

Jamboree On The Air

By Paul Lewis G4APL

October 2008

Jota 2008 preface

First of all welcome to the Guide and Brownie Leaders that may be reading the Caterham Radio Group's (CatRad) and Caterham Guide's JOTA 2008 report.

This years event is the 51st JOTA. Organised on the third weekend of October. We had been notified of around 107 Scout and Guide groups operating from Amateur Radio Special Event or Clubs stations in United Kingdom So lets see if we can locate some of them on the Amateur Radio frequencies.

This event is a first step of gaining an insight to some of the various aspects of communication via wireless, be it a mobile phone, analogue or digital television, data over radio (wireless) and computer communications.

There are two radio events that Guides and Brownies can join in. February is Guides Thinking Day On The Air (TDOTA) and Guides On The Air (GOTA).

This event is now co-ordinated to run on the third full weekend of February. October is Scouts and Girl Scouts (Guides) Jamboree On The Air (JOTA)

Both events are world wide, and run over a period of 48 hours from midnight Friday to midnight Sunday.

The JOTA event is the largest of the two.
The first Jamboree On The Air was held in 1958.

This years event was run over the weekend, supported by Radio Amateur's worldwide. Sending and Receiving Greeting messages. Meeting other

Guides and Scouts over the Amateur Radio Airwaves on the Short Wave bands (High Frequency) as well on the VHF (Very High Frequency) bands using the various modes available.

This is the 23rd time that Caterham Guides and Brownies have held their 'Radio Communications day' event at 'SKY-WAVES' the home of Ann and Paul Lewis who hold the Radio Amateur Callsigns G7BSF and G4APL.

Their first visit was in February 1997. When 36 Guides and Brownies are recorded in the Visitors log.

To date we have had 572 Guide and Brownies Visitors recorded in to the Visitors log.



**Caterham Radio Group JOTA Team and
Caterham 1st & 4th Brownies, 9th Caterham Guides**

Currently the Caterham Guides now have five licensed Radio Amateurs.

As one can expect, some guides have revisited (visits in brackets) the CatRad event . Later as 'helpers' Each Brownie or Guide requires about four hours to complete the tasks. For example Laura (M3LRA)(11) Sophie (M3SOF)(16), Belynda (M3BYL)(23) and Susanna (M3ZUS)(4), Elizabeth(8) Robin(23)

Brownies visiting for the first time are working towards their Radio Communicator Badge.

First time Guides work towards their Communication in the Community and Get on the Airwave badge as well as completing the tasks for the certificate or Badge.

Second time guides work on additional tasks and assist the operators in running the station.

Third visits, starting to get the hang of Amateur Radio assisting the other Brownies and Guides. They may then be interested enough to apply and join a Radio Amateur Foundation Course run by other clubs.

The 9th Caterham Guide Leader is very enthusiastic for their Radio Communication Day using Amateur Radio. Robin is proud to have five Licensed Radio Amateur's with three M3 callsigns in the 9th Caterham Guides and two in 7th Caterham Guides as a result of these activities.

So we come to the 51st annual JOTA event which was going to be run as on previous visits.
Here is the story.

Preparation

At the beginning of September, Paul G4APL reviewed and updated the JOTA 2008 paper work. As it takes a

lot of effort and commitment of the family when preparing the house ready for JOTA

12 Guides and Brownie spaces are available for the morning and afternoon sessions. Excluding the Guides who hold a current Amateur Radio licence. Who will be part of the CatRad JOTA team.

'Robin' Guide Leader Caterham 9th Guide had previously confirmed in the Guide Diary of events published at the start September to her Guides. That JOTA is to go ahead. Though numbers of guides wishing to attend will be unknown until the JOTA event. (after they arrive) The paper work was passed to Robin to co-ordinate the Caterham Guide and Brownie companies during September and October.

October Paul updated the UK Radio Scouting Web site to advise that the Caterham Radio Group (CatRad) would be active again this year on Saturday 18th October 2008.

The Amateur Radio Callsign used for the event was again GX0SCR, the special event Callsign of the Caterham Radio Group.

