**Youth Newsletter** **November 2026**

# Looking back on RSGB Convention 2026

RSGB Convention 2026 was, simply put, a triumphant success. Over thirty young people attended five youth-specific events, twenty people attended the youth dinner, we filled the room for our Youth Forum, and the list goes on. We also saw continued involvement of youth in other parts of the programme, for example the opening keynote by IARU President Tim, VE6SH/G4HUA and RSGB President Bob Beebe, GU4YOX's opening ceremony speech. In addition, both the Youth Committee and the Youngsters On The Air (YOTA) Summer camp team from this year were interviewed on the livestream, continuing to show off our successes to a wider audience.



All the Committee feel incredibly honoured and proud to see the hard work and time dedicated by all the organising team to realise these events – including many volunteers from outside the Committee. This year has secured a foundation we can continue to build on, now the benefits of specific youth-activities at events like RSGB Convention can be seen clearly. It's when we step back and look at the difference all these events have made to youth numbers, that I see the most fulfilling returns as a volunteer for the RSGB. The hardest part of writing this article was deciding which of the amazing photos we have of so many great memories would make the cut!

For members who couldn't attend, you can read a summary of proceedings at our key events in the pages below:

At the Youth Forum we launched two youth membership benefits! The Youth Logo was loved by many, and it was great to see stickers fly out of the Committee's hands throughout the session. Additionally, we launched this newsletter and have had some great feedback about the stories in it. Please do continue to share the newsletter around and submit stories by emailing youth.chair@rsgb.org.uk - we want to know what you're getting up to! We also had great talks from guest speakers like the YOTA camp team, the IARU Youth Contest Program (YCP) organisers and the Radio Communications Foundation (RCF).





The Youth Panel allowed some amazing stories from young amateurs of all backgrounds to be platformed and used to inspire some of the newcomers to amateur radio who came down to listen. What was clear was the passion on display by so many young people, determined to see a thriving youth segment of amateur radio and keen to use their skills to carry on the recent improvements into future conventions, events, clubs and more.

At the Youth Parks On The Air (POTA) activation, a group of determined operators fought challenging propagation conditions to activate Ouzel Valley Park. With three HF bands active at a time plus VHF/UHF operations, we soon achieved our goal of activation and were able to get some less experienced amateurs to enjoy the magic of a POTA session.





And we can't forget the Youth Dinner, which proved itself once again to be a fantastic way of getting amateurs to know each other better and meet new friends. We hope you all enjoyed the pizza!

*- Leon Shaw, M0VUF, on behalf of the RSGB Youth Committee.*
*Look out for details about RSGB Convention 2027 as we begin to plan that! We hope to see even more of you there next year.*

## Working with amateur satellites

I first became interested in amateur radio through a bioelectronics project in Year 12, in which I built an electroencephalogram (EEG) machine – admittedly, a rather roundabout route into the hobby! While making it, I kept picking up different frequencies of signal interference, making me appreciate how much radio noise surrounds us. Curious to investigate further, I took my Foundation Licence exam and discovered the possibility of contacting the ISS and decoding signals from other satellites.

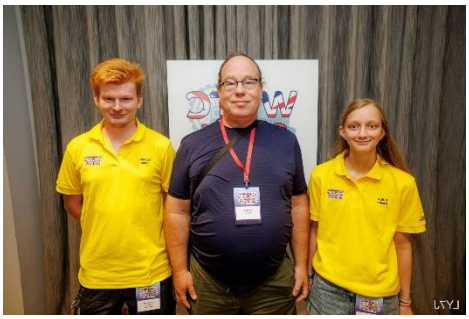
Although I have yet to speak to an astronaut, I have since built my own dipoles, Yagi-Udas, a Double Cross and a Quadrifilar Helix antenna to receive NOAA-15, 18, and 19 APT signals. This first amateur radio project sparked a broader interest in engineering, particularly in space and communications, and ultimately contributed to my decision to study engineering at university. I am now developing my satellite decoding systems further by building an automated L-band satellite receiver and decoder and look forward to hopefully building an X-band setup soon!

*- Written by Katie, Cambridge University Wireless Society Member*
*Amateur Satellites are a fascinating technology – and with Elektro L3 now visible from Europe, there's even more to get involved with! If you give it a go, please do send photos in – we'd love to know how you get on*

## WRTC 2026 – youth perspective

World Radiosport Team Championship (WRTC), often known as the Olympics of amateur radio, is an event held once every four years. Teams of two operate from near-identical locations with matched antenna setups for an intense 24-hour sprint. Earning a spot usually requires two years of relentless qualification across the contesting calendar, but the event also opens vital doors for the next generation of operators. WRTC 2026 provided four youth teams with the incredible opportunity to compete in this prestigious event. Even in the youth category, team leaders must still earn their place through the strict qualification process, proving their mettle against the world's best. This year, my team leader Leon, DL3ON and I were thrilled to be one of the four youth teams given the incredible opportunity to compete on the world stage.

### Day 1: Arrivals and reunions



Having spent the preceding days in England, my WRTC journey was only a quick train journey to St Neots, just a short distance from Wyboston Lakes resort where the WRTC HQ was situated. Upon arrival there was some time to catch up with friends and register before my teammate Leon, DL3ON and I took part in a quick interview with the RSGB media team. The evening welcome buffet offered a fantastic chance to socialise, with the opportunity to reunite with many old friends, and to meet many of the contesters that we had worked on the air so often but never had the opportunity to meet in person before. The evening concluded with some more socialising in the hotel lobby and some final testing of our WRTC set-up to ensure everything was running smoothly.

