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SILVER MICA, Close tolerance $1 \% 2 \cdot 2-500 \mathrm{pF} 8 \mathrm{p} ; 500-2 \cdot 200$ pF 10 D ; $\mathbf{2}, 700-5,600 \mathrm{pF} 20 \mathrm{p}$; $6,800 \mathrm{pF}-001$, mid 30 p ; each. TWIM GANG. " $0-0$ " $208 \mathrm{pF}+176 \mathrm{pF}$. 65D : Siow motion drive $365+385$ with $25+25 \mathrm{pP}$. 30 D 800 pF slow motion, standard 45 p ; mall 3-rade 500 p FE1 80 .
SHORT WAVE, SINGLE. $10 \mathrm{pF} 80 \mathrm{D}: 25 \mathrm{pF}$ 55D: 50 DF 85 D . CHROME TELESCOPIC AERIAL, twivel bame. 231n. 20D, SEON PANEL IADICATORS 250 V AC/DC Red or Amber 20p.
 HIGB STABILITY, 1 w. $2 \% 10$ obme to 1 meg., 10 p . HIGR STABILITY, Wive 10 obms to 10 mes., 4 p. WIAE-WOUTD RESISTORS $\$$ watt. 10 watt. 15 watt 10 ohms to $100 \mathrm{~K}, 10 \mathrm{p}$ ach; $g$ f watt, 1 ohm to B 2 ohme 10 p .

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13

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 12 loch $\$ 7 \quad 12$ jnch $\mathbf{~ C O} \quad$ Group 50 3 or 8 or 15 ohm 3 or 8 of 15 ohm 80 watt 819 TEAK EI-FI SPEAKER CABINETS. Pluted wood lront Por 12 in . or 10in, dis. apeaker $20 \times 13 \times$ Pin. 29. Poit 25 p $\begin{array}{lll}\text { For } 13 \times 3 i n . ~ n r ~ & 8 \mathrm{in} \text {. speaker } 18 \times 10 \times 9 \mathrm{in} \text {. } \quad \text { if, Post } 25 \mathrm{p} \\ \text { E4. Post } 25 \mathrm{p}\end{array}$ For $10 \times$ Sin. or 01n. speaker $16 \times 8 \times 8 \mathrm{in}$. \& 4 . Post 25 pLOUDSPEAKER CABINET WADDING18in. wide, 16 Dt .

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# everyday electronics PROJECTS THEORY. 

## BROADMINDED

A word of caution to newcomers. You'll have to be broadminded to read and enjoy this magazine.

Once upon a time the predominant reason for taking up "electronics" as a hobby was an interest in building radio receivers. But, as is now generally appreciated, radio is merely one special application or branch of this all-embracing technology.

The great expansion in uses of electronic circuits over the last two decades has been of untold benefit to the ordinary person. No longer is an interest in one particular specific applicaton the requisite for involvement in the most exciting technology of the age. Electronics is wide open to all who want to use it.

## AN ALL-PURPOSE TOOL

This is no exaggeration. The projects for the private constructor already published in these pages should have made this clear. And new readers can be assured that future designs will demonstrate even further how versatile and how useful is the electronic circuit-even in its simplest form.

Electronics is the all-purpose tool everyone can use to add to comfort or convenience at home, or to assist in the greater enjoyment of
other spare time pursuits. Its practical applicatons know no bounds, and as a mind broadener, we reckon a lively interest in electronics has no equal.

## COMMON GROUND

So it's not surprising that our pages have become a meeting place for a great variety of individuals, including, for example, photographers, motorists, gardeners, and pop musiclans; not to mention those legions of handymen whose interests are less specific but who are always ready and eager to seize upon a likely project for use in or around the home. Where else are such diverse interests likely to find cominon ground?

So if you consider yourself to be broadminded, Everyday Electronics should suit you. Join the growing band of electronics constructors who have fun building our designs and enjoy the benefits that electronic aids can provide.


Our April issue will be published on Friday, March 17

EDITOR F. E. BENNETT - M. KENWARD - B. W. TERRELL B.Sc.
ART EDITOR J. D. POUNTNEY - P. A. LOATES - S. W. R. LLOYD
ADVERTISEMENT MANAGER D. W. B. TILLEARD

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## EASY TO CONSTRUCT SIMPIY EXPLAINED

VOL. I NO. 5

CONSTEUCTIONAL PROJECTS
DARKROOM TIMER Get the exposure right by Robert A. Shokleford 246
SIGNAL INJECTOR for testing radios and audio equipment by Alan Jordine 265
SOIL MOISTURE METER Ensures correct wotering by D. Bollen 270

## GENERAL FEATURES

EDITORIAL ..... 244
CASES FROM CHASSIS An easy way to make cases by V. S. Evans ..... 251
ELECTRONICS AT SEA Electronics used in ocean going vessels by W. Maconochie ..... 254
TEACH-IN Part 5-Capacitance by Mike Hughes ..... 259
RUMINATIONS by Sensor ..... 264
MEMORY STORE Retrieval by Derek Burn ..... 274
SHOP TALK Construction problems by Mike Kenward ..... 277
READERS LETTERS ..... 278, 281

Approximate cost of components
 for constructional articles, in the box shown opposite is an estimated cost compiled from suppliers current catalogue and advertised prices. Parts for some projects may work out more expensive while others may be cheaper than our quoted price, depending on where the components are plirchased.

We would like to point out that we, as publishers, cannot supply kits of parts or individual items for any of the published designs.

THE circuil ciagran of a timer which cal be used in conjunction with an enlarger to provide stakle exposare control is shown in Fig. 1. Stability is achieved by 1 sing a tantalum capacitor in the timire circuit and high statility resistors of the metal oxide tyoe could also be used in the timer where exteaded range coupled with good sta ility is cesired.

## CIRCUIT DESCRIPTION

The delay is ach eved by charging the tantalum capacitor Cl through resistor $R_{\mathrm{t}}$. When the voltage across tue capacizor exceeds the trigger voltage of the inijunction transistor TR1 the unijunctior turns on and C1 discharges rapidly through R3 producing a shor- pulse of current. This julse is anplified ty TR2 and turns on the silicon controlad rectifier CSR1.

In the off state almost the total d.c. supply voltage is dropped across the relay coil and the
elay is encrgised. Current may then flow Ghrough the laac via relay contacts RLA2 while at the same time the other relay contact RLAl latches the circuit d.c. supply. When CRSl turns on it sho ${ }^{-}$circuiss the relay which is de-energised anc its cortacts return to the normally open state switching cff the load supply and also the timer suppiy.

A timing cyde is initiated by pressing the twopole push-on/release-of switch. This allows the relay to latch its zortac:s, switching on the lamp, while at he same tinue the capacitor has any residual charge ou it removed by shorting it to the ground line. Wr.en switch S2 is released the zapacitor begirs t) charge and the timing cycle ${ }^{2}$ egins. Obviously varia_ions of $R_{t}$ will vary the ate at which $\mathrm{C}_{-}^{-}$charges and hence vary the Gelay before the lyad is urned off.

Switch 33 is provided to allow manual overIde of the timer to al onv focusing and exposure meâsurement to te carred out.

> A variable range timer designed for photographic work but suitable for any application needing a timed range from 0 to $4=$ minutes Shackleford.



Fig. 1. The circuit diagram of the darkroom timer. Resistor $R_{t}$ is the timing resistor and is replaced in the prototype by the circuit of Fig. 2.

## Approximate cost of components

最

### 4.50 excluding case

## TIMING RANGES AND SWITCHING

To alter the time range a switch (S3) is used that brings into circuit various values of preset resistance Fig. 2. This switch and resistors take the place of $R_{\mathrm{t}}$ in Fig. 1. Connections to the circuit are made at points A and B (Fig. 1 and Fig. 2),

The time settings used on the prototype were preset values of $5,10,15,20,25,30,35$ and 40 seconds corresponding to switch S3 positions 1 . $2,3,4,5,6,7$, and 8 respectively. These times cover most of the timing requirements likely to be met in normal darkroom work. The switch circuit diagram is shown in Fig. 2, the switch being a 2 -pole 9 -way wafer type. Only 8 positions are used for the above times, the other being spare. The values of VR1 and VR4 are such as to give a delay of 5 seconds, VR2 is set to give a delay of 10 seconds, while VR3 is set to give a delay of 20 seconds. This then enables the required times to be obtained.

The timed ranges of the unit may be altered to suit individual requirements, or a variable resistor could be used for $R_{\mathrm{t}}$ or switched into the circuit by S3 in the ninth position should a continuously variable delay be required.

The capacitor Cl has a value of $100 \mu \mathrm{~F}$, and with a 1 Megohm resistor ( $R_{t}$ ) this yields a delay of approximately $41_{2}$ minutes; this has been found to be about the upper limit of the timer

## CONSTRUCTION

The timer is constructed in a metal case the dimensions of which are given in the parts list. Two brackets are used to retain the batteries

Fig. 2. Switched timing resistor circuit.




Fig. 3. Layout and wiring of the components mounted on the board. The preset potentiometers are mounted on the uncerside of the board (shown below) so that they can easily be


## DARKROOM TIMER



Inside view of the prototype timer.


Fig. 4. Layout and wiring of the components mounted in the case; the board has been cut away to show S3 and S1. The board is held by a bracket fixed to $\mathbf{S 1}$. Switch S 3 has also been shown separately, as it would appear when dismantled, for clarity. The batteries are not shown but their clips are wired up in the approximate positions of the batteries.

## Components . . . .

Resistors
R1 $820 \Omega 2$
R2 $220 \Omega$ ?
R3 $33 \Omega$
R4 $3.3 \mathrm{k} \Omega$
R5 $22 \Omega 5$ watt wirewound
All $\pm 5 \%$ 立 watt carbon except where stated.

