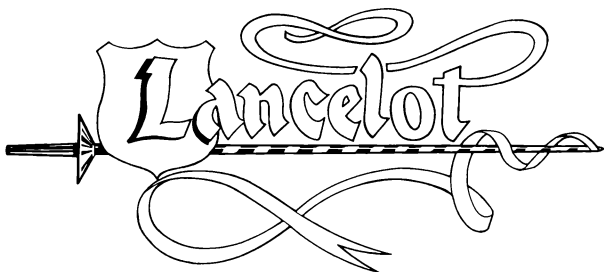




Setting the scene

PLUS A COMPLETE GUIDE FOR ADVENTURERS



Contents

Getting started	i
Preface	ii
Talking to Lancelot.....	iii
Hints.....	vii
Official Secrets.....	ix
Loading Instructions	x
Background	xvii
King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table	1

Concept and game design: Pete Austin.

Game program: Mike Austin.

Story and final game text: Christina Erskine.

Remainder of this booklet: Pete Austin.

***Pictures: Joan Lamb, Neil Scrimgeour, Dicken Peeke,
 Nusarath Jahan.***

***Systems: Mike and Nick Austin, John Jones-Steele,
 Mike Bryant.***

Transport to your Micro: Nick Austin and Mike Bryant.

Getting started

If you have not played a Level 9 adventure before, please read all these instructions. If you are an experienced Level 9 adventurer, skip to the preface and just read that.

Boot the disc or load the first cassette to start the game. If you don't know how to do this, see the loading instructions on Page X.

When the game prints "What now?" or ">", it is waiting for you to type a command. (The game also waits when it has more text to print than will fit on the screen at one time; read what's displayed and press either Shift or the Spacebar to continue.)

This game knows four types of commands:

Movement: Just type the direction you want to go: NORTH, NORTHEAST, EAST (and the other compass directions), IN, OUT, UP, DOWN or ACROSS. GO or RUN take you to a named place, for example GO TO CATHEDRAL, and FOLLOW is self-explanatory.

Actions: For example, LOOK, TAKE THE HARP, DROP IT, EXAMINE THE CROSS, WEAR THE HAT, DRINK THE WINE, or GIVE CLOTH TO SIR MELIOT.

System commands: EXITS, INVENTORY and SCORE give information; WORDS, PICTURES, BRIEF, VERBOSE, EXITS ON and EXITS OFF control what is output; UNDO takes you back a move; SAVE, RESTORE, RAM SAVE and RAM RESTORE save your position or return to an earlier position, and QUIT stops the game. See the example game, on Page iv for more details of these commands.

Commands to others: Lancelot could command some people such as knights who were grateful to him for their freedom. Type their name followed by a command such as SIR GAWAIN, GO NORTH, TAKE EVERYTHING, THEN FOLLOW ME.

You can abbreviate commands such as SOUTH to S and SOUTHEAST to SE, and even type several commands on one line, like EAST, TAKE ALL, WEST. After typing a command (or commands) press the ENTER or RETURN key.

Preface

Lancelot recreates the tales of Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, as told in Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte D'Arthur*.

Parts 1 and 2 follow Lancelot's arrival at Camelot, his rise to become the best knight in the world, and the completion of the Round Table.

Part 3 then follows the Quest for the Holy Grail, the high point for Chivalry, in which the best knights came near to God, but which led to the destruction of the Round Table.

Hints for part 1, Camelot

- Lancelot must go to Camelot to be knighted by Arthur.
- Next, he becomes the best knight by valorous deeds in Logris.
- Finally, on his return, Lancelot must look to Guenever.

Hints for part 2, Logris

- Despite the Damosel Maledisant's manner, her quest is genuine.
- You score points mainly for freeing all the captive knights, and Lancelot can command them.
- Ensure Galahad can come to Camelot.

Hints for part 3, The Quest for the Holy Grail

- Remember that virtue is what is important, so avoid sins.
- Galahad is the holiest knight.

If you are really stuck you can get a comprehensive free cluesheet with hundreds of hints, from Official Secrets (see Page ix), or direct from Level 9 at PO Box 39, Weston-super-Mare, Avon BS24 9UR, England. You must enclose the clue token from the packaging and provide a large, stamped, self-addressed envelope (UK users), or four International Reply Coupons (overseas users).

Talking to the game

As you have seen, this game understands a lot of commands. The following list is only part of its vocabulary, but it gives an idea of what to try:

North, northeast, east (and other compass directions), up, down, in, out, across, climb, go, run, follow, again, attack, inventory, quit, save, restore, RAM save, RAM restore, undo, score, wait, shout, search, examine, blink, look, kneel, take, drop, wear, throw, give, fill, empty, open, unlock, close, eat, drink, light, press, wave, blow, exits, words, pictures, brief, verbose.

Many words can be abbreviated, for example: INVENTORY to INV.

The following example is not from the game but it illustrates how to play. The player's commands are in capitals, after each ">" prompt, and any text in square brackets is a comment.

Lancelot woke suddenly. He had been dreaming of Guenever, and thought for a moment that it was she who had kissed him.

> LOOK

Lancelot was lying beside a fountain, in a glade of the Forest Sauvage. He could see a fair damosel.

The fair damosel took a step backwards and stood, peering timidly at Lancelot.

> EXAMINE DAMOSEL

She was Elaine, called at that time the Fair Maid of Astalot, daughter to Sir Bernard of Astalot, in whose castle Lancelot had recently tarried. She was holding a red sleeve.

Elaine cast a look of love unto Sir Lancelot and besought him to wear a token of hers at the jousts.

> GO NORTH

Elaine clutched at the bridle of Lancelot's horse and would not let him ride past. "Prithee, my Lord", she said, "Will you wear my token? Just tell me yeah or nay"

> ELAINE, YES

Elaine cast a look of love unto Sir Lancelot and twined the sleeve about his arm. Then she walked away into the forest, ever looking back at Lancelot until she was out of sight.

> NORTH

Sir Lancelot rode north and was on the edge of a great thorn

thicket; the biggest that man had ever seen. He bethought himself to see a treasure glinting within the thicket.

> IN

Sir Lancelot dismounted and walked in. He was trapped by the thorns, completely unable to move.

> UNDO [*Take back move – available on most micros.*]

Lancelot was on the edge of a great thorn thicket; the biggest that man had ever seen.

> INVENTORY

Lancelot was wearing a red sleeve.

Sir Lavaine entered from the south.

> EXITS

Exits lead east, south and in.

Sir Lavaine stopped in front of Lancelot. “Good sir knight”, said the youth, “Pray let me ride with you unto the tournament, for methinks I am of my age strong and wight. I see you wear my sister’s sleeve and I would help her chosen champion”.

> LAVAINE, FOLLOW ME

Sir Lavaine bowed.

> BRIEF, WORDS, EXITS ON

OK. OK. OK. [*Locations will be described briefly, pictures turned off and exits reported automatically in future. To reverse these choices, you could use VERBOSE, PICTURES and EXITS OFF.*]

> E [*EAST*]

Sir Lancelot rode east and was on a forest road. Exits led east and west. Lancelot could see a little gate across the track.

Sir Lavaine entered from the east.

> A [*AGAIN – repeat previous command.*]

Lancelot pushed the gate halfway open. Sir Lavaine looked on with interest. Then the gate sprung closed, blocking the road.

> LAVAINE, WAIT THEN PUSH THE GATE [*WAIT defaults to WAIT 1.*]

Sir Lavaine nodded.

