

Jamboree on the Air 2013



UK National Report

Interest in JOTA 2013 showed a marked increase. The number of potential stations making enquiries in advance of the event reached an all time record and after the event there was an improvement in the number and quality of the reports submitted. Some stations write at length in Radio Magazines but fail to send a copy to the JOTA co-ordinator!

There were several very large events, at Gilwell Park, Youlbury and other Activity Centres which can offer the whole spectrum of technological and international interests as well as some more energetic pursuits. Smaller stations often offer a more concentrated emphasis on good Amateur Radio technique. Both have their place in the event and we have received encouraging reports from stations large and small and already planning for 2014.

Judging by the reports of stations contacted, radio conditions in the UK favoured Sweden and Portugal bringing aerial radiation patterns to life! The Gambia and Senegal, Sudan and Gulf States feature in several reports but there were few contacts with North or South America. Increasingly Echolink is the mode of choice for far-reaching contacts.

It is also encouraging to see more and more Scout licensed Radio Amateurs, especially at Foundation and Intermediate level. Several stations also had youngsters express interest in the Foundation Licence. The graduated licence system, now in its second decade has done much to encourage younger people into the hobby. Amateur radio clubs support the event wholeheartedly and this is acknowledged gratefully here.

The event has enjoyed increased support from the UK Scout International Department and from articles in 'Scouting' magazine which reaches every Leader in the country. Our national JOTA website is being updated as is all our information material.

B0BFS - 1st Bingley Scout Group

This station was active on Sunday from 9.00 to 17.00 and their team of Radio Operators provided plenty of Scout contacts for the Cubs and Scouts. The youngsters were also able to try related communication activities old and new from semaphore to CB radio and texting. They completed parts of the Communicator badge and the Global Challenge. In the afternoon they were delighted to have a visit from Les Mitchell G3BHK, the founder of JOTA.

GB0DSG - Derwentside District Cub Scouts

Some 35 Cubs had a weekend of activities towards the Communicator badge as well as a sleepover at which 15 cubs gained their Nights Away badge. They also had a JOTI station. They had a JOTA contact with Belgium and exchanged greetings with their operators.

GB0FLS - 1st Ludlow Scouts

This station was active on both days and had Scouts of all ages working towards their Communication Challenge and trying Morse and Semaphore as well as bases with Pioneering and Navigation. They had contacts with several UK Scout stations.

GB0GDS - Greenock and District Scouts

With a first contact with HB9S in Geneva, the weekend was off to a splendid start. They also contacted Gambia for the first time and had lots of contacts with European stations especially in Sweden, Holland and Portugal. There was no shortage of games and activities and badge work. The team are good at taking up ideas they glean from other sources. Badge work was available for those that wanted, including Explorer, Communicator and Science badges.

GB0MKS - Milton Keynes Scout District

Operating from the Quarries Camp Site this station had a large number of visitors from all sections. The JOTA station was manned by members of Milton Keynes Amateur Radio Society and had lots of contacts round the UK and abroad, especially in Portugal. Radio was not the only activity on offer as there were opportunities for archery, shooting and climbing.

GB0NFB - 91st Bristol (Horfield Baptist) Scout Group

With a communications evening in advance of the event, the Cub and Scout visitors were well prepared for the event. They had a contact with HB9S and several stations in Portugal as well as UK JOTA stations.

GB0RDS - 12th Rugby District Scouts

The new Scout Group HQ had its official opening ceremony during the JOTA weekend. All sections were represented and there were also visits from the local MP, the Mayor and representatives of local sponsoring companies. Radio contacts were on offer as well as word games based on the phonetic alphabet, plastic cup telephones, Morse code and direction finding.

GB0RSC - 1st Llanelli Scout Group

With a Scout Leader Training weekend also running the opportunities for a Busy JOTA were limited. 10 Scouts helped set up the antenna and station. They also had Echolink running and contacted K2BSA, Boy Scouts of America and Hong Kong Scouts. 10 Scouts gained their Communicator badge.

GB1BSG - Belton Scout Group

The station was active for some five hours on Saturday and a dozen Scouts took the opportunity to gain their Communicator Badge. They had contacts with UK stations as well as Sweden, Switzerland and Germany.

GB2BSR - 12th Doncaster (Bawtry) Scouts

Although only four Scouts took part, they had a lot of fun operating from the Church clock tower. They were glad it did not chime the quarter hours!

GB2COS - Cestrian Scout Group, Chester

This station is one of the biggest in the UK, attracting over 100 visitors from as far away as Australia. A dozen operators took care of the many radio links and echolink provided some distant contacts. Their very full report will be included as an appendix.

