

A diary from YOTA 2016

This year the Youngsters on the Air camp took place in Wagrain, Austria and was hosted by ÖVSV, the Austrian National Society, it was one of the biggest with over 100 young people from IARU Regions 1 and 2.

The purpose of the event is to bring together young people who share the same interests and passion for amateur radio. The initial invite went out to all young RSGB Members, who were invited to apply for a place on the UK team. We were a team of three young people and a youth leader – Kieran Clarke, M6RZR, Nick Ravenscroft, M6NJR, Arthur Loukes, 2EORTY and Sara McGarvey, 2IOSSW. Once chosen, the preparation work began. Skype meetings were held, telephone conversations took place, emails were exchanged and flights were booked. The three months following the initial contact flew by.



Saturday 16th July

Before we knew it the RSGB team were at Birmingham International Airport waiting to catch the 9:10 flight to Salzburg. When we arrived we were collected by bus and transported to the beautiful market town of Wagrain about 70km from the airport.

Not wasting any time, workshops began almost immediately with an introduction to FlexRadio given via Skype by Steve Hicks, N5AC. The rest of the extensive schedule was outlined in the first of many meetings with the rest of the participants. After dinner we all took part in games aimed at getting to know each other.

Sunday 17th July

We all met at breakfast and prepared for the day's events. We were beginning to make new friends and learn new things. Nick, M6NJR said the VHF antenna building on was his favourite activity as it was something he had never done before. We also learned about meteor scatter and how to configure a Raspberry Pi for WSPR use.

An intercultural evening gave us the opportunity to learn about each other and our countries a bit more. Each team brought some traditional food or drink and made a short presentation about what they had brought. We were all then given the opportunity to try the food and drink from each country. The event went on well into the night giving everyone the chance to get to know each other a little more.

Monday 18th July

We were captivated by a topic that Kieran had never heard of before, HAMNET, a high speed amateur radio multimedia network based on commercial wireless devices. This was followed

up by a workshop using the Raspberry Pi, supplied by the camp, that we configured into an APRS station.

Tuesday 19th July

We had a day out visiting the Hohenwerfen castle in Salzburg, first going on a tour. The falconry show that we were treated to after the tour was amazing! We then focused our attention on a 2m contest and were able to use the antenna we built during Monday's workshop. Following the castle tour it was a short bus ride to the Ice Cave. After what felt like a long, slow hike we made it to the top only to discover that once inside we had to climb a lot of stairs to get to the top! We tried to use our radios inside the cave to contact the others outside but it did not work.

Wednesday 20th July

It was an interesting day for all the team members as we were given an insight to how emergency operations were carried out in times of need. The greatest shock was when we were given radio equipment to send an email! We used a wire antenna and that's it. To test it we sent an email to Kieran's dad back in the UK (Dave, G7JGD) and the Region 8 Manager (Philip, MIOMSO). Later that day we took part in a DV workshop in which we experimented with DMR and D-Star communication using a dongle with the Raspberry Pi we were supplied with at the beginning of the week. Most people we knew back home had managed to talk to Kieran and Sara on 20m using the



station on site and we could hear amateurs calling in from all corners of the UK and the rest of the world!

Thursday 21st July

It was a day for SOTA lovers as we were given the option to go to one of three mountains to experiment with our antennas from the previous days. We decided to go for the biggest mountain. It was, to say the least, one of the best views we had seen. You could see all over the Austrian mountains and down below – amazing. It was one of the best moments of YOTA 2016.

Friday 22nd July

This was definitely the most active day for Arthur and Kieran who took part in the ARDF event. The heat didn't do them any favours as it was one of the warmest days. The day was finished off with a talk on LTE, which we found very interesting.

Continued on page 10

Saturday 23rd July

A tough day, not just because we had to say goodbye to everyone but also because our journey home did not go quite as planned. Thankfully, we all made it home safely.

Summing up the event, Arthur said “I had a fantastic time, I never thought I would have learnt so much in such a short time.” Nick’s views was “I have been inspired by the passion other young people have in the hobby.” Kieran decided that “It has been amazing to meet so many people who share my love for amateur radio, I can not wait to keep in contact with the friends I have met and I hope to be involved in other events in the future.” Sara, the team leader, said “I have been given this amazing opportunity thanks to the RSGB. My passion for radio has been reignited. I am looking forward to sharing the knowledge I have gained and to encouraging other young people to get involved.”

Sara McGarvey, 210SSW
drm84@rsgb.org.uk

