Q L

ADVENTURERS' FORUM

Issue 2

Edited By Richard Alexander

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by Adrian Phillips

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Welcome to QL Adventurer's Forum 2.

Richard

EDITORIAL

Greetings and welcome to the second issue of QL Adventurers' Forum. I must admit to being very pleasantly surprised by the very favourable reaction to the first issue. This second issue has several smaller pieces left over from the first issue plus some articles, reviews and letters sent in by readers. I'm pleased to see that we have articles on both the QL Adventure systems commercially available, Quill and APT, plus some d-i-y hints for those using SuperBASIC.

This issue also has some correspondence between Javid Systems and myself regarding their "Dark Side of the Moon". In spite of my review I'd recommend readers to get a copy themselves and make their own minds up about it. I must confess that my reactions to it were coloured by the difficulty I had in getting started.

The wargame project looks like getting beyond the suggestion stage and I'm currently researching the Battles of St. Albans with a view to doing them in collaboration with David Bayliss and anyone else who cares to climb aboard (v. bad pun!). I'd especially like to hear from artists who can design a medieval typeface, the map and the tokens for the respective armies.

I've received a copy of "Imagine" and this has been shipped out for reviewing in the next issue. I've only managed a sneak preview of this before sending it off but first impressions are very good, with graphics at each location showing objects that are removed from the screen when you pick them up. Certainly a good advert for the APT system. Alan Pemberton has kindly submitted two of his adventures "Adventure Playtime" and "From the Tower of Valagon" which have also been sent out for review.

Also in the next issue I hope to have clues for Dark Side of the Moon, for those of you who have a copy and Zkul. I'd also like to see some hints for Heart of Gern - especially getting started!! Also how are people getting on with Nemesis, Horrorday and West ? Alan has given me some hints for "Adventure Playtime" which uses a novel "DECODE" format. I'll publish these in number 3. As they're in code and you can't use them unless you have the game running they shouldn't spoil anybody's fun.

There have been a few new games issued recently which may be of interest to readers: Gridland-Holocaust from Quantum Computing, an American outfit - so we can guess where their politics are at; The Talisman, from PCBS - which even the author has yet to finish! and Alien

Hijack from Maxtronics which is an arcade adventure.

Please feel free to give copies of QLAF to friends etc as all material is anti-copyright (unless stated otherwise in the relevant text.) At the current rate of production the next issue should be out around Easter time. I've now got a volunteer for 3.5in disks so will put all the details in the next issue of where to get them.

If you've got a game you want to publicise or sell do let us know - especially details as to format, price and address. Alternatively put them in either the Quanta library or Sinclair QL World's mdv_ exchange. Advertising will be free in QLAF for the time being - just send a _doc file with what you want included - but do keep it brief if possible.

I hope to be co-operating with Sinclair QL Super User Bureau in the near future - see next issue for details.

Right that's enough guff, remember that if you want QLAF3 then send an s.a.e., blank medium and 50p to Richard Alexander, Cwm Gwen Hall, Pencader, Dyfed, Cymru, SA39 9HA as soon as you like!
And let's be having them reviews, letters and articles.

Cheers, Richard.

REVEIEW

DARK SIDE OF THE MOON

This is a text adventure from Javid Systems and is on special offer, of £10, from them until January 1988. The name may indicate an Indian author or publisher but is, in fact, an amalgamation of two English names. The game is attractively packaged and the scenario at least gets away from dragon-slaying, witches, magic and all that stuff by setting the adventure on the Moon.

However there are some things about this adventure that get up my nose! Firstly having loaded it, and this takes ages even from disk, you may find yourself confronted by a command parser that totally ignores every command you type in. Why ? Because you have to type everything in capitals, that's why. And does the manual tell you this, does it hell. All that there is in the manual is the comment "The computer will accept the beginnings of some words as typed in capitals". A quick examination of the list that follows shows that the parser scans the first four letters. And that's it. You are supposed to infer from that cryptic comment that it ONLY accepts commands in capitals. No on-screen instructions. The location descriptions are not in capitals and neither is the invitation to enter a command. All in all a sloppy piece of work. Grrrrr!

My next gripe concerns the other crew members. The manual says that they will help you by carrying out tasks and carrying things for you. How kind. But don't bother trying to communicate with them or issue instructions 'coz they can't hear you. No, you treat them as dumb waiters, to have stuff loaded on and off as required and if you give the right tool to the right person, and to be fair this sometimes hinted at, they go off and do the necessary action without you saying a word. Some might call it "artificial intelligence".

The gripes continue. The vocabulary is very poorly thought out. One has to spend ages trying to work out the correct wording for the simplest command. Trying to get the "Jet-Pack" fails, it has to be "Jet", and so on. Given the complex nature of many of the objects described I would have thought that more synonyms should have been provided to make life a little bit easier for the player. It is immensely frustrating and off-putting to constantly have to struggle with vocabulary. The problems should be the puzzles, not the wording of accessible objects.

Another grumble. One spends most of the first phase, apart from swearing, gathering the necessary bits and pieces together for your journey to the moonbase and subsequent battles. You have to go through laborious procedures to get all the clothing and wear it, get the buggy and

trailer etc. and finally proceed through an air-lock. Fine in itself but the other characters walk out onto the moon surface straight from bed, in one case, without any such equipment. Either they should be described as going through the motions or your character shouldn't be singled out. As a result I was unaware that the other characters were coming out of the space craft with me until too late, necessitating the leaving behind of valuable items. Well that shouldn't be too bad, should it ? Well it is if your position is saved automatically for you as you pass from Phase 1 to Phase 2 (and yes there is a password needed as well!) so if you make a mistake there it means starting all over again. And with four phases to get through that compounds the problems.

Right what of the game itself, apart from all the above grumbles. Mapping the spaceship is easy and the "puzzles" there are easy too. In fact one could argue that the whole phase is unnecessary except to get you used to the style of the game and the problems. Whizzing around the moon surface is ripping fun, full of places where you can wreck the buggy. Mapping is a nuisance. No neat grids here, you have to leave plenty of space around the "central" locations to allow for the nooks and crannies to be explored and mapped, otherwise your map will become a mess. There is, of course, a maze. And if your stuck in it, the way out is to follow the descriptions. I shan't say more. (Thanks to Javid Systems for the hint!) Another grumble, when describing your inventory it lists what you are wearing twice and counts both items as being carried. As you have to keep your space suit, helmet and boots on all the time you can only carry three more items. Again sloppiness manifested.

However, I must thank Javid Systems for kindly sending me a review copy of their game, complete with covering letter and hints sheet. (You didn't think I'd got as far as Phase 2 all on my own did you ?) I wish I could be more complimentary about their product, and perhaps being forewarned, you might find it more friendly, knowing of the above problems, and therefore able to get straight into the adventure itself. At £10 it's one of the cheaper QL adventures and if you want to get away from the more traditional scenarios you may find it to your liking. Perhaps a later edition of the QUILL would result in an improved product ?

Richard.

