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## SPECIFICATIONS

Operating voltage (DC) Loads
Frequency response measured at 100 watts Sensitivity for 100 watts Typical T.H.D.@ 50 watts 4 ohms load Dimensions $205 \times 90$ and $190 \times 36 \mathrm{~mm}$ The P.E power amp kit is a module for high power applications disco units, guitar amplitiers, public address systems and even high power domestic systems The unit is protected against short circuiting of the load and is safe in an opencircuit condition. A large safey margin exists by use of generously rated components. result. a high powered rugged unit. The PC Board is backprinted. etched and ready to drill for ease of construction, and the

125 watt RMS 50.80 Max 4.16 ohm $25 \mathrm{~Hz} .20 \mathrm{KHz}_{z}$ $400 \mathrm{mV} @ 47 \mathrm{k}$ $0.1 \%$

PRACTICAL ELECTRONICS CAR RADIO KIT ${ }_{\text {(Constructors pack7) }}$


CONSTRUCTORS PACK 7A
plus $£ 2.00$ p $\&$
Suitable stainless steef fuly retractable locking aerial and speaker (approx. $6^{\prime \prime} \times 4$ ") is
available as a kit complete $\mathbf{£ 1 . 9 5} \begin{aligned} & \text { per pack. } \\ & \text { p\&p } f 1.15\end{aligned}$


30 + 30 WATT STEREO AMPLIFIER BUILT AND TESTED
Viscount IV unit in teak simulate cabinet silver finished rotary controls and pushbuttons with matihing fascia, red mains indicator and stereo jack socket. Functions switch for mic magnetic and crystal pickups, tap and auxiliary. Rear panel teatures fuse holder. DIN speaker and input socket $30+30$ watts. RMS $60+60$ watts peak for use with 4 to 8 ohm speakers Size $143 / 4^{\prime \prime} \times 10^{\prime \prime}$ approx
heaor to play $£ 32.90$ plus
¢ 3.80 p\&p

## HI FI STEREO AMPLIFIER MODULES

[^1]aluminium chasis is preformed and ready to use. Supplied with all parts, circuit diagrams and instructions.

## ACCESSORIES

Suitable LS coupling electrolytic for
Suitable LS coupling electrolytic for 200W model
Suitable Mains Power Supply Unit for 125 W model
Suitable Twin Transformer Power Supply for 200W model




MULLARD LP1183
STEREO PREAMP

- Featuring latest SGS/ATES TDA 200610 watt output I C. win-built thermal and short circuit protection.
- Muliard Stereo Preamplifier module
- Atractive black vinyl finish cabinet. Sire 9 " $\times 8 \%^{\prime \prime} \times 35{ }^{\prime \prime}$ approx - Converts to a 20 watt Disco amplifier

To complete you just supply connecting wire and solder. Features include din inpul sockets for ter amic cartridge, microphone, tape or tuner. Outputs-tape, speakers and headphones. By the press of a button it transforms into a 20 watt mono disc amplifier with twin deck muxing. The kit incorporates a Mullard LP1 183 pre-amp module, plus power amplifier assembly kit and mains power supply. Also featured 4 slider tevel controls, rotary bass and treble controls and 6 push button switches. Silver finish fascia panel with matching knobs and contrasting ready made black vinyl finish cabinet and ready made metal work. For
SPECIFICATIONS
Suitable for 4 to 8 ohms speakers
Frequency responce $40 \mathrm{~Hz}-20 \mathrm{KHz}$
input Sensitivity P.U. 150 mV Aux. 200 mV Mic. 1.5 m
Tone controls Bass $\pm 12 \mathrm{db} @ 60 \mathrm{~Hz}$
Distortion $1 \%$ typically @ 4 watts
Mains supply $\quad 220-250$ volits 50 Hz
BSR chassis record deck with manual set down and return. complete with stereo ceramic cartridge $£ 8.50$ plus f 3.15 pk
when purchased with amplifier
Available separately f 10.50 plus f 3.160 O p


8"SPEAKER KIT $28^{\prime \prime}$ aporox. twin cone domestic use speakers. $£ 4.75$ per stereo pair plus $f \uparrow .70 \mathrm{p} \& \mathrm{p}$ when purchased with amplifier. Available separately $\mathbf{£} 6.75$ plus $\mathbf{E 1 . 7 0} \mathrm{p} \mathrm{\& p}$

## STEREO MAGNETIC PRE-AMP

CONVERSION KIT. All components including P C.B. to convert your ceramic input on the $10+10 \mathrm{amp}$ to magnetic. $£ 2.00$ whe purchased with kit leatured above. $£ 4.00$ separately ine. p\&p.

## 可TVI

323 EDGWARE ROAD, LONDON W2
21 bHIGH STREET, ACTON W3 6NG ACTON: Mail Order only. No callers
All items subiat to availability Price courect 5281 and sabject to change without notice

For further information send for instructions $20 p$ plus stamped addressed envelope
NOTE: Goods despatched to mainland and M. Ireland only
Persons under 16 years not served without parent's authorisation R TVC LTD. reserve the right to atter, update or improve their products without notice.

STEREO DISCO PREAMPLIFIER
matchnng above modules, suitable for twin deck mixing with P.F matcing above modules,
output and Mic/Tape input
Ready built, ready to play with circuir Ready built, ready to play with circuit
diagram and aplication notes to suit
our power module kits. f1.72 p\&

## 100 WATT <br> MONO DISCO <br> AMPLIFIER <br> Brushed aluminaum fascia and rotary controls

Size approx $14^{\prime \prime} \times 4^{\prime \prime} \times 10 \%$. Five vertital slide
controls, master volume, tape leverl. mic level. deck
level, PLUS INTER DECK FADER Ior perfect graduated change
from record deck No 1 to No 2. or vice versa. Pre fade level
controls (PRL) lets YOU hear next disc before fading it in. VU meter monitors output level. Output 100 watts RMS 200 watts peak

50 WATT MONO DISCO AMPLIFIER
Size appox $13 \times \times 5 \% \times 6 \% " 50$ watts ims 100 watts peak output. Big features include iwo disc inpurs, both for ceramic
cartidges. tape input and microphone input. Level mixing controls cartridges. tape in
fitted with integral push-pull switches independent bass and treble controls and master volume.
£30.60
plus $\{3.68$ p\&
8SR Manual single play record deck with auto return and cueing lever. Fitted with stereo ceramic cartridge 2 speeds with 45 rpm spindle adaptor ideally suited
$f 1225$
PHILLIPS RECORD PLAYER


[^2]A GOOD CASE...

THOSE of you who have already looked further into your copy will by now be aware that our May issue is a very special one lothers turn to page 36-when you have finished this piece please!) When planning our free case one of our intentions-was to present as wide a variety of digital projects to fit in the case as possible. Another factor that influenced our decision to go ahead with this rather expensive gift, in the face of the present recession, was the relatively simple construction of each project.

The use of what is probably the first of a new generation of panel meters has resulted in very high performance projects which are not expensive, are readily constructed and neatly housed. The free case was designed especially for PE by Lascar Electronics and, as far as we know, is the only case of this type available in the UK at the present time. Because you will get one free you will save over $£ 2.00$ on the project cost and our DPM Special Offer will save you a further $£ 3.00$ on the normal price.

Taking all these factors into account we believe that we can appeal to the
widest possible range of readership and thus make the most of our primary intention-to sell more copies. Yes, it's a hard world and we do publish to make money, although we can easily lose sight of that fact in our enthusiasm for electronics and for PE in particular. Of course we believe PE is excellent value for money anyway, but on this special occasion it will be even more attractive, so please make sure of your copy by ordering it now.

## . . . LAID BEAR!

Having just worked our way through that lot of (hopefully) logical thinking and confidently believing we can introduce some new readers to PE, we received the following letter trusted to the tender care of a Paddington Bear envelope:

## "Dear Sir or Madam,

In November 1974's Practical Electronics you published the "PE Minisonic" by G. D. Shaw.

My dad has a collection of your magazines, but unfortunately has not got all the parts. So could you please send me the circuit diagram for this very good battery operated synthesiser.

I enclose a stamped addressed envelope for your reply.

Yours sincerely,
Robert Brooks.

## PS. I am twelve years old."

Thank you Robert for an excellent letter, unlike many older readers you have given your name and address clearly-you'd be surprised how many people forget all, or part of it-supplied a stamped addressed (Paddington) envelope-without any marmalade on it-set out your letter clearly, kept to one subject and even given us a little praise-all others please follow Robert's example.

The only thing that worries us is why do we bother about easy to build projects to interest new readers if you are building the PE Minisonic at the age of 12 ? You have just messed up all that logical thinking!

We would be interested in hearing from other young readers, we cannot promise to answer all the letters, but why not tell us how you first started reading PE and what type of projects and articles you like.

> Mike Kenward

PS. I'm not telling you my age.

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## Technical Queries

We are unable to offer any advice on the use or purchase of commercial equipment or the incorporation or modification of designs published in Practical Electronics.

All letters requiring a reply should be accompanied by a stamped, self addressed envelope and each letter should relate to one published project only.

Components and p.c.b.s are usually available from advertisers; where we anticipate difficulties a source will be suggested.

## Back Numbers

Copies of some of our recent issues are available from: Post Sales Department (Practical Electronics), IPC Magazines Ltd., Lavington House, 25 Lavington Street, London SE1 OPF, at 95 p each including inland/Overseas p\&p.

## Binders

Binders for PE are available from the same address as back numbers at $£ 4.30$ each to UK or overseas addresses, including
postage and packing, and VAT where appropriate. Orders should state the year and volume required.

## Subscriptions

Copies of PE are available by post, inland or overseas, for $£ 11.80$ per 12 issues, from: Practical Electronics, Subscription Department, Oakfield House, Perrymount Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH 16 3DH. Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to IPC Magazines Limited.


## BUDGET VICE

This portable bench vice. pictured below. is now available from Home Radio. The jaws open to a maximum of 32 mm and it can be fit ted to benches up to 24 mm thick, so it should be suitable for most light constructional work.


The price including VAT and $p \& p$ is $£ 3.87$. Home Radio (Components) Ltd, PO Box 92, 215 London Road, Mitcham, Surrey (01 543 5659)

## DRILLMASTER

Two new mini drills ideal for use with our minidrill p.s.u. are being marketed by Microflame together with a complete range of accessories which include a drill stand with a built in magnifying glass.

The junior model features a detachable
chuck linger shicld for close control and the chuck itself has four precision cut steel collets ( $0.6,1.2,1.8$ and 2.4 mm ). An automatic 3 -jaw chuck is available as an optional extra.


The senior modet is supplied with an automatic 3-jaw chuck and a precision chuck with 5 collets is available as an optional extra (0.6. $1 \cdot 2,1 \cdot 8,2 \cdot 4$ and $3 \cdot 2 \mathrm{~mm}$ ).

The price of the junior model is $£ 10.00$ and the senior model is $£ 17 \cdot 35$. All prices exclude VAT and p\&p.

Microflame (UK) Limited, Vinces Road, Diss, Norfolk (0379 4813).

## SOAR DFM

Many people who consider digital frequency meters just too expensive to be considered for inclusion in their range of test equipment will be interested to hear about the Soar DFM. The importers of this Japanese instrument claim they have done so because of the nonavailability of a low priced high quality UK meter.


The unit which measures only $100 \times 32 \times 120 \mathrm{~mm}$ has a frequency range of 10 Hz to 50 MHz and can measure up to 500 MHz with a prescaler. Powered by either 4 penlight batteries or an external d.c. supply ( 8 to IIV) the instrument has a 4 digit display and a resolution of $10 \mathrm{~Hz} / 10 \mathrm{kHz}$ with a maximum input of 20 V .

The DFM is priced at $£ 39.99$ including VAT. For $£ 43.58$ the DFM is available with batteries, input lead carriage and insurance.

Holdings, Mincing Lane, Darwen Street, Blackburn BB2 2AF (0254 59595).

## KITS FOR BEGINNERS

A range of simple chip based hobby kits with step-by-step instructions has been introduced by OK Machine \& Tool. OK say that the kits are suitable for 12 year olds upwards. with descriptions of the various terms and components used in electronics included in the instructions. Once assembled, the kits fit into their original plastic packaging containers.


Five kits are available. Quick Reaction ( $£ 5 \cdot 80$ ), Electronic Dice $(£ 7.98)$, Digital Roultte ( $£ 8.60$ ), Morse Code ( $£ 3.99$ ) and Electronic Organ ( $£ 6 \cdot 70$ ). All prices include VAT and p\&p and items are available by mail order or by placing a credit card order over the telephone. Prices do not cover batteries or tools.

OK Machine \& Tool (UK) Ltd., Dutton Lane, Eastleigh, Hants SO5 4AA (0703 610944)

## CATALOGUES

Howard Associates have just released a short form catalogue which covers a range of PE projects such as the Solid State Car Instruments, Speech Processor, $27 / 28 \mathrm{MHz}$ Converter. DFM, Sound Operated Switch and the Dynamic Semiconductor Tester.

Part kits are available and Howard can also provide individual component price lists.

The catalogue is available from Howard Associates, 59 Oatlands Avenue, Weybridge, Surrey KT13 9SU.

Another shortform catalogue just available is from Lascar Electronics. It contains their complete range of digital panel meters, counter timers and portable instruments. Also listed is a $12 / 24 \mathrm{hr}$ clock module and I.c.d. and l.e.d. thermometers which will measure temperatures between $-55^{\circ}$ to $+150^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$ with a resolution of $0.1^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$.

Lascar Electronics, Unit 1, Thomasin Road, Basildon, Essex (0268 727383)

## KEYBOARD CONSOLES

Boss Industrial Mouldings have recently introduced three medium sized keyboard consoles into their BIM 7400 range. This range now consists of six case sizes from 355 to 508 mm wide by either 178 or 254 mm deep and with a rear panel depth of 102 mm . The front panet is inclined by 10 to 15 degrees for easier key operation.


The consoles are of all aluminium construction and incorporate ventilation slots in both rear and bottom panels with a gasket fitted between the panels to reduce vibration.

Prices for the range are from $£ 16.05$ to $£ 26.33$ excluding VAT.

Boss Industrial Mouldings Ltd., 2 Herne Hill Road, London (01-737 2383).

## DRAUGHTING AIDS

Constructors who like to produce their own p.c.b.s will be interested in the latest range of etch resistance transfers from Ace Mailtronix. The transfers which include straight or curved tracks, transistor, d.i.l. solid, oval, square and terminal pads are available either in sets of five sheets of a type or a mixed bag of six sheets including an introduction sheet. The transfers which are printed on $115 \times 105 \mathrm{~mm}$ sheets are available in a $1: 1$ scale for use directly onto copper clad boards or in a $2: 1$ scale for those
with photograpic reduction facilities. Ace can also supply black crepe paper track tape in various widths for constructors with UV light boxes.

For a free catalogue of the complete range send a stamped addressed envelope ( $9 \times 4 \mathrm{ins}$ ).

Ace Mailtronix Ltd., 3A Commercial Street, Batley, West Yorkshire, WF 17 5HJ.

## AUDIO-SAFE

The latest protection system for cars is the audio-safe unit which the makers claim makes the unauthorised removal of an in-car entertainment system virtually impossible.

The unit is a two part system: a base plate which replaces the usual dashboard trim plate and a cast aluminium cover that fits over the equipment and is secured to the replacement

panel by means of an individual locking key.
When locked together access to the mounting nuts, securing the equipment, is prevented. In fact the equipment itself cannot be seen.

The audio-safe will sell for around $£ 25.00$ from retailers.

## STORAGECASES

A new range of component containers has been added to the large range already carried by Trade Aids. The containers which are made of laminated board are light, strong and easily folded flat for storage. They are available in four sizes from $380 \times 100 \times 133 \mathrm{~mm}$

to $380 \times 210 \times 266 \mathrm{~mm}$ with prices ranging from $24 p$ to $50 p$ ex. VAT and $p \& p$.

