General Information

Useful Addresses

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Blue Force - Tsunami/Accolade -
PC CD-ROM and floppy disk - RRP £39.99

Capture The Flag - SynTax Library -
PC Disk - *Mouse essential.*

Cercla - by Jeffrey P. Johnson -
SynTax Library - PC Disk 672

Companions of Xanth - Legend - PC only
- RRP £39.99

Dracula Unleashed - Viacom/Mindscape -
PC CD-ROM only - RRP £49.99

Dragon Cave - SynTax Libray -
Amiga Disk 583

Eye of the Beholder Trilogy - SSI/US
Gold - PC on CD-ROM and floppy disk -
RRP £45.99

Frustration - by Jim McBrayne -SynTax
Library - Amiga Disk 578

Labyrinth of Time - Electronic Arts/Terra
Nova Development - PC CD-ROM only -
RRP £39.99

Magnetic Moon - by Larry Horsefield - FSF
Adventures, 40 Harvey Gardens, Charlton,
London SE7 8AJ - Spectrum 48k & 128k
Tape - £1.99 / 128k & +3 disk - £2.99

Scapeghost - Level 9 - *Try for a second
-hand copy.*

SimCity 2000 - Maxis/Mindscape
Macintosh/PC - RRP £39.99

Star Trek: Judgment Rites - Interplay -
PC Version - £44.95

Uninvited - Mindscape - *Try for a second
-hand copy.*

WYSIWYG - by Jean Childs - ST - *Details
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EDITORIAL

Contributors

Keith Adam
Dave Barker
Alan Brookland
Janice Charnley
Jean Childs
Steve Clay
Neil Currie
Darren Fisher
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Until about 8 months ago the Red Herring readership was sitting happily at around 250, since then there has been a dramatic and sustained fall and the mail out list for this issue stands at 78. The June issue figures would have dropped to around 60.

When starting Red Herring, I promised myself that if the figures ever dropped below 100 its viability was in doubt, but as they continued to drop below that magic figure, I kept reassuring myself that it was due to the result of the economic climate and that the readership would pick up, unfortunately this hasn't happened. Therefore, it is with deep regret, I have to tell you that Red Herring 16 is the final issue.

I must emphasise that it's not for financial reasons that I have decided to stop publishing, I could simply have had less copies printed. The basic problem is readership numbers and I cannot see that improving much. Mailers and reminders to those who did not re-subscribe have produced disappointing results and I doubt if an expensive advertising campaign would have much effect, although I did consider that option. Perhaps the day of the dedicated adventure magazine/fanzine has passed, I rather tend to think so.

The envelope most of you will have with this issue contains a cheque for the balance of your subscription. If I have missed out anyone, please tell me.

I have added an extra 10 pages to the final issue so that all outstanding contributions are published. The exception to this is Jim Johnson's thought-provoking article on Obsolescence which will now be published in Sue's SynTax disk magazine — 16 bit readers who don't already take SynTax might consider moving there, you will find the same mixture of reviews, articles, hints and solutions and the same dedication to Public Domain/Shareware adventures. It is, of course, the home of the SynTax Software Library.

Sue will continue to help Red Herring adventurers with hints either by telephone or mail and, as the Solutions Database is jointly owned by both of us, I will continue to fill requests for complete solutions. The Database is continually being updated, with both 8 and 16 bit adventures and I will send out a New Solutions update, as the solutions are added to the database, to anyone who wants one. If you'd like your name added to this list, let me know — there will be no charge for receiving this update.

If you'd like to fill in any back numbers of Red Herring you may have missed, a few copies of Issues 3 to 9 and 12 to 15 are available at £1.00 + 36p postage per copy.

I wish to sincerely thank all of you who have remained with Red Herring and a very special thanks to everyone who has contributed, without them Red Herring wouldn't have got off the ground. Thank you all.

Marion

Amiga readers — Interactive Technology, PO Box 146, Sheffield S13 7TY are urgently looking for playtesters for two new Amiga projects. One is a text-based adventure with a flexible point-and-click environment which also allows conventional text input. The other is a game creator which produces single player, Multi User Adventure-style games. This is based on a simple point-and-click editor in which no internal language or programming is needed. Potential playtesters should write to Martyn Westwood at the above address.

It's nice to see that a few people are still supporting the Spectrum. One such programmer is Martin Freemantle of Dream World Adventures. His latest games are Golden Figures of Death and So Little Time. Each costs £2.50 on tape or +D disk, £2.00 on +3 disk (you have to supply your own disk). All his games are also available under emulation for the Amiga at £2.50 each with a free emulator. Or you can buy multi-packs of 3 or 7 games per disk for £5.00 or £10.00 respectively. His other games are Dragon Slayer, Death or Glory, Final Battle, Settlement XIII and Curse of the Serpent's Eye. For more info or to order, contact Dream World Adventures at 10 Medhurst Crescent, Gravesend, Kent, DA12 4HL.

The 8th Ultima game, Ultima VIII:Pagan, is now out on both floppy and CD-ROM for the PC. However, the CD-ROM version, though having some enhancements such as a speech accessory, needs to be installed on, and run from, the hard disk where it takes over 40 meg. Sheesh... Once again, you play the Avatar in his continuing fight against evil and will travel through seven areas of Pagan, four of which are specific to the four elements. You were dragged into Pagan by the Guardian at the end of Ultima VII and his forces are in complete control of the land.

Also out is the first module in the Elder Scrolls, called Arena, from US Gold/Bethesda. A 33mhz 386 or better is recommended and 4 meg RAM needed. The game looks similar to Underworld and features over 20 different creatures to cause you a lot of problems as you search the land of Tamriel in search of the eight pieces of the Staff of Chaos. Once these have been recovered, you will be able to rescue the Emperor of Tamriel who has been imprisoned in another dimension by an evil mage. The first add-on module will have a Gothic horror setting and will be called Mournhold.

Games with a horror theme are big news at the moment. Let's take a quick look at a few of them...

SSI/US Gold are releasing Strahd's Possession which is set in their Ravenloft game world. Again, it is an RPG but unlike Pagan and Elder Scrolls is a four-character game.

The latest Quest For Glory game, Shadows of Darkness (QFG4) from Sierra, also features vampires, Necrotaurs and similar creatures of the night.

Then there's the forthcoming Harvester which features the most gory graphics I've ever seen. The designer has aimed for a Psycho-style build up of tension and the storyline sounds very chilling with the town of Harvest being controlled in many ways by the Order of the Harvest Moon, a strange and very powerful Lodge.

Finally, in August, you can be terrified by Noctopolis, a point and click graphic adventure cum interactive movie. Again, the initial screen shots of vampires and gloomy rooms look suitably menacing.

We can't seem to get away from RPGs at the moment. Fans of Ishar and its sequel will be pleased to hear that Ishar 3: The Seven Gates of Infinity is on its way. So is The Seventh Sword of Mendor from a Hungarian team, Flatliners Design which will feature 90,000 locations over 25 dungeon levels and 6 cities. Estimated completion time is 130-150 hours.

It's going to be a busy summer! Sue

"... Glad to hear that your problems are, touch wood, over. RH didn't suffer much because of it, just one problem that I am not going to make a fuss of, oh no, not at all, I don't care whether you miss out a great chunk of my Seastalker review, no, not at all <grin>. OK, to commenting on last issue's articles.

Firstly to James Johnston's *Lateral Thinking*. I fully agree with him that authors shouldn't have to stoop to the level of getting the players to molest an android so that they can complete the game and if that occurs to the player first off there is something wrong with them.

Nor should we have to see, or have described to us, gory details of every single death scene in the game. As James pointed out the Pit And Pendulum is a good example. If I were reading that I would get more than enough tension and excitement (and a feeling of anticipation of *'what if....'*) to keep me plugging away at the book and stuck to the edge of my seat. If this was done in a film it would loose a lot of that sensation, but that is why I like reading books and playing adventures — your mind is far more innovative and creative than any director and camera person could be.

BUT if, to survive a trip across the mountains, you must shoot a dog, skin it and then wear the skin that is fine. Yes, it may take a slightly sick and depraved mind to think of doing that (I know that I wouldn't) but it is a way to get around a problem. This goes back to James' article on *Believability*. If the skin was, in some way, dried then would he have accepted it? Probably.

His article on *Lateral Thinking* concerned itself with, mainly, the degrading and crude puzzles that we adventurers sometimes have to face. What we mustn't forget is that it isn't just these puzzles that could come under the *Lateral Thinking* heading. As James says the meaning of lateral thinking is a way of solving problems by

employing unorthodox and apparently illogical means.

This means that most of the really terrible games can be bundled under this and giving them an *easy way out*. But we know the truth...

Take a current game. Here, near the end of the game, you are presented with a box of catnip and you must *persuade* a cat to leave its present position. To do that I tried everything I could with the box and the cat but to no avail. A day later the solution dropped on my mat so I quickly skimmed to the part that concerned me and found that I must rub the catnip on a wire an then drop the wire. I'm not having a go at the author, far from it (as it is a very good game — one of the best), but this the only downfall from an otherwise perfect game — I wish I had had more of a go at the author when playtesting the game to change it! In my normal state of mind this combination of actions would not have occurred to me and so I label it under lateral thinking.

What I am trying to say is that although James looked at all the *sick* examples of lateral thinking (in its loosest possible meaning) there are plenty of other *clean* examples of this type of problem.

Right, on to my second point, the *3D Construction Kit*. Personally I think Ken's second cartoon gracing this article well and truly summed up 3DCK — *"Gigabytes of memory... acres of RAM... millions of jillions of colours... and BEEP?"*

That is the one major fault of 3DCK. It just doesn't use the computer, stretching it until you can hear the motherboard groaning under the strain, the screen swelling and blistering under graphical input and the drive spinning at 100000000 revolutions per second. And let's face it, that is what we have come to expect with games these days.

Forget about text adventures for the moment.

Shoot-'em-ups and platformers must be faster, bigger, more colourful, better sounding and more violent. RPG's must be graphically perfect with huge statistical calculations made for each move and the dungeons must be sprawling and filled with the deadliest of puzzles and monsters. Flight sims and racing games must be as close to the real thing as the professional flight sims are and if they don't have digitised graphics of every single aeroplane in existence, each handling differently from each other, with different cockpits and tactics used by the enemy (who must be ultra-intelligent) and surround-sound sound effects well, they are just no good, are they?

I'm not saying that the 3DCK should be like that, but it sure would help, wouldn't it?

As the system stands there is no hope for it or from the second offering (from what I've heard). Many a Sunday evening was spent in front of the computer trying to construct a house in which it had all the mod-cons you could ask for. Light switches (that worked), stairs that slid in and out of walls saving space, garages, doorbells, laser spitting burglar alarms, gardens and, of course, lots of furniture.

It never amounted to anything, though. The main reason for this was of the way that the Kit handled the view screen. I could handle its sluggish key response, slow movement rate and bad palette. I could handle having to type in reams of code just to have a wall change colour when you bumped into it. The thing that I could not handle was that if you wanted to create anything detailed you had to make it BIG or else you tended to have a lot of small cubes just floating around somewhere where you couldn't find 'em. This meant that when you actually completed the game the *player* was walking around a world in which the sofa seemed 20" high and the doors, well I'm surprised you could open them. If you evoked the flying option then the *player* wouldn't get the nice *clunk, clunk, clunk* sound when you walked up stairs on onto the coffee table (and my slidy stair would become redundant!). So, whatever way you look at it the Kit just wasn't realistic enough.

A final grudge is just what do you do with the Kit once you have created the best house in the whole world? Games? Nope, there just isn't enough variety for puzzle or adventure games and shoot-'em-ups would run so slowly that no-one (not even the person who said killer snails from the back garden was too fast for them) would be interested in them. What's left? Creating the best garden shed in the world, that's what!…"

James Judge

A QUESTION from Jean Childs

You are in a wide open field. You can see a body. (Examine body)

It is the body of a man and he is very dead. Beside the body you can see a bag. (Examine bag)

The bag is empty.

Now for my question…

If the bag had not been empty, the man would still be alive. What should have been in the bag?

"… Greetings fellow adventurers, from sunny South Africa. Those of you who know of me are probably wondering what has become of me. Well, I've undergone a metamorphosis — meta-phorically speaking, by graduating from *ye olde Quill* to the A.G.T. or in other words from the Spectrum to the PC.

Almost a year ago, I bought a PC (a 386DX40) and after fiddling around with the few utility and games that I had, I started to hanker after writing games again. I *KNOW* I've defected from the Spectrum and the Ouill, and quite honesty I feel like a deserter, but from what I hear very few people are buying Spectrum games any more. So, I said to myself, time to move with the times. If the Spectrum is the dinosaur, then the PC is the Phoenix. I acquired the A.G.T. and had to spend a few months familiarizing myself with its intricacies, vagaries and many shortcomings. After all said and done, there is nothing as good and as versatile as the Quill. I don't feel that Gilsoft needs that plug — not after not bothering to reply to my plea to bring out the Quill (or the PAWS) on a PC disc. But having said that, it didn't take me long to get *into* the AGT and to be truthful, it's not dissimilar to the Quill. It has great power in some ways and very weak in others. But to dissect the A.G.T. is not the thrust of this column.

I want to address myself to all you potential authors out there. If you're reading this, means you have good sense and read RED HERRING. And if you read RED HERRING it means you love adventuring. QED. Before I bought the Quill (or rather my friend Andy did — but that's another tale) I never knew I could write. The adventure-world only functions, nay exists, while folks write games we can play.

I'm afraid I won't be writing games for the Spectrum any more, mainly because there just aren't enough hours in the day to write for both machines. I get home totally devastated from the hospital each day, and the couple of hours I have then, are spent unwinding; I'm too tired to write. Weekends I now devote to writing adventures on the PC. My first game is finished and will be released shortly — and I'm already working on the second.

I suppose many of you wonder what it's like living in South Africa — especially these days. Well in a nutshell, S.A. is a thriving first-world country of about 20 million, with magnificent cities and an unbelievable infrastructure of roads, industry, mining, farming and anything you care to name. A large portion is third-world, of poverty, homelessness and squatter-camps. The political spectrum spans from the extreme right (the Afrikaners who want to retain as a white-only land) to the ultra-left (the out and out militants who scream: one settler one bullet). Contrary to what is shown on TV, life goes on normally and people go to beaches, movies, the theatre, go on vacations, go into the cities or suburbs and shop, etc. The people, both black and white dress smartly, and as everyone knows the spectre of Apartheid is now long gone — anyone can go anywhere and do anything. Anyone can go out with and or marry anyone, own property wherever they can afford. The big elections are on April 27th and it's aforegone conclusion that the ANC (headed by Nelson Mandela) will win. There is an air of cautious optimism in the air — we may yet be the first country on Earth to transform from a repressive government to a total democracy without a revolution needed as a catalyst.

Well, that's it for now folks. Just wanted you to know that *THIS* settler hasn't received one of those bullets (yet) and that I'm still very much involved in the adventure scene. I hope that my efforts on the PC will give you all as much joy as my Speccie games did…"

Laurence Creighton

CERCLA

Reviewed by Jean Childs, played on the on the PC

Cercla. Well the name didn't mean anything to me, so it was a case of load up the disc and read:-

"You are an employee of a world renowned and extremely profitable consulting engineering firm. Recently, you completed the remedial investigation of the McArdle hazardous waste site. Following a wonderful vacation in the Caribbean, you have returned to work to find that disaster has struck. All the copies of the documents critical to the remediation of the site have vanished. Even the computer files containing the documents have been wiped clean. What is worse is that your boss has a meeting with (GASP) the U.S. EPA in a matter of days. You must recover the documents before that meeting, or regulatory hell will break loose."

Well not a bad story line, except that if it had been my boss, I wouldn't have been able to finish my vacation. I would have been called back pretty sharpish. But sorry, I have interrupted the story line:-

"Unfortunately for you, some, well, shall we say, supernatural beings have made off with the documents for their own mystical, nefarious purposes. It is your quest to outwit these creatures and recover the documents. Be careful, but be quick. Time's a-wastin'!"

As you explore the immediate vicinity of your office, you find evidence to the fact that these *supernatural beings* are in fact dwarves, elves, trolls and many other such creatures. Well, hang on a minute, I thought to myself. Surely you can't use a modern day environment, such as the one described, with dwarves and the like? WRONG! The beauty of this game is just that. The two components have been mixed with ease and much charm. Well done Mr. Robinson.

Where possible, I like to end my reviews of shareware games with information about the authors, but in this case I'd like to introduce you to Jeffrey Robinson before I continue.

Jeffrey lives in Syracuse, New York, and is an environmental chemist and part-owner of a floundering environmental consulting firm. He has a Ph.D. in chemistry from the University of Maryland, and over the past twelve years has taught chemistry at the United States Naval Academy, worked for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and for various environmental consulting firms. *Cercla* is his one and only game — so far. His motivation in writing was initially to produce a humorous game that would be predominantly educational. The intent was to sell it to consulting firms, but he soon realised that the informative content that he wanted to convey was too complex for the adventure game format. Consequently, the game rapidly became less educational and more strictly fun.

There is a little bit of all the fantasy stories he has read in the game, and the room descriptions are a delight to read:-

"This is a little used part of the park. There is a large sewage pipe across a small stream. You are startled to see four small turtles with masks over their eyes come walking swiftly out of the pipe. They are singing the praises of pizza in shrill, high-pitched voices. Following them, walking upright and carrying a staff, is a large rat wearing a kimono."

This is just one of many beautifully described locations. For those of you who have stayed with me so far, here is another:

"It is dark. The first thing you hear is the sound of gulls, then comes the unmistakable sound of waves splashing. Unnaturally quickly, the sunrises above the horizon and zooms into the sky. You see that you are on the sea-shore. Before you on the water, you see a dilapidated raft in the distance. With the same unnatural quickness shown by the sun, the raft approaches you. Chained to what remains of its mast is a figure of heroic proportions. He is dressed in brilliant plate mail, and his visor is down. He is holding a naked sword in his hand. Its killing point pricks the breast of a voluptuous woman, who crouches before him. Her diaphanous, fiery green gown billows and flows with the wind. She is blonde, and very, very lovely. The two stare at each other wordlessly as the raft rapidly floats away towards the horizon. The sun sets, leaving you alone in the darkness." Poetic, isn't it?

As I stated earlier, this is Jeffrey's first attempt at writing an adventure. It took him about three months, working on it part-time. He found AGT a lot of fun to use, and nicely flexible in producing the effects that he wanted. There are one or two things that could have been improved upon. For a start, it suffers from a problem that I have seen in many AGT games. An object, such as *there is an official-looking badge lying on the table* remains the same when picked up by the player, i.e. *there is an official-looking badge lying on the table (in the knapsack)*. Apparently, the way around this problem is for the program to *swap* the item when the player picks it up. *(Thanks Sue)*.

While wondering around the locations, the player finds a booklet which when read gives an informative insight into various 'supernatural' creatures.(I wonder if our little friend in Devon likes being called supernatural.)Unfortunately, the screen scrolls past the beginning of this data and I don't know how much was lost, but what
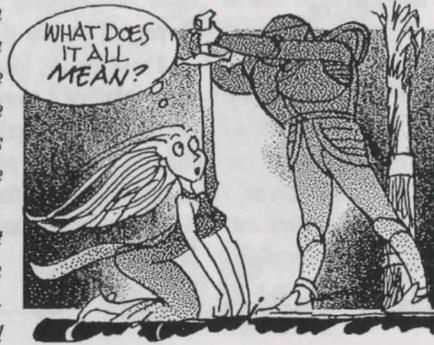
was there was interesting to read. I had never previously heard of *redcaps*.

My other grievance was that there wasn't really enough puzzles, and most of the ones that were there were fairly easy. But, having said that, the real playability of this game is the atmosphere that it contains. I'm not over-stating when I say that the text really draws you into the game. It's text at its very best and could not be equalled with the use of graphics.

As a maze lover (there are still some of us around) I wasn't to be disappointed. Mapping the maze of corridors in the U.S. EPA was great fun. I used the *drop item* method that Laurence Creighton referred to in his article in last August's issue of RH. However, I still ran into a problem. "LAURENCE" I shouted "WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU RUN OUT OF ITEMS TO DROP?" But he didn't hear me *[Shout a little louder, South Africa is a long way away. M]*, and I'm not going to tell you how I did it. Maybe Laurence will write a follow-up article containing a solution to this problem. (Hint, hint.)

If during the game you do get stuck, pressing F10 sometimes produces a hint. At the end of the game, when you achieve your goal, there is also a nice little finishing sequence. Oops! I nearly forgot. Right at the beginning of the game, you will find a knapsack which you need to carry your goodies in. Don't try to take it and then wear it, as you can't. You have to type *wear it* without taking it. Just a little bug, and I only mention it to save you from trying to work it out yourself.

The game is shareware, and Jeffrey says, *"If you are so inclined, please distribute it far*

and wide, over hill and dale, through marsh and meadow, and so on. If inspired to do so (or to alleviate any guilt you may have over getting something free), you are perfectly welcome to send me some money, say about $5.00. Just to cover the cost of pizzas, er, ah, software development, that is. In any event, I hope you get some fun out of this, it sure was fun to write it!" I find that so much nicer and more encouraging than "may a thousand curses fall on you if you don't".

There are 169 locations but I only found 167, and I attained a score of 400 out of 410 points. I played the game again, not in order to search for those ten elusive points (which I didn't find anyway), but for the enjoyment of re-reading what was for me an entertaining journey into fantasy-land.

COMPANIONS OF XANTH
Reviewed by Sue, played on the PC

Oh dear... oh dear. Legend, who took over from Infocom as the kings of text adventures, have moved to graphical adventures. Okay, Legend's first games had a graphic window as well as text descriptions but these days it's almost impossible to find pure text adventures being sold commercially. However, with a bit of jiggling, you COULD play *Spellcasting, Time-Quest, Gateway* and *Eric* virtually as text-only, apart from the odd graphical interlude.

Unfortunately, text adventures are old hat now, so we're told. Everything has to be point 'n' click, brightly coloured, with limited verbs and (often, even more limited) actions.

Legend's first foray into the world of graphical adventures is a game built around Piers Anthony's Xanth novels, specifically *Demon's Don't Dream*, which comes packed with the game. I am a great fan of Xanth, a magical land populated by weird and wonderful creatures and inhabited by people who each has a unique magical talent. Some are useful, some showy. Some are insignificant, others are so marvellous that they raise their owner's status to magician level.

The other main point about Xanth is its sense of humour which is built around puns and word-play. These may make you laugh or groan when you read the book or play the game; you certainly won't be indifferent to them.

In *Companions of Xanth*, you play Dug, an ordinary lad, who is challenged by a friend to play a particular computer game. Through it, he is drawn into Xanth itself but, since he doesn't believe in magic, Dug initially appears in the game as a computer screen rather than a person, which limits his actions somewhat. Fairly soon, he'll discover that he isn't the only person playing the game — Kim, a young girl, who believes in magic, is there too, and both of them are after the same Prize. What the Prize is, and where it can be found, neither of them knows. So they set off in different directions, each intent on winning.

Dug and Kim each has a companion, one of the Companions of the title. Dug's first decision is which of four he should choose to accompany him. All four are inhabitants of Xanth, not Mundanes as he and Kim are. There's Che Centaur, the demoness Metria, Jenny Elf and her cat Sammy, and Nada Naga. Each has his or her own special talent or ability and only one, Nada, will be a suitable companion for Dug. This can be easily discovered by either (1) picking the

wrong one as he'll be killed in no time flat or (2) checking the game box cover!

Dug and Nada's trip will lead them through various regions of Xanth, starting in Isthmus village where a censor ship, moored at a quay, is belching smoke which

I DO WISH YOU'D STOP SLAPPING YOUR THIGH...

censors the villagers' speech. With help from a (male) fairy called Nuff (geddit?) this problem is easily solved and they can head off through regions of Earth, Air, Fire and Water to their ultimate goal. As the journey progresses, Dug will finally learn the true stakes of the game and how imperative it is for him to win.

The interface is interesting in that the mouse cursor is intuitive, picking up objects on the screen and providing special verbs connected with them in addition to the standard TAKE, LOOK AT, PUT, OPEN, CLOSE, TALK TO and LOOK which are always available. There is always a default verb for any object.

Many of the puzzles are easy or ludicrous, points are thrown at the player for doing the simplest things such as talking to people, picking up items and moving in a particular direction. If in doubt about how to solve a puzzle, talk to Nada — you'll be amazed how often she will solve a puzzle in the most unexpected way. This is one of the main problems with graphic adventures which rely on conversations between characters where a choice of responses is offered. One of them will frequently offer some unexpected twist to the tale which moves the game off in a direction you hadn't expected. Incidentally, most of the other options do nothing to add to the game; usually one is important, the others just so much padding.

The game has on-screen mapping, which I

largely ignored. You can switch between the graphic display and the map. The crazy thing is that there is a large maze in the game and this is also auto-mapped. To me, the point of a maze is to disorient the player; with auto-mapping, where's the challenge? Especially when objects of note, such as switches, are marked on the map, so you don't have to hunt for them.

Whereas in some ways the game has stayed true to the spirit of the Xanth books, in other ways it is sadly lacking. Grundy Golem, who greets Dug when he loads the game, was a cantankerous and unattractive individual in the books; in the game he looks like a cross between Peter Pan and a pantomime Principal Boy. The Good Magician Humphrey also looks nothing like I'd imagined him from the novels.

The graphics aren't as good as *Simon the Sorcerer*, the humour not as good as *Day of the Tentacle* or *Monkey Island*, the puzzles not as good as any of the current popular graphic adventures. Whichever way you look at it, *Companions of Xanth* just can't compare with similar games. And I haven't yet found a graphic adventure that gives me the realism and flexibility of a text game.

The REALLY bad news is that *Companions of Xanth* has evidently sold better than any of Legend's previous adventures so we have seen the last of their text adventures. The next graphic adventure from Legend will be *Superhero League of Hoboken*, a comedy from Steve Meretzky combining adventure and RPG elements. This will be followed by a science fiction adventure based on Weis and Hickman's Deathgate novels.

DRAGON CAVE

Played on an Amiga 600 by Steve Clay

Being a recent convert to the 3D dungeon genre thanks to the wonderful *Black Crypt*, I asked Sue to send me *Dragon Cave* to review, after all it is billed as an *Eye of the Beholder* clone with stunning graphics. So I booted up and after a simple but effective title screen and an equally effective electric guitar soundtrack I was presented with the traditional stone graphics that give these games that heightened atmosphere. There are two options at this stage, Start or Menu. I opted to start and the doors slid open. Inside a narrow passage I heard a tap-tap and then a dirty great red dragon lumbers into view. I looked in vain for spells to cast or weapons to use as the great beast approached. The dragon stopped in front of me and gave me a message, no I haven't lost my marbles, apparently the dungeon is in a terrible mess thanks to adventurers leaving chests lying around and Smaug — for that is who the dragon is — wants me to clean up the mess! One moment a brave and fearless adventurer next a skivvy. Oh well perhaps there are monsters guarding these chests so I may get to blot something! 'Fraid not. Dragon cave is a puzzle game based around sliding chests around the dungeon to other parts of the dungeon.

