The *Knightmare* FANSFAQ (Frequently And Not-So-Frequently Asked Questions)
Version 3.0 (December 2006)
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Recommendations

This document is best viewed in *MS-WordPad*, version 5 or above, or *MS-Wordviewer 2003*. A good way to scroll down to an entry quickly is to copy the appropriate text from the contents and paste it into the viewing program's *Find/Search* tool.

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Contents

B. Don't I recognise that actor/actress from...?

C. I have a few questions about individual characters...

  i) What's the relationship between Mogdred and Merlin?

  ii) Er... Technosorcerer?

  iii) 1. Where'd this Lord Fear guy come from anyway? And isn't that bloke on the horse the same actor?

    2. Hang on, you've lost me. What *is* a retcon? And a McGuffin for that matter?

  iv) How is that name spelt again?

   v) How is that name pronounced?

   vi) Who's Count Brinkatore?

D. I can remember a character but I just *can't* think what their name was...

E. Is there anywhere I can contact this person from the series?

Q4. A. Are there any *Knightmare* fan clubs?

B. What *KM* merchandise can I buy?

Q5. A. Are there any decent websites about *Knightmare*?

B. Is there anywhere on the Internet I can meet/talk with other fans of the series?

C. Is it true that Tim Child is a member of the *KM* forum?

D. I can't understand all the abbreviations/nicknames you 'Net *KM* fans use. What is...?

E. Tell me about the *Challenge* website...

F. A few notes on Netiquette...

G. What creative things do *KM* fans do?

  H. What's the *Knightmare* Lexicon?

  I. What's *Q-Nightmare*?

Q6. A. What can you tell me about clue objects?

B. What about magical objects?

  C. And what are these spyglass things used for?

Q7. A. i) So... how do these magic spells work anyway?

  ii) That's odd. What's this 'turn-spell' thing?

B. Was there a limit on the number of spells a team was allowed to possess?

  C. i) What's a 'calling-name'?

   ii) Can you give me a few examples?

Q8. A. *Eeeuuurrrggghhhh!!* Gross! Are you sure this is a *kids'* show? I mean look at that face! It's falling to bits! I mean, what is this? *Poltergeist* or something?!?

 B. So what happened to the Life Force Clock then? It doesn't seem to appear from season 6 onwards?

C. Hmm... that third Clock; is it a cake or a pie?

Q9. A. *Knightmare* seems so dark and macabre for a kids' show! Did it ever get into trouble for its content?

B. What other controversies have dogged the series?

  C. Was *Knightmare* offensive?

Q10. A. Was *Knightmare* ever broadcast outside the UK?

B. Foreign remakes?

Q11. What pop culture impact has the series had?

Q12. Tell me more about this *KMRPG* thing.

  A. i) So what is the deal with the RPG?

   ii) Will the RPG ever be brought back?

  B. Ok... so seven seasons have been made... but, erm... we've only seen two and a bit?

  C. So how many seasons are going to be made?

  D. i) Who's played whom in the RPG?

   ii) *Dinosaur Name*? Is that some kind of joke?

   iii) Er, okay. And *Sock Name*?

  E. There have been spin-off films made with RPG cast members, have there not?

  F. Is it true Tim Child has played the RPG?

The Q's and A's

Q1.   A. What-*mare*?

(Start reading here, "*but remember, once embarked the only way is onward; there is no turning back.*" - Treguard, on more occasions than can be easily counted. Take it from someone who knows; see **Appendix**.)

Knightmare was a British game show that ran in the autumn on *Children's ITV* from 1987 to 1994, and it was a prototype example of televised Virtual Reality. It was produced by *Broadsword Television* at *Anglia TV* studios in Norwich.

The premise was essentially fantasy-type role-playing. There was a medieval castle with a magical dungeon, and contestants from our time ('dungeoneers' as they were called) would travel into the past to attempt to travel through the dungeon, hopefully evading the many deadly pitfalls and

dangers within it. A child dressed in T-shirt, jeans and a bizarre medieval helmet would confront evil sorcerers, ride on the backs of mighty dragons, and struggle for truth and justice. This was the stuff of fantasy, the stuff that dreams are made of. The stuff that nightmares, or perhaps *knightmares*, are made of. *The Greater Game of Luck and Glory*, it was sometimes referred to as.

These 'quests' usually had some kind of ultimate goal, be it to perform a daring rescue or to retrieve some kind of magical treasure. Unfortunately, this series wasn't called "The toughest game show on television" for nothing (*The Weakest Link*? Child's play by comparison), and very few dungeoneers ever succeeded. In fact, eight seasons of *Knightmare* provided just eight winners, in spite of there being an average of around ten quests each year.

And failure *was* tough in *Knightmare*; it was usually punished by a very grisly (simulated) death. The most famous regular line in the series, "Ooooooh, nasty!" was provided by the host, Treguard the Dungeon Master, on many occasions and usually in response to a hapless dungeoneer taking a wrong turn and getting eaten alive by goblins, or falling off the edge of a cliff, or being fried alive by fire-breathing dragons, or blasted to atoms by a malevolent sorceress or… well, you get the idea.

It could be terrifying, frankly. That's why it was called *Knightmare*.

B.   i) I've seen pictures of the show. The locations look cool, but they don't look very real. Are they…?

No they're not real. Like I say, we're talking about a chromakey precursor to Virtual Reality, and all the rooms in *Knightmare* were really just one fairly large studio painted blue. Using computers, the image of the room and everyone moving around inside it was digitally altered by removing all blue light in the picture and superimposing another image taken from somewhere else in its place. The superimposed images could be taken from anything; hand paintings, photographs, or computer-generated graphics.

The hand paintings were the least realistic for obvious reasons, but in some ways that added to the sense of reality crossing over with fantasy. Certainly there was a very chilling, dark and grimy feel to many of the dungeon chambers that were hand-drawn by David John Rowe.

The photographic chambers introduced from season 4 were the most realistic-looking, again for obvious reasons, and they were taken from visiting and photographing the remains of real castles from across the UK, with the assistance of English Heritage. The downside was that because these images were freeze-frames, they somehow felt rather less well-animated or imaginative than the painted rooms of previous years. They also seemed less magical because the pictures could only be taken in daylight, making them seem less dark or frightening, and there was only so much tampering that could be done with them from the makers' imagination, making them seem less fantastic. Other photographs were taken from forests or small village locations. These added a 'larger world' element to the realm of *Knightmare*, but again there was a loss, in that the locations seemed less claustrophobic or daunting than before (as well as the aforementioned

daylight factor).

The total CGI sequences from season 8 were the most convincing in terms of animation of course, although the resolution of the graphics had still only reached a certain level at the time, so they didn't look as physically real as the photos.

ii) Okay, but then surely the dungeoneers couldn't see the 'rooms' they were walking around in?

No they couldn't, but others could see the final image over television screens in another location. So to make the game work, the dungeoneer would be blindfolded in a visorless helm ('The Helmet of Justice' - see question **6 B** - which was really just made of foam and looked pleasingly silly) and then they would be guided around by a team of three friends, or 'advisors' as they were called, who could see the completed image from a monitor, sometimes called a 'magic mirror', in a different studio. They would give instructions that would be relayed to the dungeoneer through a small ear-piece that was concealed under the helmet.

Most scenes would start with the dungeoneer entering a room and calling out, "Where am I?" The usual, highly redundant, response would be, "You're in a room," followed by a description of the room's contents. As the dungeoneer's movement was guided entirely by the advisors, quick-witted instructions and responsive manoeuvring were essential. Very common instructions included, "sidestep to your left…", "walk forward quickly…", "shuffle forward…" etc. When this manoeuvring went wrong of course, the result was usually chaotic for the contestants. And amusing for everyone else.

Although *Knightmare* was essentially meant to be a proving ground for virtual medieval knights, the absence of visuals for the dungeoneer placed real restrictions on what could be done in practise. In particular, combat scenes were very rare and limited, and were usually substituted altogether. (The most common replacement was a riddle contest - see question **I** - at least in early seasons.)

iii) Tell me more about the dungeon…

I like that enthusiasm. The Dungeon of Deceit existed in the catacombs beneath the grim northern English keep of Dunshelm; alias Knightmare Castle, or the Castle of Confusion. It was a magical, obscure place, and infinitely variantisable - which is to say, no two quests were ever the same as the dungeon interior was never fixed in one form. The path through the dungeon shifted from quest-to-quest, making the order in which the rooms appeared change all the time, and individual rooms had a frequent habit of changing layout as well.

The dungeon was made up of three levels, each one rather more difficult to traverse than the previous one. Level 1 was usually fairly basic and designed simply to expose those incompetent teams who had no right even to be there. Level 2 was progressively more tricky, and so to get beyond the halfway stage of that was probably an achievement in itself. The third level was a deep, dark and deadly place, and only the very best teams could hope to survive to the end. To do so was a sure mark of excellence!

Making the transition from one level to the next was usually more

elaborate than simply moving from one room to the next (which generally just involved walking through a portal of some kind). In the first two seasons, the dungeoneer would travel to a lower level by climbing down a well. In season 3, the second of these 'wellways' was replaced with a rather spectacular sequence called the mine-cart ride. The dungeoneer would climb into a wheeled cart, which one of the ingame characters would give a mighty shove down a long bat-infested tunnel, to crash into level 3. (See **iv) 25** for a more detailed description.)

In season 4, the mine-cart ride was replaced by a comparatively dull staircase, although the traditional wellway was again retained for the journeys from level 1 to level 2.

In season 5, the wells were removed altogether to be replaced with an early example of technosorcery (see question **3 C ii)**), the descender (which was really just a fancy word for a lift), and with rides on the back of a mighty (animatronic) dragon called Smirkenorff (see **vi) 5**).

Other methods used in later years included trapdoors and even the infamous Corridor of Blades (see **iv) 1**, or see the **Appendix** for a list of all methods of progressing from level-to-level).

iv) Did the puzzles/rooms etc. have names?

Yes indeed, although not all of them were named in the series itself. Here's a list of many of the rooms/puzzles regularly referred to by one name; -

1. 'The Corridor of Blades' - seasons 4 - 8. The most famous quest-killer in *Knightmare*, this was a narrow corridor whose floor was a moving conveyor belt that ferried the dungeoneer through it, while huge, razor sharp circular saw-blades ran along the walls in the other direction. The trick - and it was quite a demanding trick because the saws covered more than half the width of the corridor - was for the dungeoneer to keep dodging the blades to reach the exit in the distance ahead. A fair number of them failed.

2. 'The Circular Room' - seasons 4 - 6. Coloured purple, then red in later appearances. As was often the case with a lot of season 4 locations, this chamber didn't have too many notable features, but it was used so often that it has to be mentioned.

3. 'Play Your Cards Right' - seasons 7 & 8. Probably the most confusing obstacle in the dungeon, at least for the fans. See **v)** for a full description.

4. 'Cave of Fire' - seasons 2 & 3. A broad cavern with a ledge running round the rim of a deep pit, above which there was the shape of a salamander's head carved into the rock. Intermittent bursts of fire would be emitted from the head's nostrils, and these flames would seep up through cracks in the ledge. The dungeoneer had to avoid being roasted by the flames. Occasionally haunted.

5. 'Vale of Worms' - seasons 1 & 2. A cavern with a bridge running through it and underneath was… Yuck! You'll know what I mean when you see it!

6. 'Vale of Vanburn' - season 3. A path through a short valley in open ground directly beneath Knightmare castle. Nice little obstacle

involving quicksand, and very green, too.

7. 'Black Tower of Goth' - season 7. Lord Fear's second domain, abandoned after a troll crashed through its roof.

8. 'Linghorm & Marblehead' - season 8. Marblehead was a formidable fortress built as Lord Fear's third domain. He also owned its twin palace of Linghorm until it was annexed by Maldame. All sorts of gloomy caverns and Gothic architecture in level 3.

9. 'Dungarth' - seasons 4 & 6. The ruins of a castle that once served as a sanctuary from the perils of the forest, it became an entry point into level 2, and so was hijacked by Mogdred's agents as a line of defence against questing dungeoneers. Witches took over the place in season 6.

10. 'Forest of Dunn' - season 4. A dense wooded area on level 1, and a place "where the foolhardy come" according to the elves. Sometimes prowled by goblins, wolves and even the odd assassin. Other notable wooded areas included Dunkley Wood and the Wolfglade.

11. 'Combat Chess' - season 2. A room with a large black-and-white checked floor where the dungeoneer (using the knight's move, fittingly enough) had to play as a giant chess piece against the Bishop Of The Black Monastery. All teams survived this obstacle, which is unsurprising; if it's impossible to get a King in checkmate with only a bishop, there's no way of catching a knight. This puzzle is more noteworthy for its tense, 'thinking-man's' atmosphere than for any challenge it poses.

12. 'Sewers of Goth/Great Mire' - seasons 7 & 8. Lord Fear's first line of defence in later years, a sort of moat composed chiefly of bright green raw sewage. The labyrinth of tunnels that the Mire ran through was described by Treguard as being as vast an area as the whole of the United Kingdom (although how he could have known that, speaking four hundred years before the UK was even founded, I can't say). The only way to cross it was by rowing boat. Miremen filtered through from the Mire World to here in season 8.

13. 'Castle of Doom' - season 4. Also on level 1, this was a more intact castle than Dungarth (see question **9**). Fatilla the hun was usually found on guard here, and according to Treguard the fortress is well named, although evidence to support this claim is somewhat fleeting. Several more wellways leading to level 2 were often found here.

14. 'Tower of Time' - season 4. Referred to as such by Merlin, only once, this castle was found above the lake known as Dunswater (see **15**). This was the only entrance to level 3 in the fourth season. Not much to see there; indoor locations in the Tower were only ever seen via the Eye-Shield (see question **6 B**).

15. 'Dunswater' - season 4. A vast lake that served as the crossing to the Tower of Time (see question **14**), and like the Sewers of Goth (see **12**) the only passage available was by boat. The usual fare for this was silver and/or gold. Just goes to show that greedy taxi drivers are not the sole preserve of the modern world.

16. 'Bomb Rooms' - seasons 1 - 3. Well, you should recognise

these ones easily enough on account of there being a rather large, *Dangermouse*-style bomb in them. No further elaboration necessary. Except, perhaps, "Run like *hell!!!!*"

17. 'Witchhaven' - season 6. A rather picturesque group of chambers in level 2. The witches lived here until Lord Fear kindly built the Black Tower (see question **7**) on top of it in season 7. Picturesque, yes, but not a great deal happening in them.

18. 'The Crazed Heifer' - season 4. An inn found in the forest of Dunn, although, in keeping with so much of the *Knightmare* universe, it seemed quite capable of moving elsewhere. It usually served as a relatively safe neutral ground in level 1, making it a handy place for a dungeoneer to barter for information and supplies. The surrounding area was sometimes haunted by pookas (forest phantoms - see question **vi) 1**).

19. 'Block and Tackle' - season 4. Regular quest-killer, an unstable room that gradually fell to pieces as the dungeoneer walked through it. Also the location of perhaps the most famous silly death in the history of the series, which would take too long to explain here.

20. 'Serpent's Mouth Cavern' - seasons 1 - 3. Also known as Lillith's domain, this large ice-cavern had a very wide pit and, originally at least, only one exit; a portal that looked like the mouth of a giant serpent's head carved into the blue-white ice. Getting to this was tricky and usually involved bribing the sorceress Lillith to create an icy causeway. After Lillith had disappeared at the end of season 2, the cavern remained but the serpent's mouth itself provided the only way of bridging the pit... by unfurling an incredibly long tongue across the full breadth of the cavern! This was sturdy enough for the dungeoneer to walk along, but would usually withdraw back into the mouth quite quickly, endangering anyone who was slow to cross. An alternative exit had materialised to one side by the start of season three, a narrow ledge that dungeoneers still needed to cross the bridge to get to, and this was generally regarded as a safer route than down the serpent's throat.

21. 'Clue Room' - every season (sort of). Appearing in any number of different forms - sometimes not even rooms - these were the lynchpin area near the start of every level. Despite the name, clue rooms weren't necessarily indoors; in season 4, for instance, the level 1 clue room was a clearing in a forest. Supplies for the level, including food and a choice of clue objects, could be gained here, and although these were frequently guarded (usually by wall monsters - see **vi) 2** - or perhaps a tree troll), the guardian could usually be challenged for them. A successful challenge not only earned the right to take items, but could also earn information about what would be best to take.

22. 'Causeway Puzzle' - the main obstacle on each level through seasons 5 and 6, probably overused, where the path across a cavern appears in the form of a series of stepping stones to a far exit above a bottomless pit. Each different stage of the causeway presented numerous different stones the dungeoneer could step on to advance,

but some of the stones were unsafe and would fall away when trodden upon, resulting in a long tumble to death. The stones would be coloured or have images engraved on them, and the right path was usually a pre-defined colour-code or image-code that the team needed to find out from the Opposition earlier in the level. Sometimes there was also a time limit, meaning stones would drop away after a brief time, regardless of whether the dungeoneer had stepped forward or not.

    23. 'Slice-Me-Dice-Me' - this was the most memorable chamber to appear in the recent *Knightmare VR* pilot (see question **E** for more information about that). A number of stepping stones, each marked with a letter, made up multiple haphazard paths over an enormous drop, much like the causeway puzzles (see **22**) of old, and the dungeoneer again needed to find the right combination to select the safe route across, usually another pre-defined code. Things were further complicated this time however, by a narrow but significant gap between the stepping stones that the dungeoneer would have to jump over, and even more by a series of giant axes swinging from the walls across the dungeoneer's 'flight-path'.

    24. 'Mills of Doom' - seasons 1 - 3. A noisy mechanical puzzle, where the dungeoneer had to pick his or her way across a series of giant cogs - above another of those bottomless pits that the dungeon seemed to have an inexhaustible supply of - to the far side of the chamber. The teeth round the outer edges of the cogs were always turning; as a tooth from one cog aligned with a tooth from the next one, a safe path would form briefly, and the dungeoneer would have to move swiftly over it. In season 3, the occasional poisonous bat would fly overhead as an unhelpful extra distraction.

    25. 'Mine-cart Ride' - season 3. Most rooms in the dungeon would have exits in the form of an ordinary door or portal. But, as mentioned in question **iii)**, at the ends of levels the exit would usually be more dramatic as it carried the dungeoneer down to the next stage. The most common form of exit, at least in the early years, was called the 'wellway', a broad cavern, in one corner of which would be a well that the dungeoneer would have to climb into to descend to the next level. (See **Appendix** for a list of all methods of progressing from level-to-level.) But in season 3, the wellway that took the dungeoneer from level 2 to level 3 was replaced with a much more spectacular method; the dungeoneer would arrive in a mining cavern, where there was a rail track that ran into a mine shaft covered by a light force-field that it wasn't possible to go through on foot. On the rails was a large mining cart, which the dungeoneer would have to climb into, after which one of the dungeon characters - assuming they'd been persuaded to help - would push the cart through the force-field and down the mine shaft. The cart would run along the rails at hectic speeds, while (animated) poisonous bats passed overhead trying to bite lumps out of the dungeoneer. (The shimmering colour of the shaft walls suggested that it was once a gold mine.) When the cart reached the other end of the tunnel, it would come crashing over onto its side in another cavern, this

time at the start of level 3.

26. 'Pool Room' - season 3. Nothing to do with billiards or other cueing sports, this was one of the more original and ambitious rooms to be found in the 'hand-painted' era, although in truth the premise was deceptively simple. Essentially this was the dungeon's equivalent of a Roman bath, a broad chamber with a check-paved floor, and a raised ledge around waist-height lining the outer edge. The room was occasionally filled with water up to just below the ledge, and according to Motley, at such times it was a popular place for dungeon characters to head to for a quick scrub-up. The location of the room's exit varied; sometimes the water had to be drained away to reveal a way out close to floor-level, at other times a portal could be found above the ledge in the far corner. Sometimes the dungeoneer even had to go 'wading' through the water - which of course wasn't real, thankfully - and during one memorable swim the dungeoneer was nearly attacked by a shark, to the accompaniment of music mimicking the theme from *Jaws*! (How a shark of all things managed to find its way into a vast subterranean dungeon near the border between Scotland and England was not examined in any depth, but then I suppose you could make the same complaint about creatures like the Medusa - see question **vi) 10** - if you think about it.)

27. 'Great Corridor of the Catacomb' - seasons 1 - 3. A famous landmark late in level 1, although it sometimes materialised in level 2 as well (occasionally even in the same quest, bizarrely), this chamber would usually be talked up by Treguard to the point that you half-expected Godzilla to come stamping into view, but in practise it was rarely so dramatic. In terms of layout, it was a fairly long chamber receding into the distance, with two doors in either wall. Treguard said of it that it was "patrolled by the army of the dead", but the only indication of that - if any - was a sound effect of marching footsteps. At other times the flagstones of the floor would gradually dematerialise in clusters, revealing the giant image of a skull beneath it and, more importantly, a very long drop. In season 2, it became intermittently occupied by a shadow demon - which was an ebony figure, perched at the far end of the chamber, stepping from side-to-side, making nasty gurgling sounds, and doing very little else - or a toaderdile - which was a very green hybrid of a toad and a crocodile, perched at the far end of the chamber… stepping from side-to-side, making nasty gurgling sounds, and doing very little else! On one occasion the corridor had a giant morning star swinging back-and-forth from the ceiling on a chain across the dungeoneer's path. (NOTE: In the scene in question, the room was described by Treguard as the Corridor of the Catacomb, although in fact it looked more like a modified version of the Corridor of Spears - see **28**.) As for the third season, when it appeared on level 1, the corridor's farthest wall developed the unnerving habit of sliding towards the dungeoneer, blocking off exits and (presumably) squashing flat anybody who didn't get out of the way in time. When it appeared in level 2, the corridor was usually frequented by goblin packs (see

question **vi) 3**). To sum up, whatever form the threat took within the Corridor of the Catacomb, the basic survival technique was always the same; "Get out of there quick!" This was not usually very difficult though.

      28. 'Corridor of Spears' - seasons 1 - 3. Effectively the precursor to the mighty Corridor of Blades (see question **1**), this appeared in two forms. It was a room with five exits; two in each side wall and one in the farthest wall from the dungeoneer, which was the only one that was safe to walk through. From each of the side exits, spears powered by clockwork machinery would slide in and out, blocking the dungeoneer's path at regular intervals, and so well-timed manoeuvring was required to reach the far exit. One problematic aspect of this was that the elevation of some of the spears was quite high up, which meant that once the dungeoneer had got past them, the chromakey effect became more obvious with the image of the spears still sub-imposed 'behind' the image of the dungeoneer. To get round this, the spears would stop moving once the dungeoneer was beyond them, which avoided the giveaway imagery, but also made the puzzle look a little half-hearted and untidy. For this reason, the room was modified in the second season. Many of the slabs in the floor and walls went missing, leaving lots of little holes for a clumsy-footed traveller to stumble into, and also making more of the machinery powering the spears visible. More importantly, the spears were set at a much lower elevation than before, so that once the dungeoneer got past them there was no danger of the imaging-clashes of the previous incarnation. This allowed the spears to keep moving permanently, which gave the chamber a more relentless feel. In season 3, the room was sometimes occupied by skull hauntings (see question **vi) 1**).

