Intelligent
eprom
programmer

## The PGe-h201



CIRCLE 11 FOR FURTHER DETAILS.



# Wireless World 

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Volume 90 number 1585
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CIRCLE 26 FOR FURTHER DETAILS

## Selected Lines



## Calculating leaps.

In panic at the signs of economic decline towards the end of the '70s, Britain's main error was to put aside its reputation for individuality, eccentricity and quality. Instead we regeared our industry to compete with countries already efficiently producing mechanical/electrical/electronic goods in high volume and of acceptable quality, the best example of which is Japan. Something obviously had to be done, but to try and emulate countries with healthy economies was an oversimplified solution, certainly in the long term.
Our workforce's complex mentality - potentially a great asset - should have been a main factor in devising a solution to economic decline. But this factor, apparently complex and unpredictable, was misjudged. Mentality could, conceivably, have been ignored, but it is more likely that Government decided upon a material solution to combat economic decline and considered that the remainder of the problem was simply a matter of conveying the urgency of the problem to those responsible for implementing the solution.
Much of our mainstay, a core of highly skilled craftsmen, professional engineers and scientists, disappeared during this phase; remember the brain drain? On many counts we appear to be just about keeping our heads above water in productivity, on others we have failed disastrously. But now, the relatively sudden switch of emphasis (further panic?) to 'high technology' is causing greater problems. Trained, imaginative and intelligent workers required for the new fields are scarce, so much so that recruitment advertisements for UK high-technology employees are appearing as far afield as New Zealand, despite our own unemployment problems.
To illustrate why the decision to compete directly was a mistake, Japanese people, obviously capable of producing goods at a very high rate, work together. Each member of the team works to benefit the team rather than the individual -
and is capable of working to inflexible schedules. Nothing short of self glorification suits the equivalent British worker, who is trained to try and do more than is asked for in a given time rather than to simply reach a goal before a deadline. In our education system, initiative, a term closely related to inventiveness, is all important. Tight deadlines may increase productivity in the short term, but they also inhibit creativity over a longer period. Frequent tight schedules cause the British worker, not trained to be content with being a cog in a well oiled machine, to lose will, to become resentful and eventually counter productive. Not so workers in countries renowned for productivity.

Our intrinsic desire for self glorification obviously has to be tamed but it has its advantages, especially in exploiting new concepts, as should have been clear from our now waning recognition as leaders in software and applications development. As a country faced with the prospects of economic decline, we should have put our resources into this business much earlier, rather than trying to compete with highly productive countries. We can build the machines to compete but we cannot so easily reprogram our workforce to blindly operate these machines. Short of reconditioning a large proportion of the population within a few months, we now have no alternative but to recognize and use this desire for self glorification and inventiveness which, after all, has served us well in the past.
But are we already too late again? Our prowess in software and applications development was clear all along but Government has had to wait to see other countries exploiting these resources before it decided to make a move with its belated rush into new technology. Let us hope that inventiveness suppressed in the high-productivity phase can be recovered, and more importantly that jobs created by and for new technology don't turn out to be as soul destroying as their counterparts in our production industry.

# Computer for Swedish schools 

A new computer, designed specifically for them, has come into use in schools in Sweden and it is expected in other nordic countries as well. Computers in School (Compis) is the Swedish equivalent of the British Micros in Schools Project but, with nordic thoroughness, they have not selected any commercially available computer but have developed one to specification drafted by the Swedish Board for Technical Development. The tender selected was submitted by Esselte Stadium, a supplier of educational materials, and is manufactured by Teli AB, the industrial division of the Swedish Telecommunication Administration, who have formed a new company for the development and marketing of the computer.
The result is the Compis, which has an impressive specification. A 16 -bit computer based on the Intel iAPX 186, it can be used as a stand-alone but has been designed for multiuser networking. The eprom operating system is controlled by a separate processor. Another processor controls the graphics, independantly of the central processor. In the basic version the computer has a 128 Kbyte primary memory (ram), a separate 128 Kbyte video memory, 16 K and 64 Kbytes of eprom for system software and 16 Kbytes of rom for the operating system. Total memory capacity is 1 MByte and in the basic version memory is arranged as a "solid-state disc" for the storage of files without the need to access external memory. When a disc drive is fitted this section is automatically returned to normal use.

The operation system selected for school use is CP/M 86 , a 16 -bit version of $\mathrm{CP} / \mathrm{M}$ 80. This is provided on the eprom incorporated into the 80130 (third) processor. It has the advantage of a vast supply of ready-made software. Many other operating systems can be downloaded from disc and the
computer is compatible with a side range including PC-DOS, MS-DOS, Unix and Xenix, and UCSD-p which is also offered as an alternative resident operating system. UCSD-p is claimed to be a more advanced operating system primarily intended for use with the Pascal programming language but without such an extensibe base of available software as $\mathrm{CP} / \mathrm{M}$.
An interesting choice has been made for the resident computing language, Comal. It uses many of the same words and functions as Basic, but in a structured fashion similar to Pascal. It thus offers a bridge between Basic and Pascal. Comal is included in rom and is therefore instantly available. A wide range of other languages may be downloaded from disc.

All this is available to Swedish schools at a price of 10 000 Krone, equivalent to $\$ 1200$ US or, even at the current rate of exchange under $£ 1000$. At that price and with that specification we doubt that it will stay within Sweden for long. Norway are planning to supply it to their schools and sales are expected to other nordic nations. It is possible that it could reach a Europewide or even a world market.
External memory can be provided on 5.25 in. floppy disc, up to two double-sided double density drives, or by hard disc with 10 Mbytes , expandable to 30 Mbytes . This can, of course be shared through the network
system. Communication both to the outside world and to peripheral equipment is well catered for. There is an optical interface for a multi-user network system with a data transmission rate programmable up to $880 \mathrm{Kbit} / \mathrm{s}$; two V24 (RS232) interfaces, one for a serial printer and the other for a modem; a Centronics parallel printer interface; two analogue interfaces, one for a tape recorder and the other for analogue measuring devices; and connections for the disc drives.

The Intel iAPX 186 processor is one of a new generation which incorporates functions that would normally fill a large p.c.b. Not content with an improved version of the 8086 processor there is also an 8 MHz clock generator; two independent direct memory access (d.m.a.) channels; A communications channel operating at $880 \mathrm{Kbit} / \mathrm{s}$; programmable interrupt controls; three programmable timers; programmable logic for memory selection which can also detect the peripheral units connected and adapt the processor signalling patterns accordingly; logic to control the internal $7 \mathrm{Mbyte} / \mathrm{s}$ bus; and an expansion output for co-
processors, graphics and mathematics. The clock frequency of the processor is 8 MHz and a real time clock is incorporated to record year, month, day, hour, minute and second with battery back-up to maintain it.

The central proessor is supported by an 82270 graphics processor which can provide colour graphics and high or ultra-high resolution monochrome graphics memory it is possible to shuttle screen images between that and the main computer memory and create high-speed animation. Each of 128 characters is displayed in a 8 by 16 or 8 by 8 dots matrix. 25 or 50 lines may be displayed and, in the ultrahigh resolution mode, it is possible to show 100 lines of 160 characters; they are not very legible but the function is useful in checking the layout of a document. Text and graphics may be magnified from two to sixteen times and the magnified image can be moved in any direction with a panning function. Graphics functions include lines, arcs, circles, rectangles etc. Text and graphics may be freely mixed and the text can be written on the screen in eight different directions.


## Electronic mail

A rise in postal charges has bumped up once again the cost of keeping in touch with friends and business colleagues. And even those of us who've been dozing at the back of the class are beginning to wake up, somewhat belatedly, to the possibilities of that latest wonder of the information age, electronic mail.

At the recent Personal Computer World show, Cable and Wireless treated us to a smoothly efficient demonstration of their Easylink service. "But what happens", I asked, still taking it all in, "if the people I want to talk to are not on Easylink, but on some other electronic mail system instead - Telecom Gold, for instance?"

The temperature fell noticeably. "Well, said the demonstrator, "I'm sure you'll be able to, eventually." [Inspiration!] "When they get the computer standards sorted out."
We'd always imagined that the aim of a mail service was that you could communicate with anyone. Other outfits seem to manage: British Telecom and Mercury Communications have had no problems of compatability, not as far as technical matters are concerned. And with the new cellular radio systems, people who buy 'phones from Racal or their rival Securicor will be free to use them over either network. So why the difficulty with electronic mail?

The history of technology is full of good ideas which might have been twice as good for a bit of standardization. And now, if you'll excuse us, this writer is going out for a book of stamps.

## Oftel born out of POUNC

When BT became a public limited company a new watchdog body was formed, the Office of Telecommunications or Oftel, which has taken over the duties of the Post Office Users National Council (POUNC) in so far as they relate to telecommunications. It is a Government department established under a DirectorGeneral, who is independent of ministerial control and free, it is said, from political pressures.
The first Director-General, Professor Bryan Carsberg, is an economist and accountant. He was appointed by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, whom he had previously advised on the liberalization of the telecommunication industry and the privatization of BT.

Professor Carsberg said recently that he would persue an active and vigilant campaign to promote the development of the telecomms industry and "enhance the effectiveness of contribution to the UK economy. I intend to be active in looking for indications of
compliance with licence conditions rather than passively waiting for problems to become visible."
"In the field of consumer protection, the most effective weapon is competition. However until competition has had time to develop, we have some specific responsibilities to protect the interests of customers. We are ready to consider any dispute between BT (or any other operator) and its customers, and unlike POUNC we can take strong action to resolve an issue if the circumstances warrant it."
"Special conditions exist to protect the interests of the elderly and disabled, to prevent discrimination against rural customers, and to limit the closure of public call boxes. I expect that BT will respond to these and other conditions in positive spirit, recognising the importance of good performance to their public image; but I intend to be energetic in enforcing the conditions if necessary."

## Licence- exemption proposals

Some low-power radio equipment is likely to receive exemption from radiotransmission licences according to a consultative document published by the DTI. In 1980 radio-controlled models and metal detectors were exempted, later cordless telephones. Now four other areas are to be considered; Telemetry and telecontrol for general purposes, some speech communications equipment, Doppler and field disturbance devices, and emergency alarms for the elderly.

The first category includes remote control by radio (e.g. for opening garage doors), remote relaying of measurements, nonspeech communication and devices incorporating transponders, such as animal tracking devices.
Low power speech communications include radiomicrophones for use in lectures and in entertainment, radio aids for the deaf and all speech devices using induction systems (e.g. for paging and for simultaneous translation at international conferences). However talk-back paging at

161 MHz would still need licencing.

The third category encompasses devices which detect the presence, movement, speed or passage of people or object. These include intruder alarms, production-line counters and traffic controls, or which detect the presence of resonant circuits as are used in anti-shoplifting tags and to access control equipment.
In most cases the equipment would still be subject to Government type approval, and it is proposed that there should be a standard mark to indicate that the type approval requirements had been met and to incorporate the approval number.
The Government would also retain the right to inspect the equipment to ensure that it is correctly used and maintained, that it complies with radio regulatory specifications and to close it down in the case of undue interference.
Copies of the booklet are available from the DTI Radio Regulatory Division, Room 613 (LPD), Waterloo Bridge House, Waterloo Road, London SE1 8UA.

## Simple solutions to complex problems

It may be that in some areas of endeavour, when we are looking for a complex solution to some problem, the answer is staring us in the face all the time.

Take the local area network. T.T. Farrow of Software Sciences suggested at conference that in comparison with various ring and star systems, the humble p.b.x used to switch both voice and data signals through the office extension system is as good as any. Connecting a terminal to a telephone extension through a small data/voice unit, permits
both to be used and transmitted simultaneously in analogue form down the existing pairs of wires. At the p.b.x the two are separated by a similar device, with the data being routed to the host computer and the voice transmissions allowed to enter the exchange as usual. All the systems have the disadvantage of needing re-cabling.

Such a simple and elegant solution 'feels' right. It makes one wonder how often we might be looking too hard to find a simple answer.

## New licence schedule

A new schedule to the amateur radio licence has been introduced, resulting from discussions between the DTI and the RSGB. The schedule is the technical supplement to the licence which lists the frequencies amateurs may use. It has now been produced in a single format to cover both Class A and Class B licencees and has been made easier to understand. Operators can see easily the frequencies they may use and their status (i.e. primary/secondary), the maximum power and the type of transmission permitted. There
have been a couple of minor changes in the licence; the first reflects the transfer to the Radio Interference Service to the DTI from British Telecom, the other removes the clause referring to RTTY transmissions as these are referred to elsewhere in the schedule.
Licences are available to those who have passed the Radio Amateur Examination, Class B permits transmissions at frequencies above 144 MHz . To get Class A, the operator must also pass a morse test and can then transmit on any amateur band.

## In brief

A coals-to-Newcastle story is provided by the sale of power semiconductors to the Japanese Meidensha Electric
Manufacturing company who are constructing a rapid-transit electric railway in Singapore. The rectifiers and thyristors to be used in the system's substations are manufactured by Westcode Semiconductors, in Chippenham, Wilts.

- The end of an era has been marked by the decision of the M-O Valve Company to cease manufacture of the Golden Lion KT88 tetrode valve. The KT77 will also be "phased out". The valves have been extensively used for many years in highquality valve amplifiers.
- Siliconix are building a new factory in Silicon Valley for the fabrication of 6 in silicon wafers. The production line will use many new techniques in the manufacture of mos i.cs including steppers to gibe accurate registration of masks, ion implantation and plasma etching. This is expected to give a much lower rejection rate and thus a higher yield.
- A new and revised edition of the Handbook for Television Subtitlers, prepared by the IBA Engineering Division jointly with Oracle Teletext Ltd, and the University of Southampton. About 12 hours of subtitles are available to ITV viewers each week and the book has
expanded on previous editions in the light of further research and practical experience. The text has been extended with particular reference to subtitling for deaf children and to incorporate the results of experiments in the difficult area of real-time subtitling of 'live' programmes. The book is available free to broadcast organizations and to those actively concemed with film or educational applications of captions, from IBA Engineering Information Service, Crawley Court, Winchester Hants. - BT's Research Laboratories at Martlesham Heath are involved in 14 projects which have been awarded $£ 21 \mathrm{~m}$ by the Alvey Directorate as part of its programme to promote new integrated-circuit technology. One goal is the production of microchips with the equivalent of a million components on each. The overall programme has been designed to research the new materials and processing techniques needed to reduce the size of individual components in i.cs and develop techniques for their interconnection on the chip. Among the methods used in getting things even smaller and consequently faster is multilevel interconnect, like a multilayer p.c.b. but of electronmicroscopic size.


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TS1030B3 Bent I4V IOmA. Band III driver amplfier. 10dB gain, Maximum output 30dBmV Power
TSTo30UHF $\begin{aligned} & \text { requirement } 14 \mathrm{~V} \text { 10mA. } \\ & \text { UHF driver amplifier. } 10 \mathrm{~dB} \text { gain. Maximum output } 30 \mathrm{dBmV} \text {. Power require }\end{aligned}$ UHF driver amplifier. 10 dB gain. Maximum output 30 dBmV . Power require
ment 14 V 10 mA Single channel UHF driver amplifier. 10 dB gain. Maximum output 40 dBmV . Power requirement 14 V 10 mA . (Quote channel required).

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# Microcomputercontrolled cassette recorder 

## The series concludes with two articles describing software structure

In this part, I propose to outline the overall structure of the software developed to control the solenoid-operated cassette deck. I have developed a machine-code program to run on my own 6502 based computer. Using a number of new Basic words the routines of my $\mathrm{m} / \mathrm{c}$ program are accessed and carried out, always returning to Basic upon completion of the routine. In addition to describing the overall program in general terms I shall discuss, in detail, a number of the subroutines designed to control the mechanical operation of the cassette deck.
My UK101 microcomputer has been considerably modified and augmented, using various enhancements produced by Premier Publications. In particular it uses their CIGMON X monitor chip, improved versions of the Basic 1, 3 and 4 chips and their new Basic 5. Most importantly, from their 6502 assimbler disassembler chip, ENCODER, which enables me to write $\mathrm{m} / \mathrm{c}$ programs in a form of simplified assembly language, greatly simplifying the compilation of a $\mathrm{m} / \mathrm{c}$ program, The various subroutines presented are written in ENCODER'S assembly language There are differences fro the more normal type of assembly language and where these need explanation I do so.

## Interlacing the program to Basic

The ease with which the operation of the cassette deck can be controlled by the microcomputer depends very much upon how the Basic list of command words can be extended. Fortunately, in the UK101, all inputs from the keyboard are handled by the Basic interpreter through an input routine which is accessed via a vectored address held in ram. The input routine is peculiar to the
type of computer and is therefore handled by the Monitor chip. However, instead of jumping from Basic direct to the Monitor chip, the instruction given is an indirect one, i.e. JUMP to the address location stored at another address location. In the UK101, the instruction given is JMP ( $\$ 0218$ ), where $\$ 0218$ is a location in ram which, together with the next memory address, $\$ 0219$, normally contains the address of the Monitor chip's input routine $\$$ FB46. Because the address of the input routine is contained in a ram address the computer programmer is quite at liberty to modify the values contained at those locations, substituting the address of his own 'input' routine. Using this technique I can arrange for the computer to look and check for four new Basic words, AUSAVE, AULOAD, FILIST, and ERLIST when a Basic command is typedin from the keyboard. If none are found, the control is handed back to Basic interpreter which then checks its own list of command names. If, however, one of the new words is found, then the computer jumps to a routine to handle that command.
The overall structure of the program is shown in Fig. 1. An initial $\mathrm{m} / \mathrm{c}$ routine is accessed, which sets up initial conditions and includes writing the address of the 'new input routine' at the input vector addresses. The initial routine then exists to Basic (UK101, warm start). Subsequent keyboafe entries from Basic are handled by the 'new input routine'. Upon receipt of a carriage-return the 'new input routine' looks for one of the four new Basic words, accessing one of the four new routines, if found. Each of the four has access to various subroutines which control the mechanical functions of the
cassette deck among other things. Each may 'return' to Basic through the new input routine, or 'jump' directly back to Basic.

## New input routine

I have listed, in ENCODER's assembly form, the $\mathrm{m} / \mathrm{c}$ program of the new input routine (:INPR) and its subroutine 'Find' (:FIND). The old input routine at SFB46 is a subroutine which accepts the character written from the keyboard and stores it in the Basic buffer line, and also retains it in the accumulator (the A-register) of the 6502 . The new input routine thus first uses the old routine, then checking whether the character stored in the accumulator is a carriagereturn. If not, it returns the program control to the Basic interpreter which awaits another character to be input from the keyboard, If the character is a carri-age-return, then the value of the X-register is temporarily stored at address \$02FF and a 'space' character is added to the end of the Basic buffer line which, in the UK101, starts at $\$ 13$ and is indexed by the X-register. The value of X is thus an indication of the length of the buffer line and the program jumps to the subroutine

Fig.1. Block diagram of program to control cassette deck.


Fig.2. AUSAVE routine logic
flow-chart
:FIND. Upon returning from :FIND the temporarily stored value of X is returned to the X -register, the accumulator reloaded with carriage-return and the program returned to the Basic interpreter.
The subroutine :FIND compares the word in Basic's buffer line with a list of new words stored in the subroutine :FIND at the location labeled :WORD. Inverted commas are used to indicate to ENCODER to, 'sore the ASCII values of the following text in the immediately following memory locations'. The address locations of the four routines associated with the four new words are stored in the routine starting at the location labelled :JUMP. To the ENCODER, \#:LOAD means, ‘store the address of the routine labelled
‘:JUMP; list must be in the same order as the new BASIC words separated from the next by the 'asterisk' character and the list is terminated by the 'hash' character. The list may contain any number of words of any length (up to that of the buffer line!) and the list of :JUMP addresses may be added-to, but, remember, there must be a :JUMP address for every new word.
The subroutine :FIND works by comparing the word stored in Basic's buffer line with the list of new words, starting at the begining. A 'jump index' is given the initial value of zero and is incremented by two every time a new word 'fails' the comparison. If a comparison is found then the 'jump index' is transferred to the X-register. The JUMP address of the routine selected is deter-
mined by indexing the list of JUMP addresses from the :JUMP label with the X-register. The high and low bytes of the JUMP address are transferred to zeropage addresses, SEE \& SEF, and the routine is finally accessed by the statement JMP (SEE).

## New routines

The four routines, AUSAVE, AULOAD, FILIST and ERLIST are shown only as flow-diagrams in Figs 2 to 5. In the UK101, using the new Basic 4 chip supplied by Premier Publications, it is possible to SAVE and LOAD named files using the following formats:

1. SAVE
2. SAVE "program name"
3. SAVE"
4. LOAD
5. LOAD "program name
6. LOAD "program name"
7. LOAD""
8. LOAD"
9. LOAD?"

1 Formats 1 and 4 are the same as normal SAVE and LOAD commands; they are not used in the automatic mode;
2 saves the program to tape with the specified program name, which may be up to 32 characters long;
3 saves the program in a format designed to prevent illegal use by another computer user (it can only be loaded using the syntax LOAD"");
5 loads, but does not automatically run the named program from

## tape;

6 loads and automatically runs named program from tape;
7 loads and runs the first program found;
8 loads but does not run the first program found;
9 compares a program on tape with that currently in the computer's memory. The resident program is retained. The command is used to verify a program on tape directly after it has been saved.

In writing routines to handle the new words AUSAVE and AULOAD, I have allowed only some of the above formats:

AUSAVE "program name"
AULOAD "program name"
AULOAD "program name"
AULOAD?
AULOAD""
If AUSAVE, AULOAD, AUSAVE" or AULOAD" are typed, the new routines have been designed to return a syntax error. However,
in the case of AUSAVE "program name", it does not seem to matter whether the last set of inverted commas are included or not.

Although the length of the program name, using the UK101's new Basic 4 chip, may be as long as 32 characters, under automatic control I have limited it to 6 characters. This results in a much tidier format when the directory (or File List) is displayed on the screen.
Apart from AUSAVE and AULOAD, two other Basic words are used in the control program, FILIST and ERLIST. The FILIST command is used to display the directory on the screen so that the list of programs (held in the directory) may be viewed. The format produced by the FILIST command is a row of four program names (together with electronic counter values indicating their location on the tape cassette) with each row separated by a blank row. ERLIST is similar to the FILIST command in that it also display the list of stored programs, but in this case the format is simply a column of program names. Having listed out the program names, the operator is invited to, 'Erase last Program?'. Any reply other than ' Y ' from the keyboard exists from the routine back to the Basic interpreter. If ' Y ' is typed, the programs are relisted as before but with the last program erased from the list. The
invitation to 'Erase last Program?' is repeated. The program whose name has been erased from the list is not irrecoverably lost until the directory is saved anew on the tape. Reloading the directory, stored at the beginning of the cassette tape, will reinstate the 'erased' program or programs. All that the ERLIST command does is to reassign the position of the 'next free space' on the tape to the position immeniately before the 'erased' program. Using this technique, the last recorded program may be effectively erased from the directory and a new one recorded in its place.

To be able to save and load programs to and from a tape cassette automatically, it is essential to know what programs are stored on the tape. The information is held in the directory which is always stored at the beginning of the cassette. In order that the directory can be loaded from and saved to the tape cassette without interfering with the Basic program held in the computer's memory, I have written a special $\mathrm{m} / \mathrm{c}$ routine. When loaded from the tape, the directory is placed in a reserved area of ram not used by the computer's program. Ten characters are required to store a program name, together with its electronic counter value. Thus 512 bytes of ram can hold up to 51 program details, which should be
more than enough record space for a C60 cassette.
No specific command is required to load the directory when a new cassette placed in the tape deck. By linking the 'cas-sette-in-position' microswitch on the tape deck to the CB1 input of a 6522 v.i.a. chip (see Fig. 2 of first part of the article), the computer is able to determine when a cassette is removed and a new one placed into the tape deck. When either of the four new basic commands are entered from the keyboard, each of the four routines checks to see whether the directory has been loaded. If it has not, it is immediately loaded into its reserved ram location. Unless the cassette is subsequently removed or replaced with another, there is no further need to reload it.