Having got over my initial disappointment I set about cleaning up the first level. The usual movements are made via keyboard or mouse. When playing in 3D mode — there is a 2D option — a small map is printed to the left of the game screen and a small sprite depicts the

way you are facing. Also available is an undo command that allows you to not only take back your last move but also every move you make if you so desire. While this makes life so much easier it does also take away any challenge in the game and you are left with the exciting task of beating your previous best. The dungeons are set out in a very tricky way and making a duff move can leave you requiring that undo command.

Heading back to the menu I mentioned earlier. From here you can select which dungeon you'd like to start in, what language you'd like Smaug to talk to you in — a bilingual dragon now there's a sight to see! You can also choose what dimension you'd like to play in 2 or 3. The 2D mode can only be described as functional. Also available from the menu you can select the Editor which allows you to create your own dungeons. The editor is very easy to use with simple point and click options. From the editor you can save, load and test your own dungeons. It is this that gives the program that little extra that it needs and rises it above the normal *looks good but why bother* PD material.

The graphics in *Dragon Cave* (in 3D mode) are of a very high quality and bear more than a passing resemblance to *Dungeon Master*. Either somebody has spent a long time on the graphics or they have been lifted from *DM*. Get hold of *Dragon Cave* if you like puzzle games with nice graphics, but don't bother if you're after a 3D dungeon RPG then try somewhere else!

ADVENTURES WANTED FOR THE AMIGA 500+

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A look back at...

SCAPEGHOST

Reviewed by James Jillians, played on the ST

What do you get if you take the humour of *Gnome Ranger*, stir in a decent story-line, add pints of playability, wisely opt to leave out the unpalatable ingredients of *Knight Orc*, bake, cut into disk-sized chunks and serve with a quality garnish? No, I don't mean a dire Sainsbury's ad... Pass me the chopsticks, it's time to tuck into another succulent morsel from Level 9...

In this gourmet feast of an adventure, you play the part of a detective called Alan Chance who, until recently, has been tracking a gang of drug-dealers. All was going well for you and your colleague, Sarah until someone or something alerted the gang. As soon as they learned your identity, the gang murdered you and left their hide-out, taking Sarah as a hostage.

Later, you wake up feeling disorientated, and realise that you are standing over your own grave. You have become a ghost. The gang has escaped to a new hide-out, where the police have been unable to find them. What's more, your colleagues think that it was a mistake of your own for tipping off the criminals.

In *Scapeghost* it is your job to bring the crooks to justice (giving them a good scare in the process!). For dessert you must rescue Sarah and as a cheese-course prove to the police that your murder was not your fault, thus restoring your ex-colleagues' respect. No picnic, believe me!

You start the game as a very weak ghost. As you spend more and more time in the spirit world you learn how to manipulate material objects and make yourself visible to and

communicate with living people. You discover a multitude of ghostly tricks like setting things on fire, freezing with the power of your mind, bending metal objects and charging people with static electricity.

Scapeghost is a text-adventure with all the ingredients of the traditional Level 9. As you play, the story unfolds and you learn more and more about the grizzly circumstances that lead to your death. The game is almost an interactive-novel, successfully combining story-telling with puzzle-solving.

As with other Level 9 dishes, the game features other characters which you can talk to and ask to help you with your mission. In *Scapeghost* they come in the form of fellow spirits, each of whom asks a favour before giving aid. Once befriended, the characters can be told to do anything that you can do yourself. It is necessary to enlist the help of all of them in order to solve certain puzzles. Fortunately, there aren't characters oozing out of every nook and cranny as there are in other Level 9 games. Here they come in bite-sized chunks. And, for the many of us who chopped up our copies of *Knight Orc* and fed them to the dog in sheer frustration, they don't continually steal your equipment, kill everything that moves or wander off and hide. Hooray!

Later on in the game you get the chance to meet the members of the drugs gang in their spanking new four-bedroom hide-out. You can wait and watch while the gang members conduct conversations (or sometimes slanging-matches) with each other, or follow them as they do often

humorous things around the house. At this point in the game you get the chance to scare certain gang members to distraction while the police "discreetly" sneak up on them with their helicopters, barking dogs and loud-hailers. It can be great fun treading on creaky floorboards, ruffling the curtains and throwing things around while the criminals reach new heights of terror!

The game recognises a mouth-watering selection of instructions, including many commands that are unique to Level 9 adventures. Useful words are *GOTO* and *FIND*, which allow you to travel directly to specified people, objects and places without typing in boring compass directions, and *FOLLOW*, which allows you to follow doggedly in the footsteps of one of the game's characters. These commands stop you wandering aimlessly about trying to find characters who change their location and items which you couldn't be bothered to mark onto a map.

The text is atmospheric and includes pop-up messages which tell you about the actions of other characters around. There are also pictures, pretty good ones at that, which load while you type to avoid long waits.

What about the puzzles, I hear you ask. Some of the puzzles simply require you to give items to people to enlist their help, but others are more complex. In fact, for certain problems you need to enlist the help of all the characters you have met (as well as some you didn't know existed!). Timing is essential — the characters must obey your instructions at the right times, in perfect synchronisation.

Later, you must find evidence to convict the drugs gang and find a way to get it to the police. In the later stages of the game you must not only do the right things — you must do them at the right times. The police are on their way so you must nip upstairs to distract the watchman at key moments, even if you are in the middle of

solving another puzzle. The precise timing of the game's events adds a new dimension to playing and is a feature I hadn't discovered until I started playing Level 9 adventures.

There are none of the indigestible *how-on-earth-were-you-meant-to-figure-that-out* conundrums in *Scapeghost* that are present in other Level 9 games — all puzzles are solvable with a bit of thought. The game is set at a medium difficulty level which should allow most adventurers to work their way to the conclusion of the story if enough time is spent playing.

The sheer variety of tasks is enough to satisfy the appetite of any keen adventure-guzzler. The traditional *use-what-item-where* genre of puzzles takes a back seat to make way for a multitude of original ideas.

The game takes place over three nights and is therefore divided into three parts. If you get stuck on Part 1 you can go straight on to Part 2 or 3, so you get a second chance if you can't figure out the solution to a particularly baffling puzzle. This was a feature that pleased me very much because I frequently suffer from that problem myself!

The game can end in many ways, depending on how well you do in Part 3. It is possible to finish the game having brought the drugs gang to justice, rescued your colleague, captured the evil drugs buyers, cleared your own name and reduced the once perfectly sane night-watchman to blubbering jelly, but it is much more likely that you will make a complete hash of things the first few times you play. It takes a lot of planning and calculation to work out in what order things need to be done to bring the game to a respectable conclusion.

Scapeghost is a text-adventure with all the usual features that make Level 9 games so much fun to play. A great vocabulary, useful movement commands, a story that gets more and more involved as the story goes on, well-

drawn graphics, fun puzzles and loads of interactive characters…*Scapeghost* is my favourite Level 9 adventure to date and, even if wearing white sheets and treading on creaky floorboards is not your idea of an adventuring treat, I thoroughly recommend you get your teeth stuck into a copy. Belch!

MAGNETIC MOON — 1991 Version
Reviewed by "Nemesis", played on the Spectrum

Magnetic Moon is a science fiction adventure in three parts, access to Part 2 is only gained when Part 1 has been completed etc. If you do not normally like science fiction don't worry, there is more than enough here to satisfy any adventurer. This was Larry Horsefield's first published adventure, he has since written two sequels, one has only just been released.

You start the adventure in the year 2153 AD and play the part of sub Lieutenant Mike Eaton, assistant Astronavigation Officer on board the Starship *Stellar Queen*. During a survey of uncharted space your ship has lost contact with its roving Scoutship. After a radio message from the Scoutship about a planet they had found which was similar to Earth except for the presence of two moons, all radio contact was lost and the *Stellar Queen* has set off to discover the fate of the Scoutship. Unfortunately, as the Stellar Queen nears the strange planet, the ship is caught in a powerful tractor beam and crash lands on the strange planet only to find itself caught in a magnetic forcefield which is also jamming up communications. Volunteers are called for to investigate the planet. You have volunteered but, as in real life, are told to stay on board the damaged Starship to assist in repair work. This boring prospect interests you not at all, so you determine to slip away and investigate the strange planet anyway.

Your first problem then is to leave the control room, so remember that all things come to he or she who waits. You must then gather all the equipment you will need without being caught by the Spaceship Captain, or your immediate boss. It is essential to search and examine everything,

particularly the equipment you find, as plenty of clues are given in the responses to help you choose what you need. Some sort disguise will help and so will some strategic eavesdropping. You will also need to familiarise yourself with the shipboard directions — port, starboard etc. Once you have managed to leave the ship a quick look round is necessary to avoid being marched back to the ship in disgrace. After finding out the only safe place to travel, you encounter the wreck of a space freighter blocking your path. An upward glance shows the way ahead provided you have the right apparatus. Soon after this point I got stuck as a piece of wire was not where I found it when I played the original version of the game. The game has now been updated with the inclusion of The Grue and other adventurers cluttering up the proceedings. Nevertheless you will encounter Space Pirates, irritating tiny Droids and many original puzzles in the rest of the game.

All in all this is a very good game with many commands that are still very original and give a being there feel. Well worth digging (not very deep) to add this to your collection if you haven't already done so. Shame Larry moved my piece of wire though, as I enjoyed playing so much the second time round I would like to play it all through again, so how about it Larry, where have you hidden it?

A Few Hints
At start, wait twice / When you hear voices, listen and wait until all is clear / Search the tools to find a headshield and wear this when you hear the voices / Examine forward couch in lifeboat / Fit oxygen to helmet before entering the airlock.

DRACULA UNLEASHED

Reviewed by Sue, played on the PC (CD-ROM only)

Some time ago there was a proliferation of Dracula films. Now, it's the turn of the computer world, with the release of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* from Psygnosis and now, *Dracula Unleashed*, which is a CD-ROM only title, rated at age 15 and over. This comes from the creators of *Sherlock Holmes, Consulting Detective*, so if you've seen those titles, you'll know what style of game to expect… and the quality.

Minimum requirements are a 20 MHz 386SX or higher (though my 16 MHz machine coped perfectly well), 4 Meg RAM (450K conventional RAM), 16-bit SVGA with 512k RAM or 8-bit VGA and a mouse. The CD-ROM should have 150K per second transfer rate and 350ms seek time is recommended. There is support for Sound Blaster, Adlib Gold, Sound Blaster II, Microsoft Sound System and Pro Audio System.

The storyline was written by Anthony Sherman and is, not surprisingly, based on characters in Bram Stoker's original book with some of the narration being given by Van Helsing, Dracula's nemesis, played by John Arthur Olsen. I say *played* because with the style of the game, with much use being made of full motion video clips, it is hard not to think of it as a film, especially since one can rewind, fast-forward and pause the clips, as if watching a real video.

The story starts in a flashback from the moment, on 31st December 1889, when Texan Alexander Morris visits his brother Quincey's grave. Quincey had been one of Van Helsing's companions (the other being Jonathan Harker) who had travelled with him to Transylvania to destroy Dracula, that evil, blood-sucking creature of the night.

Quincey had died in mysterious circumstances and Alexander had recently received a letter from a Romanian priest, Father Janos, suggesting that he investigate the circumstances behind it. So Alexander travels to London, deciding to contact his brother's friends and see if they can be of any assistance. One of them, Arthur Holmwood, is a prominent figure in London society and he arranges for Alexander to meet the rest of them through their membership of the same club, the Hades Club.

Despite Alexander's sadness at the loss of his brother, and the eagerness he feels in trying to discover the facts behind his death, there is still time for romance, in the form of the beautiful Annisette Bowen who he meets at a theatre. Three months later, deeply in love, he proposes and she accepts. But, around that time, her father is struck down by a strange illness.

In late December, Alexander is finally made a member of the Hades Club. But his happiness is short-lived when the butler delivers a note — Annisette's father has died. Rushing round there, he finds her distraught and her deceased father, having suffered a fatal heart attack, dead in his bed, the window wide open nearby. Checking the corpse, Alexander is horrified at the man's expression —surely this man died of fear?! His face is drained of blood, and his white hand clutches a strange piece of cloth, which the young man removes.

That night, Alexander retires to his bed, to sleep… and to dream. Not peaceful dreams, but dreams of death and terror. Once again, he is

with Annisette. Once again, her father lies cold and dead beneath the sheet. But this time, hands clutch at Alexander's throat as the old man rises from beneath his sheet and tries to throttle him, as his fiancee laughs with glee. Alexander wakes from this terrifying vision, another day ahead of him; a day in which he must start to solve the mystery of his brother's death, and maybe those of other people as well.

For death is not only in the Bowen household. Grisly murders are happening on the streets of London. Soon after the start of the game, we learn of the latest in the series of strange murders, the bodies being decapitated and drained of blood. Livestock have also been found, bloodless corpses, strange puncture marks in their necks near the jugular. We also hear stories of the *Bloofer Lady*, an old legend of a woman who used to bite the necks of children she lured away from their parents, returning them to their homes close to death. The children, unable to say the word *beautiful* when describing her, corrupted her name to *Bloofer*.

How does Quincey's death fit into these strange events? Surely they cannot be unconnected? It's up to Alexander, and therefore us, to find out in the short time permitted. The game starts outside Alexander's mist-shrouded house in Notting Hill. Atmospheric music, a barking dog and tolling bells throb from the Sound Blaster while you check out the screen and the excellent graphics.

The screen display and controls are very easy to get to grips with. There are six icons arranged along the bottom of the screen, looking very much like small stained glass windows, in marked contrast to the ominous frame of pillars with demons coiling their tails around them, and the Gothic style of the art work in general. Though the house itself is of red brick, the blue effect of the mist is the one which catches your eye.

The icons are, from left to right:

Your journal — an essential piece of equipment. In this you take note of any conversations you've had. Clicking on the journal opens it to a new page and clicking on the pen causes the entry to be made. You can re-read the journal at any time. Addresses are also noted in the back of the journal. You only get one chance to write in your journal, immediately after something has happened. Miss it and you'll be in big trouble and may find yourself unable to continue.

A pocket watch — it's important to keep track of time and not visit people in the dead (oops) of night when they're unlikely to be helpful!

Your satchel — handy for stashing all those useful (and not so useful) objects you pick up on your travels.

A compass — gives access to a map, used to judge distances around London.

The Professor — he explains the use of the various icons.

A CD disk — save/load and other options.

A few other icons are only available at certain times and locations, such as a bed (even a vampire hunter has to sleep sometimes), a telegram (read ones that are sent to you) and a door (to leave a location).

Travel around the capital is by means of cabs, which wait on each street corner. These are manned by cabbies who have the most appalling Cockney accents. Imagine, if you can, a cross between American and Cockney with a dash of Loyd Grosman... I longed for the tones of Michael Caine, Bob Hoskins or even Danny Baker. Clearly when devising what the producers thought was a Cockney accent, they decided Cockneys can't say the letter *i* - they have to say *oi*. So you get expressions like "*Where moight oi be taking you?*" and "*Oi'm happy to say we've foinally arroived*". I think there is just one actor doing the cabbies' voices but sometimes he

drops his voice an octave for variety. The cheerie chappy selling newspapers has a similarly naff accent as does a customer in a pub who comes out with the beautiful phrase, when trying to remember a name, *"Me noggin's gorn orll rusty"*. Nice try, guys! Other than that, the voices are good, particularly Alexander's, and the acting is suitably OTT Victorian melodrama style, especially the drunken foreigner at the Hades Club who hurls himself to the floor in hysterical weeping when telling Alexander about his dead wife.

By the nature of the gameplay, collecting clues and new addresses which open up new areas for investigation and visiting certain people at specific times of day, the game is pretty linear. When you die — and believe me, you will, many, many times, all of them horrible — it's a case of backtracking and trying actions in a different order in the hope of uncovering something new. Though I normally get frustrated at linear games, I found *Dracula Unleashed* refreshingly challenging; definitely one of those *just-one-more-go* games.

Now, I'll freely admit that I am not a fan of horror in general and anything remotely connected with vampires in particular. If someone gets bitten in the neck, I'm out of the room! But I've got hooked on this game. CD-ROM games should have three major areas where they score above disk-based games — size of the game, speech/sound effects, and graphics. *Dracula Unleashed* ranks highly in all categories. The other bit of good news is the game plays completely from the CD-ROM — only your save games go on the hard disk and they take a mere 400K each.

All in all, I'd recommend it highly.

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STAR TREK: Judgment Rites

Reviewed by Tim Kemp, played on the PC

Star Trek: Judgment Rites is an attempt to translate the atmosphere and excitement of the TV series (the original not the Next Generation) into an adventure. PC Gamer magazine gave it a whacking 92% and it was based upon that review that I bought the game as a Christmas present for myself.

I dare say there are a lot of Trek fans out there reading this and contemplating buying the game, so I must point out that I too am an avid fan of Star Trek and so the following review takes into account that I am a big fan and I expected the highest standards right from the word go. It should have been a dream license to acquire, but have Interplay turned the dream into a reality...?

The version I bought was the special collectors edition which came with a copy of *The Wrath Of Khan* video. Actually I should perhaps say a free copy of the video because right there on the computer store shelf next to the special edition was the standard edition — same price — smaller box — minus the video.

Upon opening the box I couldn't help but notice that the manual accompanying the 11 (yes eleven) disks was very slim. No unnecessary information to clutter its pages, just info on the icons that control the actions of the crew members under your control and a few instructions on how to handle the Enterprise in various situations.

To play the game you'll need a 386 PC running at 16mhz with 2 Meg ram (1Meg ems + 580k base memory) and a 256 colour vga display. That is the minimum configuration you'll need according to the box blurb. I've got a 386sx 33mhz PC which seemed to cope with the basic adventure side of the game, but had a bit of trouble keeping up with the odd space battles that crop up from time to time, especially those with two or three ships to battle against. But hey, I'm getting ahead of myself. The first thing to do is install the game. Loading the 11 high density disks onto the hard drive took just 20 minutes, and the space required for the initial game data is a massive 30+ Meg. Once the disks are all on your system they decompress themselves which takes anywhere up to (or over?) an hour and a half!!! The initial 30Meg hard disk space taken up by the game is then reduced to 20-ish Meg, and thankfully you need not be present while the game sorts itself out. Go and make several cups of coffee, walk the dog, then come back when you've wasted a bit of time and the game should be ready to play. *NOTE: this is a one-off installation procedure — you don't have to go through it every time you want to play the game. But you knew that, didn't you?*
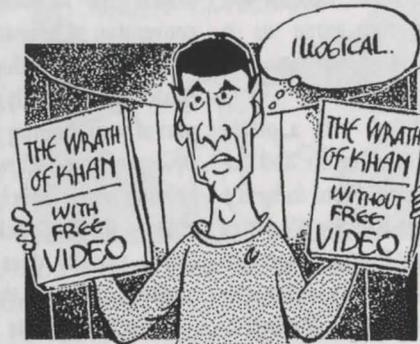
Once the whole thing is on your hard disk then you can get down to some serious adventuring. The first choice you need make is what rank you wish to play the game at. They are: Federation Cadet, Cadet Graduate or Commissioned Officer. Federation Cadet rank allows you to play the adventure without the strain of an arcade battle ever coming near you — unless you stray into enemy space of course. The other two options see varying amounts of space battles taking place — with you directing the defence of the USS Enterprise — you get to

do this by directing operations from the bridge — raising shields, firing photon torpedoes, repairing damaged subsystems etc. Most of you will only want to play the game as a straightforward adventure, and so did I, so Fed Cadet was my choice of playing level.

The game (proper) kicks off with a nicely rendered version of the Star Trek music and the *Space, the final frontier* speech. From there it's on to your first mission. Just like the TV series the game's played in *episodic* format. There are 7 missions in the game (7.5 if you count the extended section right at the end) — the first is an easy one to get you going, and although the subsequent missions don't get progressively harder they do get a bit longer and require more object manipulation in order to complete them. As each mission is completed you discover a common thread runs through them. It's not till near the end of the entire game that you'll see what the thread is.

The control method employed as the player / computer interface (parser?) is pretty simple. You can use the cursor crosshair to move around the screen — move from location to location and generally direct James Tiberius Kirk around. A click of the right mouse button brings up a little option box in which you find a few controller icons — these you select by positioning the crosshair pointer over them and clicking with the left button. Your main control choices are:

1... OPERATE: This is used in conjunction with an object or other character — i.e. clicking on the Operate Icon followed by clicking on an object in the vicinity will operate that object - if it's a standalone usable object of course, or you can click on *Operate* followed by clicking on an object in your possession (which selects the object) and then you can click on another object which essentially operates object one on object two. Isn't that always the best point and click method? This system of operation achieves

several goals with two simple commands, e.g. it could mean: *fire phaser at enemy* or perhaps: *attach rope to rock* — both follow the same convention of *Operate object x on object y*. The same control method is also used for taking control (temporarily) of the characters who form part of your landing party, i.e. if you click on the *Operate* icon followed by a member of your landing party (Spock for instance) you are then able to direct Spock to do the sort of things Spock usually does — a neck pinch, some scientific duty, use the Tricorder etc., etc.

2... LOOK: This icon enables you to take a look at the surroundings. Once selected a little blinking eye replaces your cursor and whenever it's moved over an object that can be examined more closely the icon border turns red so you know what's worth looking at.

3... TAKE: Guess what this icon does? Again, once you move the pointer (which is in the shape of a hand with an object in it) over an object that you can interact with in some way (i.e. something other than a background item) then the icon border once again turns red and you can click on the object and try to get it.

4... TALK: Very important. Talk can be used to get info from the games various characters, but most importantly of all is used to communicate with your band of fellow adventurers — your landing party! They will all have opinions on what to do next, some even have nasty things to say about your performance or the progress you have made thus far. In keeping with the TV series each game character behaves pretty much as you would expect — Spock and Bones delight in baiting each other, while Scotty comes out with some real gems — as does Chekov, who takes great pleasure in informing you that the Russians *inwented* almost every useful item that you come across on your travels.

5... STAR FLEET INSIGNIA: This little icon can be selected at any time and gives you access

to the save/load game facilities, toggles for the sound and FX, and the quit button.

The 4 main control options may not seem very many to play with, but each has various permutations which enable a lot of weird interaction to take place.

A word about the graphics… they are pretty good. The main characters are not always instantly recognisable as PC VGA mode doesn't really lend itself to great detail — especially when the characters on screen are only a couple of inches tall. However, most importantly, the objects you get to examine and take are well rendered so there's little chance of not knowing what any object in your possession or on screen might be. Anyway by *clicking* on the *LOOK* icon followed by the object you wish to look at you then get a full description of the object in question, so you shouldn't be confused over what's what even if you don't instantly recognise their graphical form. The animation in the game is pretty good — some nice little touches include Kirk shrugging his shoulders when he's done something strange that unexpectedly works, and there are some mighty large explosions to look out for too — quite impressive really - especially the way the characters take cover when something is going to go off with a bang! The sound FX and in-game music is up to the mark too! You get to hear most of the beeps, warbles and tunes from the original TV series — it all adds to the authentic atmosphere created by the other aspects of the game.

Every time a mission is completed you get a score (%) and a rating from Starfleet. My scores ranged from 79% to 100% (on a couple of occasions) which suggests that the more you examine and the more you achieve in the correct

GET THIS STRAIGHT, PAL… RUSSIA DID *NOT* INWENT CLYDEBANK…

manner the higher your score will be — it's obviously not just a matter of doing the missions adequately you really need to do them properly.

The main reason you may fail to do the missions *properly* is down to the multiple choice nature of many of the conversations you have with aliens (or other races) or the different ways you can achieve your main goals. You may find, for instance, that you have to make a choice whether to be diplomatic or forceful when dealing with an alien culture. Your con-versations may get steered down a dead end or take a wrong turning meaning you wind up gathering less information than you thought you might get when a conversation began. I found that more often than not even if my choice of actions or responses to multiple choice questions were slightly wrong I still got through to the end of a section, albeit with a lower score than I would have got if I'd been spot on with my actions and answers. The basic maxim is: do things right(ish) and get rewarded, do them wrong(ish) and your score and rating will suffer (naturally). The funny thing is that all the missions can be done in more or less the wrong way — yet you still complete the mission and get to move on to the next one, though that's not true for the final showdown where if you get things wrong too many times you find that you fail dismally and you'll also be in trouble with Star Fleet when your final rating is given.

The places you get to visit during play range from strange planets to strange buildings, meeting some strange aliens on your way. There are lots of references to past Star Trek episodes which was nice to see. You even get to meet your old sparring partner Trelane (The Squire Of Gothos) who features in *NO MANS LAND* one of

the best sections of the game. One of the hardest episodes is *MUSEUM PIECE*. It stumped me for quite a while — mainly because I missed a clue which is revealed when taking an object early on — isn't that always the way?

When I finished the game (which I did fairly quickly and with little real trouble) I found myself harking back to PC GAMER'S 92% rating and cursing them for leading me to believe it was really worth that score. I was only stuck on two single problems in two different sections, though when those *sticking points* were cleared I found that the entire game gave up its secrets without too much trouble by judicious use of the commands and options and characters I had at my disposal. I reckon even an amateur adventurer will do most sections in three to four hours.

It's great to kick off your adventure playing career by beating a game, though £45 for the privilege of 30-ish hours play is a bit measly to say the least. Don't get me wrong, I wasn't entirely disappointed by the game as a whole as it's great fun to play on occasions, and has all the spirit of the TV series, but I have to ask myself whether full use was made of the memory the game takes up, or did the battle / strategy sequences take too much from the adventure side of things? I was also quite amazed to find a few glitches (almost bugs) in the game which affected a few of the characters speech bubbles (I think it was Bones who talked an utter load of rubbish at one stage of the game, with exclamation marks, hashes and such like taking the place of his usual words of wisdom). I can't say I didn't enjoy myself while playing — I was certainly intrigued by it and wanted to see how it ended, and that's what kept me going. Sadly though none of the episodes that go to make up the whole game really had much punch (save for *NO MANS LAND*), and there were very few unexpected twists and turns to catch me out. The *segmented* nature of play means each little

section has to really have a beginning, middle and end, unlike a large adventure that can have lots of hard *pockets* of resistance between the start and finish, so really you end up playing seven mini adventures, none of which have a chance to really get going before they come to an end. It's one of those games that promises to deliver on several occasions, and which you'll enjoy while it lasts, but at the end of it all I think you may find, like I did, that it fails to deliver and certainly fails to push the boundaries of adventuring any further than they were pushed by, say, *THE LEGEND OF KYRANDIA* or even *THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND!* Perhaps it's wrong to expect innovation after innovation in every game, but on the other hand as this is a licensed title of a classic series perhaps us end users should expect something altogether in another universe let alone another league.

After completing the game on the *no space battles* setting (i.e. as an adventure only) I tried again at the next level and found that the odd encounter with Elasi pirates (who have a go at you when warping from mission to mission) added a certain something to the proceedings and would certainly make the game last a bit longer.

