

Hans Knot International Report Summer 2014

Early Sunday, June 1st the sad news came in that another of our radio legends died: 'It is with a heavy heart and profound sadness that I inform you of the untimely passing of Larry Tremaine, 'the Geator with the Heater.'

Larry Tremaine, the American who took over from Roger Day as Programme Director of Radio Northsea International in the summer of 1970. He later became Managing Director of MEBO Ltd., the company that operated the station. He had been involved in the music business for some time, having worked with the Beach Boys early in their career, sung with his own band Larry Tremaine and His Renegades (later to become the Sunrays) and hosted 'Casino Royal', a nationally syndicated U.S TV dance show. He went on to work for KRLA, KBLA, KDAY, KABC-TV, KTTV-TV and KCET-TV. The Geator broadcast daily on RNI during election week June 1970 when the station was temporary on the air as 'Caroline International' and later presented a weekly rock'n'roll show on Sunday afternoons.



Larry Tremaine with beard on tender

After the September 1970 closedown, he moved back to the United States. He lived in Beverly Hills, California and ran the Carol Lawrence Fine Art Gallery chain. The 'Geator with the Heater' nickname had previously been used on American radio by DJ Jerry Blavat. 'Geator' is slang for an alligator. (with thanks to Jon at the Pirate Hall of Fame).

Another radio friend who was in contact with Larry on regular base is Paul Rusling who wrote me: 'Very sad news that Larry Tremaine died. Only two weeks ago I spoke to him with a report about the RadioDay in Amsterdam. A very big loss for me, he was very helpful for me in many ways. Good fun and so entertaining to chat with about music. He was a huge man in radio, even though he was only on the air in Europe for a short time. This is so sad.'

Edwin Bollier, one of the owners of Mebo Ltd, the company behind RNI wrote: 'Dear Larry - the most beautiful monument that you can get is compassion in the heart of others.' Larry didn't make it to one of the RadioDays in Amsterdam, although he tried to plan it twice. I was in contact with him during the past 13 years by mail and it was always fun to have 'talks' with him about the memories to RNI and Europe in the early seventies of last century.

Some of the memories were shared with the readers of the 'Hans Knot International Radio Report'

<http://www.offshore-radio.de/HansKnot/april2005.htm>

<http://www.offshore->

[radio.de/HansKnot/reports/hans%20knot%20int%20radio%20report%20-%202012-07-08.pdf](http://www.offshore-radio.de/HansKnot/reports/hans%20knot%20int%20radio%20report%20-%202012-07-08.pdf)

But also interesting to see that more than 30 years after he left the radio scene in Europe he was found back in Beverly Hills, by reading one of my stories on internet. See the next report:

<http://www.radiolondon.co.uk/jocks/whofound5.html>

Larry Tremaine was honoured with a Lifetime Achievement Award at the International Radio Festival in June 2011.

I wish Larry's Donna, family and friends a lot of strength to carry this sudden loss.

Talking about Larry. When he was working for RNI a special song was recorded which was played several times on the station when it was election week in 1970 and read all about this song, from which we didn't know till recently that 3 official copies were pressed on disk

<http://www.campaignforindependentbroadcasting.co.uk/rare-pirate-radio-anthem-discs-discovered/>

So a very sad opening of the Summer edition of the Hans Knot International Radio Report. Anyway, thanks to all responding on last issue, sending their questions and memories and so let's go on with another bumper edition. Next we go to one of the many persons with the name 'Colin'.

'Dear Hans, although I read your International Radio Report each month, I found your June edition to be one of the most comprehensive editions ever. I particularly enjoyed the build-up of the return of the Mi Amigo in September 1972, which you wrote. It was a wonderful time for me. I wish you a great and relaxing summer after all the hard work and effort you and Martin had put in to create the most wonderful and historic RadioDay ever. I remain saddened though that there may not be another good excuse to visit Holland in the foreseeable future. Here's hoping we both have a warm and hot season. Kind regards, Colin Pidduck (UK).'

Thanks a lot Colin and have a great summer too. Also thanks for the compliments.

Next it's Graig from New Zealand, the producer of the movie '3 Mile Limit': 'Hi Hans, good to hear you. I will send you a copy of de DVD

once we have them printed. I will let you know when we have them. Regarding 3 Mile Limit, it has now won official selection into 15 international film festivals, the latest being Shanghai. And the film has won 5 film festivals for best feature film. Best regards Craig Newland.'

Well Graig that's really great news and hopefully more prizes will be won.



From New Zealand we go to an e mail from Australia: 'From Canberra and Bryan Killgalin. Bravo Hans! In high school, history was one of my poorer subjects. But you have brought it to life! I loved the story of the Caroline bell.

Recently there was a discussion between me and some other Laser 558 lovers about the deejays who were one the Communicator but never made it on the air. For instant Melinda Penn arrived with the ship from Florida in 1984 but left the organisation before Laser 558 came on the air. One of the persons reflecting on the discussion was Ric Clissold, who most of you know as Rick Harris.

'Melinda Penkava has worked in public radio since 1991, first at member station WUNC in Chapel Hill and later at NPR, where she was a newscaster, reporter and hosted programs such as Talk of the Nation. In recent years she hosted WUNC's daily interview and talk program, The State of Things. Melinda is a native of New Haven,

Connecticut and worked in commercial radio there and in North Carolina. Her resume includes a stint on a pirate radio ship off of the English coast, and later, a year and a half living on a 28-foot boat and sailing between Cuba and Nova Scotia. Melinda was planning to use the identity 'Melinda Bond'. In my memory she was the first board operator on LASER 730 during the trial broadcasts with the famous balloon. She kicked it off with LZ's Communications Breakdown. Ha-ha.



