



F R O M B E Y O N D

ISSUE 16 • JANUARY - FEBRUARY • 1993

FB INFORMATION PAGE

IMPORTANT: PLEASE READ THIS PAGE.

- **TO GAME PRODUCERS:** Please try to send a detailed help-sheet with the games you submit to us for review. We like to review them as fully as possible and a help-sheet usually allows us to do just that!
- **TO ADVERTISERS:** Adverts are FREE in FB (space permitting) though we'd appreciate it if you can supply them on white paper. The dimensions of your full page (A5) advert should be no more than 13 x 18.5cms.
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- **TO CONTRIBUTORS:** Come on, don't be shy! Whip out yer pen and paper and write to us. Comments on anything adventurous, like: top tens (and why you picked them), ideas for improvements, hints, tips, maps etc. Please mark you letters FOR PUBLICATION.
- **FB's REVIEWERS:** There's Tim. That's me! I'm a dedicated fantasy fan. Fave games include: The Hobbit, Adventureland, Laurence Creighton and Level 9 stuff. Then there's STORM. His fave games include: Velnor's Lair, Lords of Time, Mordon's Quest and a lot of 8th Day software. Finally we have THE JESTER. He's mad on games by Laurence C., the Traveller in Black, and his no. 1 adventure of all time is The Hobbit, followed closely by Zenobi's Aura-Scope. We try to be as accurate in our reviews as possible. The PERSONAL rating given at the end of the reviews is what the individual reviewer thought of the game. It may not be his cup of tea, but it may be yours, so the other ratings and the review itself should tell you whether YOU might like the game!
- **ABOUT THE RATINGS:** They all work on the tried and tested 0 - 10 sliding scale, except for the DIFFICULTY LEVEL.. This tells you if the game is perfect for BEGINNERS, INTERMEDIATE, EXPERIENCED or ADVANCED adventurers.
- **THE FROM BEYOND ADDRESS:** TIM KEMP. 36 GLOBE PLACE,
NORWICH, NORFOLK NR2 2SQ. U.K.

C O N T E N T S

FB ISSUE 16 • JAN / FEB 1993

FOREWORD:

You won't need a magnifying glass (or will you?) to see the changes to this FB. There is, believe it or not, more text per page, which in turn means we've got to work harder in order to fill the allotted number of pages. What this ultimately means is that we need more of every kind of contribution from you, the readers! If you can send in a few odds and ends for publication in future FB's then we can stay at 52 pages per issue. If we have to fill it ourselves then it may go down to 48 pages. In all fairness the fact that there's more text now per issue will mean that a 48 page issue will contain more than an old style 52 page issue, but naturally we want to keep FB at a healthy 52 pages. Basically it's up to you to help us out.

YOUR FB REVIEWERS ARE:

Tim Kemp, THE JESTER, STORM and Inspector Vance

MAPS PROVIDED BY:

Sandrunner, Tony Collins

SCARY COVER ART BY:

Sean Doran

OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS BY:

Joan Williams, Jon Lemmon, Tom Frost, Paul Cardin, Les Mitchell

ADVENTURES SUPPLIED BY:

The Guild, Zenobi Software, Compass Software, Nigel Kettlewell

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EDITORIAL

HAPPY NEW YEAR!



• 23/11/92: Plenty of changes in this issue. There's a new rating display at the end of the reviews, and fewer pages are taken up with explanations of review systems, map systems and subscription rates. There are also approximately 5 lines more per page, and a few more words per ten columns too, meaning there's more of everything per issue. It also means that we need more of your articles, maps, letters, ideas and ramblings if we are to fill every issue up. Oh yes, there are also fewer adverts in this issue, and that's the way it should remain. Everybody knows we don't charge for adverts, but from now on I've got to insist that any company wanting to place an ad send them to me on white paper, with the dimensions of the actual ad. being no more than 13cm x 18.5cm. The reason for this is that from the end of January 1993 it will be difficult for me to get reductions done due to changes at the City Hall (where my printing is done).

• 13/12/92: Three weeks since the last entry and things are going quite well. The old subscribers are still subscribing, not many new ones have been added to the books though over the past year. I read in PROBE and have heard from various sources that adventure sales are very poor. Up until a couple of years ago sales seemed to come and go with the seasons. Summer would arrive and sales would fall, autumn would be greeted by a resurgence of software orders and winter and spring were 'tick-over' periods. Seems that nowadays it's hard to predict sales and some months can be very barren indeed. There are a few 'green shoots of recovery' being reported here and there (god, sound like some faceless government minister predicting the end of the recession) so perhaps we'll pull through (again) and see some decent sales figures being reported.

• 24/12/92: Yes, still working on FB! Good grief, I can't even have Christmas Eve off. Perhaps I'm addicted to computing?

• 25/12/92: Happy Christmas! It's 5 past 11 (am), and the Turkey is coming along nicely! Hope Santa brought all the goodies you wanted. By the time you read this it'll be the middle of Jan, '93 and you'll all think I'm mad for mentioning Christmas Day!

• 11/01/93: Almost everything for this issue was done by Jan 2nd, half the printing (master pages) was done... then... the printer started printing white streaky lines. New ink was ordered, it arrived and the printer cartridge was refilled. No luck! White lines remained. Seems that surgery is required on the printer, but as that could take a while to arrange (let alone pay for), I'm going to have to grin and bear it, and I hope you can live with several sub-standard (streaky) pages in this issue. The alternative would be a 3 week (or more) delay while the printer was fixed. **Tim**

ADVENTURE REVIEW

IMPACT

Reviewed By: Tim.

In this ever changing world there thankfully remains a few constants... The Speed of light, repeats of Star Trek, the bimonthly appearance of From Beyond etc. But perhaps the most predictable happening on the Spectrum adventure scene is the release of a Laurence Creighton game. They may not appear quite as often as we'd have you believe on page 13, but they do pop up quite regularly. IMPACT, for that's L.C.'s newie, is living proof of that.

STORYLINE:

The main task in ht the game is to find the location of the Repelling Beam machine. What is it? Well, it's a beam that repels things. That wouldn't be much of a story unless there was something that needed repelling. There is... there's a blummin great meteor heading for earth that nothing can stop. Lasers and all manner of other stuff have been tried, but still it keeps falling earthward. The Repelling Beam machine has been hidden, and its inventor is now dead. This means that finding it (wherever it is) is the number one priority. You see this meteorite isn't just A tiddler - it's ENORMOUS, and when it hits it'll be bye-bye earth!

Now I don't want to alarm you but there really is a giant meteor heading for earth, but it won't be close enough to tell whether it will hit us for another 135 years. Apparently there's a 10,000:1 chance that it will hit, so now's the time to pop off to you bookie and put a quid on it obliterating the planet!

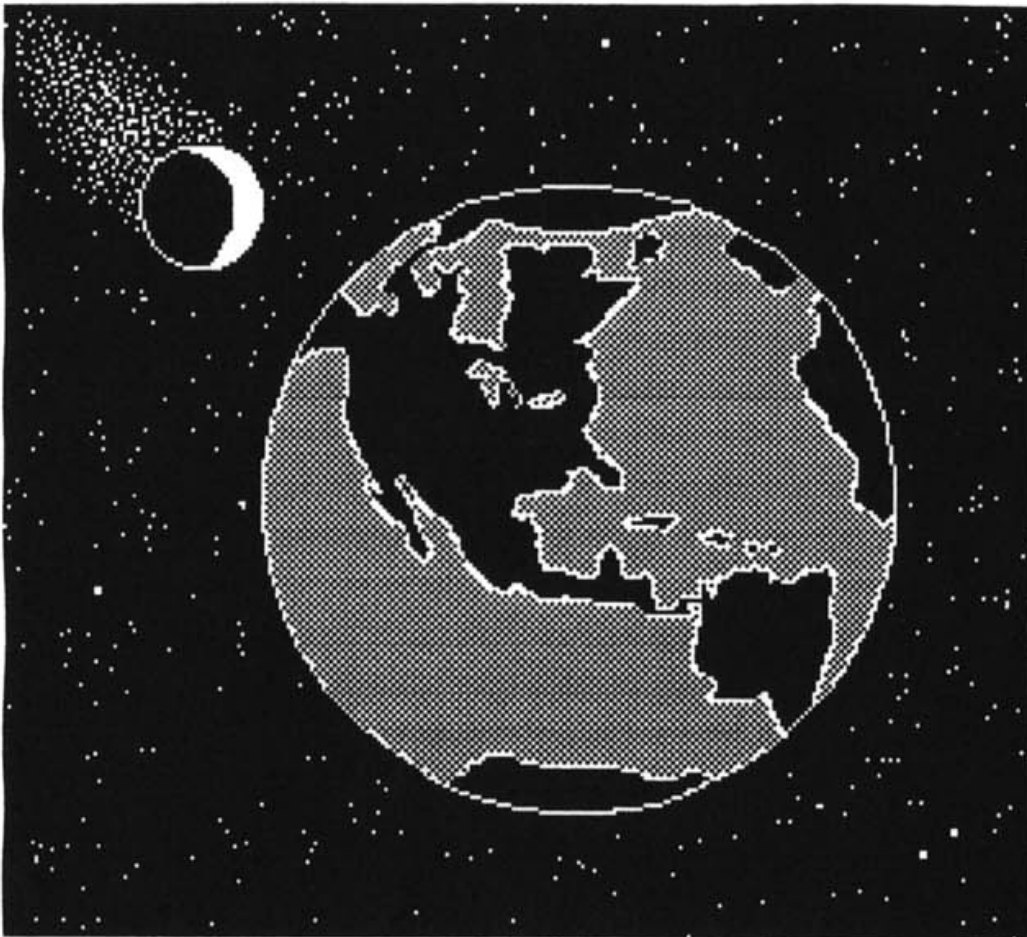
THE ADVENTURE:

You begin the game on a road by your car. A small scroll can be found here, and once read gives you a few command word examples and a bit of general info. you surely don't need me to remind you that Laurence's games are QUILL-ed and VERB / NOUN input is what they like best.

There's only really one way to go from the start, and before long the first set of obstacles / problems present themselves. If you've played any of L.C.'s other games you'll know what sort of input to make to attract the attention of the man on the other side of the river. Think simple... in fact think what you would do in real life and pretty soon you'll be making waves.

After just a few minutes wandering and exploring the first few locations you'll end up with arm-fulls of interesting and potentially useful objects. Examining everything you find, and take, sees a message appear. They are either slightly cryptic and help you progress, or sometimes straightforward but all the same manage to leave you wondering what use the object (or whatever) will be to you. Just a point about some of the objects (which you probably all know by now, but is worth repeating): Laurence likes to make ordinary looking objects behave in unusual ways. An example (from one of his other games) is: You find a snake. Kill it, skin it and twist the skin to make a rope! There's nothing in this game that quite compares to that sort of devious use of a fairly

IMPACT



ordinary object, but you have been warned to look out for them.

A few more minutes exploring will prove to be quite surprising. The game is set primarily in fairly ordinary settings and it's the fact that things are fairly ordinary that makes things a darn sight more difficult to work out. I'd call the surroundings rather bland personally, but that's what you get for basing your games in the present day, in real life (ish) situations and not using fantasy settings to spark off something amazing. Does the game suffer for it? Yes, a little bit. It's all a bit 'too real life' for me! Having said that I don't know anybody who does ordinary 'everyday situation' games as well as Mr. C.

While you ponder the uses of the objects you already have, you'll undoubtedly meet a few

characters. Thankfully, talking to them is a simple case of: TALK TO (*character*) though sometimes, as witnessed by a conversation with a farmer, you'll need more than idle chit chat to make any progress. QUILL-ed games often fall down because they are pretty simple in all aspects. This one isn't. It's not all "get this and do that", sometimes it's

"get this, do that, interact with character, do task, avoid nasty real-time situation" etc. It's all well done you know. However, there's a bit concerning the farmer and his wife (and some other bits a bit later on too) that is infuriatingly difficult. It made me scream!

Ram Save and Load will be your best friend when dealing with the real-time elements of the game. Fortunately there's plenty to do away from 'characters' so you can get stuck in to the usual problem solving side of things with gusto!

Before you even reach the one third stage of the game you'll have discovered that there's a lot of dropping to be done. What that means is that Laurence has been less than generous with the objects carried allowance. If there were only a few objects to find in the game that wouldn't be too bad -

IMPACT

but there are millions of them and it will be a big problem knowing what to take and what to drop. You'll have to scour the landscape for all manner of objects and encounters. MAKE A MAP and try to drop any objects at midway points. Midway points? Yes! You'll be travelling around quite a bit (from one side of the playing area to the other) so a midway point is as good a place to drop them as any!

By this time you may have forgotten that your main task is to locate the Repelling Beam Machine's whereabouts, work out how to use it and become the saviour of the world. Don't panic, you will find it - eventually. But will everything work out fine in the end? That's entirely up to you!

GOOD POINTS:

Lots to see and do, an intelligent use of characters (as extra - bit-players) in the game, loads of intriguing messages and squillions of objects to get, manipulate and generally wonder what they can possibly do.

More often than not the mundane stuff is turned into interesting stuff, which is something Laurence excels at. It can be quite a challenge to just work out what use some of the 'ordinary looking' objects may have.

BAD POINTS:

The tiny 'objects carried' allowance is a bit of a major pain in the rear at times, and there are points in the game where you'll be spending more time dropping items and picking them up again later, than doing anything else. Although there are lots of objects they are a bit too bland - as is the general game setting which does

nothing to spur you on, though thankfully the objects novel uses make up for their ordinariness (if you see what I mean?).

CONCLUSIONS:

You always get plenty of everything in a L.C. game, and IMPACT is no exception. However, not everything is pleasant here, and where usually everything works in harmony there are one or two things that are not to my liking... namely the object carried situation, the slightly dull settings and the bloody farmer and his wife. Don't let that put you off buying the game, as with all the other bits in it there's certainly value for money in there somewhere, and the challenges faced while playing range from the simple to the sophisticated. Really, you should know by now that an L.C. game is a sound bet. This may not be number one on my list from the 'Quill Master' but it ain't half bad.



• IMPACT •

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

PRICE: £2.49 (tape)

Outside UK please add 50p per
order or £1.00 for airmail.

RATINGS:

PACKAGING	6
STORYLINE	5
OPENING PLAY	6
PROBLEMS	8
LOCATION TEXT	4
PARSER	8
GAME DESIGN	7
DIFFICULTY	INTERMEDIATE
PLAYABILITY	7

PERSONAL RATING 6

HIDDEN MEANINGS

THE TRUTH BEHIND POPULAR PHRASES

• *Just what do adventure producers really mean when they say things like: "It's only got a small maze" or "We advise you ramsave frequently"? What do reviewers really mean when they say: "This game has NO bad points" or "This was written using the authors own adventure writing system"? STORM has studied popular adventure phrases, sayings and remarks & with my help has come up with some dubious double-talk...*

1: Slight problems with the parser... actually means that no matter what you try you simply cannot get objects.

