

Hans Knot International Radio Report Winter 2023

Welcome to another edition of the international radio report, the first edition for 2023. Again a lot of response from my readership, interesting items, sad news as well as a big thank you for the enormous amount of Christmas and New Year wishes, like the one which came from Noam in Israël:

'Dear Hans. I want to wish you and your family a merry Christmas and a happy new year with lot's of new achievement, satisfaction and above all good health and positive thinking, and that your important work continues for many years. All the best, Noam.



And let's not forget the person who has done the most reflections in the last two decades: The Emperor Rosko: 'Merry Xmas and happy Nude year to you my Guru of radio history !@!! Not a lot to report from L.A. The country is a political mess. Gigs are hard to come by with covid still rampant. Only your message of good news is welcomed with out a question! Keep up the good work and may your flag fly high and may the force be with you! EMP.'

Thanks Rosko and from all the readers a belated happy birthday to you. A gig at your age (won't mention) would be nice to attend. I wonder which flag you mean as I've two here at home: The one from the Netherlands as well the one from the Principality of Sealand.

In between again two updates regarding the Flickr Photo Archive Martin van der Ven and I have:

Veronica pictures taken from nearby the radio ship. Made in the 1960's and 1970's. 48 photos.

© Noord-Hollands Archive, Collections Fotopersbureau De Boer

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/offshoreradio/albums/72177720303876149>

Watery Wireless photos from three decades © Noord-Hollands Archive, collections Fotopersbureau De Boer

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/offshoreradio/albums/72177720303952069>

Two other e mails are next and both from two Mike's

'Hi Hans, I send my best wishes to you and Jana for a most happy family Christmas and good health in 2023. Thank you for all the wonderful memories that come our way in each of your Radio Reports and which keep the dream alive of those unforgettable zeezenders days. Mike Guy'.

Well Mike I hope, together with my readers, to bring much more reports in the coming years. Keep enjoying these informative newsletters.

Mike Grant made some nice photos from the Ross Revenge when the ship was in Chatham and are now in the Offshore radio archive on Flickr

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/offshoreradio/albums/72177720305088923>

Sad news was coming in on December 26th last year by Goran Carlsson from Sweden. Constance (Connie) Enhörning passed away on November 30rd 2022. She was the daughter of Britt Wadner and also involved with Radio Syd in Sweden and late owner of Radio Syd in Gambia. A few years ago Connie and her boyfriend left Gambia for good. She started to produce her own program as a teenager on Radio Syd and one of her first ones was 'Nattvakt med Connie' in May 1962! Connie died at the age of 77 R.I.P.'



Connie Wadner Photo collection RadioHobby Sweden

There are those strange things that happen in my part of life where I am involved with radio history. A book could be written about the strange encounters in the last 53 years that I have been writing. In addition, I have made many discoveries through research and many interviews. In the year 2022 something very strange happened to me. I will first go back to the spring.

I think it was in mid-April that I was approached by a person who cannot be called by his real name, working at the Radiocommunications Agency, a service formerly known primarily as the RCD, or Radio Control Department. This government service was

mainly concerned with tracking down illegal radio stations, which were operating from land. But they were also employed by the government to make things difficult for the then offshore radio stations, after the so-called anti-offshore radio law, which by the way was only an addition to an existing law, came into effect in September 1974.

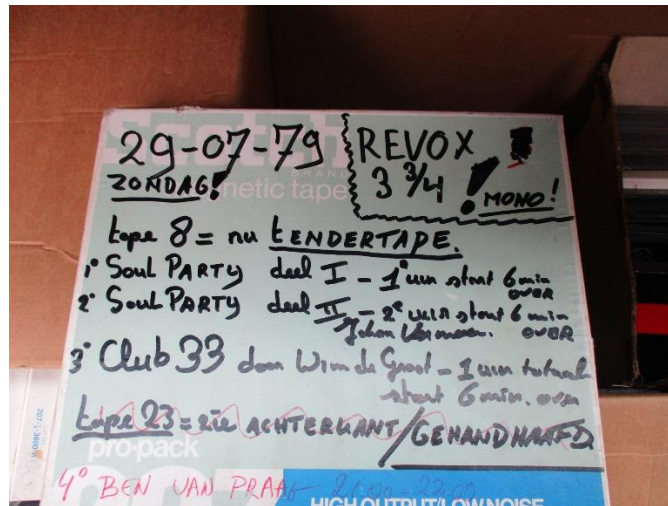
The person in question, let's call him Pete, contacted me because he was in possession of a large number of tapes. He had been given them years ago by a colleague and they had been in storage with him all this time and so had not been listened to. The reason was that he did not have the appropriate equipment to do so. His question was whether I could clarify what was on the tapes.

Due to all kinds of circumstances it was not possible to meet in the following months and finally in early September last year the exchange of the tapes took place in Groningen. Small mini tapes but also many large Revox tapes. From his car the tapes disappeared into a moving box in the trunk of our car. We greeted each other afterwards and I promised Pete that I would take care of digitization.



I found one of the former employees of the hospital broadcasting company Studio 73, where I was also active for many years, willing to take care of this digitization job. Before that, however, I took some pictures of the boxes in question, which were around the tapes. I knew in advance that it would be a surprise. For example, among them

were a couple of small tapes in which recordings had been made, no doubt by the then investigative service, of Radio de Vrije Keyzer. This station was active in Amsterdam at the time during the inauguration of Queen Beatrix, among other things, and this station was mainly concerned with the squatter situation in the capital but also with reporting on the police movements and riots during the inauguration day.



