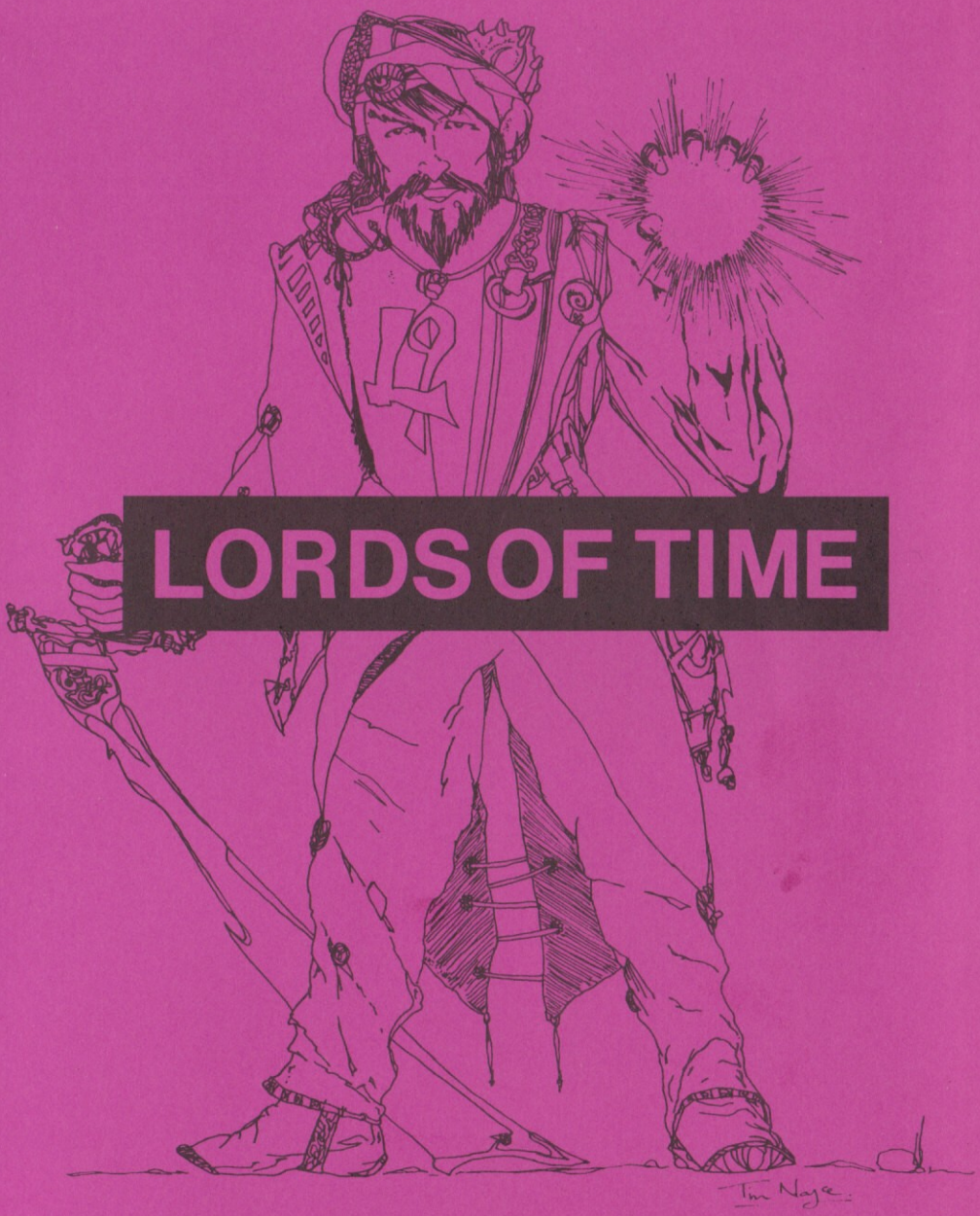
LORDS OF TIME
Tim Nagle

LORDS OF TIME

The dream returned last night: so passing strange!

It seemed that History was cast askew, and dinosaurs remained to fight Mankind. But the great beasts for all their Lizard might, were caught in cunning pits and traps, and doomed.

You see brave knights, and dragons breathing fire. But tis the latter who are good and fine, the knights are evil to a man.

Their armour melts, the knights are those in chess. You've White, with King and Pawns alone, against the Black army. But yet, in just a dozen moves, you win! You look at your opponent, it's no man but a home micro known for Chess, the maker's own program!

The board is nine-by-nine. Around it sit nine men. They talk and giggle, reaching to the board, and moving living pieces – living men. Each move reverberates, your vision blurs and fades . . .

It is the present, on a TV a star (of cow-b movies, once but little shown). The president? His trigger finger poised? You read the morning paper – something's changed – the great recovery from North Sea Oil . . is gone. The money pays the unemployed instead.

It's too absurd, you wake, it's true!!

A poem lingers in your memory:

Into the cauldron you must throw –
an olive branch, makes friendship grow.
A dragon's wing, a sign of flight,
An ivory tusk, a sign of might.
Mix in the teardrop, a touch of sadness,
and the evil eye, a sign of badness.
Add a dinosaur egg, a sign of birth,
with the jester's cap, a symbol of mirth,
plus the silicon chip, a vital invention,
and the gold buckle, a bone of contention.

