

They were young and ready to fight on against the British Government

August 14th 1967 was and is still Black Monday to those who loved to listen to their favourite stations bringing the pop and easy listening music from international waters. The British Government had earlier decided that an official law had to be brought in against what was, in their eyes, a full Act of Piracy. So on Black Monday around midnight, the Marine Offence etc Act. became reality and from that moment on it was officially forbidden for those with a British Citizenship to broadcast for an illegal radiostation from international waters. Also those stations on radio ships couldn't be tendered anymore from British harbours, companies weren't allowed anymore to advertise on the station and so on. In other words the British government wanted to blockade all those stations on the air in international waters.

Some days before the MOB became Act Ronan O'Rahilly, the Caroline director, was interviewed after arriving back from the USA, where he had visited New York to 'sell' his Radio Caroline Network to American advertising agencies. And he compared Radio Caroline in the interview "As a sort of CBS network serving the British Isles." 'Radio Caroline will stay on the air, he emphasised, despite the British Government's move to scuttle it, and it will stay afloat. Mr. O'Rahilly, 27, and the man at the centre of the Isle of Man's storm, has been to America to find alternative advertising revenue ready for when the British Government's Marines Broadcasting (Offences) Act become into force. It will stop British advertisers using his 'pop' stations. He claimed: "It has been a highly successful sales trip and one that ensures that, just as we have now been on the air for four years, we will still be four years from now on. I've been introducing the idea to some of America's big advertisers on the pitch that this is Caroline International, a station serving 25 million Britons plus audiences on the continent and in Ireland- a sort of CBS network."

When it was midnight and so August 15th 1967, there was only one organisation left to fight the law. Caroline, becoming Caroline International with a station in the South as well in the North. Most of the listeners were tuned in to the South station just before twelve o'clock, when deejays Johnnie Walker and Robbie Dale said farewell to Britain. Who doesn't remember the words Walker spoke just after midnight: 'You have our assurance that we shall carry on, we belong to you and we love you.' From there one the Beatles Song 'All you need is love' was played and the station went on in the night as Caroline International. I don't think there is any other program sent in the history of radio so much repeated on the radio than the last minutes from Radio Caroline South on that Black Monday.

The two guys, young as they were, enjoyed the momentous occasion for both a way to brake the law and to become officially radio criminals. On the sister station Caroline North it was Daffy Don Allen asking the listeners for two minutes of silence,

after which he also put the 'All you need is love' on the turntable and his station becoming Caroline International too, although with a different output than the former Caroline South. A day later the Dutch newspapers brought the opening of the Caroline Office at the Singel 160 in Amsterdam, whereby 'owner' Ronan O'Rahilly was claiming the organisation also had offices in Paris, New York and Toronto and that Caroline would go on with international advertising to pay the bills.

Ronan O'Rahilly in Amsterdam 1969 Freewave Media Magazine Archive



Dutch newspapers brought already the news that Caroline had her new office in Amsterdam on Wednesday August 16th 1967. The listeners for the station didn't get the address on the air before September 1st. It was written that Caroline had hired one floor in a typical canal house in the centre of Amsterdam where a eight persons staff was working. Partly Dutch and partly English: 'There was a spokesman for the Caroline organisation busy to set up the furnish and after that he answered questions from several journalist arriving at the office. He told that he was a Canadian advisor for the radio station but didn't want to tell his name. ' Probably the Canadian Terry Bate, who did advise Ronan O'Rahilly organising the station and was also the brain behind the successful Caroline Cash Casino, was the Canadian mentioned in the newspaper.



The Caroline director O'Rahilly had not yet arrived the new office and the Canadian told the press that he would arrive on the Thursday in Amsterdam, flying from London's Heathrow. The newspapers also wrote that tendering for the Caroline South ship would be done from Dutch harbours and during the first weeks the Fredericia, from Caroline North, still would be getting provision from the Isle of Man. In an article in the 'Haarlems Dagblad' that very day, it was also mentioned that already in the month of April 1967 a new office was hired in name of the Caroline organisation at Koninginneweg 130 in Amsterdam. One of the people working at that stage for O'Rahilly was Basil van Rensburg, who earlier worked for

the organisation running Radio Dolfijn and Britian Radio. He hired the second floor of the four floors house of the well known Dutch classical organist Piet van Egmond. However following the words of Van Egmond it could not be said that Van Rensburg was working hard to get the office ready. After a few months, it was July 14th., Van Rensburg told Van Egmond that he would start a business for himself and left the office.



left: Basil van Rensburg in later days. Right: Piet van Egmond (Freewave Media Magazine Archive)

When Ronan O’Rahilly was contacted by telephone he was totally surprised. Just days before Van Rensburg had got 10.000 guilders from O’Rahilly to furnish the office. Van Egmond thought it was all too misty and decided not to work together with the Caroline organisation anymore and so they had to look for another office, which they found at Singel 160. Another newspaper wrote that it would be a hard time for the authorities as they had to look in all the books of the advertisers, heard on both stations, to prove that they really paid for the advertisements. Also Ronan O’Rahilly was mentioned as he told the journalist that he had a very special tape, produced by two of the important journalists in England. It would have many secret facts about some ministers and their private lives: ‘He believes that when transmitting the tape at the right moment it will be possible to let fall the British Labour Government. Later it was revealed that the tape was titled ‘The Secret Life of Harold Wilson’, at that stage Prime Minister. So far known it was never transmitted and like more things mentioned by Ronan O’Rahilly I doubt if there was ever a tape with that contents.



Robbie and Stella Robinson (Dale) at Singel 160 in 2007. Archive Robbie Robinson

British Listeners who had complaint against the MOB in a letter to the Prime Minister got an answer back from the Prime Minister’s Office signed by his Private Secretary Miss E. Frankham: ‘Many people have been very disappointed to hear that pirate broadcasting is to be stopped. It seems so harmless, and is enjoyed by so many people. In fact, despite the repeated claims of the pirates, their broadcasts are far from harmless. The pirates are using wavelengths which we have undertaken to leave clear for the broadcasting services in other countries. By doing so, they prevent people in those countries from hearing their own domestic programmes. They also represent a danger – slight but ever-present to the radio services on which safety of life at sea depends. Moreover broadcasting from the high seas is forbidden, all over

the world, by international law. And the pirates make almost unlimited use of recorded material, threatening the livelihoods of the musicians and other performers whose work they use without permission or payment.'

Of course the contents of this part of the letter, which was more a kind of a circular, was not complete true as there were not enough signing countries yet to make the Treaty of Strasbourg worldwide in power. But more had to come in the letter: 'To date, twelve European countries have complained to the Postmaster General about the pirates' interferences with their broadcasting services. And communications between ships and the shore often have been seriously interfered with. If the pirate stations were allowed to continue unchecked, there would soon be so much interference that broadcasting as we know it would become impossible. This treat to the future of broadcasting has caused the maritime countries of the Council of Europe to agree to legislate on common lines to deal with it. The Bill carries out our obligations under the European Agreement.

Many people feel that an easy solution would be to bring the pirate ashore, that is to licence them to operate on land. That is just not possible. There are unused wavelengths on which powerful stations like the pirate stations could operate without causing interference. In any case, if they operated within the control of the Copyright Laws, they could not transmit the sort of programmes they have been transmitting. The Government's plans for the future of sound broadcasting, which have recently been announced, are designed to match our broadcasting services more closely to our needs without interfering with other people's rights.' So far the main part of the letter sent away by the Private Secretary from the Postmaster General in the summer of 1967.



Caroline North officially could go on with tendering from the Isle of Man as the Government of the island had refused to implement the Act. It lasted two other weeks that it became into effect. However most of the British crew of the MV Fredericia, the North ship, decided to quit on August 14th as they feared a prosecution. The left the radioship in the early evening arriving not much later in

the harbour of Ramsey onboard the Offshore III where a large crowd were there to met with them. On Caroline South Robbie Dale, Roger Day and Johnny Walker decided to stay on the air, where they were joined by several others including Spangles Muldoon, Bud Ballou, Carl Mitchell, Andy Archer, Stevie Merike and others.

