



The Adventure & Strategy Club

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AMENDMENT AND UPDATE SERVICE

MEMBERS' PACK No 25 - JANUARY 1994

<u>Section</u>	<u>Pages</u>	<u>Description</u>
C	115/116 117/118 119/120	In The Cauldron, latest news from the adventuring world.
D	247/248 249/250 251/252 253/254 255/256 257/258 259/260	Reviews of Beneath a Steel Sky, Return To Zork (PC) Return To Zork (CD-ROM) Shadowcaster, Simon The Sorcerer, Dark Sun - Shattered Lands, Theme Park (U.K.), Spysnatcher, Fantasy Empires, Dungeon Hack, The Black Tower, Settlement 13, Dracula Unleashed, Napoleonics.
E	93/94	Softography, WoW Software.
F	15/16 17/18	Utilities, assessment of Unlimited Adventures.
H	7/8	Sound Cards by Neil Booth.
P	1,1a,1b 1c	REPLACEMENT SHEETS: Index to Help Sections.
R	39 40	Shadowcaster Starter Guide The Mutant Starter Guide
S	55/56	Notice Board for January.
T	35/36 37/38	Playing Guide to Dracula Unleashed.
U	39/40	Brief Encounters: Nippon Safes Inc., Amberstar, Les Manley in: Search For The King, Might and Magic - Clouds of Xeen.
X	75/76 77/78	Hints 'n' Tips.
Y	17/18	Maps and hints for Dark Sun: Shattered Lands, Les Manley In: Search For The King.
N/A		Voting Form for the Golden Chalice Awards

JANUARY 1994

* DAZE MARKETING will be releasing a rather unusual survival simulation in February for the PC, Amiga and Atari ST computers. Set many light years in the future, ROBINSON'S REQUIEM is the ultimate test of endurance in an alien world. You, as government agent Robinson, are on a reconnaissance assignment when you discover the mission is a trap set by your own government. Your ship is dragged to an enormous prison, a kind of astral Alcatraz, and there is no escape. Carrying only a survival kit and micro-computer you land in a hostile jungle. If you are seriously hurt you may have to amputate your own limb to survive but you have all the necessary surgical equipment in your kit. There are 10 scenarios including a lunar volcano and an extraterrestrial village. Dinosaurs and fantastic hybrid monsters provide you with food and hides to make your own clothing in the ever changing climate. Prices to follow.

In April DAZE are also planning to release ISHAR 3. Formats and prices to follow.

* WoW SOFTWARE have announced the release of a new Steve Clay adventure THE FINAL DEMAND which will be the third in his TAXMAN series of games. Available for Amstrad 464/6128/PCW on disk (£4.00) or for Amstrad 464/6128 on tape (£2.00). All three games in the series may be purchased together on one disk (£6.00). They are THE TAXMAN COMETH (review on page U-31) TAX RETURNS (review on page D-218) and THE FINAL DEMAND.

* INTERPLAY have just released STAR TREK - JUDGEMENT RIGHTS for the PC (£44.99). There will possibly be a PC CD-ROM version next year.

The role-playing game STONEKEEP will not be released until June at the earliest.

LORD OF THE RINGS has been released for the PC CD-ROM (£44.99).

* At the end of January, VIRGIN INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT LIMITED will release Westwood Studios huge adventure THE HAND OF FATE for the PC (£39.99). This is the second game set in the land of Kyrandia and this time it is Zanthia, the youngest mystic of Kyrandia who has to lift a curse that is causing Kyrandia to gradually disappear. There are no other formats planned.

The PC CD-ROM version of LANDS OF LORE will be released at the beginning of February (£44.99). (Reviewed on page D-245).

An Amiga A1200 version of BENEATH A STEEL SKY is due to be released in February (£29.99).

* ELECTRONIC ARTS have just released a SYNDICATE DATA DISK which contains 20 extra missions for the PC (£19.99).

STRIKE COMMANDER is in the shops now for the PC CD-ROM. This version includes the 3 different packs that have been released for the game including all the missions and an enhanced speech pack. There is also a new introduction sequence. (£49.99).

Another recent release is the chess game KASPAROV'S GAMBIT, in which you can pit your wits against 37 computer opponents. The game uses 11 meg of hard disk space and needs at least a 386 PC to run. Price (£44.99) PC only. No other formats are planned at the moment.

The THREE-SIXTY PACIFIC war game V FOR VICTORY 4, entitled GOLD-JUNO-SWORD also from ELECTRONIC ARTS is out now for the PC (£39.99). There are 7 scenarios plus a full campaign with this game which deals with the Normandy landings of June 1944. No other formats are planned.

A PC CD-ROM version of SHADOWCASTER is due for release in March, price to follow. (Reviewed on page D-250).

* SIERRA have announced they are now distributing all COKTEL VISION titles in the U.K.

There will be a PC CD-ROM version of GABRIEL KNIGHT available from SIERRA shortly (£44.99).

COKTEL VISION'S futuristic action adventure INCA II is out now for the PC (£34.99) and PC CD-ROM (£54.99). The game is interspersed with cinematic sequences, and features digitised speech and fractal landscapes.

* The bi-monthly all format fanzine GOBLIN GAZETTE has stopped publication.

* MAXIS are releasing SIMCITY 2000 sometime in January. There are many factors involved when building a Metropolis especially with competition from neighbouring towns. You can dig underground tunnels for traffic and subway systems, lay water pipes to homes and businesses, and build marinas, prisons, freeways and hospitals if your budget allows. Your cities are all shown in 3D with 3 different zoom settings, with an option to import your existing cities for upgrading. Available for PC and MAC (£39.99).

Have you ever wanted to create your own artificially mutated monsters? In UNNATURAL SELECTION you dabble in gene splicing to create an army that will defeat a twisted scientist with a mutated army of her own. Available for the PC sometime this month.

* RIVER ADVENTURES have released THEME PARK U.K. (reviewed on page D-253) for the Commodore 64 tape or disk (£2.50). See page S-55 for the special discount offer to our members.

* TFX - TACTICAL FIGHTER EXPERIMENT from OCEAN SOFTWARE is out now for the PC (£44.99) and PC CD-ROM (£49.99). In this flight simulation you take control of a Eurofighter 2000, Lockheed F-22 and Lockheed F-117 Stealth Fighters over an area of 7 million square km. The game has fast 3D movie-like graphics. There will be Amiga A1200 version (£34.99) and an Amiga CD32 version (£34.99) both released in February.

OCEAN have also released several new titles on their HIT SQUAD label. POWERMONGER for the PC, Amiga and Atari ST (£14.99); BLACK CRYPT (reviewed on page D-165) for Amiga only (£12.99); BIRDS OF PREY for PC and Amiga (£14.99); MAGIC CANDLE II, ULTIMA IV, WING COMMANDER and CHUCK YEAGER'S AIR COMBAT all for PC only (£14.99).

* FSF ADVENTURES are in the final playtest stages with their next text adventure REVENGE OF THE SPACE PIRATES. It is hoped that it will be released in time for Christmas on Spectrum tape, disk and Plus D disk. Details and prices to follow.

* The PC version of HIRED GUNS from PSYGNOSIS has now been released (£39.99).

There will be a PC CD-ROM version of INNOCENT UNTIL CAUGHT in March. Price to follow.

The PC version of DRACULA, an atmospheric scrolling adventure game which uses the same game engine as WOLFENSTEIN, is in the shops now (£39.99). A PC CD-ROM version will be released sometime in June. The Amiga DRACULA is a platform adventure and a different style of game altogether.

* MIRAGE are releasing QQP's MERCHANT PRINCE which is the first of a new series of games for the PC entitled MASTERS OF THE WORLD. This game is a period simulation set in Venice. The ultimate goal in the game is to become the wealthiest Venetian faction when the game ends (£44.99).

* BINARY ZONE PD has taken over most of the Commodore 64 titles previously distributed by THE GUILD, at prices ranging from £1.00 to £4.00. If you would like the latest full list of games please write to Jason Mackenzie, Binary Zone PD, 34 Portland Road, Droitwich, Worcs WR9 7QW, or telephone 0905 779274.

* US GOLD have released two excellent role-playing game compilations for the PC. Both compilations are £45.99. THE EYE TRILOGY contains EYE OF THE BEHOLDER I, II and III. The second compilation is THE WIZARDRY TRILOGY which comprises WIZARDRY V, VI and VII.

THE ELDER SCROLLS - ARENA is Chapter One in a new series of role-playing games set in a colossal fantasy world with over 400 cities and towns to explore. The game, which features 360 degree movement and full-screen 3D smooth scrolling should be in the shops any day now. PC only (£42.99).

* The following games have been released on the KIXX XL budget label:

ZAK MCKRACKEN & THE ALIEN MINDBENDERS, ROBIN HOOD, NIGHT SHIFT, CYBERCON III, MIDWINTER, FUTURE WARS, GUNSHIP, MANIAC MANSION and PIRATES (£12.99). CRUISE FOR A CORPSE, ANOTHER WORLD, M1 TANK PLATOON, OPERATION STEALTH, and BATTLEHAWKS 1942 (£14.99) and THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND, KNIGHTS OF THE SKY, F15 STRIKE EAGLE II, F19 STEALTH FIGHTER, and MIDWINTER II (£16.99). All of the above are available for the PC, Amiga, and Atari ST computers. EYE OF THE BEHOLDER and LINKS are for the PC and Amiga only, (£16.99). INDIANA JONES & THE LAST CRUSADE-THE GRAPHIC ADVENTURE for PC (£15.99), Amiga and Atari ST (£14.99). WORLD CLASS LEADER BOARD-THE SERIES for PC only (£12.99).

Clue books are also available for THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND and EYE OF THE BEHOLDER (£9.99), LOOM and INDIANA JONES & THE LAST CRUSADE (£5.99).

* DIGITAL INTEGRATION's new flight simulation TORNADO is available now for the PC (£44.99) and PC CD-ROM (£49.99). There will also be an Amiga version (£34.99) and probably an Atari version will follow. In TORNADO you can either fly alone, or lead a formation of 6 tornado's in 1 or 2 player mode.

* MICROPROSE have released their futuristic submarine simulation SUB WARS 2050 where you can drive a mercenary submarine as 2 rival corporations battle it out underwater. For the PC (£44.99).

Also out now is MASTER OF ORION, which is basically CIVILIZATION set in vast empires. There is a huge galaxy out there with options of between 24 to 114 solar systems. You must create an empire that will span the galaxy by creating and terraforming the land, colonising, and clearing waste to make it ecologically sound. Available on PC (£44.99). An Amiga version will follow.

DRAGONSPHERE is a KINGS QUEST type of adventure game that is actually two games in one, with a weird twist. Due in February for the PC (£44.99). There will also be a PC CD-ROM version. Details to follow.

* ZENOBI SOFTWARE have released a new batch of games for the Spectrum computer. The Amiga versions come with a free built in emulator and are suitable for A500, A500+, A600 and A1200 computers. Prices are Spectrum tape and Plus D disk (£2.49), +3 disk (£3.49) and Amiga (£2.49). Please see page S-55 for ordering details.

A SERPENTINE TALE by Diane Rice begins as you are taking a well deserved rest after your adventures in THE BLACK TOWER. What better than a sea voyage to the city of Hiarken, renowned for its exotic food and great night-life. The voyage went well until the third day when a great storm arose. Fortunately you had taken shelter in a small boat that had been on deck for repairs and as your ship went down with all hands you were washed overboard to begin a great adventure.

In PERSEUS by Dennis F. Francombe you enter the world of mythology. Polydectes, king of the land known as Seriphos, holds a grudge against Perseus and has a cunning plan to get rid of the boy by demanding the gift of a horse from all his subjects knowing that Perseus has no horse to give. The young man offers the king anything else he might desire. The king asks for the head of Medusa knowing many have tried before and never returned. This game features a built in option where you can glean data on almost every character in the game.

THE LABOURS OF HERCULES by Terry Taylor is another game set in mythological times. Hercules has to undertake 12 'labours' before he can regain his freedom. In his quest he will meet the fearsome Hydra, Cerberus, the terrible dog who guards the way into the underworld, and the legendary Cretan Bull, as he sails the mighty oceans and crosses swamps and plains to complete his quests.

Following hard on the heels of THEME PARK UK (reviewed on page D-253) comes THEME PARK USA by Jack Lockerby. After the success of the English Theme Park, the Americans now want one of their own, so off you go to have a look (if you can solve the puzzles) at Yellowstone Park, The Rocky Mountains, New York and of course Hollywood.

THE FINAL DEMAND is the third game by Steve Clay in which you play a tax collector with a new bunch of tax evaders to pit your wits against. Can you convince them to cough up the readies? Not an easy task by any means. Available on Spectrum tape and Plus D disk (£2.49), +3 disk (£3.49).

ZENOBI SOFTWARE sell a large range of compilations and single games at very reasonable prices. Also there are so many Spectrum text adventures that have now been converted to the Amiga it would be advisable to write frequently for the latest list to Zenobi Software at the address on page A-14.

* PRISM LEISURE CORPORATION PLC have released five compilations on their HITS FOR 6 label for the PC CD-ROM (£29.99).