> PUSH THE GATE

Lancelot pushed the gate halfway open. Sir Lavaine pushed the gate the rest of the way open and it clicked in place.

> EAST

Sir Lancelot rode through the open gate and was at a junction in the road where a winding track joined it from the north. Exits led north, east and west. Lancelot could see a signpost. Sir Lavaine entered from the west.

> READ SIGNPOST

“Thou knight, which would enter into the Tower Perilous, beware thou be well prepared. For the fiendly dragon therein is proof against all weapons, save only one.”

A great roaring was heard in the distance.

Sir Lavaine looked as if he had just remembered something.

“Ye must hold me excused at this time”, he said, “For I have duties elsewhere. But if God give me speed, I shall meet with you again at the jousts”. Spurring his horse, he galloped into the distance.

> SCORE

Lancelot scored 10 out of 1000.

> RAM SAVE

OK. [Before facing the dragon, save the position in RAM – that is in the computer's memory – in case you encounter difficulties and want to return to this point, using RAM RESTORE. To save to disc or tape, use SAVE and RESTORE.]

> GO TO TOWER PERILOUS *[Let the computer work out the route. Press any key to cancel this type of “high level” command.]*

Sir Lancelot rode north and was deep in the forest.

Sir Lancelot rode northeast and was on the edge of a clearing.

Sir Lancelot rode north and was before the Tower Perilous.

Exits led south and inside. Lancelot could see plumes of smoke curling from its windows. A fierce bellowing echoed from inside the tower.

> EXAMINE EVERYTHING

The sleeve was of scarlet cloth, well embroidered with great pearls. The bellowing grew louder.

The plumes of smoke were flecked with glowing ash. Lancelot heard movement within the tower.

> WAIT FOR DRAGON *[Do nothing until the dragon arrives]*

Lancelot saw two great eyes within the tower.

A great gout of flame gushed from the doorway,

A hideous dragon entered from the north. It reared high above Lancelot, opening its mouth like a chasm.

> MAKE SIGN OF THE CROSS

A good idea but, alas, the dragon was no fiend and could not be banished.

The dragon's breath scorched Lancelot's face.

> KILL SERPENT *[Strike it repeatedly]*

Lancelot's blow barely scratched the dragon's scales. The

dragon's breath scorched Lancelot's face.

The dragon prepared itself for a deadly strike.

Lancelot redoubled his efforts and slightly wounded the dragon. The dragon's fire belched forth again, and Lancelot felt himself nigh unto death.

[This is rather one-sided, so a key is pressed to stop the command.]

Did Lancelot want to continue? NO

> **RAM RESTORE** *[Return to position saved earlier]*

Lancelot was at a junction in the road, where a winding track joined it from the north. Exits led north, east and west. Lancelot could see a signpost.

> **EXITS OFF** *[Stop reporting exits]*

OK. A great roaring was heard in the distance.

> **E**

Lancelot rode east and came to the edge of a great river. Lancelot could see a small boat. This fragile craft bobbed high in the water, rocked by every wave, its awning of white samite fluttering in the breeze.

> **GET INTO BOAT**

Lancelot seated himself in the boat.

> **E** *[To move boats, just enter the normal compass directions.]*

The boat sailed east and was at the far side of the river. Lancelot could hear the sound of distant cheering, carried on the summer air.

> **RUN TO TOURNAMENT** *[Like GO TO, but without describing the moves]*

Lancelot climbed out of the boat.

[A little time passes.]

Lancelot was on the tournament field surrounded by milling crowds. He could see Sir Lavaine a priest and a great altar.

"Hail, best of knights", said Sir Lavaine, "I have been waiting for you."

> **EXAMINE ALTAR**

It was a massive block of granite, carved with all manner of signs of the cross. A sword was sticking through the altar.

The priest noticed Lancelot's interest. "Wit ye well", he said, "that the haft and pommel of this sword are made of the bones of divers beasts; and its virtue is that he handleth it shall never be weary or hurt. But it belongs only to he that shall win the tournament".

[Perhaps the sword is what is needed to defeat the dragon, or

perhaps it will protect Lancelot so he can lead the beast to the thorns, so its fiery breath will burn them. In either case, Lancelot must first prove victorious in the tournament...]

Hints

1. Draw a map (or a series of maps). Remember that the EXITS ON command lists all the paths from each location.
2. To make life easy for you, the objects that matter in a location are normally listed in a sentence like: "You can see a shopkeeper and a bunch of herbs". (Some other authors mix in useful objects amidst the background scenery, but *Lancelot* avoids this). The rest of your surroundings are probably scenery, but by all means try to do things to them if you like.
3. Examine all the objects that you see and, as a rule, take everything that you can. Most objects are useful in some way.
4. Use the "high level" commands, such as GO TO TOWER, RUN TO ARTHUR, FOLLOW DRAGON, WAIT 5, WAIT FOR ELAINE and KILL DRAGON, which take the place of many individual instructions. Remember that pressing a key "breaks" out of such commands.
5. Some puzzles can only be solved with cooperation from other people (especially in the later parts of the game), so get used to giving orders. You can cancel orders given in error by typing, for example, DAMOSEL, STOP
6. Get used to using UNDO. If you make a mistake and get "killed" or lose a vital object, the UNDO command is available on most micros and takes you back in time – to before your previous move. On larger micros, you can use UNDO many times in succession to retrace your steps a long way through the game.
7. SAVE your place occasionally, so that if you notice a mistake too late to be able to UNDO it, or if the electricity flickers and your computer crashes, you can RESTORE the saved position and continue from there. SAVE puts your position on tape or disc (see the detailed instructions) and RESTORE can retrieve it later. RAM SAVE is quicker but less secure, as it saves the position in memory.
8. Try everything you can think of – even weird or dangerous

actions sometimes provide clues, and might be fun. You can use UNDO (or RESTORE if you have previously used SAVE) to recover if the results are “fatal”.

9. You can word a command in many different ways. For example, if there were an axe and a ball on the ground, you could take the axe by typing any of the following:

> GET THE AXE

> TAKE AXE

> GET ALL BUT THE BALL

> LOOK AT THE AXE AND TAKE IT

If the game doesn't understand your command, try rephrasing it and using synonyms. If the game still doesn't understand, you are probably trying something that is not important in the game.

OFFICIAL SECRETS

**Let's face it, at some stage in
this game you're going to
need help.**

A good move, before you start, is to send us a stamped addressed envelope. Then you'll receive a full set of clues before you need them, or at least before you get desperate for them. But the clues aren't the only thing we'll send you:

We'll tell you all about **OFFICIAL SECRETS**. That's the club for people who want more. More than what? You might ask. But we can't tell you too much because we don't want to give the game away . . . yet.

Send a large Stamped Addressed Envelope or an International Response Coupon to:

**Lancelot
Official Secrets
P.O. Box 847
Harlow CM21 9PH**

And in the corner of your envelope please mark which type of computer you have

Loading instructions for Lancelot

This section tells you how to run *Lancelot* on your computer, and lists the specific features of each version. Should you experience any loading problems, return the cassettes or disc without the packaging to Mandarin Software at Europa House, Adlington Park, Adlington, Macclesfield, Cheshire SK10 4NP.

Disc loading

Look down the alphabetical list of computer types and follow the instructions for your computer. The underlined text is what you type, and remember to press the Enter or Return key after each command.

