

## Hans Knot International Radio Report November 2011

Dear radio friends, thanks for all the e mails filled with memories and questions. Those who read the report already in 2006 do probably remember that I got a wonderful archive from a couple from Amsterdam, which was stored in their home way back in 1971 by Carl Mitchell. Many letters, photographs and notebooks were in the archive and part of the letters I've published in the report. During the last year I went through the complete archive and tried to reconstruct Carl his archive into a life story. I will publish this story in three parts in the coming months in the report, starting in this issue, but first your comments and memories.

Hospital Radio (HRS) has been very useful for many to step into the radio industry but also those in Hospital Radio, so I learnt through the years, had a strong heart for free and offshore radio, which is shown in the first e mail from Graham Jones, former station manager from a HRS: 'Hi Hans, here are some pictures from a trip to visit Radio Caroline and Shivering Sands from us, jocks from Radio Hertford (Hospital Radio), in 1976. I have many memories of the 1976 trip as well as another in 1977. We started out early morning from Brightlingsea in Essex and were rowed out to a fairly small fishing vessel by the owner Mr. Ord, who was well known for his Caroline trips.

Once aboard we set sail into the North Sea and some of us were allowed to take the wheel would you believe! The deejays on this trip are pictured in a photo I sent you a couple of years ago. The weather was pretty good and no-one seemed to suffer from sea sickness I'm glad to say. It was noticed that the lifebelts were in poor condition but no-one worried. After what seemed like eternity we finally spotted Caroline's mast and the excitement started to build. When we finally arrived we had to remember that we have to keep moving, otherwise the Customs could have spotted us and prosecuted us on our return for 'tendering' the ship.



Jane, Chris Pike, Andrew ("Bone") Davies, John Quine, Chrissy Dawn, Robbie Owen (friend of Abe Nathan) Jane Brockbank, myself, Steve Dean and Bill and Jill.

We got round that by throwing cans of beer aboard as well as the Sunday newspapers followed by several cassette tapes that we had prepared in our studios back in Hertford UK. These tapes contained jingles and messages and a couple of jingles were played when we finally left. Before saying goodbye we managed to chat with the crew and they seemed so pleased to see some new faces! It was kind of sad saying goodbye but we did not know we would be returning the following year.

Our next port of call was Shivering Sands in the Thames Estuary where we sailed very close the wartime forts that also served as home to stations like Radio City and Radio 390. It was a bit misty here and very eerie as we sailed around the deserted forts. We returned to Brightlingsea after about 10 hours at sea and our first port of call was the Fish and Chip shop. This was followed by the obligatory stop at a pub for a drink or two, or three or..!

A wonderful memory for all of us and remembered fondly at a reunion at Robbie Owen's house on 28th August this year. I would like to go on record in saying how proud I am of all the Radio Hertford members for making our station one of the best in the UK. Greetings to you and all the readers, in

the name of free radio. Graham Jones. Founder and former Station Manager Radio Hertford United Kingdom.



Well Graham thanks a lot for sending the memories and photographs and sharing them with my readers. As I was in Hospital Radio also for more than 12 years I know the feeling of making 'free radio' to make a lot of people happy in the sixties, seventies and early eighties, although sometimes staff members at the hospital made us sometimes difficult with the free choice. Part of our team was also in love with offshore radio and some of them are still very active within the radio industry.

Next one please: 'I have been a regular reader of your monthly Radio Report for several years and always find interesting stories in these reports. Hopefully you will keep doing them for many years to come, although they

must be a lot of work. I particularly enjoyed RNI in 1970 which was my introduction to offshore radio. I first picked it up on 186m on Saturday 21 February 1970 (with Roger Day, Johnnie Scott and Horst Reiner) and was an avid listener throughout its life. I kept a day by day RNI diary for much of the 1971 to 1974 period -it covered the period from January 1971 through to December 1972 and then I started again in October 1973 and went through to early March 1974 - which detailed the comings and goings on the MEBO II. When Andy Archer returned to RNI in August 1971 he gave nicknames in the form of animal names to several of the RNI DJs, some of which I don't think are in your list.

Here are the nicknames - my RNI diary records them as coming from Andy Archer on 15 August 1971: Tony Allan - Mink; Crispian St John - Sloth; Mark Stuart - Weasel; Ferry Maat - Hyena; Peter Holland - Ferret and Dave Rogers - Stoat. I know Andy is a reader of your newsletter, so maybe he remembers these. Regards, Michael Downing.'

