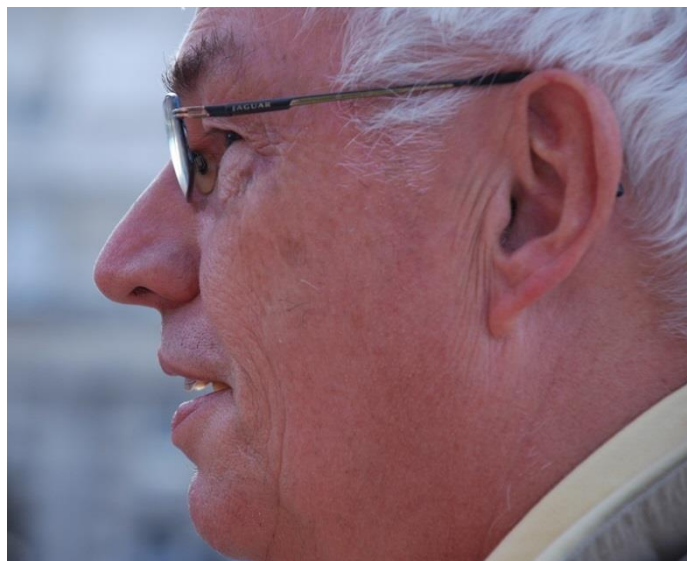


## Hans Knot International Radio Report October 2013.

Welcome friends to another bumper edition of the radio report and thanks a lot again for all the e mails filled with questions, response and memories. Of course the main part of them is already answered by mail but a selection you will find back in this issue.

This issue of the report will be a very sad one for me and others as we have to announce that my very good friend in radio and more, Rob Olthof, passed away after an extensive friendship for more than 48 years. On Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> of September he died in peace in a hospice in Wilnis at the age of 67. Our friendship started way back in 1965 with thanks to a weekly newspaper, Hitweek, in which people could write letters to talk about their meanings on several subjects. Rob wrote about Radio Caroline and I was writing about Radio London.

After some letters we took contact with each other. It was the time you were fan of the Rolling Stones or the Beatles or fan of Caroline or Radio London. The time the baby boomers took the freedom they could get.



Some critical remarks from the both of us were followed by several phone calls between him in Amsterdam and me in Groningen and after a few calls and mentioning his name my mother asked me if this 'Rob Olthof' lived at the Willemsparkweg in Amsterdam. I answered with 'yes' and my father gladly told me they knew his father as - like my parents - he was a barber who was also in the National Committee of barbers.

It was the start of a very long and warm friendship between Rob Olthof and myself, which was especially built on our common interests like radio, music, beer, trams and trains and of course offshore radio and trading.

Rob his first activity in the field of radio was in 1968 with short advertisements in music magazines, in which he offered photos of the Caroline radio ships. This for the price of 40 cents a copy with 25 cents of postage to be paid on a Amsterdam Giro account. Of course, in those days, without mentioning it to the taxmen. The first stones were laid from which became in 1978 the Foundation for Media Communication.

From the beginning it was just small stones, which led to something special in Offshore Radio. I remember at one stage singer and composer Neil Diamond was in concert in Amsterdam. Rob was at the outside of the venue, gave his camera to a fan and added 25 guilders with the question if he could make a photograph of the star. After the concert Rob was back at the concert hall and got the camera. It was 1971 and so he had to go to the photo shop to get the negatives printed. With one of the photos he went to the printer shop and ordered a lot of posters with the star. In the meantime he had paid for announces in Dutch newspaper 'Telegraaf' and some Music Magazines and hundreds of fans ordered the poster. Rob made some money, however I still doubt that the fans really recognised Neil Diamond on the poster.

Very soon after this incident Rob became chairman, secretary as well as cash man for the Olivia Newton Fanclub. Myself I was already Final Editor of the Pirate Radio News. From 1972 on we regular visited each other, either in Amsterdam at Rob's place or in Groningen where, I live. All kind of interesting things in the field of radio and music were, from that time on, organised together. When Veronica stranded in April 1973 I took some photographs at the beach, which were available at the big demonstration in The Hague, the same months. Of course some money had to be paid.

When we took off from Groningen early in the morning, we first had to go to the Willemsparkweg in Amsterdam to get the posters, as Rob had them printed. However he couldn't go with us as his mother Anneke, Rob always called her 'Kootje', had forbidden him to go along as he had a new job, he could easily loose when demonstrating in The Hague. Of course he was very dissatisfied. 10 minutes to eight in the morning his mother finally combed his hair and hurried him to come in time at the office.

May the 4th 1973 we were in the second inner harbour of Scheveningen. More than 350 people from nine countries had ordered tickets for a boat trip to the offshore radio stations. However the owner of the company, where we hired six ships, blew it off as the weather conditions were too bad to go out. Never have I seen Rob Olthof so angry again as that day. A week later we tried again and succeeded to get 4 boats filled with Anoraks to the three ships on the North Sea and many trips would follow.

In 1978 Rob Olthof was the founder of the Foundation for Media Communication, while I founded - together with two other persons - the Freewave Media Magazine. It was also the year that I was asked by the people of Music Radio Promotions from England to co-organise with some other Dutch people the 'Zeezenders 20 Convention'. This was the event which led Rob and me to start with the annual Radio Days in the Netherlands, which now brings every year hundreds of

former Anoraks to the Netherlands. With all our work, which is done under the flag of the foundation, we went on till this day to get the history of radio in word and sound and vision alive. Of course I have to mention our mutual friend from Germany, Martin van de Ven, who joined in in our organising team many years ago.

During those Radio Days Rob was always at table 'one' to collect entrance money as well selling merchandise, never forget those days are costing a lot of money to organise. On the financial front Rob was always number one.



