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## COVER PHOTO

This month's cover photograph shows the B and O 31 XX series chassis. See servicing article on pages 860-2.

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## TELEOR50R

## Dead Ends

It's understandable that Philips president Jan Timmer should have expressed deep feelings about the prospect of the loss of MAC/HDMAC, "Europe"s wonderful initiative" as he called it, as the future broadcasting system for Europe. At his recent press conference in Eindhoven he commented that "we have reached the end point technically: we are ready to move from MAC to HDMAC". To have travelled so far along this path. achieved so much technically and spent so much (though the figures are not avalable) and found that you've come to a dead end is a bitter experience. But it's happened often enough before and will doubtless happen often enough in the years to come. From the very beginning different groups have developed different TV and video systems. Because of the need for some degree of standardisation, only a few can ever be adopted for use. At the start of TV broadcasting in the UK there were the competing Baird and EMI systems. At that time any number of other systems were being developed around the world, particularly in the USA. Only the 525,625 and 819 line systems came into general use. Colour brought with it another multitude of different solutions to the problem of developing an acceptable system. We all know about PAL, SECAM and NTSC, which are still very much with us: who remembers ART and NIR? Satellite TV brought the subject of system design into the limelight once more. It offered wider channel bandwidth and hence the possibility of enhanced TV systems. Now various proposed digital systems are squeezing enhanced TV back into narrower bandwidths. There's a great deal going on in the world of TV transmission systems at present, as George Cole brings out in his IBC report on a later page. The sad thing about MAC is that such a good system has been around for so long without being convincingly relevant to current broadcasting needs and has in the end been overtaken by events. Jan Timmer seems to blame the European Commission for this situation, on the grounds that it allowed telecom band satellites to be used for TV broadcasting using the curtent terrestrial signal coding systems. But it was rather the case that the authorities were neatly sidestepped than that they failed to impose a policy. Satellite broadcasting opened a whole new ball game, one that's not amenable to the close supervision possible with terrestrial transmissions.

Philips has been particularly unlucky when it comes to TV/video dead ends. There were the banana and ultra-violet beam-indexing colour tubes, the original laser disc system and the $\mathrm{N} 1500 / \mathrm{N} 1700 / \mathrm{V} 2000 \mathrm{VCR}$ systems. That lot must have cost a pretty penny one way and another. You can't simply put the blame on inability to complete development and bring products to the marketplace quickly. Some technologies just aren't going to make it however well managed the development programme is. One thinks for example of RCA's capacitance video disc, possibly the most costly consumer electronics flop of all time, and of the EVR (electronic video recording) system in which CBS and Rank were involved.

Right now those of us who recall these dead ends must be wondering about CD-I and all those multimedia systems that are being worked on, some because computer and other electronics concerns simply don't know where to go or what to do next. Some of these multimedia ideas have, perhaps unfairly, been described as solutions looking for a problem. We already seem to have one dead end in the CDTV system. The news that Philips has just slashed the price of its CD-I players in the USA from $\$ 1,000$ to $\$ 700$, less than a year after launching the system there, is not exactly encouraging. Interactive video is of course something that calls for long-term public education. We just don't know what the eventual level of interest will be.

## INDEX TO VOLUME 40

The index to volume 40 of Television (the November 1989 to October 1990 issues) has now been printed. Copies are available at $£ 2$ each from Television, Room L323, Reed Business Publishing, Quadrant House, The Quadrant, Sutton, Surrey SM2 5AS.

## COVER PRICE INCREASE

Recent reader research has proved that readers of Television would like more editorial pages. Accordingly from next month's issue (November) the number of editorial pages will be increased by a minimum of four a month. Unfortunately this costs money, so Television's cover price will be increased to $£ 2.20$ from the November issue. But by taking out a subscription (see page 902) you can get the extra pages without paying anything more. The subscription rate will be held at its present level for a limited time.

## Satellite Notebook

Nick Beer

I wonder how many of you have noticed or get calls about an intermittent "fault" with Sky Sports: very occasionally the signal will rescramble for a second or so then clear. It seems to happen under all conditions, with IRDs and separate decoders and not just with weak signals etc. Those less cynical than I might suggest a software bug as being the most likely cause. But I've noticed that the condition arises mainly with live events: could it be something to do with a hidden copyrighting plan?

## CNN on Astra

It was reported some months ago in these pages that CNN now has an Astra transponder. There are satellite installation sales implications here. It may well help with the sale of Astra equipment, especially to up-market households, but what about sales of motorised systems? CNN was probably the biggest plus factor when it came to selling a motorised system. Now that CNN is available from Astra this sales pitch is no longer available. Providing a non-telephile with any other good reason for buying a motorised satellite TV installation is difficult. Experience has shown us that the customer will love his motorised dish once he gets one - it impresses the neighbours, then there are the saucy Italian and Spanish transmissions etc. - but how do you make a convincing case on the sales floor? It's not easy.

## Fault Indexes

For some time now various indexes of the fault notes published in Television have been available. They are not full listings of all the articles as in the "official" Television indexes, providing instead an index by make, model then symptom of the faults reported in these pages. One such listing is produced by Mike Lyons of ECS, Birkenhead. I've used it through three editions and have found that it has saved me hours of time. A new edition is produced every six months or so, covering at least ten years issues of Television. An update service is available and there are separate books for TV sets and VCRs. Of particular interest is that our newer CD player and Satellite TV fault reports are now listed. ECS can be contacted on 0516082344 - or see the advertisement carried each month.

## Operational Improvement

A slightly annoying anomaly I've encountered at home and have had queries about from customers is that when a VideoCrypt decoder is added to a non-IRD receiver such as the Ferguson SRA IS/Pace SS6000 channels that don't have to be decoded tend to scramble when a subscriber channel is


Fig. 1: $15-$ pin $D$ socket PAL connections: pin 2 video return; pin 3 video switch line; pin 4 baseband PAL video output; pins 8 and 11 chassis.
stepped through. Say for example that we have Sky One on channel I and Sky News on channel 2. Going from one to the other gives no problem. With Sky Movies on channel 3, when we go to this the decoder switches in (Ext-V) and the picture clears. Move now to Eurosport on channel 4 and the picture is again scrambled for a few seconds due to the automatic routing of the video signal through the decoder. The same thing will happen with the following two stations.

There's a simple way of overcoming this: to tell all nondecoder locations to use internal as the AV source. This is done via the main menu, on set up 147. A small point perhaps, but it does make channel hopping quicker.

## Decoder Connections

On the subject of decoders, Fig. I shows the basic PAL connections for the 15 -pin D decoder connector used in Amstrad and other early receivers. J.N. Bull and Sendz Components are advertising scart-to-15 D leads if you require them. I recall some months ago not being able to get them for love nor money.

## News

One or two points noted during recent viewing. JSTV is now scrambling parts of its service, using VideoCrypt. CNN is now transmitting audio on only the 6.5 MHz primary subcarrier. The other subcarriers are unmodulated. Previously there was audio on the 7.02 and 7.38 MHz subcarriers, thus anyone who set his receiver for stereo will now be getting a lot of noise on top of weak sound.

## BSB Equipment

In commenting on the Marco Polo satellites last month I mentioned that the BSB Squarials are designed for the reception of right-hand circularly polarised signals. Writing on BSB receiver modifications in the latest (August) issue of the British Amateur Television Club's journal CQ-TV, Trevor Brown points out that these Squarials can be converted for left-hand circular polarisation if necessary. You have to dismantle the unit, turn over the printed circuit membrane then reassemble it. Trevor's article contains practical information on converting Philips and Ferguson BSB receivers for D2-MAC and other helpful information. BATC membership details can be obtained from Dave Lawton, G0ANO, Grenehurst, Pinewood Road, High Wycombe, Bucks HP12 4DD (telephone 0494 28899).

## New Pace Receivers

Pace has announced two new receivers that will replace the 9200 IRD. They are newly designed, using ASIC (application specific integrated circuits, i.e. chips designed for the purpose) technology to reduce the component count and thus provide improved quality and reliability at less cost.

Model PRD800 features 120 channel capability, Wegener stereo sound with Panda 1 noise reduction, three scart connectors, on-screen graphics, a built-in dish positioner interface, a u.h.f. modulator that can be tuned from channel 21 to channel 69 and Datastream external remote programming for downloading stored programme information from one Pace receiver to another. Suggested price is around $£ 230$.

Model PRD900 at around $£ 250$ adds to the above specification 199 channel capability, a dual LNB input, on-screen graphics with a choice of eight coloured backgrounds, favourite channel selection, a blank-screen radio mode and an 8 -event/28-day VCR timer.

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# Servicing B and O 31XX Series Receivers 

Nick Beer

The chassis covered in this article was used in just two 20in. monitor style sets, Models M20 and MX2000, but for B and O a lot of them were sold. It's of Thomson design and seems to have been a forerunner to the Ferguson ICC5 indeed the later MX3000/4500/5000 series receivers are very much akin to the ICC5, though with the usual B and O extras and refinements.

The MX2000 was yet another stride forward in presentation, which is nothing unusual for B and O . For its time - it was on sale during the period 1985-88 - the MX2000 was a striking set, monitor style with the on-board controls under a flap the full width of the top of the case. Beneath this there's a contrast screen over the c.r.t. faceplate and then, across the full width at the bottom, a speaker fret. It came complete with a simple metal fold-down semi-ring beneath: this enables it to be tilted when placed on a flat surface. There was a B and O stand of course. It has an optional video shelf and swivels. The cost of the stand was slightly less than what Dixons' customers would pay for the average 20 in . set - and it weighs more!

Remote control is standard but teletext was an option, as were the cabinet colours - by this I mean the strip around the top and sides, which form part of the back cover. Because of this arrangement access is excellent once the back cover has been removed. It's secured by four captive screws. There's no compatibility with the MCL2 Link system, as there is with the later MX3000 series.

## Mechanical Details

To remove the speaker fret slide a flat-bladed screwdriver behind the fret as it wraps round the right-hand side of the set, viewed from the front, at about 2.5 cm from the top and bottom. Slight inwards pressure will release this edge. Slip the fret from left to right to remove it, finally unclipping the left-hand edge by means of rearwards pressure. Take great care not to mark the cabinet with the screwdriver - it's a very easy thing to do. Once the fret has been removed the baffle can be withdrawn. This gives access to the circuitry etc. beneath the c.r.t., including the speakers. You will see eight large, black cross-head screws: when these have been removed the baffle can be pulled out and up - the white tubes that form the baffle require the assembly to be pulled out in this way.

To remove the contrast screen simply slip a tool - carefully - into the small slot at the centre bottom edge and pull outwards. Don't go too fast or you may get a surprise. To refit the screen put the right-hand edge into its slot then bend the screen until the left-hand edge can be similarly fitted. This may seem graunchy but I've never yet known a screen to break.

The remote control is the same as that used with the 02 , 77XX series - the lighter brown as opposed to the darker brown one, which had one less button (sound) and no tuning facilities. This means that these sets have frequencysynthesis tuning.

The chassis slides backwards for access. Take care to release lead locks and to guide the chassis under the tube components: the clamp on top of the i.f. screen can catch the degaussing coils on the left and the leads from the c.r.t. base board can become tangled in the strange microcontroller

PCB stack at the rear edge centre of the chassis.
The mains transformer, which provides isolation, is large and is mounted at the front of the set: power input and ancillary circuits are on a small PCB fixed to the front of the set beneath the c.r.t. The IR remote control receiver is across the top of the set. The plastic control lid's hinges break but are available (part no. 3030081 ). The IR lens in one corner of the lid has a habit of falling out. If it's lost, a new lid will be required at some expense. If not careful glueing will suffice. The set's look is spoilt somewhat without it.

A teletext module can be fitted behind the microcontroller PCB on the main panel. It can be a bit fiddly to fit.

## Operation

Just one or two points for the uninitiated. If you don't have the handset you can switch the set on from standby by pressing TUNE + under the flap - the controls are rockers. Pressing this control when the set is on makes it tune up, as you'd expect. If you alter any control settings (volume etc.) do put them back where you found them, otherwise the normal levels will be upset - to avoid problems try to use the handset wherever possible.

The sets have a scart socket which allows integral remote control of suitably arranged B and O VCRs such as the VHS82, which also provides RGB on-screen menus and was a popular machine for pairing with the set.

## Circuitry

Fig. 1 shows a simplified block diagram of the set. It emphasises the central role of the TEA2026 chip IL01 which contains the sync circuitry and drives the line and field output stages, the EW modulator driver chip and the chopper. Other outputs it provides include the sandcastle pulses and an audio muting line. For standby operation the BC328-40 switching transistor TP21 removes the supply to this i.c., thereby removing the chopper and timebase drives.

The chopper circuit, see Fig. 2, is unusual, being a stepup regulator, i.e. it receives 110 V from the mains rectifier circuit and provides a regulated 145 V output which is fed via RP14 to the line output transformer's primary winding. Coil LP01 forms the load for the chopper transistor TP01, which is switched on by a squarewive drive from ILOI. It's switched off by negative-going pulses from pin 11 of the line output transformer. RP03 provides excess current sensing and DF25 over-voltage sensing: under either condition the increased voltage at pin 28 of ILOI will remove the drives to the chopper and the timebases. If the voltage then falls below 1.26 V the chopper will restart via the soft-start system. If the set trips three times the drives will shut down and will restart only after removing and restoring IL01's supply voltage. PPOI enables the h.t. to be set up by adjusting the feedback to the chopper control circuit in IL01.

The mains transformer has three secondary windings, each of which feed a bridge rectifier circuit. As shown in Fig. 1, the outputs are $110 \mathrm{~V}, 31 \mathrm{~V}$ and 12.5 V .

Another unusual feature, this time shared by the ICC5 chassis, is the thyristor field output stage, see Fig. 3. Thyristor DF08 is switched on once per line by a pulse-


Fig. 1: Simplified block diagram for $B$ and $O 31 X X$ series receivers.


Fig. 2: The step-up chopper circuit, which provides a regulated 145 V output from an unregulated 110 V input.
width modulated squarewave from pin 4 of IL01. A winding on the line output transformer is used as the thyristor's load, the negative-going flyback pulses at the end of each line switching it off. The pulse-width modulation applied to DF08's gate switches it on at a progressively earlier point in


Fig. 3: The thyristor field output circuit.
each line as the field scan progresses. Since the impedance of the field scan coils at line frequency is large they have an integrating effect on the field scan current. Thus the steadily increasing current pulses are smoothed to produce a ramp. During the flyback period DF08 is cut off, DF09 acts as a clamp and a large positive voltage (approximately 190 V ) is developed across CF10, the result being rapid current reversal through the field scan coils. The aim of this strange circuit is reduced power consumption. If DF08 fails DF09 should also be replaced - they are available as a pair under part no. 8300488 .

The sound circuitry is quite complex, using eleven i.c.s in all.

## Remote Control Handset

The remote control handset is quite expensive as a replacement but, being serviceable, repair is worthwhile. Common faults are dry-joints on the output LEDs, causing no or intermittent output, and broken PP3 battery clips. The unit seems to be vulnerable to spillage but because of the
two-board design the damage is usually limited to the upper, contact PCB - the two PCBs push together, with two connectors.

The plastic buttons can be replaced as single items and are very reasonably priced - buttons break and the lettering wears off. The battery cover tends to become loose - many a unit is bound with Sellotape when received for repair. New covers are readily available, as are all spares for these handsets.

The six screws that hold the unit together drop out - refit with screwlock.

Failure of some buttons to work is common and is caused by dry-joints at the sockets on the component PCB. As this PCB is reasonably priced it's not worth spending a lot of time on fault tracing.

