

RADIO NORTHSEA INTERNATIONAL, THE RECEPTION REPORTS AND MORE...

Every avid listener to the offshore radio stations in the sixties and seventies recalls that now and then a letter was read from another listener who wanted to tell how the reception of the station was in his radio shack. Radio Northsea International had, at one stage, an excellent program, called RNI Goes DX, run by Albert. J. Beirens and assisted by Pierre Deseyn. Both came from Belgium and through very good contacts with the owners of the radio ship MEBO II, which housed RNI from January 1970 up till August 1974, AJ Beirens was offered producing and presenting a special program. RNI transmitted the programs on AM, FM and Shortwave. In his program A.J. Beirens not only talked about recent changing within the radio industry, but he highlighted also the history of stations, especially those active in the past from international waters. Above that he had a feature in which he talked to the listeners, who wrote in to the program.

If you follow my articles about Radio Northsea International through the years you understand that I've followed this station a lot, as it was for me the best since Radio London disappeared off the air in August 1967. I had and still have several contacts with people who worked for the station and therefore my archive about RNI has some marvellous documents. This time I dived into a file called 'special listener reports'. Most of the letters used for this article were from the Carl Mitchell archive, which is in my possession since 2006. More than 600 envelops sent to the stations were never opened until I got them here in Groningen.

The radio ship MEBO II left Holland for anchorage on January 22nd 1970 off the Dutch coast in international waters and the next day at 10.30 GMT the first test started on 6210 kHz and on 102 MHz FM. It lasted up till February 11th that for the first time the station was on the air at 1610kHz, 186 metres AM. It was William P.Kilroy in Washington USA who thought he already heard RNI on 1562 kHz, as he wrote to the station's Swiss address (RNI Box 1136, CH 8047 Zürich in Switzerland) a long letter: 'I would like to inquire if your station on MEBO II is yet commenced broadcasting. Early this morning, I made a tape of a station on 1562 kilocycles, January 26, 1970 at 8.50 AM Central European time. The program format consisted of many popular music tunes mostly US Songs of current popularity'.

William P. Kilroy
2113 Ft. Davis St. S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20020 U.S.A.

R. Nordsee Internationale
Box 1136, CH-8047, Zurich,
Switzerland

Dear Sir:

I would like to inquire if your station on "Mebo II" is yet commenced broadcasting. Early this morning, I made a tape of a station on 1562 kilocycles January 26, 1970 at 850 AM Central European Time. The programme format consisted of many popular musical tunes mostly U.S. Songs of current popularity. Specifically, I heard one by "Mama Cass" @ 850 AM. These were followed by what sounded like advertisements in a language that I am not familiar. I would guess it to be Flemish. A commentary by a D.J. was made accompanied by a Herb Alpert selection. Does this have any resemblance to your format of Programming? and were you operating on 1562 kilocycles at the above time-date?

Killroy also wrote that probably one of the announcements heard was done in the Flemish language. He had made a tape recording and wrote that he could be of help when they wanted a copy. The signal strength, of the station he received, was excellent. Two other notes to mention from this letter from the USA are firstly that William Killroy used a Hammarlund HQ double conversion receiver with the use of a 20 metre longwire antenna up 8 metres. Secondly he mentioned that he heard in various radio bulletins that Radio Veronica, at that stage, had ceased broadcasting. Well that wasn't truth of course as the offshore station Veronica went on transmitting up till August 31st 1974. And next to that it's clear Killroy received another station as the frequency wasn't used by RNI and also the AM was not on the air before February 11th.

The second item from the archive is dated February 23rd 1970 and was sent by Lindsay Robinson from Invercang, New Zealand. He used a TN10 9R Sapem receiver and heard RNI around 02.00 CMT on 6210 kHz. As an antenna he used a longwire at 55 feet East West. He clearly wrote down what he heard during the 36 minutes of listening to RNI. It must have been thrilling to hear the signal at the other side of the world. He heard the deejay's name but not clearly enough as he wrote down: 'announcer Roger Davies (Day of course) followed at 2.36 with: "This is Radio Northsea International 168 metres (mistake as it was on 186) mediumwave, shortwave 6210 kHz. Write to us and tell us how strong we are coming in'. Well an excellent report from Lindsay in New Zealand

Please Reply To
Muhindsay Robinson
219 E Ann Street
Invercargill-11
New Zealand.

