Hans Knot International Radio Report June 2020

Welcome to this edition of the International Report with e mails, memories, questions, photos and more. I had planned a report for mid-July and as this one is much earlier there will be lesser pages then you're used to read. August will bring us more.

Of course a lot of memories as recently on our new fb group Dennis King and Andy Archer shared one: Andy: 'The Mi Amigo 1974. A few of us were sitting on the upper deck of the Mi Amigo when suddenly Mickey Mercer said to us: 'There is a car approaching!' We all thought he was joking but he persisted, "No, there really is a car approaching!' It turned out to be an amphibian car with Ronan and Dennis King on board. They had been chased by a police car along the beach at Zandvoort but shook them off by driving into the North Sea! Left to right: Graham Gill, Jaap de Haan, Peter van Dijken, Dennis King, Ronan, Johnny Jason, me, Tony Allan and Jan the Cook. Captain Ad Meyer can just be seen looking out of the window right behind Peter van Dijken.'



Dennis responded with: 'Well, Ronan was in an adventurous mood and I asked my friend Rob Jansen (who was a quite famous racing driver), who had this original WWII amphibious vehicle, if he would take us to the Mi Amigo. The plan was that we would drive along the beach as long as possible (the distance from Zandvoort, where we started, to Scheveningen is about 60 Km.) The plan was to start our sea journey in Noordwijk. But when we entered the beach in Zandvoort the police had spotted us and started following us, so Rob decided (to avoid hassles) to go into sea immediately. So it took us the better part of 2 1/2 hours to get to the Mi Amigo. Ronan enjoyed every second and kept talking about how we disposed of the cops. He also liked our surprise-entering of the boat. I think it was one of these incredibly crazy things that could only happen at Caroline. Love, Dennis.'



Next very sad news as we lost another hero in the person of Albert J. Beirens.

He was born as A J Beirens in 1947 in beautiful Bruges. The most beautiful description of a versatile person can be found on the internet site 'Lulu':

A.J. Beirens Fisherman's son, radio man, ferryman, news maker, blogger, skeptic and stargazer. Former broadcaster at the Englishlanguage service of the offshore radio station Radio North Sea International, deejay at Radio Atlantis. Founder of Radio Nova (Italy), Radio Paradise (Knokke-Heist) and the ORO News Service. Over 30 years correspondent for the VRT and BBC. Author of "Het Lokale Radioboek", "Beerzel, Het Geslacht Ceulemans-Van Rompaey", "Vlucht naar Penzance", "Baziel en Flavie in Knokke-Heist", "Gesels of an imaginary god", "Quotes on Religion, Terrorism, Life, Power and Capital" and "Kinderpraat en Quotes on Children".

AJ, as he was called by many in the radio world, was admired in offshore radio circles for his DX programmes broadcast via RNI on Sunday mornings. It should be added immediately that AJ Beirens was of course the most verbal presenter of the station. He quickly switched from Dutch to English, German, French, Esperanto and more. On top of that came the fact that AJ had an enormous knowledge of shortwave radio and of the history of the offshore radio stations in the sixties, which kept coming back through the many specials he brought in his programmes.



It is often forgotten what other specialties a person had in addition to the previous enumeration. AJ of course, given the above, had many. But what should be mentioned especially are his beautiful, often sung, jingles that he made at the time of RNI and Radio Atlantis. Unforgettable tunes that you will sing along immediately if they would be started up now.

I would like to look back on the shortwave broadcasts of RNI and my starting point is two letters that I received about ten years ago. They are letters that A.J. Beirens sent to his colleague-deejay Graham Gill at the time.



In 2010 I received hundreds of letters, which until then had been stored in a cellar in Amsterdam. That cellar, and the letters, belonged to Graham Gill who worked as a deejay in the seventies for

the offshore radio stations Radio Northsea and Radio Caroline. That same year Graham Gill presented his book "Way back home: the Graham Gill Story" and when the book was finished, Gill made the letters available to me.

For this occasion I am extracting two that Gill received in 1973 from one of his colleagues, Albert J. Beirens - the man who was always and everywhere marked with his first initials "A.J." and who was living in Zeebrugge at the time. Beirens was the man behind the broadcasts on shortwave, the so-called DX-programs of RNI. The letters show that he took great care to ensure that the tapes, which he sent from the shore to the broadcasting ship MEBO II, were played properly.