## Faults List

(1) No or intermittent picture, white raster etc.: Dryjoints are common on the c.r.t. base socket - resolder every pin when you get one of these sets. See also (2).
(2) Intermittent field collapse/distortion: Check for dryjoints on the EW modulator diodes DG05/6. Resolder them whenever one of these sets comes in for repair. It's best to use high melting-point solder. If the fault persists, IG01 (TDA4950) and the loading coil LG02 will overheat.
(3) EW problems: Dry-joints on the EW modulator diodes DG05/6 can cause permanent damage in the EW correction circuit. Check the diodes and the print around them first, then suspect a damaged TDA 4950 chip - this i.c. has been known to split open. The loading coil LG(2) can develop shorted turns. This is usually obvious, i.e. a molten mass instead of a coil.
(4) Horizontal black stripes at the bottom of the picture: RF35 (470) ) in the field output stage high in value or opencircuit. This is a critical safety component.
(5) Set goes to standby intermittently: Check the value of CL75. If it's $2 \cdot 2 n \mathrm{~F}$, replace it with a 4.7 nF type. This is necessary to prevent noise on the supply activating the protection circuit in IL01. Other causes have been dry-joints on the line output transformer or the transformer's case breaking down with the result that there's arcing to chassis. Also check for dry-joints on the leads soldered through the board in the deflection circuits.
(6) Low/distorted sound: The 6 MHz filter QD40 in the sound i.f. circuit defective. This fault is sometimes thermal.
(7) Dead set with no light from the standby LED: RP43 ( $0 \cdot 47 \Omega$ ) open-circuit, the result being no 12.5 V supply. This is in turn because CR67 ( $1,000(\mathrm{FF}$ ) on the microcontroller PCB is leaky or short-circuit.
(8) Dead set, channel number o.k.: The line output stage isn't working. This is usually because its feed resistor RP14 $(0.39 \Omega)$ is open-circuit, which may well be due to the fact that the BU508AV line output transistor TL02 is shortcircuit. But don't be mislead by in-circuit readings. The transistor may read short-circuit all round but be o.k., the cause of the problem being a short from the line output transformer to chassis, usually from pin 8. If TL02 has failed it's common to find that there is still a problem after replacing it because the transformer is faulty. In this event


Fig. 4: Modification for the satellite teletext problem.
readings on the transformer are usually inconclusive but bulging or cracks in the case may confirm one's suspicions.
(9) Severely reduced height: See (2), then check the surge limiter resistor RL28 ( $1.5 \Omega$ ) in the 13 V supply. If it's opencircuit suspect that the TDA4950 chip IG01 is damaged. Check for dry-joints at DG05/6 as in (2).
(10) Buzz from the set, especially in standby: The mains transformer is large and some customers can hear it buzz, especially when the set is on a wooden shelf or something similar. A replacement transformer may help.
(11) Purity errors: Could be caused by stray fields from the mains transformer. Posistor RP41 in the degaussing circuit could be faulty or dry-jointed.
(12) Low gain: Could be due to a defective r.f. (tuner + i.f.) module which is available as a service exchange unit under part no. 8053034 , but check the a.g.c. etc. first.
(13) Splashing on vision: Check the soldering at pin 23 (video output) of the r.f. module. See also (14). If necessary replace the r.f. module.
(14) No tuning: Resolder all the r.f. module's earth connections.
(15) No go: The TEA2026 chip faulty because of spikes on the supply. Remove diode DL76 and fit a 15 V zener diode (part no. 8300053) between pins 6 and 7 of ILOI, on the print side of the panel. The cathode goes to pin 7. This may have been done in production.
(16) No satellite teletext when fed via the scart socket, o.k. via the r.f. socket: The video input from the scart socket is not fed directly to the text decoder, so the following modification should be carried out. Cut the print between pins 1 and 3 of plug VT02 on PCB08 and connect pin 1 to pin 5. Cut the print between RV85 and RV93 on PCB01 and connect the now disconnected end of RV93 to pin 6 of IV03 with a lead. If crosstalk occurs with this modification, add the circuit shown in Fig. 4.

## Conclusion

The sets cause few problems to the experienced engineer. Many faults can be dealt with by those without full B and O backing but if the problems relate to the microcontroller system it may be advisable to refer the set to a B and O dealer.

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| M2938I | f11．80 | STK5332 | ${ }_{56.80} 80$ | TDalimi | 52.20 | TDA3300 | c6． 80 | TDA4si3 | E4．80 |
| M490BBI | 114．80 | STK5333 | ¢18．40 | TDAILMIZ | ${ }^{\text {¢ } 2.29}$ | TDA3301 | ${ }^{8} 7.50$ | TEAllug | 52.20 |
| M4918B1 | ¢9．80 | STK 5338 | £6．80 | TDAl432P | 55.70 | TDA33 |  | TEA1014 |  |
| M494 | £9．40 | STK5339 | 86． 80 | TDA 147\％ | E2．80 | TDA3510） | ¢6．80 | TEA1034 | ${ }^{\text {fi．}} 180$ |
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| MDA3161 | ¢9．80 | STK5422 | E8． 50 | TDAI671A | c3． 20 | TDA3510 | £9．80 | TEAzor | 80 |
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| ML92\％ | E4．80 | STK5482 | ¢5．80 | TDAlx7\％ | ${ }^{56} 8.80$ | TDA3sola | ع5．80 |  | ${ }^{\text {c }}$ 1．80 |
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| SAAI293．02 | E8．80 | STR4211 | c6． 80 | TDA2510 | c6．80 |  | E9．80） | TUA2（0n） | E8．50 |
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# Teletopics 

## BSB's SIGN OFF

With the date for the ending of the UK DBS transmissions from the Marco Polo satellites getting ever nearer there has been increasing speculation about what BSkyB will offer those who purchased BSB receiving equipment. Now we know. BSkyB has sent a letter to retailers to say that it will offer customers a choice of either twelve months' free subscription to Sky Movies Plus, the Movie Channel and Sky Sports or a refurbished Amstrad SRX200 satellite TV receiver with separate decoder and the appropriate size dish. With the latter choice, installation will be carried out by TAS and there will be a one-year guarantee. Customers have until October 31st to take up the subscription offer or until December 31 st to take up the equipment offer. Those who purchased BSB equipment after December 1990 will not be eligible for the swap deal.

RETRA's president Robin Farmer commented that BSkyB has done "as little as possible, just to cover themselves", and that he was sorry for those dealers who had wholeheartedly supported BSB. Their customers had bought high-tech MAC receivers and would receive only refurbished Amstrad kit in exchange, which is not an exchange of like products.

## SATELLITE TV ROUND UP

The Independent Television Commission has formally abandoned efforts to find a broadcaster to take over the five UK DBS channels available at the Marco Polo orbital position. Last April the Commission invited anyone interested to contact it. There were twenty replies, but none came up with a proposition that the ITC considered was likely to be viable. The licence will not therefore be advertised. What an ignominious end to official satellite TV broadcasting in the UK.

The Financial Times satellite TV monitor suggests that there were around 58,000 new receiver installations in July. This is little change on the June figure, which may be a good sign as there is usually a drop in July. But the exclusive satellite television coverage of Premier League football has not so far done much for sales.

Supervision Group Lid., Tower Works, 2 Globe Road, Holbeck, Leeds LS 11 5QG (0532 444 195), which claims to be Europe's number one satellite TV distributor, has launched a monthly newsletter. Its aim will be to keep customers up to date with news and views from all quarters of the satellite TV industry. There will be special offers, and a letters and problem solver page is promised.

In the USA Hughes Aircraft is pushing ahead with a project to offer over 150 TV channels by the beginning of 1994, covering the whole country via three satellites. DirecTv, the Hughes subsidiary involved, has entered into an agreement with Digital Equipment to operate the system's billing system. Eddy Hartenstein, DirecTv's president, estimates that the system could have 10 m subscribers by the end of the decade. Thomson Consumer Electronics has been given an exclusive deal to produce the first million receivers, which are expected to sell for around $\$ 700$. The scrambling equipment is to be provided by a News Corporation subsidiary, News Datacom. Forty-fifty channels are to be devoted to pay-per-view movies, with film showings starting every half hour. Further channels will be assigned to
subscription sports services and to special interest groups and ethnic minorities. Twenty channels will be used to deliver cable TV services to rural areas unlikely to be served by cable networks.

## LAUNCHES

Philips has delayed the launch of its digital compact disc system, which was due in September, until later in the year. The reason given for the delay is minor problems experienced during trial production of the players. The new launch will be in the UK, Germany, France and the Netherlands rather than throughout Europe. This is the second time the launch date has been missed - an April launch was initially suggested.

Sony has relaunched its Data Discman in the UK, with a new range of software. This system was also due back in April, but was held back by lack of UK software. The Discman is being sold through Sony Centres and selected independents at around $£ 350$. Discs. at $£ 25 £ 40$, are being distributed via bookshop chains and multiple newsagents.

## PHILIPS' WOES

A sharp drop in profits at Philips in the second quarter of the year, to some $£ 25 \mathrm{~m}$, has been blamed on losses suffered by the consumer electronics division. To preserve market share, selling prices have been reduced by six per cent. A return to profitability in this sector is not expected until 1994. Philips' tube business has also suffered as a result of the conditions in the consumer electronics field.

The DCC launch delay, the move to Apple Computers by Gaston Bastiaens who had headed the CD-I programme, and questions about the future of HDTV in Europe have not helped Philips. In an unprecedented move company president Jan Timmer presided over the company's quarterly press conference. On the HDTV front he made it clear that without financial backing from the EC Philips, which with Thomson had been its major backers, will regard HD-MAC as a lost cause. He blamed the improper use of telecom satellites for TV broadcasting as a major cause of the problems with official DBS services and the resulting delays to the adoption and evolution of the MAC system. Philips and Thomson have been developing a digital TV system for the US market and now seem to see the future of HDTV in Europe in digital terms.

## VIDEO NEWS

JVC has launched four new VCRs, three of them with built-in Video Plus timer systems. Model HRD790 at around $£ 300$ offers LP, an express timer system that uses three sets of buttons, PDC/Startext capability when used with an optional adaptor, a one year/eight event timer and child lock. Model HRDX22 at $£ 320$ includes a Video Plus timer and a multi-brand TV compatible remote control system. At $£ 360$ Model HRD820 has a Video Plus timer, LP, a jog/shutte dial and front AV sockets. Top of the range Model HRD880 at $£ 500$ features a Nicam decoder, hi-fi sound and a Video Plus timer that's linked to a built-in PDC decoder.

JVC claims that more and more people want features that offer ease of use, in particular help with timer setting. According to JVC, surveys suggest that fifty per cent of users cannot set the timer and seventy per cent find programming difficult.

Gemstar, which developed the Video Plus system, claims that over 300,000 handsets have been sold in the UK since
the system was launched here last winter. There has been a change in the distribution franchise arrangements, with Acomex taking over from Video Technology Marketing. Acomex is based at 5 Ivory House, Plantation Wharf, London SW1I 3TN (07I 924 6666).

JVC has developed a new VHS-C cassette that incorporates a built-in safety lock to prevent the tape becoming loose while being carried, thus avoiding the need to check whether the tape is slack before use. The locking mechanism is released automatically when the cassette is inserted in the machine. There's also a safety record slider system of the type used with Video 8 cassettes. No price details have been released.

The technical committee of the British Tape Industry Association (BITA) has released a 14 -page document that's designed to standardise video tape comparison tests. It contains information on reference tapes, test equipment and conditions and the measurement of audio and video characteristics. BITA can be contacted on 0816811680.

## DEVELOPMENTS

Sharp has launched on the Japanese market an ultracompact LCD video projector, Model XVP1. It uses a 3.6in., 100,386-pixel LCD panel that has a horizontal resolution of 350 lines in the NTSC version and 320 lines in a PAL/SECAM version. Use of a newly developed metal halide lamp and microlenses is claimed to give clear, bright and sharp pictures when projected on to an optional 40in. screen. Screen size can be from 30 to 60 in . The XVP1 has built-in speakers and headphone, composite video and $S$ video sockets. Weight is 4 kg . No UK launch details have been released.

Researchers at Sony have developed a laser that produces blue light. Since the amount of data that can be stored on an

## Help Wanted

Can anyone help with a circuit diagram or manual for an ancient but trusty Advance r.f. signal generator, type B4B5? A. Lewis, 74 Dorchester Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP3 8RH (0473 712 503).

Can anyone supply an $\mathrm{Si}-1590 \mathrm{HD}$ audio output device for a Boots R200 tuner-amplifier? The device was used in Aiwa amplifiers but is not available from them. Tony Whittle, 12 Appleby Road, Intake, Doncaster DN2 6HH (0302 363 250).

Can anyone supply a spare line timebase panel (panel C) for the Sony Model KV1820UB? Also the TLC132A panel for the Toshiba 8600UB VCR? Donald Bills, 69 Greenfields Road, Kingswinford DY6 8EG.

Could anyone suggest a source of parts and a manual for the Technisonic VTi0l VCR? It seems to have Daewoo chips in it. It would also be helpful to know of a source of parts for the Datsura Model CDR9009 CTV set. Ivan Walker, 193 Mowhan Road, Mowhan, Co. Armagh, N. Ireland BT60 2ED (086 157 361).

Can anyone supply a line output transformer for the Mitsubishi Model CT 1902L? Tim O'Brien, Claureen Drive, Ennis, Co. Clare, Ireland (065 28512).

I'm anxious to borrow service manuals for the following CTV chassis: Philips G8 550 series; RBM T26A;
optical disc is determined by the wavelength of the laser light used to scan it, use of a blue laser could triple the amount of data stored. The laser employs a new material which consists of magnesium and zinc selenide. Only snag is that the laser has to be operated at temperatures well below freezing.

## GAMES PLAYERS

Amstrad and Sega have joined forces to produce a range of personal computers that can be used as games machines. Around 200,000 of the machines are expected to be sold in Europe this autumn. Microsoft and Tandy are to launch a multimedia games machine this autumn in the USA. Code named Gryphon, the player will use Microsoft's Windows 3.0 system, play games and educational titles and receive satellite TV programmes. It's expected to sell at the equivalent of around $£ 300$.

## PC VIDEOCONFERENCING

British Telecom and Motorola are to develop a chip set that will enable personal computers to be used for videoconferencing. PC users will be able to talk to each other and see each other on their screens and send data and images ("window swapping") to each other. Motorola will integrate BT's standards-based video coding technology into a PC multimedia communications chip set capable of simultaneously processing real-time video, still images and data. Manufacture and marketing of the chip set to business partners worldwide is to be undertaken by Motorola, while BT will incorporate the chip set into future video communications products such as slot-in PC cards. PCs using the technology could be available in a couple of years' time at under £1,000.

Doric/Rediffusion Mk. 3. R.E. Bailey, 51 Robin Gardens, Waterlooville, Hants PO8 9XF.

Can anyone supply a circuit diagram for the Armstrong 625 tuner/amplifier? The fault symptoms are low gain in both channels with hum on the right channel. They are present at the input to the main PCB. Any suggestions? L. Hanran, 15 Wright Street, Townsville, 4811, Queensland, Australia.

Can anyone supply a circuit diagram for the Hinari CT143A/CT180 or just tell me the type no. of the micro used for tuning/channel selection? Please call Colin Boggis on 0483476831 or fax on 0483797893.

Is it possible to transfer the screens from a BBC B computer to a VCR in colour for the purpose of titling home videos? Phone Alan on 0933312 358. A. Brown, 14 Ashby Drive, Rushden, Northants.

Can anyone supply a new video head for a Philips VR2324 VCR (V2000 system) or a non-working machine with a good head? D. Hodgkinson, 42 Victoria Avenue, Cliftonville, Margate, Kent CT9 2UB (0843 223 618) .

Wanted: A damaged optical block for a Panasonic NVMS2. Customer Superglued the manual zoom lever control button and thus has no access to the macro function. As the trade price of the complete assembly is $£ 200$ a means of repair is urgently sought! David C. Woodnott, Spring Cottage, Iron Hill, Dunkirk, Faversham, Kent ME13 9PD (0227751594).

## Panasonic NVL28

This machine would intermittently play back a mixture of the E-E and off-tape pictures. Not something I've seen before, but this machine sure did it. Checks on the video and E-E switching showed that there were no problems here, and I couldn't see any other likely cause of the fault. But this machine has an extra digital pack for picture-in-picture effects. This was where the cause of the problem lay. Two wires in this pack were shorting intermittently. Trimming them provided a complete cure.
B.S.

## Panasonic NVF75

The E-E picture rolled and pulled though video playback was fine. A scope check on the video output from the demodulator pack produced a nice waveform with plenty of sync pulse depth. This went into the luminance processing chip IC301 where it retained its purity. But the output from the M51292FP switching chip IC3901 on the back panel was a sorry picture indeed. Replacing this chip cured the problem.
B.S.

## Panasonic NVF55

Two of these machines have come in recently with the complaint that they were dead, with no output from the power supply module. Disconnecting the module from the machine then plugging it in again showed that the various supplies were at about twice the correct voltage. Checks around IC1103, which provides a stable reference for the power supply, showed that the earth pin was at about 19 V . The print had gone open-circuit around the nearest earthing connection to the screening can.
B.S.

## Panasonic NVJ40

We've had this fault twice recently. At switch on the cassette carriage tried to load though there was no tape. The machine soon powered down as the system control detected that there was a problem. Checks showed that the capstan drive chip was operating at full tilt all the time, irrespective of the control signal at pin 16 . The cure is to replace the BA6435 capstan drive chip.
B.S.

## Akai VS485

The E-E sound disappeared after a few minutes. After an hour the E-E video disappeared as well, leaving a blank raster. The culprit was the UPD75216A-OA6 timer chip. Pin 37, the tuner mute line, was at an indeterminate state $(1.2 \mathrm{~V}$ ) instead of 0 V when a signal was detected. The 1.2 V was enough to turn on the digital sound and video muting transistors when they had become warm. A new timer chip cured the fault.
J.H.

## Sony SLV270 Mk II/Grundig equivalent

Once this machine had reached the half-load state no deck operations worked. As the drum didn't rotate, the microcontroller chip wouldn't allow any functions other than eject.

# Reports from Brian Storm, Jeff Herbert, Steve Cannon, Nick Beer, Paul Hardy, Michael Dranfield, Estelle Sandford and John Edwards 

The cause of the problem was the surface-mounted capacitor CC243 which had a $17 \mathrm{k} \Omega$ leak. Fitting a replacement restored drum rotation and normal operation. We have found that these brown-coloured surface-mounted capacitors fail quite regularly, causing various faults in Grundig machines - this one is a Grundig clone.
J.H.

## JVC HRD540

Playback in the reverse direction is a rare fault with any model. But several of these JVC machines have done exactly this. The sound is backwards: the picture is present with some mistracking bands on it, and there's colour. The play mode is entered but the tape runs in the reverse direction. The cause of the problem is the PU61003 capstan motor: due to an internal fault in its drive chip the forward/reverse line is shorted. In all cases so far a new motor has provided a cure.
J. $\mathbb{H}$.

