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APRIL 1982 85p

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24 Page Supplement Inside

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THE FIRST WORDS AND THE LAST WORD IN ELECTRONIC KITS — SEE OUTSIDE BACK COVER OF THIS ISSUE!

Powertran's black boxes are packed with punch. Not only are they superb kits to buy and build they really do the job! Imaginative and ingenious design goes hand in hand with top quality materials and outstanding performance capability. With their smart black styling the kits harmonise visually as well as musically.
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MPA 200 is a low price, high power 100W amplifier. Its smart styling, professional appearance and performance, make it one of our most popular designs. With adaptable inputs the mixer accepts a variety of sources yet straightforward construction makes it ideal for the first-time builder.

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ETI VOCODER — 14 channels, each with independent level control, for maximum versatility and intelligibility. Two input amplifiers — for speech/excitation — each with level control and tone control. The Vocoder is a powerful yet flexible machine that is interesting to build and thanks to our easy to follow construction manual, is within the capability of most enthusiasts.

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- **Component Packs** — Most kits are available as separate packs (e.g. PCB component sets, hardware sets etc). Prices in our FREE catalogue.
- **Ordering** — Full ordering details, delivery service, and sales counter opening — outside back of this issue.

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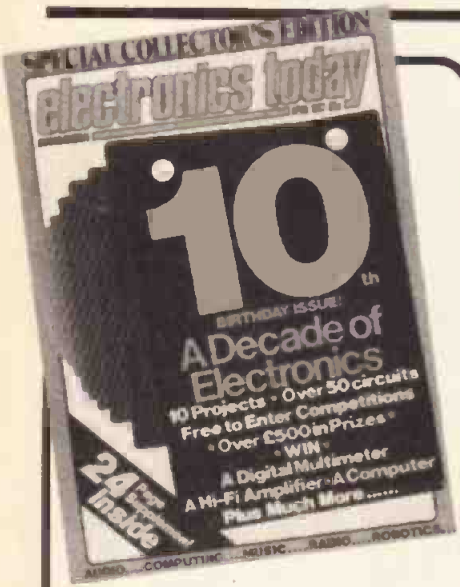

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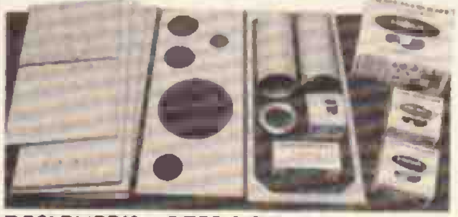

PROJECTS

INFORMATION

SWITCHES

TOGGLE 2A 250V

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DIL SWITCHES

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ROTARY SWITCHES

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VEROBOARD

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PROTO DECS

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PLUGS & SOCKETS

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PANEL METERS

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RELAYS

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COPPER CLAD BOARDS

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CONNECTORS

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CRYSTALS

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DIL PLUGS

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JUMPER LEADS

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AMPHENOL PLUGS

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ZERO INSERTION FORCE DIL SOCKETS

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Sinclair ZX81 Personal Comp the heart of a system that grows with you.

1980 saw a genuine breakthrough – the Sinclair ZX80, world's first complete personal computer for under £100. Not surprisingly, over 50,000 were sold.

In March 1981, the Sinclair lead increased dramatically. For just £69.95 the Sinclair ZX81 offers even more advanced facilities at an even lower price. Initially, even we were surprised by the demand – over 50,000 in the first 3 months!

Today, the Sinclair ZX81 is the heart of a computer system. You can add 16-times more memory with the ZX RAM pack. The ZX Printer offers an unbeatable combination of performance and price. And the ZX Software library is growing every day.

Lower price: higher capability
With the ZX81, it's still very simple to teach yourself computing, but the ZX81 packs even greater working capability than the ZX80.

It uses the same micro-processor, but incorporates a new, more powerful 8K BASIC ROM – the 'trained intelligence' of the computer. This chip works in decimals, handles logs and trig, allows you to plot graphs, and builds up animated displays.

And the ZX81 incorporates other operation refinements – the facility to load and save named programs on cassette, for example, and to drive the new ZX Printer.

New BASIC manual

Every ZX81 comes with a comprehensive, specially written manual – a complete course in BASIC programming, from first principles to complex programs.

Kit: £49.95

Higher specification, lower price – how's it done?
Quite simply, by design. The ZX80 reduced the chips in a working computer from 40 or so, to 21. The ZX81 reduces the 21 to 4!

The secret lies in a totally new master chip. Designed by Sinclair and custom-built in Britain, this unique chip replaces 18 chips from the ZX80.

New, improved specification

- Z80A micro-processor – new faster version of the famous Z80 chip, widely recognised as the best ever made.
- Unique 'one-touch' key word entry: the ZX81 eliminates a great deal of tiresome typing. Key words (RUN, LIST, PRINT, etc.) have their own single-key entry.
- Unique syntax-check and report codes identify programming errors immediately.
- Full range of mathematical and scientific functions accurate to eight decimal places.
- Graph-drawing and animated-display facilities.
- Multi-dimensional string and numerical arrays.
- Up to 26 FOR/NEXT loops.
- Randomise function – useful for games as well as serious applications.
- Cassette LOAD and SAVE with named programs.
- 1K-byte RAM expandable to 16K bytes with Sinclair RAM pack.
- Able to drive the new Sinclair printer.
- Advanced 4-chip design: microprocessor, ROM, RAM, plus master chip – unique, custom-built chip replacing 18 ZX80 chips.

Built: £69.95

Kit or built – it's up to you!
You'll be surprised how easy the ZX81 kit is to build: just four chips to assemble (plus, of course the other discrete components) – a few hours' work with a fine-tipped soldering iron. And you may already have a suitable mains adaptor – 600 mA at 9 V DC nominal unregulated (supplied with built version).

Kit and built versions come complete with all leads to connect to your TV (colour or black and white) and cassette recorder.


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DIGEST

ETI PRICE DECREASE

Readers will have no doubt noticed (painfully!) the cover price increase on this issue of ETI. We apologise for this, but are happy to say it is ONLY FOR THIS ISSUE and the price returns to 75p with the May issue.

The one-month jump was made necessary by the sheer size of this special issue. We hope you will agree it is worth it. If you could see the price of paper these days...(moan, moan).

Thank you for sticking with us through thick and thin... (and 10p!)

Tempus Fugit

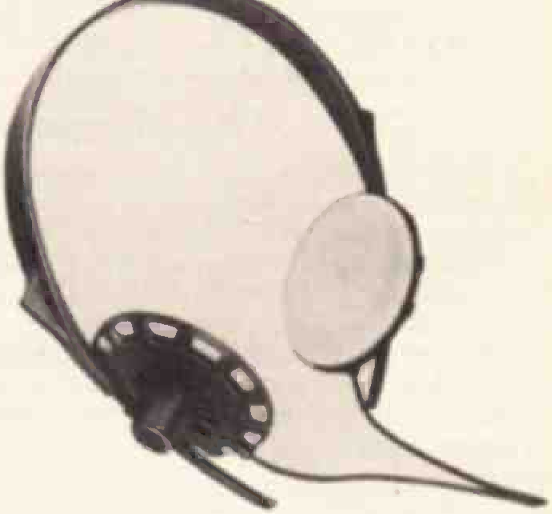
It's felt a little uncomfortable working in the ETI office this month; must be something to do with the sackcloth and ashes we're wearing. During the last few issues several of our reviews have featured Casio products, but we have consistently failed to credit the company which lent us the review models. The kindly folk in question are Tempus of 38 Burleigh Street, Cambridge CB1 1DG and we'd like to thank them for all the help they've been giving us. Tempus are leading Casio specialists and if there's something from Casio you're having problems obtaining, they will doubtless be as nice to customers as they are to us.

Sun-Day Driving

A Volkswagon Dasher car is presently being tested carrying a roof-rack of AEG-Telefunken solar modules which convert solar energy directly into electric current. The small 160 W 'solar power plant' of the test car complements the dynamo and charges the battery. This means that fuel consumption can be reduced by approximately five percent. As yet the cost of manufacturing these solar panels makes them uneconomical to use, but with the rising prices of fuel, it is foreseeable that low-priced solar generators will enter the market. Not only that, future car generations will make increased use of electricity, for example with automatic start-stop devices and pollution-free electrical energy for air conditioning in cars in warm countries. Great idea — but where will you put the luggage!

Tweeters That Go Cheap

Well, not just the tweeters, in fact. Mullard have a 40 W speaker system consisting of an 8" woofer as well as a high-power textile dome tweeter. They form part of a new low-price, two-way, self-build audio' kit (whew!) being marketed by BK Electronics. The BK Electronics crossover unit have been combined with spring-loaded terminals and recessed mounting panel. The complete system, when built into the 23 litre enclosure, is capable of handling 40 W comfortably. All this for the small outlay of £13.90 plus VAT and £1.50 carriage per kit! Get yours now from BK Electronics Ltd, 37 Whitehouse Meadows, Eastwood, Leigh-On-Sea, Essex SS9 5TY.



Heading For The Top

Headphones seem to be getting lighter and smaller these days, so Sennheiser, that well-known manufacturer of headphones, has decided to launch a pair of their own lightweight 'phones. The new model HD40 is soon to be released in the UK and weighs only 60 grammes with extremely light contact pressure. They can be supplied with either a three or seven metre lead, the seven metre variety incorporating a volume control in the lead so that you don't have to march all that way back to the amp if it's too loud. Another feature is that each ear-piece can be revolved on the headband by 90 degrees if you have a funny shaped head or if you want to store them compactly (!). The Sennheiser HD40 will be launched in the UK with a suggested selling price, including VAT, of £16.55. For those of you interested in technical specs: frequency response is 22 to 18,000 Hz, impedance is 600 ohms, characteristic SPL is 90 dB and distortion factor < 1.2%.

Electroware, OK?

OK Machine and Tool (UK) Ltd have launched a new division aimed at providing the electronics user with a really wide range of electronic hardware. All the products in the range will be available to everyone involved in building electronic equipment — that includes engineers, students, teaching staff, laboratory technicians and, not least, the hobbyist. The 40-page catalogue contains various products selected from OK's bench tool range — plus some new items — and includes soldering irons, wire-wrapping kits, IC tools, PCBs, cases, enclosures, connectors, sockets and test instruments to name just a few. Electroware is distributed throughout the UK by leading electronic and computer stores. Catalogues are free, but send 30p for postage and packing. If you want any further information or one of their catalogues contact OK Machine & Tool (UK) Ltd, Dutton Lane, Eastleigh, Hants SO5 4AA.

Lack of ZX81 memory giving you headaches..?

The Memotech 64K Memopak

The growth of interest in computer use caused by the introduction of the Sinclair ZX81 has made new and exciting demands on the ingenuity of electronic engineers. At Memotech we have focused our attention on the design of an inexpensive, reliable memory extension.

The Memopak is a 64K RAM pack which extends the memory of the ZX81 by a further 56K. Following the success of our 48K memory board the new memory extension is designed to be within the price range expected by Sinclair users. It plugs directly into the back of the ZX81 and does not inhibit the use of the printer or other add-on boards. There is no need for an additional power supply or for leads.

The Memopak together with the ZX81 gives a full 64K, which is neither switched nor paged, and is directly addressable. The unit is user transparent and accepts such basic commands as 10 DIM A(9000)

0-8K ...Sinclair ROM
8-16K...Memopak memory which can switch in or out in 4K blocks to leave space for memory mapping.
12-16K...Memopak memory which holds its contents during cassette loads and allows communication between programmes.
16-32K...This area can be used for basic programmes and assembly language routines.
32-64K...32K of RAM memory for basic variables and large arrays.

64K-£79

With the Memopak extension the ZX81 is transformed into a powerful computer, suitable for business, leisure and educational use, at a fraction of the cost of comparable systems.

MEMOTECH

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Tel · 722102/3/4/5

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NAME

ADDRESS

ETI

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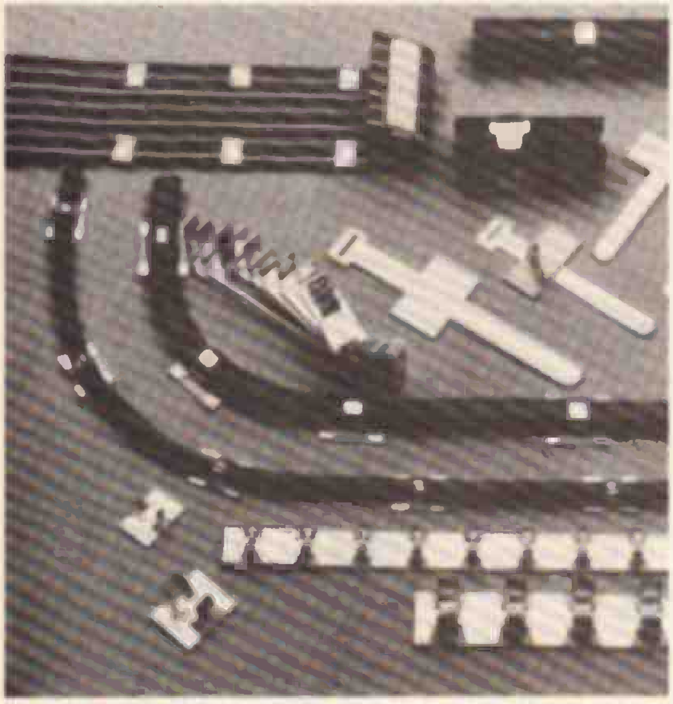
To: Memotech Ltd., 3 Collins Street, Oxford, OX4 1XL Telephone (0865) 722102

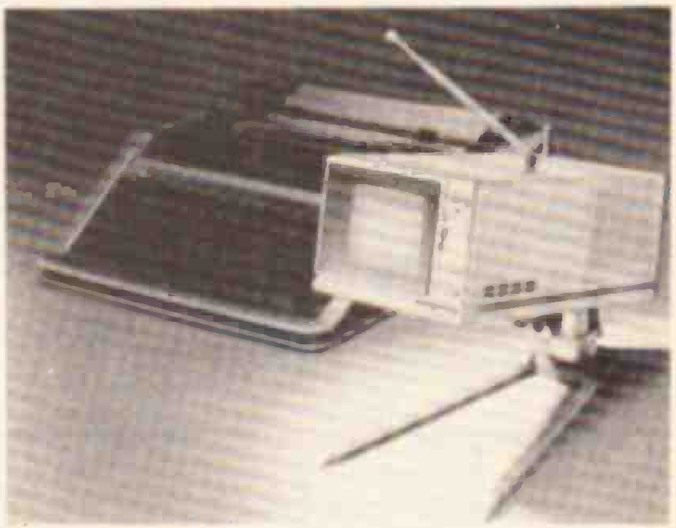
High-res Printing

New from Hi-Tek is the Facit 4542, a high-speed, high-resolution printer which combines a new type of 'Fleshammer' print-head with advanced microprocessor control to make it equally suited to text printing, label or bar code production, and graphics output. Using 260-character-per-second bidirectional two-colour printing and a 14 x 9 dot-matrix format, the 4542 can produce a virtually unlimited range of characters as well as different grey scales in graphics applications. In normal text-printing applications, the 4542 features proportional spacing, justified right-hand margin and an extensive set of up to 512 characters in 11 national repertoirs with red/black, elongated and underlining facilities. For label printing, a variable-size option is available which allows characters or bar codes to be generated in 95 different sizes from 2.52 mm up to 240 mm. Selection of size and position is easily controlled by software commands. In the graphics mode, scanning, semi-graphics and 10 levels of grey/red scale are available to illustrate reports with histograms, curves and diagrams, as well as generating half-tone illustrations in applications such as tomography, process monitoring and computer-aided design. The key to the versatility of the 4542 is the print-head, which consists of a set of nine stored-force flexible metal hammers mounted directly on a magnet armature. No adjustment or lubrication is necessary, wear is minimal, and a 'floating' mount means that the correct paper/print-head distance is always maintained irrespective of the paper thickness or number of copies. Further information is available from Hi-Tek Distribution Limited, Trafalgar Way, Bar Hill, Cambridge, CB3 8SQ.



Small And Beautiful

Hailed as 'the World's Smallest, Lightest and Lowest Power Consumption' television, the TH3-W3V from Matsushita certainly caught our editorial eye. Closer inspection revealed a colour TV set with a 3" colour picture tube, only 115 mm x 86 mm x 323.5 mm in size and 1.5 kg in weight. Power consumption is a mere 9.5 W and it operates on AC power, car batteries and on optionally available rechargeable batteries. Yet, despite its small size, it is equipped with video input/output terminals and operates as a colour monitor and a video tuner when connected to a video camera and a portable VTR, respectively. This 3" colour TV was launched on to the Japanese market in mid-December 1981 at the approximate price of £200. It is due for launch in the US in June this year and, hopefully, will be seen in this country shortly after. Further details will be supplied by National Panasonic (UK) Ltd, 300/313 Bath Road, Slough SL1 6JB.



Sticky Clips

Brandauer adhesive cable clips from Stotron provide an inexpensive method of fixing round or ribbon cables to clean, dry surfaces. The range can handle round cables from just a few millimeters up to 19 mm and flat ribbon cables from 13 mm to 75 mm can be accommodated by a selection of clips with widths in stages of 6 mm. The adhesive is instant acting and polyethylene pads provide high levels of insulation, where necessary. Further information is available from Stotron Ltd, Unit 1, Haywood Way, Ivyhouse Lane, Hastings, East Sussex.

Video Victory

Thorn EMI have just announced that agreements have been signed with Telefunken and JVC to form a holding company for the manufacture of video consumer electronics products in Europe. Thomson-Brandt was originally intended as a fourth partner, but this was not possible. However, the three other parties hope an opportunity will arise for Thomson-Brandt to join the venture.

Products manufactured by the joint venture will include VHS video cassette recorders, VHD video disc players and video cameras.

BT Bill Beater

Following the success of the Telcost TNA25 from the Ansafone Corporation, it was decided that a single line unit should be manufactured. The new machine offers a range of functions which are all designed to save money by monitoring telephone use. Ansafone's single line Telcost 1 has features including a 24-hour clock display, which instantly shows the cost of a call as soon as a user is connected with a number dialled. The unit also has a built-in printer which records details of the call including cost and number dialled. It also prints out the date, time, machine identification number and the duration of the call. Telcost 1 has a built-in memory which retains information even if the machine is disconnected from a power source. It also gives a special security midnight printout each night which frustrates any attempts to conceal the day's telephone costs by the destruction of the daily printout sheet. The machine is virtually tamper-proof as the printout will indicate if it has been disconnected from the line at any time or if any information parameters have been changed. The machine has provision for it to be reprogrammed at any time to enable the user to keep in line with British Telecom unit rate charges and the date, time and identification number can be changed for any reason if the machine is moved to a new location. This desk-top unit is no bigger than a telephone and for an investment of around £249 could help to cut out the abuse of telephones in both large and small companies.

Rapid Electronics

Tel: 0322 863494
Hillcroft House
Station Road
Eynsford, Kent DA4 0EJ

LINEAR

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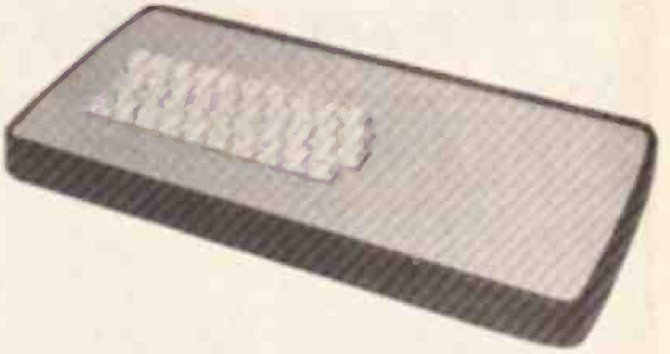
Grabbed By The Dooleys

Those tireless chappies down at Casio have taken time off from disguising BASIC computers and arcade games as pocket calculators and watches, and have turned their attention to the music scene. Although there is undoubtedly a market for top-flight organs and synthesisers amongst home musicians, many people will prefer something more modest — for financial reasons, because the living room is too small or because they can't figure out what all the knobs do. At the other end of the scale (sorry), the type of hand-held organ made notorious by Rolf Harris is a little too limiting. With the Casiotone 701, Casio have not just produced a solution to this problem but a radically new type of instrument.

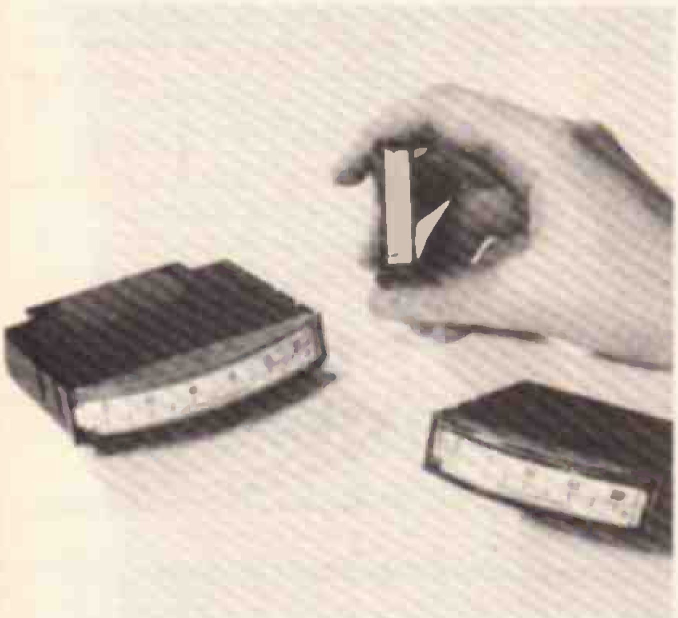
The CT-701 is not just a 61-key polyphonic (eight voice) mini-synthesiser, but also contains an on-board computer that acts as a built-in sequencer; among other things. You can play along with the built-in rhythm unit, store your own music in memory and play it back automatically, or just load the machine with a Casio music score and let it get on with things by itself. The latter function is quite extraordinary — Casio supply the music scores as bar codes and you read them into the machine using a light pen (like those at supermarket check-out desks). In melody guide mode you can even teach yourself to play the instrument, as LEDs above each key light up to tell you which note to play next.

Twenty preset sounds are available, such as pipe organ, flute, piano, oboe, bassoon etc, plus the synthesised drum sounds of the rhythm unit and the 'pneooum' sound so beloved by producers of disco records. Opinions of the preset sound quality vary from "beautiful" (Casio) through "very good" (an independent reviewer) to "too sharply filtered" (another independent reviewer). Since they can't agree and we haven't heard it (though, we're trying hard to get our mucky paws on one), you'll have to listen to one yourself before parting with any cash, but professional musicians seem to like it — the Dooleys use Casiotone mini-keyboards in their stage shows (fellow headbangers may not see this as a compliment). With so much packed into such a compact case (only slightly larger than the actual keyboard) and such a low price (about £500), Casio would certainly seem to have done it again.



ZX Revamp

For those of you who are serious ZX-81 owners (is there such an animal?) or would simply like to disguise the machine, there is a professional standard keyboard and enclosure now available from Protos Computer Systems. The keyboard is the first of a range of peripherals to make the computer suitable for more heavy-duty use. The 40-key Sinclair coded board uses top quality mechanical contact type key switches with relegendable tops. A steel mounting board holds the keys firmly in position and a high quality printed circuit board completes the board's electrical circuit. Connection to the Sinclair board is made by a flexible connector which is a push fit to the sockets provided on the ZX81. Access to the edge board connector is via a side port on the Protos enclosure and tape in/out, power and UHF connections are made through the rear. To fit the Protos entails removing the Sinclair board from the black ABS case it comes in and fixing it inside the Protos enclosure with four Phillips type screws. No soldering is required and all electrical connections are plug/socket connections provided either on the Sinclair or the Protos. Further details on this and other forthcoming peripherals can be obtained from Protos Computer Systems, Frome Computing, 20 Ashtree Road, Frome, Somerset BA11 2AS. Please enclose a large SAE with any enquiries.



Thin Meters

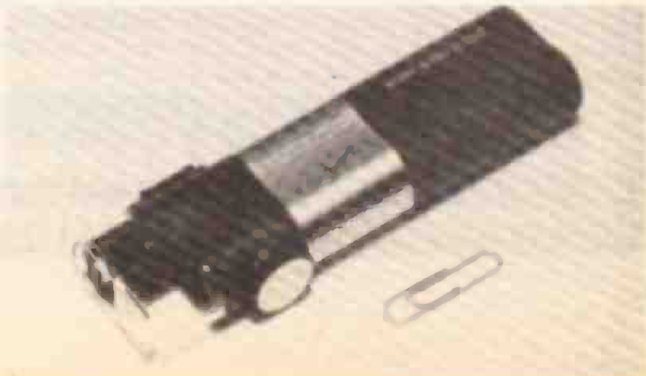
Sifam Ltd of Torquay in Devon are to market a range of very thin edgewise meters manufactured by General Electric of the USA. There are three sizes in the range with case widths of 38 mm, 63 mm and 89 mm and the units are scaled for vertical or horizontal presentation. The special feature of this design is the extreme thinness; the smallest has an overall depth of face of only 13 mm and the two larger sizes of about 17 mm. The smallest model has a rear-access zero set and a simple spring-clip method of mounting. The two larger models have front access zero set at end of scale and a slide bracket form of mounting. They incorporate jewelled pivot movements with special high-torque magnets for reliable and accurate operation. The standard meters are available ex-stock from Sifam and have a maximum sensitivity of 50 microamperes. Scale markings can be produced to suit individual requirements. Further details of these and Sifam's own range of meters are available from: Sifam Limited, Woodland Road, Torquay, Devon TQ2 7AY.

Power For Peanuts

Grenson Electronics, designers and manufacturers of power supplies for the Nuclear Research Industry have come up with a series of bench power units. The first unit in the series is priced at £59 and gives a variable stabilised output up to 30 V at 2 A in two ranges, has foldback re-entrant short circuit protection and current and voltage metering. This unit is also available in kit form at only £35 and further details are from Grenson Electronics Ltd, High March Road, Long March, Industrial Estate, Daventry, Northants NN11 4HQ.

Miniature Magnification

New from Stotron Ltd is the Scope Mark III pocket microscope with stand. Priced at under £20 it is a useful tool for laboratories, schools, workshops, service engineers and the electronics, electrical, automotive, print and graphic trades, Uncle Tom Cobbley and all! It is 125 mm long, with 20x magnification and a graticule showing linear and angular measurements. Illumination is powered by standard 1V5 'pen-light' batteries and a micro-stand (with spring clips for sample slides) is available as an option so that the device can be used like a conventional microscope. Further details on this device are available from Stotron Ltd, Unit 1, Haywood Way, Ivy House Lane, Hastings, East Sussex.



New Products

HIFI STEREO AMPLIFIER KITS

From one of Britain's leading esoteric amplifier manufacturers comes an exciting new package of stereo amplifier kits, designed to offer all the advantages of true high fidelity but without the usual price penalty. These new kits offer the choice of moving magnet or moving coil inputs, 40 or 100 watts per channel, in fact, everyhthing that made the previous models so popular is included but with added style, easier construction and a full two year warranty.

The New Range Consists of

The CK 1010 Stereo Pre Amplifier
The CK 1404 WPC Power Amplifier
The CK 1100 WPC Power Amplifier

CK 1010

This kit contains all the necessary parts to build a complete pre-amp. The main PCB is ready assembled and tested therefore construction is simply a matter of point to point wiring and mechanical assembly of the connections and controls to the pre punched chassis.

The CK 1010 takes its DC supply from the CK 1040, 1100 or, if using a different power amplifier a PSK power supply kit. Inputs for disc, tuner and tape are provided and an optional add-on moving coil input can be fitted to extend its versatility. (MC2K)

CK 1040

This is a nominal 40 watt per channel power amplifier kit which features our dual power supply and the DC output for the CK 1010. All components such as heatsinks, wire and connectors are included and protection is provided from short circuit outputs.

CK 1100

Similar to the CK 1040 this model provides a nominal 100 watts per channel with extra heatsinking and thermal cutouts are provided as standard.

When correctly assembled these kits are guaranteed for two years.

''It would seem then that Crimson have maintained their position at the top of the commercial kit-build field. There is no oriental amplifier I know of that can better the sound of this combination overall at any price and only a few — such as the KA-1000 (500+) — are of comparable standard . . . I can say no more than that for £250 it (CK1010/MC2K/1100) is a bargain and one that becomes the reference point for kit amplifiers from now on.''

ETI FEB 1982

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NEXT MONTH

electronics today INTERNATIONAL

How would you like a 10 MHz oscilloscope about the size of a large lunchbox? Can't afford one? Then build this one — it's the main project in ETI next month.

SLOT CAR CONTROLLER

Let's not beat about the bush. Slot cars are fun. If you're as keen on slot cars and electronics as we are, you'll be equally appalled at the crude control systems provided in the basic sets. Naturally we decided something should be done about the situation and came up with this project. You can have controlled acceleration with overshoot, dynamic braking, 'electronic' fuel tanks — and all from quite a simple circuit. There'll also be some advice on how to tune your cars to get the ultimate in performance from them. A must to read for kids of all ages.

COLUMN LOUDSPEAKER DESIGN

Now this is good stuff. One of the bugbears of public address systems is acoustic feedback, which can be largely overcome by the use of a highly directional sound source. This directs the sound into the audience, where it's needed, and away from the microphone, where it isn't. This article describes the design of a novel column loudspeaker design that is cheap and highly effective.

ROBOT CONTROLLER PART 3

In next month's ETI we continue this series with the construction information for this month's analogue pulse width modulation controller, plus full details and a PCB for a dual digital PWM controller. This will not only be of interest to roboticists but to anyone who needs to control the speed of DC motors.

DVMEG

Any scholars out there will know that D is Roman for 500. Since V stands for volts, it will come as no surprise that this project generates 500 V to enable the leakage current through insulation to be tested using the built-in meter. In effect it is a high-voltage resistance meter for measuring values above about 1M0 — hence the last part of the name. We don't just throw these things together, you know!

BREADBOARDING SYSTEMS

There appears to have been a veritable explosion in the number of breadboarding and prototyping systems available to industry and the hobbyist; next month we'll be taking a look at some of them. Both solderwrap and insulation displacement techniques will be examined and we'll have an exclusive first review of a major new development from a leading manufacturer. Not to be missed!

LOOK OUT FOR THE MAY ISSUE ON SALE APRIL 2nd

Articles described here are in an advanced state of preparation. However, circumstances may dictate changes to the final contents.

ELECTROMUSIC TECHNIQUES

Tim Orr, our tame electronic designer, emerged from his workshop this month just long enough to hand over this bundle of circuits for the ardent build-it-yourself musician.

Virtually all of the electronic music synthesisers that have been produced to date employ analogue circuits to generate the synthesised sounds. The process is known as subtractive synthesis, and operates by dynamically filtering out parts of the spectrum of a signal that is often rich in harmonics. The results are instant, easy to modify and relatively inexpensive to implement. It is not possible to produce an arbitrary output spectrum, and so it is very difficult to synthesise realistic copies of naturally generated sounds. This can be done using a digital technique known as harmonic synthesis, whereby the sound is constructed by precisely defining the amplitude and phase of each of the harmonics. These are then added together to produce the output. However, natural sounds are constantly varying and so the data defining all the harmonics must also vary. Harmonic synthesis can produce very realistic sounds and is in itself a powerful technique for generating completely new sounds, but the hardware is a combination of sophisticated microprocessor and digital technology and so is outside the scope of this article.

When we hear a sound we unconsciously analyse it for useful information; "Who wants another drink?" for example. Nobody knows how the human brain analyses incoming sounds, but it does it with incredible speed and sophistication. It can extract precise information from sounds (speech perception), it can experience pleasure from a rich harmony, or it can even learn to ignore certain sounds, such as a ticking clock. The brain is very good at perceiving pitch(or at least it thinks it is; it is also a fairly good liar); see Fig. 1. When you hear a pure tone you will get a strong impression of its pitch. You will not be able to define its frequency in Hertz, but you will be able to remember its pitch. A sawtooth has a strong harmonic structure but even so you will get the same pitch perception. The ringing tone has virtually no energy at the fundamental frequency and yet it is still possible to correctly perceive the pitch of the signal, although it is more difficult than for the pure tone.

Most musical instruments produce a range of notes. Some instruments, like violins, can produce a continuous range of frequencies; because, unlike the guitar, there are no frets along the neck of the instrument. Keyboard instruments have fixed tuning: the piano, for example. The keyboard is an excellent choice for controlling a synthesiser, as it is easily converted so that it generates suitable electrical signals and it is widely accepted by musicians. Equal temperament tuning is used, that is there are twelve notes per octave and they are spaced at intervals of the twelfth root of two (that is 1.0594631) along an exponential curve, as in Fig. 2.

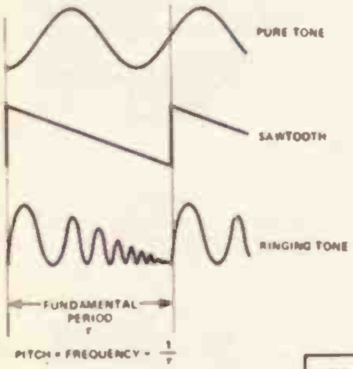
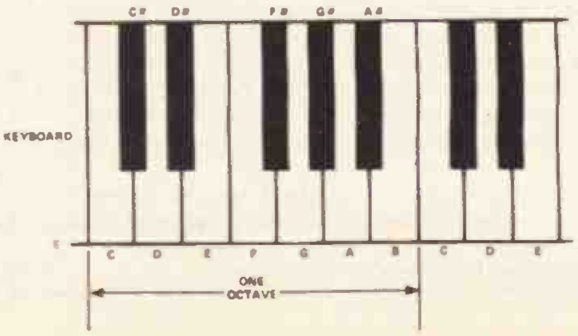


Fig. 1 Pitch perception.

Fig. 2 (below) Keyboard layout with table showing equal temperament tuning.

NOTE	FREQUENCY (Hz)
A0	27.5
A1	55.0
A2	110.0
A3	220.0
A4	440.0
A5	880.0
A6	1760.0
A7	3520.0

NOTE	FREQUENCY (Hz)	RATIO
C4	261.6	1.0000
C4#	277.2	1.0595
D4	293.7	1.1225
D4#	311.1	1.1892
E4	329.7	1.2599
F4	349.2	1.3348
F4#	370.0	1.4142
G4	392.0	1.4983
G4#	415.3	1.5874
A4	440.0	1.6818
A4#	466.1	1.7818
B4	493.9	1.8877
C5	523.2	2.0000



When You Hear The Tone . . .

The keyboard is used to define the fundamental pitch of a sound, but the actual shape of the waveform will determine its harmonic structure (Fig. 3). A sinewave is a pure tone and has no harmonics. A halfwave-rectified sine wave contains a fundamental plus a series of *even* harmonics. A fullwave-rectified sine wave is composed entirely of *even* harmonics. The squarewave and the triangle are both composed of a series of *odd* harmonics; in fact if you lowpass filter a square wave you can produce a triangle. The triangle is a fairly pure tone, with little of the energy in the waveform contained in its harmonics. The sawtooth is a rich waveform, having both *odd* and *even* harmonics.

The harmonic structure of all these waveforms extends to infinity, but the drawings only show the first 15 harmonics. If we call the harmonic number n, then the harmonic amplitude is easy to define. The rate at which the harmonic amplitude

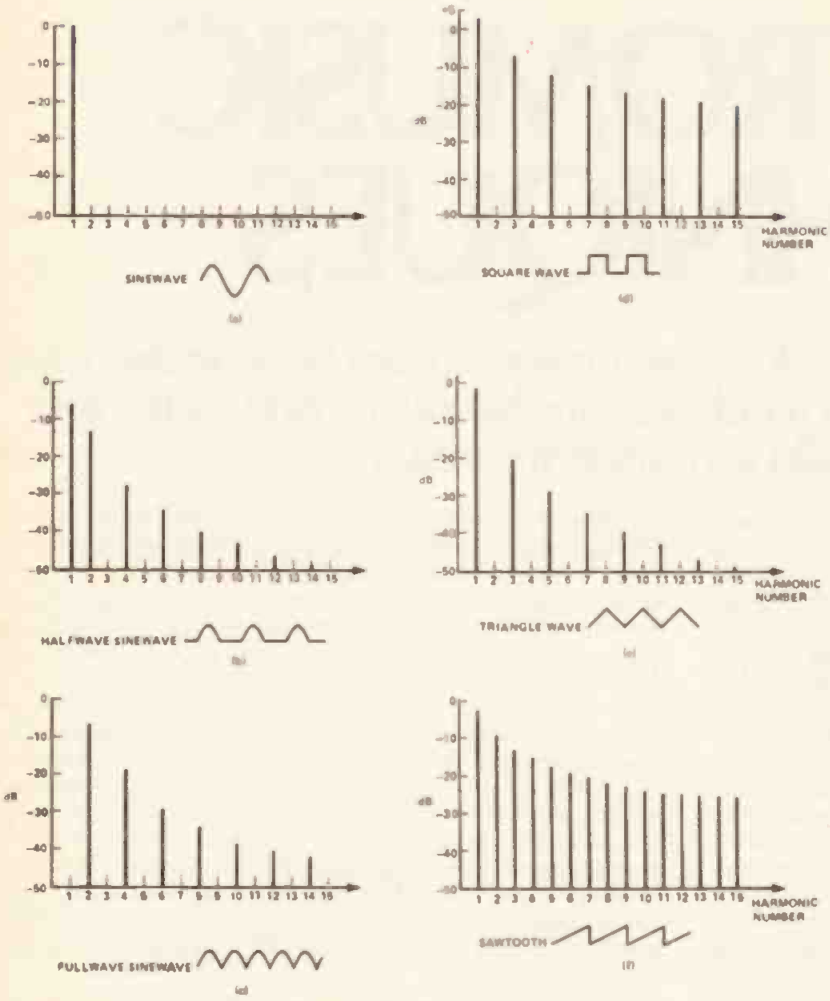


Fig. 3 Harmonic structure of various standard musical waveforms.

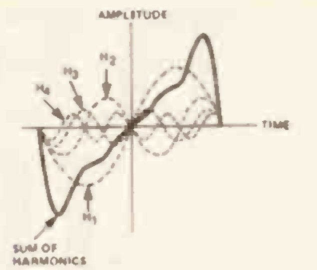


Fig. 4 Adding the first four harmonics to construct a sawtooth waveform.

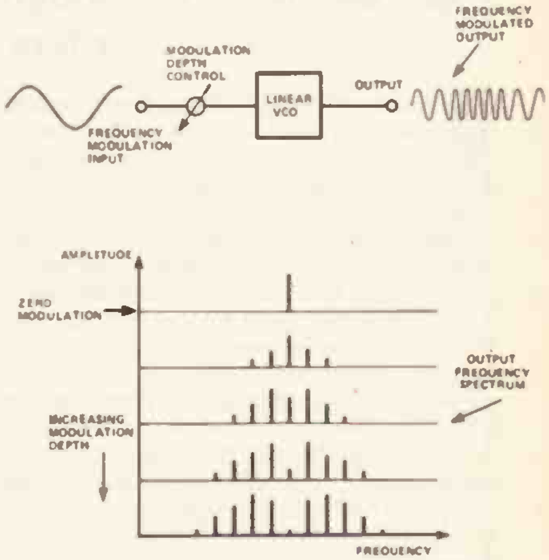


Fig. 5 The effects of frequency modulation.

decreases is 1/n for the sawtooth and square wave and $1/n^2$ for the half and fullwave rectified sine wave and the triangle. Figure 4 shows a sawtooth being constructed from harmonics. The sum of the harmonics is beginning to look like a sawtooth. As more harmonics are added (with the correct phase and amplitude) the sum will converge upon the correct sawtooth shape. An interesting effect can be produced by changing the mark/space ratio of the square wave. This modifies the *odd* harmonic spectrum and introduces *even* harmonics. The mark/space ratio is often dynamically modified as a synthesis process.

Frequency modulation is often employed in synthesisers to produce vibrato and other dramatic pitch change effects. Figure 5 shows some of the effects of frequency modulation. As the modulation depth is increased, frequency sidebands are generated. Their spacing and amplitude are determined by the modulation depth and the modulation and carrier frequencies. To precisely calculate them involves some complex maths and Bessel functions (which I have forgotten all about). To make matters worse, synthesisers usually use voltage controlled oscillators with an exponential transfer function, which tends to exponentially distort the sideband positions. But so what! Music synthesisers are all about making music and not the calculation of sidebands. If a particular electronic device produces a useful musical effect, then use it, don't analyse it.

The output from an oscillator is known as an excitation signal. This defines the pitch of the signal, and to a certain extent the harmonic content of the final signal. It is common practice to filter the excitation signal (Fig. 6). The frequency response of the filter is referred to as a formant. The formant modifies the harmonic spectrum of the excitation, producing a colouration

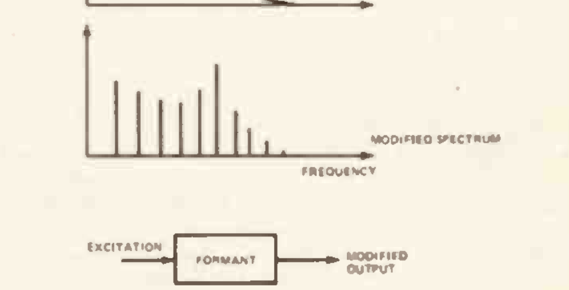


Fig. 6 The effect of filtering an excitation signal.

of the sound. The format is usually a mobile filter and this makes it possible to dynamically alter the sound colour. If the formant has a sharp resonant peak, then the output signal will ring as it passes the harmonics of the excitation.

Another parameter that characterises a sound is its amplitude contour or envelope (Fig. 7). A sound that has a sharp attack and a slow release is similar to a plucked instrument. Other envelopes will make the sound seem like something else.

Building Blocks

Most synthesisers are constructed from standard building blocks, and most of these blocks are voltage controlled. This is a very powerful concept, because it enables you to control a unit with a combination of control voltages and/or audio signals. Building blocks can be patched together in any arbitary order to produce any system that is wanted. Some standard building blocks are detailed below.

Voltage Controlled Oscillator Used to generate the pitched excitation signals. Often a VCO will generate a wide range of waveforms. The control sensitivity is usually +1 V/octave. Therefore a one twelfth of a volt change will alter the oscillator pitch by one semitone. The exponential control law is a very powerful concept. If a VCO is being driven so that it produces a melody, then adding +1 V to the control input will transpose the melody up by one octave. Thus musical transpositions are very simple to produce. Often more than one VCO will be used, so that a rich chord is obtained.

Voltage Controlled Filter This is used as a formant for the excitation signal. The VCF is generally a lowpass filter, but it can often be a multi-mode device with lowpass, highpass, bandpass and notch responses. The VCF also has a Q (resonance) control. The control sensitivity is +1 V/octave for the frequency parameter, and undefined for the Q.

Voltage Controlled Amplifier The VCA controls the level of audio signals. The control law can be linear or logarithmic. The VCA is usually controlled by an ADSR unit and is employed to generate signal envelope contours. The device is a two quadrant multiplier.

Attack, Decay, Sustain, Release unit The ADSR is used to generate the signal envelope contour and also the VCF sweep waveform.

Ring Modulator This is a four quadrant multiplier or balanced multiplier. The output voltage is the product of the two input signals. It is often used to generate discordant or clangerous sounds.

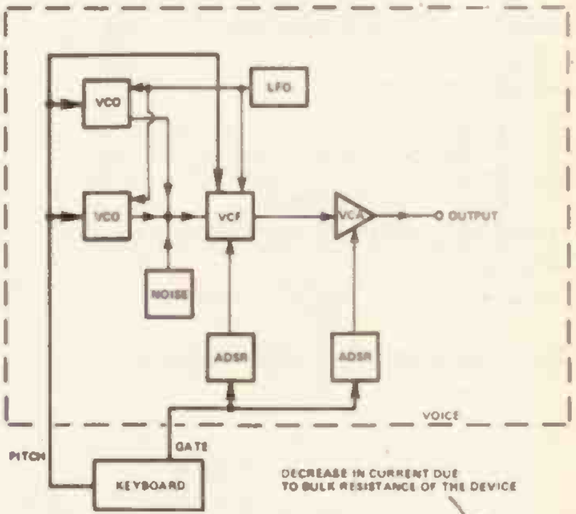
Noise source Generates random noise, which can be used in the synthesis of non-pitched sounds such as explosions. Filtered or sampled noise can be used as a random control voltage.

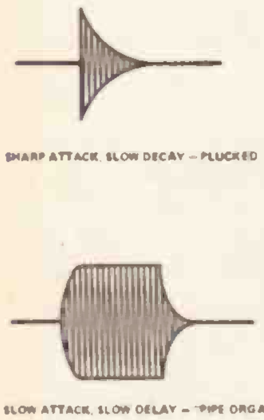
Low Frequency Oscillator These oscillators are used to generate vibrato in the VCO or a filter sweep in the VCF.

Keyboard Musical control interface, generating pitch voltages of +1 V/octave and also a gate signal to indicate that a note is pressed. A monophonic keyboard only allows one note at a time to be pressed, but if more than one can be pressed simultaneously then the system is polyphonic.

There are several other building blocks such as flangers, sequencers, frequency shifters, and pitch detectors, but there isn't enough space to deal with them.

Polyphonic synthesisers tend to be voice-based; ie all the building blocks are pre-routed to form a voice (Fig. 8). Modular systems are not pre-routed and have to be patched, either with lots of jack-to-jack patch leads or via a matrix patch board using patch pins. Patch leads are relatively inexpensive, but the leads get in the way and it is often difficult to see just what you have patched. Matrix patch boards are easy to understand, but they suffer from crosstalk and a large board (60 by 60) might cost £500!





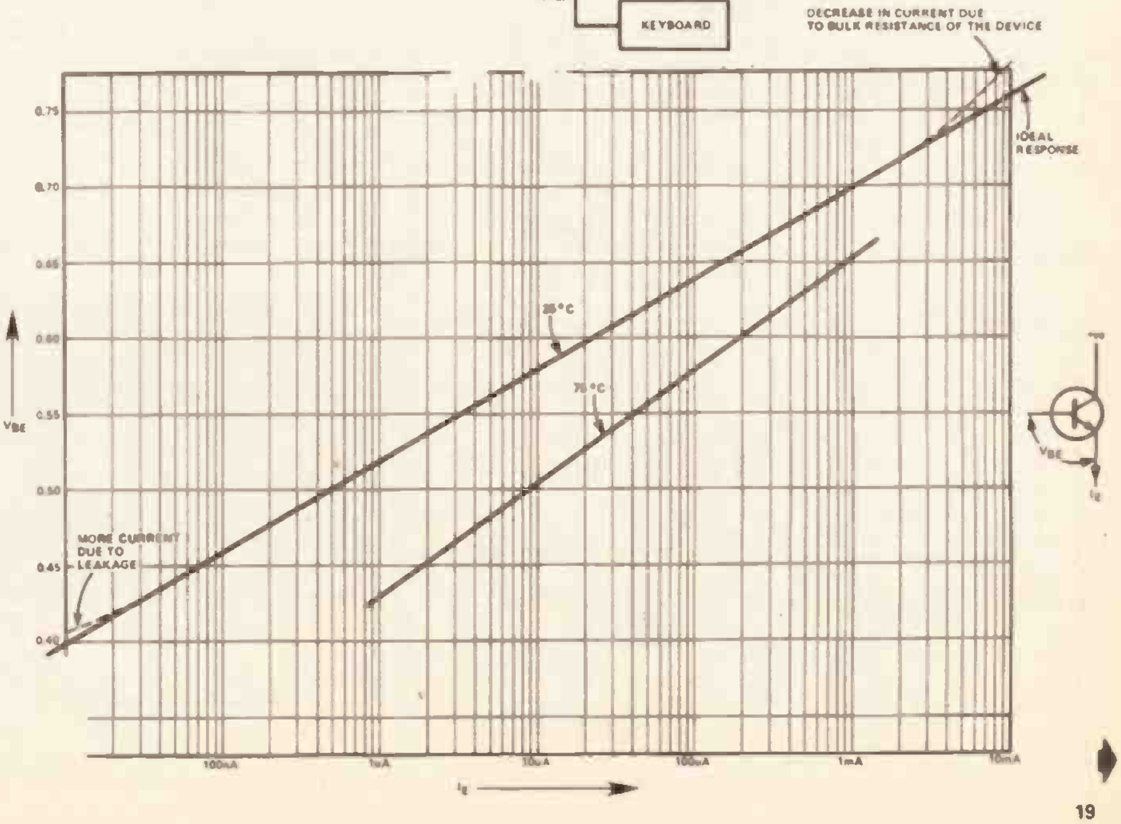


Fig. 7 (Above) Two typical amplitude contours, or envelopes.

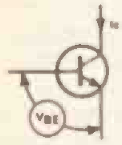
Fig. 8 (Top right) The standard synthesiser voice.

Fig. 9 (Right) Silicon diode transfer characteristics.

Diode Data

The silicon diode has an exponential transfer function, that is the diode current increases exponentially for linear increments in the diode voltage (Fig. 9). This can be used to turn linear changes from, say, a keyboard into exponential or musical intervals in a VCO. The required musical range is probably no more than 200 to 1 and so a suitable operating current would be 0.5 uA to 100 uA, thus avoiding the non-exponential parts of the curve. The silicon diode is temperature dependent (it is often used as a thermometer) and so great care must be used to avoid thermal problems. The junction voltage changes by −1.9 mV/°C, but a semitone change is equivalent to 1.5 mV, therefore a 1°C change could result in a 1.27 semitone change in pitch! Figure 9 shows two temperature effects in operation; there is a large shift and the slope of the line changes.