Volume 1. F19 STEALTH FIGHTER, TITUS THE FOX, GRAND PRIX MASTER, SATAN, CHICAGO 90 and STAR GOOSE.

Volume 2. F15 STRIKE EAGLE 2, THE BLUES BROTHERS, HAMMER BOY, HIGHWAY PATROL 2, HOTSHOTS and EYE OF HORUS.

Volume 3. GUNSHIP, CRAZY CASTLE 3, AIRBALL, STAR RAY, MEGA PHOENIX, and ARCHIPELAGOS.

Volume 4. M1 TANK PLATOON, M14 TOM CAT, BATTLETECH 2, SLOTS & CARDS, PENTYS and SCRVLIS.

Volume 5. KNIGHTS OF THE SKY, BATTLETECH 2, GHOSTBUSTERS 2, FIGHT PALACE, TIME BANDIT and FLASHY CARS.

They will all be coming out on other formats shortly.

* IMPRESSIONS have released their Civil War simulation THE BLUE AND THE GRAY. This historically accurate game uses a simple point and click windows type interface for issuing orders, and real-time battle scenes with up to 200 animated figures per battle. The game map stretches from the Mid-West to the East Coast, and from Florida up to New York. For the PC (£39.99). An Amiga version will be released any day now (£34.99).

IMPRESSIONS have also just released a huge multi-player conquest simulation game based on the board game Risk. In GLOBAL DOMINATION you can take on many of history's giant figures like Napoleon, Genghis Khan and Lincoln, each of them having their own unique personalities and playing style. The game objective is to build up and strategically place huge armies before attacking the enemy. GLOBAL DOMINATION is turn-based and features 1 or 2 player mode and modem play. You can build alliances and pacts, and use spies to see what your enemy is up to. The game has state of the art graphics and real-time tactical battles. Available for PC (£39.99) and Amiga (£34.99). There may be a CD-ROM version later.

Future releases are AIRFORCE COMMANDER for the PC, due for release in February (£34.99). Details to follow.

BREACH 3 due early March for the PC (£39.99) and Amiga £34.99).

There will also be a two game pack due to be released in February containing CAESAR and COHORT 2 for the CD32 (£29.99).

BENEATH A STEEL SKY

FROM : Revolution/Virgin
CATEGORY: Adventure
VERSION : PC (386 VGA), A1200
FORMAT : Disk
PRICE : £39.99 (PC), £29.99 (A1200)
REVIEWER: Cal Jones on PC

BENEATH A STEEL SKY is set in Australia in the near future and starts when Robert Foster, an outcast who lives in a barren area called the Gap, is kidnapped by security forces from a nearby city. When their helicopter crashes, Robert manages to survive only to find himself trapped in the city and hunted by armed guards. Why do they want him and how can he escape?

The city is divided up into different levels, with working class citizens confined to the upper walkways and the rich living lower down. Each citizen has been issued with a card which allows them access to areas appropriate to their status, so Robert's first aim is to find a card. He is also accompanied by Joey, an intelligent robot, and Joey plays a part in many of the game's puzzles. Most of the problems are very logical, rather than the sort of wacky puzzles you'll find in the LucasArts games. BENEATH A STEEL SKY isn't a frustratingly difficult game, but it's challenging enough to keep you going for a while and I found it quite satisfying to play.

The graphics are really outstanding, and this definitely gets my vote for best looking game of the year. The artwork has been supplied by Dave Gibbons, a comic artist who has illustrated Watchmen, Rogue Trooper and Give Me Liberty, amongst others. The colours are subtle, unlike all those cartoon style games we've been seeing of late, and the background detail is incredible.

The interface is very easy to use. Click on an object with the left button to examine it; click with the right button to use it. Actions are always appropriate to the object, so if you click on a door it will open, or if you click on a person you can talk to them. The inventory appears when you move the cursor to the top of the screen, so the graphics are full screen throughout the game.

BENEATH A STEEL SKY is one of the most impressive adventures around, with enough difficulty, size and humour to satisfy most people. It's beautifully presented, and whilst it isn't as accessible as, say, MONKEY ISLAND, you'll find yourself getting drawn in with every unexpected twist in the plot. A great game and, hey, it's British, too. Definitely one to add to your shopping list.

ATMOSPHERE : 18/20
VOCABULARY : N/A
PSR : 18/20

GRAPHICS : 19/20
PUZZLES : 17/20
STAR RATING : ***

RETURN TO ZORK

FROM : Infocom/Activision
CATEGORY: Graphic Adventure with speech
VERSION : PC (386 Hard disk and VGA required), CD-ROM
FORMAT : Disk
PRICE : £45.99 (PC), £49.99 (CD-ROM)
REVIEWER: Hugh Walker on PC

From its irritating beginning to its really tacky ending this game demonstrates that the return of INFOCOM and ZORK to a computer screen near you is not necessarily a thing of joy to gladden the heart.

The sound and the graphics are stupendous, the music creates a nice sense of atmosphere in some places, but it irritates the %&!! out of you in others and often makes the overlaid speech quite incomprehensible until you turn the music off, and then you miss the atmosphere!

Some of the puzzles are even quite intriguing and the method of collecting information by tape recorder and camera is quite original ...BUT... you have to hawk round your sound bites and holiday snaps to the denizens of this Other Zork along with your map and the contents of your inventory, in the hope of prompting a reaction which might just give you a clue as to what on earth is going on, let alone what you are supposed to do next. This tedious process is more often than not greeted by utter indifference. There are a few attempts to emulate the ironic humour once offered by Infocom, but even this is strangely out of place given the sinister "plot".

What is missing is any attempt in the game design to give the player a clear sense of direction in which to follow the various puzzles in any sort of logical sequence which would then allow the plot to unfold as a story. Sometimes I found my actions rewarded with points when I had only done it because I could not think of anything else to do, but most of the time it was only my stubborn refusal to be defeated that prevented me from deleting the game from my drive out of sheer frustration.

The game boasts 99 possible saves which is just as well since the game design is such that you probably won't know what something was for until you cannot get back to it or that you have done something that prevents you doing something else which with hindsight suggests that you should have done before!

My advice is play a borrowed copy and offer sympathy to whoever paid money for this insult to the memory of Infocom.

ATMOSPHERE : 15/20
VOCABULARY : 18/20
PSR : 12/20

GRAPHICS : 15/20
PUZZLES : 16/20
STAR RATING : *

RETURN TO ZORK

FROM : Infocom/Activision
CATEGORY : Graphic Adventure with Speech
VERSION : PC (386 Hard Disk and VGA required), CD-ROM
FORMAT : CD-ROM
PRICE : £45.99 (PC), £49.99 (CD-ROM)
REVIEWER : Iain Mackenzie on CD-ROM

Well, this game seems to be causing some controversy, and differences of opinion! As the floppy disk version of RETURN TO ZORK is reviewed somewhere else in this pack, I will bypass any introductions, and get right down to the nitty gritty. Let me say, straight-away, that I loved RETURN TO ZORK. It had me hooked from the first totally illogical puzzle, all the way to the cringe-worthy ending! Fortunately, it does not make any great hardware demands, but a fast CD-ROM drive does take a lot of the loading time pain away.

I have played both the floppy disk and CD-ROM versions of the game, so it would be useful to highlight the main differences between them. Firstly, the standard of presentation is significantly different. The speech and digitised sounds are occasionally muffled and difficult to make out on the floppy version, but on CD the speech is perfect. The graphics on CD are not only more detailed with more colours and more animation from the characters, but you actually move from location to location, in place of the flip screen approach of the floppy version.

The music on CD is simply stunning! There is a full CD stereo audio soundtrack for each major location. (You can even play the disc in the car if you want!). Quite frankly, this is the best quality sound I have yet to hear in a PC game, taking full advantage of the CD medium. RETURN TO ZORK is a far cry from its text-based predecessors - of which there is a spoof in the CD introduction. The new mouse-driven interface works perfectly, with all commands being actioned by a right click to bring up the various options, and a left click to action your choice.

Now, to the game itself. I agree with those who say that the frustration level is very high at times - in fact, I would have rated RETURN TO ZORK a 3 star game had it not been for one or two outrageously impossible puzzles. As a whole, it is an immensely enjoyable game with a lot of lateral thinking required, and a great deal of satisfaction to be had by solving the many and varied challenges. I would, however, recommend that, before anyone embarks on the challenge, they should make sure that they know somebody who has finished the game to help out in moments of extreme frustration. Thanks, Hugh!

ATMOSPHERE : 18/20
PLAYABILITY : 17/20
PSR : 18/20

GRAPHICS : 18/20
PUZZLES : 17/20
STAR RATING : **

SHADOWCASTER

FROM : Electronic Arts/Origin
CATEGORY : Role-playing game
VERSION : PC (4MB required)
FORMAT : Disk
PRICE : £45.99
REVIEWER : Hugh Walker

SHADOWCASTER is another of those games which infuriated me at first. However, once I abandoned trying to move using the keyboard and had got the hang of controlling movement and combat via left and right mouse buttons, I found that I was inextricably hooked and my persistence was rewarded by a week of intense pain and pleasure.

The pain comes from the tension provided by not knowing what is going to hit you next - and by the creepy music! The pleasure comes from the rush of adrenalin when you discover the former, followed by a sense of achievement and satisfaction when you have survived. Fortunately (for the sake of sanity) most monsters do not wander about much and once an area is cleared it remains safe. Thus, having moved into unexplored territory and all-hell having broken loose it is possible to break off combat and run away to a safe area to wait while POWER and HEALTH restore without too much danger of "Something nasty" following you.

You start as a Human but as you progress you are granted the ability to morph into six different life-forms. Each creature has unique abilities and a large part of the strategy of the game consists of deciding which form is best suited to survival in the next part of the game. Although the game logic is such that your latest acquisition will be put to the test very soon after finding it, it is not exclusively so. Only the Human-form can restore POWER by waiting. In fact all others cost POWER to maintain so you must change back to Human eventually; if you leave it too late and run out of POWER you change back automatically - which could be unfortunate if the current circumstances are not conducive to Human survival.

Getting started is simplicity itself - no characters or attributes to select, however the game does begin with "Something nasty" rushing towards you. This is quite effective copy protection since, without having read the manual, you may not survive very long if you are trying to work out the combat controls by trial and error.

Although the game only took 4 evenings to complete once I had it under control, they were quite long evenings and were highly charged with a constant level of tension which I haven't experienced anything quite like since CAPTIVE.

ATMOSPHERE : 19/20
PLAYABILITY : 18/20
PSR : 19/20

STRATEGY : 18/20
PUZZLES : 15/20
STAR RATING : ***

SIMON THE SORCERER

FROM : Adventure Soft
CATEGORY: Adventure
VERSION : PC, Amiga, A1200
FORMAT : Disk
PRICE : £39.99 (PC), £34.99 (Amiga, A1200)
REVIEWER: Cal Jones on PC

Simon is celebrating his 14th birthday when he hears a knock at the door. Much to his surprise, the caller turns out to be a small dog carrying a book, but when Simon reads it he finds himself transported to a magical land populated by goblins, dwarves and wizards. He discovers that he has, in fact, been summoned by the good wizard Calypso, who has himself been kidnapped by arch-villain, Sordid the Sorcerer.

SIMON THE SORCERER's main aim is to find Calypso, but there are many other tasks to perform along the way. First of all he must get himself enrobed in the wizards' guild, and that involves finding the staff of Nafflin the Necromancer, another unsavoury character. With its numerous plots and quests, this game is far from easy to solve, so don't expect to complete it in a couple of days. The puzzles are often challenging, and I got myself stuck quite a few times. The only problem is that it's frequently difficult to spot objects, because you have to be pixel perfect. Otherwise, this game doesn't have too many faults.

SIMON THE SORCERER is similar in style to games like MONKEY ISLAND and DAY OF THE TENTACLE. It has a very similar point and click interface, and the controls are fairly intuitive. One nice feature is the map, which allows you to go to locations you've already visited without the hassle of trudging backwards and forwards all the time.

The graphics are wonderful too: bright, colourful and beautifully drawn. The music complements this perfectly, and overall it's one of the best presented adventures I've seen this year. Thankfully, it's not just a pretty face and there's plenty of gameplay underneath the surface. One of the best things about Simon is the humour. It pokes fun at the fantasy genre, (at one point you must gatecrash the Tolkein Appreciation Society's annual bash), and you'll find jokes about Rapunzel, Jack and the Beanstalk, Three Billy Goats Gruff and other fairy tales. You won't exactly split your sides, but you'll definitely have the odd smile or two.

I'd definitely recommend this game to anyone who enjoys a good adventure. The difficulty level is spot on, it looks great and it's a lot of fun. What more could anyone want?