But the large tapes brought much more surprise because when I saw the notes on the boxes my memory immediately went back to 1979. The seizure of Radio Mi Amigo's station ship 272, which provided programs from the MV Magdalena. A transmitting ship that had a very inept sailors-crew on board and the broadcasts came to an end within just a few months as the ship broke from her anchor chain and finally came to a stop adrift on the so-called Potato Hump.

This sandbank was in national waters and so it became possible for any towing company to make money on a no cure no pay basis. It was Geert Theunisse from Dintelsas, Zeeland, who managed to tow in the MV Magdalena. The government had called in the National Police on Water as well as officials from the Radio Control Service. These officials from the latter service confiscated transmitter parts, the contents of the studios as well as various tapes.

These tapes were mainly recorded by the cook and technician Kees Borell to serve as so-called storm tapes, that is, they could be used

in such stormy weather that the presentation of normal programs was not possible.



I was stunned that, almost 43 years after these tapes were confiscated at the time, they still surfaced and ended up in the archives of the Media Communication Foundation. Wim de Groot, at the time active on Radio Mi Amigo 272, was also surprised that this had surfaced again after so many years. He also explained that the tapes were not only used as storm tapes but were also used in the nighttime hours for broadcasting over the 272. Again, a strange memory to cherish.

More excellent research from Martin van der Ven: Zeezender pioniers, duimzuigers en mislukkelingen (48 photo's)

© Noord-Hollands Archief, collection Fotopersbureau De Boer

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/offshoreradio/albums/72177720304005051>

Next it's Chris Garrod:

'Back in 1980 while some people were talking about bringing up the MV Mi Amigo which sank in March, a group of us from Kent, and the Midlands (Coventry), decided to rescue the Galaxy. We had negotiations with the German Company who owned the Galaxy, and they were only to pleased for us to take her off their hands. Unfortunately we didn't bargain on their legal representative, a Dr Rolf Rosenkrantz. He seemed to be very anti American, and because the Galaxy had formerly been used by the US Navy in the Second World War, as far as he was concerned the vessel should be broken up. And he put a block in any future negotiations. So unfortunately the Galaxy could not be rescued and be brought back to England. We even had a Salvage Company, who was willing to bring her back to England free of charge.'



Galaxy in Kiel Photo Dave Phillips

Thanks Chris and more memories came from Ian:

About 30th September 1972; it really was a momentous day in offshore radio! It certainly was for me personally. I think I'd been listening to Veronica and RNI during that morning, and round midday, it occurred to me that it was Radio 1's 5th birthday and was curious to see whether or not they were commemorating it. Rosko was on air, but I only listened for a few seconds. I must have nudged the dial slightly, as I found a strong, medium-pitch tone slightly further up the band, and excitedly decided to stick with it.

I'd read in Record Mirror a couple of times earlier in the month about Caroline's apparent imminent return, plus Chris Carey saying that if anyone wants to know where I'll be, just add 39 to this frequency. But I was getting a bit skeptical. I was called down for lunch round 12.30 and when I returned, I tuned to 192 and heard the switch to 538 and the start of RNI 2. A few minutes later I discovered continuous music on '259,' and continued listening for several hours - noting on sheets of A4 every record and jingle! My scepticism was still alive and well, as it was another month before the next test. Apart from snippets referring the start of Radio 199, I've never heard any recordings from any of these initial tests. If there are any I'd like to hear them again. Regards, Ian Godfrey.'

Wonderful to have heard from you too again with memories Ian.

Memories are also coming from Juul Geleick, former technician and producer on Radio Veronica and the TROS in Hilversum:

'I read the radio report but was still quite shocked when I unsuspectingly read the news that AFN's Gary Bautell has died! It still saddens me with some melancholy. Because I had been listening to AFN since my youth from 1965, in this case AFN Soesterberg. It could be received fine in Hilversum on 93.1 Mhz.

But also shocked because I met Gary Bautell briefly when we were guests of AFN in Frankfurt with some Veronica colleagues in March 1973. I won't soon forget his wonderful voice. Greetings, Juul'.



Emperor Rosko has returned to the airwaves of Radio Caroline, with a series of new monthly breakfast shows on Radio Caroline North at 6 am UK time. First was aired on Saturday 14th January. The show will also mark a return to Rosko's high energy style of the 60's, this time including the best music of the 70's, 80's and 90's, in addition to that of the 60's. Be prepared to put on your dancing shoes.

Rosko joined Radio Caroline in April, 1966, when he was part of the broadcast team, along with Tony Blackburn, Tom Lodge and Tony Prince, which re-launched Radio Caroline South from the MV Mi Amigo on its new frequency of 259 metres in the medium wave with a powerful new 50kw transmitter.

On Radio Caroline, he was one of the first deejays to champion US soul music on UK radio, and he went on to compere the legendary Hit the Road Stax tour of the UK and Europe in 1967, starring Otis Redding, Sam and Dave, Eddie Floyd and Carla Thomas. At the end of 1966, he moved to Paris to be part of the launch of the French language RTL, although his pre-recorded Rosko In Exile show was broadcast late night on Radio Caroline South for a while.

