

Discovering The Icom IC-718



● The Icom IC-718...great fun says Helen 2E0AVH!

Product	Icom IC-718 h.f. transceiver
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Helen Watt 2E0AVH takes a look at the Icom IC-718 from the Novice Radio Amateur's, and busy 14-year old student's point of view on behalf of all those in the same situation, writing it up in the idiom of her age group!

● Keen young Helen Watt 2E0AVH enjoying using the IC-718. She enjoys using s.s.b., c.w., and PSK31. (Photo G3ZBU)

I was very fortunate indeed to be chosen by the Editor to write an article specifically from the point of view of a Novice (now Intermediate) Licensee, taking a look at the 'entry level' IC-718 h.f. transceiver.

First impressions were that the transceiver was a perfect size, for a teenager's desk - 240mm length and width by about 105mm height. The tuning knob was about 50mm diameter, which is a great size and you can actually hold it and accurately tune signals!

Really Cool!

The IC-718 transceiver's also really 'cool' because it's a nice smart black all over with a funky orange backlit l.c.d. display. And there's matching orange numbers on the numeric keypad - how groovy is that?

There aren't too many knobs on the rig - just enough to control the basics. But most things can be adjusted with the buttons of which there are 26 including power.

Now the fun started when we Dad (Alister G3ZBU) and I connected it up - we used a 12V 5.7AH lead acid battery because there's no in-built

a.c. power supply on the IC-718. Dad then erected a 7MHz dipole so we could see what we could work on that band and 21MHz.

The transceiver has a built-in attenuator and pre-amplifier, but may I just ask why they can be put on at the same time? What's the point?

We decided on 7MHz because this is the band where the signals are strongest and so any deficiencies in the transceiver would become apparent. So, everything was ready and it was switched on...but there wasn't any sound!

Dad said "Helen, why doesn't it work? There's no sound coming from it!". In reply I immediately went over and examined it - and with a slight twist of my wrist I turned the RF/squelch and Hey Presto! There was a sudden burst of life.

It turned out that the **RF/Squelch** control was a dual function. This is unlike most other receivers with squelch and an r.f. gain control that is normally left fully clockwise.

Watt's 50W!

The IC-718 transceiver is capable of putting out 100W which is far in excess of the Novice (Intermediate)

requirements, so Dad's first priority was to adjust the power to 50W. His motto is "If all else fails, **read the instructions**"...and because there's power adjustment knob on the front panel, we decided to search through the instruction manual.

We discovered that you can use the **Set** button to change a lot of features, power being one of them. Then you just use the tuning knob in conjunction with up-and-down control. We would not have found this without the instructions - there isn't an F1 button for help (moral...**read the manual!**).

When changing power you can see numbers from L through to 99 and H. Dad set it to read 50, as he thought it would give out 50W. But (usually) wise Dad was mistaken! The battery voltage affects the output; and you really need an accurate external power meter (although we found that the values are not far off those quoted).

On The Air

Next we went on the air; I contacted YT6A (Yugoslavia, with 5+9 reports both ways. I also heard a Scout station from Operate (Portugal). The next weekend I did some operating on 21MHz in a CQWW phone contest and worked from Canada to Russia at about one QSO a minute!

Then my friend **Richard Gale 2E0AVG** had a go and contacted 11 countries, got 25 QSOs and 7 CQ zones. Then Dad had a go and got 24 contacts and seven CQ zones.

The 2E0 callsign caused a lot of grief because many people couldn't understand it and didn't even know what country it was! However, the further away we worked, the easier it became and one American commented that Richard had a "very neat" callsign"!

After that, the next weekend, the Club Calls contest was taking place on 'Top Band'. Here I



worked 29 stations in just over an hour, six of them were club stations.

Richard then took over and got 14 QSOs, eight of which were club stations. Dad then had a go and got 23 in 48 minutes. Many people stopped briefly during the busy contest to say how good the quality of our signal was.

Looking back...it was really good fun, and so easy to operate, you just 'turn the knob and go basically'. Richard, Dad and I all got such similar results too - Dad was bursting with pride for us!

For operation on c.w. the IC-718 has a built in electronic keyer which needs to be defeated if you use a straight key like I use. The manual had to be referred to because all else failed! I forgot Dad's golden rule) and for this you have to use a different setting, and power up the rig with the **Set** button pressed..

