



MIKE GERRARD'S

BEST OF THE INDIES

There's no doubt in my mind that many of the best adventures around at the moment are from the independent software labels, the mail-order only operations that are frequently one-man (or one-woman), businesses.

Mike

Just to illustrate this point, ZENOBI SOFTWARE gathered together SIX of these games that Mike Gerrard regards so highly and produced the compilation tape that bears the title THE BEST OF THE INDIES.

The adventures on this compilation are all GREAT games, with even the odd 'MEGA-GAME' in their midst and should provide hours of pleasure for novice and expert alike.

SIDE ONE

DOUBLE AGENT

Your starship has been sent to the planet MAREGO to help overcome a rebel invading force from a dying planet in another galaxy. The rebels brought with them a crystal source of power, which is slowly polluting the air, soil and water of MAREGO to such an extent that the planet will soon be unable to support life. Your exploration party has been captured, tortured and killed by the rebels, however two agents did manage to escape. Due to the treatment they received however, they are now incapable of original thought or action, but both still have built-in communicators and will follow simple one or two word commands issued from the control console of the mother-ship. The planet MAREGO is similar to EARTH and the secondary task of the mission was to obtain samples of rock and water for analysis and if at all possible to return with the crystal. The power of the crystal is so great that on MAREGO it must be stored under oil to reduce its effect. If it is completely exposed to the air for even a short period of time it will surely disintegrate with very disastrous results. You are also aware that one of the surviving agents is strong but does not read or speak, whilst the other is the intellectual type and fully understands the MAREGIAN language.

NOTES ... After a movement instruction to one agent, contact will transfer automatically to the other agent. If necessary individual contact can be maintained by the use of WAIT for one agent, whilst the other receives a series of instructions. Contact with the agent 'ON HOLD' can be regained by typing either "1" or "2". Use SAVE and LOAD to save a game position to tape or simply use STORE and RECALL to save a position to memory always use the former for a more permanent record. For words of more than five (5) letters it will be necessary to input at least the first five letters. As an aid to maintaining control, the colour of the input section of the panel will match that of the colour of the location area of the agent to whom you are in contact.

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ADVENTURES

SIDE ONE (Continued)

CLOUD 99

.... Last night everything seemed perfectly normal as you drank your coffee, stuffed yourself with biscuits and flicked idly through your collection of computer magazines before retiring for the night

.... but that was last night and now in the light of morning, having just awoken from a rather strange dream in which JACK FROST was up to his tricks and messing about with the 'weather-halls' on CLOUD 99, you look around and notice that your bedroom is bathed in a weird shimmering light. Being the curious soul that you are, you decide to get out of bed and investigate

Will you be able to stop JACK and his infernal messing about or will the 'weather-halls' be doomed to stay as they are? Explore the weather city of CLOUD 99 and if possible put right everything that JACK has messed up. That is if JACK will let you !!!!!

NOTES ... This game will accept such complex commands as ... DROP ALL EXCEPT THE BREAD or GIVE THE PINK KEY TO THE MAN AND THEN GO EAST or GET THE METAL KEY AND DROP THE PINK KEY or even GET THE CAKE AND CUT IT WITH THE KNIFE though the normal VERB/NOUN input will suffice in most cases. Use RAMSAVE and RAMLOAD to save a position to memory. For a more permanent record always use the standard SAVE and LOAD ROUTINES. To converse with any character that you may be fortunate enough to meet, simply input phrases such as ... SAY TO MAN "HI" or ASK BAKER "GIVE ME THE BREAD".

THE LABOURS OF HERCULES

Enter the world of legend and mythology, return to the lands of the ancient Greeks and encounter a multitude of fabulous creatures. Creatures that until now, you had only read about in books or heard of in whispered conversations.... HYDRA CEREBUS PHOLUS

Duped into killing his own wife and children, Hercules is forced by the Gods to undertake twelve (12) difficult labours ... in fact each labour was considered to be all but impossible for mere mortals, but poor Hercules had to endure all twelve. Only when they had all been completed would the Gods allow him his freedom and regard his penance done. Such was the severity of the punishment doled out by the Gods.