Trade Aids, 54-56 Hawkes Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey, KT1 3FF. (01-549 2137)

## COLOUR PRINTER

Integrex have recently announced the introduction of their new low cost impact Colour Matrix Printer, model CX80.

Printing in 7 colours (with simple control codes) and with 96 ASCII plus 64 graphics characters in ROM, the CX80 is fully dot ad-

dressable, has 15 user programmable characters together with double length and reverse claracter printing.

The retail price is $£ 895$ plus VAT, and further information is available from:

Integrex Ltd., Portwood Industrial Estate, Church Gresley, Burton on Trent, Staffs. (0283 215432)

## FUELSTRETCHER

The latest in-car monitor is the Fuelstretcher Drive Computer which will give an instantaneous m.p.g. indication as well as helping with route planning. record keeping and trip scheduling.

The computer processes and stores information received from the fuel flow and speed sensors. This information which is given on a 4 digit l.e.d. display shows the driver how much fuel has been used. elapsed time and distance travelled on a particular trip or on a weekly or monthly basis.

The makers claim the unit is as easy to install as a car stereo and should take no more than two hours. All the motorist has to do is to fit the fuel sensor into the fuel line, speed sensor to the drive shaft and then connect both to the computer unit.

The computer, complete with wiring, optional mounting bracket, instruction manual, fuel flow and speed sensors can be obtained directly from EnviroSystems for just over $£ 80.00$.

EnviroSystems Ltd., Hampsfell Road, Grange-over-Sands, Cumbria, LA 11 6BE (044 84 4233).





## New Style Office

"- - - - a transition to twentieth century from nineteenth century office technology is not easily or quickly achieved."

You might suppose the quotation above was taken from a text written, say, in 1905 and referring to then new-fangled ideas like the telephone. Actually, it was written in 1980 and published in January 1981 and is from a case history on the introduction of word processing. It implies that office methods haven't changed much in over 80 years and carries a stern warning of hazards ahead.

Word processing is now a boom area for manufacturers and equipment suppliers. But the potential user had better be wary. It is all too easy to stumble into the trap experienced by those bold enough to invest in data processing in the 1960 s . In those days persuasive sales talk and extravagant claims for economy as well as efficiency only too frequently led to hasty installations, muddle, inefficiency and high costs. The jokes about computers all but disappeared as computer science attained maturity. Early hilarity has been supplanted by the menace of computer fraud-no laughing matter.

Now that we are all accustomed to, even conditioned to, data processing, a transition to word processing ought to be comparatively easy and painless. And, one would have thought, demonstrably so as an office has a welt understood structure and purpose.

Not so, according to this case history. The authors went back to first principles and asked themselves what an office is and what it does. They found that in their own case that different departments organised their affairs quite differently and often to suit the personal needs of executives and
secretaries as well as particular characteristics of the work undertaken.

There were more than 20 departments employing some 1,500 staff, half in London, originating over 1.2 million pages of text on A4 paper per year. When they looked at what people did they discovered that 150 person-years of time which should have been available for profit-earning professional tasks was being frittered away on internal administration. In fact the biggest savings would not be in reduction of secretarial costs but in gains of management time.

When it came to selecting a system it was found that over 30 suppliers offering over 50 different systems were available. Whittling these down to a short-list and final selection was no easy task.

The investment was eventually some $£ 700,000$ for the London office and an equal amount for the provincial offices, making a grand total of $£ 1.4$ million. The payback period was calculated as two years or less.

There is no space to describe all the development of software, training of staff, integration of the system with existing data processing facilities, or possible future expansion of the word processing system in terms of both size and newer technology as it becomes available. Or of how the system was progressively introduced, section by section, of 85 work stations without disruption of the daily work schedule.

The conclusion is that word processing is available now and is cost-effective. There is no mention of staff redundancy so that one assumes that payback in this case is added capacity for throughput which can only pay with an increase in business. In other words, while there are no immediate redundancies there should be no need to expand the staff for a long time ahead.

While this picture looks bleak for office workers, the other side of the coin is a huge new market for the electronics industry in manufacturing, installation, servicing and, eventually, a substantial replacement market, not to mention armies of software specialists.

Albert Einstein is recorded as hapving said: "If we look hopefully upon the shape of things to come, we can visualise automation as the greatest blessing mankind has ever known." I can only add that it seems a pity that the implementation of such a blessing is so painful.

## Inertia

As a counterweight to the above an eminent engineer last year was remarking that although technology continues to advance it was slow in introduction and had had litthe real effect on our daily life pattern. As examples he quoted that people still commuted every day in great discomfort and read newspapers produced and distributed in the same manner as in the early part of the century.

How true! But he, too, is expecting big changes. What he was describing was that today there is practically no technical limitation to what can be achieved. The
only real barrier to change is that people are conservative by nature.

## Expansion

Ten years ago Aberdeen Airport was a busy terminal handling 30,000 aircraft movements per year of which 4,000 were helicopters. This year the projected movements are 130,000 including 53,000 helicopter movements. A new runway was laid down in 1977 and a new control tower added in 1979. Latest addition is a comprehensive CCTV system for monitoring apron parking, refuelling and baggage handling areas.

Such has been the impact of North Sea oil. The spin-off for the electronics industry is substantial and not only at Aberdeen.

Exploration, drilling, pumping, data logging, communications at sea are all huge markets benefiting the industry. It is interesting to note that in an analysis of the performance of the FT 30 Ordinary Share Index over the past three years that the oil giant $B P$ is a notable high flyer with a gain of 90 per cent showing the strength of oils. But BP comes only third. Runaway winner is Plessey with a gain of 170 per cent since 1978 and GEC a creditable second-placer up 117 per cent.

There are some doubts on whether the government can maintain the promised level of defence spending and this could have an effect on both GEC and Plessey prospects with some major projects. But both these companies have a wide spread of activities and any programme reductions or delays are not likely to have a great effect.

In fact the outlook for electronics has never been brighter. One market analyst, Mackintosh, is forecasting an overall European growth rate of 12 per cent through to 1984 and that the UK will increase its market share.

The British Electrical and Allied Manufacturers' Association (BEAMA). which includes heavy electricals as well as electronics firms in membership, reported a 17 per cent rise in exports over the first nine months in 1980 . In the same period, imports were up only 10 per cent.

## ATE.

Automatic test equipment (ATE) continues to thrive. Marconi Space and Defence Systems are supplying equipment for the Middle Eastern military base workshop. The contract is worth $£ 2.5$ million and the equipment supplied will be used to check out 150 p.c.b.s, sub-assemblies and other electronic units on main battle tanks.

On a more modest scale a Racal ATE worth $£ 64,000$ has gone into service with audio engineers Neve, who make sound mixing consoles for broadcasting and other high quality applications. Manual testing of a complex Neve p.c.b. takes as long as $3 \frac{1}{2}$ hours. The Racal ATE does the same job in five minutes.

## CONSUMER ELECTRONICS




Put a tape of any oxide formulation into this cassette deck, and the onboard computer will
 have adjus ted to correc bias, equalisation and sensitivity within seconds. Functions are solenoid (logic) controlled. The fluorescent bar meter allows for peak hold, and Dolby noise reduction is included in the GX-F95. Akai America Ltd.

11 in . wide, 4 in . high, 10 in . deep UC-S4 AM/FM digital tuner:

11 in . wide, 2 in . high, 10 in . deep


Selling the concept of psychoacoustics, "Doc" Cavalier of Omnisonix Ltd says of his Imager . . " "far more dramatic than the performance of a dynamic range expander" Shown here is the 801-A intended for automobile hi-fi. Courtesy of Omnisonix Ltd.


Magnavox 14-day programmabie touch-tune VHS VCR, model 8340 portable. Features frame by frame advance, variable slow motion, stop action, fast motion and picture search; fascia or remote control.

Leading edge technology concealed in a "Mediterranean" styled colour TV. Model 5056 in Pecan, by Magnavox.


Magnavision laser-optical videodisc player. Forward, reverse, speed and search facilities, plus choice of bi-lingual-or-stereo, are built in. Video discs are immune to dust and scratches. Courtesy of Magnavox



Today's look in television. The CB-954 is one of the latest family of 19 inch sets from Toshiba. Picture improvement results from the following: Electronic Noise Cancellor, Automatic Dark Picture Intensifier, and a White Detail Purifier. Photo courtesy of Toshiba America Inc.

Computers disguised as animals aid development in thinking and co-ordination in the very young.


POCKET TELEVISION
WITH LIQUID CRYSTAL SCREEN


The star revelation at Las Vegas was undoubtedly three hand-held UHF-VHF TVs, whose monochrome pictures are produced on flat-screen l.c.d.s. Each unit measures an amazing $6.8 \times 3.2 \times 0.7$ inches thick, and weighs just 10.5 ounces. The screen system used measures $1.2 \times 1.6$ inches ( 2 in . diagonal). One model incorporates a digital clock, and another, a radio. All three televisions can double the image size by zooming in on the centre area of the screen.
This is the way Toshiba describe the operation of their breakthrough: "The screen comprises a liquid crystal matrix panel filled with liquid crystal in a gap between the integrated circuit and the front glass. A picture is the end result of brightness differences on the crystal created by voltage differentials."

Photographs courtesy of Toshiba Con-
 sumer Electronics Divn.

Mattel Electronics, a pioneer of handheld electronic games, is expanding in the computerised video games field. Some of these games are shown below.

A unique threedimensional game called Cosmos. In addition to what are described as "Holoptic" images. this sophisticated l.e.d. game incorporates novel sound effects.


OUTLAW

fLAG CAPTURE


HUMAN CANNONBALL



Praxis 35 por table electronic typewriter. Auto matic correction of last ten characters via memory. Courtesy of Olivetti.

Mura claim this is one of the lowest priced digital VOMs. The LCD-200 features easy-to-read $\frac{1}{2}$ inch high digits, and is intended for hobbyists and engineers.

Banana plugs are used in preference to pin contacts, and all ranges are switched, obviating the need to change the probe leads from one socket to another, as is often the case with cheaper units. Photo courtesy of Mura Corporation.



The "jewelry look" has come to calculators. This charcoal grey case with raised chrome numeral keys and l.c.d. display should suit some ex ecutives

The Kosmos biorhythm unit and world time clock will display data on six people. It also has a stopwatch. Courtesy of Kosmos International of Atlanta.



# Oscilloscopes <br>  ....HOW THEY WORK Part One...The Cathode Ray Tube... by lan Hickman 

This two-part feature is taken from the last two chapters of a new book by this well-known author. Published by Newnes Technical Books the paperback is entitled Oscilloscopes. How to use them. How they work.

THE cathode-ray tube is the main component of an oscilloscope. A cathode-ray tube consists basically of an electrode assembly mounted in an evacuated glass vessel (Fig. 1). The electrodes perform the following functions:

1. A triode assembly generates the electron beam, originally called the "cathode ray". It consists of a cathode $K$ heated by a filament $F$, a control grid $G$ and the first beam-acceleration electrode (2).
2. An electrode (1) focuses the beam.
3. The beam is then further accelerated before reaching the deflection plates.
4. The vertical deflection plates change the direction of the beam in proportion to the potential difference between them. When this is zero, i.e. the two plates are at the same potential, the beam passes through undeflected. The vertical deflection plates are so called because they can deflect the beam in the vertical direction, so that it hits the screen at a higher or a lower point; they are actually mounted horizontally above and below the beam, as shown in Fig. I. Similarly the horizontal deflection plates permit the beam to be deflected to left or to right.
5. The deflected beam then hits the fluorescent coating on the inner surface of the glass screen of the c.r.t. The coating consists of a thin layer of "phosphor", a preparation of


Fig. 1. Basic oscilloscope (electrostatic) cathode-ray tube (courtesy Enertec Instrumentation Ltd.)
very fine crystals of metallic salts deposited on the glass. The "spot" or point of impact of the beam glows, emitting light in all directions including forwards. Modern c.r.t.s are aluminised, i.e. a thin layer of aluminium is evaporated on to the rear of the coated screen. The electrons pass through this with little retardation, causing the phosphor to glow as before, but now the light emitted rearwards is reflected forwards, almost doubling the useful light output.
The potential at the focus electrode is adjusted to obtain a very small round spot on the end of the tube. Unfortunately, if no other control were provided, it would often be found that the focus control setting for minimum spot widths was different from that for minimum spot height. This is avoided by providing an astigmatism control. In the case of a simple cathode-ray tube this consists of a potentiometer that adjusts the voltage on the final anode and screen relative to the deflection plate voltages. Alternate adjustments of the focus and astigmatism controls then permit the smallest possible spot size to be achieved. With more complicated tubes using a high "post-deflection acceleration ratio" another electrode is often needed. This is a "geometry" electrode and is connected to another preset potentiometer, which is adjusted for minimum "pincushion" or "barrel" distortion of the display.

When an electron beam passes between two horizontal plates


Fig. 2. Y-deflection sensitivity: see text (courtesy Enertec Instrumentation Ltd.)
that have a potential difference of $V$ volts between them (Fig. 2) it is deflected vertically by an amount:

$$
\Delta Y=\frac{K V L D}{2 V_{\mathrm{a}} d}
$$

where $L=$ length of the plates
$D=$ distance between the plates and the point on the axis where the deflection is measured
$d=$ distance between the plates
$V_{\mathrm{a}}=$ acceleration voltage applied to the beam at the level of the plates
$K=$ a constant relating the charge of an electron to its mass.

The $Y$ deflection sensitivity of a c.r.t. is defined by $\Delta Y / V$ and is expressed in $\mathrm{cm} / \mathrm{V}$. However, in practice the inverse relationship is normally used: $V / \Delta Y$, in $V / \mathrm{cm}$, i.e. the differential deflectionplate voltage necessary to achieve a spot deflection of 1 cm .

Brilliance or intensity modulation (also called Z modulation) is obtained by the action of a potential applied to the cathode or grid that controls the intensity of the beam. Generally, a change of 5 V will produce a noticeable change of brightness, while a swing of about 50 V will extinguish a maximum-intensity trace. The beam is normally extinguished during "flyback" or "retrace"; see Part 2. This may alternatively be achieved in some c.r.t.s by means of an auxiliary "blanking" electrode, which can deflect the beam so that it no longer passes through the deflection plates and hence does not reach the screen.

## TUBE SENSITIVITY

The deflection plates of a c.r.t. are connected to amplifiers, which can be of relatively simple design when the required output amplitude is low; it is therefore desirable for the tube sensitivity to be as high as possible. To enable the amplifier to have a wide bandwidth, the capacity between the plates must be kept low, so they must be small and well separated. On the other hand, in order to obtain a suitably clear trace of a signal with low repetition frequency (or single-shot) the energy of the beam must be high. But the ideal tube must be:

1. Short (not cumbersome): $D$ small
2. Bright (high acceleration voltage): $V_{\mathrm{a}}$ large
3. And with low deflection-plate capacity: $L$ small, $d$ large This gives a tube with very low sensitivity, considering the formula:

$$
\text { Sensitivity }=\frac{\Delta Y}{V}=\frac{K L D}{2 V_{\mathrm{a}} d}
$$

The requirements for high sensitivity contradict the terms of the equation. Practical cathode-ray tubes are therefore the result of a compromise. However, techniques have been developed to improve a selected parameter without prejudice to the others. Postdeflection acceleration (p.d.a.) is one of these; see Fig. 3. To improve the trace brightness while retaining good sensitivity, it is arranged that the beam passes through the deflection system in a low energy condition (relatively low initial acceleration); postdeflection acceleration is then applied to the electrons. This is achieved by applying a voltage of several kilovolts to the screen of the c.r.t.

Spiral p.d.a., Fig. 4, is a development of the basic p.d.a. technique, and consists of the application of the p.d.a. voltage to a resistive spiral ( $500 \mathrm{M} \Omega$ ) deposited on the inner tube surface between the screen and the deflection system. The uniformity of the electric field is improved, which reduces distortion. In addition the effect of the p.d.a. field between the deflection plates is weaker, so the loss is sensitivity caused by this field is reduced.