On the Fredericia Dee Harrison, Martin Kayne, Mark Sloane, Don Allen and Jim Gordon were the first to fight the MOA.

Offshore III alongside MV Fredericia. Photo Archive Les Woollam

Caroline North continued to be tendered from the Isle of Man for two weeks and the last tender went out of Ramsey harbour at 8.30 pm on August 31st 1967 to make the final delivery of supplies and crew before provisions of the British law became effective on the Isle of Man. At least 2000 people made a special crew that very day using the ferry Manxman from the Steam Packet Company to cruise from Douglas to Ramsey Bay with one purpose: just for the last time legal circling the radioship MV Fredericia, by them named as the MV Caroline. Just before midnight again attention was made to the MOA and after Don Allen told his opinion he played the Manx National Anthem and of course thanked the authorities and all the people who loved and supported the station on the Isle of Man.

Commercials were heard on the air for companies who were already on the airing list before August 15th but the owners from the companies or their representatives claimed that they didn't asked for the commercials, either paid for airing them. Also minor new commercials were heard, next to a lot of in-house commercials, like the endless spots for the products of Major Minor Records, which was owned by Caroline's co director Philip Solomon. We all remember those endless long commercials for the Orchestra of Raymond Lévèfre, The Dubliners, David McWilliams, and the Roberto Mann Strings. Some of the products we liked, the others were terrible and decided me often to tune into an other station. The money which came in at Caroline's office was on a far much smaller scale than for instant in 1966, when Radio Caroline was on her 'height', mainly was paid from religious organisations from the USA who bought airtime on both Caroline's.

Listeners from those days remembered the farewell to England from the deejays who stayed on the ships. They were not allowed anymore to go into their own country without getting in

Disc and Music Echo—November 11, 1967



Ronan: 'waiting game'

CAROLINE 'PIRATES HAVE LANDED!

RADIO Caroline rebel deejays have been inside Britain in the past month with police knowledge but without any action being taken by the authorities.

This was revealed to Disc on Tuesday by Caroline boss Ronan O'Rahilly, speaking from his London flat. "Spangles Muldoon and one of the North ship deejays have been here and the police knew all about it," said O'Rahilly.

"I can only assume that the authorities are playing a waiting game which is their mistake. Given another 12 months, Harold (Wilson) won't be able to do anything about Caroline International. I say 12 months' time, because we really started a radio station all over again on August 15 and we're still building up."

O'Rahilly was unable to confirm a claim that Mark Slor, a Caroline North deejay for a month after the Marine Offences Bill became law, is back in the country. "It could be the boy who was on the ship—but I haven't met him so I don't know whether it may be just someone looking for some publicity."

Caroline's share of the listening audience between the ages of 16-24 is 50-50 with Radio 1, according to a National Opinion Poll published in Saturday's Daily Mail. More comprehensive audience figures are expected soon to indicate who is winning the battle for listeners.

GPO spokesman replying to Ronan O'Rahilly's claim that deejays have been in Britain in the past month, told Disc: "No-one has yet been prosecuted under this Act, but this is not to say that nobody will be."

The spokesman added that the failure to prosecute, presumably referring to the entry of Caroline deejays into Britain, was to be raised in a question at the House of Commons in the "near future."

problems and facing a heavy punishment. The question was however if they really went to Amsterdam with the tender with the option to stay there until another tender trip brought them back to the radio ship, or could it be they visit illegally Great Britain? An answer on this question came in the November 11th edition from 'The Disc and Music Echo' in which it was confirmed that the Caroline rebel deejays had been inside Britain in the then past months with police knowledge but without any action taken by the authorities. Caroline boss Ronan O'Rahilly was asked by the magazine and answered from his London flat with: 'Spangles Muldoon and one of the Caroline North deejays have been here and the police all knew about it. I can only assume that the authorities are playing a waiting game which is their mistake. Given another 12 months Harold (Wilson) won't be able to do anything about Caroline International. I say 12 months' time, because we really started a radio station all over again on August 15th and we're still building up.'

But not all the listeners had the same feelings like me about most of the advertised music spots for Major Minor Records and the more regional music on Caroline North. At the Amsterdam Office, like in London in earlier days, a lot of letters came in from the avid listeners. Alistair Watt wrote one to Martin Kayne in January 1968: 'I am a frequent listener to Radio Caroline, both South and North. Needless to say I am a great admirer of Free Radio. I enjoy all the shows. One feature on Caroline North that I especially like is the occasional playing of Scottish records e.g. The Alexander Brothers. It is on this point I'm writing to you. In the old days when Radio Caroline was not the only free radio station broadcasting, the late Radio Scotland used to have a special Ceilidh programme for its listeners and with Jack McLaughlin

Rosemary Collyer,
Dirlator,
North Berwick
East Lothian,
29th January 1968

Dear Martin,

I am a frequent listener to Radio Caroline both south and north. Needless to say as a great admirer of free radio I enjoy all the shows. One feature of Caroline North that I especially like is the occasional playing of Scottish records e.g. The Alexander Brothers. It is on this point that I am writing to you. In the old days when Radio Caroline was not the only free radio station broadcasting the late Radio Scotland used to have a special Ceilidh programme for its listeners and with Jack McLaughlin presenting the programme it was a big success. You mention on your Saturday show that you would like ideas from listeners on music programmes and I suggest that you present a programme of Scottish music perhaps once or more a week.

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I'm sure you would find this type of programme very successful.

Another favour I would like to ask of you is would you play me a request three Saturdays from now i.e. February 17th?

Sometime between 3 and 3.30 p.m. would be most suitable and if you have a record of the "Black Bear" I'd like to hear it. On the last night of Radio Scotland one of the disc jockeys played Caroline's theme tune and I thought it would be a nice return gesture if you played the "Black Bear." Of course you may not be able to oblige so in case of this could you play "Pictures of Matchstick Men"

by the Status Quo for Roger "Twiggy" Day.

Well, to finish ~~you~~ off let me remind you to keep up the good work and if you do you will remain my favourite D.J. and also Radio One will never get a look in

Yours sincerely
Alistair Watt

presenting the programme it was a big success. You mention on your Saturday show that you would like ideas from listeners on music programmes and I suggest that you

present a program of Scottish music perhaps once or more a week. I'm sure you would find this type of programme very successful. Another favour I would like to ask of you is would you play me a request'. Then Alistair asked Martin to play the ' Black Bear' a typical Scottish tune. And the letter went on with: 'On the last night of Radio Scotland one of the disc jockeys played Caroline's theme tune and I thought it would be a nice return gesture if you played the ' Black Bear'.

Of course there were contracts signed by advertisers or advertising agencies at a moment it was not known that the MOA would be brought in. Sometimes a contract was for a period of three or six months and so Radio Caroline played on with the commercials after August 14th. This was bringing problems for a lot of advertisers and they mostly denied that they have given Caroline permission to go on with the spots in the programs. One example was mentioned by Mike Leonard in his publication: Derek Gardner. This local advertiser, Photographics of Leatherhead and Epsom, had run a campaign on Caroline during the early summer of 1967, which included promotional offers available until the end of September. And so Caroline continued to broadcast the commercials after August 14th. The story tells us that the owner, Derek Gardner, even went to the Amsterdam Singel Office, to protest against the transmission of the commercial.

Bringing attention to a law, in this case the MOA, was not only done on the air by several radio stations but also by the authorities. It was the Post Master General who warned the British Citizens in official advertisements for the penalties which could be received if they would work together with the then called pirate radio stations. Also tender bosses were warned not to supply the pirate radio stations and companies were warned that advertising was forbidden. In some 70 newspapers advertisements were bought up to a sum of 18.000 Pound Sterling. And then we speak of course about this amount in the year 1967. A lot of money, of course at the end paid by the listeners in Britain, as they were supposed to pay tax to run the governmental bodies, including the Post Office.

