

## Let it Wrip!

A second attempt by Damian Walker to review *Wrippers*, the artillery strategy game.

Back in issue 8 I made an attempt to review the strategy game *Wrippers*, by Popidea. I had to give up in the end, as the time limit placed on the unregistered version was that short I didn't have time to evaluate the program. Since then, John Spillett at <http://tobidog.com/> has found a generic key, after finding the game could no longer be registered. So, equipped with this key, I can now try to review the game again.

*Wrippers* is an artillery game, like *Scorched Cannons* reviewed in issue 10 of *EPOC Entertainer*. The object of the game is to kill all your opponents with projectile weapons of one sort or another, players taking turns to do fire at each other. The skill is in your aim—judging the angle and power required when firing your weapon.

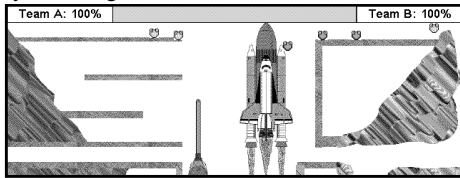
Unlike the 3-dimensional *Scorched Cannons*, *Wrippers* uses a pure 2-dimensional view. Each player controls a team of three *wrippers*, the creatures that give the game its name. The range of weapons available is good, including bazookas, assault rifles, bombs and missiles. Extra tools allow the building of walls and bridges to protect your team against attack or to advance towards the enemy.

The game contains a certain amount of humour which is most apparent if you take the time to read the manual. This is recommended, as some of the controls are not immediately obvious from the user interface. The help system is unavailable during play, so you'll need to read it beforehand if you're not to get stuck.

The graphics are very well-drawn, making this an attractive game. Good sound has also been provided too, with each weapon making its own particular noise. This is a good job, as the animation is not always clear. Sometimes I have trouble knowing what the enemy has fired,

from where, at which member of my team. Luckily the health of all the participants is displayed at the end of each turn, so if you miss the animation you can at least see who has been injured.

General playability is good, with the game being more addictive to my mind than *Scorched Cannons*. The ability to build bridges and walls adds to the game. It is unfortunate that these are drawn as simple black blocks, but this is due to something which is an advantage in the game: user-designed levels. The game allows you to draw your own levels using Sketch or any graphics package from which you can save an MBM. You can draw a level on a PC-based package like Photoshop or The Gimp and convert it using PsiWin, BMCONV or nConvert, making it easy to draw some very artistic battle fields. Obviously *Wrippers* is unable to make its bridges and walls match the variety of backgrounds that could be drawn, so the author has opted to make them plain.



Compatibility with this game is limited to the Series 5, 5mx and Ericsson MC218. It can be played in letterbox mode on the Geofox, Series 7 and netBook, but Revo, Mako and Osaris screens lack the resolution to play the game. On the sprightly MC218 the computer can take a while to consider its move, and this waiting around detract from what ought to be a quick and lightweight game. But *Wrippers* allows two players to compete too, and obviously in a two-player game slow AI is not a problem.

So, if you get yourself to John Spillett's site for the registration code then this game is worth a look as a lighter alternative to *Scorched Cannons*.

Author	Popidea
URL	<a href="http://psion.cyningstan.org.uk">psion.cyningstan.org.uk</a>
Licence	Shareware
Systems	Series 5/5mx, Ericsson MC218
Rating	☆☆☆

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# ENTERTAINER

Editor: Damian Walker

In this issue: *Wrippers* is back!

Here in England spring time has arrived, and soon we'll be having the kind of weather that allows me to sit out in the park, sunlight streaming onto my little Psion's screen, playing games or writing reviews.

This issue of *EPOC Entertainer* brings the promised article about playing games on the Geofox. I finally revisit *Wrippers* in this issue too, with the help of John Spillett. And finally there's a review that will be of interest to owners of all machines *RMR Boxx*.

The RMR Boxx review is the first that I've prepared completely using the Oregon Scientific Osaris, whose praises I sang back in issue 4. I can now say that not only is it a great little machine for games, but it's not a bad machine to work on either. But you do need good lighting conditions!

As usual, if you've any comments or suggestions to make about the magazine, get in touch at the email address below.

