



YOTA month December 2023

The Youngsters on the Air (YOTA) programme is an IARU Region 1 initiative aimed at engaging youngsters in amateur radio, as well as supporting amateurs under the age of 26.

YOTA Month in 2023 was supported by a variety of individuals and groups who share a passion for encouraging young people to be involved with amateur radio. Here are some of the reports from those who hosted GB23YOTA.

Mallaig High School

Mallaig High School's amateur radio club operated GB23YOTA on 7 and 14 December 2023. Everyone involved had great fun, especially the youngsters who were on the air! We hosted 18 primary school pupils, aged 11, from Mallaig Primary School, Arisaig Primary School, Lady Lovat Primary School in Morar and had them operating on the 80, 40, 20m and 2m bands.

It virtually turned into a Geography lesson with the youngsters exchanging signal reports with amateurs across the UK, Europe and North America.

Their Primary 7 Class topic had been 'Space' and we delivered a talk on 'Amateur Radio in Space'. This talk clearly caught their imagination and participation in Youngsters on the Air during December reinforced their interest and awareness of the wonders of amateur radio. This is great preparation for August 2024 when these youngsters move up to Mallaig High School.



Youngsters at Mallaig High School ARC, GM5MHS.

Special thanks to Alistair, MM7ETU; Jim, MM7FEM; Paul, 2MOTNM; Rob, GMODUX; John, GMOOTI and others who helped make our YOTA 2023 experience so enjoyable.

Lyall Smith, GM5MHS

Sandringham School, St Albans

Since 2016, the Amateur Radio Club at Sandringham School has taken part in the December YOTA activities. The aim of the club is to deliver a STEM-related extra-curricular club for any student who is keen to learn and develop their understanding of radio communications. Over the years, almost 30 students have gained their Foundation or Intermediate licences. The club callsign is MOSCY and is used on Fridays after school when the club meets. In order to encourage independence,

those students who hold a licence are free to use the radio room when they wish, if they operate under their own licence parameters.

This year the team established four stations in a sixth form teaching room kindly loaned by the head of Sociology. This room is directly below the radio room but, being larger, enabled the students to spread out and experiment. The TS590 from the radio room was brought down and set up, together with a K3 for HF operation. These used a W3DZZ trap dipole for the 80 and 40m bands and a Spiderbeam Aerial-51 asymmetrical dipole. Both wire antennas were supported on aluminium masts on the sixth form centre roof.

Alex, MOIZA very kindly gave up a day's work to join us once again, and brought along some of his equipment for use. We had an SDR station using a Raspberry Pi 4 connected to an SDRPlay receiver and a 15m wire antenna. There was also a Yaesu FTM-400XDR transceiver using a homemade dipole on the roof of the building connecting to a couple of the local UHF repeaters with 5W on FM. This station also accessed a digital repeater using the IDe-Coverage Internet Repeater Enhancement System – allowing a broadcast FM signal to be relayed across the internet to a wider audience.

The students had fun operating and managed to make 88 contacts in total, with 13 different countries. They operated independently, whilst Alex



Keerthana, M7KRI operating; Tom; Nathan, M7KSP; Alan (Headteacher), G4DJX; Connor; Alex, M7IBB; and Theo, M7HKG.

and I watched and enjoyed some of the delicacies from their café in the sixth form building! The team included Keerthana, M7KRI; Alex, M7IBB; Nathan, M7KSP; and Theo, M7HKG. We also had Zander, Max, Tom, Connor, Lauren and Hina helping with the logging. They are very keen to complete their foundation examinations as soon as possible. I am very grateful to Alex, MOIZA who once again gave up the day to come along and help run the event with me.

As always, if you are interested in working at a school with a radio club, get in touch with me to see what opportunities are available – teaching or non-teaching.

Alan Gray (Headteacher), G4DJX



Alex, MOIZA, Hina (sending greetings) and Lauren.

St Peter-in-Thanet CE Junior School

The children of St Peter-in-Thanet CE Junior School in Broadstairs, Kent, were so enthralled by their experience in October 2023 of making contact with the astronaut Jasmin Moghbeli, KI5WSL on the ISS, that over 70 of them volunteered to take part in GB23YOTA. There were so many children, aged from 7 to 11, that the Hilderstone Radio Society, GOHRS had to organise two days of operating from 10am to 3pm, with 15 minutes allowed for each child.

