Tandy Color Computer

Very similar in design to the Dragon 32 (though the Tandy came first), this computer is well supported by peripherals — from digitisers to ink-jet printers

Despite being quite different in appearance, the Tandy Color Computer bears a remarkable resemblance to the Dragon 32 (see page 130) in the way it operates. They are so compatible, in fact, that many programs that run on one will run on the other.

There are other similarities, as well. Both have the same type of cartridge port and the same CPU — a 6809E. This is a very powerful processing unit that has been used in few other home computers. But in some respects, this CPU is ill-matched with the other components of the machine. Normally, the 6809 is used in machines designed for professional use. Its power is rather wasted in the Tandy Color Computer, however, which has a relatively low clock speed of 895 KHz.

The machine comes with its own version of BASIC — Tandy Color BASIC. Despite the low clock speed, this is acceptably fast in operation, thanks to the sophistication of the CPU. It has several specialised command words that are designed to make the hardware easier to use. One of the Tandy Color Computer's features is the 6847 video controller, a programmable device that generally produces a screen format of 16 lines of 32 characters. Normally, the display is of black

The Tandy Keyboard
The Tandy Color Computer, unlike the Dragon, does not have a normal typewriter-style keyboard, but instead has 53 square buttons. These are adequately spaced, but don't have quite the correct 'feel' for long periods of touch-typing

Joystick Connectors
Fully proportional and including a signalling line, which is generally connected to a button. These interfaces could be used for other analogue signals, such as those from laboratory experiments

On/Off Switch

Power Supply Components
The output from the transformer is smoothed and conditioned by these parts. In the process a lot of heat is generated, and this is dissipated by the large heat sinks

Transformer
The in-built power supply makes for a tidier setup, with fewer trailing wires and separate boxes

RS232 Serial Port
Printers, modems or other serial devices can be connected here. The machine has no provision for parallel input or output

Tape Interface
Remote motor control is also provided on this interface

Channel Selection
The TV output can be tuned to two different channels. A selection is made by changing the position of this switch

Tandy Graphics Tablet
The GT-116 graphics tablet can be used either as a digitiser for tracing drawings and images into the computer, or as a pointing device for selecting items from menus displayed on the computer screen. The tablet takes A4-size paper, and costs £300
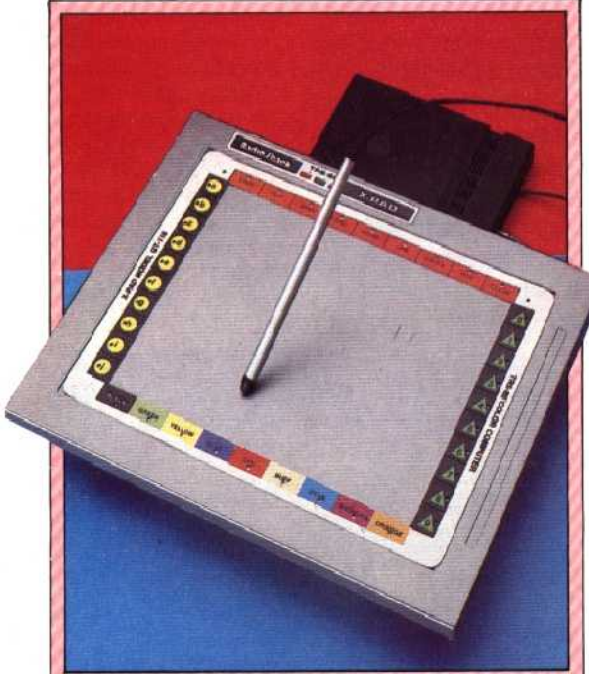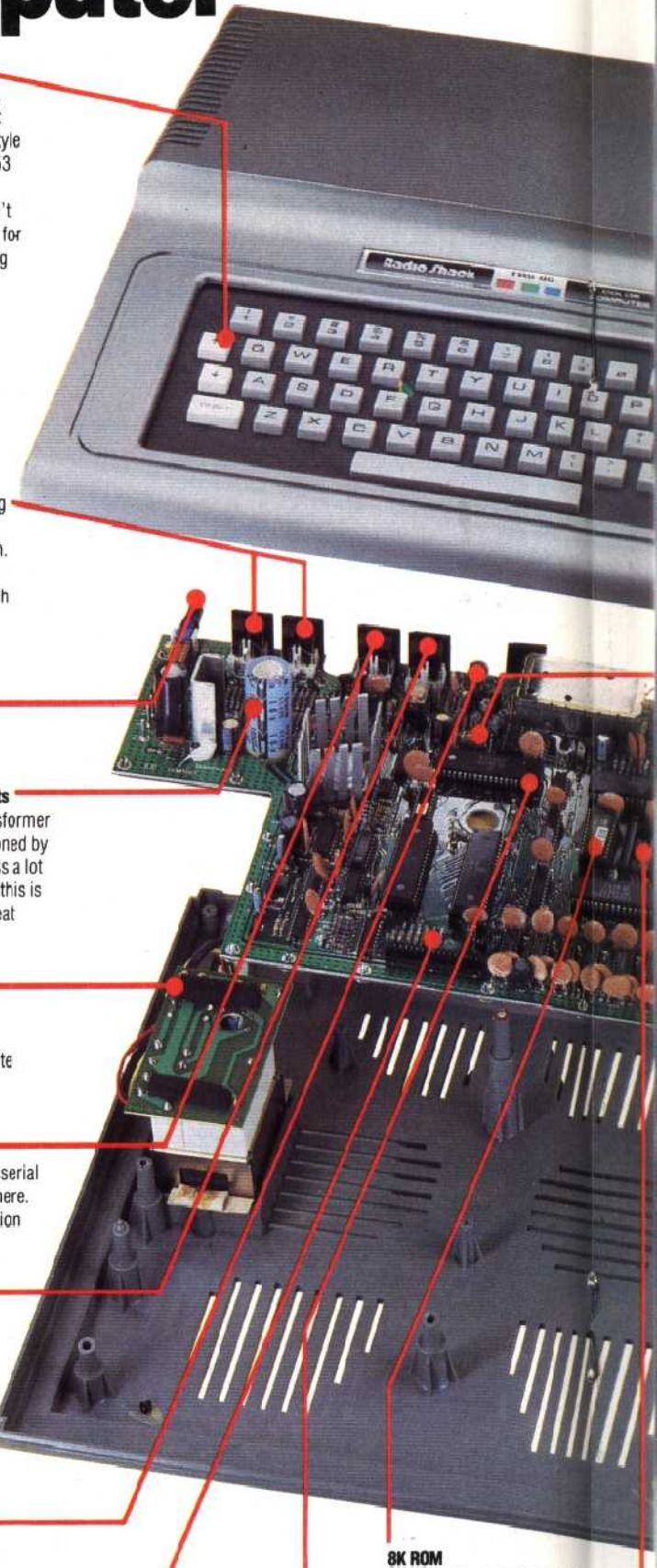
Keyboard Connector
A laminated plastic ribbon cable joins the keyboard to the computer through this port

8K ROM
Contains Tandy Color BASIC and low-level routines

6847 Video Controller
The style and colour of the screen display is controlled by programming this chip, either from BASIC or in machine language