SNOWBALL

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"The Level 9 Adventures are superbly designed and programmed, the contents first rate. The implementation of Colossus Cave is nothing short of brilliant; rush out and buy it. While you're at it, buy their others too. Simply smashing!" - SOFT, September 83

"Of the programs reviewed here, the one that is wholly admirable is Level 9's Colossus Adventure." - Your Computer, September 83

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EDITORIAL

MICROADVENTURER (MAD for short) is designed for novice and experienced adventurers alike. It will also cover the world of computer strategy, simulations and wargames.

For those of you who have never ventured into the realm of computer adventures before, they consist of a series of intricate puzzles. The puzzles themselves are set in worlds of myth and imagination, ranging from J R R Tolkien's The Hobbit through any number of elves, dwarves and trolls, to deserted castles and vast alien space ships.

Most adventures have some central aim, either a princess to be rescued or some treasure to be collected, but much of the fun lies in exploring the world created by the programmer. Suddenly, you are confronted by wizards, vampires, dragons and perhaps even the fabled Medusa, whose mere glance will turn you to stone. Alternatively, you may find yourself in a world populated by Norse gods — Odin, Thor, Loki and the rest — or maybe a world where the confederacy won the civil war in the United States. But, whatever form the particular adventure takes, sooner or later you will be faced with problems to which there are no obvious answers. You may find your progress blocked by a locked door. Perhaps there is a key hidden elsewhere, or an axe, or maybe the door really is impassable and you need to find a hidden passage in another room. The only solution is to experiment, looking for clues all the time.

There is usually a purpose behind most of the objects to be found in adventures, though there are some deliberate red herrings. A tree, for example, may enable you to see the surrounding countryside. If you climb it. Then again, chopping the tree down may expose a hollow hidden in its roots. A cave which, at first sight, appears to be empty, may contain a cellar. But, if the entrance to the cellar is barred by a leashed watch dog, you will have to decide whether to kill the dog, or make friends by giving it some food. The obvious choice of killing the dog may allow you to progress further in the adventure, until you reach a toll bridge guarded by an armed sentry. The sentry refuses to allow you to pass, making it impossible for you to complete the adventure. But, if you had fed the dog and taken it with you, the dog would have frightened the sentry away, leaving the bridge clear for you to cross.

It is almost impossible to describe the feeling of elation that results from solving a puzzle that has had you stumped for hours. The solution is often obvious, after the event, prompting cries of "But why didn't I see it before?". Adventure players are continually questioning their environment and the characters they find living in it. Things are often not quite what they seem — happy adventuring.
The ultimate adventure for the Dragon 32

Pettigrews Diary
From SHARDS Software

June 13th
At last the mysteries seem to be unfolding before me. Very soon, I sense, the ultimate secret will be mine. But also, I can sense the evil forces closing in. Every day they seem stronger. It is my duty then, to maintain this journal of events, so that it may guide he who may follow, if anything should happen......

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Letters

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Obsessed well-doers

MY FRIEND and I are obsessed by adventures and we have recently purchased Artic Adventures A-D and think we have done reasonably well with them. We have some hints that may interest others: a multi-coloured inventory will prove ENTERtaining at the port hole, and a surprise may mean a disguise.

The only adventure that we have succeeded in so far is Inca Curse in which our highest score is 3,850: treasure points 2,500, eagle 400, coins 500, chandailers 200, knives (Artic’s spelling mistake) 100, and bowl 150.

Kennith McCuller, Belfast.

Space for adventure

NOT EVERYONE uses their Beeb for education. How about reviewing some BBC adventures instead of always Vic 20 or Spectrum stuff? I would be glad to write a review if you sent me some tapes.

C McQueen, Steeple Morden, Herst.

YOUR WISH etc, etc — no other micro mag has as much space as we do for adventures, so we will be able to extend our coverage to a wider range of machines.

On the subject of reviews: the best thing to do is send us a sample 300-word review of an adventure you already have, telling us what micros you own. If we’re impressed then we’ll send you new cassettes for reviewing.

Keeping a count

HAVING SOLVED the Count on the Vic 20 in three months I was pretty fed up with my journey into adventury. I then swapped it for Adventureland and I solved that in about two weeks.

Then I realised that the number of the adventures was significant and so I next got Pirate’s Cove instead of Voodoo Castle, thinking it would take four weeks to complete. How wrong I was — I have now been trying to solve this part of the adventure for 2½ months.

In this time I have made a few discoveries: pressing the V key causes the text to scroll a lot faster, and the P key reveals something totally unusual which I suspect is a debugging aid for the programmer. This works on the Vic 20, but I don’t know about other computers.

Simon Mills, London SW12.

It’s all in the name

I WAS interested to read of problems with Tansoft’s Zodiac adventure, as I am the program’s author. The due to the safe is that the player cannot open it him/herself, but needs to get someone else to do it for him. I think that will probably be enough to go on.

On the maze in Zodiac each room in the mirror maze has a unique name, so it can be mapped. For instance, one room might be: “You are in a maze of confusing shiny mirrors” and the next: “You are still in the confusing mirror maze”. Also, you are occasionally asked if you would like to be brought out, with a slight loss of score.

I would also like to point out that there are six treasures and that, despite reports elsewhere, the ram and scorpion are not red herrings. And there are 12 signs (think about the name of the game).


Unsticking service

MAY I take this opportunity of mentioning the formation of a new mail-order software company, Adventure-Zone Software. This company sells adventure programs only, and acts as a forum for adventurers to swap ideas and hints. We also help people that are stuck (if we can!), even if they didn’t buy their programs from us.

Simon Clarke, Adventure-Zone Software, 10 Ennis Close, Harpenden, Herts.

Running away

I HAVE played a game similar to White Barrows on the MZ80K and the rule of thumb runs away may have something to do with the fact that are are open.

I also have some clues for Colossal Adventure. The vending machine needs coins and, as to where the colossal cavern is located, I think you must already be in it to find the plover room.

We are requiring specific clues to Colossal or Castle of Riddles can contact me on Micronet 302840768.

Jim Thornton, Doncaster.

Down in the dungeon

I WOULD be most grateful if you could give my daughter and I some guidance on the adventure game the Hobbit.

We have been wrestling with the tape for something over 12 weeks now, but no matter what brilliant ploy we come up with, we cannot get out of the goblin’s dungeon.

We have visited the small comfortable room, the lonely lands, the trolls’ clearing (large key), trolls’ footpath, trolls’ cave (sword and rope), Rivendell, misty mountain maze (golden key), the deep valley, Beorn’s house (food), outside the goblin’s gate, inside the goblin’s gate, a large cave with torches, a stuffy winding passage, etc, etc.

We always finish up in the goblin’s dungeon, armed with a sword, some rope, some food, Thorin (and sometimes Gandalf). After digging in the sand and prevailing upon Thorin to smash open the trap door, Thorin gets the small curious key (Thrum’s key).

We cannot reach the window. We have asked Thorin to pick up the Hobbit — and then we get stuck! Our pleas for help always result in the same cryptic reply: “A window should be no obstacle to a thief with friends.”

In order to restore some form of sanity in our household, we would be most grateful for any advice.

Peter R Feller, St. Albans.

JUDGING FROM the correspondence it prompts, the goblin’s dungeon is familiar to many. Tony Bridge is the person to write to if you need help with an adventure — he’ll be writing a regular adventure help column for this magazine, in addition to his contribution to Popular Computing Weekly. If you want to solve a problem by contacting a fellow adventurer, then adventure contact is the section you need.
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- COLOUR GENIE
- ATARI 400/800
- COMMODORE 64
- DRAGON
- ZX81
- LYNX etc.

When questioned about this epidemic, a representative of DIGITAL FANTASIA, a company who are actively involved in research and development work on Mysterious Adventures said, "There is probably no cure for TIS other than mains failure, faulty RAM chips etc. which can be at best only a temporary solution". "In the absence of a more permanent cure, I would advise TIS sufferers to submit to the Syndrome and obtain Mysterious Adventures from any sources available to them". "TIS is highly contagious and in view of the current worldwide epidemic, I would say enjoy it while you can, resistance is futile".

If you have a 48K SPECTRUM, you can obtain Mysterious Adventures direct from DIGITAL FANTASIA in any of the following dosages:

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4. ARROW OF DEATH (PART 2)
5. ESCAPE FROM PULSAR 7
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9. PERSEUS AND ANDROMEDA
10. TEN LITTLE INDIANS

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Dungeon starts to stir

DRAGON'S Dungeon has announced four new adventures for the Dragon 32.

The first is The Crystal Chalice of Quorom, a sword and sorcery text adventure of advanced difficulty. Next is The Temple of Zoren, a science fiction text adventure of intermediate difficulty. Third is Treasure Tombe, a real-time graphics adventure, and last comes Giant's Chest, a graphics adventure for young children.

All four have been written by Mike Meineck and are available on cassette. Each costs £7.95 except Giant's Castle which is £5.95.

Contact Dragon's Dungeon, PO Box 4, Ashbourne, Derbyshire, DE6 1AQ.

Blackpool lights up on CBM 64

SIRIUS Software has converted its best-selling adventure title Blade of Truth for the Atari to run on the Commodore 64.

Also, a new graphic adventure, Grads in Space, will shortly be available for the Apple II and Commodore 64. Each of the four costs £39.95.

Contact SIRIUS Software, 10364 Rockingham Drive, Sacramento, CA 95827, US.

Some of the titles are available in this country from Calisto Computers in Birmingham.

SCIENCE fiction fans will be interested to hear of a new company — Mosaic Publishing.

Mosaic will specialise in adventure games based around books by well-known SF authors. The software and book will be sold as a joint package, and the games will be for the Spectrum, BBC and Commodore 64 computers.

The first title, scheduled for early January, will be an adventure game based on Colin Kapp's Unauthodox Engineers stories — The Pen and the Dark. The Unauthodox Engineers travel the galaxy solving tricky engineering problems that nobody else can handle, and in the adventure you play the role of the book's hero Fritz Van Noon.

Harry Harrison, another science fiction author, is planning games to accompany his Stainless Steel Rat novels, and in fact is also working on a program to be released at the same time as the final of the Rat series, early in 1985.

Adventures are also planned to accompany other books short stories: Special Deliverance by Clifford D. Simak: Soldier, Ask Not, one of Gordon Dixon's Dorsai series; The Width of the World by Ian Watson; The World Thinker by Jack Vance and Technicolour Feudal, one of the Dag Fletcher stories by John Rankin. All of these titles should appear in the first half of 1984.

"The games will be adventures in the broadest sense of the word," says Mosaic's founder Vicky Carne. "Some of the titles will be of The Hobbit style, others will be more of the Dungeon and Dragons type."

To write the games the company uses freelance programmers working from schemes either developed by the books authors or by Mosaic's own designers. More than 10 programmers are currently working on the various projects.

Mosaic was formed in July 1983 by Vicky Carne. She previously worked for Sinclair Browne, the book publishing arm of Sinclair Research.

Others involved in Mosaic include computer author Tim Hartnell and Clive Allison of publishers Allison and Busby. Mosaic's titles will be distributed by John Wiley.

Scrolling through the caves

SCROLLING on the Spectrum is put to good effect on Oracle's Cave, a graphics adventure from Doria.