Capacitors
C1 $100 \mu \mathrm{~F}$ tantalum 12 V
Variable Resistors
$\left.\begin{array}{rrl}\text { VR1 } & 25 \mathrm{k} \Omega & \text { skeleton preset } \\ \text { VR2 } & 50 \mathrm{k} \Omega & \text { skeleton preset } \\ \text { VR3 } & 100 \mathrm{k} \Omega & \begin{array}{l}\text { skeleton preset } \\ \text { VR4 }\end{array} \\ \hline\end{array}\right\} R_{t}$

Semiconductors
D1 ZC12 or similar 12V, 250 mW Zener diode
TR1 TIS43 unijunction, silicon pnp
TR2 C762 or 2N697 silicon npn
CSR1 CRS $3 / 05$ or similar $50 \mathrm{~V}, 3 \mathrm{amp}$ controlled silicon rectifier (thyristor)
D2 IN914 (or any similar small diode)
Switches
S1 2 pole push-on, release-off pushbutton
S2 single pole single throw toggle
S3 2 pole 9 way wafer switch
Miscellaneous
RLA1 12V 150s2 relay having 2 normally open contacts (Keyswitch MK2 or similar) B1 PP6 9V batteries-3 off wired in series. Aluminium case $6 \frac{1}{2}$ in $\times 4$ in $\times 4$ in, plain perforated Veroboard 3.2 in $\times 3$ in $\times 0.2$ in matrix, Vero pins to suit board, battery connectors ( 3 off), insulated terminal post, earth tag, connecting wire, mains lead and plug, knob, 4BA fixings.
and provide a mount for Sl. Switch Sl is also used to mount the circuit board and thus it determines the layout to a certain extent. The layout given need not be followed exactly and the bracket used to mount the switch and board may be modified to suit the parts used.

The circuitry itself is assembled on plain $0 \cdot 2$ inch matrix Veroboard, using Vero terminal pins and the switches and relay are mounted on the front panel and floor of the case respectively. The case is earthed to the main supply through a 3 core mains lead and plug.

Battery B1 is made of three PP6 9V types wired in series; the type and quantity of batteries are determined exclusively by the relay voltage and current requirements.
Mounting of the relay has been left to the individual, as there are so many on the market
of different shapes and sizes and methods of fixing may vary. The only critical parameters are that it should have two normally open contacts and if the unit is to be used for controlling enlarger exposures, the contacts should be suitably rated to carry the lamp current.

Start construction by cutting the board to size and inserting the mounting pins in the positions shown. Connect the pins in the required manner using tinned copper wire and insulating sleeve where required (Fig. 3). Next mount all the components checking the polarity of the capacitors and diodes and the connections to CSR1 and transistors, which should be mounted after the other components and flying leads have been soldered in.

The tantalum capacitor Cl may be either the polarised or non-polarised type and may not be the same shape as that shown in Fig. 3. The correct polarity for polarised types is shown on Cl in Fig. 3.

Once the board is complete and has been checked for wiring errors and dry joints it may be mounted in the chassis, together with the remaining components, and connected up as shown in Fig. 4. Wires to components mounted on the front panel must be left long enough to facilitate removal of the panel for setting up.

Take particular care when wiring the mains to the relay, S 2 , and the load and make sure that an earthing tag is fitted to the case and connected to the mains earth. The output to the load can be, connected directly to the enlarger lamp or terminated in a suitable two-way mains line socket.

## SETTING UP

To set the timer up it is only necessary to remove the front panel to gain access to the preset potentiometer. If a multimeter set to its ohms range is connected across one set of relay contacts (without the unit connected to the mains supply) or used on a d.c. volts range to monitor the voltage across the relay coil, then circuit operation will be easily visible, alternatively the unit may be connected to the mains supply and a mains lamp bulb used as the load.

The potentiometers should be set half-way around their tracks and with switch S3 set to the desired time, the circuit triggered by briefly pressing switch S2. The duration of the time delay may then be measured by measuring the time for which the meter pointer is deflected from its initial condition or the lamp is on. The potentiometers may then be adjusted as required and the process repeated until all the desired times are set up.
The front panel can then be designated with the time positions. Once this is complete the unit is ready for use and can be connected to the enlarger lamp and mains supply as required.

# fromssis by v.S.Evans 

## An inexpensive case for your projects, using aluminium chassis

Having decided to build an electronic pro-ject-perhaps to your own design, or maybe partly so, early consideration should be given to the form of its eventual housing.

This may well be an important factor in deciding the size of the circuit board, control panel, or even method of construction and assembly.

## HOME BUILT AND READY MADE CASES

Making a neat and presentable cabinet in wood or metal can be quite a problem, and usually requires the use of special tools and skills and takes some time and patience. The alternative is to use or adapt something already made up to the approximate size required.

Instrument cases and die cast boxes can of course be purchased, although a bit expensive, but are excellent for high class permanent projects.
Fig. 1. Front panel is attached to the chassis by means of four self-tapping screws through the flanges

## ALUMINIUM CHASSIS

For less exacting or experimental projects use can be made of the considerably cheaper aluminium chassis available by fitting a panel of Paxolin, Formica or Perspex to the open side and using this as the front and control panel.
This panel is made to fit the aluminium chassis such that it rests on the corner flanges of the chassis, Fig. 1 which are slightly recessed, so that quite a neat job results. Small self-tapping metal screws are used to fix the panel to the flanges.

## RE-USABLE

If the project is one of a temporary nature, or maybe a prototype which may well be dismantled and re-built, it is as well that the metal case itself (the chassis), is left untouched, i.e. no holes or metal cut-outs are made. This way your case will serve again and again and need
Fig. 2. The Circuit board is fixed to the front panel by four bolis and spacer nuts.



Fig. 3 (a) (left) Fixing the potentiometer to the front panel if there is not enough space on the component board.

Fig. 3 (b) (right). Alternative method for potentiometerfixing.
never be discarded as being full of unwanted holes.

## COMPONENTS ATTACHED TO PANEL

To avoid "mutilating" the case, all controls and the component board etc. are mounted on, or attached to, the front panel. This leaves considerable scope for the constructors ingenuity. Fig. 2, shows how the circuit board can be attached to the back of the panel with 4 bolts of suitable length. Spacing sleeves or nuts being used to hold the board at a "distance." Remember to make allowance for corner flanges of the chassis when designing the dimensions of component board.

Controls such as variable potentiometers and variable capacitors can be. mounted on the cir-

cuit board with their spindles protruding through holes drilled in the panel or they can be mounted directly onto the front panel as in Figs. 3(a) and (b).

## USING BRACKETS

An alternative method can be employed where the circuit board is attached vertically or horizontally to the panel with small angle brackets. This method would be used where the panel is carrying something bulky such as a meter or multiple wafer switch. Angle brackets may also be used to attach a metal heat sink carrying a power transistor, or, say a horizontal deck to support a mains transformer Fig. 4. If a small loudspeaker is involved this can also be mounted on the panel-the fret being simply a symmetrical pattern of holes drilled in the panel opposite the loudspeaker cone, Fig. 5.

By using a combination of these various ways to attach everything to the front panel, the case can be left virtually "untouched". Panels made from Formica offcuts are cheap, easily cut with a scriber and metal straight-edge, and can be regarded as expendable.

## HOLES AND SLOTS

Although it is still necessary to cut holes and slots in the panel for mounting such things as meters, slide switches, etc., it is considerably easier with formica because in most instances the hole or slot can usually be deeply scribed with a scriber and then pushed out. It may then be necessary to "clean up" the hole with a small file. Small holes should be drilled in the usual way.

With Paxolin and Perspex it is slightly more difficult. The usual method for making a large circular hole is to drill around the circumference
of the hole to be removed and then clean up with a file, this takes some time. There are special tools on the market for this-a tank cutter and a disc cutting saw. Both of these fit into drills but they tend to be costly.


Fig. 5. A completed case of a small amplifier showing holes drilled for loudspeaker

## FINISHING AND LETTERING

With Formica and Perspex panels there is no finishing required as these are available in a variety of colours with excellent finishes.

With Paxolin, however, its finish is smooth but it is only available in a brown colour which looks ugly. This can be sprayed to the colour of choice using any of the aerosol sprays on the market or even painting with a paintbrush will do. It is best to try the paint on an offcut first to make sure that the Paxolin is not affected by the paint.

As far as labelling the control panel, Letraset is by far the best method, adding a touch of professionalism. All three of the panel materials mentioned above readily accept Letraset.

To prevent the labels from being scratched off it is necessary to cover them with varnish, Letracote Gloss is ideal for this job as it protects the lettering and gives the panel a gloss finish. The whole panel can be sprayed or just the regions of lettering as preferred.

Fig. 6. Various sizes and shapes of available chassis.



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## All in the April issue of


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When the young Marconi demonstrated his wireless apparatus by serding a transmission over a distance of less than two miles on Salisbury Plain in 1896, there were many eminent scientists of the day who dismissed the novelty as a toy; and many who firmly believed that wireless waves would be diverted or distorted by hills. As for the possibility of transmitting across water-why, the very suggestion was ridiculous in the extreme. Everyone knew that the wireless waves needed a return path through the earth. Besides, water would absorb the wireless energy like blotting paper.

## NO LIMIT

Marconi confounded these opinions on 11th May, 1897, when he carried out a successful transmission from Lavernock Pcint near Penarth to the island of Flat Holm in the Bristel Channel-a distance of three and a half miles. Though some doubters still stuck to their guns, this was hailed as a tremendous scientific achievement, and when a week later he succeeded in sending a message over a distance of nine miles across water, right across the Bristol Charnel to Brean Down in Somerset, scient fic enthusiasm was such that there were those who claimed that there was no limit to what conld now be achieved with sufficiently high-pover apparatus

No limit, indeed. Within four years Marconi had sent his transmissiors across the Atlantic from Foldhu in Cornwall to Signal Hill in New foundlard; and to-day, no mose than a lifespan since the tine when tae young man first arrived in Engand ships at sea a on ormunu eate daily
by Morse or speech with stations right acros; the world, and even modest 75 -watt radiotelephone sets such as those used by Sir Francis Chichester, Robin Knox-Johnson, and Chay Blyth can carry their words across 5,000 miles of ocean. Moreover, during that lifespan, like strong branches from the main trunk of pure communication, have sprung electronic aids to navigation and safety in the shape of direction-finding echo sounding and radar.