      29. 'Ariadne's Lair' - seasons 2, 4, 5 & 6. Ariadne, fashioned 'Queen of All Arachnids', was a giant tarantula that could be found lurking in various parts of the *Knightmare* world. Originally her lair was a broad but nondescript courtyard at the heart of level 2, with a low wall on each side, and an exit in each wall that could only be accessed by crouching. The dungeoneer had to hurry to escape before Ariadne could seal off each exit with a web. (This would sometimes be complicated by the presence of a quest-piece, which the dungeoneer would need to retrieve first.) Ariadne appears to have left the Dungeon at the end of season 2, although the courtyard reappeared a few times in season 3, usually as the entrance to the Vale of Vanburn (see **6**) on level 1. Ariadne resurfaced in season 4, now outside the Dungeon walls in Dunkley Wood (see **10**), again on level 2. Her new lair was the interior of a hollowed-out tree that appeared to be bigger on the inside than it was on the outside - no curly-haired man in a very long scarf was ever visible - with one of her giant webs across the ceiling. Clue objects and food were usually available in Ariadne's forest lair, which again complicated the business of escaping through the only exit on the other side of the tree. She then moved on to a forest clearing in season 5, with one of her giant webs distorting the view of the sky, but as before

there was a choice of clue objects for the dingeoneer to think about, slowing escape. This incarnation of the lair was referred to as 'Ariadne's Glade'. Ariadne then reappeared briefly in the only winning quest of season 6. Her latest lair was only accessible via a portal aboard *Cloudwalker*, the galleon of an Arabian mariner called Captain Nemanor, although the lair was not aboard the ship itself. It seemed to be a darkened chamber in some kind of castle or stately home, with yet another of those giant webs across the ceiling.

v) Now that you mention it, I think I remember seeing that 'Play Your Cards Right' puzzle, but I could never figure out how it worked. Any ideas?

At the risk of sounding the teeniest bit smug (a stance I normally wouldn't countenance of course!), I'm amazed how many times this question has popped up over the years. This puzzle was based on a game that, like many card games, has more than one name, but I knew it at school as '52-Pickup'. As a result, the solution always seemed very obvious when I was watching. Maybe it's just me?

Anyway, the layout in the chamber, in case you don't recognise the references so far, is that the dungeoneer would be standing on a stone block overhanging a wide pit. There were stone blocks all along the wall, which could be used to form a path to the door on the far side, but these blocks would be retracted into the wall, and have to be opened out. This would be done by the dungeoneer pressing their hand to large playing cards suspended on the wall above the stones. There would be two cards hanging over each block, and the dungeoneer would have to select the correct card to unfurl the next stone. If they were to choose the wrong card, the block they were standing on would retract into the wall instead, and the dungeoneer would fall to their death.

So how does the dungeoneer know which card to select? Well, there'll be a running theme between each correct card and the correct ones immediately adjacent to it, suit or number. The team should remember which card they chose for the stone the dungeoneer is presently stood upon, and then compare it to the two cards that are presented to them now. Most commonly, the next correct card will be of an identical suit. If it isn't though, the number of the card (or its class if it's a picture card) will be identical instead.

So, say that the dungeoneer has used a four of clubs to land on the current stone, and is now presented with a choice of a nine of spades and a four of hearts. The dungeoneer should choose the four of hearts because it's the same number as the card from the previous choice, while the nine of spades has no common theme.

vi) Could you tell me about a few of the monsters that were in *Knightmare*?

Well it'll have to be a few or I'll be writing forever. Here goes…

1. Skull-hauntings were among the most common monsters in the series. They were described as the undead spirits of previous dungeoneers who had perished in other adventures. The skulls were always super-imposed graphic images that floated around the screen

making a chilling wailing sound, and if they made contact with a dungeoneer they would drain life force (see question **8**). Most skulls were white in colour, but rarer ones were blue or green, and these could drain energy at a much higher rate. Other, similar hauntings included sturmgeists (which were essentially the same thing), and pookas, which were large forest phantoms that occasionally spread to more remote human settlements.

2. Wall monsters were probably the most famous creatures in *Knightmare*; walls that had been enchanted with the power to morph into a craggy face, and with a modicum of personality - the personality usually taking the form of a bad attitude. Most wall monsters were guardians of level 1 clue rooms (see **iv) 21**), where they would test dungeoneers with three-part riddle contests, and reward or punish them accordingly. Olgarth and Granitas were guardians in the first two seasons. Another level 1 clue room was introduced in season 2 to alternate with the original, and this was guarded by Igneous. In season 3, all the old guardians were replaced. Igneous was succeeded by the only ever female wall monster, the Brangwen, while Olgarth and Granitas made way for Golgarach in the original clue room. Wall monsters became scarcer after that, but they still appeared from time-to-time, albeit in rather modified roles. For instance, blockers appeared in seasons 5 and 6. These were wall monsters that would seal off an exit and not let anyone through without a correct password; and if the dungeoneer gave a wrong password, the blocker would eat them alive. Then in season 7, the Brollachan was introduced. This was a wall monster that could appear in practically any room it wished to, where it would grill the dungeoneer for knowledge. The bemusing aspect of this one though was that it never actually knew the answers to its own riddles (long story), which made its introduction seem a little pointless. Similar creatures to the wall monsters included the tree troll, Oakley, and the weeping doors from season 4, all of which would test dungeoneers with riddles.

3. Goblins were a common menace introduced in season 3. They were scavengers with a fondness for human flesh, and they hunted in packs, usually to the chilling accompaniment of loud blasts on a hunting horn. They were an extreme hazard to dungeoneers, even though most of them were unaligned. The exceptions were Grippa and Rhark; in season 5, Lord Fear took two goblins into captivity to use them as extra troops, and hired a sadistic goblin master called Skarkill to control them. (In season 7, Skarkill was replaced as goblin master by a brigand called Raptor.) Much rarer were hobgoblins. These were giant, powerful goblins armed with huge shields and scimitars. One of these was also taken into captivity by the Opposition, and was named 'Tiny' by Skarkill. (NOTE: This name was Skarkill's optimistic attempt at proving that he had a sense of irony.)

4. Goblins still appeared intermittently in season 8, but within the ranks of the Opposition they'd now been replaced by miremen. These were bizarre piscine creatures walking on flippery feet and

carrying nasty-looking hunting tridents. They were better-suited to surviving in the damper, grimier environments that were reintroduced for the final season, but they were also immensely slow and lacked co-ordination on land. Raptor was re-assigned from goblin master to miremaster to keep them in line. Similar to the relationship between goblins and hobgoblins was the relationship between miremen and mire-trogs. The trogs were absolutely gigantic, a kind of hybrid of miremen and trolls (see **9**) that were used by Lord Fear to guard some of the most important chambers of level 3.

5. Dragons were quite a frequent monster in *Knightmare* and while some were friendly, most were not. The first dragon (one of David Rowe's hand-drawn images) was a yellow wyrm that appeared in season 2, and it was both unfriendly and thoroughly contemptuous of humans. It was so large that only its head was visible within the confines of the screen. If the creature had a name it was never revealed. In season 3, the same basic graphic for this dragon was reused, modified slightly, but its personality was modified completely. It was now a kindly creature with a gentle Welsh accent, and identified itself as Owen. It still tended to look down on humans but more out of pity than contempt. Owen only appeared the once. The next dragon to appear was introduced at the beginning of season 5, and rather than a hand-painting it was a fully animatronic model. It had a saddle and flight harness on its back, making it a method of high-speed travel, usually between levels (see **1 B iii)** or **Appendix**). This green wyrm, which didn't speak until the start of season 6, was called Smirkenorff and although he was basically friendly, he retained the aloofness of most of his species, and so dungeoneers could still expect a frosty reception. He usually charged a fare for travelling on his back; gold, firestones, and dragon mints were among the forms of payment he would accept. At the end of season 6 however, Lord Fear launched a violent red dragon that called itself Red Death (I know, I know, Corn-City) to attack Knightmare Castle. This ended up getting shot out of the sky by a magical weapon called 'The Lightning-Rod', and crash-landed on the Opposition's own castle on Mount Fear, leaving it in ruins (see **9 B**). In season 8, Lord Fear recruited numerous tiny red dragons called 'Snapdragons', which would hide in alcoves of dungeon tunnels and try to bite a chunk out of any passing travellers. A rogue snapdragon was taken as a pet by the fool-taker, Snapper Jack. Lord Fear further recruited Bhal-Shebah, a giant red dragon with a split personality. Bhal and Shebah hated each other, usually leading to chaos. (On a very serious note, Bhal-Shebah was occasionally referred to as a schizophrenic. This is quite an unfortunate mistake on the part of the series as, contrary to popular myth, schizophrenia and multiple-personality disorder are not the same thing.) Bhal-Shebah was brainwashed in the penultimate quest of the season and given a new, singular personality with delusions of grandeur. It renamed itself Firestorm Of Marblehead.

6. Introduced in season 8, skeletrons were a kind of successor

to the skull-hauntings (see **1**) that had more or less vanished by the end of the seventh season. They were the skeletons of dead bodies reanimated by technosorcery (see question **3 C ii)**), and were generally used by Lord Fear as sentry guards. Although quite dangerous, they were mindless and had very restricted vision; they could see nothing that wasn't moving directly across the path they were walking on.

7. Another iconic monster revered in *Knightmare* legend was the catacombite from seasons 1 - 3. This was in some ways quite similar to skeletrons (see **6**), in that it was a human skeleton reanimated by sorcery. The magic also warped and mutated the bones however, making the creature four-legged and far larger than a human. Contact with a catacombite, or sometimes just close proximity, could drain life force at a fearsome rate.

8. Mechanical enemies appeared occasionally. The first was a clockwork warrior from season 2 called the Automatum, a slow, whirring, clanking robot in chainmail and shaped like a Norman soldier. It was sometimes referred to as 'the mindless mechanical warrior'. In season 6 a mighty monstrosity called the Dreadnort was introduced to patrol the first two levels for dungeoneers. There was no escape from this creature without a password.

9. Trolls appeared in seasons 2, 7 and 8. The first troll to appear in the dungeon occupied a vast cavern just below a high ledge, on which dungeoneers would desperately try to escape. It had small horns on its head and very little intelligence, but it was able to speak. (This character should not be confused with the giant from season 1, which was very similar, but was not a troll.) The trolls from seasons 7 and 8, which looked like giant warriors from ancient Greece, were somewhat smaller and even less intelligent. They had grey, stony skin and no power of speech. They were sometimes armed with enormous battleaxes or clubs.

10. The medusa appeared in seasons 2 and 3 as one of the most lethal enemies of the third level. She was similar in some respects to the wall monsters (see **2**), in that she essentially existed as no more than a face within a wall. In keeping with her Greek legend, her hair was made of snakes and her gaze could turn any creature who looked upon her to stone. Even the blindfolding effect of the Helmet of Justice could not long prevent this power from taking hold. The only way for a dungeoneer to escape her was to hide behind a magical shield or use a spell.

11. Cavernwights - or just 'wights - were endemic on level 3 in the first three seasons of *Knightmare*, and in some ways were similar to the later miremen (see **4**). Short, slow, clumsy, blind, but aggressively carnivorous, the 'wights were assumed to have descended from humans who had become trapped under the ground many centuries earlier. Most of the cavernwights' senses had apparently faded away, except for their sense of smell, which had developed to many scales above that of a human, and *possibly* their hearing; it was sometimes stated that they were deaf, but Treguard often went to great

pains to keep dungeoneers from making the slightest noise near them. In keeping with their sharpened sense of smell, the cavernwights' noses had grown far longer, and looked almost like trunks. (Given that their hands had flattened out into the forms of hooves, the creatures looked vaguely like very small elephants that could stand upright on their hind legs.) The very touch of a 'wight was said to be deadly.

12. Last but not least, the Frightknights appeared from seasons 3 to 6, in two forms, the second of which became one of the most prominent icons for the series. They were all essentially mindless warriors, controlled by sorcery and/or technology. When the first Frightknight appeared in season 3, it was referred to by Treguard as a 'Behemoth', a large, clunky figure in waves of heavy field plate armour, lumbering slowly through the levels in pursuit of dungeoneers. Although it could be injured, it appeared to be indestructible. It appeared again in season 4, when the term 'Frightknight' was specifically coined for it by Gundrada. In season 5, after Lord Fear had taken charge of the bad guys, he unleashed a new, fleeter breed of Frightknight. These wore conical helmets with leering, evil-looking visors, flowing silver cloaks, and less bulky armour. They carried mighty broadswords, and their feet were never visible, giving a gliding, almost spectral aspect to their movement. They were undoubtedly more sinister and fearsome than the previous model - so much so that their image became a logo on many an item of *Knightmare* merchandise (see question **4 B**), as well as the shape of the trophy awarded for winning quests in the later years (see question **vii)**) - but in truth they never played much of a role in the series itself beyond functioning as a kind of decorative ring of bodyguards for Lord Fear, who referred to them as "mindless bits of metal."

vii) You say very few teams ever won *Knightmare*. What *did* they win?

Not a lot, it must be said. It was suggested that there should be a cash prize or something glamorous like a computer for the winners, but these ideas were rejected, as *ITC* laws forbid the use of monetary prizes on children's' shows, and a computer didn't seem very in-keeping with the character of the programme.

Instead, winning teams got a very rare trophy as a reward. In the first four seasons winners were awarded a small salva, which was dubbed 'The Spurs of Squiredom.' From season 5 onwards, the trophy was replaced with a very grand statuette in the shape of a Frightknight (see question **vi) 12**).

viii) And *who* were the winners?

The roll of honour is a small one I fear, but at least that makes the job of listing them a cinch...

Season 1.   No winners.
Season 2.   Team 4. Mark, Daniel, Matthew and Jonathan, all from Witney. Team 10, Julian, Vaughan, Becca and Mary, from Banbury.
Season 3.   No winners.
Season 4.   Team 6. Dicken, Dominic, Tim and Praveen, from Torquay.

Season 5.   Team 4. Ben, John, Ray and Jonathan, from Exeter. (My hometown, yay!)
Season 6.   Team 5. Ben, James, Alan and Nathan, from Salisbury.
Season 7.   Team 6. Julie, Helen, Samantha and Helen, from Staffordshire. Team 7. Barry, Simon, Derek and Daniel, from Worcestershire.
Season 8.   Team 5. Dunstan, Alex, Oliver and Alan, from St. Albans.

C.   i) Who created the series anyway?

The idea for *Knightmare* was the brainchild (no pun intended) of computer journalist and occasional TV producer, Tim Child. In 1985 he'd hit on the idea of creating a drama series using a combination of computers and blue-screen optical technology. He was told that there was no way they could make such a programme for logistical reasons, but that there was always a market for original game shows, so why not try and think up a format for something like that? So he did. He simply took the original idea and turned it into a game instead.

A pilot episode of the game, already being presented by Hugo Myatt as the Dungeon Master, was made in 1986. It was called *Dungeon Doom*. The pilot was then remixed with much-improved titles and graphics sequences, and thankfully the hoky title was changed to the much more insidious *Knightmare*. This second pilot was viewed by the *CITV* executive committee who gave the go-ahead for a season of eight episodes, just to 'test the water', and so the first episode was broadcast to a loud fanfare of no trumpets whatever on Monday the 7th of September 1987.

The water, when so tested, proved scalding hot! *Knightmare* was an immediate smash hit, with audiences of millions every week and rave critical acclaim from both the media and public. And so *CITV's* stance shifted from cautious optimism to proud enthusiasm, and they wouldn't look back for a long time. The second season was commissioned with an extension to run to *sixteen* episodes, leading right up until the week before Christmas 1988, and *Knightmare* would go on to run until the mid-1990's.

(Sequences from the *Dungeon Doom* pilot still exist, and may be remixed and made available for download off the Internet in the near future; watch this space!)

ii) What were the origins of the dungeon within the storyline?

This was never explained in the series itself; the only slight reference was in the opening scene of season 1, when Treguard said he was the only one ever to master the dungeon.

However, the first book in a series of *Knightmare* novellas written by Dave Morris (see question **4 B**) explored the story of how, late in the twelfth century, a keep built by the Normans as 'Dunshelm' became known as 'Knightmare Castle', and how Treguard became its Dungeon Master; -

According to the story, a demonic sorcerer called the Gruagach gained entry to the castle by posing as a holy man, and then used his powers to wrest control of it from its owner, the Baron Vestan. The Gruagach invested

his magical powers into the castle's dungeon and then opened it to what he falsely described as a 'friendly challenge'; honest knights from all over the former Angevin dominion would accept the opportunity to test their mettle against the puzzles and sorcery within the dungeon of what was now called 'Knightmare Castle'. All of them failed of course, dying grisly and pitiless deaths. By this treachery, the Gruagach was slowly but surely killing off the code of Chivalry, and its noblest, most gifted warriors, within England.

After some years, the master swordsman, Treguard of Dunshelm - whose father had been the Baron of Dunshelm before being murdered and supplanted by Vestan - re-emerged from years of exile on the continent of Europe to take up the Gruagach's challenge, accompanied by a jester and former wizard called Folly. Not only did Treguard and Folly manage to defeat the dungeon's puzzles, but they also confronted the Gruagach himself on the battlements of the castle. Treguard slew the demon with *Wyrmslayer*, a sword infused with magic from drawing the blood of a dying dragon. Through mastering the dungeon and slaying the Gruagach, Treguard reclaimed his birthright as the Lord of Dunshelm and became the new Dungeon Master of Knightmare Castle. At Folly's suggestion, he chose to keep the 'Knightmare Challenge' open, but this time as a genuine test of Chivalry, instead of as a trap designed to kill off the brave and the good in England.

NOTE: Tim Child has said of the novellas that they are "faithful to the concept" of *Knightmare* as a TV series, but are very different in the detail. As such, the above is not necessarily part of the continuity of the series. It is simply the *only* explanation that has ever been put forward by any authorised source.

D.   i) Do you have the dates of when *Knightmare* episodes were originally transmitted on *Children's ITV*?

With the aid of information gleaned from Knightmare.com (see question **5 A**), I can give you the transmission dates for the first and last episodes of each season. You should be able to work out the dates of episodes from in between times from that.

Season 1 (1987): Monday 7th September to Monday 26th October.
Season 2 (1988): Monday 5th September to Monday 19th December.
Season 3 (1989): Friday 8th September to Friday 22nd December.
Season 4 (1990): Friday 7th September to Friday 21st December.
Season 5 (1991): Friday 6th September to Friday 20th December.
Season 6 (1992): Friday 11th September to Friday 18th December.
Season 7 (1993): Friday 10th September to Friday 17th December.
Season 8 (1994): Friday 9th September to Friday 11th November.

ii) So... why isn't it on *Children's ITV* anymore?

In 1994 *CITV* decided to axe *Knightmare*, feeling that the series' target audience was moving away from television of this type and were getting more involved with playing video games for themselves. That's the official answer to the question anyway.

It has to be said that this doesn't really stand up to scrutiny, not least because the audience figures at the time suggested that *Knightmare* was still

as popular as any show in *CITV's* stable, but it has since been admitted that the reasons are more complex, and that this was merely the main 'problem'. All-in-all, it was probably just a run of misunderstandings between makers and broadcasters, leading to a bad final decision.

It seems a more convincing answer is never going to be forthcoming, so please don't be frustrated if, when asked the above question, we just say, "Politics," and leave it at that.

E.   i) Will new episodes of *Knightmare* ever be made?

It doesn't look likely, although one new episode, a little under fourteen minutes in length, was made in 2004. If that sounds like a poor return for ten years of waiting, consider that for some time it looked quite impossible that there would be any new material at all; public interest in *Knightmare* had slumped, broadcasters were convinced that the genre belonged to a bygone era, and even the makers themselves, as Tim Child has admitted, didn't really have much intention of making any more of it.

However, late in 2002, *Anglia TV'*s shared rights over *Knightmare* (both the programme name and the format) finally expired and these were restored in full to the original production company, *Broadsword TV*, and its spin-off company, *Televirtual*. This happened to coincide with the remarkable 'nostalgia-is-so-*now*' phenomenon of the new millennium, one of the strongest expressions of which was an upsurge in interest in television shows from the 1970's and 1980's. As it turned out, *Knightmare* was one of the shows that benefited from this (partly because of a mention on the nostalgic show, *The 100 Greatest Kids' TV Shows* in the Autumn of 2001 on *Channel 4*), as was evident in the flourishing online community that was developing.

This had not gone unnoticed among the powers that be within *Televirtual*, who realised that the audience for *Knightmare* was on the rise again, and so, on the restoration of format rights, they looked into reviving the series in a modified form; a full-on Virtual Reality show, including players interfacing with the game as computer-generated avatars. There followed in July 2003 the added boost of securing lottery funding to help develop the new project, and this led to the production of a fully-engineered demonstrator machine, which was eventually used to create a full pilot episode titled *Knightmare VR*. Video footage was available for download from the *Televirtual* website (see question **5 A**) for some months from September 2004, although it has since been taken down. It was also available in a higher-quality form on a DVD that could be obtained for free from *Televirtual* by snail-mail. (At the time of writing it can still be downloaded from http://pooka.ezri.mine.nu/zeug/Knightmare%20VR%20Pilot.wmv, hosted by Ben 'Pooka' Maydon.)

Disappointingly, a full series of *Knightmare VR* did not materialise because *Televirtual* couldn't find a channel that was prepared to broadcast it, and at the time of writing the project has been put on hold indefinitely. But the fact that it was even under consideration, and that a new episode was made - even if it was just for promotional purposes - was a massive step up from the way things were looking in the summer of 2002.

There's also another series from *Televirtual* that's already in development called *Timegate*, which in many respects will be similar to the original *Knightmare*, albeit with enhanced technology and a very different scenario. Work on this series was temporarily suspended while work was done on the *Knightmare VR* pilot, but is likely to resume in the near future now that *KMVR* has been shelved.

By the way, if you're still determined to fight for *Knightmare's* revival, you can add your name to the *Bring Back Knightmare* online petition. See question **5 A** to find the URL.

ii) What was the *Knightmare VR* pilot like?

Somewhat different. It seemed to retain much of the atmosphere and character of the old programme - including its two most prominent figures, Treguard the Dungeon Master and Lord Fear the Technosorcerer - but there was still a different 'feel'. The much more advanced playing system, for one thing, meant the dungeoneer, eleven year-old Arthur Wells, could see the virtual environment he was competing in, rendering a full team of advisors unnecessary. He therefore had only one advisor, his nine year-old cousin Vishar, who functioned much more as a consultant than as a guide.

Lord Fear was very much his usual self, and still voiced by Mark Knight (see questions **3 C ii)** and **3 C iii)** for more info about Lord Fear's usual self). Treguard was still played by Hugo Myatt, although he didn't quite manage to duplicate the voice of ten years earlier, and the Dungeon Master no longer appeared to be the host of the game so much as a kind of mentor for the dungeoneer. The host was instead a nameless goblin in armour who served Lord Fear, and who was voiced by Tim Child. There was also a return for Fear's reptilian henchman, Lissard, although on this occasion he was not played by Cliff Barry. (See question **3 B** for more cast information.)

The quest-structure and format of old were reproduced more or less as before; a contestant questing through the levels of a magical dungeon, using spells and clue objects, befriending some characters and trying to outwit opponents. It was not stated whether the three-level nature of the dungeon dimensions was retained.

