

Palitron



BY CHARLES GOODWIN

PALITRON

C-C Log 1, 2, 37

OK, so 'Omicron 2 Eridani triple code red m-class star' is quite a mouthful, but that isn't the reason so few surveillance teams get out here 11.9 light years from good ol' Mother Terra.

No, fact is there has only ever been the one colony out here, checked on by Central-Colonisation once every 100 years or so Terra Time.

From all reports the **Palitron** settlement was one of the earliest to set off for a truly uncharted area of space. Noted in my manual as probably the most boring colony you'll ever have to check out whilst in the C-C service, I guess this task has always been reserved for freshlings like me.

So why me? Why does this have to turn into the first non-routine check of this sector in recorded history? OK, just my luck I suppose. Well there's certainly no getting away from the facts, and the facts are that there is no sign of life at all on the whole of the planet. Not only is Palitron City (covering most of the habitable land on the planet) totally dead, but so is the land around it — all around it. And when I say dead, I sure mean dead. There's no sign of any biological life forms at all!

All I can get from my readings looks bad, real bad. I can locate a source of immense power coming from within Palitron City walls. The power reads like nothing ever recorded by C-C before and, well I guess I've got to say it, it looks as if we found ourselves a chunk of another universe here . . .

Yeah, I know that sounds bizarre, but the readings indicate it, and I just can't make sense of them otherwise . . . Yes, seems pretty fixed. There are several crystal-like formations within the city, and as far as I can tell their presence on the planet is killing all life forms.

There's nothing for it, I clearly can't go down there (a hero I aint), and whatever put those crystals there is probably not far behind themselves. And if their crystals can destroy a whole planet of lifeforms — gad, what could they achieve themselves?!

Hmm, there's vibrations down there. Looks as if the crystals are being tuned somehow — hey maybe they act as focussing agents allowing the alien forms to access our universe! Got to think quick . . .

Only one thing for it, I'll activate a Servo Class robot in the city. The makers have always claimed it is possible, although I've never heard anyone do it before. There's bound to be one there . . . yep there it is, activated and here we go . . . hey maybe if I can just find the Infra Class Type 3 Beast modules, then I'll be able to program me some extra help using my Servo Class!

OK. Logging off now. Been talkin' to myself mainly. Uh, this is Star Strike Cadet C-C 432345 making the time as one-twoer-fortyfive and . . . gone.

LOADING INSTRUCTIONS

AMSTRAD CPC TAPE:

Load using **RUN**"

Whilst loading the screen will go blank for a couple of minutes just prior to completion — don't panic!

AMSTRAD DISC VERSIONS:

Load by entering: **RUN**" **DISC**

PLAYING THE GAME

You are in control of a Servo Class D27 robot, and are in search of the matter-destroying crystals hidden around the city. You will probably find the various Infra-Class Beast Mark 3 robots scattered around the city a great help. When you find one (they are small inverted-dish shaped red robots within prominent antennae), you will be able to program it to accomplish tasks you would either find impossible or very difficult to do on your own. The game objective is to destroy the crystals which you will find at various locations within the game. Each crystal can be destroyed by dropping an object onto it, so that the object and the crystal collide. Not all objects are able to destroy crystals — you will have to experiment. When the game has loaded, you will be presented with 3 options:

COPY = play

TAB = training mode

SHIFT = define keys

GAME CONTROLS

KEYBOARD

The game controls are pre-defined as follows:—

↑	cursor	= move up
↓	cursor	= move down
→	cursor	= move right
←	cursor	= move left
	COPY	= jump
	T	= take
	D	= drop
	TAB	= 1) When standing next to a battery — increases your energy. 2) When standing next to an Infra Class robot — activates the robot's program.
	CTRL	= When standing next to an Infra Class robot — allows you to program it.
	SPACE	= Pause game
	SHIFT & ESCAPE	= quit game

All of the above keys, except **SHIFT & ESCAPE** can be pre-defined. Just follow the screen prompts at the start of the game.

JOYSTICK

To re-define the controls for joystick play, select the 're-define' option at the start of the game, plug your joystick in and move the joystick at the appropriate prompt, i.e. up to re-define the 'up' control and left to re-define the 'left' control etc. We recommend you use the fire button as the 'jump' control.

PROGRAMMING INFRA CLASS ROBOTS

The Infra Class robots are the red ones. We recommend that you practise programming them in training mode. You will need to have a battery in order to operate an Infra-Class robot. Move next to it and press CTRL. You can now use the cursor keys or joystick to enter your program. ← and → will 'scroll' the menu and ↑ and ↓ will move the pointer through the program.

The programming options available are as follows:—

- HELP** — tells you which keys to use
- NEW** — deletes any existing program from Infra-Class robot's memory.
- DEL** — deletes current program line from the Infra Class robot's memory (you can also use the DEL key)
- RUN** — will run the Infra-Class robot's program and return to the game
- QUIT** — will quit programming mode and return to the game
- FREE** — will tell you how much memory space is left for programming Infra-Class robots
- MOVE** — makes the Infra-Class robot advance forward by the appropriate number of squares.

(N.B.) 'forwards' will always be towards the top left of the screen. If you want the Infra-Class robot to move in another direction, you must first program it to turn left or right before MOVEing. If you want it to MOVE backwards you must first program it to turn left or right *twice*.

- RIGHT** — turn right
- LEFT** — turn left
- TAKE** — take away anything within reach (1 item only)
- DROP** — drop what the Infra-Class robot is holding
- PAUSE** — stop for a short while
- JUMP** — jump in the direction it is facing
- RETURN** — this zaps your Infra-Class robot back to its start position (using a highly sophisticated micro-matter transmitter).

If you want your Infra-Class robot to store its program for later use, just program it as above and press the QUIT key when you have finished.

When you want it to activate the program, just move onto a square adjacent to it, and press TAB.

If you program your Infra-Class robot to move in a direction in which its way is blocked, it will probably move away sideways. This is known as a 'programming error'. (yours . . . not the author's).

If you go into programming mode whilst an Infra-Class is running a program it will stop.
(continued overleaf)

STATUS DISPLAY

The various boxes at the bottom of the screen display your current status as follows:—

STORAGE COMPARTMENTS

The four large boxes are 'compartments' in which any objects you pick up are stored. You can carry four objects at any one time, one for each box. The objects you are carrying will be displayed in their appropriate boxes or 'compartments'. The 'compartment' with the white border displays the object which will be dropped if you press DROP. This is always the large box on the left-hand side of the screen. If you wish to re-arrange your collection of objects, you will have to DROP them in turn and TAKE them in the correct sequence.

ENERGY GAUGE

This is the smaller box on the left hand side of the screen. The gauge moves up and down as you gain or lose energy. (Entering the room with the bomb will sap your energy at a very fast rate. To regain energy, stand next to a battery and press TAB.

CRYSTAL GAUGE

Located next to the Energy Gauge, shows how many crystals remain to be destroyed.

LIVES

Located next to the crystal gauge, shows how many lives you have left. You start a full game with 6, and a practice game with just one.

DROP OBJECTS

Located on the middle right of the screen, this box shows the maximum number of objects which can be dropped in the room you are currently in. Any room can only contain a maximum of eight objects at any one time, excluding objects being carried.

BOMB FUSE

This box appears at the far right of the screen, when you have dropped a bomb. It counts down the time left before the bomb will explode. Be sure to get well away from the bomb before it goes off!

Game concept and programming by Charles Goodwin

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