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# The Yaesu FTM-200DR/DE

## Practical Wireless Rating



Neat, nice and easy to use.

**Richard Constantine G3UGF** takes a look at another new Yaesu on the block!

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In a previous review of Yaesu's current range of mobile offerings I begged the question as to why this manufacturer would wish to introduce yet another model into the VHF/UHF Amateur Radio mix. My first impressions were that they could see some erosion of their traditional markets, from lower cost, lower spec, competitors and like any sustainable business that they needed a new strategy. Designing all new models around a common platform makes a lot of engineering and commercial sense.

Readers familiar with my earlier reviews in this range will easily recognise that the new FTM-200D has the same footprint as its stable mates. It's manufactured on the same, unique to Yaesu, cast alloy chassis that forms the entire heatsink for this 50W max radio. See March issue review of the FTM-6000E.

It also has the same, rear mounted, 'belts and braces', high quality, near silent fan that draws air through the whole of the underside of the radio. A system they call Funnel Air Convection Conduction (FACC). Yaesu seems to be slightly

ahead of the game here in terms of global warming. How long before we need nitrogen cooling systems for our radios... I wonder?

With all the heavy design and engineering innovations done, their common platform puts them in a good place to more than compete with spurious newcomers to market. Side by side with some lower cost and less featured alternatives, you can clearly see the difference in ease of use, design and quality.

### What's in the Box?

As usual the radio arrives with fused DC cable, an 82-page detailed, step-by-step handbook plus a USB firmware, data lead for PC and transceiver pack connection. There's the optional use separation cable for remote mounting of the head/control unit, a metal desk stand and a fist microphone. I've previously muttered about the desk stand being only a piece of bent metal with no weight to it and also the flimsy cover on their otherwise very useful handbooks.

### Here's a Tip

Always curb your initial enthusiasm, photocopy the handbook and invest in a ring binder. It's

standard practice for this reviewer. I copy mine to A4 size, much easier to read and follow, and it's always there as a backup when you lose the original or it falls apart.

Incidentally, if you visit the files section of the Yaesu website, you can download a selection of additional, excellent and separate manuals for the FTM-200D to fill your ring binder, including an advanced manual plus others for APRS, Wires-X and portable digital nodes.

In the past I've chuntered about the provision of only half of what's needed to remotely install the radio in a vehicle or at desk level, as the microphone socket is on the transceiver pack, not the detachable head unit. There's a cable to remote the head unit but no microphone extension lead. Owners will need to buy one or, make up an RJ style lead with a back-to-back extender, to re-connect at the microphone end. Yaesu, why not omit the ubiquitous USB lead (I've got several like it, in a drawer) in favour of a microphone lead?

On the upside, the mounting cradle is very nice and I've not really given it due credit before. Well designed, it's not just a simple, bent metal bracket and screws, like many

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others. It's a proper slide-in cradle with a lever spring release and the ability to securely lock the radio in place with a screw, one of the best around.

The latest generation SSM-85D, DTMF keyboard, hand microphone, is identical to others supplied in this range. Having used them for quite some time now, I really like them. Subtly backlit keys plus a red TX LED, the microphones sport top-mounted, up-down keys for frequency or memory scanning.

There's a conveniently located MUTE button, for those barking dogs, calls for dinner, small children and unexpected road-rage moments. Nice one. The radio supports Bluetooth as an option.

Four self-programmable function keys and the ability to recall memory channels direct from the keyboard, make it a very useful and convenient tool. By the way, the speech quality is excellent, crisp and clean. The radio supports the snapshot picture function. For this, the optional and dedicated MH-85A11U microphone that connects to the data port on the right side of the head unit is required. To record and display incoming pictures a micro memory card (32GB max) must be installed on the left side of the head unit.

The memory card is an absolute 'must have' for backing up transceiver data, memories, voice recording and playback, GPS log data and GM/Wires-X messages. It isn't included as standard.

The detachable front panel is around 10mm lower in height than the FTM-300D. Cosmetically it looks slightly better for it. The clear and easy-to-see display is the same size with a colour choice of White, Blue or Red. Neither model has a touchscreen.

## Features

The radio has three transmit power levels of 50, 25 and 5W FM output. It's a double-conversion receiver with IFs at 58.05MHz and 450kHz. Receiver sensitivity on both 2m and 70cm is 0.2µV for 12dB SINAD. Higher bands are less sensitive. Internal speaker audio is a very loud and clear 3W, plus a 3.5mm extension socket to the rear.

Features include 1104 Alpha-tag programmable memories. Excellent when like



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me you can't remember why you programmed that frequency in the first place. Plus, it has a wideband Rx 108-999.95MHz, and high-speed bandscope covering 61 channels in VFO mode and 21 channels in memory mode. There's a 66 channel GPS receiver for APRS function, 1200/9600 data port to the rear, VOX and recording for both voice and snapshot (micro-SD card required).

Pressing the top right *Band* button allows selection of any one of five bands, for either A or B VFOs. Access or skip option for each band can be selected in the software menu. At my location there's no point in including marine band frequencies on a daily basis, but I like to have them available when I'm travelling.

Automatic Memory scan is interesting as, when in use, it sets itself to whatever mode of transmission is being received.

