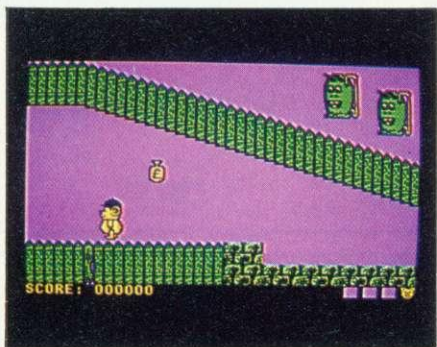


Follow the bear

'Banjax', Robico Software, 3 Fairland Close, Llantrisant, Mid Glamorgan, tel: (0443) 227354, BBC B, £9.95 (cassette)



THIS IS a smashing game. An adventure with graphics. It makes life much easier for stumblebums like me because I can at least see where I'm going even if I don't know where it's leading me. I say me, but it's really Banjax the bear who's doing the stuff. Looks very like Rupert with no trousers on, not that I've ever seen Rupert with no trousers on, you understand. It's how I imagine he would look debagged.

Essentially, you have to do the usual thing of collecting together all the bits of treasure and presenting yourself at the appointed place. This isn't as easy as it sounds because you have to follow a certain sequence, which is not vouchsafed to you. There is also a tricky bit at the start which Robico don't tell you about, but they do tell reviewers. Ha ha, power at last!

Robico have used a cut-down screen for the graphics, which are very good if not spectacular. The whole thing is a maze, certain sections of which can only be entered if you have amassed enough points. Thingies are trying to bite your neck while you roam. See, it's got me thinking I'm a bagless bear. I'm not, honest. Am I?

Unlike some text adventures, the maze is logical – ie, if you go north and then south you finish up where you started, so mapping is fairly easy. An adventurer's notebook is supplied with the program to keep your maps in. Also supplied is a help card to send back to Robico should you get lost. It would be nice to say I didn't need help but I have to confess that I did make a phone call to Robico who, as ever, were kind enough to point me in the right direction.

My sister is lost in the maze but I won't help her. Absolute power corrupts absolutely.

I enjoyed the game very much and it kept the whole family entertained and bemused for a lot longer than I care to admit. The only moan I can raise is that

it's not possible to save your position, but that's a small price to pay. Great stuff.

Rupert, who's Rupert?

Harry Sinclair

Strong fingers

'Brian Jacks Superstar Challenge', Mar- tech (tel: 0323 768456), BBC B and Elec- tron, £7.95

THE OBJECT of the game is to beat Brian Jacks (ex-world Judo champion) in a series of eight physically demanding events which will test your strength and stamina. This is great, as long as you want to build up muscles in your fingertips!

All eight events (swimming, canoeing, archery, cycling, 100 metres, squat thrusts, arm dips and football) involve the player challenging Brian Jacks.

The entry screen allows you to choose either keyboard or joysticks and whether to have sound effects. Using the keyboard can be a tiring experience for your fingers, though. The control keys vary according to the event, but generally the Z and X keys are used, usually to provide strength for your alter ego – fast, alternating pressure will increase your power.

After each event the screen returns to a title page that gives your present score against Jacks'. The screen doesn't tell you, though, what event comes next and as the key-hitting strategy changes for different events, you can be left feeling a bit bewildered.

The sound effects are limited and this seems to be an area that has been ignored. However, if you have the Acorn speech chip the BBC will speak, but not very well! This speech isn't mentioned anywhere in the package



and it's hardly surprising. The programmer has added, with minimal thought, a countdown (3-2-1) and about three other words. In the darts event for instance a hit on target produces the encouraging word 'good' from Kenneth Kendall. A miss, however, makes the machine emit 'must' – presumably the nearest word to 'miss'!

The graphics are reasonable, though

not outstanding. There is a good sense of the athlete's movement in some of the events, especially the squat thrusts, but here more than any other event the keyboard movements are awkward and very tiring. If you have a higher score than Jacks after completing eight events, you go through to the next level to challenge him at the same events but at a greater level of difficulty.

The game held little interest for me and required no thought whatsoever. As for my fingers, they've never been so strong!

Jeremy Vine

Ultimate fun

'Jet-Pac', Ultimate (tel: 0530 411485), BBC, £7.95



YOUR task is to travel from planet to planet collecting the parts to build a rocket and fuelling it. Your only method of propulsion is the Jet Pac strapped to your back. Using Caps-Lock, CTRL, and Shift to thrust, you can fly around, collecting the rocket's stages, the fuel and bonus objects. Having completed your task, the rocket takes off and lands elsewhere, opening up the next scenario.

Each level brings different nasties, who are determined to stop you. On the first screen they are relatively harmless, but later they get vicious, with balloons, aircraft, amoebatrions and other such characters after your blood.

Jet-Pac has a good graphic display, most movement is very smooth, and the Defender-type laser rifle is quite convincing. Colour has been used to good effect, and the puffs of smoke that arise if anything is killed are also well done.

Sound is varied and effective, explosions abound and the take-off and landing sequences are particularly successful.

There are options for one and two players and joysticks may be used. Sound may be disabled, and there is a top-ten high score table as well.

Jet-Pac is fun to play, if not a little rapid at times.

Stuart Menges