United States Patent [19]

Diepeveen

[11] **3,840,163**

[45] **Oct. 8, 1974**

[54] **APPARATUS FOR INCREMENTAL MOVEMENT OF DIE FRAME**

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[52] **U.S. Cl.** **226/64,** 226/68, 226/151

[51] **Int. Cl.** **B65h 17/40**

[58] **Field of Search** 226/62, 64–68, 226/73, 158, 147, 149, 151

[56] **References Cited**

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Primary Examiner—Richard A. Schacher

[57] **ABSTRACT**

Apparatus for moving a frame of the type for supporting a plurality of integrated circuit chips or die members wherein the frame on a track is moved incrementally along the same by one or both of a pair of panels pivotally mounted below the track and normally projecting through the plane of the track and into openings in the frame. A reciprocal drive means coupled to the pawls causes the latter to reciprocate, so that the pawls, as they moves in reverse, pivot downwardly in the frame and into second frame openings, whereupon the pawls are urged forwardly and they, in turn, advance the frame through a predetermined distance. If the apparatus is used as a die bonder, an improved heat shield is provided for the heater element. Also, an improved die holder is disposed adjacent to and above the heater element. If the apparatus is used as a die test unit, an improved test probe is provided wherein test leads move in engagement with terminals of a die after the die frame has been incrementally advanced.

14 Claims, 15 Drawing Figures

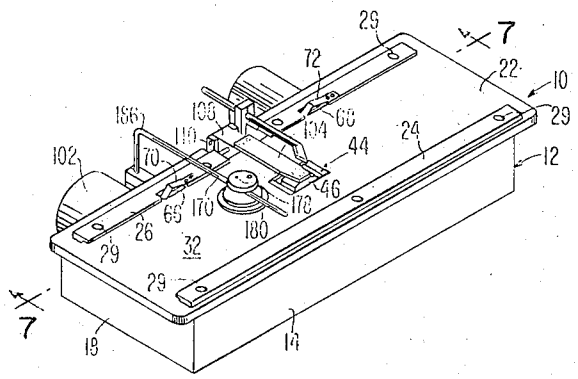
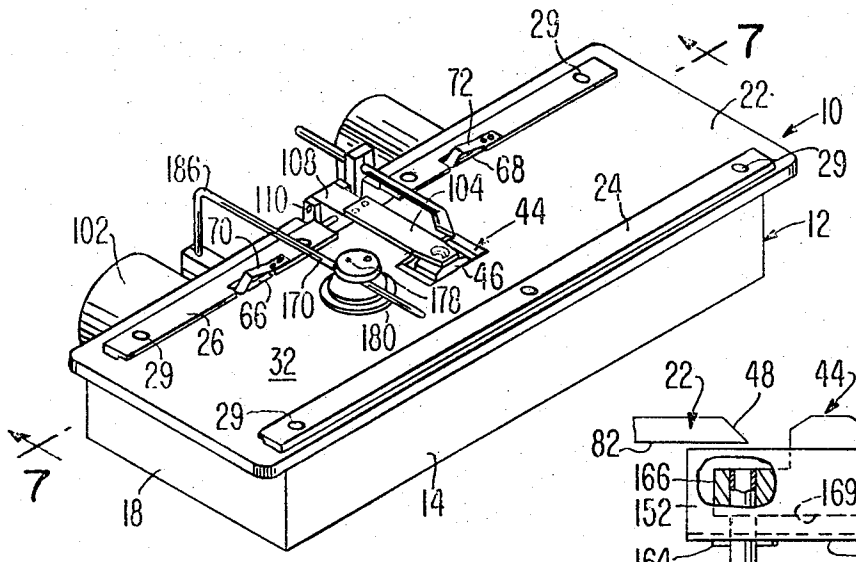