To sum up: I don't consider myself to be a very good adventure player, so if I managed to reach the end and only encounter two minor sticking points then it has to be rated as an easy game. The bottom line is whether it was worth £45... Put it like this, had *ALONE IN THE DARK* II been available as an alternative purchase at the time I'd have gone for that any day of the week. With hindsight I'd probably not have bought *Judgment Rites* had I known it was so easy. Finally, a word about the ending... oh dear! (Okay, two words)

Here's a breakdown of the ratings: Graphics: 80% — Sound: 82% — Playability: 70% — Value For Money: 65%

The Adventure Workshop
Adventures for the Amstrad

THE KHANGRIN PLANS
by Jamie Murphy

Stepping into your ship you wonder about the orders you have been given. It seems simple enough, steal the plans to the new Sanquar supership, yet you know that there will be many unknown problems to overcome. Intelligence reports have shown that this is the only time the top officials will be absent, and therefore the only chance for this plan to work. You know that their is a friendly agent somewhere on the planet, but as to who or where you have no idea. The only clue is that you must reveal the name of your planet to him. Some help! Good luck Commander. Many people are counting on you...

AVAILABLE NOW ON DISC £4.00 FOR CP/M+ ONLY.

'Twas a Time Of Dread
by Clive Wilson

Three thousand years have passed, years in which the once beautiful land has been all but destroyed. For three thousand years nothing has been heard of The Mysterious Stranger but now on a dark, wet and windy night he returns. To you, a descendent of the 'Singer of the Song'. You, a mere child, still flush with the vigour of youth. You who have done nothing remotely heroic in all of your seventeen years. The Stranger tells you that when the Black Wanderer sowed the seed of The Unborn One, so too did he sow another seed..... the one which would lie dormant until the time was ripe for it to burst forth. As the seed lay dormant, however, it matured and then mutated. It divided and became many and called itself LEGION though it was more than just one being. It was many, it was Legion and through its numbers it would gather strength. The multi-faceted evil then spawned upon the land, but it spawned far to the east, far beyond the Eagleshorn, in the unknown reaches of the place known as the Saddest Lands.

The Mysterious Stranger tells you that although the Silent Song has been lost, it too has mutated. It has mutated within YOU.... into something more than what it was. But he cannot tell you what. That is for you and you alone to discover. He leads you to the giant bird Sebac, who is to carry you over the Eagleshorn to the realm of Legion and there he bids you farewell.

AVAILABLE NOW ON DISC £4.00 FOR CP/M+ AND CP/M 2.2.

Overall: 70% (played as a straightforward adventure) 75% (with the addition of having to combat various enemies in the space battle scenarios — if you can take the strain of it all).

HINTS

Once you've done something interesting that works (no matter what it was) try to get the other members of your landing party to talk to you, or contribute something to the proceedings.

BIG HINTS

In the MUSEUM PIECE episode take the bottle from the alcove in the wall — then examine the alcove - there's an important piece of paper there. In the same section of the game operate the silver tray on the communication panel — although the tray also has other uses. Seek Scott's help whenever you can here.

In the THOUGH THIS BE MADNESS episode, several items need transforming into other parts or base elements - don't be afraid to use your phaser!

BLUE FORCE
Reviewed by Sue, played on the PC (CD ROM Version Reviewed)

Since splitting with Sierra, for whom he designed the brilliant *Police Quest* series, American ex-policeman Jim Walls moved to Tsunami where he joined a number of other ex-Sierra employees and authored yet another cop game, Blue Force. This was first seen on floppy disk early in 1993 and the CD-ROM version was released at the end of the year. Whereas the floppy version needed 10MB of hard disk space, the CD-ROM version runs directly from the CD-ROM drive and needs only a small installation program to be run to create a directory for saved games — 20Kb in all should be sufficient. Minimum specifications are 640K memory (590K available) and at least a 16mhz 386SX machine. There is support for AdLib and SoundBlaster and a mouse is required.

The story is told in flashback in the intro as a series of cut scenes. The year is 1984. Two men meet at a bar and an exchange is made. The first man saunters out of the bar just as two plain clothes policemen arrive. They try to arrest the second man who flees on a motor bike. The policemen chase in their car but lose him. Three days later, a man climbs through the window of a house at night time. Two shots ring out; a man and a woman lie dead. We see their funeral... a

sad ceremony in honour of a dead policeman and his wife. The American flag is taken from one coffin, folded, and given to their young son... that young boy is you, Jake Ryan.

Eleven years later, you follow your father into the police force, much as he followed his father, and so on, through the Ryan family tree. Passing your exams with flying colours, you get your first job as a motor-cycle cop at Jackson Beach Police Department. As you enter the modern building, you hope you'll be up to the job. Who knows, you may even solve the mystery behind your parents' murder...

The game is icon driven using the mouse. Clicking the right mouse button brings up an object like a large police badge. This has the action icons — walk, look, touch, talk and utilities — arranged around its edge and you can select them, again using the mouse. Your inventory is arranged along the bottom of the screen.

As in the Police Quest series that Jim Walls designed before, Blue Force is designed to be a true to life, accurate portrayal of police life (and death), where you need to follow proper police procedure. If you want to arrest someone, you must handcuff them. Don't try to handcuff them

if they're still carrying a gun! If you are in a dangerous neighbourhood, make sure you have back-up. Book all evidence. Respond properly to messages over your police radio and so forth. This means that a good atmosphere is created in terms of realism but that the player has less freedom of action. No *Dirty Harry* tactics will work here! It's *by the book* or not at all.

This lack of freedom is not only found in the way you carry out your duties but in the way the game is laid out as a whole, as it is pretty linear. Once on your bike, you are presented with a map of the Jackson Beach area, with locations of note identified by name when you pass the cursor over them. But travel round as much as you wish, nothing will happen until the game decides it will.

It's often easy to get stuck in a linear game because the puzzles have to be tackled in a certain order. Fortunately, this isn't the case with Blue Force as the game isn't that difficult. If you take note of conversations between characters and read the manual, it's hard to go wrong. However, there are guns a-plenty at Jackson Beach, and one of them will be aimed at Jake if he makes a mistake. Again, the message when you die will give a hint for the correct way to tackle the problem, e.g. never lower your guard until your suspect is safely secured.

Graphically the game is of the misty animated graphics type, rather than the cartoon-like quality of the early *Police Quest* games. The addition of digitized clips of *real actors* during conversations or to emphasise a point is a nice touch that works well and allows you to identify them, and also identify WITH the character you play. You can even have your own image

'injected' from a VHS video into the game if you wish; details are in the package. The animation is mixed, generally being much better and smoother when the computer takes over than when you move Jake yourself from A to B; he tends to be rather wooden. Sound effects are restricted to the like of gun shots, sirens, tyre screeches and the ever-present waves and seagulls (well, we are by the sea, after all). The music is unobtrusive and meshes well with the action.

By its very nature, American police work is notoriously violent. One surprise to me was that, according to Tsunami, it is seemingly okay to show someone being cut down in a bloody hail of bullets, the language has to be censored. For example, stopping a dubious-looking young man in a truck and questioning him gave the response — *Sheeeit. Yo, homes, you pushin' dis' @$%!# too far, man!* Some strange double-standard operating there which doesn't add to the atmosphere.

Generally, I enjoyed *Blue Force*; it's a well-designed game. However, I would have preferred some more *extras* for the CD-ROM version over the floppy version. You do get demos of *Protostar* and *Ringworld*, a bonus soundtrack and an interview with Jim Walls. I would have liked speech too, even a voice-over for the intro would have been a nice touch. As it stands, Blue Force on CD has the advantage of saving hard disk space, which for me is a big plus (since getting the CD-ROM drive, I guard my hard disk space jealously — if it's on CD-ROM I expect it to play from there with minimum installation). But in the time since the original game came out, Tsunami could have done more with it. As it stands, they're just cashing in on a new medium.

LEMMINGS 1 — HELP WANTED

Can anyone ease the frustration of being unable to save all the Lemmings on Level 3 of the Mayhem Section? I'd also like to know that, it's one I never could figure out. Your help will be greatly appreciated. (Despite this being the last issue of Red Herring, please contact me if you can help.)

WYSIWYG

Reviewed by James Jillians, played on the ST

Okay, Okay, calm down! I know it's very exciting to be presented with a brand new ST game, but try to contain your enthusiasm just long enough to read this review!

WYSIWYG is the second offering from the SynTax and Red Herring "ST Adventure Creator" expert, Jean Childs. Not content with following the standard text-game *tradition* the master of originality has come up with a new uncustomary delight. Last time her *gimmick* was the friends, Tom, Dick and Harry, and the option to *CONFER* with them; this time she has given us *What You See Is What You Get*.

Before I explain what's so unconventional about the game (as if you didn't know already!), I'll run through the plot...

It's an ordinary Saturday afternoon, and you've just arrived in your local town centre to do a spot of shopping. Naturally, as usual when you bring the car, there are no parking spaces available, and being an honest person you resist the temptation to park illegally on the yellow lines (possibly something to do with the traffic warden standing at the roadside). You decide to park out of town and catch the bus. Soon after you have are standing in the bus shelter — there isn't a bus in sight. There is, however, a perfectly ordinary carpet, lying on the ground nearby, quietly minding its own business. On it is a sign which says, "*Please Take A Seat*".

Feeling rather silly at participating in what you think is some sort crack-pot joke, you sit down. The carpet rises into the air, and as you zoom off into the horizon clinging on for dear

I'D MUCH RATHER WAIT FOR A NUMBER SIXTY-FOUR...
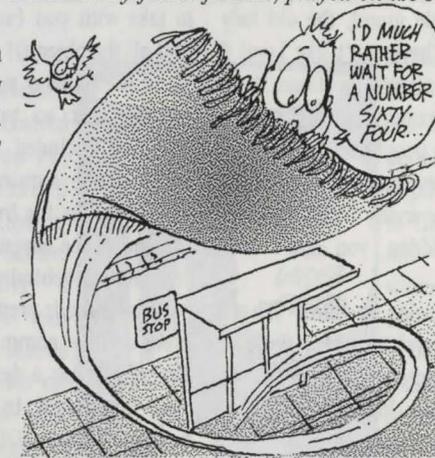
life a voice whispers a weird and cryptic rhyme in your ear:

"Be careful, be curious,
be bold.
The object of your
labours will unfold.
Your reward will be
greatness yet untold."

The carpet lands in an empty room — the first location in the mysterious and magical world in which this game takes place.

This is where the adventure begins — no hint as to what you have to do is given. However, for reviewing purposes, I'm sure Jean won't mind me telling you a bit more about the story...

In the mystical land where you have landed there once was a wondrous and beautiful castle. Unfortunately, shortly before you arrival, all the colour and liveliness was removed from it by a dark curse. The local wizard, being rather put out by all this, has offered a reward: He who restores colour to the castle shall rule the land. Need I explain further?

WYSIWYG is a text adventure game with no room descriptions. Instead of text you are given a picture for each location and handy boxes telling you in which direction you are facing and where the exits are. The names of the objects in the room are listed below the picture — the graphics do not change to compensate for items you drop or pick up. In fact, many of the objects that are important to the game are hidden in, under or on the bits of scenery, in order to be anything more than a complete lemon you will need to use the *EXAMINE* and *LOOK* commands quite a lot. Other things, like descriptions of actions, are given as text as per normal.

There are quite a few characters you can chat to — people in the High Street, James the Postman, Charles the castle guard, the old lady who sits on the train... They aren't like Level 9 characters who can move around locations; these stay put and can only be communicated with by *ASKing* them about places, people and objects you are interested in. The characters are mainly used for hint-giving. There are many hints included — some are so well hidden, you don't even realise that they are hints!

I rate WYSIWYG's puzzles as hard. (That's James Judge's difficulty level *easy*, for those of you who are used to reading the adventuring prodigy's reviews!) They are logical — but it's not the kind of logic that is solvable without a great deal of thought. The conundrums are frequently object based, for example, giving a ball to a dog or collecting up objects of certain attributes. There aren't as many of the interesting cryptic clues and riddles that featured in *Excuse Me*. In my opinion, the game is best suited to fairly experienced players who wants a fun challenge. Although not lengthy, the game takes a helluva long time to complete!

The game scenario is like a cross between a fairy-tale world and everyday Great Britain. Light-hearted and clean, the adventure is suitable for all sorts of adventurers. The story line isn't anything to get excited about — the game is based around puzzle solving rather than an involved plot. Although there is the occasional joke, *WYSIWYG* isn't what I would class as a *comedy*.

As with *Excuse Me*, it is possible to get rather frustrated with the game at times. For example, you need to travel by train several times in the first part of the game, ferrying objects back and forth, but you only have enough money for the exact number of trips required. If you forget a vital piece of equipment on one of your train journeys you have to start the adventure again because there is no way of going back for it. You might have to restart the adventure many times just to work out the right combination of objects to take with you (and that's assuming you can find all the objects)!

At the halfway point in the game there is no turning back, so, to combat further annoyance, Jean has included a message to tell you how many of the required objects you are missing. This alleviates the frustration of realising right at the end of the adventure that you need an object that you left behind when you went on the train!

The game is pretty user-friendly. It recognises most of the commands that spring to mind. Everything has a description, not just the things that are useful to the game. There are the occasional *ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT TO DO THAT?* messages which stop you doing stupid things.

The no-room-descriptions idea works quite well. You find yourself zipping between locations at a greater speed because there is nothing to read. It's a refreshing break for those of us who are tired of reading long pages of text, and lets you get on straight away with some heavy-duty puzzle solving. The graphics are clear and simple and surprisingly no problems arise from not knowing what to call an object seen in the picture. There are the occasional sound effects, and the game has been thoroughly play-tested. All in all *WYSIWYG* has a very polished appearance.

I enjoyed playing both of Jean's games. It's is a shame she didn't incorporate her wonderful *friends* idea in *WYSIWYG* too; I think a combination of her two *gimmicks* would make a great game!

To round up, WYSIWYG is an adventure which should be enjoyed by most fairly experienced adventurers. The sheer simplicity of the game, and the fact that there are no room descriptions, means that the game offers a welcome change to some of the complex Level 9 adventures I have recommended in my *Look Back At...* reviews.

FRUSTRATION

Reviewed by Steve Clay, played on Amiga 600

Frustration is a text adventure by Jim McBrayne, author of two other well-received adventures now available on PD, *The Golden Fleece* (Syntax PD 192) and *The Holy Grail* (Syntax PD 193) 1 Meg. The plot behind *Frustration* is basically a treasure hunt. You are out shopping for your Aunt Maude when a gust of wind carries off your grocery list. You chase after the errant list as the thought of returning home without the shopping is one not to be contemplated. Anyway, you have just got within grabbing range when you plummet into an open manhole and down you float. Yes, float!! In true Alice in Wonderland style you are deposited gently after a long, long fall at the bottom of the manhole.

On the floor of your start location you will find a lamp and a sword. A wander around the immediate locations reveals a few new locations but little to make you think. You will eventually find your way out of the pipe and the outside world, although it is not perhaps the world you left when you fell into the manhole. Soon after your escape from the pipes you should find a mansion, (you can't miss it, it's a great big house!). Once inside your guest really starts and you should soon be visiting rooms with curious names and picking up some strange objects, strangest of which is a wobbly pumpkin. Upstairs is the cubicle room with its glowing north wall that teleports you to a strange village and an aperture into which you can put things if you so desire.

The location text is what I like to call *long-winded*. Why use one word when twenty will do

seems to be the order of the day.. This topic is a matter of individual choice and I know many people enjoy lengthy descriptions of locations, but I tend to find it a strain on the eyes and the patience, especially when the descriptions mainly cover what exits are available.

At the other extreme the messages you receive from examining items is very short and very often leaves you none-the-wiser. For example you come across a potion, examining it tells you it is made by the ACME potion company and that is it. So I drank it and felt funny for a few goes and that was it. I later found out what was required of me but only through trial and error. The lengthy text, I feel, would have been better utilised on the examine messages.

On the plus side, Frustration has lots of locations to visit and many of these make you curious as to their purpose and it was trying to find out these things that kept me plugging away at the game. The use of buttons, as well as the ACME trading company, seems to be a trademark of Jim's. Pressing a button will give a satisfying click but no idea whether you've done right or wrong. The parser is excellent and there are no problems. It is very comprehensive and is a tribute to Jim McBrayne's programming skills.

Against these points you have a game that offers little or no encouragement to the player. You seldom get a pointer towards what to do and the phrase *flying-blind* comes to mind. The actual quest appears to be to collect the groceries on the list but this is never made clear. There is also a feeling — and it is only a feeling — that

if you don't press a certain button, other parts of the game are not going to open up to you, but if you do press it the message is so noncommittal that again left me guessing.

The score system is equally unaccommodating. Jim says not to take much notice of the score, but as it is the only hint you get in the game you tend to take note of your score and how badly (in my case) you seem to be doing. *Frustration* needs to give the player some pointers but doesn't and that is its downfall.

Overall I would recommend *Frustration* to anybody who likes a serious challenge. The ability to second guess the author would be useful and a willingness to try, try again seems essential.

To the rest of you who like to have a clue with regard to what's going on then steer clear.

Frustration is shareware and Jim asks for a £5 registration fee if you like it. Help will only be provided to those who have registered!

EYE OF THE BEHOLDER TRILOGY

Reviewed by Sue, played on the PC (CD -ROM Version Reviewed)

Back in the dim and distant past (well, okay, 1990 then), when RPGs were still finding their feet on the PC, Westwood Studios programmed an RPG for SSI called *Eye of the Beholder*. It was met with unanimous enthusiasm throughout the reviewing world and in 1991, a follow-up game was released called *Eye of the Beholder II: The Legend of Darkmoon*. Westwood Studios moved to Virgin before they wrote the third game in the trilogy, *Eye of the Beholder III:Assault on Myth Drannor*, so this was programmed in-house. Now, all three have been released on a single CD-ROM.

The packaging is enticing with a compilation cover graphic from the three games and screenshots of each on the back. The box is large format, 9" by 10" with a rule book for each game, hint book and single sheet starter map for EOTB1, catalogue and reference card, not forgetting the CD-ROM disc itself which comes in a paper sleeve. *C'mon, guys, surely you could have given us a case?*

The three games are traditional quests against evil and follow the official AD&D 2nd Edition rules. In the first, your heroes are sent into the sewers beneath the town of Waterdeep to find out the nature of an ancient evil that lurks

down there and destroy it if possible. In the second, a message comes from archmage Khelben Blackstaff. Visiting him, you discover that evil is stirring yet again; this time it's in the Temple of Darkmoon so he teleports you there to begin your investigations. The last, yet again, starts in Waterdeep, some time after the events in EOTB2. A man arrives with a mission for you; a foul lich (are there any nice ones?) rules the ancient city of Myth Drannor. The man's master wishes to restore the city to its former glory (cue picture of trans-formed city rising from ruins) but needs an ancient artefact held by... yes, you guessed it... the lich. Once again, you are transported — this time to a burial ground outside the city.

The requirements for the games are pretty standard — 386 upwards, mouse for EOTB3 (recommended for EOTB1 and 2), 640K RAM (2MB EMS for EOTB is required if you want all the bells and whistles such as digitized sound effects and use of a disk cache) and a sound board. A 386/20 is recommended as a minimum for EOTB3 but it wasn't too sluggish on my 386/16.

The CD-ROM is purely used as a storage medium; there have been no additions made to

the games and all three need to be installed onto the hard disk where they take 3.2MB, 3.8MB and a massive 9.5MB respectively. There is an installation program provided which gives a menu to allow you to install individual games or all three, plus the demos of *Dungeon Hack* and *Dark Sun:Shattered Lands* which are also provided.

You create four characters in each case though there are two spare slots for NPCs who can become an integral part of the group, offering advice and joining in the scraps. Characters can be transferred from one game to the next though there may be some changes or losses in equipment and spells. The engine used for EOTB1 and 2 is identical. EOTB3 is slightly more flash with better graphics but, still, none of the games has automapping. There have been a few changes made to EOTB3 such as the addition of an *all attack* button, rather than clicking on characters individually. But basically all three are Dungeon Master style romps with step by step movement, paper doll inventory and equipment slots, and the traditional puzzles of levers and buttons, keys, spell casting, teleporters, and fighting those ubiquitous monsters.

There are those who would say *"RPGs have progressed a lot since the days of EOTB"* and they'd be right. We can now scroll through dungeons rather than move one step at a time but I like the old style movement which I find more controllable and as for the lack of auto-mapping, it doesn't bother me one whit since half the fun, for me, of playing an RPG is digging out the graph paper and coloured pencils.

For those who have already delved deep into EOTB, there is little point in buying the CD-ROM version. But for any who haven't yet had the opportunity, this is a real humdinger of a package and, to quote the box, *'fantastic value'*. I'd recommend it highly.

UNINVITED

Reviewed By James Judge, played on the STe

"Well now, an uninvited guest! We don't get many visitors knocking on our door way out here. Now don't be afraid. I'm very sorry to hear about your car. Driving a little too fast, were we? Well, everything is alright now, come along inside. Don't mind the door ... the hinges squeak a bit. And if I were you, I wouldn't look TOO closely at the shadows. One never knows what might be lurking around this musty old place. What's that? You just want to find your brother, use the 'phone and go? After a short stay? Well, if you can find a 'phone you can definitely use it, and as to the leaving, well I suppose ANYTHING is possible..."

That is the start to this boring, dreary and terrible game from Mindscape. I'm not going to make any bones about it — I just don't like the game. It just isn't what I class as a good game, a mixture of first person RPGing and adventure game thrown into a red herring bound, poorly implemented system that MIndscape try and pass off as a good game. Normally I like Mindscape games — there hasn't been one that I haven't liked from that house of greatness until I came across games of this ilk.

Not only did Mindscape see fit to release just this game, they released another three (which I've been able to find) using the same system and they just aren't any better.

Anyway, I'm drifting...

The game takes place in this old, musty mansion where your main aim is to escape. find your brother and a 'phone. Along the way you

will be drawn (ahem) into the mysteries of this strange house and be killed quite a bit too.

The game uses a GEM style area with windows that are re-sizable and pull-down windows. In the main window is a static image of the room you are in. Below that is a text window which relays any messages and info you get from the game world. To either side of these windows are windows for your inventory, the exits and an EXAMINE SELF button. At the top of the screen is a box with a few commands in it and a menu bar with a couple of menus which are pull-downable.

The system is very basic, showing static colour images in which everything can be clicked upon and moved into your inventory by *dragging and dropping* them — even carpets, fireplaces and paintings, although they will whip back into place as soon as you put them in your pocket.

All the items that you are able to pick up go into your inventory which is another graphic window. You drag items into this window and the game makes no effort to resize them from how they were in the main window so you could end up with a book that (because it was in the foreground of the location window) is larger than a huge axe (that just happened to be in the back of a location and so was depicted to be small.

Also moving items around the location window leads to more perspective problems. You can drop an item wherever you want to in the room, leading to floating coats and mysteriously suspended boxes.

The actual gameplay is slow and sluggish with

disk reads every time something different happens (i.e. a noise or entrance into a new room). I have, actually, found a way of getting rid of these disk reading sessions. What you do (if you have got a megabyte of free memory or more) is to define a reset-proof ramdisk as drive C. Copy everything from disk B to drive C. Put the first disk into drive A and warm-reset and then boot as normal. The game will then read drive C for all the information such as sound and graphics, making it run far faster and adding a little bit of enjoyment to an otherwise terrible game.

The text feedbacks you get in the text window are short and to the point, unless something major happens and then you must scroll through windows and windows of boring text.

The puzzles are mainly deciding what items are useful and what are not. Then you must find out what items you can *USE* on what pieces of scenery to give either a clue as to what to do next or get another item. Soon you will have a lot of items that you don't know what you should be doing with them or whether they will be useful later on in the game.

There are lots of rooms, plenty of items, loads of sudden deaths and a maze — what more couldn't you want?

Mindscape should bow their heads in shame, if you ask me. Don't buy it unless you just want a quick birthday present for someone you don't really care about, but don't want to forget *Rubbish!*

A FANTASY FEATURE
by Keith Adam

Driving 150 miles a day every day for the last three and a half years left me precious little time for two of my favourite pastimes — playing (but rarely solving!) computer adventure games and reading.

When I got my first computer, the (t)rusty old ZX81, the closest thing to an adventure seemed to be making the RAM pack stay still! And my favourite reading material was Science Fiction such as Asimov and the occasional criminal novel by Christie.

A year or two later, by the time I got my ZX Spectrum and my first taste of Adventures, my reading tastes had drifted more towards Fantasy; perhaps assisted by my mild disappointment that the ZX81 was not leading to the Utopia which so many Science Fiction authors were convinced was about to be unleashed by the computer revolution.

Over the coming years, computers were to make the first steps towards that Utopia; adventures developed first still and then moving pictures until they became the truly interactive masterpieces of today. All that time I remained a staunch fan of the Fantasy novel.

Having developed an appreciation of adventures, when you realise the breadth of similarity between Adventures and Fantasy novels it is, perhaps, not all that surprising that I read such books.

Whilst there may be a formal definition as to what constitutes a Fantasy novel, I am unaware of what it maybe.

I accept that there may be many kinds of Fantasy but the broadest range of books coincides with the way in which I prefer to think; a time where there was no limit to imagination, a tune
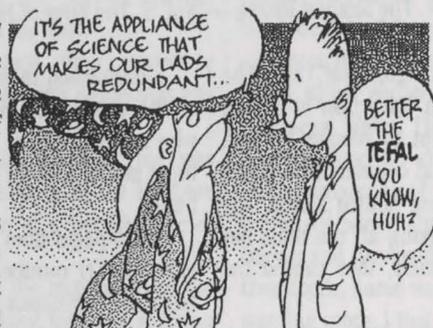
before technology, a time when magic had not been subdued by Science, where man walked amongst history, when great and heroic deeds were done, when mighty fortresses of stone rose over towns and villages as their mighty protector

Okay, that is getting a bit carried away (just a little bit) and perhaps on the simplistic side but you get the idea.

Of course, if anybody knows the formal definition of what constitutes a Fantasy novel, let me know!

Anyway, having been largely absent from these pleasures over the course of the last three and a half years, I have now returned — ignoring the fact that it took a new job, a new house 70 miles closer to work than before, lots of money (the Bank's not mine) and several rolls of wallpaper, tins of paint etc. — I am glad to be back.

So much so, when it was suggested that I submit an article to Red Herring, having pondered the issue a while (yes that was what those funny noises were) I thought that, perhaps, as there were many people doing game reviews that I might try something different — and here it is

In this article, I want to give you just a taster of two different series of books — one which has been ongoing for some 12 or more years and one which has only come to prominence in the last two or three years.

When reading this article, please remember that I am just a humble human being such as you and that I read what I enjoy and write what I think. I am not a professional writer or critic.

THE WHEEL OF TIME by Robert Jordan

Vol. 1. The Eye of the World — Vol. 2. The Great Hunt— Vol. 3. The Dragon Reborn
Vol. 4. The Shadow Rising — Vol. 5. The Fires of Heaven.

Three thousand years ago, Shai'Tan (The Dark One) was resealed in his prison at Shayol Ghul following an attempt to release his evil upon the world. In his final counterstrike before the resealing, the Dark One tainted Saidin, the male source of power -driving all the male Aes Sedai mad. In their madness, they caused the *Breaking of the World*.