But it was not only the radio history which kept us together. Cats were at Rob as well our Home and were an important factor in our daily talks. Rob his most recent cat, Jeroentje, has in the meantime the warmth of the Knot family. Our love for England led to numerous travels to several cities and places were also friends, we learned due to the radio hobby, were often visited. But also museums, churches, restaurants, concerts and a big variety in pubs were visited. And

count on me when I say that travelling with Rob Olthof brought us a lot of adventures. I shall going to miss this yearly travelling to England but also the countless phone calls we had, once a day, during all those decades, as well as the many visits we brought each other in Amsterdam and Groningen. The telephone company will get lesser income now Rob has gone.

Rob, I will never forget this enormous long and warm friendship which we have shared over more than 48 years. You will always be in my mind. Rest in Peace and thank you in name of all the radio friends inside and outside the Netherlands for you intense, never compelling work you've done to get the memories from the radio in the past alive.

Next we have very nice photograph.

There were, in the seventies of last century, not too much ladies in the offshore radio scene, although there was one radio station were more ladies than men were presenters. Remember the MV King David with Capital Radio? Well this organisation was run by the International Broadcasting Society in Bussum in Holland. The main persons were a married couple, who met each other in the sixties at Radio Netherlands World Service. Timmy Thomasson from Canada and Berte Beydels headed the IBS. Here an exclusive photo from Berte in the days she worked for Radio Netherlands.



Reader Graham Foy writes interesting stories about Radio too. Lately he went, for instant, to a party with Roger Day and made a long report about that special evening. More about Graham's work can be found at: [www.sasradiogroup.org](http://www.sasradiogroup.org)

Announcement found on Radio Caroline's website brings the sad news: 'Closure of satellite service After much thought and negotiation we regret that we have decided to end our satellite broadcasts on 30th September 2013. For a long time there have been reception problems that sadly cannot be remedied and this has led to a further decline in our audience on this platform, with those who listen exclusively via satellite falling to a tiny percentage. Our service provider, whilst not responsible for the reception difficulties, has agreed to release us early from our long-term contract as a goodwill gesture. We have mutually agreed that this course of action is in the best interests of the both of us.



Dell Richardson

Our first project following closure of the satellite service will be to launch a brand new on-line radio station to be called Caroline Extra. Caroline Extra is a brand new service from Radio Caroline which will play music from the 60s, 70s and 80s. Many so called 'Gold' stations play only a very small selection but Caroline Extra will be different. We have a huge amount of material from those eras at our disposal and we intend to play the widest possible selection. You'll hear your favourites and you'll hear music that is rarely played. Alongside this great variety of tracks you'll also have another chance to hear some of our specialised programming. Dell Richardson's Good Rockin' Tonight, The Elvis Hour, 60s and 70s Request Show, Americana Roots Show and Stafford's World will all be heard on Caroline Extra.'

Last issue brought some news about the interview Johnny Walker had in Edinburgh with Tony Benn and it's former shipmate from Walker, Robbie Dale responding: 'The Johnny Walker bit in the Independent news with Tony Benn was very interesting. After all this time, I didn't think this ill-informed politico's continued to spout this antiquated rhetoric. Greetings' Robbie Dale



Listeners to Media Network from Radio Netherlands surely remember him: Andy Sennit, who also wrote in: 'Hi Hans, Just a brief note to say that on YouTube I can across a video of a #1 hit in Canada from 1973 by former Radio Caroline South DJ Keith Hampshire. It's a cover of Cat Stevens' First Cut is the Deepest, which I've decided to play on Radio Seagull next week. The audio quality is excellent. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j4HiSM-OrfY> Keith also has a website at <http://www.keithhampshire.com/> which includes a biography that features his time on Radio Caroline. I used to enjoy his 'Keefers' shows on Radio Caroline so it's good to know that nearly 50 years later he's still active in the music and radio business. Regards, Andy Sennit.'

Well thanks a lot Andy and interesting for many who didn't know. Also a plug for your program on Seagull and for Keith of course, who's also reader of the Hans Knot International Radio Report. And on the next link you can listen to tracks of his Millennium CD: <http://www.allmusic.com/album/20th-century-masters-the-millennium-collection-the-best-of-keith-hampshire-mw0000357340>

Sad news about the illness of Ronan O'Rahilly has reached us versus our friends at offshore echos:

<http://www.offshoreechos.com/Ronan%20%27Rahilly.htm>

Roger Day wrote earlier this month on Facebook:

'I am delighted to tell you starting in December I shall be broadcasting the weekday breakfast show on a new digital radio station based in Redhill covering Surrey and Sussex. This doesn't change my other activities like the daily internet show and Sunday evenings at the Beeb. It's going to be great being at the start of yet another local radio station. Roger Day'





Roger Day, photo: Martin van der Ven

Well Roger good to hear and hopefully your new listeners will enjoy it too.

Next we go to Scotland and former Voice of Peace deejay John McDonald: 'Some of you may know that I have been receiving treatment on my eyes for a year or so now owing to complications from diabetes. I'm afraid the treatment has been unsuccessful and my vision is starting to fade out. I'm down to less than 50% vision and it is going fast. So I wanted to say thank you and to F/B friends and real life ones too. Unless there is a really fancy speaking computer program to go with F/B (which I doubt) then I will be gone from here within a few months. I should stress I am not in any way depressed and will not be doing anything silly, a new challenge means new adventures. I wanted to get this in before my vision totally disappears. Thanks again everyone. John Mc Donald.'



John McDonald. Photo: Jeff Zycinski

Well John, lucky enough there's a lot of equipment for use by people with a visual handicap. Almost every month one of my readers with a handicap like yours is 'writing in' a response on the report. So hopefully we're in contact for a long time. By the way it was very good meeting up with you and Don Stevens, Robbie Owen in Dusseldorf early June.