2: We advise you ramsave frequently... means Sudden Death Syndrome!

3: It's only a small maze... this obviously means it takes two days and a map to get through.

4: There's lots and lots of messages... means there are only three locations in the game as the author used all the memory up on the messages.

5: It's not an OPEN adventure... means you get stuck right at the start.

6: The solutions to problems are intricate... means there are 10 different inputs needed just to open a door.

7: No problems mapping the game... this obviously means I used a large sheet of paper and started in the middle.

8: It's got an easy beginning... means even Tim could get to the third location.

9: There are several red herrings... this means there are 40 objects in the game but only three are needed.

10: The graphics are good = it's a door I think... or is it a tree or...

11: It's a typical F.S.F. game... that means you had better be ready to LOOK IN, UNDER, ON, OVER, AROUND and BEHIND things!

12: Everything in the game is 100% authentic... what this means is that it's probably by the Traveller In Black.

13: This is a typical Traveller In Black game... this must mean it's a total bloodbath!

14: There's no HELP facility in the game... undoubtedly means the reviewer got stuck and was getting desperate.

15: There's even a choice of typefaces... this usually means that the author used up precious space creating several different fonts that all look the same - except for the one 'slanted' font that is unreadable.

16: There are no bad points in the game... this is a classic and means that there was a large cheque submitted with the adventure made payable to Tim Kemp.

17: It's ideal for beginners... means Tim had to refer to the helpsheet just 15 times, but can also mean that there were few problems to solve which naturally made the game easy to solve!

18: It was very atmospheric... means the author used messages containing adjectives.

19: The author has used the QUILL... meaning he couldn't decipher the PAW manual!

20: The author has used GAC... means he couldn't decipher the QUILL manual. (only joking!)

More examples will appear next issue.

ADVENTURE REVIEW

DEEP PROBE

Reviewed By: Tim.

Still overjoyed by being treated to the repeats of Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea on Sunday mornings (Channel 4 - though it's just come to the end of the series) Jon Lemmon has decided to do a sequel to The Anttilis Mission. That game had an overwhelmingly strategic feel to it and some great little graphical extras in the form of pull down menus and such like. Has Jon managed to keep the best bits, dump the worst bits and strike a happy medium with all the other bits?...

STORYLINE:

You play the Part of Captain Henson (again) who was such a hero in the first game. Your task this time is to pilot your deep salvage rescue sub (the Anttilis) down into the depths of the North Atlantic ocean and see what happened to another sub (an unmanned one) that was sent on ahead in order to try to work out what caused a 5 mile rift to suddenly appear on the sea bed... the unmanned sub discovered a few strange tunnels and caverns in this fissure, but then disappeared. Mind you, that wasn't the first vessel to be lost. All manner of other craft also vanished when they were in the vicinity. Naturally enough the whole area was sealed off (not before time) and the biggest dimwit (er, I mean dashing hero) was sent for to investigate further. Who was this dimwit? Was it

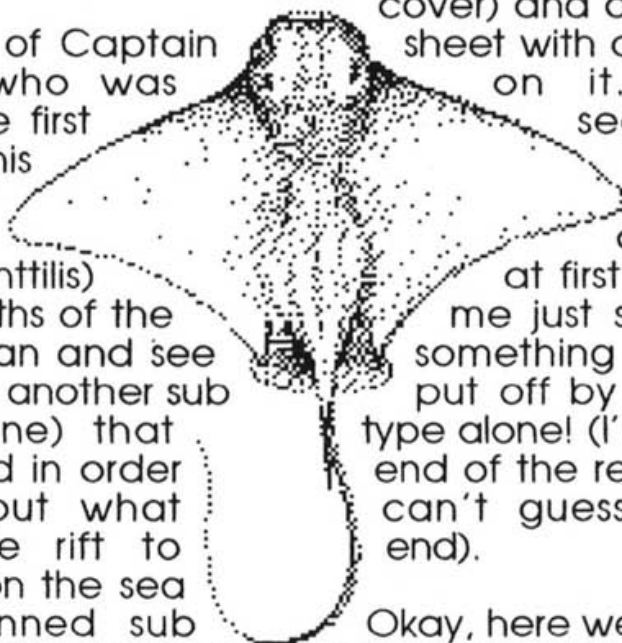
Admiral Nelson or Chief Sharkey? No! The person to do the job is... you! Well come on, in all honesty who else could it be?

By now you know your bathyscaphe very well indeed - well, you did design it, though there have been a few modifications made to it to cope with this new and far more deadly mission. So off you go... get on with the job!

THE ADVENTURE:

First things first: You get a new cassette cover with the game (not the usual standard Compass cover) and also a small Storyline sheet with a couple of pictures on it. Second things second: Even if the idea of a submarine type adventure doesn't at first appeal to you, let me just say that you'll miss something special if you are put off by the title or game-type alone! (I'll explain why at the end of the review - that is if you can't guess why before the end).

Okay, here we go... At the start of the game you find yourself at the surface of the sea with support chopper hanging menacingly in the sky above you. Before you can say "Ahoy there matey" you discover that you are sitting at the control panel and a message from the helicopter pilot tells you that your progress will be monitored via the com 3000 beacon link. This facility is what gives you access to some tic-a-type messages that



DEEP PROBE

appear during the game. As soon as you do the first few necessary actions then lo and behold... a tic-a-type message flashes (slowly enough to read) across the top line of the screen in typical tic-a-type fashion, with tic-a-type sounds to go with it! Ooohhh! Actually it's these messages that keep you up to date on the all important happenings that will undoubtedly happen around you as you play. Not only are they informative, but they also relate the details of missions you have to do within the game too. First mission received via teletype is to unblock the propellers or else you'll never get underway.

Whilst preparing to tackle your first mission there's nothing to stop you having a good old root around. Press a few of the numerous buttons, knobs and other system controlling mechanical devices while you are at it. Check out the cupboard too if you so desire. Actually you'd better make the cupboard your first port of call. Look out for the fall out from it though.

Pretty soon you'll discover the ANT suit. Sounds unusual doesn't it? Well, I have to say that ants don't play a part in the game, but the suit (and any other wearable object) does! A point about red herrings here... there don't appear to be any at all! If this means everything you come across has some use or other then I think that if you get stuck you'd better double check everything and everywhere to make sure that objects

usually like to remind you to squeeze every possible message out of every possible object, and that goes double for DEEP PROBE. More importantly perhaps is the need to make a map and mark on it all the important places that you find. You'll know them when you see them. I say make a map because on more than a few

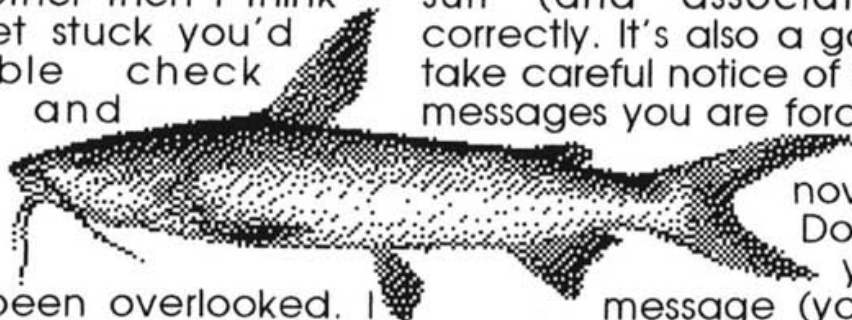


occasions you'll have to get back to certain locations as quickly (move

wise) as possible and a map will help you do just that much easier.

There are points in the game when you'll need to check various 'systems'. Pressing a single key (like 'O' for oxygen) shows you, in neat pull-down menu graphical form just how much oxygen you have left. The same goes for other systems too, some of which appear to 'fold down' from the top menu line of the screen - others appear as a graphic along its length. they are super smart, look great and DO add a certain something to the proceedings. Check out the in game info to see what special command words and letters will help you get the most from the game.

The art of completing the first few missions comes in using your ANT suit (and associated items) correctly. It's also a good idea to take careful notice of the scrolling messages you are force fed every



now and then.

Don't worry if you miss a

message (you shouldn't

etc. haven't been overlooked. I

DEEP PROBE

as the noise that accompanies them is enough to wake the dead and they scroll slow enough to read quite easily) there's a 'replay last message' facility so nothing will be missed as you play!

As the game progresses the challenges you have to face get tougher - or longer. All the while you play you'll uncover some superb graphic and sound effects. I call them superb though really the best one (which comes when you go for a dive here and there) is pretty crude in the way it works and in what it represents, but it made me realise just how much effort has gone into making every part of the game enjoyable.

Jon Lemmon has at last managed to pace the start of one of his games to perfection. The first mission (the propeller job) is quite simple, gets you off to a winning start (very important for hooking 'new' adventurers) and you'll use just about all the special functions that are built into the game in the first 20 minutes play so you'll know what does what and why before having to move on to more difficult missions. Don't get the wrong idea about these so-called 'missions'. They are incorporated into the main body of the game so that everything runs smoothly and is 'joined-up' rather than being disjointed.

You'll notice that I haven't really said all that much about the actual game itself. There's not a lot

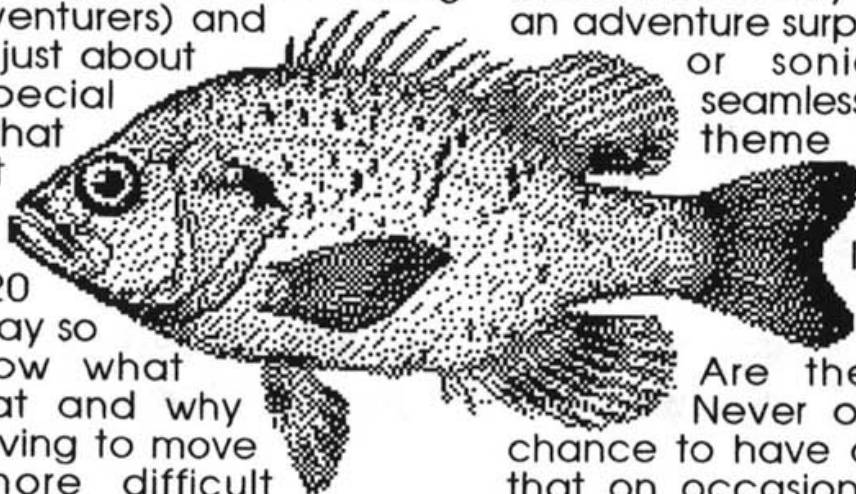
to say without spoiling things. Actually the whole game is more of an overall experience that I think you should sample for yourself, and to do that I can't really let you in on any more of it. If you've read this far And still don't feel the urge to buy the game (if only to see the effects etc.) then I can only assume the subject matter is what's putting you off. Do you really think Jon Lemmon would ONLY put boring, everyday submarine type objects and problems in this game? Certainly not! Miss it and you miss a goodie. Despite its theme it's not a boring submarine game - there's more lurking beneath the waves than you can imagine!

GOOD POINTS:

It's all well designed, paced just right and its not too big or too small. Those are the most important good points. Add to them the fact that around every corner lies either an adventure surprise or a graphic or sonic treat (that seamlessly fits in with the theme of the game) and you'll get the idea that I liked it.

BAD POINTS:

Are there any? Yes! Never one to miss the chance to have a moan I found that on occasions the incoming messages sometimes tended to distract me from the task I was already doing. When you are in the middle of some dead serious problem solving it can be a bit distracting to have to look up and make a note of what new message is appearing. There are also one or two times when tight 'move/time' limitations can cause problems, though if you do make a



DEEP PROBE



map (as I suggested earlier) they aren't so bad.

CONCLUSIONS:

If sales of adventures are as low as some people have reported then I can only say that Jon Lemmon is doing his best to make things as lively and as appealing as he possibly can in order to keep things fresh and get people who are not lovers of text only adventures (or lovers of adventures at all come to think of it) to enjoy his games. I must say that if you were to take away all the little added extras from the game you'd be left with a reasonably good product, though nothing to shout overly loud

about... taken as a whole though the game has a neat 'integrated' feel that makes up for any lack of massive problems, and one that should really be experienced by as many people as possible.



• DEEP PROBE •

Compass Software
111 Mill Road, Cobholm
Great Yarmouth, Norfolk
NR31 0BB. PRICE: £1.99
(tape) £1.99 (+D or SAM Coupe
Disk) Outside UK add 50p per order
(or £1.00 for airmail.)

RATINGS:

PACKAGING	7
STORYLINE	7
OPENING PLAY	8
PROBLEMS	6
LOCATION TEXT	6
PARSER	7
GAME DESIGN	8
DIFFICULTY	INTERMEDIATE
PLAYABILITY	9

PERSONAL RATING 8

A D V E R T I S E M E N T

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IMPORTANT DATES 1993

THE FUTURE IS LOOKING STRANGE...

JANUARY: Time to put away the turkey and get stuck into a new Spectrum adventure. Tom Frost releases a game about a Dragon called Mandy, a haggis and their offspring. new Laurence Creighton game expected.

FEBRUARY: John Wilson promises to despatch your order before you post it. New Traveller in Black game due. Body count between 50 and 100. Another software house promises to despatch your order sometime this year, well maybe, well see what I can do for '94. Another L.C. release.

MARCH: The Guild convert an Amstrad game for the Spectrum that had previously been a Spectrum game! More conversions expected. Oh yes, another L.C. game hits the streets.

APRIL: 42 L.C. games released. **APRIL FOOL.** 25th April - Laurence apologizes for delay in releasing new game... then releases it same day!

MAY: FB contains 72 pages of which 18 are horoscopes, 28 pages are adverts, 12 pages of letters, 10 pages of maps and tips... and a 4 page review of the Latest Laurence Creighton offering!

JUNE: June Rowe writes an adventure more horrific than DOOMSDAY. Later visited by friends and admitted into rest home. L.C. writes a game.

JULY: Mike Gerrard releases new game, ONE OF OUR GREEN CHEESE SANDWICHES IS MISSING. Zenobi feel Speccy games are in a rut so releases a L.C. game!

AUGUST: Protest outside South African embassy fails to stop import of new L.C. game.

SEPTEMBER: Traveller in Black game No.5 - HIROSHIMA HAVOC rejected by Zenobi for not having enough deaths. Laurence Creighton has stomach complaint so has to rest up, but writes a new game while convalescing!

OCTOBER: Zenobi changes their name to Laurence Creighton Imports Inc. and release another L.C. game. 4th Adventurers Convention at Birmingham. Tea - £2.50 and Coffee - £2.80. Sandwiches only to American Express holders. Remembering last year, Larry Horsfield refuses to enter MEGAPOINTS competition.

NOVEMBER: Long awaited MEGA CROSSWORD appears in FB. Questions for it printed in the next issue! Laurence Creighton games as the prize.

DECEMBER: Laurence Creighton moves to Rochdale to save on postage. Tim Kemp Gets Super Nintendo for X-Mas and packs in FROM BEYOND!