Tendering, which was organised from British harbours in the days before the MOA, stayed in the hands of Wijsmuller. Officially Offshore, Tender and Supply Company Ltd, from Baarn in Holland. Sometimes the Company also came in the news as Redwijs Baarn. Instead of tendering from for instant Harwich, and so a not too long trip to the MV Mi Amigo, the former Caroline South ship, very long tendering trips had to be done from the harbour of IJmuiden in Holland.



Daily delivery, as was possible in the past, was only a dream. No fresh bread, no

newspapers, no fresh milk, but also the fact that they deejays couldn't come home anymore in Britain was at one stage hearable in the shows. After some four months as Caroline International complaints were heard on the air about the tendering. Also lesser commercials were played and minor deejays came for one or a couple of stints on board the radio ships. And those stints weren't anymore a fortnight as before, but mainly for a period of six weeks or longer. Of course we all know the big names who fought the law, but we also have to mention people like Ross Brown, who came back as Freddie Beare, Lord Charles Brown, Ripley Thorne, Jason Wolfe and Stevie Gee.

[Freddie Beare Archive Pirate Hall of Fame](#)

Frictions occurred on the ships and with the tender official documents from

11/1/68 Note to ALL STAFF concerned with the M.V. CAROLINE. Due to the recent conduct displayed by some of the staff and constant frivolous friction - I wish to draw your attention to the following: Firstly, that the Captain Lishold is in full command of ALL STAFF concerned, if any PERSONAL on board does not or will not conform to the Company rules, or against the company's interest, the Captain has the full authority to dismiss the person concerned from the M.V. Caroline and return the same at the first instance ashore his word will be final on any matter being of interest to the Company -

Amsterdam Headquarters signed by Ronan O'Rahilly. One went as follows: ' Note to all staff concerned at the MV Caroline. Due to recent conduct by source of the staff and constant frivolous friction I wish to draw your attention to the following: Captain Lishold (Lieshout) is in full command of all staff concerned, if any personal onboard does not or will not confirm to the company rules, or to the company's interest, the captain has the full authority to dismiss the person concerned from the MV Caroline and the same return at the first instance ashore.'

Roger Scott was one of the deejays who came in a long period after the MOA was effective and had worked for other offshore stations. In 1984 he was interviewed for the special Monitor issue 'Happy Birthday Radio Caroline 20 years old' and told about his first and last trip out to the MV Fredericia, in fact he did only one programme: 'I hadn't really considered Caroline as being an option after August 1967; mostly because the station sounded pretty ropery and it was all plug records. But by about February 1968 I was getting fairly desperate to do some kind of radio work again. A friend and colleague, Alan Clark, was also looking around and it was he who had the

idea of going along to Caroline's office – well, it wasn't really Caroline's office, it was Major Minor Records. He saw Jim Hoolihan; who was something to do with Major Minor and something to do with Ronan O'Rahilly. He used to keep Ronan's unwanted guests at bay I think. He didn't want any experience or audition tapes; he just said "When can you start?" In fact Alan was offered a job on the South Ship and I was offered a job on the North Ship. For some reason Alan never got as far as the South Ship. I think they'd closed down by the time he was actually going out there.



Backside Caroline International
QSL Card 1968

Three or four days after seeing this Jim Hoolihan fellow I went off to Dundalk; I went there on the Saturday because the tender was due to go out on the Sunday; but in fact it didn't. I bumped into Freddie Bear who was 'RWB' on Radio City and Ross Brown on Radio 390. Australians as you know always wear shorts be it summer, winter, anytime, he always used to wear these infernal shorts. We filled the next few days going to places like Dublin. Eventually we left to go out to the boat mid-evening on Tuesday night. It took all night and most of the following morning to get out to the Caroline Ship, which was anchored off the Isle of Man and it was an extremely rough night. When we first went on the tender Ross Brown said: "Let's go on the Bridge", everybody else seemed to be on the Bridge for some reason. I never did discover why. I didn't want to go on the Bridge, I wanted to go to bed, which is what I did. I found myself a bunk but I didn't sleep very much. We got to the MV Caroline about mid-day I suppose. It was a grey, nasty day, rough sea, raining, very unpleasant.'

There was just one guy within the Caroline organisation who was known to Roger Scott: 'The only connection that I had with Caroline at that stage was the fact that Martin Kayne was there. He had worked for Radio Essex a couple of years previously as Michael Kayne, so I knew him but he was going off on shore leave as I arrived. I was going out there with Ross Brown and coming off the boat were Martin Kayne and

Radio Caroline
International

**SINGEL 160
AMSTERDAM
HOLLAND**



Jason Wolfe. There apart from Ross Brown (or I should say Freddie Bear) and myself, Jimmy Gordon - an Australian guy, Don Allen of course. And there was Lord Charles Brown, more usually known as Lord Charles Brown than Charlie Brown. People used silly names on that ship, I don't know why. I was plain old boring Roger Scott - I should say the first plain old boring Roger Scott -at that time. I can't

remember much about the engineers. The cook was a Dutch guy, so we had the usual Dutch food, which was Wonderloaf and pickles and soup. The food was quite good actually, as far as Wonderloaf and pickles and soup goes, it was only the-best type.'

Dick Palmer and Roger Scott in 2005 Photo: Martin Kayne

Although the kitchen was good Roger Scott has not the best memories working for Radio Caroline: 'The most noticeable thing about Caroline North from my own personal point of view was the fact that it was the least friendly station I worked on. It was fairly soulless, a bit disappointing actually. Had I worked there longer perhaps I would have got to know people better but it was a station very much of individuals. There wasn't much of a team spirit. It seemed to me that everybody was just passing their time, knowing that the station was eventually to close. We didn't know it was imminent but we knew it was going to happen sometime, so there wasn't a great feeling for the station. Initially I was given news to do, which came from Manx Radio. So I was doing news during the day Wednesday afternoon, Thursday and Friday, then Saturday I did my first and only programme. I did six till eight in the evening I believe. Had it been a weekday my voice would have been the very last to be heard on Caroline North. However, that distinction evaded me because being Saturday Don Allen did his Country and Western Jamboree, so he closed at ten- and that, as is well known, was that.'

Dutch newspapers did not pay too much attention to the fact the Caroline stations were tendered from Holland. Of course Veronica was their only offshore radiostation in those days and the love for this was so very high that they wouldn't like to have the Dutch Government to sign the Treaty of Strasbourg and change the Dutch law for Telecommunications, so tendering from Holland for the Caroline ships would be illegal. If so, it mend also the end of transmissions from international waters for Radio Veronica.

It was not a new Dutch law which forbid the Caroline stations to go on with transmissions. There was a more financial reason it all came to an end at that stage. Insufficient revenue was pulled in from advertising. Between 14th August, 1967, and the close-down early March 1968, there were less than half a dozen paid advertisements. Most of the advertisements heard on the two Caroline ships were taped from television or from other radio stations, and of course there were always the old pre-August 14th recorded commercials to rely on.

Each ship cost approximately £1,000 per week to run and

various groups and record companies paid £100 per week for 30 plays of their nominated record. There was delay in getting money out of the country, and large debts began to accumulate in Holland. The biggest debt was to Redwijs. On Friday afternoon, March 1st 1968, a meeting was held in the company's office in Baarn and it was decided to tow the ships into Amsterdam. No one within the Caroline organisation from the boss, Philip Solomon, to Nan Richardson, who worked in the Amsterdam office, had any prior knowledge that the ships would be towed away soon.

Radio Caroline op Singel 160

Engelse piratenzender is verhuisd naar Amsterdam

Hoe lang nog in Nederland?

Met een gemengd Nederlands-Britse staf, die naar verwacht wordt uit circa 8 leden zal bestaan, heeft de Britse piratenzender „Radio Caroline” gisteren zijn hoofdkwartier van Londen verhuisd naar de bel-etage van een grachtenhuis op Singel 160 te Amsterdam.