Electronics now contribute to efficient com mercial ship operation as intercommunication systems, hyperbolic position-fixing systems closed-circuit television, automatic steerng equipment, data loggers, and automation systems using intricate computer techniques One must, in fact, have the thought in mind that between the time that this article is writien and the date of its appearance in print some new technique or application may he evolved and announced. Such is the rate of accelerat on in the marine electronics industry

## RADIO AND ELECTRONICS

Except for the periods inmediately after the two world wars, it is diring the past few years that this expansion of the use of electronics at sea has been most marked. This is pointed by the fact that in April, 1968, the title of the Radio Officers Union was officially changed to the Radio and Electronic Officers Un on, while a number of companies now give extended training to their radio officers to bring them up to the rank of electronics officers. Indeed, even before the last war the responsibilities of the Merchant Navy radio-officer-the traditional.

"sparks"-usually went well beyond the operation and maintenance of his communication station and included the maintenance-and sometimes the operation into the bargain-of echo sounders and direction-finders. Of course, in more recent times he has also become responsible for the maintenance of radar, intercommunication and sound distribution networks, closed-circuit TV for navigation or entertainment purposes, data logging equipment, communal aerial systems, etc.

With the increasing use of automation at sea, and its dependence on electronics for much of its primary control and transmission of data and instructions, a ship's electronics installations are becoming much more complex from day to day and there is even talk-although it is still only talk-of the possibility of sending ships to sea without a crew at all. One wonders-is there indeed no limit?

But that is still in the future. At this moment the use of electronics on board ship is sufficiently considerable to be interesting. Ships' electronic installations naturally differ according to their needs which, of course, are dictated in part by international regulation and aIso by

The Lavernock and Brean Down experiments, May 1897, showing the method by which an increase in distance from three miles to eight miles was obtained. For these experiments kites covered with tin foil were used as aerials.

The control room and studio of the comprehensive television installation on board a cruise liner which distributes a choice of four programmes to more than 400 receivers in the ship's cabins and public rooms.
Navigational CCTV on a container ship in the Manchester Ship Canal clearly shows the forward tug which would otherwise be completely invisible to the officers on the bridge.

## at Sea

By W. Machonachie


the type of service in which they are engaged There is thus no "typical" merchant ship installation although regulations lay down the minimum equipment to be carried by four classes of merchant ship and also by fishing vessels.

## SHIP CLASSIFICATION

The classification of ships as set out in the Merchant Shipping (Radio) Rules is, as might be expected in an official document, a little on the wordy side, but briefly sunımarised, Class 1 ships are those carrying more than 250 passengers on vpyages of more than 16 hours duration. Class II covers passenger ships not in Class I and all cargo ships of 1600 tons or more. Cargo ships of 500 tons upwards but less than 1600 tons are Class III, and those of 300 tons and more but less than 500 tois constitute Class IV. The rules are not applied to sailing ships, pleasure yachts, or ships smaller than 300 tons, while fishing vessels have their own regulations.
Although there is therefore no typical merchant ship installation it is possible to define fairly accurately a typical installation for a type or class of ship. One of the most common oceangoing ships is the cargo liner, carrying general cargo on a regular service run-say from Southampton to Cape Town. She may carry up to twelve passengers, but is not classified as a passenger ship, and so far as her electronic equipment is concerned she can in broad terms be equated with the refrigerated meat or fruit carrier, or with the container ship, oil tanker, or bulk cargo carrier. All these ships run on international voyages and their electronics must cater primarily for the communication needs of their crews and owners and for the safe, economical and efficient rumning of the ships and their cargoes.

## STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

This type of ship-general cargo, tanker: bulk carrier, etc-whether she be 1600 tons or 300,000 tons, must be equipped to a minimum standard before she is allowed to leave port. The mandatory requirement is for a wireless telegraphy installation capable of both main and emergency operation; an automatic alarm receiver, unless she carries enough radio officers to maintain a continuous human watch; a direction-finder; a portable transmitter/ receiver for emergency use in a lifeboat. All this equipment must be of an officially approved nature, and her crew must include at least one qualified radio officer. Her wireless telegraphy installation has to comprise a main transmitter and separate receiver, both powered from ship's
The electronics officer of a cargo liner with the data logger which monitors 350 performance points in the main and auxiliary machinery, the refrigeration plant, and in the cold cargo space.
mains, as well as an emergency or reserve transmitter and a reserve receiver which derive their power from batteries so that they can be operative in the event of a failure of the mains supply.

The installation must also include a watchkeeping receiver, fitted with a loudspeaker, and capable of reception in the 500 kHz band, and an automatic keying device which can be made to operate either the main or the reserve transmitter in case of emergency and cause them to transmit the auto-alarm signal
This the statutory minimum for Class II ships, which includes some of the largest vessels afloat today, may not seem to comprise a very sophisticated installation. There is, for instance, no compulsion to carry radar-at the present moment. In practice, however, only a very few ships nowadays carry no more than will satisfy the law.

## NORMAL INSTALLATION

Walk aboard an ocean-going ship and you will almost certainly find at least one radar set on the bridge. Indeed, many now fit two radars, with interswitching arrangements so that units are in effect interchangeable if either set should suffer a breakdown.

In the wheelhouse you will also see an echosounder, or perhaps two-one recording and the other of the visual indicating type. Her directionfinder will probably be fully automatic, and both this and the radar will be coupled to the gyro-

compass. Moreover, the direction-finder may now be linked with the auto-alarm receiver so that if an auto-alarm signal, preceding the distress call, is received while the radio officer is not on watch, the direction-finder will automatically take a bearing on the distress position.

Our Class II ship will almost certainly have a v.h.f. radiotelephone for short-range speech communication with port facilities such as pilots, tugs, and harbourmasters, and this may have remote control extension units in both wings of the bridge and also in the radio office. The wheelhouse will contain the master control panel of a crew-call and talk-back system providing internal two-way communication with working areas on and below decks and with loudhailing facilities as well, while an internal telephone network will also be provided.

Loudspeakers in crew quarters will be accessible to the crew-call system and will also be linked to a broadcast receiver and amplifier installation to enable personnel to listen to news and entertainment during their off-duty times. Outlet points from a communal aerial system will be fitted in crew's cabins so that they can use their own personal broadcast receivers if they wish. Broadcast radio entertainment is not all that ships' crews can enjoy at sea-television programmes, too, can be watched through the provision of multi-standard receivers which more and more ships are fitting as permanent installations in crew's and officer's mess-rooms.


## CCTV AND ELECTRONIC MONITORING

On many large passenger liners today television is a "must" and an installation can be a very comprehensive one indeed, with hundreds of receivers or monitors in public rooms and cabins, offering a choice of four programmes or more. Such a system will be a combination of closed-circuit and off-air TV, taking the latter when within range of suitable shore transmissions and also generating its own on-board programmes with telecine, videotape, and from the ship's own studio and cameras.

Closed-circuit television has another marine application. If the ship is a large oil-tanker, bulk carrier or container vessel with the bridge aft and perhaps as much as 1,000 feet distant from the bows, she may well have a CCTV installation for navigational purposes. In such an installation the TV camera is mounted in the bows or up on the foremast and a monitor is fitted in the wheelhouse to give her officers a close-up view of objects immediately ahead which would otherwise be obscured from human-eye observation. Provided with a remote-controlled steerable camera and facilities for measuring the range and bearing of buoys, tugs, or other comparatively small objects close ahead of the ship, such a system can be invaluable when a very large vessel has to manoeuvre in restricted or busy waterways or has to negotiate canal locks and dock entrances.

Again, CCTV cameras are sometimes used to observe machinery operation in the engine room, where a different kind of electronic watchkeeper in the form of a data logger is often used to monitor hundreds of points of main engine and auxiliaries performance, such as oil pressures, fuel flow, temperatures of bearings and fluids, as well as temperatures and humidity levels in cargo holds and cold stores-in fact, any data which have to be checked regularly.

Data loggers or alarm monitoring systems of this kind are capable of producing a complete check on 400 parameters, with comparisons and off-limits alarm warnings, every three minutes, and will produce an instant readout on demand. The same round of tasks laboriously performed by human agency would keep several men fully occupied for a complete day's work.

## SATELLITE AND HYPERBOLIC NAVIGATION SYSTEM

So far in use on only a very few ships is a system of navigation, or more properly positionfinding, which derives information from four United States Navy satellites in polar orbit. These circle the earth every 108 minutes at an altitude of 600 miles, passing over the North and
The electronics officer of a transatlantic cargo liner using the facsimile weather chart receiver and recorder on the bridge.

South Poles, and broadcasting signals which announce their position every two minutes. The special shipborne observation equipment comprises a receiver, a data handler and a teleprinter. The system operates by measuring the Doppler effect variations in the broadcast frequency received from each satellite as it passes, but the shipboard installation is costly and cumbersome and the system is at present in use on only one or two high-prestige ships.

In much more common use are the Decca and Loran hyperbolic position-fixing systems which require only relatively simple and inexpensive receiving and metering equipment on board ships that wish to use them. Decca is very accurate but is relatively short-range and global coverage would therefore require a considerable number of shore station "chains." Loran, perhaps less accurate, will operate over greater distances from the shore transmitters, but so far serves only about one-fifth of the globe with more than 100 shore stations. The system of this type which appears to hold most promise is Omega, the v.l.f. hyperbolic system first developed for United States military use and since made available to cornmercial ships and aircraft. With four shore stations now in operation, transmitting on $10 \cdot 2$ kHz and $13 \cdot 6 \mathrm{kHz}$. Omega will later give complete global coverage with a total of eight shore stations.

## WEATHER CHARTS

It goes without saying that knowledge of the weather conditions that lie ahead of a ship is of the greatest value, not only from the point of view of safety, but also because any delay in a voyage is nowadays a very expensive business. Weather forecasts and ice warnings have been a regular feature of international and maritime radio communications for many years-indeed, the Titanic received a number of warnings of ice before she struck the fatal berg.

