

micro Adventurer

February 1984 75p

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ADVENTURE REVIEWS

Adventures which have a fast response time in a fast computer in the amount of detail and number of locations and are available to cassette owners. I am extremely impressed. The Lords of Time Adventures are superbly designed and programmed; the contents list rate. The statements from Colossal Games (a tribute to a nothing short of brilliant) with our advice. I will place it in my own office too. Simply amazing!"

- GOLF Sept 83

"I found Dungeon not only thoughtfully planned and written, with a fast response. There is a well over 200 locations and the descriptions are both lengthy and interesting. The overall number about 100 it could therefore take some months to explore the whole network, giving many hours of enjoyment in the process."

- GAVG Sept 83

The descriptions are so good that few players could fail to be amazed by the nature of the mythical world, where they are the hero or heroine, great fun to play."

- What Micro? Aug 83

My appetite has been whetted and I intend to get my own copy of Snowball to play."

- What Micro? Dec 83



ADVENTURE REVIEWS

The best to be the the game of the year. I adventure in your game then this (Colossal Adventure) is your adventure."

-ACTV Sept 83

Colossal Adventure is simply superb. Anyone who wishes to use adventures in an educational setting really must use and see the program as it enables Cowper and Wood's masterpiece to work. For those who wish to move onto another adventure of similar high quality Dungeon Adventure is the recommended. With more than 200 locations, 700 messages and 100 objects it will test and delight."

Colossal Computing world

Colossal Adventure is included in Personal Computing's Top 10 games choice. "Puzzle solving and thought as well."

-PC Dec 83

To sum up, Adventure Quest is a wonderful program that is exciting and challenging. If you like adventures then this one is for you."

- NUGG W 13

Colossal Adventure. For those who like a program that has up to its name, a marvellous feat. Thoroughly recommended."

- Computer Choice Dec 83

wholly admirable

- Your Computer Sept 83

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Letters

Your opinion on adventures is plain to
see by its title, and some advice from
other adventures

4 Two war games examined 28

Two historical studies from a quarter war games
and offers advice on the background material for
advent

News



Your educational games from Shandy and
Hawson will have Fraser Hubbard solved
that Quora Adair was in record time

6 Turning a fantasy into code 31

Yakov Perpet (O'Brien) has an adventure
game in computer code and in code, a
special database which is run in code. The
writing program involves a lot of code
from a lot by Steve Haynes

Your Adventures 34

Readers' papers in the month include
Lorraine, a note on the 27th September and
LETT'S BRIGHTS and MIBS magazines
also for the Spectrum

8 A world of your own 10

Mike, Gabe, don't miss the previous
article in getting a detailed story line
when writing your own adventures

Adventures File 41

The more computer games, the more
we have. The more we have, the more
we have.

10 A micro learns English 10

I know Alpha says this is another low
achievement. It was once the program by
which a computer acquires the skills of
English comprehension is really quite simple

Adventures Help/Contact 48

What is your help? It can be of help to
have some to offer — to try our contact
column if you want to reach fellow adven-
turers

12 Software Inventory 23

Want to know what the new releases are
like? Look, no longer, here you'll find
Houses of Death for the One, and The Earth
Force, from Puffin which includes a
variety of game styles and 1984 year logs

Competition Corner 50

Played with your past efforts. Each one
smaller than the last — to find the winner
from each of the activities and for your
monthly you could win Alpha Game, part
one of the Star Prizes, or more than that

FORUM

THESE 5 AN AMERICAN pop song that goes "When I look back at all the crap I
learned in high school, it's a wonder I can think at all!" Now we wouldn't argue that
adventures could be useful in school in terms of supplying you with knowledge which
might be useful not in the case you had to prove yourself later. For example, you're not going
to learn the names of all the world's capitals by playing adventures (although you might
acquire an immense knowledge of our lovely part of London), nor will you learn your
multiplication tables (although Puffin has a few geometrical pointers, but in terms of
re-creating memory, analysis and decision making there's a lot to be said for adventures.
And if Edward de Bono is right and lateral thinking overrules logic, adventures would
make an ideal educational tool.

Compare at that, you could even advance an argument as (group of bad adventures —
the ones with limited vocabularies would certainly manage a child in kindergarten ("Look,
mommy, I know more words than the computer") that to take our tongues out of our
collective throats it does seem odd that teachers are ignoring the educational opportunities
provided by adventures.

Exactly why should adventures be excluded from that paltry category educational
material? (Thanks go anybody who answered "Because they're expensive.") Admittedly
some excellent software has been developed in and non-learning for younger children —
but why stop there? Good adventures encourage players to discover and explore in an
almost risk to life or limb but facing a wide range of imaginary threats — this has to be
rewarded and puzzles solved — and strategies have to be developed and then adapted. The
world of adventures may appear frivolous (like school Home Cooks when we've got nuclear
bombs, why go to Middle Earth when there's Cerebral Cortexes to be used instead?), but
the thought process adventures encourage can be useful.

If a group of children were to play an adventure together the results might be even more
rewarding. They would obviously be no lack of things to discuss (perhaps discuss in an
understanding) — both in deciding what to do next and then in wondering what went
wrong. The advantage is that nothing can go irretrievably wrong — you always live to
learn your tables on another day. Maybe you did lose your head in the Cerebral Cortex but
at least you've guaranteed a nice time when you should do better.

LETTERS

Send your hints, addresses, comments and compliments to Letters Page, Micro Adventure, 1212 Little Newport St, London WC2R 2LD

Six of one . . .

AFTER READING the article on *The Princess* in the December issue of *Micro Adventure* would it be possible to provide me with the address of the fan club Six of One please?

R. Spayton
The Holmes
Fossilwater,
Melksham,
West Wiltshire

AFTER reading your article on *The Princess* I would like to know if the approximation society will even and, if so, how could I contact it?

I would like to congratulate you on the magazine in which I now subscribe, having paid £19.00 for 12 issues. Keep up the good work.
Andrew Lakin
Alderley St
Stoke
Plymouth

MY 26 Year old approximation society for *The Princess*, does not exist. The address is PO Box 24, Cheltenham, Glos

Why a disk drive?

WHILE applying the production of a magazine devoted to computer adventure, I am disappointed to see that you are following in the path of most other computer magazines by publishing inaccurate, incomplete information and advice.

One item in particular comes to the latter mind. Disk drive expense (December) The result is like that in a limited fashion, ie inaccurate and misleadingly biased.

Software programs including 260k models for released an expense because random file access is integral to the manner in which they operate. It is not a matter of some 10 to 20 minutes wait for loading, or a preference for disk packaging that manages against the expense but the nature of the material.

Software programs range from 10k to more than 100k of programs and data that making it unfeasible to load into memory, or its storage, from cassette. The sequential type of software adopted for Commodore's Black Crystal cassette will not work either: sequential large multiple programs are adapted to the sequential nature of tape storage.

Software games are successful because they are not linear and allow the participants within the game to make full use of the disk medium. It is possible to move from one area via correctly as memory, with a few seconds while the necessary information is overlaid into memory and continue then return to the previous area, again with only a few seconds wait as the previous data is retrieved in the computer's memory.

The technique is commonly acceptable to permit it to allow the use of large programs and simple data but relies on the ability of disks to support random access files.

While a reader has similar method of program overlays would be possible in an element an occasion, I doubt this even PC Games would be prepared for multiple long time lags when moving to and from such a game.

The only hope for those who cannot afford disk drives is some form of microdrive or the development of large ROM cartridges, using some form of internal bank switching to cater for large programs.
Lawrence Miller
Great Lane
Bromingham

Critique snowballs

THE DISK War is an appointment was your (December) *MWA's* review on the new adventure from Level 7 Snowball. In a review I like to be told some idea of the happenings in an adventure. I find it very difficult to find that loading takes seven minutes, that Snowball's conceptual analysis allows a great flexibility in quested format, so that adventure games are awarded for doing clever things. The reviewer obviously knew little of the adventure and has peddled his or her way out of trouble with a load of useless facts. Fully researched my fact Where, in the *Labyrinths of La Cordera*?

Now that you have got me going and I'm in the grey mood, I would like to try something about Adventure Critics on Tony Bridge's page. While I think that the review is a reasonable idea if you use a pin to trace an area of help, I have written to quite a number of reviewers on my advice — but I have never received a reply. I am afraid that this is starting to put me off writing to people. My last criticism to date have been on the

subject. On this point surely it is better with letters to the editor to just give telephone numbers or an address. You can obtain a telephone number from an address via directory enquiries but not an address via a telephone number.

David Young
Shepherd Rd
Claydon

SOBBY YOU are having a bit of a problem with the Contact Column. For the moment we think it better not to publish phone numbers. If you like contact someone via the post then might release their phone number. Perhaps other adventure critics would like to write to the editor with comments on how they have found the column.

An addict's advice

ALTHOUGH MY disk drive is an important in the field of business programming, I and a self contained adventure addict of many years standing.

My home machine is a Commodore 8000 with 800k disk drive and I suppose that this gives the reader an advantage over many readers in having access to large disk based games. But I really must express disappointment that on a magazine dedicated to adventure games there is no mention of programs that I consider to be the peak of sophistication.