The incidental music was composed by a small company in Norwich calling itself *Madmanmusic*. The tunes were very different from what was used in the original series, and had a peculiar, happy-go-lucky quality to them that was not at all in keeping either with what the makers were trying to achieve on-screen, or with the music that was used in the series of old (see question **G**). The music on the *KMVR* pilot was poorly-received almost universally, although had the full series been commissioned it seems highly unlikely that it would have been used again anyway. The music can be downloaded from the *Madmanmusic* website at http://www.madmanmusic.co.uk/music-knightmare.htm.

Although Tim Child has made clear that only one of the lines spoken by either dungeoneer or advisor in the entire pilot was actually scripted, it must be said that most of what they said sounded rehearsed. My suspicion is that they'd decided between themselves in advance what sort of things they were going to say, without much input from the production team, although how much advance knowledge the kids had of what challenges they were

going to face is unclear. But whatever the truth of that may be, the 'reading-from-a-shopping-list' tone of their voices did little for the tension of the proceedings.

The best addition the pilot offered to the long and glorious history of dungeon architecture was certainly the 'Slice-Me-Dice-Me' puzzle, which gets a description in question **B iv) 23**.

Overall, the pilot was very good for what it was trying to be - which is to say, promotional material produced with limited resources - and it did recapture some of the atmosphere of the original series, which makes it well worth a look for anyone who was a fan of the original. It would even be an interesting curiosity for people who are new to *Knightmare*. But be warned before you try it that we only see the first few minutes of the quest, which can be infuriating, there are several enormous logic gaffes in the storyline (pay close attention to Lord Fear's instructions to Lissard if you want to spot the most severe one), the dungeoneer/advisors relationship has been altered fundamentally in a way that traditionalists may find jarring, some of the music is very irritating, and the appearance of the dungeoneer as an avatar - rather than a live-action presence on a super-imposed background - can take some getting used to.

F. Can I see episodes of the original series anywhere?

More often than not, yes you can if you have Satellite or Cable TV in the UK. However this is always subject to change.

After *CITV* axed the series back in 1994, it went into limbo for a while until the broadcasting rights for all eight seasons were bought up by the *Sci-Fi Channel* in 1995. All the seasons were shown concurrently from late-1995 through 1996, and most of the first four seasons had been broadcast again when the rights expired in 1998, whereupon the controllers at *Sci-Fi* decided not to renew them.

There followed years of quiet frustration for *Knightmare* fans until late 2002, when the specialist game show channel *Challenge* bought the rights to broadcast season 3 of *Knightmare* (widely acclaimed the finest of all eight seasons) over the Christmas period, to be reshown in the New Year. They also made a mini-documentary about the history of the series, including interviews with Tim Child, that was broadcast on numerous occasions over the festive holiday.

Viewing figures on the New Year run were impressive enough that through 2003 *Challenge* agreed to buy up and show seasons 4 & 5 as well. In April and May 2004, they showed seasons 6, 7 and 8 concurrently, and while this was happening, the first two seasons were bought up as well. *Challenge* were then in a position to show all eight seasons in order from early June through until September.

Nowadays, *Knightmare* episodes can sometimes be seen on *Challenge* on Saturdays and Sundays. The rights to broadcast most seasons have now expired sadly, although *Challenge* have not ruled out renewing them.

G. Who composed the music on *Knightmare*?

The title music was composed by Ed Welch. There were seven different recordings of the theme music used in the series. Seasons 1 to 3 had a very sharp, slightly ethereal title track, appropriately supernatural but also urgently medieval and high of tempo. The credit track for those years was less harsh, but followed the same basic theme. This was probably the most chilling version of the title music, especially the shrieking, hollering opening chord.

A new version of the theme tune was introduced in season 4 to coincide with the introduction of photographic locations that were replacing the old hand-painted chambers. Although synthesized, this version of the music was very grand and orchestral, almost symphonic. The new credit track that accompanied it was perhaps the most inspiring version of the *Knightmare* theme, although there was also a contracted and sped-up version of the credit track that was used at the ends of some episodes. The brevity of this version took some of the edge away from it.

The final release of the theme tune was introduced in season 6, and had a slightly different character meant to reflect the growing influence of technosorcery (see question **3 C ii)**) in the show. It seemed to be a kind of hybrid of several different musical styles, with an electronic drum beat, a mystical front sound and a slight bluesy tone to the instrumentation. The credit track was a bit slower and more bluesy. (Personally, I can't stand the final version, but many people prefer it to the previous ones.)

H. You say there were eight seasons... Is there an easy way to tell one season from another?

Not always, but there are indicators out there.

Most important is to check the general lay-out of the dungeon itself. The first three seasons were predominantly made with pseudo-rooms that were hand-drawn by art-wizard David Rowe. Although they looked pretty stunning, at least by the standards of the late-80's, it was still blatantly obvious that they were drawings. Seasons 4 to 7 on the other hand generally used superimposed photographs of castles and country landscapes in place of the old dungeon chambers, while season 8 depended mainly on computer-generated graphics. So, depending on what the rooms and locations appear to be 'made of', that can help you narrow it down.

Other big indicators can help. Treguard's outfit and general behaviour are handy guidelines. If he wears a brown Hessian body with a hood, and a hem that goes down almost to his knees, and if he has a beard so overlong and thick that it looks like he's simply never heard of scissors, you're probably watching season 1 or 2. (Also if his behaviour seems not merely sinister, but slightly evil and wild, again, that suggests it's one of the first two seasons.) If he wears a studded black tabard with a white undershirt and a magnificent cloak, and his hair is heavily brushed back from the temples, it's season 3 - 6. If he wears studded black leather armour over a red shirt, and his hair appears rather greyer than usual - but otherwise more or less as it was in the first two seasons - it's season 7 or 8.

Also, if Treguard has an assistant co-presenting the programme, it can't be any of the first three seasons. If the assistant is male, dressed in green, has pointy ears and answers to the name of Pickle, it must be season 4,5, or 6. If the assistant is female, has dark curly hair, has an unconvincing Spanish accent, and answers to the name of Majida, it must be season 7 or 8. Furthermore, if Majida wears an all-red outfit, it's season 7. If she wears a cream and red outfit, it's season 8.

Looking at the dungeoneers can give you a hint as well. If the helmet they wear has horns, you must be watching one of the first six seasons, if not it's one of the last two.

There are all manner of other indicators of course, but they're far too narrow and specific for me to list them here.

I.   i) What were the sources for the storylines and scenarios in *Knightmare*?

Numerous and varied. The early years in particular took a lot of their inspiration from medieval, and even Dark Age, history and mythology. One of the more prominent early characters was Merlin, the legendary Celtic wizard (who contrary to popular assumption was based on a genuine historical figure, called Leilocen). The links to the Arthurian legend didn't stop there however. Merlin's evil alter-ego, Mogdred, was partly-based on King Arthur's incestuously-conceived son, Medraut (or Mordred).

All manner of other sources from mythology can be seen in the series. Elves, goblins, dwarves and pixies can all be found lifted from many a common European fairy tale, while figures from darker legends, such as wights and the legendary Greek monster the Medusa, made appearances in the deepest and darkest level.

In later years the material, and especially the characterisation, became more original and topical and thus less derivative. A particularly strong example of topicality was Lord Fear, who was a parody of the technical revolution of the 1990's. See question **3 C ii)** for an explanation.

Another issue that must be addressed on this topic is riddles, because of the dependence of the series on them, especially in the early years, for testing the mettle of contestants. Interestingly, the sources for riddles (many of which weren't really riddles at all but ordinary general knowledge questions) were even more widely varied, and frequently anachronistic. For instance, although the implication is that Treguard would have lived at the beginning of the thirteenth century, the riddles asked on the show have included ones about Joan of Arc, the Wars Of The Roses, Queen Elizabeth I, Sir Isaac Newton, and even the Braille alphabet.

J. What's this 'temporal disruption' thing they keep going on about?

Also sometimes referred to as 'time-out' or 'phase shift', temporal disruption simply meant the end of an episode. As episodes were under twenty-five minutes in length and the average quest was over half an hour, it

was rare - though not unheard of - for an adventure to end in the same episode in which it started. So when time ran out, the action would freeze in mid-motion (usually to the accompaniment of the tolling of a mighty bell), leaving Treguard just enough time to sign off.

But rather than saying, "That's the end of this week's show, folks!", which doesn't sound particularly medieval or mystical, the above more metaphysical/interdimensional-sounding terms were invented to keep the show in-character.

Temporal disruption could set in at absolutely any point in a quest, even right in the middle of a life-or-death situation for a dungeoneer. This may sound utterly infuriating - and indeed it could be - but in fact it was a peculiarity of the series that added another layer of the unexpected and served to draw the audience in more. The sudden chime of temporal disruption happening out of nowhere could make the watchers jump in their seats, and if it happened at a critical moment it was guaranteed to leave people wanting more.

The next episode would usually open with a reminder from Treguard of the current state of play, sometimes in the rhyming form of a 'dungeon ditty', or perhaps one of his assistants would give a quick rundown of the dungeoneer's present status and possessions, before action would resume from exactly the moment things left off.

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Q2.   A. Has *Knightmare* ever been released on video?

No. Many promotional ideas for a release have been discussed in recent times, and there have been numerous online petitions on the subject, but as yet there has never been an official commercial release of *Knightmare* on video or DVD.

B. Do you know anyone who has episodes on video who could make copies for me?

Oh dear. Cue sharp intakes of breath all across the Internet. This question is an all-too-common one, and therefore has to be included, but I have to say now that if there's one sure way of making enemies for yourself around the *Knightmare* community, it's asking this one.

For the sake of (hopefully) stopping people from continually asking this, or e-mailing long-suffering people who run *Knightmare* websites (like myself) about it, I shall now attempt to relay in full the story of what *used* to happen, why it no longer happens, and most importantly, why it will not happen for the foreseeable future…

Firstly, let me reiterate that no episodes of *Knightmare* have ever been put on official commercial release, be it in the UK or anywhere else. Rumours abound on the Internet forums about a DVD release in the near future, but at the time of writing there has been no movement in that regard for several years, and since around October 2003 all attempts by fans to enquire about

it have been met with almost total silence by the manufacturers who raised the idea in the first place (*Granada Media*, the broadcasting wing of *Granada Ventures*, which is the company that owns *Anglia TV* these days). So don't hold your breath.

It *is* possible to ask *Anglia TV* to make copies of old episodes for you, but this is unrealistic. That's because many of the episodes were filmed in a format that is now very out-of-date, and the equipment needed to convert them to VHS for you costs the proverbial bomb to operate. At the last estimate, one episode of *Knightmare* converted to VHS cost something in excess of £75; that's *one* episode, by the way. Not a season, but just one episode! Later seasons were recorded in a less awkward format, but even then the conversion price is something like £37 per episode.

In short, unless you're made of money, this approach isn't going to get you very far.

Any videos you can get would therefore probably have to be pirate copies made by other fans for you. Now I'm sorry if I sound a little terse here, but there's a general agreement among *Knightmare* fans these days just not to discuss this subject in any detail publicly. I can give you some background info, but it's a bit of a touchy story, so please bear with me.

Up until near the end of the year 2002, there was a small group of *Knightmare* fans who had episodes from the series on video, and they'd set themselves up as unofficial 'traders', who would make copies of the episodes for other fans and distribute them on a strictly not-for-profit basis. Tim Child and *Anglia TV* were both aware of this, but as it was being done for free (bar costs) they were happy to turn a blind eye. (It should be understood, before I go any further, that ignoring piracy and actually condoning it are two different things.) The traders' online 'HQ' was called *Neil's Knightmare Trading Post*, and the site still exists, albeit in very truncated form at http://www.nktp.freeserve.co.uk/. (Neil Jones plans to revive the site in the near future at a new URL. See question **5 D iii)**.)

Unfortunately, and I suppose inevitably, someone had to bite the apple. Somebody - none of the traders themselves as far as we know - started offering to sell seasons for up to £40 each on the e-Bay auctioneers' site, incurring the wrath of *Anglia TV* and its lawyers. A lot of people, including Tim Child indirectly, were suddenly under the microscope. The *Trading Post* had already closed down by this time anyway as Neil no longer had time to devote to it, but he now had to bury all information about the individual traders involved to keep backs covered (so I'm afraid there's little chance of identifying a trader and asking them to make any cassettes for you), and this in effect made sure that the site would not be revived for a long while. Open trading in copying and distributing episodes of *Knightmare* has now ceased, and it will remain dormant for the foreseeable future, as the situation was very hot for a long while, and although it's cooled down, it wouldn't take much to flare it up again. Most, if not all, *Knightmare* websites now publicly discourage the pirating of episodes of the series, and even the discussion of it in public; and incidentally, that also has to be the position of this FAQ.

Please, if you want to join the online community (if you haven't done

so already) and talk *Knightmare* with us, by all means do so, you'll be more than welcome, but please do *not* angle on the message boards for pirate copies of episodes. Instead you should discuss with us the idea of an official DVD and a proper video release, but even there you have to realise that the chances of an official release presently look no better than about 40-60. And don't let the frustration of *that* bring you to ask openly for people to make copies of episodes for you either. People at *Granada Media* and *Challenge* both keep a close eye on the *Knightmare* forums and websites, and if they catch anyone making enquiries about resuming pirating - *even if no money would be involved in the transaction* - people are going to get into trouble again, and the chances of a DVD release will become even more remote. At the very least, *Challenge* may assume that pirating has resumed and judge that there's nothing to be gained from renewing their rights to show episodes of a TV series that's already in wide circulation, at which point they'll take it off the air.

And if that happens and it's all down to you, you're not going to be very popular with the rest of us, are you?

C. What are the companies that made *Knightmare* doing now?

As mentioned in question **B**, *Anglia TV* is now a part of *Granada Ventures*, one of the largest media conglomerates in the UK, and still owns all eight seasons of *Knightmare*. The *Anglia* studios in which *Knightmare* was filmed, at Magdalen Street in Norwich, were closed down in 2005.

Broadsword Television has effectively evolved into two sister companies; *Televirtual*, which is the company that continues to work in the realm of television programming and developing visual hardware (see question **1 E**), with *Knightmare* creator Tim Child at its head. The other company is *Broadsword Interactive*, which generally works in the area of games software and graphic design. David Rowe, designer of most of the virtual architecture on *Knightmare*, is the company's director. (The URLs for the two companies' websites can be found in question **5 A**.)

Children's ITV, meanwhile, is still going as strong as ever (debatably), and continues to dominate weekday mid-afternoons on 'the third channel'.

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Q3.   A. Who played *that* character?

Well, it depends which one you mean, but here's as complete a cast list for the eight seasons (and the pilot episode of *Knightmare VR*; see question **1 E**) as I can manage...

Treguard the Dungeon Master	-	Hugo Myatt
Merlin the Wizard/Mogdred the Necromancer	-	John Woodnutt

Pickle the Elf	-	David Learner
Majida the Genie	-	Jackie Sawiris
Lord Fear the Technosorcerer/ Rothberry the Apothecary/Ah Wok the Oriental Trader/Sir Hugh de Wittless	-	Mark Knight
Hordriss the Confuser/Owen the Dragon/Oakley the Tree Troll/Smirkenorff the Wyrm/The Dreadnort	-	Clifford Norgate
Lillith the Sorceress/Mildread the Witch	-	Mary Miller
Olgarth the Wall Monster/ Granitas the Wall Monster/The Troll	-	Guy Standeven
Folly the Jester/Gibbet the Guard	-	Alec Westwood
Cedric the Mad Monk/Casper the Key	-	Lawrence Werber
Motley the Jester/Sylvester Hands the Thief/Fidjit the Lockmaster/The Boatman	-	Paul Valentine
Gumboil the 'orrid/Igneous the Wall Monster/The Giant/The Automatum/ Mugg the Gargoyle	-	Edmund Dehn
Gretel the Dungeon Maid/The Oracle of Confusion	-	Audrey Jenkinson
Olaf the Viking/Bumptious the Miner/Mrs Grimwold the Crone	-	Tom Karol
Golgarach the Wall Monster/ McGrew the Highlander	-	David Verrey

Mellisandre the Maid/Oracle/ Dooris the Level 1 Door/Dooreen the Level 3 Door	-	Zoe Loftin
Velda the Elf Maiden/ Morghanna the Dark Sorceress/The Brangwen	-	Natasha Pope
Mistress Goody the Dungeon Hag	-	Erin Geraghty
Malice the Sorceress/ Gundrada the Sword Mistress	-	Samantha Perkins
Brother Mace the Tavern Monk/Fatilla the Hun/ Doorkis the Level 2 Door/The Gatemaster	-	Michael Cule
Elita the Cavern Elf/Pixel the Pixie/Heggatty the Grey Witch	-	Stephanie Hesp
Gwendoline the Green Warden/Aesandre the Ice Queen	-	Juliet Henry-Massey
Julius Scaramonger the Merchant/Skarkill the Goblin Master	-	Rayner Bourton
Sidriss the Confused/ Greystagg the Witch Queen/Maldame the Iron Maiden	-	Iona Kennedy
Ridolfo the Troubadour/ Captain Nemanor the Mariner	-	Adrian Neil
Romahna the Dragonrider/Marta the Serving Wench	-	Jacqueline Joyce

Lissard the Atlantean/Raptor the Brigand/Brother Strange the Proverbial Monk	-	Clifford Barry
Grimaldine the Green Wizard/ The Brollachan	-	Anthony Donovan
Stiletta the Warrior Thief	-	Joanne Heywood
Snapper Jack the Fool Taker/ Honesty Bartram the Dealer/Bhal-Shebah the Red Dragon	-	Bill Cashmore
Lissard the Atlantean (KMVR incarnation)/Despair the Gargoyle	-	Nick Collett
Ellie the Elfin Maid	-	Louise Milford
Goblin Narrator/Guardian Ogre	-	Tim Child

B. Don't I recognise that actor/actress from…?

Very possibly, although it must be admitted that very few of the actors who appeared in *Knightmare* could be said to have had careers that have set the world alight elsewhere. Harsh but true.

Still, here are one or two notable instances…

Audrey Jenkinson, AKA Gretel, was a regular in the Scottish soap opera *Take The High Road* for a time.

Mark Knight appeared as the villain in *Knightmare's* 'off-spring' series on *Children's BBC*, called *Timebusters*. He is also a regular on stage and screen, especially with the Royal Shakespeare Company.

In 1992, Joanne Heywood (Stiletta) appeared in *Grace and Favour*, the spin-off to the cult *BBC* comedy *Are You Being Served?*

David Learner, who played Pickle, is probably most famous for playing arch-whinger Marvin the Paranoid Android in the televised version of *The Hitch Hiker's Guide To The Galaxy*, albeit his voice was dubbed out and replaced with the voice of Stephen Moore. (Learner also appeared as Marvin in one of the stage versions of *Hitch Hiker*.)

Also in *Hitch Hiker*, playing a newscaster, was Rayner Bourton, who played Skarkill and Julius Scaramonger in *Knightmare*. He further appeared in the stage version of the cult musical *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, by Richard O'Brien.

John Woodnutt (Merlin/Mogdred) appeared in many roles on TV down the years, of which the most notable are probably his various guest appearances on *Dr Who*. (On a sad note, John Woodnutt died in the new year

of 2006 after a lengthy battle against illness. He was 81.)

Another curiosity worth a mention; one of the winning dungeoneers, Julian Smith from season 2, is now a professional actor, writer and director, going by the stage name of Jason Karl. His most prominent work was as a presenter of *Most Haunted* on *Living TV*. He also sometimes frequents the *Knightmare* forums (see question **5 B**).

C. I have a few questions about individual characters...
i) What's the relationship between Mogdred and Merlin?

It's never been explored in too much depth, maddeningly, but according to what little Merlin revealed to a dungeoneer in season one, Mogdred is "the dark side of my nature, and of my magic." What this actually means is very open to interpretation.

It *could* mean that Merlin is a sort of Jekyll-and-Hyde/Banner-and-Hulk figure, who changes from his good side to his evil other side, depending on anything from his mood to the time of day. Perhaps even on which level of the dungeon he is present in. This overall idea seems a little unlikely on the evidence of what happens in the series e.g. Mogdred's realm is level 3, yet he is seen in level 2 on more than one occasion - including his debut appearance early in season 2.

On the other hand, it could mean that Merlin is some kind of bifurcated figure; his evil and good sides were originally one whole, but they have somehow divided off into two distinct entities in separate bodies, which seems to tally with the facts rather better.

ii) Er... Technosorcerer?

A new arch-villain was invented in season 5 called Lord Fear. Whereas the original supremo, Mogdred, was a necromancer with a penchant for the evil side of pure magic and corny bad-guy dialogue, Lord Fear had a gift for witty gloating and magic spells enhanced by the taint of technology. As such, he is sometimes called a 'Technomancer', or more often a 'Technosorcerer'.

This was in fact a clever bit of satire by Tim Child. To quote an online interview he gave to Kieran O'Brien early in 2004; -

"[*Knightmare*] adopted and fed on elements of political and social parody, as most fantasies (with the exception of *Dr Who*) are inclined to do, and (I believe) benefit from.

"*Knightmare* began in Thatcher's Britain, quickly satirising its values. Surely most of you recognised Margaret Thatcher's occasional 'guest appearances' and utterances? Then came the beginnings of the technical revolution, so in response Lord F became the Technomancer - a gadget freak - with boundless enthusiasm, but little foreknowledge of the effects of dabbling with new technology. What a shame *Knightmare* ended in '94. What fun we would have had with New Labour!"

Mind you, technosorcery in the dungeon didn't start with Lord Fear. Examples of mechanical apparatus apparently powered by sorcery could be found as early as season 2, for instance the Mills of Doom (see question **1 B iv) 24**), the Automatum AKA the mindless mechanical warrior (see question **v) 2** or **1 B vi) 8**), the modified Corridor of Spears (see question **1 B iv) 28**),

and the Corridor of Blades (see question **1 B iv) 1**), all of which suggests that Mogdred wasn't quite the purist we've been led to believe.

iii) 1. Where'd this Lord Fear guy come from anyway? And isn't that bloke on the horse the same actor?

The short answers are… no one seems quite sure, and yes.

The longer answers are… yes, the bloke on the horse from season 5, Sir Hugh de Wittless, is also played by the same actor who played Lord Fear; the ever-brilliant Mark Knight. Furthermore, during the later years MK was on the show he also played a sarky Oriental trader called Ah Wok, and a dozy apothecary called Rothberry.

As for where Lord Fear came from… well, I'm afraid this is one of those little exasperations we *Knightmare* fans just have to put up with. Being a game show, and one that prided itself on constant self-reinvention, the writing of the series could sometimes be as fluid and obscure as the dungeon itself. Therefore continuity wasn't a big priority, and as such, inconsistencies, McGuffins and retcons abounded. One of the most annoying and jarring sticking points is the big transition between seasons 4 and 5. Up until that point, Treguard had been a strictly neutral host, and there was little by the way of clear allegiances for all but a handful of the characters.

After season 5 however, there were big changes. The Greater Game was turned into some kind of heavily-restricted war between the forces of 'The Powers-That-Be' and 'The Opposition'. Treguard was turned into a strictly-defined good guy (and therefore became a bit boring if you ask me - but then nobody ever does) and the hoky Mogdred was replaced by the much more entertaining Lord Fear.

