

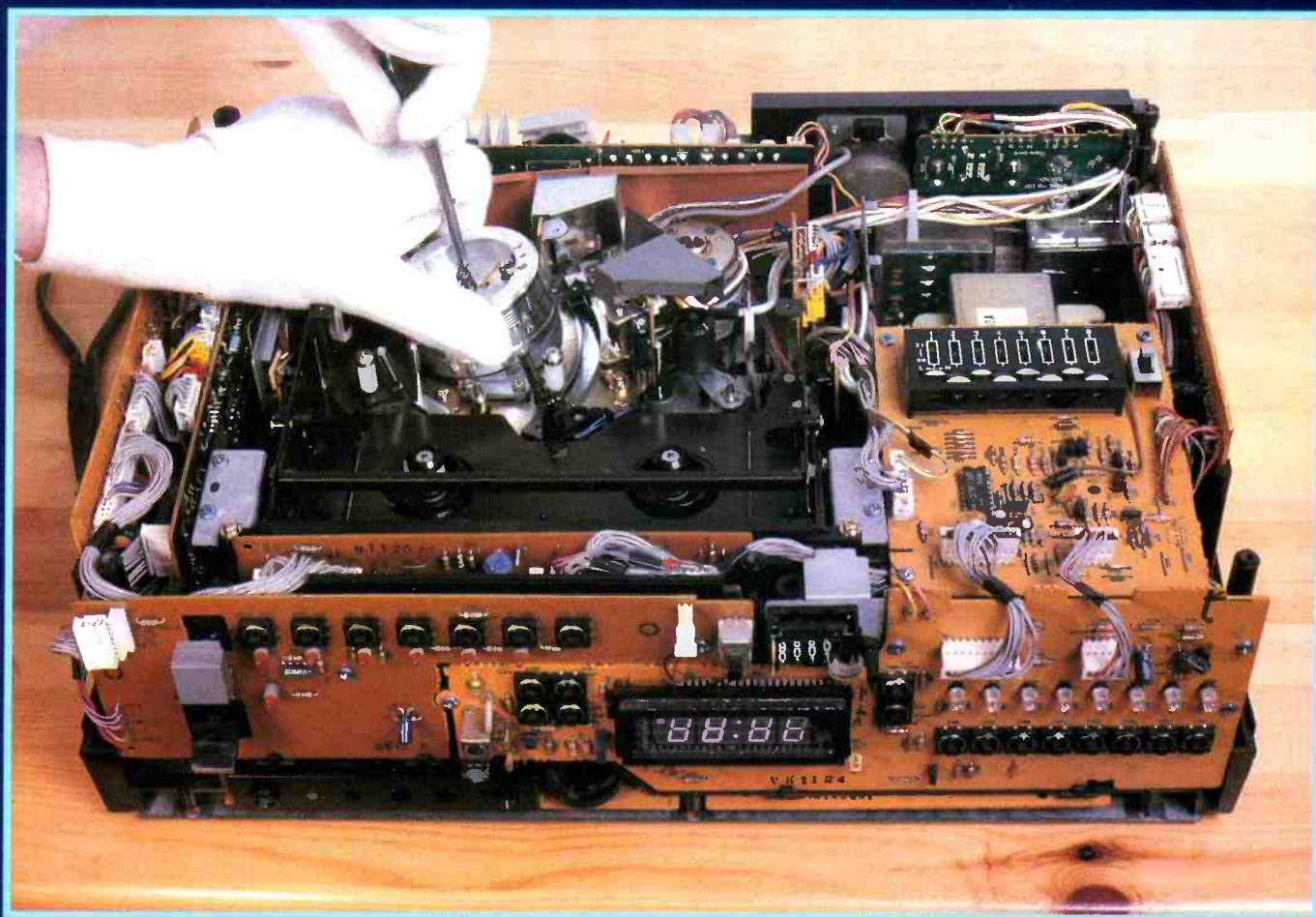
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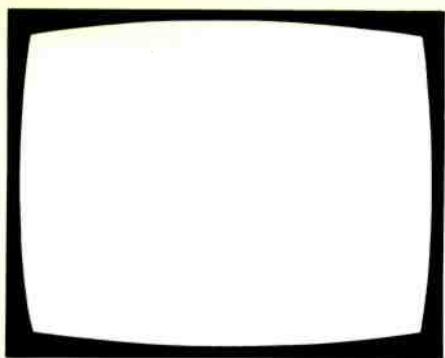


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January
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QUERIES

We regret that we cannot answer technical queries over the telephone nor supply service sheets. We will endeavour to assist readers who have queries relating to articles published in *Television*, but we cannot offer advice on modifications to published designs nor comment on alternative ways of using them.

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- 184 Test Report: Beckman Industrial Scopemate 2** *David Botto*
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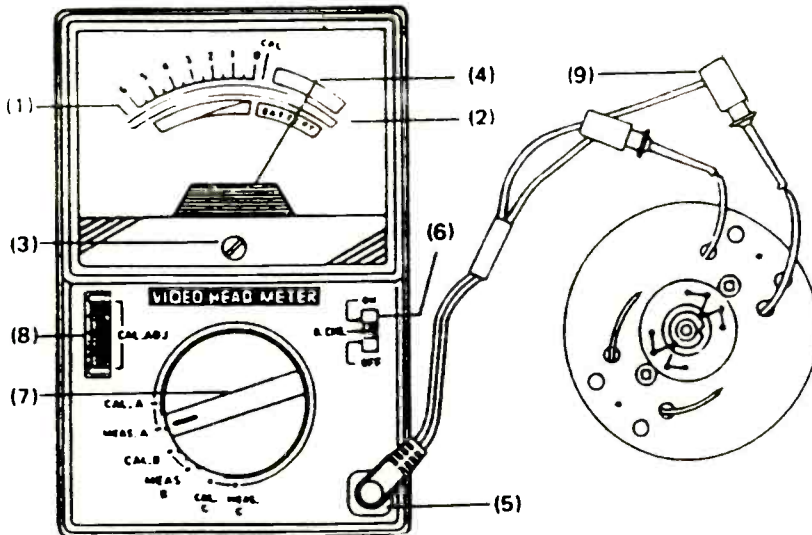
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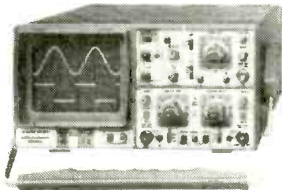
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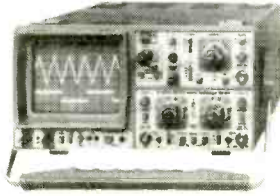
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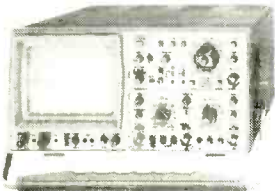
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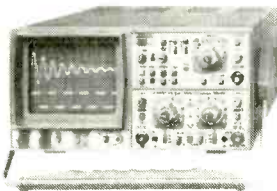


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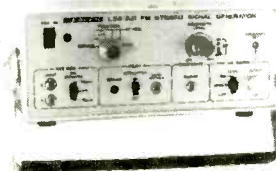


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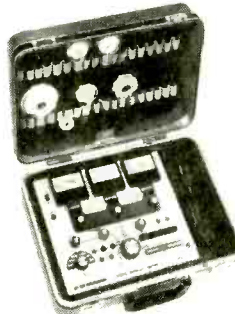
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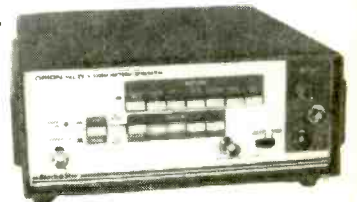
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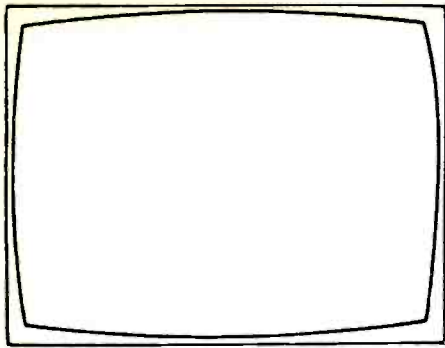
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TELEVISION

THE MAC WINDOW CLOSING?

Is Europe to have HDTV in the foreseeable future? If so, which transmission standard is to be used and how do we go about implementing the required broadcasting policy? These are important questions since a great deal, not least by way of technological investment, is at stake. But one can't help feeling gloomy about the prospects as the various interested parties continue to argue about it.

The European Commission's 1986 directive on satellite broadcasting standards expires at the end of December. What the broadcasters and other interested parties, in particular the European setmakers, have been arguing over is the terms of a successor directive. At the moment the Commission proposes that from January 1st 1995 European broadcasters using PAL or SECAM, which means virtually all TV broadcasters, will have to transmit the channels simultaneously in the D2-MAC standard. This proposal, a climb down from the earlier insistence on simulcasting from 1993, has been approved by the European Parliament. Other proposals are that digital TV should be allowed to develop alongside the development through D2-MAC to HD-MAC, that the new directive's expiry date should be 1999 instead of the 2001 suggested in the original draft, that D2-MAC decoders should be mandatory in large-screen CTV sets but not small-screen ones and that the EC should provide financial support for the simulcast transmissions. The EC's telecommunications commissioner Filippo Maria Pandolfi has been hoping to persuade manufacturers and broadcasters to sign a legally binding memorandum of understanding, which would run parallel with the directive, committing them to a common HDTV strategy.

It's clear that the broadcasters do not want to enter into any such commitment. They are hoping to continue to use PAL/SECAM as at present and see no reason for doubling their transmission costs from 1995. When you consider the parlous state of satellite TV broadcasting at present this is understandable. It's far from certain that the future of the satellite TV broadcasters will improve to any marked extent over the next few years even when the recession does end and advertising increases. One has also to consider the man in the middle, the viewer. It has been estimated that equipping large-screen sets with a D2-MAC decoder would increase the average price to around £770, considerably more than viewers are used to paying. This would clearly not go down well. Viewers would rightly ask why they should have to pay extra to receive a marginally improved picture which will at the same time be available to them in the usual form, receivable on the sets they already have.

The manufacturers' case is understandable. A considerable investment has already been made in MAC. It's an excellent system, capable of being upgraded with little difficulty. The patents could be used, as the PAL ones were, to provide a degree of protection. (The only slight problem here is that National Transcommunications Ltd., which as successor to the IBA's engineering side holds the basic patents, has been sold to a management company which clearly aims to sell it on at a later date, so no one can tell who will end up owning the patent rights.) It would be nice for Europe to adopt and develop its own HDTV technology, especially as the system is a proven one that's in advance of any currently available alternative. To drop MAC and go for a digital alternative, the next generation, would be to put HDTV in Europe back by several years and maybe lose for European manufacturers a substantial market.

This aspect is something of a gamble however. With 16:9 aspect ratio sets costing around £3,000, how much will HDTV sets end up costing? The figure for Japanese sets (MUSE/NHK standard) is currently around £17,000. One can't, somehow, see many sets being sold in the UK at that sort of figure! Prices will come down of course. The development of advanced chips will make a substantial contribution to this. But chip development programmes don't come cheap. Even the Japanese and US semiconductor manufacturers are having to establish joint development programmes to spread the cost. One recalls too the horror story of that ITT chip for BSB. Chips will go only so far with cost cutting however. The major cost, as always, will be with the display device. A large, HDTV tube is not going to come cheap.

Any technology has a time limit during which it's either adopted or falls by the wayside, and no directives can alter that. It increasingly looks as though the long debate about European HDTV is going to result in MAC being an interesting technology that never made it. The time scale is no longer in its favour. It seems unlikely that HDTV will be a major consumer product in Europe this century. It's going to take at least ten years for HDTV to take off, and by that time the digital alternative will be available. It could be the US manufacturers who will benefit from that. It could also be that the Japanese will quietly drop the MUSE system if it doesn't get established in the market soon and go for a digital alternative.

CORRECTIONS

"Grundig CVC2410 chassis" last month on page 100, TV Fault Finding, should have read CUC2410 chassis. The acknowledgement at the end of the B and O 39XX article (September, page 807) should have been to Hans Rackham, not Rackman. Our apologies.

EDITOR

John A. Reddihough

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

Tessa Winford

Please note that the telephone numbers below are for contact with the advertisement departments only. Editorial enquiries should be sent to the editor at the address given on page 161 or faxed to 081-661 8956.

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COVER PHOTO

This month's cover photograph shows a Ferguson 3V29 receiving servicing attention. See article on pages 180-3.



Letters

CHANNEL 5 PROBLEMS

Under the terms of the 1990 Broadcasting Act the Channel 5 operator will be responsible for retuning equipment affected by Channel 5 transmissions. This sounds like a neat answer to the problem. But, as is often the case when politicians become involved in technical matters, they either grasp the wrong end of the stick or, more likely, miss the stick altogether. To speak of retuning is a gross simplification of the problems involved.

We have a large number of customers, both domestic and commercial, who have u.h.f. distribution systems that carry far more than four local off-air channels and the output from a VCR. A typical system might carry four local off-air channels, two extra BBC-1 and/or ITV regions, two VCR outputs and one satellite receiver output. There may be a second satellite receiver output or the output from a surveillance camera. Such systems are becoming increasingly common.

Correct channel planning has to take into account the shortcomings of the modern TV set, so the channel relationships $n + 5$ and $n + 9$ have to be avoided. As a simple aerial rigger, I don't know why some modern TV sets have such poor image rejection: I just regard it as a fact of life. Obviously $n + 1$ can't be used. In the case of a domestic system, for cost reasons the VCR's and satellite receiver's built-in modulators are almost always used. As many channels as possible are fitted within the tuning range (nominally chs. 29-41) of these modulators. Channel planning can obviously be a bit tight. As an example, one of our customers has the following system: local off-air signals on chs. 23, 26, 29 and 33; VCR-1 output on ch. 36; satellite TV receiver output on ch. 39. Originally there was a VCR-2 output on ch. 31, crammed between two off-air channels, but this had to change when our customer bought a new Ferguson TV set for his study. On this set ch. 36 had to go. VCR-2's modulator would just reach ch. 42, so there it stayed. The system also carries two remote ITV regions on chs. 59 and 61.

What will the Channel 5 operator be prepared to pay for in such a case? The aim will obviously be for a cheap solution, but I for one am not prepared to waste my time shuffling channels from one theoretically incorrect line-up to another in the hope that eventually I'll find one where the wavy lines aren't too noticeable. In the case of the system outlined above, the only legitimate approach is to install a modulator at the head-end for VCR-1, operating on a channel outside the ch. 29-41 band. Good quality modulators cost about £100. Audio and video cables would be required, together with new channel-pass filters, a leveller etc. If the new transmission was on a channel with an unfortunate relationship with another channel in use, then the latter would have to be moved as well. It begins to sound like at least £250 plus VAT to me. Will the Channel 5 operator pay this? I don't think so. Speaking as someone with a pile of unsaleable BSB receivers in my stockroom, I've become extremely cynical in these matters. They'll come up with some lame excuse like "we accept responsibility for only one VCR or satellite receiver per household"!

Many SMATV systems in which a large number of satellite channels are carried at u.h.f. are in operation. Often the channel planning leaves only a four-channel gap for subscribers' VCRs. Either one or two existing channels

will have to be moved, or Channel 5 will have to be demodulated then remodulated on to say ch. 68. Even when a six-channel gap has been left in anticipation of Channel 5, another problem arises. Because we haven't been told exactly which channel will be used for the new transmissions, there will inevitably be $n + 5$ and $n + 9$ clashes. These matter with a large SMATV system because of the number and variety of TV sets and VCRs in use. Who will pay for all this work?

Incidentally, I see that Sky has agreed to compensate Comet, in an out of court settlement, for its mountain of unsold BSB equipment. The figure is reputed to be in the region of £5m. As a small independent dealer, I look forward to receiving my compensation from Sky for the BSB receivers gathering dust in my stockroom.

*Bill Wright, Wright's Aerials,
Micklebring, Rotherham, S. Yorkshire.*

ASPECT RATIO

The August leader on the HD-TV debate assumed without any basis in fact that the 4:3 aspect ratio of existing TV, old films and photographs is based on this being the aspect ratio of human perception. The assumption is nonsense for the following reasons.

First, as far as cinema films are concerned an aspect ratio of about 4:3 was chosen mainly because it was easier to produce cameras, projection equipment, screens etc. with an aspect ratio of this order. Some early systems used different ratios, for example 5:4 and 1:1 were used. The 4:3 ratio was eventually adopted as the standard for the cinema, but human perception was not a factor in this.

Secondly, the old Kodak box Brownie cameras produced photos of approximately 1.52:1 which is wider than 4:3, similarly the standard 35mm still cameras produce photographs with an aspect ratio of about 1.7:1, i.e. roughly 16:9.

Thirdly, during the Sixties the Japanese amongst others did some research on the aspect ratio of human perception. The results were published in the SMPTE Journal. It was found that the human perception aspect ratio is between 2:1 and 2.2:1 – the latter aspect ratio happens to be that of the 70mm Todd AO format. Cinemascope and Panavision have an aspect ratio of 2.35:1. The standard wide-screen aspect ratio for unsqueezed prints (including VistaVision prints) was allowed to be between 1.66:1 through to 1.85:1. A survey on picture aspect ratio preference was included in the research. The results, also published, showed that almost all those surveyed preferred an aspect ratio of about 2.11:1 or greater for all forms of picture, including films and stills. So much for the 16:9 ratio being "decidedly uncomfortable" as you put it! Obvious to most is the fact that because human eyes are horizontally displaced, with the left eye able to see farther to the left than the right one can and vice versa, perception is somewhat elongated in the horizontal plane compared to the vertical plane.

Fourthly, the aspect ratio of current TV screens was determined mainly by tube manufacturing constraints. Even here there were arguments, with the original tubes having an aspect ratio of 5:4 while the transmitted picture was standardised at 4:3. There are not as many restraints today, and most standard tubes are at present 4:3.

With respect to the HD-TV debate, I feel that as usual the interested parties cannot see the wood for the trees in as much as they say that they cannot make tubes with a proper Cinemascope aspect ratio of 2.35:1 because of mechanical difficulties. Perhaps this is so, but I predict that in five years' time the TV set will be a flat picture framed

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device no thicker than 2-3in. that will hang on the wall. Its display will be either liquid crystal or some sort of LED matrix. In any event the picture tube as we know it will rapidly become a thing of the past and any restraints it imposed on picture aspect ratio (and size for that matter) will disappear. Because of this I think that it's very short-sighted of those choosing the HD-TV system to limit the aspect ratio to 16:9. Once again we'll have to put up with cropped pictures. Surely this is the time to adopt the same standard as the cinema industry once and for all.

Finally, you suggested that there's not much present wide-screen product to show apart from westerns and spectaculars. Rubbish! Almost every film made since 1952 has been made in the Cinemascope/Panavision format. Unfortunately most TV stations show cropped versions of Cinemascope prints. Hence your writer, who probably watches too much TV and doesn't go to the movies often enough, is not aware that with wide-screen films quite a lot of activity goes on outside the immediate action area. This is often in the form of visual gags, but is usually in the form of continuity activity to give even more realistic effects to and hence enhance the enjoyment of the film. There is no problem for TV companies in producing wide-screen TV shows.

*John W. Dagg,
Masterton, New Zealand.*

DMM RESISTANCE RANGES

Little mention was made of the resistance ranges in David Botto's interesting article on choosing a digital multimeter (October/November issues). If, like me, you opt for a cheapo hand-held model, watch that this is adequate. The minimum requirement should be regarded as a maximum possible reading of 10M Ω . My meter, which has given many years of useful service and is called an ISI, is autoranging. I find this most helpful as, when checking through a particular section of circuitry, several voltage or resistance ranges will usually be required. The autoranging facility changes the range automatically. This obviously saves wear on the switch – and the operator.

*Dave Mackrill,
St. Leonards-on-sea, East Sussex.*

STUCK IN STANDBY

We have had problems with the Amstrad SRD400 satellite receiver being stuck in standby. The following information was sent to us by Amstrad and might be helpful to others. To reset the microcomputer chip when the unit is stuck in standby, proceed as follows:

- (1) Disconnect the unit from the mains supply.
- (2) Remove the top cover.
- (3) Remove the decoder PCB and position it safely upside down. Note that the decoder PCB is not powered down in standby.
- (4) Apply power to the unit.
- (5) Add a 1k Ω resistor temporarily between pin 5 of IC104 and chassis.
- (6) Press Standby. The display will show "8".
- (7) Press H/V twice followed by audio. The display will show "----".
- (8) Enter a PIN number, e.g. "1234". The display will show "1 1 1".
- (9) Remove the 1k Ω resistor.
- (10) Press audio.
- (11) Press standby on/off and confirm that the unit is now reset.

By way of explanation, once step (6) is actioned the

microcomputer chip tries to talk to the non-volatile RAM chip IC104, but the added 1k Ω pull-down resistor corrupts the data from the microcomputer chip so that the RAM can't respond with the stored PIN. The microcomputer chip then thinks that no PIN is stored and allows the user to enter a new PIN.

If this doesn't cure the problem, replace IC104.

*G. Rees,
Walkden, Worsley.*

SOVEREIGN CTV6000 AV OPERATION

Following my short article on the Sovereign CTV6000 14in. colour portable in the August issue, a couple of queries were received about VCR incompatibility (flag waving). The problem can be overcome by adding a diode (1N4148 or similar) from pin 11 (anode) of the TDA1180 field timebase chip to pin 16 (cathode) or any other convenient point at chassis potential. Should there be a slight tendency for ragged verticals to be present with off-air transmissions after carrying out this modification, it can be made switchable by fitting a suitable single-pole switch between the diode and chassis. Ingenious types might like to try fitting a small microswitch at the back of the push-button tuner in order to provide automatic VCR switching on one channel.