On July 10 th., 1973, for example, he wrote to Gill: 'Listen to the DX program on July 15th, because then I will play a record for you and also for Allen. In the section 'World in Action' a request record will be played for Marc van Amstel and Floor. By the way, if you're the one who's going to start the programs on the coming Sunday, I can already tell you that 'World in Action' starts with the beeps of 10 o'clock GMT and not with a jingle, like you're used to from me. So start the program five seconds before the whole hour. I had a phone call with Andy [Archer] today and he sees the future for Radio Caroline again quite optimistic'.

The letter was written around the time that Radio Caroline had started a full English service again from the ship Mi Amigo in June 1973 and had also put a second station on the air that was programmed on a kind of "middle of the road". Not only did Beirens keep a close eye on his programmes, he was also careful in his social contacts. His letter concluded with the words: "Give my regards to the boys on the ship, especially to Brian. We'll see each other soon." Brain is Brian "The Kilt" McKenzie, who was fired on 24h of October 1973, but was reinstated at RNI about ten days later.

The same combination of taking care of his programs and his immediate colleagues is found in a second letter I found in Gill's archive. This short letter, dated November 18th, 1973, was written on the official letterhead of the headquarters of Radio Nordsee

International in Zurich, Switzerland, but mainly concerned personal matters, in this case of a financial nature. Beirens opens with: "hello Graham, I hope everything is going well with you, both in health and talent. Yesterday, for the first time, after my illness, I went outside again and I enjoyed myself very much, to put it mildly. Something else: I'd like to ask you a favor. In 1973 I spent over 700 Pounds on my programmes, most of them for the purchase of recorder tapes. That's why I'm asking if you can make sure that some of those tapes, about sixty I estimate, are sent to my address in Zeebrugge.

Maybe the people from the Trip Tender can take care of it for you or else Marc van Amstel and you can send a number to my address by mail every week. Of course I will reimburse all expenses incurred. I would also like you to find out for me why my programmes were not broadcast two Sundays in a row. Give me a call when you get off the ship. I will probably come to the MEBO II for a few days around Christmas. So are you on board too? Like I said, give me a call and let me know if you'll be on board for Christmas."



AJ on air

In recent years the health of A.J. Beirens breed deteriorated and he decided to write his own blogs, mainly for family members and other relatives, with one titled 'High on radio'. Take the time to read those stories, definitely worthwhile.

https://highonradio.blogspot.com/

A.J. had contact with me again on a regular basis on various subjects in recent years and so the personal aspect also appeared in our mail exchanges. For example, we exchanged memories when old colleagues like Robin Banks and Graham Gill died. In May this year he wrote that he was not doing so well, his illness took so much of him that practically nothing came out of his 'pen' and still wanted to try to write some memories. That's all. On June 22nd he wrote very briefly in a message via Messenger that his life would soon come to an end. Finally he wished me another good life. A.J. turned 72 and it was an honour to know him.

AJ had also a personal page on Flickr with memories to RNI https://www.flickr.com/photos/133200338@N02/albums/72157654 935259065

Hans Knot

Well let's go to some e mails: 'Hi folks I hope you are all keeping ok through the lockdown. As many of you will know, we had some special programs on the Medium-wave a few weeks ago, when Absolute Radio broadcast their 'Absolute Radio 40's' pop up service. On that day, I made loads of videos of my vintage wireless sets receiving these programs, and starting last week, I have been publishing one per week on my 'Wireless of the Week' Facebook page.

https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2393953224235143

I will continue publishing these videos one per week either until I run out of videos, or until the Keith Skues show (which WOTW is normally based on) returns to the airwaves, whichever is the sooner. Hope you all find this of interest, Regards Christopher Brisland.'



Next another e mail from England: 'Hi Hans. Many thanks again for another International Radio Report. I was interested to read about Prime Minister Harold Wilson opening a new Cavern Club on 23rd July 1966 as George Harrison sings about him in 'Taxman', the opening track of The Beatles' album 'Revolver', released on 5th August 1966.

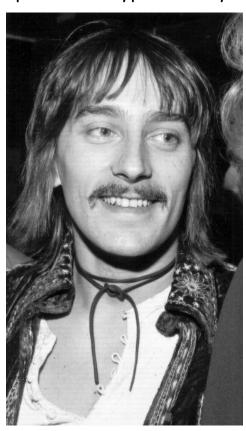
As a drummer, I played the Cavern for a week in 1971 with my band which has a brick in their Wall of Fame. I returned to the Cavern in 2016, sat in with the band for four songs on my birthday and took this photo of the original 1971 sign.