This in itself is not a problem, but it's a source of great irritation to a lot of viewers that no explanation has ever been offered within the confines of the storylines as to why any of this happened, why these 'Powers-That-Be' and 'The Opposition' had never really been referred to before, where Mogdred - or Merlin for that matter - had disappeared to, or even who Lord Fear actually was or where he came from. (The fanmade audio play, *Famous For Retreating* - see **13** - offers possible answers to a number of these questions, but it's not an official source so don't rely on it.)

For such huge factors in the scenario to be thrown into the mix completely out of nowhere, and for such equally large factors to be taken out, all without the slightest hint of an explanation, means the start of season 5 is seen by some as a huge and ill-thought-out retcon.

2. Hang on, you've lost me. What *is* a retcon? And a McGuffin for that matter?

Okay, technically speaking these are not questions about *Knightmare*, but they are more than relevant, so I've decided to include them.

Retcon is literary slang for 'Retro-active continuity'. It means a bit of a storyline that's revealed after the moment it belongs chronologically. There were countless retcons in *Knightmare* (and even more outright omissions).

For instance, one retcon was the unexplained (but, for me, much-celebrated) disappearance of Motley the Jester at the end of season 6. He

didn't appear at all in season 7 and was replaced by a skilled lock-breaker called Fidjit, who was despised almost universally by the fans. So in response, Fidjit was dumped and Motley was brought back for season 8. But because this drew attention back to the fact that Motley had disappeared in the first place, it was decided that an in-story reason was needed for his missing year, and so it was explained that Lord Fear had turned Motley into a statue as a punishment for offending him. The thing is, this would have happened after the conclusion of season 6, but as the story was only told at the beginning of season 8, this means the continuity was changed retro-actively.

Retcons are not necessarily bad things, you understand, but they have to be handled carefully to avoid undermining previously-established facts, or else they just irritate people (like the resurrection of Bobby Ewing in *Dallas*, or the resurrection of Den Watts in *EastEnders*). It's fair to say that countless retcons in *Knightmare* were handled carelessly.

McGuffin on the other hand is a term inadvertently coined by the legendary movie director Alfred Hitchcock on a train journey to Chicago in the 1960's. He was sat in a carriage with a colleague, and for the entire journey there was a man in a railway uniform stood outside the carriage doing nothing but staring vacantly into the middle distance.

Hitchcock's companion began to find the man too distracting and eventually turned and asked, "Who *is* that man out there? What's he there for?"

Hitchcock glanced up, and saw that the man had 'McGuffin' printed on his name-tag. "He's the McGuffin," explained Hitchcock smartly. "His job's to be there."

Since then, the term has been adapted to the world of TV and movies, and nowadays is widely used to describe a particular type of lazy writing. Specifically, it means a plot device that is brought into a story completely out of nowhere, without the slightest warning or prior reference, and then, once it's served the needs of the plot for which it was invented, disappears straight back out of the storyline again without any explanation for where it went, and without ever being referred to again. In other words, it has no purpose but to be where it is, and when it's put there.

Examples of McGuffins in *Knightmare* include quest objects after they've been won, and save-the-day magical objects, like the 'lightning-rod', from end-of-season confrontations (see question **9 B**).

While there's no doubt that the abundance of these shortcomings in *Knightmare* is annoying for devotees, we also have to recognise that coherence of the overall plot and scenario were never big priorities for the makers of the series. *Knightmare* was meant first and foremost as a high-tech game show, not a drama series, and if taking liberties with the narrative was required to push back the technical boundaries, they wouldn't even stop to think about it. That's why I said in section **i)** that these are exasperations we just have to put up with.

iv) How is that name spelt again?
1. Mogdred or Mogdread?

This is a frequent spelling quandary among *Knightmare* fans (not helped

by the fact that they even got the spelling wrong on the old *Anglia Gold* website - see question **5 A viii) -** a few years back), but the necromancer's name is supposed to be spelt 'Mogdred', as is confirmed in the credits at the end of every episode he appeared in.

As for the source of the confusion, I think it's two things. Firstly the very thorough pronunciation by the late John Woodnutt; "Mogg-*drrread*". Secondly, I suspect a lot of fans of the early years are confusing memories of Mogdred with the similarly-named crone from the second season, Mildread (not least because many of the same people seem to spell her name 'Mildred'. See **7**).

And by the way, although the name is clearly derived from the figure from Arthurian legend, he is definitely *not* called Mordred, no matter what it says in the Dave Morris books.

2. Treguard or Treaguard?

This error is much rarer, and as far as I can tell, it's only shown up on one or two poorly-researched press releases for the books, and the occasional carelessly-typed post on the forums. It's supposed to be spelt 'Treguard'.

3. Automaton or Automatum?

'Automatum'. The name is not real English, but a Latinised pun of 'automaton', which *is* derived into English from ancient Greek. Again you can check the credits of the episodes he appeared in for confirmation, but also the odd pronunciation is a giveaway. See **v) 2**.

4. Sidriss or Siddriss?

The name of Hordriss' daughter is spelt 'Sidriss'. I've often made this mistake myself, but it's purely a typo when I'm working too hurriedly. One D only.

5. Fidget or Fidjit?

I'm not sure this one's worth the bother of getting right to be honest, but it's spelt 'Fidjit'.

6. Bamptious or Bumptious?

Cue embarrassed, rueful grins from yours-truly. This error's my responsibility I'm afraid. A few years ago I wrote a fanfic that appeared on the *Trading Post* (see **2 B**) called *Theatre Of Dreams*, which featured the dwarfish miner from season 2, Bumptious. For reasons I can no longer remember, all the way through the story I spelt his name 'Bamptious'. The error has been corrected in all subsequent re-releases of the story.

7. Mildred or Mildread?

As mentioned in **i)** this is the other side of the Mogdred/Mogdread conundrum. The crone's name is a pun, with a deliberately mangled spelling as a result. The correct spelling is 'Mildread'.

8. Cavernwights or Cavernwrights?

These creatures were a sort of precursor to the goblins I suppose, an infestation of devolved humans on level 3. The correct spelling of their name is 'cavernwights'. A 'cavernwright', if it existed at all, would presumably be someone who builds caves.

9. Mellysandra Make-pits Per-whatten-not... uh?

The maid who replaced Gretel in season 3 had a long choke of a name that the man who designed the coast of Norway would've been proud of. We

never saw it spelt out in full but as far as we can tell, correctly-spelt her name should read, 'Mellisandre Makepeace Perhappenstance'.

10. Linghorm or Linghorn?

This is probably the most frequent mis-spelling (or mispronunciation) from the final season. The tower Maldame stole from Lord Fear was called 'Linghorm', as was evidenced from a scroll that was found by a dungeoneer in level 3.

v) How is that name pronounced?

1. Dunshelm?

The original name of Knightmare Castle, and thus Treguard's baronial title, is pronounced "*Dunnz-helm*".

2. Automatum?

'Automatum' is pronounced "*Orr-tow-may-tumm*", in contrast to 'Automaton', which is pronounced "*Orr-tomma-tonn"*.

3. Aesandre?

Spoken out loud, this name is a very obvious pun. It's pronounced "*Ice-ann-dra*".

4. Maldame?

The name of the snobby sorceress from season 8 is pronounced "*Mall-dah-may.*"

5. Eliphanta-sanza-winkle was that?

If you're referring to Elita's real name, no it wasn't. I have no idea how it's spelt correctly, but pronunciation-wise she gave it as... (deep breath) "*Ell-if-fa-san-va-san-va-san-cho-ga-win-kal*".

6. Majida-what?

On her debut, Majida gave her full name as '*Daughter-Of-The-Setting-Moon-Whose-Eyes-Are-Like-Daggers-In-The-Hearts-Of-Men-Who-Ride-The-Great-Caravan-Of-The-Sultan*'. It goes without saying that we're taking her word for that. (Thanks to Billy Hicks for pointing this out to me.)

7. And *what's* that middle name supposed to be?

According to a spyglass (see question **6 C**) discussion with his Atlantean assistant, Lissard, in the *Knightmare VR* pilot (see question **1 E**), Lord Fear's middle name is '*Maurice*'. It's not yet been revealed what his first name is; although one veteran fan has speculated that it might be something equally embarrassing like 'Cuthbert', and that the teasing that Fear would have suffered for it at school would neatly explain why he turned to evil. Come to think of it, perhaps it was the teasing for his *middle* name that did it...

vi) Who's Count Brinkatore?

Some aristocrat who never appeared in the series itself. Brinkatore was mentioned several times in season 6 as a friend of Lord Fear (Fear had a friend?), and apparently he had an unfaithful wife who had flings with first a jester (is that where Folly got to, perhaps?) and then Ridolfo the troubadour.

D. I can remember a character but I just *can't* think what their

name was...

Well you have to understand that I can't give a detailed physical description of all the characters who have ever appeared in *Knightmare*; there just aren't enough hours in the year. But you can ask around, and for sure someone will be able to help you. Check question **5 B**.

E. Is there anywhere I can contact this person from the series?

You'd be lucky. A few *Knightmare* fans have had the privilege of learning contact details of individuals who worked on the show - be they cast or crew. And yes, I've got one or two of them myself. But for obvious reasons we can't just hand out these details willy-nilly. Again, have a look at question **5 B**. Then, if you can find Kieran O'Brien on the main *Knightmare* forum, you can send him any questions or messages you would like passed to the actor/crewman in question. As Kieran has contacts in the industry, he should be able to get your message to the right people for you.

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Q4.   A. Are there any *Knightmare* fan clubs?

Not exactly. There used to be an official *KM* fan club, which was called *The Knightmare Adventurers' Club*. This was launched in 1991, but closed down in 1995 due to waning interest after the series' demise.

The *Adventurers' Club* had an annual subscription fee of £3.95, and in return members would receive a semi-regular newsletter and a goodie bag called an 'Adventure pack'.

Each membership pack included a set of a welcome letter and a few *Knightmare* goodies, which might have included a ruler, a rubber, a puzzle game, a bookmark, a badge, a pen, and a membership card. There was also a set of four colouring pens encased in a clear plastic wallet with the Frightknight logo (see question **1 B vi) 11**) printed in black.

The aforementioned newsletter was called *The Quest*, and at the time it was the most comprehensive source of information about the series. It also allowed readers the opportunity to enter exclusive competitions, send in work - such as stories and drawings - to be published in the letter, and even, in the final issue, to receive discounts on *Knightmare* merchandise.

Sadly, *The Quest* only lasted ten issues until it was terminated in summer 1995. After that it was succeeded by a fanzine called *The Eye-Shield*, edited by Paul McIntosh and Jake Collins. It was originally intended as a completely independent and unofficial magazine, but the people at *Broadsword* were so impressed with it that they made it the new 'Official *Knightmare* magazine'.

TES was rather more impressive content-wise than *The Quest*, if a bit less glossy. But the circulation declined with each passing month until, in December '97, the editors accepted the inevitable and brought the magazine to a close.

Since the emergence of Illusion's *Knightmare* Tribute site (see **5 A i)**)

however, *TES* was relaunched in 1999 as an online magazine, with Jake Collins this time taking up the editing reins on his own. *The Eye-Shield* is still running today as a kind of newsletter for the online community, which at the moment is the nearest thing there is to an official *Knightmare* fan club.

B. What *KM* merchandise can I buy?

Well, it's by no means impossible to get your hands on a few bits of memorabilia, but it's not easy, chiefly because *Knightmare* never had very much merchandise, and what little there was has long been out of production.

Probably the best and most famous merchandise for *Knightmare* was a series of novellas written by fantasy author Dave Morris, and printed by *Corgi*, from 1988 to 1991. These were: -

> *Knightmare* (Unofficial subtitle *Can You Beat The Challenge?*)
> *Knightmare: The Labyrinths Of Fear*
> *Knightmare: Fortress Of Assassins*
> *Knightmare: The Sorcerer's Isle*

Each of these books contained a story around a hundred pages in length telling of an adventure of Treguard the Dungeon Master, followed by a short interactive adventure, giving the reader a chance to play the dungeoneer.

The quality of these books varied, sometimes from page to page. The general consensus among fans seems to be that the first book had easily the best novella of the lot (see question **1 C ii)** for a synopsis), but that the interactive stories at the end were laughably short and easy. By contrast, the novella in *The Labyrinths Of Fear* (which is a misleading title as most of the story took place in a forest) was clearly too short and therefore came across as an unsatisfying read, whereas the interactive adventure at the back was probably the best to be found in any *Knightmare* book.

After this series, the publishing contract passed in 1992 to *Corgi's* sister company, *Yearling* books, who employed Morris to write three more titles. They were: -

> *Knightmare: The Forbidden Gate*
> *Knightmare: The Dragon's Lair*
> *Knightmare: Lord Fear's Domain*

The format of the books changed for these three, as did the style of the stories that Morris wrote for them. Whereas the original line of books was meant for teenagers and young adults, the *Yearling* titles were noticeably more juvenile in terms of content and presentation, and they were not novellas so much as straightforward storybooks. *The Forbidden Gate* and *The Dragon's Lair* both followed the established pattern of a story that filled most of the book and an interactive adventure at the back. *Lord Fear's Domain*, by contrast, was an interactive puzzle book, where the reader had to solve puzzles to advance the overall storyline.

As for other merchandise, the legendary mugs, and kids' sweatshirts and T-shirts featuring the Frightknight logo (see question **1 B vi) 12**) or the original Life Force Clock (see question **8 A**), can all still be obtained through

Televirtual's back-stocks from ten-plus years ago. Check out their website (see question **5 A vi)**) to make enquiries about any of them. There was also a rather neat board game released in 1991 by *Milton Bradley*, my own copy of which still has pride of place on my shelf. There were several computer games based on *Knightmare* as well, one for the Spectrum and one for the Amiga, neither of which were spectacularly good or had remotely the feel of the series itself.

Whilst all of the above are long out of production, those fans who don't mind buying second hand can look out for the books, the board game, and the old computer games on the *eBay* or *Amazon* websites, where they regularly pop up.

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Q5.   A. Are there any decent websites about *Knightmare*?
Looked at one way, that question sounds slightly insulting, in that you must have been on a *Knightmare* website at some point to be reading this! But anyway… yes, there are a number of websites out there that have information and features about the Greater Game. Here's a list of a few…

i)   www.knightmare.com/   *The Knightmare Infosite*. Quite simply, this site is the very hub, heart, and soul of the *Knightmare* online community, and I daresay that there probably wouldn't be a community were it not for Illusion's bloody-minded devotion to the programme. The site is huge, comprehensive, and incredibly well presented, with hundreds of megabytes available in pictures, sound files, video clips and information for the series. NOTE: Despite the URL, this is not an official website - *Knightmare* doesn't really have one - but it does include official input.

ii)   http://interactive.knightmare.org.uk/ *Interactive Knightmare* - home of such online pursuits as the *Knightmare* RPG and other games, and very importantly, another handy reference guide for the series; the *Knightmare* Lexicon. Run by the legendary David Forester.

iii)   http://knightmare-encyclopedia.port5.com/index.html *The Knightmare Encyclopaedia* - Julia Lawson's guide to the dungeon.

iv)   http://havetstorm.tripod.com/knightmare/index.html *The Other Side Of The Greater Game* - that's my site. Designed to take the mickey out of the series… although in an affectionate way of course!

v)   http://www.kmramdram.co.uk   *KM RAmDram* - Home page for an audio amateur dramatics group making plays based on *Knightmare* characters (see question **13**).

vi)   http://www.televirtual.com/   The homepage of *Televirtual*, the company that tried unsuccessfully to develop a new version of *Knightmare* (see question **1 E**).

vii)   http://www.bringbackknightmare.co.uk/   *BBK* - this is a long-established online petition started by Alan Boyd in 2001, aimed at persuading TV companies to invest in reviving the series. The site was effectively defunct for some while (witness the out-of-date URLs on the

Links page) but has been brought out of moth-balls again fairly recently by Alan Boyd and Ben 'Pooka' Maydon. Please take a moment to add your name to the petition if you haven't already done so.

viii)   http://members.aol.com/treguardd/knight.html   *The Knightmare Homepage* - Johnny Burkhart's fansite. You shouldn't let the name fool you; it *was* effectively the *Knightmare* homepage when it started up simply because it was the *first* website devoted to *Knightmare* (as far as we can tell), the first two seasons specifically, but these days it's been superseded in prominence by numerous others. As the dates on the page will tell you, the site is now years and years out-of-date, and a number of the media-clip links no longer work, but it's still worth a look.

viii)   http://www.angliatv.co.uk/   The homepage of *Anglia TV*, the company that provided the studios in which *Knightmare* was filmed. *Anglia*, which these days is part of the broadcasting conglomerate *Granada Ventures*, still owns all eight seasons, even though the format rights have now reverted to the creator. Although there's no *Knightmare* material to be found on the site these days, back in November 2000, it included a section called *Anglia Gold*, devoted to popular shows from the studios' past, among them *Knightmare*. It was the nearest thing there ever was to an official website for the series, and was going to include an online computer game called *Shadow Of The Technomancer*, although development of the game was never completed before the *Anglia Gold* segment was taken down.

ix)   http://www.broadsword.co.uk/   Homepage for *Broadsword Interactive*, sister company of *Televirtual* and direct descendant of *Broadsword TV*, the company that produced the original series of *Knightmare*. Again there's very little in the way of *Knightmare* info on this site, but the company is run by dungeon-artist David Rowe, who gives the series a mention in his profile page.

x)   http://km.r3dmm.com/thegame.htm/ A download site for a rather impressive, free-to-play PC game based on the series (see question **G** for more information).

xi)   http://www.q-con.org.uk/events_qnightmare.php   *Q-Con XIII* - A gaming grouping called *Dragonslayers* created a tribute to *Knightmare* called *Q-Nightmare* for the thirteenth outing of the annual *Q-Con* gaming convention. The *Q-Con* website can be found at the above address. (See question **I**).

xii)   http://jen.radish-spirit.com/critique/knightmare.html   *It's Only An Illusion* - Jen Kollic's *Knightmare* page. *Not* for the easily-offended!

B. Is there anywhere on the Internet I can meet/talk with other fans of the series?

Well, if you're reading this now, you're on a site that is only a step away from loads of them!

The largest, busiest and most accessible place to talk to other *KM*

junkies is probably the *Knightmare* Discussion Forum, at http://www.knightmare.com/forum/index.php. It now has over eight hundred and fifty members, although the hardcore of regular posters is quite small.

You can also visit the KMChat room at weekends to talk live to other *Knightmare* fans (see question **D i)**), or visit the *Challenge* website and post on the forum there. Although I advise caution before you resort to that… (see section **E**.)

There are also the *Knightmare* Back-up forum at http://www.knightmarepost.co.uk/forum/ (although that tends to be used by *Knightmare* fans who are in the mood to talk about something else altogether), and the out-of-character boards on the *Knightmare* role-play forums at http://surrounds.proboards20.com/ and http://www.knightmarerp.proboards91.com/.

C. Is it true that Tim Child is a member of the *KM* forum?
Yes he is. He maintains close unofficial ties to the main *Knightmare* tribute site and its various offshoots, and he drops by on the forum once or twice a week when he has spare time in his schedule. He goes by the daunting username of… ah, but that'd be telling!

D. I can't understand all the abbreviations/nicknames you 'Net *KM* fans use. What is…
i) KMChat?/#*Knightmare*?
'KMChat' or #*Knightmare* are just the standard abbreviations for the *Knightmare* online chat sessions held every Friday, Saturday and Sunday at 8pm, usually hosted by Billy Hicks and Darren Kerwin. To attend, all you need is an IRC-compatible Chat client. Go to http://ikm.ezri.mine.nu/, click on the Chat tab, and then follow the instructions from there to download a client and to connect to the correct server.
ii) IKM?
'IKM' stands for 'Interactive *Knightmare*', one of the main websites in the *Knightmare* online community. See **i)**.
iii) NKTP?
This is actually a pretty redundant abbreviation as it refers to a site that has long-since been closed down. At one time, however, it was one of the most prominent *Knightmare* sites on the 'Net, which is why its name still pops up from time to time. It's short for 'Neil's *Knightmare* Trading Post' (see question **2 B**), which was run by Neil Jones from 2000 to 2002. Neil occasionally threatens to revive the site, though for legal reasons it won't function as a trading post anymore; a new URL has been assigned for it at http://www.knightmarepost.co.uk/, so fingers crossed it'll be up before the next FANSFAQ update.
iv) *KMRPG*?

Another of Kieran O'Brien's semi-regular ventures, although not his brainchild. The '*Knightmare* Role-playing Game' is supposed to be an annual event (although for reasons far too complicated to go into here, it rarely turns out to be) in which fans of the series are able to meet up online and play a full interactive *Knightmare* adventure, compiled and programmed by other fans, on their on PC's! Exciting or wot?

These adventures are usually accompanied by full motion video sequences that have been recorded by the makers and incorporated into the game to tell the storyline. These video sequences are usually shot somewhere or other in the north of England on a mass meet-up of fans. They tend to take around a week to make. (See question **12** for more information about the *KMRPG*.)

Development of the RPG is currently on indefinite hold.

v) RPF/Surrounds?

'Role-play Forum'. Along with its now-defunct sister forum, the *Knightmare* Boarding School, 'Surrounds' is run by Emily Bradshaw, going by the username 'Kully'. This is a forum for *Knightmare*-themed role-playing (see question **B**). There are a few other role-play forums out there as well (see **x**), although 'Surrounds' is the best-established.

vi) PYCR?

'Play Your Cards Right'. One of the trickier puzzles from seasons 7 and 8 (see question **1 B v)**).

vii) CoB?

Nothing to do with sweetcorn, or indeed with anything sweet at all, this is the abbreviation regularly used for 'The Corridor of Blades' (see question **1 B iv) 1**).

viii) MK?

A simple abbreviation of 'Mark Knight', the actor who played a number of key characters in the later years of *Knightmare*, including Lord Fear (see question **3 C iii)**).

ix) KMVR?

'*Knightmare Virtual Reality*' (see question **1 E**).

x) HoJ?

'Helmet of Justice' (see question **6 B**).

xi) TES?

'The Eye-Shield' (see question **4 A** or **6 B**).

xii) Labyrinth?

Given the dungeon-going nature of *Knightmare*, this can mean a number of things of course, including the Gallic version of the show (see question **10 B**), but the most general usage appears to be for another role-playing forum simply called 'Labyrinth'. The URL for it is http://labyrinth.hyperboards.com/. It's moderated by Az 'Azrael' Sanders and Andrew 'Snowcat' Kenny.

xiii) *KMRAmDram/KMAP?*

'*Knightmare* Radio Amateur Drama' or '*Knightmare* Audio Play'. This bears some similarity to the *KMRPG* (as per question **iv)** or **12**), but instead of creating a game or anything with visuals, this is about

producing *Knightmare*-themed audio drama. See question **13** for more information.

 xiv) *FFR?*
     'Famous For Retreating', the name of the *Knightmare*-based Audio Play (see **xiii)** or question **13**).

 xv) *Q-N?*
     'Q-Nightmare', a tribute game based on *Knightmare*, performed at a gaming convention in Belfast (see **I**).

  E. Tell me about the *Challenge* website...

 Challenge provides more discussion space for fans of *Knightmare* (and indeed fans of other game shows) in the forms of its own forum and chat room.