Dear Sir,
I am pleased to report reception of your station heard
operating 6210 kHz. 40 meters on February 23/197
at 0200 GMT
Details of Reception
Receiver Trio 9R-59PEW
antenna long wire 55 Feet. East West
S I N F O
5 5 3 3 4 5 3 4
Weather Fine. Location Invercargill New Zealand.
If the below report corresponds with your station
log I shall be pleased to receive your QSL
Verification Card + Peanut Thank you.
Items and announcements heard are as follows
GMT

Strange enough Lindsay wasn't the only person having problems with the presenters names as in article from Disc and Music Echo from March 1970, written by David Hughes, I found another one in the person of German deejay 'Huss Rider' which was of course Horst Reiner. 'Radio Caroline stars 'Twiggy' Day, Andy Archer and Carl Mitchell, and Radio 270 man Alan West (also known as Ross Randall) head the DJ cast of Radio North Sea, the latest and most reliable 'pirate' station to hit the air since the days of Big L - Radio London.'

In the Article David Hughes mentioned some lines from RNI spokesman in England, Clive Martin: "The Dutch government is in the process of trying to ban offshore radiostations, namely Radio Veronica and ourselves. But the process is likely to take at least a year. When and if that happens North Sea will continue to broadcasting, but will be serviced from Hamburg. We already thinking in terms of a better wavelength, but no decision has yet been made.'

Then a rundown of programming follows in the article in Disc and Music Echo and some news of new deejays, who will come aboard: 'Ross Brown, alias Freddy Bear, Ed Mereno are expected to join soon. Well Ross Brown never appeared aboard the MEBO II and Ed Mereno only for one short stint.

By DAVID HUGHES

RADIO CAROLINE stars Roger "Twiggy" Day, Andy Archer and Carl Mitchell, and Radio 270 man Alan West (also known as Ross Randall) head the DJ cast of Radio North Sea, the latest and most reliable "pirate" station to hit the air since the days of Big "L"—Radio London.

Although still broadcasting at half strength, the 670-ton M/S Mebo 2 is currently pushing 18 hours of top rate pop a day on 186 metres medium wave. When full power is reached in a few weeks the station will have the signal strength of Radio Luxembourg and will be heard by the entire British Isles.

Anchored five miles off the Dutch coast, Radio North Sea is supplied by tender from Amsterdam from offices in Zurich, Switzerland.

Says British spokesman Clive Martin: "The Dutch Government is in the process of trying to ban off-shore radio stations, namely Radio Veronica and ourselves, but the process is likely to take at least a year. "When and if that happens, North Sea will continue broadcasting, but will be serviced from Hamburg. We are already thinking in terms of a better wavelength, but no decision has yet been made."

North Sea's programmes at

the moment read like this:
6-8 a.m. German speaking with DJ Huss Rider.
8-10 a.m. Roger Day.
10 a.m.-noon Andy Archer.
Noon-2 p.m. Carl Mitchell.
2-4 p.m. Alan West.
4-8 p.m. German speaking.
8-10 p.m. Roger Day.
10 p.m.-midnight Andy Archer.

Ross Brown, alias Freddy Ed Moreno are expected to join Bear and one-time Caroline man the station's staff shortly.

None of the British DJs will now be able to re-enter the country without risking prosecution and possible imprisonment under the Marine Offences



M/S Mebo II—home of Radio North Sea International

Act. This is nothing new to Roger Day and Andy Archer, both of whom defied the Act

North Sea pop pirates are ready for battle

Radio North Sea can already be heard in London, Essex and South-East England, although reception is marred by interference from nearby stations.

Advertising is expected from both American and Continental firms and Radio North Sea is now set for a long and hopefully successful future.

Other "pirate" news includes Radio Geronimo, described as "the only legal progressive rock station in Western Europe," which takes to the air again this Saturday on 295 metres from midnight-2 a.m. Planned for the programme are

exclusive tracks from Ginger Baker's Air Force "live" LP, "Delaney and Bonnie On Tour" live LP, and Doors "Hard Rock Cafe."

Geronimo, using the Radio Monte Carlo studios and wavelength, is expected to start daily broadcasts on March 27.