ADVENTURE REVIEW

CORPORAL STONE

Reviewed By: Tim.

James Taylor may be a new name to most of you, and his first effort, written using the QUILL is, as I like to often say, not half bad. So what's it all about? Curiously, you won't know till you've played for a while.

STORYLINE:

The game notes, loading screen and accompanying storyline are all pretty vague. Actually that's not really correct because you do get the usual detailed A4 instructions that normally accompany Zenobi adventures. What makes things vague is the fact that you are only given brief notes on who you are, what you've got to do etc., and as it's not until you actually start solving a few problems that you get a hint of what you are supposed to be doing, and that's why things are a bit blurry to start with. Nothing wrong with that though as it adds a certain extra dimension to the proceedings. What you do know from the start is that you get a call from one of your superiors telling you to go and see what the disturbance is down at the Hexagon Centre in district 4. There have been reports of curious Alien-like beings, and small wooden toy-like characters in the vicinity, and to cap it all your partner and best buddy has gone missing from the very same area! As you can see, you have to make what you will of those instructions... what are you? where are you? and why...!

THE ADVENTURE:

Everything becomes a bit clearer when you arrive at your destination

- The Hexagon Centre in district 4. There you discover what happened to your partner, and when you find him he has this to say: "They got me... Kill the little people... Squaaa..." - not very helpful really. As this is a QUILL-ed game, much emphasis is placed on the finding of objects, and examining them. The game play area seems to encompass most of the Hexagon Centre and a little bit of the surrounding area too. Inside this 'mall' you'll discover some of the most curious shops, shopkeepers and shoppers that you are ever likely to see. There's a lift that allows you to go from place to place quite easily and have access to most of the games problems. The problems tend to be the usual sort of QUILL-ed problems. i.e. you find an object (possibly lying around, or maybe after examining something else), examine it, get a message hinting at it's possible use, find a place or character where you can use the object (possibly in combination with another object), you then use it, and maybe are then given or find another object... and so it goes. Nothing wrong with that at all. Good traditional problem solving.

Character interaction plays a tiny part in the game. Fortunately the author has made it simple. 'TALK MAN' seems to be the order of the day - and there's no long drawn-out question and answer sessions. Always a blessing! From your conversations you may be given a task to do. This will lead to more exploration and thus to more problems to solve (natch!).

CORPORAL STONE

Even after completing 33% of the game I still didn't really know what it was all about. There are certainly a lot of weird things happening as you play, and it all seems like you are in a drugged state (Corporal Stoned?) at some stages because things really do get very strange. The small wooden people and aliens are in there somewhere... but what is their purpose and why are they here? There's also a boy in a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle pullover who throws a toy brick at you. Why? That's just what you've got to find out.

There are a couple of riddles to solve - you are even given an example riddle to get you into the swing of things, and a lot more to do as well. There's a great problem with the Eddie Kid-like train set (there's a hint for you to help you know what to do) and the trampoline problem is quite novel too. The game also has the odd strange character or two for you to get to know. Satan, a Lion, a linguistic expert and, horror of horrors, Dickie Davies.

With all the unusual goings on it's a great relief to find that the parser copes with some more unusual word than normal. The end game is quite novel and it's only really then that you realise (or are told) what's been going on and what you are here to do. SDS (Sudden Death Syndrome) plays little part in the game, except for the odd occasion when you need to learn what to do in certain situations, and when the only way to learn is by seeing the way you die. When the final message appears on screen, and you sit there satisfied that you've solved ANOTHER adventure, just contemplate the fact that AGENT 10 is among us... his name is... Arghhh, the little people... they've got me!

GOOD POINTS:

Lots to see and do. (Say that a lot, don't we?) Plenty of unusual things to make you think a little deeper than normal. Nice price and a nice first effort from Mr. Taylor.

BAD POINTS:

Lacks a bit of sophistication here and there, and a few more problems wouldn't have gone amiss. The lack of much storyline 'background' info can either be classed as good or bad. personally i rather liked finding out what was going on as I played, rather than having a fixed goal from the word go.

CONCLUSIONS:

It's certainly quite an unusual adventure - one that escapes the bounds of the regular hack 'n' slash efforts that most new authors come up with. Good problems, quite well structured... a good way to while away a few hours without having to worry about too much.



• CORPORAL STONE •

Zenobi Software
26 Spotland Tops
Cutgate, Rochdale
Lancashire OL12 7NX
PRICE: £2.49 (tape)

Outside UK please add 50p per order or £1.00 for airmail.

RATINGS:

PACKAGING	6
STORYLINE	6
OPENING PLAY	6
PROBLEMS	6
LOCATION TEXT	5
PARSER	8
GAME DESIGN	7
DIFFICULTY	BEGINNER
PLAYABILITY	8

PERSONAL RATING **7**

ADVENTURE REVIEW

DAYS OF SORCERY (SAM ONLY)

Reviewed By: TIM.

Although FB is a Spectrum only fanzine we do, on the odd occasion, like to have a look around and see what's going on elsewhere. With the recent re-re-emergence of the SAM Coupe what better way to welcome the computer back than by reviewing what must be one of the best products for that computer - it's an adventure called DAYS OF SORCERY, is available for the SAM Coupe only, was written by Nigel Kettlewell with graphics by Phil Glover and took a year to produce. We know there are a few SAM owners out there, so this review is aimed at you!

STORYLINE:

The time: The middle ages. The place: North Pelesia. The king returns from a worthy crusade abroad to find his kingdom somewhat altered. Mellryn - the king's faithful Wizard had disappeared some time ago and was replaced by a nameless Sorcerer who's powers seem to be great. Things were not looking good. They looked even less good when a magical fog started drifting across the land, engulfing and laying waste to all it touched. Peasants and nobles alike succumbed to this fog and it seemed that all was lost... Meanwhile, on the other side of the kingdom, you set out, blissfully

unaware of the events taking place all around you, to visit you homeland... soon though the fog begins to draw nearer to you, and with fear gripping your heart you run in a vain attempt to escape... Soon you find yourself falling into unconsciousness - even pulling your cloak over your head doesn't help... however, when you come to you see that you are in a hut, rescued by a farmer who soon fills you in on the strange events. There's going to be a meeting in the great hall soon... someone (here we go) must defeat the evil mist.

THE ADVENTURE:

The game begins inside the hut. There seems to be nothing of interest in there, save the fact that the brown text on cream (parchment colour?) background is a nice combination - easy on the eyes. The roof of the hut is low and the

doorway to the northeast is a bit on the tiny side. This either means you are a giant or the villagers are small - dwarfs perhaps?

Once outside it won't be that long before you find your way to the Great Hall. WOW! Graphics! Great ones at that! What you see is a top quarter rendition of the Great Hall. A long table stretches from end to end, there are shields on the wall, sturdy beams holding the roof up and a roaring fire at the north end. Something you don't see, but



DAYS OF SORCERY (SAM ONLY)

that's described in the text, is the 20 or so chaps discussing what to do about the plague on the land. It's here that you are lumbered with the unenviable task of taking care of things. The Village Chief would go and attend to things - had he not got all his Chieftain duties to perform instead. Outside the hall you see you can go off in all manner of directions. It just so happened that I picked a route that took me to the second graphic location... a massive forest spreads out before your very eyes. Over the canopy of this majestic forest you spy the cold grey mountains far in the distance, their peaks dipped in white snow, reaching high into the azure sky. That's not the description, that's what popped into my head when I first saw this picture. Whoever said a picture is worth a thousand words wasn't far wrong. Anyway, travelling down the forest path (forest maze path almost) there are a few objects to collect and things to make notes on, before yet another beautiful graphic appears (instantly to boot) this time of a cottage. The inhabitant should be interacted with. Typing help at the start of the game gives you a pointer or two concerning what you should do when you meet the wandering (or static) characters, so pretty soon you'll discover that amongst the objects you can get and fiddle about with, and amongst the characters you can converse with you'll see that there are a number of sub-plots and mini-quests to do too. I always like to have the odd little sub-question the go as well as having the main game goal to think about. It's a good way of keeping the player both interested and on their toes. This is especially true when you are told that this particular quest I was

about to embark on had better be done properly - or else!

From this point onwards you'll discover that there's a lot more wandering to do, and plenty more great graphics to find. You can turn them off if you like, though if you do you'll miss out I can tell you. One of the early challenges (though not a real quest) is to enter the walled city. You can't do it the easy way at first, and you'll have to get some information from a likely looking character who's face I couldn't place, but their name rung a bell. Before you get too carried away with things it's best to have a good old search around for any objects you may have overlooked first time round. There's a few dark places that need a source of light. Use some of the more obvious objects to help yourself get to the more 'hidden' ones.

Soon as you think you are doing alright a nasty, horrid maze pops up to annoy you. Actually it's not that nasty, so if like me you don't particularly like mazes then fear not, this one isn't too bad, and there are a couple of goodies to be had along the twisty-turny way. Yet more exploration of your surroundings shows that a few old chestnuts have been drafted in to reinforce the good old fashioned feel that the game develops. At one stage (and I don't think this is giving away too much) you come across a huge boulder teetering precariously on the edge of a chasm. Examining it shows that with one good push it should, by all accounts, topple over. Like a sucker I tried "PUSH ROCK" and was told that I first pushed it to no avail, then put my shoulder into it and heaved with all my might - still

DAYS OF SORCERY (SAM ONLY)

no good - it didn't budge an inch. When you eventually work out what does the trick you'll see that the author has allowed for the slightly obvious (but wrong) input and then gently nudges you in the right direction. A bit of quality programming there.

In the mean time, if you manage to do one of your sub-quests you'll see that things don't end there. You may find that you gain some knowledge, are given a further task, or just discover that there's more to do than you first thought.

Amongst the wandering, object manipulation, quests and conversations you'll discover the odd sudden death. These seem to be along the lines of moving in the wrong direction without first having done something to prevent a future series of events. There's one place where wearing the right clothes works well - but no warning that I could see informed you that you may be in trouble if you failed to do so. In all fairness the SDS (Sudden Death Syndrome) at this point actually points the way to what need be done, but I can think of better ways to learn something in a game than having the player unexpectedly die.

I've played a few games lately that make the player combine objects in his or her possession in order to make one other specific item. In DAYS OF SORCERY this 'make object from objects' convention is used well, with several items you find eventually being combined to form one item. I'd like to see more of this in the future - it's quite interesting to try to figure out how to put things together in order to make another item whose ultimate use may be

very different from the parts that went into its making (if you see what I mean?).

Towards the end of the game I felt that there were perhaps a few too many transitional locations, ones where you simply have to move through them in order to get somewhere more interesting. That's another throwback to old adventures. However, the graphics seen in these less than interesting locations more than make up for the fact that you have to keep travelling through them. They really are quite beautiful.

before long the end-game starts creeping up on you. You can tell you are at the three-quarter stage when the game switches from get object, use object, examine object to 'look out for the thing that nabs you'. You'll see that the prison complex you come across has two uses... won't say anymore because it'll spoil your fun. However, I will just say that timing is critical at this point in the game. If you come out alive and in good spirits then you have a little bit more travelling to do, several more characters to meet, and finally you get to have a good old punch up and do a bit of baddy bashing!

GOOD POINTS:

The graphics really steal the show, but that doesn't mean that the rest of the game relies on them. There's reams of great text (locations, messages, descriptions etc.) to read and there are more than enough problems to sort out, plenty of graphics to go 'cor' at, and the parser is pretty complete too - meaning for the best part of the game you can achieve your goals without having to wonder when and where the 'You can't do

DAYS OF SORCERY (SAM ONLY)

that, try another command' message will pop up! You can change the way the text looks to make it suit your eyes / tv / monitor too - the same goes for text and screen colours. I suppose that what I'm trying to say is that the game has options that allow you to configure it so that it looks exactly the way you want it to look.

BAD POINTS:

Nothing bad to report on. You could moan about the high price, but then again this is a quality product, and one that in my opinion justifies a higher price tag. The odd Sudden Death that pops up here and there is a bit of a drag, though as you learn something from each death (and they don't occur too often) it ain't too bad. Dare I mention the fact that there were a few too many maze-like sections in the game too... a few less next time round if you please!

CONCLUSIONS:

The review copy I received came without the promised A5 manual (including some artwork) and minus any fancy disk labels. These missing items should be ready by now.

In terms of the evolution of SAM adventures (or software for that machine in general come to that!) it's a bit like The Hobbit on the Spectrum. That game came along when things were still pretty much verb / noun input (and text only) and was seen for a long time as the game that all others had to measure up to, mainly because it had graphics, semi-intelligent / independent characters, had a reasonably sophisticated parser and came in a box with a book. DAYS OF SORCERY has appeared

like a shining beacon - outclassing anything I've seen to date (mostly Spectrum conversions it has to be said) on the SAM Coupe. I sincerely hope that it sells very well. It certainly deserves to.

Nigel Kettlewell (the author) says it's his first major SAM project and it took a year to complete. For a first effort it is exceptional. There are one or two things that are lacking - like major problems to overcome for instance, but as a whole the game is really and truly excellent. Phil Glover's graphics are also superb - really evocative and they fit in with the general fantasy game feeling. I can only urge you to buy it at once. It's miles better than most SAM games (arcade ones too) and will keep you going for ages. Nigel and Phil, I demand a sequel.



DAYS OF SORCERY

(SAM COUPE ONLY
256k upwards.)

Nigel Kettlewell

12 Limited Road
Moordown, Bournemouth
Dorset BH9 1SS
PRICE: £9.99 (SAM disk)
Make cheques and PO's payable to: Nigel Kettlewell

RATINGS:

PACKAGING	n/a
STORYLINE	7
OPENING PLAY	8
PROBLEMS	7
LOCATION TEXT	8
PARSER	8
GAME DESIGN	8
DIFFICULTY	BEGINNER/INT.
PLAYABILITY	10

PERSONAL RATING **10**

ADVENTURE REVIEW

VENOM

Reviewed By: THE JESTER.

An old game now (5/6 years anyway) - Written by Les Hogarth and Clive Wilson; originally issued by Mastertronic; and now being re-released through Zenobi. A 'golden oldie'? We'll have to see! And it's icon driven - oh dear, don't know whether icon handle that!

STORYLINE:

The land of Argonath had, for many years, been subjected to attacks by the hordes of the evil tyrant, Traklan, who dwelt in the mines of Autratis in the region of the abyss. These attacks were now becoming alarmingly frequent, and Arrel, the respected ruler of Argonath, felt it was now time to put an end to Traklan's bid for power. Recruiting YOU, by name Rikka, and another friend, Beris, arrangements were made to meet at the local hostelry which is where...