*John C. Priest,
Blackpool, Lancs.*

WARNING

I traced the cause of a fault on a Ferguson 3V43 to a loading motor/mode plastic cam with broken teeth. No part number is given in the service manual. So I enquired at Ferguson and was told that I would have to purchase the motor assembly complete, as supplied to them by JVC. The Ferguson part number is POS36689W. I had a complete unit in stock, obtained from JVC, part number 36689W, but after half a morning's work I found that the cam units differ in the number of teeth. So take warning. Don't try to be too clever!

*K.P., Rudolf's Electronics,
Blackburn, Lancs.*

SELF-TAPPING SCREWS

Back in the February 1990 VCR Clinic there was a tip about easing in self-tapping screws with oil. In my view this is bad practice, as done two or three times the plastic will fall apart. My method is to turn a self-tapper (or any screw into plastic) anticlockwise until the thread is engaged, then tighten.

*R. Goodman,
London SW18.*

PLASTICS POLISHES

It's not often that one comes across a product which does all it claims, even less often one that performs miracles. But this is exactly what I've come across. Greycate Plastic Polish is an industrial product used for cleaning windows and acrylic baths. I'm told that it was originally developed for use on the windscreen of Spitfires. But it's also superb for removing scratches from plastic. I tried it out in disbelief on the case of an early Sony portable TV set. Amazing! It removed shallow scratches and made deep ones much less visible. Any snags? Yes, you can buy it only in cartons of one dozen at £19.70 plus VAT. But it's far

more effective, and cleaner, than using Brasso or whatever.

Greygate also makes a product which is ideal for cleaning Bakelite. It's called Paste Polishing No.5 and was made for the GPO for polishing the old black phones. I use it for getting a superb shine on Bush radio and TV cabinets. Once you try it you'll use nothing else. The address is Greygate Chemical Products Ltd., Fintree Lane, Groby, Leicestershire LE6 0FH (0533 877 777).

Andrew Emmerson,
Northampton.

SETMAKERS' FEEDBACK

The letters column is always a source of mild amusement and information. Like everyone else, I either agree or disagree with every letter published. I feel however that I must reply to the one from Bernie Hinton (December) on Donald Bullock's experience with a Ferguson FV31R. To provide a monthly article, you inevitably say the wrong thing on occasions and make the odd mistake or three, but

if you worry about it you'll never write anything. So to Donald Bullock, you're a naughty boy and don't do it again, but please keep on writing. And to Bernie Hinton, *Ferguson Feedback* is available only to Ferguson dealers, so many service departments don't get a chance to see it unless a copy can be begged from one of the larger shops. But we still have to repair all makes of equipment, including many Ferguson products. How can the thousands of small shops get this information, which is not included in the service manuals?

While on the subject, I might as well go the whole hog and ask whether manufacturers would be prepared to release their stock fault and in-house service information to small "repair only" shops, in the interests of better servicing?

John Hopkins, *The TV Workshop*,
Felixstowe, Suffolk.

Editorial note: *Television* would welcome the opportunity to help manufacturers to disseminate such information, which we do to some extent already.

Teletopics

JAP HD-TV HOURS INCREASE

Hours of HD-TV transmissions in Japan were increased to eight a day on November 25th. To emphasise the significance of this step the Hi-Vision Promotion Association held an international symposium at which Mitsuhiro Wada, director general of NHK's satellite broadcasting department, set two targets. He wants to see sets on sale at under ¥1m (about £4,300) and a million sets in use as soon as possible. At present the sets costs around ¥4m (£17,200), putting them for the time being beyond the means of most viewers. The development of highly integrated chip sets for the Japanese HD-TV system seems to be the most hopeful approach to cost reduction, and to this end several joint development programmes have been started to share the huge costs involved. It has been estimated that some 33,000 HD-TV receivers were sold in Japan during 1991, mainly to businesses and hotels for demonstration purposes. There's to be a three-year test broadcasting period in Japan.

Meanwhile in Europe there's been no progress in adopting a common approach to the development and introduction of HD-TV. The European Commission has been trying to impose a directive that would force broadcasters to use the D2-MAC system for all future satellite TV transmissions as part of a compatible path leading to the adoption of HD-MAC. The European Parliament has backed a more flexible approach. Most broadcasters however simply seem to want to go on using PAL/SECAM and any enhanced versions of these standards that may come along.

SATELLITE TV

According to the *Financial Times* satellite monitor there was a significant increase in satellite TV installations in October, with over 100,000 new dishes installed. Substantial promotional activity along with discount deals are thought to have fuelled the increase. FilmNet has been sold by the Swedish office products group Esselte to a

consortium led by the Swiss holding company Compagnie Financiere Richemont, which is part of the South African tobacco and luxury goods group Rembrandt. The price is believed to have been around £79m. It seems that the cause of Astra 1B's malfunctioning is interference picked up on the satellite's wiring and getting into the attitude control system's memory. Engineers at the Berzdorf control centre are now transmitting safety data to block the entry of code-like noise into the memory. On a lighter note, muralist and decorative artist Mark Lewis of Flat 5, 62 Waverley Road, Southsea, Portsmouth, Hants PO5 2PR (0705 863 415) is brightening up the dish scene with decorative plastic covers that clip securely on all Amstrad dishes, including the black-mesh version. The designs are quite striking. Prices are from £20 per cover.

CABLE TV

Figures released by The Cable Television Association show that houses connected to broadband cable networks rose from 116,759 in October 1990 to 220,728 in October 1991, an increase of 89 per cent. This is the largest increase achieved to date in any twelve-month period. The number of franchises in operation is now 44, an increase of 19 per cent over the year. When old cable networks are added, the total number of cable TV subscribers rises to 444,880. The overall ratio of subscribers to houses that have cable available is 20.8 per cent.

The National Grid Company, which controls the bulk of electricity distribution in England and Wales, is understood to be considering the use of its power cables to distribute TV to electricity consumers. Use of encoding/decoding make it possible to transmit TV signals via the network, and it's believed that NGC has achieved significant advances in this technology.

CD-TV UPGRADES

Commodore has announced upgrades to its CD-TV multimedia system. The advanced video mode (AVM) card will improve the CD-TV picture quality, enabling up to four million colours to be displayed - this compares with the initial 4,096 colours. According to Commodore this will enable CD-TV decks to play Kodak/Philips Photo-CD discs. Commodore is currently negotiating with Kodak for a licence. The AVM card will slot into the back of a CD-

TV player and is expected to cost around £50. The second upgrade is the A690 CD-ROM drive, which enables an Amiga computer to be used as a CD-TV player. Its price is expected to be less than £350.

RITZ TAKEOVER

The US video rental company Blockbuster which has 1,934 stores, almost all in the USA, has made a recommended offer of £75m for Cityvision which runs the Ritz chain in the UK. Ritz is the UK's largest video rental company, with 875 outlets. Blockbuster wants to use it as a basis for expansion in Europe. Cityvision's profits have declined over the past year. Its pre-tax profits for the last financial year were £16.4m on turnover of £78.4m. During the first six months of the present financial year profits fell to £3.5m on turnover of £39.8m and a warning was issued that second-half profits would be still lower. Philips has an option to buy a fifty per cent stake in Cityvision if the deal goes through.

TRADE NEWS

Datapart, Electron House, 100 Great Barr Street, Birmingham B9 4BB (021 766 5551) has been appointed national distributor for Crown Corporation.

Wizard Distributors of Manchester have produced their 1992 catalogue which is now available to trade customers. Completely redesigned, this latest edition contains many new items including satellite spares and Loewe parts. Trade customers who require a copy should contact Wizard Distributors, Empress Street Works, Empress Street, Manchester M16 9EN – telephone 061 872 5438, fax 061 873 7365.

PSL, the Kent based UK representative for Nokia Display Techniques of Germany, has for eight years supplied UK setmakers with Nokia colour picture tubes. It is now able to offer individually boxed new tubes to the service industry. The complete Nokia range is available, including full square, full square flat and the new Nokia Black Planigon tubes in 21, 25 and 28in. sizes, normally for next day delivery. Full details can be obtained from Purchasing Supplies (UK) Ltd., Unit J6, Springfield Enterprise Park, Springfield Road, Gravesend, Kent DA11 8HL. Telephone 0474 320 450, fax 0474 320 345.

Audio and video components/accessories distributor HRS Electronics, which was acquired by the Ring Group of companies last October, has appointed Martyn Brunger managing director and Chris Springhall operations director.

Satellite equipment distributor Micro-X has gone into liquidation.

SONY DEVELOPMENTS

Sony has announced growing support for its Mini Disc system and technical developments that could provide much longer playing time. Also unveiled are a DAT speech recorder, a two-hour Hi-8 video tape and a new range of anti-vibration audio tapes. Companies with MD licences now include Aiwa, Columbia Japan, Kenwood, Pioneer, Sanyo, Sharp, TDK and Teac. It's understood that some 300-500 titles will be available in time for the hardware launch. Within two-three years, technical advances in magneto-optical recording technology could enable the 2.5in. discs to store 74 minutes of full 16-bit digital audio, the equivalent of CD quality. The aim however would be to increase the recording time to 120 or

even 180 minutes rather than add to the resolution. DAT-NT (no tracking) recorders intended for high-quality speech recording are to be launched this spring. They will use postage-stamp sized cassettes to record up to 120 minutes of 12-bit digital audio and are expected to sell for under £200. The serial copyright management system will be incorporated. The two-hour (four in the LP mode) Hi-8 tape will be of the metal evaporated type for camcorder use. The Esprit I, II and IV audio cassettes have shells designed to absorb vibration rather than transmit it to the tape – the company believes that most home taping is done for in-car and personal stereo use.

PHILIPS WIDEBAND HYBRID AMPLIFIERS

A range of low-noise wideband (40-860MHz) hybrid amplifiers with gains from 12-30dB has been introduced by Philips. They are said to be unconditionally stable despite virtually any line mismatching. There are eleven modules for aerial systems, RATV, MATV, u.h.f./v.h.f., cellular radio and instrumentation applications. Operation is at 12V. There is also a range for i.f. use in satellite TV and cellular radio receivers and for use in h.f. measuring and general-purpose equipment. The OM929 has a bandwidth of 10-2,000MHz and the OM956/2 a bandwidth of 950-1,750MHz.

VIDEO NEWS

Sharp is to introduce the world's first twin-lens 8mm camcorder, Model VL-MX7, in March at around £1,000. It has a 6-48mm ×8 zoom lens and a 4mm super wide-angle lens with a field of view almost equivalent to that of the 28mm lenses used in 35mm SLR cameras. Weight is 890g with battery and cassette. Other features include a picture-in-picture effect to enable users to combine pictures from both lenses into a single frame, various wipe and fade effects, a colour LCD viewfinder, hi-fi stereo sound and digital focus, white-balance and exposure control.

Sharp also plans to launch a series of mid-drive, centre-loading midi-sized VCRs. The tape handling mechanism will be centre-mounted on a three-point honeycomb chassis to reduce vibrations from the motor. The audio, video and control circuits are separated to reduce interference. The first model will be the VC-A33HM at £299. Features include auto-tracking, a quick-start mechanism, index search and a one year/eight event timer.

Nokia has launched three VCRs that feature an improved version of its ASO picture enhancement system called ASO Plus. Models VR3782, VR3742 and VR3722 have suggested prices of £520, £350 and £330 respectively.

The Akai VS410 and VS510 at £350 and £450 respectively feature the company's Intelligent HQ picture enhancement system. Model VS510 has LP, a shuttle ring and Nicam.

Nicam VCRs have also been introduced by Panasonic (Model NV-F55) at £460, Ferguson (Model FV58T) at £570 and Philips (Model VR712) at £479.

The Philips 41DV2 VCR is a compact model measuring 360 × 87 × 330mm. Its suggested retail price is £349. Philips has also launched a full-size VHS camcorder, Model VKR6860, at £1,000. Its features include a 1/2in. CCD image sensor with 450,000 pixels, a two-speed zoom lens, four fast shutter speeds and VITC compatibility. The £2,300 VKR9550 S-VHS camcorder is being withdrawn due to problems with the 700,000-pixel CCD image sensor and its customised peripheral components, including the auto-focus system.

Servicing the Ferguson 3V29 VCR

Joe Cieszynski

This popular VCR of early Eighties vintage was designed and built by JVC but was distributed by a number of manufacturers under their own brand names and model numbers. It came on the market at the time of a video boom, and in consequence was sold and rented in large numbers. Ten years later many of these machines are circulating on the secondhand market in excellent order, having stood the test of time. Because of their reliability and a ready supply of cheap spares, these machines are often well worth overhauling. In this article I'll be highlighting some common problems. I'd also point out that these machines are ideal for training purposes: they are basic, easily accessible for servicing, spares are cheap, advice is not difficult to come by and, should you do something silly to them, they are usually very forgiving.

The basic JVC version is Model HR7200, but in the UK the Ferguson 3V29 is more often encountered. Other guises include the Decca/Tatung VHR8300, the Granada VHSWJ1 and the ITT TR3913. It's a basic model with a single-event timer and wired remote control. The 3V30 (JVC HR7300) looks much the same but has a multi-event timer and Dolby sound: it was distributed through Thorn rental outlets as the Baird 8930. The various manufacturers who marketed these machines had their own customised front panels, which enabled the layout of the controls to be varied. They are quickly identifiable however by their characteristic pop-up cassette housing, the large preset tuning cover to the right of this and the three-position standby/on/timer switch at the front left.

Modifications and Variations

During the two-three years when these machines were in production several major modifications and additions were introduced. This is something that must be taken into account when using circuit/layout diagrams for fault finding and when considering the use of panels from a scrap machine. The main changes are outlined below. Fig. 1 shows the basic panel layout.

The luminance/chroma/audio (YCA) board at the bottom of the machine underwent three major design changes during production, the modifications being confined mainly to the luminance and f.m. circuitry. In the earliest version all the YCA circuits are on the main panel. The second version had a noise-cancelling circuit added using a chip designated IC1 (not to be confused with the audio processor chip which is also labelled IC1): this circuit couldn't be contained on the main panel, so a sub-panel mounted beneath the presetter board was added. Connectors 161-162 and 171-174 were added to the main panel to link it to the sub-panel. The third version has an enlarged sub-panel to accommodate extra noise-cancelling circuitry, while the main panel has extra interconnection sockets. In addition, with this version the f.m. and luminance signal paths on the main panel were altered drastically, making it difficult if not impossible to trace signals using one of the earlier diagrams.

Another major area of change is the motor drive amplifier (MDA) circuit and board. In the earliest machines the drum MDA circuit consists almost entirely of discrete components: the board is mounted vertically in front of the cassette housing. A little afterwards the twenty

nine transistors were replaced by a single HA13008 chip. The modified PCB is mounted in the same position. Subsequently the main servo board on the left-hand side was redesigned to accommodate the drum and capstan MDA circuits – the compartment forward of the housing was left vacant. The servo and MDA circuits remained unchanged, i.e. the same chip set was used, only the board layout being different.

A new microcomputer/system control board was introduced at the same time as the combined servo/MDA panel. The later version has a different plug/socket arrangement. Thus the two boards are not interchangeable, though the individual chips are.

There's also a version (Baird 8940/JVC HR7350) with stereo sound: this has a new servo chip set, the circuitry bearing no resemblance to the earlier versions – not even the i.c. circuit reference numbers are the same. The main change here is the replacement of the 28-pin HA11711 servo chip with a 40-pin BA851A (IC2 on the new board). Two BA6302A chips replace the three VC1029 frequency-voltage converter chips. In the earlier circuits the third VC1029 is used for reel motor control during visual search: in this later version IC8 doubles as capstan speed control for playback/record and reel motor control during search. Another significant change in the 8940 is the accommodation of the Dolby stereo sound PCB in the vacant compartment in front of the cassette housing. This is worth noting as it is not unknown for an unsuspecting engineer to look for an MDA fault on the Dolby stereo sound board! This model was amongst the first of the stereo VCRs, prior to hi-fi sound: it was not a great success because the stereo sound still used the lateral audio tracks and, as a result of the low tape speed (23.39mm/sec), the audio quality was nothing like hi-fi.

The majority of machines have an f.m. test point (TPFM) atop the deck terminal 1 board. In the 8940 the f.m. test point is on the servo panel: it's towards the rear of

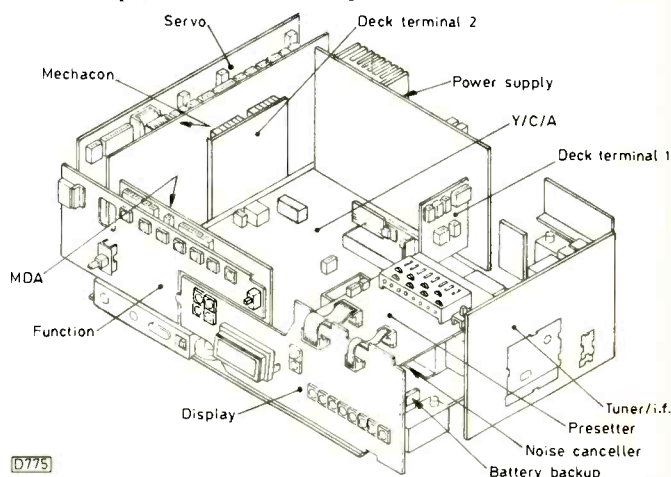


Fig. 1: Panel layout. The earliest versions didn't have the noise-canceller board or battery back-up. On later versions the MDA circuit was put on to the servo board, leaving an empty compartment behind the function board. On the stereo sound version this compartment was used to house the additional audio circuits. The deck terminal 2 board is needed only with the combined servo/MDA board: it was added to accommodate the interconnections between the MDA, the system control and the motors.

the board and is designated TP9.

Another addition with the 8940 is a ni-cad battery and charger circuit to provide clock and timer back-up in the event of mains failure. These items are located next to the noise-canceller sub-panel beneath the presetter board.

In some cases it's possible to interchange panels between different versions of the machine, but this is rarely possible without having to carry out modifications.

Basic Mechanical Overhaul

In most cases a 3V29 can be restored to normal working order by replacing the pinch roller, the loading belt and the cassette lamp. This should of course be accompanied by thorough cleaning of the tape path. If this basic overhaul has restored normal operation, it simply remains to check the tape path for signs of tape curl, the reel idler operation, the take-up spool torque, the condition of the heads, and the tuning presets. Once these points have been attended to and any repairs required have been carried out the average machine will be ready to give a further four-five years of trouble-free operation. Many other problems arise quite frequently however. A more detailed account of these and how to cope with them follows.

Mechanical Faults

A pinch roller that has done more than a thousand hours of service generally needs replacement because it becomes concave, see Fig. 2. Thus the tape will slide up or down with respect to the audio/control head. The result is poor quality h.f. audio response or poor tracking due to loss of the CTL pulses. Both symptoms can be intermittent. Creasing of the tape edge may also occur.

The same symptoms can be caused by a distorted pinch-roller mounting bracket. It becomes distorted when excessive pressure is applied whilst removing the pinch roller fixing screw. It's worth checking for this during each routine service. Fig. 3 shows the method of checking the mounting.

The back-tension band is not a source of trouble with these machines. If it appears to be well worn however it should be replaced. According to the service manual the torque should be set at between 30-40g-cm, using a back-tension cassette. The only correct way to set back tension is to use some form of tension gauge. If you are working on only the occasional machine however, out of interest rather than as a repair service, the 3V29 is, unlike many other models, very tolerant and will often allow you to set the tension using the method outlined below (see Fig. 4) – but I must emphasise that you do so at your own risk. Tension is adjusted by moving the foot (A) from left to right. Without a tension gauge, fitting a new band in the same mechanical position as the old one will usually give you approximately the correct tension. Where the original band has been moved (you can tell if the locking glue has been broken), approximately correct tension should be obtained by aligning the slot in the foot with the adjacent hole in the chassis. This forms a good starting point when you do use a tension gauge.

The loading belt in this machine is notorious. When it stretches it will either fail to close the after-load switch, as a result of which the machine will unload after about ten seconds, or it will fail to close the unload switch, with the result that the motors continue to rotate after unloading and the cassette housing won't open. Both symptoms may be intermittent.

To replace the belt, remove the loading motor assembly

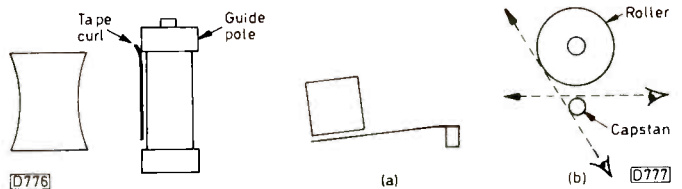


Fig. 2 (left): A concave pinch roller results in uneven pressure on the tape, which will slip up or down on the exit guide pole. It's best to check the pinch roller by removing it.

Fig. 3 (right): It's essential that the pinch roller is vertical. A distorted pinch roller mounting bracket is shown at (a). The pinch roller can be checked, see (b), by pressing the roller towards the capstan with a finger, leaving just a narrow gap through which the roller can be sighted. Use the capstan as a reference. Check from two angles, as shown, for zenith and azimuth distortion.

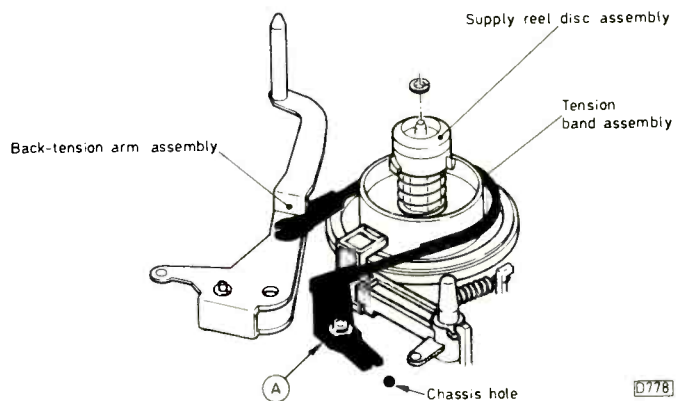


Fig. 4: The back-tension assembly.