Thanks Rick, most appreciated. Next we go to Israël and photos from the Voice of Peace in 1975 taken by Yakir Aviv:

https://www.flickr.com/photos/yakir_a/sets/72157629140528250/with/6803944730/

Now a tip to visit you tube where a small movie is were Ronan O'Rahilly is talking to a fan. The movie is from 1994.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6JIfgpsjLbI>

Here's another Colin, again from England, but this time from Leeds: 'Hi Hans, reading through the June report you had a e-mail from a

Mr. Jan G. who says his father took 100 records from the Mi Amigo Radio Caroline South, does anyone know what happened to the rest of the records and what happened to all the records from the Radio Caroline North ship? Someone must know. There must be some gems among them. Colin Wilkins.'



Mi Amigo Zaandam harbour. Photo: Freewave Archive

Well I know for sure that many so called 'fans' - yes we talk about the period before Andy Archer introduced the Anoraks - visited the ships in Amsterdam and at a later stage Zaandam. So I think many of the records left the ships in small bags. But maybe some of our deejay readers can tell something about the amount of records which were on the ships in March 1968. Colin went on with: Hans you mention 'Laughing' Don Allen, are these the laughs that Don used? I got to know Don very well when he lived about ten minutes away from where I used to live in Leeds and we spend many hours listening to recordings of him on Caroline North and RNI, he did say that he would let me have copies of the laughs and drop ins that he used to

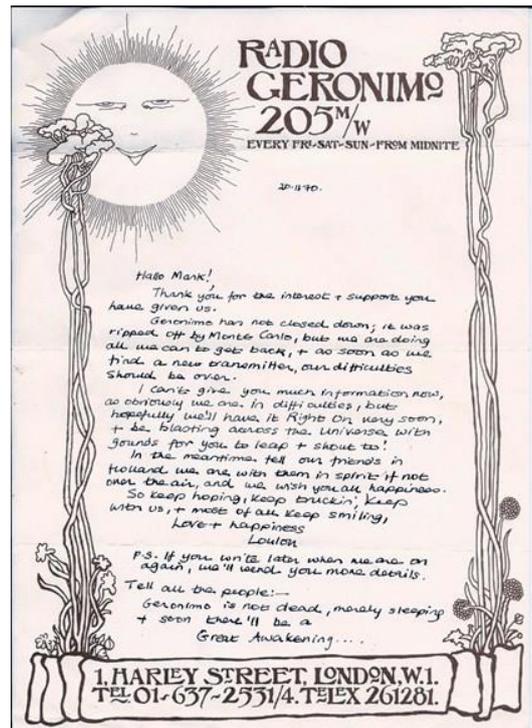
use, but somehow he never got round to it...I just wondered if you have copies of these and could you please send me copies just for my own collection and memories of Don I hope that you can. Colin Wilkins'. Well one of the others mentioned the nickname and in the meantime you've got the tape you wanted.

Well here's another interesting link to a movie on internet:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XMhve-O-KIk> brings you back to the Raid on Caroline's Ross Revenge in 1989 and the Hooters song 'Give the music back' as a wonderful companion. And never forget that it is already 25 years ago that this did happen!

Geg Hopkins mailed me after receiving the International Radio Report from June with: 'I love you Hans! Never stop mate. Sunshine Radio, another... you hit it right on the nail. A very big thank you for a super big edition of the radio report, so much to read and see, will take me a couple of days to go through it all, just wonderful. All the best, Geg.'

Frank van Heerde sent me a letter dated 20th of November 1970, which he found back in his collection. It's all about a station which wasn't any more on the air on the day he got the letter: Radio Geronimo, 40 years ago, on the new site for the Angel Film Awards in Monaco, stood the famous Palace Radio Monte Carlo (RMC). From here after midnight each weekend, evangelical programmes from Trans World Radio were followed by inspiration of another kind. Europe's hippest music station - Radio Geronimo. Beamed over Europe on RMC's powerful medium wave transmitter, the programmes were recorded at a studio in Harley Street London, and financed by Rolling Stones producer Jimmy Miller and record industry operator Tony Secunda (The Move, Marc Bolan).



http://www.radiogeronimo.com/geronimo_doc_radio.htm

Radio Geronimo beamed a far-out mix of cosmic music and anarchic presentation through the Spring and Summer of 1970. Support for anti-Vietnam war protesters and ads for the biggest cigarette papers in the world were broadcast in between music ranging from Jimi Hendrix and Albert Ayer to Buxtehude. Somehow the ad agencies didn't catch on and when funds ran out, Radio Monte Carlo's management woke up and the brief dream ended. We remember this tumultuous summer of 1970 through the hazy memories of these intrepid broadcast pioneers. Winner of Best Short Documentary Film and Best Independent Spirit Awards at the Angel Film Festival in Monte Carlo, December 2010.'

Impressive pictures of the rebuilding of the MV Ross Revenge in 1983 can be found now on our Flickr pages. A few of them saw the lights on internet already but you've never seen them in such a good quality <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v3TvOHbvm-M>

Here an email sent by a Dutchman from Oostend in Belgium: 'Hi Hans, great to read your IRR (the e-mail version) out here in Belgium during Mi Amigo 40 <http://miamigo40.be/nl/> with as usual a lot of interesting matters. While keyboarding this message the radio is on 94.9 mHz with Peter van Dam and Bart van Leeuwen live from the North Sea near De Haan. The last time I shared several matters with you and your readers was in December (under the Christmas tree). Meanwhile in the summertime with not your report published every month up till September. Enjoy the deserved some kind of holiday time! During the great RadioDay, on March 22nd in Amsterdam I recorded conversations for Mi Amigo 40 with several people of the offshore radio scene. Those who have missed it (and are interested in the stereo version; also of the interviews) can ask via abcd.fam@gmail.com for a download link. Here the dates and the ones mentioned who were interviewed for the horizontal scheduled (6.00 - 7.00 Hrs CET) 'BS goes offshore' (4 days in a row) on Mi Amigo 40:

29-5-2013: Mandy Marton and Ferry Eden.

30-5-2013: Richard Thompson, Stuart Russell and Johan van der Meer.

31-5-2013: Peter Chicago and Stevie Gordon.

