

Jamboree on the Air 2009

UK National Report



After a quiet 2008, it seems that interest in JOTA has increased with many potential new stations asking for information in advance of the event. From the list of stations registering it seemed that many of these did progress to running a station but despite every effort to get them to submit a report the actual number received remains disappointingly low. If those who do supply information are representative of the rest then the variation in the type of event is fascinating. The Technology weekend at GB2LC seems to be as popular as ever with almost 200 Scouts taking part. A very different combination is the event run in conjunction with the national Scout rifle shooting championships where 750 Scouts, Explorers and their leaders attended, although the number actively involved in JOTA is of necessity much lower. A third event with high numbers found that other activities actually restricted the time spent on air by the Scouts. At the other extreme some stations found that only a few scouts visited, sometimes because of distances involved and sometimes because of the school holidays.

Now to operations. Several stations bemoaned the poor conditions and found Echolink a lifesaver with plenty of excellent contacts. The German contest was mentioned again though without sufficient detailed information to pinpoint any transgressions outside the contest sectors. Despite such difficulties experienced JOTA operators managed an impressive list of Scout contacts over the weekend and managed to achieve the main aim - to put a Scout in contact with a Scout he might never have met otherwise.

We ask stations to indicate which of their operators are Scouts or Guides and it is very encouraging to see plenty of youngsters with the Foundation Licence listed. Stations assisted by clubs often have the advantage of a permanent club station and at least one such station starts a Foundation Licence course in the New Year with students mainly recruited at JOTA. Not all stations can rely on Scout and Guide Licence holders. Once again we are all indebted to those Radio Amateurs who are so willing to help.

Although not strictly part of the JOTA report, many stations did run JOTI too, or in some cases try to do so with a total lack of success.

I am encouraged by those who, running a station for the first time, are determined to run a bigger and better station next year.

Individual Station Reports

GB0BWS - Bishop's Waltham Scouts

This station had the advantage of Explorer Scouts with licences. A busy weekend was planned and the Amateur Radio side of the event went very well but JOTI failed to function. The station has the advantage of comfortable surroundings and preparations started on Thursday. The event started on Saturday after a Friday night hike and sleepover. They had plenty of contacts in UK and Holland. Despite some of the expected visitors failing to arrive, those who did take part had plenty of opportunities to try the various modes available.

GB0FWS - 34th Birmingham and 118th Birmingham Spitfire District

Scout leaders and members of Solihull Amateur Radio Society were using a new location and hoping to raise the awareness of JOTA in the District. The event built on a Communications theme running in the District for the previous weeks and included Morse code and simple circuit construction. They had contacts with a nearby station GB4SP at Sutton Park exchanging messages with their Cubs and two contacts with stations within the Arctic circle.

GB0GDS - Greenock and District Scouts

This busy station operated for the full weekend and was part of a wider international programme. With visitors of all ages and a team of Scout and Guide operators there were contacts on several modes including SSTV and BPSK 31. Plenty of badges and awards were gained including Communicator badges for 8 Cubs and 30 Scouts and 30 Global Challenge and 46 International Friendship Partnership Awards

GB0GUN - National Scout Rifle Championships

This station is run at the rifle Championships which attracts 750 Scouts and their leaders. Not all of these find their way to the JOTA station but those who do have a range of radio related activities on offer and the chance to make some contacts.

GB0RSC - Radio Scouting Carmarthenshire

This station is some 15 miles from the nearest Scout group but a select band had contacts on HF and Echolink with stations within the UK and further afield.

GB0SSO - Scouting South Oxfordshire

Harwell Amateur Radio Society offered to host JOTA for Scouts in the south of the county from their new QTH at the Harwell campus. Plenty of local Scouts found their way to the event and were able to make contacts with several UK JOTA stations as well as several overseas. Morse code was very popular and a badge construction activity was very popular. HARS signed up several potential licence holders for their forthcoming Foundation Course.

GB1AS - 1st Abertillery Scout Group, Bleanau Gwent Scouting

This event was part of a wider programme of Communication Skills and Back to Basics Scouting. In action for both days, they had plenty of visitors including the local MP and Community Police Officer. 30 Cubs and 10 Scouts gained their Communicator badge while 15 Cubs gained their Global Adventure Award.

GB1PCS - Presteign Cub Scouts, Radnor District

Running their first JOTA since 1996, their Scout hut hosted local Radio Amateurs who had visited earlier in preparation for the weekend. They enjoyed it so much that they are already planning a bigger event for next year, having made plenty of Scout contacts.

