sinclair
ZX81

ZX ADVENTURE

The Game

You are Wilhart, a disgraced guard at Castle Freygal. After an all-night poker game with the Hoovian longbeards, from the Grey Castle at Wengel, you are banished from the castle, and told to find the Chalice of Sirdat, that you gambled away on that fateful night.

Use either the cursor keys (5,6,7,8) or Z, X, K, and M to move yourself (depicted by 'I') around the map to find the chalice (the 'Y') and return it to the throne room of your castle, to redeem yourself. You can carry only one object at a time, so be mindful of which you choose. The sword ('T') will slay the dragons, and the keys ('1', '2', or '3') will unlock any door or padlock with the equivalent number (inverse '1', '2', or '3'). If you find any treasure along the way ('$') then you can safely pocket them, without incurring the wrath of the king. There is also a time limit, so be quick!

The History

Back in May 2015, I spent an evening watching retro game documentaries - "From Bedroom to Billions", "Atari:Game Over", and "Video Games-The Movie.", all good in their own way, with individual quirks, issues, and omissions. (Disclaimer: I'm a computer historian!) The one thing I took away from the evening was how long ago it all seemed! What was worse, is that I've been in the industry for longer than many of the participants, and so I felt really really old :(I started programming in 1983, and have developed on almost every console, home micro, and online service since then. But I haven't done it recently......which is when I thought about making Adventure (1979 from Atari) on the ZX Spectrum (1982 from Sinclair.) It was so crazy, it just might work. (At least I knew that, technically, it would be feasible. And that even I could manage the graphics.)

My plan was to remake Adventure as if it were an unlicensed port of the original. Which, in essence, it is! I was quite 'method' by my approach, and reasoned about what trade-offs a developer working in 1982 might make to get the product out in this period. My dragons, for example, are only 1 character high, instead of 2. I wondered how much extra detail the developers of that time would add to the map - not a lot, I thought! I also considered that a lot of ZX Spectrum developers would have just come from the ZX81 and so would do little more than colour the ink of a tile!

Fast forward to 2020, and I thought that someone might be interested in publishing a cassette version of the game. Seeing as it was freely available online I offered to write a ZX81 version to bundle with the Spectrum game, to sweeten the deal. Then CV19 happened. And everything stopped. It took me until October before I had the motivation to start porting the game to the ZX81. Piece by piece, I replaced the 'engine' components for drawing graphics, and accepting input, with ZX81-friendly code. I replaced the UDG graphics with single characters, and re-worked the title screens to fit the ZX81 display.

Writing the ZX81 version look a lot longer than planned, because I'd made assumptions about the IX and IY registers, which didn't cause issues on the Spectrum, but did here. However, because I'd spent so long re-writing those routines, I didn't want all that work going to waste on a 'B-side' or 'just a port'.

So, I added several new rooms, enhanced individual levels, created some transition wipe effects, and changed the main game design a touch.

The Developer

My name is Steven Goodwin. And I'm a geek. The Marquis de Geek! My first machine was a Sinclair ZX81, bought as part of the £45 bundle deal in 1983. (It consisted of a ZX81, 16K RAM pack, and two arbitrary software titles. In my case they were Space Raiders and VU-File.) Technically speaking, it was my family's first machine, but it didn't take long before it was commandeered into a development machine where I learned BASIC and Z80 machine code which, because I couldn't afford an assembler, was created by hand! Other machines followed, but there was always something special about that little black cheese wedge!

Despite such humble upbringings (or maybe because of it!), I went on to become a professional developer, writing games for the PC, Sony PlayStation, Xbox, and Gamecube along with numerous social and mobile titles. I've also architected and written back-end systems for multiple companies, creating infrastructure that is as far away from my Sinclair-led beginnings as can be imagined!   More recently, I've written the EMF emulation system (https://em.ulat.es) which builds emulators from text descriptions of the machines. I used that development environment to write this game.

The Dedication

For Mum and Dad.

Steven Goodwin
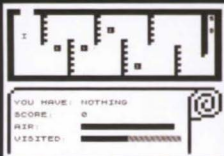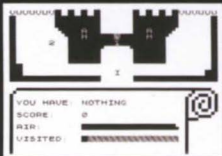www.MarquisdeGeek.com

LOADING:

Rewind tape to start, You are now ready to LOAD the tape. Type LOAD "" and press <new line> and start the tape. Should the tape fail to load, try other side of the tape, and perhaps adjust the volume, and stand on the other leg, perhaps hopping a bit.

When the program has loaded, with the message 0/0, type RUN and <new line>

YOU HAVE: NOTHING
SCORE: 0
AIR:
VISITED:

YOU HAVE: NOTHING
SCORE: 0
AIR:
VISITED:

Exciting machine code arcade action game by Steven Goodwin. Find the Chalice of Sirdat that you gambled away, and return it to the throne room © 2021 Steven Goodwin

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