## Sony SLV615

There was no rewind or reverse picture search, a fault we've had several times with these machines. When rewind was selected the machine rewound the tape for a second then stopped. The same thing happened in the review mode, but every other function was fine. We suspected something optoish, such as an end sensor, reel sensor, etc. So we scoped the outputs from the supply and take-up spool sensors. The low-frequency take-up reel sensor pulses appeared to be perfect, with correct amplitude. Things were different with the output from the supply reel sensor PHOOl however. Pulses were present, but at only half the correct amplitude. Switching the scope to d.c. input showed that the pulses were still well above 0 V at their lowest level. After fitting a new opto-sensor (part no. 8-759-144-33) the machine was back in good working order.
S.C.

## Panasonic NVG45

This machine had an intermittent fault. The capstan would start to run fast in all modes, including lacing and unlacing. When the fault was present in the play mode the machine was toggling between SP and LP. We suspected a fault in the capstan FG pulse feedback circuit and sure enough found that the FG signal was going missing at pin 3 of IC2104 on the sub-main servo part of the PCB. The only components in the feed here are R2184 and C2185. Scope checks at the resistor showed that the signal was present at one side but not the other. It's a surface-mounted component, with a value of $1 \mathrm{k} \Omega$. We cured the fault by fitting a standard eighth watt resistor.
S.C.

## NEC N9055K

This machine would shut down and display the error signal (a flashing square in the fluorescent display). We gave the machine a clean up and changed the idler after which it would record and play back its own tapes. But the recordings were incompatible with another machine: the sound was out of sync and there were multiple noise bars on the screen. The cause of this was that the exit guide didn't locate fully in its V block because the tape guide had slipped out of position in
the guide casting. The entry and exit guides were both replaced. After realignment the machine performed perfectly. I've since learnt that this is a common problem with these machines but it was new to me.
P.H.

## Hitachi VT520

This machine played its own recordings perfectly but with prerecorded tapes the chroma was at best noisy and at worst non-existent. Checks around the chroma processing chip IC301 showed that the chroma signal was of about the right amplitude but very noisy. Matters weren't helped by several mistakes in the circuit diagram: the playback not the record voltages are the ones in brackets while pin 18, the search switching line, should be at 1.5 V or so in play and 0 V in search. I felt that the f.m. entering the chroma processing was poor but it looked fine. Luckily I had another head amplifier, but substitution made no difference. And so to the video heads. Strange though it may seem, the cause of the problem was the lower drum assembly/rotary transformer/drum motor.
N.B.

## Panasonic NV688

This ageing LP VCR was pretty dead: there was no clock display and the machine didn't work, though the LP and power LEDs were permanently on. The cause of the problem was that the regulated 6 V supply, from which the 5 V supply is also developed, was missing. There was voltage at the emitter of the regulator transistor Q1201 and the correct base bias was present, but there was no output at its collector which was dry-jointed. Q1201 is miles away from the power supply area, being mounted on the back of the DD unit.
N.B.

## Sharp VCA100H

This VCR was noisy in review, had low sound output and intermittently poor playback sync. The noise was caused by a barrelled pinch roller, which also caused severe tape riding in all modes. The other two faults were caused by a very worn audio-control head.
N.B.

## Ferguson FV50

This machine wouldn't accept a cassette. Removal of the carriage enabled me to check that the mechanism was working all right and that the problem was due to the carriage itself: the main cam had broken off its mount. N.B.

## Hitachi VT130

Intermittent stopping of the capstan and drum motors is a fault we've had on a couple of occasions with these machines. Because of the intermittent nature of the fault it took us some time to get to the bottom of the problem the first time round. We found that tapping the luminancechroma subpanel would instigate the fault. giving us the clue to its cause - the fact that the 4.43 MHz reference oscillator signal is also used by the servo circuits. A scope check at pin 32 of the servo chip IC601 showed that the 4.43 MHz signal went missing when the Y/C panel was flexed or tapped. After much searching and soldering we decided to replace the HT4539B chip IC301, which is the source of the 4.43 MHz signal. It's a hybrid chip that contains some surface-mounted components and has a crystal stuck on top. We didn't attempt to replace the crystal but think it's the cause of the trouble since no
amount of panel tapping stops the oscillator when the crystal is cooled. Those without an account with Hitachi can obtain the chip from Willow Vale.
M.Dr.

## Sharp VCA615HM

Many odd, intermittent faults with the Sharp VCA range of VCRs can be cured by replacing the mode switch, which is a very easy job. This particular machine proved to be a real time waster however. After we'd replaced the mode switch everything worked fine until fast forward or rewind was pressed. In these modes the reel idler didn't move far enough towards the reel discs to engage. After much checking we discovered that in addition the brakes were not being released from the reel discs. Both of these operations are controlled by a lever off the master cam. By turning the master cam back a bit the brakes came off and the reel idler engaged with the reel disc. So it seemed that the loading motor was overshooting its correct position. Then the penny dropped. Although the new mode switch looked exactly like the old one in fact the rotating part was a different colour. When we prized open the two switches we found that they had different track patterns. After fitting the right switch - a yellow one for the VCA615 - the machine functioned correctly.
M.Dr.

## Akai VS23

This machine came in with a power supply fault - hum on sound and unstable vision. The cause was ripple on the 5 V line from the chopper power supply. Replacing C7 (100) F , $10 \mathrm{~V}), \mathrm{C} 6(220 \mu \mathrm{~F}, 10 \mathrm{~V})$ and $\mathrm{C} 60(100 \mu \mathrm{~F}, 25 \mathrm{~V})$ which were all low in value cured the trouble. Beware of a misleading indication however. A finger placed across pins 2 and 3 of the NJM2352 chopper chip ICI may seem to provide a cure and lead you to look elsewhere, as I did. All this does is to increase the chopper frequency, making the electrolytics more effective.

Repeated failure of TR12 (2SD1292) in the voltage doubler circuit that produces the -35 V supply for the display digitron is caused by shorted turns in choke L8. When you replace TR 12 , always replace L 8 at the same time. M.Dr.

## Ferguson FV30

This machine worked all right with its own recordings and could be set up for near perfect f.m. with an alignment tape, but on all other prerecorded tapes there was rolling as though the TV set was tuned to the wrong channel. If the microcontroller chip IT0I has been changed you will have to follow the instructions in the manual on resetting the head switching pulses. BT08 has to be shorted to chassis for one second: this starts an internal program within IT01 to set up the chip for the deck. It's quite hard to find BT08, which is at the right-hand side of IT01 on the component side. There's a convenient chassis pin next to it. Surprisingly enough doing this cured the fault.

## Akai VS23

The E-E and playback pictures suffered from severe vertical jitter, with line tearing and a ragged hum bar across the centre of the screen. A check on the voltages at the power supply output plug Pl showed that pin 4 was at 17 V instead of 9 V . The 2SA 1286 transistor TR7 turned out to be leaky all round. When this had been replaced the picture was steady but a slight hum bar was still visible. Replacing C4 ( $47 \mu \mathrm{~F}, 25 \mathrm{~V}$ ) and $\mathrm{C} 6(220 \mu \mathrm{~F}, 10 \mathrm{~V})$ cured this final problem.
J.E.

# Palmcorder Shake Compensation 

A problem that users have with mini camcorders is that they are difficult to hold still. This can be particularly noticeable with a zoom to telephoto. Zoom ratios of $8: 1$ are available with these lightweight camcorders - newer models can enhance the zoom electronically to $64: 1$ (with a considerable reduction in the resolution!). Shake compensation is a means of overcoming this problem, and some interesting information came my way recently from Japan on a new technique developed jointly by Sony and Canon.

## The Original Panasonic System

The first shake compensation system was developed by Panasonic for the company's Model NVSI. It achieved improved picture stability by zooming out a small percentage of the scene. In fact about fifteen per cent of the picture area is lost in order to give the compensation circuitry an operating margin. Fig. 1 indicates how the system works.

There are four motion detection zones in the CCD imager's picture area. These are shown as small rectangles in Fig. 1, the outside rectangles (two fields are shown) representing the imager's total picture area. The two fields show the effect of shake with movement in the direction indicated. The shake compensation zoom removes part of the top and right-hand side of the picture on the first field and part of the bottom and left-hand side on the second field, thus stabilising the image. This action occurs when the compensation circuitry is enabled. The smaller, broken-line rectangle in the two fields is the picture area after compensation. Provided the picture shift due to shake is small enough for this smaller rectangle to remain within the larger picture area the system works.

Fuzzy logic is used to determine movement priorities within the detection zones. The system must try to coun-


Fig. 1: Panasonic fuzzy giro shake compensation.


Fig. 2: Block diagram of the fuzzy giro system.

Steve Beeching, T.Eng.

teract efforts to compensate for normal movement within the scene. The technique is referred to as a fuzzy giro: it's an electronic giro stabiliser.

Each motion detection zone is further split into thirty small points. From these the motion detector chip can deduce the amount and direction of shift due to camera shake. The accuracy achieved is better than half a pixel. which is very small. Detection is a digital process carried out between two successive fields, with one of the fields stored in memory. Fig. 2 shows the system in block diagram form.

After calculation of the movement vector in both direction and amplitude the real-time picture from the imager is read into a field store memory with correction applied to the timing pulses to compensate for any shift. Priority is given to vertical movement to avoid applying compensation when someone walks across the scene, otherwise the system could attempt to correct for normal horizontal movement not caused by shake. The fuzzy logic algorithms take care of this.

There remain some problems however, one being the reduced resolution when the anti-shake circuit is switched in and the picture is electronically zoomed, another the limit

Fig. 3: Cross-sectional view of the variangle lens that's the basis of the new Sony/Canon shake compensation system.


Fig. 4: Block diagram of the variangle lens system.


Fig. 5: How the variangle lens system works.
set by the fifteen per cent error margin between the original picture and the zoomed picture. In addition for the detectors to work there must be picture information: low-resolution scenes, blank walls, misty landscapes and so on can impair reliable operation. With the original system tilting the camera up or down rapidly results in a sequence of abrupt still pictures. Different algorithms that differentiate between shake and tilt in the newer NVS5 have largely eliminated this problem however.

## Sony-Canon System

A new technology just announced by Sony and not yet available in the UK consists of a section, called an optical shake compensation mechanism, that's mounted in front of the lens. Since it has been developed by Sony and Canon we can expect both firms to use it.

Compensation is provided by a device called a variangle lens or prism. Fig. 3 shows a cross-sectional view. It consists of two glass plates, with reinforced metal outer rims, connected by bellows. The space between the plates is filled with silicon oil, which has a refractive index of 1.5 the same as glass. Though the device is in fact a lens it acts like a variable prism. Tilting the glass plates with respect to each other deflects the optical path.

The variangle prism provides the compensation while
two piezoelectric angular-velocity sensors carry out movement detection. Fig. 4 shows a block diagram of the system. One sensor detects pitch (vertical movement) while the other detects yaw (horizontal movement). Thus the direction and amount of shake are known. This information is fed to a microcomputer chip which decides what to do about it. Two actuator coils, under the control of the microcomputer, twist and tilt the variangle lens. The drive provided by the coils is in the opposite direction to the shake movement, thus providing compensation.

Fig. 5 shows an example. If the camera is tilted upwards slightly in error due to camera shake the scene moves downwards within the picture area. The variangle lens drive then tilts the lens downwards, maintaining the correct position of the scene within the picture area. The amount of compensation provided is $1.5^{\circ}$ for vertical and horizontal shake.

The system has the following advantages. First, it doesn't depend on sensing movement within the scene: instead, physical gyroscopic movement is detected by inertia. Secondly full resolution is maintained as the picture isn't artificially or electronically zoomed, and the full picture area is maintained

From my point of view as the unit is apparently selfcontained it should be replaced, if a fault occurs, as a module. Just how we'll establish that someone's anti-shake compensator is intermittent has yet to be determined!

## At the Amsterdam IBC

This year's International Broadcasting Convention was held in Amsterdam at the beginning of July. There were many developments in the TV field to be seen and of more general concern were questions about the future of HD-MAC, the European high-definition system.

## PAL Plus

PAL Plus has been around for a while now but seems to be gaining support. Developed by a consortium of European terrestrial broadcasters and equipment manufacturers that includes the BBC, NTL, ZDF, SRG, ARD, IRT, Thomson, Philips, Grundig and Nokia, it's an enhancement of the PAL system offering 16:9 widescreen pictures, digital stereo sound, improved picture quality and compatibility with existing PAL sets. There are some 170 million PAL TV receivers in use worldwide, 100 million of them in Europe. PAL Plus transmissions can be received by these existing sets though there's some reduction in picture quality.

PAL Plus was developed as a defensive measure: terrestrial broadcasters were worried about viewers zapping from widescreen satellite TV channels to terrestrial ones and finding the quality of the latter disappointing. At present PAL Plus is not intended as a rival to the D2-MAC satellite TV transmission system, but at this point in time it's difficult to know how things will develop.

The first PAL Plus demonstration was given at the 1990 IBC: the public saw the system for the first time in 1991. Second generation PAL Plus equipment and receivers were being demonstrated at this year's IBC. The picture and sound quality are impressive and the system shows that there's still plenty of potential left in PAL. A number of test transmissions have been carried out in Germany, and the plan is for a PAL Plus service to begin in 1995. It would be
introduced on a country-by-country basis, with the number of PAL Plus broadcasts depending on the number of sets sold, i.e. if ten per cent of homes have a PAL Plus receiver, ten per cent of programmes would use the system.

## Technical Details

Various papers delivered by members of the PAL Plus group explained how the system works. Special processing is required to ensure that the PAL Plus signal remains largely compatible with the existing PAL system. Fig. 1 shows a simple PAL Plus encoder block diagram: the encoder's output can be displayed on any type of PAL receiver. Fig. 2 shows how two types of displays are produced, for 4:3 aspect ratio PAL sets and 16:9 aspect ratio PAL Plus sets. First, the 576 active lines of the source signal are vertically low-pass filtered and sub-sampled to produce 432 new lines, i.e. three-quarters of 576. A 4:3 aspect ratio set displays these lines with a black band at the top and bottom. High-pass filtering and further sub-sampling produce another 144 active lines which fit at the top and


Fig. 1: PAL Plus encoding block diagram.


Fig. 2: Letterbox processing.


Fig. 3: PAL Plus decoder, basic block diagram.


Fig. 4: Signals section of a PAL Plus receiver.
bottom of the picture. With a $4: 3$ aspect ratio set these lines are in the blacked out areas at the top and bottom of the screen, giving a letterbox effect - the technique is known as letterbox processing. A vertical helper code signal is added in line 23. A PAL Plus TV set senses this signal which tells it to use the 144 extra "vertical helper" lines to fill the top and bottom of the screen so that a full 576 -line display is seen.

The vertical processing system varies with the picture source. When the picture comes from a TV camera the processing is done on a field basis to reduce motion effects. When a film source is used the processing is done on a frame basis. Various steps are taken to hide the vertical helper section of the display from $4: 3$ viewers, including band limiting and a compansion system. It was possible to see the helper however with some programme sources: it appeared as a flickering line within the black band.

Fig. 3 shows the elements of a PAL Plus decoder.

## Colour Plus

One of the problems with PAL pictures is occasional cross-colour and cross-luminance effects. PAL Plus includes a system called Colour Plus to reduce these effects by separating the luminance and chroma ( Y and C ) signals. It relies on the fact that there's a high correlation between the brightness and colour information carried by two succes-
sive fields.
The phase of the colour subcarrier on any two lines that are 312 lines apart, e.g. lines 2 and 314 , differs by $180^{\circ}$. This fact enables simple addition and subtraction to be used to separate the Y and C signals. Field one plus field two gives a cross-talk free luminance signal with a full 5 MHz resolution while field one minus field two provides a crosstalk free chrominance signal.

The Colour Plus system works well with film and video sources where there isn't excessive motion or colour saturation. Video sources with fast movement and high colour saturation are processed without Colour Plus. The PAL Plus group is now working on a ghost-cancellation system.

## The PAL Plus Receiver

The front end of a PAL Plus receiver is just like a conventional PAL set, see Fig. 4, but the signal processing is more complex. In a PAL Plus set four types of signals have to be processed, the Y/C signal, the vertical helper signal, the code signal and the subcarrier. The vertical helper signal is demodulated to baseband then processed while Colour Plus or normal PAL decoding is carried out in the central 432 lines of the picture. The additional 144 lines are produced by vertical interpolation.

There are problems with a PAL Plus signal from a conventional VCR. The helper signal will have been modulated on to the chrominance carrier, but VCRs use a colourunder system to squeeze the chroma signal into a narrow gap in the $0-\mathrm{l} \mathrm{MHz}$ region. Unfortunately this process degrades the helper signal, resulting in poor playback picture quality.

The PAL Plus group has suggested two possible solutions to this problem. The first is to decode the PAL Plus signal to baseband YUV (luminance plus U and V chrominance) with a 16:9 aspect ratio and 576 lines, then encode to the PAL Y/C standard with the $16: 9$ information recorded on the control track. A voltage signal fed to pin 8 of a scart connector would tell the receiver that the picture has an aspect ratio of $16: 9$. This system is used for D2-MAC. With the second proposal the helper signal is demodulated and recorded in the Y channel. During playback the helper signal is fed to the TV set via the scart connector's Y pin. The recorded C signal would contain only chrominance information.

The PAL Plus group is also working on standardisation of the signal that automatically tells the TV set whether the programme source is in $4: 3$ or $16: 9$ form. The proposal is to insert a data burst in the first half of line 23 , with the main energy centred around 2.5 MHz to allow recording by a VCR. There would be around twenty user bits that would tell the receiver the aspect ratio, the type of programme source (e.g. film or video), etc.

