A Graphic Adventure, set in Colditz Castle during World War II. Outwit the Guards and plan your escape.

LVL

BBC

COLDITZ

CAN YOU FIND THE EIGHT DIFFERENT ROUTES TO FREEDOM

COLDITZ

by Derrick Dains DLC

OVERVIEW

Colditz Castle was utilised by the Germans during World War 2 in order to house those Allied prisoners-of-war who had shown a propensity towards escape, because Colditz was considered to be escape-proof. That it was not, was amply demonstrated by the prisoners who succeeded in escaping in large numbers, many reaching safety.

After the war, several first-hand accounts were written and in recent years there was a much admired BBC television series which although fictional, drew heavily on actual events.

This computer game attempts to put the solo player into the position of a prisoner who is trying to escape. There are several ways out, but none are easy.

LOADING THE PROGRAM

Put the cassette into the cassette recorder, and ensure that the tape is fully rewound - that is, with the full spool on the left. Type CHAIN "COLDITZ" and press RETURN.

SEARCHING

Start the cassette player in the PLAY mode. After a few moments the following message will appear -

COLDITZ 00

- and then the 00 will change to 01,02,03 and so on as the blocks of program are loaded in. In case of difficulty, the computer may cease loading and report -

DATA? or - BLOCK?

In either case, rewind the tape a little way (there is no need to start all over again) and try again. In case of continued difficulty, try adjusting the volume control on your machine; most people tend to have the volume far too high.

Users of programs supplied on disk should have even less trouble, but if they do, usually removing and carefully re-inserting the disk will cure the problem.

RUNNING THE PROGRAM

When the last block is loaded in, the display will show -

COLD2 3B 3B81

There will be a short delay and then the program will start automatically. Stop the tape if your cassette player does not have auto-control.

The title page asks if an introduction is required. Type Y (for yes) if the introduction is required, which gives access to three pages, repeated here for convenience.

Your task is to escape from Colditz, an old castle used by the Germans during WW2 as a POW camp. There are several methods of escape, but none are easy; see how many you can find.

Before you can begin an escape attempt, you MUST collect an escape kit. This consists of:-

A Compass

A document	) IN	.... See note 1
A map	) ANY	
Civilian clothes	) ORDER	
Spare food	) (make a note)	.... See note 2

You move about with the cursor .... See note 3
control keys. In addition, you may
type a command, such as
LOOK, GET and so on, followed if
necessary by a suitable noun,
making (eg) GET GUN, GO UP or
whatever.

Some commands are so frequently .... See note 4
used that Function keys have been
programmed for them. These are:-

f0 - HELP - get advice   .... See note 5
f1 - CARRY - list of possessions .... See note 6
f2 - LOOK - examine an area   .... See note 7
f3 - GO UP   .... See note 8
f4 - GO DOWN   .... See note 9
f5 - SHOW PASS   .. See note 10
f6 - LIFT MANHOLE COVER   .. See note 11

If APPEL is called, you have 1 .. See note 12
minute to get to the East end of the
courtyard before the guards come
looking for you. Finally, your time
is assessed in terms of days taken
to escape. (5 minutes of real time =
1 game day.)

WARNING

Being found with items of escape .. See note 13
kit will earn you 30 days in the
cooler.

The user then has the option of reading
the introduction pages again. Type Y if this
is required.

NOTES

(1) A 'document' is taken to mean a real or
forged identity card.

(2) Chocolate is NOT considered to be
spare food.

(3) Cursor control keys are situated at the
top right of the keyboard, with directional
arrows.

(4) The Function keys are the red ones at
the top of the keyboard.

(5) Help is given in the form of cryptic
clues, some more helpful than others.
Repeated pressing of the f0 key will
produce the same clue, because which
message is given depends upon the
number of game days that have elapsed.

(6) At no time is the player permitted to
carry on or about his person more than six
items: an important limitation. Pressing f1 at
any time will produce a reminder of what is
being carried.

(7) Use the LOOK command frequently. Not
only are you given a brief description of
where you are, but also told of removable
items that are in view.

(8) and (9) GO UP and GO DOWN are synonymous with climbing, jumping, leaping, etc., and can be used on stairs, ladders, ropes, or what-have-you.

(10) Passes are needed to get past guards stationed at some doors. See description of movement, later.

(11) An obvious way out. See EXAMPLE RUNS, later.

(12) An APPEL was a muster which all prisoners had to attend for the purposes of headcount and selected body checks. The 1 minute allowed is real time.

(13) 'Cooler' was a colloquial expression for solitary confinement.

SCREEN DISPLAY

The main display comprises a map of the ground floor of the castle, with a narrow text "window" below, which is used for messages, instructions, etc., from and to the computer. The standard query is, "What do you do?" which indicates that the computer is awaiting instructions.