R E P L Y

Dear Richard,

Thank you for your recent letter and review. I must admit to being a little disappointed about the amount of space devoted to complaints, as against hardly any good points. We did have a line of program which automatically turned the commands into capitals, but we deleted all the poke commands which had been giving us a lot of problems and omitted to put this one back in. We should have made more of this in the manual, but we still feel our manual has a lot of detailed compared to other games for the QL. We have now added this to the manuals. We feel our vocabulary is reasonably extensive, as I'm sure that most players would think to write "Take Jet", instead of "Take Jet Pack" or "Take Gun" instead of "Take Laser Gun", as it is preferable to have shorter sentences. The totlal program is around 400K already and to put in every combination of object descriptions etc would make it even longer. This also applies to the question of communicating with the other characters. I feel you should base your review against other text adventures for the QL(1), most of which do not include speech, so I don't think most adventure players would expect this. Our characters take far more actions in the game than most other adventures for the QL and I enjoyed Zkul and West just as much.(2)

It is my opinion that most adventure players enjoy the problem solving most and expect to take weeks or months solving the game, which gives good value for money. This game took us 2 years to write and so far advertising and production costs have amounted to neraly £5500. As a result of this expenditure we have sold only 60 games during the past 12 months, so it is no surprise to me that there are not more games for the QL of a high standard.(3)

You have complained about Phase 1 being too easy, but we already stated that in our manual and that logically you would not expect your own space ship to contain too many problems. The laborious procedures wearing space suit and helmet are all intended to add reality, as real astronauts would have all this extra work to do on the Moon and the player must be aware that he is travelling in a hostile environment.(4)

Mapping is also part of the fun and I don't see why you put this in as an objection when you have to follow this procedure in any other game.(5) There is a map that we have followed in joining the locations, so it must be possible to make an

accurate one, but I suggest that you have only given this a short time.

I'm afraid that I don't quite understand your point about leaving valuable things behind when you leave the craft. If the characters are carrying them, then they will bring them through with you. Alternatively, there is enough room in the trailer. However, any problems like this would be alleviated by using the "Save" command before leaving the ship, which I think would be standard procedure for most players.(6)

However, I must accept your criticisms, as it's very hard to be objective about something you've spent such a long time on.

Yours faithfully,

David Colyer

Editor's comments:

(1) Given the paucity of QL software, I don't think there is a standard to measure text adventures against (The Pawn, Zkul?) - I'd rather judge each on its merits or demerits.

(2) This is a total non sequitor

(3) See 2! Without being too cruel, I feel one should point out that the sum of money invested in a product does not necessarily give a clue to its quality. It must be heart-breaking to invest so much money for so little return.

(4) My point here is that the character under one's control is the ONLY one to be required to go through all this rigmarole, which is not realistic as the other characters wonder onto the Moon without helmets or suits - or perhaps they were wearing them all the time. A simple piece of text revealing that as they enter the air-lock they had put on their gear would have helped. As it was I didn't realise they too were able to leave the Space Craft. (Or is that TOO realistic?)

(5) I have no objection to mapping in itself - having mapped both Lords of Midnight and Doomdark's revenge on the Speccy - not to mention loads of other adventures, mapping I quite enjoy. What I don't like are adventures where the text gives no idea of scale. Whilst I don't expect adventures to be based on a strict square grid - I don't like having to redraw maps several times due

to new "spaces" opening up in the map. This is not to say that one couldn't trace the map of Dark Side accurately - once you had the map. Surely, if we're talking "realism", a moon buggy would have proper mapping facilities onboard anyway.

(6) My comments under (4) above explain my confusion as to the other characters. Yes one should save frequently, but saving on the last location is a pain - as one has to then load the next section, see what has happened, if you've got it wrong, reload the previous phase and reload your saved position. O.K. it's part of adventuring to save/load often. Personally I'd prefer to be stopped at the end of a phase if I hadn't got everything right - but I can see circumstances when this isn't or wouldn't be so much fun.

Anyway I've had two bites at the cherry. If anyone else has played Dark Side then I'd like to hear your opinions too. Alternatively if you need any help, I've still got Javid System's help sheet to hand.

Richard.

Although this has yet to be released, I understand that TK Software will be bringing this out on their Talent+ label. I have written a review of this, the second episode in the Dennis the Dwarf saga, based on a pre-production copy. This time the scene is a circus, rather than a Hammer film-set, slightly reminiscent of the old Spectrum adventure "Circus" - although this should not be thought of as a direct spoof of that title.

This is another two part text adventure, which runs happily from disk, coming, like Horrorday, with its own boot prog that allows you to choose which part you want to play. The vocabulary is O.K. so far, although it is always difficult to say until one has solved all the adventure, as it can sometimes be the case that puzzles and interaction with other characters is easier than one realises if you haven't sorted out the way to do it.

Unlike the earlier adventure, Dennis is this time accompanied by his friend, 'Enry Elf, who apparently has wings. Exploring the funfair is quite straight-forward, allowing one to be lulled into a false sense of security, until one stumbles upon the off-duty Freaks. However this is not a sensible adventure - although I think the reviewer in QL World was overstating it when recommending leaving one's brains behind when playing this - as brains will indeed be required to solve it, especially if you haven't been sent a complete solution and map to help review it. Like Mert's earlier game this looks like being sensible geographically, and the problems are "realistic" even if some of the objects are a little silly. Still when was the last time you saw a dwarf (i.e. a mythological creature, not a person of diminished stature) and an elf walking round a funfair?

As this game has yet to be released I won't be giving any hints in this issue, especially as I have yet to finish it. However, I can recommend this game to all QL adventurers, unless they are offended by the idea of an elf throwing up on the Big Wheel.

If, by any chance, you complete this before the third issue of this magazine comes out, I'd like to see any maps you draw, and if you find a way of getting past the trapdoor in the Crazy House I'd appreciate it. (I wonder why the three foot bath plug doesn't cover it?)

Richard.

ARTICLE

SUPERBASIC ADVENTURE WRITING

For some of us, undoubtedly a masochistic minority, there is more enjoyment to be gained from writing adventures than actually playing them. To satisfy this unnatural desire, a number of adventure creating utilities has become available, and for the QL these include the Quill (from Gilsoft) and APT (from Shadow Games).

However, these two utilities are relatively recent additions to the QL adventure writer's armoury - previously we were left to code our own unaided. This was not such a bad situation as it might seem, since we QL owners have access to a very flexible alternative, namely SuperBASIC.

At this stage, and I hope you're not totally devastated, I feel I must reveal that you won't be able to create the next "Pawn" using SuperBASIC, but if you're not averse to playing God, you will have the opportunity to create your own pet universe and have complete control over how it works.

Where to start...

Now if you have the inclination to write your own BASIC adventure you might already have had a stab at it, but even if you haven't, you will find that most of the fun (and if it isn't fun - don't bother) comes from finding your own way of getting it to work. For that reason (not to mention time, effort, space, etc.) I do no intend to go into the nitty gritty and describe a complete skeleton system in detail, but some general suggestions and guidelines won't spoil the fun too much.

What is an adventure?

OK, so we all know the answer to that one, but how do we get the player input into the computer, decipher it, create the illusion that the computer understands it, and give an appropriate response? Most adventures appear to do that along the lines of...

a) Get player input
b) Decode input
c) Take appropriate action
d) Perform any input independent actions
e) Go back to a)

I intend to work through the first two items on the list, effectively what is known as the PARSER, but if there is a demand I will discuss the other items in another article, or maybe another enthusiast will have something to say on the subject.

Time to get technical

a) Get Player Input

This can be a simple "INPUT sentence$" to take the whole player input into the string variable "sentence$". That would be enough to be going on with, but ideally a fully error-trapped routine would be desirable (examples of this sort appear regularly in computer magazines and books).

b) Decode Input

Before rushing headlong into this section, we must pause and decide how complex the parsing will be. For example, the Quill looks only for the first two words in the sentence that are included in the vocabulary, ignoring all others. This is obviously the minimum requirement, bit it works quite well for the usual "verb - noun" type of adventuring.

Right, first of all we need to split the sentence into its component words and store them in an appropriate array (say, "words$()"). Then each word is checked off against the vocabulary (a DATA list containing the words recognised by the program, each of which - ignoring synonyms - has a unique number) until a word is recognised. If it is the first word recognised, then "word1" is made equal to the number of the word from the vocabulary, otherwise "word2" is assigned that value. Having worked out the essence of what the player wants to do, we can give an appropriate response.