## PAL Plus Problems

Charles Sandbank of BBC Engineering explained why the PAL Plus group had opted for the letterbox format rather than extra side panels for $16: 9$ sets. The problem with side panels is that all the action has to be put in the centre of the screen, which defeats the whole object of widescreen TV. Another problem lies in stitching the side panels on to the main picture without viewers seeing the joins or noticing differences in noise, colour etc. Mr. Sandbank pointed out that continental viewers are used to letterbox pictures, the main problem being in the UK where limited broadcasts are made on Channel 4.

A paper delivered by Paul Gardner of the ITC addressed
this problem. He explained that 68 per cent of UK households have at least one TV set with a screen size of less than 20in. As captions and subtitles can't be displayed in the black bands these add to the difficulty. Research carried out by BARB showed that over a third of viewers don't like letterbox pictures. Mr. Gardiner proposed a temporary measure that would help "educate" viewers to accept black bands. This would involve cropping $4: 3$ picture sources to 504 active lines and down-converting $16: 9$ sources to the same number of lines, the result being a 14:9 aspect ratio. The picture loss with a $4: 3$ set would be reduced from $12 \cdot 5$ per cent with the existing letterbox system to just six per cent of full screen height with 14:9. In practice most of the black bands would be masked by overscanning. 16:9 sets would display narrow bands at the sides of the screen. Mr. Gardiner added that $14: 9$ broadcasts would not affect existing studio production practices - all productions would remain in 4:3 or 16:9 form.

Another problem with PAL Plus is in designing a digital sound channel for countries like Germany that use dualcarrier f.m. stereo sound with system B/G. The system B/G channel bandwidth is 7 MHz , which compares with 8 MHz for the UK system I. With system I the main sound carrier is at 6 MHz above the vision carrier whereas with system $\mathrm{B} / \mathrm{G}$ the vision-sound carrier spacing is 5.5 MHz . Thus with system I there's a 2 MHz gap for sound use whilst with system B/G the gap is only 1.5 MHz . The UK has a Nicam digital sound channel at 6.552 MHz above the vision carrier. Nicam is also used by system B/G countries like Spain where the carrier is at 5.85 MHz above the vision carrier. It has so far proved to be impossible to add a digital sound carrier to the German system however because its second f.m. sound carrier is spaced 240 kHz above the main carrier. One answer may lie in the use of a new low-bit rate coding system that can be squeezed into the tight gap. Such systems are unlikely to become available until several years after the launch of PAL Plus however. This could mean that German viewers would be faced with the choice of two types of PAL Plus receiver: early ones without digital sound and later ones with it.

## D2-MAC

European broadcasters, equipment manufacturers and cable and satellite operators have drawn up an action plan that's designed to increase the number of D2-MAC services. The plan, which is being considered by the Council of Ministers, has the following elements:
(1) To increase the number of 16:9 satellite TV D2-MAC services to around thirty by 1996.
(2) To increase the number of cable TV networks that carry 16:9 D2-MAC signals.
(3) To increase the number of $16: 9$ programmes produced.

To implement these objectives the plan asks for an 850 m ECU subsidy. EC telecom ministers have proved to be hostile to this subsidy however. D2-MAC supporters have pointed out that without a subsidy there will be no D2-MAC and thus no HD-MAC.

## HD-MAC

HD-MAC was much in evidence at the Convention, with live broadcasts from Wimbledon attracting lots of viewers.

The pictures looked good, apart from occasional blurring on some fast-moving objects. In a back room of the Eureka 95 stand visitors were shown work that's being undertaken for phase 3 of the HD-MAC project, to start in 1993. The Group has been improving the motion-compensation algorithms, but it was difficult to see how this improved matters as there were no side-by-side comparisons. There was also a multi-channel sound system that cleverly squeezed three extra channels into the space occupied by the conventional stereo channel.

There was much criticism of Europe's step-by-step approach to HDTV, with consumers moving from PAL to D2-MAc and then to HD-MAC. Some conference speakers felt that Europe should go straight to HD-MAC; others said that Eureka 95 should be adandoned and a move made to digital TV instead.

## Terrestrial MAC

MAC was originally conceived as a satellite TV system terrestrial channels couldn't handle its wide bandwidth. But work by Thomson, France Telecom and the French research centre CCETT has produced terrestrial D2-MAC and HDMAC transmissions. The D2-MAC signal uses one terrestrial channel while HD-MAC uses two. Field trials were carried out in Rouen and Grenoble in September 1990 and at Nemours near Paris in May and July this year. In the earlier trials 80 per cent of receiving sites could pick up the D2-MAC signal. In the Nemours trial SECAM/D2-MAC simulcasts were broadcast and compared. The SECAM signals were on channels $32,34,49,52$ and 55 , with D2MAC on channels 31 and 53. The Eurocrypt system was used with the D2-MAC transmissions. Results were said to be promising, the D2-MAC transmissions proving to be more robust than the SECAM ones. No information was provided on the results of the experimental HD-MAC transmissions.

## Digital TV

There was much talk about digital TV, and a terrestrial HDTV system was on show. Many delegates felt that Europe and Japan had been overtaken by the USA, which has opted for digital terrestrial HDTV services. On paper at least digital TV offers a number of advantages over analogue systems such as PAL and HD-MAC. These include greater resistance to noise and interference, easier interfacing with computers and digital telephone systems, easier standards conversion, squeezing more channels into a given bandwidth, and the prospect of multimedia programmes and computer data being sent directly to TV sets. Critics argue that digital TV transmission systems are untested, that there is no evidence that consumers will want multimedia services and that it will take ten-fifteen years for digital TV services to become viable.

Despite this a number of digital TV systems are being developed.

## Spectre

A paper presented by A.G. Mason and N.K. Lodge of National Transcommunications (NTL) provided an update on the IBC's Spectre (special purpose extra channels for terrestrial radiocommunication enhancements) programme, which aims to broadcast digital TV signals in the channel spaces left empty to avoid interference between analogue TV transmissions. A digital signal requires less power than an analogue signal, typically around -30 dB , so digital-
analogue simulcasts are possible. Spectre TV transmissions should offer a wide range of advantages including good quality, widescreen video, digital audio, teletext and over-the-air subscriber addressing. Quite a tall order for what is being planned as a low-bit system!

Spectre uses a discrete cosine transform (DCT) signal compression system to reduce the data rate from 216Mbits/s to $12 \mathrm{Mbits} / \mathrm{s}$. It works by removing redundant and repetitive information within a frame and between frames. The transmission system is OFDM (othogonal frequency division multiplex), which spreads the digital signal over hundreds of carriers - the NTL system uses 400 . This makes the system resistant to interference. Incidentally the digital audio broadcast ( DAB ) system uses a similar multicarrier method to reduce mobile radio interference.

NTL has been conducting test transmissions using the Stockland Hill and Beacon Hill transmitters, which are 50 km apart, with Stockland Hill transmitting the actual digital TV signals while Beacon Hill contributes OFDM interference in the form of random noise. Video and audio signals are fed to a video codec and multiplexer, where they are digitised and compressed. Error correction bits are then added, producing a bit rate of $13 \mathrm{Mbits} / \mathrm{s}$. A bit rate of $256 \mathrm{kbits} / \mathrm{s}$ is used for the digital stereo audio signal. The signals are fed to the OFDM modulator which modulates them on to the 400 carriers, each of which are 15.625 kHz apart. The final steps involve mixing the digital signal with a u.h.f. carrier and feeding this to a high-power amplifier.

Spectre is a versatile system. The codec can work over a range of bit rates and the OFDM modulator can use a variety of digital modulation techniques. The digital transmissions were picked up by a survey vehicle with a 10 m telescopic aerial. It seems that the results showed great promise: further work is planned.

## Vadis

The video-audio digital interactive system (Vadis) is a pan-European project with 34 members from fourteen countries. They include the BBC, NTL, BT, Thomson, Philips, RAI, the German Bundespost. Nokia and Olivetti. Work began in April 1991 and has been designated Eureka 625, the aim being to develop a digital TV system with a low bit rate, i.e. less than $10 \mathrm{Mbits} / \mathrm{s}$. The work is also part of the second audio-visual coding studies set up by the ISO/IEE, commonly called MPEG 2 . A number of compression algorithms, most of them hybrid DCT systems, are at present being evaluated by the Vadis group. Bit rates are in the 4 $9 \mathrm{Mbits} / \mathrm{s}$ range. The group plans to draw up draft technical specifications next year.

## Sterne

The French research centre CCETT is developing Sterne (system de television en radiodiffusion numerique), a terrestrial digital TV system that will operate at around 5Mbits/s for SECAM-quality pictures and 30Mbits/s for HDTV quality. The group hopes to have developed a prototype for demonstration this autumn, with improved systems next year.

## dTTb

A number of European project groups, including Spectre and Sterne, have formed dTTb (digital terrestrial television broadcasting), which hopes to develop a standard digital coding system and has received a 2.7 m ECU grant from the Race (research and development in advanced communica-
tions technologies) project for a feasibility study. The dTTb group is exploring some interesting possibilities, including the following.

Hierarchical broadcasting: A single digital channel could have several picture quality levels, for example HDTV, enhanced TV and standard quality. TV sets would automatically select the best picture quality for their display capability. An HDTV set for example would select the highest quality while a portable might select standard

Graceful failure: Digital systems tend to fail quickly, but the hierarchical approach means that a TV set could move from one level to another depending on the reception conditions.

Single-frequency transmissions: National TV channels could be transmitted using a single frequency, freeing the broadcast spectrum for other uses.

Simulcasts: Digital channels could be broadcast along with analogue ones, allowing analogue systems to be phased out in due course.

## HD-Divine

The system that caused the greatest stir however was HD-Divine (digital narrow-band emission), a digital HDTV terrestrial system developed by a consortium of Scandinavian companies. HD-Divine reduces the video data rate from $900 \mathrm{Mbits} / \mathrm{s}$ to just $24 \mathrm{Mbits} / \mathrm{s}$. The video signal is fed to an encoder which digitises it and compresses it using a DCT-type system. Four audio channels, each with a bit rate of $128 \mathrm{kbits} / \mathrm{s}$, and a $64 \mathrm{kbits} / \mathrm{s}$ data signal are then mixed with the video signal in a multiplexer. This takes the bit rate to $25 \mathrm{Mbits} / \mathrm{s}$. Adding error protection bits gives a final bit rate of $27 \mathrm{Mbits} / \mathrm{s}$. HD-Divine uses a $16-\mathrm{QAM}$ (quadrature amplitude modulation) system and OFDM transmission. The signal can be accommodated in an 8 MHz u.h.f. channel.

The HD-Divine pictures were very sharp and clear, but they were being sent from a van parked at the back of the convention centre and the u.h.f. modulator was out of action. The feeling was that the group would have to show that the system worked well in a real-life situation. Even so its achievement is very impressive. The Scandinavians claim that an HD-Divine service could be up and running within ten years, and want their work to be integrated into a Eureka project. They also suggest that HD-MAC should be abandoned. Not surprisingly this suggestion didn't go down too well in some quarters. The general feeling at the IBC however was that the window of opportunity for MAC is closing fast: even some of its strongest supporters are now working on alternative systems.

## Other Highlights

Sharp showed an HDTV LCD projector, Model XHL100. which produced stunning $101 \times 508 \mathrm{~cm}$ pictures with 3.6 m pixels. Its price in Japan is around $£ 35,000$. NTL displayed System 2000, a digital compression system that operates between bit rates of 4 and $12 \mathrm{Mbits} / \mathrm{s}$, enabling several TV channels to be transmitted in the space normally occupied by one. NTL said that the system could be used by satellite and cable TV operators to offer additional channels. The first units are expected to be available by the end of the year. Pioneer showed its video disc player/recorder, which is the subject of a separate article elsewhere in this issue.

## Problems with NICAM

NICAM: Near Instantaneous Companded Audio Multiplex. What a mouthful! But it just trips off the tongue after you've repeated it a couple of dozen times. Customers are usually most impressed when you can tell them after they've asked what NICAM stands for. Shop staff have also been known to be impressed. Not many people know exactly how the system works, and it's not the purpose of this article to do so. Suffice it to say that the left and right stereo audio signals are converted to digital form then combined and compressed, nearly instantaneously, thus forming the "near instantaneous companded audio multiplex" which is transmitted on a separate subcarrier using DQPSK (digital quadrature phase-shift keying) modulation. Those wanting a more detailed account of the system should refer to Eugene Trundle's articles in the SeptemberNovember 1990 issues of Television. Demodulation and decoding is done by one or two chips and their peripheral components, so a detailed knowledge of the system - the elaborate coding used etc. - is not essential for fault finding purposes.

I'm sure everyone will agree that NICAM is a vast improvement on f.m. sound. I was rather dubious before I heard it, not knowing whether it would be a real benefit or just another of the gimmichs that we are so used to with modern electronic products. But after using a Panasonic TX28AI receiver to listen to the NICAM test transmissions when they were being broadcast on Channel 41 had to admit to being truly impressed. Thankfully so was the customer, who paid for the set in cash there and then.

## Faults

Most of the complaints we've had have been about intermittent crackling or popping, the sound reverting to $f . \mathrm{m}$. and the NICAM indicator(s) going out. Hooking a frequency counter to the relevant VCO and adjusting the trimmer capacitor for the correct read-out has usually cured the problem, regardless of the make of set. We've occasionally had dry-joints on the crystal oscillators, but I can count on one hand the number of times when we've had an actual component failure. Several manufacturers have issued


Fig. 1: Adjustment waveforms for the Panasonic Alpha 2 and 3 chassis. (a) Incorrect, (b) and (c) correct.


Fig. 2: Filter block adjustment.
modification sheets which have been helpful.
One very curious fault that comes to mind relates to Finlux 3000 and 3600 series receivers. During reception of a NICAM broadcast you could hear a 750 Hz tone very faintly. This really did have us stumped but Finlux, being very much on the ball, issued a modification sheet very promptly. You remove the screening can that covers $\mathrm{ICr}^{9}$ in the 3000 chassis or ICr 4 in the 3600 chassis, connect a shorting link from pin 2 of $\mathrm{ICr} 9 / \mathrm{ICr} 4$ to the chassis print at the top of the NICAM module, refit the screening can and finally connect a shorting link from the negative side of Cr 54 in the 3000 chassis or Cr 49 in the 3600 chassis to the chassis earth print, again at the top of the panel.

Another modification, this time issued by Hitachi, relates to the C21 P819 series NICAM receivers. The symptom is the classic NICAM one: crackling and NICAM dropping out. Crystals X 4001 and X 4002 on the NICAM panel have to be replaced.

## Setting Up

We've had to adjust the NICAM demodulators in some Panasonic sets fitted with the Alpha 2 and 3 chassis. The symptom is again crackling or popping NICAM sound. Unfortunately the procedure given for setting up the NICAM decoder in many manufacturers manuals is rather sketchy. Panasonic however has issued an excellent supplementary sheet covering NICAM demodulator adjustment. It could be useful with any decoder of the same design. The adjustment is to suit local reception - our relay transmitter here is notoriously bad, tramsmitting the signal with a ghost. As a result we had terrible problems when teletext first started. With improved text decoders and i.t. strips we now get only a few letters per page corrupted instead of a few letters per sentence. Because of this problem with our local transmitter we may have had more difficulties than other dealers with NICAM decoders.

The setting up procedure for these Panasonic sets isn't too complicated but does call for the use of a dual-beam oscilloscope. It differs slightly depending on the chassis. The procedure with the Alpha 2 chassis (Models TX24AI, TX28A1. TX24W 1, TX28W1 and TX2IV1) is as follows:
(1) Tune to a NICAM transmission and set the scope to the $\mathrm{X}-\mathrm{Y}$ or external Y input mode.
(2) Connect one scope probe to pin 19 (channel B input) and the other to pin 20 (channel A input) of the NICAM demodulator chip IC2502. Observe the trace. Fig. 1(a) shows the incorrect condition.
(3) Adjust the carrier frequency VCO trimmer C2546 to obtain the waveform shown in Fig. 1(b), i.e. the waveform is now on a level instead of a slanted axis.
(4) The filter block T2501 (see Fig. 2) next has to be adjusted. It's most important that the correct core is adjusted. Adjust the core next to the coloured one until the trace is as shown in Fig. I(c). If this cannot be achieved, adjust the coloured core to obtain the same result.

The relevant models with the Alpha 3 chassis are the TX25A2, TX28A2, TX33A2, TX25W2, TX25W2A and TX28W2. The procedure is as given above but in step (3) the trimmer is C2044 and in step (4) the filter block is T2001.

Thank goodness for mod sheets!

# Experiments with Video 

David C. Woodnott

Do you ever wonder how you got yourself into this business and why you're now doing what you are? Having always been fascinated by the idea of television, I suppose I should not be surprised to find myself in later life happily running my own small business engaged in a rather specialised aspect of our common endeavour - camcorder and camera servicing.

## Flying-spot Principle

From my earliest days as an apprentice with a national rental company (now trading under another name) in the late Fifties I was interested in the idea of building some form of closed-circuit TV. At that time however there was really virtually nothing with which a keen amateur constructor could build a TV camera. There were certainly no cheap secondhand vidicons. But I remembered reading about the idea of using a TV set to produce a blank raster which would scan a transparency mounted in front of it, the light in turn falling on a photocell acting as a pickup device. The resultant video signal would hopefully produce a picture on a suitable monitor. That was the theory, anyway.

