 'Quill' Creighton, June Rowe, Ian S. Brown for the crossword, Kurt Schimmel, Scott Denyer, and special thanks to Bob Bates for the PCG DeskTop Publishing contribution!

Hopefully that's everyone mentioned who made a contribution of some sort.

VOTE NOW:

Please try and do your best to fill in and return the enclosed FB adventure award form. Your vote counts... so use it!.....Tim.

CONTENTS

Subscription Rates / Address	2
Contents	3
Editorial	4
NEWS	5
Review System Explanation	6
Review 1 'Golden Pyramid'	9
Letters	12
Dear Diary ... Pt.II	13
Review 2 'Kobyashi Ag'Kwo'	16
Feature: CGL's DTP System	20
Adventure Help Line	26
Sandrunner's MAPS	28
Review 3 'Phoenix'	31
Feature: I did it MY way!	37
Review 4 'Bomb'	40
The Comment Column	43
Review 5 'Bermuda Triangle'	44
Stop Press	47
Loose Ends	48
D.I.Y. 'Recap'	51

ALL CONTRIBUTIONS TO FROM BEYOND ARE MOST WELCOME - ESPECIALLY LETTERS + HELPLINE STUFF! SO KEEP SENDING THEM IN.....TIM
 FB is published on a bi-monthly basis & costs £1.50

EDITORIAL

'FB': 100 subscribers... and growing! 25-8-91

First of all I'd like to thank those of you who have congratulated me on becoming the new Your Sinclair adventure columnist. Even though it has slimmed down to just two pages long, I hope I can still make it interesting. I'd like to see a few more adventures make their way onto the cover mounted YS cassette - that will at least make buying YS a bit more attractive for you hardened adventure players! Don't know if I'll have any influence in that department, though if you let me know what you want to see as a free YS covergame then I might be able to do something about it. Coupon Corner will obviously feature in my forthcoming plans - watch out for a whole heap of coupons in Your Sinclair soon! But enough of the YS talk, what will my job at YS mean to 'FB' readers... will 'FB' be

as good as ever? Er, yes, I think it will! This issue is a mighty 56 pages long, has 5 reviews and features all the usual stuff... with the exception of a couple of 'promised' items. 1: The illustrated legend / fable and 2: The look back at adventures from the past. Both were due to be featured this issue - but space restrictions and previous commitments have meant that they are postponed - but only till next issue. (I said that last issue, but they are top of the agenda for issue 9! Honest!!!)

NEW REVIEWERS:

From this issue onwards you'll find that some of the reviews are done by my two new underlings, namely STORM and BESSIE BUG HUNTER. Both are experienced adventure players / enthusiasts and are, to my feeble mind, a welcome addition to the 'FB' staff. Their pictures

(cartoons actually) appear at the top of their reviews so you'll know who is reviewing what. As each of us has different favourite types of games we'll be introducing a brand new, very accurate ratings system from next issue, which basically works on a sliding scale / 1-10 rating which will allow us to score the games various elements based on a carefully worked out formula which will eliminate vastly differing scores which may occur. (Due to our different game tastes) Obviously we'll be printing the new ratings system explanation in the next issue.

CHRISTMAS STUFF:

Issue 10 (Nov/Dec) is our X-mas issue, and although it's a couple of issues away yet we'd obviously like to do something special / give something away... Any ideas? Write in and let me know what you want to see.....Tim.

NEWS

What's new on the adventure scene?

RED HERRING:

Anyone seeing the 'flyer' that Sue Medley and Marion Taylor have been putting about lately, advertising their forthcoming bi-monthly adventure book, 'Red Herring' will, like me, be eagerly awaiting its imminent arrival. Boy, does it sound (and look) good!

It's an all formats magazine, produced on an Apple Mac IIx, printed using a laser printer, has 80 A5 pages and is 'comb-bound' so it lies flat when opened! Those details alone seem to be enough to blow the opposition away... hang on a minute, that's me! Seriously though, it looks as though it's going to be a very good publication, and at just 2.95 it's priced just right.

ZENOBI NEWS:

Not content with being the worlds biggest supplier of Spectrum adventures,

young John Wilson has now branched out into peddling novels too! He's gotten his mitts on a book by Frank Oliver called *AXE: A tale of Carthelion* - and pretty good it is too. It's full of swords and sorcery, goodies and baddies, is 240-odd pages in length and only costs a quid at the moment (incl P&P) from:

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26 SPOTLAND TOPS,
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On the games front, Zenobi have released squillions of games since last issue, most of which are reviewed this issue, with PHOENIX being awarded the semi coveted 'Golden Gauntlet' award because it's a real cracker!

COMPASS NEWS:

Jon Lemmon has been very quiet just lately, though this is due entirely to the fact that

he's been working strange, unfriendly and downright anti-social hours for the past few months. Jon tells me that there is a light at the end of the tunnel and that he'll be working on some new titles soon. The P.I.E. System games are taking a back seat, and good old fashioned, traditional adventures are what Jon will be supplying - with the added bonus of a few special effects put in at appropriate places!

GI GAMES NEWS:

Gordon Inglis has, as promised, released the 8th day software back catalogue, along with Walter Pooley's games too - with the promise of more goodies to follow soon. (Who was it who said they didn't know how long the Spectrum adventure scene will last?) For the list of GI GAMES see the advert in this issue. See **STOP PRESS**, (page 47) for more GI GAMES news.....Tim.

Review System.

An explanation of the 'FB' reviewing system.

Most of the categories in the 'FB' reviewing system are self explanatory - like **STORYLINE** (does the game have one?), **PACKAGING** (is there a cassette cover or added extras like maps etc., that come with the game?), **SCREEN\$** (is there one, is it good, are there clues to aspects of the game in it, or is it just a pretty picture?).

After the above categories have been reported on we then move on to **THE ADVENTURE** section of the review where, naturally enough, we review the game in question.

Originally it was just little old me doing the reviews, but with my new found fame (working on the YS adventure column) I've had to employ a couple of underlings to help with some of the reviews. These adventure crazed minions are highly

trained adventure experts, and can also write as good as wot I can. (Which isn't too difficult.) You'll find the reviews by these two new reviewers to be entertaining, thorough, probing and most of all fair! Their identities must remain a secret, but an actual 'cartoon' representation of each reviewer appears at the start of each review they do. These other two reviewers will be sticking as closely as possible to the method of reviewing we've employed since 'FB' started, so after the main body of the review you'll still find the sections entitled: **FEATURES**, **GOOD and BAD** and **CONCLUSIONS**.

FEATURES details the games features, like **RAM SAVE**, **SCREEN** and **SOUND** effects, packaging features etc.

GOOD & BAD deals with the good and bad points of the game as a whole.

CONCLUSIONS, will be where you can find the reviewers summing-up of the game he or she has just played.

Finally, a series of ratings are produced based on the games **STORYLINE**, **PACKAGING**, **TEXT**, **GRAPHICS**, **DIFFICULTY**, **EASE OF USE**, **VALUE FOR MONEY** topped off by an **OVERALL** score.

High marks for storyline, packaging, text, graphics, value for money and overall, are what you should take the most notice of. (coupled with the actual review and comments that precede them of course.) Exceptions to that rule are: **DIFFICULTY** - where a high mark means the game is a hard one, & low marks mean it's quite easy, and **EASE OF USE**: where a low score means it was less than friendly to use, had a poor vocab etc. High marks mean things go smoothly etc.

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For more information, please write to: Marion Taylor, 504 Ben Jonson House, Barb

REVIEW 1

'THE GOLDEN PYRAMID' Zenobi 1.99



There's always plenty to see and do in a Laurence Creighton game. Laurence himself thinks this is one of his best. Read on to discover if it is...

STORYLINE:

'After returning from an expedition to Peru, you present your latest 'find', 'The Mask of the Sun God', to the British Museum. Never one to sit around twiddling your thumbs, you decide to set off straight away in search of 'The Golden Pyramid', which is to be found somewhere in deepest central Africa... Finding a pilot to take you there isn't too easy as there is nowhere to land a plane. Never mind, you think to

yourself, I'll just bail out and parachute down to the suspected site of the fabled pyramid. So, with a nod from the pilot you leap out and see a white canopy open, tent like, above your head... Before you can say 'Indiana Jones', you land in the tallest tree imaginable and dangle, entangled in your parachute...

PACKAGING:

Dare I say it? The usual Zenobi cassette cover and A4 storyline / vocab / note sheet is what you get. (Which is exactly what you've come to know, expect and love!)

SCREENS:

The author, Laurence Creighton, has his name emblazoned above a small, centrally located pic of the pyramid. (The very pyramid that will, believe you me, be the cause of great suffering to mere mortal adventurers!) Zenobi

have their 'cat' logo at the foot of the screen - just below the games name!

THE ADVENTURE:

Unusually for a Laurence Creighton game, you'll find yourself stuck in the first location, with limited movement options! Normally you are relatively free to wander around, sussing out the locations, casually searching out problem spots etc. In 'Pyramid', though, you must start using your wits right from the word go. You are, as mentioned earlier, dangling at the top of a tall tree with only a knife, safari hat and exotic bird for company. Examining everything is always a good idea, and it proves to be good advice here. In no time at all you should be standing at the foot of the tree (no way back up though.) clutching at least one goodie! Do try to find the least violent ➡

method of achieving your early goals!

A sound effect greets your escape from the top of the tree location, and once on the ground things will really start happening!

The number of locations you can visit are somewhat limited (again unusual for a Laurence Creighton game) and I have to confess that I was hopelessly stumped by everything that was put there to stump me! (See the map for pitfalls

and hot spots.)

Fortunately Zenobi had supplied a help-sheet so I 'peeped' at that to find out where I had gone wrong so early on. My problem was that I hadn't taken enough notice of the location descriptions at locations 3, 4 and 5! After cheating, erm, I mean sorting myself out via the help-sheet, I found that in no time at all I was back on an even keel, doubly aware of what to keep an eye open for and

early part of the games locations.

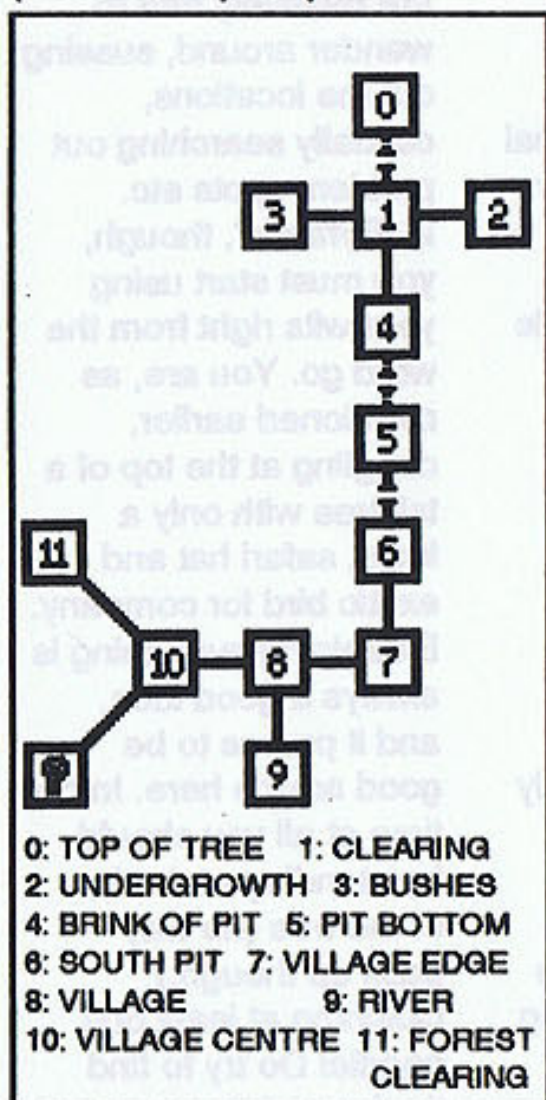
When you do eventually stumble across the golden pyramid you'll find loads and loads of small problems within its tortuous depths, most of which tend to turn into bigger problems just when you think you've got them licked!

There are a few characters in the game who mostly want to do you favours - though usually only if you are prepared to do them a similar service! Keep your eyes peeled for the chief, the witch-doctor and a cheeky monkey who holds the key to getting past a certain early problem. (You'll probably have met him at the start of the game.)

Actually, all the sentient characters you meet seem to have important roles to play, so keep on at them if you think they could be of further use to you.

I have to say that I found myself deep in trouble on several occasions, having to refer to the help-sheet a few times to let

how to interpret the hints contained in some of the locations themselves. Examining all the useful things (both within locations, and the actual objects you may find) is an absolute must! You'll have to thoroughly work through all the variables to have even the slimmest chance of progressing from the mapped locations (on the left) which represent the



me make any progress in the right direction. When you actually begin getting into the swing of things then you can really start to enjoy the 'Indiana Jones' type traps, puzzles and problems that Laurence has built into the golden pyramid. When you examine a potential hazard you are, thankfully, given a message hinting at the dangers that await you should your attempts to solve the problems be the wrong ones! All through your journey you'll be given a few menial problems to solve. These, it seemed to me, are there to occupy you while you contemplate ways of overcoming the big, juicy problems. The need to drink will be hinted at early in the game, though I got a good three quarters of the way through before I started getting peckish! You've got plenty of time to find sustenance after the first hunger pangs strike - and indeed you should have already come across a source of water or two, as well

as the odd bit of food. I've got to say that the problems seemed to me to be super-tough, and I kept having all sorts of hassles finding the right words to do some of the more difficult tasks, though to be fair the author had done a good job in anticipating what I was hoping to do, and the messages of help when trying to do something the wrong way were quite useful. Normally I wouldn't play too much of a game with the help of a help-sheet, but I wanted to see what problems I might be missing towards the end, so with three quarters of the game done I cheated like mad to finish it... Yes, the problems were still hard, they were also very good too! The ending was a bit of an anti-climax though!

