= The Cottage (video game) =

The Cottage (Swedish : Stugan) is an adventure video game that was initially made available in 1978 for the mainframe computer Oden in Stockholm , and later published by Scandinavian PC Systems for IBM PCs in 1986 in Swedish , Danish , Norwegian and English . It was the first publicly available Swedish adventure game and one of the first commercial Swedish video games .

The game is set in a cottage in Småland ; the player explores the cottage and its surroundings by typing simple commands to indicate what they want to do or where they want to go . They aim to find items and perform certain actions to raise their score and rank , while avoiding traps and enemy characters , with the ultimate goal of getting inducted into the " cottage council " .

The game was developed in the 1970s and 1980s by Viggo Kann , Kimmo Eriksson and Olle Johansson , three children who had played the game Adventure and wanted to create a similar game in Swedish . The Cottage began as a collection of smaller games the three had previously developed on their own , with the player moving through an amusement arcade to choose what to play ; as they found it more fun to move through the arcade than to play the games , they ended up expanding the area to explore and removing most of the smaller games . Several thousand copies of the IBM PC release were sold ; despite this , the developers did not receive much money from it outside of pre @-@ paid royalties . The game had a cult @-@ like status among Oden users at the time , and was commercially important to the computer center in Stockholm .

= = Gameplay = =

The Cottage is set in a surreal environment in the Småland province in Sweden , and begins on the pier of a lake , outside a cottage surrounded by a deep forest and waterfalls . The cottage is larger on the inside than the outside , and has nine underground levels . The player is able to move in four cardinal directions and perform actions by typing simple commands , such as " North " , " Left " and " Take ball " . Their aim is to explore the cottage and its surroundings to find and collect items . The inside of the cottage includes obstacles such as trapdoors the player can fall through and robbers who can steal the player 's valuables , while the cottage 's surroundings include " mysterious creatures " that the player can encounter .

At the start of the game , the player 's score is set to the value of 50 ; their goal is to increase it as much as possible , for the maximum score of 307 . This is done by performing certain actions , finding new areas , solving puzzles , and by finding and keeping treasures and valuable items . In exchange for some of their score , the player can receive hints or get resurrected following an in @-@ game death . The player is ranked in accordance with their score : they start as a " clumsy rookie " (" klantig nybörjare ") , and eventually become an " expert on Småland houses " (" expert på hus i Småland ") . If the player finishes the game , they get inducted into the cottage council (" stugrådet ") .

= = Development = =

The Cottage was originally developed in 1977 ? 1978 by three children : brothers Viggo Kann (then Eriksson) and Kimmo Eriksson , and their friend Olle Johansson , who at the time of the project 's start were ten , twelve and fourteen years old , respectively . As Viggo and Kimmo 's parents worked at Stockholms Datamaskincentral (" Stockholm 's Computer Center " , QZ) and the Royal Institute of Technology (KTH) , and Johansson 's father worked at an office that was a client for QZ , they had access to QZ 's mainframe computer Oden . Using Oden and the book What to Do After You Hit Return (1975) , the Eriksson brothers and Johansson learned programming .

With the help from system developers at QZ , the three set up their game ? at the time just titled Stuga (" Cottage ") ? on Oden in 1978 , and created the message board Thorvalds stugråd (" Thorvald 's cottage council ") for it ; scientists working at QZ played the game , and were able to discuss it on the message board . The Eriksson brothers and Johansson used a single Texas Silent Writer computer terminal in the Erikssons ' parents ' bedroom to program the game , through which

they could log in to Oden . Connecting to Oden was expensive , so they sometimes visited KTH during the evening to work on the game , as Oden only cost money to use during the day . At KTH , they had access to one terminal each , which used actual monitors to display text , as opposed to their writer terminal at home which printed the text on " enormous amounts of paper " .

All three had previously programmed their own video games : Johansson had made a Mastermind game featuring an opponent character named Thorvald ; Kimmo had made a slot machine game and a tic @-@ tac @-@ toe game ; and Kann had made a guessing game similar to hangman . They thought about how they wanted to combine their games into one single amusement arcade @-@ themed game , where the player could pick which of the games they wanted to play , but due to difficulties in unifying the three developers ' different programming methods , the game 's code became " messy " ; Kann eventually decided to make a " final push " and managed to finish and unify the program .