The example program

LOAD the program "parser_bas" and examine the listing (best done from MODE 8).
The important procedures are "get_words" and "assign_values".

"get_words" - Notice how the FOR - END FOR loop (lines 260 to 370) chops up the sentence by looking for spaces (CHR$ 32).

"assign_values" - This procedure runs through the vocabulary until two of the input words are recognised, or the words run out.

Look at the vocabulary then run the program and try some inputs. Note how the "full version" of each word is given in a DATA statement at 10000 + the numerical value of the word. You could easily alter and add new words to the vocabulary (remembering to put in an appropriate "translation") and try them out.

This system for searching the vocabulary works OK with a relatively small number of words, but with a larger number, it will begin to take quite some time. You could try splitting the dictionary into 26 alphabetical sections, so that knowing the initial letter of any word, you need only search one smallish section.

ARTICLE

This listing should have provided some food for thought, and possibly make the basis of an adventure system. Why not try it and see?

Happy adventure writing!

Alan Pemberton

```
100 REMark SIMPLE PARSER
110 REMark ALAN PEMBERTON
120 :
130 dictionary=9500: translations=10000
140 CLS:CLS#0
150 :
160 REPeat parse
170   get_words
180   assign_values
190   IF word1=0 AND word2=0 THEN PRINT
"Pardon???":ELSE ok
195   PRINT
200 END REPeat parse
210 :
220 DEFine PROCedure get_words
230   DIM words$(15,4):start_slice=1:
no_words=0:last=32
240   INPUT sentence$
250   sentence$=sentence$&" "
260   FOR num=1 TO LEN(sentence$)
270     letter=CODE(sentence$(num))
280     IF letter=32 AND last<>32 THEN
290       no_words=no_words+1
300       end_slice=num-1
310       words$(no_words)=sentence$(start_slice TO
end_slice)
320       start_slice=num+1
330     ELSE
340       IF letter=32 AND last=32 THEN
start_slice=num+1
350     END IF
360     last=letter
370   END FOR num
380 END DEFine get_words
390 :
400 DEFine PROCedure assign_values
410   REPeat ass
420     word1=0:word2=0
430     FOR num=1 TO no_words
440       RESTORE dictionary
450       found=0
460       REPeat loop
470         READ dict$,val
480         IF dict$==words$(num) THEN found=1:EXIT
loop
490         IF dict$="!" THEN EXIT loop
500       END REPeat loop
510       IF found THEN last_found=num:IF
word1=0:word1=val:ELSE word2=val
520     END FOR num
530     EXIT ass
540   END REPeat ass
550 END DEFine assign_values
560 :
```

```
570 DEFine PROCedure ok
580   IF word2=0 THEN
590     IF word1>100 THEN PRINT "You can't do that to
";trans$(word1)\:
RETurn : REMark - NO VERB RECOGNISED
600     PRINT "You ";trans$(word1)\: REMark YOU DO
SOMETHING
610   ELSE
620     PRINT "You ";trans$(word1)!trans$(word2)\:
REMark YOU DO SOMETHING TO  SOMETHING/BODY
630   END IF
640 END DEFine ok
650 :
660 DEFine FuNction trans$(x)
670   LOCal x$
680   RESTORE translations+x
690   READ x$:RETurn x$
700 END DEFine
9500 REMark **** vocabulary ****
9510 DATA "nort",1
9515 DATA "n",1
9520 DATA "sout",2
9525 DATA "s",2
9530 DATA "east",3
9535 DATA "e",3
9540 DATA "west",4
9545 DATA "w",4
9550 DATA "get",11
9555 DATA "take",11
9560 DATA "exam",12
9565 DATA "look",12
9567 DATA "l",12
9570 DATA "drop",13
9572 REMark - You can have as many synonyms as
you like.
9575 DATA "kill",14
9580 DATA "atta",14
9585 DATA "slay",14
9590 DATA "murd",14
9595 DATA "muti",14
9597 REMark - Names of OBJECTS have values 101 -
200
9600 DATA "swor",101
9605 DATA "lamp",102
9610 DATA "gobl",103
9615 DATA "orc",103
9770 DATA "!",0
9999 :
10000 REMark **** translations **** This line must
be 10000
10001 DATA "go north"
10002 DATA "go south"
10003 DATA "go east"
10004 DATA "go west"
10011 DATA "take"
10012 DATA "examine"
10013 DATA "drop"
10014 DATA "attack"
10101 DATA "a sharp sword"
10102 DATA "the magic lamp"
10103 DATA "the hideous goblin"
```

Dear Richard,
I've taken the liberty of using white text. If anyone else has used Quill with SPEEDSCREEN they will know why!

Please note that the contact address for Samson Software is
H C Billington,
Newnham College,
Cambridge.

not to me as your reductions document suggest. Further all cheques should be made payable to H.C. Billington. Also note that all Kings sent out will now be duplicated from my copy which will make fixing errors (if they exist in V1.2) easier.

I can arrange to act as a contact point for 3 1/2 disks if required. I'll leave the sorting out to you.

The connect 4 is now twice as fast and a little meaner.

If you do set up a wargame writing commitee I will offer my services as a programmer. As a point you may wish to consider, if the wargame does prove to be any good it will be marketable. If this proves to be the case it is worth writing it in a manner which will make it easy to port to other machines. This will involve making the code well documented and modular. I hence suggest that you supervise the work quite closely as programmers tend to go off on their own little tangents if not watched. It may even be worth considering some language more portable than BASIC if enough people have skill and compliers for it.

Try as I might I cannot get king to crash. I'm not saying I don't believe you merely that I'm having troubles removing a bug I can't find! I have however come up with the idea that we may be working from different copies of the program. (Duplication is handled elsewhere.) I am thus sending you a copy of what I believe to be the released version. If you have time between your studies I would appreciate you trying to crash it. If you still can crash it I'll have to think again!
(I did have the time, and alas I crashed it. King v1.3 is now being developed — Ed)

I'm sorry I didn't explain what a finite state automaton is. It is really a lot simpler than it sounds. Indeed you have probably played with a small one in the 'Game of Life'. (See any of about 30 different magazine articles.)

The idea is simple that you imagine a 'machine' (automaton). Now this automaton can be in a number of different positions (states). Now to simplify things you say the machine can only be in a finite number of positions. (The shrewder among you may guess how it got it's name now.)
The trick is then to have a set of rules such that if something happens to a machine when it is in a given position it will move into a new position.

For example you could have a FSA that counted pulses and could tell whether an odd or even number had passed. First you need two states (ODD and EVEN). Then all you need is two rules:
1: If a pulse comes and I'm in ODD move to EVEN
2: If a pulse comes and I'm in EVEN move to ODD.
Got the idea? The extra idea I used is to have the 'external event' as simply a clock tick. Thus it is possible to have many FSA's operating in parallel without unwanted interference.

Right now imagine a grid (say 10 by 10) with lots of these little machines in. Further imagine that each machine can see what its' immediate neighbours states are. You then have the basis for a very clever simulation game. For example imagine each machine represents 500 square yards of earth. Further imagine that the state of the machine depicts the inhabitants of the soil. The rules like the following help build the game.
1: If the clock ticks and I'm in state CONTAINS ZEBRAS and one or more of my neighbours are in state CONTAINS LIONS then move to state CONTAINS SCARED ZEBRAS.
2: If the clock ticks and I'm in state CONTAINS LIONS and one of my neighbours is in state CONTAINS TRAPPED ZEBRAS then move to state CONTAINS GRASS.
3: If the clock ticks and I'm in state CONTAINS GRASS and one of my neighbours is in state CONTAINS SCARED ZEBRA then move to state CONTAINS ZEBRA
4: If clock & in CONTAINS SCARED ZEBRA & neighbours in CONTAINS GRASS=0 then CONTAINS TRAPPED ZEBRA
5: If clock & CONTAINS SCARED ZEBRA & neighbours in CONTAINS GRASS>0 then CONTAINS GRASS

These rules say that Zebras with lions near them will try to flee to grass. If they can't they are trapped and the lions will move to them and eat them.
There are certain technical problem with getting these beasties to run fast enough that you can run hundreds of them in parallel. I will not witter on about this unless specifically asked to however.