Your quest is to find your way through the maze of caves to defeat the monsters and claim the treasure.

PRETTY standard? Not really. The program features a split screen display. The top half is you, an animated figure, and the cave you are in. Text input in the lower screen half moves the figure into the labyrinth.

Cave the display scrolls across pixel by pixel as the figure walks. When you enter a cave with treasure or monster you can see it and in the latter case defeat it. When you climb either up or down ladders you encounter, the screen scrolls up or down as the figure climbs.

You mustn't hang around, though. As the game proceeds time is running out...

Explains Chris Dorrell, the program's author: "A game lasts for five days — computer days that is. In real time you can expect a game to last about 40 minutes."

Every time the game is played the layout of the caves and connecting passages is different. So, too, is the distribution of monsters and treasure.

The Oracle's Cave runs on the Spectrum 48K and costs £7.95. It will shortly be available from WH Smith.

November 1983 Micro Adventurer 7
On your marks for Groucho

MID-OCTOBER sees the launch of Groucho, Automata’s follow-up to Pimania.

In it you must follow Groucho all over the US picking up clues to a mystery personality. The first to discover the hidden identity wins a trip to Hollywood for two.

Those only in it for the music may delight in a new single by Lady Clair Sinelive and the Pinkmen to be found on the other side of the tape.

Groucho is for the 48K Spectrum and costs £10. Automata can be reached at 27 Highland Road, Portsmouth, Hants.

Wizard given quality graphics on the Apple

ADVENTURES on the Apple II are beginning to employ some quite fancy graphics.

Most of the companies involved are American because that is where most of the Apple are. Sir-Tech is a New York based company with one such title — Legacy of Lylgamy.

The program uses an unusual method for presenting its text and graphics. Both appear in ‘windows’ produced on-screen. Different types of display have different priorities. For example, an option asking if the player wishes to use stairs to go up or down might appear in the middle of the screens, covering part of the graphic representation of the room; the text has priority over the graphics.

However, when the player answers the question the text is removed and the missing graphics are regenerated to produce the complete picture once more.

Up to five levels of display are at times represented using advanced software techniques. Without those on Apple’s new machine — the Lisa.

Legacy of Lylgamy is the last part of the Wizard trilogy from Sir-Tech and the first to use the new windowing techniques. Available on disk at cost $39.95.

Sir-Tech is based at 5 Main Street, Ogdensburg, New York, NY 13669, USA.

Melbourne House has announced its follow-up to The Hobbit.

The new adventure, as yet unnamed, will be the first of a series based on the characters from Conan Doyle’s detective novels — Sherlock Holmes, Dr Watson and Inspector Lestrade.

The adventure is in two stages — both in the same program. In the first you, as Holmes, discover a body and need to find the clues to identify the killer. In the second you must present your evidence to Inspector Lestrade and, when he is satisfied that your evidence stands up, apprehend the culprit.

In the new adventure it is hoped to take communication with the other characters a stage further than in The Hobbit.

“The Hobbit was a unique step forward for artificial intelligence,” says Melbourne founder Fred Milgrom. “Sherlock Holmes will be another step down that road where it will be difficult to distinguish between the computer and another player.”

Dr Watson will be an invaluable helper, according to Melbourne House, but he is rather gullible — should you make an erroneous choice for the culprit he will most likely just as amazed as if you have chosen correctly.

You must use him as a foil to discuss your ideas before going to Lestrade.

Doctor Watson’s knowledge of railway timetables will be crucial to apprehending the killer.

If you make foolish deductions in your discussions with Lestrade he will become “stroppy”. If you continually bother him with ridiculous hypotheses he will even stop giving you much of his time.

“Although the plot is not based on any particular book we have tried to stick very closely to the mood of the Conan Doyle stories,” says Fred.

It is not clear if the Sherlock program will have graphics as The Hobbit does. Explains Fred: “We are not sure if we will be able to manage the more advanced graphics together with the more complicated English interpretation and character interaction routines.”

The Sherlock program is not expected to be ready until the beginning of 1984 and it will be available simultaneously for Commodore and Sinclair machines.

Franklin takes off in Fishy Business

THE second part of Salamander’s adventure trilogy for the Dragon is now available — Lost in Space.

At the end of the first program, Franklin’s Tomb, Franklin discovers and activates the matter transponder, transporting him into space for the start of the new adventure.

The final part, Fishy Business, should come out very close to Christmas. In an underwater world Franklin meets the person who sent the strange message which first set him on the trail at the beginning of Franklin’s Tomb. Fishy Business provides the final clues to resolve the mystery.

Although the trilogy will be available first for the Dragon, BBC and Oric versions of Franklin’s Tomb should now be available and versions of Lost in Space for these other two machines will follow shortly.

Each adventure in the series is supplied with an illustrated booklet and costs £9.95 — the same price for the three machines.

Looking further into the future, Salamander plans a full machine-code arcade/adventure hybrid by February next year called Rainbow Warrior.

The first of Salamander’s long-awaited Castle-Barron series of role-playing adventures is now scheduled for the end of next year.
Snowball
starts
to roll

LEVEL 9's new adventure, Snowball, is the first part of a trilogy of adventures.

In the program you wake up inside a freezer cockpit on a colony ship bound for a distant star. The ship — an asteroid of ice five miles in diameter being towed through space by a fusion-powered tug — has been hijacked. You have been put on the asteroid, unknown to the crew, just to stop this kind of thing from happening — so you have to do just that.

Snowball is available for the Spectrum, BBC, Commodore 64, Lynx, Oric and Atari machines, all priced at £9.90.

The second part of the trilogy, Return to Eden, is planned for around Christmas, with the final part aimed for Easter time — The Worm in Paradise.

Shortly before Christmas, Level 9 plans a further adventure, not part of the trilogy, called Time Lords.

Orienteering in the comfort of home

THE Forest, a new simulation game for the 48K Spectrum, will appeal to armchair orienters.

If you have always fancied the outdoor sport of orienteering, only without the physical effort involved, then this is for you.

The object of orienteering is to complete a given course through the countryside as quickly as possible, without getting lost. At the start you, and other competitors, are given the map references you have to get to, a map, and a compass.

The Spectrum version is a little different. For a start you don't need to leave your seat. A map is provided, and the Spectrum does the rest. You are given a routine to complete — about seven computer kilometres — but you can also set your own. There is also uncharted ground beyond the edges of the map.

When you are ready, off you go. As you change direction the landscape unfolds before you on the Spectrum screen.

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November 1983 Micro Adventurer 9
WHAT POSSIBLE connection could there be between a venerable scientific organisation like the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a netherworld inhabited by dwarves, unicorns and wizards?

Stumped? Well, the answer is Infocom, one of the new breed of companies revolutionising the adventure game market.

Infocom is a young company made up of young computer professionals who cut their teeth working within the hallowed walls of the MIT. It was there that they began the work that has put them among the trendsetters in adventure games.

Since going it alone Infocom has played a large part in the development of adventure games. Its first, Zork, was written for mainframe computers in 1977 in MDL, a language inspired by Lisp and developed in the early 1970s at the MIT. As the 1980s dawned, Infocom used its expertise to convert Zork to run on microcomputers.

Sentences

The company has developed software permitting adventure game players to use complete sentences rather than the standard two-word commands. These games are known as the Interlogic Series. They include the Zork trilogy, Starcross (a galactic adventure game), Suspended (a sortie into the twilight world of cryogenic suspension), Planetfall (a light-hearted look at science fiction), Deadline and The Witness (both murder mysteries).

The games, which require 32K primary memory and a disk drive, are compatible with the Apple II, Atari micros, the Commodore 64, CP/M systems, DEC's, Rainbow and RT-11, IBM Bit, NEC's APC and PC-8000, the Osborne I, Texas Instruments' Professional and Tandy's TRS-80 Models I and II.

In Zork I the Great Underground Empire confronts players with predicaments ranging from the mystical to the macabre, as they strive to discover the 20 treasures of Zork and escape with their lives. Zork II takes players into new depths of this subterranean realm where they will meet the Wizard of Frobozz. And in the final game in this trilogy, players encounter the Dungeon Master himself, who holds their destiny in the balance.

Initiation

Deadline, an interactive mystery, is an initiation into real-life adventures. Players are pitted against a 12-hour time limit to solve a murder case, working from an actual dossier on the crime as they try to piece together the clues.

In the science fiction adventure Starcross players are launched into the year 2186 and the depths of space where they are destined to rendezvous with a starship from the outer fringes of the galaxy and enter the ship's mysterious interior. Once inside, they will come face-to-face with other worldly beings, both helpful and harmful.

Another science fiction adventure, Suspended, takes players into the twilight world of cryogenic suspension and awakens them to the nightmarish reality of a planet in crisis. Players strategically manipulate six robots in order to solve the problems. A game board and movable game pieces are also used. Suspended comes from staff member Michael Berlyn, an established writer of science fiction books.

The Witness, a whodunit rooted in the classic mystery novels of the 1930s, is a follow-up to Deadline. It puts players on the scene of the crime, working from a clue-laden police file and battling a 12-hour time limit.

Planetfall takes a light-hearted look at science fiction. On a distant planet, the hapless player has been shipwrecked, armed with only a patrol-issue, multi-purpose scrub-brush and aided by a pliable robot companion. Players are challenged with saving the doomed and plague-stricken world while trying to keep a straight face.

The company's vice-president for product development, Marc Blank, clearly sees the Interlogic Series as a big breakthrough in the adventure game field. Writing in the January 1983 issue of Softline magazine, he said: "In the five years during which Interlogic games have been developed, the parser (the part of the program through which the player communicates with the games environment) has been continually enhanced and expanded. The impetus for that expansion has been the desire to present the player with new and challenging problems."

Opening doors

"Early on, we recognised that adjectives were important in that they allowed the existence of more than one object of the same kind. An example from Zork I is doors: in the living room are two doors, a trap door (which is initially hidden) and a wooden door. The ability to distinguish between these is vital."

"The addition of prepositions and compound verbs using prepositions (eg "Pick up", "Put down" and "Turn on") was another important turning point in the
construction of the Interlogic parser. There were two equally important reasons for this addition. In the case of prepositions, the need was compelling: “Put the knife in the trophy case”, “Swing the sword at the cyclops”, “Unlock the door with the key”, “Fire the gun at the monster”. Prepositions used in this way are vital if the verbs “Put”, “Swing”, “Unlock”, and “Fire” are to be used conveniently and logically. Compound verbs allow a great deal of flexibility. Although the verb “Look” is ubiquitous in adventure games, the additional ability to “Look inside”, “Look behind”, or “Look under” adds new possibilities.

“Deadline incorporates a more conversational (albeit limited) style for interaction with the characters. One might say, for example, “Mrs Robner, tell me about your husband.” Or “McNabb, show me the holes.” The important thing to realise is that the entire interactive basis of Deadline is predicated on the availability of a parser that allows that interaction. In the case of the Interlogic games, the need for an ever-improving interaction has consistently led to ever-improving parsers.

“A complement of additional enhancements make game playing more enjoyable; foremost among these are the ability to use multiple objects in a command, the ability to string multiple commands on one command line, the recognition of ambiguous nouns and the ability to easily clear up the ambiguity. These are all intended to save the player from time-consuming repetition,” he concluded.

