

Hans Knot International Radio Report

Late April 2020

Welcome to this edition of the International Radio Report. 'During the early afternoon, April 20th 2020, Ronan O'Rahilly, founder in 1964 of Radio Caroline, passed away on the age of 79 in Ireland. Here the official announcement made by nowadays Caroline organisation: **Ronan O'Rahilly 21st May 1940 - 20th April 2020**

We are deeply sorry to announce the death of our Founder Ronan O'Rahilly.



In a pastime populated by unusual people, Ronan was more unusual than all of them combined. In a world where we all follow rules created by others and imposed on us, Ronan had no rules other than his own. He said he was in the business of "why not?".

Peter Moore remembers his friend: 'As a young Caroline enthusiast I first met Ronan at a protest March in 1970, being delighted to shake

his hand. Sixteen years passed before we met again when having taken on some tasks for the station we were both in a basement office in Covent Garden where he viewed me with caution and suspicion and maybe always did. Ronan identified me as an incorrigible chatterbox while he kept conversation to a minimum, stating "there is no obligation to divulge information just for the sake of doing so".

As he gradually became more relaxed I learned a little about his Acting School, a hospital of Traditional Chinese Medicine, brief management of the Rolling Stones and a strange foray in to movie making. He came close to managing the Beatles. Almost but not quite. Later references to 'my friend George' indicated that George Harrison bailed Caroline out financially more than once. He had a deep interest in the Kennedy dynasty, particularly the death of J.F.K but his much researched film on the subject never saw the light of day.

Chris Moore suggested that for Ronan, life was a game where the subject matter was immaterial only that he would see a situation where money or a possession might be available, when he would employ his persuasive skills so that the money or possession became his. Then the game was won and it was time for the next game. I did sometimes wonder if Radio Caroline was a bargaining opportunity rather than an end in itself, but many years later I was admonished by Ronan's girlfriend of the eighties Jenny, who asked me if I had failed to noticed the way he persistently moved and hunched his shoulders ease the chronic tension pains in his neck. She said that on the night of the 1987 hurricane he was in anguish about the plight of the crew on the Ross Revenge and that increasingly, the need to make public or media appearances made him physically sick with nerves. Jenny insisted that behind the wheeling and dealing, Radio Caroline was all important.

In 1992 Ronan did visit the ship in Dover for me on a morale boosting mission. His main utterance was to first thump the filthy and rusty superstructure with his fist, then stating "Germans, I hate them, but they do build strong ships". Later, as evidence of his dark humour, we were at the funeral in Surrey of Chris Cary (Spangles Muldoon). There was an anecdote that financial backers had come to the old Mi Amigo carrying much cash and that during their overnight stay Spangles had taken the money and departed leaving the hapless Dick Palmer to face the angry men. I asked Ronan why, in view of this allegation, he had travelled to pay his respects to a man he had no respect for. "That's not the reason" he told me, while people stood with their heads bowed "I'm here to make quite sure that he won't ever rip anyone else off". At the funeral of Tony Allan we again sat together and, it being a Roman Catholic service at Westminster Cathedral, I whispered that he may want to take the chance to confess his sins to the Priest. He considered this and then whispered back "Baby, the guy could not spare enough time".



Ronan and Keith Skues. Photo: Chris Edwards

Ronan was also the master of the put down, made more cruel by his deadpan delivery. At a Caroline social event, neither of us really

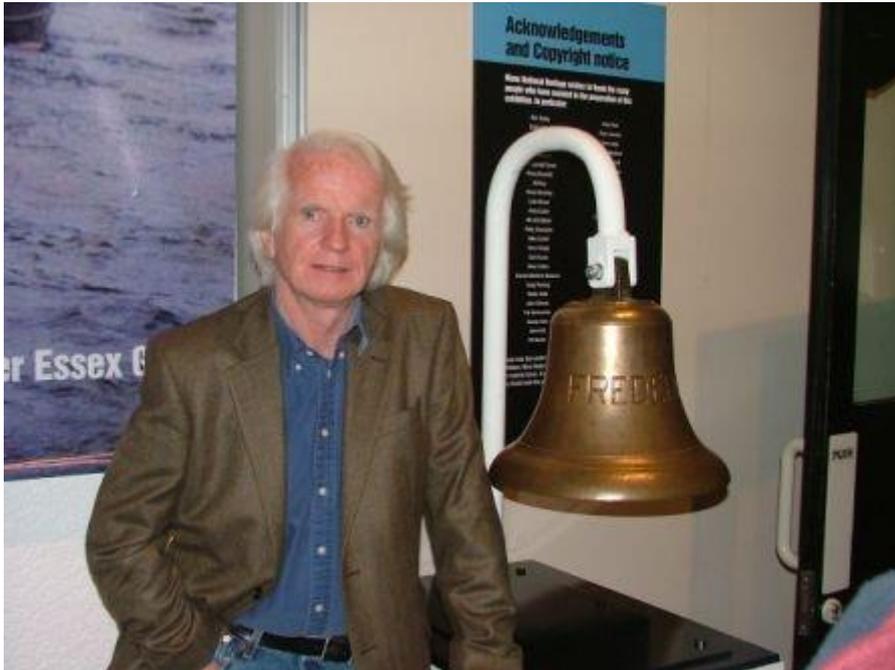
wanting to be there, he espied one time Caroline DJ Keith Skues who in 1967 had quickly taken the chance to join the BBC. He was selling copies of his book Pop Went The Pirates. With an anger undimmed by the passage of 25 years, Ronan explained how Keith had deserted as soon as things became difficult. His actual words were far more harsh than that and I hoped that Skues would not approach us but he did. "Ronan baby, so good to see you after all this time. Here, have a copy of my book". Ronan took the book with disdain and turned it over in his hands as though it might suddenly catch fire, noting that it was a paperback whereas he thought he might deserve a hardback copy.

