REVIEW: Jupiter 2 Handheld scanner

The Jupiter II is a wideband monitor receiver covering 25MHz to 550MHz, and 800MHz to 1300MHz, with selectable FM and AM modes of reception. As such, at the time of writing it is the handheld scanner with the widest frequency coverage available, on par with many dedicated 'top of the range' base station scanner receivers. A glance at some of the many frequency guides on the market

Handheld scanners now cover a wide range, so we checked out the latest to appear in the UK.

shows the wide range of services the Jupiter II is capable of receiving, such as 27MHz and 934MHz CB, cordless phones, VHF, UHF and Band III two-way radio, VHF and Cellular Radiophones, civil and military aircraft, VHF marine users, and the 29MHz, 50MHz, 70MHz, 145MHz, 433MHz and 1296MHz amateur bands.

Do however remember that in the UK, deliberate monitoring of some of these frequencies is strictly speaking illegal, although in other countries where HRT is also read even military frequencies such as the 300MHz aircraft range may be openly monitored. Amateur radio frequencies may of course be received, and reception of the civil aircraft bands and marine communications (excluding telephone links) is usually accepted by some authorities without the fear of user prosecution, but do be warned!

Features

The set measures 67mm (W) × 175mm (H) × 40mm (D), with an internal battery compartment housing 4 AA size cells which power the set when in portable use. An external 12V DC socket is provided to allow charging of nicads, as well as powering the set itself provided any internal dry cells (such as alkaline manganese, if fitted) are removed. A telescopic whip terminated in a BNC connector is supplied as a portable aerial, which may be extended up to a maximum length of 510mm, and an alternative aerial may be connected in place of this if required for home or mobile use. A tactile keypad is provided for digital control of the set's functions, a large lcd (liquid crystal display) showing the set's frequency, mode of operation, memory state and so on, this display may be backlit for night time use. An internal speaker is fitted on the case front, which is supplemented by a 3.5mmm external speaker socket on the top panel. Concentric rotary volume and squelch controls are fitted on the top panel, next to a push button on/off switch.

Frequencies

Receive frequencies may be entered directly using the set's front panel keypad, by simply keying in the required frequency followed by a press of the 'Enter' key. The reception mode may be toggled between AM and Narrow-Band FM by use of a 'Function' key followed by the 'AM/FM' key, 'AM' being indicated on the lcd when this mode is enabled. A useful feature of the scanner is that once a frequency has been entered, you can manually tune away from it by the use of Up/Down buttons, the tuning increment being selectable to either 5kHz, 10kHz, 12.5kHz, 25kHz or 30kHz steps, with the display changing accordingly.