David A Bayliss.

9

BOOK REVIEW
WRITING YOUR OWN ADVENTURES - PART ONE

A review of "Creating Adventure Programs on Your Computer", by Andrew Nelson, Interface Publications, 1983 (236 pages, paperback). Available from MPC Software, 72, Julian Road, West Bridgeford, Nottingham, NG2 5AN, - £2.50.

Andrew Nelson's book may be of interest to QL users wishing to write their own adventure games in Superbasic. The author covers the main elements in creating an adventure, including the mapping of the fantasy world, allotment of treasures and monsters, acquisition of food, weapons and booty, combat with ghouls and aliens, and use of magic amulets and transporters. Three complete game listings are given for the reader to type in and play.

Though the program listings are for the IBM PC, only a few minor alterations are required to get the games running on the QL. Specifically, the section of the program which interprets the player's responses to prompts uses the following:
460   INPUT   A$:   A$ =   LEFT$(A$,1)

This means that the player may input a complete word, such as "PICK" for "pick up the treasure", but the program acts only on the letter "P" and then responds along the lines of:

IF A$ = "P" THEN ..... (do something). There are several ways of avoiding the use of the LEFT$ keyword, not available in Superbasic, the easiest being to leave that part of the line out. A few other changes are necessary, though some programmers may prefer to adopt the essential ideas of the programs but rewrite them in more structured Superbasic. Utilities such as the Better Basic Expert System are available to assist in the conversion of programs from versions of Basic such as ZX81/Spectrum Basic, BBC Basic, Commodore Basic and Microsoft/IBM Basic to QL Superbasic. This presents the QL user with the possibility of aquiring adventure listings from several sources and converting them to run on the QL.

In addition to converting the dialect of Basic, there are a few errors in the listings which prevent the games being played correctly. The first game, "Werewolves and Wanderer", has an error in the movement table which prevents a valid move being made from one particular room to the

one from which you have just emerged. Check the data statements for rooms against the movement map in the book. Also I believe there is no check to ensure that the magic amulet cannot be used if it has not yet been purchased. This means that it can be used without having to go to the expense of using treasure to buy it! To prevent such cheating, all that needs be done is to add : IF A$ = "M" AND AMULET = 1 THEN.... to lines 625 and 630. I have put a version of this game, with the errors corrected (I hope!), in the Quanta library. I have added input error trapping which works on JS QLs, and intend replacing it with a compiled version with error trapping to work on all QLs.

The games in the book are not massive, and represent only a small advance over adventures I used to play on the 16K ZX81. The listings are for programs of about 13-18K length. Nevertheless they can provide a certain amount of amusement, especially to the novice adventurer. It is fairly easy to complete them, so the aim should be to achieve as high a score as possible, based on number of monsters killed and booty collected. To a considerable degree, more pleasure is to be obtained from entering the programs, understanding how they work and expanding and improving them. The knowledge gained from doing this should enable you to write similar adventures from scratch.

Due to the present shortage of adventures on the QL, it is worth the price of the book for the three games. More importantly, if the reader learns how the games work it can provide a starting point for writing further QL adventures in Superbasic. However, it is very unlikely that you will learn how to begin producing mammoth adventures to compete with The Pawn simply from reading this book!

Michael L. Jackson

ARTICLE

THE QUILL ADVENTURE WRITER AND OTHER SUCH GRIPPING STUFF
by
Martin Hopkins

Anyone who has ever been sucked into the stimulating (and often extremely frustrating!) world of computer adventures, will, at some stage, take it upon themselves to consider producing a game of their own. Let's face it, how often have you played an adventure and thought that you could have written a far better one? (Especially if it's one of mine!) It happens to us all, I can assure you. But, the big problem - how does one go about getting all these wonderful ideas from the mind and into the computer. If, like me, you are an absolute incompetent in so far as programming goes (even basic gives me a migraine), then Gilsoft's 'The Quill' is truly a gift from the gods!

I first encountered 'The Quill' several years ago on the humble Spectrum. After spending many pleasurable hours trying to solve that quirky Melbourne House game, 'The Hobbit', I was totally hooked! (If you've never encountered this program then you're missing out on the grandfather of graphic adventures, a true classic.) I fiddled with 'The Quill' for a while, produced an embarrassingly awful adventure, then purchased a QL and promptly forgot all about my aspirations to become an Infocom hack!

Ah, the delights of QL ownership! The tired old Spectrum went by the board as I delved into the world of supercomputationalsophistication! But that old yearning was still there, lurking in the back of my mind whilst I tried to grapple with the very basics of SuperBasic. Talent launched the first real game for the QL, the brilliant adventure 'Zkul'. Hastily I mailed my cash, and wasn't to be disappointed! Here was an adventure which was really taxing. After two years I still haven't come anywhere near solving it (though I do take delight in killing that nasty chap with the sword!). Then came 'West', and my QL was alive at last.

But the utter frustration of it all! I had a computer which was capable of great things - in the right hands! I attempted to write my magnificent adventure in SuperBasic, with zero success. If anyone out there thinks that this man is a fool, they're absolutely correct - I deny nothing. At last! (All breath a sigh of relief!) My prayers were answered. The Quill on QL!!!

Building on my previous experience with the Spectrum, I was soon able to operate the program with some dexterity. A word of advice at this point - don't both to follow the example mini-adventure in the manual, it's a deadly bore - enough to put you off adventure writing for life!

Besides, I really believe that the program is simple enough to master just by playing around for a couple of weeks, interspersing with a little judicial delving into the small print at the rear of the manual.

'The Quill' really is well written. It has been developed over the past four or five years onto practically every home computer on the market - with stunning success. The pleasure in using 'The Quill' is derived from its relative simplicity of operation, which belies its virtually unlimited capabilities. (By the way, I don't have shares in Gilsoft - honest!) Thus onto Horrorday.

Whilst owning the Spectrum, I encountered a wonderful spoof adventure - 'Bored Of The Rings'. I had read the book many years before, so I sort of knew what to expect. The game was quite simple, too simple in fact, but its saving grace was the humour. This was the type of adventure I wanted to produce. I must confess that I very quickly lose interest in an adventure if it is too difficult. There is nothing worse than spending £15 or £20 on a game in which it is only possible to traverse the first three locations! (Although there is an adventure?? on the Amstrad called 'The Experience', where the whole aim is to get out of one room. When you succeed in escaping, the game is over - exciting, eh!)

There is also an air of pomposity about many of the 'straight' adventures on the market nowadays, so much so that it detracts from the enjoyment of participating. Too many games tend to take themselves seriously - in writing Horrorday I wanted to get away from that stigmatic situation. Surprisingly, (or not, depending on your point of view!) Dennis the Dwarf was born as I staggered from a pub one Friday evening just after Christmas '86. I spent a weekend working on the plot of part one, (which consisted mainly of working out the name of the adventure) then another six weeks completing it. I do tend to work slowly!

Being fairly pleased with the way that part one came out, I cobbled up a loading screen and sent the package off to Talent. A couple of months later (after I'd forgotten all about Horrorday) a contract dropped through the letterbox. It was about then that panic set in! Here I was with a contract and only half a game!!! Suffice to say, part two of the program evolved from non-existance to completion in four days - and the game play was far better than I'd expected.