THE ADVENTURE:

...your quest starts - sitting astride your faithful steed, Devala, outside the Dancing Drayman Inn. Not being the Coach and Horses, not only are coaches not allowed, but neither are horses - and straight away I came across the first of a couple of 'odd' inputs. You obviously need to DISMOUNT from the horse in order to enter the Inn - but the only available verb is MOUNT, which actually serves both purposes. Similarly, it is necessary later in the game to TIE a character, when, in actual fact, what you are doing is UNTIEing him - seems most illogical at the time. That aside, once having gained

entry, you find that your companions are not there - why? Instead, there is a rather surly innkeeper, some dubious food, and a room to the west which defies entry. Evidently a little more exploration is needed. Exploration is not difficult, and finding your way around is no problem (there are only 24 locations in the whole game) - but be sure to take Devala on your travels, as he will be invaluable later, when this noble equine gives his own life to save yours (if he's not with you - tough!)

A little searching will bring to light one or two useful items; and will also unearth the entrance to a cave, wherein lies your friend Beris, fatally wounded. From him you learn (as usual just before he expires) that Arrel has been hurt, and is being held in Ragar's (a minion of Tracklan) palace. Obviously, this is why neither were waiting at the inn; and, just as obviously, your next task is to rescue Arrel. Emerging from the cave, you are immediately subjected to a barrage of arrows. Some quick action is required here, or it's 'Goodnight Vienna'! Assuming you manage to escape, it's back to the inn, where it's necessary to get yourself captured and thrown into the taproom at the back. Here again, a little thought, and a little spiking of drinks, will see you free with more useful items.

Westwards now to outwit the guard and gain entry to the abode of Variol, the high priest (or Hi 'Ennom), where you will find the Heabal Orb. Picking up this object is no problem - parting with it is a

VENOM

different matter! So find a mug to do your work for you! Once Variol has infused consciousness into the Orb, it accompanies you everywhere. Note here 0 the Orb is listed in the *character* 'window', and is not an object in the inventory. As such, it can be treated as a character. It is possible, nay necessary, to instruct the Orb to carry out certain actions for you!

Entry to the palace is not difficult, as the guard is not averse to corruption's partner; and provided you have the requisite 'pass', Ragar will lead you to Arrel - but you cannot rescue him straight away. A further visit to Variol must be undertaken before that can be accomplished. It was at this point that the 'solution' provided came to an end - so it came as rather a surprise to find the game still continuing.

Arrel was still hurt, and only Morasalia could cure him! But where was she? Further exploration uncovers a secret room, which houses a Venomite snake statue, complete with a lever 'conveniently' situated in its mouth! Be warned! Well, levers are meant for pulling, aren't they? Yes, but it was what to do next that had me stumped! As STORM once said, it's not what you know - but who!! Then Morasalia was quickly located; Arrel cured; and the game was over.

But hang on! What about Traklan and his evil hordes? I thought defeating them was the object of the mission - not just rescuing Arrel! Maybe the overthrow of Traklan is implicit once Arrel is free; but I couldn't help feeling just a bit 'cheated' - as though the game had finished halfway through!

The game is written in machine

code, and is entirely icon driven - no typing in of inputs. The top left half of the screen is given over to either a graphic representation of the location, or a short extract from the history of Argonath! (heed this well - it may contain some useful information). The top right of the screen contains the available verbs (only 24 in all). Under the graphics / history is the information/messages window; and under the verbs is another window showing the characters present. Below all this is the location description. To make an input, use the cursor keys to highlight the verb you wish to use. Then, depending on the verb chosen, either a character will be highlighted (eg SAY TO HARG), or the location text can be 'scanned' to allow any word therein to be used (eg EXAMINE STATUE). Quite long commands can be built up (SAY TO ARREL GIVE RAGAR THE SWORD) - and, indeed, you will need to do this often, as much of the game necessitates your getting other characters to do things for you. Each icon choice must be confirmed by pressing ZERO (0). The game is accompanied by the usual A4 storyline/instruction sheet, which explains all this - but as I wasn't provided with one (Tim??), it took quite a bit of random key pressing to suss it out! (As I said earlier, there are only 24 locations in the entire game (two of which are merely a death trap) - which I know STORM would consider to be a minus point (he likes about 70); but, to my mind, it's not the number of locations that counts, but what's in them. The gameplay area may be small, but VENOM is no pushover - perhaps made harder than it actually is by one or two 'awkward' inputs. Both RAMSAVE /

VENOM

RAMLOAD and SAVE / LOAD are catered for - select the L'SAVE icon, and you are given the choice of MEMORY or CASSETTE.

GOOD POINTS:

Given the way the game has been programmed, it must be admitted that the presentation is very good - response is fast, and the graphics are neat and quickly drawn.

BAD POINTS:

I find this type of adventure too restricting. I also found it rather slow going - flicking through the various icons to find the ones I wanted was slower than my typing, and I'm not the world's fastest!

CONCLUSIONS:

Admittedly, VENOM was, at first, a pleasant change from the plethora of PAW'd or QUILL'd games; but after a while the lack of freedom and slowness started to pall. I'm afraid Venom failed to convert me to icon driven games.



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

PRICE: £2.49 (tape) £3.49 (+3 disk)
Outside UK please add 50p per order or £1.00 for airmail.

RATINGS:

PACKAGING	6
STORYLINE	5
OPENING PLAY	5
PROBLEMS	5
LOCATION TEXT	6
PARSER	4
GAME DESIGN	6
DIFFICULTY	INTERMEDIATE/EXP.
PLAYABILITY	4

PERSONAL RATING 4

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ADVENTURE REVIEW

CURSED BE THE CITY

Reviewed By: TIM.

It's nice having the odd GAC game come along every once in a while. It makes a change from the QUILL and PAW, and more often than not the games are quite old and offer a bit of a trip down memory lane... CURSED BE THE CITY fits the bill.

STORYLINE:

Tal-Bha-Sair, the wise one, (known as Tal to his friends) invoked and watched visions of the City of Gold. He saw the dark riders with scarlet pendants marked with the Raven fill the land. Setting camp outside the great walls, they laid siege to the City.

For a hundred nights the scene changed little, then suddenly the Raven flew from the masts in the City, and the streets ran red with blood. In one night, a thousand years had vanished and all the City lay dead.

No, not all. One survivor, Prince Ashar (you), awaited his fate in the dank dungeons. His would be torturer prepared to get to work on him...

THE ADVENTURE:

The loading screen is a good scene setter. Most of the screen is taken up with a large disintegrating skull, and there's also an advert for Pat Winstanley's ADVENTURE CONTACT fanzine. Yes, we are talking circa 1986 here! The author, Ross Harris, is a new name to me (I think)... wonder where he is now?

After the loading screen clears, pressing 'anykey' brings up the first

location and its associated graphic. Yes, it's a pretty standard dungeon walls / stone steps / door affair. If you don't fancy the graphics version there's a text version on the other side of the tape.

As promised in the storyline you find yourself in the unenviable position of waiting helplessly while your would be torturer, a thing named SUDO, sharpens his gilet piercers (or whatever they sharpen when preparing to torture an adventure game captive?). You are a bit incapacitated, so perhaps you'd better try a few moves. Doing so will alert you to what you are supposed to do in situations like these. Once you've worked out what to do, and how to avoid an early end to the game, it's off on your travels. There's nothing much to stop you from moving from place to place early on, though there is really only one way to go. There's the gardens with a tree. I doubt if you'll have a lot of trouble working out where to go and what to do here.

Pretty soon you'll come across a character who needs your help. Doing the right thing (i.e. following the on-screen instructions to the letter) is the best way to make swift progress, and soon you'll be exploring the games subterranean levels. Actually nearly all the action takes place more or less underground. Yes, you'll come across the usual array of twisty passages, rubble filled rooms, and dark nooks and crannies - just the sort of things you'd expect to find in games of this vintage (7 or so years old!).

CURSED BE THE CITY

Funnily enough there aren't that many useful objects to be found on your travels. Those that you do come across are fairly easy to get (by examining your surroundings for clues on how to obtain hidden objects) and are also easy to use after you examine them (as you are told what they do or how to use them by very (overly?) helpful messages). The Parser is pretty good, meaning you won't have to grope around trying to find the right words that do the right action. Again, because things are so easy you'll find yourself sailing through the early and mid sections of the game. You do get stopped in your tracks occasionally by the odd sudden (ish) death or problem that needs to be solved by using (or sometimes just carrying or wearing) certain objects.

To help you get an insight into what you are doing (or are attempting to do) you should examine everything you come across. Even then I was a bit unsure as to what my main goal was, and I couldn't help wondering if a bit of storyline had gone astray.

Every once in a while you are treated (?) to a simple graphic image. They are okay. Nothing to write home about, though they are also nothing to get upset about either. I don't suppose there are above 12 pictures in the whole game, and you'll have seen them all in about a couple of days. To be honest even a novice adventurer will sail through most of the game within a week. And no, that doesn't mean it's a bad game just because it's relatively easy. Naturally enough a bit more to do throughout the adventure - especially the end which was a bit abrupt would have gone down well.

GOOD POINTS:

The storyline is quite suspenseful and is added to by the things (facts and tales) you learn throughout the course of the game. It's quite a nicely constructed adventure and even the graphics aren't too bad - don't forget there's a text only version on the B-Side!

BAD POINTS:

Lacks a bit in the general content stakes, and there's an annoying pause (only of a split second, but annoying nonetheless) between issuing your commands and the computer responding to them.

CONCLUSIONS:

All in all it's a pleasant fantasy romp (how many times have I said that in the past?). For an oldie it's pretty good. Once again, for £2.00 I'd have to say you can't really go far wrong, and I'd stick my neck out and say that on the whole you should enjoy playing it. I did!



CURSED BE THE CITY
THE GUILD
760 TYBURN ROAD
ERDINGTON,
BIRMINGHAM B24 9NX

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RATINGS:

PACKAGING	6
STORYLINE	6
OPENING PLAY	8
PROBLEMS	6
LOCATION TEXT	6
PARSER	7
GAME DESIGN	8
DIFFICULTY	BEGINNER
PLAYABILITY	7

PERSONAL RATING

7

DEEP PROBE



Two weeks ago a huge underwater volcanic eruption ripped open the seabed in the North Atlantic. Since then, several ships and three Royal Navy submarines have disappeared in that area without a trace!

The cause of these disappearances is not known at this time and

all vessels sent out to investigate have also disappeared. A five mile exclusion zone has been placed around that part of the ocean and all merchant shipping has been ordered to stay clear of the area. A robotic pod, armed with a high filter camera was sent down to investigate. Deep sonar probes from the pod revealed a massive fissure had opened up and multiple echoes within the fissure were reported.

Possible reasons for the multiple sonar echoes could be due to reflections from large underwater tunnels or caverns, although all contact with the pod was lost before this could be confirmed. The only information received, was one picture transmitted by the pod before it was destroyed. Cause of pods destruction, unknown....



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Dragon : Corya the Warrior - Sage.

CORYA THE WARRIOR-SAGE: DRAGON by Anthony Collins

Upon the holy mountain of Ianel-An-Uthen stands the citadel of the Ancient Ones. A fortress impenetrable by normal means, within the few are taught the way of the Warrior-Sages. Taken from their families when young the new priests of the Temple of Wisdom would learn the virtues of wisdom, the prowess of the warrior and the power of the sages. As they reached manhood they took the final test, the trial of Eutar, the death-walk. To perish now would mean oblivion for their soul, to survive would earn them the title of Warrior-Sage.

Seldom would a priest venture forth into the world of man, but this is the tale of one such man, of Corya the Warrior-Sage. Having left the mountain Corya travelled within the realm of Iannan for many years. Knowledge of a Warrior-Sage leaving the mountain spread like wild-fire throughout Iannan, but seldom was he seen unless the need was great and he would appear, always where he was needed most, always where only he could help.....

.....Barley shut up the tavern a little before midnight and slowly made his way to the kitchens. Pouring himself a tankard of warm ale and seating himself in his favourite chair he settled back to ease his aching back. Exhausted from a hard days work he dozed in his chair, his head nodded and slowly dropped, resting his chin on his chest he slept.

The screaming from the village woke Barley with a start. He quickly got to his feet and the half-full tankard clunked as it fell to the floor. He half ran, half walked to the front of the tavern and opened the arched door that led to the village. All around pandemonium struck the village, buildings were ablaze, lighting the midnight sky with a red glow. Everywhere villagers ran, none seeming to know which direction to run, all trying to escape from something, but what. Horror gripped him as out of the sky, silhouetted by the fires all around, swept the dragon. An inhuman cry screeched above the sounds of panic and the crackling of the fire. Barley, shaking with fear, was rooted to the spot as the monster swept down towards him. A second soul-rendering cry was the last thing Barley heard as a ball of flame engulfed him, burning him to ash within seconds.

The dragon lifted and flew upwards, circling the village, eyeing its devastation. Several more times it circled above the village then content, made its way towards the mountains, the darkness cloaked it and it was seen no more.

The village was a shambles. Villagers spent the remainder of the night putting out fires, trying to stop the red menace spreading to the few untouched buildings. At first light the true cost was apparent. Three-quarters of the village was burnt to the ground or unsafe and crumbling. Many villagers were dead, burnt trying to save their homes, or simply engulfed by the beast as it attacked. The surviving villagers gathered at the great hall, itself without a roof and one corner badly damaged, but as safe a place as any. There they prayed for help, prayed for hope of a miracle.

Atop a small hill overlooking Ermahal stood Corya looking down at the devastation, he heard their prayers, he had come....

Dragon: Corya the Warrior-Sage is available on Spectrum Tape for £2.50, +3 Disk for £4.50, Commodore 64 Tape or Disk for £3.00. The Spectrum version is in two parts and the Commodore version is in three parts.

The Guild Adventure Software, 760 Tyburn Road, Erdington, Birmingham, B24 9NX
Prices include postage within the UK, Overseas customers please add £1.00
Please make cheques/P.O. to Glenda Collins

THE DARK TOWER

In the small store-room of the monastery stood a large oak chest, adorned with bands of copper and held together with tiny brass bands nailed in place with small iron nails. Inside this chest lay a green-leather book, it's pages yellow with age and as brittle as a leaf on a cold autumn morn. On these pages, in dark blue ink, had been scrolled the annals of the 'Age of Shadows' and of the fate that befell the monastery of Draghag at the hands of marauding Orcs.

The book told of a time when there was a bitter struggle between humans and orcs, of a time when the 'Dark Lord' was slain and the orcs put to flight. It also told how many of the orcs split into small bands and spent their time roaming the countryside intent on pillaging and looting. One such band had attacked the monastery and stolen, amongst other religious artifacts, the legendary 'Golden Chalice'. They had then retired to the safety of the 'Dark Tower', a secure citadel situated somewhere beyond the Shadow Mountain. They also took with them the leader of the unicorn herd and after subjecting the poor creature to barbaric treatment, turned it loose in the forest.



Spectrum 48K/128K+2.

One day the abbot sent for you and informed you that even though you were but a mere novice it had befallen you, as the youngest and the bravest, to seek out the orcs and their infamous 'Dark Tower' and to recover the the stolen items. You were also instructed to find the unicorn, as that would be your only means of returning to the monastery.