Figure 10 illustrates the equations that determine the diode operation. Two facts emerge from these equations. First, an 18 mV change in V_{BE} will double the current I_C and second, this parameter has a temperature coefficient of −0.33%/°C. Both the temperature problems can be resolved by using a circuit similar to that shown in Fig. 11. Transistor Q1 is run at constant current (12 uA) by the op-amp. Q2 is used as the exponentiator transistor. The emitter of Q2 is held at a voltage of about −0V6. Any voltage change at the base of Q2 will result in an exponen-



$$I_C = I_O\,(e^{(qV_{BE}/KT)} - 1)$$

$$\therefore I_C \approx I_O\,e^{qV_{BE}/KT}$$

WHERE
Io IS THE EMITTER SATURATION CURRENT
K IS BOLTZMANNS CONSTANT
q IS THE CHARGE ON AN ELECTRON
T IS THE TEMPERATURE IN °K

HOWEVER, $\frac{KT}{q}$ IS 26mV AT 28.58 °C (301.73 °K IS ROOM TEMPERATURE).
THEREFORE, $I_C \simeq I_O\,e^{V_{BE}/26}$
WHERE V_{BE} IS MEASURED IN mV
REARRANGING THE EQUATION,

$$26 \ln\left(\frac{I_C}{I_O}\right) = V_{BE}$$

THEREFORE, AN OCTAVE CHANGE IN Ic IS CAUSED BY A 18.021827mV CHANGE IN V_{BE} (AT 28.58 °C). HOWEVER, IF THE TEMPERATURE WERE +1 °C HIGHER, THEN V_{BE} WOULD HAVE TO BE INCREASED IN SIZE TO A NEW VALUE OF

$$26 \times \left(\frac{302.73}{301.73}\right)$$

SO, FOR AN OCTAVE CHANGE IN Ic AT THE NEW TEMPERATURE, V_{BE} MUST CHANGE BY 18.08156mV, AN INCREASE OF 0.060723mV. THIS CAN BE EXPRESSED AS A PERCENTAGE CHANGE PER °C :—

$$\text{TEMPERATURE SENSITIVITY} = \frac{0.060723 \times 100}{18.021827} = 0.331306\%/°C$$

Fig. 10 Exponential transistor characteristics.

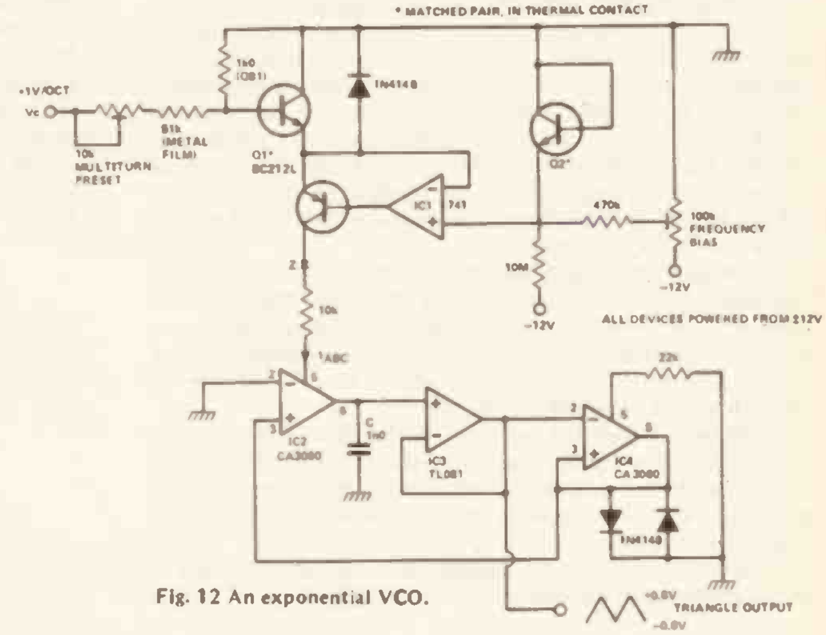
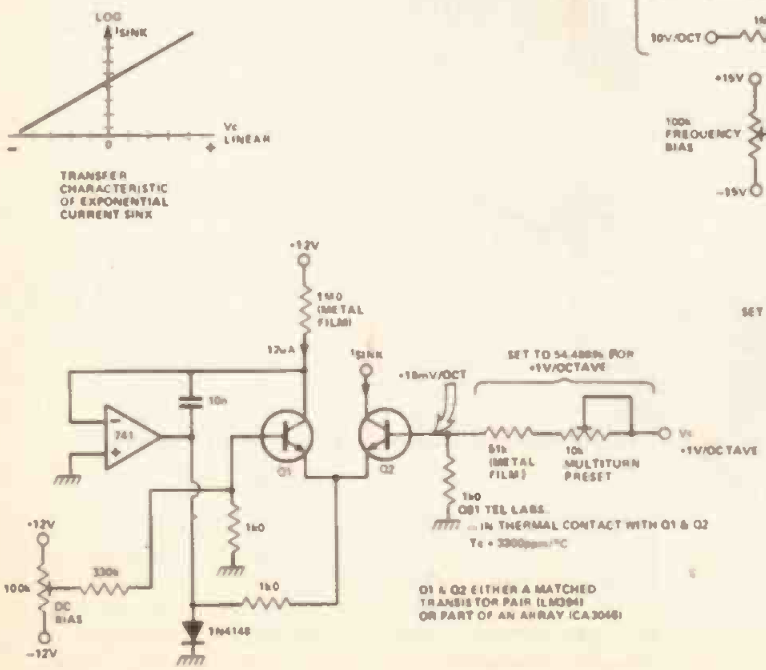


Fig. 12 An exponential VCO.

Fig. 11 (Below) An exponential current sink.



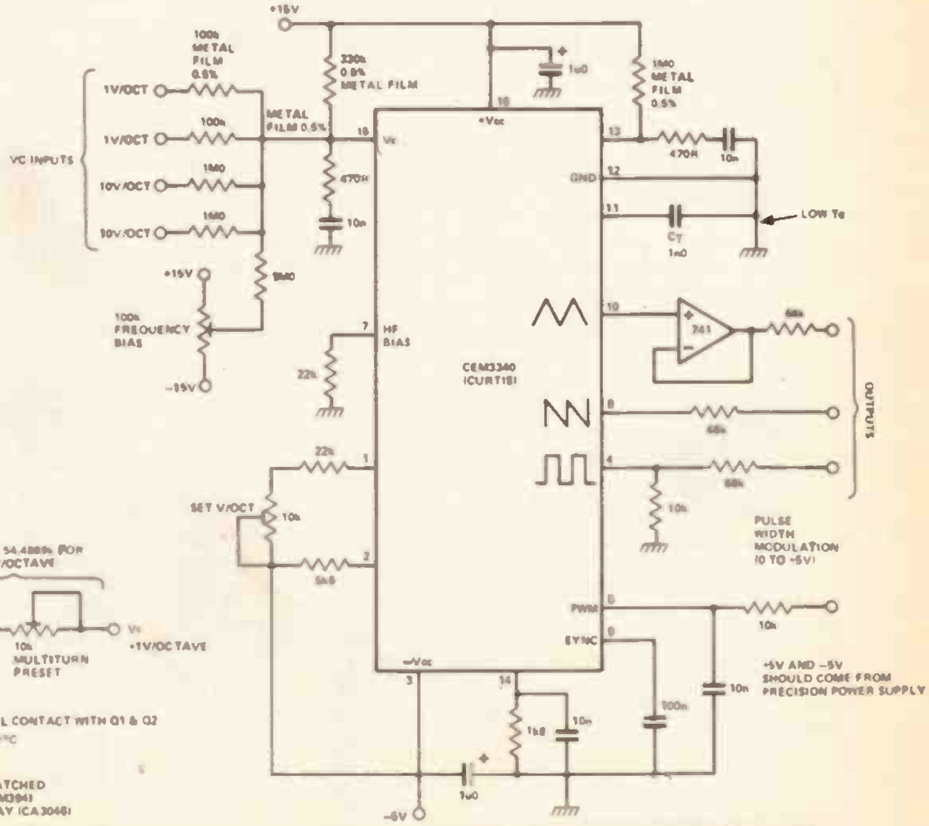


Fig. 13 A VCO using a monolithic device.

tial change in the collector current of Q2. Q1 and Q2 are in thermal contact and so any temperature change will effect both equally. Thus the −1.9 mV/°C factor is cancelled out by Q1 acting as a compensating thermometer for Q2. The slope change is removed by using a temperature sensitive resistance (Q81 — Tel Labs) which has an equal but opposite temperature coefficient to the diode junction. This resistor is often in thermal contact with the matched transistors. If this circuit is connected to a linear current controlled oscillator, a musical VCO is produced.

VCO Circuits

Figure 12 is the circuit for an exponential VCO using an exponential current source. The oscillator is a standard triangle-square wave device. IC2 is a current-controlled integrator; the slow rate at its output is equal to I_{ABC}/C. This voltage is buffered by IC3 which drives a Schmitt trigger IC4. The output of IC2 ramps up and down between the two hysteresis levels which are determined by the two clamping diodes connected to the output of IC4. Any stray capacitance on the output of IC4 will slow down the Schmitt trigger and this will make the VCO go flat at high frequencies. Also the propagation time delay around the oscillator will cause a flattening out ot the response at high frequencies. These effects can be nulled out but they may not even affect things if the VCO frequency is kept relatively low.

A very good VCO is shown in Fig. 13. It is a monolithic device, the CEM3340 from Curtis Electromusic Specialities Inc who make a range of electronic music devices. As can be seen, very few external parts are needed to implement the VCO. All the temperature compensation is performed inside the chip. Triangle, sawtooth and variable mark/space square wave outputs are simultaneously available. The mark/space ratio is a voltage controlled parameter. A sync input is also provided so that the VCO can be slaved to another oscillator.

LFO Circuits

A couple of LFO units are shown in Fig. 14. All four output waveforms can be usefully employed to sweep VCOs and VCFs. Often the waveforms are mixed together to produce strange frequency modulations. When the sawtooth is fed into one side of a ring modulator and noise into the other, a beat track can be generated; it sounds a bit like a cymbal being hit.

Noise Generators

In 'the old days' noise sources were made by amplifying the noise current of a diode junction that was zenering. These were a bit unreliable, and always involved selecting the device. However, noise can be generated digitally with a maximum length pseudorandom sequence generator (Fig. 15). The noise spectrum is relatively flat and always the same. If you slow down the clock rate you can get some interesting sounds; I think that this is used on some TV games. If a longer shift register is used, say 30 or 40 stages (the 4006 is 18 stages long), and the noise source is turned on, a tone is initially heard which gradually changes into noise as the sequence becomes more scrambled up. You can purchase a monolithic noise generator (pseudorandom); it is the MM5837 made by National Semiconductor, also sold by AMI with the part number S2688.

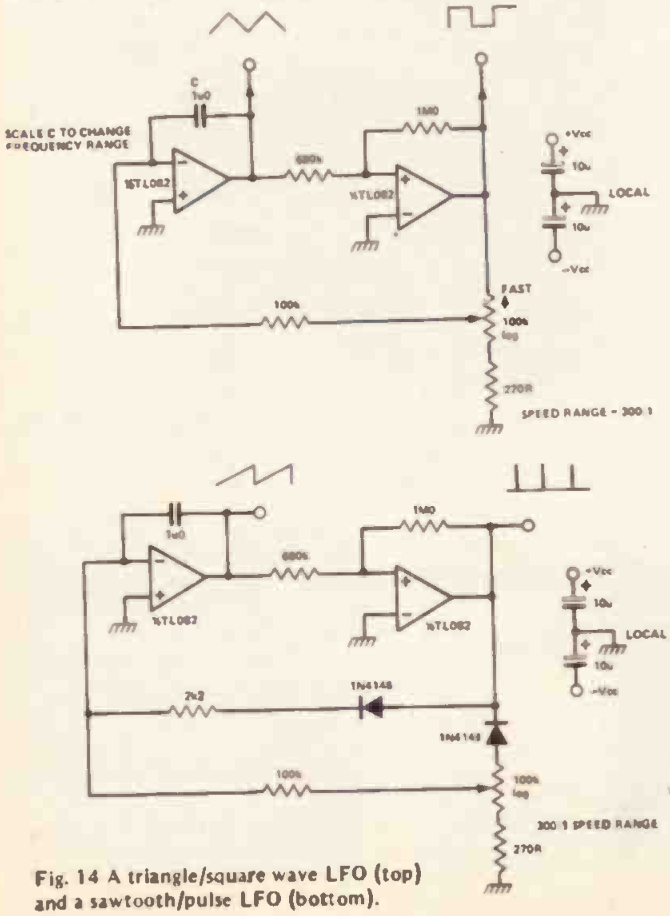


Fig. 14 A triangle/square wave LFO (top) and a sawtooth/pulse LFO (bottom).

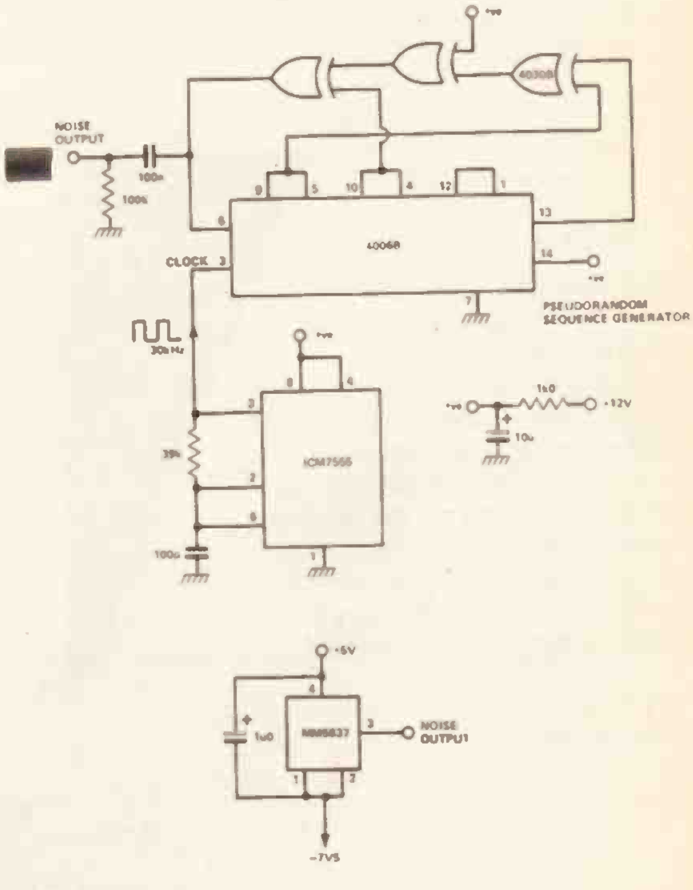


Fig. 15 A digital noise source (top) and a noise generator chip (bottom).

Five pages gone already, and we've still only scratched the surface of this fascinating subject. In part two next month, Tim Orr will continue his discussion of electro-music techniques with yet more circuit building blocks. ETI *introducing* **The WERSI Comet**

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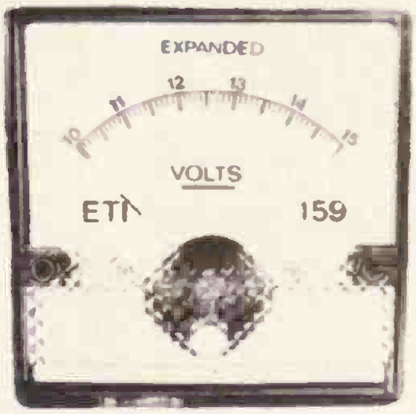
WERSI and AURA — The Winning Combination

ACCURATE VOLTAGE MONITOR



This simple, low-cost instrument can be built into power supplies or used as a portable or fixed 'battery condition' monitoring meter. Design by Simon Campbell and Roger Harrison.

Common storage batteries to power nominal 12 V DC electrical systems have a terminal voltage that ranges from a little over 10 V when discharged to around 15 V when fully charged, the operating voltage being somewhere in the range 11V5 to 13V8. Lead-acid batteries, for example, may have a terminal voltage under rated discharge that commences at around 14V2 and drops to about 11V8. A 12 V (nominal) nickel-cadmium battery may typically have a terminal voltage under rated discharge that starts at 13 V, dropping to 11 V when discharged.

Equipment designed to operate from a nominal 12 V DC supply may only deliver its specified performance at a supply voltage of 13V8 — mobile CB and amateur transceivers being a case in point. Other DC operated equipment may perform properly at 12V5 but 'complain' when the supply reaches 14V5.

To monitor the state of charge/discharge of a battery, a battery-operated system or the output of power supplies, chargers, etc, a voltmeter which can be easily read to 100 mV over the range of interest (10 to 15 V) is an invaluable asset. This project does just that.

The Circuit

An LM723 variable voltage regulator is employed to set an accurate 'offset' voltage of 5 V, and the meter (M1) plus the trimpot RV2 and R3 make up a 5 V meter, with the trimpot allowing calibration. The negative terminal of the meter is connected to the output of the 723 so that it is always held at 5 V 'above' the circuit negative line. The positive end of the meter goes to a zener which will not conduct until more than 5 V appears between the circuit +ve and −ve lines. Thus the meter will not have forward current flowing through it until the voltage between the +ve and −ve rails is greater than 10 V, and will read full scale when it reaches 15 V (after RV2 is set correctly).

The meter scale limits may be adjusted by setting the output of the 723 higher or lower (adjusted by RV1) and setting RV2 so that the meter has an increased or decreased full-scale deflection range.

A variety of meter makes and sizes may be used.

Construction

Mechanical construction of this project has been arranged so that the PCB can be accommodated on the rear of any of the commonly available moving coil meter movements. We chose a meter with a 55 mm wide scale (overall panel width, 82 mm). A meter movement with a large scale is an advantage as it is considerably easier (and more accurate) to read than

HOW IT WORKS

The meter, M1, is a 1 mA meter with series resistance — made up of R3 and RV2 — so that it becomes a 0-5V voltmeter. The negative end of the meter is maintained at 5 V above the circuit negative line by the output of IC1, a 723 adjustable regulator. The positive end of the meter is connected to the circuit positive line via ZD1, a 4V7 zener diode. Thus, no 'forward' current will flow in the meter until the voltage between the circuit negative line and the circuit positive line is greater than 5 + 4.7 = 9V7.

Bias current for the zener is provided by a FET, Q1, connected as a constant current source so that the zener current is accurately maintained over the range of circuit input voltage. This ensures the zener voltage remains essentially constant so that meter reading accuracy is maintained.

The trimpot RV1 sets the output voltage of the 723. This determines the lower scale voltage. Trimpot RV2 sets the meter scale range, less resistance decreases it.

Diode D1 protects the circuit against damage from reverse connection.

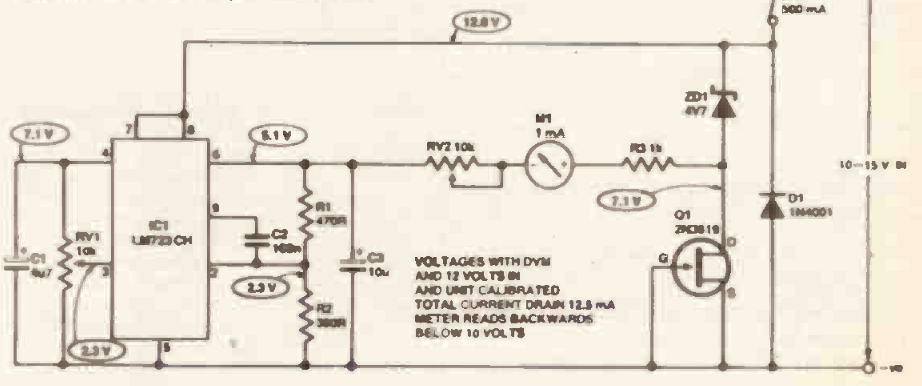


Fig. 1 Circuit diagram for the Voltage Monitor.

Having chosen your meter, drill out the PCB to suit the meter terminal spacing first. The components may then be assembled to the board in any particular order that suits you. Watch the orientation of the 723, ZD1, the FET and particularly D1. The latter is an 'idiot diode'. That is, if you have a lapse of concentration or forethought and connect your project backwards across a battery, the fuse will blow and not the project. Fuses are generally found to be cheaper than this project!

Seat all the components right down on the PCB as the board may be positioned on the rear of the meter with the components facing the meter. The size of C2 may give you a little trouble. Polyesters are generally too large and therefore unsuitable. We used a ceramic type capacitor — as commonly used on computer PCBs as bypasses. Alternatively, a 100n tantalum capacitor (+ve to pin 2 of IC1) may be used. The actual value or type of capacitor is not all that critical.

We have used multiturn trimpots for RV1 and RV2 as they make the setting up a whole lot easier.

Calibration

For this you will need a variable power supply covering 10 to 15 V and a digital multimeter (borrow one for the occasion).

First set the 10 V point. Connect the digital multimeter across the power supply output and adjust the power supply to obtain 10.00 V. Set the mechanical zero on the meter movement to zero the meter's pointer. Connect the unit to the power supply output and adjust RV1 to zero the meter needle.

Next, set the power supply to obtain 15.00 V. Now adjust RV2 so that the meter needle sits on 15 V (full scale). Check the meter reading with the power supply output set at various voltages across the range. We were able to obtain readings across the full scale within ± half a scale reading (± 50 mV). With a 2% FSD accuracy meter the worst error may be about ± one scale division.

BUYLINES

Only one thing to comment on here; when you purchase your LM723 (or uA723 — same thing) make sure you get the version that comes in a T099 case, not the DIL version. The PCB is designed for the 10 pin version as shown in the overlay and the DIL type won't fit. Speaking of PCBs, as usual you can get it from us using the order form on page 44.

PARTS LIST

Resistors (all ¼ W, 5% metal film)

R1	470R
R2	390R
R3	1k0

Potentiometers

RV1,2	10k cermet multiturn horizontal trimpot

Capacitors

C1	4u7 10 V tantalum
C2	100n ceramic
C3	10u 10 V tantalum

Semiconductors

IC1	LM723 (see Buylines)
Q1	2N3819
D1	1N4002 or similar
ZD1	4V7 400 mW or 1 W zener

Miscellaneous

M1	1 mA meter (see text)
FS1	500 mA fuse and in-line fuse holder

PCB (see Buylines); meter scale to suit meter; red and black cable, etc.

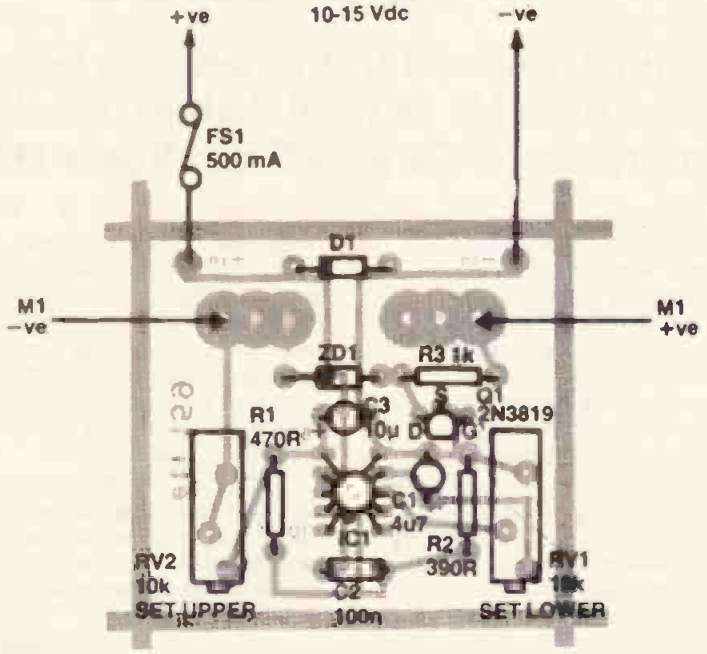


Fig. 2 Component overlay for the Voltage monitor. Note that IC1 is in a 10-pin T099 case.

BATTERY CONDITION AND TERMINAL VOLTAGE

The 12 V battery, in its many forms, is a pretty well universal source of mobile or portable electric power. There are lead-acid wet cell types, lead-acid gel electrolyte (sealed) types, sealed and vented nickel cadmium types, and so on. They are to be found in cars, trucks, tractors, portable lighting plants, receivers, transceivers, aircraft, electric fences and microwave relay stations — to name but a few areas.

No matter what the application, the occasion arises when you need to reliably determine the battery's condition — its state of charge, or discharge. With wet cell lead-acid types, the specific gravity of the electrolyte is one reliable indicator. However, it gets a bit confusing as the recommended electrolyte can have a different S.G. depending on the intended use. For example, a low duty lead-acid battery intended for lighting applications may have a recommended electrolyte S.G. of 1.210, while a heavy-duty truck or tractor battery may have a recommended electrolyte S.G. of 1.275. Car batteries generally have a recommended S.G. of 1.260. That's all very well for common wet cell batteries, but measuring the electrolyte S.G. of sealed lead-acid or nickel-cadmium batteries is out of the question.

With NiCads, the electrolyte doesn't change during charge or discharge.

Fortunately, the terminal voltage is a good indicator of the state of charge or discharge. In general, the terminal voltage of a battery will be at a defined minimum when discharged (generally between 10 and 11 V), and rise to a defined maximum when fully charged (generally around 15 V). Under load, the terminal voltage will vary between these limits, depending on the battery's condition.

Hence a voltmeter having a scale 'spread' to read between these two extremes is a very good and useful indicator of battery condition. It's a lot less messy and more convenient than wielding a hydrometer to measure specific gravity of the electrolyte!

The charge and discharge characteristics of typical lead-acid and sealed NiCad batteries are given in the accompanying figures.

ETI

COMPUTER EXPANSION SYSTEM

How's your memory? If you're lacking EPROM and the ability to program it, the fourth of our expansion cards is just what you need. Design by Watford Electronics.

This month we present an EPROM programmer and associated EPROM cards suitable for the machine code freak to store away those beloved extra routines or the space invaders freak to capture his aliens in 0's and 1's for life.

The first major consideration when designing an EPROM programmer is just what EPROMs should it be capable of blowing. There is more than just a little confusion here. There are two basic types of EPROM currently available — those that run off a three rail supply and those that run from a single +5 V rail. The two sizes of PROM most popular at the moment are 2K x 8 and 4K x 8. Aha! here manufacturers have had some fun. Intersil and others like calling their triple rail PROMs 2716 and 2732 whereas Intel make their 2716 and 2732 single rail; not to be missed out Texas try to settle the balance by nominating their EPROMs 2516 and 2532; both are single rail!

To clear up the matter our programmer will program single rail EPROMs only, these being the most popular. It will program the Texas 2516 2K x 8 EPROM and Intel 2716 2K x 8 EPROM as these are pin-for-pin compatible (see Fig. 1). However, 2532 and 2732 4K x 8 EPROMs are not compatible and we have stuck to the 2532, as this then allows for use of the new 2764 8K x 8 EPROMs with the minimum alteration (see Fig. 2). If you wish to program 2764's then you must make the alterations to correct the $\overline{OE}$/V_{PP} and $\overline{CS}$ lines. A12 has been brought to pin 1 and power (V_{CC}) to pin 28.

Selection of the type of EPROM you want to program is made by means of a quad DIL switch. This switch is unusual in that each section operates two oppositely biased single pole switches — this means it can be

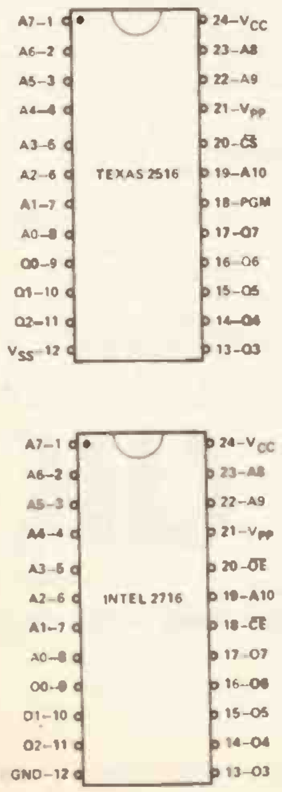


Fig. 1 You can program these EPROMs...

HOW IT WORKS

PROM PROGRAMMER

The heart of this board is two 6520 peripheral input-output chips — they serve to generate the address bus, the data and control signals for the chip being programmed.

R1 and C1 generate the power up reset; C4, 5 and 6 are included in for decoupling. The rather peculiar need of the V_{PP} pin for 0, +5 V and +25 V is met by the PSU and switching circuit. Transformer T1 supplies 30 V AC to the bridge which rectifies it and feeds it to smoothing capacitor C3. IC3 and ZD1 regulate this to +25 V DC. C2 is included in the interests of stability. Transistors Q1 and Q2 handle the switching of V_{PP} between 0, 5 and 25 V. This output is then fed to the DIL switch and then to the V_{PP} pin of the EPROM to be programmed. Ports A and B of IC2 are used to generate the address bus — note A12 is connected to pin 1 of the EPROM (on a 28 pin basis) for use later with 2764 EPROMS. The data bus is generated by port A of IC1, while port B of IC1 generates the control for V_{PP} and the $\overline{CS}$ and PGM lines which are switched with A11 to the correct pins of the EPROM by the DIL switch.

Inputs to the 6520s are straight from the expansion sockets — $\phi 2$ being used to enable the chips to reduce power consumption.

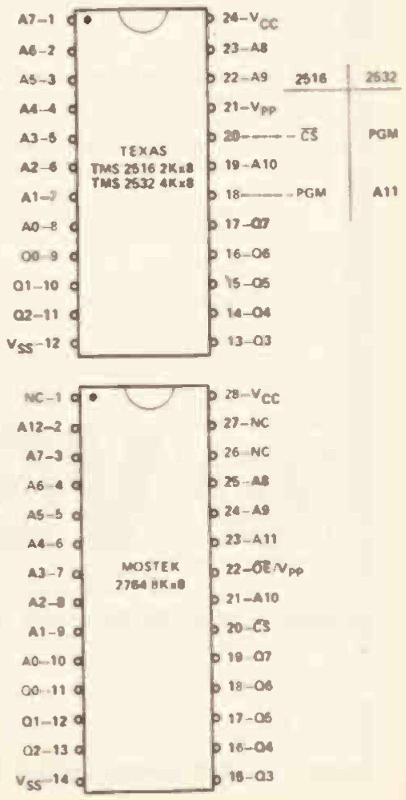


Fig. 2 ...or these ones.

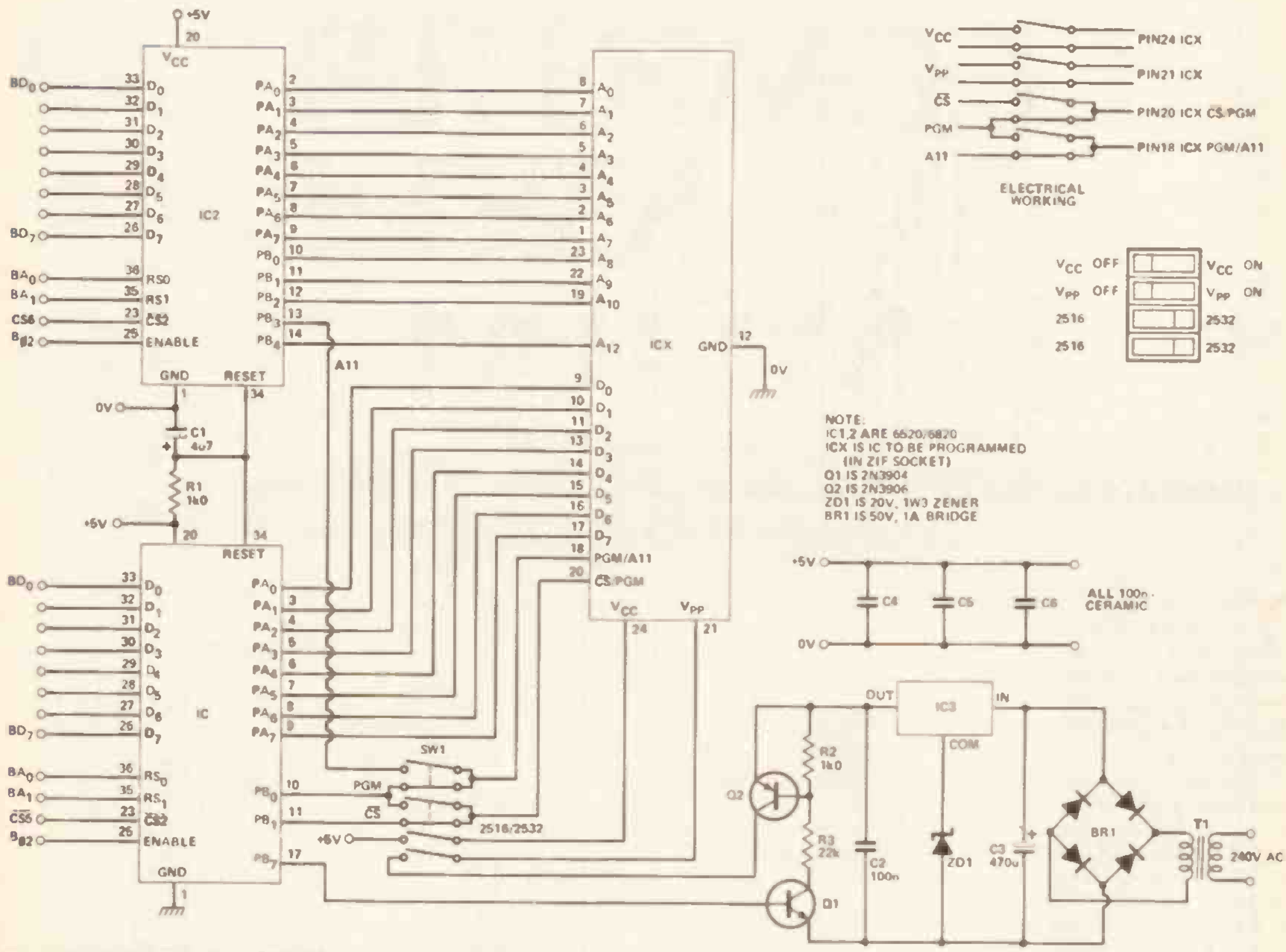


Fig. 3 Circuit diagram of the EPROM programmer, with details of SW1. ICX is the EPROM to be programmed.

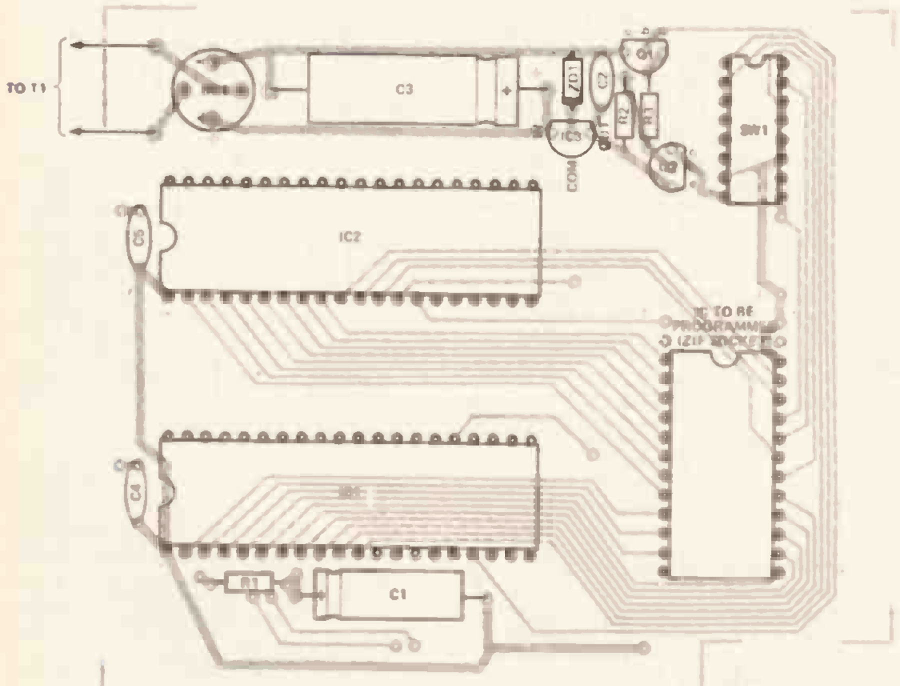


Fig. 4 Overlay for the EPROM programmer. The zero insertion force socket position has extra holes to allow for 2764s.

PARTS LIST

PROM PROGRAMMER

Resistors (all ¼ W, 5%)

R1,2	1k0
R3	22k

Capacitors

C1	4u7 25 V axial electrolytic
C2,4,5,6	100n ceramic
C3	470u axial electrolytic

Semiconductors

IC1,2	6520/6820
IC3	78L05
Q1	2N3904
Q2	2N3906
ZD1	20 V, 1W3 zener diode
BR1	1 A, 50 V bridge rectifier

Miscellaneous

SW1	Quad DPST DIL switch

PCB (see Buylines); DIL sockets; transformer (6 VA, 0-15-0-15)

used as a 4 pole changeover switch and makes it ideal for the job. Two of the four sections are used for chip power (+5 V) and the programming can be destroyed if V_{pp} is applied with V_{cc} disconnected. The other two sections are used to switch $\overline{CS}$, PGM and A11 to the correct pins of the ZIF socket according to whether a 2516 or 2532 is to be used.

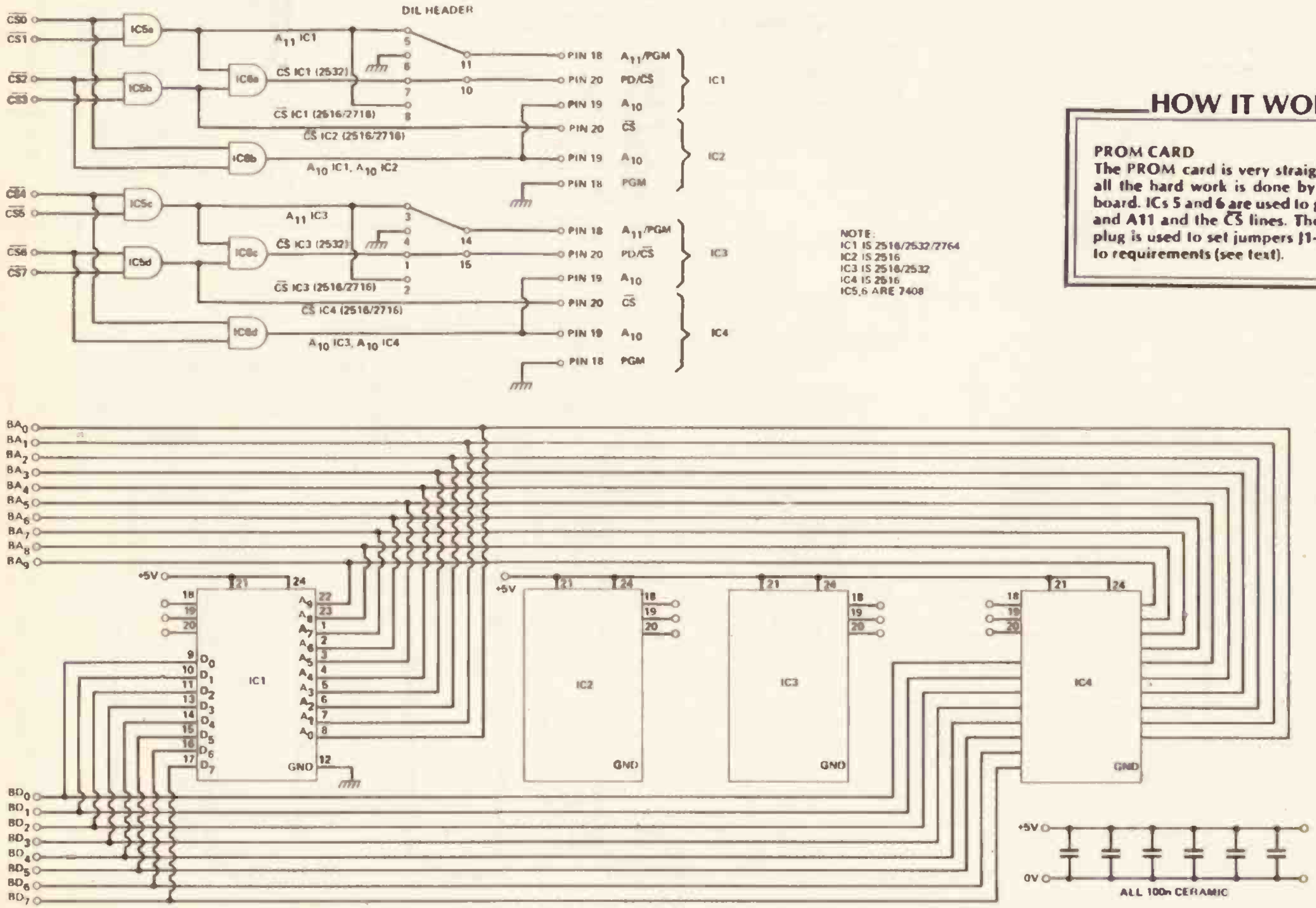


Fig. 5 Circuit diagram for the EPROM card. Links soldered to a DIL header select the correct signals for the various combinations of EPROMs — see Fig. 7 for details.

HOW IT WORKS

PROM CARD

The PROM card is very straightforward as all the hard work is done by the motherboard. ICs 5 and 6 are used to generate A10 and A11 and the $\overline{CS}$ lines. The DIL header plug is used to set jumpers J1-J6 according to requirements (see text).

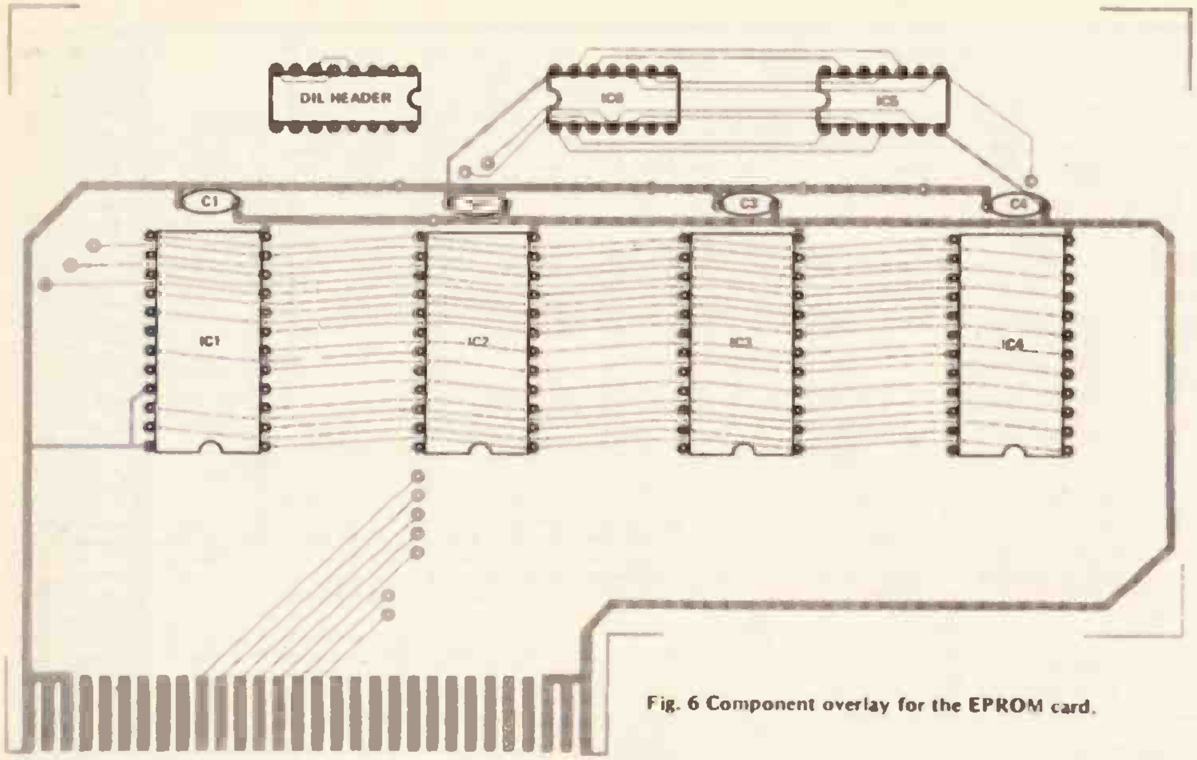


Fig. 6 Component overlay for the EPROM card.

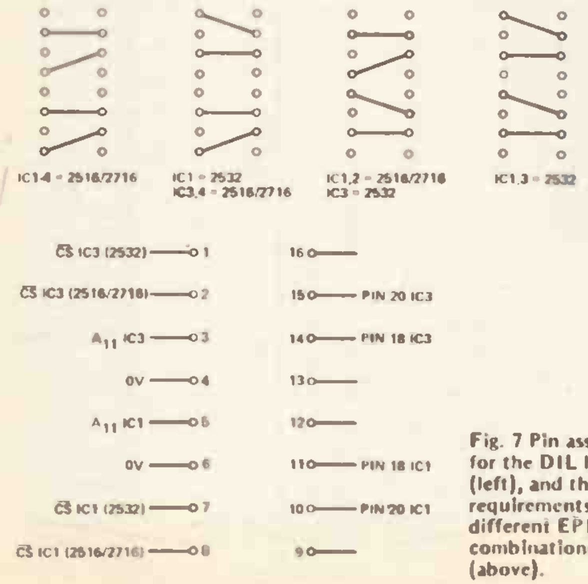


Fig. 7 Pin assignments for the DIL header (left), and the link requirements for the different EPROM combinations (above).

PARTS LIST

PROM CARD

Capacitors

C1-6	100n ceramic

Semiconductors

IC1-4	2716, 2516, 2532 — PROMs as desired
IC5,6	7408

Miscellaneous

PCB (see Buylines); DIL sockets as required; header plug (see text).

BUYLINES

A complete kit of parts for these expansion cards are available from Watford Electronics. The PROM programmer kit costs £26.95 (PCB only £9.75); the PROM card kit costs £11.95 (PCB only £9.75). All prices are subject to VAT at 15%.

A similar method has been used on the EPROM card. As there are four sets of switches needed for four EPROMs a 16 pin header plug and socket have been used. You can make up a header for four 2516s and two 2532s and easily change the role of the board by simply exchanging header plugs. This retains better flexibility than jumper links and is cheaper than the method previously considered. The DIL header plug can be wired as in Fig. 3.

Refer to Fig. 7 for an explanation of how the header plug is wired.

Construction

Construction of the two boards is very straightforward — follow the overlays given here. Note that if you want to move the card around in memory then simply break the connections $\overline{CS5}$, $\overline{CS6}$ to $\overline{CS2}$ of the 6520 and re-make to the $\overline{CS}$ line you desire.

Use two Veropins or similar to bring the 30 V AC from the transformer to the board — unfortunate as it is using a transformer mounted off the PCB to generate the V_{pp} voltage, it is about the only practical way from a computer that has supply rails of 0 and 5 V.

Fit the 28 pin DIL socket at the IC1 position on the EPROM board. This is to allow experimenters to fit a 2764 8K chip at a later date.