Last month I told you that David Jacobs had presented his very last radio program and the radio report was just sent out to you the reader, when the next sad message was found in my mailbox: 'Broadcaster and presenter David Jacobs, whose career spanned seven decades, has died aged 87. Jacobs, who stepped down from his Radio 2 programme last month because of ill health, died at home "surrounded by his family", the BBC said in a statement. He started at the BBC in 1945, hosting shows including Housewives' Choice, Juke Box Jury and Any Questions. BBC director general Tony Hall hailed him as "one of the great broadcast personalities. As a young and avid viewer of Jukebox Jury, I remember him every week scoring the hits and misses," he said. "And I was still listening to him just last month as he fronted his show The David Jacobs Collection on Radio 2. We shall all miss him tremendously."

David Jacobs during Luxembourg days. Photo: Alan Bailey



Announcing in July that he was stepping down from his Radio 2 show, Jacobs said: "Over the past two years Radio 2 has given me time to be treated for liver cancer and Parkinson's Disease." Jacobs presented Juke Box Jury from 1959-1967. He started his broadcasting career in the Royal Navy in 1944, where he was made an announcer on wartime radio station Radio SEAC. After leaving the Navy, he began working at the BBC as an announcer and newsreader. In 1964, he became one of the original Top of the Pops presenters and he also worked as the BBC's Eurovision Song Contest commentator before he was succeeded by Terry Wogan. He also introduced all 53 episodes of radio sci-fi serial Journey Into Space, as well as playing 22 characters.'

Next we go to the beautiful Island of Guernsey, where also we have a couple of readers: 'Hi Hans, while searching for something non

pirate radio related this web page came up, there is a film on Radio Caroline in the year 1965 on it which I have never seen before. As far as I know it does not seem to be anywhere else on the net either, the film has commentary which is not very well lined up with the film and very out of synch . <http://www.eafa.org.uk/catalogue/1030>  
I thought you might find it interesting.'

It was written by Robert Clancy and although many of you haven't seen the movie before, we did mention it a couple of years ago. I wondered if Robert was still on Guernsey and he came back with: 'And yes I am still on the sunny isle of Guernsey, you might be interested that I took a certain Stig Hartvig Nielsen owner of WMR World Music Radio (Andorra/Denmark) to see our Richard Harding at Island FM recently, he stayed with me for the weekend while visiting the local BBC and commercial radio stations in Guernsey. The photos are of his visit first one is web cam shot of Island FM live studio with Richard on air with me crouched in the corner with the Island FM news reader ducking from view!! Stig is standing far right, second photo is taken by Stig showing Richard on air, third one is a meal that I took Stig and my mother to at La Villete Hotel, fourth one is combined photo of outside of BBC Guernsey and Channel Television studios at Bulwer Avenue, St. Sampsons and the final photo is the BBC Guernsey AM TX site.





You may use the photos as copyright has been given to me by Stig and Richard Harding(Island FM web cam) for use by The Guernsey Channel Islands Branch of Monitor.org.uk or as I see fit for external use, Stig's article on channel islands radio stations will appear in about 4 months time in a Danish DX radio magazine.



Hope you can make use of the photo's Robert Clancy'  
[deejayclancy@guernsey.net](mailto:deejayclancy@guernsey.net)

Well Robert thanks for the additional information and as you see I've made a selection of the photos you've sent. Hope to meet once we will be visiting Guernsey again.

Next we're going to the Greater London area: 'Hello, Darlings! Full Photo Report of Kenny Everett blue plaque unveiling and book launch On Saturday 14th September. The British Comedy Society, Transworld Books and Terence Higgins Trust co-hosted a day-long event celebrating the life and career of Kenny Everett. A blue plaque was unveiled by Cleo Rocos outside his last home, 91 Lexham Gardens, Kensington followed by the launch of his much-anticipated authorised biography, 'Hello Darlings' at the Grange Tower Bridge Hotel. A four-page photo-report of this wonderful celebration of our favourite DJ's life is now on the Radio London website.

[www.radiolondon.co.uk](http://www.radiolondon.co.uk) Mary Payne.' Well thanks a lot Mary and of course there's far much more to see on this wonderful site in memory of the best radio station of the sixties, that's in my mind and ears.

And what a surprise from René van Abeelen, who wrote in: 'Radio Caroline's first ship, the MV Fredericia, now in miniature! RS7: The Radioships.com will offer its newest miniature during Radioday 2014 in Amsterdam: a beautiful model of the ship that started the era of British pirate radio half a century ago. The new miniature will only be available during the Radioday in Amsterdam, March 22, for a special anniversary price of € 50. The miniature can be ordered by e-mail. Perhaps later a second run will follow but that is not certain.

The Fredericia is made in the usual scale of 1:400, weighs 262 gr. and is 14 cm long. On the website [radioships.com](http://radioships.com) there are more pictures of the new miniature & all info about how to order one.



René van den Abeelen started Radioships.com in July 2008 with a miniature of the Norderney. Miniatures of the mv Mi Amigo, MEBO 2, REM Island, Ross Revenge and Galaxy followed. All three Radio Caroline vessels are now part of the Radioships.com collection. More miniatures will be made in the future!

Well we go to Phil Champion, who brought us months ago in the Hans Knot Radio Report part 1 about the Scandinavian offshore radio stations. This time he takes us in part 2a to Radio Mercur.

## WHAT CAN WE LEARN ABOUT THE SCANDINAVIAN PIRATES?-

### Part 2 a- Radio Mercur

Philip Champion

In Part 1 I looked at Radio Nord. Let's see what the others were like, starting with the pioneer Radio Mercur. First, let's look at the name. In English we would pronounce it as '*Mer-cur*' (rhyming with 'fur'). However, the Danes said it as '*Rad-dee-oh Mer-coor*' (Rhyming with 'poor' though the last syllable was a bit clipped.) The trumpet sound or jingle which went with the station ID was appropriate as signifying the trumpet of Mercury, the Greek/Roman messenger god. And here was a radio bringing messages of music and information.

