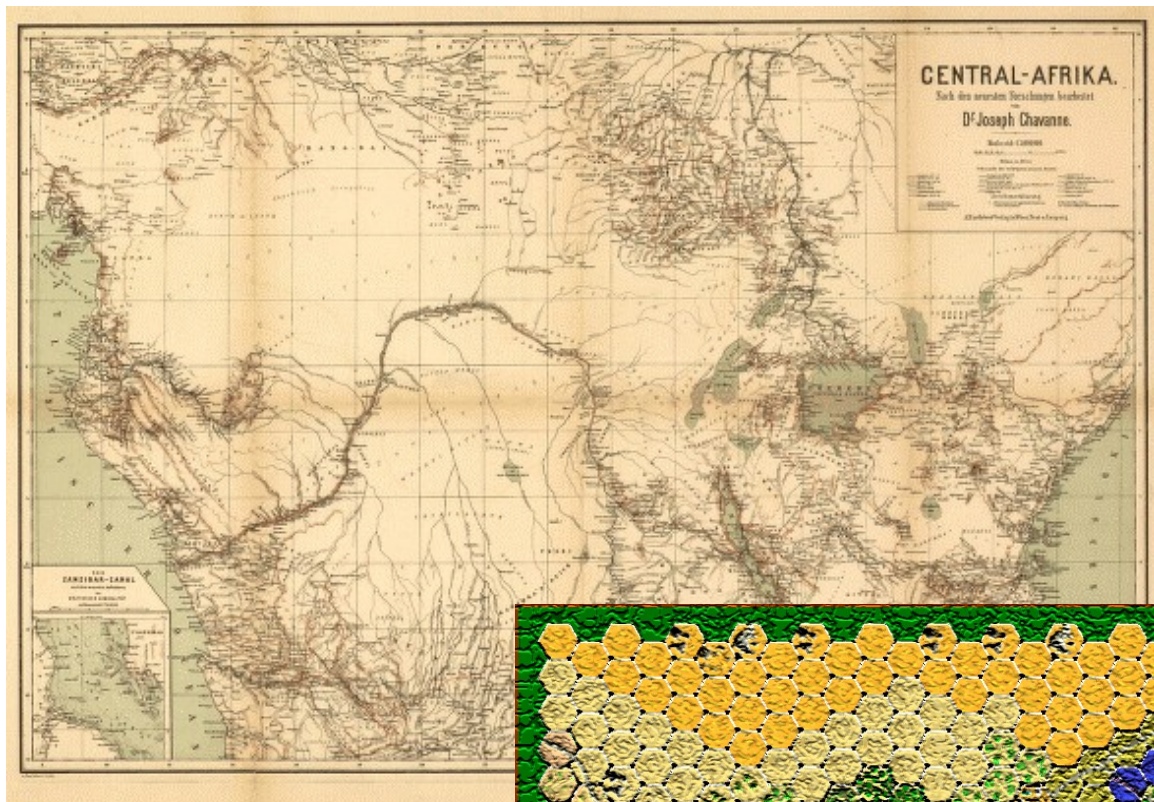


WARGAMES TABLE HEXGEN – Instructions

Welcome to Wargames Table Hexgen – a small planning utility for campaigns and inspired by the Wargames Foundry range of Darkest Africa wargaming figures and rules. The utility is not just for this range however, and I hope to expand the uses of the generator to cover other periods. The game was written in Python using the Pygame set of functions – this is my first Python program after several million years of writing databases, so you will just have to put up with my bad programming until I can get a better handle on it.

