VOLUME 1
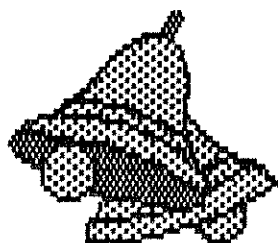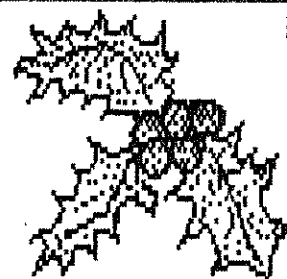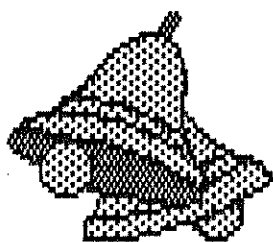# ISSUE 5
NOVEMBER '85

THE ADVSIG GAZETTE

THE EDITORIAL RAMBLE

1 November, 1985.

Hi! and welcome again to 'The ADVSIG Gazette'. Welcome especially to our new members - hope we can help, inform, advise or entertain you somewhere along the way. This is our Christmas issue (notice the cover!), although there isn't too much difference between this and a normal issue.

In this issue we have quite a number of reviews, mostly submitted by members, which is great to see. More of it though - if you've got something to say, say it - to us all! It's also good to see that the reviews are covering different companies, and a wider range of products.

The newest Infocom reviews - that is, of 'A Mind Forever Voyaging', and 'Spellbreaker' have been delayed (heard that somewhere before!!). Infocom didn't release them until well after the announced 1 September. Spellbreaker has just been released. Also, A Mind Forever Voyaging is available only for a limited range of computers - no Commodore 64's, no Atari 800's. Spellbreaker (the conclusion to the Enchanter trilogy) however has been released for the masses, and should wriggle it's way into a review in the January issue.

The reviews we do have though include - Telarium's Fahrenheit 451 and Broderbund's Mask of the Sun, both reviewed by Michael Spiteri, and are taken from Michael's forthcoming adventure review book, which will be published by KIM BOOKS. Also, Planetfall, Voodoo Castle, Emerald Isle, and the budget adventure Subsunk.

Oh well, enough of my ramble - until next year at least. Merry Christmas from all of me to all of you. Watch for the next issue around early January '86.

Until 1986,
Happy Adventuring,

Sincerely,

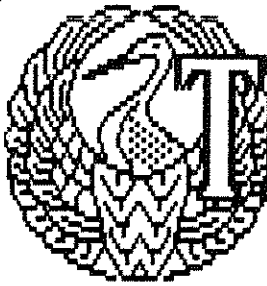Ernie Sugrue.

A BIT OF THIS - A BIT OF THAT

All information published in 'The ADVSIG Gazette' is believed to be accurate, and in the public domain at the time of printing, unless otherwise stated. It would be appreciated if any inaccurate material, or copyright material that is published be advised to ADVSIG as soon as possible so that it can be retracted.

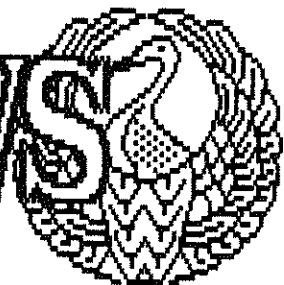All views expressed in 'The ADVSIG Gazette' are personal views only.

'The ADVSIG Gazette' is published bi-monthly in January, March, May, July, September and November by 'The Adventure Special Interest Group'. Individual copies of 'The ADVSIG Gazette', are $2.50 including postage. Membership to the 'Adventure Special Interest Group' is $10.00 per year, and includes six copies of the Gazette. Inquiries should be addressed to: ADVSIG, PO Box 594, Maryborough, 4650, Queensland.

Submissions on any topic regarding computer adventures, including reviews, hints, maps etc are welcomed by the group. All information received may be published unless otherwise requested, but may not necessarily be.

☠

〈 - VOODOO CASTLE - 〉

The Count's has been cursed and it is
your task to cure him, and set him
free - in Adventure International's 'Voodoo Castle'.

reviewed by Tehn Yit Chin.

☠

Voodoo Castle, the fourth adventure game in Scott Adam's Adventure series, is an adventure based in a castle. As the name suggests, the player is to bring a man, Count Cristo, who has been in a deep sleep back to life.

The game has applied the logic of a natural world and the adventurer must have logical thinking to complete the adventure. There is a stone wizard in the game and you must change him back to normal, when he will give you an important clue to solve the mystery.