This article has taken nine months to research - not all the time obviously but a lot of it. It is made up two things. First, I've listened to original recordings. Most shows are from Ingemar Lindqvist's website at <http://radiohistoria.jvnf.org/index.htm> then the 'Radio Mercur' section. With about 45 items to hear, often about 30 minutes long, I must admit that to save time I often jumped from the start to the end of a record. This site has Poul Foged aka Paul Dane's interesting talk on Radio Mercur at Zeezenders 20 in 1978: I was there but had forgotten most of the details!

The [scandinavianoffshoreradio.com](http://scandinavianoffshoreradio.com) website provided over 100 adverts broadcast on Radio Mercur. Yes, I listened to every one! From these recordings I made my own comments about programmes and did an analysis of the adverts. Second, I used the text from the various websites to build up a picture of the station's history. As



well as the two websites mentioned I used the [radio-mercur.dk](http://radio-mercur.dk) tribute website run by Henrik Nørgaard plus a site run a lady called Pia Charlotte Schultz [www.pia-charlotte.com/?page\\_id=285](http://www.pia-charlotte.com/?page_id=285) which provided more of an insight: A lot of cross-referencing had to be done. For example, trying to find out what sort of people broadcast on Mercur and what subsequently happened to them led me to the [danskefilm.dk](http://danskefilm.dk) site. Again I had to draw my own conclusions from the 'raw' data. In all of this online translators were essential. There was a great deal of copying and pasting into them to find out what the Danish text means. Ingemar checked and amended the original draft last summer and gave more information though since then I have found out even more. His help has been invaluable.

Other research on the internet has given me some idea of the nature of some of the products advertised. Some information came from Hans Knot's "Soundscapes, " particularly an article from the July 12th 1959 edition of the Dutch "TV" magazine. [www.soundscapes.info](http://www.soundscapes.info) There is also some information about the ships from the [offshorechos.de](http://offshorechos.de) website. Useful photos and schedules were found on an open [Facebook](#) page on Radio Mercur, following a link from the mercur.dk website (click on 'Nyt' and scroll down). Just as I was finalising this article Hans Knot reprinted an article by W. Hijmans which appeared in the 'Supplement' to the Dutch daily paper "Algemeen Dagblad" on April 7th 1962, where the journalist had visited Mercur's headquarters. Henrik Nørgaard checked the final draft of this article, corrected a number of Danish spellings and provided some important 'new' information, including that from his book "Brask -The Life and Times of a Danish Tycoon." To all these people: Thank You.



In English publications the history of Mercur is sketchy. Paul Dane's talk was more detailed. Here, for the first time to my knowledge in English, is a more comprehensive look at this pioneer's history and an idea of what it sounded like. It was a station which Paul said was "to revolutionise the whole radio world." This was true of course for countries with a State monopoly in radio but not for commercial radio as such which was already operating in places like North America, Spain and Australia. Within Denmark, Henrik Nørgaard wrote to me, "Mercur has always had a certain aura around its name." His own fascination came from talking to those people who were young enthusiastic people who started the station led him to write a book in 2003 "Pirater i æteren" (Pirates of the Ether.)

First we need to think of Denmark's geography. The main peninsula coming north from Germany is Jylland (Jutland) with the large island of Nord Jylland just north of it. To the east are two of the larger of the 70 inhabited islands making up the country: Fyn (Funen) and Lolland. Further east across the straits called the Storebællt (Great Belt) is the largest island of Sjælland (Zealand) on the east coast of which is the capital København. Visible from there across the north-south channel called the Øresund is part of the Skåne (Scania)

region of Sweden which was ruled by the Danes from around 800 - 1658. On Skåne's coast are the city of Malmö and town of Landskrona. Just two areas of the Øresund were in international waters. The Øresund is nearly 40 miles long, is two miles wide at its narrowest but is typically five to seven miles wide.

For an article in "Soundscapes" Henrik Nørgaard wrote that in Denmark the State radio, Statsradiofonien, broadcast two channels with an aim to educate and entertain (rather like the BBC.) Entertainment and modern music, like the BBC too, were allocated just several hours a week. In any case lots of parents in Denmark were aghast at the new rock and roll music and were worried at its effect on young peoples' morals. On good days Radio Luxembourg could be heard in Denmark with a fairly good signal.

It seems that 32 year old Peer Jansen was partly inspired to start Radio Mercur by the Voice of America radio station on the "Courier" off Rhodes broadcasting to Eastern Bloc countries. He found out about it when visiting southern Europe. It used frequencies not allocated by the ITU but that didn't seem to bother anyone except maybe Russia. Inspiration also came from AFN's broadcasts of entertainment and popular music in Germany and Radio Luxembourg's popular shows. There is a story that he mistakely thought '208' came from the English Channel. Henrik Nørgaard found out that this was a story made up by someone who joined Mercur later on, certainly after the early planning stages. According to Peer's cousin and legal adviser, Børge Agerskov, he had not talked about radio broadcasting from the Channel. Anyway, Luxembourg circumvented British broadcasting laws.

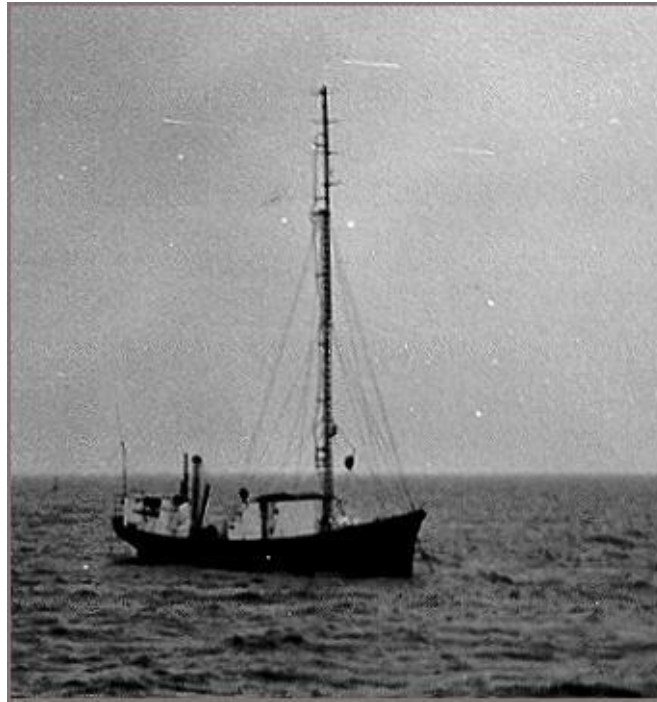
So he thought of a similar station broadcasting in the Øresund channel between Denmark and Sweden. Børge was in the last year of a university law course and was interested in Peer's ideas. He described his cousin as very adventurous and able to inspire people. He studied the Danish broadcasting legislation and realised Peer had

