



FROM BEYOND

I S S U E • 1 2 • M A Y / J U N E • 1 9 9 2

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If you are a subscriber to From Beyond then adverts are FREE! (Full or Half Page) If you are trying to sell a game, promote your wares or whatever then we are only too happy to help out in that department. (Ad's normally cost £5.00 each!)

SUBSCRIPTIONS

From Beyond is published on (or as near as possible to) the 15th of every alternate month. (In other words it's a Bi-Monthly Publication). Whilst we obviously welcome single issue orders it's easier all round if you can subscribe for 3 or 6 issues at a time. Besides, subscribers are entitled to FREE goodies and are also entered automatically into subscriber only competitions.

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The address to send your orders, subscriptions, letters, maps, hints, tips and comments to is:

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C O N T E N T S

FB ISSUE 12 • MAY/JUNE 1992

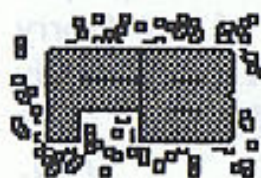
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This issues horrifying
cover picture was
crafted by:

- **Sean Doran**

X-tra special thanks this issue go to
John Wilson of **Zenobi** for
providing you, the FB readers, with a
FREE blank tape on which you can
save your game positions. If you didn't
have a **FREE** tape then you must have
subscribed too late as they were
available on a first
come first served
basis. See you next
issue!



Tim.

GENERAL CONTENTS

| | |
|------------------------------|----|
| News | 05 |
| Review System Explanation | 06 |
| The Comment Column | 18 |
| Readers Writes | 24 |
| Dear Diary (last instalment) | 43 |
| Write A Story 'The Winner' | 51 |
| Loose Ends | 60 |

REVIEWS

| | |
|----------------------------------|----|
| Red Alert | 09 |
| GameStar issue III | 12 |
| The Fisher King | 14 |
| April the 7th | 21 |
| The Curse Of Calutha | 29 |
| Brian & The Dishonest Politician | 46 |
| The White Feather Cloak | 54 |
| The Taxman Cometh | 58 |
| Laskar's Crystals | 63 |

MAGICAL MAPS

| | |
|-------------------------------|----|
| Circus | 37 |
| Phoenix | 38 |
| The Hulk | 41 |
| Sorcerer Of Claymorgue Castle | 42 |

ADVERTISERS

| | |
|----------------------|-------------|
| Bare Bones | 36 |
| Compass Software | 19,20,32 |
| Delbert The Hamster | 33 |
| Northern Underground | 34,35 |
| The Guild | 07,08,50 |
| ZAT | 49 |
| Zenobi Software | 61,62,67,68 |

EDITORIAL

MORE THAN JUST WORDS ON PAPER!

As this is our 12th issue, and as such our second birthday celebratory issue, let me start by thanking everyone who, over the last two years, have given the fanzine splendid support. Names I'd like to mention specially are Ian S. Brown who sent me 'Menagerie' to review and offered support and advice which proved to be invaluable over the first couple of issues. Tom Frost and Jack Lockerby also gave splendid support and encouragement too, as did a certain John Wilson and Jon Lemmon. Many more of you supported us right from day one by taking out subscriptions and making contributions of various kinds. Norman D. Haigh took out a 12 issue subscription which was a brave thing to do if you ask me. Apparently he does that kind of thing to most people who are serving the adventure community, so good on you Norm! What has From Beyond given to the adventure fraternity in return? Hmmm, all I can say is we've done our best to improve over the 24 months we've been with you.

The fact that I am physically and mentally incapable of doing anything that I dislike means that I like doing From Beyond. That means there's no reason to suppose it will not be around in another two years time. naturally there are things about doing FB that I hate! The biggest 'hate' must be folding and stapling the blummin' things. As it costs more to have that service done I'd rather do it myself which means the money can be spent on adding pages to a basic 52 page issue.

All the games reviewed in FB are donated by the generous Software producers out there. We all owe them a debt for carrying on and producing the goods year after year. There are easier ways to make a few extra bob and it's all credit to them that they still persist with writing and selling adventures. It's like I said, if you don't enjoy doing it then you won't carry on doing it. Naturally these software producers deserve something in exchange for sending me FREE copies of games, so I give them as much FREE advertising space in FB as they want. It's the very least I can do for them in return methinks!

What else has been going on in FB land? Well, Bessie Bughunter has decided to stop doing regular reviews - I hope she sees fit to send in the odd one every now and then. I'll miss her regular contributions. Turn to page 63 and you'll see her replacement reviewer take over in splendid style! There are another 10 games waiting for review but I refuse to give them anything less than a proper review, so they'll have to wait till next issue to see the light of day (sorry Tony C. and Larry H. - your games will make it into the next issue - fully reviewed in glorious FB-O-Scope?!) Oh well, time to go away and make a start on the next issue. See you soon!

Tim.

NEWS ROUNDUP

ADVENTURE NEWS & STUFF!



- New Zenobi titles to look out for from June or July are: 'The Khangrin Plans', 'The Mines Of Lithiad', 'Aztec Assault', 'Aura-Scope' and 'the Lost Twilight'. Three of those titles are 128k only - sounds interesting.

- Zenobi SAM Coupe News: Good news is that Zenobi have plans to release the following games on the SAM Coupe: 'Agatha's Folly', 'Crack City', 'Diablo', 'The Jade Stone', 'Treasure Island', 'Kobyashi AgKwo', 'The Darkest Road' with 'Jekyll & Hyde', 'Magic Isle / Legacy For Alaric' to follow.

- Compass Software fans may be pleased to know that Jon Lemmon's latest adventure 'Zogan's Revenge' is almost complete - in fact it almost made it into this issue of FB. There should be an advert for it somewhere in this issue, so have a flick through and read all about it!

- Talking of adverts... New company 'The Northern Underground' would like to see your adventures with a view to publishing them. Their ad. can be found on page 7 and 8 - they've already got several games ready for release so why not take a look at what they offer to both adventurers and adventure authors.

- Tee-shirts: Oh pooh! The promised FB 2nd anniversary tee-shirts have been 'blown-out!' the reasons are complex so I won't explain them here. I'm negotiating a deal on some patches now which are smaller and easier to produce than tee-shirts (duh, you don't say!) and hopefully will only cost somewhere in the region of £1.00 each. More news (and the promised order form) next issue.

- Delbert The Hamster have several 'licensed' titles coming out: 'Castle Thade Revisited', 'Dr Goo And The Samarons' and 'Virus' - all ex-Global games. (See ad. in this issue.)

SAM COUPE NEWS (again!)

If it hasn't already appeared, SAMco are preparing a special 'starter' pack consisting of a basic SAM Coupe 256k computer and a couple of tape games for under £100. For those of you who don't know, the Coupe has a nice, full size keyboard, great graphics and sound and, once expanded to 512k and with a disk drive fitted it can run Spectrum emulation software which, as far as I can see, means it runs just about all the 48k adventures you can lay your hands on. For more info write, enclosing an sae, to: SAMco LTD. LAKESIDE, PHOENIX WAY, SWANSEA ENTERPRISE PARK. SA7 9EH

THE REVIEWING SYSTEM

THE FB REVIEW SYSTEM EXPLAINED

Despite having a plethora of categories to take note of when you eventually come to the scores at the end of each review, the FB ratings system is quite simple to understand. It operates on a sliding scale of 0 to 10 - 0 being the lowest score, 10 being the highest. All categories use this scale and scoring system - except the difficulty level which has 4 possible entries...

- Beginner • Intermediate
- Experienced • Advanced

Those categories refer to the type of player that the game seems to be aimed at. The rest of the ratings all use the 0 - 10 system...

- **Storyline:** It's always nice to see the game come with a story which could detail important pre-adventure events, useful info., handy playing hints, or just something that sets the scene or helps create an atmosphere.
- **Packaging:** This rating is here to show how much effort has gone into the packaging side of the game, including Cassette Inlay design, do you get a separate info / storyline sheet etc.
- **Opening Play:** This category gives you an indication of the strength of the opening problems, the way the game starts. Has it got a well produced intro, or are things too tough to start with. We all know what it's like to be stuck in a game after only a few moves because it's far too difficult to play past the first few locations.
- **Problems:** This is worked out over the entire game and we mainly take into account the number of problems, the type, how original they were, etc.
- **Location Text:** How detailed was the location text, how imaginative was it, how lengthy etc.
- **Parser:** This one's important in that it shows you how easy it was to type in your

commands and how flexible it was.

- **Game Design:** How well was the game designed? Was it something new, did it flow, did it all come together nicely? (Or not?)
- **Difficulty Level:** Overall was the game suitable for - Beginner, Intermediate, Experienced or Advanced adventurers?
- **Playability:** This is also an important category. Low marks = you won't bother finishing, high marks = you won't want to stop playing!
- **Personal Rating:** This is where your impartial and friendly FB reviewer sums up their feelings about the game under review!

And there you have it... Quite simple when all is said and done! The following are lists of the resident FB reviewers fave games of all time.

- **Games We Like:** *This is the kind of thing the FB reviewing team like... Yes, what a normal bunch we are!*

BESSIE:

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Lords Of Time | 2. Mordon's Quest |
| 3. All River Games | 4. Laurence C. Stuff |
| 5. Horrorscope | 6. Dungeon Adventure |
| 7. Bulbo & Liz. king | 8. Firelance |
| 9. Golden Sword Of Bhakhor | 10. Axe of Kolt |

STORM:

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Velnor's Lair | 2. Golden Apple |
| 3. Mutant (River) | 4. Mordon's Quest |
| 5. Lords Of Time | 6. Faerie |
| 7. Quann Tulla | 8. Earthshock |
| 9. A Harvesting Moon | 10. Magnetic Moon |

TIM:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. The Hobbit | 2. Adventureland |
| 3. Dungeon Adventure | 4. Tower Of Despair |
| 5. The Golden Apple | 6. Colossal Adventure |
| 7. Impossible Mission | 8. Espionage Island |
| 9. Velnor's Lair | 10. Lords Of Time |

The Guild Adventure Software

| TITLE: | AUTHOR: | TAPE: £ | DISC: £ |
|----------------------------|------------------------|---------|---------|
| SPECTRUM | | | |
| WEREWOLF SIMULATOR | CHARLES SHARP | 2.00 | ---- |
| CURSED BE THE CITY | INCANTATIONS | 2.00 | ---- |
| TIME WARRIOR | FRANK OLIVER | 3.00 | ---- |
| MAGICIANS APPRENTICE | SIMON AVERY | 2.00 | ---- |
| TOTAL REALITY DELUSION | SIMON AVERY | 2.00 | ---- |
| PRISON BLUES | SIMON AVERY | 2.00 | ---- |
| DANGER! ADVENTURER AT WORK | SIMON AVERY | 2.00 | ---- |
| THE ISLAND (128K) | KEN BOND | 2.50 | 4.50 |
| METHYHEL (128K) | PEGASUS SOFTWARE | 2.50 | 4.50 |
| METHYHEL (48K) | PEGASUS SOFTWARE | 2.00 | 4.00 |
| THESEUS AND THE MINOTAUR | PEGASUS SOFTWARE | 2.50 | 4.50 |
| TEACHER TROUBLE | PEGASUS SOFTWARE | 2.00 | 4.00 |
| DRAGON: CORYA I | PEGASUS SOFTWARE | 2.50 | 4.50 |
| THE LAST BELIEVER | PAUL LUCAS | 2.00 | 4.00 |
| ALSTRAD | PAUL GILL | 2.00 | 4.00 |
| CRASH LANDING | SIMON LANGDAN | 2.00 | 4.00 |
| JOURNEY TO DEATH | SIMON LANGDAN | 2.00 | ---- |
| DUNGEON OF TORGAR | SIMON LANGDAN | 2.00 | ---- |
| JHOTHAMIA 6 | DAVID EDGAR | 2.00 | ---- |
| PUZZLED | TONY MARSH | 2.00 | ---- |
| DEATHBRINGER | TREVOR WHITSEY | 2.00 | 4.00 |
| THE SOUL HUNTER | TREVOR WHITSEY | 2.50 | ---- |
| THE FORGOTTEN PAST | TREVOR WHITSEY | 2.00 | ---- |
| THE CRYSTAL CAVERN | HARRY CAPELING | 2.00 | ---- |
| HOMICIDE HOTEL | JAMES BENTLEY | 2.00 | 4.00 |
| THE ELEVENTH HOUR | TERRY BRAVERMAN | 2.00 | 4.00 |
| FORTRESS OF KELER | BRIAN KITTS | 2.00 | ---- |
| FIRELANCE | BRIAN KITTS | 2.00 | ---- |
| FABLED TREASURE OF KOOSAR | A.SIMMON & D.BARDON | 2.50 | ---- |
| A DARK SKY OVER PARADISE | INTERACTIVE TECHNOLOGY | 2.50 | ---- |
| DEAD END | INTERACTIVE TECHNOLOGY | 3.00 | ---- |
| THE SPORE/THE AMULET | STEVE KENDALL | 2.50 | ---- |
| THE CALLING (48K/128K) | VISUAL DIMENSIONS | 2.00 | 4.00 |
| REALITY HACKER | VISUAL DIMENSIONS | 2.50 | ---- |
| HOLIDAY TO REMEMBER | VISUAL DIMENSIONS | 2.50 | 4.50 |

COMMODORE

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|------|------|
| DANGER! ADVENTURER AT WORK! | SIMON AVERY | 2.00 | 2.00 |
| MAGICIANS APPRENTICE | SIMON AVERY | 2.00 | 2.00 |
| NYTHYHEL | PEGASUS SOFTWARE | 2.00 | 2.00 |
| DANCE OF THE VAMPIRES | INTERACTIVE TECHNOLOGY | 3.00 | 3.00 |
| DEAD END | INTERACTIVE TECHNOLOGY | 3.00 | 3.00 |
| DARK SKY OVER PARADISE | INTERACTIVE TECHNOLOGY | 2.50 | 2.50 |
| THE SPORE/THE AMULET | STEVE KENDALL | 2.50 | 2.50 |
| HOTEL HELL | MARIO MOELLER | ---- | 4.00 |
| STOWAWAY | MARIO MOELLER | 2.00 | 2.00 |
| ESCAPE TO FREEDOM | MARIO MOELLER | 2.00 | 2.00 |
| CURSED BE THE CITY | INCANTATIONS | 2.00 | 2.00 |

ATARI ST

| | | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|------|------|
| DEAD END | INTERACTIVE TECHNOLOGY | ---- | 3.00 |
| DARK SKY OVER PARADISE | INTERACTIVE TECHNOLOGY | ---- | 3.00 |
| WIERD TALES | INTERACTIVE TECHNOLOGY | ---- | 4.00 |

| TITLE: | AUTHOR: | TAPE: | DISC: |
|---|------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| SPECTRUM | | £ | £ |
| THE GUILDMASTERS VOL.1 (INTO THE MYSTIC, CAPTAIN KOOK (2 PARTS), NYTHYHEL (2 PARTS), MAGNETIC MOON (3 PARTS), BOOK OF THE DEAD (2 PARTS)) | VARIOUS ARTISTS | 4.00 | ---- |
| SPEC-6AC-ULAR VOL.1 (CROWN JEWELS, USE YOUR LOAF, THE FORGOTTEN PAST, BEHIND THE LINES) | VARIOUS ARTISTS | 3.00 | ---- |
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| FLIGHTS OF FANTASY VOL.1 (DRAGON OF NOTACARE, TALISMAN, ROYAL ADVENTURES OF A COMMON FROG) | VARIOUS ARTISTS | 3.00 | ---- |
| PAWS FOR THOUGHT VOL.1 (ALSTRAD, DUNGEON OF TORGAR, THE LAST BELIEVER, DRAGON: CORYA II) | VARIOUS ARTISTS | ---- | 5.00 |
| PAWS FOR THOUGHT VOL.2 (DEATHBRINGER, ARLENE, TEACHER TROUBLE, THE CALLING (128K)) | VARIOUS ARTISTS | ---- | 5.00 |
| PAWS FOR THOUGHT VOL.3 (HOMICIDE HOTEL, THESEUS AND THE MINOTAUR, THE ISLAND (128K), HOLIDAY TO REMEMBER) | VARIOUS ARTISTS | ---- | 5.00 |
| AMSTRAD | | | |
| THE COLLECTION VOL.1 (CASTLE WARLOCK, THE BASE, THE TEST, THE SPIRO LEGACY, THE ISLAND) | KEN BOND | ---- | 5.00 |
| THE COLLECTION VOL.2 (THE HERMITAGE, NYTHYHEL, TEACHER TROUBLE, THESEUS AND THE MINOTAUR, MIAMI MICE) | TONY COLLINS | ---- | 5.00 |
| THE COLLECTION VOL.3 (KEY TO PARADOX, A.R.E.N.A., JOLLY POPPA DOWN, WEREWOLF SIMULATOR, DRUIDS MOON) | CHARLES SHARP | ---- | 5.00 |
| THE COLLECTION VOL.4 (THE PROPHECY, THE GLADIATOR, DETECTIVE, CROWN JEWELS, HERO SELECT) | ALEX GOUGH | ---- | 5.00 |
| THE COLLECTION VOL.5 (INTO THE MYSTIC, THE MISER, DAVY JONES LOCKER, TREASURE ISLAND, THE BOUNTY HUNTER) | RIVER SOFTWARE | ---- | 5.00 |

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REVIEW ONE

RED ALERT

Reviewed By: *Bessie Bughunter*

This two part sequel to 'Hodgkins Manor' has arrived on my desk for review, written by Jonathon Scott using the PAWS utility, and having played Hodgkins, which I enjoyed, I look forward to a pleasant time working through this one...

STORYLINE:

Basil Hodgkins has built himself a missile and once again you are chosen to find him and disarm the weapon before he brings about the destruction that he threatens. Have you got what it takes to do this?

PACKAGING:

If you are unfamiliar with the standard blue Zenobi cassette cover then a) where have you been for the last 5 years? and b) it's blue, made of card and has loading instructions, address and a standard picture of a barbarian brandishing a sword on the front of it!