The development of a programming system that allows full sentences to be used is obviously a big advantage for Infocom. But the company’s president, Joel Berez, believes Infocom has two other things in its favour.

Expertise

The first is the MIT-influenced expertise of the people working for it. “It’s the ability of these individuals that keeps Infocom in the forefront of the markets,” says Berez. “With all these talents blended together, the resulting products can offer the highest level of sophistication. By working in a stimulating environment — formerly in the lab at MIT and now at Infocom — this team has developed an advanced set of programming tools.”

The second is the versatility of the games. “Because we develop application software in a machine-independent manner, a single development effort yields software that, after only a very small amount of machine-dependent programming, will run on hardware manufactured by a number of major vendors,” says Berez.

He believes both these factors augur well for the young company. In fact, he predicts that Infocom will soon branch out from entertainment into other areas, one of which will probably be business applications.

“We have the technological base established to develop new products,” he says, “The personal computer market is growing by leaps and bounds and we plan on providing quality products for a wide spectrum of computers and end users.”
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The first born has been destroyed. The Black Crystal of Beroth has been banished. The alliance of Evil has been defeated by the armies of Lord Fendal. So ends the Third Age. Now we invite you to write your name in the history of the Fourth Age of the Third Continent.

You will meet friends and enemies, old and new, in the long awaited sequel to Volcanic Dungeon. Using high resolution graphics and combining the best qualities of "Black Crystal" and "Volcanic Dungeon", we will allow you to become part of this tale of revenge.

"The Wrath of Magra" comes as three. 48K programs on cassette, boxed with instruction manual and book detailing the history of the Third Continent and the many spells you will be using throughout the game.

NOTE: "The Wrath of Magra" is a complete adventure. You need not buy "Volcanic Dungeon" or "Black Crystal" to play it.

CARNELL SOFTWARE
North Weylands Industrial Estate, Molesey Road, Hersham, Surrey
KT12 3PL
Meet the gang . . .

Tony Bridge tells who's who in the adventure game world in this extract from his book Spectrum Adventures

THE BETTER AUTHORS employ a good deal of imagination in creating monsters, weapons, treasures and all the other paraphernalia in their adventures. But some characters tend to be regular inhabitants of these games — although familiarity should never be allowed to become contempt.

The term monsters, for our present purpose, can be applied to any character in a program that is out to do us harm — and they are not always recognisable as such. We can see distinct categories here. The classic adventure, descended from the original mainframe adventures, contains fairly passive monsters which tend to sit there, waiting for some brilliant strategem from the player to scare him away. Or we may have to avoid the monster by finding a way around him.

The evil dwarves are a notable exception in the Colossal Cavern adventures. They appear occasionally to throw a weapon at the adventurer. The first dwarf throws an axe. This must be picked up by the player and then thrown at the succeeding dwarves. They are all hurling knives, after the initial axe, but if you remember to keep retrieving the axe, you should have no trouble in surviving their attacks. In Level 9's version of the classic, an endgame is included that extends the original to some 70 new locations. And here you can really get your own back on those little dwarves! By dropping dynamite near a crowd of them, you can score many points. Incidentally, during this finishing sequence, you can also score points by saving from death a number of elves.

As played originally, on mainframe computers, the player was often the only means of seeing what was happening — so blow by blow combat in D&D style was not really feasible.

Active monsters

This leads us to the next monster category, which we find in the action games. In this category, the monsters are extremely active, and definitely out to get you! The combat system from the role playing games like Dungeons & Dragons is often used in these games, as exemplified in The Valley. And the monsters themselves, as befits the ancestry of this type of game, are of the leg-ripping, skull-crushing, heart-stopping sort. Here follows a list of some of these lovely things, along with brief details of their attributes, and origins. I've put them in a very subjective order of fiercenessomeness — so, if you meet a balrog, you would usually treat it with rather more respect than, say, an Orc.

Dwarves appear in the original mainframe classic, hurling knives and axes at the player — nuisance value only. Orcs, the jack-of-all-trades, monsters, appear in the most Tolkienish adventures. Extremely vicious and ugly creatures, in groups, and usually wielding spears or scimitars. There is an Orcish Archer in one of Level 9's games. The Waug appears in The Hobbit. Originally an extremely dangerous creature, who often accompanied Orcs on their raiding trips, the Waug doesn't seem to be active in The Hobbit. Its mission in that game appears to be lying around dead.

Animals also abound. Most programs featuring a snake do so to create a problem rather than to actively cause a player harm. Birds are often to be found at the top of mountains sitting on Gold Eggs. Find a way to frighten them off before attempting to purloin the treasure. Dragons are very frightening and powerful — do not
A gathering of the monster clan —
but the creatures needn’t follow the classic monster mould

approach unless very strong, or very sure of how to cope with it. In The Hobbit, you may need help. A kraken is a water dragon. Elementals come in four types: Air, Fire, Earth and Water. You will need magic of a sort relating to the Elemental before attempting to fight.

There’s no need to tell you how to fight vampires. Before coming across them, you should have picked up any requisites at other locations, don’t turn your nose up at the garlic. Mind vampires are a special sort — they are not after your blood.

Dogs are very lowly monsters, but often attack in packs. Only the most rudimentary of weapons are needed to fight them. Wolves are often more vicious than dogs. Only magical weapons will be of any use against werewolves.

Goblins are small, ugly creatures which delight in provoking their victims in the knees with sharp sticks. Hobgoblins are larger, more dangerous and more cunning than their more animal-like half-brothers.

A harpy is a winged creature of amazing strength and agility. A siren is a sea-faring harpy — usually found basking on rocks near the sea, singing. Rock music was never like this.

Trolls are devious, greedy, onish creatures. You’ll meet two very typical examples in The Hobbit. They don’t like the sun. Barrow Wights are ghostly apparitions which populate the Middle Earth wilderness.

Centaurs are half horse-half men, often armed with bow-and-arrow, of which they are masters. Fire imps are little, agile flames of nuisance value. A fire giant is a large, dangerous flame. The thunder lizard is one of the most potent of monsters. Only tackle it if you are well-armed with conventional weapons, and have a fair amount of dexterity. A sand worm/purple worm is extremely dangerous. The sand worm is basically a mouth with a 60-foot stomach behind it. The purple worm is similar but with eyes, and not confined to the sand.

The Minotaur is the well-known bull-like creature. As dangerous as you would expect a highly-intelligent bull on the rampage to be. The Wyvern is another winged beast — this one comes equipped with vicious fangs and claws. The Balrog is one of the most dangerous of all monsters, and often met in adventures, as typifying the whole Tolkien-esque, D&D world of fantasy. You may also have occasion to meet a Lich, so be warned — they are extremely powerful. They are former wizards who have died and brought themselves back to life to wreak havoc.

Original creations

This is, of course, only a partial list of the monsters you may expect to meet. Most adventure programs will feature some of these, and more of their own. In writing you own adventure, imagination can be the only restriction. Just about anything can be pressed into service in a game, and I have seen everything from snowmen to London double-decker buses being used as death dealing enemies.

Most programs that rely on a Dungeon & Dragon-style combat system will keep you informed of your current physical status. This may take the form of physical points, combat points, or food points. You may, indeed, be given a combination of all these, but it will be clear to you when playing, that a decision on whether or not to fight with a particular monster must be made by you, taking into account your own strength, using whatever system the program adheres to, together with your own knowledge of the monster’s own rating.

Of course, you may be given no forewarning of a monster’s presence, and thus have to fight whether you want to or not. This sort of program would be a very unfair one, and they’re not common. Most games will give you both a certain pre-knowledge of the monster’s capabilities and a method of escape should you wish to decline the challenge. You may not, though, make good your escape, if the monster is a particularly speedy one!

The sort of combat we’ve spoken about so far, with the system of strength

November 1983 Micro Adventurer
After this, other adventures will just be games...

The classic rescue adventure, with astounding program intelligence.
‘Breaks new ground’ — Dragon’s Teeth.
‘The most original and interesting’ — Your Computer.
‘The armchair caver has really come of age’ — Caves and Caving.
‘The most original role play game I have yet seen’ — Popular Computing Weekly.

DRAGON 32/48K SPECTRUM/BBC B
From software retailers nationwide, or by return of 1st class post. £5.45
< or combat points is based on the physical side of combat — that is, a few well-aimed chops at the monster's head with your broad-sword or morningstar. Many programs, however, give you the options of employing magical powers, and casting simple spells at a monster. This idea is very well-entrenched in D&D and Tunnel and Trolls, where many pages of the rulebooks are devoted to complex spells, which become ever more complex the longer you survive as a wizard.

The basic idea of a spell remains the same, however — to zap the monster with a well-aimed spell. This can take the form of a simple "SLEEP" spell which lulls out the monster for a certain amount of time, to the "CRISPIT" spell as seen in The Valley, which annihilates the thing completely. Spells of this potency require a great degree of experience to use.

Weapons

At the start of the classic adventure, you are weaponless. You have to find your own armoury during the course of the game, and it will probably consist of not much more than a short sword, or dagger, or axe — and these are usually thrown at you by the occasional passing dwarf. These weapons come in handy when dealing with the dwarves, and you'll get points for killing them, but you will probably not get much of a chance to use them against dragons, or sirens, or other monsters. No, they are to be beaten by brute force. You'll find that the Big Bad Pirate, who, every so often, rushes in to steal all your hard-won treasure and rushes out again to hide it, does so long before you can throw any axe you may also be carrying. So, we have to look elsewhere if we are to use a lot of lovely, blood-dripping swords!

Although the Dungeons and Dragons system, with its swords, maces and so on, is a fertile ground, well-used by game-writers, there are several adventure programs available for the Spectrum which may make use of more conventional weapons, including Richard Shepherd's Superspy and Transylvanian Tower. Fighting monsters with deadly weapons, however, is not really the ultimate aim of the traditional adventure game — sorry Jason, Fred and Tom of 2C! The monsters are usually protecting something, and that is usually the treasure (sometimes heavily disguised). We've finally arrived at what is without doubt the real reason for putting up with all the frustrations of playing these wonderful games.

Getting the treasure is not, however, the final story, as you have to return to a certain location to deposit the treasure and collect your points. Whilst this may seem a bit of a chore, as you will have to renegotiate all the perils on your return, there are, in most good adventures, certain routines to bypass this necessity.

Crowther and Woods wrote a certain magic word on a cave wall in their adventure — utter this at the right time (that is, when you have an armful of treasure you want to get rid of), and you'll find yourself, treasure included, back at your starting point. You may then obtain your score. Other adventure programs actually allow you to carry the treasure-repository, along with you. You may have to drop it at some point to allow you to collect treasure (or squeeze through narrow cracks in rocks) — so don't forget where you left it.

Treasures

Let's have a look at some typical treasures. And, as with my list of monsters, there will be a (rather loose) progression of potency. A helm is a boring iron sort of helmet, a silver helm is a bit better, a golden helm is quite nice, but a magic helm is more like it, although there is an even better one on offer — the Helm of Immortality.