come across a loophole. The laws had overlooked the possibility that transmitters could be put on a ship to circumvent the broadcasting monopoly in that country. So these two men can be thanked, with due deference to the VoA ship, as opening up the ways for many offshore radio stations over the next three decades or so. Peer Jansen needed backing and he approached his boss in a silverware firm, Ib Fogh, who duly invested. In fact, he was more than an investor as he was involved in the planning with Peer Jansen from an early stage.



Studio Cheetah I

The decision to use the new FM band when most radios were just on medium wave was said to help with the transmitter aerial design. However, FM was chosen to obtain a better sound quality. Peer's brother in law was a radio enthusiast who knew another amateur radio enthusiast, William Pedersen. The latter's occupation was repairing cycles but was very skilled at making radio transmitters. He built one for Radio Mercur. Though power was 1.5 kW the directional antenna and gain of 6dB gave an erp of 25 kW so that it could be received in most of the province of Sjælland from its anchorage in the Øresund. The "Cheeta" had been fitted out for its new role in Stege south of København. This former German fishing vessel was very small, as its tonnage of 107 shows.



### Cheetah I

The first tests were on July 11th. Radio engineer Ib Hansen talked from the deck of the ship between records. Really he was the first true offshore radio voice. Two records on the audio clip I heard were by Danish men, one sounding like the "Londonderry Air" tune. On the ship there was not really a studio but a 'playback room' with two Phillips Major four-track tape recorders combined with a small mixer. At first the vessel was anchored in the northern of the two sections of international waters- that being north of Saltholm island and south of Ven island which was more between København and Landskrona. It was some 10 km/six miles from Danish territory and outside their four mile limit. The anchorage was moved south to a location midway between København and Malmö to improve reception in those two cities.

On land work had been going on since the summer of 1957, the Mercur tribute website tells us. The first studios in the villa on Maltegårdsvej in the wealthy, leafy Gentofte suburb of København were ready. It had been the Argentine Embassy. This would house

the 30 programme and administration staff. They used the cellar, hall and library with the studios on the first floor. One photo shows the sound engineer's room full of equipment including reel to reel tapes while another shows the announcer sitting at a small table covered with a cloth (near the window to the engineer's room) with a spare chair, microphone and table lamp in what appears to be the corner of a larger room.

The villa's dining room was converted into a concert hall. Mercur had decided to have their own band, as State radio stations did. The popular bandleader Ib Glindemann was brought along to set up a 16 - piece band but had to keep quiet about it.

The band recorded a stock of tapes of dance music for later transmission. This makes Radio Mercur different from later pirates which relied 100% on playing records. Glindemann composed the Radio Mercur jingle with the three trumpets and a voiceover by Pedro Biker, "Du lytter til Radio Mercur" (You're listening to Radio Mercur.) Though Jansen and Fogh founded the station Production Manager Benny Knudsen ran it on a day to day basis. He too had been involved in the planning from the early stages.





**Ib Glindemann orchestra in front of Mercur building**

They had several tribulations before the official start, with several announced dates in July missed. In fact, a newspaper in June leaked the coming of the station with a report of the ship being fitted out in Stege. A start date early in July was then given. On July 15th there was massive coverage in the newspapers of the station's coming, with the 19th given as the opening date. However, the anchor was lost on July 17th -18th as the ship drifted in a storm. The ship "Cheeta" ran aground on the Swedish coast just off Malmö with the mast damaged and the aerial falling into the sea. The tug "Charles" took it off on the 24th but as there had been so much damage to the hull that it took in water it was towed to a shipyard in Stege for repairs.

With work completed the "Cheeta" returned to its position on the 25th ready to start full transmissions. Tests restarted on July 31st with the signal loud and clear in greater København and the south of Sjælland. It was the Danish press which referred to Radio Mercur as "pirate radio" - a popular term used universally since for offshore



radio stations.

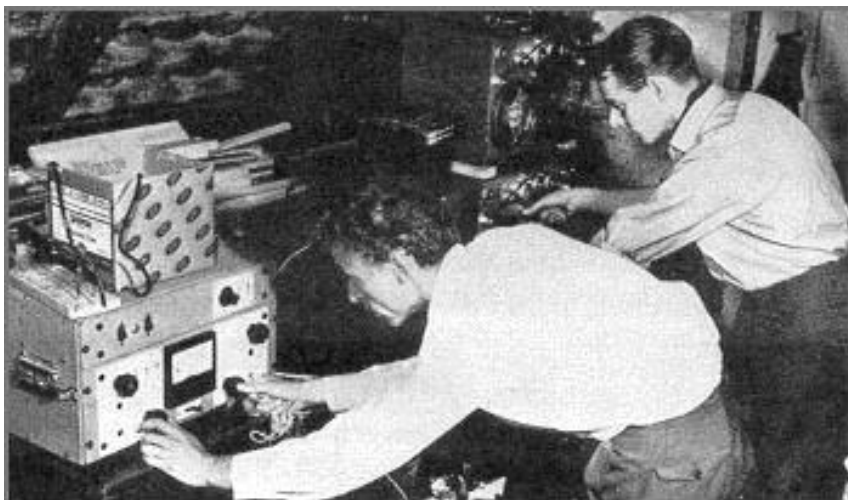
Some idea of the first day, Saturday August 2nd 1958, can be gained. Opening was at 6 pm. A recording of the first five minutes shows that after the chimes a male (Pedro Biker) announced Radio Mercur followed by the trumpets. Both female and male announcers spoke about the station, one male talking for about a minute. Then the female and male gave brief announcements of the types of music to be heard e.g. melody as they played clips of: orchestral music, big band/swing, a clarinet instrumental, soft orchestral then a softly-singing female vocalist. It seems that these first broadcasts were taped in primitive conditions in the loft of the villa.