FIG. 1



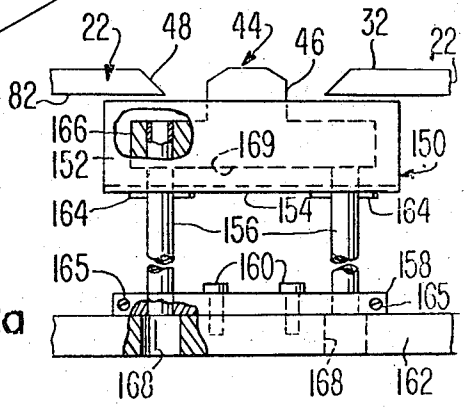


FIG. 2a

FIG. 2

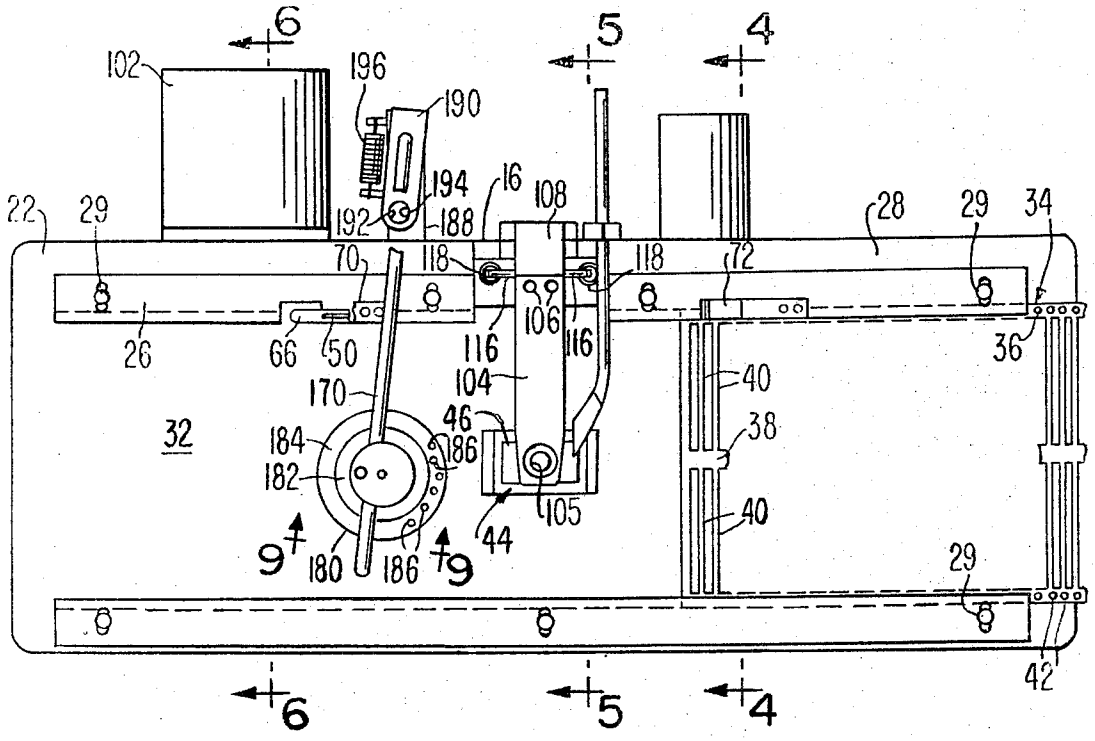


FIG. 3

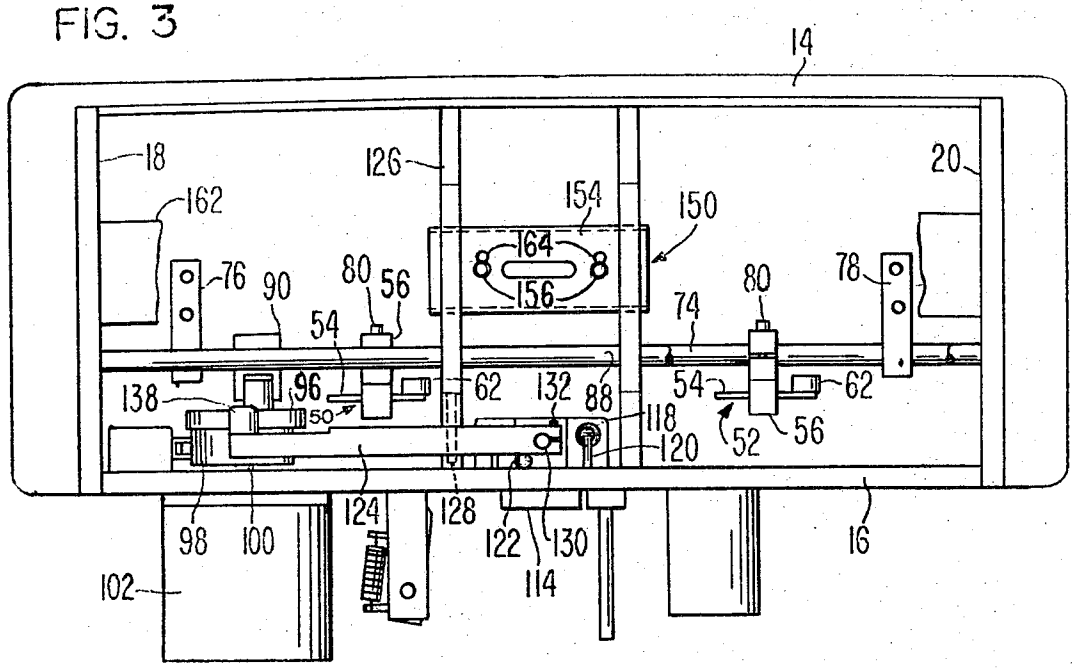

14
18
126
20
162
154
150
164
156
76
90
80
56
54
74
80
78
138
96
50
62
132
88
54
62
118
120
52
56
98
100
124
128
122
130
114
16
102

FIG. 4

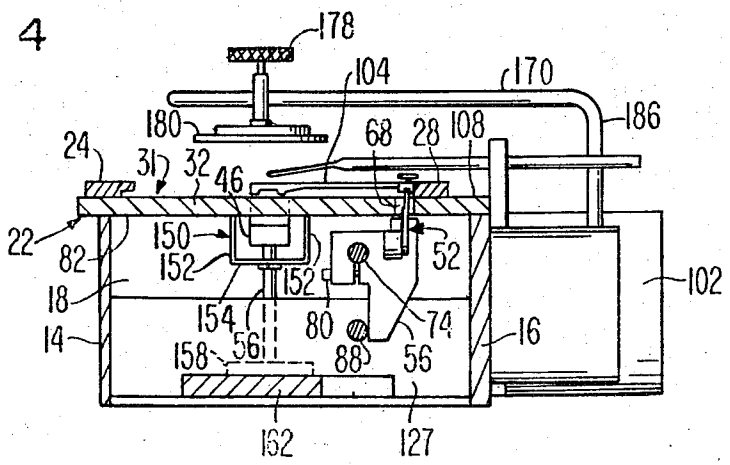

178
104
170
180
186
68
28
108
24
31
32
46
22
150
82
152
52
102
18
152
154
80
74
14
158
56
88
56
16
162
127