When you have finished you will have a very powerful means of customising your system to your own specifications. To mention one use: you could burn a renumber routine into ROM and then while writing a BASIC program simply renumber by calling the routine through the USR(X) function. **ETI**

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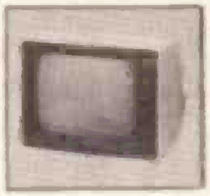

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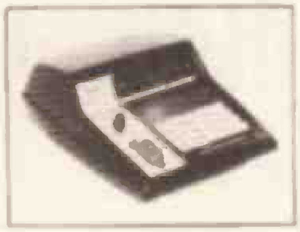

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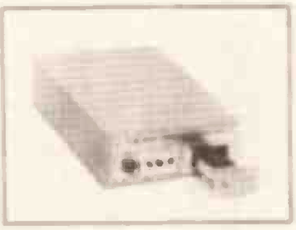

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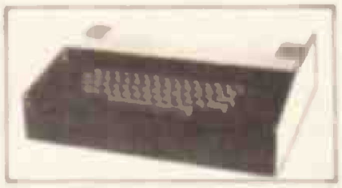

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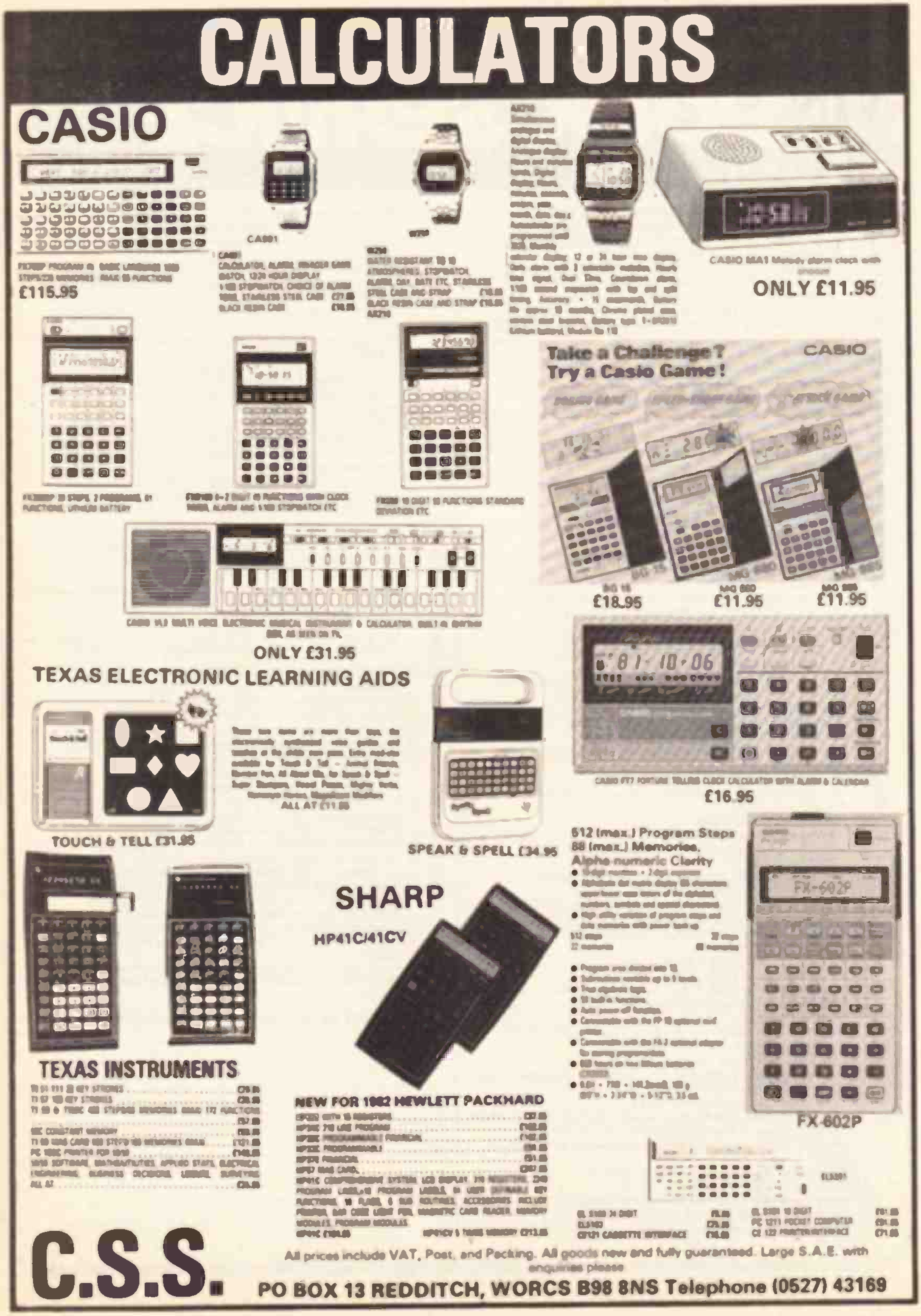
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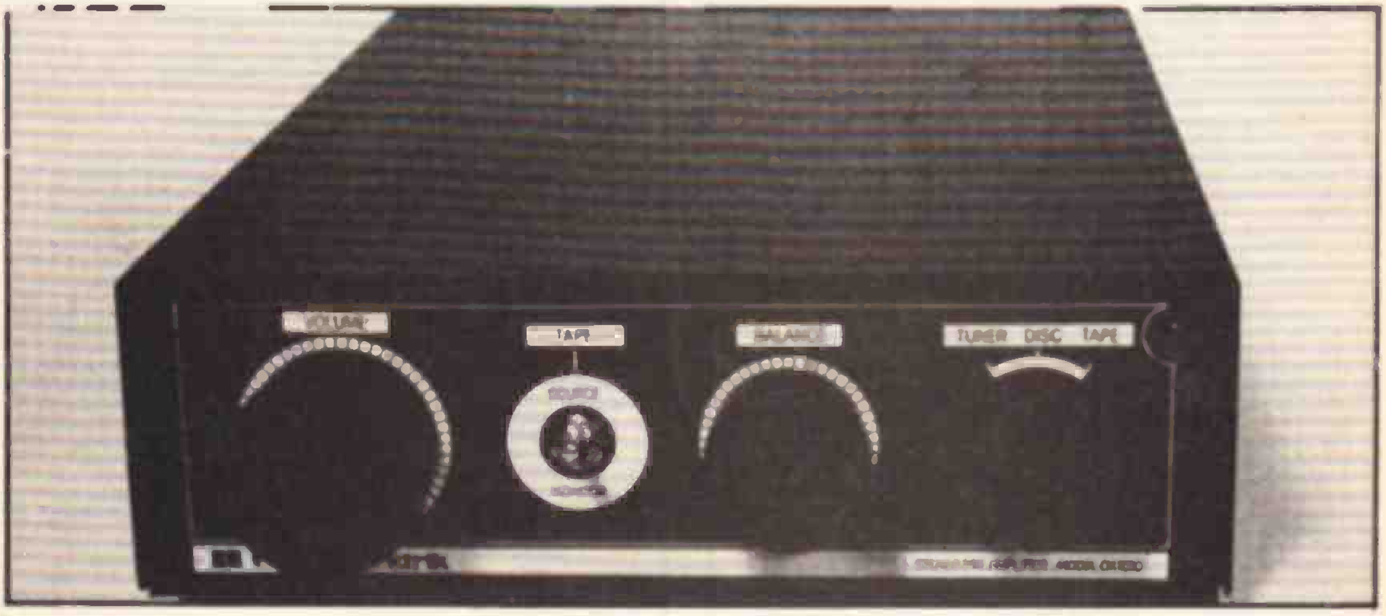
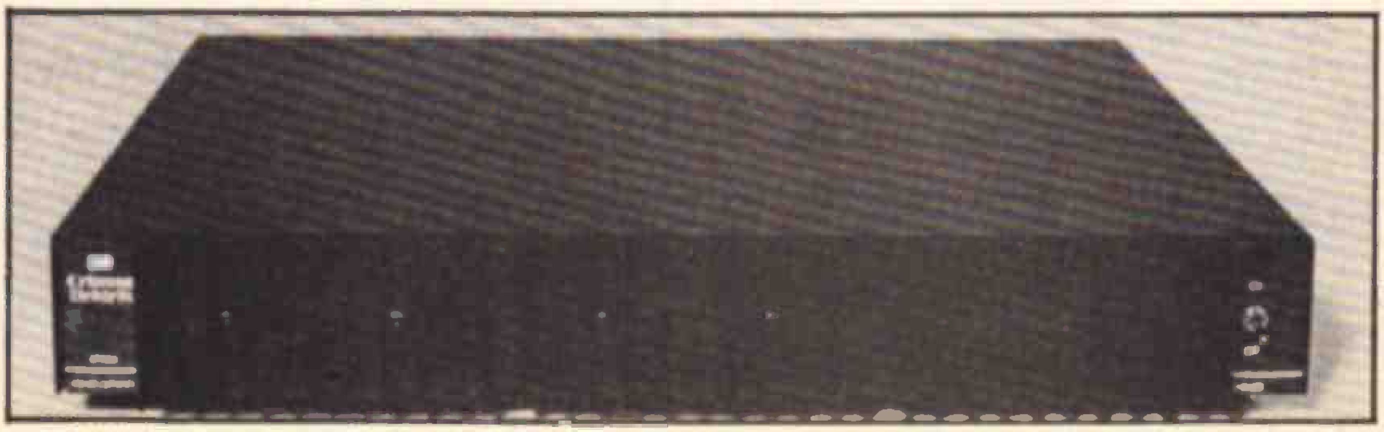
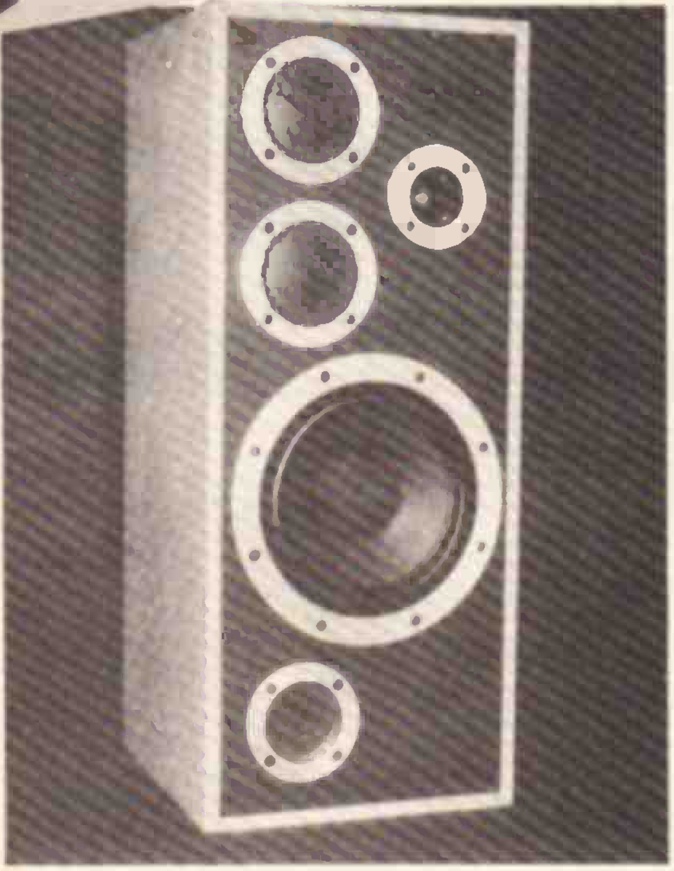




KIT REVIEW

Fancy a pair of Wharfedale E70s? Can't afford them? Then why not build 'em yourself? Peter Freebrey underwent the mystic rites of woodworking and saved himself over £100.



For many years now there have been speaker manufacturers who have marketed kits for the 'do-it-yourself' audio enthusiast. At the present time there are several well known and respected firms supplying high quality kits. One such firm is Rank Hi Fi who manufacture the Wharfedale range. Their approach to this market is the Wharfedale Speakercraft series of drive units and crossovers, together with the constructional information necessary to duplicate their ready-built units using these same components. If the demand is there someone will supply that demand ... such is the case with Wilmslow Audio who sell kits of the cabinets to suit the Wharfedale units. This review follows the construction of the E70 system using the WE70 flat-pack cabinet kit.

Why build loudspeaker kits? Well, one obvious answer is to save money; often the cost of a kit is very much less than buying the completed unit. If you are reasonably competent at woodwork, it is perfectly feasible to start from scratch with just a large sheet of flooring grade ¾" chipboard. An electric power saw makes the job much easier and can also give a better edge to the cut. It is often the edges which concern people as they are going to be visible somewhere around the loudspeaker cabinet and it is easy to think that to get rid of the ugly sight of these will be difficult. This is not necessarily true; there are several ways in which unsightly edges may be hidden from view. The simplest answer is not only to buy a kit of speakers, crossovers, and so on, but perhaps to buy a ready-cut cabinet kit as well — this does not rid you of dealing with edges, but at least they are all cleanly cut!

I had heard that Wilmslow kits were of a very high standard — several people having commented upon the ease with which they went together. That sort of build-up sometimes takes a bit of living up to and I waited for the delivery of the WE70 kit with some uncertainty. When they arrived my initial reaction was favourable; all cuts were clean and the method of construction looked simple and sensible. The sides, top and base are rebated by about ⅛". This not only gives you a better mechanical joint, but also makes it almost impossible to get any voids or gaps — which is good, acoustically speaking. It also means that with the minimum of care the cabinet will slot together into its correct shape with no unsquare corners or leaning sides. Included with the kit were two cardboard transmission tubes for the mid-range units, acoustic damping material, grille material (both black plastic foam for the reflex port and cloth for the front), nylon grille plugs and sockets, 3 mm wander plugs and sockets for loudspeaker lead connections, and the screws to fix the speaker units themselves. Last but not least there are written instructions on how to assemble the kit.

16 Steps To Heaven

Step one in the instructions is to examine the panels for transit damage. Presumably if any damage is noticed, Wilmslow Audio should be contacted as soon as possible. Step two is to remove all dust, etc from the panels. Any excess of wood dust from the sawing operation can only do harm so vacuum all surfaces. If there were any build-up of sawdust at the surfaces to be glued that sawdust could conceivably impair any glue joints and also cause the fit of the joints to be out of true.

Step three is to assemble the cabinet without gluing to check the fit. It is also suggested that panels be swapped around to find the optimum results. This step proved to be most encouraging ... I assembled one unit (panels only) and held it together with just one turn of linen tape (no string please — it can bite into the corners of the chipboard and cause you extra work later). The cabinet felt as firm as a rock. No glue, just well-fitting joints. Thus encouraged I rapidly got on to step four, which was to paint the face of the baffle board matt black. I gave it a couple of coats of sanding sealer — not so much to get a 'de luxe' finish but to seal the wood surface. Chipboard is pretty thirsty stuff and you can use up a lot of paint if you do not seal the surface first. Just be careful not to get any of the sealer or paint on the edges, as this may affect the glue joint you have to make later.

Step five is to glue the midrange enclosures (transmission tubes) to the baffle boards, using plenty of glue to ensure an air-tight seal. The baffle boards are recessed to take the cardboard tubes so it is easy to line up for position. I used Evostik Resin W, which is a PVA wood-working adhesive for all glue joints. It is easy to apply and may be cleaned off the hands/clothes as it is water soluble. Just don't put your speakers out in the rain! Light pressure to a PVA glued joint gives a better joint so I placed one of the side panels across the top of the four tubes to ensure a light even pressure. Rather than apply liberal amounts of glue in one dose I used sufficient so that a *small* bead of glue was squeezed out all around the tube. This was smoothed around with a handy finger and when dry a further fillet of glue was applied all round the tube/baffle joint. Four pieces of approximately 1" thick polyurethane foam are supplied which must be

glued to the rear (outside) end of the baffle tubes. Wharfedale recommend a hard rubber pad at this position but as this 1" foam is to be compressed to about 3/16" it probably is just as good.

Step six is probably the most critical point in the whole construction procedure, for at this point the cabinet panels are glued together. This entails gluing five of the six panels; the sixth (the side furthest from the mid-range enclosures) is placed in its position while the glue is setting but is not glued. This enables you to work inside the cabinet; fitting the crossover, acoustic wadding etc.

Wharfedale suggest that the acoustic wadding be attached to the inside of the panels before you reach this step. Wilmslow Audio suggest that the wadding be fixed *after* the panels have been glued. Although I only learnt of Wharfedales' suggestion after I had completed step six, I favour the Wilmslow approach for several reasons.

If the wadding is stuck/tacked or stapled to the panels before they are fitted together two things may happen: 1) some of the wadding may inadvertantly get caught between the panels and cause either an air gap or 2) force the cabinet to go together 'out of true'. Also, with the wadding in place you cannot inspect the inside corners to check that there is a continuous fillet of glue all along the joint.

If you choose the Wilmslow way you will have to cut the wadding to fit around the mid-range enclosures but in practice this proved to be a very simple task.

Getting A Grip

Holding the whole thing together while the glue sets is quite a teaser. I was fortunate to have a set of excellent clamps known as Jet System Clamps made by TMT Design Ltd of Leamington Spa. They cost about £10 per clamp but are worth their weight in gold for this type of job. The problem comes from the 1" thick foam stuck to the rear of the mid-range enclosures; this tends to force the back panel out of position. Wilmslow suggest either that clamps be used or that the joints be held *firmly* together with masking tape. It is possible with masking tape but only just; remember that unlike your trial fitting in step three, the foam pads are being compressed to about 3/16" and all but one panel has glue all along the edges and is quite capable of sliding all over the place! I bought a wide webbing strap from a camping shop to assist the initial stages of holding the four vertical panels approximately in place while I set up the clamps. The cost of the strap was wasted as I could not get enough tension in it to overcome the spring in the foam . . . a linen tape would have done just as well! If you are going to use masking tape then get someone to help apply the pressure to hold the front and back panels in position while you apply the tape. Lastly, cut up a thin polythene bag and place four pieces inside each corner of the panel that is not to be glued; it would be a shame if this stuck firmly to the rest of the panels by accident!

It is useful to have a rubber-faced hammer at this stage as, having clamped or taped the cabinet firmly together, you may wish to tap the panels firmly but lightly into position. A hammer *and* a block of wood do the trick just as well, but try not to mark or dent any edges. The places to look for out of true joints are the corners . . . remember once the glue has set there is nothing you can do, so a few light taps now can save the day. Wipe off excess glue with a damp cloth. Wipe from the centre of each panel *out* towards the edge; try not to get any glue smeared over the panels.

Having completed step six the rest of the construction is plain sailing. Step seven is simply to remove the loose side when the glue has set (leave for at least 24 hours). I then put a small fillet of glue all around the inside of all joints BUT not up to the edges where the last panel is to fit . . . we want it to go back from whence it came!

Step eight is to place the drive units and reflex port trims in the baffle board and mark accurately where pilot holes for the fixing screws are to be drilled. Although the chipboard is high density it has a fairly soft texture so it is well worth buying a new ⅛" drill bit. This ensures the pilot holes are clean and in the right place . . . worn bits tend to wander! Although I'm sure it is unnecessary I drilled all my pilot holes just deep enough for the screws by slipping a small rubber sleeve over the drill bit at the right depth. No-one could accuse me of having any extra holes or air gaps here!

Step nine is to position the grille frame on the front of the cabinet with the cabinet lying on its back. Use masking tape to hold it in position and carefully drill a pilot hole through the grille and into the baffle board. I used a 1/16" drill bit and drilled four holes, one in each corner section of the grille frame. These holes can now be drilled out to the correct size to accept the nylon plugs and sockets that hold the grille in place. Wilmslow supply eight plugs/sockets for each grille but as Wharfedale suggested that four would be sufficient I chose the latter. It is far easier to line up four holes than eight! For the socket in the baffle board I used a 7/16" bit and for the grille a 7/32" bit. Don't forget to drill only from the rear of the grille and only to a depth of ¼-5/16". The 1/16" pilot hole may be filled with wood filler but when the grille material is fitted I doubt that these holes can be seen. If you are happy with the finish on the baffle board then glue the sockets in now; if not, then wait until you have quite finished before fixing them in position. Do not stick the plugs in the grille until you have fixed the material in place. I used a quickset epoxy glue for these fittings.

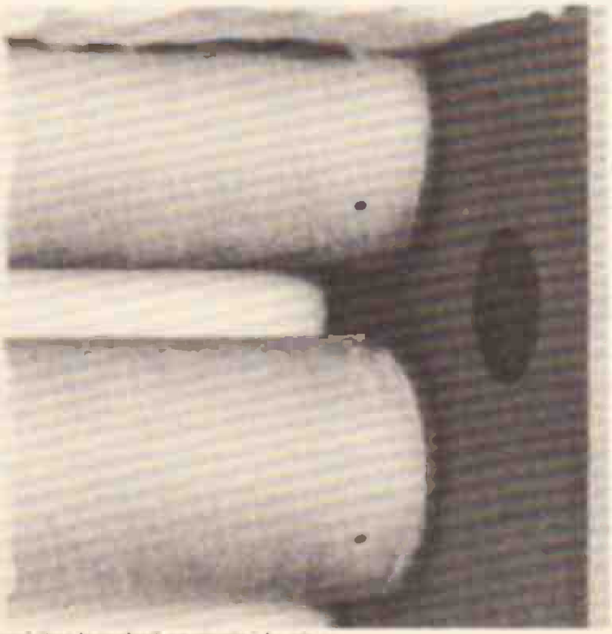
Step 10 is to glue the black, acoustically transparent foam over the inside of the reflex port aperture. You can use either PVA glue or quickset epoxy, just be careful not to get any of the adhesive on the foam where it is over the port.

Step 11 is to position the crossover network inside the cabinet on the rear panel opposite the bass unit aperture. Before you screw it into position check that the leads from the drive units can reach their appropriate tags! Wharfedale recommend that the crossover has a piece of felt or foam between it and the panel to prevent any vibration rattles. Also in step 11 is the fitting of the input terminals through the rear panel. I smeared the threads on these sockets with some latex glue, again to ensure that there would be no air gaps. Solder the leads from the crossover to these terminals — make sure they are connected correctly, red to red and black to black!

Step 12 is to cut three 5" discs of wadding and place these in the mid-range tubes. The Wharfedale instructions that come with every Speakercraft unit specify that the packing density of this wadding should increase towards the back of the tube and that the tube should be completely filled with wadding. In view of this I cut two extra discs and fluffed out those towards the front of the tube.

It's In The Bag

Step 13 is to line the inside of the cabinet with the acoustic wadding and glue the remaining side into place. Now comes the tricky bit — how do you slide the wadding up behind the mid-range tubes? The wadding catches on the side panel and snags up behind the tubes! Easy — get a large polythene bag 12" or more wide and about 15" to 18" long, slide the wadding into the bag, slide the bag plus the wadding up behind the tubes and, lightly holding the wadding in place, pull out the bag. Cutting the wadding to fit round the tubes sounds fiddly but turned out to be quite easy. Cut the holes for the tubes smaller rather than larger as the wadding will easily stretch to fit comfortably in place. No wadding is required on the baffle board but don't forget to put wadding on the loose side panel before you glue it into place! The wadding may be tacked or stapled into place.



The wadding is tacked or stapled in place.

Step 14 is to attach the wires to the drive units — *observing the correct polarity* (if in doubt refer to the Speakercraft instructions and double-check every connection), and screw all units and ports to the cabinet. Wire up and fit the bass unit last as the bass aperture gives you ample room to work inside the cabinet connecting wires to the crossover. The wires from the mid-range units come through small holes in the tubes and these holes should be sealed after you have connected the wires to the crossover. The fitting of the drive units should only be started after the glue joints of the final side have thoroughly set and any glue fumes have completely cleared. The comment regarding fumes is highly pertinent if you are not using a water-based adhesive. There is a possibility that the fumes could affect certain plastics used in the construction of the drive units.

Step 15: You have two working loudspeaker systems, so connect them to your amplifier and sit back and enjoy your favourite record.

Step 16. The cabinets are now ready for their final cosmetic treatment. There are a number of options open to you; they may be:

- veneered either by you or a local cabinet-maker.
- covered in iron-on veneer or plastic laminate.
- sealed and then painted (preferably sprayed) in colour of your choice.
- Wilmslow Audio also suggest the use of a 'Contact' type covering as these can be obtained in very realistic wood-grain finishes.

Whichever method you opt for you will probably have to attend to the cabinet edges/joints before you can proceed. Due to the small but noticeable tolerances in the cutting of the panels, the amount of glue and the pressure used during the construction, there are likely to be a few panels that are slightly proud of the edges that butt up to them. There are several ways to solve these problems but the simplest is to use one of the proprietary wood fillers. Which choice depends upon your choice of finish.

If the cabinets are to be covered in plastic laminate you can afford to use one of the more easily worked fillers such as Fine Surface Polyfilla, Alabastine or Plaster of Paris. If, on the other hand, you are going to cover them with 'Contact' or simply spray-paint them then I would suggest a tougher type of filler that is less likely to crack or crumble. My choice here would be one of the car body fillers — they are easier to sand than some of the loaded general-purpose fillers from the DIY shop. So you are less likely to sand away the wood from the cabinet instead of the filler!

The grille material must be stretched over the grille frames and either tacked/stapled or glued (or both) to the inside of the frame. The material supplied by Wilmslow Audio stretched easily and evenly; I smeared PVA glue over the rear faces of the frames (having first painted them black) and stapled the material in place while the glue set. When set I trimmed off the excess material (having removed the 50-odd staples) and ran another bead of the adhesive over the edge of the material.

Looking back on the construction of this E70 loudspeaker system using the WE70 flat-packs, I can only say that I am very satisfied with the way they went together. There were one or two instructions that could have been a little clearer but they have been covered in this article. Common sense would probably have solved any uncertainties but I chose to phone Rank Hi Fi to confirm my conclusions. The people I spoke to did not know that I was writing this review and so it is a pleasure to say the they could not have been more helpful. This entire project has been enjoyable from first to last.

BUYLINES

Wilmslow Audio sell the complete WE70 package (flat pack, drivers and all components for two speakers) for £220 plus £8 carriage. Wilmslow Audio, 35/39 Church Street, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 1AS.

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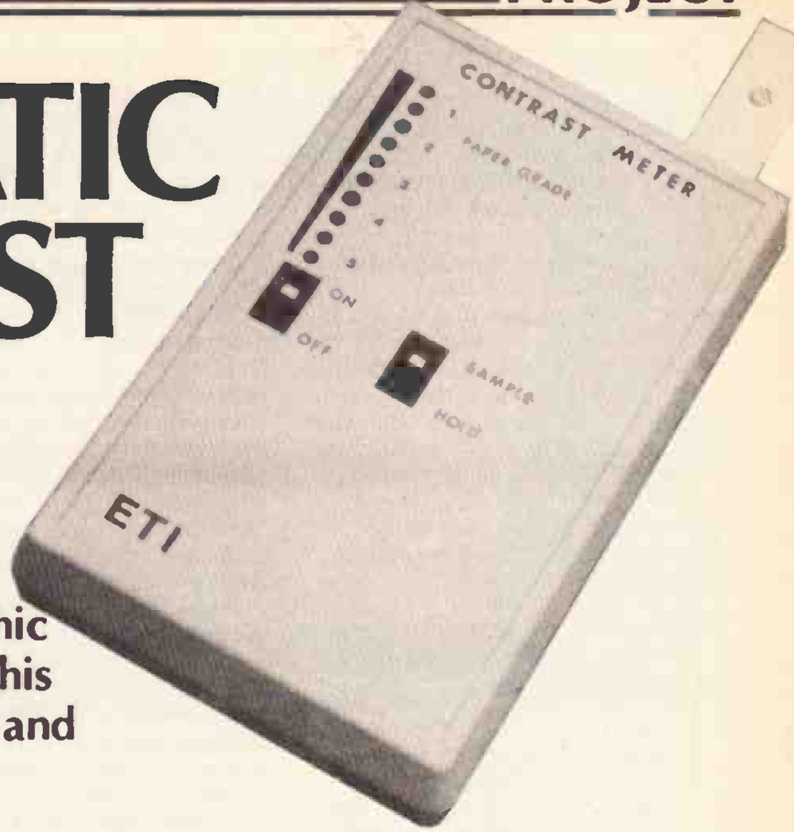
AUTOMATIC CONTRAST METER



What's black and white and read all over? Answer — a photographic negative, providing you've built this simple and useful device. Design and development by Rory Holmes.

Contrast ratio is a very important quality of photographic negatives that must be assessed during the printing process, in order to select the correct grade of photographic paper. The contrast of negatives depends on the type of film used, the lighting conditions and the developing process; consequently five grades of printing paper are available to enable the full range of tones from black to white to be reproduced from any negative. Grade 1 is termed the softest and it is used with the highest contrast negatives. At the other end of the scale, grade 5 is the hardest paper, which will enhance the tonal variations of poor contrast negatives.

During the design stage of this project we experimented initially with two separate photodetectors which measured the instantaneous light difference between two points. There are a number of problems with this approach, as the photodiodes and their associated amplifiers must be carefully matched in light sensitivity.

Secondly, the lightest and darkest points of the image must be known exactly, and the two photodetectors need to be simultaneously positioned on these points while the reading is taken. This is an awkward business at the best of times, but especially so in a darkroom!

We considered that a different approach was required and developed the circuit of Fig. 1 to overcome some of these difficulties. Only one photodetector is used and the peak positive and negative voltages obtained from different light levels are followed and stored independently by sample and hold circuits.

Now, as long as the photodiode is scanned at some time through the lightest and darkest points of the image, the peak detectors will memorize the maximum and minimum voltages, and thus provide a contrast measurement.

The photodetector input stage of our meter is rather unusual in its configuration. Photodiodes are usually

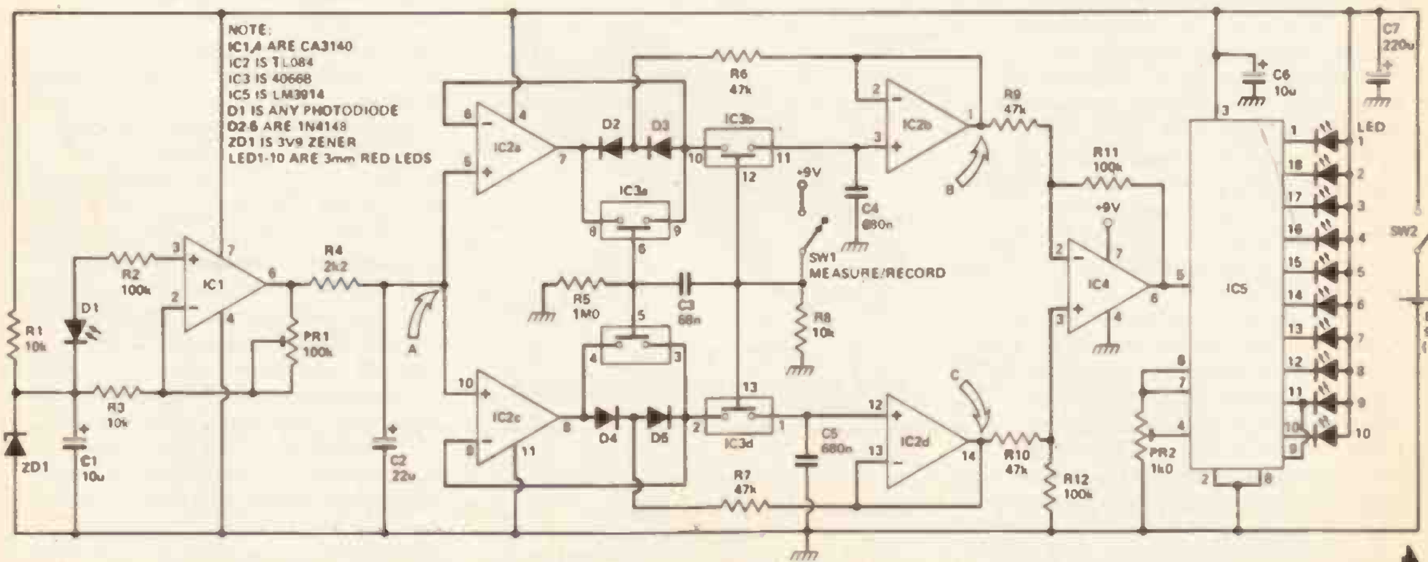


Fig. 1 Circuit diagram of the Contrast Meter.

used in the 'photovoltaic mode' where the photocurrent developed and measured is linearly proportional to the light intensity. Our input amplifier has an extremely high input impedance and thus measures the open circuit voltage generated by the photodiode. This voltage is logarithmically proportional to irradiance as the graph of Fig. 2 illustrates. This is a very convenient property since the sampling circuitry can now work on the log of the light level to provide maximum and minimum values. By simply subtracting these two values with a differential amplifier we obtain a voltage that is logarithmically proportional to the ratio of the maximum and minimum light levels, ie the contrast.

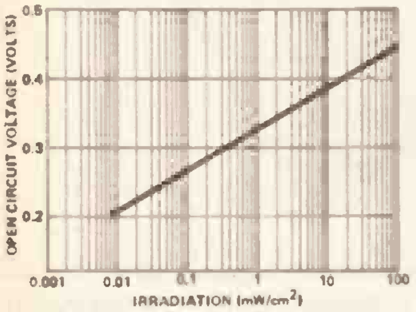


Fig. 2 Response of the photodiode used in this project.

Meter Made

The ETI contrast meter was intended primarily to determine the paper grade for a well balanced print; consequently a 10 LED bargraph type meter is sufficiently accurate for calibrating the five grades of paper. At today's prices this also works out somewhat cheaper than a moving coil meter and is less prone to damage. After calibration, the meter will be found very easy to use. It is switched on with the 'sample/hold' switch in the 'hold' position and placed down flat on the enlarger base with the photodetector probe anywhere in the image area. (The photodiode has been mounted in a separate probe with its amplifier in order to keep it as close to the focused image plane as possible. If it were much higher than this the detecting element would pass through an unfocused image, giving a false contrast reading).

Any red safety lights should be switched off before the reading is taken to avoid error since the photodiode is responsive at this wavelength. The sample/hold switch should now be moved to the sample position; this will clear any previous reading and start measuring light variations. Now the photodiode may be moved across the image and through the areas that look the brightest and darkest. This can be done quite slowly thanks to the peak detectors' long memory time; however, several areas should be scanned to ensure the recording of the true maximum and minimum. The eye can be deceived quite easily by those cunning optical illusions lurking among the shades of grey!

During the scanning process the reading on the LED scale will increase and finally level-off at the true contrast ratio when the black and white peaks have been covered. Before removing the meter from the image area the sample/hold switch should be set to 'hold'. The meter will now be immune to further light variations and will continue to display the contrast reading for a considerable time, thanks to the even longer memory of the sample/hold circuitry!

A true ratio is provided by the meter and thus the contrast reading for a given negative will be independent of the light source intensity and enlargement size (photographic aberrations known as "circles of confusion" may produce sources of error under certain conditions). Negatives may thus be compared or matched for contrast.

Construction

The meter is built into a slim style plastic enclosure produced by OK Machine and Tool company. This houses the battery and main PCB on which all the parts are mounted. Since the light sensing element must be as close to the enlarger base plane as possible, we have mounted it externally on a separate small PCB with its associated amplifier. A probe to house the external sensor is made from a short length of aluminium channel extrusion. Figure 3 shows the

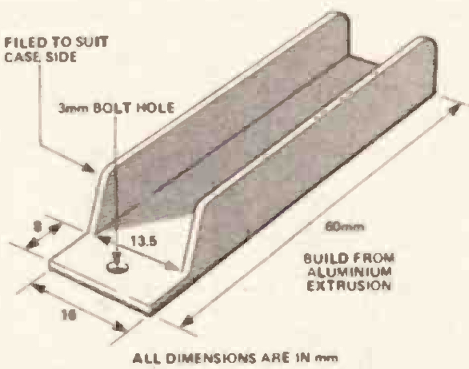


Fig. 3 Details for the aluminium extrusion that houses the photoprobe.

dimensions for the probe; if the aluminium channel proves difficult to obtain, a piece of the slotted aluminium extrusion used for commercial shelf-racking systems is ideal. This is available from most DIY stores in short lengths with the required internal width. After filing or cutting to the right size, a piece of insulating tape should be stuck down on the inside to prevent shorting out the PCB. As shown in the diagram, a hole is drilled on the end for bolting it to the bottom of the case. This bolt should eventually be connected to circuit ground, thus providing screening for the photo-amplifier. The two PCBs for probe and main meter circuits are laid out as one board, and should be sawn apart along the lines shown on the foil patterns.

For other construction arrangements, the circuit can be left as a single board, since the interconnections are already made.

Three wires are used to connect the two boards together as indicated on the overlay; these should pass through a small hole drilled in the case side where the metal probe case is bolted on. When the probe board is mounted and stuck down in its channel, a piece of thin aluminium sheet is cut to form a lid with appropriate holes for the photodiode and preset. (The photodiode case is internally connected to the cathode, so it must not short against the lid).

Calibration

Start with preset PR1 fully clockwise to set a gain of 1; also set PR2 fully anticlockwise, setting the voltage required to illuminate the lower end of the bargraph at zero. First, measure a high contrast negative that is known to require grade 1 paper for a good average contrast after developing. Initially a low contrast reading will be obtained, say about grade 4 or 5. Now, adjust PR1 anticlockwise to increase the gain of the photoamplifier. Take another measurement, when the contrast reading should be greater. Repeat this process until a grade 1 is consistently recorded.

Now select a negative with very poor contrast ratio, one known to require paper grade 5 for bringing out the contrast. Take measurements several times while adjusting only PR2 clockwise, until the bottom end of the scale illuminates at grade 5. The other contrast grades should now fall linearly between these points and can be checked for accuracy.

Although the bargraph display has a low resolution and accuracy, the rest of the metering circuit is obviously much better than this; consequently a moving coil meter could easily be added to measure the contrast voltage for those who may desire greater resolution.

HOW IT WORKS

The general circuit arrangement consists of a photo-amplifier which feeds a voltage derived from varying light levels in an enlarger, to a pair of peak detectors. One follows the peak positive voltage and the other the peak negative voltage. The capacitors used for storing the voltage peaks in the followers also form part of sample and hold circuits which are then switched to 'hold' after measurement. Their outputs represent the maximum and minimum values of light intensity. A differential amplifier then computes the ratio of these values and the result is displayed on an LED bargraph meter.

IC1, a CA3140 CMOS op-amp, is used as the photodetector amplifier. It is configured as a non-inverting DC amplifier with a gain variable from unity to about 10, set by PR1. Although IC1 can have input and output voltages all the way to ground, this facility is not used owing to the driving requirement of the TL084 quad op-amp. This requires inputs at least 1 V above ground, and thus IC1's output is offset by a reference voltage of 3V9 provided by R1, ZD1 and C1. The anode of the photodiode is connected via R2 to the non-inverting terminal of IC1 which has an effectively infinite input impedance. Thus the open circuit voltage generated by the photodiode is amplified according to the gain set around IC1 and appears at the output on pin 6 added to the reference voltage.

The voltage at point A (ignoring the reference offset) will be logarithmically proportional to the intensity of incident light, owing to the properties of the photodiode (see Fig. 2) R4 and C2 form a simple filter to remove 100 Hz ripple caused by AC mains bulbs. This voltage is fed directly to the peak detectors. These circuits are essentially the same, the difference being the polarity of the rectifier diodes. They operate in exactly the same way, and we shall deal only with the peak positive voltage follower.

Assume initially that the CMOS analogue switch IC3c is open and IC3d is closed. C5 will be connected to the output of op-amp IC2c via the rectifiers D4 and 5 (we can ignore the action of R7 for the moment). C5 will charge up via the rectifiers to the most positive voltage peak when the voltage at point A on the non-inverting terminal is greater than the capacitor voltage applied to the inverting terminal. The voltage held on C5 will droop over a period of time due to leakage current through the rectifiers D4 and 5 and the input bias current of IC2c. IC2c was chosen as a FET op-amp with a low input bias current and R7 is included to reduce the diode leakage current.

IC2d is connected to C5 as a straightforward high impedance voltage follower to buffer the stored voltage. When the input voltage to IC2c at point A drops below the peak value, IC2c's output will go negative, reverse biasing D4. However, IC2d applies the capacitor voltage via R7 to the anode of D5, effectively removing leakage current through D5.

The peak positive value of the signal at A thus appears at point C, and likewise the peak negative value at point B. When the analogue switch IC3d is now opened, C5 is disconnected from the peak detector and acts in conjunction with IC2d as a sample and hold circuit thus isolating the measured values from further light variations.

When SW1 is open, R8 and R5 hold the control pins 13 and 5 of IC3 low, opening both analogue switches. This is the 'hold' mode. When SW1 is now closed, the control pin 13 is taken high, switching to the 'sample' mode. C3 and R5 produce a positive pulse (about 50 mS) on control pin 5 to briefly short out D4 and D5, so resetting the peak detector to the current voltage at point A. When C3 has charged the IC3c switch will open again, allowing the peak detector to function.

IC4 is wired as a differential amplifier with a gain of 2, to subtract the voltage at point C from point B. Since these voltages are the log of the light levels, the output on pin 6 will represent the contrast ratio of these light values.

IC5 is a standard LED bargraph driver, the LM3914. The input voltage on pin 5 is converted linearly to illuminate one LED on a scale of 10. Full scale deflection (LED 10) is set internally at 1V2; the zero scale deflection is set by PR2 anywhere between 0V and 1V2 during the calibration process. C6, a 10 uF tantalum, is required for IC5 to ensure stability from oscillation.

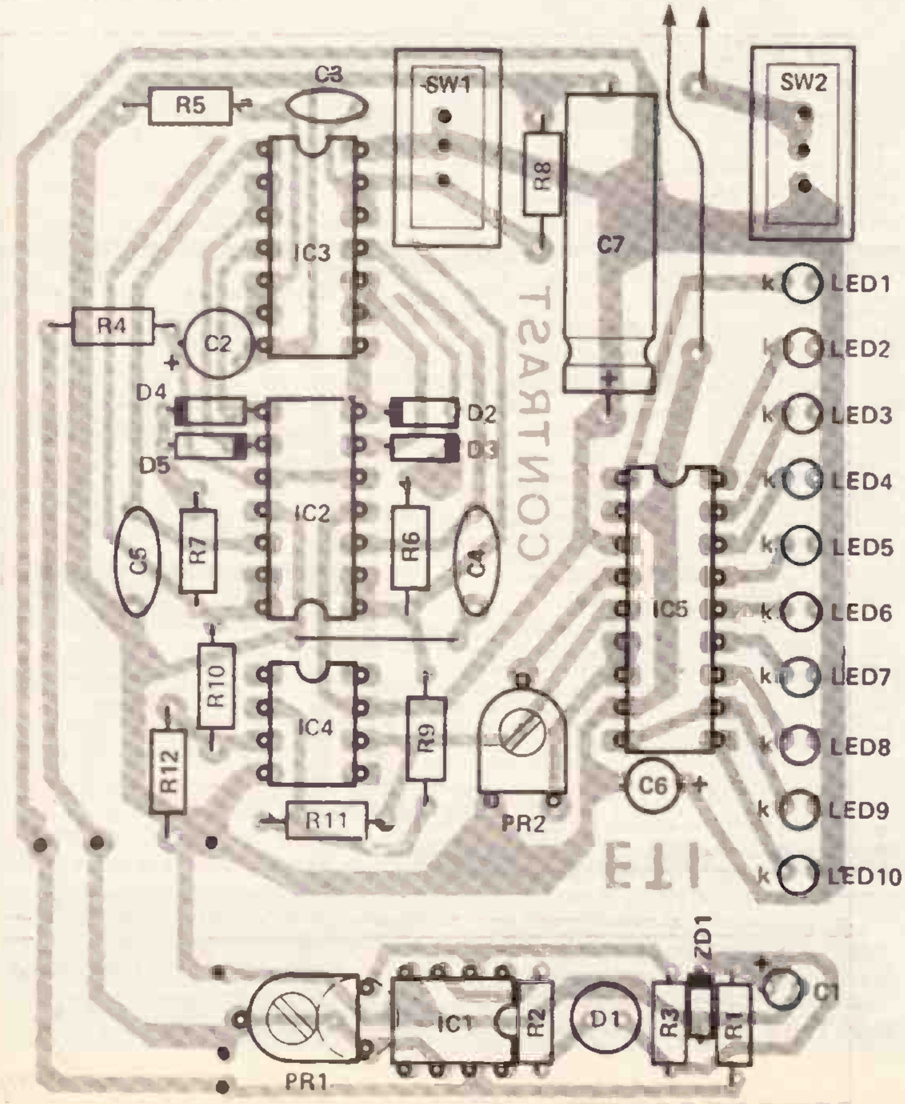


Fig. 4 (Left) Component overlay for the meter (showing the board uncut).

PARTS LIST

Resistors (all ¼ W, 5%)	
R1, 3, 8	10k
R2, 11, 12	100k
R4	2k2
R5	1M0
R6, 7, 9, 10	47R
Presets	
PR1	100k subminiature horizontal preset
PR2	1k0 miniature horizontal preset
Capacitors	
C1	10u 35 V tantalum
C2	22u 25 V tantalum
C3	220u 16 V electrolytic
C4, 6	82n polycarbonate
C5	68 n ceramic
Semiconductors	
IC 1,4	CA3140
IC2	TL084
IC3	4066B
IC5	LM3914
D1	BPX65
D2, 3, 4, 5	1N4148
LED1-10	3 mm red LED
Miscellaneous	
SW1, 2	miniature slide switches

Case (see Buylines); PCB (see Buylines); B1 PP3 9 V battery (preferably alkaline type).

BUYLINES

The photodiode specified in the Parts List is the one used in our prototype, but any general purpose type should do. The case we used is a Pactec type HP, size 146 x 91 x 28 mm. The PCB is available from us using the order form on page 44 — price is £2.12.

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Now you can buy your boards straight from the designers — us! As of this issue all (non-copyright) PCBs will be available automatically from the ETI PCB Service. Each board is produced from the same master used to build our prototypes, so you can be *sure* it's accurate, and will be finished to the high standard you would expect from ETI.
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DESIGNER'S NOTEBOOK

Five into one does go. This month Don Keighley explains all about sampling and time-division multiplex systems, and looks closely at the advantages of pulse-width modulated telecommunications networks.

Sampling is a process we can undertake if we want to combine many different signals on to a single transmission line. The transmission line can be of any type such as wire, radio, or optical. Combining several signals into one is called 'multiplexing' and can save the expense of having many separate lines. Sampling is used in a specific type of multiplexing called time-division multiplexing (TDM) which I'll explain later. The other form of multiplexing — frequency-division multiplexing (FDM) — is the basis of all standard radio transmissions. Each signal to be transmitted is mixed with a carrier wave (or radio frequency) on to a set frequency within the radio spectrum. Thus many signals can be transmitted and received by radio link — one on each defined frequency of the radio spectrum.

Figure 1 shows an illustration of sampling. In the figure, a sinusoidal signal (known as the message signal) has a series of values taken at regular intervals. These sample values can be used to represent the message signal. For instance, we can pass the actual DC values of the samples, ie their voltages, along the line. At the other end of the line the sample values, or pulses as they are usually called, are converted back into the message signal, simply by passing them through a lowpass filter. The filter removes the high frequency pulses and thus re-creates the envelope of the original message signal — as shown by the sinewave of Fig. 2.

One of the most important questions arising is — How often do we need to sample the message signal? It is obvious that if the signal is sampled too few times we won't be able to reconvert the pulses into the message signal at the receiving end of the transmission line.

The minimum number of samples is given by the sampling theorem, which states that a message signal of bandwidth B Hz can be represented by a set of sample values taken at a frequency of 2B Hz. For example, an audio system has a frequency response of 20 Hz to 20 kHz. Its bandwidth is thus 20,000 − 20 = 19,980 Hz. The audio signal of the system can thus be represented if samples are taken at 2 x 19,980 Hz = 39,960 Hz.

But the *minimum* number of representative samples (2B Hz) isn't the *easiest* number of samples to convert back into the message signal. It's usual to take a greater number of samples because doing so makes the reconversion easier. To see why this is so we've got to take a look at the spectra of the transmitted samples and see how they differ when different sample frequencies are used. Figure 3 shows the possible spectrum of a message signal such as an audio signal. It's the sort of result you would see on the screen of a spectrum analyser. Frequency f_m is the maximum frequency contained in the signal. The lowest frequency contained is 0 Hz (the signal extends down to DC); so the bandwidth of the message signal is $f_m - 0 = f_m$ Hz.

When the message signal is sampled at a frequency f_s the overall spectrum looks something like that shown in Fig. 4 and consists of components at harmonics of the sampling frequency, with upper and lower sidebands around them, as well as the original spectrum of the message signal. In Fig. 4 you can see the sampling frequency, f_s, is more than twice f_m — hence there is a gap between the highest frequency of the higher sideband of a

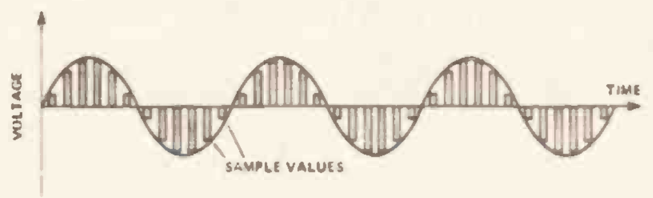

Fig. 1 A message signal can be represented by a series of sample values of the signal.

Fig. 3 Power density spectrum of typical audio signal. The higher frequency component in the signal is f_m. The signal extends down to 0 Hz, so the bandwidth of the signal is f_m Hz.

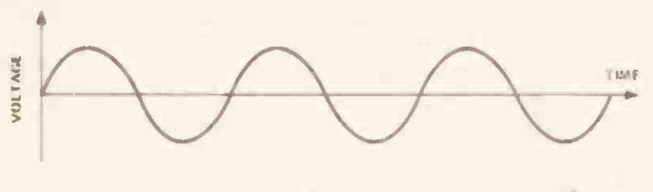

Fig. 2 If the series of sample values is passed through a lowpass filter the original message signal is recreated.

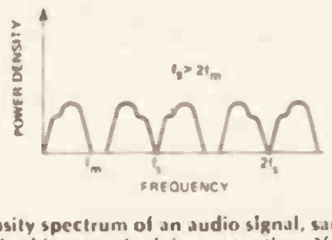

Fig. 4 Power density spectrum of an audio signal, sampled at a frequency of f_s. In this example, f_s is greater than $2f_m$.

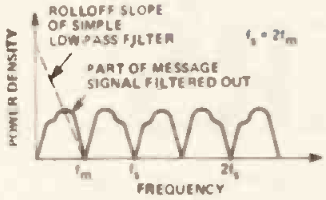

Fig. 5 Sampling frequency f_s equals $2f_m$. A simple lowpass filter may filter out some of the wanted message signal.

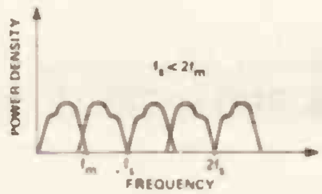

Fig. 6 Sampling frequency less than $2f_m$. A lowpass filter cannot be used to recreate the original message signal.

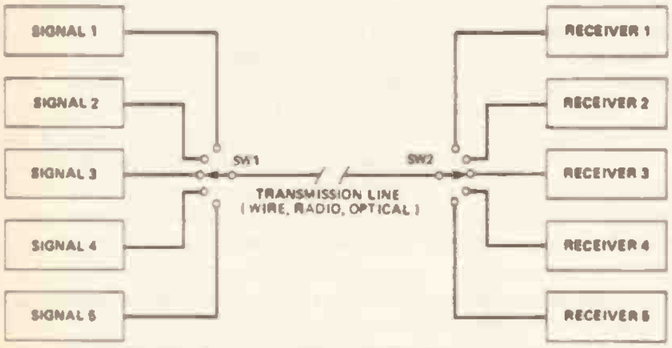

Fig. 7 A simple time-division multiplex (TDM) system.

component and the lowest frequency in the lower sideband of the next component. This gap between bands means that a simple lowpass filter can be used at the receiver to pass only the message signal and not the higher components: so the message signal is recreated.

With a sampling frequency of only $2f_m$ (Fig. 5) the highest frequency of one band and the lowest frequency of the next occur at the same point. A simple lowpass filter would filter out some of the message signal, as shown in the figure. A more complex lowpass filter (with a steeper roll-off slope) could be used to correctly recreate the message signal.

In Fig. 6, f_s is less than $2f_m$ and, as you would expect, the spectrum shows how message signal and sidebands overlap. A lowpass filter *cannot* be used to recover the whole of the message signal without letting through part of the next sideband.

TDM Tricks

A simple TDM system is shown in Fig. 7, in block diagram form. Each signal to be transmitted is connected to an input of switch SW1. This switch, although shown in the diagram as a mechanical-type switch, will be of electronic construction in a real TDM system, so that a high switching speed can be obtained. The output signal from the switch is transmitted along the transmission line to switch SW2, which connects each receiver, in turn, to the line. Providing the switches are operating fast enough so that the sampling theorem is fulfilled ($f_s \geq 2f_m$) for *all* the message signals, everything is fine and we have five signals passing down one line.

The whole process of sampling and TDM is a form of modulation because only a representation of the message signal is transmitted, not the actual signal. And because pulsed samples of the message signal are transmitted, we call the process pulse modulation.

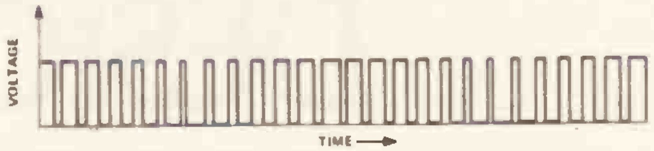

Fig. 8 Pulse-width modulation. The width of each pulse varies in accordance with the amplitude of the message signal.

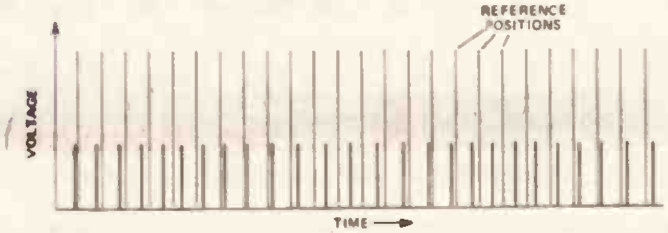

Fig. 9 Pulse-position modulation. Each pulse's position, with respect to a reference point, varies in accordance with the message signal amplitude.

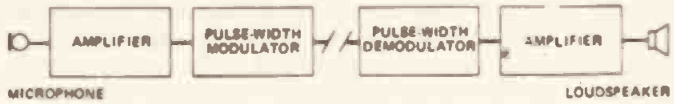

Fig. 10 A pulse-width modulation microphone/loudspeaker system.

