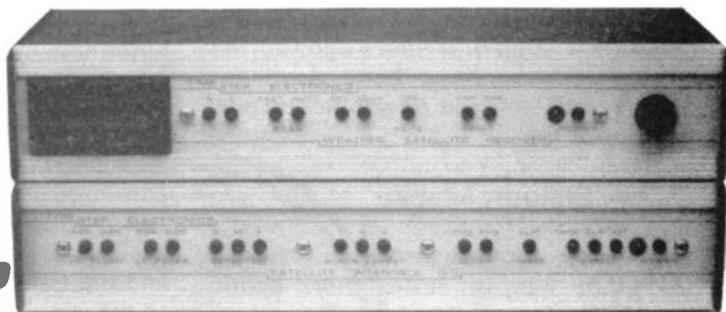


Weather Satellite Pictures:



Timestep Electronics System

For the past ten years, I have been interested in weather forecasting having started out decoding the five figure weather codes transmitted from Bracknell. The only bother with this method is that the codes require decoding, into so many tenths cloud or so many kilometres per hour for the wind, etc — all very in-

teresting but rather time consuming. So when I went to the National Exhibition Centre for the RSGB exhibition this year and saw the stand run by Timestep Electronics Ltd, I thought to myself, this is for me!

satellite's data to pictures is called 'Slow Scan Imaging'. There are three satellites in orbit at the moment sent up by USA in the frequency range of 137-138MHz, called NOAA 6, NOAA 8 and NOAA 9. (The letters 'NOAA' stand for National Oceanic and Atmosphere Administration). There are also a number of Russian satellites which transmit pictures. They all use the same type of equipment, APT, which stands for automatic picture transmission. So a single receiver can accept signals from them all.

switched off and NOAA 8 being activated. The failure of NOAA 6 was due to an internal oscillator problem which prevented proper operation of the attitude controls. Because the failure was intermittent, the back-up oscillator would not switch on. However, the primary oscillator has now ceased operation completely, allowing the back-up to be activated. At present both NOAA 6 and NOAA 8 operate on a frequency of 137.50MHz and NOAA 9 on 137.62MHz.

Having become interested in weather satellites, the next step is the receiving equipment. Ken Michaelson, G3RDG, evaluates one system, from Timestep Electronics Ltd, which runs with a BBC 'B' micro computer.

I understand at the time of going to press that NOAA 6 is being

JUNE 1985 NOAA 9	
Listen for Sat.	Heading
1 June 1985	
120	67
200	29
420	7
620	3-1
1240	117
1420	104
1600	207
2 June 1985	
110	73
240	36
420	10
610	3-7
1290	111
1410	157
1500	208
3 June 1985	
230	43
410	11
600	342
1220	104
1400	150
1510	177

Fig. 1 Where you would have found NOAA9 in June.

interesting but rather time consuming. So when I went to the National Exhibition Centre for the RSGB exhibition this year and saw the stand run by Timestep Electronics Ltd, I thought to myself, this is for me!

Timestep Electronics market a complete system for the reception of weather satellite data with the exception of the BBC computer. The pictures on Timestep's stand showed the sort of thing one used to see on BBC 1 TV before the weather forecasting went over to the latest method.

The conversion of the

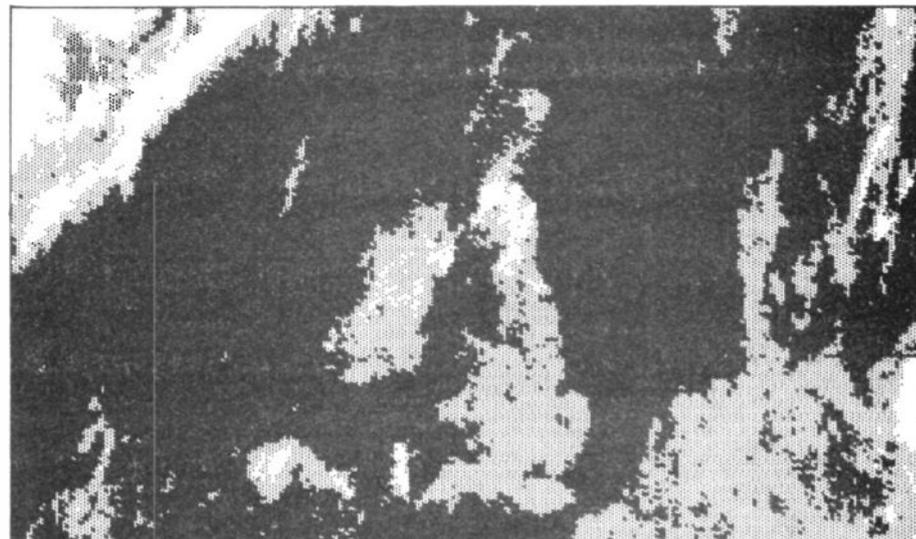


Fig. 2 A print out of a picture of the UK received from NOAA9.