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<1422/c>	in analogue form - infinite impulse response filters are a good example - most digital blocks derive their shape from the original analogue function. There is another aspect. Although the changing voltage on a line connecting a pair of gates may be classed as digital, it remains an electrical signal like any other. A design engineer might well require an appreciation of transmission line theory to ensure that the two connect together without data corruption. The same goes for the avoidance of earth loops, common mode inductance nodes and all the other pitfalls. We will continue to accord analogue design the importance which it deserves. But we must also acknowledge the significance of computing and digital design. EW + WW has enjoyed an illustrious past by presenting the important technology of the day. We must continue to do this if we are to safeguard its future reputation. Frank Ogden Reed Business Publishing Group REGULARS UPDATE EC announces £420m for R&D - but is it enough? Research grants worth £420million have been announced by the EC, revealing its plans for the third set of Esprit projects. But it may not be enough according to some industry commentators. US-based companies will play a major role for the first time, but the Japanese are not expected to be heavily involved. Main change introduced in the Esprit III programme is a new category of research called the Open Microsystems Initiative (OMI). Its aim is to establish R&D projects so as to: 'Make the European Industries competitive in the design, manufacture and use of future integrated circuit microsystems,' according to the EC's documents inviting companies to take part. US companies are expected to be involved in the research, backed by £65 million of EC money. Rosalie Zobel, deputy director of the Esprit projects told EW + WW that Mips Computer Systems, Sun, Motorola, DEC and IBM have all been invited to preliminary OMI meetings. Motorola is interested in joining some of the projects, according to Barry Waite, general manager of the company's European semiconductor group. But he questions whether the programme as a whole is too ambitious. 'I'm very sceptical whether the grand aims can be met in that time scale with that amount of money,' he says. Zobel said that there had been no approaches from Japanese companies wanting to work in the OMI. The Esprit III work programme, which is backed by 600 million ECU, is split into six sections. As well as the OMI and microelectronics research, there will information systems and advanced home systems projects. Rob Causey Unappealing face of <a href="#">Blumlein biography</a> Francis Thomson, the man who for nearly twenty years has been promising to write
 <p>Key:  <a href="#">Footprint</a>  <a href="#">ConEn1</a>  <a href="#">Footprint</a>  <a href="#">ConEn2</a>  <a href="#">Footprint</a>  <a href="#">ConEn3</a></p>	<p><a href="#">a biography</a> of <a href="#">Alan Blumlein</a></p> <p>is once again appealing for <a href="#">more material</a> on <a href="#">Blumlein</a>. Thomson's latest letters to the media very, but in some he explains the decades of delay with a puzzling tale of his attempts to 'shield <a href="#">the Blumleins</a> from the belated discovery that a person close to them had supplied me with letters ... stolen from the late Mr A K Van Warrington'. As before, Thomson, who has also put out calls for <a href="#">biographical material</a> on other subjects, including S G Brown, signs himself a Member of the Institution of Electrical</p>

	<p>Engineers, helping establish credibility with editors unaware of the fact that <b>he started collecting original papers in 1972</b>. But he has published nothing, refuses third parties access to <b>his collection</b> and <b>will not catalogue what he has</b>. Although some editors have treated <b>the 'biographer's'</b> latest call with suspicion and either ignored his request or published it with qualification (eg Hi-Fi News, other have simply regurgitated Thomson's <b>plea for 'letters, notes and photographs'</b>. Unqualified appeals have already been published in Television (journal of the Royal Television Society), Image Technology, (journal of the BKSTS), Nature and the AES Journal. Charlie Chester obligingly broadcast the appeal on Radio 2. The IEE has tried to negotiate with Thomson, offering help with writing and publishing <b>his biography</b> in time for the fiftieth anniversary of <b>Blumlein's</b> death in June 1992. But Thomson has rejected the IEE's offers and it now looks certain that the anniversary will be missed. Some members want the IEE now to use more muscle, with threats of expulsion from the Institution, if Thomson does not at least provide <b>a catalogue of the material he has collected</b> and give rock solid guarantees on its long term security, after his death. Barry Fox Preparing to test an underwater optical fibre cable joint on the 600kV DC test set at the new high voltage laboratory at Southampton University. Photo STC Submarine Systems Superconducting buckyballs A new method of producing very pure samples has allowed researchers at Los Alamos National Laboratory and UCLA to make two crucial measurements of superconducting compounds built with 'buckyballs'. The compounds' responses to magnetic fields and pressure have boosted scientists' hopes that they will form the basis of practical superconducting. Buckyballs, of buckminsterfullerene, are soccer-ball-shaped assemblages of 60 carbon atoms. Earlier this year researchers learned that inserting a few atoms of potassium into a framework built of buckyball molecules makes the compound a superconductor: below a critical temperature of about 19 Kelvin - or 19 degrees above absolute zero - the material conducts electricity with no resistance. The Los Alamos and UCLA researchers measured the critical magnetic fields of the material - which point to how useful the</p>
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