If you do this, before time runs out,
a winner you'll be – there is no doubt.
But take care when you find the lords,
or you'll not gain your just rewards,
your quest will all have been in vain,
and you will have to start again.

Simply complete the formula to defeat the Evil Timelords who are meddling with Earth's History.

The Game

Lords of Time is a full scale adventure game, with well over 200 locations, 750 messages, about 80 objects etc etc. You will have to solve a large number of puzzles in order to collect the objects needed to defeat the Evil Timelords.

To play Lords of Time, load it from the cassette and then simply enter English phrases to tell the computer what you want to do (e.g. SEARCH THE ROOM or LOOK AT THE MIRROR). The program will act as your eyes and ears to describe your surroundings.

As with all proper adventure games, Lords of Time is very easy to play – you don't need to be able to type rapidly, or blast aliens by reflex. But don't be too surprised if it takes weeks (or months) to complete.

The best way of playing is probably to use the program in short sessions, stopping if you seem to be totally stuck and resuming if you come up with an idea that might work. Making a map will probably help. Remember that you can use the SAVE and RESTORE commands to save the current state of play and restart later – they are quite quick.

If you have any problems with solving the game, please use the hints card included. You're welcome to enclose it with a letter if you like, but hint-requests may well not be answered unless the card is included.

If you have any problems with using the game program, please tell us which computer you have (and, for cassette problems, which cassette recorder you have). Please help us to help you!

Instructions

The program asks "What now?" whenever it expects you to enter another command.Simply type an English phrase to tell it what you want it to do and press RETURN (or ENTER). The program will act on your request, ask you for the command, and so on.

The program knows an extensive vocabulary of English words (over 200) and it looks at your entered command, picking out the words it knows and 'guessing' your meaning from these. Only two or three words are used for each phrase, so you are advised to keep instructions simple.

In practice you should find it is simple to state what you want to do, but if the program does not understand just rephrase your request.

Lords of Time provides great freedom in possible commands but, to help you get started, some possible instructions are summarised below:

INVENTORY	SEARCH
LOOK AT COFFIN	WIND CLOCK
EXAMINE COFFIN	LOOK AROUND
NORTHWEST	GIVE DRINK TO BARTENDER
TAKE PICTURE	OPEN DOOR
WEAR HAT	WHAT'S MY SCORE
DROP VASE	TAKE EVERYTHING

These are only a small sample of the words known by the program. To save typing, words can be abbreviated (e.g. EAST to E, NORTHEAST to NE, and AGAIN to A).

The command analyser used by Lords of Time is even cleverer than that used in our "Middle Earth" trilogy of games. For example:

* You can take or drop EVERYTHING
* As well as compass directions for movement, LEFT, RIGHT, FORWARDS and BACKWARDS are allowed.
* AGAIN repeats the previous command.
* Lords of Time understands IT, and IT can save you time. Use IT if you want to act on the same object as in your last command – but please keep IT simple

You should know three special commands:

QUIT	Abandon the game. You can start again if you like.
SAVE	Keep the current state-of-play on tape. Start your recorder on RECORD, with a blank tape, first.
RESTORE	Load a SAVEd position back from tape.

Scoring

* You score points for collecting each of the 9 ingredients, and also for collecting each of 18 treasures.
* There are bonuses for a few actions, such as completing the game.
* You lose points for getting killed.

Hints

Buyers are entitled to a free clue each, and a hints card is enclosed for this. Put it in an envelope, with another stamped, self-addressed envelope, and send it to the address at the back of this instruction booklet. We will do our best to reply as quickly as possible. Don't use up the clue too soon!

Answers will be truthful, but partial answers may be given to questions which take too much work. (e.g. "Please list all words understood by the program" or "What are the functions of all the objects"). We'll try to be fair and help you to progress.

* You need to enter the clock, and 9 time-zones can be reached from this.
* Tackle the 9 time-zones in numeric order. This should ensure that you have the objects needed to solve each puzzle reached.
* After finishing each of the first 8 zones, you can always get back to the clock.

Implementation

Lords of Time is written in Level 9's own super-compact adventure language known as 'a-code'. This gives machine-code speeds and is much smaller. Additionally, text messages have been compressed to about half size (by the automatic extraction of the most common strings – such as "the" – and their replacement by single characters). The coding is rather cunning in places, too.

Thus the game needs much less space than it ordinarily would – and we can cram in much more detail than others do.

Credits

Game Design:	Sue Gazzard
Implementation:	Pete Austin
Transport to your Computer:	Mike Austin
A-code Compiler and System:	Mike Austin
Data Compiler:	Pete Austin
Additional Expertise:	Ian Buxton
Instruction Booklet:	Pete Austin
Artwork:	Tim Noyce

Level 9 Adventures
Our current range of adventures is:

1) **Colossal Adventure** — **"Middle Earth" Trilogy**
2) **Adventure Quest**
3) **Dungeon Adventure**

4) **Snowball** — **"Silicon Dream" Trilogy**
5) **Return to Eden** (early 1984)
6) **The Worm in Paradise** (early 1984)

7) **Timelords**

Details of all Level 9 Computing products are available from:
Level 9 Computing, 229 Hughenden Road, High Wycombe, Bucks.

Tim Nuge