FEATURES:

Some nifty, well timed screen and sound effects are worth looking out for.

GOOD and BAD:

Probably the best thing

in the game is the amount of puzzles - most of which are ingenious and unusual to say the least. On the minus side I'd say that one or two major problems are a touch too hard or too ingenious to be able to tackle with confidence.

CONCLUSIONS:

I found the going tough, but you do at least have plenty of fun along the way. If you can handle a challenge then you'll have a good time! 1.99 to test your mettle... cheap at half the price!

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PACKAGING	58
TEXT	70
GRAPHICS	
DIFFICULTY	88
EASE of USE	71
VALUE	87
OVERALL	77

LETTERS

Read 'em then write in with your views...

Apart from several letters congratulating me on getting the Your Sinclair job, 'printable' letters were pretty thin on the ground. However, I've lifted a few comments from a couple of letters, the first being comments from June Rowe concerning my review of Delbert the Hamster Software's game: Desmond and Gertrude which was reviewed last issue... June says:

"I don't quite agree with your comment that the spelling mistakes in Desmond and Gertrude didn't really matter - they do, to someone who can spell. It's a bit like finding a currant in a plain cake - it shouldn't be there!"

June Rowe

Actually June, I quite agree with you! Spelling mistakes should be eradicated from games before they even reach the playtesting stage. I just wonder how many authors expect their

playtesters to actually pick up on the spelling side of things. I also wonder if Playtesters see correcting the mistakes as part of their job? If there are any playtesters reading this then you might care to write in and let me know what you actually do as playtesters!... Tim

...Here are a few points 'culled' from a letter from Kurt Schimmel...

"Here is a 'moan' about Compass Software's game: The Blood of Bogmole, a very good example I would say of how not to start an adventure... Let's face it, you are dead before you can read the text on the screen. Just about everything you do from location 1 at the start of the game ends in death. No time to ponder, no chance to map. Very frustrating - especially if you can't work out what you are supposed to do, and are given little chance of ever doing so."

K.Schimmel

Very good points, Kurt! I said in my review of the game (last issue) that it 'kicks off in typical Compass fashion with a hell of a lot happening.' Make the wrong moves and you do tend to die. Yes, that's frustrating I have to admit. I also said (in summing up the game) that I occasionally wished that the games 'pace' would relent somewhat... I meant to print a tip last issue to ease the pace a bit, and I've printed it in this issues help-line, so that should help struggling 'Bogmolers' out. The first few moves and problems you come across when starting a new adventure often make a big impression on the player... Some people like to be thrown in at the deep end - others don't. I much prefer a leisurely start myself, though as long as I can make some progress I don't really mind how a game starts! What are your views on this interesting subject? Tim

Dear Diary...

The diary of an adventure writer. (Pt.II)

Scott Denyer of Delbert the Hamster Software kicked off his 'Dear Diary' feature last issue... He had hoped for fame, money and reviews of his game. Did he get them? Read on and find out...

DIARY OF AN ADVENTURE WRITER PART II: 'Mum's on the warpath!'

3rd June:
I send off my diary for inclusion in the next issue of 'From Beyond'.

6th June:
I have agreed to write a game which will be designed by a fellow adventurer (hereafter known as Gareth). I receive his initial designs for his game called 'Microfair Madness'. It's set in a... wait for it... Microfair! Let me say now it's going to be the most amazing, brilliant, rip-tooting, etc., game ever

9th June:
Tragic day. My mother confiscates my

computer so that I will do some 'last minute' GCSE exam revision. (I was going to anyway, of course!)

21st June:
Having received most of the text for level 1 of 'MM', I can now finish programming it. I send Gareth a demo.

24th June:
Gareth writes back to say he thought the demo was brilliant! But... modesty forbids me to boast. I think I'll encounter memory problems though, as I've a whole level 1 mini game to incorporate, and I've only 4 bytes free.

28th June:
Another sad day. 'Your Sinclair' arrives and they've cut the adventure section down to 2 pages. (Tell me about it - Ed!) I wear a black arm-band and pace around the house quietly weeping, to everyone's amusement. I decide that 'Microfair Madness' will have to

be in 48k and 128k versions, as loads of Gareth's brilliant text won't fit into 48k. I also decide that the 'official' release date will be at the 'Adventure Probe Convention' on October the 26th. Therefore, I'll send it out to the mags around the end of September for a review in the November issues.

5th July:
I write and explain the memory problems to Gareth, and he promptly sends me more text for inclusion in the game. Sometimes the poor lad just doesn't understand. In the second post comes the 'Probe' review of 'Desmond & Gertrude'. Sadly the review isn't that good, but at least it didn't get a 'reet slaggin'. My hopes of becoming a millionaire overnight crumble into a fine powder.

8th July:
I sit by the letterbox anticipating the

The diary of an adventure writer. (Pt.II)

arrival of the greatest adventure journal of our time, but 'From Beyond' arrives instead (chortle, chortle). The 'D&G' review is much more complimentary than the 'Probe' one, and things look up. My diary also makes a dramatic entrance onto the scene. Sitting unnoticed on the table is another envelope, which I open and it's my first order!!! (Scott faints and has to be revived with the smelling salts). But... every silver lining has a cloud. The cheque is made to DTHS. A quick scan of the 'Probe' review shows that it forgot to mention who cheques should be made payable to. However, a quick phone call to the customer sees another cheque dispatched, and Mandy at 'Probe' promises to put a note in the next issue.

14th July:

I have set myself till tomorrow to send another demo of 'MM' to Gareth. Unfortunately, there's more programming to be done than I thought. My mother comes

bursting in shouting 'Get that computer off.' I don't understand it... 12.30 am is a perfectly reasonable time to be programming away!?

15th July:

I get up at 7.00am to program the 'MM' mini adventure called 'The Search For Smok'! Yep! You've guessed it! It's a parody of... The Sound of Music'. No, just kidding my little tinkers! Anyway, I get the demo finished and sent off.

18th July:

Gareth sends me all the text for level 2 of 'MM'. He comments on the latest issue of 'FB', and of the exceptionally poor standard of 'Dear Diary Pt.I'. (Cheeky Monkey!)

20th July:

I have 2 Delbert and Gertrude tapes returned as faulty, which I promptly replace. (Service with a smile.)

21st July:

I phone Gareth for the first time and we discuss 'Microfair Madness', the universe,

and everything. The call is prematurely ended by my Mother complaining about the phone bill.

25th July:

I don my 'maniac photocopier' guise, and visit the place where I do my documentation. I make a zillion (and 5) copies of everything and leave in a puff of smoke. My second game release, 'Star Flaws', is sent off to the playtesters.

29th July:

I receive one playtest report of 'SF' (Blimey, that were quick -Ed.) and it seems to go down quite well!

3rd August:

The second playtest report arrives and is a very different story altogether. While the playtester enjoyed it they thought the game was very 'risque', and unsuitable for younger gamers. To avoid complaint, I edit (censor!) the game and send it off to the various mags.

16th August:

Over the last week ➡

The diary of an adventure writer. (Pt.II)

I've been working on 'Arnold the Adventurer II', which I'm hoping to sell to Zenobi Software (if it's good enough.)

EPILOGUE:

As the diary draws to a close for another issue, I can say that 'Microfair Madness' should be finished within a few weeks, and therefore should go as scheduled. 'Star Flaws' would be reviewed in

this issue of 'FB' (No chance - Ed). So, until issue 9, stay easy!

NEXT ISSUE:

Scott starts the 6th form, and prepares for the 'Probe' convention. How will he cope...?

Well, Scott didn't sound too disappointed about response from reviews of 'Desmond and Gertrude' so presumably things went

quite well. If you bought the game please let Scott know what you thought of it. It might also be a good idea to drop me a line to see how the 'FB' review compared with your thoughts on the game. Next issue will indeed see another installment of Scott's diary, and his new game, 'Star Flaws' will be given a good going over by the 'FB' reviewing team.....Tim.

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REVIEW 2

'KOBAYASHI AG'KWO' Zenobi £1.99



Before we go any further let me introduce you to STORM. Storm is one of 'FB's' new reviewers, is an experienced adventurer and knows what he's on about. Both reviewers have adopted pseudonyms, and are, as far as I'm concerned, going to add an extra dimension to 'FB'. That just leaves me to say: It's over to you, Storm...

STORYLINE:

In this, the latest game written by Clive Wilson, you find yourself on the world of Ygor. In the past, many have visited the planet when undergoing the formidable test of the Kobayashi Naru. Since then though, the world

has been taken over by the mysterious Etherions, a strange humanoid race who have altered the Naru into the Ag'Kwo, a far more fiendish trial for the Immortals. Naturally you have been chosen as the first Immortal to hopefully overcome all the problems and pass the ultimate trial.

The Etherions have hidden four artifacts in various zones on the planet. These must be located before your time runs out. Due to the nature of the trial, you will find that your strength and stamina will wane very quickly and unless you are careful, could actually prove fatal. Having said that, the Etherions are very generous and frequently reward you with Credits. Ideally by the end of the Trial, you should have acquired the four artifacts and 100 Credits.

PACKAGING:

As one would expect from a game released

by John Wilson, it comes in the standard blue Zenobi cassette cover. As mentioned by Tim in the previous issue, the uniformity is quite eye catching when you have amassed several games.

SCREENS:

A pair of red eyes stare menacingly at you from the blue centre of the screen. On either side of which is a sword. At the top is the info that Clive Wilson wrote the game with the PAW while at the bottom is the Zenobi cat logo and year of release. Unless I am mistaken, the loading screen was partially done by Clive himself as it is in a similar style as the graphics you will come across during the game - but I could be wrong!

THE ADVENTURE:

Once the game has loaded, you are presented with one screen of

introduction, most of which I've covered previously in the storyline, so I'll continue. The next screen you see is the first location of the game but first I'll cover what else is there. At the top of the screen is a red shaded area in which is contained four white 'counters' that keep you constantly updated on your progress. The first of these counters shows your CRredits - you start with none and your aim is to collect 100. Next is the STamina counter - it starts at 100 and you've got serious problems should it reach 0. The third one is for Time - fairly self explanatory I think. Last is the ARtifact counter that starts at 0 and which will hopefully reach 4 if you complete the Kobayashi Ag'Kwo. Below this 'status line' is the location description which is in yellow. Then there is a white message urging you to get moving and to the left is a green face partially made from the altered input marker and cursor. As you type in your

response, the face separates and your input text appears in white. Overall a colourful presentation, that is easy on the eyes and shows that Clive wasn't content to have an unaltered basic PAWed game. So, where are you? 'You stand now within the alien world facing the unknown. All is silent here and in the realm before you. Take heart, brave one, for surely you can survive... Look now. Before you is a monitor with four push buttons. Take care...' Why take care I ask as I Examine monitor? Sticks and stones may hurt me but these words won't hurt me. In fact they are quite helpful later on. Anyway, I learn that there is not an exit to the North, South, East or West. Back to the monitor again. Choosing a number between 1 and 4, I transport to the planets surface and look around. In one zone you find yourself within the Deepest Realms of Gor. Your initial location in another zone is the

Black Corridor, a road carved through stone, leading hither and thither through trial and tribulation to salvation. Yet another will find you in the Torn Valley, surrounded on both sides by vast ranging hills. The last zone starts in a dark plain with the Cargoth mountains to the East. In these locations, your exits are shown by blue arrows after the words - Paths lead in (in purple letters). Each of these zones is fairly open to investigation with assorted objects being found all of which for a specific purpose. Likewise there are creatures, some of which will be of assistance while others will need to be dealt with appropriately. Ideally though, your progress depends on getting the map of the zones. How you get it though is not so much what you do, more how you do it. Similarly I would suggest that all objects that are present or described be examined. Clive provides lots of subtle hints and tips to help you overcome ➡

things although the input HELP will only give you the response 'The only aid you will get in this game is First Aid.' This reviewer is kinder and would like to point out that Kobayashi Ag'Kwo is not written using the Quill, but using P.A.W. which is capable of understanding commands such as VERB - NOUN - ADVERB or even VERB - NOUN - PREPOSITION - NOUN. Time though is not at a premium, nor is your STamina. If you should transport to the right zone at the wrong time, or the wrong zone at the right time, depending on how you see things, there is the BEAMOUT command that will return you to the initial location... but it costs you 5 units of STamina. There is a restriction on the number of objects you can carry so it pays to drop objects at convenient locations for collection at a later time. One thing that made examining things and creatures interesting was that most of them had a

graphic representation to accompany the response message. In other words, you examine A and you get the message with a picture courtesy of Clive underneath it. When you complete the first zone, you will be automatically transported to your initial location with the monitor now displaying a different message that will direct you to your next zone. Sometimes the objects acquired in one zone will be needed in the next, sometimes they won't. The RamSave/RamLoad option is present using the words RECALL and STORE so mistakes and their consequences can be minimised. This facility would be wisely considered as there are two sudden deaths - one is hinted at but the second caught me unexpectedly. Some of the problems you have to overcome are fairly straight forward to solve but some will test even the most experienced adventurer. I'm sure many will embark on the Kobayashi Ag'Kwo but I wonder how many

will pass all the tests set by the Etherions.