Een zegsman van Radio Caroline was daar druk bezig met de inrichting van een kantoor en met het beantwoorden van talloze vragen, die hem door Engelse en Nederlandse journalisten persoonlijk en per telefoon werden gesteld. Hij zei een Canadese raadgever van Radio Caroline te zijn, doch wenste zijn naam niet te onthullen.

Terwijl de beide schepen van Radio Caroline („North” bij het eiland Man en „South” dichter bij de Nederlandse kust) vandaag als enige Britse piratenzenders onverstoorde muziek de ether in zonden, maakte de Ierse directeur en miljonair Ronan O’Rahilly zich gereed om Engeland definitief de rug toe te draaien. Volgens de zegsman in Amsterdam zal hij morgenochtend uit Londen op Schiphol aankomen.

Vanuit Nederland

Het ligt in de bedoeling van Radio Caroline International om het station op het zuidelijke schip vanuit Nederland te gaan bevoorraden. Naar bekend wordt Radio Caroline North vanuit het eiland Man bevoorrad, hetgeen tot een controverse heeft geleid tussen de gouverneur van dit nogal onafhankelijk ingestelde eiland en de Britse autoriteiten in Londen.

Engeland heeft de Britse piratenzenders het bestaan vrijwel onmogelijk gemaakt door een speciale wet, die gisteren van kracht is geworden. Daarbij is het de Britten op straffe van twee jaar opsluiting of betaling van maximaal tienduizend gulden boete verboden deel te nemen aan de uitzendingen van illegale radio- en t.v.-stations of de zenders te bevoorraden met levensmiddelen, technische uitrustingen of geluidsbanden.

Voorlopig is Radio Caroline South in Am-

sterdam nog veilig, want zolang de Staten-Generaal geen goedkeuring hebben gehecht aan de Europese conventie tegen illegale radio-stations en zolang de telefoon en telegraafwet nog niet met een speciale wijziging is aangepast aan de hedendaagse toestand, kan de justitie niet ingrijpen.

Duistere figuren

Ronan O’Rahilly heeft de moeilijkheden natuurlijk van te voren zien aankomen. Hij was dan ook allang bezig met het zoeken naar huisvesting voor zijn hoofdkwartier in Amsterdam. Aanvankelijk had hij een zijner medewerkers, de Zuid-Afrikaan Basil van Rensburg, naar Amsterdam gezonden om daar vast een kantoor te gaan inrichten. Deze Rensburg slaagde er eind april in om bij de organist Piet van Egmond, die aan de Koninginneweg 130 te Amsterdam de beschikking heeft over een pand van vier etages, de tweede verdieping te huren. Van het inrichten van een kantoor kwam echter niets. Na circa anderhalve maand deelde Rensburg zijn huisbaas onverwachts mede, dat hij ging vertrekken en dat hij voor zich zelfs iets zou beginnen. Hij verdween daarop van de ene op de andere dag uiterst beleefd, doch met de noorderzon. Dat was op vrijdag 14 juli j.l. Daags daarna belde Ronan’Rahilly bij Van Egmond aan en toonde zich hoogst verbaasd, dat Rensburg gevlogen was. „Ik heb hem tienduizend gulden gegeven om hier het kantoor in te richten,” zei hij.

Deze gang van zaken was voor de heer Van Egmond reden verder niet meer met Radio Caroline de mistige ether in te gaan. O’Rahilly keerde onverrichterzake terug naar Londen, maar is er nadien dus in geslaagd op het adres Singel 160 kantoorruimte te huren.

Very early on Sunday morning March 3rd 1968 Caroline South was on the air at 5 a.m. when a Dutch tug, the MV Titan, arrived near the MV Mi Amigo. Roger Day was in the studio of the MV Mi Amigo when the captain of the towing vessel arrived. He told Roger the reason why they had to go off the air and when Roger asked if he could make an announcement the captain refused and so came an end. Just in the middle of a record Caroline International (South) from the Mi Amigo was off the air. It would last up till September 1972 it was back where it belonged, the international waters.

At almost the same time the tender and supply company Wijsmuller also got hands on the Fredericia, the Caroline North ship. There the salvage vessel MV Utrecht came alongside the radio ship and told crew and deejays that there would be a long trip as the radioship would be towed to Amsterdam. On both radio ships deejays and crewmembers were locked up into the lounge and had no chance at all to say goodbye to their listeners. Just within a day the Mi Amigo was the first to enter Amsterdam harbour, on March 9th followed by the MV Fredericia, Caroline North flagship. Soon it became known by reports in the newspapers that the two radio ships were towed in order of the Wijsmuller Supply and Tender Company from Baarn but not only due to non payment of dues by the Caroline organisation.

After the tug and their crew had boarded the Fredericia a long trip to Holland started from which Roger Scott remembers: 'It sounds kind of romantic sailing from the Isle of Man round the country by way of the Lleyn Peninsula, Cardigan Bay, Lands End, English Channel to Amsterdam, but there really wasn't anything spicy about it, it was more boring. It was a week of quite rough seas, not very much happened. Most of the time I remember lying in my bunk looking at the porthole getting soaked and occasionally some water would come in. It was not a particularly exciting time. I think it was noticeable there were no hoards of weeping girls waving their knickers at us. This had been the case, we had heard, on Radio London when the Marine Offences Act came in, but we went in the mouth of the canal that leads to Amsterdam and there were hoards of totally indifferent Dutch people fishing and wondering what this strange ship was. Only in our imaginations were the people on the quayside aware of who or what we were and why we were there. Literally we were met without very much excitement at all. The South Ship was already tied up. It must have been there a couple of days; there was nobody around, they'd all gone.

We were paid off on the quayside and we were told that we'd be kept informed as to what was happening. Of course we were not. I think it was generally accepted that as far as Caroline was concerned that was it, there wasn't any future in it. So very rapidly everybody went their own way. I came back on a flight with the Caroline representative whose job it was to pay people. He was based in London, probably something to do with Major Minor, I can't remember his name. Don Allen followed a couple of days later. Jimmy Gordon became Guy Blackmore and did a few shows for Radio One. Lord Charles Brown faded into oblivion. Ross Brown I think probably went back to Australia to get his shorts laundered. About a month after I'd finished on Caroline, I joined Harlech Television.'

Not to think that with dues only the tendering was not paid by the Caroline organisation, no there was far much more not organised. When an organisation like the Wijsmuller Supply and Tender Company, has a contract with the – in this case – the Panamanian owners of the radio ships, they are fully responsible for the nautical

arrangements. That also means a proper insurance. The insurance companies have in their policy that ships have to visit a dry-dock for inspection on regular base. And that was one of the many things which was not arranged by the Caroline organisation. And a normal conclusion is that when the insurance rules are not followed the official certificate of seaworthiness will be withdrawn. Following the words of the Wijsmuller Company early 1968 this happened to the MV Mi Amigo as well as the MV Fredericia. An official document was sent to the European representative of the Panamanian owners. From there on a settlement had to be arranged at which date the ships would go into dry-dock, somewhere in a country from which was known the Treaty of Strasbourg was not signed yet.

The Panamanian owners refused several times to bring the ships in for inspection and that was finally the moment for the insurance company to act and withdraw the seaworthiness certificate, an action which was clear enough for the Wijsmuller Company to take the ships into Amsterdam harbour. Officially nothing was mentioned in the press about the difference in thoughts the two Wijsmuller Brothers had. Years later it became known that one of them had the idea that going on with the transmissions wouldn't be a problem, The other however thought that it was nonsense to spend more money into tendering, without the total amount of costs coming back from the Caroline organisation.

When first the MV Mi Amigo arrived, later followed by the MV Fredericia, suddenly



the Panamanian owners wanted to talk and ordered the Wijsmuller Company to look for the cheapest dry dock, where inspection could be made for getting back the sea worthiness certificate. And so Wijsmuller found two places at the Oranjerwerf (Orange Wharf) in Amsterdam. And I can reveal that inspection has been made to the Fredericia and the MV Mi Amigo. When the official reports were received by the Wijsmuller Company they were directly send to the Panamanian owners with the question to make funds available for the inspection costs as well as repairs which had to be made before getting another official certificate. Officially everything could have been arranged within days but months went by and on July 9th 1968 officially both ships were locked up in order of the Wijsmuller Supply and Tender Company from Baarn. As the owners of the Oranje Wharf also want that there are guards on the ships, day and night, the bills for this also went to the Panamanian owners of the radio ships. And you can guess yourself if these invoices were paid.

