

STAR DRIFTER

Professional, Originally Released On Cassette Only

Game Type : Arcade Adventure In Rather Unique Style
Authors : T. J. Wilkinson & J. R. Day
Standalone Release(s) : 1985: STAR DRIFTER, Firebird, £3.99
1987: STAR DRIFTER, Firebird, £1.99 (BBC Side A/Elk Side B)
Compilation Release(s) : None
Stated compatibility : Electron
Actual compatibility : Electron
Supplier : FIREBIRD, Wellington House, Upper St. Martin's Lane, LONDON
WC2H 9DL
Disc compatibility : ADFS 1D00, CDFS, DFS

Instructions

"One of the Class VII B ships of the ill fated Galactic Colonisation Programme has mysteriously re-entered Earth space . . . totally silent. Non humanoid life forms have been detected on board. Enter the ship and take part in this extraordinary graphic adventure through 120 rooms to solve the enigma of the STAR DRIFTER . . ."

The Game

Your adventure aboard this ancient colonisation liner begins on the bridge; your task - to discover the answers to this strange disappearance of the fleet.

You may move freely around the open areas of the ship, discovering artifacts and clues; but many parts will be inaccessible to you without the keys to the computer controlled doors scattered around.

Beware of the intermittent force fields in some of the corridors which will drain your Oxygen supply when active. However, with an oxygenator unit, it is possible to replenish your Oxygen supply by standing in one of these forcefields. Watch out for the many alien life forms that have infiltrated the ship; they will rapidly reduce your oxygen supply if they are allowed to touch you.

Each of your three lives will be terminated when the Oxygen supply is exhausted.

Playing The Game

When the game has loaded, you will need to select the keys that you wish to use. From the title page, you may start the game by pressing <SPACE>.

Initially, communication with the Earth is impossible. Your first task therefore will be to locate the ship's RADIO and return it to the bridge, which is where you start the game.

You may only carry three items at any time; these are displayed on the left of the screen.

Instructions' Source : STAR DRIFTER (Firebird) Back and Inner Inlay

Review (Electron User)

The first thing that strikes you about STAR DRIFTER is the sophisticated loader complete with twinkling stars. The game allows you to define the keys you wish to use to move around, fire and pick up or drop objects. Other options include sound on or off to spare the rest of the family, and freeze/restart, which I always find useful to rest my aching fingers.

This is the latest in the current vogue for graphics adventures. Set in a maze of passages on board an ancient starship, your task is to uncover the mystery surrounding the disappearance of the other members of the fleet. The walls of the

passages are covered with strange equipment and messages, not unlike Egyptian hieroglyphics.

You soon find that you are not the only creature on board the ship, which is filled with a variety of small, colourful and deadly alien lifeforms, each of which will try to rob you of your vital oxygen supply. When you've picked up the gun you can gain points for zapping them as you travel round the ship.

The graphics are nicely done, as good on a colour TV as a black and white one. The spaceman moves fast and smooth, though it must be said that he slows somewhat when the screen is full of agitated aliens.

Some of the passages are blocked by walls which can be blasted, and others by force fields which repel you unless you are carrying the correct two keys.

Only three objects at a time can be carried, and the instructions suggest that you should start by returning the radio to the bridge to enable communication with Earth.

The limiting factors are three lives and the oxygen supply, so to solve this game you'll have to keep very busy.

STAR DRIFTER needs more thought than most space action games, and it should help bridge the gap between these and text adventures. All in all I quite liked it, even if I didn't get very far. It's well written and the package has been well produced.

Sound	4
Graphics	8
Playability	7
Value for money	8
Overall	7

Nick Rhodes, ELECTRON USER 3. 8

Solution (EUG)

Firebird's budget graphic adventure STAR DRIFTER is a roam around the spacecraft of the same name. It's a quirky little title, a lot tougher than it first appears, in which you have three lives with which to complete two missions. The first one is not particularly difficult. It is more of a gentle introduction to the playing style involved. The second one is the real puzzle.

STAR DRIFTER has had countless players weeping with frustration over the years due to its maze-like structure. Blasting thousands of aliens and working your way past some notoriously difficult combination doors often brings you the reward of nothing but an empty cavern!