Keith replied "Ronan baby, I'm sorry I don't have any hardbacks here". I hoped that may be the end of the exchange but he was not realising the need to walk away. "Ronan baby, when did we last meet, it must be twenty years ago". "Probably", said Ronan. "Ronan baby, we should not leave it so long next time". "Why not?", said O' Rahilly.

From Surrey he had me give him a ride home in a splendid Range Rover that I had borrowed. He was convinced that it was mine and that maybe I had bought it from my Caroline earnings which of course were nil. All the way to Chelsea and in many different ways he tried to get me to admit that the car was mine finally or seemingly letting the subject drop before saying "So, how much did you pay for it?". There was no malice in the question, just that his mind would not compute that a person would work for so long without expecting any reward.

On various journeys, our subjects covered were strange and delightful. When a person might drop into to conversation that they had bought a new lawn mower, Ronan would talk about the time he bought an experimental nuclear spaceship, or his promotion of an engine that ran on water, which of course it did not. He was almost

childlike when saying that he had made no provision for old age due to having no intention of getting old.



Ronan with Fredericia bell Photo: Ray Terret

We were walking from Chelsea to Tower Bridge while I was saying that I had found enough money to buy a small generator for the ship. He at once told me to get another on the grounds that the first generator would cause problems knowing that it was in a commanding position, whereas if there were two it would realise that it was not indispensable. I was told that when he was in America, or Canada seeking much money for the Caroline project, a shrewd businessman was asking him searching questions about time taken to break even and the returns thereafter when out of exasperation he said "Look, have you at no time in your life ever done anything just because it was a nice idea?". The money was provided. I am sure that the businessman never saw it again.

Jenny said that the disasters of the late eighties and the shipwreck damaged Ronan physically and mentally from which he never quite recovered. Conversely on the Saturday of the 1989 raid on the Ross Revenge he called me when I was veering between despair and

furious anger. "Look at it this way" he said calmly and slowly, "It could have been just another boring Saturday afternoon for you". But later he became so guarded as to only hold conversations in moving vehicles or on deserted railway platforms. We dragged his doomed legal case concerning the raid to one law firm after another, often having to lodge cash deposits into court to keep the case active. Ronan really thought that he was playing poker with HM Government and that if he kept raising the stakes they would blink first. They did not and the money was lost.



Ross Revenge in Dover Photo: Rob Olthof

With him being so unusual and to my shame, I failed to realise for years that something was actually wrong. In 2006 I tried to give examples of the deterioration of the Ross Revenge by explaining that one of the big M.A.N generating sets had caught fire beyond repair. Ronan said that this was impossible as in his mind the twenty four year old machine was brand new. I thought he was being difficult but he was not.

For a man who lived on his wits, dementia was the cruelest blow. Deserting his traditional home turf of Chelsea for Ireland, he moved first to Dublin where his grandfather fought the British in the 1916 uprising. At length he settled in Dundalk across from Greenore where the Caroline adventure started 56 years before. A clever man, sometimes verging on genius. Eccentric of course, sometimes unscrupulous, but suddenly kind and warm hearted. A rogue maybe, but a charismatic and loveable rogue. He will be missed.'

Thanks a lot Peter for the above memories. Here is next Robb Eden:

'So sad to hear the news about Ronan. His timing, as usual, gives us all problems as I'm sure we would all like to celebrate his life together but can't. Maybe sometime in the future. Shame that he let us so close to his 80th birthday. To my mind Ronan O'Rahilly is a forgotten hero. Yes, we all know the legacy left by The Beatles, The Stones, Mary Quant and Twiggy but where is Ronan in the grand scheme of things that make up our history, the history taught to our children and our children's children? He made such a huge impact yet few people know the name Ronan O' Rahilly. I was fortunate to be part of the Caroline family and it is Ronan I have to thank for that.

It was through our friendship that I got to know the real Ronan. To many he was a God but, like all of us, he was human and it was this humanity that kept me going even through times where we disagreed and there were plenty of them. There were good times and bad times, possibly the best being at the time when he had Maria and Glenna to look after him. He needed people around him. The worst was after his girlfriend, a good friend of ours, left him to return home. Ronan was devastated, locking himself away in the flat, having to be coaxed out slowly. This was at a time when I was fervently looking for a new ship as we realised that the Mi Amigo would not last forever and so I dreaded the journeys to Hull, Grimsby, Portsmouth and Scotland knowing that Ronan was on his own. Yet was he? I am sure that anyone who knew Ronan would agree that he was able to successfully compartmentalise his life so that one person

wouldn't have a clue as to the relationship he had with the other. The only time you would meet them would be at a chance meeting in The Casserole or Thierry's or perhaps walking down the King's Road. Ronan knew a lot of people and it is this network that led to the financing of the new Radio Caroline and the Ross Revenge.



Robb Eden and Ronan in 1978 Photo: Theo Dencker

Perhaps, at this sad time, we should reflect on the what Ronan has been trying to tell us all these years. Caroline is not one person, it is a co-operative. Ronan was the glue that held it together but, ultimately, everyone had a bit part to play. Now that Ronan is no longer here it would be a shame if the spirit of Caroline is lost forever. Robb Eden.'