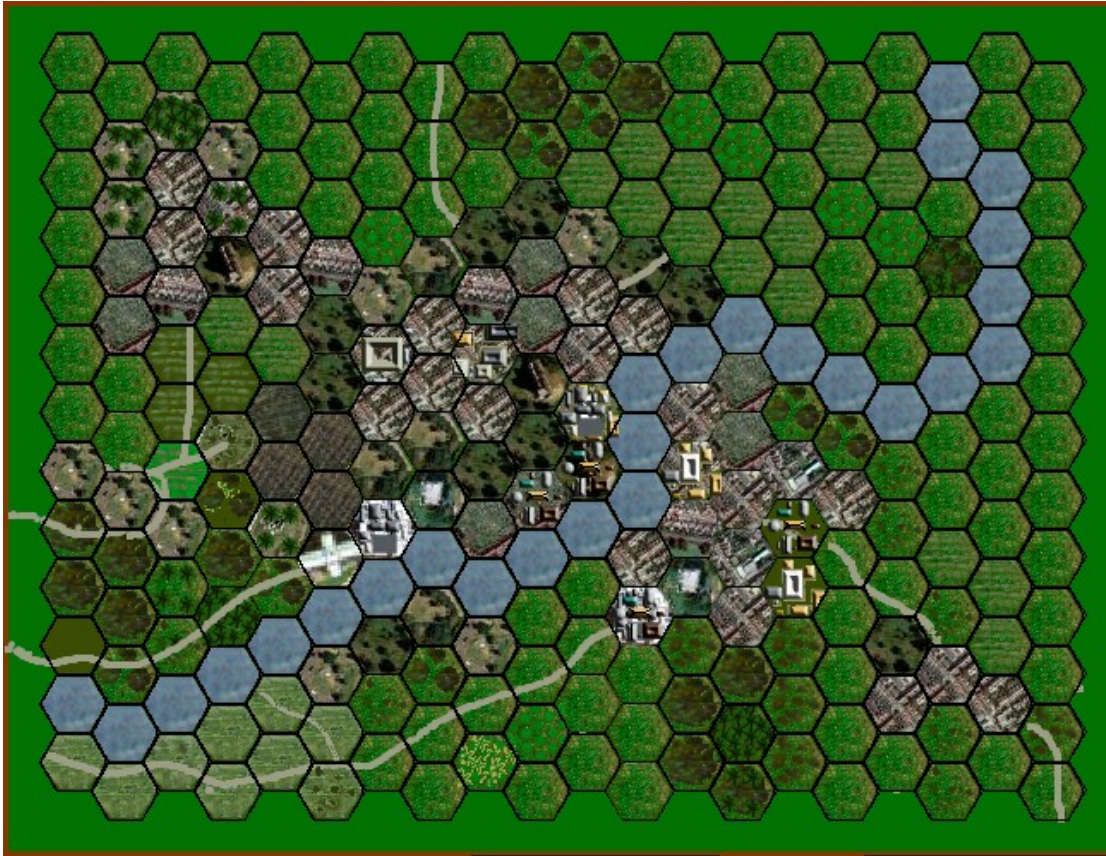
1 A Quick Visual Tour

The game comes with six separate screens and the package you have received will contain these six efforts by me to show how easy it is, and to whet your appetite for adventure and exploration across the great continent. The visuals come with the contemporary diary entries of that intrepid explorer and Victorian pillar of the Empire, Sir Rupert Mainley-Standing.