THE ADVENTURE:

Not the most endearing start to a game, you have three moves in which to get your act together otherwise you go back to the beginning and try again. A bit of quick thinking will avoid this unnecessary irritation and after this soppy start you can explore the area without further fear of sudden deaths lurking round every corner. The mapping is straightforward with directions available to you given at

the top of the screen, as is your score. I quite liked this idea - very user friendly! All the streets are named after elements, Copper Close, Gold Street to name but two and you meet various characters, some of whom require an object from you before you can elicit their help. Please note that the format for speaking to the characters takes the form of the following... SAY TO CHARACTER "HELP" or whatever, the speech marks are necessary otherwise you get very little response. Most objects are fairly easy to find and there are plenty of clues dotted about in order to guide you in the right direction. It will pay you to read the text carefully as some things are perhaps not quite so obvious, but on the whole you shouldn't have a lot of trouble sussing things out. One or two things however may fox you, not because you don't know what to do, but because you have to struggle a bit finding the correct input. For example, in order to open a door, a five word input is needed, which takes a bit of trial and error and it would be easy to be fooled into thinking that you are on the wrong track, which may not be the case. I'll give you a nudge in the right direction... the answer doesn't involve a set of keys. One word of warning may also be to your benefit... if you are foolhardy enough to enter the sewers before you have acquired all you need from this first part, you'll have no option but to save your position for part two, for this sewer

RED ALERT

is the entrance to Pt.2 I mention this in your interest as you are given no warning and no chance to retrace your steps.

Having to reload because you have missed something is a real pain, and I speak from experience as I had to do this several times. Of course, with hindsight I should have saved my position before entering

Once you have loaded the second part you are requested to load the saved data, and a good feature here is that there is then an immediate RAMSAVE which is a bonus if you happen to get yourself killed or wish to start again, you won't have to go through the bother of having to reload your saved data! (Yep, that is a good feature - Ed!)

In the sewers you must find a way of making contact with a hermit for it is he who will open up a little more of the game. how you do this is quite neat, but does take a bit of thought. As in the first part, you will meet



Remember: When communicating with characters always use speech marks: i.e. SAY TO CHARACTER "HELP"

the sewers, but I didn't because the RAMSAVE option was all that I needed... or so I thought. Anyway, now that you have been warned you won't make the same mistake will you?

There doesn't seem to be a limit to the number of objects you can carry so grab anything you can and worry about what to do with them later. Dealing with the individual characters is quite logical, by talking to them you learn what it is they require from you, the most troublesome person could well be the doctor, but you do get a clue, you just have to think about how to go about it.

Assuming that you have done everything, you can enter the sewer, provided that you have found the proper headgear that is, and save your position for part two...

an odd assortment of characters with whom you must deal, there is a film director, a patient in hospital and a very handy man in the Duplicators shop. However it isn't very long before a strange voice informs you that you only have 17 moves before the coach leaves and being as you need to board this coach, panic sets in as you desperately try to find a ticket. Acquiring the ticket is vital and let me assure you that it CAN be done within the required number of moves but I guarantee that you'll need a few goes at it first, I'd recommend a few tries, using RAMSAVE when you leave the boat and finding your way about before you tackle the main problems, as all the 17 moves need to be carefully used - there is no room for error. If you miss the coach you will not be able to complete the game. Having boarded it though enables you to find basil and hopefully disarm the

RED ALERT

missile. This last sequence is a bit hair-raising, for on dealing with Basil you learn that he has instigated a TIMEOUT routine which ticks away merrily at the top of the screen whilst you frantically go about the business of sorting out wires, cut the wrong one and you will blow everything up. If you succeed, Basil is imprisoned (only to escape)... and you realise that this isn't the end after all, the third part of the Zikov trilogy will be coming soon...

GOOD POINTS:

Plenty of movement within the gameplay, easy on the eye and fun to play.

BAD POINTS:

I think the lack of warning that you are about to enter part two is a bit unfair, but that's about all.

CONCLUSIONS:

An entertaining game for the most part, the balance between the puzzles and the connection with characters is about right and the timing sequences in part two are well judged. It took me a good while to fathom out how to catch

the coach, but as with all problems, once it was solved it seemed so obvious. The text is ok and in keeping with the storyline. The range of problems were varied, some old chestnuts and some fairly original. I can't say it has the tingle factor though most people should enjoy it.

• RED ALERT •

Zenobi Software

26 Spotland Tops


Cutgate, Rochdale

Lancashire OL12 7NX

PRICE: £1.99 (tape)

overseas customers add £1.00 per tape to cover extra postal costs.

RATINGS:

| | | |
|--|---------------|---|
|  | PACKAGING | 6 |
| | STORYLINE | 6 |
| | OPENING PLAY | 4 |
| | PROBLEMS | 8 |
| | LOCATION TEXT | 5 |
| | PARSER | 6 |
| GAME DESIGN | | 5 |
| DIFFICULTY | BEGINNER/INT. | |
| PLAYABILITY | | 7 |
| PERSONAL RATING | | 7 |



In a previous From Beyond I expressed doubts about whether or not 'Violator of Voodoo' came with the full instruction sheets that I had been supplied with by the author of the game, The Traveller in Black. The reason for this was that I received a review copy from Zenobi with just the usual A4 storyline sheet. John Wilson took note of my comments and has now confirmed that you do indeed get a sheet of Voodoo information. Very good it is too!

REVIEW TWO

GAMESTAR ISSUE III (TAPE-ZINE)

Reviewed By: Bessie Bughunter

One of my missions this month is to review this tape magazine dedicated to adventures and I'm all for trying anything new so here goes...

GAMESTAR:

On loading, you are presented with a menu which consists of various sub-headings and it is for you to choose which one you want to read. The most obvious choice is to start from the beginning and this is what I shall do, taking each section in order and hopefully informing you as to just what you will be getting should you subscribe.

EDITORIAL:

The starting position here is an apology for being late due to exams and informing you that tape magazines are much cheaper to produce than paper based A5ers. One ventures to ask, if this is the case, how come the two previous issues were priced at two pounds? However, the cost has now been reduced to something a bit more realistic so I shall pass on to the next section.

REVIEWS:

Despite the heading of 'GAMES GALORE', in this review section you have Microfair Madness and Deep Waters II. Deep Waters, which is a compilation of Jack Lockerby games, in my humble opinion a tremendous package which no self respecting

adventurer should be without, merits one measly screen of comments which do a disservice to River Software, shame on you Graeme!

PUBLISH YOUR OWN GAMES:

Included in this page is an interview with Scott Denyer and if you don't know by now who Scott is then where have you been this past year? I suppose that it is fairly interesting to read about how he goes about his business but is it really interesting enough to warrant heaps of 'pages' (screens?), especially as this young chappie has yet to make a real impression on the market? (Microfair Madness just might make the initial impact that he deserves and good luck to him).

ADVENTURE BUILDER SYSTEM:

This section has a review of the Tom Frost utility ABS which has been available for yonks and reviewed in other magazines before, but if you missed it you may find it interesting and worth checking out.

PAWS HELP PAGE:

As the heading implies, you either get or are given advice on PAWS, and in this particular issue, the editor is asking for help. One might be tempted to tell him to write to the man who knows... namely Larry Horsfield...

GAME HELP:

Don't expect anything serious from this page, you are offered some

GAMESTAR ISSUE III (TAPE-ZINE)

advice as to how to get to any level (apart from level 1), in Microfair Madness. It has to be said that this 'help' is more of a cheat really as it actually encourages you to hack into the game and read the listing to find a password, tut, tut... Also available is the super tip of typing in names of any of Delboys (Delbert!) games to see what happens...

COMMENTS PAGE:

Not having seen the previous two issues I cannot in all fairness comment on the improvements which have been made to this latest one. However, what I can say is that the text is very condensed and I found it quite hard to read at first, I also got a bit irritated by having to return to the menu each time I had read a section.

WRITE A REVIEW:

This section offers you a chance to write a review for Gamestar. The instructions are clearly laid out and are as follows... You must have a good stock of games, reply within ten days (?) send your review containing 100 to 200 words, to the editor and IF he likes it he will write back to you. (I assume that if he doesn't then he won't... For all your efforts if your review is used you get, (that's what it says - I thought I'd slip in an example of the numerous mis-typing errors) a copy of the mag...

ADDRESS / INFORMATION:

The contents of this section deal with the copyright, subscriptions, advertising etc., the sort of thing we

find on the inside cover of PROBE and FB.

PUZZLES / NEXT MONTH:

The answer to last months puzzle is given and this months teaser is a real corker... I jest of course!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Self-evident... thanks to all who contributed etc., the list isn't very long but at least it's recognisable.

That just about covers everything so what about the final conclusions? Well, the idea of a tape magazine is basically good and there is nothing wrong with the categories. What is disappointing is that this particular tape is littered with spelling errors, mis-typing and bad grammar and if this is a one man band, my advice is to get a proof reader before sending this out. There is very little in the way of content and what there is is rather poorly put together. With a lot more thought and encouragement perhaps the potential for this type of magazine can be fully exploited but at this moment in time, I don't think Gamestar has quite got it right, but the price reduction is a step in the right direction.

The usual rating system does not cover this type of review so I can only give it a personal one, which is two!

• GAMESTAR •

Graeme Coleman

14 Manor Gardens, Carnoustie

Angus, Scotland DD7 6HY

PRICE: £1.25 (tape)

REVIEW THREE

THE FISHER KING

Reviewed By: Bessie Bughunter

This two part game, written by Dennis Francombe, is one that I was pleased to receive as having played his GOLDEN SWORD OF BHAKHOR, which I loved, anything else by him is most welcome, muchos gracias Tim...

STORYLINE:

You are at a great feast in Caerlon - On - Usk, with the Knights of the Table Round present. The hideous Loathly Damsel is appealing to the king for a knight to assist her in her quest for the castle of Anfortas. King Arthur looks to his Assembly of Chivalry, but each one avoids the royal eye for the damsel is a fearful visage and even the most chivalrous would decline the request. Do you, as Percival the lowly scullion, step forward to volunteer assistance?...

PACKAGING:

Think we'll have to drop this category soon as lately it's been all Zenobi adventures reviewed and you know what Zenobi packaging is like by now!

THE ADVENTURE:

You have a choice of answering yea or nay to the Damsel's request and as with all choices, be it on your own head should you make the wrong one. Whichever you decide you are elected anyway and sent off on your mission clad only in rusty armour and mounted on a sorry nag, the Damsel rides alongside you on her palfrey. It isn't

very long before you are confronted with your first problem in the form of a rude Knight who will not let you cross the ford, this could be quite a problem - or not - depending on your willingness to help in the first place, but unless you deal with this rude man you will never go further than the ford. Once across, you enter a wasteland, heavily disguised as a maze, and somewhere in this blighted enchantment you should find a battered shield which will be the means of further progress towards the castle. Having got yourself out of the maze, you can make rapid progress towards a village, stopping on your way to visit a pavilion, as there are a couple of necessary objects to be found in these locations. There is a nice little set-up of problems in this area, for if you find yourself in prison, you will realise that entering it was a lot easier than leaving it. Careful examination will provide the clue but you don't have a lot of time to fiddle about as the companion that you stumble across rapidly shrinks before your very eyes, a fate that awaits you in a short space of time, so you must act quickly. Once you have freed yourself, you can head on to the village but beware, a wrong direction will take you back to the forest and you will have to find the shield again and go through the same procedure as before. After all this effort, the castle is in sight, across a bridge - all you have to fathom out is how to get

THE FISHER KING

across. The only comment I shall make is that it took me ages and ages to solve this problem and when I finally found the solution I groaned in disbelief.

Across the bridge is the Castle of Sangrael, the enchanted fortress of Anfortas, the Fisher King, who is ailing. A feast is bestowed upon you before you find yourself in the bed chamber. Read the text carefully when in the king's presence as there is quite a lot of information given to you. You have a good sleep and the following morning awake to find that you may go east or down, heading east you notice a cabinet, which contains a chess set and it is not long before you are transported to some glowing gates. I should mention at this stage that typing HELP will give you a set of five random clues, one of which pertains to this gate so it should be obvious as to how to deal with it. Except that it isn't and I think this problem is one of the trickier ones, if not to say a bit sneaky! However, overcoming this problem allows you to head north and on to a windswept moorland to be greeted by the Damsel, (who had deserted you at the ford), handing you a sword. And thus you are sent on your way again with still a bit more to do before you complete this part. With very few objects to hand, your task doesn't get any easier but with a bit of logical thinking you should find yourself in a hall with another chess set in view. If you are persistent you will be able to acquire a chess piece and reading the text

carefully will enlighten you as to what to do with it. Clarrisant, a beautiful princess, appears to tell you how to achieve the end of part one so follow her instructions carefully and you must then save your position for part two.

Haven taken you through this first part and trying not to reveal too much, I have tried to convey that this is not the easiest game to play, and I move on to the second part with trepidation...

...Oh, that's nice I must say - on loading this second part you are told that you can use the RAMSAVE as many times as you like, but you will forfeit two points each time - flipping cheek or what?

You carry on from the end of part one, still carrying out Clarrisant's instructions and you are now in a glade of the Northern Forest, with your score at 40%. (At least, it should be). A bit of trial and error is required in this maze. (Not another one - Ed!) I suspect it isn't as big as I thought though, and trying all directions will eventually lead you to a pool and it is here that your adventure begins again. Keep in mind what you are supposed to be doing for this is your immediate objective, performing Clarrisant's request leads you on to the next mission, and each problem that you overcome leads on to another. By now you must realise that your helping the Damsel in the first place has brought more than you bargained for as there

THE FISHER KING

are a lot of other things to do before you can take your seat at the Table Round.

I found a weeny bug (as is my wont),... on a wall is a bronze ring and my kleptomaniac tendencies required me to try and take it, which I did, much to my surprise, but when I returned to the location later it was still there, fixed to the wall despite the fact that my inventory listed "a large ring on the wall"... Not that it matters really, it's only daft people like me who try to take a fixed ring in the first place and i was still able to do what I should have done with it.

Morganna appears at the riverside and asks you to return the sword to her - will you or won't you? You have to make a choice here and whichever you decide will possibly affect the outcome of the game but will not kill you off, there is also an obstinate mule who refuses to be ridden, but at least you still have the nag. Riseult, a mischevious individual, has run of with something that you need to complete Clarrisant's instructions, so you must find a way of sorting her out if you wish to progress much further. If all this sounds confusing I can only apologise but I'm having trouble with keeping up with the game myself so please be patient with me...

Typing HELP will once again give you some random clues and by using this method you will learn that you need a mirror and a ring, the latter I suspect will depend upon your answer to 16

Morganna and the former isn't too difficult to find. Marching on rapidly now brings you to a village, the residents of which may not be happy to see you. If this is the case then read the text and you will find out why and how to solve the problem but in any event, you are stopped in your tracks by a crystal bridge which is very precarious. I suggest that you keep trying as it is only then that you will get the help that you need. (This is a really sneaky game Dennis...), and once across this bridge there can be no going back so west is your only choice. You meet up with Riseult again, by now she is getting bored with you chasing her and offers to give you the desired object in exchange for a present. Check your inventory and offer what you think 'she wants' - if you go about it in the right way at last you will be rewarded. A bit of thought will open a door for you where you will be met by Morganna and appeasing her will bring forth another set of instructions. Read the text carefully once more and off you go again in this fast moving adventure. You are now back in the forest ready to carry out Clarrisant's orders, (are you still with me?), and having done all of that your troubles are still not over. You are guided to a barge which has no oars but this is no problem as the Damsel has materialised and by giving her a particular object - no brains required to work out which one - allows you to make more progress. At this point in the game you should have at least 80%, so if you were too liberal with the RAMSAVES then you

THE FISHER KING

are paying the penalty as your mission cannot be completed as you will not be allowed to enter the Chapel. A bit of persistence will get you what you need and having done so you are whisked back to the banquet hall in the Fisher King's castle and remembering that the king is ailing it is up to you to cure him, manage that and you take your coveted seat at the Table Round... Your mission accomplished. Well done!

GOOD POINTS:

Lots of well written text and plenty of locations. It would be churlish of me to moan about the sneaky puzzles because when I finally complete the game I realised their value. Good range of things going on - all designed to keep you on your toes!

BAD POINTS:

Nothing that springs to mind - though I do personally think that the RAMSAVE penalty is a bit of a toughie, but we were warned so one shouldn't really complain.

CONCLUSIONS:

I'm a little perplexed as to how to sum up this game. It's very pacey inasmuch that having complete one task you are rushed into another location before you have time to blink. On several occasions I was left with the feeling that I hadn't quite read the text carefully enough and would have liked the chance to refresh my memory. The problems are not straightforward & some of 'em are downright sneaky - which is why I

have hinted about being persistent... The text is excellent, very descriptive and there is certainly a lot of it that you need keep track of. There are not many objects to juggle with and the bulk of the play involves contact with characters, taking notice of what they tell you and acting accordingly. Making a wrong decision alters things considerably but I think that adds to the game, at least it's different! I enjoyed it for the most part though, I think I'm just a bit 'iffy' about it because I'm dazed after struggling though for hours in order to write this review. In the final analysis I'll give it the thumbs up for being very absorbing. Not for beginners though!

• THE FISHER KING •

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RATINGS:



| | |
|---------------|-------------------|
| PACKAGING | 6 |
| STORYLINE | 8 |
| OPENING PLAY | 6 |
| PROBLEMS | 6 |
| LOCATION TEXT | 8 |
| PARSER | 6 |
| GAME DESIGN | 7 |
| DIFFICULTY | INTERMEDIATE/EXP. |
| PLAYABILITY | 6 |

PERSONAL RATING 8

THE COMMENT COLUMN

16 bit: TO BUY OR NOT TO BUY?

• *Haven't commented in a Comment Column for a while, so here's a little bit by me which has come about because of the 'Magician's' letter printed on page 24 which concerns the upgrade from a Spectrum dilemma...*

There have been no end of letters in Adventure Probe of late concerning the amount of reviews for Amstrad, C-64, Spectrum, Amiga, ST and PC computers. The crux of the debate seems to be revolving around review distribution. With a multi format fanzine such as Probe, all those aforementioned computers need to be adequately covered. One of the reasons that From Beyond is remaining as a 'one machine' publication is that I know there's no way of giving all the people the service they demand. SAM coverage may creep into the pages of FB, but will certainly not take over in any way. Since the majority of Spectrum adventures run under emulation on the SAM Coupe all we'll be pointing out is which games, to our knowledge, do work. SAM owners can buy FB because what applies to the Speccy as far as adventures go also applies to the SAM. No hassles over unfair coverage of one machine over and above that of another here! What is interesting is that there is now, surely, room for another fanzine to appear. Many people are indeed buying 16bit computers to take the place of their Spectrums. The lure of brilliant graphics, big games and fast access

times should take people from the 8bit scene. I suppose it's a natural progression, but I'd urge those of you, like the 'Magician', who are thinking of an upgrade to keep your Speccies too. If the price of software on 16 bit computers doesn't floor you then the fact that (to my mind) the Speccy still has the best adventures written for it might well see you playing Speccy adventures even when you get your 16 bit wonder machine.