ATMOSPHERE	: 16/20	GRAPHICS	: 18/20
VOCABULARY	: N/A	PUZZLES	: 17/20
PSR	: 17/20	STAR RATING	: **

DARK SUN: SHATTERED LANDS

FROM : US Gold/SSI
CATEGORY: Role-playing game
VERSION : PC (386, VGA), CD-ROM
FORMAT : Disk
PRICE : £45.99
REVIEWER: Geoff Hyman on PC

The world of Athas is no paradise. Evil wizards have turned the planet into huge basins of silt, evaporated the seas, and reduced the sun to a dull crimson glow. Distorted by magic and the new harsh conditions, hideous monsters have evolved, forcing humanity into secure citadels, under conditions of near slavery. To add insult to injury, the oppressors are the very evil wizards who caused the ecological catastrophe in the first place! Outside the walls of the citadel are a few isolated villages inhabited by escaped slaves, who scratch a meagre and precarious living from the wastelands. You command a party of characters and start the game as slaves/gladiators who must defeat a series of monsters in the city's arena. Eventually, you escape from the city-state of Drajj and have to recruit the villages to help defeat Drajj's evil army.

Athas forms the backdrop and provides the storyline for DARK SUN. The scenario has already been developed by TSR Inc via a number of Advanced Dungeons and Dragons table-top role-playing game modules and in a series of paper-back books. The game follows AD&D 2nd Edition rules but, unlike the earlier gold box series, has an entirely new game engine which requires a 386 processor to run. The freshness of the game format is one of its main strengths, but may also be connected with some minor software bugs which did not spoil my enjoyment of an excellent game. Save often, particularly just before combats.

The interface can be operated entirely by mouse but keyboard controls are also available if desired. The playing area fills the entire screen, the scenery is attractive and varied, and there is a very handy mapping and exploration facility. There are a number of sub-quests but there are only one or two puzzles that force you to stop and think. Instead DARK SUN concentrates on combat and gaining experience points. It is very easy to control the characters, even to the extent of allowing them to pass weapons to each other in mid-combat! The monsters are just tough enough to give you a good fight but not too strong to yield to persistence and good tactics. The game supports a vast variety of magic spells, but it is rarely necessary to make use of them. This is rather a waste of this central component of the AD&D genre. Nevertheless, a plausible story, nice graphics and a great interface combine to make DARK SUN good enough to get me well and truly addicted. More please!

ATMOSPHERE : 17/20
PLAYABILITY : 18/20
PSR : 17/20

STRATEGY : 14/20
PUZZLES : 13/20
STAR RATING : **

THEME PARK U.K.

FROM : Jack Lockerby/Zenobi Software
CATEGORY: Adventure
VERSION : Spectrum 48, Commodore 64, Commodore Amiga
FORMAT : Tape or disk
PRICE : £2.49 (Spectrum tape), £3.49 (+3 disk), £2.50 (C64 tape or disk), £2.49 (Amiga disk including free Spectrum emulator)
REMARKS : Spectrum and Amiga versions available from Zenobi Software, C64 version available from River Software
REVIEWER: Sue Roseblade on Spectrum

The year is 2050 and you are standing outside the entrance to a theme park. However, this park has no candyfloss, cartoon characters or white-knuckle rides. Instead you are thrown into real-life situations where you must use all your skill and intelligence just to survive, returning to the main exit at the end of the day uninjured and carrying five treasure objects.... EuroDisney it ain't!

The park has several sections which you may enter and leave as often as you wish, using the token (with a limited number of turns) provided for you at the start. The locations are reminiscent of a safari park setting, with forests, lakes, elephant grass and caves, plus a sprinkling of hostile wild animals. You do not, however, have the safety of your car from which to explore - in fact you don't even have any clothes on to start with!

This adventure is packed with excellent, brain stretching puzzles. The order in which you tackle them is part of the dilemma, as many of the objects can be used in several ways, some of which may be totally wrong and may render the object unusable later when you really need it. All the familiar adventuring ingredients are here; a torch which goes out after a number of turns, a backpack in which to carry objects when you need to keep your hands free, feet which get too sore if you can't find any boots and things which disappear for good if you don't jump on them in time! The game is extremely well designed and devious, for example there are at least five different ways to kill the giant spider but only one will allow you to gain the necessary benefit. I had only one minor moan - the usual one I'm afraid. A couple of the inputs are very precise and rather unfair, eg. WEAR VINE AROUND NECK.

This is a lovely adventure. It had me screaming with frustration throughout, culminating in the horrendous experience of arriving back at the main exit with 100% and my five treasures, only to find that my turnstile token had expired and I couldn't get out! Jack Lockerby is truly on form with this one. Don't miss it!

ATMOSPHERE : 16/20
VOCABULARY : 14/20
PSR : 17/20

GRAPHICS : N/A
PUZZLES : 17/20
STAR RATING : **

SPYSNATCHER

FROM : Topologika Software
CATEGORY: Adventure
VERSION : BBC, CPC, PCW, PC, Nimbus, Atari ST
FORMAT : Disk
PRICE : £15.00
REVIEWER: Sharon Harwood on Atari ST

Welcome, Agent 3084... You have been summoned to M17 headquarters, popularly known as 'The Zoo', in order to unmask a mole. The chief, Sir Arthur Cayley, is extremely worried. The plans for the new Sonic Macrothrodule are believed to have been leaked. They were kept in the safe in his office and were there yesterday when he came in at 9.00 am. The safe had been disturbed when he checked it in the morning but the plans were still there.

Having been given your briefing you are left alone to search the building, undetected of course, and discover the identity of the mole. Avoiding the security guard will be your biggest worry but access to some rooms will pose interesting problems and piecing the evidence together results in several pages of scribbled notes. I enjoy a good detective style game and personally feel that the pages of notes add to the atmosphere. However, the strict timing involved did become a little tedious and I dislike the 'mental posers' involved in some of the puzzles. One, involving the Saints and their days of the year, was totally beyond me and I was forced to refer to the on-line help. This was my first Topologika game and quite different to the majority of games I have previously played. I found the on-line help invaluable but did become a little impatient at the lack of response from the game itself. Discounting the clues given as to the mole him/herself there was little in the way of subtle hints to the puzzles posed. The 'examine' command was of practically no help and on several occasions I was forced to refer to the hints and gather more information than I would have liked. Coupling this with the fact that timing is essential, I found I was forced to completely restart the game because I hadn't done things in the right order or hadn't left something in the right place. This became a little aggravating near the climax.

On the whole I would say that the game gave a good balance between real puzzles and the ultimate goal of finding the mole. Despite the fact that my lack of experience in Topologika games made everything seem that bit more difficult, I would have to say that the adventure was compelling and even a number of restarts (completely scrubbing all of my saved games) did little to hinder my determination to discover the mole's identity and complete my mission. A difficult game for those unfamiliar to Topologika but I'm sure their fans will not be disappointed.

ATMOSPHERE: 18/20
VOCABULARY: 15/20
PSR : 16/20

GRAPHICS : N/A
PUZZLES : 17/20
STAR RATING: *

FANTASY EMPIRES

FROM : US Gold/SSI
CATEGORY: Strategy
VERSION : PC (Hard Disk, 4MB, 386, VGA required)
FORMAT : Disk
PRICE : £35.99 (PC)
REVIEWER: Geoff Hyman

FANTASY EMPIRES is a wargame in the same Dungeons and Dragons series as STRONGHOLD, which we reviewed recently. However, the games were written by different authors and they bear little resemblance to each other. The main unique feature claimed for FANTASY EMPIRES is the incorporation of a computer Dungeon Master, who mediates throughout the game. The rich tones of the DMs voice summons you to the challenge. During the game the DM lurks at the top of the screen, his eyes following your every move, ready to congratulate you on your victories, offer unsolicited snippets of advice, and give you a post-mortem on which of your areas have been subject to enemy attacks and spell effects.

The rest of the game works like a fairly simple wargame, reminding one of games that were around several years ago, but with some stylish effects added. There are two types of game: scenarios and campaigns. The scenarios have pre-defined starting conditions which get you quickly into the game. There are quite a wide range of these scenarios, supporting multiple players in your alliance and amongst the opposition. Campaigns allow the player to create new characters as well as retaining characters with experience from previous games. When creating a character you can select character abilities and alignment and can even compose a short essay about the character's background. Is that cute or what? You can go on to create a small library of favourite characters, ready to haul into battle at the drop of the DMs hat. Or not.

All action takes place in the world of Mysteria - a location that I can't seem to recall from any TSR game modules or stories. The cartographic mysteries are resolved immediately, with the aid of a map of the Known World in the centre of the game manual. The gameplay consists of checking around the world map, buying buildings, training troops and invading nearby territories. With more land your income increases, letting you build more training facilities, but the ebb and flow of your finances can sometimes be hard to control. You can also send your heros off on seemingly pointless quests for arcane objects. When you get into combat the display switches to an unconvincing overhead view in which you can move one of the participants in a rather clumsy way around the battlefield. If you prefer, you can skip the fighting and let the computer decide on the result. Or you could skip the whole game.

ATMOSPHERE : 8/20
STRATEGY : 10/20
PSR : 8/20

PLAYABILITY : 12/20
PUZZLES : N/A
STAR RATING : ?

DUNGEON HACK

FROM : US Gold
CATEGORY : Role-playing Game
VERSION : PC
FORMAT : Disk
PRICE : £39.99
REVIEWER : Hazel Miller

DUNGEON HACK is a single character role-playing game that allows you to generate unlimited custom-made dungeons in the same style as SSI's EYE OF THE BEHOLDER games, all done very simply from one screen of options. It uses the same type of manual explaining all spells and statistics, and has a bestiary of over 50 monsters.

The character creation system gives you 32 male and female character portraits to choose from, each one showing a synopsis of their history, past deeds, and character, which is rather a nice touch. You can choose from fighter, paladin, ranger, mage, cleric, thief, and bard plus various multi-classes like fighter/mage/thief, from six races. There is also an option to re-roll the statistics until you are satisfied. You can have an easy, moderate, or hard game, plus a custom game where you can choose how many dungeons you required (from 10 to 25), the amount of monster activity, how much treasure and food you would like scattered around the dungeon, if you want pits and traps, a water level, magical zones, illusion walls, multi-level puzzles or on-screen hints.

The screen layout is very easy to manage. Your back pack holds 54 items with 18 showing on-screen at all times. A quick click revolves them around to the next 18 items so important things can be kept together in one of the slots for easy access. Part of the screen has a small living map that can be enlarged and printed, and shows all the illusion walls, monster activity and objects.

Every dungeon level has different graphics and all are very colourful. Some have stone walls and cobbled floors, others are very lavish and futuristic, and it is quite exciting to enter a new level to see the decor. Items found in the dungeons change to favour which character you choose to play with. A wizard hasn't many spells at first but there are lots of offensive wands lying around to help him through bad patches. A fighter finds good armour and weapons plus wands and scrolls. My favourite character was the Priest, a fairly good fighter to begin with who found lots of offensive wands. He could use his spells to cure himself during a hard battle and proved a good all-rounder.

This game is excellent value for money due to the long term appeal of creating endless dungeons and characters. It is also good fun.

ATMOSPHERE : 16/20
PLAYABILITY : 18/20
PSR : 17/20

STRATEGY : 15/20
PUZZLES : 14/20
STAR RATING : **

THE BLACK TOWER

FROM : Diane Rice/Zenobi Software
CATEGORY: Adventure
VERSION : Spectrum 48, Commodore Amiga
FORMAT : Tape or disk
PRICE : £2.49 (Spectrum tape or Plus D Disk), £3.49 (Spectrum
+3 disk), £2.49 (Amiga disk with free Spectrum emulator)
REVIEWER: Jenny Perry on Spectrum +3

Your task in this adventure is to find and destroy the Morjan Crystal, located in the infamous and sinister Black Tower.

You can explore the first 18 locations with ease. These include some native huts, a pool, a peaceful glade, a dark cave and an ancient oak tree. There are plenty of objects to be found but you have to look very carefully indeed and the uses for your items aren't always obvious. After solving a few tricky problems you will meet a grumpy goblin who will only be kind to you if you give him a present (sounds just like the children!). Later still you come across a point of no return, where you tumble down to a stony path beside a cold river near a waterfall. On the other side of the river you will find an exciting looking cave in which I perished many times before solving the puzzle. Thank goodness for RAMSAVE! You are now nearing the end of Part 1. Depending on what you are carrying, you will be given one of two passwords for Part 2 - needless to say only one of them will get you very far.

The beginning of Part 2 poses an interesting problem as you seem to be stuck on a ledge, with a sheer drop down a steep hole as your only visible exit. Having broken every bone in my body two or three times I finally hit on the ingenious solution and was ready to explore a little further. Getting completely stuck in a hidden temple, a quick phone call to a fellow adventurer sent me on my way to meet a giant Roc. He will take you for a ride if you know the correct command. You land in the Roc's nest and he flies away leaving you perched up a cliff with a sheer drop on all sides - I hope you have a head for heights!

Eventually, mentally exhausted, you will reach the Black Tower where you can destroy the crystal. There's a nice final twist to the game if you're not careful.

This is just my sort of game with plenty to do and interesting and varied puzzles. There aren't many sudden deaths - but I found them all! I also ground to a halt many times because I had not looked carefully enough in certain locations. This is Diane Rice's debut and her nicely devious style sets a good standard for her newly released follow-up game A SERPENTINE TALE.