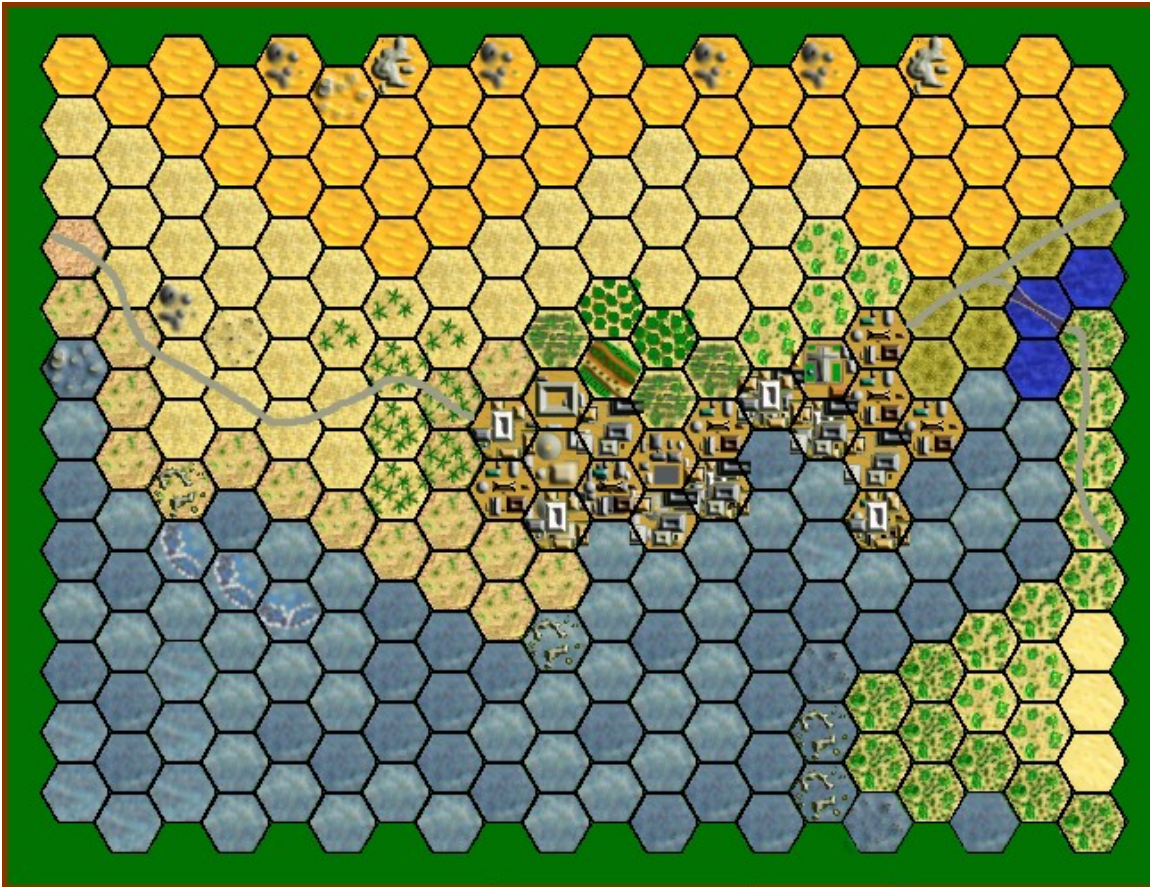
Top:
A map of central Africa drawn
by a German
Bottom:
A picture of the coast of Africa
drawn by Betsy

Good Old Blighty



“ By the grace of God and Her Majesty Queen Victoria, may she reign for donkey’s years (and probably will), our expedition will soon be ready to set out for the interior of Africa. Our base-camp here at Wincelike Manor is abuzz with activity. I have found it prudent to return the gift from the wife of Reverent Blenkins of a pith helmet which she made herself – she seemed unaware that they were not actually made from that substance itself... My darling, Fanny Sayling has said she will wait for me to return home in glory, so that we may be wed – I have named the steam launch for the journey after her, though some of the ship’s crew look strangely unconvinced. ”

Africa off the port bow !



