

# Evaluating the FT290R against the C58 Practical Report

There have been a number of recent reviews covering two metre multimodes – the range of portable equipment is evidently becoming more popular. Trio, Icom and FDK do not seem to have catered for this market although they and other manufacturers do produce hand-held equipment. This therefore leaves us with just two multimode portables for 2m – the Standard C58 and the Yaesu FT290R. They are claimed to be multipurpose pieces of equipment – suitable for portable, mobile and base station use. But are they?

By Trevor Butler G6LPZ

Turning first to the Yaesu *FT290R*, the first ever (just) two metre multimode, one would expect the design to be tried and tested and any small problems found on earlier production models to have been rectified. It looks as a portable should look (not to be confused with hand-held equipment) with a compact 58(h) 150(w) and 209(d)mm overall and weighing some 1.79kg complete with batteries. It utilises PLL synthesisers, dual VFOs as well as receiver incremental tuning,

switchable 2.5W/500mW output plus split memory/VFO working and priority channel facilities. It certainly has all the extras, but are they all necessary? Do they hide a good, basic transceiver or a load of drawbacks?

## FT290R

As supplied the frequency coverage on the UK version of the *FT290R* is 144.0 to 145.999MHz, although by cutting the wire link

between pin 38 of the micro-processor and earth (it's the pin nearest the bottom of the micro's pcb) the range is extended to 147.999MHz. This link is one of four controlling frequency coverage and steps. I found the step shifts as supplied – 25kHz/12.5kHz FM and 100Hz/1kHz SSB – to be the most convenient. An option available is a 10kHz/5kHz stepping on FM achieved by joining another two link wires.

## Batteries

8 'C' dry cells or similar size Nickel-Cadmium rechargeable batteries supply power. Alternatively a regulated DC power supply of 11 to 15V may be connected. Full memory back-up is obtained via a long lasting lithium cell (supplied with the rig!) and switchable through an internal switch to conserve its life if the rig is to be out of use for long periods. Access to both the charging socket (3.5mm) and external DC socket (2.1mm) is via the rear panel. Ni-Cads may be charged in situ even if the rig is being driven from an external supply.