Dad connected the transceiver up to his laptop and received PSK31 with *WinPSKse* software and I played around with that, it was really good and I decoded a Polish station who was working **2E0RAF**. The *WinPSKse* program can decode two QSOs simultaneously by clicking the right and left mouse buttons anywhere on the audio spectrum display; try it....it's great fun. PSK31 **needs a stable receiver and there was no noticeable drift on this rig at all.**

Richard Gale 2E0AVG joined in the fun and worked some good DX with the budget-priced IC-718. (Photo G3ZBU)



As an experiment we tried to see how low it would go in receive mode and the answer is 30kHz. This allows you to receive the lowest bands, which are 73 and 136kHz.

Small & Light

The IC-718 is so small and light it's really easily taken up the garden to adjust antenna tuning units. Even though the rig has a built in s.w.r. meter on its l.c.d. display, it didn't exactly match the results from an external meter. You have to take the readings with a pinch of salt...that's why most people seem use external meters with their transceivers...whatever make they may be.

There is an adjustable noise blanker on the rig. The default position was set at 50 (which didn't really do anything) but when turned up it effectively got rid of impulse noise. However, if it was

turned up too high it would distort s.s.b. signals, so it's a control to be used carefully.

The Icom IC-718 was great fun too and was also a very nice little rig that was easy to operate. We all enjoyed playing about with it and it was very versatile and puts out more than enough power for Novices like myself. Guess what I'm going to ask for next Christmas? Thank you Icom for loaning it to me!

Pros & Cons

Pros: The Icom IC-718 was great fun too and was also very nice little rig that was easy to operate. We all enjoyed playing about with it. Very versatile and puts out more than enough power for Novices like myself.

Cons: No internal power supply. **And you must read the manual!**

Price

£699.99 RRP inc. VAT

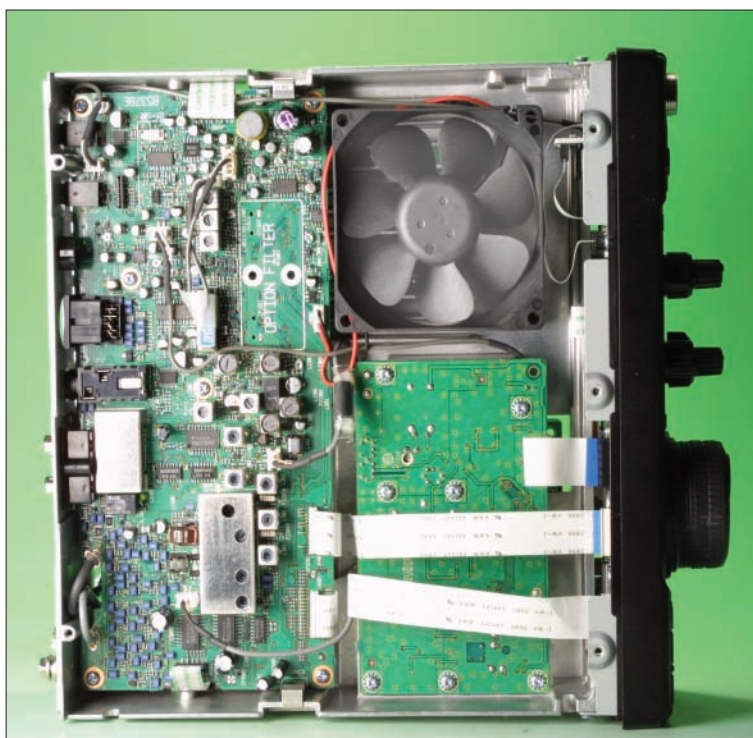
Summary

Very versatile and puts out more than enough power for Novices like myself.

Thanks

My thanks for the loan of the review transceiver go to **Icom (UK) Ltd., Sea Street, Herne Bay, Kent CT6 8LD. Tel: (01227) 741741, FAX: (01227) 741742. E-mail: info@icomuk.co.uk**

Dad, Alister G3ZBU provided the antenna erecting expertise and support for daughter Helen and also enjoyed using the IC-718 too!



Small and light it may be (no internal power supply) but the IC-718 is no light-weight performer and is well equipped with good heat-sinking and cooling.



Rear panel view of the IC-718.

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