 Now I'd like to say that it's a great move to join the *Challenge* forum, but to be honest, you could find it's more trouble than it's worth. Some of the regular users of the other *Knightmare* forums are also members on the *Challenge* site, but there are many other people there as well, and sadly some of them are not very big on the principles of Netiquette (see **F**). The behaviour on the *Challenge* forum is noticeably poorer than on any of the other forums listed in this FAQ, and while there has undeniably been an enormous improvement over time, it still has moments that you just *wouldn't* see elsewhere in *Knightmare* fandom on the Internet.

 There's no denying that *Challenge's* forum is a priceless one to be a member of, not least because it's the main artery of communication between the audience and the people who work at the channel, thus making it a great place to make enquiries, offer feedback, and receive important announcements about scheduling for *Knightmare* - and the channel asks nothing in return for providing it. But you also have to be aware of periodic surges in pointless flaming, repetitive enquiries, and childish bitching that the message boards get cluttered up with. To be fair, at the time of writing these surges have become far rarer than they were a couple of years ago.

 The most regular channel representative to use the forum these days goes by the name of 'Challenge Guru', and is usually happy to help with any enquiries... just so long as you ask politely. Ill-mannered enquiries are something of a sore point for *Challenge* staff when they go onto the message boards; 'Challenge Guru's' predecessor, who went by the username of 'JamesP', often went to enormous efforts to keep viewers informed, efforts that some users were slow to appreciate. The abusive flame wars that they would cause were both very sad and counter-productive.

 If you have a request to make to *Challenge* then by all means get onto the forum and exercise your privileges... *but*... firstly, check through the recent threads that are already there and make sure that no one's already made the same enquiry. Because if they have, you may find that the answer's already waiting for you, and not only will you be needlessly increasing the time you have to wait to read it, but you'll also get on people's nerves if you make them wade through page after page of identical posts while they're looking for something new. Endless identical threads make for

the biggest and most aggravating problem on the *Challenge* forum, but they're not the only one.

Also, if you have a complaint to direct to *Challenge*, try to keep some measure of dignity and composure in what you say. Being abusive wins you no respect, can make you look stupid, and also makes the people at the channel feel less inclined to help you.

For instance, "I think that the current schedule for *Knightmare* is unfair as I have no VCR and I simply can't get up at 5am to watch it," is more likely to elicit a response - probably a sympathetic one - than, "WhY THE F*CK*N HELL CARN'T U IDiOTS PUT KM ON WHEn I CAN WOTCHiT FOR A CHANGE!!!!!!!!!!!! BLOODY t*SSERS!!!!!!1!!"

Incidentally, the point so delicately raised in the above passages of speech, about awkward programming schedules, is the difficulty that viewers probably raise most often on the message boards. Unfortunately, there's not a lot that can be done about it; with a more versatile schedule of the type that *Challenge* tries to create, time slots are going to change frequently. They are trying to suit everybody, but in practise there are too many fans of too many different shows, and all of them want to see their favourite show in the optimum time-slot each day, which is of course impossible. It means that sometimes *Knightmare* has to be shown at an ungodly time to make room for shows with a bigger regular audience like, for instance, *Takeshi's Castle*. (I'm not saying *Takeshi's* is a *better* show than *Knightmare* by the way, good heavens no, but there's still no denying it draws more viewers.) Not always being put first, and even more, having to concede to the will of the majority; well, these are just parts of the way life works. Don't forget that the series may be repeated soon anyway.

But above all, try to remember that *Challenge* are under no obligation to show any episodes of *Knightmare*, now or in the future. We should also try hard to appreciate the fact that they eventually bought up *all eight seasons*, knowing as they did at the outset that they were taking a risk with a show that had disappeared almost completely from the wider public eye for the better part of a decade. That they took such a chance was brave of the controllers at *Challenge*, and even though their broadcast rights are now expiring (and may not be renewed), they deserve enormous gratitude for all they did for *Knightmare*, instead of vicious abuse for not always being in a position to give us everything at once.

F. A few notes on Netiquette...

Whichever forum or Chat room you choose, by all means do come and join us online. It's the best way to meet by the thousand people who share the same enthusiasm you do, and the more the merrier.

However... do please behave towards people as you would like them to behave toward you. We're not asking much here, just to recognise that there are certain standards that users in general should do their best to meet, to make sure that a pleasant time is had by one and all. At the very least, it would be nice if the other forums and chat rooms avoided descent into the kind of childish bitch-slapping that cripples the *Challenge* message boards

from time to time.

Most likely your first step into the *Knightmare* online community will be through Illusion's site. But when it comes to interacting with other fans, you'll probably start off with his discussion forum. Now when you join, you might want to start posting straight away, and there's no harm in that. However, I'd recommend you take a day or two 'lurking' first (it was three years in my case!) just so you get the hang of what others are discussing, and also giving yourself time to browse through a few of the older threads already on the forum. This should give you an idea of what sort of things get discussed and what sort of mindset you're likely to be dealing with.

A few don'ts…

i) When quoting other people's posts, try not to quote more than is necessary. The larger that posts are, the longer a page takes to open, and a lot of people on the forum don't have broadband so spare a thought for them. This goes double if you want to include pictures in a post. By all means include them if they're essential to what you're trying to say, but don't add in ones that aren't important.

ii) DON'T TYPE ALL IN CAPITALS. IT MAKES IT LOOK LIKE YOU'RE SHOUTING AT EVERYBODY, AND IT'S RUDE AND IT'S NOT VERY EASY TO READ. and if you don't want to bother with the shift key or the caps lock, you can just type in all lower case instead. i know it still looks a bit odd but look on the bright side; at least they're easier to read than all-caps. wouldn't you agree?

iii) Don't litter the ends of your sentences with exclamation marks just to make them look dramatic or funny!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Try to get the punctuation right, rather than thorough!!!!!!!!!!!! The exclamation mark is only effective when it's used infrequently, and in any case, if your words say what you want them to then a tidal wave of exclamation marks is unnecessary, and can even be embarrassing to read. (Or patronising for that matter; it's almost like you're telling them, "You vill laugh now".) And if your words *don't* say what you want them to, you should edit them instead.

iv) Doe'nt spehl badd oar maik unn-goudd inglish wen yu tipes. There are several users on the forum who have problems with learning difficulties, and of course we always indulge them, but even if your spelling isn't the best it's still a good idea to make your posts as readable as you can get them. There's no point in making the post to begin with otherwise, and a badly-punctuated, incoherent and poorly-spelt post can also make you look quite stupid. Remember, posting is not a race. Once you've typed up what you want to say, read through it and check everything's in order before you send it. And even if you then find that a mistake or three have got through, there's no law against editing it again after the event. Don't worry about those untidy-looking 'EDIT' markers that show up on the posts afterwards. No one else ever pays any attention to them so why should you?

v) Don't post wasteful or gratuitous entries just to boost your post count. You'll make enemies on most forums very quickly if you resort to any kind of spamming at all. On that note, if you were the last person to make a post on a thread that you now want to post to again, you should edit your last post (unless it's a few days or more old) and add in your new points

there instead of starting a new post altogether. It's not a serious rule by any means, but it'll look less like you're just taking liberties in a bid to boost your total.

       vi) Beyond that, general common sense courtesy guidelines apply. Don't set out to annoy people, be prepared to apologise and explain yourself if you do so, however inadvertently, in so far as is possible don't waste space by starting new threads that are identical to old ones, and generally just try to be considerate.

G. What creative things do *KM* fans do?

       Gosh, you name it. The biggest projects tend to be the *KMRPG* and the Audio Play, but they're dealt with in question **12** and **13** if you want to skip over to them.

       Made by some of the same people who work on the RPG - and at least as bizarre as anything that happens in it - is *Wall Aid*, a song that parodies Band Aid's charity single *Do They Know It's Christmas?* A kind of tribute to the wall monsters (see question **1 B vi) 2**), the filk features singing of a… er, standard, and you can download it in mp3 format from http://pooka.ezri.mine.nu/wallaid/Wall%20Aid%2011%20-%20Do%20They%20Know%20It's%20Quest%20Mess.mp3. The song is very funny and odd, and it's well worth giving it a try, even if the quality of the singing won't exactly have Mariah Carey losing any sleep. There are plans to make more *KM* filks in the near future.

       Other mp3s (and indeed MIDIs) that can be found on your net-travels include various remixes of the *Knightmare* title music (see **1 G**) .

       On a smaller scale, you can find a lot of artwork based on the series (just search through some of the sites listed in section **A** to find most of it). Fanfiction for *Knightmare* was a very gradual burn, but has finally increased in quantity. There used to be a bundle of stories on the old *Trading Post* (see question **D iii)**), but since that was closed down only a little of it has re-emerged anywhere else. There is a growing collection however on the fanfiction.net repository site, at the URL http://www.fanfiction.net/l/1385/3/0/1/1/0/0/0/0/1/, with numerous stories by the likes of 'Drassil', 'Emii', 'Ark' and - dare I mention - myself that are worth investigation.

       There are also bits of interactive fiction to look out for. Liam Callaghan has written a 73-page adventure where the reader takes on the role of the dungeoneer in the classic 'Choose-Your-Own-Adventure' style of the 1980's. (The URL to download it is http://www.knightmare.com/fanstuff/ultimatequest.zip.) Similarly, Anthony Thompson has written one 38 pages in length (download from http://www.knightmare.com/fanstuff/km_cyoa.zip). Ali Everett, meanwhile, has created a pair of terrifically-designed and lavishly-presented HTML adventures called *Knightmare: The Challenge* and *Knightmare: The Dark Talisman*, both of which can be accessed via the *Interactive Knightmare* website (see question **A ii)** for the URL). A forum member by the username of 'DJ Oska', meanwhile, has used the classic PC development tool, *Games*

Factory, to build a *Knightmare* video game. It has one or two faults, but has an impressive scope and ambition for a one-man project, especially as work on it was completed in just a few weeks.

Oh, and this next little creative morsel is worth a taste as well...

H. What's the *Knightmare* Lexicon?

Exactly what it says on the tin. Created by David Forester, the Lexicon is quite like the very document you're reading right now; a reference guide to *Knightmare*. However, unlike the FANSFAQ, which attempts to predict and answer structured questions people may ask about the series, the Lexicon is essentially a lengthy glossary, offering definitions and descriptions for different words and names connected with *Knightmare* and its fanbase. It's also developed a little differently.

For one thing, the FANSFAQ is an out-and-out text document, while the Lexicon is accessed through a handy HTML menu system, which includes pictures and even provides a one-click feedback tool allowing readers to inform the writers how useful their contributions have been.

Furthermore, where the FANSFAQ has a very limited authorship(*) - albeit with plenty of outside advice and help - and is written in a much more comprehensive style, the Lexicon is more or less open to anyone to write entries for it, and so written contributors to it number in the dozens. A sort of *Hitch Hiker's Guide to Knightmare*, if you like. Entries in the Lexicon number over five hundred at the time of writing, but there's still enormous scope for more additions, so if you have any usable information to add to it, please get writing.

If you want to read the Lexicon, or even to contribute to it, go to the URL in question **A ii)** and follow the appropriate links.

(* This is not to say that the FANSFAQ isn't open to more written contributions from outside as well. So far only three of four people could be said to have actually *written* for it, but extra offerings will always be considered.)

I. What's *Q-Nightmare*?

It was a tribute to *Knightmare* held in 2006 by the Dragonslayers Gaming Society at the thirteenth annual gaming convention, *Q-Con*, which was held at Queens University in Belfast. In a sense, it was a variation on the *Knightmare RPG* (see **12**), only closer to the original series in terms of gameplay, especially the player-participation. Most of the chromakey scenes were done 'live' at the convention, with the dungeoneer appearing in them, rather like the advisors' perspective in *Knightmare* itself. Considering it was being performed 'live', and as a voluntary production, the final visuals were remarkably good. You can sample some of them at the http://www.dragonslayers.org.uk/gallery/v/Q-con/Qnightmare/, or by downloading the trailer, which at the time of writing is still available at http://quis.qub.ac.uk/ds/qcon_xiii_2006/qnightmare-test-recording.zip. Other clips may be picked up by searching the (sometimes notorious)

Youtube website.

There are whispers that *Q-Nightmare* could become an annual fixture at *Q-Con*, but as is always the case with these things, it very much depends on what the general level of interest is like.

On a note of curiosity, although he didn't take part in *Q-Nightmare*, one of the guests at *Q-Con XIII* was Michael Cule, who played Brother Mace, Fatilla the Hun and the voice of Doorkis in seasons 4 and 5 of *Knightmare*.

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Q6.   A. What can you tell me about clue objects?

There's not a great deal to tell, really. There were a few restrictions and guidelines for the dungeoneers, but generally clue objects were essential tools for survival. The rules limited dungeoneers to carrying no more than two objects at any one time, although magical objects like the Eye-Shield didn't count against this limit. Also, most objects had to be abandoned at the end of the level on which they were found.

Objects would usually be found in a clue room (the name's a giveaway isn't it?) and if the room had a guardian, a successful riddle challenge would normally win information to help select the right objects to take, as the number of objects available usually exceeded the limit.

At other times, ordinary common sense might be all that was required to make a sensible choice; for instance, what use would it be taking an offensive weapon like a crossbow when the dungeoneer was blindfolded? Also, it was unlikely to be worth taking a treasure object on level 3, where there was so little human presence that successful bribery by conventional means would be a rare possibility.

B. What about magical objects?

The most famous, or perhaps that should be infamous, magical object in *Knightmare* was possibly the Eye-Shield. It was introduced in season 4 as another method by which the makers attempted to speed up the game a bit. The intent was to smooth the transitions between locations, and also to preselect the correct exit to a chamber, so preventing all the old dithering by teams as they tried to decide which way to go next. Because the shield had an eye in the middle of its face, one that allowed it to 'see' on the dungeoneer's behalf, the makers were able to slot in streams of video footage portraying the shield's 'perspective'. (In practise this didn't really speed things up significantly, as the video sequences sometimes took even longer to guide a dungeoneer from room to room than the advisors.) The Eye-Shield is much maligned by many *Knightmare* fans, although by no means all of them. Love it or hate it, it can't be denied that it's iconic, which is why it became the title of the official *KM* fanzine (see **4 A**).

Another magical object, hated almost universally, was the Reach Wand, introduced in season 8. This was a very strange and awkward device used for moving distant objects and unlocking CGI doors. To be fair, it might

have been a decent idea if the technology at the time had been up to the standard required for it, but in practise it was a desperately slow and fiddly business for the dungeoneer to try to aim it in the right direction, and it annoyed viewers intensely waiting for the quest to pick up while teams struggled to get their acts together.

A further magical object is the oldest of them all, the Helmet of Justice, the dungeoneer's blindfold. This appeared in two forms. From seasons 1 - 6, it was a bizarre item of headgear with horns fastened to either side of it, which was probably a design meant to hark back to early Saxon/Viking cultures. (It's worth mentioning at this point that no Saxon or Viking helmet dug up by archaeologists has ever been found to *have* horns, but then what can you do about urban myths?) Although it was tainted to look very bronzy and sturdy, it was really made of foam and brown nylon fabric. In the last two seasons this was replaced with a rather more magnificent (but ultimately still silly-looking) knightly iron helmet, which in reality was just made out of reinforced plastic. This was introduced to allow the makers to add a tiny pair of VR goggles inside the visor in front of the dungeoneer's eyes, and therefore allow them occasional sight. Like the Reach Wand, this was a well-intentioned but unsuccessful move, as technical limitations at the time made it impossible to provide a workable first-person perspective via the goggles, and so all the dungeoneer would get was a choppy image of what the advisors could see on the screen, which only served to cause confusion.

Other magical objects were random items that might have been picked up during the course of a quest. For instance, a dungeoneer in season 4 was once given a bottle of 'Etruscan brandy' that he was allowed to carry between levels, and in season 5 a dungeoneer was given a magic book. In both cases the objects did not count against their item limits.

C. And what are these spyglass things used for?

In the immortal words of Julius Scaramonger the merchant, "Well what do you think a spyglass is used for?" Spying! Spyglasses, introduced in season 5, were frequently misnamed magnifying glasses by dungeoneers and advisors when they had knottier problems of adventuring occupying their thoughts, and that's because magnifying glasses are what they looked like. By peering into one, the team could remotely eavesdrop on Lord Fear and his henchmen as they discussed their dastardly plans. These sequences usually ended with the Technosorcerer's 'security systems' alerting him to the uninvited audience, at which point the spyglass had to be abandoned with some alacrity.

These sequences were pre-recorded and allowed far greater, more detailed and more elaborate plot development in quests than had been the case in earlier seasons. In effect, quests had changed from roleplaying adventures into real storylines. The biggest plus they provided however was probably the increased potential for character development among the Opposition. In early years, dungeoneers spent most of their time trying to avoid the bad guys, meaning that the villains spent rather less time

communicating with them than the good guys could. As the spyglasses gave us a chance to hear members of the Opposition communicating with each other, their characterisation became sharper and more advanced.

This is one of the reasons (though by no means the only one) why Lord Fear is widely considered to be a far more interesting villain than his predecessor, Mogdred (see question **3 C iii)**).

The *KMVR* pilot (see **E ii)**) featured a variant of the spyglass, a flat slab called a 'seeing stone', a 'magic mirror' (not to be confused with the magic mirror of the dungeon antechamber - see **1 B ii)**) or 'spying orb', which is a bit of an odd name given that the stone wasn't round.

Q7. A. i) So... how do these magic spells work anyway?

Well, I suppose there is some degree of ambiguity in the more advanced areas of this field. The basics are straightforward enough though, and were explained by Treguard in season 1. (A sound clip is available from Illusion's tribute site on the following link: http://www.knightmare.com/clips/series1/1trespellcast.rm.) A rough translation is as follows...

The first thing you need is the name of the spell, which will usually be a good clue as to what effect the magic is likely to have. Secondly, one member of the advisors on the team must be given the title of spellcaster. (In the series, the dungeoneer could not be the spellcaster, although he was able to cast spells in the *Knightmare VR* pilot (see question **1 E ii)**.)

To invoke the magic, the caster must call out (loudly enough for the producer to hear) the chant "Spellcasting...", followed by the letters of the spell's name in the correct order. (It's a spell so you spell it. Obvious really.)

Things get more complicated though as some spells, once cast, need to be dismissed to avoid prolonging their effects beyond what is desired, or even to prevent them from reverting onto the dungeoneer/caster. Sometimes it may even be possible to dismiss a spell that has been cast by someone else. Again, all you need is to know the spell's name, and you can usually dismiss it without too much difficulty.

To dismiss magic, the caster must call out the chant "Dispell..." (no one's too sure how it's meant to be spelt, which is ironic if you think about it. Because of the thorough emphasis placed on the second syllable, it seems fairly likely that it's not spelt the 'correct' English way i.e. 'Dispel'), followed by all the letters of the spell's name. But this time the letters have to be in an *in*correct order. It doesn't matter what particular order they're in, just so long as it's not the correct one. (Usually, the caster just reverses the order of the letters, but this is not compulsory.)

One problem is that some spells are not dismissible. Either their effects are simply not of the type that can be dismissed, or they may be cast-locked. For example, in season 5 a dungeoneer was turned into a goblin by a spell that couldn't be dismissed when they attempted to dispell it. On these occasions, an altogether-new counter-spell is required.

ii) That's odd. What's this 'turn-spell' thing?

This is the third, very obscure factor in the *Knightmare* world of magic, and one that is frequently forgotten. It's the main cause of ambiguity as well. It's unclear exactly what it is or what it means, but it was a passing reference made in season two to a possible third chant.

Team seven attempted to dismiss a SHROUD spell that had been cast on their dungeoneer, causing him to turn invisible. Unfortunately, when they attempted to dispell it, they kept missing out the letter O. At first they didn't realise and assumed they were using the wrong chant. As a result, they attempted to use a new chant that had never been referred to before; "Turn-spell..." followed by the letters of the spell in reverse order.

How this should be interpreted is unclear, but it appears to have been a legitimate technique as the letters appeared on the screen as they were invoked, and the usual 'magic' sound effect was audible after the letters were called out - albeit, once more the dismissal failed as they missed out the O again.

One possible explanation, and I stress that this is only a theory, is that it's a riskier but more powerful defence than dispelling. When a spell is cast on someone, they can attempt to dismiss the effects by dispelling, which will probably work as long as they know the name of the spell (and know all the letters in it). Alternatively they can take a chance and attempt to *reverse* the spell altogether.

What this means is that if the spell is reversible, the effects would not be dismissed but would actually rebound straight back onto the caster. So, let's say that a mage cast a FIRE spell, and a fireball was thrown at the dungeoneer; if the team's spellcaster is fast enough, he/she could attempt to turn the spell and the fireball would change direction and fly straight back at the mage.

The risk is that a lot of the time you can't say for sure that the spell *will* be reversible, and so if the turn-spell is attempted and it fails, precious time that could have been used for dispelling (which is more likely to succeed) has been lost. The chant, presumably, is "Turn-spell..." followed by the letters of the spell's name in *reverse* order only. (Repeat: This is only a theory.)

A Realmedia clip of the scene in question, by the way, can be downloaded from Illusion's tribute site. Here's the link; http://www.knightmare.com/clips/series2/2team7mogdred.rm.

B. Was there a limit on the number of spells a team was allowed to possess?

According to the rules of the interactive adventures in the novellas, a dungeoneer could not possess more than three spells at any one time. No such rule was ever stipulated in the TV series, but it seems likely that there was some kind of restriction. Unlike clue objects, spells could be retained and used on levels other than the one they were earned on.

C.   i) What's a 'calling-name'?

A calling-name is a kind of incantation spell that can summon sorcerers, sorceresses and many faerie creatures. Everyone's calling-name is unique to them, and for obvious reasons they like to keep them secret. To make use of a calling-name, the invoker must call it out three times in quick succession.

ii) Can you give me a few examples?

Well as you asked so nicely… Hordriss' calling-name was *Malefact*, Malice's was *Merris*, Greystagg's was *Gwen* and Maldame's was *Spite*.

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Q8.   A. *Eeuurrgghhh!!* Gross! Are you sure this is a *kids'* show? I mean look at that face! It's falling to bits! I mean, what is this? *Poltergeist* or something?!?

Heh, I suspect you're referring to the Life Force Clock. (On the issue of *Knightmare's* suitability as a kids' show, check out question **9**.) This was a less integral part of gameplay than it was sometimes made out to be, but was still an excellent innovation for rounding out the creepy atmosphere of the programme.

One of the problems for the makers of the series was trying to keep the gameplay from slowing down, especially when the teams were wasting time, be it by playing negatively or just being pointlessly indecisive. To combat this, the term 'Life Force condition' was introduced from the word go to hurry things up artificially. So every time that a team was taking too long solving a puzzle, or answering a riddle, or choosing which door to take next, Treguard would chime in with an ominous warning, usually something on the lines of, "Hurry team, you're wasting life force!"

To add substance to the threat - although only for the viewers' benefit - an animated Life Force 'Clock' was added in. This showed the dungeoneer's in-game physical status. It had three basic stages, GREEN (healthy), AMBER (jaded) and RED (critical). These stages were represented by a vortex of coloured waves in the background of the clock, but in the foreground was a much more grisly image; a helmeted face that was slowly falling to bits, to the accompaniment of the sound of a heart beating.