Thanks a lot for this memory Michael and surely the nicknames will bring memories back to Andy, Dave Rogers, Mark Stuart and Ferry Maat as they are all readers of the Hans Knot International Report. Maybe the nicknames were once or twice used and may never heard before by some of them.

In last issue I published the favorite deejay list from Tom Mulder and I asked you to send in your favorite Top 8 of offshore deejays. In this issue the first lists which came in. And please don't forget to send your personal Top 8 to [HKnot@home.nl](mailto:HKnot@home.nl)

The first one is from Mike Terry in Bournemouth:

1. Kenny Everett
2. John Peel
3. Tony Blackburn
4. Tony Windsor
5. Johnnie Walker
6. Ed Stewart
7. Paul Kaye
8. Tony Allan



As you can see from the list Mike had two favorite stations: Radio London and Radio Caroline. More to follow soon but first something about a happening in September: 'Dear radio friend, the 11th Erkrath radioday took place on Sept 17th 2011. See some impressions and a report at [http://www.travelseries.de/trav2011/trav11\\_1.htm](http://www.travelseries.de/trav2011/trav11_1.htm) have fun Peter Messingfeld.

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*Just before Radio Caroline restarted in 1983 rumours were heard that a new radioship would appear at the West European Horizon. But it would last until November that year that we saw in the trade publication 'Radio News' the first printed message about the American financed project. In their edition from November 4<sup>th</sup> 1983: 'A new pirate ship is leaving Fort Lauderdale, Florida, today to anchor alongside Radio Caroline off the British Coast. The station, which will be called Laser 730, is expected to arrive off Kent in two weeks time. Laser 730 is American backed and will feature only American personalities keen to make impression on the European Market. Its music will be CHR - Contemporary Hit Radio - or Top 40 - which has taken the major stateside market by storm. The mast is 354 feet high and Laser 730 is hoping to achieve a power of 100 kW'. It was the start of a hectic period in which Western Europe was highly caught by the broadcasting team of Laser 558. In this book many memories of a wonderful radio station from more than 25 years ago, 'All Europe Radio Laser 558'.*

Hans Knot (62) is a Dutch media historian and has been researching and writing since 1969. He has written countless articles and books on the history of radio and television which were published in the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, England, France and the USA. In 2009 he was honoured by the Dutch Queen Beatrix with a knighthood for his work as media historian.

**LASER All Europe Radio 558**  
Hans Knot

It did not mean a big surprise as the Radio Caroline radio vessel MV Ross Revenge arrived in the Thames Estuary to seek for an anchorage and to start broadcasting programmes for the new Radio Caroline. It was August 1983 and after 42 months the station was back on the air. Some years earlier it had to stop transmissions (March 1980), when their former radioship MV Mi Amigo sunk in a heavy storm.

The new sound of Radio Caroline was for many avid listeners very boring as less talk and too much non stop music tracks were played. It wasn't the family station we were so fond of. In those days I wrote for Buster Pearson's Monitor Magazine and the Freewave Media Magazine. A third person I have to mention is the late Tom de Munck, who also wrote for the

Freewave Media Magazine and incognito as John Wendale for the Free Radio Magazine. Along with others we followed the offshore scene to bring reports for the readers. The three of us worked closely together in the eighties and succeeded in presenting our work not only to the readers of our magazines but also to several newspapers, magazines and radio stations, who were interested in the intensive work we put into the Laser scene. Now after more than a quarter of a century I dived into our archives to edit this 'All Europe Radio, Laser 558'.

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Groningen, Hans Knot, October 2011.

So, there it's the introduction to my new publication, which just came from the printer and is now for sale. It's a 192 pages book, with also many photographs, including 8 in full colour, many not published before. How to order the book: **The Price is 21 Euro, including package and postage. For people from the Netherlands payment can be done at account number 4065700 or 988940301 on the name of Mediacommunicatie, Amsterdam.**

**For ordering from outside the Netherlands you can use either 4065700 or 988940301 adding IBAN NL85INGB0004065700 BIC INGBNL2A**

**Or you can use paypal: [rob@mediacommunicatie.nl](mailto:rob@mediacommunicatie.nl)**

Please inform also the author when ordering the book and giving your complete address where the book can be send to at [HKnot@home.nl](mailto:HKnot@home.nl)

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When talking with some one of my age about John Peel always his program 'Perfumed Garden' comes into the conversation. In Holland in the late sixties and early seventies we also had such a program on the national pop station, Hilversum 3. It was the AVRO program from Ad Visser and several programs can be found on next internet site:

<http://scdm.wikidot.com/nederlands>

Look Out! We've another personal deejay Top 8: 'Hi Hans, this will be fun!