01-6-2013: Ad Roberts, Ad Roland aka Ad Petersen, Francois Lotte and Dick de Graaf aka Jos van der Kan.

During the Mi Amigo 40 trips on the Artemis many photos were made. With this message there's a photo (© BS) selected I've made of four akas: Peter van Dam, Ton Schipper, Marc Jacobs and Bob Noakes.



As many of your readers already know Radio Waddenzee and Radio Seagull will be offshore again. Some hours after I had done my last 'BS goes offshore' from the Artemis I saw an e-mail in which was asked if available between coming 18/8-1/9 for another offshore broadcast (20/8-31/8) from the Jenni Baynton. While the Artemis was doing the last RMA 40 broadcast and hearing Bert Bennett from the North Sea I gave a reply from the youth hostel in Oostende to be available for then. Good that another broadcast from the saltwater I was asked for is in week 33. More about that when there's green light from an authority. Enclosed a picture I made in a quiet harbour of Harlingen in June. That after with several people been working on the helideck of the Jenni Baynton. Best wishes to you, Jana and your IRR readers from Oostende, Bart Serlie.'

Thanks a lot for the nice update and hope you had fun during the special broadcast celebrating the fact it was (more than) 40 years ago Radio Mi Amigo started in international waters. Good to see the nice photo with some Mi Amigo/Caroline golden oldies.



Radio Seagull radio ship. Photo Bart Serlie

Short but clear is the next e mail: 'It occurs to me that I never actually reply to these 'radio report e-mails', so just let me say I always enjoy reading them, and thanks for the effort that you and all your correspondents put into them. Keep them coming! Lee Morrisson.'

Thanks Lee and hopefully we can do for many years to come!

Each week former Swinging Radio England program director Ron O'Quinn can be heard on several radio stations with his excellent oldies show. Learn more about it versus the podcasts of the shows:

<https://rewindron.podomatic.com>

Next former Caroline's Alan Turner: 'Hello, fifty years ago in the afternoon of Monday July 6th. 1964, Tynwald Day, Radio Caroline sailed into Ramsey Bay and anchored off the Bahama Bank and so started a major event in the history of the Isle of Man. We, myself, Jerry Leighton and Tom Lodge brought Radio Caroline not only to the Isle of Man but to the North of the U.K. establishing, along with

Radio Caroline South (on the Mi Amigo) nationwide coverage of the U.K. of the first Commercial Radio station. This email is to let you know that I will be visiting the island from the 2nd. July to 11th. July, to remember and celebrate this historic event and will be available for interviews. Alan Bennett-Turner.'

Thanks a lot Alan and have a lot of pleasures. Maybe a report from you and a photo for next radio report in September?

Next we go to Marc Jacobs - who is a friend of mine since 1970 - and who reflected on the fact I was mentioning two of the man who were responsible for a lot of technical work for the Caroline organisation in the seventies, as well as the eighties: Koos and Leunis, those two were terrific guys. I remember that they once went with us to the Mi Amigo when the lady was on a Sandbank. Some of us were taken of the radio ship and were temporary in Oostend, Belgium. I did phone you late that evening and some days later we could go to the ship again. We were on one tender, Koos and Leunis on a second tender. The weather was very bad and those tenders were dancing on the waves. At high seas the two jumped from theirs to our tender, absolute a tour de force. After that they towed the Mi Amigo free from the sandbank and on own power the Mi Amigo went back to the Knock Deep. I was at the helm when suddenly a big bang came from the bottom of the ship and followed by very black smoke from the chimney. The main engine from the MV Mi Amigo broke down and we never succeeded in starting it again. You can say that certain day the Mi Amigo lost the 'M.V' as it became a barque from that point on. '

Thanks Marc and yes I did remember this memory very well. Maybe you can tell another time more about the things happening with an anchor chain in Ostend during the same week. Well from Marc in the Netherlands to Martin in Kent is just a small step.

'I just discovered and rescanned this picture taken of myself supposedly listening to Radio 355 back in 1967. The observant will notice the radio is not tuned anywhere that frequency, or should I say wavelength. Thought it could be good for my epitaph, or obituary. Not that any intentions exist towards me making a permanent departure any day soon. Andy aka - Martin Kayne.'



Photo collection Andy Cadier

From the USA an e mail from Yvonne Hermann, married to one of the Hermann's working for Veronica in the early sixties. 'Hi Hans, I wanted to tell you something, our youngest son and his wife are expecting their first child, a girl. The plans are that they are going to name her 'Veronica'. I thought you might enjoy this bit of information.'

Thanks a lot Yvonne, I hope the both of you are well. Happy soon to be Grandma and Granddad again. Congratulations from this side of the pond. Hopefully all will be going as expected. And please enjoy the granddaughter as soon she's born.

Last time we missed our London correspondent Ian, but he's back with his regular comments on the subject radio, which came in late May: 'A month has passed since the last of the programs commemorating the launch of Radio Caroline and normal service has resumed, which to me is usually quite entertaining, with stations such as Veronica 192, Offshore Radio Sounds, Atlantis 312, etc. Five weeks ago 199 The Radio Ship started normal programming. I don't listen that much during the week but a particularly interesting Sunday show is live on the Medium Wave. Last Sunday an August 66 recording of Radio City was played - Alan Clark presenting 5 by 4, followed by half an hour of Paul Kramer, including a few records I'd never heard before.



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OF THE NATION**
RADIO CITY, 7, DENMARK STREET, LONDON, W.C.2.

Archive Freewave Nostalgie

The quality was quite good, presumably remastered, with a bit of background Morse, probably more related to the recording equipment than interference. I thought the presentation was quite slick and spontaneous and was surprised that there was only one ad,

for Silentine paint. I don't remember seeing any listening figures for Radio City. There were several requests from people in the London area but if the power output was only about 2 kW the coverage couldn't have been that great.'

Well I think sometimes the power was higher and we had the opportunity to tune in too here at my location. They has special request shows, for instant 'the Basildon Request Hour', whereby a lot of requests were played for people in that area. Probably the same was with the program you heard, but then with the London area.

