

Jamboree on the Air 2011

UK National Report



The mild weather throughout the autumn held for the JOTA weekend, much to the delight of those stations with outdoor activities as part of the programme. For once I had the opportunity to experience three very different events. The first was a small unit activity held as part of the weekly Scout meeting where they went to the Radio shack at Youlbury to learn something of the basics of Amateur Radio communication and make some contacts as stations prepared for the following days. In contrast on Saturday, I was part of the team running JOTA as one of the activities for a weekend Cub Scout Residential weekend. The leader in charge ended up taking her Foundation Licence after visiting to plan the weekend. The Cubs were enthusiastic and eager to relate the highlights of their weekend to other stations. On Sunday I joined the team at Gilwell Park where the newly re-established Radio Station was very busy. The station was open to visitors from on site and local units providing a steady stream of participants of all age groups.

These three stations were in their way representative of the wide variety of JOTA events. Many also have JOTI stations running in tandem, presenting another opportunity to share Scouting experiences round the World. We had reports from small stations catering for a few youngsters for a short time, stations which had a variety of activities working towards badges or practising traditional Scouting skills, especially cooking in the open air and huge technology camps offering a multitude of chances to try something new or further an existing interest.

The emergency communications theme was taken in earnest by one group whose comments I include. This station is one of an increasing number with young licensed Scouts. One such youngster was in contact with the person who had run the camp Amateur Radio station the previous year where he had spent all his spare time. Both were delighted with the result.

This year we tried to increase the number of reports by encouraging stations to report on line. It met with limited success. The same stations always submit reports but others prefer to write about their station in the Amateur Radio press. While this publicity is valuable it doesn't help the poor JOTA co-ordinator.

For some years now the UK has produced their own JOTA/JOTI badge with sales increasing each year. With a thousand sold this year it may be some indication of the number of participants at both events, especially that some larger stations produce their own badge.

We remain grateful to those Radio Amateurs who are so generous with their, time, energy and equipment. We are encouraging Scouts with Foundation and Intermediate Licences to progress to a full licence so JOTA stations are safe in the future as some of these older volunteers are no longer able to lend us their valuable assistance.

GB0BWS - Bishop's Waltham Scouts

This station submitted a very detailed report which mentioned several months planning. They planned to use the post earthquake scenario as the basis for their activities with an incident hike to the Scout hut where they would find emergency refuge and, of course, communications! Their task was then to make contact with as many Scout Groups as possible to discover who had survived the earthquake. It seems that quite a few had survived as they contacted 16 other UK JOTA stations as well as more abroad. They have young operators who were given the chance to work the usual JOTA pileups. They had JOTI running as well as digital radio modes. They had hoped to work the ISS as it passed over three times during the event but although heard it was data modes every time. During the weekend they had plenty of visitors but the Cub Scouts failed to appear (victims of the earthquake?)

GB0GDS - Greenock & District Scouts

This station operated as a drop-in station as JOTA weekend clashed with school half term holidays. The operators are all either Scout or Guide members with plenty of Special Event experience. Over 20 Scout members of all sections found their way to the station and all passed a greetings message to another Scout station elsewhere in the UK or abroad. The Netherlands topped the overseas contacts list of mainly European stations but they did have a contact with Japan too. Their event featured in the local Scout news and the Greenock Telegraph.

GB0SDB - Spitfire District, Birmingham

The station operated on Saturday with licenced Scouts joined by members of Solihull Amateur Radio Society. Another station that attracted Scouts of all ages who were able to talk to Scouts in other UK stations as well as at two Swiss stations, HB9S and HB9Y/J. Also on offer was Morse code, paper cup telephones and QSL card designing. A simple construction project was very popular and JOTI was on offer for the first time. 8 cubs gained their Communicator badge and several worked towards the Global Challenge Badge.

GB0TNS - 12th Northholt Scout Group

The station was established on Friday but the visitors came on Saturday to experience some radio basics, Phonetic alphabet and Morse code, while working towards their Communicator and Global Challenge badges. They listened to emergency messages from MX0BCQ a bunker station in Skipton and passed plenty of messages, with GB8CS in Bristol being very popular. A certificate was awarded to those who passed greetings. This station was one of the many who had a contact with HB9S in Geneva.

