

## MIKE GERRARD'S

# one of our wombats is missing

All through school you had harboured this 'longing' to be a writer and the sound of names like STEINBERG, HEMINGWAY and DRARREG caused your pulse to quicken and your heart to beat faster. However it seemed that all the eloquent comments and flowery phrases that dwelt in the depths of your head could never seem to find their way down your arm and out through the end of your pen. As things stood, it looked as though you were destined to be just one more of the 'faceless-millions', plodding through life in some dead-end job. Or at least that was how it appeared until the nice little man in the 'careers office' put your name down on one of those Y.O.P.S. courses. Little did he or anybody else know just exactly what they were letting you in for ....

"Just pop along to the local zoo and give this note to the head keeper." mumbled the nice little man and so it was that you found yourself employed as a trainee zoo-keeper.

For the first couple of days all was fairly simple and you had nothing more taxing to do than to read through your copy of "Animal Recognition". A small paper-back containing numerous pictures of animals, each with a few well-chosen words to assist you in finding out just which animal was which ... no easy task for somebody who had never escalated beyond the 'three bees in a jam-jar' stage of animal husbandry. However most of the pictures were clearly printed and suitably labelled, apart from something on page 79b and that was probably not very important anyway. The one for the Polar Bear caused you to snigger when you read it because it stated that, despite all rumours to the contrary, the Polar Bear did NOT spend all its time perched on a gigantic see-through mint! However you kept finding yourself drawn back to the emptiness of page 79b and the one word boldly printed across the top of the page .... WOMBAT .... what was one of them and would you ever see one?

So it was that the head keeper approached you and with a gentle grin on his face said .. "Time to earn your keep my young friend, no more studying the pictures for you!" With that he donned his overcoat and headed for the door. "I'm off now, but before you go home just take a trip around the zoo and make sure that nothing has escaped."

NOTES

When loading this game will all +2 and +3 owners please ensure that they select '48k Basic' and then type LOAD "" and press ENTER.

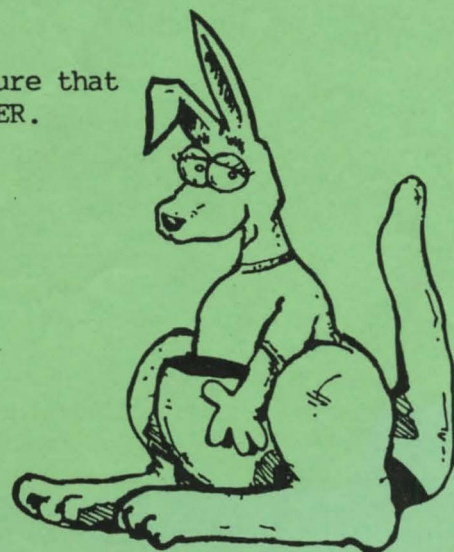
Use the commands CASSETTE and MEMORY to store a game 'position'. Cassette will store that position to TAPE, whilst memory will store it into RAM.

Always use CASSETTE to make a permanent record of your progress.

Some useful abbreviations are ... Z = WAIT, L = LOOK, R = REDSCRIBE, X = EXAMINE, I = INVENTORY.

HINTS

Be kind, generous and above all patient and remember that the best place for fish is on a plate beside some nice crispy chips. Bored, then type in some names.



*"I ain't got it .... honest!"*



With his feet firmly planted on the kitchen table and a steaming hot mug of coffee gripped tightly in his left hand, Balrog was attempting to remove a large wad of bluish-grey fluff from the depths of his belly-button, with the aid of the bread-knife, when the rattle of the letter-box shattered the early morning silence. The sudden noise startled Balrog, causing him to swing downwards with the knife and almost sever his 'pride and joy' from his body, but luckily enough the knife hit the large safety-pin that was holding his flies together and glanced off to safety. "Whoops!" he cried, "that was a close escape, Mrs Balrog would never have forgiven me if I had spilt blood on the carpet." Then shuffling towards the open door, he went to see what great joys awaited him on the mat beneath the letter-box.

As he entered the hallway he noticed a large pile of assorted envelopes and right in the middle of them was a small brown jiffy-bag. "Hmm" he thought, "wonder what that can be?" and reaching down he seized the bag in his right hand and shook it vigorously. "Can't be a faulty tape because everybody knows that Balrogs use only the BEST quality tapes" he mumbled, before taking a large slurp of coffee. It is surprising just how difficult it is to drink coffee with your tongue in your cheek, but it was a trick that Balrog had learnt at a very early age and one he was most proficient at. Deftly tearing open the package, Balrog was surprised to see that it was a tape but when he turned it over he was relieved to see that it was a copy of 'ONE OF OUR WOMBATS IS MISSING' ... a game often talked about in quite whispers and hushed tones but never before seen in real life. "Hey this is that game that old Ekim has been blabbing about in the pages of YOUR UNFAIR for the past decade or so, he must have finally finished writing it" and with that Balrog shambled upstairs to try out the tape.

As the tape-deck whirred and Balrog's old telly flashed and hissed, Balrog sat reading the leaflet that had come with the game .... "You play the part of a young apprentice Zoo-Keeper, who is sent out one day to ensure that all the animals have been safely locked up in their cages and that all the visitors have gone home. However to the young apprentice's surprise one of the cage doors is ajar and the cage totally empty. Your task is to discover what is missing and if possible, return it to the cage."

"Sounds a simple enough task to me" grunted Balrog switching off the tape-deck and adjusting his nether regions to make himself more comfortable. "Now what is missing I wonder" thought Balrog, quite oblivious of the 'subtle' clue in the title of the game. For the next hour or so silence reigned in the Balrog abode, with only the odd cry of "Where is that bleedin' wombat!" or "Well which key does unlock that soddin' door then?" as Balrog attempted to probe the inner workings of the game and locate the object of his search. He spent ages chasing a small cockroach, met a very talkative bird and hung around in the oddest places just waiting to see what would turn up. Despite having come across a multitude of locked doors and red-herrings, Balrog was thoroughly engrossed in the game and it was not until he heard the cry of "You lazy old sod! What have you been doing all day?" that he realised just what time it was and slowly trundled downstairs to be met by an irate Mrs Balrog. "Here I am" she cried, "returning from a hard day at the office and what do I find? The breakfast dishes still in the sink and the bread-knife sticking in the carpet. By the way, what is the large wad of bluish-grey fluff that is lying on the kitchen table?" Balrog lowered his head and headed for the safety of the little hut at the bottom of the garden, his mind full of Toucans, Elephants and Spectacled Bears. "Damn good job there is a 'save' routine in that game, I will be able to get back to playing it when the old battleaxe goes to her W.I. meeting tonight. After all it is a great little game and one that is well worth playing through to the end. It is a bit like a Balrog's 'pride and joy' ... not too big and just hard enough to cause you enough pain in the parts that others don't always reach!"

To the sceptical amongst you who may just think that Balrog might be a shade prejudiced in his comments, all that can be said is ... 'Buy it and try it!'

Balrogian Rating ..... "MORE ENJOYABLE THAN A GREEN CHEESE SANDWICH"