Merlin walkthrough

This is a challenging adventure mainly because it has a different map each time you play, and in the end turns out to be a search and hope for the best once you know what to do. The map is an 8 by 11 grid, populated at random every time you play. To be successful you will need to populate a blank map template (provided below) as you go in order to return to places discovered before being able to "interact" with them.

Your quest is to find Excalibur and return it to Londonium (the starting point). You will be given a rating on return based on your performance. The ratings are (worst to best):

Arthur the Rabbit-heart
Artie short-dagger
Arthur of the bent sword
Arthur the battler
the Fighter
Strongarm
the Swordsman
the Arm of Steel
the Knight Crusader
the Lord of the Red Dragon
the Master of Merlin

The rating is calculated based on your strength and experience (call an inventory during the game to see how you are tracking), whether you returned with Excalibur or not and whether you called for Merlin's assistance or not. I also determined you get an extra point if you take 100 or more (yes, more) moves.

Solving the game:
The minimum actions needed to win:

1. In any order:
    a. Find the castle with the Oak tree, go up and get the vial
    b. Find a coin and give it to the beggar to get the flint and steel
    c. Find the castle with the armour and torch and get them (technically you don't need the armour but it does limit the loss of strength in combat). Alternative is to get the candle from the Roman Shrine if you come across that first.
    d. Get the key from the pond
2. Get the clue from the castle with a flight of stairs. Go up, unlock, go in, light torch or candle. You will be given the clue (magic word) that will restore the Coracle by the lake. There are 5 possibilities: launcelot, vortigern, avalon, guenever and gawain.
3. Go to the lake (and remember the direction you travelled to enter) and say the magic word (guessing the wrong word will have dire consequences). Drop your armour (it will slow you down causing you to die when fighting the dragon), sail boat, throw vial, go in (the cave), get sword, go out, use sword, sail boat, get armour. Now leave by "backing out" otherwise you will enter the lake and drown (see movement tips below). For instance, if you went North to enter the lake, when you return from the cave with Excalibur, going North again puts you in the lake, so exit by going South.
4. Return to the starting point and knock. You will re-enter Londonium and be given your rating.

Getting a high rating
As stated above, the rating is calculated on a number of factors. To get the highest rating:

1. Get Excalibur as per above, but before returning to Londonium

2. Go to the Druid Burial Mound, push the slab and go down. DO NOT TAKE THE SHINY OBJECT. Simply go up. This increases your experience by 8. Repeat until you reach 50, although it may cave in beforehand – I think this occurs at random. I once went in and out 6 times.
3. Go to the Roman Shrine, push the Altar and drink the water – this restores your strength to 1000. This can be done multiple times during the game, so if you are running low, use this to restore your strength. Then take the fastest route back to Londonium as it reduces by 1 every move
4. Make sure you have had at least 100 turns
5. Don't call for Merlin.

Movement Tips

The movement can be a little clumsy. As mentioned above, if you continue in the same direction as when you entered a special location, you go further in to that location rather than to the next location on the map grid. It is always best to reverse out.

The other time this is needed is when you are beside a heath. You can't proceed through them, so you are forced to change direction. If you are traveling North and come to a heath, you can either go around it (E,N,W or W,N,E) or go to the side then re-enter from that other side then continue North (E,W,N or W,E,N)

Location tips

Normal locations

There are 8 normal locations – Dark forest, open woodland, clearing, grassy meadow, heath, bog, hill and misty vale. They serve no real purpose other than heaths causing a change in direction as mentioned above, hills giving a description of adjoining locations and the ability to climb a tree to see what is in adjoining locations.

Special locations

- Castle with oak tree – climb it to get the vial (read vial if you want to see the clue)
- Castle with stairs – need a key to unlock the door and the flint and steel and the torch or candle to see when inside the room
- Castle in ruins – get the armour and torch
- Roman Shrine – get the candle, light it to see the amulet, get it and read it (you'll need to go out again to be able to read it) for a clue, otherwise it is not actually needed, push the altar to reveal the water, drink to restore strength
- Spring – drop a coin to get directions to the lake, drink (you feel refreshed) to increase strength by 100 – can only be done once
- Druid Burial Mound – push slab and go down to enter. Don't take the shiny object. Go up to leave to increase experience. Can repeat until there is a bang (it will no longer be accessible).
- Pond – go in and get key (for use at the castle with stairs). There are two ponds, you can get the key from either (but it won't be available in the second one after getting it from the first)
- Beggar – drop a coin to get the flint and steel.
- Coins – you only need two, one for the beggar and one for the spring. They are located randomly. Sometimes they are cursed or draw enemies, including one who will steal your dagger. Nothing you can do about this – it's all random. There are 8 scattered around the map. Sometime you will be offered flint and steel in exchange for the coin.
- Catacombs – two locations will see you fall into the catacombs. There are no clues to determine where they are. Like the map, catacombs are randomly mapped and therefore different for each game. Where you fall into it is also random. There is a bag of gold in the catacombs but no point searching for it as the amount of gold you find does not influence the score. It is simply a matter of navigating around until you find the exit. It is essential to map your way. It is randomly generated within a 10 by 10 grid. Light the torch or candle, if you are able, to see possible directions, otherwise it is simply trial and error. I have found typically there are around 30 locations within the catacombs.