GB0WNS - Wolverhampton North District

As it was the first time they had run a JOTA station they planned to 'keep it simple'. Even so they impressed their District Commissioner, Shona Grieve. Also impressed was an Explorer leader who decided to book on a licence course! They had plenty of contacts to keep the Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorers busy and the Cubs went on to complete their Communicator badge within the week. Several stations have Scouts working towards the Global challenge but trying to arrange follow-up is often difficult. The station produced excellent work sheets to lead the Cubs and Scouts round the various activities at the station, with a detailed but concise introduction to Amateur radio.

GB2GCS - Grimsby & Cleethorpes District Scouts

In contrast to Wolverhampton, Grimsby has been taking part in JOTA for over 30 years. With so much experience they had a plenty of willing helpers to assist over 100 visitors from both the Scout and Guide movements during the weekend. They had good coverage in the local press and included the Mayor and Mayoress of North East Lincolnshire and their local MP among their guests. The Mayor went on to extol the virtues of Amateur Radio in the local paper! Meanwhile the youngsters busied themselves learning the basics of Radio Communication in order to pass a message to one of the many stations they contacted.

GB2GP - Gilwell Park

The old Radio Shack at Gilwell Park was no longer fit for purpose and demolished. Now modern technology allows for remote operation around the site but for JOTA and JOTI the event was in new buildings on the old site. Frank, M0AEU, submitted a very detailed report to which this summary cannot do justice. The event was staffed by a team of 11 Scout and Guide operators who made some 234 contacts in 52 countries, including 72 Scout stations. The station was open to visitors staying at Gilwell and local Scout groups and more than the 63 who signed in probably found their way to the station. On offer were kit building and weather satellite reception and the earthquake simulation featured a battery powered portable station set up in a tent some way from the main station. Topping up the batteries by bicycle proved hard work. The internet chat room was also very popular. Cubs and Scouts working for badges were given work sheets to take back to their units so they could complete the syllabus.

GB2IRS - Ipswich Radio Scouts

This station operated by an experienced team welcomed Scouts from several Groups. They were operational from Friday evening until Sunday afternoon. There was aerial erecting and radio direction finding to add to the greetings message passing. 9 Scouts gained their Communicator Badge either at the event or shortly afterwards. Among the many contacts at home and abroad, the one that really gladdened the heart of the station manager Peter, G8BLS, was the contact with a Scout in Dorking who had met him at the Radio Station at NORJAM in 2010 and was so interested that he went on to gain his licence. Congratulations to David M6PIC and to Peter for inspiring him and others to take up the hobby. This station also experienced the 'earthquake' with a crack appearing in the ground and their mast being

brought down. Luckily they could power up the rig with Scout cycle power and repair any visible damage before the camp warden saw it.

GB2LC - Linnet Clough

The event at the Greater Manchester East Campsite is one of the largest in the UK. It is part of a Science and Technology Weekend attracting 118 Scouts and 40 leaders to take part in a wide array of activities, including Information Technology, Photography and Electronics as well as Amateur Radio. 113 badges for these topics were gained and Scouts could also try radio orienteering, geocaching, flight simulators and arcade games. The amateur Radio station could call on a team of 12 operators to make the contacts and supervise the messages. They had some 26 UK JOTA stations in the log and another dozen International contacts. They also worked two stations in New Zealand, one of which was for the Rugby World Cup.

GB2LSS - Arundel & Littlehampton District Scouts

This station had a majority of Cub Scout visitors but also saw Beavers and Scouts try their hand at Morse code with a certificate for those who sent their name. They made contact with Scout stations in the UK and had demonstrations of digital modes. Twelve badges were gained during the weekend

GB2TSC - Tolmers Scout Camp

Active throughout the weekend, this station could offer kit building, secret codes, Morse code and semaphore in addition to radio contacts. They worked several UK scout stations and HB9S in Geneva.

GB4CNS - Central Notts District

A station with plenty of visitors and plenty of contacts, it was part of a District event offering Camping, Archery, Climbing, Pioneering, Pedal Go-carts and a Night Hike. They made 162 contacts during the weekend, of which 88 were with Scout stations. Their impressive list of International contacts stretched from Texas to Brisbane, but they fielded an experienced team of Scout Radio Amateurs.