John operated HF on an Icom IC-7300 with a KPA500 500W Elecraft amplifier and a DX Commander Classic antenna. The boys and girls were amazed to learn that their voice would be carried across the channel to France and Germany, to Wales, Scotland and Ireland! It was their first time listening to amateur radio communications, so it took them a while to get used to the sound of the operator's voice – they thought they sounded like “an alien”! Nevertheless, we had some excellent contacts, with everyone being very supportive. Most encouraged the children to take up the hobby. Alex proudly told his contact that he had used amateur radio to speak to an astronaut! Also, we tuned into the strange sounds of the CW section of the 40m band. They learned that people were communicating one letter at a time, much to their astonishment. Some children were familiar with Morse, as during British Science Week they used an LED to send code to each other.

Matt, M0LMK operated an Anytone 578 DMR on the Brandmeister network. The children made contacts around the world – from the USA to Australia. They covered ten different time zones. Matt used the UK-wide talk group and the world-wide talk group. The children were awestruck that their voice would be transmitted around the world and, indeed, a short-wave listener in Austria sent us an amazing recording of Hope talking to Gus, AA4GH in Florida. They had learnt their name in the phonetic alphabet beforehand, practising it at home with their parents. The children exchanged signal reports and gave their name, age and school. They asked the operator what time it was in their country. When one child was told they were ten hours ahead in the evening, he said “you are living in the future!” Kaz, 2EOWFY filled in a special certificate for them to take home, celebrating their achievement of speaking on the radio.

Youngsters on the Air was hard work for us, but it was a joy to see them communicating using amateur radio. Science teacher Mr Williams asked the children if they enjoyed the experience, to which they replied “it was ‘cool’” and they wanted to learn more about radio. Their incredible enthusiasm has inspired us to start a course, ‘the Magic of Radio’, with them next year.

John Hislop, G7OHO



Vivienne speaking on DMR.



St Peter's in Thanet School with Hilderstone Radio Society – 74 pupils involved!



Lucius holding up his certificate.

Las, MOBOY and Tommy, M7OMY

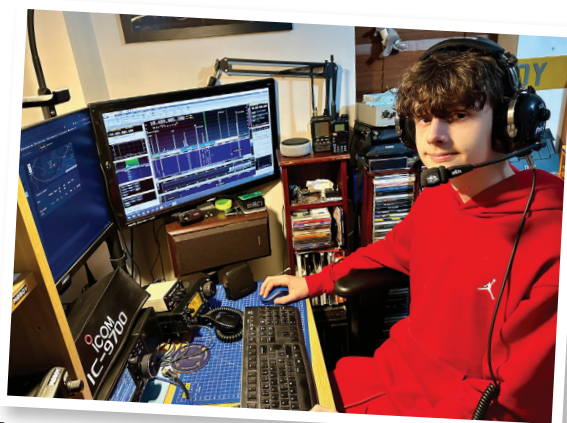
After the enormous success at the NRC early in December where Pippa, M7PFL; Ella, M7XGC; and Tommy, M7OMY made an absolutely superb job of making GB23YOTA so popular over the weekend, it was our turn to contribute to the success.

We knew it was going to be challenging from home, without the big guns at the NRC, but all we wanted was to give it a go! We installed the 20m vertical in the garden the night before and everything was ready for Saturday morning (16 December).

I woke up early and bagged 3 QSOs through the ARISS repeater onboard the ISS as a warmup. It was the only good pass for the day, so I took advantage of it. After breakfast we assessed which radio to use, and Tommy naturally pointed at his own IC-703. My reaction was "...but that's only 10W!" Tommy smiled and I knew what he meant by that. It is not about the power!

Going up and down the band there wasn't much on and CQ calls didn't seem to get attention. The situation was different when we switched to FT8. Dozens of stations were eager to work us, and we quickly contacted some distant stations including Japan.

Later, we toggled between voice and data and the show went on. Towards the evening, after a well-deserved break, Tommy had a successful marathon on QO-100. Overall, we ended the day with 99 QSOs and more than 160 QSOs in the log for Tommy throughout the two days we hosted GB23YOTA.



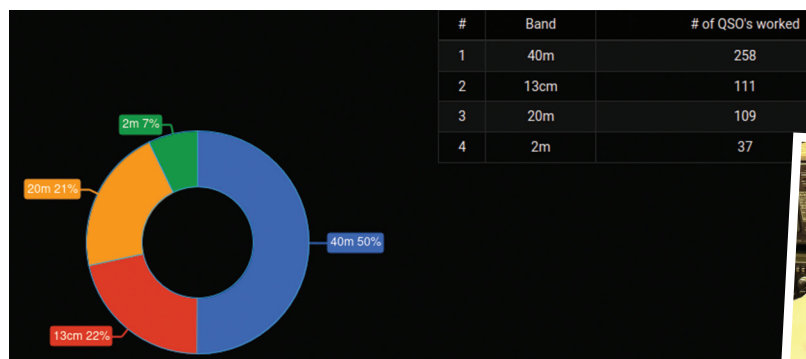
Tommy, M7OMY operating at home.