Amiga 500	Insert the game disc and turn on your Amiga.
Amiga 1000/2000	Insert your Kickstart disc and turn on your Amiga. When it asks for Workbench, insert the game disc.
Amstrad CPC 6128	Turn on your CPC (6128 or 464/664 expanded to 128k) and insert the game disc. Enter RUN"MENU"
Amstrad PCW	Insert your usual CP/M+ disc and turn on your PCW.
Apple II	Insert the game disc and enter MENU
Atari ST	Insert the game disc and turn on your Apple II.
Atari XE or 800XL	Insert the game disc and turn on your ST.
BBC Master or 48k+	Remove any cartridges. Insert the game disc. While holding down Option for at least five seconds, turn the Atari on. If nothing happens, turn off the Atari for 30 seconds and try again.
CBM 64 or 128 disc	Turn on your BBC Micro, insert the game disc and press Shift and Break together. If this doesn't work, press Control+Shift+D and Break together.
	Turn on your Commodore (while

	holding down the Commodore key, if you have a 128). Insert the game disc and enter LOAD""",8,1
IBM PC and clones	Insert the normal operating system disc and turn on your IBM PC. Replace it with the game disc, and enter MENU
Mac, Mac+	Insert the normal operating system disc and turn on your Mac. Insert the game disc and double click on the MENU icon.
Spectrum +3	Turn on the Spectrum, insert the game disc and press Enter.

Tape loading

Put one of the game tapes in your recorder, look down the alphabetical list of computer types and follow the instructions for your computer. The underlined text is what you type, and remember to press the Enter or Return key after each command.

If the tape doesn't move, press Enter or Return again.

Amstrad CPC tape	Turn on your CPC. If it has a disc drive, enter :TAPE Type RUN"" start the tape on play and press the Spacebar.
Atari XE/800XL	Remove any cartridges. While holding down Start and Option for at least five seconds, turn on the Atari. Start the tape on play and press Return. If nothing happens, turn off the Atari for 30 seconds and try again.
CBM 64 or 128 disc	Turn on your Commodore (while holding down the Commodore key if you have a 128). Press Shift and Run/Stop together and start the tape.
MSX 64k	Turn on your MSX, enter RUN""CAS:" and play the tape.
Spectrum 48k	Turn on the Spectrum, type LOAD"" and play the tape.
Spectrum 128/+2	Turn on the Spectrum, press Enter and play the tape.

Saving to disc

To save game positions from the disc version of *Lancelot*, you first need a blank disc of your own.

Before playing *Lancelot*, format (initialise) this disc, using the ordinary software bought with your micro. (Exceptions to this are Apple II and Atari XE/800XL discs – *Lancelot* uses its own disc format on these computers and will initialise the disc itself.)

When playing the game, enter SAVE and follow the instructions displayed.

To return to a SAVED position, enter RESTORE and YES, and follow any instructions asking for one word from the story. When entering a filename, you can either type a short word such as POS1, or use the full format permitted by your particular computer.

Saving to tape

To save game positions from a cassette version of *Lancelot*, you need a blank cassette of your own.

When playing the game, start a blank tape on RECORD and enter SAVE (if the cassette doesn't move, press Enter or Return again). When the game starts running again, for example to prompt for your next command by displaying ">" or "What now?", stop the tape.

To return to a SAVED position, enter RESTORE and YES, then follow any instructions asking for one word from the story. Finally, rewind the tape on which the position was saved, and play it (if the cassette doesn't move, press Enter or Return again).

Save in memory

To save your game position in memory (all but the 48k Spectrum, 64k Amstrad CPC and expanded BBC Micro allow this), enter RAM SAVE

To return to a SAVED position, enter RAM RESTORE

Remember that saving in memory is very quick and con-

venient – it is an ideal way of saving your position before trying something risky – but a RAM SAVED position will be lost if your computer is turned off or crashes, so SAVE to disc or tape occasionally.

Note also that the UNDO command is available on all versions which have RAM SAVE. UNDO takes you “back in time” to before Lancelot last moved: It’s a bit like RAM RESTORE where the corresponding RAM SAVES are automatic. UNDO can be used many times in succession on larger micros.

Additional features

The versions of Level 9 adventures on large micros often have more facilities than those on smaller machines. Here is a summary of the features available with *Lancelot*.

AMIGA FEATURES

- Colour pictures (use the mouse, with its left button pressed, to slide the picture up and down).
- Picture cache (avoiding unnecessary disc loads).
- Recall and editing of previous commands, by cursor keys and Backspace.
- RAM SAVE/RESTORE and UNDO.
- README file. For more information, boot the Amiga with Workbench, then insert the game disc and double click on its icon and README.TXT.

AMSTRAD CPC DISC FEATURES

- Colour pictures (use F8 and F2 to slide the picture up and down). To see more pictures, wait until the game has loaded and is waiting for you to type something – then flip the disc over.
- Picture cache (avoiding unnecessary disc loads).
- Recall and editing of previous commands, by cursor keys and Delete.
- RAM SAVE/RESTORE and UNDO.
- The Amstrad CPC disc also works on Amstrad PCW and Spectrum +3.
- README file. For more information, turn on the CPC, insert the game disc and enter LOAD”README” and LIST.

AMSTRAD PCW DISC FEATURES

- Black-and-white pictures. To see more pictures, wait until the game has loaded and is waiting for you to type something – then flip the disc over.
- Picture cache (avoiding unnecessary disc loads).
- Recall and editing of previous commands, by cursor keys and DELETE.
- RAM SAVE/RESTORE and UNDO.
- The Amstrad PCW disc also works on Amstrad CPC and Spectrum +3.
- README file. For more information, boot the PCW with CP/M+ as usual, then insert the game disc and enter TYPE README.TXT

ATARI ST FEATURES

- Pictures on colour and black-and-white displays (use the mouse, with its left button pressed, to slide the picture up and down).
- Picture cache (avoiding unnecessary disc loads).
- Recall and editing of previous commands, by cursor keys and Backspace.
- RAM SAVE/RESTORE and UNDO (several times in succession).
- Variable text size, (experiment by pressing F1 or F2, then typing a few characters). This will help television users.
- Demonstration game. If you would like a continuous demonstration of *Lancelot*, perhaps for use in a shop, start the game and WAIT UNTIL THE FIRST PICTURE HAS FINISHED LOADING and the game is waiting for a command. If necessary, press the spacebar a couple of times so the game can print the rest of its start-up message and reach the first prompt, “>” or “What now?”. Only then should you press Alternate+R.
- An interpreter which can be used with Knight Orc and Gnome Ranger, letting them benefit from new features. Copy the previous game to a new disc, then copy GAME.PRG from the *Lancelot* disc, replacing the old version. Hey presto! Variable text size and so on.
- README file. For more information, start the ST with a disc which does not auto-boot (for instance a blank disc). Then

insert the game disc and double click on its icon and README.TXT.

BBC DISC FEATURES

- Colour pictures on BBC Masters, B+ with additional sideways ram, or BBC B with both shadow and sideways ram. (Smaller BBC Micros show a Mode 7 text-only display – such as the BBC B with just sideways or shadow ram). On BBC Masters you can use the cursor keys, with Shift pressed, to slide the picture up and down. To see more pictures, wait until the game has loaded and is waiting for you to type something – then flip the disc over.
- Recall and editing of previous commands, on BBC Micros big enough to show pictures, by cursor keys, Delete and Copy (“forward delete”).
- Variable text size, on BBC Micros big enough to show pictures; press F0 and F1 to select between 40 and 80 column text.
- RAM SAVE/RESTORE and UNDO on big BBC Micros.
- Picture cache on very big BBC Micros (avoiding unnecessary disc loads).
- README file. For more information, turn on the BBC Micro, insert the game disc and enter *TYPE “README”

COMMODORE 64/128 DISC FEATURES

- Colour pictures (use the cursor keys to slide the picture up and down). To see more pictures, wait until the game has loaded and is waiting for you to type something – then flip the disc over.
- RAM SAVE/RESTORE and UNDO.
- Fast performance when the pictures are turned off; partly because loading from disc takes a little while (even though we use a good turbo) and partly because not needing to maintain a moveable split screen (between the picture and text) frees more processing power.