Anyone who has waited for their product to hit the

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THE QUILL ADVENTURE WRITER AND OTHER SUCH GRIPPING STUFF
by
Martin Hopkins

market will tell you what a miserable time the waiting is. The game is complete, you eagerly await the reviews, but the release date is months away! What could I do but write another adventure to while the weeks away?

Funfear was produced in a much more sensible manner than Horrorday. I had my characters, I had a plot, I had a title. I planned everything before committing myself to code, aiming for the perfect sequel. When Funfear was completed I promised myself that there would be no other adventures, I was in need of a break, all my spare time was being swallowed by Dennis Dwarf and 'Enry Elf! But the best laid plans of mice and men...

It was literally hours after finishing Funfear, and there I was, scribbling down the basics of The Prawn. I had just sent a partially completed copy of The Prawn to our esteem editor, Richard, when the bodyblow came. THAT review of Funfear in the October issue of QL World. I can laugh at it now, but at the time I was devastated. It's not too pleasant to read that something which has taken months to produce is regarded as 'infantile' and 'childish' and 'an insult to ones intelligence'. The final quip about leaving your brain somewhere else before attempting to play the adventure was the final straw - I quit! The reviewer mentioned nothing of the humorous slant of the adventure - perhaps there was no humour? I was becoming paranoid!
Then Talent announced that they were pulling out of the QL market - it was more than flesh and blood could stand! After a several month 'cooling off' period I decided to complete The Prawn - a copy of which Richard has for review purposes. T.K. Computerware has taken over from Talent, and is marketing Talent's software under the name of Talent+. There is a good chance that they will be marketing The Prawn, so look out for it all you readers of this sorry tale!

Finally a word about APT, Shadow Game's Adventure Programming Tool. I am working on a new adventure utilising this system, and have to say that it is superb. You can do just about anything with it, including graphics! Unfortunately a little programming skill is required to reap the full benefits - if you are competent with SuperBasic, you'll have no problems here. As to the question of price (the system is over £60 complete) all I can say is that the entire suite of programs fill a total of five microdrives - I consider it to be very good value indeed!

HINTS TIME:-

Just to really bore you. Many adventures have real time features - like night and day occuring etc. This is how I did it in The Prawn using The Quill...

STATUS TABLE

START _	EQ 5 0		If flag 5 = 0 then
	LET 5 120		let flag 5 = 120
NIGHT _	EQ 5 90		If flag 5 = 90 then
	SET 0		set flag 0 to non-zero
			and print message
	MESSAGE 1		"NIGHT FALLS"
DAY _	EQ 5 30		If flag 5 = 30 then
	CLEAR 0		clear flag 0 to zero
			and print message
	MESSAGE 2		"DAY BREAKS"

Simple, isn't it? You can of course move objects and characters around to different locations etc when night falls or day breaks. What about the various people you meet in adventures? The simplest way to include them is to produce them as objects which you are unable to pick up.
As to bodies following you around in your wanderings - i.e. 'Enry Elf wandering behind Dennis Dwarf. (What do you mean, you've never played Horrorday or Funfear? Go and buy them this instant!) The only way I know of doing this is:-

If object one is a cat and you wish to go north from location 1 to location 2, Ignore the movement table. Entries are required in the STATUS TABLE as follows:

N *	AT 1	at location 1
	PRESENT 1	cat is present
	GOTO 2	go to location 2
	CREATE 1	cat is created at location 2
	DESC	describe location 2
N *	AT 1	at location 1 but cat not present
	GOTO 2	go to location 2
	DESC	describe location 2

The second piece of data N * is required because commands to the status table will 'fall through' if the cat isn't present.
Right, that's enough for now - I'm off to bed.

Cheers
Mert

H E L P   L I N E

HELP WANTED ON MORDON'S QUEST

In Morden's Quest, with your help, I have been through the futuristic world and come to the Roman Arena, where I have failed miserably to get the better of the gladiator or to make any progress. Where's my ticket? Help again!!! (see QLAF 3 for more hints!)

HELP WANTED ON CLASSIC ADVENTURE 1

I haven't touched Classic Adventure 1 since I wrote the article for QLAF 1 and I am still stuck at the window by the pit, trying to elicit a response from the shadowy figure. Help would be appreciated from any of your readers who have got past this bit.

SHANE MCGARVEY, Two Gables, Eaton, Nr. Congleton, Cheshire. CW12 2NH

HORRORDAY - HINTS

It's always a dodgy business giving hints to adventures when you haven't finished them, you can never be sure if what you've done is actually the right thing. Needless to say if any of our readers cares to correct my advice, so much the better. Also really good adventures are full of red-herrings and should allow you to misuse objects.

The first phase is straight-forward, doing what one usually does with rubble and handing over the usual drink. Tree trunks are there to be climbed and sign-posts to be read. With a name like HORRORDAY you can expect the usual denizens of Hammer films to make their appearance and so garlic will come in handy. The spiky wise one would appreciate a lift from you provided he's kept warm.

The second phase about the old hag's cottage is a shade awkward - all I'll say is that stepping-stones are made of stone (or rock) and that the old crone likes to use a face-pack. Fences not only have gates and the old hag's gift is useful when spanning chasms. (Thanks to Martin for those hints!!!)

After this you can go exploring, a useful disguise is hidden in the caves and the doors to the castle need a good shove. There is a useful cleaning implement in the cellar but what it reveals takes two to lift. Cats can be fed in the usual way.

Although the pie looks most tempting, resist or else you won't be able to leave. Some additional clothing comes in handy and the heed well the hedgepig's advice - it'll save a lot of banging on walls. The final grill simply needs a touch of the Doc Martens, and you should be through to the second part. If Esmerelda wails at you then you'll just have to go back and pick up just about everything that you can to get out. Well that will get you through the first part, if not write in to the "Agony Column" for further advice - happy adventuring.

Richard.

P.S. If you can get past the Centurion or "solve" the maze in part two, do let me know. As far as I can see the maze has only two locations and I've yet to find a way out. I'm sure that the answer is staring me in the face but you know how it is with adventures!!!

NEMESIS
Plea for help from Kurt Johansson

I'm discovering the first part of the adventure game "Nemesis".
There are some difficulties to overcome and I hope that you can take the time necessary to answer some questions I have:

1) OLD LADY SITTING OUTSIDE A HOUSE PLAYING WITH TAROT CARDS.
When I sit down, as she tells me to do, the microdrive starts to whirl for a while but then stops and the game does the same. I must reload the game again.
Is it any fault in my game or shall I do anything else before, like give her some kind of gift or what?

2) MAN IN THE FOREST WEARING A FUR COAT
I have tried to give the man the dead rabbit and he offers me some water.
I have also tried to give the longbow to him but the microdrive starts to whirl for a moment and then as in the example above I have to relaod the game.
What shall/can I do with this man? I would like to get his coat off him as I am freezing to death in other parts of the game.

3) UP IN THE MOUNTAIN WITH THE POOL
I manage to swim down in the water coming up in another room with some wood staff.
What shall/can I do with the wood staff?

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What use can I have of the man in the mountain who is willing to follow me?

4) CASTLE'S ENTRANCE
When I try to enter the castle I have problems with those iron sticks on the floor.
What equipment must I have with me and are there also other demands to fulfil before going in?

5) "INSERT BABY HERE"
I have read an inscription on the wall near to the water closet in the underground but I don't know the meaning of the word "BABY" in the sentence.
What is a "BABY" in this case?

6) BOTTOM LINE
As you understand I'm in great need for help!

Are there any maps or hints to be given for my future search?

Is there any vocabulary list available?

