



Radio Society of Great Britain Press Release



Icom sponsors IOTA

The popular Islands on the Air programme has been given a major boost thanks to a three year sponsorship deal with radio maker Icom.

The Radio Society of Great Britain is pleased to announce that as of 1 October 2006, Icom will be the new corporate sponsor of the RSGB Islands on the Air (IOTA) programme. This three-year worldwide sponsorship deal is a major boost to IOTA both in the UK and internationally. It teams probably the best DX programme in the world with a world leading amateur radio maker. Principally involving sponsorship from both Icom UK and Icom US this deal is set build this already popular programme into 2009 and beyond.

The IOTA programme has expanded significantly in recent years and now has tens of thousands of participants and millions of IOTA contacts made each year. The programme is now set for more major expansion in forthcoming years, thanks to the new sponsorship deal. This is a particularly exciting time for IOTA enthusiasts. Slick new web-based software has been launched to make the programme easier to use. The software will revolutionise the processes whereby award applications can be made and checked. It will also give easy access to IOTA information and standings. Plans are in motion to expand the number of IOTA contests and awards particularly internationally. The Icom sponsorship will provide funding that will ensure the success of these developments. The partnership will also provide joint promotion and marketing efforts, greatly raising the profile of the IOTA programme throughout the world. In the past, IOTA has also been sponsored by Kenwood and Yaesu and both have aided in the programme's development since it was launched in 1964.

Quotes

IOTA CHAIRMAN.

RSGB IOTA Committee chairman John Butcher, G3LAS, responds to the sponsorship deal with Icom: "Since the RSGB Islands on the Air programme was created by Geoff Watts over 40 years ago, it has developed into one of the world's most prestigious amateur radio awards. Now, second only to DXCC in popularity, it attracts many thousands of participants worldwide, who regularly battle it out in the pile-ups for a contact with that elusive 'new one'. Many of these exciting opportunities are made possible only by the efforts of the hundreds of intrepid expeditioners who range the planet to activate many remote and often nearly inaccessible islands. We look forward with enthusiasm to working with Icom to promote IOTA across the world so that we and they will derive mutual benefits. As we move forward in the 21st century, we will try to achieve another 40 years of growth and development in IOTA for the enjoyment of amateur radio enthusiasts in all countries".

THE AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE

Icom America amateur division manager Ray Novak, N9JA, explains why IOTA has such an important role to play in securing the future of amateur radio across the pond: "As Icom America's amateur division manager, I see my challenge as keeping the amateur radio hobby alive. With today's technological advances, many people no longer look to amateur radio as the new and exciting hobby it was 10-15 years ago. As an amateur radio manufacturer, it is our duty to do things to create excitement to entice people to participate in this wonderful hobby. "So much of our time is spent in the

work place, taking us away from the relaxation and enjoyment of our families. Therefore when we take time off from work, we want to spend time with our family. Well, IOTA gives amateur radio that much needed family tie. Take the family on vacation to a resort Island, and enjoy the relaxation, the beach, and the DX pile-ups as a family...what a perfect combination. "Let me tell you about a personal experience I had with some friends from the Tennessee Valley DX Association, TVDXA, back in September 2006. We activated St George Island, FL, NA085. While this does not sound like a rare identity to the US operators, we had so much fun running Qs and hearing 'Thank you for the new one Ray!' So, our goal is to share that experience with as many amateur radio operators in the world as possible. We also feel this will generate more activity on the HF bands and also result in more people wanting to get into our hobby. "Where do I see this going? I would hope that IOTA would be one of the things that would attract people to go and get their licence. We want IOTA to have the same profile as the DXCC award in the US. This will not take place over night. It will take time, money and effort. Amateur radio is one of the least expensive, competitive hobbies in the world. All we have to do is promote it.

Further Information

"WHAT IS IOTA?

IOTA is an award programme in which participants "collect" contacts with islands worldwide. These contacts count towards 18 separate certificates, graded in difficulty, for island chasers, as well as two prestigious awards for high achievement. The awards can be claimed by any eligible licensed radio amateur who can produce evidence of sufficient two-way communications with islands. For the purposes of IOTA, the world's islands have been corralled into some 1200 groups with varying numbers of qualifying islands (or counters) in each. The objective, for the island chaser, is to make radio contact with at least one counter in as many of these groups as possible. For the DXpeditioner, the objective is to provide such island contacts. The basic award is for working stations in 100 IOTA groups. The IOTA Programme also produces an annual Honour Roll and other performance tables that are published on the IOTA web-site and the IOTA Directory. For both the island chaser and the island activator, IOTA is a fun pastime, adding much enjoyment to on the air activity. IOTA has an estimated 15,000-20,000 followers, making it one of the most popular award programmes in amateur radio. You can find out more about the programme at www.rsgbiota.org.uk .

But beware, island chasing can become compulsive!

For more Information:

Contact: Mark Allgar, M1MPA
Tel: +44 (0) 870 904 7373
Fax: +44 (0) 870 904 7374
E-Mail mark.allgar@rsgb.org.uk
Web www.rsgb.org.uk

**Radio Society of Great Britain
Lambda House
Cranborne Road
Potters Bar
Herts
EN6 3JE
UK**