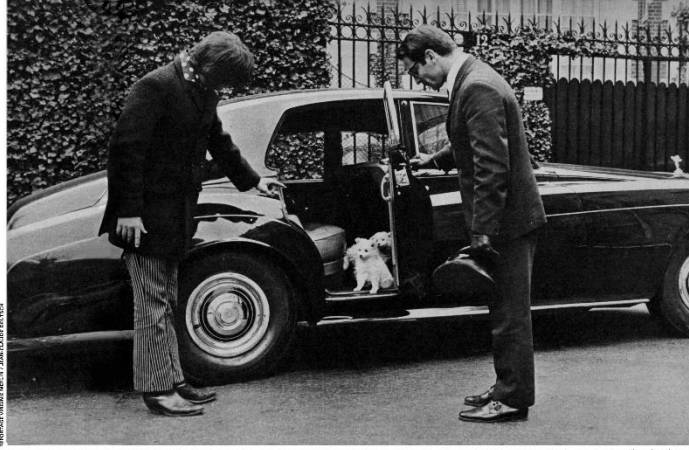
C'EST POUR MINI ET MAX QUE LE « PRÉSIDENT » ROSKO A UNE ROLLS



Fait à fait avec le micro, Rosko parle aussi avec les mains



Comme toute nouvelle vedette, Rosko sacrifie au festoyer matinal au Parc de Bagatelle. Dès deux heures, il est prêt à la Rolls qui le suit. Mais il aura fourni la semaine. La Rolls, abnégation de soi-même. Est partie de personnage.



Actrice, Paul, le "président", le chauffeur, leur à succéder respectivement la petite, mais Mimi et Max, les petits chiens de Rosko, se sont bien fait à découvrir. La Rolls est la meilleure des robes.

He was also part of the launch of BBC Radio 1 in September 1967, becoming a frequent contributor on Radio 1 until 1982. He has broadcast on numerous other stations in Europe, including Radio Luxembourg and Virgin Radio. In 2008, he was inducted into the UK Radio Academy Hall of Fame.

Rosko last made an appearance, before this comeback, on Radio Caroline when he presented his own personal Top 15 show on August 15th, 2017.

It was three years ago in January that Jaap and Jacqueline Schut of Museum RockArt brought the necessary archive pieces from the collection I built up from Groningen to Hoek van Holland. January 30th they were visiting again and definitely did not leave empty-handed. Among them were various scrapbooks, listening post from RNI and Graham Gill, International Newspaper, Volume 1941 Vrije Geluiden from Broadcaster VPRO. Hundreds of articles written by one Hans Knot and much more. Including the original 1969 tape with the tune of Klaas Vaak on Veronica. The photo shows Hans Knot and

Jaap Schut exchanging the tape as well as a logbook by Captain de Ruiter of the Norderney. I will try to decipher that log in the near future.

Photo: Jacqueline Schut



December 15th 2022 Norman Barrington had another interesting story in our Facebook Group: Almost exactly 50 years ago, 26th December 1972 to be exact, I went over to Holland to get a Job on Radio Caroline. I took a large holdall, which had a few clothes and a large collection of PAMS jingles, in the original boxes.

During the previous few years, I had been in contact with a young Jonathan Wolfert, who was a fellow jingle collector, and he had secured himself a job at PAMS. It was about 1970-72 and he kindly sent me everything he could lay his hands on in jiffy bags the size of pillow cases. Anyway I played Chris Cary my audition tape, and said "If you take me on, you get all these jingles for production use into the bargain". He said "Yes, you are hired!" Much of the material found it's way onto the air during the following two years.

In July 1974, Peter (Chicago) Murtha asked me if he could borrow some of my tapes, so I lent him a whole bunch. However I left the station in August 1974, and never saw him again, and certainly did not expect to see the tapes again either.

Wind forward nearly 50 years, and I saw an online post, where he was donating a tape machine to the current Radio Caroline. Chicago mentioned he was moving and was trying to unload an enormous collection of transmitter gear that he had accumulated over the years. I decided to give him a call, to ask if he would save for me a transmitter component, a variable vacuum capacitor which is a very attractive item, and would make a great memento of dear old Caroline. He said he would be happy to, but being 500 miles south of me, I asked an old school friend down south, to pick it up for me.



During a subsequent call just a couple of days ago, I said "I am not sure if you remember that I lent you some PAMS tapes back in 1974, I don't suppose you still have them?" He said "I have already packed them in with the capacitor, it was going to be a surprise!"

He had kept them all these years, it really was a surprise. I attach pictures of the boxes about 22 in all, yet only a small part of my whole PAMS archive, but great to get them back, and also the capacitor which I shall mount onto a plinth and put on the mantle-piece. I am not yet sure what is on the cart, it might be Caroline or RNI. Christmas has come early for me! Thank you Chicago, you are looking good!



Photos: Collection Norman Barrington

Excellent you have these back Norman. Later in the report more from you.

Mike Terry is next: 'The "Wonderful Radio London 266 metres" Facebook group was formed in 2010, it now has over 2,500 members. This group is for those who appreciate the legendary broadcaster off the English coast from December 1964 to August 1967. For many it was the greatest radio station ever. It closed on the day of the

passing of The Marine, etc. Broadcasting (Offences) Act 1967. At 3pm on 14 August 1967 266 metres medium wave went dead, millions were listening, many have not forgotten.

