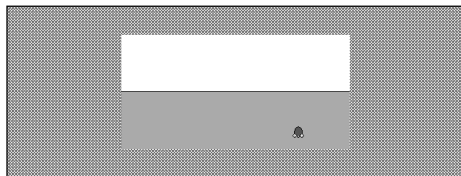


Mightier than the Sword

Damian Walker continues the pen programming tutorial's demonstration game.



Mole Hunt as it appears in the centre of an ample sized Series 5 screen.

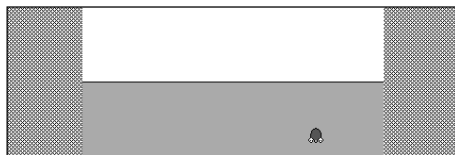
In the last issue our program displayed a lovely clean lawn for nearly five seconds, and then told you that you hadn't hit any moles. This is unsurprising as there are no moles yet to hit! This month we can make them appear. To do this, replace the *MoleUp%* procedure with this:

```
PROC MoleUp%:(time&)  
  LOCAL molex%,moley%,hit%  
  molex%=16*INT(RND*20)  
  moley%=16*(5+INT(RND*5))  
  gAT molex%,moley%  
  gCOPY mask%,0,0,16,16,1  
  gCOPY mole%,0,0,16,16,0  
  hit%=AwaitHit%:(molex%+  
    windowx%,moley%+windowy%,  
    time&)  
  
  gCOLOR $AA,$AA,$AA  
  gFILL 16,16,0  
  gCOLOR 0,0,0  
  RETURN hit%  
ENDP
```

And to allow the program to run, add this temporary procedure to the end of the program:

```
PROC AwaitHit%:(molex%,moley%,time&)  
  PAUSE time&/50000  
ENDP
```

This is how the *MoleUp%* procedure works. First the mole's position is calculated. The mole will appear somewhere in the bottom half



Mole Hunt filling the height of a Revo screen

of the screen, i.e. the lawn and not the sky. The position is random, but aligned on a 20x5 grid.

When the mole's position has been calculated, it will be displayed on the lawn using the *gAT* and *gCOPY* instructions. These work in the manner explained in the *Animating OPL* tutorial: the mask is used to cut a mole-shaped white hole into the background, and the mole is then copied into this space with the white pixels on the mask acting as transparent areas.

When the mole appears the *AwaitHit%* procedure is called. At the moment this gives you no means of dealing with the mole, but instead just waits for two seconds and returns a zero value (a miss).

Once the time for hitting the mole has passed, the mole will be made to disappear by displaying a grey rectangle over it. The final line returns to the *MoleHunt* procedure with the *hit%* value, telling the main program whether the mole was hit or missed.

At the moment you can only stand and watch helplessly as the moles make a mess of your lawn. In the next issue I'll introduce the pen control that will allow you to do something about it.



Mole Hunt filling the height of the Osaris screen.

EPOC

ENTERTAINER

Editor: Damian Walker

Issue 30: Aug 2010

In this issue: Chinese Chess

Welcome to the 30th edition of *EPOC Entertainer*! The only thing preventing this coming out at the start of the month was my lack of inspiration for something to fill the front page. Then I hit upon the idea: a reader survey!

Many people download the latest issue each month, as well as back issues, but only a handful will think of something to email me

about. So here's the answer: a small number of questions with easy tick-box answers.

In addition to this there is the usual mix of reviews and the latest instalment of the programming tutorial, where we work towards a complete game. As always, emails on any aspect of the magazine are welcome!

entertainer@cynningstan.org.uk

Our First Reader Survey!

For the first time EPOC Entertainer is providing you with a quick and easy way to have your say about the magazine.

Though the magazine has an email address, the number of responses is very small compared to the number of downloads for the magazine. So this month it's time to try something different. Below is a short survey about what you think of the magazine. Please do take a few minutes to fill it in and send it back to the usual email address. You can scan in the printed form, take a screen shot and scribble on that with a paint package, or just send the answers in an email: whatever suits you best. Thanks!

1. How long have you been reading *EPOC Entertainer*?

- Since the beginning
- A year or more
- A number of months
- Never, yet!

2. What's your main reason for reading?

- Keep track of news
- Looking for games I've not played before
- Games Programming
- Nostalgia

3. What EPOC32 machine(s) do you have?

- Psion Series 5 "classic"
- Oregon Scientific Osaris
- Geofox One
- Psion Series 5mx/Ericsson MC218
- Psion Revo/Diamond Mako
- Psion Series 7/netBook

4. What articles do you enjoy most?

- Game Reviews
- Programming articles
- In the spotlight
- Head-to-head comparisons
- Software News
- One-off features and series

5. Are you interested in programming for EPOC32?

- Yes
- No

6. What else would you like to see most?

- Larger issues with more pages
- Competitions
- A place for regular readers' input
- Something else...

Made in China

We look to the east with a review of Chinese Chess by Purple Software.

Most people are familiar with the game of chess. What is less well known is that there are national variants of chess still played across Asia. Only in the western world has chess been standardised. In the east there are such interesting games as Japanese chess (“shogi”), Thai chess (“mak-ruk”), Korean chess (“changgi”) and Burmese chess (“sittuyin”). But the chess game played by more people than any other—including western chess—is Chinese Chess, or “xiang-qi”. It was a pleasant surprise that, though EPOC32’s catalogue of games numbers in the hundreds rather than the thousands, Purple Software saw fit to release a version of this charming game for the all EPOC machines except the Osaris.