Gemstones come as opals, diamonds of course, emeralds, topaz, lapus lazuli — you name them and you'll find them somewhere in an adventure. Rings are the boring sort, a silver ring is not bad, and even a golden ring is a bit common nowadays — every adventure seems to have one! The one found in The Hobbit is famous for having no perceivable purpose. An invisible ring doesn't look much (how could it?) but if it makes the wearer invisible too, then it is obviously useful. An invisible cloak is even better than the ring.

These last two lead us to a secondary list — of 'found' weapons. That is, weapons that the explorer will find in his travels, scattered about the caverns, rather than the sword that most adventures provide their player with at the start of the game.

A torch is a very basic weapon, useful for clearing an area of ants, frightening wolves and so on. A club is a bit of a brutal weapon, not very subtle, while a dagger is a secretive variation of sword. A Kris is just one example of exotica. The typical adventure author is extremely imaginative when it comes to dreaming up new weapons, and you can meet all sorts of devices you never knew existed. Who said these games weren't educational?

Scmitts are another bit of exotica on the face of it, but actually one of the favourite weapons of the Orcish tribe, so often met in adventures.

Meanwhile, back at the treasure: books are generally just worth points, as an artefact, but they are understood to be repositories of ancient lore, so, on opening, may increase your intelligence. But beware, they have been known to explode on opening. Gold coins are the standard currency in all the best adventures, but not as valuable as gold which is usually found in boards, and is often the objective of the adventure.

And finally, but not least, the ultimate treasure of any adventure to date. The Golden Sundial of Pi. There is only one time and place in which it is to be found, and that time may well be 1986. It is still, however, the only treasure featured in an adventure program which can actually be won by the player.
Little flair in doom

Adventure The Caverns of Doom Micro Dragon 32
Price £4.95 Format Cassette
Supplier Premier Microsystems, 208 Croydon Rd, London SE20.
PREMIER Microsystems, known to Dragon owners as the disk drive company, has moved into adventure software. The cassette arrived in a custom cassette case with scant instructions. Premier's reply to this is that you have too much away would spoil the game — fair enough.
I had a little trouble loading, the levels required seemed to be higher than usually needed. However, after a few attempts, the game was up and running.
It is a standard sort of text adventure. Your aim, I can only guess at, because you are not told in the instructions, I would imagine it is to collect as much treasure as possible in line with the classic mould of adventure games.

The game starts promisingly enough with a simple scenario and several useful objects nearby to pick up. You are told a couple of the commands in the instructions but to get anywhere in this adventure you must endeavour to build up a list of the computer's vocabulary. There is no other way to do this than by trial and error.
On moving around the game and solving a few of the puzzles along the way, I saw a few things which suggested that this adventure had been a little rushed. Several words are spelt incorrectly and three or four are cut in half by the end of a line.
The response time for most commands is around 10 seconds, but this shortcoming has prompted Premier to produce a new version which should be the one on sale when you read this. The new version has a response time of around four seconds and the screen display has been improved (I hope those little errors have been corrected too).
I have come across no graphics and at the time of writing am close to solving the adventure. The game is really for beginners, fairly simple and straightforward with a few absorbing puzzles to solve but not much to excite the experienced adventurer. At £4.95 it's fairly priced but it is lacking in flair. CG

SOFTWARE INVENTORY

What's on the way in the adventure world — if you have a new adventure, war game or real-life simulation which you are about to release send a copy and accompanying details to Software Inventory, Micro Adventurer, 12-13 Little Newport St, London WC2R 3LD

No sense in the thunder

Adventure Cavern
Adventure Micro BBC
Price £6.95 Format Cassette
Supplier Program Power, 8/8A Regent St, Chapel Allerton, Leeds.
CAVEMAN Adventure is intended as an introduction to adventuring, and is therefore not too arduous a trial. But it is well presented, and pleasant enough to play. You take on the persona of a Neanderthal man, who must overcome various hazards to reach his village. The hazards are suitably neanderthal — including stampeding buffalo, large insects and the like.
Here is my first complaint: the various "sudden deaths" resulting from a wrong direction are a bit too sudden for my liking. Early on, for example, you are told that you are hungry. In the next move, you drop dead from starvation!

One feature of the game, not mentioned in the insert, is the use of the BBC's sound. This makes the game all the more enjoyable, using white noise mainly for rivers.
Caveman has one of the best screen layouts I have seen in an adventure. A description of the location is displayed at the top of the screen, along with the title, on a coloured background. Any objects are immediately under this, against a different background. The rest of the screen is normal teletext white-on-black, and is used for commands and responses. Oddly, the program can run in Mode 4, 5 or 6.
The game has some quirks in its commands (there are 12 verbs it will accept). GET and DROP are replaced by TAKE and LEAVE, and DESCRIBE is EXAMINE. The more unusual USE is a kind of general purpose verb for objects.
There are a number of other quirks, some serious. For instance, a thunderstorm which frightens the caveman into dropping everything does not reset the inventory to zero. Instead, you are told "you cannot carry anything", even when INV responds "you are carrying nothing".
Thunderstorms apart, this is an enjoyable adventure which experienced adventurers and newcomers alike can play. MW

All aboard for war games

Adventures Conflict and Galaxy Conflict Micros ZX81, Spectrum 16K, CBM 64, Atari 800, BBC B, Dragon 32
Prices £11.95 on the Sinclair machines, £14.75 on the rest. Format Cassette plus board and counters
Supplier Martech Games, 9 Dillingham Rd, Eastbourne, Sussex.

Both of these games are different from most adventures as a separate playing board is included with each, and consequently most of the action takes place off the computer screen itself.
The games come in fairly large boxes by computer game standards, and look like ordinary board games at first glance. Indeed, once the box is opened the similarity continues, until you notice that among the board, counters and other paraphernalia there is a cassette tape.
On one side of the tape is recorded a program for the ZX81, and on the other a program for the ZX Spectrum. The appropriate program for the players' computer has to be loaded before the game can start. Both games are twoplayer only, so you will have to grab a sibling, spouse or gullible friend as well.
Conflict, the first game, is set in the present or near future, and is a war between two countries. Each player is in control of the resources of one country, and the winner is the first to march an army into his opponent's city. As an alternative, if time is limited, both players can agree on a number of moves after which the game will end.
Most of the game is spent...
Revolution on The Quill

Adventure The Quill
Micro Spectrum 48K
Price £14.95 Format Cassette
Supplier Gilsof, 30 Hawthorn Rd, Barry, South Glamorgan.

Giboff will allow the writer to sell the resulting adventure — all it asks is that it be given a mention.

Although programs resembling this one have been available before (such as Crystal Computing's Dungeon Master), these have been aids to Dungeon and Dragon-type play-board creators, and not aids to writing complex and difficult adventures. With The Quill, anyone can sit down, let their imagination run riot and fashion satisfying programs. Admittedly, many attempts will be rather reticuous — for a start, graphics are not supported, although UDGeS are catered for.

Such an important program really needs more space devoted to it than I have here, and next month, Micro Adventurer will be looking in depth at The Quill.

the movement allowed, objects to be found, special conditions (for example, the player must GET the lamp before being allowed to switch it on), and all the other parameters of a good adventure. The finished framework may then be tested, and amended if necessary.

trying to earn the money necessary to purchase and maintain army units (mercenaries?). This can be done by dealing on the stock market, surveying and drilling for oil, and pirating neutral ships carrying precious metals. At each turn the players have to decide how much of their available revenue to spend on buying shares, armies, warships, oil prospecting, etc. In this sense the game is about resources management, not unlike the other such games available on most microcomputers (eg Dictator, King, Hammurabi and Stock Market).

However, the game also has the feel of a more traditional board game, since armies, warships and the like are represented by counters which are moved around the board.

Galaxy Conflict, the second game, has a much more futuristic setting. This time each player is the leader of a fleet of battle cruisers, and the object is to defeat the enemy and become ruler of the galaxy. The game is very similar to Conflict, except that this time the limited resource is energy, and at each turn the players must decide how much of the available energy is to be used to build new cruisers, refill damaged cruisers, attack enemy planet stations, and the rest.

However, the game is not as simple as it sounds, as there are also crew to think about, who will starve unless their supplies are replenished at fairly regular intervals, and of course there is the element of the game which involves moving counters round the board, as in Conflict. Also, there is the problem of defending each planet station's mineral moons, which provide the only source of regular energy input.

The programs vary little between the Spectrum and the ZX81 versions, since only very limited use of colour and sound is made on the Spectrum versions. However, although they are not very impressive from a programming point of view, they do the job that they have to do.

However, I do have a criticism of the programs — they do not keep track of where everything on the board is. Instead this information has to be entered every time the computer requires it.

The boards themselves are very clear and well laid out. Both are divided into grids, with Conflict also being divided into regions which are identified by colour. The boards certainly have a much more professional feel to them than the programs.

However, the instructions do not receive such high praise. There seemed to be essential details missing from both sets, such as how to move the neutral ships in Conflict, and when the game actually ends in Galaxy Conflict. Still, as long as both players can agree on a convention, this needn’t actually spoil the fun.

In general, I found both these games enjoyable, and sometimes even quite intellectually taxing to play. However, rather than saying that they are computer games which also use a board, I think that it would be more accurate to say that they are board games in which a computer program replaces the dice and paper money.

Thanks for the memory

Adventure Adventureland
Micros Vic 20, Atari 400 expanded and 800
Price £9.99 on the Vic and £16.99 on the Atari for text only — graphics version on Atari disk costs £27.99

November 1983 Micro Adventurer 19
I have to 'look' at your surroundings, as if you were walking around with your eyes closed. Secondly, a lot of the treasures you just happen upon for no particular reason. It would be far better if they were hidden within a location.

If there's one thing guaranteed to get an adventurer pulling his hair out, it's locations that are laid out illogically, e.g. moving south to a new location and then finding that you have to go east to get back to where you started. No such problems with this one.

Yes, I enjoyed this adventure; it's not a five minute wonder and several problems had my wife wearing earplugs. PM

Good and bad on Kraal

**Adventure Kraal's Kingdom**
**Micro Vic 20 + 16K**
**Price £4.95 Format Cassette**
**Supplier Buniasaf, 149 Monk's Walk, Buntingford, Herts.**

KRAAL'S KINGDOM is a text adventure spread over two 16K parts, giving a full 32K worth of adventuring.

The story is, apparently, set in the Dark Ages in the kingdom of Kraal, an evil land baron. Kraal has kidnapped the princess of a neighbouring kingdom. It is the adventurer's task, as the hero, to rescue her.

In part one you have to travel around Kraal's kingdom, collecting weapons and equipment with which to defeat him and survive the traps he has set for you. This involves fighting an evil knight, smashing down barn doors and robbing a corpse of its weapons, among other things.

In part two you must make your way into Kraal's castle, find the princess and deliver her from the clutches of the evil baron. To do this, Kraal's loyal guards have to be overcome.

I'm afraid I was not really excited by this game. The plot itself seems reasonable, but I found the presentation not up to the standard that one would expect from such a game.

The whole game's text is in capitals, making it difficult to read. There also appeared to be some bugs in the program. For instance, at one stage, I was caught floating on a plank of wood in the middle of a lake, and no matter what I tried, I could not move or get ashore. I had to resort to turning off and re-LOADing.

