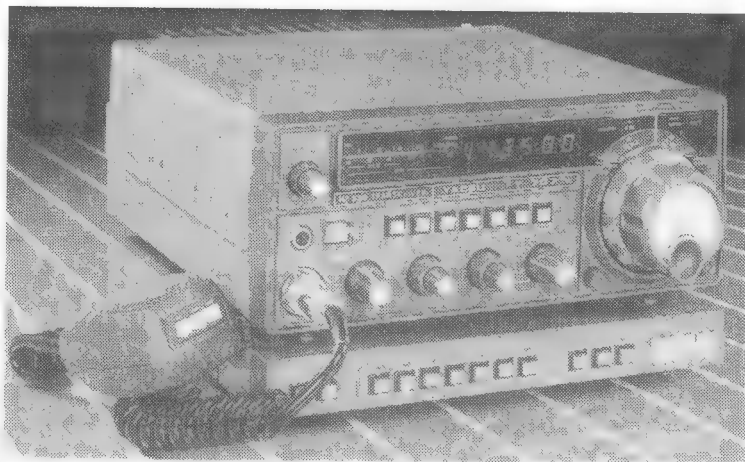


Amateur transceivers I have owned...

FT-707

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Now that all amateurs have access to the HF bands we expect to see more activity and a group of amateurs looking for HF gear for the first time. Some of these up grading and newly licensed amateurs may not be able to afford one of the "new black box" transceivers, priced at \$3000 or more. You do not need all the "bells and whistles" on your transceiver to get "on air" to have an enjoyable QSOs. Second-hand or "pre loved" AR equipment can and will get you on the air at 1/4 to 1/2 or less the cost of a new unit. It would be a shame to loose some of these keen new HF operators because they felt they could not afford a suitable transceiver. I hope over the next 12 months or so to review some of these "pre loved" transceivers.



The dos and don'ts of buying pre-loved gear

One warning I wish to make is to be careful of equipment in certain situations. If you visit the seller's shack: Is it reasonably tidy? Is the equipment in reasonable condition, clean, lights work, complete with knobs and controls? Can you hear and see it run into an antenna on all bands, all modes? If the seller has a good dummy load/watt meter, see that it puts out the correct amount of RF power. Ask why he/she is selling the transceiver! Has he/she bought a new replacement?

Deceased Estates can be a source of good working gear. It was probably being used and working well before the owner became a silent key. Unfortunately one usually can not try it out before buying. Beware of equipment used by heavy smokers. The tobacco smoke/fumes can get in everywhere and dirty electrical contacts, like switches etc. Cleaning can be difficult but if the price is right and you feel capable of cleaning the unit thoroughly, it may be a bargain! Club "Buy & Sell" days are another source of used equipment. The seller/owner is usually standing there offering the gear. You can size them both up. He/she can

tell you why it is for sale. Some clubs offer a test site and with the seller's permission, you can try it out. A chat to fellow amateurs may reveal any idiosyncrasies of the particular transceiver. Buying from "Hamads" in AR or on the Internet can be a risk especially if it is from interstate. If the seller is in your state or even in your city it is easier. It's good to take a knowledgeable amateur friend with you in these instances. If you know the seller from QSOs you may have had with him/her its even better. You may have even heard the unit on the air. I have purchased simpler equipment i.e., ATU, SWR meters from interstate amateur sellers with no trouble. One piece of AR equipment that I owned and used over 20 yrs ago, was the Yaesu FT-707. The FT-707 came out in about 1980. It was an all solid state HF transceiver, covering 3.5 MHz to 29 MHz, LSB, USB, CW, & AM. Nominally 100 W SSB Out, 50 W AM. It required 13.5 VDC at 20 A to run it. All the usual features were available, VOX, NB, ALC, 2AGC ranges, and a clarifier. It also had IF band width control 300 Hz to 2.5 kHz. On the rear, besides the massive heat sink and cooling fan, it had the usual DC input socket, PL259 antenna socket, key,

speaker, PTT, and 2 Din type sockets for the remote digital VFO.