FIG. 5

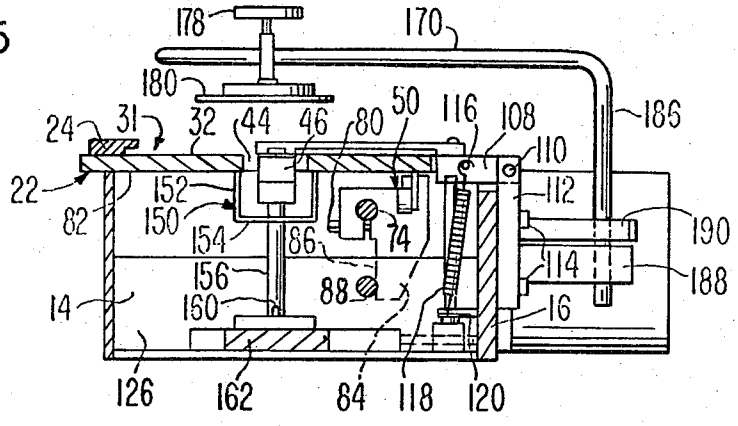


FIG. 6

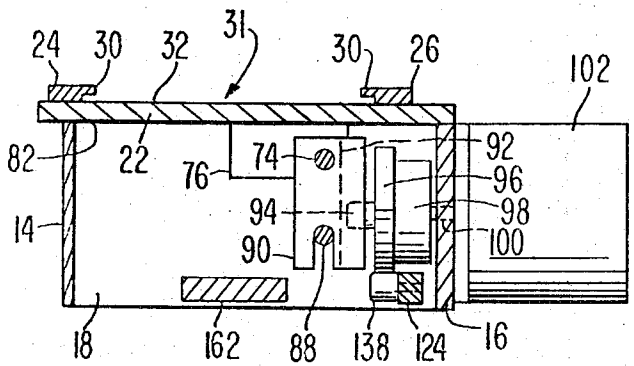


FIG. 7

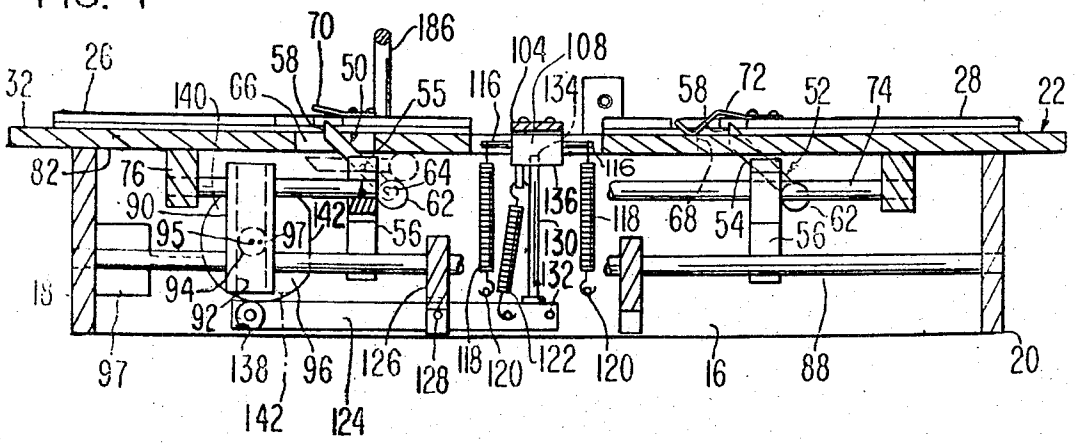


FIG. 8

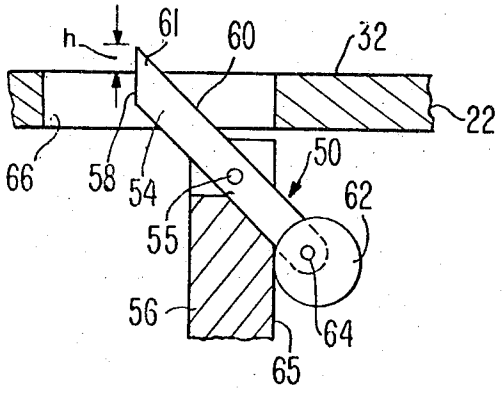


FIG. 9

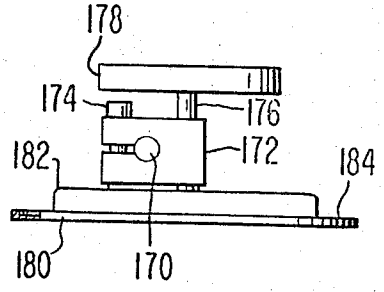


FIG. 11

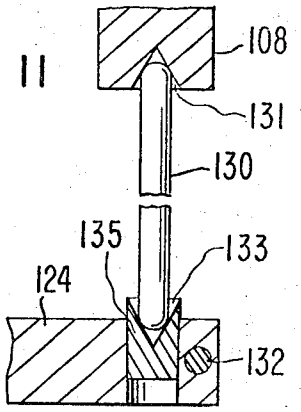


FIG. 10

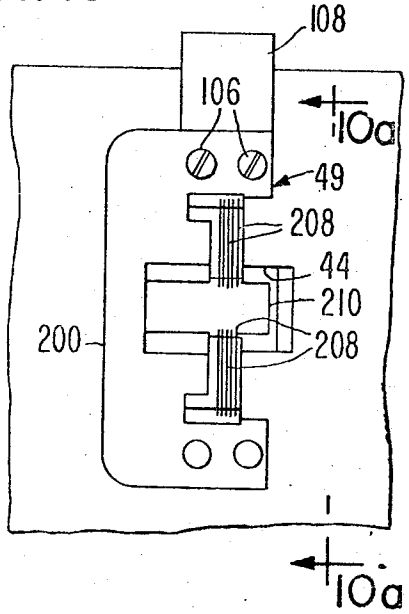


FIG. 11a

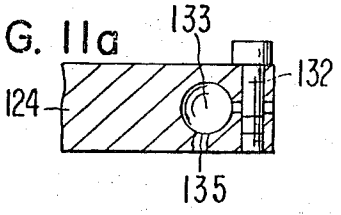


FIG. 10a

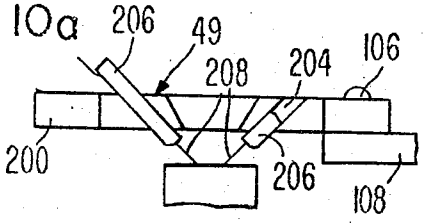
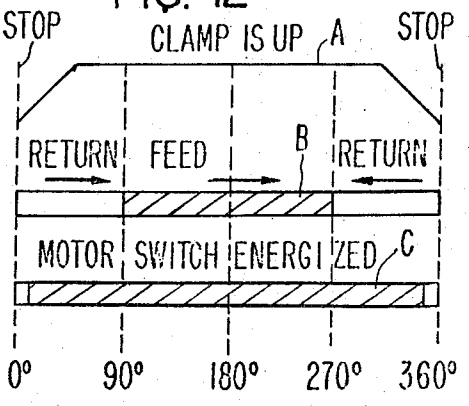