The ground floor map might be taken as the fundamental or basic display, because it will be used so often. There is also an underground or cellar display, an upper-storey display and a rooftop display.

Walls are shown as solid yellow lines, while doors may be shown as gaps (open doors), or as narrow lines (closed doors.) Windows are treated as doors if they are big enough for egress, but otherwise are not shown. Rooftops are shown as a red chequered pattern. Stairs are not shown specifically as such. All that the user needs to know is that there are three stairs; study of the ground plan will suggest where they are located. (See EXAMPLE RUNS, below.) Part of the fun of the game lies in finding your way about under conditions similar to those that a new prisoner would experience.

The player's position is at all times denoted by an 'X'. Lastly, in the courtyard is an 'O' which is the manhole cover.

The following will give some feel for the game. After that, you're on your own!

From the starting position, use the four cursor control keys to move the X about the display. You will observe that the computer does not allow you to take the X through walls and closed doors, although you may pass freely through open doors. Try going through the closed door on the north (top) side of the courtyard, and you will get the printed message, "You have no key to fit the lock." There are three locked doors and three separate keys. Of course, if you find a key you may use it, but another part of your job is to find out which key fits which lock!

If you attempt to go through any of the closed doors on the south side of the courtyard, you are told, "A guard challenges you. 'Your pass?' What do you do?" The only correct response is to type, "SHOW PASS", or press Function Key f5, but of course the program checks to see if you do in fact have a pass with you.

Typing LOOK almost anywhere in the courtyard produces the message, "Castle courtyard. There is nothing here." However, taking the X adjacent to the 0 and then typing LOOK produces the message, "Castle courtyard. There is a manhole cover." Now type "LIFT MANHOLE COVER" or press f6. The computer responds "There's a hole! Going down (Y-N)?" Press Y (for YES; no RETURN needed) and the display instantly clears and shows the underground display with the X at one end of an L-shaped narrow area. Again, the X may be moved about but cannot be moved onto the adjacent yellow area.

The LOOK command tells you, "Disused sewer pipe. There is a GRILL." The grill appears as a chequered spot. However, if you attempt to move the X past or through the grill, the computer tells you, "You need a spanner to shift that grill." (You didn't think it was going to be that easy, did you?)

The rest of the game is like that; you now have to locate the spanner, take it and your escape kit down the sewer and get clear and away. For the time being however, there is nothing that you can do except

return to the end of the sewer and type GO UP. The display instantly shows you back in the courtyard.

As a second and final example, take the X to the top-left corner of the courtyard and type LOOK. The computer responds, "A landing on spiral stairs." Type GO UP. Now the display clears and the upper storey plan is shown.

EQUIPMENT

At the start of each game, the computer randomly distributes a number of items about the castle, with a few restrictions. (There is never an article in the courtyard, for instance, and some articles are always put in the same places.) The player is never told where anything is, but must always give the LOOK command. Notice also, that seeing an item is not the same as owning it.

For example, if you move into the large room to the west (left) of the courtyard and give the LOOK command, the computer will give the message, "The camp theatre." "There is clothing." The player does not possess the clothing yet - and indeed, may not want to. To pick it up, he must type GET COTHING. The computer will then print, "OK - you've got it." If the player then gives the CARRY command, the computer will print, "You have CLOTHING." The LOOK command will now produce the remark, "The camp theatre. There is nothing" because the clothing is now in the possession of the player.

Similarly, to dispose of an item - perhaps to cache it - the player types DROP *CLOTHING* and the computer responds with, "OK."

THE COOLER

The player may be consigned to the cooler for any one of a number of reasons. Here are a few.

(1) Being found on appel with forbidden items.
(2) Trying an escape without full escape kit.
(3) Attacking a guard.
(4) Being caught on a random check with forbidden items.
(5) Trying to bribe the wrong man.

You will no doubt discover others!

Please note that the cooler display is timed; you cannot hurry it. Please note also that whenever the player is consigned to the cooler the program redistributes all the items of equipment. It is therefore equivalent to a new start. Thirty days are of course added to the game time, but there is one consolation - typing the HELP command will produce a different cryptic clue.

ENDING THE GAME

To end the program at any time, press ESCAPE.

If - or when - the user manages an escape, a fanfare is sounded and a suitable congratulatory message is given. Man Adventure type games are then no longer playable because the player knows all the clues and the tricks, but COLDITZ is not of this type. There are eight different ways of escaping, so that having discovered one, the player may then have the pleasure of discovering another. At the time of writing, nobody who had tested the game has managed to discover more than three.

SOLUTIONS

A full list of the secret factors contained in the program is available by sending a stamped and addressed envelope to:

LVL SOFTWARE
SCIENTIFIC HOUSE
BRIDGE STREET
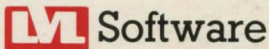SANDIACRE
NOTTINGHAM NG10 5BA

This includes all cryptic messages, details of every escape route and so on.