The game consists of quite a number of rooms. Some of the rooms require special items to gain access, like your admittance to the chimney. It is blocked by a grating and you need a saw from elsewhere to proceed further up the chimney.

You will confront some hazards, such as if you want to break the crystal ball that belongs to the medium, a light will shine out from her broken crystal ball and it will kill you, which in turn ends the game. Another hazard is the laboratory, if you do not have a shield to protect you from the exploding chemicals, the game will end soon after.

The main object of Voodoo Castle is to pull the pins out of a voodoo doll in order to set the count free. To do that you have to discover a secret spell.

Voodoo Castle uses two word (verb, noun) commands as do most adventures. Overall, Voodoo Castle is an adventure aimed for the 'novice'.

(- PLANETFALL -)

JUST YOU AND FLOYD - WITH A PLANET TO SAVE FROM DESTRUCTION

reviewed by Ernie Sugrue.

The nerve of it all. There you are one depressing day, in your guise as a lowly Ensign seventh class, cleaning the seventh deck of 'your' ship the Feinstein, staying out of your superior's (huh!!) way (Blather) when an almighty explosion rocks the Feinstein. You must act quickly or all, including you will be destroyed forever. Later in the game you may find the cause and purpose of that fateful explosion. For now though - just get outta there!!

After landing planetside various problems confront you, hunger, tiredness and a certain, slow but deadly airborne virus. Your mission is to find a clue to the cause and perhaps a cure to this virus. To 'help' (?) you is Floyd. Remember he is your friend. Floyd will do almost anything you tell him. The reactions to this computer-generated robot are sometimes pure genius. They do however get a little repetitious after a while. Floyd is needed to solve a certain problem. Use him for whatever else you want him for before you get him to do this.

Time also plays an important part in Planetfall, and if you try to do this too late you may fail. Overall Planetfall is an excellent game (my favourite) with average difficulty. Some parts are a little disjointed, but overall it is very enjoyable. In one place, according to Infocom, quite a few people cry over what happens. Well, I thought it was a bit sad; sure, but cry!! Anyway, it ends up OK.

The most recent in the 'Science Fiction' series of Infocom adventures, 'A Mind Forever Voyaging' is one of their latest releases.

THE REVIEWS

CONTINUED

<- EMERALD ISLE ->

GETTING ON IS EASY - ARE YOU CLEVER ENOUGH TO GET OFF AGAIN?

reviewed by 'The Happy Hacker' himself - Stuart Elflett.

Emerald Isle is Level Nine's third graphic adventure for the 64, the first two being Return to Eden, and Eric the Viking, which was written for Mosaic. The Level 9 departure from text only to graphic adventures was (and still is) heralded by some as a giant step backwards, but a company must make money, and the truth is that graphic adventures sell.

Due to the efficient text and graphic compression technique used by Level 9, the number of locations and objects do not suffer from the addition of graphics, and there is nearly as much glorious text as in their text only games. And of course there is the usual multitude of problems that we have come to expect from Level 9. The commands 'words' and 'pictures' turn the graphics on and off.

The Level Nine sense of humour is evident throughout the game, though the puns are not as prolific as usual, or as bad! Conversations with shopkeepers will give you a grin, as will the phrase book.

The plot behind the whole game is that your plane falls to pieces as you fly over the Bermuda triangle, and you parachute to 'safety'. Legend has it that only the ruler of the land may leave Emerald Isle alive, and that every visitor is tested. Your immediate goal is to escape being eaten by the wildlife as you hang helplessly in a tree, but your long term aim is to leave Emerald Isle alive. Thus begins your quest to become King and Queen (no sex-discrimination in Level 9) of Emerald Isle. It's a task that will keep you going for many days and nights, especially if you can resist the hint sheet! I have resisted this temptation so far, but I've been hopelessly stuck for a while now - someone will have to look up a clue for me.

Emerald Isle is another superb adventure from Level 9, slightly easier than their previous games, but still very enjoyable and challenging. Just don't be too afraid of the dark!

SUBSUNK

Subsunk from Firebird enters the realm of the budget adventure
It is reviewed here by The Happy Hacker' himself - Stuart Elflett.

You may have heard about Firebird, the British Telecom software company, and their earlier releases being cheap and nasty. Well, Subsunk is definitely cheap, but it's not nasty! It is the first game I've played that has been written using 'The Quill', and it promises good things for the future.