ANSWER.................
I HAVEN'T THE FOGGIEST !!!
I haven't spent much time on Nemesis myself, so....
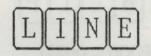
If you can help please write to:

Kurt Johansson
Sodra Laget 149
S - 136 53 Haninge
Sweden

(And while you're about it, how about dropping the editor a line too. Thanks. Richard)

COLOSSAL CAVE - HELP & CLUES

If you intend offering solutions to specific problems, there is one in Colossal Cave/ The Adventure which has been holding me up for months. I can find my way around the pirate's maze to recover the treasure, but not the maze with the battery machine. Sometimes I can find the machine but not the way out. Other times I go in and out without finding the machine. I need to do both, as I have explored as much of the maze as I can and my light is disappearing. Incidentally, I can buy the batteries easily in the Quanta version but not in the Sinclair one. Is this a bug?

In reply to Caveman, QLAF1, to get light into the emerald room, say PLOVER when at Y2. Then go NE to get a platinum pyramid, S back to the emerald,

then PLOVER again to return to Y2. At the debris room, say XYZY (or XYZZY in the Quanta and other versions) to get back to the well house, and the same again to return to the caves.

TREASURE HUNT - CLUES

SOMEWHERE I have a complete map to the Treasure Hunt game, but have only been able to find a partial solution. The game largely requires most actions to be performed in the correct order, i.e. an object obtained from solving a problem at one location is needed to solve a further problem elsewhere, sometimes with other tools. Help can be obtained in some locations, but not many. For the time being here's a solution to one of the more provoking problems. Near the market in the Orcs' castle there is a well. It is well worth exploring, once you know how. To attach the rope acquired in the guard room to yourself and a nearby horse, "Tie Rope" -twice! Once you "climb down", there is a loose brick in the wall which is worth a look. Don't go further down the well unless you particularly want wet feet and a reception party waiting for you when you return to ground level.

I found the need to use the exact words all the time a great problem, and had to resort to cheating by examining the program listing a couple of times. I will try to compile Treasure Hunt to prevent cheating by others, though the Basic is odd in places and might defeat QLiberator.

Yours sincerely,

Michael L. Jackson

LETTER

Dear Richard,

I'm most pleased that you have managed to start the ball rolling with QLAF, I must admit that I had almost given up hope since you indicated that you expected to launch it sometime in November last year. I hope that the decision to use microdrives as the shipping media for the magazine doesn't cause too many problems, mine copied to disk without hassle, I hope you have no trouble with it now, since I've used the same cartridge to put this letter on...

You mentioned, in the forum, that it might be a good idea if anyone could undertake to copy QLAF to 3.5" disk, well I don't mind taking that on provided I'm not out of pocket at the end of the day. Let me know if you want to take this further. You will, I'm sure, have noticed the other two cartridges enclosed, these contain a finished copy of the illustrated adventure that I have now completed. Please do have this reviewed in the next possible edition of QLAF, if you want. The game was reviewed, all-be-it rather briefly, in the Feb. edition of QL World, but don't let this put you off. If you have any comments about the game concerning any bugs etc. that you, or your reviewer, might find, then please do let me know. Although this version has undergone considerable debugging, I would be most surprized if it is error free. However, I am sure that no major mistakes are in it, or at least as sure as I can be! I have included a few background notes about IMAGINE at the end of this letter.

Now on to the APT system, which was used to write IMAGINE. I have included a 'plug' for APT as you suggest, this is in the file APT_doc, also on this cartridge. Please feel free to edit this as you see fit, provided, of course, that you don't alter any factual information in it. The system has been finished for some time although Shadow Games are being rather slow, much to my dismay, in actually advertising it. The latest addition to the APT system is the sound package, you will hear this in action when you run IMAGINE. This now allows APT to produce adventure games that make full use of all the features that the QL has to offer. I'm now considering branching out to other machines, such as the AMIGA, and I will probably try to transport the APT system over to this machine. I expect this will keep me busy for some time to come!

While reading through the first edition of QLAF I had a thought concerning your comments about copying software to disks etc. Before I tell you what I have in mind I must stress that I am most certainly NOT prepared to do anything that would help would be software pirates, I share your views on that subject. However, I am quite used to legitimate 'hacking' for my own convenience. What I would like to suggest is that I would be quite

willing to offer to attempt to convert any 'problem' software so that it can be operated from disk. If any QLAF readers have any program, even non forum related stuff, that they would like to have run from disk, but can't sort it out themselves, then I am willing to have a go for them. Clearly I will have to draw a line on the number of such jobs I take on, but I don't expect that there are too many programs that fall into this category.

If there is anything else I can do to help with the forum then do let me know. I am willing to support it in any way I can, time permitting of course.

NOTES ON IMAGINE, TO GET YOU OFF THE GROUND

I have supplied the game on mdv_ but you can copy it, using the appropriate CLONE program on each cartridge, to any other device. Note that CLONE_1 must be used if you want to run the game off of any device other than mdv, since it does the required patch, to the game itself, to tell it which device to look for the picture file on. As it stands, you should run the game in mdv1_ and the picture file should be in mdv2_.

IMAGINE will run OK on any QL configuration, you will find that it avoids delays in reading picture data if you do convert it to disk, though. The program itself is memory resident, you can remove the cartridge in MDV1_ once the game is running, if you want. Don't be tempted to remove the picture media though, this will give it a headache. The save feature will deposit the save file on the same device as the picture file is on. So, if you CLONE the program to operate from disk then the save file will also be on the disk.

The game has about 100 locations, 70 objects and a vocabulary of over 330 words. I have a 'hints' file available for the game, if you should need it. I have pitched IMAGINE at a level that will probably make it on the easy side for experienced players, however, I have also put in quite a few little nasties that might make you think you have solved a puzzle, only to find out, later, that your particular solution leaves you scuppered!
IMAGINE is to be sold through Shadow Games, the price mentioned in QL World was £19.95, but I think we might well reduce this to £15 or so.

OK, I'll leave it there. If you have any problems with any of the cartridges I have enclosed then let me know, I'll happily send duplicates in this case.

I look forward to QLAF_2

Cheers, Steve Sutton

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The APT adventure writing system
- an alternative to QUILL

I became involved with adventure games quite some time ago when, over many a lunchbreak at work, I grappled with ADVENTURE, the original Willie Crowther game, which I had acquired to run on a DEC mini-computer. From this beginning, I progressed through several other games and eventually began writing games of my own. It was only natural that I should want to convert these for use on my QL, but this is where I started to discover some of the speed problems with home micros!

Early attempts to write a game using SuperBASIC quickly convinced me that this wasn't the way to proceed. At this time the QUILL wasn't available for use on the QL and anyway, I found that it couldn't offer all of the features I was looking for. I toyed with using some other language on the QL, apart from SuperBASIC, to code a game in, but after some thought I decided to embark on a project to construct an adventure writing system of my own that would include ALL the features I wanted. Well, here I am, several thousand hours of work later, and at last I have managed to convert a part of my original game to run on the QL by using my APT system! The game I have produced, IMAGINE has been reviewed in the Feb. issue of QL World, and I hope in this issue of QLAF, but if, like me, you enjoy actually writing adventure games as well as playing them, then you might like to know a bit more about APT itself. (It'll have to be in QLAF3 as QLAF2 has filled up very quickly! Richard)

APT actually stands for Adventure Programming Tool, and it consists of a comprehensive set of utility programs, data files and, of course, manuals. With APT you can program ANY feature you want into a game, it can include illustrations (including simple animation effects too) and sound effects, and both the APT system and the games it produces can run on any QL configuration. In a word APT offers complete flexibility.

For ANY adventure writing system there are several features that are essential. For example, a system for constructing the 'geography' of the game must be included, as must ways of including objects and creatures. With APT these, and other features such as the vocabulary of words that the game is to know, are contained in data files which may be examined and edited using one of the appropriate multi-tasking utility programs provided. These make constructing the 'framework' of an adventure

a simple matter.