Ian went on with his comments: 'On the 18th of May Chris Day (on Offshore Music Radio) played a recording of Radio Atlanta from May 64. I'm pretty sure I've got this on CD but it was still great to listen to, partly because it was the only significant reference to the station. Based on past experience I felt pretty sure that Atlanta would be almost completely buried under the commemorations of Caroline, which turned out to be the case. Being such an obvious key factor in the first couple of months of Caroline I've always been a bit mystified that it rarely gets a mention. If it wasn't for Atlanta the chances of Caroline North would have been virtually zero. Maybe Caroline regards it as a bit of an embarrassment, possibly due to the Alan Crawford cover versions! Regards, Ian Godfrey.'

Now we stay in England to have more about the Caroline North bell, so here's Mary Payne: 'Going back to the latest Hans Knot International Radio Report, there's a video clip of me ringing the Fredericia bell here:

<http://www.radiolondon.co.uk/caroline/irishsea/index7.html>

Best wishes, Mary.'

Thanks a love Mary and good to see Chris and you still have the flag for Big L high in the sky!

www.radiolondon.co.uk

Well look who's here? Jon from the Pirate Hall of Fame:

I have just updated The Pirate Radio Hall of Fame.

We have some wonderful photos taken by Paul May on board Radio Northsea International in the seventies; there is another page in the ever-growing 'Eighties Supplement', this time featuring Laser and Caroline DJs with names beginning with K - including such favourites as Caroline's Chris Kennedy and Laser's Erin Kelly;

Radio Seagull returns to sea; a fashionable new hotel opens on the site of Ronan O'Rahilly's Scene Club; we hear the sad news that Radio Scotland DJ Peter Mallan has passed away; and we remember Tony Allan who died ten years ago this month. Thanks, as always, to all the contributors. More next time. Best wishes, Jon

www.offshoreradio.co.uk

I've promised to bring back, in the year we celebrate that Radio Caroline was raised 50 years ago, several chapters of some of the books I either wrote or edited through the years with the subject Offshore Radio. Here are the memories from Steve Young, which he wrote 10 years ago.

Steve Young began his broadcasting career in 1963 when he put on his cowboy hat and spurs to ride the controls at radio station CHAT in Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada. He went to visit England in 1965, put a patch over his left eye and became a Pirate, joining Radio Caroline South in 1966 to do overnight and daytime relief shifts. (He's still having trouble adjusting to a regular routine and he can't catch any decent zzzz's unless someone rocks him to sleep at night).

In 1968 he returned to Canada and resumed a normal (sic) life working in the radio and television biz at CKOV Kelowna, CFRN Edmonton, CKIQ Kelowna, CJVI Victoria and CHEK-TV Victoria. He lapsed into a state of semi-retirement in 1998 and has since been masquerading as a voiceover artist, freelance writer and broadcast media producer. Here are some of the many memories Steve has to the high days on international waters.

'A gale force wind was blowing in the North Sea off the East Coast of England one night during the winter of 1966. I was spinning the discs on the midnight-six a.m. shift aboard Great Britain's infamous, but dearly beloved, Pirate Radio Station, Caroline South. The 650-ton coastal freighter *Mi Amigo*, flying a foreign flag, registered in Panama, carrying a Dutch crew and a staff of English speaking deejays, technicians and news readers, was the home of the Radio Caroline operation, and tonight she was under siege. The boat was rockin' in more ways than one as I turned-up the monitor speakers in the cramped studio to full volume, blasting out the music of the Rolling Stones in a vain attempt to drown out the sounds of the storm that was raging outside.

Waves pounded the side of the ship and she lurched violently each time they slammed into her. The shrieking winds howled through the stays that secured the giant 160-foot transmitting antenna to the foredeck. Chains and metal plates clanked and creaked as the vessel swung into the storm, held only by her forward anchor, and the whole ship shuddered violently as she tugged at the forward anchor chain. I held on to the edge of the mixing console as the boat rose violently, up and down in the heavy swells. The music played on, turntable arms weighted down with heavy English pennies, which were scotch taped to them in an effort to prevent them from skipping off the surface of the 45rpm records. I turned on the

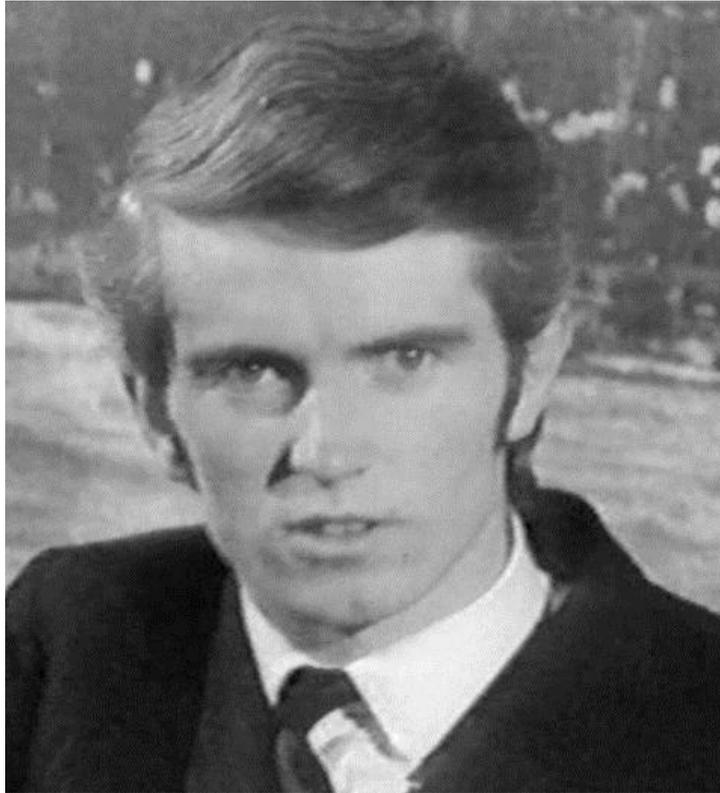
microphone, did some kind of ad-lib when, just as I introduced the next record and turned off the microphone, the door crashed open and a member of the Dutch crew lurched into the studio holding a life jacket. "You'd better put this on", he shouted "if this storm gets any worse the anchor isn't going to hold and we'll have to abandon the ship". I struggled into the life jacket and said a silent prayer. For the next 5 hours the storm raged while the Mi Amigo, and the music, rocked-on in the stormy North Sea. Luckily for me this would be a time when the storm would subside and life would resume its normal routine, with the 50 Kw transmitter broadcasting music, news, contests and trivia 24 hours a day to listeners across the British Isles and deep into Continental Europe.