And Radio North London, land-based "pirate," plans four days continuous pop from Good Friday to Easter Monday this year. Programmes will be broadcast on 200 metres from various studios in London, but the signal should be strong enough to be heard through much of Britain.

After a series of test transmissions RNI officially opened at 6.00 PM on February 28th with programs in German and English. Within a month it seemed these programs had no commercial influence at all and the owners decided there was another possibility to make some money, which was heading to the British coast. It was in the late afternoon of March 23rd the MEBO II left the Dutch coast, broadcasting while sailing to Clacton and arriving the next morning around 9. It was Carl Mitchell who was on board during the trip and told the listeners 'England here we come.'

What occurred was that the transmissions on 186 metres interfered with the Walton on the Naze coastguard, who used the 183 metres. So they really had problems there to stay in contact with the Trinity House as well as the lightships at the time. March 27th RNI decided to close down the AM transmitter for a small period to return on the air on April 10th on a frequency of 1578 kHz (190 metres). It took another 5 days before the British Authorities decided that the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications had to take action. A jamming transmitter with a 800 c/s tone came on the air on the same frequency as RNI was. The governmental transmitting site at Rochester in Kent was therefore in use.

This resulted of course in a very difficult way of radio listening to RNI. I personally remember Norman Greenbaum's 'Spirit in the sky' as the first record I heard when the jamming period started. It was highlighted on the double LP 'The History of RNI' which was produced by Jacob Kokje and Hans Knot for the station in 1973. And when a station is in problems of course the letters are coming in with hundreds a day.

On RNI the presenters still asked the listeners to send in reception reports and one of the many who did so was Peter Newton from Watford in County Herts. I can't exactly mention the date he wrote the letter to RNI as in the header of the letter it says 'Time 11.40 Tuesday I don't know the date' I have written in answer to your request on Tuesday, you wanted to know what local receptions were like. Unfortunately we get a lot of Morse code and some f.....g German station or other coming in and interfering. The signal is good though and there's very little fade out. I would like to really congratulate you guys because I think what you're doing is really worthwhile you know. I was real sick when 'Caroline' folded up and hoped someone would get it

together soon'.

(H)

15, GROSVENOR RD,
WATFORD,
HERTS

TIME 11.40
TUESDAY I DONT
KNOW THE
DATE.

TO CARL MITCHEL,

I HAVE WRITTEN
IN ANSWER TO YOUR REQUEST
ON TUESDAY, YOU WANTED TO
KNOW WHAT LOCAL RECEPTIONS
WERE LIKE. UNFORTUNATLEY
WE GET A LOT OFF MORSE
CODE AND SOME FUCKING GERMAN
STATION OR OTHER COMING IN AND
INTERFERING, THE SIGNAL IS
GOOD THOUGH, THERES VERY LITTLE
FADE OUT. I WOULD LIKE TO
REALLY CONGRATULATE YOU GUYS,
BECAUSE I THINK WHAT YOU'RE
DOING IS REALLY WORTHWHILE...
YOU KNOW
P.T.O.

The rest of the text of the letter from Peter Newton tells it clear in swearing words that

he disliked the government in Britain and also would like the BBC to leave the air for ever. It was just before RNI became Caroline for a few weeks in 1970.

Michael Veunion wrote a letter from Richmond in Surrey on March 9th 1970: 'Radio Northsea is Super, but we do wish the engineer could do something about the morse. It really drives me mad as I listen to you now it suddenly has gone. The signal is as powerful as yours and it's affecting thousands of your fans! '

And that Michael was indeed a super fan of RNI in 1970 became known in another strophe from his letter when he told what he was doing to publicise the station by the old way of Graffiti: 'I'm writing it everywhere on trains, on walls for everyone must know that Radio Northsea is the Greatest and the Weird Beard is back!' With the last words he wrote about Carl Mitchell, who worked for Caroline in 1967/1968 and came back on the air for RNI in March 1970. His nickname was 'The Weird Beard'.

One of the organisations who fought against the government in the sixties and seventies of last century, with several petitions, demonstrations and other forms of protest was the FRA (Free Radio Association.) Listeners could become members of the FRA and even could set up their own local branch. March 24th 1970, the next letter was written by Fred Power to deejay Carl Mitchell. He came from the Isle of Wight and claimed his place was the Headquarter for the Free Radio Association, Isle of Wight Branch.

