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TECHNICAL ITEMS

THE SMALLEST ELECTRONIC DIGITAL TIMER IN THE WORLD

By developing and launching on the market the smallest electronic digital timer in the world, a firm at Bienne specialising in the measurement of short intervals of time, has taken a step further in the miniaturisation of pocket timers.

The "Mini-Microsplit", as this new timer is called, weighs only 100g; although no larger than a tape cassette, it offers all the basic functions of a conventional timer and makes possible instantaneous reading of the time to 1/100th of a second.

The scope of this timer covers a large number of sports as well as different fields of research, industry and the liberal professions; it can be used, for example, in work-time studies as well as in medicine.

The time base is a high frequency quartz crystal, ensuring a timing precision of 0.1 seconds per day. The time is indicated by figures 5mm high, by means of light-emitting diodes according to the system known as LED, with a timing range of 59 minutes 59.99 seconds.

The essential part of this instrument is a highly advanced integrated circuit, which guarantees perfect reliability of operation, at temperatures of -15° to $+65^{\circ}\text{C}$. This new timer is equipped with four small batteries providing sufficient power for over 50 hours of use.

LONDON SEES NEW PIGMENTS FROM CIBA-GEIGY

Unisperse-E, a new range of pigment dispersions for interior and exterior emulsion paints was the centre-piece of the CIBA-GEIGY stand at this year's OCCA Oil and Colour Chemists' Association exhibition. Other features included a number of product ranges for woodstains, pigment preparations for vinyl type printing inks and pigments for specialised printing applications.

This technical exhibition was held at London's Earls Court at the end of April.

PORTABLE DEVICE FOR ORGAN TRANSPORT

The "Grand Prix" of the International Exhibition of Inventions in Geneva was awarded to a surgeon from Zurich for his invention of a portable device for the preservation and transport of living organs.

With this device, the result of four years of research and development, the long-term preservation and transport of kidneys for grafting have now been made comparatively simple and economical, whereas previously, only cumbersome and very expensive appliances were available for this purpose.

The instrument is very small (diameter 24cm, height 27cm) and weights just over 2lb; although inexpensive, it fulfils the same functions as the more costly pulsatile appliances and possesses the additional advantage of working independently of external sources of power and without any need for supervision.

NEW STEP FORWARD IN THE MINIATURISATION OF STEPPING MICROMOTORS

A firm at La Chaux-de-Fonds, specialising in the manufacture of components and appliances for watchmaking and electronics, claims to be the only one in the world to manufacture and market a full range of miniaturised stepping micromotors.

The four families of Socrem single-phase stepping micromotors manufactured by this firm now comprise a dozen specific types, designed for application in the fields not only of quartz watches but also of instruments requiring control systems.

The latest addition to the range of Socrem stepping micromotors, the S 02 version — only 5.5mm in diameter and 2.8mm high — is the smallest stepping micromotor in the world.

It carries out eight steps per revolution, controlled by rectangular impulses of constant sign. Like all motors in the Socrem range, as a result of its

design it requires no magnetic screening to be able to withstand without disturbance the magnetic fields permitted by Swiss watchmaking standards.

This makes it possible to take full advantage of the dimensions of the micromotor, which is available in two versions. The S 02.1 model, at present manufactured in pilot series, is a motor specially designed for extra-slim quartz watches and ladies' watches. It develops a couple of more than $0.3 \mu\text{mN}$, which is sufficient to drive a single train of wheels or even a simple date calendar.

Its consumption, in the neighbourhood of $4 \mu\text{A}$, means that it will run for two to three years on the battery supplied as well as making possible the use of a flatter battery and even, for a running time of one year, the use of a battery of the smallest diameter at present available on the market. The extremely small size of the components also makes possible greater refinement in the dimensions and design of the watch and, consequently, maximum freedom of styling.

TECHNICAL AND COMMERCIAL CO-OPERATION BETWEEN BROWN BOVERI AND TRANSELECTRO

An agreement governing technical and commercial co-operation has been signed by Brown Boveri & Co. Ltd., at Baden, Aargau, and the Hungarian state organisation for foreign trade, "Translectro" (Budapest).

This agreement covers a number of fields in the electrical industry and can be modified, as and when desired, to suit the needs of either partner.