I began in the grand way with games such as *Prince's Cave* it does to admit and similar programs but found them so very challenge. *Catacombs and Catacombs*, marketed by Spectrum, was my main fixation in the realm of true advanced programs. Word Word would probably have had me convinced had I not become a critic, with the editor.

Computer code development by the same author and available early this year is a new program possibly to be called Word Word II (although I prefer the title *Adventure's* ready to be to be used every day in the book to make it undoubtedly the ultimate game to date.

Joe Allen Brown
Penelope Croome
Newport Street
Gloucester



"One gather together at one, one drive back if you wish (The editor said it was, would know to include readers — covering up facts!"

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Program by Phil Nathan
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Adventure game program by Keith Campbell
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solve the mystery of the indestructible pillar of
darkness and the riddle of contra-energy in the
mind-bending, fast-adventure game.

Reading Colin's story in the pen should help you. But once
you and your micro are locked into the problem, not even Colin
could get you out.

By special arrangement with an unspecified alien culture, Mosmic will let you
have the story along with the program - so at least you're in with a chance.

Please read the story carefully, because we'd like to release our Spring
SF bookcase blockbuster (Harry Harrison's Stainless Steel Rat on micro for the
best price!) before you carelessly unleash contra-energy across the universe. Thank you.

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LEGEND

VALHALLA is a computer role playing game for the Spectrum and Amstrad computers. It is a fantasy world where you can become a hero and fight the forces of evil. The game is set in a world where magic is real and you can become a powerful wizard or a mighty warrior. The game is set in a world where you can become a powerful wizard or a mighty warrior. The game is set in a world where you can become a powerful wizard or a mighty warrior.

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NEWS DESK

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know

Spectrum favourites converted

ARKS have released their adventure games for the Commodore 64.

They are *Plains of Death*, *Isle Carna*, *Ships of Doom* and *Pageimage Island*.

They are the first Arks games released for the Commodore. Previously they were available only for the Spectrum.

3 BBC B games

CATTLE Penetration, **The Quest for the Holy Grail** and **The Kingdom of Eldor** are three adventures recently launched by Sage Software for the BBC B.

They are traditional text adventures written in machine code.

The games include full screen colour, colour line drawings, sound and game save on tapes.

Each game includes puzzles and about 100 locations.

On the road to learning

REINCH Road, an educational adventure for the Spectrum 48k, from Shards is a first in many ways.

It was written by a church minister, Peter Goodford, from Seven Kings in East London. And it aims to teach history through a fast and entertaining tale of a biblical war.

In the adventure, which is set on two levels, the player may find a way out of Israel along the road to Jericho.

In the difficult screen the player must also solve a tricky word puzzle before the game is completed.

An illustrated plot with a

script but containing word squares is found. The player wins people and places to find an escape from Israel. He or she is given clues and gradually works out the solution.

Of course it has one familiar with the biblical story, it will be a help in talking to the adventure of non-Shards have their part of work done telling you how the story evolved, the background of its characters and places and clues to the game.

Shards emphasised that the program did not preach but that it was purely educational based on a biblical story.

The company plans to launch another educational

program this month called *Mystery of the Ark's Star*.

It contains the story of an righteous captain built from the depths of the South Atlantic.

The program is aimed at the 11 to 14 year-old age group.

It requires a knowledge of geography, the reading of compass, and grid map references, and the ability to solve jigsaw puzzles.

The first part progresses for the *Dragon 32*. It begins in England where the player must find a map of the South Atlantic, discover how to fly on the plane where the Ark's Star sank.

The strategy game *Empire from Shards* which was based on a board game in which the player progresses to conquer the world, has been released for the BBC.

It was previously available only for the Dragon. The BBC version costs £8.95.

Teenager completes program in record time

FRANCO Hubbard the 17-year-old who cracked *Herzog's Quest Adventure* says that he prefers to play adventures rather than work, complaining they are more time consuming.

Hubbard, who completed *Herzog's* in taking only six weeks to solve the adventure instead of six months, comes from Loughborough in Leics where he is studying for his O levels.

A spokesman for *Herzog's* and *Quest Adventure* would usually take a long time to solve because it required lateral thinking.

"I never had been in a car accident and that the only way to solve the game. So he solved it sooner than the world



Photo provided by publisher, *Herzog's*.

was expected, the speaker said.

He is a full computer fanatic. He probably did

not hang out while he was at 16, began to be a program and where he learned about the performance level.

£3,000 contest launched

MELBOURNE HOUSE, the producers of *The Hobbit*, have launched a competition with £3000 in prize to encourage the release of a game designer.

It was designed to enable Spectrum owners to develop machine language adventure games and graphics as a professional standard.

A series of questions and the adoption of features needed to design a specific game.

If the design reported as a text, mission, storyline, or something more unusual, the design designer can be directed to produce it.

Any design can be fully assessed to give an access to the quality.

Variations to the game may be achieved by changing individual features. You can speed the game up, change the scenery to make the characters more realistic. Features could be built and more features can be added.

The games can be saved to a cassette and played later using the game designer as the

contest programme of 100.

Melbourne House will award a prize for the best-designed game, which will cost £1000.

Details of the competition are enclosed with each thing package, which costs £14.95. The game designer is available from all leading retailers or by mail order.

Quill exceeds expectations

THE SUCCESS story of the ZX maze fan field is the Alexandra Palace was The Quill.

Based on the success of the Commodore product Howard Gilbert said The Quill was selling better than he could have hoped.

The Quill is an abstract program that can be used to compare your own adventures in the Spectrum disk.

After writing their first program, Quill owners are excited to market their ideas, not if they think someone will buy it.

All Gilbert said is that they be acknowledged in the beginning of a program based on The Quill.

Howard believes that the maze adventures on the market, did become the standard of games.

"The Quill could improve the adventure market about twenty fold than what it is," Howard said.

One game already written with The Quill is Demos through the Drinking Glass.

Written by Roger Taylor, also in the ZX Fan, the game is in verse. The first location is devoted to "A city due to

Number 20 wife from Mager's eye, where you can play your get away and drink the coffee die."

In the game the hero is Denis Thatcher. His objective is to get on a plane called the Green Dipper's Arms in all cities, avoiding the watchful eye of the press camera.

On his journey, which covers up to 10 locations, Denis meets a variety of people, including Ben Lomaxton, Norman Tubbs, Gove Stern and Ian Paisley.

He visits for Keith Joseph and his ministerial home world and, carrying a love letter and penicillin, drops it on the Pope.

It may be added, perhaps unexpectedly that the game is an unanalysed case of current political figures.

The author of the poem, is a political graduate and teacher dismissed.

Roger believes that there is a market for his game among people with a sense of humour who are fond of juggling several channels before completing their quest.

Following the success reported in Demos through the Drinking Glass, with Roger



Howard Gilbert from Gilbert at the maze bar

appearing on television Gilbert have released a series of adventures all written using The Quill.

Some available include The Adventures of Boris, the Dwarf, Damned Tard, Magic Circle and Enchantment.

Roger's second game, written after with the use of The Quill, is a puzzle of logic and was named after the master magician Archimedes.

The player is presented with a rhyming riddle in each location of Archimedes' Seven.

The riddles must be solved so that various objects can be used aimed to their correct places.

Roger and players should find the games amusing and difficult.

"They only benefit on general knowledge and lateral thinking," he said.

"The structure of the program when mapped looks like an Archimedes maze," Roger said, hence the name.

Both games are available for the Spectrum disk.

The second ZX Fan success story reflected the growing popularity of the Commodore Speech Synthesizer.

Priced at £29.95 the Level 9 stand had sold out of their stock of 100 by noon on Sunday.

An aid for CBM 64 owners

INTERFLEX, an inexpensive adaptor from Oxford Computer Systems, is designed to reduce the dependence of the user on the Commodore 64's single disk drive.

According to Oxford Computer Systems the software that can be run on a 64 may be used with Interflex.

The Interflex is said to be an aid for businesses that are presently restricted by the sophisticated operating speed and facilities covered by the Commodore range of 64 peripherals.

Interflex is a small board box that will provide users with both RS232 and 10100 connections.

Unlike other interfaces Interflex does not use the cartridge slot of the 64.

Cricklewood wakes up

THE Cricklewood location is a maze. Tarnoff's adventure disc can now.

Set in the London suburb of Cricklewood, the player must make his way through London buses, cars, and a variety of other vehicles, and avoid the police.

placed with a lot of trouble. The Cricklewood location will be available for the first time.

Your problem solving ability will be tested in House of Death Tarnoff's follow up to Zicka.

Infocom releases detective mystery

INFOCOM has released a new game called Witness, based on a detective mystery. The Witness package contains a detective's dossier of clues, the National Detective Gazette, a suspect list, witness, a checklist and the day's news items.

The game is set in February 1988 and concerns death of a society mistress. A man man is trying to frame the dead woman's husband.

You, as the witness, work

from a clue rabbit about file and receive a 12-hour time limit to solve the suspicious society murder.

Clues hint that it is a murder family affair that may lead everyone from the frames to the killer's prints.

It's up to the player to sort through the clues, evidence and alibi in order to solve the mystery.

The Witness is available for £21.95 for the Apple and IBM + PC.

the 1988 new game, set in an old house, where horror film will once made.

The player receives a 4 hours among groups, time pass and a list of clues members.

