# Readout—
## A SELECTION FROM OUR POSTBAG

### United effort

Sir—In reply to Mr R. F. Marchant's letter, published in the June 1968 issue of P.E., I should like to point out that instead of complaining, a group of enterprising electronics amateurs in South Wales have formed the British Amateur Electronics Club. This is a rapidly growing club and with even more support from the electronics amateurs of this country it will undoubtedly become a very successful national club.

The B.A.E.C., although only 18 months old, has united many amateurs who now work on a single project of considerable size together—rather than each on his own personal small project. Through the B.A.E.C. it is also possible to solve any problem in the field of electronics with the help of the committee and of the many professional members who are invariably willing to give advice.

I will admit that electronics is the handmaiden to many other activities, but it is now about time that we amateurs united to help other individual societies instead of being "loners". This will not only be an advantage to the individual members but also to other societies who utilise electronics in their activities.

I am certain that the present members of B.A.E.C. would like to see Mr Marchant's name along with those of many other electronics amateurs among the ever increasing membership of the B.A.E.C.

John G. Owen, GW8BFT,
Llangefni, Anglesey.

**NATIONAL GRID LEEK**


*"Jones the Fuze will now demonstrate the instability of certain power supplies"*

### "Frilly" sophistication?

Sir—The remarks made by D. H. Heppell in Readout (June issue) were indeed interesting, but are they valid? Comparison between honest-to-goodness simplicity, and "frilly" sophistication in electronic circuits tends to reveal a double standard of thinking, with a marked disparity between the circuit most people prefer to build and the equipment they would most like to own.

If Mr Heppell—as an instrument design engineer—was offered a choice between a free gift of a £500 oscilloscope and a £30 oscilloscope, there can be little doubt which he would choose despite considerations of reliability and maintenance.

It seems to me that the whole argument in favour of simplicity boils down to wanting something for nothing, the ultimate in performance for a minimum time and effort. Is the hobby of electronics a utilitarian means to an end, a short cut to some higher purpose, or is it a source of self-education and pleasure?

D. Bollen,
Devon.

### Guarding the home

Sir—Of far more importance than car-theft preventers are house-theft foilers. Anything from half an hour to a fortnight's absence leaves one's home open to quick looting by yobboes. Surely alarms set off by mere approach of a human body, concealed in rooms, set and de-set by coded transmission, could be devised by ingenious readers, which would save many homes this summer from raiding during holidays by these idle, vicious pests. I have certainly fitted my own maisonette with an unstoppable alarm—and booby-traps which would give an unpleasant reception to any unauthorised entrant!

P. Benn,
Somewhere in England.

### Transistor curve tracer

Sir—The uniselector for the *Transistor Curve Tracer* in the May 1968 issue will not step round automatically if its coil is connected as shown in the circuit diagram, Fig. 3, page 337. To achieve self-drive the coil should be connected in series with the interrupter contacts located alongside the coil.

It is also necessary to connect a spark-quench across the interrupter contacts as I have shown in Fig. 1, otherwise there will be heavy sparking at the contacts and they will quickly burn out. This also prevents diode D4 having high back e.m.f. pulses applied to it, and the quench circuit also reduces radio interference. Suitable values are shown in the diagram. The resistor should be a 1W carbon, and the capacitor a 250V working paper type.

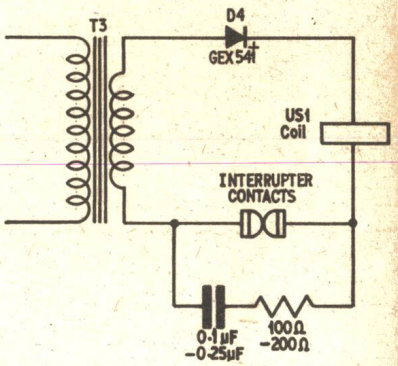


*Fig. 1*

The speed at which the uniselector rotates can be adjusted by turning the two screws each side of the coil, to alter the tension of the armature-return coil springs. It may also be necessary to alter, by careful bending, the setting of the interrupter operating lever (the extension arm on the armature) and the tension of the long interrupter contact spring. These adjustments are likely to be inter-dependent, and the settings should be such that there is smooth and regular stepping at the desired speed of rotation. Too much bending of the interrupter operating lever could break or crack it.

W. E. Thompson, G3MQT,
St. Leonards-on-Sea, Sussex.

*The uniselector used was already partially wired to include the interrupter contacts and I should have shown these in my circuit diagram.*

*I did not find the spark quench circuit necessary but it is a wise precaution to include this across the contacts as suggested.*

*With regard to uniselector adjustment I would hesitate to suggest that the constructor should adjust the interrupter arm by bending it. The manufacturer has generally adjusted this before leaving the factory and the tension screws are sufficient to vary the stepping period.*

*If bending is attempted then the use of a standard GPO relay adjustment tool is preferable to a pair of long-nosed pliers that the constructor would normally use. This is because a movement at right-angles to the lever is required which is difficult to achieve without damage when using pliers.—GKF*