On the Hungarian side, not only "Translectro" but other Hungarian companies in the electrical engineering sector are included in this contract signed by Brown Boveri on behalf of all firms in the Brown Boveri group.

It is mainly in the course of the last few years that the Swiss firm has systematically built up and expanded — through very large licensing agreements — the business relations it has maintained for many years with various Hungarian industrial and trade organisations.

In view of the present comparatively favourable conditions prevailing on the market for electrical products, this new agreement represents a

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further step towards the realisation and development of a co-operation from which both parties can but benefit.

HUGE ORDERS FOR A SWISS FIRM

The present economic situation makes the recent success of the Mechanical Engineering Works at Vevey (Vaud) all the more remarkable.

They have in fact just received two huge orders representing a total far in excess of the annual turnover recorded last year.

The Vevey firm has been commissioned by the naval shipyards at Quincy, near Boston, to design and produce enormous master-moulds for the rational production of spheres for the transport of methane gas.

The Quincy shipyards had previously ordered a large gantry from the Vevey works for loading the five aluminium spheres (36m in diameter) on board each of the 300m long methane tankers built at Quincy.

The second order, placed by "Electricité de France", concerns the construction of big revolving cranes for the nuclear power stations under construction in France.

A BAGGAGE-SORTING SYSTEM WHICH WORKS

A new baggage-sorting system is also operational at Zurich airport.

Some of the baggage of passengers departing from Terminal A and that of all transit passengers is handled by it.

The system, planned by Swissair and designed to cope with the vast quantities of baggage carried by wide-body aircraft, has already passed its operational tests with flying colours.

The baggage is first transported on conveyor belts from the check-in desks or aircraft to coding stations, not unlike a railway signal-box.

The coding staff here read the flight numbers marked on the baggage labels and feed this information into a computer via a keyboard.

The computer controls the distribution of the baggage from the coding stations on to two independent parallel sorting machines, each over 70 meters long. These consist of an endless chain on which five tippable plates are fitted per meter.

When the baggage reaches the appropriate point the computer tips as many plates as the length of the piece of baggage which is conveyed to a container or luggage-van.

Each of the two sorting machines can direct 3,600 pieces of baggage to their destination per hour, 7,200 pieces per hour in all. This is a greater capacity than is needed at present, so there is a built-in reserve for anticipated growth.

NEW WIDE-BODIED JET TERMINAL AT GENEVA AIRPORT

A new terminal building specifically catering for passengers arriving and departing on wide-bodied jet aircraft is now operating at Geneva airport.

The new building is located at the north-eastern end of the airport apron at right angles to the main airport terminal, with passenger and baggage handling facilities on two floors.

The first floor contains an information desk, duty-free shop, newspaper kiosk, bureau de change, washrooms and three waiting lounges.

Each lounge has its own passenger and hand luggage security and screening equipment and personal search cubicles.

On the ground floor, 1,700 square metres is available for the containerisation of baggage, involving the use of up to 80 containers, of which 40 can be loaded on transporters.

Wide-bodied aircraft are parked side by side next to the new building in nose-in position and are reached by passengers by means of corridors along the south-east edge of the new apron area. On departure, the aircraft are towed out to the taxi-way.

The construction works took 10 months to complete and the project cost Sw.Fr. 75 million (£1.16 million).

Swissair has introduced DC-10-30 jets on two return services weekly between Switzerland and Teheran via Beirut.

The DC-10s — replacing DC-8s — will operate eastbound on Wednesday and Friday, and westbound Thursday and Saturday. Both destinations will continue to be served daily, with DC-8s still being operated on the remaining flights.



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Swiss Cheese Union's Fanny Cradock cookery competition success

Fanny and Johnnie Cradock are to present a cookery cabaret for the Swiss Cheese Union during June.

The cabaret will be part of a special trade evening organised to present prizes to the winners of the Union's first-ever cookery competition.

Said UK sales promotion manager Gabor Oliver: "The competition has been a great success. We set out to increase the awareness of the use of Emmental and Gruyere in cooking. The interest shown among students proves that we have achieved our aim."

The competition offers a first prize of a holiday for two in Switzerland. There are cash prizes and fondue sets for the runners-up.

Competition winners have still to be decided. Explained Mr Oliver: "The winners will all be invited to London in June as guests of honour at a special trade function to receive their prizes from Fanny and Johnnie Cradock."