ATMOSPHERE : 16/20
VOCABULARY : 15/20
PSR : 17/20

GRAPHICS : N/A
PUZZLES : 17/20
STAR RATING : **

SETTLEMENT XIII

FROM : Dreamworld Adventures
CATEGORY: Adventure
VERSION : Spectrum 48, Spectrum +3
FORMAT : Disk or tape
PRICE : £2.50
REVIEWER: Simon Husbands

Some games can leave you feeling frustrated, some can leave you feeling like you have achieved something, some can leave you cold. This one leaves you feeling all warm and cuddly, like the departure of an old friend! It has one of the best endings I have played for a while - a little soppy maybe but better than the usual "YOU HAVE JUST SAVED THE UNIVERSE" type of thing. A kind of Mills and Boon ending!

The plot. You are part of the drive to bring the peoples of the world together after nuclear holocaust. In the game your mission is to sort out some trouble in a settlement of survivors in Devon, so half the game is spent just getting there, the other half escaping to meet YOUR other half! (Play the game to understand). It is a PAW'd game and has all the usual stuff. There are some very nice little touches in the game which all add to the enjoyment - stuff like a diary you find. When you read it the screen changes and you can flip through the pages.

The puzzles are good. Not too tricky but hard enough to keep you on your toes. There is a lot of wandering around to find component parts, but as getting these requires a bit of brainwork I didn't mind the exercise. I got a bit lost at the beginning of the game. I seemed to have no clear purpose, but in this game certain commands are very important, so once I had the grasp of these I was off and running. In the old days all one had to do was EXAMINE everything. Now you have to LOOK and SEARCH and EXAMINE at least twice to make sure you've seen everything!

The plot was well thought out, and even though it was a little hokey in places I could believe the scenario. There's little interaction between characters but that's OK as most of the action can only be logically done on your own. Scenes were well described and there was a certain brooding atmosphere which I liked.

In places I found the vocabulary a little frustrating, but again I soon got the hang of what I was supposed to be doing. Often I expected some complicated solution which was not required. All in all I did enjoy the game very much. It is not going to change the world, but I found the whole experience very fluffy, pink and lovely.

ATMOSPHERE : 14/20
VOCABULARY : 13/20
PSR : 14/20

GRAPHICS : N/A
PUZZLES : 14/20
STAR RATING : *

DRACULA UNLEASHED

FROM : Viacom/Mindscape
CATEGORY: Strategy
VERSION : PC CD-ROM
FORMAT : CD-ROM
PRICE : £49-99
REVIEWER: Iain Mackenzie on CD-ROM

DRACULA UNLEASHED is the latest product in the range of 'interactive' software from Viacom, the creators of the Sherlock Holmes series of murder mysteries.

In DRACULA UNLEASHED, you play Alexander Morris, an American who has just arrived in London to solve the mystery of how his brother Quincy died, and ultimately to face and defeat(?) Dracula himself. This is achieved by unravelling a series of clues and events that happen over a period of 4 days. A useful aspect of the game is that, if you fail to complete any day, progress to the next cannot be made.

DRACULA UNLEASHED is described as an 'interactive movie' by Viacom. This is stretching a point, as the interaction is very limited. Having said that, it is considerably expanded compared to the Sherlock Holmes series. At least, in DRACULA UNLEASHED, you have an inventory which holds objects, which have to be held in hand at the right location in order for the plot to unfold. This is one of the limitations of DRACULA UNLEASHED: it is very much in the 'be in the right place at the right time' school of adventure. The plot is completely linear, which leads to frustration as all events have to be completed in the right order to succeed in defeating the evil Dracula.

The interface works very well, being both fast, functional and easily configurable. Movement between locations is by London cab (with an irritating chatty cabbie!), and there is a journal recording all important events, which can be accessed at any time to remind yourself of important clues. The quality of the Full Motion Video - both in terms of graphics and fluidity - is excellent if you excuse the rather silly American Cockney accents, and the speech is very clear indeed, which all adds to a rather creepy atmosphere.

All in all, DRACULA UNLEASHED is a great improvement over the Sherlock Holmes series, and the overall experience is one I would recommend. There are, though, many periods of frustration when you just don't seem to be able to get the sequence of events right, and continue to see the same teeth sink into your neck over and over again as you die for the umpteenth time!

ATMOSPHERE : 15/20
VOCABULARY : N/A
PSR : 16/20

GRAPHICS : 18/20
PUZZLES : 15/20
STAR RATING : **

NAPOLEONICS

FROM : On-Line Entertainment Ltd.
CATEGORY : Simulation
VERSION : PC, Amiga, CD-ROM
FORMAT : Disk
PRICE : £34.99
REVIEWER : Graham Perry on Amiga

NAPOLEONICS is as the title implies a simulation of 3 battles, namely Austerlitz (1805), Borodino (1812), and Waterloo (1815) historically representing victory and defeat respectively. The games were released as individual products around 4 years ago and were received as innovative and challenging. Although using Austerlitz as an example in this review the comments can equally be applied to the other two games as the game system has almost identical graphics, commands and implementation. Indeed, this lack of variety is one of the weaknesses of the compilation.

The key opening options are whether to view messages between generals who view the battlefield from different locations and whether to change historical orders. You play either or both Supreme Commanders giving a wide variety of orders to your Generals including battle actions (move, attack, defend, shell, retreat) plus support, report, transfer and strategy actions. The trouble about implementing these options is the use of a text input requiring very precise instructions. This takes a long time to become familiar with and makes progress very slow. Some of the orders are relatively straightforward eg "Lannes send me your battle reports" others require a complex though consistent formula. "Keimeyer at 11.30 am order Stutterheim to move 1 mile north". Since inputting orders is the main activity of the simulation, the end result is a course in word processing as well as historical battle. In my view a series of icons would have enhanced the game considerably since I found it hard to concentrate on strategy when I had to continually focus my attention of accurate input. Despite this and the age of the game there are several redeeming features which make NAPOLEONICS an attractive proposition for those interested in war games and its historical simulation.

Most games of this type give an overhead "God" perspective of the action. NAPOLEONICS uses the Supreme Commander's view of the changing battle field. Orders can take 30 minutes or 1 hour to reach a General if he is waging war two or three miles away. The "fog of war" element ie not knowing how things are proceeding in different parts of the battlefield and are therefore uncertain what action to take in several locations are the main attraction of NAPOLEONICS. Its prevailing sense of realism is, one senses, the author's main criteria in all three battles.

ATMOSPHERE : 11/20
PLAYABILITY : 9/20
PSR : 13/20

STRATEGY : 16/20
REALISM : 18/20
STAR RATING : ?

WoW SOFTWARE

Prior to 1989 Joan Pancott had been providing a helpline service for Amstrad owners, to get them out of jail, strike down dragons, grues or balrogs and generally to rescue them in their adventure games. It was becoming apparent however that support for the Amstrad CPC, in particular the reduction in the number of software suppliers for these machines, was beginning to cause a problem.

In 1990, therefore, Joan decided to start up a company to supply adventure games for the Amstrad CPC and PCW range of computers. The company was named WoW Software, derived from Witch Of Wessex.

The first adventures produced were three new games from Michael and Jane Trehwella, SIMPLY MAGIC, CRISPIN CRUNCHY and TIME. Since then, by dint of much phoning and encouragement, the stock has built up to around 60 games. Some two-thirds of these are new, the others re-released with permission of the original authors.

The catalogue is still slowly expanding as new games come along but this is a slow business - not helped by the fact that Joan insists that adventures are very thoroughly tested before publication. In this respect she enlists the services of the "Scottish Office", headed by Lorna Patterson, who is without doubt the best text adventure playtester in the country.

Joan Pancott has three times been awarded the title of Most Helpful Adventurer at the Adventurers' Convention in 1990, 1992 and 1993. The original Amstrad helpline is still running, as well as the ASC telephone helpline which she has run since 1990.

Also at these Conventions, WoW Software has won awards for Best Homegrown Adventure Company in 1992 and Best Independent Software House in 1993.

Amstrad author Steve Clay's game THE TAXMAN COMETH won the Golden Shield Award for Best 8-bit Adventure Game of 1992/1993.

As to the future, WoW Software will continue to release adventures on both tape and disk for Amstrad 464 and 6128 and on disk for the older PCW machines. By encouraging new authors and providing them with a reliable outlet for their games, it is hoped that the Amstrad adventure scene can be kept alive for as long as possible.

Overleaf is a full list of WoW Software titles that have been reviewed in the Reference Book Of Adventure:

<u>Title</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Page</u>
THE ANGELICUS SAGA	M & MJ Crewdson	013/U-7
ATALAN	Mandy Rodrigues	019/U-231
THE BIG TOP	M & MJ Crewdson	023/U-35
THE BLACK KNIGHT	Mandy Rodrigues	015/U-15
CRISPIN CRUNCHY	M & J Trehwella	011/D-78
DANGER! ADVENTURER AT WORK 2	Simon Avery	019/D-166
GRUE-KNAPPED!	Bob Adams	013/U-7
HELVERA - MISTRESS OF THE PARK	Bob Adams	020/D-187
THE LAST SNOWMAN	M & MJ Crewdson	022/U-33
PRISON BLUES	Simon Avery	020/U-27
TAX RETURNS	Steve Clay	022/D-218
THE TAXMAN COMETH	Steve Clay	021/U-31
A THIEF'S TALE	Simon Avery	021/U-31
TOTAL REALITY DELUSION	Simon Avery	020/U-27

An up-to-date list of all the titles currently available from WoW Software can be obtained by writing to the address on page A-14.

(January 1994)

UNLIMITED ADVENTURES

FROM : US Gold/SSI
CATEGORY : RPG Game Writing Utility
VERSION : IBM PC, Macintosh
PRICE : £35.99
ASSESSOR : Geoff Hyman

UNLIMITED ADVENTURES is a construction kit for fantasy role-playing games. The kit lets you build up a game with a general format similar to the Advanced Dungeons & Dragons 'Gold Box' series of games, with scenarios drawn from the extensive Forgotten Realms. The kit is up-to-date, incorporating the refinements to graphics and sound that have been made as the series has evolved. The kit is available in both PC and Mac formats. The PC version, reviewed here, runs on a 286 or better processor, requires a hard drive and VGA graphics and supports the AdLib, Soundblaster and Roland soundcards as well as a choice between mouse, joystick or keyboard operation.

In the box are three high capacity disks and a very detailed 120 page Designers Journal. The Journal has been very clearly written, and is essential reading whilst you are first trying out the features of the kit. After working through an example, you can put the manual down and start to create your own games. There is a short sample game included "The Heirs to Skull Crag", to give you the general idea. If you wish, this sample game can be used as the initial core of a trial game, extending it with your own sections.

The facilities offered by the kit are of better quality than others I have seen to date, and represent an advance on the BARD'S TALE CONSTRUCTION SET, reviewed on pages F-7/8. All of the facilities can be selected from menus and there is absolutely no need to understand computer programming, it is sufficient just to plan things logically and to test them step by step. Even with its simple and friendly interface, the format is flexible and produces high quality results. I found that my limited creative skills were more of a constraint than the facilities offered by UNLIMITED ADVENTURES. A sensible plan might be to write an entertaining fantasy story first, then use the kit to turn it into a game.

Each game consists of four basic components: Places, Events, Art and Characters. The tools for controlling these components are: the Map Editor, the Events Editor, the Art Gallery and the Monster Editor. The game mechanism can be easily tested. Finished or partly written adventures can be shared with other owners of the kit. This enables a small group of game designers to collaborate, each specialising in a different aspect of the game.

The Map Editor

Dungeon Levels are created and edited using the Map Editor. The game designer can define up to of 40 Dungeon Levels. Each level can contain up to 576 separate locations. (On this basis it should

be possible for a completed game to contain as many as 20,000 locations, but I have not tested this!)

In the map editor you can see both a 3D view inside the current location as well as an overhead view of several surrounding locations. A compass indicates the direction that your party of characters is facing. Your current grid position is also reported, making it easy to check computer designs against pre-drawn dungeon plans (ideally prepared on squared paper). The party can move around the level, and dungeon features can be placed at any location. These allow the designer to control the scenery that will be viewed and the events that take place.

The map can be selected from a variety of types, which include separate maps for the placement of walls, backdrops and events. There is also the very handy option of allowing the party to move through solid walls, whilst the map is being tested. Maps are provided for displaying and editing the entry and exit points from the level show the locations that are currently accessible.

There are many different types of wall style including solid walls, secret passages, locked doors, stairways and fireplaces, made in different materials e.g. rock, rough stone, smooth plaster, rough wood, smooth wood and metal. The placement of walls is very simple. Just move to location where you want a wall, Select the style you want from a menu then click on Place, Left or Right. This makes it simple to create corridors e.g. by clicking on Left and Right, moving forward and repeating.

The overhead view shows the exact details of each type of wall at each location, using a neat system of colour coding. At the same time you can also see the 3D straight-ahead view, a graphical sample of the current wall style and text descriptions of the styles of the walls in front of and to each side of your current location. If the designer does not like a change that has just been made it is a simple matter. Click on the UNDO button.

When some progress has been made the current design can be saved to disk, ready for reloading in case a major mess is about to be made. However it is hard to go far wrong as everything is so easy to control and check. There are even facilities for making 'global replacement' of dungeon detail for pre-defined blocks of locations. These enable refinements to be made in an efficient and reliable manner to designs that have already been well developed. There are also built-in checks to help you avoid deleting the results of earlier design work.