## Ausave

Figure 2 is a flow-diagram of the logic of the AUSAVE routine. The command AUSAVE 'program name' enters the routine as previously described, the first check merely establishing the correct syntax to ensure that the program name is read correctly. The next check determines whether the directory is already loaded or not and loads it if not. The characters 'AU' are now from the command held in Basic's buffer line, so that


Fig.3. Second half of AUSAVE routine hand back to Basic when deck is in record mode. Fig.4. Flow-diagram of AULOAD routine.

when control is handed back to the interpreter, Basic sees the command, SAVE 'program name’ in the buffer line. When SAVEing a program under automatic control it is obviously important not to use the same name twice. The next check prevents this from happening. However, if the program name has already been used, the opportunity is given to overwrite the existing program (no matter where it is located) by the new one of the same name. This technique can be useful in updating an old program, but care must be taken to ensure that the length of the new program is not greater than the old one, or the program following it on the tape may be corrupted. If the program name has not been used before, then it is added to the directory together with the electronic counter value of the 'next free space' on tape: the tape is then wound to this position.

Before placing the tape deck into its RECORD mode the address of the start of the second half of the AUSAVE routine shown in Fig. 3 is placed into the input routines vector location. With the tape-recorder running in its RECORD mode, this half of the AUSAVE routine hands control back to the basic interpreter, which sees the command SAVE 'program name' in its buffer line and therefore SAVEs the named program in the normal way. Once the program has been saved the Basic interpreter returns to its 'input routine'. As a result, it is immediately vectored to the second half of the AUSAVE routine. The first function of this half is to stop the tape-recorder. If an old program has been overwritten, then there is nothing more to do but reassign the address of the 'new input routine' to the input
Fig.5. Second half of AULOAD

routine vectors and return to the Basic interpreter. If, however, a new program has been SAVEd then the 'next free space' value must be updated. This is done by reading the current value of the electronic counter and adding a little to its value so as to clear the end of the last program by a comfortable margin. The details of the directory stored on tape must also be updated as follows.

The tape is rewound to the beginning, the tape counter reset and the tape advanced to the start of the directory location. The directory is then saved anew, overwriting the old, but with the additional information concerning the new program. By always rewinding to the beginning of the tape and resetting the tape counter, before advancing to the beginning of the directory, the 'load directory' routine is designed to exit from its program after the tape has incremented beyond the expected directory start location by a reasonable amount. In my program I have arranged for the words, 'Directory Not Found' and to wait for confirmation from the operator via the keyboard, since a misread of the directory will produce the same result and an immediate attempt to SAVE the required program could result in a disastrous corrupting of the existing programs.

## AULOAD routine

The flow-diagram of the AULOAD routine is shown in Fig. 4 In the case of AULOAD there are a number of syntaxes to support as described earlier and the first four checks sort out the various possibilities, exiting from the routine if none of the four allowed are found. In such an event, upon return to Basic, a syntax error will be indicated. The first check determines whether the first character after the command, AULOAD, (other than a 'space' character) is a set of inverted commas or a question mark, the next one determining whether the second character is a set of inverted commas, or not. If it is, the program jumps to the steps prior to exiting the routine. This procedure is designed to handle the AULOAD?" syntax. If immediately prior to this command AUSAVE "program name" has been carried out, then appropriate temporary stores contain information about the start location of the SAVEd program. The tape is thus wound to this position
and the SAVEd program compared with the program remaining in the computer's memory. The previously SAVEd program can thus be verified. The syntax, AULOAD"", will produce a similar result: however, in this case, the program recently SAVEd is LOADed into the computer, erasing that held in memory.

If the second character is not a set of inverted commas, then it should be the start of the program name, 'spaces' not being allowed: the third step performs this check. The fourth check determines whether the program name is terminated with inverted commas. If it is, then the program is required to be RUN immediately after LOADing. However, the RUN command must not be carried out until the second half of the AULOAD routine has been performed. The second set of inverted commas are thus replaced with a 'space' character and a RUN flag set for subsequent attention by the second half of the routine.

With the directory loaded, the next step searches the directory for the desired program in order to determine where it may be found on tape. If the program name is not found the routine is exited. The reason for 'jumping' to Basic this time, rather than 'returning' through the :FIND and :INPR routine is really for nicety. To avoid a 'syntax error' being printed to the screen, the buffer line is erased (i.e replaced with 'space' characters). Jumping, then, to warm start Basic produces the 'READY' comment, whereas returning does not. (Remember, when JUMPing rather than RETURNing to Basic, the unused 'return from subroutine 'addresses must be pulled off the stack by two PLA statements.)
Having found the desired program, the characters ' AU ' are replaced with 'space' characters to leave the command LOAD "program name" in the buffer line. The address of the start of the second half of the AULOAD routine is loaded into the 'input routine' vectors after having wound the tape to the location of the start of the program. The taperecorder is then put into its PLAY mode and the first half of the routine exited. The BASIC interpreter now sees the command LOAD "program name" and therefore loads the program in the normal way. Once loading is complete, the basic interpreter

Continued on page 58

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## The Information Society-3

## Telecommunications: techno-commercial politics, protocols and standards

The big users whose traffic justifies a nationwide or international private telecommunications network can employ managers responsible for ensuring reliable service. These people lease lines, purchase equipment, organise software etc., and can control the whole system and purchase equipment in such a way that protocol and equipment incompatibility problems are avoided. These are the people who use the 'private networks' of Fig. 1 (May issue) for intra-organisational communications and who are likely also to use the facilities offered by v.a.n. vendors on 'commercial networks'. However, when it comes to inter-organisation or inter-person communications they are no better off than the rest of us.

A coalescence of networks transparent to the user - that is which enable him to send and receive data on any machine as easily as he now direct dials and talks to a friend in Hong Kong, may well be 20 years away. Incidentally the politics, technicalities, and investment needed to establish direct dial communications between users with one simple standard instrument - the telephone - took many years to complete.

Communication between machines brings in another team of players - the commercial suppliers - active in the technocommercial political arena which is somewhat different from the 'higher level' politics discussed in the previous section. Each player is trying to so well establish his own rules (protocols) for running a system using machines of his
own manufacture that other suppliers will have to play by those rules if they want to join the game (a de facto standard). At the same time he co-operates with his competitiors in hammering out a consensus standard for the general benefit of the community, but without trying too hard.

Commercial suppliers have less inertia than PTTs and some are more enterprising than others. If one supplier jumps in with a system while the PTTs are still thinking about it, penetrates the market, and the system is seen to work, he can hope that the others won't re-invent the wheel and will adjust to his fait accompli. Other suppliers and PTTs can, of course, think of all kinds of reasons for ignoring this pushiness. The system may be geared to the proposer's own data processing equipment, it may be considered to be too complex or already out of date, it may give the proposer an unacceptable commercial advantage, or it may be incompatible with such standards as already exist.

The development of machines for inputting, storing, processing, and retrieving information, and methods for transferring data from one machine to another has been carried out in a very short time in a highly competitive environment with the larger companies introducing major advanced systems incompatible with others. The sale of a number of systems is followed by the introduction of add-on compatible bits and pieces, the whole being controlled by proprietary software. faced with the option of writing off their first investment and starting
afresh with another supplier, or buying and using the new compatible offerings from the same supplier more or less painlessly, suppliers hope that customers will choose the second course.

After briefly introducing the subject of protocols the author of a useful booklet ${ }^{43}$ continues 'Topic understood - but why should I switch off my yawns about it?'. The answer is that once established, standard protocols will enable you to buy the most suitable items of equipment from different sources knowing that they will work together and with other people's equipment, systems will be able to communicate with each other, numbers of devices needed will be reduced, obsolescence will be minimized because up-grading will be easier, and costs will come down - always assuming, of course, that the 'right' standard is adopted in the first place.

Standardization in a rapidly changing field requires the wis-

Present problems will partly be resolved by network unification, but it will still be necessary to arrange for one machine to 'talk' to another without the intervention of compatibility problems for their users.


43. User View of Communications Standards, 2nd edition March 1983, published by NCC Ltd., Oxford Road, Manchester M1 7ED, England, (On behalf of the IT Standards Committee for Private Users, Depatment of Industry).
44. Pouzin, Louis; Zimmerman, H

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47. Mier, Edwin E. Data Communications, July 1982, pp.71-101.
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48. Jones, Thomas C. Data Communications, July 1982, pp.123-31.
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49. von Studnitz, Peter. Computer Networks, vol.7, 1983, pp. 27-35.
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50 . Focus IT Information Sheet, Issue 1 , April 1983. IT Standards Unit, DOI, 66-77 Victoria St., London SW 1E 6SJ. Intercept strategy announcement
dom of Solomon. What may seem sensible today may be obsolete tomorrow. However, the general chaos has prompted the OSI seven-layer reference model agreement, arrived at under the auspices of the International Standards Organisation (ISO), Comite Consultatif Internationale de Telegraphie et Telephone (CCITT), the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), the European Computer Manufacturers Association (ECMA) and others.

The OSI model brings together certain existing and proposed CCITT standards in an orderly and logical manager in contrast to present piecemeal useage. The majority of CCITT members are from the PTTs, so the standards are backed by the power of these monopolies seeking to maximize the use of their enormous investment in cables and equipment. CCITT includes some computer/ data processing manufacturer members and the operation of most of the equipment made by industry follows CCITT recommendations. IBM goes its own way.

The problem which the OSI model seeks to solve is this. Mr Dupont has an MBI machine connected to a local area network (lan) and he wants to send some information to Mr Singh, say, in another country - for example the message 'Gone to lunch; back at 2 pm GMT'. Mr Singh has a Faxo machine, accessible via a telephone line with its own number. Dupont types Singh's address on the message and the system is required to transmit, route, and present the message to Singh exactly as Dupont typed it.

To do this, a set of instructions must be automatically appended to Dupont's message to establish a path through a complex set of networks to Singh's machine, and to ensure that the arriving bit stream is presented on a screen or on paper, exactly as composed, regardless of the different characteristics of the sending and receiving machines. Various devices en route will read that part of the instructions intended for them and will act to carry out these functions.

A very large body of mainly incomprehensible literature exists about the OSI model. A major article appeared ${ }^{44}$ at an early stage which is heavy going perhaps because it is aimed at the already knowledgeable, and its title is a misnomer. Another
equally authoritative article appeared later which also fails to provide a picture ${ }^{45}$. A selection of articles, mainly with self-evident titles, are listed in references 4649.

The OSI model is usually presented as an abstraction in the form shown in Fig.3. Seven functions are recognized in the model. Dupont's message will require instructions so that each function can be performed en route, once a set of standards devised to deal with these functions are complete. For instance the 'application layer' box will only recognise and execute 'application' instructions. Dupont's message - an 'electronic mail' application, will have a mail code attached by the application layer at the sending end. The remote application layer box will recognise mail and know that it must be read into a file called mail in Singh's machine.

At another level, say the transport layer - the layer responsible for selecting a route of the required quality for the information being conveyed and checking and correcting it - a device installed somewhere along the way, triggered by the appropriate code will be standardized with a set of "transport expectations". In other words it will be able to take action only by reference to a set of codes, any one of which it may receive, to take care of a designated sub-function. For example, if it receives an error checking code that is wrong it will automatically ask for the retransmission of a block of message symbols.

Until the OSI model starts to be implemented, attempts to establish de facto standards will continue. This approach more or less succeeded in another area microcomputer operating systems ( $\mathrm{CP} / \mathrm{M}$ ). It came somewhere near to succeeding in telecommunications when IBM introduced Binary Synchronous Communications and then Systems Network Architecture in 1974. This was an advanced concept, since further developed, with application programs running on host computers and remote terminals or complete devices. Other IBM 'document interchange' software enables the exchange of files between all devices. Once adopted, a customer would probably be lockedin to IBM for future requirements.

Of course there are many other communication require-
ments besides inter-computer and distributed processing; moreover many IBM users have stayed with BSC because of the cost of installing SNA. SNA required all messages to embody a nine byte code - the instructions to the en route devices to take the necessary action, as will be required when OSI is in place. On the other hand, the apparent success of the IBM Personal Computer, obviously also seen by IBM as the intelligent terminal for use with its mainframes, the existence of companies making IBM-like equipment to deal with the special communications problems of IBM users, and IBM's juggernaut approach with SNA used in its DIOSS office system coupled to high-powered advertising, indicated that SNA is a long way from being displaced by thoughts of OSI.

Currently IBM is placing full page SNA advertisements containing diagrams which look like the OSI model, claiming 10,000 large system installations. Closer inspection reveals that the seven layers are there with different names. IBM has been forced to acknowledge the existence of the PTT-sponsored X25 interface to public and other networks and now advertises the fact that an SNA network can be connected to them. This means that there is SNA-to-other-network compatibility by standardization at the bottom three layers of the OSI model concerned with interconnection and the reliable transport of data - but that is all. The way in which the data is handled in terms of encypherment, flow control, formatting, and file interchange is another matter.

It is probably true to say that the OSI model owes a good deal to SNA, but the standards finally adopted for the component parts of the model require to look sufficiently different for it to be evident that IBM is not calling the tune. IBM will presumably pursue an opportunist policy according to the relative success of SNA and its successors, and competitive OSI-compatible offerings.

Anticipating that OSI or something very like it, will be adopted the UK National Computer Centre, acting on behalf of the Department of Industry, have announced an 'Intercept Strategy ${ }^{50}$.

Further articles review telecommunication techniques and discuss social aspects of the Information Society.

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ELECTRONICS \& WIRELESS WORLD NOVEMBER 1984

# Variable-speed video playback 

## Analogue to digital conversion and memory organization

Sampling the signal and storing it in a memory provides the varialbe delay necessary to correct timebase errors, the time between writing and reading representing the delay. Using sample storage is the only feasible method of correcting the large timing errors resulting from variable speed operation.

## A-to-d conversion

Figure 1 shows the essential elements of $\mathbf{t}$.b.c.video input processing.Amplitude variations resulting from varispeed operation have been described, and prior to entering the convertor proper, the signal amplitude has to be returned to normal. Since the playback signal level is proportional to offtape line rate, a frequency-to-voltage convertor running from offtape H -sync. can be used to control a v.c.a. in the video signal path: the level will now be independent of speed. For the broadcastable speed range (typically $-1 \times$ to $+3 \times$ ) the amplitude range is so small that the v.c.a. can be bypassed or omitted. For speeds between around $-10 \times$ and $+10 \times$, the signal spectrum is sufficiently similar to normal that the standard anti-aliasing filter can be used. Beyond these speeds, the sampling rate changes so much that different cut-off frequencies are needed, one of about 7 MHz for high forward speed, and one of about 2 MHz for high reverse. Filter selection is done by comparing offtape H -rate with references.
In a c.c.d. based t.b.c., the filtered signal requires a sample/ hold circuit to take a near-instantaneous voltage sample and hold it for transfer to the storage device. As the c.c.d. is analogue, it will exhibit no quantizing error, but the sampling process will suf-
fer from the aperture effect, which will require equalization as in Fig. 2.

In a digital t.b.c., the filtered signal is fed to the a-to-d conver-tor.Sample-hold is not always necessary in video a-to-d cs for reasons which will be explained.

The a-to-d convertor serves to quantize an analogue voltage into a finite range of integers. Since the storage medium will be binary, the number range will be an integer power of two. In practice 8 bit resolution, having 256 quantizing intervals, is almost universal, although some units work with 9 bit accuracy.
Figure 3 shows how the vídeo signal, in this case colour bars, is embraced by an 8 bit quantizing structure. The fact that sync. tip

goes below zero is of no consequence provided that new syncs will be applied after timing correction. Two precautions are necessary to keep the video within the convertor range: firstly, the input will be pedestal-clamped to prevent level shift due to picture content changes; and secondly, the input level is above or below standard. A manual gain adjustment is provided for use in conjunction with these level lights.

The a-to-d convertor is a critical component of the t.b.c. because of the high operating speed needed. Many of the well known a-to-d techniques, such as
ramp conversion and successive approximation, are ruled out because they cannot run fast enough. The preferred approach is the flash convertor which can work at very high speeds owing to its inherent simplicity. Figure 4 shows that each quantizing level has its own binary comparator. A resistor chain and current source produce one reference voltage for every quantizing level. The input signal is fed to the other input of the comparators: there will thus be one binary output for every quantizing level, and a priority encoder is necessary to give a digital output. No sample-hold is

Fig.1. Input video processing system returns signal amplitude to reference with H-locked Voltage Controlled Amplifier. Following the antialiasing filter, video signal can be sent to flash convertor directly. CCDs and half-flash converter require sample/ hold (see text).

Fig2. Response due to aperture effect for various aperture ratios. Horizontal axis is fraction of Nyquist limit frequency, e.g. for $\mathbf{4 f}_{\mathrm{sc}}$ sampling, Nyquist limit is $2 \mathrm{f}_{\mathrm{sc}}$, hence horizontal scale would be $0-2 f_{\mathrm{sc}}$. The equaliser needs an inverse response to the above to give flat overall response.

(b)

Fig.4. Flash convertor has one reference voltage for ach quantizing level with which the input signal is compared. Representative waveforms (a), typical circuit.

Fig.5. In monolithic flash convertor, exclusive-or gates facilitate generation of complemented output for some applications. Device shown in TRW1007.


Fig. 3. How the composite video signal fits the quantizing structure. The important range is the total excursion of subcarrier. One quantizing interval is 5 mV in this example.
necessary with such an approach, since all the comparators see the input at the same time.

The simplicity of the flash convertor is offset by the need for one comparator for each quantizing interval, 256 being needed in an 8 bit system. This is a natural application for an integrated circuit, and single chip flash convertors are available. Figure 5 shows the TRW device used in the Ampex TBC-2.
A 256 level flash convertor in discrete component or s.s.i. form is not practicable, and before the single chip device became avail-
able, a variation on the flash convertor was used. In the half-flash convertor of the Sony BVT-2000 shown in Figure 6, the input signal is fed to a 16 level flash convertor, which produces a 4 bit resolution output. This is fed to a d-to-a convertor which produces a 4 bit, accurate analogue output. The d-to-a output is subtracted in the analogue domain from the input signal, to produce the quantizing error due to 4 bit conversion. This error is sent to a further 4 bit flash convertor, whose output is appended to the original 4 bits to produce an 8 bit output. Note that there are only 32 comparators, as opposed to 256, which makes the approach feasible with discrete components.

Drawbacks of the half-flash convertor are that the two-stage conversion requires sample hold, with consequent compensation for aperture effect, and that careful adjustment is necessary to minimize non-monotonicity at 16 level intervals.

Memory. The memory can take the form of either RAM or shift registers.As c.c.ds are analogue relatives of the shift register, the description of the latter will serve both.
Memory addressing is split into two distinct subsystems, one controlling the sample address within the line, and one controlling the line address within the available memory.
Owing to the high sampling rates used, interleaving is necessary to permit available memory devices to work within their speed specifications. The degree of interleaving is affected by the chosen sampling rate. Figure 7 shows two examples of current practice: in the Ampex TBC-2, bipolar shift registers are used with $3 \times \mathrm{f}_{\mathrm{SC}}$ sampling, requiring 6 way interleaving whereas the Sony BVT-2000 uses r.a.m. and $4 \times \mathrm{f}_{\text {SC }}$ sampling, requiring an 8 way interleave. Individual storage chips are thus working at the same speed in these two machines.
Since all available chips have capacities which are a power of two, interleaving can also be used to increase the choice of the number of samples stored in a line without sacrificing elegant addressing methods or wasting chip capacity. For example, the six-way interleave of Figure 7(a) stores 768 samples per line ( $6 \times$ 128 ), which at $3 \times \mathrm{f}_{\mathrm{SC}}$ ( 75 ns ) stores $768 \times 75 \mathrm{~ns}=57.6 \mathrm{mic}$ roseconds from each line. Clearly the $4 \times \mathrm{f}_{\mathrm{Sc}}$ device will need 1 K samples to store the same portion of a line. The full 64 microseconds is not needed since syncs are replaced.
A counter is needed for both shift register and r.a.m. storage. In the case of r.a.m. the counter generates the r.a.m. address, whereas with shift registers, the counter determines the correct number of clocks needed to shift data in and out. When memory is written, the counter can vary, whereas when the memory is read, the clock will come from reference, and the only variation will be due to the action of the velocity compensator. A selector is needed for the appropriate clock, and clearly write and read cannot be simultaneous.

Memory line addressing. The functions of the memory line addressing system can be summarised as follows:
a) updates write line address at offtape H -rate, and read line add-


Fig.6. In the half flash convetor, the input is quantised to 4 bits accuracy, then reconverted to analog and subtracted from the input. The signal at A cannot exceed 16 levels in amplitude for the high order A/D would increment, subtracting a further 16 levels. Signal at $A$ can thus be quantised by a futher 4 bit A/D to give overall 8 bit signal. Sample/ Hold is necessary because signal A cannot be determined until after A/D and $D / A$ have operated.

Fig.7a. Shift register memory of Ampex TBC-2 was 3 to 1 bit rate reduction in shift register and further 2 to 1 reduction by interleaving dual register with two phase clock.
ress at reference H -rate.
b) ensures that the four kinds of PAL line* are never interchanged.
c) ensures that the first line of an offtape field becomes the first line of a reference field irrespective of the time difference between these events. This is known as verticle locking.
d) caters for other modes of the v.t.r. such as E-E and confidence playback.
Figure 8 shows that the memory address overflows from the highest back to zero, giving the memory the structure of a ring. The addresses are combined into stes of four to preserve the PAL four line sequence. For this reason PAL C-format t.b.cs always have a line capacity which is a multiple of four. The two least significant bits of the memory address, $2^{0}$, which determines the state of Vswitch at 7.8 kHz and $2^{1}$, which determines normal or inverted burst at 3.9 kHz are controlled independently of the other address bits. At normal speeds, the correct four line sequence will be
*See Appendix on PAL system

(b)
assured by resetting these bits during the vertical interval once every four frames, when a colour frame pulse will appear in the VTR control track. This follows from the fact that the 4 line sequence reaches the same phase after four frames since 4 does not divide 625 .
At variable speeds, the track jumps executed by the track following head will break the 4 line sequence. However, it is possible

Fig.7b RAM memory of Sony BVT-2000 uses one stage 8 to 1 bit rate reduction. 256 location RAMs store bits for a pair of lines - good for storage density, but has a side effect of making the window smaller. Note that a and $b$ are repeated 8 times to store 8 bit A/D output.


Fig.8. Ring memory structure of 24 line TBC. Note the subdivision into 4 line blocks in order to cater for the PAL 4 line sequence. $\mathrm{N}=$ Normal Burst $\mathrm{I}=$ Inverted Burst (3.9KHz) O/E=odd/Even V switch. ( 7.8 KHz ).

Fig.9. PAL C-Format tape has 85 parallel tracks at any one perpendicular, with a 3.5 H timing shift between each. The 0.5 H term cancels the effect of interlace and $H$ pulses in all tracks are aligned. The timing error in variable speed will be obtained by multiplying the head deflection (in tracks) by 3.5 H. Eg. $+1 / 2$ track deflection $=1.75 \mathrm{H}$ advance.
to calculate the discontinuity from the number of tracks jumped, and the direction, so the VTR sends this information to the TBC in addition to the video. These precautions are necessary because losing the phase of the four line sequence prevents any subsequent colour difference decoding.
As stated, the read address and write address increment at different rates in varispeed. To quantify this phenomenon, it is necessary to return to the fundamentals of the C-format which are responsible for it. Figure 9 shows a view across a C-format tape. Owing to the chosen geometry, a line perpendicular to the tracks will intersect precisely 85 tracks at points which are successively $3 \frac{1}{2}$ lines further along. Upward movement of the track following head is the equivalent of an advance, and downward movement is the equivalent of a delay, rela-
tive to drum phase, which the VTR will hold constant relative to reference. When the tape is moving at non-normal speed, the head must follow a ramp in order to stay on track, which causes a steady growth in timing error, until a jump takes place, causing a step timing shift.Clearly the step caused by jumping must be equal and opposite to the gradual timing change caused by deflecting the head to stay on track.

To take some examples, at just below normal speed, the head will repeat one field occasionally by performing a one track reverse jump. This has the effect of suddenly advancing offtape video by $3 \frac{1}{2}$ lines relative to drum (and thus relative to reference ) timing. ©Over the next few fields, the slow tape speed will cause timing to slip back gradually until it is again corrected by a jump. Conversely at just above normal speed, a field will be skipped occasionally, and in this case the $3 \frac{1}{2}$ line step delay will balance the gradual advance caused by the increased tape speed. In both cases the timing errors stay within $3 \frac{1}{2}$ lines, giving an indication of the amount of memory required for correction.

To be continued.


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# Telemetry decoder for Oscar-10 

## James Miller concludes his desigh with a look at the software requirements and an alternative decoding technique

by J. R. Miller, B. Sc.