The use of a field grid-Fig. 5a-avoids any reduction in sensitivity caused by the effect of the post-deflection accleration field. A screen is interposed between the deflection system and
the p.d.a.; this makes the tube sensitivity independent of the p.d.a., a significant benefit. The screen must, of course, be transparent to the electrons and is formed from a very fine metallic grid. With this system we reach the domain of modern cathode-ray tubes.

The next development is the electrostatic expansion lensFig. 5b. By modifying the shape of the field grid (e.g. a convex grid) it is póssible to create, with respect to the other electrodes, an electric field that acts on the electron beam in the same way as a lens acts on a light beam. It is therefore possible to increase the beam deflection angle, for example by a factor of two, which improves the sensitivity by the same amount.

The field can also be formed by quadripolar lenses. So, for example, if the sensitivity of a spiral tube is $30 \mathrm{~V} / \mathrm{cm}$ in the X axis and $10 \mathrm{~V} / \mathrm{cm}$ in the Y axis, then the sensitivity of a lens-fitted tube, for the same trace brightness, may be $8 \mathrm{~V} / \mathrm{cm}$ in X and $2 \mathrm{~V} / \mathrm{cm}$ in Y or even better.


Fig. 3. Single-stage post-deflection acceleration (courtesy Enertec Instrumentation Ltd.)


Fig. 4. Spiral p.d.a. (courtesy Enertec Instrumentation Ltd.)


Fig. 5. (a) Mesh p.d.a.; (b) As (a) combined with expansion lens (courtesy Enertec Instrumentation Ltd.)


Fig. 6. Delay-line Y-deflection plates (courtesy Enertec Instrumentation Ltd.)

(a)


Fig. 7. Travelling-wave Y-deflection plates (courtesy Enertec Instrumentation Ltd.)

(b)

Fig. 8. (a) Dual-gun tube; (b) Dual-gun tübe with common X- deflection plates (courtesy Enertec Instrumentation Ltd.)

To improve the sensitivity by modifying the deflection system it is necessary to do one of two things:

1. Reduce the distance between the plates, increasing the capacity between them; in addition it must be possible to deflect the beam without it striking them.
2. Lengthen the plates, again increasing the capacity; however, the transit time involved limits the application of this idea.

The transit time is the time taken for an electron to pass through the deflection system: $t_{0}=L / e l e c t r o n ~ s p e e d . ~ S u p p o s e ~ t h a t ~ a ~$ sinusoidal voltage of period $t_{0}$ is applied to the deflection plates. An electron leaving the plates will be in the same position as one entering the system, because the instantaneous value of the voltage applied to the plates will be the same (one period between the input and the output) and there will be no deflection. To enable the beam to be deflected so as to trace the outline of the applied signal, the length of the plates must be small compared with the distance the electrons travel during the period of one cycle of the signal. So for high-frequency work the plates must be short, which again reduces the sensitivity.

This problem can be circumvented by the use of sectional plates (Fig. 6). To improve the sensitivity several plates are placed in series, connected by a delay line. As the propagation velocity of the line is made equal to the speed of the electrons in the beam, the deviation accumulates successively. On the other hand the parasitic capacitance of the plates is incorporated in the delay line, which must be terminated in its characteristic impedance. The design of the line is entirely determined by its stray capacitance and the propagation time. This brings us to delayline deflection plates (Fig. 7). Here, the dimensions of the plates have been reduced and their number increased. Two flattened helices are used, each spiral acting as a deflection plate. The helix is constructed in such a way that its propagation velocity corresponds to the speed of the electron beam. These deflection systems, together with field grids or quadripolar lenses (or both), permit the construction of very high-performance tubes.

## OTHER TUBE CHARACTERISTICS

To be suitable for use at high frequencies a c.r.t. must, as already discussed, have a highly developed deflection system.

But this alone is not sufficient when it is required to observe and photograph fast pulses with low repetition rates or single-shot phenomena. The brilliance of the display must also be adequate. This is why "writing speed" is an important feature in these conditions. Writing speed is defined as the maximum speed at which a spot, passing once across the tube face, can be photographed under specified conditions (camera, aperture, image/object, film sensitivity).

On the occasions when it is necessary to compare several fast, single-shot phenomena occurring simultaneously, the only solution is to use an oscilloscope equipped with a c.r.t. with several beams. There are a number of different types available:

1. Multi-gun tubes. Fig. 8a shows a c.r.t. with several cathode-ray assemblies mounted in a single tube. Fig. 8b shows a tube where each gun or triode assembly has its own vertical deflection system but shares common horizontal deflection plates. All phenomena are displayed with the same sweep speed.


Fig. 9. Electrode assembly of Brimar mesh p.d.a. c.r.t. type D13-51 GH (courtesy Thorn Brimar Ltd.)
2. Multi-beam tubes. There is a single electron gun for the different deflection systems, typically two. The beam is shared between each deflection system by means of a splitter plate. This type of tube is more economical because there is a single gun assembly. However, there is reaction between the two systems, and the brilliance of the displays cannot be adjusted separately.

## CONSTRUCTION

The construction of the electrode assembly of a mesh p.d.a. cathode-ray tube is shown in Fig. 9. The deflection plates are within the cylindrical shield and the mesh covers the square opening at the end. The wires of which the mesh is woven are so fine that it is invisible; this also ensures that it is transparent to the beam of electrons. Fig. 10 shows a high-performance oscilloscope c.r.t. with side connectors to the deflection plates for minimum capacitance, spiral p.d.a., internal graticule, bonded implosion guard and light guide for graticule illumination.


Fig. 10. Brimar spiral p.d.a. c.r.t. type D14-210GH/82 with internal graticule (courtesy Thorn Brimar Ltd.)

All the measures to maximise the bandwidth of a c.r.t. mentioned previously-p.d.a., delay-line deflection plates, scan expansion lenses-have been put together in the cathode-ray tube used in the Tektronix type 7104 oscilloscope. This instrument boasts a 1 GHz real-time bandwidth, this limit being set by the $Y$ amplifier rather than the c.r.t. itself. The latter could display signals up to 2.5 GHz , were it possible to design suitable wideband drive circuitry. Also, notwithstanding the conflict, explained earlier, between tube design parameters for optimum bandwidth and maximum writing speed, this tube achieves the remarkable writing speed of $20,000 \mathrm{~cm} / \mu \mathrm{s}$, using ASA 3000 film without fogging. (In fact, single-shot events at that speed can also be seen comfortably with the naked eye.) The secret is revealed in Fig. 11, which shows that in addition to the measures already mentioned, the c.r.t. incorporates a microchannel electron multiplier plate. This consists of thousands of short parallel tubes, each coated internally with a high-resistance film. Each individual tube acts as an electron multiplier by virtue of secondary emission, resulting in 10,000 electrons hitting the phosphor for each electron in the beam. Owing to the small spacing between the microchannel plate output side and the aluminised phosphor, together with the high potential difference between them, there is negligible spreading of the output of each microchannel tube, maintaining a small sharp spot size.

NEXT MONTH: the oscilloscope circuitry.


Fig. 11. Cathode-ray tube used in Tektronix oscilloscope type 7104 (courtesy Tektronix UK Ltd.)




Fig. 1.1. Block diagram of the Digisounder
features, the basic operation is to pulse an electronic transducer. At the same time, a counter is reset to zero and the counter input is held open. An oscillator input is fed into the counter, which will commence to count. The counter is stopped and the resultant count displayed on receipt of the transmitted pulse. This count is dependant on the depth of water below the transducer. Varying the oscillator frequency means that the read-out can be in feet, metres or fathoms.

## CIRCUIT DESCRIPTION

The complete circuit diagram of the Digisounder is shown in Fig. 1.2. The 1 Hz oscillator IC1d, e, f controls the timing of the circuit. It initiates the cycle of firing the $500 \mu \mathrm{~s}$ monostable IC2e, IC2f which gates the 150 kHz oscillator IC1a, IC1b, IC1c, "on" (for $500 \mu \mathrm{~s}$ ). The tuned power amplifier TR3, TR4, TR5 amplifies this 9 V pk-pk square wave to about $400 \mathrm{~V} \mathrm{pk}-\mathrm{pk}$. The waveform at this stage is approximately sinusoidal because of the tuning. When this 400V signal is applied to the transducer, the crystal turns the electrical signal into an acoustic one, which travels down to the seabed where it is reflected. On returning to the transducer, it is converted back to an electrical signal (typically tens of microvolts).

The tuned amplifier TR8, TR10 has a time dependant automatic gain control TR6, TR7. The 1 Hz oscillator turns the gain down during transmission and raises it again over the following 30 milliseconds. As the transducer is fired, a positive going pulse appears at the output of IC3b, switching on TR7, discharging C9. Which then charges exponentially through R15, R16 and this changing level is fed via emitter follower TR6 to supply the first tuned stage of the receiver, TR9. The purpose of this is to reduce the risk of a false reflection from air bubbles or debris, which if they are near the transducer can cause large receiver signals and hence an incorrect depth reading. As the gain of the tuned amplifier is very high, it is susceptible to all sorts of interference, hence the need to turn the 150 kHz oscillator off by D2 when it is not driving the transducer (if it were not turned off, some small amount of 150 kHz might get through and saturate the amplifier).

## COUNTER

The heart of the unit is the main counter, which receives pulses from the oscillator. The gate of the counter is held open from the moment the transmitter is fired until the returned pulse 'disables' the counter, and operates the latch, updating the display. The time the gate is held open is proportional to depth of water and the frequency of pulses fed in during this time determines the ultimate displayed figure. Therefore, by feeding in different frequencies, the counter will display feet, metres or fathoms. As an example, the 'feet' oscillator is exactly six times the frequency of the 'fathoms' input. This automatically converts the reading into fathoms.

The counter used is the Intersil 7224, a $4 \frac{1}{2}$ digit counter that will drive an I.c.d. directly. Although $3 \frac{1}{2}$ digits are sufficient, this i.c. was chosen as being the most convenient method of implementing the required function. It features low power operation, direct 7 -segment I.c.d. drive, latch and reset inputs and a count inhibit (enable/disable) control.

## 'NO REFLECTION" DEFLECTION

The flip-flop IC4a, IC4b is set by the 1 Hz oscillator at the beginning of the transmit pulse and reset by the demodulator IC3e when a reflection is detected (so the output is high for a time proportional to the depth of the water, and this signal is used to 'enable' the 7224 counter). If the bottom has soft mud or substantial weed growth, it is possible that no reflection will be detected. IC5a, IC5b another flip-flop is set on transmission, and stays in this position as long as reflections are received. If, however, after approximately 0.5 seconds, no reflection is received, IC5d resets it. IC5a output goes low, which resets the main flip-flop (IC4a, IC4b) and prevents the latch pulse being transmitted by IC4d. TR11 turns on, and pulls the reset and latch inputs of the 7224 low. This makes the display show a zero reading indicating that no reflection has been received. As soon as a correct reflection arrives, normal operation recommences.

## DEPTH OSCILLATOR

By varying the rate of the oscillator IC6b, IC6e, IC6f applied to the count input of the 7224, it is possible to arrange the display to show the depth in any desired unit - feet,


## COMPONENTS . . .

```
Resistors
    R1 22
    R2.R11,R12 1k(3 Off)
    R3,R42 2k2 (2 off)
    R4,R13,R16,R26,R28,R29, 100k (12 off)
    R35.R36,R38,R39, R44, R46
    R5, R20, R30, R32, R37, R45 10k (6 off)
    R6,R7,R22,R24,R41 1M (5 off)
    R8,R78 560k (2 off)
    R9,R31,R40 47k (3 off)
    R10,R17 22k (2 off)
    R14,R25 4k7 (2 off)
    R15,R33 33k (2 off)
    R19 2M7
    R21, R23
    R27
    R34
    R43
```

    All resistors \(\frac{1}{2}\) W 5\% carbon
    Potentiometers
VR1. VR2
VR3
VR4
VR5
Capacitors
C1. C8
C2, C14, C17
C3, C15, C18, C24
C4
C5, C10, C11, C19, C20, C21, $\ln (9$ off)
C23. C25, C28

## C6, C7

C9
C12
C13.C16
C22
C26
C27
47p (2 off)
$47 n$
220n
560 p (2 off)
10 n
22n
$1 \mu$

## Semiconductors

D1
D2-D14
D16
D15, D17
TR1, TR4
TR2, TR3, TR6, TR7, TR9,
TR1 1, TR12
TR5
TR8, TR10
IC1, IC2, IC3, IC6
IC4
IC5
IC7
in4001
1N4148(13 off)
BZY88 10 V Zener BZY88 5V6 Zener (3 off) BFY50 (2 off)
BC237 (7 off)
TIP41A
2N3819 (2 off)
4069 (4 off)
4011
4001
ICM7224

## Miscellanous

3 pole 4 way switch
$3 \frac{1}{2}$ digit I.c.d.
PP7 battery and connector
15 way p.c.b. plug and socket
Case Pac Tec 60119-1
UHF socket
Rm10 (AL250) pot core kit (RS228-242)
YXNS 30450 NK 2 mH choke (2 off)
22 s.w.g. enamelled wire
36 s.w.g. enamelled wire
Ultrasonic transducer
Soldercon pins
WD1 Piezo-Electric Sounder

## Constructor's Note

A complete set of parts for the Digisounder is available from Lascar Electronics, Unit 1, Thomasin Road, Basildon,
Essex ( $0268 \mathbf{7 2 7 3 8 3}$ ). Price $£ 69.80$ (transducer extra)
metres, fathoms, inches etc. For the purpose of this design, the first three are used.

Those who know the ICM 7224 will, no doubt, realise that it is a $4 \frac{1}{2}$ digit counter, but here it is only being used to drive a $3 \frac{1}{2}$ digit display. This is because there is little point in measuring to an accuracy of 0.01 feet ( $\frac{1}{8}$ th of an inch) when the boat will be moving up and down substantially more than that, due to the movement of the water. A $3 \frac{1}{2}$ digit display is easier and cheaper to obtain with larger digits for the same glass size.

## "TOO SHALLOW" DETECTOR

As the current consumption is so low, there is no reason why the instrument should not be left on all the time, in which case the shallow water detector IC4c comes into its own. If there are three consecutive readings below a preset level (adjustable by altering resistor VR5 on the p.c.b.) an alarm sounds, so you can sleep in confidence that if the tide goes out, you will be woken up before it is too late! Three consecutive readings are required, as you might get an occasional low reading from a fish or piece of debris near the transducer. The output from IC4a is taken low when the transmitter fires and stays low until the flip-flop is reset by the returning signal. When the output first goes low, C26 discharges at a rate set by VR5. If the main flip-flop is reset before the voltage on C26 is below the CMOS threshold (approximately 4.5 V ) due to shallow water, then a negative go-
ing pulse on the output of IC4c partially discharges C27 This is normally being charged via R43. However, the circuit is arranged so that three consecutive 'low level' readings discharge C24 to the point where IC5c switches on TR12, activating the alarm. VR5 allows setting of any depth between 2-3 feet and 25 feet.

If the depth sounder is to be used on a boat with an engine, it is imperative that the engine is properly suppressed, otherwise it will produce interference, giving random depth indications.

## POWER SUPPLY

The instrument operates from a 9 V supply, from which is derived a 5 V supply for the logic circuitry. The 9 V supply can be from the internal PP7 battery, or external in the range 12 V to 30 V . The external input is regulated down to approximately 9 V by D16, TR1. D 15 and TR2 regulate the 9 V input down to 5 V . Diode D1 protects against reverse polarity connection of external supply.

The instrument can be powered from either a supply in the range 12 V to 30 V or an internal 9 V battery, but not both at the same time, because the 9 V battery may leak corrosive chemicals as a result of having charge pushed into it. If external supply is used, the internal 9 V battery should be removed
NEXT MONTH: Construction, Testing and Installation

## P.E. COMPUTER SPEECH PROJECT

See P.E. Nov. ' 80 and Dec. ' 80 for relevant articles.

