



reflect the new functions assigned to the keys. Each function label can contain up to 15 characters, although only the first seven of these will appear on the screen.

The keyboard and screen editor work together to make editing easy. Four keys move the cursor around the screen, and changes can be made anywhere on the screen by simply over-writing the existing characters. Inserting and deleting characters requires single keypresses. The cursor keys on the Toshiba HX-10 are the same size as other keys on the keyboard, but the Sony Hit-Bit uses large distinctive keys for its cursor cluster. These keys are used often, so such a design can be very handy.

As with the hardware, the MSX software is filled with extra features. MSX BASIC includes such commands as AUTO and RENUMBER, and contains several commands to handle sound, graphics and

'interrupt handling'. There are three primary commands to create graphics. LINE draws a line between two points, although it can also be used to draw a square by adding the letter B (for 'box') after the co-ordinates. Adding the letters BF (for 'box fill') draws a square of solid colour. The CIRCLE command can be used to draw ellipses and arcs as well as basic circles. And the PAINT command will fill any outlined shape with solid colour, managing to cope with even the most awkward shapes.

Many other useful features are included in MSX BASIC, although the most impressive set of commands — for 'interrupt handling' — may not be appreciated at first. Interrupt handling is very useful in high-speed graphics programming. There are a number of situations in which a program must perform one task, while constantly checking to see if something else happens. A