FEATURES:

This game has the useful Ramsave - Ramload facility as well as the traditional saving and loading to tape. Your progress and condition is constantly visible at the top of the screen (thanks to the status line) thus avoiding untimely or unexpected terminations. Most objects, when examined, have graphics to accompany the message. One thing not mentioned so far is that Clive has provided three typefaces that you can chose from when playing it. I preferred FONT 1 but the other two are both acceptable.

GOOD and BAD:

People will compare this game with others done by Clive, which is only to be expected. As this reviewer has not tried his other games, I regret I am not in a position to do that. What I will say is that I enjoyed

'KOBAYASHI AG'KWO' Zenobi £1.99

progressing through the world of Ygor. The location descriptions are both atmospheric and helpful and most of the responses are similar in content. The zones are fairly open, the problems are logical, no red herring objects and an informative status table at the top of the screen. The sudden deaths are irritating but not too costly thanks to the Ramsave option. The two things in the game that I wasn't too keen on were 1. The need for precise lengthy inputs - I'm of the old Quilled school who is used to verb-noun format. 2. The size of the game - just over 40 locations. Not wishing to get involved in a heavy argument between text purists and those who like graphics whether they be for locations or objects, all I will say is that normally the greater the number of graphics, the less memory that is available for locations or problems. The same could be said regarding the number of character sets in

Kobyashi Ag'Kwo. For the player to have the option which character set he prefers, first they require to be loaded into the database and when that happens, there is a reduction in the available memory for other purposes.

CONCLUSIONS:

As I stated in the previous section, this is the first adventure that I've played of Clive Wilson. They say first impressions count. I enjoyed it. There are a lot of good things in it for the adventurer, whether he/she/it be a new or seasoned campaigner. Clive Wilson wrote an article for the programmer profile section of FROM BEYOND issue 4. Since then, he has written The Darkest Road (also available from Zenobi Software) and also this game, Kobyashi Ag'Kwo, using Gilsoft's Professional Adventure Writer. It is a credit to Clive that he has learnt how to use it to this level of competency in so short a time. I look forward to his next

adventure... on the assumption that there is going to be one.

Reviewed by...**STORM**.

AVAILABLE FROM:

Zenobi Software
26 Spotland Tops,
Cutgate, Rochdale,
Lancashire OL12 7NX
PRICE: £1.99

RATINGS	%
STORYLINE	65
PACKAGING	58
TEXT	82
GRAPHICS	45
DIFFICULTY	55
EASE of USE	45
VALUE	75
OVERALL	70

As that was STORM's first review I'm sure you'll agree it was a pretty good effort. It's a tough task reviewing a game. If you don't believe me give it a go and show me the results! Seriously though, it's not an easy job so if you have any comments on the accuracy of the reviews by either new reviewer then I'll be happy to print your letters about them.....TIM.

Desk Top Publishing on the SPECTRUM? Whatever next?! Well yes Desk Top Publishing on the SPECTRUM! It comes in the form of PCG's DTP suite based on the WORDMASTER (WM) wordprocessor and is just the thing for the preparation of adverts, storyline, documents and instructions to go with your new adventure.

PCG's Desk Top Publisher Pack

Reviewed by Bob Bates.

Desk top publishing on the Spectrum is also the reason (Editor permitting) why this review is slightly different in appearance from the rest of "FROM BEYOND". This page was prepared and printed with Wordmaster to demonstrate its ability to mix simple

combinations of text and graphics. The title graphic was prepared with the HEADLINER! extension program. The text on succeeding pages was prepared with Wordmaster but printed out with the TYPELINER! extension program on a STAR LC10 9 pin dot matrix printer. The original was A4 xerox reduced to A5.

Together WORDMASTER, HEADLINER! and TYPELINER! make the DTP suite.

WORDMASTER

WORDMASTER is the work horse of the suite and provides the basic wordprocessing to prepare the text which can be printed out directly or via TYPELINER!

All large complex programs on the Spectrum represent a compromise in the allocation of memory. In the case of WM it is necessary to reserve memory for the DTP extensions and associated files, consequently it is a little lacking in traditional word processing features. Briefly, with the ability to print out to 136 columns but with a display limited strictly to a maximum of 64 columns it is somewhat less than WYSIWYG when printing wide documents although this is compensated by the splendid, plain English, command line system (see below). Likewise the lack of a tabulate function or an adjustable left margin on the display can make tables difficult to type. The final piece of bad news is that there is no line count so it can be difficult to make out where you are on the page. However the "find page" function will show where the page breaks will occur at the current lines per page.

That is the end of the bad news, the rest is good news all the way!

In any complex business program three areas are especially important, these are the systems for control of the program, entry and editing of the data and the control of output, in this case to the printer. If any of these are wrong then the program can be very difficult to operate. WORDMASTER and the whole DTP suite score heavily in all three although it will be a little time before you are fluent in all aspects.

CONTROL OF THE PROGRAM

The system of control is crucial in a complex program. The whole DTP suite is controlled by a sensible series of menus with selection by simple key press, nothing flashy, no pointers, no icons, just fast and efficient selection. Many of the choice keys are the initial letter of the option while that particular menu is displayed but some times the choice key is

PCG's DTP Pack. continued.

given as a Spectrum KEYWORD such as "DRAW" and this may pose problems if you have an upgraded keyboard that does not have all of the labels on the keys.

File handling is equally efficient, WORDMASTER creates a RAM DISC and all files and extension programs are automatically loaded to the RAM DISC from whence they are activated by the GET command or automatically by the programs.

ENTRY AND EDITING OF TEXT

Brevity forces a brief glance. Apart from the minor problems mentioned above, WM has a full range of entry and editing functions including slow and fast scroll, delete, underline (shown on screen), insert/overwrite, flexible search or search and replace, and a comprehensive set of BLOCK commands including the ability to save sections of text to disc.

CONTROL OF THE PRINTER

Control of the printer is another crucial area where WORDMASTER scores heavily. So far as possible, it uses plain ENGLISH or meaningful

abbreviations to communicate with the printer! No more problems with peculiar graphics symbols. Instructions which have a global effect on all of the following text are entered as a COMMAND LINE which is inserted into the text

ROMAN
BOLD
LIGHT
DATA
OUTLINE
STADIUM

Fig: HEADLINER!
fonts

at the appropriate point by pressing the TRUE VIDEO (CAPS SHIFT 3) key. The COMMAND LINE appears on the screen highlighted on yellow paper and preceded by the command prompt, >. Commands are printed opposite the prompt. The COMMAND line does not appear in the printed text.

For example, the following sequence of commands > margin

10,> column 120,> nlq,> pica (on separate command lines) prints out the text with a left margin of 10 and a right margin of 130 (10 + 120) in the printers pica near letter quality font. Simple, even I can understand and visualize that.

Additional COMMANDS are too numerous to list in full but include, PITCH > elite, condensed,> large, > normal,, STYLE > draft > nlq, JUSTIFICATION > left,> centre,> fill (right and left justify), TITLES > header and > footer. Page numbers are inserted automatically as a special form of footer. And so on and on.

Other commands which affect only a few words are inserted in the text by the GRAPHICS key followed by the initial letter of the command, capital for on and lower case for off. Thus GRAPHIC "E" and "e" represent emphasised on and off. The command character appears in inverse. Italics, compressed and several other functions are switched in a similar way. If all this is not enough to control all of the effects that your printer can produce, you can define new > COMMANDS or GRAPHIC control characters.

PCG's DTP Pack.

continued.

WORDMASTER will print in whatever fonts that your printer is equipped with and right justification is achieved with equal spaces between words. **INCLUSION OF**



GRAPHICS

The jewel in the crown of **WORDMASTER** is its ability to mix text and graphics in the same document. The graphic can be a screen[®] generated by **HEADLINER** or it can be imported either from another graphics program or as public domain **CLIP ART**. If your adventure includes graphics these can be included in your advert or story line.

The graphic must first be placed on the **RAM DISC** in a form that can be recognised by **WORDMASTER**. This is done by calling the appropriate menu and pressing the **GRAPHIC** key, and loading the screen[®]. A flashing box

is then placed round the section of the screen that you wish to include. Pressing **ENTER** clips the graphic prompts for a name and enters it on the **RAM DISC**. The rest of the screen is erased to save memory.

The graphic is placed in the text file by means of the following command line. graphic w,h (file name) where w and h are scaling of width and height.

As if that were not enough, text printing can either stop during printing of the graphic or it can be made to continue down the left or the right of the

If your adventure has graphics, include some in your adverts, inlay or storyline with the aid of **HEADLINER**!

graphic with the text left or text right commands.

Note that the brackets in the graphic command should be square brackets but chemists and mathematicians please note that when they are included in the text they cause odd effects when the file is sent to the printer

HEADLINER

HEADLINER is a graphics and text design package for the production of titles, headlines, logos and drawings. It is fully integrated with **WORDMASTER** and in fact is

loaded into **WM** as an extension. It is equipped with six large fonts, light, bold, outline, roman, data, and stadium which can be in two scales of width and height, bold or italicized. There is also provision to load in normal sized fonts (Spectrum character size) which you have designed yourself or ready made from the public domain but there are no normal sized fonts supplied.

Characters are entered on screen, typewriter style, at the cursor position

Headliner also has a full set of line drawing facilities including line, circle, box and arc. These are entered with the aid of two cursors, an origin and



destination cursor which can be scrolled round the screen in three different modes, radial, follow and parallel.

The drawing routines are satisfactory but

PCG's DTP Pack.

continued.

sometimes not as well executed as on a dedicated graphics program such as ARTIST 2 or ART STUDIO, remember the memory restrictions, HEADLINER! is operating inside a word processor! For example, the circle routine gets into trouble if any part of the



circle is off screen and the fill routine can take several goes to completely fill a shape.

The screen can be scrolled to reposition the picture and it can be filled with pattern or coloured. When working with colour, a character square grid can be placed on the screen to help with the colour boundaries. Fine detail can be added with the aid of magnification and there is a store and restore screen function for recovery from mistakes.

Despite the minor criticisms, HEADLINER! is a very useful graphics extension program and has a font set which is far superior to anything supplied with the other major graphics programs.

A utility program was published recently, in FORMAT magazine, to design new headliner fonts.

TYPELINER!

Typeliner! is the page design program which takes text, graphics and fonts from the RAM DISC and prints them out on a nine pin printer using page designs produced at the time or stored on RAM DISC. Like HEADLINER! it is fully integrated with WM and is loaded into the wordprocessor as an extension.

The text can be printed in a wide range of TYPELINER! fonts using "TRIPLE PASS" printing to achieve amazingly crisp



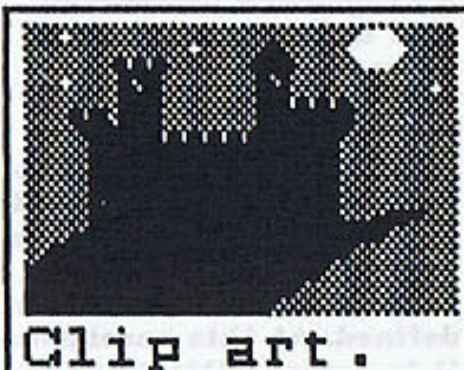
TYPELINER! TIP

If your TYPELINER! graphics are misaligned ensure that the printer is set to PICA pitch.

appearance. Can this be your Spectrum printing to a mere nine pin printer? Yes it can! All that you have to do is to design a good looking page.

TYPELINER! is loaded into the WM RAM DISC together with any text, fonts, graphics and

page designs. It is then activated with the GET FILE command and you are prompted for the file name. Then the main TYPELINER! screen appears with the outline of an A4 sheet on the right and a control area



on the left.

Any number of text blocks can be defined by placing a box which can be expanded or contracted as necessary and scrolled round the screen. Pressing the key to fix the block leaves its outline on the screen and moves on to the next box. The font to be used for each block is specified by placing a GRAPHIC command code in the text with WM.

Picture blocks are placed in a similar manner by calling GRAPHICS mode, entering the graphic name in response to the prompt then placing the box on the screen. The graphic box is automatically scaled for

PCG's DTP Pack.

continued.

two heights and four widths.

A third type of box, a display box, can be defined to place a border round any part of the screen. The display boxes can be drawn in several styles or they can be collapsed to produce a straight line. A temporary measuring grid can be put on the screen to aid positioning and sizing. This is useful for producing A5 pages.

A VIEW PAGE option can be called at any time and the text and graphics are poured into the boxes in the order that they were defined. At this resolution it is not possible to read the text, each word is shown as a solid bar with the width proportional to the font but a legible image of the text or graphic in each box can be presented on the left of the screen.

If you like the look of the page then it can be sent to the printer in either draft or full quality. Sit back and be amazed!

Close scrutiny of the text will reveal that the TYPELINER fonts are fully proportional but do not offer kerning. Right justification is achieved by equal spacing between words but it does not employ microspacing between characters. Both kerning and micro spacing are very advanced

features; their absence in a program running within the memory restrictions of a 48K computer is not surprising and is not to be taken as a serious criticism of the program.

Long though it is, this review is an incomplete record of the features of the DTP suite but the only real criticism from the point of view of adventuring is that the fonts are more business like than decorative. Extra font packs offering Old English, Gothic and other decorative fonts are available.

WILL IT WORK IN YOUR SYSTEM?

The program was reviewed on a 48K Spectrum + fitted with Commander keyboard, a Disciple disc/printer interface 3.5 inch drive and LC10 printer but versions of PCG's DTP can be supplied for a wide range and combination of hardware. There is even a version for the SAM COUPE but if you have the Spectrum version it can be run on the COUPE under one of the Spectrum emulators, SPECMAKER or LERM SAM TAPE 4.