Some of the deejays thought to seek for free publicity to find a new job when both Radio Caroline stations were off the air in March 1968. For instant deejay Stevie Gee, who had only been for one stint on the MV Mi Amigo and lived in an house on the Prinsengracht where also other deejays stayed during their time on land. It was owned by the Hoodle Family. Lately I found a newspaper cut from April 16th 1968 from the Haarlems Dagblad.

With the header 'Ex deejay from Caroline loves to stay here' the story of Stevie Gee was told: 'The 22 years old ex deejay from the ex radio station Caroline has really found his place in Amsterdam. For many weeks he played his records in the local club 'The Sound' and also since two weeks Stevie Gee can be found as deejay some days a week in the local dancing 'Extase' in the village of Bergen. Next to spinning



the records Stevie is songwriter as well as singer. On Radio Caroline he did his own show last year and before that he did presentations from artists in England. A year ago, in the summer, he came to Holland. The same happened to other Caroline deejays. However Stevie saw the station go down and decided to quit within days of arrival'. Lucky enough he's a lot of experience to get more clubs to sign a contract

with for spinning the records for a live audience.'

Carl Mitchell, Alan Clark and Stevie Gee in 1969: Hans Knot Archive

Who has ever heard Stevie on Radio Caroline? As I did sent the info to Jon at the Pirate Hall of Fame to, he came back with: 'Hi Hans, thank you very much for the for the Stevie Gee cutting. Stevie was heard on Caroline South on the midnight-6am "graveyard slot" for a short time (a month or six weeks) in September/October 1967. He was only on the ship for one stint. And another reader from my 'Hans Knot International Radio Report', Alan Hamblin, sent me a message in 2006 stating: ' He was on board the MV Mi Amigo from Tuesday 29th August 1967 until Tuesday 12th September 1967. For most of the time he was on the air from midnight until 6.00 am.'

So six weeks on the radio ship and from there on back to Holland trying to earn money on the name 'Caroline'. What happened to him? Afterwards he worked as a disco DJ and musician. He spent five years in Amsterdam, DJ'ing in clubs and, while there, wrote a number of pop hits. He also appeared on some Caroline roadshows on the continent which he says were much better paid than his time on the ship! In the early seventies he moved to Denmark and was DJ, compère and singer in a large club in Copenhagen called 'Revolution'. He was a member of a successful Danish band called 'Life' but was forced to return to the UK when his father fell seriously ill and needed Stevie's assistance. Since then he says he has done a "straight nine to five job".

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20th March, 1968.

Letter I

Dear Sir,

Re: Seaborne Radio Station - Radio 270 - Ship Ocean VII

Thank you for your kind enquiry of 11th March and addressed to our Whitby Office. We hasten to enclose the details of the ship which you have requested, and these details, of course, include the equipment which is installed therein.

The asking price for the ship is £25,000 at Whitby. This price is to include all the equipment and furnishings installed in the ship as per the enclosed details. We understand from the Chairman of the Company, Ellambar Investments Limited, which own the ship, that all the equipment, motors, engines, etc. are in good working order; the ship is in a good seaworthy condition and could be sailed out of Whitby on any tide. We know that all the engines and equipment have been tested and run for a short time every Thursday since the ship has been berthed in Whitby as an engineer has spent each Thursday morning checking all the working parts.

Concerning the matter of commission if you succeed in selling the ship for us. We are quite prepared to allow you half of our commission after we have deducted our advertising expenses. Our commission rate has been fixed by the Company at 3% of the sale price, therefore, on £25,000 this would amount to £750. Our advertising expenses to date amount to £150. In the event of you obtaining a sale to a willing and able buyer who has not been introduced to the ship already from any source, your share of commission would be £300.

We should be glad to make arrangements for your applicants to view this ship at any time that is suitable to them, and we await hearing of your further interest.

Thank you for your letter of the 22nd May.

Letter II

In noting the contents, I can categorically inform you that Mr. Ronan O' Rahilly has not bought Ocean VII. It is quite true that negotiations have taken place with Mr. Ronan O' Rahilly but these did not reach fruition owing to the legal difficulties concerning selling the Ship for Marine Broadcasting off the coast of Gt. Britain. This difficulty, of course, does not stop us selling it to someone in a country which has not signed the European Marine Broadcasting Bill of Geneva, Switzerland.

Naturally, as soon as we have sold the Ship, we will acquaint you.

Concerning the matter of disposing of records, as far as I am aware, the Company is not prepared to dispose of records separately. The record library has not been kept up to date, but that would present no problem to somebody commencing a broadcasting station, as all the record companies would be only too pleased to supply records free gratis.

Yours faithfully,

Dictated by *Denys Tuckley*
BUT NOT SEEN

Denys Tuckley SECRETARY

Denys Tuckley.

little then a week after the ships were towed away Dutch biggest newspaper 'De Telegraaf' already mentioned that behind the scene people already worked hard to bring back one of the Caroline radiostations. They stated that the new radiostation would come from another radioship, which was formerly used by Radio 270, known as the Oceaen 7. The ship would be anchored off the Essex coast in International Waters. 'A spokesman for the Caroline organisation told us that first Caroline South would come back on the air due to higher listenership compared to Caroline North. First we planned to use the former Radio London vessel MV Galaxy, which is in Hamburg harbour. But too much work must be done to the ship before bringing it back into international harbours. Therefore the Caroline-organisation decided to purchase the Oceaen 7 from Radio 270.'

[Oceaen VII for sale letter Archive: Freewave Media Magazine](#)

