



Ghostship Delgado is a two part adventure game for the BBC micro, Acorn Electron and Amstrad CPC.

It can also be played on modern computers using a software emulator.

Written by Tony Kingsmill ©Loftcat Software 2024

Created with The Quill ©1983 Gilsoft International
<http://8-bit.info/the-gilsoft-adventure-systems>

Physical Releases tbc

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Introduction

Take on the role of George Pike, a happy go lucky chap renting a yacht on the holiday of his lifetime. George is accompanied by his partner, sleeping on the lower deck, and Ruffles, George’s trusty dog.

While dozing off to sleep in the sunshine of the upper deck you awake to find yourself on the quarter deck of a mysterious, seemingly abandoned historic ship.

Only Ruffles the dog and the clothes you are wearing appear to be the same. You begin to survey your surroundings you immediately notice a stillness in the air, and no-one in sight.

Yet the ship appears to be far out to sea with no land in sight. You call out in hope that someone may hear you but to no avail.

Ruffles begins to sniff, circling with his nose to the deck. Has he smelt something?

Can you discover why George arrived here? Can you find a way off the ship and back to your yacht and partner? And will Ruffles safely make it along with you?

Loading the game

Playing on a real BBC or Acorn Electron (Disk):

Insert the disk or select the disk image if you’re using a Gotek drive or similar. Hold down right Shift and press Break. Alternatively type CHAIN “GAME” and press Return.

Playing on a real Amstrad CPC (Disk):

Insert the disk or select the disk image if you're using a Gotek drive or similar. Type in RUN"GAME" and press Return to load the main menu. On the title screen image, press any key to proceed on to the main game.

Playing the BBC/Electron version on Windows/Mac

You can play the game by loading the disk image into an emulator. For Windows I recommend BeebEm. For Mac OS I recommend B2. There's a Linux version of B2 and I've received the thumbs up for a player that this works. Links to the emulators can be found in the Development Tools section below. It's also possible to play the game on a web based emulator such as jsbeeb (link in the dev tools section below).

If you want to play on an Acorn Electron emulator there's a separate version of the game that can be played on Elkulator. The Electron version is broken down into three parts due to memory constraints.

Playing the Amstrad CPC version on Windows/Mac

Retro Virtual Machine is recommended for both Windows and Mac emulation of the Amstrad CPC version, although if you're familiar with WinAPE I can confirm this works well too. For help setting up Retro Virtual Machine, see the document "How to set up an Amstrad CPC emulator for Ghostship Delgado".

Gameplay

Ghostship Delgado is broken down into two separate game files parts one and two. You need to complete the first part before you can play the second. Part two will ask you for the password to play, which is shown to you on completing part one.

It's occasionally possible to be trapped or killed, but it's very rare – the emphasis is on progressing rather than being killed off. I do recommend saving your position regularly so you can return to an earlier position, should you take a wrong step.

There are objects to collect or interact with along the way in order to complete the game. Nearly all the objects are needed for something. Being a normal human there's a limit on how many things you can carry, so occasionally you may need to put something down to pick something else up.

Parser

Ghostship Delgado has been written using the classic adventure writing tool The Quill by Gilsoft, originally released in 1983. Everything can be achieved by typing in one or two words on a line, typically <verb> <noun>, for example OPEN DOOR.

You can type HELP in game to list some useful pointers.

Actions

Every action in the game can be achieved using one or more of the following verbs.

GET <object>

DROP <object>

WEAR <object>

REMOVE <object>

OPEN <object>

EXAMINE <object> (EXAMINE can be abbreviated to EX or EXAM)

USE <object>

JOIN <object>

TIE <object>

PULL <object>

BREAK <object>

HOLD <object>

GIVE <object>

LOOK – clear the screen and re-describe current location and objects visible. Can be abbreviated to L.

CALL <character>

BURY <object>

ENTER <place>

EXIT <place>

Some synonyms are also supported in the vocabulary.