This happened on a number of occasions at several different locations. Maybe I just couldn't find the right commands and gave up too soon, but none of the standard adventure commands worked.

Another fault was that you could go straight on to part two without even playing part one.

Still, Kraal's Kingdom does have its good points as well. It is easy to use and you can move around reasonably easily, allowing you to make a map of your movements without running into problems.

I'll leave it up to the buyer to weigh up Kraal's good and bad points, but those who are very experienced in adventure games should give it a try. It is not, however, the best game for beginners.

**Challenge In The Crypt**

**Adventure The Crypt**
**Micro Spectrum 48K**
**Price £4.95 Format Cassette**
**Supplier Cornell Software, North Wylyands Industrial Estate, Mosely Rd, Hershams, Surrey.**

PREPARE yourself for the many challenges that shall confront you when you dare to enter The Crypt. You will battle with Giant Scorpions, Hell Spawn, Cranes, Pos negs and if you are unlucky enough, the Dark Cyclops! So runs the blurb on the packaging of a new program, released this very month by Cornell Software. Written by 17 year-old Stephen Reuton, The Crypt is a mixture of graphics and fantasy.

Several levels of danger make up the game, and each level contains a large number of mini-crypts for the player to explore. There is a chest in each location which may contain treasure, or, if you're unlucky, something horrible like a black mamba. There is a catch, of course — there is also a Guardian present, who doesn't take very kindly to having its personal chest examined in this way, and will come after you, intent on drinking your blood. Cornell doesn't want to lose all its customers, though (there are a lot more goodies on the way from the company), so it wants to provide a weapon for the intrepid adventurer to pick up.

The monsters aren't easy to kill, and precise positioning is called for. At screen-bottom is displayed your combat rating, along with the monster's, and these are reduced as battle progresses.

There are plenty of other hazards — watch out for the lethal lightning bolts, and the invisible walls.

Your reason for indulging in all this wandering about is not just more monster-bashing. Your mission is to find a certain bangle and return it to the first location. Once this is accomplished, the player is given a code word which is used to advance to the next level — then the trouble starts all over!

The program is so new that I

**Escaping from the computer**

**Adventure Secret Mission**
**Micro Vic 20 + 16K**
**Price N/A Format Cassette**
**Supplier Kew Enterprises, 14 Fairway Avenue, Manchester. THIS IS A TEXT ADVENTURE (with a touch of graphics here and there) in which you, the explorer, have been trapped in a huge computer complex. Your mission is to find and deactivate the central computer which is in control of the establishment. As you move around the rooms and corridors, you encounter numerous puzzles. These can range from opening a door with one of six buttons, with only a cryptic clue for help, to killing a manic robot. The building's four floors are inter-connected by several lifts and stairways. There are also several utility rooms which have to be discovered with the careful use of the clues and hints provided. After sitting for about five minutes, waiting for the game to load and hoping it would be as good as it sounded, the screen lit up with the running titles and the adventure began.**

Secret Mission features a game-save option and accepts all of the usual adventure commands, except that the INVENTORY command is replaced by CHECK.

The game is further brightened by the addition of the odd bit of graphics. For instance, when you enter one of the lifts, the control panel is displayed on the screen, with a light next to the floor number the lift is on. Although I did not manage to complete this game, I am sure I came very close. This is the type of adventure which can be almost as addictive as Invaders, but, of course, still involves the cunning and logical thinking necessary to solve all good adventures.

My only criticism is that map-keeping is made a little difficult by the fact that you occasionally go up or down flights of stairs automatically, or fall through a trap door in the floor.

I shall say no more now, for fear that your fun will be spoiled. Just go and have a try.
Hell brings life to Oric

Adventure Hell's Temple
Micro Oric: 48K.
Price £12.00 Format Cassette
Supplier Kenema Associates,
1 Marlborough Drive, Worle,
Avon.
"IT IS the time of the dark
ages when only witchcraft,
sorcery and fear ruled
mankind." So I entered
the realm of Hell's Temple,
an excellent adventure for the 48K
Oric. You are placed on
the top level of a deep, dark temple
of many rooms, and your
quest is to gather as much treasure as
possible while avoiding the
dark forces of Hell.

The game revolves around a
graphic display of the part of
the temple in which you are
situated. You can move in one
of three directions: left, right
or forward. In this game, there
is no turning back.

You will be confronted with
a quick description of the room
in your chosen direction. Then
you are given the choice of
entering the room, leaving,
asking for details of any
monster, or detecting whether
the information given to you is
an illusion or a trick. If you
enter a room where a monster
lies, then you are given four
more commands: RETREAT,
FIGHT, BRIBE and SPELL.

The chances of bumping
into a monster are very high as
there are 76 different varieties of
beast waiting to kill you. As
you get lower and lower, the
monsters become tougher,
larger and more frequent. The
instructions warn casually that
visited The Crypt a mere few
hours before press time, so I
evaporated a mention in
the Fantasy HiScore Table, but
I'm looking forward to finding
all the secrets of this weird
place.

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Adventures The Island
Micro CBM 64
Price £10 Format Cassette
Supplier Superb Software, 98
Oval Road, London NW1.

There is nothing more mono-
tomous than having to enter the
same first 30 commands just to
get back to your previous
situation.

There are a few other
minuses as well, including a
poor use of sound and an
unimaginative use of the
Dragon's graphics and colour
capabilities but these criticisms
are concerned with the frills of
the program. There is nothing
wrong with the main game
core.

CG
Hitting the adventure trail on tv

Andrew Briggs talks to the men behind The Adventure Game, without being evaporated

A COUPLE OF years ago BBC producer Patrick Dowling was given the task of devising a science programme for children. But the BBC bosses were in for a shock. What emerged from Patrick's fertile imagination — honed by numerous games of Dungeons and Dragons and a fascination with computers — looked like a cross between Dr Who, The Generation Game and Open University.

Instead of blinding the kids with science, Patrick decided to make the learning fun. He took the concept of computer adventure games and adapted it for television. The result, appropriately enough, was called The Adventure Game.

The premise of the game is simple: three Earth people arrive on the planet Arg and, before they are allowed to return home, have to solve a series of logic-related problems. Failure to do so means being evaporated. But, just to make things a little easier for the Earthlings, clues are provided along the way by some of the planet's zanier inhabitants.

Aspidstras rule

The BBC obviously likes the game, as do the younger viewers. A third series has just been made.

Patrick Dowling and the man eventually responsible for producing the program, Ian Oliver, both believe strongly in the "fun" aspect of the show. "Children like fantasies," says Patrick. And The Adventure Game certainly isn't lacking in the fantastic. Just look at some of the resident Argonds — a "Bazza McKenzie" character who talks backwards because he comes from the other side of the planet; a furry little three-eyed beast called a dogran; and a rather bad-tempered aspidistra which, it transpires, is the planet's ruler.

"Originally the program was aimed at the 11 to 16 age group," says Ian Oliver. "but we get fans as young as five. I think they like to see people get evaporated."

But The Adventure Game isn't completely out of this world. The puzzles posed for the contestants are quite down to earth, some being of 11-plus science level, while
others bear a strong similarity to childhood games. They all have one thing in common — it takes logic to solve them.

In a typical show contestants might be required to work out a telephone number or a password, find their way through a maze, or use their powers of logic to beat a resident Argond to a crystal. And, throughout the programme, the visitors must work out what present they can give the planet's ruler without incurring his wrath and being evaporated. At various stages in the show, for example, they are told that the ruler likes balls but not round things, ballads but not songs. All very logical really.

And, of course, where there's logic there's usually a computer — often up to five (BBC, naturally) are used in production of The Adventure Game. Most obvious is the one used in some parts of the programme by the contestants, but a number are also used behind the scenes to add the effects that help make the programme so appealing.

But even with the aid of a computer, ultimately it is the logic of the contestants that is being put to the test. And, since the contestants are not always the most logical people in the world, clues are often needed to prevent the show getting bogged down. It is the job of the Argonds — those strange characters mentioned earlier — to steer
the contestants in the right direction when needed.

If you’re a fan of The Adventure Show you will probably have noticed that some of the clues seem a bit obscure. Well, there’s a reason for this. The contestants usually consist of two show business personalities and a “specialist” guest. The showbusiness people often have an edge over the other guest in that they are used to the atmosphere of a TV studio. Ian and Patrick quickly found a way to make the other guest more involved. Explains Ian: “We try to make them feel more at home by making some problems relevant to their specialist knowledge.”

Hence the clues which may seem a little obscure to viewers.

The Adventure Game gives viewers the chance to watch other people’s processes of deduction and logical thought in action — and maybe even compare their powers of logic with those of the contestants. A lucky few, through pre-recorded answers to a puzzle which runs throughout the show, can take a greater part in the game.

But that’s where viewer involvement in the program ends. According to Ian Oliver, it is just not realistic to film The Adventure Game in front of a live audience or get members of an audience involved. Time is the enemy: filming takes too long to accommodate an audience. “We have to record about three hours of stuff for every show — most of it gets edited out later.”

Consolation

There is, however, one consolation for those who want to do more than just watch The Adventure Game on TV. One of the more popular parts of the show — a puzzle called Droga — is being marketed as a program for the BBC machine. Acorn Software is manufacturing the game which, although not an adventure, nevertheless requires the use of logic.

Droga, in which the contestants have to cross a board of different shapes and colours to get a crystal, is one of two segments of The Adventure Game that have proved extremely popular. The other comes at the end of the programme and is the last hazard the contestants must face before they can escape back to Earth. Called the Vortex, this could also soon be made into a program for the Beeb.

The Adventure Game has obviously come a long way from its beginnings as a “science program for children”. But since hitting on the adventure game format, changes have been minimal. The regular characters, for example, have remained unchanged over the three series. But, according to Patrick, the puzzles have in fact become easier as the show has progressed.

Just what will happen to the show after this series is something of a puzzle itself. Patrick, the man who dreams up most of the puzzles, emigrated to Australia soon after I talked to him. He doubts whether the BBC will make another series. Ian Oliver, on the other hand, believes there’s still more for Earthlings to puzzle over on Arg. II.
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Into the Valley of Death

Brian Lloyd takes the Dragon on a trip into Death Valley in this excerpt from "The Dragon Trainer"

(i) Hold down the SHIFT and CLEAR keys together (ii) Press the @ key (iii) Release the @ key (iv) Release the other keys

This procedure does not always work first time, so you may have to do it twice. One last thing, all the # symbols in this routine represent spaces.

When you RUN this routine (if you enter RUN 190 then you do not have to choose a character, etc) you will see a blue box with a zig-zagging path passing through it (don't worry about the OK message appearing in the middle). The path appears in a different position each time you RUN the program, just to break up the tedium a bit. At one end of the path is a keep, and at the other the Palace.

We can now add the lines which tell us how well the character is doing (lines 360-380). Now that the character is seen to, we can start to move him around (lines 530 and 2300-2450). That's the routine to check which way you want to go, now we need a man to move around, and a routine to move him (lines 530, 410-660 and 790). You can now have great fun racing around the screen with your character, using the keys:

R T Y
F H
C V B

We can now add some lines to tell us where the character is (lines 650 to 750).