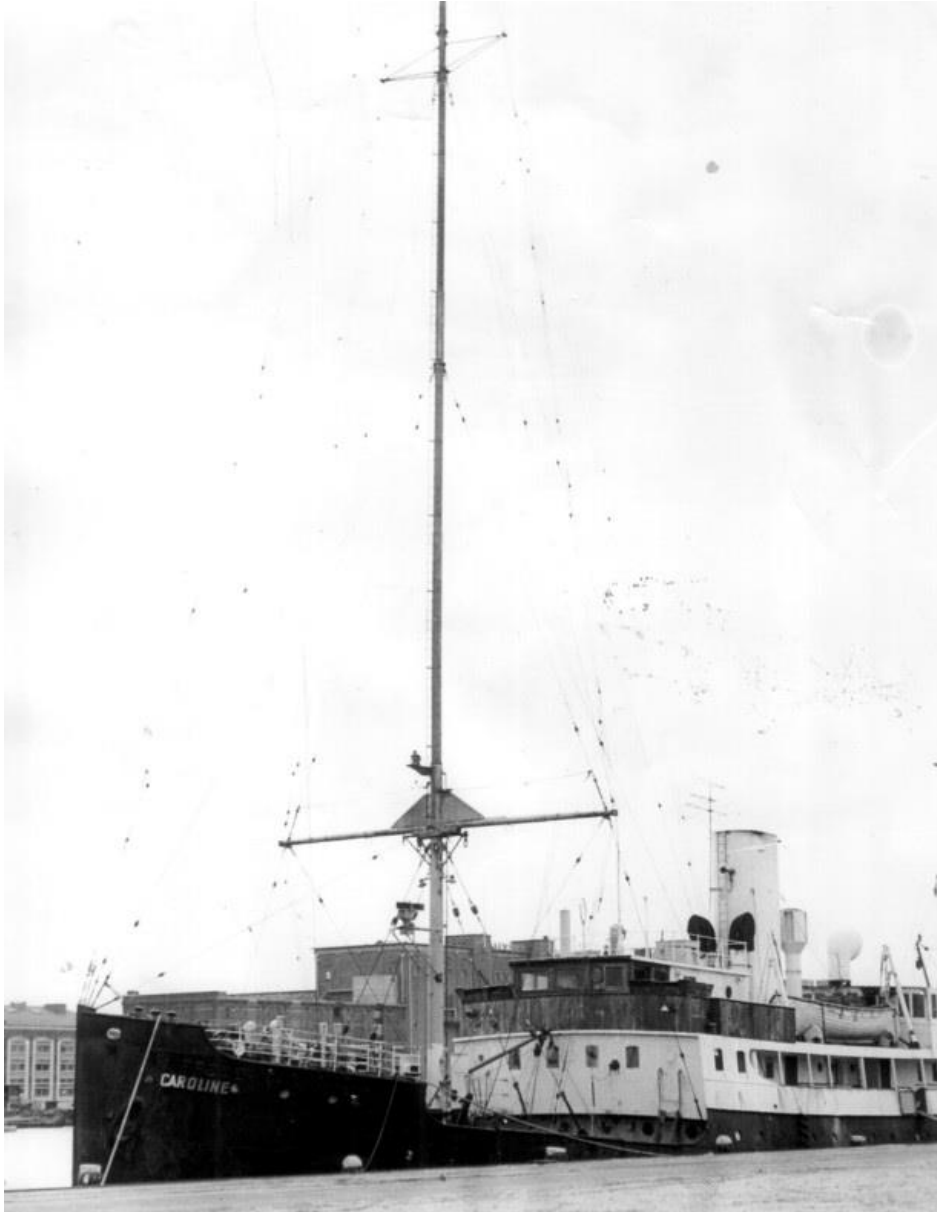
The Haarlems Dagblad, a local newspaper in Noord Holland, brought more information almost two months later. On the front page of the May 11th edition it was mentioned that the director of Caroline had decided not to use the former Radio 270 vessel to restart his famous radiostation. Earlier Ronan O'Rahilly told that Radio Caroline would come back with Easter with the use of this radio ship. Deejays mentioned at that time were people like Andy Archer, Roger Scott, Don Allen and Freddie Bear who would be on board to present the programs during the first three weeks of broadcasting. 'Officially it's announced that too much pre-publicity on the former Radio 270 vessel thwarted the plans to relaunch Radio Caroline. Later on it became known that intimidation and extortion were not unknown factors in the failure to relaunch Radio Caroline at that stage'.

It was March 1969 the name 'Caroline' appeared again in my diary, which I filled almost day from day since 1968: 'The Caroline Revival Hour was transmitted on Radio Andorra on 428 meters, which is 701 kHz. It happened on March 2, 1969, from midnight up till ten minutes past one. The programme was a commemoration of Radio Caroline, the offshore station that went off the air a year ago, when both its ships were towed away from international waters by some tugs hired by the tender company Wijsmuller. Reason was that the station owners had not paid their bills for tendering the MV Fredericia, anchored off the West Coast of England, as well as the MV Mi Amigo off the Eastern Coast. I've also heard that the programme was a test for eventual similar programmes in the future. It was first announced in Spanish, while the microphone later was handled by some Caroline deejays. I heard the voices of Don Allen, Bob Stewart, Bud Bullou, and Stevie Merike."

In the Netherlands, the reception from Radio Andorra was very poor during the first twenty minutes. There was some interference originating from a German radio station, but later on the reception improved. The deejays took us back to the earlier days of Radio Caroline and they played many well-known records from those years. An air-check of the August 15 broadcast from Radio Caroline South was also played. I heard some adverts for the 'Free Radio Association' and for some music magazines. In Disc and Music Echo I later read that similar programmes could be expected soon in the form of regular transmissions between midnight and four in the morning soon on Radio Andorra.

Let's see what I've found more in my diary between 1968 and the moment both ships were sold: 'Radio Caroline, however, did not return on the frequency of Radio

Andorra. Indeed, it would take some years before Radio Caroline would be back on the airwaves. It certainly was curious to read this memory back in my own handwriting. My words suggested that the station already had known a long history. At the time, however, Caroline had only been on the air for scarcely four years. To me, then, four years clearly were a long period of time and one must also not forget



that in those years a lot had happened to the station. Now, we realize that this period was only ten percent of the actual lifetime of the station. The next item I found in my diary regarding Caroline dates back to April 1969:

'The Sunday Telegraph announced that there's a plan for a Beatles' plane. John Lennon and Yoko Ono have agreed to appear in a colour programme for a television station that will be broadcasting to Britain from an aircraft over the Irish Sea. Mr. Ronan O'Rahilly is the initiator and the station will go

by the name of 'Radio Caroline Television.' A lot of show-business people have agreed to participate when the station gets on the air. Curiously, the station won't break any law. The broadcasts will be between six in the evening and three in the night the following day. Ronan O'Rahilly has bought two Super Constellations, each of which will be transmitting in turn. I read in the newspaper that the organisation is discussing some large contracts for advertising with a number of agencies. Most of the advertising will be bought and paid for outside Great Britain. Three countries have agreed to let the airplanes take off and land. The station's policy will be mainly light entertainment with an accent on old films. Also there will be a serious programme with reporters interviewing people on the streets. Invectives will not be censored.'

MV Fredericia in Amsterdam 1968. Photo Rob Olthof

Simon Dee confessed to the press: "I am extremely flattered about the invitation to do a programme on Caroline TV and will consider joining Caroline TV very seriously. At the end of the year I will be a completely free agent. If Caroline TV has a normal, mature format, I see no reason why we should not be involved. I've heard it will be financed by overseas advertisements and the nerve centre will be in New York. But offices also will be opened in Switzerland and Holland. In the Bahamas is a co-backer, called George Drummond, who is only 26 years of age. Ronan told me that the prices for advertisements will be 300 Pounds for 30 seconds compared to the 5500 Pound on ITV." Now, thirty-nine years later, we know that O'Rahilly's television plan was an ill-fated project. In a later publication I will come back to it with some documents never shown before.

In the meantime, the former Caroline ships weren't doing particularly well. In my diary, I found these lines on the pages regarding September 1969:

"Both Caroline ships, the MV Mi Amigo and the MV Fredericia, are still lying in Amsterdam harbour. From the Javakade they were moved to the Houthaven (Wood Harbour) and have been scavenged by thieves. Four tape machines and a television set have disappeared. The vessels are corroding under the influence of water and weather." The water police, as I read in a newspaper, was guarding the ships. It was stated that the ships were owned by Kernan Corporation and Tesman Investments Inc from Panama with an address too in Liechtenstein. This company did not react on questions about their ownership. A spokesman for the Water Police, Mr. Dolman, stated that the huge collection of records is becoming smaller and smaller, mainly due to occasional thieves. During the month of August 1969 several people attending the ships were arrested. Dolman: One day we captured a rowing vessel. Only one guy was in there but it was for the rest completely filled with '45 singles'. Also we stopped 8 guys who went out boating with one of the live-saving rafts from one of the radioships."

The newspaper 'Dagblad Kennemerland' mentioned that it was a complete chaos on the ships. Fire-extinguishers were unloaded bringing a white powder in the studio of one of the ships. Also some hundreds of unopened letters from listeners are on the ground of several cabins and many photographs of ladies who admired their deejays.' The newspaper reported that O'Rahilly had visited the ships in Amsterdam at least three times and it was rumoured that he wanted to bring at least one of the two ships back on the air again with Dutch and English programmes. There were also rumours that Mr. Abe Nathan could buy the complete equipment of the MV Mi Amigo for 450,000 dollars for his Voice of Peace project. The Voice of Peace ship, though, left for New York without the mentioned equipment.