There are various forms of pulse modulation which can be used in a TDM system, all relying on the fact that the original sample values control some property of corresponding pulses. The one just described uses the DC value (ie amplitude) of the pulses and is therefore known as pulse-amplitude modulation. Other forms of pulse modulation are: pulse-width modulation (where the width of the pulses is varied according to the sampled value) and pulse-position modulation (the position of the pulse, relative to a reference position, is proportional to the sample value). Figures 8 and 9 show examples of these pulse modulation systems and the sampling frequencies of both must follow the sampling theorem — the sampling frequency must be at least twice that of the message signal bandwidth. There is a final pulsed system, in which each sampled value is converted into a train of binary digits. This is, strictly speaking, a digital system and doesn't concern us here; however the system must still follow the sampling theorem.

Practical Matters

With careful design all the pulse modulation systems can give good results in TDM but perhaps the best — because it's easy to use, has a high immunity to interference and yet needs a minimum of component hardware — is pulse-width modulation (PWM). Figure 10 shows a block diagram of a PWM microphone/loudspeaker set-up — such as you might have in a multi-station intercom system or similar.

We can investigate the modulation and demodulation blocks in more detail, as in Fig. 11 and 12. Figure 11 shows a simplified pulse-width modulator. It consists of an oscillator to provide sampling pulses at a rate of over $2f_m$, so that the sampling theorem is fulfilled. In a good quality audio modulator, the sampling rate is therefore over 40 kHz and the time between pulses must be $1/f_s$ = 25 uS.

The pulse duration is less than this, say 1 uS, and each pulse charges the capacitor C1 to full voltage. After charging, the capacitor is linearly discharged via the constant current source. The cycle repeats itself at every pulse. The capacitor's discharge rate is a product of the capacitor/constant current time constant, which should be about 2 uS. Comparator IC1 compares the ramp discharge with the incoming audio signal — when the non-inverting input voltage is above that of the inverting input

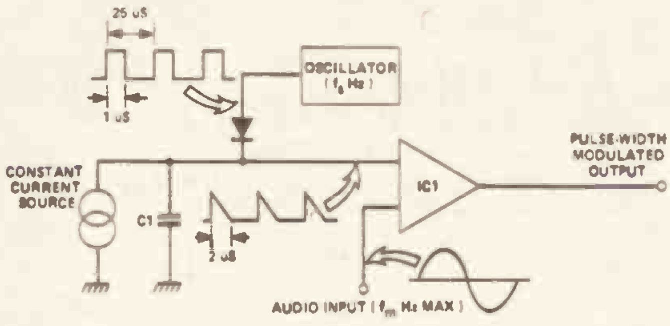

Fig. 11 A pulse-width modulator in detail.

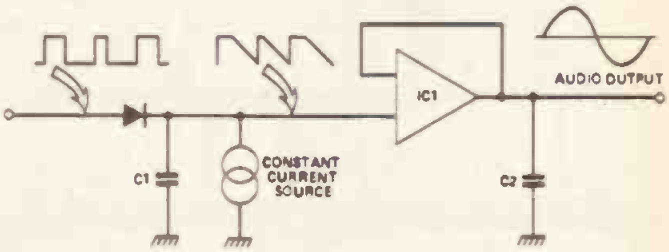

Fig. 12 A pulse-width demodulator can be built using the same basic components used in a pulse-width modulator.

the comparator output is high; when the non-inverting input is below the inverting input the output is low. Thus the output is high the instant of every sampling pulse, but falls low again after a time which is linearly related to the amplitude of the audio signal. In other words, the width of the pulse is modulated by the audio signal.

A pulse-width demodulator is shown in Fig. 12. A capacitor with a parallel constant current source is again used and the incoming width-modulated pulses cause a charge/discharge cycle similar to that in the modulator. The average DC level of charge across the capacitor is dependent on the width of the pulses — the wider the pulse, the higher the DC level. Buffer IC1 prevents loading of the voltage across the capacitor and the output is lowpass filtered by capacitor C2 to remove the sharp spikes of the sampling pulses, thus re-creating the original audio message signal.

The advantages of such a system aren't always immediately obvious, but you must remember that the audio signal is being represented by a pulse of nominal width 2 uS in a cycling time of 25 uS. This means that 12 different, high-quality audio signals can be time-division multiplexed down that transmission line simultaneously and without interference — and this is just a simple system. With a shorter nominal pulse width and more accurate modulators and demodulators, many more signals can be multiplexed on to a single transmission line.

It's all down to economics really. When you look at a large telecommunications system like the telephone network, there are literally thousands upon thousands of miles of expensive copper cable. By putting 100 telephone conversations down one line the overall cable cost is only 1/100th of that of a non-multiplexed system. Makes sense, doesn't it!

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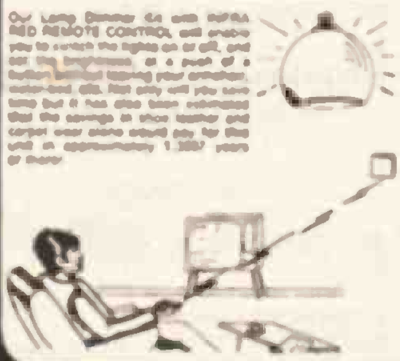

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SOUND EFFECTS 1: BOMB DROP

One of the attractions of the more sophisticated video games seen in 'fun' arcades these days is the realistic array of sound effects that go with the action — gunshots, bomb whistles and explosions, etc. Make some yourself with just one IC. Design by Phil Wait.

Those 'cannon shots' and explosions that go with the popular 'Space Invaders' video games and its variants add a measure of interest, feedback and stimulation to the action in which you participate on screen. Those sounds are electronically synthesised — that is, they consist of a complex mixture of waveforms that make up the required sound.

A 'bomb drop and explosion' is a remarkably complex sound when analysed carefuly. Looking at it simply, there is a descending tone followed by a burst of noise that dies away in intensity. The descending tone starts at quite a high pitch and is not a 'pure' tone (ie a sine wave). The explosion is a burst of noise that commences suddenly and dies away slowly in a recognisable way (usually exponentially). While it is possible to electronically produce very nearly an exact replica of a bomb drop and explosion, some compromises are acceptable to reduce the complexity and cost of the task and yet produce a recognisable replica of the sound.

To produce such sound using conventional components — transistors, diodes, op-amps, resistors and capacitors — would require a whole legion of components. Fortunately, the IC maufacturers can come to our rescue here and much of the circuitry can be incorporated into a complex integrated circuit requiring the addition of a minimum of external components and the appropriate interconnections to synthesise the required sound. Generating a wide variety of sounds fortunately requires only a limited number of functional blocks, such as: a noise generator, voltage controlled oscillators, multivibrators, envelope generators (a sort of modulator), mixers and amplifiers. Tim Orr discusses such circuitry elsewhere in this issue.

Texas Instruments, the giant US-based component and equipment manufacturer, have designed a series of complex function ICs for various applications and among them is the SN76488 Complex Sound Generator. This chip contains both linear and digital circuitry and is intended for use in applications requiring audio feed-back to the user — video games, pinball, alarms, toys, etc, or industrial indicators, feedback controls and the like. Power consumption is quite low, allowing battery operation, and only a single supply rail is required.

The SN76488 is contained in a 28-pin package and can be purchased for less than £5. It is quite a versatile chip, but we have chosen to describe how to obtain only two sound effects, these being a bomb drop and explosion, and a steam train and whistle. The former is described here; the latter appears on page 118.

Construction

Both the projects described use the one PCB design. Only the required components are assembled into the board according to each overlay diagram to obtain the required sound generator. Naturally enough, the polarity of the IC should be noted as well as the polarity of electrolytic and tantalum capacitors used. Commence construction by assembling the passive components, followed by the IC. This is not a CMOS device and no special care is required, apart from being careful not to bend any pins under the device when inserting it. If you wish, a socket may be used for the IC. This way, you can assemble both projects and purchase only one IC, swapping between the boards as you need to use them!

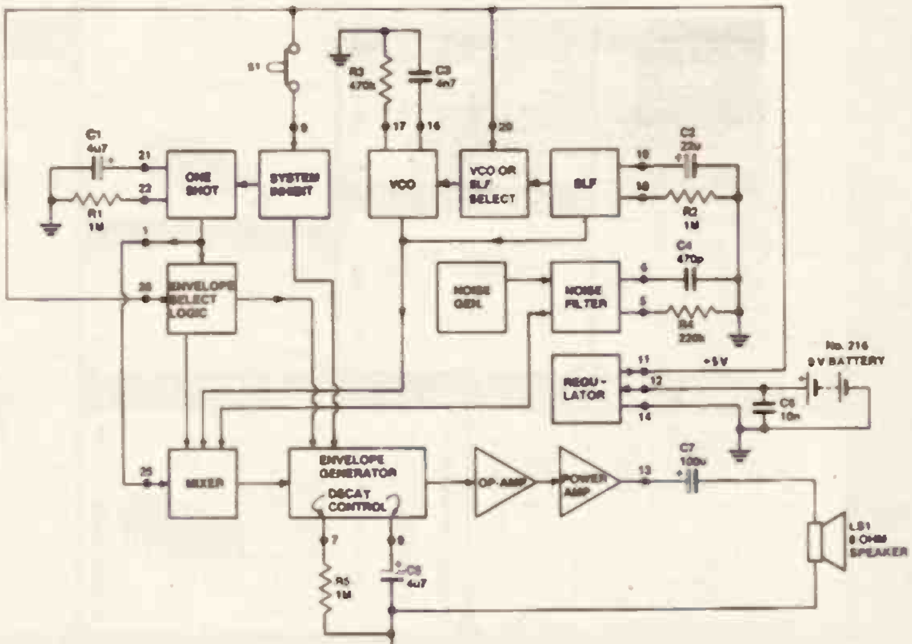


Fig. 1 Circuit diagram of the Bomb Drop and Explosion sound effects board.

Wiring to the switches, the speaker and the supply should be attached last.

The unit may be mounted in any convenient-sized box and the speaker mounted on the front. Alternatively, it may be wired into an existing piece of equipment. We'll have to leave these arrangements up to you.

Projectile Project

This produces a 'bomb drop and explosion' sound at the press of a button. Alternatively, the push-button PB1 could be replaced by a pair of relay contacts operated by a piece of equipment or a transistor (emitter to pin 9, collector to other side of PB1) that is turned on by a logic high applied to its base via a resistor.

This project is one of the most complex, using almost every functional block within the SN76488. Varying R3 and C3 a little will vary the pitch range of the 'bomb drop' (desending whistle), while varying R4 or C4 a little will alter the characteristics of the explosion. Note that it is generally easier to 'fine tune' things by varying the resistor values. The duration of the event can be varied by changing the value of either C1 or R1 and the decay of the explosion can be changed by varying R5 (varying C5 produces quite gross changes in the decay period).

Watch that you insert the link on the PCB in this one, located at the 'notch' end of the IC.

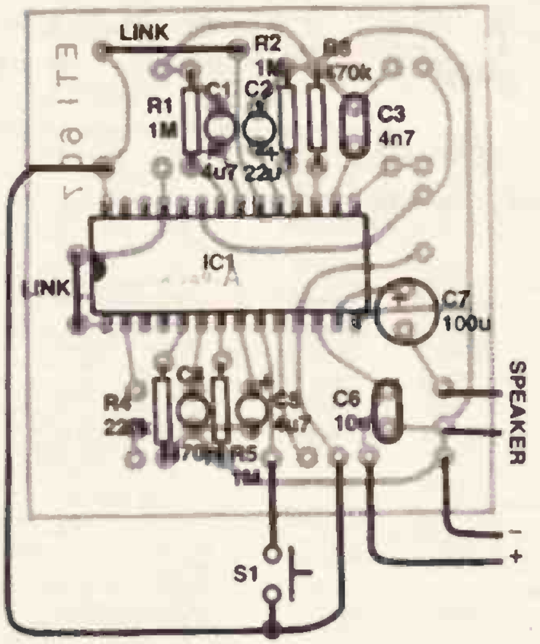
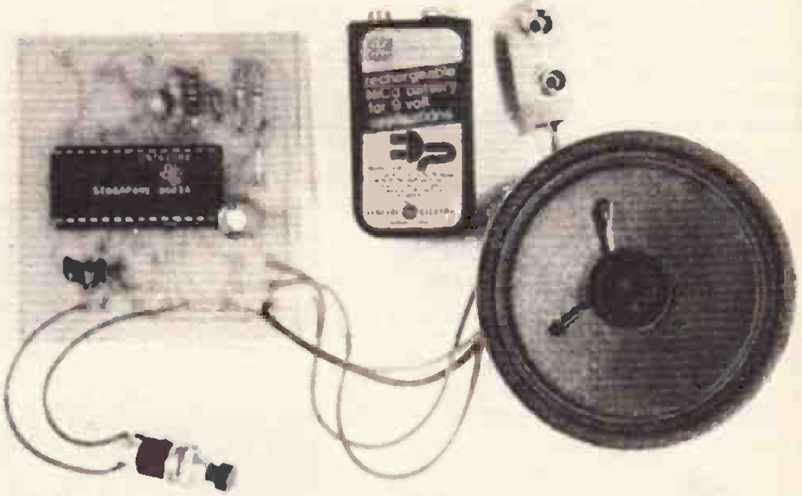


Fig. 2 Component overlay for the Bomb Drop board.



PARTS LIST

Resistors (all ¼ W, 5%)

R1,2,5	1M0
R3	470k
R4	20k

Capacitors

C1,5	4u7 16 V PCB electrolytic
C2	22u 16 V tantalum
C3	4n7 ceramic
C4	470p ceramic
C6	10n ceramic
C7	100u 16 V PCB electrolytic

Semiconductors

IC1	SN76488 (see Buylines)

Miscellaneous

PB1	SPST push-button switch

PCB (see Buylines); 50 mm diameter 8 ohm speaker; PP3 battery and clip.

BUYLINES

Very few components and very few supply problems with this one. The SN76488 is an improved version of the Texas SN76477 and can be obtained from Technomatic. The PCB will cost you £1.80 from our PCB Service; see page 44 for details.

HOW IT WORKS

This unit employs most of the function blocks in the SN76488. The SLF provides a linearly increasing voltage waveform, or ramp, to the VCO, taking several seconds for the ramp voltage to rise from zero to maximum value. The causes the VCO to produce a tone which 'glides' down in pitch, making the 'bomb drop' effect. The explosion is generated by the Noise Generator/Filter and the Envelope Generator. It starts with a burst of noise, which dies away in intensity exponentially in a few seconds.

The whole sequence is triggered by operating the pushbutton, PB1. This applies a high (+5 V) to the input of the System Inhibit block, pin 9. This in turn triggers the One Shot and the Envelope Generator. At the commencement of the One Shot timing period, the One Shot triggers the SLF HI/LO Sync, starting the SLF, and the VCO does its things. At the end of the One Shot timing period the Envelope Select Logic becomes operative. the SLF is disabled and the Envelope Generator commences to do its thing. The Mixer selects the VCO output at the start of the One Shot timing period and the Noise Generator/Filter output at the end of the One Shot timing period. Thus the two sounds are switched through to the audio output stage in sequence, the Envelope Generator modifying the noise so that it dies away, the time it takes to do so being controlled by the time constant of R5, C5.

The starting pitch of the VCO is determined by R3 and C3, the rate of rise of the voltage ramp produced by the SLF is determined by C2 and R2, while the One Shot timing period is determined by the time constant of C1 and R1. The frequency characteristics of the broad-band noise produced by the Noise Generator are modified by R4 and C4 connected to the noise filter control pins (5 and 6).

Audio output is coupled to the loudspeaker via C7, a 100uF electrolytic capacitor. ETI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READ/WRITE

Dear Mr. Ron Harris Sir,

We seem to have been hearing quite a bit about System A recently; technically it looks a rather nice amplifier. However, it's difficult to tell how good commercially-produced units are with only limited information available about them. So what about the other end of the problem — what does System A sound like, compared with other amplifiers? Unfortunately, I can't see any of the hi-fi mags doing a review of it, so — how about you doing one (totally unbiased, of course) please, pretty please? Come on, put your reputation on the line!

Yours grovellingly,
M.R. Barrett,
Hove.

Certainly not. Someone might chop it off!

System A has a comparable sound to any of the more highly regarded commercial units. Listening tests we have conducted over the months since the creature's completion, have shown it (the power amps) to have a more detailed and open midrange/top than ANY we have compared it to. The top commercial boxes — Threshold, Monogram, Carver, etc can exhibit a better bass control than the System A however, but as to whether or not that is important for your particular application (ie loudspeaker), I could not say (because you haven't told me what speakers you've got, have you?).

Anyone contemplating building a System A is welcome to write to us for advice on speaker matching.

Dear Sir,

I read with interest the articles in the July and August editions of ETI describing the construction of the System A Audio Amplifier, as I have been on the lookout for a high-quality class A amplifier design for some time. My particular interest in class A stems from the fact that I own a pair of Lowther loudspeakers — these units are almost ridiculously sensitive, requiring only some 10 W or so of input to produce the equivalent sound output of a conventional 100 W system. Given this sensitivity, most high quality class AB amps are only ticking over when driving a pair of Lowthers, and hence are working at the highest distortion end of their operating range. Hence the interest in class A, where no penalty is paid for operating the amplifier at low levels of power output. However, before going ahead and building the System A, I would like the answers to a couple of questions. Firstly, the July article heralds System A as "quite simply the best, designed to out-perform even commercial equipment." There is, however, no objective assessment or comparison to back up this claim, and before laying out the not insignificant construction cost, I would like to see the amplifier reviewed, preferably alongside its "competition" in the commercial amplifier field. Is this a possibility?

Secondly, the high power output of the System A seems more than a slight degree of overkill in the context of my

Lowthers. Is it reasonable, therefore, to construct a lower power version of the power amp section? If so, what modifications should be made to the present design?
Yours sincerely,
T. Jeffree,
Milton Keynes

Taking the two points you raise, in order; first we feel it is inappropriate for us to review our own product against anyone else's. (Would you believe us anyway?) 'Objective' would not be an appropriate word to apply to such a test.

System A has aroused a great deal of interest and we know that a large number of sets have been completed. There is probably, however, a larger number of people still who would tackle the project, if only they could get to hear one first! Accordingly any owners of a System A who would be prepared to let a fellow ETI reader have a listen, can write to us and we'll run the letters herein. Secondly the high power output of the amp will not be wasted, even on your Lowthers, it will simply provide you with more headroom — and hence a cleaner sound with better bass output on transients.

Dear Mr Harris,

I am writing for advice on the purchase of an amplifier and speakers combination. I list my present system below:

Home-brew 10 W amp
Ferguson (?) 3-way speakers (actually 2-way, 3-cone)
Realistic 31-987 Graphic Equaliser
Hitachi D-225 Cassette Deck
Pioneer PL-300 turntable (the latest addition!)

The amplifier now ceases to be of any great use in terms of power, although quality is more than adequate (based on Bi-Pak AL30A). I have considered NAD3020, Pioneer SA410, and also the "Audiophile" amp, the MOSFET amps from JW Rimmer, and the Linsley-Hood kit from Powertran. The last three give me extra headroom, and I would like to feed them into AR18 speakers from Acoustic Research.

Basically, I would like your opinion on the Linsley Hood 75 De Luxe/AR18 combination, plus any comments on the other "possibles".

Also, the Pioneer PL300 I have just bought is certainly the best turntable I have heard at the price (£79.95), and I can't help wondering why it gets so little attention. Perhaps you can fill me in?

Thank you for your valuable time.
D. Crary,
Ilford, Essex

PS When is Felicity Kendall to return to our screens?

The AR18 is a fine unit and if you like the sound of them, go ahead and buy yourself a pair. You haven't named your cartridge so I've no idea if it matches.

Ditch the equaliser, with decent speakers and amp, you won't need it!

As to amplifiers, from the units you mention the Linsley Hood power amps are the best bet, but the preamp of that unit is getting a bit long in the tooth now, although the sound quality is still very good by any standards. Have a listen to the Crimson CK1010/1100 set-up before you decide, however, as it is in your price range and offers a high-quality alternative.

The Pioneer PL300 I have not been able to listen to at any length and must thus refrain from commenting upon!

INSTRUMENT PROBE

This probe will allow you to make CRO or frequency meter/timer measurements on high impedance circuits with waveforms having rise times as fast as three or four nanoseconds. Cost is well below commercial equivalents. Design by Jonathan Scott.

Most readers would be aware that, when taking a measurement on electronic circuitry, the input impedance of the measuring instrument must be much greater than the impedance of the circuit to which it is attached, otherwise the accurary of the measurement suffers. The input impedance of the majority of oscilloscopes is generally 1M0 with a parallel capacitance of between 20pF and 40pF. For a wide variety of applications this is perfectly adequate and will suffice for measurements of frequencies up to 5 MHz or so. The input impedance of the CRO falls with increasing frequency owing to the falling reactance of the input capacitance. For example, a capacitance of 30pF — which may be made up of direct input capacitance plus cable capacitance — has a reactance of only 500 ohms at 10 MHz. The input capacitance also affects the rise time of the input — that is, the speed at which a 'step' input will rise from the 10% amplitude value to the 90% amplitude value.

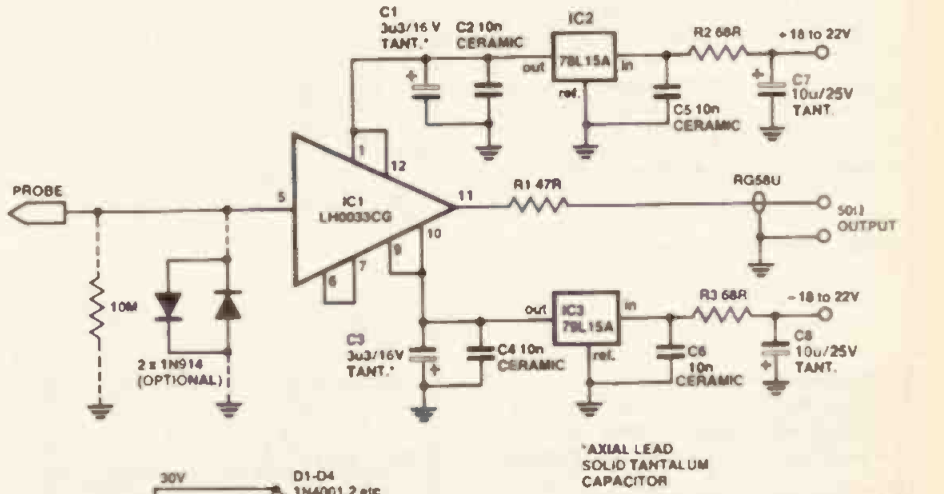
The input impedance of an oscilloscope can be effectively raised, and the capacitance decreased, by using a 'stepdown' probe. For example, a 'x10' probe will generally have an input impedance of 10M and a parallel capacitance of between 5pF and 15pF. While this improves the input impedance there are two trade-offs. Firstly, unless elaborate (and expensive) compensation is employed, the rise time is degraded, and secondly, maximum sensitivity is decreased by a factor of 10. As Murphy's law would have it, your CRO will run out of grunt just when you need it most.

Taking the situation with digital counter/timers, we find similar problems. Those that operate beyond 30 MHz or 50 MHz generally employ a prescaler with an input impedance of 50 ohms — which is perfectly all right if you're working on low impedance circuits and/or with high signal levels. But there are those occasions when you need a high impedance input and a fast (high frequency) rise time. As with the CRO, this is where your counter/timer runs out of grunt.

It's times like these you need this project; a x 1 active instrument probe using a special buffer IC with an input impedance of typically 100,000 megohms! — that's 10^{11} ohms — a very low input capacitance of around four to five picofarads, a fast rise time (around three nanoseconds) and a bandwidth of 100 MHz. Output impedance is around 50 ohms and the device is capable of driving capacitive loads up to several thousand picofarads. Thus it is eminently suited for use with high speed, wide bandwidth oscilloscopes and digital frequency meter/timers at frequencies up to 100 MHz. Output impedance is close to 50 ohms and it is thus suited tc drive both high impedance instrument inputs and low impedance inputs (which are generally 50 ohms).

Design

It's all done inside a special IC — an LH0033CG from National Semiconductors. This is described as a 'fast buffer amplifier'. (It has a companion designated LH0063, described as a 'damn fast buffer amplifier'!). The LH0033 is a direct-coupled FET-input voltage follower/buffer (gain ≃ 1) designed to provide high current drive at frequencies from DC to over 100 MHz. It will provide ±10 mA into 1k0 loads (±100 mA peak) at slew rates up to 1500 V/uS, and the chip exhibits excellent phase linearity up to 20 MHz. No offset voltage adjustment is required as the unit is constructed using specially selected FETs and is laser-trimmed during construction. Input is directly to the gate of a



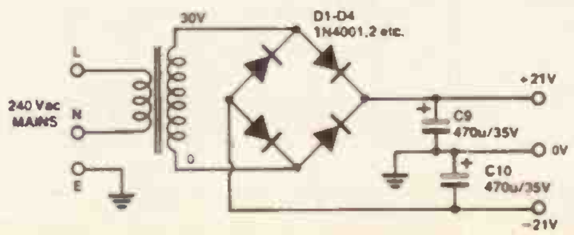


Fig. 1 Circuit diagram for the probe. C2 and C4 need to be ceramic
Fig. 1 Circuit diagram for the probe. C2 and C4 need to be 10n ceramic chip or 1n0 ceramic disc or plate types. C5 and C6 need only be disc or plate ceramic. See 'Bypassing' over the page.

junction FET, operated as a source follower, driving a complementary output pair of bipolar transistors.

Regulated plus and minus supplies of 15 V each provide power to the IC. Low-power three-terminal regulators are used to keep the unit compact. An external unregulated supply of between 18 and 22 V at around 50 mA is required to power the probe.

The supply pins on the IC need to be well bypassed over a wide frequency range so that the IC can maintain its characteristics, and the construction has been specially arranged to achieve this. Axial lead solid tantalum capacitors are used to bypass the IC's supply pins at the lower frequencies, while low inductance ceramic capacitors are employed as bypasses for the higher frequencies. A double-sided fibreglass PCB is used to preserve the high frequency response and the high input impedance, and the layout is arranged to permit direct connection to the probe tip and provide low input capacitance.

However, the presence of the PCB substrate will degrade the input impedance, surprisingly enough, and you can drill out the area of board immediately beneath pin 5 of the IC and solder the pin directly to the probe tip. For those who wish to go 'all the way' (as Frank Sinatra sings), the plastic insulation of the probe tip can be replaced with a similar piece of Teflon — if you can afford it and have access to a lathe.

The maximum input voltage permissible, when driving a high impedance load, is plus or minus 15 V. When driving a 50 ohm load, maximum input voltage permissible is only plus or minus 10 V (limited by maximum output current). No input protection has been included. However, if you are only working with circuits where voltages are no greater than about 1 V peak-to-peak, protection can be added by putting two diodes back-to-back in parallel with the input, along with a 10M resistor. The maximum input voltage figures include any DC voltages present, *plus* the superimposed signal voltage.

At this stage it is only fair to tell you that the LH0033CG is an expensive device (by comparison). But — compare the total cost of this probe to a similar commercially-made type and you won't catch your breath a second time!

Construction

The project is constructed on a small double-sided fibreglass PCB *with*

BYPASSING

Supply lead bypassing is important in order that the LH0033 can operate correctly over the full bandwidth from DC to 100 MHz. To ensure this, the bypassing has been specially arranged and the techniques employed are probably unfamiliar to many readers.

The output circuit signal return path for the IC is via the ground and the two supply rails. Any significant impedance in series with this path (or paths) will subtract signal from the output load. Thus, the supply rail bypassing has to present an impedance which is a *fraction* (like one-tenth or better) that of the minimum output load impedance. Here, the minimum output load is about 100 ohms (R1 + 50 ohms instrument input impedance) and the supply bypassing impedance should ideally be less than 10 ohms across the frequency range.

The bypassing on each supply rail to the IC leads here takes advantage of the characteristics of three separate components to cover three sections of the frequency range.

From DC to around 100 kHz, each three-terminal regulator (IC2, IC3) has an output impedance well below one ohm, rising to four or five ohms at 1 MHz, as shown in Fig. 1. The two tantalum capacitors, C1 and C3, then take over.

Solid tantalum capacitors have a characteristic impedance that falls with frequency according to its value, which then 'flattens out' in the region around 500 kHz — 1 MHz, rising to a few ohms around 10 MHz, as can be seen in Fig. 2. Thus, C1 and C3 serve as effective bypasses across the range from around 100 kHz to around 10 MHz. Axial lead tantalum capacitors were chosen as their construction exhibits the slowest impedance rise following the minimum impedance value.

To provide bypassing over the decade from 10 MHz to 100 MHz, capacitors C2 and C4 have been specially chosen and positioned on the PCB. For the prototype, 'chip' ceramic capacitors were used. These tiny, 'naked' chips of ceramic with a capacitor embedded in them are probably the most effective bypass capacitors made. The leads and physical construction of all capacitors form an inductance which is effectively in series with the capacitance of the component. The combined effect forms a series resonant circuit, the frequency of which (that is, the self-resonant frequency of the component) is mainly dependent on the length of the connecting leads, the particular construction of the capacitor and the way in which it is mounted. Ceramic chip capacitors, being a tiny block with connecting pads or surfaces on each end, have extremely low values of series inductance and thus very high self-resonant frequencies — see Fig. 4. Now, any value of chip capacitor between 1n0 and 10n can be used for C2 and C4. The self-resonant frequency of a 1n0 chip capacitor is somewhat above 100 MHz (as per Fig. 4), but that of a 10n chip is between 40 MHz and 50 MHz. Now, this isn't a problem, for the chip's impedance falls with frequency as usual until near the self-resonant frequency where it falls rapidly, reaching a minimum at the self-resonant frequency. Above that frequency its impedance rises again, but is still low enough for effective bypassing.

Ordinary ceramic disc and plate capacitors behave in much the same way. The self-resonant frequency of a typical 5 mm diameter disc or 5 mm square plate capacitor depends on the lead length, as shown in Fig. 5. Thus, you could use 470pF or 1000pF (1n0) capacitors of this type for C2 and C4, provided you installed them on the underside of the board with *absolute minimum lead length.*

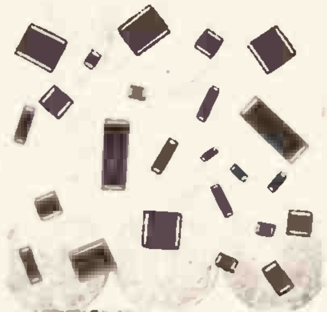


Fig. 3 Ceramic chip capacitors shown about actual size.

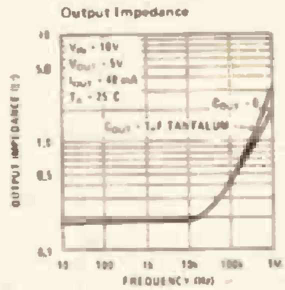


Fig. 1.

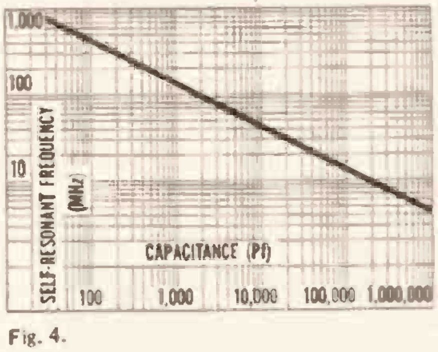


Fig. 4.

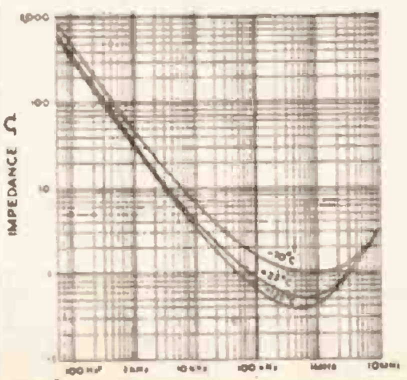


Fig. 2.

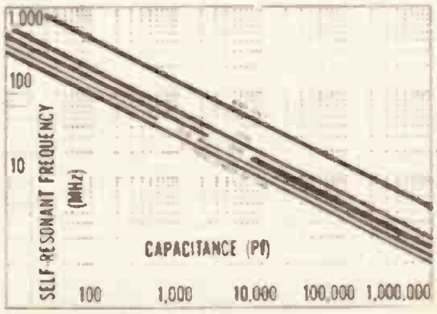


Fig. 5.

components mounted on both sides of the board. Commence by soldering in place the components that go on the top side of the board, leaving IC1 until last. Note that the positive leads of both C3 and C8 are soldered to the groundplane areas on both the top and the bottom sides of the board. Take care with the orientation of the tantalum capacitor, as well as IC2 and IC3. Having done that, solder C2, C4, C5 and C6 to the bottom side of the board. Now you can install IC1. You will have to juggle the legs a little. Push the can as far down on the board as you're able; its base should sit no more than 3 mm from the board.

Now that you have everything in place, *check it all.* It seems pretty simple, but Murphy's law will ensure that the simplest things have the highest stuff-up rates!

All's well? — now you attach the output coax cable to the underside of the board, plus the DC input and ground (0 V) wires. *But* — before you do, slip the output end piece of the probe case over the cable and supply wires, push it down about 150 mm or so and then slip the case of the probe case down the wires. This saves slipping them over the other end of the whole business and sliding them all the way to the probe.

The probe tip can be attached and soldered in place last of all. Now you can screw it all together and attach the appropriate plugs to the other end of the cable and supply wires.

With the construction completed, you can power up and try it out. Note that the transformer suggested in our power supply is but one of many suitable types. Any transformer that will deliver at least 26 V AC at a load of about 50 mA will suffice. Alternatively, any dual polarity DC supply having an output between 18 and 22 V at 250 mA will power the probe.

Note

Always take care that you don't exceed the input voltage limitation; LH0033s are expensive.

BUYLINES

Ceramic chip capacitors and solid tantalum axial capacitors are a trifle unusual; however, they are stocked by C.T. Electronics (Action) Ltd, 267 & 270 Acton Lane, London W4 5DG. (They also stock the BNC plug should you have any problems there). We will be selling the double-sided board through out PCB Service — the order form is on page 44.

PARTS LIST

Resistors (all ¼ W, 5%)		
R1	47R	
R2, R3	68R	
Capacitors		
C1, C3	3u3 16 V solid tantalum axial leads	
C2, 4, 5, 6	10n ceramic block	
C7, C8	10u 25 V tantalum	
C9, C10	470u 35 V electrolytic (if required)	
Semiconductors		
IC1	LH0033CG	
IC2	78L15A	
IC3	79L15A	
D1-D4	1N4001,2,etc. (if required)	

Miscellaneous
PCB (double-sided fibreglass); RG58U coax cable and BNC plug; T1 — (if required) 240 V to 30 V transformer or similar; optional 10M/¼W 5% resistor and 2 x 1N914 diodes; wire; probe housing.

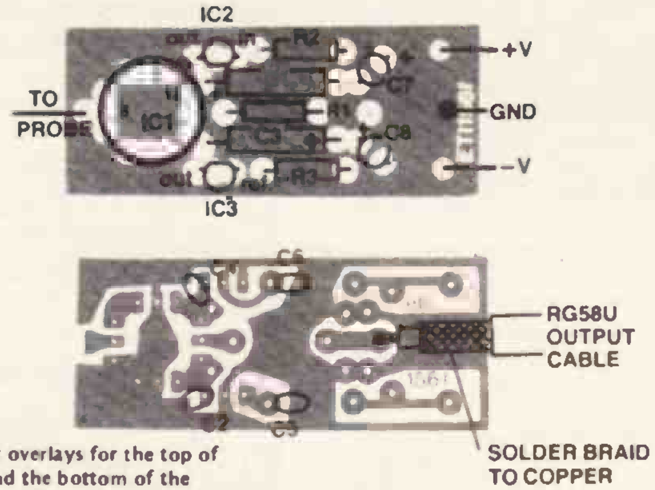


Fig. 2 Component overlays for the top of the board (top) and the bottom of the board (bottom).

HOW IT WORKS

This instrument probe employs a wideband hybrid voltage follower/buffer IC, the LH0033, with very close to unity gain, that features a very high input impedance and a low output impedance. It requires regulated, well-bypassed supply rails. Two three-terminal low power regulators provide plus-and-minus 15 V supplies from an unregulated input.

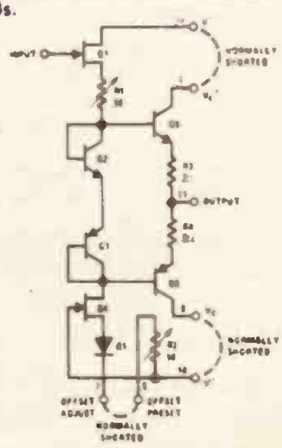
The internal circuit of the LH0033 is shown below. Basically, it consists of a FET input stage (Q1), operated as a source follower. The other FET, Q4, provides a constant current source for the source bias of Q1, while Q2 and Q3 are connected as diodes and provide bias for the bases of Q5 and Q6. Resistors R1 and R2 are laser trimmed in manufacture so that the IC meets the offset voltage specification. As Q1 has a constant current source load, the input impedance at the gate of Q1 is very low. The output of the source follower drives a complementary pair output stage, Q5-Q6. Thus the IC will have a very high input impedance, a very low output impedance and a gain very close to unity. With appropriate construction employed for the internal devices, the bandwidth over which the device will operate can be made very wide indeed. The −3dB point for the LH0033 is 100 MHz.

As the device is direct-coupled, DC levels will be maintained between input and output.

Bypassing requirements for the IC's supply leads are explained elsewhere in the article.

To provide regulated plus-and-minus 15 V rails for the IC, two three-terminal regulators are employed, a 78L15A for the positive rail and a 79L15A for the negative rail. These can supply up to 100 mA and have a very low output impedance up to several hundred kilohertz, which is exploited for low frequency bypassing. Each supply rail requires an unregulated input of between 18 V and 22 V. Decoupling of the supply leads provided by R2/C7 on the positive rail and R3/C8 on the negative rail. The input terminal of each regulator is bypassed to prevent instability.

As the input voltage is limited to a maximum equal to the supply rails (high impedance load), input protection may be added in applications where only low level signals are being examined. As shown in the main circuit, this protection consists of two 1N914 diodes connected back-to-back in parallel with a 10 M resistor across the input. Signals above 1 V peak-to-peak will be clipped, preventing any damage to the IC. If very fast rise time signals are to be examined then better protection for the IC can be obtained by using hot-carrier diodes such as the HP 5082-2800 instead of the 1N914s.



WIN AN ELECTRONIC IGNITION!

Hands up all those who had trouble starting their cars during the recent appalling weather. Don't you wish your car was fitted with an electronic ignition to make the most of your battery, as well as increasing the life of your contact breaker and giving you more miles to the gallon into the bargain?

The prize in this competition is a Total Energy Discharge ignition unit designed by Electronize Design, a company with a great deal of experience in the field. The unit is supplied as a kit of parts and is easy to assemble.

To win this kit you have to answer these two questions:—

(1) The standard ignition circuit, using a coil and contact breaker, has been fitted to virtually all mass produced cars for 60 years. Who designed it? (We'll accept surname only).

(2) In a four-cylinder engine, firing the cylinders in the order 1-2-3-4 would lead to excessive engine vibration. Give one firing sequence commonly used to overcome this problem.

Write your name, address and answers on the form on page 133 (there's no need to cut up this page) and send it to us by April 30th, 1982. (All right, you can put your hands down now!)

RULES

1. Closing date is April 30th 1982, and all entries post-marked later than this date will be disregarded.
2. The coupon provided in the magazine must be used. Photocopies are NOT acceptable.
3. Employees of ASP and their relatives are not eligible for entry.
4. The judges' decision is to be considered final and no correspondence will be entered into concerning the competition.

electronics today INTERNATIONAL

A Decade of Electronics

...AUDIO....COMPUTING....MUSIC....RADIO....ROBOTICS...

IF YOU'VE READ THE LAST TEN YEARS OF ETI WIN THE NEXT 10 FREE!

This is a special competition for our regular readers. We're offering a ten year subscription to ETI as a 'thank you' prize for supporting us this far. All the questions refer to back copies of our magazine and will be easy if you've kept the issues! (Surveys tell us that over 90% of readers keep ETI for longer than a year!) Index issues will be particularly useful, but will not give you *all* the answers. Fill in the coupon on page 133 — you don't need to ruin this issue — and don't forget your *name and address!* In the event that no one gets *all* the answers correct, the highest number of right answers will win. In the event of a tie, it will be the earliest postmark that takes the ten year subscription.

Read the questions carefully before answering.

1. Which issue was designated a "4 Channel Sound Special Issue"? ______
2. Who edited the May 1973 issue of ETI? ______
3. What month did the first issue of ETI appear in Britain? ______
4. What makes March 1979 good theatre? ______
5. ETI published the first-ever TV games project. In which issue? ______
6. Which IC is featured in the July 1976 "Data Sheet"? ______
7. The amplifier on the cover of the February 1982 issue has also appeared on a previous cover of ETI. Which one? ______
8. In 1979 who reviewed Star Chess for ETI? ______
9. Who first wrote the series "Electronics Tomorrow"? ______
10. The 100 W Guitar Amplifier (the first one!) appeared when? ______
11. Microfile is the title of ETI's regular computing hardware section. In which issue did it first appear? ______
12. In what year did we publish a synthesiser, an LED multimeter and an FM tuner in successive months? ______
13. What was "The Beast"? ______
14. How many parts of the popular "Electronics — It's Easy" series were published in ETI? ______
15. How many editors has ETI had in the past years? ______
16. In October 1976, who was ETI's Assistant Editor? ______
17. Who designed the Transcendent DPX? ______
18. Which issue began "Project 80"? ______
19. The 4600 synthesiser is one of our all-time most popular projects. In which issue did the series begin? ______
20. DIY Polyphonic keyboards came to ETI when? ______

RULES

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electronics today INTERNATIONAL 1972 - 1982
ISSN 0142-7229

10 YEARS ON

The last ten years have been the most dramatic in the history of electronics. Tracing back, you can chart the explosive growth of the "consumer electronics product" from the first — highly expensive — calculators, through digital watches and the like — to the fully-equipped home computer.

When compiling this issue — ETI's 10th Birthday, as I'm sure you've noticed by now — it occurred to us that we had the entire course of electronics charted out for us — within the news pages of ETI! News Digest has always figured very highly in our readers surveys and companies mentioned therein have often commented upon the interest the feature generates.

Accordingly we went back and read every single news page from April 1972 through to April 1982. (Yes, it did take a long time). Lo and behold! History unfolded!

It was all there — the first calculators, the first watches, the beginnings of LCD, the first MPU chips, cheap memory, the Space Shuttle tests, bubble storage announced — and failed, CB radio underway, FETs on the hobbyist market, CMOS finally becoming cheaper than TTL — and the lunacies! We found quite a few of those, in fact. Witness the Queen's speech that wasn't and the TV game with ball-bearing scoreboard.

You will find them all in the following pages, the successes, the failures, the achievements...and the gaffs. We have gone through the mountain of material available and put together what we think is a truly historic collection. (Sounds good that doesn't it — should be in the British Museum.)

Reading through you will be presented with the fascinating and surprising history of electronics, 1972—1982. Check the dates each item appeared. Some of them will astound you. When was the first TV game on sale? The first LED watch? When could you buy a home computer in the UK? As to the ladies who crop up all the way through, we've no idea how they got there — they've nothing to do with us and they are most certainly not included just because we thought you would enjoy seeing them again. Enjoyment has got nothing to do with it.

It is an interesting conjecture as to what we will be able to include in our 21st Birthday Issue. Any guesses?

TV GAMES COME OF AGE

It is just over two years since the first TV games started to appear in pubs - since then a lot has happened in this field with a large number of small companies marketing various units by a variety of methods. Although the TV games have received a considerable amount of publicity they have not yet caught on in a big way.

"No one who has ever played TV games has ever said anything derogatory about the concept", Richard Fairhurst of Videomaster Ltd., told ETI, " they may not like the price or the packaging but they always like the idea".

ETI NEWS NOV 1975

bbc get it taped

The BBC and 3M have collaborated to develop a new tape recording system claimed to provide 90 dB noise figure. The system will accommodate 32 tracks on one-inch tape at an undisclosed tape speed.

ETI NEWS JULY 1973

PIEZOELECTRIC HEADPHONES

The Pioneer SE-700 are the first high fidelity headphones to use the piezo-electric effect. As the audio signals reach the headphones, the driver elements of ultra-thin aluminium-coated high-polymer film expand and contract accordingly, creating "breathing" motion. Tonal characteristics are comparable to those of the electrostatic type headphones, but the SE-700 require no matching transformer.

ETI NEWS MAY 1975

its a wide word

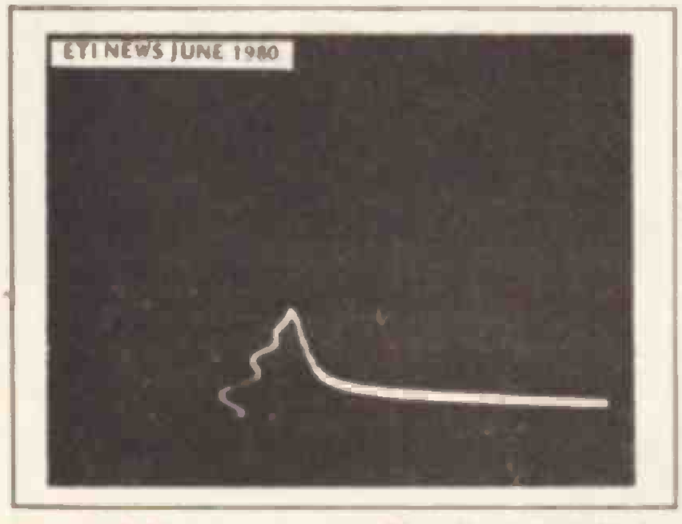
Intel, Zilog and Motorola are taking their places in the front rank on the grid for this years expected race to 16 bit MPU sales. All three have completed development, and will probably show the nature of their teeth at next months US Solid State Circuits Conference. The pause between this and letting loose of the hounds as it were will almost certainly mean late autumn production.

On yer marks ....

ETI NEWS MARCH 1978

Doctor Who

One of our readers, Mr. S. Knowles of Hampshire, sent us a scope picture he took whilst designing with a Textronix 7403 on 500 nS/div with x10 expand. It seems he was looking for a pulse, but he may well have discovered the secret of time travel!



Pet Chip

This should appeal to those of you who spent your hard-earned pennies on a 'pet rock.'

We recently received a letter from an anonymous dad who made an apparently trivial Christmas presi for his daughter. However, since then he has been inundated with orders.

Mr A. Nonymous painted a face on one end of an IC (pet IC, you see) and made a matchstick cage for it complete with watch battery feeding bowl.

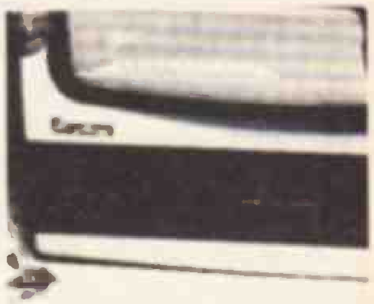
The chip should quickly LATCH on to its new OHM. As for feeding, a few BITS of CURRENTS a day should be AMPle. Just let it NOR away to its heart's content. You can teach it tricks.

Ta, Mr Nonymous. We haven't had a good groan in ages.

ETI NEWS MARCH 1980

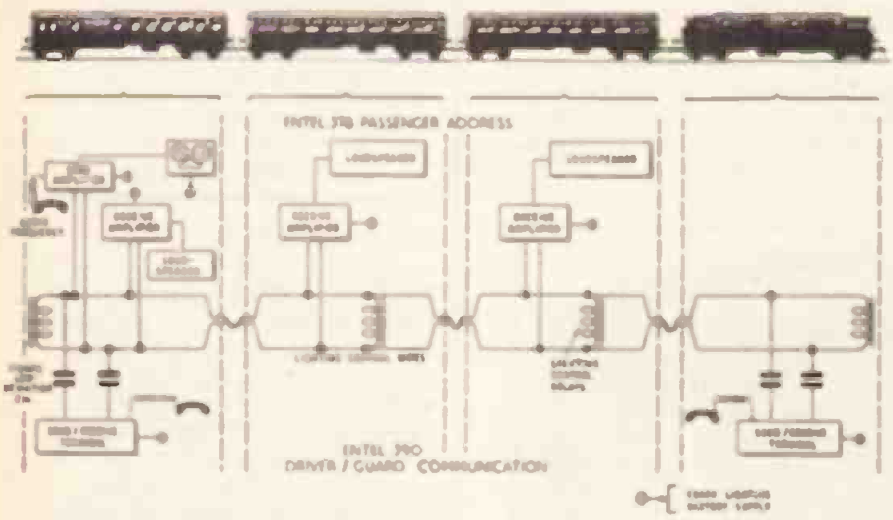
SHORTS

- Every Ready — now called Berec — have released four rechargable consumer batteries, in the HP2, HP11, HP7 and PP3 varieties. Chargers are also available. An undoubted reaction to the phenominal loss of dry cell power these days.
- Direct drive turntables yes. But direct drive MPUs? Also yes — now. The S2000 is a new release from AMI which can drive flouorescent displays directly, with HT drive and 7-segment decoding on chip. Also on board 64 x 4 RAM and 1K ROM. Intended for low lost applications.
- Ingersoll — the tick tock people — are into electronics. They have released three TV games, three clock radios, two Door Chimes, and a portable micro cassette player. Photo shows one of their new TV games. It must be Christmas.
- Fairchild are making a big fuss about having their F16K Dynamic 16K RAMs available at last. Access times vary from 150 ns to 300 ns.



ETI NEWS JAN 1979

TALKING IN TRAINS



British Rail's plans for 150 mph trains include improved communication systems between drivers and guards. Also planned are passenger address systems.

A range of equipment — known as EMTEL — has been designed specifically for this task by Britain's Nelson Tansley Ltd.

The main problem to be overcome was the impossibility of providing a special cable, running the length of the train, on which to carry the signals.

The equipment was therefore designed to accommodate any continuous circuit, for example, the control wires for the lighting relays which (in British Rail), are the only conductors always connected throughout any passenger train. In this case, departure from the ideal of a 600 ohm noise-free line is caused by the connexion across the wires of many relay solenoids, the impedance of which is not only complex, but variable.