Once the system has been adjusted it may be checked out live or with a test tape. The waveforms obtained should be as shown in Figs.6,7 and 8 (October issue).A number of features of the satellite data make this easier. The padding character hex 50 and <space> both occur in longish bursts. In addition, the sync code tester will obviously not work unless everything else is going properly, and so illumination of the 'block' led once every 14 seconds for 10 sec onds provides a quick, comprehensive overall check.
The design of the software to decode and display the data is straightforward enough, but it is outside the scope of this article to present it in full.

The computer should examine the block flag until it is asserted, then wait for a byte strobe. It should then read in the byte, place it into a 512 -byte buffer and await the next strobe. Alternatively, bits may read in serially and packed away.

When all 512 bytes have been read, decoding can begin. In realtime there are four seconds in which to do this. Check that first two bytes are recognisable identifiers, e.g. Q <space>. Then all that remains is to pick out the items of interest such as volts, amperes and temperatures and to display them on a printer or screen in an appropriate format.

Alternatively it is possible to dump the lot, or selected bytes, to storage for later processing, perhaps to monitor specific parameters or to plot graphs.

A simple program for display using the BBC microcomputer is available from Amsat-UK ${ }^{1}$, and is suitable as a basis for experimentation.

A useful indicator of performance is given by the bit error rate.



## REFERENCES

1. Amsat-UK, London E12 5EQ, England. Oscar-10 Operating Manual, $£ 3$; The Satellite Experimenter's Handbook $£ 9.90$ Satellite Experimenters Handbook $\mathcal{L} 9.90$ (members $£ 8.50$ ); Oscar-10 telemetry test
data tape, $£ 6$ (members $£ 5$ ); telemetry data tape, $\mathcal{L} 6$ (members $\mathcal{K} 5$ ); telemetry
decoding software for the BBC microcomputer, on cassette $£ 6$ (members $£ 5$ ); p.c.b. $£ 15$. Prices include packing and UK postage; overseas postage costs extra. A stamped addressed envelope should accompany all enquiries. Amsat-UK depends on donations.

If we define a reasonable rate as less than 1 in 10000 bits, i.e. an average of one error every other block, the theoretical channel sig-nal-to-noise ratio (s.n.r.) should be 2.4 dB in 1600 Hz bandwidth. Allowing for the signal amplitude modulation and the limiter, the practical figure is actually about 6.2 dB , peak signal power to noise power, or $2: 1$ in voltage. With care this can be verified experimentally - the signal sounds and looks pretty ragged.

An s.n.r. of 6.2 dB is represented in the lab by the surprisingly small figure of 52 nV $(-133 \mathrm{dBm})$ at the input of a receiver having a 3 dB noise figure. Now, the 2 m general bea-

Table A. connection details

| $\mathrm{J}_{2}$ - inputs | $\mathrm{J}_{3}$ - outputs |
| :---: | :---: |
| 1 Audio in $16+12 \mathrm{~V}$ | $1+5 \mathrm{~V}$ in/out $\quad 16+12 \mathrm{~V}$ |
| $2 \mathrm{OV} 15 \mathrm{TP1}$ | 2 OV 15 Led+ |
| 3 Car. lock ${ }^{14}$ TP2 | 3 Block 14 Led- |
| 4 Tune $\}$ tos, 13 TP3 | 4 Ser.data $13-$ |
| 5 Clk lock 12 Tuning, VR ${ }_{3}$ | 5 Ser.clock 12- |
| $\begin{array}{ll}6 \text { Meter amp. } & 11 \text { Tuning, } \mathrm{VR}_{3} \\ 7 \mathrm{TP4/Clk} & 10 \text { Meter }\end{array}$ | 6- 11- |
| 80 V 99 Meter + | 8 OV 9- |

con transmits about 1 W $(+30 \mathrm{dBm})$; the space loss over a 40000 km path is 168 dB , so the received signal at a unit gain antenna is roughly -138 dBm . Thus an antenna gain of 138 $133=+5 \mathrm{dBi}$ is needed, plus a margin for fading, cable losses, wider bandwidth, higher receiver noise figure and so on.

In practice this means that for satisfactory reception a modest Yagi or equivalent is needed, pointed at the satellite.

It is worth noting that it is typical of optimal demodulators that they exhibit a marked performance threshold effect. In our ' 6.2 dB ' example above, a reduction in the s.n.r. of only 1 dB results in a dramatic tenfold error rate increase. This is most apparent where there is a rapid fading (usually induced by the satellite's $50 \mathrm{rev} / \mathrm{min} \mathrm{spin}$ ): what appears to be a healthy signal actually results in bursts of errors at s.n.r. minima. Spin fading occurs most strongly a few hours each side of apogee, when the spacecraft's antennas are not pointing directly towards Earth.

Another point concerning errors: because of the differential decoding scheme, a single bit error leaving the integrate-anddump section results in two adja-
cent bit errors at the system output. This should be remembered if any software error checking is to be attempted,

## A further decoding method

Finally, there is another method of decoding the signals. There is a distinctive relationship between the message bits (as opposed to data bits), and the encoded stream $\mathrm{D}^{*} \mathrm{Clk}$ signal with missing inter-bit transitions, whereas a message 0 does not (see Fig.3, October issue).

So an alternative decoding method is to treat $\mathrm{D}^{*} \mathrm{Clk}$ as a stream of $800 \mathrm{bit} / \mathrm{s}$ half-bits, grouped in pairs. Two similar successive half-bits are decoded to a logic 1 output, and two differing half-bits to a 0 .

This can be implemented most simply by feeding the integrator with $\mathrm{D}^{*} \mathrm{Clk}$, clocking the integr-ate-and-dump and differential decoder with I: 800 , and inverting the data output sense! Links X, Y and $Z$ are provided to enable experimenters to evaluate this.

The error properties of this arrangement are interesting:

- because the signal energy per dump decision has halved, the half-bits' intrinsic error rate is much higher than a whole bit's, but
- it is now possible for single message bits to be corrupted.
- The presence of a mid half-bit-pair transition for zeros implies that the carrier energy per bit for a 0 is about two-thirds of that of a 1 . So message 0 s are more easily corrupted than 1 s .
- This contrasts with the whole-bit decoder, where 0 or 1 data bit errors are equally likely but two message bits are always corrupted together (though less frequently).


## Acknowledgements

My thanks are due to friends Trevor Stockill for encouragement, p.c.b. layout facilities, instant hardware and BBC computer software advice; Philip Howarth for criticism of the manuscript; Andy Kerr for being the constructors' guinea-pig; to Ron Broadbent of Amsat-UK; Janet for letting me hog our home computer, and to Cambridge Consultants Ltd for the free use of facilities.

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All currently available singlesupply 27 -type eproms, from the 2716 to the 27512 , can be programmed by the instrument as can proposed 12.5 V A-series devices. Where applicable, the programmer makes use of 'intelligent' or 'interactive' programming algorithms devised by eprom manufacturers to speed up the
programming of larger dèvices. This, together with some built-in features, typically reduces the nominal programming time for such devices by $75 \%$ - and all for under $£ 100$.
One of my daily tasks is designing embedded microprocessor systems using so-called one-chip microcomputers. With this in mind, the solution to this quite complicated specification seemed obvious - use a microcomputer. Probably the most popular one-chip microcomputer family is the 8048 series by by Intel, Philips and many Japanese manufacturers. These processors are primarily intended as 'one-chip' systems, the microcomputer containing program rom, read/write memory, clock generator and input/output facilities. Not widely known though is that there are versions for use with an external program rom, and with such devices powerful 'three-chip' systems can be made. While the program addressing capability may seem limited and the instruction set rather small, what instructions there are are very effective when the microcomputer is being used in a system like this one with many control lines.

The programmer requires 43 control lines, some input, some output and some bidirectional, which is beyond even the 40 -pin 8048 processors, but special i.cs called $\mathrm{i} / \mathrm{o}$ expanders are available for just such requirements. These i.cs offer between 12 and 16 extra individual i/o lines each and are specifically designed for
use with the 8048 which has a set of instructions for addressing external expanders. There are various members of the 8048 family, the differences being in the amount and type of internal memory. The one chosen for this programmer is the simplest, the 8035. This processor has no internal rom, an external addressing range of 4 Kbyte of program rom and 32bytes of
by J.H. Adams, M.Sc.
*SC84 was described in the May, June, July, September and October issues of

Programmer specitication
Eprom types 2715, 2732, 3732A, 2764, 2764A, 27128, 27128A, programmed $27256,27512,8741,8746,8749$

Modes Computer peripheral
Programmer-control functions and eprom data i/o through 9600 baud serial link. Eprom reading, copying and programming under computer control. Disc-file to eprom and vice versa, sum-check master or slave and copy master to slave using SC64 software. Manual controls are inhibited.

Stand alone
Manual controls, verified by sounder, for eprom copying, erasure verificationand sending contents of eprom to a serial printer, etc, in formatted hexadecimal and ascil form at one of four data rates.
Interface RS232C bidirectional with hardware handshake Eight-bit data, , l.s.b. first, no parity, two stop bits send, one or two stop bits receive.
Printer $\quad 9600,2400,1200$ and 300 baud
data rates
Controls Four push controls,
PROG - programs selected master to slave eprom
LIST - lists master eprom via RS232 port UP - increment selection pointer DOWN - decrement selection pointer

Processor 8048 microprocessor with i/o extenders controls above functions and uses 'intelligent' programming algorithms where applicable to reduce programming time by at least $75 \%$.
internal general-purpose read/ write memory. Together with two $8243 \mathrm{i} / \mathrm{o}$ expanders, the program eprom, a latch to catch the eprom address, a counter to generate the programming address, RS232 buffers, relays, switches, leds, and p.s.u., it makes a powerful and versatile program.
The problem with eproms is that their manufacturers implement an eprom, such as the 2704 , in a 24 -pin package and then immediately start work on the next device. As each new eprom is introduced, its doubled memory capacity demands an extra address pin - the 2732's 24 -pin package is bursting at the seams. Data and address pins cannot be omitted and as a result, the number of control pins decreases and hence their use gets more complicated. When the 2732's successor was introduced, it had to be in a larger 28pin package and this gave the luxury of three separate control lines (chip-enable, data-output enable and program), a separate pro-gramming-voltage pin and one to spare. The spare pin disappeared in the 27128 and by the time the 27512 was designed, the eprom was back in the same straitjacket. What will happen next, according to one maker at least, is a 30 -pin i.c.

Running concurrently with the development of 27 -series eproms has been the 25 series with a different pin configuration, which mercifully died out at the 2564 level, and the odd maverick such as a 24 -pin version of the 2764 from Motorola. The standard is now the 27 series and, learning from mistakes made with 24 -pin devices, the pin configuration of 28 -pin devices was agreed and registered with JEDEC early on, resulting in easier circuit design and later expansion.

The only headache left is for the eprom programmer designer. High voltage needed to program 27-type eproms has proliferated from the original 25 V to include 21 and 12.5 V . Also, 'intelligent' programming algorithms introduced to reduce programming times of larger devices involve such unorthodoxies as stepping $\mathrm{V}_{\text {cc }}$ from 5 to 6 V and using modes specified to function only between 20 and $30^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$.

## Intelligent programming

Intelligent or interactive programming algorithms are techniques which eprom manufactur-
ers have developed to speed up the programming of eproms without compromising data integrity. The programming technique in use since the introduction of the first single-supply eproms has been to apply the specified programming address and data and then to apply a 50 ms programming pulse. This was brute-force programming to a certain extent, the pulse length being long enough to definitely program eproms whatever their characteristics. Using short pulses, the problem has been in checking that an eprom location is programmed sufficiently to retain data on a long-term basis and not just enough to scrape through a verificiation. Pulse shortening is necessary though - it would take about an hour to program 27512 using 50 ms pulses.

The solution adopted by manufacturers (with slight variations) is to raise the supply by 1 V during programming and verification. Increased sensing thresholds within the eprom mean that even a marginal verfication at 6 V will ensure correct operation at 5 V . In outline, the algorithm repeatedly programs the eprom with 1 ms pulses and checks it during an interactive period. Next an extra programming section is carried out for safety and finally the eprom is checked at a 5 V supply. Typical programming times are reduced by a factor of four or five using this algorithm. Further increase in speed in this and conventional programming (for 24 -pin devices) is achieved by checking whether or not a location actually needs programming before attempting to program it. After erasure, an eprom contains all FF bytes (hexadecimal) so for speedy programming, all unused data bytes to be sent to the eprom should be set to this value (hence FILL and NEW commands in MCOS). To illustrate the advantage of this technique, the programming time for a 2764 is reduced from seven minutes to just one.

## Programmer hardware

Most of the design effort went into the 8035 control program and the SC84 program for controlling the programmer as a peripheral. These will be described later - first the circuit.

All devices in the 8048 family can all be forced to access external memory by wiring a specific pin to +5 V . This even applies to
the preprogrammed variety so the 8048 and 8049 are suitable. At least one supplier of 8035 i.cs is supplying 8048 devices to overcome the present shortages. In its 'one-chip mode', the 8048 offers three eight-bit ports. When external program storage is used, port zero forms a multiplexed data and lower-address bus and the lower four lines of port two form the upper four address lines. An address-latching signal ALE (address-latch enable) and a rom-enabling signal PSEN (program-source) are used to control the fetching of instructions. As data regularly appears on these 12 lines, the three-chip solution restricts the use of ports zero and two compared with a true one-chip circuit. However, port zero may still be used as a conventional data bus. The 8048 has $Z 80$-like read and write signals which can be used to access i/o devices connected to port zero or, in conjunction with the latched address and special MOVX (move external) instructions in the processor, external read/write memory.

To compensate for the loss of i/o capability, the lower four lines of port two, as well as providing rom addresses, act in conjuncton with another control line called PROG to pass data between the processor and i/o expander i.cs. A typical three-chip solution the one used here - would therefore use port zero to access the program rom, half of port two to supply rom addresses and the expander interface and the other half of port two to provide general i/o or, when more than one expander is fitted, act as an expander selector. Port one becomes an uncommitted eightbit port.

As suggested above, the 8.048 can only address one expander at a time. To simplify the software design it is important that the system does not keep switching between expanders and so the allocation of lines has been split so that one expander, EXP0, is concerned with the programmer's controls and display and the second, EXP1, with control of the programming process. Each expander consists of four, fourbit ports. These ports may all be used for both input and output although all four lines each port must be either inputs or outputs. As well as being able to transfer data between the processor accumulator and the ports, the processor can AND and OR patterns into the ports to set individual
lines high or low.
The ports are numbered four to seven in the processor instruction set. In expander zero, ports four and five are used for the led display, port six to drive the three status leds and an optional sounder which gives an audible indication of keypad use, and port seven to sense the four keys. In expander one, port four controls $V_{\text {cc }}$ and $\mathrm{V}_{\mathrm{pp}}$ supplies, port five provides control signals for the eproms and address counter, port six energises relays used for power control and port seven controls those eprom lines which can act as higher-order address lines,

Expander zero is activated while the programmer is being set up, either from the key-pad or the computer. Once given a command, expander one is selected, the lines are set to suit the selected eprom and the command is executed. The only exception to this is during the list operation when the processor switches back to expander zero after each printed line to make sure that you are not trying to interrupt the listing by pressing one of the keys.

Serial $\mathrm{i} / \mathrm{o}$ is performed through lines on the microcomputer as, under computer control, the system must be able to sue serial i/o at all points in the program. The asynchronous receiver/transmitter for reception and transmission of serial data is all in software, the data format being eight bit with no parity, with one start bit and two stop bits on send, one or two stop bits on receive. When listing an eprom the most significant bit is alway zero. Data rates of 300 , 1200,2400 and 9600 baud are provided for the listing port so that the programmer may be used with a variety of printers, electronic and mechanical. The data rate for the computer link is set at 9600 baud, which is also the default rate for the listing port. Other data rates are easily established by modifying the control eprom. The RS232 lines are buffered directly in and out of the processor. The two output lines (data and handshake) come from the two spare lines of port two; the two inputs feed in through one of the 8048 T (test) inputs and the external interrupt line. This leaves port one as the bi-directional eprom data bus.

The lower 12 address bits are produced by a 4040 cmos counter, this being a cheaper solution for providing another $12 \mathrm{i} / \mathrm{o}$ lines than fitting another $\mathrm{i} / \mathrm{o}$ expander. This i.c. is cleared by a control line from expander one but, as


Power supply and setting-up procedures are subjects of the next article. Software and an adaptor for programming eprom versions of the 8048 microprocessor will be described later. Components and software are available from John Adams at 5 The Close, Radlett, Hertfordshire, telephone Radlett 5723. Printed circuit boards, currently under manufacture, will be available from Combe Martin Electronics, King Street, Combe Martin, North Devon EX34 0AD. An enhanced version of SciDOS the CP/M2.2-compatible disk operating system for SC84 - has recently been introduced. Users of SciDOS can obtain an updated disk for $£ 5$ including postage. Details of this can be obtained from John Adams by sending an s.a.e.

A hexadecimal listing of the programmer software can be obtained from our editorial offices at Quadrant House, The Quadrant, Sutton, Surrey SM2 5AS. Again, please send an s.a.e.
there are no other lines to spare on this expander, it is clocked using the 8048 WR signal, this and RD being general-purpose strobes when there is only program memory on port zero.

## Using the programmer

When the system is switched on or reset, the indicator leds point to 2716 (i.e. 2716 programming is selected), the high-voltage supply is turned off, a printer rate of 9600 baud is selected and the link to the computer is enabled. The system then loops, waiting for either a press of one of the four keys on the programmer or for a character from the computer. If a command key is pressed, the link to the computer is disabled until the selected operation, list or program, is completed. If a byte is received over the link first, the system is placed under computer control and keys on the programmer are ignored until a command has been received and executed.

While in stand-alone mode, repeated pressing of the up or down keys moves the led pointer through the various eprom types and data rates. When the led pointer is in the eprom area of the selection table, pressing PROG initiates programming and LIST listing of the indicated eprom type. When the pointer is in the data rate area of the table, pressing prog has no effect but pressing LIST selects the indicated rate for the printer interface. The programmer acknowleges valid key presses by a single 'beep' and valid commands by a double one. Note that if an eprom which doesn't match the type selected is put into the slave socket, you may damage both the eprom and the programmer (depending on how the eprom fails) when you operate the programmer. No damage will occur to an eprom in the master socket (providing it is not put into the socket the wrong way around), nor are there any programming voltages present on the master socket. As the behaviour of the programmer is uncertain at the moment of switch-on or off, it should not be turned on or off with an eprom in the slave socket.

In listing mode, the eprom is listed as for the SC84 MCOS LIST command, i.e. the address of the first byte on line followed by the contents of 16 consecutive eprom locations in spaced hexadecimal, grouped in clumps or four bytes.

At the end of the line, the same 16 bytes are repeated as either their ascii representations if they are valid ascii characters, or as periods. Note that, to save $1 / 0$ lines, the lower 12 address lines for the eprom addresses are generated by a 12 -bit ripple counter. As this address cannot be stepped backwards, as would be possible with a software address counter, the 16 bytes are stored in the 8035 internal memory as they are accessed for hexadecimal listing so that they are available for the ascii section of the listing. Listing mode can be interrupted by holding down either the up or down key.

In programming mode, a 16 bit address counter is maintained in parallel with the external counter so that the system can decide when the programming operation is complete and, when larger eproms are being programmed, set up the higher-order address lines as required. A 24 -bit data sum check is maintained for each eprom. The least-significant byte of each sum check is compared during programming operations after each byte is programmed and the operation terminated if they are found to differ. At the end of the programming session, one of the status leds is set, OK or ERROR.If the programming is under computer control, an eight byte result frame consisting of the programming address value, the master sum check and the slave sum check is sent back to the computer. From this information the computer is able to deduce if the programming was successful and if not, at which address the error occurred and which bit(s) in the slave eprom failed to program. When under computer control the progress of the operation is indicated by the steady conversion of the last message displayed into reverse video. Do not expect the programming to take place at a steady rate, especially when a 2764 or larger eprom is being used as the programming algorithm is data-dependent.

The circuit, as with much modern digital equipment, is just a collection of interconnected i.cs. The originality is really in the software. The resistor and diode arrangement feeding pins 1 and 23 of the master eprom socket allow the slave and master pins to be driven from the same source. Depending on the eprom type these pins may be address lines or programming voltage
pins. In the latter mode the slave socket will need to receive the programming voltage and the master socket +5 V at between 5 and 15 mA depending upon the eprom. As a cmos device cannot supply this current without some voltage-drop, the master socket is not permanently driven by the relevant signal line set high but is driven from the high-voltage supply to the matching slave pin with a diode to clamp the voltage to no more than one diode drop above 5 V , and a resistor to limit current. Pin one is $V_{p p}$ on 2764, 27128 and 27256 devices, but $A_{15}$ on the 27512s. Pin 23 is $A_{11}$ on all eproms except for the 2716 where it is $V_{p p}$. In fact, both of the pins on the master socket could be set to their respective $V_{p p}$ levels and the master eprom read normally as this is the mode described as program verify in the data sheet. I decided for safety's sake however to keep all voltage over +5 V off the master socket though so that should the wrong eprom for the selection made be put into the master socket there would be no chance of it being damaged or reprogrammed. Naturally, when an address line is supplied to this and the slave's pin 1 or 23 , the diode stays off and the extremely high input impedance of the eprom makes the resistor's effect negligible.

Relays were used to switch eprom pins which alternate between signal and power pins depending on the eprom (pins 1 , 22,23 and 26 ) for simplicity and to avoid variable voltage drops which could affect the programming voltage. Levels of $V_{p p}$ are critical during intelligent programming, where using a 2764 as an example, a $V_{p p}$ of $20 \mathrm{com}-$ pletely negates the potential speed up while a potential of over 22 V will destroy the device. Power to pin 28 of the slave eprom is switched electronically between +5 and +6 V .

The power supply provides unregulated lines at approximately +12 V and -12 V for the slave power, relays and the RS232 interface, and a regulated 5 V rail for the logic. It also provides a programmable high-voltage supply which the programmer can set to zero and up to three other voltages up to 30 V at up to 50 mA .

## To be continued

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CIRCLE 34 FOR FURTHER DETAILS.

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CIRCLE 21 FOR FURTHER DETAILS.
ELECTRONICS \& WIRELESS WORLD NOVEMBER 1984


## Continuity indicator

This circuit indicates impedances lower than $20 \Omega$ between the probes by lighting a led - and from a $3 V$ supply. When built using E-line transistors, miniature resistors and HP17-type batteries, it is small enough to fit inside a pen-sized probe.
Low leakage is important for
$\mathrm{Tr}_{1}$ as it acts as a power switch.

The two $330 \Omega$ resistors are selected to ensure that this transistor doesn't turn on until probe resistance is less than a few hundred ohms. The left-hand transistor acts as a voltage-reference source which inhibits $\mathrm{Tr}_{3}$ until the probe voltage is higher than about 50 mV . This means that diode junctions will not indicate continuity.
K. Wood

Ipswich
Suffolk


## 8085 systems run Z80 software

Many users of 8085-based microcomputers are unhappy about the processor's limited instruction set. Because of this I developed an easy to use adaptor which replaces this processor by an NSC800 (National Semiconductor). The NSC800 instruction set is fully compatible with the Z80's so this modification allows you to use 280 software on 8085 systems.

My adaptor, which fits into the 8085 socket, simply crosses a few pins and inverts one or two inputs and outputs. Internally, the NSC800 (cmos) is very similar to the 280 , but its bus structure is similar to that of the 8085 , the only main differences being that STD and SOD (serial input/output data) are not available. In applications where SID and SOD are required by your system, this modification cannot be used.

One or two points worth noting are that the 8085 non-maskable interrupt (TRAP) causes a jump to location $0024_{16}$ and the NSC800 NMI causes a jump to 0066; however, both processors address input/output ports in the same manner and divide the crys-tal-clock frequency by two. On the NSC800, the interrupt-control register is located at address BB (on-chip) and this address must be free. Execution times of the two processors also differ so watch out when using software delay loops. One version of the NSC800 runs at 4 MHz .
Franz Braunschmid
Vienna
normal operation and
short circuit respectively and the primary fuse is a slow one.
Salvador Espin
Balearic Islands
Spain

## Protectionfora.c. loads

Transformer short circuit protection is given by this circuiit designed for an application where tv distribution amplifiers were driven through coaxial cable. The top transformer winding biases the transistor (with heatsink) and resistor $R$ sets the current limit. Green and red leds indicate

## Dynamic binary-to-b.c.d. converter and display

This circuit converts eight-bit binary data for a decimal display without using static decoders. Parallel data at $\mathrm{D}_{0-7}$ is loaded into up/down counters $\mathrm{IC}_{1,2}$ by DATA STROBE. This signal also produces control pulses at gates $\mathrm{IC}_{4 \mathrm{c}, 4 \mathrm{~d}, 5 \mathrm{c}}$. Content of the b.c.d. counter $\mathrm{IC}_{6}$ is latched at the device's output by DATA TRANSFER, RESET clears the counter section of $\mathrm{IC}_{6}$ to zero, UPDATE causes the output of $\mathrm{IC}_{6}$ to be latched into b.c.d. seven-segment decoder IC 4 and START sets the bistable circuit formed by $\mathrm{IC}_{3 \mathrm{c}, \mathrm{d}}$.