In the meantime, it became 1970 and two people from Switzerland, the then 33 year old Edwin Bollier and 32 year old Erwin Meister, had brought their own radio ship. They would bring Radio Caroline on the air again during the British election campaign by renaming their station Radio Nordsee International into Radio Caroline. It did take a long time before I used my diary again for writing down the word 'Caroline'. On the December 1970 pages I that I found the next lines, dated December 18th: 'The former Radio Caroline radio ship MV Mi Amigo, now in Amsterdam Houthaven, was sinking today due to an act of sabotage. A tap in the engine room was opened and

the ship listed. The crew of a tug of the Amsterdam port authority saved the famous pirate by getting some pumps aboard'. A few days later, the British guard on the MV Mi Amigo, Dave Fletcher, told me that Ronan O'Rahilly had visited Amsterdam to see if the ships were still fit for broadcasting. He also told me that O'Rahilly had plans to



restart Radio Caroline in case the rumours were true that RNI would be back on the air again. RNI closed down at the end of September 1970 to come back on the air in February 1971. It would, however, take up till September 1972 before O'Rahilly followed suit with Caroline again, or should I write when Peter Chicago and Spangles Muldoon did so?

For the last week of May 1972 my radio diary again has some lines on both the Caroline ships: 'The Caroline vessels which were in Holland since March 1968 now both have been sold.' To go into more detail, it was the shipbroker Frank Rijdsdijk, from Hendrik Ido Ambacht, who bought the Caroline vessel, we all know as the MV Fredericia, on Monday afternoon, May 29, 1972 for the price of 26,500 Dutch guilders. This sum was not only paid for the ship but also for what was left of the inventory of the MV Fredericia. The MV Mi Amigo was bought by ships agency Hofman for a sum of 20,000 guilders. The agent could not tell for whom he bought the former Caroline South ship. By the way, the sum paid for both ships was only a small fraction of what the ships and their inventory were worth when entering Holland way back in 1968'.

MV Fredericia at Ouwerkerk aan de IJssel. Photo: Karel Gerbers

About the final destiny of the MV Fredericia I can be very short. Frank Rijdsdijk resold the ship to his colleague Rinus van der Marel in Ouwerkerk in the province of Zeeland and so her final destination would be the broker in a small place near Zierikzee. The aerial mast already had been removed in Amsterdam harbour and the MV Fredericia made her way through the canals of the Netherlands on her own power to a sand-bank near Ouwerkerk, called 'Het Keeten'. The 1350 hp motor

seemed to be in good condition. During the month of July, the MV Fredericia still could be found at the shoal and the new owner had to wait for a very high tide so the ship could be taken into one of the small channels near the broker's place. Early August 1972, the first work on the MV Fredericia had been done by breaking down the upper decks of the ship, where once the studios had been situated. It soon became clear that it would be a heavy job to break down such a strong ship as the MV Fredericia. The ship originally was built as a ferry in Scandinavia, where during wintertime there's a lot of ice. Once the upper deck had been removed, the ship brokers decided to set the ship on fire. They had seen that everywhere in the ship insulation material could be found. They thought they could get rid of these materials by burning it away. What Van Marel still didn't know at the time, was that on the ship heavy anchor chains were used as ballast and as we know anchor chains won't burn away. Maybe that's the reason why work on the ship stopped after it had been set on fire.

The ship stayed at this place and over the many years that followed, Ouwerkerk became a new pilgrimage place for anoraks who were keen to make photos of the former radio ship. I must admit I was there too. I brought some visits to Ouwerkerk and on such an occasion the owner showed Paul de Haan and me the bell of the MV Fredericia. Rinus van der Marel was very proud he had the thing hanging in his office. It would take up till late 1980 before the MV Fredericia was completely broken up. Later I heard that the bell joined Van Marel, when the old man left the Netherlands for an African country. Since a couple of years he's now back, as well as the bell. On the place of the former broker's shipyard nowadays a museum on the history of ships can be found.

Luckily, the Mi Amigo got another destiny. Soon after the auction it was rumoured in the small world of Anoraks — a word that wasn't being used yet in those days — that Gerard van Dam and someone called Rob Vermaat had asked Hofman Shipping Agency to buy the Mi Amigo for them. And we all know that this led us to the rebirth of Radio Caroline, although it first was mentioned 'Radio 199' in the month of December 1972.

Many deejays have worked for Radio Caroline after it became Caroline International on Tuesday August 15th 1967. We already know what Stevie Gee thought was the best to bring more warmth into his career. From many involved, people like Roger Day, Robbie Dale, Johnny Walker and others, it is known what happened to them within and outside the radio industry. But there are some things to reveal, which will be 99,999% new for my readership. And that after 40 years. I found some twenty documents back in the estate of the late Carl Mitchell which brought me the decision to archive it as 'we had plans in 1968'.

INMODE HOLLAND

A. Maclagan
P. Warren

Bos en Vaartstraat 16, Haarlem
Algemene Bank Nederland
Zijlstraat 76, Haarlem
Rek. No 56.03.48.665

Mr. K. Mitchell,
c/o Ross Brown,
43 West Cromwell Road,
L o n d o n -SW6.

Haarlem, 9th April 1968.

Dear Karl,

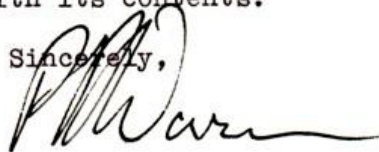
This letter is in confirmation of our telephone conversation on 8 April, when we discussed the following points.

1. You are in contact with a total of four ex-Caroline disc-jockeys willing to travel to Holland and work on the Bus project as described on the attacked information sheet.
2. All disc-jockeys have current driving licences for group 1 vehicles- heavy and light locomotives (i.e. a car licence.) It is essential that they are at least twenty one years of age, from the licence point of view.

Would you:

1. Please sign the enclosed copy of this letter, if you agree with its contents.
2. Get all four D.J.s to sign the attached copy of the information sheet, if they agree with its contents.

Sincerely,



P.D. Warren.

The first one was a letter from a guy called P.D. Warren from Haarlem where he had a company called 'E' together with A.Maclagen at the Bos and Vaartstreet 16. The addressed person was 'Karl' Mitchell c/o Ross Brown, 43 West Cromwell Road in London. It was dated April 9th 1968. It was a confirmation of what was in a telephone conversation between the sender and Mitchell earlier that day. The two main points in the letter were

- 'You are in contact with a total of four ex-Caroline disc-jockeys willing to travel to Holland and work on the Bus Project as described on the attacked information sheet.'
- All disc-jockeys have current driving licenses for group 1 vehicles – heavy and light locomotives (i.e. ca licence.) It is essential that they are at least twenty one years of age, from licence point of few.

The mentioning of the attacked information sheet didn't give me a direct clue as it was not archived.

The next document was send away a day later from the same address to Karl in London. It stated that the contents of the letter was 'for your eyes only'. This since the letter contained information which the sender wanted to release bit by bit to the others (deejays) to keep their interest up during the waiting period. Mr. Warren went on with the next paragraph:

'A difficult point here Karl. I think I said last night that I could give you definite Go/No Go information this week, which is optimistic.

a) we do not have the contract yet which make all possible.

b) But everything else is falling into place nicely

c) This contract could materialise next week and equally it might not materialise until the end of April – hence the flexibility of starting date.

d) I feel sure the product will go, but feelings aren't worth money. So I have told you the exact position. The latest decision date is 30 April, and 'Yes' could happen any time now. Over to you, Karl.'

Still all very misty to me at that stage what would happen. In the same letter there was also some agony as P.D. Warren wrote: 'I have heard rumors of dope connected with DJ's. I look to you to prevent a dope addict getting in, as should this be discovered; the adverse publicity could be disastrous.' Further on in the letter it became clear that Carl would become within the project the DJ Boss and he should

4. I have heard rumors of dope connected with D.J.s. I look to you to prevent a dope addict getting in, as should this be discovered; the adverse publicity could be disastrous.

5. A matter which is vital to the project is the character of the D.J.s. Consider only people who are responsible, each D.J. will be in charge of a bus miles away from us. I think you could best consider this in the light of the fact that you will be D.J.-Boss, and you should only choose people you would feel confident to control even though they are some way away.