Early kitchen table experiments were only moderately successful but did prove that the principle worked. A rather insensitive photocell and my inexperience both caused problems. The basic set-up I was using is shown in Fig. 1. It consisted of a small 9in. TV set, such as a Bush or Ferguson model, suitably modified to produce the required scanning raster. The "camera" consisted of a photocell followed by several stages of amplification and a modulator which, I hoped at the start, would produce an r.f. output somewhere in Band I. Blanking pulses were generated and fed to the TV set. Sync was optional! Initially I relied on the monitor's timebases operating in the free-running mode. In later "improved" versions sync pulses were stripped from an offair transmission and added to the video signal, as shown. Instead of a transparency a photographic negative could be scanned. This called for signal inversion in the electronics to produce the correct display.

The arrangement worked reasonably well and created much interest in the workshop. A later version was used in the early Sixties to provide advertising in a showroom window. This method of producing TV pictures is known as flying-spot scanning and is, at least in principle, the same as the film-to-video transposition system used by the broadcasters - though they don't use scrap TV sets and homemade pick-up arrangements!

## Use of a VCR 97

At about this time probably my biggest failure occurred. I had decided to build a purpose-made scanner unit to produce better-quality pictures. It used an electrostatically scanned and focused c.r.t., type VCR97, to produce the raster. These tubes were available as ex-government surplus at the time and provided a cheap way of experimenting. Much time was spent in building the unit. Then the great day arrived: time to see just how well it worked!

All was ready. The newly built scanner produced a nice bright, well-focused raster which was locked to off-air sync pulses. The photocell and the video and modulator circuits produced an r.f. output. The family's 17 in . Murphy set was being used as the monitor, while my parents were out at work. A transparency was carefully positioned. A glance at the monitor showed - nothing! What was wrong? Everything was checked and rechecked but there was still no picture, only the stubborn, locked, blank raster. Suddenly the penny dropped! What had I overlooked in building my new unit? The c.r.t. produced a bright green raster but the photocell was completely insensitive to green light. Ah well, back to the drawing board. I went back to using the 9 in. Ferguson set for the raster, the green disaster subsequently becoming part of an oscilloscope. Back to square one, though a valuable lesson had been learnt.

## Using a Photomultiplier

I soon got to thinking about improving the picture quality and system noise level. After all the photocell was an industrial device, designed for other purposes - certainly not television! At this time I came across a gem of a book by Ian Sinclair, later to achieve fame through his inexpensive computers and other inventions. One of the projects it contained was a flying-spot scanner. The circuitry was much as I'd been using but the pick-up device was something completely different - a photomultiplier. Where could I get one? After much searching through the ads in Practical Wireless and Practical Television I found a supplier of secondhand 931A photomultipliers.

In appearance the device is similar to a 6 V 6 GT valve, with an octal base and a glass envelope. Its light-sensitive area is at one side, like a photocell. To use it a special can had to be made to screen all except the light-sensitive aperture. Basically the multiplier is a photocell-type pickup incorporating additional concentric anodes that are operated at increasing potentials with respect to each other, the voltage difference between each anode being around 100 V . As a result it provides a higher-level video output signal. The principle of secondary emission, something to be avoided with normal valves, is used to generate this higher-level output. With each electrode being held at


Fig. 1: Basic flying-spot scanner system used in David Woodnott's early experiments.
a progressively higher voltage, an increasing secondary electron flow is produced at each "stage" (secondary electrons are those emitted from a surface bombarded by "primary electronics"). I found that the device not only provided a much improved signal level but also reduced the system noise. Various other improvements were made over a period of time, but the technique had its limitations. Cheap vidicon tubes were still not even on the horizon at the time, so what next? My aim was to emulate a video camera tube without actually having one. A tall order!

## Projection TV

In the early Sixties it was probably quite common for keen young engineers to be given work that older, more sensible chaps shied away from. In my case I was given anything to do with projection TV, something that was considered to be beastly - designed to bite and maim. Projection sets did after all employ an e.h.t. voltage that was far in excess of that used by any other TV receivers of the era. So I suppose that some reticence was understandable. But the result was that I became something of an expert at servicing these beasts.

Various makes were encountered, mainly Philips, Ferranti and Decca, and in addition there was the "in-house" type that was manufactured by Plessey. All used a Fresnel screen and back-projection to give a large, flat but faint picture. In their day these projection sets were the only way of producing large-screen pictures. The heart of the projection system was a Schmidt folded-optical unit. It was a large, heavy box with optical adjustment control by means of three main threaded knobs. The c.r.t. was generally a Mullard MW6-2, a small-screen tube that was operated with
an e.h.t. of 25 kV . This was derived from an r.f. oscillator that drove what looked like a line output stage: there was a pentode output valve and a special output transformer that contained three EY51 valves in a voltage multiplier arrangement. The beam current was high at around 1 mA and e.h.t. regulation was always a problem, causing defocusing with bright scenes. A dark room (curtains closed) was needed to get reasonable picture quality, an arrangement that was not ideal for servicing!

But my new-found interest in projection TV fitted in well with my wish to produce real TV pictures. A marriage of projection TV and the flying-spot scanning technique seemed to be the way, though rather cumbersome, of achieving my aim. The projection TV set was used as the scanner, projecting its raster on to my bedroom wall. The photomultiplier was positioned to look at the same wall area.

The monitor set eventually produced a semblance of an image of my younger brother sitting, terrified, in the darkened room. His distress was to be expected I suppose, considering the effects of the full brightness beam on his eyes. He soon departed, mumbling something about elder brothers being "cracked".

I had both succeeded and failed in my endeavours. A true television picture had been produced without a camera tube, but the need for anyone being "televised" to sit in a darkened room before the dazzling glare of an MW6-2 tube was not likely to generate much enthusiasm in a prospective TV star. I felt, I think, like a latter-day John Logie Baird. Having achieved this "success" my interest gradually waned until, some years later (in the early Seventies), cheap vidicon camera tubes became available. But that's another story!


## What a Life!

## Donald Bullock

Old Abe dropped in again the other day. He's a rustic who lives in a shed close to the banks of the Severn, along with a growing crop of old TV sets, a screwdriver or two and a tube of Superglue. His dwelling doesn't run to a bathroom or a sink, and he hasn't changed his cloths in all the years I've known him. So his aroma precedes him. If there's anything he's better at than bottling it's long-distance walking and doffing his cap to anyone who wears a tie. But he pays his way.

Brother Terry, who lives almost a mile away, saw him striding past and telephoned to warn me. "Your buddy Abe is closing in on you" he joyously announced, "he's got one of his sets wrapped up in his horse blanket and tied with binder twine. Better get the kettle on."

## Abe's Pye T194

Abe soon put in an appearance. He greeted me and started to unpack his parcel. Out came yet another monochrome portable, this time a 14in. Pye T194 (Philips TX chassis).
"Me brother gave 'im to me. Says 'e's gone wrong once too often, keeping 'im broke. Now 'e's mine and I'm going to give 'im to the Merry Widow. Aaarh, I likes 'er!' And he doffed his cap. "I've 'ad a quick look at 'un" he added.

As I put the set on the bench its back fell off. I plugged it in, switched on and found that the field scan had collapsed to about a fifth of an inch high. "If you plugs the aerial in and turns that knob down" said Abe, "you sees little cowboys roamin' about in that little bar o' light".

I quickly checked the field output transistors. One of them had recently been replaced. It was the other one, TS521 (BC338), that was virtually open-circuit. A new one brought back full height. Then the picture started to twist around. I switched off quickly and looked at the smoothing. The main block had been pulled out of the board and pressed back in.

I looked at Abe, did some sums, resoldered the capacitor, tested the set and boxed it up. As I was about to speak Abe put three tenners and a fiver on the bench.
"I knows, thirty five pounds ain't it?" he said. "That's what it cost me brother at Snoddies when it went like it the other day."
"Abe" I said, "what can I do with you? It ought to be fifteen pounds. I was going to make it twenty because of your bloody meddling, but you're always straight, pay up without a word and walk eight to ten miles here and as many back with your sets under you arm. Pick up two of those tenners before I start thinking about the price of Bell's whisky. I've got a thirst brewing."

## A Metal Box with Dials

Our next caller was Jeremy Chamberlain, a farmer who lives close by. He's pretty big in farming circles and sometimes appears on the BBC, putting forward the farmer's view. He was carrying a metal box with dials. Said it was a Marconi moisture meter, Model TF933C.
"What does it do, Jeremy?" I asked.
"Measures the moisture of my grain" he said. "According
to the instructions it's a Wheatstone bridge. I put the grain in this little pillbox thing, screw it down tightly with this thumbscrew and read the results on the dials. Only it doesn't work."
"Er . . . doesn't it then?"
But he'd gone, leaving me baffled by his machine. Sir Charles Wheastone, who invented the famous bridge, lived round the corner. But he died in 1875, when I was a young blade. I wished that Jeremy had brought the thing along earlier. It ran off two PP3 batteries and they'd been left in when exhausted. As a result the battery clips had suffered. So I ordered some new ones.

## John Berryman's Samsung CTV

John Berryman's big van then drew up. He's the cheerful undertaker from a nearby village. "You look well Don. How's Greeneyes?"
"We're both fine John" I said, "and expect to last for some time. You'll have to be patient."
"Looks like rain out there" John said, "and this blessed Samsung's just died. What can you do about it?"
"Can't do much about the weather" I whipped, "as for the set - well, you're the undertaker." Fierce wicked like.

He left me with the set, a C1210R which is similar to the Alba CTV10. Actually it's the Nikkai Baby 10 chassis. Very neat and tidy it is. I pressed the power button and the LED came on. Pressing the standby button produced a relay click but apart from this the set remained as dead as a doornail.

I'd no circuit diagram. Oh for the days when a dozen circuits would enable you to repair almost any set put on the bench! And we could mend most of them without having to get the circuit out. I opened the Samsung and found that the fuses were o.k. A check showed that there was 16 V across the main smoothing block. This voltage was present at the relay's output and then passed to the AL2711K chip IC402, a huge three-pinned device that lives in its own boxy heatsink. The second pin is connected to chassis, so I hoped to find a decent h.t. voltage on the remaining pin. There was 2.9 V .

## The Logic of It

With masterful logic I decided that either the chip was failing to deliver or something was dragging down its output. I open-circuited L402, which feeds its output to the other circuits. The voltage fell to zero, so I had to stop and think. From a study of the chassis it was soon apparent that the chip was wide open and that the 2.9 V had actually come via R408 which is in parallel with the chip and L402. To prove that the chip was the cause of the problem I bridged it with a $5 \Omega, 10 \mathrm{~W}$ resistor and momentarily switched on. Up came a writhing raster. A new AL2711K chip did the trick.

## Ferguson TX100 Chassis

Just as I was pulling a Ferguson 22G2 (TX 100 chassis) on to the bench I heard a clopping sound outside. I looked out to see a vision of poetry in motion. It was Miss Dream again. She was carrying a set that looked like the one I'd just repaired.

After the pleasantries and a promise to have it ready that evening she swept off. I put the set aside for attention later. After the experience I'd just gained it would be a piece of cake.

I switched the Ferguson set on and it squealed at me. It
was otherwise dead. With the back off it was clear that the noise was coming from the line output stage. As I had an output transformer in stock I decided to try it. Up came the picture and the set screamed no more. I wasn't too bad an engineer after all I thought.

## Miss Dream's Portable

As I picked up Miss Dream's portable the storm began. Rain peppered down, lightning flashed and the mains supply started to blink. Her set was a Samsung C1212R. I looked reassuringly at my remaining AL2711Ks, reckoning that I'd shortly be needing one. But when I opened the set up I found a totally different chassis that was quite new to me. And I didn't have the circuit for this one either. There seems to be no end to service data problems these days, especially with the variety of cheap sets around. We can hardly add the price of a manual to the bill with each new set we get.

The fuses were once more all right. They always are! I looked for h.t. at the main smoothing block then traced along to the emitter of Q131, a 2SB948A transistor used as a regulator. There was 18.5 V at its base but nothing at its collector, so I disconnected its load. As this didn't restore its collector voltage I checked the transistor. It was good.

Its base is controlled by Q130 which was biased off with over 17 V at its base. I traced this state of affairs back to the TMP47C433AN microcontroller chip IC105. Without a circuit diagram there was little I could do apart from check for a good waveform across its crystal oscillator. This was excellent.

## Microcontroller Fault

A quick phone call to Samsung proved helpful, as it always does. I put the phone down with the knowledge that the chip should have an input voltage of 4.5 V at pin 42 and that there should be a 4.7 V output at pin 8 . The first voltage was present but not the latter. At this point son Steven announced that we had a replacement - one of a complimentary pack that Toshiba had kindly sent us yonks ago when we contacted its technical department about a problem we'd then had.

When I fitted the chip the set sprang to life. But there was no brightness. Advancing the first anode voltage potentiometer on the line output transformer a little produced a bright screen with a large row of noughts across it! None of the front controls worked, and I then found that the set would come on from cold without pressing the standby button.

I carefully checked the chip I'd taken out with the one I'd put in. The numbers were identical except for what I'd thought had been a batch number under the big one. The chip that had come out had 3842 on it while the one I'd fitted had a different number in this position. Samsung confirmed that this was the programming software number. Steven managed to get the correct one locally, and this proved the point. The set now worked perfectly, with a striking picture.

It was getting towards the end of the day, and we appeared to be in for a wet and windy night. Our last caller was Miss Dream, who was delighted to find that her set had been done. She paid up and made to clip-clop out.
"You're my favourite man today" she cooed.
Then Jeremy Chamberlain phoned. "Any luck with the meter?" he asked.
"Not yet Jeremy, probably tomorrow" I said. "But if you're wondering about your grain, I can help you there. It's wet Jeremy, very wet."

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- VHS TAPE PATH ALIGNMENT

This is something that's frequently done but often done incorrectly. It seems to have become common practice to move the V blocks to provide compensation for tracking problems. It's worth knowing why alignment should be carried out according to the book and exactly how to do so. Joe Cieszynski explains it all.

## - SERVICE BRIEFS - PHILIPS

Guidance on various modifications and servicing problems for the Philips range of CTV sets, VCRs and CD players.

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## Pioneer's Video Disc Recorder

Gerald Exeter

One of the big attractions at this year's International Broadcasting Convention was the first video disc player/recorder to be shown in Europe, the Pioneer VDR-V1000P. VDR stands for video disc recorder.

Optical disc systems like the Compact Disc and Laser Disc have a number of advantages compared with tape systems, including fast access and no wear. As the disc is read by a laser which is not in physical contact with it. functions such as pause and freeze frame can't damage the disc or the player. But until now tape has offered one major benefit, the ability to record as well as play back. What's more the record, playback, erase, record, playback cycle can be repeated many times. The audio CD and Laser Disc are read-only systems. This hasn't stopped CD players and discs selling well, but is one of the reasons why Laser Disc players haven't been similarly successful. Although the Laser Disc offers superior picture quality to the VHS system, consumers are prepared to forgo quality for the convenience of being able to record TV programmes. But disc recording systems are now beginning to appear in the audio and video markets. Will they eventually replace today's tape systems?

## Write-once Recording

For some time now WORM (write once, read many times) disc systems have been available in the professional and industrial markets. These enable the user to record, but once this has been done the information can't be changed. There are two main sizes of WORM discs, 5.5 in . which hold around 800 Mbytes of data and 12 in . which store up to 2Gbytes. Music studios also use CD-R (CD recordable) discs for test pressings.

Some WORM discs are coated with a reflective alloy such as Tellurium. Recording is carried out by a process called ablative coating: heat from a high-power (typically 17 mW ) laser melts the coating, the cooling process leaving a series of raised edges or pits which for playback are read by a low-power (around 2 mW ) laser. Other WORM discs use organic dyes which are heated to form pits.

WORM discs are useful for archive material such as medical records and legal documents, but they can't be used for material that needs to be changed or updated. For this we have to turn to another recording technology.

## Erasable Discs

Erasable discs work like tape and can be used and reused. Several erasable disc systems have emerged, the most promising being the magneto-optical type. This is the technology used by the VDR-V1000)P and also by Sony's Mini Disc system.

Magneto-optical discs store information in the form of a series of magnetic flux reversals. With digital information a north pole facing upwards represents one, downwards zero. On a blank disc all the north poles face downwards. During the recording process the specially coated disc is bathed in a magnetic field. Heat from the laser traversing the disc raises the temperature of the coating above its Curie point. When this happens the drive magnet changes the polarity of the bit. The modulation switches the laser on and off, a one
being written each time the laser is switched on.
Playback relies on the Kerr effect, which results in the reflected beam from a polarised light source (the laser) being twisted either clockwise or anticlockwise. The beam is passed through a polarising filter, which either blocks or passes it depending on whether it's twisted one way or the other. The player thus reads the recorded information.

Some magneto-optical systems use a direct over-write system: the laser is kept in a constant state while the magnetic field is modulated instead. The advantage of this is that erasure and recording can take place during a single pass.

The information can be stored on the disc in digital or analogue f.m. form.

## The VDR-V1000P

Pioneer launched its first VDR in the NTSC markets last autumn. The VDR-V1000P is the PAL version. It's aimed at professional users such as broadcasters and video production houses.

The recorder consists of a large unit that's divided into two sections. The top section contains the recording and playback system while the bottom section has various controls and a large display screen. Overall dimensions are $436 \times 321 \times 649 \mathrm{~mm}$ : the unit weighs 42 kg and the power consumption is 120 W

The video signal is recorded as f.m. in analogue component (luminance plus two colour-difference signals) form, the luminance bandwidth being 4.8 MHz . This is less than the full PAL bandwidth, but Pioneer points out that it was necessary to strike a compromise between price and performance. Later models may have an extended bandwidth. The signal-to-noise ratio for the Y (luminance) component signal on frame 20,000 is claimed to be 46 dB , the corresponding figure for the chrominance signal being 50 dB .