Pulses from the display-multiplex oscillator (in $\mathrm{IC}_{6}$ ) are now used to simultaneously increment $\mathrm{IC}_{6}$ and decrement $\mathrm{IC}_{1.2}$. When $\mathrm{IC}_{1.2}$ reach zero, clock pulses are inhibited by gates $\mathrm{IC}_{5 \mathrm{a}, \mathrm{b}, 3 \mathrm{a}}$ a and bistable circuit $\mathrm{IC}_{3 \mathrm{Bc}, \mathrm{d}}$. The sequence repeats on each DATA STROBE pulse.

Addition of uarts and current-loop signalling allows the circuit to provide a remote indication and since conversion is carried out in the remote unit the uarts need only continuously transmit one eight-bit word.
D.W.Cooper

Rochester
Kent



$1 C_{4 b}$ output


Data strobe


# Stage lighting system -2 

## More circuitry and some practical advice

In the September issue, the equipment was described in outline, with some circuit details. The rest of the circuit information follows, and the article concludes with constructional information.

Control desk power supply. This is a relatively standard circuit, and is shown in Fig. 9. The mains input is filtered in the same way as the power box supply, and the rectified output is smoothed by two $4700 \mu \mathrm{~F}$ capacitors and then fed via a 2.5 A fuse to three 5 V regulators. This system was adopted in preference to a single $3 \mathrm{~A}, 5 \mathrm{~V}$ regulator so that there would be greater isolation between the various sub-sections. Outputs were monitored by three 5V6 Zener diodes connected to the base of a TIP3055: any excess voltage is reduced if it is a pulse, or if a regulator fails, the fuse blows.

The negative 5 V regulator is standard and provides bias for the
a/d convertors. Originally, 2708 eproms were used and this supply provided these memory chips with bias. The positive 12v supply is obtained from a voltage doubler and powers the modulator and the original 2708 eproms. The 0V line is connected to the mains earth and the control desk case.

Control desk keyboard. The keyboard is a hexadecimal key pad and the electronics, shown in Fig. 10, was designed and built by pupils. A diode matrix provides 16-to-4-line encoding and a separate key is used to control whether the first or second digit is entered. The information is stored in two 74LS75 latches and is connected to the data bus via two 74LS367 buffers. The buffer is enabled on input port 01 H .

Microprocessor board. A separate microprocessor was used rather than a commercial computer so that it could handle the very fast and frequent interrupts from
the uart and also to give pupils the opportunity to program a microprocessor rather than a computer. In Fig. 11, of the relevant I/0 lines of the m.p.u. are buffered and the clock is provided by another tv crystal. The software is stored in a 2 k eprom (2716) and ram is provided by a 6116 . This memory chip was used so that battery back-up could be provided at some time in the future. Reset is provided by two push switches wired in series, so that the system could not be reset accidently.
V.d.u. and modulator. The simple v.d.u. gives a display of 32 characters by 16 lines - an adaption of the v.d.u. used in the WW computer which was published some years ago. In Fig. 12; there are essentially three divider chains running from a 4 MHz crystal oscillator ( 8 MHz divided by two). The first divider chain, consisting of two 74LS93s, produces the line sync. pulses. Each line is $64 \mu \mathrm{~s}$ long and is divided

Fig.9. Control-desk power supply.



Fig.10. Control-desk keyboard circuit.


Fig.11. Control-desk microprocessor board.
into a $48 \mu$ s display, a $8 \mu$ a pause, a $4 \mu$ s sync. pulse and a further $4 \mu \mathrm{~s}$ pause, as in the original design.

Each character is 6 pixels wide and the second divider chain performs character line count. It consists of a divide-by-six counter (74LS92) followed by a divide by 32 counter ( $2 \times 74 \mathrm{LS} 93$ ), which are only enabled during the $48 \mu \mathrm{~s}$ display. The output of these counters is fed to the video ram $(7 \times 2102)$ via two-way selectors (74LS157). Line count is performed by the third divider chain of two 74LS93s. Each character consists of eight pixels down, each pixel consisting of two lines: the outputs of the first 74LS93 feed the row-select inputs of the character generator and the outputs of the second 74LS93 are fed to the video ram, via the two-way selectors.

This uses a total of 256 lines out of a possible $312 \frac{1}{2}$ lines. The others are blanked out by a monostable (74121) which also provides the frame sync. pulse. A 74S262 teletext character generator was used because one was available: other character generators would be suitable. The video information is changed into serial form by the 74LS165, which is mixed with the video blanking (during synchronization) and then fed to the modulator.

The video ram is simply decoded to appear at 8000 H of the computer memory. Some noise on the display is experienced, but since the up-date rate of the v.d.u. is user-controllable (via software) a satisfactory compromise between noise/up-date rate can be achieved. The modulator was adapted from a video game published some years ago and could probably be replaced, with advantage, by a commercial modulator. However, the circuit did provide useful experience to some pupils in u.h.f. work (i.e. the need for short wires!).

Uart, master a/d, enter latch. The uart for transmitting the information to the power box controls the microprocessor via the INT line as shown in Fig. 13, and is serviced as soon as the INT line is taken low, i.e. when the uart transmitter buffer register is empty. The uart is clocked by another tv crystal, suitably divided to produce a clock rate of approximately 140 kHz . The output from the uart is taken to the transistor complementary Darlington amplifier before being sent to the power box.



Fig.13. Control-desk uart, a/d converter and enter latch.

Fig. 14. Control-desk fader and relay unit.

The master fader has its own a/d convertor (ZN427) which is frequently interrogated by the microprocessor. The circuitry is based on the ZN427 data sheet.

When a keyboard entry is required, the Enter key is pressed, which sets a bistable (4011). When the uart has been serviced, a check is made to see if
a keyboard entry has occured, before returning to the main program. Full details of this and the I/0 ports used will be in the software section.

Faders and relay unit. The design of the system required that the faders could be plugged directly into the dimmers. Since

power box 0 V is neutral-referenced and the computer 0 V is earth-referenced, care had to be taken to ensure that these 0 V lines could not be connected together. This is achieved by the circuit of Fig. 14.

When used without the computer, the faders are powered from the power box power supply via a 50 -way cable, which is only connected to the faders if the multiplexer and uart circuit boards are removed from their edge connectors. There are also wire links on these boards which make relay A operate, so ensuring that the supply remains disconnected. With these boards removed, relay B operates and connects the supply to the master fader circuit, which in turn supplies power to all the faders. This ensures that the master fader still controls the brightness of all of the lamps. The master fader circuit essentially consists of an emitter follower. The diode at the 0 V end of the master fader offsets some of the base emitter voltage drop of the emitter follower.

Multiplexer and fader a/d. The circuit in Fig. 15 stores the number of the fader to be converted in the 74LS373 octal latch. Num-

bers $0-15$ are stored as $60 \mathrm{H}-$ $6 \mathrm{FH}, 16-31$ as $50 \mathrm{H}-5 \mathrm{FH}$, and $32-39$ as $30 \mathrm{H}-37 \mathrm{H}$. Input/ output port decoding is achieved using the 74LS138, the decoded ports being $80 \mathrm{H}-87 \mathrm{H}$. The output from the octal latch is fed to the 7 -to-40 line decoder, consisting of three 4514 s , whose outputs operate the 40 analogue switches (4016), so enabling the output of each fader to be connected to the a/d convertor (ZN427). The circuit of this a/d convertor is the same as the master a/d convertor.

## Construction

The lighting system was built in many modules to enable as many pupils as possible to work on the project. Many of the circuits were fabricated on Veroboard, using traditional wiring techniques.

Control desk. The circuits for the control desk were built on veroboard, with 43 -way edge connectors. Four of these boards were used and the circuits were divided up as follows: V.d.u.; microprocessor and memory; general input/output including uart and master a/d converter; fader multiplexer and $a / d$ converter. The remaining circuits (modulator, p.s.u. keyboard, etc) were built on ordinary pieces of Veroboard.

The four edge-connectors were soldered onto the copper strips of another piece of Veroboard. The fader multiplexer and a/d converter board was double sided, which enabled one side of the edge-connector to be joined to the 'computer bus' while the other side was used to carry the inputs from the faders to the analogue switches. The remaining terminals on this side of the con-
nector were used to arrange the switching of the safety relays for when the power box is connected directly to the control desk.

Power box. The circuits for the power box, with the exception of the dimmer boards, were constructed on Veroboard, and were divided into the following modules: power supply and mains filter; regulators for the dimmer boards and the ramp generator; demultiplexer and d/a converter. Each of these modules was housed in its own die cast box and the three boxes were stacked together at the right hand end of the power box.

The mother boards for the two diminer racks were made from Veroboard again, reinforced by a metal and wood frame. The copper strips only carry the low-voltage supplies to the dimmer

Fig.15. Multiplexer and fader a/d converter.


Fig.16. Dimmer printed circuit board.

Details of the software and operating procedure and the eprom listing are too extensive to reproduce here. Interested readers can obtain them from this office by sending a stamped, addressed envelope, marked 'stage lighting'.

Fig.6. FILIST and ERLIST routines to display list of stored programs - the
directory.
board: They were broken either side of the dimmer board plug for the live and 0 V line., i.e. mains neutral, and 6A wire was used to connect to the main neutral wire for each mother board, which was a piece of 6 mm square brass bar, carefully insulted on Perspex supports. The mains live wire was also treated in a similar way, being distributed on each mother board by a 6 mm brass bar. Connections are made to each lighting circuit by 6A terminal blocks at the rear of each mother board.

Since the dimmer boards had to be mass produced (a total of 40 were required) it was decided to make printed circuit boards. The component lay out and foil pattern are shown in the diagrams and photographs. To make these boards, a mask was cut out of a piece of thin s.r.b.p. board, held in place over the cleaned copper board and sprayed with ordinary car paint. Two or three thin layers of paint made an effective etch resist. Since Iron (III) Chloride was not plentiful, the circuit boards were first electrolysed in copper sulphate, the circuit board being made the anode and
another piece of copper the cathode. This removed much of the copper and the remainder was removed in Iron (III) Chloride solution. The paint, after etching, was then removed with a suitable solvent.
R.S. 10 -way circuit-board plugs and sockets were used for the dimmer board connectors, rated at 250 V a.c. 2.5 A per way. Three ways were paralleled together for the neutral/ 0 V line and two were used for the connection to the lamp circuit.

Safety. Obviously, safety is very important when dealing with a 100 A mains supply. I was very conscious of this during the whole project and so carried out many tests on all the mains connected parts of the circuits to satisfy myself of their reliability. All of the mains wiring has been deliberately overloaded for both current and voltage and it survived satisfactorily. In normal use the whole of the power box remains cool during operation, even after many hours of operation.

The power box enclosure was made from square section steel
tubing, brazed together to form a frame, which was then covered in Aluminium sheeting. The dimmer boards and all live connections are normally behind aluminium mesh, although this has been removed for the photograph of the box. When in normal use there is a lockable door enclosing all the electronics and a small panel to the right gives access to the input sockets. This ensures that no unauthorized person has opportunity to gain access to the mains circuits.

Acknowledgement. I am indebted to many people for their assistance and encouragement during this project. In particular I owe thanks to the following peo-ple:-
A very tolerant wife.
Malvern Hall Parents' Association who financed the project. Mr H.K. Greenhalgh, Headmaster.
Mr A. Martin and Mr K. Hickinbottom who built the enclosures and cases. G. Tomkins, A. Perkins, K. Sollis and R. Manton., pupils of the school.

## CASSETTE RECORDER continued from page 20

returns to its 'input routine' and is immediately vectored to the second half of the AULOAD routine in Fig. 5. The recorder is stopped, the addresses of the new input routine reloaded into the input vectors, and the RUN flag checked. If not 'set', the routine is exited via a JUMP statement to 'warm start' Basic. If the flag is 'set', the command RUN is written into Basic's buffer line, the X-register set to three (the number of characters in the word RUN) and the A-register loaded with 'CR'. The routine is then exited via an RTS statement with the result that the Basic interpreter acts upon the RUN command and runs the program previously loaded.

## FILIST and ERLIST routines

The FILIST and ERLIST routines perform functions as previously described, the flow-diagram being shown in Fig. 6. Both routines are simply housekeeping routines which allow details of the programs held in the Directory to be displayed on the screen. The routines are exited via a JUMP to 'warm start' Basic after first erasing the FILIST or ERLIST command from the Basic buffer line.
to be concluded


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CIRCLE 5 FOR FUR'THER DETAILS.


CIRCLE 32 FOR FURTHER DETAILS.

# Microprocessor multimeters 

## Bench and systems instruments merge with increasing use of microprocessors

In its more complex form a digital multimeter consists not only of an accurate multifunction measuring instrument but also a high speed one with 'intelligence'. This enables it to control the a-to-d conversion, autoranging and initial zeroing in the analogue department, in addition to permitting autocalibration and self-testing routines, data manipulation and storage, and automatic operation over a data bus. Facilities now available in most microprocessor multimeters include some or almost all of the following
o variable reading rate e.g. one an hour to hundreds or even thousands per second, with resolution trade-off.

- multiplication of readings by entered or stored number
O subtraction of offset values
o ratio calculation (inc power)
o real-time ratio between two inputs
o percentage deviation from entered value
0 averaging
o variance, standard deviation, r.m.s.
$\bigcirc$ maximum and minimum readings stored
- low, pass, high-limit testing
- linearization, sometimes to third order, e.g. for thermcouple use
- logarithmic compression e.g. $\mathrm{dB}, \mathrm{dBm}$,
O storage of hundreds of readings
- measurement uncertainty (24h, 90 day, 1 year) error limits held in rom
O self-testing of display, analogue and digital sections $\bigcirc$ automatic calibration
- measurement timing, elapsed or real



## 2: Bench digital multimeters

| Maker | $\begin{aligned} & \mathrm{Dig} \\ & \mathrm{~A}= \end{aligned}$ | Madel | Basic price | Sens. d.v. | Basic error(1) | $\begin{aligned} & f_{\text {max }} \\ & a_{1 . v .(2)} \end{aligned}$ | Crest factor | Res note3 | $\mu \mathrm{P}$ <br> note4 | Other features |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Beckman | $31 / 2$ | 3050 | '179 | $100 \mu \mathrm{~V}$ | 0.1\%+1 | 100 kHz | - | $\checkmark$ |  |  |
| Industrial |  | 3060 | 275 | 100 | 0.1\% +1 | 20 | 5 | $\checkmark$ |  | cont.test |
| Brown Boveri (HI,JMI) | $31 / 2$ | 2030 | 116 | $100 \mu \mathrm{~V}$ | 0.1\% | 5kHz | - | hi/lohi/lo |  | cmos bookstyle G,R,dBC |
|  |  | 2031 | 143 | as abov |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  | 2032 | 162 | as abov |  |  | 7 |  |  |  |
|  | $43 / 4$ | 2110 | 550 | $10 \mu \mathrm{~V}$ | $.05^{1} 6+1$ | 20k | 7 |  |  |  |
| Data Precision (Farnell) | $31 / 2$ | 1351 | 180 | $100 \mu \mathrm{~V}$ | 0.1\%+1 | 10 kHz | - | $\checkmark$ | 10 | battery |
|  |  | 175 | 210 | as abov |  | 50 | - | hi/lo |  |  |
|  | $41 / 2$ | 255 | 270 | 10 | 0.03\% +2 | 1 | - | $\checkmark$ |  | battery (model |
|  |  | 258 | 285 | 10 | 0.05\%+1 | 20 | 5 | $\checkmark$ |  |  |
|  |  | $2+80 \mathrm{R}$ | 270 | 10 | 0.03\%+2 | 50 | 5 | $\checkmark$ |  | 248 led) |
|  |  | 3400 | 720B | 10 | . $007 \%+1$ | 20 | 5 | 4 |  | GE690 <br> l.e.d. <br> ratio GE165 |
|  | 51/2 | 2590R | 640 | 1 | . $007 \%+2$ | 20 | 5 | $\checkmark$ |  |  |
|  |  | 3500 | 990 B | 1 | . $005 \%$ |  | - | 4 |  |  |
|  |  | 3600 | 655 | 1 | . $007 \%+2$ | 100 | 7 | (4) |  |  |
| Datatech (Telonic) | $31 / 2$ | 30 | 177 | $100 \mu \mathrm{~V}$ | 0.1\%+1 | 10kHz | - | $\checkmark$ |  | led(lcd) |
| Farnell | 4/2 | 141 | 345 | $10 \mu \mathrm{~V}$ | 0.63\%+2 | 20 kHz | 5 |  |  | BE80 |
| Fluke | $31 / 2$ | 8010 | 218 | $100 \mu V$ |  | $200 \mathrm{kHz}$ | $3$ | $\checkmark$ |  | hold,batt |
|  |  | 8012 | 291 | as 8010 | but $2 \Omega$ resis | tance ra |  |  |  |  |
|  | $\begin{aligned} & 4^{11 / 2} \\ & 51 / 2 \end{aligned}$ | 8050 | 328 | 10 | . $003 \%+2$ | 200 | 3 |  |  | dB,batt GE123 $\mu \mathrm{C}:$ : 477 |
|  |  | $8840$ | 570 | 1 | $.005 \%$ | 100 | £123 | 4 | 1 |  |
| Hewlett Packard | $31 / 2$ | 3435 | 534 | $10 \mu \mathrm{~V}$ | 0.1\%+1 | 100 kHz | - |  |  |  |
|  |  | 3466 | 798 | 1 | 0.03\%+1 | 100 | 4 | $\checkmark$ |  | diode test HPIL |
|  |  | 3468 | 664 | 1 | . $018 \%+2$ | 100 | 4 | 4 |  |  |
| Griffin \& George Iwatsu | $3^{1 / 2} \text { Dual input. Pro }$ |  | 180 |  | 1\% $\pm 4$ |  | - | $\checkmark$ |  | RS423 |
|  |  |  | gram m | dules al | ow many va | riables. |  |  |  |  |
|  | $41 / 2$ | 7501 | 2750 | $1 \mu \mathrm{~V}$ | 0.03\% | 100 kHz | 3 | - | $2,4,5$ | 12.13G |

PM2519 multimeter incorporates Philip two-line inter-i.c. bus ( $\mathrm{i}^{2} \mathrm{C}$ ) to interconnect processor and peripheral chips as well as a GPIB adapter.


Thurlby's $19055^{1 / 2}$ digit microprocessor-controlled multimeter offers exceptance value for money at $£ 325$, as the chart on page 73, October issue, indicated.

Digital multimeter glossery Absolute accuracy. Degree of traceability of a measurement to a national standard.
Accuracy. Measurements are $100 \%$ accurate if there are no errors; often, inaccurately, taken to mean inaccuracy or error limits.
Autozero. Residual zero voltage, current or resistance error, automatically detected and compensated.
Common-mode rejection. Ratio of common-mode voltage, i.e. in both inputs relative to chassis, and amount converted to normal mode voltage.
Crest factor. Ratio of peak value to r.m.s. value. Large values require true-r.m.s. converters.
Effective common-mode rejection. Combined effect of simple c.m.r. and guard. Four-terminal measurement. Elimination of lead resistance by separating current source and voltage measurement terminals.
Guard. Electrostatic shield to reduce common-mode currents. Linearity. Ability to convert analogue to digital quantities up to full scale.
Repeatability. Ability to reproduce identical measurements.
Resolution. Degree to which a quantity can be subdivided, usually given in parts per million.
Sensitivity. Smallest amount of a quantity, usually voltage, that can be detected.
Stability. Repeatability.

A multimeter can thus be set up manually using the relevant feature at a suitable reading rate and then left to complete the test cycle. And if the instrument is of the 'systems' type - one that is programmable by a separate controller over a twoway data bus - it may be done completely remotely. Although the general purpose interface bus is now by far the most common form of instrument link some dmms have the serial RS232 or a parallel binary interface as an option. A few bench-type instruments have only a transmit mode and so are not programmable.
A less expensive route to programmability than a full GPIB system is through a wired hand-held controller such as

Fluke introduced to their 8860 a few years ago. As well as. increasing computational power this can also control output to printer and at the same time leave the front panel relatively uncluttered.
The programming concept has been taken a stage further in Hewlett Packard's interface loop, which is a lower cost serial interface bus primarily aimed at the small-system user. On the loop, which supports a controller and a number of transmitter and receivers, messages are sent in eleven-bit groups at $\pm 1.5 \mathrm{~V}$ levels along two wires which can be up to 10 metres long (or 100 m using a shielded twisted pair). The controller could be a
microcomputer but typically


[^1]2. Level limit may vary
3. 4: four-wire measurement, hi/lo: high and low test voltages
4. Microprocessor programs 1: Digital calibration, 2; compute (offset, scale, \% dev.), 3: ratio, 4: max and min hold, high, pass, low limits, 5: averaging, 6: results store, 7: dB, 8: linearizing for temperature, 9: statistics (van. , rms), 10: self test 11: timer, 13: null facility


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[^2]would be the hand-held calculator HP41C, whilst other loop members might be printers, data recorders, modems, measurement devices, terminals, etc. Used in conjunction with the 3468 HPIL volt-ohmmeter, the 41 C is the location for programming tasks requiring computation.

The other in-house bus worthy of mention is $I^{2} \mathrm{C}$ used on last year's introduction by Philips - the PM2519. The inter-i.c. bus is a two-line bus data and clock) that interconnects processor and peripheral chips and is not really intended as an outside world bus. But the GPIB option does rely on this method of interconnection to the instrument by using a second $i^{2} c$ processor (8440). The first $i^{2} c$ chip acts as bus manager between a-d convertor, ram and display driver, the connections only requiring two lines each.

Perhaps the most useful microprocessor function for high-accuracy meters is that of automatic calibration. The precise form this takes, its traceability, and accuracy varies with calibration method maker and model. Some instruments use a calibration module that contains typically a voltage

reference attentuator and standard resistor, and if all ranges are to be calibrated uncertainty factors build up and traceability can be poor on the highest ranges. With a memory, auto calibration can be greatly simplifid, adjusting out offsets and storing values for each range for subsequent adjustment of readings. With a c-mos memory energized by a lithium cell, constants can be stored for as long as five to ten years.
To enable manufacturers to claim a complete 'lids on' calibration some allowance for the source-dependant errors, such as bias current for the


In its high resolution mode, this Datron $6^{1 / 2} / 7^{1 / 2}$ digit Autocol multimeter switches in additional circuitry 10 make a finer determination of zero ironings (Fig. 2e, page 76, October issue).

Solartron's new 7071 computing meter has error limits defined by a square root law which can predict its errors for up to 10 years (3ppm error in 24 h ), see text.