The suspense could be a landmark in the recent time in which the player might find their primary the right explanation are found on they may be a help. It's up to you to solve them the right solution.

Latest PSS software

THE US based software company PSS have released a new adventure called Crystal of Zoog for the Commodore 64.

A spokesman for PSS said the game should prove as popular as the PSS educational games, such as Easy Tutor.

Crystal of Zoog retails for £7.95 (.)

Creating a land of your own

Planning a plot that will save you time and headache when writing the program, says Mike Grace in this extract from "Commodore 64 adventures"

MOST OF the books and articles on programming will tell you that writing any type of software should follow certain well-defined paths and adventure games should be no exception.

I have found that despite the obvious advice, it is almost as if the keyboard and screen programming logic always slip into one form when the advice — think first — is read.

I know this, as always — in fact the structure of the hardware is a total dictum in its own programming — but unless you do first yourself to work out the bulk of your story on paper first all you'll achieve is a stack of writing problems for later or an error in logic structure your program team and mine.

But, then, for perhaps a better word would be plan in a usual to both the success of the plot and the structure of the program. In many ways the process of creating a variable adventure is similar to the methods that film-makers use when constructing a film in concept. I will return to a later date I found this was the most common way to do the program.

The basic ideas

You need to both create the basic theme, the story, or other words, and then describe it as though viewing it through the eyes of your audience.

Part of the thrill of most adventure games I've played has been the final participation of actually taking part in the scenario. It is to be regarded that this is the case in a combination of features which I will summarize in no particular order thinking about them now — while writing to create the beginning of your story.

The success and satisfaction of your game will depend on your ability to use words to create images of your story, the depth and plausibility of your plot and the imagination of the player playing the game.

With regard to the last point you don't have any control over the skill and imagination of potential players, but as it appears that adventure players are often fans of science fiction and fantasy then a certain reasonable assumption that they will have a self-developed imagination — to I think we can take point three for granted. The other two features are vital to a more important role.

Adventure games will tend to give clues to follow the rule of the original scenario,

created for individual computers or the well known book-adventure games — this here it has awards the dragons, and dragons, various forms, forests or forests there.

A quick scan of any magazine will show up a variety of titles such as *Moonmist*, *Candy*, *Dragon's Lair*, *Wizard of Doves*. That of the *Dragon* and many more. Of course you don't have to follow the trend and there are several games with a totally different storyline emerging from an ancient looking for the right hardware/walk computer to slip out for a night on the scene which add a welcome touch of originality to the hardened player.

Main characters

I read once there are no magical plots for video — only different scenarios. Of course a vital, but Star Wars is a perfect demonstration of the ability to take a simple plot and transform it into a superb hit.

In all our stories we need some type of agent or hero to be achieved that maintains a primary escape from a dangerous situation through the means of a puzzle. We need a recognizable hero or heroine for the adventure game the player enters on the role and usually a villain or some other conflict for our main character.

When I wrote my own story I used the following steps:

1. Write the scenario in my fantasy, fiction style.
2. Choose a quote or goal for final success, escape from a hazard.
3. Develop the rule of the hero/heroine.
4. Select the main characters by named names or symbols.
5. Write a synopsis of the story.
6. Draw a completed map with a few basic locations.
7. Storyboard the plot.

Bookings of paths

It may sound as though there is a lot of hard work before even reaching the keyboard, but many of the steps in writing your story will follow so naturally that a bookman's interesting and challenging goal is made. And then, certainly, the way will either produce a new work list or result in an uninteresting product to the end.

The traditional type of adventure game,

which have no levels, walls, forests world or forests and island mystery demands with this. Objects, weapons, traps, dragons with maps and mazes, and similar ideas.

Perhaps it really is the nostalgia of the late days of our youth that you explain the popularity — perhaps a deeper reason, but for the budding adventure the range of possibilities opened by allowing the environment adds a cost and originally limited in the more mature world. After all — is there is possible in your story.

Immediate ideas

Speed and variety is a branch of this type of environment which substitutes the more magical aspects for realism. In the past (inspired by the writings of Robert E Howard) and his legends have created the world in a dark and magic place where spells and words are real and you proceed with the search of your goal and quest.

There are plenty of other variations you can use as I have mentioned the *Wizard* solving through the means caught up to the world of computers, the doorway to a dream world. You only need to look at the programs on the references, the books, or the fiction section in your library or the titles bring closer to your local concern to find immediate ideas for your story. And, of course, there is humor to use.

I will write a later date and have been that in the environment I show for adventure — *Nightmare Planet*. *Planet 51* fans would probably agree that *Nightmare Planet* is more space opera than it is SF, but for the sake of simplicity I repeat all scenes with a background of one, and space is a science fiction.

Again possibilities are plenty, creative use (and to create the good doctor who has been things into the far future) by his previous computer work a time machine feature against the theme planning to create the work involving a time machine plot for the title of the book. It was also the type of general environment that I decided to plan my story.

See goal

The whole idea of adventure is to create a puzzle that is money, where a goal — to the main character from the start may be to escape what your main goal will be.

When I first began to write *Wizard*, *Nightmare Planet* I had only one goal — to reach the Princess Aurora. As the story developed during the programming stage I added a second goal — to find the magic crystal and bring it back to the queen.

This added to the difficulty of the game and extended the scope of the adventure game considerably but was not really an essential part of the original story. Thus, despite the importance of choosing your goal it is possible to extend it later or to edit — add to it.

Don't be tempted to want to work out the detail at this stage. For example suppose you have decided to make your goal **FIND THE TREASURE** under the **Castle of Doom**. As your imagination

Lesson: Inside your Spacemap

You awaken with a throbbing head inside the wreckage of the contents of your cabin. As you creep to your feet, suddenly the memory of your spacemap being stored comes back to you.

Your mission is to deliver the beautiful Princess Ariadne to the Planet Thrax. What does this mean? Well, the Oracle, Zora Ranzak, a tall old man who sees the future in terms of an planetary value.

Your problem — you have fallen in love with the Princess and undertaken to be married with her into the lonely wastes of the Galaxy in an attempt to get her to forget her previous suitor, Zora Ranzak and return with you.

The few things placed a hand in your plans for your trip was damaged by a sudden air storm and it was all you could do to get for an additional place in the outer limits of the known Galaxy and escape a landing.

Now you receive inside the damage of your beloved spacemap. Almost sure to be the contents of your cabin, your spacemap, plans, charts, your finances and things of importance to you. But Ariadne has gone.

Your attack is registering that it has been opened from the outside that revealed. Your only friend in this Planet, your good friend, is abandoned and called you to your search for Ariadne.

WHY SMALL WE DO NOW?

begin to mark out the stars you had seen thinking of whether to add it now to the game adding 10 points for every star of course.

While you stand a thinking on this you could become diverted into solving the concept of additional points for various problems encountered which your player has (solved as a particular case law.

From this you may decide that you will need a depth of the stars on the screen all the time — so you do them in front of your screen and begin to mark out the "galaxies" of your spacemap.

The results of good mapping is the stage is complete. The balls will move later you can begin to program.

Facing her

Now you have to decide on the role of the hero. This — goes through — places the player into the scenario. An involvement in the adventure is the key to good playing you need to make your personal player feel as if he is the hero.

Your player may be himself chosen into the fantasy world or your player may be the role of the fantasy hero.

I don't think a mystery role much which you decide — as long as you make a clear right from the start of the game. In my own case I wanted the hero to be the pilot of a battered but reliable spaceship (babe of Han Solo) who made his living as a freight operator.

On one of the other alternatives in the plot will depend on the story you are writing so the same should really be considered as the same case in choosing the actual story itself. But as most of these suggestions slightly involved — but really happens a bit that you think of now — you will make naturally by thinking of the hero the

heroism, the different it seems to have some kind of structure which means that you don't have anything out.

The main characters must be someone people to create, villains, and awarded types to add local value as well as old feelings or old parts. Nightmare Planet is fairly lacking in characters because of its location — an alien planet which contains vast parts rather than villages — so the only other real character is the Princess Ariadne.

While I have not done so for the purpose of this book, it would be a simple matter to include a group at the beginning of the game taking of the planet in order to handle upon receiving the appropriate response the game would then be various variations so that the pressure could become a point and the player become a final space pilot.

Items can occur at the beginning of the game, often in the form that it might, so as to map out on the way.

As I worked down from Manchester to London and still maintain the whole plot came to me quite unexpectedly and quick, and I scribbled it down there and then.

Then turned the synopsis — which contained the same in basic outline throughout the creation and programming of the whole game.

Plot: Villains

My synopsis was as follows: you see the pilot of a spaceship on a mission to deliver the beautiful Princess Ariadne to the planet Thrax where she is to be married to the great ruler. You have fallen in love with Ariadne but dare not tell her.

A sudden power failure or monster storm causes you to crash on a remote, uncharted planet, but successfully land your ship but think you during the crash.

LOCATIONS: By the shores of a lake

WHAT SHALL WE DO NOW?

Date:

CAN'T DO THAT? YES?

WHAT SHALL WE DO NOW?

Name:

OK

You feel slightly uneasy at the water, looking down at the glowing

moon stage in the bed of the lake. It is a number fifteen from the opening.