Although DTP is supplied customized for EPSON compatible dot matrix printers, it can be customized for other formats including IBM with the aid of extension

programs supplied

It is particularly pleasing that the program can be used from tape cassette. This seemingly impossible feat is achieved by use of the RAM DISC. Once all of the relevant files have been loaded individually to RAM DISC they can be resaved as a single SUPER FILE ready to be reloaded in a single operation each time you work on that project.

CONCLUSIONS

PCG's DTP pack is an outstanding, well designed package for production of magazine style pages of text and graphics and it would be perfect for the production of adventure related items and adverts. At £37.50 it is quite expensive for a Spectrum program but you won't be disappointed.



THE
END

PCG's DTP Pack.

continued.

Text .FBr-hp4res

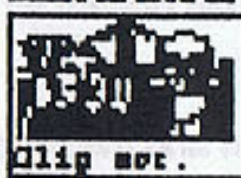
Block:01

>reset!
sometimes not as well
executed as on a
dedicated graphics
program such as
ARTIST 2 or ART
STUDIO, remember the
memory restrictions,
HEADLINER! is
operating inside a
word processor! For
example, the circle
routine gets into
trouble if any part
of the circle is off
screen and the fill
routine can take
several goes to

PCG's DTP Pack.

continued.

THESE ARE THE
SCREENS YOU SEE
WHEN YOU RUN THE
PROGRAM. THE
SCREENS ARE
DESIGNED TO BE
EASY TO USE AND
TO SHOW THE
RESULTS OF YOUR
WORK.



THIS SCREEN IS
THE MAIN SCREEN
OF THE PROGRAM.
IT SHOWS THE
RESULTS OF YOUR
WORK.

THE SCREEN IS
DESIGNED TO BE
EASY TO USE AND
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RESULTS OF YOUR
WORK.

Fig. "VIEW PAGE" before printing.



TYPELINER! TIP

Each page must have at
least one display box.
If you do not want it to show,
collapse it to a short line and
place it in the left margin
where it will be hidden by the
binding or can be covered with
correction fluid.



TYPELINER! TIP

To use TYPELINER! you
must have a text file
and font on RAM DISC. If you are
designing a page of graphics
load a very short dummy text
file, containing just a full
stop. Place this somewhere
inconspicuous and cover it with
correction fluid, if necessary.

Why D.T.P.?

Bob Bates kindly
offered to review this
Spectrum D.T.P.
package to show you
what can be done with

it. I think adventure
writers might find it
useful for producing
adverts for their games,
packaging, order forms,

labels, help-sheets,
maps, etc., etc. Some-
one might even try
D.T.P.-ing an adventure
fanzine with it!..... Tim

HELP-LINE

Some guidance for lost souls.

First up are a few hints for various games from 'Sandrunner'...

'One of our Wombats is Missing': If you lose the Wombat look where all the food is.

'The Golden Sword of Bhakhor': Close the beggars eyes.

'Orc Island': Don't wear the waistband of strength from the village guard house.

'Quest for the Golden Orange Peel': Feed the bookworm.

'Star Crystal': Wear the boots and grab the bush to avoid the snake.

'Kaa's Kingdom': If you must break the egg don't examine its contents.

'Brian the Bold': An old axe will open a door, but a sharp one is needed for a wooden chest.

'Dragon Slayer': For

spear cut thicket.

'Sorcerer's Mountain': Swing to avoid acid.

'Picture of Innocence': Sharpen branch for lance.

'Jason and the Golden Fleece': Take rat to vet.

Sandrunner signs off by saying: "If anyone has played a game called 'POLEARN' (128k) can they please let him know how to get down from a tree, as he's been stuck up one for about three months! (and he's starting to get cramp!) Sandrunner's address is:

'APACHARIA'
3 BULAY ROAD,
LONGROYD BRIDGE,
HUDDERSFIELD,
YOURKSHIRE.
HD1 3NH.

Moving along... here, as promised last issue, are some more 'Agatha's Folly' hints from Gary 'Nuttty' Naylor... Don't forget to read the solutions from left to right - not right to

left...

AGATHA'S FOLLY:

Having trouble removing that wallpaper from the bedroom? all you need do is: TEG KCOR DNA TEW EGNOPS.

The hairgrip is used to: KCIP KCOLDAP.

This final clue from Gary is really cryptic (read it normally): SAW the post with the SAW? (Eh?)

Moving along (more swiftly than a swiftly moving thing), this next set of hints comes from Scott Denyer...

DEEK'S DEEDS:

Rescue Fudgebow from the gallows by throwing the hat. (Item No.2 on the initial choice menu.)

AN EVERYDAY TALE OF A SEEKER OF GOLD:

Open the oven in Bulbo's house to get a tasty surprise. Give them to the Trolls ➡

HELP-LINE: Some guidance for lost souls.

to get the spade.
Examine everything
about the spade to find
out what to do next.

BULBO AND THE LIZARD KING:

The donkey is arguably
the most important
companion. To find him
go SW from the market
place and 'GET ROPE'
to obtain him.

ONE OF OUR WOMBATS IS MISSING:

Go to the Jackdaw's
cage and WAIT
(several times) to get
the 1p and 5p. Go into
the unisex loo and
examine cockroach and
grab something that's
dangling from it!
(Oo-er!)

*This next bit of help
comes from Jon
Lemmon, and should
have been printed last
month...*

THE BLOOD OF BOGMOLE:

To stop the orc attacks
during the game simply
type FB.
Also, an intrinsic part of
the game is getting

captured and
subsequently escaping
from the dungeon. The
first escape attempt is
arguably the hardest,
so here's a lot of help:

Exam Door, Exam
Window, Exam Ogre,
Exam Stool (clue),
Exam Hole, Exam
Spider. Now, if you
have some mud, (this
bit's backwards...):
KCOLB ELOH HTIW
DUM. When you've
done that wait for a
while (4 or 5 times
should do the trick) and
then: KCOLBNU ELOH.
Take a look at your
handywork and the rest
will be plain sailing!
(But just to be on the
safe side STORE the
game at that point.)

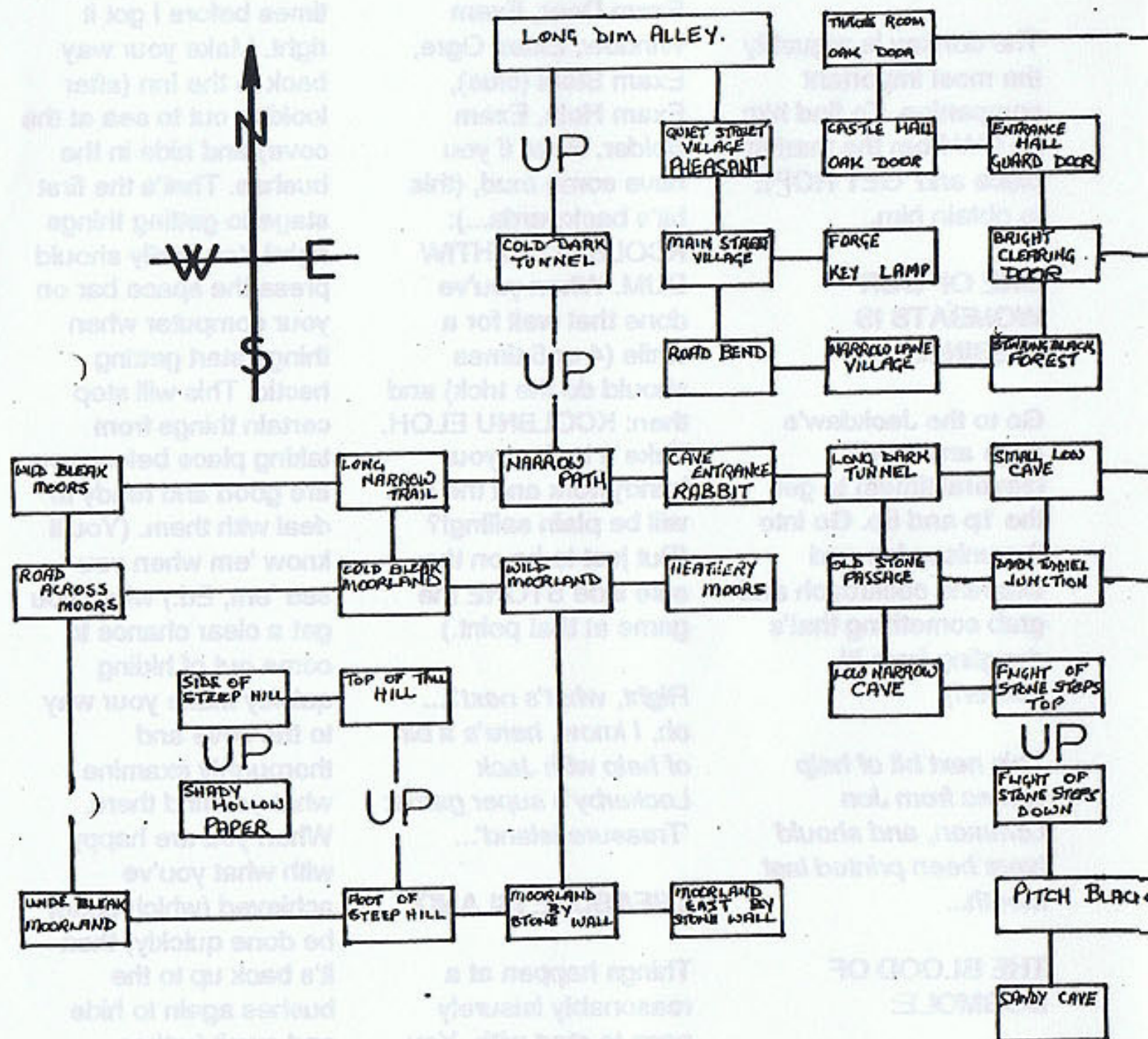
*Right, what's next?...
oh, I know, here's a bit
of help with Jack
Lockerby's super game;
'Treasure Island'...*

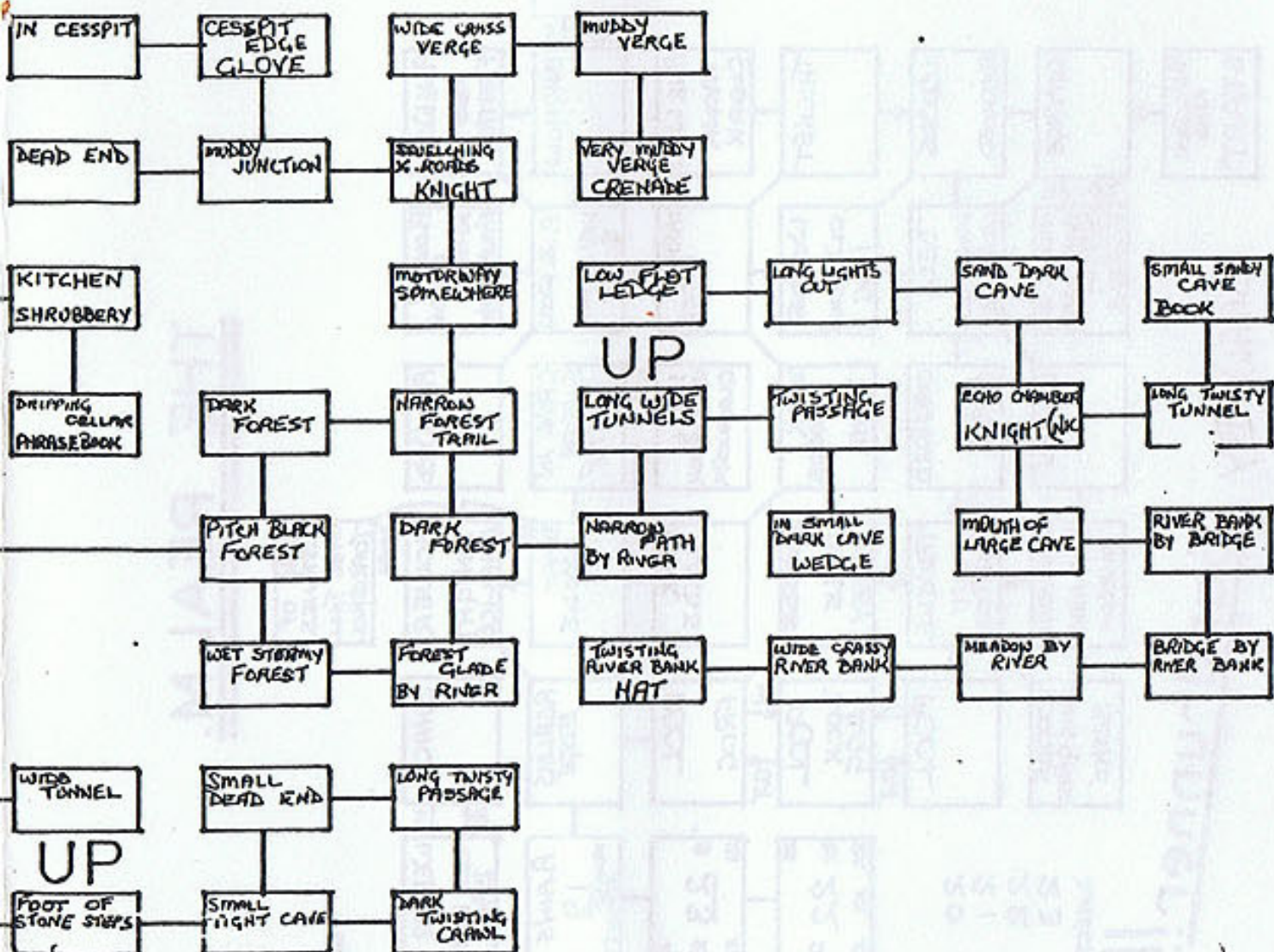
TREASURE ISLAND:

Things happen at a
reasonably leisurely
pace to start with. You
can search around,
sniff out a few clues,
find a few objects
before things start
getting a bit tougher...

after collecting
everything you can find,
close the Inn door, go
to the cove and look out
to sea. This triggers off
a set of events that
caught me out about 12
times before I got it
right. Make your way
back to the Inn (after
looking out to sea at the
cove) and hide in the
bushes. That's the first
stage to getting things
right! You really should
press the space bar on
your computer when
things start getting
hectic. This will stop
certain things from
taking place before you
are good and ready to
deal with them. (You'll
know 'em when you
see 'em, Ed.) when you
get a clear chance to
come out of hiding
quickly make your way
to the cove and
thoroughly examine
what you find there.
When you are happy
with what you've
achieved (which better
be done quickly) then
it's back up to the
bushes again to hide
and await further
happenings. If that's all
a bit vague you'll just
have to use RAMSAVE
a lot till you get things
right.....Tim.