Racing around the valley obviously uses up some of your energy, so we need the extra lines 390, 400, 490 and 540. Running around in a valley can get pretty boring after a while. The best way to cure this is to populate the valley with a few friendly little monsters whose only desire in life is to eat you (lines 40 and 500).

The routine in lines 2770-2790 chooses a monster, with line 2790 choosing a more dangerous one if your EXperience is over 2000. Lines 2810-2820 invert the letters of the monster's name (ie change uppercase to lowercase letters). If you are a cleric you can get rid of undead monsters, so lines 2830-2840 allow this.

The monster's energy is worked out by lines 2850-2870, while lines 2880-3000 allow you to hit the monster (you use the H key to hit - note the time limit in line 2930). The monster retaliates in lines 3010-3030, and the damage routine is lines 3040-3100. Lines 3110-3120 check to see if you have killed the monster. The monster comes from lines 3200-3240. Finally, lines 3770-3780 inform you that you are dead, complete with appropriate tune.

This program is written in Microsoft Basic - it begins by developing a character to go battling through the maze.

Now that you have a character, you need a world for him to live in.

```
10 CLS
70 ST=RND(9)+RND(9)+RND(9):1G=RND(9)+RND(9)+RND(9)
80 EN=RND(9)+RND(9)+RND(9):ST=ST+G:1G=1G+RND(10)
90 PRINT"1 WARRIOR":PRINT"2 CLERIC":PRINT"3 BARBARIAN"
100 PRINT"4 WIZARD":INPUT"WHICH ONE (1-4)";A
110 IFA<1ORA>4THENCL=="FOOL":1G=1G=RND(10)
120 IFA=1THENCL=="WARRIOR":ST=ST+RND(5):1G=1G+RND(10)
130 IFA=2THENCL=="CLERIC":1G=1G+RND(10)
140 IFA=3THENCL=="BARBARIAN":1G=1G+RND(5)
150 IFA=4THENEN=EN+RND(5)
160 INPUT"NAME";NAME$
170 IFNAME$=""THENNAME$="MR. X"
190 CLS
200 PRINTSTRING$(32,175);FORM=0:TO:PRINTCHR$(175);
210 PRINTSTRING$(30,32);CHR$(175);NEXT
220 PRINTSTRING$(32,175)
230 A$(1)=CHR$(175)+":"|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|
240 A$(2)=CHR$(175)+":"|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|
250 A$(3)=CHR$(175)+":"|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|
260 A$(4)=CHR$(175)+":"|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|
270 J=RND(5)*32:PRINTA$(1),A$(2),PRINTA$(3)
280 PRINTA$(4)
```

30 Micro Adventurer November 1983
360 PRINT"352, NAME$;" THE "; CLASS$ ;
370 PRINT"384, "ST; " ST; TAB(10); "10;" @ TAB(20); "EN; ";
380 PRINT"396, PRINT"416, "TR; " TR; TAB(20); "EX; EX; 

530 GOSUB 2360 
2360 A$=INKEY$; IFA$="THEN 2300 
2310 IFA$=" R" THEN D=-33 
2320 IFA$=" T" THEN D=-32 
2330 IFA$=" Y" THEN D=-31 
2340 IFA$=" F" THEN D=-1 
2350 IFA$=" H" THEN D=1 
2360 IFA$=" C" THEN D=31 
2370 IFA$=" V" THEN D=32 
2380 IFA$=" B" THEN D=33 
2450 RETURN 

...and a routine for movement. 
30 MAN=1056: Z=16 
410 MAN=MAN+1+33 
440 POKE MAN, 36 
560 IF PEEK(MAN+D)=1110 OR PEEK(MAN+D)=92 THEN MAN=MAN+D: POKE 
570 MAN-D, Z: PATH=1: Z=PEEK(MAN): GOTO 660 
580 IF PEEK(MAN+D)=1 THEN MAN+MAN+D: POKE MAN-D, Z: CASTLE=1: Z= 
590 PEEK(MAN): GOTO 660 
600 IF PEEK(MAN+D)=16 THEN MAN+MAN+D: POKE MAN-D, Z: PL=1: Z= 
610 PEEK(MAN): GOTO 660 
620 IF PEEK(MAN+D)<175 THEN MAN+MAN+D: POKE MAN-D, Z=PEEK 
630 (MAN) 
640 REM SOMETHING WILL GO HERE LATER 
790 GOTO 440 

Telling you where the character is. 
660 IF Z<11 THEN CASTLE=0 
670 IF Z<16 THEN PL=0 
680 IF Z<16 AND Z<11 THEN PATH=0 
700 PRINT@320, " 
710 IF PATH=1 THEN PRINT@320, "SAFE ON PATH" 
720 IF CASTLE=1 THEN PRINT@320, "SAFE IN KEEF" 
750 IF PL=1 THEN PRINT@320, "SAFE IN PALACE" 

Using up energy. 
390 IF U=1 THEN RETURN 
400 U=1 
490 GOSUB 360 
540 E=E+1: IFE=10 THEN EN=EN-1: E=0 

Introducing the monsters. 
40 PL=1 
500 IF RND(4)=2 AND DEAD=0 AND CASTLE=0 AND PATH=0 AND PL=0 THEN 
500 GOSUB 2770 

Choosing a monster... 
2770 SOUND 10, 5: SOUND 100, 4: RESTORE: IF EX<2000 AND TW=0 THEN 
2780 FORM=1: RNDN(19): READMONSTER$, HITS: NEXT 
2780 M=0 
2790 IF EX>=2000 OR TW=1 THEN FORM=0: RNDN(19)+20: READMONSTER$, 
2790 HITS: NEXT 

...in lower case. 
2810 FORM=1: RLEN(MONSTER$): MID$(MONSTER$, N, 1)=CHR$(ASC 
2820 (MID$(MONSTER$, N, 1)+32)): IF MID$(MONSTER$, N, 1)="5" THEN 
2830 MID$(MONSTER$, N, 1)=CHR$(128): NEXT: ELSE NEXT 
2840 PRINT@320, "YOU HAVE MET A " : MONSTER$; 

Right of clergy. 
2850 IF CLASS$=" CLERIC" AND (MONSTER$=" mummy", ORMONSTER$= 
2860 " wraith", ORMONSTER$=" spectre") AND RND(3)=2 THEN YZ=1 
2870 IF YZ=1 THEN FORM=0: TO 2000: NEXT: PRINT@320, " BUT YOU TURN IT 
2880 AWAY!": FORM=0: TO 2000: NEXT: PRINT@320, "": EX=EX+1: YZ=0: 
2890 RETURN 

Continued on page 33
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Continued from 31
The monster's energy.

2850 HITS=HITS+RND(INT(HITS/2)); IF HITS<INT(EN/2) THEN 2850
2860 H=HITS
2870 FORM=0 TO 10000: NEXT

Hitting the monster.

2880 PRINT$448,"strike";CHR$(128);" now"
2890 SOUND50, 2
2900 A%=INKEY$%
2910 PRINT$448; STRING$(28,32);
2920 PRINT$448; "THE MONSTER HAS";HITS;"ENERGY "
2930 FORM=0 TO 3000: A%=INKEY$: IF A%<>" THEN 2940: ELSE NEXT: PRINT$448; "too";CHR$(128);" slow": FORM=0 TO 2000: NEXT: PRINT$448;
*":GOTO2990
2940 REM SOMETHING WILL HAPPEN HERE LATER
2950 IFA%="H" AND RND(2)=2 THEN EN=EN+RND(ST)+SD: PRINT$448, "you"; CHR$(128); "hit": FORM=0 TO 2000: NEXT: PRINT$448, G;
"DAMAGE!": FORM=0 TO 3000: NEXT: YZ=1
2970 IF YZ=1 THEN YZ=0: PRINT$448, "": HITS=HITS-G: ELSE IFA%=="H" THEN PRINT$448, "you";CHR$(128);"missed": FORM=0 TO 2000:
NEXT: PRINT$448, STRING$(30,32); YZ=0
2980 IF G<0 THEN SOUND50, 2: G=G-1 ELSE SOUND200, 2
2990 PRINT$448; "THE MONSTER HAS";HITS;"ENERGY ":
3000 IF HITS<=0 THEN 3110

Monster retaliates.

3010 SOUND200, 2: PRINT$448, "the";CHR$(128);"monster";CHR$(128);" strikes": FORM=0 TO 2000: NEXT: PRINT$448, " 
3020 IF RND(2)=1 THEN EN=EN+RND(HITS) PRINT$448, "and";CHR$(128); " hits": SOUND10, 2 FORM=0 TO 2000: NEXT ELSE PRINT$448, "and":
CHR$(128); "misses": SOUND50, 2 YZ=1
3030 IF YZ=1 THEN FORM=0 TO 2000: NEXT: PRINT$448, "": YZ=0

Damage routine.

3040 EN=EN-M
3050 IF M>0 THEN PRINT$448, "DOING"; M; "DAMAGE!": FORM=0 TO 2000:
NEXT: PRINT$448, " 
3060 GSUB360
3070 H=0
3080 IF EN<=0 THEN 3770
3100 HITS=HITS-1: EN=EN-1: GOTO3690

Is the monster dead?

3110 PRINT$448, "": PRINT$448; STRING$(31,32); PRINT$320,
"YOU'VE KILLED IT": FORM=225 TO 250: SOUNDN, 1: NEXT: EX=EX+
H+EN=EN+RND(INT(H/2))
3120 FORM=0 TO 2000: NEXT: PRINT$320, ": IFEN 400 THENEN=EN-RND( INT(H/2)) : RETURN: ELSE RETURN

Range of monsters.

3230 DATA"WEAVER", 120, "HANTICORE", 125, "HINOTAUR", 120, "MUMMY", 105, "OGRE", 120, "OWL BEAR", 110, "PURPLE WORM", 300
3240 DATA"SPECTRE", 120, "TROLL", 130, "VAMPIRE", 100, "WIGHT", 60, "WRAITH", 80, "HELL HOUND", 140

You're dead.

3770 PRINT$320, "YOU'RE DEAD": IF K=1 THEN 3770
3780 PLAY"01Y31T2L46GLG66L4R-AA66F+G": K=1: GOTO3770

November 1983 Micro Adventurer 33
Auditions for a war game
Bob Collman takes the stage to put a BBC micro through its paces

Star Frontiers — one of the most recent science fiction role-playing games, from TSR

SOME OF US have a weakness for ripping yarns. Possibly we have spent too much time with the wrong literature and developed the mistaken view that life is a series of daring adventures. It may be, but for most of us, our adventures and successes lack the glamour of jungle exploration or deep sea diving. We may risk a great deal in our lives, but few of us choose to risk our lives — at least off the motorway.

Because we read history, thrillers, science fiction and/or fantasy we might have wondered at times how we would have coped had we been in the shoes of the hero/heroine. Mercenary, spy, explorer, pirate, wizard, the possibilities are infinite. Role-playing games offer the opportunity to face horrific dangers, succeed against overwhelming odds or die heroically in the attempt — without, in reality, suffering anything more than wounded pride (losing a character's life, even in fantasy, is unsettling).

