= Alien 8 =

Alien 8 is an action @-@ adventure video game developed and published by Ultimate Play The Game . It was released for the ZX Spectrum , BBC Micro , Amstrad CPC and MSX in 1985 . The game is a spiritual successor to the best @-@ selling Knight Lore , which was lauded by critics for its isometric graphics . In the game , the player takes control of a robot , Alien 8 , whose job is to ensure that all of the cryogenically frozen passengers on board a starship remain viable during the ship 's voyage .

The game was written by Chris Stamper , and graphics were designed by Tim Stamper . Alien 8 uses the same image masking technique as Knight Lore , which allows the developers to create composite structures out of stacked images without visual overlay . The technique was copyrighted by Ultimate as the Filmation game engine . As with its spiritual predecessor , the game is rendered isometric projection . The game was critically acclaimed upon release . Reviewers praised the game 's graphics and innovation , however minor criticism was directed at its similarities to Knight Lore .

= = Gameplay = =

The game is presented in an isometric format and set on board a starship . Taking on the role of the robot , Alien 8 , the player must explore the large starship in order to ensure that the cryogenic life support systems preserving the biological crew are re @-@ activated . The core of this system is a series of geometrically @-@ shaped circuits . However , the circuits have been removed by the invading aliens and distributed around the starship . The main objective of the game is to collect the correct circuits and return them to their respective locations before the starship reaches its destination . The circuits are variously shaped as cubes , pyramids , domes or cylinders .

As with its spiritual predecessor , the environment of the game takes the form of a series of isometric flip @-@ screen rooms (which trace the outline of a large starship) . There are a total of 129 rooms and most are filled with various objects , such as moveable platforms , static hazards such as spikes and hostile aliens . As well as executing well @-@ timed manoeuvres and jumps , the player is able to use starship props to block or defend themselves . Another feature is the use of remote controlled drones , which can be directed by Alien 8 into inaccessible or dangerous areas .

= = Synopsis = =

On a dying planet in a distant galaxy , the last of the creatures known as the " guardians " stored all of their libraries , records , and knowledge on a single starship together with cryogenically preserved members of their race . A single robot , Alien 8 , is tasked with keeping the occupants of the vessel alive for the duration of its journey .

The ship is launched towards a new solar system and Alien 8 performs his task for thousands of years during the journey . However , as the ship nears its destination , it is attacked and boarded by hostile aliens . The cryogenic life support systems were damaged during the attack and Alien 8 must restore them to an operational status before the ship 's automatic thrusting systems manoeuvre it into planetary orbit .

= = Development and release = =

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 mainly 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 .

Development of Alien 8 began immediately after the release of Knight Lore , in which the Stamper

brothers predicted that publishers would attempt to copy Knight Lore 's Filmation technology in other games . As with its predecessor , the Stamper brothers developed the game in monochrome to avoid visual overlay and attribute clash , as it was a common processing limitation in early 8 @-@ bit consoles . However , the Amstrad release exclusively displayed dual @-@ colours .

= = Reception = =

 The game was critically acclaimed upon release . A reviewer of Crash praised its graphics and presentation , stating them to be " excellent " and more " imaginative and pleasing " compared to its predecessor , despite regarding it as " only having a slight difference " . Amstrad Action similarly praised the graphics , citing them as " amazing " , " brilliant " and having " great " colour combinations . A reviewer of Amtix ! stated that the visuals were " breathtakingly stunning " and improves on its predecessor . David Kelly of Popular Computing Weekly stated the game was a " little " disappointment due to its similarities to Knight Lore , however he asserted that the graphics were of superior quality to its predecessor . Chris Bourne of Sinclair User stated that the general quality of graphics were " higher " than its predecessor , although it used an identical system .
 Crash praised the new additions to the game , in particular the time limit and various collectable items . The reviewer stated that the new features were " compelling and exciting " , as it differs from its predecessor . A reviewer of Amstrad Action similarly praised its innovation , stating that it has " wonderfully " original ideas , despite criticising it similarities to Knight Lore . Kelly praised the game 's extra puzzles and the animation of enemies , heralding them as " brilliant " . Bourne similarly praised the 3D animation , stating that every extension of the game improved over Knight Lore .