Until a few years ago ships at sea had to rely on the reception of very lengthy coded morse
A typical communications console in the radio room of a modern passenger vessel. The two s.s.b. main transmitters are not visible in this picture.
broadcasts for their advance weather information. On board ship this involved the time-consuming and laborious task of decoding each transmission after the radio officer had copied it down, and then transferring the verbal information into symbols and figures on a chart, always with the possibility of error. Today some thirty weather facsimile transmitting stations have been established throughout the world by the World Meteorological Organisation, and these broadcast synoptic charts at regular scheduled times. These charts, compiled by the meteorologists and complete with all isobars and symbols, may be received in full facsimile by any suitably equipped ship, free of charge.

The suitable equipment consists only of a special receiver covering .51 spot frequencies and combined with a facsimile chart recorder which produces a permanent image of the chart printed in black or brown on white paper.

## MANDATORY-THE MINIMUM

It will be seen that in the majority of well-run ships the mandatory requirement is regarded as the minimum, and any or all of the additional aids we have discussed may also be found in use on board ships for which they are suited.

Large passenger vessels may be expected to carry a wider range of equipment, sometimes with duplicated communications installations, while in such ships high-frequency long-range radiotelephony, nowadays using single-sideband, is the rule rather than the exception. Indeed, many cargo ships also make considerable use of high frequency radio telephone, and some passenger ships and tankers are now fitted with high-speed automatic transmission and reception with automatic error-correcting facilities and teleprinters linked into the shore Telex system.

So far this article has dealt only with the electronics usage of ocean-going ships. Electronics are just as useful to smaller vessels and fishing trawlers, and the types of equipment they employ and the ways in which they use them will be reviewed in a later article.

## - Acknowledgement

Photographs kindly provided by The Marconi International Marine Co., Ltd.



## By Mike Hughes M.A.

THis month we are going to introduce another very important electronic component, the "capacitor", but first of all let's look at the principle behind it. To do this we will revert to our simple water analogy.

## CAPACITY AND CHARGE

There is no need to have a complete circuit to ensure water flow-we could, for example, have used a hose pipe connected to a source of pressure to fill a bucket. Taking this a little bit further if we used a pump that was only capable of producing a pressure equivalent to 30 ft of water and we started to pump water into the bottom of a 40 ft reservoir tank the initial rate of flow would be large and limited only by the resistance of the hose pipe. As the tank filled, the "back pressure" would cause the flow rate to fall and would stop altogether when the level of water in the tank reached 30 ft .

By closing the tap at the inlet of the tank we could take away the pump and hold the water in the tank as "stored energy". By opening the tap the water would flow out at a rate governed only by the resistance of the pipe and the water level in the tank. As the level falls the flow rate reduces until the tank is empty.

We have already defined the electronic analogues of pressure, resistance and flow rate, but we must now introduce a fourth parameter -the quantity of water stored in the tank. In electronic terms we call this the "charge". The water tank is equivalent to the capacitor which has the capacity to hold a given charge.

## THE CAPACITOR

In its simplest form a capacitor is two plates of metal separated by a very small distance, see Fig. 1. Connecting a battery in series with a resistor across these plates will cause electrons to be pulled away from the plate connected to the positive terminal and "push"

Fig. 1. Schematic diagram of capacitor being charged.

NO CURRENT FLOWS ACRQSS

them through the resistor to the other plate.
Initially the rate of flow will be limited only by the resistor but as the electrons leave one plate so it will start to show a positive potential with respect to the other. This potential difference will build up as time progresses and slow down the flow rate-just like the pump, hosepipe and tank. Eventually the potential across the capacitor will equal that of the battery and flow will stop.
By observing a voltmeter connected across the capacitor you could see this happening; this will be shown experimentally later. Opening the switch in Fig. 1 is just like turning off the tap and removing the pump. The charge of electrons will stay on the right hand plate and the potential difference will be maintained as shown on the meter. When we do this in practice you will see that the charge leaks away through the resistance of the voltmeter.

By connecting a resistor across the capacitor as in Fig. 2 we can deliberately make the electrons regain their original equilibrium. Initially the flow rate will be high but will get less and less until the capacitor is discharged and the current stops flowing. In principle that is all a capacitor does in any circuit.


Fig. 2. Capacitor discharging through a resistor.

## DEFINITIONS AND UNITS

Electronic charge is measured in units called coulombs. One coulomb is defined as the number of electrons that flow past a given point in a wire when a current of one ampere flows for one second.

Capacitance is measured in Farads. A capacitor has a capacitance of one Farad when, if it has been charged with one coulomb of electricity, produces a potential difference of one volt across the plates of the capacitor.

This can be represented mathematically by

$$
C=\frac{Q}{V}
$$

where $C$ is the capacitance measured in Farads $Q$ is the charge on the plates
and $V$ is the potential difference across the plates produced by the existence of $Q$.
To obtain a charge of one coulomb we would have to have a current of one ampere flowing for one second. This is a very high current in electronic terms and we only experience it in very high power circuits. Thus it should seem fairly logical that values of capacitance we
encounter should be very much less than one Farad.

Usually we deal with millionths of Faradsmicrofarads ( $\mu \mathrm{F}$ ), thousandths of millionthsnanofarads ( nF ) and billionths-picofarads ( pF ).

## CAPACITOR TYPES

Unlike resistors there is a much wider choice of differing styles of capacitor of both the fixed and variable type. Their circuit symbols are given in Fig. 3.


It has always been a battle to obtain large values of capacitance in a small physical size because the phenomena that causes it is purely geometric-the area and separation of the two plates. If the distance between the plates is decreased, the capacitance increases, but by bringing the plates closer together (in most cases less than a thousandth of an inch) we have to introduce a spacer material-the "dielectric".
The dielectric itself can help increase capacitance but we immediately encounter another problem (except for very expensive dielectric materials), that these materials that enhance capacitance, very often exhibit poor insulation properties. If we used a very poor insulator as a dielectric any charge stored would leak away within the capacitor itself. We would say the capacitor was "leaky".

Some dielectrics will not withstand high voltages across them particularly when they are very thin.

## ELECTROLYTIC

Some very effective dielectrics are in the form of a paste where the initial flow of current through the initially "leaky" capacitor produces an electro-chemical reaction that actually forms an insulator. Capacitors which use this form of dielectric are called "electrolytic", and they exhibit polarity properties (i.e. the capacitor can only be connected into circuit one way round). We usually turn to this type of capacitor when very high values of capacitance are required. They come in all shapes, sizes and working voltages.

Different types of capacitor are usually described by the type of dielectric and Fig. 4 shows some of the more important ones.

## SILVER MICA AND POLYSTYRENE

Provided they are obtained from a respectable source, leakage is not usually a problem-this is well taken care of in manufacture. Nevertheless, the best type to use when this is the controlling parameter is the silver mica type. These are limited to low values of capacitance from lpF up to $10,000 \mathrm{pF}$; the higher values in the range tend to be rather expensive. They can operate up to about 300 V but individual manufacturers types might differ widely.

Polystyrene capacitors have a similar range of capacity and are usually available at different voltage workings-typically from 30 V to 500 V . While they are not as effective as silver mica types in all applications, they are nevertheless very good insulation wise, and are a little cheaper.

## CERAMIC AND POLYESTER

Ceramic dielectric devices also have a similar range of values and working voltages but sometimes are available with wider tolerances (this makes them cheaper) and some types are very sensitive to changes of temperature-this can be a useful or bad thing depending on the application.

Perhaps the most used by the amateur today is the polyester device. These start in value at about $0.01 \mu \mathrm{~F}(10,000 \mathrm{pF})$ and go up to $1 \mu \mathrm{~F}$ with voltage ranges of from 50 to 300 V . Overlapping this range and going up to about $5 \mu \mathrm{~F}$ are polycarbonate types that are a little more expensive than polyester.

## TANTALUM

For miniaturisation and high capacitance one can turn to solid Tantalum types. These are fairly new on the amateur scene and are inexpensive. These types have a very low leak-

Table I: COMPARISON OF DIFFERENT CAPACITOR TYPES

| Type |  | Capacitance <br> Range | Working <br> Voltage |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | Tolerance

age current-typically 0.02 microamp per microfarad volt. Available values range from $0 \cdot 022 \mu \mathrm{~F}$ to $270 \mu \mathrm{~F}$ with working voltages generally from 100 to 60 V respectively.

See Table 1 for a comparison of types.


Fig. 4. Shown above is a variety of common capacitor types: A paper; B polyester; C tubular metallised polyester; D electrolytic can-type; E ganged variable; $F$ electrolytic; $G$ beehive trimmer (concentric); H variable; I metallised polyester; J paper dielectric; K tubular mixed dielectric; $L$ trimmer (compression); $M$ and $N$ metallised polyester; $\mathbf{O}$ silver mica (printed circuit type), $P$ silver mica; Q disc ceramic; $R$ tantalum; $S$ high voltage (pulse) ceramic; T polystyrene.

## TOLERANCE

A word about tolerance values. Like all components, capacitors have tolerances which usually vary from one type to another. Generally, silver mica types are within $\pm 1$ per cent and have their values printed on them. Polystyrene can range from $\pm 2$ to $\pm 10$ per cent and also have printed values; likewise with ceramics but the tolerance can be as high as $\pm 20$ per cent. Polyester types are usually $\pm 20$ per cent but values are frequently put on them in colour code form. The code is exactly the same as for resistors except that the values are in units of picofarads ( pF ), see Fig. 5. Polycarbonate types are similar but values are usually printed.

Electrolytics are usually used where tolerancing is not very important and one requires "at least" a certain value. They generally have tolerances of +100 to -25 per cent. Invariably they have values printed on them.

## VARIABLE CAPACITORS

Variable capacitors are limited to comparatively low values-typically up to 500 pF . Their most usual application is for tuning radios and this range of values is ideal. The most frequent type encountered uses an air dielectric and has a number of interleaved plates (to increase the total surface area). One set of plates is attached to a spindle and they can be moved relative to a fixed set. The shape of the vanes is designed so that in the radio tuning application the fre-


Fig. 5. An example of the capacitor colour code.
quency of the tuned signal varies in direct proportion to the degree of rotation.