Much knowledge was lost and many civilizations perished. Throughout the three thousand years since, there have been many wars and destruction as the world began to rebuild itself and fought to keep the remnants of evil that remained at bay.

But the wheel is turning and soon the time will come when Shai'Tan will be free to walk the world. There is only one hope for the world; as prophesied, Lews Therin Telamon — The Dragon — who resealed the prison at Shayol Ghul must be reborn to face Shai'Tan at Tarmon Gaidon — The final Battle. But in his coming to save the world he will also destroy it, in defeating the Dark One, the Dragon reborn will break the world anew.

Summarised to the extreme, these novels tell of the coming of the Dragon Reborn, of those who search for him (to guide him or to destroy him) and of a world sliding towards the ultimate battle.

4,000 pages does seem, initially, a somewhat excessive (!) number of pages to tell this story, but a short synopsis such as this cannot do true justice to the full extent of the vision evidenced in these novels.

The pace and power of the storytelling never fails in a tale which captivated me entirely. The tapestry of history that has been woven to support these novels is rich and complex; but delivered in a way which makes the reader explore the world, both past and present, for himself.

There have been five volumes in the series so far and there is plenty scope for more to come — if they continue to be woven so well, they will be very welcome.

P.S. In case you hadn't guessed, I liked these books!
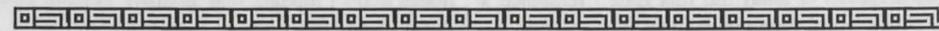
THE DERYNI NOVELS by Katherine Kurtz

The Legends of Camber of Culdi (3 Vols.) — The Heirs of St Camber (2 Vols., third due 1994)
The Chronicles of the Deryni (3 Vols.) — The Histories of King Kelson (3 Vols.)
The Deryni Archives (Short Stories) — Deryni Magic — A Grimoire

In the land of Gwynedd, there dwell two races; Human and Deryni.

The human are as we; the Deryni however are a race apart. They have the ability to work magic; healing, mind-reading, and many other

skills. Their magic is very much of the mind rather than of matter but still it sets them apart. The magic itself is neither benign or malignant; only its practitioners.

And therein lies the problem.

In the year 822, the land of Gwynedd was ruled by the Haldane kings — a human line — until the throne fell to the Deryni Festillic Dynasty who invaded from the East.

The Festillic Dynasty used their powers to subjugate their human *hosts* and much that was evil was done.

Eighty years later, the Festillic line was deposed and the Crown restored to the Haldane heirs — at the instigation of a Deryni Duke of Gwynedd, Camber of Culdi.

The first series tells of the restoration of the crown to the human Haldane line, the reaction of the people of Gwynedd and the obsession of a few powerful individuals with the persecution of all Deryni — even those Deryni who sought the restoration of the crown to the Haldanes. The second series continues this theme as the Deryni race is decimated and seeks ways to prevent the complete extermination of its people. The third and fourth series pick up the theme some 200 years later; The Deryni race has survived but is a

shadow of what it once was. These novels tell of the Deryni struggle for acceptance and interweaves their tale with that of the new Haldane King Kelson.

These novels show a high level of historical detail which equates the land of Gwynedd with mediaeval Wales. The historical detail, however, does not cover up what I feel is perhaps the only true shortcoming of these volumes; whilst we are tantalised with glimpses of the history of the Deryni and Gwynedd, there is very little detail or true depth. Some would say that this leaves you wanting more; I just feel frustrated.

The lack of *historical* depth aside, these novels themselves are well written and planned and highly enjoyable.

Indeed, Katherine Kurtz is amongst my favourite authors and I always eagerly await her next novel. (Even if sometimes the wait gets a bit long; the gap between Vols. 1 and 2 of the Heirs of St Camber was around two years!)
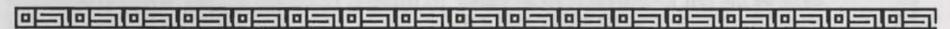
An A to Z of...

If you can do your own A — Z on a Fantasy related subject or can fill in some of the blanks in these, please let me know.

An A- Z of Authors

A	Marc Alexander, Wells Of Ythan series		L	Mercedes Lackey, Valdemar Trilogies
B	Terry Brooks, Shannara Trilogy and Heritage of Shannara		M	Julian May, Saga Of The Exiles
			N	?
C	Louise Cooper, Time Master Trilogy		O	?
D	Stephen Donaldson, First & Second Chronicles Of Thomas Covenant		P	Terry Pratchett, The Discworld Novels
			Q	?
E	David Eddings, The Belgariad, The Mallorean, The Elenium etc.		R	Jennifer Robertson, Chronicles Of The Cheysuti
F	Raymond E. Feist, The Riftwar Saga		S	H.F.Saint, Memoirs Of An Invisible Man
G	Ken Grimwood, Replay		T	Roger Taylor, Chronicles Of Hawklan
H	Robert Don Hughes, Pelmen The Powershaper Series		U	?
			V	?
I	?		W	Margaret Weis & Tracy Hickman, Dragonlance
			X	?
J	Robert Jordan, The Wheel Of Time		Y	?
K	Katherine Kurtz, The Deryni Trilogies		Z	?

An A-Z of Places

A   Aeil Waste, The Wheel Of Time by Robert Jordan
B   Barad-Dur, Lord Of The Rings by J.R.R. Tolkien
C   Cor Culdi, Legends Of Camber Of Culdi by Katherine Kurtz
D   Druid's Keep, The Shannara Trilogy by Terry Brooks
E   Elvander, The Riftwar Saga by Raymond E. Feist
F   Fortress Of The Light, The Wheel Of Time by Robert Jordan
G   Gwynned, The Deryni Trilogy by Katherine Kurtz
H   Haven, Valdemar Series by Mercedes Lackey
I   Inn Of The Last Home, Dragonlance by Weis & Hickman
J   ?
K   Krondor, Riftwar Saga by Raymond E. Feist
L   Lothlorien, Lord Of The Rings by J.R.R. Tolkien
M   Mujhara, Chronicles Of The Cheysuli by Jennifer Robertson
N   Numenor, Histories of Middle-Earth by J.R.R. Tolkein
O   ?
P   Paras Derval, The Fionaver Tapestry by Guy Gavriel Key
Q   ?
R   Rhuidean, The Wheel Of Time by Robert Jordan
S   Sthiss Tor, The Belgariad by David Eddings
T   Tar Valon, The Wheel Of Time by Robert Jordan
U   Unseen University, The Discworld Novels by Terry Pratchett
V   Valoret, Heirs of St. Camber etc. by Katherine Kurtz
W   Wells Of Ythan Series by Marc Alexander
X   Xak Tsaroth, Dragonlance by Weis & Hickman
Z   Zaryt's Teeth, Spellsinger Series by Alan Dean Foster

If you want to comment, criticise or even tell me what books you have enjoyed, write to me c/o Red Herring or at Flat 2,10 Hillcoat Loan, Edinburgh. EH1S 1UA.

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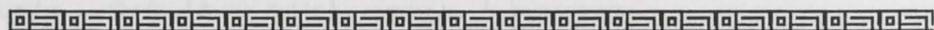
CAW — Creative Adventure Writer for the ST and PC

A PS from the author, Richard Hunt

There is an inaccuracy over the editing facilities. It should have been in the documentation, but if not they are (for both computers) as follows...

<Arrows> Moves the cursor within the text. Text can thus be added to/removed anywhere as required.

<Delete> Deletes the character under the cursor position.

<BkSpce> Deletes the character left of the cursor position.

<Insert> With nothing entered brings up the old location/trigger description.

<Return> With nothing entered keeps the old location/trigger description. Useful when triggers just need to be reset (!edit resets triggers).

* On its own, uses the location/trigger description from the previous location visited.

The following is adapted, fairly freely, from a series of role-play sessions held at Essex University last year, around Easter. It must have been exam pressure, that's all I can say…

AN EASTER TALE
by Alan Brookland

Reality just ain't what it used to be. Parallel universes now swoop through it with gay abandon, quantum events crop up nine to the dozen and waves of probability threaten to wash it away with every non-deterministic action. Nobody's sure what it real and what is imaginary any more, nothing can be said for sure. Of course, some people have known this for generations, but only children (who haven't been taught any better) tend to believe them.

Reality ain't what it used to be, but it is what it once was.

In one of the many realities, spiralling around our own, occasionally, very occasionally, colliding with it, stands a small forest. As forests go it's nothing unusual. Birds sing in the trees, small animals dash through the undergrowth and flowers poke their heads gently through the earth. Some might say it was idyllic, fairy-like and they'd almost be right. The people who live here might not be fairies, but they do occasionally borrow their lawnmower.

Within this forest stands a small house. For the area, this too is nothing unusual. Some might remark at the necessity of the glazed-honey stone-cladding, but only because it obscured the more traditional gingerbread.

Within this dentist's nightmare lives, not as you might expect, an witch (even the best informed of story-tellers are occasionally misled), but a small white rabbit. He is, in deference to tradition, wearing a blue waist-coat and carrying a gold pocket-watch which he studies periodically, almost

WAS THAT A NERVOUS TICK?

A NERVOUS TICK IS WHEN SOMEBODY ASKS FOR CREDIT…

as a nervous tic. He is also pacing up and down fretfully and brushing back his ears.

The cause of the rabbit's distress is not immediately obvious, but the suspicion hangs in the air that it might be connected to a green hand-cart, parked outside his house. A suspicion that the occasional sight of a little, green-bearded, man bobbing past the window and waving his arms, appears to confirm, especially when linked to the sight of a carefully lettered sign, written along the side, reading, *"O'Malley and son. Builders, decorators and carpenters. Ornamental icing a speciality".*

But now we are closer to the house and, if we strain our ears, we can hear the conversation from within, a conversation which may lead us also to suspect that all is not well in the forest.

"To be sure, our prices have risen slightly since the last job, but…."

"Slightly! This is more than double what you charged me before! By my ears and whiskers O'Malley, are you trying to ruin me?"

"If you'll just let me finish, Mr. er…"

"Yes, yes, get on with it."

"…our expenses have risen rather a lot since we last worked for you. A pot of gold doesn't go so far as once it did, especially in our current economic climate."

"What current economic climate? We haven't even got an economy! You leprechauns are the only ones with any real money, you know that just as well as I do."

"To be sure this is the truth Mr. er…, but it's

the materials you know. Have you seen the market price for sugar these days? Not to mention the current poor state of gold against gobstoppers and the way licorice prices have been rising defies belief. Things are looking very bad for the confectionery architecture industry let me tell you. Stocks are right down across the board. You can't get hold of a sherbet dab for love nor money in town any more and as for bullseyes…"

"Yes, thank you Mr. O'Malley. I'm sure we all have our problems. Do you mind if I put this bill on the slate for now?"

"Nothing would give me greater pleasure, save actually receiving any money. I sure hope you've stocked up for Easter yourself Mr…. Mr, because you cannot be getting a chocolate egg in town now, even if you begged for one. I shall be seeing you."

O'Malley then leaves the house, pausing only to glance back at his friend and best customer, the Easter Bunny, as he thoughtfully closes the door behind him. Back inside, the titled, but still unnamed *(Note 1)* rabbit stares, with some satisfaction, to the door of his storeroom, filled only last week with the finest chocolate eggs available. It had obviously been a good idea to buy in stocks ahead of time, even though the refrigeration was costing him a small fortune. Perhaps just a quick check to make sure everything is secure. Tomorrow would be a busy day after all. He opens the door wearily, careful not to disturb the mountainous piles of eggs stored within, but it swings open ominously easily. A small hole is visible in the far wall, across the empty room. A hole, the Easter Bunny notices, is about the size of a fairy, before he falls into a dead faint.

Meanwhile, away from the forest, up in the mountains, where even on worlds which are better organised, anything can happen, stands a large white castle. Its construction seems to warrant closer inspection, but also suggests that such inspection would prove unpleasant, so we shall simply move within, to a large room, filled with sweets and chocolate beyond imagination and above it all, a small winged fairy, giggling slightly in the fading sunlight.

The Easter Bunny ran into town, forgetting even his traditional hop in his haste. There was only one group of people heinous enough to steal chocolate eggs from the Easter Bunny and he well knew it. The fairies had always resented him. It was only him and Santa left now, holding out against their new franchises and Santa was only still there because he had a life sinecure. He was vulnerable and he knew it. Spring had always been a good time for fairies and they wanted his place. Well, he wasn't going to go down without a fight, that was for sure. There was only one person who had any control over the fairies in town, one person cunning enough to hold his position at the top and one person always ready to gain a hold over his competitors. The price would be high, but he had no choice. He was going to see the fairy godfather.

Now, he felt less sure of his intuitions. You always had to watch yourself around fairies, but even fairies had to check their pockets around the fairy godfather. It was rumoured among some of the less trustworthy members of the forest that he'd once met Tinkerbell, whose true story has still never been told, and the tales told of what he could do with a pumpkin had put the Easter Bunny off his food for weeks. It was even whispered, when people were sure he wasn't around, that he was involved in the Puck affair, the full details of which still haven't come out, particularly what happened to Bottom afterwards. He did hear that a scene similar had been used in a movie, changing the names of course, but even film producers wouldn't be that nasty, surely? Still, it was too late to go back now, he was here and he hadn't even wanted to listen to the stories of what the godfather did to people who disturbed him unnecessarily.

The door of the godfather's house creaked open slowly, fairies always being ones for theatrics, and the Easter Bunny waited patiently for the inevitable glimmer of fairy dust which scheduled the arrival of one of their members. That was something else about the fairies — they were messy. "It's all very well", he mused to himself, "appearing in clouds of shimmering dust, but who gets to clear it up afterwards? Still, that was fairies all over, too impulsive, never ones to think of what happens afterwards, when in the cold light of day their victims suddenly find themselves with splitting headaches, clothes covered in dust and a large orange vegetable for their trouble, why…"

"So, Easter Bunny, you return to the family", the husky voice of the godfather jerked his attention back to the present. "The one person I've never been able to read. What is it goes on inside that little white head of yours my friend?" He sniffed slightly, "You wear Warren aftershave. But not today."

The godfather was a strange creature, even by fairy terms. No-one, not even the most imaginative storytellers, knew what he really looked like. All people remembered, after meeting him was the long baggy coat he wore perpetually and a brown trilby hat, which covered his face.

The Easter Bunny gulped slightly. "It's the fairies, er… They've gone and stolen my eggs." he stuttered out slightly.

"I can help you my friend", the soft tones of the godfather hung slightly in the breeze, "but it must be quid pro quo. I help you, you help me. I require just one thing from you, my friend, your name. Tell me that, that no-one knows and I shall help you."

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"Oh, alright then. So long as you don't tell anyone else." He whispered softly into the godfather's ear. The hat dipped slightly before returning to the top of the coat.

"So it was you in that film then? I always did wonder. Tell me, did you get any royalties from the sherry? No, I can see that you didn't. You should have come to me sooner my friend, I have a few contacts. But this is an aside. I know who has your eggs. I know of a fairy who has been rather overworked just recently. A fairy who should have come to me for help. A fairy who has more cause than most to dislike children eating sweets. I can tell you no more than this, but I'm sure a rabbit as intelligent as you can find her from this. I believe a Mr. O'Malley has recently finished some work for her. Perhaps you should talk to him. Anyway, I must go. I have business to take care of. Good-bye, my white whiskered friend. I shall see you again."

The front of O'Malley and Sons, builders merchants, has always been a sight to cause wonder from the casual observer. Comments such as, "I wonder how it stays upright", are often passed, usually fairly quickly in case it suddenly doesn't. More thoughtful passers-by occasionally discuss the obvious talents of Mr. O'Malley in getting it to stand up at all, but only a select few know the store is the way it is solely because the O'Malley family built it. *(Note 2)*

Inside the usual cacophony of bangs and sawing has ceased, for now, as O'Malley himself again enters the story, forcefully…

"I'm sure there is no need for violence Mr. Er… Bunny, Now if you'll just putting down the saw, I'd be happy to show you where I was working last. I'm seeing that you're upset, that I am, so if you'll just let me get my coat… No, I

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can see you're in a hurry, we should be going, indeed…"

…and leads our hero to a strange building we've already met.

The similarity of the tooth-fairy's castle, for this is where we are, to O'Malley and son's store has often been noted. Unfavourably.

"Is this where you've been working?". The Easter Bunny wrinkled his nose in disgust, "It's revolting! Are those really…"

"Yes, and revolting isn't the half of it. I tell you, if times weren't so bad… Anyway, the door is through here." O'Malley pointed to a small cavity in the side of one wall, "Tis a good thing not everyone brushes as well as they should or we'd never get in."

Inside the castle, things don't really improve. The gold effect flooring is quite nice, though it's probably best not to speculate where it came from.

"You know, it's funny. I noticed a load of chocolate eggs last time I was here. Didn't think anything of it at the time. Well, you don't do you? Well, yes, I can see why you might, but they've never been something I've really been interested in. Now, a good meringue, that's another matter, I've always been partial to another meringue."

The Easter Bunny ignored O'Malley's prattlings, at first simply as something to do to take his mind from the, rather forceful, architecture of the place, then because he had something else on his mind.

"There! There's my eggs!", he bounced

excitedly, remembering only later on what he was walking, "and there's the thief herself! Grab her!"But the tooth fairy was gone, vanished, as fairies so often do, leaving only a cloud of dust.

"No, wait! There's a note as well", the Easter Bunny collected the small piece of paper from the dust pile and read slowly…

"To whoever finds this note. I'm sorry for any trouble I've caused. It was the only thing I could think of. Things have been really bad just recently, it's been a boom market for teeth and I just can't keep up the payments any more. Easter would have been the final straw and this was all I could think of to do. I guess I'll just have to come up with something else. It's signed, *The Tooth-fairy.* Gosh, I didn't realise things had got that bad for her." The Easter Bunny wrinkled his nose sorrowfully, in a pose which would have had any passing greetings card artist rushing for his sketchpad, before starting to collect his eggs. "Still, we all have jobs to do. At least she gets some return on her gifts, that's more than I get. I dunno, just a little something occasionally would be nice. Even Santa gets his shot of sherry. Pah! Sherry! If I ever get my hands on that producer…"

But there we must leave this reality, returning to our own, far more sensible, view of the universe, secure in the knowledge that fairies don't really exist. I mean, there'd be dust everywhere if they really popped around like that. Come to think of it, it is fairly dusty in here. *Hey! Gerroff my Easter egg! Come back with that…*

NOTES

(1) The name of the Easter bunny has been much speculated and discussed by many interested parties, generally those involved in unsolicited mail-shots. However, it has never been discovered. The closest anyone has come to discovering his identity came when he was once spotted wearing a blue dressing-gown monogrammed with an H, but he refused to be drawn to what this might stand.

(2) O'Malley properties have only one redeeming feature, noted often by their customers. When they fall down they look exactly the same as when they're upright.

BEYOND BELIEF
by James G. Johnston
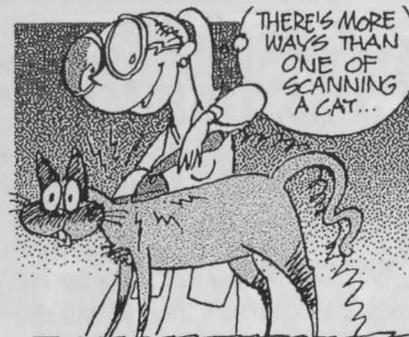
Well there I was browsing through Red Herring when I was suddenly brought back to reality by the following comment on one of my recent articles (Deja Vu, Red Herring 12) . *"…I had to laugh when I read Jim Johnston's article, Deja Vu when giving outrageous computer specifications, he mentioned having to have a 1000k hard disc. Wow! I thought, such power, a megabyte hard disc, how can you improve on that?"*

Despair crowded in on my tender little world as once again I found myself in that frustrating situation of being *NOT BELIEVED*. This has been a constant problem all my life and I had hoped when I retired that I had, at last, laid it to rest.

Let me explain what I mean. As a young lad of the tender age of eight years, I went, one Friday evening, to the township of Leven (some two miles from home). There was a circus pitched on waste ground near the beach. I had no money for a ticket but on offering to help, I was told that if I filled two sacks of rubbish I would get a ticket for the Saturday morning show. I set to work and managed to complete the required amount. I was given my free ticket and also asked if I wanted see the animals. I of course said 'yes' and was allowed into the animal training and housing area. There to my amazement were three brown bears practising their act. When they finished, the trainer handed each bear a feeding bottle filled with milk. This they held with their front paws and sitting on the ground proceeded to drink the milk. I was dumbfounded! I rushed home and told my mother about my ticket and all about

the bears. Mother suggested that they were not real bears *just men in bearskins* and I was too young to try and explain that the body functions of bears are not carried out in private as would happen with men in bearskins. The end result was inevitable. After a while, not only did my insistence fail to convince my mother, it annoyed her to the extent that I was punished for telling lies by having my ticket confiscated and never saw the circus.

When I was Undermanager at the colliery, part of your duties required that you arrive at the colliery early enough to meet the nightshift officials coming off shift and the dayshift coming on shift. One morning, as I drove to work, I came on a motor car in the ditch, on its side. Naturally I stopped and gave what help I could. Once the police arrived I left the scene and drove on to work. Naturally I was late, in what I thought was a good cause, but the shift change was over and a note on my desk requested my presence in the General Manager's office. I was asked to explain my failure to attend the morning shift change. I told the gentleman about the accident and my action and was politely informed if I slept in again I should *"have the guts to admit it and not shoot a load of crap"*. No way was I going to be believed and left hurt to the core. Next day I presented him with the evening paper's report on the accident. He informed me that anyone could claim to have assisted at the accident and since my name was not mentioned in the report it was all rather airy fairy however he would give me *"the benefit of the doubt"* and hoped that I

realised that I *"couldn't use that excuse again"*. Giving me the benefit of the doubt just meant that he still did not believe me but could not prove I was lying. Spit! Spit! Spit!

These are just two examples of many that have happened to me and as I said earlier, my little soul is hurt by disbelief of the truth.

So to put the record straight and get Jim to be friendlier to my bruised ego, here goes...

Taken from Atari ST Review. Issue 18. October 1993.

Advert Page 9 — System Solutions, Windsor and London offer :- Falcon SCSI HARD DRIVES. Ideal for hard disk recording 1000Mb, 10ms, 5 yr. warranty — £1199.

Advert Page 32 — Gasteiner, London offer :- Falcon 030 External Hard Drive

1.2 Gigabyte + SCSI II Casing — £999.00 + VAT

Advert Page 89 — Drives, London offer :-1.1 Gb Digital (5 year warranty) — £1199

The specification for the Falcon allow up to 14 Mb of RAM and will display 65536 colours from a palette of 262144 at 768 by 480 DPI resolution. I have no doubt that the present top of the range PCs can exceed the above. I just haven't the will to look the specifications up as they will probably not be believed!!

For the record, I would like to move away from our *small* computers and give the following examples of commercial computer power. A modern aircraft flying, say, London to Singapore (a seventeen and one half hour flight) is only manually controlled during the actual take off (i.e. for some 10 to 20 minutes). For the rest of the flight the aircraft is totally under the control of the on-board computer, in auto-pilot mode. This can include the landing, with the computer interacting with the airport Instrument Landing System (itself a computer). This on-board computer is also controlling all the other functions of the aircraft, monitoring engine performance, answering signal beacons,

etc., etc. Right down to items like cabin environment and video operation, as well as constantly updating the flight recorder (Black Box). The only human problem to be found in the system is *The Human Boredom Syndrome*. That's the one that makes you switch switches and push buttons that you should not. It can also make you fall asleep when you should be awake and watching. To this end, due to the flight length, there are two complete air crews on board. The captain and his crew take the aircraft up, switch to auto pilot and take the first 4 hours watch then he beds down. The second officer and his crew are then on duty watch for the next 8 hours. The captain and his crew then take over for the final part of the journey. In fact the only reason they appear to be with the plane is to reassure the passengers, who might not like being piloted completely by computer.

In most of our large stores, the tills/checkouts are computer outstations. As the barcode is read it prints the item name and cost on your till receipt. However that's not all it does immediately. It also deducts the item from the *Stock Held* file, updates the re-order file, updates the cash intake file, etc., etc. All this information is subsequently (probably each night) downloaded, by modem, to the Head Office Computer for use in the various departments. Supply Stores, Accounting, Statistics, Sale Trends, Customer Services, etc. all need this information and without it the company cannot operate. That is *Without It's Computer*!! Many of these stores also have a computer link to the credit card centres. Passing your card through a reader gives direct access and the debit will be approved immediately or a code will be given indicating why the credit is refused (overspent, underpaid card bill, etc.) and the assistant will be able to give you this information. Of course, if the transaction is approved then the your friendly credit card computer will immediately debit your account

with the amount, so don't use the card the same day as you put money in. The humans in the bank can take up to three days to process you money in. The computer can take it out in milliseconds — if not quicker.

Finally a futuristic one. Some years ago I was involved in the development of a signal device which would cut off electrical operating power to industrial plant if the wearer moved towards a danger zone. Where mineral crushers, mechanical stowers, chain bunkers etc. were in use, the normal safety precaution was for the person entering the danger zone to shut off the power using a laid down procedure but this system was subject to *human failure*. The *pod* we developed automatically shut off the power and maintained it in that state of isolation until the wearer left the danger area. The scientist who drew up and developed the pod informed me that this would be the normal system in the future for identification and control of human affairs. The pod would be inserted under your skin and on being scanned would positively identify you. This would be used by your bank, timekeeping at work and would be used by the police as identification for a search of their records.

Well I am still waiting for it to happen!! However, my Siamese cat has just been fitted with an *Identichip*. This has been inserted under the skin at the back of her neck. Should she lose herself and be taken to a Vet or cat home with a reader, she can be scanned and the coded number will produce details of her, her owner and her Vet. Also, the development of *genetic fingerprints* means that a computer which could scan genetic data could identify any of your possessions. The full implications of this needs careful examination. By using this method of positive identification we could rapidly reach a situation of policing by spot identity check and identification of criminal and/or victim by examination of objects for genetic fingerprints. Let me conclude by saying that the same chip as used in the cat's case with a code of your genetic print on it is perfectly possible now. The future, however, lies in direct scanning of your genetic data by computer as you enter the bank etc. with all the restrictions on human rights that will entail.

Big brother is NOT watching you!! but his computer is doing it for him.

DR. WHO — The Michaelmas Phantoms
A novel by Andrew Kearley
by Tim Lomas

Surprise, I've emerged from the wreckage of the PBM column to bring another article your way. I was planning to mention this in the column but our poor editor *insisted* I wrote her a separate review.

Oddly enough it's neither an adventure nor anything PBM related (well, only very slightly), instead I'm into book reviews.

Andrew Kearley (as it happens) is one of the Delenda GMs (he's the one with the evil imagination who plays (among other of the NPCs) my mother). He's also a Dr. Who fanatic. His knowledge of the subject is astounding (well, it astounds me). I did throw the Dr. Who questions that the Mastermind champion answered at him, he answered the lot, all correct in 30 seconds flat and then asked me where the hard questions were. Unlike most of the other fans of the series he's just got round to finishing off his very own novel.

What you get for your money is a *booklet* of 108 pages with card covers (this is a hobby of his remember, we're not taking about large scale print runs and the new titles section of your local WH Smith's), solid text throughout, a fairly meaty read which should keep you occupied for a while.