## High accuracy systems digital multimeters

| Maker | Digits | Model | Basic price | Interface Sens. (note 1) dv |  | Error ppm/yr | Speed rdg/s | Features (notes 2,3) |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Data Precision | $51 / 2$ | 7500 | 12950 | $\begin{aligned} & 830 \\ & 740 \mathrm{~B} \end{aligned}$ | $1 \mu \mathrm{~V}$ | 70+1d | 101000 | 10 | Ratios | 4 |
| Datron | $\begin{aligned} & 66^{1 / 2} \\ & 6^{1 / 2 / 71 / 2} \\ & 6^{1 / 2} \\ & \hline \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 1061 \\ & 1071 \\ & 1081 \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 1595 \\ & 2495 \\ & 2950 \\ & \hline \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 200, B \\ & 250 \\ & 250 \\ & \hline \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 100 \mathrm{nV} \\ & 100 \\ & 10 \\ & \hline \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 30+2 d \\ & 20+4 d \\ & 11+2 d \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & \hline \text { to } 220 \\ & 2 \\ & 2 \\ & \hline \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 1-4,7,10,11 \\ & 1-5,7,10,11 \\ & 1-4,8 \\ & \hline \end{aligned}$ |  | $\begin{aligned} & 4, \mathrm{t} \\ & 4, \mathrm{t} \\ & 4, \mathrm{t} \end{aligned}$ |
| Fluke | $\begin{aligned} & 66^{1 / 2} \\ & 61 / 21 / 1^{2} \\ & 51 / 2 \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 8505 \\ & 8506 \\ & 8520 \\ & 8522 \\ & \hline \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 3059 \\ & 4934 \\ & 2867 \\ & 3982 \\ & \hline \end{aligned}$ | $406, B, R$ $406, B, R$ $B$ | $\begin{aligned} & 100 \mathrm{nV} \\ & 100 \\ & 1 \mu \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 19+8 d \\ & 19+8 d \\ & 90+1 d \\ & \text { data as ab } \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & \hline \text { to500 } \\ & \text { to } 200 \\ & 200 / 500 \\ & \text { bove } \\ & \hline \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & \overline{3,5} \\ & 2-11 \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & \mathrm{t}: 1 \mathrm{MHz} \\ & \mathrm{t}: 10 \mathrm{MHz} \\ & \mathrm{t}: 1 \mathrm{MH}_{1} \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & \text { Res./d.c. } \\ & \text { Res/d.c. } \\ & B \end{aligned}$ |
| Hewlett Packard | $51 / 2$ $6^{1 / 2} 2$ | $\begin{aligned} & 3478 \\ & 3497 \\ & 3455 \\ & 3456 \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 1220 \\ & 2646 \\ & 4256 \\ & 3368 \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & \checkmark \\ & V \\ & V \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 1 \mu \mathrm{~V} \\ & 1 \mu \\ & 1 \mu \\ & 100 \mathrm{n} \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 19+2 d \\ & 20+1 d \\ & 50+1 d_{90} \\ & 77+2 d \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 67 \\ & \text { to260 } \\ & \text { to22 } \\ & \text { to } 290 \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 1,10 \\ & 6,8 \\ & 2,3,10 \\ & 2-8 \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 4 \mathrm{t}: 300 \mathrm{kHz} \\ & 4, \mathrm{t}: 1 \mathrm{MHz} \\ & 4 \mathrm{t}: 250 \mathrm{k} \end{aligned}$ |  |
| Keithley | 61/2 | 192 | 1355 | 395 | $1 \mu \mathrm{~V}$ | $70+1 / \frac{1}{2} \mathrm{~d}$ | 8 | 2,4,6 | 4,1G $\Omega$ |  |
| Philips | 51/2 | 2528 | 1295 | $\checkmark, B$ | $1 \mu \mathrm{~V}$ | $100 \pm 1 \mathrm{~d}$ | to 18 | 8 | 4 |  |
| Rhode \& Schwarz | 61/2 | UD56 | 3118 | $\checkmark$,R | 100n | $40 \pm 6$ | 330 | $\begin{aligned} & 1- \\ & 4,7,9,10 \end{aligned}$ | 4 | Scanner |
| Racal Dana | $\begin{aligned} & 51 / 2 \\ & 6^{1 / 2} \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 5900 \\ & 6001 / 2 \\ & 6900 \\ & \hline \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 3490 \\ & 4092 \\ & 5375 \\ & \hline \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & \mathrm{B} \sqrt{2} \\ & \mathrm{~B} \\ & \hline \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 1 \mu V \\ & 100 \mathrm{n} \\ & 100 \mathrm{n} \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 30+10 \\ & 30 \pm 1 d \\ & 30 \pm 8 d \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & \text { to } 33 \\ & \text { to } 6000 \\ & \text { to } 140 \end{aligned}$ | $1-7,10,13$ | Ratio Ratio, 4 Ratio | $\begin{aligned} & \text { 4,t,R } \\ & \text { h-speed, } \mathrm{t} \\ & \text { 4,t,R } \end{aligned}$ |
| Siemens | 6 | 1050 | 2606 | $\checkmark$ | 360 nV | $30+30$ | to 12 |  | 4,2ch |  |
| Solartron | $\begin{aligned} & 51 / 2 \\ & 6^{1 / 2} \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 7055 \\ & 7151 \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 1570 \\ & 1250 \end{aligned}$ | $\underset{\checkmark, R}{\text { G,R,B }}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 1 \mu V \\ & 100 \mathrm{n} \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 80+1 d \\ & 80+3 d \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 330 \\ & 25 \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & \hline 1-10,12 \\ & 2- \\ & 4,6,7,9,12 \end{aligned}$ | $4, \mathrm{~T}$ $4, \mathrm{~T}$ |  |
|  | $\begin{aligned} & 51 / 2 / 61 / 2 \\ & 6^{1 / 2} \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 7060 \\ & 7065 \\ & 7066 \\ & \hline \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 1150 \\ & 1800 \\ & 2090 \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & \text { G,R,B, } \\ & \text { G,R, } \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 1 \mu \\ & 1 \mu \\ & 100 n \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 80+5 d \\ & 40+4 d \\ & 40 \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 266 \\ & 330 \\ & 330 \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 3,5,13 \\ & 1-10 \\ & 6,8,12 \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & \text { Ratio ,4 } \\ & 4, \mathrm{~T} \\ & 4, \mathrm{~T} \end{aligned}$ | Scanner Scanner Scanner |
|  | $71 / 2$ | 7075 | 3050 | G,B | $1 \mu$ | $20+8$ | 200 | 10 | ratio, cf: 5 | Scanner |
|  | 81/2 | 7071 7081 | 3250 <br> 3995 | $\checkmark$, R | $10 n$ $10 n$ | $20 \sqrt{\mathrm{yr}}$ $11 \sqrt{\mathrm{yr}}$ | 1100 | $1-10$ $1-10,12$ | ratio, 1 MHz Ratio, t , | scanner |

Notes. 1. Price of GPIB shown. B, R normally indicate options for bcd/parallel and RS 232 interfaces.
2. Microprocessor program key 1: auto calibration, 2: complete (offset, scale, $\%$ dev)t, 3: ratios, 4: max, min hold, limits, 5 averaging, 6 : memory, $7: \mathrm{dB}, 8$ : linearizing, 9 : statistics (var, , r.m.s.), 10: self-test, 11: display of error limit, 12: timer 13:
nulf facility.
3. t: true r.m.s., R resistance, $T$ temperature, $G$ conductance 4: four-wire measurement.


HP3468 is designed to operate with HP's interface loop, a two-wire serial bus for battery-operated instruments, see text.

This Iwatsu instrument is more properly called a 'multilogger' than a multimeter, with its 12 channels and it larger storage capacity.

True r.m.s values up to a crest factor of 8 can be measured with an error of
120ppn in 24 hours with
Fluke's 8506A thermal multimeter.
resistance function and droop in h.f. response, is required which though analogue in nature need to be stored in digital form. In the Datron Autocal instruments, a digital-to-analogue converter provides the corrections during the calibration cycle (to a varicap-compensated attenuator in the a.c. case). To keep additive errors low during measurement of such correction factors, Datron use their averaging mode to give an effective, internal resolution of 1/16 of a display digit by averaging readings taken at $1 / 16$ steps.

Specifications, particularly of error limits, require a knowledge of component behaviour under stress and their drift with time, often hard to come by because of inediquate information from component manufacturers. Solartron's research into long-term drift has shown that components can be selected so that their drift is not random but follows a predictable pattern. In the 7081, and the just announced 7071, drift rate is proportional to the square root of elapsed time, and this allows a simple 'root year' error statement to be used instead of separate error

limit tables for 30 days, 90 days, 6 months, and so on. Providing a single one-year table yields error limits for periods greater and less than by taking the square of that figure. For example the two-year error limit is $\sqrt{ } 2$ times the one-year figure, and the six-month error limit is $\sqrt{ } 0.5$ times the one-year figure. So after, say, nine years without recalibration the 7081 will be within three times its one-year limit (and still be more accurate than most other meters). Its error limit summary table
d.v.
$1.2 \mathrm{ppm} \mathrm{rdg}+0.3 \mathrm{ppm}$ fs ( 24 h ) $11 \mathrm{ppm} \mathrm{rdg}+0.3 \mathrm{ppm}$ is $(\sqrt{\mathrm{yr}})$

## a.v.

$0 \%$ rdg $+0.015 \%$ is (24h)
$0.01 \% \mathrm{rdg}+0.015 \%$ fs $(\sqrt{\mathrm{yr})}$

## resistance

$1.5 \mathrm{ppm} \mathrm{rdg}+0.3 \mathrm{ppm}(24 \mathrm{~h})$
$14 \mathrm{ppm} \mathrm{rdg}+0.5 \mathrm{ppm}$ fs $(\sqrt{\mathrm{yr}})$
(For the short-term transfer error only the full-scale term is used.) So a single table not onlu reduces complexity but saves on space, in rom as well as on paper!
Solartron's 7081 precision multimeter is the only meter offering true seven and eightdigit resolution according to its makers. Meters using conversion methods other than the continuous pulse width method offer only six digits, say Solartron, and the seventh is 'invented' (by mathematical means, for example by addition of ten lpV -sensitivity readings and 'inventing' a 0.1 pV answer. A resolution of the order of one
part in $10^{7}$ is essential to provide a 1 in $10^{6}$ resolution over the whole measurement range. And, say Solartron, providing for eight-digit operation gives full confidence in the seventh.

An example of such an averaging approach to seven and eight-digit operation occurs in the Datron 1071 multimeter. Normally a $6 \frac{1}{2}$ digit instrument, the display is extended to $7 \frac{1}{2}$ in its 'averaging' mode, the eighth digit appearing after a fivesecond delay. It uses its microprocessor to compute cumulative average, based on taking 16 readings at a speed of three a second each offset from the next by $1 / 16$, finding an average value and displaying an eighth digit after its readings thereafter updating the average after each further reading. The operation performed is the sum of the old average and the difference between the new sample and the old average, divided by the current number of samples. While admitting this is not a true time integral, Datron point out that it does tend to the integral with succesive samples, and argue that the process makes real use of the additional digit by increasing accuracy rather than just averaging the error. With it, they claim a 10 nV resolution on the 100 mV range. Hewlett Packard's 3456 volt-ohmeter also has an averaging mode to reduce the effect of random noise. They claim an improvement in sensitivity by a factor equal to the square root of the number of measurements, so sensitivity can increase from 100 to 10 nV after a hundred measurements.

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## Megawatt sparks

An item "R.S.C. r.f.i." in the September Wireless World (page 29) drew attention to the long drawn out battle over the building of a new high-power h.f. transmitter complex on the site of the old Post Office receiving site at Bearsley, near Stratford-on-Avon. Although this site is about three miles miles or so from the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, fears have been expressed that r.f. interference would be caused to the theatre's lighting and audio system.

The writer of that note pointed out that such equipment should be built to withstand r.f. and, if not, could readily be 'sorted out' with a few disc ceramics and r.f. stopping resistors (ferrite beads would be better).

Unfortunately, the multiple problems of megawatt radio and radar transmissions deserve to be taken rather more seriously. The hazards of non-ionizing radiation have been studied intensively for many years. Despite the wide gap between the safety recommendations established in the USSR and those current in the West there now seems little reason to fear health hazards at distances beyond those established by the National Radiological Protection Board and B.S.I. standards. There remains however the problems of r.f.i. and also of r.f. sparks at distances that can extend to miles rather than feet.

For many years it has been recognized that metal structures and wires, located well beyond the power flux "safe distance" can act as resonant aerials and pick-up sufficient r.f. to generate small sparks. It is for this reason that mobile radio transmitters should never be used when refuelling or in close proximity to petrol tanks or in locations where explosive charges are detonated electrically. Although in practice the hazard represented by the use of low-power transmitters in hazardous environments can be exaggerated, work a few years ago at the Postgraduate School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, University of Bradford, did show that spark ignition of flammable substances could not be dismissed in some circumstances.

That sparks could occur at considerable distances from megawatt transmitters became evident during the brief
operational life of the American over-the-horizon radar at Orfordness when trawlermen complained of sparking from masts and rigging.

More recently, constructional workers building a new international sports stadium outside Riyadh in Saudi Arabia have found themselves exposed to high-voltage sparking from virtually every piece of plant and equipment. The sparks raise small blisters and have proved frightening and potentially hazardous to operatives working high-up in the building.

Cause of the sparking was found to be the 1.2 megawatt "Voice of Islam" radio transmitter located some two kilometres from the site. Since the stadium is being fitted with sophisticated electronic scoreboards, computerized security systems with electronic locks, television and radio equipment, it is having to be fitted with costly special screening, screened cable ducts etc. in addition to those ceramic disc capacitors.

Although such problems often seem to come as a surprise to contractors, equipment suppliers etc., it is interesting to note that the Admiralty marine chart for Dubai, United Arab Emirates, identifies a "danger area" that stretches some seven miles along the direction of the main lobe of the directional antenna of this 1480 kHz broadcast radio station which has an output of about two megawatts to a directional antenna array. A note on the chart identifies the danger area as follows: "Within the pecked area $\left(24^{\circ} 58^{\prime} \mathrm{N}, 54^{\circ} 53^{\prime} \mathrm{E}\right.$ ) a fire hazard to electronic equipment exists owing to radio transmissiona in the 1470 to 1490 kHz frequency band. Masters of vessels are advised to avoid the area. See Admiralty Sailing Directions."

The IBA's Annual Report, 1983-84, notes that: "In Autumn 1983, the m.f. transmitter at Barns Farm in Fife near Edinburgh for Radio Forth was closed down and the service transferred to a new site at Colinswell, a few miles away. This was done in order to reduce the strength of the radio signals at a petrochemical plant adjacent to Barns Farm. The strength of the signals at this plant was considered a safety hazard as any spark might have initiated an explosion."

Yet the radiated power of the ILR transmitter is only about 2.2 kW e.m.r.p.

## Section 78 and <br> r.f.i.

The susceptibility of many domestic electronic appliances to strong r.f. fields has become notorious. Local transmitters can affect not only radio and television receivers but also audio equipment, modern telephones, video cassette recorders, smoke detectors and virtually any systems using microprocessors etc. Some radio amateurs have found themselves faced with major repair problems resulting from the use of a radio transmitter in vehicles using electronic systems. Some appliances can be affected by very low power transmitters if these are within a matter of a few feet. Similarly, there are strong suspicions that r.f.i. from the powerful transmitters of Radio Free Europe was responsible for the crash in Germany of a $£ 16$ million RAF "Tornado" aircraft by affecting the on-board computers, supposedly "hardened" against r.f.

It is interesting to note that Section 78 of the
Telecommunications Act 1984 for the first time empowers the Secretary of State "to make regulations imposing requirements on wireless telegraphy and related apparatus with respect to their ability to resist interference by rejecting unwanted signals. Sale of noncomplying equipment will be an offence."

It remains to be seen whether DTI will attempt to implement this section of the Act which would appear to raise many legal questions. While Section 78 could clearly be applied to radio and television receivers what is one to make of "related apparatus"?

Is a v.c.r. machine, used with a tv receiver, "related apparatus"? If so, what if it is used with a visual display unit? What about an electronic telephone? How high or low a level of interference? Or will this section prove to be an idle threat, kept in abeyance in view of the difficulties of implementing it?

## Friendly sets

There is a strong belief among broadcasters that the ubiquituous radio set needs to become much more 'user-
friendly'. The large number of legal and illegal stations has emphasized how difficult it is for many listeners to tune the average portable or domestic receiver to a specific station.

On m.f., sets are now usually calibrated in 'kilohertz', but many people still think in terms of 'metres' or even 'kilocycles'. On h.f. not everybody understands that 6000 kHz is the same thing as 6.0 MHz . The European 9 kHz spacing results in less memorable figures than the American 10 kHz channels. Calibration is seldom accurate.

But in any case, few modern dials can be 'read' with any degree of accuracy. A few years ago when an attempt was made to discover how listeners tuned to stations it became obvious that most simply remember 'the spot on the dial' with no recollection of either frequency of wavelength. One answer might be 'channel numbers' for m.f.

There are today receivers with digital fequency readout, car radios with auto-search etc; there is the promise of automatic station selection and identification with 'Radio-data', though industry seems in no hurry to implement a system that will inevitably be confined to a few 'top of the range' models, initially car radios for which listeners seem prepared to pay more than for the average 'tranny'. Some listeners compare the inconvenience, and difficulties of radio tuning with the effective push-button selection of television channels but do not recognize that unlike television sets many radios are used in different parts of the country, complicating pushbutton selection.

A few years ago the BBC sought to increase the popularity of v.h.f./f.m. by developing a portable receiver using a ferrite-rod aerial in place of the awkward telescopic rod, but this has had little impact on an industry in which British production is almost non-existent.

The technology surely exists for truly 'user-friendly' radio sets at acceptable costs. With the present currency exchange rates it seems a pity that there is no sign of revival of local manufacture of receivers on which listeners could be sure of listening to the stations they want, whether this be Radio 3 or Laser 558!

The UK plans for the extension of Band 2, eventually up to 108 MHz , are based on the concept of band segments allocated to five national networks, plus sub-sections for local radio. The idea is that the national services should each be tuned in the same recognized order in all parts of the UK so that the exact frequency will be of only minor import. This plan, however, could be upset if the proposed community radio stations are slotted into any empty gaps in advance of the final release of the upper portion of the 100 to 108 MHz allocation, should this be delayed until 1995. There is little doubt that the major problem facing 'community radio' is financial rather than lack of frequency spectrum; but it seems irresponsible of some commentators to suggest that there is no longer any need for effective regulation of the broadcast bands.

## F.m. for the young

The swing of American radio listeners to v.h.f./f.m. as opposed to m.f./a.m. listening continues with a recent Radar report putting the f.m. share at 68 per cent of the 183 -million ( 95.6 per cent) of listeners aged 12 or more who listen to radio during any given week. The cumulative audience figures are 154 million f.m. and 115 million a.m. 88 per cent of the agegroup 12-24 preferred f.m. to a.m. and only in the 50 -plus age group does the balance tip the other way with 56 per cent listening more on a.m. than f.m.

## Amateur Radio

## Technical incentives?

The steady decline in recent years of home construction among those coming into amateur radio - most newlylicensed amateurs now tend to buy virtually all of their equipment and aerials though some later plunge into constructional work - has
resulted in some decline of any deep interest in the engineering aspects of radio communication. For a significant proportion, the technical Radio Amateur's Examination and (for Class A licences) the morse test are once-and-for-all hurdles, taken with only limited intention of the further theoretical or practical study that traditionally has constituted the 'selftraining' aspects of the hobby. Yet at the same time, there appears to be a continuing resentment that the media often find it difficult to distinguish between 'amateur radio' as now practised and c.b. radio.

Some amateurs believe that the problem would be reduced by making the multichoice-type RAE more difficult to pass, though there is little evidence to support the belief that this examination is any easier to pass than the old written-form of examination. Indeed there is some evidence that the RAE is deliberately made difficult by the ambiguous nature of some of the 'answers'. A more straightforward and fairer examination could be devised, perhaps, if each question had five instead of four possible answers as seems to be the practice in a number of other 'multichoice'-type examinations.

A more logical way of encouraging 'self-training' would be to adopt the technique of 'incentive licensing' used in many overseas countries, including the USA, Japan and the USSR in which progressively more difficult tests bring added operating privileges. It would be difficult and unpopular to try to introduce a full scheme of incentive licensing at this time, although there are a number of ways in which this might be achieved fairly painlessly.

Martin Atherton, G3ZAY has proposed a voluntary 'advanced RAE' rather on the lines of the advanced driving test. Amateurs would be encouraged but not compelled to take this further examination but would suffer no loss of existing operating privileges if they declined to do so.

Whether a voluntary, limited incentive scheme would really work is open to question. The problem basically is that modern, multi-mode factorybuilt equipment tends to use complex technology that bears
little relation to the technical level of the R A E yet it would surely be a retrograde step to bar entry of 'non-professionals' to the hobby by raising its standard. The real answer would seem to lie in a fullyfledged incentive licensing scheme even if this seems unlikely ever to be adopted in the UK.

## Here and there

Arthur Milne, G2MI recently celebrated his 'diamond jubilee’ as a radio amateur, having been licensed in 1924. His many contributions to the hobby has been unique including the running with his wife Lucy of the RSGB QSL Bureau for many years and GB2RS newsreader for the London weekly news bulletin (Sundays 9a.m. 3650 kHz ) on almost 1300 occasions. To mark his jubilee he staged a fascinating exhibition of equipment, valves and components, spanning six decades. Despite his early start the callsign G2MI has not always been his; initially it was issued about 1921 to the McMichael Company. His son and grandchildren are licensed amateurs.

In April 1982, I made brief reference to these columns to the book 'Armement Clandestine' by Pierre Lorain, F2WL as an excellent source of information on the clandestine radio equipment and techniques used by SOE and British Intelligence, including also the excellent sets made by Polish engineers in England for both these rival organizations. An English adaption and translation of this book, with the collaboration of David Kahn, has now been published in the UK under the title 'Secret Warfare' (Orbis Publishing Ltd, 185 pages, $£ 7,99$ ). For those following the current eight-part BBC-1 documentary series on SOE this book deserves to be regarded as a classical source of additional technical information. It includes many of the author's painstakingly accurate drawings covering not only radio but also weapons, aircraft and the development of agents' 'onetime' ciphers. While the emphasis is on SOE's work, the book makes it clear that Intelligence similarly had many radio links with occupied Europe, though its procedures
tended to be less complex and technically the equipment was often more crude, than the later designs by John Brown, G3EUR for SOE.

## In brief

The DTI on September 10 formally published details of the new 'schecule' to the UK amateur licence, including frequency bands available to the amateur service and the amateur satellite service, their status, carrier and p.e.p. power limits and permitted modes of transmission, together with lengthy series of associated footnotes. However, the details remain basically as announced informally many months ago... 1985 president of the RSGB will be Joan Heathershaw, G4CHH. She will be the Society's first 'xyl' president... One of the few tv plays based on amateur radio, 'CQ' by Paula Milne with technical guidance from Peter Marcham, G3YXZ, was due to be transmitted on Channel 4 on October 11... The British Amateur Television Club has recently published a useful 12-page booklet 'Introducing Amateur Television' by John L. Wood, G3YQC, providing a short guide to fast-scan and slow-scan amateur television, a glossary of terms and abreviations, frequencies and the constitution of the BATC. It was issued to all new members. Membership secretary is Dave Lawton, Grenehurst, Pinewood Road, High Wycombe, Bucks HP12 4DD... The address of Rev. George Dobbs, G3RJV, energetic honarary secretary of the G-QRP Club, devoted to low-power communication, has changed following his appointment as vicar of St Aidan's Church, Sudden: St Aidan's Vicarage, 498 Manchester Road, Rochdale, Lancs 0L11 3HE (Rochdale 31812)... The 'Wireless Museum' (curator Douglas Byrne, G3KPO) at Arreton Manor, near Newport, Isle of Wight, has changed its name to 'The National Wireless and Communications Museum' and is seeking charitable status. An exhibition station, GB2WM, operates regularly on 3.5 and $7 \mathrm{MHz} \ldots$ The DTI has produced special application forms for amateurs wishing to operate between 24.05 and 24.25 GHz ...

## Digitaltuner control

## Concluding the design of a circuit for digitally tuning Varicap-tuned f.m. modules.

In the first part of the article in September, the digital derivation of the control voltage and preset memory were outlined. The frequency display remains and constructional data is presented.