A few months earlier, in January of 1966, the disc jockeys and crew had not been so lucky when, during another vicious winter storm, the anchor chain broke and the Mi Amigo was blown ashore and beached at Clacton-on-Sea, Essex. Luckily everyone aboard was rescued safely, but it would not be the last time that Radio Caroline and

her crew would suffer the ravages of the stormy North Sea. To understand how such a broadcasting operation could come into being, let's flashback in time to the early 1960's, when a different kind of radio service ruled the airwaves. The British Broadcasting Corporation ("Auntie" as she was affectionately called by some) was just about the only game in town up until early 1964. The BBC Home Service and the Light Programme, as they were called, had changed their program offerings very little over the years. Shows were presented in block format and were usually a mixture of light or serious classical music, radio dramas, comedy shows and news, down at the bottom of the list was the occasional pop music show. To be fair to Auntie BBC she did her best to be 'all things to all people' and, being funded by government revenues derived from license fees paid by the listeners; she was at the mercy of bureaucrats and politicians.

So, what were the young people of England to do? Some of them, late at night with their crystal sets hidden under their pillows, tuned into the faint and unreliable signal of Radio Luxembourg 'The Fab 208', which broadcast from the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, targeting the British market with popular music and sponsored programs. It was the only alternate source that was available in those days, but for one young listener named Ronan O'Rahilly, this was not enough! I first met Ronan O'Rahilly at Caroline House, the headquarters of the Radio Caroline Empire, in London. I'd just been hired and, before I was to head out to the ship, Ronan took the opportunity to talk to me. He was a soft-spoken young Irishman, with prematurely gray hair and penetrating blue eyes. He emanated a spiritual quality as he talked about Radio Caroline and his vision of Free Radio in Britain. Surprisingly, profiting from his Pirate venture was not at the top of Ronan's list of priorities.



Ronan O'Rahilly Archive Media Pages

He was more interested in providing British listeners with an alternative to the monopolistic programming practices of the BBC. Ronan had been to North America and had listened to Top 40 radio, with its rock 'n roll music, jingles and slick, fast-talking disc jockeys. He had been subjected to the constant barrage of commercials, which filled the American airwaves, and he knew this could be a way to support his vision. But, more than anything, the free spirit of American radio inspired him, and he returned to England wondering why British audiences couldn't have access to such a form of entertainment. But Ronan also had another reason to seek an alternative to the BBC. In 1964 he was managing a young singer/musician named Georgie Fame and had been trying to persuade the BBC to give his records some airplay. The BBC wasn't interested, claiming that they were only interested in established artists. Ronan was not the kind of person to say "no" to and it only

made him more determined to gain access to the radio airwaves and to offer listeners a real alternative to Auntie BBC.



STEVE ON DECK OF THE MV MI AMIGO

Personal collection Steve Young

Ronan had heard about a new radio station called Radio Veronica broadcasting to Dutch listeners from a ship anchored off the coast of Holland and, at last, he knew what he could do to make his radio fantasies come true. After summoning all of his resources and convincing investors that this was 'an idea whose time had come' Ronan purchased his first ship, the MV Fredericia which he then began equipping with all the necessary gear to begin transmitting. Soon, with the studio equipment, transmitter and huge transmitting antenna all in place, Fredericia sailed from her dock in Ireland and took up her position in international waters three miles out to sea and 12 miles from the nearest port of entry, Harwich, on the East Coast of England. Then, on March 28th, 1964 at 12 noon, with Canadian Simon Dee at the microphone, Radio Caroline turned on her

10 kW transmitter and began her tumultuous life, broadcasting on 199 meters in the medium wave band to a listening audience whose ears were hungry for a steady diet of non-stop rock 'n roll music.

Little did Ronan O'Rahilly know that, when he launched Radio Caroline, he was opening up a Pandora's box of aspiring Pirate Radio operators. Some of them, like Radio Caroline and Radio London, went on to become huge successes, while others signed-on and signed-off as fast as the fortunes of their owners rose and fell in the stormy waters of the North Sea. Even Radio Caroline suffered many, many setbacks but, unlike the others, she always managed to recover her dignity and continue her broadcasting tradition as 'The Smallest Boat to Rock the Nation'.

After operating for just a few months Caroline merged with an upstart rival station, Radio Atlanta, which was broadcasting from the motor vessel *Mi Amigo*. The *MV Fredericia*, home of the original Caroline, then set sail around the Southern tip of England and up the West coast to take up her position off the Isle of Man where she became Radio Caroline North, broadcasting to audiences in Ireland and the North and West of England. Meanwhile the *MV Mi Amigo*, home of the former Radio Atlanta, became Radio Caroline South and continued to target audiences in London and the Southern and Eastern counties of England. During the night the station also reached well into Continental Europe as the 50 kW signal, picking up amplification over the waters of the North Sea and the English Channel, boomed deep into Holland, France, Sweden and Germany.