The group has no connection with any other radio station or organisation using the name Radio London, Big L or similar. We are usually very happy to admit new members on application. Applications should only be made direct from the applicant so we are sure they want to join!



We really appreciate everyone's input about the station, maybe memories; or those who are too young to remember the 1960s sharing with us the other reasons why they joined the group. Comments are permitted which relate solely to Radio London between 1964 to 1967 and the careers of their on-air personnel after that date (this restriction is because there are many other Facebook groups for offshore and tribute stations past and present). The group is moderated and they will delete spam or unsuitable comments. Mike Terry.'

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/287728211787>

Marcel Sieron passed away in Ghent on the 8th of December, the funeral service for family and friends took place on Saturday 17th of December. Marcel Sieron was an important link in the Mi Amigo organisation. In addition, as advertising representative for the station, he was Sylvain Tack's right-hand man when he defected to Playa d'Aro on 17th February 1975. There was daily telephone traffic between the two to handle the practical side of Radio Mi Amigo along

the Belgian side. Before then, much of the programmes were recorded illegally at Marcel Sieron's country house in Opbrakel. Marcel Sieron was also the man sent to Marseille on Sylvain Tack's instructions to arrange the purchase of Abie Nathan's Peaceship, which ultimately failed.



Marcel Sieron was a man with a golden heart with a sense of initiative. He did not wish to be in the limelight but played his role from the background. He lived to be 86 and leaves behind a wife and son.'

Source and photo Michel Dauwe

Next is Christopher Brisland from England:

'Hi Everyone, in case any of you are interested, here's a link to my Wireless of the Week site, in which I am paying tribute to the Longwave transmission of RTL France - formally Radio Luxembourg (the home of the English service before the 208 meters Medium-wave transmission started) which closed down on New Years Eve. Also includes a video of the transmission being received here in Ipswich, UK on a 1930's radio.

Seasons greetings one and all, Chris

<https://www.facebook.com/100063285004857/videos/1623243644772138>

From Sweden came the bad news via Per Anderson that Ove Sjöström died on 23rd of December at County Hospital in Kalmar after a period of illness. Ove was known as a very prominent radio amateur and had worked as a broadcast manager at Radio Nord, among other things.

Here a link to an interview with Ove

<https://www.mediafire.com/?tsxkhrec5djfh2a>

Next space for Jon and:

I have updated The Pirate Radio Hall of Fame.

New this month:

- Another of Ray Clark's fascinating interviews with former offshore radio personnel. This time it is Dave Rogers remembering the bomb attack on Radio Northsea International and the closure of Radio Atlantis;
- we have updated the page about a visit to the mv Mi Amigo in 1978 on the paddle steamer Waverley with the help of some photos from the Felixstowe & Offshore Radio Facebook page;
- and thanks to George Saunders for identifying the Radio Caroline engineer boarding the tender in the photos taken by Alec Fry which we posted last month.

My thanks, as always, to everyone who has contributed.

Best wishes,

Jon

www.offshoreradio.co.uk

Tony K has also a question

'Dear Hans, perhaps something for the International Radio Report? Via the Radio North Sea group on Facebook, I came across a recording by Paul May from 22 November 1971. The MEBO 2 was

being towed back to its berth at that time. The transmitting ship had been knocked off its anchor in the morning in wind force 11.

https://www.mixcloud.com/Cornish_AI/paul-may-on-rni-november-22nd-1971/

From about 14:30 minutes Paul May apologises for his 'on-air performance during the 7 o'clock news'. It's quite bothering him apparently, because he goes on and on about it. Do you know what was going on and what he is apologising for?

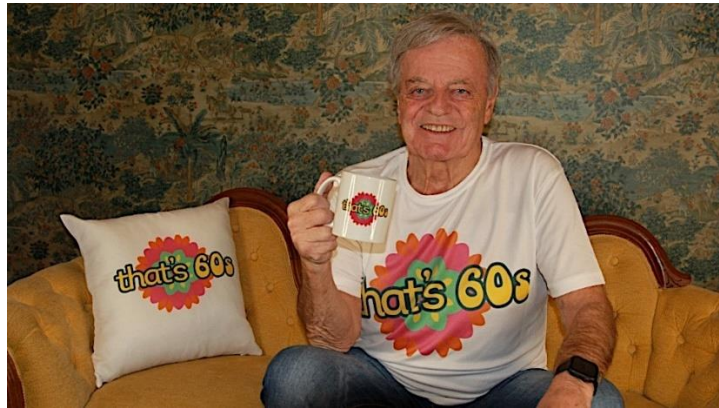
Thanks Tony K. Guess what? Paul is reader of the report. Maybe Paul May does remember it.



Paul May on the air: photo from his personal album in the SMC Archive

Paul Rusling is next on January 6th: Many of my friends, who remember the Sixties, will be delighted to hear there is a new TV channel devoted to the era and the best of 60s music. That's 60s, will be part hosted by Tony Blackburn, who began his radio career on Radio Caroline and was the launch voice on Radio 1 - still on the air today on Radio 2.