'This is just a short rush letter to let you know that at this moment at least 1000 members of the FRA here on the island are listening, and have been regulars since RNI started. Thanks for all your efforts and the risks all of you are taking, keep it up! I can promise you that eventually you will be on land licensed. I have the assurance from Paul Bryen, who is one of our greatest fans.'

At the end of the letter Fred Power asked a request for his wife and himself: a Glenn Miller song. Of course not a song to be requested on a pop station like RNI in those days. Finally I can mention that during the time the letter was written something very special happened on the Isle of Wight as he wrote: 'PPS: FRA membership here over 12.000. '

(2)
Jerry is working in Bournemouth Hunts at a disco,
or was up to church 3rd. I suspect he's contacted
Twiggy by now to try and get back on the air, let's try
and get Twiggy to sign him up.

I heard of Ross Brown recently in Southampton
also Rick Dane ex R. C. North. Since Caroline closed
I have at sometime or other heard of all our ex-friends
Bud Ballou, is with Radio Wolf in New York in
Upper Manhattan, I know he'd like to get back to
England. Bud can be heard on 16.76 chimes every
Saturday from 19.00 hrs to 21.00 hrs. B. S. T.
No more now beer.

yours as ever.

Fred Power. Sec. F.R.A.

X P.S. Bud, can you please play a Glen Miller
record for my darling wife, Joan and myself, at
your own convenience (JOAN)

P.P.S. F.R.A membership here over 12,000.

Next to the official protests made by the FRA and other organisations (see also my article 'The fight for free radio, The political activation of offshore radio's fanbase 1964-1989' at www.soundscape.info Volume 6, 2003), a lot of individuals wrote to the authorities when the RNI transmitter on the mediumwave was heavily jammed. A non personal standard answer was sent back by the Ministry of Posts and

Telecommunications: 'Dear Mr. I have been asked to reply to your recent letter addressed to the Minister about the pirate station Radio North Sea International. I hope you will find the information contained in the enclosed leaflet, which was written when the Marine Etc. Broadcasting (Offences) Act 1967 was made law, will help you understand why pirate broadcasting stations cannot be allowed to operate'. Was undersigned by W.F. Johnson.



Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications

Telecommunications and Radio Regulatory Department

Waterloo Bridge House Waterloo Road London SE1

Telex 261969 (Minpostel Ldn) Telegrams Gentel London SE1

Telephone 01-928 7878 ext 7588 Radiogen London SE1

H Goodwin Esq
Rose Cottage
137 Sandbach Road
RODE HEATH
STOKE ON TRENT
ST7 3RZ

Your reference

Our reference

Date 10 April 1970

Dear Mr Goodwin

I have been asked to reply to your recent letter addressed to the Minister about the pirate station Radio North Sea International.

I hope you will find the information contained in the enclosed leaflet, which was written when the Marine Etc Broadcasting (Offences) Act 1967 was made law will help you understand why pirate broadcasting stations cannot be allowed to operate.

Yours faithfully

W F JOHNSON

When going through the files I found a letter from April 6th 1970 written in Invercargill New Zealand by A Mervyn Branks. Mervyn was member of the New Zealand Radio DX League and wrote in his letter about the reception at his place of the transmissions of RNI and went in detail about his equipment: 'Dear Sirs, from right on the south coast of the South Island of New Zealand. I wish to report reception of your medium-

wave transmitter on 1610 kHz. I have a listening post stop, a sandy saddle approaching a rocky promontory two-thirds surrounded by the waters of the South Pacific. A series of eight long-wire antennas run in various northerly directions up into the sand hills 120ft above sea level. The one I heard R. North Sea on is 960 ft long, averaging 16ft high and, strangely, pointing east or nor-east. Being on battery operation and away from power lines, there is no electrical interference.'