Thank you so much Robb and take care. Next a message Tony Prince made on you tube on the evening Ronan passed away:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k9p7dMR8E7w&feature=youtu.be>

Much more people paid respect versus e mail or social media as well in the newspapers: Jeroen Shovel: 'Founder of Radio Caroline, Ronan

O'Rahilly, died at age 79. We all love Rock and Roll. And every now and then some of our beloved rock stars eventually dies, sad enough, these things happen. So today I must pay tribute to a man whom without Rock music would not have been so popular, well at least not over here in Europe. Making music as a musician is one thing, to be successful, you need someone to play it on the radio. Back in history the big radio stations in Europe refused to play popular music.

And then came this Irishmen O'Rahilly, and he came up with a brilliant plan. He bought a transmitter, put it on a boat, sailed out onto the North sea and began broadcasting the music the BBC didn't want to play...instant success, and his radio station still exist today.

Although this form of making radio was outlawed by the British and later on other European countries, it's called Pirate Radio. These radio stations in my opinion made pop and Rock music big. Even the great Lemmy Kilmister of Motörhead ones said "If it wasn't for Radio Caroline, I would not be playing in a band after all. Today, I heard that the pioneer of Radio Caroline, Ronan O'Rahilly, has died.

My deepest condolences to all family and friends. Thank you mister O'Rahilly.'



John Burch. Photo: Leendert Vingerling

John Burch: 'We've lost a lot of good people in the last few weeks, but today I lost one of my heroes - Ronan O'Rahilly, founder of Radio Caroline. Some of you will have picked up on the news that Ronan finally passed away this afternoon. I'm not going to say much here because many others have already said a lot and others will no doubt do so in the coming days. Save to say that from my first meetings with him 40 years ago I was in awe of the man. We had our differences, but that never changed my respect for him.

His unbounding charisma and persuasive nature was something I have never experienced in the company of anyone else. Radio Caroline and the way of life that went with it changed my life in so many ways. I met my wife through Caroline, my musical interests are vested in Caroline, my love of the sea is vested in Caroline and my views of politicians and the media are almost certainly vested in the various fights to save Radio Caroline for us all to be able to enjoy today. I'd just like to say to all Ronan's family thank you for sharing him with us all for his life and may you all be very proud of him. I'm sure he is, even as we speak, considering his next deal and looking to see who he can persuade to invest in a free heavenly broadcaster. What better place to beam good music down to us all then up there above us all. Watch out Heaven - the one you've let in today will totally amaze you with his persuasive ability! Farewell Ronan.'

Norman Barrington: 'I am so sad to hear the news of Ronan passing away. It marks a special milestone in my own life. Having been part of the Caroline family 1972-1974. I saw him quite often during that tumultuous yet magic time. He gave the go ahead to Mike Haggler and myself to have the Caroline free festival at Stonehenge, which was otherwise in doubt, it was held over the weekend of 21st June 1974, he attended the whole time. He had a particular impact in my life through my time on Caroline. But also more famous DJs from Caroline's first incarnation, and of course many musicians too. But he touched the lives of millions of listeners, all simply by daring to be

different. My sadness is tempered by knowing Ronan had an Amaazing (his favourite word) Life. Thank you Ronan.'

Here you will find an obituary in an Irish newspaper

<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/irishman-who-founded-radio-caroline-and-changed-radio-forever-dies-1.4233665?mode=amp>

Tony Prince: 'Ronan O'Rahilly passed away in care at 2pm Dublin time today. He changed the world and so many of us owe him an enormous debt of gratitude, not just we DJs who worked for him on Radio Caroline, but British and European radio listeners who had been starved of music until he came out fighting.

His granddad was part of the Dublin uprising and Ronan had some of him in his blood when he decided to launch his magic floating jukebox. Politicians did not concern him, his hero was John F. Kennedy and Radio Caroline was named after JFK's daughter. I know DJs everywhere who were part of his plan and those who descended from his great idea, will give an extra round of applause for him on Thursday at 8pm UK time. God be with Ronan, he deserves a special place in heaven and I do hope we'll all meet again...don't know where, don't know when.....Tony Prince.'

On the internet site from Offshore Echos you can read this tribute:

<http://www.offshoreechos.com/Ronan%20Tribute.html>

Caroline Martin: 'Sad to hear about the passing of Ronan O'Rahilly. Without him radio wouldn't be what it is today. Without him my dad wouldn't have had the passion for Radio Caroline he passed on to me and without him I'd never have known about half the musical artists I have in my collection. A great man. RIP .'



Caroline Martin Photo: Leen Vingerling

From Canada Keith Hampshire: In 1966, a handsome man gave a young snotty-nosed kid from Calgary, Alberta a job as a deejay on his little rebel radio ship, Radio Caroline. Little did I realize at the time what an impact we would be having on the British Isles and the World!! We all want to leave this planet a better place than when we found it, and Ronan O'Rahilly did that in spades. That little rebel radio ship not only changed the face of broadcasting in Britain, but was greatly instrumental in "The British Invasion"! Finally, British musicians could get their music exposed to the general public and the rest of the world. His partner fired me twice for not playing his records, but Ronan hired me back both times. This great man passed away today at 2PM British time. He has left a hole in my heart that may never heal. Thank you, Boss! You changed my life!

Avid listener Bob Glenn: 'It is with sadness that today the great Roland O'Rahilly, the founder of Radio Caroline has passed away aged 79. His vision and courage changed history in the UK music and broadcasting industry forever. He literally fought the law and in this case the law lost. Hundreds of bands and solo artists would never have been heard of if it wasn't for Ronan. RIP Ronan, you will never be forgotten.'