As with resistors it is sometimes impossible to rely on manufacturing tolerances and preset trimmer types are required. These can be of the compressional type where the gap between two plates is adjusted with a screw, or the concentric type where one cylinder is made to slide over another thus varying the effective surface area of overlap. Values of trimmers are very low and rarely exceed 150 pF .

## EXPERIMENT 1

We shall now demonstrate the function of capacitors on the Demo Deck. For this we shall use one that will come in handy later. Ideally we specify an electrolytic with a high value, $500 \mu \mathrm{~F}$ at 25 V . Provided you have one in the range 250 to $1,000 \mu \mathrm{~F}$ and its working voltage is in excess of 12 V it will do.

The circuit diagram and layout on the Demo Deck for this experiment is shown in Figs. 6(a) and (b).

First make a 10 V range voltmeter by using a 10 kilohm resistor in series with the 1 mA meter. Make two flying leads that have crocodile clips on their ends and attach the ends without clips to your voltmeter-make sure you know which one is going to the positive terminal. Now solder the capacitor across any pair of turret tags - identify the terminal of the capacitor (identified with a + sign or a red spot at this end). Solder a 10 kilohm resistor to the positive end of the capacitor and attach its free end to another tag. Now connect a flying lead to the negative end of the capacitor and take it to the negative terminal of the 9 V battery.

Similarly connect a flying lead to the free end of the resistor but leave the other end of the lead free for the time being. Now use the crocodile clips to connect the voltmeter across the capacitor-positive lead to the positive end.

## OBSERVATIONS

Initially nothing should show on the meter. Now connect the free wire from the resistor to the positive terminal of the battery. This connection acts as Sl in the circuit diagram. The



Fig. 6(a) (above). The circuit diagram for experiment 1.
Fig. 6(b) (left). The circuit wired up on the Demo Deck.



Fig. 7. Typical charge and discharge curves for a capacitor. Similar curves should be obtained from the results of experiment 1.
voltage across the capacitor will start to rise -fast at first, due to the high current flow-but the rate of rise will get less and less until the meter reads about $4.5 \mathrm{~V}(0.45 \mathrm{~mA}$ on the scale $)$. The reason why the voltage does not rise above 4.5 V is that the resistance of the meter (approximately 10 kilohm) forms a potential divider with the supply resistor. Now disconnect the lead from the positive battery terminal.

The voltage across the capacitor will fall caused by current flowing through the meter circuit-again fast at first and then the rate will tail off until no charge is left. Although it is difficult, try plotting a graph of voltage charged to (reading on meter), against time and then do the same for discharge. You should get curves rather like those shown in Fig. 7.

Although it requires buying another identical capacitor, you could do the same experiment with two 5004 F capacitors in parallel. You will then notice an appreciable increase in the time of both charging and discharging.

## SERIES AND PARALLEL

 COMBINATIONSPutting capacitors in parallel increases the

Fig. 8(a) (above). The circuit diagram for experiment 2.
Fig. 8(b) (left). The circuit wired up on the Demo Deck.
monitor the current on the 1 mA meter in series.
Now connect the battery and watch the meter. Initially the charge current will be 0.9 mA but this will gradually fall until full charge has been reached, i.e., the current becomes zero.

Now disconnect the positive lead from the battery and hold it on the negative terminal. Note that the meter tries to read backwards. Repeat the whole experiment, but when you get to the second half, reverse the connections to the meter. The negative current you saw can now be read from the meter scale. This is caused by the capacitor discharging back through the resistor.

Because the immediate "start" current was 0.9 mA you can see that the only thing that limited the current in the first instance was the resistor. You could say that when the resistor is short circuited to the battery negative terminal, you were applying zero volts to the capacitor.


Fig. 9 (a) Integrator and (b) differentiator circuits.
The two experiments carried out demonstrate a pair of very important basic circuits which are
usually seen in the form of Fig. 9. They are respectively called integrator and differentiator circuits.


Next month: Semiconductors and experiments with diodes.

# Ruminations BySensor 

## Take a Card

A friend, who has just returned from the U.S.A., told me that the electronic construction hobby is highly organised over there. Apart from a large number of retailers specializing in the supply of components to the hobby market over the counter or by mail order, there have appeared, in drug stores, supermarkets and other unlikely places, complete kits of parts with full instructions for building electronic projects. The parts are mounted on a card covered by plastic; even the resin cored solder is supplied.
Where integrated circuits are used, the reductions in physical size and in the number of individual components required for a project have made it possible to supply everything required on a card no larger than E.E.

The advantages to the construc-
tor are obvious and apply equally to other complete kits; all the parts are of the correct type and can be expected to work together without difficulty. There are no delivery problems and no frustrations due to unavailability of any component, it would seem to make things almost too easy. But what about all those components one already has? Are these doomed to lie on the workshop shelf until they become obsolete? And what of the pleasure one can gain by searching the advertisements in Everyday Electronics looking for bargain price components? Personally, I would rather buy components as and when I need them and the phrase "any component sold separately" in a kit advertisement, gladdens my heart.

## Take Another Card

I tend to lump together all "things sold on cards" as belonging to that class of cheap and nasty products that were once found in the cheaper stores, particularly at Christmas time. I think especially of one called, if memory serves me right, "The Young Carpenter", which con-
tained a "tin" saw, a wooden hammer, trisquare and few other useless "tools". The saw buckled at the first attempt to cut anything, the wooden hammer head broke from its shaft, and the glasspaper disintegrated at the first rub. How much damage to a young child's confidence could be wrought by a toy like this? The young fingers, not very skilful to begin with, the eager desire to make something, inexorably doomed to failure from the outset. It's enough to make anyone neurotic! I found my father's hacksaw and looked for something to saw; my mother's shopping basket lay near to hand and I carefully cut through the handle. There was no malice in the deed, I just wanted to saw something! It was very satisfying -but the aftermath was uncom. fortable.

I am waiting for some manufacturer to bring out a range of educational toys and I suggest one might start with "The Young Roadmender". This would contain a pneumatic drill-realistic noise -really works-keeps children. quiet for hours. For other people's children, of course.

Although only a simple instrument in the field of radio servicing, the pocket signal injector is a most valuable and handy tool for both the amateur and professional.

Because no mains power supply is required for its operation, and due to its small, compact size, this signal injector can be used almost anywhere-in the car, for example, where fault diagnosis can be carried out on the car radio which would normally be removed from the car necessitating, usually, in the car battery and speaker being removed also.

The signal injector is not, in general, able to pinpoint a malfunctioning component, but enables the stage containing the faulty component to be isolated enabling tests appropriate to this stage to be carried out.

## CIRCUIT DESCRIPTION

The circuit diagram for the complete signal injector is shown in Fig. 1.

It can be seen that the collector of TR1 is capacitively coupled to the base of TR2 by capacitor C1, and TR2 collector is capacitively

## Approximate cost of components

A useful pocket instrument for fault location on transistor radio receivers and audio equipment

## SJGDAL

 IDJECTOBBY ALAN JARDINE


Fig. 1. The complete circuit diagram of the signal injector. Output is taken from the collector of TR2. and is a "square" wave of basic frequency 11 kHz .

## Components....

```
Resistors
\begin{tabular}{ll} 
R1 & \(22 \mathrm{k} \Omega\) \\
R2 & \(68 \mathrm{k} \Omega\) \\
R3 & \(68 \mathrm{k} \Omega\) \\
R4 & \(22 \mathrm{k} \Omega\)
\end{tabular}
```



```
All \(t\) watt \(\pm 10 \%\)
Capacitors
\(\begin{array}{ll}\text { C1 } & 0.01 \mu \mathrm{~F} \\ \text { C2 } & 0.01 \mu \mathrm{~F}\end{array}\)
C3 \(0.01 \mu \mathrm{~F}\) high voltage type (see text)
Transistors
TR1, TR2 OC44 or 2G344A germanium pnp (2 off)
Switch
S1 on/off pushbutton
Miscellaneous
B1 1.5V battery type HP7
SK1 3 mm insulated socket
PL1 3 mm miniature plug
Veroboard, \(4 \times 25\) holes 0.15 inch matrix 1 inch diameter tube about \(5 \frac{1}{\frac{1}{2}}\) in long (it is advisable to obtain one with a clip-on lid); 1 crocodile clip; 1 in nail; rubber grommet.
```

coupled to the base of TR1 by capacitor C2.
This cross-coupling produces what is in effect an oscillator, due to the feedback action of the capacitors. This type of oscillator is called an astable (free-running) multivibrator.

Basically the multivibrator has two states, TR1 "on" (conducting)-TR2 "off" (non-conducting), and TR2 "on"-TR1 "off." The transistor states are activated by the capacitors Cl and C2; the length of time each is "on" and "off" is dependent on the values of $\mathrm{Cl}, \mathrm{C} 2$ and R2, R3.

## OUTPUT WAVEFORM

The output voltage seen at the collector of TR2 is a square wave formed by the periods of TR2 being "on" and "off" as shown in Fig. 2.

The ratio of the time one transistor is "on" to the other is known as the mark/space ratio. In this case $\mathrm{Cl}=\mathrm{C} 2$ and $\mathrm{R} 3=\mathrm{R} 2$, each transistor is on for the same length of time and so it is 1 .


Fig. 2. The waveshape obtained at the output. This is made up from periods of TR2 conducting and non-conducting, the resultant effect being a square wave. A similar wave form is available at the collector of TR1.

The frequency (in Hz ) of the square wave at TR2 is given by: $\mathrm{f}=1 \div(1.4 \mathrm{C} \times \mathrm{R})$ where C is in Farads, R in ohms. For the circuit of Fig. 1 the frequency is 1 kHz .

This signal can be regarded as a sine wave of frequency 1 kHz with harmonics $u p$ to 10 MHz . Thus the signal can be injected into any stage of a radio set and will produce a continuous note if the set is in working order.

The capacitor C3, in the output stage, has no influence on the signal produced by the multi-vibrator-its function is to prevent any current flowing into the injector from the radio under test.
It must be stresed at this point that this signal injector is primarily designed for use on transistor radio sets. If it is going to be used on mains sets, capacitor C3 should be a high voltage type, at least 350 volts working and


The photograph on the left shows the completed signal injector being used to test the Astron receiver. Complete test procedure for the Astron is given in the text of this article. The injector can also be used with other radios and audio equipment.