It seemed that this listener in New Zealand had received on March 25 that year when he was going through the medium waveband: 'I was listening to Radio München on 1602 kHz and detunes slightly and heard a pop group of singers at 7.33 p.m. Central European Time (GMT plus one hour). This was followed by electronic noises and a fade out. ' Next this guy in New Zealand wrote down a list of songs he heard the next 20 minutes. And he also recorded the reception on a recorder to have the programme on tape as a solid way to prove he really did receive the station. But the above was only part of the story from Mervyn: 'In my small shack or lightning I use a Tilley Lamp...it started to leak kerosene into my case where I had placed a tape of above reception and right into the EMI box. As a result the tape would not play at the correct speed and I couldn't follow it. I then washed it with a damp meths rag but the tape stretched. So the above report is just what I had jotted down and I was sleepy as I was awake most of the night.'

Mervyn tried several times to go back to his shack, which was 27 miles away from the city where he lived. The third time he was successful in getting the RNI sound on his radio again: 'We hear European stations on the medium wave band around equinox time when the days and nights are of near equal length. Signals transmitted at dusk in Europe travel in darkness all the way and in a split second arrive in New Zealand next morning. Best wished for successful broadcasting.'

NEW ZEALAND RADIO DX LEAGUE



A. M. Branks
5 DUBLIN STREET
INVERCARGILL.
NEW ZEALAND.

April 6, 1970

Audience Mail Department;
North Sea International,
P.O. Box 113,
ZURICH 8047,
Switzerland.

Dear Sirs,

From right on the south coast of the South Island ~~of the South Island~~ of New Zealand, I wish to report reception of your medium-wave transmitter when on 1610kHz. I have a listening post atop a sandy saddle approaching a rocky promontory two-thirds surrounded by the waters of the South Pacific. A series of eight long-wire antennas run in various northerly directions up into sandhills 120ft above sea level. The one I heard R.North Sea on is 960ft long, averaging 16ft high and, strangely, pointing east of nor-east. Being on battery operation and away from power lines, there is no electrical interference.

It was your programme of Wednesday evening. March 25. 1970

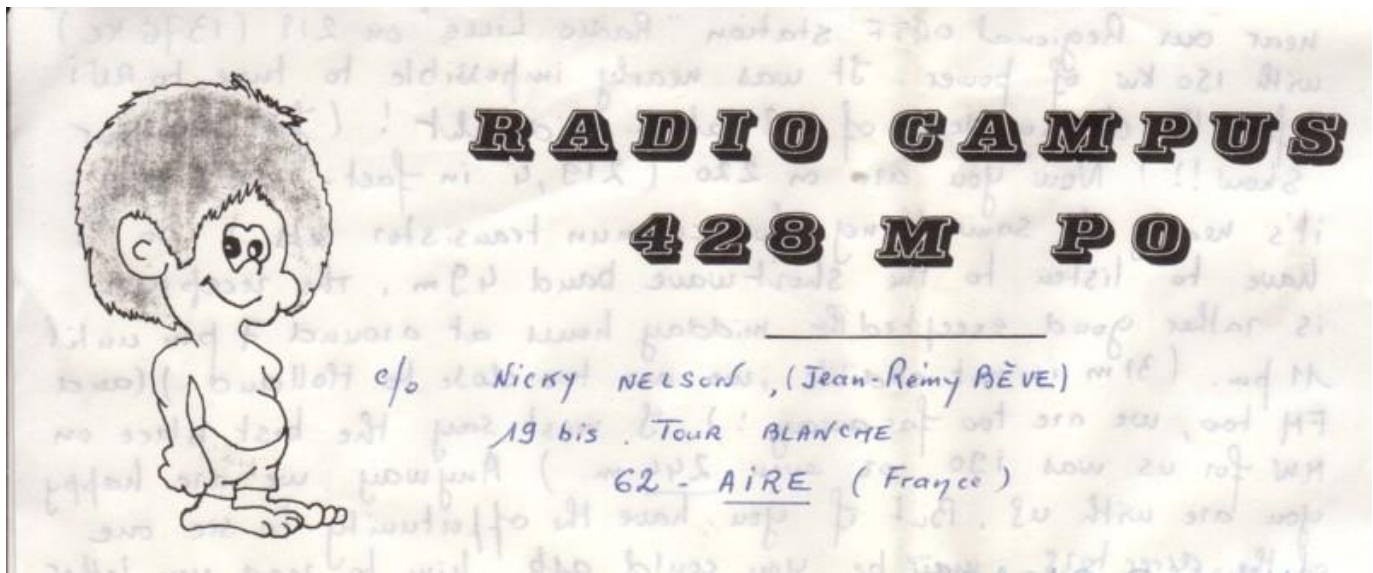
Of course not only letters came in for requests in the programmes and the regular reception reports. Another category were those send in by young people who thought it was their dream to become a deejay too, like this one from Anthony Brown in Cleethorpes in County Lincolnshire. He had his own drive in show called 'The Hot Wax Disc Show' and wrote to RNI in April 1970: 'I hope you don't mind writing to you. I took the address from an old issue of Billboard (about February). I have written twice to the head office of RNI enquiring about a job as a deejay but have not received a reply. Whether the letters have reached their destination or not, I wouldn't like to say, If you'd pass this letter to someone concerned directly with employment of broadcasters for RNI, I would appreciate it very much.'