Chinese chess differs from western chess in many ways. Pieces are flat discs with designs painted on them. They are placed on intersections of the board instead of in squares. Some intersections are specially marked: there is a “river” and two “imperial palaces” which affect the movement of some pieces.

But beyond appearances there are other differences. Many of the pieces have different names and moves to those in western chess. The king and counsellors (queens) are restricted to the imperial palace; the ministers (bishops) cannot cross the river; and the knights cannot jump as in western chess. The pawns capture as they move, and can move sideways after they cross the river. The most unusual piece is the cannon, which moves like a chess rook but can only capture by jumping over a piece before landing on the enemy beyond. Only the chariot (rook) behaves exactly like its counterpart in western chess.

These differences create a game that has the same feel as chess but plays very differently.

It is somewhat quicker and feels “lighter”, but it’s not lacking in strategy.

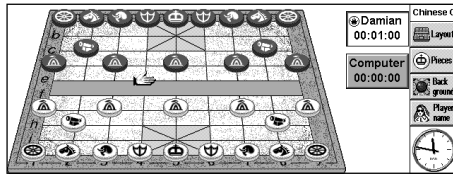
Purple’s Chinese Chess was originally released as a commercial product, and this shows in the overall quality. The graphics, while not up to desktop standards, are very good and well presented. Colour is supported, though the results are slightly disappointing to my eyes. After seeing what Purple did with colour on the Backgammon and Checkers games, colour support in Chinese Chess looks very much like an afterthought. Sound appears not to be supported at all, but its inclusion would not have added anything much to the game.

There are many options that allow you to customise the game, as is typical with Purple Software offerings. You can vary your view of the board, choosing flat top-down views with or without a move list, or a 3-dimensional view. You can choose between different sets of pieces: discs with westernised or traditional

Chinese markings, or even a toy-themed set. You can also choose from a number of backdrops to add interest to the display.

Configuration extends beyond aesthetics, though. You can choose different notations in the move list. Like western chess, Chinese chess has developed a number of different ways of recording moves. You can also set up a board in order to play from a pre-arranged start position, which would be useful in solving Chinese chess problems.

For fans of chess who would like to try something a bit different, I can really recommend this. It has a permanent place on my Psion!



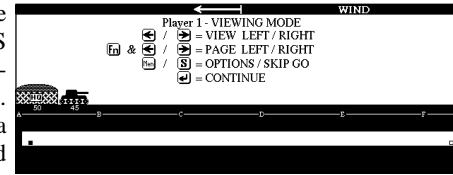
Author	Chinese Chess
URL	psion.cyningstan.org.uk
Licence	Freeware
Systems	Revo, Series 5, Geofox, Series 7
Rating	★★★★

Fortunes of War

Report to HQ! It’s time to try out Ben Vaughan’s strategy game War.

Ben Vaughan’s strategy game, simply called *War*, describes itself as “a cross between ‘Command & Conquer’ and ‘Worms’.” But don’t take the “Command & Conquer” label too seriously—those looking for a real-time strategy game to rival *No Man’s Land* (reviewed in issue 6 of *EPOC Entertainer*) or *Imperium* will be sadly disappointed. Still, *War* is an entertaining game involving strategy, calculation and a bit of guesswork. Interested? Then read on...

I downloaded *War* from Ben’s own site, whence all his Psion games are still available. Installation is not as straightforward as in some programs, as the game isn’t packaged in a SIS file. Instead it’s supplied as ZIP archive. You need to create a folder called `\System\Apps\War` on



drive C: or D: and unpack the files from the archive into there. Unfortunately the game won’t work on any other drives, so I was unable to install it alongside my other games on Drive E. While Ben may not have envisaged people partitioning their CompactFlash cards when *War* was written, the operating system will tell an application what drive its files are on, so I think this is an unnecessary limitation.

When I got the game running, the thing that first entertained me was the animated title screen. The graphics are all simplistically drawn in what looks like pure black and white, but movement and explosions add an element of fun to what would otherwise be a drab introduction. Moving to the game itself, the graphics appear to have been lifted straight from the EPOC16 version of the game with little modification. It’s a shame that the author didn’t see fit to try and upgrade the appearance a little for EPOC32.

Sound is another matter entirely. Ben likes to put speech in his games, and *War* is no exception. While the game comments on and announces various events, there are other good sound effects like the expected gunshots and explosions too. A desktop game on an equally powerful machine might have made more use of sound, but this wouldn’t necessarily be welcome in the environments where you’d be using a PDA. The balance of sound and silence is probably just right here.

Let’s go back to gameplay. *Command and Conquer* this is not. Nor is it *Worms*. From *C&C War* takes the concept of buying units, improving your own base, and launching air strikes. From *Worms* and many other games comes the artillery method of combat, choosing your angle and power before making a shot. But in contrast to both games, *War* takes on a strictly 1-dimensional feel. Your artillery, tanks and infantry move along flat

ground between your base and that of the enemy, with no terrain to act as obstacles or change the height. None of this is to criticise the game, though.

The simplicity makes it a fast-moving bit of fun.

If I have any complaint about the game, it’s that the pen is under-used. Apart from pen control in the pull-down menu system, which is a feature of the operating system, the pen seems to be ignored entirely. Being able to zoom straight to a position on the map, or select a unit with the pen, are two examples where pen input would have been useful.

Despite the issues with pen control and drive restrictions I’d still say this one is worth a look.

Author	Ben Vaughan
URL	www.bjv.btinternet.com
Licence	Shareware
Systems	Revo and Series 5
Rating	★★★★