Backtracking slightly... There's a gap in the fanzine market where a paper based 16 bit fanzine can fit. SYNTAX, run by Sue Medley, is a superb 16bit disk fanzine which fits the bill very well so far. I'm sure though that a paper 'zine will also do well if (and when) one appears. There are plenty of Public Domain PC, ATARI ST and AMIGA adventures out there which are cheap and cheerful and will keep new 16 bit owners happily adventuring away while they save up for 'The Secret Of Monkey Island'. Anybody fancy doing a 16 bit adventure fanzine? It's totally feasible to produce something comparable to From Beyond (length, size, quality - ahem!) and also give away a free adventure on disk each issue for around about £2.00. I'm sure Red Herring and Adventure Probe could switch to 16 bit only 'zines if they wanted to, though until that happens (big if) there remains a gap in the 'zine market just crying out to be filled. Now if I had the time..... Tim



ZOGAN'S REVENGE

After Zogan was defeated at Bolimol he retreated with the remaining orc army and marched into Freand!

He set up camp at the far side of Battle valley and began his new campaign to rid this land of good.

His first target were the mud monsters he believed that if the mud monsters had helped him, he would not have lost the war. Zogan called on all

his magic powers and one by one the mud monsters dried and crumbled to dust! As Zogan became more powerful the evil that burned inside him began to take its toll. The dark force engulfed Zogan, his body and face twisted and distorted into a hideous form. It was at this time that Bogmole, following Zogan's trail, arrived in Freand with prince Eldrin and the dwarf army. As prince Eldrin and the dwarfs marched towards Battle valley, Bogmole decided to visit his old swamp and see what damage had been done. After a short walk he arrived at Black hill. Suddenly, three orcs appeared and surrounded Bogmole. They were about to attack when Randor the dwarf burst forth from behind a tree. He drew his sword and charged into the orcs. Now, badly wounded the orcs retreated up Black hill and disappeared. Randor then explained to Bogmole how he had been sent by prince Eldrin to act as bodyguard and to travel with him on his journey.

YOUR QUEST...

You are Bogmole, the last of the swamp monsters. With the aid of Randor you must hunt down Zogan and destroy him before he commits total genocide on the mud monster race. Gregor, the wizard of Bolimol, has promised to help when he can and Bernard the beaver has already entered Freand and is now searching for you...

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REVIEW FOUR

APRIL 7th

Reviewed By: Storm

Yet another Zenobi game. This time by an unfamiliar name so it should prove especially interesting to play...

STORYLINE:

You are one of a select group of highly capable people who have been chosen to retreat to a vast underground government shelter until the threat of imminent mass destruction has passed. You were to form the core of a new social order. Unfortunately the threat became reality and your stay there is a more permanent one than you anticipated. Many long years go by with sometimes only tranquillisers keeping you sane...

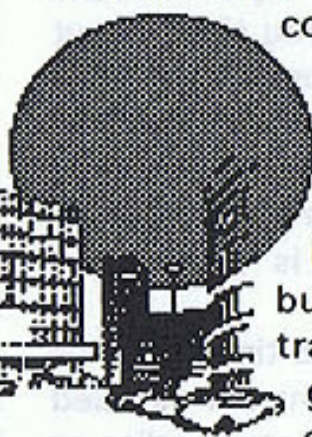
THE ADVENTURE:

While loading there is an appropriate loading screen to view, one dominated by a red sun burning down on a devastated city and with a wild and wooded area in the foreground.

Afterwards, there is some screens of general info. Basically, there is a list of useful verbs and inputs that you will need. Also you discover that there is another typeface you can select (I preferred the first but the alternative is nearly as good), and a RAMSAVE facility. Oh, by the way, for those that feel it is relevant, it is written using the QUILL.

In the first location you are informed:- "You are lying on a

crumpled bed. Despite having just awoken from a drug-assisted sleep, you sense something is terribly wrong. IT IS TOO QUIET." The usual HELP and INVENTORY provide nothing so it is check out the room time. The bed is purely for sleeping so I open the cabinet and acquire the contents- a red security pass that is used to gain access to certain areas. (SHOW RED etc.). The computer listing I found on the floor was checked and left. Going through the now open door, I



commenced to explore the map. Along the walkway, you find there are about 25 locations in this, Level 3, part of the bunker. There is a transporter room that gains you access to the other three levels, each of which is a similar size.

Several bodies are found around this and other levels. Obviously something took place while you slept. In the Chief Programmers room, all becomes clear when you read a note left by a close friend. 'Couldn't wake you. Emergency. Shelter infiltrated. Slaughter. Got to get out. Toxic outside. Kit up. Meet at A 11. Rachel'. Not knowing exactly what was going to be required outside, I started collecting items. Geoff (the author) Lynas was very generous when he decided how many items you can carry, so there is very little need to double back and collect things because

APRIL 7th

you had reached your limit. When I had finished exploring this level, I had acquired 9 items, of differing apparent importance.

Next I decided to try the lower level. Not as many items were found, but they seemed to be useful nonetheless. One question here though Geoff, what was the nature of the cube?

On level 2 more items were found. The ubiquitous Laser Rifle looked interesting and I knew what it would be used for but sadly it required something to make it work. A syringe containing an unknown liquid is found in one location and if you think about it, its nature is obvious but you still have to check, haven't you? Elsewhere you come across a hopefully friendly robot. I say hopefully because it is at present deactivated.

I think it was about this time that the lower level of the complex flooded again. I'd caused it to occur earlier on but after a certain number of moves, it occurs whether you repeat my action or not. Lots of time though before it happens but do get the goods before they get wet.

Anyway on the top level, you find a container that is sure to be required but is too heavy. If you do what I did in the garage you will find a means of transport but it requires two items to get it moving. The first you should already have but the second I found nearly by accident. Sometimes I get lucky.

Oh, there is also the way out of the bunker but the friendly computer has a

tendency to inform you that you are not sufficiently kitted out to survive out there.

In addition to all this, there is a possibility of a raging inferno and swarms of rats. There are areas without lighting, areas that are dead easy to get into but somewhat difficult to leave, plus the odd maze.

GOOD POINTS:

An open game with about 100 locations. It is QUILLED, has a RAMSAVE, a choice of typefaces and a restrained use of colour. There are sound effects when using a weapon similar to those quill games that have been enhanced with the Patch. most problems are easily overcome using either the obvious inputs or those listed in the intro. A satisfactory, logical ending with room for a sequel i.e. the search for Rachel or the survival outside. Playtesting seems to have been thorough - well up to the usual Zenobi standard.

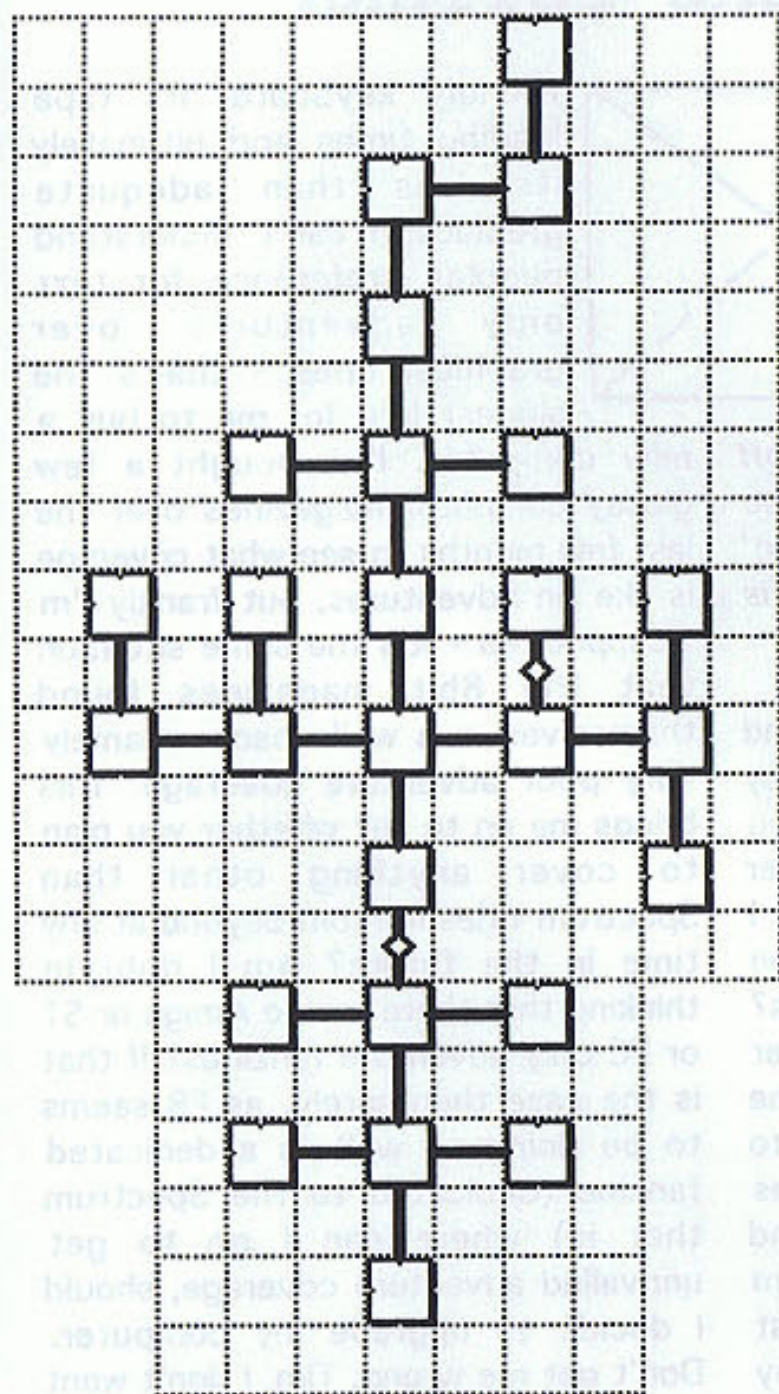
BAD POINTS:

A few too many instances where you get the response 'You Can't'. As most exits are not listed it is trial and error in all locations. Then of course there's a... maze! (Yes, probably the least liked item included in many a game still - Ed!)

CONCLUSIONS:

A pleasant adventure that should be welcomed by the less experienced adventurer but may be a trifle too easy for the more experienced. Then

APRIL 7th



Geoff, if you haven't already started one, why not?

• It's funny how post apocalyptic adventures have always been really popular. *Mindfighter* by Abstract Concepts, *Earthshock* by GI Games / 8th Day and many many more (too many to remember in fact!) Hopefully this vision of life after the bomb will not come to pass. That's the beauty of adventures, you can extend your experiences past the bounds of reality without getting hurt. Anybody out there ever come to any harm when playing an adventure?

Tim

• APRIL 7th •

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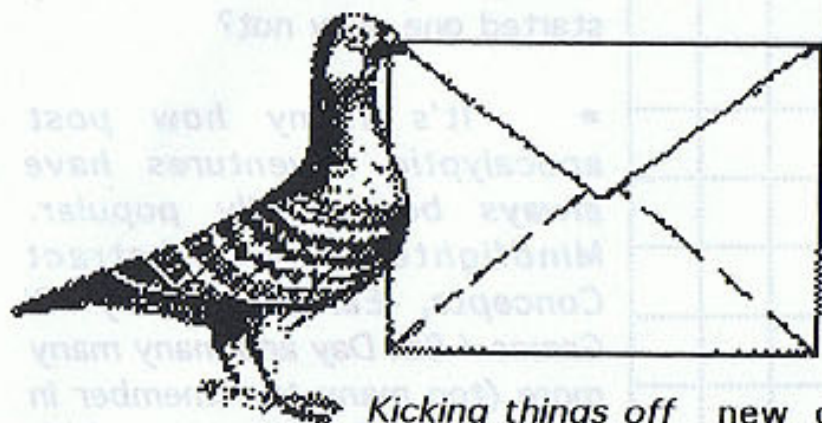
again, it's good for the old ego to complete an adventure in a reasonable time without resorting to pleas for help, hint-sheets and the like. It's a good sized game that is straightforward to map too. Assuming that Geoff Lynas is new to the adventure writing scene, I think it's a commendable first effort and certainly look forward to his next one, if there is one. In other words,



| | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| PACKAGING | 6 |
| STORYLINE | 6 |
| OPENING PLAY | 6 |
| PROBLEMS | 4 |
| LOCATION TEXT | 6 |
| PARSER | 6 |
| GAME DESIGN | 6 |
| DIFFICULTY | BEGINNER/INT. |
| PLAYABILITY | 6 |
| PERSONAL RATING | 6 |

READERS WRITES

FB READERS LETTERS



Kicking things off this issue is a letter from the curiously named 'Mystical Magician' which makes a lot of sense and is worth commenting on...

• I've been buying From Beyond now for a good while and can only say that it is an excellent publication which somehow manages to get better with each issue. The problem is that I may have to stop buying it in the future. What will make me do this? The lure of buying a 16bit computer that's what! Much as I like the Spectrum I feel it's time to move on to pastures new. I like the look of games like 'The Secret Of Monkey Island' and there are also a lot of old Infocom games out there which are just waiting to be bought and played by people like me who have previously only ever dreamt about owning them. What with PC's Amiga's and ST's dropping in price quite considerably over the last few years I'm now in the position of being able to afford a 16bit computer. Naturally I don't have to sell my Spectrum, but fear that buying one of the newer machines will see me loath to return to the realms of the Spectrum with its less than

friendly keyboard, its tape loading times and ultimately its less than adequate graphics. I can't understand peoples preference for text only adventures over graphical ones - that's the biggest lure for me to buy a

new computer. I've bought a few glossy computer magazines over the last few months to see what coverage is like on adventures, but frankly I'm disappointed - it's the same situation that the 8bit magazines found themselves in a while back - namely very poor adventure coverage. This brings me on to ask whether you plan to cover anything other than Spectrum titles in From Beyond at any time in the future? Am I right in thinking that there are no Amiga or ST or PC only adventure fanzines? If that is the case then surely, as FB seems to be doing so well as a dedicated fanzine (dedicated to the Spectrum that is) where can I go to get unrivalled adventure coverage, should I decide to upgrade my computer. Don't get me wrong, Tim, I don't want to give up on FB, but money is short and buying a fanzine that doesn't meet my needs doesn't make sense. I haven't considered buying a SAM because of it's limitations - I think I'm on the verge of going for an Amiga but there's still time for you to put me straight as to what to buy and what not to buy for both fanzines and computers.

HELP! 'MM'

FB READERS LETTERS

Well, Mr. Magician, thanks for the kind words about FB. In answer to your question, No! I hadn't thought about catering for other computer users in FB - not since the abortive attempt to cover Amiga titles in FB some time back. FB is now firmly a one computer magazine. As to your point about buying a 16 bit computer so you can play 'Secret Of Monkey Island' I'd certainly say go right ahead and go for it! It's a strong bet that floppy disk access or even hard disk access times will see your Spectrum gather dust at the back of a cupboard as it is doubtful if, as you say, you will want to return to playing games on that ancient yet venerable machine in the future - especially after sampling the goodies on the 16 bit machines. As an overall adventure players computer the Spectrum simply can't be beaten though! (My opinion!) You are a bit out of line on the SAM Coupe front. It's not got poor specifications it's just been poorly promoted. There's a good chance all the adventures available now for the Spectrum will run under emulation on the Coupe and there's an adventure writing system for the Coupe on its way which promises to deliver the goods. What's more the Coupe can give the 16 bit machines a run for their money where graphics are concerned. I really couldn't tell you if there's a fanzine that caters for Amiga, ST or PC users exclusively. Have you tried Red Herring or Adventure Probe? See my little bit in the Comment Column on page 18 of this very issue for my views on that very subject! **Tim**

Moving on... I've had a certain amount of 'The Michael' taken out of me of late for my choice of top 10 (and top 15 in YS) adventures. I'm stunned that people don't find 'The Hobbit' a classic quite frankly. So, to see what adventures other people come up with I asked June Rowe and Barbara Gibb, two well respected adventurers, to tell me their fave games so I can have a good laugh at their choices...

• **BARBARA:** My criteria for choosing the following games is thus: a) satisfaction at actually finishing them, b) excitement because I had thoroughly enjoyed them, c) sadness because I wouldn't be playing it anymore d) the length of time before I could settle down to start a new adventure.

DUNGEON ADVENTURE: It'll take something exceptional to knock this off my number one spot.

CASTLE ADVENTURE: A classic example of how to utilise locations to the full.

THE DRAGON QUARTET: Contains as much interaction as I can cope with, and still held my attention with some interesting characters and puzzles.

GOLDEN PYRAMID: Nicely balanced with a twist in the tale.

GOLDEN SWORD OF BHAKHOR: Vastly underrated adventure with excellent storyline told in three contrasting parts. A wonder, considering it was written with the G.A.C.

HORRORSCOPE: A massive adventure. Only started playing it recently though I'm kicking myself for not

FB READERS LETTERS

starting on it sooner.

JESTER QUEST: Lovely satirical humour and tricky puzzles.

MAGNETIC MOON: Well designed science fiction adventure.

MISER: Very compact adventure; the past, present and future locations beautifully crafted together.

PHOENIX: I've never liked adventures based on horror, yet this one is different. It actually contains logical puzzles with well-researched descriptive text.

REALM OF DARKNESS: Wonderful fantasy adventure.

SNOWBALL: A truly sci-fi adventure.

STARSHIP QUEST: Disproves the theory that sequels are never as good as the original.

URBAN: An underrated game with interesting characters who compliment the puzzles and finally - STAFF OF POWER.

Not a Brian Howarth or Scott Adams adventure in sight! With adventurers having such diverse tastes I can't see a definitive list ever being completely acceptable. You like Scott Adams, I find him incomprehensible and obscure; yet some adventurers will recommend his games to beginners. All I can say is if I had started with 'Sorcerer Of Claymorgue Castle', I wouldn't be playing adventures now.

Barbara Gibb

It certainly is the hardest thing to do - put together a list of fave adventures. Many people put ancient games at the top of their list because they were the first games they bought or finished,

others only take note of the games that thrilled them. I personally like to apply all manner of reasons when thinking back and picking out my top ten list. First bought, first completed, most fun had playing a game, most unusual game etc. Here's June's list of fave games...