ETI NEWS JULY 1972

LASER MISSILE INTERCEPTOR

The US armed forces may soon have a laser missile interceptor. Air Force reports state that prototype deuterium fluoride lasers have been successfully tested at 'very very high' power outputs.

Power output is apparently so high that the laser beam burns straight through heavy gauge stainless nickel steel plate.

ETI NEWS JULY 1975

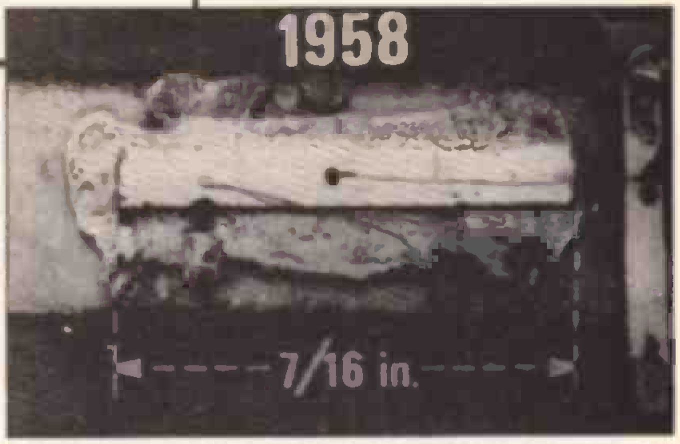
BIAS – AUTOSELECTION

Cassette tape recorders that have been designed specifically for use with chromium dioxide tapes require special bias switching facilities.

At present this is done manually. However the latest BASF 'SM' chromium dioxide cassettes have a notch on the rear of the cassette (in addition to the tab now used to prevent erasure of recorded material) and, hope BASF — and Philips who are backing the system — future cassette players will have a switch mechanism actuated by this tab to bring in the necessary bias circuitry.

ETI NEWS APRIL 1972

ETI NEWS APRIL 1974



It had to happen. The integrated circuit is so old that it has earned its place in a museum. Doesn't it make you feel old? The world's first IC, invented by Jack Kilby of Texas Instruments in 1958, is one of three exhibits on loan from TI in Dallas for the 'Challenge of the Chip' exhibition at the Science Museum. The other two are the first silicon transistor and the first single chip microcomputer.

ETI NEWS MAY 1980

LIGHTING THE WAY

Many local authorities are now using a street lighting control system in which a photoelectric cell measures the light level and varies the input to a thick film heating element controlling a temperature sensitive switch. The street lights are therefore automatically switched on at dusk and off at dawn, which means that light is provided only when it is needed and ensures that electricity is not wasted.

GETTING READY FOR COMMERCIAL RADIO

Commercial radio is on its way: anyone doubting this should tune around the medium wave band where tests transmissions are already being conducted. Contracts for the supply of the transmitters and the aerials have been placed with EMI, the value of the order is put at £160,000.

ETI NEWS MAY 1973

shorts

- Tandy is doing well with its home computer in the USA, and is expanding, both physically and financially, that side of the business.
- New from GI — the Cricket chip. The AY-3-8910 is a programmable sound generator and is software controlled, needing only a power supply and clock to begin chirping or hooting or . . .

Hong Kong King

Some numbers to tick off on your fingers. In the first six months of the year Hong Kong exported 16 million watches (worth £77m). These break down as 61% mechanical, 29% LCD and only 10% LED and quartz analogue combined. Surprising LED figures eh?

Germany developed a sudden lust for these non-tockers and their imports leapt up by 287%, putting them as the second largest consumers — behind the US and ahead of us!

ETI NEWS NOV 1978

ETI NEWS OCT 1978

forget who not?

You know we've quite forgotten why we used this photo at all. Now let's see something to do with TV games? Anyway the editorial desks have been bereft of nice lady photos lately — so this one appeared as an oasis amid the dusty filing trays.

P.S. Binatone the people who make the box in front — don't ask what box or in front of what or we won't speak to you again — claim to now taken over half the TV game market — the magic 51% in fact.

ETI NEWS NOV 1978

BE WARNED (IN A SMALL WAY!)

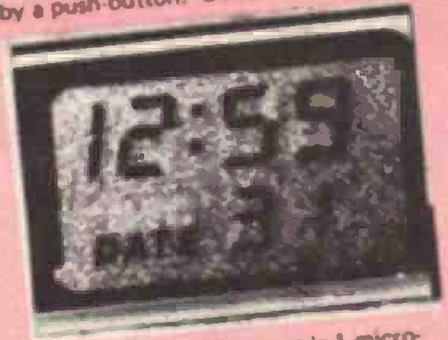
The Mini-Bleeptone 525 is a unit which provides a choice of two continuous signals of up to 80dBs with current consumption ranging from 3–15mA.

ETI NEWS JULY 1976

Its applications are wide, being ideally suited as a fault indicator mounted onto portable equipment and instrument panels, or for localised warning of such things as intruders and/or fire

NEW LC DISPLAYS FOR WATCHES

A new series of Liquid Crystal displays have been announced by Beckman for digital watches. These display hours and minutes continually with either date or seconds, selected by a push-button. Contrast ratio is



20:1, power requirement is 1 microwatt so that even with constant readout battery life is over a year. LC modules are available for both 3V and 6V models and a CMOS compatible.

Beckman Instruments Ltd., Queensway, Glenrothes, Fife, Scotland.

ETI NEWS OCT 1978

Pocket Companion

Not just an electronic dictionary or a translator or an appointments diary or an encyclopedia, but something of all these rolled into one, the 'Brainbank' is hailed as the world's first pocket information centre and language laboratory.

Brainbank is programmed via a series of interchangeable plug-in memory cells, so you have virtually unlimited information storage possibilities (armed with a bucket full of memory cells).

Each language cell, which contains 32K of ROM holds about 1200 of the most common words, stored individually and in groups of up to fifty in categories such as travelling and food. The program also includes short phrases, automatically corrects spelling errors and explains words with double meanings (with its double entendre chip?).

The information centre's heart is a Mostek 3870 microprocessor. Memory cells are currently available on diet and nutrition, first aid, taxation and a thesaurus. New cells will become available every month. A custom cell service is also available.

Brainbank will cost around £150 plus £20 or less for each additional cell. We will tell you more about this little marvel, when we can get hold of one to play with.

ETI NEWS JAN 1980

300 MPH HOVERTRAIN – PUBLIC SHOWING

Computerised control and data recording equipment that can handle information from up to 413 different sources will be used in the development of Britain's tracked hovertrain – during its period of full-scale development.

From this console, commands will be transmitted by radio to the hovertrain and radioed signals from the measuring instruments inside the vehicle will be received, recorded and analysed.

The 25-ton vehicle straddles the track and is supported approximately an inch above it by a system of fans employing the hovercraft principle. The linear motor consists of an aluminium strip set into the top of the track as the motor's "stator", and a complex set of electrical windings mounted inside the body shell. Power is picked up from a trackside rail.

The train made its first run over a mile of the track recently, watched by visiting experts and the press from several countries. It performed perfectly during the slow-speed run and is now expected to reach speeds of up to 90 mph during the next two months.

The hovertrain has been designed and constructed by Tracked Hovercraft Ltd., a company set up by Britain's National Research Development Council, and would be capable of providing a link between central London and the airport planned for Foulness, its passengers completing the journey in quiet pollution-free comfort in about 20 minutes.

ETI NEWS APRIL 1972 (OUR FIRST EVER NEWS ITEM!)

RED TAPE GAGS THE QUEEN!

In the wee small hours of January 19th 1903, Marconi established the first two-way communication across the Atlantic. Messages were exchanged between the American president Theodore Roosevelt and the British King Edward VII. To mark the 75th anniversary of this event, the Cornish Radio Amateur Club have organised a team of sixty local amateurs to run GB3 MSA (Marconi's Seventy-fifth Anniversary). The station was run 24 hours a day, from the 14th to the 22nd January, from the lounge of the Poldhu Hotel in sunny Cornwall – only metres away from the spot Marconi used.

Transmitting on 80m, 20m and 2m the team had already made 1 100 contacts in 51 countries when ETI contacted them on the 16th! All the equipment was owned by the club and its members and set up for the week specially. On the American side was another station, KM1 CC, based in Cape Cod. KM1 CC was run by the local Barnstaple, Mass radio club with the help of the Radio Club of America.

Now for the red tape . . . President Carter sent a message via KM1 CC and the Queen wanted to send a reply via GB3 MSA, just like Edward VII did back in 1903. The Home Office said that if she did, it would break a condition in all British amateurs licences – namely the one about not passing on messages from 3rd parties! So after 2 years preparation the Cornish Amateurs and the Queen were denied permission to reply to President Carter.

ETI NEWS MARCH 1978

Something Bugging You?

With the increase in telephone tapping and boardroom bugging, Audiotel International have developed a simple to use, yet sophisticated successor to their Scanlock radio surveillance receiver. It is called the Scanlock Mark VB and is a fast, easy means of detecting and locating an eavesdropping transmitter as well as being capable of routine 'sweep' searches of high level meetings rooms. Carried in a vehicle it can also locate any bleeper bug used for 'trailing'.

The Scanlock is not limited to the conventional radio receiver's range of 88-108 MHz. It covers the wider frequency spectrum of 10-1800 MHz and its automatic 'sweep' mode scans this range four times a minute. Finally all that is necessary is to press the 'Locate' button and use the hand-held wand to guide you to where the bug is located. The kit is the size of a small briefcase, weighing 6.3 kg complete with spare battery pack. There is also provision for mains usage. For further information contact Audiotel International Ltd at Saddlers Court, Yately, Surrey, GU17 7RX.

ETI NEWS OCT 1980

CONCORDE BAN?

Whilst we are currently bombarded with PR material extolling the 'virtues' of the Concorde supersonic airliner it is interesting to note that in the USA Senator Alan Cranston has introduced a bill, co-sponsored by Senators Edward Muskie and Caliborne Pell, to prohibit overseas supersonic transports from landing at any US airports or flying over US territory at supersonic speeds.

The SSTs which carry less than half the passenger load of a 747 make ten times as much noise on take-off and landing.

ETI NEWS JULY 1972

RICE LOGIC?

Later this summer – about June – National Semiconductor and Kellog's are to hook-up on a promotional deal. All Kellog cereal packets will carry coupons for reductions on National calculators. Barley credible is it not?

ETI NEWS JULY 1976

breadboard 78

At long last a show for the electronics enthusiast – Breadboard '78 will be held at Seymour Hall in London from the 21st to 25th of November – mark it in your diary now 'cos ETI will be exhibiting! If you are a firm and would like more details contact: Breadboard '78, Abbey Mead House, 23a Plymouth Road, Tavistock, Devon PL19 8AU.

ETI NEWS JUNE 1978

ELECTRONIC GAMES
COLOUR CARTRIDGE T.V. GAME
SEMI PROGRAMMABLE T.V. GAME
• 4 Cartridges • Mains Adaptor
Normal Price £73
NOW REDUCED TO:
£39.50
DATABASE T.V. GAME
FULLY PROGRAMMABLE CARTRIDGE T.V. GAME
14 Cartridges available
Normal Price £87.86
NOW REDUCED TO:
£59
ATARI T.V. GAME
£95
SPACE INVADERS
CHESS COMPUTERS
We carry a range of over 15 different Chess computers
Electronic Chess £29.95
Chess Traveller £39.95
Chess Challenger 7 £79.00
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Sensory Voice £269.00
SPECIAL OFFERS
VOICE CHESS CHALLENGER
MANY UNITS ARE COVERED BY THE EXCLUSIVE SILICA SHOP 2 YEAR GUARANTEE
TELETEXT
ADD-ON ADAPTOR
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THE RADOFIN TELETEXT ADD ON ADAPTOR
THIS NEW MODEL INCORPORATES
SPEAK & SPELL
NOW REDUCED TO:
£39.50
ADDING MACHINE
OLYMPIA HHP 1010
NOW REDUCED TO
£34
24 TUNE ELECTRONIC DOOR BELL
NOW REDUCED TO:
£12.70
MATTEL T.V. GAME
£199.95
HAND HELD GAMES
EARTH INVADERS
£23.95
HAND HELD GAMES
GALAXY 1000
£19.95
THE OLYMPIA — POST OFFICE APPROVED
TELEPHONE ANSWERING MACHINE
WITH REMOTE CALL-IN BLEEPER
£135
PRESTEL VIEWDATA
Prestel
SPECIAL PRICE £228.85
FOR FREE BROCHURES – TEL: 01-301 1111
Silica Shop
SILICA SHOP LIMITED
1-4 The Mews, Hatherley Road, Sidcup, Kent DA14 4DX
Telephone: 01-301 1111 or 01-309 1111
SILICA SHOP

hammer fet-ish

A new range of low cost VMOS power FETs in plastic have been introduced by Siliconix. These devices are aimed at replacing conventional bipolar transistors in a great many applications. This development in VMOS technology has cut the price of such devices by a third enabling them to compete directly with bipolar devices.

ETI NEWS APRIL 1978

CALCULATOR CHIPS NOW LESS THAN £1

Calculator chips prices continue their inexorable fall in price. Latest prices in the USA for four function eight digit MOS chips are now as low as 40p to 80p. Even the complex scientific calculator chips are down to £6 or less compared to £20 this time last year.

MOS Technology Corporation for instance are selling a single chip scientific unit for £7.

ETI NEWS JULY 1975

ETI NEWS DEC 1977

sailing into space..........

A 12 bladed solar sail spacecraft is a new candidate for mankind's first interplanetary shuttle. Designed to be employed in the 1980s its first use might well be a rendezvous with Halley's Comet in 1986.

The 'heliogyro' sail uses a helicopter type design with 12 'blades' composed of reflective aluminium plastic film, and deployed in two tiers of six each. After launch from the space shuttle, centrifugal force would open the blades to their 4½ MILE length. (They're 28ft. wide). The craft sits in the centre of the array.

The craft would be slowly spun by the sun's photon radiation, and complete a rotation every three minutes. A square sail, and hence windjamming to the stars, was rejected in favour of the blades, which now fight it out with an ion stream propulsion system for NASA considerati

ANTI-SKID CONTROL

The first standard I.c.'s designed specifically for the automotive market have been announced by Fairchild. Both are complex linear circuits developed over the past two years as 'custom' circuits before being added to the standard product line.

ETI NEWS OCT 1973

ELECTRONIC CHEQUEBOOK CALCULATOR

A pocket calculator that will hold and display bank cheque account balances for a year or more is shortly to be announced by the US Mostek Corporation.

During the times that the calculator is 'off' data is stored in a static shift register (drawing a mere 100 micro-amps). This data is then clocked solely when access is required.

The unit is expected to retail for less than £16 and will be built into a plastic chequebook holder.

ETI NEWS JULY 1975

BUBBLING OVER

Next year Rockwell are hoping to launch their now developed one-megabit bubble memory price? One millicent per bit!

Their device can operate up to 300kHz and measures 10 x 9.5mm and is designed for a 1.8 micron bubble diameter. ETI NEWS SEPT 1977

ACC AFTER ONE YEAR

Now moving into its second year of existence the Amateur Computer Club has now formulised its activities into a constitution and has a membership of over 200. ETI NEWS AUG 1974

- Bowmar has Texas's range and is homing in. Texas are being sued for $3 million by Bowmar who allege the supply of a large number of defective calculator keyboards.
- XR4741 to you. Nothing to do with sci-fi but a new quad op-amp. Very low noise and better than a 741 in all respects. Available from RASTRA at 275 King St. Hammersmith. London W6. Ideal for audio projects where the hissing of summer circuits is not required.
- The Government's hi-fi firm, Strathem are to launch their new SM2000 turntable in the autumn, which will replace the SMA2 model. Once again the unit looks technically sound — maybe success at last for nationalised-fi?

ETI NEWS OCT 1978

Power Cuts On The Way

In 1960 your 20 inch colour telly using 90° deflection would have consumed over 200 W. Now, the figure is around 65 W. A new development from Finland will further reduce that to about 40 W.

The system, which results in a reduction of about 40% in power consumption, has been incorporated in the Salora G Series of portable colour sets. The design is basically a 90% efficient couple between the power supply and picture tube using an induction transfer system. The resultant cool running improves reliability and extends operational life.

The G Series, with its 16, 20 and 22 inch models, will operate from a standard 60A/hour 12 V battery for 15 hours, or from mains for as long as you pay your bills.

All the models feature automatic electronic tuning, fine tuning and memory plus add-on options for remoted control, 12 V battery and video frequency interface unit.

Salora products are available in the UK from Salora (UK) Ltd. 25A Techno Trading Estate, Swindon SN2 6EZ.

SPACE SHUTTLE ON THE TILES

Extremely pure silica glass has been manufactured for at least 40 years - longer than jet aircraft have been around. Now it is to aid and abet the ultimate aircraft - the U.S. Space Shuttle. Made into tiles (composed of 96% silica glass) of which 34,000 are used, the material covers well over 70% of the surface of the Shuttle.

These tiles are incredible heat 'shedding' devices (see photo) and will be expected to withstand temperatures of up to 1260°C for 100 re-entries into the atmosphere. Previous heat shields were destroyed on re-entry.

Each tile is precisely milled to fit exactly against the curvature of the Shuttle body, thus making the composite craft as light as possible, and as aerodynamic as is feasible. This does however mean that no two of those 34,000 tiles are alike! Imagine the little man in a white coat with the job of fitting them to the aircraft - a huge 3-D jigsaw puzzle with only one solution out of 34,000 (i.e. 34,000 x 33,999 x 33,998...x 1) possibilities! Rather him than me.

ETI NEWS MARCH 1977

ORACLE ON AIR

ORACLE, ITV's Teletext system (see ETI, July 1975) began an on-air experiment on the ITV network on 30th June. Operating the experiment are two editorial teams and three computer systems. At ITN there is an editorial team (plus computer) for news and associated information. At London Weekend Television there will be an editorial team preparing public service and similar information pages, and the second computer. At Thames Television the third computer will be used to insert data into the network during the Monday to Friday broadcasting period with LWT taking over for the weekend transmissions. It is hoped that there will soon be sets with decoders in the main entrace lobbies of ITN House, London Weekend Television's South Bank Studios and Thames Television's Euston Studios, so that visitors can interrogate the system and see how ORACLE works.

ETI NEWS SEPT 1975

WATCHES FACE COLLAPSE!

Five companies have dropped production of digital watches, due entirely to the price war raging around the product. Gruen, Benrus, Armin Litronix and Gillette have decided the wrist borne digit is not for them. Those still there are sufferin too. Bulova are expected to make a loss this year. Gillette in fact pulled out before they pulled in, scraping well laid plans to burst into the 'marketplace' at the eleventh hour.

ETI NEWS SEPT 1977

solid state speech

If the latest goodie from Texas Instruments is as successful as we think it will be, the next generation will speak with an American accent! Called "Speak & Spell" it is a box that talks to the kids (with a 'standard' American accent). and theoretically helps them pronounce new words correctly — it also compares how the kids spell the word with the correct (American) spelling, and indicates whether they gave the right answer

ETI NEWS AUG 1978

£15 DOLBY RADIOS SOON?

Even the cheapest of domestic radio receivers may soon have Dolby circuitry inbuilt according to Alan Gregory of the Signetics Corporation, manufacturers of the NE545 Dolby IC chip.

Gregory believes that the inclusion of the chip (which will be sold to manufacturers for less than a dollar will increase the price of domestic receivers by a pound at the most.

ETI NEWS APRIL 1975

SCREEN TEST

The UK is now Hong Kong's largest market for TV games. We absorbed 30% of their export in the field, some 523,500 items if you please, in the first eight months of this year. Germany finished second on 22% and the USA came third with 13%.

Somewhat of a surprise, and a shame, that we take more than the States of these items. I always thought we had more taste.

ETI NEWS JAN 1979

A POCKET CALCULATOR IN EVERY HOUSEHOLD

"By the mid-70's the pocket electronic calculator will be as much an essential part of the household as the transistor radio is now". This is the prediction made by Sinclair Radionics.

Recent market research confirms that increasing numbers of the population are becoming aware of the possible applications of pocket electronic calculators. This is most marked in the educational field, at school and college levels although considerable interest is also being shown on the domestic front by husbands and wives who are able to use a calculator to help control the family budget.

ETI NEWS DEC 1973

THE END OF THE AMP?

A British invention (three cheers!) could well mark the end of the amplifier as a circuit block. A new device called a 'voltage-to-current transactor' can do everything an op-amp can — but better. Invented by Professor Gosling and Carl Brinker, the device contains no passive components at all, and consists of a network of transistors.

The advantages are that it integrates smoothly rather than as a series of steps, follows an input quicker and with a wider dynamic range, is smaller in chip form and uses less external components. A VCT can also double as a transformer!

ETI NEWS OCT 1976

Blonde Bombshell

Now be honest with yourself — aren't there times during those long cold winter days when you could do with one of these in your office. No, unfortunately I don't mean Blondie in the white pants. The blonde bombshells here are the brushed aluminium boxes of ITT Terryphone's new solid state intercom units.

The intercom, which doubles as a security and alarm system, consists of a master unit and from one to nine sub-units. The system is easily installed in many configurations.

Simple press-button-to-talk operation is featured on the master and sub-units. Each sub-unit can be called independently from the master unit, or all sub-units can be called simultaneously. Pressing the self-latching security button allows noises from children, equipment, burglars, etc to be picked up and transmitted to other parts of the premises. So, the intercom can be used as a security system in small businesses of a baby alarm at home.

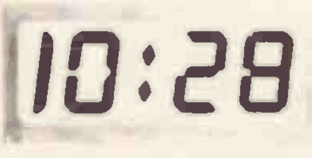
Each sub-unit comes complete with cable and cable fixing pads for £20 each. The master unit costs £85 and comes with a mains plug and a screwdriver. Talking of Blondie — she can install an intercom in my office any time.

Further details of this system is available from ITT Terryphone, Station Approach, London Road, Bicester, Oxon OX6 7BZ.

ETI NEWS JAN 1980

FIELD EFFECT LC DISPLAYS

Siemens incorporate the field effect principle in their new liquid crystal displays with low operating voltages.



All the liquid crystal displays in field effect technology have dark symbols on a light background and are suitable for reflection operation, all with high contrast ratios, low operating voltage and low power draw. Such features allow the displays to be driven by CMOS and other ICs.

ETI NEWS MARCH 1975

BANDING TOGETHER

The Editor,
Electronics Today International,
36 Ebury Street,
London SW1W 0LW.

Dear Sir,

We were most pleased to read the article "C.B. for Britain" in your July issue. The Citizens' Band Association is campaigning for the establishment of a VHF Citizens' Band in the UK and agrees with nearly all the points you make.

We have prepared a technical proposal for a VHF FM Citizens' Band which is being sent to the Home Office for discussion and contains a number of proposals to ensure that a British Citizens' Band suffers from few of the disadvantages of the American one. These proposals include:

1. Modulation shall be FM which avoids many problems of TVI, BCI and audio equipment break-in.
2. Each transceiver should contain an automatic identifying signal which is transmitted every time the transmit key is depressed. This means that anyone misusing Citizens' Band can easily be identified.
3. Transmission time should be limited to 15 seconds to prevent channels being monopolised.

Apart from the above, and a few purely technical proposals concerning standards which should be high enough to prevent interference to other services but not so unnecessarily high as to price Citizens' Band equipment out of the market, we believe that a British Citizens' Band should have a minimum of regulations.

Membership of the CBA is £1.50 p.a. for individuals and £5 for clubs.

Yours faithfully,

James M. Bryant,
President, Citizens Band Association.

ETI NEWS OCT 1976

STEERING WHEEL? WOT STEERING WHEEL?

We had a very careful second look at this photograph, vowed to give up wine, women, and especially song, (for at least five minutes) then decided yes he was in the back seat, and yes the car was moving. Visions of a huge hoax flashed to the editorial mind — frenzied navvies rushing about with the backdrop to simulate movement — tiny men crammed into the wing mirrors steering via cunning Chinese arrangements of levers and gears. The mind boggled.

Alas the answer is nought so scandalous. Quite simply an Australian electronics enthusiast has packed his car full of voice recognition and MPU circuitry to the end that it will now obey verbal commands — even by walkie-talkie up to a range of 12 miles (Naturally it obeys only its owners voice).

The car has a CCTV system installed which enables the driver to see behind him — very useful in injun country. Infra red sensors pick up red traffic lights and brake the car automatically — no we're not joking. Radar ranging maintains a constant distance with respect to the car in front, and sensors apply the brakes should the car come too close to any object — even people.

All this makes it a better driver than most of us.

ETI NEWS NOV 1976

right hook

In a historic ruling, the US Supreme Court has confirmed that private individuals have the right to buy or make their own telephone equipment and connect it to the US telephone network.

Under the ruling it will be legal to hook up as many devices as the user wishes — computer controlled systems, 'phone diverters, memory diallers, picturephones etc, etc. The only restriction is that the various bits must meet the relevant FCC requirements.

ETI NEWS APRIL 1978

DIGITAL RECORDING

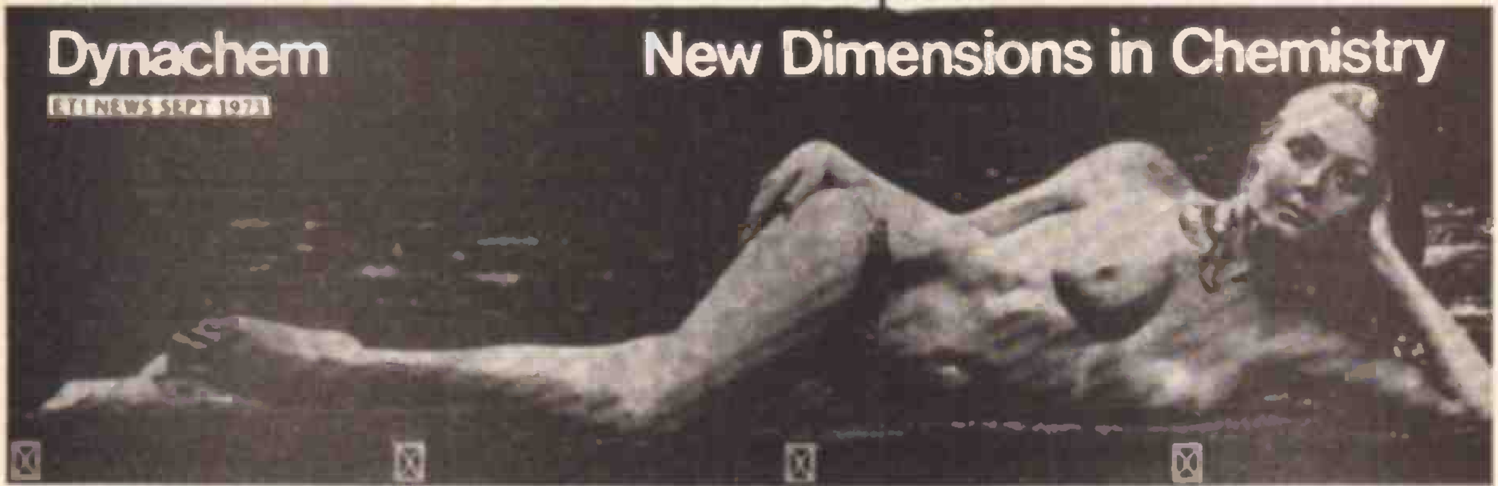
Japan's Nippon Columbia company have developed a digital recording technique. The new equipment, said to cost over £125,000 uses pulse code modulation.

Advantage of this technique is its virtual imperviousness to noise and distortion. Further details will be published as they come to hand.

ETI NEWS JAN 1973

LASER STICK FOR THE BLIND

A stick specially designed for blind persons gives the bearer a loud sonic signal in the event of impediment in his path at wrist height or above. The new device was commissioned by the Swedish Institute for the Handicapped and work on the project was initially financed by the Swedish Board for Technical Development (STU). The prototype stick comprises a 1.3-metre-long tube made of glassfibre-reinforced plastic. To it is attached a gallium-arsenide laser, a midget transmitter and receiver, and an amplifier. The power source is a tiny nickel-cadium accumulator. The laser beam's trajectory is almost at right-angles to the stick's length, and as such sticks are normally held forward at an angle of about 45 degrees to the ground, the beam is directed both upward and forward. The laser sends about 1000 pulses per second and when one of these meets an object — such as a lorry, car or a road sign — it is reflected back to the stick, where it is electronically transformed into a sonic warning signal to alert the bearer. ETI NEWS NOV 1972



GIRL BY INSTALMENTS!

Electronics manufacturers throughout Europe are receiving a series of unusual sales leaflets from a manufacturer of specialist chemicals used in the making of printed circuit boards.

Dynachem are sending out four leaflets spaced at regular intervals. On the front of each will be printed a tantalising part of the company's DYNAGIRL, an exquisite young lady well worth a second look. By keeping the leaflets, the recipient will be able to build up a complete picture.

On the reverse sides will be information about the company's range of photo-resists, plating solutions, brighteners, cleaners and ancillary chemicals.

ZX81 HARDWARE

- KEYBOARD KIT 20.75
- BUILT 26.50
- CASE 10.30
- BUILT & FITTED IN CASE 36.15

IN/OUT PORT

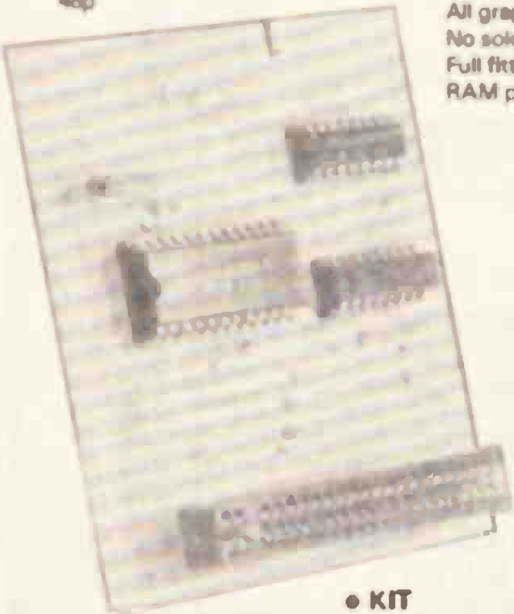
- KIT 16.95
- BUILT 18.95

24 lines, in or out.
Programmed by BASIC.

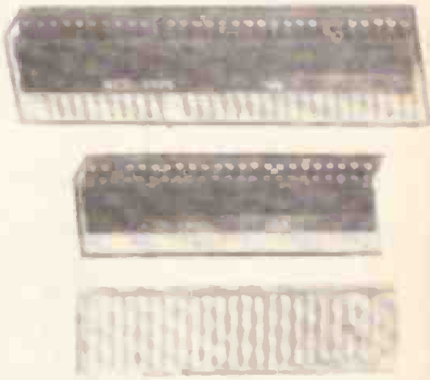
EX STOCK!

Spare switch
48p

40 typewriter keys.
All graphics etc shown.
No soldering (built version) just plug in.
Full fitting and assembly instructions supplied.
RAM pack operation not effected.



CASE
Ready punched top.
All screws supplied.
Feet supplied.
(For keyboard only, ZX81 does not fit inside).



MUSIC BOARD

- KIT 16.95
- BUILT 18.95

3 outputs.
.01Hz to 2Mhz.
Programme by BASIC.

CONNECTORS

- ZX81 23 WAY 2.95
- MALE CONN 1.30
- IN-OUT/MUSIC BD 3.00
- 24 WAY RIBBON CABLE 1.40
- RAM PACK CONN 6.95

(Allows RAM pack to be mounted away from ZX81).

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REDDITCH
WORCESTERSHIRE
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BOXES

SWITCHES

A selection of popular best-sellers from our great assortment of different types

CONNECTORS

We stock connectors from highly specialised types to the everyday kind that you must be sure of being able to get when you want them. Here are some examples. See also Catalogue 82.

AUDIO DIN Ways	Plug	Socket
2	8p	8p
3	14p	8p
4	16p	14p
5(180°C)	14p	
6	18p	20p
7	19p	19p

D-TYPE Ways	Sock	Plug	
9	104p	78p	130p
15	147p	108p	139p
25	218p	150p	152p
37	316p	210p	160p

PANEL MOUNTING METERS

SPECIAL OFFER TO MARCH 31st

Panel mounting meters offered in the following F.S.D. ranges:— 0-50μA. 0-100μA. 0-500μA. 0-1mA. 0-5mA. 0-10mA. 0-50mA. 0-100mA. 0-500mA. 0-1A

Normal price, each **£2.69** Special offer price to Mar. 31 **£2.20**

SABTRONICS

FREQUENCY METERS

Model 8000B: 9-digit 1GHz Frequency Meter.

HANDY PACKS

TRANSFORMERS

BUDGET RANGE All primaries 240V

CHARGER TYPES Secondaries

TOROIDAL RANGE

Heat Sinks

Types 6F2, 6F, 18F2, 18F, 224F, 266F	14p each
2Y-TO66	£1.23
2Y-TO3	96p
TV3	29p
TV35 100N	£1.98
6W4 (Drilled)	£4.30

Many other types and sizes in stock

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COMPUTER CUSTOMERS

ELECTROVALUE LTD

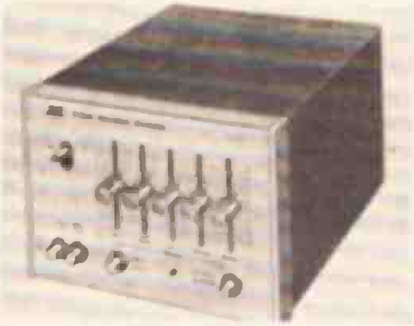
ETI NEWS SEPT 1981

Mini Discs

Philips, Sony and PolyGram have declared the Compact Disc Digital Audio System ripe for production. These companies are unanimous in the belief that this new system will eventually replace the LP as we know it. PolyGram Records Operations and CBS/Sony have now put their productions on Compact Disc. It is not expected that the CD will be on the market before the autumn of next year.

STEREO CONTROL UNIT

Connect this unit to your existing power amplifier, and at your fingertips you will have a degree of control over the audio spectrum previously unattainable with conventional tone control systems. JVC's unique Model SEA-10 takes the full audio range of 20 to 20,000Hz and divides it up into five discrete frequency bands centred at 40, 250, 1000, 5000, and 15,000Hz. Each band can then be varied independently by ± 12dB using the professional type slider controls with 2dB click stops.



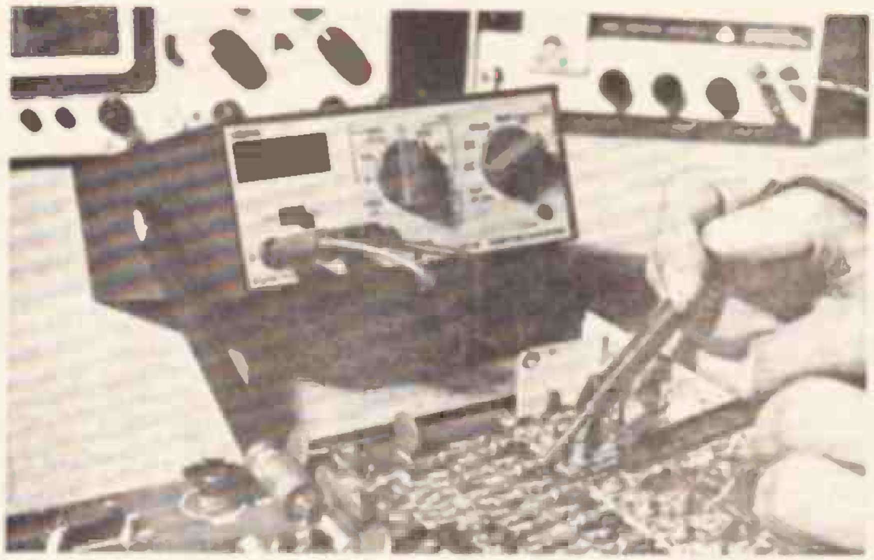
ETI NEWS JULY 1973

ETI NEWS MAY 1975

CARTRIDGE PERCUSSION UNIT

Bandmaster Limited of Gloucester Street, Glasgow, have designed a rhythm unit called the Powerhouse which uses multi-track continuous tape loop to produce multi bar synchronised "live" percussion rhythms.

DIGITAL MULTIMETER FROM ADVANCE



The way things are going, the adjective 'digital' will soon be dropped when talking about test gear. The advantages of digital readout are overwhelming compared to the standard meter (which has of course an analogue readout) and most new quality test equipment utilises direct digital readout.

One of the recently introduced DMM's is the Alpha from Advance Electronics, amongst the many attractive features is the price of £55.

ETI NEWS JUNE 1973

MPG meter.......

A device called a Mileage Computer (what else?) from the Young Corporation in America is designed to produce a digital readout of miles per gallon being obtained from a vehicle at any given instant.

The device is composed of speed and distance sensors, fuel level indicator and calculator circuit. A sensor attached to the speedo picks up pulses every revolution to provide some of the info needed.

The MPG meter will sell at around $20 in the USA. ETI NEWS DEC 1977

COLOUR PREJUDICE?

Official figures for the number of homes with colour TV's, i.e. those with a license, have just exceeded 50% of the total. Some lesser mortals might well be tempted to conjecture how high the total would be if the un-licensed felons in our midst could be stood up and counted. Naturally we refrain from any such thoughts.

ETI NEWS DEC 1976

TELEPHONE COMPONENTS

High-standard telephony today relies on components and function elements whose design and properties render them equally suitable for use in completely different fields. Read-only memories, MT components, keylock connectors and automatic cutouts are some examples of such components.

The MT (magnetic-core transistor) component developed detection of switching criteria in dc signalling systems, has a magnetic core with a rectangular hysteresis loop to detect signals which are amplified by the transistor. The core and transistor circuits are operated at the same potential and the defined Yes/No statements can be evaluated electronically or via relay circuits.

ETI NEWS APRIL 1973

CMOS IN PLASTIC PACKAGES

Motorola Semiconductors have just announced that 39 devices from their standard CMOS logic family are now available in plastic packages. In the past, ceramic packages have been used for all CMOS devices.

ETI NEWS SEPT 1973

FAIRCHILD TO MAKE CONSUMER PRODUCTS

The USA's Fairchild group are actively planning to enter the consumer products market, according to a usually reliable source.

Fairchild's first products are believed to be a low-end of the market one-chip hand-held calculator with 8-12 digits. However several industry commentors query Fairchild's ability to produce the necessary MOS chips, quoting Lester Hogan's (president of Fairchild) own description of his company's performance in the MOS field as 'disappointing'.

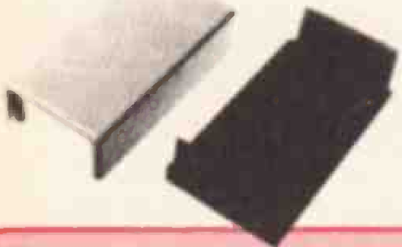
ETI NEWS JUNE 1974

PLASTIC BOXES

Vero Electronics Limited have recently become distributors for the Odenwalder Kunststoffwerk range of plastic products which include a range of plastic boxes. These are manufactured from high impact polystyrene, which is suitable for machining, engraving and silk screen printing. The upper portion of the box is coloured light grey and the lower portion, dark grey. The latter is provided with integral fixing points for circuit boards. The boxes can be free standing or wall mounting and should provide an attractive enclosure for reader's projects.

Vero Electronics Limited, Industrial Estate, Chandler's Ford, Eastleigh, Hants.

ETI NEWS JAN 1974



SOVIET RADAR BLAMED FOR HIGH HEART DISEASE

A Russian radar tracking station near the Finnish town of Ilomaritsi may be responsible for a sharp increase in heart disease and cancer according to Dr. Milton Zaret, an American microwave expert.

The Finnish border towns have the highest rate of heart disease in the world and cancer has increased inexplicably.

ETI NEWS JULY 1975

the little cb that santa forgot

Citizen Band radio manufacturers around the world are crying into their transceivers after Xmas. They expected a boost to sales to revive their drooping business, and it didn't materialise. Seems no-one wanted to contact anyone else — not even the reindeer.

ETI NEWS MARCH 1978

BLUE RESEARCH

Your choice of LED colours might include blue in the not so distant future. The new devices, being developed by Siemens, use silicon carbide and are predicted to have a forward voltage drop of 4 V at 50 mA.

ETI NEWS OCT 1979

* Polaroid are about to release an automatic focusing camera that uses an ultra-sonic transducer to measure distance.

* Computers stores in the US are opening up literally every day — we have just heard that 700 have been identified by someone preparing an exhibition! In addition to those dedicated to Home computers, office equipment suppliers and camera shops are at the forefront when it comes to jumping on the bandwagon: even Macey's stores have now got a computer department in some of their stores.

* Sanyo have demonstrated a 6 mm thin solid state green and black television. The display is made out of 6,144 green LEDs in an area only 50 mm by 75 mm. They hope to have a commercial set by 1981.

* A radar based overspeed detector is in use in the U.S. of A. the unit measures your speed and lights up a neon sign saying YOUR SPEED IS .... REDUCE SPEED. The unit is very effective, only problem was the local hot-rodders using it to check their top speed! Problem solved by limiting display to 75 instead of 99.

ETI NEWS SEPT 1978

Watch This!

If you're sick of digital watches, how about taking a look at this watch from Casio. Its all analogue, but with a difference. It's fully electronic and has no moving parts. It uses LCD and has conventional hours, minutes and sweep seconds hands. The Model AN8CL is designed to be attractive and fashionable, face colour matches the synthetic strap. Hour positions are marked by standard Roman numerals and all the time settings and adjustments are handled by two buttons, keeping the compact gold-plated watch case simple and uncluttered. The display shows hour and minute hands, and seconds indication is by a third sweep hand or as a series of marks on the face edge to show accumulated seconds. Accuracy is to within 15 seconds a month. RRP is £27.95, but products of this type are often sold cheaper. Further information can be obtained from Casio Electronics Co Ltd, 28 Scrutton Street, London EC2A 4TY.

ETI NEWS NOV 1981

GREENWELD

443A Millbrook Road Southampton SO1 0HX

All prices include VAT at 15% — just add 50p post

CONGRATULATIONS TO ETI ON THEIR 10TH ANNIVERSARY

Here are some special Bargains to celebrate!!!

ET1 Electrolytic Pack — 10 each of these PC mtg types: [illegible] 47/50, 1/50, 2.2/50, 4.7/40, 10/40, 22/50, 33/25, 47V16, 47/40, 100/16, 100/25, 220/10, 330/25, 1000V16. Total 150 caps for £3.95

ET2 1A rects — 25 each 1N4001, 2, 5 & 7. Total 100 for £3.95

ET3 Minibox polyester caps — 10 each of .01/630, .022/250, .047/400, .068/250, 1/100, .22/100, .33/100, .47/100, 1/100. Total 90 caps for £3.50

ET4 TTL pack — 5 each of 7400, 02, 05, 10, 13, 20, 30, 47, 73, 74, 86, 90, 93, 95, 107, 121. Total 80 chips for £14.95

ET5 100V 12A stud mtg diodes — 10 for £2

ET6 2 ½ in 8R speakers — 2 for £1

ET7 200V 4A Triacs — 6 for £1

ET8 1500uF 40V PC mtg caps. 5 for £1

ET9 700uF 10V axial caps — 12 for £1

ET10 ¼W 5% CF resistors, 20 each of these values: 2R2, 4R7, [illegible], 22R, 33R, 47R, [illegible], 180R, 270R, 560R, 820R, 1k2, 1k5, 2k2, 3k3, 12k, [illegible], 82k, 120k, 180k, 750k, [illegible], [illegible], 10M. Total 500 for just £3.50

ET11 Mains transformer, 12—0—12V 50mA, 2 for just £1

ET12 100 1N4148 diodes £2

STABILIZED PSU PANEL

A100 A versatile stabilised power supply with both voltage (0—30V) and current (20mA—2A) fully variable. Many uses inc bench PSU, Nicad charger, gen. purpose testing. Panel ready built, tested and calibrated. £7.75. Suitable transformer and pots £6.00. Full data supplied.

SPECIAL ETI BIRTHDAY OFFER

(Aren't we nice!!!!)

The above PSU, transformer, pots, heat sink, 0—30V and 0—2A meters, switch, terminals, neon and smart cabinet to mount it all in, plus wiring diagram & data.

JUST £24.95

MIXED LED PACK

All new full spec by Micro, Fairchild, etc. Red, Yellow, Green, Amber, Clear, 3mm & 5mm. Pack of 50 assd £3.50; 250 £15

1W AMP PANELS

A611 Compact audio amp intended for record player on panel 05 × 65mm including vol control and switch, complete with knobs. Apart from amp circuitry built around LM380N or TBA820M, there is a speed control circuit using 5 transistors. 9V operation, connexion data supplied. ONLY £1.50

OP—AMP PSU KIT

A199 All parts + instructions to make a 50mA + 15, 0, −15V supply from mains input. Only £1.50

P.C. ETCHING KIT MkV

The best value in etching kits on the market — contains 100 sq ins copper clad board, Ferric Chloride, Etch resist pen, abrasive cleaner, two miniature drill bits, etching dish and instructions. All for £4.95

PANELS

Z521 Panel with 16230 (2N3442) on small heat sink, 2N2223 dual transistor, 2 BC108, diodes, caps, resistors, etc. 60p

Z527 Reed relay panel — contains 2 × 6V reeds, 6 × 25030 or 25230, 8 × 400V rects + Rs. 50p

Z529 Pack of ex computer panels containing 24 carbon ICs. Lots of different gates and complex logic. All ICs are marked with type no. or code for which an identification sheet is supplied. 20 ICs £1.00; 100 ICs £4.00

A504 Black case 50 × 90 × 75mm with octal base. PCB inside has 24V reed relay, 200V 7A SCR, 4 × 5A 200V rects, etc. 60p.

CHEAP CHIPS

76477 Sound IC £1.25
2102A RAM 8 for £3
MM4027 shift reg. 8 for £5
uA7805 + volt reg £1.00
uA7905 − volt reg £1.20
74LS112 Dual Flip-Flop 8 for £1
TIL311 Hexadecimal display with decode 0—9 and A—F. With data £3.50

DEVELOPMENT PACKS

These packs of brand new top quality components are designed to give the constructor a complete range so the right value is to hand whenever required. They also give a substantial saving over buying individual parts.

K001 50V ceramic plate capacitors 5%, 10 of each value 22pF to 1,000pF, total 210 £4.00

K002 Extended range 22pF to 0.1. Values over 1000pF are of a greater tolerance. 10 of each value 22, 27, 33, 39, 47, 56, 68, 82, 100, 120, 150, 180, 220, 270, 330, 390, 470, 560, 680, 820, 1000, 1500, 2200, 3300, 4700, 6800, .01, .015, .022, .033, .047, .1 PRICE £7.00

K003 C280 or similar Polyester capacitors, 10 each of the following: .01, .015, .022, .033, .047, .068, .1, .15, .22, .33 and .47uF PRICE £5.40

K004 Mylar capacitors. Small size, vertical mounting 100V. 10 each of the following: .001, .0012, .0015, .0018, .0022, .0027, .0033, .0039, .0047, .0056, .0068, .0082, .01. Total 130 capacitors PRICE £4.70

K007 Electrolytic capacitors 25V working small physical size axial or radial leads. 10 each of the following: 1, 2.2, 4.7, 10, 22, 47, 100uF. Total 70 capacitors, PRICE £3.00

K008 Extended range, as above, also including 220, 470 and 1000uF all at 25V. Total of 100 capacitors. PRICE £5.35

K021 CR25 resistors or similar, miniature ¼ watt carbon film 5%, as used in nearly all projects. 10 of each value from 10 ohms to 1M. E12 series. Total 610 resistors. PRICE £5.00

K041 Zener diodes 400mW 5%. 10 each of all the values from 2V7 to 39V. Total 280 zeners. PRICE £16.00

K051 LEDs. Pack of 60 comprising 10 each red, green and yellow 3mm and 5mm together with clips. PRICE £5.95

UHF TUNERS

GJ6 Sylvania P4720 Channels 21—68. Brand new, no data £3.00

VHF TUNERS

Type P3720 (CCIR) by Sylvania. Bargain at only £3.00

RELAY/TRIAC PANEL MKII

Z557A PCB 100 × 75mm containing a wealth of components: 2 × 12V DPCO min relays, SC146 10A 400V triac, 555 timer, 10 × 1N4001 diodes, 2N5061 SCR, 2 × 3mm LED's, 3 × 2N3704, R's & C's — Amazing value — if bought separately, parts would cost around £6! Our price for the panel, just £1.00

LIE DETECTOR

Not a toy, this precision instrument was originally part of an "Open University" course, used to measure a change in emotional balance, or as a lie detector. Full details of how to use it are given, and a circuit diagram. Supplied complete with probes, leads and conducting jelly. Needs 2 × 4.5V batts. Overall size 105 × 100 × 100mm. Only £7.50 — worth that for the case and meter alone!!!