For the next couple of years things proceeded smoothly and the Caroline's began building vast and loyal audiences, numbering in the millions, throughout the British Isles and across the European Continent. But then a series of events took place that were to make the lives of Radio Caroline, her disk jockeys and crew and Ronan

O'Rahilly as stormy and turbulent as the seas upon which they floated their feisty little station. It all began on January 20th, 1966 when a violent North Sea storm snapped the forward anchor chain of the Mi Amigo and, in the dark and rain swept seas, she began drifting towards the shore. As the vessel drifted out of control the deejay on duty that night began broadcasting a "May Day" message to any vessels in the area which might be close enough to come to their rescue. Simultaneously the ships Captain transmitted a similar message over the maritime frequencies, a desperate call for help in a time of distress. But it was too late to save the drifting ship and a few hours later the Mi Amigo crunched up on the eastern shores of England near Clacton-on-Sea. The lifeboat crew from nearby Harwich was quickly on the scene and set up a breeches buoy to begin lifting the disc jockeys and crewmen off the stricken vessel and onto the shore.

**Caroline back
this week**

RAUDIO CAROLINE will be back on the air this week, on a borrowed boat. While the "Mi Amigo" damaged in a recent storm is being inspected at a Dutch dry dock, Caroline will start broadcasting from "Cheetah II", a Danish ship loaned by Mrs. Britt Wagner of Radio Sud, a pirate radio station which has been operating off Denmark for seven years.

It was a distressful time for all involved, including the huge audience of loyal listeners, who were now deprived of their Caroline. But, like Ronan O'Rahilly, Radio Caroline was not to be deterred by this little setback and less than a month later she was back in business with studio and transmitting equipment rescued from the Mi Amigo and re-installed on another vessel, the MV Cheetah 2, loaned to Ronan O'Rahilly by a generous benefactor. It was not to be long before the

Mi Amigo was back in the water either. This time with new studio equipment, a new 50kw transmitter, a new 160 foot transmitting antenna and a new frequency of 259 meters in the medium wave band she was back in her old anchorage pumping out the music and entertainment that listeners wanted to hear. In August of that year I joined the station and so began, what was to become, the most memorable period of my 30-year career in broadcasting.

In the summer of 1966 Swinging England was the place to be. The British musical invasion of America was at its height and music was everywhere as bands and musicians consolidated their ever-strengthening position in an ever burgeoning music industry. The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, Jimmy Hendrix, The Kinks, Peter and Gordon, The Hollies, Cat Stevens, Dusty Springfield, Gerry and the Pacemakers were just a few of the acts that had jump-started the musical revolution of the mid-sixties. Chelsea, Kings Road and Carnaby Street were the places to be, and the sweet smell of success (and marijuana) was everywhere.



The Pirate Radio Stations were reflecting the mood of the day filling the airwaves with popular music, both British and North American. These were heady times for the Pirates, who were not only satisfying the musical taste of their audiences, but were also helping to set musical trends by introducing new and upcoming artists. Having worked at a small radio station in Canada I was enthralled when I arrived in England and began listening to these pirates of the

airwaves as they shared their shipboard adventures with their listeners. Little was I to know that I would soon be joining them at sea.

It was the spring of 1966 when my friend, Keith Hampshire (another Canadian), who had signed on with Radio Caroline just a few weeks earlier, called me. He suggested that I get in touch with Caroline's Production Manager Tom Lodge who wished to hire an overnight guy to work on Radio Caroline South. Tom listened to my demo, talked to me on the phone and then hired me. I packed my bags and headed up to Harwich, Essex where I boarded the tender that would take me



On deck Mi Amigo Keith Hampshire

Photo personal collection Keith Hampshire

out to sea and my first taste of life aboard Radio Caroline. When I set out into the early morning fog on the supply tender that first day I really had no idea what I would find anchored out there. A gleaming white cruise ship perhaps? I was in for a rude awakening. The tender plied a daily route, carrying mail and passengers to several of the offshore radio stations anchored off the East Coast of England, stopping at Radio England/Britain Radio, Radio London and, finally, at

Radio Caroline. Our first stop was at Swinging Radio England which shared quarters with her sister station Britain Radio aboard the MV *Laissez Faire* a ship that, reportedly, had at one time transported the corpses of American GI's, casualties of the Vietnam War, back to America. The *Laissez Faire* was a gloomy vessel and life aboard was said to be Spartan. The disk jockeys quarters were on the lower decks where they camped out in sleeping bags and there were few amenities. Swinging Radio England and Britain Radio were owned by an American consortium which had directly transposed a slick, tightly-formatted, Top-40 radio format, complete with American deejays, onto the British airwaves. It was a format that was, ultimately, to prove unsuccessful. British listeners just weren't ready for that kind of high energy radio, preferring a more laid-back and chatty communication.

Next stop was Radio London, 'The Big L', housed aboard the MV *Galaxy* a vessel that was once a Navy mine sweeper. The ship still bore the utilitarian grey colour of a military vessel, with streaks of rust accenting the hull. Against the grey sky and gloomy green seas that morning she looked grim and foreboding. She certainly wasn't a visual representation of the Wonderful Radio London image that was portrayed in the jingles and deejay patter that interspersed the music on The Big L. But living conditions on the *Galaxy* were a lot better than those aboard the *Laissez Faire* and the deejays and crew were friendly and welcoming.

Finally, about a mile further out to sea, we reached our ultimate destination, Radio Caroline. As we drew near, the stern of the 650-ton coastal freighter MV *Mi Amigo* loomed out of the fog like a forgotten shipwreck. Its rusting hulk rose up and down in the swell of the North Sea and my stomach rose up and down with it as I

prepared to set foot on deck for my first taste of life as a Pirate on the high seas.



STEVE YOUNG ON AIR Archive: Steve Young

As we drew alongside the Mi Amigo a deckhand caught the lines thrown from the tender and secured the two vessels together. I waited until the ocean swell lifted the tender level with the deck of the Mi Amigo and, without looking down at the heaving seas between the two ships, leapt aboard. Once safely on deck I looked up and saw a group of longhaired, unshaven, half-dressed, disheveled-looking figures approaching me. They looked like escaped prisoners and I wondered if I had I been dropped off on a convict ship by mistake? They were in fact several of the eight or nine deejays, newsreaders and technicians who were working their fourteen-day shift aboard Radio Caroline. Some were departing for a week-long shore leave as their replacements arrived. The on-air crew was comprised mostly of Brits, Canucks, Yanks, Aussies and Kiwis, all of whom came from

varied backgrounds and who all impressed me, at that time, as being somewhat larger than life. Most importantly though, they were all cheerful and friendly and were soon to become some of my best friends.