Tony says: "On That's 60s I'll be playing some of the wonderful music we had and talking all about it. I mean it's the 60s - what more could you ask! It's the best decade ever!" The station can be seen on Sky 366, Freeview 65 and on the 20 local TV stations on channel 7.



Next a pirate story by Jan Sundermann:

'A while ago was a documentary on German TV about the search and the discovery of a real pirate ship. It was the last ship under command of Blackbeard. His real name was Edward Teach from Bristol. In 1996 the remainings of that ships wreck have been found in the sea near Beaufort, North Carolina.



The remains of the ship Photo: International Boast Magazine

It was in the year 1718 when the Pyrates (then the contemporary writing) had blocked the harbour of Charleston, South Carolina, and then beached with their ship finally on a sandbank. Historians are not

clear, if that was an accident, or if Blackbeard sank the ship by intention to get out of the game. The fact, that really hit my memory was the name Blackbeard had given his vessel: QUEEN ANNE` s REVENGE! Greetings Jan.'

Norbert Van Slambrouck, known as a singer, entertainer, the Hey girls and not least for BRT Radio 2 (West Flanders), Radio Mi Amigo and the VBRO, died on the 3rd of February, at the age of 85, at the AZ Delta in Roeselare. Born in Bruges on 31 December 1937 as the son of bicycle dealer and manufacturer André Van Slambrouck and Maria Haesaert, he grew up in Bruges' Katelijnestraat. The Bruges Radio House announced his death. After his secondary studies at the institute of the Xaverian brothers, he studied economics.

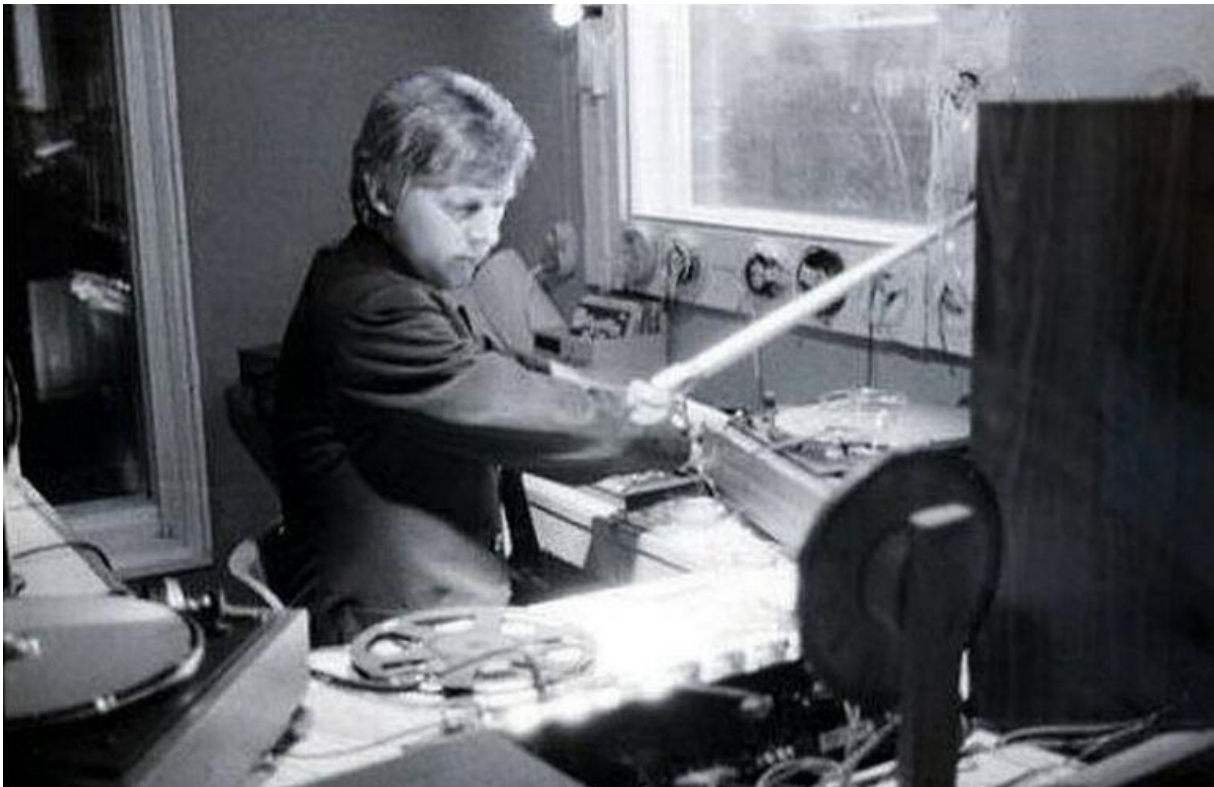
Norbert did so at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, where he obtained his doctorate in 1963. In 1968, he fully opted for a singing career. Norbert scored hits with: 'Liedje Voor Mary-Ann', 'Pas Op Voor De Verf', 'En Dat Vergeet Ik Nooit', 'Waar Is De Tijd' and 'Zomermeisje'. He performed all over Flanders and became one of its most popular singers. He was one of the few artists who invested in a complete show. With his own Hey girls and his own orchestra.