IBM PC FEATURES

- Pictures in MGA and EGA modes. (The disc just contains one set of pictures and converts them on output when MGA is chosen).

- Picture cache (avoiding unnecessary disc loads)
- Recall and editing of previous commands, by cursor keys and Backspace.
- RAM SAVE/RESTORE and UNDO (on machines with more than 128K).
- Demonstration game. If you would like a continuous demonstration of *Lancelot*, perhaps for use in a shop, start the game by entering MENU and waiting for it to load. Then, before doing anything else, press ALT+R. Continue by choosing a display format as usual.
- An interpreter which can be used with Knight Orc and Gnome Ranger, letting them benefit from new features. Copy the previous game to a new disc, then copy AINT.EXE, MENU.EXE and MENU.TXT from the *Lancelot* disc, replacing the old versions.
- README file. For more information, boot the PC from its normal operating system disc, then insert the game disc and enter TYPE README.TXT.

MAC FEATURES

- Black-and-white pictures (use the mouse, with its button pressed, to slide the picture up and down).
- Recall and editing of previous commands, by cursor keys and Delete.
- RAM SAVE/RESTORE and UNDO (several times in succession).

SPECTRUM +3 DISC FEATURES

- Black and white pictures, tailored for TV display (use the cursor keys to slide the picture up and down). To see more pictures, wait until the game has loaded and is waiting for you to type something – then flip the disc over.
- Recall and editing of previous commands, by cursor keys with Symb Shift pressed, and Delete.
- RAM SAVE/RESTORE and UNDO (several times in succession).
- The Spectrum +3 disc also works on the Amstrad CPC and PCWs.
- README file. For more information, turn on the Spectrum +3, insert the game disc, select +3 Basic and enter LOAD “READ.ME”.

Copyright

Please remember that *Lancelot* is protected by copyright and took a lot of research, time and trouble to produce, so make no more than one copy, for your own use, to keep only as long as you have the original game. Before copying any game you must check the copyright conditions in its documentation.

Background

The legends of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table are known to all, but it is a sad fact that most modern interpretations, whether games, films or stories, seem to owe nothing to the original tales.

You have surely seen the programs with Arthurian titles that, for example, turn out to involve something called “Merlin” jumping from platform to platform, while zapping orcs with fireball spells.

Well, we got tired of waiting for someone else to do a proper job, so here’s our faithful interpretation of the Arthurian saga. And, putting this on one side, I think it’s our best game to date. I hope you enjoy it.

Lancelot is based on Sir Thomas Malory’s *Le Morte D’Arthur*, published by William Caxton in 1485, as one of the first books to use modern printing.

Le Morte D’Arthur was an amalgamation of Arthurian stories of that time. It omits a few of the tales, and anyone who thinks bugs are a modern invention should consider its multiple Elaines and wounded kings, but it is the main English source on King Arthur and an undoubted literary classic.

(If you want to read the full Arthurian legends yourself, however, I recommend *The Once and Future King* by T.H. White. It’s a fairly free adaptation, but infinitely more readable).

A much shorter version of the Arthurian legends is enclosed, as background to the game. We have tried, in both this and the game, to use modern English while keeping some of the linguistic flavour of Malory’s original.

The adventure follows Malory’s story, from the foundation of the Round Table to its finest hour, the finding of the Holy Grail. *Lancelot* was chosen as the hero because, while Arthur

remains passively at court, Lancelot rides out to earn the title of Best Knight in the World. He rescues damosels and captive knights, and goes on to become the only first-generation Round Table knight to see the Holy Grail.

The game starts with a new scene in which Lancelot meets Arthur. After this, it follows Malory pretty faithfully, but omits the detailed jousting results and obscure feuds, which must have numbed generations of English students. It also ascribes to Lancelot a few adventures which originally starred the likes of Gawain or Tristram. Apart from this, however, *Lancelot* sticks closely to the book.

You don't get showy magic or excessive violence. What you do get is a game which recreates the Arthurian world, with both traditional adventure puzzles and some of the ethical problems involved in becoming a parfait knight.

The best of the books consulted were:

Le Morte D'Arthur (two volumes)

Malory, Penguin, ISBN 0-14-043043-1

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight... Anon/Brian Stone, Penguin

The Once and Future King

T.H. White, Flamingo (Fontana), ISBN 0-00-654010-4

The Plain Man's Guide to Ethics

William Barclay, Fount (Collins), ISBN 0-00-626836-6

The most disappointing:

The Book of Merlin

T.H. White, Flamingo(Fontana), ISBN 0-00-654045-7

The Mists of Avalon

Marion Bradley, Sphere, ISBN 0-7221-1957-7

And the most peculiar:

The Cauldron and the Grail

Nick Mann, Annenterprise of Glastonbury, ISBN 0-9510682-0-2

The historical Arthur seems to be a mythologised composite of war leaders from southwest England and Wales, dating between the slow collapse of Roman Britain, and the Saxon influx from the east. But we cannot recommend any of the over-inflated books on the subject. By far the best works are tourist guides to individual sites, such as:

Arthurian Sites in the West

Radford and Swanton, Exeter University, ISBN 0-85989-026-0



The Birth of a King

IN the days when Uther Pendragon was King of all England, the mighty Duke of Tintagel stood out against him and for a long time held war against the king.

After many battles, Uther sent for the Duke, that they might talk of peace. But he also charged him to bring his wife, Igraine, for Uther had heard that she was most fair. And when the Duke and his wife were with Uther, the king declared his love to her. Igraine was much distressed and warned the Duke her husband that they should flee, for the king surely intended her dishonour.

After they had departed secretly, Uther was wonderly wroth, both for pure anger and great love of fair Igraine.

The Duke heard warning of this, and anon he made provision for a long siege. He set Igraine in Tintagel Castle, the which he strongly fortified, while he set out for Castle Terrabil. Ere long, Uther's pavilions and knights surrounded Terrabil and a bitter battle began.

But Uther was sick with his love, and remained listless in his tent, so that his knights were greatly worried. In hope of finding a cure for the king, one of his men set out to seek Merlin, a wizard well renowned for his knowledge of ancient crafts and remedies. And Merlin said that he would help Uther, if Uther would be sworn to reward Merlin in his turn. The

noble knight assented that Merlin should have whatever he desired if he could make Uther whole again.

Merlin rode to Uther's pavilion, where he told the king that Uther might spend the night with Igraine, for by Merlin's magic, he would appear to her in the likeness of her husband. In return, Uther must deliver any child, born of their union, for the magician to raise.

Uther could not hold his patience, and rode out with his party for Tintagel at once. The Duke espied Uther's knights riding hard, as if in retreat, and he left his Terrabil fortress to pursue in all haste. On the field, he met with Uther's remaining men, and was himself slain ere the king came to the castle of Tintagel. And so, as Uther lay with Igraine, she was already a widow.