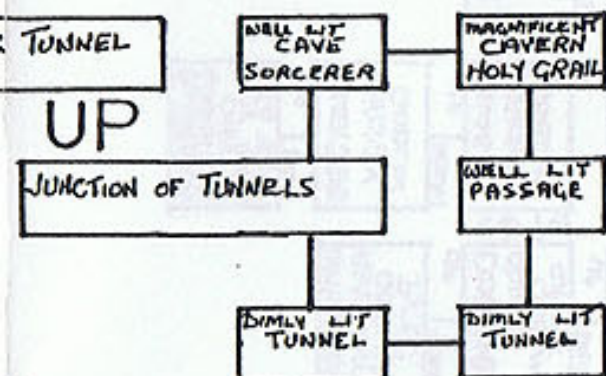
QUEST FOR THE HOLY GRAIL.



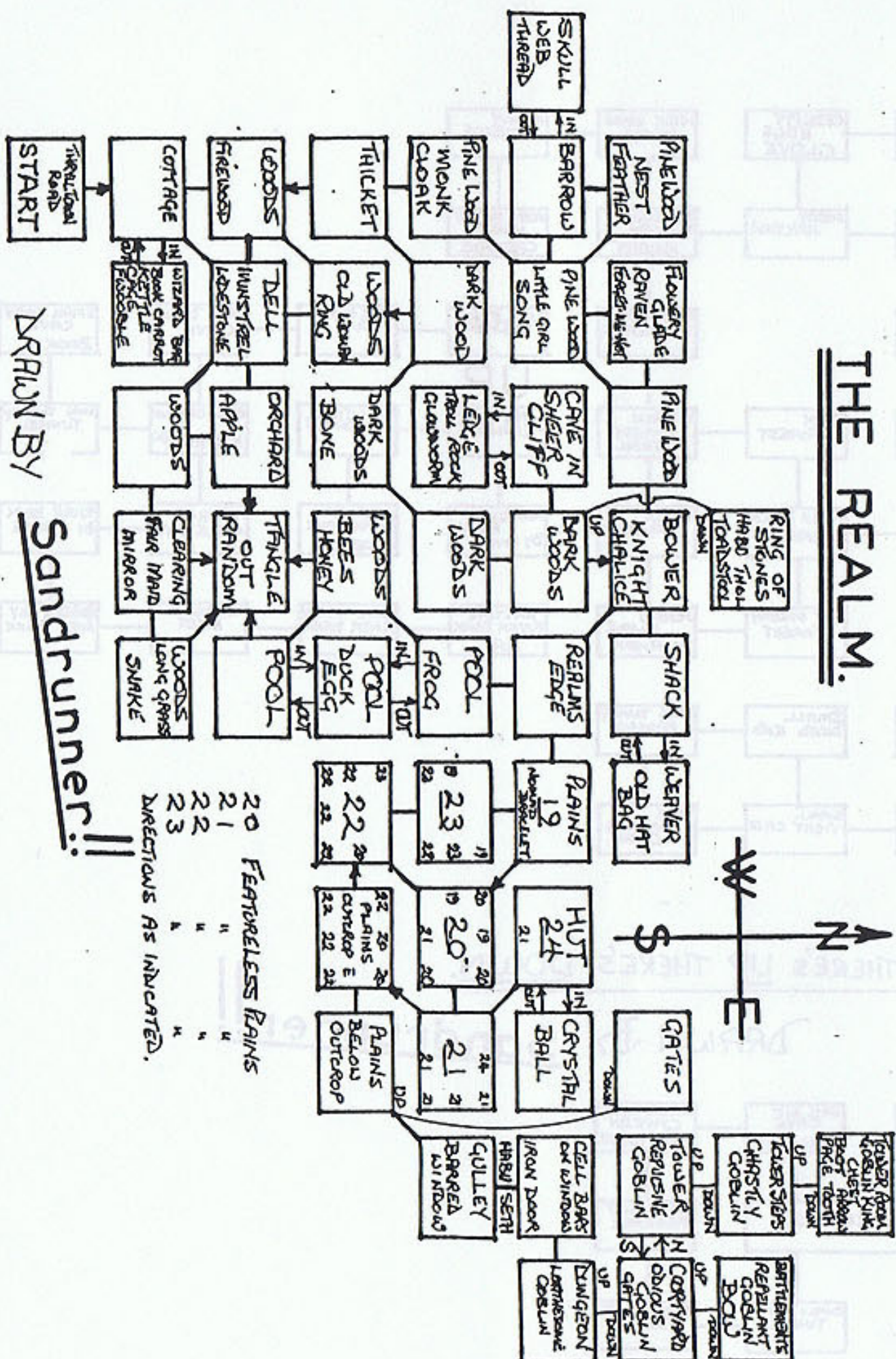


WHERE THERE'S UP THERE'S DOWN.

DRAWN BY Sandrunner!!



THE REALM.



REVIEW 3

'PHOENIX' Zenobi Software 1.99



Years ago I played a game called TOWER OF DESPAIR by Games Workshop. It was a powerful tale of death and mayhem (and despair), and would, if it had been a film, have been given an 18 certificate! Now, with Zenobi's new release, PHOENIX, an equally powerful, twice as chilling tale has been brought to your computer... 'Where have all the adults of the village of Finvarra gone? Why are the children being struck down with demonic ailments? Why are the villagers of Dunatis afraid? And who is the mysterious 'Traveller in Black? Is he a sinner or a saviour?... Something evil resides in Finvarra, it must DIE...

STORYLINE:

...Your life force fades, the visions dim. All that remains are the tenuous memories. You remember a time of tranquility and contentment in the bosom of your family. Lost forever through treachery and greed when your land was engulfed by the forces of evil.

You remember the sound of your own screams as you were repeatedly tortured by the Abominations insane minions. You remember the period of Limbo that followed, the timeless waiting, the frustration and the need for revenge, before the legendary 'Champions of Chronos' recruited you to fight in the great 'Temporal Struggle'. The land of Dagda was the first rebirth and deep down you know that there are others, or will be, for such is the existence of 'the traveller in black' now called **PHOENIX**.

Once again you feel the cry for help, so powerful that it crosses the barriers that cannot be crossed, allowing you yet again to be summoned to a time and place not of your own. You feel the pain of your 'rebirth' and when you open your eyes.....

PACKAGING:

The usual Zenobi cassette cover and A4 storyline / info sheet is what comes with the game. Normally I'd say no more about it, though I must add that this game would have been a prime candidate for a few maps, spell scrolls and added extras to be given away with it! Nuff said!

SCREENS:

The loading screen fits in well with the story, basically because it doesn't give anything away about it... you see a planet, a star the games name & nothing else! How intriguing! ➤

THE ADVENTURE:

After the pain of your rebirth finally abates you find yourself standing beside a small spinney of oak trees on the road that winds its way South to Castle Malakin and North towards the villages of Finvarra and Dunatis. Your mission has begun!

Typing HELP (as I always like to do at the start of any game) tells you that YOU are the one that has been summoned to help - not the one who needs to receive it! You are, however, told that praying to someone on one occasion could be a wise move.

You begin your quest armed with a sharp knife, boots and a black robe (hence the name of your character - a traveller in black). The author of the game, who has decided to adopt the same name as the games hero too, seems almost insistent that you immediately take the direct route to Finvarra - bypassing the other places in the vicinity... Not being a particularly

trusting soul I thought I'd take a trip to Castle malakin first...

However, you are told that it was the Finvarran's who summoned you - meaning their need is of greatest importance. However, things in Finvarra are far too chaotic, mind-bending and dangerous for you to simply go wandering in there without first preparing the way by



doing a few good deeds and favours first.

One of the first things you'll encounter on your travels are a group of villagers from Dunatis. Dunatis appears to have escaped the fate of Finvarra, in that the adult population are still alive! What's more, they are guarding the way into their village, and will certainly not admit a sinister-looking black-robed stranger

such as yourself!

It's easy, if you don't head straight for Finvarra like you are told to, to start the game in completely the wrong way! If, however, you do head straight out to see what's going on in the seemingly 'damned' village, you'll find that the adventure begins in earnest, and it will give you the drive to defeat the evil entity that has made its home in Finvarra!

What you come across that makes you determined to banish the evil malicious 'entity' that now dwells in the village turns out to be one of the abominations minions, obviously taking great delight in torturing someone... If you are quick witted you'll be given the first of many tasks to perform, which in turn will lead you further into the game... The scene of carnage early on is a bit strong, so don't say you haven't been warned! The crimes committed against the villagers (and remember, it's only the infants who are left there) at the behest of the Abomination ➤

have left the village children suffering from all manner of demonic ailments ranging from full-blown Possession to a severe case of Warts! From what I could gather you are totally free to wander the village, exploring the various 'features', finding out where useful objects are, and you are only prevented from sussing out the lie of the land on one or two specific occasions. When this happens you'll hopefully be armed with enough knowledge (gained from your travels around the village and surrounding countryside) to overcome almost anything.

On a few occasions you'll certainly benefit if you have a reasonable knowledge of mythology. The author has taken various myths and legends, carefully worked them into the storyline, and turned them into the games (main) problems, and it's with the solving of these myth / legend inspired problems that the games main aim (to

cure the afflicted children) can be realised! If you are having difficulty solving any of the many problems in the game, then I'd head for Hubert the Hermit territory. Hubert, once the village wise man, was tortured by the abominations evil-doers. Hence he has no hands, his legs are in irons and he has no sight. Fortunately for you Hubert is a Mystic, Oracle and fortune teller, so you'll undoubtedly find that he's pretty useful on a couple of occasions. But what of the dreaded Abomination! How can it be defeated? Well, it has taken up residence on the Village green and is truly terrible to behold. Upon examining it you'll see that this... *"depraved being from the primal darkness is the colour of disease and the shape of a nightmare, constantly changing. A part of it resembles an unborn foetus writhing about, its mouth open revealing curving dagger teeth with its bloodshot eyes staring at you with malice.*

Even though from another time and place, it recognises you for what you are... or what you were... or maybe shall be."



You'll notice I haven't told you too much about the games problems... Well that's mainly because they are nearly all interlinked with some of the games main tasks, and to say too much about them would only spoil things for you! You'll find out for yourselves that the Abomination and his evil minions really are a thoroughly nasty bunch of malformed malcontents, spewed forth from the pits of hell! Nothing, be it animal, vegetable or mineral, is too insignificant to be overlooked. They have effectively destroyed and despoiled the whole of Finvarra! ➤➤

The children of the village are relying on you to heal them or sort out their problems. Each time you do just that you'll be rewarded with more information, objects or knowledge to help you solve other problems. Most of the objects in the game have a purpose, and also have helpful messages when examined or 'operated'. Talking of messages... there appear to be an awful lot of them, along with atmospheric location descriptions and problems to see, and take in, before you get anywhere near the point when you have the tools and the knowledge to deal with the Abomination. When the final conflict eventually comes it's a swift one, though the outcome will definately surprise you!

FEATURES:

Nothing new or innovative has been added to the usual RAM SAVE / LOAD features, though there's nothing in the game that would really benefit from having anything

special to see, do or use. The text is plain white on a black background with a line of udg's seperating the main body of the location description text from the text input area. There's no sound, graphics or special effects either - though they aren't really needed or missed!

GOOD and BAD:

The good points far outweigh the bad... The whole game is very well done! The problems vary in difficulty from moderately easy to quite difficult. Helpful messages never give too much away, and the problems in the game are challenging and, despite their origins, innovative! The only bad point I can think of is that you are, at times, not given enough information on how to overcome some of the more Mytyh / Legend based 'tougher' problems! I'd certainly recommend you get a reference book or two out from the library, and look up the names of characters, objects and landmarks that are to

be found in the game! I found the 'research' aspect to be part of the fun!

CONCLUSIONS:

Despite only being a one part game, there's still a lot to it! It's well thought out, well written & researched, well hard (in places) and to my mind deserves, and indeed gets, the highest 'FB' accolade: The Golden Gauntlet award! I demand a sequel!

AVAILABLE FROM:

Zenobi Software
26 Spotland Tops,
Cutgate, Rochdale,
Lancashire OL12 7NX.

PRICE: £1.99



RATINGS

%

STORYLINE	80
PACKAGING	58
TEXT	90
GRAPHICS	
DIFFICULTY	77
EASE of USE	80
VALUE	88
OVERALL	90



Your life force fades the visions dim. All that remains are the tenuous memories. You recall a time of tranquillity and contentment in the bosom of your family. Lost forever, through treachery and greed, when your land was engulfed by the forces of evil. You even remember the sound of your own screams as you were repeatedly tortured by the 'Abomination' and its insane minions.