By 6.35 it was "Guldbarrer Ombord" (Gold Bars Onboard) This seemed to be recorded in front of an audience, featuring a Danish lady singing two melodies then a male on behalf of Radio Mercur 'phoning' another man as part of the show with some laughter from the audience. After applause the orchestral music came up as a man read out the credits for those taking part. The opening announcements at 6.45 for "Musik til Opvasken" (Music for Dishwashing!) included an advertisement for an anti-bacterial product, Flink (Quick), from Barnängen. This Swedish company was noted for its hard soap. Flink was a washing powder for cleaning clothes. The music started with a jaunty male singer singing in Danish, Nat King Cole with "Dance Ballerina Dance" with a swing/big band backing, an orchestral piece, the ad for Flink again, some male and female singers in Danish in a MoR syle, an orchestral piece with sounds that seemed like tap or Cossack dancing (which probably got the dishes washed quicker!) then a slower, tuneful saxophone piece.

Some of the songs were quite catchy and typical of a 1950s style. In fact it was quite pleasant to hear in 2011. There were no announcements between the records, just a few seconds of dead air. A third ad for Flink completed the show. At 7 pm the Danish announcer said that Max Factor Hollywood presents "Aktuelt

Pladevarter" (Current Records Corner). It featured records by American singer Jimmy Rogers -"Honeycomb" (a hit in 1957) and "Kisses Sweeter Than Wine" (a 1958 hit) with the announcer's links being straightforward and quiet in style. A lady and a man did a Max Factor ad. Back to Jimmie Rogers again for three songs without interruption: "Waterboy", "Tell Us More" and "The Long Hot Summer." A credit for the programme title and sponsor completed it at 7.15.

The next known show was "Kabaret Mercur" at 8.15. The half hour of non-stop music from 9 pm is what I imagine a night club at the time might have sounded like: very easy listening with predominately female vocalists in Danish and English, a few jazz-type instrumentals though a mixed vocal duo did a Danish song. At 9.30 was "Succes Gennem Tiderne" (Success Through the Ages) sponsored by Galle & Jessen who made Succes chocolate. This had its own advertising jingles sung by females. The programme consisted of vocalists on record from America, France, Germany and Denmark. Some of these sounded quite old from their style. The announcer was restrained and kept referring to 'success.' At 10 pm was the "Ib Glindemanns Orkester". In "Den Halvtolvte Time" between 11 -12 Freddy Ahlbeck played a mix of MoR vocals in English or Danish plus orchestral/big band instrumentals.



Testing equipment on Cheetah 1

Problems with the weather and the new FM technology meant reception was almost nil in some areas; it was on one third power and the winds meant that the antenna was pointing more to the sky and sea than land. Next day things worked much better. In time listeners were rushing out to buy the special 'Mercur antenna.' It was not only music programmes on Mercur; by November 1958 they had a 20 minute weekly thriller on Mondays at 10.30 pm read by the Danish film actor Axel Strøbye and Freddy Ahlbeck.

More problems followed. The Danish government got Panama to remove the ship's registration on August 29th. In November the ship sailed under its own power into port as its antenna came down and was off air for two days. Next money problems came. Advertisers seemed wary as there had been no listenership survey. From the start staff waited a long time for their wages. Technician Birger Svan said those with families got paid before the others, which had some sense in it. It was said that there was a near mutiny among the staff. Help came from banker Alex Brask Thomsen in February 1959 who provided a loan from the small bank Finansbanken (set up two months earlier) and wages were paid. The company was on a better financial footing and improved advertising income helped this further. By August 1959 the station was able to pay the loan back. Thomsen had advertised his bank through radio advertisements which was unusual for the time. He later admitted that this was not the way to publicise a bank but it had brought a lot of attention to Finansbanken.

Mercur moved its base on land several times. Programmes were taped ashore. There was though at least one example of a live broadcast from the ship with Hans Vangkilde and his favourite technician Preben Ploug when Preben pushed Hans into the sea and then had to take over as announcer! The first studio was built in a villa at Maltegårdsvej 24 in Gentofte but they moved to Adolfsvej 61. In the "TV" article of 1959 Pedro Biker said the announcers used a smaller studio the most in preference to the larger one downstairs.

In 1961 Mercur bought the Nørrebro Teater (theatre) built in 1886 in Ravnsborggade in central København which they called 'Radio Mercur City.' The announcers' studio was two and a half metres square. Programme secretary Olav Bennike said that every Thursday evening a show was performed in the theatre and this was broadcast on Radio Mercur 10 days later. Advertising was sold from a room in Rømersgade 9 in København called 'Mercur Reklame' Later they moved to Sortedams Dossering 55. The tapes were pictured being put into sacks and taken to the ship by fishermen from the port of Skovshoved north of the capital. One photo seems to show a small motor boat instead as the tender. For a while a plane was used on occasions when they were in a rush to get the tapes to the ship.