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S2B (£69.50 + BOp PP + VAT) 64 words.
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(see P.E. review (April edition) \& P.E special offer May and June)

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See P.E. Dec. '79 and Jan ' 80 for full description of programmer, along with interface to COMPUKIT.



## THE NEXT DECADE

The Calendar for the next decade is a very full one. It is hoped that it will begin with the first trials of the Space Shuttle, Columbia. This issue of Spacewatch should be in your hands for the date set for the launch, which is the 17th of March 1981.
At the present time of writing Columbia is set up on its launch platform at the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida. The vehicle was powered up from the ground using ground based power. Engineers have since January 5th been making the final inspections and the exhaustive check of the systems.
On January 6th the prime team of astronauts, John Young and Robert Crippen together with the back-up crew practised the escape routines. The back-up team are Joe Engel and Richard Truly. There are complete safeguards for the crew from the moment of count-down. A quick exit is possible during the final hours of count-down if an emergency should arise.

The first orbital flight will last for 54 hours. During this flight the crew will test all the systems including the opening and the closing of the 59 feet long doors which cover the payload bay (where the spacecraft to be launched will be carried) and the space which is provided for other instruments.
The Shuttle with its boosters will be launched vertically and will later re enter the atmosphere to glide in an un-powered condition to the NASA Dryden Flight Research centre in Edwards. California. If an emergency should arise the crew can also land in Florida or at the White Sands Missile Base near Las Cruces, Mexico.

## PROSPECTS FOR THE NEXT DECADE

August 1981 will see the encounter with Saturn by Voyager 2. Plans are already being finalised for this event. The success or
otherwise is dependent on the state of the vehicle when it arrives in the area of Saturn, before going on to Uranus.
The Soviet Union have a planetary programme which will involve four Venus probes. Venera Nos. 13 and 14 will be launched in November this year with an encounter date in the spring of 1982. Two more Venera craft nos. 15 and 16 will be launched around June or July 1985

The missions will be "landers" and will very likely be similar to the Viking landers used by NASA on Mars. The two vehicles 13 and 14 witl land March/April 1982 to examine the surface of Venus and, no doubt will be making the details of the project available. The 1984 mission will be a joint mission with France. Venera 15 and 16 will carry two balloons and two landers. These balloons at present being developed will carry instruments for the study of the Venusian atmosphcre at a height of 56 km over a period of about six days. The landers will be carrying out observations from the surface at the same time. It is not known at present whether the vehicles themselves will orbit or flyby, but one will leave for an encounter with Halley's comet. This will be in 1986. This vehicle will be equipped with a specially developed camera supplied by the French.
The European Space Agency is preparing the Exosat which will be an additional satellite to cover the X -ray spectrum. At the moment this is the province of the Einstein satellite of NASA. An additional booster will be added to the Ariane launcher in order to get the required power to lift the Exosat to its eccentric orbit, taking it some 200.000 km above the North Pole. The vehicle is equipped to study the position, structure and spectra of the sources emitting X -rays in the energy range up to 1.5 keV . This satellite will operate as an observatory so that the groups of observers can share the time. The date set for the launch is November 1981.

A joint European/United States venture for the launching of an astronomical Satellite in August 1982 will go ahead, but at a higher cost due to certain technical problems. Its task is to study the infra-red wavelengths, which cannot be done satisfactorily from ground based telescopes, because of the carbon dioxide and water in the Earth's atmosphere. This satellite is the IRAS.

Another joint NASA/ESA venture will be the Space Telescope. This is due to be launched by the Space Shuttle in December 1983. The exact date of launch will of course depend on the progress and time table of the Shuttle programme. The telescope will have a primary mirror of 2.4 m diameter, and will carry a number of instruments for the task to be undertaken. The benefit of this telescope will be that it will be some 500 km above the atmosphere and will in consequence produce results of the order of 10 times greater than the largest of the earth based instruments.

In 1984, during March, the Galileo probe is due to be launched. This vehicle has also had a number of difficulties due to the financial troubles that have beset NASA. The plan is to send a probe deep into the atmosphere of Jupiter and an orbiter to go round the planet.

The orbiter would be sent ahead of the probe and will circle the the planet for 20 months make close observations of the conditions of the atmosphere. The probe will study the atmosphere down to a level where the pressure is more than 10 times that of the Earth. Both vehicles will encounter the planet in July 1987.

Still another joint mission is the International Solar Polar Mission. The object of this mission is to explore that part of the solar system away from the ecliptic. It will be the first time that any spacecraft explore that part of the solar system about which we know nothing. The orbit will be over the poles of the Sun. Two spacecraft will be despatched toward Jupiter and "flicked" round in the planet's gravitational field toward the Sun. They will be launched in such a way that they pass over each of the solar poles. that is, they will travel in opposite directions.

Their task is to study the high energy particles of the solar wind and study the solar magnetic field. This is a most important mission to which the European space agency has already allocated $£ 30$ million.

In 1986 the Venus Orbiting Imaging Radar mission will be launched from the Space Shuttle. The object, as its name implies, will be to obtain radar pictures of the surface of Venus. The system of imaging that has been successfully developed will enable distances down to 150 m to be resolved through the thick cloud cover. This vehicle will be dispatched in May or August depending on which trajectory is chosen. It will arrive at Venus in December of the same year.

Another special mission is that of Giotto. This is to be launched by an Ariane vehicle in July 1985 on a trajectory to intercept Halley's comet in March 1986. Attempts will be made to obtain imaging of the nucleus and measure the gas and dust of the coma. There is a great deal at stake in this mission, for an accurate knowledge of the composition of comets is very necessary to qualify present theories of cosmology.

The United States will carry out a plan to extend Gamma-Ray astronomy. The observatory will be launched in August 1985. The Shuttle will also be the vehicle for this mission. The observatory will examine, from an orbit $400-500 \mathrm{~km}$ above the Earth, the very short wavelengths below $10^{-13} \mathrm{~m}$. It is hoped that these observations will help to provide clues as to the nature of Pulsars, Quasars and Super nova.

To make a new map of the sky a special satellite. Hipparcos, is to be launched in 1986/1987. This was put back in favour of Giotto to ensure that at least one spacecraft was able to rendezvous with Halley's comet. Hipparcos' mission is an extremely important one for the same reasons that Giotto was important: further accurate knowledge of the universe.

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fall within the frequency range of the speech signal. At middle and high frequencies (say above 2 kHz ) the harmonics generated fall outside the speech signal frequency range and can be attenuated by means of a suitably designed filter.

The transfer characteristics for various degress of amplitude limiting are shown in Fig. 2. 'Hard-limiting' occurs very abruptly, there being no perceptible increase in the output signal amplitude beyond a certain input level. 'Softlimiting', as its name implies, is somewhat more gentle and the slope of the transfer characteristic is made to fall progressively as the input signal amplitude increases above


Fig. 1a Amplitude limiter block schematic


Fig. 1b Dynamic compressor block
a certain threshold level. 'Soft-limiting' offers some advantages over 'hard-limiting' as regards the generation of unwanted harmonics of the input signal. These are considerably reduced with the result that the output signal is less harsh and consequently more pleasant to listen to. Also, due to the reduction in harmonic content, less stringent requirements are imposed on the subsequent filter stage. Typical signal waveforms obtained with 'hard' and 'softlimiting' are shown in Fig. 3.

The degree of limiting employed depends largely upon the particular application. A change in output of, say, 3 dB for a change in input of 20 dB may be eminently suitable for voice communications over a noisy radio channel, however, for public address and tape recording of speech signals a somewhat less severe 6 dB change in output for a 12 dB change in input will be more suitable. An essential requirement, therefore, of a general purpose speech processor employing amplitude limiting techniques is that the degree of limiting should be adjustable over a wide range. In practice, and since the input signal level may vary from one source to another, this means that the signal level both preceeding and following the limiter stage must be made variable. By careful adjustment a wide range of limiting can be achieved and a variety of input and output signal levels can be catered for.

The block schematic of the speech processor is shown in Fig. 4. The first stage is an amplifier with a voltage gain which is adjustable from approximately 1 to 100 . The limiter stage which follows has a fixed voltage gain of 2 for small signals and this falls dramatically as the signal level increases. The active low pass filter has an upper cut-off frequency of approximately 4 kHz and significantly reduces the harmonic content of the output signal from the limiter. The final stage is another amplifier, the gain of which may be adjusted over the range of 0.05 to 4.5 .


Fig. 2 Transfer characteristics for various degrees of amplitude limiting


Fig. 3 Effect upon signal waveforms of the limiting characteristics depicted in Fig. 2


Fig. 4 Block schematic of the Speech Processor



Fig. 5 Circuit of Speech Processor


## CIRCUIT DESCRIPTION

IC1a operates as a conventional inverting voltage amplifier, the gain of which is controlled by the negative feedback resistor, VR1. The voltage at the non-inverting input is set by means of R1 and R2 at approximately half the supply voltage with C2 providing decoupling at signal frequencies. A similar arrangement is used for setting the non-inverting input on each subsequent stage. The active limiter is formed by IC1b, D1, D2 and associated components. Since D1 and D2 are silicon devices, a peak-peak voltage of approximately 1.2 V at pin 14 of IC1 will cause D1 and D2 to conduct on alternate half-cycles and this will, in turn, provide a low impedance shunt path across the feedback component, R8.

IC1c and associated entry circuit forms a low-pass Sallen and Key filter. This is a simple, yet effective, second order filter, and cut-off frequency being determined by R9, R 10 and C6, C7. The ratio of R9 to R10 and C6 to C7 being kept constant to provide fixed filter characteristics. The final stage, IC1d, is an inverting voltage amplifier, similar in configuration to IC1a. VR2 and R16 set the voltage gain of this stage, the values being chosen so that the stage can provide attenuation as well as amplification. S1a provides a direct signal path between input and output when S1b is in the 'off' position. A conventional LED and current limiting
resistor is used to provide visual indication that the processor is in use.

## CONSTRUCTION

The speech processor is built on a single sided p.c.b., the copper foil layout of which is shown in Fig. 6. The components are arranged on the top side of the p.c.b., as shown in Fig. 7.

It is recommended that IC1 be mounted in a low-profile 14-pin DIL socket and that, as far as possible only miniature components are used. The completed p.c.b. should be carefully checked and then mounted in a small plastic case using stand-off pillars. The layout of the input and output sockets, on/off switch and l.e.d. being entirely a matter for the individual constructor's preference. The connections to the p.c.b. together with associated wiring are shown in Fig. 8.

## INITIAL TESTS AND ADJUSTMENTS

Connect a suitable battery (PP3, PP6 or similar) and check the supply current. This should be in the region of 12 to 20 mA . Set VR1 and VR2 to mid-position and connect a microphone to SK1. The output signal should then be checked using an amplifier or tape recorder connected to


Fig. 8 Interior layout and wiring
SK2. The effect of varying the settings of VR1 and VR2 should be noted. If VR1 and VR2 fail to have any effect, or if the output signal is not obtained, the p.c.b. should again be carefully checked and, if this does not reveal any errors, d.c. voltages should be measured and reference made to the table of test voltages.

When experimenting initially with the speech processor it is recommended that VR1 and VR2 be set almost fully clockwise. This will produce similar input and output levels when using a low impedance dynamic microphone and limiting should occur when 'close-talking' into the microphone. Where an appreciable amount of gain is required, as would be the case when speaking at some distance from the microphone, the settings of both VR1 and

VR2 may be increased to around mid-position.
Note that this may have the undesirable side-effect of amplifying unwanted extraneous noises to such a level that their presence is annoying. The settings of VR1 and VR2 are best determined by experiment in conjunction with the actual microphone or signal source which is to be used. It is then a fairly easy matter to determine the optimum settings for any particular application.

## APPLICATIONS

## Radio transmitters/transceivers

The addition of a speech processor will enhance the performance of most transmitters and transceivers. The extra "talk-power" often making the difference between a signal which is readable and one which is lost in noise. Air tests under marginal conditions show an effective 3 to 4 dB increase over a signal without speech processing. The device is suitable for use with most types of transmitter and transceiver and, being merely inserted in the microphone connection, requires no internal modifications whatsoever. The processor may be switched in and out as required; a direct path from microphone to transceiver being provided in the latter case. Since processed speech tends to be somewhat less pleasant to the ear this facility is useful for restoring normal operation for local contacts; the speech processor being primarily intended for chasing DX! When used with mobile equipment the speech processor will allow


Fig. 9 Frequency response of the Speech Processor with C1 $=470 \mathrm{n}$ and 'rolled-off' at LF below 200 Hz with C1 $=100 \mathrm{n}$


Fig. 10 Transfer characteristic

## Test voltages

IC1 pin

| 14.5 V | 84.5 V |
| :--- | ---: |
| 24.5 V | 94.5 V |
| 34.5 V | 104.5 V |
| 49.0 V | 110 V |
| 54.5 V | 124.5 V |
| 64.5 V | 134.5 V |
| 74.5 V | 144.5 V |

All the above voltages were measured with a $10 \mathrm{~m} \Omega$ input d.c. voltmeter. The d.c. supply was 9V.

the operator to talk at some distance from the microphone thus permitting the use of a gooseneck or tie-clip microphone. This is much safer in use than the usual handheld microphone!

## Public address

The speech processor is particularly useful as a means of compensating for the variation in signal level which is often experienced when a fixed microphone (on either a floor or table stand) is employed. The processor then allows the speaker to vary his position relative to the microphone without appreciable loss of amplification.

## Tape recording

The speech processor may be used to replace the AGC system used on some cassette tape recorders when recording speech. There is no annoying 'recovery time' and the processor is useful in clarifying signals contaminated by noise as would be the case when recording from short wave receivers. The unit is also suitable for dictation, freeing the user from the need to hold the microphone and allowing him or her to talk at some distance from the recording machine.

And finally, although the processor is not generally suitable for music (the distortion introduced being quite noticeable) it may prove to be of some interest to those who wish to experiment with musical effects. The speech processor makes a very effective "fuzz-box" with VR1 and VR2 suitably adjusted!

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BEX-Southampton Nov. 4-5. Polygon Hotel. K
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## 27/28MHz CONVERTER (March '81)

The following coil winding details were omitted from Fig. 6: L1 3 turns 26 s.w.g. wound over L2.
L2 15 turns 30 s.w.g. close wound.
L3 \& L4 12 turns 30 s.w.g. close wound.
L5 18 turns 30 s.w.g. close wound.

* In Fig. 5, D5 Anode should be connected to C21 which is non elect. MICROBUS (Feb '81)
There was an error in one of the ZX80 programs. See Readout on page 64.


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# P.s.u. and controller design for mini-drills employing p.w.m. to vary the speed 

NEARLY everyone who regularly produces printed circuit boards at home will own a miniature drill of some sort. These drills normally require a power supply of 14 volts, capable of giving 2-3 amps. The supply will allow the drill to give a better performance if it is regulated, since the 14 volts will be maintained when the drill is under load. Also, if the drill is to be used for other purposes than drilling (which should always be done at the fastest possible speed) a variable speed power supply/controller is desirable. The most notable time when a slower speed is required is when using a burr bit to scratch out a p.c.b. track, at full speed the burr tends to skid or bite making the job very difficult. The design presented here is for a suitable power supply and controller, employing pulse width modulation to give the variable speed capability.

## PULSE WIDTH MODULATION

The easiest way to control the speed of a small d.c. motor (as are most drills) is to vary the power supply voltage. However, the torque developed by the motor falls off very quickly as the supply is reduced, making the slower speeds useless. This problem can be overcome by using a square wave drive with variable 'on' and 'off' time. (Fig. 1). When the 'on' time is a small percentage of the 'off' time the motor will obviously run more slowly since less energy is supplied, but since the motor is pulsed by a full power surge the torque remains fairly high. Obviously the speed is increased by increasing 'on' time. It is usual to keep the frequency of the system constant and vary the width of the 'on' pulse, hence the name of pulse width modulation.