It seems like Anthony thought it was a big company with a special department for employment. In his letter he was honest that he had not been deejaying during the then past three years. Before that he was a regular in discotheques, ballrooms and clubs. And he was also aware of that during that period he kept his crowd in a good mode. After summing up his music interests, which were mainly soul and blues, he told that he worked as a window-cleaner. He had also a thought about what could happen if he get a job as a deejay on RNI: 'I realise that, if by some chance I do get a job with RNI, that I will have to forget my British nationality, and I will also be liable to imprisonment when I do return to England. This only makes me even more determined. If there is any chance of a job (or even if not) I'd be very pleased to hear from you.'

He did enclosed an international reply coupon for an answer. Sadly enough when I

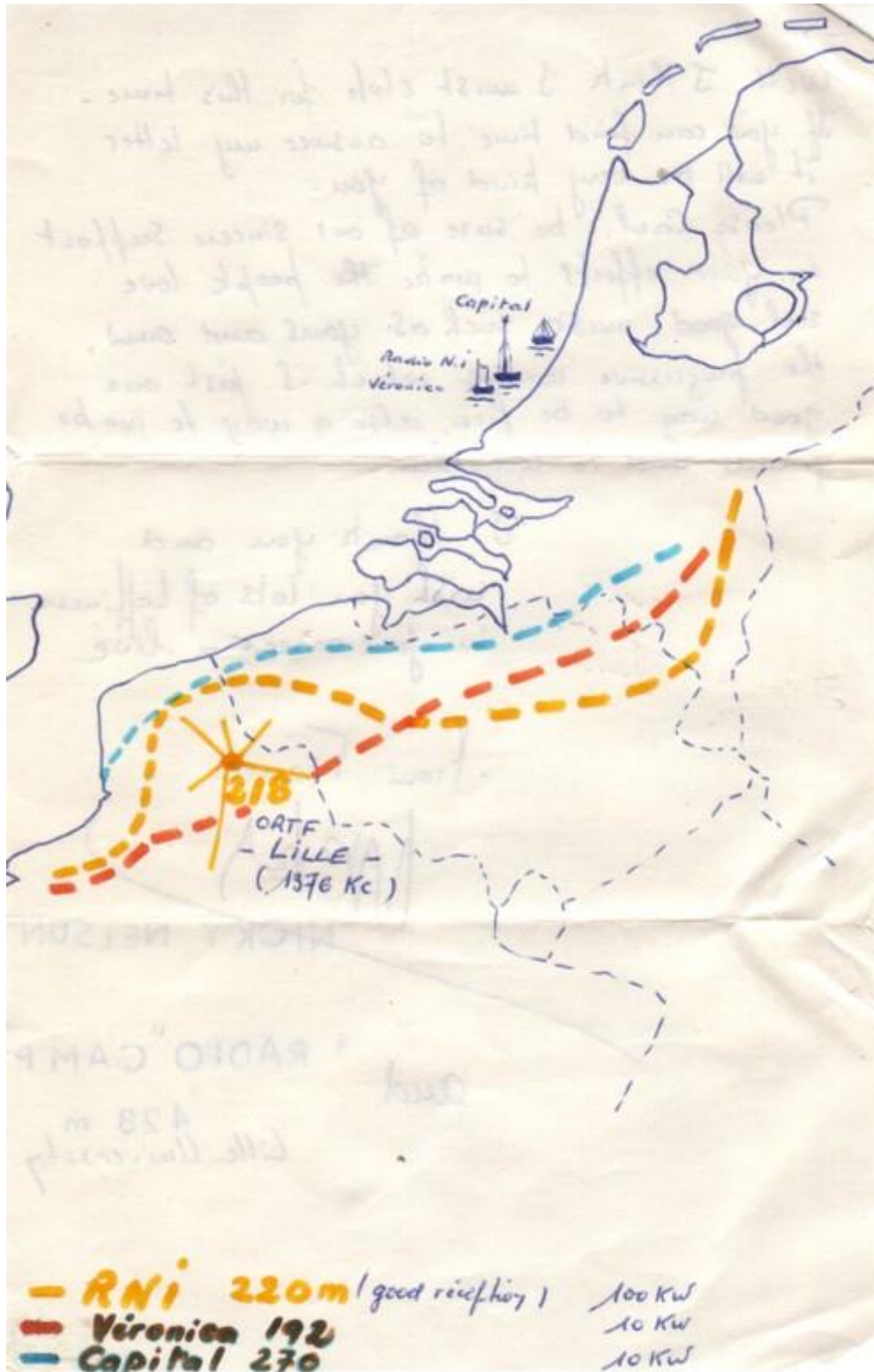
was exploring the hugh boxes with letters from the Carl Mitchell archive, which I got early 2006 from Mrs and Mr Hoodle in Amsterdam (housekeepers of the late Carl Mitchell) this letter was still in a disclosed envelop. So Anthony never got an answer on his letter.