All the very best, Martin H. Samuel'



Thanks a lot Martin, nice memory! Now over to our man in Los Angeles, the Emperor Rosko.

'Hi Hans! (It could be a song) Hi hans HI hans hihi chanted to drums! DJ humor! As always thanks for the excellent report on the history of a dying breed! If the virus doesn't get us the old age will. I was thinking there is always something in the Report that sparks a memory of a time or place or event or person and your mention of Stuart Henry got to me. About a year or so before he passed away he said he wanted to see California and so I said let me know when your passing through. He asked me to check out the train rides through the Rockies and said he would visit me and then catch the choo choo across the mountains, which takes several days and is a spectacular type of 3 day trip etc.



Stuart Henry Freewave Nostalgia Archive

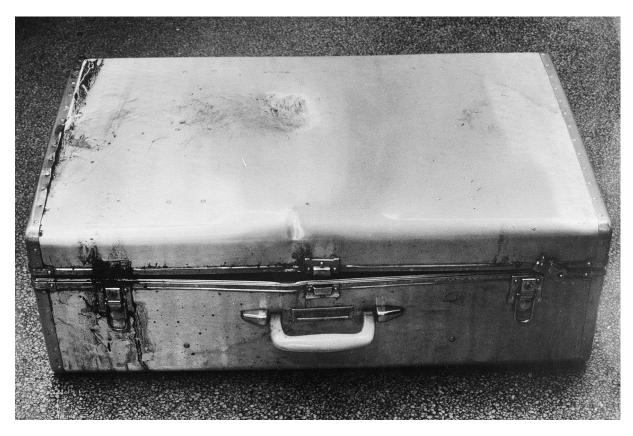
Well I was amazed when he actually got here and we had a few jars too many in our reunion. I had not thought of a wheel chair being on the cards and realized my home had no access for them and all the sleeping quarters were upstairs! His wife Ollie and I managed to carry him up each night and then back down. And in the end he had a grand old time. I last saw him taking off for his most anticipated Train ride and knew I would not see my friend again. I was happy to donate my time for a few days and wanted to share that memory on to any of his fans that frequent these pages. As usual no pictures of that event. Stay away from the bug! EMP.

Now it's time for an article I wrote which has partly to do something related to the offshore radio stations.

What the Maunsell forts had to do with a suitcase murder.

Of course, as in every year in 1965, crime and murder took place in the Netherlands. That year it was very strange to be regularly confronted with reports about the discovery of a suitcase in Amsterdam, filled with human remains, believed to have come from a person of the yellow race. On August 25th an aluminum suitcase was found, in the water at the Jacob van Lennepkade, in which a mutilated body was found and the legs and hands had been removed, as well as the head.

At first it was not understood that this was a corpse of a Japanese person, but all kinds of missing persons were exposed to see if the found 'body' belonged to the missing person. One of the suspicions was that it was a Frenchman who had abandoned his family and who was known to be somewhere in the Dutch capital. At a certain point, criminal investigation in Amsterdam discovered that the brand of suitcase that had been found was only for sale in the land of the rising sun. The remains of the clothing found were also of Japanese manufacture and some business cards were found.



Precisely these business cards would lead to the name of the person whose partial body had been found. It was the 32-year-old Kameda, a representative based in Brussels, for a Parisian trading company, who had her mother's seat in Osaka, Japan: Nisjizawa Company. It will never be known exactly what happened to Kameda. Four days before the suitcase was found, he had informed his employer that he was going to Africa. However, he told his co-residents of a house in Brussels that he was going to Amsterdam.

Where he lived in Amsterdam never became known, let alone who killed him. A number of people and friends around Kameda also died. A friend of his would be interrogated in Brussels. The man in question, Okagaki, drove himself to death on the highway. A Japanese journalist, who had had another interview with Kameda on 21th of August 1965, was killed under strange circumstances at the beginning of September that year. At the time, there was widespread speculation that the various victims died in such a short space of time in various parts of the world, all of whom had a line to Kameda, could point to a network of international spies.



In the 1980s, I tried to become more aware of the trunk murder. This as part of my research for the book on the activities of Roy Bates, who owned a former defense tower in the Thames Estuary, on which he had founded his own empire, the Principality of Sealand. All practices carried out or not carried out by Roy Bates and his family were highlighted. Including the running of two radio stations at another fort, Knock John, at a time when many offshore radio stations were active off the British coast. During my research for the story, I found out that the Suffolk criminal investigation service had been commissioned by colleagues in Amsterdam to investigate various forts in the Thames Estuary . This because there were rumours that remains of the body could be found on these forts.