### Day 2: Logistics, briefings & the opening gala

After a quick breakfast, the next day kicked off with a short walk to the HQ and the competitor and referee meeting. Here some details about the logistics of the contest were shared by the organisers and there was plenty of time for questions from both competitors and referees to ensure complete clarity before the contest. Then it was time for the contest prep to begin as teams took turns setting up their link to World Radio League (WRL), the platform that would run this WRTC's score reporting

as well as the live scoreboard. That evening the official opening ceremony was held. Not only were all served with a wonderful three course meal during the following gala dinner, but there was also plenty of music and entertainment provided on the evening, as well as some games including one to decode CW from a musical piece.

**Day 3: Site draw and testing**

Friday kicked off bright and early with both the site and the referee draw. Once everything had been assigned competitors and referees alike poured into the waiting minibuses and headed to the sites with all their equipment. Here we had a few hours to fully assemble and test our entire WRTC station, along with the onsite kit and antenna. Some interference troubleshooting later and with some help from our wonderful site manager all was operational and ready to go for the next day. The evening was once again spent onsite at the HQ with a quick dinner and several rounds of cards, while the anticipation grew for the coming weekend.

**Day 4: Contest operations as MB1N**




After an early breakfast competitors and referees once again got into the minibuses and headed back to site, well ahead of the contest to allow for final testing and set-up to be done. Fifteen minutes before the contest started, we were handed the famous envelope containing our callsign for the next 24-hours, and so it was that at 1200UTC we started operating on the air as MB1N. The contest itself started off quite well with good rates in the early hours of the night, but technical issues (14 generator outages) cost us hours of operating time and hundreds of QSOs in the later hours of the night. Disheartening as it was, we kept going for the rest of the contest and finished with just under 4300 QSOs. Once everything was packed up, teams headed back to the HQ for a buffet dinner and some post-contest debriefing and socialising. After dinner, most of the younger operators and volunteers spent several more hours hanging out and catching up. Coming from all corners of the globe, opportunities to sit together in the same room are rare, making the late-night socialising one of the highlights of the week.

**Day 5: Closing ceremony and goodbyes**

Monday morning was quiet as many of the competitors were either using the opportunity to get some rest or beginning to pack up in preparation for departure the following day. The evening, however, was far from uneventful, concluding with the much-anticipated closing ceremony and an outdoor buffet dinner. This was a nice opportunity for some final socialising, entertainment and goodbyes. Reflection, overall it was an incredible week, and I thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to meet so many incredible people and to make some memories that will undoubtedly last a lifetime.



*- Written by Megan, EI5LA/M5ILA*
*WRTC was an amazing event that the RSGB Youth Committee was very proud to be a part of, with Sam, M0UEL being interviewed on the WRTC livestream!*

## What was JOTA 2026 like?



This year our scout group (46th Sheffield) participated in the Jamboree On The Air (JOTA) event on 18 October. The activities we completed helped us to achieve our communicator activity badges. At the event we looked at the electromagnetic spectrum and propagation. It was really interesting to look at how some radio waves move through the air and bounce off the atmosphere (sky waves), while others travel in straight lines between two points (ground waves).

I really liked using the Software Defined Radio (SDR) radio to monitor communication across the air waves. We looked at which services used different frequencies and the bandwidths they took up. I hope to purchase my own SDR radio and to make my own aerials so that I can do this at home. I'm going to use my Raspberry Pi 5 computer to run the SDR++ software, because it's really fun and maybe I'll get to hear the International Space Station!



We also learnt Morse code and some of the rules and regulations of using amateur radio. We learnt to say our names using the phonetic alphabet (mine is: WHISKEY INDIA LIMA LIMA) and we also created our own call signs. We then got to use an amateur radio to send short messages and to speak to people all over the world. There was an amateur radio competition running in Germany on that day so many of the frequencies were very busy but we did get to speak to a person in Scotland, someone in the South of England and also a person in Sheffield. It was really good fun and I hope we get to do it again next year - maybe next time we will be able to speak to someone even further away!

*- Written by William, aged 12*
*We've loved reading your JOTA stories and seeing many inspired Scouts! Please do let us know how your JOTA weekend went by emailing youthchampion.scouts@rsgb.org.uk.*

## Upcoming youth events

Get involved with Youngsters On The Air (YOTA) Month! This IARU programme takes place every December and encourages young radio amateurs to get on the air. This year's event will feature special event station GB26YOTA. As it's a special event station, you will need a Full licensee on site to supervise the operators. If you're not a Full licensee, you could get together with others and have a group event – perhaps your club, school, university or youth group could take part? You can find details on how to apply to be a host at rsgb.org/yota-month. Make sure you don't miss out on being part of the team helping to make YOTA Month the best yet!

The 3rd round of the YOTA contest takes place on 28 December, from 1000-2200UTC. You can read more about the YOTA contest, including participation rules, entry categories and scoring at yotacontest.mrasz.org. The YOTA contest is a great way of learning to contest in a low-pressure environment - several Youth Committee members were introduced to contesting through the YOTA contest.