Assist Hercules in his task and endeavour to complete all twelve 'labours' that the Gods have set him, thereby freeing him of his penance for killing his family.

NOTES ... Commands may be either in the form of single words .. e.g. PRAY, or the standard VERB/NOUN input .. e.g. KILL HYDRA. Some commands may be shortened to single letters, such as I (Inventory), H (Help) or L (Look). Use the standard SAVE or LOAD facility in order to save a game position to tape and use the input SCORE to display your success rate, current or otherwise. In some case there may be a response to the input of HELP but then again there might not be it all depends upon the actual task that is being undertaken.

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SIDE TWO

THE DOMES OF SHA

A long, long time ago in a far corner of the galaxy, an event was taking place that would shape the destiny of not only the tiny, dying planet of OLAXAS, but of other worlds not even born and in turn, the whole universe as we know it

Olaxas was once a thriving planet, with an economy based upon agriculture and relying heavily on the vast Yander forest for most of its needs then came the 'WAR' and the devastation that followed. No records of events from that terrible period have ever been found and even the 'Elders' can recall nothing. It is as though the past has been erased. ... the only people to survive the 'WAR' were the Sha tribe, a proud people who dwelt in the encircled valley that bore their name. The land surrounding the valley was dead and barren and for all they knew they were the only tribe left alive on Olaxas. They knew their planet was dying but some dreadful fear, that no one could explain, prevented them from leaving the valley, even though they knew that if they did not they would soon perish and die. They called this fear the 'Cold Fear' and none had been strong enough to bear its full force maybe YOU can and escape from the imprisonment of the valley in order to explore the barren lands surrounding it

NOTES ... During this game you will be in the company of a 'friendly' Mugarat named GRUNT, so pay him good heed as there are certain tasks that only he can perform. To instruct GRUNT just use the standard SAY TO GRUNT "GO NORTH" or SAY TO GRUNT "FETCH THE STICK" and as long as he understands he will carry out the required action. Always use the speech-marks ("") when indulging in conversation. The game will accept all standard commands and will also recognise RAMSAVE and RAMLOAD, so use these to store a position to memory. Always use the normal SAVE and LOAD commands to make a permanent record on tape.

THE SECRET OF LITTLE HODCOME

Discover the source of the 'EVIL' force that pervades the tiny hamlet of LITTLE HODCOME. Learn how to put a halt to its awesome powers and set the villagers free from its grasp. Find the only man who can tell you the dark secrets you will need to know to defeat the 'EVIL' and cast it from the land.

At first the thought of a nice little cottage in the country seemed very appealing, but now that you have actually arrived at the front door of the place, only to find it locked and no sign of the estate agent who promised to be there with the key, you are beginning to suspect that perhaps it was not such a good idea after all.

NOTES ... This programme will accept all the standard commands, with the addition of 'RAM SAVE' and 'RAM LOAD'. Use these in order to save a position to memory but adopt the standard SAVE or LOAD routines to enable you to make a more permanent record on tape.

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SIDE TWO (Continued)

RETARDED CREATURES AND CAVERNS

Up until now it had just been like any other day, but as soon as he saw Bulbo coming up his garden path, clutching a small brown parcel, Algernon knew that all that was about to change and he began to wish that he had gone to the 'TROLLS versus ORCS' match after all.

Guide Algernon past the dreaded denizens of the 'caverns', utilising where necessary, all the cunning and skill of a stalwart adventurer. Do battle with immense 'creatures' and solve many intricate problems and puzzles in your search for great wealth and untold riches. Help Algernon overcome 'hungry' Dragons and negotiate dark, twisty passageways ... that is if you can ever figure out how to get into the damn castle in the first place!

P.S. Be kind to your boots and you never know your luck.

NOTES In addition to the standard commands, the game will also recognise the following STATUS will describe either Algy's current levels of abilities or that of any creature he has just encountered. CASSETTE will save a current game position to tape, whilst MEMORY will save it to RAM for instant recall. To activate the save/load routines either input SAVE or LOAD and then choose the medium you wish to use. A few 'possibly useful' phrases are ... REACH INTO THE BUCKET, CLIMB INTO THE WELL and LOOK INTO THE CHEST. Some useful abbreviations are ... Z = WAIT, X = EXAMINE, L = LOOK, as well as the usual I = INVENTORY and R = REDESCRIBE. By the way, just in case you would never have thought of it, WORN can be a very informative command.