A link to BBC News about Ronan's death:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-essex-52362113>



Fred Bolland. Photo: Leen Vingerling.

Next Fred Bolland: Ronan O'Rahilly passed away today. With great sadness I think of the many moments I spent with this special man. Like the moment after many conversations about the start of Radio Monique. After my earlier collaboration with the Dutch Caroline, the contacts had stopped after the sinking of the Mi-Amigo. I was

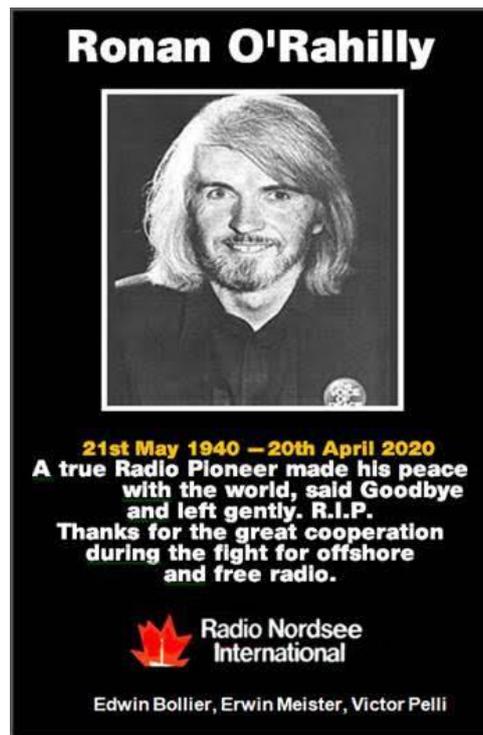
working on Radio Paradijs, the project of Ben Bode and Danny Vuylsteke. When this was stopped by illegal intervention by the Dutch government and was unduly postponed by the Dutch courts, I continued with Radio Monique. I contacted Ronan through Robb Eden. He had managed to get back on the air with Caroline on a fantastic new ship. At the end of the negotiations, we came together in Liechtenstein to confirm the agreements and settle the financial affairs. The relief was great when this was successful. Ronan gave a dinner in Vaduz in Liechtenstein. He was very happy and we discussed many stories about Caroline. An unforgettable moment with a special man. '

Here a tribute from the Emperor Rosko from LA:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w7dwjXhxmag&feature=youtu.be>

Mark Wesley Recalls "This rally was part of a campaign during the general election of that year (1970). Ronan had gathered a handful of people to record the 'Who Do You Think You're Kidding Mr. Wilson' record. Amongst the small group of singers was Andy Archer, Larry Steinman, George Lazenby, Ronan and myself. We simply sang over the top of the Dads Army theme tune. For a short while Radio Northsea International was renamed Radio Caroline. It is this tiny gap through which I can say I worked for Radio Caroline. Magical days!"





Stuart Clark: 'Sad, sad news. My old Radio Caroline boss, Ronan O'Rahilly, has passed away. He changed the face of not just British, but Irish radio - both directly through Caroline and also giving the Sunshine and Nova founders, Robbie Dale and Chris Cary, their big breaks. He was one hell of a character.'

Andy Cadier: Had it not been for the success of Ronan's 'Radio Caroline' in 1964 I don't suppose any of the fort stations would have been established.'

Dave Asher: 'Ronan O'Rahilly. He once rang my mum looking for me and was so mysterious on the phone she thought he was a hitman or a secret agent! Often known by a series of other names.. even the ship was known as the "unit". George Lazenby stopped being James Bond as Ronan told him to. Call me Bobby Kennedy. "dont look at me when I give you the money.. " Our world is poorer for his passing. Rip Ronan.'

Another link to an article on the internet:

<https://www.hotpress.com/music/newsflash-radio-caroline-founder-ronan-orahilly-passed-away-22812793>

And also in RadioToday: <https://radiotoday.co.uk/2020/04/radio-caroline-pays-tribute-to-founder-ronan-orahilly/>

Paul Rowley: 'Ronan changed the landscape of British radio. Without him the UK wouldn't have had Radio 1 or commercial radio. When Caroline North came on the air in 1964 when I was 9-years-old, I dreamed of being on the wireless. And I've been doing it for 40+ years. So thank you, Ronan. Not Fade Away. All You Need Is Love. LA. RIP'.

Steve Marshall: 'The list of people who worked for Caroline is long, however in the end there was one person who was Caroline, and that was Ronan. I never worked for or met Ronan however I heard many stories about him over the years. He helped to start a radio revolution which continues today. May he RIP. My thoughts are with his family, and the Caroline family in many places.'

Edo Peters: 'Never met the man. But his legacy could be felt immediately when I boarded the Ross Revenge for the first time to be part of the on-air team. Within an hour he was mentioned by the British crew. His name stuck with me forever. Thank you Ronan, for changing radio history.'

From Berlin, Dennis King: 'Sad day! I just heard that Ronan O'Rahilly, the founder and long-time owner of Radio Caroline, has passed away. Without Ronan I never would have had a chance to work on the radio. Everything I learned about broadcasting and communication in practice, I learned from Radio Caroline. He gave me the first chance to make myself happen.'

For almost 7 years I worked for Ronan, often in secret missions and as a man (well boy then) for the impossible things. He taught me that anything is possible. He was my boss, my big brother and mentor.