The Doctor concerned is the Eighth, the year is 1997, we're in Oxfordshire and Sonia MacIntyre has arrived. She's the new UNIT chief on the ground (we need someone to take over from the Brigadier) and is definitely my favourite character from this story. If Andrew takes any notice of what I say (which will make a welcome change) then we'll have her back in the other stories he's planning!

The Doctor is his usual preoccupied self, Andrew seems to have captured him quite nicely, the assistant is female as always but does exhibit a few more brains than some of the old ones, (still faints though!) and we have the usual collection of assorted characters for the Doctor to ignore, yell at or make use of at his whim. The Major is my favourite (as I said), she shows the exasperation that all UNIT commanders end up with after spending more than half a story trying to cope with the Doctor and eventually figures out the method the Brigadier finally settled on many years ago. She works around him and does the best she can under the circumstances.

As you've noticed, I'm carefully hedging around the story, it's difficult to write about a book without giving the story away. The basis to the plot is a scientific breakthrough (apparently) which goes (or is about to go) horribly wrong through no fault of the poor scientist apart from an over inflated opinion of his own abilities and tendency to go blindly through with his experiments no matter what. No problems, The

I LIKE A BOOK WITH LOTS AND LOTS OF PICTURES!

NEW WHO THE MCQUELMAS PHANTOMS

EX-TERM-INATE....
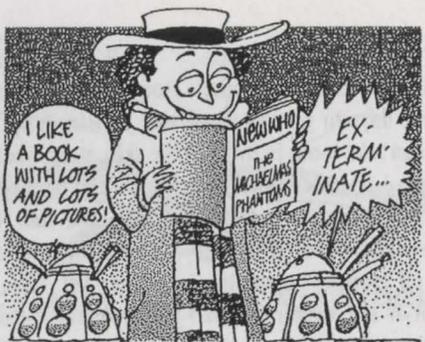
Doctor has more than enough experience of this sort of thing to sort it all out.

In keeping with the TV serials we have three or four major cliffhangers as we go along (actually it'd make a rather good series if the BBC ever get an urge to make any more); the cliffhangers seem to occur at just about the right points for a series to break between episodes, the plot keeps bowling along at a merry pace and the action comes thick and fast. I did worry at an early stage that too many characters were being introduced too quickly to keep track of them but that didn't turn out to be a problem.

Overall it's an excellent read, nice plot, well written and kept me well entertained. I originally got it because I heard he's published it and I was interested mainly not in the book itself but in seeing what Andrew's writing was like. I expected something readable but I was pleasantly surprised with rather more than that. Some of the Dr. Who books tend to be badly written with less than wonderful plots, this compares very well with the best of the others that I've read. I even have the first copy he sold (must get him to sign it at the next con). If you're a Dr. Who fan then it's a sound investment, it may not look as good as the one's you'll get at the bookshop, no pictures and home produced but it reads as well and in most cases better. He's got 6 more novels planned (nothing like being ambitious) and is planning a magazine of short stories, details on the inside back cover.

Available from : Andrew Kearley, 85 Jubilee Rd, Corfe Mullen, Wimbourne, Dorset. BH21 3NJ, cheques/POs payable to Andrew Kearley for £3.00. If you decide to splash out don't forget to tell him I sent you.

THE WYVERN AND THE RATT

An exclusive Red Herring interview conducted by Richard Hewison

Back in the good old days (early to mid 1980's), games were designed and created by just one programmer (more often than not with a musician in tow). Apart from designing the game and writing the code, the programmer would often create the graphics as well. These days, with the advent of new technology (including CD-ROM), games are much more of a team effort. This is mainly due to the enormous amount of work involved in seeing a game through to completion thanks to the improved speed, storage, sound and graphic capabilities of the machines on the market. A good example of how all these elements come together can be seen in *Liberation*, the recently released sequel to the award winning *Captive*.

For those unfortunate enough not to have seen *Captive*, it was a first person perspective R.P.G in a similar style to *Dungeon Master*. It had many unique features including the ability to fit new devices to your 'droids and thus improve their capabilities. It was released by Mindscape in 1990 and it went on to win many prestigious software industry awards. Initially available for the ST and Amiga, the PC conversion was released last year.

The sequel, *Liberation* is a Byte Engineers game. The engineers in question are two programmers who can justifiably be called veterans of their field — Tony Crowther and Ross Goodley (a.k.a Ratt and Wyvern). Tony wrote such early C64 classics as *Loco*, *Suicide Express*, *Trap* and *Monty Mole* before cracking the R.P.G market with *Captive*. Ross's most recent game (prior to *Liberation*) was the fascinating 3D arcade strategy game *Gravity*.
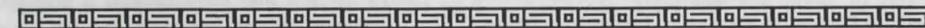
RICHARD: You seem to have been involved in the games software industry since it all started. How did you become interested in programming and what was your first ever finished program?

RATT: I really started when I was at school, writing educational software in the library. The school (Bradfield Comprehensive) would then sell it to other schools to help school the funds. My first commercial program was a 3D maze game on the Commodore VIC called *Amazing*, which was sold in a local computer shop in Sheffield. Later it was used to start a company called Alligator Software. This was then followed be six C64 games (one being *Aztec Tomb Adventure*).

WYVERN: Me, I started at University. One of the first things I did after I got there was to

appropriate a user number and get hacking... Happy days.

RICHARD: Your early programs were very much arcade games but later on you did more puzzle oriented games like *Bombuzal*. Was this a deliberate move away from arcade games towards puzzles and ultimately Adventure/RPGs?

RATT: I think the main reason was the machines at the time. The C64 was a little restricted in what it could do, and Shoot Em' Ups were the only real games you could write for it. The move to the Amiga meant bigger games, so *Captive* was born, followed by *KnightMare* and now *Liberation*. With the possibility of a move to the PC CD based machines, even bigger games are expected as a result. I do like to use the power of

the machines, and Shoot Em' Ups on an Amiga don't really use the machine to its full.

WYVERN: I think that when we started in this business no-one had the faintest idea of either what the machines could do or indeed how to do it. We, the machines, and the games grew up together.

RICHARD: There seemed to be quite a lot of close comradeship in the early days between the programmers and musicians on the 8 bit machines. Do you miss the early days at all in comparison to the way things are run today?

RATT: Yes, I really miss working with Ben Daglish. In fact I've not seen him in years. I think he's still writing music. It was fun being able to help write the music, suggesting changes and finding new sounds for him to try. Now I just get sent the finished music which I just plug into the game.

WYVERN: There still is a pretty close companionship, but with so much to do thanks to the advent of CD machines I fear that we are all going to end up with very little time to even talk to each other let alone be *comrades*.

RICHARD: I think it's safe to say that you must have played and enjoyed *Dungeon Master* when it first appeared. Have you always been an Adventure/RPG fan and what other games in the genre have you played and enjoyed recently?

RATT: *Dungeon Master* was a fun game and it did bring to light the power of the 16 bit machines, but it wasn't my favourite type of

> COLOUR OF SOCKS? ONE RED AND ONE GREEN...THE OTHER ONE'S SORT OF A BEIGE...

game. I was really into the standard text adventures (i.e. 99% of the Infocom range — *Lurking Horror*, *Hitch Hiker's Guide...*, *Leather Goddesses...* the list goes on). Then along came *The Pawn* which I never liked, but this was eventually followed by *Jinxster* which was a lot more fun to play.

I haven't played any games recently. Nothing has yet appealed to me to stop working for a month and play it to death, but I'm still looking. I would play *Liberation* if someone else had written it, but it's no fun knowing the answers before you've seen the puzzles!

RICHARD: How did *Captive* come about, and how long did it take to design and write?

RATT: As you may have guessed it does feel like *Dungeon Master*, but so it should! I just wanted to add the things I felt they missed. Notice how I kept the way you could interact with the game, from throwing objects related to your strength, seeing the object fly through the air, hit the wall and land. Then there's picking up and dropping objects, and most important of all you can squash monsters in doors! No other *Dungeon Master* style game keeps these intact. They just copy it and loose all the *YOU CAN DO ANYTHING* out of the game.

The game itself took 18 months to write. It was originally written for Image Works but after ten months into the project they told me they didn't want it so I came to Mindscape who thought it had potential.

RICHARD: Were you surprised by all the accolades *Captive* was awarded back in 1990?

RATT: Yes especially the Game of the Year award as *Populous* (written by Bullfrog) was also in the running and I thought that would have won, but alas I did.

A funny thing happened at the *IN-DIN* that year 'cause I went off to buy some cigs for our table and when I came back I had won the *Adventure Of The Year Award* and missed my chance to go up and thank every one, but as fate has it I won the *Game of the Year* as well so I was able to receive an Award in person.

RICHARD: How did the *Knightmare* license come about, and did you enjoy doing another similar game so soon after *Captive*?

RATT: *Knightmare* came about because Tim Child was into *Captive* and came to one of the computer shows and asked if we were interested in using the *Captive* engine to write *Knightmare* for the Amiga. All I could say was Yes!

It was fun doing *Knightmare*, receiving tonnes of scripts, videos of new video images yet to be used in the forthcoming series etc. Best of all was the invite to see them at work on the sets and meet all the actors. I did have a break of two months after *Captive* so I was ready and eager to go on *Knightmare*.

RICHARD: *Liberation* has now been released for the Commodore CD32. What enhancements were made to the game once it had been decided to go from the Amiga to the new CD32?

RATT: Lots. Using the AA Chipset i.e. more colours, making use of the 68020 as this can be faster than using the blitter, adding speech to the text files (boy was this fun and a half), using CD Audio for the music and the anims, mixing the anim music tracks with sound effects and speech, creating over 70 different wallsets, and worst of all implementing the CD32 Joypad controls.

I must add that with the overload of work it would not have been possible if it wasn't for my Co-Writer Ross Goodley (Wyvern).

WYVERN: I wrote the vector engine, the text engine, the game controller code and it's my program that generates all of the plots. We have an equal share in the credit, but Tony gets all the publicity!

RICHARD: Are there any plans to release *Liberation* on the A1200 or the IBM PC? I know of quite a few people who enjoyed the original who would love to get the chance to play it.

RATT: The A1200 version is being worked on now. That's all I can say at the moment as the rest is in Mindscape's hands...
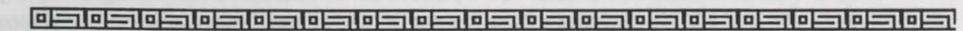
Unfortunately I forgot to ask the most important question of all — i.e., what colour socks are you wearing?. Sorry Marion, sorry Sue... I'll try and remember next time!

I'd like to thank Tony and Ross for taking the time to participate in this interview for Red Herring whilst they were busy working on the A1200 version. *Liberation* is available for the CD32 from Mindscape International (0444 246333) and the disk version for the A1200 (unfortunately minus the excellent CD audio music and speech) should be available sometime in March '94.
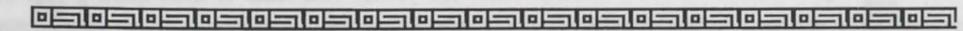
PLAY BY MAIL
by Tim Lomas

All aboard the Skylark! In other words it's time for the 1994 London con, assuming this issue is out before the 7th May, which our beloved editor assures me it will be, then I'd like to see all of you descending on Bethnal Green and the 9th (I think) London PBM convention. It's probably too late to get your tickets by post but in case you still have time and want to save a pound they're available from The BPBMA 23 Aragon Place, Kimbolton, Huntingdon, Cambs. PE18 0JD. The price for the advance rickets is £2.50, on the door they'll be £3.50. Cheques or Postal Orders (no cash) payable to BPBMA.

I'll be there as always, if any of you turn up you can find me by checking the Timepatterns or Pagoda stands, if I'm not at one of those they should know where I'm liable to be (or at least you can leave me a message with them. I'm liable to be fairly busy this year but I can always find a few minutes if anyone comes looking for me. The reason I'll be busy? Well, I'm working on a Football PBM for Pagoda and I can foresee a lot of discussion going on with Keith about that, I've got to see three editors about articles I'm due to write for them this year and I'll be doing a bit of work on getting a UK distributor for my mapping software up and running. Besides which it's been a few months since I had a chat with one of my allies (well coconspirators) in Delenda and he's due to be there! I may not be there until midday or so this year so it's probably not worth looking for me before that.

On with the article, this issue we're getting back to basics.

It was pointed out to me recently that

THE NAME OF THE GAME IS THE NAME OF THE GAME...

RPG THE BOOK

someone reading my articles for the past few months without having read the early ones might well come rather rapidly to the conclusion that PBM is a game for those with healthy bank balances and the time and inclination to spend that on things like large phone bills, expensive role playing games, flashy computers, modems and electronic mail networks and travelling the country attending assorted meets and conventions. This is far from the truth.

It is indeed true that I spend a rather large proportion of my time and energies on various PBM related activities, computers and electronic mail, it is also true that I've got a reasonably well paid job (in computers naturally) which gives me the cash to splash around on my hobbies and the incentive to spend time talking to people in far away countries.

It is also true that this is in no way typical of PBM. There is an interesting split among the PBMers in the UK. There are quite a few of us who've been around in the hobby since the early 1980's, we grew up with the coded turnsheets of those days and we've been watching the hobby grow from what was a very small group of players who knew a large proportion of each other. In the early 1980's it was very unusual for me to enter a new game and not bump into at least one player I already knew. There was a pretty steady population for a few years and then (about 1985/1986) there was a sudden growth in the hobby, this slowed to a trickle of new players in the late '80s and another rush started about 1990 (a lot of sports games have appeared in the last few years). This leads to three main groups of

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players (based on how long they've been playing), if you take me as a typical member of the first group, I was in my early 20's when I started and I'm now heading towards my mid 30's, there's another group about 5 years younger than me and another group still about 10 years younger (for some reason a lot of people seem to get into PBM between the ages of 18 and 22, University being one breeding ground and people getting jobs in their late teens and having a little more cash to spend are two possible reasons.

Naturally there are so many exceptions to these *rules* that you'll find them all over the place. The two that it's easy for me to forget are the beginners who are just starting in the hobby and have no real contacts and those who have little cash to spend (either because they're at school or maybe unemployed, there are other reasons of course). The reason I tend not to bump into them very often is that I tend not to play in the games they're playing. That being said there's a need to remind myself every now and then that I have to cater for all groups, if you don't have a lot of cash to spend on PBM (or maybe just don't want to spend much) then this is for you, we're heading off into the realms of the cheap games. Cheap does not mean second best, there are cheap games which are well worth playing and that's where I want to point you. Next issue I'll cover the second of these groups and go back to good games for new players. The main difference being that cheap games may well mean games run by GMs for their own pleasure and which have a greater than average chance of folding while games for new players will still concentrate on good value while veering

off towards companies with a good reputation who are unlikely to disappear.

What I'm going to do is a quick run down on the cheapest games I can find in the latest Flagship with comments on the companies or games when I know anything about them, as I've never played a lot of these games nor had dealings with the GMs I can't comment for the most part on them and anything I do say will be mainly heresay, the rumours that have come my way. The one thing I have avoided is listing the very cheap (50p per turn) as these are too likely to fold at a moments notice. I've grabbed all the games I could find starting at £1 per turn and carrying on until I got tired of typing. It's also too easy for me to keep mentioning games and GMs I know and have dealt with, this way I get to mention a pile of people I've never dealt with. Apologies for the fact that there's very little information on the games, I simply don't know most of them. The one type I have left out which would otherwise go in are a couple which give different addresses for term and holidays, these are obviously students and while it's possible they could carry on to better things, exams and suchlike are liable to make the turns slightly iffy.

OK, with that caveat here we go. If you do write to any of these GMs then remember that they probably all make a loss running their games, include an SSAE if you ask for details. If people are running games for their (and your) enjoyment and making nothing for their trouble it's only polite not to expect them to pay the postage for your enquiry. It may not seem a lot but if they get 40 enquiries it's £10 in postage alone just for them to answer the letters.
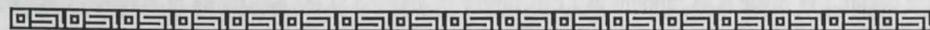
Ad Astra — Pagoda Games — £5 startup (3 free turns), £1.50 per turn. This game I know nothing about but I do know the GM, he's the one I'm currently programming a new game for. Enthusiastic and has a good reputation.

Aeroball — Mark Wightman — £2 startup (1 free turn), £1.25 per turn. A game I know nothing about but I assume from the name it's probably a futuristic sports simulation. The GM I know of but have no details.

Anthelios —State of Mind Games — £6 startup (2 free turns), £1.40 per turn. State of Mind games have been around for a few years. I have no details of the game

Archmage — State of Mind Games — £2 startup (2 free turns), £1.40 per turn. Same people, different games, it sounds like a fantasy wargame but I don't know of it.

Away the Lads — Dracs Games — free startup (no free turns), £1.50 per turn. This simply has to be a football game (from it's name), beyond that I couldn't say. The GMs have been around for a while but I've no more information beyond that.

Battle for Eternity — Mark Walbank — free startup (1 free turn), £1.00 per turn. From the name I'd guess at a strategic wargame, possibly with a fantasy scenario but I have no information on the game or GM.

Battle Plan — Blackpool Games — £6 startup (2 free turns), £1.75 per turn. Blackpool Games are an offshoot of KJC games (probably the biggest PBM company in the UK). There is no connection between the two except that Blackpool were started by ex-KJC GMs and run some games which used to be run by KJC. The game sounds like a strategic wargame and while I've heard nothing either way about the GMs they should be reasonably good given their previous experience.

Championship Football — Hemsoft Computer Consultants — Free startup (no free turns), £1.20 per turn. This is obviously a football game but I'd never heard of the GMs until I looked up the abbreviation which told me who ran it.

Clans — Warrior Games — £7.50 startup (2 free turns), £1.75 per turn. This sounds like it should be a Role Playing Game but as it's computer moderated it's probably a wargame. I've heard of the GMs but know nothing about them.

Come on You Reds — Camelot Games — £1 startup (1 free turn), £1.00 per turn. YAFG (Yet another football game), I did say that sports games are the flavour of this year. Camelot are another lot I've heard of but know nothing about. The game is listed as mixed moderation which suggests it allows a little more inventiveness in the way you play it rather than the computer moderated stats games.

Conflict — Sherwood Games — £5 startup (5 free turns), £1.25 per turn. Another wargame from the sound of it, Sherwood have been around for a few years.
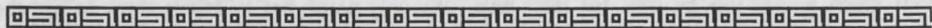
At that point I'll stop, it looks as if I've used up my quota of pages at about this time and I don't want to carry on listing games for the sake of it. You can see something of the games available which are cheap, I've made it as random as I can simply by starting at the beginning of Flagship's list and carrying on listing all the games between £1 and £2 per turn. None of these are my recommendations as I've no experience of playing any of them. I may well decide to list some cheaper games which I do know next issue. If you do try any of these games let me know what you think, I'm always interested in hearing about games I haven't played. Fortunately I happen to have the list of addresses on disc which means I won't mistype them!

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Internet tim@antsnest.demon.co.uk

Compuserve 100014,1767

WHAT'S THE USE, PAPS?
by William McCole

I'm sure my Grandad is very fond of me! "Why?", you ask. Well he keeps giving me the old adventures that he has failed to finish and asks me to complete them.

As time has gone on, I have started to see a connection between the failure to complete certain adventures and the fixed knowledge of grandad's life and education. That sounds a bit heavy, so I will explain using a typical example.

Paps has got a copy of *Mines of Saturn*, a very simple 18-location text adventure, marketed by Mikrogen 1982, as part of a two adventure tape (with *Return to Earth*). Having failed to complete this one, in the early days, he now decided it was time to complete it…with my assistance (volunteered or not !!)

We started from scratch and soon had 14 locations duly mapped and searched and reached a position of being stuck, in two locations, by failing to resolve the input form required to move on.

1. To the north, the way is blocked by rocks. You have dynamite but no means to detonate it. Here my Grandad's superior specialist knowledge, as a Mining Engineer, came into play. He explained the various methods of detonation for various types of explosives… Nitroglycerine — Impact (hammer etc.), Black Powder (Gunpowder) — Light, Fuse, Strum etc., Gelignite — Electrical Detonator

We tried all kinds of combinations of the above (including trying to hit the explosive with the hammer — a game, as I point out , not recommended to anyone (even adventurers).

2. The other sticking point was at the canal bank. I had the boat and oars and was trying to get to the next location. Again, Grandad has had three boats (for fishing and pleasure) and still

sails for sea and loch fishing. He was able to advise me on the correct input to cover this situation... *PUT BOAT IN WATER, PUT OARS IN BOAT, GET INTO BOAT, SAIL BOAT, ROW BOAT, BOARD BOAT, EMBARK BOAT, SAIL CANAL*, etc. We tried everything but failed. We even disassembled the database to obtain the verb/noun list (verbs first then nouns). An examination of the verb list did not give any suitable input to suit Grandad's suggestions. Requests for outside help were non-productive and the exercise came to a stop.

I was looking at the verb/noun list one evening and noticed the verb *USE* was in the middle of the nouns. I decided to try this *(USE DYNAMITE)* to detonate the dynamite at the rocks. This worked and cleared my way north but two moves north and I was killed by ants in a cave. Oh Well! One down and one to go!! When I came home from school next day, Paps was waving a letter from Barbara Gibb (Editor of Adventure Probe Magazine). The letter explained that Barbara had given the adventure a *run through* while watching the *Bowls Final* and enclosed details. At this stage, all I required was one input — How to use the boat? That WAS the answer — *USE BOAT*. Many thanks, Barbara.

You see, we had discussed the *USE DYNAMITE* the night before and while Grandad, grudgingly, admitted that it had worked in the case of the dynamite, there was no way that it could be used for the launching and sailing of a boat and we had left it there for the day. Grandad could not argue with the additional evidence from Barbara

YOU SHOULD DEFINITELY *NOT* TRY THIS AT HOME...

DYNAMITE

and the adventure was quickly finished.

The moral of this exercise is not to slate Grandad. He is O.K. but he had *too much* knowledge in these particular cases and he could not, due to this specialist knowledge, think it possible to *make use* of an artifact or article by a simple *USE ARTICLE*. Perhaps other adventurers could benefit from using this approach.

Although this was a rather primitive adventure, it can not be decried if the input required was smothered by the players specialist knowledge.

Keep it Simple — Keep it Fun...

Do not let your specialist knowledge kill the pleasure. After all, as a qualified Scuba Diver, I know that a goldfish bowl, a piece of pipe and an oxygen tank from an oxyacetylene set will never make a set of diving gear to operate underwater nor could you go diving without a companion (your Buddy) or a Shore Marshal but surely my specialist knowledge should not stop me using my imagination in creating my underwater gear (for the adventure) from the goldfish bowl, tube and tank. Not everyone knows the regulations and examinations (not to mention medical examinations) which are required in order to qualify as a Scuba Diver. But why should this be needed to play an adventure? No more than you need a degree in law to play *Jack the Ripper* or any detective adventure or a medical/chemistry qualification to play *Dr. Jeckel and Mr. Hyde.*

Keep it Simple — Keep it Fun... We all want to play!!

Footnote (for protection of my future)

Sorry Paps, I listen to your advice in all things but sometimes you lack one thing — *A Young Mind.* I still would not change you. Wills.

SynTax

SynTax is a bi-monthly disk magazine, running in colour, and it's the only diskmag dedicated to adventures, RPGs and related software and books. It contains information sections, articles, reviews, maps, solutions and hints including the popular SynTax 3-in-1 hints where you can pick subtle or sledgehammer hints. The disks build up into a useful reference collection and specially labelled disk boxes are available to keep them organised.

Originally produced for the ST, the first issue was in July '89 and an Amiga version, which runs using an emulator in an external drive (but not on the Amiga 500 Plus or the Amiga 2000, sorry) is now available. The emulator is provided free with your first disk. The ST and Amiga versions are colour-coded issue by issue. The new PC version, programmed by Graham Cluley, runs in a similar range of colours and includes Bumblebee Red and Cheese and Onion flavour!

The SynTax PD Library of adventure games, solutions and demos contains disks for the ST, Amiga and PC. They can be bought or traded one for one for contributions to the magazine on disk.

Finally, what is Brainchild? It's an innovation in adventuring brought to you by High Voltage Software, authors of Cortizone, in association with SynTax, and exclusive to SynTax readers. To find out more, order Issue 15; it's just £3.50 or £20.00 for a year's sub in the UK/Europe (£5.25/£30.00 rest of world by airmail).

Send cheques or POs payable to S. Medley to SynTax, 9 Warwick Road, Sidcup, Kent, DA14 6LJ. Don't forget to say whether you want the ST or Amiga version.

SIMON THE SORCERER: Part 1

Helplines by Ron Rainbird, played on the Amiga 500 (1 Meg)

N.B. These Helplines are NOT in any chronological order.

1. To cross Troll Bridge, get blocked-up Whistle from Barbarian. Talk to Troll, start to leave, then ask him to try to blow the whistle. The rest is satisfying to watch.
2. With the Scissors from the Wizard's house, snip the beard from the sleeping dwarf in the Inn. This will give you a disguise as a Dwarf for entering the Dwarven Mines.
3. The danger from the Smithy enables you to ring he bell outside Repulser's Tower.
4. Sow the magic beans from the yokel into the compost heap behind the Wizard's Cottage and harvest the fruit.
5. Use the Metal detector from the Woodcutter in the snow location prior to the Sleeping Giant.
6. Awaken the Giant by playing the Sousaphone.
7. At the Tree Stump, give the woodworm the wood of their choice. This is in the cellar of the Woodcutter's house
8. Outside the Goblin's Castle you can find a shopping list. Give this to the village shopkeepers. Eventually they will pack the order into a box and leave it outside their shop. Inspect the box carefully.
9. Repulser will get you into the Chocolate Truffle House.
10. Get a bucket of water from the Well outside the Witch's Cottage.
11. The box outside the Village Shop will transport you to the cellar of the Goblin's Castle.
12. Find a specimen jar and fill it with stew in the Swampling's abode. However, you will first have to eat a dishful of the obnoxious brew.
13. Search for a rope in the Smithy.
14. You can get a sticky substance by using the Beekeeper's Clothing, a Smoke Bomb and Matches, at the Beehive.
15. Below Repulser's bedroom there is a Tomb. Open it and grab hold of the loose bandage on the Mummy. You can then get the Staff of Power required by the Wizards.
16. Climb down the Vines by the Waterfall to meet Golum. Give him the bottle of Stew. Fish for a Ring.
17. To get the Sousaphone, throw a Melon at the instrument.
18. Indy Jones requires a fossil. In the snowy wastes there is a Rock which will provide one if taken to the Blacksmith.
19. Move the Chest in the Swampling's House to reveal a trapdoor. This leads to a jetty, but to repair the loose board you need a Hammer and a Nail.
20. In the cellar of the Goblin's Castle you are locked in. Look in crate for a Spellbook and get a loose sheet of paper from it. Use this with the ratbone to poke the key from the lock and open your way to further danger.

To be continued

THE DARK FOREST

Solution by Dorothy Millard, played on the C64

Notes

1) Due to the random nature of this game, it isn't possible to give a step-by-step walkthrough.