While the Clock was on GREEN, the face would still be helmeted, but as time progressed and Life Force ebbed, bits of the helmet would slowly fall off or float away. Once all of the helmet was gone, the condition would change to AMBER. This is where things start getting grisly! The sound of the heart rate would increase in tempo, while the skin of the face would start to crack up and peel off in little pieces that would drift off the edges of the screen, slowly unveiling the skull beneath the surface. Once most of the skin was gone (not quite all of it) the condition would change to RED. The heart rate sound would now be rapid, while the skull would start to fall to bits. Once that was gone, all that would remain would be the eyeballs, which would gradually roll 'past' the camera one at a time. At that point the clock would have run out and the dungeoneer would be 'dead', usually to the

sobering accompaniment of the chimes of a great bell.

This process isn't actually as macabre as it sounds, because there is no portrayal of blood in it, because the images are 2D, and because it's not all that well animated, at least by the standards demanded by today's cynical public.

But at the time (this was 1987, before we'd been desensitised to VR by the special effects in things like *Harry Potter* or the *Star Wars Trilogy Special Edition*) it was really frightening. In fact, the most frightening thing about it was probably the eyes and the way that they helplessly watched each small piece of helmet/flesh/bone becoming prised away and disappearing from the screen. It added quite a sense of leeriness, even griminess, to the dungeoneer's predicament.

Incidentally, the only way to keep the Clock from running out was for the dungeoneer to find food and place it in the knapsack provided at the beginning of the quest, or by touching CGI sprigs of energy that occasionally appeared in the lower levels. These would restore Life Force to GREEN and restart the Clock from the beginning.

A clip put together by Adam Battersby of the full cycle of the original Life Force Clock can be downloaded from Illusion's tribute site via the following link; - http://www.knightmare.com/clips/others/lifeforcefull.avi. NOTE: The picture on this clip is blurred and there's no sound on it, but it gives a reasonable idea of what's what.

B. So what happened to the Life Force Clock then? It doesn't seem to appear from season 6 onwards?

It does in fact, but it was redesigned several times. Neither of the later versions of the Clock is terribly popular with the fans, but in truth, by the time they'd been introduced, Life Force had ceased to be a very important factor in the game anyway. This was because from season 3 the makers began to think up some much more dramatic and direct methods of hurrying teams up a bit, for instance the introduction of 'hauntings' (CGI skull-ghosts and floating weapons that could chase the dungeoneer around), or goblin hunting parties.

But they decided to retain the concept while changing the appearance of the Clock. To this end, in season 6 they created a side-on image of a figure walking in medieval armour. As Life Force (now referred to as 'energy levels' instead) ebbed, bits of armour would fall off and be left in the figure's wake, revealing a skeletal figure underneath. Eventually when the dungeoneer's energy ran out, the skeleton would turn greeny-yellow and collapse in a heap. The chimes of the death knell were usually still included.

As the only consistent animation in this Clock was the walking movement, which could be recycled indefinitely, the linearity was greatly reduced and this allowed the makers greater flexibility for employing it. Unfortunately it was also very limited in terms of the number of stages available, badly reducing the tension it built up for the audience when it appeared on the screen.

Then in season 8 they decided to abandon this version of the Clock and they came up with something, shall we say, a little perfunctory…

C. Hmm… that third Clock; is it a cake or a pie?

Heh heh! Every fandom has its own petty topics of debate that get people disproportionately fired up, and *Knightmare's* silliest hot topic is probably the third incarnation of the Life Force Clock. It's an argument that kept rearing its head for years, and seemed to make a lot of people quite stubborn, whichever side of the argument they came down on. It's a daft subject for an argument anyway, but made all the more pointless by the fact that it was a pretty feeble incarnation of the Clock, and therefore unworthy of such passions.

In answer though, Tim Child finally put the debate to bed for good early in 2004 when he confirmed that it was a pie.

The pie would erode in slices, and this would represent energy levels ebbing away. No direct reference to this process was ever made throughout season 8, suggesting it was a superficial gesture of continuity with earlier years; perhaps only included at the last minute. But whatever the reason, it *was* pretty feeble and it would probably have been better that year if they'd just done without a Clock altogether.

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Q9.   A. *Knightmare* seems so dark and macabre for a kids' show! Did it ever get into trouble for its content?

In a way, yes it did, but it soon sorted itself out.

After the series had been showing on *CITV* for a few weeks back in 1987, *Knightmare* fell foul of that most tiresomely resolute self-appointed guardian of the nation's morals, Mary Whitehouse. She accused the series of being "damaging", not least because of its apparent portrayal of children being violently slaughtered.

The thing was, Whitehouse hadn't actually *seen* the show when she made the criticism. In that light the comment may sound like a typical bit of reactionary crassness on her part, but to be fair to her she was in an awkward spot at the time. She'd basically been ambushed by people from the press who were in the mood to stir up an argument, and they described the show to her accurately but with as macabre a spin as possible. In that position she obviously felt she couldn't just say, "No comment!" but had to give some kind of reaction.

When the time came that she actually got round to seeing an episode of the series, she immediately issued an apology to *Broadsword* and *Anglia*, when she saw the very responsible way the death scenes were handled, especially where Treguard would go to great pains to stress that the dungeoneer had survived in reality. Whatever else we may think of the late Mary Whitehouse - and I for one never had a high opinion of what she stood for - we must at least give her credit for being big enough to hold up

her hand when she was proved wrong.

In truth, *Knightmare*'s material was never inappropriate on grounds of being horrifying. However, it could well have gotten into trouble for some of its dialogue, which at times drifted blatantly close to the mark, especially in later years.

Treguard's assistants were the prime offenders. In season 5 Pickle referred to Elita the cavern elf as a "little cow... slip", then in a later episode he called her a "cavern-cow." In season 7 Majida referred to Marta the maid as a "serving winch" (in Scotland, to 'winch' someone is slang for giving physical stimulation with the tongue!), and then called one of the dungeoneers, a particularly loquacious fellow by the name of Barry Thorne, a "smart bottom."

Most risqué of all however was a nasty argument in season 8 between the two halves of Bhal-Shebah the dragon's split personality, when Bhal audibly accused Shebah of being a "smart*ss".

For all of these little transgressions *Knightmare* apparently got off scot-free. Fun, innit?

B. What other controversies have dogged the series?

Well none really, at least no great public rows. There have been a great many grumbles from fans about things that have happened on-screen mind you, and these continue to cause rigorous debate today. Many of these, like the Eye-Shield (see question **6 B**), and production conspiracy theories (see **Appendix**), are explored elsewhere in this FAQ, but there are others.

One matter that causes tempers to fray time and again, and therefore has to be studied in detail here, is the various ways that the show handled season finales. The problem was that at the beginning of any quest nobody could say exactly how long the dungeoneer was going to survive for, and when a season was nearing its conclusion there was every danger that time would run out altogether with the quest still in progress.

In the first season, it appears that incredibly lucky timing spared the makers from having to address this problem. The sixth dungeoneer chose a wrong quest object from the level 3 clue room, and so as a result he got trapped a couple of rooms later and his Life Force Clock ran out just as the last episode of the season was drawing to a close. So everyone was able to ignore the question of what they'd have had to do if the dungeoneer had chosen the *correct* item. (Just for the record, my unconfirmed suspicion is that this sequence of events was *not* the result of lucky timing but ruthless editing; the team was given two spells in level 2 that still seemed unused by the end of the quest, and I think they were probably used in level 2 scenes that were cut because of the time constraints.) Courtesy of Illusion, you can see a clip of the first end of season at http://www.knightmare.com/clips/series1/1endseason.rm.

In the next two seasons however, this problem was brought into sharp focus by the fact that on each occasion the season ended with a team going strong in level 2. That either of them were good enough to have gone on to win is doubtful, but at least it was *possible*, and the teams were deprived of a

chance of ever finding out for sure. Clips of these scenes at http://www.knightmare.com/clips/series2/2endseason.rm and http://www.knightmare.com/clips/series3/3endofseason.rm respectively.

It was even worse in the fourth season, when a team was halfway through level 3, having defeated such mighty obstacles as the Corridor of Blades and the Block and Tackle, and looked like a quality bet to win outright, when the season drew to a close. Several of the players on the team looked more than a little miffed as they were sent packing having come within probably just three or four rooms of victory and been deprived through something that was no fault of their own whatsoever. That quest in particular causes a lot of heated feelings among fans even today. (http://www.knightmare.com/clips/series4/4end.rm.)

From season 5 onwards therefore, the makers started thinking up elaborate ways of getting rid of this hideous sense of anti-climax, by inventing the now-notorious 'End-of-season-confrontations'. What would happen was that a mini-story would be thrown into a quest that showed no sign of ending before time ran out, and instead of continuing the quest as normal, the dungeoneer would have to deal with a sudden crisis that threatened the existence of Knightmare Castle itself.

In season 5, the Ice Witch Aesandre (AKA Queen Icy-Knickers, AKA Queen What-A-Total-Rip-off-Of-What's-her-name-You-Know-The-One-From-Narnia) was hired by Lord Fear to freeze over the entire dungeon, and the dungeoneer had a mad-dash-to-the-line to escape being frozen to pseudo-death. (http://www.knightmare.com/clips/series5/5endseason.rm.) In season 6 Lord Fear sent a mighty red dragon called Red Death to attack the castle, and the dungeoneer had to retrieve a legendary weapon called 'The Lightning-Rod' to shoot the monster out of the sky with. (http://www.knightmare.com/clips/series6/6end.rm.) In season 7, Fear sent a troll called Bulstrode to attack Knightmare Castle, and the dungeoneer had to retrieve a magic hammer to bring the monster to heel. (http://www.knightmare.com/clips/series7/7endseason.rm.)

These ideas were probably an improvement on what had happened previously, because at least they took away the feeling of a pointless anti-climax, and the race-against-time element was usually well-enough portrayed at least to make it exciting for the audience.

However, as is often the case with my less favourable view of the later seasons, there is a downside to this. For a start, these confrontations were thrown into the mix with little warning, making for botched retcons, and the weapons that the dungeoneers were required to retrieve were never given any explanation whatsoever and then disappeared from the series altogether once they'd been used, giving them a serious McGuffin quality (see **3 C iii) 2** for a description of retcons and McGuffins). This leaves a very hollow feeling in the aftermath.

Also, on reflection we can see that the confrontations were only papering over the cracks, and that the real problem very much remained; there was little point in the dungeoneers embarking on their quests in the first place as they didn't have the time to finish them properly. Because, with the debatable exception of Barry Thorne in season 7, they still *didn't*

complete their quests at all.

In season 8, the makers took a much more extreme approach, and this is the cause of some of the loudest arguments of all. One dungeoneer (the unfairly-maligned Dunstan Roberts) was clearly not going to have nearly enough time to win, so the makers offered him an opportunity to get around the problem; they would invent a shortcut at the end of level 1 for him to bypass level 2 altogether, and he would then be allowed to play an extended final level, based on the toughest parts of levels 2 and 3. Dunstan accepted, and furthermore he went on to win his quest outright. (http://www.knightmare.com/clips/series8/8t6win.rm.)

This caused a furore amongst *Knightmare* fans at the time, one that has never properly died down, with the general consensus being that Dunstan and friends were given licence to cheat by not having to play a full third of their quest. At the very least it seemed ludicrously unfair on all those teams over the years who had been defeated on level 2. All that Dunstan had to do for the second level was defeat the eternal Corridor of Blades; a business that created a controversy in its own right as he appeared to be struck by one of the blades during the journey and got away with it.

Once again however, my own opinion is rather different from the apparent majority's. Firstly, we have to remember that losing one third of their adventure was not a benefit to Dunstan and chums, it was a disappointment. Who do you think was better off? Dunstan with an adventure of half an hour or so, or Barry with a quest of over sixty minutes?

It also has to be considered that, in one way, skipping a level probably made the task more difficult, not less so, because the direct transition from a bog-standard, easy-peasy level 1 to an enhanced level 3 had to be the most brutal learning curve in series history.

I used to agree that Dunstan got away with it on the Corridor of Blades, but having watched the scene again recently I've changed my mind even on that score. It's a quite separate matter in any case, and besides, he certainly wouldn't have been the first dungeoneer to get undue benefit of the doubt over that particular puzzle; the aforementioned Barry Thorne got away with one in the Blades Corridor - and several other floor puzzle mistakes for that matter - in season 7, but no one ever seems to complain about that.

Whether these arguments will ever be settled is hard to tell, but personally I hope they won't be. They're good fun, just so long as people don't get silly and lose their tempers over them.

C. Was *Knightmare* offensive?

As discussed in **A**, some of the language used in the series could be overly 'adult'. But this leads onto another topic that has surfaced from time to time amongst *Knightmare* fans, which is whether some of the material in it is actually offensive. Certainly parts of it seem dated by lazy stereotyping that it probably wouldn't get away with today.

A lot of this debate might never have been raised without the fashions of modern political correctness - which is something I loathe - and therefore would probably have been greeted with bewilderment had the issues been

raised back in the day. Having said that, it has to be acknowledged that stereotype characters were not exactly in short supply in *Knightmare*. The characters that probably make modern audiences most uneasy in this regard are Olaf the Viking from seasons 2 and 3, Ridolfo the Troubadour from season 6, and Ah Wok the Oriental Trader, also from season 6. This is because, at least on first examination, they seem like they could be racist caricatures.

In Olaf's case, he spoke with a very annoying and over-the-top Scandinavian accent - forever ranting about looting and pillaging - carried an oversized battle club, and wore a helmet with horns on it that looked almost as ludicrous as the Helmet of Justice (see **6 B**). He was also immensely stupid and easily taken-for-ride, and was therefore referred to by Motley as "Olaf the Dead... on account of his extreme mental agility." Whether or not this should be regarded as offensive to the modern people of Norway and Denmark is doutbful, but even so it's a very limited portrayal of what a Viking would have been like. Loot and pillage *were* strong parts of Viking activity in Western Europe, it's true, but they were far more cultured than just that, and generally a good bit more intelligent than Olaf.

Ridolfo was a minstrel from Italy who was reminiscent of Captain Bertorelli from *'Allo 'Allo!*, not least because of his cod accent, his flirtatiousness, his extravagant dress sense, and his apparently limitless libido. Beyond doubt, a randy womaniser was an extremely simplistic way for an Italian to be portayed. In his defence though, Ridolfo was fairly intelligent and streetwise, and very good-natured, so if he was a stereotype, at least he wasn't an overwhelmingly *negative* one.

Ah Wok was the really major sticking point. I must confess he seemed quite funny to a teenager of the early 90's, but nowadays I often wince. With his narrowed eyes, his ballooning yellow outfit, and his sternly tied-back hair, his appearance alone could set alarm bells ringing. But what could really turn audiences pale was of course the voice. Transliterating his L's and R's like there was no tomorrow, always misunderstanding two words in every five that were said to him, and never short of a sarcastic jibe to aim at a customer, he seemed to embody almost every narrow-minded assumption that Middle England has ever held about the Far East (bar being short).

The portrayal of women also causes some debate. A pattern that has been identified by some of the female audience can be summed up as follows; "If a woman in *Knightmare* is intelligent, she'll be evil, and if she's stupid, she'll be good." This isn't especially accurate as a number of female characters can be seen to break either side of this 'rule', but nevertheless the tendancy in *Knightmare* for female goodness to be inversely proportional to female intelligence is real, especially in the early years; the maids Gretel and Mellisandre were both classic examples of nice airheads, while Lillith and Malice were both highly intelligent villainesses. The scale continued on the middle ground too; Mildread and Gundrada weren't particularly bright or dim, but nor were they especially good or evil.

However, we should keep in mind that there were some nasty female characters who were pretty dense. For instance, Mistress Goody from season 4, and Peggatty from season 6, were both hostile to dungeoneers while

showing little conspicuous intelligence. By the same measure, friendly female characters like Gwendoline, Romanha and Stiletta were fairly bright. They all had their dimwitted moments of course, but then the same could be said for almost every character in *Knightmare*, even Hordriss the Confuser.

Another complaint about the female presence in the series is that the women would tend to be dressed up in, shall we say, *briefer* attire than the men, something that, it is tempting to suggest, the series *would* have gotten away with today. (In fact, modern programmers at *CITV* would probably have encouraged more of it.) Again it's not universal, but there's absolutely no doubt that the younger, more telegenic ladies in the cast would generally be given more figure-hugging outfits that left far less to the imagination than the costumes the men or the older ladies were given. This pattern of (almost literally) 'sexing-up' the ladies in the cast became more pronounced in later years, to the great annoyance of many female viewers. Particularly blatant examples were Marta the serving wench from season 7, and Stiletta the warrior thief from season 8.

In Marta's case, she had a *very* low-cut dress, and a bad habit, when talking to seated customers at the inn where she worked, of leaning a very long way forward, putting almost everything 'on display' for the camera. (And watching those scenes it's quite clear that the actress, Jacquelin Joyce, knew exactly what she was doing; there's just *no way* that it wasn't deliberate.) Worse, in one notorious scene with Lord Fear, him staring down the inside of Marta's dress appeared to have been scripted!

As for Stiletta, her outfit had very pronounced *S & M* undertones. It was made up of small sheets and straps of leather covering most of her torso while largely leaving her arms and legs exposed. All her 'important bits' were well covered up of course, and in the cold light of day the outfit wasn't as revealing as it might have seemed on first inspection. But it was still racy enough for one dungeoneer - Richard from team 1 - to inform her that he was "admiring her chest." (Hardly surprisingly, that particular bit of unscripted dialogue was edited out!)

All in all, does this catalogue of infamy mean the series was offensive? Well, as nothing can mean exactly the same thing to all people, it very much depends on your point of view. To me, most of the above problems aren't really offensive as such, but many of them *are* tiresome to differing degrees, indicative of lazy/cheap/easy ways of getting the job done or boosting the ratings, when doing the job *properly* would have been far more impressive. On the other hand, I'd have to concede that Ah Wok was the point when the series genuinely stepped over the line.

If the rest of it offends you, I guess you'll just have to grit your teeth and console yourself that far more racist things happened in *Love Thy Neighbour*, and far more gratuitous and cheap raunchiness is still going on in the new version of *Dr Who*. But *don't* get me started on that…

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Q10. A. Was *Knightmare* ever broadcast outside the UK?

Available knowledge about this is very sketchy. Satellite broadcasts from the UK can sometimes be picked up in other parts of Europe, and this is why *Knightmare* has been seen in places as far off as Scandinavia. Apparently, the series has also been shown on native cable channels in the USA; seasons 5 and 6 were shown for a brief spell on *New York 55* - I know not in which year this happened - and for around a year it was shown on the US incarnation of the *Sci-Fi Channel*. Again, I have no information about which year this happened in, or even which seasons were shown.

To the best of my knowledge, there were no native broadcasts of *Knightmare* anywhere else in the world, although the series was remade in several countries.

B. Foreign remakes?

Indeed. Two foreign spin-offs were made, and several others got to brinkmanship.

In 1990 the format for *Knightmare* was hired out by a partnership of two TV companies in France, one called *Marina Productions*, the other called *Top No. 1 Productions*, and they developed a new, Gallic version of *Knightmare* that they called *Le Chevalier du Labyrinthe* (which translates as *The Knight Of The Labyrinth*).

The series they created was largely modelled on season 3 of *Knightmare*, at least visually, with many of David Rowe's original hand-painted dungeon chambers slotted into the programme, albeit usually modified somewhat. The show was hosted by a dungeon master again, played by the energetic George Beller. The actual rules of the game, however, were quite different.

As in *Knightmare*, there was a team of four players; one dungeoneer blindfolded in a visorless helmet and guided by three advisors. But whereas in *Knightmare* a team only had one life, if a dungeoneer was 'killed' in *Labyrinthe*, one of the advisors would step up as a replacement dungeoneer, and the team would be allowed to carry on until there were no advisors left, or until they won. If the team won, rather than being awarded a trophy, each player would win a very un-medieval SEGA games console.

Also instead of the quests lasting for anything up to an hour, each one would last a single episode, meaning that they were always a lot shorter, and that the labyrinth was a lot smaller than the dungeon.

Labyrinthe debuted on *Antenne 2* on September the 19th 1990 (just twelve days after season 4 of *Knightmare* began on *CITV*). On its first run, each episode was shown on Wednesday afternoons at 4:30pm, and was then repeated at 8:00am on Sunday mornings.

A randomly-selected episode of *Le Chevalier du Labyrinthe* is available to download from Illusion's tribute site at the URL, http://www.knightmare.com/clips/others/labyrinthe.rm.

Although it was undoubtedly popular in its time, *Le Chevalier du Labyrinthe* only lasted two seasons. However, each season was 52 episodes in length, so in fact it lasted almost as long as *Knightmare* in terms of transmission hours!

There's a fansite for *Labyrinthe* run by Fabien, which can be accessed at the URL, http://monsite.wanadoo.fr/chevalier-labyrinthe, although for obvious reasons, its content is written entirely in French. You can use *Google's* translator tool to decipher it through the URL, http://translate.google.com/translate?u=http://monsite.wanadoo.fr/chevalier-labyrinthe&langpair=fr|en&hl=en&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8&prev=/language_tools, although be aware that, as is often the way with online translators, the language-conversion process gives some pretty bizarre output.

A year on from *Labyrinthe's* debut, the *Knightmare* format was hired out by *Television Espanola* in Spain for another new version called *El Rescate del Talisman*. At the time of writing, I'm afraid we have little information about this series, although all indicators are that the rules were almost identical to those of *Le Chevalier du Labyrinthe*. However, some of the rooms were bizarrely different from anything seen in the British and French versions. The prize for winning was a PC.

Again, a random episode of *Rescate* is available to download c/o Illusion. This one is available in two parts at the URLs http://www.knightmare.com/clips/others/talisman.rm and http://www.knightmare.com/clips/others/talisman2.rm.

Also in 1991, *Broadsword* were in negotiations with *RTL* to create a fifty-episode German version of *Knightmare* at *Anglia* Studios in Norwich, with an option for a second season to be filmed in Cologne. But the deal fell through and the project was cancelled. Then in 1993, the pilot episode for a US version called *Lords Of The Game* was made, but the full series was never commissioned. The pilot episode for *Lords* still exists however, and Tim Child has hinted that it may eventually be made available for download from Illusion's tribute site.

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Q11. What pop culture impact has the series had?
Considering how popular it was in its heyday, the series has had surprisingly little impact culturally. It's certainly given a grand legacy to the television and even film industries with all its technological innovations, but very few of the sayings and phrases coined in the show have stuck in the public imagination or been harked back to source.

Nonetheless, those who remember the show with affection will always be able to point to a few regular lines that have stayed with them, especially from Treguard of course. And a few of them could apply to life in general, rather than just a virtual journey through an imaginary dungeon.

Remember, the only way is onward; there is no turning back.
I shall be with you; and yet not *with you.*
Where am I?
Sidestep to your left, and walk forward.
Winning isn't about playing fair. It's about winning.
Look upon Mogdred and quail.

We play fair or Fear play foul, we begin again at the allotted hour.
Turn, set your foot upon the path, and step boldly forward.
Spellcasting...
Folly is my name, and folly is my nature. Foolishness my character, and fun my alma mater.
Take a good look. Because you know, looks really can *kill.*
Your advisors must be your eyes...
Here, nothing is real, and everything is surely an illusion.
Oh dear, what a pity... never mind.
Hurry team, you're wasting Life Force.
Eavesdroppers never hear good of themselves.
Your Lorrrrrrd-nessss!
'Ands is the name. Y'know, 'ands. Like feet only at the other end of ya body.
Goblin fodder!!!
Just keep telling yourself, "It's only a game... isn't it?"
And of course, the most eternal expression of them all...
Oooooh, nasty!
(Any *Knightmare* fan who claims they've never said that one on a reflex at some time in their life is either a liar, or not a *Knightmare* fan after all.)