Romp vermoedelijk niet van vermiste Fransman

Is een Griek het slachtoffer van de Amsterdamse koffermoordenaar geweest? Het is niet uitgesloten. De Amsterdamse politie zoekt althans op het ogenblik met man en macht naar een 25-jarige Griek, die vorige week vrijdag naar vrienden in Rotterdam reisde en niet in zijn woonplaats is teruggekeerd. Zijn verloofde heeft de politie verteld, dat hij op zijn onderbuik een litteken had en bovendien ondergoed droeg, dat uit Hongkong afkomstig was. De Griek had ook vrienden in Amsterdam. The first time I read about the relation between thje suitcase murder and the forts in the mouth of the Thames was in the magazine '40-45 TOEN en NU' while later on I came across a short note in a legal article about the forts. At that time I decided to contact the leader of the investigative team, that had investigated the case murder 22 years earlier and came into contact with detective Hoegee, who I found willing to talk to. After this conversation, I made a report for the book, including some important points:

On Wednesday, August 25th, 1965, 7-year-old schoolboy Joop Braam saw a suitcase floating in the water on the Van Lennepkade in Amsterdam. Joop did not trust the suitcase and warned the owner of a nearby houseboat, who informed the police. Around half past six that afternoon, the Amsterdam municipal police fished the aluminum suitcase, also known as the aircraft suitcase, out of the water and took it with them to the Leidse Plein Bureau for investigation. The officers opened the case in the courtyard and came to the terrible discovery. The case contained the remains or the torso of an Asian person in which several limbs and the head were missing. Research carried out by employees of the Rijswijk Judicial Laboratory, under the supervision of Dr. Zeldenrust, showed that the person had been killed about four days earlier.

A few days after the discovery, it was decided to send found hairs for research to Japan to let scientists there investigate whether these were really hairs from someone of the yellow race. On a part of the left arm, which was still present on the trunk, Dr. Zeldenrust found small scars that could have come from injections, suspecting that the person later known as Kameda, had been murdered by poisoning. On September 2nd, 1965 the identity of the Japanese person was revealed as being the 31 year old Kameda. He was last seen in Brussels, where his car with a sum of money was also found during the investigation. Investigation had shown that Kameda should have had at least another 20 thousand guilders in cash in his possession.

Kotter uit Japan

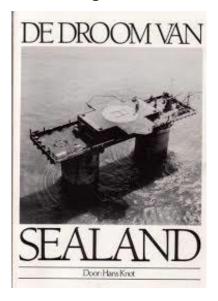
Intussen is komen vast te staan, dat de koffer, waarin de romp van het slachtoffer werd gevonden, van Japanse makelij is.

Ook de merktekens, die de Amsterdamse politiedeskundige, drs. D. Eskes, gisteren aantrof op de stukken stof in de koffer, blijken Japans, zoals we gisteren reeds in een deel onzer edities meldden. Op een deel van een grijs truitje, dat een bruine kraag en bruine manchetten gehad moet hebben, stond in Japanse lettertekens "gegarandeerd polyester 853"; op een stuk van een sportbroekje stond bij een afbeelding van een sportman "Voorwaarts"; enkele andere lettertekens, op het broekje, bleken de aanwijzing te behelzen: "verwissel elastiek hier". Vijf katoenen lappen van 30 bij 40 cm hebben een of meer gekartelde randen. Op alle vijf lappen zit een soort wit plakkertje met een Japans cijfer.

Hoegee also told me that information gathered from colleagues in Osaka had revealed that in mid-July Kameda had written another letter to his wife in which he wrote, among other things, that he felt enormously lonely and hoped to be able to return to Japan soon. In the meantime investigations were being carried out in various places in the Netherlands and Belgium into the possible presence of missing body parts. Because a tip had come in that it was quite possible that physical remains might have been hidden on one of the forts in the Thames Estuary, some of which were used as a base for a radio station, the colleagues in Suffolk were asked by the Amsterdam criminal investigation department to investigate the aforementioned forts. However, the investigation yielded nothing.

The remains of the body were eventually cremated in The Hague, after which the urn and its ashes were transported by plane to be buried in Osaka. Detective Hoegee told me in 1987 that the file was closed two years after Kameda's death without a perpetrator being found. In the spring of 1988, I decided to go to the Bates family, living in White Cliff on Sea, once more to ask questions about matters that were not yet entirely clear to me regarding all the activities of Bates, his family and associates. This whole I was

researching and writing for a book, later released as 'The Dream of Sealand'. One of my questions related to the investigation carried out by the Suffolk Police Investigation Team.