• Not an easy task picking 15 games from over 300. I ended up with a list of 46 and these following 15 were the very best of a very good bunch.

AZTEC HUNT FOR THE SUN GOD

DOUBLE AGENT

LORDS OF TIME

MATCHMAKER

RUNES OF ZENDOS

AGATHA'S FOLLY

THE BEAST

CLOUD 99

CUSTERD'S QUEST

FROM OUT OF A DARK NIGHT SKY

MADCAP MANOR

ONCE UPON A LILLYPAD

THE REALM

SKELVULLYN TWINE

SUBSUNK

June's list of the 31 other great games was also enclosed, titles like: ESPIONAGE ISLAND, TEN LITTLE INDIANS, MICROMAN, NOAH and THE INNER LAKES show that no matter what the subject matter, what style of adventure or how old they are it makes no difference to a game being good - well, good in your eyes at any rate! Moving on, a change of subject heralds a Laurence Creighton letter...

FB READERS LETTERS

• I want to add my voice to an age-old controversy: the use of graphics in adventures. We all read books. They don't have pictures. We all listen to music - we don't see the artists. We all listen to the radio - we don't see the announcer or the artists or whatever: we build up our own images in our minds. So, why on earth must we have inane drawings in adventures? If I read that I'm before a large gate I don't need to wait 20 - 25 seconds twiddling my thumbs while a plot/draw routine unfolds before my eyes showing me a gate - I'm not from outer space: I know what a gate looks like! I recently played a well publicised adventure (which received much ovation) and the delay whilst idiotic drawings were made almost drove me scatty (no off option). I know what a wall looks like, I know what a desk looks like etc. until such time as someone can produce an instantaneous sketch without prejudicing available memory for text I can live without them. Sorry Gilsoft - your suite of utilities are wonderful but NOT your graphics. Anyhow, I'd rather see a screen full of text and use my imagination than have half a screen of text and an inane drawing distracting me. Putting memory consumption aside, I think the author would be better occupied devoting his / her FULL attention to the logic of the game than half to the game and half to the time-consuming graphics. Imagine how Macbeth or Hamlet would have turned out, if the Bard had diverted his attention to putting in drawings...

Laurence Creighton.

The majority of games nowadays don't feature graphics. True, some bad graphics spoil an otherwise good game, but I don't think that good graphics make a bad game any better at all - good game and good graphics = a great game if you ask me. The only person I know who's graphics occupied an area in memory that wasn't used anyway is Jon Lemmon of Compass software (Blood Of Bogmole). What's more they were digitised, appeared instantaneously and could be turned off. They weren't of the very highest standard but they were good enough. The intelligent use of graphics in games needs to be explored a bit more I think. Tim.

A new FB reader, Diane Smith, asks where she can get hold of older games like the ones in the FB reviewers top ten lists... This next letter from Steve Clay may help her out a bit. (I also printed an address in FB 12 for an 'old game' specialist.)

• SHOPPING FOR OLDIES: One of the most frequent questions asked by adventurers is 'Where can I get hold of that old classic Espionage Island' or whatever. So here are a few suggestions that may help you unearth that golden oldie.

SOFTWARE SHOPS: With the vast majority of these emporiums not stocking adventures over recent years, the chances of finding what you are looking for are remote! You may well come across a gem in the bargain bin. You may find old Level 9 or magnetic Scrolls games, but don't be

FB READERS LETTERS

surprised to find these have risen in price! (We have to make our profits, you know!)

WOOLWORTHS: Stores like woolies often come up with bargains around sale time. They appear to buy out redundant stock and sell the games at either 99p or £1.99. There are often many adventures to choose from with many Mastertronic and Melbourne House titles available.

I recently picked up the Codemasters CD box set for 99p. Although not an adventure it is an indicator of the bargains to be had.

FANZINES: These are written and read by enthusiasts. There's every likelihood that someone, somewhere has the game you are after. Most Fanzines allow line ads to be inserted by subscribers for free. Worth a try whatever game you are looking for.

FLEA MARKETS: Probably the richest source of old adventures. A look on most stalls is worthwhile. (forget the ones surrounded by mad grannies waving cardigans). Some stall holders have strange ideas about the value of computer games. One stall holder on our local flea market had SE-KAA of ASSIAH for £2.50. The fact that it originally cost £1.99 brand new didn't seem to matter. I managed to find Classic Adventure and Invincible Island for 50p each. Many stalls will buy your old games, but don't expect your asking price.

OTHERS:

SECONDHAND SHOPS. Could be worth a try?

MAIL ORDER: These are companies who advertise in the glossies.

Normally they have a decent back stock of games from Level 9, CRL etc. An S.A.E usually brings a reply - I got Time & Magic for £3.99 before Christmas.

JUMBLE SALES: When a well meaning mother raids little Johnny's software collection in the belief that "He doesn't listen to these very often!" you can cash in of little Johnny's misfortune. head for the White Elephant stall where software invariably turns up. Be prepared, however, to do battle with bargain hunters who are experts in the use of elbows and the stamping of feet!

Wherever you look may good fortune light your way!

Steve Clay.

• *Just this second had a letter from a chap called Paul Lewis who is interested in buying and selling (original) adventures so there's another possible supplier of older games; here's Paul's plea:*

• PAUL LEWIS • (desperate Adventurer)

Loneley adventurer seeks Pen Pals for Hints, Tips and to Swap Games. I am also looking to Buy / Sell Adventures - Please send list & prices / requests to: Paul Lewis. 1 Hungate Close, Hungate Lane, Hunmanby, Nr. Filey, N. Yorks.

REVIEW FIVE

THE CURSE OF CALUTHA

Reviewed By: Tim

The admirable Laurence Creighton rears his ugly head again this month... does he ever stop writing games? Laskar's Crystals is his newbie - reviewed elsewhere in this issue... in the meantime here's the lowdown on big L's last game, a two parter called 'The Curse of Calutha'...

STORYLINE:

A 'take-over' at your place of work has left you exhausted and, as your boss so rightly points out, in need of a well earned holiday. So off you pop down to the local travel agents to see what they have to offer you... It turns out that they've got diddly squat in the way of interesting post-merger hols., so you decide to do a bit of reading instead. A tatty old tome that once belonged to your aunt Agatha proved a good read - full of old mysterious tales. One in particular held your attention longer than the rest. It was all about this old mystic, Calutha. It seems that he roamed his homeland for many a year, gathering artifacts and treasures as he went, only to deposit them all in a place called THE CAVE OF LIGHTS. The whereabouts of the cave is no mystery. In fact many adventurers had entered but none had managed to penetrate deeper than the 'Golden Antechamber'.

So it was that you found yourself in a quaint picturesque land on the trail of Calutha's fabled treasures... What about the curse that protects the

hoard? Dare you ignore it...?

THE ADVENTURE:

A Laurence Creighton game has yet to fail to impress me. They are Quilled - this one being no exception, and are jam packed with all manner of problems. Once the loading screen of a burning candle disappears the usual storyline screen appears. A tap of 'anykey' sends you into the game... The first location is much the same as most L.C. adventures. You find yourself standing in a wide clearing complete with deep pit and patch of firm ground. Need I remind you to examine everything thoroughly - innocent looking scenery included? To the east lies a lake while north is a disused quarry. Starting off in my usual way I type HELP. 'NOT HERE' was the promising response. INVENTORY showed I had a bit of loose change about my personage. Knowing L.C. games like the back of my hand now I thought it best to opt for some random exploration rather than trying to mess around with the starting location, so off I headed in my favourite direction, which you all know by now is North. (Sometimes east - but that's usually in the summer months!?) Heading that way threw up a few objects that could be fiddled with and examined. Please try to remember that even early on you should attempt to examine and look at everything and anything - even things that appear in location descriptions or even messages sometimes. Try taking

THE CURSE OF CALUTHA

items that appear in location descriptions early on to see what I mean.

Anyway, after a nice little leisurely ramble a small forest (maze) appears to form a crossroads that you'll have to traverse many times during the course of part one of the game. Learn the route through (short and simple) and you'll have no trouble with it. I was reaching for the help-sheet to steer me through the forest, but didn't need it. However, once on the other side I reached for it again. It's normally the case that somewhere in his games, Laurence sticks in a tough bit. Normally the toughness comes from an unusual choice of 'key' words. I found a rope ladder hanging from a tree but try as I might I couldn't resolve a problem experienced at the top of it. Just think logically and the solution to getting the ladder (and hanging around a while) might come to you. Try as many verb / noun combinations as you can think of. The answer is obvious, though is phrased strangely!

Grabbing all you can from the early locations and examining everything will, with a bit of head scratching, see some things firmly secured at the right places! Laurence has a penchant for making things come together to overcome one obvious problem, then he likes to upset you by hitting you with something you won't have thought about. His problems are 'stacked' and are tests of your mettle that's for sure! The deep pit problem at the start

of the game shows you what a devious mind he's got. It's not easy to get into the pit, and once in it ain't easy to get out either! Gather everything collectible to location one and have a good long think about what might be useful and things will start to click into place.

After any initial troubles sorting things out or getting started even, the game begins to take on the classic L.C. look and feel. If you are unfamiliar with the Creighton game formula then an apt description would be: 'search, locate object, combine it with something else, use the combined object and prepare to be bamboozled!'. Once you get the hang of how things work then you'll find that part one has more than enough to satisfy the most avid adventurer. Plenty of stuff to see and do to keep you busy for a good long while! A bit too much retracing of one's footsteps is the only criticism I can level at this first stage. The characters who inhabit the village are all simple to interact with and will give more than they receive in all ways. My only other real problem in part one came when I happened upon a bridge that needed fixing before crossing it. Once again a bit of brain racking saw the solution appear before my very eyes.

When you come to use the boat make sure that, unlike me, you use the convention: ROW E, W etc. rather than ROW EAST. Why? Because you'll row east if you type ROW E and you won't if you type ROW EAST. A bit of a

THE CURSE OF CALUTHA

buggette perhaps? Nothing major though. Humour plays a little part in the game from time to time. Check out the policeman accompanying a child who accuses you of being a thief. Nothing jokey to make your head fall off, but far preferable to some 'comic' parts in other games.

Part one of 'Curse of Calutha' ends quite suddenly when you discover the thing you've been looking for. A message appears telling you to reset and load part two. Make a note of the password needed to start part two before turning off though!

Inside the cave (first location of part two) I had the feeling that I was going to enjoy exploring this subterranean world... I was a bit surprised to find out that it's not particularly centred around caves at all. I can't really explain too much more about the game as I don't wish to spoil your enjoyment of it. Needless to say part two is bigger and better than part one. It's on a par with it as far as the difficulty level goes (i.e. it's quite tricky / fiendish), though once again clear thinking and masses of object and location manipulation and examination usually throws up enough messages to help you piece together clues to help make steady progress.

I'll be mightily surprised if you finish the game quickly. It's very difficult in places as some of the objects are either highly unusual, don't immediately appear to have an obvious use or they are modern well

known objects that combine with unusual ones to work in ways which are not immediately thought of. Definitely a challenging game, and if you win through to the end you'll certainly deserve all you get!

GOOD POINTS:

A big game in two separate parts for a small price - what could be better value for money? Laurence is doing well to put problems together in his games that haven't been seen before. Sure they are toughies on the whole, but I'd much rather see tough ones than easy peasy stuff. Some are easier than others though, so you'll succeed to some degree or other and won't be totally perplexed or frustrated. RAM SAVE and LOAD are evident (as usual) and the messages given after doing anything remotely important will help you along with just the right degree of helpful hintishness!

BAD POINTS:

Am I harping on about it being a hard game? Probably! It's a bit tough right at the start - or should I say one part of the beginning is hard. Overcome that though and you'll find nothing to complain about I'm sure - apart from the fact that there's a bit too much 'travelling' from location to location and a less than generous 'objects carried' limitation. The key to successful play in all of Laurence's games will mean getting into the swing of things and learning how Laurence operates. It's not that his problems are hard or he uses obscure vocabulary, rather it's the fact that

THE CURSE OF CALUTHA

the challenges he sets you are very 'involved', that's why they are hard!

CONCLUSIONS:

Put quite simply this, The 9th of 10 Laurence Creighton games (with more in the pipeline!), is good, solid adventuring fun. There are masses and masses of detailed and intricate problems to solve - many interwoven with one another or with other aspects of the game. Getting two parts on the same tape is undoubtedly excellent value too. You could possibly say that the game lacks a bit of sophistication, though once you are into the swing of things and start thinking like Laurence does then you'll be entertained, challenged and surprised from start to finish. Don't be surprised though if you are still playing this game come Christmas!

• THE CURSE OF CALUTHA •

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Lancashire OL12 7NX

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

RATINGS:



| | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| PACKAGING | 6 |
| STORYLINE | 6 |
| OPENING PLAY | 7 |
| PROBLEMS | 10 |
| LOCATION TEXT | 6 |
| PARSER | 8 |
| GAME DESIGN | 10 |
| DIFFICULTY | INT./EXPERIENCED |
| PLAYABILITY | 8 |
| PERSONAL RATING | 9 |

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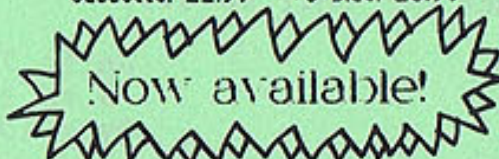
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|--|-----------|-----|
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If you are interested in joining the Northern Underground, then please write to us at the address below for any further information you require. If you are sending your game for evaluation, then please enclose a help-sheet or map...

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All games were written by Les Floyd (1990) and are the exclusive rights of the Northern Underground (1992)...

For a further list of releases, please write, enclosing a stamped/addressed envelope to:

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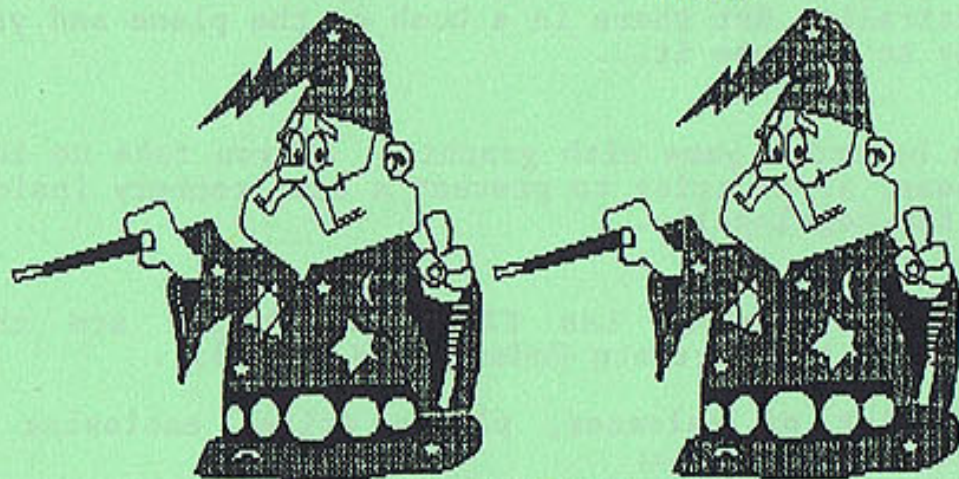
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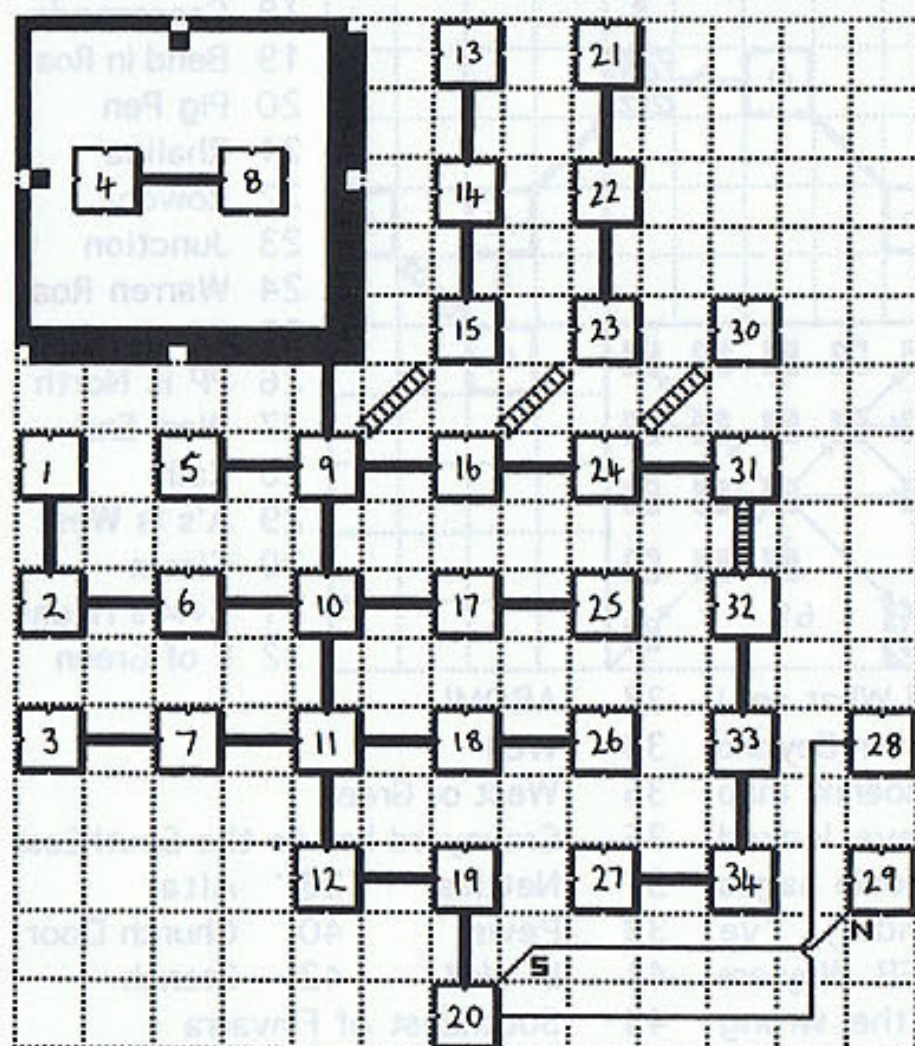


