

AETHERIA

— The Bio-Mechanical Abyss —

For the AMSTRAD CPC 6128 · 128K · Disc

REVIVE8BIT Software · 2026 · Beyond The Pixels



THE STORY

Long before the first city raised its towers, the Ancients hollowed out a world and filled it with machinery. They called it **Aetheria** — a planetary engine the size of a moon, built to keep a dying star alive. For ten thousand years its pistons breathed, its conduits sang, and its Core burned bright at the centre of everything.

Then, silence.

Nobody remembers who left the Engine to rust, or why its keeper — the **Warden** — sealed the Core and turned against its own maintenance drones. The vents filled with scrap-life. The crystal conduits grew wild. The mainframe dreamed cold, corrupted dreams.

You are **SPARK** — the last living pulse of the Engine's ignition system. A mote of pure energy with a stubborn will and a fading charge. Somewhere far below, the Core is still warm. Reach it. Reignite it. **Wake the world machine.**

But the way down is barred by ancient energy seals, and the powers you were built with have been scattered across the Abyss. You will have to find them all — and face the Warden — before Aetheria breathes again.

LOADING THE GAME

1. Switch on your Amstrad CPC 6128.
2. Insert the AETHERIA disc, label side up.
3. Type RUN"AETHERIA and press **RETURN**.
4. Admire the loading screen, then press **SPACE** to begin (or wait 10 seconds and the Engine will start itself — it is impatient).

The game requires an Amstrad CPC 6128 or a 464/664 with 128K and a disc drive. In an emulator, simply mount `aetheria.dsk` and do the same.

YOUR MISSION

Explore the interconnected chambers of the Engine, screen by screen, across three great regions:

- **THE RUST VENTS** — warm, hissing plate-work crawling with scrap-life;
- **THE CRYSTAL CONDUITS** — glittering energy channels, cold and sharp;
- **THE MAINFRAME** — the deep circuitry where the Warden waits.

Recover the **five lost skills**, arm yourself with the **three weapons** of the ignition system, throw the switches the Ancients left behind, and pass the three great seals. Beyond the last of them: the **Warden**, and the **Core** itself.

Doors sealed with glowing energy require a skill you do not yet possess — the HUD will tell you which. Heavy blast doors open only when their hidden mechanism is triggered. **Everything can be reached. Nothing is optional by accident.**



THE SCREEN

The lower strip of the screen is your lifeline:



- **PIPS** (left): your five health cells. Lose them all and Spark dissipates.
 - **ENERGY BAR**: powers your weapons and phasing. It recharges constantly — patience is ammunition.
 - **WEAPON**: the currently selected weapon.
 - **PTS**: your score — gems and scrapped machines (see *Treasures of the Abyss*).
 - **COMPASS LINE**: an arrow and a name — the direction of your next objective, e.g. > **FIND DOUBLE JUMP**. When you stand before a sealed door it tells you what the seal demands.
 - **MINI-MAP** (right): every chamber you have visited. Your position blinks; the Core burns red.
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CONTROLS

Key	Action
Cursor Left / Right	run
Cursor Up	climb (on walls, with Wall-Cling)
Cursor Down	drop through thin ledges
SPACE	jump — hold for height, press again in the air to double jump
SHIFT	dash
S or M	fire weapon
A	fire straight up (<i>requires the Up-Shot skill</i>)
W	change weapon
C (hold)	phase through ghost-matter
P / ESC / TAB	pause — full map of the known world & your record
R	self-destruct back to the last checkpoint (for the truly stuck)

A joystick may be used for movement; button 1 jumps, button 2 fires. The keyboard is still needed for dashing and phasing — the Ancients assumed you would have at least three hands.

THE FIVE LOST SKILLS

Each skill sleeps inside a glowing **ability orb**. Walk into it and it is yours forever.



DOUBLE JUMP — a second impulse in mid-air. The red seals of the Rust Vents answer to it.

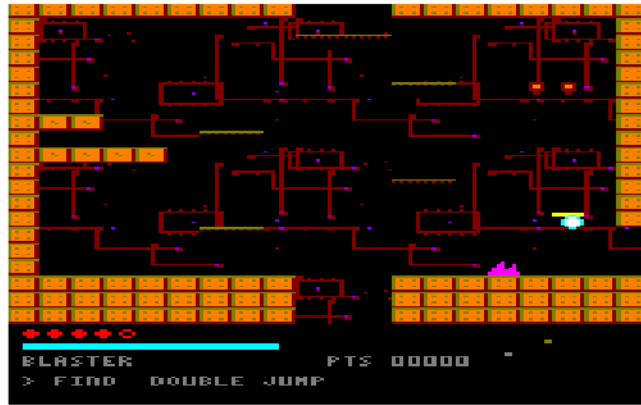
DASH — a lightning blink forward. While dashing you are untouchable, and anything you pass through regrets it. Opens the way to the Mainframe.

WALL-CLING — press into a wall to slide slowly; hold **Up** to climb; jump off the wall to leap away. The mark of a true vent-runner.

PHASE — hold **C** to become ghost-matter and drift through the pale, shimmering blocks. Drains energy fast. The Core seal answers only to this.