The following solution is only one of the ways to complete STAR DRIFTER. It is best played alongside a printed out map of the extensive playing area. You should bear in mind the following points throughout:

1. Try and conserve energy at all times, particularly in the early parts of the game. If you lose a life in mission one, start again from the beginning.
2. There are occasions when you will have to make journeys without the gun. Also there are occasions when you will simply need to think hard about the items you are picking up and dropping. Try and minimise being 'mugged' by aliens by leaving, and then returning to, an area where they have crowded around your exit.
3. Only four aliens appear on each screen at the same time. Try and shoot any aliens in your area of the screen. If all four appear in an area separated by a maze wall from you then you can relax. This is especially helpful if you are trying to pick up and drop objects without interference.

Finally, note that there are more bombs, and a rather meatier gun, which are not collected in this solution. You don't need them to complete the game and collecting them takes a lot more time in a game that already takes about an hour to complete.

Mission One - Return The Radio

From the start, walk right two screens and get the gun. Continue right, blasting the door four screens on to pass through. Collect key 2.

Go left again three screens then down one. Go right onto the next screen, shoot the door and take the lower exit right. Cross the next screen left-to-right and on the next screen collect key 1.

Now go left seven screens, switching to the top passageway when you have to. Then go down six screens to the 1&2 door. Pass through it then immediately drop key 1.

There is a way down from this screen. Follow it down, right then walk across three screens where the lower level runs parallel. When you arrive at the end, move down to this lower level then go left four screens then down. Collect key 3 and don't leave anything behind.

Go back the way you came; e.g. up, right four screens, up to the parallel path above then left four screens and up. Don't collect key 1. Just continue up past it and up for six screens (until the passageway bends right). Follow the route right and through the 2&3 door.

Now go down into the square cavern and there's the radio! This next bit is a bit more tricky. You need to get the radio back through the door 2&3 but, as you can only carry three items, you need to leave the gun behind. So drop/pick up until you have key 2, key 3 and the radio. As fast as possible, go up and left through door 2&3 again. Drop the radio and return to get the gun again.

Go back to the radio and shuffle your inventory so you have key 2, the gun and the radio. You have to leave key 3 behind.

Now retrace your steps left four screens (until you can't go left any more), then down six screens to where you left key 1 at the 1&2 door. Pick up key 1 again and leave the gun so you can walk through the door with the radio. Once on the other side, drop the radio and walk back through to get the gun again. Once you have moved both the gun and the radio across the 1&2 door, carry the gun, the radio and key 1.

Go up six screens then right four screens. Go up one screen then keep going left to the cavern where you began the adventure. As you walk into it, the Radio will spring into life and you will receive a message from Mission Control.

Mission Two - Return The Mission Logbooks

Warning - The mission to return the radio is a stroll in the park compared to the rest of this adventure!

If you have followed the above, you will begin with the gun, Key 1 and Key 4. Make your way right four screens then down one before going left four screens and then down six screens back to the familiar 1&2 door. Pick up key 2, dropping key 4, and pass through the 1&2 door. Drop the gun momentarily and go back to get key 4.

Carry key 1, key 4 and the gun. Go up the passage on the right side of the screen. On the screen above go right and shoot through the door. Ignore the 6&7 door. Go up instead. On the next screen you will be entering the bottom left corner of an open space. Walk right along the bottom of this for two screens then go down and right again. You will approach a 1&4 door. Walk through it and immediately drop both key 1 and key 4. Go up on this screen and up on the next screen. You will enter a cavern which contains a bomb. Pick this up.

Now go back down onto the screen below and go right onto the next screen by the top exit. Go up and you will discover the oxygenator. If carrying this, the force-fields which usually deplete your energy will instead recharge it. Pick this up and then go down one screen, left one screen, down one screen and then right one screen. Walk into the force field and charge your energy up to maximum.

Go down one screen then right one screen. Shoot through the door that blocks your way then go up the passage right behind it. You will enter another open space. Again walk right along the bottom of it for two screens. Then go up two screens.

On your right will be an area shielded by a grey door. Walk up to this door and you will automatically drop the bomb. It will blow up, blasting you left into the wall. Walk back to the door and go right into the cavern it protected. Inside is key 5. Pick this up.

Now you need to get back to the 1&4door which is down two screens, left two screens, down one screen, left one screen, up one screen then left one screen. Remember *not* to avoid the force fields now as these keep your energy topped up!

At the keys do a complete swap of inventory, so you end up carrying key 1, key 4 and the oxygenator. Go left through the 1&4door then drop the oxygenator. Go back and get your all-important gun. However, you also need key 5 for the next part so find some space where you can drop the gun again and go back for key 5 as well. (You'll probably be mugged by the aliens whenever you're defenceless so if your energy falls too low abandon your plans, grab the oxygenator and leap into the nearest force field!)