You remember the period of 'limbo' that followed, the timeless waiting, the frustration and the need for revenge. But all this was before the legendary 'CHAMPIONS OF CHRONOS' recruited you to fight in the 'Great Temporal Struggle'. A task that you found impossible to refuse, a task that sparked off that indomitable urge to succeed.

The land of Dagda was the first 'rebirth' and deep down you know that there are others, or will be, for such is the existence of the 'traveller in black', the one they now call PHOENIX.

Once again you feel the need for help, so powerful that it crosses the barriers that cannot be crossed, allowing you yet again to be summoned to a time and a place not of your own.

You feel the pain of the 'rebirth' and when you open your eyes

PHOENIX

Notes : This game will support all the 'normal' commands such as EXAMINE THE ROBE or THROW THE SPEAR or OPEN THE GATE. It is also possible to link more than one command by the use of the word AND .. e.g. PICK UP THE BONE AND EXAMINE IT. Whilst the use of the word IT is also useful when referring to the last named object ... e.g. TAKE THE MEAT AND EAT IT.

In order to keep a record of your progress throughout the game it is advisable to use the normal SAVE and LOAD commands to store a 'game-position' on the medium of your choice ... i.e. Tape users to tape, disk users to disk. However you can also use RAMSAVE and RAMLOAD to store and recall a position to memory. This is only a short term storage however and more permanent records should be made to TAPE or DISK.

"The time for struggle is upon you and the 'Abomination' and its insane minions await your arrival, so gather your strength and compose your thoughts for it is time to do battle with those who must be destroyed. The 'Champions of Chronos' look to you, continue to uphold their beliefs and do your utmost to succeed in the 'Great Temporal Struggle' .."



Zenobi Software

adventures

Zenobi Software adventures



Spectrum 48K/128K+2.

Being a 'free-lance' reporter has its advantages and sat here supping a decent cup of 'Earl Grey' is most certainly one of them ... not to mention the slab of 'Cherry Genoa' that had accompanied it. All that remains of the latter are a few crumbs on a white porcelain plate, whilst the matching cup in your left hand is in urgent need of a re-fill. Leaning forward you ring the small silver bell and some moments later old Rigby shambles towards you clutching a tray containing a silver tea-pot and a brown manilla envelope.

"This just arrived for you," he mumbles and you smile at the missing 'Sir' that any of the others here present would have had tagged on to the end of the statement. But old Rigby had never really accepted you as a 'bona-fide' member of this club and often made his feelings known concerning the matter. However he was good at his job and the simple fact that he produced such an excellent pot of tea more than made up for his 'crustiness'.

Tearing open the envelope, you slide out the small sheet of paper contained within and begin to read its contents as old Rigby turns on his heels and shuffles away.

".... have located the site of the ancient GOLDEN PYRAMID looks to be in excellent condition natives a shade restless but should not cause you many problems the rumours have it that it is untouched will look forward to your arrival" Your eyes scan the page and come to rest on the signature on the bottom and a smile of recognition flits across your face. You have seen that scrawl many times before and it has always meant that you were on the verge of yet another great adventure. One day you would have to meet Wee-Yin personally and express your gratitude for all his stalwart work in the past.

Some hours later, fully equipped and ready for any eventuality, you climb into the 'jump-seat' of a light aircraft and set off for the arid region of Africa where the GOLDEN PYRAMID is to be found.

GOLDEN PYRAMID

NOTES : This game will accept all the standard commands such as EXAMINE, LOOK, GET INVENTORY etc. It will also accept the use of RAM SAVE and RAM LOAD in order to save and load a game 'position' to and from MEMORY. However always use the more normal commands of SAVE and LOAD to store your position on tape. This will ensure that your record will be a permanent one. To quit the game at any time simply type in QQ and follow the prompts on screen. Abbreviations are ... G = Get, R = Look, L = Look, X = Examine and I = Inventory.

adventure

I did it my way!

Laurence 'Quill' Creighton does it like this...

Can you really still produce a halfway decent game using Gilsoft's ancient Quill? Laurence Creighton can! Here he divulges how....

To start, what I found I needed was a fertile imagination, lots of poetic licence, a soft pencil and a very efficient rubber. Oh of course several sheets of paper - preferably 'A3' in size.

I start off with a basic storyline in mind - by drawing a vague sort of flowchart. I have no idea at this stage how to connect them, but by joining lines to and from each one, it starts to take on the appearance of a map. Then insanity prevails as I start muttering to myself saying that could be a ledge, so I must be able to go DOWN to it, or that is a peak so I must be able to go up to it. To illustrate, let me refer to "The Lost Temple of the Incas". For the opening

scenario I merely drew a cross for the four initial locations and labelled them accordingly. People who play my games will notice that once (and sometimes twice) in a game there is no going back. e.g. once you've ridden in the helicopter you can't get back to the village. I do that so I can re-use flags. I'm going to assume that readers are vaguely familiar with the 'Quill'. There are only 18 flags, if you leave out flag-28 reserved for the Patch. This is hopelessly inadequate, so you have to have points as above where you can clear them all back to zero to re-use.

You must keep an accurate list of what flag is doing what - especially if you clear them as above; if a situation crops up where you've cleared them and it IS possible to back-track, strange things can happen & / or weird messages can occur unsolicited.

My first port-of-call once I have loaded in the 'Quill' is to change global colours to black: please other writers - black letters on a white background can ruin your eyesight. I then go to table B which is messages and type in what I call routine messages i.e. those which are continually repeated e.g. "You can't do that yet" or "Why" or "With what" etc. And I also write these out for constant referral. My next visit is to table A which is the vocabulary and synonyms. I put in the first 20 or 30: the rest follow as I go along.

Finally I go to table C which is the location texts and kick off. Until this point I don't have a clue what I'm going to say, but just like my colleague Larry Horsfield, if I look at a blank sheet of paper my mind too goes blank. As I gaze at the screen however with a keyboard in front of me, ideas just

Laurence 'Quill' Creighton does it like this...

start flowing. I usually do outlines of the locations, and flower them up later - when I can see how much memory is left (oh what an enemy...)

The next thing is to link the locations together with the movement table. (Table D)

Now it gets a bit choppy as sometimes (often) a player is only permitted to go in a direction under certain circumstances.

Now, we have the locations written out, we can move between them (after a fashion) and we have a vocab of sorts.

Now comes a bit where a friend of mine once said "Laurence, you don't have problems - you create them!" At this point I'm still a bit befuddled as to exactly what I want to do. I'll say to myself "Ah I think that should be an unstable ledge, let's give the player 3 turns down there to sort himself out" or "we have a slightly sloping passage filled with, say, green slime, how could we get past it?" In other words I create

problems for a player to solve.

My prime concern is that the player should ENJOY the game and NO game should be unplayable. From the objects you have or from the situation itself one should be able to deduce how to resolve the current problem. If it is very tricky it should be resolved with HELP even if the hint itself is slightly veiled.

I then work progressively through the game in "blocks". By that I mean I do little segments at a time, trying to see the problem from every angle and possibility and have an answer for every input (usually cocky or sarky!). Say for instance you need to cover yourself with lotion to prevent mosquitoes from biting, I'll work at it until the player either gets zapped by being bitten or doesn't if he's covered himself.

When finally the game is complete - after a fashion, I improve on the text, the responses

and generally polish it up. I put everything where it's supposed to be and give it it's 1st play-test. You'd be amazed at the number of corrections that come out. After I've ironed out all the errors and corrections, I put it through the illustrator and patch and present it to Andy McCall to give it it's first PROPER play-test. By that I mean by someone who doesn't have a clue what the story-line is. I find when you test your own games you know what to look for (or avoid) and subtle things can happen and are missed. Poor Andy, he's not really a play-tester but what I do is plonk him behind the keyboard with my latest masterpiece loaded, and I guide him through the game. We don't waste time with him drawing a map. That's the only help he gets. I insist he thinks aloud so I can hear his thoughts (that way I can get dozens of fresh ideas). As they say in the TV show "It works for me". (What TV show is this, Laurence? - Ed) Andy usually has >>

Laurence 'Quill' Creighton does it like this...

to play-test about three times: each time there are less and less corrections and / or additions until I run out of memory. The whole game is then polished and re-polished trying to anticipate what the play-testers will criticise and 'behold' another adventure is done! My personal favourite is still "The Golden Pyramid" (reviewed this issue, Ed.) and if only I had the Press I could have added so many

more tricks & puzzles! Well, that's it really. Hope everyone enjoys playing my adventures as much as I enjoy writing them.

*Laurence Creighton.
Cape Town,
South Africa.*

I'm sure that most of you reading this will have at least 1 Laurence Creighton title in your collection... His games are no frills, no nonsense, no fuss affairs - stuffed full of

problems, are easy to get into and get harder as you play. All the ingredients, in fact, for damn fine games. Zenobi Software has a large collection of L.Creighton titles, and new titles seem to be eagerly awaited by a lot of adventurers. So it seems that once again the venerable Quill (coupled with a fertile imagination) still keeps going strong and still does the business!

Tim.

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REVIEW 4

'... Bomb Under Parliament' Zenobi 1.99



Bessie Bug Hunter (for that is the chosen pseudonym of our second 'new' reviewer) has millions of hours of adventure play-time under her belt, her fave games of all time are Lords of Time, all other Level 9 stuff, River Games and Horroscope and her fave author is Jack Lockerby! I've decided to put her straight to work on two Laurence Creighton titles, the first being 'There's a Bomb Under Parliament'...

STORYLINE:

You receive a phone call in the middle of the night telling you that a nuclear bomb has been placed under Parliament and you have until midnight the

following day to locate and disarm it.

PACKAGING:

The immediately recognisable Zenobi cassette cover with the usual A4 sheet of instructions and storyline.

SCREENS:

Not as one might expect, judging by the title of the game, instead of Guy Fawkes we have a picture of a man who looks like a cross between Hitler and Montgomery. Nicely drawn by Kez though and it does give you something to look at whilst loading the game.

THE ADVENTURE:

On loading, you hear a sound of a telephone and are confronted with a screen of information detailing your role in the game and with a press of a key you find yourself outside the front door of farmer

W.Heat's house, (I liked the rural touch to his name). Before you can start to explore his land however, you have to get his permission, he isn't too keen on trespassers, so be warned! Once permission has been granted you can roam around at will but being as there are only five locations to visit at this point you will soon get the lie of the land. A locked door prevents further progress and how to open the door is the basis for opening part of the game. If you bear in mind that 'search' and 'examine' don't necessarily mean the same thing you will be able to uncover some well hidden objects which should help you towards your objective, and reading the text carefully is advisable.

Once you have managed to open the door, remember the farmer's words and don't be tempted to rush into the cave

unless you are prepared to take the consequences if you find yourself ill equipped for the task in hand. Despite the warning that you have until midnight to locate and disarm the bomb, you appear to have ample time in which to do it, as there doesn't seem to be a time penalty in this game so being as there are only thirty locations to explore, you can do so at your leisure, without the pressure of running out of time. Most of the locations are easily accessible and the ones that aren't will not take a lot of brain power to work out how to gain access to them, however, unless you have worked out the order in which to do things you could all too easily fail in your mission. For example, during your exploration you come across a ladder conveniently lying around and there is a hole in the roof, this is where I found my first little niggle with this game, as it was obvious that I needed to place the ladder under the hole to gain

access to the roof. Logically enough, I couldn't do that whilst having my hands full so I used the 'drop all' command which worked a treat, thus having placed the ladder under the hole I tried the 'take all' command, working on the basis that it would also work - not so I'm afraid, you have to take the objects again one at a time. It may be churlish of me to complain but I'm sure a bit of simple programming wouldn't have been amiss. Gaining access to the

the ladder had slipped so how do you get down? The answer is that you don't - unless you had the foresight to prepare yourself beforehand, but to be fair, I should have been more suspicious about the convenient ladder in the first place, I just mentioned this little incident to show you how easy it is to fail without a bit of pre-planning.

To review this game step by step would spoil your enjoyment, suffice to say that as in a previous Creighton

Fascinating Fact File: (1) Guy Fawkes:

Fawkes (1570 - 1606), a Catholic convert, born in York was found hiding in the cellars below parliament with 20 barrels of gunpowder. Under torture he confessed to plotting to blow up the King (James I) and the House of Lords. Fawkes and his fellow conspirators were hung, drawn and quartered - finally (just to make sure they were dead?) their heads were set on poles as a warning to others.

roof was fine, there were some very useful things lying around but then I needed to go down again and oh dear, without warning

game you have the problem of a door with a keypad which warrants finding a code and using the correct sequence in order ➤

'... Bomb Under Parliament' Zenobi £1.99

to open it. There are two offices in the cavern, nicely fitted out with telephones, dictaphone and locked filing cabinet and one of the neat touches in this game is the use of sound when using the equipment. The dictaphone is especially amusing provided you can get it to work! All the usual adventuring problems crop up, locked filing cabinet, digging rubble, need to use and conserve light, climbing down slippery cables - there isn't really anything not seen before although I did find the hammer used in a fairly novel way and the camera served more than one purpose. All in all this isn't a bad little game really, I don't think it's the best one to come out of the Laurence Creighton stable but fans of his work won't be too disappointed with it. There are some amusing responses which is always good to see - try examining the telephone! Although I said there wasn't a time limit to locating the bomb, I don't wish to lead you into a false

sense of security so it's only fair to say that once you have found it you have very few moves to disarm it, but you all know how to disarm a nuclear bomb so there's no need for me to tell you is there!

FEATURES:

RAM SAVE and LOAD are extremely useful and the use of sound is quite impressive, if only for light relief.