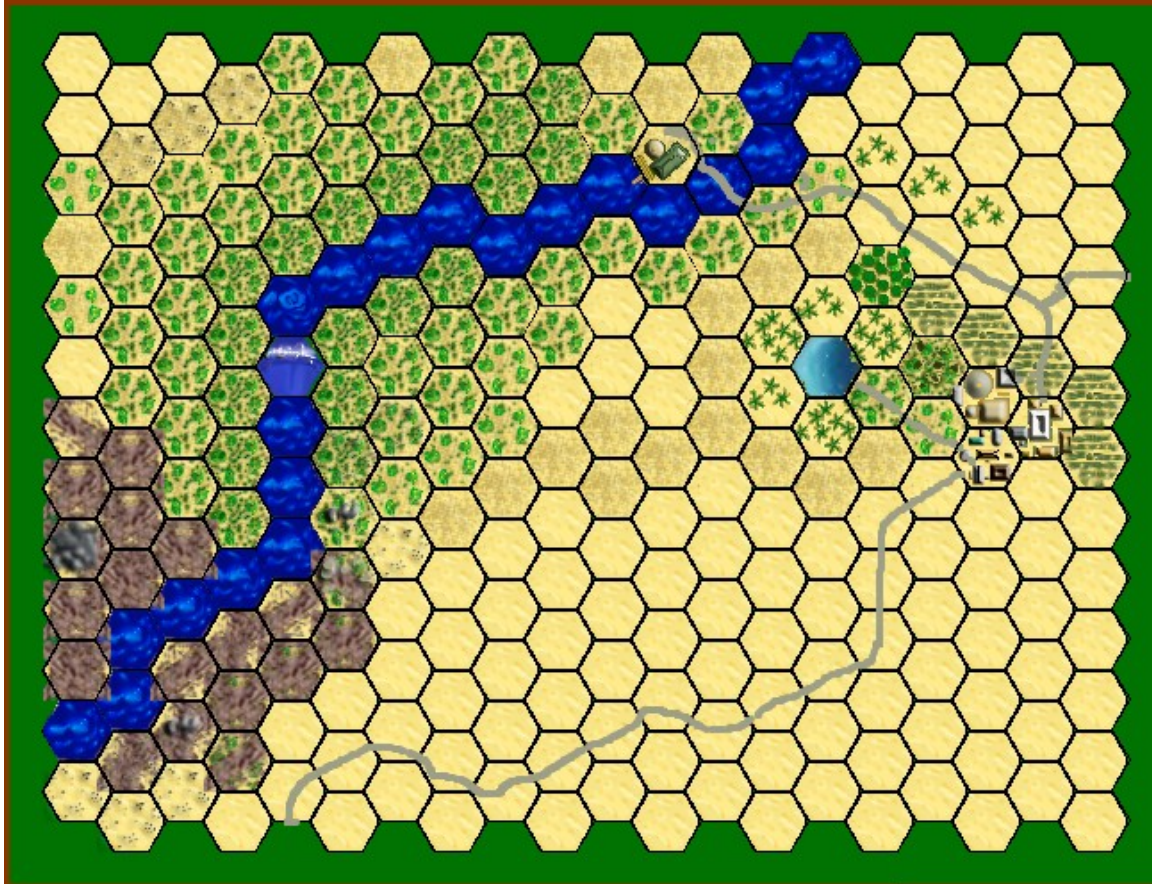
“We have just negotiated the treacherous reefs and rocks around the bay and have set foot in the slaving town of Faynek Ya Ahmed. The locals seem pleased to see us and are assisting us with our baggage –some have offered to take it home for the night to look after it but my faithful companion Betsy the Staffordshire terrier unfortunately dissuaded them by chewing through the leg of one nice Zanzibari fellow with an eye-patch. (though I am not sure how you chew through a leg with an eye-patch)”