Moving Around

The game plays like a classic 8-bit adventure with compass directions, including north-west (NW), NE, SE and SW, although most paths follow standard N, E, S and W directions. It's also possible to go UP or DOWN in a handful of locations. Sometimes you'll need to ENTER or EXIT a room or building.

Using Objects

Most objects need to be picked up (GET <object>) before you can EXAMINE them.

Remember to examine objects (and things you see in location descriptions). Sometimes you will find something. When you do, use LOOK to re-describe your location and show any new visible objects.

Most objects can be manipulated with USE <object> but there are certain situations where one of the special verbs (see list above) may be needed.

Sometimes you might need to use two objects together but The Quill only accepts two word instructions. In this situation using <verb> <noun>, eg: TIE ROPE, assumes you're carrying something or at a location to tie the rope to.

Sometimes objects can be taken away from you after you have used them. Don't worry if this happens – they will no longer be required.

Standard Quill Commands

SAVE – Prompts you to enter a filename and saves your position. The destination will be the same as the source the game was loaded from.

LOAD – Restore your position from a previous save. You'll need to know the name of the file you saved.

QUIT – Quit the current game. You'll be presented with your score and asked if you wish to play again. Choosing no will exit the game.

Scoring

You can achieve 100% in both parts of the game, but you may not need to reach 100% to reach the end of the game. Type SCORE to view your current score.

Game Background

The initial idea for Ghostship Delgado began in 2014. Over the previous year or two I had considered returning to The Quill for one final spin. I began working on three different ideas reaching various stages of progress:

- > 'Infiltrate X20' – a sequel to my 1992 game Ultimate Nightmare – a sort of opposite to an island escape.
- > 'Return to Magic'/'Village of the Chained' – a sequel to my first attempt at The Quill in 1989, 'Lords of Magic'.
- > 'Ghostship Delgado' – initially part one of the now completed game.

All the games reached various stages of development but all were abandoned for other projects (later in 2020 I updated and re-released Ultimate Nightmare).

The Quill never left my mind and in 2023 I returned to Ghostship Delgado. On reviewing my 2014 progress, I decided to start again, keeping some elements from my 2014 designs but virtually rewriting the locations on the ship and many of the objects. Some of the objects/characters in the original idea that I dropped along the way include a parrot, a teddy bear(?), a two way radio and a 'ghostly thing'!

After some time I decided I wanted to expand the idea further and concerned with the amount of space available for the Acorn Electron decided to create a separate part two of the game. To play part two you need to obtain the password obtained at the end of part one so the game is essentially a continuation. Part two grew until it became significantly bigger than the first part of the game, essentially giving some substance and closure to George Pike's bizarre experience. The Amstrad CPC version followed, replicating the experience on the BBC Micro.

I do hope you enjoy the game as much as I've enjoyed creating it. Please do let me know your comments – you can find me on itch.io (<https://loftcat.itch.io>), the <https://www.stardot.org.uk> forum (user: controlbreak), CPC Wiki Forum (user: loftcat) or via email (see the about page on my website) here <http://loftcatsoftware.x10host.com/about.html>

Tony Kingsmill May 2024, updated October 2024

Acknowledgements

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Development tools

The Quill adventure writing tool <http://8-bit.info/the-gilsoft-adventure-systems>

BeebEm BBC micro Emulator <http://www.mkw.me.uk/beebeem>

B2 BBC micro Emulator <https://github.com/tom-seddon/b2>

jsbeeb (web based emulator) <https://bbc.xania.org>

Elkulator Acorn Electron Emulator <https://elkulator.acornelectron.co.uk>

WinAPE – for developing the Amstrad CPC version <http://www.winape.net>

RetroVirtualMachine – for playtesting the Amstrad CPC version

MMBImager – for transferring emulator files to a real Beeb

BBC Micro Image Converter <https://www.dfstudios.co.uk/software/bbc-micro-image-converter>

DaDither <https://www.dadither.com>