1. Dick Palmer (Radio Essex, Seagull and Caroline)
2. Johnny Jason (Seagull and Caroline)
3. Michael Hagler (Seagull and Caroline)
4. Tony Allan (Radio Scotland, RNI, Caroline and Voice of Peace)
5. Barry Everett (Seagull)
6. Tineke (Radio Veronica - the late night show)
7. Roger Day (Caroline and RNI)
8. Robb Eden (RNI and Caroline)



Robb Eden 1978 photo: Theo Dencker

Of course Kenny Everett was the greatest, but I'm sure he'll get hundreds of votes so won't be needing mine! Best wishes, Andy Archer. Thanks Andy and of course most of them are related to the very good period Radio Caroline and Radio Seagull had in the first half of the seventies.

Another deejay Top 8 was sent from Germany and reads as follows: 'Hi Hans, thanks for your continuous work to keep us informed about pirate radio. You asked to name the 8 top deejays from the stations so here I give you my results: (its like to vote for the European Song contest)

1. Emperor Rosko
  2. Tony Blackburn
  3. Dave Lee Travis
  4. Kenny Everett
  5. Johnnie Walker
  6. Robbie Dale
  7. Tony Prince
  8. Pete Drummond
- All the best, Harald Urbig.

Thanks a lot Harald and the Emperor will be happy again that he's on the top of your deejay Top 8. For all other readers, don't forget to send your favourite list to [HKnot@home.nl](mailto:HKnot@home.nl)



Bob Baird Scotsman.com, reporting on Belgian Radio enthusiasts Rock on at Rockall as Belgian radio team make landfall at last. Here's what I learned from Nicolas Christian: 'A group of Belgian radio enthusiasts have succeeded in their attempt to land on the remote Scottish island of Rockall. Stormy weather has prevented the group from getting on to the volcanic rock for much of a week. It's a 250-mile boat journey from Stornoway and is just 100ft wide and 70ft high. The Rockall 2011 Belgian Expedition crew



became so seasick that they had to withdraw to St Kilda. But team members have since managed to clamber ashore and reach the top of the rock. A message on the Group's website said: "We have landed! Patrick, ON4HIL is the first to land on Rockall". The group hopes to broadcast from the island. Ownership of Rockall is being examined by the United Nations because of claims from Ireland, the Faroes and Iceland. The disputes centre on fishing rights as the waters surrounding Rockall are home to rich shoals of haddock and monkfish. The island was claimed by the UK on 8 September, 1811, by Royal Navy officer Basil Hall, who led a small landing party from the frigate HMS Endymion to the summit of the outcrop. '

Well Bob thanks a lot for your message and it's always interesting to read about small peaches of earth where certain people or countries think they can claim it. Keep it coming the news! Well next an interesting link on internet: <http://oldiesalternative.com/>

I once told my readers about the special contacts I had in the seventies, after the double LP on RNI, which was produced by Jacob Kokje with me as co-producer was released. I got, in those days, several letters from female listeners of the station, including Liz Poole. Now, almost 38 years later, she's back on the radio scene and wrote to me: 'I only got Broadband recently and had a quick look at the Pirate hall of fame. I didn't even know Rob Out had died. He was my favourite Veronica DJ and I used to come home from school, (in 1970 - 71) rush to my room and lie down with the radio on top of me so I could feel the vibration of his voice on my heart! Embarrassing, really. Don't tell everyone! Then I saw him later on, in 1972, on the balcony of the Hilversum studios, and felt my life was complete! There was something magic about those stations that made us hero-worship the DJs more than anyone else. I'm sorry the world has lost him, and may he rest in peace. Hoping all is well with you and that you are looking forward to the radio day, best wishes from Liz Poole.'

Thanks a lot Liz for this wonderful memory. And as you loved to listen to Rob Out I specially dived into the archive of the Freewave Media Magazine to find this photograph.



Snapshot from a television programme with Rob  
Out presenting The Three Degrees  
Photo: Archive Freewave Media Magazine

Do you want to buy a painting from an ex offshore deejay? Mike Hayes ex Radio City and Radio 270 deejay wrote: 'Dear Hans, I've just added the latest five new works to the site: <http://www.mikesgallery.info>.

And from pictures we go to a model of a ship as John Slinn wrote: 'Hi Hans Thought you might like to see a couple of pictures of my model of the Ross Revenge. She is fitted with remote controlled motor, deck lights, and with a battery powered AM transmitter. I didn't make, it the man you made it was Sterwart Crossley. I bought it of him. I did the transmitter. Enjoy reading your International Reports, I hope you can include a picture in your next report. Keep the dream alive. Cheers John Slinn.'