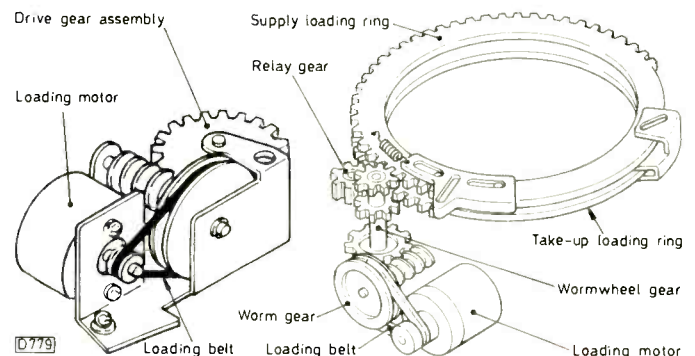


Fig. 5: The loading block and loading rings. The simplest way to replace the belt is to remove the block, but note that the rings are then free to move and can thus become unmeshed.

(see Fig. 5) and release the circlip. But beware: when the motor assembly has been removed the two loading rings are free to move and, after reassembly, may be out of mesh. This problem can occur even when you take great care as you remove and replace the assembly. What usually happens is that the gears on the motor block rotate as you change the belt. Thus when the motor block is reinserted the gear teeth no longer locate with those in the rings. One's natural instinct is to gently juggle the motor block until the teeth are aligned, but this is when the rings move out of mesh. What you should do is to lower the motor block on to the rings and, if the teeth don't engage immediately, gently rotate the motor pulley until they do. The operation isn't difficult: I've managed it successfully in a customer's front room on many occasions.

If the rings do become unmeshed, remove the loading block, fully retract both the slant poles, look to see that the

teeth on both rings are aligned above each other, then reinsert the loading motor block. Now check the loading, ensuring that the guide rollers locate firmly in the V notches.

You may occasionally encounter a machine in which the loading motor has lost its torque, or where a tooth on one of the drive gears has come adrift. These are not common problems with the 3V29 however.

Still connected with the loading belt, another problem you might encounter is the afterload switch actuation bar sticking. This bar is on the top of the deck, running beneath the supply spool, the back-tension arm and the sub-deck. It has a hook at one end – this presses against the switch when loading is complete. The bar sticks because the hook is bent: the latter occurs because many engineers do this in a vain attempt to correct the fault caused by a stretched loading belt (they are usually not aware that the belt is the culprit, and bending the bar seems to be the obvious cure).

It's not possible to straighten the bar from beneath the deck – this will introduce a kink that will cause sticking – and the bar cannot be removed as it's secured to the chassis by rivets. The best thing to do is to remove the back-tension arm, the sub-deck and the loading rings, after which the bar can be straightened from above, using a wide, flat-bladed screwdriver and some gentle percussion.

As with many other VCRs, the take-up clutch is a common cause of trouble. Intermittent tape spillage into the machine, or the machine going into the stop mode during play, are more often than not caused by a defective clutch or the take-up idler which is between the clutch and the take-up spool.

The manual quotes a take-up torque of between 60-150g-cm. A torque gauge is not essential however. Diagnosis of a defective clutch can usually be carried out by playing the latter part of a three-hour tape and watching the spool operation for a brief period: you will see the spool begin to stall.

The reel idler also gives its fair share of trouble. Apart from poor fast winding and failure to reel the tape into the cassette when unloading, the reel idler is also the main cause of poor visual search performance. During search the reel motor comes under the control of a servo that uses the control-track pulses for feedback. If the idler is worn or dirty, the servo will not be able to maintain proper control of the nine times normal tape speed.

Another cause of poor search is a slightly dirty CTL head. The head may provide sufficient output for normal play, but in the search modes the CTL output falls and the servo accelerates the reel motor to the full fast-wind speed.

Occasionally, apparent failure of the reel idler may be due to distortion of the plate spring behind the idler. This spring keeps the idler pressed against the motor pulley when it's jockeying between the two spools. If the spring is distorted the idler won't throw over. You can usually straighten and retension the spring.

Unlike other makes that I could mention, the reel motor rarely gives trouble. Before you condemn it I would recommend that you rule out all other possibilities.

Because of the age of these machines, worn or hardened spool carrier tyres are common. If they need to be renewed it's advisable to replace the clutch and the reel idler at the same time (unless new ones have recently been fitted).

The guide rollers should never fail. But thousands have had to be replaced because they have been adjusted without releasing the locking screw at the rear base. If the top of the roller appears to be chewed, scope the f.m. waveform while a known good tape is being played and

look for signs of dropout. If dropouts are evident it's best to remove both rollers and inspect the shafts. Look for scouring caused by the locking screws. I always replace the guide roller(s) when scouring is evident – experience has shown that a lot of time can be wasted trying to set the rollers when in fact they've become distorted.

Here's a practical hint when adjusting the guide rollers. Holes in the V notches make it possible to release and secure the hexagonal locking nuts with the machine in the play mode. After adjustment it's advisable to secure the screws with the rollers in this position, as otherwise they have a tendency to move out of alignment when unloading.

A number of things can cause poor tracking and a poor f.m. waveform. When you feel that you've tried everything possible to correct this situation the slant pole(s) are suspect. In several machines I've come across a slant pole has worn at the point where the tape runs round. In all cases the wear has been almost unmeasurable and invisible but a replacement pole has cured the problem.

A common problem occurred in the early days when someone would fit the drum rotor back on its shaft in the wrong position. This puts the PG magnets out-of-phase with the video heads, causing all sorts of upsets. Most engineers today are aware of this problem, but do bear it in mind if you have to remove the rotor: the locking screw must locate against the flat on the shaft.

The cassette housing is robust and quite reliable. Occasionally you come across one where fluff or fur have become entangled around the damper fan mechanism, the result being that the housing won't come right up. The main problem with the housing itself is refitting it after service. If it's too far back, i.e. away from the front of the player, the machine may eject the cassette whilst in the play mode. If it's too far forward it will fail to eject at all. There was originally a housing alignment jig, but I doubt whether many people ever used it. In the main, correct operation will be obtained when the housing is fitted loosely, pulled fully forward, then pushed back about one millimetre. Secure the housing then check its operation by playing a tape then pressing eject, preferably with your hand over the housing just in case!

The capstan motor is on the whole reliable but is occasionally responsible for wow and flutter. The main complaint about it however is the noise it produces – the motor tends to hiss constantly when running. Before you spend a large amount of money on a replacement note that they are like this from new.

The drum motor is equally reliable, but you can come across one where a Hall element has failed or where the PCB breaks inside the motor, the result being that it either takes off at full speed or runs at a snail's pace. I also had one machine in which patterning and noisy chroma were caused by a defective rotary transformer. The f.m. waveform in one channel was clearly noisy, and a replacement lower drum assembly (after replacing just about everything else) provided a cure.

Electronic Faults

In its youth the 3V29 had its fair share of electrical faults. This was quite unlike the earlier 3V00/3V16/3V22 series which mainly suffered from mechanical failure such as distorted loading arms and gears. I should add that many of us were at the time tired of rebuilding those machines and viewed an electrical fault as a relief!

Electrical faults with the 3V29 are rare nowadays. When they do occur, a replacement panel from a scrap machine can usually be quickly found. But many electrical faults are

easy to trace, and repair is often quicker than realigning a replacement panel. Here's a rundown on the more common faults I've had.

Any of the five fuses on the power supply panel can fail due to age – they rarely fail because of a fault condition. With a dead machine it's prudent to start by making a quick check on these fuses. At the start I mentioned that the 3V29 is very forgiving. By this I meant that should a spanner or meter probe fall into the works the only damage suffered is very often a blown fuse on the power board. This cannot be said of certain other VCRs.

Dry-joints can occur anywhere. Some of the more common ones are as follows:

- (1) At Q101 on the YCA panel. The result is loss of the "all time 9V" supply and hence all the switched supplies.
- (2) At the tuning block assembly or associated transistors (presetter board). The symptoms are won't tune or intermittently jumps off tune.
- (3) At the connector terminals on top of the full erase head. The symptoms are as follows: the picture and sound are recorded correctly (the old video tracks are erased by the h.f. f.m. signal while the sound track is erased by the audio dub head) but colour patterning is evident because the f.m. doesn't remove all the l.f. chroma of the previous recording.
- (4) At various transistors in the audio stages (YCA panel). The symptom is intermittent sound, perhaps only when recording.

These machines can suffer from breaks in the wiring looms. They occur where a wire enters the plug connector. As the breaks are usually within PVC sleeving they are not obvious. Once you've located a break, the best way of dealing with it is to remove the terminal pin from the plug and remake the connection by soldering the wire to the pin, which can be removed by pressing the barb in gently with a fine screwdriver. When reinserting the pin, be sure to open the barb first otherwise the pin will push out as you reconnect the plug.

Cracks in the servo panel can result in the capstan motor taking off at full speed due to loss of the FG signal. These cracks occur in two places: in the top left-hand corner, by plug 61/62, and along the bottom edge close to Q2. The most effective repair is to hard wire across the print using insulated wire.

With any older VCR failure of the stop sensor lamp is the most common cause of an inoperative machine. Just once in a while however a new lamp doesn't restore operation with a 3V29. Where this is the case the most likely suspect is the feed transistor Q1, which is mounted on the deck terminal 1 board. When replacing this, note that it's a pnp device. A BC307 usually works.

With any electronic equipment, ensuring that all the power supply lines are present and correct is an essential initial check. As with most VCRs the 3V29 has a number of supply lines that are switched to change the mode, i.e. the Play 9V, Rec 9V, E-E 9V etc. lines. Supply switching is carried out by a set of mode-control transistors on the YCA panel. An open-circuit transistor results in loss of the relevant supply. Problems also occur when one of the transistors is leaky, with the result that the supply is permanently present. This can be interesting. With a leaky E-E switch transistor for example the machine will record correctly but operation of the luminance, chroma and servo circuits in the play mode is totally incorrect as the circuits receive both the Play and E-E supplies. Fig. 6 provides an outline of the mode-control circuit.

Small isolating inductors are used to prevent interaction between circuits via the supply lines. Occasionally one of

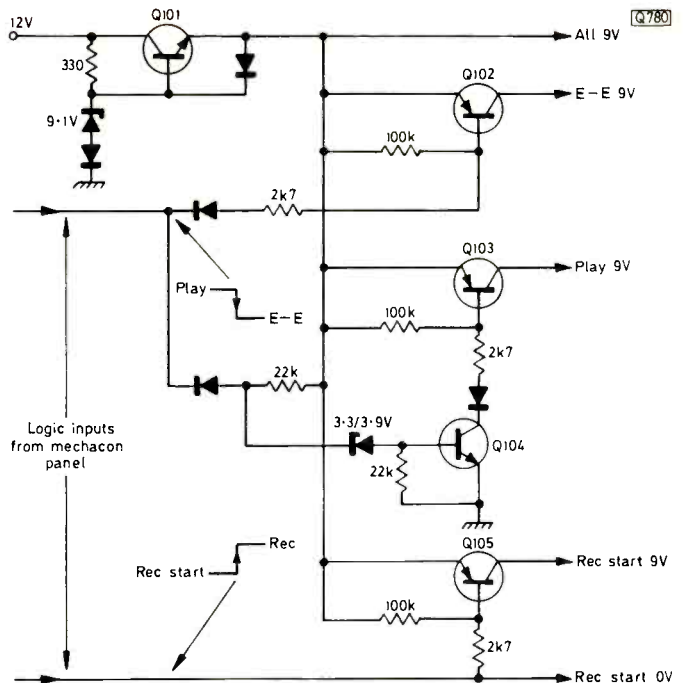


Fig. 6: The mode-control circuit. It's on the YCA board.

these coils goes open-circuit, the result being failure of one small area of the circuit.

Watch out for failure of the 32V tuning supply. The regulator consists of Q8 and IC3, which are on the tuner/i.f. panel. An unregulated 40V supply feeds the circuit. This has its own 315mA fuse (F5) on the power supply panel.

Failure of the reel motor to operate can be due to a defective circuit protector (CP2) on the mechacon panel. It's shown as a 10Ω resistor in some circuit diagrams but in even the earliest machines I've never found anything other than a circuit protector.

IC12 on the mechacon panel tends to be blamed for other reel motor faults. It's a reliable device however and I've found that the cause of the fault usually lies elsewhere. Possibilities include regulator Q2 on the main chassis, behind the drum motor, an inverter in IC8 on the mechacon panel and faults in the wiring looms.

Chip failure is not frequent but does occur. In my experience two of the most troublesome devices are the VC1029 frequency-voltage converter chips and the IR2403 logic inverter chips. The operational amplifiers in the VC1029 chips (servo and MDA panels) fail occasionally. The IR2403 contains seven separate inverters. It's not uncommon for one of the outputs to become permanently short-circuit to the negative side of the supply, a fault that can be confirmed with an ohmmeter. This type of chip is used extensively on the servo and mechacon panels.

If visual search results in loss of line lock with the tape accelerating to the fast wind speed, clean the CTL head and check that it's correctly aligned. During search the reel motor comes under the control of a servo that uses the control track pulses for feedback.

If the front display is dim and patchy forget it! The vacuum fluorescent display is a thermionic device which, as with all such devices, loses emission.

In Conclusion

Given an overhaul the majority of these machines should be able to provide another four or five years service. They and their clones have proved to be the true workhorses of the video world.

Test Report: Beckman Industrial Scopemate 2

David Botto

The Beckman Industrial Scopemate 2 is an i.c. and component tester with a whole lot of extra features. It has been designed with the concerns of the TV/video/computer engineer expressly in mind, is nicely built and looks good on the bench. The keyboard is well laid out and clearly labelled. Some instrument keyboards I've come across have a spongy feel. This is not the case with the Scopemate 2, whose keys are positive in use and have that gentle, responsive touch that comes with the use of top-quality key switches. This is an important point with an instrument you'll be using every day. A comprehensive set of test leads is supplied with the instrument.

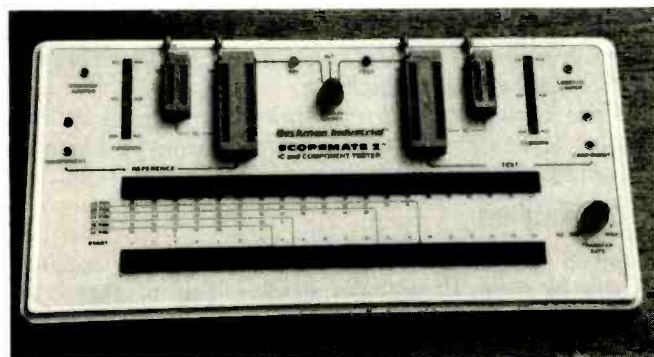
Mode of Operation

The component tester is used with an oscilloscope to provide the display, and is an extremely useful adjunct if your scope doesn't incorporate a tester. Fig. 1(a) shows the tester's basic mode of operation. An a.c. voltage is connected across two resistors, R-low and R-high, the latter representing the tester's internal circuitry. With the arrangement as shown, almost the full a.c. voltage is applied to the scope's X (horizontal) input. This will produce a horizontal line on the screen, see Fig. 2(a). If a short-circuit is now placed across the test sockets the display will consist of a vertical line, see Fig. 2(b), because the a.c. voltage is now applied to the scope's Y (vertical) input.

When a component is connected across the test sockets, a.c. flows through it. The result is a waveform display that depends on the characteristics of the component. The scope's X axis displays the voltage across the component while its Y axis displays the current that flows through the component. For example, when a diode is connected to the test sockets with the polarity shown in Fig. 1(b) it will conduct only when the a.c. waveform at its anode is positive-going with respect to its cathode. The pattern thus produced is shown in Fig. 2(c). Reverse the diode and the pattern will be as shown in Fig. 2(d). A capacitor connected across the test sockets produces an ellipse – see Fig. 2(e).

Output Current

The Scopemate 2 supplies, via an internal current limiting resistor, 12V a.c. at 50Hz to the component being tested. Use of this resistor limits the maximum short-circuit current through the component to approximately 300 μ A.



For a complete description of the basic working principles of a component tester, see my articles in the July and August 1990 issues of *Television*.

Connections

I encountered no problems in connecting the Scopemate 2 to my oscilloscope. The instrument is connected to the a.c. mains supply via a small, external 240V a.c. mains transformer. Its X and Y outputs are connected to the scope's X and Y inputs via two substantial leads that look as though they'll stand up to workshop conditions.

Once the Scopemate 2 has been connected up, the scope is set to its X/Y mode and the tester is switched on by means of its combined on-off switch/transfer rate control. The setting up procedure is straightforward and is fully described in the operating manual.

Use

To use the tester in its simplest mode, two test leads equipped with miniature crocodile clips are plugged into the two right-hand 4mm test sockets. These leads are then connected to the component being tested. If the component is open-circuit you get the display shown in Fig. 2(a). If it has gone short-circuit the display is as shown in Fig. 2(b).

I found that the Scopemate 2 will test popular digital and analogue chips, including DTL, TTL and CMOS types; linear devices such as operational amplifiers, comparators and voltage regulators; LSI chips such as microprocessors and peripheral devices with a maximum of 40 pins; and various other devices such as opto-isolators and custom logic arrays.

The four zero-force i.c. insertion sockets are craftily designed to accept in-line chips with various numbers of pins and widths. Since the Scopemate 2 tests transistors I felt that it might have been an idea to have included pre-wired transistor test sockets. In practice however I soon found it easy to insert the leads of a small transistor into the first three sockets of one of the i.c. holders.

The Scopemate 2 will also test diodes, capacitors, resistors, inductors, transformers etc. It checks for the short- and open-circuit conditions and, with semiconductor devices, diode action and leakage. It's also useful as a continuity tester. Beckman Industrial's claim that if a component will fit into one of the i.c. sockets, or can be connected between the two clip leads, it can probably be tested by the Scopemate 2 appears to be justified.

Testing a component is fast and easy, because the instrument generates simple patterns which are displayed and compared on the screen of an oscilloscope. Any leakage or shorting in a component is instantly apparent to the eye.

The Scopemate 2's panel has two 20-pin and two 40-pin zero-insertion force i.c. sockets. In addition there are two 40-pin "common" strip sockets.

Where the Scopemate 2 really scores is that it enables comparative tests to be carried out. A known good component can be connected to the left-hand section of the tester and a suspect component of the same type to the right-hand section. By means of Scopemate 2's display

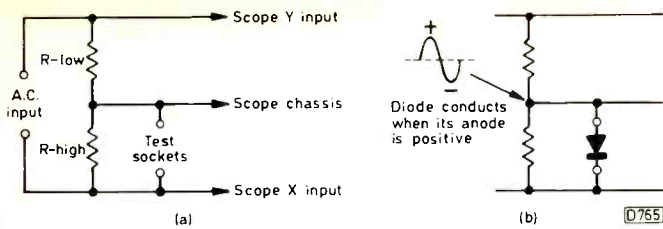


Fig. 1: The tester's basic mode of operation (a) and the effect of connecting a diode to the test sockets with the polarity shown at (b) – see waveform (c) in Fig. 2.

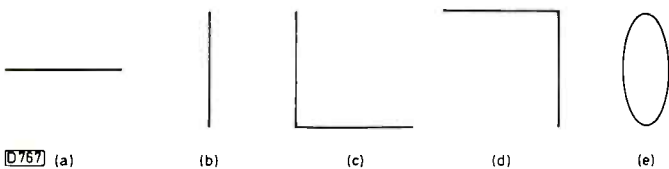


Fig. 2: Some of the many waveforms produced. (a) The open-circuit condition. (b) The short-circuit condition. (c) Diode connected as in Fig. 1(b). (d) Diode with connections reversed. (e) Ellipse produced by a capacitor.

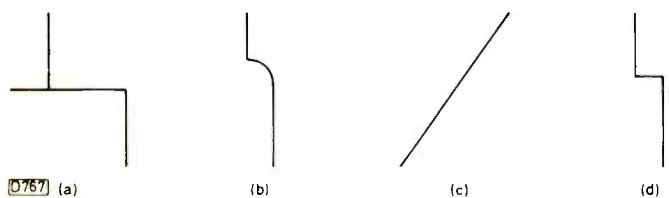


Fig. 3: Some further waveforms. (a) At pin 3 of a 723 voltage regulator; (b) at pin 3 of a 555 timer; (c) resistor; (d) zener diode.

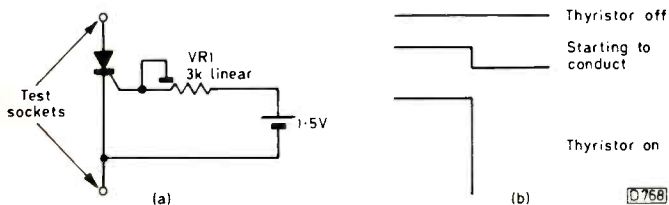


Fig. 4: Testing a thyristor. (a) Connections. (b) Waveforms produced.

select switch the waveforms produced by both components can be compared either by selecting test and reference in turn or by means of the alt mode. When this latter mode is used the trace pattern alternates between the two components at a rate determined by the setting of the transfer rate control – this controls the frequency of an internal clock oscillator which in turn controls, via a drive amplifier, a switching relay.

Some further waveforms that are produced by various components when connected to the Scopemate 2 are shown in Fig. 3(a)-(d).