The VDR-V1000P's picture quality is very good, with sharp detail and rich colours. There are inputs for component (Y/C), analogue RGB and composite video, also stereo PCM sound. Time-code sockets and an RS422 computer interface are also provided.

## Recording and Editing

The VDR-V1000P uses 12in. magneto-optical discs which are housed in a protective caddy. They are coated with a mixture of iron, terbium and chromium. The writing laser power is 15 mW , the read laser power being 2.5 mW . Apparently the disc can be re-recorded around a million times: Pioneer says that it would take over 60 years to repeatedly over-write the disc, and that's without viewing the recordings!

In order to provide freeze-frame facilities the constant angular velocity (CAV) system is used. Each disc holds up to 32 minutes of full-motion video or 92,000 fields, to which there's individual access. Time-lapse and audio-only recordings can also be made.

Video signal recording is as follows. AD conversion is the first process: the Y signal is sampled 720 times per line while the two colour difference signals ( $\mathrm{R}-\mathrm{Y}$ and $\mathrm{B}-\mathrm{Y}$ ) are sampled 120 times per line. The signals are then time
compressed. This involves feeding the data into a RAM and reading it out at a faster speed. For the Y signal the compression ratio is $1: 1 \cdot 2$, the colour-difference signal compression ratio being 1:7.2. Sync and time-code information are added before DA conversion and recording on the disc in f.m. form.

The video information is arranged on the disc in sectors. To give fast access each sector contains address data which has been added to the video information. This address data consists of 137 bits arranged as follows: 52 bits for clock pulse generation - these bits are a series of ones; 3 bits for block synchronisation; 5 bits for the sector number; a 3-bit gap; an odd track consisting of 18 data bits and 16 errorcorrection bits; another 3-bit gap; an even track that's again made up of 18 data and 16 error-correction bits; and finally another 3-bit gap.

The VDR-V1000P uses the Video-8 PCM recording system for the sound. It's an 8 -bit system that improves the performance by means of noise-reduction compansion and non-linear quantisation. Before AD conversion the audio signal is compressed to $1: 2$. Sampling is then done at 31.25 kHz , with 10 -bit quantisation. This sampling rate provides a frequency response of $20 \mathrm{~Hz}-15 \mathrm{kHz}$. Before recording the 10 -bit words are converted to 8 bits using a non-linear encoder. DA conversion and expansion take place during playback.

Each audio data block consists of 107 bits arranged as follows: eight 8 -bit data words; two 8 -bit P and Q parity words; one 16 -bit error detection word; one 8 -bit address word; three sync bits.

The access time is 0.3 sec but even this isn't fast enough for real-time editing. A two-head system (see Fig. 1) is used to get round this problem. The two heads offer the following
facilities:
(1) Two or more sequences from different parts of the disc can be played back without seams. The user simply keys in the time codes for the required sequences, after which the VDR-V1000P plays them as if they were all joined together on video tape. Thus users don't need a second machine for editing and there's no loss of picture quality.
(2) The ability to play back a sequence while recording on another part of the disc.
(3) The ability to rerecord information from one part of a disc on another part without signal erasure. This makes it possible to mix video sources, add titles and captions, etc.

## Future Developments

The VDR-V1000P will be available next January at around $£ 25,000$. Each disc will cost some $£ 800$. Pioneer plans to expand the playing time and may even market a multi-standard machine. But more interesting is the longterm plan to produce a version for the domestic market. The discs will need to be much cheaper - a Pioneer executive suggested a price as low as $£ 8$ - before a home system becomes feasible. If you think that this is maybe a bit unrealistic, just think for a moment of the cost of the first broadcast VCRs. Whoever thought then that VCRs would find their way into people's homes?

## Acknowledgements

My thanks to Pioneer Japan and to Andrew Wilson, general manager of Pioneer UK's Industrial Systems Division, for their help in the preparation of this article.


Fig. 1: Optical head arrangement.

# Long-distance Television 

Roger Bunney

There was a reasonable amount of Sporadic E activity during June/July considering our position in solar cycle 22 and the relatively high peak. July didn't produce such high drama as the North American opening on June 22nd, but it was certainly an active month.

Excellent weather during early July brought with it tropospheric reception in the Midlands and the south and east of the UK on the $6 / 7 \mathrm{th}$, with Band III/u.h.f. signals from Germany. Denmark, France and the Benelux countries. Of interest was the stability of many of the signals, strong with little fading. The 18th produced Spanish signals in the south west. Roger Fussell (Torpoint) commented that it was the best Spanish opening he'd ever seen, with signals on chs. $\mathrm{E} 2,3,4,5,8,9,11,23,31,33,34,37,42$ and 49 . On the 28th he logged TVE Madrid ch. E24 at 0620 BST. Poignant this: I well recall the excitement when the late Doug Bowers received this station at Torpoint in the late Sixties. In those early days of u.h.f., with the first surplus valved tuners costing 29/6d from Laskeys and transistor tuners with AF 139 s just beginning to appear, this was dramatic news.

The 17th produced suspected auroral activity, with characteristic rumbling noises in Band I from a northerly direction. Cyril Willis noted this at around 2000 BST. Unfortunately no pictures were seen.

The extensive $\mathrm{SpE} \log$ is as follows:
5/7/92 RUV (Iceland) chs. E3, 4; SVT (Sweden) E2, 3, 4; NRK (Norway) E2, 3, 4; YLE (Finland) E4; DR (Denmark) E3,4; CIS (Russia) R2: +PTT (Switzerland) E2, 3; CST(Czechoslovakia) R1; C+ (France) L2; RAI (Italy) IA, B; ARD (Germany) E2; TVE (Spain) E2, 3. CIS R1, 2, 3; DR E3, 4; SVT E2, 3, 4; NRK E2, 3, 4; ARD E4; TVP (Poland) R1, 2; ORF (Austria) E2a; C+
I.2, 3;RTP (Portugal) E2, 3; TVE E2. 3; TVE-2 E2. RAI IA.B.
7/7/92 NRK E2; SVT E2; DR E3; TVE E2, 3.
8/7/92 ARD E3: TVE E2, 3, 4: RTP E3; C+L2: CIS R1. 2.
9/7/92 TVE E2, 3, 4; RAI IA, B; C+L3; DR E4; HTV (Yugoslavia)E3; SVT E2, 3, 4; CIS R2.
10/7/92 NRK E2, 3, 4; RUVE4.
11/7/92 RAIIA.
12/7/92 TVE E2; RAI IA; SVT E2; DR E3, 4.
13/7/92 TVE E2.
16/7/92 CIS R1; TVE E3.
17/7/92 TVR (Romania) R1; HTV E3; RAI IA.
18/7/92 RAIIA, B; TVA (Italy) IA; TVE E2, 3, 4; SVT E2.
19/7/92 RAIIA, B; TVA IA; SVT E2.
20/7/92 TVE E2, 3; RAI IA, B; HTV E3, 4; +PTT E2; TVP R1; ARD E2; CST R1; CIS R1. 2; MTV (Hungary) R1; SVT E2, 3, 4;YLE E3, 4; NRK E2, 3, 4; RUV E4; RTE (Ireland) ch. B ; unidentified ch. A2 signal.
21/7/92 TVE E2.
22/7/92 TVE E2, 3, 4; RAI IA; +PTT E2; CST R2: DR E3.
23/7/92 RAI IA; HTV E3, 4.
24/7/92 RAIIA.
25/7/92 CST R1; RAI IA; TVE E2, 3, 4.
26/7/92 TVE E2, 3. 4; RAI IA; RTP E3; NRK E2; RUV E4.
27/7/92 NRK E2; TVE E4.

28/7/92 TVE E2, 3, 4.
29/7/92 TVE E2, 3, 4.
30/7/92 TVE E2.
31/7/92 NRK E2; TVE E3.
Mystery reception time. Gary Smith (Derby) received a ch. E4 test card with the identification ISR-P. Can anyone help identify this? Garry also noted RUV using an electronic test pattern with a small dark central circle, not unlike the W. German patterns of the mid-Sixties. And yours truly received an unidentified programme on ch. E4 at 1500 BST on the 23rd, consisting of an English lesson. The signal came from the south east, was slow fading and weak, eventually fading out. Any ideas?

An active month then. My thanks to the following for sending in logs and reception reports: Roger Fussell (Torpoint), Iain Menzies (Aberdeen), Peter Schubert (Rainham), Garry Smith (Derby), Simon Hamer (Powys), Cyril Willis (King's Lynn) and David Oliver (Birmingham).

In the early Sixties a company called Fringevision, of Marlborough, Wilts, manufactured aerials and aerial parts. Does anyone have one of this company's catalogues?

## News Items

CIS: The Moscow Independent Broadcasting Company (MIBC) plans to join forces with Ted Turner (CNN) in operating a commercial service with transmissions on ch. R6. A licence has been applied for.
Hungary: Passage of the Broadcasting Bill has been postponed, delaying at least three planned TV channels.
Czechoslovakia: Two independent channels. Perfex and Medium 5, have been given a three-year licence in the Slovakian Republic. They will use channels previously used by TA3 and to start with share equipment. Nearly twenty applicants are seeking licences to transmit over the OK3 network in the Czech Republic.
Poland: The following independent stations are now reported to be on air: TV-Es Poznan ch. E32; Telewizija Nezalezna Lublin ch. R55 (10kW e.r.p.).
Hong Kong: Legislation allowing pay-TV has been passed. The first operator will have a monopoly for the years 19936. Cable technology is favoured by the government.

Brunei: Peter Bacon reports in Six News that the transmitter at Libang, his local one, operates during 0800-1530 weekdays and slightly longer at the weekends. Its carrier frequency is not locked and tends to drift, generally being $\pm 5 \mathrm{kHz}$ of ch. E2. It has been measured as low as 48.2495 MHz . This East Malaysian station is obviously the one that's been seen during recent F2 openings. Peter goes on to report that there are two transmitters to the south of him, which suggests Indonesia, their carriers being measured at 48.2396 MHz and 48.2605 MHz .
The Netherlands: The Dutch government is offering tenyear licences to the current broadcasting groups if they will amalgamate their operations to provide a three-channel public service.
Sweden: The new TV4 network has opened studios in Stockholm, Goteborg, Malmo, Sundsvall and Vasteraas. Others are planned.
In brief: The Finnish third network FUBK test pattern now carries the identification YLE TV3. Egyptian TV has started regular teletext transmissions.

## ATV Contest Dates

The BATC tells us that ATV contests will be held on the dates listed below. It's more likely therefore that ATV
signals will be seen during these periods, either at 70 or 24 cm . The former is the easier frequency ( 435 MHz ) to receive since a.m. video is normally used, it lies within the range of many tuners and Group A aerials work reasonably well. All times are GMT.
International ATV: $1800 \quad 12 / 9 / 92$ to $1200 \quad 13 / 9 / 92$. All bands, fast scan.
Autumn ATV: 0001-2359 15/11/92. All bands, slow and fast scan.
Winter ATV: 1800 12/12/92 to 1200 13/12/92. All bands, fast scan.

## Satellite TV

The Olympus satellite at $18.5^{\circ} \mathrm{W}$ has been reorientated to provide wider European coverage and is carrying various experimental transmissions. The BBC is testing DAB over the RAI transponder - tests will continue until late spring next year.

The Intelsat 603 craft is now operational at $34.5^{\circ} \mathrm{W}$, replacing 506 which has been moved to $50^{\circ} \mathrm{W}$. At the time of writing the all Ku band Intelsat K craft is still testing at $21.5^{\circ} \mathrm{W}$ - no TV signals have been seen to date though Brightstar is to use four channels for European-American links.

The Eutelsat II F4 craft is in operation at $7^{\circ}$ E. ECS I F4 is to move to $35^{\circ} \mathrm{E}$.

NTL has developed a video noise reduction system for HD-MAC signals, enabling a 60 cm dish to be used when a 1 m one would previously have been required. A sort of video Dolby.

Turkey: the Avrasya service for central Asian CIS states has been launched via Intelsat 507 at $57^{\circ} \mathrm{E}$.

The US company Natropolis International has introduced a red laser beam feedhorn alignment system. The Laser Focus Finder fits inside the feedhorn's throat. When activated it produces a beam that's used to centre the feedhorn precisely. C and Ku band versions are available.

Ian Waller (Lincoln Satellite) has successfully received the 11.76 and 11.82 GHz (horizontal) Conus beam transmissions from the PanAmSat PAS-1 satellite at $45^{\circ} \mathrm{W}$. Just visible results were obtained using a 1.7 m dish. This Ku band beam is aimed at the US eastern seaboard, with coverage extending virtually to the Rocky Mountains: in theory back radiation to W. Europe is nil!

## Amstrad MP3 Receiver Unit

It was with considerable interest that I learnt from Brian Renforth about an outboard receiver unit available from Greenweld Electronics ( 27 Park Road, Freemantle, Southampton S01 3TB - 0703236 363). It's admirably suited to conversion for use with a TV-DX receiving set-up - though once powered it will immediately work as a Band I/III/u.h.f. system B/G receiver.

During a visit to Greenweld I found a large pile of brand new, boxed Amstrad MP3 v.h.f./u.h.f. receivers at the giveaway price of $£ 14.95$. The unit is referred to as the "computer modulator/converter MP3". It's a complete, cased r.f./i.f./video unit that's intended to provide both composite video and RGB outputs via a 6 -pin DIN socket for direct connection to an Amstrad CPC464 or 6128 computer using the CTM644-2 monitor/VDU.

A five-turn potentiometer is used to tune the v.h.f./u.h.f. varicap tuner. In addition there are band changing, colour, contrast and volume controls. A coiled wire with plug is intended to obtain a 12 V d.c. supply from the computer the unit consumes around $160-180 \mathrm{~mA}$ from an external 12 V


## 11 Kent Road, Parkstone, Poole Dorset BH12 2EH Tel: 0202738232 Fax: 0202716951

source. Audio output is from an integral speaker, though the RGB DIN socket output pins can be disconnected and one pin used instead for an audio feed to a monitor or amplifier. As supplied the MP3 is intended for use in W. Europe. having 5.5 MHz system $\mathrm{B} / \mathrm{G}$ sound, but Greenweld provide two 6 MHz ceramic filters so that the unit can be converted for system I operation if required.

My initial thoughts are that a small Aztec modulator could be fitted internally to provide a u.h.f. output and that the 6-pin DIN socket could be used to connect an outboard tuning potentiometer, with possibly an in-built meter to measure the tuning voltage and thus give a channel reading. The internal baseband video with buffer stages should enable an inverter stage to be added, giving selection of negative- or positive-going video. This would enable French TV pictures to be displayed.

I'm not sure about the quality of the tuner, but the Toshiba EG613/EGG522F MOSFET tuner which is available from Sendz Components could be fitted instead. Brian Williams reports that this high-gain, very low-noise tuner is "bomb proof" - unless, as he does, you live next door to the Wenvoe transmitter! It should be easy to incorporate selectivity switching for wide/narrow i.f. bandwidth operation. If the composite video output is used the RGB circuitry could be disconnected to minimise the current drain.

The unit has a grey plastic case and measures $330 \times 250$ x 50 mm . It looks like good news for an efficient, low-cost outboard TV-DXing tuner system. We hope to be able to feature modification details shortly. Even without modification Brian Renforth and Brian Williams report good results with weak tropospheric signals. At the time of writing supplies at Greenweld are plentiful, but a check on availability might be sensible before ordering.

# TV Fault Finding 

Reports from Philip Blundell, AMIEIE, Brian Storm, Stephen Leatherbarrow, Michael Dranfield, Bob McClenning, N.J. Williams, Graham Richards, J.G. Grieve John Edwards, Mike Leach and J. Olijnyk

## Philips 2B Chassis

Here are some faults encountered on later 2B chassis sets: no sound, EEPROM X2402 faulty; protection crowbar firing, check whether the print by pin 1 of the line output transformer is open-circuit; 140 V supply normal with a 60 W dummy load but low with a bright picture, transistor 7685 (BC547) leaky.
$\mathbb{P} . \mathbb{B}$.

## Philips FL1.1 Chassis

This set gave a chirp at switch on then shut down with the standby, on and stereo lights lit. There was 0.7 V at TP56, which indicated that the hardware protection circuit was operating via the PROT (protection) line - this line monitors the sound, line output, beam current and EW modulator circuits. Scope checks showed that the fault was in the EW correction circuit, where transistors 7542 and 7540 were short-circuit. There's a mistake on the circuit diagram here: transistor 7542 is drawn as a pnp device but the type number shown is BC848C. The correct type is given in the parts list - BC858C.
P.B.

## Panasonic TX21T1 (Alpha 2 Chassis)

This set displayed the classic field collapse symptom - a white line across the screen. As checks around the TDA2579 timebase generator chip IC501 showed that it was not producing a field drive output it was replaced. This made no difference. The guilty component was sulking quietly nearby. Need you ask? - a leaky $0.01 \mu \mathrm{~F}$ capacitor, C403. It's in the field feedback circuit. A replacement restored full field scanning.
B.S.

## Panasonic TC21M1R

The symptoms with this set were no video with faint, unsychronised lines in the background. Good video came out of IC601 but it was attenuated going through board H , where the video switching and sync separator are to be found. Checks around the sync chip IC521 showed that the sync pulses leaving pin 14 were poor. The 180 pF ceramic capacitor connected to this pin turned out to be leaky, a replacement restoring the excellent picture.
B.S.

