

FT102 Review

Yaesu's successor to the FT-101 offers a high quality, versatile receiver together with a transmitter of professional performance standards.

By Tony Bailey G3WPO

The FT-102 transceiver is the latest addition to a long line of equipment from what we have come to expect as one of the leaders in commercial amateur radio rigs. The unit loaned for review was the basic transceiver, with a number of options fitted — the AM/FM facility, with 6kHz AM filter and 1.8kHz narrow SSB filter. A number of additional filters can be fitted for CW. Other outboard accessories are available — in the UK these would normally be the SP-102 External Speaker/Audio Filter (with adjustable AF response), the FV-102DM synthesised scanning external VFO, and the FV-102 1.2kW Antenna Coupler.

Two problems came to light on removing the transceiver from its more than adequate packaging. Firstly, the mains lead was a 3 wire type, but fitted with a 2 pin European moulded plug, so this had to succumb to a pair of wirecutters for fitting a 13 amp plug. Secondly, the unit does not come with a microphone.

This seems a strange omission when you are talking of £700+ of equipment — even the cheaper 2M mobile rigs seem to manage this useful little extra. The handbook details a number of suitable Yaesu mikes, but the only Yaesu one to hand was the wrong impedance.

Even if the correct impedance (low) had been available, it wouldn't have helped as the mike connector is an eight pin special, conspicuously not included in the accessory pack (although plugs for most other sockets are), so some time was lost in obtaining a suitable microphone — a point to bear in mind before you leave the shop. In the meantime, the rig was used on CW.

The overall appearance of the FT-102 is impressive, housed in a very durable enclosure, and following the traditions of modern transceivers, there are 38 controls to play with on the front panel. However, these are sensibly laid out and marked and it only takes a short while to familiarise oneself with those most frequently used. The rear panel possesses a number of sockets, some of which will probably never be used, but again these are all clearly indicated.

The handbook impresses on the reader that the operating voltage of the transceiver should be checked before connection, by reference to a label on the rear panel. Unfortunately, there was no information on this panel, or any shown in the manual photographs. The only place it does appear is on the packaging box that contains the mains lead.

The manual itself is in the usual comprehensive Yaesu style, with explicit operating instructions, backed up by photographs and drawings. Full circuit diagrams are given, the only comment being that Yaesu could take a leaf out of Icoms' book and add typical voltages throughout the circuits.

Facilities Available

The transceiver is fairly wide at 368mm, which may be a consideration on the bench, by 129 high and 309 deep. A nice touch is the provision of an extra pair of feet for the underside which enables the operating tilt to be changed. The tuning knob is positioned centrally, and is pleasant to use with a nice feel, although the reviewer would have preferred a dial capable of being spun, as it takes a while to get from one end of the band (in 500kHz segments) to the other. Tuning rate is 17kHz per turn, as with the 101 series, and the unit is provided with a backlit analogue dial, calibrated in kHz, as well as a bright green fluorescent display, reading to 100Hz.

An addition to the display panel is a set of annunciators showing the reception mode, including any wide or narrow filter options. Two meters