Practical Tests

The ability to test electrolytic capacitors is one of the most useful functions of a component tester. Scopemate 2's operator's manual states that it should not be used to test electrolytics however. The reason for this is the suggestion that misleading waveforms may be displayed when an a.c. voltage is applied to an electrolytic capacitor. Now I'm not saying that you should disregard the manual's recommendations. I've successfully checked electrolytic capacitors with numerous component testers and bridge circuits however, all of which applied a low-current a.c. voltage to the electrolytic capacitor being tested. So I decided to use

the Scopemate 2 to check a wide range of electrolytics. The instrument tested the lot perfectly, no problems being encountered.

I found that Scopemate 2's i.c. testing facilities are invaluable in the workshop. The i.c. to be tested is plugged into one of the zero-insertion force i.c. sockets in the test section of the instrument. Each numbered pin switch provided corresponds with an i.c. pin number. By pressing the pin switches in turn, according to the number of pins on the i.c., you can view the waveform at each pin. By inserting a known good chip of the same type in the reference section of the instrument and then using the transfer control the waveforms at each of the pins of the two chips will be displayed alternately.

CMOS devices can be tested provided they are industry-standard items that incorporate the usual protective diodes at each pin. If in doubt it's best to refer to the manufacturer's data sheet.

In-circuit tests are a helpful feature. Before making such tests, disconnect the equipment from the mains supply and make sure that the power supply capacitors are discharged. In the case of a TV set the c.r.t.'s final anode capacitance must also be discharged. While carrying out practical tests I found that many transistors, diodes, capacitors, transformers, LEDs etc. can be tested in-circuit.

When using the Scopemate 2 to check equipment you regularly service it's a good idea to make a note of key "signature" waveforms and draw them in the service manual.

Additional Tests

Scopemate 2's usefulness can be considerably extended by means of 16-, 20-, 24- or 40-pin extender test cables. Use of such cables enables the waveforms produced by a suspect PCB to be compared with those produced by a known good one. Here again the transfer mode is used.

The operator's manual is easy to understand, but a few additional pages would have made all the difference. In my view anyone not familiar with the use of a component tester could miss out on many of the extensive tests the Scopemate 2 can carry out.

A wide range of zener diode voltages can be accurately measured for example. Large-value capacitors can be checked by manipulating the oscilloscope's controls. How to do this is not explained in the manual. It's also possible to carry out effective thyristor tests. To do this all you need is an external 1.5V battery and a linear wirewound control. Connect the thyristor as shown in Fig. 4(a) and a horizontal line will be displayed. As the resistance presented by VR1 is gradually reduced the waveforms shown in Fig. 4(b) will be seen.

In fact virtually all the tests described in the August 1990 issue of *Television* and a lot more besides can be carried out using the Scopemate 2. This includes the signature testing methods described in the earlier articles.

Conclusion

Scopemate 2 is available from Beckman Industrial Ltd., Astec Building, High Street, Wollaston, Stourbridge, West Midlands DY8 4PG – telephone 0384 202 620. It's made in the USA and costs £310 plus VAT. This cost would soon be recovered in a busy workshop. The instrument comes complete with a comprehensive set of test leads: sets of i.c. extension leads can be supplied at extra cost.

My thanks to Sue Round of Beckman Industrial for arranging to lend me a Scopemate 2 for evaluation.

TV Fault Finding

Reports from Ed Rowland, Nick Beer,
Mick Dutton, Ray Crockett and
E.M. Beddow

Grundig CUC2201 Chassis

This portable colour set would sometimes trip for about twenty minutes before coming on, after which it would run without further trouble. At other times it would work for days on end without the fault occurring. There were no dry-joints, and heating/freezing suspect components had no effect whatsoever. The cause of the trouble turned out to be the set-h.t. control R637 (1k Ω) **E.R.**

Saisho CM16TT

This set was brought to us because it was intermittently dead. The customer asked whether the colour could be checked as it was also faulty. The STK7308 regulator chip was the cause of the power supply problems. When it had been replaced we had good pictures with unlocked colour. A judicious tweak of the APC control restored normal colour, which was fortunate as we'd no manual. **E.R.**

ITT CVC1175 Chassis

This dead set had been checked at the air base where its owner worked. The technician had diagnosed a faulty line output transformer. The trouble was in fact due to the 115V line reservoir capacitor C716 (10 μ F, 350V). It looked o.k. until it was unsoldered, when it was found to be leaking electrolyte. **E.R.**

Panasonic TC297NP

The complaint was that the picture became unwatchable after three-four hours. So the set was put on soak test. Sure enough after about three hours flyback lines appeared on the screen and the picture lost definition. As we didn't have the service manual we decided to freeze all the capacitors in the line output and video stages. This did us no good. It was only when we noticed C356 (1 μ F) on the c.r.t. base panel that our luck changed. Freezing this capacitor cleared the fault completely, and on unsoldering it one of the legs dropped off. No further trouble was experienced after fitting a replacement. **E.R.**

B and O 33XX Chassis

This set was stuck in standby. The cause was an excessive line output stage load. A check showed that the output transistor was o.k. and subsequent tests revealed a primary-to-secondary short in transformer 5T11. **N.B.**

Salora J Chassis

This set was stuck on channel number 3. If you pressed the other buttons the channels came up but didn't latch. Also some didn't do as they should – number 4 produced number 1 for example. There was a fairly obvious link in the lines between the SAA1251 control chip and the front keyboard. The switching transistors in these lines have been known to give trouble. The appropriate one, TC11, read o.k., as did all the others. A replacement SAA1251 made no difference, and all the pull-up, down and feed resistors had the correct values. Print continuity was o.k., and the M293B1 programme chip was all right. For want of

anything better to do I replaced TC11. This cured the problem, though the transistor still read right when tested out of circuit. **N.B.**

Sony KV2092

This set would intermittently remain dead when an attempt was made to start it from standby. A quick check when the fault was present showed that there was no 115V supply at the h.t. fuse. The cause was a dry-joint on the resistor mounted in the L602 position. It's an 0.68 Ω fusible type. Neither the resistor nor the coil is shown in the circuit diagram. Whichever is fitted is between the chopper transformer and the anode of the 115V rectifier D601. I've also had this resistor go open-circuit when the line output transistor has gone short-circuit. This has happened before or in addition to failure of F602. **N.B.**

Toshiba 285T5BZ

This large-screen set had failed before, when it wouldn't start from standby. The cause had been failure of the TDA4601 chip IC801. Here we were twelve months later with the same problem. A phone call to Toshiba technical was all that was needed. Replace the i.c., change R818 to 15k Ω and C845 to 100 μ F and all would be well. It was. **N.B.**

Salora Small-screen L Chassis

In the August issue, page 717, we referred to the front panel controls doing the wrong thing with these sets – fault (7) in the list. Our latest experience has been that simply re-enabling and storing will cure such problems. If the set comes back again, follow the previous advice (replace the SAA1293 and MDA2061 chips). **N.B.**

Philips KT3 Chassis

After the set had been running for many hours the field would contract, with severe foldover at the bottom. T1530, one of the field output transistors, had a thermal fault. Fitting a new BD233 put matters right. **N.B.**

Sony KV2752UB

This monster set had been causing a local dealer some grief. The symptom was severe EW distortion – there was no correction and gross vertical overscanning. The chip and the transistors on the scan-correction PCB had been checked/changed, as had most of the other likely components. A check on the underside of the main chassis showed that the correction PCB plugging and unplugging had resulted in dry-joints at its socket. These were resoldered and it was while doing this that I saw the real cause of the problem – L802 was dry-jointed at its busy end. **N.B.**

Grundig GSC200 Chassis

The ticket with this portable said no results. When we took the back off we found that R607 in the start circuit had

sprung open. R621 was also open-circuit, so there was no h.t. After replacing R621 and resoldering R607 the set worked normally until the end of the day. Next morning there was a loud thumping noise when the set was switched on and R607 sprung open. In the past we've had problems with the e.h.t. regulating thyristor TY503, so this was replaced and the set was given a soak test. As the fault persisted we had to investigate further. It seemed that the problem was in the regulation when the set was cold: when the 5V supply to IC2511, which is a TTL device, was checked it was found to be only 2.8V and varying. The fault was caused by the 4.7V zener diode Di2502. **M.D.**

Fidelity CTV20T

There was no sound and a check at pin 13 (volume control) of the TDA8190 audio chip IC3 showed that there was no voltage at this point. We suspected that the remote control chip IC2 was holding down the voltage via R46, but when this resistor was disconnected there was still no volume control voltage. The cause of the problem was traced to R59, which is in series with the slider of the volume control. It had increased in value from 100k Ω to over 2M Ω . **M.D.**

Ferguson TX90 Chassis

Field collapse it said on the ticket. We thought it would be a quick resoldering job but the joints were perfect and there was h.t. at the field output stage. The mid-point voltage was low at 22V however. Drive from the TDA4501 chip was fine. The cause of the problem was R198 (6.8k Ω) in the chain that supplies the base of TR104. It had gone high in value, upsetting the field output stage biasing. **M.D.**

Sony KV2066

The customer complained that the set sometimes took a long time to come on from cold – as long as half an hour. Checks around IC601 showed that there was no voltage at pin 4, the standby line. R632 (2.2M Ω) had gone open-circuit. **M.D.**

Ferguson TX90 Chassis

The line output transistor was short-circuit. When a replacement was fitted and the set was switched on there was a smell of burning. Before I could locate its source the transistor blew again. Suspecting the line output transformer I removed it and provided the replacement transistor with a resistive load, so that the drive waveform could be checked. All was well. When the transformer's primary winding was reconnected, via flying leads, the transistor again failed.

After fitting a new transformer and transistor I ran up the set using a variac. The correct h.t. voltage was obtained with only 220V input. With 240V input the verticals were bent. Also I found that the h.t. potentiometer didn't work. Checks in the regulating circuit showed that Tr107 and Tr108 were short-circuit. They'd probably been damaged by the faulty transformer. Replacing them restored normal operation. **R.C.**

Decca 80 Chassis

The problem with this set was intermittent field collapse. When I first saw the symptom there was a band of picture about one and a half inches high across the screen. This suggested a faulty field timebase chip, especially as the

supplies were in order and all the capacitors had been replaced about a year ago for a similar fault. Changing the chip did provide a cure, long enough for the set to be soaked for some hours then returned to its owner. A day later however the phone rang. Same fault. Call and find that the 32V supply is low. As I couldn't find any definite fault I decided to resolder all the joints in the area of the line output transformer and its associated rectifier diodes. This seemed to do the trick, but some days later the fault reappeared.

The set was brought back to the workshop and subjected to shock and vibration tests. This produced a slight increase in height. As the height was evidently trying to increase I thought I'd help it by adjusting the height control. No good. Out of desperation I tried the hold control. This produced full height! As I didn't have a replacement I removed it and cleaned the centre metal sliding contact, which was well tarnished. No problems after that. Why do these faults never show up at the start? **R.C.**

Ferguson TX100 Chassis

A common fault with these sets is field collapse due to failure of the TDA3652 field output chip. As this chip is no longer available a TDA3654 has to be fitted. We've started to experience problems when this is done: the results can be no scan at all, severe cramping or inability to set up the field hold correctly – despite changing the value of the resistor (R96) in the drive line from 6.8k Ω to 3.3k Ω as suggested in the sheet that comes with the chip. This chip is also used in some Sony sets, but in this case with a 1.5k Ω resistor in series with the drive. So we've tried 1.5k Ω in the Ferguson chassis and have found that the chip then works perfectly.

When contacted Ferguson commented that R96 can be reduced to 2.2k Ω if problems are experienced but that the TDA3654 must be obtained from them, also that they've had a lot of complaints about TDA3654 chips obtained from other sources. Sony however said it didn't matter where the chip came from as long as the value of the resistor was altered. **E.M.B.**

Sony KV2096

This set came in with a report saying that it was dead, also that the EW correction was poor. We soon found that the chopper transistor was short-circuit due to dry-joints on the 680 Ω snubber network resistors. These should have been resoldered using the special solder that Sony supply with the mains switch modification kit. We were told that the switch modification had been carried out, but whoever had done it had fitted the wrong switch. We obtained the correct switch kit from Sony, fitted it and repaired the power supply. The result was a good picture, but we couldn't obtain straight verticals even with the pincushion amplitude control at one end of its travel. This was eventually traced to C527 having gone low in value. It should be 470 μ F but read 350 μ F when checked with our capacitance meter. **E.M.B.**

Philips System 4 Chassis

We've had several of these sets in which the field output chip has failed only a week or so after a replacement had been fitted. Replacing the electrolytics associated with this chip cures the problem. One in particular falls in value, from 100 μ F to about 70 μ F. It can also cause flyback lines to creep down the screen. **E.M.B.**

Satellite TV Receiver Project

Part 2

C.W. Murray

The receiver is built on two PCBs, both $11 \times 16\text{cm}$, one for the receiver circuitry and the other for the power supply. Figs. 2 and 3 show the component layouts, Figs. 5 and 6 the track patterns. Single-sided boards with a minimum of links are used in preference to double-sided ones as this makes it easier for those who have suitable facilities to make their own PCBs for the project.

Construction

Construction of the signals board is straightforward. Start with the links and resistors, moving on to higher components. Use sockets for the i.c.s. The LED indicator lamps and their associated switches are PCB mounted. A connector (CN14) is provided for the tuning controls.

If the power supply PCB is to be free standing, the specified heatsink should be used. Don't be tempted to use the slot in the heatsink for mounting the chips and transistor: drill and tap suitable holes – 6BA is a reasonable size. Remember to use insulating kits with IC5 and Q2. It's easier to fit the heatsink mounted devices to the heatsink then solder them to the board once the heatsink has been attached to it.

If the power supply is to be fitted in a metal case, the left-hand section of the PCB can be cut down to leave a 3mm earth track and the metal case can be employed as the heatsink, using a spacer made of heavy-gauge aluminium sheet. Refer to the previous note on heatsink capacity.

Connector pinning is shown on the circuit diagrams and must be followed carefully. Note that the power connector

pinning differs on the signals and power supply PCBs. Check all connections thoroughly prior to testing the unit.

Setting Up

Before starting on the test and set-up procedure, check that all components have been fitted correctly, e.g. i.c.s inserted the right way round etc., and that there are no solder bridges.

Test the power supply as a separate module before connecting it to the signals board. Proceed as follows.

- (1) Set all presets to their mid-positions and remove fuses.
- (2) Switch on and check that the following voltages, relative to 0V, are present: 40V at the input to F2, 27V at the input to F3 and 13V at the input to F4. These are approximate values.
- (3) If o.k., switch off and fit fuses. Switch on and check the following voltages at CN2: pins 2/3 $5\text{V} \pm 0.25\text{V}$; pins 4/5 $12\text{V} \pm 0.5\text{V}$.
- (4) Set up the 28V supply. Monitor pin 8 of CN2, adjusting VR1 for $28\text{V} \pm 0.1\text{V}$.
- (5) Set up the 13/17V supply. Monitor at pin 10 of CN2. Adjust VR3 for $17\text{V} \pm 0.1\text{V}$. Short pin 9 to 0V then adjust VR2 for $13\text{V} \pm 0.1\text{V}$. Remove the short.
- (6) Set up the current source. Place a short across CN3 and monitor the voltage across R23. Adjust VR4 for $90\text{mV} \pm 5\text{mV}$. Short pin 1 of CN2 to 0V then adjust VR5 for $1.89\text{V} \pm 0.1\text{V}$. Remove the short.

This completes the setting up.

Connect the power supply to the signals panel. It's very important to check the connections between the two panels

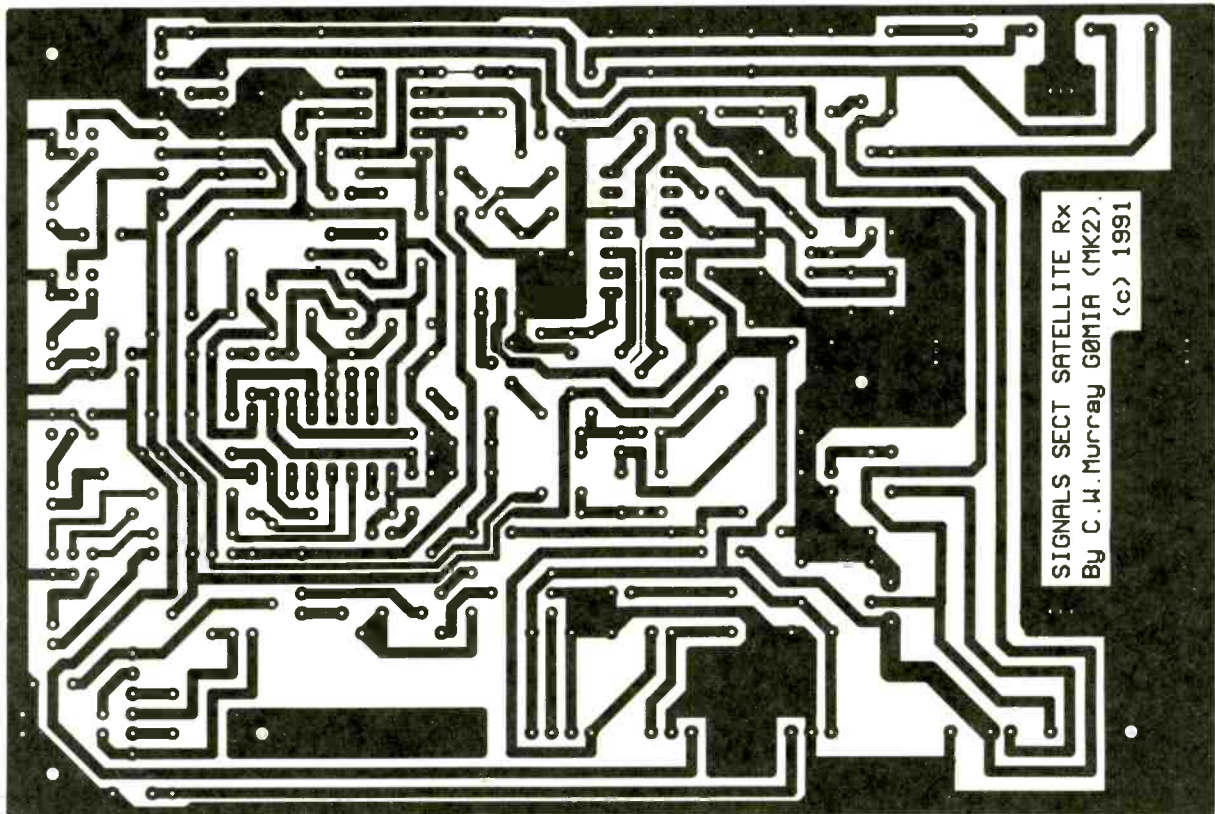


Fig. 6: Print pattern, receiver PCB.

carefully before switching on – any errors could lead to irreparable damage to the signals panel, so be careful! To set up the signals panel you need access to a dish and LNB which are ideally pointing at Astra or a similar Ku band satellite and have been checked with another receiver or set up using a signal-strength meter. Failing this, the dish and LNB should be set up to point approximately at Astra: under these conditions access to a frequency meter is invaluable. The signals panel setting-up procedure is as follows.

(1) Connect the receiver to a suitable LNB whose supply is provided via the coaxial cable connected to the i.f. block (centre conductor is at 13/17V, outer at 0V). If necessary connect the polar rotator to connector CN3 on the power supply PCB. Pulse-type or mechanical polar rotators cannot be driven directly by this receiver. Connect the receiver's output to a u.h.f. TV set tuned to the modulator's channel 36 output.

(2) Switch on and check that the grain pattern displayed by the TV set changes. Turn VR6 and VR9 fully anticlockwise.

(3) Adjust the vision tuning slowly from end to end: stop when something resembling a distorted picture appears. Leave the tuning control then slowly back off VR6 until the picture becomes clearer. Next adjust VR6 in conjunction with the tuning control for optimum picture quality – note that the TV set may also require fine tuning at this stage, so considerable patience and care are needed in making these adjustments.

(4) At this point make any fine adjustments to the dish needed to achieve a clear sparkly-free picture.

(5) Adjust the sound tuning until the main mono subcarrier is found, then adjust to the centre of the tuning range for this subcarrier. Adjust VR9 for maximum volume at both settings of SW5.

(6) Monitor the voltage at pin 7 of IC4 with respect to 0V. Adjust VR8 in conjunction with the vision tuning control for $14V \pm 1V$ and optimum tuning – these controls are interactive.

(7) VR11 and VR12 set the offset and sensitivity of the signal-strength meter. Set the tuning to mid-travel and cover the LNB's feedhorn with tin foil or other suitable material to block the signal. Adjust VR11 to give a very small positive reading. Remove the foil and tune to the nearest signal. Adjust VR12 for a reading of around three-quarters of full-scale deflection with a good, sparkly-free picture.

This completes the setting-up procedure. Use a frequency meter to set the tuning as follows. With the meter connected to CN5 the frequency to which the receiver is tuned can be calculated. The following equation assumes that the DRO in the LNB is set at precisely 10GHz:

$$F_c = (F_m \times 128) - (479.5 + F_d)$$

where F_c is the channel frequency in MHz, F_m is the frequency meter reading in MHz, 479.5 is the second i.f. (of the i.f. block) and F_d is 10,000 (i.e. the LNB local oscillator frequency). Divide F_c by 1,000 to give the frequency in GHz. This equation assumes that the prescaler in the i.f. block divides by 128. If necessary alter in accordance with the module used.

I would like to thank Mike Willis for constructing and testing the prototype and to dedicate this article to everyone at Surrey University who took an interest in and helped inspire this project.

