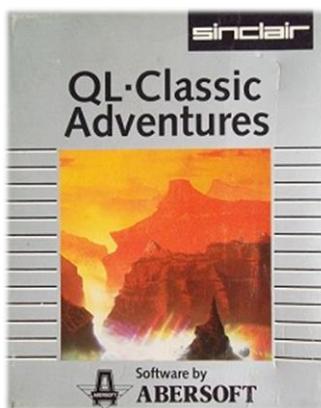


Classic Adventures Review, Text From QL World December 1985



SINCLAIR RESEARCH has taken the plunge and joined the budget adventure games market with a new release, QL Classic Adventures. Previously the company promoted areas for which little software was available but now, by producing QL Classic Adventures, it is competing with dedicated software manufacturers.

The first adventures for the QL were the highly-acclaimed Zkul and West from Talent software. They made use of the large QL memory and powerful processor and were significantly better than adventure games for other home computers.

QL Classic Adventures does not, however, make use of those facilities and consequently lacks their professionalism. You will receive a solitary Microdrive incorporating not one but two adventure games, both equally inferior.

The first is based on the famous adventure game by Crowther and Woods, the first of its kind, while the second is a loosely-related but original sequel. Documentation supplied is confined to the back of the box, so no details of the story are related.

Some instructions are included in the program but they are limited and cover only the basics of how to play. They also give some subtle clues. The first of the programs has always been a popular storyline and the program is interesting in that respect.

Unfortunately the intelligence of the original on which it is based - has also been maintained, so the program is very basic in its understanding of requests from the player.

That has only one advantage — if you prefer to abbreviate all your commands — but can cause problems for inexperienced users; for instance, north-east must be entered as NE, or it is read as north.

Moving north into a room does not necessarily mean you enter it from the south. Roads are often curved, so moving north can take you east, and so on. The adventure puts you in a forest from which the only escape is down — through a grating to the underworld.

Once you have entered the underground caverns, snakes, magic words and dwarfs all have to be contended with, and in some circumstances contested.

The text is clear but rather brief and suffers from one or two grammatical errors. It is also written in such a way that events happen before you are informed of them — “a dwarf threw an axe at you which missed”, it says, which does not give you much of a chance to dodge. Also the replies to commands do not distinguish between requests which are not understood or requests which are not possible under the circumstances.

The second adventure is called Mordon ‘s Quest. Unlike its partner it is entirely original in its storyline but still suffers from a poor vocabulary and a severe lack of intelligence, using the same routines as the first program.

It is, however, more logical in its design, and suggests helpfully that you thaw a map to trace your route. Initially you find yourself in a large house in the middle of an impenetrable mist. Your mission

is to help the immortal Mordon, "oldest Lord of the many realities", to find his stolen machine and keep reality a reality.

Having struggled for several hours to achieve a result, or at least to go somewhere interesting, I concluded that the name Mordon would be more appropriate without the 'd' — but that is all part of the fun.

In both adventures various object are used to help you through the problems you encounter. Again the unprofessionalism of the program shows; although you can hold about eight objects at any time, each one has to be identified individually; you cannot say "take all", as you can in other adventures. In *The Adventure* those objects are present in certain rooms or caverns, while in *Mordon's Quest* they are locked initially in a cupboard and revealed only when you agree to undertake a mission assigned to you. Travelling from place to place is easy but the entertainment provided in each place is somewhat limited.

For those who have not tried this type of game previously, *Classic Adventures* might drive you to distraction. — *Jason Ball*.

- QL *Classic Adventures* is available for £9.95 from Sinclair Research by mail order or from good Sinclair retailers.

(Out of 5*)

Playability	* *
Adventure challenge	* *
Addictiveness	* * *
Documentation	* *
Overall Value	* *