## THECIRCUIT

The circuit is shown in Fig. 2. The power supply is fairly conventional, except that a great deal of decoupling is employed. This should not be omitted because the drill generates a lot of spikes which will cause faulty operation of the timing circuit. It is important that all the power supply components are rated to sufficient current.

## mini drill <br>  <br> CHRIS LARE



Fig. 1. Pulse width speed control

A 20 volt transformer was used in the prototype to give plenty of spare capacity. The output from this transformer is fed to C2 via a 6 amp bridge. Transistor TR1 and R1, D1 form a simple series regulator for the timing circuit. The voltage generated by this supply also determines the final output voltage and thus should be chosen to suit the drill concerned. A 15 volt Zener was used in the prototype, when reduced by three base/emitter drops the resultant 13.2 volt final drive is ideal for a 14 volt drill.

The timing is generated by two 555 timers in a double package (556). The first timer is connected as an astable, of 60 Hz frequency. However, the output from this is in the form of a short pulse, this being ensured by making R2 much greater than R3. The pulse output is used to trigger the second 555, which is connected in monostable mode. C8 and R4 act as a pulse differentiater which increases the noise immunity of the circuit.

The monostable period can be varied by VR2, between short and long periods. Since the maximum period required is just less than the frequency of the first 555 VR3 is included to allow this period to be accurately set; similarly VR1 sets the shortest time available-or the slowest speed. A footswitch facility is provided by using the reset of the monostable; this simply inhibits its operation.

The output from the monostable is fed to a Darlington pair, of which the 2N3055 should be mounted on a heatsink. The output from the 2 N 3055 is fed directly to the drill, although considerable decoupling in the form of C11, C12 and R 10 shouild be added.



Fig. 2. Circuit diagram

| Resistors |  | COMPONENTS |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| R1, 10 | 680R |  |  |
| R2 | 47k | Semiconductors |  |
| R3, 5.9 | 1 l |  |  |
| R4 $\mathrm{VR}_{1}$ | 10k 47 k miniature preset | D1 | 15 V 400 mW Zener BC184L |
| VR2 | 47 k potentiometer | TR2 | BFY51 |
| VR3 | 100 k miniature preset | TR3 | 2N3055 |
|  |  | IC1 | 556 |

## Capacitors

C1, 3, 5, 6, 9, $12 \quad 0.1 \mu$ Mullard C280

| C2 | $2200 \mu 63$ Volt electrolytic |
| :--- | :--- |
| C4 | $470 \mu 25$ Volt electrolytic |
| C7, 10 | $0.47 \mu$ Mullard C280 |
| C8 | 680 p polystyrene |
| C11 | $2.2 \mu$ Mullard C280 |
| C12 | 0.01 disc ceramic 750 V |

## Miscullaneous

REC1-6A bridge; T1-20V transformer 2.4A; double pole single throw illuminated switch: 1A fuse \& holder; 3A fuse \& holder (optional); 2 mono jack sockets; plugs; die cast aluminium box; p.c.b.; footswitch (Watford PB12); insulation kit for 2 N3055; cover for 2 N3055; nuts, bolts etc.; sticky feet; mains supply neon (optional).

## CONSTRUCTION

The physical construction is not critical, but the wiring diagram should be closely adhered to so as to avoid noise problems.

The prototype circuit was built on a printed circuit board, produced with an etch-resist pen. Veroboard is not recommended due to the possible noise problems. The circuit board, together with the other parts was housed on a large die-cast aluminium box, chosen for its good heatsink properties. The 2 N3055 transistor was mounted on the box part and fitted with a cover to prevent accidents with wandering screwdrivers. A double pole illuminated switch for the mains supply and the speed control were mounted on the lid of the box.

Standard quarter inch jack sockets were used to connect the drill and footswitch. Note that the footswitch should have closed contacts when released. Most footswitches are connected the other way round, but the one used in the prototype had a standard changeover micro switch inside,



Fig. 4. Interwiring detail
and it was a simple matter to alter the connections. The main capacitor and bridge were mounted on the bottom of the box, and the output decoupling components were mounted directly on the output jack socket.

Four stick on plastic feet completed the unit.

## TESTING

If an alternative current limited supply is available it is a good idea to test the board with that, since a major failure will almost certainly destroy TR1 and probably D1 as well. Set the supply for about 17 volts. After re-checking the wiring switch on. Check the regulator works. Check that a pulse output is present on pin 5, and also on pin 9 . Set both presets to half travel and connect a drill up and it should run. Increase the speed control to full, and the drill should speed up. If it starts to run roughly, and slows down, do not
worry-it is simply the monostable over running. Adjust VR3 with the speed control at maximum until the motor runs at its fastest. Turn the speed control to minimum and adjust VR1 until a suitable speed is obtained, then re-adjust VR3 with the speed control at maximum.

## IN USE

All drilling should be performed with the speed control at maximum. Slow drilling will wear the drill bits out more quickly, as well as taking longer. For other uses, burring, polishing, etc. the best advice is trial and error, but around half speed seems to be the best.

The footswitch is a definite improvement. It is particularly useful if the drill stalls because the drive can be released quickly, and when drilling over a centre point because the drill can be positioned and then started.

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# Semiconductor UPDATITEm FEATURING icm 7242 L290, 1 \& 2 4118, 4801 \& 4802 R. W. Coles 

## DIGITAL 555

Probably the most universally useful and successful integrated circuit ever made is the ubiquitous 555 timer. You find them in the most unlikely places, often doing unlikely jobs which the manufacturers never dreamed of when they introduced the design back in the early 'seventies. First came useful dual and quad versions in 14 and 16 pin packages, and more recently came the CMOS versions, all helping to expand the area of application, but never really eclipsing the original design with its cheap, simple and robust reputation. All of the "improved" 555 devices have been covered in this column over the years, and this month I am able to report on yet another device intended to replace 555 s in certain timing applications.

One area where all previous 555 circuits have run out of steam has been in the construction of simple timers capable of long delay periods of seconds or even minutes duration. The trouble is that the 555 relies on a single CR period to set time duration, and this means going to large electrolytic capacitors when long time-outs are needed. The use of electrolytic capacitors brings the usual bogies of poor tolerance, high leakage, and temperature sensitivity, and for critical applications the solution has been to run the 555 as a higher frequency astable and follow it with a multi stage binary counter such as the CMOS 4040.

To make the job of constructing long duration timers and low frequency oscillators easier, Intersil have introduced the ICM 7242 which puts the oscillator and the counter all in one 555 -like 8 pin package. A single external resistor and capacitor set the basic oscillator frequency, and the oscillator output is fed to the internal 8 stage binary divider chain whose final stage therefore gives an output frequency $1 / 256$ th that of the oscillator. Also in the package is a control flip-flop which is set by a TRIGGER input, and starts the count sequence, and reset by a RESET input which stops the count and zeroes the counter chain. With the

RESET line disconnected the 7242 can be used as an LF oscillator, with the RESET line connected to the final count stage output the 7242 works like a monostable or timer.

For additional flexibility the basic RC oscillator output is brought out, as is the first stage of the count chain which gives a symmetrical square wave at half the oscillator frequency. This is a very useful device for those occasional long time/low frequency applications, but it won't replace the 555, take my word for it!

## ROBOT MUSCLE

Robots, like people, need muscles to enable them to move their "arms". Animal muscles can be precisely controlled, are efficient, and are very complex. The poor old robot, on the other hand, has to rely on electric motors, gears, and drive belts, not to mention feedback pots, servo amplifiers, and power supplies.

Really useful muscle analogues seem as far away as ever, but perhaps a new chip set from SGS-ATES can at least help to streamline existing d.c. servomotor "muscle" technology to make it more efficient and compact. With the addition of a d.c. motor and an optical position encoder, and under the control of a microprocessor, the L290, L291 and L292 trio make up a compact and powerful servo system for position control in robots or any other industrial machine. The L290 comes in a 16 pin plastic d.i.p. and contains the circuitry to interface the optical position encoder to the microprocessor by means of derived position and velocity signals. This chip also provides a compensated reference for the L291, which accepts parallel binary data from the microprocessor and converts this into an analogue servo demand signal using a $D$ to $A$ converter. This chip also contains a position amplifier, mode/direction switches, and is housed in another 16 pin d.i.p. The L292 is the motor driver, able to handle up to 2 amps at 36 volts using an overload protected bridge circuit. The L292 operates in the "switched" mode, and in keeping with the application, it is housed in a 15

## ead Multiwatt power package

When interconnected, the servo components operate in two modes. In order to slew rapidly to a new demanded position the servo loop can initially employ velocity control only, but as the target position is approached, a change to precise position control is made.

## PUTTING THE BYTE ON

If you are shovelling together a new microprocessor system and can't make up your mind what to do about memory, it's probably time you had a look at the "Bytewyde" concept championed by Mostek.

Bytewyde is not a reference to a single memory device, but is the name given to a whole family of devices, including some you will already be very familiar with, like the 2716 EPROM. What makes the concept special is the plug-in interchangeability of ROM and RAM memory devices in the same socket by utilising the pin configuration made standard by 24 pin UV erasable EPROMs and compatible masked ROMs. To launch the concept, Mostek introduced the 4118 , a $1 \mathrm{~K} \times 8$ static RAM in a 24 pin package which would have been a useful hunk of memory even without EPROM compatibility! Things didn't stop there however, and now there are bigger chips and several new manufacturers joining in. Mostek have introduced another $1 \mathrm{~K} \times 8$, the 4801 which is faster than the 4118 , and are now offering the 4802 which is faster and has a $2 \mathrm{~K} \times 8$ capacity to boot. The Mostek chips are all NMOS, but in the land of the rising sun they are turning out CMOS memories in the Bytewyde mould, such as the MSM 2128-1 from OKI Semiconductor, another $2 \mathrm{~K} \times 8$ device.

If you adopt Bytewyde, you can lay your boards out with standard 24 pin sockets and then by changing links to just two of the pins, you can plug in your choice of $1 \mathrm{~K} \times 8,2 \mathrm{~K} \times 8$ or $4 \mathrm{~K} \times$ 8 EPROMs, or $1 \mathrm{~K} \times 8$ or $2 \mathrm{~K} \times 8$ RAMs. If you use 28 pin sockets instead, you will be ready for all of the above plus the new generation of $8 \mathrm{~K} \times$ 8 EPROMs and those giant RAM chips which are just around the corner!


Appearing every two months, Micro-Bus presents ideas, applications, and programs for the most popular microprocessors; ones that you are unlikely to find in the manufacturers' data. The most original ideas often come from readers working on their own systems; payment will be made for any contribution featured.

THIS month's Micro-Bus presents an automatic program loader for the ZX 80 , and a three-dimensional plotting program for the Acorn ATOM. But first here are three ingenious programs for the ZX80 devised by Lars Silen of Finland. They provide ways of concatenating strings. transferring the last character from one string to another, and reading from the ZX 80 's keyboard.

## CONCATENATING STRINGS

The ZX80 has no built-in function for concatenating two strings: so you cannot, for example, add the two strings $A 8=$ "STUV" and $B \$=" W X Y Z "$ by writing $A \$=A 8+B \$$ as you can on some BASICs. The routine shown in Fig. I overcomes this limitation by providing a way of concatenating any two different string variables, and it is called as follows:
LET A $8=A 8$
LET B\$=B\$
GO SUB 1000
With the examples given above $\mathrm{A} \$$ would end up with the value "STUVWXYZ" and B\$ would have the value "" (the null string). The references to $\mathrm{A} \$$ and $\mathrm{B} \$$ in the two seemingly redundant LET statements may be changed to any two different string variables that are to be concatenated. Note that no variables should be used between these two LET statements and the subroutine call, as this may cause the interpreter to hang up.

1000 REM STRING ADDER
1010 LET AD=PEEK $(16394)+256 * \operatorname{PEEK}$
(16395)-3

1020 LET AD=AD-1
1030 IF NOT PEEK (AD) $=1$ THEN GO T - 1020

1035 LET TP=PEEK (AD+1)
1040 POKE AD, 0
1050 POKE AD, PEEK (AD+2)
1060 LET AD=AD+1
1070 IF NOT PEEK (AD+2) $=1$ THEN GO TO 1050
1080 POKE AD+1,TP
1090 POKE AD,l
1100 RETURN
Fig. 1. Program to concatenate two strings on the $\mathbf{2 X 8 0}$

## PROGRAM OPERATION

The program depends, for its operation, on the way strings are assigned in the ZX 80 ; when a string variable is assigned to, the old version is deleted and a new version is created at the end of the list of variables. The two LET statements above have the effect of moving the
strings AS and BS to the end of the list of variables, so that they are positioned in memory as shown in Fig. 2 (a).
(a)


E6523]
Fig. 2. Diagram showing two strings (a) before and (b) after running the String Adder program of Fig. 1

Locations 16394 and 16395 contain the address of the top of the list of variables: the program reads backwards from this address, through string B\$. until the terminating byte ' 1 ' is found at the end of $A \$$ (lines 1020 to 1030). Then the characters of $\mathrm{B} \$$ are shuffled down onto the end of A\$ (lines 1050 to 1070), and finally $\mathrm{B} \$$ is recreated as a null string (lines 1080 to 1090 ). The result is shown in Fig. 2 (b).

## TR\$ FOR THE ZX80

The following routine is very much like the ZX80's TL\$ function, but instead of cutting off the leftmost character from a string, it cuts off the rightmost character; it could therefore be called TR\$. The routine is shown in Fig. 3, and uses much the same technique as the program to concatenate strings. Again, the routine is called by executing:

## LET A8=A8

LET B\$=B\$
GO SUB 1000
The effect is to cut off the last character from AS and add it as the first character of B\$. Thus if initially $A S=$ 'STUV" and $B S=" W X Y Z "$ the result would be $\mathrm{A} \$=" S T U "$ and $\mathrm{B} \$=$ "VWXYZ". B\$ may initially be a null string.

```
1000 REM TR$
1010 LET AD=PEEK(16394)+256*PEEK
(16395)-3
1030 LET AD=AD-1
1040 IF NOT PEEK(AD)=1 THEN GO T
O 1030
1050 POKE AD,PEEK(AD+1)
1060 POKE AD+1, PEEK (AD-1)
1070 POKE AD-1,1
1080 RETURN
```

Fig. 3. Program for the $\mathbf{Z \times 8 0}$ moves the last character from one string to another

## ZX80 KEYBOARD ROUTINE

One shortcoming of the ZX80 is that the keyboard and display are effectively dead during execution of a program. However, with the help of the following simple machine-code routine it is relatively easy to read keys at any desired time:
IN A. 0 : read port 0 into accumulator
LD L.A : save result in LSB of HL
LD H. 0 : zero MSB of HL
RET : return to BASIC. result in HL
Since there is always a risk that a machinecode routine located in the ZX 80 's RAM will be overwritten by the display file, the routine is written into a string which must not therefore be used elsewhere in the program. The program of Fig. 4 sets up the machine-code routine, and is called using the USR function:

## LET $\mathrm{K}=\mathrm{USR}(\mathrm{O})$

where $K$ is given the value of the key pressed. Note that this function, and lines 20 to 90 in the program, refer to the variable "O", not the digit zero.

10 REM READER
20 LET O\$="XXXXXX"
30 LET $0=\operatorname{PEEK}(16392)+256 * \operatorname{PEEK}($
$163931+1$
40 POKE O, 219
50 POKE O+1,0
60 POKE $0+2,111$
70 POKE $O+3,38$
80 POKE $0+4,0$
90 POKE O+5, 201
Fig. 4. Program sets up a machine-code routine to read the $\mathbf{2 X 8 0}$ 's keyboard

## AUTOMATIC PROGRAM LOADER

It is often convenient to record a large number of seldom-used programs onto one cassette, but then it can be a lengthy business retrieving the particular one you want. The following system automatically searches a tape for the correct program, hy skipping the correct number of earlier programs on the tape. It was developed by Trevor Toms of Phipps Associates, for use with the cassettes of programs that accompany their excellent "ZX80 Pocket Book", and they have kindly given permission for it to be included in Micro-Bus.