Now we go to the USA where Ric Harris, known from Laser days, wrote the next e mail: 'Hans, I greatly enjoyed reading the Laser 558 book. The book has brought back forgotten memories and I have learned of some aspects of the Laser story I did not know from before. Thank you for writing it. Ric Clissold.' Thanks a lot Ric and I now know I didn't write it for nothing. Any one who want an own copy, elsewhere in the report you can read how to order it.

For those who know the German language here is an interesting story to read about Radio Sutch and more:

<http://www.noz.de/drucken/57976789/1510-med-aufmacher-samstagsseite>

The link was sent by Martin van der Ven, who also found a site with interesting photographs of Radio Syd.

<http://bilderisyd.se/index.php/search?q=%22radio+syd%22>

Some years ago I wrote about the Fink Competition, which I repeated in the last issue of the Hans Knot International Radio Report and it is Jan van Heeren who reflected with: 'I found in my archive a letter which was sent to new members of the Caroline Club. The letter is only dated with 1966, but the envelope brings the full details as it was sent on October 20<sup>th</sup> 1966. What I learned from the letter is that the competition had a long run on the station, so I think it got several mentioning in the programs.

ALREADY A SENSATIONAL SUCCESS - THE THINK 'FINK' COMPETITION!

This free competition has met with such fantastic demand that we are still sending out entry forms so that every member has his (or her) chance. Yours is enclosed! Remember, with 1000 prizes to be won, you've got a really great chance of being lucky! Although 'Fink' is a word most D.J.'s use now and then, everyone has different ideas about what one actually looks like. We want your idea, so put on your 'finking' cap and get to work right away. As you'll see from your entry form, anything goes in this great competition, just as long as it gives us your ideas of what a 'Fink' looks like!

Because we've had such a sensational response to this competition, judging has already started, but we can guarantee that, as soon as your entry arrives, it will be given full consideration. So get going with your groovy ideas right now, and send in your entry soon!

lots of luck,  
*Susan Simpson*  
SUSAN SIMPSON  
CAROLINE CLUB

P.S. DON'T KEEP THE CLUB TO YOURSELF - pass on the two spare membership forms to your friends - they'll love you for it!

P.P.S. Please quote your new membership number on your competition entry and on all future correspondence with the club.

Also have a look at for more about the competition:

<http://www.offshoreechos.com/Caroline%2060/Caroline%20Club-4.htm>

Thanks a lot Jan for sending us the Caroline Club letter as well as the link to the OEM information page, where the 'Fink Competition Form' is printed completely. Talking about Caroline in the sixties another reader, Gary Hunt, send me some time ago a short e mail stating: This I didn't know before, including a short newspapercut from the New Musical Express dated 1966 09 30. Those who were teenagers in the sixties all know the 'Black is Black' song by Los Bravos, a Spanish group. In the article it was mentioned that Philip Solomon, in those days Programme Director with Radio Caroline, had signed two other Spanish groups which he would take into the studios to records songs on his then Major Minor label. But remarkable was the following information: 'Solomon is also setting up a weekly commercial radio programme to be heard in most parts of Europe. He has concluded a deal with Decca's distribution subsidiary Selecta to handle his Major-Minor label and the first release planned for October 28th will include a single by Los Brincos, one of the two Spanish groups he has signed at the weekend. The disc will be an English version of the group's current Spanish chart topper. The other group, Los Shakers, has a Scottish boy as its lead singer and will record for a Major Minor release in November. Next week Solomon attends a meeting in Madrid at which details of his weekly hour-long commercial radio programme will be finalized. It will comprise equal contributions from England, France and Spain and will be broadcast in England, France and Spain and will be broadcast to Britain by Radio Caroline, to France by Europe 1 and to Spain by Radio Madrid.'