1967

THE BEAT FLEET OFFICIAL COMMISSION

*This document Certifies that the herein
named..... has been awarded a full
commission to the rank of Lieutenant and has sworn
allegiance to serve the Admiral of the Beat Fleet*



Robbie Dale

ADMIRAL

Once aboard I soon got to know my way around the Mi Amigo which, compared to the other vessels I'd seen, was extremely habitable. A midships superstructure housed the main studio, a small production studio/news booth, dining room/lounge, galley, heads and shower. Below decks were four sleeping cabins each with two bunks, a small seating area, a desk and two lockers. In a larger cabin, slightly forward, was the record library, filled with 33rpm albums and 45rpm single records. It also contained a listening area and comfortable seating on chairs and couches. All of these areas were the principle domain of the on-air staff and studio technicians. The ships Captain and his Dutch crew (deckhands, engineers, cook and stewards) all lived in quarters housed below the bridge at the stern of the vessel.

Topside, secured firmly to the forward deck (although on several occasions it would prove to be not quite firmly enough), was the huge 160 foot transmitting antenna. Just below decks was a cabin housing the 50kW Continental transmitter and a standby 10kw transmitter. The studios were moderately well equipped with Spot master cart machines, three turntables, a couple of Ampex reel-reel tape

machines, fold back monitors and a mixing console above which was housed the famous Caroline ships clock. At the back of the studio was a porthole that could be kept open when the weather was warm, it was also handy for checking out the local weather conditions for the South East coast of England. Outward appearances aside the MV Mi Amigo was actually quite well equipped and maintained, something for which I was grateful as she was to be my second home over the next year and a half.

Life on board was filled with short bursts of intense activity and long stretches of dull routine, which could become very boring. Since most shifts were only 3 hours in length there was a lot of time to fill. During the summer months life was pretty good, we would idle away the hours fishing, swimming (when the tides weren't running) or simply lazing on the upper deck, drinking beer and reading mail. Winter was more difficult to cope with as the bitter winds and violent storms forced us to remain inside. A lot of time was spent watching TV, reading, sleeping and playing cards or answering fan mail from the thousands of letters we received every day! The live-aboard amenities were quite adequate. The dining room/lounge area contained a large galley table where the cook and steward served our main meals, there was a fridge containing soft drinks, beer and snacks and a lounging area with a 14" black and white television. The meals were hearty and included plenty of Dutch-Indonesian food, for which I soon acquired a fondness. Each of the deejays, newsreaders and technicians was given a weekly allocation of beer and cigarettes, accommodations were provided, earnings were tax-free and there were many other perks. For most of us it was a career move that we were glad we had made.

However there was a downside to life on board. While members of the opposite sex often came out to visit the ship they were

permitted to stay aboard only as long as the tender was alongside. So, with no women stationed on board there was little need to be on our best behavior and, boys will be boys, so there were lots of pranks and mischievous antics that took place when we got bored. There were also some serious occurrences that led to violent confrontations between individuals and more than one member of the English and Dutch crews became the subject of police files when things got out of hand. There were other goings on too, that were out of our control and we were soon to discover that bigger battles were being fought, which were to affect the tranquillity of our lives, and our safety, at sea.

In January 1967 a dispute erupted over 'squatters' rights' on an abandoned wartime defence fort, constructed on stilts and located several miles out to sea. A number of Pirate Radio operators had occupied several of these forts in the hope of starting their own radio stations. One of them, known as Rough Towers, situated six miles off the coast of Felixstowe, Suffolk became the object of a bitter struggle between the Caroline organization and a rival company. Ronan O'Rahilly had put two men on the Rough Towers fort in order to establish occupancy rights. Meanwhile an individual by the name of Roy Bates the 45-year-old owner of Radio Essex which, like Radio Caroline, broadcast from a vessel carrying the Dutch flag, had his sights set on the same piece of property. Bates sent four men out to get rid of the other two, triggering a war, which we were to become caught in the middle of.

One morning I awoke to the sound of a vessel circling the *Mi Amigo*. I watched as it sailed around and around us, maintaining a distance of several hundred feet. Aboard the boat was a small group of men who were shouting threats at us. They were also carrying firearms which they aimed at us, although no shots were fired, and eventually the

boat sped away. Later that day another vessel drew alongside and a number of 'heavies' clambered aboard the *Mi Amigo*. They were on 'our side' and were stopping by to lick their wounds after having been firebombed during an unsuccessful raid on the Rough Towers fort by the opposing forces. Luckily nobody was seriously hurt and, after receiving medical attention they were soon on their way. So the monotony of daily life on Radio Caroline was, at times, broken by events such as these but, as a rule, the two-week stints on board the *Mi Amigo* were tedious and our weekly shore-leaves couldn't come soon enough.

When the tender arrived to take me back to shore for my first week of leave I was not prepared for the overwhelming popularity and listener adoration that awaited me and the other Radio Caroline deejays. The novelty of the Pirate stations, the mystique of the deejays who played music on the high seas and the burgeoning British music scene all contributed to a kind of mass hysteria that made the Pirate Radio deejays 'rock stars' in their own right.



Roughs Towers Archive Freewave Media Magazine

Everywhere we went doors were opened to us. The press made a fuss over us with never ending articles about life aboard the ships; the popular nightclubs and discos provided us with free memberships and admissions and record companies vied for our attention, trying to get airplay for their artists. Payola was not unknown in the industry and many deejays boosted their earnings with supplemental cash incentives surreptitiously handed to them by record execs.