1000 RESISTORS £2.50

We've just purchased another 5 million preformed resistors, and can make a similar offer to that made two years ago, at the same price!!! K523 — 1000 mixed ¼ and ⅛W 5% carbon film resistors, preformed for PCB mtg. Enormous range of preferred values. 1000 for £2.50; 5000 £10; 20k £35

200 ELECTROLYTICS £4.00

K524 Large variety of values/voltages, mostly cropped leads for PCB mtg. 1—10,000uF. All new full spec components, no chuck outs!!! 200 £4; 1000 £17.50

CAPACITOR BARGAINS

2200uF 100V cans [illegible] 45mm dia 70p; 10/£5.00; 220uF 10V axial 5p; 100 £2.50; 1000 £18; 400 × 100uF 270V 102 × 64mm dia 75p; 10 £5.00; 200uF 300V, 100 × 100 × 50uF 300V can 75 × 45mm dia. 60p; 10 £3; 100 £20. 100uF 25V Axial £3. 100

0.33uF 50V rad £1.00/100; £12/1000
0.47uF 50V rad £1.00/100; £12/1000 also
22uF 50V rad £3/100; £20/1000
Electrolytics 10x40V PC mtg 25; £1.20; 100 £3
4.7u 63V PC mtg same price
1,000u/25V can 10 £1.50; 100 £10
1000u/40V can 10 £2; 100 £15
800u/200V can 10 £5.50; 100 £44
400u/400V can 10 £8; 100 £64
100u/200V, 120 × 100 × 50; 200V tall in one can! 10 £5.00; 100 £35.00

TOROIDAL TRANSFORMER

110mm dia × 40mm deep. 110/240V pri., Sec 18V 6A, 6.3V 1A, 240V 0.3A. Ideal for scopes, monitors, VDU's etc. Special low price £9.95

TRANSFORMERS

Mains primary, 50V 20A sec £20.00
Mains pri. 110V 15A sec £20; 20A £40.00

DISC CERAMICS

0.22uF 12V 8mm dia. Ideal for decoupling. 100 for £2.70; 1000 £20.00
0.05uF 12V 10mm dia. 100 £1.95; 1000 £13.00
Pack of disc ceramics, assorted values and voltages — 200 for £1.00

1N4006 DIODES

Special purchase of 1A rects. Russian made. Packed in boxes of 200, £5.00 per box, 4 boxes £20.00; 10 boxes £75

AUDIBLE WARNING DEVICE

Solid state circuit drives high efficiency transducer to give high output. Voltage read 6—15V. Can also be driven direct from TTL or CMOS. Module size 45 × 21 × 12mm. Comprehensive data supplied £1.50

NICAD CHARGER

Versatile unit for charging AA, C, D and PP3 batteries. Chargertest switch, LED indicators at each of the 5 charging points. Mains powered, 210 × 100 × 50mm. £7.00

ULTRASONIC ALARM — £14.95

Originally made to retail at over £30, these neat units housed in a 120 × 100 × 45mm case are brand new and boxed. They work by transmission of a 40kHz beam which responds to movement by detecting the Doppler freq. shift. Mains operated with internal buzzer and provided with data, these units are excellent value at only £14.95

SOLENOIDS AND RELAYS

W821 Solenoid rated 48V at 25% duty cycle, but work well on 24V (750gm pull, 10mm travel) push or pull 27 × 16 × 10mm 50p

W822 Mains 240V ac solenoid, 10% duty cycle, push or pull, 10mm travel, 50 × 20 × 10mm. Only £1.00

W894 6V DC relay 500R SPCO 20 × 24 × 10. 60p

W733 11 pin plug in relay, 240V ac, 3PCO 5A contacts £2.50. Base £20p

W830 700R 24V 4PCO "continental" relay 35 × 30 × 15, only 64p; 10/£7.00

W847 370 [illegible] 10V relay, SP 3A contact, PCB mtg 11 × 33 × 20; 58p; 10/£7.00

W850 Omron LY4 mains relay 4PCO 5A contacts £2.90

W855 24V ac coil, but works well on 6V DC. 2 × 10A c/o contacts. Ex equip. only 50p

AMAZING! COMPUTER GAMES PCB's for PEANUTS!!

A bulk purchase of PCB's from several well known computer games including Battleships, Simon, Logic 5 and Starbird enable us to offer these at incredibly low prices.

'STARBIRD'

Gives realistic engine sounds and flashing laser blasts — accelerating engine noise when module is pointed up, decelerating noise when pointed down. Press contact to see flash and hear blast of lasers shooting. PCB tested and working complete with speaker and batt. clip. Needs PP3. PCB size 130 × 65mm. Only £2.50

'SIMON'

The object of this game is to repeat correctly a longer and longer sequence of signals in 3 different games. Instructions included. PCB contains chips, switches, loudspeaker and lamps, and is tested working, complete with speaker. Needs PP3 and 2 × HP11. PCB size 130 × 120mm. Only £3.50

'COMPUTER BATTLESHIPS'

Probably one of the most popular electronic games on the market. Unfortunately the design makes it impractical to test the PCB in a working model, although it may well function perfectly. Instead we have tested the sound chip, and sell the board for its component value. SN76477 sound IC, TMS1000 + processor, hex digits, R's, C's etc. Size 100 × 140mm. Only £1.00 Instruction book and circuit 50p extra

'MICROVISION' Cartridges

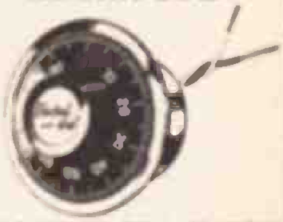
These are a small PCB with a micro processor chip, designed to plug in to the microvision console. Only snag is we don't have any consoles!! However, they can be used as an oscillator with 4 different freq. outputs simply by connecting a battery and speaker. Tested and working too as sent with pin out data. PCB size 72 × 42mm.

ONLY 25p each!!

LOGIC 5 PANEL

Tested Logic 5 main cct out — but no fixing cover. PCB's with 10 LED's and chip on, but no keyboard. Not tested. 50p

ELECTRO-DIAL



Electrical combination lock — for maximum security — pick proof, 1 million combinations!! Dial is turned to the right to one number, left to a second number, then right again to a third number. Only when this has been completed in the correct sequence will the electrical contacts close. These can be used to operate a relay or solenoid. Overall dia. 65mm × 65mm deep. Only £3.50

Also available without combination — Only £2.00

1982 CATALOGUE

... is not ready yet!!! 1981 edition is now out of print, but the big new 1982/3 edition should be ready by late March '82 — Send 75p for your copy now!!

WHOLESALE LIST

We have in stock many millions of components — we supply shops, M/O companies, Schools, Industrial Users etc. Can we supply you, too? Our quantity (100+) prices for new full spec components is very competitive. Ask for our free bulk buyers list.

NEW CONTROL SYSTEM FOR SLR CAMERAS

Electronic shutter speed and exposure controls can now be built into single lens reflex cameras without mechanically modifying the camera bodies or lenses.

A new control system, developed by Matsushita Electrical Industrial Corporation, measures the light at a preset aperture (in less than two milliseconds) and then sets exposure time accordingly. Control range varies from 0.0005 seconds to four seconds – dependent upon lens aperture and film speed.

Prior to the Matsushita development, it was necessary to have a light measuring device accommodated behind the main lens – calculating light intensity with the lens held wide open. **ETI NEWS JULY 1975**

RIDING HIGH

The next step in America's space programme is the tesing of NASA's space shuttle. Landing tests are to be carried out in mid 1977. Amazingly the machine will be launched 'piggy-back' from a Jumbo 747! Several

flights will be made to ensure stability before the shuttle is actually released. Trust Americans to build the worlds largest airliner and then carry people *outside* it! **ETI NEWS AUG 1976**

Elrad: ETI Germany................

A new edition of ETI starts this month – Elrad in Germany. The name Elrad itself means nothing and is simply an amalgamation of electronics and radio. It is being published by Heinz Heise in Hanover and is edited by Udo Wittig. **ETI NEWS JAN 1978**

COSMOS NOW CHEAPER THAN TTL FOR MAJORITY OF DIGITAL SYSTEMS

RCA has announced further price reductions in its CD4000 range of COS/MOS integrated circuits. The reductions range from 35% to 60%. The biggest price reductions have affected the more established MSI devices of the CD4000 range, with many types being reduced by over 60%.

As a result of the price cuts, many of the popular TTL devices are currently more expensive than the equivalent COS/MOS functions.

ETI NEWS SEPT 1975

CB2B

At long last a specification has been published by the Home Office for the legalisation of Citizen's Band radio. Two frequencies will be allocated: 934.025 to 934.975 MHz and 27.60125 to 27.99125 MHz. For the 934 MHz (AM) frequencies the maximum power is 8 W (25 W ERP), 20 channels at 50 kHz channel spacing. Hand-held units are restricted to 3 W PEP. On the 27 MHz (FM) frequencies the maximum power is 4 W (2 W ERP), 40 channels at 10 kHz spacing. Frequency tolerance: ±1.5 kHz. Maximum frequency deviation: ±2.5 kHz. Adjacent channel power: –60 dB to 2 uW, spurious emission less than 50 nW.

ETI NEWS JULY 1981

PLAY–ALONG–WITH–RCA

Single chip I/O for video games is the laudible aim of messers. RCA. To be introduced in January the device is primarily a vertical and horizontal synching circuit designed for use with RCA's 1802 MPU. Price could well be around £12 when and if introduced into this country.

ETI NEWS DEC 1976

CBM AGAIN!

Right – now you've stopped staring at the picture can we proceed with this month's news. Thank you. Once again our old friends CBM have managed to get in on the act. The above watches – yes **watches** – represent their long-awaited entry into the digital watch market – with the 5,000 series. All three use a common module, with the casings making for a price range of £17.50-£21.00.

ETI NEWS JAN 1977

CZECH ON CALCULATOR PRICES

ETI NEWS MAY 1976

A typical dour Czech day. The rain sleets across Prague.
Somewhere in the back streets well away from the patrols and the populace, Ivan scuttles into a dingy corner shop.

There, amid the Western papers and naughty mags, he spots the object of his desires.

Eyes alight he lifts the proscribed machine from the rack, and carries it reverently to the counter, behind which stands the owner.

"How much?" he stammers, hands shaking.

"Novus 650 comrade? To you, £172. Crossed the border this morning right under the army's noses." he looks around furtively, and leans across the counter, whispering.

"Interested in the REAL thing eh comrade?" Ivan nods. The man reaches below the counter and produces a battered show box. Ivan's eyes are wide by now, riveted to the lid as it lifts. Inside lies a full frontal scientific, a HP 45.

Ivan faints.

Now before you dismiss this as merely the alcoholic follies of the ETI staff, following a party, let us inform you dear reader, that whilst we may be guilty of slight embroidery, our flight of fancy is based on fact.

It seems our Eastern friends consider pocket calculators to be highly prized items, and will pay vast sums to acquire them. What would cost you or I £7, our Ivan would need £172 to own. For that HP 45 you could possibly get a weekend with Siberian Sue, belle of the Balkans.

The reason behind this black marketing and smuggling is that calculator ships are not produced behind the ferric curtain and the machines are banned from importers fists by the governments, to preserve foreign exchange as their value is so high.

I wonder how they count it?

FOUR CHANNEL DISCS

In the UK the EMI group have announced plans to release quadraphonic discs — using the CBS developed 'SQ Matrix' system — in April.

The company claims that the new discs will be fully compatible with existing stereo equipment.

ETI NEWS APRIL 1972

COMPUTER 'ON A CHIP' WITH CASSETTE TAPE

A new byte-orientated micro-computer with its own in-built cassette tape backing storage has been produced by Computer Electronics Ltd, of Saffron Walden, Essex, as part of its range of cassette tape data systems.

Believed to be one of the first 'processors on a chip' computers to be developed in this country, the complete computer fits on one of the company's standard printed circuit cards.

ETI NEWS AUG 1973

CALLING ALL K9s, R2D2s, ROBBIES, C3POs, MICROMICE etc, etc.....

ETI is very keen in getting a robot dialogue going.

Anyone out there on the other side of the printers ink interested in robotics, especially anyone actually building robots of WHATEVER complexity - should contact us here at ETI.

If possible how about some photographs of your machines? They may well be in line for an appearence in ETI. So come on, lets be hearing from you - ALL of you - take pen in hand (or get the robot to do it) and write to

The Editor,
ETI Magazine,
145 Charing Cross Road,
London WC2.

Mark your envelope "ROBOTS"

So we can deal with it with our usual machine - like efficiency.

ETI NEWS NOV 1979

TV GAMES LSI CHIP AVAILABLE SOON

Rumours have been abounding for about a year now that an LSI chip for television games was being developed.

We now have definite news that Logic Leisure, a British Company, have produced a chip which will produce four TV games, with two variations on each, giving eight permutations. There is score and sound facility. Type number is not yet known but the chip is suitable for both 625-line, 50Hz and 525-line, 60Hz.

It is hoped that the chip will be on sale in October and the price tag is going to be in the £10-£12 range (plus VAT). U.K. distributorship is in the hands of Television Sprots Co. Ltd., 6 Half Moon Street, Mayfair, London, WIY 7RA.

ETI NEWS AUG 1975

brief news

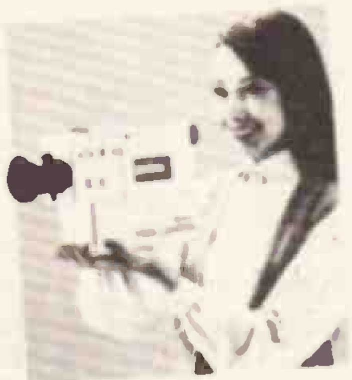
NASA have received weak signals from Skylab for the first time in four years. The possibility of sending it deeper into space is being considered....

★ A study by the American National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (Niosh) has concluded that VDUs in use in the offices of the New York Times are not responsible for cataracts developed by two copy editors working there....

ETI NEWS SEPT 1978

Hitachi MAGic

Hitachi have developed an experimental colour video camera combined with a video tape recorder — provisionally christened the 'MAG Camera'. Using high density recording techniques, the combination is little bigger than an 8 mm cine camera. The cassette, using ¼" tape, is almost as small as an audio cassette and allows two hours of recording/playback. The complete unit weighs only 2.6 kg, including a rechargeable battery pack. Watch this space for news on development of the MAG Camera.



ETI NEWS JAN 1981

BRITISH? PRECISELY!

From a firm called James Niell comes the Micro 2000 to rise into our News Digest with carefully measured precision. This instrument gets our vote for the best innovation of the year already! A digital *micrometer* no less.

As you can see from the picture, it actually reads out a measurement in seven-segment format. Goodbye verniers. It has so many features and advances, it is perhaps best simply to list them.

Accuracy to ± 0.002 mm., with a 'constant force' spindle and self-calibration facility. As soon as it is switched on, the 2000 self zeros.

The zero reset means that it can be used as a comparator against a known standard, and variations from that can be read directly. Also in awkward situations, the instrument can be zeroed, utilised, and then removed to be read.

ETI NEWS JUNE 1977

Sat 54

Well, it was Satcom 3 actually, but the plot is reminiscent of that old, old American telly series. The Car 54 in this case, however, was an RCA communications satellite, last heard of in December, 22,000 miles above mother Earth.

If anyone finds a communications satellite answering to the name of Satcom 3, send it to RCA, nto us. Mind you, if it has gone up in a puff of smoke, it has probably burned up on its way back to Earth. NASA quick to assure us that it won't cause another Skylab incident. So, you needn't dust off your anti-Skylab umbrella, yet.

ETI NEWS MARCH 1980

Text To Talk

Kurzwell Computer Products of Cambridge, Massachusetts has developed a machine to turn written text into speech.

The machine contains an optical scanner, a small computer, a small synthesiser and a loudspeaker unit.

The page to be read is placed over the scanning unit which then converts the written text to digital signals for the computer. The computer then converts them into sound.

ETI NEWS APRIL 1980

junk calls

From the land that brought us Muzak and MPUs comes the Junk call — the same as Junk mail but verbal! A machine is being used to dial up to 1,000 numbers a day and make a pre-recorded sales pitch, unlike junk mail there is no way of knowing when the call will be junk or not. By dialing up numbers from 0001 to 9999 the machine annoys everybody who answers on a particular exchange, even if you hang up it holds the line open until the pitch is finished — this has caused emergency calls to be delayed in some cases.

Ten states are considering legislation to curtail the activities of the machines. However they intend to exempt charities, pollsters and politicians. Some people want an electronic 'no thanks' sign to be developed, although nobody is quite sure how it would work. What next?!

ETI NEWS SEPT 1978

HP AT A (CALCULATED) LOSS;

Hewlett-Packard — renowned for their up-market calculators, are apparently running this section of the business at a loss. Equipment and other activities are keeping then in the black, and H.P. cite the delays occurring on the introduction of new models as the cause for this. Also named as a culprit is "severe price erosion in the pocket calculator marketplace". Pick the bones out of that ye rivals of the beast.

ETI NEWS NOV 1976

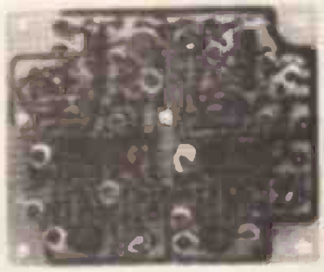
★ A computer system capable of controlling the lighting and heating in up to one hundred buildings has been set up in London by Honeywell. The system, called BOSS, is the first of its kind in the UK . . .

ETI NEWS MAY 1978

ANRS INTEGRATED INTO A SINGLE IC CHIP

In 1972, JVC first introduced their Automatic Noise Reduction System (ANRS) into their top-range cassette decks. Since then, ARNS has been incorporated into a wide range of tape decks. Recent improvements however, in cassette deck quality and the possibility of "noise-reduced" FM broadcasts have meant improvements in the quality of noise reduction systems and the application of these systems to components other than cassette tape decks.

To meet these new requirements, JVC has recently completed the development of the ANRS IC.



ETI NEWS OCT 1975

CEEFAX AND ORACLE SYSTEMS COMBINED

The BBC and IBA, together with BREMA and the Broadcasting Department of the Home Office have agreed on a unified system of data broadcasting.

Until now the BBC have been working on CEEFAX, the IBA on ORACLE. Both systems allow a TV viewer to select at will from a number of different 'pages' of information and put these onto his screen.

ETI NEWS JULY 1974

ELECTRONICS ENGINEERS' SALARIES FALL BEHIND

The 'Survey of Salaries', published by the Management Survey Centre this August, shows that the salaries of electronic engineers working for large companies have stagnated whilst other engineers' salaries have increased. Senior chemists have done best - their salaries have increased 3-4 times more quickly than the average.

For a senior professional in development (with major responsibilities) the median salary is £4,174; for electronic engineers in particular the median at this level is £3,720.

ETI NEWS OCT 1973

A Preview from the Next Issue of

AMBIT
INTERNATIONAL'S

WORLD of RADIO & ELECTRONICS

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AUDIOPHILE

Soon burglars won't be bothering to nick your whole hi-fi; they'll just take the cartridge. This month Ron Harris reviews two new pickups, one with a gemstone cantilever and the other a work of modern art.

News just in of a new piece of British circuitry genius. This is a new protection circuit, soon to be added to a famous manufacturer's product, which is claimed to make an amplifier totally invulnerable electrically.

Totally in this case means "even from 240 V mains at input or output". Ultra-fast relays are set at the output and on the supply lines to the PCB. These are driven from the new circuit, which has as its final stage a voltage amp with an incredibly high slew rate. This ensures a high speed of operation for the relays.

Out Of Phase

The protection circuit operates like this: if an amplifier is suddenly faced with a massive input signal, the ratio of the feedback signal to input will drop dramatically. A comparator senses the change and a 'low-feedback' signal is generated. This by itself is sufficient to trip the supply relays, so that the overload cannot be passed on to the output stages, thus destroying them — and probably the speakers.

A second block within the circuitry watches the supply rails and any surges which are outside the requirements of normal drive will trip the protection circuit, since this is a "low-feedback likelihood situation" as the designer puts it. Great play is made of the fact that the music signal and the feedback voltage are in anti-phase at the point of comparison, so no interaction within the buffer is likely. 'Anti-phase reset', as it is called, thus introduces no colouration. Hence the protection reset of the relays can occur either in the case of low feedback-to-signal ratio, or in event of an "overload likelihood". I suppose this is where the somewhat pompous title of the circuit is derived — Anti-Phase Reset In Low Feedback (Or Overload) Likelihood.

Shure MV30HE

A dedicated offshoot of the renowned V15 IV design, the MV30HE is for use in the SME Series III or IIIS only. The cartridge is built into a SME carryarm such that no headshell is used, or needed.

The moving components are those of the V15, save that no damper is provided. The cartridge body is all new, however, and quite a few problems it must have given them getting the coils and poles into a body as slim as this. The design is so arranged that the point of bearing intersection and the stylus line up parallel to the record. This will tend to aid stability in the replay of warped records.

As in the V15 a hyperelliptical stylus is used, which will give lower distortion results than either a spherical or elliptical tip. Tip mass is commendably low and output level is on a par with the V15 IV.

Once fitted into the SME the MV30HE looks very smart indeed is and visually extremely classy!

Testing an Armful

In the lab the MV30HE had an easy time passing just about every test. It tracks as well as the V15 IV and measures slightly better. There is no higher technical accolade than that. The LF resonance came out — surprisingly — at around 16 Hz, a little higher than optimum in my opinion. Best values are somewhere around 10-12 Hz so as not to affect extreme LF reproduction. Best tracking was obtained at around 1.0 g, and no improvement was forthcoming for increased force.

Frequency response was boringly perfect at 20 Hz — 20 kHz ± 1.3 dB with a separation figure of 27 dB at 1 kHz. Compliance measured very high at 34 cu, so only the smallest damping paddle is required. It is required however — see later.

Instructive Stuff

The instruction booklet is worth a special mention. It is a straight 'copy' of the SME style, right down to the little diagrams with ticks and crosses for right and wrong answers. Some sort of deal has been struck here, methinks!

One point that I just *have* to mention here; I could not

At long last Quad have released their new tuner, the FM 4. It was shown for the first time at the Audio 82 exhibition in Swiss Cottage recently. Designed to match the Quad 44 control unit (preamp to the rest of us) the FM - only unit has digital tuning and seven pre-set stations. Programme locations are stored in memory.

A tuning knob has been retained in preference to a set of push-buttons, since Quad say it is easier to use.

Brief Specification:

Full limiting	1 V	IF Rejection	100 dB
S/N (1 V input)	7 dB (stereo)	AM Supression	60 dB
Distortion (1 KHz)	0.15%	Image Rejection	80 dB
Capture Ratio	2.5 dB	Crosstalk (1 KHz)	40 dB

The MV30HE set up In a Series III. About the best looking piece of of hi-fi you'll ever see. As the compliance is very high only the smallest damper paddle is required, despite the lack of dynamic stabiliser (as fitted to V15 IV).

in any circumstances, get the arm to balance out using the recommended mixture of weights and spacers in the SME. Despite Shure patiently showing me the same arm set up perfectly in *their* Series III, would it balance once I left the factory? It would not!

I would be most interested to hear from any MV30HE purchaser as to balance requirements. I agree the total mass is 11.8 g but I'll be damned to an eternity of music centres playing Barry Manilow before I'll agree that an MV30HE balances in an SME Series III with four weights and six spacers.

Down To Sound

I suppose the obvious comparison with the MV30HE must be the V15 IV. So, as I'm getting old and predictable (I *still* hunger after Felicity Kendal . . .) that was the first pickup against which I auditioned the unit. Frankly, I had expected to discern no difference, and initial tests confirmed this to some degree. However, having settled in at home with my own system around me and the reassuring brandy in hand, subtle differences began to manifest themselves. The MV30HE has a more coherent sound — the mid-range is more open under close examination and the bass is 'cleaned-up' and tighter, if a little more prominent. These are *exactly* the changes to be expected from a unit which simply matches the arm better, but has a higher resonance. Which, of course, if I'd thought about, is *exactly* the MV30HE/V15 IV relationship. Serves me right for being so sure of myself!

In comparison to the market as a whole, the MV30HE/SME pickup stands well-up with the best. The damper is not significantly missed, provided the SME paddle is employed. Leave it off and boom is liable to result, as is a certain lack of stability on warped records. A limited application, then, but a very creditable performance and one which will compete with Shure's own V15 IV. After all, if you've got an SME and were contemplating a V15 IV, the MV30HE is a better bet all around. It is no more expensive than the V15 IV with a CA1 arm to hold it and it provides a cleaner, more refined performance. All in all, a nice touch Shure. Whither goest thou now?

Dynavector Karat Ruby

Both this month's cartridges are unusual in their own way; Dynavector's Karat is notable for its gemstone cantilever. This 2.5 mm long piece of single-crystal ruby is cut with a laser to accept the stylus (diamond) and then allowed to cool, thus fixing the stylus in place. The length is remarkably short, since Dynavector say that the less material the stylus information has to pass through, the higher will be the fidelity of the output.

Wave propagation through a medium is something not many of us take up as a hobby, but someone down at Dynavector must have it all well sussed! Apparently this equation:-

$$\frac{EI}{m}\frac{\partial^4 y}{\partial x^4}+\frac{\partial^2 y}{\partial t^2}-\rho\frac{EI}{m}\left(\frac{1}{E}+\frac{\gamma}{G}\right)\frac{\partial^4 y}{\partial x^2\partial t^2}+\frac{\rho^2\gamma}{mG}\frac{\partial^4 y}{\partial t^4}=0$$

$$C_B=\alpha\sqrt{2\pi f}\left[1-\frac{1}{4}\beta\frac{2\pi f}{\alpha^2}+\frac{1}{4}\delta(2\pi f)^2+\cdots\cdots\right]$$

where E = Young's modulus; I = secondary moment of section area; G = shear modulus; m = mass per unit length of a cantilever; p = density of the cantilever material; x = distance from the end of the cantilever; y = flexural displacement of the cantilever; r = constant; t = time.

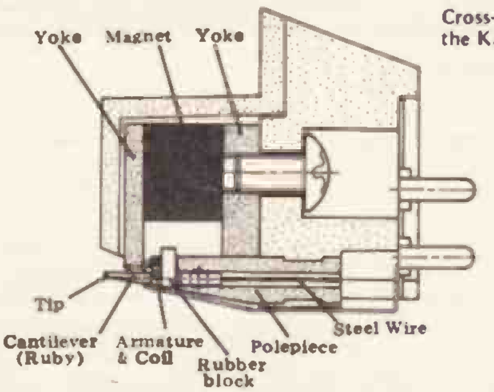
sums up the vibrational behaviour of a cantilever under dynamic conditions. It can also be used to prove that rigid materials, such as ruby and diamond, make for better cantilevers than boron, berylium and the rest.

(There is a 'big brother' to the Ruby, which has a diamond cantilever and costs around £450 as opposed to the Ruby's £100. If I can persuade the ever-helpful Dynavector into lending one I hope to report on the differences soon. Maybe if I say "please" . . . ?)

Temperate Zones of Test

Another piece of original thinking has gone into solving the problem of temperature dependence and damping material. The only rubber used in the Karat is to prevent the cantilever taking its jewelled self up into the body whilst playing records. Normally the pivot damping in a cartridge is accomplished by a rubber block and this is prone to suffer from changes in temperature and slow deterioration as it ages — the Karat suffers neither of these weaknesses.

In fact, due to the short rigid construction of the cantilever, the Ruby requires no damping at all.



Cross-section of the Karat Ruby.

Under test the Karat showed a ruler flat response from 100 Hz to 30 kHz of under ± 0.5 dB! It was only 1 dB down at 30 Hz and separation measured an excellent 24 dB at 1 kHz and a more than adequate 18 dB at 20 kHz. Stylus resonance fell at 49 kHz and in the SME Series III (what else?). LF resonance was well placed at 12 Hz, below audibility and above warps.

Tracking was exemplary for a moving-coil unit — at 1.75 g it tracked all my test bands perfectly; the first moving coil to do so. Bias was set for 2.0 g, a high value, but one that worked well. In actual use the Karat was never caught out by any recorded information.

If at this point you're looking around the pages in search of the usual response graphs, don't bother — I haven't included any. If you really want to see a straight line, go buy a ruler. Dishearteningly disappointing for us cynics.

Listening Out

As the Karat Ruby matches the SME Series III so well, it was left in that arm all through the listening test. One brief excursion into a Linn Itokk showed the two to be completely incompatable in my opinion, as the sound stage broke up and the bass became so loose as to be positively flapping! Strange that, as both are capable of much better and there is little on paper to point to such obvious mutual abhoration.

The loudspeakers used were my trusty KEF 105 II's fed by a variety of amplification from Crimson, Monogram and Trio. Source equipment remained at Thorens 160S/SME III throughout.

On the very first LP side I played with the Ruby it was obvious that here was something special. The sound is so detailed and open, with such tight control of the bass that it makes you sit up and take notice of the music. This is a cartridge that will be much appreciated by reviewers, as it is so easy to listen *through* for long periods.

In fact there is little I can say against the Karat. It is a trifle recessed — I cannot account for this impression from the lab results, however, but it remains a definite impression — but is so relaxed and balanced a sound that none but the most obnoxious could find aught to quibble with. The sound quality reminded me greatly of the Ortofon MC30, but with greater resolution of complex passages and a more extended bass end.

At around £100 the Karat Ruby is an excellent bargain. Even accounting for the required step-up device, this pickup is required listening for anyone in the market. I have no hesitation in saying that it out-performs many units costing much, much more and will give more musical pleasure than just about any other cartridge I know.

Mind you, I haven't heard the Karat Diamond yet . . . but can it *really* be worth £350 more? On this evidence I would doubt it! (Pause while Dynavector work out whether this is a compliment or an insult . . .)

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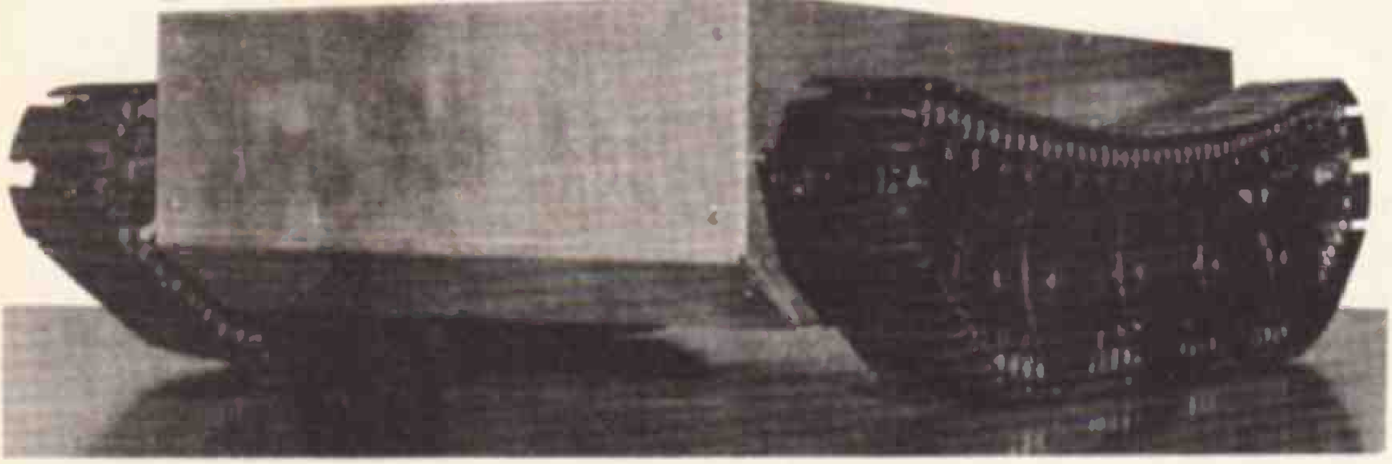
ROBOT MOTOR CONTROL

This month we feature a control board for last month's motor driving board. This is part 2 in a series of DIY robot modules — collect them all! Design and development by Rory Holmes.



In this second part of the series on the ETI intelligent programmable mobile we shall describe the design of an analogue pulse width modulator for controlling the motor driver stage featured last month. We shall also take a brief look at some of the modules being offered later in the series which can be added in stages to enhance the motorised vehicle. The intention is to build up to a complete computerised mobile.

A lot of flexibility has been allowed for in the actual use and configuration of the modules, as we are well aware that constructors interested in this type of project have firm ideas of their own on the final form and capabilities of their mobile. Construction and interconnection details for all the modules we are presenting will be given along with guidelines to a range of applications.

The facilities we have planned for the mobile will continue with the digital motor control and an on-board programmable computer for overall control of other modules. A light-weight manipulator arm complete with teaching arm has also been designed, for mounting on the front of the mobile. It is powered by four radio control servo motors and the electronics interface between the servos and computer will be described along with details of the arm mechanics. Optical proximity detectors for object sensing, and infra-red tachogenerators for speed sensing will also be featured on the ETI mobile.

It is hoped that the designs will also prove useful as stand-alone modules for individual use in other applications. Optical proximity detectors, for example, have numerous applications in batch counting, limit sensing, detection, alarms and so on.

The digital pulse width modulator in next month's issue will find many uses in the control of analogue functions; how about a computer interfaced to a pulse width modulated optical data link, for analogue information transmission? Our version will control two pulse width modulated channels, with a resolution of one part in 256, via an eight bit data port; modulation being achieved solely by logic to satisfy the all-digital purists.

Optical Proximity Detectors

These have been designed as small independent units with as much in-built versatility as possible. The circuitry is housed in a short length of aluminium tube axially aligned in the detector direction, with three external connecting points, ground, positive supply, and an open collector digital output. A number of detectors can thus be easily mounted in strategic locations. All circuit operating parameters are independent of the supply voltage, which can be anywhere between 5 and 35 V at a current of 20 mA.

The proximity switch works on the principle of transmitting and detecting a modulated infra-red beam. The infra-red transmitter receives 1 A peak current pulses, of 10 uS duration, with a modulation frequency of 1 kHz. The 100:1 duty-factor thus achieved allows high currents to be used to increase the detection range, while reducing the average supply current to only 10 mA.

The sensor can be set by a preset pot, accessible through a small hole, to detect an object at any distance in the range 1 cm to 35 cm.

A small amount of hysteresis is introduced into this switching distance to ensure clean switching thresholds and stability of the output signal. The use of tuned detector amplifiers provides excellent infra-red interference rejection.

Analogue Speed Control

The analogue speed control has

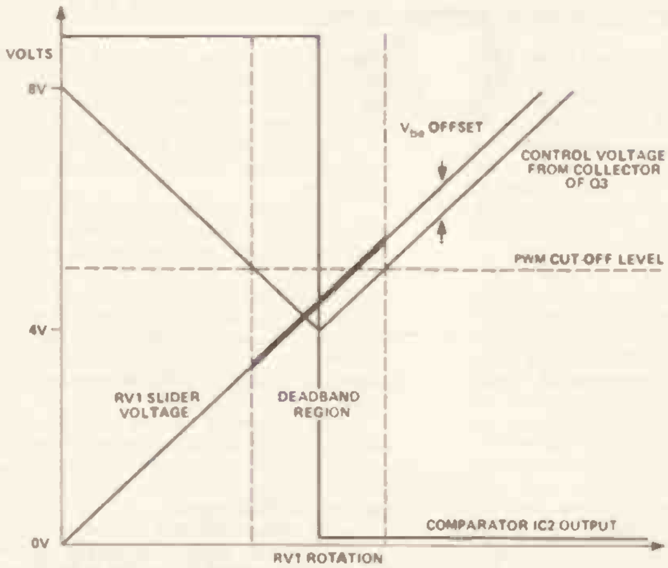


Fig. 1 Various voltages associated with the circuitry around Q3. The control voltage is measured at point A in Fig. 5.

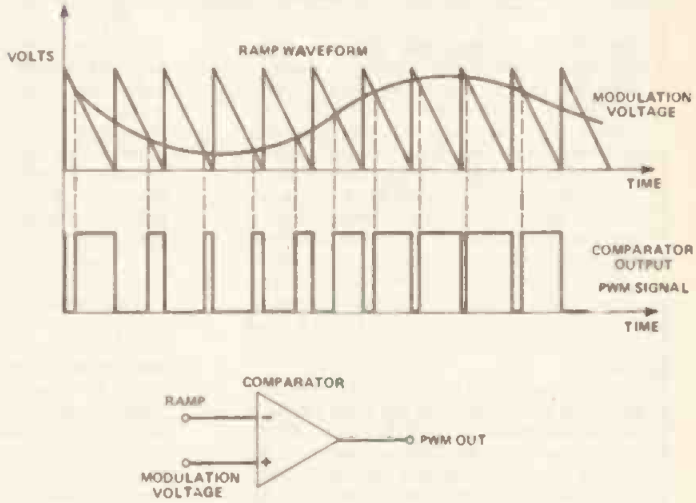


Fig. 3 How PWM waveforms may be generated using a comparator.

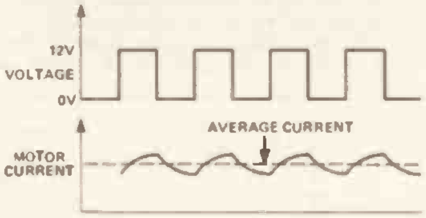


Fig. 2 PWM motor driving waveforms for last month's circuit.

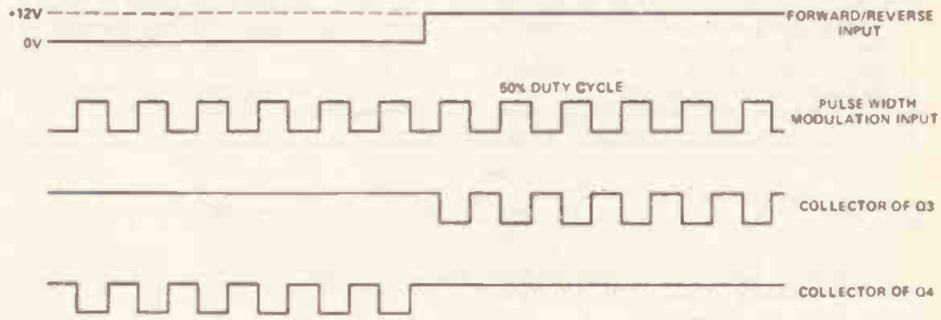


Fig. 4 The waveforms needed by our motor driver board, published last month. (Q3 and Q4 refer to last month's circuit.)

been devised for manual control of the main traction motors; it provides two pulse width modulated signals suitable for the motor driver amplifier.

The circuit is designed to provide a linear control-voltage-to-pulse-width relationship for greater flexibility in application, and to simplify the addition of speed feedback velocity control.

The modulator can be built either single or dual, and the manual control section, if not required, is easily omitted. Speed control is achieved via two remote potentiometers, allowing speed to be set in either forward or reverse directions independently for each traction drive.

Since both motors are controlled via switching amplifiers from the same battery supply, it is important to reduce the peak currents that are drawn. This can be achieved by offsetting the phase of the switching waveforms relative to each other, such that at 50% duty cycle modulation, power

BUYLINES

No problems here with any of the components specified — most mail order companies who advertise in the magazine will be able to supply everything. We can supply the PCB — see page 44 for details.

An internal view of the driver unit showing the interwiring to the bridge rectifier of one channel. Constructional details for the pulse width modulator will appear next month.

HOW IT WORKS

The circuit for the dual analogue pulse width modulator is shown in Fig. 5; it will be seen that each channel is identical with the exception of the circuitry around the CMOS gates IC1 and IC4. As described earlier the two switching waveforms must be the same frequency and synchronized 180° out of phase, to distribute the motor current peaks more evenly through the cycle. This is achieved by synchronizing both pulse generators to a master clock based around IC1a and b. A 20 kHz square wave is generated by this conventional astable arrangement and its frequency, set by R1 and C1, is fairly independent of supply variations.

The output of IC1d at pin 6 provides a buffered square wave in the same phase as the output on pin 10 of IC1b. C2 and R3 differentiate the positive-going edge of the square wave to produce a very short logic low pulse at the output of Schmitt inverter gate IC1c. In similar fashion C9 and R16 produce a logic high pulse coinciding with the negative-going square wave edge. IC4b further inverts this signal to a logic low pulse. Two separate trains of 500 nS negative-going pulses are thus provided in the correct phase relationship for resetting the charging cycle of two sawtooth oscillators as described below.

The pulse width modulators are identical from here on and we shall refer to the topmost circuit for description. Voltage controlled pulse width modulation is, in principle, very simple; a ramp waveform (sawtooth) is applied to one input of a comparator and the modulation voltage to be encoded is applied to the other, producing the required PWM squarewave at the comparator output. Figure 3 illustrates this operation.

Due to the design requirement of a linear relationship between control voltage and pulse width, a constant current source formed from Q2 is used to generate the linear ramp waveform. LED1 and the base-emitter junction of Q2 are forward biased by R6 and together define a temperature-compensated voltage across R7 which in turn defines a constant emitter and collector current of about 1 mA. C3 is charged up negatively from this current, until the negative-going reset pulse arrives from inverter IC1c. This pulse turns Q1 hard on for a very short period (500 nS), during which C3 is completely discharged, taking the ramp voltage back to +8 V. This process repeats at the clock frequency of 20 kHz, providing a negative-going sawtooth of about 3 V peak-to-peak referenced to the +8 V rail.

IC3b, the comparator used to perform the modulation, is an LF353 dual op-amp, chosen for its large bandwidth and high slew-rate. The inverting terminal on pin 2 is fed from the ramp waveform, while the non-inverting terminal is fed from op-amp IC3a, an inverting amplifier configured to sum control voltage inputs relative to a 4 V reference.

The potential divider R11 and R12 provides the 4 V reference to the non-inverting terminal of IC3a, and the control voltage applied to R13 at point A is summed relative to the 4 V. An offset voltage set by PR1 is also summed at the inverting terminal of IC3a, and is used to bring the control voltage into the correct operating range and for setting a deadband region on the manual control pot RV1.

The output of op-amp IC3b (and indeed most others) will not swing to the full supply rail voltages, so the inverter gate IC1e is used to buffer the square wave to full CMOS logic levels.

The manual control system included in this circuit enables a single potentiometer to control the speed in both forward and reverse directions. When the pot is at centre travel, and for a certain deadband around this point, the motor must be stopped and no switching pulses should occur (ie the PWM signal is continuously low). As the pot is turned in either direction from its midpoint, the pulse width should in-

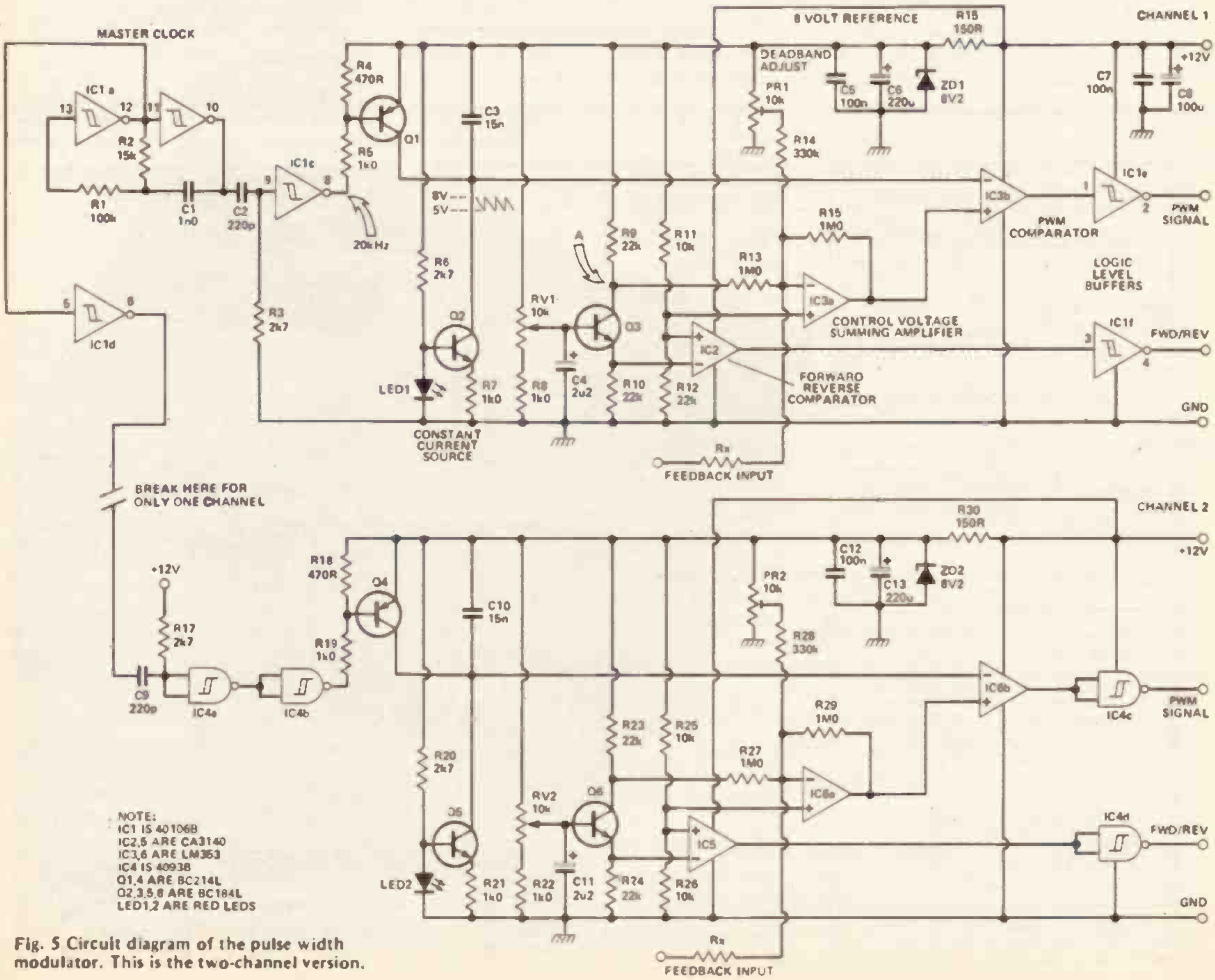


Fig. 5 Circuit diagram of the pulse width modulator. This is the two-channel version.

crease and this requires a positive-going input voltage to the summing amplifier IC3a. The forward/reverse logic level should also change state as the pot moves through its midpoint. Q3 provides the necessary voltage transfer function from the pot RV1 to the control voltage summing amplifier, as explained graphically in Fig. 1.

The emitter and collector resistors of Q3 are both equal and the base voltage is taken directly from the slider of the manual control pot RV1. The output voltage is taken from the collector of Q3 to feed the summing amplifier, and will be held at +8 V via R9 when Q3 is switched off. As the slider of RV1 moves toward the centre of travel, the base voltage rises, slowly turning on Q3 and lowering the collector voltage.

When Q3 is turned hard on as RV1 reaches its mid-point, R9 and 10 will form a potential divider giving 4 V as the minimum control voltage. Further increase of base voltage can now only increase the emitter and collector voltages back up to the positive rail, reaching a maximum at one V_{be} drop from the +8 V rail.

During the above process the voltage on the emitter of Q3 rises from zero to the same maximum voltage, and is fed to the inverting terminal of IC2, a CA3140 used as a comparator. The other comparator input receives 4 V derived from the potential divider R11 and R12. This provides the required forward/reverse signal that corresponds to each half of the control pot. Inverter gate IC1f buffers the output of IC2.

C7 and C8 provide supply decoupling for both channels, while C5 and C6 provide further smoothing for the 8 V zener regulator formed by R16 and ZD1. This 8 V reference rail is used for two reasons; firstly to allow for fluctuation in the 12 V battery power supply that would otherwise affect the output pulse width, and secondly to ensure that the op-amp supply voltage is well above the maximum input voltage.

The resistor marked as Rx in the circuit shows where a speed feedback voltage will be added to the controller to close the velocity control loop. An infra-red tachometer module to directly sense the traction speed will be described later in the series.

If the manual control input is not required, the components associated with this can be simply omitted (ie RV1, R8, R9, R10, C4, Q3, IC2 and their equivalents in the other channel). Control voltages may now be fed to the unconnected end of R13, where a variation of 3 V, set by PR1 to be anywhere in the range 0 V to 8 V, will provide 100% control of the output pulse width. Forward/reverse switching must also be applied to the input of IC1f on pin 3.

will be switched alternately to each motor. This spreads the current peaks more evenly over the switching cycle.

Construction and setting up with interconnection details for the motor driver will be described next month.

PARTS LIST

Resistors (all ¼ W, 5%)	
R1	100k
R2	15k
R3,6,17,20	2k7
R4,18	470R
R5,7,8,19, 21,22	1k0
R9,10,23,24	22k
R11,12,25,26	10k
R13,15,27,29	1M0
R14,28	330k
R16,29	150R
Potentiometers	
RV1,2	10k linear
PR1,2	10k linear miniature horizontal preset
Capacitors	
C1	1n0 ceramic
C2,9	220p ceramic
C3, 10	15n polycarbonate
C4, 11	2u2 35 V tantalum
C5, 7, 12	100n ceramic
C6, 13	220u 16 V axial electrolytic
C8	100u 25 V axial electrolytic
Semiconductors	
IC1	40106B
IC2,5	CA3140
IC3,6	LF353
IC4	4093B
Q1,4	BC214L
Q2,3,5,6	BC184L
LED1,2	red LED
ZD1,2	8V2 400 mW zener diode
Miscellanous	
PCB (see Buylines)	

ETI

SOLID STATE REVERB UNIT

Where have all the spring lines gone? Gone to lesser projects in other magazines, that's where. Meanwhile we present this cheap, simple, but high-quality unit using solid state technology. Design by Charles Blakey.

At last — a reverberation unit which is not a pseudo echo effect and does not suffer from the defects of spring line devices. The unit described below will interface with virtually any preamplified signal and is ideal for direct use with most musical instruments or for incorporating in the 'echo-send' line of mixers. The design has been made possible by a new 3328-stage bucket brigade device having six tapped delays and capable of producing a useful reverberation time of about three seconds.

Sound emitted in an enclosed space will be subjected to both simple and multiple reflections from internal surfaces. Since these surfaces are at varying distances, the time for these reflections to occur and then decay by absorption will vary. The effect is a build-up of sound known as reverberation. When playing a musical instrument in the home, small studio or some other venue, the decay time can be very small coupled with a high absorption loss; the result is a weak sound when compared to recorded music or to live music played in a large hall.

Until now the only low-cost method of simulating acoustic reverberation has been the use of spring lines. These units, however, are prone to vibration, require a high power consumption for effective driving and are prone to producing distorted resonant peaks. Furthermore it is not possible to adjust the reverberation time and in many instances a short reverberation can be very effective. Another option has been available for some years, namely, the use of bucket brigade devices to electronically delay signals. While claims have been made for reverberation effects based on these products, a realistic unit would require at least three dual 512-stage BBDs, such as the Reticon SAD1024A. The cost and complexity of the latter approach puts it beyond the reach of the average constructor.

Beyond The Pail

The reverberation unit utilises the MN3011, which is the latest in a series of bucket brigade devices for audio applications to come from National Panasonic. They are all fabricated in PMOS and for a start you can forget most of what you may have read about the disadvantages of PMOS BBDs. It is a fact that they are somewhat limited in clocking speed (10 kHz to 100 kHz) and also have a limited bandwidth, typically 10 to 12 kHz. The latter, however, is not usually a limitation since the bandwidth is often restricted by the desire for long delay times. What makes the series ideal for audio applications is their low insertion loss, low distortion and excellent signal-to-noise ratio and for the MN3011 the specified values are 0 dB, 0.4% and 76 dB respectively.

The IC is unusual in that it has 12 pins but is the length of a normal 18-pin package; the functional block diagram and pinout for the MN3011 is shown in Fig. 1. As is normal with such devices it requires two power supplies, V_{DD} and V_{CC}; the former may be up to -18 V with respect to ground while V_{CC} should be $+1$ V higher than V_{DD}. Bucket brigade, or charge coupled, devices are analogue shift registers which operate by sampling the input signal at a rate determined by an external clock. The signal level at the time of sampling is stored on an internal capacitor; this charge is then clocked down a series of capacitors by means of internal switches. The transfer process is accomplished by a dual clock whose outputs are in antiphase and so are alternately opening and closing adjacent switches. It will be apparent that the slower the clock speed the longer the delay. Since the devices operate at high clocking speeds the input signals are faithfully reproduced at the output.