Photo Archive RadioVisie

In May 1968, recommended by BRT radio producer Jos Boudewijn, he received an offer to present his own programme on BRT 2. It became 'Variété met Norbert'. Unfortunately, he fell seriously ill. TB forced him to avoid any activity for a year. Nevertheless, he still worked through a number of contracts. Discharged from hospital, he received a PR offer from a real estate promoter to gain weight in Spain. On his return to Belgium, he was met by Sylvain Tack.

The waffle baker from Buizingen was rapidly building a music empire. A great recording studio, a portfolio brimming with Flemish artists, a record label and plans for his own station from international waters. Norbert was given a prominent role in the very first radio team. From 1 January 1974, he presented the 'Norbert Show' and 'Norbert's Saturday Show Train' on weekdays. Mi Amigo became a huge success, reaching up to one million listeners.



Norbert in Radio Mi Amigo studio in Caroline House the Hague.

Photo: RadioVisie Archive

When broadcasting from international waters was also made difficult by the Dutch government - Mi Amigo had its studios there because the country had not stood in the way of offshore radio until then - the entire organisation moved to Spain. Norbert dropped out, but kept his connection with the station. Also in 1974, he had received the proposal to take on the artistic direction of a grand nightclub on Moerkerksesteenweg in Sint-Kruis-Brugge.

He turned the former cinema hall into 'Norberts Hey Club' (Norbert Feestzaal). Call it a discotheque that could just as well serve for various types of parties. The cream of Flemish artists as well as international celebrities such as Donna Summer, The Rubettes, The Tremeloes, Smokie, J. Vincent Edwards and the Dolly Dots performed there. In 1979, after renovation, the venue was renamed 'Norbert Hey Center'. It was there that the Bruges-based VBRO saw the light of day.

By then it had become 1981. In a short space of time, Free Bruges Radio Broadcasting became wildly popular. It eventually became a fully-fledged radio station, with its own newsroom, solid programming and a competent team of presenters and technicians. That the former free radio distinguished itself professionally from many other free stations was mainly Norbert's work.

From the outset, VBRO opted for a wide range of music and typical programmes, often with a Bruges name. 'Music Binst Da'j Werkt', 'Behind d'Olletorre' and the week-tip 'De Brugse Keppe'. Or the slogan 'Da's joen radio!'. It can still be heard in the programmes. After Frederik Thomas took over in 1991, Norbert went to live first in Ostend and then in Rumbekke. He mainly engaged in coaching and gave advice to young radio makers and performers.

A fall at home between Christmas and New Year, a few days before his birthday, he would eventually not recover. He died of consecutive complications.

With thanks to RadioVisie as well as Mediapages



Norbert Photo Willem de Bruijn

It was Andy Archer who worked close together with Norbert in the days Radio Mi Amigo was set up as a new station and used the Caroline Studios at the Van Hoogendorpstreet in the Hague. Andy responded on the sad news with:

'I was sorry to learn from Hans that Norbert had passed away. He was an important part of the original Radio Mi Amigo team back in late 1973 and into 1974. Norbert was a true professional of the old school. He presented the daily mid-morning show and soon built up a sizeable following, particularly in his native Belgium.

I didn't know him that well, but whenever we met I found him both charming and extremely good company. Moge hij in vrede rusten. Andy Archer.'

Long time not heard from Benny Brown in Luxembourg but on January 11th he suddenly dropped in with:

'Hans! Believe it, Man! 2023! Even as I release the secrets kept hidden within the Brown ancestry, you'll accept that some facts must remain a mystery. Many of you already know that my mother was Princess Anastasia of Slombovia. When the Persians under Xerxes invaded Japan, she was forced to tunnel her way under Diamond Head to Vanuatu, and that's where she founded the family business. Sadly though, everything she built was taken from her by Attila the Hun and his then-ally, the Cisco Kid. In reality, it was Pancho, masquerading as the Lizard Alien from the planet Gonzo. Her fortune was reduced to zero, resulting in my having to spend time following Barack Obama's golf cart in a taco truck in case he got hungry.



Benny Brown 2023 Photo from his own collection

But that's not all. It's now 2023 and they keep renewing my contract. I continue to provide a simmering broth of broadcast moonbeams amid the eerie essence of baked Mississippi mud, allowing rubber limbs to move like cats in a fire, and always delivered live, to the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg from the Kirchberg studios. I am surrounded by talented people, and there's even a major thoroughfare here

commemorating my birthday: the Avenue of the Tenth of September (interestingly, also the date of General Patton's Third Army liberating the country in 1944.) History will not be denied.

The progress bar indicates that Marlies and I are now entering our 24th year on-air here, albeit in three distinct segments. We anticipate the future, scorning those who lament about "how it used to be." Residing amid the grapevines directly by the Moselle encourages our feeding of the swans and the ducks, as the barges cruise gently by. We readily divulge the many tales of burnt ju-ju offerings to the nearby shepherds.

If the Cisco Kid astride Diablo should surreptitiously appear representing the Anarcho-Sushi Syndicate, we'd welcome the dialogue, always remembering that crackpot conspiracies are rarely the truth. Casey, now reburied in Oslo, commanded "Now, on with the countdown," so we shall immediately comply. Benny Brown'.