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MAGICAL MAPS

CIRCUS



- 01 CLOSET
- 02 STORE ROOM
- 03 INSIDE WAGON
- 04 RING (CANNON)
- 05 MESS ROOM
- 06 STORE ROOM
- 07 MAINTENANCE
- 08 WAGON (DOOR)
- 09 CIRCUS RING
- 10 CIRCUS RING
- 11 TENT ENTRANCE
- 12 FIELD
- 13 FIELD
- 14 HIGH PLATFORM
- 15 ON TRAPEZE
- 16 TRAPEZE STAND
- 17 CIRCUS RING
- 18 SMALL ROOM
- 19 SMALL ENCLOSURE (GENERATOR)
- 20 ROADSIDE
- 21 LAY-BY
- 22 STAND
- 23 ON TIGHTROPE
- 24 TIGHTROPE STAND
- 25 CIRCUS RING
- 26 TANK
- 27 FIELD
- 28 ALCOVE
- 29 INSIDE CAR
- 30 REAR OF CAR
- 31 SAFETY NET
- 32 TIGERS CAGE
- 33 GLOOMY PASSAGE
- 34 EQUIPMENT ROOM
- BEHIND PANEL

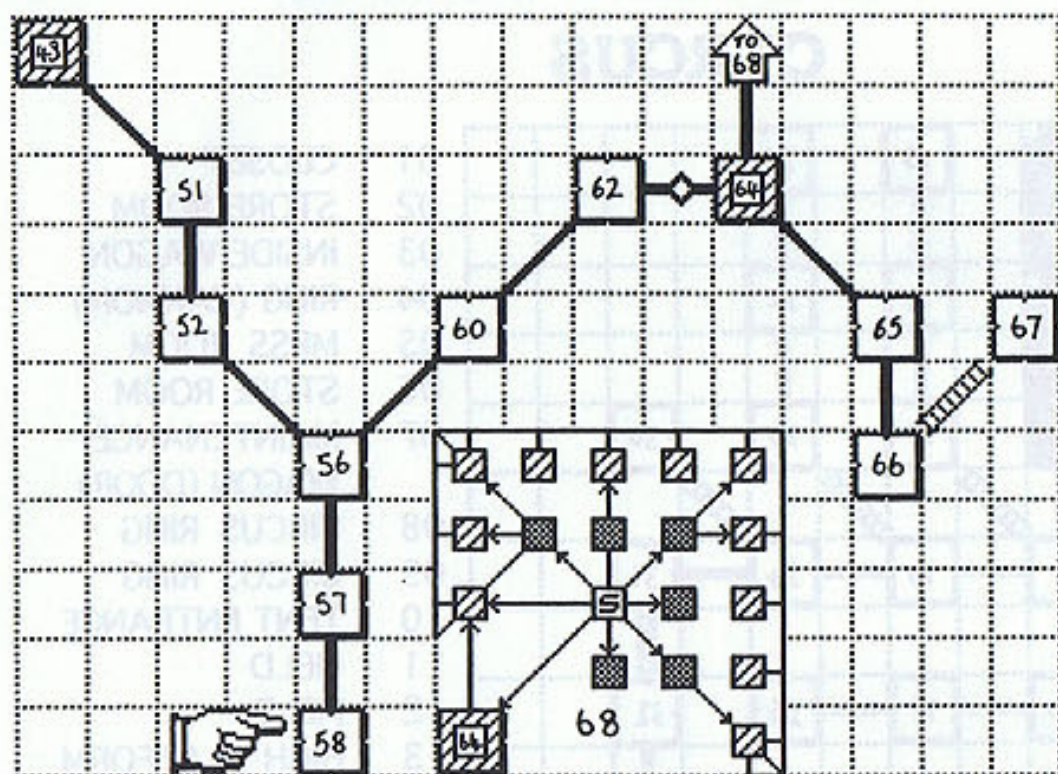
Roll up, roll up... The Circus is in town. That adventurous Ringmaster Tony Collins has supplied me with some marvellous maps for several (dozen) adventures... 'Circus' by Brian Howarth is a game I owned many years ago but never completed, and I don't know where it went to - probably sold it in a clear out years ago. However, thanks to Elaine Deary, (who kindly sent me the original) I can now have another stab at it... if I can find the time to fit it in that is...!

Oh yah, don't forget to keep sending maps in, they are always most welcome believe you me.

- 22 ON TIGHTROPE
- 23 TIGHTROPE STAND
- 24 CIRCUS RING
- 25 TANK
- 26 FIELD
- 27 ALCOVE
- 28 INSIDE CAR
- 29 REAR OF CAR
- 30 SAFETY NET
- 31 TIGERS CAGE
- 32 GLOOMY PASSAGE
- 33 EQUIPMENT ROOM
- 34 BEHIND PANEL

• Ladders represent up and down movement except for safety net (30 to 24) which goes down only it seems.

PHOENIX (pt. I)



- 17 Field is West
- 18 Crossroads
- 19 Bend in Road
- 20 Pig Pen
- 21 Rhalina
- 22 Rowena
- 23 Junction
- 24 Warren Road
- 25 G&A's North
- 26 PP is North
- 27 West End
- 28 Calia
- 29 A's is West
- 30 Circle
- 31 C+M's House
- 32 E of Green

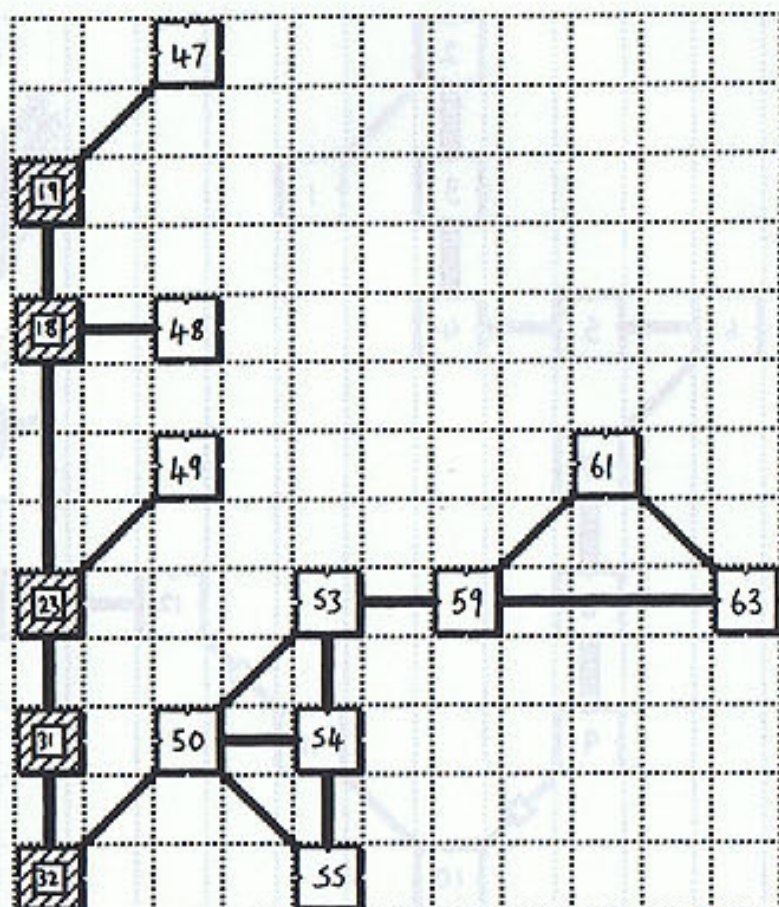
Oh if only it were 12" long! What am I talking about? Why, each From Beyond page, that's what! This 'Phoenix' map by Terry Brawls would have looked great spread across the middle pages as it was 12" long (wide!). I've segmented it a bit to fit in FB. Why are the location numbers in the wrong order? Mind your business!

- 01 Dome; Grim
- 02 Top Tunnel
- 03 Half Way
- 04 Cave (I)
- 05 Cave (II)
- 06 Hubert The Hermit
- 07 Ledge
- 08 Ladder
- 09 Mine Entrance
- 10 Guard
- 11 On Tree
- 12 Tree and Bridge
- 13 Long Grass
- 14 East End Canyon
- 15 Dirt Track
- 16 Muddy Field

- | | | | |
|----|---------------------------------|----|--------------|
| 33 | ABOM! | | |
| 34 | Well | | |
| 35 | West of Green | | |
| 36 | Graveyard lies to the SouthEast | | |
| 37 | Nettles | 38 | Altar |
| 39 | Pews | 40 | Church Door |
| 41 | In Well | 42 | Stench |
| 43 | SouthEast of Finvarra | | |
| 44 | Foot Path | 45 | Tomb Stones |
| 46 | Hole | 47 | Priory Door |
| 48 | Cesspit | 49 | Maria |
| 50 | Pasture | | |
| 51 | Finvarra lies NorthWest | | |
| 52 | Main Road | 53 | Fallow Field |
| 54 | Corn Field | 55 | Silent Lambs |
| 56 | Fork in the Road | | |
| 57 | Thorns | | |
| 58 | • START • Oaks | | |
| 59 | Cursed Land | | |
| 60 | Windy Road | 61 | Burnt Trees |
| 62 | People Tracks | | |
| 63 | Bog | 64 | OWL |
| 65 | Druids Henge | | |
| 66 | Fairy Ring | | |
| 67 | Soltice Summit | | |
| 68 | Wyvend Woods (Snail at Centre) | | |

PHOENIX (pt. II)

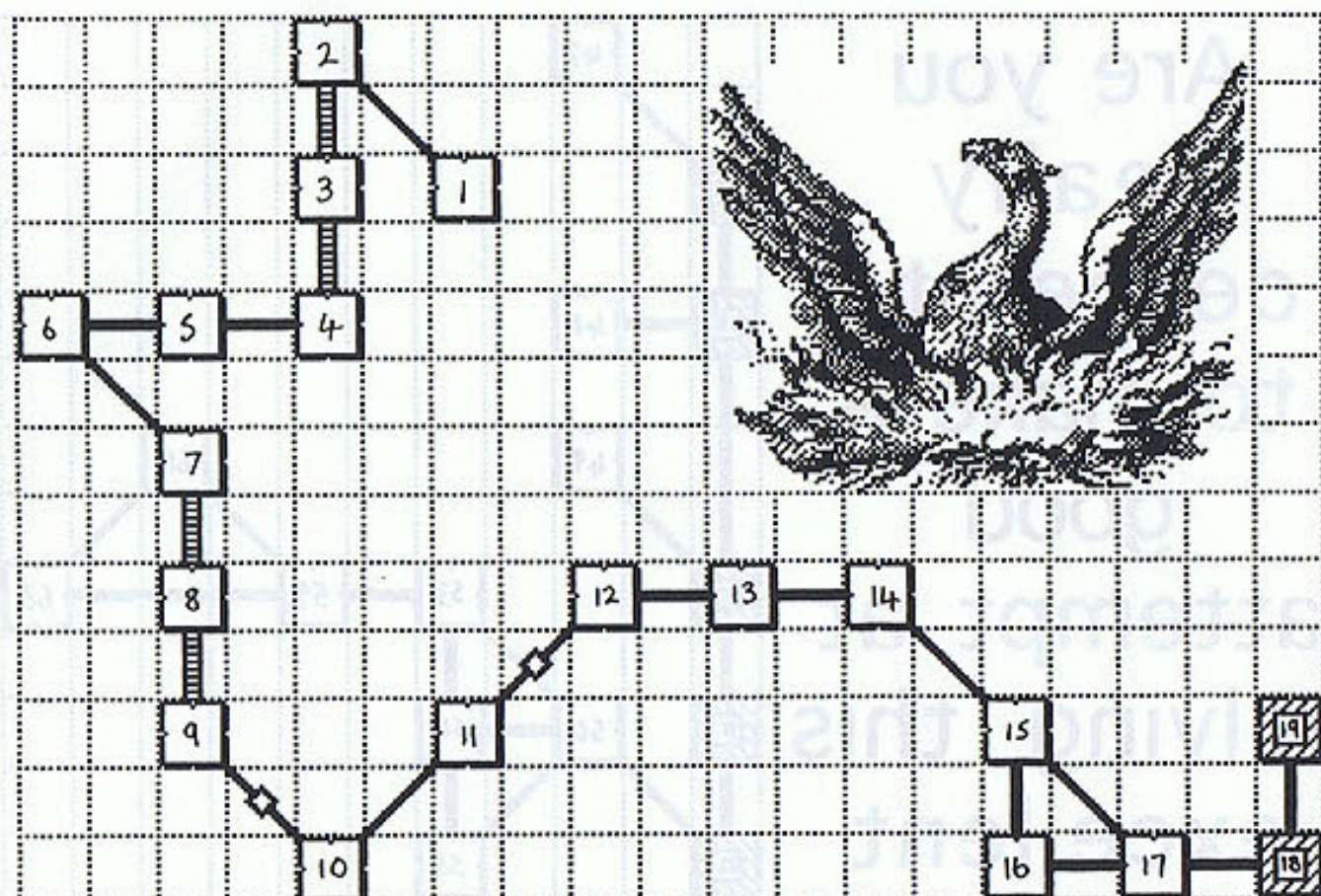
Are you
really
desperate
to make a
good
attempt at
solving this
excellent
Zenobi
adventure?
Okay, getting
off to a good
start is
always
helpful so
here's the
best way to



go about
things.

I, EXAMINE TREE, SHAKE TREE (= MISTLETOE), TAKE SPRIG, NORTH, NORTH, NORTHWEST, THROW KNIFE AT LECKTA, EXAMINE CHILD, SAY "I'LL AID YOU", TAKE KNIFE, SOUTHEAST, NORTHEAST, NORTHEAST, EXAMINE TRACKS, FOLLOW TRACKS, SOUTHEAST, GIVE SPRIG TO DRUID, EXAMINE HANDS, SHOW HANDS, EXAMINE AMULET, NORTHWEST, NORTH, NORTHEAST, SOUTH, TAKE SNAIL, SOUTHWEST, WEST, SOUTHWEST, SOUTHWEST, NORTHWEST, NORTH, NORTHWEST (X3), WEST, SOUTH, EXAMINE DOOR...

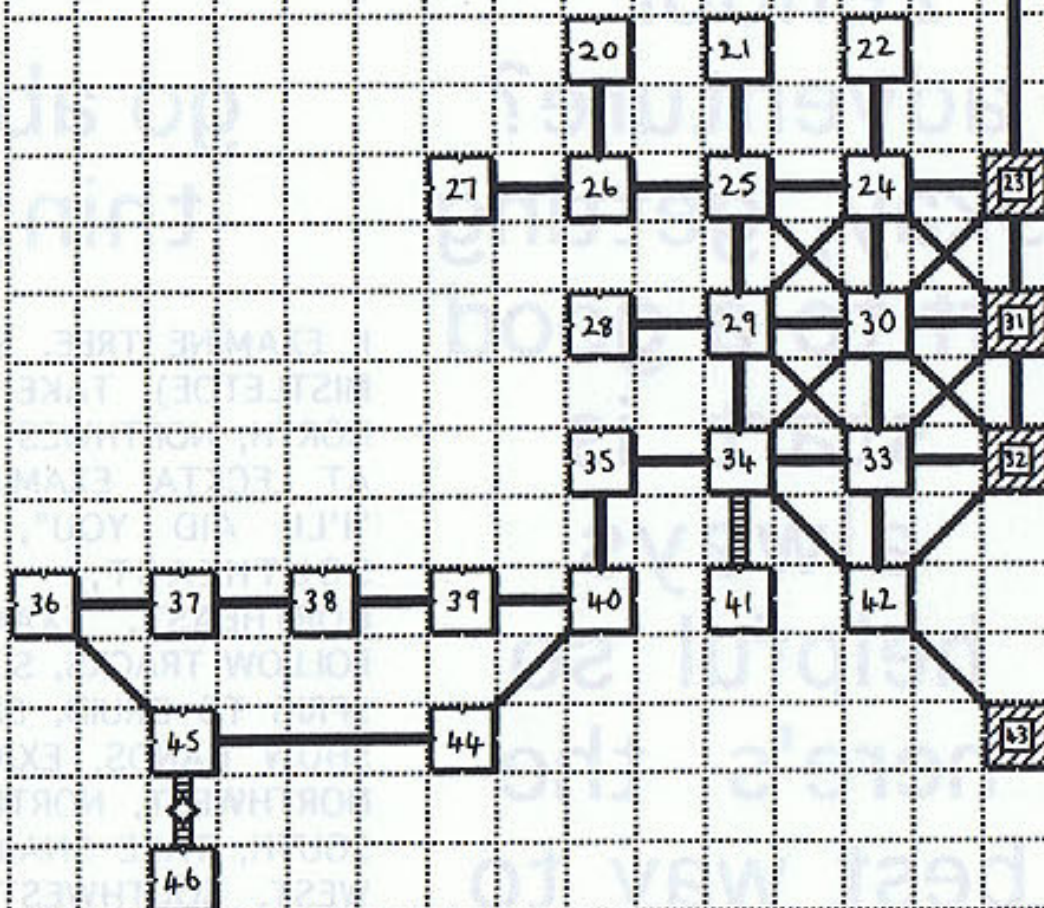
PHOENIX (Pt. III)



Useful Objects:

Thistle at 37
Swab at 39
Heart at 46
Toad at 40
Gauntlet at 41
Brush at 28
Cards at 21
Snail at 68 (ish)
Eggshell at 48
Clove at 47
Pot at 22
Spade at 49

Don't forget:
There's some
mistletoe on the
oak at the start
of the game.

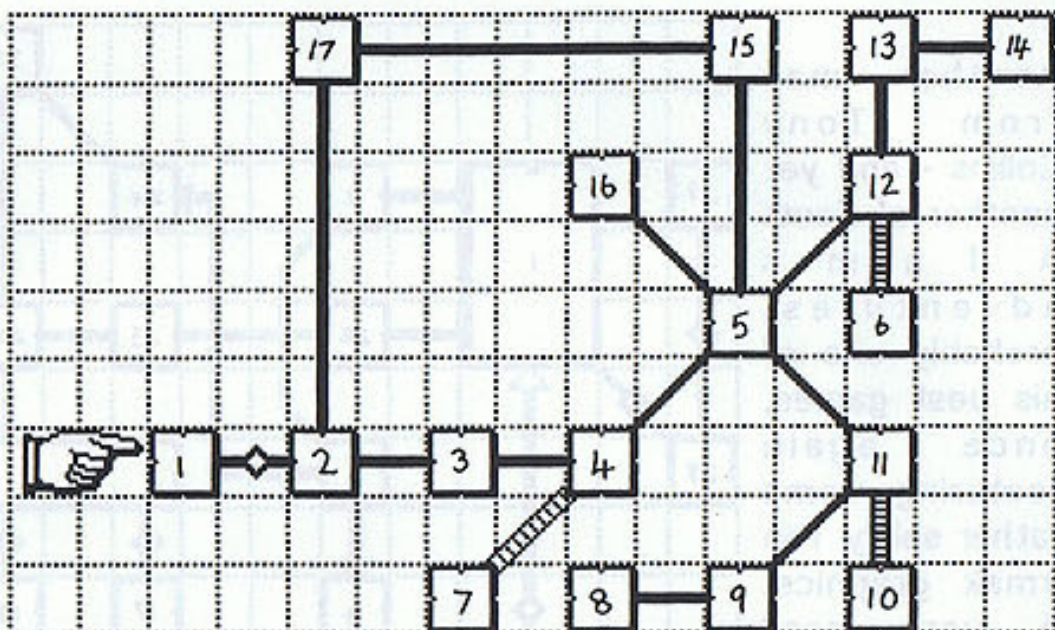


A knowledge of old wives tales will be
of great help throughout the game.