2) If your strength is getting low, type R for rest. Don't let it get below one or the game will end.

BEAR TRAP

Avoid the bear trap which is north of the clearing where you start, east of Berry Hamlet, south of the field with the well in it and west of the market square. Randomly you may find the right word to escape but it is easier to just avoid it.

OBJECTS

At random locations you will find various objects which you are asked if you wish to open. When you answer yes, you will randomly either find the items listed below or an evil orc will jump out, losing you strength.

a) Old Glass Bottle - a large cloud of smoke appears and the essence gives you new strength and life.

b) Large Oak Chest - much treasure is contained within and you are a rich man.

c) Vellum Book - contains six powerful spells.

d) Box Of Exotic Fruit - You are so tempted that you eat several, they are delicious and add to your strength.

e) Gold Locket On A Chain - has a small portrait of the beautiful Princess Caroline. It is quite valuable.

PEOPLE YOU MEET

Whether you fight or run from the following people depends entirely on your attributes and whether you are strong enough. Fight with the attribute in which you are the strongest. Sometimes you have no choice but to fight. The people are: Grendel The Hermit, Sir Rufus Of Gascony, The Black Knight, A Band Of 10 Robbers, A Ferocious Bear.

WELL

The well is random and most times you will fall in and lose money and strength. If you do succeed however, you will find a small niche is the well hiding a gold figure, the Ram Of Anag, and carved on the base is the word GRANDOS. This adds considerably to your wealth. Note: GRANDOS is an anagram of DRAGON.

WOODCUTTER'S HUT

If you have been down the well and have the gold figure the answer is DRAGON, otherwise just ignore the request for the code and type in anything. You can always go the other way round anyway.

TROLL / CAVE / THE CREATURE

When you meet the troll and are asked to guess the amount, it is usually around 50, but might be less, so start low and work your way up. You will need as much money, strength and spells as possible before entering the cave where you will meet The Creature who you will have to fight. If you win, you also win the game.

Well done. You have conquered the Dark Forest. You have outwitted your enemies, explored the forest and found The Creature. You have rid the country of a great threat and you shall be rewarded.

INNOCENT UNTIL CAUGHT

Hints and Tips from Janice Charnley, played on the PC

After the animated introduction you begin at the Spaceport where you should talk to the Customs Official. Tell him your hard luck story and he will advise you to talk to the Pawnbroker on Badside. Take the red passport from the bench and leave the Spaceport. Walk left and go into Sam's Bar in Badside. Here you should collect a pawn ticket and a jar with a lid. The jar, plus some mayonnaise, will be useful for trapping a fly.

Chewing gum from the girl in the Paradise Bar will help you get into the bank after hours, enabling you to get the blueprint. Use the blueprint when in the sewers to find the alcove which will lead you into the basement of the bank. To break through the wall, drop the mushroom and free the fly.

After completing your tasks on the planet Tayte, you will be shipped to Shmul and instructed regarding your next quest — to steal the Transatron from the research laboratory of the evil P'PauD'P'Pau. Collect the fur stole from the tourist at the Spaceport. It will come in useful for keeping the nasty dog quiet.

After leaving Shmul in an escape pod, you reach Sky City where P'PauD'P'Pau's daughter, Ruthie, is to be found again. She is willing to betray her father in order to help you. Look carefully for the crowbar in the refuelling area, as it will open a crate for you. Make sure you propose to Ruthie or you may never escape.

Add a string to your bow by being unkind to the little girl at the zoo.

Pick up the egg from the rubbish bins where the bikers meet. Man-eating plants like sausages!

To pass through the laser beams in the bank vault, you'll need to obtain something from the Desk Sergeant at the Police Station.

In prison, sit on the bed and help will arrive.

During your flight to Shmul, give flowers to the newly-weds.

When you land on Shmul, ask Narm N'Palm to get you a soldier's uniform. This will get you into the Pesearch Laboratory.

At Sky City, move a crate to uncover a secret passage. When you get the gas and balloons, you'll be able to rise above your problems!

Answer to Jean's Joke

A PARACHUTE

[Sigh… I knew I never should have put all these jokes in the Christmas Issue.]

THE TEST (Micronet 800)

Solution by William McCole & J.G.Johnston, Maze by William McCole, played on the Spectrum

[1] GET MIRROR, GET JAR, NORTH, SOUTHWEST, GET NET, NORTH, EAST, EAST, NORTH, EAST, NET GLOWFLIES, PUT GLOWFLIES IN JAR, DROP NET, WEST, SOUTH, EAST, REFLECT FORCEFIELD, SOUTH, GET GREEN KEY, NORTH, WEST, WEST, NORTH, UNLOCK DOOR, OPEN DOOR, NORTH.

[2] DROP JAR, GET MATCH, NORTHEAST, ENTER COTTAGE, LIGHT MATCH, LIGHT FIRE, (Old lady gives knife), LEAVE COTTAGE (Do not use LEAVE on its own as a BUG will move you to location 59 and you cannot complete the adventure), NORTHWEST, BOARD BOAT, CUT ROPE (Boat goes to island), GET RED KEY (A bridge appears), WEST, NORTH, UNLOCK DOOR, OPEN DOOR, WEST.

THE MAZE

N, NW, N, N, SE, N, NE, N

| 91 | S. End Large Deep Valley |

| 89 | South To Tunnels |

88	Rock strewn Tunnels
90	Large Tunnels
87	Long Winding Narrow Tunnels

84	Narrow Tunnels
85	Narrow Winding Tunnels
86	Wide Tunnels

81	Fairly Straight Tunnels
82	Damp Tunnels
83	Long Straight Tunnels

78	Tunnels Go
79	Tunnels Wind
80	Long Tunnels Go

| 77 | First Tunnel |

WARNING
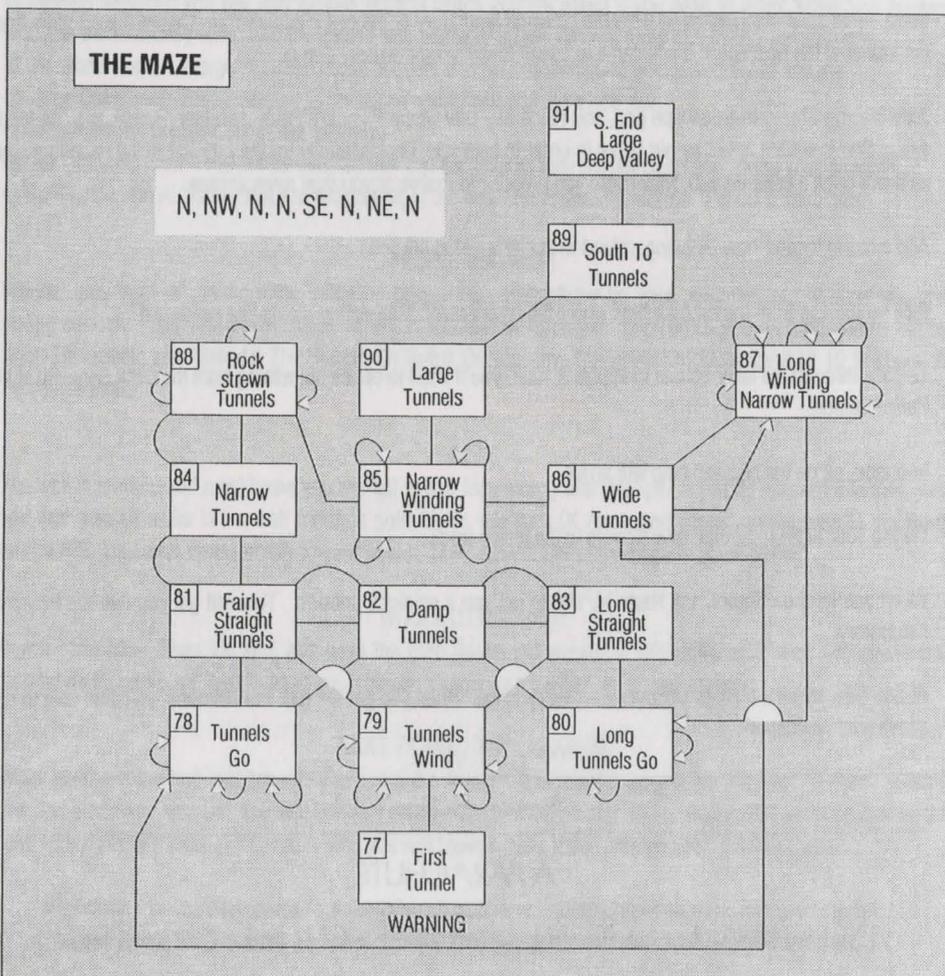
[3] WEST, SEARCH HAYSTACK, GET GOLD, EAST, NORTH, WEST, WEST, SOUTHWEST, GIVE GOLD, GET PEACH, BREAK PEACH, NORTHEAST, NORTHWEST, INSERT STONE (The bridge swings across the river), NORTH.

[4] EAST, GET SLATE, EAST, NORTH, NORTH, GET BUCKET, PUT SLATE IN BUCKET, SOUTH, SOUTH, FILL BUCKET, NORTH, NORTH, NORTH, WEST, THROW WATER, ENTER CAVE, GET ROPE, EAST, EAST, DROP BUCKET, NORTH, NORTHWEST, CLIMB TREE, DOWN, SEARCH FUNGUS, GET YELLOW KEY, UNLOCK DOOR, OPEN DOOR, EAST.

[5] EAST, EXAMINE CLOCK (Stopped at 11.45) - [Convert to 24 hour i.e. 23.45], 2345 (door opens to North), NORTH, OPEN CURTAIN, GET TIN, SOUTH, WEST, DOWN, WEST, GET KNIFE, EAST, OPEN TIN, FEED DOG, NORTH.

[6] NORTHEAST, NORTHWEST, GET ROD, SOUTHEAST, WEST, NORTHWEST, SOUTH, THROW ROPE, PULL ROPE, INSERT BATTERY, NORTH, NORTHEAST, SOUTHEAST, NORTHEAST, POINT SONIC, ENTER BUILDING, GET COMPASS, SOUTHWEST, NORTHWEST, NORTH.

[7] NORTH, NORTHWEST, NORTH, NORTH, SOUTHEAST, NORTH, SOUTHEAST, NORTH, INV, DROP COMPASS, DROP ROPE, DROP KNIFE, DROP SONIC, CROSS BRIDGE (Do not be carryng anything or you will die - hence INV).

[8] WEST, NORTHWEST, GET FLINT, SOUTHEAST, EAST, EAST, NORTHEAST, GET STICK, NORTH, NORTHWEST, WEST, GET IRON, NORTH, WEST, GET RAG, WRAP STICK WITH RAG, DIP STICK IN OIL, EAST, SOUTHEAST, SOUTHEAST, SOUTH, SOUTHWEST, STRIKE FLINT, INV (to see you have source of light or STRIKE FLINT again), DOWN.

[9] SOUTHWEST, NORTHWEST, NORTHEAST, UP.

[10] DROP FLINT, DROP IRON, EAST, NORTH, GET ARMOUR, WEAR ARMOUR, SOUTH, NORTHWEST, CROSS PIT, NORTH, REMOVE ARMOUR, THROW ARMOUR, JUMP RIVER, GET ARMOUR, WEAR ARMOUR, NORTH, CROSS PIT, UP.

[11] WEST, SOUTH, GET PORTRAIT, EAST, EAST, EAST, GET SHIELD, WEST, SOUTHWEST, SOUTHWEST (SHADOWS is the answer to the question asked), SOUTH, PRESS CARVING, SOUTH, GET STATUETTE, NORTH, NORTH, NORTHEAST, NORTHEAST, SOUTH, SOUTH, WEST, SOUTHEAST, PUT SHIELD ON TABLE (to see the end message).

William has sent me the complete map for The Test, but I don't have enough space to publish it in this issue.

Readers who would like a copy can have one — just send me a request for it and a large SSAE.

Marion

ISHAR 2: A Partial Exploration Of Some Of The Islands — Part 3
by Ron Rainbird, played on the Amiga 500 (1 Meg)

Back on Irvan's Island you will find the combat much easier and, incidentally, the food cheaper. Head over to the East and wander along the cost and, with a bit of luck, you will bump into an aged Priest. His appearances will be random so keep roaming around this area until he comes into view. After a brief conversation, give him the 10,000 coins you should have brought with you, release your eagle, after which, when you look at your map, you will find that another portion has been added.

Now travel to the peninsular on the western aide of the island until you spot a Relic. When you pick it up, however, a Golem attacks and when you have beaten it, another one appears just behind you. These fights are quite tough because magic does not seem to work against them. With the Relic in your possession, go back to the Harbour and set sail for the Southern Port of Jon's Island, the recent acquisition to your map.

As soon as you arrive, put on Fur Coats *(which you should have bought from the Clothes Shop on Zack's Island. If you didn't, rush back and get one for each Party Member)*. Oh yes, you need ropes for everyone so if these are not in your possession you will find them for sale in most general stores. The Fur Coats will stop you from freezing to death, whilst attaching the ropes to each person will prevent you from falling to destruction. If you head East you will eventually find a cauldron which will enable you to mix potions. Go back and continue Westwards following the path until you come across a rhinoceros. Kill it and take the horn from its' head. Go back to the h harbour and sail for the North-west part of the island.

Land and go West until you find two giants. Killing them will put you on the path to the Living Sword. This is a good weapon in the hands of a fighting person. Go back to the coastline and head North until you can go no further. Turn left and in one of the off-shoots you will see a Priest. With the aid of the Cauldron, prepare a Humbolg potion *(see your Instruction Manual)* and give it to the Priest. In return he will add the island of Thorm to your map. Sail back to Zack' Island and make sure that you buy an Iron Shield if you have not already got one. Then get yourself ready for Thor Island.

On landing at Thorm's Island, make sure that you wear the pendant obtained from the dying woman when the game began. Prepare a Jablou Potion *(see your Manual)*, then go North at the Junction until you come to the second turning on the right when eventually you will meet a strange looking creature. Give it the Potion and be rewarded with another pendant. Go South and West and go into the huts there. Return to your landing point and head East until you find a Relic. Back to the Harbour and go North, East, North and East again until you come to a petrified Druid. Give him your Rhino Horn, then your shield *(you did bring one, I hope)* and he will enchant this item as proof against fire. Retrace your route to the crossroads and go North, East, North and West. You are now in a Maze. Keep heading West until you find yet another dead woman *(the game seems littered with unexplained female corpses)*. Around her neck is a key which, naturally, you must take. Now return to your boat and go for a short visit to Zack's Island. Go straight to the Town Hall using the key to get inside. Take the idol, go to the Temple and give the idol to the Monk. He is so grateful he gives you *(you've guessed it)* another pendant. Off to the bank, draw out at least 7,500 coins, stock up on food and set sail for Akeer's Island.

To be continued

SPY TRILOGY: Part 2
Solution by Dave Barker, played on the Spectrum

This is the REAL test where you assume the role of a Secret Agent who has evaded the guards to gain entry to premises where atomic devices are produced. Your mission is to steal the latest device, in its entirety. Guards still patrol outside on foot and another is usually stationed inside the building. Beware, this guard's patrols appear to be random. You must effect your escape before the plant resumes normal working at 8 am. Although it is dark outside you are able to explore the premises as most of the rooms are equipped with pale blue night lights. For graphics mode enter OFF or ON.

The time is midnight and you are in a reception area. Stairs lead up, a corridor goes south, a general office is to the east, the exit is west and there is an unmanned security guard's station here.

S - you are in a ground floor corridor. E - you are in a cloakroom. S - you are in an engineering workshop, you can see a sharp knife. GET KNIFE, N, E, E - you are in the quality control department, there are some matches here. GET MATCHES, W, W, N, E - you are in the office of the managing director's secretary, there is a small file here. GET FILE.

W, W - you are back in the reception area. U - you are in the upstairs corridor. N - you are in the sales office, there is a bent paper clip here. GET CLIP, S, E - you are in a changing room, you can see a notice on the wall and a cardboard box. READ NOTICE - 'For your own protection please wear safety suit in the laboratory'. EXAMINE BOX - it's tied with string. CUT STRING, DROP KNIFE, OPEN BOX - inside you see a safety suit. GET SUIT, WEAR SUIT - you are now protected from radiation.

E - you are in the radiation laboratory, there is a large trunk here, EXAMINE TRUNK - it's secured by padlocked chains and a screwed-down lid. PICK LOCK - the padlock opens and the chains fall away. UNSCREW SCREWS - you remove the screws. DROP CLIP, DROP FILE, OPEN TRUNK, GET CASE, READ LABEL - 'Contents are completely safe until starter fuse is connected'. E - you are in a general store, you can see a notice on the wall and a light bulb. GET BULB, READ NOTICE - 'For your own protection please wear safety suit in the laboratory'.

N - you are in the reference library, you can see a pen, a red folder and a desk on which can be seen a few drops of liquid. OPEN FOLDER - a sheet of paper falls out. GET PAPER, EXAMINE PAPER - it's blank! EXAMINE LIQUID - it's very pale yellow in colour. TOUCH LIQUID - it's slightly sticky. TASTE LIQUID - it's very sour!! Lemon juice? SMELL PAPER - you detect an odour of lemon. SMELL PEN - (it's that lemon smell again). W - you are in the office of the chief chemist, you can see an ignition key and a notice on the south wall. REMOVE SUIT - you remove it and let it fall to the ground. GET KEY.

W, W - you are back in the sales office, you can hear the faint sounds of footsteps coming from downstairs. S, W - you are at the end of the corridor by a pair of plain stainless steel doors. There is a button on the wall next to the doors. PRESS BUTTON - the lift doors open. W - you are in the lift, on the control panel are three buttons marked FIR, GND and GAR. PRESS GND - the doors close, the lift shudders and then the doors open. E - you are at the end of a corridor outside a lift. E, E, N, E, E - it's dark in here.

LIGHT MATCH - you are in the office of the managing director. It is well-appointed and has an exceptionally large desk. You notice a switch on the wall, some broken glass and an empty light socket. [The light from the match only lasts a few seconds.] INSERT BULB, PRESS SWITCH - the light comes on. EXAMINE GLASS - it looks like a broken light bulb! EXAMINE DESK - it has one drawer. OPEN DRAWER - inside you find a rotor arm. GET ARM, PRESS SWITCH - the light goes out.

W, W, S, S, E, E - you are in the boiler room, it's hot in here. WAIT - your wait has been worthwhile. After a few minutes you notice a change taking place on the paper. READ PAPER - you see the number 5532. W, W, N, W - you are in a ground floor corridor, passages lead west, north and east, whilst some stairs lead down. D - you are in the basement, there is a wall safe here. DIAL 5532 - the safe opens, inside is a starter fuse. DROP PAPER, DROP MATCHES, GET FUSE - U, W - you are at the end of a corridor by a lift door. PRESS BUTTON - the lift arrives. W - you are back in the lift. PRESS GAR - the doors close, the lift shudders and then the doors open. E - you are at the end of a corridor outside a lift.

E - you are in the garage, you can see a car, the closed garage doors and a switch on the wall. PRESS SWITCH - the garage doors open. ENTER CAR - there is a lever under the dashboard. PULL LEVER - the bonnet is released. W - you are back outside the car. OPEN BONNET, EXAMINE ENGINE - it looks like a part is missing. INSERT ARM - the car is now in perfect order. CLOSE BONNET, ENTER CAR - you are back inside the car. INSERT KEY, TURN KEY - the engine roars into life. DRIVE AWAY - a guard rushes into the garage but you speed away.

[This solution takes you through to about 7.30am so it can be seen that there is little time to waste.]
The code word for the next part is:- SPY.

BATTLEFORCE

Solution by Neil Currie, played on the Amiga

S, GET CARD, EXAMINE CARD, READ PLAQUE, S, S, EXAMINE SLOT, READ SIGN, INSERT CARD INSERT CARD, N, N, N, READ PAPER, N, EXAMINE TABLE, GET GUM, EXAMINE GUM, S, E, E, S, GET HANGER, EXAMINE HANGER, N, W, W, S, W, N, N, N, E, E, N, GET GUN, EXAMINE GUN, S, E, E, N, N, READ MANUAL, S, S, W, S EXAMINE COMPUTER, PRESS BUTTON, STORES 969, LOGOFF, LOOK, GET POWERPACK, EXAMINE POWERPACK, INSERT POWERPACK IN GUN, N, E, N, N, E, FIRE GUN AT BARS, I, READ FORM, N, S, S, W, S, PRESS BUTTON, SECURITY, 195, LOGOFF, N E, N, EXAMINE SHELF, BEND HANGER, CLEAR SHELF WITH HANGER, STICK GUM TO HANGER, CHEW GUM, STICK GUM TO HANGER, CLEAR SHELF WITH HANGER, LOOK, GET KEY, N, UNLOCK DOOR, N, EXAMINE SWITCH, PUSH SWITCH, S, S, S, E, N, EXAMINE PANEL, PRESS TWO, S, S, EXAMINE RADIO, S, EXAMINE HOOVER, GET HOOVER, N, E, E, E, EXAMINE CABLE, GET CABLE, W, EXAMINE BATTERY, ATTACH CABLE TO BATTERY , W ATTACH CABLE TO HOOVER, LOOK, GET FUSE , EXAMINE FUSE, W, ATTACH CABLE TO RADIO, DROP CABLE, N, N, PRESS THREE, S, S, E, GET SPACESUIT, WEAR SPACESUIT, TURN WHEEL, E, E, EXAMINE ANTENNA, INSERT FUSE, W, W, TURN WHEEL, W, N, N, PRESS TWO, S, S, GET CABLE, ATTACH CABLE TO RADIO.

SynTax Software Library

Disks cost £2.50 each unless stated otherwise, including P&P in UK/Europe. Outside these areas please add £1.00 to TOTAL cost. Cheques/POs should be made payable to Sue Medley, 9 Warwick Road, Sidcup, Kent, DA14 6LJ. PC owners, remember to say which size disks you require! ST disks which will run on the Amiga using the emulator on PD 182 are marked (AM+Em). Many of the text PCadventures will run on the ST using any PC emulator. These are a selection of the available disks including ones that have been popular over the last few months and the latest additions. A full list of disks can be obtained from Sue at the usual Sidcup address.

ST DISKS

STAC
Text/graphics unless stated
6: Wizard's Tower V1.65
8: The Payoff
89: Snatch and Crunch. Adult, text-only
94: Treasure of the New Kingdom
130: The Grimoire
175: Trials and Tribulations of an
  Apprentice Wizard
437: Operation Blue Sunrise. Shareware
438: Slayer
439: Black Dawn
463: Mysterious Realm
464: Escape From Cygnus Alpha
499: Hack. NOT the RPG
503: Obscure Naturalist. Shareware
539: Black Dawn. Adult

AGT
Text-only
38: The Adventure Game Toolkit -
  shareware v1.3
39: AGT Source Code 1 - 10 AGT
  adventures. Requires AGT disk.
  Buy both PD 38 & PD 39 for *£3.50*
245: AGTBIG - write larger games
41: A Dudley Dilemma
42: Tark
64: Star Portal
65: Susan. Adult
66: Tamoret
67: Pork
68: Son of Stagefright
72: Pork II
73: Pyramid of Muna
74: Quest for the Holy Grail
75: Sir Ramic Hobbs
76: The Battle of Philip
146: Dragon Slayer - adult
183: Disenchanted
218: Magic Mansion
223: Pyramid
225: Storms
261: Deena of Kolini and Lottery - adult
262: Betty Carlson's Big Date +

Christian Text Adventure
269: Elf's Adventure
308: Ghost Town
314: Castle of the Alchemists
318: Colossal Cave (D. Malmberg)
319: Apprentice
321: Colossal Cave (D. Gasior)
332: Fleece Quest
333: Hotel Notell
335: Rescue Of Princess Priscilla
337: Deadly Labyrinth
339: Library
341: The Lost Stone Mansion
345: The Spelunker's Tremendous
  Cave Adventure (spoof Colossal)
347: Tales of Tavisa
350: The Tomb of the Ancient Pharaohs
364: New England Gothic
365: Mop and Murder
418: Crusade
440: Droolig and the King's Gold
442: Christian Text Adventure
465: Jubilee Road
500: Oklib's Revenge. Cutback PD version
551: Helvira. Cutback PD version
572: The Detective
568: TimeSquared
569: What Personal Computer
570: What! No Low Alcohol Mineral Water
571: Murder Of Jane Krabz
572: The Detective
573: Zim Greenleaf's Laboratory
574: Space Aliens...

TADS: These TADS games,
and TADS itself, need 1 meg.
77: TADS + Ditch Day Drifter. Shareware
178: Deep Space Drifter
378: Unnkulian Underworld: the
  Unknown Unventure
379: Unnkulian Unventure II: the
  Secret of Acme
534: Alice source code

CAT
C AdventureToolkit for text games
248: CAT. Shareware, ST and PC versions.
  Needs C compiler

249: Awe-chasm. Adult
356: Everyday Adventure
STOS
93: Treasure Search + source code.
  Treasure hunt for kids.
441: Grandad and the Quest for the
  Holey Vest. Shareware. 1 meg
ADVENTURE WRITING UTILITIES
660 CAW (Text adventure Writing Utility)
RPGs and STRATEGY
5: Hack! v1.03, with ramdisk
37: DDST
127: Nethack v2.3 1 Meg
258: Mystic Well. Shareware.
  No save facility
466: Dungeonlord. 3 levels. DM-type
  game. Shareware. USA
467: Cailynvorn.
468: Omega. 1 Meg
489: Conquest. Strategy
504: Dungeon Lord
547: Caesar. Strategy
549: Chaoes. 1 Meg

ALEX VAN KAAM'S Map Disks
All D/S with slideshow program.
(AM+Em in low res.)
61: Bloodwych maps
129: Bloodwych Data Disk maps
131: Xenomorph maps
362: Knightmare maps/solution
JOHN BARNSLEY'S Game Help Disks
(AM+Em)
59: Bard's Tale 1 Game Help Disk,
  maps and text
Other RPG Help
11: Dungeon Master maps and demo of
  the DM cheat
60: Chaos Strikes Back. Maps
156: Chaos Editor and Bloodwych Editor
162: Chaos editor, Chaos hints/pix,
  Populous editor
180: A new DM dungeon
251: Five Chaos dungeons
252: Five more Chaos dungeons
253: SimCity editor, terraformer,
  cheat program and printer option

310: Captive help, maps, text. (AM+Em)
368: Sim City extra cities vol. 1 D/S
370: Sim City extra cities vol. 2 D/S
425: Captive Maps by Ivan Broad.
(AM+Em)

TALESPIN
176: Mountain, SDI and Mansion -
written by children for children
181: The Wolf and the Seven Kids -
aimed at 5-9 year olds
381: Wizard's Dungeon

UNCLASSIFIABLE!
158: Mapper - draw, save and print maps
for RPGs and text games (AM+Em)

UTILITIES
33: ST Writer Elite now v4.5. Excellent
PD word processor , saves as ASCII
403: Intro Maker - write intros for
your adventure games.