The abbot and several of the monks accompanied you as far as the edge of the forest, but when an orc archer was spotted amidst the trees they all turned tail and left you to your own resources.

You wandered around aimlessly for a spell, then suddenly spy a wisp of smoke rising lazily over the tree-tops. Striding northwards, you head in the direction of the smoke ..

ADVENTURE

NOTES : In order to put an item into a container simply input PUT HORN INTO BARREL or PUT APPLE INTO BAG. You can also PUT ALL INTO BARREL or GET ALL OUT OF BARREL. That is provided that you can find the barrel and something to put into it. Use RAMSAVE (RS) and RAMLOAD (RL) to store a position to MEMORY, but always use the standard SAVE and LOAD to store a more permanent record to TAPE. It is also possible to use the following commands - STUFF, PUSH, TURN, SPIN, PADDLE, POINT, STRIKE, RUB, MOVE, READ, EXAMINE, SEARCH, CLIMB, OUT and even to GET ALL EXCEPT followed by the name of the item you do NOT wish to pick up.

HINTS : Nests serve more purposes than just keeping eggs warm - sacks can prove very useful for disguising things - a mantelpiece is a good place to store things.

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READERS WRITES

THE FROM BEYOND MAILBAG



Letter number one this issue comes from Joan Williams who's got something to say about Laurence Creighton's comments last issue which concerned the efforts made to try to encourage a few more people to try adventuring. Take it away Joanie...

• Dear Tim, In reply to L.C's letter (issue 15), I feel obliged to put pen to paper. Not that I disagree with a single word he said, but to point out the difficulties involved when it comes to recruiting adventure enthusiasts. From my own experience - and I've been an enthusiast for years - I've found that visitors and games playing are NOT compatible. My 'friends' gave up on me ages ago and consider me eccentric and are fully aware that I have no wish to be disturbed when involved in my hobby. As regards recruiting members of the family, I'm sure there's many a player / writer amongst your readership that has had the odd tiff over the amount of time being spent on the computer, so if they haven't been recruited by now, they never will be! Youngsters aren't very interested in these sort of games - "no street cred" I believe the expression is - they would rather score 15 million points on an arcade game than find a lamp and a rope.

So how do you recruit more enthusiasts? With the best will in the world, if you explain to friends, family etc., that they would adore a hobby which is time consuming, solitary and anti-social, and that you can't buy the games in the shops - would they be converted? I think not, but having said that, YS may be able to convert a few people by putting some good games on their front cover, it remains to be seen.

P.S. MERRY CHRISTMAS 'Mr. LAURENCE' & THANKS FOR THE SPECIAL MESSAGE!

JOAN WILLIAMS
RUGBY, WARKS.

I fully agree with you, Joan. Adventures are hard to 'sell' to other people in the hope of trying to convert them. I didn't have space last issue to reply to Laurence's letter,

THE FROM BEYOND MAILBAG

but I wanted to say that I tried to convert my brother some time ago, and thought that his love of puzzles (traditional jigsaw puzzles I mean), logic games and such like would have meant that an adventure would have been right up his alley! Wrong! He didn't like them at all, and he had a very tough time helping out with the playtesting for Project-X the Microman. Perhaps that was a baptism of fire as it had a notoriously hard opening section (and was quite tough all the way through now I come to think of it). I've tried cousins, nephews, friends... all to no avail! The only slight convert was Jon Lemmon, but his adventure writing activities soon took over from actually playing the things. I suppose that as long as the people who still like adventures keep playing them, and the authors keep writing them, and the fanzines keep writing about them, then what we've got (number of player wise) should be okay for a while longer. As for YS... well, there have been a couple of goodies on cover tapes of late, and they may do some good. Let's hope so!

As Jon Lemmon received a bit of a mention in that last little bit, it seems only fitting to press on with a letter from the big guy himself...

• Dear Tim, Much as I like FROM BEYOND (especially when you give my games such great reviews - the latest cheque is in the post by the way) I have to say that while the general layout, value for money, number of reviews, points of interest per issue is well up to scratch, what you need is some better clip-art to accompany the text and add a bit of spice to the proceedings. The stuff that's appeared so far, like the squid picture in the Anttilis Mission review you did a while ago, the winged thingy on Aztec Assault and the other few bits and pieces you've added have been okay, but are nothing special. Can nothing be done to jazz things up a bit?

JON LEMMON
GREAT YARMOUTH, NORFOLK

I've been buying in the odd PD MAC clip art disk, but a lot of the stuff on the disks simply doesn't apply to many of the games we've reviewed. I was lucky to have a squid for the Anttilis review, and the same goes for the other clip art that has been featured. I'd dearly love a scanner for the MAC, but the price is just too high... at the moment. I've

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got a few file transfer programs which may well enable me to convert AMIGA or PC graphics files to MAC format. You've got an AMIGA scanner, haven't you Jon? I'm sure you'll be only too pleased to come up with some suitable images that I can use should I manage to actually get these file transfer / conversion programs working. You know I'm always trying to make FB look better, and if that is one way of doing so then I'm all for it! One thing I'm never going to do, ever again, is cut pictures out and stick them in gaps. Talk about time consuming. (My money is on waiting till the middle of next year and buying a scanner for the MAC - easiest yet costliest way of doing things!)

Moving swiftly on, here's a letter from Les Mitchell of Goblin Gazette fame...

• Dear Tim, I was both surprised and honoured to receive the FROM BEYOND award for OUTSTANDING ADVENTURE CONTRIBUTION 1992. It will have pride of place on the wall above my desk, it will cover that stain nicely (only joking hee! hee!). Your comments regarding GOBLIN GAZZETTE filling the gap left by SPELLBREAKER very well is indeed a great compliment as, although I only subscribed to six issues it was in my opinion the best adventure fanzine around at that time and it was a pity that Mike Brailsford had to stop producing it.

If I may I'd like to share the award with everyone who has contributed to 'GG' and who have helped it mature to its present format at such an early age. There are too many people to list here but I am sure they all know who they are!

So what are my plans for 1993? I am hoping that I can continue to make improvements to 'GG' and that the readership grows steadily, and that it loses its tag as a solutions only fanzine. Hopefully it will be known for its all round coverage of adventure related material. I'd like to see it win an award at the next ADVENTURERS CONVENTION (or at least be recognised by its organisers). Above all I want it to be a fanzine that is fun to read and fun to produce.

LES MITCHELL
(Editor GOBLIN GAZZETTE)
HULL

Glad you liked the award, Les. It was getting late in the year so I just thought I'd do some personal awards rather

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than ask everyone's opinion. It would give me a chance to reflect on the stuff that had happened over the last year and see what came out as award winners. As far as 'GG' went there was some stiff competition in that area. Red Herring was my first initial thought for OUTSTANDING ADVENTURE CONTRIBUTION. IT's a great mag, is superbly produced and even at £2.95 is not overpriced because of its size and content - and yes, even the Spectrum holds more than its own amongst the other computers that RH deals with. Laurence Creighton was another possible winner in that category. His games may only be QUILL-ed but he brings them out regularly and they rarely disappoint! In fact all the other categories were closely contested, but the award in this case went to 'GG' because of the fact that it was possible that only a small number of people would want what was (notice I said was) a solutions fanzine, and for Les to carry on through initial 'small' sales should be recognised and rewarded. 'GG' is now turning into more of a reviews / solutions 'all formats' 'Zine. Good luck for the future Les.

The following is a letter from me! It was sent to Les Floyd of the Northern Underground. Read it and you'll see what it's all about. When you've finished you'll have to draw your own conclusions...

- - - - -

Tim Kemp
36 Globe Place
Norwich, Norfolk
NR2 2SQ

Ref No: 050:02

Date: Thursday, November 26, 1992

Dear Les,

I feel duty bound to ask you what's happening down at the NU HQ? Certain of my readers are complaining personally to me that their orders are not being processed quick enough, and it is in my capacity as FB's editor that I must ask you to reply in writing to this letter (which will appear in FB-16) so that you yourself can let my readers know what's what.

I've so far told people what you've told me, i.e. your night shifts have played havoc with copying and dispatch times of games. However, even though I myself wouldn't mind waiting

THE FROM BEYOND MAILBAG

a couple of weeks for delivery, the majority of those people who have contacted me are not happy to wait that long. Perhaps if the other software producers also had a record of slow dispatch times then things wouldn't be so bad... but they don't.

I would dearly have loved a policy statement from you (as I requested in mid October) for the last issue of FB (issue 15), but as one didn't materialise I'm beginning to find myself in a precarious situation. My readers who ordered games from you and who have yet to receive them are finding it hard to see how I can continue to give you my support. As you know I've been more than happy to send out your leaflets, place adverts and even explain the NU situation on your behalf, but I feel that given the delays experienced by FB readers in trying to obtain Northern Underground products I have to be loyal to my readers and distance myself somewhat from the Northern Underground until you can make your position clear.

- - - - -

Well, that was interesting, wasn't it. That's the situation as it stands I'm afraid and I can tell you no more as, surprise surprise, Les didn't reply to the above letter. Someone said he must be lying low... why? If you ask me all it would have taken to get anybody off his back was a simple letter stating the situation. Les was in this same position in a previous software venture. To be in the same position and make the same mistakes again is somewhat foolish to say the least. It goes without saying that should Les reappear at some stage I'll find it hard to be overly supportive to him, though I am a fair bloke and will always give people the benefit of the doubt whenever I can, but I've got to draw the line somewhere. To balance things up a bit I've heard from a few people (who know of the Les situation) who said they ordered from him and had no problems obtaining the goods. So what is going on? Let's hope Les comes out of hibernation and writes to FB soon. One thing I will always do is let people have their say, (that's what these letters pages are primarily for) so Les, if you are reading this, you know that you can have your say. Can't be much fairer than that now, can I?

Well, that's all the mail for this issue... let's hope for lots more in the new year. Do please try to write to us. We like printing your letters.

Tim.

ADVENTURE REVIEW

THE SHARD OF INOVAR

Reviewed By: STORM.

This game, and its two stable mates reviewed elsewhere in this issue, were BIG sellers on the MASTERTRONIC label several years ago... what impact do they have on today's market?

STORYLINE:

Your name is Varwield and it is your goal to seek out Inovar and return it to the Eharin in Mantieron and also find the Tree of Truth. *(Whatever that means - Ed!)*

THE ADVENTURE:

Written by Les Hogarth and Clive Wilson. This was originally released by Mastertronic for the PC, C64 disk and the Spectrum +3 disk (for new readers a Clive Wilson programmer profile appeared in From Beyond Issue 4). I'm sure many of you will remember seeing this adventure in your local W.H.Smiths or Woolies, as it was first released when a) adventures were still being considered for publication by the major software houses, and b) they were readily available and relatively easy to obtain from the high street multiples. Ah, the good old days. Mind you, it was a case of 'graphical adventures only', in these shops, but at least you could buy them! This is where 'Shard' must have appealed to most shops as not only did it have graphics, but it also had none of that fiddly typing in to do - everything major being icon controlled.

Back to the adventure... While loading you have a screen layout you will later become familiar with as you play the game. The upper

half has 16 icons across the top and sides while there are another 10 icons across the bottom. Also the top half has two squares, the left one showing a graphic representation of your location while the right one displays the word corresponding to the current icon. In the space just below the icons but above the squares is an area where messages i.e. EXITS are scrolled from right to left. The lower half also contains the location description.

The text of the first location is:- Behold the Dais of Cairnru upon which are invoked sacred rituals of the elfin Eharin. Overhead the crimson aura of the barrier of Cairnru hisses as the energy absorbs the rainfall

The icons are blue, with the current one (selected) white and if there is an object you can get, such as in this case, The Shard of Inovar, the GET icon is coloured red. I moved to the EXAMINE icon and pressed the 0 key. The location text then had the first word displayed blue and that word also appeared in the right square. I moved the blue area to the appropriate object in the text and again pressed the 0 key, if there was anything of importance, the message was displayed before allowing you to move to the next icon.

I'm sorry if all that sounds complicated. It's not. Unfamiliar, yes, but not difficult once you've had a bit of practise at it.

So I examined the object, got it and then tried to invoke the Decairn. The character Ataka

THE SHARD OF INOVAR

appeared, spoke to me, and left me a gift. The choice of exits was west or east so I moved east and arrived at a steep grassy hill. I read the text and spent the next few minutes examining things. Then it was the east icon again. To the north was the fortress of Arthemim and the first of the sudden deaths. This one involved fireballs. I tried various other moves around here but failed to make any progress so I decided to go west (into a mire) and faced another sudden death. Another try and I examined everything at the Adklaart Pass and found the sign of Eharin.

Moving to the USE icon, I then had to get the object I wanted to use, displayed after the USE. This involved scrolling the objects carried until the correct one carried was displayed then finally pressing '0' again.

Anyway, seconds later you are standing next to the Tree of Truth. This was duly examined and then I tried to get the object that was present. After trying various Icons, I then moved on and came across a vicious Laryx, a horned goat-like creature... that killed me. By now I was quite conversant with the top left icon. That is the LOAD / SAVE one

that does the business, saving to either memory or tape.

I decided not to get too involved with the creature so proceeded to

the temple and started using the EXAMINE key and moving the blue area to the right word.

By now I was getting strong feelings about the icon system of doing things. I've been playing adventures for years and have developed a certain speed and familiarity with the keyboard, yet I found that it was taking me about 2 to 3 times longer to input each command. At first I put it down to unfamiliarity but things had not improved by my third try at it. Basically my impressions are that visually it may look great and promises to be user friendly but in practise it is slow, and once the novelty has worn off, irritates.

Back to the game again... Once past the creature, I arrived at the temple, unlocked the door, got the

Ryxblade, got killed, loaded my position again and after a few more moves came to a grinding halt. Referring to the solution (thanks Tim), I learnt what I had failed to do earlier. Simply put, I had not given an object to another object which I would later have got back in a better state. To speed things up I referred to the solution in order to complete the next part. That still left about the last third

to do but by then I felt that the icons and me didn't agree, so I switched off the computer. The game could well have the best



THE SHARD OF INOVAR

ending ever written but I regret I'm not in a position to say. Unlike nearly all the other games I've reviewed, I didn't complete this one. Sorry guys.

GOOD POINTS:

Visually it looks really great, and thankfully there's a tape / memory, load / save function!

BAD POINTS:

As stated in the main body of the review, the Icons and me didn't see icon to eye. Also the world-scenario was difficult to accept. The game would definitely have benefited from coming with a sheet of scene setting / world history details so you knew a bit more about the places and people you come across in the game. It may have also helped me grasp the basic idea of things a bit quicker.