When they had finished programming and connecting the arcade , they realized that it was more fun to walk around in the arcade than to actually play the games . They ended up creating more and more rooms in the arcade , with characters to play games with , but as the arcade area and its surroundings grew , they eventually decided to remove the arcade games . Instead , they added new elements , including " shady characters " , animals and items ; the elements that remained were the slot machine and the character Thorvald . Having played Adventure (1976) on Oden and finding its cave exploration exciting , they wondered if they would be able to create a similar game in Swedish . As they worked on the game , they grew into different roles : Kimmo mostly came up with " wacky ideas " , Johansson was a driven visionary who " made things happen " , and Kann fixed things and made sure that everything worked . According to Kimmo and Johansson , they cared about the game 's content , not just the technical aspects , and made a game that they found fun themselves . They created two reoccurring characters based on themselves , who appear throughout the game : Kimmo , based on the real Kimmo , and the " cottage council chairman " Thorvald , who represents Johansson . As Kann was interested in language , and had specific ideas of how to spell certain words , they used consistently correct grammar , while consistently using non @-@ standard spelling for words such as " sig " (" oneself ") and " dem " (" them ") , rendering them as " sej " and " dom " .

The Eriksson brothers and Johansson used the programming language BASIC to create the game , which Kimmo called noteworthy : it was considered impossible to write big programs in BASIC , and The Cottage was " gigantic " . The reason for their choice in programming language was that it was the only one all three knew beforehand ; Kimmo said that they would no longer have chosen BASIC if they had programmed The Cottage in 1986 , as they had access to many more programming languages by that time . According to Johansson , another reason was " pure defiance " towards the Eriksson brothers ' father , who had told them they would never be able to get the game running if they programmed it in BASIC . According to Johansson , the most challenging aspect of the development was getting the game to understand the Swedish language ; to keep the size of the game 's command interpreter " reasonable " , they decided to limit it to two @-@ word commands only . Acknowledging that different people use different words for things , they play @-@ tested it with friends and family , writing down all attempted commands and deciding what the game should be expected to understand . During a short period of the game 's development , the developers also logged all actions players at QZ had taken that the command interpreter had not understood ; based on this data , they improved the interpreter and changed the outcomes to certain actions . At one point , the Eriksson brothers and Johansson took a two @-@ year break from the game , but eventually returned to it and finished it in 1979 .

= = = Home release = = =

The Eriksson brothers and Johansson did not work much more on the game until 1984 , when the journalist Erik Fichtelius conducted an interview about the game for the Swedish airline Linjeflyg 's magazine Upp & Ner , which was distributed to all their airplanes in 1985 . In the article , Fichtelius asked Johansson why they had not made the game commercially available for home computers ;

Johansson said that it had been considered but that they had only developed the game because it was a fun challenge for them , and that they would have to find a distributor of computer programs if they wanted to create a PC version .

The business software publisher Scandinavian PC Systems found out about the game through Upp & Ner ; they were expanding at the time and wanted to add a video game to their catalogue , so they contacted the game 's developers . The Eriksson brothers and Johansson developed a version for home computers , but had problems with compiling it for the PC , as it was a much larger BASIC program than most compilers could handle . Due to copyright issues , a scene in the mainframe version of the game where the player guest stars in The Muppet Show had to be cut for the commercial release , but all other materials remained intact ; additionally , some visuals and audio were created and added for this release . The game was published by Scandinavian PC Systems for IBM PCs in Swedish , Danish , Norwegian and English in 1986 . The developers negotiated with Scandinavian PC Systems , and were given 5 SEK per sold copy of the Swedish version and 2 SEK per sold foreign copy as royalties ; 30 @,@ 000 SEK of the royalties were pre @-@ paid .

= = Reception and legacy = =

The Cottage was the first publicly available Swedish adventure video game , as well as one of the first commercially available Swedish video games . Through the late 1970s and early 1980s , the game had a cult @-@ like status among people with access to Oden . As people had to pay for the time they spent using Oden , the game was commercially important to QZ , leading to all three developers getting free Oden accounts . Almost all IBM PCs in Sweden following the game 's release for that platform had a copy of The Cottage , and several thousand copies of it were sold ; Kann reasoned that the success came because the IBM PC was still new , and that almost no computer programs were available in Swedish at the time . Despite this , the developers did not receive a lot of money outside of the pre @-@ paid royalties ; according to Johansson , they only got 500 SEK " every once in a while " .

In his book Video Games Around the World , author Mark J.P. Wolf called the game an " impressive achievement " considering the developers ' young age . Sigrid Nurbo at Jönköpings @-@ Posten noted the game 's absence from the 2013 video game exhibit at the Swedish National Museum of Science and Technology as odd considering its popularity and cult status . An eight week long video game development camp , named Stugan after The Cottage 's Swedish title , was held in Sweden in 2015 , with a follow @-@ up planned for 2016 .