A few weeks before the event, it appeared that Paul would be short of Radio Amateur operators. With Mike G3TWJ, Ted G7OBF and Ann G7BSF advising that they are not available.

So Paul was relying on the support from his daughters Belynda M3BYL and Annabel 2E1PAL (who would drop in to assist around lunch time with her partner) as well as any of the 'Young Caterham Radio Group M3 Guide Members that would arrive on the day.

During the preceding weeks Ann and Paul started to re-arranged the house. So that on Friday before the event, Paul would not have so much to do.

Paul again took a couple days of annual leave so that the house and radio shack could be re-arranged. The aerials checked out. The tower supporting the aerials would be raised to the full height to ensure that we send and receive strong radio signals,

Thursday Paul was setting up the room, tables and running cables. Friday was spent connecting up the radio equipment in another room and setting up a computer network for the guides to use.

Paul was also monitoring the Short Wave bands during the week. Conditions did not appear very good. The Solar Flux index was still very low 70. This figure is very low, as we are still in the 23rd eleven year Solar Cycle minima which is still.

We will just have to wait and see what we can do for

our Guides and Brownies on the day.

The Event

Saturday 18th October Paul at 07:45hrs Caterham time, Paul was found to be powering up the network PC's and laptop's linked to Caterham's gb7cip.ampr.org server. Running the Amateur Radio worldwide gateway and convers links, and checking the 2 Metre VHF and HF stations were ready.

Checking 20 Metres no signals were heard from Australia. Radio conditions were poor again.

The decision was made that we would start our operations on the 7MHz 40 Metre band.

John G8MNY arrived at 08:15 and assisted in setting up the technical area.

Robin the 9th Caterham Guide Leader arrived at 08:45hrs followed by Brown Owl 1st Caterham Brownies.

Bryan G0SYR arrived a little later as he had a central heating crisis at home. i.e. Stopped working!!

Sophie M3SOF and Laura at around 09:30 and stayed all day, and Susanna M3ZUS at 14:30 to assist with the afternoon session
Annabel 2E1PAL arrive at Midday.



1st Caterham Brownies and Leader having elevenes food and drink break in the Sun.

For the morning session we had 2 from the 4th Caterham Brownies, 5 from the 1st Caterham Brownies and 1 from 9th Caterham Guides excluding the Guide M3 Licensed Radio Amateurs (Young Leaders) turned up for the morning session.

In the afternoon session, we had 3 from the 4th



left to right Sophie M3SOF 9th, Elizabeth 9th, Larua M3LRA, Rachel 4th.

Caterham Brownies and 1 from the 9th Caterham Guide. A total of 12 out of the 24 that had committed to attend their Radio Communications Day.

08:59 UTC Bryan would start off operating the HF Station. Speaking to stations on 40 Metres. Bryan ran the HF station most of the day with Robin assisting in the background with the logging of contact details for the Brownies. Paul G4APL looked in to see if any assistance was required.

As expected the HF band conditions were poor with stations fading out as last year. Contact were made with the following JOTA Stations
 GB5JS Jamboree Scotland Dunfermline
 CT7EMG and CT7EAB Portugal
 ES4JOTA Estonia
 9H3XSG Malta
 SN325S Poland
 KT4BSA North Caroline USA
 K1BSA Maine USA
 CU4L Azores
 AA2BH Baiting Hollow Scout Camp 449 New York

Countries worked Europe
 England, Scotland, Northern Island
 Portugal, Germany, France, Switzerland,
 Netherlands, Czechoslovakia, Scilly, Finland, Italy,
 Estonia, Malta, Azores

Countries work outside Europe
 North and South Carolina, Maine, Illinois,
 Connecticut, Florida, Michigan California, New
 Jersey, Pennsylvania, New York,

The radio propagation conditions of 40 Metre at this time of the Solar Cycle, meant that the skip distance for reaching stations was over 200 hundred miles.