## Grundig GSC100 Chassis

There was lack of height plus bad foldover. A check on the + D supply input at pin 6 of the field timebase module showed that the voltage here was only 13.1 V instead of 18.6 V . This supply is obtained by rectifying line flyback pulses. Di627 is the rectifier diode and C628 $(2,200 \mu \mathrm{~F}$, 40 V ) the reservoir capacitor. C628 was obviously suspect but a replacement made no difference. Neither did a new diode. Yet the voltage across C628 was low at 13.6 V . There's little else here apart from the 1AT fuse Si627. A check showed that it was dropping 0.5 V along its length. So we replaced the fuse. This cleared the fault and the voltage across C 628 rose to 18 V .

A check on the old fuse showed that it had a resistance of $1 \Omega$. As a check we fitted a $1 \Omega$ resistor across the fuseholder.

Although the voltage dropped slightly the set still worked all right. Just to make sure that I wasn't dreaming I refitted the old fuse. This brought back the original fault. Certainly an odd situation. The customer paid rather more than the cost of his new fuse.
M.Dr.

## Samsung Cl3312Z

The complaint with this set, which we'd sold four months previously, was that it wouldn't come off standby. Checks showed that the power supply was running but the 2SD288 12 V supply switch transistor Q802 wasn't being turned on. We traced the circuit back to RQII which was o.k. then pin 41 of the PCA84C640 microcontroller chip RIC01. The voltage here wouldn't go low to switch the set on. By shorting this pin to chassis we were able to switch the set on but there was only a snowy raster, no on-screen display and no tuning. Clearly the microcontroller was in trouble. Pin 39 (serial clock) and pin 40 (serial data) were both dead. Disconnecting them from the EPROM RIC02 made no difference, neither did replacing RIC01. When the 10 MHz clock crystal RX01 was replaced however the set sprang to life.
M.Dr.

## Ferguson TX90 Chassis (20in. Version)

This set came in dead. We found that the 1.6AT fuse had blown and that the R4050 line output transistor was leaky. These items were replaced but the set then tripped rapidly. In this chassis the trip measures the 175 V RGB output h.t. supply, killing the line drive if the voltage is excessive. The first thing we did was to measure the boost voltage, which was correct at 115 V . As the e.h.t. was heard to rustle up between the on/off tripping we next checked this. The reading was around 40 kV . No wonder the set was protesting! Only one component could be responsible for this, the 5.6 nF line flyback tuning capacitor C194. When we removed it we found that it was open-circuit. A replacement restored normal operation.
M.Dr.

## Ferguson TX85 Chassis

It's quite common to get one of these sets in with a field linearity fault, usually top foldover and cramping. The thing to check is transistor TR7, which is type TIP 112 H or T0167V. It's the lower transistor in the field output stage and is a Darlington device, so it should be checked by substitution.
M.Dr.

## Sony KVM19TV

This set displayed all the symptoms of a very worn tube. There was red flaring on peak whites and so little green emission that the on-screen display could be seen only in the dark. According to the customer the fault had occurred suddenly however, so the chances of the tube being faulty were pretty low. Checks at the tube base showed that the first anode voltage was pretty low at around 200 V . The source of this supply was traced back to the main PCB. This brought us to the safety resistor R 852 ( $1 \mathrm{k} \Omega$ ) which was open-circuit. As no shorts could be detected a replacement
was fitted. It failed at switch on. Attention was next turned to the associated RGP01-17 rectifier diode D852. Although it tested all right, when we removed it from the panel we found that there was a thin burn line across its underside. It had evidently been tracking across. Replacing D852 and R852 restored an excellent picture.
M.Dr.

## Toshiba C2090B1

This set presented us with a bit of a problem as we had no manual. The basic chassis is the Rank T24, but this model has electronic tuning and memory - and guess where the fault lay! When a channel button was pressed the relevant LED lit up but went out again as soon as the button was released. Also no signals appeared. When the electronic tuning button was depressed however stations could be tuned in but couldn't be stored.

As a start voltage checks were made on a couple of large wirewound resistors on the tuning PCB. One, RE22, had -6 V at one side and -0.5 V at the other side. It was stone cold. A zener diode and electrolytic capacitor were connected to the 0.5 V side, with their positive terminals connected to chassis. There was also a chip. So this was a negative rail and the chip must have been a memory as these need a high negative voltage to write in data. At the -6 V side of RE22 there was a $22 \mu \mathrm{~F}, 160 \mathrm{~V}$ electrolytic (CE21) and a diode. Clearly the setmaker wouldn't fit a 160 V device if it had only -6 V across it! This seemed to be where the fault lay. The diode was o.k. but when CE21 was removed from the board we found that it had a white, powdery deposit on its base. A check showed that it was open-circuit. A replacement cleared the fault, leaving RE22 with -125 V at one side and -24 V at the other side. As time was pressing I didn't get to find the source of the voltage.
M.Dr.

## Solavox 141/Nikkai TLG88/99/etc

The fault symptoms with this 14 in . portable were no colour and the height reduced by two inches at the top and bottom. We decided to check the output from the 12 V regulator IC103 and found that this was correct. Only 10 V was present at the other end of the following filter resistor R104 however. The circuit gives the value of this resistor as $5 \Omega$ (1W) but when we removed it we found that it was marked $3 \cdot 3 \Omega$. A check showed that its value was nearer $12 \Omega$. A replacement cured the fault.
M.Dr.

## ITT $80110^{\circ}$ Chassis

No signals, no raster and the digital channel display fading or pulsing were the symptoms with this set. We found that the voltage on the 12 V line was very low, varying between 4 V and 5 V . As the regulator chip was very hot an overload was likely. A long foray along the various paths followed by the 12 V supply eventually brought us to $\mathrm{C} 307(10 \mu \mathrm{~F}, 16 \mathrm{~V})$ which had a bad but varying leak. It's a red tantalum type on the decoder panel.
S.L.

## Ferguson TX90

No colour is usually a very easy fault to cure these days. This one tripped us up however. The job was given to an apprentice who checked the supply to the UPC1365C decoder chip then, finding it to be correct, replaced the chip and its reference oscillator crystal. There was still no colour however. Scope checks were then carried out on the waveforms around the decoder chip. We found that the line pulse at pin 23 was low in amplitude and a little distorted.

Replacing the BAV20 diode D103 in the feed with a IN4148 gave us unlocked colour but thankfully restored the correct pulse amplitude. Another new crystal put matters right, the first one being faulty.
S.L.

## Hitachi CPT1474R

This set was dead. We suspected IC901 as the voltages at pins 2, 3, 4 and 5 were all drastically low but the culprit turned out to be the BZX79C2V7 zener diode ZD910 which was almost short-circuit.
J.G.G.

## Philips CP90 Chassis

When servicing these sets I'd recommend replacing the 1 kV 1.5 nF line output stage tuning capacitor C2619 with the beefier 2 kV version, Philips part no. 482212232501 IJ.G.G.

## Ferguson TX85 Chassis

If you find that the 800 mAT mains fuse FSI has blown, replace the TIPL791A chopper transistor TR6, its TEA2018A driver chip IC4 and the three 1 N4001 diodes D8, D10 and D23. If R101 ( $1.2 \mathrm{k} \Omega$ ) in the snubber circuit has ruptured replace the associated 1 nF capacitor C 75 and uprate FS1 to $1 \cdot 25 \mathrm{~A}$.
J.G.G.

## Philips GR1-AX Chassis

If the set won't retune or reprogramme the volume, colour etc. and store the new values the store-lock facility has been accidentally set. To unlock it, select ch. 38 then press the store and control buttons simultaneously.
J.G.G.

## Philips G90 Chassis

If the action of the contrast control becomes very limited check whether C2560 ( 33 nF ), which is connected to pin 7 of the line output transformer, is leaky. This removes the standing bias for the beam limiter.

Random failure of the BUT11AF chopper transistor is commonly due to the CNX83 optocoupler.
B.McC.

## Fidelity ZX4120 Chassis

We were puzzled by occasional failure of the $0.68 \Omega$ surge limiter resistor R 98 in the 16 V rectifier circuit in one of these sets. The rectifier is fed from a tapping on the chopper transformer's output winding. Amongst other things it feeds a 12 V regulator. After much experimentation to check whether there was an excessive current drain we realised that the input voltage from the transformer was too high! The cause of the problem was the 120 V supply's $100 \mu \mathrm{~F}$ reservoir capacitor C87. It was unbalancing the outputs from the chopper transformer so that too much appeared in the 16 V circuit.
B.McC.

## ITT Monoprint B Chassis

This set originally came in because it was dead. The mains rectifier's $5 \cdot 1 \Omega$ surge limiter resistor R652 was open-circuit, the 115 V supply rectifier D733 (BYW36) was short-circuit and the line output transformer was faulty. When these items had been replaced I was presented with another fault. The cause of intermittent start up and tripping when cold was traced to $\mathrm{C} 707(2 \cdot 2 \mu \mathrm{~F}, 63 \mathrm{~V})$ in the power supply. It's the reservoir capacitor for an 8.5 V feed to the chopper control chip IC701. When we checked it with the component tester

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|  | $\begin{aligned} & 3.63 \\ & 3.72 \\ & 3.10 \\ & 2.31 \\ & 2.31 \\ & 3.28 \\ & 1.71 \\ & 0.03 \\ & 0.06 \\ & 0.03 \\ & 0.06 \\ & 0.05 \\ & 0.05 \\ & 0.05 \\ & 0.03 \\ & 0.05 \\ & 0.25 \\ & 0.05 \\ & 0.07 \\ & 0.11 \\ & 0.10 \\ & 0.03 \\ & 0.21 \\ & 0.28 \\ & 0.26 \\ & 0.16 \\ & 0.200 \\ & 0.35 \\ & 0.34 \\ & 0.95 \\ & 0.42 \\ & 1.12 \\ & 0.10 \\ & 0.13 \\ & 1.23 \\ & 033 \\ & 0.10 \\ & 2.60 \\ & 0.60 \\ & 0.08 \\ & 0.17 \\ & 0.30 \\ & 0.30 \\ & 5.71 \\ & \hline 1.73 \\ & 0.17 \\ & 0.49 \\ & 3.42 \end{aligned}$ |  | 0.25 0.08 0.13 0.11 0.16 0.13 0.19 0.74 0.20 0.28 0.13 2.31 0.10 1.80 0.99 0.13 0.33 0.49 0.58 1.43 0.92 0.87 0.25 0.21 0.21 0.13 0.28 1.07 0.08 0.25 0.23 3.67 0.28 1.50 2.38 0.28 0.24 0.19 0.29 0.16 4.25 1.06 2.29 3.61 3.13 0.33 1.27 0.12 |  |
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we found that it lost all capacitance when cold.
N.J.W.

## Hitachi CPT2508 (G7P Mk II Chassis)

The usual cause of a dead set with the 2.5 AT mains fuse F901 open-circuit is the $4.7 \mathrm{nF}, 1 \mathrm{kV}$ disc capacitor C919 in the chopper transistor's snubber network. Use the correct type from Hitachi as others are unable to handle the spikes present at the collector of the BUT11AF chopper transistor. If you use the wrong capacitor you'll end up with a blown TDA4601 chip (IC901), BUT11AF transistor (Q901) and the two $150 \mathrm{k} \Omega$ and $120 \mathrm{k} \Omega$ resistors R931 and R932. For no start up check the 82 pF capacitor C911 connected between pins 2 and 3 of the TDA4601 chip.
N.J.W.

## Mitsubishi CT1902

This set had a blank raster with no sound and field collapse. We found that the $0.5 \Omega$, 2 W safety resistor R560 was opencircuit. It feeds 14 V to the 12 V ripple filter.
G.R.

## Hitachi CPT1474R

This set tripped at switch on. The tripping stopped when we disconnected the line output transistor's collector. Checks on the line output transformer then produced $30 \Omega$ readings between all pins and chassis. This was our third Hitachi line output transformer failure in a fortnight.
G.R.

## Boots 1411R (Tatung 190 Chassis)

This set was dead. We quickly found that the cause of the fault was the two start-up resistors R882 and R883 which are both $15 \mathrm{k} \Omega, 0.5 \mathrm{~W}$. One of them was open-circuit and the other read $18.5 \mathrm{k} \Omega$. The set worked perfectly when they had been replaced.
G.R.

## Goodmans TV20RC

This one came from another dealer with a ticket that said "no sound". The two transistors in the audio output stage receive their supply from the 103 V line via R601 ( $560 \Omega$, IW) which was open-circuit. When this had been replaced we found that there was also no picture. R430 (10S) in the 180 V supply to the RGB output transistors was opencircuit.
G.R.

## Sharp SV2588H

At switch on the e.h.t. rustled up for a second or two then the relay switched to off, leaving the set dead. Overriding the relay gave us a blank raster with no sound. A supply was clearly missing but we didn't have a manual. After careful physical examination we found that both D712 and D713, which are twin-diode stand-up encapsulation types, were dry-jointed. Correcting this restored normal operation. We've since had the fault again, so it looks like one for the notebook.
G.R.

## Ferguson TX10 Chassis

The customer's complaint was that the picture was intermittent. It would sometimes disappear a few minutes after switching the set on while at other times the set would be o.k. for days. Fortunately when we tested the set the fault appeared quite quickly and we were able to see that the tube's heaters went out. The cause of this couldn't be proved however as movement of either the c.r.t. base panel
or the main panel would produce the fault. We decided to resolder pins 1 and 6 of the c.r.t., take a wire direct from pin 6 to R729 ( $2 \cdot 2 \Omega$ ) which we renewed, and take another wire from R729 to the line output transformer, the idea being to ensure that there was no chance of an open-circuit in the heater supply path. A very long soak test proved that all was well.
J.E.

## ITT CVC800 Chassis

After a time any channel that was selected would drift in and out of tune. As the 33 V supply to the tuning circuit was varying slightly we replaced the ZTK33 regulator. This made no difference. The supply is derived from the 90 V line whose reservoir capacitor $\mathrm{C} 514(10 \mu \mathrm{~F}, 100 \mathrm{~V})$ was leaky.
J.E.

## NEI 1551TX

This set was dead because thermistor R802 which provides the start-up supply for pin 9 of the TDA4601 chopper control chip was open-circuit. The maker's part number is 154214. If you shake one of these faulty thermistors you'll find that it rattles in the same way that degaussing circuit posistors do.
J.E.

## Hitachi CPT2260 (Salora J Chassis)

There was a very bright picture and the contrast and brightness controls had no effect. The culprit was CH5 $(2 \cdot 2 \mu \mathrm{~F}$, 350 V ) on the tube base panel - it was open-circuit. J.E.

## Bush 2020 etc

After completing the now common power supply rebuild in one of these sets we noticed that there was bad patterning and what looked like a very mild form of field cramping in the centre of the screen only. The cause turned out to be the $1,000 \mu \mathrm{~F}, 16 \mathrm{~V}$ l.t. supply reservoir capacitor C806. We decided to fit a component with a slightly higher working voltage (35V) and after doing this the fault had cleared.

Two days later the set came back with the complaint "no results". When we switched it on a loud whistling sound came from either the chopper or the line output stage. After about half a minute there was a loud crack and smoke appeared to come from somewhere in the line output stage. I almost burnt my finger on the h.t. reservoir capacitor C810 ( $220 \mu \mathrm{~F}, 160 \mathrm{~V}$ ). A check across this capacitor under the fault condition showed that the voltage was over 200 V instead of the correct 110 V . Yet another capacitor in the TDA4601 power supply had dried up, this time $\mathrm{C} 818(1 \mu \mathrm{~F}, 50 \mathrm{~V})$. It's the reservoir capacitor for the chip's negative feedback voltage. Fitting a replacement cured the fault and all was well again.
M.L.

## Some Quickies

Toshiba C2226: The cause of incorrect field linearity was C309 ( $2 \cdot 2 \mu \mathrm{~F}, 50 \mathrm{~V}$ ).
Telefunken 711 chassis: The picture was reduced all round because one of the EW modulator diodes was open-circuit. We thought it best to replace them both.
Ferguson 1790 chassis: The MC13002 chip IC2 which incorporates most of the circuitry in this 12 in . monochrome portable was the cause of no field scan.
Toshiba C2226: There was no field scan at switch on. The field then took about half an hour to reach full amplitude. The cause was C317 $(2 \cdot 2 \mu \mathrm{~F}, 50 \mathrm{~V})$.
Samsung CI347F: This set was dead due to failure of Q403 (SC2229) and Q402 (2SC2120).
J.O.

## Letters

## SERVICING INDUSTRY'S PROBLEMS

Reading Donald Bullock's articles always brings a smile to my face, not as much because of his grief with certain customers but to how well I can relate to him. I used to have the use of a shop with a workshop but lost both through no fault of my own. I now work from home and the abuse from some customers has to be experienced to be believed. My best example to date was a phone call at five minutes past midnight on Christmas morning, demanding instant service. No prizes for guessing my reply, but I have this feeling that we may have lost a customer. Phone calls at that time of the morning are guaranteed to set your heart racing, as you always fear the worst.

There are definite advantages to working from a shop. The problem of getting people to collect their equipment is common: your workshop ends up looking like a store-room. A sharp reminder letter, after several telephone calls, may get the items removed, generally followed by the loss of that customer.