The map editor enables events to be tested. When combat occurs there is a very useful option for winning the fight outright. This helps considerably to speed up the development of the rest of the game. Of course, this particular option does not appear when a completed game is played!

The Event Editor

Once the designer selects the option to place an event at a given map location, the Event Editor module is invoked. There is a wide selection of different types of event, including adding Non-Player Characters to the party, combat, camping, training, visiting towns and shops, answering questions, collecting items of treasure and using stairs or teleports. There is a pro-forma for each of these event types. This allows, for example, text messages to be displayed with detailed options that are specific to each type of event. The designer only needs to fill in an option where it differs from a default setting, making it easy to repeat commonly occurring events.

One particular event type illustrates the flexibility of UNLIMITED ADVENTURES, referred to as a Chain Event. The options here include a test for the event to occur, depending on all sorts of different conditions. Examples of these conditions are: whether the party hold a certain item, whether they have completed a certain quest, which direction they are facing, if they are searching or detecting traps, whether they can see invisible items and even if it is day or night. Each such event in a Chain Event can be followed by another event, and this process can be repeated. This would permit an able designer to set up multiple combat rounds, detailed conversations and complex puzzles.

The Art Gallery

Entering the Art Gallery gives the game designer access to a veritable cornucopia of pre-drawn images, all of high quality and many containing animation. There are several different image types available, depending on the way they are incorporated into the game. The basic image type is the Picture, a close-up image that fills one quarter of the screen. This could be used, for example, at the start of a combat event or during a conversation. There are dozens of different pictures of the various monsters and friendly characters with lots of nice original artwork as well as old favourites from previous Forgotten Realms scenarios. Another image type is the Sprite. This displays a monster in the near, middle or far distance, in the 3D view straight-ahead, together with surrounding dungeon walls. These can be used to display the approach of an enemy in stages, prior to possible combat.

Another type of image are Combat Icons, which show the monsters in the isometric perspective views used during fighting. There is also the Big Picture, which fills the entire screen, handy for depicting major events, and Overland Maps, which provide one of the available means for getting from one Dungeon Level to another. There are also a number of dungeon Wall Sets and Backdrops, for setting the atmosphere during dungeon exploration.

Game designers can also incorporate new artwork into their games. Using images in either Deluxe Paint or PC Paintbrush formats, games can include customised Pictures, Sprites, Combat Icons and

Big Pictures. To assist in this, Template files are provided for each format and type of image. These contain instructions for creating the image, the frames into which they must fit, and the colour palettes that can be used. A total of 256 'colour slots' are available, but each type of image uses a different set of colour slots. There is provision for a 'transparent' colour, useful for creating animations for combat icons and sprites against the dungeon background.

The Monster Editor

This lets the game designer define suitable monsters for use in the game. Again there are a host of different features that can be customised. A new monster must, of course, be given the name which it will be called when used elsewhere in the design. The character might be a true monster or a human character. Either could be male or female and have alignments Lawful, Neutral or Chaotic and Good, Neutral or Evil. A human character's class can be selected from amongst: Fighter, Paladin, Cleric, Mage, Thief or Ranger, or it can be one of nine different mixed-class characters.

The character can be given any number of Hit Points or Age, can be given a customised Level, and can have the standard AD&D Abilities: Strength, Intelligence, Wisdom, Dexterity, Constitution and Charisma. In addition, a monsters behaviour during combat can be tailored as well as its attack, defence and mobility ratings. Changes can also be made to the items held by the characters as well as their all-important spellcasting abilities. All of the Forgotten Realms monsters are already in the game, including Spiders and Zombies, Dragons and Beholders, Elementals and Giants, plus dozens of human adversaries and Non Player Characters.

The designer can make use of a variety of different types of item, including Weapons, Armour, Rings, Wands, Potions, Scrolls and Special Items. Taken together, this results in an immense choice of different individual items. The spells available cover the full range that arise in the Forgotten Realms, providing Clerical spells up to level seven, Mage spells up to level nine, and three levels of Druid spell. All the favourites are there such as: Magic Missile, Stinking Cloud and Fireball as well as the higher level spells of Mass Invisibility and Monster Summoning.

Completing the Game Design

Once all of the dungeon levels are mapped out, any new images imported and all of the events, characters and monsters determined, and each of the parts fully tested, it is time to put the finishing touches to the game. This amounts to little more than giving the game a name, defining the starting location for your party, together with their initial experience, equipment and money. In addition the entire game can be protected by a password. This turns off all of the editing aspects, permitting your completed game to operate in a standard manner. The Designers Journal also provides full instructions for playing a completed game, in case you are not already an experienced fantasy role-player.

SOUND CARDS (by Neil Booth)

Do you really need one? In a word yes! The day of the humble PC bleeper is over. If you are playing modern PC games without a sound card you are missing half the fun, and there really is no need, because there are sound add-ons available at a range of prices and sophistication.

When upgrading from the PC's built in speaker to a more sophisticated device, there are several paths that you can take, depending upon what you ultimately want to do with the machine.

The simplest and cheapest is to buy an external digital/analogue converter. These start from around £30 and they are an ideal solution if you do not fancy the idea of opening up your machine, because they simply plug into your parallel port.

If you only have one parallel port and use a printer, then you could look for a sound device that allows a printer to be plugged in at the same time. Otherwise you will have the hassle of switching between them. Be careful because this often results in a rather unsafe connection on your parallel port and any movement of the machine may result in either the connector or the parallel port being damaged.

These devices work in a very simple way. Sound is sent by a series of bytes to the printer port; the device then converts them to an analogue signal which can be fed to headphones or a small speaker. One point to bear in mind is that most of these devices require either a mains adaptor or batteries to run.

If you require a more sophisticated device then you will need to fit it in an internal expansion slot. But one word of warning when making your choice, make sure that you have a free expansion slot of the right size, as some that are quite large.

With regard to the way that sound boards generate sounds, one is by a digital-to-analogue conversion process which is identical to that used by the external devices, and the other is synthesized sound. The 16-bit cards offer better sound than 8-bit cards, but is it worth the extra money?

Fitting the sound card can be more complicated than fitting many expansion cards because sometimes you must configure the card. Each card will be designed to work at a range of I/O addresses, DMA lines and Interrupt numbers. Your card will be configured at the factory to a default setting, but this may conflict with another device that you are already using, like a mouse. You must resolve the conflict or it is possible that neither device will work properly.

Configuring the card is done by changing the position of the jumpers. These are small plastic and metal bridges that join pairs

of pins sticking out from the board. The actual operation is not that bad providing that you read the manual carefully and put the jumpers in the right place. Even if you do get them wrong, it is very unlikely that you will damage the card .

Most cards are supplied with set-up and diagnostic software which you should run to complete the installation. This will then test it by playing some sound effects or music through it. It will also install any necessary driving software on your hard disk, and possibly alter your CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT.

So what's around on offer and at what kind of price? Well, listed below are some of the better ones on the market, with manufacturer's prices quoted. Often cheaper prices can be obtained by shopping around. Happy listening!

Gallant Soundcard SC-3000 £ 72

This is an 8-bit Sound Blaster compatible card that undercuts Sound Blaster's price.

Logitech Soundman 16 £210

An expensive 16-bit card but it does not emulate Sound Blaster Pro.

Orchid Soundwave 32SE £189

This is one of the best sound cards available except there is no 3D surround sound.

Sense Total £116

Good value and the package includes speakers and three games.

Sound Blaster Pro £60 - £210

Various 8-bit and 16-bit versions and CD-ROM support. The standard.

Sound Galaxy BX £70

Good value 8-bit card, but bad speakers, Sound Blaster compatible.

Sound Galaxy NX Pro 16 £175

This is a 16-bit sound card with nothing to make it outstanding.

Sound Producer Pro £159

Good value, compatible with Covox, Disney and Sound Blaster.

Soundtech 2000 £292

A quality card but the rest of the stuff in the bundle you can keep.

Soundware 4000 Multimedia kit £499

This is a top quality card and includes 7th Guest CD-ROM and lots more. Well worth it if you can afford it.

INDEX TO HELP SECTIONS.PACKS 1 TO 25

This index shows all titles which have been covered in the sections of the Reference Book offering help with games. Sections included are SECTION P (Mini-Solutions), SECTION Q (Serialised Solutions), SECTION R (Starter Guides), SECTION T (Playing Guides), SECTION X (Hints 'n' Tips) and SECTION Y (Maps).

ABANDONED PLACES 2	T-29/30/31
THE ADVENTURER	X-70
ALONE IN THE DARK	X-45
ANTTILIS MISSION	X-30
ARNOLD II	X-28
AXE OF KOLT	X-24/25
BARD'S TALE II	R-3/4
THE BASE	X-56
BATTLMASTER	R-11/12
BETRAYAL AT KONDOR	R-31/32/33/34
THE BLACK TOWER	X-78
BLOOD OF BOGMOLE	X-26
BLOODWYCH (data disk)	X-9, T-3/4
BOUNTY HUNTER	X-12
BRIAN & THE DISHONEST POLITICIAN	X-30
CADAVER	R-9/10
CAPTAIN KOOK	X-15/16
CAPTIVE	T-9/10/11/12
CASE OF THE MIXED UP SHYMER	X-49
CELTIC CARNAGE	X-67
CHAOS STRIKES BACK	X-9, T-25/26/27/28
CHRONO-QUEST	X-6
CIVILIZATION	T-15/16/17/18
CORRUPTION	X-5
CORTIZONE	X-17
COUNTDOWN	X-17, X-22
COUNTDOWN TO DOOM	X-3, X-9
COVERT ACTION	X-27
CRACK CITY	X-20
CRUISE FOR A CORPSE	X-18
CURSE OF ENCHANTIA	X-60/61
THE DAGGER OF AMON RA	Y-9/10
DANGER! ADVENTURER AT WORK	X-52
DANGER! ADVENTURER AT WORK 2	X-52
DARK SUN: SHATTERED LANDS	Y-25
THE DARKEST ROAD	R-27/28
THE DARK GLADIATOR	X-59
DAY OF THE TENTACLE	X-77/78
DEADLINE	X-20
DEATH OR GLORY	X-57
DEEP PROBE	X-46
DEJA VU	X-1
DEJA VU II	X-6
DIABLO	X-11/12

DIARMID	X-72
DOMES OF SHA	P-3/4
DRACULA UNLEASHED	T-35/36/37/38
DR JEKYLL AND MR HYDE	X-23
DRAGON SLAYER	X-41
DRAKKHEN	Q-1/2/3/4
DUNGEON ADVENTURE	X-5
DUNGEON MASTER	T-21/22/23/24, Y-7
ELLISNORE DIAMOND	X-28
ELVIRA	R-7/8
THE ENCHANTED COTTAGE	Q-13/14/15/16
ENCHANTER	X-40
ENDDAY 2240	X-74
EVILUTION	X-20/21
EXCUSE ME - DO YOU HAVE THE TIME?	X-72
EYE OF THE BEHOLDER	Y-3/4
EYE OF THE BEHOLDER II	R-19/20
EYE OF THE BEHOLDER III	R-29/30, Y-23/24
FAMOUS FIVE ON A TREASURE ISLAND	Q-17/18
THE FINAL BATTLE	X-8
FLASHBACK	X-78
THE FOUR SYMBOLS	X-30, X-41
FREDDY PHARKAS FRONTIER PHARMACIST	X-65/66
GOLD RUSH	X-4, X-14
GORDELLO INCIDENT	R-13
GRUE-KNAPPED	R-38
GUILD OF THIEVES	X-5
HAMMER OF GRIMMOLD	R-18
HEART OF CHINA	X-16
HELVERA - MISTRESS OF THE PARK	X-47
HITCHHIKERS GUIDE TO THE GALAXY	Q-5/6/7/8
THE HOLY GRAIL	X-50
HOOK	Q-19/20
INDIANA JONES & FATE OF ATLANTIS	X-42/43
INDIANA JONES & THE LAST CRUSADE	X-6, R-17/18
INGRID'S BACK	X-5
INNER LAKES	X-38
INTO THE MYSTIC	X-13
INTRUDER ALERT	X-46
ISHAR - LEGEND OF THE FORTRESS	X-57
ISHAR 2 - MESSENGERS OF DOOM	T-33/34
THE ISLAND	X-41
JESTER'S JAUNT	X-35
JINXTER	X-2
THE JOURNEY	X-8
THE KHANGRIN PLAN	X-46
KIDNAPPED	X-66
KINGS QUEST I	X-26
KINGS QUEST II	X-26
KINGS QUEST IV	X-31
KINGS QUEST V	Y-15/16
KINGS QUEST VI	X-51
KNIGHT ORC	X-2