The approximate estimated cost of the receiver is £120, exclusive of the case and dish etc.

next month in

TELEVISION

FREE SIGNAL DIODES

Next month's issue comes with two free cover-mounted 1N4148 general-purpose signal diodes. For tax/customs reasons they will not be available with export copies.

● 150MHz FREQUENCY PRESCALER

Many service departments are equipped with an older type frequency counter which, though accurate and well built, often has an upper frequency limited to 10 or 30MHz. With modern TV/video/microcomputer servicing however the coverage of a frequency counter should extend to at least 80-100MHz. Next month's prescaler project, designed by David Botto, extends the range of almost any frequency counter to at least 150MHz. It uses only a few readily available components and is simple and straightforward to build. When used with a DMM such as the Cirkit TM175 or the Beckman DM27XL the frequency range is extended a hundred times. It has proved to be very useful on the test bench.

● MORE ON THE FERGUSON 3V29/30

As a follow up to Joe Cieszynski's general guide to servicing these popular VCRs John Coombes provides an itemised faults list.

● DEVELOPMENTS IN SWITCH-MODE POWER SUPPLIES

The switch-mode power supply put in its first appearance in a UK CTV chassis with the Thorn 3000 design in 1969. Since then it has become standard practice in CTV chassis. There has been quite a lot of development and innovation over the years. Next month Joe Cieszynski takes a look at some of the more important innovations, including mains isolation, standby operation, h.f. operation and the use of power MOSFETs.

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What a Life!

Donald Bullock

The lady brought this 20in. set along and explained that it was her husband's. "E said to let you do it" she added. The label said it was a Goodmans CVT2T, which was a new one on me. When I switched it on there was a rustle of e.h.t. but the set was otherwise dead. After a brief bout of meditation I increased the first anode supply, using the potentiometer on the line output transformer. This produced brightness on the screen, but nothing I did got me any further. Nor could I find any reference to Goodmans Television anywhere amongst my papers and data. So I rang my valued friend Peter Ambrose at Comet. He's a technical wizard who sounds like twenty five but is, he assures me, as ancient as I am.

A Nikkai Chassis

"It's actually a Nikkai chassis" he said. "On the left-hand side, close to the on-off switch, you'll see a small transformer designated EM104. Its windings are bound with yellow ticky-tacky tape. The secondary winding feeds a rectifier diode, D102, which should have 11V at its cathode to feed the front panel control circuitry. But you'll find that this voltage is missing because the fuse in the transformer's primary section is open-circuit."

"Well, thanks" I said, "now where do I get a replacement?"

"You'll have a job" he replied, "they're like gold dust."

I checked for 11V at the cathode of the diode and, as he predicted, it was absent. So I took out the transformer and checked across its primary connections. There was an open-circuit, again as predicted. When I telephoned Nikkai I was told that they had no stock, so I gingerly picked away the yellow ticky-tacky and found the open-circuit thermal fuse. After replacing it with one from my junk box I switched on again. Up came an excellent picture. I wish I knew as much about these things as Peter – and that I sounded as bright. I dunno what fuel he runs on but wish I could get some. Next day I had a similar set, this time wearing a Solavox jacket. The symptoms were the same and, armed with my new knowledge, I had the transformer out and repaired in no time. Thanks, Peter.

JVC HRD520

Feeling buoyant for once I picked up a JVC HRD520EK VCR. "Severe tracking troubles" said the ticket. Its own recordings played perfectly, but those made on other machines and from video libraries were unwatchable, with the tracking control having no effect. I worked through the tracking circuitry but couldn't find anything wrong then, reluctantly and carefully, I gently adjusted the tape guides. The right-hand one turned easily by hand: setting it up with a first-class tape then sealing it brought perfect results. Why hadn't I tried that first?!

Amstrad VCR4600

An Amstrad VCR4600 had been brought in with a cassette jammed inside. When I tried it the idler seemed to be slipping. So I took it out, fitted another and tried again.

The machine groaned and whirred, but the tape didn't move. The drive belt underneath had flown off its pulley wheel. After cleaning and refitting it I got a repeat performance. So I took out the cassette manually and tried another one. This time the machine worked perfectly. When I examined the cassette I saw that it had jammed solid because one of the tape pillars had broken. When the owner called I told him that the cassette had caused the trouble and would do so again if he tried to play it.

Fault Indexes

I've had on one side recently for the purpose of reviewing them some of the advertised TV Fault Indexes, and have referred to them from time to time to see how helpful they are. The answer is very. Recently I had a Solavox NVCR5000 with a strange fault. It was dead, with only the standby beacon lit. When I looked it up I found a reference to a similar fault in this model, only this time the symptom was a muddled clock display. The Indexes referred me to page 288 of the February 1991 issue of *Television*. I looked this up and found that a modification involving a 4.7k Ω resistor would bring about a cure. Then I noticed that the article was one of mine. Good thing I write these things down! The modification had already been done, but the resistor was far smaller than any that I use, and it was open-circuit. Then I recalled the correspondence that followed my article. The general consensus was that replacing the "battery" capacitor was a better solution. I did this and found that it worked. It will be interesting to see whether this provides a lasting cure.

Sony KV2060

The next job was Mr Moggie's Sony KV2060UB TV set. "The picture went into a line" he piped, "it can't be the tube because the sound's all right." As the field had collapsed I homed in on the UPC1378H field output chip IC551 and checked its voltages. The supply voltage was correct and the others weren't too far out. There was also a healthy input from the timebase generator chip IC501, via R515. So I phoned J.J. Components for a replacement UPC1378H. When it arrived next morning I fitted it. Up came the field, but there was no field hold. None of the pretty preset potentiometers were labelled hold, and I feared that there was't such a thing. But the circuit told me that there was. It's grouped with the brightness, contrast and colour controls under the front plinth of the tube surround. Adjusting it produced solid locking, in fact an excellent picture. Super set, but flimsy cabinet.

Ferguson TX90 Chassis

The next set was another case of field collapse, but there were oddities this time. It was a Ferguson TX90 – the 20in. version. After ensuring that the field output transistors weren't footloose I checked them. As they were o.k., without further ado I removed the line output transformer to gain access to R268, the 22 Ω fusible resistor cunningly concealed within the line output stage screening box. It's in the 100V feed to the field output transistors, and was open-circuit. A replacement brought back the field scan, but there was a dark horizontal line across the centre of the picture, as though the tube's screen had been burnt by being left in the field collapse condition. But I wasn't sure about this. So I applied my degaussing wand to the tube's neck and moved the picture about on the screen. The line moved with it. After some searching I found that R203

Long-distance Television

Roger Bunney

October was a rewarding month, with a liberal sprinkling of Sporadic E signals, some spectacular F2 layer propagation and, for those suitably located, tropospheric enhancement in Bands I and III and at u.h.f. We've now just passed the peak of Solar Cycle 22, but with the recent high sunspot counts F2 propagation and the related maximum usable frequencies should remain high. First however the SpE log:

- 5/10/91 +PTT (Switzerland) ch. E2; DR (Denmark) E3; TVE (Spain) E3.
- 6/10/91 TVE E2, 3, 4.
- 7/10/91 TVE E2, 3, 4; RTP (Portugal) E3.
- 9/10/91 TVE E2, 3, 4.
- 13/10/91 DR E3; TVE E2.
- 15/10/91 TVE E3; RAI (Italy) IA; ARD (Germany) E2; +PTT E2, 3.
- 17/10/91 TVE E2, 3.
- 19/10/91 TSS (USSR) R1; RAI IA, B; TVE E2, 3; +PTT E3; JRT (Yugoslavia) E3, 4; DR E3; SVT (Sweden) E2; C+ (France) E2.
- 20/10/91 DR E3; RAI IA.
- 21/10/91 RAI IA; TVE E2; TSS R1, 2 (Eesti).
- 22/10/91 TVE E2, 3.
- 23/10/91 C+ L1; TVE E2, 3; TSS R1; CST (Czechoslovakia) R1.
- 24/10/91 TVE E2, 3; RAI IA; RTP E2; C+ L2; MTV (Hungary) R1.
- 26/10/91 TSS R1; +PTT E2.
- 27/10/91 TSS R1.
- 28/10/91 +PTT E3; DR E3; TVE E3.

There was auroral activity on the 28th, from 1530-2000 BST, with identified reception from RTE (Eire) ch. 1 and RAI ch. IA and unidentified programmes on chs. R2, E2, E3, E6 and E8.

There was a tropospheric opening on the 10/11th, with Band III/u.h.f. signals from the Benelux countries, Germany (ZDF, NDR and ARD) and France. In addition Scottish TV was seen in the south. A slight lift on the 22nd produced signals from Eire and the Benelux countries. The most dramatic opening occurred on the 24/25th however, with extensive reception from Germany (NDR, WDR, ZDR and West 3), Denmark (TV1 and 2), Norway (in Band III), and Finland (YLE-1 ch. E7, YLE-2 ch. E9).

From the 7th, F2 layer propagation started to occur – Tim Anderson has the honour of logging the first F2 reception (Ghana ch. E2) of the season. From the 10th, signals were received regularly. This is the F2 log:

- 10/10/91 Dubai ch. E2.
- 11/10/91 Dubai E2.
- 13/10/91 Dubai and Iran E2.
- 14/10/91 Dubai E2.
- 15/10/91 Dubai E2; TSS R1.
- 16/10/91 TSS R1; Dubai E2; RTQ 0 (formerly DDQ 0) ch. 0 (Australia) at 1015 BST; ZTV (Zambia) E2.
- 17/10/91 TSS R1; unidentified Arabic ch. E2 and 525-line ch. A2 signals at 1040.
- 18/10/91 TSS R1; Dubai E2; Thailand E2 (with 3 logo); DTQ 0 (formerly ABMN 0) ch. 0; New Zealand ch. 1; RTM (Malaysia) E2; ZTV E2; Dubai E2.

- 20/10/91 TSS R1; Dubai E2; IRIB (Iran) E2.
- 21/10/91 Iran E2.
- 22/10/91 Iran E2.
- 23/10/91 Dubai E2; Iran E2.
- 24/10/91 Dubai E2; Iran E2; TSS R1.
- 25/10/91 Dubai E2; Iran E2; TSS R1.

All in all a remarkable month, with some excellent F2 reception. Just for the record, and if you have a scanner, ZTV ch. E2 has a +10kHz offset, Thailand ch. E2 a -8kHz offset and Malaysia ch. E2 has zero offset. Note the changed identifications for Australian stations.

My thanks to the following for sending in really excellent logs: Roger Fussell (Torpoint), Simon Hamer (Powys), Ryn Muntjewerff (Holland), David Glenday (Arbroath), Tim Anderson (St. Leonards), Cyril Willis (King's Lynn), Garry Smith (Derby) and Brian Williams (Penarth).

Before going any further a correction is required. In my review of the *Ku Satellite TV* book in the November column I gave the number of pages as 3,432. The effect of old age perhaps? This should have read 432 pages. My apologies to anyone who bought the book on this misunderstanding. It's still a very good book.

News Items

Sweden: It appears that the M3 consortium, consisting of Rikstelevision and Kinnevik, has been awarded the six-year licence for the new commercial terrestrial channel. Kinnevik operates the London-based TV3 satellite service.

Finland: The first ch. E12 transmitter has opened at Pyhavuori, for TV-3.

Germany: Progress in providing regional TV in the eastern region has been very slow. NDR-1 is expanding into Mecklenburg-Vorpommern using its own plus ARD material. Mitteldeutschen Rundfunk is to commence broadcasting this January, with its headquarters at Leipzig. DFF is being disbanded. RTL+, Pro 7, Sat 1 and Tele 5 have as yet, for political reasons, gained no foothold in the east. ZDF has been given permission to expand eastwards and already has one transmitter in operation.

ZDF Marlow has changed from ch. E43 to ch. E46 (vertical) with increased e.r.p. Tele 5 has been given a licence permitting it to operate in Schleswig-Holstein.

Eastern Europe: The East European broadcasting organisation OIRT has decided to carry out research and development into improving the Secam colour system. It's felt that this would present fewer difficulties than converting to PAL Plus.

Ghana: Last month we mentioned the restart of services in the Tamale region. Two 5kW transmitters are now being installed at Amedzofe and Akatsi (Volta region). A further transmitter is to be installed at Sunyani (Brong Ahafo region). Consideration is being given to building a new transmitter at Ajangote, Accra, to transmit CNN International material.

Eire: The Broadcasting Commission has withdrawn the TV3 licence, halting for the time being any progress in starting the projected commercial network.

Switzerland: The subscription-based Telecine Romandie service on ch. E69 has reopened. There's competition from La Cinq and M6, providing services for the Geneva area from Mont Blanc on chs. E54 and E51 respectively, at 250W e.r.p.

Chile: The La Red station that opened on ch. A4 in Santiago hopes to extend operations throughout the country.

Cyprus: There are reports of PAL instead of SECAM being used in both parts of the country. Does anyone have any definite information on this?

50MHz Amateur band: News via the Six Metre Group. Class A operators in the Lebanon can now use the band, with outputs up to 100W into any aerial. Estonia has given temporary permission for 50MHz operation. The Polish authorities are planning to allow use of the band, probably before the end of the year. Spain has allowed ninety Class A operators to use the 50-52MHz band for a year on an experimental basis, with a maximum output of 30W e.r.p. using CW and SSB only.

Satellite TV

Reader Darren Salter tells us that a post-graduate medical service called Medical Television Network, funded by British Aerospace, is now being carried by the Eutelsat I F4 satellite at 7°E. Times are not known, but the channel is 11-64GHz horizontal.

Turner Broadcasting of Atlanta, having purchased the Hanna-Barbera library of children's material and with access to other film distributors including MGM, intends to launch a World Children's channel. It seems that the European area may be the first to receive this, though the project is a long-term one that might take several years to come into operation.

The South African satellite-distributed service M Net may be allowed to start an entertainment channel.

HD-TV test transmissions are now being broadcast in Japan for eight hours a day via the BS-3a satellite. November 25th was "Hi-Vision Day", when the extended service started.

A new service Campus TV, produced by French students, is being brought into operation via Eutelsat II F2 at 10°E, the channel being 12-54GHz vertical. Test transmissions have been seen. Another service seen on test via this satellite is Mega 10, financed by the Turkish Democratic party. Channel is 10-987GHz horizontal.

Launch of the first Intelsat K satellite has been put back to March. Intelsat VI F5 has taken over from VI F2 at 24-5°W - F2 is to move to 60°E in early 1992. Intelsat VI F1 will take up position at 27-5°W in early January.

Filmnet has been seen testing via the Eutelsat satellite at 13°E using D2-MAC with and without Eurocrypt. It seems likely that Filmnet will eventually opt for this system - you've been warned! Scansat is now operating with D2-MAC/Eurocrypt on all downlinks.

Winter-time Propagation

At the start of this column I mentioned the sustained high sunspot activity now that we've just passed the peak of Solar Cycle 22. High sunspot activity ionises the F2 layer at about 230 miles above the Earth's surface, allowing v.h.f. signal reflection over great distances - as the F2 log reports, reception in the UK from Australia, New Zealand and other distant parts has recently been experienced. Such reception tends to be restricted to the lower part of Band I. With high ionisation levels more than one reflection can occur - it's in this way that we get reception from the antipodes. Unfortunately multiple reflection produces poor picture quality, with severe ghosting or smearing.

Since ionisation of the F2 layer occurs because of solar radiation, it follows that the centre part of the reflection path must be exposed to the sun. Hence F2 layer propagation is a daytime phenomenon. If you live in London, from about 0830 GMT there's the possibility of receiving the first distant ch. R1 Russian signals - one or more during an intense opening. Look out for clocks to give an indication of the time zone being received. By 0900-1000 you could be lucky and receive signals from Australasia. Australian ch. 0 signals can be strong though

AERIAL TECHNIQUES

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the picture is difficult to resolve. The mid-morning period may bring signals from the Gulf - these can last for some hours. Lunchtime may bring signals on a southerly path from Zimbabwe ZTV and Kenya VOK. Early in the afternoon signals from Nigeria and Ghana may put in an appearance, while from about 1430 the aerial should be swung to the west for possible American reception - this produces a characteristic 60Hz (field rate) buzz, and if you are lucky enough to see a signal it may be rolling. Once locked, it will lack height.

Transequatorial skip propagation from the south may occur from about 1700 GMT as the breakup of the daytime F2 layer produces clouds of ionised gas that once again reflect signals across the Equator into southern Europe. Propagation can last for an hour to up to 2100.

F2/TE propagation can occur until early March - it's a winter-time phenomenon. Use of a wideband scanner assists with the location of very low-level signals, before they can produce an image on the screen. It also enables offsets to be measured, which helps with identification. The nominal vision carrier frequency for the Australian ch. 0 is 46-25MHz; New Zealand ch. 1 is 45-25MHz; ch. E2 is 48-25MHz; ch. R1 is 49-75MHz; chs. A2 and E3 are 55-25MHz.

MS Propagation

Though it's not exclusively a winter-time phenomenon, another propagation mode that can be exploited during winter when signals are sparse is meteor-scatter propagation. This occurs when meteors (space debris) burn up on coming into contact with the layers that surround the Earth. Meteors produce intense though short-lived ionisation as they burn up, usually at a height of around

seventy miles, i.e. in the E layer. This ionisation will reflect incident v.h.f. signals, generally in Band I though with intense ionisation reflection at up to Band III occurs. Since reflection is in the E layer, reflection distances are the same as with SpE reception, i.e. 500-1,500 miles.

High-gain equipment is required for MS reception – this applies to aeriels, preamplifiers and receivers – while the latter should be able to lock quickly to short signal flashes. These typically last for a few seconds, though they can last for ten seconds or more. For random signal reception you tune to a Band I channel and wait. MS can occur at any time of the day or night, though the morning period is usually more rewarding. Random MS DXing can be very time consuming, but at certain times of the year there are regular meteor showers that normally produce a high incidence of burn-ups with an increased level of reception.

The following list of 1992 meteor showers has been

provided by George Spalding of the British Astronomical Association:

Quadrantids January 1-6th, peaking at 1000 on the 4th.
Virginids April 7-18th, peaking on the 12th.
Lyrids April 19-25th, peaking at 2100 on the 21st.
May Aquarids April 24th-May 20th, peaking on May 5th.
Delta Aquarids July 15th-August 20th, peaking on July 29th and August 6th.
Capricornids July 15th-August 25th, peaking on July 31st.
Perseids July 23rd-August 20th, peaking at 0900 on August 12th.
Orionids October 16-27th, peaking on the 22nd.
Taurids October 20th-November 30th, peaking on November 3rd.
Leonids November 15-20th, peaking at 1000 on the 17th.
Geminids December 7-16th, peaking at 1600 on the 13th.
Ursids December 17-25th, peaking on the 23rd.

Steve's Camcorner

Steve Beeching, T. Eng.

An increasing number of the new camcorders that are coming on to the market have no camera setting up controls. Instead, they have EVRs – electronically variable resistors. The controls are in fact buried at an address location within an EEPROM (electronically erasable programmable read only memory). The data stored at the relevant location is fed to a digital-to-analogue decoder which produces the appropriate d.c. level for the required control setting. Functions such as luminance level, colour matrixing and even the auto-iris setting are stored in this way. Examples of models with this feature are the Panasonic NV-S1, NV-G1, NV-G2 and the JVC palmcorder range.

To alter an EVR value you require a microprocessor controlled EVR jig. Under the control of a ROM this uses hexadecimal codes to gain access to the EVRs and alter them. The codes allow for 256 control levels to be used.

Be warned: if you carry out camcorder repairs, don't attempt to replace the lens assembly in a Panasonic G series model without measuring the correct reference levels and without access to an EVR jig. Otherwise, believe me, you will be in it deep. My prediction is that EVR control will be increasingly used in camcorders and also VCRs: it makes computerised adjustment on an assembly line in the factory quick and cheap. The problem is that the EVR jigs required for servicing cost between £200 and £400 each. The cost will have to be borne by specialist service centres and charged to dealers (even under guarantee) and to the public. Dealers who expect EVR controlled video equipment to be repaired for the cost of a manufacturer's claimback are going to be in for a nasty surprise quite soon!

Sharp VLC73

The problem with a Sharp VLC73 was that at power on only a small current, less than 100mA, was drawn before it switched off again. This suspiciously low current suggested a power supply problem, supported by the fact that the 9.4V rail was missing. The power board was removed for checking, with the aid of extension leads from various JVC kits.

We found that pin 10 of IC901 was low while the base of Q909 was high: this was a bit puzzling as they are both

connected (or supposed to be) to a single run of print. What had happened was that C927 had leaked slightly and corroded the print running beneath it – the print that connects Q909 and IC901. A piece of miniature cable was used to link Q909 and IC901, while operation was restored by replacing C927.

Sony TR55

Two months after I fitted a capstan motor to a Sony TR55 because the FG signal was missing it came back with the complaint "snow outside". After cross-examining the owner I came to the conclusion that the problem was overloading because the iris didn't shut down. Strangely enough, in between the initial telephone call and the customer's arrival with his TR55 I received a Grundig Technical Bulletin that referred to the VS8300, which is not sold in the UK but is a TR55 clone. The note in the bulletin referred to the iris staying closed and described how to strip down the optics to clean the iris blades, which can stick in the closed position. When I stripped down the TR55's optical block I found traces of oil on a tail part of one of the iris vanes. The oil, probably from the zoom drive motor, had made its way around the lens and into the iris assembly via a screw. Cleaning provided an effective cure, but great care was needed.