The bandscope mentioned above, that centres on whatever the dial frequency

**Photo 1:** FTM 200D in cradle with mic  
**Photo 2:** Active channel, displaying current setup.  
**Photo 3:** Remote mount with bandscope showing activity just below 2m calling channel.  
**Photo 4:** Head unit with current channel set up displayed.  
**Photo 5:** Transceiver pack internal with mic and speaker.

currently is, proves useful to find activity both simplex or repeater when you're out of your home area.

## PMG Included

First seen in the FT-5D handportable (see *PW* Jan 2022) the radio has the newly available Priority Memory Group (PMG). This allows up to five PMG channels to be registered either from the dial or from a recalled memory, simply by pressing the front panel, *PMG-PW* button, on the right-hand side. This has proved excellent when mobile for a quick logging of an active frequency.

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Recalling the *PMG* list allows for manual return to any of the five channels or auto-scanning to monitor for potential activity.

In normal operation the radio has the usual scan-stop, scan and resume, scan limits etc. for both band and memory channels. There's a programmable skip function for selected channels, when memory scanning.

It's worth pointing out that while this model only has one receiver and the display shows both switchable A and B VFOs, monitoring two bands at once can easily be achieved by making use of the fast scanning systems built into the software. Also, when pre-programmed for local use, *PMG* scan function means, most users simply won't be aware of the single RX.

It's all down to how you customise the radio for your requirements and pleasure. In doing this the *F-menu* key is your friend. It works in conjunction with the main dial control and the *SQL-back* button. Manufacturers like to offer a lot of play value these days and the FTM-200D has it in spades.

Most of the buttons on the radio have a dual-press capability, as you can see from the legends. I'll come to the short press on the *F-menu* key in a moment.

A long press on this key reveals the main menu list of up to a potential of 118 features, each with a sub-menu choice. The list is scrolled from the main dial control and the sub-menu choice for each option selected by a push on the control. After selecting the wanted function that can be anything from step rate, mic gain deviation brightness, shift, tone, colour and much more, escape is achieved by use of the *SQL-back* button.

### Now for the Magic!

A short press on the *F-menu*, reveals the current setup for the dial frequency. This is something I've not seen before. It's a great little feature for an easily confused operator like me, always changing things around when researching for a review.

For some reason I had lost access to my local repeater and couldn't understand it – much head scratching and menu scrolling. Shift and CTCSS tone were in place but it didn't work. A quick press on the *F-Menu* immediately informed me that I had the wrong squelch mode selected for the CTCSS to activate. Into the main menu by long press, change mode and back out – brilliant, a self-troubleshooting radio!

Active settings are illuminated in the short press display menu, with non-active settings greyed out. The operator can even change what information is to be displayed, on screen. I love it!

### C4FM – Worldwide System

Of course, the big plus with this radio is that it gives access to the worldwide C4FM Wires-X network. Over the various generations of using and reviewing Yaesu models, I've noted that software tweaks and display presentation changes seem to have made access and C4FM operation easier and easier. I currently have a remote mount FTM-400D in my campervan and I like the big display. However, unlike the review model it only has C4FM digital capability on the A band VFO.

Keeping 2m and 70cm on separate VFOs for convenience means for me that any 2m C4FM repeaters need to be in a memory. Over various reviews I've seen accessing and displaying

C4FM and its many room choices improve. This new radio is a piece of cake. Many repeaters remain far too inactive during daytime hours particularly. On the basis of use it or lose it, activating a 'room' is a great way to ear-wig, start or join a conversation. I've enjoyed having this radio on my office desk dialled into 'America-Link' in the afternoons. The radio's inbuilt GPS system calculates/displays the distance from my location to the active station

### APRS

Automatic Packet Reporting System is another option in this radio and enjoying something of a resurgence right now. As part of the system I do like looking at the electronic compass and graphic display altimeter, ideal for /P, not forgetting the inbuilt clock display. It's not something I've personally had an application for. I can see the benefit for groups of users, handheld to mobile etc indicating course, direction and speed for station location and messaging. As mentioned earlier there's an APRS-specific 56-page manual for this radio on the Yaesu website. It's well worth a read and who knows, it may spark a new interest, once you have the radio.

### Final Words

Having experienced and in some cases owned, the whole of Yaesu's current VHF/UHF model range, plus some earlier models, I find this radio fascinating. It's a mid-range model with some higher-end features and benefits, many more than my editor would possibly allow me space to detail here.

I see Yaesu attempting to future-proof themselves from some of the pretenders to their market. I also see them working to offer amateurs a range of choice and cost options in uncertain economic times. World prices are on the rise for just about everything. A retired radio dealer and importer myself, I know how tough that can be – please support your preferred supplier.

Despite my mutterings about certain things (that's my job), the FTM-200D offers a lot of quality and facility for the money. It has some very slick, user-friendly software and some uniquely Yaesu features. The user experience is very satisfying while making the most of its single receiver design.

It may be of no interest to some but I will own up to being a little biased. I like Bluetooth, especially when mobile. Personally, I'm disappointed that the BU-4 module (circa £30.00) is an add-on and not supplied as standard, but it's not a deal breaker. The radio is neat, it's very nice and once programmed, easy to use. For me it's a very solid 4.5 stars and well worth spending that little bit extra in the mid-range market.

Price at time of press FTM-200DE £349.95. My thanks to ML&S for early provision of this radio. **PW**

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