GB2BD - 2nd Bideford and 1st Edgehill and Torridge Scout Groups

Appledore Radio Club members provided the team to keep almost 40 Scouts occupied with a full Amateur Radio programme. They had plenty of contacts from Siberia in the east to Salt Lake city in the west and Jamboree stations at home and abroad.

GB2COS - City of Chester

This station was one who found conditions difficult and suffered interference from German contest stations. Nevertheless, using Echolink, they contacted stations on the other side of the World including VE3TER, Kent, in Melbourne who spent a long time chatting to the Mayor of Chester who visited the station. Over 80 Scouts of all ages took part.

GB2GCS - Grimsby Cleethorpes District

Another station visited by the Mayor, this time of Northeast Lincolnshire along with almost 80 Scouts from all sections and a large contingent of 39 Guides. Active on both days, their team included licensed Scouts and could offer a variety of modes including Echolink, PSK31 and SSTV. They were particularly pleased with Echolink Scout contacts in Trinidad and India.

GB2IVS - Itchen Valley Scouts

A team of licensed Scouts and Guides ran this station on both days. They had plenty of JOTA contacts within the UK but found the clarity of Echolink contacts very rewarding, especially N4LRA and K2PEJ. This station also had a construction project making Dutch clap-light kits that even a power cut could not interrupt.

GB2JAM - Birkenhead District Scouts

All sections were represented at this station which was active from Friday afternoon until Sunday lunchtime. They worked Scout stations around the UK and abroad including Iceland, Holland, Ireland, Canada and USA. They had an interesting contact with G7AIR powered by batteries charged by solar power.

GB2LC - Linnet Clough

Greater Manchester East Technology Camp had another fantastic weekend with a host of exciting activities on offer. The Amateur radio station contacted 24 UK JOTA stations and a further 15 abroad, mainly in Portugal and Holland as well as Saudi Arabia, Japan and USA. They also had a CW contact with Australia. A total of 160 stations were contacted, 173 electronic kits were completed and 29 Communicator badges were gained while Radio Orienteering attracted 32 teams.

GB2WSG - 2nd Willingdon Scout Group

This was the first JOTA for a newly formed Scout Group and they are determined to do it again next year. They operated on Saturday from Bushy Wood Camp Site and made contact with plenty of UK JOTA stations.

GB2WVS - Walkham Valley Scouts

Dartmoor Radio Club ran this JOTA station and have run Foundation Licence classes which have already seen two Scouts gain their licences. They operated on Saturday only but had plenty of traffic between stations sending and receiving messages to one another.

GB2RUN - Runway's End Scout Activity Centre

This station had a large contingent of operators including 10 Scouts with licences and their expertise led to plenty of contacts with Scout stations at home and abroad in 50 countries and 6 continents. Their more exotic contacts included Australia and New Zealand, Saudi Arabia, Trindade Islands and Mariana Islands. Although no complete badges were gained, plenty of clauses were signed off.

GB4BDS - Banstead District Scouts

A large Scout team operated this station on both days and were able to offer kit building, Morse code, and Pod casting. They had visitors from all sections and a Brownie who managed to complete her Communicator badge despite not being in the original plan. They also made an entry in the Worked All Germany contest that has plagued JOTA stations in the past.

GB4CNS - Central Notts District

Two hundred Scouts visited this station which had a large Scout team of operators. They had a fantastic list of UK JOTA stations in their log, as well as stations further afield. They also contacted G4NNR/MM afloat south of Plymouth and WA4USN, USS Yorktown, a WWII Aircraft carrier. The JOTA station was part of a wider programme which included an incident night hike and an outdoor challenge camp.

GB4YOU - Youlbury Scout and Guide Amateur Radio Station

This station was briefly on the air before the operators joined the GB0SSO team.

GB8CS - 2nd Clevedon, Gordano District, Avon Scout County

Ten Scouts visited the station which was also catered for by Scouts working for their Chef's badge. The radio team found time between the eating to make plenty of contacts with Scout stations at home and abroad

GG100GN - Girlguiding Northants

This Guide station is a regular feature of JOTA, not wishing to miss an opportunity to contact Scouts and Guides by Amateur radio. They also contacted the US WWII Aircraft carrier which had 300 visiting Scouts on board. Apart from radio activities the girls took part in a Campfire Challenge, clauses for the Brownie Seasons Badge and a Guide received her Baden-Powell Award.

M3HOD

A combined JOTA/JOTI event which made good use of Internet contacts. Their radio activities were restricted but they enjoyed the event and want to do it again despite having no sleep on Saturday night!

The 53rd Jamboree on the Air takes place on 16th & 17th October 2010 - Looking forward to hearing you all again.