The Damm'busta Falls



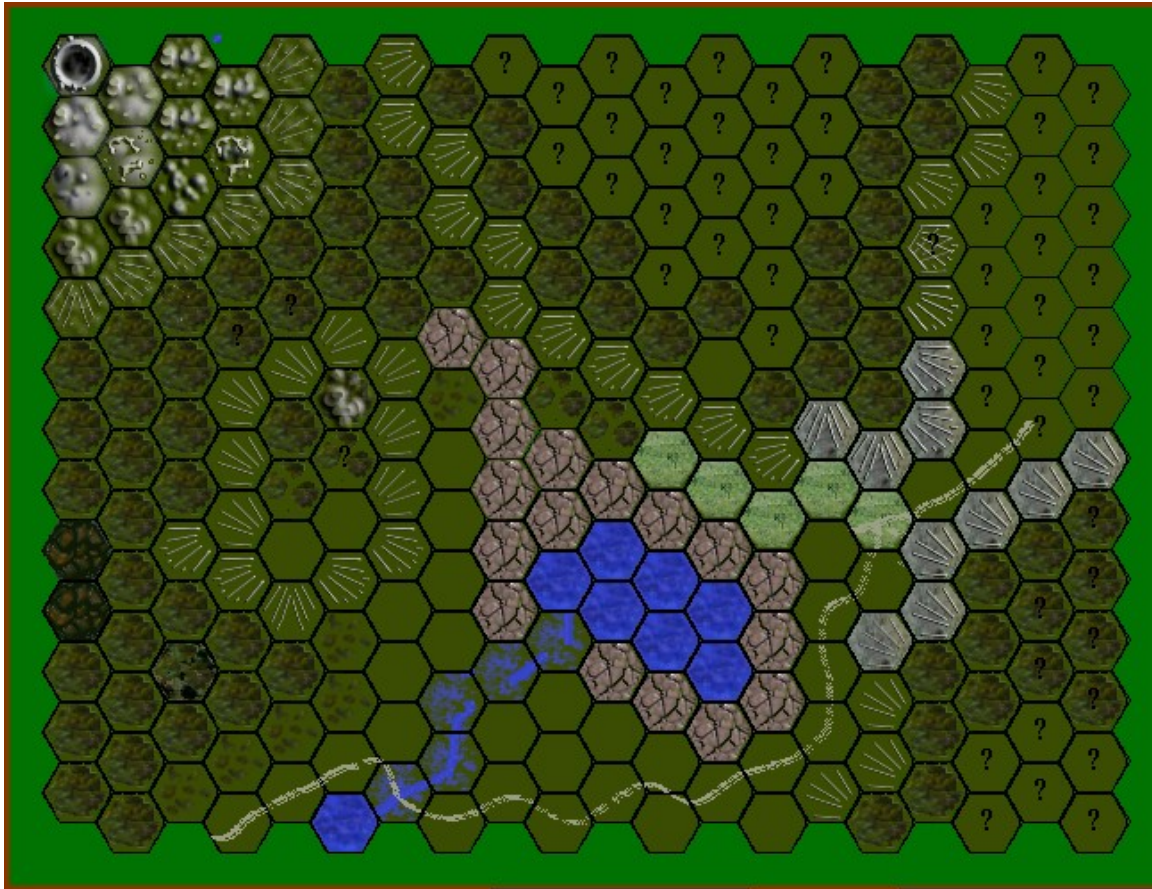
We have discovered the mighty falls of Damm'busta making a noise like thunder as they fall off the high escarpment (though locals seem to think they may have noticed it before). We have camped below the falls at the confluence of the Blue and Slightly Bluer rivers, and a short distance away from the river trading post of a Belgian emigre who calls himself Lord Loucain, - his English is excellent though. Local natives seem to think this area is inhabited by a being, half man, half ape, known as Darzan, who dresses in little more than a loincloth and who can speak to animals. I have given them a good Christian thrashing for their cheek, though I have written to the Royal Geographical Society to tell them that we may have found the missing Doctor DooLittle. Lord Loucain has kindly said he will deliver the letter next time he goes home. He gave no date..”