FIG. 12



APPARATUS FOR INCREMENTAL MOVEMENT OF DIE FRAME

This invention relates to improvements in the handling of die support frames and, more particularly, to apparatus for incrementally moving a die support frame past a die-handling area, such as is used in die bonding, wire bonding and die testing operations.

The present invention is suitable for use in incrementally advancing a die support frame along a predetermined path so that a plurality of die members or integrated circuit chips can be successively bonded to respective locations on the frame when the apparatus is used as a die bonder, or leads can be bonded to die members previously bonded to the frame if the apparatus is used as a wire bonder. Moreover, the incremental advancement of the frame can be utilized in the testing of die members bonded to the frame if the apparatus is to be used as a test probe unit. In all such uses, a die frame is moved incrementally by improved, reciprocal pawl means such as a pair of spaced pawls which move out of engagement as the pawl means reverses but move into engagement with and advance the frame as the pawl means moves forwardly.

The pawls are carried by a reciprocal rod below the path of movement of the frame and the frame itself is generally provided with a grid or network of spaced, metallic terminal strips or spaced sprocket holes at the side margins thereof, whereby the pawls can enter the spaces between the strips or enter the holes so as to engage the frame for moving the same forwardly. The pawls normally project through a frame support plate defining a track along which the frame is moved. Each pawl has a rear inclined margin so that, as the pawl is reversed, it is forced downwardly and out of a space or hole of the frame and into a rearward position at which it is in vertical alignment with the next adjacent space or hole, whereupon bias means coupled with the pawl urges it upwardly and into such aligned space or hole. Then the pawl is urged forwardly, and the pawl thereby engages and advances the frame until the next die support location is in an operative position.

Means for reciprocating the rod includes a rotatable eccentric coupled to a stepper motor. The eccentric also operates a pivotal frame clamp which holds the frame against movement during a die handling operation, such as a die bonding step.

The present invention includes an improved heat shield around the heater element of the apparatus when the latter is used as a die bonder. The shield has tubular support posts providing a chimney effect for directing cool air from beneath the apparatus to a region near the heater element, thereby causing the heat therefrom to rise to the die support of the frame thereabove. Also, the shield prevents adjacent structure from being heated by reflecting the heat radiated by the heater element. Thus, the heat is localized so that injuries to the fingers or hand of the operator of the apparatus will be avoided.

The primary object of this invention is to provide an improved apparatus for advancing a die support frame wherein a pivotally mounted pawl projecting through the frame is reciprocated and urges the frame forwardly an incremental distance after each reversal of the pawl, yet the frame is stationary during pawl reversal to thereby assure movement of the frame in only one direction.

Another object of this invention is to provide apparatus of the type described wherein the pawl is caused to pivot downwardly below and to move along and beneath the frame during pawl reversal but, thereafter, the pawl pivots upwardly and extends through the frame and during forward pawl movement, advances the frame through an incremental distance sufficient to move the next adjacent die support of the frame into an operative position at which a die handling operation can occur.

Other objects of this invention will become apparent as the following specification progresses, reference being had to the accompanying drawings for an illustration of the invention.

FIG. **1** is a perspective view of the apparatus of this invention;

FIG. **2** is an enlarged, top plan view of the apparatus;

FIG. **2***a* is an enlarged, fragmentary, side elevational view of the heater assembly of the apparatus when the same is used as a die bonder;

FIG. **3** is a bottom plan view of the apparatus, parts being broken away to illustrate details of construction;

FIG. **4** is a cross-sectional view taken along line **4—4** of FIG. **2**;

FIG. **5** is a cross-sectional view taken along line **5—5** of FIG. **2**;

FIG. **6** is a cross-sectional view taken along line **6—6** of FIG. **2**;

FIG. **7** is a cross-sectional view taken along line **7—7** of FIG. **1**;

FIG. **8** is an enlarged, fragmentary, vertical, cross-sectional view of the apparatus, showing a frame-moving pawl thereof;

FIG. **9** is a fragmentary, side elevational view of the die support above the frame-supporting surface of the apparatus;

FIG. **10** is a fragmentary, top plan view of a test unit on the apparatus when the latter is used to test semiconductor components;

FIG. **10***a* is an end elevational view of the test unit;

FIG. **11** is an enlarged vertical cross-section of the mechanism for raising or lowering the frame clamp finger of the apparatus;

FIG. **11***a* is a top plan view of a part of the mechanism of FIG. **11**; and

FIG. **12** is a timing diagram showing the sequence of operation of the apparatus.

The apparatus of this invention is broadly denoted by the numeral **10** and includes a support **12** comprised of a pair of opposed sidewalls **14** and **16** and a pair of opposed end walls **18** and **20**. A generally horizontal plate **22** is mounted on walls **14, 16, 18** and **20** and covers the open upper end of the space surrounded by such walls. Thus, the side and end walls and the top plate define a hollow housing.