RSGB National Radio Centre (NRC) at Bletchley Park

We had a fantastic weekend (9 and 10 December) at the NRC with three young M7s operating the GB23YOTA callsign. Tommy, M7OMY and Pippa, M7PFL operated on the Saturday, with Ella, M7XGC joining them on the Sunday.

Over the two days, the girls racked up an amazing 111 QSOs via the QO-100 geo-stationary satellite. Tommy made an incredible 24 contacts through the ISS onboard repeater, in addition to a handful via the RS-44 and SO-50 satellites. He also made over 140 HF contacts on the 40 and 20m bands. With plenty of data/digital contacts made too, the grand total for the weekend was a whopping 515 QSOs!

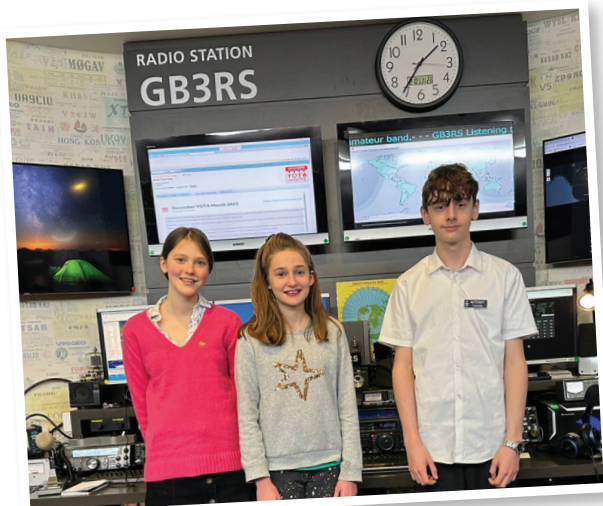
The three youngsters really enjoyed their time operating, all developing in confidence over the weekend. Here is what they had to say about their experience:



QSOs made by M7 licence holders at the NRC.



Tommy, M7OMY operating the GB3RS station at the NRC.

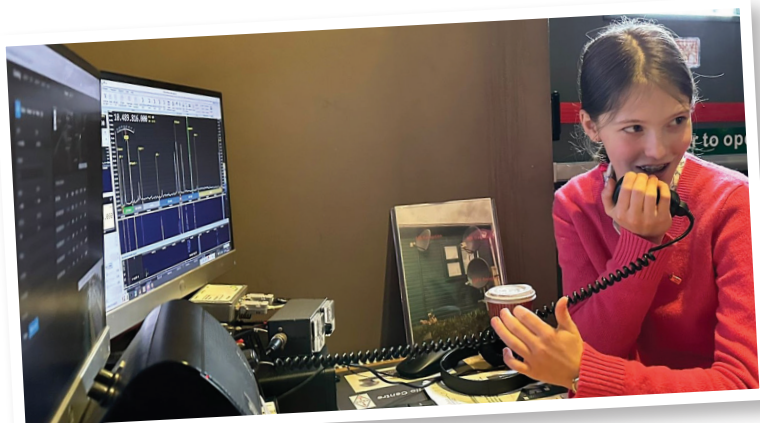


Pippa, M7PF; Ella, M7XGC; and Tommy, M7OMY.

Tommy, M7OMY

"I enjoyed operating the Flex 6600. It's really simple to use and you can spot people easily. The NRC is a great environment to operate in, with no distractions (like my cat at home!). With a special event callsign, it's much easier to get QSOs and not many people have the opportunity to operate it."

Tommy gained his licence in December 2021, just in time to operate the GB21YOTA callsign with his dad, Las, MOBOY. This year was the second time he has operated the special callsign at the NRC during December's YOTA Month.



Pippa, M7PFL having fun making QSOs.

Pippa, M7PFL

"I enjoy talking to people around the world. There's some really interesting people out there! It's nice to have them saying how much they like hearing youngsters on the air and wishing us an enjoyable special event. It was great making contact with the Turkish YOTA callsign."

Pippa was licensed in September 2023, and this was her first experience of spending the day (well, the whole weekend!) making contacts via QO-100. Her aim is to achieve her Intermediate licence by Christmas 2024. Pippa plans to visit the NRC at least once a month to help demonstrate and operate the GB3RS station.