The North



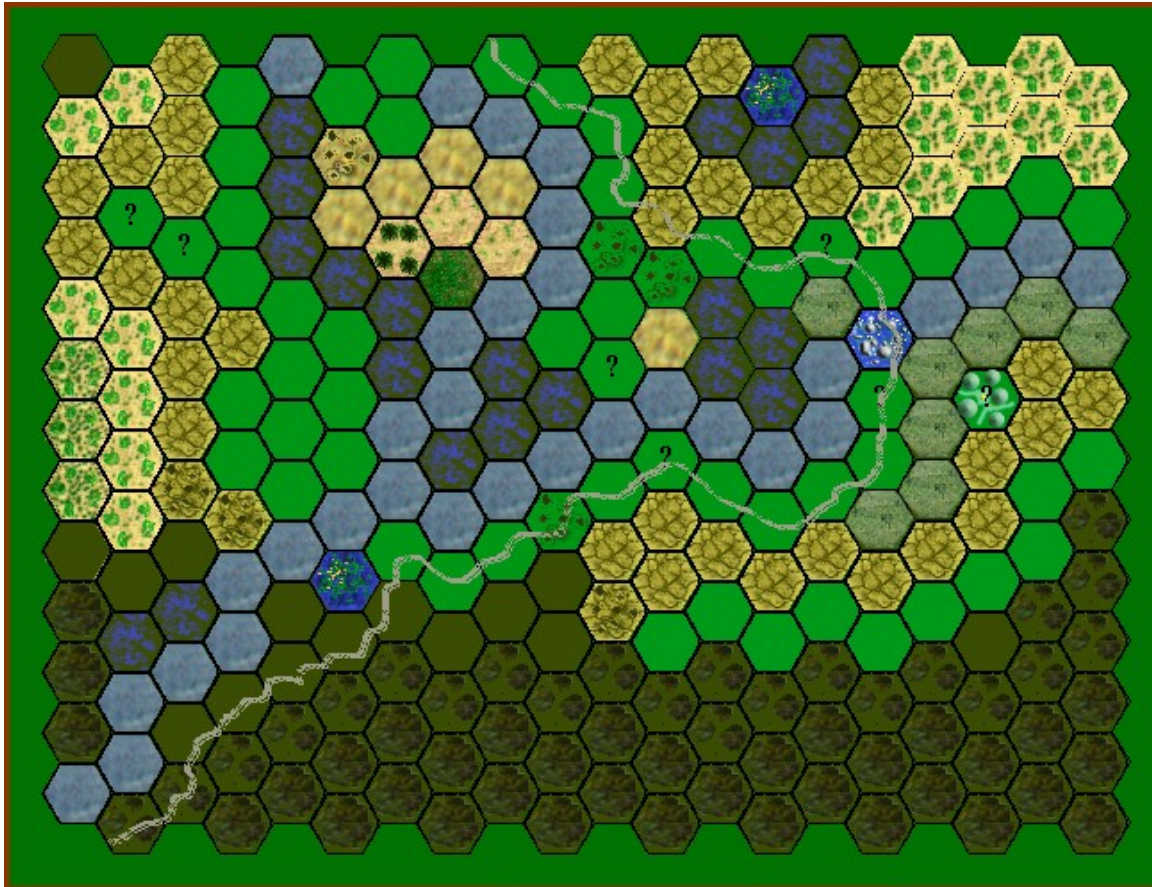
“Our path has led us out of the steamy jungle into the land of the Arab. We have stopped at the trading town of Harrek Tisek by the oasis of Ya Hammar, where unfortunately I received a letter from Fanny telling me she has married another. Still, we must sacrifice some things for the good of the Empire.”

Back in the jungle



“ For some time now we have followed a tributary of the Yella-Feva River to its source, a grubby area of baked mud, volcanoes, and trees surrounded by kopjes and high escarpments. My guide Rufus tells me this is also the source of the river Thames, but I am beginning to think his geography is not up to the standard he claimed when I hired him. Other natives tell me that this is the home of a fierce cannibal tribe, and I have already lost more than half my bearers during the night who said they were “just popping out for a fag “. We are making for the pass up ahead – but it looks like a good place for an ambush. Still, I must believe in the Almighty for deliverance. Supplies are running short and my faithful companion Betsy seems to have gone missing. “