The most interesting feature of the

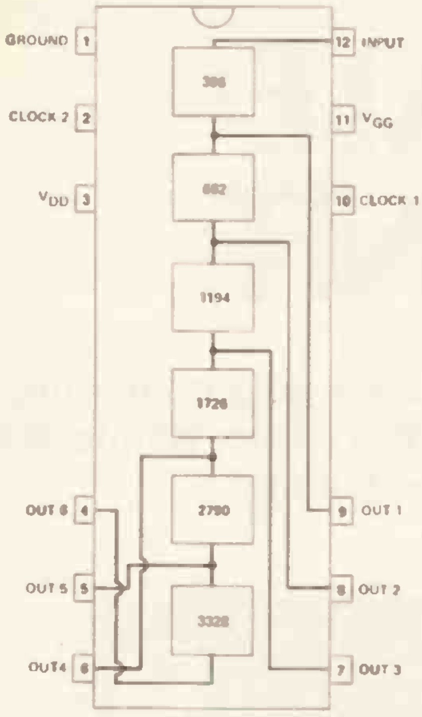


Fig. 1 Pinout and internal layout of the MN3011. The centre three pins on each side of this 18 pin package are absent.

MN3011 is that it has six tapped delays and Fig. 1 shows the number of stages for each tapping. The tappings are not evenly spaced since otherwise the reverberant sound would have a distinct flutter. If the device was being clocked at 10 kHz then the delays from outputs one to six would be 19.8, 33.1, 59.7, 86.3, 139.5 and 166.4 milliseconds respectively. If these delay times are mutiplied by 0.33 then one obtains the equivalent room path length for one trip, ie the longest delay is equal to a room length of 55 metres (181 feet). Reverberation time is usually measured as the time taken for the power to decay to one millionth of its initial level (60 dB down). For the present design the time was measured for the output level to fall to one hundredth of its initial level (−40 dB) and at the longest delay this was found to be about three seconds.

Blocks 'n Clocks

The block diagram of the circuit for the reverberation unit is shown in Fig. 2. First there is the dual clock driver, which is another National Panasonic device, the MN3101. It has an oscillator, divider and wave form shaping and produces the dual clock pulses required by the MN3011. It reduces component count and is lower in cost than other alternatives, such as a 4007. A further advantage is that it also generates the required V_{GG} voltage.

The unit will operate satisfactorily with any input signal greater than 280 mV RMS and higher input signals are attenuated by the input potentiometer. The signal is also reduced by half in amplifier A1 and inputs higher than 140 mV to the first filter are indicated by a LED peak detector circuit. Although the MN3011 will accept signal levels up to 780 mV before the distortion value stated earlier is exceeded, it will become apparent that the effect of reverberation can lead to reinforcement of signals and consequently this has to be allowed for. The only preset in the circuit is used to apply a bias voltage to the signal. The precise value of this voltage is not very critical in the current design and the object is to keep the signal at a level where it will not be distorted or clipped within the BBD.

The main problem with BBDs is the inability to completely cancel out the clock pulses and these can form audible cross products with the input signal. In order to prevent this foldover distortion, the bandwidth of the input signal should be limited to between a half and a third of the clock frequency. Filter F1 in Fig. 2 is a lowpass filter with a cut-off frequency of 3.6 kHz. This may seem rather low but in fact it is equivalent to the upper reverberation limit of most spring lines and the BBD scores in respect of low frequency responses since springs usually give rise to 'booming' below 100 Hz. The limited bandwidth is compensated by mixing the original signal with the reverberated signal at the output stage. The filtered signal goes to the MN3011 and the six output stages are summed to give a composite signal with different delay times. This signal is again filtered with a lowpass filter with a cut-off frequency of 3.6 kHz, to remove residual clock glitches, prior to mixing with the original signal at the output amplifier, A2.

The most important feature, however, is that the signal from the longest delay is returned, slightly attenuated, to the input and subjected to further delays. This is the reverberation effect and with the times given earlier the sound will simulate the effect of the first reaching a surface 55 metres away (assuming slowest clocking rate) and then being reflected back as well as being reflected from other surfaces closer than the 55 metre surface. The whole process is repeated until the original delayed signal and its reflections die away. In the meantime new signals are being recycled and the overall effect is a build-up of sound — reverberation.

Construction

The construction is very straightforward but the following precautions should be observed. First,

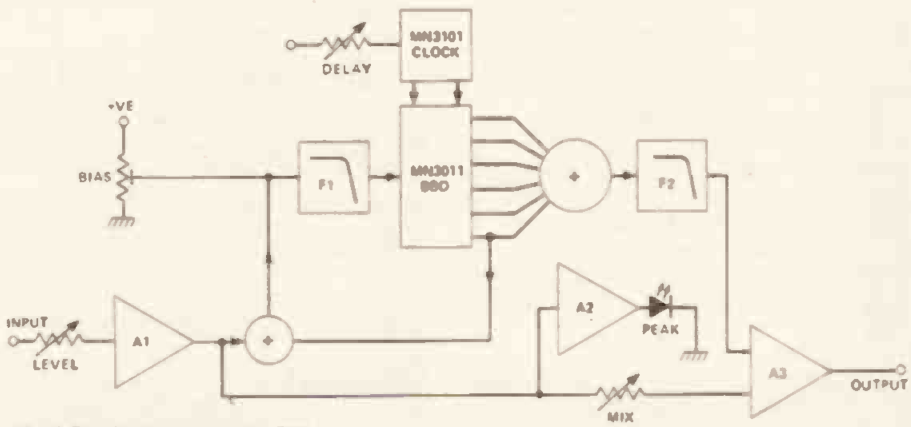


Fig. 2 Block diagram of the ETI Solid State Reverberation unit.

BUYLINES

The PCB and a kit of components for the reverberation unit is available for £32.00, inclusive of postage and VAT, from Digisound Limited, 13 The Brooklands, Wrea Green, Preston, Lancs PR4 2NQ. The power supply may also be obtained for an inclusive price of £7.00. As the PCBs are copyright they will not be available from our PCB Service; however, the foil patterns are reproduced at the back of the magazine. National Panasonic do not distribute active components in the UK and the ICs may *only* be obtained from Digisound.

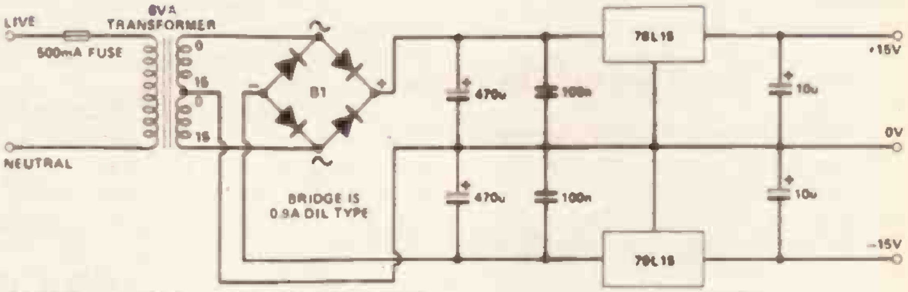


Fig. 4 Circuit diagram of a suitable PSU for this project.

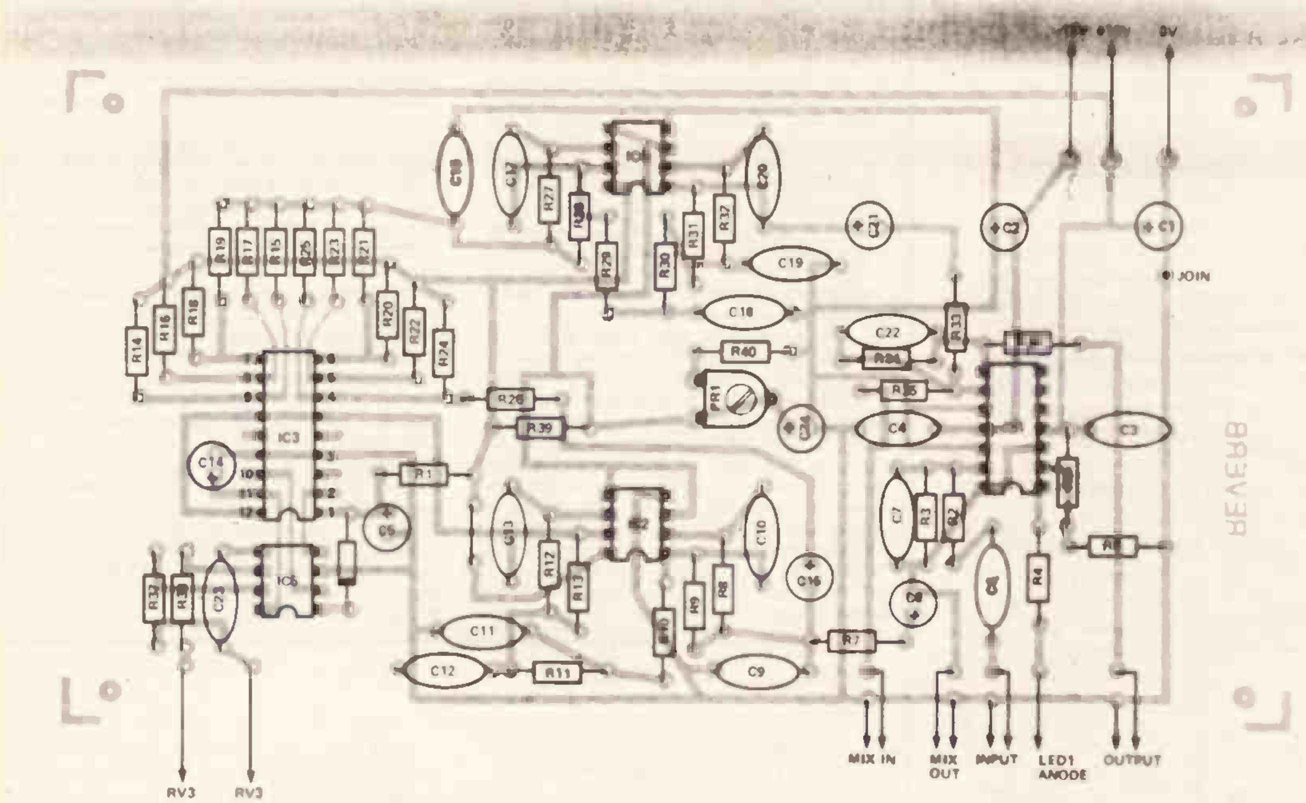


Fig. 3 Component overlay for the reverberation unit.

make sure you get the correct orientation of the ICs which are clearly shown on the component overlay. Second, the MN3011 is a CMOS device and with the advent of 'B' series devices we have all become rather careless as regards handling such ICs. For the MN3011, however, take the precaution of working on a grounded

PSU PARTS LIST

Capacitors

C1,2	470u 35 V PCB electrolytic
C3,4	100n polyester
C5,6	10u 35 V PCB electrolytic

Semiconductors

IC1	78L15
IC2	79L15
BR1	0A9 DIL type

Miscellaneous

PCB (see Buylines); PCB-mounting transformer (15-0-15, 6 VA); 500 mA mains fuse and chassis-mounting holder.

PARTS LIST

Resistors (All ¼W 5% except where stated)

R1	10R ½W
R2,5,7,9, 13,32,33,39	100k
R3,34	51k
R4	330R
R6	1k3
R8,12,27,31	33k
R10,29,37	47k
R11, 30	56k
R14,16,18,20, 22,24	56k 1%
R15	100k 1%
R17	110k 1%
R19	120k 1%
R21	130k 1%
R23	150k 1%
R25	160k 1%
R26	200k
R28	82k
R35	18k
R36	1k0
R38	36k
R40	68k

Potentiometers

RV1	100k logarithmic
RV2	10k logarithmic
RV3	470k linear

PR1	47k miniature horizontal preset

Capacitors

C1,2	10u 35 V PCB electrolytic
C3,4	100n polyester
C5	22u 35 V PCB electrolytic
C6	220n polyester
C7,10,13, 20,22	220p polystyrene
C8,14,15, 21,24	3u3 63 V PCB electrolytic
C9,11,12, 18,19	2n7 polystyrene
C16	2n2 polystyrene
C17	270p polystyrene
C23	33p polystyrene

Semiconductors

IC1	TL074
IC2, 4	LM358
IC3	MN3011
IC5	MN3101
D1	1N4148
LED1	5 mm red LED

Miscellaneous

SK1,2	mono jack sockets

PCB (see Buylines); IC sockets; case (Vero order no. 91-2673G).

metal surface, such as a piece of aluminium foil, do not insert the IC with the power on and do not use a soldering iron on the PCB with the IC installed.

The PCB supplied with the kit has a ground plane to reduce interference from and to other electronic equipment as well as to reduce noise. This feature allows greater freedom in locating the unit, eg it does not have to be housed in a separate metal case. A ground plane comprises a metallized surface on the component side except for small areas around the holes for the components. Ensure that the component leads do not touch the ground plane — which is not difficult — and preferably solder the resistors and axial capacitors in place with a thin piece of card between the component and the board so that the former are not in physical contact with the ground plane. After soldering the card is removed. Th latter step is not essential. The one wire link must be made with insulated wire. The ground plane has to be connected to the 0 V line and some 15 mm from where the latter is connected to the PCB there is a hole marked 'join'. A piece of wire should be placed through this hole and soldered on both sides of the PCB.

The PCB has been laid out such that the BBD and clock are as far away as practical from the signal input and output. This separation should be maintained if the unit is housed in a box and all wiring should be kept as short and as neat as practical, with the audio connections being made with miniature screened cable.

The unit requires a ±15 V power supply and the current consumption is a miserly 13 mA at +15 V and 9 mA on the −15 V line. If a separate power supply is required then a suitable PSU is shown in Fig. 4. A PCB-mounted transformer is preferred, and it should be mounted as far away from the BBD as practical. The photographs show the unit inside a Vero 'G' range case with internal dimensions of approximately 218 x 138 x 50 mm.

HOW IT WORKS

The input signal is attenuated by RV1 and also by the inverting amplifier built around IC1a which has a gain of about 0.5. From IC1a the signal goes three ways. A comparator built around IC1b forms a peak detector to indicate optimum signal level, while RV2 and R35 allow mixing of the original signal with the reverberated signal in the inverting amplifier configured around IC1c. The component values in this section are such that equal proportions of the two signals may be mixed. Finally the signal also passes to two active filters constructed around IC2 which have a 12 dB/octave roll-off for each stage and a cut-off frequency of 3.6 kHz.

From the above filter stages the signal passes into the MN3011 and the six delay outputs are summed by the resistor network formed by R14 to R25. Note that the shorter the delay, the less the attenuation. From the longest delay (pin 4) the signal goes via R25 back to the input of the filter and thus provides recycling of the delayed signal in order to generate a true reverberation effect. The reverberated signal is filtered by two active filters constructed around IC4 and these have the same characteristics as the input filters. Between the active filter stages some passive filters have also been added to increase the roll-off; the loss in these filters is compensated by increasing the gain of the active filters.

The dual clock for the MN3011 is provided by IC5 and with the components shown, the clock frequency may be manually varied with RV3 over the range 10 kHz to 100 kHz, allowing maximum first pass delays from 16.64 to 166.4 milliseconds. Pin 8 of IC5 provides the V_{GG} voltage for the MN3011. Since both IC3 and IC5 are P-channel CMOS it would be normal to operate them from a −15 V supply. Voltages are, however, relative and by connecting +15 V to the ground pin and ground (0 V) to the V_{DD} pin they will operate happily with positive signal inputs. R1 and C5 prevent clocking signals getting back into the power lines. The filters are also operated from a single +15 V supply and this avoids any problems which may arise from excessive bipolar signals, ie they will be clipped at +15 V or ground and not damage the BBD. The bias voltage required by the BBD and the filters is primarily to allow them to accept bipolar signals; this voltage is provided by the resistive divider using components R39, PR1 and R40 and is applied to the non-inverting input of the filter op-amps.

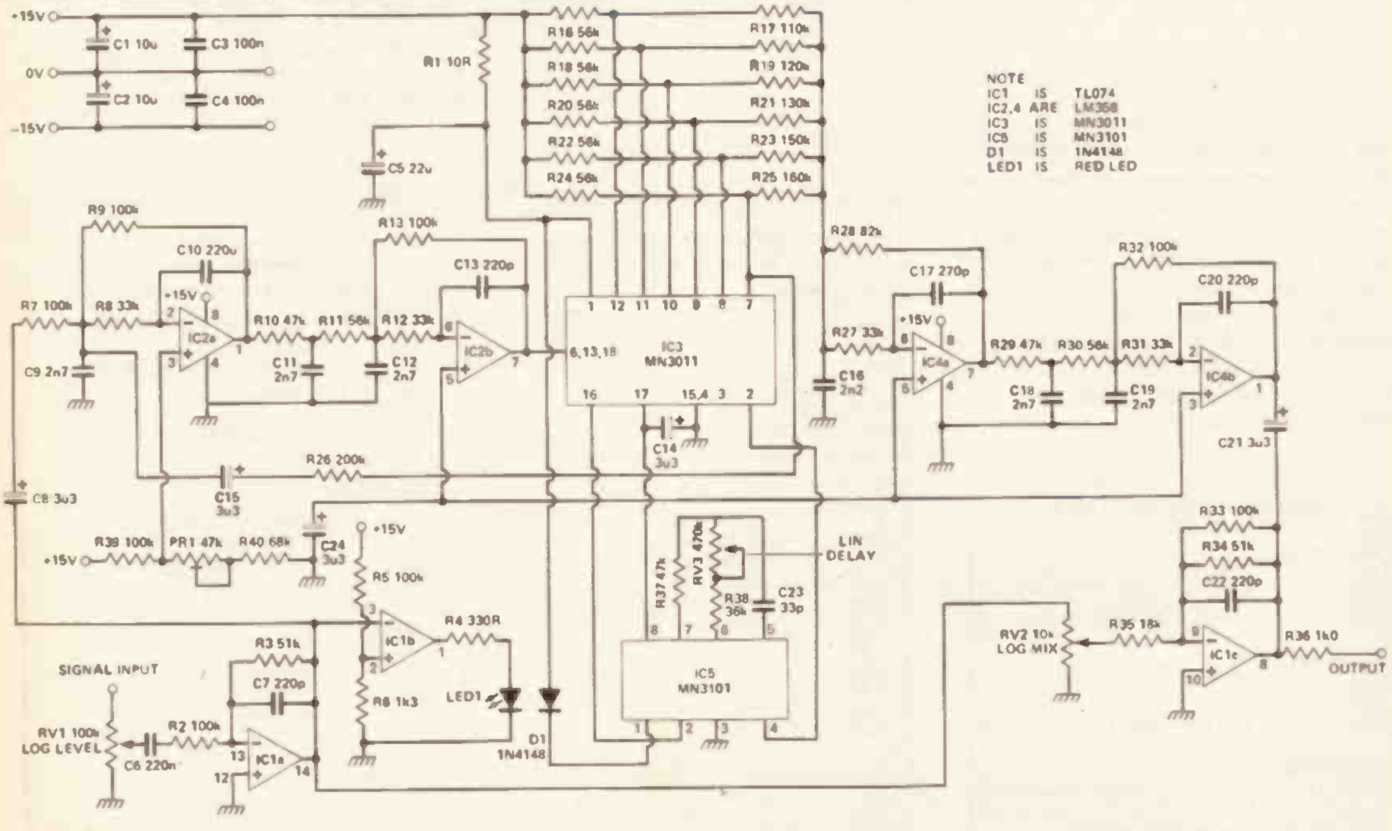
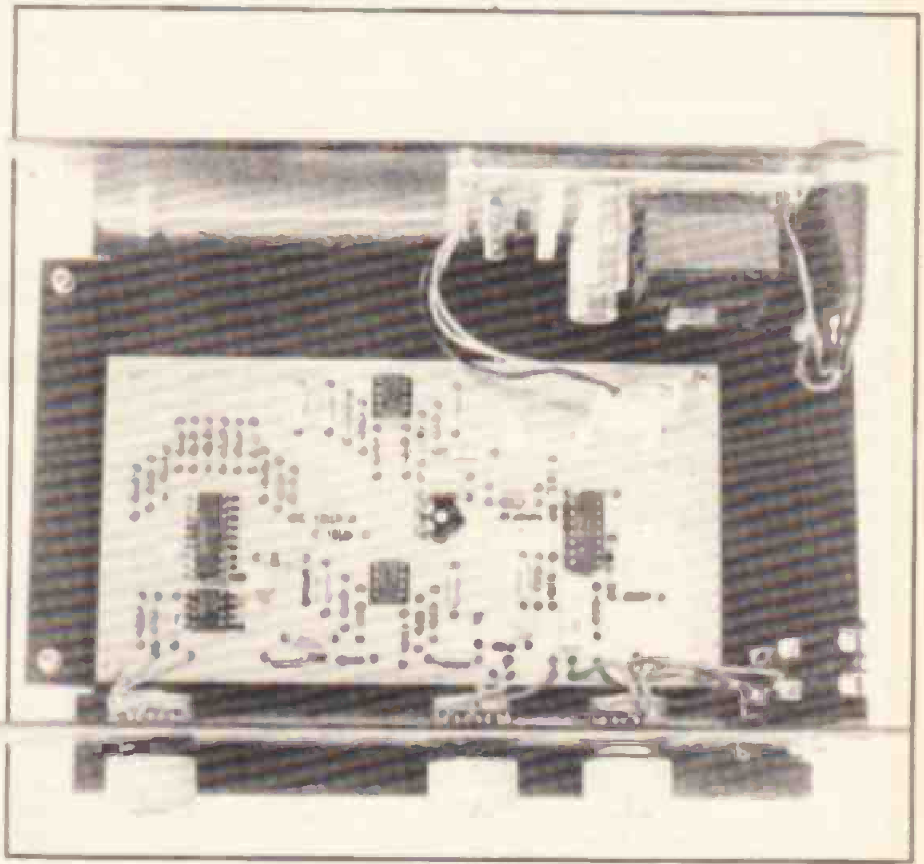


Fig. 5 Circuit diagram for the ETI Reverb.

Setting Up And Use

The only setting up required is adjustment of PR1. If a sinewave source is available then the latter may be used as the signal source and PR1 adjusted by ear, or with an oscilloscope, for minimum distortion. Alternatively measure the voltage at the junction of PR1 and R40 and adjust PR1 to give a reading of 6V2.

The unit has a signal-to-noise ratio of better than 60 dB but this requires that it is operated with the peak indicator LED just glowing or occasionally illuminating. The output level will vary from about 0V5 to 1 V RMS, depending on the amount of mixing of the original signal, and these levels should ensure adequate response from most amplifiers, mixers, and so on. In other words, by keeping input signals at maximum level the amplifier setting will be such that during periods of no signal the residual noise will not be obtrusive. This is common practice with recorders, many of which have much lower signal-to-noise ratios.



ETI

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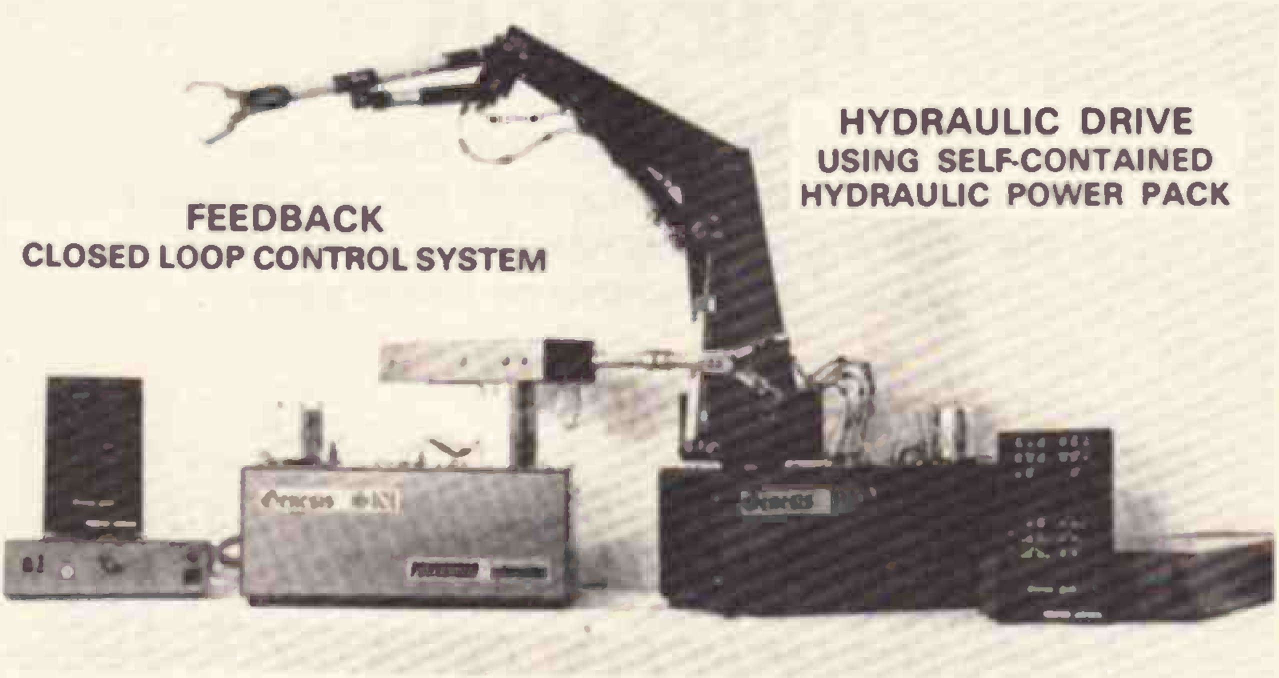

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AUTORANGING CAPACITANCE METER

Look — no hands! The only control on this piece of test-gear is the on/off switch; the only connection is to the test terminals. This month — construction. Design and development by Phil Walker.

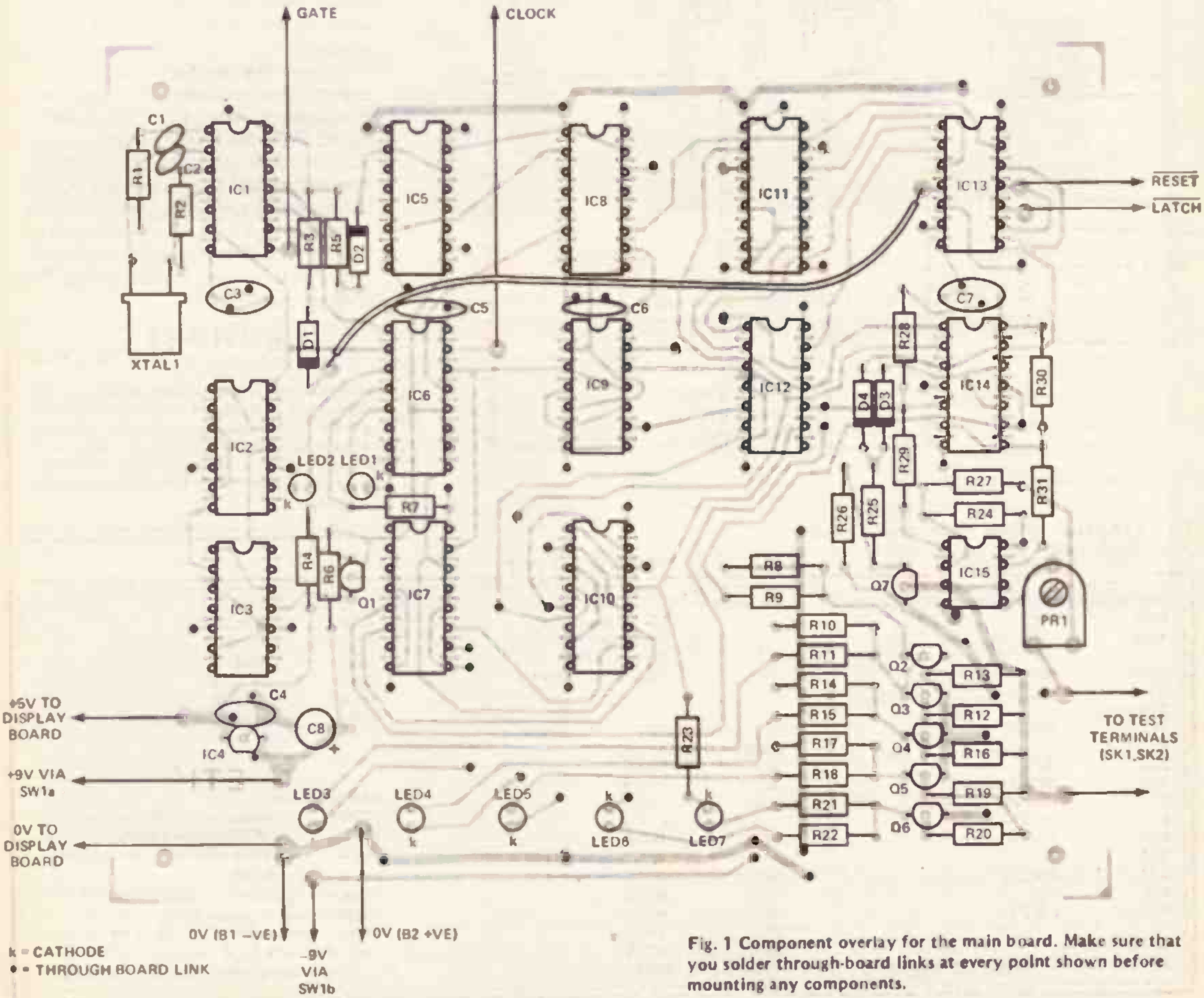


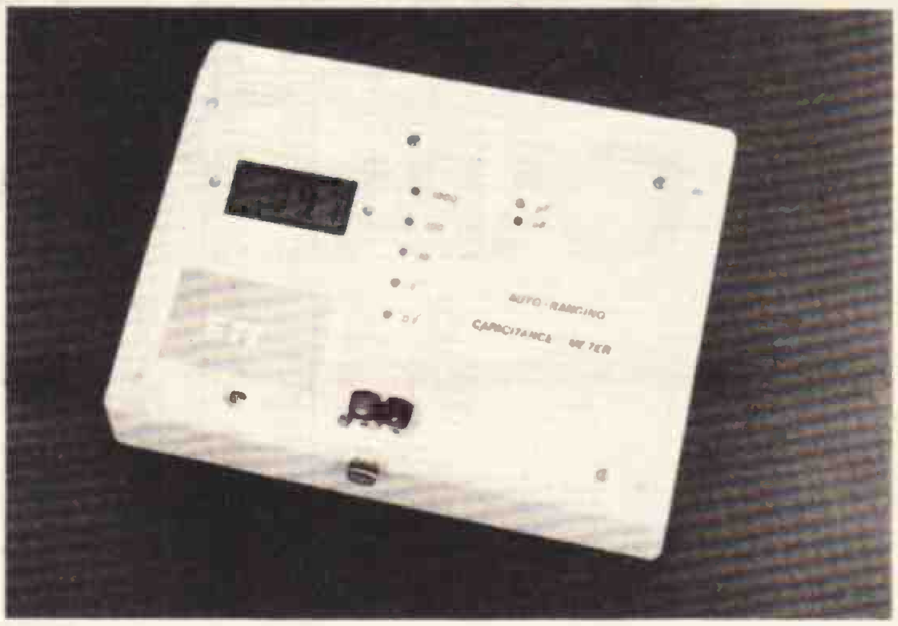
Fig. 1 Component overlay for the main board. Make sure that you solder through-board links at every point shown before mounting any components.

This is a fairly complex project and should only be attempted by those with a good deal of constructional experience. It is well worthwhile checking the PCB for shorts between tracks before doing anything else. Ensure that there is a hole through the board under the PR1 position to facilitate adjustment later.

Put links through the board at all positions marked with a dot on the overlay and solder on BOTH sides of the board. The other components may now be inserted into the board — preferably using sockets for all the ICs except IC4 and IC15. IC4 is a T092-type package 100 mA regulator and does not need a socket, while IC15 may foul PR1 if a socket is used.

The LEDs should not be fitted until the board is test-fitted in position as they are intended to protrude through the panel as indicators. Attach power supply wires and fit up to the panel, position the LEDs and solder in position.

Assemble the display board components and attach the logic and power supply wires from the main board. Wire the remaining power leads via the on/off switch to the battery connectors and attach the two boards to the front panel using pillars or long bolts and lock nuts. Our prototype just fitted into a slope fronted instrument case made by Vero Industries (see Parts List).



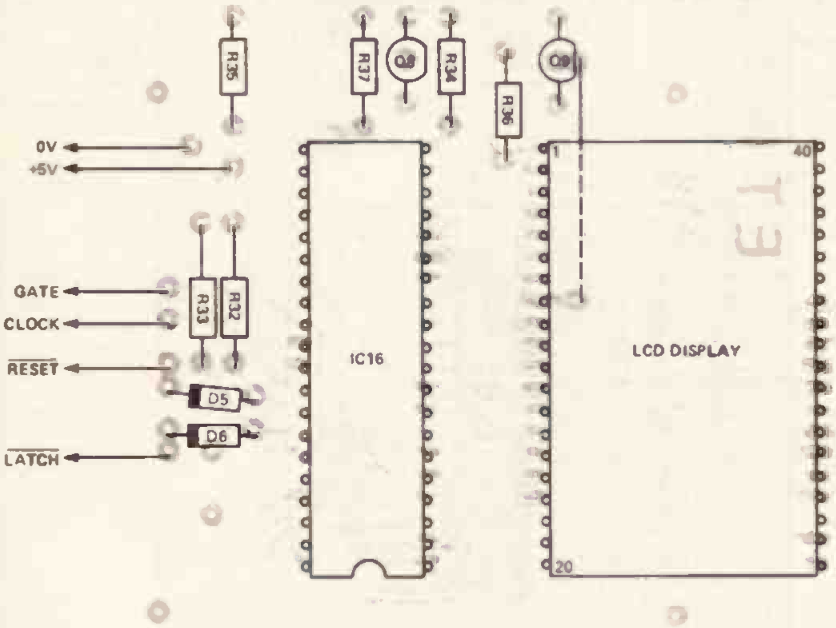


Fig. 2 Component overlay for the display board. Insert the link under the display first.

BUYLINES

Very few unusual components in this project; all the logic is standard CMOS. The ICM7224 and the LCD display is stocked by Watford Electronics, while the LF353 is available from Rapid Electronics. The two PCBs can be obtained from our PCB Service, advertised on page 44.

PARTS LIST

Resistors (all ¼ W, 5% except where stated)

R1,2	470R
R3,4,5, 28-37	15k
R6,25	4k7
R9	10k
R10,14,17, 21	100k
R11,15,18, 22,23	1k0
R12	100R 1%
R13	1M0 5% or better
R16	1k0 1%
R19	10k 1%
R20	100k 1%
R24,27	27k 2%
R26	1k8
R24,27	27k 2%

Potentiometer

PR1	47k miniature horizontal preset

Capacitors

C1	10p ceramic
C2	1n0 ceramic
C3-7	100n ceramic
C8	100u 10 V tantalum

Semiconductors

IC1	74LS04
IC2,3	74LS90
IC4	78L05
IC5,8	4518B
IC6	4053B
IC7	4029B
IC9	4013B
IC10	4051B
IC11	4049B
IC12	4012B
IC13	4011B
IC14	4001B
IC15	LF353
IC16	ICM7224
Q1,7,8,9,	BC182L
Q2-6	BC212L
Q3-7	BC212L
D1-6	1N4148
LED1-7	miniature green LEDs

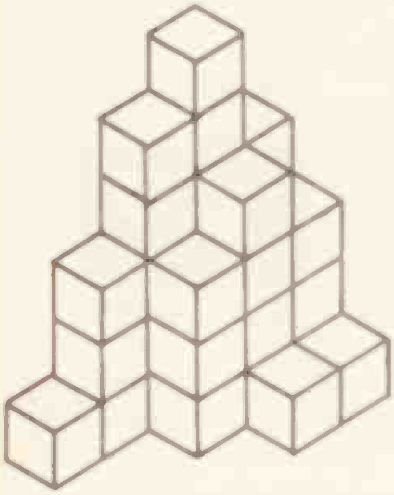
Miscellaneous

XTAL1	miniature 10 MHz crystal
SW1	DPDT toggle switch
SK1,2	press terminals (one red, one black)

PCBs (see Buylines); 3½ digit LCD display; IC sockets; display socket (if required); PP9 battery and connectors; PP3 battery and connectors; mounting hardware; case (Vero 220 x 156 mm sloping front box, order no. 65-2523E).

ETI

WIN £50's WORTH OF VEROBOXES!



There's no doubt that no matter how clever the project you've built is, your friends and family are not going to be impressed with it if you display it in a cardboard box or the proverbial tobacco tins. What's more, the feeling of satisfaction you get from project-building can be that much greater if you end up with something that looks as good as commercial equipment.

One of the companies with the largest range of cases is Vero Industries. They've given us a collection of their cases worth £50, and we're going to give them to one of you — but the lucky recipient has to have answered these three questions correctly.

(1) How many boxes in the pile on the left? (There are no concealed box tops).

(2) How many of this month's projects are housed in Veroboxes?

(3) Is the Vero 'G' range of cases made from plastic or metal?

Answers on the form on page 133 please, together with your name and address, to reach us before April 30th, 1982.

RULES

1. Closing date is April 30th 1982, and all entries post-marked later than this date will be discounted.
2. The coupon provided in the magazine must be used. Photocopies are NOT acceptable.
3. Employees of ASP and their relatives are not eligible for entry.
4. The judges' decision is to be considered final and no correspondence will be entered into concerning the competition.

TECH TIPS

Frequency-To-Phase Controlled Power Supply

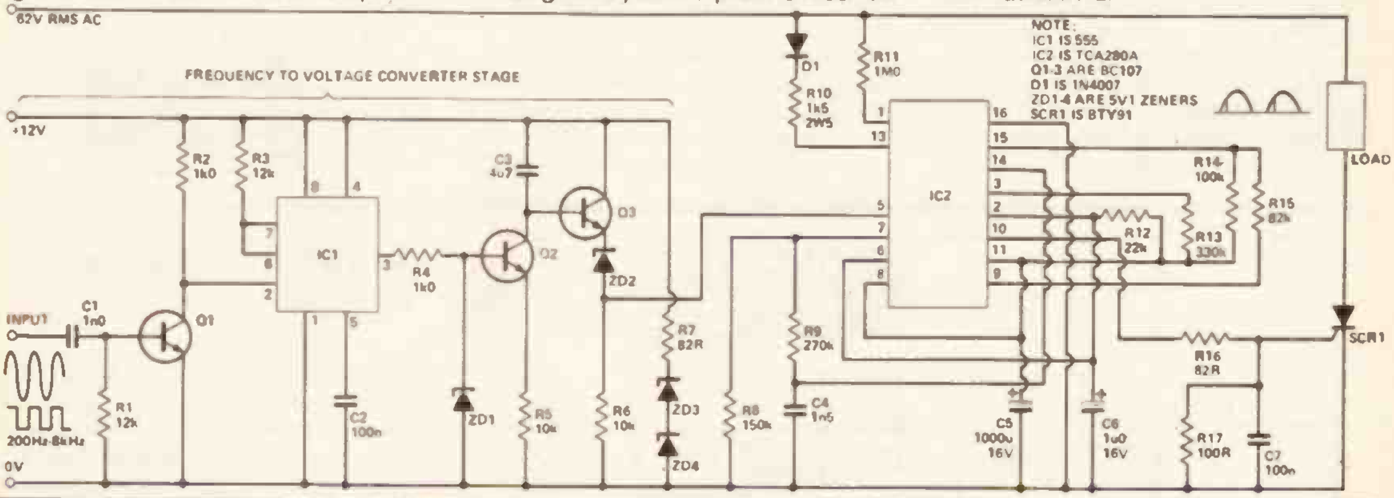
Dilbay Singh (B.Tech), Crawley

The circuit shown in the diagram was initially designed to obtain a phase-controlled power supply to use with a ¼ horsepower stepping motor. The phase angle can be varied over the complete cycle period and is dependent on the *frequency* of the input. Clearly the circuit can be used to control resistive loads such as lamps or motors.

The first stage of the circuit consists of a frequency-to-voltage converter. C1, R1, and Q1 effectively differentiate and amplify the input signal waveform to provide triggering pulses for the 555 timer, which is used in the monostable mode. The output of the monostable is used to charge C3 by a constant amount of charge every time a pulse is received at the base of Q2. The voltage across C3 acts as an input to the common collector stage formed by Q3. The voltage across C3 is DC-shifted by means of the zener diode ZD2 to a suitable value, providing the input to the trigger IC (the Mullard TCA280A). The TCA280A provides the phase control signal for the gate of the thyristor.

A triac may be used in place of the thyristor, if phase-controlled AC is required.

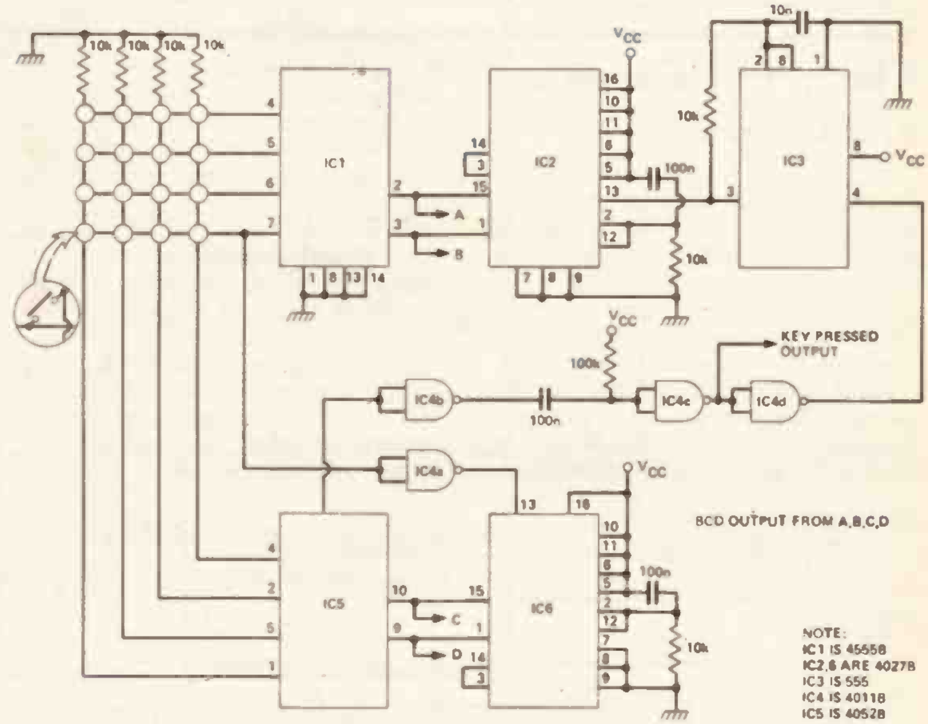
The component values shown are suitable for providing phase control using frequencies in the range 200 Hz-8 kHz on the control input. The firing angle can be varied from 0° at 8 kHz to 170° at 200 Hz.



Fully Debounced Keyboard

Graham Kyte, Bexleyheath

This circuit produces a debounced output whenever a key is pressed. Each matrix point is scanned in turn and the output of the 4052 data distributor goes high when a pressed key is detected. This stops the scanning oscillator (555) for about 10 mS and a 'key pressed' output is produced, thus enabling the BCD output to be stored in a latch or otherwise made use of. The use of CMOS ICs enables current consumption to be minimised, making the circuit suitable for operation in a car. The circuit is easily modified for a larger number of keys by using an eight-way data distributor (with relevent counter made from three J-K flip-flops rather than the two as used here).

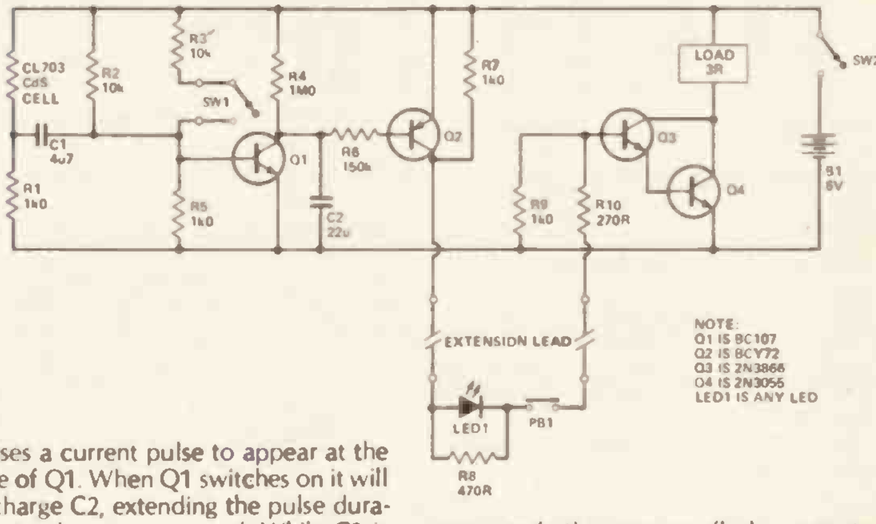


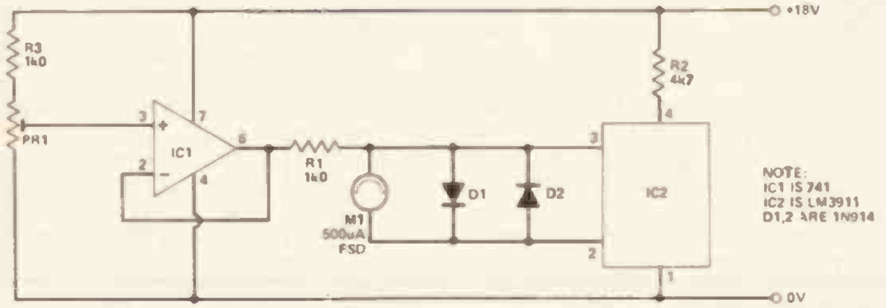
Remote Camera Release

Geoffrey Ammon, Welling

When taking photographs from a distance, a pneumatic remote release is normally used. These will only work over a limited distance and it is not always possible to tell if the camera has operated. This simple circuit uses a low current trigger circuit to operate the camera and provides a visible indication that the camera or flashgun has worked correctly.

The circuit operation is as follows. When the remote release push-button PB1 is operated, a current flows via the extension lead, which may be a 100 metres or more in length, to switch transistors Q3 and Q4. This combination provides the load current of up to 2 A for the camera release solenoid. When the flashgun fires, light falling on the CdS cell causes a current pulse to appear at the base of Q1. When Q1 switches on it will discharge C2, extending the pulse duration to about one second. While C2 is charging Q2 will be turned on, causing a large enough current to flow in the extension lead to operate LED1. If a flashgun is not used, the camera flash contacts (SW1) may be connected to bypass the CdS cell and remotely operate the indicator LED1.

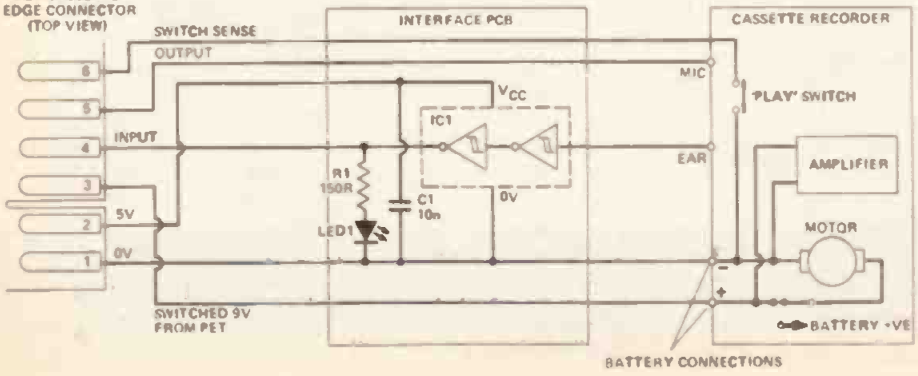




Cheap PET Cassette

D.J. Cocker, Portsmouth

In view of the price of the Commodore cassette unit, the following adaptation may be of interest. I have been using this arrangement for some time and have experienced very few problems. In order to signal the PET when the PLAY key has been pressed, a switch mus be incorporated into the cassette key assembly – a small microswitch is ideal. This is an improvement on the Commodore unit, in which any key activates the switch, leading to confusion and ambiguity. The 'signal present' LED is very useful in locating the start and end of the data tape. The cassette recorder is supplied with power from the PET, batteries only being required for fast forward and rewind functions — a switch should be fitted to facilitate this. When the PLAY key is depressed, the PET has control of the tape motor. It may be found necessary to disable any tone control circuitry or AGC which may be fitted in the cassette recorder. Any suitable TTL Schmitt gate may be used as IC1.



Room Thermometer

J. P. Macaulay, Crawley

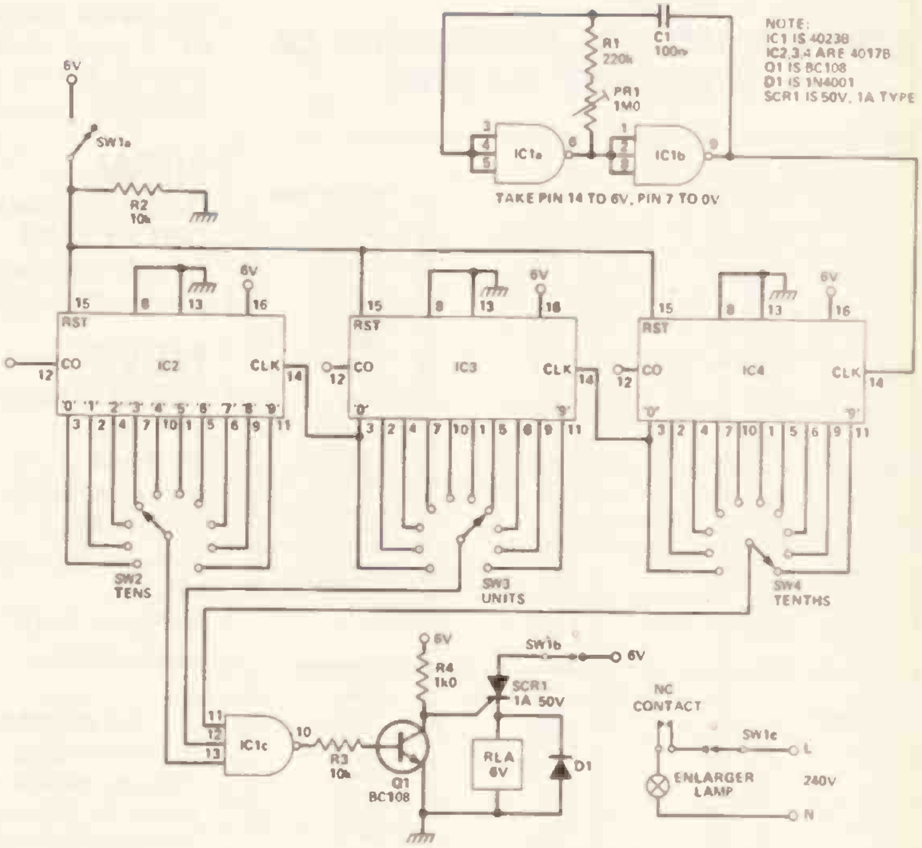
With the advent of the LM3911 temperature controller IC the task of measuring temperature has become simple in the extreme. The internal circuitry of this device comprises a temperature sensing element, an op-amp and a stable reference voltage. The device gives, in its simplest form, a stable 10 mV change in output for every 1° change in temperature over the range −25 to 85°C. For the application of room thermometer it is only necessary to utilise part of this range from, say, 0° − 50°C. The circuit to be described measures this range.