3D CONSTRUCTION KIT GAMES
461: The Maze
462: Hysula
517: Speilraum
518: West One
519: Infiltration

PC DISKS

*To simplify things from now on, it will be
assumed that PC Owners use 3.5" disks and
have a hard disk. If you don't, please check
whether or not the disks will run on your
machine.*

TEXT ADVENTURES
53: Crime, Island of Mystery, The
Haunted Mission, Nuclear Submarine
Adventure, Terror in the Ice Caverns
57: Golden Wombat of Destiny
62: Quest for Kukulklan, Under the Ice
153: Jacaranda Jim now v 4.03
157: Humbug now v 4.5, saves to
disk as well as RAM.
170: Advanced Xoru - evaluation copy.
174: Nirvana
196: McMurphy's Mansion
197: Four With Battune (Museum,
Caverns City, Battune in Wonderland
and Battune the Sailor
264: Another Lifeless Planet (and Me
with No Beer...)
273: Four More With Battune (Battune
Becomes an Actor, Crime-fighter, Goes
on Safari and Meets Sleeping Beauty)
274: Supernova by Scott Miller

283: Pirate Island, Castle of
Hornadette and Stoneville Manor
285: Fifi's Whorehouse, Softporn
Adventure (both adult only), Basic
Adventure and FunCity Adventure.
286: T-Zero. Time travel adventure
295: Alien, Dark Continent and Nebula
298: Masquerade, Escape from Maya's
Kingdom and The Thief's Adventure
375: Dunjin
414: Pork, original vers. not AGT version
417: CIA, Escape from New York
(both need Basic), IBM Adventure and
Dungeon, the original Lebling/Blank et
al adventure!
446: Mutant Invasion, Intercept and
Red Planet
469: Geneva Adventure
476: Alice in Wonderland
479: Melita Adventure
482: Perils Of Darkest Africa, Revenge
Of The Moon Goddess, Eye Of The Inca,
Explorer
520: Starship Columbus, Crypt, LBSS,
Maroon, The Adventurer's Museum.
522: Nectar Of The Gods, Paul's First
Journey.
528: Return To Colossal Cave, Rimworld
and Silver Cloud.
529: Revenge Of Xoff, Orbital Observatory
Adventure and The Other World.
530: Skylands Star
597: Secret Quest 2010, Raspion,
Drawplus, Werewolf Howls At Dawn,
Wizard's Castle (needs BASIC).
598: Deathworld, Diamond Quest,
Revenge Of The Balog, Kidnapped,
(needs BASIC)
599: Raiders, Time Traveller
600: Ghastly Manor, The Abbey, Destiny,
Derelict, Hampton Manor, Trouble At
The Quatt Wunkery.
601: Kquest, KquestII, Keys Of The
Kingdom, Yggdrasil.
602: Pizza Quest, Kingsley's Mansion.
603: Adventure Of Captain Bane, Bones
Mansion, Fellowship Of The Ring.
604: Brainscape, Wade Wars 3.

GRAPHIC ADVENTURES
385: Hugo's House Of Horrors I.
Hard Disk
430: Hugo II. Hard Disk
436: Hugo III. Hard Disk
472: Hogbear
474: One Night In Sweden. 2 disks. £3.50

477: Mystery Of The Java Star. 2 disks.
£3.50
486: Drock 1
628: Mythmaster
666: Dare To Dream (Windows and HDD)

TADS
Text Adventures
288: TADS plus Ditch Day Drifter. V 1.2
289: Deep Space Drifter
329: Uunkulian Unventure I - The
Unknown Unventure
330: Uunkulian Unventure II - The
Secret of Acme
526: High Tech Drifter and Source Code
527: The Great Archeological Race
533: Save Princeton
534: Alice Source Code
540: TADS v2.1
546: Unnkulia One-Half plus Unnkulia
Zero demo. Freeware.
605: Four Symbols (Cutback PD version)
659: Horror Of Rylvania Demo

CAT
C Adventure Toolkit
266: CAT - write your own text
adventures, needs C compiler.
357: Everyday Adventure

AGT
Text Adventures
198: AGT - write your own text
adventures. £3.50 (multiple disks)
230: Humongous Cave. Expanded
AGT Colossal. Hard Disk
237: AGT Utilities - AGTBIG, POPHINT,
PRETTY, SCRIPTER
167: Betty Carlson's Big Date
168: Deena of Kolini - adult
195: Andkara
219: Magic Mansion
224: Pyramid
226: Storms
229: Crime to the Ninth Power
265: Crusade
267: Son of Stagefright
268: Elf's Adventure
278: Quest for the Holy Grail
287: What? No Low Alcohol Mineral
Water
291: Space Aliens Laughed At
My Cardigan
307: Ghost Town
309: A Dudley Dilemma
315: Castle of the Alchemists
320: Apprentice, the Testing of a
Magical Novice
322: Colossal Cave (D. Gasior)

324: Escape From Prison Island
326: Sanity Clause
327: Cosmoserve. AGT
328: Disenchanted
338: Deadly Labyrinth
331: Fleece Quest
334: Hotel Notell
336: Rescue Of Princess Priscilla
340: Library
342: The Lost Stone Mansion
344: Sherwood. AGT. Hard Disk
346: The Spelunker's Tremendous
Cave Adventure (spoof Colossal)
348: Tales of Tavisa
349: The Multi-dimensional Thief
351: Tomb of the Ancient Pharaohs
352: Mop and Murder
363: New England Gothic
447: Pyramid Of Muna
448: Love's Fiery Rapture
449: Tark
450: Battle of Philip...
451: Der Ring Des Nibelungen
452: Susan (Adult)
453: Sir Ramic Hobbs...
454: Pork
455: Pork II
456: House of the Os
457: Star Portal
458: The Pilot
459: Fast Lane
460: Easter Egg Hunt
470: AGTAID. Easier to write AGT
adventures.
495: Odieus' Quest
496: Squynchia Adventure
497: Jubilee Road
498: Darkest Road (shareware)
501: Oklib's Revenge - cutback PD vers.
525: AGT Adventure Author
531: Wraith Blaster
535: Shades Of Grey
552: Helvera. Cutback PD version
553: The Murder Of Jane Kranz
554: The Detective
555: Cliff Diver 2: Purchased Sight
Unseen
556: The Caves Of Dyanty
556: The Lady In Green
558: Time Squared
559: The Quest For The Black Pearl
560: The Tempest
561: Reruns Again
562: A Journey Into Xanth
563: Zim Greenleaf's Laboratory

575: The Unborn One
595: 'Twas A Time Of Dread
611: Tamoret
612: The Spatent Obstruction
613: Cruising The Strip

OTHER ADVENTURE WRITING UTILITIES
394: Adventure Writer
521: Adventure Compiler/Interpreter and
game, Mugger, plus ADVSYS and
Adventure Maker.
523: Gamescape and Levy adventure
writing systems.
524: Figment
607: HIF
608: Gamescape. Version C.4
609: Gamescape Life. Version C.1
648: DC Graphic Adventure Game
Builder (for RPGs)
601: CAW (Text adventure writing utility)

AGT MASTER ADVENTURES
594: Hurry! Hurry! Hurry!
620: Sherlock Holmes

RPGs
171: Moraff's Revenge
173: Dungeons and Dragons
290: NetHack v 3
296: Vampyr - Ultima-style colour
305: PC Hack v 3.6
407: Lorrinitron. Hard Disk
408: Maze Quest
432: Realm of Harkom Vol 1, The
Axe of Fargrim. Written using the
Bard's Tale Construction Kit, needs
2MB hard disk space. 4 disks! £5.00
471: Ranadinn
473: Moraff's World
475: Camelot, RPG-ish 'board' game
for 2 players.
478: Fall Through. Text
480: Avaricus
485: Bandor, The Search for the
Storm Giant King. First in a series,
4 x 3.5" disks, £5.00. Hard Disk
487: Ancients 1: Deathwatch. VGA/Mouse
516: Moria
541: The Land
542: Dragon's Shard. Version 1
642: DND - 5 dungeons
643: DND - new versions, 5 more
dungeons
645: MAG plus C sourse code
646: Rooms Of The Abyss
647: Dragon's Shard. Version 1.8
663: Shadowkeep
665: Pits Of Angband

UTILITIES
627: Spectrum emultor for the PC

MISCELLANEOUS
292: Questmaster - design your own
Sierra-style adventures.
299: Editors for Pools of Radiance and
Bard's Tale 2 plus fixer for Bloodwych
367: SimCity extra cities volume 1
369: SimCity extra cities volume 2
422: Character editor for Eye of the
Beholder II by Hartman Game Utilities

AMIGA DISKS

TEXT and TEXT/GRAPHIC ADVENTURES
192: The Golden Fleece. Text
193: The Holy Grail. Text, 1 meg
275: Midnight Thief. Text or text/graphics
adventure by D. Thomas. 1 meg. Works
on A500+/600 but better with PD510
429: Catacombs. Icon-driven graphic adv.
508: Thrallbound. Text/graphics
509: A Night At The Top. Text
564: 6 Amigabasic adventures + World.
Text
565: Life After Death + Zut Alors! Text
566: Dark Staff + Jungle Quest.
Text/Graphics
578: Frustration. Text.
580: Rolta. Text/Graphics. 2 disks. £3.50
585: Talisman. Text/Graphics. Needs 2MB,
2 disks. £3.50
625: Storyland 2 (point & click)
626: Starbase 13 (point & click, 2 disk
set, £3.50)
653: Atlantis (graphic)
654: Box Adventure (text) + Maths
Adventure (puzzle game)
656: Exorcism (text/graphic,
2 disk set £3.50)
657: Mystery 2144AD (graphic)
658: Neighbours (mouse-driven,
2 disk set £3.50)

AGT
Text Adventures
*Unless stated otherwise, AGT games need
two drives to run, but they are gradually being
replaced with one-drive versions.*

353: AGT text adventure writing
utility. 2 drives recommended.
359: Battle of Philip...
360: Tark
361: Quest for the Holy Grail

If you have any disks suitable for inclusion in the list, please contact me. Sue.

Solutions

Send a First Class Stamp for each solution requested and a SAE. This isn't the full list, so if you don't see what you need... ask!

Elf's Adventure
Elfindor
Ellisnore Diamond
Elven Crystals
Elvira I
Elvira II
Emerald Isle
Emmanuelle
Empire Of Karn
Enchanted Cottage
Enchanted Realm I
Enchanted Realm II
Enchanter
Encounter
End Day 2240
Energem Enigma
Erik The Unready
Erik the Viking
Escape!
Escape From A.R.G.C.
Escape From Cygnus
  Alpha
Escape From Devil's
  Island
Escape From Hodgkins
  Manor
Escape From Khoshima
Escape From Magic
Escape From Pulsar 7
Escape From The
  Planet Of The Card-
  board Monsters
Escape From The Shire
Escape From Traam
Escape To Freedom
Escape To Zanuss
Escaping Habit
Espionage Island
Essex
Eternam
Eureka
Everyday Story Of A
  Seeker Of Gold
Evil Ridge
Evilution
Excalibur
Experience, The
Extricator, The
Eye, The
Eye Of Bain
Eye Of Kadath
Eye Of The Inca
Eye Of Vartan
Eye Of Zoltan
Fable (AGT)
Fabled Treasure Of
  Koosar
Faerie
Faery Tale
Fahrenheit 451
Fairly Difficult Mission
Fantasia Diamond
Fantastic Four
Fantasy World Dizzy

Farmer's Daughter
Fascination
Fast Lane
Father Of Darkness
Faust's Folly
Feasibility Experiment
Fergus Furgleton
Ferryman Awaits
Final Battle
Final Mission
Fire And Ice, The
  World Will End In...
Firelance
Firestone
Firien Wood
Fisher King
Fish!
Fistful Of Blood
  Capsules
Five On A Treasure
  Island
Flashback
Fleece Quest
Flight 191
Flight Of The Unicorn
Flint's Gold
Flook 1
Flook 2
Fool's Errand
Fool's Gold
Football Director II
Football Frenzy
For Your Thighs Only
Forest At World's End
Forest Of Evil
Forestland
Forgotten Past
Formula, The
Fortress Of Keller
Four Minutes To
  Midnight
Four Symbols
Frankenstein
Frankenstein's Legacy
Frankie Crashed On
  Jupiter
Frog Quest
From Little Acorns
From Out Of A Dark
  Night Sky
Fuddo And Slam
Funhouse (Pacific)
Future Tense
Future Wars

Galadriel In Distress
Galaxias
Gateway, The
Gateway To Karos
Gauntlet Of Meldir
Gem of Zephyrr
Gerbil Riot of '67
Ghost Town (Adv/Int.)
Ghost Town (AGT)

Ghost Town (Virgin)
Giant Adventure
Giant's Gold
Giro Quest
Gladiator
Gnome Ranger
Gobliins 1
Gobliins 2
Goblin Towers
Gods Of War
Gold Icon
Gold Or Glory
Gold Rush
Golden Apple
Golden Baton
Golden Fleece
Golden Mask
Golden Pyramid
Golden Rose
Golden Sword Of
  Bhakhor
Golden Voyage
Golden Wombat Of
  Destiny
Gordello Incident
Grail
Grail Quest
Grandad & Quest For
  The Holey Vest
Grange Hill
Grave Robbers
Great Mission
Great Million Dollar
  Jewel Heist
Great Peepingham
  Train Robbery
Great Pyramid
Greedy Dwarf
Greedy Gulch
Green Door
Gremlins
Grimoire, The
Ground Zero
Gruds In Space
Grueknapped!
Gryphon's Pearl
Guardian, The
Guild Of Thieves
Gunslinger
Gymnasium
Gypsum Caves

H.R.H.
Hacker 1
Hacker 2
Halls Of The Dwarfen
  King
Hammer Of Grimmold
Hampstead
Harvesting Moon
Hatchet Honeymoon
Haunted House
Haunted House
  (Version.B)

Haunted Mansion
Haunted Mission
  Adventure
Heart Of China
Heavy On The Majick
Helm, The
Hermitage, The
Hero Quest (Gremlin)
Hero's Quest (SSI)
Heroes Of Karn
Heroes Of The Lance
Hexagonal Museum
Hillsfar
Himalayan Oddysey
Hit
Hitch-hiker
  (Supersoft)
Hitchhiker's Guide
  (Infocom)
Hob's Hoard
Hobbit, The
Hobble Hunter
Holiday To Remember
Hollow, The
Hollywood Hijinx
Holy Grail (Jim
  McBrayne)
Homicide Hotel
Hook
Hostage
Hostage Rescue
Hotel Hell
Hound Of Shadow
House Of Orion
House Of Seven
  Gables
Hugo's House Of
  Horror
Humbug
Hunchback (Amstrad)
Hunchback (C64)
Hysula

I Dare You
Ice Station Zero
Ichor
Imagination
Impact
In Search Of Angels
In Search Of Atlantis
Inca Curse
Incredible Hulk
Indiana Jones And The
  Last Crusade
Indiana Jones And The
  Fate Of Atlantis
Inferno
Infidel
Ingrid's Back
Inner Lakes
Inspector Flukeit
Institute, The
IntoThe Mystic
Intruder Alert

Invaders from Planet X
Invasion
Invincible Island
Iron Lord
Island (Ken Bond)
Island (Crystal)
Island (Duckworth)
Island (Virgin)
Island Of Chaos
Island of Mystery
It Came From The
  Desert

Jacaranda Jim
Jack And The
  Beanstalk
Jack The Ripper
Jade Necklace
Jade Stone
Jason And The
  Argonauts
Jason And The Golden
  Fleece
Jekyll And Hyde
Jester Quest
Jewels of Babylon
Jhothamia
Jinxter
Joan Of Arc
Joe Dick. Case 1
Jolly Duplicator
Journey (Infocom)
Journey One Spring
Journey To The Centre
  Eddie Smith's Head
Journey To The Centre
  Of The Earth
Jungle Bunny

K.G.B.
Kabul Spy
Karyssia
Kayleth
Keeper, The
Kelly's Rescue
Kentilla
Key To Paradox
Key To Time
Khangrin Plans
Killing Cloud
King
King Arthur's Quest
King Solomon's Mines
King's Quest I
King's Quest II
King's Quest III
King's Quest IV
King's Quest V
Kingdom Of Hamil
Kingdom Of Klein
Kingdom Of Speldome
Knight Orc
Knight's Quest
Knightmare

(Mindscape)
Kobyashi Ag'kwo
Kobyashi Naru
Kristal, The
Kult

Labarinth
Labours Of Hercules
Labyrinth (Actavision)
Lady In Green
Lancelot
Land of the Giants
Lapis Philosophorum
Laskar's Crystals
Last Voyage Of Sinbad
Last Will and
  Testament
Leather Goddesses of
  Phobos I
Leather Goddesses of
  Phobos II
Legacy, The
Legacy For Alaric
Legend Of Apache
  Gold
Legend Of Faerghai
Legend Of Kyrandia
Legend Of The Sword
Leisure Suit Larry
Leisure Suit Larry II
Leisure Suit Larry III
Leisure Suit Larry V
Les Manley In Search
  For A King
Les Manley Lost In LA
Let Sleeping Gods Lie
Liberte
Life Term
Lifeboat
Lifeform
Lighthouse Mystery
Little Wandering Guru
Loads of Midnight
London Adventure
Loom
Loony Castle Quest
Lord of the Rings
Lords Of Midnight
Lords Of Time
Lost City
Lost Crystal
Lost Dragon
Lost In The Amazon
Lost Phirious
Lost Temple Of The
  Incas
Lost Tomb Of Ananka
Lottery
Lucifer's Realm
Ludoids
Lure Of The Temptress
Lurking Horror

Madcap Manor

Maddog Williams
Mafia Contract I
Mafia Contract II
Magic Castle
Magic Isle
Magic Mountain
Magic Shop
Magician
Magician's Apprentice
Magician's Ball
Magnetic Moon
Majik
Malice In Blunderland
Malice In Wonderland
Manhunter New York
Manhunter San
  Francisco
Maniac Mansion
Manic Badger
Mansion Quest
Mansions
Mapper
Marie Celeste
  (Atlantis)
Marooned
Martian Prisoner
Mask Of The Sun
Masquerade
Masters Of Midworld
Masters Of The
  Universe
Matchmaker
Matt Lucas
Maze
McKensie
Mean Streets
Mega Adventure
Mega Lo Mania
Mega Traveller I
Mega Traveller 2
Memory
Menagerie, The
Merhownie's Light
Merlin
Merlin's Apprentice
  (El Diablero)
Message From
  Andromeda
Methyhel
Miami Mice
Mickey's Space
  Adventure
Microdrivin'
Microfair Madness
  48k & 128k Versions
Micro-mutant
Midwinter II
Might And Magic II
Million Dollar Jewel
  Heist
Mind Forever
  Voyaging
Mindbender
Mindfighter

Mindshadow
Mindwheel
Mines Of Lithiad
Miser
Mission (J. McBrayne)
Mission Asteroid
Mission One: Project
  Volcano
Mission X
Mold I
Molesworth
Monster
Monsters Of Murdac
Moonmist
Mordon's Quest
Moreby Jewels
Moron
Mortville Manor
Motor Cycle Crazy
Mountain Palace Adv.
Mountains Of Ket
Mouseman
Mural, The
Murder At The Manor
Murder Hunt '86
Murder Hunt II '86
Murder Off Miami
Murder On The
  Waterfront
Murders In Space
Murders In Venice
Mutant
My First Adventure
Myorem
Mysterious Fairground
Mystery Funhouse
Mystery Island
Mystery Of Munroe
  Manor
Mystery Of Old
  St. Joseph
Mystery Of The Indus
  Valley
Mystery Of The Lost
  Sheep
Myth

Napoleon's
  Sandwiches
Nebula
Necris Dome
Nectar Of The Gods
Neilsen's Papers
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FEATURES

STAR ONE — The Blake's Seven Fanzine

by Tim Lomas

Oddly enough I've been let out of the PBM column for the second time in recent weeks for another review which again has absolutely nothing to do with PBM or adventures.

Coincidences abound, it's another Science Fiction thingy as well, the first edition of a *Blake's Seven* fanzine, edited by Judith Proctor (who's one of my Delenda GMs) and including a story by Andrew Kearley (who's the other Delenda GM and also wrote the Dr. Who story I've also reviewed). Maybe there's something about Delenda that attracts would be writers?

So, what will you get for your hard earned pennies?

The zine itself is 132 pages long, photocopied with a light blue card cover. The copying quality is fine, no nasty fading and a nice readable font size. I like the cover illo, it's simple and effective, it's too easy to get clever with fancy artwork which doesn't copy well. It's also well stapled, with a zine this thick it's far too easy to find that your stapler isn't big enough with the result that it starts to fall apart after ten minutes. This one has been to and from work in my panniers and stuff in a pocket on the way to a pubmeet and shows no sign of disintegration at all.

On we wander into the middle, I'll cover the artwork first then follow with the stories.

I should point out that I'm a Philistine when it comes to artwork, as far as I'm concerned it's a waste of time and simply takes up space which could be better used to provide me with more words to read. That being said the artwork in here isn't too bad, 3 out of six (neglecting the front cover) are by the same artist and they give a nice consistent feel to the work. The characters are easily recognisable and except for one slightly dodgy one (which I won't name to save the artist blushes) they're perfectly acceptable.

For the zine itself we have 7 stories from all series, one spans all of the 4 series and one is set afterwards.

The first *(Harmony)* is to put it quite bluntly weird and I have to admit I didn't enjoy it at all, fortunately it's short. The 4th is interspersed with poetry and I hate poetry so I really shouldn't knock it too hard, I didn't enjoy it but that's mainly because of the style.

The rest are all stories that I read and enjoyed reading, most of the characters get a fair whack and they all retain their characters from the series very well, A couple of cases have them acting unusually but it's done well and consistent with the storyline.

Cygnus Prime is an interesting story and the way it was written is quite fascinating, I saw it developing so it was no surprise when it appeared. Judith (the editor) and Patrick McClaughlin started throwing stuff at each other quite spontaneously on Compuserve (in the PBMgames forum) and that developed into them developing a story between them as they developed a plotline. It was quite interesting to watch in action and quite a novel way of getting a story.

Overall I enjoyed it, in any collection of stories like this there will be some that you like and some that you're not so fond of (and in this case just one which i didn't like at all), for the price (£3.50) it provides an interesting read if you're interested in *Blake's* 7 or just interested in something different.

CAPTURE THE FLAG

Reviewed by Darren Fisher, played on the PC

Imagine a game, where there are no planes, cars. tanks, ships or Aliens from the planet Zarg, no h-tech missile sites and not a huge technical manual in sight. You can't? Dismissing any game without the above is a mistake, especially with this game. It is outstanding in (a) addictiveness, (b) ease of use, (it reminds me of the gameplay of some of the most user-friendly Spectrum games), (c) amazing colour graphics and (d) the outstanding on-line help.

I had better explain what the game is about. Imagine you're back to your childhood days where you picked various friends as a team to try to capture your enemy's base, sneaking through fields, farms etc., past the *lookouts* — and remember the triumph when you conquered your it, or the anger and frustration when they capture your base. This game is based loosely on the above scenario where a flag is the base and the aim is to take it in turns to find the flag before the other side finds your flag.

Upon loading the game, you're treated with a bright colourful windows-style screen which looks stunning. In the top left hand corner are three *boxes* with headings... FILES, COMMANDS and HELP. I recommend going to HELP first as this really explains everything clearly. Once you're past the HELP stage, click on DEMO. This shows clearly what to do and is a great help.

This game can take quite a while to finish and I'm glad there is a Load/Save option. It is turn based (like a wargame) and each character has 26 turns or movement points per turn. There are 4 types of movement, ranging from running

to crawling and there is also a *Stand Still* option. Movement is restricted by rivers, mountains, forest and rocks, and each use various amounts of movement points. The strategy is to work out the best use of movement which gains you the most ground.

Each player has a vision meter and depending on where the character is, e.g. on open ground or behind a rock, this greatly changes. Any area you can't see is blacked out, gradually fading to show where you are. This is a technique used in Dune 2 and Civilization and adds to the tension!

Whenever any of your characters (Blue Team) meets any of the opposing team, depending on the position and also the movement, there is a *Tom and Jerry-style* punch-up and the one with the most stamina takes over that square — this is great to watch. The on-line help is a joy to behold as there are constant reminders of movement ratings, status and many other things which help tremendously.

Games of this calibre are rarely seen at prices like these and I can't really fault it except for a few niggles... (a) No choice of team colour — always blue. (b) You can't change the names of the characters. (c) The graphics are a bit too small.

Apart from these, if you want a change from blasting Aliens from Zarg and enjoy a game with hardly any violence then rush out and buy — it's great for adults and children (especially with the new censorship laws coming in). Enjoy.

SIM CITY 2000

Reviewed by Tim Kemp, played on the PC

The sun rises over the tall apartment buildings that form the heart of the city. Traffic starts to appear on the well thought out but overcrowded road system, while the busy airport, situated slap-bang in the middle of the richest commercial zone comes to life. The morning paper arrives with headlines telling of an uprising in Zaire, a mutant ferret on the loose, pollution concerns and a small article about Big City's oldest resident — oh yes, and a warning that the fifty-year-old power station is about to *blow*. If the headlines in the paper make for hard reading then hold on to your hat as your attention is swiftly focused on an aircraft that has just *clipped* one of the taller towers in the city, and has exploded before your very eyes, sending flaming debris into the surrounding streets! The fire brigade are dispatched to the scene and they try, with the help of the police, to stop the blaze getting out of hand, but it's too late... City Hall and much of the commercial district burns to the ground. Welcome to *SIM CITY 2000!*

Actually that scenario is not one that you'll get to see awfully quickly in the game, but it's typical of the type of surprises that await you at some stage or other. Another surprise lurking round the corner is the fact that *SIM CITY 2000* can be bought for around £25 rather than the RRP of £39.99 — if you shop around. A decent saving considering it hasn't been on the shelves that long.

So what is *SIM CITY 2000* and why is it soooo darn good? Basically it's a tarted-up version of *SIM CITY*. Everybody must know what *SIM CITY* is by now. Well SC2000 offers a few crucial improvements over its first incarnation. The biggest improvement is that it uses the PC's Super VGA graphics (SVGA) mode which basically means the images on screen are in 256

colours and are very high quality indeed. The label on the game-box actually states that you need extended video graphics array (EVGA — not to be confused with EGA) capabilities in order for the game to work. Once the lid's of the box an A5 double-sided *READ THIS FIRST* leaflet can't fail to be noticed. It tells you that SC2000 has beautiful high-resolution (640 x 480 - or higher) 256-colour graphics. This is wonderful (yes, it is), but... there are just 2 itty bitty potential problems:

1: Your computers video card must be Super VGA (there, told you so!) with at least 512k video memory. And 2: Each SVGA card that can display these great graphics works a little bit differently from the rest... Uh-oh!

Fortunately if you know what SVGA card you have installed in your PC then things are okay. The card (or computer) usually arrives complete with a set of *drivers* on disk which enables your monitor, SVGA card and computer to work in harmony. Actually, all this info is pretty much irrelevant as the SIM CITY 2000 install routine checks out the configuration you have and pops a couple of *drivers* on the disk for you — or so it says on the *read this first* sheet. It seemed to work okay on my computer without too much tampering with the basic set-up.