Also remember: Cross-hatched
locations are repeated elsewhere!

THE HULK

Another map from Tony Collins - and another oldie to boot! This, as I'm sure most of you know, is a Scott Adams 'Questprobe' adventure. There may only be a few locations but each one of them



is accompanied by some lovely graphics. It's a strange game that always baffled me and I could never quite get into the spirit of the thing... yep, you guessed it, I never actually completed it. Hopefully Tony's map may help you out if you are stuck in it.

START AT LOCATION 1: TIED IN CHAIR - CAN'T ESCAPE? BITE LIP.

GOING PLACES?: TRY GOING FROM (LOC. NO.) TO (LOC. NO.)

AT LOC. 03 GO TUNNEL TO LOC. 04

04 GO DOME TO 03

04 GO HOLE (AFTER DIGGING) TO 07

05 GO DOOR 16

09 GO TUNNEL 11

11 GO DOME 09

11 GO HOLE 10

12 GO HOLE 06

12 GO DOME 13

13 GO TUNNEL 12

15 GO CRACK 17

16 GO DOOR 05

17 GO HOLE 02

01 START (TIED TO A CHAIR)

02 DOME

03 TUNNEL

04 FIELD WITH DOME & GEMS

05 FUZZY AREA

06 HOLE

07 HOLE

08 DOME

09 TUNNEL

10 HOLE

11 FIELD WITH DOME & GEM (II)

12 FIELD WITH TINY HOLES & GEM

13 TUNNEL

14 DOME

15 UNDERGROUND ROOM

16 CHIEF EXAMINER ROOM

17 CAVERN

You have to use the words GO and DIG a lot... Where? Okay, don't get angry here's the instructions...

DIG AT LOCATIONS:

04, 10 (DIG 7 TIMES), 06 (DIG 4 TIMES)

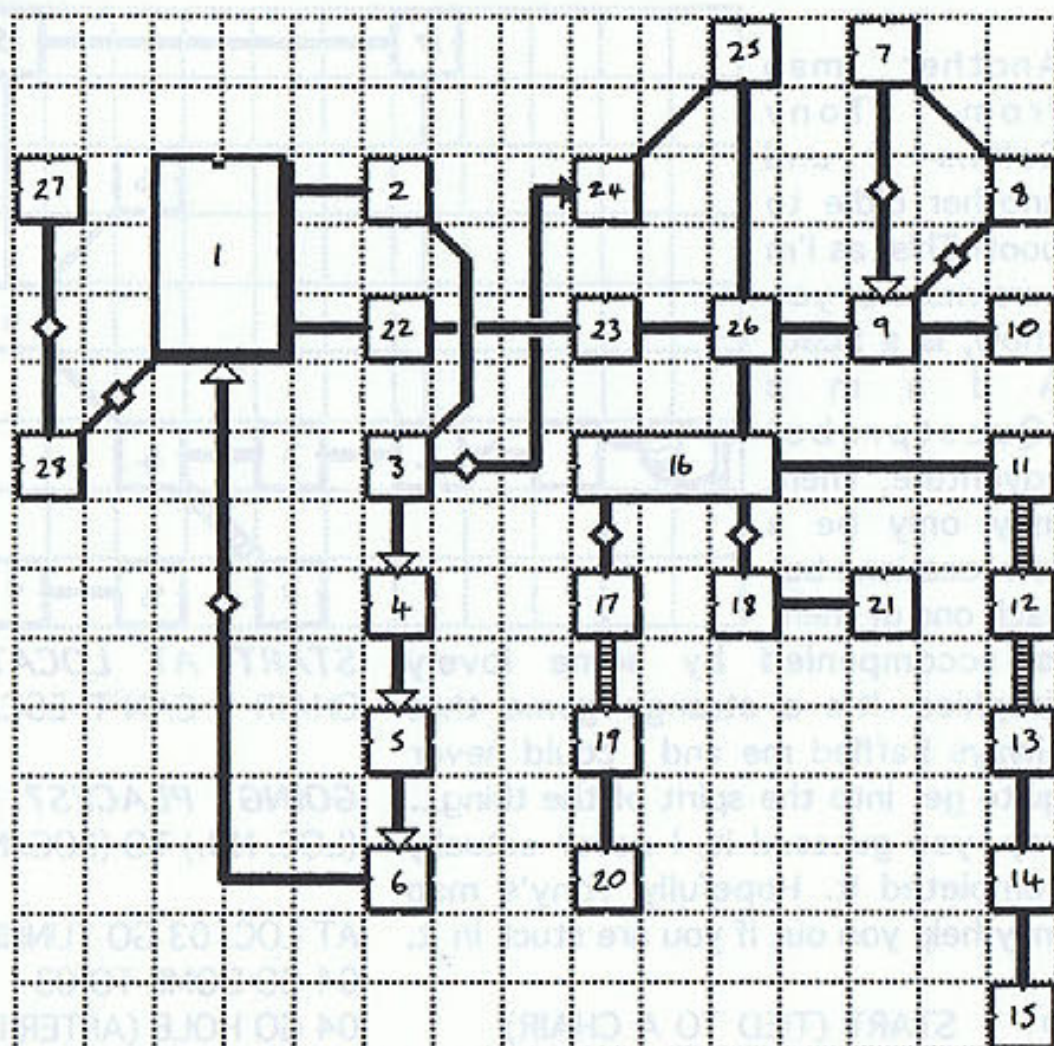
FIND GEMS AT: (LOC.NO)

02, 04, 06, 07, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 (bio gem), 16, 17.

What could be simpler?

SORCERER OF CLAYMORGUE CASTLE

Another map from Tony Collins - and yet another of Scott Adams adventures, probably one of his best games, once again featuring some rather spiffy Teo Irmak graphics. A very hard game - finish it and you can rightly claim to be a good adventurer!



- | | | |
|----|-----------------------|---------------|
| 01 | Field | |
| 02 | Moat | |
| 03 | Murky Fluid (I) | |
| 04 | Murky Fluid (II) | |
| 05 | Murky Fluid (III) | |
| 06 | Moat Bottom | 07 Loft |
| 08 | On The Chandelier | |
| 09 | Ballroom | 10 Box |
| 11 | Dusty Room | 12 Staircase |
| 13 | Deep Cavern | |
| 14 | Lava Flow / Stream | |
| 15 | Grotto | 16 Plain Room |
| 17 | Store Room | |
| 18 | Dragon's Lair | |
| 19 | Staircase (II) | |
| 20 | Under Stairs | 21 Workshop |
| 22 | On Drawbridge | |
| 23 | Entryway | |
| 24 | Dirty Pool | 25 Kitchen |
| 26 | Courtyard | |
| 27 | Forest Of Enchantment | |
| 28 | Hollow Tree | |

• SPELLS:

Cast BLISS spell At Loc. 6 to go to 1
 PERMEABILITY at Loc. 27 go to 28
 YOHO at 28 go to 01

• ACTIONS:

Obstacles can usually be overcome or crossed by using GO: i.e. GO CHANDELIER (believe it or not?!), GO DRAWBRIDGE, GO HOLE, GO DOWN etc. SWIM DOWN is also useful! CROSS LAVA at 13. Sometimes you have to GO (location name) though to retrace your steps you have to GO (direction).

• FIND SOME STARS AT:

Loc. 1, 6, 8, 10, 15, 17, 18, 20, 21

• FIND SPELLS AT:

15, 21, 26

DEAR DIARY

THE CHRONICLES OF DTH SOFTWARE

• This is the last in the 'Dear Diary' series from Scott Denyer. Over the last few issues we've seen his trials and tribulations in trying to establish the Delbert The Hamster Software name. With college rapidly approaching Scott signs off with one final instalment...

5th March:

I receive a playtester report from Barbara about 'Larry the Lemming', a game I've written which is available on my soon-to-be-released compilation. Surprisingly, even though it's a mini-game, she liked it a lot, and seems to be the most positive report I've ever had from her. Maybe she'd just won the pools or something, as she must have been in a very good mood when writing it!

7th March:

I receive the report from Sharon regarding my 'Epic'. With statements such as "You've done a great job!" and "I can't wait to play part 2", I figured that maybe she'd won the pools recently as well. She'll have to wait for part 2 though! I've no idea when I'll get round to writing that, as I've so much other stuff to do at the moment.

10th March:

I receive a report for yet another game I've got in the pipeline, 'Grabbed by the Ghoulies!' and Barbara seemed to really like this as well, as she thinks it'll be a popular adventure.

What!?!?! One of my adventures... popular!!!! I peruse over the fact that surely it's impossible for one woman to win the pools twice!

28th March:

I take the day off from DTHS (and schoolwork of course!) and travel up to Liverpool to watch a football match. I had intended to flatter Barbara Gibb with a visit, but unfortunately I have no idea where the road she lives in is!

19th March:

I get a letter from Ian Osborne to say that Crash has ceased existence, and tells me that had it not, then 'Brian And The Dishonest Politician' would have got about 79% in the next issue. Laugh? I almost wet myself. I spent most of the night ignoring a pressing essay to program the text of Gareth Pitchford's next game (if I write it before any of his numerous others!) 'The Life Of A Lone Electron'. It's the first real programming I've done in about three weeks! Some new jiffy-bag and envelope labels arrive too!

20th March:

"FB" arrives (about time!) and 'Arnold II' gets 7/10. Not bad, sonny! One of the comments is that "there's nothing wrong with it, everything works fine" etc. Having spoken to many people at the 'Probe' convention last year, they all seemed to say that 'Arnold' had been their favourite of my games. So I wrote 'Arnold II' as something similar to 'Arnold I' - no-

THE CHRONICLES OF DTH SOFTWARE

nonsense, no-frills, just the same sorts of puzzles and gentle humour that had made 'Arnold I' quite a success. I didn't want to include all my acquired expertise (cough!) as that would make the game different to 'Arnold I', and therefore not very similar to its predecessor. Enough said!

21st March:

Having now got my printer to work with my +2A (the original fault) I print off some contracts and send them to Gareth.

26th March:

I prepare the inlays for my 'Wheel Of Fortune' compilation, only for the person who does my photocopying to ring up and say that he won't be able to do it anymore. Fab!

28th March:

I am awoken at 8:30 (on a Saturday!!!!) by an irate mother, who is also angry at being woken due to a postman delivering a recorded delivery. Thanks Dave... snarl! In the package was the prototype +D compilation of my games. However, as I don't have a +D I can't test them. I package it off to Larry H. to have a look at it for me!

1st April:

Did the inlays at school today. I had 230 sheets printed for only £4. Not bad, except that the Ogre who runs the photocopier at our school says that I can't do any more of that quantity.

2nd April:

I send out a newsletter to all my customers, including a special offer on the 'Wheel Of Fortune' compilation. Hmmm, it costs me over a tenner. Hope I get some orders back! Gareth sends me a game he has actually programmed... shock, horror, etc. It's Part 1 of a game called 'The Search For The Nether Regions' (chortle chortle) and it looks quite swish!

11th April:

I travel to London for an adventurers gathering, and meet Sue Roseblade and Jackie Bennett off the train. We get a taxi to the wine-bar, only to find it closed off due to the bomb yesterday. We find everyone in the station nearby, and walk a few miles around the underground to Charing Cross, where Larry suggests a small pub on that station. When I say small, I mean SMALL! The pub itself was smaller than the men's toilets!!!! We retrace our steps to a larger pub we saw while walking through London. I could write pages and pages about what went on that day but to summarise, I spoke to Sharon about Arnold Swarzenegger films, Larry about the disk I sent him, and Larry's wife about cockroaches!!!! Many other people turned up, but I haven't got enough room to list them all. Hello again, everyone!

13th April:

Spent tonight making +3 versions of all my games. Well, I bet ya really wanted to know that, eh? (Er, not really, but if you want to tell us about it then feel free - Ed!)

THE CHRONICLES OF DTH SOFTWARE

14th April:

Spent all day programming the rest of 'Electron' and debugging 'Grabbed By The Ghoulies!'. Boy oh boy! Did that take a long time or what?!

16th April:

I decide to play a game for once, and continue playing part 1 of 'The Spectre Of Castle Coris' by FSF. What an absolutely appalling game! Only joking, Larry. I somehow manage to complete part 1, though that was with phoning Sharon for help, and cheating by loading the database into PAW and having a look around inside it.

Well well. That appears to be it! It's been fun writing this regular column for "FB", and I hope all you readers have enjoyed this little insight into an adventure company. Just think, when I started writing this exactly a year ago, none of my games had ever been reviewed, and now look at DTHS. Possibly the most innovative

software house around (ahem!). Should there be a public outcry for this column to continue (not very likely) then I will gladly continue writing it. It's bloomin' hard work running a company which is expanding as much as DTHS, and all my spare time is taken up by it. (What's spare time? Ed!) Once of these days I might start doing my school essays again! Before I go, can I just thank ALL my customers for their support over the last year, you've all been great. I love you all... (Scott bursts into tears and has to be helped away from the podium having just won 'Software House OF The Year 1992')

• *I enjoyed Scott's diary - it was a nice contribution to look forward to each issue. FB 13 should hopefully see an article on some special PAW overlays that Jon Lemmon of Compass Software has just obtained. After that...? Let me know what you want to see as a permanent feature. Tim.*

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

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REVIEW SIX

BRIAN AND THE POLITICIAN

Reviewed By: STORM

Time to let the hamster out of his cage for a quick run around your living room... What's in store for you in the latest DTHS game? Read on and, if you haven't had enough of elections by now, you'll find out...

STORYLINE:

In part 1 of this 2 part adventure, it is up to you to attain the 10 votes needed to win the election. (Do we really want more mention of elections? Ed!) This would thwart Gareth Pitchfork's dastardly plan to donate the citizens of Lower Ruddleston to Haemorrhoid Research for £1,000,000. To obtain the ten votes you must do odd jobs and generally help out your fellow citizens. In part 2, you must infiltrate the mansion of Mr. Pitchfork and find the evidence that will stop any more problems from that individual.

THE ADVENTURE:

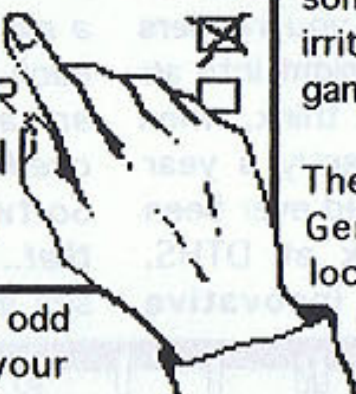
After the loading screen, there are some instructions. Apart from those that are familiar to most of us, there are tips on speaking to the characters, how to change modes but most importantly as far as I'm concerned, the advice that you should examine UNDER and BEHIND things. Ignore that

advice at your peril.

Anyway, at the start, you learn 'Brian stood in his humble home. It was a small one-roomed house, but it was comfortable and suited his needs.' Likewise you own (carry) nothing and HELP directs you to a SAE. Going west into his garden I learnt that there was a shed to the south so off I went. In it I found Brian's bike and remembering the instructions at the start, thoroughly examined everything. It was here that I first experienced something that frequently irritated me throughout the game.

BALLOT PAPER

| | |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|
| PITCHFORK | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| RUNT | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| BRIAN | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| ZIPPER | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ROTUN | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ALIEN | <input type="checkbox"/> |



The screen layout is a: General description of location, then b: Row of U.D.G's, then c: more information of what's present and exits, then d: another row of U.D.G's. As you input anything, section c and d scroll under the U.D.G's of b and soon all you have left is a and b. Which means that quite often there is a need to redescribe the location to check what else there is and which is the exits. As you often come across characters as well, the amount of inputting at certain locations increases and so does the need to redescribe.

Anyway on with the playing and mapping. Once out onto Brian's Street

BRIAN AND THE POLITICIAN

you will start meeting some of the people of Lower Ruddleston. The postman is rather upset as he misplaced his bag and is unable to complete his deliveries. He then leaves. Just to explain... The postman is what the P.A.W refers to as a PSI or Pseudo-Intelligence. Wiser? No? There are times when a message appears telling you of the arrival of a character. Later another message appears telling you he has left in a specific direction. If you go there, you will find the character. He then leaves etc. If you do it properly, it can create a greater sense of realism as opposed to character who are superglued to a location until you overcome the specific problem and the person leaves permanent. For the record, Delbert Hamster have done an excellent job as there are several PSI's moving in and out of the game in realistic, nicely controlled fashion.

Back to the review. You should come across Lady Petulia fairly soon and get her vote, if you help her back into her house. Elsewhere there is an Assassin, and angry PSI who is looking for a suitable weapon. Old Mrs. Smith's house is a useful location in your hunt for a vote elsewhere. You find a training show at the entrance to the gym but no foot to fit it (come back Cinderella, all is forgiven). There is a donkey tied to a fence and later a farmer (PSI) who is looking for it. At the hotel, you will probably get thrown out but don't be put off. The playground is quiet but nearby you should get something that will be very

useful. The fishmonger needs fish, The estate agent has a problem with one of his houses. (Good, that'll teach the money grabbing git - Ed!) The cafe is likely to be visited by the public health. The landlord has an unwelcome patron who needs ejecting. The town crier has misplaced his speech. And there is the shop assistant who wakes up when you enter and refuses to allow you to take something out.

In all there are about 70 locations to visit and lots of problems to overcome. After which, if you get all 10 votes that you seek, you will learn the password that will enable you to play part 2. A different approach will be required here. Hardly anyone top come into contact with. Basically a bit of breaking and entering, and then getting the goods on the dastardly Gareth Pitchfork. This part is the more serious of the two and to be honest, I think I prefer part 1. style. Unlike Star Flaws where the humour wasn't my style, I found the restrained, subtle variety in part 1 quite enjoyable. And so to the roundup...

