18 of the mobile telephone 14. The mobile telephone 14 also includes a display screen 15 capable of displaying graphic objects 16 and alpha-numeric information 17. The alpha-numeric information 17 that may be displayed includes phone numbers and lists, for example of list of entries in a phone book, that are input by the alpha-numeric input buttons 10 and accessed by the assignable function buttons 12a-12c.

[0041] **Fig. 4** is a schematic representation through line 4-4 of **Fig. 3** illustrating that the alpha-numeric input buttons or keys 10 in the mobile telephone pass through the case 18 of the mobile telephone and contact a plurality of switches 19 disposed on the PCB 62. The switches 19 are in communication with the controller 9 (not shown). Suitable switches 19 include any analog or digital switch, for example rubber switches, snap dome-type switches, and pressure sensitive switches. Preferably, the switches 19 are capable of producing distinct input signals to the controller. Even more preferably, the switches 19 are capable of producing such signals for two or more positions. In the embodiment shown, the keys 10 contact a plurality of digital switches, each capable of producing four distinct input signals to the controller 9 to correspond to the four levels at which pressure is applied to the buttons 10 by the user.

[0042] The PCB 62, on a side opposite the switches, is in communication with the actuator 61. As illustrated, the actuator 61 is a piezo-electric actuator having a metal diaphragm 20 in contact with the PCB 62 through one or more spacers 21 and a piezo ceramic element 22 in contact with the metal diaphragm 20. Alternative actuator embodiments include a flexure coupled to the shaft of a motor, secured to the PCB 62.

[0043] As illustrated, the keys 10 are initially in a rest position 23. A biasing member arrangement (not shown) as is available and understood in the art is used to hold the keys in the rest position 23. An object 24, for example the user″s finger or a stylus, is used to select one or more of the keys 10 by applying pressure in the direction of arrow A. This pressure causes the selected key to progress through a plurality of positions. As illustrated, after leaving the rest position 23, the keys pass sequentially through a second position 25, a third position, 26, a fourth position 27, and a fifth position, 28 as greater and greater pressure is applied to the button 10. The distance of travel between each position does not have to be equal, and the amount of pressure required to move between each position can vary. In addition, for a given key, the number of positions can vary from two (no pressure and activated) up to the number of input signals assigned to a given key. Therefore, in the embodiment shown, a key 10i is moveable from a first level (rest) 23 to a second level 25 upon the application of a sufficient amount of pressure to the input device. In the embodiment shown in **Fig. 3**, the amount of pressure necessary to move the key 10i from rest 23 to the second position 25 is about equal to the amount of pressure that user″s finger would exert upon contact with the key without actually selecting the key.

[0044] Accordingly, in one method of using the embodiment shown in **Fig. 3**, when a user of the mobile telephone 14 shown in **Fig. 3** presses the ″9″ key 10i using a relatively light amount of pressure, the button 10i moves from rest state 23 to its second level 25. Such movement causes the button 10i to apply pressure to switch 19a, which is received by switch 19a. The switch 19a is in communication with the controller 9. The switch 19a is configured to transmit a first signal to the controller 9 upon receiving a pressure of magnitude indicating that sufficient pressure has been placed on button 10i to move from its first level 23 to its second level 25. The controller 9 receives this first signal. The controller 9 is configured to transmit a first controller output signal to the actuator 61 upon receipt of this first signal from the switch 19a. The controller transmits the first controller output signal to the actuator 61. The actuator 61 is configured to provide a vibration of a first pre-selected frequency to the metal diaphragm 20 of a pre-selected duration upon receipt of such a first signal. In the embodiment shown, the actuator 61 provides a side-to-side vibration to the diaphragm. The diaphragm 20 thus vibrates at the pre-selected frequency, in turn causing the PCB 62 to vibrate at that same frequency, and thus in turn causing the switches 19 to vibrate at that frequency. The switch 19a is in communication with the button 10i, thus causing the button 10i to vibrate at that frequency.

[0045] When the user applies further pressure to the button 10i sufficient to cause the button to move from the second level 25 to a third level 26, the button″s force is applied to switch 19a. Switch 19a receives the force and is configured to transmit a second signal to the controller 9 whenever it receives force to indicate that the button 10i has moved from the second level 25 to the third level 26. The switch 19a does so, and the controller 9 receives the second signal. The controller 9 is configured to transmit a second controller output signal to the actuator 61 upon receipt of this second signal from the switch 19a. The controller 61 transmits the second controller output signal to the actuator 61. The actuator 6 is configured to provide a vibration of a second pre-selected frequency, different from the first pre-selected frequency, for a pre-determined duration to the metal diaphragm 20 upon receipt of such a second signal. In other embodiments, the first and second pre-selected frequencies are the same. As above, the actuator 61 provides a side-to-side vibration to the diaphragm, which is communicated through the PCB 62 and switches 19 to the button 10i.

[0046] When a user applies pressure to the button 10i, which is communicated to the switch 19a, at each level 25, 26, 27, 28, a distinct signal is transmitted by the switch 19a to the controller 9. Thus, in the embodiment shown, different signals are transmitted by the switch 19a for each pressure-applied levels 25, 26, 27, 28.

[0047] In the embodiment shown, a ″dwell to select″function is employed. For example, when a user provides sufficient input to cause the button to move to its second level 25, the first signal is transmitted to the controller 6 continuously while the button receives pressure to push it at or past the second level 25 but not sufficient pressure to push the button 10i to the third level 26. The controller 9 determines the length of time the button is maintained at the second level 25 by monitoring the length of time the first signal is transmitted to the controller 9. If the first signal is received for greater than a pre-determined length of time, the controller determines that the user wishes to ″select″the function associated with the second level 25 by the fact that the user ″dwelled″ at that level for the pre-determined time. Upon so determining, the controller 9 transmits a signal to a processor (not shown) indicating that the user has selected the