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Q12. Tell me more about this *KMRPG* thing.
I'll hand over to **Kieran O'Brien** and **David Forester** here, as between them they probably know more about this subject than the rest of the human race put together.

A.   i) So what is the deal with the RPG?
The *Knightmare* Role-playing Game began life in 1999 as a text adventure conducted live within *Knightmare* Chat (see question **5 D i)**). It was created and hosted by Adam Battersby with some technical assistance by David Forester. As its popularity grew, so did the sophistication of the RPG. Season 2 introduced graphical artwork, to help represent the current location of the team within the game, in typical 'magic mirror' fashion. This then further progressed into full video sequences with the introduction of season 3.
For season 3, Adam acquired a Mini-DV cam and set up a small blue screen stage. He then invited some members of the fan community to participate in the production of full-motion video (FMV) scenes that could then be interweaved into the game when the teams played their quests online. This acting team was formed by: Gareth 'Ark' Weaving, Melanie 'Geekgirl' Hoyle, Adam Battersby himself, and Lucy 'Sidriss Starshine' Warriner. The FMV concept at that point was still quite limited, with these filmed scenes being shown to the team when they made use of the spyglass (see question **6 C**) in-game to see what the Opposition was doing.

This season was once again conducted in *Knightmare* Chat. Although it did experience some technical issues and received some negative criticism, it could not be faulted for its ambition; at the time it was the closest anyone had yet come to recreating *Knightmare* authentically.

The following year, filming was conducted for season 4 with an extended cast, and with FMV sequences for all encounters in the game instead of just for the spyglass. Unfortunately, editing of the footage was never completed, and at the time of writing it is unlikely ever to be so, although it is available to those who were involved in the production.

Despite season 4 not being completed, plans went ahead for a further season with the cast and crew extended still further. This led to numerous problems, in part down to over-ambition. Reorganisation occurred in which Adam left the production and the crew that remained continued to produce the project. Despite having made the best out of a bad situation, the footage produced was not made available to the group until mid-2005, so no work could be done on it.

The remaining cast and crew reorganised the development of the project for season 6. The season also looked doomed in the build-up; the accommodation, for instance, was only confirmed a matter of weeks before filming was due to take place. But it still managed to go ahead. Once again, due to a lack of technical ability and/or interest from within the group, at the time of writing there has been little progress made on the raw footage.

Season 7 also went ahead with many lessons having been learnt from before, and could be said to be a total success in terms of the filming shoot. Unlike previous years, where a last-minute, very-hurried film shoot was required to get all material completed in time, season 7 finished roughly a day *ahead* of schedule. The footage produced from this is currently in sole possession of Matt Richings and is yet to be distributed.

As of writing, there are no plans to continue the RPG or go ahead with further production.

ii) Will the RPG ever be brought back?

Anyone who thinks they've the ability to organise and motivate a technical team should contact Forester who will help explain the current situation further and provide more details of current & past team members, though nobody is currently making any major progress working on the RPG as of writing.

B. Ok... so seven seasons have been made... but, erm... we've only seen two and a bit?

'Broadcast' of season 3 was abandoned early on because of technical complications. Season 4 had only been semi-completed by Adam Battersby and, until recently, was not available to the others involved in the production. There are presently no plans to finish producing this season. Season 5 was also in possession of only Adam for a long while and so could not be worked on; this has recently been released to the group and requires a team of people willing to edit it in full for work to begin on producing it.

Season 7 is currently in the sole possession of Matt Richings, and

cannot be edited until released to the group by him.

With many incomplete projects, the RPG is in major need of a technical department. Without a stronger technical force, the group is unlikely to make any further progress in preparing the RPG for playing online.

C. So how many seasons are going to be made?

As of writing, three have been filmed, edited and played (sort of). One is almost certainly never going to be shown. Two are currently in development limbo. There are no plans to film any further seasons. But if the right people get involved it could potentially kick-start again.

D.   i) Who's played whom in the RPG?

Since filming started for season 3, we have had many characters, and many cast playing them; and a few technical crew filming them. This is a good place to offer up some credits (in no particular order).

Season 3 (Filmed April 2001):

Lord Wraith	-	Gareth Weaving
Ixia	-	Lucy Warriner
Torseena	-	Melanie Hoyle
Kane	-	Adam Battersby
Voice of Treguard	-	Kieran O'Brien

Season 4 (Filmed April 2002):

Treguard/Lucifer/Gregale/		
Guard 1	-	Kieran O'Brien
Frégo Tirac/Arilannon/Faloban	-	David Forester
Lord Wraith/Zypheron/		
Asteroth	-	Gareth Weaving
Ixia/Adele/Foehn	-	Lucy Warriner
Merlin/Lance	-	Matt Richings
George/Ambrose	-	Adam Battersby
Robin/Meksis	-	Ben Maydon
Lizbeth/Roenne/Zora	-	Stephanie Keeler
Non-Player Characters (NPC)	-	Melanie Hoyle & Rachel Anderson

CITV Crew - Matt Richings, Robin Barlow & Rachel Anderson. Co-starring Ben Maydon as *The voice of Dinosaur Name*

Camera crew - Adam Battersby & Matt Richings

Season 5 (Filmed April 2003):

Treguard/Lucifer/Mrs. Grimwold/Sandy	-	Kieran O'Brien
Frégo Tirac	-	David Forester
Merlin/Arthur Farnham	-	Matt Richings
Lord Wraith	-	Gareth Weaving
Gabriel/Voice of Festus	-	James Aukett
King Tharadus	-	Keith McDonald
Morgaine/Funkus	-	Dave Holt
Mordred	-	Alex Greenwood
Iokus/Halfling Elder	-	Ali Everett
Ceidor/The Apothecary	-	James Pearcey
Kully/Lhiori	-	Emily Bradshaw
Faehlen	-	Warren Earl
Julian	-	Robin Barlow
Camera crew and stage hands	-	All of the cast

Season 6 (Filmed April 2004):

Treguard/Lucifer/Mrs. Grimwold	-	Kieran O'Brien
Frégo Tirac/Gatekeeper	-	David Forester
Merlin/Arthur Farnham	-	Matt Richings
Lord Wraith	-	Gareth Weaving
King Tharadus/Jeremy Gaylords	-	Keith McDonald
Gabriel/Voice of Festus	-	James Aukett
Morgaine/Funkus	-	Dave Holt
Robin/Prince Isárion	-	Ben Maydon
Ruke/Saie	-	Anna Francombe
Ingard The Apothecary/ Automatum	-	Jason Burret
Drassil/Ghutlar	-	David Goldstein
Kully/Oracle	-	Emily Bradshaw

CITV Crew - Matt Richings, David Goldstein & Rachel Anderson. Co-starring Ben Maydon as *The voice of Sock Name*

Camera crew - Andrew Kenny & Matt Richings

Others - Martin Odoni (and several volunteer dungeoneers from Denmark whose names we have forgotten, to our everlasting shame)

Season 7 (Filmed August 2005):

Treguard	-	Kieran O'Brien
Frégo Tirac	-	David Forester
Gabriel/Voice of Festus	-	James Aukett
King Tharadus	-	Keith McDonald
Rhollgar Thrundemahl	-	Gareth Weaving
Morgaine	-	Dave Holt
Ah Mok/Goblin	-	Robin Barlow
Lon	-	Matt Richings
Phyliss/Goblin	-	Susan McPherson
Pyron	-	Keith Moss
Robin	-	Ben Maydon
Milly	-	Hannah
Isilme Tindómerel	-	Lucy Scarisbrick-Wright
Brother Virtue	-	Richard
Ergo Grimwold	-	Darryll Linnerman
Toddy	-	Jason Burret
Aranel	-	Anna Francombe
Drassil	-	David Goldstein
Dungeoneer	-	Graham
Camera crew	-	All of the cast

ii) *Dinosaur Name*? Is that some kind of joke?

To answer this in a simple way, yes, it *is* a joke. This story goes back to July 2002, and it takes place on Adam Battersby's old RPG website (now defunct). Knowing that we were filming mock-*CITV* Scenes in August, Adam decided that we needed a puppet to go along with the two presenters. Adam then decided this character would be a dragon. A poll was created.

The question was 'What should the *CITV* dragon be called?', or something like that. In the answer box, just to help us understand where we type in our suggestion, the text said 'dragon name'. It was then decided it would be a good idea simply to submit *Dragon Name* as the name for the puppet. To my knowledge, no other name was ever suggested, and as Rachel would say, "*Dragon Name* is a very suitable name for a dragon."

When we actually arrived at the filming shoot, alas, we had no dragons nearby, so we had to make do with a random dinosaur puppet that was found at the Youth Hostel.

As filming proceeded, we christened the character *Dinosaur Name*, and sure enough, Rachel agreed that "*Dinosaur Name* is a very suitable name for a dinosaur." As you can tell, we all took the project very seriously! I am sure Adam was pleased with the maturity of the cast's attitude to his puppet! (To sum up: everyone was just feeling too sarky to think up a proper name.)

iii) Er, okay. And *Sock Name*?

A more self-referential joke this time. There was another *CITV* parody in the 2004 RPG, and it was decided that another puppet would be a good idea for rounding out the studio line-up. No glove puppet was available however, so Ben 'Pooka' Maydon provided a woolly sock and more vocal effects from a hiding place behind a couch. As a tribute to the fond memory

of *Dinosaur Name*, the new puppet was baptised *Sock Name*. (To sum up: everyone was just feeling too *lazy* to think up a proper name.)

E. There have been spin-off films made with RPG cast members, have there not?

There have been two spin-off films made by members of the RPG group. Others have been planned but due to either time constraints or lack of group interest, they have never made it past the ideas stage.

For the record though, here's what we've done so far; -

Treguard & Frégo Do Blackpool (June 2002):
Treguard and Frégo have flashbacks on a holiday organised by Merlin. The pair tackle the modern world with a typical *Knightmare* twist.

The Bigger Job (August 2003):
Treguard and Frégo have let the antechamber turn into a tip. Merlin sends them to London in the year 2003 and instructs them to find a proper job to teach them a lesson. Can they hold down a proper job in the real world, and is Frégo destined for a celebrity-filled life?

There are no current plans to film any more spin-offs.

F. Is it true Tim Child has played the RPG?

Yes, Tim Child played the RPG in season 1. He actually managed to complete his game before escaping the room for his tea.

G. You seem to have had a lot of cast members... why do some only stay for a season? Do they get dropped? How does the process of recruiting/dropping work?

Months prior to the filming of an RPG, it is announced in the community that plans are being made to film a season and requests are made for interested parties to get in touch with the organisers. People who don't remain involved for more than one or two seasons usually drop out through their own choice, often due to other commitments. Anyone who is interested can get involved and it doesn't just have to be for the filming, effort is always made to ensure everyone is given the ability to contribute in any way they see fit. Places are usually limited due to accommodation constraints but there's always been room made for new people to the production to get involved. Due to the large number of people with on-screen roles in the last production it had become necessary to reduce the number of roles per person to one each. There is however a desperate need for more people with technical know-how.

H. How do you write for the RPG?

This has varied from season-to-season. Initially (up to and including season 4) all writing and development was conducted solely by Adam Battersby. The entire RPG was fully-scripted with specific characters assigned to the cast. As nobody was an actor by trade, this meant the employment of such tools as whiteboards off-camera, or cleverly-secreted scripts on-set, was required.

For season 5 the process was changed significantly, mainly due to a delayed start in filming. The group brainstormed basic outlines for quest storylines and general plots. From these plots, outlines for character encounters and spyglass scenes would be developed during filming by those cast members wo were not currently required on-set. These allowed for the actor to memorise only the deed rather than the words i.e. when on camera they had to get a particular message across, or react in a particular way, rather than say specific words. This element of improvisation was somewhat similar in nature to the way *Knightmare* was filmed for real. This method was found to be more effective and efficient, and was adopted permanently for later seasons.

Season 6 adopted a similar style to season 5, with some Quests pre-planned to allow filming to begin immediately. However the lack of pre-planning and complications of the situation ultimately made the system less effective than previously. Later in the filming, this issue was resolved and filming was completed, though the production only came to a close at 5am on the last morning of the film shoot!

Season 7 saw the introduction of an online data system accessible by RPG members called the Quest Builder. This was a collaboration system developed by David Forester that enabled everyone to submit ideas for stories and scenes. These ideas could then be pieced together and modified by others to form complete levels of the dungeon. The levels would in turn be pieced together to form a full quest. It also provided some statistical information to ensure balance and fairness. This meant that none of the cast was left out and all had a say in how stories developed. Twenty quests in all were written, each with three levels containing five encounters or spyglass events. This was then scheduled according to the time available to ensure everything was conducted efficiently and tidily, and ultimately proved a resounding success.

Since there are no plans at present to produce an eighth season of the RPG, there is no definitive system assigned to the writing process, but one could conclude, given its success, that the Quest Builder would be used for it again.

I. How do you recruit teams?

Currently, no teams are being recruited to play the RPG. Previously it was done by e-mailing Adam Battersby, who would then inform the teams when they should expect to be required to play. If a season is going to go ahead, then usually details will appear on *Interactive Knightmare* (see question **5 D ii)**) . Anyone who does apply though will need to ensure they're

available for when the game is played, and not only for their own quest, but also for the quest of the team playing before them; the moment of a dungeoneer's death is never certain in advance, and so the next team has to be on standby at a few moments' notice.

J.   i) Where does the group stay during filming, and how do you organise the accommodation?

The location of the accommodation has changed from year to year. To begin with, Adam Battersby took control of the organisation, and the group stayed at the Manchester Youth Hostel Association for seasons 3 and 4. Adam once again had control for the fifth season, and the group stayed at a place called Copperheads. For season 6, Kieran O'Brien and David Forester took control of organising, and the group stayed at the Hatters Hostel, again in Manchester. Kieran and Forester offered their services again for season 7, organising accommodation for twenty-two people at a YHA in Alstonefield.

The methods of organising the accommodation were fairly simple. To begin with, a suitable place would be selected, and those interested would be asked to send in their payment. It really wasn't too much more complicated than that. For seasons 6 and 7, a poll was set up on the RPG forum for people to suggest places to stay, and then vote on what they find to be the most popular for them. A primary booking would then be made at the place that won the poll, and all those currently attending would be asked to send a payment by a specified deadline, by either cheque or bank transfer, and then a payment would be made by the organiser to the chosen place. Scouting is also an essential part of finding the perfect place for the RPG group to stay and film; things such as space, cost and location all have to be taken into account. For season 6, the Hatters was scouted by Kieran O'Brien and Martin Odoni (with fallback options researched also). For season 7, Kieran and Forester scouted the accommodation, this time actually spending a night in prospective locations beforehand.

Unfortunately, organising the RPG is very stressful for the people involved, as people will drop out of the shoot before filming begins. It provides a headache for any organiser when a person can't or won't keep to their commitments, as once someone drops out, it requires the organiser, firstly, to make sure a refund is given, and secondly, to find a replacement actor or actress; essential for season 7 where a specific amount of beds had to be filled. Typically if a place became available, it was advertised on the *Interactive* homepage.

ii) Where is the RPG filmed?

The RPG is a bit of a 'wandering player', so to speak, and has been filmed in numerous places over the years. Here's a quick list; -

> *Seasons 3-5: Adelphi Building Basement, Salford University.*
> *Season 6: The Hatters Youth Hostel, Manchester.*
> *Season 7: Alstonefield YHA, Staffordshire.*

K. What does the future hold for the *KMRPG*?

As mentioned above, there are no plans to continue the RPG at the time of writing. However if you've knowledge in video editing, visual effects, or using chromakey software, then you could definitely assist in at least bringing one the seasons that have already been filmed to the Internet. Also, any multimedia programmers - especially those who know either Java, OpenGL or SDL (*not* just people who can use game creator packages) - would be a very handy addition. Furthermore, 3D modellers and artists are in great demand. Musicians too for background ambience and incidental music and special effects - oh, and development of a theme tune of course - would be most welcome too.

So in theory if enough people with the above skills were to get involved, the RPG could still get back on its feet.

Kieran O'Brien & David Forester, May 2006.

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Q13. A. *KMRAmDram*? Is that that some kind of military parade for sheep or something?

Not even close. It's actually the name of an amateur acting group, and is short for *Knightmare Radio Amateur Dramatics*. (If there's anyone out there who can think of a better name, by the way, your recommendations will be welcome.)

In March 2005, a small group of *Knightmare* fans, myself among them, gathered together at the SAE institute in Glasgow to record an audio play (a *KMAP* for short) as a tribute to the series. It was partly meant as an extra bit of promotional material for *Knightmare VR*, but due to severe delays in pre-production - the script had been written as far back as June 2004 - by the time the play was recorded *Televirtual* had already shelved *KMVR*. There were even longer delays in post-production as well, but the play was finally given its first release in November 2006, and can be downloaded for free from several locations on the Internet. (See **C i)**.)

The play was titled *Famous For Retreating*, which in case you're wondering is a part-quote from season 5 of *Knightmare*. (Again, suggestions for a better title may be considered, even though it's a bit late in the day to change it now.)

B. A few questions about creativity...
i) Who played which character in the play?

The cast was painfully small, because many people had to drop out due to other commitments, some at very short notice. The upshot was that much of the remaining cast had to 'double up' i.e. perform more than one role, which certainly didn't help matters. Here's the full cast list though; -

Treguard - Russell 'Ruzl' Odoni

Stiletta	-	Eleanor Booth-Davey
Lord Fear/Honesty Bartram	-	Martin Odoni
Majida/Heggatty	-	Sue McPherson
Greystagg/Elita	-	Clare Speedie
Merlin/Skarkill	-	Alec Downs
Mellisandre/Lady Brinkatore	-	Vivienne Traill.

ii) Who wrote the script?

I did. It was me. Okay? I did it. I'm responsible. Me. It was my fault. Is that *abundantly* clear yet? Yeah, it was rubbish, and it was all down to me. Fine. I'll never live it down, I know, I'm deeply ashamed of it and I will never write anything so badly again. Hell, I shouldn't bother writing *anything* again as long as I live. In fact, I'm not sure why I'm even bothering to write this now…

Cue a tidal wave of hysterical paranoid tears.

Actually, the play was fairly good, even if I say so myself. (If you don't agree with that, I should mention that Ricky Temple wrote a couple of the scenes as well, so if I'm in a cowardly mood, I can always blame him as a very unconvincing get-out.) The story probably isn't everyone's cup of tea of course, but it's not bad either.

iii) Who produced it?

Andrew 'Snowcat' Kenny was director, joint-producer and post-production mixer/editor for the CD release, while I did post-production work on the MP3 version (see **C iii)**). Studio production was principally done by Neal Sawyer, resident Dubliner of the staff at the Glasgow SAE. He deserves a special mention at this point, as it's fair to say that the play would've been a rank disaster without Neal's ruthless determination to get every last bit of nitty-gritty work done right. In fact, Neal's tireless efforts during the recording of the play are all the more impressive when you consider that he'd never heard of *Knightmare* until several minutes *after* he'd joined us at the studio. He cheerfully admits that to this day he's never really understood the script at all. To do such a fine job voluntarily is remarkable enough, but to do so when you don't even have a clue what the people around you are trying to achieve is worthy of an Academy award.

iv) Who did the music and FX?

Most of the music and sound effects were supplied by various online sound-publishing companies, of which there were four main contributors; one called *Soundrangers*, another called *Royalty-Free Music*, a compilation forum called *Freesound*, and finally *Soundtrax*. The identities of the composers for many of the individual pieces are sadly restricted, so I know no better than you do who they are.

v) What's the title/credit music on the *KMAP* called?

The title music is called *Hidden*, and was composed by an American

called Matthew Oates, while the credit music is called *Celestial Embrace*, which is one of the tracks whose composer is anonymous (see **iv**). If you don't think the track-names sound terribly in-keeping with the content of the play, well you're probably right, but the tracks themselves capture the right kind of mood. The tracks are used under licence from *Soundtrax* and *Soundrangers* respectively.

vi) And who did the artwork for the website?

Rob Lo and Tracey Lineker drew the main cover design, which is sometimes nicknamed *Bealwit Moonscape*. NOTE: The black dragon, Bealwit, from the first *Knightmare* novella (see **4B**) does not actually appear in the play, which also has nothing whatsoever to do with the moon, nor is it set at night or near the sea. Again, if you feel this makes the cover seem a little irrelevant… well, just humour us, okay?

Sue McPherson drew the title banner with the evil transitional eyes of Aedric/Lord Fear. (This is a picture I nickname *Aedric's Fear*, though Sue hasn't named it herself.) She then modified Rob and Tracey's basic cover somewhat to incorporate bits that appear in the title header.

vii) Since when were Merlin, Greystagg and Elita Scottish?

Since Alec Downs, native of Glasgow, and Clare Speedie, native of Stirling, were cast in the roles. Fussing about accents can often take concentration off the rest of a performance, especially when you don't have much acting experience. So it was decided early on that it would be best to deal with the problem of accents by just ignoring it. (See **ix)** for greater elaboration.)

On the subject of Merlin's voice, it's also worth mentioning that the Dark Ages figure Merlin is based on, Leilocen, was a native of the Forest of Caledon, which was somewhere near the modern border between Scotland and England. Therefore, giving him a Scottish accent is at least as legitimate as doing a John Woodnutt impression.

viii) Why does Treguard sound like he has a sore throat?

Because he *does* have a sore throat. Russell (or 'Ruzl' as he insists his name be spelt because it allows him to put the minimum effort into writing his signature) had heavy 'flu during recording. It meant his nose was blocked, he was coughing incessantly, and his voice was hoarse as he did his lines.

This wasn't necessarily a bad thing, it should be said, as it added an extra level of gruff 'other-worldliness' to the role, which is very appropriate for Treguard; especially the more sinister Treguard of *Knightmare's* early years, which was the incarnation Ruzl was attempting to portray. At the same time, it must also be admitted that the performance was pretty remote from *anything* Hugo Myatt did.

ix) The characters in general aren't quite what they were in the TV series…

Well no, the characters aren't exactly their old selves, but then they wouldn't be.

If we could have afforded to, we'd have eagerly hired Hugo Myatt, Mark Knight, Joanne Heywood et al to join us in Glasgow to reprise their old

roles. Problem is, we *couldn't* afford to. (We could scarcely afford the accommodation, let alone to hire professional actors.) So we had to do the acting ourselves. None of us had the same voices as the actors/actresses we were 'taking over from', which left us with a problem, and there were two ways of trying to surmount it.

On the one hand, we could have simply tried to mimick the TV voices of the characters as best we could, to ape the performances of the original cast. The downside of that approach, however, is that, by definition, we would simply have been parodying the series, and for all its ironic tone, *FFR* is supposed to be a drama.

Alternatively, we could try to perform the characters to the best of *our own* understanding, adapting them to our own strengths, instead of aiming for the understanding and strengths of the TV cast. The result is that, yes, Treguard sounds more like Captain Jack Sparrow than Hugo Myatt (see **viii)**), Lord Fear is suffering from occasional Dave Prowse-syndrome ("*Oo-ar*, the Force be strong with thiss'un, so it be..."), Merlin sounds more like a Glaswegian Slartibartfast than John Woodnutt, and Elita has mysteriously developed a Stirlingshire accent (see **vii)**).