## Digital readout

If it is assumed that the tuner responds linearly to changes in direct control voltage, a cheap digital read out can be accomplished by conversion of the 8 bit binary output from the counters into four digit led display information as follows:

The eight bits of data are fed as addresses $\mathrm{A}_{2}-\mathrm{A}_{9}$ to an eprom. Address $\mathrm{A}_{0}$ and $\mathrm{A}_{1}$ are derived from the first section of the 14518 counter and will therefore cycle

$$
\begin{array}{ll}
\mathrm{A}_{1} & \mathrm{~A}_{0} \\
0 & 0 \\
0 & 1 \\
1 & 0 \\
1 & 1 \\
\text { etc. }
\end{array}
$$

This has the effect, when combined with the binary output, of addressing four unique locations for each one of the 256 counter steps. The data associated with each of these addresses is split in two. The low four bits $\left(\mathrm{D}_{0}-\mathrm{D}_{3}\right)$ are used as digit select drivers via transistors and cycle as follows

| $\mathrm{D}_{3}$ | $\mathrm{D}_{2}$ | $\mathrm{D}_{1}$ | $\mathrm{D}_{0}$ |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| 0 | 0 | 0 |  |
| 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| etc. |  |  |  |

The higher four bits $\left(D_{4}-D_{7}\right)$ form the b.c.d. code relevant to that digit and is decoded for a seven segment display. The data is modified to suppress leading zeros on frequencies below 100.0 MHz and to read 108.0 when the counter is between 200 and 255 . Only a sample of the program is given in Fig 4, as the full listing is too long to include.

```
100 PRINT"":INPUT"START ADDRESS";XW
110 DIMAD*(1124)
120 DIMDT$(1124)
130 GDTD440
140 REM**BINARY ROUTINE**
150 IFX-256=>OTHENBE ="1": X=x-256:GOTO1.70
160 B8%="O"
170 IFX-128=>OTHENB7*=" " ": x=x-128:GOTO190
180 B7$="O"
190 IFX-64=>OTHENB6 $="1":X=x-64:GOTO210
200 B6 =="O"
210 IFX-32=>OTHENB5 = ="1": x=x-32:GOTO230
220 B5 ="O"
230 IFX-16=>OTHENB4m="1": x=x-16:GOTO250
240 B4&="O"
250 IFX-8=>OTHENB3 ="1": x=x-8:GOTO270
260 B3 ="O"
270 IFX-4=>OTHENB2*="1": X=x-4:GOTO29O
280 B2&="O"
290 IFX-2=>OTHENB1$="1": X=x-2:GOTO31O
300 B1$="0"
310 IFX-1=>OTHENBO$="1": X=x-1:GOTO330
320 BO末="O"
330 OP$=B8$+B7$+B6$+B5$+B4$+B3$+B2$+B1$+B0$
340 RETURN
350 REM****
360 DEC=O
370 LB=LEN(BIF)
3BO FOR I=1 TO LB
390 LB=LB-1
400 IF MID#(BI#,I,1)="1" THEN DEC=DEC+(2\uparrowLB)
410 NEXT I
420 PRINT DEC
4 3 0 ~ R E T U R N
440 REM**MAIN PROGRAM**
450 A=-1:PRINT"CONVERTING ADDRESSES TO BINARY"
460 FOR I=O TO 255
470 FOR B=O TO 3
480 A=A+1:PRINT"ADDRESS NUMBER ";A,
490 X=1:gOSUB140
SOO ADs(A)=RIGHTE (OPs,B): X=B:GOSUE 140
510 AD$(A)=AD$(A)+RIGHT (OP*,2)
520 PRINTADE (A):NEXT B,I
530 A=-1:PRINT"CONVERTING DATA TO BINARY"
540 FOR I=880 TO 1136
550 1$=STR $(1)
560 IF LEN(IS)<5 THEN I = = O"+I*
570 FOR N=2 TO 5
580 x=VAL(MIDE(I#,N,1))
590 IF I>1080 THEN I =="01080"
600 EOSUB140
610 A=A+1: FRINTA:
620 DT$(A)=RIGHT (OP$,4):PRINTA,DT$(A),
630 X=2\uparrow(N-2)
640 IF I<1000 AND N=2 THEN }\textrm{X}=
650 gOSUB140
660 DT$(A)=DT$(A)+RIGHT$(0P$,4)
670 FRINT FIGHT生(DT (A),4)
6BO NEXT N
690 NEXT I
700 FDRA=0 TO 1023
710 BI$=AD$(A):GOSUB350
7 2 0 ~ P = D E C
730 BI$=DT$(A):GOSUB350
740 Q=DEC
750 FOKEXW+F,0
760 NEXT A
```


# by J.N. Darlington 

John Darlington joined the RAF in 1961 as a radio apprentice and trained for three years at RAF Locking, followed by a further ten years as a radar technician, during which time he obtained an HNC in electronics.

On leaving the RAF he joined Marconi Radar as a technical author attached to the Sea Wolf missile project. For the last eight years he has held production management posts, having gained a diploma in management studies at the Norwich Management Centre: first with Datron Instruments manufacturing precision digital voltmeters, and lately as works manager of Laserscan Laboratories in Cambridge.

Fig.5. Basic program for production of soft rom.

Table 1.

## Linearity of tuning control

$\left.\begin{array}{llll}\begin{array}{l}\text { Tuning } \\ \text { voltage }\end{array} & \begin{array}{l}\text { Measured } \\ \text { (tequency } \\ \text { MHz }\end{array} & \begin{array}{l}\text { Linear } \\ \text { response } \\ \text { MHz }\end{array} & \begin{array}{l}\text { Calculated } \\ \text { response }\end{array} \\ \text { MHz }\end{array}\right\}$

Max error - $0.183 \%$ at 96.83 MHz
Table 2.
Frequency meter error

| Display <br> frequency | Tuned <br> frequency | $\%$ <br> error |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| $\mathbf{8 7 . 6}$ | 88. | $.95 \%$ |
| 89.3 | 89.7 | $.44 \%$ |
| 90.9 | 91.2 | $.33 \%$ |
| 92.2 | 92.5 | $.33 \%$ |
| 94.3 | 94.5 | $.2 \%$ |
| 95.9 | 95.97 | $.07 \%$ |
| 97.6 | 97.54 | $.06 \%$ |
| 98.9 | 98.71 | $.2 \%$ |
| 99.8 | 99.6 | $.2 \%$ |
| 100.9 | 100.6 | $.3 \%$ |
| 102.2 | 101.96 | $.23 \%$ |
| 103.3 | 103.2 | $.09 \%$ |
| 104.0 | 104.0 | $0 \%$ |
| 105.0 | 105.5 | $.05 \%$ |
| 106.1 | 106.2 | $.09 \%$ |
| 107.2 | 107.23 | $.03 \%$ |
| 107.9 | 107.8 | $.09 \%$ |

I developed the program using a Commodore 4032, and Fig. 5 gives the Basic listing for the production of a 'soft' rom in one of the empty rom sockets of this machine. The soft rom is then copied on the standard prom copier.

Start address input requires a decimal number response, which may vary from one type of machine to another.

## Construction

The layout of the display and control keys is dependent upon individual taste as regards appearance. The main digital section was constructed on a RS Components Eurocard standard board using miniature pvc-covered single strand wire. This method is quick, easy and reliable and ideally suited to one-offs. The display used is another RS component and all keys are singlepole press-to-make except the up/down switch, which is a cen-tre-biased, 2 -pole, 2 -way toggle type.

Both 15 V and 5 V power supplies need to be regulated and the resistors around the 3140 need to be $1 \%$ metal film types. The R-2R ladder resistors should also be metal film, $1 \%$ or better, expecially in sections 2 to 6 . The overall linearity will depend upon the tolerance and ratio matching of these resistors.

Calibration consists of operating the up/down keys to obtain 88.0 MHz or thereabouts and adjusting $\mathrm{RV}_{2}$ for $+2 \mathrm{~V} . \mathrm{RV}_{1}$ is adjusted with a frequency of 108.0 MHz selected to give around 11 volts (assumes tuner range is 2 - 11 V - tuners outside this range may require different value resistors in the op-amp circuit). Finer adjustments are carried out with either a signal generator or on stations at the bottom and top end of the band using $\mathrm{RV}_{2}$ and $R V_{1}$ respectively (if a.f.c. is switchable it should be off).


Fig.4. Eprom sample listing for digital readout


Fig.6. Local oscillator tuning linearity of Larsholt 7254 module


Fig.7. Frequency meter performance.

## ENERGY <br> TRANSFER

Once more Wireless World gives space to Ivor Catt's views. on EM theory. It would help his efforts to overthrow the current position (the 'establishment view') if he showed more evidence that he knew what it was.

His article in the September issue of WW contains at least six major errors, any one of which is sufficient to destroy his thesis.

- Sinusoids and pulses are convenient ways of analysing waves mathematicly, be they electric, water or acoustic. The 'mistake’ attributed Einstein and 'the modern physics community' just cannot exist. - He constantly confuses impedance and resistance, leaving his transmission line analysis without value. EM energy is turned into heat by a resistance. When flowing in a transmission line or free space the energy is not changed into heat by the impedance but can be fully recovered as electrical energy. It is rubbish to say that modern physics ignores the impedance of free space, antenna theory and practice is based on it.
- He persists with his view that modern physics somehow requires electric charge to move with the speed of light in conductors. This is nonsense. It is helpful to regard a conductor as a pipe full of water, water flows in one end and out the other when pressure is applied. Naturally water flow is not the same as charge flow but those 'disciplined in the art' do not think, as Mr Catt would have us believe, that electrons have to rattle down some empty tube of a conductor, filling it up at the speed of light. A conductor already has lots of free electrons in it, all ready to start moving under the influence of a passing wave, it is this that distinguishes it from an insulator.
- He carries his conception of a capacitor as transmission line only so far and fails to complete the analysis. He shows it as an unterminated transmission line, but an open line is always terminated by free space with an approximate impedance of 377 ohms so every time a pulse travels down the line some
energy is radiated and some reflected. Ivor Catt's mistake is to imagine that there can be some sort of permanent wave oscillating back and forth. Capacitors (and inductors) are only approximations, there can be no exact analysis of a capacitor without including inductive, resistive and transmission line effects. It is worth noting that it is a common v.h.f. and u.h.f. technique to use a transmission line to approximate a capacitor or an inductor.
D.J.O. 'Reilly

Antwerp
Belgium

Reference the "Catt Anomaly", there is no anomaly to thoroughgoing Practising Electrician who really believes in charges, currents and fields, since to him it is obvious that a conductor is not just an empty tube. Space does not guide a TEM wave, and intrinsic semiconductors do not either and suffer from space charge effects etc. Conductors are materials that have a high density of mobile carriers, far in excess of the induced charge that moves at "the speed of light". There is no reason why a charge shoukd not move at the speed of light or even more. A charge is a local imbalance between the two polarities of particle. An electric current is the slow drift of the mobile ones. Consequently, where the drift velocity changes, there is a charge build up. The location of a charge can therefore be changed at any geometrical velocity. (A location is neither mass nor signal - thus keeping relativity happy.) Since the drifts are caused by the penetration of the external fields of the TEM wave, the actual velocity with which the drifts rearrange themselves is limited to the phase velocity of the TEM wave with the prevailing boundary conditions. In the case of a step pulse the drifting region elongates at the propagation velocity (nominally c), whilst charge pours into the moving transition region where the drifting carriers "collide" with the stationary ones. As it sweeps along, it leaves the surplus charge behind as a region of enhancement. Where does the charge come from? Nowhere. It was there all the
time. All that has happened is a slight compression of the carrier density, made up at the driving end by the earth return current. D.H. Potter

Axminster
Devon

Ivor Catt implies yet again that it is impossible for those "disciplined in the art" of conventional electromagnetic theory to understand the propagation of a current-voltage pulse or step along a twin conductor transmission line. Specifically he implies that the rapid progress of the two electrically charged zones along the conductors, terminating the electric lines of force looped between them, cannot be accounted for ("the Catt anomaly"), since the drift velocity of conduction electrons in metals is known to be small compared with the speed of light.

The conductors and the surrounding fields represent intimately coupled systems, both essential in the type of transmission system described by Catt. According to the elementary theory of metals the conduction electrons in a circuit behave much as the molecules of a gas contained in a loop of pipe. The current source, such as a cell, behaves as a circulation pump for the gas, sucking electrons in at the positive pole and ejecting them at the negative pole. The metal also contains positive ions, equivalent to obstructions in the pipe, and due to the associated frictional effects (equivalent to resistivity on the metal) the gas can indeed only be circulated at comparatively low speed. Catt continually overlooks the fact that variations in electron gas pressure and density generated by the electron pump may be propagated much faster, in the same way as sound propagates through air or a train of coupled wagons quickly jerk successively into motion when the locomotive pushes or pulls them. The zone with increased density generated, say, by a compression stroke of a pump extends to a range equal to the velocity of sound multiplied by the stroke duration. It is this principle which allows a loudspeaker to generate wavelengths much longer than the amplitude of vibration of the
cone itself. The combination of the rapidly moving fluctuations in electron gas density and the background of positive ion charge yields the necessary, rapidly moving positively or negatively charged zones in the metal. The analogy with sound propagation is not quite exact, since the extra charge prefers to collect on the surface of the metal to reduce energy, much as cream floats to the surface of milk. Also, the electromagnetic interaction between the electrons equivalent to gas pressure or wagons colliding with each other, is transported principally through the surrounding dielectric medium into which the electromagnetic fields penetrate deeply in lines with typical geometry. In the gas filled pipe analogy this is equivalent to the transport of a signal via the material of the pipe itself, which one generally seeks to minimize in practical acoustics. The speed of propagation of electron density variations is accordingly limited by the speed, and in typical lines the relevant speed is that for the dielectric medium. As Catt states, the energy ultimately delivered to the load is most economically regarded as transported by the fields, the conductors acting essentially as a guide for the energy. Contrary to Catt's claim, libraries wellused by "the modern physics community" contain many texts on the transient response of transmission lines. The authors naturally assume that elementary notions of wave generation etc. were wellassimilated by the reader at an early age, and make little reference to very basic ideas. N. Morton Stockport

I would like to make two comments on Mr Catt's article on energy transfer.

First, I remember being taught as an undergraduate about the passage of stepwaves and pulses along a transmission line, as well as sinewaves. That was forty years ago, long before t.t.l. and 气.c.l. were dreamed of. Yet we were interested in pulses even in those days (remember when radar was still called radiolocation?). So perhaps it would be unwise to assume that everybody else has been taught

Fig. 1

as badly as, apparently, was Mr Catt.

Second, the Catt anomaly, the details of what happens when a step-wave passes along a transmission line, need more discussion than perhaps Mr Catt felt able to give them in a short article. The figure shows a stepwave passing from left to right. In (a) it has not yet reached two electrons A and B in the earthy wire, which are still at rest a distance $d$ apart. The electric field at the wavefront is bowed outwards, convex in the direction of motion (remember that "lines of force" are supposed to repel each other sideways). Hence at the surfaces of the wires there are components of the field along the wires. Therefore when the wavefront passes electron A the latter experiences a momentary force (an impulse) which sets it moving relatively slowly drifting - along the wire. In (b) is shown the situation when the wavefront has passed A, but has not yet reached B. On a truly loss-free system A does not need any further force to keep it moving, so behind the wavefront the electric field is strictly normal to the wires. The important point to notice is that the distance between A and $B$ is decreasing.

In (c) the wavefront has passed $B$ also. $B$ has been sét moving, with the same velocity as A, so the pair of electrons drift along together, with a constant but smaller distance d' between them. Applying this result to all electrons in the earthy wire it appears that the moving electrons everywhere behind the wavefront are slightly more crowded together than when they are at rest.

Hence in unit length of the wire there is a larger number of negatively charged electrons than the number of positively charged ions in the parent atoms fixed in the wire. That is, the wire has (as expected) acquired a net negative charge on which the "lines of force" terminate. Conversely, in the live wire the passage of the wavefront causes electrons such as C and D to drift to the left, with an increase in the distance between them. In this wire the mobile (conduction) electrons are less crowded together than normal, and there is a net positive charge from which the "lines of force" originate. To sum up, if in a wire (any wire) the flow of (electron) current is in the same direction as the flow of energy then the electrons are more crowded together than normal; if in the opposite direction, the electrons are less crowded together. This is a detail in the description of the flow of current which admittedly few text books mention.
Nowhere in the foregoing argument has it been demanded that any electron should move with the velocity of light; yet the accumulation of charges, positive and negative, keeps pace with the travelling wavefront. This is because the accumulation are formed by the wavefront itself, from the electrons which are already present at the wavefront. The Catt anomaly does not exist, so any arguments which are adduced to 'explain' it are unnecessary.
In practice the crowding is, relatively, very small. Consider an air-spaced transmission line of characteristic impedance
$50 \Omega$, so that its capacitance is (very nearly) $20 \mathrm{pF} / \mathrm{ft}$. For a step wave of amplitude 1 V the net charges, negative and positive, are $20 \mathrm{pC} / \mathrm{ft}$.

Dividing this by the charge on an electron, $1.6 \times 10^{-19} \mathrm{C}$, we find that number of excess electronics (or holes) is $1.25 \times 10^{8} / \mathrm{ft}$. But this is small compared with the number of conduction electrons which in a metal is about $10^{23}$ per cc. If the wire of which the line is made is 1 mm in diameter its volume is $0.24 \mathrm{cc} / \mathrm{ft}$, so the relative excess or deficit is $\left(1.25 \times 10^{8}\right)$ /
$\left(0.24 \times 10^{23}\right)=5.2 \times 10^{-15}$. This number is so small that Mr Catt, and possibly many other people, may be forgiven for overlooking it.

## P.L. Taylor

Marple
Chehire

Ivor Catt seems to have repeated a misconception about what happens in transmission lines.
Fig. 2 shows the state of affairs in a transmission line after a voltage step has been applied to its left end. The switch was closed at time $t_{0}$, and after a further time $t$, the wavefront has advanced a distance $t, c$ being the speed of TEM propagation in the dielectric. The left of the wavefront there is an excess of electrons on the lower conductor and a shortage on the top conductor. The right of the wavefront there is no net charge on the conductors.
Concentrating on the lower conductor, Catt wants to know where the excess of electrons came from. "Not from somewhere on the left", he says, "because such charge would have to travel at the speed of light in a vacuum",
and that this "is obvious to the untutored mind." It is fairly obvious to my untutored mind that somewhere on the left is exactly where the charge came from, that there is absolutely no need for it to travel at anything like to speed of light, and that Catt is wrong.

Perhaps I can illustrate by way of analogy. Imagine a row of coins, all 25 mm in diameter, and each separated from the next by 1 mm . I begin to push the leftmost coin to the right at 1 mm per second. After one second it touches the next coin and this begins to move. After another second this bumps into the third coin. This contact happens 26 mm to the right of the first, one second later. After each second elapses, another contact occurs 26 mm to the right of the previous one. We can imagine this sequence of contacts to be a "wavefront" running through the coins at 26 mm per second - that is 26 times the speed of the coins themselves. To the right of the wavefront there is one coin every 26 mm , but to the left there is a higher "coin density" of one every 25 mm .

Returning to the bottom conductor, electrons to the right of the wavefront have the "neutral" density $D$, but to the left they have a slightly excess density and are drifting slowly to the right. The wavefront itself is moving at the speed of light. Obviously electrons do not "bump into" one another like coins, but the principle is the same. To a first approximation the ratio of c to v is the same as the ratio of $D$ to $\lambda$.

In a real transmission line the "neutral" electron density D depends on the geometry of the line and the type of conductor material used. $V$ and $\lambda$ also depend on these factors, and on

Fig. 2

the size of the voltage step applied as well. The velocity of propagation of the wavefront though, depends only on the dielectric and has something pretty fundamental about it which to my mind gives credence to the idea that energy flows through the "insulator", and not the "conductor" which is in fact a barrier to energy flow. After all, metals are shiny because light bounces off them, and I can't ever remember seeing the wires that carry the sun's energy through space to us. I wish Catt would not discredit such (at least potentially) good ideas by throwing in duds of this own.
One final point. On page 47 Catt says "The fact that parallel voltage planes, when entered at a point, present a resistive, not reactive, impedance, was for me an important breakthrough". Really? If a disturbance is applied at a point in such a pair of planes, a circular wavefront will propagate away from the point. As it moves out, its size will increase, and the impedance of the planes to the wavefront will fall.
As a result of this, energy will be reflected back to the original point of disturbance. This continuous reflection process will present to the disturbance an inductive impedance won't it?
Alan Robinson
London

## BAIRD

Once again the old Baird controversy has been set in motion, this time by Pat Hawker, G3VA, in the June Communications. Since its foundation in 1975 the Narrow Bandwidth TV Association has seriously tried to set the record straight by building Baird-style equipment and demonstrating its limitations and possibilities, so that people might judge the issue for themselves rather than be swayed this way or that by rhetoric.
Mr Hawker complains that Baird's 30 -line system contained 'no real sync. signals' and was therefore barely 'true television'. Poor John Baird! Not so long ago his claim to be the first demonstator of 'true television' rested on his fulfilment of the three basic conditions of the 'true' art: it
must show pictures of real subjects (not paper or celluloid images); the pictures must be capable of motion (not 'frozen' as in facsimile); the full scale of grey tones must be present (no mere outlines or silhouettes). No others conditions such as colour or 3D were demanded (these took Baird another two years). Now Mr Hawker introduces a fourth requirement: there must be 'real' sync. signals. Since the 'black bar' employed by Baird was totally independent of the picture content, it is difficult ot understand how its 'unreality' can be shown: certainly an oscilloscope display would favour Baird rather than Hawker. Baird's contract with the BBC demanded a signal of composite video (to use the modern term) and this he supplied to their satisfaction. He was thus, at the time of the Baird Television, well ahead of all his continental and American rivals, none of whom had serious attacked this problem, preferring to synchronize pictures via a land line, a separate carrier frequency, or just a shared a.c. mains supply. It is a flattering tribute to Baird that all the world's present-day tv systems employ this same black bar, albeit intensified to facilitate separation, and extended to swallow up almost a fifth of the picture area against Baird's modest five to ten per cent.
The cog-wheel sync device which Baird employed, and which appears to cause Mr Hawker to frown, was an elegant device without rubbing surfaces, wholly silent in operation, and the only part of a Televisor likely to work perfectly today after fifty years in a cellar. Unlike a phonic wheel it had pointed teeth to provide (by the time-window principle) a degree of immunity to false pulses near the middle of the picture. Baird's early critics "proved" the unfeasability of mechanical tv by showing that, for success, the receiver would have to keep in step with the transmitter to an angular accuracy of better than one part in a thousand over the period of an hour or so, a clearly impossible feat. Baird's success can be judged from the fact that the long time exposures needed to produce photos of the dim neon-lamp
pictures frequently yielded images without any trace of blurring.

In truth, synchronization of the 30 -line pictures was often poor over long transmission distances, but this arose from the primitive state of pulseseparating techniques at the time and not from any fault of the device itself. This remains a landmark in the history of tv technology, demonstrating in a single imaginative leap both the feasibility of the composite video principle and the huge potentialities of motor control through error detection and feedback. As soon as the problems of sync separation were partly solved, mechanical receivers with their built-in 'flywheel' effect were able to show their surperiority over their electronic counterparts, a lead which they maintained up to 1939 and the outbreak of war. The gap was not closed until long after the resumption of transmissions, following the general adoption of 'flywheel sync' an ingenious electronic analogue of the mechanical system.
But Mr Hawker goes further than simply denying that Baird's sync pulses were sync pulses. He claims that if sync pulses of the kind he prefers had been present, they would have been "virtually impossible to transmit on medium waves". Many of our Association members use the $7: 3$ composite video favoured by the present commercial operators. A number of carrier frequencies have been used experimentally for NBTV signals and no difficulties have ever been reported in conveying the xync information. I can't quote them all, but the highest is 440 MHz and the lowest is 10 kHz . Clearly, Mr Hawker knows something special about the medium waves that the rest of us don't!

What is it that animates the Baird debunkers who write from time to time in these pages? He had no public school background, distrusted the rich, used dockland invective when provoked, and acquired the bulk of his technical knowledge informally. Surely these things should count for little nowadays. Like many creative people he tended to abandon his brain-children soon after birth and indulges in an instant new
pregnancy. This must have been hard on his assistants but doesn't explain the wider venom.

The answer may lie in his image as the small man challenging the "superior" knowledge of the broadcasting establishment and the big firms, a dangerous though, perhaps.
Or is it because "real" television must be wholly electronic and mechanical tv was a dead end that wasted everybody's time? If so, then Baird must be condemned, not alone, but in the company of Jenkins, Alexanderson, Mihaly, Bartelemy, Traub, and many others. Besides, the modern spiral-scan video tape recorder, a wonderful example of precision engineering applied to mechanical tv could not be allowed to exist, and the Dwight Canvendish 1250 -line colour tv system currently being developed (with rotating mirrors Baird would have been proud of) must be dismissed as an activity conducted by fools.
Let me end on a constructive note by suggesting a way in which those who regard Baird's 30 -line system as no achievement worthy of mention may do something concrete to prove their point. Let them band together to produce and demonstrate tv pictures of their own (for comparison by a neutral arbiter) with those produced by Baird. They may use any number of scanning lines they wish, and so that the contest may err on the side of generosity, they may make use of an additional fifty years of $t v$ technology. The only strict condition they must observe is that the signal must not exceed 9 kHz in bandwidth, the restriction imposed upon Baird by the broadcasting authorities when they refused him access to any BBC short wave transmitter (with a more generous bandwidth) and so brought about the medium wave experiments.

