

removed from the printer. They also have a tendency to dry up easily and the quality of the print is sometimes difficult to read.

The BASIC interpreter is loaded from tape instead of being built into ROM. This frees the machine for use with alternative languages.

The technical documentation is of a high standard. It features memory maps and circuit diagrams, an Assembly language listing of the system software that is built-in, and other technical details. It isn't comprehensive, however, since it lacks timing diagrams, but it is far better than most manuals.

The Sharp MZ-711's manufacturers have an

unaccountable tendency to play down some of its unusual features. An example of this occurs when the demonstration program is run. While the manual implies that the machine can produce the usual eight colours, the program seems to conjure up a range at least eight times that number.

If you inspect the program, however, it becomes apparent that a short machine code routine has been POKEd into location 40960 and is called up at certain points in the program to produce a range of colours from pale pastels to dark shades. The true range of colours is hard to judge. It is difficult to verify because the documentation on colour facilities is rather modest.



Cassette Deck

The cassette deck on the MX-711 is an optional extra, though it can be built into the main casing. The operating system, however, has no control over the cassette motor, which limits its applications



Printer/Plotter

Like the cassette, the printer/ploter is an optional but built-in extra. It uses four miniature ballpoint pens to produce text and graphics on 11.5cm (four inch) paper. Three operating modes permit three text sizes, and hence 26, 40, or 80 columns across the paper