The graphics are just 'keyboard' graphics, better than those in the Mountain Valley range, better than most games in fact. One annoying feature is that the graphics and description scroll off the screen after one or two inputs - this may be a side effect of the Quill or may be sloppy programming. A minor quibble when balanced against the low price.

The game has a reasonable number of locations, over forty, most of which have graphics. It is by no means the hardest of adventures, but it is fairly original, being the first adventure I've played on a sunken nuclear submarine - (enraged readers will now write to Ernie and tell him of hundreds of games with nuclear submarines, but this is a personal view of the game!). The actual story is that you are trapped in a sunken sub, and your only hope of rescue is to send off a distress signal to G.H.Q. (Government House, Queensland [?] Probably not!)

The vocabulary is quite good, better than the suggested words indicate. There are a few bursts of well programmed music, and some reasonable sound effects, which are great at first, but once you get used to them they just slow you down. Nice try, though. In one location you can have a resounding scream, which definitely does make you feel better.

I feel there must be more to this than just sending the message, as I have several objects that I didn't need to send the message. Either that or P Torrence and C Liddle have gone to extreme lengths with their red herrings.

All in all, Subsunk is an enjoyable romp, but the $7:98 price tag makes it excellent. Definite value for money.

Heading this months 'New Products' section is the two newest from Infocom Inc. In a _Mind Forever Voyaging_ you play .ne role of a computer that has been raised as a human until age 20. You must now enter a simulation of the future to see whether or not a plan proposed by the country's leaders will be beneficial for the country. Due to the new development system, and the increased vocabulary (around 1700) that Infocom is now using, the emphasis in this game is more on developing the games storyline, and less on solving puzzles. The minimum memory required is 128K - which leaves the Commodore 64's and early Atari range for dead. It has been released for the Atari 520ST, Commodore Amiga, Apple II series IBM PC/PCjr/XT/AT and the Apple Macintosh.

Completing the highly successful and innovative _Enchanter_ series is _Spellbreaker,_ the second new release. You have been promoted to the ultimate title - leader of the coveted 'Circle of Enchanters'. However, the world based on sorcery is failing fast and you must find and destroy this evil that is causing this failure - once and for all. _Spellbreaker_ is available for the masses - Apple II series, Amiga, IBM PC/PCjnr/XT/AT, Macintosh, MS-DOS compatibles, Atari 400/800, XL/XE, ST, Commodore 64/128.

Telarium's newest release is called _Perry Mason: The Case of the Mandarin Murder_. You are the world famous criminal lawyer. You must challenge the evidence, cross examine the witness is order to prove your client's innocence. Only you can do it - and time is running out!
Telarium adventures are available for 'most popular home computers' (<- their words, not ours!)

A new type of program called _Hacker_ has recently been released through Activision. Apparently you are simply confronted with the opening screen: 'LOGON PLEASE:'. That's it, no instructions. The main idea is that you have stumbled into an unknown computer system - now what do you do? You aren't supposed to be there, but the temptation is almost overwhelming. Some comment's from reviewers: '...the most mysterious game ever..', 'Plunge into every hackers dream'. Currently available for Commodore 64/128, Atari 800, XE, XL, Apple II series, and compatible systems.

The above products may be purchased through ADVSIG (via 'Adventure 'R' Us'). Further details elsewhere in the Gazette.

'A FUNNY THING HAPPENED.....'

This is the section where we'll print those humourous responses that you can get from adventures.
Some may be amusing, some may be deadly. If in doubt, do a SAVE first.
Also, if you are still completing an adventure, you may find out something about solving the adventure that you don't want to know. You have been warned.

Planetfall:

try...eating the ambassadors celery. - Eugene Wong.
try...throwing your brush at Blather. - Eugene Wong.
try...kissing Floyd. - Eugene Wong.

Witness:

try...kicking and hitting people.- Eugene Wong.
try...examining the toilet. - Eugene Wong.
try...patting people. - Eugene Wong.
try...sitting in Linder's chair before the murder. - Eugene Wong.

Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy:

try...consulting the Guide about Heart of Gold. - Grant McHerron.
try...opening the bedroom curtain.- Robert Sabbatini.

The Hobbit:

If you are fed up with Thorin and the gang, climb into the wooden chest, close the lid and then try walking around. - Michael Spiteri.

? "THE HAPPY HACKER" HIMSELF ?

Stuart Elflett, another member of ADVSIG runs his own adventure group, that produces a periodic newsletter called Adventure News. The club is only for users of Commodore 64's, SX64's and C128's.

