



Genie's Cassette Meter

Trying to set a cassette recorder to the right volume level for the computer can be extremely difficult, but the Colour Genie has its own tape meter to make writing to and reading from a cassette considerably easier

mode at the end of the program. The BASIC also includes commands to clear the graphics page (FCLS), and alter background (FILL) and foreground (FCOLOR) colours. This system is clumsier than the single-page arrangement adopted by most new machines, but it does allow each pixel to be individually coloured (unlike the Spectrum, for example, which has a higher resolution but limits the colours that may be displayed within each eight by eight pixel block). Most arcade-type software uses the text screen for speed, with user-defined characters to give a high resolution effect.

The screen display is clear and steady, but the character set used makes text a little difficult to read. The Genie offers eight colours — white, red, green, yellow, cyan, magenta, blue and orange — all of which may be displayed on the text screen at the same time. High resolution graphics restrict the user to four colours (red, blue, green and black) but there is an additional command (BGRD) to set the graphics page background to pink.

Several interfaces are included: an RS232 port for printers and modems; a 50-way expansion port, which is used for connecting disk drives; a composite video output; an audio output; a light pen socket and a joystick port. Available peripherals include joysticks, a Centronics printer interface, a Prestel cartridge (which requires a modem) and disk drives. The dual joysticks feature built-in keypads but are difficult to use — a lot of pressure is needed to make them respond, and the joysticks do not return to the central 'neutral' position when the pressure is released. Eaca, the company that makes the Colour Genie, does not offer a disk drive for the machine. One is available thanks to a British company that offers its own disk drive using an operating system called QDOS, similar to Tandy's TRS-DOS.

A recording-level meter is built into the case to counter cassette loading problems; the user simply adjusts the volume until the needle is centred, and cassette tapes should then load easily. In addition, a 'data stabiliser' may be fitted between the cassette player and the Genie's cassette lead; this 'cleans' the signal and also aids in tape operation.

The Colour Genie is supplied with two manuals — a beginner's guide and a basic manual. Both are clearly written but are lacking in detail, and neither

Second 16K Of Memory

This is on a separate circuit board because the Colour Genie was originally sold as a 16K machine with the option of a further 16K add-on. This is now included as standard

First 16K Of Memory

This is part of the main circuit board

Power On/Off Indicator

Composite Video Output

This allows a monitor to be used

Sound Output

TV Modulator

This produces a signal for ordinary TV sets. A cable is permanently attached to it

On/Off Switch

Mains Transformer

This is built into the computer

16K Of ROM

The ROM memory is spread over four ROM chips

