

this! From a convenient spot on the South Downs, stations in South London, Kent and Surrey were worked with ease, with the *SB-2X* standing on the ground alongside me and using its built in whip. Finally, using an indoor 4 over 4 at my home QTH I managed to work into South Wales under flat conditions during a recent contest, a distance of about 150 miles!

CW operation

It can be seen that the *SB-2X* is a reasonably good rig for the SSB operator; however, as with the *MX-2*, it is not quite so convenient for CW. I rather get the impression that, as with many 'all mode' rigs, CW has been included as an afterthought since, whilst the performance is adequate, it is rather inconvenient from an operational point of view. For a start, there is no convenient way of putting the rig into transmit other than by pressing the PTT button on the mic, and one is thus left holding the mic in one hand and the key in the other. It is not even possible to wire a foot switch to the socket on the back as explained

earlier. Then there is no side tone, and the key must be removed in SSB operation, so that it is necessary to fumble round the back of the rig to plug the key in when a CW contact is required, and to remember to remove it again afterwards. I am currently devising a modification to provide semi break-in CW and sidetone.

Conclusions

To sum up, the *SB-2X* is a well-built, cheap two meter SSB rig, offering an overall performance similar to the more expensive multimode portables. At £165 with all accessories (but without NiCads) it is about £100 cheaper than the *C58* and *FT290* and is thus very good value for money. It does not, of course, cover the whole band, or offer you FM, memories, scanning, etc., but it covers all the frequencies of interest to the SSB/CW operator, with the possible exception of the satellite band. Even this need not be a drawback, since an operator who is not interested in CW can replace the crystal that covers 144.0 to 144.2 with one covering 145.8 to 146; Mizuho do not market a

suitable crystal, but one could easily be made by one of the crystal suppliers who advertise in this magazine. Furthermore, not everyone needs a multimode rig; you may, like me, already have a perfectly good FM portable, or you may not be interested in FM.

The *SB-2X* also has the advantage that its simplicity will make it easy to maintain and modify, avoiding expensive and time-consuming returns to the manufacturer, and that simplicity should in any case improve reliability, since there is less to go wrong. In conclusion, the *SB-2X* is an ideal rig for the person who wishes to add low power two-metre SSB to whatever facilities they already have. I've enjoyed trying it out. See you on .300.

As a special offer to HRT readers only, Lowe Electronics will be selling the SB-2X at the reduced price of £145, reduced from the list price of £165, for the month following the publication of this issue of the magazine.

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