KNIGHTMARE	R-16, X-29
KULT	R-5/6
LAMBERLEY MYSTERY	X-17
LANCELOT	X-2
LANDS OF LORE - THE THRONE OF CHAOS	R-35/36/37
LASKAR'S CRYSTALS	X-38
LAST DAYS OF DOOM	R-15
THE LEGACY	Y-19/20/21/22
LEGEND OF KYRANDIA	R-28
LEGEND OF THE SWORD	X-2
LEISURE SUIT LARRY I	R-22
LEISURE SUIT LARRY II	X-4
LES MANLEY IN: LOST IN LA	X-64
LES MANLEY IN: SEARCH FOR THE KING	Y-26
LIGHTSPEED	X-40
LORDS OF CHAOS	X-33/34
LOST FILES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES	Y-11/12/13/14
THE LOST TOMB OF ANANKA	X-59
LURE OF THE TEMPTRESS	X-47
MAGNETIC MOON	R-13
MANHUNTER - NEW YORK	X-1
MANIAC MANSION	X-3, X-4, X-8
MAROONED	X-52
MARTIAN DREAMS	X-13
MICROFAIR MADNESS	X-32
MIGHT AND MAGIC III	X-24, X-35
MILLENNIUM 2.2	X-58
MINDFIGHTER	X-6
MINES OF LITHIAD	X-32
THE MISER	X-62
MONKEY ISLAND II	T-13/14
MONSTERS OF MURDAC	X-6
MURDER ... HE SAID!	X-50
THE MUTANT	R-40
OLD FATHER TIME	X-9
ONE OF OUR WOMBATS IS MISSING	X-13
ORB QUEST	R-27
P.C.W.	X-63
PHOENIX	X-25
PLANETFALL	X-15
PLANET'S EDGE	X-39
POLICE QUEST II	X-3
PROJECT NOVA	X-58
REX NEBULAR & COSMIC GENDER BENDERS	X-73/74
RINGWORLD: REVENGE OF THE PATRIARCH	X-71/72
RJ'S ULTIMATUM	X-74
ROBIN HOOD	X-26
RUN, BRONWYNN, RUN!	X-34
SAVAGE EMPIRE	X-10
SCAPEGHOST	X-6, X-8
SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND	X-19, Y-8
SETTLEMENT XIII	X-76
SHADOWCASTER	R-39

SHADOW OF THE COMET	Y-17/18
SHADOWGATE	R-14
SHADOWLANDS	R-25/26
SKELVULLYN TWINE	X-14
SORCERER	X-44
SPACE QUEST III	X-29
SPACE QUEST IV	X-52, T-32
SPECTRE OF CASTLE CORIS	R-23/24
STARSHIP QUEST	R-20
THE SUMMONING	X-48/49
SYNDICATE	X-68/69/70
TEARS OF THE MOON	X-38
THE TEST	X-61
THEME PARK U.K.	X-75
TREASURE ISLAND	X-21
TWAS A TIME OF DREAD	X-28
ULTIMA VI	X-7
ULTIMA VII	X-36/37
ULTIMA UNDERWORLD	T-19/20
ULTIMA UNDERWORLD II	X-53/54/55
THE UNBORN ONE	X-59
THE UNINVITED	X-2, X-5
THE VIOLATOR OF VOODOO	R-21/22
WEAVER OF HER DREAMS	X-18
WISHBRINGER	X-11
WITCH HUNT	X-11
WIZARD'S SKULL	X-39
WIZARDRY VI	X-16, Y-5/6
WONDERLAND	T-5/6/7/8
ZAK MCKRACKEN (ALIEN MINDBENDERS)	X-63
ZOGAN'S REVENGE	X-38
ZORK III	Q-9/10/11/12

The first few moves are explained in the manual. Once this has been accomplished you will have two life forms at your disposal. If necessary, wait as Human until HEALTH and POWER are at maximum, then open the gate and step on the teleport. As soon as you arrive, morph into the cat-form and start knocking the stuffing out of the red plants. You will also encounter a yellow/blue creature which fires bolts at you from a distance. Get up close quickly and kill it. You may need to change back to Human to heal a few times before the area is cleared. Keeping a look-out for more plants, move around as Human to build up the map while you are healing. Pick up Float-plant seeds as you go.

When ready to move on, morph into the cat and head south. On Level 1 the gates with symbols are locked but the plain barred gates can be opened. Eventually you will encounter a chest floating in the air. This will shoot fireballs at you and is too high up to hit with your paws so use your wand to destroy it. The chest will drop a white triangle which matches that on the pedestal nearby. Pick up the triangle (key) and right-click on the pedestal's triangle. The statue south will move to reveal a teleport. Do not step onto this yet.

When you head east, then north you will fight your way to an area of brown "water". This is harmful, do not swim in it. Drop a series of Float-plant seeds to make a path across. The area to the west of the water is empty, those to the north and northeast are occupied. Deal with the north first then go to the northeast. Here a simple puzzle awaits - when you step on some squares fireballs fire at you, some squares do not. Just find the route to the north exit.

Pick up the throwing-star and when you find a row of fires, throw the star at the "circles" hovering in the air behind each fire. When the third is destroyed the fires go out, releasing the creatures behind them. Kill these quickly (as cat-form) then change back to Human, collect the Statue-head and return across the water to the pedestal.

Head west then north to find a second teleport. When fully restored, step on the teleport as Human. You arrive on Level 2 in deep water. Dodge around the bat-like creatures until you find a ball hanging on a chain. Right-click on the ball to drain the water. Find the Skull and place this on the Skeleton sitting on the throne. This comes to life and attacks you, so kill it.

An exit has opened in the throne-room through which you will find a Magic Sword, armour and a Statue head. The teleport takes you back to Level 1. The teleport on Level 1 by the pedestal goes to Level 4 where you will need the Statue heads (plus 2 more on Level 4) - you are on your own from here!

Compiled by Hugh Walker

THE MUTANT

Jack Lockerby/Zenobi

STARTER GUIDE (Atari ST version)

Amiga, Spectrum and Commodore 64 versions will vary slightly.

You begin this adventure standing beside an abandoned landrover on a woodland track. Enter the landrover and you will find an oily rag. Examine the seat to see a map and a pair of stockings and suspenders. Take all these and leave the landrover.

Open the bonnet to discover a battery. You cannot take this but will need to return to it later. Now go down the slope and through the forest until you reach a lake. Examine the reeds here and you will find a strange egg. Get the egg and go west along the stream, pursued by a huge crocodile! After three locations you will find a large alligator. Drop the egg and the two reptiles will fight over it and disappear into the swamp.

There is a dead tree here. Climb it and examine the hornets' nests. Get the creeper vine and a nest and climb down again. Go west into some scrubby gorse where you will encounter a family of boars. These will attack you, so throw the nest at them and they will be chased away by the hornets.

Now return east twice and get the hollow reed. Continue to follow the stream eastwards until you reach a clear pool. Examine the pool, which is infested with purple snails. Get some snails - you will need them later to feed a bird - and don't drop them or they will slither away.

Return to the landrover and examine the battery. Connect the lead on the battery to produce a spark which lights your oily rag. Wear the stockings to protect your legs and go west four times, along the track and through the nettles, to a cave.

Go into the cave and drop your rag, which will continue to provide light while you are in here. You are beside a cold dark pool. Put the hollow reed in your mouth to help you to breath, enter the pool and go west to the other side. Here you will find a skeleton and a red diary. Read the diary and examine the skeleton to find a wad of tobacco.

Return to the east side of the pool, then go back to the landrover. Continue eastwards from here along the track to an old fallen tree. Climb over the tree and you will find a pair of climbing boots.

Return westwards until you are beneath tall larches, where you will see a path leading downwards. Follow the path down an animal trail and go into the bird hide where you will find a bird book. Read it. Now, wearing your boots, you can go downwards and then northwards into the mountains to continue your search for the Mutant!

Compiled by Sue Roseblade

025/R-40

JANUARY 1994

We hope that you had a most enjoyable Christmas and we would like to wish you all a very happy New Year.

THE GOLDEN CHALICE AWARDS:

With this pack we are enclosing a voting form for our annual awards, asking you to vote for the best Adventure, RPG, Strategy game and Simulation released during 1993. Please return your voting forms as soon as possible.

DISCOUNTED SOFTWARE SERVICE - UPDATE:

The following titles are now available, and will be added to pages W-4 and W-5 in due course:

RIVER SOFTWARE

		<u>Normal Price</u>	<u>Discount Price</u>
Theme Park U.K	Commodore 64 (Tape or disk)	£2.50	£2.25

TOPOLOGIKA

Spysnatcher	Atari ST	£15	£10.50
Countdown To Doom	Atari ST	£15	£10.50
Return To Doom			
Philosopher's Quest			
Acheton			
Kingdom Of Hamil			
Last Days Of Doom	Atari ST	£20	£14.00
Avon/Murdac			

Please add £2.00 p & p for first item, plus 50p for each further item. No credit card orders under £25.

BINDERS:

If you have been a member of the Club since Pack 1, then by now your Reference Book Of Adventure will be getting very full. If you feel that you need a second binder in order to reorganise your collection, these are available from the Club address at a reduced price of £6.95.

PRICE CHANGE:

Due to rising postal and packing costs, ZENOBI SOFTWARE have had to make a small extra charge to the cost of each game. Please include an extra 25p per game when ordering from the address on page A-14.

BUY - SELL - SWAP:

I am looking for a copy of War in Middle Earth for the Amiga. Please telephone Sylvia Parry after 8pm on 081 870 4641.

I have the following PC games for sale. Ultima Underworld II, Ultima VI, Lands of Lore, Tergel's Mercenaries, Blade of Destiny, Star Trek 25th Anniversary, Shadowlands, Planet's Edge, and Darklands.

Please telephone John on 091-417 6153 evenings only.

ATARI ST and SPECTRUM SOFTWARE FOR SALE:

I have a large number of adventure games for sale for the above machines. All are originals, most are text adventures, a few are graphic adventures. Many are old classics. Rock bottom prices! For a full list, please send an SAE to Sue Roseblade, 22 Pembroke Avenue, Eynesbury, St Neots, Cambs PE19 2SW or phone 0480 471216.

WANTED - I am looking for an Amiga version of Legend of Kyrandia. Please telephone Graham on 097 43210 after 8pm or weekends.

I am looking for a secondhand 386 DX with a 3.5" drive, Super VGA graphics and a hard drive of 80 meg or over plus cache and sound card if possible. As I travel around the country, please write or telephone the club with details. David Baker.

WANTED - I would like to buy Crusaders of the Dark Savant and Might & Magic V. Please telephone Hazel at the club number.

PC SOFTWARE FOR SALE

Due to lack of space I have the following software for sale Rex Nebular and the Cosmic Gender Bender.

The Lost Files of Sherlock Holmes.

Twist and Shout (sideways and banner printer).

Open to offers on the above - contact Neil on 0803 525989.

DRACULA UNLEASHED

Viacom/Mindscape

After visiting each location make sure that you record the events in your journal and look for new items in your satchel. It is wise to check all the journey times from the map and work out an itinerary that avoids wasting time. To survive the first night you need to make sure that your beloved Annisette has a silver cross, which can be obtained from Harker, under the right conditions. A detailed plan of action for the first day follows.

At the Hades Club you learn of the peculiar death of Annisette's father. Visit her in Notting Hill and obtain the strange white cloth that her father was clutching.

Take the carriage to the Westminster home of your friend Holmwood, where you learn of another gruesome murder: the Holmwood's coachman, and obtain the address of the Harker residence. A parcel was found beside the body of the coachman.

Nearby is the Westminster newsstand, so visit this next, read the items of news and learn the address of Saucy Jacks. A drink might be nice, but it's probably too early in the day and there is much business to be attended to first.

Head north, to the Telegraph office in King's Cross and send a telegram to Janos. His overseas address is on his calling card.

A rather unsettling visit to the Harker home in Marble Arch gives you the address of Harker's office and his calling card. Postpone going to his office until later in the day.

A brief return to the Hades Club in Kensington will give you the chance to chat with Devlin, but little else.

By now it should be lunchtime, so it's off to the Saucy Jack hostelry in the Strand. A free drink and the address of an arcane bookshop are your rewards for this. Next, visit the bookshop in King's Cross and obtain a book and the address of the asylum. Visiting the Asylum in Paddington however only gets you a weapon.

Return to the Holmwood residence, where Regina will tell you about a tragedy and you offer to deliver the parcel.

Now may be a good time to approach Harker in his St Pauls Office. He is obviously quite busy, but make sure that he gives you a necklace before you leave the premises.

Back in Notting Hill, Annisette is still very upset, but Juliet is there to comfort her. The silver cross appears to protect her from vampires and may prove to be your own salvation.

Back home, wait until 9:00 pm and a telegram will arrive from Janos. Read it and sleep soundly until the following day.

DRACULA UNLEASHED: DAY 2

The critical events for this day depend on arranging a timely meeting with Van Helsing. The Telegraph Office opens at 7:00, so it's best to get there early and send another telegram to Janos. A viable itinerary for the rest of the day follows. The times quoted are those that you will enter in your diary, recording the events occurring at each meeting.