The automatic loading is performed by a header program, stored at the beginning of
each tape. This is loaded first, and it prints out a list of all the other programs on that tape. All you need to do is type the number of the program you want, and the header program will locate it and load it.

## MACHINE-CODE ROUTINE

The first stage in writing the header program is to create a machine-code routine that will skip past a program on the tape. This is best done using a BASIC program, as in Fig. 5. First, line 2 reserves 100 bytes for the machine-code by dimensioning an array $C$, and the address of this array is calculated and stored in the variable $C$ (line 10 ). To avoid having to write the entire cassette routine from scratch, the ZX80's LOAD subroutine is copied out of the relevant part of the monitor ROM in lines 30 to 70, and then "patched" to do the required task by modifying certain bytes. The patches are as follows:

Lines 110 to 230 converts the routine into a subroutine, rather than part of the main command-entry loop, and make it read program bytes from tape until a byte containing 128 (or 80 in hex) is detected. This byte denotes the end of the program and program variables. Lines 240 to 260 make the routine ignore the system variables, which are stored as 40 bytes before the program text and program variables. Finally, the routine is patched so that if the BREAK key is pressed the USR function will return a value of -1 (lines 330 to 390 ). Any other value returned indicates that a program has been successfully skipped over.


Fig. 5. Program to set up a machinecode routine to skip a program on tape

Having typed in the program of Fig. 5, and saved it on tape in case it crashes, run it to create the machine code in array C. Now delete every line in the program, being extremely careful to avoid pressing RUN or CLEAR which would destroy the contents of array C. Now type in the header program of Fig. 6: this contains, in lines 100 to 200, a list of the programs to be saved on the tape, and these lines should obviously be altered to suit the programs to be stored. Line 20 calculates the address of the skip subroutine created earlier, which still exists in memory although there is no longer any reference to it. The subroutine is called by the function $\operatorname{USR}(\mathrm{C}+14)$.

```
        1 REM *** "GOTO 1" ***
        2 REM *** DO NOT "RUN" ***
    10 LET MAXPROGS=3
    20 LET C=PEEK(16392)+PEEK(1639
3)* 256+2
    30 PRINT "PROGRAM SELECTION:"
    4 0 ~ P R I N T
    100 PRINT "1. MASTERMIND",,"lK"
    100 PRINT "2. HANGMAN",,"1K"
120 PRINT "3. HUNT THE WUMPUS",
" 3K"
    200 PRINT
    210 PRINT "REWIND TAPE, ENTER S
ELECTION"
    220 PRINT "PRESS PLAY/NEWLINE T
OGETHER"
    300 INPUT N
    310 IF N<1 OR N>MAXPROGS THEN G
OTO 1
    320 IF N=0 THEN LOAD
    330 IF USR(C+14)=-1 THEN GO TO
400
    340 LET N=N-1
    350 FOR Y=1 TO 400
    360 NEXT Y
    370 REM SMALL SETTLE LOOP 4 SEC
S
    380 GO TO 320
    400 PRINT "BREAK..."
9999 STOP
```

Fig. 6. Header program for the $\mathbf{Z X 8 0}$ loads a specified file from a tape

Having entered the header program, save it at the start of the tape, and you are then ready to fill up the tape with programs you wished to archive. Note that about 10 seconds of blank should be allowed after recording the header program, so that it can be updated and rerecorded if more programs are added to the end of the tape at a later stage.

## USING THE PROGRAM

In use, the header program is first loaded from the start of the cassette, and executed using "GOTO 1" since RUN would destroy array $C$ containing the machine-code routine. Having selected a program from the menu, and entered its number, the tape is rewound and played again, while typing NEWLINE. The automatic loader will then skip the header program. and all the intermediate programs. finally loading the program that was chosen.

## 3-D PLOTTING

The simple program in Fig. 7 plots a threedimensional curve using high-resolution graphics. It is designed for an Acorn Atom
with a floating-point extension. The program avoids plotting lines that would be hidden by the perspective from which the curve is being viewed; see Fig. 8.

The program uses a mixture of integer and floating-point variables; the floating-point variables are prefixed by a "\%" sign, and are

```
        5 REM 3-D PLOT
10 CLEAR4
20 A=128;B=A*A;C=96;D=96
30 FOR X=0 TO A
40 S=X*X
50 % P P=SQR(B-S)
60% I = -% P
6 5 \text { DO}
70 % R=SQR(S+%I * % I)/A
80 %Q=(%R-1)*SIN(24*%R)
90 &Y =% I/ 3+8Q*D
95 FIF %I=-%P %M=%Y;GOTOb
100 FIF %Y>&M %M=%Y;GOTOA
105 FIF &Y>=8N GOTOC
110b%N=%Y
115a%Y=C+%Y
120 PLOT13,(A-X),&Y
130 PLOT13,(A+X),%Y
135c%I =8 I +4
140 FUNTIL &I }>=%
145 NEXT X
150 END
```

Fig. 7. Three-dimensional plotting program for Atom BASIC with floating-point


Fig. 8. High-resolution graphics curve produced by 3-D Plot program
totally separate from the normal integer variables. A second version of the IF statement. FIF. is provided for floating-point comparisons: similarly the integer DO . . . UNTIL loop, which gives repeated execution of a section of statements until the condition in the UNTIL statement is satisfied, has as its counterpart the floating-point DO . . FUNTIL toop. The lower-case letters are labels. used by the GOTO statements instead of line numbers.

The graphics command 'CLEAR 4' sets up the display for $256 \times 192$ points, and the statement ${ }^{\circ}$ PLOT 13.X.Y' plots a point at coordinates $\mathrm{X} . \mathrm{Y}$. Hidden-line removal is performed by keeping a record of the highest point plotted. in \%M, and the lowest point plotted. in $\% \mathrm{~N}$ : only points greater than $\% \mathrm{M}$ and less than $\% \mathrm{~N}$ are plotted. Line 90 determines the perspective at which the curve is viewed. The function for evaluation is given in line 80 , as the height $\% \mathrm{Q}$ in terms of the radius $\% \mathrm{R}$, and this line can be changed to give plots of other functions.


THIS Ultrasonic Intruder Alarm is an updated version of the design published in PE December 1979. Modifications to the original circuit include the use of a sensitivity control which will also preset the detection range and a steady alarm output. The complete unit has been redesigned to fit onto a single p.c.b.

CIRCUIT DESCRIPTION
The complete circuit diagram of the Intruder Alarm is shown in Fig. 1. The 555 timer (IC2) is connected as a 40 kHz square wave generator which can be fine tuned by VR1. The square wave output is filtered by R22 and C16 before being used to drive the ultrasonic transmitter $\times 1$. The 40 kHz signal sets up a sound pattern in the protected room and if an object moves within the field a frequency shift occurs (due to the Doppler effect) to the waves which are reflected from the moving object. The transducer X 2 will receive two different frequencies $(40 \mathrm{kHz}$ and the shifted frequency which can be higher or lower than 40 kHz ); these will combine to produce a beat note. The frequency of this audio or subaudio beat note will be the difference between the two ultrasonic frequencies. This beat frequency is then amplified filtered and used to operate the alarm. The received sound from $\times 1$ feeds the 40 kHz amplifier IC3 the gain being determined by VR2, R6 and C6. VR2 adjusts the voltage gain from 1 to $\times 100$.

The output of this stage is fed to the envelope detector to remove the 40 kHz signal and detect the Doppler frequencies from the received signal. IC4 forms a Doppler frequency amplifier the gain being set by R10, R9, and C8 this increases the signal sufficiently to drive the diode pump detector C9, D7, D8, C10 and R11 to convert the Doppler frequency into a d.c. level.

This d.c. level feeds the unit 'on' and 'movement' indicator formed by IC5, D9 and R12. The diode D9 glows when the unit is on and increases in brightness as a movement is detected, the brightness being dependent upon the voltage at the output of IC5 which causes current to flow though D9 and R12. The diode D9 also acts as a 1.2 V level shifter for better matching to the next stage.

The d.c. level from IC5 is filtered by R13 and C11 (to form
a 1 second invalid movement delay to prevent false triggering) before feeding IC6a and $b$ whiclf form a bistable reset at switch on by C12, D11 and R19 (D10 forms a discharge path at switch off for C12). When the bistable is triggered by pin 13 going high the output of pin 10 goes high charging C13 via R14. When the voltage across C13 reaches the upper threshold of the Schmitt trigger formed by IC6c and d, R15 and R16 the output of pin 4 goes high driving TR1 via resistor chain R17 and R18, the collector of TR 1 drives RLA and D12. Resistor R21 and C15 provide sufficient current to energise the relay with a low holding current to minimise the power taken by the relay. When pin 4 is high C12 is discharged by R19 and R20 causing the voltage at pin 9 to rise, which resets the bistable causing pin 10 to go low discharg-

FEATURES
(1) Screw connections for 240 V a.c. supply and remote alarm sounder.
(2) 18 V battery back up option in case of mains failure. Ni-cads can provide up to 5 hours of protection.
(3) Internally preset detection range (normally preset to 15 feet with built and tested alarms)
(4) Half second system test at switch on-acts as an alarm on reminder for the user
(5) Twenty seconds delay at switch on-to allow the building to be left without sounding the alarm.
(6) Twenty second delay on entry-to allow the alarm to be cancelled without sounding.
(7) One second invalid movement delay-to prevent false alarms by plants etc.
(8) Two minute self cancelling alarm-to provide repeated protection whilst away for long periods.

The alarm is most sensitive to moving objects in front of the unit and towards the unit. A red lamp glows on the front of the unit when power is connected and increases in brightness as movement is detected.


Fig. 1. Complete circuit diagram of the Intruder Alarm

## COMPONENTS . . .

Resistors

| R1, R18 | 2k2 (2 off) |
| :---: | :---: |
| R2 | 12k |
| R3 | 47k |
| R4, R5 | 220k (2 off) |
| R6, R12 | 1 k (2 off) |
| R7 | 4 k 7 |
| R8 | 100k |
| R9, R22 | 100 (2 off) |
| R10 | 470k |
| R11, R16, R20 | 4 M 7 (3 off) |
| R13, R17 | 22k (2 off) |
| R14, R15, R19 | 1 M (3 off) |
| R21 | 680 |

Potentiometers

| VR1 | $4 k 7 \mathrm{~min}$. hor. |
| :--- | :--- |
| VR2 | 100 kmin hor |

Capacitors
C1
C2, C15
C3
$470 \mu 25 \mathrm{~V}$ elect.
$220 \mu 16 \mathrm{~V}$ elect. ( 2 off)
1 n polyester

C4, C16
C5, C8, C11, C12, C13,
C17
C6, C7, C9, C10, C14 $\quad 100 \mathrm{n}$ polyester (5 off)
Semiconductors

| D1-D4 | 1N4001 (4 off) |
| :--- | :--- |
| D5 | 1N4002 |
| D6, D7, D8, D10, D11. | 1N4148 (6 off) |
| D12 |  |
| D9 | Red I.e.d. |
| TR1 | BC547 |
| IC1 | $78 L 12$ |
| IC2 | NE555 |
| IC3 | CA3140E |
| IC4, IC5 | 741 12 off) |
| IC6 | 4001 |

Miscellaneous
$T 1$
$\times 1$
$\times 1$
$\times 2$
20 mm grommets (2 off) 9 mm grommets ( 2 off)
ABS box $115 \times 95 \times 45 \mathrm{~mm}$
Relay Omron LC1N-E
Piezo sounder ITT 250 RHA, p.c.b
3 -way terminal block p.c.b. type (2 off)


Fig. 2. P.c.b. design


Fig. 4. Gircuit for ni-cad conversion


Internal view of the alarm


Fig. 3. Component layout

## CONSTRUCTION

The p.c.b. design for the alarm unit is shown in Fig. 2 with the component layout shown in Fig. 3. After all the components have been soldered onto the p.c.b. and checked then the case can be drilled. On the prototype the two transducers were fitted into 20 mm grommets. The front panel should also be drilled for the movement detector l.e.d. Grommets should also be fitted to the two holes at the rear of the case used for the mains lead and relay connections.

With the transducers fitted into the case and the p.c.b. mounted, then C16 and the other end of R22 should be soldered onto the ultrasonic transducer X 1 .

## SETTING UP

Point the alarm into the room. Turn VR2 fully clockwise and measure the voltage at IC4 pin 3 which should be at around 5.5 V d.c. Adjust VR1 until the maximum voltage is obtained, reduce this setting of VR2 for the required sensing range. It is always best to use the minimum range required to reduce the possibility of a false alarm.

## INSTALLATION

The alarm is prone to both vibration and air currents therefore the points below should be observed to avoid false triggering of the alarm.
(1) Do not place the alarm on a vibrating surface.
(2) Close all doors and windows.
(3) Do not point the alarm at a radiator or convector heater.
(4) Cats, dogs and large insects should be considered.
(5) If more than one alarm is to be used ensure that the ultrasonic sound emitted by one alarm does not interact with the second alarm.
(6) Try to install away from telephones as some bells can produce high frequency sound similar to that of the alarm

SG402 A.M. Signal Generator - 100 KHz to 30 MHz in 6 bands -100 mV of O/P with variable attenuator - Int and Ex. A. M - Solid State - Lightweight and portable - Large clear easy to read frequency dial.


FG270, Function Generator -0.1 Hz to 1 MHz in 6 ranges sine, square and triangle -20 V p-p open circuit output $-<1 \%$ distortion - D.C. offset - TLL OP - Ext VCO for sweep tests FG271 as above plus 0.02 Hz to 2 MHz in 7 ranges - int. sweep -

Pulse, Tone Burst and A M


AG202A 200 KHz R.C. Oscillator - 20 Hz to 200 KHz in 4 ranges Sine and Squarewave - Flat OIP to 10 V r.m.s. from 600 ohms $<0.5 \%$ distortion - $>60 \mathrm{~dB}$ of variable OIP atten - Ext Sync. Large easy to read single dial with smooth precise tuning control Instant stable signals - Solid State


CO1303D, DC to 5 MHz Oscilloscope - 10 mV Vidiv sensitivity with variable atten - Int. variable sweep frequency in 4 ranges from 10 Hz to 100 KHz - Int. and Ext. sync. - Direct deflection terminals can monitor R. F. up to 450 MHz CO1303G as above, plus $1: 8$ to 54 MHz monitor freq. range from 1 to 500 W direct coupling - Two Tone gen

1 KHz and 1575 KHz - ideal for SSB. A M. CW etc.


CS1562A Dual Trace 10MHz Oscilloscope - 10 mV to $20 \mathrm{~V} / \mathrm{div}$ sensitivity in $1-2-5$ sequence with fine control - $1 \mu \mathrm{~s}$ to $05 \mathrm{~s} / \mathrm{div}$ sweep tume plus X5 Mag. - Auto, Manual and TV triggering $Z$ mod and $X-Y$ operation. A single trace version CS1559A is avallable at even lower cost
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DAL 9622

# Interfacing COMPUKIT <br> <br> Part 4 D.E.Graham 

 <br> <br> Part 4 D.E.Graham}

THIS MONTH we introduce a second companion board to the Decoding Module, and examine the implementation of analogue output from the Compukit.

## ANALOGUE, TIMING AND AUDIO BOARD

This is a double sided p.c.b. of the same dimensions as the Decoding Module, which connects directly to it via a single edge connector to provide the Compukit with a range of facilities. The board is powered by the Decoding Module's dual 5 volt power supply, and, as may be seen from Fig. 4.1, contains four separate sections: A D/A converter and operational amplifier taken out to SK7; an 8 channel A/D converter accessed through SK6; an AY-3-8910 Programmable Sound Generator and audio amplifier whose output is taken to a number of pads at the edge of the board, and whose two 8 bit ports are accessed through SK2 and 3; and a 6522 Versatile Interface Adaptor providing a number of counting and timing facilities, as well as a further 16 bits of parallel port. Connections to the 6522 are made via SK 4 and 5. Sockets SK2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 are all of the 16 -pin d.i.I. variety.