Plate **22** is provided with a rail or first bar **24** (FIGS. **1, 2, 4, 5** and **6**) along one side margin thereof and a pair of spaced second rails or bars **26** and **29** (FIGS. **1, 2, 4, 6** and **7**) along the opposite side margin thereof. Bars **24, 26** and **28** are adjustably mounted on plate **22** by screws **29**, each bar having a slot-shaped, screw-receiving hole as shown in FIG. **2**. The bars have cross sections of the type shown in FIGS. **4–6** wherein each of the bars has a lateral projection portion **30** (FIG. **4**)

which overlies and is spaced above the upper surface 32 of plate 22. Thus, plate 22 and bar portions 30 define a track 31 (FIGS. 4–6) extending longitudinally of the plate in substantial spanning relationship to end walls 18 and 20, the track adapted to receive and guide a generally rigid, metallic die support frame 34 (FIG. 2) of the type for supporting a plurality of integrated circuit chips or the like. Bars 24, 26 and 28 are open at their outer ends so that frame 34 can be manually placed on track 31 at its entrance end (the right end of plate 22 when viewing FIG. 2) and can leave the track at the exit end thereof.

Frame 34, for purposes of illustration, has a pair of opposed, parallel side strips 36 (FIG. 2), a central strip 38 parallel to side strips 36, and a plurality of spaced lateral strips 40 which interconnect central strip 38 with respective side strips 36. Side strips 36 are provided with a plurality of holes 42 therethrough much in the same manner as in photographic movie film. Central strip 38 is adapted to support a plurality of integrated circuit chips or other semiconductor components at spaced locations thereon, specifically in alignment with respective lateral strips 40, the strips serving as leads for terminal points on the chips supported on central strip 38. Frame 34 is of conventional construction and may or may not have openings 42. Other types of chip-supporting frames can be used with apparatus 10, such as those having no holes corresponding to holes 42 and those having a plurality of leads or lateral strips for each chip locations, respectively.

The purpose of apparatus 10 is to advance frame 34 incrementally along track 31 so that the various chip or die locations on central strip 38 are successively moved into overlying relationship with an opening 44 (FIGS. 1, 2 and 5) in plate 22. For purposes of illustration, apparatus 10 is shown in FIGS. 1–9 as a die bonding machine wherein strip 38 is moved incrementally over and past a die bonding heater element 46 (FIGS. 1, 2, 4 and 5) aligned with opening 44 of plate 22. The apparatus could also be used for wire bonding operations wherein a wire bonder carried by support 12 could be used to bond wires to a plurality of spaced chips on a chip-supporting frame which is supported from beneath on a surface disposed in opening 44. In such a case, heater element 46 would be removed to make room for the support surface. Furthermore, a test probe unit 49 (FIGS. 10 and 10*a*) can be substituted for heater element 46 so that apparatus 10 can be used in the electrical testing of integrated circuit chips as they incrementally advance on frame 34.

The means for incrementally moving frame 34 includes a pair of spaced pawls 50 and 52 (FIGS. 4, 5, and 7 and 8), each pawl comprising a rigid bar 54 which is pivotally mounted by a pin 55 on the upper end of a follower 56 disposed below plate 22 (FIGS. 4, 5 and 7). Each bar 54 has a forward edge or margin 58 which is generally perpendicular to track 31 when bar 54 is in its operative position (the full-line position of FIG. 7), i.e., the position at which it moves frame 34 forwardly (to the left when viewing FIG. 2). The rear edge or margin 60 is inclined and convergent to margin 58 so that margins 58 and 60 define a pointed upper end 61 on bar 54.

A counterweight 62 is adjustably and eccentrically mounted by a screw 64 on the lower end of each bar 54, respectively. This counterweight biases the corresponding bar in a clockwise sense when viewing FIGS. 7 and 8, yet allows the bar to pivot into its retracted position (the dashed-line position of FIG. 7). The counterweight also engages surface 65 of follower 56 so that surface 65 serves as a stop to limit the upward movement of upper end 61 of each pawl. The height *h* (FIG. 8) of upper end 61 relative to the upper surface 32 of plate 22 can be adjusted by adjusting the position of counterweight 62 with respect to pin 64. Thus, by rotating the counterweight relative to its bar 54 into a new, fixed position, the value of *h* will change.

Plate 22 has a pair of slots 66 and 68 therethrough in the plane of respective bars 26 and 28 (FIGS. 1, 7 and 8) and disposed below the path of one of the side members 36 of frame 34. These slots are adapted to permit respective pawls 50 and 52 to extend upwardly and through plate 22 so that upper ends 61 of the pawls project above upper surface 32 of plate 22. Thus, upper ends 61 can enter respective, aligned side opendings 42 in frame 34 so that the pawls, in their operative positions (FIG. 8), can push the frame incrementally forwardly as the pawls are shifted incrementally to the left when viewing FIGS. 7 and 8. A pair of spring fingers 70 and 72 overlie respective slots 66 and 68 and serve to hold frame 34 in a fixed position on track 31 as the pawls retract and move rearwardly in a manner to be described.

Followers 56 (FIGS. 3, 4, 5 and 7) are rigidly secured to a first rod 74 which extends longitudinally of track 31 and is shiftably mounted for longitudinal movement in a pair of bearing blocks 76 and 78 (FIGS. 3 and 7) rigidly secured to the lower surface 82 of plate 22. A screw 80 (FIG. 5) adjustably clamps each follower 56 to rod 74, whereby the position of the corresponding pawl can be adjusted relative to its slot through plate 22. Each follower 56 has a lower extension 84 (FIGS. 4 and 5) having a side surface 86 normally slidably engaging one side of a second, fixed rod 88 parallel to rod 74 and end walls 18 and 20 in spanning relationship thereto. Rod 88 serves as a guide for followers 56.