Another nice shot of the Cheetah 1

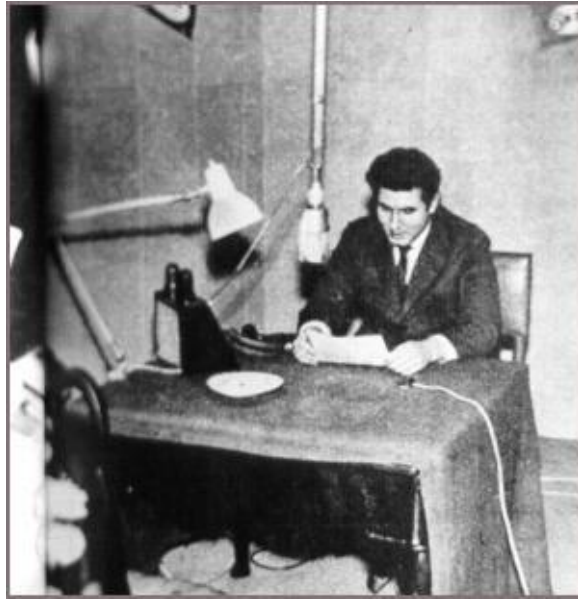
The station opened on ' 93.120 MHz' . This was a good move to 'catch' listeners as it was placed between Statsradiofonien (later known as Danmarks Radio) P1 and P2 on the dial. It changed frequencies several times in its life after complaints by the Danish authorities. Gerry Bishop's book "Offshore Radio" says that after a

few weeks Mercur moved to 89.55 after complaints of interference to a Swedish station. Another frequency used was '88.00 MHz' apparently from when the "Cheeta II" was used.

About 100 people worked for Radio Mercur in its history. In Gerry Bishop's "Offshore Radio" book you'll see only 14 on-air staff mentioned; I've found 31 mainly from programme schedules, Ingemar's website and the [scandinavianoffshoreradio.com](http://scandinavianoffshoreradio.com) website. Among them were Peter Abrahms, Freddy Ahlbeck, Pedro Biker, Anders Dahlerup, Ib Glindermanns who introduced his orchestra, Niels Heilmann - also Programme Director, Bjarne Hoyer, Vagn Jensen, Jerry Katz, Georg Kringelback, Kjeld Erik Larsen, Poul Reinau (also Advertising Manager), Bjarne Rostvold, John Steenberg - who was also in charge of Commercials Production, Preben Uglebjerg, Hans Vangkilde (Programme Director) and Per Wiking who presented under the name 'Peder Syv' (=Peter Seven) because he was also working for the State radio and didn't want to use his real name.

Presenting "Copenhagen Today" at first were an American, Phil Urwin, then Neville Powley or Charles Richards. This programme was recorded in Mercur's studios. Preben Ploug remembers them as "Phil -big man =big voice, Charles -little man =big voice!". There were more females than usual on radio for that time, Hannah Bjarnhof, Lea Dalby - a senior announcer, Birgit David, Tove Grundtvig, Gitte Muller, Kate Mundt, Hannah Rahlff, Helle Schmidt, Nete Shreiner, Inge Stauss, and Jytte Weiss. Added to these 31 were two technicians -Ib Hansen and Preben Ploug- who as described above did a brief spell of announcing each.

The tapes had to be played on board by 'technicians' or 'console operators.' On board was a crew of three; the technicians on board were paid about 50% more than their counterparts on Danmarks Radio. Among those employed were Ib Hansen and William Pedersen on "Cheeta", Verner Hansen plus later on the "Lucky Star." Erik Lindhardt, Leif Knudsen and Tage Røppke.



One of the landbased studio's of Radio Mercur

We do have to be careful though with assuming that a name on Mercur's programme schedules was an announcer. When we see Nina Simone listed we assume that it was an announcer playing her records. So several people, some of whom have been listed as djs elsewhere, might have presented their own programme or quite probably it was a Mercur announcer playing their records. Clara Pontoppidan was a Danish actress who has been listed recently as a dj. Was it just a programme showcasing her acting? Similarly, Lise Reinau was a singer who performed with her husband, Poul Reinau who was also a musician and Mercur announcer while Lilly Broberg was a singer and actress. Maybe they recorded shows or performances for the station; maybe Mercur just played their records.

Another pitfall is to assume that programme schedules, mentioning announcers, are Radio Mercur's even if they print the station name. I was caught out by this. If the frequency shows 89.55 or 89.6 then these are the schedules of the Swedish language Skånes Radio Mercur (in effect, a different radio station established by the Swede Nils -Erik Svensson who rented airtime from Radio Mercur)

which often dropped the 'Skånes' word in the schedules.

So who were these broadcasters? From the information on several of them, some gained from the [dansefilm.dk](http://dansefilm.dk) website, it seems they were in their 20s and 30s. Programme Manager Hans Vangkilde was born in 1924 and so was 34 when Mercur started broadcasting. He had been a freelance music consultant for Danmarks Radio. A year older was Nete (short for Agnete) Schreiner who was a soloist and a member of a singing trio. They had made a number of records in Danish and made a number of appearances on Danmarks Radio. Niels Heilmann was the same age as Hans. He was an entertainer, playing the clarinet, and accompanied Danish singers. He was a producer at Radio Mercur then also presented programmes.

Advertising manager Poul Reinau was a musician who was born in 1923 and was married to the singer Lise Reinau. Pedro Biker, a singer in Ib Glindemann's orchestra and the 'voice' of Radio Mercur was born in Portugal in 1925 as Max Petersen de Andrade Corvo Barraso Judice. Born in 1927 Georg Kringelbach was a journalist in his 30s when he went to Mercur. Hannah Bjarnhof (born 1928) was an actress who was letters editor on Mercur. Those in their 20s included Anders Dahlerup (29 when it opened) who had broadcast on Danmarks Radio since the age of 20. Per Wiking who served throughout from 1958 - 1962 was a 27 year old actor when he first took to the air. Hannah Rahlff born in 1930 trained at RADA in London and appeared in a play in Denmark with Per Wiking in 1957.