### 4.1. Block diagram of Analogue Board

## CONSTRUCTION

This should prove to be fairly straightforward. It is probably easiest to solder in i.c. sockets first, followed by discrete components, and finally the through-pins (as indicated on the component overlay in Fig. 4.4). Before inserting the i.c.s, test that the correct supply voltage appears at the appropriate pins of all i.c. sockets. The Analogue Board connects to the Decoding Module via a $2 \times 25$-pin 0.1 inch edge connector SK1. This is wired to SK6 on the Decoding Module as shown in Table 4.1. This wiring should be kept to a few inches in length. Precautions against static damage must be exercised when dealing with i.c.s 1, 2, 6, 8 and 10 since these devices may be easily damaged by static charges.

We will cover the testing of the four parts of the board in the particular sections dealing with each functional unit. Details of the PSG 6522 and $A / D$ converter will be given in forthcoming issues. Now we deal with D/A conversion.

## D/A TECHNIQUES

In its simplest form a D/A converter may consist of a chain of resistors joined to a parallel output port. Fig. 4.5 shows a 4 bit D/A converter that could be connected directly to the

POWER SUPPLY 2 RESET, R/W, DATA BUS, ADDRESS BUS \& ADDRESS DECODING FROM DECODING MODULE (SK6)

EP509

outputs of a 7475 quad latch. The output voltage would range from a fraction of a volt for zero data to about 4 volts for the decimal value 15 . The resistors would need to be one per cent tolerance types to avoid abrupt changes in voltage occurring when different sections of the chain are brought into play, as in the major transition which occurs from 7 to 8 for example.

The configuration could be doubled up to produce an 8 bit converter, but resistor tolerances would become more
critical. Also, if a PIA port was to be used with such a converter, higher value resistors would be required because of the relatively low drive capability of its output. This would further necessitate the use of a d.c. amplifier to produce a usable analogue output.

## ZN425 MONOLITHIC CONVERTER

It is of course possible to get around these problems, and particularly the problem of conversion accuracy, by using a

4.2. P.c.b. for Analogue Board (actual size)

Table 4.1 Connections Between SK1 of Analogue board and SK6 of Decoding Module.

| SK1 pin number | Upper |  | Lower |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | SK6 pin number (upper) | Function | SK6 pin number (lower) | Function |
| 1 | 1 | Vgg(-5V) | 1 | RESET |
| 2 | 2 | $\emptyset 2$ | 2 | W7 |
| 3 | 3 | 1 RQ | 3 | W8 |
| 4 | 4 | BC1 | 4 | R7 |
| 5 | 5 | BDIR | - | NC |
| 6 | - | NC | - | NC |
| 7 | - | NC | 7 | R/W |
| 8 | - | NC | 8 | GND |
| 9 | - | NC | 9 | GND |
| 10 | - | NC | 10 | D7 |
| 11 | 11 | W7 | 11 | D6 |
| 12 | - | NC | 12 | D5 |
| 13 | 13 | A3 | 13 | D4 |
| 14 | 14 | A2 | 14 | D0 |
| 15 | 15 | A1 | 15 | D1 |
| 16 | 16 | AO | 16 | D2 |
| 17 | 17 | GND | 17 | D3 |
| 18 | 18 | GND | 18 | Vcc |
| 19 | 19 | GND | 19 | Vcc |
| 20 | - | NC | 20 | GND |
| 21 | - | NC | 21 | GND |
| 22 | - | NC | 22 | GND |
| 23 | - | NC | - | NC |
| 24 | - | NC | - | NC |
| 25 | 25 | NMI | 25 | BL2 |

monolithic D/A converter i.c. From the variety of such devices on the market we have chosen to use the Ferranti ZN425 for a number of reasons. In particular it is readily available at a reasonable price, and operates from a 5 volt supply.

Fig. 4.6 gives a block diagram of the sections of the 425 used in D/A conversion. Essentially it consists of 8 data switches which are activated by an external port or latches. These switch a precision R-2R network to an on-chip 2.5 volt reference source to produce an analogue output on pin 14. This is typically 2.555 volts for all bits on, and 3 mV for all bits off.

## PRACTICAL D/A CIRCUIT

Fig. 4.7 gives the full circuit of the $D / A$ section of the Analogue Board. This consists of a pair of 74LS75s wired to form an 8 bit data latch. The latch enables are taken to the W line on the Decoding Module, which corresponds to an address of 61320. The 8 parallel outputs of the latch are connected directly to the ZN425, which performs the conversion of the latched data within $1 \mu \mathrm{sec}$. The analogue output (DA) appears at pin 14 of the 425 , and is fed to the noninverting input of IC11, a 741 operational amplifier. Both DA, and the output of the op. amp. (DAA) are taken out to SK7, which also carries both polarity supply connections and ground.

The op. amp. circuit has two associated variable resistors. VR1 is used for zeroing, and has been given an extended offset capability, and VR2, which controls the gain between about 1 and 2.

To test the converter, connect a voltmeter between pin 14 of SK7 and earth (pins 1,5 or 6 of SK7). Execute the command POKE 61320, 0, and adjust VR1 to give zero volts on the meter. Now execute POKE 61320, 255. This should cause the meter to read somewhere between 2.5 and 4 volts, depending on the setting of VR2. The system is now operational, and POKEing intermediate values to 61320 should yield intermediate voltage readings with a linear correspondence (providing the gain has not been set too high).

If the voltage does not vary with differing data, a voltage check should be made on the DA output of the converter (pin 14 of IC6, or pin 16 of SK7). If this does not alter when data is POKEd to 61320, then checks should be made on the outputs of the two latches IC4 and 5. These should also change when different values are POKEd to 61320.

## APPLICATIONS OF THE D/A CONVERTER

The DAA output of the converter unit at pin 14 of SK7 may be used in a wide variety of different applications. It could be used for example to feed a servo amplifier controlling a d.c. motor which could variously drive a graph plotter, a steering mechanism, or a robot's left leg.

More simply it may be used to drive power controllers of one kind or another. For low power d.c. operation, a simple current amplifier of the type shown in Fig. 4.8 may be connected to the DAA output of the converter unit. This will vary the brightness of a 2.5 V lamp according to the data POKEd to 61320. To set this up, first execute POKE 61320, 0, and adjust the zero offset (VR1) so that the bulb is just extinguished. Then execute POKE 61320, 255. This should


CONSTRUCTOR'S NOTE: NEW MONITOR IN EPROM

During the development of this series the screen editor written by Nigel Climpson and published in PE was found to be extremely useful. This editor is now available as the CEI monitor in a 2716 EPROM for $£ 12.50+$ VAT and $\mathrm{p} \& p$, from Technomatic Ltd. It replaces the UK 101 2 K monitor ROM, and also contains useful routines such as a rapid screen clear.
illuminate the lamp brightly, and VR2 may then be adjusted to achieve best control over the full range of data.

A program of the type listed below will be found useful in setting up the converter for the above, and for other applications:

80 REM TEST ROUTINE FOR A/D CONVERTER
$100 \mathrm{~A}=61320$
120 INPUTX
140 POKEA,X
160 GOTO100

It simply requests a number, which should be an integer between zero and 255, and POKEs this to the converter.

TRIAC CONTROLLER
If a.c. or pulsed d.c. control is required, then the converter may be used to drive a Triac or Thyristor. There are many ways in which this may be achieved, but perhaps the most straightforward is to use the DAA output of the converter to vary the brightness of a l.e.d. indicator, which itself illuminates a light dependent resistor placed at a strategic


Fig. 4.3. Analogue Board p.c.b. component side
point in a triac or thyristor controller circuit. This has the great advantage of completely isolating the computer system from the mains. Alternatively, a patent opto-isolator such as the TIL112 may be used. In either case the l.e.d. may be directly driven by the DAA output of the converter as in Fig. 4.9

Fig. 4.10 gives an experimental circuit for a power controller using the l.d.r. method. The phase shift for the triac is produced by the R1/C1 network, with the l.d.r. altering the
charge time of C1. R2, R3, and C2 help to reduce hysteresis and flicker, common diseases of this type of controller, though the latter is not completely eliminated. L1 and L2 are inductors each formed by winding about 100 turns of wire of a half inch former. Perhaps the most vital part of the circuit is the R4/C3 network. This prevents spikes in the supply line from destroying the triac.

The l.e.d. and series resistor are connected between the DAA output of the converter and Vcc. The I.e.d. should be


Fig. 4.4. Component overlay for Analogue Board
taped to the l.d.r., and the pair mounted in a completely light-tight container.

To set up the circuit, VR 1 of the converter should be set to give zero volts between DAA and ground on execution of POKE 61320, 0. VR2 should then be adjusted to give a smooth range of control. Some adjustment of R1, 2 and 3 may be necessary to effect this.

## THYRISTOR CONTROLLER

In the author's experience, far more satisfactory power control is achieved using thyristors rather than triacs. One advantage of the thyristor is the ease with which unijunction transistor delay circuits may be used with them; and secondly they cannot suffer from asynchronous firing in the two directions of current flow, as may occur with the triac, and which is indeed one of the factors causing flicker in the controller of Fig. 4.10.

Fig. 4.11 gives the circuit of a thyristor controller which may be used to vary the power to some 12 volt d.c. device for currents up to two or three amperes. Control using the 500 k resistor is smooth and flicker-free. An l.d.r. driven by an l.e.d. from the D/A converter may be introduced in a number of ways into this circuit. About the simplest is to take the I.d.r. from point $X$ to earth via a resistor in the range 20 to 100k. To obtain smooth control it will be necessary to adjust the 500k pot in conjunction with VR1 and VR2 on the Analogue Board. Again, however, it should be stressed that this is an experimental circuit, and some adjustment of values may be necessary to obtain the best performance.

If it is desired to use this circuit for power control at a higher voltage, then it should be possible to increase the supply voltage, and adjust the Zener diode dropper resistor R1 accordingly. If a.c. control is required, then the load



4.12. NE555 signal generator

4.11. Thyristor Power Controller

4.13. Block diagram of storage oscillocope

## COMPONENTS

## Resistors

| R1, R6, R8 | $1 \mathrm{k}(3$ off $)$ |
| :--- | :--- |
| R2 | 100 k |
| R3 | 10 |
| R4 | 390 |
| R5 | 82 k |
| R7 | 3 k 9 |
| R9 | 18 k |
| R10 | 10 k |

Potentiometers
VR1 10 k preset
VR2 25 k preset
VR3 $100 \mathrm{k} \log +$ switch

## Capacitors

C1, C2, C6, C11, C12
C17

C3, C4, C13
C5
C7, C14, C15
C8
C9
C10
C16

100 n disc ceramic ( 6 off) $10 \mu / 10 \mathrm{~V}$ (3 off)
1 n
$100 \mu / 10 \mathrm{~V}$ (3 off)
$200 \mu / 10 \mathrm{~V}$
47n mylar
220 n mylar
50n mylar

Integrated Circuits

| IC1 | 6522 |
| :--- | :--- |
| IC2 | AY-3-8910 |
| IC3 | LM386 |
| IC4, IC5, IC | 74 LS 75 (3 off) |
| IC6 | ZN425 |
| IC8 | 4051 |
| IC9 | 74 LS90 |
| IC10 | ZN427 |
| IC11 | 741 |

## Miscellaneous

P.c.b

SK1 $2 \times 250.1$ in. edge connector
SK2-SK7 16-pin d.i.I. sockets (6 off)
40-pin di.l. sockets (2 off)
16 -pin d.i.l. sockets(5 off)
8 -pin d.i.l. sockets (2 off)
14-pin d.i.l. sockets
14-pin d.i.l. sockets
length of 40 strand ribbon cable

## Constructors' Note

A complete kit of parts, excluding loudspeaker, is obtainable from Technomatic Ltd., 17 Burnley Road, London NW10
should be placed in series with the a.c. supply feeding the bridge rectifier. Additionally the reader is referred to the many power control circuits that have appeared in P.E. in the past, and to the useful book on the subject by D. Marsden, entitled 110 Thyristor Projects. The use of one of these with a controlling l.d.r. or opto-isolator should meet most individual requirements; though it should be noted that the recently published circuit for the Slave Light Dimmer (P.E. Feb. 1981) is not suitable for this purpose.

## AUDIO OUTPUT

For some purposes it may be found useful to run an audio generator from the Analogue Board D/A converter, or from a R-2R converter running from an unused port, and buffered with an operational amplifier similar to that used on the Analogue Board. In either case the DAA output (or similar) may be used directly with i.c.s such as the NE566 function generator or the NE555 timer. Fig 4.12 gives a circuit for audio production using the 555 . The DAA line from pin 14 of SK7 is used to directly drive the control pin (pin 5) of the 555. With the components specified this will give outputs in the range 5 to 10 kHz . VR1 should be set to null output for zero data, and VR2 to maximum gain. This will result in outputs of about 10 kHz for 255 , and about 5 kHz for data of around 80. If zero is POKEd to the converter, the generator ceases to oscillate, so providing a convenient means of switching off audio output.

## FURTHER APPLICATIONS

The D/A converter on the Analogue Board may also be used for directly handling audio and other waveforms. It can, for example, be used in the direct generation of virtually any conceivable waveform. The program below produces a stair-
case output at the DA and DAA pins of the converter:

## $100 \mathrm{~A}=61320$

110 INPUT "SAMPLE RATE: TRY 5"; C
120 FOR B=1 TO 255 STEP C
130 POKE A, B
140 NEXT
150 GOTO 120
Using BASIC for this purpose limits the output frequency of any waveform generated to a few Hz or so. For higher frequency outputs, the program would have to be executed in 6502 code. It would be a relatively simple matter to write a short routine in 6502 code that successively output the contents of a block of memory to the D/A converter. The block could then be filled beforehand, using a POKE routine in BASIC, with any desired waveform, e.g. sin, square, triangular step, etc. The short 6502 code program could then be accessed via the $\operatorname{USR}(\mathrm{X})$ call to output the data at any given speed.

Using similar techniques in conjunction with an A/D converter it would be possible to write software for a storage facility for an oscilloscope. The A/D converter would sample a given waveform, and store the data in a given block of RAM. The D/A converter could then be used to output the sequence repeatedly, and at any frequency and repetition rate, so as to provide a permanent display, with the option of recall facilities, etc. See Fig. 4.13.

Next month we will look at the use of the PSG on the Analogue Board, and discuss applications such as a 14 -note organ operated from the UK 101 keyboard. Details will also be given on the use of the Programmable Sound Generator as a 3-channel D to A converter

# Readout... A selection from our Postbag 

Readers requiring a reply to any letter must include a stamped addressed envelope.
Opinions expressed in Readout are not necessarily endorsed by the publishers of Practical Electronics.

## Excellent <br> Combination

Sir-l have recently constructed a $P E$ Congress amplifier from a kit supplied by Wicca, as a re-introduction to electronics after a fifteen year break. Apart from bridging two tracks in the phono stage, the unit worked first time. I must congratulate the designer(s) on the performance of this design-it really is incredibly good to listen to, and is capable of 'demolishing' a number of commercial units with a higher 'paper' performance.

I have only two small points of criticism. Firstly, the effectiveness of the balance control can only be described as minimal. I can find no fault in the construction, so can you advise? The second problem (about which 1 intend to speak to Wicca) is transformer hum. which, in an amplifier that generates so little noise internally, is very noticeable. Perhaps a toroidal unit would have been worthwhile?

My second reason for writung is to give a pat on the back to a company which has given me superb service. Some six months ago, I purchased a pair of Videotone GB3 speakers through the PE Special Offer. These were used a few times on an old stereo record player which at best could be described as poor. but did play old records, so I took little notice of the poor sound. When I had completed the Congress. I connected the GB3 units, and with a decent input to them, it was immediately obvious that one tweeter was inoperative.