The signal injector completely wired up except for S1 and the earth lead. The probe is secured to the case cap.

Layout and wiring diagram of the complete signal injector. The lead to the crocodile clip passes through a grommet in the side of the case.
the metal case housing the unit must be adequately insulated. Several layers of insulating tape wrapped around the metal case should and must be used.

## VEROBOARD LAYOUT

The resistors, capacitors and transistors are all mounted with the battery on a piece of $0 \cdot 15$ inch matrix Veroboard of dimensions $3_{4}{ }_{4} \mathrm{in} . \times$ $5_{8}$ in. ( $4 \times 25$ holes). The layout of the components is shown in Fig. 3(a).

The Veroboard length was chosen so that the battery can be attached to give a rigid, secure structure.

The underside of the board should be cut as shown in Fig. 3(b). Note the wiring across the copper strips at Al to A4.

## MOUNTING THE COMPONENTS

Once the Veroboard is cut we can mount the components. starting with the resistors R1, R2, R3 and R4 followed by the capacitors $\mathrm{Cl}, \mathrm{C} 2$ and C3.

A piece of tinned wire should now be soldered across the 4 strips of copper at Al to A4 with one end protruding through the top of A 4 for later connection to the battery.

Solder a 3 inch piece of insulated wire to the positive terminal of the battery and place the battery on the Veroboard in position shown. Secure in this position by wrapping some insulating tape around the battery and board.

Solder the bare lead from A4 to the battery base (negative terminal).
Next the flying leads to locations X4 and Y4 should be soldered. X4 lead should be about 5 inches long and Y4 should be about 2 ft .

The probe flying lead should now be soldered in position indicated, Y2. This should be about 2 inches long and be of seven strand insulated wire.

All that remains to be done on the board now is to solder the transistors in position. Remember when soldering transistors, to use a heat shunt on the leads being soldered. A small pair of snipe nose pliers held across the lead being soldered will act as an efficient heat shunt. If no heat shunt is used permanent damage to the transistors may result.

Now take the leads from $\mathrm{X} 4, \mathrm{Y} 4$ and the positive battery terminal to the end of the board as shown. These may be held in position by means of a piece of insulating tape on the side of the battery.

Connect the push-button switch S1, as shown and ensure it is in the off position.

## CASE

The case used in the prototype was an empty "Steradent" tube which is an aluminium tube with a plastic clip-on cap. A plastic clip-on cap
should be used since it affords insulation of the probe from the case and no lead twisting results from the clip-on action.

A small hole is drilled in the centre of the cap to suit a 3 mm insulated socket (which forms part of the probe), and a nut and washer hold it securely in position.

Another hole is drilled in the opposite end of the tube to suit the switch Sl .

The switch used, and obtainable from Woolworths, was found to be a little large to fit into the tube. It is necessary to file a little off each corner of the switch to enable an easy fit.

At the rear, and on the side of the tube, drill a small hole about ${ }^{3}$.6 inch diameter for the fly lead from Y4. A rubber grommet should be used in the hole for protection of this wire.

## PROBE

The probe is very easily constructed. It consists of a 1 inch nail with its end filed to a smooth point and its head soldered to the inside of the 3 mm plug. A length of insulated sleeving is then pushed over the stem of the nail, leaving about ${ }^{1}{ }_{4}$ inch of tip exposed, and the plug cap screwed on. Push the plug into the socket on the lid of the tube-the probe is now complete and the fly lead from location Y2 on the Veroboard can now be soldered to the tag on the socket.

## ASSEMBLY

First of all, check that the correct transistor lead connections have been made and that the battery is connected the right way round.

Thread the lead Y4 through the hole on the side of the case. Now lay a thin piece of foam rubber along the bottom of the Veroboard and lap it around the battery end (this may be held in position by a dab of glue and prevents possible shorting against the case) and slide the whole unit, switch end first, into the tube.

Screw the plastic fixing nut on the switch and clip on the lid. The grommet should now be placed in position and a crocodile clip attached to the end of the exterior lead.

The unit is ready for use.

## TESTING

Testing the unit is a simple matter. Apply the probe to the aerial socket or aerial connection of a radio set that is known to be in working order, and attach the crocodile clip to the earth line in the radio and switch on.

With the volume knob turned up, a high pitched tone should be heard whatever the setting of the tuner dial.

If there is no sound, recheck the circuit and investigate for breaks in the circuit, short circuiting and dry joints.


Fig. 4 The circuit diagram of the Astron receiver with the test points indicated for fault location and checks.

## FAULT LOCATION

The completed signal injector may prove a very useful instrument for the consterictors of the Astron receiver featured in the January edition of Everyday Electronics as well as constructors of other projects or for use in fault locating on commercial transistor receivers.

The Astron circuit will be used to illustrate the use of this instrument, but it will be seen that the testing procedure can be adopted for use on other types of receivers, amplifiers, etc.

Basically what happens is that we work backwards through the circuitry from the loudspeaker listening to the volume and tone of the signal emerging from the loudspeaker.
When a point is reached which produces "no sound", then the fault lies between this point and the previous one. The absence of any sound indicates such things as a faulty component, dry joint, circuit break or wrong connection. When such a "noiseless" stage is reached, this region should be checked in detail.
Foe the Astron, signal injection should be at points 1 to 6 as indicated in Fig. 4.

Assuming that the radio is in perfect working order, the testing procedure should give results as listed below.

## PROCEDURE

Turn the volume control full on and adjust the tuner so that no station is tuned-this results in a hiss from the loudspeaker. Attach the crocodile clip to the negative side of capacitor Cl and apply the probe to the points 1 to 6 in numerical order.

Point 1 A high-pitched sound of low volume will be heard over the loudspeaker. This indicates that the loudspeaker is functioning.

Point 2 A louder sound of the same pitch will result, indicating that the TR4 side of the output stage is functioning.

Point 3 The probe of this point produces higher pitched sound but with a reduction in volume as compared with test point 2 . This indicates the functioning of the other half of the output stage -that containing TR3.

Point 4 This point is to test the driver stage containing TR2. A very loud sound is heard that has a lower pitch than point 3 .

Point 5 A higher pitch sound than previous test point with the same volume level. Satisfactory signal indicates R4 and C6 free from fault.

Point 6 This position tests the performance of TR1. The sound produced by probing this point is very loud, with a lower pitch than previous test point.

It is important to test in the way described above, i.e., working back from the loudspeaker. Only if the stage previous to the one on test gives a satisfactory result can any conclusions be drawn about the one on test.

When a faulty stage is located, it should be examined in detail-it may be necessary to use other test equipment for this purpose. When rectified the above test procedure should be carried out again starting from test point 1 . $\square$


## By D. Bollen



## Approximate cost of components

 B
### 3.00 excluding case

O$N$ the face of it, watering the garden would seem to be a simple pastime, but it often does more harm than good. A light sprinkling during dry weather will, for example, merely attract rootlets to the surface and cause excessive transpiration, while water applied to apparently dry soil could percolate down to where roots are actually lying in sodden earth. Even more critical is the watering of plants in pots and seed boxes, because there is no large volume of earth to act as a moisture buffer.

Obviously, plants of different species have their own individual water requirements, and the only reliable way of ensuring that they are catered for is to measure soil moisture content at root depth.

## MOISTURE MEASUREMENT

The electrical conductivity of a soil is approximately proportional to its moisture content, and the principle adopted here is to measure the a.c. current flowing between a pair of copper electrodes inserted in the ground. This gives a meter reading linearly calibrated in terms of percentage saturation which can be readily adapted to suit soils of widely differing porosity. It might be thought simpler to use d.c. current between the electrodes, but this would only result in electrode corrosion and errors due to polarisation of the electrodes.

The basic arrangement of the moisture meter is show in Fig. 1, with an oscillator supplying current to the electrodes via an a.c. microammeter and a series resistor. Insulated sleeving is fitted over the electrodes in such a way that only the ends are exposed to the soil, thus the depth at which readings are taken will depend on how far the electrodes are inserted.


Fig. 1. Basic arrangement of the moisture meter.

## Components ....

## Resistors <br> R1 4.7 kS , <br> R2 $68 \mathrm{k} \Omega$ <br> R3 68ks <br>  <br> R4 4.7 kS ) <br> All $\pm 10 \% \frac{1}{2}$ watt carbon

## Capacitors

C1 $1 \mu \mathrm{~F}$ polyester ( 250 V d.c.)
C2 $0.1 \mu \mathrm{~F}$ polyester ( 250 V d.c.)
C3 $0.1 \mu \mathrm{~F}$ polyester ( 250 V d.c.)

## Semiconductors

| D1-D4 | OA 200 (4 off) |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| TR1 | BC 108 | Silicon npn |
| TR2 | BC 108 | Silicon npn |

Switch
S1 Single pole push to make
Meter
ME1 $500 \mu \mathrm{~A}$ f.s.d. moving coil meter $(100 \mu \mathrm{~A}$ may bè used-see text)

## Miscellaneous

VR1 $10 \mathrm{k} \Omega$ vertical skeleton preset potentiometer
B1 PP3 9 V battery
JK1 3.5 mm mono jack socket
PL1 3.5 mm mono jack plug
$2 \frac{3}{4}$ in $\times 2 \frac{1}{d}$ in $\times 0.25$ in matrix plain perforated circuit board, insulated sleeving, mounting pins to suit board, battery connectors, 24 in $x \frac{3}{10}$ in outside diameter copper tubing, case (approximately 4 in $\times 3$ in $\times 3$ in), connecting wire and probe leads.


Fig. 2. Complete circuit diagram of the soil moisture meter.

## CIRCUIT

The complete circuit of the moisture meter is given in Fig. 2. Transistors TR1 and TR2 are cross-coupled by capacitors C2 and C3 to form a multivibrator oscillator which provides à squarewave output of 8 V amplitude at a frequency of about 100 Hz . The output is taken through capacitor Cl which serves to prevent a flow of d.c. between the electrodes.