With key 1, key 4, key 5 and the oxygenator all on the left of the 1&4door, you're ready to proceed. Carry the gun, key 5 and key 4 and go left one screen, up one screen into the bottom of the first open space and left two more screens. Go down into the screen with the 6&7door then left one screen and down two screens.

Walk right four screens until you reach the end of the passageway. Then go down and walk back left in parallel for three screens. As soon as there is a way down, take it.

On the next screen take the bottom exit right and you will be beside the 5&4door. Don't walk through it. Instead, drop the gun, key 4 and key 5 next to it. You are going to have to avoid the aliens for the next part so grab any oxygen bags scattered around en route.

Retrace your steps all the way back to the 1&2door. Here you'll find key 2, abandoned from earlier. Collect it.

Now you also need key 1 and the oxygenator for the next bit so you need to continue up then go right, through the broken door, up by the 6&7door, right two screens across the open space, down and into the area where you left key 1 earlier. Pick it up then go all the way back to the 1&2door and then, of course, down one screen, right three screens, down to the parallel left passage, left three screens, down one and then take the bottom exit right.

The next part is pretty infuriating in its difficulty. You end up unarmed for a good few seconds whilst being mobbed by aliens. If you make a mistake while juggling your inventory the situation continues longer. So, although it doesn't always happen, you should expect to lose one of your lives here. The trick is to remain calm and try to do the switch as quickly as possible. If your energy gets too low for your liking then grab the oxygenator and run downwards off the screen. There are quite a few force fields around when you can recharge.

Drop key 1, key 2 and the oxygenator and get the gun, key 4 and key 5. Go through the key5&4 door and drop the gun. Go back left through the door and get key 1. Go back right through the door and drop key 1 then back left through the door and get key 2. Go back right through the door and exchange key 2 for the gun. Now carry key 1, key 5 and the gun and go right two screens.

Walk through the key5&1 door. Immediately, drop key 5 then go down and right into a cavern which contains key 6. Collect it then go left and back up again to where you left key 5. Swap key 5 for key 6 so you are now carrying key 1, key 5 and the gun. Now once again, you have to drop the gun because you have to go back to get key 2.

So with just key 1 and key 5 (and a song in your heart), leg it as fast as possible right two screens, pick up key 2 and race back to your gun. Carry key 2, key 6 and the gun and go right one screen.

Walk through the 2&6door and immediately drop the gun and go back left to collect key 5. Go back right through the 2&6door and carry key 5, key 6 and the gun. Now go right two screens and at the shielded door go down to the 5&6door. Walk through it and immediately drop the gun (You are about to collect key 7 and this frees up the space needed). Go right into a cavern and collect key 7.

You now have to go all the way back along the route you just traversed, back through the 2&6door, the 5&1door and the 5&4door. Juggle keys, the oxygenator and the gun as necessary to wind up with yourself and all of the keys to the left of the 5&4door. This takes a considerable amount of time. Always abandon your plans and run with the oxygenator to the nearest force field if your energy falls close to zero.

Finally the area to the left of the 5&4door will be littered with keys. Carry key 2, key 4 and the gun and go left from the screen with the 5&4door. On this screen, you will appear in the right of the bottom passage. Without leaving the screen go up and exit via the right of the top passage. Go right across the next screen and drop key 2 and key 4 in front of the 2&4door. Then go back left to where you left all the keys and get key 1 and key 7.

Go back to the 2&4door and shuffle the keys and the gun so you pass through it. On the right side leave key 2 and key 4 so you are carrying key 1, key 7 and the gun. Now go right four screens (shooting through one door en route) until the passage continues upwards. Go up, through one screen and left on the next one. Go up one screen and you will be entering the second open space again. This time go up three screens so you are at the top of it. Then go right one screen and up to leave the open space. On your right will be a 1&7door.

Leave key 1 and key 7 at this door and then go down through the open space for four screens until you reach the bottom. Go left one screen then down three screens. Go left three screens and collect key 2 and key 4 so you can walk through the 2&4door. As soon as you've passed through, drop key 2 but keep hold of key 4. Go left two screens, down to the lower level and collect key 5 from wherever you dropped it earlier.

Go right and back through the 5&4door. Drop key 5 on the other side of it then go down and avoid the force field. Go right into a cavern where there is another bomb. Collect the bomb then go back left and up to the 5&4door. Shuffle the items so you can go left back through the 5&4door and move the bomb and all the keys to the left of it. Now carry key 4, key 6 and the gun and go left from the 5&4door and up and right two screens to the 2&4door. Switch key 6 for key 2 and walk right through the door then drop the gun and return to grab key 6 again. Go back right through the door and drop key 6 in a space.