Toshiba A1-420

A Toshiba A1-420 caused its owner, myself and the dealer some major upsets. The batteries didn't seem to last very long before "battery low" appeared in the viewfinder, followed by power switch off. The batteries were initially blamed, but the dealer (Fletch) subsequently found, with the owner, that they were not responsible. So we had the camcorder in, stripped it down and tried to adjust the low-battery indicator preset R650. It's mounted on the inside of a mother PCB which has another PCB on top of it. So both PCBs had to be removed, refitted together and then reconnected to the deck assembly, which is not the easiest of tasks. Then the camera head had to be connected to re-establish the power. Unfortunately the lead required to connect the motor drive on the deck to the mother PCB was not included in the lead kit, but I found a JVC one that fitted.

R650 was set for 9.3V in the battery-low condition, not according to the manual which is nonsense. After reassembling the camcorder it was returned, but came back some weeks later with the same complaint. We repeated the adjustment and left the camcorder on soak

test all day. At the end of the day the battery-low indicator came on at 9.6V. R650 and its associated resistors (R601/2) were cleared of suspicion when we found that the voltage from the micro varied between 2.15V (for 9.3V battery low) to 2.2V (for 9.6V). This shouldn't be, as the microcomputer chip should be internally referenced to produce the battery-low indication at a given single voltage level, not one that varies. Toshiba eventually managed to supply a new chip (IC601). When it was fitted and R650 was set so that the battery-low indication came on at 9.3V we found that the variance when hot was only to 9.4V, a much more stable situation.

JVC GRC2

Circuit protector CP1, which feeds a 5V d.c./d.c. converter in the JVC GRC2, kept blowing. Initially the cause was a mystery. Eventually however a high-pitched whistling came from the main PCB, which was lying on the bench all on its own. While checking around I found that IC12, an LC4011 logic chip, had a section which produced a squarewave output for no reason at all. This output went to a small bistable on/off relay which chopped the 9.6V supply and obviously upset the d.c./d.c. converter. Rather like a line output stage, if the triggering is interrupted a large current can flow. Hence the failure of CP1.

Ferguson FC08

There was no fast forward or rewind with a Ferguson FC08. In addition the functions were intermittent. When I stripped it apart I found that the capstan motor stopped when the servo PCB was flexed. Seeing that the d.c./d.c. converter had been replaced, I came to the conclusion that someone else had also attempted to find the cause of the fault.

After checking all the way through the servo only to find that it was operating normally I checked beneath the PCB, which was difficult. A large capacitor, C7, was fouling the capstan motor spool belt pulley – repositioning it cured the problem. As it's next to the d.c./d.c. converter it was difficult to decide whether whoever had changed the converter had moved C7.

Tandy Head Cleaning Cassette

A Tandy Video Care head cleaning cassette in a Panasonic NV-MS1 had reached the end of the tape. As it didn't have a clear section for the machine's end sensor to realise this, it was probably responsible for jamming the mechanism and the demise of the loading motor i.c.

Panasonic NV-G45

We deal with VCRs (and a few TV sets) as well of course. Some problems were being caused by a Panasonic NV-G45. A tape provided by the customer showed that there was no video head drum servo lock in the record mode. The symptom shows as the head crossover point wandering up and down the screen. Additional symptoms were poor capstan servo lock with sound pitch variation. Neither the dealer nor ourselves were able to confirm these symptoms. I'm glad that I was able to phone my friend SG (Super Gerald) at Panasonic. He came up with a circuit upgrade to deal with the problem. A 150kΩ resistor and a 15nF capacitor are added in parallel across R338 on the YC panel – this appears to be part of the sync separator circuit. Closer inspection of the results produced by the owner's tape showed that servo lock was lost when a rapid screen change from very dark to light occurred. This probably made the video signal ride up and down on the d.c. level, affecting the sync slicing.

HELP WANTED

Can anyone supply a circuit diagram photocopy plus any other details for a Connexions CX2450 satellite receiver? *All costs would be paid. Oliver Rogers, Lower Polgrain, St. Wenn, Bodmin, Cornwall PL30 5PS.*

Can anyone supply service data or the complete valve line up for the Armstrong 127 valve stereo tuner-amplifier? All expenses paid. Roy Bailey, 51 Robin Gardens, Walterlooville, Hants PO8 9XF. Answerphone 0705 241 344.

Can anyone supply a mains transformer (code 7000 4134) for the Bush audio system 1500 music centre Model BS3049, or alternatively supply VA rating and voltage output details? D. Ford, 34 St. Winifred's Road, Bridgend, Mid-Glamorgan CF31 4PL.

We urgently require MCM 0464 L7 i.c.s – it's a 16-pin Motorola memory chip. Will buy a quantity of new or used. Allan Bone, PO Box 97, Coolangatta, Queensland, 4225, Australia.

Can anyone supply a circuit diagram for the Telefunken TR1200 hi-fi tuner-amplifier? B.J. Brandon, 8 Moor Park Avenue, Rochdale, Lancs OL11 3JG.

Can anyone supply a service manual or circuit diagram for the Sharp C1001SP portable TV receiver? D. Joyner, 12 Oakland Road, Banbury, Oxon OX16 9DT. 0295 253 054.

Can anyone supply the six-position switch and cable (record input selector) for the Technics' SUV2 amplifier? E.J. Edwards, 22 Bryn Hir, Cwmbach, Aberdare, Mid-Glamorgan CF44 0ET. 0685 881 694.

Can anyone sell me a 26in. Grundig 7200 or 7400 or alternatively a 22in. 4200 or 4400 for spares? L.A. Kellas, 10 More Close, Purely, Surrey, CR8 2JN. 081 668 6634.

Can anyone suggest how to remove teletext interference with the ITT FT110 chassis? E.G. Terry, Smiths Radio Ltd., 91 Lewes Road, Brighton BN2 3HZ. 0273 605 309.

Can anyone supply test cards for use with the Mullard high-speed valve tester? John Hulin, 1 Hill View, Conford, Liphook, Hants GU30 7QW. 0483 275 997 (work)/0428 751 469 (home).

Has anyone any waveforms or other information for the Fara/Sovereign C140 TV set? E. Faulkner, 53 Langdale Road, Runcorn, Cheshire.

Wanted – a good second-hand LOPT for the Panasonic Model TC381G. C. Taylor, 12 Reeds Close, Reedsholme, Rossendale, Lancs BB4 8ND.

Can anyone supply a Sanken stereo Model SI1525HD? Leon Electronics, 11 Woodend Close, Three Bridges, Crawley, West Sussex. 0293 520 536.

Can anyone supply or advise on the source of TDA2653 chips, used in the Grundig CUC720 chassis? We require a couple. Joseph M. Borg, Evergreen, 94 Mill Street, Mosta, Malta.

Can anyone supply a service manual or circuit diagram for the BBC Master Compact colour monitor. C. Morris, 30 Southcourt Road, Penylan, Cardiff CF3 7DB. 0222 490 766.

Does anyone have a service sheet or other information for a Hartley or James Scott CT436 valve oscilloscope? Donald Bills, 69 Greenfields Road, Kingswinford DY6 8EG.

My D.B. scope

Fault Finding in Toshiba CTV Power Supplies

John Coombes

Toshiba has used a number of different power supply arrangements in its CTV receivers over the years. This article summarises our fault experiences with various models. Note that all these power supplies will operate with a 60W bulb as a dummy load.

Model 261T4B

Model 261T4B is a 26in. set dating from 1984. The 2SD1432 chopper transistor Q804 is controlled by a TA7265AP chip. It's a fairly complex arrangement since the chopper and line output stages share the same transformer T802.

A dead set can be a bit of a problem. The obvious thing to do is to check the 2AT mains fuse F801. If it's open-circuit or blown, check the TVR4J mains bridge rectifier diodes D801-4 and the 2SD1432FA-1 chopper transistor Q804 for shorts. Another item that can go short-circuit is the 1N4148 diode D807 in the start-up circuit.

If the chopper transistor is short-circuit the operation of the TA7265AP chopper control chip IC801 should be checked, with the mains supply disconnected. Connect the positive terminal of a 9V battery to pin 6 of IC801 and the negative terminal to the chassis side of R802. If all is well there should be a 2.6V peak-to-peak sawtooth waveform at a little less than line frequency at pin 9. If this waveform is missing, check whether R815 (16k Ω), R816 (1.6k Ω) or R852 (5k Ω) is open-circuit or C811 (0.0056 μ F) is short-circuit. The chip itself is suspect if these items are in order. Check it by replacement.

If still in trouble, check the drive waveform at the base of the chopper transistor. It should be as shown in Fig. 1. If it's missing or of incorrect shape, check IC801 and the components in the circuitry connected to pins 1-4 as necessary. Also check the regulation action of IC801. The easiest way to do this is to connect a 50k Ω potentiometer across C809 (2.2 μ F). Adjustment of the potentiometer should vary the mark-space ratio of the drive waveform at the base of Q804. If this is incorrect, check Q804's base-emitter junction. If Q804 is o.k., set the potentiometer to the point where IC801 is just prevented from providing an output. Next, check for shorts across the 140V line, i.e. across C466 (470 μ F). Then remove R416 to prevent operation of the line output transistor. At this point remove the 9V battery and apply power. First check the start-up circuit. There should be 9.6V at the emitter of Q805 (2SC2552). If not, check Q805, Q806 (BC547B), R803 (6.2k Ω , 7W), R804 (100k Ω , 2W) and zener diode D806 (05Z10X). Check D807 (1N4148) for leakage. If everything is in order, remove the potentiometer, check the mains input circuit and set up the h.t. and l.t. voltages. Finally reconnect R416.

Model 212R4B

Model 212R4B is a 21in. set dating from 1985. It uses a self-oscillating chopper transistor (Q802, type 2SC3678) with IC801 (SI8100D) in the control loop.

For no results/dead set, first check the mains input circuitry. Fuse F801 (2AT) may be open-circuit or blown. If the fuse is open-circuit it could simply have failed or a quick-blow instead of an anti-surge type may have been

fitted. If the fuse has blown, check the TVR4J mains bridge rectifier diodes D801-4, the 0.0047 μ F protection capacitors C803-6 and the 120 μ F reservoir capacitor C801 for shorts. If the mains input circuit is o.k., check whether the chopper transistor Q802 is short-circuit. Next check whether R810 (0.33 Ω , 2W), which is in series with Q802's emitter, is open-circuit. If so, IC801 must also be replaced. If R810 is o.k., check whether the surge limiter resistor R801 (6.2 Ω , 9W) is open-circuit. Should it be faulty, before replacing it check C814 (22 μ F, 50V) and D810/1 (both type BYV95C) by replacement. These items are in Q802's base circuit. If everything is o.k. so far, suspect the chopper transformer T802. Check it by replacement.

If the fuse is o.k., check whether R824 (51k Ω , 1W) or R825 (100k Ω) is open-circuit. If necessary check the optocoupler DR10 (TLP631GB): replace it if the voltage between pins 5 (collector) and 4 (emitter) is more than 5V. If the voltage is less than 5V, check the associated circuitry including Q802 and Q803 (BC337) – the d.c. conditions should be checked very carefully.

DR10 can be responsible for the set being stuck in standby and for low h.t. It can also prevent the set going into standby and giving snowy vision.

A slight rise in the value of R810 will result in low h.t.

Model 255T7B

Model 255T7B is a 25in. set dating from 1987. It uses a TDA4601 type chopper power supply. Be careful when working on this chassis as the mains bridge rectifier's reservoir capacitor C810 can hold a heavy charge.

In the event of no results, check for 300V across C810 (330 μ F). If this voltage is absent, check the 3.15AT mains fuse F801 by replacement. Should fuse blowing continue, check for shorts in C810, the bridge rectifier D801 (RBV406M) and the 2SD1548 chopper transistor Q802. If the fuse holds but there's still no 300V supply, check whether the surge limiter resistor R801 (6.2 Ω , 15W) is open-circuit.

If the chopper transistor is o.k. but the 145V h.t. supply is missing, check the RU4A rectifier diode D809 and its 330 μ F reservoir capacitor C824. Note that the h.t. passes via a standby switching circuit involving Q803 and associated components.

No h.t. could be due to no start-up supply for the TDA4601 chopper control chip IC801. Check whether D805 (BYD33J) or R818 (20k Ω , 3W) is open-circuit or C820 (100 μ F, 50V) is short-circuit. If the voltage at pin 9 of IC801 is only 8V or so one of the bridge rectifier diodes in D801 could be open-circuit. If still in trouble, check IC801 by replacement.

If the h.t. is low at 60V, check whether zener diode D812 (04AZ6.2Y) is open-circuit. D807 (BYD33J) going

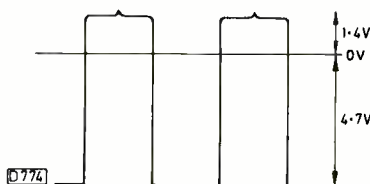


Fig. 1: Correct drive waveform at the base of the chopper transistor Q804 in the Toshiba Model 261T4B.

open-circuit will result in an even lower h.t., maybe only 40V. If the voltage on the h.t. line is only 1-2V, check whether R825 (62Ω) is open-circuit.

If the set won't leave the standby mode, check the voltage at pin 6 (power on/off) of the M50436-588SP microcontroller chip QA01. If the reading is 5V (standby) QA01 or possibly QA09 (BC557A) is faulty. Check them by replacement. If necessary move over to the power supply and check whether Q804 (2SA1321) in the switching circuit is short-circuit. To prove whether the fault is in the remote control section or the power supply, switch off, short across the collector and emitter of Q805 and switch on. If this brings the set to life check Q805 then check the remote control system. Note that only the 145V line is switched in this way.

Models 175R9B and 215R8B

Models 175R9B (17in.) and 215R8B (21in.), which date from 1988/9, have a series chopper power supply with the chopper transistor in the STR-D4420 chip Q801.

No standby operation can be caused by a faulty M34300N4-583SP microcontroller chip (QA01). Check the d.c. conditions very carefully. The 5V supply should be present at pin 42 (see below). For standby switching, pin 33 varies between 0/5V.

For no results, the first thing to check is the 2AT mains fuse F801 – by replacement. If the replacement blows, check the mains filter capacitors C801/2 (0.1μF), the bridge rectifier D801 (LB156) and the protection capacitors C803-6 (0.0047μF) for shorts. The chopper chip IC801 could be shorted to chassis.

If the fuse is o.k., check whether the surge limiter R801 (6.2Ω) is open-circuit. The 120V h.t. supply will be missing if the R2M protection zener diode D808 has gone short-circuit. In this event, check whether R823 (1.2kΩ) or C815 (0.33μF) is open-circuit. The chopper transformer T802 could be open-circuit. Other things to check if necessary are the 0N3111 optocoupler DR01 (by replacement) and the 5V supply circuitry – the C78MR05 regulator Q805, rectifier diode D814 (BYD33J), reservoir capacitor C817 (1,000μF, 25V) and coil L812. A defective chopper chip (Q801) can cause loss of the h.t. supply – also check that R810 (220kΩ) between pins 2 and 3 isn't open-circuit.

Model 218D9B

The final set in this round-up is the 21in. Model 218D9B which dates from 1989. Its chopper circuit is of Thomson-SGS origin, with a master and slave control chip arrangement – Q803 (TEA2164) and Q807 (TEA5170).

If the set is stuck in standby, first check Q811 (BC557B), Q809 (BC547B) and Q814 (2SA1297Y). In this mode the h.t. will be low at 60V but there will be sufficient output to power the L78MR05 5V regulator Q806. Either of the control chips could be faulty. As a check, Q807 can be powered by a 9V battery (positive terminal to pin 2). If it's working, there will be a pulse output at pin 3. This is coupled via T804 to the other control chip Q803 (differentiated pulse input at pin 6). If Q807 is working, replace Q803. If still in trouble, check whether the M37100M8-583 microcontroller chip QA01 is faulty.

For no results, check the 2AT mains fuse F801 by replacement. If it fails again, check the mains filter capacitors C801/6 (0.1μF) and C802-5 (1,000pF), the bridge rectifier D803 (RBV406M), the protection capacitors C811-4 (4,700pF) and the 2SC4199A chopper transistor Q804 for shorts/leakage.

If the fuse is o.k., check that start-up supplies are present at pins 9, 15 and 16 of Q803 (TEA2164) – the common element in this feed is R810 (68kΩ, 3W), which can go open-circuit. If Q803 is operating in its start-up mode, sufficient voltage should be produced to power Q807 (TEA5170) on the secondary side of the circuit. If there's no voltage at pin 15 of Q803, check whether R817 (6.8Ω, 5W) is open-circuit. A change in the value of R815 (68kΩ) will stop Q803 working. As previously mentioned, a check on the master/slave chip system can be carried out by using a 9V battery to power Q807. Make sure that the output from the mains bridge rectifier, across reservoir capacitor C818 (270μF), is arriving at pin 3 of the chopper transformer T803.

This power supply has over/under voltage and excess current protection. In the excess current condition Q803 shuts down. The clue here is a substantial charge on C828 (4.7μF) which is connected to pin 3. Switch off, discharge C828 by connecting a 10kΩ resistor across it, then switch on. If Q803 trips, check for heavy loading. Q804 (2SC4199A), C861 (390pF, 2kV) or D812 (BYD33J) could be short-circuit or T803 could have shorted turns.

PHOTOSTATS SERVICE

Newer readers may have missed important servicing features published in *Television* over the past few years. We are therefore starting a photostat service to make this information readily available. Photostats of the following servicing features, listed in alphabetical order, can be supplied at the prices shown. Please send requests to: Television Editorial Department, Room L323, Quadrant House, The Quadrant, Sutton, Surrey SM2 5AS. Cheques/POs should be made payable to Reed Business Publishing Ltd. There are two standard prices, see below.

Feature	Price
B and O L/LK2500/2800 chassis	A
Decca 80/100 chassis	A
Decca 120/130 chassis	A
Ferguson FV31R VCR	A
Ferguson TX10 chassis	A
Ferguson TX100 chassis	A
Finlux 1000 series chassis	A
Fisher FVH-P520 VCR	A
Mitsubishi CT2227	A
Mitsubishi Euro-4 chassis	A
Mitsubishi HS304 VCR	A
Panasonic D1 VCR deck	A
Panasonic G VCR deck	B
Panasonic NV333/366 VCRs	A
Panasonic NV370/830/850 VCRs	A
Panasonic NV730 VCR	A
Panasonic NV777/788 VCRs	A
Panasonic NV2000/2010/3000 VCRs	A
Panasonic U3 chassis	A
Panasonic U4 chassis	A
Panasonic U5 chassis	A
Salora F chassis	A
Salora G and H chassis	B
Salora J chassis	A
Salora K and L chassis	B
Sanyo CTP7130/1/2	A
Sony KV2252/2256/2752/2762	B

Prices, A = £2.50, B = £3.50.

VCR Clinic

Reports from Eugene Trundle, Nick Beer, John Edwards, Bob McClenning, S. DaCosta, Alfred Damp, Michael Dranfield and Mike Leach

Sony SLV401

Although playback of tapes recorded by other machines was fine, anything that this machine recorded then played back came out very poorly, with streaks, worms and dots on the picture. The cause was worn video heads. When we found that the trade price of the upper drum assembly is just over £100 we decided to try resetting the luminance record current. In the Sony alignment details the instruction is to set the current for 2.2V at the appropriate test point. We found that the machine recorded perfectly all right when the voltage at this test point was 1.2V, but we had to warn the customer that the pictures would deteriorate sooner or later as the heads wore down further.

E.T.

clean and a new roller were all that was required. For those who don't have an NCS or Mitsubishi account, genuine rollers are available from Willow Vale. N.B.

JVC HRD320

This machine would accept a tape very slowly, then eject it and switch off. Sometimes it would try lace-up/fast forward/rewind etc., accompanied by unhealthy noises (crunching and groaning) from the mechanism, then shut down. Checks on the STK5481 regulator chip, always a good place to start, showed that pin 3 was at 1V instead of 5V and pin 4 at 0.7V instead of 12V. Replacing the regulator restored normal operation. J.E.

Fisher FVH-P615

Here was another case where the cost of spares pushed us into mending rather than replacing. The trouble was juddering E-E pictures and a very strange video waveform from the tuner module, which includes the u.h.f. tuner, the i.f. section and the demodulators. The source of the trouble seemed to be in the vision a.f.c. section, but the service manual gives no circuit details – the black-box approach. Sanyo, who handle Fisher spares, quoted us £93.73 plus VAT (trade price) for this mystical module. We went into it with a hairdryer and freezer and found that C12 (0.47µF, 50V) was the cause of the trouble. An 0.47µF, 35V tantalum bead replacement (blue one, Les!) put all to rights. E.T.

Ferguson FV26D

This machine accepted a tape but there were no deck functions. When eject was selected the cassette was returned but a loop of tape was left caught around the left-hand roller guide. Quick checks at TP801 and TP802 showed that the 12V and 5V supplies were missing. Circuit protectors CP601 and CP602 were o.k., the culprit being the STK5481 regulator chip. This chip is prone to failure and it pays to check the voltages around it before carrying out any other work on the VCR. As a guide, the following voltage readings were obtained with a working machine, using a 10MΩ/volt DMM. Pin 1 3.4V; pin 2 8.4V; pin 3 5.2V; pin 4 12V; pin 5 0.2V; pin 6 12V; pin 7 13.2V; pin 8 18V; pin 9 11.9V; pin 10 13V; pin 11 18V; pin 12 0V. J.E.

Sanyo VMH100P

If you get one of these camcorders that provides no chrominance signal output to the TV set's (or copy VCR's) S terminal, check the continuity of the S-connecting lead before dismantling the camcorder. We've had two with open-circuits in the chroma wire – it's probably a batch problem. E.T.

Ferguson 3V30/JVC HR7300

The cause of this fault eluded us for nearly a year. Very occasionally the customer reported that on pressing play, record or timer record the machine would load then unload. We had tried the usual causes – the belts and pulse inputs to the microcomputer chip. Then finally the fault put in an appearance for us: the pinch-roller solenoid disengaged before our eyes. Transistor Q4 had gone slightly leaky from base to emitter. Happiness is a niggling fault put to rest! Bear in mind that the holding drive transistor is a definite possibility for this sort of trouble. B.McC.