I telephoned Videotone and explained the problem, which they suggested may have been caused by clipping on the old amplifier (which I doubt as I treated the unit very carefully in deference to its meagre output), but they took my address and offered to supply a new tweeter under warranty. It duly arrived and was installed, and the speakers were connected. The performance of those tiny (and cheap) boxes is a revelation. There is ample bass during the day with a little boost, but the
real beauty is at night. With the bass rolled off a little, the sound quality is retained without annoying the neighbours. Try doing that with the bus-sized speakers that so many people seem to think necessary. In any normal residence, the Congress and GB3 pairing will be found capable of generating excrutiating volume without distortion, even to those with "disco-ears".

To any reader who may have built a Congress. I would say without hesitation, "hang on a pair of GB3s, you will not believe your ears". I bought the GB3s on the strength of an earlier auditioning of the older 'Minimax', which was very good, but not, I believe, in the same class as the GB3. As for the service from Videotone, what can I say except "thank you".
S. G. West,

Northampton.

## Noddy Radio

Sir-As a reader of your magazine I would be quite content if the sickeningly over-exposed letters "CB" appeared never again. I have no enthusiasm for citizens band radio, and 1 suspect that $99 \%$ of the population of this country is similarly disinterested.

What we have is a verbose minority creating a furore over what is, after all, Noddy radio. I am prepared to tolerate occasional breakthrough on my domestic equipment when it is the police going discreetly about their business-or even a local taxi firm.

However, I see no reason why I should endure prolonged breakdowns when I am trying to take in the news, just so that an immature "citizen" can tell the world he is called Rubber Duck and he doesn't like "bears".

I have no doubt that should this band be allowed, every ten years or so it will become involved in some small way with a murder hunt, and then we shall hear of the wonderful contribution CB makes to society. Why should a respectable magazine like Practical Electronics jump on this bandwagon?

As far as I'm concerned, CB should be allowed only on microwave at 1 mW so that nobody can use it!

## Peter Bleck,

 London.Sir-I see that you have published a CB converter in your March issue. I already have a converter and I see from your editorial in the February issue that I need a licence to listen to it. As I cannot obtain a licence to listen to CB, how can I be prosecuted for not having something I cannot obtain anyway?

It is also illegal to transmit on CB, so therefore there is nothing to listen to. So how can I be prosecuted for listening to something that is not there in the first place?

This seems to me to be a ridiculous situation and the sooner the government comes up with some sensible licensing ideas, the sooner it will be getting more money to help with the running of the country.

Little T, Leicester.

Sir-Your editorial seeking views on listening to-for example- CB on 27 MHz raises a wider question. Has any government the moral right to forbid us to listen to any available radio transmission? There may be perfectly justifiable reasons for restricting transmission (e.g. CB) but it must surely be a fundamental right to listen to any broadcast information in an intelligible form.

The obvious exception is on security grounds, e.g. police radio-but the enterprising criminal is hardly likely to be deterred by the Wireless Telegraphy Acts more than, say, the Theft Act!

If the originator of a message chooses an inherently public medium such as radio the onus is on him to adopt a cryptic method of transmission. If an illicit broadcaster gets on the air it is the business of the authorities to stop him, not to tell us not to listen, as do totalitarian regimes. Even those who practice press censorship tend to go for the publisher rather than the reader!
D. B. Lyall, Cheltenham.

## Alive and Kicking

Sir-As the new chairman of the Amateur Computer Club I would like to clarify the current position of the ACC, and in particular its future. I feel that your readers, many of whom are interested in home computing will be interested to learn of the current position of the ACC.

I am pleased to announce that the ACC is now very much alive and kicking following a somewhat dormant period last year. The ACC is a national organisation to promote interest in amateur computers and computing, to facilitate the exchange of information and ideas, and to help members with their home computer systems. Annual membership is $£ 4.50$.

I would also like to mention a few other points. Firstly, last year the ACC year was extended to September '80. The new year started on October 1st and runs until 30th September "81. Secondly, it is hoped to set up regular contact with the journals and to keep them informed of the activities of the ACC.

Peter Whittle, Chairman-ACC, I Blinco Road,

Urmston.
Manchester.

## Micro Bus Error

Sir-Congratulations for your excellent 'Micro Bus' series, but why not every month? Having tried the Draughts Board game in February 81 issue (for the ZX80) I would like to point out a couple of small (but very important) errors (probably printing errors!):

Line 30 should read: PRINT " 12345678 " Space after the eight, and Line 300 . . OR ( $\mathrm{X}=13$ AND TL\$ (A\$)="R") OR NOT... Bracket close after " $R$ "

Having just spent a Sunday afternoon finding the missing space, I hope this might save someonerelse the trouble. There has been some gain though, at least I now know how the program works, which I admit I wouldn't have if it had worked straight away!
P. Holton,

Upper Norwood, London.

## PE Microtune

Sir-l have read with interest your project Microtune, in the Dec-Jan editions of your magazine, and was impressed by the technical specifications and useful functions available on what is quite a reasonably priced machine.

It is good to note that your magazine is aware of the importance of the correct adjustments to the ignition system of the modern motor car and that this equipment makes such adjustments an easy task. Using this equipment carefully should enable the builder to recover the cost of it in improved fuel consumption and smoother running in a very short time.

On reading the section "USING THE MICROTUNE", I would like to comment on a few points that I feel may cause confusion with an operator who is not fully conversant with car electrical systems and I hope that my comments may be of use.

In the section "Battery Checking" the test that is suggested is a good test but I feel that the duration of the test should be limited to 15 seconds as the time of 30 seconds quoted I consider too long and could result in the premature condemning of a serviceable battery. An extra check that could be incorporated into this section is a check on coil SW
voitage. On a 12 volt coil system the voltage at the SW terminal should be no more than 0.5 volt lower than the battery voltage. A higher volt loss could be due to a faulty ignition switch or connections in the coil feed. On a ballast system the voltage should be between 5 and 8 volts; a reading higher or lower could indicate a wrong coil fitted or a high resistance in ballast resistor or wiring. These checks are carried out with the contacts closed and ignition on. With the engine being cranked over, this voltage at the SW terminal should be a minimum of 9 volts. With a ballast system a voltage of, say, 5 volts would indicate a fault in the boost circuit between solenoid and coil.

Coil resistance tests are extremely useful, particularly when trying to find out if a car has the right coil fitted. The most usual figures are 3 to 3.5 ohms for a 12 volt coil and 1.5 ohms for a ballast coil. Most ballast resistors are 1.5 ohms and on some cars it is possible to check this also.

The section on points resistance is perhaps the most useful section, and it is important to get this figure down as low as possible. The figures quoted by distributor manufacturers vary between 0.1 volt and 0.4 volt. The Lucas figure of 0.2 volt can be considered as one to aim for. Good starting and coil output depend on a low volt loss here and to some extent condenser performance can also be affected. Things to look for are faults in plug-in connectors in the wiring, burnt or dirty contacts and distributor base plate earth faults.

Dwell angle on modern cars is around $50^{\circ}$ and typical figures quoted are Motorcraft 48 to $52^{\circ}$ on Ford vehicles, 46 to $56^{\circ}$ by Lucas on most Leyland vehicles and 49 to $51^{\circ}$ by Delco fitted to Vauxhall cars. These figures are all for 4 cylinder engines. Owing to the fact that altering the dwell angle by $5^{\circ}$ alters the ignition timing by $5^{\circ}$, it is important to check and adjust the ignition timing after any distributor adjustments.
M. J. Stacey, TI Transport.

PO Box 8 ,
High March.
Daventry,
Northants.

## Going too far?

Sir-In view of the recent interest in CB. I think you may be interested to learn of an article which appeared in a recent issue of the medical newspaper Doctor.

The article concerns an incident in Preston, when a CB group donated $£ 560$ to the intensive care unit of a local hospital to buy some urgently needed equipment. The doctor who had accepted the donation was shocked when the hospital management refused the gift and ordered inquiries into the donors.

The article states: "An embarrassed Dr Saltpepper said 'After the DMT's final decision I was informed that it is not advisable for members of staff to associate with unlawful organisations." He had not realised that the CB group-many of whom are ambulancemen-was unrecognised as a charitable body because CB radio is illegal."
D. M. Broughton, Leeds.

## FINGER ON THE PULSE

The national obsession with jogging, and the health risks involved, is producing a spate of patents for gadgets which monitor the wearer's pulse rate and heart beat. The latest, 8 ritish patent application 2039 434, from Patrick Wright of Woking, Surrey and Julian Lynn-Evans of Chichester, Sussex, describes a sophisticated monitor which is worn like a watch on the wrist to give a constant digital readout of heart beat and sound an alarm if a dangerously high rate is reached.

The unit shown in Figures $1 \& 2$ has a transducer 16 and pressure sensor 13 on the rear face which lies over the wrist pulse point. Normal pulse rate is around 72 pulses per minute and the inventors suggests that in general, exercise should be controlled to keep the rate down to below 120ppm.


Figure 1


Figure 2

Copies of Patents can be obtained from: the Patent Office Sales, St. Mary Cray, Orpington, Kent. Price £1.25 each.


Figure 3

Figure 3 shows the basic circuit for utilising the pressure sensor output. Oscillator 28 produces a 3600 Hz signal on line 92 coupled to clock 94. Heart beat rate is determined by the formula

$$
H=\frac{3600}{8}
$$

where $\mathrm{H}=$ heartbeat rate and $\mathrm{B}=$ the number of oscillator pulses stored between heart beats. So if 60 pulses are stored between heart beats, a rate $H$, of 60 beats per minute is represented and if 120 are stored between beats a rate $H$, of 30 beats per minute, is represented. Clock circuit 94 is a conventional second, minute, hour, clock and its 60 pulse per second output on line 98 is fed to AND gates 34,36 . These gates are enabled by a signal from flip-flop 26 which changes state each time a pulse is received from transducer 24. When the sensor 13 is in contact with the wearer's pulse pressure point it produces a pulse each time a heart beat is detected so flipflop 26 changes state with the wearer's heart beat.

With the appearance of each heart beat one of two counters 42,48 begins to store pulses from oscillator 28 until the next heart beat is sensed. At that instant the 60 Hz pulses from clock 94 are transferred from the first counter to the second counter, while the output of the first counter is coupled to input register 62. So the number
of pulses occurring between heart beats is stored alternately in counters 42, 48 and transferred alternately to input register 62. Arithmetic unit 80 is programmed to divide 3600 by whatever count is stored in register 62. The output of unit 80 is coupled to numerical display 90 . So the wrist watch unit provides a constant monitor of heart beat rate.

To sound the alarm for an excessively high rate, a pre-set number of oscillator pulses is stored in a register for comparison with the sensed rate. Switches 19,20 couple the output of divider circuit 100 to storage register 104 and 106. As these switches are held closed, pulses are fed into the registers at 20 pulses per second and until required upper and lower limit heart beat rates are stored. Switch 19 is depressed to store the upper rate and switch 20 is depressed to store the lower rate.

Comparators 122, 124 receive the same input signals as arithmetic unit 80 from input register 16. Comparator 122 produces an output for OR gate 128 if the monitored heart beat is greater than the number of pulses stored in register 104. Likewise if the monitored number of pulses is less than the number stored in register 106, comparator 124 produces an output for OR gate 128 . In each case an alarm 130 is activated to warn the wearer.

 A selection of readers
riginal circuit ideas. It original circuit ideas. It
should be emphasised that these designs have not been proven by us. They will at any us. stimulate further thought.

Each idea submitted must be accompanied by a declaration to the effect that it has been tried and tested, is the original work of the undersigned, and that it has not been offered or accepted for publication elsewhere.

Why not submit your idea? Any idea published will be awarded payment according to its merits.

Articles submitted for publication should conform to the usual practices of this journal, e.g. with regard to abbreviations and circuit symbols. * Diagrams should be on separate sheets, not inserted in the text.


## 'DAY TO REMEMBER' CLOCK

THIS circuit is an add on unit to D. E. Clarke's Digital Calendar published in PE June 1976. It provides a 'Day To Remember' alarm for birthdays, anniversaries, etc.

The NOR gates inputs are wired up to the required outputs from the 74154 on the digital calendar and the 7442. I have divided the unit up into three groups of three NOR gates, DAY/UNIT/MONTH, DAY/TENS/MONTH, DAY/TWEN. TIES/MONTH. If the day to remember is the 16th March, then the middle set of gates would have one of its inputs connected to the 3rd output on the 74154 and the other input connected to the 6 output on the 7442 .

When the clock indicates this date both inputs would go to ' 0 ', feeding a ' 1 ' to the 7410 gate, as the date is the 16th, and not the 6th, or the 26 th. 'except tens' will be at ' 1 ' and the 'inhibit 30 ' will also be at " 1 '. then a ' $O$ ' will be fed through and trigger the 7473. This will remove the inhibit from the 7440 and let the 1 sec . pulse through to switch the l.e.d.s on and off. The 7473 is reset by a ' 0 ' on pin 6 ; this will cause pin 9 to restore the inhibit and stop the l.e.d.s switch on and off.

Obviously it would be of no point in setting up the clock to indicate the day on which the birthday or anniversary falls, therefore I have set my clock up for the alarm to come on 5 days before the event.

> C. T. Chantler. Grimsby, South Humberside.



## ENVELOPE DIFFERENTIATOR

MOST monophonic lead line synthesisers have provision for modulation of the VCOs by other oscillators to give vibratos and trills, but few use the ADSR envelope output because of the difficulty in tuning caused by sustained portions of the envelope. The circuit described here converts an ADSR envelope into an AD envelope, giving a 'chirp' at the beginning of every new envelope.

Capacitor C1 'differentiates' the changing envelope voltages, whilst diodes D1
and D2 ensure that only negative going AD envelopes reach the VCOs. VRI controls the depth of VCO modulation. Rx is a resistor chosen to give acceptable maximum levels of modulation. For use in the $P E$ Minisonic suitable values range from 100k to 470 k , depending on individual tastes.

Martin Russ,
Fallowfield,
Manchester.



THIS circuit was originally designed for use in a voltage-controlled synthesiser as a multi-purpose voltage processor, but it can be applied to many other uses.

The circuit consists of a peak detector made up of IC 1 and the associated components, and a memory circuit made up of IC2 and the associated components.

Switches S2 and S3 are used to control the operation mode of the circuit. Controls

VR1 and VR2 control the rate of change of the output voltage. Switch SI controls the direction in which the circuit holds the peaks of the input voltage.

With S2 open the rise time of the circuit is determined by VR1 and the circuit now behaves as "lag' circuit or integrator. If S3 is closed the fall time of the circuit is determined by VR2, S3 is opened for a memory hold or peak detector function. If S2 and

## SYNTH PROCESSOR

S3 are closed and VR2 is set to its minimum value, the circuit acts as a voltage follower.

There are many applications of this circuit. In a voltage-controlled synthesiser, the lag processor and voltage follower are useful control-voltage modifiers, using the peak hold with a keyboard voltage can give unusual effects such as unidirectional portamento, where the glide speed varies with the direction of playing on the keyboard. For low frequency a.c. applications the circuit can be used as a rectifier and filter unit with the output being proportional to the 'average' of the input in a similar manner to the operation of an envelope follower.

Martin Russ,
Fallowfield, Manchester.

TVC FOR SYNTHS


COMMERCIAL performance synthesisers use many forms of man/machine interface. Of these, the pitch-pad is rarely seen on home produced synthesisers. The touch voltage control (TVC) described here enables the pitch pad idea to be applied to almost any synthesiser.

The basis of the circuit is the "conductive" black foam used to pack CMOS i.c.s. By using a piece about 3 cms square, sandwiched between two metal sheets, it is possible to make a resistor whose value changes with pressure, from about 100 k or more down to about 200 ohms.

Mechanical and electrical construction of the TVC pad is shown in Fig. 1. The prototype was constructed in a PP3 battery case from which the insides were removed and a rectangular hole cut in the side.

The pad can be used to replace any resistor in the control circuitry of the synthesiser, a few ideas are given in Figs. 2, 3 and 4. These are a voltage controller, volume control and attenuator respectively.

Martin Russ,
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