GB4WHS - 1st Wall Heath Scouts

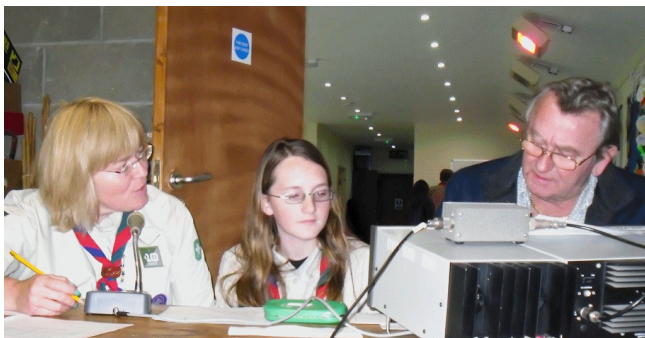
Just over a hundred people made their way to this station following several weeks of preparation exploring communication prior to the event. Every section was represented and the youngsters were kept busy with contacts to JOTA stations here and in Europe. This station also mentioned MX0BCQ, the bunker station at Skipton and listed contacts in Iceland, Taiwan and Japan. They were visited by the Mayor of Dudley and Scouts from other groups and from another JOTA station nearby run by Explorer Scouts. Several ex-Scouts also looked in and the team are hoping they might have recruited some leaders or helpers.

GB4YOU - 4th Oxford Scouts

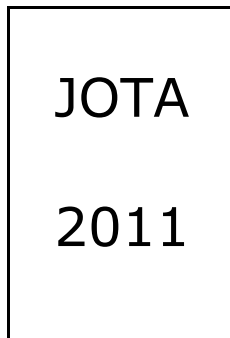
4th Oxford Scouts exchanged their usual Friday meeting venue for a visit to the Radio Room at Youlbury Scout Activity Centre. Jamboree on the Air runs from midnight on Friday to midnight Sunday local time which means that for those far east of the UK the event has already been running for some hours, However this is no guarantee of a radio contact and they were content to talk to any station in the process of setting up and testing their equipment. With the Scouts introduced to the basics of the hobby and with suitable messages about their Scouting activities prepared they kept trying to make that vital contact. At last a contact with a station in the Netherlands and one in Slovenia but neither were Scout stations. Then they managed to find GB2GP with Frank, M0AEU, at the microphone to take messages and the Scouts and their leaders went home happy with that one contact with the Home of Scouting.

GB8CUB - Marston & Kidlington Cub Activity Weekend

Cubs from three packs in the Oxford area gathered at the Stansfeld Field Studies Centre in Headington for a weekend of activities, one of which was Jamboree on the Air. In small groups they learnt enough of the phonetic alphabet to spell their name and went on to prepare a message about what they were doing that weekend, easier for those coming later in the day with the excitements of climbing and shelter building under their belts than for the first few with all this yet to come. A lively, interested and enthusiastic bunch, they all overcame any microphone shyness and were soon telling their counterparts in other parts of the UK about their weekend. One group were lucky to have contact with a Scout group in the Netherlands where their excellent command of English makes for rewarding exchanges of information. During the preparation of the event the organiser was so enthused by JOTA she gained her M6 call.



GB0DDDS - John is in control of the station while the Scout participants speak into the desk microphone. We had contacts all round the country and as far afield as South Carolina in the USA.[]



GB0DDDS - Our little 9m antenna mast is rather dwarfed by the adjacent water tower!



GB0DDDS - G4CXT on the left and Rachel on the right!



GB0DDDS - Explorers Scouts building morse code buzzer/light boxes



GB0DDDS - Sending a morse message using the box built earlier in the day

Earthquake in Suffolk

An earthquake occurred in Suffolk during Jamboree on the Air this year (2011). It brought down the TA33jnr beam which had been at 10m before the earthquake struck. The best DX that GB2IRS had worked with it were several VK stations and an HZ and a JM. The photo shows some of the 'International Rescue Team' pondering the damage to the beam (now 'optimised' for VK/ZL 'short-path') and the crack that opened up which can be seen in the foreground. Fortunately, the Scouts were able to repair the damage before the camp warden saw it.



Orry, M6OWK, can be seen operating the 'back-up' to the back-up' station from a hand-cranked generator mounted on a convenient 'tree'.