Those damn flies



“I think we may be in trouble – the few of us that survived the ambush are making our way down a leg of the Effluvia river, and emerging from the jungle we find ourselves in a land of swamp, tsetse flies, mosquitoes, crocodiles and more bloody long grass. Rufus told us it would bring us to the fabled city of Pichhi Kiin, or possibly Weybridge – unfortunately he was killed by a bearer carrying a spear who claims he forgot to stop when I called for a halt, accidentally piercing him in the rectal area. The spontaneous round of applause from the other two bearers was most un-Christian and I have admonished them. “

“We have come under attack from pygmies hiding in the long grass, after my failure to marry the local king’s daughter, strangely shortly after I told her she looked like my Fanny “

“ I can feel a fever coming on.... I do hope there is a good doctor in Weybridge. My last bearer looks scepticalGod save the Queen.....”

Installation

The instructions to install the product are (until I get hold of an installation package)

- Extract the contents of the .zip file into a directory of your choice (I recommend c:\Program Files\Hexgen or similar.
- Make a shortcut to the file HexGenV1_0.exe
- Run (the file)

The Interface



Key

1 The Top Bar

The top bar has the following functions which are accessed by single clicking on the relevant button

Save screen

This button will save any screen you have created to the working directory in the format “Screen_saved_nnnnn.bmp” e.g. “Screen_saved_00054.bmp”. The number is updated automatically every time you save. If you need to change the basic number it is stored in the working directory as “save_no.txt”. (Note it is a pure ASCII text file, and should be edited with Wordpad or similar program, not Word 97 or similar).

Author: Ian Harrison

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There is currently no print function with the Hexgen – the screens are designed to be saved in a common .bmp format so that they can be edited in any art package (even Microsoft Paint and printed out from there) In later versions of this program I hope to add screen stitching so that larger maps can be generated. I also will include functionality to call back old saves for re-editing. The only current way to call back a saved out screen is by changing its name from what it was to one of the “Screen_saved_nnnnn.bmp” files – then it will become one of your six working templates.

Switch Hex Sets

There are currently 5 sets of hexes for use in the Hex palette in Hexgen.

- The first set are Ground hexes and should be used as a ‘base coat’ on your map canvas
- The second set are Water Hexes – used the same as for ground hexes but wetter
- The third set are Rock Hexes – does exactly what it says on the ..er.. rock. Note that these and other hexes have a transparent layer so that the ground base coat or other hexes are visible underneath. Also note that in many cases if you click on the same canvas hex several times the hex becomes more prominent.
- The fourth set are Building Hexes – works the same as rocks. Again many of these have a transparent layer. On the second screen you can see that I have overlayed several building hexes on top of each other to represent the crowded harbour front.
- The fifth set are Foliage hexes – you’re probably getting the hang of this now.

Minor tech bit for people wanting to create their own hexes:

All hexes are 38W x 34H .png files with a transparent background layer. Da_default_20.png is a useful template to use to base your efforts on. The ‘_20’ signifies that the hexes on the screen have a 20 pixel radius (vertex to centre). I include the radius as a standard because the program is capable of creating hexes of any size, but I haven’t written the swap in/ out routines yet so have temporarily disabled the function. (and besides I haven’t done any hexes to fit them)

The hexes for each screen are all prefixed by the following

*Dag_ Ground hexes
Daw_ Water Hexes
Dar_ Rock hexes
Dab_ Building hexes
Daf_ Foliage hexes*

(and I use Da_ or Dat_ for templates in an inconsistent way)

As long as each newly created hex starts with one of these prefixes(except for the templates) the program will automatically pick them up from the working directory and put them in the hex palette next time you cycle round to that set. Each palette set will accept 46 hexes(but there’s a bug which allows you to keep going and spill onto the canvas which I haven’t got round to fixing yet – so don’t do it). A future release will also have the functionality to swap in and out batches of hexes so that you can load outer space hexes or whatever turns you on.