WHAT SHALL WE DO NOW?

Date:

OK

A good number of attacks you appearing at a foot level.

WHAT SHALL WE DO NOW?

Forbidden:

IMPOSSIBLE — it is not done.

WHAT SHALL WE DO NOW?

But worse:

I DON'T KNOW WHAT MONSTER IS

WHAT SHALL WE DO NOW?

But worse:

WHAT SHALL WE DO NOW?

But worse:

OK

When you awaken you discover the ship has been raised from outside the pressure has been captured. You have to get out and proceed for.

The atmosphere on the planet is poisonous as you are forced to wear your spacemap in this but along the way you change upon an alien planet with strange fruit, which before stated allows you to breathe the air itself.

You cross a vast desert to a ruined city in your travels, but off you find there is a great task which awaits you.

You even will come to a huge force and combat your search. You become lost and after some time climb a tree to see where you are.

Risky ending

Underneath you see a snake waiting in the area — My of some size. On the way to the area you are attacked by a dinosaur, obviously the planet has no developed life. In along the evolutionary road you end eventually you find a village of men belonging to the natives who inhabit this part of the land.

You have found Ariadne who is you indicated by the natives to be a goddess. They threaten you when you try to take her away — and it is only when you kill her and show them you are her intended mate that they will let you take her.

On the way back to your ship you discover that Ariadne really loved you all along (there was obviously more, as "that's how it is") and you fly away together to a beautiful forest at the edge of the galaxy.

It was not a great literature but the creation of my plot is all there. As I began developing the story I added refinements and improvements along the way but surprisingly little. ☺

Q You need some idea of the geographical relationship of the various locations in your adventure to help you avoid making mistakes in your planning. Here as I found this was simpler if I just drew a very basic map which placed the various locations, with "real space" rather than attempting to fit them into a grid.

The discipline of drawing the map is a great help in developing the story. Just as I began to think of the objects, and people I would want to place in specific locations so I found the timeline of my original plot developing layers of a link.

Having drawn the initial map and given some thought to the plot, the next stage is to start to view toward your adventure.

Essentially this is a visual process. I love film. I prefer advanced stories to print that means contact and when it comes to writing I tend to see the finished product in my mind's eye before I put finger to keyboard. So it was natural for me to begin to write my adventure by using a technique of storyboarding similar to the process a director will often use when planning out a film in the early stages.

Storyboarding

A storyboard is just a collection of visual images portraying the story on a collection of boards — a strip cartoon of the film in other words. Obviously using a computer program saving heavily on text is not the same as drawing on film, but if I was to use a similar principle then what I wanted was

to see first what the player would see on his computer screen.

I decided to develop the layout of text on the screen and to picture some of the possible responses of my potential player so I could begin to think about the responses of my plot.

As this was a technique that seems to be of a little value — after all who wants to be an animal writing imaginary responses to "WHAT SHALL I DO NOW?" on his computer when there's a keyboard to play, we had to do it on a card. I found this part of my construction extremely valuable.

Developing Ideas

I suspect it was because I was able to begin to thought-forms. The reason that I was forced to the art of writing down various ideas and trying to think such story down deeply about both my plot and story locations. I began to get ideas which would serve me in good stead later.

A simple example is the personal robot Praximo who has survived for years and so I save on the screen published with the article. I am not sure in your search for Avard.

I first learned the idea of having a little robot who would be around to assist in with a comic computer or quiz on this screen — my first storyboard.

This idea would change and develop to become "Lance the robot who drops down from the top of the screen at various moments throughout the game. I wonder if

I'll look through it because I had to spend an hour thinking it, and writing up then to a major idea on the program?

The last advice before the just further thinking is: begin to draw how I was planning out my plot.

The last screen is one of the many I made up as I went through my story — trying to imagine I was looking in the eye of my responses to the messages from the computer. When I came to the actual programming of the response I was already fairly certain of what I wanted — and although I changed a few ideas around slightly the essence remains in the final version of Nightmare Planet.

Writing the plot may be the hardest part of writing your own adventure and perhaps the most frustrating for some programmers. But I have a hunch that adventures are attractive and creative people who will find that most the idea of a plot for his steps into their mind it is by hard to think a. Thus this happens that the only way to escape is to write — to transfer the thoughts to paper and then to computer.

I hope my introduction to the actual art of transferring the idea that concepts that will make your adventure unique and workable and will save you time and heartache later.

I have spent some time on it because all the books and articles I had read on programming adventures concentrate on the technical aspects of programming and tend to skip the hard part — the creative

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Graphics span the Spectrum

Tony James looks at a sub-routine that enables the printing of an unlimited number of User Defined Graphics

ON THE SPECTRUM the User Defined Graphics are kept at the top of the memory, above RAMTOP. By POKEing the part of the memory it is possible to define up to 25 characters, which can then be used in PRINT statements at basic programs.

The following sub-routine will print an unlimited number of UDG graphics to be printed. It can be used in any basic program but the documentation suggests because that an advanced program is being written, that the program reports the graphic representation of 16 numbers, each using four graphics characters, in response of one character each and an odd non-graphics character comprising a single character. A total of

80 UDG graphics to all. These names are listed below.

The Main C is routine tapes and the RAMDISK tape will be needed. Mark the blank tapes one and two. Tape one will store the final documentation program consisting of three changed parts.

The first will be a simple basic loader, using RAMDISK to a new value and loading the other two parts. The second part will be the 80 UDG graphics in code and the third part will consist of the sub-routine, together with a test routine to demonstrate it works. Tapes two will be a new tape tape to store code transparently.

Four tapes

The first requirement is to key in the program Loader (Listing 1). It is very short and should present no problems. Use 40 slots RAMDISK to 4823, protecting the 80 UDG graphics. This should be saved on tape one by its command "SAVE UDG LIST LINE 30" in most systems. After verification print the tape to test on for a few seconds then stop it. Do not record a Flop tape due to size table.

The 80 UDG graphics will occupy the top 172 addresses from 48234 to 49330. The character number these graphics 01 to 049. When they have been loaded into the memory, the memory map will look like Item 1.

THE UDG NAME	LET #	GRAPHIC CHARACTER
WIZARD'S LEFT HAND	001	⚡
WIZARD'S RIGHT HAND	002	⚡
REP (LEFT) (G87)	003	⚡
REP (RIGHT) (G88)	004	⚡
WELL	005	⚡
FLAME	006	⚡
STAIRS	007	⚡
HEALING WELL	008	⚡
FIGHT PIT	009	⚡

```

10 REM *****
20 REM ** LOADER **
30 REM *****
40 LOAD 4823
50 LOAD "UDG00" CODE
60 LOAD "TEST"

SAVE "UDG TEST" LINE 10
    
```

```

10 REM *****
20 REM ** BASIC UDG **
30 REM *****
40 LOAD 4823
50 LOAD "01" 48234-493
50 LOAD "02" 48234-493
50 LOAD "03" 48234-493
50 LOAD "04" 48234-493
50 LOAD "05" 48234-493
50 CLR
110 PRINT "LOADED MEMORY TO BASIC"
120 PRINT #
130 CLR
140 PRINT "UDG00" CODE 48234-493
150 PRINT "MEM KEY TO HELPER"
160 PRINT #
170 CLR
180 PRINT "UDG00" CODE 48234-493
190 PRINT "OK"
    
```

Figure 1. The UDG graphics to be loaded into the memory.

The four graphic spaces for the memory will represent a wizard's left hand, right hand, left helmet and right helmet. Together with the weapons they will have to be carried into the memory in a set random order. Keeping the odd one to the end of the run so that 01 will represent the living wizard's left hand, 02 the living wizard's right hand, 03 the living wizard's left helmet, 04 the living wizard's right helmet, 05 the wizard's left hand, 06 and so on, running through all the weapons and weapons in turn. The odd non-graphics follow online with 050.

The code saves the memory order by all the graphics from 01 to 049. The character names are then introduced and defined. The required paper to draw the graphics list by filling in the squares on a 16 x 16 grid at the end of the memory and so on. It is good to use the case of the weapons and the odd one.

When satisfied with the results, LOAD the program characters from the RAMDISK tape. Using this program and with the help of the drawings, construct graphics 01 to 028 (weapons) and weapons 1 to 49, defining them to graphics A to graphic T.

Save these on tape two to "01". Now repeat the process for 029 to 049 (weapons) and weapons 5 to 49 saving them on tape two as "02", then "03". Repeat the process for 041 to 048 and 050 to 059 saving them as "04" and "05". The odd ones 041 to 049 should be defined as graphic A to graphics I and saved as "06". On tape two should now be five levels of UDG graphics saved as "01" to "05" left and "06", in the correct running order from 01 to 049.

They must now be LOADED into the memory in their proper addresses. Program "MOVE UDG" (Listing 2) will do this. To check the character memory which the sub-program 07 and on at the main. Now you can key "MOVE UDG". Load 40 slots D-



Figure 2. Diagram of the memory map of the loaded UDG graphics to be loaded into the memory.