When I spoke to Joan and Roy Bates about the case, they were sitting breathlessly listening and when I asked Roy if he knew about the investigation by the police, he answered very firmly: "This is all completely new to me and I know nothing about this case. It happened during the time that I sailed a lot on one of my fishing vessels. Of course you come into the many little harbours of South East England and I can tell you that the skippers there share everything with each other but I have never heard a word about this investigation. Just assume it's all nonsense." Afterwards it appeared, via the file shown in Amsterdam, that there had indeed been an investigation into Knock John, but that Bates preferred not to be reminded of this police investigation at the time.



Roy and Joan Bates Photo: Rob Olthof

Next an e mail from England after last report was read: 'Quaker Oats Company did more than advertise on early radio stations. From 1920 they manufactured and distributed basic radios so that people could hear the radio stations they were advertising on!

The American Quaker Company does not exist anymore. It is just a brand name owned by PepsiCo. In the UK, the brand is licensed by PepsiCo to a maker of potato crisps and other snacks. Paul Bailey.'

Thanks Paul as usual an informative addition to what was published.



Above newspaper cut I've published recently on our special SMC Spot on Facebook and response came from Pat Hammerton: 'I was in Caroline House the day Cilla Black was there. I had just been told that I had got the job of news director on Caroline South. I was asked to find a new name to broadcast with as they did not think PH was user friendly. I was downstairs in the library thumbing through the London Telephone directory when DLT came in and told me to quickly choose a name and Cilla will do some jingles for me. I had got to s in the directory and Sloane was listed so with my middle name Mark the rest was easy.' However I haven't seen or heard the jingles in years. Whilst on the South Ship DLT nicknamed me the BIG TOE and Cilla did a jingle for me "Toe Toe Quick Quick Toe Hi to the Big Toe Mark Sloane".

Nice stories Mark a pity we never heard those jingles or can't remember to have heard these.

Felixstowe & Offshore Radio on facebook recently came back to the subject Rolf van Brandtzaeg, about I published in the past three issues of the report.

Following posting this photo album about Rolf van Brandtzaeg, we were also contacted by friends of his family. They confirmed that Rolf had died around 25 years ago, but that he and Glenna (both seen in the Pathé News film and still photo we posted recently) had a daughter Yasmine, known as Yazz, born on April 4th 1968 (the same day as Martin Luther King was assassinated). Tragically, she died only last month, aged 51, having been a professional dancer and talented singer, who was also a dedicated sign language interpreter. See also https://yazzcat.wordpress.com/



The next day another message: 'having posted yesterday about the sad news of Rolf and Glenna's daughter Yazz, we can also bring news of Glenna. She appeared on the cover of this UK mono album (as opposed to the stereo album, which had a different cover) release in

1968 by Booker T & the MG's, in a photo that was taken by Rolf. She is an actress, who has appeared in a number of films and on TV as can be seen here:

https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0287006/?fbclid=IwAR3U_cuolYapk QdwER8rvVeRjKfuXiivookunt4GFjyIkbDKl0Vwujx5s7Q

Now a memory from my own 'pen'.

On Saturday August 10th 2002, there was a 35th Anniversary Offshore Reunion for sixties offshore personnel ('The Wet Club') to commemorate August 14th 1967. Mary and Chris Payne from the Radio London website along with some dedicated offshore radio friends had organised a fantastic event.

Many former offshore personalities attended the reunion in The Doggett's Coat and Badge, Blackfriar's Bridge, London. One of the attendees owed it to his dearest radio friends that he was able to visit the reunion, as he himself had no money to travel for it. So we pampered him quite a bit with some special or peculiar features that came to the fore during that long weekend.



Photo Ben Meijering

The kick-off of the trip was in Amsterdam, from where Rob Olthof, Graham Gill and Jana and Hans Knot left for Hanwell, located in West London. We regularly went to beautiful England and plastering in London meant that often the same bed and breakfast was visited run by an older couple in Hanwell. However, there were only three extra beds and so we had to find a solution to accommodate Graham for two nights.

Jana went looking, via the internet, which was actually still a bit in its infancy, for a place where Graham could spend the night, not too far away from our place to sleep. We found it on Boston Road in Hanwell where he spent the night in a room above a small Indian restaurant. The reunion took place on the south side of London and so we agreed to go early to Black Friar's Bridge where, in a restaurant, the roof terrace and interior space had been rented by Chris and Mary Payne.