CONCLUSIONS:

As I'm sure you've gathered, I didn't much like this game. Zenobi Software have released scores of excellent games over the years, and Clive Wilson's recent efforts using the PAW are also available from Zenobi and I would recommend these without hesitation (*I can agree with that*

comment - Ed.). However, this game's a different kettle of fish. It's programmed skillfully enough, but for me, I think there are far superior games currently available using facilities such as the Quill, PAW, GAC etc. If you're nostalgic or feel comfortable with icons then give it a try. You've got nothing to lose - well, £2.49 to be exact! Sorry Clive, it's the thumbs down from me on this one. Is it right what Tim tells me, that you have lost the bug?



• SHARD OF INOVAR •
Zenobi Software
26 Spotland Tops
Cutgate, Rochdale
Lancashire OL12 7NX.

PRICE: £2.49 (tape)

Outside UK please add 50p per order or £1.00 for airmail.

RATINGS:

PACKAGING	6
STORYLINE	5
OPENING PLAY	4
PROBLEMS	6
LOCATION TEXT	5
PARSER	n/a
GAME DESIGN	6
DIFFICULTY	INTERMEDIATE
PLAYABILITY	5

PERSONAL RATING 4

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INSIDE TIM'S TINY MIND

A VOID SPEWING NOTHINGNESS...

Oh yeah, what's this column all about then? Well, if you've been with us over the last 15 issues you'll have noticed that we've tried all manner of non-specific 'columns' to get across views and ideas that people occasionally write in with that need more attention than they'd get on the letters page. The idea hit me the other day to pop in a column every now and then made up of interesting bits of peoples letters - the letters that I get containing interesting snippets that are not for publication that is. I shan't be naming the senders of these letters - just nicking bits from them and using them to skillfully (ho ho) blend together a few ideas and see what comes out at the other end. So here goes... (Nothing libelous, no names, no pack drill etc...)

- It's been suggested that magazines such as Probe, Red Herring and FB should not bother giving FREE write-ups to other 'new' magazines that come on to the market. There isn't enough room for any more being one reason stated for not featuring them. I suppose that's fair enough, but I see it as my duty to report fairly and accurately on anything that appears on the market that is connected with adventures. I recently gave a little bit of support to a magazine that was supposed to appear but didn't. My support was in the form of a free FB for review purposes. I made a point of telling the person concerned with this new magazine that their initial approach was a bit off as they had put things like: This magazine MAY be one thing or the other, MAY

cost a certain price, MAY appear on a bi-monthly basis. Too many maybe's for my liking. Eventually a launch date for this publication was drawn up, then missed. The same thing happened again, then was missed once more. That seems to be the end of that particular publication although the would be editor did say that should it appear in the future (?) all those who ordered a copy in advance would get a FREE issue (everybody DID get their money back - I even got a cheque for the FREE FB I'd sent!). I did mention the fact to the editor of this fanzine that in my opinion the fanzine market was getting a bit crowded and in all honesty is very well catered for by the excellent fanzines that already exist. One problem (and this includes writing adventures too, not just fanzines) is that people seem to only be interested in doing something if they are fully supported by hundreds of readers / game players, and become disinterested if their initial product doesn't take off. I look at it like this: If you don't intend to try to get any pleasure out of what you are aiming to do then don't do it! Doing adventure related things is more of a hobby to most of us (that doesn't apply to you Wilson, so don't write to me telling me off) than anything else. You wouldn't do a hobby you didn't like doing, would you? A quick bit of advice to anyone out there thinking of trying their hand at writing an adventure, fanzine, solutions book, adventure word dictionary etc... do it first, then see who's interested - not the other way round. If you enjoyed it then keep doing it!

A VOID SPEWING NOTHINGNESS...

- Someone said to me the other day: "Why doesn't *From Beyond* have more help-lines, or a *getting you started* section?". There are two reasons for that. 1... I dislike making notes of useful objects, how to solve problems etc. My brainpower is limited and while I can happily play away and make review-oriented notes and mental notes of what does what, I can't do them in a way that lets you translate them into tips. When I tried to do it in early FB's my enthusiasm for the whole kit and kaboodle was seriously dented! 2...The second (and last) reason is that I try not to step on Probe and Red Herring's toes. RH has a selection of hints and mini maps, and Probe does the ultimate in getting you started, hints and full solutions, so I just do big maps and show you what's what and what can be found where! I like to think that in FB's reviews we give away the odd game playing hints and tips anyway. Les Mitchell's 'Goblin Gazette' caters for those people wanting mostly FULL solutions to games. Hopefully by trying to keep FB a comment / letter / article / map / review fanzine we stay out of the other 'zine's territories. I think we all have something to offer in our own distinct ways.

- In Adventure Probe VOL 6 issue 11 Barbara Gibb reported on some new releases from Compass Software - namely DEEP PROBE and THE (LOST?) TOMB OF ANANKA. She said she hoped I didn't mind her using information taken from FB. May I respectfully remind her, and anyone else thinking of 'nicking' anything from us, that everything between the front and back covers of FB is copyrighted. ONLY JOKING. Actually, anyone wanting to use

any information from FB can go right ahead and do so as long as it's used in a reasonable and responsible way - hopefully to promote adventuring. So the answer, Barbara, is NO, I don't mind at all if you want to take info from FB and use it in PROBE. It's an honour to be of some use.

- FB FACT: 1... There are only two FB's I really like doing... the May/June and July/August issues! Why? The weather is just right and I feel like doing more per session than at any other time of the year. Imagine me now, sitting at my (new) desk, bashing away on December the 22nd 1992. There's presents to (still) buy and wrap, relatives to welcome into the home at all hours of the day and night, and the other 101 Christmas chores that, although are willingly undertaken, all mean that there's never enough time to do what I want on FB. Still, X-Mas is a time to stop moaning, so I will. FB FACT 2... Recession measures have forced the (permanent) postponement of the long promised cloth FB patches. We'll have to see what the new year brings on that front I'm afraid.

- One last thing before I split, I must put in a request to all adventure authors when it comes to writing games. Please try to liven your text up with a bit of colour. White isn't mandatory you know, and a choice of fonts would go down well too. I'm getting fed up with the usual 'adventurey' typeface and long for something like: White location descriptions, cyan messages, green exits, yellow system messages, black background and BBC MODEL B (style) font. Yes... there you have it. Perfection.

Tim.

ADVENTURE REVIEW

THE GOLDEN LOCKET

Reviewed By: TIM.

Very few adventures (traditional text only ones that is) are written using systems other than the QUILL, PAW or GAC. Tom Frost's Adventure Builder System (ABS) has found favour with a few writers, and can be used to good effect. This games author, Keith Burnard, has previously dabbled with it and came up with RADIOMANIA. What's he come up with this time?...

STORYLINE:

You find yourself sitting at home, late one night, watching an old western on TV. All of a sudden you hear the words: "Put your hands up." You think it's part of the film... WRONG! To your amazement you suddenly notice 3 masked gunmen appear as if from nowhere. They search you at gunpoint and steal your Golden Locket (the self same object you'd bought for your wife's birthday) and, each taking a part of it - Chain, Locket and Photo, they then run off laughing, leaving you staring in disbelief at the TV. You realise then that a man's gotta do what a man's gotta do, and so you set out to retrieve your property.

THE ADVENTURE:

So what's the difference between

a game written using ABS and one written with one of the more 'popular' utilities? Not a lot, it has to be said! Once you begin playing you see that the screen layout, command input method (verb / noun mostly), and game objectives are all familiar. There's a slight slowness when compared to screen refresh rate on a QUILL-ed game, for instance, but that's about the only difference.

However, once you start exploring you'll see something quite different. A lot of the fun has been sucked out of the game in some way. The overly hard beginning does nothing to make the game playable, and when you have to escape from the clutches of a ferocious Bear (see the 'GETTING GOING' box) but have to spend more than ten minutes constantly getting killed, then you hope that things get seriously better when you eventually manage to make it past it. If you think that Compass games sometimes start off too hard, then try this and you'll think otherwise!

But wait, the going gets even tougher just after you deal with the bear. This, in my opinion, is certainly not a game for the impatient novice. I tried to play the game with the aid of the supplied (thank's John) help-sheet, but it was written in such a way as to still make you guess most of the words. In other words hardly anything on it worked.



THE GOLDEN LOCKET

I always try my hardest to finish (usually with the aid of the help-sheet) any games I review, and although I manfully struggled on to see a good bit more of the game, and although the problems become a tad more reasonable (original at least) as the game progresses, I found that sudden deaths, semi-sudden deaths and just deaths (and unforeseen setbacks) constantly knocked me out of my stride. It's a bit like someone asking you questions when you are trying to work out the shopping bill... ten minutes of interruptions and you give up. That's what I had to do with The Golden Locket - give up well before the end. This means I can't really give it a PERSONAL RATING as I didn't see enough of it to form a solid opinion. On what I saw it would only rate a three.

GOOD POINTS:

It's been a long time since I've had to dig deep to come up with some good points. I have to say that the only things I can think of are the price - it's cheap - and the amount of problems in the game. Seeing an adventure written with a different adventure authoring system is quite a novelty, and shows that the QUILL, PAW and GAC are not the only systems you need consider.

BAD POINTS:

Sudden deaths, annoying deaths, not such a hot parser and a bit of a dull storyline.

CONCLUSIONS:

Keith's other ABS adventure, Radiomania, was a good deal better than The Golden Locket. Mind you I did manage to see more of that game than I did of this, and I wasn't even playing it with a review in mind! Having said that I'm sure Keith will bounce back and come up with a goodie next time. What's needed is the correct 'pace'. Once that's sorted (and the sudden deaths removed completely) then I for one will have no worries about checking out further KB ABS games. Barbara Gibb reviewed it quite favourably in Adventure Probe so perhaps it was just me who didn't like it?



THE GOLDEN LOCKET

Zenobi Software
26 Spotland Tops
Cutgate, Rochdale

Lancashire OL12 7NX

PRICE: £2.49 (tape)

Outside UK please add 50p per order or £1.00 for airmail.

RATINGS:

PACKAGING	6
STORYLINE	4
OPENING PLAY	3
PROBLEMS	4
LOCATION TEXT	3
PARSER	5
GAME DESIGN	5
DIFFICULTY	ADVANCED
PLAYABILITY	4

PERSONAL RATING

n/a

GETTING GOING: Plagued by death at the start of the game? Want to get going but can't? The moves to make are actually fairly obvious, but with a bear on your tail you may have problems. Try: RUN N, RUN W, RUN UP, GET ROCK, THROW ROCK, EXAMINE ROCK and GET COMPASS!

ADVENTURE REVIEW

MURDER... HE SAID! (128k ONLY)

Reviewed By: Inspector Vance

This issue we've been visited by Inspector Vance of the Serious Crime Squad... Here's his report on Murder He Said.

STORYLINE:

A murder has been committed at Dundee Manor. The victim, a Philip Stowe, was present to celebrate his engagement to Emily, daughter of Major and Elizabeth Dundee. You instruct the desk-sergeant to make a casebook up containing information on all the people present at the time of the event. Likewise you ask the local medical examiner to finish his preliminary examination prior to your arrival. Your job is simple - to find the guilty party and bring him or her to justice.

THE ADVENTURE:

"Yes Sir... Yes... Yes thank you, sir. Certainly. You'll have my full report on your desk in 24 hours... What? Oh... Er... Of course, Sir... Well, following the telephone call, I collected my bleeper, the car keys and the casebook containing the files on the persons present and then proceeded to Dundee Manor to commence my investigation. On arrival, I went up the driveway towards the premises and the waiting police officer, close to his motorcycle. prior to entering the building, I wisely decided to walk around the grounds in the hope of finding something dropped or hidden by the murderer.

To the west there was an unlocked garage containing 2 vehicles, one of which belonged to the victim. its contents would have been hard to

justify. What?... Yes Sir. They were found outside the house. I thought it strange that someone would dump them. Alright. I know blue isn't everyone's colour but they looked almost new. Near the greenhouse I encountered Alfred Rogers the gardener and general handyman. I had previously read the file on Alfred, as I had the others so I knew a certain amount about the person. He was busy preparing the ground for a rose bush but eventually agreed to talk to me when I QUESTIONED ALFRED. The search of the greenhouse was unproductive at this stage... What? No that was later, and the potting shed was locked with the key nowhere to be found. I then decided it was time to enter the building.

Having rung the bell, I was escorted to the study where major Dundee quickly introduced himself before going upstairs to comfort Elizabeth, his wife... Yes Sir. Very Upset. Anyway I then went from room to room searching and examining things, looking for anything that might point the finger of suspicion at someone. In the front hall, I read the medical report on Philip Stowe, a 25 year old male. He had been shot by a .38 revolver and had died at about 1:00am, about 6 hours before the body was discovered. Traces of cocaine were present in his clothing.

In the music room with its bloodstained carpet, I found several hairs that must have been missed by the other officers. I CALLED the PC and gave him the hair. Remarkably quickly a detailed report from the lab was waiting for

MURDER... HE SAID! (128k ONLY)

me on the table inside the front door. What? No Sir. Not the victim's.

Anyway, I visited all the rooms on the ground floor, about 20 I think it was, and questioned various individuals. George Stowe, the father of the victim was in the library but later retired upstairs. Emma Frost, the cook for the Dundees for the last 21 years was constantly on the move but backed up Alfred's statement regarding going to the local pub that night.

It was on the first floor with its 20 rooms that I questioned the Major and his wife in her bedroom, and Oliver their son on his return from downstairs with a drink. By that time, I was already in possession of his diary and knew his feelings regarding the deceased... Yes Sir. Not a very popular person was Philip Stowe... No sir.

Near here I found a safe. In my report I will state that the door was open and the contents visible. unofficially though I opened it myself... What? No Sir. Took me about 10 seconds. Even my four year old son could have done it. I mean anyone who leaves a 5 digit number lying about is asking for trouble.

I questioned Geraldine Ross, a model and friend of the victim before moving up to the second floor and its 10 rooms. basically these were used by the staff. using an old metropolitan trick, I eavesdropped a conversation which proved to be very helpful... No, again that came later.

A bloodstained item of clothing was found and its subsequent report put the owner squarely in the picture. After which it was fairly straightforward finding the additional items needed to provide the necessary evidence to

bring the murderer to justice. Pardon? No doubt at all. The murderer was asking to be caught, leaving all the evidence about. Likewise I've never known such an honest lot of replies that I got when I SHOWed them interesting items. Yes Sir. Amateur criminals is the phrase I'd use too. Then again, makes my life easier. Yes Sir. Than YOU sir. As I said, the report will be on your desk within 24 hours. Bye..."

GOOD POINTS:

Everything. One of Jack's best games to date. A joy to play. Ideal for a sequel.

BAD POINTS:

There ought to be something major, I suppose. Oh yes. No butler. Why? Because the butler always does it.

CONCLUSIONS:

Treat yourself to a fabulous whodunnit. This is definitely going to appear in my future top ten list.



MURDER... HE SAID!

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

PRICE: £2.49 (128k {ONLY} tape)
£3.49 (+3 disk). Outside UK add 50p
per order or £1.00 for airmail.