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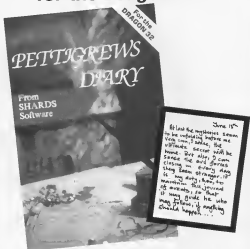
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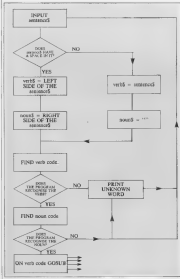
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How a computer develops skills in English

Lyman Alpha describes how a computer acquires the skill of English comprehension



I AM SURE you have wondered at least once while playing an adventure game how the devil you would make a macro understand the English commands and that a night be completed.

Well, it is not all that difficult to program a computer to interpret English, making a macro understandable to the computer. I will give you several example macros with differing levels of complexity. But I shall not deal with individual sub-routines for commands such as GET and INVENTORY as they can differ widely with one's needs.

Starting from the basic (verb) noun-format I shall describe how to deal with even the more complex sentence-complex (verb) (adjective) (adjective) (noun) (adjective) | | (noun) (verb) format. You should then be able to add a rather sophisticated sub-routine, enabling you to issue a sentence such as GET THE RED APPLE AND EAT IT THEN DRINK THE LEMONADE. (The basic (verb) or (verb) (noun) format)

In order to make the computer understand what you have typed in, the program has to replace the sentence with code numbers. It is usual to indicate all verbs and nouns you want in your adventure program using the following code handle numbers much more effectively than strings.

To illustrate this point, let us say that we want the program to GET LAMP and we had assigned numbers 2 to the verb GET and 1 to the noun LAMP. Once you have converted the verb to a number you can use it to load the computer to the verb routine using ON — GOSUB —.

The GET sub-routine will add verb number 2 to your memory and remove it from that location. Because the program can take numbers it is more simple and structured.

Take a look at program 1 written in BASIC below and flow chart 1, which shows how replacing simple (verb) (noun) commands with code numbers. The first line after the input of sentence is to see if the command consists of a single verb or (verb) (noun). If it is just a single verb let verb equal sentence, or split sentence into words and noun separately. It then finds the codes for the verb and the noun and sees if they are the words recognized by the program. If they are not it tells you so and goes back to the beginning of the program. The program then uses ON verb code GOSUB ... to call the required sub-routine.

The function FINDverb compares word with words in the dictionary DATA file. If the REPEAT UNTIL loop gets to the dummy string END then the routine returns TRUE. TRUE indicates that the verb was not recognized by the program. The function FINDnoun does exactly the same for noun.

Let's add define and redefine macros and programs so that the commands are grammatically correct and more elegant. Add line 461 to 464 to program 1. These lines will do anything necessary to clear for the additional format. The line 461 sets the noun was "IT" then returns the

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ed) last. I completed the game in just under eight hours.

The program is written in Basic, so the responses are slow. And life is made more fun, I think, when neither the CTRL-C nor the RESET keys are so disabled, making it very easy to break into and test the program.

Despite these faults there are some nice features in this game, and had it been priced around \$10 I would have recommended it as a beginner's game. As it stands though, at \$9.99 this game is over priced IMHO.



Graphics double the fun

Adventure: *The Hunt for the Unicorn*, Micro, BBC 124, Price \$9.99

Format: Cassette
Supplier: Big Box, Mailbox, House, Company Plus, Laserport

IT SEEMED inevitable that, sooner or later, a graphical-adventure would run up for the BBC machine.

The graphics are the program's main selling feature, the show of a type in its graphic adventures, according to Big Box at least.

There are more than 170 pictures in *The Unicorn Valley*, drawn on the Model 2 screen. This leaves about 10K for the game itself (all the picture enhancement) built in, but it is a perfectly playable adventure.

The setting for the action is a valley ruled by two kings and inhabited by goblins, elves and other standard fantasy creatures. You have a number

of strength points to start with, which tend to vanish when you're speared more than the game permits.

There are assorted items of treasure to be collected, which add to your score. As the story there is a bit in character from regarding the format and display of graphics. You can have full graphics, no graphics and long and short descriptions of the locations.

A full list of the program's vocabulary is given both in the game and in the instruction sheet supplied. The sheet also gives a few clues and a general background.

Five command words are given to the graphics. The picture-making capabilities of the computer are exploited effectively in most drawings, which appear very quickly on-screen.

Because however the program uses Model 2, any picture must stretch for text which is a great shame but unavoidable. Objects and characters are not displayed in the picture.

The number of objects you can carry is small. The maximum is to have three given to the other characters to keep



temporarily. To get back you have to use ALT or left whatever is keeping the object as far as I can see, then enter its value if you have it or make an attempt to kill you — usually successfully.

Once you start to avoid mainly intelligent characters the strength points begin to disappear as the aid you battle, dragons and dragons is fit.

One feature of *The Unicorn Valley* occurs in the end of every game and is totally unexpected. After you die, or quit, the program stops and cannot be restarted. The usual way of fix is to reset to reload the program or, since the SAVE and LOAD commands will work, a LOAD on position at the start of the game. But the authors of *Amulet* state (17/84) it is to be a permanent fix.

The Unicorn Valley is an involved and difficult adventure. As the instructions say, "You too have to practice at every step", which means it will take some time to solve.

The random graphics add to the enjoyment, which is only detracted from by the fact that to stay in the game, you need to care a great deal. This will certainly be true to become a class. IMHO.

Warlock casts his spell

Adventure: *The Hunt for the Unicorn*, Micro, BBC 124, Price \$9.99

Format: Cassette
Supplier: Big Box, Mailbox, House, Company Plus, Laserport

FENCLIFF Books starts with a dramatic advance over most software computers in practice.

That is evident in the excellent packaging of *Warlock of Fenest Mountain*. It comes in a custom-designed package including the best selling light-up-fancy game book which inspired it.

The game book itself and comprehensive instructions are displayed. There are a little less available since it takes no less than 10 paragraphs to control the screen. When you think you have them memorized you can proceed to the associated adventure.

Your task is to collect 10 keys with which to unlock the warlock's treasure chest and to escape alive. To do this you visited the west mountain of a little red-roofed town search a vast maze, with a

in different each time you play. Armed with a sword and a bow you combat the spiders, warriors and other creatures which try to bar your way. Almost as easy as it will be, it is a very slow and well structured. The game is complete and highly entertaining.

It is also, as some of you may have noticed, rather similar to the popular *Hells of the Temple* indeed it is so similar that it would be possible to build both games.

The pace of *Warlock of Fenest Mountain* is that you get the book as well. It has been seen resembles to the game being a kind of role-playing and Dungeons type of adventure.

You play a name printed paper and dice, with the book providing all the resources and problems. The experience is very similar to playing a traditional role-playing. All in all, *Warlock of Fenest Mountain* is highly recommended. IMHO.



Be beware of the Warlock of Fenest Mountain

Aladdin's lamp goes out

Adventure: *The Seven Lamp*, Micro, BBC 124, Price \$9.99

Supplier: Big Box, Mailbox, House, Company Plus, Laserport, Chelmsford
The GRAND Vision has just added the *Aladdin's* adventure

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NOTE: The Wrath of Magra™ is a 3-D computer adventure game for IBM PC compatible systems. It is the first in a series of three adventures set in a fantasy world of magic and mystery.

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Beat Nelson or Napoleon at their own war games

Ron Stewart studied two popular war games and offers tactical advice to the budding general or admiral

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS ago a company called Avalon Hill published, in the United States, the first board wargame called Tactics.

Since then a whole industry has developed to cater for the budding general admiral or squadron leader. The games produced today are so far removed from Tactics as the white or black the microprocessors. Subscribers often say it takes them 10 pages and allow for those available.

Game players

We playing games give the chance to see if you would have made a better general than Napoleon or Kutuzov. Perhaps if you had been captain the Wehrmacht would not have been tank or your troops not outgained by Nelson's Victory. The choice is endless.

Because of the difficulty of finding people prepared to sit down and play these simulation games have to give solo (tryng to oppose the strategy) or tank rules. This comes in of course, since to allow. When the computer came along many gamers saw their chance to progress the computer to play the other side.

Early computers did have limitations and this was not really essential. In the beginning most experienced gamers were able to beat the computer with ease. Things have now changed and, with the advent of more powerful computers, the programmers are catching up and making the computer more and more difficult to beat.

One of the most popular computers to produce wargames for the computer is Strategic Simulations Incorporated (SSI). Their games are written, as the name, for the Atari Apple and TRS80 computers. I will compare two of their offerings, Battle for Normandy, a game simulating the D-Day landings, with a new release on the market called Operation Wargame, which is published by Interleaf for the Amx.

Battle for Normandy comes in a flat book shell with two, in the program disk or cassette, plastic and cards, and a manual.

The first lesson in wargame strategy is read the manual. Don't try to absorb it all in one reading. Just glance over all the rules and gain a rough idea of what kind of what is going on.

Load the game onto the computer, as it does at lowest level and get the feel of moving and being the units available to you. It will be helpful at that stage to look at the flyers at your command and get to know their strengths and weaknesses. This also applies to the enemy forces. Look for a weak point it may be crucial later.

Now go back and reread the instructions fully in a game such as Battle for Normandy you will have to take into account weather and fogness. It is the weather in fact you will not get supplies from the ports across the channel, neither will you have access to support.

The manual gives you a percentage probability chart covering the period of the strategy. Keep this in mind when making moves.

Go direction

The most important reason of the rules to read is the line setting and game victory conditions. In Battle for Normandy you score victory points for capturing certain areas and pushing the German forces inland.