Igraine thought her lover that night was her husband; but when she heard tell of the Duke's death she marvelled who that knight who lay with her might be. Even when she assented unto marriage with Uther, to unite their two houses, he did not tell her.

And when the child was born, Merlin came, as he had told Uther he would, to take the baby away, reassuring the father he would be well-nourished.

But Uther was not able to spend a long and happy life with Igraine. Within two years he had fallen sick of a great malady and died, to Igraine's great sorrow, for she had learned to love him.

The rule of the kingdom fell into jeopardy, for there was no known heir. Many lords made claim to the throne, and fought bitterly for the right to reign, but none could take the kingdom by just cause.

The Sword in the Stone

AFTER years of great feuding, Merlin went to the Archbishop of Canterbury and counselled him that he would find the right-born king. All the lords of the realm and all the gentlemen of arms were summoned to London for a New Year's Day tournament, where the new ruler would be revealed.

Sir Ector, his son Kay and his adopted son Arthur were among those who rode to London for the jousting, Kay making great excitement, for he was to be made a knight at the tourna-

ment. Yet, as they rode to the jousts-ward, Kay discovered with dismay that he had lost his sword, for he had left it at their lodging. He prayed young Arthur to run back to collect it.

Arthur found the inn empty and locked; everyone had already left to see the tournament. Trudging dolefully back to his father and brother, he went through a churchyard, where near the high altar, he espied, to his joy, a sword. It was stuck through an anvil, set upon a wide marble stone, and glittered in the winter sunlight.

“I will take that sword”, Arthur decided. “My brother Sir Kay shall not be without a sword today of all days”. He grasped it firmly and found that it came easily out of the anvil. Hurrying after his party, he never noticed the words that were written in gold about the sword.

But when Arthur delivered the sword to Kay, his brother turned quite pale. For Kay too had seen the sword in the stone in the churchyard, but he had also seen what Arthur had not, the lettering around it, which read, “WHO SO PULLETH OUT THIS SWORD OF THIS STONE AND ANVIL, IS RIGHTWISE KING BORN OF ALL ENGLAND”.

A small smile appeared on Kay’s face as he took the sword from Arthur, and so he rode to find Sir Ector. “Look, father”, he cried. “I have the sword from the stone. I must now be King of all England.”

Sir Ector was no fool. He took both Kay and Arthur back to the churchyard, and he made Kay swear upon a book how he had come by the sword.

Kay faltered. “My brother Arthur brought it to me”, he said. Ector turned to his adopted son, and Arthur explained how he had taken it. Then Ector replaced the sword in the anvil and told Arthur to pull it out again.

“There is no great skill to it”, said Arthur airily, and lifted it smoothly and cleanly out of the anvil.

Then Ector and Kay both tried pulling the sword from the stone for themselves, with all their might, but it would not move. When the two elder men learned full well that the sword would give only for Arthur, they both knelt down to the earth before him.

Arthur was greatly dismayed. “My own father and brother!” he exclaimed. “Why do ye kneel before me?”

“Nay, Arthur, I am not your father, nor of your blood”, said Sir Ector gently, and for the first time he told him how Merlin

had delivered him to Sir Ector as a newborn baby, and charged him to nourish Arthur as his own.

At Pentecost, young Arthur was crowned at Carleon and took on the heavy duties of King of all England.

Excalibur

THE early years of Arthur's reign were not easy. Many lords and kings had no joy of him because of his youth and lowly upbringing and he spent much time in bloody battles, defending his right to the throne. Merlin was ever nearby to help him when he was on the brink of defeat, and after long years, Arthur finally vanquished most of the enemy lords.

Arthur fathered two children, Borre and Mordred, while still a young man. Mordred's mother was Margawse, wife of King Lot of Orkney and the daughter of Igraine and the Duke of Tintagel. Though none could know but Merlin, this meant she was Arthur's half-sister, for which Merlin blamed the king.

"God will not forgive your foul deed", the soothsayer warned. "You have lain by your sister and on her ye have gotten a child, born on May day, that shall destroy you and all the knights of your realm."

Sore afraid at Merlin's words, Arthur sent for all the children born on May day, and he set them adrift in a ship. The ship was wrecked and the most part of the children perished, but Mordred was washed up alive on a beach, and raised by a good man.

Arthur's battles were long and bloody and oft there was danger that he might be slain, so Merlin thought that Arthur should have his own special sword. He took Arthur on a journey to a wide and still lake, and, in the middle of the waters, an arm, clothed in rich samite silk, rose from the water. The hand was clasping a fair sword.

"This is the sword that shall be yours", Merlin told Arthur. "The Lady of the Lake will come to you, and ye must speak fair to her to get the sword. And anon indeed the Lady told Arthur to row out in a barge to the centre of the lake to take the sword and its scabbard.

When he returned to the shore, he looked on his new sword and liked it passing well. Merlin asked him, "Which do you like better – the sword or the scabbard?"

Arthur considered. “The sword”, he replied.

Merlin looked at him with impatience. “Ye are still so unwise”, he said with annoyance. “The scabbard is worth ten of the sword. While ye have the scabbard with ye, ye will never lose blood however sorely wounded ye may be.”

Guenever



WHEN Arthur first saw Guenever, daughter of King Leodegrance of Camelard, he knew straightway that he wished to marry her. Arthur thought her the most valiant and fairest lady living.

But, as ever in these early years of his reign, he asked for the counsel of Merlin, for he was still for the most part ruled much by the magician’s words.

“In beauty and fairness she is above all women”, Merlin assented. “But if your heart was not set, I could find you a damosel of great beauty and goodness, who would certainly please you. But when a man’s heart is set, and there is nought that can make him return.”

Merlin further advised the king against taking Guenever as his wife, “I warn you that she will be loved by Lancelot du Lake, and she will love him back.”

But Arthur’s mind was set fast on his choice, and so anon Merlin went forth to King Leodegrance to tell him that King Arthur wanted his daughter for his wife.


Leodegrance, to be sure, was overjoyed. "That is the best tidings that ever I heard", he cried. "And I shall send Arthur a gift, which might please him more than lands, for he has lands enough. I shall give him the Table Round, which was given to me by Uther Pendragon. The Table will seat a hundred and fifty knights when it is full, and I will myself send a hundred good knights."

Leodegrance was right. The gift of a hundred knights and the Table Round pleased Arthur far greater than land, and he sent out Merlin to find fifty accomplished knights to complete the number, the while he made preparations for the most regal wedding he could devise. But Merlin could only find forty eight knights of enough prowess to grace the Table Round, and so there were two empty seats.

Then Merlin, by his magic craft, made each of the names of the knights appear in gold lettering in their places at the table, and in just two places was there no name.

As the knights came to Camelot, where the King was wedded unto Guenever, Arthur set out them their duties as Knights of the Table Round. He charged them never to commit treason or murder, never to be cruel, never to enter into battle for a wrongful reason whatsoever the reward, but ever to grant mercy when it was asked for, and ever to help ladies, whether gentlewomen or damosels, whenever succour was needed. And every Knight was sworn to this oath and every year at Pentecost they affirmed it again.

Merlin and Nimue

OR all that he was a magician and a soothsayer, Merlin fell in love with one of the ladies of the lake, called Nimue. He became besotted upon her and could not bear to be away from her, and she kept in his company until he had taught her all manner of things she desired to know of his magic crafts.

Merlin also knew that despite all his magic, he would not live long in the earthly world, and ere he was put in the ground he told Arthur many prophecies that would befall the young king. He warned him to keep always his sword and scabbard with him, and he told him of the end of his reign and of the last days of the Table Round.