- 8:10 Give the rose to Mina Harker, who asks you to meet her the following day at the funeral of Annisette's father.
- 8:45 Read the news and note the address of the cemetery.
- 9:35 Visit the Holmwood residence. Listen to one version of the events surrounding the death of your brother.
- 10:35 At the bookshop, discuss the strange white cloth and learn of the address of the university.
- 12:25 The asylum is now worth a visit, where you obtain Van Helsing's calling card.
- 1:25 Take the strange white cloth to the university for study and learn something of its history.
- 2:00 Go to the Hades Club and obtain a gold coin from Devlin.
- 2:55 Send a telegram to Van Helsing.
- 4:00 Show the bowie knife to Harker at his office. He asks you to come to his home later that evening.
- 6:35 Visit Annisette and discover that Juliet has been sleepwalking and having strange dreams.
- 7:05 Meet Van Helsing at the Harker residence, who tells you more about your brothers death and about vampires. In some agitation, you tell him about Juliet.
- 9:50 At Annisette's Van Helsing treats Juliet. Juliet gives you a note to take to Devlin. On leaving, Van Helsing rescues you from the vampire attack.
- 10:10 At home, Jano's telegram confirms your suspicions about the bowie knife.
- 10:40 At the Hades club, give Devlin the note from Juliet. He drops a bunch of keys. You should know where they fit.
- 11:55 When the shop is empty, go through the secret door in the bookcase and find a curious manuscript. Now go home and sleep to the next day.

DRACULA UNLEASHED: DAY 3

This is the day of Andrew Bowen's funeral, where Mina asked to meet you. To survive this day you must make sure that Van Helsing also survives and can formulate a plan to combat Count Dracula.

- 7:35 Visit Annisette. Devlin is there but the garlic is gone! Juliet is too ill to attend the funeral and takes fright at the silver cross.
- 8:35 At the University, Dr Briarcliff will examine the gold coin, telling you of its Transylvanian origin, and the manuscript, telling you about an arcane amulet.
- 8:55 Drop into the Hades Club and listen to Stransokowski.
- 9:40 At the newsstand, read about graverobbers and a murder.
- 11:20 Attend Andrew Bowen's funeral. Mina Harker introduces you to Reverend Jenkins, who may be able to help. He promises to send something to Mina the following day.
- 12:10 Visit the asylum, with Van Helsing, but be very careful. Renfield has gone wild and will attack Van Helsing and you will need to defend him. A weapon may be needed.
- 2:20 At the Holmwood residence, engage in polite chit-chat.
- 3:20 At the bookshop, you enquire about vampires, but receive only a warning for your efforts.
- 4:30 Return home where a telegram awaits. Dr Briarcliff tells you more about the strange cloth.
- 6:10 At the Saucy Jack you can catch up with Van Helsing. He believes that Count Dracula has risen from the dead and arranges a meeting at the Harker residence.
- 8:50 A gathering has formed at Harker's home, where Van Helsing expounds his theory, but may be met with some incredulity. Support his views with the evidence you have gathered from your sneak visit to the bookshop. When you leave you are attacked by a wolf, but Van Helsing wards it off and you obtain some wolfsbane.
- Go to Annisette's and stay there overnight, attempting to prevent Dracula from doing his evil work.

DRACULA UNLEASHED: DAY 4

Many things must be done in a short time. Destroy vampires, discover more secret chambers, encounter Dracula and finally defeat him. Many lives will be lost this day.

- 7:00 Discover that, despite your efforts, Juliet has been murdered and Annisette has been attacked.
- 8:55 On your route east, pass by the newsstand, but learn little. Attend a hurried meeting at Harker's office where you are charged with finding a stake and a mallet.
- 9:50 In the ashes of the Asylum you find what you need.
- 10:35 At the Hades Club, find Devlin raving about Juliet.
- 11:20 At home read two telegrams. Dr Briarcliff has translated the manuscript and Sewart has sent you a recording.
- 11:50 At the university find keys and signs of foul deeds.
- 1:20 Attend Juliet's funeral. Does she rest in peace?
- 2:10 At the Saucy Jack, collect a note from Arthur Holmwood.
- 2:45 At Harker's office, listen to the recording.
- 3:35 At Harker's home, Mina gives you a cross that has been consecrated by Reverend Jenkins.
- 4:05 At the Hades Club, learn about the hidden room.
- 4:35 At Annisette's, Van Helsing formulates his plan.
- 5:45 At the cemetery, play your part in the plan and help to destroy a vampire.
- 6:10 Back at Annisette's, discover that evil is still around.
- 7:05 Visit Mina Harker, who tells you about her visions of Count Dracula. She cannot tell you where he is now.
- 7:40 At the Saucy Jack, find a drawing left by Devlin.
- 8:15 Call by the Holmwood's and chat briefly to Regina.
- 9:15 At Annisette's you meet Count Dracula, but he evades you. Van Helsing has been knocked down but is alive.
- 10:15 Make your belated appointment at the Holmwood residence. Discover the dreadful truth about Regina and Arthur.
- The best advice now is to go home and get some sleep.
- 4:45 At the asylum, discover that yet another murder has taken place. Then visit the Hades Club where the hidden room can now be entered. Count Dracula will soon show up, but you should now have the means to defeat him.

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The Software Business

PC (£34.99), Amiga, Atari ST (£29.99).

Despite receiving good reviews in virtually every glossy, Nippon Safes is a classic case of 'neat presentation, no game'. You control one of three characters, Donna Fatale the go-go dancer, a brainless former boxer called Dino Fagioli or Doug Nuts, a would-be techno wizard with a plethora of get-rich-quick schemes. All three are down on their luck and just out of a Japanese prison. You're not told what your aims are and you bet it involved getting them on their feet again. This is achieved via three separate, self-contained adventures which take place in the same series of locations - three games in one. This would be a bargain if they weren't all terrible!

Take Dino's plight, for example. The first problem of any note is opening a door by guessing (and I mean 'guessing') the combination of four on/off switches. You then get locked in a museum store cupboard - although you are employed there and have been told to look after the exhibits. The only way out involved destroying four of them. This appalling lack of logic runs through the entire game. The game's interface is easy to use but hardly conducive to serious adventuring - for example your inventory is infinite, and the only way of dropping an object is to put it into a container, e.g: a dustbin.

The storyline flows as well as a silted-up canal too, the player often carrying out seemingly pointless actions simply because he can, their significance being revealed later in the game. The Japanese-inspired graphics are pretty impressive and the comical animation a real treat, but what's the point of polished presentation if the heart of the game just isn't there? Nippon Safes Inc scores heavily for originality and humour, but personally I'd rather see something done well instead of just differently - definitely one to avoid.

ATMOSPHERIC 8/20 - STRATEGY N/A - PLAYABILITY 6/20 - PUZZLES 3/20
PSR 4/20 - STAR RATING 0

Reviewed By Ian Osborne

AMBERSTAR

Thalion Software

PC, (£35.99), Amiga, Atari ST (£29.99)

AMBERSTAR is a fantasy role-playing game in the ULTIMA style. Set on the planet Lyramion, your quest is to find the thirteen pieces of the Amberstar which, when put together will defeat Lord Tarbos, God of Chaos. You begin the game alone, gathering your party along the way. There are 3 types of magic user to choose from and over 90 spells are available. This is a game of epic proportions slightly let down by the unexciting combat routines.

ATMOSPHERIC 16/20 - STRATEGY 15/20 - PLAYABILITY 17/20 - PUZZLES 16/20
PSR 15/20 - STAR RATING **

025/U-39

LES MANLEY IN: SEARCH FOR THE KING

Accolade

PC, Amiga (Special price £19.99)

Lester P. Manley works as a lowly video technician for Channel 53. As a publicity gimmick, the company offers a \$1 million reward for finding The King, expecting not to have to pay out. Les decides to take up the challenge. Escaping from the office, Les must follow up clues about The King and soon finds himself at the circus. Here he recruits Helmut Bean - The Smallest Man in the World and they both go to Las Vegas and the Kingdom. This graphic adventure game requires text input and occasional good timing, which can sometimes prove tricky, and has many amusing puzzles. Short, but a classic.

ATMOSPHERE 12/20 - VOCAB 13/20 - GRAPHICS 13/20 - PUZZLES 14/20**PSR 12/20 - STAR RATING ***

Reviewed by Geoff Hyman

MIGHT AND MAGIC - CLOUDS OF XEEN

New World Computing/US Gold

PC (£45.99)

As in all the MIGHT AND MAGIC games you have quests galore. The main quests are the search for the Sixth Mirror, and to kill the evil Lord Xeen. Along the way you are asked to help with lots of sub-quests which are fairly easy to complete and bring great rewards.

There are 5 towns to explore initially, each one having problems for you to solve like clearing the town of Nightshadow which is awash with vampires. The bat queens in this area are graphically stunning and sway towards you from the distance, hissing through their fangs and swishing their cloaks. I was very sorry when the last one bit the dust.

Once you have visited all of the places on the beautiful land map, off you go to a whole new kingdom among the clouds.

Speech in the game is excellent, from the sexy tones of the voluptuous hotel keeper to the ethereal voice of the tattooed faced guardian of the keep. Also the tedium of note taking has been solved as all the quests and places of interest you have discovered are recorded as you go, complete with map references.

This game and DARK SIDE OF XEEN are really one big game and you can jump between the two.

CLOUDS OF XEEN is a thoroughly enjoyable romp across a huge playing area. It is heavy on exploration and light on puzzles, with some nice surprises and a little bit of humour.

ATMOSPHERE 18/20 - STRATEGY 17/20 - PLAYABILITY 19/20 - PUZZLES 16/20**PSR 19/20 - STAR RATING *****

Reviewed by Hazel Miller

025/U-40

THEME PARK U.K

River Software/Zenobi

<u>OBJECT</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>USE</u>
Arrow	Native hut	Kill the gorilla and the spider(?).
Axe	Native hut	To cut a branch, smash the padlock, kill spider(?).
Backpack	Move skeleton	Carry objects, especially when climbing or swimming.
Banana	Little tree	Drop it from above to attract an elephant.
Boots	On cave skeleton	To wear.
Bow	Native hut	Kill the gorilla and the spider(?).
Branch	Up a tree	Lever open trapdoor and kill spider(?).
Carrion	Up a tree	To lure the leopard and distract the spider.
Chest	Bottom of lake	It contains the fiddle.
Dead spider	Cave	Dip arrow in poison.
Hammer	In the reeds	Use it to break masonry and kill spider(?).
Hide	Skin gorilla	Scares away the goblin.
Knife	X Trapdoor	To cut a reed, skin the gorilla, kill spider(?).
Overalls	On cave skeleton	To wear.
Reed	Lakeside	To breath under water.
Rock	Bottom of lake	Helps to open trapdoor.
Spade	On a cloud	Dig at the bottom of the lake and down the well.
Torch	Native hut	Light it from the fire. Will also kill spider!
Vine	Woods	Cut it and use it to climb down the well.
<u>TREASURES</u>		
Blowpipe	Bottom of well	Just a treasure.
Fiddle	Bottom of lake	Play it to open and close dungeon door.
Horn	Stony ground above spider cave	Play it to open stone door.
Lute	Behind dungeon door	Just a treasure.
Tusk	Top of volcano	Just a treasure.

SETTLEMENT XIII

PART 1

In each location LOOK AROUND. SEARCH AND EXAMINE each object otherwise you will miss things.

Have a good privacy look around your apartment. Notice your door is open! Get some privacy THEN look. Nose around your boss's office and use what you find to purchase a source of light from a street trader. Help the secretary by finding the missing item. She will give you something you may think is surplus to requirements, but you will need it later. The missing item is on or around her desk.

Be a lounge lizard and check out the dance floor!

Let Jaques take you to the tunnel then search any debris you come across. Get into any cars you can. Look under the seats.

You will need a grapnel to get around so make your own. You will need a hook and some rope. Throw the grapnel at whatever you want - if it can stick it will.

Be prepared to do some Tarzan stuff from the light fitting. SAVE your position regularly.

At the end of the tunnel use the keys to create a diversion. Make sure you have somewhere to hide when the Loners come.

Take the back road when you come out of the tunnel.

At the old farmhouse, make sure the bike is well oiled.

Check out the fridge - wear your scarf or be overcome by the fumes!

Find the safe (obviously positioned) and open it to get the journal. You will need this in part 2. When confronted, throw something sharp, then get on your bike.

At the fire station beware. All will collapse! Use your rope.

Search upstairs properly to get what every boy scout wants.

PART 2

Check out Anne's house for a frank diary. Use the feminine utensil to pick the lock for a tool.

Search the kitchen for another useful item.

Look at the blackboards in the school for a clue as to where everyone has gone.

Move the desks to gain access to the trapdoor in the ceiling.

You'll need to lever it open though with one of your tools.

Search the barn thoroughly. Upstairs is bigger than downstairs so maybe there's some hidden space?

The scarecrow has some hidden secrets.

The pub and the supermarket both have hidden objects that you need.

Use the tube to syphon petrol into the can.

You will need to climb into the water tank - cut the fence with the snips to gain access.

Check out the library for some technical information.

Search the attic well - move some of the stuff to uncover more.

Get the petrol from the petrol station - use your wrench to unscrew the petrol cap.

Once you have everything assemble your aircraft. Remember the fuel.

When you land, do not resist. Talk to people. Give them valuable information.