[entertainer@cyningstan.org.uk](mailto:entertainer@cyningstan.org.uk)

## In Search of Missing Games

A call for help by Damian Walker in searching for some games missing from the EPOC32 Games Database

When putting together the *EPOC32 Games Database* back at the end of 2007 there were some games I had to give up on, simply because I couldn't find them. In particular three games from French author *Eric Schrafstetter* seem to be very elusive.

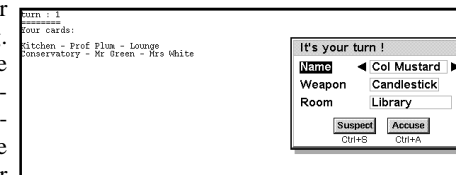
The games database has records of four games by Eric: *Cluedo Light*, *La France*, *Labyrinthes* and *Memory Blocks*. *Cluedo Light* is online, but the other three are still missing. The Wayback Machine ([web.archive.org](http://web.archive.org)) appears to have downloadable copies, but the ZIP files it has appear

to be corrupt. I've drawn a blank on other avenues of my search, too.

So I'm asking readers for help. If you have copies of Eric's missing games, if you have contact details for Eric or if you can otherwise throw light upon this then please do get in touch!

I do have an extra request, though: if you find a ZIP archive for one of these games I'd be

grateful if you could check that it installs and runs on an EPOC machine before sending it on. Corrupt, useless versions seem to have spread far and wide.



*Cluedo Light* is the only one of the games available.

## Taming the Fox

Damian Walker examines the ill-fated Geofox One as a gaming platform.

In *EPOC Entertainer* 25, I promised you an article looking at the Geofox One as a platform for EPOC32 games. Now I've had some time to play with the machine, I feel competent to execute the task. But as an aside, I can assure you that with its spongy keyboard, it's not an ideal machine for typing articles!

The first thing I noticed about the Geofox that was specifically relevant to gaming was the inclusion of Purple Software's Chess in the ROM, alongside the Bombs game from the Series 5. Now while I like Bombs as a way to kill a few moments here and there, Purple Software's EPOC chess game is a world apart. The special Geofox version supports all the 3D views of the standard version, and this is a game I hope to review in future.

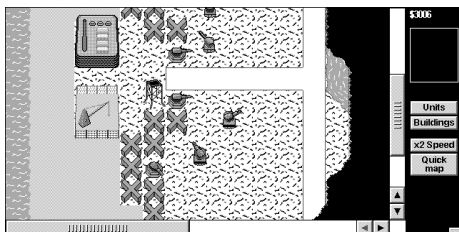
Before experimenting too much with games on the Geofox there are a few things that need your attention. Firstly, the computer uses the EPOC release 3, like the Series 5 classic, so if you haven't already done so you need to run *INST\_TE.EXE* from the Message Suite CD. If you don't do this the machine doesn't recognise SIS files.

The other issues are Geofox-specific omissions or bugs in the ROM. EPOC's screen dump facility is missing on the Geofox, so you need to install a third-party replacement if you want to take screen shots. Of more interest to the general user is a bug that resets the computer if you run OPL games that use 16 grey scales. A patch is available to fix this, and is available along with the screen dump utility from the EPOC Entertainer web site.

Like the Osaris, the Geofox has its own screen resolution not shared by other EPOC32 machines. At 640x320 pixels, the screen is bigger than the Series 5. This means that almost all games that run on a Series 5 will also run on a Geofox. Many games will do this by running in "letterbox mode" as on the Series 7 and netBook, with the bottom portion of the screen

left unused. Some games will improve slightly on this by centring the Series 5-sized display on the Geofox screen: *Vexed* is an example of where this has worked well. There are games that make better use of the screen area. *Castle III* and *No Mans Land* both use all the available screen space so the player can see more of the game map than on a Series 5. *Castle III* also makes clever use of the toolbar, fitting as many buttons on there as it can, and it even makes sure that "Close" is always the last button shown. A few games have specially-designed graphics for the Geofox: my own more recent games do this, though some just fill the extra space with a decorative panel.