Soon afterward Nimue departed from the court, and Merlin

went with her. He followed her wheresoever she went, and within a while Nimue began to be weary of him.

Then one day Merlin showed her a rock, inside which were marvels wrought by enchantment. Nimue tricked Merlin by subtlety and made him go underneath the rock, to tell her of the marvels, and then, by use of the crafts which he had taught her, she enclosed the rock.

Merlin was not harmed, and spoke happily enough to passing knights, but, no matter what charms Merlin practised to assay to open up the rock, he remained trapped.

Sir Lancelot du Lake



AS King Arthur's reign drew on, and the deeds of the Knights of the Table Round became ever more renowned throughout the land, so many knights came to the tournaments and jousts. Some knights who came oft improved their prowess so that they surpassed most of their fellows, but none more so than Lancelot du Lake. Never in any of his fights was he beaten, unless it were by trickery, and he was the knight who was admired most of all by the people after Arthur. And because of his excellence, Queen Guenever favoured him above all other knights, and he too favoured her, and many of his great knightly deeds were done for love of Guenever.

Sir Lancelot was riding in Corbin, when he saw the fairest tower he had ever seen. Inside was a lady, enchanted to remain in scalding water until the best knight in the world should take

her hand. Lancelot rescued her and discovered her name was Elaine; she thanked him and he thought she was the fairest lady in the world, apart from Guenever.

Lancelot slew a fiendly dragon nearby, then they rode to Carbonek, castle of Elaine's father, King Pelles.

At the celebratory feast, a damosel came into the hall, carrying a golden vessel, which shone richly with a pure and dazzling light. King Pelles knelt in front of the vessel, and prayed devoutly before it, and all the company did the same after him. Lancelot marvelled much at this and asked wonderingly what this apparition meant.

"This vessel is the richest thing that any living man could have", replied Pelles. Ye must know is the Holy Grail, that was blessed by Our Lord at the Last Supper." And he left Lancelot to ponder on this marvel. Lancelot found that after the appearance of the Grail that all the wounds and bruises he had suffered in his joust had healed and that his flesh was smooth and new, and he determined to see the Grail once more before he died.

King Pelles knew it was ordained that Elaine should conceive a child by Lancelot; that the child should be named Galahad; that he would become the best of all knights, surpassing even his father; and that he would be worthy of the Holy Grail. Yet how could it be done, fair though Elaine was, when every man knew that Lancelot kept himself only for love of the Queen Guenever?

Then Dame Brisen, one of the greatest enchantresses that lived at the time, came unto Pelles, and told him that she could work this thing by using her crafts.

Lancelot was given wine, the which had Brisen infused with potion to make him blinded with lust, and when he was taken unto Elaine's chamber, he thought that she was Guenever, and lay with her until morning.

Elaine knew well that the child she carried from that night was born to be the noblest knight in the world, and when he was born, she christened him Galahad, and kept him well and nourished him. But Lancelot was shamed by the trickery, and left the castle that same morning to continue his travels.

Some months after, Arthur decreed that a feast be held.

Elaine deemed it right that she should attend the feast and bring the baby Galahad with her. She came with her servant Dame Brisen, and a retinue of twenty knights, and was so

richly attired that all of Camelot agreed she was the fairest lady ever seen in that court. All, that is, save Lancelot, for fear of Guenever's fury.

Elaine was heavy of heart that Lancelot would not speak kindly to her, nor look at her, and went unto Brisen for advice. The enchantress assented to work her special powers so that Elaine might lie again with Lancelot that night.

When the court had retired, Guenever commanded Elaine to sleep in a chamber near her own, and she bade Lancelot to come unto her in the night. "Or else I am sure", chided Guenever, "ye will go to your lady Elaine's bed, for have you not gat a son of her?"

But Brisen's enchantments were stronger than Lancelot's promises, and she came to Lancelot in the likeness of one of Guenever's maidens, and led him unto Elaine's chamber instead of Guenever's. Lancelot thought that it was Guenever he held in his arms, for so Brisen had devised it.

Then Guenever sent her servant to summon Lancelot to her, but the servant came to the Queen and said that she had found Lancelot's bed cold and empty. The Queen went nigh out of her wits with wondering where he was. She was not long in doubt, for Lancelot had the habit of talking in his sleep, and anon through the walls, she could hear his voice in Elaine's room.

Then was Guenever nigh mad with anger and with pain. She knew not what to do, but then she coughed so loudly that Lancelot awoke, and he heard her cough, and wist that it was Guenever. Then he knew too that he lay not with his queen as he had thought and ran out of Elaine's chamber, only to meet a white-faced Guenever in the passageway.

"Thou false traitor knight!" she cried. "Never more wilt thou abide in my court; never will I let thee come into my sight again!"

Lancelot could not bear the anger of her words and, filled with shame and the loss of his love, he leapt from the castle window.

Lancelot ran mad in the forests, sometimes tended by hermits and village folk, more often living off berries and strange plants. Only after many years did he return to King Arthur's court.

The Coming of the Holy Grail



Each year, the Knights of the Table Round came unto Camelot for the high feast of Pentecost, to relate their deeds and the marvels they had seen. But still the Table was not complete, for the last place, the Siege Perilous, was not filled.

Then one year the knights had found, according to the custom, that their names were written about the Table Round in gold lettering, but this time there were new words written above the empty Siege Perilous. "FOUR HUNDRED WINTERS AND FOUR AND FIFTY ACCOMPLISHED AFTER THE PASSION OF OUR LORD JESU CHRIST OUGHT THIS SIEGE TO BE FULFILLED".

"It seemeth me", said Sir Lancelot who had accounted the time between the birth of Christ unto that day itself, "This siege ought to be fulfilled this very day, for this is the feast of Pentecost after the four hundred and four and fifty year." And the other knights agreed, and they ordained to cover the Siege Perilous with a silken cloth, so that the letters could not be seen until the rightful knight came unto the Table.

As they set themselves in their own places at the table the next night to be served their feast, an old man accompanied by a young fresh-faced knight, quite unarmed, save for an empty scabbard at his waist, came unto the hall at Camelot.

And as the other knights set all eyes upon the two, the elderly one led the young boy right up to the Table Round, and anon he led him to the Siege Perilous, where beside sat Sir Lancelot. The old man lifted up the silken cloth, which showed that the words inscribed in gold had changed again. Now it read: "THIS IS THE SIEGE OF GALAHAD THE HAUT PRINCE".

The old knight set his young charge surely in that seat, and departed, so that the boy was in the centre of the others' looks. Many marvelled that one so young did dare sit in that siege, but Lancelot knew him as his own son, and his heart swelled up with pride.

The next day, King Arthur took Galahad to a lake near Camelot, where the court had found a sword set into a stone in a lake. This sword was inscribed with lettering, which read that only the best knight in the world could pull the sword clear.

Now, many thought that this knight must surely be Sir

Lancelot, but Lancelot had remembered the sins of his love for the Queen, and had said he was unworthy to try the sword. Sir Gawain and Sir Percival were both knights of great renown, but when they tried to lift the sword, it would not move. Now Arthur was sure that Galahad was the rightful owner of the sword, and so it was, for Galahad lifted it cleanly and easily, and it fitted perfectly into his empty scabbard.

Then Arthur organised a great jousting tournament, that Galahad might test his skill against the other knights. And Galahad acquitted himself superbly, and many good knights of the Table Round were unhorsed by the young man, save two whom he did not fight, Lancelot and Sir Percival.