Anyone who wants more info or needs help with arcade/adventure problems can contact Stuart direct at:

Stuart Elflett,
MSF 550,
Toogoolawah, 4313,
Queensland.

Stuart has written many reviews for this 'ADVSIG Gazette' as well as some more coming up in the next issue. On ya Stuart – [He's also known as 'The Happy Hacker']

RAPID RIBBON FOR RAPID RIBBONS

83 LONGUEVILLE ROAD, LANE COVE, 2066, NEW SOUTH WALES.

Rapid Ribbon Co. is a new company that calls itself 'Australia's No. 1 Ribbon Company'. They stock over $1,000,000 worth of stock. RRC accepts payment in cheque/money order and major credit cards.

If ordering, add a delivery charge as follows:
SYDNEY/MELBOURNE/BRISBANE :$3.00, ADELAIDE/DARWIN/PERTH :$5.00.

All orders are shipped immediately on receipt.

AMUST SP80 multistrike	14.75
AMUST '88 matrix	18.75
ADLER DRS250 matrix	14.75
APPLE imagewriter matrix	14.75
B.M.C. SP80 multistrike	14.75
COMMADORE SP80 multistrike	14.75
COMMADORE MPS 801 matrix	14.45
COMMADORE VIC 1525 matrix	12.75
COMMADORE PET 8024 matrix	13.75
COMMADORE PET 8023 matrix	14.50
COMMADORE PET 8300P matrix	12.75
COMMADORER PET 4022 matrix	22.75
COPAL 80 matrix	21.00
C.ITOH 8510 matrix	14.75
CENTRONICS 150 matrix	14.50
EPSON MX80-FX80 matrix	12.95
EPSON MX100-FX100 matrix	18.95
EPSON LQ1500 — ERC13 matrix	16.75
LOGITECH FT5000	18.75
MANNESMAN TALLY 100-110-120-160 matrix	21.75
MANNESMAN TALLY 130-140-180 matrix	26.75
N.E.C. 3500 multistrike reversible	18.75
N.E.C. 3500 matrix	19.50
N.E.C. pinwriter P1-P2 matrix	19.75
N.E.C. Pinwriter P3 matrix	24.75
NATIONAL PANASONIC matrix	18.75
OKI Microline 80-82-83-90-92-93	8.75
OKI Microline 84 matrix	12.75
OKI Microline 8300 matrix	24.50

FORDIGRAPH Executive 77	
QUME IV-7-9-11 multistrike	9.75
QUME IV-7-9-11 matrix	14.95
RADIX 10 matrix	19.50
RADIX 15 matrix	21.50
RADIO SHACK/Tandy TRS 80 -1-2-3-4-5-6 matrix	24.50
RADIO SHACK/Tandy TRS 80 -6-8 matrix	18.75
RADIO SHACK/Tandy TRS 80 — D.M.P. 200	16.75
RADIO SHACK/Tandy TRS 80 — D.M.P. 401 multistrike	24.75
RADIO SHACK/Tandy TRS 80 — D.M.P. 400 matrix	13.75
RADIO SHACK/Tandy TRS 80 — daisywriter 2 multistrike	16.75
RADIO SHACK/Tandy TRS 80 — daisywriter 2 matrix	13.75
RADIO SHACK/Tandy TRS 80 — D.M.P. 100	16.95
RADIO SHACK/Tandy TRS 80 — D.M.P. 200	13.75
STAR Gemini 10X twin spool matrix	15.75
RICOH 1300/1600 multistrike	8.75
SEIKOSHA line printer 80	13.75
SEIKOSHA line printer 100	13.75
SANYO ME108 matrix	15.75
SMITH CORONA D300 matrix	9.75
SMITH CORONA D200 matrix	16.75
SILVER REED EX55 multistrike	22.75
SILVER REED EX55 nylon	16.95
TOSHIBA P1350-P1340-P1351 matrix	18.75
TOSHIBA 351 matrix	16.90
TOSHIBA R203 matrix	16.90
TOSHIBA P1010/P1150 matrix	21.50
TOSHIBA PA7024E matrix	14.75
WRITEMAN/INFORUNNER matrix	14.75
	17.85

ADVENTURES 'R' US !!

FOR THAT HARD TO GET ADVENTURE PRODUCT- JUST HOLLER FOR ADVSIG

You've heard of this great new adventure program you'd simply love to get - but it hasn't been released in Australia yet, and you don't want to go to all the trouble of ordering from America. What do you do? Easy - let ADVSIG order it for you!