The multivibrator functions by the alternate switching of TR1 and TR2 actioned, at the selected frequency, by the charging of C2 and C3 through R2 and R3. Variation of these components will alter the frequency of the multivibrator.

The output is taken from across the collectors of the two transistors so that current is flowing through the probe circuit at all times. If the output was taken across one transistor only, then no current would flow when that transistor was fully conducting.

The a.c. microammeter in Fig. 2 consists of diodes Dl to D4, which form a bridge rectifier and meter ME1. The preset potentiometer VR1 functions as a series meter resistor and is also used for calibration. A.C. current passes from the collector of TRI, via Cl , through the a.c. microammeter, and then by way of JKl and PLl to the electrodes, through the soil, and returns to the collector of TR2.

Switch Si in Fig. 2 is a push button switch which energises the circuit only when a reading is being taken. The meter MEl has a $500 \mu \mathrm{~A}$
movement, but $100 \mu \mathrm{~A}$ and $50 \mu \mathrm{~A}$ movements may be used if their terminals are shunted by a resistor of 270 ohm or 120 ohm respectively. A convenient meter scale calibration would be $0-100$, or $0-10$, representing 0 to 100 per cent saturated-a method of altering the meter marking is given later in the article.

## CONSTRUCTION

The moisture meter components can be housed in a small plastics food container or any other suitable small case, with ME1, S1, and SK1 fixed to the front. The remaining components are assembled on a piece of 0.25 inch matrix plain, perforated circuit board which is bolted to the meter terminals, see Fig. 3.

The photograph used in the heading of this article shows the meter face as marked in the prototype. To designate the meter as shown the movement must be taken from the case and the metal scale carefully removed from the movement. Unwanted markings already on the face can then be carefully removed using an abrasive cleaner or metal polish. Once this has been done new markings can be inked in and the meter reassembled, once again taking care not to damage the movement.

Commence construction by cutting the circuit board to size, and drill two holes to take the meter terminals. Insert all turret tags in the locations shown and then solder on link wires, resistors, VR1, capacitors, and leads, using insulated sleeving where necessary. When the circuit board has cooled, solder the diodes and transistors to the turret tags, using a heat shunt if you are not proficient at soldering the leads quickly.

If the meter polarity is not the same as in Fig. 3, the connections to the solder tags should be reversed. Also, where a $100 \mu \mathrm{~A}$ or $50 \mu \mathrm{~A}$ meter movement is employed, the appropriate value of shunt resistor should be soldered across the meter tags, as mentioned earlier.

Having mounted the meter, push button switch and socket on the front panel, attach the circuit board to the meter and connect up the leads as shown in Fig 4. The battery can be taped to the inside of the box, or a special clip made to hold it in place.

To check that the circuit is functioning cor: rectly, temporarily solder a 4.7 kilohm resistor across SK1, connect up the battery and press S1. Now adjust VRl for a full-scale meter reading. If the meter does not respond at all when S1 is pressed, the circuit should be checked for wiring errors. Check the polarity of the diodes and the transistor connections in particular.

## ELECTRODES

Take two pieces of ${ }_{16}$ inch outside diameter copper tubing about 12 inches long (or longer if desired) and. flatten one end of each with a


Fig. 3 (above). The layout and wiring of the complete circuit board. This board is mounted by the meter terminals.

Fig. 4 (right). Connections of the flying leads from the circuit board to the remaining components.

Fig. 5 (below). Construction of the moisture probe-two are required. These are connected by two core wire to JKi via PL1.

hammer, see Fig. 5. Drill the flattened ends to take 6 B.A. screws. Push insulated sleeving over the electrodes leaving about 1 inch of the unflattened ends bare.

The moisture probes may be permanently installed or used at various locations with the meter. Having decided on the location of the electrodes, and the length of cable necessary (this should not exceed 20 yards) solder the ends of the cable to the electrode tags and fit PL1.

## SETTING UP AND CALIBRATION

It is advisable to check that the probe cable does not introduce too much capacitance into circuit, especially when a long run is used. Support the electrodes off the ground on a piece of dry wood, connect PLl to the meter and press Sl . If there is a slight movement of the meter pointer away from zero this can be compensated for by adjustment of the meter zeroing screw.

Push the electrodes into the ground, about 3 inches apart, to the required depth, and then pour about two gallons of water onto the soil around the electrodes and leave for an hour or two, until the soil is saturated at root depth,
then press Sl and adjust VRl for a full scale (100 per cent) reading. If, after calibration, there is a prolonged dry spell, the meter reading will slowly decline and may eventually reach zero.

## USING THE MOISTURE METER

Some plants will thrive best if their moisture level is maintained within limits, for example, house leeks 10-30 per cent, roses $30-70$ per cent, and marrows 70-95 per cent. Cacti, on the other hand, will demand a seasonal watering programme varying from, say, 60-80 per cent in summer down to $5-10$ per cent in winter.

There are many books available on gardening and the various moisture requirements of plants can be found from these books. If you require the probes to be permanently installed for monitoring of one plant a second set of probes could be constructed and used with the meter to check other plants both indoors and outdoors. A set of smaller probes may be useful when checking small pot plants.

Meter calibration can be checked from time to time when the soil becomes saturated after a heavy rainfall.

# MEMORY STORE 

## Retrieval By

Derek Burn

SUPPOSE that it is true to say that I became involved in electronics by the back door. My only formal training had been a wireless mechanic's course in the RAF, and that was a very long time ago and almost forgotten. Then one day a new neighbour passed the house carrying under one arm a very large and impressive model boat and under the other an equally impressive box covered with an incredible array of knobs and dials. This fascinating sight could not be allowed to pass unremarked and I just had to find out more. I think perhaps a dormant interest had been aroused, for the immediate result of a most interesting conversation was that I gained a new friend and a new hobby.

The magnificent boat was of course radio-controlled, and it turned out that it was not working very well. Hoping that at least a part of my RAF course had stuck, i rashly offered to try to put things right. Fortunately it wasn't too difficult for these were the early days of radio control when
valves and very simple circuits were the only hope for success.

We soon reached that triumphant stage when the gear would work correctly on about half of our visits to the local pond-and that was quite a fair performance in those days!

About this time, commercial equipment was beginning to appear featuring that new-fangled gadget, the transistor. Naturally we could not afford such luxuries, but at least we could try to learn something about the device and attempt to build our own gear. This was a very exciting period for radio control.

The transistor made it possible to devise very much more sophisticated circuitry which was small and light, and yet more reliable than the valve equipment that it replaced. Our visits to the pond became more frequent and much more successful.

As I learnt more about these transistors, I became fascinated by their possibilities, and my interests widened to cover any aspect of electronics that took my fancy. The main reason for this active interest was curiously my inherent laziness.

I had always been put off by the enormous amount of tin-bashing which seemed to be such an
essential feature of the electronics of the valve era. The transistor changed all that. The chassis was now just a piece of printed circuit board, and I felt that I could now get stuck in!

Probably because I was never very successful with r.f. circuits (oscillators would never oscillate and amplifiers invariably did), the ham scene did not appeal to me. However, I discovered an unexpected talent for making multivibrators that worked, and so I was led inevitably into the field of digital circuits. As it happened, model radio control also moved in this direction with the introduction of the so-called digital proportional system, and so my interest in that aspect of electronics was maintained.

The scope of this type of circuitry is almost limitless, bounded only by one's imagination. Well, almost only, another factor being patience. After all, there is a limit to the number of bistables one is prepared to wire up!

Happily, just at this time, integrated circuits burst upon the amateur scene, and really complex circuits such as digital clocks became a reality. I can see no end to this type of electronics for many years to come, and I am happy that it should be so.

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We will try and clear up a few points that have come to light during the last month. First it would appear that in January issue two components were missed out of components lists. In the Astron R9 680ohms was left out ( ${ }_{4}{ }^{2} \mathrm{~W} \pm 10 \%$ carbon) and in Electro Laugh D1 1N914, diode was left out.
When constructing the Electro Laugh please note the link between P7 and Q7 is not very clear on Fig. 3 as C6 has printed rather darker than it should have.
In the Astron we have also managed to show two C5's on Fig. 3-the one on the left should be C6-and we have transposed the battery leads on Fig. 4. We have also made the same mistake with the battery leads in the Rain Alarm, February issue Fig. 4, sorry about these points.

Whilst talking about these projects there are some other points worth mentioning. The speaker used in the Astron is the same as that specified for the Demo Deck. Due to demand created by these articles the speaker is at present unobtainable, however, some firms have similar size speakers in stock and one of these could be used, provided that its impedance is not less than about 20 ohms. Speakers with much higher impedance than the 35 ohms specified will not provide such a high output power.

Some readers have enquired about the earpiece used in the Electro Laugh, it is a magnetic device and is generally available for around 60p. After some experimenting the unit was also found to work well into a small 75 ohm speaker and this makes a good alternative to the earpiece.


## Component Wiring

Apparently new constructors are having difficulty in following our Veroboard layout and wiring diagrams. The main problem seems to be that readers are unsure about what is copper and what is board. In all our diagrams the black strips are the board and the white the copper. The small black dots are connections of the wires to the strips and the large black circular areas with white holes are the areas where the copper has been cut away with a drill or spot face cutter.

Another point that is worrying some constructors is the type of wire we use for making links on the board. In general the wire is 22 s.w.g. tinned copper wire but


Compare the photograph with the drawing and identify the strips of copper, soldered connections and breaks in the strips.
in some cases-where bare wire could touch other wires or com-ponents-single strand covered wire should be used.

We hope that has solved a few problems from previous monthsnow let us look at this month.

## Moisture Meter

The 0.25 inch matrix perforated circuit board used in the Moisture Meter is the same as that used in the Demo Deck. To state the position about supply once again, it is made by $R$. S. Components but not available to readers from them. The board must be purchased through one of the normal components retail firms and a number of them either stock it or will get it for you; the same applies to the mounting pins used.

When it comes to covering the probes with insulating sleeving Home Radio sell some heat shrinkable sleeving which is easy to use and is eminently suitable for the job. The tubing is called Polyshrink and is available in a range of sizes to suit various diameters to be covered from ${ }^{1} 8$ inch to $3{ }_{4}$ inches.