RNI had also listeners abroad an some were very active in radio. Listening as well as broadcasting themselves. On letterhead from 'Radio Campus 428 metres' it came from Jean Rémy Bève, aka Nicky Nelson, who wrote to RNI on August 24th 1970. Apparently he had been out to the MEBO II earlier as in his letter he looked back on a trip on July 24th: 'We had a lot of fun during our return to the shore on the MEBO II with Spangles Muldoon, Michael Lindsay, Mark Wesley and Larry Tremaine. Indeed it was the greatest day of my offshore experiences. You probably know I try to get everything concerned with the pirates since 1960. I got every book on the subject ever published at present time and a complete range of photos and cuttings (over 3000). Also I've over 2000 American jingles and tapes on every station at sea since Radio Nord, Radio Mercur including of course KING, Essex and all the greatest such as Caroline, London, Scotland and not forgetting Radio England.'



Well Jean Rémy was a French guy really enjoying the free radio, not only from international waters but also on land. This as he also mentioned that he listened – now and then – to the transmissions from Radio Free London. RNI, at that stage in 1970, wasn't the only station he received from international waters in Aire (France). He also listened in to Capital Radio from the MV King David on 1115 kHz. He wasn't to happy with RNI as he wrote: 'Regarding the reception of RNI here in France I'd like you to know that it's not very good. Not because of the station's equipment itself but because of the wavelength on MW. Did the management think one moment of French listeners? I know it's rather difficult to get a wavelength which doesn't cause any trouble but RNI on 217 was to near our regional station 'Radio Lille' on 218 metres (1376kc) with 150 kW of Power. It was nearly impossible to tune to RNI before the closing down of 218 at midnight. Now you are on 220 metres (219,4 in fact

– 1367 KHz). It's nearly the same thing for communication transistor sets) . So I have to listen to the short waveband 49 metres. The reception is rather good except the midday hours.'



RNI was on the air during that period also on the 31 metres band but reception of this frequency was impossible in countries like Holland, Belgium, Great Britain and France as those were too close to the transmitter vessel MEBO II. In his long letter Rémy also told the station what programming he liked the most: 'And now I like to congratulate RNI for all the Sundays programmes. Absolutely tremendous with the Top 30 and the Beatles Show, the pop news, the golden classic show and then Larry Tremaine. What a show, like last week with the captain of the ship.'

And I can tell you that this was not the only listener in France as there were a lot, especially to the programs of RNI. During 1970 I was already writing on the subject radio – in those days for Pirate Radio News - and I can tell you we had a lot of subscribers in France. One of them – the late great André Blondeau – was a fine fanatic follower of RNI and recorded a lot himself. At one stage, when the boss of the Dutch service had asked Jacob Kokje, co-editor of the Pirate Radio News to record the station 24 hours a day, André also came around the corner. The recorded '24 hours a day' tapes were kept in store for four weeks and once a month, or so, André drove from his living place, Neuilly sur Seine, to Leiden in Holland and took the tapes with him. Still the main bunch of tapes are in store. The very sympathetic Blondeau died early in a car accident, but the archive survived and treasured by the people of the French OEM.