Matsui VX820/Saisho VR1200

According to the customer this machine had been afflicted by a power surge or something similar. All the unswitched supplies from the multiregulator were present but there were no switching signals for the others. This was caused by loss of the 12V supply as the 2SD1207 regulator transistor Q2 was short-circuit base-to-emitter. N.B.

JVC HRD211

This machine came in dead. The famous STK5481 chip was faulty. Replacing this chip brought the machine to life but it was very confused. The record and pause lights were both on, the loading motor ran continuously in the loading direction and the tray moved in and out. A new microcontroller chip put matters right. S.DaC.

Panasonic NV-G40B Scanner

This scanner powered up and everything, including the red light, worked. But it wouldn't read codes. The cause of this was that the 1µF, 50V coupling capacitor C02 was open-circuit. It's a surface-mounted, can-type non-polarised electrolytic. Spares are not easy to obtain. N.B.

Panasonic NV-D38

The clock lit but the machine wouldn't work because the regulated 5V supply was missing. Q2006 (2SD1330) on the main PCB was open-circuit base-to-emitter. Tuning in an off-air programme was impossible and as a result the picture-in-picture feature was inoperative. We found that the 45V line was loaded down, reading only 18V. This was

Salora SV8600/Mitsubishi HS337

This machine allegedly stopped in the play mode. It ran faultlessly until I got in and provoked it. The pinch roller was distorted, apparently because of spillage that entered courtesy of the tape (the tape path was coated). A good

due to the AN5043 chip IC7551 being faulty – it was rather hot. **S.DaC.**

Hitachi VT17

After playing for a few hours this machine would loose speed and eventually stop. When we opened it up we found that all the chips had been replaced and a new capstan motor had been fitted. Someone had been beaten by this one! We found that the flywheel became stiff when the fault occurred. All that was needed was cleaning and lubrication. **S.DaC.**

Toshiba V210

A vertical black bar moved across the screen in the E-E tuner mode. It didn't appear in the E-E Aux mode, which narrowed the field of search to the off-air circuitry. An oscilloscope check showed that there was ripple on the detected video from the i.f. unit, but replacing this module made no difference. The tuner unit was the next logical suspect, especially as there was no discernible ripple on the supply lines. A replacement tuner put matters right. **A.D.**

Akai VS15

This machine came in because there was no fluorescent display. When we dismantled it the display worked. We left the machine on test with all the boards accessible. After a time the fault started to come and go. Waveforms were present at all the grids and segments of the display. The cause of the fault was eventually traced to the display filament rectifier going open-circuit intermittently. **A.D.**

Hitachi VT410

The problem with this machine was intermittent audio recording due to loss of bias. We traced the cause to a switch within IC401 closing. This occurred because the voltage at pin 5 fell below 11.3V, thus activating the switch. C431 was found to have a 2M Ω leak. Note that according to the diagram pin 5 has to go high for the switch to close: in fact it has to go low. **A.D.**

Akai VS33

After half an hour the E-E mode tuner picture was replaced by a blue screen. We traced the off-air signal on the E-E route from the i.f. unit to the base of transistor TR113 on the main board. It was missing at the emitter of this emitter-follower transistor. This was due to the action of IC201, TR106 and TR109 earthing TR113's emitter. Both the chip's oscillators were working but there was a sync pulse problem. Replacing the LVA519S chip IC801 cured the fault. **A.D.**

Akai VSF33

When play was selected there was a hum bar on the E-E picture while the playback picture consisted of noise and a hum bar. All the supply lines were correct except for the "limit 12V" rail which was low at 8.5V. A check at the junction of the limit-12V reservoir capacitor C7 and resistor FR4 showed that a large ripple was present, but replacing C7 made no difference. This point is also connected to the collector of TR7, the power-on transistor for the "idle 5V" supply which is derived from TR6. We found that the supply to TR6 was missing because FR2 was open-circuit. The "idle 5V" supply was

drawing current via TR6 and TR7, overloading the "limit 12V" supply. **A.D.**

Hitachi VT33

This VCR would shut down after five seconds. The drum and capstan motors both worked but a hunting sound came from the drum. At start up a scope check showed that there were squarewaves on the 9.5V supply to the servo: the supply was also trying to rise to 10.5V. Replacing the STK5421 chip IC151 on the regulator board cured the fault. **A.D.**

Matsui VX800/Saisho VR1000

Fast forward and rewind worked but there was no drum rotation, also no E-E picture – just a blank, noise-free raster. The cause was F2001 of course. It's an N20 (800mA) ICP. To avoid having to remove the front PCB etc. you can replace it from above by lifting out the power supply. After replacing F2001 everything worked all right until play was selected. The tape then loaded but as soon as it touched the head drum the tape stuck to the drum and the motor stalled, blowing F2001 again. This was due to sticky gunge on the drum. A good clean and polish plus a new ICP put matters right. Normal current through the ICP is 260mA in the E-E mode, 360mA in the play mode. **M.Dr.**

Hinari VXL9

When play was selected this machine would load then unload straight away. Fast forward and rewind were o.k. After a very unsuccessful search with the scope the machine was put to one side while a manual was obtained. It was not up to the usual Hinari standard: the circuit diagram had to be viewed through a magnifying glass as it's all on a single page. Checks around the TD6364NPAL digital servo controller chip IC102 showed that drum switching pulses were present at pin 18 but there was no head switching squarewave at pin 9. Since the 5V supply was o.k. at pin 38 it seemed that the chip was faulty. As a check a Matsui VX820 that was waiting for a new carriage was pressed into service – its head switching signal was fed to the Hinari VCR, which then played but with the drum rotating too fast. Normal operation was restored after obtaining and fitting a new TD6364NPAL chip. **M.Dr.**

Sharp VC488

This VCR caused me a bit of a turn. The reported fault was no rewind. Just the usual idler replacement and clean up I thought. After doing this I inserted a test tape, but there was no picture. As the heads appeared to be dirty I gave them a good scrub and tried again. No better. It's an upmarket hi-fi machine so I thought I'd better check on the price of heads with Willow Vale before giving the customer a quote. I'm glad I did. I was told that they are not held in stock and asked if I was sitting down! The trade price is £173 plus VAT. So I decided not to order. I returned to the bench and wondered what to tell the customer. Then I noticed that the playback picture had improved significantly while I'd been on the phone. A quick tweak on the tracking control was all that was needed. The situation was that the machine wouldn't work from cold, so I sprayed some freezer here and there. The cause of the fault was dried up electrolytics in the power supply. After replacing C952/3/4/5, C961 and C963 the machine worked normally at all temperatures. I still can't believe the price of those heads though! **M.L.**

The Bang and Olufsen Link System

Nick Beer

The Bang and Olufsen MCL (master control link) or Link system provides integration and complete control of a B and O entertainment system from various locations. The futuristic vision of audio and video equipment all around the house being controlled by use of a master system has with B and O products been a reality for some years now. A TV receiver, VCR and hi-fi installation as either a combined entertainments centre or in separate form in one or two rooms can be controlled and, where appropriate, heard or watched in any other suitably equipped room. This article will probably be of mainly general interest since few homes are equipped with the Link system. B and O products do tend to fascinate however.

B and O has its own terminology that goes with the Link system. We'd better keep to it. A room containing a TV set, VCR etc. is referred to as the main room. Further rooms adapted for the system are called local rooms. The link itself is a paired transceiver and relay unit.

The minimum hardware required in a local room is a link and a pair of speakers. The link consists of an infra-red transceiver and a relay box. Remote control commands

from the handset are received by the transceiver which has to be positioned on a wall so that it can see them. In conjunction with the relay box, it controls the on/off switching of the speakers in the local room. It also controls the flow of command data from the handset back to the master system in the main room via the audio link leads. Figs. 1 and 2 show the transceiver and relay box circuitry. When a received command has been carried out, data is returned from the master system to the transceiver, via the relay box, and a confirmed status signal is sent back to the remote control unit. This is of use only when the remote control unit is a transceiver device (see below).

The speakers connected to the link provide sound from the selected source. Where the local room is equipped with a TV set its video input can also be from any appropriate source. Stereo speakers in a TV set can be used instead of the external ones for audio only reproduction. When the TV set is a 39XX, 316X or 326X series type there's no need for a link transceiver as the one built into the set can be used.

Even when only currently available equipment is used

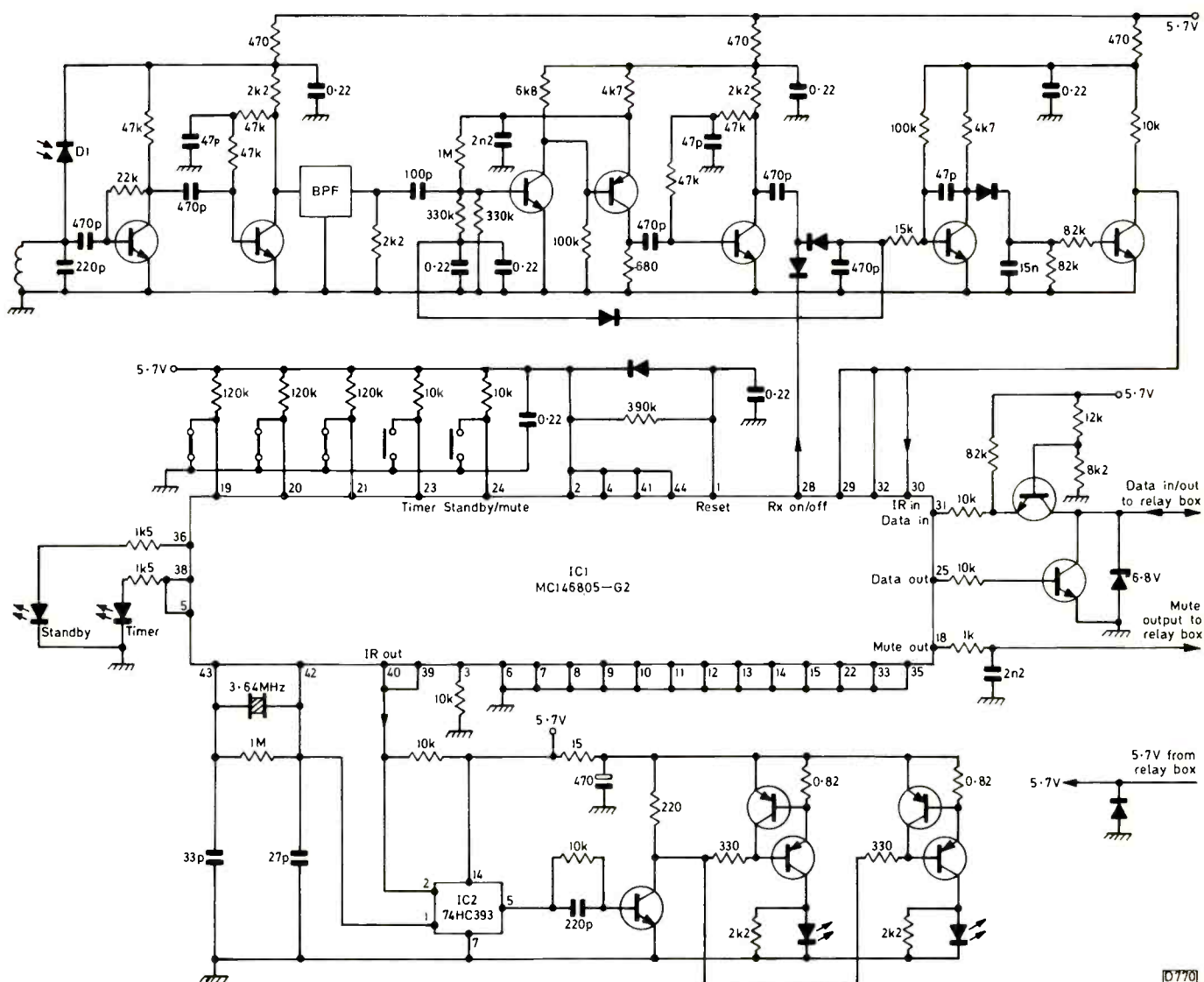


Fig. 1: The MCL2A transceiver circuit.

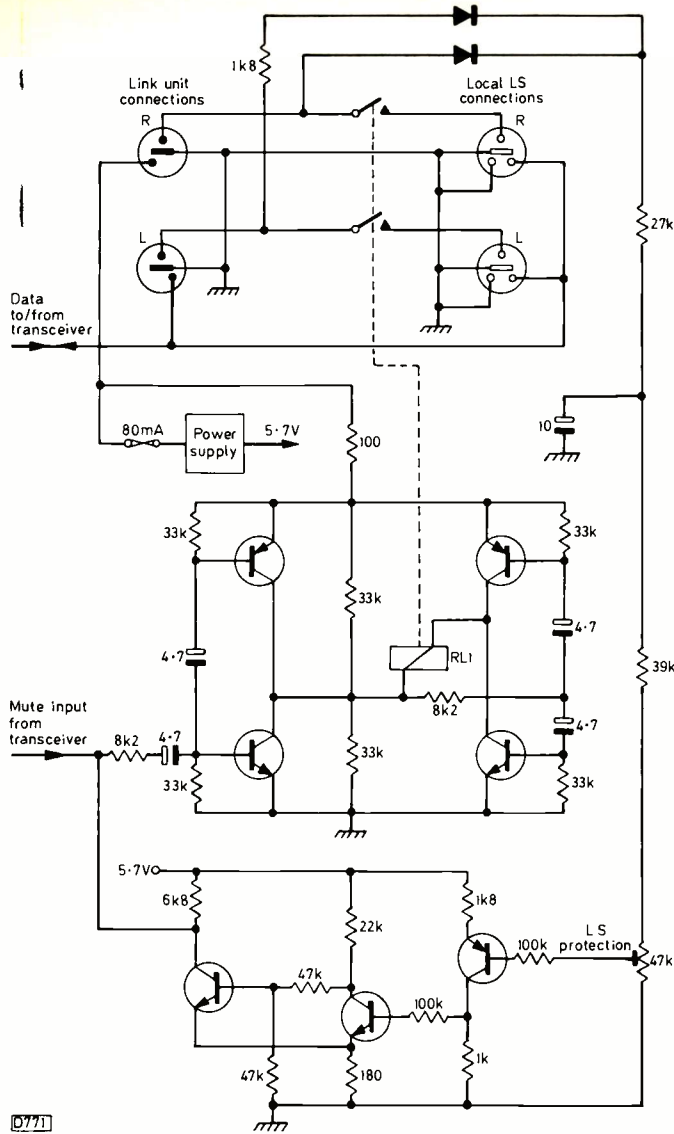


Fig. 2: The MCL2A relay box circuit (regulated power supply not shown).

the system allows for a vast number of permutations. When current equipment is used in conjunction with items from previous ranges there's an almost incredible range of possibilities. As this article is intended as an introduction, we'll not discuss specific combinations and their operation.

Consider an integrated system with a hi-fi installation, TV set, VCR and a satellite receiver (simple systems may

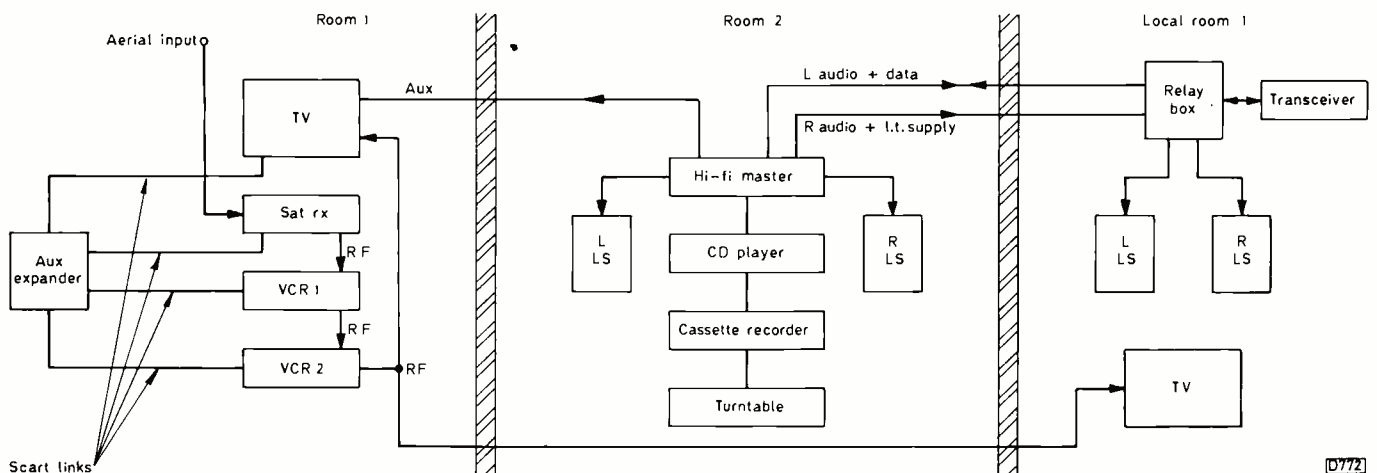


Fig. 3: Typical set up with two main rooms and a local room.

use just hi-fi equipment for example). The video items, in this case TV set, VCR and satellite receiver, are normally in the same room. It's fairly common for the hi-fi installation to be in another room however. This is where one important consideration arises. Systems are referred to as either one- or two-room situations and the master units are programmed accordingly. This is done as part of the option programming routine. The reason for this is as follows. If you have a TV and hi-fi master in the same room, controlled by a single remote control unit, a certain amount of confusion could arise unless arbitration is used. This takes the form of selective muting of the IR receivers in the master units.

Connections

The audio and video units can be integrated without being part of a link system. But in either case the interconnections are the same, see Fig. 3. Here the hi-fi master has all the audio equipment connected to it in the traditional manner (though B and O tend to use DIN plugs). The hi-fi master is also connected to the TV set via a seven-pin DIN lead between its aux or tape-2 socket and the TV set's aux-1/link socket. VCR(s) are connected to the TV set via their aux-2 scart socket(s). The satellite receiver may be internal (Beosat LX in the older L/LX00/02 series 37XX and 38XX chassis or Beosat LM in the 39XX chassis) or external (Beosat RX). The external unit is daisy-chained at r.f. and scart-linked to the VCR. With the 39XX chassis a second VCR can be connected via the AV DIN, aux-3 or a second scart connector. At the time of writing there are no S-VHS B and O VCRs, but the 39XX chassis does incorporate an S socket. All scart leads need to be connected as virtually all B and O video equipment uses on-screen menus or displays fed via RGB inputs. Otherwise, i.e. with composite video/r.f. connection, the displays would usually be in monochrome.

Where extra scart capability is required the aux-1 AV expander unit is available. This device is not passive: it has microcomputer control, and is thus another item connected to the data bus. In Fig. 3 one of these is shown connected to a 39XX series TV receiver - its presence is noted on the on-screen system map automatically (TV shift text).

To incorporate a link system, the relay box in the first local room is connected to the speakers-2 output on the hi-fi master unit via a special multipin speaker DIN plug. The transceiver is connected to the relay box via its 5mm lead. Further links in other local rooms are simply parallel connected to the preceding relay box. Each local room

would also need to have a TV set and a coaxial feed from the main room for full advantage of the possibilities to be obtained. In this way TV, VCR and satellite signals can be viewed as well as heard in each local room.

Remote Control Handsets

For some time all remote-control B and O equipment has come with a handset known as the Beolink 1000 as standard, included in the price. It will control a TV set, VCR and satellite receiver and hi-fi gear as well as the light control unit. It's a transmit only unit, with no on-board display. The retail price is less than £100.

There are now two other handsets which are options. Both are two-way communications units that will operate with any suitably-equipped products. The Beolink 5000 is of similar design and appearance to the 1000 but has in addition a twin-sided, transparent LCD screen and extra buttons. The display enables the selected function and feedback data to be viewed. In this respect the 5000 is not as complete as an MCP or the 7000 (see later), but it's very good. There are buttons on both sides of the unit. Some of the less frequently used ones are in a trough at the back. A nice feature is that you can use a button on the top, the handset display confirms this, but when you then press a button on the back the display scrolls over so that it reads from the back. Some of the buttons have been included to reduce keystrokes – menu for example obviates shift text. Cursor keys have also been added. These are laid out at the foot of the handset in a very user-friendly way.

The Beolink 7000 is something else. It's a full-feature, interactive, two-way communication control centre. Its controls are all touch-sensitive pads on glass. When you use the main ones more options are displayed on the screen. You get these options simply by touching them on the screen. The unit guides you to where you want to be by showing you relevant options based on the function selected. If you put the unit down on a flat surface the control fascia sits up at an angle of about 45°, pivoting in the centre of the handset. When picked up the unit folds flat again. This feature can be switched off via the menus. Everything, from light controllers (local and global) to hi-fi and video products, can be controlled by this handset. It's stunning!

Master Control Panel

Prior to these two new handsets the master control panel (MCP) was the only transception unit. It has appeared in a number of guises, basically matching the appearance of the top-of-the-range hi-fi separates system of the time, i.e. the MCP5000 (Beosystem 5000), MCP5500 (Beosystem 5500) and MCP6500 (Beosystem 6500). These MCPs contain every possibility for full hi-fi system remote control, indeed the only controls on the audio units are standby, mute, door open/close and step as appropriate. The MCP also has a display to show everything from clock to track number, counter and frequency.