He hadn't been feeling well for a number of years, his health was lazy. Now that he's gone, his legacy is huge. He broke the BBC monopoly, brought album radio to Europe and was responsible for the musical careers of countless superstars. When I met Felix Papalardi, producer of Cream, in Copenhagen in 1977 and we talked all night at the Plaza Hotel, he said to me: "Without Radio Caroline, Cream would never have become the super group. Clapton owes a lot to the station as a solo artist. "

However, the loss of a person to whom I owe almost everything, he formed a man from an immature boy who is still grateful for the knowledge and attitude that was passed on to him then. Rest softly Ronan, your departure is a serious loss to me and the former colleagues and friends. I hope where you are now there is a quiet place for you. In my heart you live on. Love, Dennis.'

In our Offshore Radio photo archive on Flickr a special tribute page is opened with a lot of photos featuring Ronan O'Rahilly and others.

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/offshoreradio/albums/72157713983258772>

The next photo was send to me by Nickki Eden. She wrote: 'This was an old picture taken one afternoon in Paulton Square Gardens in Chelsea - we were chilling in the sunshine and I dared Ronan to put the Smarties tube in his ear for a picture - to represent smart people listening to radio - as you can see he did just that.'



Photo: Nickki Eden

Brian Mckenzie: 'Just a thought. If Ronan O'Rahilly had never pioneered offshore radio in the UK we would not be here today talking to each other or discussing anything about radio. No Radio Days no Radio magazines, radio books, no offshore forums on Facebook and I wonder would land based stations exist in the form that we know today. An Irishman with a vision made this all happen'.

A very sad day as the man who revolutionised radio in the UK, Ronan O'Rahilly, passed away just after 2pm this afternoon, just a month short of his 80th birthday. His partner told me that it was a peaceful passing, he wasn't in any pain at all. He gave me my break into radio and helped me many times since when I was 'in competition.' A true friend. RIP Ronan, and thanks for everything. Paul Rusling.'

Thanks a lot Paul, also for your personal updates about Ronan's condition by e-mail and telephone. Well appreciated. Next is Chris Edwards, radio friend since the early seventies:



'Ronan O'Rahilly, who sadly passed away yesterday. Pictured with myself and Francois Lhote. I've made many friends because of Ronan, a number of "adventures" and many memories, mostly happy ones. Thank you Ronan, you're greatly missed. Chris Edwards.'

Yet another obituarial:

<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2020/apr/21/ronan-orahilly-radio-caroline-founder-uk-pop-pirate-radio-dies-aged-79-james-bond-george-lazenby>

And from the Netherlands: 'His nickname was SilverFox, is no longer with us. He became 79 years of age. He unleashed a revolution in the media world. Due to his determination, many people have been able to make and develop a career in the media. Including me. RIP Ronan. Wim van Egmond.'

My first Radio Boss and a true visionary Ronan O'Rahilly has passed away ... but his dream lives on. Nick Richards.'

And from Nick to Doug Wood is a little step:

'Ronan O'Rahilly, the founder of Radio Caroline, has died at the age of 79. The Irishman set about creating the pirate station as early as 1964 from the MV Caroline anchored in international waters off the coast of Essex in England. He's been the figurehead of the station ever since in launched at Easter 1964, and the station continues to broadcast to this day.

In 2013 Ronan moved back to Ireland after being diagnosed with advanced vascular dementia. Everyone who has had a career in commercial radio in the UK is indebted to this man because he changed the face of radio in this country when he launched Radio Caroline on the 28th March 1964. I personally want to thank him for the interest he sparked off in me back then and the opportunities that came from his determination to break the BBC monopoly of radio. I hope the people who have a career in commercial radio right now understand what he did, and acknowledge the respect he deserves. Rest In Peace Ronan O'Rahilly 21st May 1940 - 20th April 2020. Thank you Ronan. Doug Wood.'



Doug Wood during his VOP days.

Short news item on ITV:

<https://www.itv.com/news/anglia/2020-04-21/radio-caroline-founder-ronan-o-rahilly-dies-aged-79/>

Steve Conway his memories:

<https://www.thejournal.ie/readme/radio-caroline-5080049-Apr2020/>

Next Tony Prince with a longer item:

'I climbed the 180 foot mast of Radio Caroline South in a storm that had stopped a rigging engineer to sail out to us on the tender from Harwich. A few of us had a go. Tony Blackburn went a fair way then came back down because he needed gloves. Dave Lee Travis made about ten rungs and came back defeated. I then made my attempt to reach the very top where a cable, clearly seen whiplashing in the fierce wind, had broken loose, short circuiting the most popular radio station in the UK.



Tony Prince source unknown

At halfway I realised the safety belt clip couldn't secure itself on the larger rungs where Irish shipbuilders in Greenore, Ireland, had

welded on the extension. I descended defeated, freezing but glad to be back on the swaying deck with my DJ pals. Armed with gloves Blackburn set off on the longest journey of his life. Later in his career he would win "I'm a Celebrity Get me Out of Here" but this was the most dangerous challenge he ever faced.

As he scaled the first rungs, DLT chimed, "Blackburn, can I have your record collection"? We watched with hands shading our squinting eyes from the vicious clouds which had turned the weather three days ago, hoping it wouldn't start raining again as the breakfast show host arrived and then bravely (or stupidly) continued from the new mast on and on with no safety belt for the remaining 90 feet. At its height the mast swayed 20 feet side to side which was when Tony would need all his courage.

Seeing him wrestle with the rogue cable we held our breath. Then we watched with bated breath as the cable started to fall.