A coupling element 90 (FIGS. 6 and 7) is secured to first rod 74 and depends therefrom. Element 90 has a vertically disposed channel 92 (FIGS. 6) for shiftably receiving a cylindrical roller 94 eccentrically mounted on a disk 96 having a cylindrical base 98 secured to the drive shaft 100 of a stepper motor 102 rigid to and extending laterally from sidewall 16 (FIGS. 3, 4, 5 and 6). Roller 94 operates to cause horizontal reciprocation of element 90 relative to and along rod 88. As shown in FIG. 7, the axis 95 of roller 94 is spaced laterally from the axis 97 of disk 96. As the disk is rotated under the influence of stepper motor 102 through a complete revolution, roller 94 rotates about axis 97 and, as it does, it moves element 90 from a starting position first to the right (when viewing FIG. 7) through a first distance, and then back to the left through the first distance, and beyond through a second distance, and then back to the right through the second distance to its starting position. When element 90 is reciprocated, it causes rod 84 to reciprocate and this, in turn, causes reciprocation of followers 56 and respective pawls 50 and 52.

In FIG. 7, element 90 is shown at its extreme left-hand position, just before it is returned to the right to its starting position. When element 90 is in its starting position, pawls 50 and 52 are tilted more to the horizontal as shown by the dashed line positions thereof in FIG. 7. This is because frame 34 will cause the pawls to rock in a counterclockwise sense and out of respec-

tive frame holes, yet will remain in respective slots **66** and **68** as element **90** is returned to its starting position. The pawls, in their starting positions, are half-way between the holes they have just left and the holes they will next enter. A switch **94***a* (FIG. 7) coupled with disk **94** stops motor **102** when element **90** returns to its starting position. An override circuit coupled with motor **102** actuates the same at the beginning of a frame-moving operation.

As the pawls are shifted to the right when viewing FIGS. **7** and **8** from their starting positions, they will be moved through a distance sufficient to permit the upper end **61** of each pawl to be aligned with the next adjacent hole **42,** whereupon the bias action of the corresponding counterweight **62** will cause the upper end **61** of the pawl to enter the aligned hole thereabove. Upon movement of each pawl to the left, its front margin **58** will engage the frame and advance it incrementally to the left, thereby moving the next die support of central strip **38** into overlying relationship to the central portion of opening **44.** Then, the pawls are returned to their starting positions as element **90** is moved a short distance to the right as described above. While a pair of pawls have been shown, only a single pawl can be used to move the frame. However, two pawls are provided on opposite sides of opening **44** so that at least one pawl is in driving engagement with the frame at all times.

A frame clamp finger **104** (FIGS. **1, 2, 4** and **5**) is provided for apparatus **10** when the latter is to be used as a die bonder. Finger **104** extends across a portion of upper surface **32** of plate **22** and terminates adjacent to opening **44** as shown in FIG. **2.** Finger **104** clamps the frame against movement relative to surface **32** as the pawls are reversed (shifted to the right when viewing FIG. 7), i.e., as each pawl moves out of one hole **42** and into alignment with the next adjacent hole **42.** In this way, the pawls are assured of moving into the next pair of adjacent holes **42** to provide for positive forward incremental movement of frame **34.**

Finger **104** is secured by screws **106** (FIGS. **2**) to a first block **108** pivotally mounted by a pin **110** (FIG. **1**) on a second block **112** adjustably secured by screws **114** (FIG. **5**) to the outer surface of sidewall **16,** the holes in block **112** for screws **114** being enlarged to provide for the adjustability of the block in the *x–y* direction. In this way, the inclination of the finger can be adjusted, if necessary, to render the finger parallel to the upper surface of heater element **46.** A pair of laterally projecting pins **116** at opposed sides of block **108** are coupled to the upper ends of a pair of coil springs **118** which extend downwardly adjacent to the inner surface of sidewall **16** and are secured to projections **120** (FIG. 7) on the inner surface of sidewall **16.** The springs are under tension so that finger **104** is biased downwardly toward surface **32.** A third spring **122** (FIG. 7) is coupled at its upper end to block **108** and at its lower end to a bar **124** pivotally mounted on a crossbrace **126** (FIG. 7) by a pin **128** which is horizontally disposed. Brace **126** is rigid to and spans the distance between sidewalls **14** and **16.** Spring **122** is under tension; thus, bar **124** is biased by spring **122** in a counterclockwise sense when viewing FIG. **7.**

A vertical rod **130** spans the distance between block **108** and bar **124** and is pivotal relative thereto as shown in FIG. **11.** Both ends of rod **130** are convex, the upper end being pivotally received in a conical recess **131** in block **108** and the lower end being pivotally received in a conical recess **133** in a shiftable member **135** adjustably secured by a screw **132** to bar **124** (FIGS. **11** and **11***a*).

The opposite end of bar **124** has a roller **138** which engages the outer periphery **140** of disk **94** during movement of the pawls. During such pawl movement, finger **104** is slightly spaced above opening **44,** thereby allowing frame **34** to move beneath finger **104** and across the heater element **46.** However, disk **96** has a flat, outer peripheral segment **142** (FIG. **7**) which moves into overlying relationship to roller **138** as element **90** returns to its starting position after each incremental frame movement. When this occurs, bar **124** is allowed to rotate through a small arc in a clockwise sense (FIG. **7**) about pin **128,** causing the outer end of finger **104** to again engage frame **34** and clamp it to heater element **46.**

Roller **138** normally does not engage flat segment **142** because the outer end of finger **104** engages frame **34,** before this occurs. Also, the inclination of finger **104** can be adjusted by the adjustment of the height of rod **130** by manipulating the height of member **135** to accommodate bent frames or chips of different heights. Thus, the apparatus is suitable for use in wire bonding operations as well as die bonding operations. The outer end of finger **104** has a central hole **105** therethrough to provide access to the die support of frame **34** or to a die on such die support.