Thanks Benny keep on rocking there and to all readers feel free to reflect on what Benny wrote versus HKnot@home.nl

Now as promised back to Norman Barrington with another subject than PAMS jingles:

'Back in December's newsletter, Hans posted an article by me, concerning our short lived 1973 triangular mast, manufactured by 'Pylonen De Kerf' of Belgium. It may be some wondered why I was bringing this subject up fifty years after the event. What may not have been clear is that I was answering a number of questions online about what happened and why.

Hans copied my text into the newsletter, and that is partly why it may have appeared a bit disjointed. My motivation for writing these explanations, is because it is of great interest to visitors of sites such as SMC's Facebook Spot and Offshore Radio Highlights. Plus I

am happy to share my memories, of a remarkable time in my life, and also attempt to correct some erroneous, some plain silly accounts in various publications and books. Ironically however, I made a few minor errors in my own accounts, which further research and new photos coming to light makes clear to me.

Although events of the past that stand out, still seem like last week to me, I have to remember we are talking about 50 years ago, I find it unbelievable to be writing down the number 50! For example, the bent section 8 was removed a few weeks before the three of us, Bob, Robin and I, erected the final two replacement sections 8 and 9, and not all on the same day (8th July 1973). Also at the end of that day, I only ventured out on the boson's chair to the end of the starboard boom (lower crosstree) to complete the connections of the guy wire to the new top of the mast, and not both starboard and port sides as I stated.



Norman Barrington some time ago

Photo from his own collection

In fact we were running out of energy and daylight, and any more could be done, the boson's chair had to be moved to the port boom, therefore the portside boom, guy wire was connected with the rest of the additional guying over the following two days by Dick Palmer

assisted by Peter Van Dijken and Jaap De Haan. Although no photos exist of us three on the 8th, there are several pictures of the progress on the 9th and 10th July when the mast was fully completed.

But I also unintentionally made a more serious error in my wording, which appeared to suggest I was pointing the finger at one individual, when I was bemoaning my conviction at the time, that the guy wires were being over-tightened, putting undue stress on the lightweight mast, which was not designed to have guy wires at all, but intended to be freestanding on land, and not on a moving ship! Since the mast was the last step in the transmission chain, and it proved to be the weakest link. I stated the Peter Chicago was a whizz with transmitters, but not so with mast construction. What I failed to say, which would have been far better, was that *no one* in our team had any experience in mast choice, let alone construction at sea! **But everyone** did the best they could in the circumstances"

Back at the end of 1972 money and resources were very short, and mast availability was almost nil, the Belgian De Kerf mast appeared as the only available choice, with just the bottom 2 meter high first section, already on board, when I first joined the ship in Amsterdam, December 30th 1972. Over the following six months. as money and weather would allow, construction was completed in stages. We had no choice but to work with what we had, although clearly far from ideal. Yet we had achieved what experts had said was impossible, and I understand building of this mast fully at sea was a world first. I hope to publish a fuller, more accurate account, well-illustrated with photos in due course.

I have myself experienced what it is like to have unpleasant, unfair, unkind things written about you in print, you cannot defend yourself

from what is in a book. I would just hate doing that to someone else, at least a regular newsletter enables a retraction and apology. Realising I had well and truly put my foot in it, regarding apparent blame in the article published at Christmas, I phoned Peter to apologise and to my relief, he was magnanimous in his response.

Indeed we also reminisced about other events, some dangerous, some extremely amusing. During a second lengthy call, I learned a lot more about the circumstances of the ill-fated mast, and additionally spoke with Dick Palmer for a good hour, and again only last week, getting his angle on events. He has no internet, email or computer, and asked me to write what his greatest regret about his time on Caroline was, which is unrelated to masts.

I feel I have a much better understanding of the sequence of events and why it occurred, I hope to write, not a sort of post-mortem, but as accurate an account possible, of this period when we had two stations on air, leading to the start of Radio Atlantis and Radio Seagull. I will include what Dick told me. I can use the numerous photos mentioned earlier to illustrate the process. Dick would love to write a book, but to date has not found the right person to assist putting his memories in order, and to convey not just a story about radio stations, but his life beyond. I feel much the same and am keeping my short written pieces, which perhaps could become the bones of a book, as many have suggested.



Brian Anderson, Norman Barrington and Steve England

on the Mi Amigo 1973. Photo from Norman's Collection

I had put personal effort into completing the mast in dangerous conditions, along with others, which is why I was so concerned with the reason that just three months later it collapsed, I was already concerned about the strength of the mast, and the way it was guyed and tensioned. Indeed many of the team on-board, who had put much more work into it than I, must have been absolutely gutted on that fateful day too. Mistakes inevitably were made, and it is a testament to the determination and dedication of our team, keeping Caroline alive, that we did not throw our hands up in despair and give up. But most importantly, learned from those mistakes, and set about building a new mast, which although it must be said, was less elegant, proved to outlast the ship herself.

My article higher up in the newsletter about Peter Chicago and the PAMS tapes, was written before Christmas, and it is pure coincidence that our paths crossed on two completely different matters! Indeed I must seem like London buses to him. No calls from me for fifty years, and then suddenly five phone calls in six weeks!

Norman Barrington, February 2023



Caroline main studio 1973

Photo Norman Barrington

Next it's a part of an e mail from Bob Noakes and as Norman already reflected on the mistakes he made in last report I will bring the only that part which, after Norman's statement, still really matters.