The figure shows the complete circuit of the thermometer. The meter, a 500 uA FSD type, is connected between the output and inverting input of the internal op-amp. Resistor R1 connects the inverting input to the output of the 741 op-amp. This is used with 100% AC and DC feedback to form a unity gain voltage follower with a current output capacity of several milliamps. The input of the 741 is connected to the slider of PR1 which in turn is connected across the stable supply voltage produced by the IC. D1 and D2 protect the meter from overrange temperatures and thus protect its delicate movement from harm.

Once completed, a calibration can be made with a room thermometer of known accuracy. Simply leave the equipment in the room for 10 minutes or so for its own temperature to stabilise and then adjust PR1 until both thermometers read the same; the calibration is now complete.

Enlarger Timer

C. E. Basson, South Africa



The circuit of the enlarger timer can time periods from 0 to 99.9 seconds in 0.1 second steps. PR1, C1, R1, IC1a,b form an oscillator that feeds a 10 Hz signal to the first 4017 counter stage. Either the 'carry out' or '0' outputs of IC2 and IC3 can be used to feed the next stage, as the frequencies are the same and the positive-going edges of the pulses appear at the same time. Outputs '0' to '9' go high in sequence as the pulses are received at the 'clock in'. The desired time is selected by SW2, SW3 and SW4.

Q1 is used as an inverter and with the NAND gate it performs the same function as an AND gate. As soon as the desired time is reached, all the inputs on the gate will be high and this will trigger SCR1. The relay will be turned on and switch off the enlarger lamp. The lamp will remain off until the circuit is reset.

The circuit can be resetted by closing SW1a and opening SW1b and SW1c. SW1a will reset the 4017s and keep them in the reset condition. SW1b will remove the current from SCR1 to reset it. SW1c prevents the light from going on when in the reset condition. When SW1 is switched back to normal, the light will go on and remain on for the desired time.

Comprehensive CMOS Logic Gate Test Rig

David Ian, Surrey

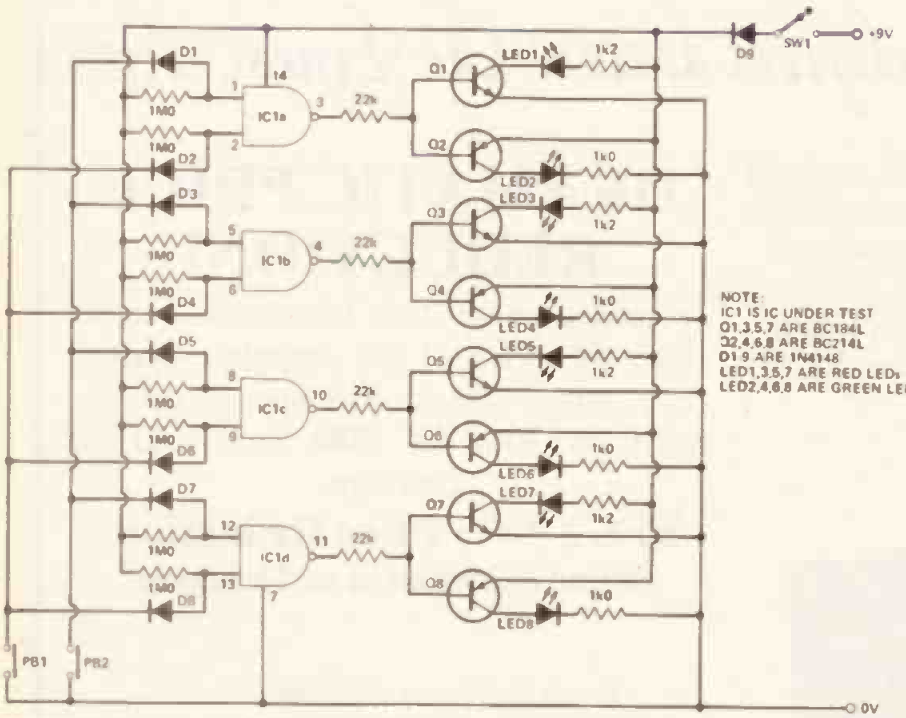
This simple test rig will check out all possible functions of any type of dual input CMOS logic gate allowing, for example, a faulty gate to be pinpointed so that the rest of the IC may still be used.

Each gate is provided with a green LED to indicate a high output and a red LED to show a low output.

Use a 14-pin holder for the IC and orientate the LEDs to relate to their appropriate gate.

SW1 connects power and a logic 1 to all inputs: press A to put a 0 onto one input of each gate; B puts 0 onto the other inputs; A and B togther force all inputs low.

A milliammeter in series with a 9 V supply should only indicate the current drawn by the LEDs, ie about 7 mA per LED. An appreciably higher reading indicates a completely faulty IC.



4011 (NAND)	GREEN	RED
SW1	ON	OFF
PB1	OFF	ON
PB2	OFF	ON
BOTH	OFF	ON

4001 (NOR)	GREEN	RED
SW1	ON	OFF
PB1	ON	OFF
PB2	ON	OFF
BOTH	OFF	ON

4081 (AND)	GREEN	RED
SW1	OFF	ON
PB1	ON	OFF
PB2	ON	OFF
BOTH	ON	OFF

4071 (OR)	GREEN	RED
SW1	OFF	ON
PB1	OFF	ON
PB2	OFF	ON
BOTH	ON	OFF

4070 (EXOR)	GREEN	RED
SW1	ON	OFF
PB1	OFF	ON
PB2	OFF	ON
BOTH	ON	OFF

4077 (EXNOR)	GREEN	RED
SW1	OFF	ON
PB1	ON	OFF
PB2	ON	OFF
BOTH	OFF	ON

SW1 ONLY — BOTH INPUTS HIGH
PB1 PRESSED — ONE INPUT LOW
PB2 PRESSED — OTHER INPUT LOW
BOTH PRESSED — BOTH INPUTS LOW

WIN A CASIO FX-702P

That's right — in this competition we're offering you a chance to win the fabulous Casio FX-702P pocket BASIC computer, kindly donated for the occasion by Tempus. The features of this computer include:—

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First, let A$ = STR$(the product of 7K (in decimal) and the standard audio bandwidth). We'll use this later. Now, add the UK AC mains frequency to yellow/violet/red and divide by the number of our modular synth project. Divide the result into VAL(RIGHT$(A$,4))–VAL(MID$(A$,5,3))/LEN(A$). Add to this result the difference between our office street number and the TTL prefix. Multiply by the log (to base 10) of the sum of the digits of a CMOS quad EXNOR IC divided by the number of pins on a 555. Finally, add the decimal number represented in binary by 10111.

If you've managed all that (hint — people who know BASIC well have an advantage), write the answer on the entry form (page 133) with your name and address and send it to us by April 30th 1982. Answers to six decimal places, please.

RULES

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2. The coupon provided in the magazine must be used. Photocopies are NOT acceptable.
3. Employees of ASP and their relatives are not eligible for entry.
4. The judges' decision is to be considered final and no correspondence will be entered into concerning the competition.

SOUND EFFECTS 2: STEAM TRAIN

Railway modellers looking for something special to improve their layout need look no further. Our second sound effect project simulates a steam train and whistle. Design by Phil Wait.

Aahh, the nostalgia! If you're young at heart, old in years, or both, then this is for you — a steam train (chuff-chuff) and whistle. The *electronic* construction details are given on page 50 in the bomb drop project; but for that *authentic* touch, deft constructors can also fashion a cow-catcher out of tinned copper wire to attach to the unit!

The chuff-chuff runs continuously once power is applied and the whistle sounds when the push-button is pressed. The VCO is used to provide the whistle while the SLF modulates the noise generator/filter output to produce the steam train's chuff-chuff sound. The chuff-chuff rate may be varied by changing the values of R1 and C1, while the chuff-chuff sound may be varied by changing the values of R2 and C2. For a special effect, you can control the chuff-chuff rate manually by replacing R1 with a 1M0 potentiometer.

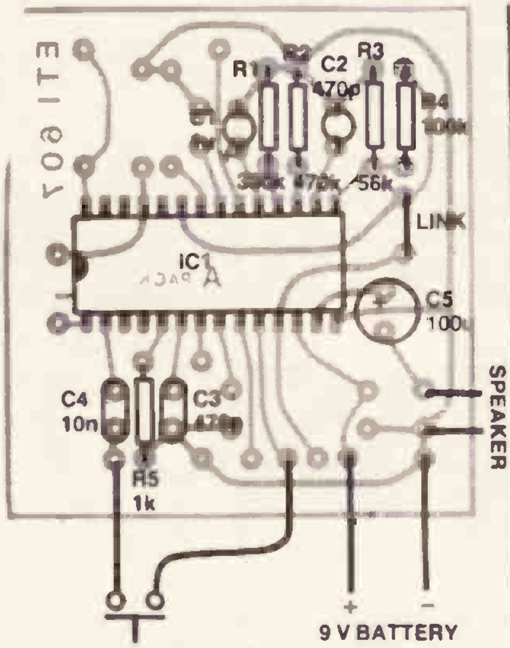

Fig. 2 Component overlay. For Buylines, see page 51.

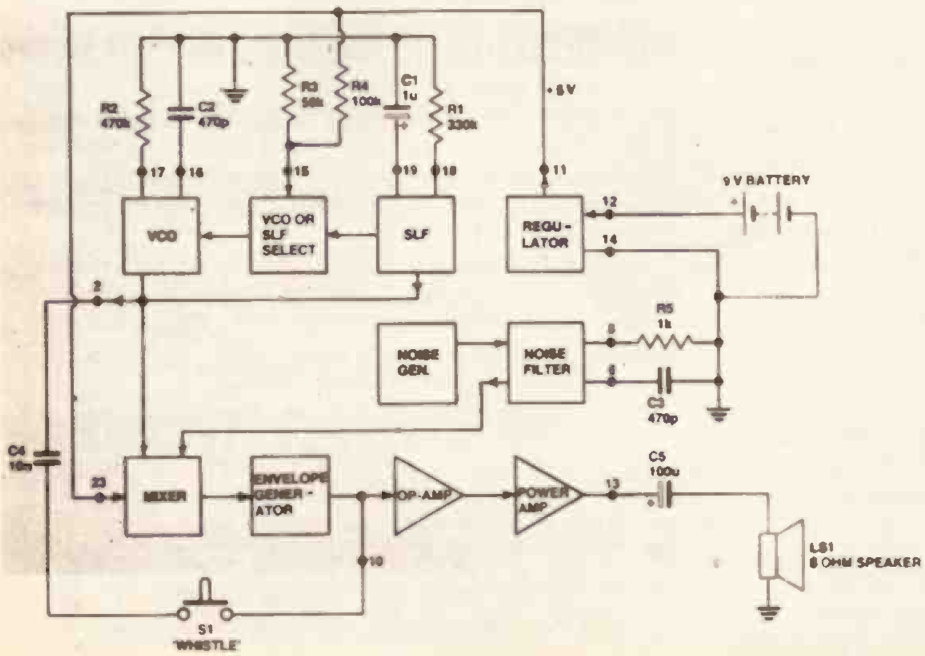

Fig. 1 Circuit diagram of the Steam Train and Whistle unit.

HOW IT WORKS

In this unit the Noise Generator/Filter is employed to produce the basic 'steam engine' sound, this being modulated by the SLF to produce the 'chuff-chuff' so characteristic of steam locomotives. The whistle is produced by the VCO, which is set to a particular non-varying pitch, and the output is switched into the audio input pin to produce the whistle.

The broadband noise from the Noise Generator is modified by the Noise Filter, the frequency characteristics being determined by R5 and C3 connected to the Noise Filter Control pins (5 and 6). The Noise Filter Output is fed via the Mixer and the Envelope Generator (which doesn't function here) to the audio output stages. The SLF square wave output effectively modulates the noise to produce a noise burst followed by a silent period, then another noise burst. Thus the chuff-chuff sound is produced. This sound is continuous whilst power is applied to the unit.

A resistive divider, R3/R4, provides about 1V8 at the VCO frequency to a convenient pitch within its range, providing a suitable pitch for the whistle. The VCO output is coupled to the audio input (pin 10) via C4 and the push-button, PB1. When PB1 is pressed, the whistle is heard over the chuff-chuff sound.

The SLF frequency is determined by C1 and R1, while the combination of R2/C2 and the voltage on pin 15 determines the VCO frequency. Output to the loudspeaker is coupled via C5, a 100uF electrolytic capacitor.

PARTS LIST

Resistors (all ¼ W, 5%)	
R1	330k
R2	470k
R3	56k
R4	100k
R5	1k0
Capacitors	
C1	1u0 16 V tantalum
C2, 3	470p ceramic
C4	10n ceramic
C5	100u 16 V PCB electrolytic
Semiconductors	
IC1	SN76488 (see Buylines)
Miscellanous	
PB1	SPST push-button switch

PCB (see Buylines); 50 mm diameter 8 ohm speaker; PP3 battery and clip.

ETI

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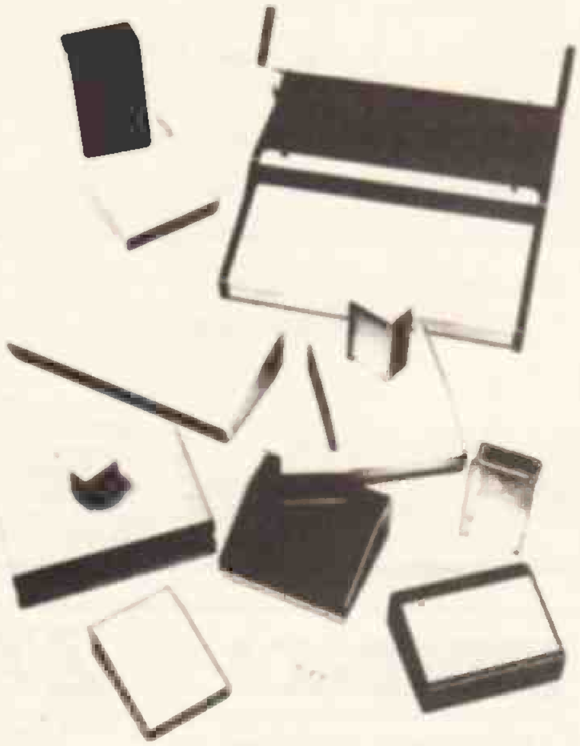

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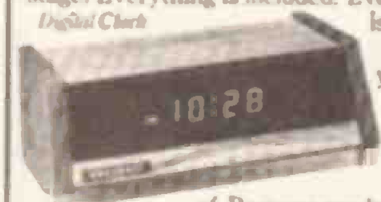

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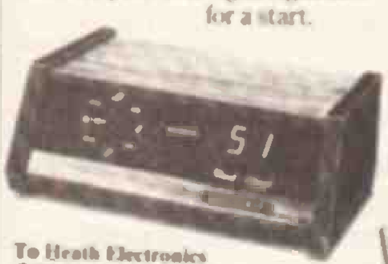

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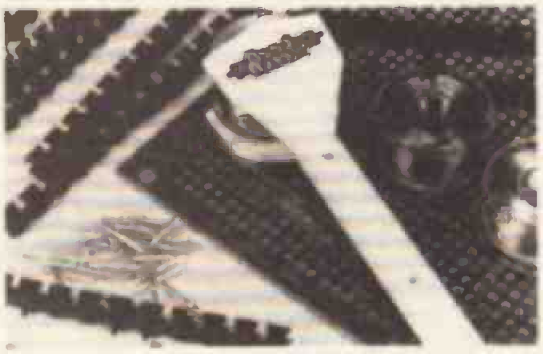

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GUITAR PRACTICE AMPLIFIER

Simple construction, low cost, good performance and super neighbour relations are the features of this project! Design and development by David Tilbrook.

This project has been designed to enable guitarists to put in long hours of practice and still keep that high power amp in the cupboard, where it belongs! It is a compact amp capable of about 7 W into a 4 ohm load. This is enough power for practice purposes and just think of the greatly improved relations you will have with your neighbours.

We were in a considerable quandary as to how to present the project, whether it should be done as a complete practice unit with inbuilt speaker or simply as an amplifier to be connected to an external speaker. Finally we chose a compromise. The PCB has been designed in such a way that it can be used as a totally self-contained unit. The heatsinks for the output stage have been mounted on the PCB so that the only components separate to the board are the power transformer, 240 volt power switch controls, input and output jacks. We have shown the project mounted in its own box with power transformer but it should be a simple matter to construct the whole unit inside a small loudspeaker cabinet.

The unit has two inputs so that two guitars can be mixed together using the relative settings of the two input level controls. A preamp output enables your main high power amp to be driven from the guitar practice amp using the practice amp as foldback.

We provided the PCB with the necessary circuitry for a battery input but you might elect not to use this feature. If so diode D8 and the battery switch can be omitted with points 'A' and 'C' connected together by a wire link.

Construction

Construction of the project is reasonably simple since it is almost entirely devoted to construction of the PCB. Start as always by mounting the resistors and non-polarised capacitors. Mount the tantalum and electrolytic capacitors next, being careful to orient them correctly. These components could be irreparably damaged if inserted the wrong way around. Mount the LM301 IC, transistors and diodes, again being careful to insert these the correct way round.

Finally the output devices can be mounted. Although the transistors are in TO220 packages, our PCB is laid out to accept heatsinks drilled for TO3 transistors. The overlay and photograph should make the construction method clear. Cut the centre (collector) lead off. This lead is connected to the case of the transistor internally, so in this case, electrical connection is made through the mounting screw that also serves to hold the heatsink in place. Place the heatsinks on the PCB and secure with the lower nut and bolt (not used to mount the transistors). There is only one right way round. Bend the leads of the output transistors and, using a small amount of thermal compound, mount the transistors with the leads protruding through the PCB.

Secure each transistor with a nut and bolt through both the transistor 'flag' and heatsink. Use a star washer between the head of the bolt and the copper pad on the PCB to ensure good electrical contact. Now the base and emitter leads can be soldered to their pads.

The prototype unit was constructed in a steel box measuring

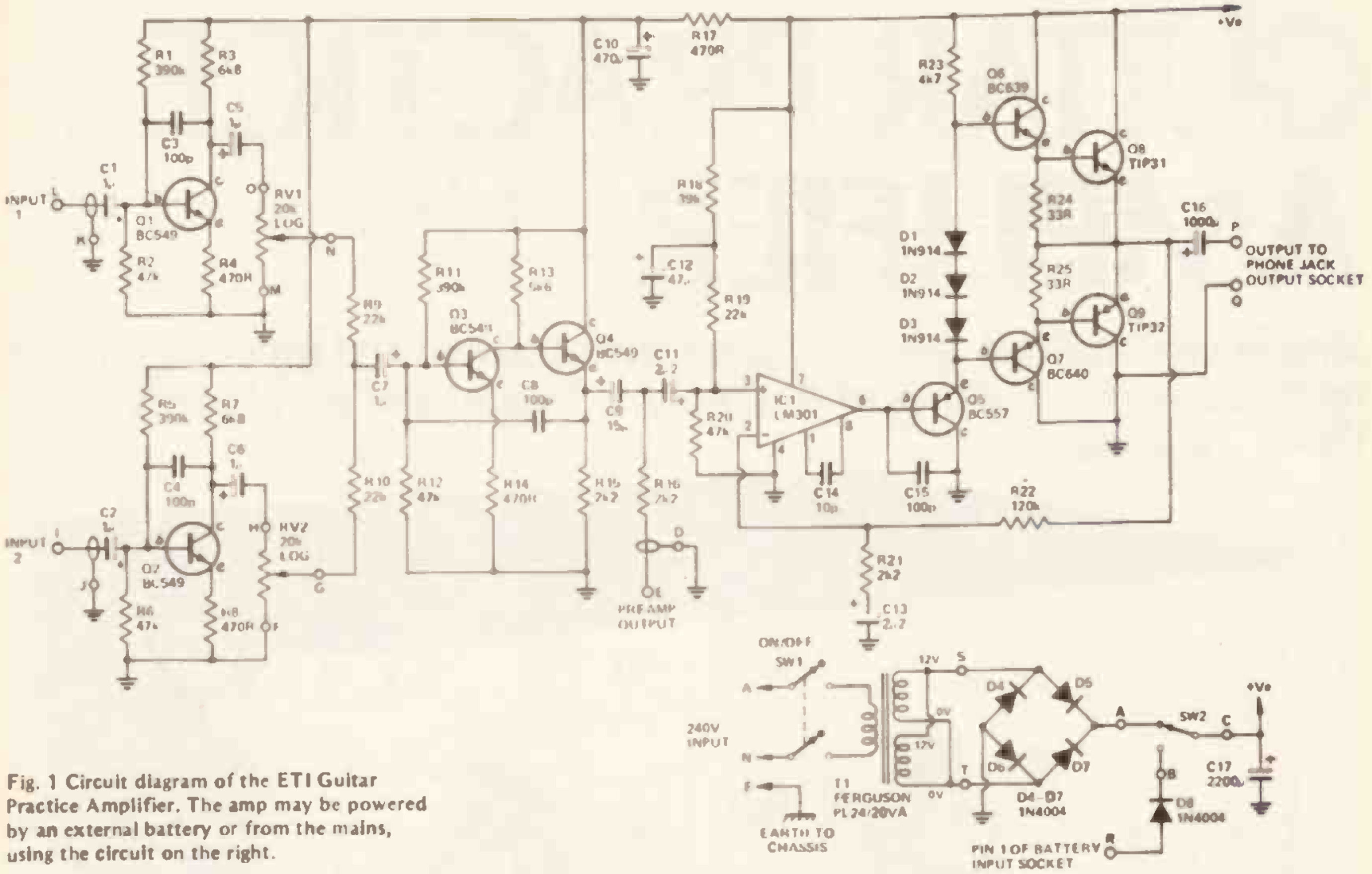

Fig. 1 Circuit diagram of the ETI Guitar Practice Amplifier. The amp may be powered by an external battery or from the mains, using the circuit on the right.

HOW IT WORKS

The two input stages formed around Q1 and Q2 are identical. Resistors R1, R2 and R4 form a very stable biasing configuration around Q1. The gain of this type of circuit is determined by the values of R3 and R4 (specifically, the gain is R3/R4). The load impedance on the output of the input stages is in parallel with R3, effectively decreasing the total value of impedance from collector to ground. Remember that, as far as signal is concerned, the positive supply rail is a short circuit to ground, since it is connected to ground through C17, a 2200uF capacitor. When all these factors are taken into account the gain of the first stage is about 10 since the impedance from collector to ground is about 4k7.

The signal, which should now be around 200 mV, is then applied to the input of the second stage through potentiometers RV1 and RV2. The 22k resistors R9 and R10 prevent the output of one of the stages being shorted to ground when the other is turned right down.

The second stage works in exactly the same manner as the input stages, resistors R11, R12 and R14 forming the bias network for Q3. The voltage present on the collector of Q3 is around 9 V which is approximately half the supply voltage. This is used to bias Q4 which is an emitter follower. This type of amplifier has no voltage gain but provides a low output impedance to drive the preamp output socket. Q3 has a gain of approximately 10. If the volume controls RV1 and RV2 are used in their middle positions, the voltage out will be around one tenth of the voltage at their inputs since these are logarithmic pots. So, the signal voltages into Q3 should be in the order of 20 mV. This will be amplified to a level of 200 mV and applied to the input of the power amp. The power amp has been designed to deliver full power with an input voltage of 300 mV, so the amp should be easily driven to full output with usable settings.

Since this is a guitar amplifier, it will spend most of its life hard into clipping. The output stage had to be robust! The basis of the output stage is the LM301 op-amp. This device gives all of the voltage gain in the power amp. The output IC1 is fed through a voltage follower Q5. This has no voltage gain and, like Q4, serves to decrease the impedance feeding the output stage. The three diodes, D1, D2 and D3, maintain 1V8 between the bases of Q6 and Q7. Each of these transistors will drop approximately 0V6 across their base-emitter junctions. This leaves a total of 0V6 to be dropped by the two 33R resistors, R24 and R25. Since these are of equal value they will each drop 0V3 and hold this voltage across the base-emitter junctions of the two output transistors Q8 and Q9. As these transistors require 0V6 to turn on they will remain off until the applied signal voltage causes the voltages on their bases to rise above 0V6. The extra 0V3 needed to turn on the output devices will be supplied by a mere 10 mA of current through the 33R resistors. Resistor R22 forms a feedback loop around the entire output stage to decrease distortion, stabilise the DC output voltage and set the overall gain of the power stage (a process too difficult to go into here).

The op-amp will at all times attempt to make the DC voltage at the output equal to that voltage set up on its positive input. This voltage is determined by the potential divider formed by R18, R19 and R20. Since this is also the main input to the power amp any noise which might be on the positive supply rail (and supplies can get very noisy sometimes!) will be communicated directly to the input of the power amp, only to be amplified and applied to the loudspeaker. Capacitor C12 prevents this from happening by bypassing to ground any noise above a frequency of around 0.1 Hz.

approximately 250 x 210 x 80 mm. Mount the pots and switches on the front panel, using the pot and switch nuts to secure the front escutcheon if you have one. Mount the output and battery input sockets on the rear panel. If you are using a battery input socket use something different to the output socket (which is usually a two-pin DIN socket or a 6.5 mm jack socket) to avoid confusion.

Mount the power transformer and make the 240 V connections. The mains lead should be terminated immediately inside the case into a terminal block and the earth lead secured firmly to the chassis by a solder lug bolted to the case using a star washer. This lead must be the longest. A length of 240 V cable should be used between the terminal block and the power switch. Wire the transformer to the power switch as shown in the circuit diagram, then wrap the whole switch with insulation tape or enclose in large diameter heat-shrink tubing so that no 240 V connection is exposed.

Finally, the fully-loaded PCB can be secured into the case using short metal spacers. If Veropins are used, all the connections to the board can be made after the board has been mounted. Connect the front panel controls, rear panel sockets and input sockets, using short lengths of shielded cable to make the connections to the two inputs and preamp output.

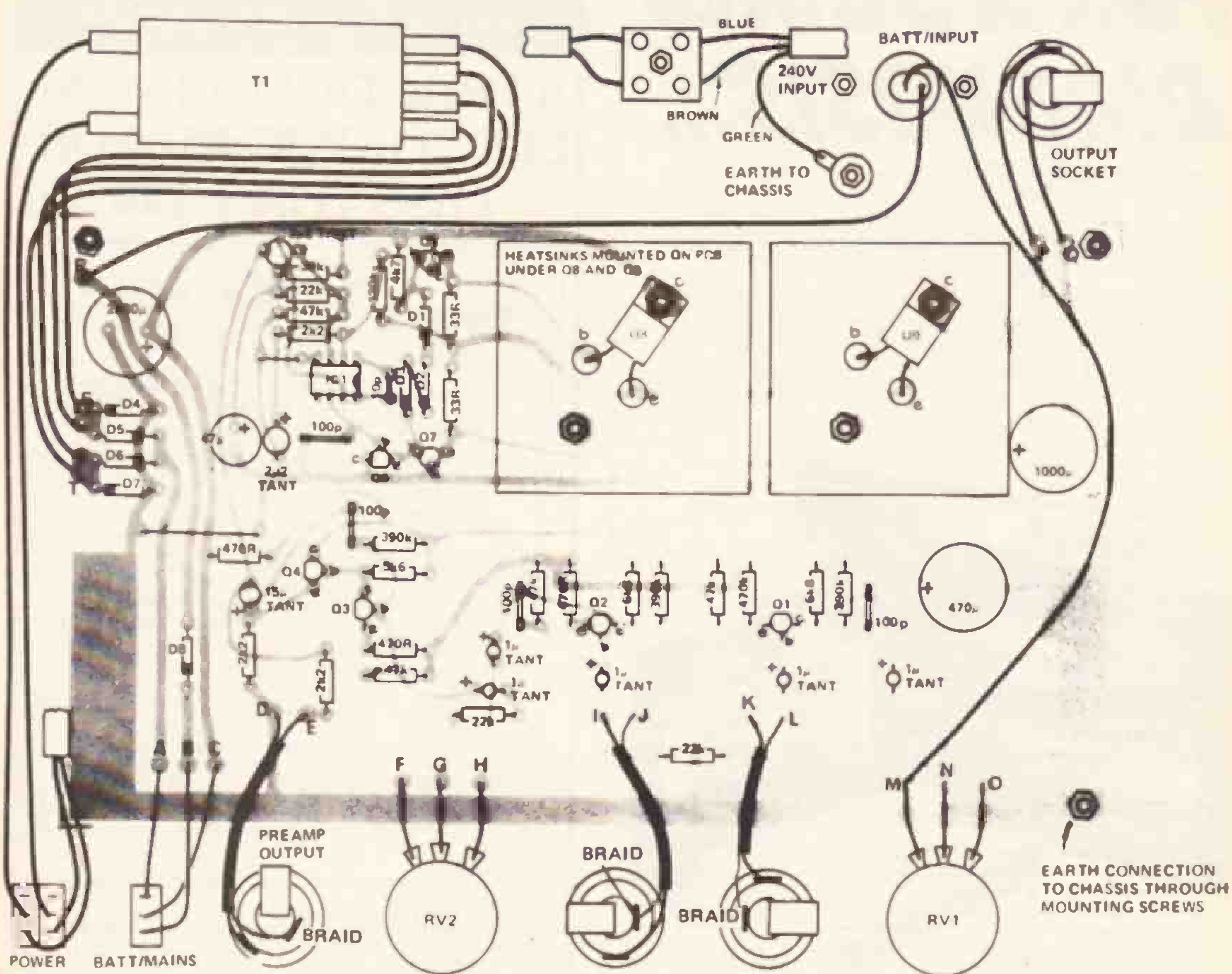

Fig. 2 Component overlay for the amplifier. The original design used a BC639/BC640 complementary pair for Q6 and Q7, and these are shown on the overlay, but they may prove hard to obtain. Consequently the PCB we will be supplying is laid out for a BC140/BC160 pair, which have different pad layouts — the b,c and e pads are etched onto the board for your guidance.

Powering Up

Make a final check of the wiring and PCB. If all is well, apply power. A slight turn-on thump should be heard at the moment of turn-on. If the 'Input 1' volume control is now wound up, some hiss should be heard from the loudspeaker. Do the same check on the other input. There is no set-up procedure since the power amp stage is operating in class B and requires no bias adjustment.

BUYLINES

Lots of nice, standard, easy-to-obtain components in this project, so you shouldn't encounter any problems with supply. The PCB will be available fro our PCB Service at the price listed on page 44.

PARTS LIST

Resistors (all ½W, 5%)

R1,5,11	390k
R2,6,12,20	47k
R3,7	6k8
R4,8,14,17	470R
R9,10,19	22k
R13	5k6
R15,16,21	2k2
R18	39k
R22	120k
R23	4k7
R24,25	33R

Potentiometers

RV1,2	22k logarithmic

Capacitors

C1,2,5,6,7	1u0 35 V tantalum
C3,4,8,15	100p disc ceramic
C9	15u 16 V tantalum
C10	470u 25 V PCB electrolytic
C11,13	2u2 35 V tantalum
C12	47u 25 V PCB electrolytic
C14	10p disc ceramic
C16	1000u 25 V PCB electrolytic
C17	2200u 25 V PCB electrolytic

Semiconductors

IC1	LM301
Q1-4	BC549 or BC109
Q5	BC557 or BC179
Q6	BC140
Q7	BC160
Q8	TIP31
Q9	TIP32
D1-3	1N914
D4-8	1N4004

Miscellaneous

SK1-4	mono jack sockets
SK5	DIN socket (or other type — see text)
SW1	DPDT toggle switch (mains rated)
SW2	DPST toggle switch

Transformer (12-0-12-0, 20 VA); TO3 type PCB-mounting heatsinks; PCB (see Buylines); case to suit; mounting hardware.

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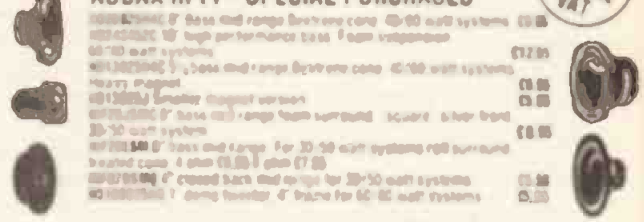

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RULES

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2. The coupon provided in the magazine must be used. Photocopies are NOT acceptable.
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4. The judges' decision is to be considered final and no correspondence will be entered into concerning the competition.

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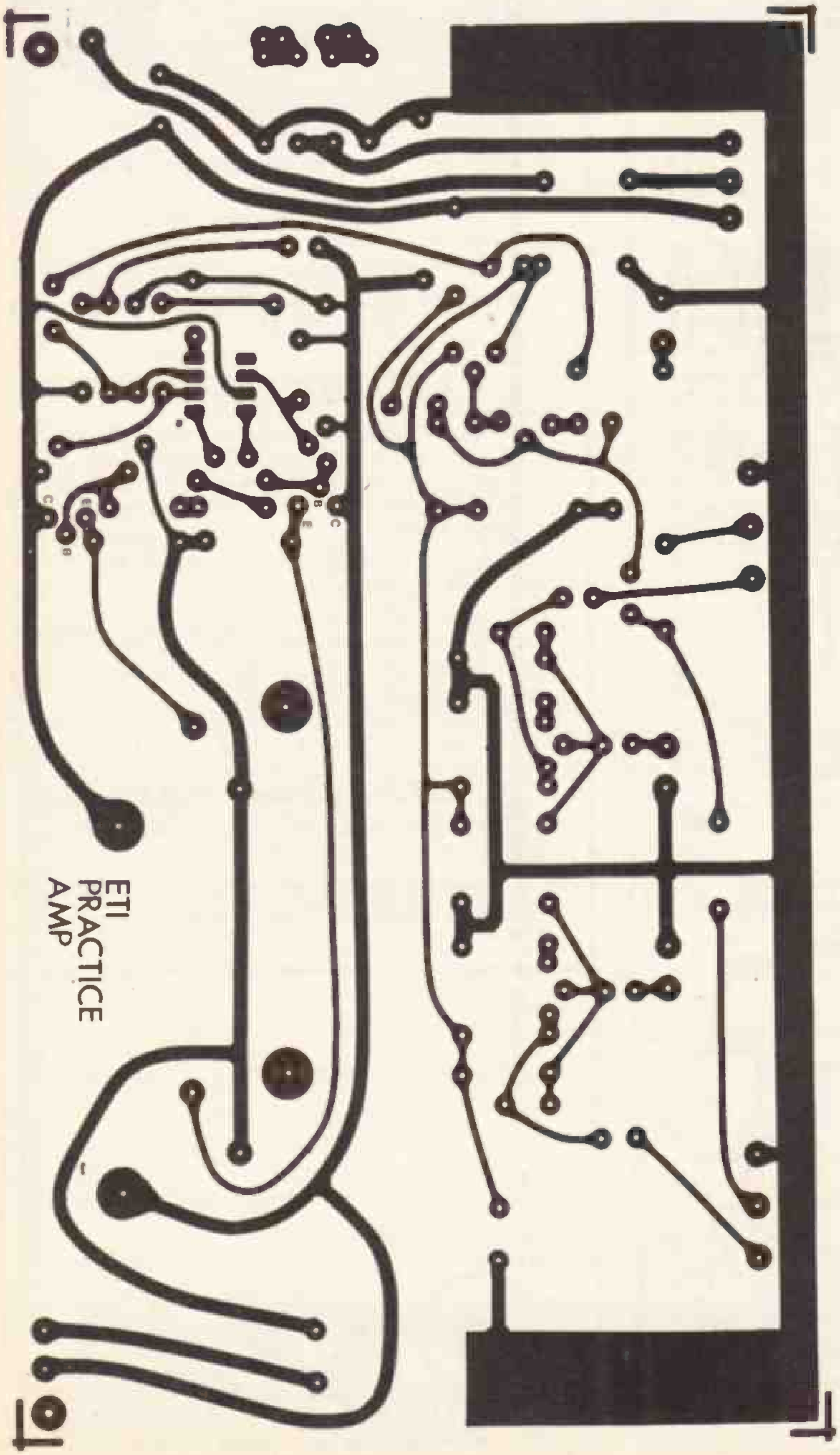
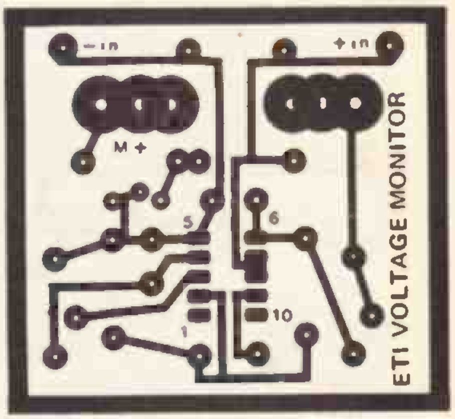
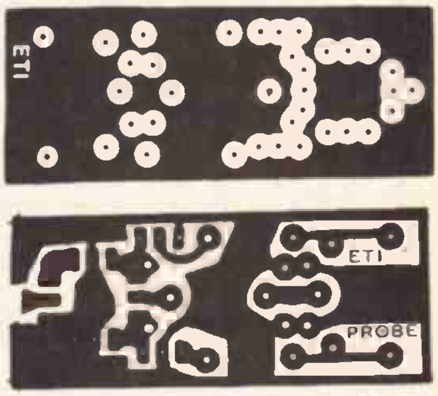
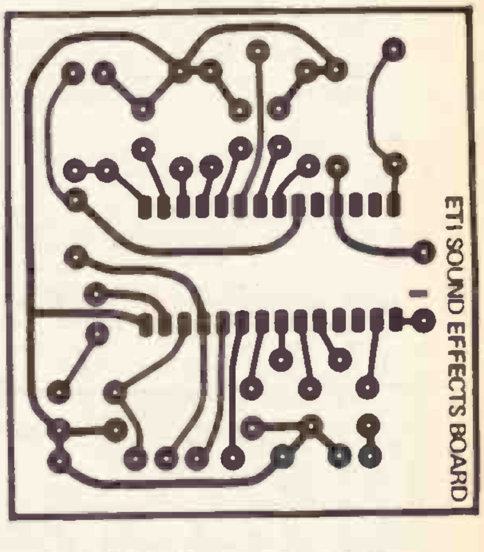




Above: the PCB for the Voltage Monitor.



Above: the two foils for the double-sided 100 MHz High Impedance Probe PCB.



Above: the board for the two sound effects projects.

Left: the board for the Guitar Practice Amplifier. Please note the alteration to the pad layout for Q6 and Q7.

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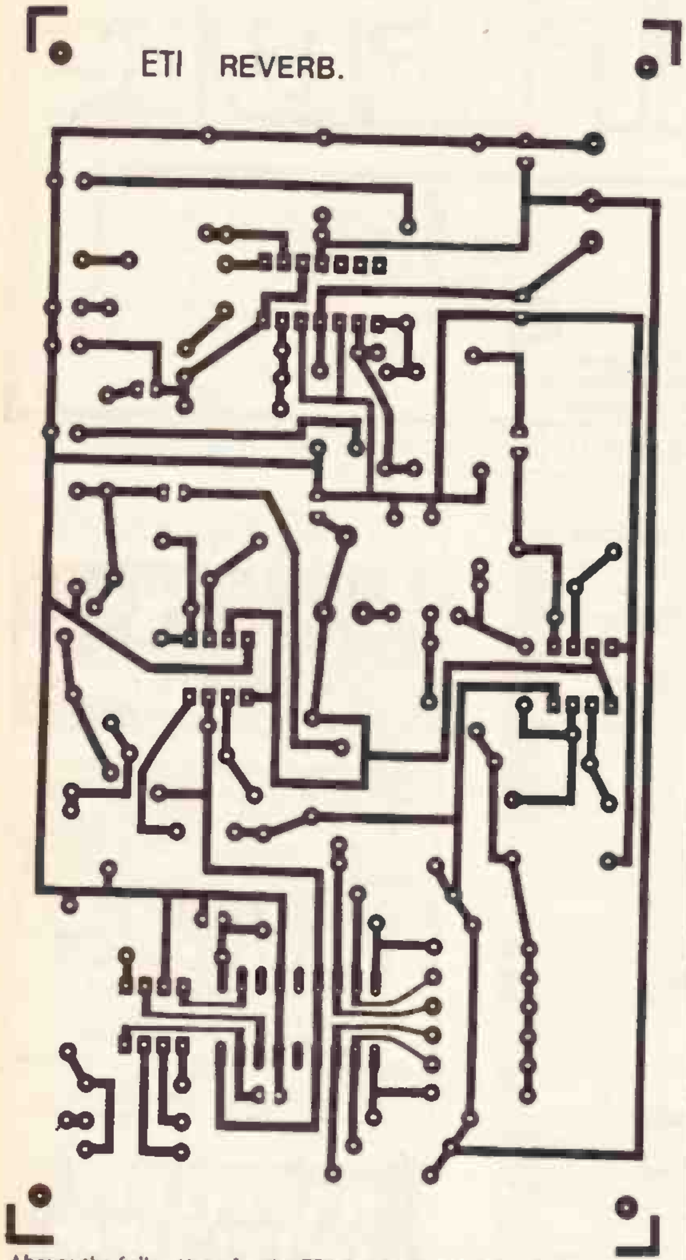
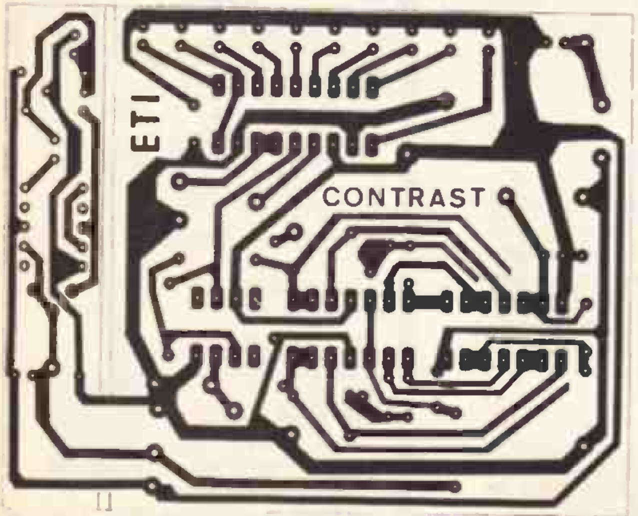
PCB Foil Patterns



Above: the foil pattern for the ETI Solid State Reverb unit. Commercial firms should note that this board is the copyright of Digisound, and may not be reproduced for sale.



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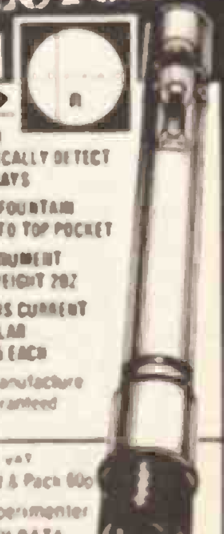

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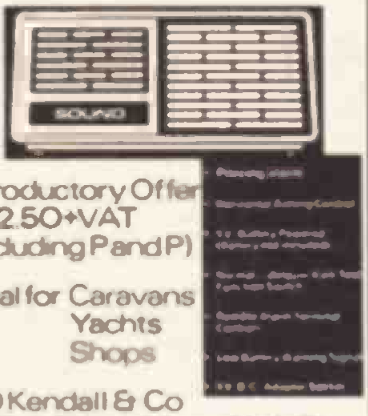

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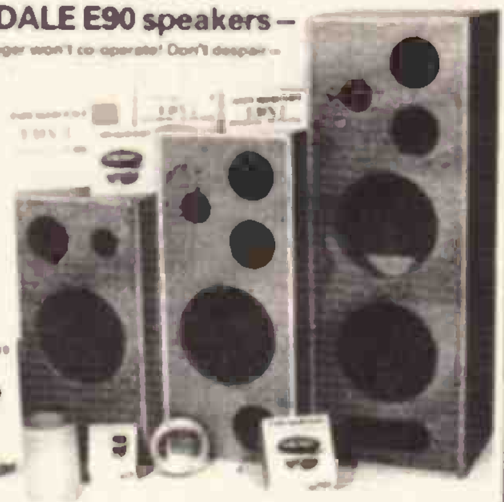

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AD INDEX

Make the most of your Sinclair ZX Computer...

Sinclair ZX software on cassette.

£3.95 per cassette.

The unprecedented popularity of the ZX Series of Sinclair Personal Computers has generated a large volume of programs written by users.

Sinclair has undertaken to publish the most elegant of these on pre-recorded cassettes. Each program is carefully vetted for interest and quality, and then grouped with other programs to form a single-subject cassette.

Each cassette costs £3.95 (including VAT and p&p) and comes complete with full instructions.

Although primarily designed for the Sinclair ZX81, many of the cassettes are suitable for running on a Sinclair ZX80 – if fitted with a replacement 8K BASIC ROM.

Some of the more elaborate programs can be run only on a Sinclair ZX Personal Computer augmented by a 16K-byte add-on RAM pack.

This RAM pack and the replacement ROM are described below. And the description of each cassette makes it clear what hardware is required.

8K BASIC ROM

The 8K BASIC ROM used in the ZX81 is available to ZX80 owners as a drop-in replacement chip. With the exception of animated graphics, all the advanced features of the ZX81 are now available on a ZX80 – including the ability to run much of the Sinclair ZX Software.

The ROM chip comes with a new keyboard template, which can be overlaid on the existing keyboard in minutes, and a new operating manual.

16K-BYTE RAM pack

The 16K-byte RAM pack provides 16-times more memory in one complete module. Compatible with the ZX81 *and* the ZX80, it can be used for program storage or as a database.

The RAM pack simply plugs into the existing expansion port on the rear of a Sinclair ZX Personal Computer.

Cassette 1 – Games

For ZX81 (and ZX80 with 8K BASIC ROM)

ORBIT – your space craft's mission is to pick up a very valuable cargo that's in orbit around a star.

SNIPER – you're surrounded by 40 of the enemy. How quickly can you spot and shoot them when they appear?

METEORS – your starship is cruising through space when you meet a meteor storm. How long can you dodge the deadly danger?

LIFE – J. H. Conway's 'Game of Life' has achieved tremendous popularity in the computing world. Study the life, death and evolution patterns of cells.

WOLFPACK – your naval destroyer is on a submarine hunt. The depth charges are armed, but must be fired with precision.

GOLF – what's your handicap? It's a tricky course but you control the strength of your shots.

Cassette 2 – Junior Education: 7-11-year-olds

For ZX81 with 16K RAM pack

CRASH – simple addition – with the added attraction of a car crash if you get it wrong.

MULTIPLY – long multiplication with five levels of difficulty. If the answer's wrong – the solution is explained.

TRAIN – multiplication tests against the computer. The winner's train reaches the station first.

FRACTIONS – fractions explained at three levels of difficulty. A ten-question test completes the program.

ADDSUB – addition and subtraction with three levels of difficulty. Again, wrong answers are followed by an explanation.

DIVISION – with five levels of difficulty. Mistakes are explained graphically, and a running score is displayed.

SPELLING – up to 500 words over five levels of difficulty. You can even change the words yourself.

Cassette 3 – Business and Household

For ZX81 (and ZX80 with 8K BASIC ROM) with 16K RAM pack

TELEPHONE – set up your own computerised telephone directory and address book. Changes, additions and deletions of up to 50 entries are easy.

NOTE PAD – a powerful, easy-to-run system for storing and retrieving everyday information. Use it as a diary, a catalogue, a reminder system, or a directory.

BANK ACCOUNT – a sophisticated financial recording system with comprehensive documentation. Use it at home to keep track of 'where the money goes,' and at work for expenses, departmental budgets, etc.

Cassette 4 – Games

For ZX81 (and ZX80 with 8K BASIC ROM) and 16K RAM pack

LUNAR LANDING – bring the lunar module down from orbit to a soft landing. You control attitude and orbital direction – but watch the fuel gauge! The screen displays your flight status – digitally and graphically.

TWENTYONE – a dice version of Blackjack.

COMBAT – you're on a suicide space mission. You have only 12 missiles but the aliens have unlimited strength. Can you take 12 of them with you?

SUBSTRIKE – on patrol, your frigate detects a pack of 10 enemy subs. Can you depth-charge them before they torpedo you?

CODEBREAKER – the computer thinks of a 4-digit number which you have to guess in up to 10 tries. The logical approach is best!

MAYDAY – in answer to a distress call, you've narrowed down the search area to 343 cubic kilometers of deep space. Can you find the astronaut before his life-support system fails in 10 hours time?

Cassette 5 – Junior Education: 9-11-year-olds

For ZX81 (and ZX80 with 8K BASIC ROM)

MATHS – tests arithmetic with three levels of difficulty, and gives your score out of 10.

BALANCE – tests understanding of levers/fulcrum theory with a series of graphic examples.

VOLUMES – 'yes' or 'no' answers from the computer to a series of cube volume calculations.

AVERAGES – what's the average height of your class? The average shoe size of your family? The average pocket money of your friends? The computer plots a bar chart, and distinguishes MEAN from MEDIAN.

BASES – convert from decimal (base 10) to other bases of your choice in the range 2 to 9.

TEMP – Volumes, temperatures – and their combinations.

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	25	Cassette 5 – Junior Education	£3.95	
	17	*8K BASIC ROM for ZX80	£19.95	
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