

tion, the front panel sports a lot of knobs and switches, providing about 65 functions in all. All the usual ones are there, with the less common extras being ALC meter hold (so you can see the ALC peaks easier), Audio Peak Filter, Notch filter (a disaster — see later), Tone control, Keyer speed (if fitted), TX monitor (and sidetone), and SWR Calibrate for the built in SWR meter. The latter is not of the automatic type as in the Trio 930S.

Frequency displays

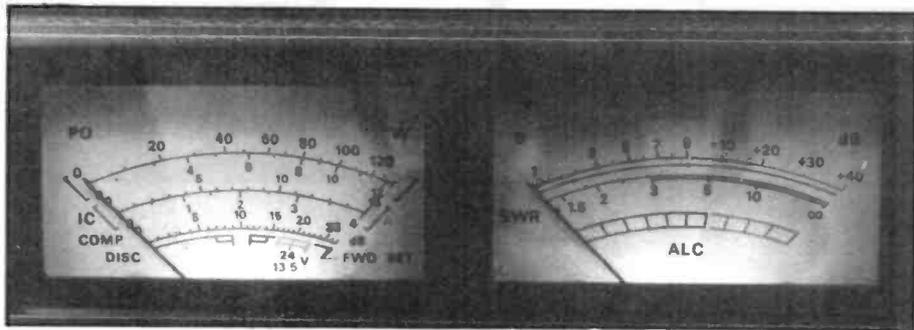
The 980 has two digital readouts — one of which is a 'synthesised analogue display' or, if you like 'a digital analogue display'. The idea is to provide a scale type readout for those who prefer this method of reference over a digital display. In this respect it fails miserably.

Virtually all of the people who saw the rig commented on the wierd readout under the main dial! To explain the way it works is a bit difficult, but what you get is a scrolling set of figures at 50kHz intervals, with a cursor underneath which indicates steps of one kHz. It is a bit confusing to say the least as the cursor moves in the opposite direction to the scrolling scale, and it takes longer to decipher it than read the main display. Maybe there is someone who likes it.

The main frequency display is green fluorescent, and is slightly unusual in that the display down to 10Hz is available if required, although this can be changed to 100Hz by means of one of the keys. A DIM/BRIGHT control is fitted for the night owls working the DX at 2am in the morning. A set of indicators backs up the switches, showing which mode the rig is in. One nice touch is that with rapid tuning the display freezes until the new frequency is reached, and you aren't faced with a rapid blur of figures.

RIT

Receiver and transmitter independent tuning is provided but does have some disadvantages in its implementation. Pressing one or other of the RIT buttons puts it into this mode, and the main tuning knob then becomes the RIT control, with up to ± 10 kHz of shift available. The problem is that once you cancel RIT



Meter scales

you lose the setting, and if you want it back, you have to start all over again. This is a definite disadvantage — I don't recollect any other rig that doesn't allow you to recover the RIT setting if needed. If you are in a 'net' and one station is off-frequency, the RIT will be needed to listen to him. Once someone else comes up you have to cancel it, or retune. Then set it up again when his turn comes round next time.

Scanning

As you might expect from a heavily microprocessor based rig, scanning is offered, via three push switches under the main tuning knob, or via the microphone, or through the external computer. Stepping frequency (the synthesiser increment) is 10Hz and the rate either 300Hz per second or 30kHz per second. I found the slow rate too slow and the fast rate too fast! The high speed would have been better at about 5kHz/second, or even better, settable via the microprocessor to suit the mode. After all, scanning FM requires a different speed to CW, or AM.

Both microphones supplied had scan buttons, but for some reason, the desk mic refused to operate the scan function.

Frequency control

This is under supervision of the micro, and provides several options to arrive at your intended destination. Other than the main tuning knob, any frequency can be entered directly from the bank of buttons at the right centre of the front panel, to an accuracy of 10Hz. Larger changes in frequency are possible — either via a 5kHz UP/DOWN button, which may be single stepped or continuous, or using the UP/DOWN buttons which move the frequency in whole amateur bands at a time

(except in General Coverage mode when the step is 500kHz.)

The 980 does have two separate receive modes — either HAM or GEN, button selectable, which does speed up moving around as against a general coverage only mode.

A 'TABLING' function is also provided, and can be used to set upper and lower frequency limits on either HAM or GEN bands in the scanning mode.

More frequency options

Trying to use the micro to its full extent, there are four buttons which set the source of the controlling frequency for the receiver, transmitter and main display. Selecting the VFO button lets the main general coverage VFO control everything — the normal power-up mode. The MR button selects Memory Recall (see later), while the RX V/RX M buttons allow split frequency operation. The V option lets the VFO control receive, and whichever memory channel is selected on transmit, and the M option the reverse of this. There are LEDs to remind you that split frequency working is being used.

When using split frequency, another button OFFSET FREQ allows the main display to show the frequency difference between the VFO and memory channels. This is useful when wanting to work DX-peditions and you need to know how many kHz you are away from his transmit frequency, without doing mathematics.

If you want to have a look at your memory channels without changing frequency in the process, a CHECK button permits this. Another button V/U allows a unique feature that displays the 100s of MHz digit when a VHF/UHF transverter is in use. I haven't seen this on any other rig and it is a nice cosmetic feature if nothing else.