Switch Screen

There are currently 6 screen canvasses to work on. Clicking on this button will save your work and circulate to the next screen canvas. Note that the ‘Save’ button does not actually save the working canvas on the program but only for export – make sure you click the switch screen to save your current work.

Path Mode

This button allows you to draw roads or paths across your map. Left Click the button to select the function, place the mouse cursor to where you want the path to start and Right Click. Draw the mouse slowly along the desired route (go too fast and the graphic will fragment) and when you have finished do a Left Click. So remember – Left click, right click, left click (left, right, left – any decent wargamer should be able to remember that !!)

Track Mode

Works the same as the path mode but more ‘trackier’

Stream Mode

Yep – you guessed it – as above but bluer

Wipe Screen

This screen will return you to the original numbered blank hexes. It comes with a warning – a left click will abort and a right click zaps the screen. You have been warned!

Quit

Leave the program – you did save the screen by switching didn’t you ?

Legals

Yeah – nuff said

About

Gives you my email address so that you can compliment me on my graphics (choke), report bugs, ask for changes, or generally provide a bit of feed back. Its always good to hear from users.

Credits

A quick credit for the inventors of Pygame and Python. Although this is my first Python program it is a great language to use (and free!!). More power to their elbow. Also credit to Wargames Foundry for the figures and rules for those of use who like to enjoy wargames away from the “f***ing rivet counters” (as those people who always moan when your hussars have the wrong coloured piping. The expression itself comes from a train restoration enthusiast I knew who had the same problem people - “..but surely the 4-2-4 tanker had 36 rivets on the boiler plate, not 37...”. the guy is dead but the expression lives on.

2 The Hex Palette

I’ve probably said enough about the hexes themselves in the above section. To select one just click on it (or even near it – my programming is very tolerant!) - The name will be shown at the bottom rightish of the

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lower information screen. If you fail to select a hex before you start clicking on the palette you will get the 'WHAT?' template hex appearing to remind you. Please note that many of the hexes overlap the edges of the hexes in some cases owing to my sloppy art work. Until someone tidies them up for me, I have left a template edge hex on most hex sets so that you can 're-enforce' the edges.

Note that some hexes deliberately overflow the hexes, especially in the buildings hexes.

There is also a '?' hex to show that the ground is uncertain / uncharted / unexplored

3 The canvas

This is where you paint your maps with the hexes supplied. There are 6 available canvasses that you may swap between. See above for the sections on how to save and switch screens. My recommended order for doing the hexes is

- A Base(ground or water), then
- B Rocks
- C Foliage
- D Roads, tracks, paths
- E Hex Edge re-inforced
- F Buildings
- G More Hex Edge over the buildings if you prefer it

Note that a lot of hexes have a transparent layer so that the ground base coat or other hexes are visible underneath. Also note that in many cases if you click on the same canvas hex several times the hex becomes more prominent. (useful for ridges and trees on dark backgrounds etc)

4 The information screen

Lots of useful and useless information including

Grid saved to -	what name the last screen canvas was saved as (will be saved to working directory)
Current screen no	what number screen (out of 6) you are currently on
Selected Hex	piccy of your selected hex
Messages	messages relating to functions
Hex Set	which hex palette set you are using
Key Mode	whether path, trail or stream mode are activated
Hex Position	what hex number you just clicked on the canvas (the numbers get covered up)
Click pos	the co-ords of the place you last clicked on the screen (a debug thingy)
Hex Name	the directory name of the hex tile you are using
Mouse Pos	where the mouse is (a debug thingy)

The End

Please enjoy the product, and please let me have feedback on harrisoni@blueyonder.co.uk.

I should be getting my website up and running in due course and will be tackling a stack of other projects I have lurking at the back of my mind but haven't had chance to get on with yet.

When I've tidied up my programming and tested it on other machines I'll bring out the cross-platform version for you Linux/Unix/Mac groupies

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