APT does most of the sorting out of the text automatically, each message, location description, or whatever is formatted to fit the display window quite automatically as the game runs. In addition, you have full control of INK and STRIP, character by character if you want, and either QL screen mode is supported. All this is combined with a powerful text compression system which will achieve a compression factor of up to 2X, while allowing most characters you are likely to want to use, and of course, mixed case letters.

You can optionally add illustrations to APT adventures. This is done by a versatile graphics program that can also be used independently of the APT system to provide pictures for other applications. In addition, pictures produced by other drawing programs can also be incorporated, using an efficient screen compression utility. A unique feature of the system is that it allows you to have MODE 8 illustrations along with MODE 4 text on screen at the same time, if you want, (yes I really do mean that). This doesn't involve any hardware changes or anything like that. The amount of the screen used for illustrations can be varied in a game if you want. Sound effects can also be incorporated, if you can BEEP it, you can include it.

Another unique feature of APT is the way that it controls the logic of the adventure game. Rather than being fixed, this is controlled by two programs, written in APTBASIC. These programs are provided with the kit, but you can add to or change them in order to include any number of extra features into your game. Two programs are used in order to allow APT to offer real-time facilities to a game. One program is involved with responding to a players command, this only runs when such a command is actually made. The other program is run, about once a second, all the time the game is running. This provides the control of counters and flags that are used to operate all the real time events in the game, such as movement of creatures, control of burning objects or other, 'random' events.

APT includes an intelligent parser, that allows the player to enter commands in abbreviated form, optional last command recall, automatic freeze screen if too much text is output at one go, game save/restore to any media you want, a vocabulary of up to 4096 words, up to 255 locations and 256 objects, virtually unlimited messages... I can't really begin to list all the features here.

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APT is available through Shadow Games, and the price varies depending on how much of the kit you want. The complete kit is considerably less than £50 and is available on microdrive (six of them) or an a single 3.5" disk (and there isn't too much space left on that). The kit is supplied with extensive documentation and, of course, full backup service in the unlikely event of your having difficulties with any of it.

If you want more information, please contact Shadow Games directly, the address is:

Shadow Games
Moory Park
Jeffreyston
Kilgetty
DYFED
SA68 0RT
Cymru

Steve Sutton, January, 1988.

CONVERTING GAMES TO DISC OPERATION

It is to be welcomed that QLAF gives details of the likelihood of converting each of the reviewed games to disc operation, since QL World and Quanta rarely mention such matters in their reviews. However Richard Alexander implies in QLAF1 that he does not use a program or toolkit to help change the adventures to running from disc. This is quite reasonable of course, since the authors and publishers of the games should provide clone programs to do the job for us. The problem is that often they do not provide such a clone utility, and even worse they insult our integrity by using methods of copy protection which require the use of the original cartridge as a key to load their games. Several of the games reviewed so far have required the key cartridge to be placed in microdrive 2 each time the adventure is loaded. In order to convert such games to SINGLE disc operation (whether 5.25 inch or 3.5 inch) a copy utility is needed.

The program I have found of most use in copying from cartridge to disc is Zitasoft UK's 4Matter, by Steve Jones. Though I have not used any of the other clone utilities advertised in QL World, I understand that most of them will simply make an exact copy of the key cartridge, which must be placed in mdv2_ as usual. 4Matter goes much further than this in providing routines to assist in running programs from a single disc (FLP or FDK). To put it simply, not only should 4Matter be able to change all references in an adventure

(whether Superbasic or machine code) from say mdv1_ to flp1_, but it should be able to fool the game into thinking that the original cartridge is in mdv2_ when in fact it is quite empty! How it does this is covered quite adequately in the program's many help screens.

To give an example, recently I purchased a database program published by Sinclair which would have required the use of three cartridges to operate. An original cartridge was required in mdv2_ as a loading key, and backups of the program cartridge and the data cartridge had to be swapped in and out of mdv1_. Needless to say, 4Matter allowed the programs to run from a single disc in flp1_ with no key in mdv2_. I have had 100% success in removing the need to use original cartridges, many of which are quite expensive and almost impossible to replace if damaged.

With such utilities available several of the popular methods of software protection are a nuisance only for the 30 minutes or so it takes to fully deprotect them. I hope this will encourage adventure game authors to rely on other methods of protecting their creations, especially copyright law. Incorporating a user number or name and address of the purchaser in each copy sold is an acceptable method of protection as it would allow the source of any pirate copies of a game to be identified. Two other changes to publishers' policies would help discourage piracy.
(i) Supply adventure games in all formats of disc and cartridge.
(ii) Reduce the price of the games. Adventures written using The Quill are available at £1.99 each on the Spectrum, Commodore, etc. £5.00 – £6.00 would not be unreasonable for such games on cartridge or disc (many discs are CHEAPER than cartridges!), and should appeal to a greater number of QL adventurers.

Michael L. Jackson

THE PAWN : CLUES, PART TWO

At the end of the clues in QLAF1 I left you having, or rather giving a drink to Jerry Lee Lewis. From his room go south and east. If you're carrying the white you'll not be able to proceed further unless its light is hidden. From here its a sharp north into a cavern full of powerful demons. If you want to look in the fridge, do save your position first, similarly if you wish to go back the way you came. Eastwards lies your goal: Hell.

Surprise! Yes old Nick rules the roost here. And he's got the solution to your problems with Kronos - so ask him for the low-down on the wizard and, while you're at it, see if he'll enlighten you with regards the wristband. Generously he gives a crystal bottle and then banishes you from his realm back to the high ledge. A little light will help here and now you can face the dragon.

In the dimly-lit cave there's a bundle of treasure with a cute dragon rubbing his tum at the prospect of lunch - you! Those shadows could do with some illumination and the dragon needs a little guidance before he'll look into them. Now whilst the dragon gorges himself on those hobbits you can rush off into the magician's cave and bung him a little devil's brew. The ensuing mess can be cleaned up with with squirt from the aerosoul. Having vacated his vestments, you can wear them yourself - as the dragon recognises Kronos by them. That wand loks handy too. And exit south pronto. Alternatively you can go north and fly back to hell on that handy slab, provided you're not carrying excess baggage. Whichever old Nick would like the aerosoul.

Back in hell show the Devil the aerosoul and lo, the wristband vanishes. Don't hang around to discuss the weather - scoot! Retrace your steps, past the porter, but do get your rope before climbing it. Right we have a little gardening to do before finishing so, following the booklet plant the plant in the pot with the trowel. Now, back to the mountains - it is a chore isn't it - and tackle those perspex doors. Answer the question truthfully and you'll be rewarded by the programmers with a listing. This needs to be debugged. Once that is done you've finished and can safely wander around the game without hindrance. If the princess has not been rescued, you can take her back, but I doubt if you'll be rewarded.

That's your lot, I think. If I've left something out, do tell me, or drop a line to the help-line. But if you want to play Guild of Thieves or Jinxter, you'll have to buy another machine!

Richard.

MORDON'S QUEST - HINTS PT2

Following on from the hints in QLAF1, we come to the next stage of solving this adventure. This concerns the notorious underwater section. One has to solve this part before being able to complete the game and as it is a self-contained section it can be done in one go.

Firstly you have to come out of the cylinder onto a beach to the north. If you don't there is little point exploring the Roman section at this stage - except to get an idea of what hazards lie ahead. From the beach you head for the boat and then Down to pick a vital piece of equipment. Thence north through a tunnel until you get to the ocean bed. From here you have to head SE to the oyster bed and then Up into the slimy area. From here go the clear area and Down to the garden. North and East will take you to the air supply for the aqualung.