Identify these points on the map. When playing the game it is often a good idea to note it you gain extra points here and then do so it might make all the difference later.

Movement of both forces on the map is controlled by hexagons. This means that from any point on the map a unit can move in any of six directions. Each unit is allocated movement points. While a unit will only expend one point moving through one hexagon it will use up four crossing a swamp hex.

Units also effect the way a unit fights. Units attacking on the back hexagon hexagons that penetrate in Normandy will have their fighting ability doubled while

the attackers will have an advance modifier halved on them.

Combat in Battle for Normandy is simply repeated. Battle is played when opposing forces come into contact with each other. Every unit on the board has a degree of control. When a unit comes into contact with one of three zones it must stop. The concept is based on the premise that while five units another it will be local upon.

These units can also effect movement. It will use up more points to disengage a unit from the battle. Each unit has combat points. When battle is encountered the computer looks at all the units taking part and totals their combat points. It then reduces them to a value and modifies it for terrain.

A unit's combat effectiveness can be changed if it has not received any supplies other than that to the reserves or its command from a supply area. In Battle for Normandy you can also the effectiveness of the attack from aerial reconnaissance to see if you attack.

Enemy abilities

It will often occur a lot to keep in mind don't worry. After playing the game a couple of times you will soon get the hang of it.

In Battle for Normandy, you must capture and hold the towns of Cherbourg, Caen and St. Lo. Normally the other does not score the 1,000 victory points necessary to win the game before attacking it. To do this in Battle for Normandy is wonderful of time and space. The optimum strategy, I have found is to send a couple of strong infantry divisions and an armored unit around the coast.

The other forces are their terrain and will not invade. The German defense points at you will be able to move faster and dominate the German unit player.

In every game I have played so far the computer has only sent one unit north to reinforce the first unit defending Cherbourg. Try to take it as early as the game is possible. It gains extra points and we all know what points make do a war?

As well as capturing Cherbourg you must also take the Germans out of the coastal zone. This at the same it will also be necessary to capture St. Lo as an end part of Caen.

Other basic strategies can be used in most war at your fight. Can the two strongest divisions are areas as soon as possible keeping them on the back of the attack as long as possible. Don't make your odds even. All the way to it depicts your units can quickly making their mark on the later part of the game.

This is a strategy to be kept in mind when playing all wargames. You can see how the computer must overcome the enemy



needs to be kept to a lower level. If a unit gets low on strength remove it from the front line and allow it to build up again.

Basic for Normandy is one of the best wargames for beginners to get their teeth on. It includes most of the features that are found on board wargames. The graphics are good and it will take a lot of time to find the optimum strategy. The variables, such as weather, make each game different and unpredictable.

Superior weapons

Operation Whitford is newly released from Headland for about \$18. The game is of a more general nature. In fact it is a direct from Britain for Normandy as that is from there.

The map board is more again displayed on the screen and while very smooth, with roads, rivers and woods shown clearly. The terrain elevations are not stated and neither is the time period. You could be fighting the Germans in Madagascar or the Allies in the Ardennes.

Loss of objects to capture and hold a town against numerically larger forces. You begin not equipped with superior weapons and firepower. The game can be split into two separate parts. The first is the rush to capture the town. The second is to set up defenses for the counter attack that is sure to follow.

Your forces consist of heavy and medium armor, infantry, artillery and engineers for building bridges. Each type of unit is identified by a different model. Movement is regulated by squares and not hexes and the combat system has been simplified. Close range means attrition like other movement except that when you are getting near the front the control over the units is more precise. If you proceed any further the war is quickly over but you will be able to live in the combat zone.

This game is so interesting that it is difficult to define any kind of last strategy. Your main objective must be to take the town before sundown (but the AI that make up the game). This is quite easy when you are playing on the easy levels. On the harder ones it becomes an exciting race against time.

Heavy money

Once installed in the town you will have to live in a defensive wall. It is here that you must take into account the range of the units. I have found it easier to place the heavy long-range tanks just on the outside of the wall with a clear field of fire.

The soldiers, I think three squares apart. Two squares in the military camp. This means that anything coming into range can be shot at by two units. When forming a defense wall at the, always place units



For \$18, Head, Inc. **Operation Whitford** will make you discover some of strategy's mysteries.

behind the front line in a longest board pattern. Second line units can plug any holes that form in line as an enemy opponent who strays too close.

Overall, **Operation Whitford** is a wargame suited for the novice and experienced wargamer. It is easy to understand and you can start to play the game quickly. The rules booklet is one of the best I have seen and reads great even as an

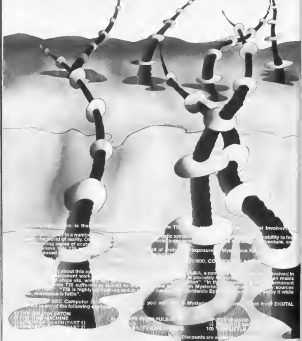
industry manual. Not only is it easy to read but there are no less than eight pages of hints and tips on the strategy to use.

Double shot

If like me, you get fed up tapping arms in cheaply made guns around a computer adventure, try a wargame and get the old guy starter working in a different direction. □



HAVE YOU BEEN INVOLVED IN A MYSTERIOUS ADVENTURE RECENTLY?



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Turning fantasy into code

ADVENTURE PROGRAMS are a special form of database program. This is why it is quite easy to develop programs, which give a description of an adventure, will produce a working program.

Normally adventure programs have no menu tasks displaying the commands typed in by the user and moving the user around the map.

Simple operations

The detailed description of how this is achieved is beyond the scope of this article but a brief description is given as follows: at the simplest level a command from a user consists of two parts: the verb (VP) and the noun (NP). For example a typical phrase in adventure games is: GET KNIFE. The adventure program would split this into two parts: GET (VP) KNIFE (NP).

The system would then find the verb part in a list of verbs and COMBINE it a

After planning an adventure game you must convert it into a computer program, and Andrew Pepper explains how

subroutine which does it. In our example they would be a subroutine which does the "GET" command. It would check the noun part "KNIFE" to make sure you were not already carrying it, check that it was in the room, check that you could carry it and, finally, get it, add it to your list of objects and remove it from the room.

I know the sounds complicated but, in fact, it is a series of simple operations like most computer programs and providing you keep your head when writing the code it is quite simple to write. But my main concern is with the development of the database.

How the database is organised is something you have to think carefully about. For each room the following is required: the name of the room, a description of the room, the routes to other rooms. There may be more information that you wish to store: a floor and how description for example, but we will try to keep it simple.

One way you could organise the data is to have three string arrays to hold the three parts of information, say N1 for the name, D1 for the description and R1 for the routes. This allows you to display the name of room N1 by typing PRINT N1(N). The description is produced by typing PRINT D1(N).

Alternatives

You could have the contents of the three arrays held in data statements in the program. When the program was RUN the data would be READ into the arrays. But this is inefficient. The data in effect, is stored two times in the source code of the program and again in the array. It is far more efficient to store the data on cassette and load the program in two halves, one part loads the same programs part of the program. When the program is run it loads the second half of the program into the arrays. If your machine can store the programs in its LOADED and RUN in one go, this could be done without the user knowing. See figure 1 for a diagram showing this.

An alternative method of storing the database is as a series of DATA statements. To read in the data for a particular room, the program starts at the first DATA statement and reads through all of them until it reaches the room required. This is slower than storing the information in an array but makes development easier as the programmer is now one file rather than two.

Room paths

The second technique will be used for our program examples. It is less machine dependent (the listings with this article are written in ANSI standard Basic, as used on the New Wave) because a database is really about rules which form the database most later. For example, if the rule is made that there can be a connection of two paths leading from one room (going north, east, south or west) then the information could be held for each room as a string showing the room number to which a particular route will take us. Suppose we are currently in room 11. The code using might look like this: 11 = 0011. The system decides the next the following lines if you go north then you enter room 11. You cannot go east if you go north then you enter some door. If you go east then you enter room 12.

With this as a model look at the simple adventure in program 1. It prints up a description of each location and asks for a direction. It takes the direction you enter

```
100 GET *****
110 GET *** See Program 1 - The Ice Palace
120 END
130 PRINT "See last issue"
140 END *** Start at room 1.
150 r = 1
160 ROOMS
170 FOR n = 1 TO 7
180 FOR m = 1 TO 4
190 PRINT
200 PRINT
210 PRINT
220 PRINT "Enter direction (N, E, S, W)."
230 INPUT d$
240 IF d$ = "N" THEN n = n + 1
250 IF d$ = "E" THEN m = m + 1
260 IF d$ = "S" THEN n = n - 1
270 IF d$ = "W" THEN m = m - 1
280 IF d$ = "" THEN PRINT "No"
290 PRINT " "
300 PRINT "Get 1 in that way from here"
310 END
320 END
330 r = n + m
340 PRINT
350 PRINT "Enter room No. (0 is an exit point or an closed door).--"
360 INPUT r$
370 PRINT "You are on an icy plain with a standard 60000--"
380 PRINT "Froze lake. There are in the side of a frozen lake. A cave near the top.--"
390 PRINT "Cave entrance. The cave is dark and forbidding.--"
400 PRINT "Inside cave. There is a little light from the entrance.--"
410 PRINT "Back of cave. You are at the rear of the cave.--"
420 PRINT "Top of ice mountain. You are at the peak of an ice mountain.--"
```

```

100 REM *****
110 REM Data array 2. See description
120 REM
130 PRINT "see line 2 see"
140 DIM a(10)
150 a(0) = "you are in"
160 a(1) = "the air is"
170 a(2) = "it is dark"
180 a(3) = "small"
190 a(4) = "large"
200 a(5) = "trees"
210 a(6) = "cave"
220 REM
230 REM *** take in 80 and 81 as, dimensions as 80 81
240 REM
250 PRINT
260 PRINT "Enter string to decompress"
270 INPUT a$
280 FOR i = 1 TO 100000
290 IF MID(a$,i,1) = " " THEN NEXT i:GOTO 300
300 c$ = MID(a$,i,1)
310 i = i + 1
320 PRINT a(i);
330 i = i + 1
340 GOTO 290

```

and display the new rooms you see it.

