

## In Emulation

In this issue's instalment, Damian Walker emulates an HP48 calculator..

One of the most unlikely games machines that you'll find is a calculator. Not the kind of calculator on which children try and spell out words like "BOOBLESS" upside down, nor that kind of game. But certain sophisticated programmable scientific calculators have reached a level of complexity surpassing the old Psion Organiser II, which many readers will remember. One such calculator is the Hewlett-Packard HP-48 series.

The Hewlett-Packard HP-48 calculators are best known for their use of Reverse Polish Notation. Instead of typing  $5 \times 13 =$  as on a normal calculator, you would type  $5 \ 13 \ \times$  instead, with the 5 and 13 being placed on a "stack" before the  $\times$  multiplies them. Complex formulae and even programs can be built up in this way. The calculator can also be programmed in machine language, making it possible to write any sort of application—including games.

HP's own 4-bit Saturn microprocessor powers the calculator, running at 2 or 4 MHz, depending on the model. The display of the HP48 is  $131 \times 64$  pixels. It's an odd size, and smaller even than the Psion Series 3, but it's good enough for many types of game that don't require a great amount of detail. The HP48 has adventure, arcade, board and card games, as well as some other types of game too.

For EPOC32 there is the emulator Emu48E, which comes in two flavours. One emulates the HP48SX model, and the other emulates the HP48GX. The GX is the more advanced of the two. The emulation software

is very easy to install, being a simple SIS file packed in a ZIP. No extra ROM files are needed to boot up the calculator, everything being supplied in the SIS.

Installing games is not quite as easy as with some other emulators. A "Load object" item on the "Edit" menu allows the software to be loaded and placed on the stack. What you then do with it depends upon whether it's a machine code library or an RPL program. More details about installing and running software can be found on the [www.hpcalc.org/](http://www.hpcalc.org/) web site. Emu48E saves the machine state each time you quit, so that once you've installed a core of games and applications on your virtual calculator, they'll be there until you delete them.

There is quite a large number of games for the HP48—possibly more games than are available for EPOC32. The best sources I found are the

above mentioned [www.hpcalc.org/](http://www.hpcalc.org/) site, from which these screen shots are taken, and [belois.cher-alice.fr/hp48.html](http://belois.cher-alice.fr/hp48.html)

which also has a large number of games to download. Many of the games lack depth, but there are exceptions, including very good little clones of *Lemmings* and *Street Fighter II*. Board games are available in abundance, including some that are not available natively to EPOC32 (nine men's morris being one of my favourites). Someone's even tried to squeeze a Go board onto the little screen! Card games are lacking in detail, though, and there seems to be little of value not available in EPOC32 versions. Sadly for me, there appear to be no strategy games.

I would recommend HP48 for a taste of something different. The range of games is quite good, and if you can cope with the fiddly little display, you might just find some of them entertaining.



EPOC

# ENTERTAINER

Editor: Damian Walker

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In this issue: Shipmania

To those who thought that *EPOC Entertainer* had stalled again and might not be out in February, all I can say is... "Oh ye of little faith!"

While work commitments at the end of January prevented the magazine being published at the start of the month, I've been working hard to get it published as soon as possible. And here it is!

Instead of rushing the issue out though, I've taken a little more time over it and have therefore been able to catch up with some news I missed in recent editions: see below. These are thanks to

[psionwelt.de](http://psionwelt.de) and to John Spillet of [tobidog.com](http://tobidog.com), whose efforts are keeping the world of EPOC32 software interesting.

This month I bring you the usual two reviews: one of Adam Sissman's *Logjam* card game, and one of Michael Hadlich's *Shipmania* battleships game. The *In Emulation* series also continues with a look at an unusual games platform.

I hope you enjoy this issue. Please get in touch with any comments or suggestions you might have. You can contact me at the usual address.

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## Software News

Damian Walker looks at recent happenings with games software in the EPOC world.

It's time to catch up on a few items of news that have slipped past *EPOC Entertainer* over the last few issues.

### Mondopondo

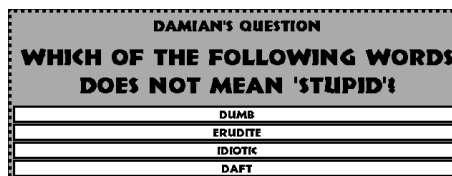
Mat Ripley's quiz game *Mondopondo* is now available free of charge. You can still download the EPOC32 version from the web site, <http://yadabyte.com/>.

### Ultimate Poker

Having failed to get in touch with the author, John Spillet has provided a generic registration code for *Ultimate Poker* at his site <http://tobidog.com/>

### Wrippers

Also at John Spillet's <http://tobidog.com/> site is a registration code for *Wrippers*. Regular readers may remember that an aborted review was published back in *EPOC Entertainer* issue 8. The registration code will allow a full review to appear in a future issue.



## Stuck in a Jam

### Damian Walker reviews Adam Sissman's Logjam card patience game.

The EPOC32 operating system is blessed with a number of card patience or solitaire games, those card games designed to amuse a single player. One of these is Palmscape's Logjam, a shareware program by Adam Sissman, named after the traditional game of the same name.

In Logjam, eight columns of cards are dealt on the tableau, face up, with all fifty-two cards plus four jokers. Beside the tableau are four foundation spaces, one for each suit, which start the game empty. The object of the game is to move all the cards from the tableau to the foundation area, discarding the jokers. Rules limit the movement of cards. Only the last card on a column can be moved at once. But cards must be moved to the foundations in groups of three or more, so to move cards to the stack of hearts for instance, you have to locate three heart cards at the end of their columns. Jokers stand in for any suit, but are discarded rather than adding them to a foundation. Finally, when a column is emptied, a card may be moved from the end of another column to fill the space.