Now, retrace your "steps" and retrieve the pearl and back to the ocean bed. From here you have to go North through the Whale, a wreck and a tunnnel to the bottom of a well, picking up goodies on the way. The octopus won't see you in the dark. At the well it is best not rush up or you'll get the bends so hang around a couple of goes. Right now you can go up and give the superhero something to read. This'll give you a paint spray and help yourself to the control whilst you're at it.

From here it's a straight run back to the beach, taking the same precautions as on your way to the workshop and thence to the cylinder, where I shall leave you to continue exploring until the next issue of QLAF. (If you can't wait read Sinclair User for September 1987, to whom thanks.)

Richard.

LETTERS

Dear Richard,

Congratulations on the first edition of QLAF, long may it reign!

Now, in a bid to contribute to the magazine, rather than just crib answers from it, I have sent off to Microdrive Exchange in order to review and (hopefully) give hints for some of the programmes that may appeal to QLAF. They are: Stellaris, which seems to be a combination of adventure and simulation; The Double, which appeals to me greatly since it involves playing the part of a soccer manager guiding his team to League and Cup success by buying the right players, boosting the team's morale and winning.

Knowing my luck I'll end up as manager of Hartlepool and the only way I shall win is by tying the opponents' bootlaces together! Adventure Playtime looks quite fun and the fourth programme is the more conventional dungeon-type adventure, with the aptly named title of Dungeons.

So hopefully in the wintry months that seem certain to descend on us any moment in East Cheshire I will be gainfully employed reviewing and hinting for QLAF.

In the meantime I shall be having another look at the three adventures I have hitherto been stuck on, trying to make some progress before the next edition of QLAF arrives. You could be getting a phone call or two!

I look forward to receiving QLAF 2 in due course on this mdv. Best wishes for No.2...

Shane McGarvey

PS Feel free to use this letter in your letters column or wherever it suits you.

Dear Richard,

Thanks very much for the copy of QLAF1. Sorry to see that you didn't manage to do it on a desk top publisher, but it is quite understandable as I also average 2-3 hours per page using Page Designer.

What is more important is the content, and QLAF seems set to cover territory largely ignored by QL World and Quanta. Even Popular Computing Weekly seems to have abandoned its Adventure Helpline in the recent issues I have seen.

I enclose your cartridge, on which are a couple of reviews (printed copies also enclosed). If I have time I will put one or more compiled adventures on the cartridge as well.
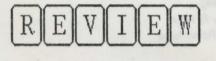
The idea of producing a wargame between several readers of QLAF appeals to me, as I was once a very keen wargamer. I don't know what I could contribute, though I have a degree in Modern History and should be able to check the authenticity of several wars.

I have a 3.5 inch disc drive and would be pleased to review programs submitted to you on such discs if you cannot use them otherwise.

Good luck with future issues of QLAF.

Yours sincerely,
Michael L. Jackson

REVIEW

QL Forum : 3

The latest issue of QL Forum contains an adventure created using the QUILL adventure system. Called "Farce", it is written by Ian Bruntlett, who produces QL Forum.

The adventure itself is not very easy, and is full of sudden death traps, admittedly well sign-posted! Fortunately the game re-starts quickly, so that one can learn from one's mistakes. This is yet another in a long line of spoof adventures. Is this a sign that people find the "traditional" adventures too unrealistic to take seriously?

Anyway this one is well worth its price (free!) and is available, with the rest of QL Forum for 50p and a blank mdv_ from Ian at 25, The Broadway, High Barnes, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear, SR4 8LP, England. Ian welcomes contributions in the form of progs, superbasic_extns, reviews and games, so readers who want to get their adventures tested can send them to Ian to put on future Forums (or to Quanta for that matter).

In the mean time if anyone can tell me how to get into the wooden hut to the west of the obelisk I'd be grateful, and a use for the driftwood and lasagne would be useful. One could grumble about one or two points: driftwood isn't recognised, you have to use "wood" instead; and I don't like hidden paths very much either - especially in the first (land) location. Still this is a first attempt at adventure writing and shows how the QUILL can be used.

Richard.

P.S. I'd just like to register my displeasure at finding a crude drawing program on QL Forum #3, which purports to display a series of females (named) in swimsuits. Isn't it time that male computer users grew up!

BITS AND PIECES

NEW HORIZON

On the back of Quanta vol2/4, May 1985, there was an advert from New Horizons Software advertising a range of adventures. Did anyone ever buy any of these as they no longer seem to be in business and my attempts to contact them appear to have failed?

Listed as being available were the following adventures:
Stranded
Dungeon
Golden Chalice
Damien
Elfin Way
Martian Affair
Beacon Adventure

All were at £10.00 each. if anyone has got a copy of any of these or knows where to get hold of them - if indeed they were ever produced - please write to the editor. If I can get permission from the copyright holders of these games I'd like to re-introduce them into circulation - hopefully at a much reduced price. New Horizon's address used to be Four Winds, Cwm Lane, Rogerstone, Newport, Gwent, Cymru, NP1 9AF.

SMALL ADS

ALAN PEMBERTON WILL BE HAPPY TO SUPPLY COPIES OF BOTH OF HIS ADVENTURES: "ADVENTURE PLAYTIME" AND "FROM THE TOWER OF VALAGON" TO ANY READERS WHO SENDS A BLANK FORMATTED MDV_ (FOR EACH TITLE REQUIRED) AND AN S.A.E.. PLEASE MENTION THAT YOU SAW THE OFFER IN QLAF. (ALTHOUGH ALAN DIDN'T MENTION IT, YOU COULD ALSO SEND HIM A 50P OR £1.00 COIN FOR HIS TROUBLES)

ALAN PEMBERTON, 16,COMISTON TERRACE, MORNINGSIDE, EDINBURGH, EH10 6AH, SCOTLAND.

QUANTA ADVENTURES

Those of you who are members of QUANTA, and shame on those who aren't, will know that it maintains a large library of free or very cheap software. What you may not realise is that in the library are several adventures. I've listed below those adventures currently listed on the library guide (guide costs £5.50 if you haven't had one

previously). I've played most of them and they're quite good, certainly better than Treasure Hunt that some QLs had as a freebie, and would make an excellent introduction to adventuring if you're new to the genre.

What is quite nice about these adventures is that for the most part they are written in BASIC, so that you can break into them or copy them to scr_ or ser1. Mind you, even if you do so, it'll still take you hours to work out the "cheats" way to do things: it may just be quicker to play the game. I'm not sure if it's worth doing individual reviews and hints for these games as they're so cheap and can be got at. However if you are stuck or would like to review any of them, let us know.

HACK, Soken		Disk 02	(no charge)
QUEST, Shaw		Disk 05	(no charge)
WORM, Bladon		Disk 06	(no charge)
WORMC, Bladon (inc Pics1 + 2)	Disk 07	(£1.00)
VALLEY, Methley		Disk 06	(no charge)
COLOSSAL CAVE, Crowther & Woods	Disk 08	(£6.00)
JEWEL, Bladon		Disk 09	(£2.00)
ADVENTURE, Van Loenen	Disk 09	(£2.00)

Simulations:

MANAGAME, Salmi		Disk 12	(no charge)

N.B. charges relate to an entire disk's contents, and if there's more than one adventure on a disk, you only pay a single charge. There is a different set of tariffs for mdv_ carts. You may be lucky enough to get what you want on a mdv_ without any option charges on it.

QUANTA membership: Brian Pain, 24 Oxford Street, Stony Stratford, Milton Keynes, MK11 1JU (Tel: 0908-564271)

You'll have to join to get the benefits of membership, so you won't be able to get copies of QUANTA software, including the adventures, etc above, any other way.

Richard.