UP-SHOT — re-aims your weapon skyward. Press **A** and the ceiling is no longer safe for

anyone.



THE ARSENAL

Weapons draw from your energy bar — watch it, or you will be reduced to harsh language.

PULSE BLASTER (4 energy) — your faithful sidearm. Fast bolt, modest sting, never jams.

SCATTER-SHOT (22 energy) — six pellets in a spreading fan. Short range, glorious damage — and the only thing that **shatters cracked walls**. Listen for the crunch.

PLASMA BLADE (12 energy) — a crescent of burning plasma. It bites hard, **bats enemy shots back at their owners**, and is the only tool delicate enough to trip a melee switch.

TREASURES OF THE ABYSS

The Engine keeps score. Every machine you scrap is worth a small bounty — and in the blind alleys of the world, where a corridor simply *stops*, the Ancients left their **prize gems**.



A gem is worth **500 points** and can be claimed **once per game** — but never cheaply. Some glitter on perches no simple jump will reach; one sleeps sealed inside a box of ghost-matter. If you can see a gem and cannot touch it, you are missing a skill, not a way.

Your score glows on the **PTS** counter of the HUD, and the Core tallies it when Aetheria is reborn. Dead ends are never dead in Aetheria — they are savings accounts.

KNOW YOUR ENEMY

The Engine's fauna is out of warranty. A field guide:

	Name	Notes
	CRAWLER	Patrols the plate-work. Dim but persistent.
	FLOATER	Drifts on lazy currents. Harmless-looking. Isn't.
	SENTINEL	Hovers, tracks, and fires. Shows commendable dedication.
	CHARGER	Winds up, then rams like a freight piston. Sidestep the telegraph.
	HOVER-TURRET	Stationary, patient, and it <i>leads its shots</i> . Keep moving.
	STALKER-DRONE	Hunts you around corners. Flattery, of a sort.
	ARMORED CRAWLER	Frontal armour shrugs off everything. Jump it. Educate it from behind.
	THE WARDEN	Guardian of the Core. Fans of fire, and a temper that <i>doubles</i> when wounded.

Touching any of them hurts. Dashing through them hurts *them*.

MACHINES AND MECHANISMS

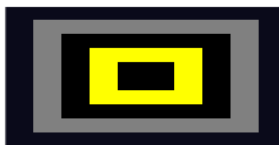
SHOOT SWITCHES — dark sockets set into the machinery. One clean hit lights them up and throws some distant bolt.



MELEE SWITCHES — too finely made for gunfire. Only the Plasma Blade's arc will do.

PRESSURE PLATES & BLOCKS — an old failsafe: push the heavy block onto the plate

and *keep it there*. The mechanism holds only while the weight does.



SEQUENCE PANELS — three switches, one correct order, six seconds. The Ancients enjoyed their little tests. Wrong order? Start again.

BLAST DOORS — massive riveted slabs. Each one is wired to a mechanism somewhere in the *neighbouring* chamber. The treasure vaults of Aetheria hide behind them.

CRACKED WALLS — hairline fractures in the plating. The Scatter-Shot turns them into doorways.

THE MAP AND THE COMPASS

Press **P**, **ESC** or **TAB** at any time:

```
PAUSED

          ■
        ■ ■
    SCORE 00000 TIME 000 MIN DEATHS 000
    SKILLS DJUMP DASH CLING PHASE UPSHOT
    WEAPONS BLASTER SCATTER BLADE
    CURSORS MOVE SPACE JUMP SHIFT DASH
    S FIRE A UP W WEAPON C PHASE F PAUSE
          P OR TAB - RESUME
    ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
    BLASTER PTS 00000 ■
    > FIND DOUBLE JUMP
```

The Engine pauses politely. The full 8×8 lattice of the world appears — every chamber you have charted in cyan, your position blinking white, the Core burning red in the deep — together with your score, your time, your deaths, your progress through skills and weapons, and a reminder of the controls for the moment your fingers forget. Press again to resume.

DEATH AND REAWAKENING

When your last pip goes dark, Spark dissipates — but ignition systems are built to retry. You reawaken at the door of the chamber that killed you, fully charged, everything you had collected still yours. Only your pride takes permanent damage: the deaths counter never forgets.

SURVIVAL TIPS FROM THE VENTS

1. A short tap of SPACE makes a short hop. Live by this.
2. Energy is time. Retreat, let the bar climb, return rude.
3. The compass points to your next skill. The scenic route is optional — and usually profitable.
4. Armored Crawlers turn around slowly. That is not a flaw in their design. It is an

- invitation.
5. The Warden's fans have gaps. Below half strength, the fans grow — and so must you.
 6. Blast doors mean treasure. If a wall looks cracked, it is a door that hasn't been informed yet.
 7. Dashing is a weapon, an escape, and a dodge. Its cooldown is shorter than your panic.
 8. Heard a switch click three rooms away? Remember where you were.
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CREDITS

Design, Code & Bio-Mechanical Plumbing — REVIVE8BIT **Original Concept** — *Aetheria: The Bio-Mechanical Abyss* (.NET/Raylib) **Z80 Wrangling, World Baking & AY Noises** — the Revive8Bit workshop **Published** — 2026, for the machine that deserved it

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