DAY OF THE TENTACLE

<u>OBJECT</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>USE</u>
TEXTBOOK	BERNARD	H:READ BOOK TO HORSE
DIME	PHONE/LOBBY FLOOR	B:PUT IN FICKLE FINGERS
BANK BOOK	OFFICE DESK	B:ORDER DIAMOND
BOOBOO-B-GONE	OFFICE DRAWER	L:PAINT FENCE NEAR CAT
CONTRACT	OFFICE SAFE	H:PUT IN MAIL BOX
VACUUM FLYER	LOBBY	H:IN SUGGESTION BOX
HELP WANTED SIGN	LOBBY WINDOW	H:GIVE TO RED EDISON
PLASTIC BARF	LOBBY	L:HAROLD IN CONTEST
CROWBAR	PARKING LOT	B:CANDY MACHINE
BOX-O-LAUGHS	HALL(IN CLOWN)	L:CONTEST:USE ON TED
CIGAR LIGHTER	HALL(SALESMAN)	H:WASHINGTON'S CIGAR
EXPLODING CIGAR	HALL(SALESMAN)	H:GIVE TO WASHINGTON
CHATTER TEETH	HALL(CHASE TO GRATE)	H:GIVE TO WASHINGTON
DECAF COFFEE	KITCHEN	B:PUT DOCTOR FRED TO SLEEP
REGULAR COFFEE	KITCHEN	B:WAKE DR FRED
FORK	KITCHEN	L:WITH SPAGHETTI HAIR
FUNNEL	LAUNDRY ROOM	B:WITH FRED AND COFFEE
CAR KEYS	HONEYMOON DOOR	B:GIVE TO CAR THIEF
SWEATER	HONEYMOON ROOM	B:PUT IN DRYER
QUARTERS	CANDY MACHINE	B:IN DRYER COIN SLOT
DISAPPEARING INK	DWAYNE'S ROOM	B:ON STAMP ALBUM
FLAG GUN	DWAYNE'S ROOM	B:SWAP FOR GUN LIGHTER
VIDEO TAPE	TENTACLE'S ROOM	B:USE WITH VIDEO
STAMP ALBUM	WEIRD ED'S ROOM	B:GIVE BACK TO ED
STAMP	STAMP ALBUM	H:USE TO POST CONTRACT
HAMSTER	WEIRD ED'S ROOM	B:PUT IN ICE MACHINE
ROPE	ATTIC	B:MOVE TED AND FRED
CRANK	ROOF FLAGPOLE	L:LOWER TENTACLE FLAG
CAN OPENER	HOAGIE	L:USE WITH TIME CAPSULE
LETTER	MAILBOX	B:GIVE TO DWAYNE
HAMMER	RED'S WORKSHOP	H:SWAP HAMMER
LAB COAT	RED'S WORKSHOP	H:MATERIAL FOR KITE
BLANKET	HALL	H:USE WITH CHIMNEY
GOLD PEN	HALL	H:GIVE TO RED
OIL	KITCHEN	H:GIVE TO RED
SPAGHETTI	KITCHEN	L:CONTEST:USE ON TED
BUCKET	WASHROOM	H:WASH CARRIAGE
SOAP	MAID'S CART	H:USE WITH WATER
BRUSH	WASHROOM	H:WASH CARRIAGE
WINE	FRANKLIN'S ROOM	H:PUT IN TIME CAPSULE
HORSE DENTURES	HALLWAY	L:CONTEST:USE ON TED
TOY MOUSE	ATTIC (SWAP MATTRESS)	L:LURE CAT
RED PAINT	ATTIC	H:PAINT TREE/PAINT TED
SCALPEL	LAVERNE	B:PUNCTURE OOZO
SMALL SWEATER	DRYER	L:USE WITH COLD HAMSTER
HUMAN TAG	REG. DESK	L:TED IN HUMAN SHOW
CAT	OUT IN YARD	L:SCARE PRISONERS
FROZEN HAMSTER	ICE MACHINE	L:DEFROST IN MICROWAVE

VINEGAR	TIME CAPSULE	H:GIVE TO RED
ROLLER SKATE	70'S SHRINE	L:USE ON TED/PUSH
EXTENSION CORD	70'S SHRINE	L:USE WITH CHRON-O-JOHN
DINNER CARD	SHOW PRIZE	L:GIVE TO KENNEL GUARD
TENTACLE CHART	DR. TENTACLE'S ROOM	H:USE WITH BETSY
FLAG	ROOF	L:TENTACLE DISGUISE

THE BLACK TOWER

Zenobi Software

Part One

Cross the stream, carrying the knife.
 Rest in the glade.
 Feel the ledge underneath the oak tree.
 Use the thread from the ring and the pierced thorn to sew the rabbit skins.
 Feel the wall in the tunnel past the icy cave.

Part Two

Moss will ensure a soft landing, so take some extra with you.
 Smile at the statue in the temple.
 Call a friend in the maze.
 Dig in the hole in the island.
 Weave the reeds in the Roc's nest.
 Hold your breath in the gassy staircase.

FLASHBACK

Delphine

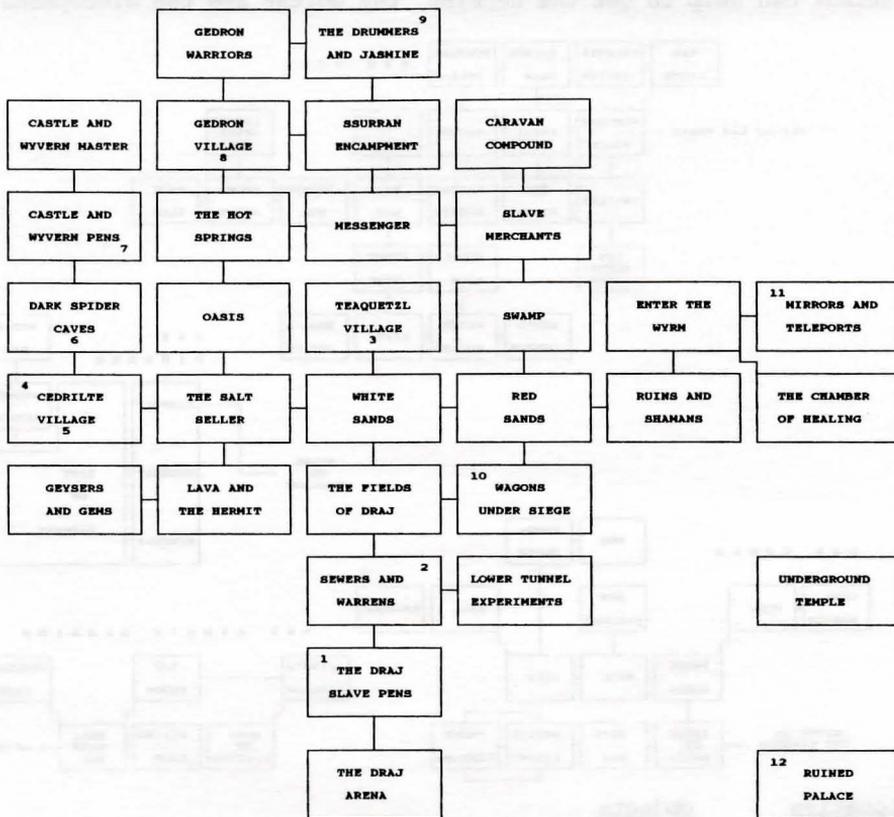
Stuck on a level? Can't get off the alien planet? Keep getting killed by those blobs? Well, here is the end to all your problems! Here are the codes to let you progress further:

LEVEL	EASY	NORMAL	EXPERT
1	JAGUAR	BANTHA	TOHOLD
2	COMBEL	SHIVA	PICOLO
3	ANTIC	KASYK	FUGU
4	NOLAN	SARLAC	CAPSUL
5	ARTHUR	MAENOC	ZZZAP
6	SHIRYU	SULUST	MANIAC
7	RENDER	NEPTUN	NO WAY

TYPE BELUGA for the end sequence

DARK SUN: SHATTERED LANDS

The overall plan is: first escape from the slave pens, then recruit the three villages to defeat Draj. One you have completed this, you can reach the Ruined Palace and fight the final battles. Good Luck.

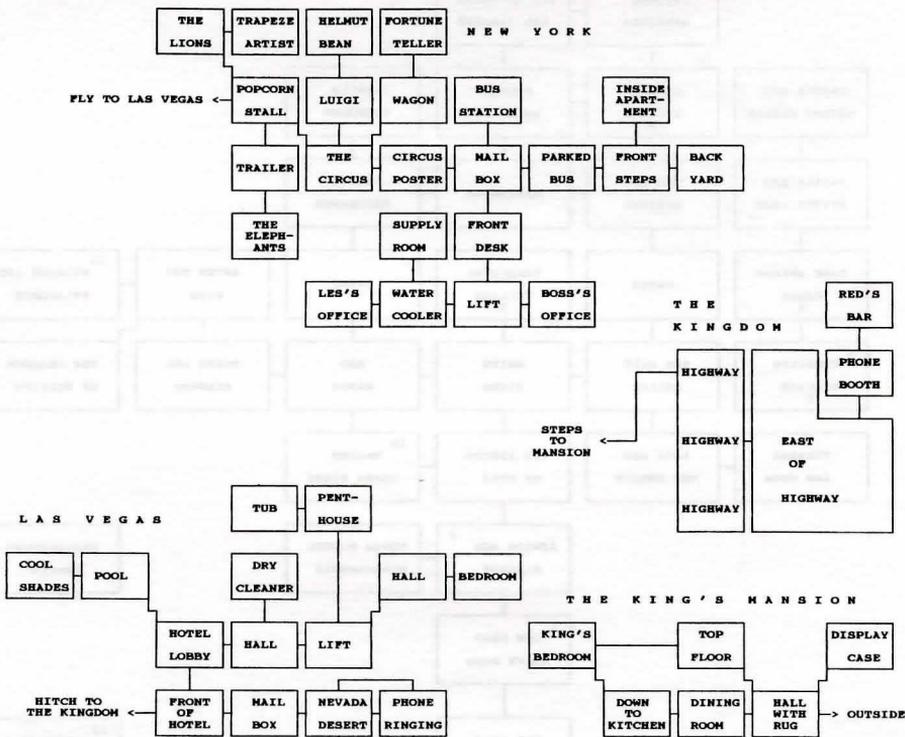


- 1 Escape the slave pens via the sewer grate in the NW corner.
- 2 To access the lower tunnels use the staff from the E warrens.
- 3 At Teaquetzl, the well leads to Tynan, NE in the underground temple.
- 4 At Cedrite, Kriktor can help you find the cave entrance.
- 5 At Cedrite, the well leads to Zeefram, S in the underground temple.
- 6 In the caves, use Silk Rope to climb the cliff. Go NE to the castle.
- 7 In SE of castle, use Serpent Boots to get through the barrier.
- 8 At Gedron, the well leads to A'poss, NW in the underground temple.
- 9 To rescue Jasmine, use the grappling hook on the rope bridge.
- 10 At Wagon Train, bridge leads to Tristram, SE in underground temple.
- 11 In the Wyrn, use teleports to get the Draketooth sword.
- 12 In the Palace, teleport from NW to SE to get to Craggs body.

LES MANLEY IN: SEARCH FOR THE KING

ACCOLADE

Aided my Helmut Bean, Les must make his way to the Kingdom and perform a convincing impersonation of the King. There are a number of objects that may also assist Les on his quest, detailed below. Helmut can help to get the Receipt, the Guitar and the Microphone.



Location

Objects

New York	Lunch Bag Reporters ID	Thermos Dream	Master Key Scarf
The Circus	Free Ticket Rosin	Wax Popcorn	Resurrection Card Helmut Bean
Las Vegas	Helmut Bean Skeleton Key	Sunglasses Receipt	Dental Floss White Suit
King's Mansion	Loaf of Bread Microphone	Banana	Guitar

THE ADVENTURE & STRATEGY CLUB AWARDS FOR 1993

VOTING FORM

Each year we will invite our members to vote for the best Adventures, RPGs, Strategy games and Simulations from those released during the previous year.

The categories are listed below, and we would like you to vote in all or any of the groups.

If you are only interested in one type of game, then we would still like you to vote in that category even if you prefer to leave the rest blank.

NAME OR MEMBERSHIP NUMBER: _____

GOLDEN AMULET: Best 16-bit Adventure

GOLDEN SHIELD: Best 8-bit Adventure

GOLDEN SWORD: Best Role-playing Game

GOLDEN ORB: Best Simulation

GOLDEN TALISMAN: Best Strategy Game

GOLDEN CHALICE: Best Overall Game (Adventure, Rpg, Strategy or Simulation)

SOFTWARE COMPANY OF THE YEAR: Having provided the best service and highest quality of games during 1993

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN LIBRARY

LIBRARY

Dear Sir: We will have our records in view for the past
thirty years, 1870, 1880, 1890, 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930, 1940, 1950,
1960, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010, 2020, 2030, 2040, 2050, 2060, 2070, 2080, 2090, 2100.

The records are listed below, and we would like you to vote in
all of any of the groups.

If you are only interested in one type of item, then we would
like to know so that we may be able to give you the best
of the lot.

NAME OF PERSONS TO WHOM

GROUP NAME: Best 10-bit adventure

GROUP NAME: Best 5-bit adventure

GROUP NAME: Best 10-bit playing cards

GROUP NAME: Best 10-bit

GROUP NAME: Best 10-bit

GROUP NAME: Best 10-bit

GROUP NAME: Best 10-bit

