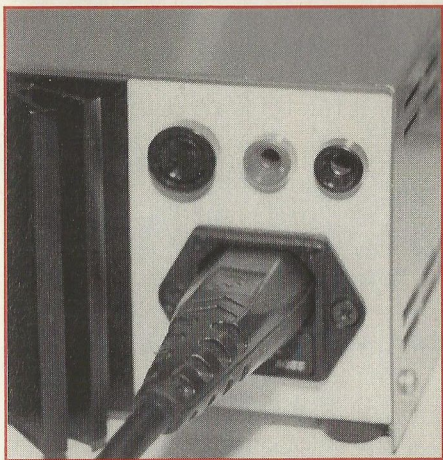


First let me point out that I am already the proud owner of one of these chargers, I have been for about six months. Why did I want one to begin with? Well, it was nothing to do with fashion or favouritism I can assure you. Ian Spashett and I have pitted alongside each other for the last five years, and this is the first charger of his I have used. Why, I hear you ask? I was happy with what I had and electricity from any source is pretty much the same to me, providing it meets certain requirements. These are reliability, control of current and indication of charging status. I wanted more six months ago because I was going to the land of 110v (the 1/12 Worlds) and everything I had was for 240v. Charging cells, tranny and soldering could have been a problem, and carrying some kind of converter would have been burdensome. Intronics had this charger conceived but its birthing was taking eons, Ian likes to be sure of things and he was making sure with this one!

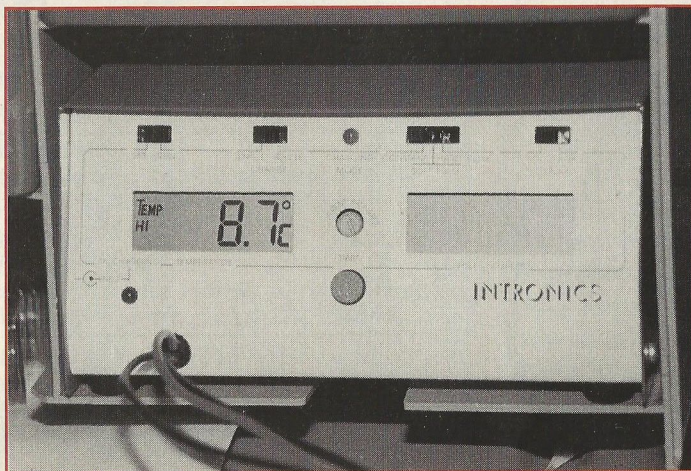
It's the sheer convenience of

The mains lead and 12V outlets.



this unit that sets it apart from others. Its size, as it is designed to fit in a polybutler. It's complete, you can plug this one into the mains, even across the water (it uses a high quality toroidal transformer that has tappings for 110v). You can power it from 12v, you can also tap 12v for a fan or soldering iron when it's got a mains supply. It even charges your

It fits perfectly in a Polybutler.



The Intronics Mains 12V Thermal Charger

tranny from a little socket in the side. What doesn't it do? Well, it doesn't discharge cells, it hasn't got a peak detect and doesn't tell the time. Intronics make a discharge meter, the peak detect is being incorporated and they'll sell you a watch!

The front panel has all the controls and two liquid crystal displays. At the top of the panel there are four "slide" type switches, these select the various features

available on the charger. In the centre, between the displays, there is a hole that provides access to the current control "pot", this leaving nothing to knock during charging but it requires ownership of a screwdriver to alter the current.

Pressing a button is all that's required to start the charge, a red light emitting diode lights to indicate that this is successful.

Being a thermal charger you can determine the temperature at which the charge finishes, sliding the first switch enables this feature, pressing the "charge start" button alters the

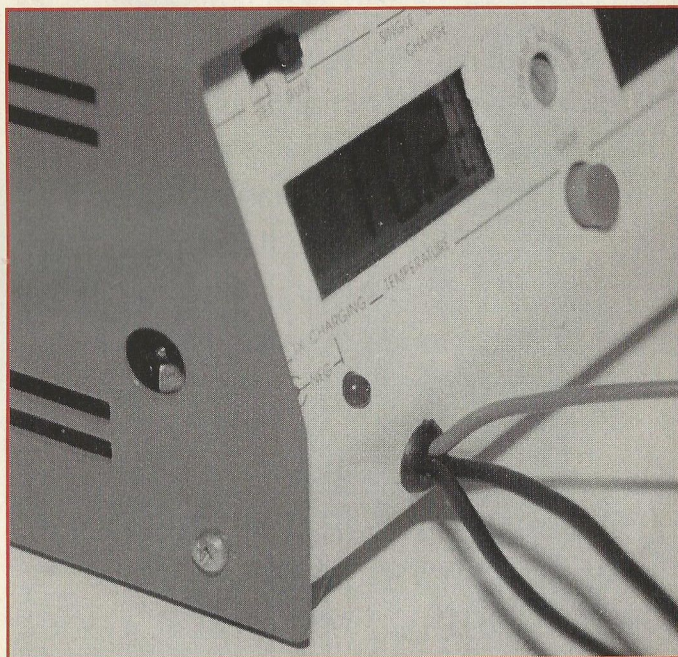
temperature, it cycles through from -19 to 69 deg centigrade. When in the set mode the charger does not charge cells. The next switch along enables you to switch the charger to cycle mode, not a feature I have used, this will automatically start the charge cycle again when the cells have cooled off. The next switch determines whether the charge is constant current, pulsed soft or pulsed hard.

These latter modes need some explanation, soft pulsing is where the current supplied is simply switched off for a small period so the average current is as set and hard pulsing is a constant current overlaid with a pulse. The maximum pulse spike is 15 amps in all cases. The last switch determines what the other display reads, charge amps or voltage at the end of the charge leads, ie, the cells when connected.

It's some of the 'hidden' features that are nice, you can't reverse charge easily as it won't switch on until the voltage reaches 0.6 volts, it trickle charges the cells to see if you've connected them the right way. You can short out the output as it simply turns off when you do this, if you disconnected before charging has finished it will resume on reconnection, so if you don't want this to happen, just touch the outputs together and it's reset, you now have to start the charge by pressing the button.

The insides are a little cramped but why should that concern you, the construction is solid and safe, as it is a mains unit it needs to be. The metal case is of a high standard, the circuitry is in two parts, utilising proven bits from past chargers such as the temperature module. Ian has changed the probe that attaches to the cells during charging, from the normal bulb type, as is normally supplied with these modules, to a more robust version that can survive the hazards of the

Tx charging socket.



average drivers pit area.

The price is competitive and, if you don't like lugging a car battery or power supplies about then it's a must. If you feel the need then give Ian Spashett a call at Intronics on 0323-736688.

It's quite easy giving this a good endorsement but don't just go from this, look around the pits to see who's using them. More impressively, I happen to know of a certain Cell Magician who swears by them. Mc2 rule OK!

REVIEW by CHRIS HARDISTY