The aliens seem to be quite forgiving in this area, don't they? So, just carrying key 2 and key 4, run left back through the door and left one screen, grab the bomb from where you left it and run back right and through the 2&4door again. Now carry the bomb, the gun and key 6.

Go right four screens then up two screens. Walk up to the shielded area and the bomb will explode and blast you backwards. There's no need to explore beyond it at this point so, from where you land, walk right one screen then go up four screens. You will leave the caverns and go through the open space as you did before. Go right one screen and then up to the 1&7door. By shuffling your inventory, get yourself and key 6 on the right of it. Then carry the gun alone and go up into a cavern containing key 8. Get key 8 and go down again. Drop key 8, get key 1 and key 7 and go left through the 1&7door again. You now need to retrieve key 2 and key 3 for the rescue of the first logbook!

Drop key 1 and key 7 to the left of the 1&7door and just carry the gun. Now go down through the open space four screens, left one screen and down three screens. Go left four screens until you find key 2 and key 4 next to the 2&4door again. Pick up both keys and continue left through the door. Drop key 4. Go left two more screens and find and collect the oxygenator. You're probably running low on energy by now!

Head up and turn right at the broken door. Cross the parallel passages along the bottom left to right for three screens then, as usual, switch to the top passage and go left three screens. Go up and you'll be back at the old 1&2door. Continue up past it for another six screens then go right four screens until you find key 3 where you left it during the mission to find the radio. (Remember that?) Pick it up and leave the oxygenator. You will now be carrying key 2, key 3 and the gun. It's time to go and rescue that first logbook at last.

Go back along the exact same route you came: so left four screens, down seven screens, right three (along the top of the parallel passages), down and left three (along the bottom), down one screen, right six screens (along the top passage and through door2&4). Leave behind key 4 on the right of door2&4. Go up two screens into the open space and up another three to the top of it. Then go right one screen and up one screen to arrive left of door1&7.

Now the next part really is difficult. You have to change inventory in very confined spaces and aliens teleport in to drain your energy routinely. On the next few screens to the right there are three more doors: in turn the 6&8door, the 7&8door and another 2&3door. All the keys are to hand but it is impossible to give a real walkthrough to this part. You need to get key 2 and key 3 through each door in turn by dropping the gun as you're used to doing. It is possible but you should expect to lose another of your lives at this point as the aliens are merciless in distracting you from it. To the left of the 2&3door there is always a bag of oxygen to replenish your supply. You will certainly need it.

When you finally get through the 2&3door to the cavern with the log book, the battle's still far from won. You now need to drop the gun to get it back through the succession of gates. When it's finally to the left of the 1&7door you need to go through the whole rigmarole again to get key 9 which is one screen to the right of the 7&8door. Tough work indeed!

You need eventually to get the gun, log book, key 1 and key 9 to the left of the 7&8door. Then carry the gun, key 1 and key 9 and go down three screens through the open space, right one screen and down one screen. You are now ready to go through the door you blew up earlier so go right one screen, right through the 1&9door. Drop key 1 and key 9 then go right one more screen and then up two screens and left into a cavern containing the second log book. Collect it.

Now go back right one screen, down two screens and left one screen to the 1&9door. Switch your inventory around and pass through the door. On the other side, drop the log book so you are carrying the gun, key 1 and key 9. Go left four screens, up one screen, left one screen, up one screen and then right one screen. Now go up three screens until you reach another 1&9door. Drop key 1 and key 9 here. You are now entering the very last stage of STAR DRIFTER.

All you need to do now is to recover the log books from where you left them! So the first one is at the top of the open space. From the 1&9door go down three screens, left one screen, down one screen, right one screen, down one screen, right one screen, then up four screens through the open space. Go right one screen and up one screen and collect the log book. Now the second one at the bottom of the open space. So go down four screens to the bottom then right one screen, down one screen and right one screen. Be careful not to walk straight into the 1&4door (Easily done in the excitement!) and pick up the second log book.

Carrying the gun and both log books, proceed left four screens, up one screen, left one screen, up one screen, right one screen, up three screens and you'll be back at the 1&9door. Drop the gun and carry one of the log books, key 1 and key 9. Go through the door, drop the log book, go back left and take the second log book and do the same. Now carry the gun and the two log books again. You're now on the final stretch.

Go right one screen, up one screen, left two screens, up one screen and then keep going left for four screens until you arrive in the same place you began. And with that, you've completed both the mission and STAR DRIFTER!