Only human
Role-playing games usually have a human moderator or gamemaster, who runs the game, which allows for more flexibility than boardgames: players can create situations not specifically covered in the rules. Good role-playing rules provide an easy framework by which the gamemaster can make realistic and fair judgments about the outcome of an attempted
action. Players are limited by what their characters can do and this is determined when the character is first created. Each role-playing system generates characters in its own manner, but the basic ideas remain the same.

A role-playing system attempts to label human characteristics and divide them into several broad categories, such as strength, dexterity, stamina and logic. These can then be determined for each character using die rolls. The rolls produce a statistical curve not unlike the scatter of real human characteristics. Players then choose their character’s name, profession and beginning skills. Skills and some characteristics can be developed as the character gains experience and training.

Fantasies

Once created, the character participates in various adventures and in the process attempts to gain in experience, skills and wealth. The fun is not only in the excitement of the adventures, although this can be quite considerable, but in watching the various characters develop gradually over the months. Each player will develop his character according to his own fantasy and the type of role he enjoys playing. The interaction between the characters is a lesson in group dynamics and can be a major element of enjoyment, and also friendly competition.

Role-playing games attract a wide age range.

Introducing Bogart Bütslinger, a Yezirian with the axe to the dark

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| Robotics | 123 45 6 | |
| Technician | 123 45 6 | |

| Biomedical: | | |
| Environmental Medicine | 123 45 6 | |
| Psychosocial | 123 45 6 | |

| Notes: | |
| --- | |
| Introduction: Bogart Bütslinger is a Yezirian with the axe to the dark. |

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November 1983 Micro Adventurer 35
 ELF pretensions

You might ask what place microps have in the lives of men who gather in groups pretending to be elves. Computers would seem to be, with their unyielding submission to precise rules, out of place in the flexible world of role-players. In reality, good rules are precise in many areas — exactly those that often become chores which detract from the game. Computers are adept at taking over these mundane tasks. I will confine myself for now to one aspect, the character generator, probably the easiest game assistance program to write and possibly the most useful.

Creating characters normally consists of a fair amount of die rolling, then calculating characteristics based on the rolls and filling out an individual character sheet. This can be relatively quick for some games and quite time-consuming for others — a significant part of an evening can be spent kitting out new players with characters. A game master may have to create large numbers of characters to fill his scenarios and has even greater need for computerized help.

Grandaddy

Star Frontiers is one of the most recent science fiction role-playing games and comes from TSR, the originator of Dungeons & Dragons and the grandaddy of them all. The cover art does not suggest that it is a game for the serious sci-fi fan, but further investigation will reveal, behind the comic-book facade, probably the most polished role-playing system currently available. Star Frontiers uses the best of D&D, Runequest, Traveller, Top Secret and others to produce a system more consistent and logical than its progenitors — granted, the first three available scenarios are D&D on another planet and contain, for my taste, far too many confrontations with monsters. Fortunately, our group has a gifted game master who designs his own scenarios.

The rules for developing and using skills are extremely clever and allow excitement even when the characters are not engaged in combat. Our group successfully concluded a mission the other evening by taping into the enemy's computer. Using various characters' skills we were able to find and make our way to the terminal, disable security systems and change a vital program. Not a single laser was fired — best of all, it was fun.

The following program will allow you to generate characters according to the rules of Star Frontiers (I'm afraid it won't be of much use without the game). It will "roll" general characteristics and allow you to choose the race of your character (several friendly aliens are available if you tire of being a boring human). You may trade some characteristics for others and choose a name, sex and handedness (this is considerably more choice than you had at your own birth). The results can then be printed in the form of a character sheet which is used in the game.

Most inputs are single key press and are well-protected, both upper and lower case being acceptable. The program was designed to be used by gamers who are not necessarily knowledgeable about computers and therefore nothing in it should frighten anyone.

Menus

But, for those of you with computers, a bit about the program. One of the most used routines is FQuick which returns a number from 1 to 26 for letters or 0 to 9 for numbers, and is used in menus. Character generators tend to have many menus and if you want protected inputs it is easier to write one routine to screen them all. The program is currently set up to work with an Epson printer with parallel interface but would require very few alterations to work on most other printers.
Play Mage Cage on the Spectrum

A 16K Spectrum graphic adventure by Quicksilva programmer Mike Moscoff
THE AETHANES, NASTIES from the Nth Dimension, threaten to destroy Earth. You must enter the Valley of Shadows, and find and destroy the fusor, a weird object that holds open the gateway between the Dimensions. The valley comprises 25 arenas, or rooms.

Avoid or kill the evil Dragons: there are four types — Magenta, Green, Blue and Yellow. The Yellow Dragons have the worst bite, and need four strikes with the sword to kill them. Watch out for the Traps, which can block, exhaust or kill you. Look for any useful objects (eg the sword). To pick them up, just touch them. To move, use the cursor keys (5-8). To use the sword (to strike left or right), press Caps Shift and 5 or 8. Note: you must first find the sword! To get help, press 'H' (for info about the traps).

This program has been horribly compressed. Most numbers have been replaced by single-letter variables: O = 0, L = 1, B = 2, etc. . . . see list of variables. Many character variables hold numeric data: \"ABCD\" translates to: print trap number 1(A) using pattern 2(B) starting at position Y = 3(C), X = 4(D). FN n converts characters to numbers. FN c$ converts numbers to characters.

Problems: don't mistake Hs (10) for Ms (100). Lines 4400-4425 (and others) use weird characters: @ (Symbol Shift & 2) to represent 0, \((\text{Symbol Shift} & \text{V})\) to represent 28, (\(\text{Extended Mode, Symbol Shift} & \text{Y}\)) to represent 27, \((\text{Extended Mode, Symbol Shift} & \text{U})\) to represent 29. Typing in lines 4400-4470 is easier if you enter the letters in groups of three. . . . EYE

. . . HAL POKE 236593,7 sets INK 7, PAPER 0, POKE 23693,56 set INK 0, PAPER 7, POKE 23658,8 sets Capitals lock. USR 3280 scrolls up 1 line.

Program routines
10 Initial setup & intro
20 Setup new game
30 Setup new room
40 You move
50 Alien move (or delay)
80 Score & end checks
100 Alien move sub/routine
300 Your move s/r
400 Sword fight s/r
500 Trap action s/r
600 Objects s/r
670 Print obj inventory
680 Print object
690 Convert attr colour to object number
700 Replace lost object
900 Print messages s/r
1000 Lose game (or newlife)

1100 Win game
1200 Scores & end
3000 Select new room
4000 Setup new room
4600 Setup traps — barriers
4030 Setup traps — mazes
4050 Setup objects
4080 Setup \textit{final} room
4100 Setup alien
4300 Setup you
4400 Trap patterns s/r
4600 Room data
7000 Definevars — temp
7500 Definevars — perm
7600 Define Special chars
9000 Introduction
9100 Controls display
9200 Traps info \textit{(help)\textit{}}
9900 Cls & header s/r
9920 Delay s/r
9930 Wait s/r
9940 Object name s/r
9950 Trap name s/r
9960 Trap info s/r

Numeric vars
DC . . . remaining lives
DI . . . die flag
OK . . . win flag
PO . . . power (strength)
RO . . . room number
ROO . . . old room no
SC . . . score
ST . . . top score
T . . . alien way flag
TN . . . alien number
TR . . . trap number
TX . . . alien \textit{x} \textit{y} position
TY . . . alien \textit{y} position
UX . . . your \textit{x} \textit{y} position
UY . . . your \textit{y} \textit{position}
UXO . . your old pos
UVO . . your old pos

B . . . 2
C . . . 3
D . . . 4
E . . . 5
F . . . 6
G . . . 7
H . . . 10
I . . . 20
J . . . 30
K . . . 40
L . . . 1
M . . . 100
O . . . 0
V . . . 003
W . . . 01

Temporary:
A, N, P, Q, X, Y

User defined chars
line char:
105 \"D\"
106 \"E\"
300 \"H", \"B\"
301 \"G", \"C\"
ALLA

VALHALLA is supplied on a 48K Spectrum program cassette, with VALHALLA player manual and presentation box. AS VALHALLA uses the full 48K RAM, microdrives and full-size printers are not supported. ZX printer optional.

VALHALLA will be despatched in the week commencing October 2nd. If for any reason we are unable to fulfil your order within 14 days of receipt, we will notify you.

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Enclose cheque/P.O. for £.................... (12.95 each incl. VAT and P&P)
Or I wish to pay by Access/Barclaycard/Visa
Card No..................................................
Please print name and address
Name.......................................................... Address..................................................
Credit Card holder's signature..........................
Breaking sentences down to two words of three letters

By Sunshine programmer Simon Lane

This routine for the Spectrum or Commodore machines will convert a sentence into two three-letter words. The first corresponds to the first three letters of the first word in the sentence, and the second to the first three of the last word.

This allows the input to an adventure game to be processed so that to some extent it is standardized. For example, say the player wanted to drop the golden statue that he was carrying. He might type in "DROP STATUE", "DROP THE STATUE", "DROP THE GOLD STATUE" or even "DROP THE GOLD STATUE". All of these sentences would return the same thing if sent to this subroutine, ie "DRO" and "STA". This should be sufficient to determine what the player actually means.

The string should be sent to the subroutine in the variable Z$, and the two three-letter words are returned in the variables W$1 and W$2 in the Spectrum version, and in W1$ and W2$ in the CBM 64/Vic 20 version.

Here's my classified ad.

(Please write your copy in capital letters on the lines below.)

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I make this.......................... words, at 20p per word so I owe you £..........................

Name........................................

Address....................................

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Telephone..................................

Please cut out and send this form to: Classified Department, Micro Adventurer, 12-13 Little Newport Street, London WC2R 3LD
Giant's Gold

From Paul Price in Boamin

THIS IS AN adventure program for the Vic 20. The program requires a minimum 5K expansion for the Vic, as it uses just over 8K. It uses print statements and should be easily transposable to other machines.

The adventure is test only and all commands which must be entered as single letters are explained in the program. All others are the usual two word commands.

The following is a list of the main variables used:
A = Pointer to current location
LO$ = Additional information at the location — alters depending on actions taken
OBS = Objects
OB = Location of object

O = (being carried)
AS = First input
BS = Second input
CI, RA, MA, DW, DR, KE, MT, BA = Various flags to indicate certain conditions (MT is for matches and starts at six so use them sparingly.)

All locations are held in subroutines and line 21 indicates which subroutine to GOTO, determined by the value of A. A is altered by the values of NO, SO, WE and EA. H for help and EXAMINE will give clues in the right places.

November 1983 Micro Adventurer 43
Storing well on the BBC

From Andy Mitchell, Larkfield, Kent

A LARGE PART of the space taken up by adventure games is that used to store messages. It is essential therefore to store this as efficiently as possible. For this reason it is a good method to place such text in one large database at the end of the program and use a single procedure to extract the required message.

By this method we have a neat structure which is easy to debug and as a bonus we can make up different replies by mixing the messages (see line 5000). By calling the procedure PROC with suitable parameters we can make up various messages using the same data (lines 2000-2030). Line 10 will print the message: YOU HAVE

FALLEN DOWN THE STAIRS BUT LANDED SAFELY.