The Geofox has another significant difference from the Series 5: the touch-sensitive screen and stylus is replaced by a "GlidePoint" mouse pad. It was ahead of its time, and while it allows a clearer display by dispensing with the touch-sensitive layer of other EPOC32



*No Mans Land on the big screen of the Geofox*

machines, it does cause issues with some software designed with a stylus in mind. *Vexed* is slightly awkward, as it relies on dragging, done on the Geofox with a quick double-tap and slide of the finger. *Onyx Light* and *Tac Tile* rely even more on drag and drop, and with *Onyx Light* needing dexterity too it is almost impossible to play on the Geofox. *Castle III* appears to try and track the pointer even when you're not dragging, but it can be played well enough with the keyboard alone most of the time.

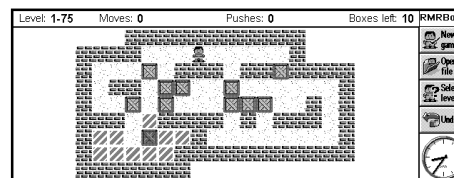
Overall, my gaming experience of the Geofox has been quite positive so far, despite the keyboard and difficulties with the GlidePoint mouse pad. The big, clear screen is a real improvement over the Series 5 for some games. If you're lucky enough to have one of these machines tucked away somewhere then get it out and have a play with it!

## All Boxed In

RMR and FatCatz Software's RMRBoxx is reviewed by Damian Walker..

*Sokoban* is a hugely popular puzzle game invented in 1980 by Hiroyuki Imabayashi, and published over the following decade by Japanese software house Thinking Rabbit. As with other very popular games, *Sokoban* has been imitated by a large number of clones and derivative games on many platforms.

The name of the game means "warehouse keeper", and the object of the game is to move a number of boxes, scattered around the warehouse, to their proper places which are marked out on the floor. This is done with the aid of the warehouse keeper, whose character the



player controls. As you'd expect from a puzzle game there are rules that govern what you can do. The warehouse keeper can move a box only by pushing it from behind. Only a single box can be pushed at a time, as he's not strong enough to push a row of them. This means that you have to make sure you leaving room around a box if you want to move it again—push a box into a corner and that's where it stays. *Sokoban* keeps two scores: one for the number of moves and one for the number of pushes. The lower these are at the end of the level, the better you have done.

RMRBoxx, developed by FatCatz Software and distributed by RMR, is a shareware clone of *Sokoban*. It adheres closely to a Unix version of the game called *XSokoban*, whose level and save game files it can make use of. This means that you can participate in the online high score table and use *XSokoban*'s custom levels and solution files. The unregistered version of RMRBoxx is

limited in time and function. You can play for 28 days, and can only make 150 pushes. This is enough to complete the first few levels at least.

The game play of *Sokoban* is reproduced completely by FatCatz/RMR. It is addictive and fun, and the large number of levels will keep players happy for a long time. If you are addicted enough to finish the bundled levels, there are more at RMR's web site, and you can use those from *XSokoban* or even design your own.

Presentation on RMRBoxx is good. Some effort has been made to make the game attractive, and there is colour on colour machines. Sound, though, is minimal. The controls are simple and consistent, as only the cursor keys are needed to move the warehouse keeper around the level. Alternatively the stylus can be used, which works well but isn't as convenient as the keyboard. The only confusion was in starting the game up in the first place: on the Extras bar and in a few other places it refers to itself as "Sokoboxx".

Where RMRBoxx wins out is in the array of features. I've already mentioned the ability to exchange files with the Unix version of the game, allowing competition for a place on the online score table. But RMRBoxx sports other good features too. Presentation can be adjusted to alter the game's appearance, with a choice of tile sets and the ability to remove status information as well as the toolbar, a boon on the Osaris' little screen. The game supports large levels, scrolling or allowing you to zoom out if they don't fit on the screen.

RMRBoxx is still sold by RMR on their web site. Due to the general quality of this version of *Sokoban* I can recommend it to those who enjoy puzzles.

Author	RMR Boxx
URL	<a href="http://www.rmrsoft.com">www.rmrsoft.com</a>
Licence	Shareware
Systems	All EPOC32 systems
Rating	★★★★