Ella, M7XGC

"It took me some time to get confident calling CQ but, once I got going, I felt so proud of myself! I felt really excited when someone responded to my calls. I still find it amazing that you can talk to people who are so far away, using amateur radio. It was great to be able to be on the radio at Bletchley Park for YOTA Month'.



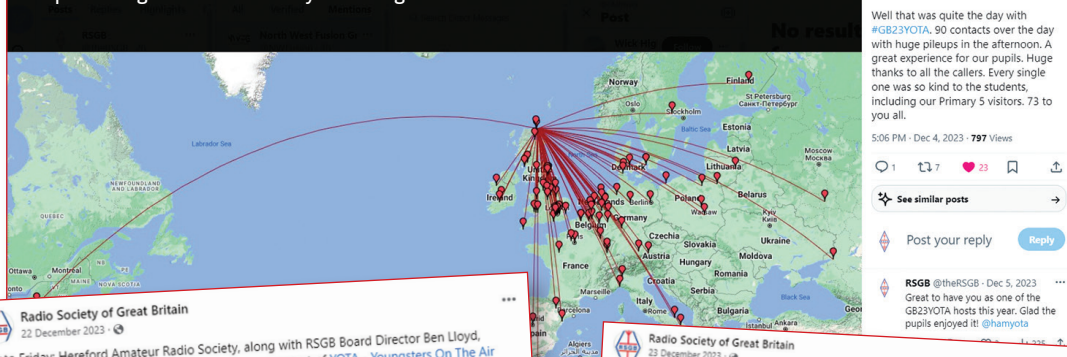
Ella, M7XGC at the NRC.

Having passed greetings messages before, this was the first opportunity Ella had had to operate since gaining her licence in October 2023.

If you know a young person, perhaps with a Foundation licence, who would like to visit and use the GB3RS station at the RSGB National Radio Centre, please contact the NRC Coordinator, Martyn G0GMB by email at nrc.support@rsgb.org.uk

Here are some social media posts about GB23YOTA that we enjoyed...

Map showing contacts made by Wick High School Radio Club.



Wick High School Radio Club
@GM0WH

Absolutely wonderful visit from the local primary school. Heidi did amazing on the air. The class had brilliant questions about how the radio worked, how the signal reached other countries and if we could talk to pilots 👍👍
#GB23YOTA



12:53 PM · Dec 4, 2023 · 901 Views

A post from Wick High School about its GB23YOTA experience.

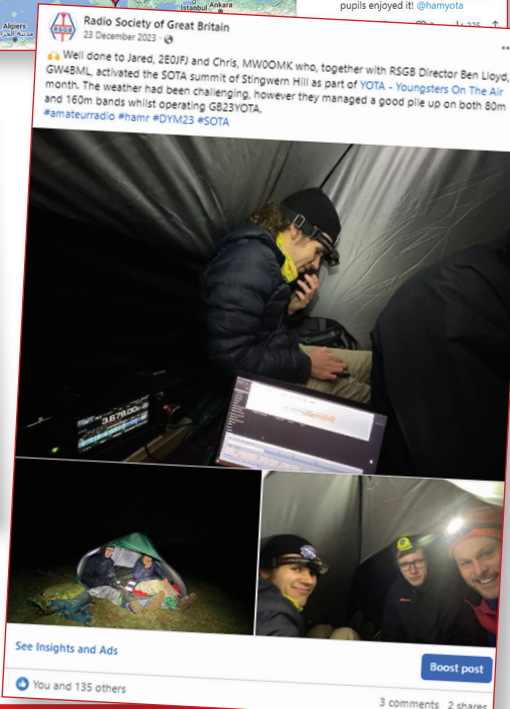


Radio Society of Great Britain
22 December 2023

Photo Friday: Hereford Amateur Radio Society, along with RSGB Board Director Ben Lloyd, GW4BML, took part in using the GB23YOTA call sign as part of YOTA - Youngsters On The Air month. With their supervision five non-licensed Scouts, who took a big interest in the event, tried operating. Great to see so many young people getting involved!
#amateurradio #hamr #DYM23

Hereford ARS, operating the GB23YOTA callsign along with RSGB Board Director Ben Lloyd, GW4BML.

Operators activating the summit of Stingwern Hill using the GB23YOTA callsign.



Radio Society of Great Britain
23 December 2023

Well done to Jared, 2E0JFI and Chris, MW00MK who, together with RSGB Director Ben Lloyd, GW4BML, activated the SOTA summit of Stingwern Hill as part of YOTA - Youngsters On The Air month. The weather had been challenging, however they managed a good pile up on both 80m and 160m bands whilst operating GB23YOTA.
#amateurradio #hamr #DYM23 #SOTA