Three quarters of the way down it caught in the rigging. Tony came back down not attempting to release it, knackered and spent. The engineer said we needed the cable to repair and it had to be retrieved. It never crossed my mind to think how the hell we were going to eventually fix it back in place. I made my second attempt.

As I arrived at the new mast, unbeknown to me, the tender that visited us twice a week with provisions and sacks of fan mail, had arrived on the scene. On board was the man who changed radio history when he conceived and built his pirate ship in his father's Irish shipyard. Ronan O'Rahilly was on board having decided to come out and make the climb himself.

As the wind howled I failed to hear the panic below. Everyone shouting at the tender captain to stay away and pointing upwards to the tiny volunteer who now neared the cable. Had the tender tried to dock alongside us the fears were that it would shunt the Mi Amigo causing me to lose my grip. I knew none of this.

Only when I captured the cable and threw it down to the deck did I look down to see my boss clapping me from the tender. He'd missed

the real heroics of Tony Blackburn who, with the other DJs now cupped a warm beaker of grog which the ship's chef had made for everyone.

I recount this story to underline the passion and love we each had for this exciting radio ship and the revolution we were each contributing towards. To a man we were all what was known as personality DJs. It was a time of learning. A time to understand what makes a good DJ. We learned from colleagues who had arrived from world's where lots of radio stations and thousands of DJs were established. Norman St. John and Graham 'Spider' Webb from Australia, Emperor Rosko and Big Jim Murphy from the USA were our tutors.



The late Big Jim Murphy from Jim's collection he sent years ago

You learned the subtlety of talking too and not at the listener, (note non-plurality). You learned that although you may have millions of listeners, you directed your conversations to one person. "Imagine you're talking to someone you really like", was Spider's advice.

And so it eventually came to pass that the Labour Government led by Prime Minister Harold Wilson, finally, after three glorious years, decided to bring in a law that would capsize the entire fleet of ships and forts which completely surrounded the UK.

Radio Scotland with it's Stuart Henry, 270 with Paul Burnett and Mark Wesley,

Radio England with Roger 'Twiggy' Day, Radio Caroline South with Johnnie Walker, Robbie Dale, Rosko, Mike Ahearn and Tony Blackburn (who had jumped ship from Radio Caroline to Radio London because he liked their PAMS of Dallas jingle package better than the home-made jingles Ronan had commissioned in the UK). My last 18 months were on Radio Caroline North off the Isle of Man. My tutors here were 'Daffy' Don Alan, Jerry 'Soopa' Leighton, 'Baby' Bob Stewart, Mick 'Luvzit' and for the last couple of month, Dave Lee Travis (the Hairy Monster) who had been packed off north from the south ship.

The Marine Offences Act made it illegal for British subjects to work on the pirate stations even though they were anchored three miles out in international waters. The Government maintained the ships weren't paying royalties for the music they played which effected musicians and, the biggest lie, they caused problems with the emergency services communications.

But the job was done. The BBC finally conceded to create a youthful pop station, Radio One. Here the mast-climbing hero launched the breakfast show. The BBC team was made up of a cacophony of DJ voices mainly pirates from the southern based ships. DJs who had become legends on the nightly Radio Luxembourg station were also brought in, Pete Murray, Alan Freeman, 'Diddy' David Hamilton, Jimmy Young and Jimmy Saville. These elder statesmen from 208 The Station of the Stars, had mostly been out of work actors or, in Jimmy Young's case, a vocalist who made records or in slimy Saville's case, a man who managed a ballroom in Leeds.

Ed 'Stewpot' Stewart and Kenny Everett made it to the Radio One team and John Peel came to Broadcasting House bringing his prog-rock programme 'The Perfumed Garden' from Radio London.

After the bill Caroline remained the only ship, Johnnie Walker, Robbie Dale and Bob Larkins remained the only Brits willing to chance

their arm. It meant, instead of a 45 minute tender journey back to shore, now a Caroline HQ established in Holland, saw a 24 hour boat trip to and from Caroline. Most became very seasick. Few were paid.

I had the same agent as Simon Dee who had left Radio Caroline before the bill was introduced and had now established himself as a TV star with DEE TIME. "Be patient", he told me. "The BBC have passed your audition, it's now a question of them finding a slot for you".

Unlike all the other DJs I'd come into my career through Top Rank's ballroom circuit and landed a spot each week on a TWW television pop show 'Discs-a-Gogo'. This was why Chris Moore, Caroline's Programme Director, had selected me. It was usually the other way round, a radio DJ going to television. So he was impressed.

Before the BBC offered me the job I craved, an offer came from Radio Luxembourg. In answer to the pirate radio format of live ebullient DJ teams, I, Paul Burnett, Noel Edmonds and David 'Kid' Jensen were ferried to the centre of Europe to bring a more modern sound to the station which had been entertaining listeners in the UK and throughout greater Europe since the 30's.

As on the pirate ships we conceived our own jingles and promotional gimmicks and made the best we could of living in the grand Duchy of Luxembourg. Noel was really the new boy with no experience whatsoever but he adapted quickly and learned from we who had been taught. People ask how Luxembourg (208) went from strength to strength after the pirate invasion and this was for two reasons. Firstly pirate radio had made the advertising agencies keener to use the radio medium, Luxembourg was entirely commercial, the BBC of course wasn't. Secondly the new fledgling Radio One was still encumbered by the Musician's Union and had to adhere to a limited number of records it could play each day. They called this 'Needletime Restrictions' which played into Radio Luxembourg's hands. Whilst the BBC had to employ bands and orchestras to cover the popular hits of the day leaving poor Kenny Everett to introduce The Beatles 'Sgt Peppers' followed by Bob Miller & The Millermen's

atrocious cover version of "A Hard Day's Night" and other huge chart hits Luxembourg was playing every night.