## Darkroom Timer

The list of semiconductors used in the Darkroom Timer is varied but the Zener diode, silicon controlled rectifier and diode are all items that are readily available in a variety of type numbers. Indeed many suppliers no longer quote the type numbers but list such things as Zener diodes by the voltage and power rating as we have given in the components list. It is not necessary with this type of device to search for the correct type number provided the ratings we quote are the same.

The wafer switch used is a 2 pole 9 way type and we have shown this as having two wafers, however, it is available in a number of types-all suitableand some may only have one wafer or possibly two with 12 ways on each, it is only necessary to use 8 of the tags and a wiper.

## Signal Injector

As far as we can see there are no buying problems concerning the Signal Injector-provided you take note of the advice given in the article concerning the tube used as a case.


## Mystery!

Why is the subject of electronics surrounded by such an air of mysteriousness? I am new to electronics and have learned a lot from the first three issues of your magazine. If I want to develop a film there is no mystery. All I need is a developing tank, a bottle of developer and bottle of fixer. It's as easy as making a cup of tea. Your magazine is helping to destroy the mystique that has shrouded the subject for far too long. Carry on the good work.

Russ West
London.

## Letraset

Thank you for your latest publication, Everyday Electronics, a great alternative to P.E. which I have been taking for a number of years. I have just completed the record player featured on your first edition, with a few alterations in layout, to suit the plinth I made and I am delighted with results. I have one request to make, could you please inform me where I can purchase L,etraset so often prescribed by your authors for projects but never a source of supply mentioned. I would be grateful if you would also let me know which sheet I would require for audio and if possible, price.
G. H. James

Scotland.
Letraset is available in a vast range of type faces from most large stationers. Each sheet contains a range of letters and num. bers and hence any designation can be made up; the prices of the sheets vary.

## Projects

Having just read my first copy of your magazine, Everyday Electronics. I find this magazine most interesting as it deals with the practical aspects of electronics which are often complicated by theory in other periodicals.

I wonder if you have considered the use of electronics as used on small boats as most professionally manufactured electronic aids are very expensive. It would seem
that there is a demand for practical advice as to the construction of instruments which would be of use to small boat owners.
B. L. Strang Edinburgh.
The boat owner will not be overlooked in future issues.

It was quite by chance that I picked up a copy of the January 1972 issue of Everyday Electronics and was so pleased that I have now ordered the first two copies and have placed a firm future order.

I am writing, because I expect that you are feeling your way as regards to the contents and level of your articles. There must be many like myself who reached a fair knowledge in the use of the valve and due to circumstances had to chop the hobby only to find now that there have been so many changes that it is most difficult to take up the hobby again.

Your Teach-In article is just right for us as is the m.w. reflex receiver. I am looking forward to making a start on the Windscreen Wiper Control, when I get the copy.
G. V. Pride

Dorset.

## Device Function

May I offer the following comments concerning your new magazine, for which I have placed a regular order, in the hope that they may be of some assistance to you.

You appear to be aiming at simplicity and this is most important, but being specialists, I fear you may drift into the complication and jargon which so limits the field of other electronics magazines. You see I am sure there are a great number of do-it-yourself practical people who would like to widen their hobby scope, without having to do a great deal of research and study. They are the type of people who want to use the equipment in some useful way. After all, many people use motors, relays, solenoids etc., in gadgets and models, without knowing much about equipment designs-flux densities-back e.m.f., etc.

In a good deal of reading I have not come across a clear statement of what transistors and S.C.R.s do, without a long and difficult explanation of how (which incidentally seems to vary). Maybe as specialists you do not appreciate that the practical person is not interested in the how, he accepts a transistor as a "little thimble with three or more wires sticking out of it." What he wants to know is which wire to connect to what in order to make a timer work, a flash gun to flash, a bell to ring etc. In this respect, please keep printing a drawing of the base of the various transistors you use in your projects.

## F. R. Holmes

Darlington.
We will keep printing those base drawings and, if you follow Teach-In you will be able to learn, fairly simply, what the various devices actually do.

## Preferred

I am a beginner in electronics and therefore E.E. is of great interest to me. My only criticism is that in projects such as the Electro Laugh (which I shall make in the near future), which are built on Veroboard, you only show the holes round the edge. Construction would be greatly simplified if all the holes were shown, mistakes are hard to avoid as it is. I hope you can put this right soon.

In Mr. Sproxton's article Component Buying \& Supplying he mentioned the notorious $F$. J. Camm who did not use preferred values for resistors and capacitors. Why have these? Why not have multiples of $1,2,3,4$, etc., instead of the E12 series, with the addition of multiples of $1 \cdot 5,2 \cdot 5$, $3 \cdot 5,4 \cdot 5$, etc., instead of E24 series? This does happen to some extent with electrolytic capacitors. Where do the preferred values derive from originally?

Colin Walls
Southend-on-Sea.
We have found from past experience that in most cases when all the holes-or a large number of them-are shown on Veroboard layouts that this tends to make them harder rather than easier to follow. It is a simple matter when constructing a unit to place a transparent ruler along each set of holes to make it easier to follow.
Preferred value resistors are necessary because manufacturers would turn out almost any value otherwise. We have the various series of values because they have been calculated so that any specified value can be made up from the fewest possible number of individual preferred values.

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## The Bug

I don't know whether I should express my thanks for your new publication, or whether I would be perhaps better advised by my inner self to make this a letter of condemnation of you and your colleagues!
The reason for this indecision on my part, as you may have already guessed, is that I have been well and truly bitten by "the bug." Since I first picked up E.E. in my local newsagent just before Christmas my diet has been one entirely made up of resistors, capacitors, and other mysterious ingredients, some more indigestable than others! I have now devoured two issues of E.E. and two of big brother P.E. but my appetite shows no sign of abating.

Since cutting my teeth on Meccano many years ago I have always been a dabbler, and have run the whole gambit of the more "fiddling" pastimes-model-making, marquetry, fretwork, paperfolding, printing, in fact any hobby that can be enjoyed in a reasonably small space. But until now the radio/electronics world had remained totally incomprehensible, then along comes E.E. and suddenly I begin to get a glimmer of light through the haze and glimpse a whole new area of pleasant and useful activity. Or to come back to earth and use my wife's expression "I see we have a new collection of gadgets cluttering up the kitchen!’

Anyhow, for better or worse, the die has been cast and I am anxious to try out my new soldering iron, and actually construct something. Trouble is, for a couple of reasons, progress is not what I had hoped it might be, and I have yet to hear the first cries of my first-born electronic creation, and am still being denied the heart-warming patter of tiny oscillators!

You see, first of all as a complete absolute beginner, there are many things not covered by "firststep" Teach-In type articles. What is needed is a couple of really basic articles which assume no pre-knowledge at all. For example, what sort of wire do I use for connecting components;

How does one actually mount components on to various types of perforated board; what is used for connecting links (in illustrations e.g. January cover-Laugh Simulator-it looks like bare wire of paper clip proportions). It is the same with books borrowed from library-components are explained in great detail, but the ordinary bricks and mortar are largely ignored.

## J. G. Richards

Sale.
The bare wire used for connect ing components on a circuit board is normally 22 s.w.g. linned copper wire - as used for the soldering exercises in Teach-In part 1. Where necessary single strand covered wire may also be used. The Using Printed Wiring Board article in our first issue deals with the component mounting question and Shop Talk this month refers to Veroboard.

## Laugh

I am a very keen reader of your magazine and although electronics in todays form is fairly new to me I have tried several of your projects (with great success) and find them very well explained and easy to construct. I must however tell you about one of them in the January edition, the Electro Laugh. I set to work and constructed this project only to find that it would not work. After checking my wiring several times I was about to give up when I discovered (by referring to the circuit diagram) that you have made a mistake. I refer to Fig. 4 This shows the copper strip on the Veroboard as being cut at point Q24 when in fact it should not be cut at all. After soldering a piece of wire across this cut I found that the laugh simulator worked quite well.

## Brian Wadsworth Staffs.

This point may help some readers who are having similar troubles. There is actually no mistake in the Electro Laugh wiring, this difficulty has arisen because a link shown under C6 in Fig. 3 has become obscured. Reference is made to this project in Shop 'ralk this month.

## Connections

I am writing to you, concerning the Astron M.W. Receiver. I followed the instructions very carefully not forgetting to solder the transistors as requested, on completion I switched on expectingly, but alas, there was no sound apart from the faintest crackling when I switched on. Determined not to be dismayed I checked and rechecked the circuit, till it came to my notice that D1 and D2 in Fig. 1 did not show the same polarities as in Fig. 3. Where upon I reversed the polarities of D1 and D2 to correspond with Fig. 1 but still the result was the same, next I noticed that TRI and TR2 in Fig. 3 were facing in opposite directions yet they are both n.p.n. and have the same value, could you please advise.
M. Torpey

Wood Green.
The diode connections are correct in both Figs. 1 and 3, the positive sign on the diodes corresponds to the arrow head in the circuit symbol.

It would seem that you have been misled by the perspective view of the transistors in Fig. 3. Both TRI and TR2 face the same way, the leads have been shown bent in different directions for clarity. When wiring in transistors refer to the base diagram (shown between the two parts of Fig. 3 in this case) and the lead markings on the wiring diagram.

Some points concerning construction of the Astron*are also given in Shop Talk this month.

## Further Control

I have experienced a similar difficulty with the Windscreen Wiper Control as mentioned by Mr. Bacon in your January issue, the maximum delay being seven seconds.

I adjusted R2 to the point of cut-off, disconnected the negative end and found the sum of R2 plus R3 was 200 kilohms. As no adjustment of values at this point could be helpful, I reconnected R2, disconnected C2 and found the control operated normally.

As C2, on test, was satisfactory, I reconnected it with a 125 ohm resistor in series and this achieved the desired result, the delay being variable from five to thirty seconds with R2 operational over the full range.

## J. Roscoe Cheshire.

From this letter it would seem that the problem can be caused by leakage through C2, Readers can either fit a resistor in sories or try another capacitor for C2.

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