GAME CREDITS

DOUBLE AGENT ... Tartan Software, 61 Bailie Norrie Crescent, Montrose, Angus, Scotland, DD10 9DT

THE DOMES OF SHA ... River Software, 44 Hyde Place, Aylesham, Canterbury, Kent, CT3 3AL

THE LABOURS OF HERCULES ... Terry Taylor, 20 Lee Road, Bacup, Lancashire, OL13 0EA

CLOUD 99 ... Linda Wright, 19 Briar Close, Nailsea, Bristol, BS19 1QG

THE SECRET OF LITTLE HODCOME ... Zenobi Software, 26 Spotland Tops, Cutgate, Rochdale, Lancashire, OL12 7NX

RETARDED CREATURES & CAVERNS ... Zenobi Software, 26 Spotland Tops, Cutgate, Rochdale, Lancashire, OL12 7NX

Last but not least, MIKE GERRARD for allowing us to use his 'phrase' and name.

NOTES ... Before anybody asks, some 'standard' commands are ... UP, DOWN, EXAMINE, IN, OUT, SEARCH, OPEN, CLOSE, LIFT, PULL, PUSH, TURN, TWIST, UNDO, GET, TAKE, DROP, PICK, LEAVE, ENTER, QUIT, NORTH, SOUTH, WEST, EAST, HIDE, SMASH, BREAK, KILL, ATTACK, SAY, SHOUT, YELL, LISTEN, REMOVE, HIT, RUB, LIGHT, MAKE, UNTIE, TIE, LOWER, RAISE, CHOP, CUT, SCRAPE and most of the best 'swear' words

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LAST BUT NOT LEAST

Finally, just a few well-chosen words from the man himself, bon-vivant, suspender-freak and trainee falconer EKIM DRARREG

"What can I say? You've done a magnificent job in getting together six of the classiest Spectrum adventures ever released in the 'Indie' market. They are all top quality games and were bargains when originally released, at the budget prices that all the mail-order companies are to be praised for sticking to. But now that the six are together on one tape at such a price, I don't see how anyone could fail to buy it. Except me, but then buying games is against my religion as a software reviewer. Seriously, each and every one of them is a little gem and some of them are big gems, and anyone who hasn't yet tried an 'Indie' adventure is in for a treat. If there's anyone out there who doesn't have a single one of these titles, then they're about to get a bargain of a lifetime and can I have the fiver now please, John?"

Ooops, you said you wanted comments about the individual games. Getting so excited I forgot.

DOUBLE AGENT: Tom Frost shows that there is life beyond The Quill and other utilities. He does things with the Spectrum that I thought were physically impossible Oooooer!!

CLOUD 99: I've always liked Linda Wright's games, she's a very professional adventure writer, whose games always seem to be immaculately presented which probably more than can be said for Linda.

THE LABOURS OF HERCULES: This game shows that one person working on their own in the back bedroom can still come up with an adventure that puts more expensive releases to shame. A very tricky game ... I believe even Hercules is still struggling on it.

DOMES OF SHA: I know Jack Lockerby won't mind me revealing that he'll never see 21 again, but the great thing about adventures is that they appeal to all ages, and can be written by anyone too. Jack's produced a series of first-rate games, and Domes of Sha is the perfect sample of his work. People should rush out and buy his others well, it helps supplement his pension, you know.

THE SECRET OF LITTLE HODCOME: John Wilson's first game, or at least the first one he admits to. Written when Zenobi was just a cat and not a software house, it hasn't dated and is a good introduction to adventures. When you've flexed your muscles on this, you can move on to

RETARDED CREATURES AND CAVERNS: Typical of John Wilson's wacky approach to adventure writing, this was deservedly a 'MEGA-GAME' in that mega-mag known as YOUR SINCLAIR. John's games have been compared favourably to Fergus McNeill's earlier adventures, and I'm not arguing with that."

Mike Gerrard

Zenobi Software