That evening the knights were again come unto the hall in Camelot for their supper, every man in his place at the Table Round, and this time there were no empty seats. And scarcely had they sat down, when there was a great cracking and a crying of thunder that shook the very walls of Camelot, and in the midst of this clamour a great burst of light flooded into the hall, like a sunbeam that was seven times clearer than daylight. Then all the knights felt themselves to be filled with the grace of the Holy Ghost. They beheld one another to be fairer than ever they were before, and they were struck dumb by the brilliance of the light.

Then came into the hall a golden centre to this light, and it was the Holy Grail, covered in a cloth of white samite, so that none could see the vessel underneath. And with the Grail came all manner of meat and drink that the knights loved best.

As the Holy Grail crossed over the length of the hall it vanished as suddenly as it had come, and in the sudden emptiness of the hall after its passing, the knights all burst into voice at once.

Sir Gawain, ever impetuous, leapt to his feet and spoke unto the company. "One thing has beguiled us this evening", he cried. "We could not see the Holy Grail because it was so preciously covered. And I will vow here and now, that tomorrow without delay, I will go out in quest of the Holy Grail. I will labour for a year and a day, or longer if needs be, and I shall not rest until I have seen the Grail more openly than it has been seen here."

The other knights were greatly inspired by this and ere Gawain had sat down, each of them had risen and made vows such as he had done. And as they were rejoicing and making

great plans for their quest, only Arthur was still and silent.

For Arthur remembered the prophecies and teaching of the soothsayer Merlin, and he knew that many of his knights would never return, and the Table Round would never be restored.

The Quest for the Holy Grail



THE quest for the Holy Grail continued for many years, and all the knights who set out to seek the Holy vessel had many marvellous adventures, but none more than Sir Lancelot who was to see the Grail at Castle Carbonek, or Galahad whose destiny was to fulfil the quest.

Lancelot rode hard for several days, until he came unto an old chapel, where he thought to find himself rest. He tried to enter therein, but could only reach the altar, richly arrayed in silk and with six great candles set into a fair silver candlestick. He could find no entry to the chapel itself and at last, tired and dismayed, laid himself to sleep on his shield at a stony cross outside.

He was half wakened some time after when two fair white palfreys rode up to the cross. The palfreys bore a litter which carried a sick knight, that moaned in pain for the Holy Grail to come to heal him.

Lancelot stirred, still half asleep, for it seemed to him that he could not rise into wakefulness, and he espied the candlestick from the altar carry itself, as if floating, unto the cross. It was

followed by a silver table, and the shining holy vessel of the Holy Grail, although Lancelot could see none that was bearing it aloft. He heard the sick knight sit up and welcome the Holy Grail, and he saw kneel down to the ground to touch the vessel and kiss it. Then the knight rose up again whole and healed. The Holy Grail remained at the cross for a long while before it glided back into the chapel, and yet still had Lancelot no power to follow it.

After some hours Lancelot woke fully. He recalled how the sick knight had been healed, but it was as though it were all a dream. And even as he thought this, a voice came to him, and told him to withdraw from the holy place in which he had been sleeping, for he was unworthy.

Lancelot was sore unhappy and wept at these words, and the more unhappy still when he discovered that his horse and helm and sword had been taken away by the healed knight, yet he knew well the message. "My sin and wickedness have brought me unto great dishonour. When I sought worldly adventures and worldly desires, I achieved them. Now I have taken up a holy adventure and my old sin has come back to shame me, so that I have no power when holy blood appears before me."

With much sorrow, Lancelot departed from the cross on foot and went unto a hermitage where the hermit would hear his confession. The hermit counselled Lancelot that his shame in God's eyes had to do with his sinful love for Guenever, and that he should forswear his lust for her. And Lancelot fully repented of his earthly sins, and with the hermit's blessing set out to start his quest afresh.

After many months, Lancelot came unto the water of Mortaise, where he laid down to rest and a vision came to him in his sleep, which told him to enter the first ship that he could find. Lancelot arose and went to the strand where he found a ship without either sail or oar and he entered and a great feeling of peace and joy overwhelmed him, and he remained with the ship for over a month.

Then one day, somewhat weary of the small ship, he was sitting on the shore when he heard a thundering of hooves, and a most seemly looking knight on a fair horse galloped up to the shore. He dismounted and taking his saddle and bridle with him, went straight into the ship.

Lancelot followed, curious about this self-assured young

man, and made himself known to the young man, whereupon the knight revealed that he was Sir Galahad, Lancelot's own son. There was much rejoicing between them as the two embraced, and told each other of their adventures.

Galahad had ridden from Camelot into strange lands which he knew not. Many adventures befell him and always he was successful in his endeavors and gained much in knightly experience. He had defeated many knights in fair combat, he had given support to the defenders in a great siege at a castle, and with their comrades Sir Bors and Sir Percival, he had been set adrift to sea in a boat which had beached them in the marshes of Scotland, there to do battle with many knights who had challenged them.

Lancelot made great joy to hear his tales. His own quest had been tortuous and hard, with little success and he took much pride in his son. For a full six months, Lancelot and Galahad voyaged together in that boat, encountering many perilous adventures.

But never did they come near the Holy Grail, the true nature of their quest and so Galahad then left the ship to seek the vessel as he was ordained.

Then did Sir Lancelot make much sorrow, for he was alone and downhearted, but he prayed daily to God that he might still see some tidings of the Holy Grail. The ship carried him over the sea, he knew not whereto, but trusted it to steer him safely.

After a month at sea, the ship beached at midnight beside a fine castle. A postern opened out towards the sea and a voice bade Lancelot to enter in. Anon, Lancelot armed himself and went to the gate, for here, so he thought, might at last be his adventure.

As he neared the castle, Lancelot saw two lions on guard. He drew his sword, but it was smitten from his hand and a voice chided his evil faith, that he put more trust in weapons than in his Maker.

He entered the castle without further challenge, but inside he could find no door or gate which would open. But behind one door he could hear sweet and reverent singing, and he knew full well that the Holy Grail was in that room. Lancelot fell to his knees and prayed to God to show him at least some part of the Grail.

He looked up from his prayers and was filled with awe to see

the chamber door swing slowly open. From inside shone out a great light, that was the clearest, purest light Lancelot had ever seen.

Lancelot looked up and into the chamber, and there was the silver table, and the Holy Grail covered in red samite and all the ornaments of an altar, and a priest who seemed to celebrate mass. Then Lancelot could not bear to stay outside, and taking a deep breath, he strode into the room where the Grail was.

As Lancelot reached out to touch the Grail, a scorching wind threw him down. His body would not move, and then he felt hands all about him, that carried him out of the room and left him in the passageway.

The next morning the people of the castle found Lancelot's body outside the chamber door. He was taken to a bedchamber, where he lay without stirring.

Lancelot awoke on the twenty fifth day and learned that he had achieved as much of the Holy Grail as he would ever see, and Lancelot understood and thanked God for that which he had been allowed.

Elsewhere, Galahad, since departing from the ship, had many further adventures before he met again with Sir Percival and Sir Bors. The three of them then rode together until they came to the Castle Carbonek. When they entered within, King Pelles was full glad to see them, for he knew that now the quest for the Grail would be achieved.

King Pelles, his son Eliazar and the three Grail knights sat down to dinner, but before they could eat, a voice came to them. "There are two among you that are not in the quest for the Holy Grail, and therefore you both should depart."

