MIRE MARE

There have been many legends born around games produced in the 80s, especially regarding titles that were supposedly in the pipeline but never got released. There was a very interesting article printed in Retrogamer this

month which did a good job of uncovering what happened to these titles.

One I specifically remember being advertised at the time was the game 'Scooby Doo in the Mystery Castle', to be released by Elite, the game looked amazing if the screen shots were anything to go by, but it never saw the light of day.

However, something that had totally eluded me was the news of a game by Ultimate Play the Game, which was supposedly completed, but never released. If you have ever played a game by this software house, especially at the time, then you will know that pretty much every game they produced were head and shoulders above many of the other titles released for the ZX Spectrum.

While earlier games like JetPac and Atic Atac were well received, it was Sabrewulf which really catapulted the Stamper Brothers

to stardom and paved the path to many other successful titles. So it was exciting to learn that there was a game in the pipeline which would look and feel like a sequel to this successful game.

If you completed Underwurlde, you could exit via 3 different paths, and each one which reveal the name of an up and coming Ultimate title. The first of which was Knightlore and the second was Pentagram, both of which were released within the next couple of years.

However, if you took the third exit, the message said "Congratulations, you have escaped from the Underwurlde. Your next adventure is Mire Mare". Sorry, Mire Mare, I don't seem to remember that game? You also had a message at the end of the game Pentagram further confirming the following title would be Mire Mare.

Although many of Ultimate's recent titles seemed to favour the 3d isometric adventures, it is understood that Mire Mare was going look more like the top down approach of Sabrewulf, which personally I would have preferred.

According to an ex employee, the game was already completed, but the company was on the verge of selling to US Gold, so the unreleased game got somehow

buried, most likely deliberately. US Gold didn't seem to share Ultimate's original vision, and instead went on to develop their own games, which clearly had a different look and feel to them. That's a polite way of saying they were s It is clear that even after 30 years, there is still interest in this game. A quick search in Google will show various articles and even Facebook fan pages, from which some of the information and photos in this article have been taken from. For example, credit must go to these guys who set up this Facebook Page.

Almost as interesting was the fact there were plans to create JetPac for the C64, for which there are existing screenshots, and it was coded by Martin Galway, who was more known for writing music of the C64. Maybe more about this in a future post.

For now, we can only hope that by some kind of miracle, the code from Mire Mare surfaces, until then, it remains a mystery and the stuff of legend.