

- chasers will help to keep track of the activators, often posting timely information about exactly where in the many frequency bands an activator is currently to be found - this helps others to make contacts with that activator, and helps the activator conserve their precious battery power for more contacts;
- ...and then there are those points to collect - for many, this gives extra impetus to switch on the radio in the comfort of their home, sometimes at odd hours, to make contact with the activator on her sometimes lonely and cold summit!



## Welcome to Amateur Radio and Summits On The Air (SOTA)

Hopefully, this short leaflet has helped you to learn more about the amateur radio hobby - already over 120 years old and counting - and in particular about the Summits On The Air (SOTA) award scheme, which can give so much pleasure to so many.

Currently, there are many millions of radio amateurs worldwide, using radio to communicate via voice, Morse code, advanced digital modes and amateur television, and via satellites, talking with astronauts aboard the International Space Station, and even bouncing signals off the Moon!

The Summits On The Air award scheme has become very popular amongst radio amateurs in six continents of the world. If you would like to know more about SOTA, please visit the SOTA website at:

<https://www.sota.org.uk/>



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<Your first name and callsign here>

### What is Amateur Radio?

Amateur radio is, on the one hand, a hobby and a pastime in which licensed participants experiment with, and learn about, radio communication equipment, techniques and theory.



Michaela OM4CX at her home amateur radio station



Rolf HB9DGV operating a lightweight SOTA portable station from a summit

Amateur radio, or "ham radio" is not just about personal self-training, however: it's also an officially-recognized **public service**, with many participants providing relief or emergency communications to aid other public services during times of need.

There are many fun aspects to the hobby as well, and one of these is engaging in the **Summits On The Air** scheme.

## What is Summits On The Air, or SOTA?

SOTA is an amateur radio award scheme in which participants may either:

- set up a portable radio station on the summit of a hill or mountain and make radio contacts with other stations, either at home, or on other mountain-tops - this is called **activating**;
- use their home radio station to make contact with those calling from the mountain tops - this known as **chasing**.



*Roberto IW2OBX enjoying SOTA portable with a friend*

For obvious reasons, those who set up stations on mountain tops are known as **activators**, and those who call from home stations are **chasers**.

Being an award scheme, SOTA provides opportunities to earn points for both activating and chasing, and many enjoy the collecting of points to compare their activities and progress with those of others in the scheme.

## What is the point of SOTA?

Generally, SOTA is just another among the many activities which radio amateurs engage in as part of their fascinating and ever-changing hobby.

Specifically, SOTA presents many opportunities for the radio amateur to optimize the equipment required to communicate over large distances using battery-powered lightweight radios and aerials or antennas which can be set up almost anywhere, especially in places where there is no cell- or mobile-phone coverage.

For the **activators**, i.e. those who use their skills to put together a lightweight portable radio station, who climb to the top of a hill or mountain to set up the station and then call others, there are several benefits:

- gaining and maintaining fitness by climbing hills and mountains, and enjoying the fresh air;
- overcoming the challenges in navigating safely through sometimes difficult terrain;
- it's a great opportunity to travel to unfamiliar places;
- activating requires a lightweight approach - optimizing ones' equipment for different conditions is a constant challenge for improvement;
- it's a real pleasure to be able to make contacts with others in the local area or state, or in the same continent, or even worldwide;
- with every activation, points are awarded to both the activators and the chasers who contact them.

There are benefits for the **chasers** at home, too:

- making contacts with the activators, who are often running very small stations with minimal power on some distant summit, is always a real pleasure;
- setting up and maintaining their own stations at home requires all the skills, experience and knowledge they have learned;