This is the type of low level program I used when developing a database. It lets me check that the rooms make sense and gives me some idea of what the program will be like to use.

One hint when developing this program if you start the DATA statements on a conveniently numbered line number (say 1000) then it will be easy to find the data statement for a particular room. Room 000's data is on line 1001, room 0000 on 1002 and so on.

If you look at the descriptions of rooms in the example program you will notice that the same phrases keep appearing over and over. It is possible to make use of the fact to compress the data. Commonly occurring phrases are not typed into the data lines over and over again. They are stored in a separate array. If we use string C\$(1) to hold the phrases then we could set up the array like this:

```

C$(0) = "you are"
C$(1) = "the air is"
C$(2) = "it is dark"
and so on

```

We now have to arrange that these phrases can simply be inserted into the descriptions before printing. A simple way to do this is special characters as an escape character, which would be treated specially by the system. Suppose we choose the backslash character "\".

The string "\0" is a small room, \2 and \1 dump "\ should appear by. You set up a small room. It is dark and the air is dump

This gives a string of about 20% over the

original. The code that converts the form is very simple and is shown in program 2. When this program is run you will be asked for a string to decompress. Try typing in the following: Enter string to decompress? \0 \2 \5 \2 and \1 and the system will produce: You are in a small room. It is dark and the air is cold.

The great feature here is two-to-one compression.

If your machine has an INSTR statement then it is possible to speed up the search for the escape characters. One obvious point. This program assumes that the character following the backslash is a number. If you find it with a string which has a backslash without a number after it then it will produce a BASIC error.

Planning

Hypos that more than 10 built-in phrases (10 to 20) that you could use the letters (A, B, C, Z). Line 100 in the program will have to be changed to read: 100 G = ASC(C) - 65. This converts a letter between A and Z to a number between 0 and 25.

There are some improvements that could be made to the example program. The descriptions should be split into 30-40 characters should be being printed, and the coding should be performed in a more compact form. But the program was designed as examples of the techniques used.

Remember to plan ahead when writing any program. Decide what the program should do before writing it. That way you can tell if it is working or not. From the



examples I have given by building up towards a full adventure. Hopefully, it will soon show, several simple elements linked together.

There are refinements you could add to role playing game players are given random characteristics: S.U.C.K., STRENGTH, COMBAT and HEALTH for example. These could be used in an adventure game to decide whether a particular task is possible or not. This adds a random factor to the game that should make it interesting to play even when the game is completely mapped out.

Remember that an adventure can be as simple as you want to have, writing the game out for an adventure is hard. The text is only a paper intended by the program. You are playing God and defining a whole universe.

To obtain a copy of the first part of the article, how to write your own adventure, send a stamped addressed envelope to, Mike Adventure, 12 12 Little Newport St, London WC2E 9LD □

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YOUR ADVENTURES

Programs from readers this month include the second part of *Catawaw*, a game for the ZX Spectrum by Keith Parrock. After a shipwreck you find yourself on a tropical island. While wandering around looking for materials that could be used to repair your boat you stumble across an Inca temple and other indications that the island might be inhabited. Roger Thomas in Sussex has written a program that provides LEFTS, RIGHTS and MDS equivalents for the Spectrum.

Send us your adventure listings — modules which readers can incorporate into their own games, short adventures and useful programming routines are all welcome. Please send us a printout and cassette along with a general description of the program and details of how it is constructed and can be used. If you want us to retain your program, enclose a stamped, addressed envelope. If you have any queries on the listings, write to the appropriate author, *Your Adventures*, Micro Adventures, 12-13 Little Newport St, London WC2N 2LD.

Survival in the South Pacific

A ZX Spectrum game from Keith Parrock in *Adventure*.

IN THE second part of *Catawaw* you begin to explore the island on which your boat has been deposited. While looking for

some of resources you find an Inca temple.

If you would like a copy of the first part of *Catawaw*, send a stamped address envelope to *Catawaw*, 12-13 Little Newport St, London WC2N 2LD.

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```

An option for string slicing

12-13 Little Newport St, London WC2N 2LD

ALTHOUGH THE Spectrum's means of using strings is very neat and logical it is quite different from the usual format.

Fortunately the listing solves the problem by giving you constants for LEFTS, RIGHTS and MDS.

```

3 DEF FN S(STR$,A) : STR$=LEN A$ :
  FN S(LEN A$) : LEN A$

```

```

4 DEF FN L(STR$,A) : FN S(STR$,A) :
  FN S(STR$,A) : FN S(STR$,A)

```

```

5 DEF FN R(STR$,A) : FN S(STR$,A) :
  FN S(STR$,A) : FN S(STR$,A)

```

```

6 DEF FN M(STR$,A) : FN S(STR$,A) :
  FN S(STR$,A) : FN S(STR$,A)

```

```

7 LET A$="LEFTSRIGHTS"
8 PRINT FN L(A$) : GOTO 10
9 PRINT FN R(A$) : GOTO 10
10 STOP

```

```

11 DEF FN S(STR$,A) : FN S(STR$,A) :
  FN S(STR$,A) : FN S(STR$,A)

```

```

12 DEF FN L(STR$,A) : FN S(STR$,A) :
  FN S(STR$,A) : FN S(STR$,A)

```

0000 DATA 10 2 2
0000 DATA 10 2 2
0000 DATA 10 2 2
0000 DATA 10 2 2
0000 DATA 10 2 2
0000 DATA 10 2 2
0000 DATA 10 2 2
0000 DATA 10 2 2
0000 DATA 10 2 2
0000 DATA 10 2 2

0000 ACM

0000 DATA "made the tolerances
of your goal which has been ad-
justed. The beach, here, at
reaches north and south. Read 1
here is a plateau... 10 20 2 2 1
2 2 2

0000 DATA "ages distance from the
of escape. A small group of palm
trees lead to the east. To the
east lies a small cove... 10 20 2 2
2 2 2

0000 DATA "leading a group of palm
trees swaying in what breeze
there is. Occasional here seen by
the sundress... 10 20 2 2 2 2

0000 DATA "at a small cove. T
here are signs of life here. A
with the presence of marks in the
sand in the shape of footprints.
10 20 2 2 2 2

0000 DATA "at a small cove. T
here are signs of life here. A
with the presence of marks in the
sand in the shape of footprints.
10 20 2 2 2 2

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with the presence of marks in the
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10 20 2 2 2 2

0000 DATA "at a small cove. T
here are signs of life here. A
with the presence of marks in the
sand in the shape of footprints.
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0000 DATA "in a narrow cove...
The light
of the water... 10 20 2 2
2 2 2

0000 DATA "in a narrow cove...
The light
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2 2 2

0000 DATA "in a narrow cove...
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0000 DATA "in a narrow cove...
The light
of the water... 10 20 2 2
2 2 2

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TRACE & DESTROY
THE SOUND OF
THIS FIVE



THIS SECURE TO
IT! CAN BE
PLAYED AS A
STAND ALONE
SCENARIO



WHAT IS THE
SECRET OF THE
STRANGE
MACHINE IN THE
DESERTED HOUSE
ON THE MOORS



YOU ARE CHOSEN
BY A RACE OF
SUPER INTELLI
GENT BEINGS TO
SAVE THEIR DYING
RACE



LEFT ALONE ON A
SPACE FRONTIER
WITH ONLY AN
ESCAPE
MONITOR FOR
COMPANY



DET OF PETROL
ON A LONELY
ROAD YOU SEEK
HELP FROM THE
NEARBY CIRCUS
BUT THIS IS NO
ORDINARY
CIRCUS



IF YOU CAN
RESCUE THE
KING'S DAUGHTER
FROM THE ENIG
MOANS HOPLINE
WILL BE YOURS
FAR AND YOU ARE



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MONSTERS AND
SUPERNATURAL
POWERS IN THIS
CLASSIC
ADVENTURE



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TO A STRANGE
NATION! WHAT
SECRETS DO THE
TEN WOODS HOLD
IF YOU LIVE LONG
ENOUGH YOU MAY
FIND OUT



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- cross the lake?
- loyno the chapel alive?
- ly?