In FIG. **2***a*, a transversely U-shaped heat shield **150** is provided to localize the radiant and conducted heat from heater element **46.** Shield **150** has a pair of opposed sides **152** (FIG. **4**) and a bottom **154.** It is open at the ends and at the top and is loosely supported by respective cotter pins **164** (FIGS. **2***a* and **3**) on a pair of tubular posts **156** which are adjustably secured to and extend upwardly from a mounting bracket **158** secured by screws **160** to a bar **162** (FIG. **3**) which is rigid to and spans the distance between the end walls **18** and **20.** Cotter pins **164** pass through holes in respective posts **156.** Bracket **158** has a pair of clamping screws **165** which adjustably secure the lower ends of posts **156** to bracket **158,** thereby permitting the height of heater element **46** relative to opening **44** to be varied.

Heat shield **150** is formed of thin, polished, stainless steel and reflects heat radiated thereto by heater element **46.** Also, the loose connection of the heat shield on posts **156** minimizes heat loses to the posts by conduction.

The upper and lower ends of each post **156** are open as shown in FIG. **2***a*, the upper end of each post being secured to a lateral extension **166** (FIGS. **2***a*) of heater **46.** The lower, open end of each post **156** is in vertical alignment with a respective opening **168** through bar **162,** so that posts **156** operate as chimneys to direct cooling air from a location below bar **162** to the regions on opposed sides of heater element **46.** The lower surface **169** (FIG. **2***a*) of heater element **46** is spaced above bottom **154** of heat shield **150** by a distance equal to the spacing between heater element **46** and each side **152** of the heat shield. This construction of the heat shield localizes the heat radiated from heater element so that the person using apparatus **10** will not suffer burns to the fingers and hand during die bonding operations.

A swingable rod **170** (FIGS. **1, 2, 4, 5, 6** and **7**) is swingably mounted on support **12** for movement through a small arc in a plane above and substantially parallel with the plane of plate **22.** Rod **170** has a bracket **172** (FIG. **9**) clamped thereto by a screw **174.** A stub shaft **176** is rotatably mounted in bracket **172** and has a knob **178** at its upper end. A disk **180** having an annular base **182** thereabove is secured to the lower end of shaft **176** so that, when knob **178** is rotated, disk **180** rotates relative to rod **170.**

The upper, annular surface **184** of disk **180** operates to support a plurality of integrated circuit chips **186** to be bonded to frame **34** on central strip **38** thereof. Rod **170** is mounted so that, when it is swung in a counterclockwise sense when viewing FIG. **2,** the chips on surface **184** are moved into proximity to opening **44.** Thus, the operator of apparatus **10** can continue to view a chip-supporting location of frame **34** aligned with heater element **46** through a microscope as the outer peripheral margin of disk upper surface **184** is moved into a part of the optical path of the microscope, thereby permitting the operator to transfer a chip from surface **184** onto frame **34** without moving the head away from the microscope. This will facilitate a die bonding operation and make such operation less tedious for the operator.

Rod **170** has a vertical leg **186** (FIGS. **1, 4, 5** and **7**) pivotally mounted in a lateral extension **188** rigid to and extending outwardly from sidewall **16.** Leg **186** has a short bar **190** rigid to it and extending toward sidewall **16.** Bar **190** has a hole **192** therethrough which receives a pin **194** secured to and extending upwardly from extension **188,** pin **194** serving as a stop to limit the swinging movement of rod **170.** A coil spring **196** coupled to extension **188** and bar **190** biases rod **170** in a clockwise sense when viewing FIG. **2.**

OPERATION

Apparatus **10** is used by first manually placing frame **34** at the entrance end (the right-hand end when viewing FIG. **2**) of track **31.** The frame is then manually moved along the track until the left-hand end of strip **38** is adjacent to heater element **46.** Then, assuming heater **46** is energized so that it is at a pre-determined operating temperature, stepper motor **102** is actuated so that it causes the pawls to reciprocate in the manner described.

As disk **96** rotates through a single revolution, the pawls move to the right below the plane of upper surface **32** of plate **22** until upper ends **61** of the pawls move into alignment with the next adjacent holes **42.** Then, upper ends **61** enter the aligned holes **42** thereabove and the pawls force frame **34** forwardly as disk **96** continues to rotate. The total distance traveled by frame **34** is such that the next adjacent die support on the frame is vertically aligned with heater element **46.** During the forward travel of the pawls, clamp finger **104** is elevated to allow frame **34** to move over track **31.** After the frame has been moved, the pawls return to their starting positions. The timing diagram of FIG. **12** illustrates the sequence of operation of apparatus **10.** Curve A indicates the time in which Clamp **104** is up during a complete revolution of disk **94.** Curve B indicates frame movement during each revolution, and Curve C indicates the time during which motor **102** is energized.

During a die bonding operation, the heat radiated from heater element **46** is intercepted by the sides and bottom of heat shield **150** and the heat is reflected toward the heater element. During this time, air rises in posts **156** by convection, thereby drawing air into the lower openings **168** in bar **162** (FIG. **2***a*). The small amount of heat loss through the open ends and the top of shield **150** is not sufficient to heat the surrounding structure to any appreciable degree; thus, the operator of apparatus **10** will not suffer discomfort if the hands or fingers contact the structure adjacent to element **46.**

If apparatus **10** is to be used as a wire bonder, heater element **46** is replaced by structure defining a frame support surface provided in opening **44** and a wire bonding tool is mounted in any suitable manner on support **12.** Then, a frame having a plurality of chips previously bonded thereto can be incrementally moved over track **31** in the manner described above. Each time a chip is aligned centrally of opening **44,** a wire bonding operation can occur wherein a plurality of wires are bonded to the chip. In such a case, clamp finger **104** is used to clamp the frame against movement during the operation. It may be necessary to adjust the arc of movement of clamp finger **104** to allow clearance of the chips as frame **34** carrying the chips is moved by the pawls. This adjustment is made by moving rod **130** (FIG. **7**) releasably secured at its lower end to bar **124.**

Test probe unit **49** (FIGS. **10** and **10***a*) includes a bracket **200** secured by screws **106** to swingable block **108;** thus, bracket **200** replaces clamp finger **104** when apparatus **10** is to be used in testing integrated circuit chips or the like carried on frame **34.** The height of bracket **200** relative to upper surface **32** can be varied by adjusting the vertical position of block **112** on sidewall **16.**

Bracket **200** has a pair of inclined recesses **204** extending thereinto from a pair of sides thereof. Each recess frictionally receives an insulating block **206** having a number of spaced, electrically isolated leads **208** extending along the same, the lower ends of the leads projecting outwardly from respective blocks and disposed for contacting corresponding terminals on a chip to be tested. Recesses **204** are inclined oppositely relative to each other so that blocks **206** converge as their lower ends are approached. A rigid support **210** in opening **44** is provided to support frame **34** as leads **208** are disposed above and move into contact with the clip aligned with opening **44** during a test operation.