I look forward eagerly to viewing the offering of any courageous challenger, but secretly fear that this letter will be the prelude to a long and significant silence.
D.B. Pitt

Chairman, NBTVA

## ISOLATED VIDEO DRIVER

With reference to Mr Mclay's video driver circuit (page 49,July issue), I feel a warning ought to be issued.
The 6 N 139 is rated at 3000 V d.c. isolation. This is regarded by UL as adequate for 220 V a.c. but as far as I know (and I admit that I may be wrong) this device is not approved for isolation from UK 240 V a.c. mains.
Hewlett Packard describe the device as functioning to 1 Mbit/ s , and 5 MHz sounds a bit optimistic. I would respectfully suggest that the amount of effort and cost required to obtain and fit a suitable isolation transformer to the set would probably be the same or less, and result in no curtailment of bandwidth. It may perhaps be felt that the difference between 220 V a.c. and 240 V is trivial, but an informed insurance company investigator would not take that view if a fire originated in the equipment, however caused. The increasing tendency of manufacturers to offer isolators rated at 7.5 or even 10 kV in the European market also testifies to the importance of the matter.
M.D. Bacon

Taunton
Somerset

## ELECTRIC CHARGEFROM A RADIO WAVE

I refer to correspondence concerning the article 'How to make electric charge from a radio wave' ( $W W$, August 1983). In this, Professor Jennison contended that e-m energy propagating in a re-entrant slow wave structure (in this case a ring transmission line having an unusually low group velocity), can be brought to rest with reference to the laboratory frame by physical moving (rotating), the transmission line.

Several correspondents, e.g. Chris Paton (WW, May 1984), have likened the system to a polyphase machine stator which is commonly believed to produce a rotating magnetic field. No so. A polyphase stator contrives the vector addition of several time-varying fields produced by
several spatially distributed though static electromagnets. This merely gives the impression and effect of a rotating field but is not the same as a travelling continuum of e-m energy propagating in a transmission line.

Regarding the argument that e-m energy propagating in waveguide is independent of any physical motion of the guide, I suggest that if an open ended, radiating waveguide were moved back and forth, the radiated signal received at a distance would surely exhibit the appropriate Doppler modulation. How then can it be said that the propagation velocity in the guide (relative to the receiver), is unaffected by motion of the guide itself?
M. G. T. Hewlett

Midhurst
West Sussex

## PRECISION PREAMPLIFIER

Mr Self's reply (April, 1984) to my earlier letter concerning his precision preamplifier struck me as somewhat overblown, containing as it does some very unsubtle suggestions as to my competence, and I fear, attempting to brand me as that most irrational of species, the hi-fi loonie. Some persons, having been on the receiving end of such as outburst might even regard his remarks as insulting, but I prefer to take a more Christian view.

I note that Mr Self is of the Roger Bacon school of thought, wherein scientific observations take precedence over Aristoteleian dogma. This is a noble trait and much to be revered, although it becomes incumbent upon the experimenter to take such observations as are necessary to define a whole process.
After making these observations, it is of some use when informing others of the results to include the parameters of the tests. Thus, I cannot accept that any old electrolytic capacitor produces less than $0.001 \%$ distortion when I am not told of the voltage range this encompasses nor the corresponding frequencies. Let us hope that manufacturers attempting to reduce 3rd harmonic distortion in electrolytic capacitors (such as Blackgate and Nicholson in

Japan) can be persuaded by Mr Self's measurements to abandon their R and D efforts as a complete waste of time and energy. Everything is apparently perfect already!

Dielectric absorption effects and induced bias in capacitors are, I quite realize, low-
frequency effects because of the RC time constants employed for coupling applications. But at I.f. the effects do exist, since a voltage drop does appear across the capacitor, and the d.c. voltages induced then place an envelope delay distortion on the signal as they decay through the net impedance to earth. I would like unwarped records and perfectly set up arm/cartridge combinations as much as the next man, but since l.f. bias is independent of capacitor type and hence unavoidable, I prefer to use film coupling capacitors for their low d.a. (and low tan delta at I.f.). The poor old electrolytic, polar or not, sitting there with its electrolyte molecules in a jumble at zero bias, is a perfect candidate for a good bit of dielectric absorption from the occasional passing l.f. 'transient', and the polar electrolytic will be biased positively, or in reverse, all leading to uncertain characteristics,(1).These effects cannot be detected by audiofrequency sine waves, but do exist in practice.
As for the effects of poor contact resistance, if is a sheer waste of time to band two contacts together and measure the result immediately. Nobody disputes that the initial contact is good. Wait six months and the effect may occur as contact pressures weaken and the surfaces tarnish, silver being an obvious example, which is why a decent switch using silver or silver alloy contacts is made to be self wiping. Tamishing is also the reason why Cromolin and other insulating lubricants were developed to keep out atmospheric pollutants on contacts.
I really feel that Mr Self is deliberately missing the point on contacts and the best of luck to him in his rusty nail world! For the modest extra expense, I once again reiterate my opinion that a gold flashing on RCA phono plugs is more than worthwhile as it simply does not tarnish (And I'm not going to argue about how pure the gold
should be, etc, etc. That point has been laboured over and over again in the press.)
Finally, the hoary old argument about the music signal having been processed 15 ways to Sunday before it ever gets to the record is trotted out by Mr Self. So what? Is this an argument for more processing and switches as a paliative, or do two wrongs magically create a right?
I do not know how involved most readers of Wireless World are in high-fidelity sound reproduction, nor am I aware of their general sensibilities. Consequently, I do not want to appear to be preaching; but a great many of the points in dispute here have been are are being addressed in the hi-fi press. I would particularly commend to WW readers a series of articles running in Hi Fi News, on the design of a preamplifier by one B.J. Duncan, which began in the May 1984 issue. This design, insofar as it has been revealed at present (there are five monthly articles altogether) appears to be a technically tour-de-force, in my opinion, and provides a ready, timely, and detailed approach to the proper selection and use of components for a real world design. This is not to castigate Mr Self's design as such - it is elegant. I just want to have it as nice as possible when I make mine.
W.M.B. Armstrong

Halifax,
N.S.

## PAUSAID

I wonder whether you are aware that, with trivial modifications, the 'Pausaid' (May 1984 WW) can become a useful 'DJ Killer'? i.e. a device which will silence the chat in between musical items, and though I don't 'of course' speak from personal experience, could be arranged to provide, via a solenoid recorder, continuous music recordings.
R.G. Young

Newhaven
ESussex

## Letters

Letters for publication are always welcome. Those that are short and to the point stand the best chance of publication since space for these columns is limited.

# Tape timing circuit 

## Real-time tape clock, independent of tape-recorder circuitry and needing only mechanical modifications.

This circuit was designed as part of a digital tape clock/counter and can provide the correct 'clock' and 'up/down' signals for several counter i.cs currently on the market. It is completely independent of the tape recorder's own circuitry and the only modification is purely mechanical, when the 'interface' roller, timing disc and two opto switches are attached to the deck near the tape path.

The schmitt triggers of $\mathrm{IC}_{1}$ in Fig. 1 provide noise-free pulses with fast rising and falling edges and secure trouble-free operation of both control logic and frequency divider.

When $A$ and $B$ inputs are both low, the circuit is internally reset and pin 10 of $\mathrm{IC}_{4}$ goes low. The circuit then detects which input first goes high. If A goes high first, the UP/DOWN output goes high. If $B$, however, goes high first, the UP/DOWN output goes low. When both $A$ and $B$ go high, a negative clock signal is produced at pin 11 of $\mathrm{IC}_{2}$. The positive clock signal is obtained at pin 10 of $\mathrm{IC}_{2}$ and fed to the dual counter $\mathrm{IC}_{6}$,
where the clock signal frequency is divided by 3 , by 2 and again by 2 at the appropriate times to produce 1 clock pulse per second, dependent on tape speed. When A or B goes low after both inputs have been high, no change is made at the UP/DOWN output. As long as the tape is moving in the same direction, the UP/ DOWN signal is therefore a direct voltage, changing only if the tape changes direction. The connection to the phototransistors determines which direction is named 'forward' or 'up'. The opto switch feeding input A should in any case be the one changing state first as the timing disc rotates during recording and playback. The truth table is shown in Fig. 2. No RC time constant is included in the circuit, and its performance is not influenced by the rotation speed of the timing disc. I have in vain tried to fool it.

Mr Per C. Andersen in his April, 1983 article has described the near perfect clock-to-tape interface' roller. Because I have no
access to a precision lathe, I had to try the alternative of Fig.3. I bought from Tandberg a spare pressure roller for the TD20A tape recorder. It has an outer diameter of 25.4 mm and requires a 4 mm shaft. (A steel base plate with the 4 mm steel shaft can also be supplied.) By attaching the roller to an electric drill and carefully applying a fine grade sand paper, the diameter was reduced to 25.2 mm ( 25.1995 mm ). With a small hacksaw blade, three parallel grooves were made to improve contact between tape and roller, especially during fast wind/ rewind. The timing disc in Fig. 4, with five black sectors, was attached directly to the roller. A 4 mm shaft and a small p.c.b. carrying the two optical switches were fastened to a base plate.

The roller has a sintered bronze bush bearing, and even though its friction is higher than that of ball bearings, it has appeared to be sufficiently low, and only light pressure against the tape has been necessary.


Fig. 2. Truth table for UP/DOWN and clock output of Fig.1. circuit

Fig.1. Circuit diagram of the timer.



Fig.3. Clock-to-tape 'interface' mechanism.

Fig.6. One form of counting and display circuit, using

CMOS.

Because different i.r. emitters and detectors have different power outputs and sensitivities, it may be necessary to change the value ( 5 k 6 ) of $\mathrm{R}_{2}$ and $\mathrm{R}_{3}$. The opto switches should be positioned so near each other that one sector of
the timing disc is able to cover both optical paths at the same time. In fact, if discrete emitters and detectors are used, only one i.r. emitter is necessary for the two phototransistors.

The p.c. board shown in Fig. 5 carries all the components except the opto switches and the (optional) 3 -way switch.

The described circuit has been used with two minutes and seconds counters, one with four 4510 cmos b.c.d. counters and four 45117 -segment drivers as in Fig.6, the other being a very simple construction using Intersil's ICM7217C chip shown in Fig. 7. The Intersil device is easy to use and has several optional facilities built in, but it is definitely not cheap, and it may appear to be difficult to find a distributor who has it on stock. The ' 4510 ' counter counts to 9959, while the ICM7217C counts to 5959. (ICM7217 and ICM7217A are decade counters counting to 9999, while ICM7217B (common anode) and ICM7217C (common cathode) are intended for real time counting, counting to 5959.)


Positioning of the two opto switches providing $90^{\circ}$ phase difference

Fig.4. Timing disc.

One 4510 and 4511 i.cs, together with 7 -segment display and their associated components were soldered to their small 'counter module' p.c.board, seen in Fig. 8, the 7 -segment display being attached by the aid of another small board. Four counter modules were then attached to a common bus board. The i.cs containing the gates necessary for correct seconds and minutes counting were also soldered to a separate small p.c.b. but could


Fig.5. Printed-circuit board layout for circuit of Fig.1.


just as well be placed on the bus board, which can easily be made from a piece of Veroboard. The diodes and resistor which provide zero blanking of the $10 \times$ minutes counter can be soldered to the copper side of that module. A few additional components on the bus board provide automatic resetting of the counters at power switch-on.

Standard cmos i.cs can operate at power supply voltages from 3 to 15 (or 12) volts and are very flexible to use and not easy to destroy. If supply voltages other than the 5 V indicated are used, the
current limiting resistors to the displays should be chosen so that power dissipation limits of either the 4511 i.cs or the displays are not exceeded and the p.s.u. is not overloaded.

## References

1. Wireless World, April 1983, p.58: 'A digital tape clock'
2. Wireless World, August 1983, p.49: 'Letters to the editor'.
3. Intersil Data Book, 1981, pp 6-55 to 6-66: 'ICM7217 Series, ICM7227 Series 4 digit c-mos up/down counter/display driv4. R
4. RCA Cos/Mos Integrated Circuits Databook, p.628: 'ICAN-6346: Applications of the RCA-CD4093B COS/MOS Schmitt the RCA

Fig. 7. Alternative to counter of Fig.4, using intersil chip.

Fig.8. Circuit-board layout for CMOS circuit of Fig.7. Four such boards are needed.


## LITERATURE RECEIVED

A new products Update from
Electroplan reflects additions to their ranges of test and measurement equipment. Included are multimeters from Fluke and Avo, a GPIB
Multifunction calibrator from Time, function generators by Wavetek and Wayne Kerr component bridges. Microcomputer equipment is also included with the Hewlett Packard HP-150, data acquisition boards for the IBM PC, and memory expansion cards for the same computer. To these are added communications and interfacing products for
Microcomputers. Electroplan Ltd, POBox 19, Orchard Road, Royston, Herts SG85HH. EWW 250

Not only do Verospeed have a wide range of components, they also supply technical publications and have produced a brochure to prove it. These include the TI Data Books and user guides and the 'Understanding' series from Learning Centre
Publications. Verospeed, Stanstead Road, Boyatt Wood, Eastleigh, Hants SO5 4ZY. EWW 251

For data transmission speeds up to 2400 bit/s the Type 2424 full duplex modem is available from Thom EMI Datatech and is described fully in a brochure. Suitable for two-wire, dialup and leased line applications, the V22-type modem uses a number of microprocessors which enables the inclusion of many 'advanced' features, which include autodialling, an equaliser and a network test system that allows remote testing, even through a multiplexer connection. For telephone lines with poor line quality the modem can automatically reduce its speed to 1200bit/s. Data Communications, Thom EMI Datatech, Spur Road, Feltham, Middlesex. EWW 252

A shortform catalogue has been intoduced by Analog Devices which lists all the products concerned with angular and linear measurement. The catalogue contains enough information to be able to specify a product. In particular it lists the IS60 angular resolver which may be used as an alternative to the absolute shaft encoder. Analog Devices Ltd,

Menory Devices Division, Central Avenue, East Molesey, Surrey KT8 OSN. EWW 253
Copies of the PAL Handbook, from Monolithic Memories, are now available. A comprehensive guide to the use of programmable array logic, the book contains the latest specifications, design concepts and product application together with reprints of articles relating to p.a.l. usage and the testing of p.a.l. circuits. Further information from Microlog Ltd, Elizabeth House, Duke Street, Woking, Surrey GU21 5BA. EWW 254

An extensive range of a.c.-d.c. converters as produced by Gardners who have issued a leaflet describing them. The Dilcon range are in p.c.b.mounting form and significant features include single or dual outputs, minimum e.m.i. low power loss giving efficiencies of up to $70 \%$, regulated and unregulated versions with power ratings up to 1.5 W and physically and electrically interchangable with most rival
imported versions of these British products. Gardners Transformers Ltd, Christchurch, Dorset BH23 3PN. EWW 255

Benchware is the term used by STC to describe their range of production tools and materials which are illustrated in the latest edition of their Benchware Book. Adhesives, heatshrink tubing, cable markers and tapes are included for the first time as are a variety of soldering equipment. Also included is a wide range of batteries. STC Electrical Services, Edinburgh Way, Harlow Essex CM20 2DF. EWW 256

If there is anything measureable in f.m. radio and television equipment then it seems that Rohde and Schwarz has devised an instrument to measure it. A vast range of such equipment is described in a hefty book, Rigs and recipes, which is obtainable from them, Rohde and Schwarz (UK) Ltd, Roebuck Road, Chessington, Surrey KT9 1LP EWW 257



Cad techniques are used in the speedy design of p.c.bs at Circuit Consulants (Norwich) Ltd, Hurricane Way, Norwich NR6 6HU. They have started a 'flexible' system of paying for the designs at different prices depending on the urgency of the job. It is possible to name your own price and then be told when to expect delivery! This is in addition to the company's normal and Superfast services.

EWW 205

## LOW COST ACOUSTIC MODEM



At "half the cost of any other modem available", the Protek 1200 is compatible with any RS232/423 computer and provides a $1200 / 75$ baud link to Prestel or similar viewdata systems and a 1200/1200 baud half-duplex link for computer-to-computer communication. The unit is battery-driven and acoustically couped to the telephone handset. Acoustic coupling has been criticised for being subject to interference from external noise, but the Protek device has been designed to exclude such noise. The retail price for this BT approved modem is $£ 59.95$ inclusive but an additional interface pack is necessary for specific computers. For example, the BBC computer pack for $£ 14.95$ includes a hook-up lead and the software provided on cassette; the Sinclair Spectrum needs an RS232 interface box and the interface pack costs $£ 24.95$. Interfaces are ready for these computers and the Commodore 64 and are being prepared for a wide range of other nome micros including the Amstrad, Oric, Sinclair QL and all MSX computers. Available in the High Street stores the Modem is marketed by Cirkit Holdings plc, Park Lane, Broxbourne, Herts EN 10 7NQ. EWW 206

## CMOS 6502

Pin-compatible with the bi-polar 6502, Rockwell's 65C02 offers several advantages. Its power consumption at 1 MHz is only 20 mW , about $4 \%$ compared with its prodecessor. It has better tolerance to voltage fluctuation and better noise immunity. It can act as a plug-in replacement and use all the same instructions but improvements in internal architecture has allowed the addition of several more instructions. These are principally concerned with zero page addressing and allow indirect addressing and indexing. Zero page memory bits may be set and reset directly rather than through the accumulator. This allows more compact and faster machinecode programming. Versions are available for $1,2,3$ or 4 MHz operation with the suffixes P1 to P4 respectively. So, for example a BBC micro would use an 65C02P2. RCS Microsystems have a special offer to BBC users with the processor and its data sheet along with software to enable the extra instructions to be used in the BBC's assembler, all for $\mathfrak{£} 17.25$ inclusive. They also have details of other members of the 6500 family in c.mos including a PIA and an ACIA, and especially interesting is the advance information on a two-processor chip which can directly address 128 Kbytes of ram.
RCS Microsystems Ltd, 141 Uxbridge Road, Hampton Hill, Middlesex TW12 1BL. EWW 207

## THROWAWAY SOLDER SIPPER

A rugged low-static-potential desoldering tool provides sufficient suck for most requirements including the reworking or removal of staticsensitive mos i.c.s Priced at $£ 3.70$ it is easily replaceable. Circuit Plating Equipment Ltd, Newbury, Berks.
EWW 208

## FLOPPY-DISC CONTROLLER

Filling the gap created by the world-wide shortage of Intel 7282 and NEC uPD765A integrated circuits, Rockwell have produced the R6765-5 double-density floppy disc controller. A direct replacement for the other controllers, it is IBM compatible in both single and double-density formats and is also compatible with a wide range of 8 and 16 -bit microprocessor buses. The 40pin device can control up to four disc drives and offers programmable data record lengths of $128,256,512$, or 1024byte/sector. Pelco (Electronics) Ltd, Spring Gardens, Romford, Essex RM7 9LP. EWW 209

## BUFFERED DELAY LINES

Lumped-constant buffered active delay lines which incorporate Schottky t.t.l. logic elements in the input and output terminals are available from Ashcroft. The modules can be used as t.t.l. elements with a precisely fixed delay time. Any change of delay time due to temperature variations may be compensated by complimentary matching of the delay line and the i.c. Seven types are included in the series, offering delay times from 20 to 250 ns with five tapped outputs available to the user incrementing the delay by 4 to 50 ns with a rise time of 3 or4ns. Significant saving of component count is made by the use of the RHT series of delay lines, making the design of digital circuitry easier and providing highly accurate pulse timing. Ashcroft Components Ltd, 28 Somerford Road, Cirencester, Glos GL17 1TW. EWW 210




## FIBRE-OPTIC TESTING

The photon-counting properties of silicon avalanche photodiodes have been used to produce an optical fibre fault locater. Based on techniques developed by BT, the instrument is claimed to have a sensitivity 10000 greater than conventional test devices. The instrument used optical time-domain reflecrometry and can be used to locate cable damage and also to measure attenuation and splice losses along a fibre. The term photoncounting derives from the fact that the diodes can detect individual light particles (photons) which have energies of only $10^{-21} \mathrm{~W}$. Using this property, Cossor have been able to develop an instrument
impedance and gain (magnitude and phase) at linear or logarithmically spaced intervals. Resistors, capacitors, inductors, transformers, op-amps, bipolar transistors and fets can all be simulated by the program and the a.c. performance of circuits containing any combination of these can be evaluated without the need for breadboarding and bench testing. It is easy to alter the values of components in order to assess the circuit's sensitivity to component
tolerances, stray capacitance etc.

The program is particularly suited for frequency response analysis of filter circuits, audio amplifiers, wideband amplifiers, tuned r.f. amplifiers, linear integrated circuits and the like and has been in use as such for two years by the electronics consultants who designed it. £35 inclusive. Number One Systems, 9A Crown Street, St. Ives, Huntingdon, Cambs PE17 4EB. EWW 211

# CIRCUIT ANALYSIS ON A MICRO 

Versions of the computer program 'Analyser' are available for the Acorn/BBC and the Sinclair ZX Spectrum microcomputers. Analogue circuits with up to 16 nodes and 60 components can be entered into the system to give analyses of input impedance, output

capable of locating defecting cables up to 30 km . away. They hope to be able to use similar techniques in such areas as nuclear instrumentation where
bulky and fragile photomultiplier tubes are used. Cossor Electronics Ltd, The Pinnacles, Elizabeth Way, Harlow, Essex. EWW 212 Reprints of Original'Articles from 'Hi-Fi News'......... \&1 no VAT.

## LINSLEY-HOOD 100-WATT MOSFET

 POWER AMPLIFIERGS 001 2-MOTOR CASSETTE DRIVE. Fully solenoid controll cassette mechanism
sutable tor Hi -Fi or digital use. With a logic control boaro the deck
can be operated by can be operated by
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## DISC DRIVES SHRINK

All the data formerly stored on an 8in floppy disc can now be squeezed onto a 5.25 in disc using a Mitsubishi M4854 disc drive. The unformatted capacity is 1.6 Mbytes, with 77 tracks and a $500 \mathrm{Kbit} / \mathrm{s}$ transfer rate. Track-to-track access time is 3 ms . Recording density is 9621 bit/in, using the high coercivity recording medium available from many sources (see below). Using the drive to replace 8 in versions gives the benefits or reduced cost, size, weight and power while retaining the investment in software and controller designs. Mitsubishi Electric (UK) Ltd, Herford Place, Maple Cross, Rickmansworth, Herts WD3 2BJ. EWW 214


## ...and discs to fit them

Memorex have introduced a 5.25 in disc, intended to be completely compatible with 8 in discs of the same capacity (1.6Mbyte). They offer $60 \%$ more capacity than 5.25 in
format discs. Memorex claim greater data protection for their discs by using continuous seam sealing for their outer covers. Memorex UK Ltd, 96 to 104 Church Street, Staines, Middlesex TW18 4XU.
EWW 215

## MICROPROCESSOR BOARD TESTER

A trouble-shooting instrument is designed to diagnose and locate faults in microprocessor systems. The Antron B2000 simulates the target processor by taking command of the address, data and control buses. The test are performed using the functions programmed into the unit and initiated through the touch-sensitive front-panel keypad.
Fifteen tests with each up to 12 steps can be stored in a non-volatile memory. An alphanumeric display give operator prompts and program use. Faults and results are recorded on the built-in thermal printer. Cards
plugged internally can support Z80, 8085, 6800 or 6502 families of processors and the test features include memory mapping, ram test, rom checksum, bus shorts and i/o tests. The unit can also
disassemble rom programs and decode and print hexadecimal and Ascii characters. Antron Electronics Ltd, Hamilton House, Hamilton House, 39 Kings Road, Haslemere, Surrey GU27 2QA. EWW 216


## SATELLITE BEACON FOR AIR-SEA RESCUE

For use with the Marisat series of satellites, three of which are now in operation. A portable beacon has been developed by Graseby Dynamics in Watford. Designed to be stowed aboard lifecraft and to be included in survival packs for aircrew members, the beacons emit signals automatically in an emergency. They operate on a new distress frequency of 406 MHz and transmit a 5 W , 400 ms burst every 50 seconds. The signal data includes the class of user, country of origin, identity and type of emergency.


