

BARROWQUEST

1. INSTRUCTION FOR PLAY

The screen display divides into four parts. The top two lines of the display give power and stamina scores and a verbal description of the player's current location. Initially, power is set at 100, but it may be increased by winning fights, by entering charmed places or by finding power enhancing objects. Stamina is initially set to 200 and cannot be increased beyond this point. It will, however, decrease as the game continues and when it reaches 0 the game will end. Stamina can be increased either by Eating (the player presses t to eat) or by resting at a hotel in one of the Borderland Towns. Food and Hotel rests cost money. The Player begins with 200 crowns, but may find more, in the form of Barrow Treasure, as the game progresses.

The middle section of the screen is a graphical representation of the player and his current location. Weapons are shown as they are found (the man carries a shield once he has found a shield, etc.). Only a limited area of the total playing space is shown in this window - in fact, one quarter of one per cent - so the man has some exploring to do. What the graphics areas mean can be seen by reading the second line at the top of the screen. When the game opens, the player is in a yellow and red striped area - this is a town. The black squares above him and to the right are a hotel and the hamburgers on his bottom left are the food market. The only other graphics symbol that needs to be mentioned here is that for the Barrows - a pile of skulls for a Barrow that is unexplored, crossed boards for a barrow that has already been entered. More about Barrows in a moment.

The middle right of the screen gives the player's current grading, and a list of all objects, including food and money, carried. No more than 200 food units can be carried at any one time, but the player can carry an unlimited amount of money. Objects are listed as they are found (and removed from the list if they are lost). Lost objects can always be found again LATER.

The bottom three lines of the display give the situation report. They indicate found objects, give the attack strength of any attacking monsters, and so on.

2. MOVEMENT

The player moves by using the cursor keys. Sometimes string or numerical inputs are required, but this will always be indicated in the situation report. The other controls are:

"t" to eat. Assuming that the player is carrying enough food, this increases stamina by 10 and decreases Food units by 10.

"r" to run. This can be used to escape from combat, but it can also be used anywhere that is "outside" (i.e.; you can't use it inside castles or in tunnels). The trouble with run is that it is uncontrolled - you can't always tell how far you have run or in which direction, so you might get lost.

"p" to use X-pills. If you are carrying X-pills, pressing "p" will decrease your stock by one and move you to a random point in the open. It is therefore useful as a means of escape from blocked places. Save X-pills and only use them when it seems that there is no alternative.

"q" to quit. q exits the game and goes to the Hi-score board. Use it to end a game when the situation seems hopeless.

3. FIGHTS

Combat is straightforward. Monsters are shown as they attack, and their attack strength is given in the situation report. If the player stands his ground, the creature is engaged and the outcome is decided by the computer. The odds in favour of the player winning are determined by the ratio of the player's power points to the creature's attacking power. If the player thinks that the odds are too great, he can always escape by pressing "r". Fights may be won by the player - in which case power is increased - or they may be lost. If the player loses a fight, he may be taken prisoner by the attacking creature, or he may be wounded. *C'est la guerre.*

4. THE TERRITORY

The whole of the Borderland territory is covered by the Barrows which give the game its title - the Burial mounds of a long forgotten race. Their position is shown by mounds of skulls. There are 20 Barrows in all. Entering a barrow plunges the player into an underground labyrinth, and once underground the entered Barrow will either become a part of the tunnel wall or part of a tunnel walk. In this way, Barrows can sometimes seal off tunnels (and the player too). Exit from the maze is either by means of X-pills or by finding another Barrow through which to surface. Barrows are always in the same place, and always occupy the correct relative positions above and below ground. Players should always keep a note of how many barrows have been located and

entered, and should keep at least a rough map of their relative positions across the Borderland territory. Barrows contain money or nasties or are "charmed" - two Barrows contain quest objects. Barrow tunnels contain food and X-pills. This can either be picked up as found, or it can be left as supplies and returned to later. Food and X-pills are always in the same locations in all games.

5. SAVING THE GAME

Keying "s" saves the current game to tape. It can only be used if the player is above ground and in the open (i.e. it won't work in Castles or tunnels). The usual Sinclair message appears at the bottom of the screen, and the current position is saved in two parts. The first part is a short record of the variables area, the second part is much longer and saves all of the data above Ramtop. Not only is the game saved, but the current Hi-score board is saved along with it, so that all-time high scores can be preserved in this way. By saving a game, the player can avoid having to run through large sections of exploration and collection. Once the game has been saved, play continues from the current position.