Jerry Katz heard of the forthcoming Radio Mercur from a friend and joined them. When he heard they needed more staff he contacted a friend, Preben Ploug (23 in 1958, whom he had met through Civil Defence activities. From 1957 they worked as technicians and studio engineers building up a stock of audio tapes. Preben Uglebjerg at one point had a Sunday morning programme with his then wife Kate Mundt. While she was an actress he was an actor who also took up singing, being credited as Denmark's first Rock n'



Roll singer. Kjeld Erik Larsen was a 14 year old who wrote in offering to work unpaid. He was given practical jobs but when it was clear he had a talent for editing and then producing shows he was given his own fortnightly show "Teenage Kvarteret" (Teenage Quarter). He visited venues recording and interviewing musicians/groups. Later it became the weekly "Teenagematiné."



Anti Mercur cartoon

To be continued. All photos and illustrations [www.soundscape.info](http://www.soundscape.info)  
Thanks to Phil Champion for this special story, well researched!

Well we have some more on the movie which will be out soon in New Zealand: 'Hi Hans, attached is the first look poster for 3 Mile Limit. We had the cast and crew screening in Auckland last Thursday which was a packed out cinema. The feedback has been that people are impressed by the scope of the film, especially the boat sequences. I'll be able to send you the trailer for the film very shortly. Best regards Craig Newland Director  
3 Mile Limit'

Well Craig really good news, which I want to share of course with my readers. Hope to hear more soon.



Alex van der Hoek made once again a fascinating video, this time about the special day organised at Museum RockArt on August 31<sup>st</sup>, you know the date way back in 1974 we heard for the last time Veronica and RNI and so you can see in this video some well known names for yesteryear.

[http://www.facebook.com/l/KAQGRvtOLAQG7qrEhbjiX1gCO8tr6PW\\_XJ9KX\\_XO445goYag/youtu.be/X082zRAm-gw](http://www.facebook.com/l/KAQGRvtOLAQG7qrEhbjiX1gCO8tr6PW_XJ9KX_XO445goYag/youtu.be/X082zRAm-gw)

Hi Hans. THE RADIO SHIP has a test page on-line at [www.theradioship.net](http://www.theradioship.net). Work on the project is well underway with test transmissions starting on 28th March 2014 and full service from 12-00 on Easter Saturday 19th April 2014.

Doug Wood

Someone in California was waiting two months for the next report and when he did get it he saw himself: 'Welcome back! I must find a better photo, I was drunk when I sent it to you! Watch this space. Emperor Rosko.' Well I watched his space in the e mail box but nothing has arrived since then. Probably he's still recovering. Lucky enough I've enough material in store:



Another sad lost, this time in the USA: 'Hi Hans, Allan Weiner from WBCQ radio here. Just a sad note that my first lady of shortwave radio, my beloved wife Jennifer, passed away earlier this month.

### [Jennifer Garland Weiner](#)

MONTICELLO, Maine — Jennifer grew up in Bourne, but recently lived in Maine and Florida. She and her husband owned several commercial AM, FM and shortwave radio stations in north-eastern Maine. They both wrote and hosted many public talk shows.

Jennifer was an electronics expert and an advanced computer programmer. She worked for the U.S. Navy and IBM in Groton, CT.

As a child she flew with her father, Christopher Garland, and later earned her pilot's license. She was an avid horsewoman, tennis player, scuba diver, amateur radio operator — and had an irresistible sense of humor. Jennifer was deeply religious in the Christian faith and was prayerful, empathetic and kind to all who knew her. She leaves behind her beloved husband, Allan Weiner, her mother Frances Anderegg, stepfather Jack Anderegg, sister Jill, brother Charles Garland and many dear stepsiblings and cousins in the Cape Cod area and far beyond.



Alan, as I wrote you personally already I would love to say, in name of my readership that I hope you've the strength to carry this very sad loss of your wife. Of course many of my readers know you from your offshore radio projects of the American coast, like RNI (Radio New York International).

Last month I had the VOP special from Bruce Wayne and one of his colleagues in those days doesn't agree with him at certain things: 'Hi Hans, I just read the contribution from Bruce Wayne. His memories of Max and the Peace Ship food will surely remain with him for ever. I know mine will stay with me. 'Convict Bollocks' ... brilliant! I, however, was addressed thus: "You stupid, f\*\*\*in', no-good-for nothing', lanky, four-eyed, ENGLISH bollocks!" Max was a colourful character, a special part of the ship, as was Radha and also Engineer



Arnold Bio. Max produced memorable dishes, which we gave suitable names. One was 'Anorexic Chicken', which was a pitiful, greasy morsel of skin, bones and some pinkish meat. We also had 'Abie Burgers', which leaked dark red grease when cut open. An unforgettable dessert was rice pudding, made with water! Max prepared it this way because, he said, his Jewish beliefs dictated that milk could not be served in a meal which included meat.

Occasionally, some of us would prepare food in the galley at night. This was strictly forbidden. We had to be very quiet, as Max's cabin was near to the galley. One night, Steve Richards was frying a panful of food when he heard Max coming. Steve ran out the other side of the galley and along the deck, holding the sizzling pan in front of him like a new type of relay runner. He hid in the TV lounge, leaving just the cooking aroma in the galley for Max to puzzle over.



**Paul Fraser on the VOP. Photo: Collection Hans Knot**

I will never forget the cooking that Radha did for us. Every Saturday, he would prepare tasty, healthy meals from the very same supplies that Max wrecked. I always looked forward to 'Radha Day'. We all did.

From my description of him, Max probably seems like a monster. He

was actually an OK guy, apart from his cooking. He was part of the above-decks fun and humour, along with Radha and Arnold. It was unfortunate that he was too lazy to do his job properly. Thanks, as always, for your Report. All the best, Paul Fraser.'

Well that ends this edition of the Hans Knot International Radio Report. I hope to be with you next month and all reflections can be send to [HKnot@home.nl](mailto:HKnot@home.nl)