A further sophistication is to use the value of a flag in the calling parameter. Imagine a room containing a beanstalk which could be in one of four states: a tiny plant, a 6 foot plant crying water, a 12 foot plant reaching the roof, or a dead overwatered plant. A variable called PLANT is initially set to 1 and is in turn changed to the values 2, 3 and 4 in response to the user giving the command WATER PLANT. By adding the plant descriptions to our existing database as shown in line 4000, you will see that the first description can be printed by the command PROC(6) and the subsequent states by PROC(7), etc.

However, the state of the plant at any time can also be printed more simply by the command PROC(5+PLANT). We can therefore with the minimum of code insert this command into our room description procedures to ensure the correct description of the plant when the plant room description is used (lines 5 and 15).

By Sunshine programmer Simon Lane

THIS PROCEDURE FOR the Electron or the BBC micros makes the player guess a secret code, with a limit on the number of guesses allowed. Each time the player makes a guess he is shown how many of the letters in his guess were correct, if any.

Input to the procedure is the string to be guessed, and the maximum number of attempts allowed. The procedure sets the variable GUESSED to TRUE if the code was guessed in the number of tries allowed, and to FALSE otherwise.

For example:
1000 PRINT "The wizard looks at you, and in a booming voices decrees 'If you can guess my name I will let you enter the cavern. Otherwise I will turn you into a frog. My name has five letters, and you may have up to five guesses'." 1010 PROCsecret("BORIS",5) 1020 IF GUESSED THEN PRINT "The wizard smiles and says 'You have passed my simple test, good Sir. I will let you pass,' and he stands aside.' " GOTO 2000 1030 PRINT "Creak."
The most complete listing available of adventures, war games and real-life simulations — new entries are printed in italic and should be sent to Adventure File, Micro Adventurer, 12-13 Little Newport St, London WC2R 3LD

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NOTES TO THE TABLE

- The programs will run on either the Atari 400 or 800 unless E is specified, in which case extra memory is needed on the 400.
- The programs will run on either of the BBC micros unless the model B is specified, in which case extra memory is needed on the model A.
- The programs will run on either Spectrum model unless E is specified.
- All programs need a 16K RAM pack.

48 Micro Adventurer November 1983
AT THE recent ZX Microfair at Alexandra Palace, I spent several hours watching the crowds around the various stands and the reactions of those looking at the software on display.

Did I detect a slight, but noticeable, feeling of boredom (shock! horror!) with the arcade game? The latest crop is as far advanced from the early programs as can be imagined, and is extremely good, but it is hard to foresee what more can be done with arcade games on the home computer, as it presently stands.

Until now, games programmers have been striving to make their creations as much like the arcade originals as possible. It's unlikely, of course, that games like Defender and even simple Space Invaders will ever be satisfactorily copied across to the home micro (Artie's Space Invaders is a remarkably similar implementation, but no version has the adrenalin-pumping thump-thump of the original).

So now the writers display great imagination in creating new games of their own. Games like Cookie, Zoommm, Psst! and the rest are as good as any arcade game. But with arcade games beginning to use video disks, total environments and multi-players networks, it's unlikely that the home micro can keep up the pretence of similarity.

Thus, I believe that we have reached a plateau. Certainly there will be new arcade-like titles appearing each month, and they will hold the attention for a while, but I think interest will gradually turn towards less frenetic computer pastimes.

One of the main reasons, I imagine, for the popularity of the "zap" game, is the sheer escape that they afford the player — but we can make the same escape via, for example, adventure games (you knew I'd get to it soon, didn't you?).

I don't know if arcade games can be called a hobby, but I think there is generally not a lot of interaction between adherents of the rocking, vibrating console. Although networks of machine users are now appearing in the States that allow interaction between players, this does not make the pastime a hobby.

Computer & Video Games, indeed, publishes hi-scores, and passes on hints from keen arcadists to others of a similar ilk, but the advice passed on to other adventurers by those who have successfully passed a difficult location, is of a much more helpful nature. And it is more interactive, of course — you scratch my back, etc.

As for hi-scores — well, there has been a little contest running for some time to achieve the lowest score in completing The Hobbit!

Of course, I have no wish to seem elitist at this point — arcade games have just as much right to be popular as adventures, and many, many people will be quite happy to carry on playing them. But zapping Zaxxon can't possibly be as edifying as klobbering Kobolds, can it?

ADVENTURE CONTACT

MICRO Spectrum 48K Adventure The Hobbit Problem How do you get the bard to kill the dragon? Name Adam Lock Address 2 (MSQ) TA Centre, Llandaff North, Cardiff.

MICRO Vic 20 (16K) Adventure Zork's Kingdom Problem How do you get passed the place with the pits? Name David Martin Address 50 Whitehall Rd, Ramsgate, Kent.

MICRO Spectrum Adventure Ship of Doom Problem How do I remove the key from the glass cover? What part does the frozen body play in escaping? Name David Hawkins Address 107 Butts Hill Rd, Woodley, Reading, Berks.

MICRO BBC B Adventure Castle of Riddles Problem How do you get out of the sitting room without going down hole under the chair? Name James Skinner Address Wintercleyde, Rogers Lane, Stoke Poges, Bucks.

MICRO Vic 20 Adventure Adventure 5 The Count Problem I cannot open the coffin to get to Dracula Name Simon Hoare Address Ashtett Meade, Stonehills, Fawley, Southampton.

MICRO Spectrum 48K Adventure Velnor's Lair (QuickSilver) Problem How on earth does one feed the sharks with live food? How is it possible to capture one of the nasty orcs, trolls, etc and take it to feed them? Name D J Clarkson Address 113 High St, Chesham, Bucks.

MICRO Dragon 32 Adventure Madness and the Minotaur Problem Cannot find mushroom in order to find and learn spell Name A W Garrrington Address 45 Station Rd, Llanelli, Dyfed.

MICRO Spectrum 48K Adventure The Hobbit Problem How do you get out of the goblin's dungeon and where do you get the ring? Name Glen Hardy Address 14 Telese Avenue, Canvey Island, Essex.

MICRO Commodore 64 Adventure Zork Ill Problem How to get by the panel/mirror near the button room and how to get crown jewels back to the present Name Tim Bell Address 37 Catisfield Rd, Fareham, Hants.

MICRO T99/4A Adventure Scott Adam's Mystery Funhouse Problem How to disable the gun in the shooting gallery in order to enter from the tunnel and not get shot Name G Westerlan Address 22 Turner St, Rochdale, Lancs.

MICRO Vic 20 Adventure Adventureland Problem Please tell me how to wake the dragon and how to get the axe Name S Barker Address 10 Church View, Brompton, Nonthallertown, North Yorks.

MICRO Spectrum 48K Adventure Adventure B (Inca Curse) Problem What are the scales used for? Name Jeremy Forgan Address 39 Buttermere Ave, Middlesbrough.

HAVEN'T YOU BEEN staring at the screen for days, or given up in disgust, stuck in an adventure whose problems seem insurmountable? Adventure Contact may be the answer. This column is designed to put adventurers in touch with one another. When you're stumped a fellow adventurer may be able to help — and you may be able to solve other people's problems. If you are having difficulties with an adventure, fill in this coupon and send it to Adventure Contact, Micro Adventurer, 12/13 Little Newport St, London WC2R 3LD. We will publish Adventure Contact entries each month in this special column.

Micro

Adventures

Problem

Name

Address

November 1983 Micro Adventurer 49
Escape the Hex by retrieving the ring

BURIED DEEP among the piles of rotted and rotting vegetation that cover the floor of the dim cavern in which you have taken refuge from Tisch, your eye has been caught by the gleam of these shattered pieces of chitin... they're curiously shaped, and so you thrust them into the pouch on your belt.

It is your undoing, because the extraordinary hearing of Tisch picks up the rasping of the fragments as you handle them, and the hot stench of her breath sweeping over the contents of what she thinks of as her herbal store is your only warning as she silently enters the cave. Naturally, you drop down into the debris, and, hardly daring to breathe (the smell makes it difficult not to panic with each breath anyway), try to squirm deeper into the decomposing mess.

Now that Tisch can smell you, however, she swings her massive tail across the entrance of the cave, blocking any hope of escape, and starts delicately picking through the foliage with a single claw extended from her black and scarred wing-tip. Even so, you almost escape detection as her vision, sensitive to infra-red, confuses the warmth of your body with that of the decomposition around you.

But the rustling rasp of those cursed pieces of chitin again give you away as you passively roll under her massive claw... and she has you once more: she has a task for you. She wants you to enter the Hex, retrieve the Ring and make your way out again.

She wants you to succeed: she sketches the rough layout of the cells within the Hex with her claw in the sandy floor of her sleeping-grounds. The Ring is in the centre. It is the Ring she wants. Anything else you can take is yours.

The day before you are to enter the Hex, Fortune smiles upon you at last. As you cast around for anything to distract yourself from the almost certain death that you are to meet in the Hex, you remember those curiously marked chitin fragments, and examine them: suddenly you realise that they map the interior of the Hex: but how do they fit together? And what treasure will you be able to take for yourself?

The diagram shows the fragments and a rough translation of the writing on them... you must join them together as best you can in order to find the entry, locate the Ring and make your way out again. Send us your rearrangement of the chitin fragments in the form of the Hex, indicating which fragment is which and the route you followed to the treasure and then to safety. Also let us know the other treasures you emerge with. As a tie-breaker, complete the following sentence in less than 15 words: I want to own a copy of The Hobbit because...

Your entry must arrive by the last working day in November. The winners and the solution will be published in our January issue. You may only enter once. Entries will not be acknowledged and we cannot enter into correspondence on the result.
MY NAME IS DIAMOND, DAN DIAMOND. I'M A PRIVATE COP. I WORK THE BIG APPLE, A SEETHING METROPOLIS FILLED WITH HUMAN MISERY AND CHINESE TAKEAWAYS.

NORMALLY I ONLY DO ROUTINE DIVORCE CASES BUT WHEN SHE WALKED INTO MY OFFICE I FOUND MYSELF INVOLVED IN A CASE SO STRANGE THAT IT MADE THE BIG SLEEP LOOK LIKE A CAT NAP...

HUNT WINS GRAND PRIX

At yesterday’s Monaco Grand Prix, a hunting party strayed onto the track at the climax of the race. Cars were halted as the hounds rampaged around the circuit. “The whole place has gone to the dogs,” one driver was reported as saying. The race was restarted; riders and drivers battled bitterly around the course before the Hunt thundered past the finishing line to take the chequered flag (it hasn’t been seen since).

PRIVATE DETECTIVE DISAPPEARS

Police are baffled by the disappearance of Dan Diamond. He was last seen approaching the eerie edifice known as Franklin’s Tomb, but the authorities are completely uninterested. Citizens are asked to report any information relating to his disappearance immediately. For further details, buy FRANKLINS 48k ORIC-1. This adventure comes complete with a 24-page illustrated Case File. £9.95 from BOOTED. SPECTRUM, COMPUTERS FOR ALL, WEBSTER’S and all other purveyors of good quality software.

2 DEAD IN EVEREST TRAGEDY

The Everest Expedition ended in tragedy yesterday as Carl and Harg plunged down a crevasse to a grisly death. The expedition was quoted as saying “Yak”. Continued.

COLD WAR OR XARG ESCAPE?

Thousands dead in Ice Storm Mudurash. The editors do not know.