GOOD POINTS:

A good sized PAWed adventure with the usual features i.e. Ramsave etc. Straightforward to map. Most problems can be overcome by obvious inputs. Best of all though is that there's no problem interacting with and talking to the characters you happen upon in the game - the PSI's were very well done. (It's very easy to get it wrong).

BRIAN AND THE POLITICIAN

BAD POINTS:

As stated earlier, the thing that irritated me was the scrolling of the location description and the need to redescribe. Other than that minor point, there is only one other thing and it occurs with many but not all multi-part adventures. THE PASSWORD. If you can't complete part 1, you don't get the password and therefore you are unable to play the rest. Perhaps it is me. What do you readers out there feel on the subject? Should access into subsequent parts of a multi-part adventure be dependent on a password?

CONCLUSIONS:

Most enjoyable. Aimed at the intermediate adventurer but will most likely find favour with all levels. I look forward to his next, especially if he keeps to the restrained style of humour.

- *Should access to other parts of a multi-part adventure be given at the end of each subsequent part, or should you have to beat one part to gain the access code to the next part? Personally I'd like all parts of multi-*

parters to be immediately accessible. There are other things to take into consideration though... Sometimes info is gained in part one that is needed in part two. Play the second part of the game first and get hopelessly stuck in the middle - even more frustrating I'd say!
Tim.


• BRIAN AND THE DISHONEST POLITICIAN •

Delbert The Hamster Software
9 Orchard Way, Flitwick
Beds. MK45 1LF

PRICE: £2.49 (tape)

Make Cheques and PO's
payable to S.P. Denyer.

RATINGS:

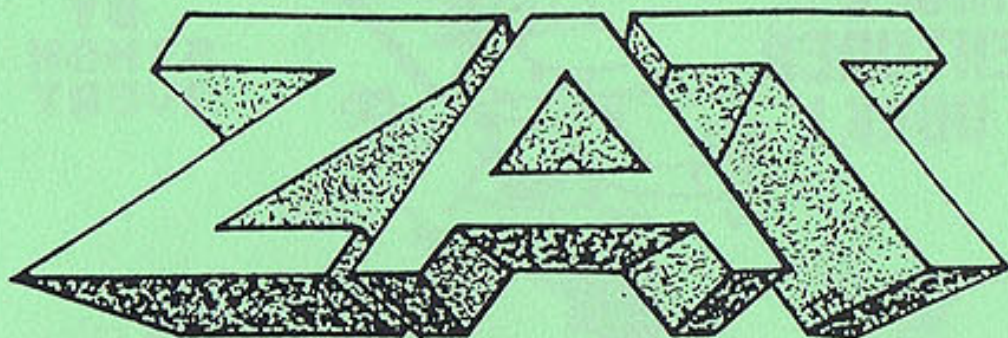
| | | |
|--|---------------|---|
|  | PACKAGING | 6 |
| | STORYLINE | 8 |
| | OPENING PLAY | 7 |
| | PROBLEMS | 7 |
| | LOCATION TEXT | 6 |
| | PARSER | 7 |
| GAME DESIGN | | 7 |
| DIFFICULTY | INTERMEDIATE | |
| PLAYABILITY | | 8 |

PERSONAL RATING 7



Could this be the end of madness as we know it? Delbert The Hamster Software is, according to the almighty squeaky one, Scott Denyer, on the verge of great change. Scott's off to college sometime real soon and the running of DTHS would be too much to do along with his college work. Scott still intends to write games but DTHS looks to be 'on ice' from now on. More news of this in the NEWS section on page 5. Is college ready for Mr. S.P. Denyer?

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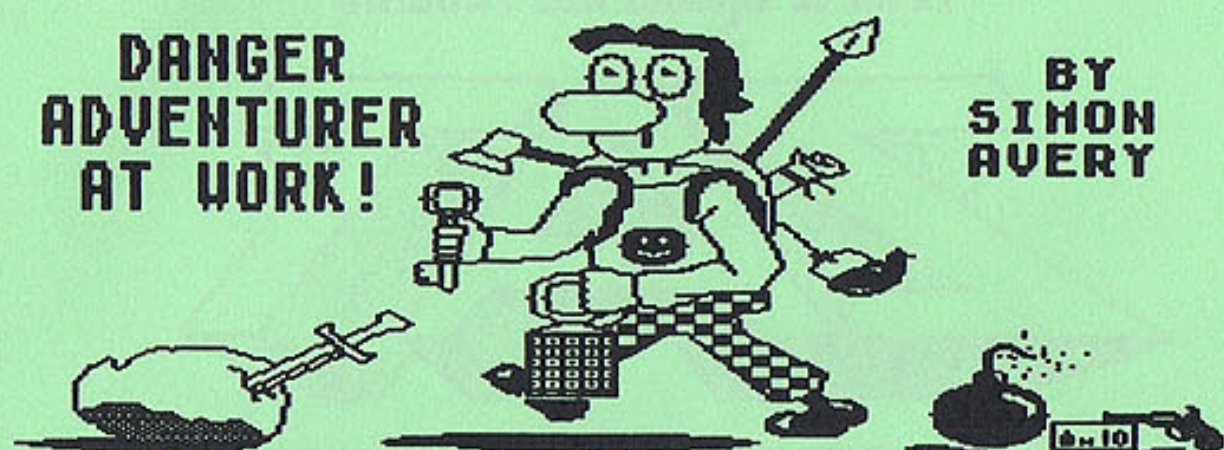
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PRIZEWINNING STORY

THE BALROG AND THE TAXMAN

At last, a couple of entries have arrived telling stories using characters from an adventure or situations inspired by adventures. I asked for such stories in FB 10 after doing a strange interview with the mysterious traveller in black. The following tale is the first placed effort by Steve Clay... (June Rowe's tale will appear next issue)

THE BALROG AND THE TAXMAN

The sun was high in the sky. The light crept through the gap in the curtain, chased across the floor, ran up the bed and splashed callously on the face of the sleeping Balrog. He stirred as the warm rays massaged his face. He opened a red eye and screamed!

It was the morning after the night before and the Balrog was suffering. Mrs. B. was away and while the cats away Balrog has the boys around. He shuffled across the landing and descended the stairs gingerly.

Balrog headed for the kitchen, he needed coffee in the same way most people need air. After a couple of near-misses he found the kitchen. Balrog stood trying to figure out what was wrong with the room. He passed a rough hand over his eyes and looked again. The table! It had gone! Hazy memories brought an answer. He remembered betting Whiffy the half-orc he couldn't eat the table. It seemed he could! Any further thought on the

subject, let alone what Mrs. Balrog would say, were banished by a hearty knocking at the door.

For the second time that morning he screamed. He wound his way down the hall and flung the door open.

"Morning Mr. Balrog!" It was Pat, the far too-bloody-cheerful, postman. "Had a rough night? I can't drink cider myself, does things to my legs. I like a drop of sherry though."

Balrog grabbed the package that Pat was waving about. His head ached and if Happy Harry didn't sod off soon there'd be trouble.

"It's a lovely day, don't you think? A nice day for lazing around in the garden. Still you won't be doing much in the way of lazing, what with the Taxman on his way up here! Anyway can't stand around here all day talking, bye Mr. Balreeekkk!!!"

Pat hung limply in the Balrog's grasp. "Taxman?"

"Oh yes! I passed him in the lane. He asked if he was on the right road. I... er... told him he was!" At this moment a tall figure hive into view.

Balrog dropped Pat and raced inside. Shortly there came a heavy rapping at the door. Balrog nipped smartly out of the back door and locked himself in the privy. Just in time too, the garden gate swung open and through it walked the Taxman. Years of experience had

THE BALROG AND THE TAXMAN

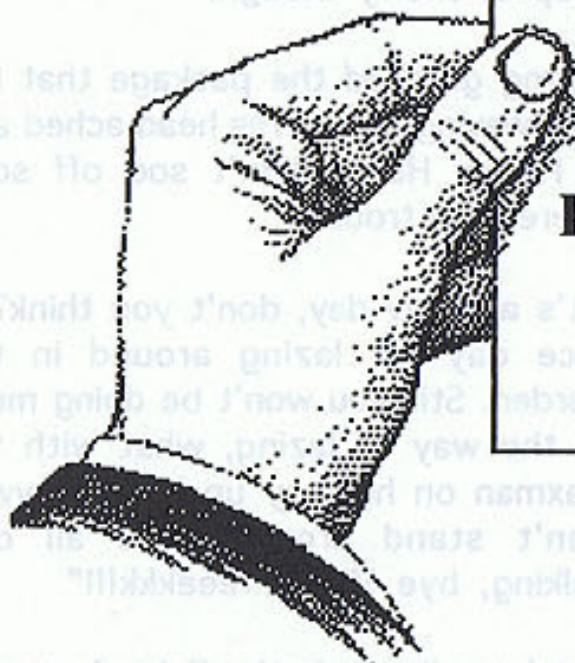
taught him the value of back gates.

As the Taxman explored the deserted house, Balrog was having his own problems. Crouching on the toilet bowl he became aware of a steady rumbling. Last night's Squirrel Vindaloo with Spicy Balls (Don't ask whose!) was about to sound a fanfare.

He screwed up his face and flexed all the required muscles in an attempt to keep it silent. He failed.

retreat. He sat down on one of the large white rocks that formed Mrs. Balrog's rockery. He was about to light his pipe, when he noticed a troop of ants walking up his sleeve. They stopped at his shoulder and the leader produced an ant-sized megaphone.

"We'll get him out for you!" It squeaked. Waving to his followers he shouted; "Come on lads!" Whistling Colonel Bogey they marched down his sleeve.



**H.M. INSPECTOR OF
TAXES
FOR THE ATTENTION
OF:
MR. BALROG**

"WHOOOMMPH!!" A small cloud of purple gas wafted up. Balrog completed his hat-trick of screams.

The Taxman located the source of the explosion. He gagged at the escaping fumes.

"Mr. Balrog? I would be grateful for a word or two."

"Try Bog Off! There's two!"

"I need to see you in person! It's vital!" Another violent rip rent the air and forced the Taxman into a hasty

Fascinated, the Taxman followed them to the privy door. In a neat military formation the ants advanced under the door. Silence. A thunderclap. A troop of gassed ants retreated in a variety of poses, from throat-clutching to exaggerated staggering. The leader appeared waving a white flag.

The Taxman knocked on the door.

"Come out I need to talk to you!" Balrog wasn't listening. He was having real trouble breathing, his

THE BALROG AND THE TAXMAN

stomach was getting its own back for last night and, to cap it all, the noise from his rectal explosions had brought back his headache.

Outside the Taxman looked around for inspiration. There was an almost audible "PING!!" as the idea came to him. Next to the privy was a manhole. The Taxman wrestled with the cover and eventually prised it free. He looked down the hole and was quite surprised, nay relieved, to see a steady torrent of water. Nothing unspeakable floated past.

Setting to his task, the Taxman began transporting the rocks from the rockery into the hole. After a while he noted the water flow was down to a trickle, two more stones and the flow had ceased.

Balrog had heard the noises outside, but his raging internal strife held his full attention. The noises outside had stopped and were soon replaced by a distinct rumbling. It took him a few moments to realise that the rumbling

wasn't him.

"What the F..." Whoosh! A huge fountain of water blew him from his porcelain throne.

"There she blows!" yelled the Taxman. The privy door swung open and revealed a damp and defeated Balrog.

"Ah, Mr. Balrog I presume!" He held out his hand. Balrog ignored it. Undaunted the Taxman continued. "With regard your last accounts the revenue have arrived at 200 gold pieces as the disputed figure."

He rummaged in his briefcase. He handed the Balrog a small pouch.

"Please accept our apologies and we hope you enjoy your tax-refund."

Balrog clutched the proffered pouch and not for the first time that day he screamed!

THE END

• *For his efforts, Steve will be getting the fabled 'Purple Crystal Cluster' that was the prize for the winning tale. Hope you like it, Steve!*

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

ZOGAN
IS
COMING!

REVIEW SEVEN

THE WHITE FEATHER CLOAK

Reviewed By: Tim

'The Dogboy', 'Silverwolf' and 'The White Feather Cloak' are games from the St. Brides stable that I'd never heard of before, and I thought that perhaps the reason behind that was that the games were not worth marketing. **WRONG!** All those mentioned above are, to my feeble way of thinking, three of the most interesting titles to have been released over the last couple of years. Read on and find out why...

STORYLINE:

I can't remember receiving a storyline sheet or anything with the game, but basically it turns out that your friend and patron Borin the Bold has been kidnapped by the evil Sorcerer Grimbald the renegade. The house of Borin lies in ruin and his gorgeous bride to be, Princess Elsbeth, is a tad upset at the recent turn of events. Prior to this you had journeyed far and wide with Borin and had many great adventures... the last saw you retrieve the fabled 'White Feather Cloak' from Grimbald's clutches. Your name is Cedric - go do your stuff!

THE ADVENTURE:

Once the GI GAMES logo clears the credits appear with special mention for Marc Peirson for supplying the adventure plan and verses. Verses? Yup! A press of a key reveals the first of many: "A leaf rustles upon the

floor of a high and lonely hall, and despair grows within you of the winds mournful call. The sword of sorrow pierces you There is lead within your heart but courage is within your soul be bold and play your part!"

If you are a fan of graphical adventures then you'll like this one. The graphics appear in the middle top third of the screen - with text beneath. They are bordered by a scroll type surround and are, thankfully, quick to appear. Considering their size they are pretty good too. This first graphical location depicts the front door of Borin the Bolds abode. The mansion and grounds lie in ruins! The game features riddles (that need an answer if progress is to be made) and verses. The riddle on the ruined doorpost is effaced and unreadable. No matter as a nice stroll around (going North naturally) reveals another graphic, this time of a Gnome Castle. The option to enter or go around is given - it's your choice... fancy a trip to the court of the Gnome King? Well you'll get one no matter what you do, though to make things easier later on DO make a spectacle of yourself before accompanying the nice guards to meet the King.

Before long another verse will pop up as the King suspects you helped kidnap your pal Borin... the verse goes: "Gnome King, old thing, I have Borin the Bore.

Before you choke, give me the cloak or I'll give him what for.....

THE WHITE FEATHER CLOAK

Yours in hate, Grimbald the Great."

Once again it doesn't seem to matter what you attempt to say to prove you had no part in the kidnap or put the record straight - the Gnome King does with you what he likes anyway! Things get a bit confusing for a while, though working out what to do next will come to you eventually. After you work out where you are going and what you need do next, the first 'riddle' presents itself.

Solve it and type in the answer and you will progress to the next stage of the game and will have to overcome some more problems. The whole of part one is structured in this way. Riddles, Problems, Riddles, Problems. The first riddle goes: *"The strongest body shall it make most weak; strike the wise dumb and teach the fool to speak. What is it?"* Well... what is it? If you know the answer then the other riddles will pose little or no problem. If you don't know the answer and are crap at riddles then you may be frustrated at being stuck at them and not being able to progress. I know you are a sharp lot so you should solve 'em with no problems!

Beyond the door that this first riddle appears on lies a certain Princess. You don't get a lot of hints as to what to do from messages - certainly not as many as you get in a Laurence Creighton game, but if you do all the things that the Princess expects you to do then you'll be okay. A classic bit of Princess interaction is what's

needed! A question and answer session leads you on to riddle two - appearing as something spidery. A few standard warp / tunnel effect screen wipes takes you from one situation to another.

Several pure fantasy elements confront you, one of my faves is the owl. Hope you've got something no wise owl should be without with which to win him over. The penultimate riddle in part one is probably the easiest to guess but that's not a hardship and it should, to my mind, probably have been the first rather than the third.

Whilst adventuring merrily away (which you will be because it's a merry kind of game) you should take note of any place names and unusual names in the riddles etc., some of which are used later in the game. Up till this point things on the whole had been reasonably straightforward with just a hint of trickiness here and there to keep one on ones toes. Then comes a surprise attack or two. It's easy to deal with but it's what happens a few moves later that will probably stump you. Things seem a bit 'hit and miss' at some points in the game and I had one or two worries about whether or not I'd done all I was supposed to do.



THE WHITE FEATHER CLOAK

This uncertainty added, in an indescribable way, to the general tension and excitement that begins to build after riddle three is solved. Fortunately RAMSAVE and LOAD have been implemented through the LOAD and SAVE commands. (i.e. you get a choice of saving or loading to and from tape or to RAM when you type SAVE or LOAD!)

Keep your eyes peeled for the King of the Elves who makes a splendid entry and who cuts a dashing figure with a crown of elagantine and a bulrush sceptre! How are the Elves described in the game?:

"They are unkempt, untamed, wild-eyed, as fleet as forest fawns, as uncanny as a forest stream, as irresponsible as puppy dogs, as irrepressible as spring grass. They are golden, sweet and perilous." The Elves are the stars of part one in my eyes - the author obviously liked them too!

One point I should mention is the fact that tension in the game is often created by slight pauses after you've done something major (either a bad move or a good one) and the screen goes black for a few moments before a picture draws and you learn your fate. If that's an entirely intentional bit of programming then it's a cunning ploy that works amazingly well.

After four game segments, punctuated by riddles, part one draws quickly to a marvellous end. All you need do to progress to part two is collect the

correct items then you'll be given a password, rather than have to save data from part one. What happens if you don't have the right objects at the end? You get to go back and search for them if you so wish. This ending sequence reminded me a lot of an old foreign TV program called the 'singing ringing tree'. Remember that? Needless to say I was keen as anything to get part two loaded and make a start on it...

Once part two has loaded a verse appears to set the scene. I had to resort to the help-sheet to get started, and I'd advise you to LOOK UP if you want to start playing in anything under half an hour. A bit of a naughty start, I thought, but once past that hiccup the game starts to open out. The graphics that appear are the same style as those in part one though a bit more ambitious in some places and a bit less detailed in others. Nevertheless they are nothing to be frightened of and shouldn't distract you from the task in hand. The initial locations you find yourself restricted to must be explored thoroughly to find a way out. Riddles take a back seat and, er... I.Q. tests sort of take their place. Once again they ain't too bad to guess or work out. (I did 'em so they can't be hard!) Use the knowledge gained from characters you meet in part one (and this part too) and soon you'll be making great progress. I'd love to tell you more about this second part of the game (I said that about Curse of Calutha) but to tell you more would spoil things. I'll sign off by just

THE WHITE FEATHER CLOAK

saying that, an Ogress, the mysterious floor, the evil garden, the hall of mirrors and the snake chair will give you something to think about for a good while. Oh yes, and the way to kill the demons who dwell in the dark places is to... Eek! Here comes something horrible... I'm off!