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NOTE TO THE USER

NOTE: the programs will run on either the Amstrad 400 or 464 unless it is specified in which case no memory is needed on the 400

RAM: the programs will run on either of the 512K memory unless the model is specified in which case extra memory is needed on the model A

DRIVES: if a program needs a disk drive system this is specified in the notes column

OPERATION: the programs will run on either Spectrum

THIS MONTH I'll look at the best of problems — and some of the silliest encountered when playing adventures.

Adventure programs often let you stumble about in the dark for only a short time, or a couple of hours before deciding that you haven't the sense, plan or how to proceed and dumping you unceremoniously at the nearest saved-to order screen screen.

But what's this — something like water up to the neck? YOU ARE IN A SMALL CAVE. THERE IS A SMALL WOODEN BOX HERE TO THE NORTH. YOU SEE AN UNDEVELOPING STREAM FLOWING THROUGH A SMALL CRACK IN THE ROCK. THROUGH THE CRACK YOU CAN JUST MAKE OUT SOMETHING GLITTERING IN THE DARK BEYOND. WHAT NOW?

Hi! He says "essure"! Must get all flooded with possible pairs of our letters at every the vowels, we think the next problem with pairs. How are we going to get at the gold in the cave now?

We can't go the direction,

ADVENTURE HELP

If you need advice or have some to offer write to Tony Briggs, Adventure Help, Mirror Adventure, 12 13 Little Newport St, London WC2R 2LD



to trying
WOT WOTING
 YOU CAN'T GO THAT WAY WHAT NOW?

That's a lot of a blow. The computer, that is, doesn't seem very impressed with our previous brilliant deductions, and is already putting more problems our way! There must be a way through the crack. Maybe we are entering too many spaces, and we can't squeeze through.
DROP ALL
 O.K.

WHAT NOW?
 N
 YOU CAN'T GO THAT

WAT
WHAT NOW?

Hmm, this is getting silly. Is there anything to help us in the cave? There's a little pile of treasure on the floor which we dropped a few moments ago, but none of that is useful to us now. Was there's a box, isn't there. How could we have forgotten that?

EXAMINE BOX
 YOU SEE A SMALL WOODEN BOX.
 THERE IS NOTHING UNUSUAL.

Computers can be very pedantic!

OPEN BOX

O.K. THE BOX IS OPEN INSIDE YOU SEE AN AQUA-LUNG.

Aquaplan? Underground stream?

GET AQUALUNG
 YOU ARE CARRYING

THE AQUALUNG. THE BROWN GLOVES WHICH YOU ARE WEARING. THERE IS ALSO A SMALL BOX WHICH IS OPEN.

Was a moment though the box might be useful. We've sold it a small but maybe it will carry everything we want to take with us, and maybe it will float! How we can it?
GET RING

O.K. YOU HAVE THE RING. WHAT NOW?

PUT RING IN BOX
 O.K.

WHAT NOW?
 LOOK.

and we get the same lot as before, but with a difference at the end.

AND A SMALL BOX WHICH IS OPEN. IT CONTAINS THE GOLDEN RING.

A series of unobscuring problems that eventually yield results in a typical format for most traditional adventures.

ADVENTURE CONTACT

MAR 84 Spectrum 48A, Adventure **Lights Out? Problem** Who does not see you do so use the most needed at the lake? Name Supply Lane Address 11 Riverside 18, Solihull 40000

MAR 84 No 28 Adventure **Spies How Problem** How do you make the device stop and when do you do with the solar power cell and the ray gun? Name Maria Lucas Address 11 Valley Drive, Kewford, Cardiff

MAR 84 Asia Adventure 155 **Samurai Problem** How do you get past the camera, and in the great pirate's castle? Name John Firth Address 4 Pine Lane, Badgerley, West Sussex

MAR 84 Spectrum Adventure **Planet of Death Problem** How do you get out of the prison cell? How do you get out of the shed with the laser? Name S. Lamb Address 8 Macey Close, Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol

MAR 84 Spectrum 2A, 48A **Adventure** **The Hobbit Problem** What is where is the cavern? Name Mark Haggan Address 1 Tappan Lane, North Petherton, Somerset **MAR 84 2 MAG 18A Adventure**

Adventure Island Adventure **DI Problem** How can I cross the swamp without drowning? Does the profit have any significance? Name Ross Colledge, Dalkeith, Leitham

MAR 84 IN Spectrum Adventure **Planet of Death** **The Hobbit Problem** How do I escape from the tunnel, all out the golden dragon? Name Mark Robinson Address

Chesham, Bucks, Bucks, Bucks

MAR 84 230 Adventure **Esperanza Island Problem** How do you get down stream without being shot by a patrolling helicopter and how do you see at the dark corner of the second overhang? Name Dennis Cox Address Emswiler, Newbury Rd, 10 Newham, Twickenham, Norfolk

MAR 84 Spectrum 48A **Adventure** **Valhalla Problem** **What is the use of the sword?** Name S. Dair Address 111 Cliffe Rd, Middlebrough, Cleveland

MAR 84 Spectrum Adventure **Knights' Quest Problem** I am at the deserted woodland with a horse, compass and a coded rope. What should I do with the rope? Name M. Roberts Address 13 Balfie Lane, Fulstons, Yorkshire

MAR 84 BBC B Adventure **Circle of Builders Problem** I cannot map the jumbled maze. I have used the red and have got red, orange, yellow, green and blue, but not water. Name PW Anthony Address 17 Hallowesgate Close, Redhill Estate, Slough, Berks

HAVE YOU BEEN during at the water for this, as green up in stages, walk in an adventure whose problems seem insurmountable? Adventure Contact may be the answer. The column is designed to get job contacts in touch with one another. When you're stuck in a tedious adventure 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 the coupon and send it to Adventure Contact, Mirror Adventure, 12 13 Little Newport St, London WC2R 2LD. We will publish Adventure Contact items each month in the special column.

Name _____

Address _____

Problem _____

Name _____

Address _____

COMPETITION CORNER

Tony Roberts tests your skill — send your answers to Competition Corner, *Micro Adventures*, 12-13 Little Newport St, London WC2R 2LB



The best 20 answers we receive will win a copy of *Alpha Dawn*, which is part one of *Star Frontiers*, a science fiction role-playing board game from TSR.

Solve mystery of missing runic rings

TISCH, the black dragon, is now sporting three rings on his left fore-claw.

Placed both with herself and the work you have done, Tisch now has another task in mind. She wants you to start on a collection of ancient runic rings. The task is fairly demanding so a couple of your past efforts might help boost your confidence.

In the past you have had to enter the hut to retrieve the first ring, and escape back with your life and any treasure you were able to carry out with you.

On the way you had to battle numerous spiders, hungry gnomes, a dragon and soldiers. Not escape you did!

Well Tisch's servants, you had to find a second ring kept in one of eight rooms, which were described as a busy blue light. However, your strength would last only for six rooms.

For the third ring you had to fight two strange purple creatures that were viewed at two of the six rooms of a maze you had to enter where the ring was hidden.

The Frog's trials were deadly and the walls of the maze were too high for you to escape.

The runic rings Tisch wants you to find were hidden in a time before anyone placed or guarded and badly trapped

places by the last of her kind.

Tisch has spent the past weeks mind probing the first of these hiding places. She has mapped out the safest route for you through the maze to the ring.

Each turn you must take is marked with a left or right arrow on the six parchment sheets here.

As you enter the maze a deep growl and clanking of metal on a nearby rock starts you. The parchment slip from your fingers.

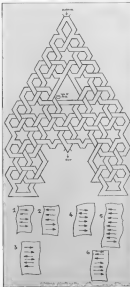
Fortunately you gather them together — but what order should they be in?

As a challenge complete the following sequence in 12 words or less. The top of the sheet is like to play first in this puzzle game.

Your entry must serve by the last working day on February. The winners and solutions will be published in the May issue. You may enter only once. Names will not be acknowledged and we cannot enter into correspondence on the result.

Due to Christmas holidays, the production of this magazine was brought forward by two weeks.

In order to allow readers enough time to complete the competition we have delayed until next month winners and publishing the names of the solution.



THE DAN DIAMOND TRILOGY

*My name is Diamond,
Dan Diamond,
and this is my story. A story
of beautiful mermaids,
bored robots and dank, dark
dungeons. A story that
started one muggy day
in New York, and like
the Big Apple, it's
rotten to the core.*

The Dan Diamond Trilogy is three separate adventure games. Each game may be played on its own, but they may be found in the earlier adventures which may help later on. Each game comes with a lavishly illustrated 60-page case file and hints (both help and misleading) which have been hidden in the illustrations.

Part I: Fearless's Tomb, in which our hero receives a cryptic message and sets out to a hidden tomb and the mystery of the mermaid.

Part II: Lost to Space, in which our hero is abducted in a spaceship and must discover the way out.

Part III: Fishy Business, in which our hero finds out a watery planet that was the source of the plot in Part I and saves the day.

All three programs cost \$29.95 each and are available for the CRAYON 32, BBC MICRO, B and G 486, ORIC 1 and Commodore. (Note: Fishy Business for the BBC and ORIC will be available February 1984).

Watch for the other 7 exciting computer adventure games from Salamander Software.

Salamander SOFTWARE

17 Norfolk Road, Brighton, East Sussex, BN1 3AA.

Look out for Dan Diamond's next Adventure Series "Franklin to Woodstock" Available Spring 1984