Privé: Jagtlust, Eemnesseweg, Blaricum, The Netherlands

-/-

only choose people for the project, he would feel confident to control even though they are some away. Also P.D. Warren had in mind to give the complete new staff a training course a few days in length immediately before the project would start: 'This will train staff to deal with normal running and with emergencies of all kinds. Because I would like to take charge of this course, it will be necessary for you to come over at least three weeks before the project starts, so that a) you can learn it yourself and b) you can advice on a disco bar installation.'

And there was the first point meriting attention: 'Disco Bar' installation, Would it something to do with a Mobile Drive In Show? The two pages long letter ended with: 'I think I've written quite enough for the time being. When I have received a point by point answer to this letter from you, I shall write to you about Radio Veronica and large bus-ins'. Yes: a mobile drive in show was the idea! A strange sentence ended the letter: 'Thanks for the enthusiasm – it does us good. Keep the boys happy now, and don't forget Scientology, - it works!'

Both people from INMODE in Haarlem didn't wait until an answer on the April 9th

letter was received, as only two days later they made a concept letter to the deejays who probably would join in. And there I found, next to the concept, also the complete plan they had, which was already in their brains in February 1968. The info sheet was from that month and so the idea was already there before Wijsmuller towed in the both Caroline ships. The people from Haarlem thought to earn a lot of money with the Netherlands Bus Project 1968.

'The project is intended to publicise and sell the products of one or more of

- a) An established Dutch retail clothing organisation
- b) A major record company
- c) An international soft drink manufacturer
- e) A prominent Dutch popular music magazine

The goods will be displayed on English double-deck buses from London, the interiors of which are converted into small modern shops. Each of these busses will tour the Netherlands independently, stopping for short periods in a number of places. The goods being publicised in this way will also be on sale to the public and the traders in the locality who sell the same goods will be offered attractive publicity on the visit of the bus.'

INMODE also announced more about the interior of the double deck busses:

'The interior will contain carpeted showrooms on both floors, and the bus will be manned by a crew of two, a man and a girl. The main area in which the girl's clothes are sold will be upstairs, where there will be a changing room, and where the sales girl will be predominantly in attendance. Downstairs near the exit will be the cash and wrapping area and the ground floor will also contain areas where men's and girl's clothing and accessories will be on sale. Here there will be also a disco-bar where records can be bought. In addition, soft drinks and souvenirs will be available on the ground floor, where the male member of the crew is stationed. A well finished, attractive appearance will be maintained throughout.'

In the appendix also information was given specially for the male crew member, who also was the technician / announcer in the plan: 'Your area will be at the rear of the lower deck of the bus, and it will comprise a) Two high quality record changers with optional automatic changers. B) a mixer panel. C) a microphone. D) a record bin with quick reference index. E) a cash drawer and f) a seat. Working space will be very

restricted, but Karl will personally supervise the building of your work area, and on the choice of equipment.'

Accord:

So art that stage everything had to be ordered. Also info was given about the length of the project: 'During the four of five months of the project, each bus will stay in say one town for a period of a week. Six days a week, except Sundays and any other holidays on which the bus must be closed, the busses will be open for sales from 10.00 am. to 6.00 pm.'

- 1) *Karl Mitchell*
- 2) *Ruf Brown*
- 3) *Jim Gordon*
- 4) *Don Allen*

And what was the plan for the male crew to do on the busses? Starting with the most important thing: a) take the money from purchasers leaving the bus. B) play music continuously. C) draw customers into the bus with whatever means you like to do. D) once a week or so, it will be your job to drive the bus into the next station and f) you will be the person who keeps order.'



Wages wise an amount of 200 Dutch guilders a week was promised and 1% of the turnover. I must say a lot of money as I earned during that period about 300 guilders a month at the age of 18 years. This document was twice in the Carl Mitchell boxes and one of them was signed in concept by the following persons without a date of signing: Karl Mitchell, R.W. Brown, Jim Gordon and Don Allen. You see all former Caroline deejays.

On May 1st 1968 INMODE announced that J. Walter Thompson had said 'yes' to the project: 'They see no trouble in filling in the buses with their own clients. All we now have to decide with them is when and exactly how. So quit worrying. Soon we will be telling you when, and forgive us if we're a little late already. We meet them again today. Yes we will be hearing the result, probably by telephone. We have now a PR man working for us, and he is also a TV producer. So we now have a couple of hours TV promised too.

A written document by Carl Mitchell is another one which I will highlight. It's a concept letter to the Monthly Muziek Express, a musical magazine in Holland. In there the name for the project was revealed as the Inmode Buscotheque. Advertising would

Muziek Express.

A London double-deck bus will tour Holland this summer and through the month of November as an exclusive mobile shop and publicity medium for Europe. Called the "Buscotheque", the bus will have advertising on the outside and inside. Various fashions and products of the "Carnaby Street" image will be ~~sold~~ for sale within the bus on both levels. In addition, a built-in disco-bar on the lower level will provide continuous music during the day and operate as a discotheque at night.

Apart from the roof and several smaller alterations, the exterior of the bus will remain much the same as a normal London Transport bus. Due to limited headroom and the legal height requirement for such a vehicle, the ~~present~~ roof will be cut off at the upper window level and a ~~new~~ flat roof of ~~the~~ reinforced fibre glass in its place. ~~This too~~ the roof will lie flat when in motion thus complying with the 4-metre height requirement limit. When standing for operation, the roof ~~raises to~~ ~~pro~~ hinges up from one side to provide ~~3~~ ^{ample} metres of headroom on the upper level. A canvas will seal off the area ~~on three sides~~ opened on three sides creating a panel the length of the bus (8 metres) and two

appear on the outside as well as the inside of the bus for fashions of 'Carnaby type' and all the other products to be sold would have a general accent on 'The flavour of London'. There were also problems with the London double decker as regulations in Holland made it impossible to have the double decker on the roads. Therefore the roof had to be cut from the busses at the upper window level.

Part of the concept letter with information to Muziek Express

In the very last document I have on this project it gives a mentioning that the project

will start on June 28th 1968 on Museumplein in Amsterdam following a pre-opening for press only on the 26th of June. People from Muziek Expres would arrange the appearance of a Dutch beat group and in addition a fashion show of the clothes to be sold on the bus would be arranged. It was also mentioned that Lex de Rooi (the television producer) would invite Luxembourg deejay The Emperor Rosko.

As I'm in contact with the Emperor Rosko on a regular base these days I sent him the information I've got on the INMODE Bus and specially the Museum Plein happening in Amsterdam and within hours he came back to me with an answer:

'I have gone through the documents and can say that I was not involved. I can't remember if I was asked because, as you know, we get a hundred crazy proposals a week from people all the time. The Caroline organisation asked me to do a show



from Los Angeles but that was in the mid 80's and it was when the station had New York connections , it was to be a daily show. It was all set to go and then something changed in the company, about that time. But no buses or Dutch connection for me. Rosko'.

Finally it was mentioned that the project was owned and operated by Inmode, based in Haarlem and that the project was the idea of Andrew J. Maclagan and

Peter D. Warren. Both English and the first one residing in Holland for 3,5 years while Warren was there for one year: 'They have been working on the project for 6 months and they hope to expand their idea to a larger number of buses at a later date during the summer or sometime at the beginning of next year in an exclusive European Campaign. They look forward to carrying the project into various other countries both in Europe and America over the next several years.'

Carl Mitchell in Berenkuil Groningen. Photo: Hans Knot

And that closed the part in which the documents are concerned. I think to remember that there was early 1969 a double decker with promotional material on the Grote Markt in Groningen but I don't remember if this has anything to do with the project. Around that time one of the people involved moved to Groningen to rent a room in the Oude Ebbingestreet and to get a job at the big local discotheque 'De Berenkuil' situated at the same Grote Markt. The Weird Beard Carl Mitchell got a job in Groningen until he left in March 1970 heading to Scheveningen to get the tender to the MEBO II on Radio Nordsee International.

HANS KNOT 2008.

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Personal diary Hans Knot

Archive from the late Carl Mitchell