Other opportunities awaited us too, as emcees for rock concerts and other musical events. I was privileged to work on stage with the likes of Jimi Hendrix, The Kinks, The Turtles, Cat Stevens, Peter & Gordon and many other established or up-and-coming artists. The money was good too, sometimes paid as a flat fee by the company but, more often than not, as a percentage of the gate receipts. After a busy week ashore some of us would return to the ship each with enough cash to fill a small suitcase. But we lived high on the hog too, and we all suffered from a certain degree of megalomania! We partied hard and generally acted like kids in a candy store. It was a high time for all of us! But more powerful forces were at work and these were soon to precipitate a number of events that would see the end of Pirate Radio, as we knew it at that time.

The British Government had never been pleased with the upstart attitude of the Pirate radio stations but, because they were located more than three miles out to sea, beyond the territorial limit of the British Isles in International waters, there was nothing that could be done to stop them. All that was to change when, in January of 1967, the Government under Prime Minister Harold Wilson, took the first step towards outlawing the Pirate Radio stations by introducing Parliamentary legislation known as The Marine Broadcasting Offences Act. There was a great deal of debate in Parliament. Conservative M.P.'s fought in support of the Free Radio Movement

while the Labour Party proposed to make it a crime for anyone to supply, work on, or be in any way involved with the Pirate stations. Outraged listeners flooded government departments with petitions. 'We Want Our Caroline' became a popular slogan that was taken up by Caroline fans everywhere. A group recorded a song called 'We Love the Pirate Stations', which, naturally shot to the top of the charts. The Press, too, featured frequent articles in support of the Pirates. Almost everywhere people were ready to support us in our fight to stay on the air. But it was not enough and, in August 1967, the British Government passed the Marine Broadcasting Offences Act into law. Those who defied the new law could face severe penalties so, on August 14th, 1967 we did our last shows and said goodbye to our listeners. Then we packed our bags and boarded the supply tender for the trip back to shore. As we pulled away from the Mi Amigo we looked back silently at her rusting hulk slowly disappearing into the early morning mists and all of us felt a deep sadness and loss for the place that, for so long, had been our home away from home.

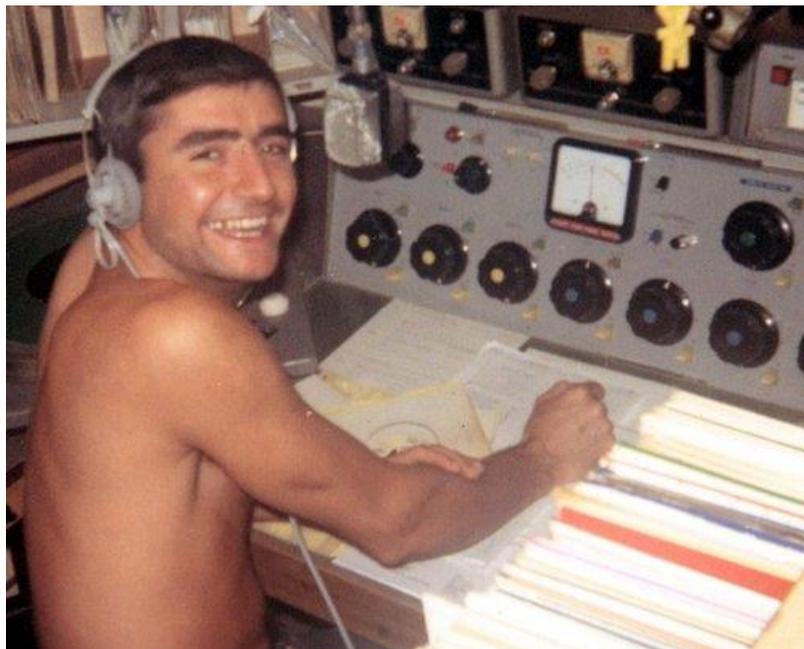
Many of the Pirate deejays were offered positions at the newly created BBC Radio 1, introduced by the Government as a means of placating the millions of listeners who had become accustomed to 24 hour-a-day music and news. Subsequently a call went out for license applications for the first of the many new commercial radio stations that were to go on the air from 1973. These stations too, became home to many of the former Pirate deejays. Meanwhile the rest of us returned to our various countries to pursue careers in more stable, albeit somewhat less exciting, jobs.

But, as we went quietly about our lives, the memories stayed with us. The cold winter storms, the summer sunsets over the North Sea, the cry of the gulls, the hum of the generators, the smell of diesel fuel mixed with sea air, the clanking of the anchor chains. These, and the

ever-present music that introduced a new era in broadcasting all over Britain, would always be a part of our lives. For us they are still the memories that were Radio Caroline, 'The Smallest Boat To Rock the Nation'. Although the Marine Broadcasting Offences Act effectively closed down most of the British offshore radio stations Radio Caroline was not to be silenced for many years to come. When the Act became law one deejay, Johnny Walker and others, stayed aboard and continued broadcasting.

Supplies continued to be shipped in from Holland but, since it had become illegal for British companies to even advertise on Radio Caroline, the positive cash flow was starting to reverse itself. In March of 1968 the company that operated the supply tender was owed money and they seized the Radio Caroline ships. In May of 1972 the Mi Amigo was sold at auction. But it was resold to the Caroline organization, which can be read more about in other chapters.'

Well Steve Young a big thank you for writing this chapter, now ten years ago. Good to see we still have a lot of good memories to those good old days!



Steve Young on air on Caroline South

Photo: Collection Steve Young

Question time from England: 'Now a question for the next issue - does anyone know where I could buy an original 1964-67 Radio London T-shirt? There must be a few that have survived and I would love to buy one. There are plenty of reproductions but that's not what I am looking for. Cheers Mike Terry.'

Anyone who has one on the shelves and wants to sell it, please contact Mike versus HKnot@home.nl



Well that was another long edition of the Hans Knot International Radio Report. All contributions are welcome, as ever, at the above email address. Wishing you all the best for the summer or winter period and till late August. Hans Knot