System Operation

Most systems will be used, at least initially, with a Beolink 1000 handset. Operation is as follows. The required unit in a main room is selected by pressing the appropriate handset key. The numeric keypad and deck function keypad are then universal, i.e. TV 1 selects channel one on the TV set, radio 1 selects preset programme one, CD 1 selects CD track one etc. The first

press activates the unit. When on-screen menus are used the pattern is also pretty universal. The selected line of the menu is in a different colour to the other options. To move from one option to the next you use the fast forward and rewind keys. To select an option, press play. To cancel a menu, press stop. To alter a selection or value within a menu option use step keys left and right. All this is very logical, but as usual some customers take a long time to get used to it.

When in a local room you sometimes have to prefix the command by link. Otherwise the operation is the same as in a main room.

The master control panels are basically hi-fi control units but also provide limited control of TV and VCR functions through the universal deck function and numerical keypads. TV sets are addressed as aux-1, VCRs as aux-2/3. Depending on the model and software version, some anomalies can occur here, e.g. switches on but won't switch off, or comes on with no picture.

Powerlink

A recent development with speaker connections is Powerlink. On hi-fi masters and TV sets of later manufacture there are two 8-pin DIN sockets that are fed with left- and right-hand channel information. Each speaker unit then produces whichever information is desired. When the speakers have display panels (Beolab) data on source is displayed, including preset/track number and level. Many speakers can be coupled together, one from the other, and switched to produce the desired channel. This can be useful when the speaker locations are not equidistant from the amplifier. Powerlink can be run from the amplifier to the nearest speaker and the next one can be fed from that point. The alternative, traditional connection, Speaker Link, uses conventional looking plugs with extra pins that carry data.

Complications and Upgrades

Complications inevitably arise when a product that is to be connected to previous purchases is sold. Due to incompatibility the new item may not work when delivered, or some functions may not be obtainable. Such problems are usually surmountable, but it's best not to find out about them on delivery. To avoid such problems we use a system in which the salesman fills out a specially designed form at the time of the sale. It lists previously purchased equipment, that now being bought, functions especially desired, layout of the equipment in the house, etc. This is passed to the service department where it's checked and any upgrades/modifications required are inserted, together with the cost as appropriate. The salesman is then aware of the work that will be required to carry out installation and can arrange for it to be done with any charges added to the bill.

These upgrades or modifications usually involve replacing or adding chips in order to modify the software that controls the unit. Such jobs are seldom difficult or time consuming. Equipped with an antistatic mat and the relevant i.c.s., our specialist B and O salesman can undertake most modifications.

Fault Finding

When systems go wrong it's not always simply a matter of collecting a unit and providing a loan one. It's first necessary to determine which item is faulty, then work out

HCTV dispells myth and thrives in the face of adversity

There is a popular misconception that the sale of ex-rental and B-Grade television and video equipment is the type of business only to be found operating out of the back door of a garage. It is thought by some to be an unstable and unreliable kind of business and therefore anyone purchasing goods from such a source is deemed to be taking a high risk.

As always, you will find some outfits that will fit exactly the above description, but many will be surprised to hear that the market has matured to such an extent that one company in particular has expanded to five branches, has the approval of some of the country's largest engineering firms, employs 50 per cent of its staff in support and engineering roles and has a 15-year trading history.

Service with knowhow

HCTV, headquartered in Erdington, Birmingham, is one of the most respected and established businesses in the market. Set up 15 years ago, it now has branches in London, Preston, Oxford and Cardiff as well as Birmingham. The company puts a strong emphasis on service and it has workshops in Birmingham and London where all equipment is checked, cleaned, serviced and polythene-wrapped before being shipped to customers. Its 25 engineers are kept up to date on the latest technology and HCTV has an enviable record of recruiting the right people.



John Henderson, general manager, explains: "We watch what we buy and we pitch ourselves in the right place. We know from our lengthy experience, for example, that some makes and models are more popular in certain areas of the country than others and we stock our branches accordingly. A lot of people have been squeezed out of the market because they did not know enough. We make sure that our engineers keep up with the standards."

Competitive pricing

HCTV's reputation for quality goods is affirmed by the fact that they are approved by both Teleprice and Clydesdale, two of the country's largest engineering firms. But as well as being assured of good service, customers can also expect a good price. "Because we have five branches, we have a large volume buying power and we can pass on those price benefits to our customers," says Henderson. "We have a bigger selection of ex-rental and B-Grade stock than anyone in the UK and if customers want something specific, our national coverage means that we can keep an eye out for it."

The company's newly installed computerised stock control system monitors its twice-weekly deliveries to all of

its branches making sure that each branch is well stocked with its own particular best sellers.

Far and wide

HCTV has seen a number of its competitors fall by the wayside recently but has managed not only to keep its head above water but to go from strength to strength. Demand from abroad has led to an export business and HCTV now ships container loads of products as far away as Russia, Greece and Dubai.

Far from being a fly-by-night outfit operating from a garage, HCTV, the largest independent in its line of business, competes strongly with the publicly-owned corporate companies that are unable to offer the same value for money. And far from taking a risk by buying from HCTV, it will probably be one of the safest purchases you'll make.



Birmingham Office

208 Bromford Lane, Erdington Birmingham B24 8DL.

Tel: 021 327 3273

London Office

Unit 2 Royal London Estate, 29/35 North Acton Road, NW10. Tel: 081-961 5005

Preston Office

Unit 439 Oakshot Industrial Estate, Preston (M6 Junc 29)

Tel: 0772 312101.

Oxford Office

The Driftway Centre, Unit 5 Horsepath Trading Estate, Pony Road. Tel: 0865 749711

Cardiff Office

Unit J7 Colchester Industrial Estate, Colchester Avenue, Cardiff CF3. Tel: 0222 471485

how best the system can be run without it. Remember that with a Link system amplifiers are not just amplifiers – they are the heart of the system. The service engineer has to have an electrician's experience of tracing faults in cabling, often in trunking or under floors, combined with the ability to carry out complex repairs in the customer's house. It may seem to be asking rather a lot, but it can all be successfully managed.

In Conclusion

Considering the problems encountered with other consumer electronics hardware, it's surprising how well the average B and O Link system user gets on. Operational queries inevitably arise however. These can mean that the

dealer has to try it himself, read the instruction books/PCG, or consult B and O for an answer – fortunately B and O provides a superb back-up. It's best of course to be fully conversant with such a system at the outset, but how many engineers/installers are able to acquaint themselves with sophisticated new products before they start to encounter them in the course of their day-to-day work? In the case of something as complex as the Link system however it's almost essential.

Such problems are minimised by the fact that only B and O Centres sell and install such equipment. Despite the good sense of users returning to a B and O Centre for service, no doubt many will look elsewhere – and that could be you! Fortunately the equipment has to date proved to be extremely reliable.

CD Player Casebook

**Reports from Mike Leach,
Philip Blundell, AMIEIE,
S. DaCosta and Brian Storm**

Toshiba SL3258 Midi System

No CD sound was the complaint with this Toshiba midi system. Just the odd thump and bang could be heard from the loudspeakers. A quick glance at the circuit diagram told me that a CXK5816M RAM chip is used in the CD decoder. As mentioned before, failure of this chip is a common complaint with various CD players. Access to the CD electronics in this model is difficult to say the least. The electronics for the whole system are on a single PCB. It appears that the only way to fault find on the CD section is to remove everything from the cabinet, including the mains transformer and CD mechanism, and spread it all out on the bench. This done I replaced the RAM chip (circuit reference Q707) and, as with all machines that are difficult to work on, this failed to provide a cure. I was convinced of being in the right area however. There's very little other than the DA converter chip Q801 or the decoder chip Q706 that could cause such a fault symptom. As it's the easier one to replace, I changed the DAC chip first. This didn't provide a cure either. Checks around the CXD1135Q decoder chip produced faint music when the data lines to and from the RAM chip were scoped and also when the output pins to the DAC chip were touched. It's not an easy chip to change by any means, but a replacement cured the fault. The Pyropen came in very handy here, but it took me as long to put the machine back together again as it did to replace the chip. **M.L.**

Rotel RCD855

The fault symptom with this player was skipping and jumping on the first few tracks of a disc. A knocking noise could be heard from the CD mechanism when the fault occurred. Slight pressure applied to the disc clamp with the forefinger enabled the vibration of the knocking to be felt. When further pressure was applied the fault disappeared and the machine worked perfectly. A new clamp assembly restored normal operation. **M.L.**

Philips CD160

Here's an unusual one! This machine read the table of contents all right and found the track, but it wouldn't play and the time display didn't appear. I suspected the M4804 decoder chip but it's no longer available, so I contacted the nice man at Philips. He said an SAA7210 could be used

provided other components were changed, but suggested replacing the MAB8441 microcomputer chip first. He was right. Thanks R.N. **P.B.**

Sony CDP-M35

The display said "no disc" when one was inserted. The disc didn't rotate and the lens didn't focus. We found that the connector between the laser assembly and the main PCB was only half pushed in. This has been the case with a number of players of different makes.

With another of these machines the tray opened and the sled motor moved to the outer position when power was applied. A new LA8550 sled/tray drive chip was required. **S.DaC.**

Sony D100

This player was dead. A replacement Wickman fuse, F25X, was all that was required. **S.DaC.**

Technics SLP500

This machine skipped and jumped from track 1 to track 6 when first taken from the box and tried. Beyond track 6 it worked all right. A new laser unit was required. **S.DaC.**

Technics SLP550

We've had a few of these machines with complaints about intermittent sticking or skipping. The SLP550, along with its close relatives the SLP770 and SLP990, usually benefits from the following attention. First, clean the laser lens and the turntable. Then remove, clean and polish the two guide shafts. If there are any fine scratches on the shafts – this usually happens only with dusty units – replace them (part no. SUXD78-1). When they have been cleaned and reinstalled, lubricate them lightly with SZZOL32 grease. Finally, check the mechanical adjustments (first) then the electrical adjustments. **B.S.**

Technics SLXP1 and SLXP2

We've had some of these portable CD players in with the 6.8Ω, 1W surface-mounted resistor R31 in varying states of distress. In one case the condition was so bad that a small

hole had been burnt in the bottom cover. Sometimes ICP11 (a two-legged, transistor-shaped fuse) goes open-circuit.

The instruction books for these machines clearly state that any batteries other than Technics SHCDB8 type must be removed before the a.c. adaptor/charger unit is used. Sure enough we found that in each unit there was a proprietary rechargeable, an ordinary alkaline or a common AA type battery. The Technics SHCDB8 has a charging current of 700mA, via R31. As the player with the hole burnt in the bottom also had a hole in the main PCB, failure to observe this instruction can be an expensive mistake. **B.S.**

TEST CASE

349

Each month we provide an interesting case of TV/video servicing to exercise your ingenuity. These are not trick questions but are based on actual practical faults.

Mr. Field wasn't at home when Philbert called to look at his TV set. Mrs. Field was there, but she'd never seen the lines on the picture. Philbert closely examined the display. Seeing only the scanning lines, he went on his way. A few days later there was another call about the same trouble. Once more Mr. Field had been borne away by the 8.29, and again Philbert could see only the coloured lines that made up the picture. He removed the rear cover and tapped the PC boards with the handle of a screwdriver. This made no difference. So he loaded the set into his van and took it back to the workshop. It was a Sony Model KV-M2120U, which is fitted with the BE1 chassis – a modern set using, apart from the picture tube, similar technology to other makes of receiver.

The horizontal lines that so troubled Mr. Field could be seen in the workshop. Starting about an inch from the top of the screen and extending an inch downwards, there were six faintly visible coloured lines – two blue, two green and two red, in that order, each the height of a single scanning line. While the picture responded to operation of the brightness, contrast and colour controls the lines didn't. They could be seen most clearly on a plain grey raster from a pattern generator. If the set was switched to the AV mode with no signal input they could still be seen but were nearer the top of the screen.

What were we to make of this? If it had been a blanking fault the lines would have been white or grey but these lines, though faint, were clearly in the three primary colours. Since RGB signals exist only after the PAL decoding process, attention was turned to this area. Matrixing and RGB drive signal generation occur in the TDA3505-V9 chip IC302, which is on board B. Most of what goes on in this chip in the way of blanking and

clamping is controlled by the sandcastle pulse that enters at pins 10 and 11. There's no oscillogram of this crucial waveform in the manual, but by good luck we had another set fitted with the BE1 chassis in the workshop. Checks showed that the shape of the sandcastle pulses in the two sets was the same.

The conditions around the RGB chips in the two sets were next compared: voltages and waveforms corresponded closely throughout. The RGB drive signals at pins 1, 3 and 5 in the faulty set were then examined, with a plain black-level input signal. We found that there was a positive pulse on each drive waveform, shortly after the field sync pulse. A double-beam oscilloscope showed that these pulses were slightly offset in time for R, G and B. Obviously these spurious pulses were the cause of the horizontal coloured lines at the top of the screen! The excitement caused by this discovery was much dampened by the fact that the self-same pulses were found to be present in the good set, at the same points in the field blanking period. Yet the good set didn't display any coloured lines at the top of its screen.

At this point it was seriously suggested that the drive signals from the faulty set should be hooked to the cathodes of the picture tube in the good set in an attempt to narrow down the field of search. Wiser counsels prevailed, though the lines would have been displayed had we followed this course of action. What fundamental point had been overlooked? Which part of the set should we have been investigating? See next month for the answer and another of our Test Case puzzles.

ANSWER TO TEST CASE 348 — page 129 last month —

The sort of problem described last month had a nice old-fashioned feel about it in these days of data bases, programme memory latches and the like! Such symptoms were being tackled ten, twenty and thirty years ago, probably by banging electrolytic capacitors across high-voltage points as CE was doing. The main symptom he was working on in an ITT CVC801-chassis set was a horizontal black-white hum bar across the picture, which was also very torn and distorted. The output from the power supply had no significant mains-rate ripple, and the horizontal bar disappeared when the aerial was disconnected. This and the fact that the set couldn't tune in the upper half of the u.h.f. TV band were very significant clues!

This set uses varicap tuning, for which a tuning voltage supply of about 30V is required. It's obtained from a ZTK33B voltage regulator on the tuner control module. This is in turn fed from the line output transformer derived 90V supply. D504 is the relevant rectifier, with C514 its reservoir capacitor. Both of these items are on the main PCB. A check here showed that there was a 78V peak-to-peak ripple on the 90V line – C514 had gone open-circuit.

Thus the voltage (average) on the tuning line was low while the supply's impedance was high. As a result the higher channels couldn't be tuned in and hum was being picked up. This hum was being superimposed on the tuning supply.

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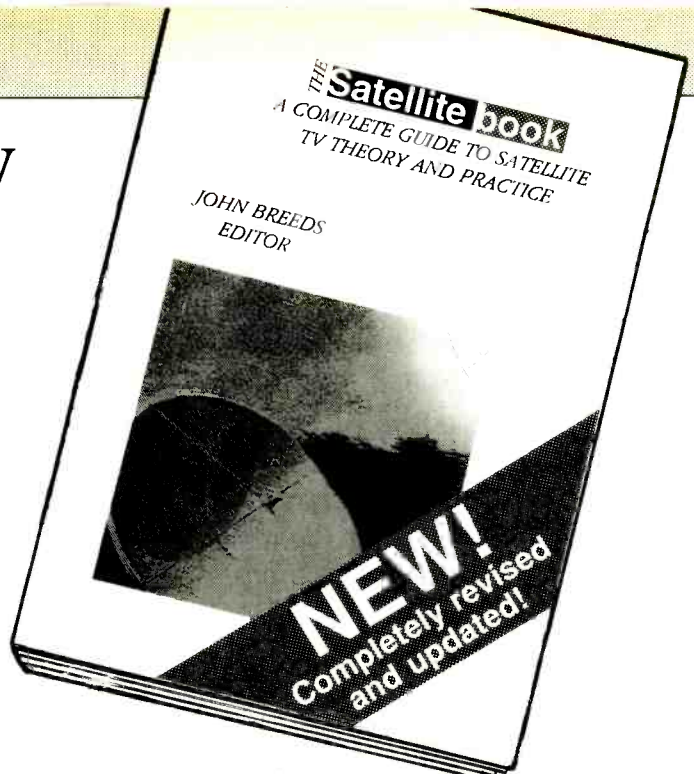
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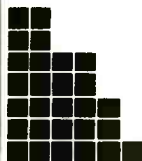
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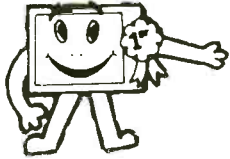
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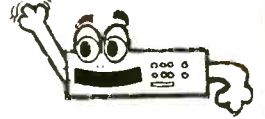
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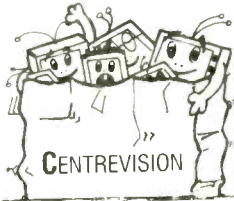


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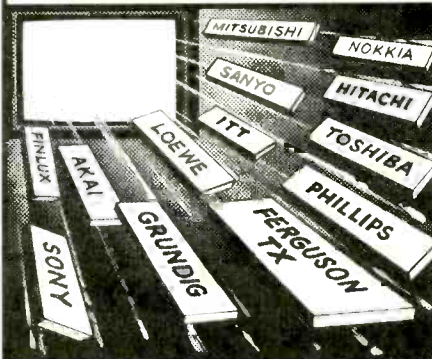
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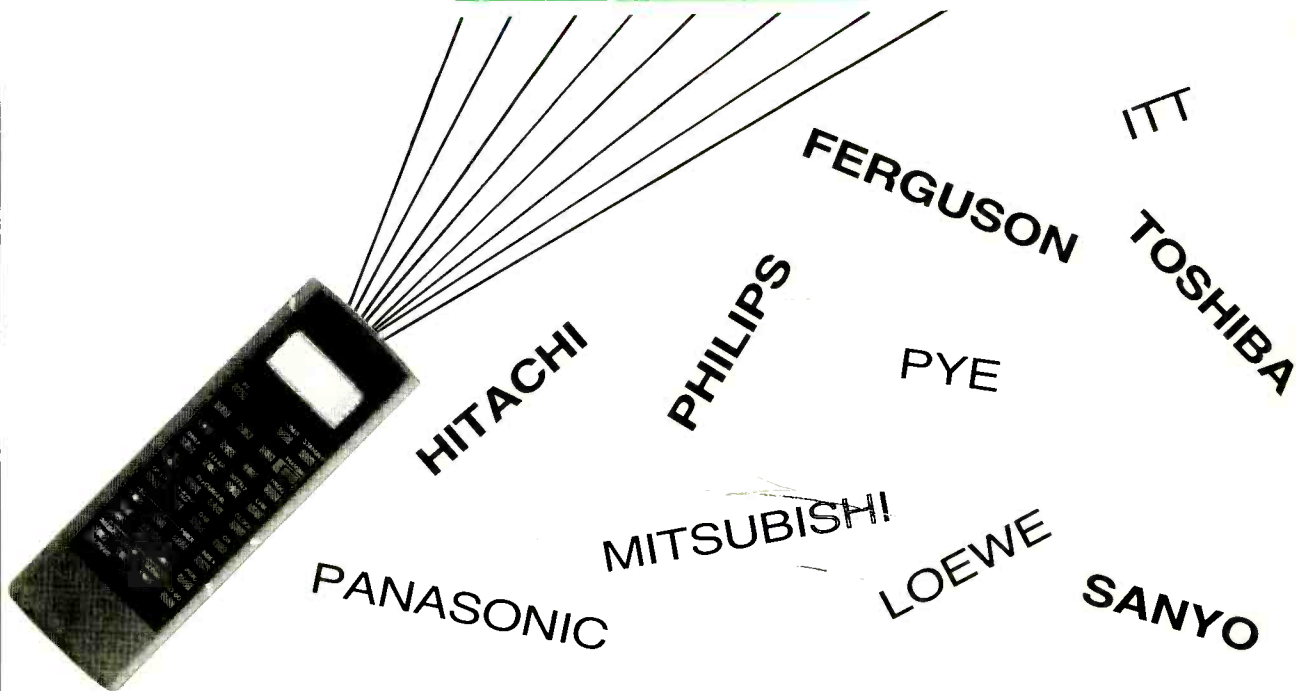
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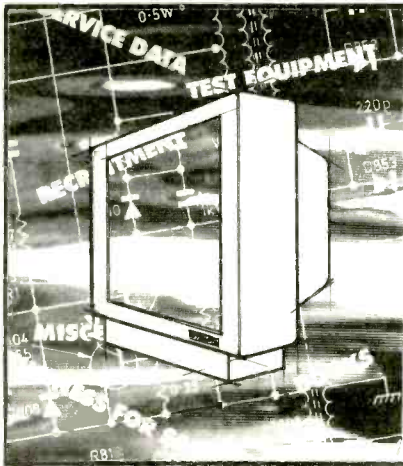
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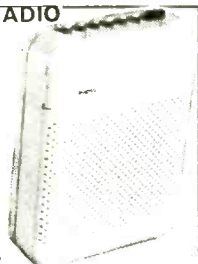
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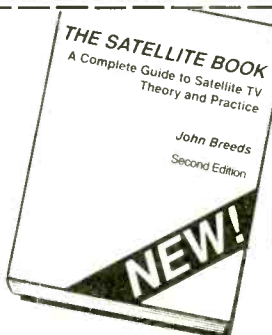
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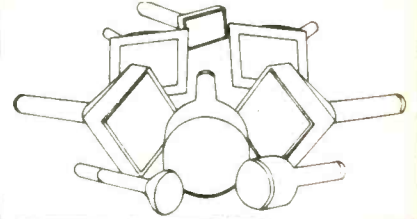
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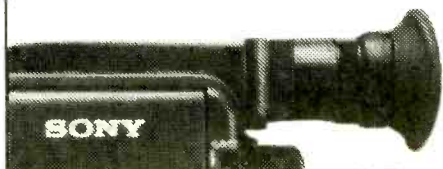
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