But we were never going to sound the same as the original cast anyway - at best we'd have sounded like we were taking the mickey out of them - so we agreed it was best we simply play the characters in a way that we were comfortable with. So yes, the style of the performances takes some getting used to, but we all firmly believe the play would have suffered if we'd tried the other approach.

x) *What* did Lord Fear call Greystagg early in the play?

(I recently altered my forum signature in response to this question!)

Early in the play there's a scene where Lord Fear and Greystagg are arguing remotely via 'communicators'. Greystagg comes up with a rather cutting insult, causing Fear to react angrily, and a couple of listeners have expressed shocked confusion at his response. Their assumption is that Fear retorts by calling her "Grey-whore!"

Now the language does veer close to the mark once or twice in the play - although no more so than the series did on some occasions (see **9 A**) - but there are no outright swearwords or explicit insults, not even in this scene. So just to make it absolutely clear, Lord Fear actually addresses Greystagg as "Grey-*horse*". Still not a nice thing to say of course, but a bit less 18-certificate.

C.   i) How is the play distributed?

At present, it's available as an MP3 for free download off the Internet from various sources (see **iv)**), the main one being a webspace run by David Forester that he has kindly loaned to us. However, plans are proceeding to release it in a much higher-quality Compact Disc form. Either form will be distributed completely freely. If you'd like to hear the CD version, just let us know at kmramdram@tiscali.co.uk, and once the mixing is done, we'll burn a copy and send it to you by snail mail as soon as possible. (Remember when you contact us to give us a postal address we can send the CD to!)

ii) Right, and how much will the CD version cost me?

Ten times as much as the MP3 version.

To clarify; the *KMAP* is an entirely voluntary project. Not a penny will be taken by the cast or crew from anyone receiving it *in either form*. If you have a copy of it, you are free - indeed you are encouraged - to copy and distribute it to anyone and everyone who you think would like it. Reviving the profile of *Knightmare* is an aim for the wider fan community, and giving it a free advert like this seems a good way to do it.

By the way, this free-distribution rule works both ways. If someone offers you a copy of it in exchange for money, say no. Any attempt to profit from it may *possibly* be legal (see question **D iii)** for an explanation why), but there's no need to pay for it when you can very easily, and legitimately, get a copy for nothing.

iii) You say the CD release is in a higher quality format than the MP3 version. Are there any other differences between them?

Yes. Although both versions use the same voice recordings, the CD version is to be a completely different mix, with a great many different sound effects, and more sophisticated voice treatments.

At the outset, Snowcat was going to do the mixing for both versions - in fact, the original idea was that the MP3 would just be a lower-quality copy of the CD mix - but other commitments meant he fell behind. So I did a mix of my own so that at least we could have a fairly early release in MP3 form. Having far less experience in sound engineering and rather more limited tools to work with than Snowcat, the sound field I created for the MP3 is considerably less tidy or authentic than the CD release is likely to be; hence the MP3 is sometimes referred to as 'the prototype'. I also had to compress the files to a smaller size to make them easier for people to download, which further lessened the sound quality.

The MP3 is cut up into five files. Therefore, the start and end of each 'instalment' of the play features a couple of bars of the title and credit music respectively. These extra bars of music will not be included in the CD version, which will instead tell the play in one go. There are set to be numerous other very minor differences, mainly in dialogue editing.

A trailer was made for the MP3 release, around 3 minutes in length, composed mainly of a montage of short dialogue-clips lifted from the play, to the accompaniment of *Hidden* (see **B v)**).

iv) Where can I download the MP3 version of the play from?

There are several websites and a bittorrent with the MP3 version, including the trailer, available on them. Go to http://www.kmramdram.co.uk/ to find the primary links, and more information about the play. (The links are also mirrored on *Interactive Knightmare*. See **5 A ii)**.)

D. A few formal details...
i) Is the story in the play official?

No. The situation with the *KMAP* is much the same as with the *KMRPG*;

Tim Child did give us informal approval to release it, but it is categorically not part of official *Knightmare* continuity.

ii) Is it part of *KMRPG* continuity?

Again no. A few of the *KMRAmDrammers* (for want of a better name) have also worked on the RPG (see question **12**), but this is a separate project, which is why there is no reference in it to any RPG-only characters, and events in it don't really mesh with those in the RPG either.

iii) Was it legal to make the *KMAP*?

Quite simply, yes. (To a different extent by the way, this also applies to the *KMRPG* - see question **12**.) We were actually very thorough about the legal points, perhaps excessively so; -

If you listen to the play, study the script, or even examine the inlay of the CD-case when the time comes, you'll notice that there's no reference made to the series title at all. (The nearest there is to that are a few mentions of 'Knightmare Castle' in the dialogue.) Even the website offers no explicit reference to *Knightmare*, except on the links page where it was unavoidable. Full intellectual credit for creation of the characters and scenario was given to Tim Child. With the exception of the sound of the goblin horn, none of the music or sound effects were 'lifted' from the series - or any other series for that matter. The sounds we didn't generate for ourselves were used under licence (some of them under *paid* licence, he added with an impoverished grimace). Clearance from Tim Child to proceed was obtained before the play was distributed, and, above all, not a penny has been taken by the cast or crew in profit, or even to cover costs.

In short, we went to enormous pains to avoid treading on any statutory toes.

All the above details mean that, because it wouldn't be cashing in on the trade name of *Knightmare*, it might even be legal to make money from distributing it. I'm not sure about that though, and I'm not going to risk trying it just to find out.

E. Will there be another *KM* audio play?

Well, the team-members have discussed this several times and we're all in favour of making another one in principle, but nothing's certain as yet. For one thing, we need far more cast members - ones who can firmly commit time to making it - to avoid a repeat of the serious organisation problems that nearly caused recording of the first play to be called off. We also need to hire a new studio; we were lucky first time around in that Snowcat was a student at the SAE Institute in Glasgow and therefore we could borrow the studios there, some of the best-equipped in Europe, free of charge. This is no longer the case, as Snowcat has now completed his course there. There are loads of other studios available of course, but most of them are very pricey for a bunch of amateurs to hire when they're paying out of their own pockets. And those studios that are cheaper tend to be modestly equipped.

But above all, it depends on whether there's enough demand from *Knightmare* fans in general for more. (At the time of writing, it has to be said, we haven't exactly been inundated with requests for another play.)

Whilst I can't promise anything, I can say that I have several scripts in progress that could be used for a second play if everything else falls into place. Also of course, there's nothing to stop other groups from making *KMAP*s of their own. So never say never.

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Appendix: AND NOW… WELCOME TO ANORAKS' CORNER!!!

This is the section for those of you who just *can't* put that rucksack down or pull your jeans on without ironing creases into them first. It's the realm of the anorak… it's stats time!

All sorts of arcane, pointless, bizarre, or just plain dull information can be found here, from logistics to useless trivia. Any vaguely consistent running theme in the history of the TV series of *Knightmare* will be welcomed in this list, and any additions that can be suggested will be included in later updates.

How many episodes were there in each season of *Knightmare*?

There were eight episodes in the first season. The second season was extended to sixteen episodes, and that would remain the fixed length until season 6, which was reduced to fifteen episodes. This was also the length of season 7. The final season, due to behind-the-scenes decisions at *CITV*, was just ten episodes in length.

DID YOU KNOW…?

Every season started in the first half of September, which means that seasons 1 and 8 were the only ones that didn't end in the run-up to Christmas.

How many times did Treguard say, "Oooooh nasty…"

- overall?	Thirty-three.
- in each season?	
S1	Twice.
S2	Again, only twice.
S3	Nine.
S4	Not even once, surprisingly.
S5	Seven.
S6	Five.
S7	Three.
S8	Five.

DID YOU KNOW...?
Treguard's usual reaction to a dungeoneer's death in the early years was not "Ooooh nasty!" but "Oh dear, what a pity!" However, he never said it after season 4.

How many times did Treguard say, "Oh dear, what a pity"?
Ten.

How many times did Treguard say, "There is no turning back"?
Twenty-two.

DID YOU KNOW...?
Treguard only restated the familiar old adage about "no turning back" once in season 3 and he never said it again afterwards. However, Pickle, apparently in one of his smarty-pants moods, quoted it back at him once in season 6, and Treguard did say something very similar to Majida in season 8; "The only way is onward... turn back and you'll head into even greater danger..."

How many quests ended with a dungeoneer falling to their doom?
Nineteen.

How many times did Merlin forget his own name?
Three, including twice in one scene.

How many times did Mogdred boom at someone to 'Quail!'?
Five.

DID YOU KNOW...?
Paul Valentine got his voices muddled up on his second appearance as Sylvester Hands. He started well enough but halfway through the scene Hands was attacked by Pixel the Pixie, and in the confusion that followed, Valentine inadvertently switched to his usual Motley characterisation.

How many pond-life references did Lord Fear use to address or describe Lissard?
Seventeen.

How many people criticised Lissard's bad breath?
Lord Fear kept on making jokes about it, but in fact he was one of only two people ever to complain about it directly (the other being Maldame).

DID YOU KNOW…?
The most Lissard has addressed Lord Fear as 'Lord-ness' in a single scene was a spyglass sequence in season 8, when team 2 were in level 3. He addressed him by the title eight times in the sequence.

How many times did Lissard address Lord Fear as 'Lord-ness'?
Believe it or not, he was out on ninety-nine. Just one more spyglass scene and he'd surely have completed his century…

DID YOU KNOW…?
As everyone knows, Mr Grimwold the ogre appeared in seasons 3 and 4, while his wife the crone only appeared in season 3 (it sounded like she was eaten alive by their giant pet, Festus, on her final appearance). Often overlooked however is Young Grimwold, a smaller ogre who appeared in season 6 as Julius Scaramonger's servant. What relation he was to the aforementioned ogre and crone was never clearly established, but the resemblance is such that most fans assume he was their son.

How many times did Elita call someone a 'faceache'?
Fifteen.

DID YOU KNOW…?
Elita called the eighth dungeoneer of season 5 'faceache' four times, the most she ever used her favourite insult in a single scene.

How many different people did Cedric call a 'dogsbottom'?
Although he used the term on many more occasions, he only called five different people 'dogsbottom'.

DID YOU KNOW…?
Cedric's longest appearance in a single scene was the famous 'Duel-by-Insults' against Folly in season 1. The scene lasted some six minutes, and given both the length and nature of it, it's surprising to note that he didn't use his pet 'dogsbottom' taunt in it even once.

How many male dungeoneers were there?
Forty-nine.

How many female dungeoneers were there?
Twenty.

How many all-male teams were there?
Forty-two.

DID YOU KNOW...?
Team 6 in season 7 was the only all-female quest to win Knightmare. The only mixed team to win was team 10 from season 2.

How many all-female teams were there?
Seventeen.

DID YOU KNOW...?
No all-female team managed to reach level 3 of the dungeon until quest 6 in season 6.

How many mixed teams were there?
Ten.

How many dungeoneers died in level 1?
Thirteen.

How many dungeoneers died in level 2?
Twenty-eight.

How many dungeoneers died in level 3?
Fourteen.

DID YOU KNOW...?
Three of the first four teams in season 3 got a perfect score against the wall monsters in the level 1 clue rooms. After that however, no team managed to get a perfect score against a wall monster until the debut appearance of the Brollachan in season 7.

How many perfect-score riddle contests were there...
- **in total?** Thirty-two.
- **against Olgarth?** Two.
- **against Granitas?** Three.
- **against Igneous?** Three.
- **against Golgarach?** Two.
- **against the Brangwen?** One.
- **against Door-is?** Four.
- **against Door-kis?** Two.
- **against Door-reen?** One.
- **against Oakley?** Four (including a one-riddle challenge in season 5).
- **against Cedric?** Two.
- **against the Brollachan?** Six.
- **against Snapper Jack?** Two.

DID YOU KNOW...?
Cedric never gave up a perfect score in three riddle challenges in season 1. He then put up a further three riddle challenges in season 2 but gave up a perfect score in two of them.

How many spyglass sequences were there...
- **in total?** Sixty-six.
- **in season 5?** Sixteen.
- **in season 6?** Seventeen.
- **in season 7?** Eighteen.
- **in season 8?** Fifteen (including the last ever scene in *Knightmare*).

How many people were found trapped in the stocks/pillory, and how many times each?
Seven different characters were found trapped in the stocks or the pillory throughout the history of the series. They were; Merlin and Gundrada three times each, Motley and Mellisandre twice each, and Ridolfo, Fidjit and Romahna once apiece.

DID YOU KNOW...?
There was a grand total of approximately two thousand two hundred and thirty-nine minutes of questing time in the eight seasons of Knightmare*.*

Which quest was the longest of all time?

Team 7 of season 7 had the longest quest of all time at sixty-three minutes. This is presumably because of the relentless gob of Barry 'Smart-bottom-who-can't-use-one-word-when-two-hundred-and-seventy-six-will-do' Thorne stringing things out a lot. (Apparently an awful lot of his natter had to be cut out of the final edit because of broadcast-time constraints, so heaven knows how long his quest *really* was…)

Incidentally, the second longest adventure was team 4 from season 5, another winner. At sixty-two minutes, theirs was the first quest to last over an hour.

DID YOU KNOW…?

Team 3 from season 5's adventure was probably the slowest of all time. It lasted fifty-seven minutes and wasn't even a winner; in fact the dungeoneer fell very early in level 3. Interestingly, the adventure was nearly twenty minutes longer *than the first ever winner (back in season two), and furthermore, the next season 5 quest was another winner but was only five minutes longer.*

Which quest was the shortest of all time?

At ten minutes in length, the arch-bumblers of team 6 in season 2 had the shortest adventure of all time, and they were lucky to get that long - see next segment. (NOTE: It had previously been assumed that the final team from season 8 had the shortest quest at eight minutes, but I've re-checked it and their abortive journey was approximately thirteen minutes long.)

DID YOU KNOW…?

Fans frequently complain about suspected 'fixes' i.e. quests that are made to succeed by the producers when the team have stuffed up. Most of these conspiracy theories are probably nonsense, but there were several genuine cases that have since been confirmed by Tim Child. One in season 2 involved the aforementioned team 6, who were arguably the worst team in history. They were the only ones ever to fail all three riddles in a challenge against a wall monster, and wall monsters were supposed to consume a dungeoneer whenever that happened. The problem was their quest had only lasted around four or five minutes.

To give them a chance to last a bit longer a cavern scene was recorded and pasted into their adventure as a new third room (in season two the third room in a quest was usually a clue room, but on this occasion it became the fourth). This extra scene allowed the team to gain a spell called TRUTH. Then, part of the clue room scene was refilmed with the team casting the spell as a substitute for a correct answer. (So if you've

ever watched that quest and thought it was all a bit convenient that they managed to get such a generic spell, well now you know why!)

As it was, the team still only had a score of one, and in any case they continued making mistakes until their quest ended after a paltry ten minutes.

Another definite fix was the first team of season 3, who by my best calculations only lasted about seven minutes into their adventure before their dungeoneer fell to his death when he stepped off the 'tongue-bridge' in the Serpent's Mouth cavern (see question **1 B iii) 20** for a description)*. The next team had still to arrive at the studio, and so, not wanting to waste precious recording time, the production crew allowed team 1 to re-do the crossing. (If you watch the scene closely you may notice the dungeoneer obeying one or two instructions slightly before his advisors give voice to them; again, now you know why!)*

Once more, the producers' generosity was wasted, as the team only lasted a few more minutes before the dungeoneer was directed off the path in the Vale of Vanburn (see question **1 iii) 6**) *and his quest ended in quicksand.*

What was the average time span for a quest?
Well maths was never my strongest subject, but by my calculations it was thirty-two minutes and thirty point zero one seconds.

DID YOU KNOW...?
The only ever member of the credited cast to have a double-barrelled surname was Juliet Henry-Massey, who played Aesandre and Gwendoline in season 5.

How many different methods to get from one level to the next were used?
Seven. Wellways, mine-cart ride (see question **1 B iv) 25**), Smirkenorff, descender, trapdoors, an enchanted ship voyage (in season 6), and the relatively dreary staircases (one from season 4 and another from season 7).

DID YOU KNOW...?
Although he is usually referred to these days as a 'Technomancer', the term was never used to describe Lord Fear in the series itself; the term 'Technosorcerer' was the only one used. It's not entirely clear where the term 'Technomancer' originated; possibly from Broadsword TV*'s concept work for* The Sword of the Sorcerer, *a proposed successor series to* Knightmare *whose development never got past the early negotiating stage. (The term 'Technomancy' was used a few times in season 8, mind, so 'Technomancer' could be seen as a natural progression from that.)*

The expression was used quite frequently by fans for some years, and was eventually used by the Anglia TV *website for the title of a planned online* Knightmare *tribute game called* Shadow Of The Technomancer*. This* also *ended up never getting released; Technosorcery is clearly as much a curse for those who create it as those who must fight against it.*

How many dungeoneers flew on Smirkenorff?
Nineteen.

How many times did Smirkenorff accept a dragon mint as fare for travel?
Perhaps surprisingly, only twice. More often he was paid in firestones, a total of which I may include in the next update.

DID YOU KNOW…?
The common assumption is that there were four possible quest objects in Knightmare*; The Sword of Freedom, The Crowning Glory, The Shield of Justice, and The Cup That Heals. In fact there were five others (among them the objects of the first two successful quests). In the early years it was also possible to seek The Chalice, The Talisman (won by Julian Smith in season 2), The Sword of Justice, and The Shield of Liberty, or to seek to Free The Maid (achieved by Mark Wickson, again in season 2).*

How many times did Smirkenorff describe a fare as "*Most* acceptable"?
Four.

DID YOU KNOW…?
Smirkenorff's flight scenes sometimes contained a glaring visual error; the dragon cast the shadow of a helicopter on the ground! It was also frequently easy to see that the dragon wasn't flying from one location to the next, but instead would take off, fly round the surrounding area in a broad circle, and land back exactly where he took off from. In any case, the flying scenes were not very popular with the audience and were dropped altogether from season 8 (except for a cameo over the credits of the final episode).

What's the largest number of characters any one actor has played in *Knightmare*?
If you only include on-screen appearances it was four, a total shared by two performers. Mark Knight played Lord Fear, Rothberry the Apothecary, Ah Wok and Sir Hugh de Wittless. Paul Valentine played

Motley the Jester, Sylvester Hands the Thief, Fidjit the Lockmaster, and the Boatman of Dunswater.

If you include both on-screen and voice-only characters the total was five, again shared by two actors. Clifford Norgate played Hordriss the Confuser, Owen the dragon, Oakley the Tree Troll, Smirkenorff the (other) dragon, and the Dreadnort. Edmund Dehn played Gumboil the Guard, Igneous the Wall Monster, Mugg the Gargoyle, the Giant and the Automatum.

DID YOU KNOW...?

In season 5, the fifth team got away with a serious mistake when they cast a crucial spell at the wrong moment. They were given a spell called BAG, with which they were meant to capture the magically-disembodied voice of Elita the cavern elf. Instead, they tried to cast it on a skull-haunting, but the production crew obviously weren't ready for it and nothing happened at all. As such the team were able to keep the spell and use it again when they found Elita's lost voice.

How many different spells were cast throughout the series, and what were their names?

(For the purposes of this list, I'm not counting duplicate spells or spells that were given out but ended up not getting cast at all, and I'm also only counting spells that were cast or dismissed using the standard chants - see question **7 A**. The PICKMEUP spell used in the *Knightmare VR* pilot - see question **1 E ii)** - is also overlooked here as that wasn't in the series itself.) There was a total of seventy-one different spells cast throughout the eight seasons. They were; -

ANVIL	FREE	SHROUD
ARKEN	FREEZE	SIGHT
AVAUNT	FREEZER	SLEEP
BAG	GHOST	SLOW
BEAUTY	GRIP	SMALL
BIG	GROWME	SPEED
CHANGE	HEROES	SPLASH
CURE	HOME	SPRINT
DANCE	INSIGHT	SUN
DARK	ITCH	SWORD
DASH	JOKE	TALISMAN
DISMISS	LANTERN	TINY
DOWN	LITTLE	TOAD
DRINK	LOOK	TRANSFORM
ENERGY	MOUSE	TRICK
ERG	OPPOSITE	TRUTH
ESCAPE	PIXEL	TWIST
FALGO	RESTORE	UNITE

FILLET	RETURN	VISOR
FIRE	RUN	WEB
FLARE	RUST	WELL
FLIGHT	SAMURAI	VIM
FLOAT	SESAME	[KNOT]
FOUL	SHADE	

DID YOU KNOW...?

Igneous the wall monster, famous for his roaring bad temper and loud shrieking cries of "FALSEHOOD!", never in fact said it until he tested team 6 of season 2; he didn't appear in season 1 at all, and both of his previous riddle challenges in season 2 were met with a perfect score. Ironic then that team 6 didn't answer any of his riddles correctly at all.

How many times did Mrs. Grimwold call someone 'dearie'?

(Could this be the Question that Douglas Adams was pondering for all those years?) Forty-two.

DID YOU KNOW...?

In one scene in season 3, Mrs Grimwold addressed the dungeoneer from team 9 'dearie' a record eleven times. At one stage in the scene she said it three times in as many seconds.

Which region of the country is the best at *Knightmare*?

This is a very tricky one to calculate, and the system I've come up with to attempt it has a few rules of thumb in it, so please don't assume that what's here is holy writ or anything.

Firstly I decided to work this out county-by-county (more or less), as it's tricky to decide where the boundaries between areas should be otherwise. I calculated the performances of all sixty-nine teams in *Knightmare's* history entirely on how far their quest progressed before it ended, rather than taking into account other details along the way. From this I was able to allocate points on the following scale; -

A team gets one point for reaching the final room/chamber/location of level 1. They receive a further point for getting past the halfway mark of level 2, and one more for reaching the final location of level 2. A further point is awarded to any team getting more than halfway through level 3, and a grand total of five points is the reward for winning outright.

I then totalled up the results from each county that had been represented in *Knightmare* and calculated the mean score from there. A bonus point was added to the mean score of every county that had any winners, while half a point was taken away from the mean score of any county that was represented by fewer than three teams. Here's what I

found…

The best county at *Knightmare* was apparently Oxfordshire. It was only represented twice, both in season 2, but remarkably both quests were winners. Joint second best were Staffordshire and Worcestershire. Each was represented only once, so they had to be slightly downgraded accordingly, but both quests succeeded. Third most successful was Devon. It was only represented three times but also had two winners, even though the third team failed to get to the end of level 1.

The worst county assessment on *Knightmare* by the way was for Surrey. Only one quest came from there and it also failed even to get to the end of level 1.

DID YOU KNOW…?

London was represented by six different teams throughout the history of Knightmare. *However, none of them appeared in the first three seasons, the first being team 5 of season 4. When the dungeoneer in question revealed their hometown, Treguard responded with the dreary quip, "Capital!"*

How many dungeoneers died on the Corridor of Blades?

Considering it was used in five different seasons, and is often hailed by fans as the greatest quest-killer of all time, it may surprise people to learn that only four dungeoneers were struck down in the Blades Corridor.

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FAQ Revision History

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