This game differs from the more usual Klondike (Windows Solitaire) in that you can see all the cards at once, and so you can plan ahead. Apart from the initial deal, nothing needs to be left to chance. In this it feels a bit like Golf, the patience game built into some Psion Series 3 models. If you don't think ahead a little, the game can lull you into a false sense of security. It's easy to find three of the same suit to move to a foundation. But if you're not careful you can find yourself left with a single spade at the end of the game, for instance, and no jokers left to match it with.

Logjam can be quite addictive, like other patience games. If you've planned ahead, then there's the feeling you have to go that little bit further before allowing your game to be interrupted. Every deal is, of course, different. Sometimes your initial position is quite restricted, and your first few moves are automatic. At other times you're given more choice. I haven't managed to find out whether every game is possible to finish, though.

Palmscape's program is a neat and tidy version of the game. It has few frills. Graphics are workmanlike, and sound is limited to a barely intelligible announcement when a game is finished. The author has added a bonus round, where your score can be increased by repeatedly drawing a card and guessing if the next card will be higher or lower. You can collect at any time, but lose the entire bonus if you guess wrongly.

Having been written between 1998 and 1999, Logjam supports only the Series 5 and direct compatibles. As with many games, it will

run in letterbox mode on machines with larger screens, but will not scale down to the Revo or the Osaris. Despite being written when all EPOC32 machines ran at

18 MHz, some aspects of the game run very slowly on a stock Series 5. Menus are very sluggish, and the dealing takes a while. The latter could be a deliberate attempt at realism, but without accompanying sounds the slow deal is more tedious than realistic.

Logjam can no longer be registered. The registration link given in the game is no longer active, and a Google search did not give much alternative information about the game's availability. But as the unregistered version is fully playable, I can still recommend that readers give it a try.

Author	Palmscape
URL	<a href="http://psion.cyningstan.org.uk">psion.cyningstan.org.uk</a>
Licence	Shareware
Systems	Series 5/5mx
Rating	☆☆☆

## Ship Ahoy!

### Damian Walker reviews Michael Hadlich's Battleships game Shipmania.

The game of Battleships brings back vague memories of around 1980 for me. Milton Bradley sold a plastic version of the game with peg markers and electronic noises. I never had this version of the game, but remember its all too frequent advertisements on the television.

For those who may not have played the game: it's actually a game for pen and paper designed before the First World War. At the start of the game, players lay out a preset selection of fighting ships on his own secret grid. Then each player takes turns to fire at the enemy, calling out co-ordinates for his salvoes. His opponent will tell him when he has hit part of a ship, or sunk an entire ship. A player wins the game by sinking all his opponent's ships.

Michael Hadlich's EPOC32 version for the Revo, Series 5 and Series 7 retains the game play of the pen and paper original, but with some slight changes in the rules. There are also some extra features that make the game more convenient to play, or allow you to select variations in rules.

A myriad of options allows you to configure what sort of game you want to play. You can choose the size of grid to play on. Pen and paper games were usually limited to 10x10 grids, and the plastic game, though larger, was still of a fixed size. You can also choose the number of ships, which is confusingly disguised as a "difficulty" level. And you can decide whether ships must have gaps between them or not.

There are some fixed rules which could have done with being optional, though. Shipmania allows ships of a single grid square—never part of the original game, where part of the challenge was to find the rest of the ship when you had hit one

part of it. Another is the placing of ships facing diagonally, which again was never part of the original game. But these details would only offend Battleship purists, should any exist.

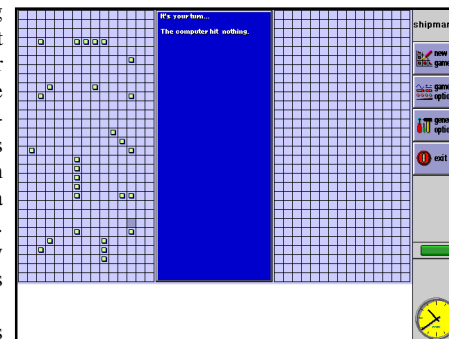
Graphics in the game are very simplistic. An attractive title screen leads on to a well laid out but very basic display of two map grids with a text display in between. When your ships have been placed, they are shown as square blocks on the grid. As the game progresses, and ships have been hit, damaged parts are shown as a circle. I think some opportunity for more attractive graphics has been missed here.

Sound is claimed to be present in the game, but when I selected the appropriate option in the Game Options dialog, the game remained silent. There are no sound files in the game's directory in the system folder, so I assume they were accidentally left out of the SIS file.

One positive point about the game is that it is one of the few to support infra-red games between two players. While Psions are rare nowadays, and it's seldom that one meets another owner in the normal course of life, I think infra-red play might entertain our friends in Austria at

their regular Vienna meetings at least.

I'll make a confession. When, a few years after seeing those advertisements on television, I was given a pen and paper version of the game with pretty pre-drawn map sheets, I found it unengaging. I still find it a less interesting game than Squares on pen and paper, though it beats noughts and crosses. But for those who find the game enjoyable—especially those with a Psion-owning friend—Shipmania is worth trying out.



Author	Michael Hadlich
URL	<a href="http://psion.cyningstan.org.uk">psion.cyningstan.org.uk</a>
Licence	Freeware
Systems	Revo, Series 5/5mx, Series 7/netBook
Rating	☆☆☆