The only thing I ever had in common with the BBC was the MU's drive to rid the world of records which they maintained was putting musicians out of work. That was far from the truth because most radio play royalties go to the songwriters. As a singer guitarist with a fifteen-piece Top Rank Bristol ballroom band I had been playing records whilst the musicians had their breaks. Tuesday nights had become total record nights. It's what the people wanted. At a union meeting in a Bristol hotel one Sunday afternoon, I was expelled from the union and joined Equity.



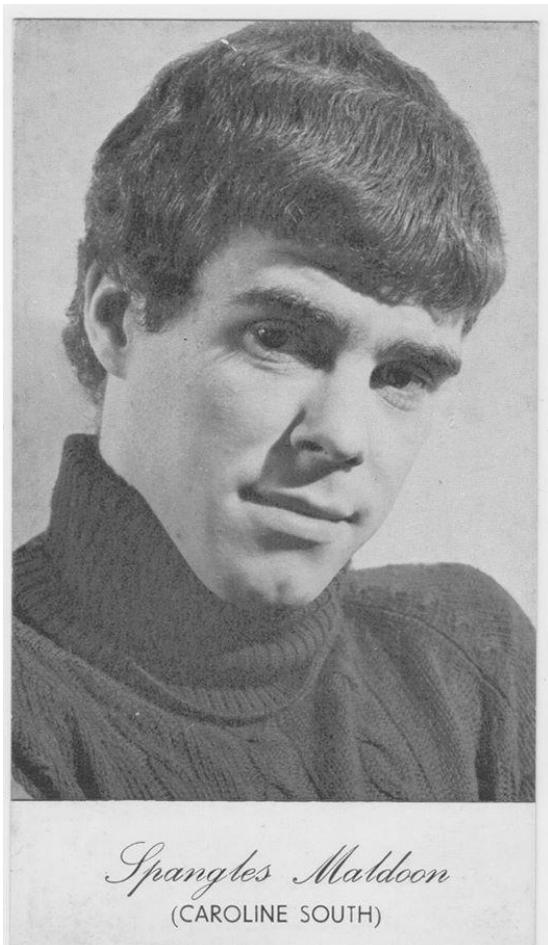
We had our problems at Luxembourg. Before the pirates, the station, was sponsored by the major record labels, The Decca Show, EMI, CBS all sponsored shows featuring only their own releases. As teenagers we hadn't realised this, we didn't care, it was, after all pop music fed to our music starved world.

The idea for the Radio Caroline pirate ship was inspired by this situation and when Ronan O'Rahilly managed to get a meeting with 208's MD, Geoff Everett, (himself a former DJ who once lived in Luxembourg), he was told he couldn't play the new Georgie Fame record an artist who Ronan managed whilst also running a small club in Soho. Making to leave the room at 38 Hertford Street in disgust he turned to look at Everett and uttered the eternal words, "Well I suppose I'll have to start my own radio station"!

In 1968 as the Luxembourg audience figures supplied by Gallup Research went through the roof, we inherited two problems. The paid for plays, no longer in their own sponsored shows were slipped into all our programmes under orders, each paid for by record

companies. We eventually persuaded our boss to stop this practise if he wanted to compete with the newly launched ILR network.

Then, having come from self-op studios on the ships where you are completely in charge of the output, Luxembourg provided the traditional studio with a DJ in one room and an engineer through a glass window playing the records and commercials. RTL, the company behind what they called the English Service of their mighty network, were also under the cosh from unions. The engineers could not be moved.



DJ Chris Carey (aka Spangles Muldoon) joined the team. Of all the Radio Caroline DJs Chris was closer to Ronan than any other and had great broadcasting know-how. Chris joined 208 as others left. Noel, (who's great regret was that he had missed joining the pirates), had gone to the BBC, Paul Burnett and Kid Jensen would end up there also. Chris made a side-business by erecting aerials on Luxembourg roofs so the English speaking community could receive American

Forces Network television from Germany. He also knew and claimed he'd helped with the original design of the 'chip' which revolutionised our media a knowledge that would get him into a great deal of trouble in due course. It was Chris who somehow persuaded the RTL hierarchy to install self-op studios in the DJs side of the glass with cartridge machines that spit out our jingles, commercials and self-made promos. Now we felt like proper DJs.

Chris left Luxembourg to start his own radio station in Dublin. Radio Nova was an astounding success and where he made his fortune in a country that had no radio offences laws. Then he got greedy counterfeiting Sky chips at a fraction of the price. He went to prison for this, escaped to New Zealand and was finally extradited back to the UK to complete his prison sentence.

In 1997 I received a call from Ronan and we arranged a lunch at Langans. He was enthusiastic again, his pupils dilated as he discussed his idea to bring Radio Caroline back. He wanted me to invest in it but I argued the job was done, there was no longer a need for pirate radio. xxx

"Come on Tony", said my Irish hero, "I gave you your job back when Phil Soloman fired you". Phil had become his partner. When I auditioned for the job his Programme manager Chris Moore had insisted I leave Solomon's agency, even providing me with legal support to do so. When he brought money into Caroline and sat at the top desk in the Mayfair office, he instructed Tom Lodge to fire me. Soloman's revenge. Weeks later after being flooded with letters from listeners who wanted me back, Ronan over-ruled Soloman.

"You owe me", he said with a rye smile as we left Langans.

