# 68 A simple Morse oscillator

## Introduction

This is an excellent project which uses the 'junk box' as its source of components. If you have trouble in finding the bits for this one, a good source of the components for this and many other similar projects is to be found with the parts list at the end of the project.

## The circuit

This is shown in **Figure 1**, and uses an 'unknown' Plessey chip, which makes the overall circuit extremely easy to build. A 0.1 μF capacitor is connected between pins 7 and 8, a speaker (in the popular 8 to 25 Ω impedance range) is connected between pins 8 and 9. If a 9 V battery is connected with its positive terminal to pin 8 and its negative terminal to pin 1, 3 or 5, a tone will be produced in the speaker.

To make this circuit into a good Morse practice oscillator, it is necessary only to insert a Morse key into the supply rail from the battery.

However, there is another refinement which you may care to build into the circuit. The tone from the loudspeaker is different, depending upon which of pins 1, 3 or 5 you use. In the prototype, a single-pole changeover switch was used to select the tones from pin 1 or pin 3, and the Morse key would be connected to the circuit via a small jack socket. There is no need for an on/off switch, as the Morse key performs that function. The switch and the jack socket can be seen in the photograph.

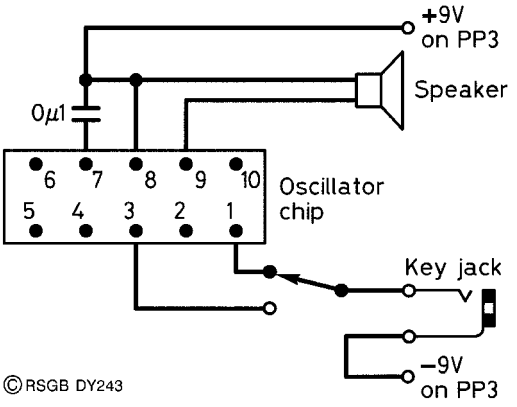



**Figure 1** Morse oscillator, circuit diagram

## The case

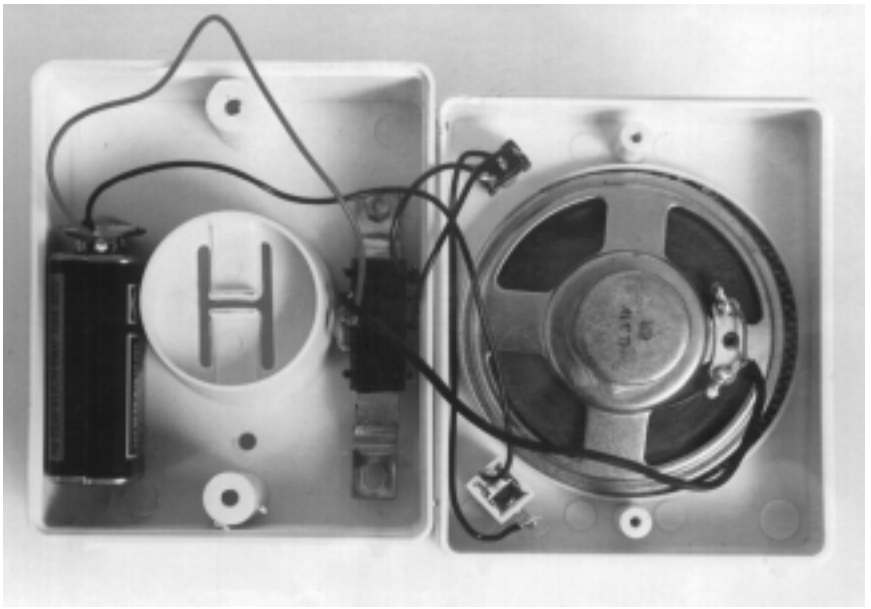
Almost any small loudspeaker will do; the higher the impedance the better. The 'impedance' is the figure usually printed on the rear of the speaker magnet. It is a value given in ohms (Ω). For simple circuits like this, you will usually find that the higher the impedance (within reason), the louder the sound it will produce. Speakers from old transistor radios will work, although their impedances can be rather low sometimes.

Any case big enough to house the components and the battery will be suitable. The prototype used a 'Walkman'-type speaker and case, and is shown in the photograph.

To use the circuit, simply attach a 3.5 mm jack plug to your Morse key, and insert it into the socket. Nothing should happen until you press the key, when a tone should be heard from the loudspeaker.

## Another application

Try soldering the two wires of a 'twisted pair' to the 3.5 mm jack plug. Touching the wires together produces a tone from the speaker. This simple circuit can then be used as a 'continuity tester'. Touch the two wires to the ends of a fuse. If there is no sound, then the fuse is blown. There are many other such tests you could perform with this device – to check whether there really *is* a connection between one end of a wire and the other, for example.



## Warning

You must **never** make such tests on any equipment which is connected to the mains supply, even if it is switched off. If you want to make any such tests, make sure you are supervised by someone who understands what you are doing and is competent to advise and supervise you.

## Parts list

Plessey oscillator chip
0.1 μF capacitor (disc ceramic)
Loudspeaker 8 to 25 Ω
3.5 mm jack socket (and 3.5 mm jack plug if needed)
Single-pole changeover switch

The Plessey oscillator chip is available from J. Birkett, 25 The Strait, Lincoln LN2 1JF, tel: 01522 520 767.

John Birkett may also provide a kit of parts (the chip, capacitor and loudspeaker).