

# MT

# REVIEW

## Eton/Grundig G4000A

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If the newly-released Eton/Grundig G4000A looks suspiciously like a Yacht Boy 400PE (YB400PE), it should. A sales representative from Eton reassured me that it was different, but couldn't tell me how. An Eton technician, however, said the two were identical with the exception of the case. It looks like this review will be a re-review of the YB400PE, now known as the Eton/Grundig G4000A.

I personally own a YB400 (not the PE version) to which I will occasionally refer in perspective.

### First Glance

I must admit, the silver-toned case adds a bit more "professional" finish to the G4000A, and is probably more durable than the black – my YB400 shows the accumulation of years of use and minute dust particles quite visibly. The G4000A's footprint is about 8" W X 5" H X 1.5" D, which makes it a handy size for taking with you wherever your recreational activities lead you.

The LCD multi-function display is about 2" X 1" and displays all of the necessary information including mode, frequency, time, selected clock, memory channel, signal strength and stereo signal detection. There is a button on the top of the radio to turn on a green backlight for ten seconds, unless switched off sooner by another button press.

The G4000A covers longwave from 144 kHz to 353 kHz, AM broadcast from 520 kHz to 1710 kHz, short wave from 1711 kHz to 30 MHz, and FM broadcast from 87.5 MHz to 108 MHz. It receives AM, FM, and SSB modes, and has provision for FM stereo reception through the headphone jack located on the left side of the radio.

### Ergonomics

Being a simple portable, the controls on the G4000A are spaced conveniently for use by the right thumb when the radio is held using two hands.

There is a LOCK button on the front panel to prevent accidentally changing a setting by pressing a front panel button. While the radio is off and locked, power cannot be turned on until it's unlocked; however, if the radio is on and locked, pressing "power" will shut the radio off. I personally like the lock function, mainly for the power-on protection while carrying the radio in its case; it's possible otherwise to turn on power accidentally and kill your batteries without realizing it.

The speaker looks to be about 3" in diameter and is located on the left half of the front panel. Either of two clock functions is selected by a button on the front panel.

### Warning Sign?

I usually lower my expectations whenever I see a "reset" button on a communications product, and on the G4000A it's on the front panel. In my experience, this typically indicates marginal operating software that occasionally "locks up" the radio. I'm happy to report, however, that in the eleven years I've used my YB400, I have never had to use the reset button.

### Changing Frequency

Frequency change is accomplished by any of four ways: a twelve-key keypad, up/down tuning buttons, selection of a memory channel, or Auto Tuning. There is no tuning knob on the G4000A – which is one thing I like to have – but there is a fine-tuning knob on the radio's upper right side for clarifying single-sideband (SSB) signals.

Keypad entry is as simple as entering a frequency using the numeric keys and pressing the Frequ./Meter button. Meter-bands can be immediately accessed by entering the band number and once again pressing the Frequ./Meter button.

Step sizes for the up/down tuning buttons are selected using a button on the front

panel, with two step sizes available for each frequency range: 1 or 10 kHz for the longwave and AM broadcast ranges, and 1 or 5 kHz for shortwave. Those who are outside the US can select 9 kHz longwave and AM step sizes instead of the U.S. 10 kHz. The step size for FM broadcast is fixed at 50 kHz.

Memory channel selection can be done by either entering the memory channel number and pressing one of the up/down Memo buttons, or by pressing one of the Memo buttons until it scrolls to the channel you desire. If you hold one of the up/down Memo buttons longer, the radio will begin scanning through the memory channels, stopping at each one for about five seconds, then proceeding to the next. Frequency storage to a memory channel is as easy as entering a number from 1 to 40 and pressing the Store button.

I equate the Auto Tuning feature to more of a "Seek" function. Depending on the duration of the Auto-Tuning key press, the radio will tune up or down in frequency (with the receive audio muted) until it finds a station. There is no "dwell then resume" capability for this feature. While listening to shortwave, the Auto Tuning feature is confined to the shortwave broadcast bands. There is a list of these bands and their associated frequency ranges printed on the back of the radio.



## ❖ Sleep and Auto-On

For those of us who like to fall asleep to our favorite radio station, there is a sleep button on the front panel that provides play time in ten-minute increments; with each press, starting at the maximum of sixty minutes, it counts down to "off."

If you like to be awakened by your radio, you can set the alarm time and select either a beeping tone or a radio station for your greeting. And yes, there is a "Snooze" button on the top of the radio for you to squeak out a few more winks.

## ❖ Antennas

The G4000A comes with three antennas. For AM broadcast, there is an internal ferrite-core antenna that provides bi-directional reception when the radio is turned clockwise or counter-clockwise. A 36-inch swiveling telescopic whip antenna is used for FM and shortwave, and a 23-foot external wire reel-antenna is provided with the radio for shortwave. The reel-antenna plugs into the left side of the G4000A, and could be replaced with any other antenna, provided it can plug into the 3.5 mm (1/8") mono antenna jack.

## ❖ Other Jacks and Controls

For those who like the ability to reduce the sensitivity of the radio, there is a Local/DX switch. I have not measured the attenuation, but would guess it to be somewhere between 10 and 20 dB.

There are also switches provided for wide/narrow bandwidth, high/low tone, and SSB on/off. Audio volume is controlled by a knob on the lower right side, and there is a jack for connecting an external 9 VDC power source.

## ❖ What's in the Box?

Eton ships the G4000A with an AC wall adapter, stereo earphones, a 23-ft reel-antenna, and a carrying case that doubles as a radio-stand.

## ❖ How Does It Play?

I took the radio out on the porch to enjoy a nice sunny day and do a little listening.

Using the whip antenna, I decided to start by tuning the 20-meter amateur band to hear how SSB reception was. The tuning seems, at least to me, to be a little coarse at 1 kHz per step. Granted, the fine-tuning will cover the entire 1 kHz range, but it's cumbersome having to bounce back and forth trying to cover a 1 kHz window. Clearly, 100 Hz steps would go a long way toward improving the situation, but would probably add to the cost. The audio was rather poor for SSB voice, but was acceptable for Morse code reception.

In FM, the audio was very nice, and there was no problem tuning in the local broadcasters.

Tuning around on shortwave in the AM mode revealed more noise than I would expect, just as with my YB400, even with a moderately strong signal. The selectivity was

acceptable, about the same as some low-end tabletop radios.

Here in the US, we don't have broadcasters on longwave, but we do have aeronautical beacons in that range; performing a quick scan of the beacon portion of the longwave band, I was able to receive a couple of regional beacons with acceptable signal quality.

## ❖ Final Thoughts

The audio is acceptable on FM, but was fatiguing on AM and SSB, just as with my YB400. While I wouldn't recommend it for serious shortwave DXing, it might be "just the ticket" for someone who is just getting started in the radio hobby and wants to "test the waters" before spending a significant amount of money.

The Eton website, at <http://www.eton-corp.com>, lists the G4000A's price at \$150 US dollars. Grove Enterprises offers the Eton G4000A as Rcv23, for \$149.95. For more information, visit their website at <http://www.grove-ent.com> or call 1-800-38-8155.

**Table 1. Receive Sensitivity (10 dB (S+N)/N)**

Input at the external antenna jack	
Freq. (MHz)	Level (uV)
1.8	2.8
5.0	1.0
11.0	1.3
16.0	1.8
22.0	1.8
28.0	1.8

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