The system is designed to work with Sarsat (search and rescue satellite aided tracking), an international system which monitors the whole surface of the world continually for distress signals and can locate the new type of beacon to within 2 to 5 km . Rescue services can be launched within three hours of the transmitted signal, compared with days, under former systems. Graseby Dynamics Ltd, Park Avenue, Bushey, Watford, Herts WD2 2BW. EWW 217


## 16-BIT CONTROLLER

Up to 48 digital or 40 digial and eight analogue inputs, can be accomodated by the Intel MCS96 family of 16 -bit single-chip microcontrollers. Based around the 8096 16-bit processor, $\mathrm{i} / \mathrm{o}$ and peripheral facilities are built into the same silicon substrate. One version (8396) has 8 K of internal rom and eight different configurations are available. The processor instruction set supports bit, byte, word and 32 -bit double-word operations
and with a 12 MHz input frequency, execution time averages 1 to $2 \mu \mathrm{~s}$ for each instruction.
External event recording is provided by four high-speed trigger inputs. Six trigger pulse generators are available to control external events at preset times and four timers can perform simultaneously through the output unit under software control. The devices are equipped with serial ports, an internal watchdog timer and a p.w.m. output signal. MEDL Distribution, East Lane, Wembley, Middlesex HA9 7PP. EWW 218

## AUDIO DAC

A 16-bit monolithic digital-toanalogue converter has been designed for use in professional recording studios and for stereo digital disc playback in the home. The Burr-Brown

PCM53JP-V is fast enough to process both channels of a stereo signal simultaneously and provides 16 -bit resolution with a total harmonic distortion of $0.002 \%$ at full-scale input and $0.02 \%$ at -20 dB , a settling time of $3 \mu$ s and a dynamic range of

96 dB . The low-cost plastics package has had severe environmental tests to reveal a m.t.d.f of about 4.5 years. Burr-brown International, Cassiobury House, Station Road, Watford, Herts WD1 1EA. EWW 219

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sockets are only 5 mm high with contacts of copper-beryllium plated with tin-lead or gold, as required. Dage Eurosem, Rabans Lane, Aylesbury, Bucks HP19 3RG. EWW 220

## TV TUNER CHIP

A single i.c. frequency synthesiser has been designed for tv tuning. The SP5000 from Plessey, used with a varicap tuner, forms a complete p.1.1. tuning system. The circuit consists of a divide-by- 16 counter with its own preamplifier and a 14 -bit programmable divider controlled by a serially-loaded data register. Band selection lines can give four switched output combinations. The frequency/ phase comparator has a reference frequency derived from a 4 MHz crystal using an on-chip oscillator. Only one external transistor is required for varicap line driving. The device can select frequencies from 30 MHz up to 1024 MHz in 62.5 kHz steps. The devices can select frequencies from 30 MHz up to 1024 MHz in 62.5 kHz steps. It is controlled from a four or eight-bit microprocessor which is also used to decode the remote control and keyboard inputs and to drive a two-digit display of the channel selected. Versions of the chip are available for up or downconversion of frequencies to connect tv aerial inputs to cable distribution systems. Plessey Semiconductors Ltd, Cheney Manor, Swindon, Wilts SN2 2QW.

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#### Abstract

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CIRCLE 66 FOR FURTHER DETAILS.
ELECTRONICS \& WIRELESS WORLD NOVEMBER 1984

## TWO CHANNEL OSCILLOSCOPE

Two new dual-channel oscilloscopes come from the Hameg stable. HM204-2 is a 20 MHz instrument and Hm605 can measure up to 60 MHz . Both instruments have sensitivities variable from 1 to $50 \mathrm{mV} / \mathrm{cm}$ and there is a signal delay line to view the trigger edge of a waveform. A variable sweep delay enables the expansion of any section of the waveform and the sweep range is variable in the HM204-2 from 10 ns to $1.25 / \mathrm{cm}$ and in the HM605 from 5 ns to $2.5 \mathrm{~s} / \mathrm{cm}$. Both oscilliscopes have built-in component testers for checking components individually in or out of circuit. 1 kHz and 1 MHz square wave calibration outputs are provided as is $z$ modulation. Levell Electronics Ltd, Moxon Street, Barnet, Herts EN5 5SD EWW 222

## RGB DRIVER FOR COLOURCRT

A250V bipolar i.c. may be used to drive directly the red-greenblue cathodes of a colour tv tube. The TDA 8150 replaces several discrete components while offering an equivalent or better performance. Inside the chip there are three independant video output amplifiers with a circuit to generate the first grid voltage. Each output stage is protected by an internal clamp diode against flashover discharges in the tube and further protection may be provided by the addition of a low cost spark-gap. The circuit is intended for use in sets that have a sequential cut-off system for adjustment and includes a common sensing output. Typically the chroma processor will drive each input in turn during the frame-blanking interval, adjusting the drive level so that the video black level corresponds to the beam cut-off voltage. The TDA8150 conform to CCIR standards and has a typical bandwidth of 5 MHz (80V peak-to-peak). It operates from a 200 V supply ( 250 V maximum) and features a 100 ns rise and fall time. Output voltage swing is at least 180 V peak-to-peak with a 200 V supply. SGS, via C. Olivetti 2,20041 Agrate, Brianza, Italy.EWW 223


## OPTO RELAYS

A range of optically isolated triac drivers, miniature solidstate relays, can drive small a.c. loads directly. The MCP series from General Instrument have the advantage of 'zero-crossing' circuuitry which only allows the
controlled triac to switch on when the a.c. supply crosses the zero voltage point, reducing interference. Internally they use infra-red leds for high stability and rapid response. The devices may be used to power lamps, motors, solenoids etc. as well as to trigger larger triacs for higher power applications. General Instrument (UK) Ltd, Times House, Ruislip, Middlesex HA4 8LE.
EWW 225

## STAND-OFF INSULATORS

To meet a demand for good anchorage and location when multi-point insulator, Jackson Brothers have developed the Type-U Stand-off insulator.It is one of a selection of insulators and terminal strips, all of which are subjected to vigorous quality control and can withstand temperatures from 40 to $100^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$.
Jackson Brother (London) Ltd, Kingway, Waddon, Croydon, Surrey CR9 4DG.
EWW 224

 range of computer peripherals include the Essex analogue board. This can accept up to 16 analogue signals and can measure each with a resolution of 12 -bits. Simple resistor selection at each input allows scaling of the input voltages to take full advantage of the a-to-d converter which reads both positive and negative-going signals. The board also has two analogue output channels and four digital outputs.

Connections are made to screw terminals which can be connected off the board and then simply plugged into it.
Another interface from the same stable is an opto-isolator board which provides the isolation needed in electrically noisy environments. Twelve input and twelve output channels are provided. The v .mos power fets at the output stages are capable of switching 5 to 60 V of 800 mA current while offering over 1 kV of breakdown protection. The isolated digital input circuits will accept 'on' voltages from 2.6 to 40 V thus accommodating a wide range of external supplies. Twopart screw terminals similar to those on the analogue board are used
Both boards are single Eurocard size and are directly compatible with the Essex Tiny Basic computer and its system bus. Essex Electronics Centre, University of Essex, Colchester CO4 3SQ.
EWW 226
unstabilized motor supply voltages of between 10 and 45 V d.c. output currents from 10 mA to 1 A can be selected in steps or varied continuously. Additionally the circuit can operate in step or half-step modes. A built-in time delay ensure that there is never a short circuit in the output stage during a phase shift. Two UC3717s and a few passive components form a complete control and drive system for a microprocessor-controlled stepper motor system. Unitrode (UK) Ltd, 6 Cresswell Park, Blackheath, London SE3 9RD. EWW 227

## RADIO MODEM

A u.h.f. pair of a transmitter and a receiver with a modulator and a demodulator respectively constitute the Micro-Tel system. It can receive and transmit data at any rate up to 1200 baud at a line-of sight distance of up to 10 km . Further distances are possible if used on high buildings or from aircraft. The transmitter, powered from 12 V d.c. can accept serial input from t.t.1. level or +12 V (RS232) or anything in between. Inside the transmitter, the received signal is used to generate two audio sinwaves

## STEPPER MOTOR CONTROL

A monolithic i.c. can control a wide range of bi-polar stepper motors. The UC3717 from Unitrode is all that is needed between a control computer and the motor being controlled. The circuit is provided with a t.t.1.compatible input, a current sensor and an output stage with built in Schottky protection diodes. The device provides a constant current chopped drive which achieves high efficiency and performance with
supplied with each unit and are suitable for most application although an external aerial can be used. The transmitted power is restricted to the maximum allowed in the U.K, 0.5 W although 3 or 10 W power boosters are available on export models. The units may, of course be used to transmit computer data, but the makers see the units to be of most use in the remote monitoring of instruments used in telemetry and surverying, and in unmanned weather stations. Measurement Devices Ltd, Bennico Centre, 23 Commerce Street, Aberdeen AB2 1BE EWW 228

# DAWSBURY 

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to 1000 Hz . The POCOMTOR AFR 2000 is to 1000 Hz . The POCOMTOR AFR-2000 is the firsi RTTY reception device on the consume area that fully automatically deternines the received baud rate and synchronizes thereon, without being way. It is now only required to call up the automatique routine and aftel a shor time for the signal reception of about 10 to 15 seconds the synchronization is reached and the text can be written.
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| FAST 7 | 74 HC 253 N 1.03 | 74LS221 | 1.08 | 4034 | 1.00 | 4081 | 0.40 |
|  | 74 HC 257 N 1.03 | 74LS240 | 1.40 | 4035 | 0.54 | 4082 | 0.25 |
| 74FOOPC 0.60 | 74HC266N0.92 | 74LS241 | 1.40 | 4040 | 0.65 | 4085 | 0.66 |
| 74FO4PC 0.60 | 74 HC 273 N 2.24 | 7415242 | 1.36 | 4041 | 0.36 | 4086 | 0.40 |
| 74F08PC 0.65 | 74 HC 27 N 0.80 | 74LS243 | 1.36 | 4042 | 0.76 | 4093 | 0.32 |
| 74F109PC 0.65 | 74 HC 280 N 3.26 | 74LS244 | 1.40 | 4043 | 0.64 | 4099 | 0.50 |
| 74F11PC 0.527 | $74 \mathrm{HC} 32 \quad 0.40$ | 74LS245 | 1.95 | 4044 | 0.62 | 4502 | 0.86 |
| 74F138PC 0.52 | 74 HC 373 Ni 2.40 | 74LS248 | 1.16 | 4045 | 2.00 | 4507 | 0.47 |
| 74F138PC 1.26 | 74 HC 374 N 2.40 | 74LS249 | 1.16 | 4046 | 0.77 | 4508 | 0.96 |
| 74F1 39PC 1.26 | 74HC 393N 1.78 | 74LS251 | 0.78 | 4047 | 0.50 | 4510 | 0.68 |
| 74 F 151 | 74 HC 40020.64 | 74L5253 | 0.78 | 4048 | 0.40 | 4511 | 0.69 |
| 74 F 1531.26 | 74 HC 40171.16 | 7445257 | 0.78 | 4049 | 0.50 | 4512 | 0.40 |
| 7451571.30 | 74 HC 40201.46 | 74LS258 | 0.78 | 4050 | 0.49 | 4514 | 1.76 |
| 7451581.17 | 74 HC 40241.20 | 7415259 | 1.77 | 4051 | 0.52 | 4515 | 1.84 |
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| 74F175 1.82 | 74 HC 40750.64 | 74LS266 | 0.35 | 4054 | 1.30 | 4519 | 0.25 |
| $74 \mathrm{~F} 181 \quad 3.90$ | $74 \mathrm{HC} 42 \mathrm{~N} \quad 0.90$ | $74 \mathrm{LS27}$ | 0.25 | 4055 | 0.72 | 4520 | 0.96 |
| $745189 \quad 5.10$ | 74 HC 45112.51 | 74L5273 | 1.35 | 4060 | 0.68 | 4521 | 1.32 |
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| $745191 \quad 3.20$ | 74 HC 45382.36 | 74LS28 | 0.25 | 4066 | 0.50 | 4526 | 0.52 |
| 745194 ll | 74 HC 45433.04 | 74L5283 | 1.00 | 4068 | -0.25 | 4527 | 0.52 |
| 74F20PC 0.52 | $74 \mathrm{HCS} 1 \mathrm{~N} \quad 0.64$ | 74L5290 | 0.86 | 4069 | 0.40 | 4528 | 0.48 |
| $74 \mathrm{~F} 240 \quad 3.16$ | $74 \mathrm{HC533N} 2.40$ | 74L5293 | 0.86 | 4070 | 0.40 | 4532 | 0.68 |
| $74 \mathrm{~F} 241 \quad 2.42$ | 74 HC 534 N 2.40 | 74L530 | 0.25 | 4071 | 0.40 | 4541 | 0.82 |
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| $747244 \quad 2.96$ | $74 \mathrm{HC58N} 0.64$ | 74L533 | 0.30 | 4073 | 0.40 | 4553 | 2.40 |
| $74 F 2456.08$ | 74HC595N 1.84 | 74L5365 | 0.55 | 4075 | 0.46 | 4555 | 0.48 |
| $74 F 2511.26$ | 74HC597N 1.72 | 74LS366 | 0.55 | 4076 | 0.48 | 4556 | 0.44 |
| 7472531.26 | T4HC73N 0.84 | 7415367 | 0.55 | 4077 | 0.40 | 4585 | 0.48 |
| 74 F 2571.26 | $74 \mathrm{HC} 74 \mathrm{~N} \quad 0.84$ | 7415368 | 0.55 |  |  |  |  |
| 74 F 2581.34 | $74 \mathrm{HC} 75 \mathrm{~N} \quad 0.92$ | $74 \leq 537$ | 0.25 | CRYSTALS |  |  |  |
| 74 F 28001.74 | $74 \mathrm{HC} 76 \mathrm{~N} \quad 0.64$ | 74.5373 | 1.50 |  | 1 MHz |  | 4.50 |
| $745283-1.74$ | 74 HC 85 N 2.02 | $74 L 5374$ | 1.50 | A11 |  |  | 4.00 |
| $74 \mathrm{F32PC} 0.52$ | $74 \mathrm{HC} 86 \mathrm{~N} \quad 0.80$ | 74.5375 | 0.75 | A1 |  | 32 MHz | 3.50 |
| $\begin{array}{ll}744352 & 1.26 \\ 744353 & 1.26\end{array}$ | P4HCU04N 0.80 | 74.5377 | 1.50 | Al16A | 2.457 | 76 MHz | 2.00 |
| $\begin{array}{ll}744353 & 1.26\end{array}$ |  | 74.5378 | 1.22 | A120B | 4 MHz |  | 1.25 |
| 744373 | TL | 74.5379 | 1.50 | A132A | 6 MHz |  | 1.70 |
| 745374 | 74LS00 0.25 | 74L538 | 0.25 | A140A | 8 MHz |  | 1.25 |
| 7443791.83 | 74LSO1 0.25 | 74.5386 | 0.50 | A169A | 3.686 | 64 MHz | 2.00 |
| $74 F 381 \quad 6.62$ | $74 \mathrm{LS02} 00.25$ | 74.5390 | 1.10 | A173A | 9.830 | 9MHz | 2.75 |
| 74F382 4.4 .22 | 74 LSO 30.25 | 7415393 | 1.10 | A182A | 19.66 | 608 MHz | 2.50 |
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| $74 F 538$  <br> 745539 4.38 | $\left\|\begin{array}{ll} 74 L S 109 & 0.54 \\ 74 L 511 & 0.25 \end{array}\right\|$ | 74.554 | 0.25 | 07071602 | 16 | $\begin{array}{ll} 1 N & 0.09 \\ \hline N \end{array}$ | 0.07 0.10 |
| $74 F 539$ 4.38 <br> $74 F 64 P C$  <br> 0.52  | 74L5112 0.54 | $74 \mathrm{LS55}$ | 0.25 | 07071802 | 18 | $\begin{array}{ll} \text { N } & 0.15 \\ \hline \end{array}$ | 0.10 0.14 |
| $\begin{array}{ll}74 F 64 P C & 0.52 \\ 74574 P C & 0.58\end{array}$ | 74L5113 0.54 | 74L5670 | 2.30 | 07072002 07072202 | 22 Pl | $\begin{array}{ll}\text { N } & 0.19 \\ \text { PN }\end{array}$ | 0.14 0.15 |
| $\begin{array}{ll}74 F 74 P C & 0.58 \\ 74786 P C & 0.77\end{array}$ | 74LS114 0.44 | 74L573 | 0.30 0.35 | 07072202 07072402 | 22 Pl | $\begin{array}{ll} \mathbb{N} & 0.21 \\ \operatorname{IN} & 0.21 \end{array}$ | 0.15 0.16 |
| 74F86PC 0.77 | 74LS12 0.25 | 741574 | 0.35 | 07072402 | 28 Pl | $\begin{array}{ll} \text { IN } & 0.24 \\ \text { IN } & 0.26 \end{array}$ | 0.16 0.17 |
| HIGH | 74L5122 0.75 | 74LS75 | 0.50 0.35 | 07074002 | 40 PI | PIN 0.29 | 0.18 |
| SPEED | $\begin{array}{lll}74 L 5123 & 0.95 \\ 74 L 5124 & 2.30\end{array}$ | 741578 | 0.35 | SKTS GOLD |  |  |  |
| SPEED | 74.5124 | 74L583 | 0.90 |  |  |  |  |
| C |  | 74L585 | 1.16 | 06060802 | 8 P1 |  | 0.16 |
|  | $74 L S 126$ <br> 74513 0.49 | 74L586 | 0.42 | 06051402 | 14 PI |  | 0.20 |
| $\left\|\begin{array}{ll} 74 \mathrm{HCOON} & 0.42 \\ 74 \mathrm{HCOON} & 0.42 \end{array}\right\|$ |  | 74L590 | 0.66 | 06061602 | 16 PI |  | 0.21 |
| $\left\|\begin{array}{ll} 74 \mathrm{HCO2N} & 0.42 \\ 74 \mathrm{HCO} \mathrm{~N} & 0.64 \end{array}\right\|$ |  | 74L591 | 1.30 | 06061802 | 18 PI |  | 0.22 |
| 74 HCO 2 N 0.64 $\|74 \mathrm{HCO4N} \quad 0.44\|$ | $\begin{array}{lll}74 L S 136 & 0.46 \\ 745138 & 0.77\end{array}$ | 74.592 | 0.66 | 06062002 | 20 PiN |  | 0.28 |
| $74 \mathrm{HCO8N} \quad 0.42$ | 74LS139 0.77 | 74.593 | 0.66 | 06062202 | 22 PI |  | 0.32 |
| 74 HC 107 N 0.78 | 74LS14 0.80 | 74L59 | 0.77 | 06062402 | 24 Pl |  | 0.42 |
| 74 HC 109 N 0.50 | 74451451.23 | CM |  | $\begin{array}{ll}06064002 ~ 40 ~ P I N ~ & 0.66\end{array}$ |  |  |  |
| $74 \mathrm{HC10N} \quad 0.64$ | 47451481.50 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 74HC112N 0.86 | 74LS15 0.25 | 4000 Series |  | DIL SKTS W/WRAP |  |  |  |
| $74 \mathrm{HC1} 13 \mathrm{~N} 0.86$ | 74LS151 1.10 | 4000 | 0.25 |  |  |  |  |
| 74 HC 132 N 1.28 | 7445153 1.10 | 4001 | 0.52 | TURNED PIN |  |  |  |
| 74 HC 137 N 1.81 | 74LS155 0.77 | 4002 | 0.25 | 9090802 | P |  |  |
| $74 \mathrm{HC138N} 1.20$ | 7415156 | 4006 | 0.90 | 9091402 | 14 P |  | 0.36 0.75 |
| $74 \mathrm{HC139N} 0.78$ | 8 74LS157 0.62 | 4007 | 0.25 | 9091602 | 16 P |  | 0.8 |
| $74 \mathrm{HC151N} 1.16$ | 674151580.62 | 4008 | 0.92 | 9091802 | 18 P |  | 0.90 |
| $74 \mathrm{HC153N} 0.90$ | 074151600.80 | 4009 | 0.25 | 9092002 | 20 PIN |  | 1.08 |
| $74 \mathrm{HC157N} 1.02$ | 274551610080 | 4010 | 0.25 | 9092202 | 22 PIN |  | 1.18 |
| 74 HC 158 N 1.02 | 274551620.80 | 4011 | 0.30 | 9092402 | 24 P |  | 1.28 |
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| 74 HC 162 N 1.51 | $174 L 516511.30$ | 4014 | 0.50 | 9034002 |  |  | $1 . \%$ |
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| 74 HC 164 N 0.95 | 74LS173 1.13 | 4016 | 0.46 |  |  |  |  |
| 74 HC 165 N 2.24 | 4 74LS174 1.30 | 4017 | 0.63 | OB082402 $24 \mathrm{PIN} \quad 5.70$ |  |  |  |
| 74 HC 173 N 1.35 | $574 L 517500.96$ | 4018 | 0.46 | 0808280228 PIN 6.90 |  |  |  |
| 74 HC 174 N 0.80 | 74LS181 2.09 | 4019 | 0.39 | $0808400240 \mathrm{PIN} \quad 8.25$ |  |  |  |
| 74 HC 175 N 0.78 | 87451900.98 | 4020 | 0.45 |  |  |  |  |
| 74 HC 194 N 1.28 | $874 L 51910.75$ | 4021 | 0.56 |  |  |  |  |
| 74 HC 195 N 1.28 | 874451921.10 | 4022 | 0.42 |  |  |  |  |
| $74 \mathrm{HC} 20 \mathrm{~N} \quad 0.40$ | 74LS193 1.10 | 4023 | 0.34 |  |  |  |  |
| 74 HC 237 N 1.80 | $074 L 51940.78$ | 4024 | 0.66 |  |  |  |  |
| 74 HC 240 N 1.38 | $874 L 51950.78$ | 4025 | 0.25 |  |  |  |  |
| 74 HC 241 N ! 1.34 | $474 L 519611.10$ | 4026 | 0.74 |  |  |  |  |
| 74 HC 242 N 2.24 | $474 L 51971.10$ | 4027 | 0.52 |  |  |  |  |
| 74 HC 243 N 2.24 | 474 LS20 0.25 | 4028 | 0.34 |  |  |  |  |
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## components



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| :---: | :---: | :---: |
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| CON101 | Phono plug to BNC plug (2M) |  |
| CON102 | BNC piug to BNC plug (2M) |  |
| CONiO7 | 6 pin DIN to open end (1M) |  |
| CON108 | 6 pin DIN to 6 Pin DIN (1M) | BBC |
| CON160 | DIN plug to 2 phono plugs | Dragon |

## Cassette recorder cables

CON109
CON110
CON191
CON118
CON117

| 7 pin DIN to open end |  |
| :--- | :--- |
| 7 pin DiN to $2 \times 3.5 \mathrm{~mm}+1 \times 2.5 \mathrm{~mm}$ J/plug | BBC |
| 7 pin DIN to 5 pin DIN $+2.5 \mathrm{~mm} \mathrm{~J} /$ plug | BBC |
| 5 pin DIN to $2 \times 35 \mathrm{~mm} / /$ plugs | BBC |
| 5 pin DIN to $2 \times 3.5 \mathrm{~mm}+1 \times 25 \mathrm{~mm}$ J/plug | Spectrum $/ 2 X$ |

Parallel printer cables

| CON130 | 36 |
| :--- | :--- |
| CON131 | 36 |
| CON132 | 36 |
| CON133 | 36 |
| CON144 | 36 |
| CON145 | 36 |
| CON134 | 36 |
| CON135 | 36 |
| CON142 | 36 |
| CON139 | 36 |
| CON140 | 36 |
| CON14 | 36 |
| CON143 | 36 |

RS232 Cable
CON106 CON
CON 1
CON
CON
CON
CO
CON1
CON1
CON127

| 36 way plug to 36 way piug (2M) | Sirius/Apricot | 18.00 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 36 way plug to 36 way plug (5M) | Sirius/Apricot | 26.50 |
| 36 way plug to 36 way socket (2M) |  | 18.00 |
| 36 way plug to 36 way socket ( 5 M ) |  | 26.50 |
| 36 way plug to 25 way maie D type (2M) | \|BM/TIPC | 19.00 |
| 36 way plug to 25 way male D type (5M) | IBM/TIPC | 27.50 |
| 36 way plug to 25 way male D type (2M) | RML/Apple | 19.00 |
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| and 20 jumpered as required) 2 M |  | 15.95 |
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For further details please write to the address given below. As our careful selection process takes some time, it would be particularly helpful if you could detail your qualifications, your personal fields of interest and practical experience, and describe the type of of working environment most suited to your career plans.

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