GOOD and BAD:

The only quibble that I have is the feeling that I have played this game many times before by different authors and under different titles. I think that's called *deja-vu*!

CONCLUSIONS:

A standard game problem-wise but is lifted out of the mundane by the humor and lack of maze. The title is a bit misleading however as the whole scenario takes place in a cave and I could find no connection with parliament at all. The shortage of locations is

a bit disappointing but if you have a couple of hours to spare and fancy a nice gentle game then this could suit you perfectly.

AVAILABLE FROM:

Zenobi Software
26 Spotland Tops,
Cutgate, Rochdale,
Lancashire OL12 7NX

PRICE: £1.99

RATINGS %

STORYLINE	50
PACKAGING	58
TEXT	60
GRAPHICS	
DIFFICULTY	58
EASE of USE	85
VALUE	80
OVERALL	75

Well, there you go... that was the first of many reviews by Bessie Bug Hunter - hope you liked it! She's also reviewed another of Laurence's games, 'The Bermuda Triangle' on P.44. Well done Bessie, I think it's an excellent review and would, having played the game, have said much the same.....Tim

COMMENT.

The State of Play.

I'd like to take the opportunity of using this space to tell you where I think things stand as far as the spectrum adventure scene is concerned...

A year and a bit or so ago, letters started appearing in Adventure Probe to the effect that certain authors were fed-up with the fact that their games were not selling well (or even getting into double figures) and as such they might as well stop writing games altogether. A lot can happen in a few short months... Things, as they stand at the present time, seem to be looking up a bit! I've received (through both FB and YS) several letters from would be authors asking for advice on writing, producing and marketing games (hence the condensed re-run of the DIY columns elsewhere in this issue). Couple this with FB's subscription list breaking the 100

barrier and things really do seem to be looking up!

As far as I'm concerned Spectrum adventures offer the best all round deal, and really knock the stuffing out of the opposition, even if the opposition happens to be the 16bit machines. There's no point saying the Commodore 64 or Amstrad CPC's threaten the Spectrum's adventure supremacy, that can only come from a significant upgrade of technology, and most Spectrum owners seem to go for Atari St's or Amiga's, rather than opting for a sideways step into C-64 or CPC ownership. However, I'd urge all would be upgraders not to sell your Spectrum if you still want to be able to play the best games. Nothing that I've seen on the Amiga (with the possible exception of a few PD games) can touch Speccy games for originality, thoughtful programming, value for money or overall quality.

The Spectrum has now, according to various sources, ceased production. Of course this doesn't mean much at all, as there are still hundreds of thousands of Speccy's out there in use, and I can still see the Spectrum adventure scene being here, and in good health, in another 5 years time!

As I mentioned earlier, new authors are appearing all the time, new (and major) adventure publishers are appearing too (GI GAMES for instance) along with new fanzines and revitalised glossy mag columns. Mike Gerrard said (in a letter to adventure probe - spelling out the reasons why he quit the YS column) *"Who knows how much longer the Spectrum adventure scene will last anyway."* Well, looking from the outside in, things never look as good as they really are, though from where I'm standing they don't look too bad at all. What say you?.....Tim.

REVIEW 5

'THE BERMUDA TRIANGLE' Zenobi £1.99



Laurence Creighton has been a very busy little adventure writer of late with no less than three new games on offer. Fans of his will be delighted as he is building up quite a reputation for producing games that are a joy to play. I hope he continues to write them for a long time because all of his games so far are a reminder to all of us just what adventures used to be like before the clever ones came along. I'm sure there are a lot of us who remember the good old fashioned games with fondness...

STORYLINE:

The infamous Bermuda Triangle has mystified people for more than

half a century but recently a commercial airliner disappeared, only to re-appear a few days later as if nothing had happened?. You are about to find out, for you must reconstruct events exactly as they happened during those missing few days and your adventure begins with you taking part as one of those passengers in the 747 flying to New York...

PACKAGING:

Standard Zenobi blue cassette cover plus A4 storyline and general instructions.

SCREENS:

Nothing special - just the title of the game with a triangle in the background - quite nicely done though.

THE ADVENTURE:

At the start of the game, the first two screens give you an explanation about the Bermuda Triangle and

the role you will take, thus pressing a key will find you in the aircraft but you only have two moves before the Captain's voice informs you that you are heading into some turbulence of unknown origin and what you do in those two moves is important because once the Captain has spoken you are immediately deposited into a field and have no chance of re-entering the plane. Not the most endearing way to begin a game but there it is, quick thinking is required throughout gameplay as sudden-death syndrome seems to be the order of the day! However, paying attention to the screen should provide the answer to leaving the field because if you can't answer a question then you will have to begin again - all this hassle in the first couple of locations is typical of a Creighton game - (one always has the feeling that something vital

»»

has been missed). Once you have satisfied the voice from above you can head East and begin to explore the area and it is here that the game opens up. Some way along, you come across a woodsman's hut which gives a very graphic description of six legged thingies crawling over long floorboards and on examination, one of the boards appears to be loose. Try as I might, I could not lift, prise, remove, smash or loosen the wretched thing so I searched high and low for a tool to do the job, but to no avail, and after a frustrating time I hit on the solution which was so simple that I couldn't believe it, the lesson being that this is not a complex game and simple is best. Having obtained the floorboard, I was amused to see that there was a space mentioned on the screen and, as the author intended his players to do, I avidly examined it. The response made me giggle - nice one

Laurence, it calmed me down after my efforts to obtain that floorboard. The going gets a little tougher when you find that you have to deal with a snake and trying to find a way to avoid the pits takes a bit of head-scratching, but as I said before, simple is best, as with the floorboard problem the solution is so obvious that you try everything else first before the light dawns. Eventually you will reach a village and SDS crops up (Sudden Death Syndrome). Without any warning you enter a shop to be told that it is on fire but once again you only have two moves to deal with it otherwise you will be killed off and will have to start again. The fact that there is a bucket of water to hand might well help, but personally I would rather have a few more moves in which to get my thoughts together or even a warning that I would be entering a death trap would have been appreciated. A good look round the village produces plenty of clues as to your requirements for the

task in hand and having spent your money (you have got some haven't you - if not I'm afraid you might as well start again as you won't get much further without it) - you come across a suspicious looking tree. Examine this and note the response because if you can't deal with the forcefield then - dare I say it - you'll have to start again. On reaching a stone ➡

Fascinating Fact File (2):

Bermuda is Britain's oldest colony. The Tall Ships Race is run from Bermuda to Halifax, Nova Scotia. The most famous 'disappearance' inside the Bermuda Triangle concerned five American bombers from Fort Lauderdale, Florida which simply disappeared - followed by the rescue mission sent to look for them.

'THE BERMUDA TRIANGLE'

Zenobi £1.99

circle and if you paid attention to the voice from above then you will be able to head North at this point - if not.....

Sooner or later you will enter a maze, and as with all Laurence Creighton's mazes this one is fairly tricky plus you have the added problem of only having forty moves before everything goes dark. This sounds quite generous on the surface but you have to work your way through this maze and it is surprising how quickly your moves are used up and it is vital that you get through as quickly as possible because you need the lantern later on. Before you can even think of tackling this underground cave make sure you have the means of lighting the lantern because once again, after only 2 moves in the dark you stumble and all your efforts will have been in vain. Emerging from the caves is not so easy, you find that you are a might too big to get through a hole and

finding the solution to the problem isn't too difficult but with the pressure of a flickering light, panic could easily set in. Even when you get out of the caves your troubles are far from over, because you find the 747 but how do you reach it? Despite having the solution / help sheet to aid me in writing this review one thing defeated me - it was a safe which, despite following the help sheet carefully and accurately, totally refused all attempts to open it! It was a pity that this happened because up until then I was enjoying the game. Judging by the rest of the goodies that lie in wait for the player (according to the help sheet) it looks to be a winner, and I can only assume the problem with the safe is down to a missing clue in the help sheet - not a bug.

FEATURES:

RAM SAVE / LOAD
and a few sound F/X.

GOOD and BAD:

Needless to say,

sudden death syndrome is not wildly impressive but the problems are neatly thought out and it is fun to play with lots of understated humour and amusing responses to examined things which will bring a smile to your face.

CONCLUSIONS:

The sudden deaths can be a bit tiresome, but liberal use of RAM SAVE will keep you sane. If you can live with them then you'll enjoy yourself whilst playing 'The Bermuda Triangle.'

AVAILABLE FROM:

Zenobi Software
26 Spotland Tops
Cutgate, Rochdale
Lancashire OL12 7NX
PRICE: £1.99

RATINGS %

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PACKAGING	58
TEXT	85
GRAPHICS	
DIFFICULTY	56
EASE of USE	85
VALUE	90
OVERALL	79

STOP PRESS

Late News... New Releases... Items of Interest

I just had to create this new section because it's fairly typical that late news items etc., arrive when the fanzine is about to go to press...

GI GAMES - NEW RELEASES:

Gordon Inglis has just informed me that he has purchased the rights to the following Fergus McNeill adventures...

SHERWOOD FOREST

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RETURN OF THE JOYSTICK

BORED OF THE RINGS

ROBIN OF SHERLOCK

THE BOGGIT and...

THE BIG SLEAZE

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CHARLES BABBAGE:

Here's a poem from June Rowe which is all about Charles Babbage

*In the year of '92 -
Seventeen ninety two,
the date,
Came a boy whose
mind grew set
on diff'rent ways to
calculate.*

Paperwork he soon discarded -
Babbage, Charles, was
this lads name.
With his plan to ease
accounting,
Adding by machine
earned fame.

Built in eighteen twenty
two,
Charlie's "engine" won
a medal,
But his thoughts went

on and on,
Like a monkey on a
treadle.

Not content to just add
figures,
Planned to do a
computation.
Spent his cash to aid
this aim,
Then a grant showed
approbation.

But in eighteen forty
two,
as he had no firm
report,
Or machine to prove his
theory,
Government withdrew
support.

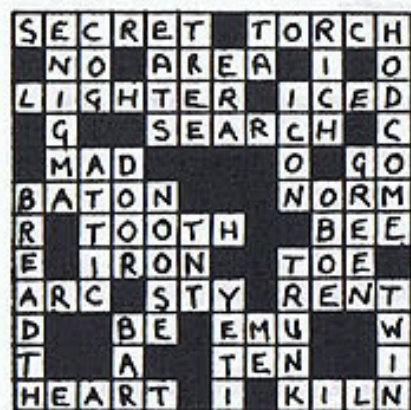
Then Babbage died, at
eighty nine,
With his goal still
unachieved.
But we today enjoy
results,
Of what his clever brain
conceived.

So, zappers and
adventurers,
For puzzling or for
shooting,
Say thanks to babbage,
'cos he was
The father of
computing.

LOOSE ENDS

Competition solutions and winners names.

THE SOLUTIONS:



Not such a hard crossword this time, was it? That was reflected in the number of you who got it right. So, without further ado the winner is: Margaret Abble from Fife, Scotland who receives (he said, rummaging frantically around in the giveaway goodie box): A painted and based 25 mm fantasy figure (very handy for marking your position in a game on a map!). They are collectors items I tell you!

Here's a bit of extra news that I might as well throw in for good measure... Jon Lemmon (Compass big cheese) is rather busy with various non-

adventure projects at the moment so don't think he's disappeared because he hasn't released any games lately. Now is as good a time as any to catch up on some of the other Compass titles you may have missed in the past. Everybody must know Jon's address by now, surely? No? Oh well, here it is then...

Compass Software
111 Mill Road,
Cobholm, Gt. Yarmouth
Norfolk NR31 0BB.
(Enclose an S.A.E for the latest software list.)

Issue 7's other competition was a 'name the character from the game' affair... The winner was June Rowe from Cornwall, who worked out that: MIKE ERLIN was in MAGNETIC MOON, JOHN CRESTON was in HOB's HOARD, WISE THE OWL was in DEMON FROM THE DARKSIDE, PADDY MURPHY was in THE CUP, PROF. NEIL RICHARDS was in THE

MICRO MAN, INGRID BOTTOMLOW was in GNOME RANGER, CHIGGERS appeared in ADVENTURELAND, MICK HAMMELFORD was in CRACK CITY and finally the VIROIDS were in BOUNTY HUNTER. The prize for winning that comp is the same as the crossword. (25mm fig.) Most of the answers were in previous 'FB's as suggested on the competition form!

SID THE RAT:

I also promised a prize in last issues 'FB' for the first person to tell me who or what SID the RAT was and what game he first appeared in. B. Bassingthwaite was first with the answer. Sid was (not surprisingly) a rat and appeared in Compass Software's Demon from the Darkside! Well done B.B, you also get a 25mm painted fantasy figure! That wraps up another Loose Ends section.

Tim.

Zenobi Software

ADVENTURES

In the mid-eighties many an ardent adventurer journeyed into the ancient world of YGOR to attempt the test of the KOBAYASHI NARU, or as it was referred to by those who had failed and fallen by the wayside ... the ULTIMATE TRIAL.

A few intrepid souls survived the challenge and live to tell the tale of their exploits on bleak winter evenings and surrounded by lesser mortals aghast at the horrors that befell them. One or two even embellish their tales with slight exaggerations of their own prowess and of the ferocity of the creatures with which they did battle. It is only harmless fun and whilst the more knowledgeable of the listeners smile knowingly, the younger element sit entranced by the tale and agog at the skill of the teller.

But now their time has come, now is the hour for them to enter the world of YGOR and see for themselves the dangers and hazards that abound there. Now is their chance to strive for fame and immortality for the test of KOBAYASHI AG'KWO is upon us and some must make their way to YGOR.