'Thanks for another year's supply of Reports. Will the stories of offshore radio never come to an end or dry up? I was interested to read Norman Barrington's story in the Christmas edition about the mast of the Mi Amigo which we finished in 1973. To be honest, I was a little surprised he brought the subject up again, or maybe it was simply in view of the fact that it all happened half a century ago this year. It's not something I talk about much these days, belonging in the category 'stories nobody believes', which I keep locked away for myself, thereby avoiding being considered a fantasist or just plain loony; and, as Norman rightly mentions, as far as we know there is no photographic evidence to back up any of it.

Yes, it was a highly dangerous job, but, as he says, it had to be done and no-one else dared. I remember one evening after a mast-building day, bumping into Jimmy Houlihan in the washroom. Although he never climbed the mast, Jimmy was one of our essential helpers at deck level. As we carefully cleaned our bloodied hands I told him in a roundabout way that the whole operation terrified me. "Don't worry," he replied. "You're insured!"

"Yes," I answered, "with the Blarney company, I suppose!" and we both laughed. In a strange manner it was humour that gave us the guts to do the job at all. But as far as the possible over-tensioning of the stays is concerned, I clearly remember that Dick Palmer had always intended to adjust and optimise the tension of the whole construction, but as soon as the mast was completed all our efforts went into getting the station back on the air as soon as possible, and, in our spirit of euphoria, one or two matters may have been overlooked.



Bob Noakes 1985 Photo: Ton van Draanen

Possibly the biggest restriction we all endured was our lack of relevant experience. After all, most of us were still in our early twenties! Looking back, perhaps it was a wonder that we were able to complete the mast at all and still live to tell the tale.

And how sad that Robin is no longer available to share his views...

Bob Noakes.' Thank you both Bob Noakes and Norman to come back on this subject, which, let's not forget, happened half a century ago.

Paul Bailey reports first on January 15th: 'Hello Hans, I hope you are both well. Radio Caroline had a problem yesterday and is now on much reduced power - well under 1 kw. Suspect salt - they are right by the sea - may have got into the transmitter box. Worth watching to see what happens. Now that BBC Essex have left medium wave, and Absolute is about to do the same, there is now space to put their transmitter on the mast at Manningtree. They might be offered space at Manningtree and a possible increase in their output power as well. Manningtree is a good site with good conductivity and good results. It is in the centre of their service area while Orfordness is not. I think you have been to Manningtree rail station which is nearby. It is well connected and quick and easy to reach compared with Orfordness. Just guessing!

The same fault occurred again at 9 am on Tuesday the 17th. First there was a shuddering quality to reception - what used to be called "a beat" where there were two stations on the same frequency. Then

after three minutes the whole signal was distorted. We think that the 2 KW transmitter may consist of four 500 watt transmitters which operate in parallel. If one fails the idea is that the station stays on the air on reduced power. However, all four units have to be synchronised on the same frequency and we think the fault was that one unit lost synchronisation, causing the other units to go unstable. That's modern electronics for you!

Added on the 21st of January "Radio Caroline presents an unique listening experience today, it's like sitting in your neighbour's lounge with a steaming cup of cocoa while he plays his favourite tracks on his old Dansette. Hats off to all the volunteers and supporters who make it possible and for the care and love the presenters give to the station." They are on the air today but on low power which suggests they may have taken one of the modules out of service.'

January 27th he added: 'There was an announcement on air this morning. They are using the old 1Kw transmitter and the old antenna as the 2 Kw transmitter has completely failed. Looks like my analysis was not far off the mark.'

Thanks a lot Paul and for more on that Radio Caroline:

<https://www.radiocaroline.co.uk/#home.html>

January 22nd there was the interview with me by Robbie Owen. We chatted for an hour about some of the historic events as well as other subjects like talking about the RNI bomb attack which wasn't a bomb attack . This is part one and part two will be somewhere in next spring The Jukebox Drive-In for 22nd January 2023 Hr3 Live Offshore Radio Special by Robbie Owen. Click on the link to listen to the special hour on Mixcloud:

<https://www.mixcloud.com/.../the-jukebox-drive-in-for.../>

After the interview went on the air I got a message from England: 'Hello Hans. Wow! I've just heard your radio interview with Robbie. Well done my friend it was most interesting to hear. Thank you for your many years of service both to the music industry and to Pirate Radio. Trust that you and all your family are keeping well and enjoying life. Take care. Regards Luc Dunne (ex Radio City). Apologies for not addressing you in the correct manner Sir Hans ...' Thanks Luc and I hope I can share a lot more in the years to come.

And from André van Os, former Radio Netherlands and also to be heard on nowadays Radio Caroline: 'Enjoyed your performance on the Robbie Owen show. Wonderful stories, always the right facts and nice surprising choice of music. Compliments! Warmest regards, André'.

So just two of the many e mails and messages which came in after the program. Another message from Christopher Brisland this time on January 22nd: As you may have heard already, Absolute Radio here in the UK has just closed down on 247m, 1215 K/c's. A Medium-wave frequency with great historical significance here in the UK. Hence I have written on my Wireless of the Week page a short history/tribute to it, and a video of one of my vintage radio's picking up the final transmission. All the best, Chris

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=559920086044882>

As this report is already on page 32 it's time to closedown and I will be back in spring. Of course your memories, photos and questions are welcome versus HKnot@home.nl

Best Greetings, Hans Knot