King Pelles stood up. The moment had come, and with a single look at Galahad he and his son slipped away. Scarce had they gone, when a man and four angels appeared before the knights. The angels set the man down before a table of silver and on the table the Holy Grail appeared. The man, who was dressed as a bishop, set about the ritual of the celebrating of mass. He kissed Galahad and bade Galahad kiss his fellow knights, which he did and then the bishop vanished away.

The three knights sat at the table in full dread of what might next happen. They looked up and saw a man come out of the holy vessel, a man with open wounds bleeding freely, as did those of Jesus Christ, and he offered the holy vessel to Galahad. Galahad knelt and received his Saviour, and Our Lord then

told Galahad that he must depart with Bors and Percival the next morning to the sea, where he would find a ship ready and waiting for him.

On the morrow, the three knights set off, and after three days came to a rivage where they found a ship waiting for them. On board the ship they found a table of silver and the Holy Grail covered in a cloth of red samite. The three knelt down and prayed with much reverence.

The ship took them across the water to the city of Sarras. They disembarked and taking the table of silver went into the city, where they remained for a full twelve months. On that day at the year's end, the man in the likeness of a bishop came to Galahad and Bors and Percival and he had the Holy Grail with him. They celebrated mass, and the man revealed himself to the knights as Joseph, son of Joseph of Arimathea, and now Galahad knew that his time on earth was near an end.

Galahad kneeled before the table which held the Holy vessel and made his prayers, and as he did so, his soul departed quickly and quietly to Jesus Christ. The watching Percival and Bors perceived a great multitude of angels take it up to heaven. They saw too that a great hand came down and took the Vessel and bore that up to heaven as well. And this was the last that any earthly man saw of the Holy Grail.

The Death of Arthur

WHEN the Holy Grail had been achieved and that part of the knights that still lived had come back unto the Table Round, it seemed that the kingdom would be as great as it had been before.

But Sir Lancelot soon forgot his repentance and his vows of the quest and soon he began to resort unto Queen Guenever again, and truly the love that was between them was so great that they spent many hours together privily.

Arthur was told, but he wished only for peace, and would not believe unless Sir Lancelot was taken with the deed. So Agravaing and Mordred, who hated Lancelot, lay in wait with twelve knights and trapped him in the Queen's chamber.

Though he had none armour, shield, sword nor spear, Lancelot fought free and escaped, slaying all but Mordred, who fled to the king. Guenever was sentenced to the fire, but Lancelot returned to rescue her and the twain left Logris for Lance-



lot's lands in France.

For himself, Arthur desired only peace with Lancelot, for he had loved him well in earlier days. But Arthur listened to the counsel of Gawain, who was his nephew. And Gawain was mad for vengeance, for Lancelot had slain his brethren in the rescue.

So Arthur took his army to France, leaving Sir Mordred to rule England in his absence, for Sir Mordred was his own natural son. And Arthur also put his wife Queen Guenever under Mordred's governance.

All the while Arthur was waging battle in France, Mordred made mischief at home. He forged letters the which he said had been sent from France, telling of Arthur's death in battle, and was himself crowned at Canterbury.

Next Mordred announced his plan to take Guenever as his wife. The Queen was passing heavy, but she hid her heart and agreed to the wedding. Mordred trusted Guenever well and gave her leave to go to London, to buy all manner of things for their wedding, whereupon she went straight to the Tower of London and stocked it for a long siege.

When Arthur heard of all these deeds, he summoned his knights anon, and turned for England to be avenged upon Mordred.

The battle between them was bloody and vicious, but Arthur's courage and his men's prowess prevailed and although many good knights died, Arthur's armies were victorious, though Sir Gawain was killed, and Mordred retreated to

Salisbury.

The final battle was assigned for Salisbury on the day after Trinity Sunday. The night before, Arthur could not sleep; his heart was heavy with the decline of his kingdom and the enmity of Lancelot. At last he fell to sleeping fitfully, and as he slept he dreamed, and it seemed that the ghost of Gawain appeared to him.

“I have come to warn you of your death”, said the Gawain of Arthur’s dream. “If ye fight with Mordred as ye both have assigned, doubt not that ye will be slain. But within the month, Sir Lancelot and all his noble knights will come to England to your rescue.”

When Arthur woke, he called his two most trusted knights remaining, Sir Bedevere and Sir Lucan, and charged them to make a truce with Mordred. After some hours it was agreed, and the two leaders arranged to affirm the treaty betwixt their armies on Salisbury Field, and each should bring just fourteen knights.

Arthur and Mordred met, and were agreed. But it chanced that an adder slithered out of a heath bush, and it bit one of the knights on the foot. He drew his sword to kill the snake and the knights of the armies, that had been so wary, saw the point of the sword glinting in the sun and shouted, “Treachery!”

Suddenly all was bugles blowing and trumpeting, and the two hosts set upon each other in the most doleful battle of them all, until both armies were destroyed. Arthur slew Mordred and was himself wounded unto death.

The king turned to Bedevere, last of his knights, “I have not much time left”, he said painfully. “Therefore, take my sword Excalibur and throw it into yonder lake.”

Bedevere took the jewelled sword and went down to the lakeside, but he hid it behind a tree. “I have done as you ask”, he told Arthur.

“What saw thou at the lake?” asked Arthur. “Sire”, replied Bedevere, “I saw nothing but waves and the wind on the water.”

“Then thou art lying”, said Arthur heavily. “Go again, and quickly, for thy tarrying puts my life in jeopardy.”


So Bedevere returned to the lake, and took up the sword and after a moment’s hesitation, hurled it as far into the depths as he could. As he looked across the water, he saw a fair arm and a hand rise out of the lake and it caught the sword as it fell.

Arthur was satisfied. He charged Bedevere to take him down to the lakeside, where a barge drew alongside the water's edge.

In the little barge were a number of fair ladies, all with black hoods, and when they saw King Arthur they wept and keened greatly. Bedevere placed the weakened king into the barge, where the ladies received him with great mourning.

Arthur struggled to speak. "Bedevere, I must go into the vale of Avalon to be healed of this wound." And Bedevere watched the barge as it sailed away.

Epilogue

HEN Queen Guenever heard that Arthur was slain, and of the bloodshed on Salisbury Field, she stole away quietly to a nunnery at Almesbury, and spent the rest of her days in penance for her sins.

As Gawain had prophesied in Arthur's vision, Lancelot landed at Dover within a month, having heard of Mordred's treachery.

He was too late to save Arthur, but was determined to see his lady Guenever again. For seven days he was on the road and on the eighth he came to a nunnery. As he entered the cloister, a nun dressed all in black and white saw him there and swooned.

They spoke together for a short time, and when Lancelot saw that Guenever had taken to a life of penance, he decided that this should be his destiny too. He took to his horse, weeping for the loss of his love, and rode until he came to the hermitage at Glastonbury, where he took on a monk's habit.

Lancelot saw Guenever just once more, many years later. One night, a vision charged him to ride with all haste to Almesbury. This he did, but he was too late, Guenever was dead but a half hour since.

Without his lady, Lancelot would eat but little meat, nor drink, until he sickened more and more and dwindled away. Within six weeks he too was dead.

Of King Arthur there is little more to be told. Some say he rests in Avalon. Others say he is not dead at all, but sleeping and will come again, with his Knights of the Table Round, when the need is greatest.

MANDARIN
SOFTWARE

Europa House, Adlington Park,
Adlington, Macclesfield SK10 4NP.



This was brought to you

from the archives of

<http://retro-commodore.eu>