

Let's now go back to the edge of the summer of 1966. Recently I was listening to an old programme of Radio Caroline North with Mick Luvzit, from Canada. He passed away in 2012 but years earlier he sent me a beautiful photo reportage of his wedding, which at the time was with his Janet Teret on board the MV Fredericia, the broadcasting ship on which he was active. The captain on duty in September 1966 was Martin Gisp from the Netherlands, who had full rights to conduct a marriage in international waters. Gisp himself was 32 years young and single at the time.

It was a unique event on September 20th 1966, as it was the first and only time in the history of the offshore radio stations that a marriage was arranged and could be heard live on Radio Caroline North, presented by Graham Webb. But before that could take place the couple, including family and guests, had to be brought to the Fredericia, the radio ship from which Radio Caroline North transmitted in international waters off the coast of the Isle of Man.



On forehand it became known that this special marriage would take place and a lot of people had planned to go out with their boats into international waters to attend on or nearby the radio ship the special event. The various newspapers that reported in the days that followed were full of stories. Hundreds of people had gathered around the local pub in the harbour of Ramsey Bay. People were weighing up the chances of being able to sail to the Fredericia and some of the islanders on Man looked at the invasion of teenagers and twentysomethings, dressed mostly in pop clothes and miniskirts, with a look of surprise. Clearly expressions of the time.

But the chance to actually witness something of the ceremony was few and far between as the weather conditions were lousy. The fog was getting in the way of many of them. On board Caroline North, of course, they also knew about the problem, and the ceremony was eventually delayed by three hours. The majority of the planned visitors had to make do with a chilly pitch on the quayside by the harbour pub, while listening to the live coverage via Caroline North and the many transistor radios brought along.

The blessing of marriage, by the way, was a figuratively colourful happening, with the station's listeners glued to the radio. The attendees on the radio ship were noisy at first, which is why Captain Gisp decided to ring the ship's bell long and loud to restore calm. It was also a great celebration for Fredricia's crew, as under normal circumstances no women, who were not employed by the organization, were allowed, which was not the case on this special day. The ration on alcohol, 2 beers a day, was also abandoned. Everyone drank as much as he/she wanted and there was either no shortage of female beauty.

And the fact that hardly any women came on board at other days was evident during a tour of the broadcast ship. On many walls there were pictures of only little dressed ladies. Beforehand, when it was announced that the captain would be performing the wedding, he

realised that he had no official uniform and the Coast Guard was contacted to borrow one. Surprisingly, an extra tender came to the broadcast ship with, among other things, a new uniform that had been rushed from the Netherlands.

Among those invited were members of the pop group Rocking Vickers, Wayne Fontana, Lulu and the Hollies. But also important people such as Luciano Sanchez, Panama's consul-general in the UK, who was invited because the wedding was held on the ship, which had the Panamanian registration and therefore their country's flag.

Afterwards, he told a journalist that he was very happy to have been invited and would not have missed that beautiful day for anything. "I thought this wedding was the most romantic I have ever attended, partly because it was celebrated at sea." Sanchez also greatly admired Janet Teret's bridal outfit, which was white trousers with a matching vest and beautiful embellishments. Janet had designed the dress herself in her brother's business, where she had been appointed manager at the time.

After the ceremony and a toast with all those present, Mr. and Mrs. Luvzit returned to the Isle of Man, where the festivities continued in a public country house in the company of family and friends. There was also one person who actually did not agree with the event. It turned out that the Reverend Bishop of the Isle of Man Anglican Church thought it was all a big publicity stunt for Radio Caroline and completely mocked what marriage normally stands for.

And, of course, there is the question of how the parents of the bride had experienced the blessing of the marriage. Not too well, as they did not reach the broadcast ship. Even the Dutch newspaper 'De Telegraaf' reported on it because among the many victims of the bad weather in Great Britain was the Teret couple and one of their children. They were stuck at Manchester airport in the thick fog and had no way of getting on a plane to the Isle of Man. They were stuck

for up to seven hours and thanks to a stewardess, who lent them a transistor radio, they were able to listen to the wedding which had been postponed for hours.



Mrs. Teret: "It was supposed to be the best day of our lives and today of all days we are here and cannot be at our daughter's special wedding. When the wedding ceremony had taken place we decided to leave the airport."

The only thing that could be said afterwards was that Mr. and Mrs. Teret were probably the only couple worldwide who had witnessed their daughter's wedding via radio, and that too via Radio Caroline North. More than 55 years after the celebration, recordings of the programme, during which the celebration took place, are still circulating.

And from now on the whole series of photographs send to me some 20 years ago by Mike Luvzit is in excellent condition made visible by Martin van der Ven in our offshore radio photo archive on Flickr <https://www.flickr.com/photos/offshoreradio/albums/72177720296612044>

Hans Knot