

KLM Multi-2700

When the Future Arrived at the Shack

There was a time in ham radio when turning on a transceiver was also like opening a small window into the future.

There were no color displays, digital memories, menus, waterfalls, or spectrum displays stretching from one end of a monitor to the other. There were knobs, switches, analog meters, and the distinctive glow of the indicators of that era. And yet, some radios seemed to be several years ahead of their time.



One of them was the KLM Multi-2700.

Introduced during the second half of the 1970s, the Multi-2700 was a 2-meter transceiver that did not want to be just another FM radio. KLM designed it as a true multimode station, capable of operating NBFM, WBFM, AM, USB, LSB, and CW. For a ham radio operator of that era, this was much more than a list of features: it was an invitation to explore.

The radio incorporated a 600-channel PLL synthesizer with 10 kHz steps, along with a continuously tunable VFO covering 144 to 148 MHz with 1 kHz readout. It also offered RIT, VOX, audio compression, a noise blanker, power and FM deviation meters, independent filters for SSB and FM, and an integrated AC/DC power supply.

But perhaps one of its most fascinating features was its connection to the OSCAR program.

The Multi-2700 incorporated a receiver for the 10-meter link used by the OSCAR satellites of that era and could operate transceive between 2 and 10 meters. For those who looked toward the sky searching for signals coming from a satellite, that capability made the radio something very special.

Nostalgia Corner

We Have to Remember the Era.

Today, we can select a frequency with a keypad, enter an uplink frequency and a downlink frequency, and let the radio do much of the work. In the 1970s, working a satellite required knowledge, patience, and a good dose of experimentation.

The Multi-2700 attempted to put some of that technology within the reach of the ham radio operator.

And it did so with an appearance that, today, is impossible not to look at with a certain sense of nostalgia.



28 Pounds of Ham Radio.

That was approximately how much the radio weighed, enclosed in a cabinet nearly 15 inches wide. The catalogs of the time advertised a minimum output of 10 watts and proudly highlighted a phrase that, today, seems almost naïve: "NO TUNING!"

To us, it may seem like a simple feature. Back then, it wasn't necessarily so.

The price was not small either. Advertisements from the time listed it at around \$695.95 to \$799.95, depending on the publication and the time. It was a considerable investment for a ham radio operator in the late 1970s.

But that is precisely where part of its charm begins.

The Multi-2700 was not created to become a decorative collector's piece. It was conceived as an advanced communications station for its time. And some of those radios were actually used to explore OSCAR satellites and experiment with 2-meter SSB.

Decades later, stories from ham operators who remember those days can still be found.

One owner who wrote about the radio recalled buying his Multi-2700 new in 1976 and using it to work OSCAR-10. Another ham operator said that, after selling his many years ago, he eventually regretted it and went looking for another one. They are small stories, but they say a great deal about the relationship some operators developed with these machines.

Nostalgia Corner

Because that is what makes ham radio different.

A transceiver can be technically outdated and yet still have a story.

Perhaps someone learned SSB on it.

Perhaps someone else heard a distant station on 2 meters for the first time.

Maybe their first satellite contacts were recorded in a paper logbook alongside a date, a frequency, and a callsign that today belongs to another generation.



And perhaps, in some shack, one of these radios is still waiting for someone to slowly turn its dial once again.

The Multi-2700 also reminds us how much technology has changed. That machine, which in 1977 might have seemed futuristic, can seem large and simple today when compared with a modern SDR. Yet it had something that no specification can measure: it represented the possibilities a ham radio operator could imagine at that moment.

It was an era when opening a copy of 73 Magazine or QST could awaken the desire to build, experiment, and hear something that had never been heard before. Catalogs were windows into other worlds, and photographs of new radios could remain in the imagination for months as someone saved money for their next transceiver.

The KLM Multi-2700 belonged precisely to that era.

An era of analog technology, experimental satellites, homebuilt antennas, and entire nights spent waiting for a signal to appear through the noise.

Today, when a Multi-2700 is powered on again after decades, it may not be the most practical way to operate on 2 meters.

But perhaps that was never the point.

Some radios survive not because they were the best equipment of their generation.

They survive because they tell a story.

And when a light comes on across their front panel after so many years, for a moment we are not simply listening to a radio signal.

We are listening to a small fragment of the history of ham radio.