ADVSIG will try to get any program for you as quickly as possible. Currently it takes about five weeks from when we get your order until you receive the software, but this could vary especially over the Christmas period.

If you'd like to order a product from us, here's what you have to tell us:

You name and address   Computer Type
Program Name   Program Manufacturer
Maximum 'American Amount' you are willing to pay

The Australian equivalent of an American amount will be more. The American Amount includes postage from the United States to ADVSIG.

Note: Customs Duty is not included in this cost nor is postage from Maryborough to your address.

In general it will cost about $65 - $70 for an Infocom adventure.

Also, when you order a program, please include a cheque for $50:00. Any extra amount will be advised as soon as possible.

If you'd like any more information on how this scheme works, please drop us a line.

ADVSIG

WE WANT TO TELL YOU WHAT YOU WANT TO KNOW.

THE REVIEWS

'FAHRENHEIT 451' - THE REVIEW

451 DEGREES FAHRENHEIT- THE TEMPERATURE AT WHICH PAPER BURNS

One of the new 'Telarium' adventures, Fahrenheit 451, based on the
best-selling novel by Ray Bradbury seems bound to become a best-selling
computer adventure. It is reviewed here by Michael Spiteri.

This review, and the one following it are both taken from Michael's
forthcoming adventure book. It is to be published by KIM BOOKS. The reviews are published with permission.

Fahrenheit 451 is a mammoth four disk graphic adventure game. The game is the sequel to Ray Bradbury's sci-fi novel of the same name. You take the role of a fellow named Montag, who has arrived in New York, sometime in the 21st century, to find the ultimate blow for freedom, and to find Clarisse, his mysterious lover. It would take me too long to explain the complete plot, but it is supplied with the game, and is very interesting. You are stuck dead smack in the middle of a park. A forest containing tigers is to the north, and to the east is a pond containing alligators. A new exit is quickly revealed and sooner or later Montag finds himself in the middle of the Big Apple. You can just imagine how many locations can be squeezed onto four disks - an awful lot. This is a very large and complex adventure game. It does understand full sentences and the vocabulary is fairly large. Then there is the graphics, very impressive indeed and quick to appear. Also, each graphic scene changes as certain incidents occur (eg: train appears).

The graphics can be switched off if required. As well as a detailed graphic location, each place is also described in effective detailed text - the type we have come to expect from Infocom adventures, also, we are presented with a new Commodore character set featuring clearer modernised letters. Plus there is also various sound effects and musical tones that are played every now and then. Playing the game itself is very enjoyable, characters come and go and talk. A true storybook adventure type atmosphere is created. The game boasts true computer generated, interactive fiction - and I could very well believe it! While I was walking down one of the side streets I noticed a WANTED sign - I was the criminal wanted! In a state of panic I ran down the nearest street - only to be killed by Robot Hounds - mechanical police dogs. The only thing that lets the game down is the fact that the player get's bumped off too easily - death is just around the corner, without any warning whatsoever. This can be very frustrating, so I suggest that players use the complex save/load routines available. The disks are packaged in a very smart record sleeve type package, and come complete with all the required documentation. Fahrenheit 451 is a very complex and high quality adventure game which should take any expert adventurer a considerable time to complete. Not recommended for first-timers to adventure games. Fahrenheit 451 - the ultimate test. Skill level - expert. Rating - 98%.

MASK OF THE SUN

Mask of the Sun
reviewed by Michael Spiteri
taken from his forthcoming book
to be published by KIM BOOKS.

Broderbund Software take a new step in computer adventure games - true graphic animation. I don't mean the occasional sprite moving across the screen, I mean full screen animation - like a cartoon! For example, if you walk north, you won't just skip to another screen, you actually move towards the north, the screen creates a 3D effect. In this adventure, driving a jeep means gazing at the moving countryside! There is a snake who actually comes to life on the screen and attacks you! There is a leopard that comes to life and walks off the screen! The graphics are very realistic, exactly like a comic book, full of colour! The game features full sentence input with a large vocabulary. As well as graphics picture (that is quick to appear) at every location, there is also a lengthy description in modern style easy-to-read letters.

