Amsthrees, "Making of"

Old but new

When I first thought in coding a game for the Amstrad platform I thought in doing something different from the typical platform game.
My first attempt was a vertical shooter, but I was learning about the platform at the same time that I was programming it, and I got out of memory with most of the features to include, so I just changed my mind and thought in something technically simpler… a puzzle game.
After giving it a thought, the idea of mixing a retro development and a contemporary game sparked in my mind. So, I scanned my phone and tablet looking for a good candidate to "port" to the CPC, and "Threes" appeared.

Begin in the beginning

After choosing the kind of game that I wanted to implement, came the moment of starting coding. I reviewed the source code of some project of the last Retrodevs, in order of learn about the basic structure of the games, and try to not reinvent the wheel.
Among all the projects reviewed, the one that I liked the most was Space Moves, so it sort of inspire me to create the basic structure of Amsthrees (thank you Toni and Fran).

Changes, changes

The days were passing fast and the game wasn't advancing at the same pace. Mainly because every aspect that I was discovering in the use of Cpctelera made me refactor big parts of what was done by that time. Examples of that are initial non tiled implementation vs Easytiles implementation in the final release, the three different evolutions of the main deck, two different sizes of letter, and three different designs of big letters, etc…
But after a few weeks, a playable version was ready.

Gameplay tunning

Once a playable version was ready, was the time to improve the gameplay.
Examples of this improvements, are the implementation of the card bag, which increases the playability, avoiding the possibility of more than four repetitions of the same card, and maintaining the proportion between 1,2 and 3 cards.
Storing and showing the highest card of the game, and highest card of the session, to increase the challenge and tempt the player to play again to try to get higher than before.
And the increasing pitch of the sfx, that raises with the apparition of every highest card on the table.

The Camelot Experience

There are three different small (and not so small) tributes to Camelot Warriors in the final release. Will you find them??

---------- spoiler alert !!! -----------------
- The first one are the small characters that you kind find in the scoreboard (a coke, a tv, a telephone and a bulb… sound familiar??)
- The second one is the main tune of Camelot Warrioirs, that you will hear in the game over message.
- And the third one is the Camelot Mode. A mode that will unblock if you are skilled enough to write your number between the four best in the scoreboard. In this mode, a new deck, tribute to Camelot Warriors, will substitute the ordinary one.

Epilogue

This game means a lot to me.
As many of the enthusiast people that are around the retro computing today, my wish, since I was a child, was programming a videogame for the first computer that I ever had.
I was ten years old when I first touched the amazing machine which is an Amstrad, and now that I see my game finished, I look at the final release, and in spite of all its defects (that are a huge bunch), it looks wonderful to me.
Amsthrees it's been my first real finished project for the Amstrad CPC, but I hope that it won't be the last.
I hope that someone enjoys playing as much as I have enjoyed creating it.

Read you in the forums.

John Lobo