Apparatus **10** is used in the manner described above to move frame **34** incrementally relative to opening **44** when test probe unit **49** is mounted as shown in FIGS. **10** and **10***a*. Leads **208** are coupled to test equipment (not shown) whereby, as motor **102** cycles, frame **34** is advanced incrementally and bracket **200** is elevated during frame movement because block **108** pivots upwardly as the pawls reciprocate when the frame is in a new position, bracket **200** will have been lowered, causing the lower ends of leads **208** to move into contact with respect to terminals on the chip therebelow. In this way, each chip can be tested to determine its quality before it is separated from the frame and packaged.

While pawls **50** and **52** have been described as positioned to enter side holes **42,** it is possible that plate **22** could have slots **66** and **68** more toward the center of

track **31**. In such a case, the pawls could enter the spaces between lateral strips **40** of frame **34**, thus rendering apparatus **10** suitable for use with frames having no side holes **42**.

I claim:

1. Apparatus for incrementally advancing a die support frame having a plurality of openings therethrough comprising: a support; means on said support for defining a track over which a die support frame can move; a pawl for entering any one of said frame openings; means on one side of the track for mounting the pawl for pivotal movement in a plane transverse to said track; means coupled with said pawl for biasing the same across the track; and means coupled with said mounting means for reciprocating the latter and thereby said pawl to cause the latter to enter a frame opening and to move the frame as the pawl is moved in one direction and to cause the pawl to exit from a frame opening as the pawl moves in the opposite direction.

2. Apparatus as set forth in claim **1**, wherein said track defining means includes a generally horizontal plate having rail means at each side thereof, said plate having a slot therethrough, said pawl mounting means being below the plate, said pawl normally extending through the slot and projecting above the plate.

3. Apparatus as set forth in claim **1**, wherein said mounting means includes a longitudinally reciprocal rod extending longitudinally of said track, a follower rigidly secured to said rod and extending laterally therefrom, and means pivotally mounting said pawl on said follower near the outer end thereof for movement about an axis transverse to said track and to said rod.

4. Apparatus as set forth in claim **3**, wherein said reciprocating means includes an eccentric, means coupled to said eccentric for rotating the same through a predetermined arc, and a coupling element interconnecting said eccentric and said rod.

5. Apparatus as set forth in claim **4**, wherein is included a second rod parallel to the first-mentioned rod, said follower and said coupling element being slidably engageable with and movable along said second rod, whereby the latter serves as a guide therefor.

6. Apparatus for incrementally moving a die support frame provided with a plurality of uniformly spaced die supports and a plurality of openings therethrough comprising: a support; means on the support for defining a track along which the frame can be moved; a pawl receivable within each opening of the frame; means on the support for pivotally mounting the pawl for movement about a generally horizontal axis below and extending transversely to said track, said pawl being movable from a first, inclined position extending above the plane of the track to a second, generally horizontal position below said plane; means coupled with the pawl for biasing the same into said first position; and means coupled with said pawl mounting means for reciprocating the latter along a path sufficient to move the pawl from a first location along said track to a second location and return, said pawl being engageable with the frame and pivoted from its first position to its second position when said mounting means is shifted from said first location to said second location, said bias means causing said pawl to return to its operative position and to enter the next adjacent frame opening when the mounting means moves into said second location, whereby said pawl will move the frame incrementally along said track as the mounting means returns to said first location from said second location.

7. Apparatus as set forth in claim **6**, wherein said pawl has a generally vertically disposed, frame-engaging forward margin when the pawl is in said first position, said bias means including a counterweight adjustably and eccentrically mounted on said pawl and engaging said mounting means when the pawl is in said first position.

8. Apparatus as set forth in claim **6**, wherein said track defining means includes a generally horizontal plate having a slot extending longitudinally of the path of the track, said pawl projecting upwardly through said slot when the pawl is in said first position and being movable longitudinally thereof as the pawl is reciprocated under the influence of said mounting means.

9. Apparatus as set forth in claim **8**, wherein said slot is located at one side margin of the track.

10. Apparatus for handling a die support frame comprising: a support; means on the support for defining a track along which said frame can move, said means having a frame support surface; a clamp finger; means adjustably mounted on said support for pivotally mounting said finger thereon for movement about an axis extending longitudinally of said track and into and out of engagement with the frame on said track, said means being adjustable; and means coupled with said finger for pivoting the same relative to said track.

11. Apparatus as set forth in claim **10**, wherein said mounting means is adjustable in two mutually perpendicular directions.

12. Apparatus as set forth in claim **10**, wherein said pivoting means includes a rod pivotally coupled at one end to said finger at a location thereon in spaced relationship to said axis, and a rotatable bar pivotally connected to the opposite end of the rod, said bar adapted to be coupled to a source of power to cause the rod to be shifted and thereby cause the finger to be pivoted.

13. Apparatus as set forth in claim **12**, wherein said rod has a pair of opposed convex ends, said finger and said bar having respective, conical recesses for pivotally receiving respective ends of said rod.

14. Apparatus as set forth in claim **13**, wherein said bar has a bore, there being a member adjustably mounted in said bore, said member having a conical recess for receiving the proximal end of said rod.

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