'MASK OF THE SUN' REVIEW - CONTINUED

Not forgetting the occasional sound that may turn up. Even better, the adventure has a very original and interesting plot! You take the role of Mac Steele, and archaeologist and treasure hunter. During his adventure Mac discovers an amulet that belonged to his colleague Francisco Roboff. Mac then discovers that the amulet may hold the secret of the whereabouts of THE MASK OF THE SUN, a most valuable artifact! When Mac tries to open the amulet it releases a strange gas. Mac wakes up in hospital bed to find his body undergoing a fast degeneration. He then learns that the MASK OF THE SUN hold the secret of the only cure. Mac quickly contacts a Mexican Professor who knows of a few Aztec ruins that could hold the Mask. The adventure starts with Mac climbing out of the plane to meet the Professor and Raoul, a companion who will help him during his quest. So the adventure begins.

Like all good adventures, there are numerous and hard problems such as avoiding a deadly snake, fighting two bony (sic) skeletons, recovering a couple of valuable bowls, jumping pits, avoiding ghouls, facing shaky rocks and unblocking passages. Those problems are what you'll face in just one of the temples, and remember there are three temples in all. There are also the most devious red herrings in this adventure! There are numerous locations and numerous objects. You must also keep an eye on Mac's life giving pills - if you drop, lose or run out of these pills, it means an instant death. Of course, there are other ways of getting killed, just keep your eyes open! There are some occasions in the game when you must be quick at the keyboard. For example, when the snake appears, you'll have to react quickly or you will be killed - no time to wait. Very well packaged with good documentation. Expect more than one disk in the package, as it is a big game. A bit pricey perhaps, but well worth it! Skill level - intermediate. Rating - 97%.

[Watch for a review of Mask of the Sun's sequel - Serpent's Star in the January Gazette - -Ernie.]

HINT LINE- ALL THE HELP YOU NEED

'Hint Line' is where we'll answer specific member questions, as well as questions that haven't even been asked (Kind aren't we!)Members who would like questions answered directly should enclose a stamped-self addressed envelope. Some of those questions will also be answered here. For clarity, the wording of questions may be changed.

In Hitchhikers, how does Ford bring back the satchel fluff?
:-Ford must somehow convince Arthur to bring it back for him. This can only be done late in the scenario, after Arthur's house has been destroyed.

Does it matter if the generator/plotter is plugged into the large receptacle on the Bridge?
:-For one situation the plotter must be plugged there. However, choose your moments carefully, as one chance is all you get.

What things are NOT needed in Hitchhikers?
:There are probably a few things that you do not require. You are able to carry every movable thing in the game at once, and all because of a g relative with foresight.

Stuart Elflett would kill for a copy of the coded clue sheet that is available for 'The Institute'. Any one who can help, can write to him at:

Stuart Elflett
MSF 550
Toogoolawah 4313
Queensland.

Help me! I'm tearing my hair out with frustration!! I have to know the exact wording of the command that I need to get out of one of the temples in 'Mask of the Sun'. It's the first temple you must complete - the one with the snake, and bowls and skeletons. I know what I have to do, but I need the exact wording as the program refuses to accept any commands I give it. -Ernie.

A CHANGE FOR THE BETTER ?

At the end of November, I will be transferred in my job from Maryborough to Sydney. Unfortunately until I can find a permanent place to live my computer equipment will be staying in Maryborough. Therefore the services of ADVSIG may be disrupted for some weeks. The copy of 'The ADVSIG Gazette', due to be issued on 1 January 1986, will now issue on 1 February 1986. If anyone would like to have a go at publishing the Gazette for a month, and can get it done for January posting, please let me know.

Any enquiries, other than membership enquiries, received after November 20, may be delayed. I'm sorry for any inconvenience, but ADVSIG'll be back next year.

HINT SHOP

This is the section where we'll offer general hints to the solving of adventures. Any adventures may be covered here, so if you have any general hints, please send them in.

Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy.
 :To get the Babel Fish - hang your gown on the hook, put the towel over the drain, the satchel in front of the panel and something more or less useless (unless it's from ADVSIG) on top of the satchel.

 :With name spoken
 And towel upon thy head
 Carve thy name in stone
 Cause he'll think you are dead.

 :The fruit of knowledge, commonly known as Steamed Fluff Plant.

Cutthroats.
 :If the status line stops, try examining your watch.

 :McGinty must not see you with your bankbook or the shipwreck book. Get rid of them both when you can...

-LEMONS- (AN UPDATE)

<- UPDATE ->

Last months 'Lemon' was Infocom's former mail order company (they have since apparently improved the service). For those who read about my problems last month - a refund for the products was received during October. It was for almost the full amount, and posted surface on 18 July.
 Just thought you'd like to know.

 A full 'Lemon' will return in the next Gazette.