



# BRITISH AMATEUR RADIO TELEDATA GROUP

## Report To The 2017 Spectrum Forum Meeting

(Sandy, 28th October 2017)

BARTG was founded in 1959 to *promote, encourage and support* the use of *datacoms within amateur radio*. Our experience of datacoms is predominantly in the HF bands. Our main activities are [HF RTTY CONTESTS](#), an [AWARDS SCHEME](#) and a [FOR SALE / WANTED](#) page on our web site.

We regret that our representative, Ian Brothwell G4EAN, is not able to attend this meeting. He has to attend, and take minutes of, the BRARS AGM.

BARTG notes the ongoing development of existing and new datacoms modes. We suspect that these modes are **increasing the number of stations that operate datacoms**. Two members of the BARG committee offer these personal observations:

Chris Plummer G8APB [Awards Manager]

As far as new data modes are concerned, I personally have seen a big surge in the use of JT9 and JT65 and recently masses of FT8 operations. **Most of these have been new operators to data modes**, maybe they were not aware of the older modes, but this activity does not seem to have been detrimental to RTTY or other older modes. This leads me to conclude that **interest in Data in general has increased around 50 to 100% since the likes of WSJT-X has been widely available**. The newer modes allows a somewhat simplistic QSO with limits to 13 characters per transmission, JT65 contacts can be completed within 4 minutes, and FT8 and JT9 within 60 seconds. Of course this hardly compares with contest QSOs on RTTY completed within 30 seconds. The FT/JT modes have the advantage that part of the messages is the four figure QRA location, and there are now some awards available for QRAs and bands etc. Take for example my 6 off JA contacts on JT65 on the magic band 6m, this bagged me 5 squares in just 30 minutes.

Roger Cooke G3LDI [Chairman]

As for the new data modes, the WSJT-X suite of programs has really caught on in a huge explosive way. The newest of these, **FT8**, has been the most popular data mode swing that I have seen for years. I have just finished a month competing in the Clublog CDXC HF Challenge and if it had not been for FT8, then there would not have been half the countries worked. I did work a few on RTTY, plus CW and SSB, but FT8 provided the vast majority of contacts.

Take a look on the FT8 frequencies, 28.074, 24.915, 21.074 and see for yourself. Whilst the majority of those bands appears dead, there are dozens of stations in the 2.7kHz of each of those segments. I know I have a good antenna, but I was working ten metres up until 10.30 at night with loads of South American stations on there.

So, if anybody queries that mode you can tell them it provides most of the contacts these days. Admittedly signal levels are low, but copy is good and although it is a basic QSO, it IS a QSO.