It should be mentioned that on the Friday evening we had a pleasant get-together in a beer garden near the Harvester in Hanwell, where Martin and Ulrike van der Ven, Gerhard Foilka and his wife and Chris Edwards and his wife Stephanie also toasted our radio friendship.



Graham Gill Photo Jana Knot

Half past 10 on the Saturday morning we appeared in front of the Indian restaurant and very proudly Graham stood there on the sidewalk, dressed in a three-piece suit. A real gentleman from Australia. As it turned out, in 2002 he had dressed himself in the same suit in which he had made his application visit in 1966 to the Radio London office in Curzon Street, located in London's May Fair. Jana immediately noticed that the suit wasn't the right size for Graham. Immediately she decided, on the street side, to make Graham more presentable so it didn't all look too tight.

Graham could grumble in time, and that could sometimes go on for days. That weekend in August 2002 was such a weekend because 'nothing was good' for him. Arriving at the restaurant there was an extensive briefing on how the day had been arranged and was not only told about the reunion but also about the buffet. Mary and Chris Payne, the organizers, are vegetarians and therefore the buffet was focused on that. Immediately Graham started to be dissatisfied about it and continued to grumble for a long time, even during the dinner session.

I visited Graham myself several times over the decades and when it came to lunch there were two toasted sandwiches, which appeared in an old oven burned and were topped with sardines. That was all. Rumours used to go that Graham, when he worked at RNI, sometimes took a sloop to the Mi Amigo to get sardines.

There were those moments during the reunion when Graham found himself the real star and Jana took advantage of that and captured it for eternity in the restaurant's stairwell, which was filled with mirrors.

Saturday was followed by another pleasant Sunday, which we spent with the eight of us by taking a nice city walk through London. It took us to St. Katherines Docks, where a photo was taken at The Pirate Alley. There was also a hot meal to be enjoyed, which we

decided to take in a restaurant in Nothing Hill. Immediately upon entering, Graham decided, in a loud tone, to express his displeasure that we were dealing there with a fast food chain that he definitely didn't want to take anything from.

Not only we were bombed with his displeasure but also other guests. The manager came in and informed himself about the problems and noticed, businesslike as he was set up, that he was willing to contribute to the displeasure and thus wanted to make a separate fresh meal for Graham Gill. You saw him all brightened up because Griselda, as his nickname was, thought he was getting his way. It took a while until the meal was served, only after the other seven people in the company had completely eaten. And you can understand that in the meantime Graham expressed his displeasure.



The weekend group of eight (number 8 is Jana who made the photo)

When he was finally eaten we left for a farewell drink to a nearby pub. On the way to the pub Graham asked me if it was possible to borrow 20 Pounds from me because he had enjoyed drinks from others all weekend and also wanted to give a round away. We are 18

years on and the 20 pounds I still have to get back. And with that we are Way back home again.'

Next it's Jon at the Pirate Hall of Fame:

Hi, I have just updated The Pirate Radio Hall of Fame.

New this month:

- some wonderful recordings of offshore radio and in particular Radio London - in January 1965, from the collection of the late Leon Tipler courtesy of Steve England;
- from a little later that same year, Eddie Austin remembers finding an illicit test broadcast for King Radio;
- there is news of Radio 390's David O'Brien;
- and we have an incomplete Radio Caroline Top 40 album chart from 1974.

My thanks as always to all the contributors. Best wishes, Jon

www.offshoreradio.co.uk

And after the update from Jon is here Mary Payne from the Radio London site: 'In Wyck Gerson Lohman's feature in your last International Newsletter, he wrote about the relaunch of Liverpool's Cavern Club on July 23rd 1966. It reminded me that we have a story about the relaunch on the Radio London site, courtesy of George Hare, who was involved in organising the event. George kindly allowed us to scan the press release, invitation and programme of events.

http://www.radiolondon.co.uk/caroline/george/memorabilia.html

I've also updated the RL website with a clip from a 1965 'Rave' magazine, when the writer was enjoying listening to Kenny and Cash and there's an unusual Big L document from 1966.

www.radiolondon.co.uk

Bye for now, Mary.

Well that ends the June 2020 edition of the International Radio Report. Have a nice summer (or winter) and I'll be back in August.

As always your memories, questions and more can be send to HKnot@home.nl

Stay healthy! Hans Knot