

= Blackwyche =

Blackwyche is an action @-@ adventure video game developed and published by Ultimate Play The Game for the Commodore 64 in 1985 . The game is the third instalment of the Pendragon series and is a sequel to Entombed . In the game , aristocrat adventurer Sir Arthur Pendragon is trapped on board a haunted galleon and must free the soul of its captain . The game is presented in a 3D isometric format .

The Pendragon series was created and designed by brothers Dave and Bob Thomas , with Ultimate founders Tim and Chris Stamper otherwise being uninvolved in development . The game 's setting and graphics were heavily inspired by HMS Victory and the surrounding city of Portsmouth . The game was met with mixed reviews upon release . Critics were divided over the game 's graphics and re @-@ usage of sprites , but criticised the game for its vast similarities to its predecessors . It was followed by a final instalment to the series , Dragon Skulle , which was released later in 1985 .

= = Gameplay = =

The game is presented in a isometric format and is set on board a haunted galleon named the Blackwyche . Sir Arthur Pendragon 's main objective is to free the soul of its former captain , Richard Cavendish . Pendragon can utilise various weapons such as knives , daggers and a magic sword to defend himself from enemy skeletons . The player begins the game with full energy and it will slightly deplete every time the player is hit by an enemy . If Pendragon completely runs out of energy , a large skeletal hand will drag the player off @-@ screen , thus killing him .

Various segments of maps are scattered around the galleon , which will form a complete view of the game 's overworld once all the segments are picked up . Other scattered items in the game include keys for locked doors , gunpowder to fire cannons and pieces of jewellery , the latter having no additional use other than adding to the player 's score .

= = Development = =

Ashby Computers and Graphics was founded by brothers Tim and Chris Stamper , along with Tim 's wife , Carol , from their headquarters in Ashby @-@ de @-@ la @-@ Zouch in 1982 . Under the trading name of Ultimate Play The Game , they began producing multiple video games for the ZX Spectrum throughout the early 1980s . The company was known for their reluctance to reveal details about their operations and upcoming projects . Little was known about their development process except that they used to work in " separate teams " ; one team would work on graphics while the other would concentrate on other aspects such as sound or programming .

The Pendragon series was created by brothers Dave and Robert (Bob) Thomas , rather than Ultimate founders Tim and Chris Stamper . Dave Thomas began his career in 1983 when he started producing multiple games for the Atari 400 , including moderate @-@ sellers such as Warlok , which later won him GB £ 5 @, @ 000 in a competition from Calisto Software . Although he began working for the company in producing video games , he later quit due to the strain of his daily , 68 mi (109 km) commute . Shortly after quitting Calisto Software , Dave Thomas started work on The Staff of Karnath , the first instalment of what would become the Pendragon series . Bob Thomas was a trained technical illustrator for the Ministry of Defence and had experience with designing interiors for the Royal Navy . According to Dave Thomas , the setting of Blackwyche was heavily inspired by the HMS Victory and the surrounding naval city of Portsmouth . The name of " Sir Arthur Pendragon " was copied from the character of the Black Prince Pendragon from Jack the Giant Killer .

The graphics of the game were designed by Bob Thomas , whereas the code was written by Dave Thomas . The Thomas brothers decided to show their progress of the game to Tim and Chris Stamper for evaluation , despite feeling embarrassed due to their workspace being inside their parents ' attic . Impressed by the game , the Stamper brothers commissioned an entire series to be released for the Commodore 64 . Dave Thomas recalled that every game they produced was met with little interference from Ultimate ; once a game was complete , it would be sent to quality

assessment and subsequently published for release .

= = Reception = =

The game received mixed reviews upon release . A reviewer of CVG thought the graphics were identical to its predecessor , Entombed , and criticised the low detail of the player @-@ character , Sir Arthur Pendragon . Eugene Lacey of Commodore User praised the graphics , stating that they were smoother and slightly more detailed , despite acknowledging that they appeared similar to its predecessor . Stuart Cooke of Your Commodore thought the graphics were too " repetitive " and stated that he had trouble determining which section of the game he was on due to the similarities of all the colours . Reviewers of Zzap ! 64 criticised the graphics , stating the sprites to be " awful " , and animation as " crummy " with little or no range of colouring . The sprite of Sir Arthur Pendragon was frequently criticised by reviewers of Zzap ! 64 , with one reviewer expressing frustration on why Ultimate continued to re @-@ use the same sprites in their games . Another reviewer condemned the 3D animation , stating that it appeared out of proportion and " frustrating " . Tony Hetherington of Computer Gamer similarly criticised the graphics , owing to the " duplicated landscapes " and identical usage of colours , concluding that it was a disappointing game .

Lacey heralded the gameplay to be " purely addicting " and considered Blackwyche to the best of the series . Harding opinionated the game to be " miles better " than its predecessor , whereas Cooke thought the gameplay was repetitive , owing to its number of locations . Reviewers of Zzap ! 64 criticised the overall gameplay , stating that the puzzles were poor , unchallenging and often gave them the sense of " deja @-@ vu " with its similarities to its predecessors . One reviewer of the same magazine considered the game to be a poor attempt at an arcade @-@ adventure game , stating that the ideas were poorly implemented . Hetherington concluded that Blackwyche was a disappointment for an Ultimate game , considering their previous hit titles such as Atic Atac and Knight Lore .