- Lake – as per the solution at the start of this document. Make sure you know the magic word and have the vial. Don't forget to take off your armour before sailing the boat, and put it back on when you return.

Combat

As far as I can tell this is all random. Enemies will attack at random times but only in normal locations. I am not 100% positive on the following, but suspect:

- Having armour will reduce the amount of strength lost in combat
- Excalibur wields more damage than the dagger
- Enemies have differing amounts of damage they do and can take
- Killing an enemy gives 2 experience points sometimes, if they flee, 1 point. But I have also noticed sometimes your experience points will go down – possibly when you get hurt
- Sometimes if an enemy hasn't seen you, you can move on without encountering them – but not often
- Some enemies will hurl you in the air and you will land in a random location, reducing your strength dramatically. Use the Map function to find out where you are.
- I simply used the "c" command (to cut) every time.

Map

Entering "m" will turn the map on, giving the co-ordinates as per the map template below. Note that when the map is on your strength reduces by 3 instead of 1 every turn.

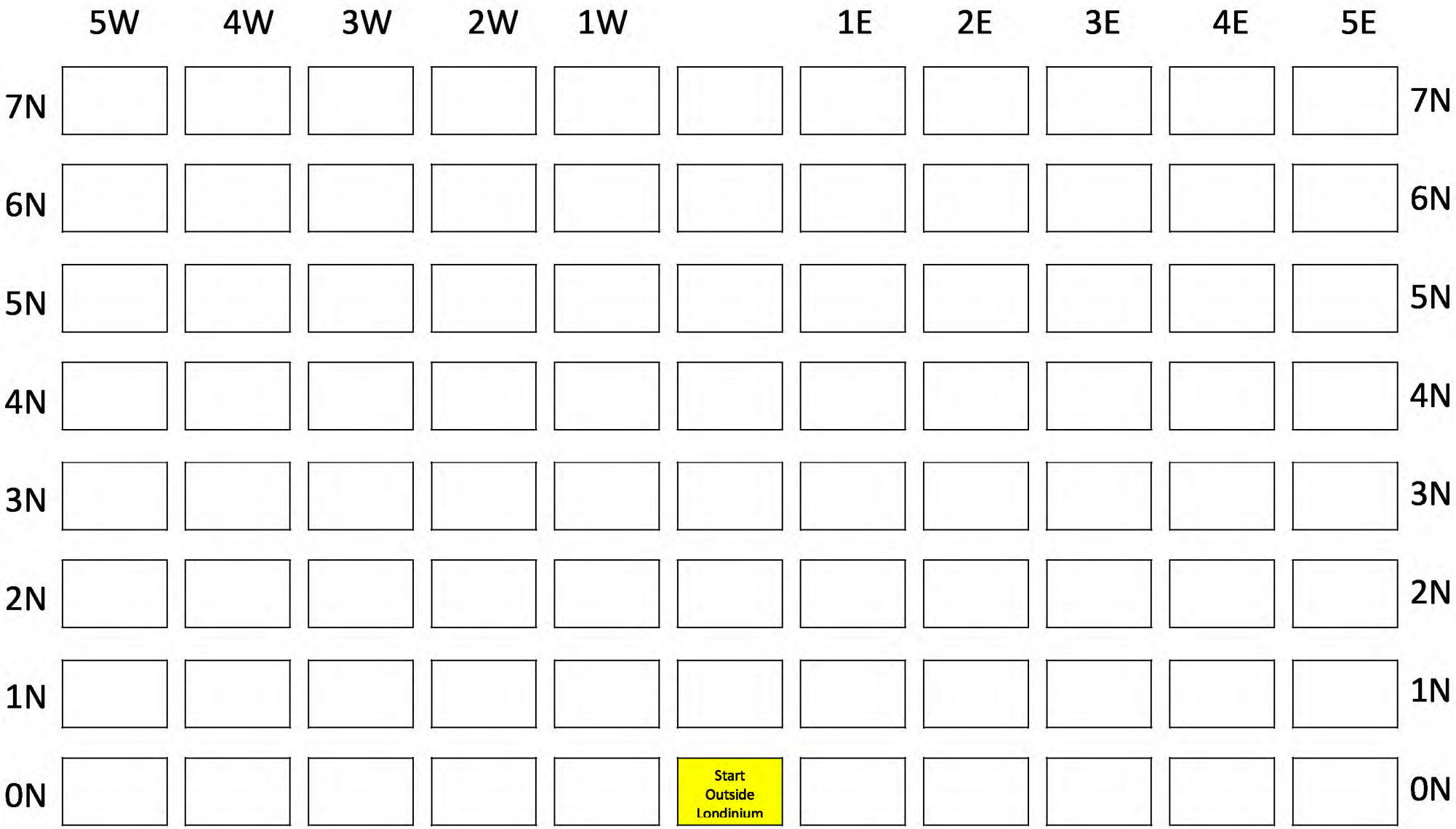
Other text

Other text seen is simply adding ambience. It is generated at random and has no impact on the game (well, as far as I could tell).

Good luck.

Merlin

Map


5W
4W
3W
2W
1W
1E
2E
3E
4E
5E
7N
6N
5N
4N
3N
2N
1N
0N
Start
Outside
Londinium