A dramatic event happened at Saturday August 29th 1970 as a launch, the Viking, and the Huski, a tug, were seen heading for the radioship of RNI, the MEBO II. Following the words of the presenters the Viking drew alongside and a guy with the name of Kees Manders climbed aboard the MEBO II. He told the crew and captain that the radioship had to be taken into the harbour of Scheveningen. After the captain told him to leave the radioship he left threatening to cut the anchor and tow her in. Also they warned to put water cannons on the transmitter mast. The deejays were broadcasting a live report on what was happening and requested on the air for assistance. Phone numbers from the head office in Zürich as well as the phone number of the Hotel in Scheveningen were both RNI directors Meister and Bollier stayed at the time, were mentioned several times over the air. Several ships came to assistance and even the Dutch navy vessel VanNes anchored nearby. Then the Huski as well as the Viking left to Rotterdam and Scheveningen harbour. It was a dramatic happening which was, as told, live on the air. In the evening Andy Archer was very happy he could play a lot of requests to the young lads on the Navy Vessel. After the transmissions of the Kees Manders thing, many letters came in and I've chosen the one which was dated April 30th 1970.

Ivan and Roy Parker were responsible for writing the letter from their home in Thorrington, near Colchester in Essex: 'We thought we would like you to drop a line and congratulate you and the other staff on the MEBO II on the way you dealt with the situation on Saturday 29th August. It must be very difficult to keep programmes flowing calmly without being able to see what is going on outside. Immediately we switched on our radio and realised what was happening we started our tape recorder in case we were witnessing the end of R.N.I., obviously we are delighted this was not so.

"Homeleigh",
Station Road,
Thorrington,
Colchester,
Essex,
ENGLAND.

Carl Mitchell,
Radio Northsea International,
P.O. Box 113,
Zurich 8047,
SWITZERLAND.

30th August, 1970.

Dear Carl,

We thought we would like to drop you a line and congratulate you and the other staff on the Mebo II on the way you dealt with the situation on Saturday 29th August. It must be very difficult to keep programmes flowing calmly without being able to see what is going on outside. Immediately we switched on our radio and realised what was happening we started our tape recorder in case we were witnessing the end of R.N.I., obviously we are delighted this was not so.

We would like to suggest that a water cannon should be installed for such emergencies. This would enable the MEBO crew to repel boarders without physical violence. It is unfortunate that this seems necessary but it appears that anything can happen in offshore radio. If this current situation had not been overcome responsibly it could have upset the Dutch government against offshore radio.'

Both brothers, Ivan and Roy Parker, were regular listeners to Offshore radio in the sixties and active members within the Free Radio Campaign. One of them even appearing in a news program on Dutch television to tell the people in Holland why he had so many offshore radio stickers in his car (to openly protest as much as possible against the Marine Offences etc Act from 1967). They also followed the programs from RNI closely since the start and had recorded events as they had happened and claimed that they were lucky as they had a history of R.N.I. in sound. The whole family were active as they wrote in the letter: 'Our household has a procedure whereby your transmissions are checked at least six times every day without fail. In view of this not much happens without our knowledge.'

Also they wanted some explanations about technical things happening around the transmissions of the station: 'We have noticed that when the station changes frequency it usually take at least a day but recently when you changed from 217 to 220 metres it took less than 5 hours. We would be interested if you could explain how this was achieved; an International Reply Coupon is enclosed as requested during recent announcements. We would like to mention how convenient it is when you give the new frequency over the air with the time the change is to take place rather than

going off the air without a word. No doubt it is not always possible to tell us but many outrageous ideas go through your mind when you switch on and RNI is not there.'

A pity also Ivan and Roy Parker never got an answer on this question as the letter had a closed envelop, like most of the mentioned letters. They were all found back in the boxes which Carl Mitchell had left in Amsterdam in 1971 and which were officially given to me by his former housekeeper in early 2006. More another time.

HANS KNOT