



# Parks on the Air (POTA)

Getting Amateur Radio Operators Into the Great Outdoors

Vic Ulfik – G4YIP



# Parks on the Air (POTA)

## What is Parks on the Air?



**International amateur radio operating program.**



**Encourages portable operation from parks and protected areas.**



**Started in 2017 following the success of the National Parks On The Air event (USA)**



**Thousands of activators and hunters worldwide.**



# Parks on the Air (POTA)

## Why POTA is So Popular?



**Easy to get started.**



**No membership fees.**



**Works with any mode:**



**SSB**



**CW**



**FT8/FT4**



**Digital modes**



**Suitable for all licence levels.**



**Can be done alone or as a group activity.**



# Parks on the Air (POTA)

## POTA in Numbers – Growing Worldwide



**Thousands of registered parks.**



**Millions of contacts logged annually.**



**Active operators in many countries.**








**Strong UK participation and growing.**



# Parks on the Air (POTA)

## Key Terminology - Understanding POTA Language



-  **Activator - Operates from within a qualifying park.**
-  **Hunter - Contacts activators from anywhere.**
-  **Park - A registered qualifying location.**
-  **QSO - Contact between stations.**
-  **Spot - Announcement that an activator is on-air.**



# Parks on the Air (POTA)

## What Qualifies as a Park?



**National Parks**



**Country Parks**



**Nature Reserves**



**Protected Landscapes**



**Historic Sites**



**Use the official park directory:**









**Parks on the Air Directory**



# Parks on the Air (POTA)

## A Simple Activation Process



-  Travel to a qualifying park.
-  Set up portable station.
-  Call CQ POTA.
-  Make contacts.
-  Upload your log.
-  Receive credit and awards.



# Parks on the Air (POTA)

## Basic Portable Station



**HF or VHF/UHF radio**



**Battery**



**Antenna**



**Coax**



**Logging method**



**Headphones (optional)**



# Parks on the Air (POTA)

Keep It Simple



**25W–100W radio**



**End-fed half-wave antenna**



**Telescopic mast**



**12V battery**



**Folding chair and table**



**Logging facilities**



# Parks on the Air (POTA)

## Activation Requirements



**Operate from within park boundaries.**



**Make at least 10 QSOs.**



**Follow local regulations.**



**Stay portable**



# Parks on the Air (POTA)

## Operating Technique - Calling CQ POTA



**Example: "CQ Parks on the Air, CQ POTA, this is M0XXX portable in park GB-XXXX."**



### **Tips:**



**Speak clearly.**



**Repeat park number.**



**Use spotting network**



# Parks on the Air (POTA)

## How Hunters Find You – Spotting Yourself



### Methods:



**POTA website spotting page.**



**POTA mobile app.**



**Other amateurs spotting you.**



**Show: POTA Spotting Page**



# Parks on the Air (POTA)

## The Hunter's Perspective – Chasing Activators



### Hunters:



**Operate from home.**



**Listen for activators.**



**Make contact.**



**Collect awards.**

### Benefits:



**No travel required.**



**Great for limited operating time.**



**Excellent for new operators**



# Parks on the Air (POTA)

## Hunter's Awards – Awards for Chasers



**Hunter Awards**



**DX Hunter Awards**



**Repeat Park Awards**



**Mode specific awards**



# Parks on the Air (POTA)

Activator Awards – Awards for Portable Operators



**Activator Award**



**Century Activator**



**Multiple Park Awards**



**Activator Milestones**



**Awards accumulate automatically through uploaded logs.**



# Parks on the Air (POTA)

## Logging your contacts



**Paper log**



**Computer log**



**Mobile apps**



**Export/upload using ADIF format to the POTA website**



# Parks on the Air (POTA)

## Operating Tips – Lessons learned



**Arrive early.**



**Check propagation.**



**Carry spare batteries.**



**Bring weather protection.**



**Have a backup antenna.**



**Use a comfortable chair!**



**Consider headphones**



**Check facilities/access & car park closing time**



# Parks on the Air (POTA)

## Operating Tips – Common challenges



**Poor propagation**



**Noise**



**Weather**



**Battery failure**



**Antenna issues**

**Note:**



**Keep equipment simple**



**Test before leaving home**



**Carry spares**



# Parks on the Air (POTA)

## Club Activities



## Benefits



**Mentoring new operators.**



**Trying different equipment.**



**Learning opportunity**











**Social event.**



# Parks on the Air (POTA)

## Planning Your First Activation



-  **Enrol on the POTA website (Chasers & Activators)**
-  **Find a nearby park.**
-  **Check park reference.**
-  **Charge battery.**
-  **Pack radio.**
-  **Spot yourself.**
-  **Make 10 contacts.**
-  **Upload log.**



# Parks on the Air (POTA)

See POTA In Action



**Come along to one of our club's activations**



**Help with setting up/packing away**



**Have a go on the mike or key**



**Enjoy!**



# Parks on the Air (POTA)



## Resources



<https://parksontheair.com/>



<https://pota.app/#/>



<https://rsgb.org/main/beyond-exams-building-experience/logbook-explorer-getting-started/rsgb-logbook-explorer-parks-on-the-air/>



<https://hamradioprep.com/introduction-to-pota-operations/>



<https://mcbainsite.co.uk/parks-on-the-air-uk/>

