Yaesu FT726 VHF/UHF multimode transceiver

Marketing an all-singing all-dancing transceiver can be a risky business — it takes only one bad section to let the whole rig down. Has Yaesu's risk paid off? Angus McKenzie investigates the FT726R.

Just occasionally we have seen rigs developed which could be described as 'all eggs in one basket' machines. After years of development, Yaesu have now introduced their more amazing new box, the FT726R into which can be put three seperate bands in the form of modules, the review sample incorporating 70cm, 2m and 6m. USB, LSB, CW and FM modulation us included, and several methods of tuning are available. The normal VFO covers either 10KHz of 100KHz per rotation in 20Hz or 200Hz steps, the VFO being available for all modes. A conventional click position rotary can be selected for FM and programmed to either 12.5 or 25KHz channelling on 2m or 70cm, but the 6m module has 5 and 10KHz channelling.

For the UK market, models sold by official Yaesu dealers will have the previously mentioned channelling, but a hugh variety of alternative modules are available with different frequency ranges and/or different channelling and repeater shifts. You may need to watch out for 'parallel' imports and check to see if they have the correct modules which are better suited to the UK situation. (SMC, who supplied the review model, have pointed out that Japanese home-market models, possibly available in this country as 'black imports', are *not* readily convertible to UK specifications.)

There are also up and down buttons which can be used either to step FM channels, or to start a scan, this latter option cutting in when the button is held on for more than 0.5 second. Audible pip tones show the commencement of scanning, etc. Three buttons on the microphone also select up/down and 12.5KHz steps if the FST button in the middle is depressed at the same time, this FST button duplicating the large/small steps button on the front panel.

Scanning speeds vary from 2KHz/20KHz per second for SSB/CW and FM/VFO to 100/200KHz per second on FM channels. A repeater switch selects either the appropriate up and down repeater shifts on the band selected, or user programmable shifts. A seperate button selects normal or reverse repeter mode, operating properly on both RX and TX.

Two VFOs are incorporated with facilities for splitting them on RX and TX. Ten memories allow mode, frequency and band to be stored. A sweeping function with frequency limits selected by the first and last normal memories allows any required portion of a band to be swept. Buttons control the selection of VFO, call with tone, memory recall, priority channel, memory/VFO changeover and memory write. The two VFOs can be set onto the same frequency by pressing one button.

On the left side of the box, there are two rows of pushbuttons for selecting mode, clarifier with clear (the FM channel knob becomes a clarifier when this is selected), up/down scanning etc., processor on/off, AGC fast/slow, narrow CW filter (optional), FM channels or VFO, noise blanker, and dial lock. A rotary switch selects meter-read discriminator, ALC, or power out. Two meters are provided which have normal modes of S-meter and power out, although indications were not too accurate from these.

The frequency displayed is to the nearest 100Hz, and thus seven digits. Various other functions are also displayed on the meter panel. Along the bottom are split concentric pots for mic gain and drive (variable on all modes from extremely low to full power), shift and bandwidth (centre indented), AF RX gain and squelch, and RF gain and RX tone.

The review sample was supplied with an additional satellite plug in, which, rather astonishingly, allows the user to transmit on one band at the same time as receiving on another. This is quite