GB2GCS - Grimsby Scout Active Support

Most of the radio operators at this station have scouting links so were in a good position to keep their visitors fully occupied. Every Scout section was represented as well as some Guides. They were delighted to link up with their twin town, Konigswinter, in Germany by echolink.

GB2GP - Gilwell Park

For the last few years a combined JOTA-JOTI station has operated from Gilwell Park manned by a Scout and Guide team of Radio Amateurs and Internet enthusiasts. This year the event attracted about 140 youngsters, some of whom were camping on site. The programme included a construction project as well as sessions on the radios and computers. They are already talking about 2014.

GB2LDS - 1st Sedbergh

Another station with licensed Scouts on the radio team, this station also had contacts with the Gambia, Saudi Arabia and Senegal as well as in Europe and all round the UK. The station was active both days working into Saturday evening.

GB4CSC - Crawfordsburm Scout Centre

Several Scout groups in South East Antrim District joined in outdoor activities at the Scout Centre as well as participating in JOTA. They tried Morse code with flashlights and Semaphore. The International aspect of the event contributing to work on the International Partnership Award and Global Challenge and 4 Scouts gained their Communicator badge. With plenty of interesting contacts, including the Falklands, several Scouts are considering the Foundation Licence.

GB4YOU - Oxfordshire Scouts

Youlbury celebrated its Centenary earlier this year as the World's Oldest Scout Campsite but with the shack demolished to make way for new buildings the JOTA-JOTI team moved to the training building and an Airdome and had a very successful event with over 100 visitors. Radio contacts were mainly in a North South line - like those aerial diagrams would lead you to

expect! Highlight of the weekend was the launch of a large helium balloon carrying a JOTA-JOTI badge as part of the payload, After a successful launch, avoiding power lines, a sudden heavy rain shower brought the balloon down after only a mile or so but the holed balloon was retrieved and we will try again next year with a new one.

GB6BBS - Barnet Borough District

Another station with over 100 taking part, Barnet Borough laid on bases covering all manner of badges and challenges. Every participant had a passport to record their achievements. This was Barnet's first JOTA and the radio team from Southgate Amateur Radio Club have not taken part for some 25 years but the event went very well with Scout contacts round the UK.

GB6TS - 6th Tredegar (St George's) Scout Group

This busy station saw 82 badges gained in the course of the weekend. The Global Challenge and Community Challenge were also part of the programme and there was a wide variety of things to try including lots of electronic construction projects and methods of communication, both old and new. With visits from the Mayor and Mayoress of Blaenau Gwent, a Georgetown - Tredegar Councillor and a local clergyman they seem to have made quite an impact locally.

GB8CS - 2nd Clevedon Scouts

Combining any activity with food is always popular and this station had the Chef's badge also running so no doubt the Radio team were well fed. The station had plenty of Scout radio contacts in the UK and Europe and another to work HB9S operating for the last time as a World Bureau Station.

GB8SAW - 1st Sawley (All Saints) Scout Group

This station also operated a JOTI station and the Cubs and Scouts could try various methods of communication. Radio contacts were confined to the UK with plenty of other JOTA stations listed.

GC4BRS/P - 1st Penmark with Portkerry (15th Barry)

The station organiser writes that we have never been involved in JOTA before but we had a fantastic time and will definitely be involved next year. One Cub was apparently linked live to Dutch TV whilst passing her message. She was thrilled! The Radio Amateurs were fantastic with the Cubs (and Scouts). Encouraging and supporting them to pass their greetings, plus also brought along some fascinating things to share with the Cubs

GX4TTF - 1st Howden-le-Wear

Bishop Auckland Radio Club provided the support for this event which had a QSL card competition as one of the activities. The Cubs could also try Morse code as well as pass greetings messages.

GX4YRC - York Ebor District Cub Scouts

With a hundred Cubs attending this was a busy Saturday and there was plenty of opportunity to gain the IT level 2 badge. York Radio Club provided the JOTA station.

G3WNS - Lone Scouter, High Wycombe

Normally part of a team at a bigger event Alan joined in JOTA from home and by returning a report earns his inclusion as a UK station. Single operators can be very valuable when the bands are busy and Cubs desperate to pass their messages cannot find a station.

MS0FNR - 1st Wick (1st Caithross) Group

Caithness Amateur Radio Club provided the station for Wick Scout Group JOTA station. The Cubs and Scouts worked towards their Communicator badge and the Scottish Challenge badge. They had plenty of publicity in the John O' Groats Journal and are enthusiastic about trying again as high winds restricted their antenna plans.