However it is written that those who have gone before will stand the greatest chance of success, for the bleached bones of their failed companions stand testament to the immensity of the task in hand and surely 'experience' will triumph over 'youthful endeavour' any time.

So be you an adventurer of many years or a sallow novice of little standing, now is the moment to embark upon

KOBAYASHI AG'KWO

You find yourself on the world of YGOR, a place much spoken of but rarely visited. However much has changed since the days of the 'Ultimate Trial' because the land is now under the rule of the ETHERIONS. They are a strange, slightly humanoid, race who have taken it upon themselves to alter the 'NARU' into the 'AG'KWO' and to offer this as the trial for those who wish to experience the ultimate.

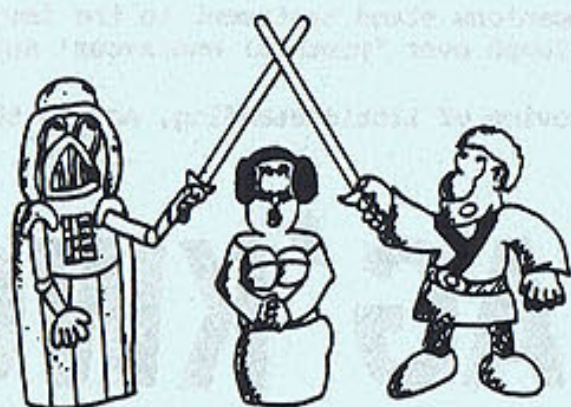
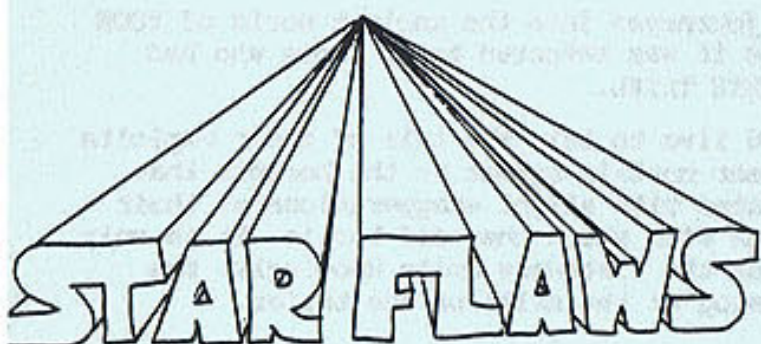
This trial is only for the 'Immortals' and has been fiendishly conceived by the Etherions as the ultimate test for all foolish enough to undertake it. YOU can, if you wish, be the first 'Immortal' to attempt it. Think carefully, for it matters that you walk the right path and that you 'size' up the situation correctly.

If you choose to undergo the KOBAYASHI AG'KWO then your task is a simple one ... merely find and recover the FOUR artifacts hidden by the Etherions before the allotted time runs out. Amongst these artifacts are the 'Golden Mythos' and the 'Ebony Icon', though the true identity of the other two is known only to those who hid them in the first place

NOTES : Beware of the level of your strength, it wanes quickly on this planet. However the Etherions are a generous race and each time you do something to please them you will be awarded a number of credits. You must amass 100 credits to succeed. Use the monitor to gain clues to the various 'ZONES' and then beam to the zone of your choice. Should you choose the wrong zone then it is possible to BEAMOUT again but this will use vital strength. Some useful commands are ... STORE to save a position to MEMORY and RECALL to load a position from MEMORY. Use FONT1, FONT2 or FONT3 to change the style of the character set.

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Software With A Squeak!

DIY Adventures

How to produce your own adventures.

In 'FB' issues 1-4 we ran a comprehensive guide to creating your own adventure, and while it didn't go into great depths on the programming side of things, we covered just about every angle on how to package and produce it to best effect. With Zenobi and GI-GAMES bringing out a great many adventures of late, it seems like a good idea to go through the main points of the DIY series again, so that those of you out there contemplating writing an adventure can do so with the minimum of fuss and with maximum impact!...

IN THE BEGINNING :

To start off with you'll need a copy of one of the popular adventure writing utilities. The best of these (well the most fully featured) is undoubtedly Gilsoft's Professional Adventure Writer or PAW for short! The Quill is another adventure writer from

Gilsoft, and despite being rather old it remains a good solid utility that many people are still using very successfully. Incentive's Graphic Adventure Creator or GAC is another utility that is a touch old now, but can still be used quite effectively in the right hands. Finally there's Tom Frost's adventure builder system, which relies on the user doing rather more programming than the other utilities listed above, though Tom's system is very cheap and cheerful and will allow you to do much the same stuff as the other adventure writing programs! (see the end of this article for addresses and prices.) You could, alternatively, write your adventure in Basic or M/Code, but why complicate things for yourself when the utilities available do a better job? (They were specifically written to help you produce your adventures, so you might as well use 'em.)

SUNDRIES :

Along with a programming utility you'll need plenty of paper, pens, pencils, a ruler, eraser, notebook, along with time, patience and most of all... perseverance!

PROGRAMMING :

The manuals that are supplied with whatever adventure writing prog. you choose will take you through the writing process, step by step! What they can't tell you is how to get ideas, where to get them from and how to implement them to best effect. Planning the game out before programming it is something that most authors would normally recommend you do, mainly because it's when you are writing down the ideas for the game, drawing the map, thinking of the problems etc., that even better ideas will start to come to you. You may start off with some simple idea ➡

DIY: How to produce your own adventures.

which when worked on will turn into something rather more complex and with a more polished, professional feel to it. The watchword for all new adventure authors is: **Never make do!** When you start saying: *'Oh, that'll have to do as a problem or location description'*, then you won't be surprised when reviewers and players start noticing that you've simply made do rather than making an effort to improve things. It's important to 'hook' players right from the start of the game, so give them something to think about. If the player's free to wander the land, then make sure they find something of interest to do before boredom sets in. Likewise, don't put people off by setting them pitfalls without giving them fair warning of their impending doom. Steer clear of large mazes! Most people don't like them and they are, in most instances, simply a waste of space. Make your location descriptions as

interesting as possible - without making them a chore to read through. Detail the exits to and from locations as fully as you can. Make interesting, examinable or searchable objects stand-out from the crowd. If you want to include a **HELP** command, make the help fit the area or objects that the player might already have visited or come across on their travels.

STORYLINES :

Some people let the game do the talking, and give only the briefest of storyline or instructions. However, a detailed storyline, background or character information can enhance a game no end. There's no reason why you shouldn't either invent a completely fictitious land in which to set your game, or pay a visit to your local library and do some research for the game. If people see that you are making a positive effort to make your games as good or as accurate as possible, then you will

be well on the way to giving them what they want to see or what they like and you'll soon win them over.

PACKAGING :

Packaging your finished adventure is just about the easiest part of the game to do - yet it's so often neglected by adventure writers. Most people tend to get to the end of their first game and think: *'Phew, thank god that's done!'* They then proceed to do a grotty cover, with hastily written notes on the cassette inlay! There's absolutely no reason why the cover of your adventure shouldn't be neat, if not stunning! Whilst programming the game you can be deciding what the central theme is, what the main character looks like, what the aim is, and use that as the cover picture. If you can't draw then trace a picture from a book, or cut one out of an old comic or magazine. Letraset rub-down letters are cheap, and are available in loads of different styles. ➔

DIY: How to produce your own adventures.

Letraset can be applied to the side of the cover for the games name, on the small flap at the back of the cover for your address, or as the games name for the front cover: **IN BIG BOLD LETTERS!**

You really do need access to a typewriter or a printer to be able to neatly reproduce the storyline, game instructions or whatever. Knowing where the cheapest photocopy shop in your area is also a help as you'll need to get your storyline and cover pictures copied and reduced. (If you want further help in producing a cassette cover then see the advert on the back page of this issue.)

ADDED EXTRAS :

Those masters of the added extra - Infocom, took great pleasure in secreting all manner of extra 'fun' goodies within their packaging. The Hitchhikers guide to the Galaxy came complete with a pair of peril sensitive glasses and a polythene bag with pocket fluff

(microscopic space fleet) in it.

Now, it can be argued that added extras add to the cost of the game, but don't add all that much else to it. If you are prepared to give something away with a game, try to do so without adding to the games basic cost. You could always go for producing a standard and deluxe version of your adventure!

SELLING THE FINISHED ARTICLE :

There's two ways to go here. Firstly you could always send a fully debugged version (complete with all the trimmings, cover, storyline, help-sheet) to the Spectrum adventure columns in Sinclair User and Your Sinclair, and likewise send it to the adventure fanzines: Adventure Probe, Red Herring & From Beyond. (placing an advert in any of these three brilliant publications may also be a good idea!) If, however, you're not interested in going it completely alone, you could always try Zenobi

Software or GI-GAMES who are keen to publish good-quality adventures of all kinds. (You'll find addresses for all these places at the end of this article!)

THE COST :

You don't get results by doing nothing! If you are starting from scratch (buying an adventure writing utility etc.) then you are probably looking at an initial outlay of between 5.00 and 22.00. You'll need at least 10 blank tapes (available from Zenobi) on which to save databases and copy the finished game! A few quid will have to be spent on the odd jiffy bag, postage and photocopying too.

THE REWARDS :

If you can satisfy yourself by producing a game that you are pleased with, then that is possibly the greatest reward you will get from it. Of course you may also see it reviewed in YS, SU or one of the fanzines, which will also give you a buzz. (If it's a good review.) ➡

DIY: How to produce your own adventures.

As far as selling your game and getting loads of dosh goes... don't think that you are going to be able to retire on your profits from sales of the game! If you sell it yourself then you'll make more money per game than if it's accepted by a company and you get royalties. However, selling it yourself will mean that you won't shift the game in the numbers that a well established name like Zenobi will! Where you may sell 10 copies, Zenobi will probably sell 100! Just about everyone who has tried selling a game themselves have been very disappointed with their initial sales! When you sell 3 copies of your first masterpiece, when you were hoping to sell 3000, then things do get rather depressing! If you stick to your guns, take note of what people say about your game, accept any constructive criticism that it receives from reviewers and you are prepared to learn from your experiences, then there's no reason why your next game

shouldn't be better than the last! (& sell more.) When Compass Software first started selling games (back in 1984) they were selling at a rate of approx. 1 per fortnight! The Compass catalogue now boasts some 11 titles (all written by the same author) and sales of their games are up into the three figure bracket. Compass have developed a style, attracted a faithful following and normally know what to give their followers to keep the sales of their games as high as possible! With a bit of thought, time and application there's no reason why you shouldn't build up a following too. If your games are imaginative, well programmed, carefully constructed and strike the right balance, then people will come to know what you are capable of doing and will keep an eye out for your future releases! By all means do one game and then sit back and wait to see what happens... but don't wait too long before starting on your next

game. Having a few different titles in your back catalogue can only be a good thing. If someone likes one of your games then there's a good chance that they may order another from you!

Well, there you have it! Supply the enthusiasm, back it up with the ability to spot what's good and what's not, never be tempted to leave something in the game that is obviously not good enough to be there, pay attention to detail, make things as friendly and easy to interact with as possible, don't waste space on pointless things like mazes and 10 location corridors or tunnels, avoid putting in annoying sudden death situations, don't charge too much for the end product (£1.99 is about maximum for a single game), give your customers speedy service & don't wait around hoping your next game will write itself, 'coz it won't!!! Now you know what to do - get stuck in and do it! You've got nothing to lose & plenty to gain. »»

DIY: How to produce your own adventures.

ADDRESSES:

If you are starting from scratch you'll need an adventure writing utility. Superb results can be achieved using Gilsoft's Professional Adventure Writer (PAW for short) and it allows you to incorporate just about everything you'll ever want to see in a game. Like most utilities it's not simple to use, but on the other hand it isn't that hard either. The 48k Cassette version of PAW costs £15.95 and the disk version (for various disc systems) costs £22.95. Gilsoft also produce a double pack consisting of their older, but still respectable utilities The Quill & The Illustrator for the bargain basement price of just £6.49. The address to send your cheques and P/O's to is: Gilsoft, 2 Park Crescent, Barry, S. Glamorgan, CF6 8HD.

Okay, so you've got your utility, written your game but don't want to publish it yourself. What do you do? Well, I'd suggest you get it thoroughly playtested,

eradicate any spelling mistakes, produce a help sheet that shows how the game can be played from start to finish (i.e. N, E, GET STICK, THROW STICK, etc...) and also produce a more detailed help sheet showing where objects can be found on the map (yes, produce a map too), what use they have in the game etc. Shaping your game up before shipping it off to a company for evaluation purposes is always the best thing to do.

Zenobi Software
26 Spotland Tops,
Cutgate, Rochdale,
Lancashire OL12 7NX

...is as good a place as any to send your game. John Wilson, Zenobi's supremo, has been around for hundreds of years and publishes all manner of Quilled, PAWed and GACed adventures. His team of playtesters will evaluate your game to the full, so don't expect a reply back within a week. (The same goes for every company) The only other alternative

publisher of games is the new set-up run by Gordon Inglis. Gordon's also been on the adventure scene for ages, and his new company GI GAMES is on the lookout for all manner of adventures too! GI's address is:

GI GAMES
11 West Mayfield
Edinburgh EH9 1TF

Whoever you send your games to, make sure, if you want them returned, that you enclose stamps to cover the return journey. Most places will return your games anyway, but it's only right you do them a favour by helping out with the return postage.

So, that's about it really. I'd just like to offer a few final words of advice... If your game has a maze don't make it too big or too complex, don't include too many 'in' jokes that involve friends, family, personal events etc, ('coz no one else will think they are funny) and finally listen to constructive criticism - don't ignore it!.....Tim.

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