"The world owes you Ronan", I said. "But I paid you back when I climbed that swaying mast". We had our last hug before he jumped into a cab on Piccadilly.

Ronan died at 2pm Monday 20th April 2020 having battled with Parkinson's disease in a Dublin care home.

RIP you magnificent man. Tony Prince.'

and in France also attention was payed in La Voix du Nord:

<https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:2oezRTLFAALMJ:https://www.lavoixdunord.fr/744023/article/2020-04-21/littoral-ronan-o-rahilly-fondateur-de-radio-caroline-est-decede+&cd=5&hl=fr&ct=clnk&gl=ch&client=firefox-b-d>

And this is what Roger Day wrote on social media: 'Just heard that Ronan O'Rahilly has died. The man who changed UK Radio and let me follow my dream. What is really sad is that we won't be able to give him the send of he deserves. But we will when things get better. I hope he knows how much he was loved. Roger Twigg Day.'
Compliments for the special program Roger Day did on April 21st on Caroline Flashback.

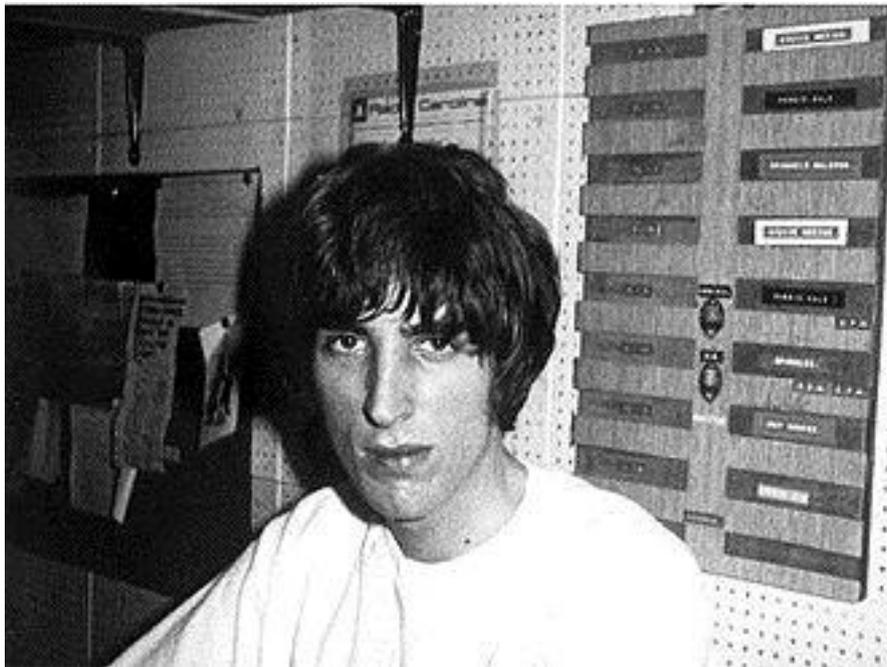
Another Englishman working just a short spell for Caroline International is Roger Scott, aka Arnold Layne etc.

'Much has been said above and life isn't long enough to read all of the comments (as the man himself would probably say) but what I would say is that the spectral O'Rahilly was the right man in the right place at the right time and always was. He was one of immense charm and charisma, one could not but be drawn to him. I met him a few times and was totally willing to believe him when on one occasion he said "I remember you". Of course he didn't and probably wouldn't have been able to put a name to me but maybe, just maybe, he vaguely remembered seeing this grotty erbert in his bunk aboard the MEBO II when he came into my cabin and stood there like some god-like figure waiting for my reaction. Which he got. "Fucking hell, Ronan ...", I declared, barely awake. That is a good place to leave what must be the thoughts of many: Quite simply "Fucking Hell, Ronan." What a guy. What a blimming' extraordinary human being. RIP. Greg Bance (Roger Scott)'

Next Tony Blackburn, earlier on mentioned by Tony Prince: 'So sorry to hear that Radio Caroline founder Ronan O'Rahilly has passed away,

I owe everything I now have to the start that Radio Caroline gave me R.I.P. Ronan.'

And on social media also Johnny Walker paid attention: 'Farewell to Radio Caroline founder Ronan O'Rahilly, The man who made the impossible possible and changed radio forever. Thanks Ronan for the incredible experience of being a Caroline deejay and to challenge the Government in 1967. You were an amazing man. Johnnie Walker.'



Johnny Walker collection Robbie Dale

Farewell to a radio legend. The man who did more to kickstart commercial radio in the UK than any other. A man who made things happen and who also gave me my break in the business I still love and am fortunate to work in. R.I.P. Ronan, Chris Pearson Manx Radio.'

Next Paul McKenna, who worked for Caroline in the eighties of last century: 'I am very sad at the passing of my friend the great Ronan O'Rahilly, founder of Radio Caroline. He was such an important person in influencing world events. Radio Caroline wasn't just about music - it was a freedom of speech movement. He helped to define modern popular culture and shaped the course of destiny with his

extraordinary vision and fearlessness in the face of opposition. Ronan stood up to the establishment and gave the world more democracy in the form of the spectacular free radio that he created. A personal inspiration and a dear friend, he is definitely someone who changed the world for the better. Rest in peace. Paul McKenna.'

Well that ends this special edition of the Hans Knot International Radio Report. Let's never forget that without Ronan O'Rahilly's ideas we never would be in contact for so many decades talking, writing, reminiscing about real radio, radio as it should be. RIP Ronan.

Reflections, memories, photos and more always welcome at
HKnot@home.nl