I don't do "cheap" repairs. Whatever the equipment requires it gets, my interest being in keeping the equipment in proper working order so that, as far as possible, costly recalls are avoided. When people phone and begin to dictate prices and terms before we even know what the problem is we usually politely refuse the job because we know, from hard experience, that trouble won't be far behind. I don't know about others in this trade, but much of the equipment we see now is in a very bad way, being brought to us only when it has sung its death throes. How many dead items have you brought back to life only to feel your heart drop to your boots at the sight of the collection of faults that didn't actually stop the thing working and were never mentioned or estimated for? Try to get paid for these or, if you feel that it's your lucky day, give it back with only the breakdown repaired. "My tele/video etc. didn't have these faults before it came to you. .." - what a familiar ring.

Large retail chains that sell their goods at a small profit in the interests of a large turnover (not profit) must take their share of the blame for making this industry appear cheap. How can you charge $£ 35$ to repair a midi system that cost only $£ 49$ in the first place? We must also take our share of the blame for advertising free quotes, call outs and estimates. No wonder that the public expects to pay next to nothing for repairs.

We are a skilled, constantly changing and upgrading industry. Let's not sell ourselves completely down the river. E.A. Barker,

Cheam, Surrey.

## THE MICROVITEC CUB

I found the article on servicing the Microvitec Cub (August) both helpful and interesting - we deal with quite a few of them. I'd like to add the following points however.

Arthur Rumbelow quotes the model numbers to which his notes are applicable. Whilst the same basic board is used in all the models mentioned, the 1441 and 1442 have a different tube base panel to suit the high-resolution c.r.t. with which they are fitted. The only change that this calls for to Arthur's notes is that the high-resolution tube's cathode pins are 8 for red, 12 for green and 4 for blue (see page 719). A number of components in this area differ because of the two types of tube.

I've not experienced the BR103 problem mentioned though I know someone who has and considers it to be a stock fault!

When the complaint is that the screen is blank but the little red light is on I usually start with the first anode supply preset VR932 (VR837 in the high-resolution version) on the tube base panel. These presets seem to fail at the slightest provocation - the damage can often be seen without having to remove the control. The associated resistors R934 ( $180 \mathrm{k} \Omega$ ) and R 933 ( $150 \mathrm{k} \Omega$ ), which are R838 and R840 respectively in the high-resolution version, often need attention as well. The preset seems to be a little bit too small for the job it does. I use the standard RS $2 \cdot 2 \mathrm{M} \Omega$ horizontal preset (part number 187-804) as a replacement - it fits in the same pin holes. I've never had recurrence of the problem after making this change and now usually carry one or two of them in the tool box, as well as having a back-up stock!

The $1.5 \Omega$ resistor R15 that's connected in series with the chopper transistor's emitter can fail of its own accord (Arthur suggests that it fails when the chopper transistor itself goes). I usually fit a 3 W type as a replacement rather than the specified 2 W type, again without further problems.

Arthur mentions blown mains fuses due to failure of the degaussing posistor Th1. We've had several of these fail in one case the fuse didn't blow but there was the classic "funny colours" report because of no degaussing action. I fit the more usual Philips type 96009 which is a plug-in replacement. It's sold as a "degaussing posistor white" by advertisers in Television. We've had no further problems after fitting this type.

These monitors are very reliable considering the hammering they get. Faults are encountered relatively frequently only because there are a large number of them around. There is, incidentally, not only a linear or TTL input version. Some of these monitors can accept a PAL input. They have a small decoder panel with a TDA3301 decoder chip, a 4551 CMOS switch and two TDA 1908 audio output chips, the result being a "triple standard-PAL interface". The inputs can be (a) PAL composite video; (b) TTL RGB plus sync; (c) linear RGB (1V p-p video across $75 \Omega$ ) plus sync. When link TLI on the subpanel is set to position 2 the sync can be with the green signal instead of via a separate lead. The two audio circuits (sometimes only one is fitted) each provide a nominal 2 W output with an input of 100 mV across $47 \mathrm{k} \Omega$.
Peter M. Delaney,
Wargrave, Berks.
Thanks to Arthur Rumbelow for his excellent article on the Microvitec Cub (August). My monitor has failed twice in recent years with different symptoms but the same cause. On the first occasion the degaussing stopped, giving a psychedelic picture. On the second occasion there was a blank raster and low e.h.t., indicated by a very small crackle when the set was powered. In both cases the cause was the degaussing posistor Th1. Apparently it dies quite often.

I had considerable difficulty in obtaining the correct replacement - finally Computer Factory at Westcliff-on-Sea supplied me with their only spare. (See note about a suitable alternative in P.M. Delaney's letter - editor).
Phil Hughes,
Theydon Bois, Essex.
Thank you for the very interesting article on the Microvitec Cub. I'm responsible for maintaining thirty BBC workstations that use these monitors and have experienced many of the faults described. One point I would like to add is that it's worth uprating the resistors in the first anode
supply network (R933, R934 and R236) to 2W as the 1W types fitted commonly fail. Use of 1 W resistors means that they are just about at their limit. With three resistors in series across 1 kV there's some 300 V across each of them, which is around their maximum rating. 2 W resistors will tolerate this voltage. To date I've not had a single failure after fitting 2 W replacements.
Ian Reichenfield,
Camberley, Surrey.
The description of the operation of the self-oscillating chopper circuit used in the Microvitec Cub (August, page 718) was based on the original version of the circuit as developed by Siemens. There's an important difference with the circuit as used by Microvitec.


It's true that the sawtooth developed across R15 will trigger thyristor TY1, thus switching off the chopper transistor TR2. But this happens only during the start-up sequence, with a low mains supply or a fault condition. In normal operation TY1 is triggered by the sawtooth developed across the $2 \cdot 2 \mathrm{nF}$ capacitor (C16, not given a component reference number in Fig. 1, page 719) between its gate and cathode. This capacitor charges via the $390 \Omega$ resistor R10 (also not given a reference number) and transistor TR1. It discharges via the gate-cathode junction of TY1. When TR2 switches off, the voltage at pin 4 of the chopper transformer goes negative and TY1 switches off, ready for the next cycle of operation. D8, D10 and D11 limit the negative voltage to protect TY1.

Regulation depends on the rate at which C16 charges via R10 and the constant-current generator TR1. TR1 senses the output voltage conditions at its base, i.e. the voltage developed across C12. Any variation in this voltage will alter TRI's conduction and hence the charging of C16.
R. Blenheim,

London W4.

## BACK INJURY

This is a call to all in the TV trade - engineers, shop managers, installers, shop staff and debt collectors. Lifting a TV set can be dangerous and can cause back damage. If you have at any time hurt your back while carrying out your duties we'd like to hear all about it - and any views that you may have on the subject. You could be entitled to substantial compensation. Please write to the address below.
H.J. and P.B. Todd,
c/o 37 Northdene, Chigwell, Essex IG7 5JS.

## VIDEOCRYPT CONNECTOR

In his August issue Satellite Notebook Nick Beer mentioned the metallurgic reaction problem with the connector of the VideoCrypt decoder module used in the Ferguson SRVI and other satellite TV receivers based on the Pace SS 9000 and suggested "that Ferguson is unaware of the modified connector". Not so! The root cause and full extent of the problem and the effectiveness of any suggested remedial work had to be investigated before we could review our position and take any action that affected our then current stock. As a result of this investigation the later version of the connector is now being supplied automatically against our existing part number.
Bernie Hinton, Regional Technical Manager,
Ferguson Limited, Enfield, Middx.

## CORRECTIONS

An error occurred in the editing of my article on the Electricity at Work Act. Under the heading "appliance testing" it should have stated that where applicable (class II appliances) the earth continuity and the insulation resistance between live and neutral and earth/any exposed metal part must be checked. Reference to earth continuity was omitted in the article as published and a "not" was inserted in the reference to class II appliances.

In the letters section last month, page 804, Mr. T. Giddings is quite wrong. The de-emphasis switch in the VideoCrypt decoder concerned was off, as it should have been. Switching it on would have made matters worse of course.
N. Beer,

Bideford, N. Devon.

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## Hinari DK100

This large, flat music centre appeared on the bench with a no CD operation fault. When it was switched to the CD position the laser would smack hard against the end stop, after which nothing else happened. I was eventually able to gain access to the CD unit, which uses a Philips laser and chips - these machines are not easy to work on as they have to be upside down most of the time. As I didn't have a circuit diagram I though at first that the fault might be rather involved, but after a few quick checks in the power supply I soon found what the cause of the problem was: there was no input to the 5 V regulator and thus no 5 V supply to the CD player section. I traced back to the function switch which, in the CD position, feeds the 14 V supply to the 5 V regulator. This switch was faulty and couldn't be cleaned or repaired. Just a small amount of pressure on the switch would restore the 14 V feed to the regulator, after which the CD player section worked normally. A complete new switchbank was required.
M.L.

## Bush MS265CD

The CD section of this midi system didn't work at all. We found that the laser unit was stuck at the outside of its travel and wouldn't move towards the centre of the disc to read the TOC. I took the side off the machine and broddled around the power supply, looking for dry-joints etc. or even opencircuit fuses, but everything seemed to be in order in this department.

One thing I had noticed was that the disc didn't sit evenly in the door - this machine uses a door rather than a tray. It was difficult to locate the disc and shut the door. When I looked a little more closely I realised that the two plastic studs on which the disc sits were broken. One of these studs opens a leaf switch inside the machine when the door is closed, giving an indication to the microcontroller chip that a disc has been inserted. This was in fact the cause of the trouble. When I opened the switch manually the laser unit moved to the centre of the disc and read the TOC, the player working normally. A new door was required.
M.L.

## Sony D350 Discman

This Discman really took us for a ride. It can be operated with a 9 V adaptor, a 3.2 V rechargeable battery or two 1.5 V dry cells for which a separate case that can be attached to the Discman is provided. There were no problems whatsoever with the 3.2 V battery or the dry-cell pack, but when the 9 V adaptor was connected the display said "no disc". Strange!

Checks around the MC34063M step-down d.c.-d.c. converter IC401 showed that the voltage at pin 7 dropped when the player carried out focus search and spindle rotation. Now pin 7 is the excess current sensing input. When excess current is detected pin 8 switches off the regulator transistor Q401. Since the machine worked all right with batteries it was obvious that there was false excess current detection. Q403 is used to detect excess current. Its collector output is coupled to Q402 after a delay that's determined by the values of $\mathrm{R} 407(10 \mathrm{k} \Omega)$ and $\mathrm{C} 427(1 \mu \mathrm{~F})$. The reason for
introducing this delay may be to take into account the initial surge (focusing and spindle rotation). C427 aroused our suspicion - it's a chip capacitor. A suitable replacement was obtained from a defective panel in a CCD-TR55 camera. It was carefully extracted from the PCB and fitted in place of C427. The 9 V adaptor was plugged in, a disc was loaded and the top cover was closed. The machine read the TOC within two seconds and when play was selected the machine worked normally.
R.A.

## Sony FHE939

The CD section of this CDPH6600 music system had difficulty reading the TOC with some discs, especially those that were scratched. Also the scanning used to get stuck when some tracks were played and skipping was sometimes noticed. A check on the r.f. waveform showed that the eye pattern was at 1.2 V peak-to-peak, which was quite normal. The scope was next connected to point TE and an EF balance check was carried out. While the waveform was symmetrical around the zero axis its amplitude was only 0.2 V peak-topeak instead of 2.5 V p-p. A new KSS240A laser block solved the problem. With the KSS240A most of the adjustments, such as focus bias and EF balance, are carried out at the factory. So replacement is a simple task.
R.A.

## Sony FHE636CD

This portable music system came in because of a CD problem. When a disc was placed in the tray and the open/close button was pressed the tray would go in, focus search would start and the disc would rotate for a few seconds. It would then stop. This suggested that the TOC was read, but the fluorescent display showed 00 tracks and 0000 as the total playing time. When the play button was pressed the disc didn't rotate and the play symbol didn't appear in the display. In fact the machine responded to only the open/close button.

Attention was turned to the UPD78134GF system control chip IC305. As the voltages and waveforms at the various pins all seemed to be normal we fitted a new chip. The TOC was then read and the display showed the number of tracks and the playing time correctly. The play and other CD commands also worked.
R.A.

## Sony FHB170CD

The display said "no disc" despite the fact that there was a disc in the tray. There was no focus search after loading, the objective lens just lying idle. A check showed that the search voltage was present across the focus coil, so we measured its resistance. It was open-circuit. Fortunately the machine was under guarantee, a new KSS240A laser block curing the problem.
R.A.

## Sony CDPS39

According to the ticket the fluorescent display sometimes indicated "no disc". A disc was inserted and the drawer closed. The machine then read the TOC and played the music without any problems. When we carried out further
tests we found that skipping occurred on a few discs, especially towards the end of the track. A check on the eye pattern at the r.f. test point showed that its amplitude was only 0.7 V peak-to-peak. So a new laser unit was installed and the relevant adjustments were carried out. This increased the eye pattern amplitude to $1 \cdot 1 \mathrm{~V}$ p-p. There was now no skipping but the machine was kept on test.
'At first switch on next day the display said "no disc"! When the tray was ejected and closed again the machine read the TOC. We consulted the customer who claimed that the machine had been sent to the Service Centre three times for the same problem whilst under guarantee and that the symptom would reappear, especially after a long rest. Careful inspection showed that the FOK signal was generated in the fault condition and the spindle motor drive was present but the motor wouldn't spin. A slight jerk on the disc would put matters right. A new spindle motor eliminated the problem.
R.A.

## Philips AZ8492 (RCD-1D Mechanism)

This radio/cassette/CD player would occasionally fail to play a disc. Sometimes it would read the TOC then do no more. On other occasions it wouldn't do anything. The laser came on and focus was achieved, but things went no further because the spindle motor was tight. Unfortunately it's not available as a separate unit, so a complete new RCD-1D mechanism had to be obtained.
N.B.

## Test Case 358

It's usually not difficult to fix a set which is completely dead. Customers often assume that a major and expensive repair is required when a set stops while something like intermittent loss of colour or tuning drift must be only a small problem which is cheap and easy to repair. In practice it's usually the other way about of course.

The set featured this month was quite dead, but its repair turned out to be a lengthy business. It was a 14 in . Hitachi portable, Model CPT1456, fitted with the NP84CQ Mk II chassis. A quick check showed that its 2.5 A mains fuse FS901 had blown violently. When a new fuse had been fitted the set worked perfectly well. It continued to do so throughout an assault on its main PCB with a screwdriver handle. Assuming that a mains surge had been responsible for the blown fuse our technician pronounced the little set fit and well and sent it on its way.

A few days later it was back on the bench. The new fuse had blown, again quite violently. A new fuse once more brought the set back to life: it showed no signs of distress in operation. After a conflab with the other workshop worthies the technician fitted a new mains filter capacitor, thoroughly tinned and resoldered all the connections to the chopper transformer T901 and replaced the start up resistors R902 and R903. He checked the connections inside the mains plug and suggested to the set's owner that it be given its own mains socket - it shared a three-way 13A adaptor with
a table lamp and a hi-fi outfit. All this work had to be done free of charge of course, because of the 90 -day repair guarantee we give. As the set ran perfectly well for the rest of the day it was once more returned to its owner.

Within a week it was back in the workshop again, with a note taped to it. The contents of the note couldn't possibly be printed in this magazine, but you won't find it hard to appreciate their general drift. F901 had again failed for no discernible reason. The technician - in this workshop everyone has to rework their own bounces - once more set to work with his soldering iron. He fitted a new STR421 chopper chip and carried out a solder-up around the line output stage, walloped the PCB with the screwdriver, heated and cooled the little diodes and transistors in the power supply with his hairdryer and freezer aerosol, and replaced the mains rectifier and chopper clamp diodes D901 and D906. As he'd lent the owner another set so that this one could be soak tested he put it to run alongside his bench.

It worked all right for the next three days, but on day four there was a loud buzz and a muffled splat when he switched the set on in the morning. Sure enough the $2 \cdot 5 \mathrm{~A}$ mains fuse had gone again. This time Workshop Sage suggested a test: the mains fuse was temporarily uprated to 3.15 A , a 2.5 A fuse was added in the supply to the chopper chip and a 2 A fuse was added in the 103 V feed to the line output stage. The set was then put back on soak test. A few days later it failed again. Only one of the three fuses had blown - the least expected one! Which one was it and what was the cause? See next month for the answer and another item in the Test Case series.

ANSWER TO TEST CASE 357 - page 814 last month -

A most peculiar fault afflicted Victor the Video's postproduction facility. A tape which had been overdubbed with new sound played perfectly in the machine that had been used to carry out the dub and also in another new VHS machine. But when it was played back in the camcorder originally used to make the recording the sound contained, faintly audible under the newly-added sound, mumblings and mutterings from the original sound track.

Logical thinking, aided perhaps by his lunch-time pint of lager, enabled our technician to work out the solution to this conundrum. No doubt you've also sussed out the cause. The audio head setting in the camcorder was wrong. Thus the correctly-positioned erase and record heads in the Panasonic edit deck didn't plough their new furrow along the exact line of the original recording. The result of this misalignment was not evident in the Panasonic machine or the new JVC machine that had been tried. The camcorder's head scanned its own original track however, which hadn't been fully erased during the dubbing process. Plainly the audio head in the old GEC VCR used as a test was also somewhat skew-whiff - the effect of Victor's screwdriver maybe?

All we had to do was to adjust the camcorder's head setting, using an alignment tape. $V$ the V declined our offer to do the same with his old GEC machine.

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