My FT-707

The pictures show the front views of the transceiver and its accessories. The front panel is dominated by the large tuning knob, with a nice feel. The set has a nice digital display of 6 digits, 10s of MHz to 100 Hz, the knob also had analogue calibrations, all illuminated in a soft green glow. There is 100s of kHz on the outer, 10s of kHz on the inner, with calibrations of kHz in between. You could set the frequencies quite well with this dial. The "S" meter was a sign of things to come. A Led Bar Graph. Green to S9, Yellow to +20, and Red to +40/60. Excellent to read when mobile. It also reads ALC or RF Power Out. The rest of the panel was taken up by the usual controls. Starting from the left Mic gain, Carrier, Power On/Off, Phones, Mic socket, Mode Switch, RF/AF gain, Clarifier, IF Width Control and Band Switch. Along with push buttons for Mox, AGC, 25kHz Marker, ALC, FIX crystal locked frequencies, NB, and Clarifier. The VOX and VOX delay are 2 small knobs just below and each side of the lovely big tuning knob. The designations are white on the grey and

khaki painted case (popular at the time). It is relatively compact for the 80s. 93H X 24OW X 295D. It weighs 6.5 kg. With the name of the "Wayfarer" it is surprising that there is no folding handle on the side.

I used my 707 both as a home station and portable/mobile. At home it was used on 80,40,20 and 15 metres most times with no complaints. Strong locals did not worry it. Mobile operation in the metropolitan area is a waste of time to me. QRM from older cars, petrol stations, TAB shops, they radiate massive amounts of RF noise. I had motor bike's

ignition noise obliterate "S9" +20 signals on 7 MHz. I believe the spark signal radiated from some of the motor bikes is greater than Marconi's first signal across the Atlantic! You can hear them before you can see them. Once you get out in the countryside it is much quieter. I have worked Gs, Ds, Es, and Ws, with the FT-707 into a Kenwood MA5 Mobile Whip on the VW Camper Van, bowling along a county road at 80 ks. The Noise Blanker worked well on my own ignition noise and other peoples.

I had the FV-707DM digital VFO, the FC-707ATU along with the FP-707 AC Power Supply. The Rack Mount shown in the catalogue looked as if it had been made with bits bought from your local hardware store, not worth the money. I held the Transceiver, the VFO, and the ATU together with a pair of aluminium side plates via the mounting screws. Painted a similar khaki colour it looked neat. If the preloved transceiver you have the opportunity to buy has the FV-707 VFO, it is worth having. It may not have all the memories the modern transceiver has, but it is excellent for mobile operation, along with the UP/DOWN buttons on the Mic. It also lets you work "Split" for the DX nets. It was a sign of things to come in transceivers.

The FC-707 ATU is neat and slim. The internal 100 W dummy load can be useful. Another amateur and I had an amusing incident with this function. We were trying the set up our mobile in the

campervan. I was driving and Tony was sitting in the back trying it all out. Next thing he says, "Something is wrong with it! It's dead on all bands, you had better stop, the antenna must have fallen off." We stopped and I got into the back to check things out. The antenna was OK but the set was "dead". I looked at all

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the controls. There on the ATU the little green Led above the dummy load push switch was lit. I turned it off and the set burst into life! We looked at one another and burst out laughing.

For Portable operation the FC-707 ATU enables you to work into "Stealth" antennas. The SWR Meter is a good size and is illuminated at night. A 66 ft length of Green coloured hook-up wire can be thrown up into a gum tree, watch out for the Koalas, with the aid of a scruffy old tennis ball. An earth stake, an old screw driver is OK, driven into the ground and connected to the earth of the tuner, lets you work the "Longwire" against ground. Try using a big battery clip onto the Tap/water pipe often close to your caravan site. You may have to vary the length of the Longwire to make it load up on your chosen bands.

For Mobile use I modified the Yaesu YH-2 Boom Mic/Headset used on the FT-290R, to work on the 707. It worked well, rolling along the highways. With the VOX facility it made life easy, but there was a trap! As there is no switch to switch the VOX off or on, you had to remember to turn the control back to zero, other wise if you took your headset off, left it say on the

dashboard, all the world heard all the chatter, coughs, sneezes and F ... s. I stopped using VOX after this happened.

The FP-707 power supply runs the whole station with ease. With the speaker built in, you don't have a loose speaker to worry about. The PSU has never blown a fuse, primary or secondary. In the warmer weather it has only got warm, along with the heat sink on the transceiver. An added feature is a pair of red and black terminals with the 13.5 V DC on the back. This enables other equipment, say 2m FM to be used at the same time. I used to run my FT-290R this way.

The whole set up, FT-707, FV-707DM, FC-707 ATU, and FP-707 PSU, makes a neat set up, for home or portable.

If you are a newly licensed Amateur and looking for AR equipment that won't break the bank, the FT-707, with or without the auxiliary equipment in reasonably good condition is worth having. Take my advice, along with that of other experienced Amateurs, and keep an eye open for such a transceiver. I still have an FC-707 ATU and an FP-707 PSU, which has been in almost daily use for the past 20 or more years with no trouble at all.

All the best to the new Amateurs on HF.
Steve VK5AIM.