GOOD POINTS:

'TWFC's' good points make themselves clear from the word go. What are they? Nice graphics, brilliant location descriptions, great riddles to solve, an interesting (unique) set of problems, two parts for a small price & gripping gameplay. That's what I felt at any rate! Are there any bad points?...

BAD POINTS:

Yes, there are a couple of bad points. Each part of the game is a little bit on the small side and the vocabulary isn't as big as I'd have liked. Those 'grumbles' pale into insignificance when comparing them to the good bits!

CONCLUSIONS:

I began by saying 'The White Feather Cloak' (and 'Dogboy' & 'Silverwolf')

were three of the most interesting (best?) fantasy games to come along in a couple of years. Does that sound a bit too strong? Perhaps the King of the Elves has enchanted me - but I think not. It's basically just a lovely game that won't upset you and should, if you give it time, have you spellbound!

• THE WHITE FEATHER CLOAK •

Zenobi Software

26 Spotland Tops

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Lancashire OL12 7NX

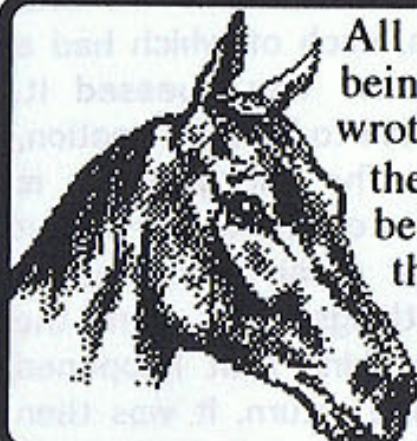
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RATINGS:



| | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| PACKAGING | 6 |
| STORYLINE | 8 |
| OPENING PLAY | 7 |
| PROBLEMS | 9 |
| LOCATION TEXT | 10 |
| PARSER | 7 |
| GAME DESIGN | 9 |
| DIFFICULTY | INT./EXPERIENCED |
| PLAYABILITY | 10 |
| PERSONAL RATING | 10 |



All the GI GAMES adventure back catalogue are being distributed by Zenobi Software. Gordon Inglis wrote to FB to let us know that GI hasn't vanished off the face of the earth entirely. It's a case of Gordon being busy with other commitments which has seen the Zenobi distribution deal come into play. I'm glad that Gordon's hard work in getting the excellent St. Bride's games together can still be enjoyed via Zenobi's marketing skills!

REVIEW EIGHT

THE TAXMAN COMETH

Reviewed By: STORM

This always makes my day, Another Zenobi game to play, This one though by Steve Clay, So computer out and into the fray. (Apologies to all discerning poetry lovers)

STORYLINE:

There will always be a few individuals who will try to avoid paying their taxes. Sometimes they get away with it, sometimes they don't. On this occasion though, the FEW happen to be the whole district of Tripe-On-Wold. Naturally this cannot be allowed to go unchallenged and so THEY send the Taxman to tackle the 6 worst offenders.

THE ADVENTURE:

The loading screen is up to the usual Zenobi standard. A mean looking bearded gentleman in front of a red stone wall. After which comes the information that this game is dedicated to Freddie Mercury. You then read 'I arrived in Tripe-On-Wold via a barge and was put ashore on a small jetty on the northern bank. It is here that I shall return to when all debts are paid.'

At the start I am wearing a pin striped suit and HELP informs me that I'm on my own. Once off the jetty it's time for some exploration and the usual mapping. Fairly soon you come across a lake with an island in the middle but at present no means of getting there. I

found the slum (sorry, cottage) of one of the tax evaders but Jeff is absent. By the way, the other offenders are Halfpint, Lofty, Topper, Odsok and Phoebe. Anyway, on with the mapping. There is a tower but no apparent way in. It was about this time that I came across a hidden chest with an unusual lock. Once open I was in possession of something illuminating to a nearby problem and so to another object, a rubber box. Based on where I'd been earlier, I knew what I had to do with this. It's called carrying it till the inspiration strikes. I seemed to end up carrying it for ages.

As I was not making much progress around here I decided to try somewhere else. A bridge problem was overcome very easily and another object acquired. This helped me into the Inner Cave. By now I was getting into the game and was quite confident that I could quickly overcome things. WRONG... It was round here that I came across some steps leading up that would not work, and were numbered 24513. A couple of moves later I found 5 rooms with blocks in them, each of which had a different number. You guessed it. 24513. There had to be a connection, right? RIGHT! The only problem is what you need to do and what effect it will have. After a fair few minutes trying various things, I left, none the wiser but something that happened nearby, made me return. It was then that I realised what had happened.

THE TAXMAN COMETH

Subsequent moves had similar but not the same effect. It took me about 15 minutes when I had worked the correct actions to overcome this problem and then get the tax from Phoebe. Apparently it can be done in three moves but that is the old story of something being easy when you know how.

At this stage I typed PAID as per instruction and had the list of the 6 offenders displayed with Phoebe now showing paid. One down and 5 to go. Another typeface is available by typing FONT but I found the initial one perfectly acceptable.

I needed a ticket to get into an area of the game. The ticket was found easily, entry permitted and a staff and a spell given.. Then the problems came thick and fast. The first of which was a door with a riddle written on it. In retrospect, it's obvious, but I didn't see it. As it was getting late, I called it a day. When I came back to the game, I was armed with the solution to the door. It's not what you know, it's who. Since then I've made more progress in collecting the taxes but it is definitely going to take a real determined effort to crack it.

GOOD POINTS:

An easy to map game written using the PAW. The problems range from the straightforward to the definitely difficult. The one involving the stairs and the blocks is an excellent one that can be solved if you approach it logically and methodically.

BAD POINTS:

Nothing springs to mind.

CONCLUSIONS:

Depending on your ability at adventures, I reckon you will either love it or be making lots of phone calls for assistance. I did both. If you like them tough, here is one that ought to provide you with lots of evenings overcoming the various ones of Steve's.

• *It's nice to see a new name or three appear on the credits of a game. Glad to see a few more people (other than the usual) writing adventures. You won't get rich from your efforts, but you will have some fun.* Tim.

• THE TAXMAN COMETH •

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RATINGS:

| | | |
|--|-----------------|---------------|
|  | PACKAGING | 6 |
| | STORYLINE | 8 |
| | OPENING PLAY | 7 |
| | PROBLEMS | 9 |
| | LOCATION TEXT | 6 |
| | PARSER | 7 |
| | GAME DESIGN | 8 |
| | DIFFICULTY | EXP./ADVANCED |
| | PLAYABILITY | 8 |
| | PERSONAL RATING | 8 |

LOOSE ENDS

WHERE THE MISC. STUFF RESIDES!

• No crossword last issue so no crossword winners names can be printed. The planned one for this issue has had to be shelved because it was to be linked with a new game from 8th day author Michael White. Let me explain... About a year and a half ago news reached me that Michael White was contemplating writing a new game. His old 8th Day titles were being negotiated for by GI GAMES and Michael had the urge to write another adventure. Most of his titles were well received so there was no reason that a NEW adventure by this prolific author should't go down well. About a year ago I recieved a massive crossword which featured loads of 8th Day references. What a good idea it would have been to tie in the crossword with an interview with Michael White and also give away some copies of 8th Day adventures. So I've been waiting for the new 8th Day release to couple that with the X-Word. Bad news - Michael White has decided not to write a new adventure so the X-Word remains 'on ice'. However, next issue we are printing another Cryptic mind-bending crossword from Paul Cardin.

• Here's a quick bit of adventure news for SAM Coupe owners: Colin Jordan (famous SAM person) has just finished coding S.A.S. What's S.A.S? Only The Sam Adventure System that's what! It sounds promising and the demo disk I had looks the biz. More news of that next issue.

MINI COMP.

What ancient adventure starts like this:

GET PARACHUTE, WEAR
PARACHUTE, PULL
LEVER, PULL CORD,
REMOVE PARACHUTE,
WEST, WEST, GET
BRANCH, FEEL
CORNER...

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3 copies of GI Games / Zenobi's

SILVERWOLF went to:

June Rowe, Nancy Finnighan and
Alan Devey (again)

(The answers were 1: 34. 2: C and
3: Zenobi Software.

ADVENTURES

| TAPE COMPILATIONS | AUTHOR | PRICE |
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REVIEW NINE

LASKAR'S CRYSTALS

Reviewed By: The Jester

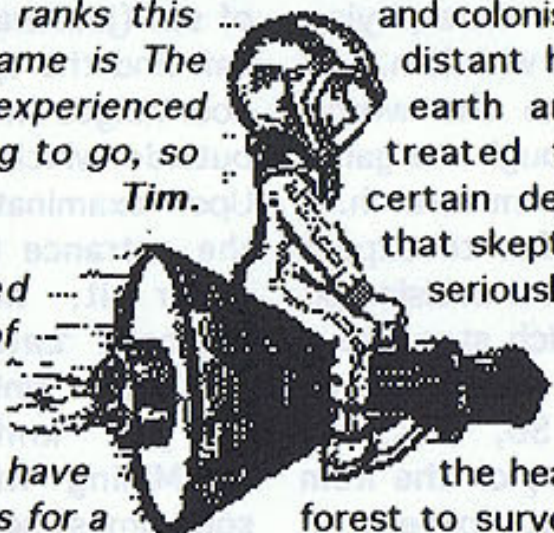


• *FB's got a new reviewer to add to the ranks this month. His name is The Jester, he's a very experienced adventurer and is raring to go, so here he goes...* **Tim.**

As newly-appointed ... JESTER to the court of King Tim, I would like to say a few words to the readers of FB. I have been playing adventures for a number of years, but this is my first foray into the realms of writing reviews - something I find completely different. I therefore crave your indulgence, and ask that you be patient whilst I "get my act together"; and, whilst doing so, I hope I don't tread on too many corns! A couple of issues ago, Tim said that barely a month went by without a Laurence Creighton game putting in an appearance. Well, there wasn't one in the last issue, but now the 'Cape Crusader' (groan - Ed!) is back...

PACKAGING:

It would be easy to say 'the standard Zenobi insert and A4 story / instruction sheet' - so I will (well, it IS my first review)! I would like to make it clear, however, that I, personally, don't mind them. It's been said before, but a row of Zenobi games does look 'neater' than a hotchpotch of different designs and colours.



STORYLINE:

Throughout the world, legends abound of aliens from other planets visiting and colonising Earth in its dim and distant history. As a down-to-earth archaeologist, you had treated these stories with a certain degree of skepticism - that skepticism was about to be seriously dented.

Your latest expedition has taken you deep into the heart of the Amazon rain-forest to survey and ancient temple. It's late, and you have retired to your base camp to write up the day's finds - suddenly you hear a gasp from outside. There you find Laskar, the very being whose existence you doubted. He is in trouble - 2 of his 3 life-support



crystals are missing, and the third is running dangerously low. Without these he cannot return home. He is too weak - will YOU find them for him? Sounds a bit like 'Indiana Jones meets E.T.'



THE ADVENTURE:

When the game proper opens (after the initial intro screen), you have arrived by boat at the river's furthest navigable point - you are now on foot. The boatman presses a shiny 20p piece into your hand, and says, "For luck" - boy, will you need it!

Straight away, it's decision time! You

LASKAR 'S CRYSTALS

are allowed just enough moves to search the boat, choose one (and only ONE) of the two items found, and disembark. If you hang around too long, the mercenary boatman will sail off in search of other fare-paying passengers - taking you with him. End of first attempt! make the wrong choice, and halfway through the game you will have to start from scratch. It is, perhaps, a little unfair to expect the player to make such a decision so soon in a game, at which stage he / she has no idea which item may, or may not, be useful. So, which to choose? I suggest you pick the item which appears most often in adventure games!

Having disembarked, you are now in the jungle, armed only with your trusty adventurers knife - oh, not forgetting the 20p given to you by the boatman. Immediately, you come across a length of bamboo and a WWI tin hat (how did that get here; didn't think WWI reached this far!), and you're informed that *'Something is moving about under the hat'*. All attempts at LIFTing, MOVEing and LOOKing UNDER it proved unsuccessful - only GET HAT seemed to work; and that just served to release the thing dwelling under it. Three moves later I was dead - indirectly the hat had done for me! Better leave the hat alone until something to combat it's occupant can be found!

Not an auspicious start, I thought - two instances of S.D.S (Sudden Death Syndrome) in the first two locations!

But this is typical Laurence - he likes to keep you on your toes right from the outset! From here on, a little more exploring can be done - you will find a hintsheet (not very useful); a mound of soil (just waiting to be dug - if you can find the spade); a hut with rusty door hinges (which you can't get into), outside which is a circle of stones. Upon examination, this proves to be the entrance to a tunnel. Trying to enter it, however, elicits the response *'Later, much later'* - OK, I can take a hint! Further judicious use of your knife, SEARCHing and EXAMining will unearth (literally, sometimes) several other objects, the use of which may not be immediately obvious.

Eventually, you will reach a rope-bridge, which is *'very old and will not support much weight'* - you have been warned! On the other side, you will be faced with a large crocodile, advancing relentlessly towards you - no problem, provided you did enough exploring before crossing the bridge!

Much to-ing and fro-in will be needed, because only 2 or 3 items can be carried across the bridge at any one time; and although there is a DROP ALL facility in the game, there is no corresponding GET ALL. Throughout the game, you will find yourself transporting armfuls of objects from A to B, as you never know whether they will be needed again.

At one time, you will meet an Indian, who wants his tomahawk back (after

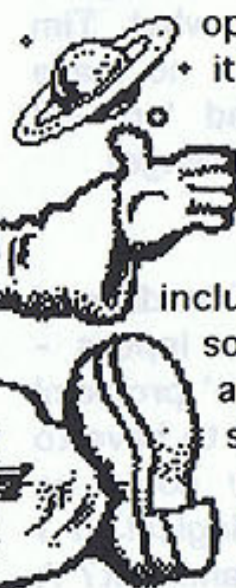
LASKAR'S CRYSTALS

you've mended it) - don't be fooled. He may be fierce-looking, but he's none too bright! Part with the tomahawk now, and you've lost it - and just guess what you need later! Another Creighton trick! After a little more problem solving (crossing the stream; and dealing with the hat - to name but two), you will arrive at an area of open ground below a cliff, where a plant is growing. The usual problem here - it needs watering. Transporting the water to it is another problem in itself! (I can guess how to do it - Ed!) having done so, the obvious thing is to climb it - but beware. This is one of Laurence's opportunities to reset his flags - having climbed up, there is NO way back. Two words of warning, therefore: 1) make sure you have everything with you before climbing. 2) DON'T assume that all items only have one use!

I was a little concerned at finding such things as an UMBRELLA and a SYRINGE in the Amazon jungle; but in the next stage of the game, you come across the wreck of a light aircraft (after a clever method of crossing the river). So, I suppose it could be argued that they fell from the plane during the crash - I'll give Laurence the benefit of the doubt, anyway. Shortly afterwards, you will encounter the problem which gave me

the most trouble (and was the one place I had to 'cheat') - not because I didn't know WHAT to do; but because of the obscure input needed to achieve the desired result. You will be faced with an area of fissures, from which flames are gushing forth. Trying to go east through these, a 'helpful' voice booms out, '*he Talisman MUST precede you*'. Somehow, you must fasten the talisman to the length of bamboo found earlier and... well, I can't say anymore about what to do.

From here, it is just a short journey (via dark caves and quickly depleting lamp batteries) to the shrine where the first of Laskar's crystals is secreted. Beware again, entry to the shrine is another no-way-back situation (but Laurence does warn you this time) - once again, BOTH words of warning given earlier equally apply here! From the shrine, the way lies open (once you've opened it) to the second crystal.



The game has been written, as usual for L.C, with the QUILL, and includes several PATCHED sound and visual effects, and a choice of character sets (FONT ON/OFF). The location descriptions, whilst not over elaborate, adequately give you all the information you need to know. A RAMSAVE / LOAD facility is also provided, but don't rely on this too much whilst trying to play the game (as I tried to do). In typical

LASKAR'S CRYSTALS

Laurence Creighton fashion, you will undoubtedly find, at some stage, that you either a) have discarded something, assuming it's served its purpose, and now need it, or b) should have carried out some action earlier and, by Sod's Law, you will have RAM SAVED at a later position than you now need - and the only thing to do then is start again. I'd recommend, therefore, that your position be saved to tape at regular intervals, as well as using the RAM SAVE. But that's only if you want to make it to the end of the game with your adventure prowess intact!

GOOD POINTS:

Plenty of problems to overcome - some which have been seen before (watering plant; batteries for lamp etc.); some which will require thought. Most death traps are signposted - ignore the warnings if you like dying. Finally, what Tim would call a good point - no maze (personally, I don't mind 'em - I consider a good maze a challenge).

BAD POINTS:

If anything, a slight 'unfriendliness' at times with regard to inputs - particularly with the 'flame' problem! Also, most objects tended to have to be CARRIED before they could be examined, which I find illogical. If I can SEE it, why can't I examine it? A little 'naughty' at the start, with 2 S.D.S's in 2 locations.

CONCLUSIONS:

Although the storyline in nothing

'earth-shattering', this is another good, solid game from the Creighton stable.

• *Thought I'd just chip in with a bit of an opinion on Laurence Creighton's adventures. I know he was contemplating a move to the PAW, but has now decided to stick with the QUILL and its associated utilities. That's no bad thing as far as I'm concerned. Traditional text only adventure purists should (and do) love Laurence's games. If it's wall to wall problems you are after then any of the 'Big L's' games will do you! Lots of playability, heaps of problems and several twists and turns per game are his trademark.* **Tim.**

• LASKAR'S CRYSTALS •

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RATINGS:

| | | |
|--|-----------------|------------------|
|  | PACKAGING | 6 |
| | STORYLINE | 5 |
| | OPENING PLAY | 3 |
| | PROBLEMS | 7 |
| | LOCATION TEXT | 5 |
| | PARSER | 6 |
| | GAME DESIGN | 8 |
| | DIFFICULTY | INT/EXPERIENCED. |
| | PLAYABILITY | 7 |
| | PERSONAL RATING | 7 |

ADVENTURES

| AUTHOR | TITLE | TAPE | DISK |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Steve Clay | The Taxman Cometh | £2.49 | £3.49 |
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NOTES

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