

## Adventure Construction Set

1984 Electronic Arts  
Programmed by Stuart Smith

Most text of the present article comes from the review published in the seventh issue of the British C64 magazine ZZAP!64 (November 1985)



## ADVENTURE CONSTRUCTION SET

Ariolasoft, £14.95 disk only



here are few days when I doubt my sanity. Normally, my great mind sees the logic in all things and so I rarely doubt others'. Today was different. It had the vague atmosphere of impending catastrophe coming nearer and nearer. It first reared its fearsome head

when I loaded Adventure Construction Set. Ah, such are the wonders of modern science that in this one package we are given all that is necessary (except the obligatory spare disk) to create our very own graphic adventures, complete with scrolling maps, custom built creatures, sound effects and cliched tedium (but wait, all will be made clear).



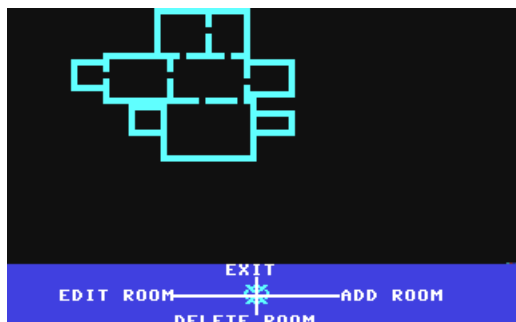
Everything in terms of operation of the ACS was simplicity itself. There was very little that could only be understood after deciphering one of those arcane offerings, the instruction manual. The manual itself was not remarkable but managed to be concise and clear if a little misleading. Misleading in what way? Oh, I have only a tiny quibble, really. It gives the impression that all the work you will inevitably put into your first creation might even be worth the effort. How misleading!



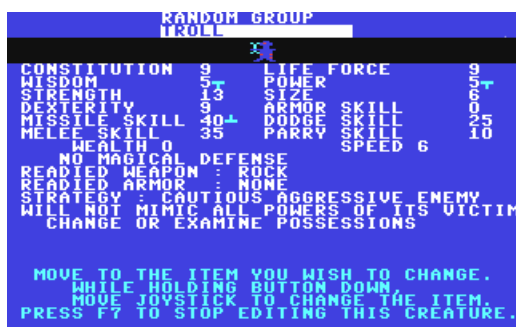
Fine, my disk was ready and I wanted to get straight into creating my own world (you must understand that there isn't much of an opportunity to get involved with world-creation nowadays). The area in which you can build your world is about eight times the size of the screen. Basically, you may use a simple joystick selection routine to place different types of territory to the map. This is so badly handled I found it rather amusing. The scrolling cannot be described as fine; in fact it is so jerky I thought my eyes were playing tricks on me. The graphic symbols used are akin to those often found in wargames on the computer, not bad but hardly anything to raise a hairy eyebrow over.



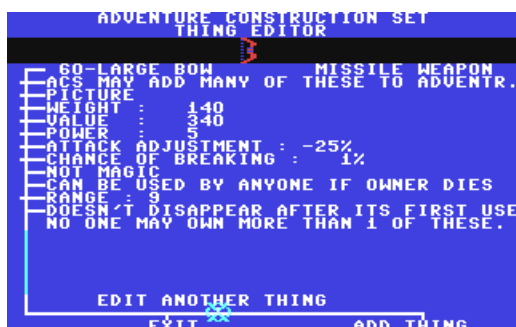
Terrain features include such fascinating things as spaceports, time warps and alien vessels (I was using the science fiction version but there are also fantasy and mystery styles of adventuring; but I did not want to complicate the matter with magic, at first). All these features exist (or could exist) for no reason whatsoever and in fact they all do exactly the same thing: transport your character from one area of the map to another of your choosing. It is possible to edit the graphic features however, and even to rename them, but such good features in the program are insignificant compared to the gross incompetence that pervades the rest.



One tiny detail of vital interest to loading minions, which the manual does mention in passing, is that there is the need for a few disk changes whilst setting up your blank disk for the adventure. Well, there are a lot of disk changes needed (I stopped counting after the fourteenth). So make sure, whatever you do, that you have several months to spend on just getting going -- otherwise you're going to have to start all over again.



The funniest aspect of this part of the program is that there is no logical restriction on the different types of terrain you can use in any given area. Consequently, I happily made a world without any coherency to it at all; plains of boiling lava are listed as passable terrain whereas water is not (oh, rivers are all right, just 'water' creates the problems). Gateways of various descriptions lead into the middle of a lake with no possible means of a character returning from one; in fact the whole affair is definitely Pythonesque.



Once you have created your map, it is possible to populate it with various creatures and objects. You can also start adding more detailed rooms, which themselves can have creatures, objects, and whatever else takes your fancy. The amount of customisation that may be achieved with the adventure pack is enormous and still easy to achieve. Should you become bored with the process you can even let the program create the rest of your adventure for you, although when I tried this, the process took as much as forty minutes!



It was so laughable because the result was so bad. I'm sure that the various routines contained massive areas of BASIC, and the resulting finished adventure could never look anything other than extremely amateur in nature. In fact, you might spend so much time laughing at the finished work's cheap, outdated and silly details (such as the fact that your character can be a mountain range), that it would be easy to forget just how much scope ACS's programmer has attempted to achieve. In that respect the product is admirable. There are even seven mini-adventures and one epic already on the disk.

The genres vary and some of the plotting is clever and imaginative, but all of them are slow and clumsily displayed. I really could not believe my poor old eyes with this one. Compared with programs already available for writing your own adventures, the Adventure Construction Set can only be viewed as a waste of time and money.

Atmosphere	30%.
Interaction	45%
Lasting Interest	25%
Value for Money	27%
Overall	24%



Welcome to Stuart Smith's Adventure Construction Set and the Land of Aventuria! This adventure contains a tutorial to help you learn the system, as well as seven different mini-adventures designed to suggest the kinds of games you can create with ACS.

Land of Aventuria by D. Daglow & S. Smith is included in the 4th disk image of the set.

Are we each destined to live for one brief lifetime? Can any person live eternally, or live again? There are some in the old worlds of Babylonia and Egypt who profess to know these answers. You may meet them on your own quest for eternal life.

Rivers of Life by Stuart Smith is included in the 3rd disk image of the set.