Aside from the requirement that you have SVGA graphics, no less important are the other specifications you need comply with — namely you must have a 386 computer with 4 Meg ram, a hard disk (naturally) and a mouse. And the faster your 386 runs the better things will be. Meet those conditions and you can progress to installing and playing the game!

After successful installation (it comes on just 2 disks) I found I couldn't get the game to run! How could the computer inform me that installation was successful and then bowl me a

googlie by telling me there was something wrong with my set-up that meant it wouldn't work. That was mainly due to the fact that although installation of the game to hard disk was no trouble, the amount of miscellaneous memory consuming items in my PC's start-up sequence caused a *not enough memory to run the game* message to appear. Now anyone who has tried to get something big or complex to run properly on their PC will know that you have to mess around with your CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT files. Having changed those important PC files on my computer many, many times in the past, and not wanting to change them again (they were already full of REM lines to tell me what did what and why), I decided to go for the option of creating a *boot* disk instead. Now a boot disk is a *bare essentials* start-up disk which basically gives you a system that *boots-up* (starts) without being cluttered with all the stuff you've been putting on your hard disk over the years. Full instructions on making a boot disk (very simple it is too) are included with the game, and that did the trick — no more *not enough memory* hassles and the game burst into life.

Okay, now that the preliminary *warnings* are out of the way, what of the game...?

After the title screen and user info (which you input when installing for the first time) screens have disappeared you can start building your City. Typically for a game so complex to install and get working it's very simple to play. The *Start New City* option on the game selection screen is the one to begin with, and a landscape on which your city will be built appears — with hills, streams, coast-line (if you like), lakes — all set out in a 3-D grid viewed from above and behind. You then get to name your city and choose which period you want to play in — 1900, 1950 or the year 2000. Your new plot of virgin earth is now fully unveiled and all the fun begins. There are literally dozens of options to try out at the start of the simulation, but the

four basics you'll need to use in order to get things moving are: 1: Creation of residential, industrial and commercial zones. 2: Creation of a transportation system (i.e. some roads). 3: The creation of a power plant. 4: Connection of all your zones to the power plant via electric cables.

In *SC2000* almost every action you take or option you use costs money. Laying cables for instance costs $2 per square on your city grid. Depending on where you've placed your various zones and power station this *wiring-up* business can cost $200 or more. Laying the foundations for your potential residents to move into costs a whole lot more - and once you click on a square on your City-plan where you want your residential zone to begin, then stretch out the area you want covered, you'll probably have spent $3000 — or more. Then you have to do the same for the commercial and industrial zones too. To begin with (assuming you go for a cheap coal-powered generating station at $4000) you'll find that out of your starting $20,000 you'll have about $5,000 left. More alarming perhaps is the fact that when you've set out your initial City-scape not a lot of interest shown in your bare plots of land. I found that the first couple of years passed without so much as a motor home rolling into town. All the while your budget is being used up on road maintenance and such like which means that your end of year budget report shows some negative figures. However, patience is a virtue (that I don't possess) and pretty soon the odd *settler* moves in. Normally small factory units appear on your industrial zones first — seizing the opportunity to take on the first workers who will start to appear in residential zones pretty soon after. This is followed by the odd building site popping up in the commercial area. A symbiotic effect then takes place, with growth becoming steady in all three zones — each zone reflects what's happening in the other zone. Pretty soon the entire starting area which you chose is a hive of

activity. Even though the graphics are small they are superbly detailed — thanks largely to the SVGA factor!

Setting the speed of the game to the slowest level is the best strategy to begin with as this allows you to peruse the options, set-up the city without interruptions from the budget statements or newspaper reports that appear, and basically get the feel of the interface. It's a simple *point-and-click-and-drag-the-mouse* affair — not quite like an adventure point and click but if you can use a mouse to move a pointer around the screen then you'll have no trouble getting to grips with this particular interface.

And there you go. That, in a nutshell, is all there is to *SIM CITY 2000*. Well, that's the basic principal behind starting the game. You then find that an incredibly subtle and engrossing simulation takes over from the basics, and you are hooked.

When your City is beginning to grow you can select a higher speed setting and watch as the zones fill up at an alarming rate. With the growth of your City comes a whole host of problems. Crime begins to be a problem. That's easily solved, just put a Police station somewhere central and that problem is solved. Police stations cost lots of money — money you may not have. You can borrow a certain amount (on a share issue) but it'll have to be paid back — with interest at some stage, though I found that if you can get a balanced situation going from the start then you don't need to borrow money. Hey, isn't that the best policy in real life too? Back to the Police... not only are stations expensive to build they cost $100 a year to maintain, and depending on your growth rate you'll almost certainly need to build another one to deal with the growing population. Do criminals never sleep?

You'll know what your citizens need in order to keep them happy by the messages that appear

in the newspapers (which you can subscribe to in order to get regular info) and also from messages that flash up in a little on-screen box. The first demand made by the population is for a Police station, quickly followed by one for a Hospital and Fire Station. Oh yes, you'll also have to provide a school too. These are the more basic type requests — reasonable ones too if you ask me. A police station helps keep crime low, Hospitals keep the population healthy... and I suppose you can guess what the Fire department is good for! Actually there's a 'peace of mind' factor that goes with having a safe neighbourhood — the kind of place where your kids can play in the park without fear. That's another early demand — a park... or even a Zoo maybe.

If you've left yourself $5000 after the initial setting up phase then all the previously mentioned items which the simulated citizens demand are within your budget — apart from the Zoo which is a luxury most people can live without for a decade or so.

At this point your popularity may start to rise, you may even make a few bucks each year — maybe even a hundred bucks. Hey, that's not bad. Hang on though, what's all this about pollution that I keep reading in the papers — 20% of the people are concerned about it. Okay, the coal power station is pretty environmentally unsound — but it's miles away from the main part of the city, so where's this pollution coming from? Take a look at those factory units that are popping up in the industrial zones. Some are warehouse type affairs, others just look strange, but the sinister ones are those with chimney stacks. Okay, so pollution is a problem. What can be done about it? Well, there's a ton of options that let you fine-tune the running of your City — one of which is the Ordinances section. Here you get to put a tick in a box next to an option called Pollution Controls. This costs money (as per usual) and when your city grows

it costs big money to keep pollution at bay. For now you may pay a mere $30 per year to help clean up the environment. It works like a dream. Pollution becomes less of a concern, your previously falling leadership rating begins to rise, as does the population who enjoy a cleaner, healthier City. The population then grows a bit more and pretty soon you are past the 2000 residents mark. The City elders reward you by giving you the option of building a house for free anywhere you like. Things are looking good. This *SIM CITY* lark is a doddle.

Oops! You spoke too soon. You notice that because you are playing it safe you have ignored the fact that the number of jobs available (via the industrial and commercial zones) remain the same while the high-rise blocks going up in your residential areas mean more people, more unemployment, more crime, more dissatisfaction with your leadership. Slums begin to appear, then become derelict buildings, they are an ugly testimony to your poor leadership and the whole place becomes less attractive to would be dwellers, consumers and workers... something must be done. So you use the last of your money to create a bigger industrial zone — remembering to wire it up and make it accessible to the residents by providing roads to and from it. You notice that a bit of life returns to your City. However the residents are parched and water shortages seem to be mentioned quite a lot. Oops! Forgot about water. It needs to be pumped around your City — several pumps (at $100 a go) should be enough. Hey presto! Growth begins at a pace once more.

Of course it's not always a case of nothing but growth and prosperity. It takes a few attempts to see what size, shape and balance of City-scape works best. Inevitably the best idea is to make the residential zone slightly bigger than the industrial zone — and at least twice the size of the commercial zone — which seems to develop the slowest of the three. Also it's a good idea to keep just one road-width (one square width on the plan grid) separating each zone. This means you'll ideally have residential areas adjacent to the industrial zone (yes, that means more pollution to control) and the commercial zone likewise one road-width from the residential (or industrial) area. Why keep them so close. Well, Sim People are a bit on the lazy side and don't like going too far to get to work. You have to try to strike a balance — remembering that your whole City cannot outgrow its physical boundaries — so keeping things tight means your city has a chance to get very big indeed. I found that working to the American-style *block* city plan worked best. By that I mean each zone is laid on a 5 x 5 block with a road separating it from the next zone — this lets traffic flow around the buildings and get to every part of your City.

So what else is there to keep you amused and on your toes? As mentioned in the intro to this review there are all manner of disasters waiting to happen. Some of these disasters are products of bad City management or planning. As an example let's take my airport. It grew very large, and the area around it grew upwards — presumably making it a bit of a problem for the air traffic to get into it. With my population at 170,000+ and hundreds of flights (theoretically) a year I get plenty of practise sending my fire-fighters into action when a plane hits a building and goes down. Still, when commerce demands an airport to boost trade then you need to build accordingly, and it just so happened that space was limited, it had to be a big airport, and, well... I'll do it better next time.

That's the beauty of *SIM CITY 2000*, you learn from your mistakes, and unless you are unlucky enough to suffer earthquakes, floods, monster attacks, fire, plane crashes, tornadoes and hurricanes (all in a short space of time) then you can easily make progress from what you learned from a badly designed City and turn

So what's bad about SIM CITY 2000. Very little! If I have a complaint then it's got to be that when things get big, or a bit of animation is taking place (planes coming in, fires spreading, roads filling with traffic etc.) then things slow down a little bit. You don't notice it too much except when it comes to selecting one of the many option icons, and then I found that I needed to press the mouse button two or three times in order to register my choice. This was especially noticeable when trying to select the Police or Fire services when dealing with an emergency. You get the report of a riot for instance, try to select the Police icon, and before you can send them to the scene the riot has taken hold. That scenario is even worse when there's a fire to deal with because the flames spread quickly — much quicker than the program wants to deal with your selection and positioning of a fire fighting team. A faster PC (faster than my 386 33mhz) would, I imagine, cope better. Still, it's a bearable niggle because the rest of the game is so enjoyable.

Not having witnessed all the things that could happen in the game so far I can only say that what I have seen to date has impressed me mightily, and has kept me coming back for more. Other more important jobs have taken a back-seat while I play at being Mayor. I think it's one of those accurate simulations that you just have to keep playing in order to see if there's anything out of place. I've noticed no bugs or quirks so far, so I guess I'll just have to keep playing till I find some. I don't think I will find any, but that's all the excuse I need to keep coming back for more.

STARBASE 13

Solution by Neil Currie, played on the Amiga

You may wish to speed up the gameplay by using the ram disk. Start the game by loading up the Starbase 13 disk. Select 'execute command' and type 'Ram:' — the ram disk icon will appear. Insert the data disc and copy it into the ram disk. Insert your Workbench disk, double click on it, select 'show all files', open the 'c' directory and copy the 'assign' command to the ram disk.

Insert the Starbase 13 disk, double click on it and select 'show all files'. Copy 'assign' from ram to the 'c' directory of the disk. (You may have to delete a file to make room, e.g. the hard drive install program or the doc file).

Choose 'execute command' and type 'assign data: ram:data'. Start the game as normal

SOLUTION

You start in a hanger. Examine the cables then walk right through the corridor into the control room. Examine the seat, the computer then talk to the computer. Shoot the camera above the display and go left. Shoot the Stingon and return to the control room. Go up the lift, walk left then enter the first door. Examine the books and the cup. Go back into the corridor and enter the second door. Shoot the Stingon and return to the control room.

Go down the lift to the power room. Examine the deep pit then go right through the corridor into the medical room. Shoot the Stingon then talk to the communicator. Go down into the laboratory, examine the box and operate it to get acid. Return to the control room.

Talk to the computer. Select 'What happened here'. 'I'm Mick Annic', '9265358'. The computer will transmit data to your ship then activate self destruct. Go down the lift to the power room and use the acid on the deep pit. Return to the hanger and walk into the shuttle.

After you land on the planet examine the mountains then walk right. You will be caught by the Stingons (painful) and put in a prison cell. Examine the wall and the force field. Take the rock from under your bed and use it on the disintegrator. Take the disintegrator from the receiver, shoot the wall and walk through the hole.

Examine the self destruct, the sign and the hatch. Walk through the service corridors until you reach the strange place. Go right through a passage the bottom right into a room full of plants. Take the stick and return to the passage. Walk through the bottom left door and use the stick to get the tooth from the green creature's cage. Return to the strange place.

Examine the wires near the door and use the tooth on the wires. Cut the red, blue and yellow wires in that order, then operate the storage unit to get a laser. Return to the room with the self destruct and shoot the hatch.

Go through the hatch then walk right and enter the first door. Examine the box closest to you and take box to get a radio. Examine the radio and try to operate it. Walk out of the room and enter the second door.

Talk to the Stingon and tell him a prisoner is loose. Take the screwdriver and use it on the laser. Use the powerpack on the radio then go to the room with the hatch.

Enter the bottom door then walk along the walkway into the tower. Quickly operate the radio then enter the lift. Take the small drill, wait for a few seconds then enter the lift. Take the door control the operate the radio to open the door. Walk through the door and operate the subspace radio there.

Walk back to the room with the hatch. Enter the far right door and continue along the passage and up the stairs and down' to a room with an open door to the right.

Go through the door and quickly use the drill on the exit. Walk through the exit to meet Dr. Sillin again, catch the shuttle back to your ship and finish the game.

SPY TRILOGY: Part 3
Solution by Dave Barker, played on the Spectrum

Your first mission! One of your colleagues has not returned from an attempt to steal a code book from an enemy detention camp and you have been given the task of succeeding where he has failed. You have managed to evade the patrolling guards outside the camp and scaled a locked gate to be inside the camp. You must find the code book and throw it from the kitchen stores window between 6.00 and 6.30 to a waiting colleague. This is the main objective of your mission, but of course final escape is also of particular interest. Hidden in the hollow of your shoe is your identity disc. You are aware of the fact that the camp is controlled by computersclosed circuit television cameras placed at strategic points. The time is 22.00 hrs.

An imposing entrance gate towers high above you, it is securely locked. The area is completely deserted.

S, S, S - you are at the south end of the courtyard. The bank of a moat is to the south. E - you are in a recreation room, there is a cue here. GET CUE, W, N - you are in the centre of the courtyard. W - you are in the computer control room, there is a Spectrum with a data recorder and a TV monitor here. A door leads south to the library but it is locked. There is also a memorandum here. GET MEMORANDUM, READ MEMORANDUM.

INFORMATION
(A) Staff changeovers will be at 7.30 and the main gate will be open from 6.15 and manned by a guard. (B) At each change-over a full physical search of all rooms will take place. (C) Surveillance monitors will be manned at all times. (D) Computer programmes will be re-written so that the codes are protected from hackers.

You hear snores from the library. EXAMINE DOOR - it has a large keyhole. EXAMINE KEYHOLE - you see the end of a key. SLIDE MEMO - you push it part way under the door in line with the keyhole. INSERT CUE - the key falls out of the lock and on to the memorandum. PULL MEMO - the key is now at your feet, GET KEY, UNLOCK DOOR - you turn the key and open the door. S - you are in the reference library, there is a guard here but he is fast asleep. You can also see a computer tape. GET TAPE, N - you are back in the computer control room.

[The next paragraph might seem confusing but all you are trying to do is mimic ZX Spectrum keyboard entry through this adventure.]

INSERT TAPE - you load the program, it's called 'SECURITY', and has loaded with an OK message. PRESS BREAK - the program listing appears on the screen, you notice the line... 2010 IF c$="????" THEN LET un=1 GO TO unlock. [Note that the number between the quotes is random.] PRESS RUN - you get the message 'Enter code number to open door to cells and workshops'. PRESS ???? [This is the random number mentioned above.] PRESS ENTER - you get the message, 'Cell block door now open. Press 9 to continue'. PRESS 9, PRESS ENTER - you get the message, 'Enter first three digits of code to lower bridge'. PRESS - ??? [This is the first three digits of the random number.] PRESS ENTER - you get the message, 'Bridge over moat now in position'.

DROP MEMO, E, S, S - you are on the north bank of the moat, the bridge to the south is in place. S, S - you are at the entrance to the cell block. The door leads south to a short corridor which has surveillance cameras mounted at shoulder height. CRAWL SOUTH - you are in the entrance hall to the cell block. There are doors to the west, north, east and south which is closed and has a notice on it. READ NOTICE - 'To Workshops and Cells'. W - you are in the prison laundry, there is a white jacket here. GET JACKET, WEAR JACKET - Hmm! you could pass for a doctor. TWIST HEEL - your identity disc falls from the false heel. GET DISC.

E, E - you are in the ante-room to the sick bay which is further east behind a closed door which also has a notice on it. READ NOTICE - it reads 'Sick Bay - Medical Staff Only'. OPEN DOOR - you enter the prison sick bay, the single patient is covered from head to foot in bandages and plaster. SHOW DISC - the patient grunts 'Cupboard' as a small key falls from his open hand. GET KEY, UNLOCK CUPBOARD - as you open the cupboard a black shoe falls out and you hear a grunt of satisfaction from the patient. GET SHOE, W - you are back in the ante-chamber. TWIST HEEL - from the false heel of the black shoe falls a piece of paper and a key card for the door to the cell block. DROP SHOE, REMOVE JACKET - you drop it on the ground. DROP DISC, GET PAPER,

GET CARD, EXAMINE CARD - it looks like a credit card but has CELL BLOCK written on it. EXAMINE PAPER - the paper looks blank but there are some indentations on it.

W - you are back in the entrance hall outside the closed south door which leads to the cell block. EXAMINE DOOR - it has a card slot. INSERT CARD - the door opens. There is a workshop to the west and a heavy door to the south. S, S, S, S - you are in a north/south corridor outside cell number 4. W - you are in the interrogation workshop, there is a pencil here. GET PENCIL, RUB PAPER - you lightly rub the pencil over the paper. READ PAPER - you can now read, 'Box on ledge in shower room, Press on to cell number 4. DROP PAPER, DROP PENCIL, E - you are back outside the heavy door. PUSH DOOR - the door opens, but only a short way. Not enough for you to get through. You will need both hands free to apply more push! THROW CUE - it lands in the room beyond just as the door closes. PUSH DOOR - you are in a gymnasium, a door to the south leads to the showers. You can see your cue and a punch bag.

GET CUE, S - you are in the shower room, you can see a large water tank and a ledge high up on one wall. EXAMINE LEDGE - there is a box on it. POKE BOX - you use the cue to push the box off the ledge. But it falls into the water tank and floats on the surface. N, DROP CUE, GET BAG, S, THROW BAG - the bag lands in the tank and the water level rises. GET BOX, N - you are back in the gym. PUSH DOOR - the door opens a short way. THROW BOX - you throw the bow into the corridor beyond just as the door closes. PUSH DOOR - you are back in the corridor, the box is lying at your feet. OPEN BOX - partial success! Out of the box falls the code book, a key card for cell 4 and a small hacksaw. GET BOOK, GET CARD, GET HACKSAW.

N - you are in a north/south corridor, cell 3 is to the east and a padlocked workshop is to the west. SAW PADLOCK - the broken padlock falls to the ground. OPEN DOOR - you are in the engineering workshop, there is a can of grease here. GET GREASE, DROP HACKSAW, E, S - you are back outside cell number 4. INSERT CARD - the cell door opens. E - you are in a damp and gloomy cell, you can see a switch on the wall and a security pass on the floor. GET PASS, PRESS SWITCH - nothing happens, but it feels loose. PULL SWITCH - the switch comes away from the wall to reveal a secret lever. PULL LEVER - it's very stiff and won't move. GREASE LEVER, PULL LEVER - a part of the east wall moves to reveal a secret room.

E - you are in the secret room, there is a shiny brass key here. GET KEY, W, W - you are back in the north/south corridor outside cell number 4. N, N, N - you are in a north/south corridor outside cell number 1. W - you are in a carpentry workshop, there is a small hammer here. DROP GREASE, GET HAMMER, E, N - you are back in the entrance hall to the cell block, to the north is the short corridor with the surveillance cameras. CRAWL NORTH - you are back outside the entrance to the cell block.

N, N, N, N, N, W - you are in the main office, there is a another door to the west. On the wall is a safe and a notice. READ NOTICE - it says, TV Surveillance Room - Authorised Personnel only. [Through the unlocked door to the west is the master TV Surveillance Room. Three guards are intently watching the monitor screens. If you open the door there is a random chance of getting caught or being able to quietly leave without being noticed.] LOCK DOOR - that should keep the guards out of the way. E, S - you are in the centre of the courtyard, there is a notice on the door to the east. READ NOTICE - it says, Dining Hall - TV Surveillance at all times. It's a good job you have locked those guards in the Surveillance Room.

OPEN DOOR - you are in the dining room, the kitchen is east. E, S - you are in a small store room, there is a small window in the east wall. BREAK WINDOW, TIME - it ought to be about 05.00 hrs, or just after. We're early! WAIT - you wait until 06.00 hrs. THROW BOOK - your colleague catches the code book and reminds you that the main gate is now open until 07.30 hrs. N, W, W - you are back in the centre of the courtyard. N - you are in the north end of the courtyard, just south of the main gate. E - you are in the staff changing room, there is a locked toilet to the east and a grey coat on the floor. GET COAT, WEAR COAT - OK! You could now pass for a guard. W - the main gate is to the north. N - the guard on duty inspects your pass and lets you continue.

CONGRATULATIONS… MISSION COMPLETED… Your training was obviously of the highest order and you can now consider yourself an EXPERIENCED AGENT.

SYNTAX LIBRARY UPDATE

PC

TEXT ADVENTURES
706: Frankenstein's Legacy + Night of the
    Walking Dead + Sea Phantom

AGT
672: Cercla
674: The Rift
675: Lost Property
677: The Game of Recovery
678: The Wizard's Castle
679: Lost in Space
680: Sir Guy Gallant
681: Ducksoup

AGT Master Games
682: The Stolen - Landmark?! - of Delos
    (HDD)
683: Space Mule
684: The Jewelled Arena
685: Oceana
686: ToHo Academy (HDD)
687: Klaustrophobia (HDD)

RPGs
692: Castle of the Winds (HDD, needs
    Windows)

OTHER ADVENTURE WRITING UTILITIES
667: Game Builder Lite + TurboPaint + sample
    game, Treasure Island

ST

AGT
690: Reporter
698: Lost in Space
699: Lost Property
700: Son of Lost Property
701: The Wizard's Castle
702: Cercla
703: Spatent Obstruction
704: The Rift
705: Ducksoup

TADS
691: Unnkulia One Half and demo of Unnkulia
    Zero

STOS Games
695: Grandad II (needs 1 meg, 2 disks, £3.50)
696: Investigation (2 disks, £3.50)

RPGs
697: Towers (needs 1 meg, or 2 meg for 2
    player game, 2 disks, £3.50)

AMIGA

3D CONSTRUCTION KIT GAMES

668: CAR + DIY + OXO

Ooh, ahrr, Miss Emily, you wants to be real careful of they 'orks, that 'ee do...Nasty, brutish short-tempered things they are...stand about this 'igh... got terrible curved beaks an' razor sharp talons as well...

Do you refer, Magwitch, to the legendary *Orc*, or are you referring in your incomprehensible Mummerset dialect to those small to medium-sized diurnal birds of prey which belong to the genus *Accipiter* otherwise known as *Hawks*? They do exhibit certain distessing character traits but then, they are *Birds of Prey*. Personally , I prefer the *Bunting*...

I used to quite enjoy it myself. but I had to give it up because of my sinuses. That an' the 'eadaches...

That would be *before* you so nobly donated your brain to science I suppose. Do not let me detain you, please return to your *elevenses*.

Thank 'ee kindly, Miss, I'll just have a mouthful of *The Cup That Cheers* before immersing myself once more in honest toil.

I was under the impression that that particular appellation was usually applied to the beverage *Tea*. You are certainly the first person I have heard apply it to *Methylated Spirits*.

However, I have better things to do . I am off now to stick lots of pins into a small but perfectly formed effigy of that bounder Fanshaw. Toodle pip...
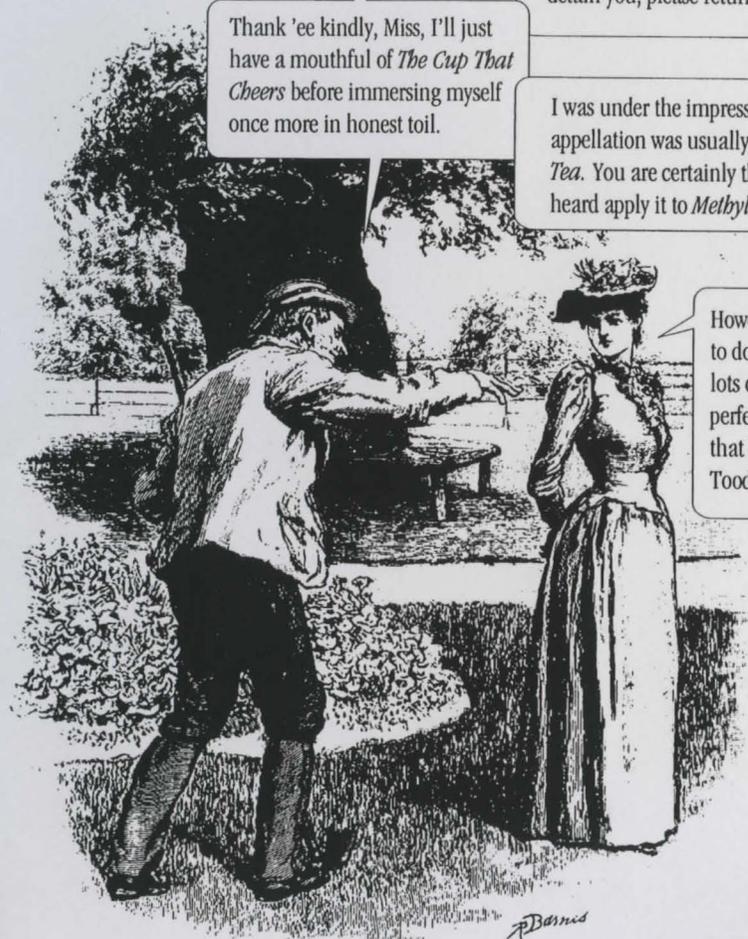
Red Herring and Syntax Adventure Helpline

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Call Sue on 081 302 6598 or write to her at
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Kent DA14 6LJ
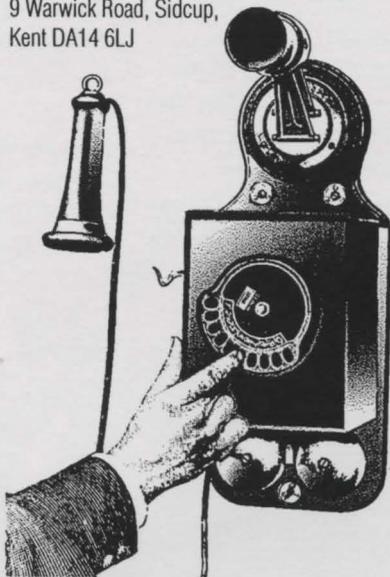
Red Herring has a number of keen adventurers
on its Helpline Team.
Your request for help will be passed
over to them for instant action
If you are writing, don't forget to enclose a SAE