RATINGS:

PACKAGING	6
STORYLINE	6
OPENING PLAY	9
PROBLEMS	8
LOCATION TEXT	5
PARSER	9
GAME DESIGN	10
DIFFICULTY	INT./EXPERIENCED
PLAYABILITY	10

PERSONAL RATING 10

STOP PRESS

VERY LATE ITEMS OF INTEREST (?)

- *I Had a couple of items of interest come in after much of FB had been put together, so here they are in a STOP PRESS special! First a letter from Tom (Tartan Tam) Frost...*

"Dear Tim, Your FB REVIEW SYSTEM includes a category identified as PARSER with comments about ease and flexibility. Well, YOU should really know better after having been involved in writing computer adventure games. The PARSER is the part of the program that takes the players typed input, analyses it and allocates numbers to the various verbs, nouns, adjectives, pronouns, propositions etc that the input contains. And THAT is ALL that the parse does, the rest of it is up to the expertise (or lack of it) of the author (I nearly wrote programmer!). What you are really referring to in your category called Parser relates to the Vocabulary given to the game by the author and how well he manipulates the numbers produced by the parser in conjunction with all of the built-in routines of the utility being used. All 48k Spectrum games written using PAW use exactly the same parser, so any comment regarding it should always carry the same score or far better, none at all.

Just one example, to illustrate the point... in issue 15 in the review of THE TEST (Spectrum 128k version) the following comment appears "...the PARSER prefers PUT A IN B here...", which is absolute nonsense as this convention is the one that the author has chosen and has absolutely nothing to do with the parser.

Right, that's it, moan over... all the best for 1993 and keep up the good work.

...so that's what the PARSER is! How complex. No wonder we'll stick to rating the games vocabulary performance using the tried and trusted PARSER rating! Nice to hear from you, Tom. Write more in the new year if you please!

Tim.

- *The CrossWord king himself (Paul Cardin) wished to share some Words and Definitions with you: (Sorry Paul, couldn't fit your examples in).*

1: LAMONT - To deliberately dodge the payment of a bill, regardless of whether you can afford it or not.

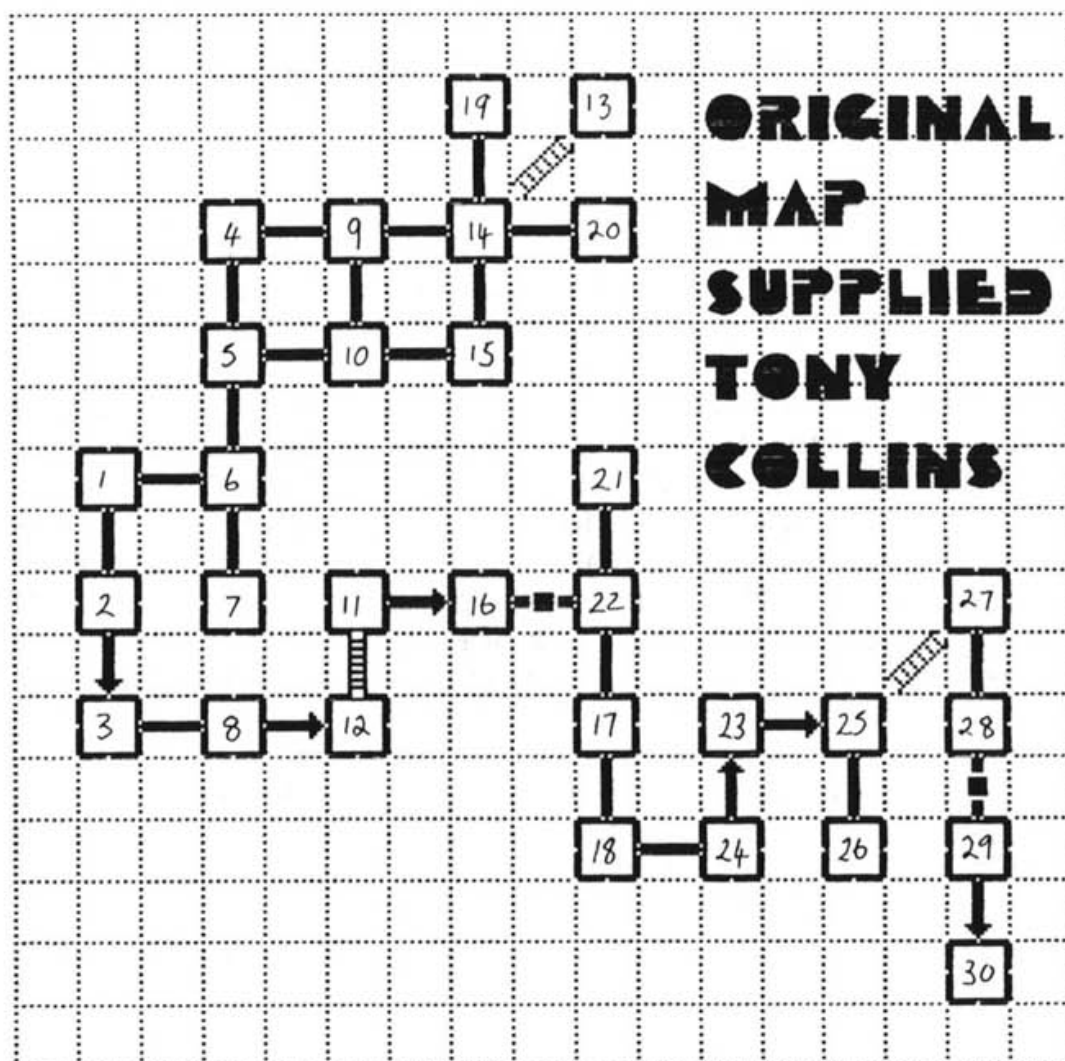
2: CHRISTMAS - To employ TV advertising, in a sickly manner, perveying certain items, eg. Aftershave; perfume; Perry Como's greatest hits, usually in a month not unadjacent to November.

3: SCARGILL - To make a prediction that is proved to be correct in years to come.

- Finally, this one's from me (Tim): CARDIN - To confuse and confound the adventure playing population using nothing more than the word LALLATION and a few choice cryptic clues.

MAGICAL MAPS

SOULS OF DARKON



**ORIGINAL
MAP
SUPPLIED BY
TONY
COLLINS**

LOCATIONS:

1: Crystal Fountain 2: Monolith Of Darkon 3: Dry Ground 4: Dead Warrior
5: Standing Stone 6: Blacksmith Forge 7: Blacksmith Shop 8: Hovering
Above Swamp 9: • START • Muddy Path 10: Open Ground 11: Gateway
Of Darkon 12: Eastern Edge Of Swamp 13: Tree 14: Muddy Path (ii)
15: Edge Of Forest 16: Middle Of Field 17: Room Of Plants 18: Glass
Room 19: Clearing 20: Muddy Ground 21: Dusty Passage 22: Trophy
Room 23: Prison Area 24: Hall Of Darkon 25: Kitchen 26: Gloom
27: Room Of Animals 28: Snakes Room 29: Room Of Ropes 30: Lord
Darkon.

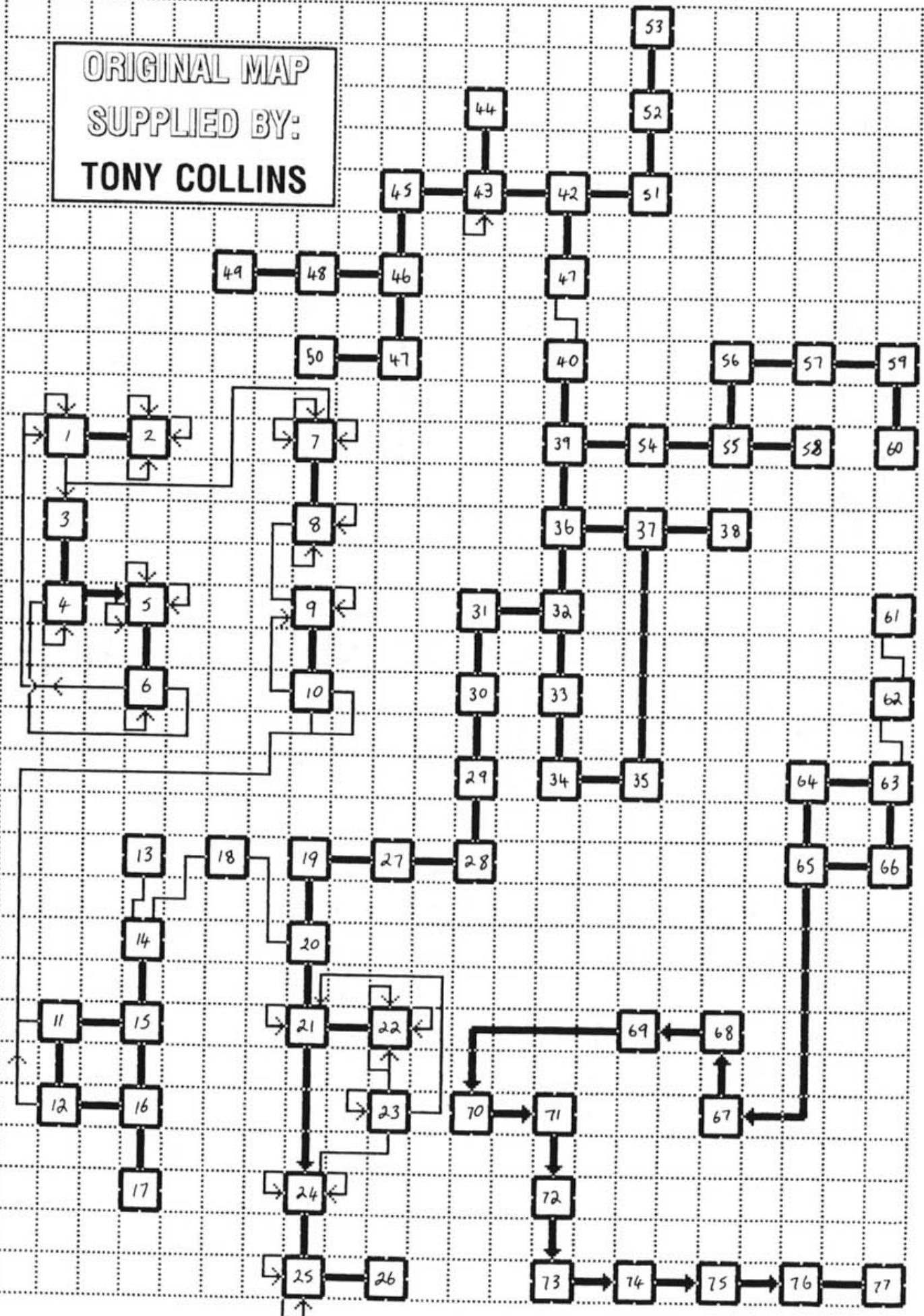
HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN FIND, AND WHERE!

At Loc. 1 = Man - Guide, Liquid Gold. 4 = Helmet. 5 = Carving, Plaque,
Axe, Sword, Altar. 6 = Barrel. 9 = Sculpture, Hook, Fork. 10 = Robot, Green
Button, Visor, Crystal. 12 = Cliff. 13 = Coin, Ring. 16 = Illusion. 17 = Watering
Can. 18 = pedestal, Silicon Star. 19 = Anti-Gravity Belt, Rope, Woodsman
Cabin. 21 = Jar, Key. 22 = Skull. 23 = Kraytor. 24 = Iron Plate. 25 = Stairs,
Wheel. 26 = Wheel, Spear.