One 20 Metres (HF), we could hear JOTA Stations in the US of A calling and talking to each other

weakly. Their signals appeared not to be strong enough to make it across the Atlantic. Later on in the afternoon, we were exchanging good reports with North America. Though there was a lot of fading.

The VHF 2 Metre station would be managed by Paul G4APL (who was also chief Bottle Washer, Tea and Coffee Maker, Chief Tester). and the operators Sophie M3SOF and Laura M3LRA operating and logging. Belynda M3BYL assisted with a little logging and the lunch time BBQ. Annabel 2E1PAL was back-up Operator if no one was available.

On 2 Metres the JOTA stations worked were
 GB2TSC Tolmans Scouts
 GB1FWS Forth Worth Scouts
 GB0SDS Stevenage District Scouts
 GB1WD Ware and District Scouts

Counties worked
 Surrey, West Sussex, Hertfordshire, Berkshire, South and North London

Our operators kept a listening watch on the 2 metre calling frequency. Ready to assist other JOTA stations as and when required. No others were heard despite our 2 metre aerial being on top of the tower at around 45 feet above ground level.

The Brownies preparing their greeting messages. Designing and drawing their QSL card. Polishing up on their phonetic alphabet that they were learning the previous week. (After all they have to take the Phonetic test later with John G8MNY or Paul G4APL)



John G8MNY leading the Technical demonstration and hands on session with the 1st & 4th Caterham Brownies

The technical area was set-up and was used to build and learn about the crystal set and preparing messages. Learning the Phonetic alphabet. .

The technical interactive talks were lead by John G8MNY. Where they learnt how radios were used and were shown different types of handhelds and mobile phones.

The Brownies were shown and held the insides of a radio and electronic components. They also learnt the basic components of a Radio Transceiver and how the signals went around the world.

Laura and Sophie took a rest from operating while the technical talks was running, and used the Packet Radio Convers 'chat' system. They had a chat to Stations in the Nederland's and Germany. Allowed Laura to practice her written German conversation.

All the required tasks completed enabled the Brownies to gain their Radio Communication Badge and Guide's their Badge.

Lunch time saw Paul set-up the Barbecue in the garden. It was a lovely day (Blue Sky) around lunch time. Annabel's partner took over the Barbecue assisted by Annabel and Belynda taking the orders.

They made sure that there was enough food to eat by those present. Paul was drink 'monitor'.

All those that attended the JOTA station to work towards their Radio Communication badge completed all the required tasks by 18:00. (6PM)

Only few photographs were taken this time, as Paul was too occupied during the event.

After the event, the tables, chairs and the house was put back together.

A total of 34 Greeting Messages were received and 115 sent.

107 UK JOTA special event stations including clubs listed

12 Guides, Brownies, 2 Guide leaders and the 4 Guide licensed Radio Amateurs attended their Radio Communication Day.

(Robin) 9th Caterham Guide Leader

Brown Owl 1st Caterham Brownie Leader

5 1st Caterham Brownies

5 4th Caterham Brownies

2 9th Caterham Guides

Supported by 8 Radio Amateurs G4APL, G8MNY, G0SYR, M3BYL (Young Leader), M3LRA Laura (Young Leader) M3SOF (Young Leader), M3ZUS Susanna (Guide), 2E1PAL plus all those Radio Amateur's that came on to give our JOTA station a call to make it a very successful event for the Caterham Guides. These also included CatRad Members Alvin G6DTW,

John, Bryan joined Belynda, Ann (Who had arrived home from work by now) and Paul for the follow up meal and debrief of the days event.

After the event Paul spent a few evenings and weekend going through the logs to prepare the QSL cards for all those Guides and Scouts and stations that we spoke to.

**A Special thank you to the four
M3 Caterham 'YCRG'
Guide Operators
Belynda M3BYL, Laura M3LRA
Sophie M3SOF, Susanna M3ZUS
and
Thank you all
Guider's
and the
CatRad Jota Team**

**⇒A JOB WELL DONE⇐
Web Site**

<http://www.theskywaves.net>

Thinking Day On The Air 2009
21st February 2009