• We always need maps. If you've done one, send it in! •

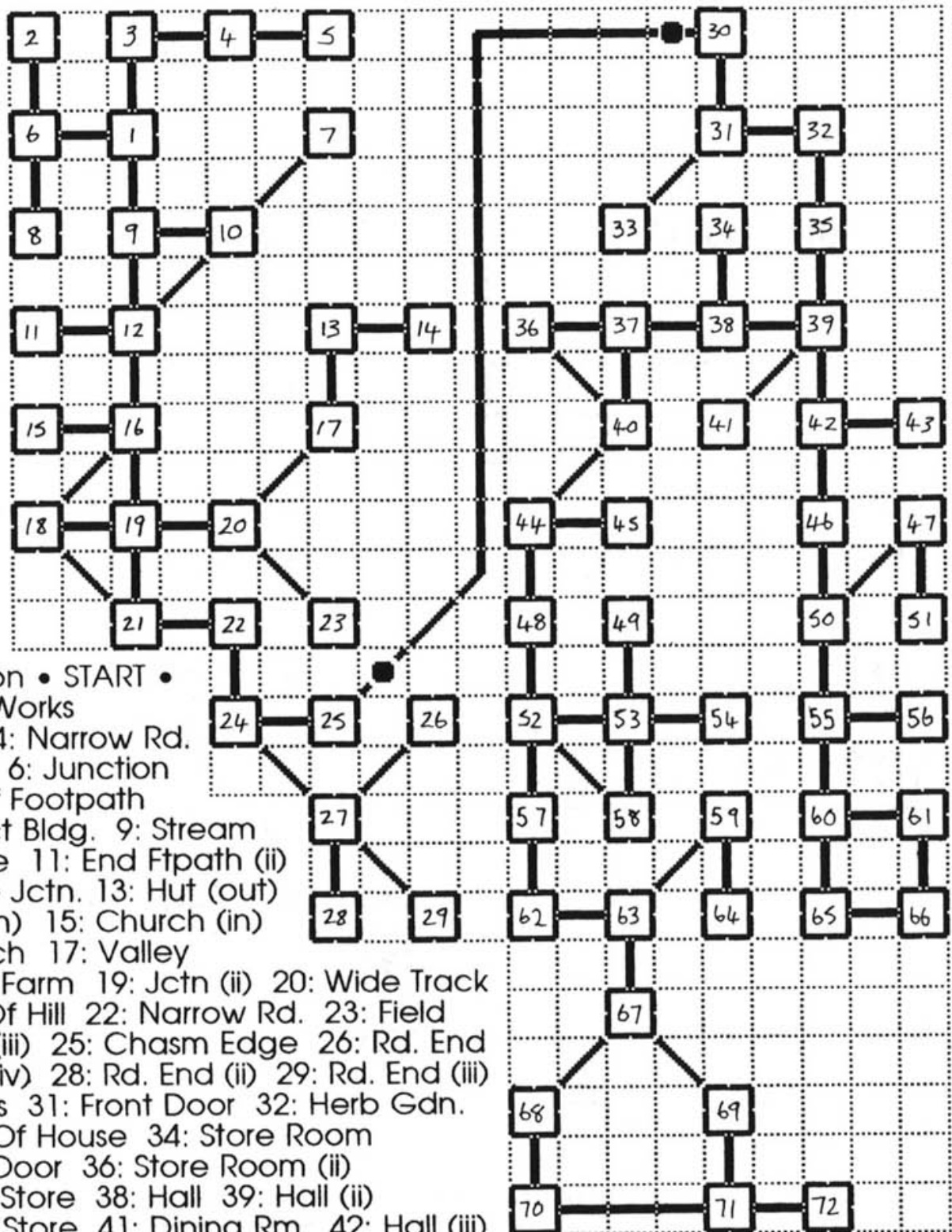
THE GUARDIAN

ORIGINAL MAP
SUPPLIED BY:
TONY COLLINS



LORDS OF MAGIC

MAP T O N Y C O L L I N S

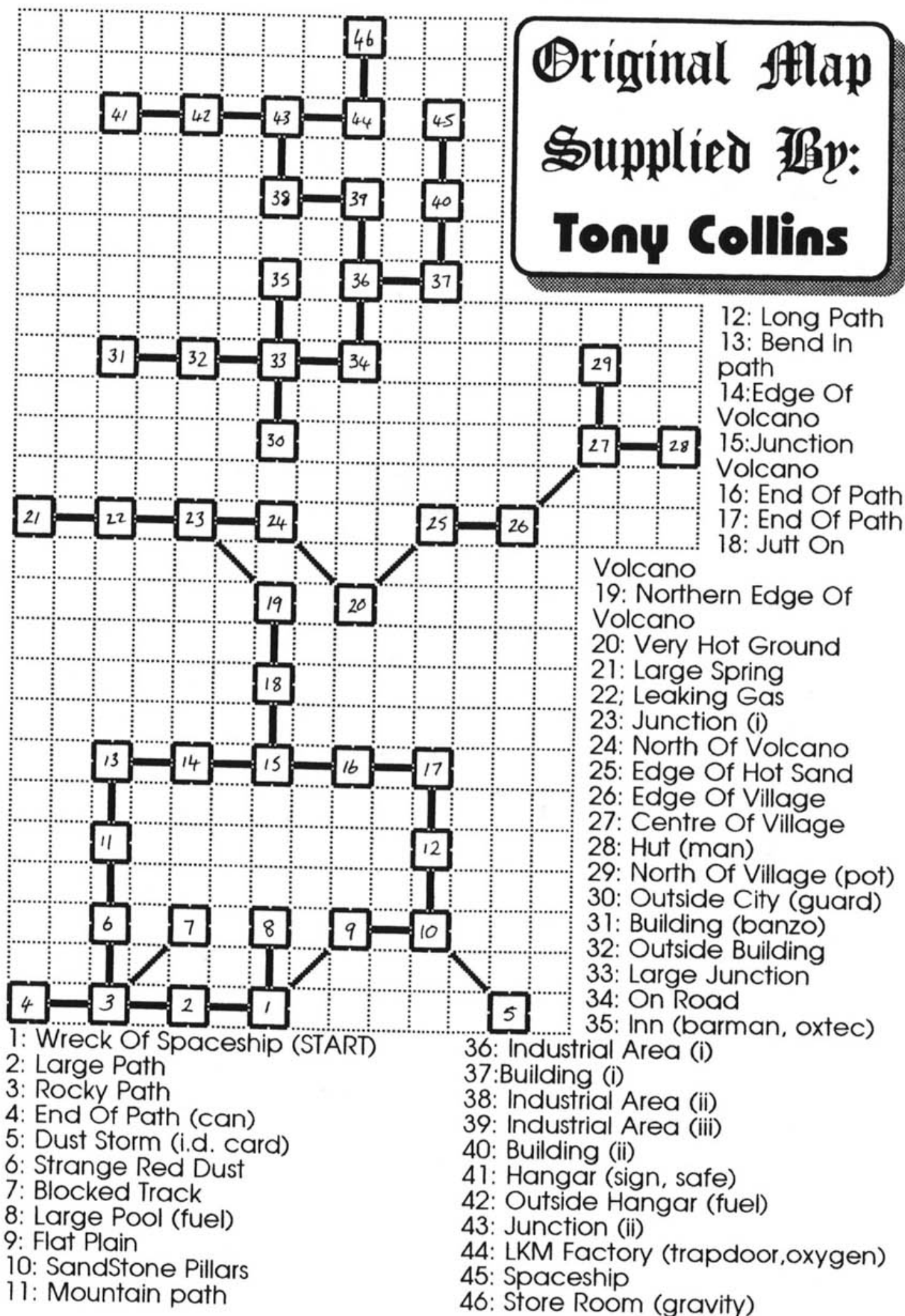


- 1: Junction • START •
 2: Road Works
 3: Farm 4: Narrow Rd.
 5: In Car 6: Junction
 7: End Of Footpath
 8: Derelict Bldg. 9: Stream
 10: Bridge 11: End Ftpath (ii)
 12: Large Jctn. 13: Hut (out)
 14: Hut (in) 15: Church (in)
 16: Church 17: Valley
 18: Small Farm 19: Jctn (ii) 20: Wide Track
 21: Top Of Hill 22: Narrow Rd. 23: Field
 24: Jctn (iii) 25: Chasm Edge 26: Rd. End
 27: Jctn (iv) 28: Rd. End (ii) 29: Rd. End (iii)
 30: Gates 31: Front Door 32: Herb Gdn.
 33: Side Of House 34: Store Room
 35: Side Door 36: Store Room (ii)
 37: Cold Store 38: Hall 39: Hall (ii)
 40: Wine Store 41: Dining Rm. 42: Hall (iii)
 43: Study 44: Dark Passage 45: Store Room (iii) 46: Narrow Passage
 47: Kitchen 48: End Of Passage 49: Store Room (iv) 50: Bottom of Stairs
 51: Pantry 52: Junction (v) 53: Junction (vi) 54: End Of passage (ii)
 55: Top Of Stairs 56: Balcony 57: Store Room (iv) 58: Wine Cellar
 59: Passage 60: Junction (vii) 61: Bathroom 62: Passage (ii)
 63: Bottom Of Steps 64: End Of Passage (iii) 65: Passage (iii) 66: Bedrm.
 67: Garden 68: Garden Shed 69: Garden (ii) 70: Junction (viii)
 71: Junction (ix) 72: Edge Of Village

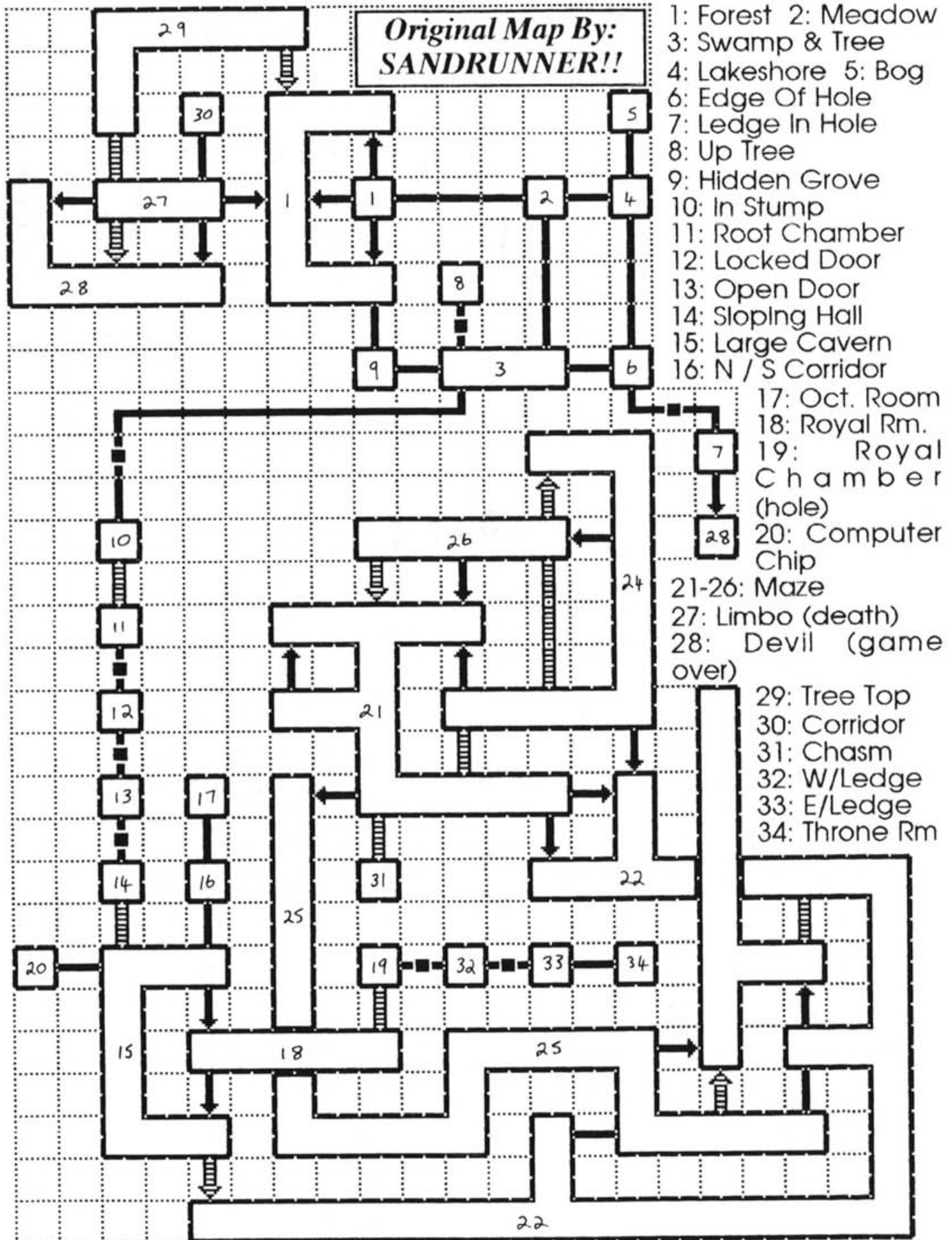
FIND ITEMS OF GREAT INTEREST AT LOC No's: 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 23, 25, 26, 28, 29, 32, 35, 39, 40, 43, 49, 51, 54, 57, 64, 66 and 72

ALIEN PLANET

Original Map
Supplied By:
Tony Collins



ADVENTURELAND



GULP! One of the most confusing maps EVER! Hopefully everything is in the right place. Find things of value at locations: 2, 4, 5, 9, 11, 17, 21, 24, 31, 33 and 34. If you've got Adventureland, and have finished it, then why not sell it to Adventures Unlimited... see ad. elsewhere in this issue!

NEWS ROUNDUP

A DOLLOP OF ADVENTURE NEWS



- With the demise of Delbert The Hamster Software we are seeing a few ex-Delbert adventures appear here and there. One game that Scott Denyer was marketing was DOOMSDAY - the controversial adventure that featured all manner of Mary Whitehouse heart stoppers. It appears that Dave Ledbury (of ZAT etc.) is looking for someone willing to duplicate the Spectrum tape version of the game. Actually it sounded more like he wants someone to take on the marketing of the Speccy tape version, and also, if I got the message right he's looking for someone who can playtest an Amstrad CP/M version of the game. If you think you can help out then drop me a line and I'll pass your letters on to Dave. The game originally sold for somewhere in the region of £5.00, but a price drop may be on the cards. Turn to page 50 of this issue for more info on a special offer (coming soon) featuring Dave L's ZAT 'zine.

- Although we've reviewed most of the new Zenobi adventures in this issue there's one that slipped through the net that should be worth more than a quick glimpse. It's called PROJECT NOVA, is a two parter and comes from the pen (or keyboard) of Mark Cantrell. It's the usual price of £2.49 (tape) or £3.49 (+3 disk). I won't print Zenobi's address because you must all know it by now, surely? Also new on the Zenobi front are: "A HANDFUL OF HAMSTERS" featuring Delbert's Aunt Velma, Star Flaws, Raymond Pringle, Larry The Lemming, Desmond and Gertrude, Snow Joke and Brian and the Dishonest Politician. That lot costs £4.99 on a +3 disk. Then there's "HAIRY TOES" featuring Fergus McNeill's The Boggit and Bored of the Rings which costs £3.99 on +3 disk, and finally there's another Fergus duo for £3.99 on +3 disk called "DICKS GALORE" featuring The Big Sleaze and Robin of Sherlock.

- Tony Collins has got a stack of games coming out... too many to mention here in fact. We've got a pile of them waiting to be reviewed here at FB-HQ and you'll be pleased to know that the next issue will be pretty much a 'GUILD' issue.

- Adventures Unlimited, the fabbo outfit who are selling secondhand Spectrum classics such as Scott Adams and Level 9 games will have a list of games ready to be enclosed with the next FB.

- Compass Software should, by rights, have "THE LOST TOMB OF ANANKA" done by now, and are working on their next game "NIGHT OF THE DEMONS". Jon Lemmon is excited about "ANANKA"... he says: "There's plenty of traditional adventuring to be done and I've done a good bit of research in order to make the things that happen in the game tie in with Egyptian myths, gods and objects. Even the traps in the tombs (to foil grave-robbers) are authentic - so watch out when you enter the tombs!"

THE PAGE WHERE ANYTHING GOES!

FB 15 CROSSWORD

Solution & Winner

A	D	V	E	N	T	H	R	E	G	A	M	E
C	E	N	R	E	R	I	C					
O	B	S	E	S	I	O	N	A	D	D	E	R
N	P	U	L	O	T	G	O					
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U	B	O	A	T	S	I	M	P	E	L	L	E
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N	O	N	S	M	O	K	E	R	B	R	A	V
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S	O	L	F	I	N	O	S					
U	N	D	E	R	S	T	A	N	D	I	N	G

TO BOLDLY GO...

DON'T FORGET...
This FB contains
more words than
usual. If you wan't
it to remain that
way then send in a
contribution...
NOW!

50

PHOTOCOPYING SERVICE

Thinking of starting up a new adventure fanzine but finding the production costs discouraging? Send for details of my photocopying charges which, page-for-page, can be as much as **45%** cheaper than a visit to your local high street photocopier! Even with postage!!

Enlargement and reduction of master copies are both possible. A variety of coloured papers and card are available. I can also photocopy onto acetate sheets. **Send for further details!!**

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Documents can be presented professionally using the *Impression 2* document processor on an *Archimedes* with an *Integrex Beta Jet* printer. I have over **100** typefaces and **80** borders to choose from. Clip art or original illustrations can be included. *Monochrome scanning of original artwork is available.*

If you are trying to market your own software from home you need to present it as professionally as possible i.e. include A4 storylines, instructions, cassette inlays etc. I can prepare a striking A4 page of text (about 200 words) including special typefaces and borders plus spell-checking for as little as £3 (plus 5p per photocopy).

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Here are a few more of the typefaces that are available:-

Decorative Victorian, Blade, similarly Trio, Bubble and Cybernoid. BALLOON, CELTIC, Gothic, ALGERIAN and many more (Shamrock)!!

DECIPHER THE ANCIENT HIEROGLYPHICS AND FIND THE SECRETS OF...



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NIGHT OF THE DEMONS

A TALE OF TERROR IS ABOUT TO BEGIN...