Thanks Gary and I must say that I have a foggy notion of it, but don't remember at all if the idea for an international radio hour was ever finalized. I think we have here another promise to the press, and so the reader and listener, which never came further than a promise. But maybe someone else knows more? About the link to Spanish Groups signing for Major Minor I can say that this was true. Another name which came up with me was the Spanish Group Los Canarios, which recorded a few songs like: 'Get on your knees' on Major Minor. On internet a long list of artists, who recorded for the Philip Solomon Company can be found, although the list is not complete but interesting to have a look at:

<http://www.globaldogproductions.info/m/major-minor-uk.html>

All reflections on this and other subject can be send to: [HKnot@home.nl](mailto:HKnot@home.nl)

Well we have to celebrate another day each year as the executive board of UNESCO would like every Feb. 13 to be 'World Radio Day'. This news was brought first Mid October in the Radio World News Bytes. The board of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization recently approved the recommendation, which has backing from numerous broadcast associations. Feb. 13th was chosen in honor of the U.N.'s establishment of United Nations Radio on that day in 1946. (The date October 30th was among the candidates, to honor the famous 'War of the Worlds' broadcast; but the director general recommended that UNESCO avoid that, writing: "Despite being a pivotal moment in the history of radio, it also represents a date that provoked panic in listeners, with dramatic consequences.") The board recommended that its membership approve, and that member states celebrate World Radio Day in the way they see fit. The proclamation calls radio a low-cost technology, both to broadcast and to receive, that is equally suited to reach global, national or local audiences ideal in areas of low literacy or for serving small specialized audiences." The authors also noted radio's role in emergency communication systems and support of disaster relief efforts. Internet radio and podcasts, they argue, are part of 'radio' and make it even more powerful and accessible.

Goals of [World Radio Day](#) include raising the understanding of the value of radio, including its role in new media; encouraging leaders to expand access to radio; providing a worldwide networking focus for radio supporters and professionals; and highlighting issues each year to publicize and gain support among the public. In addition to the War of the Worlds anniversary, dates put forward included October 6th, birthday of Reginald Fessenden; July 27th, date of the first public wireless transmission of Morse code by Guglielmo Marconi and November 30th, birth date of scientist Jagadish Chandra Bose, who demonstrated remote wireless signaling and use of semiconductors to detect radio signals. The authors argued that the benefits of radio globally are far from fully realized — "up to a billion people do not have access to radio, even as innovative uses are still being found." They continued: "For billions of people, radio is the most accessible and affordable mass medium, and in many cases the only one, but it is in danger of being overshadowed by digital technologies on the public agenda."



From Scotland we have the next information from Graeme Stevenson: 'BBC - BBC R&D, the BBC Archive and digital public space: an overview of our work on the archive. The BBC has about a million hours of video and audio content, plus a wealth of documents, including the original scripts. Most of this content is still on magnetic tape, film, records or paper and so needs to be digitized and made searchable before it can be contributed to the Digital Public Space which was the subject of a recent [technology podcast](#) from the Guardian. BBC R&D has a long track record of developing innovative technology for the BBC's archives, including the Ingex digitization process for D3 videotape [BBC R&D White Paper WHP 155](#), and Reverse Standards Conversion, which reverse engineers the processes applied by pioneering standards converters of the 1960's to programmes of that era provided to broadcasters abroad and lost from our own archives.<http://bbc.in/r34XwG>

Well guess what? Here's another one from the Emperor Rosko in California: 'hi Amigo, thanks for introducing me to myself! I had not seen those clips on internet! I forgot what I looked like back in the times of tubes and trannies. As always, exciting news not quite ready for release and you will be the first if and when. Good luck with the Radio day and the future sponsor who will send DJ's around the world tickets to attend in 2012 :) Keep up the good news work. Hope I was first to reply, I miss "first" status! This was sent with in minutes of it appearing. EMP.'

Well Emperor good to see you've seen the videos. It must be that everytime after receiving the report you check out first if you got a mention. We never sponsor trips around the world. Everyone who's coming to our RadioDay do it on the own expensive as they think it's an honour to come. Take care and let the news coming. By the way you were number three. Greetings, Hans

An unexpected mail came versus Facebook: 'Hi dude, do you remember me from ukradio.com, how are you doing? Well a few years back I know. Listen, I have a radio show that is based aboard a fictional pirate radio ship - which I am trying to syndicate. Just wondered if there are any stations in Holland or other countries that may wish to use this show - do you have any contacts please? Many thanks, Liam.'

Well Liam there are thousands of contacts so the best way is to send the request in my monthly Radio Report. So anyone who wants a demo from this special program can write to: [studio@radioscooby.com](mailto:studio@radioscooby.com)



Just two weeks before the Radio Day in Amsterdam. For those who are coming, all have a good flight or travel. We see each other at the New Casa 400. For the latest update in program: [www.radioday.nl](http://www.radioday.nl)  
As an appetizer for the program a very fine photo special of (283) with many, never before published, photographs from Radio Delmare can be seen on that site and also on: [www.radioday.nl](http://www.radioday.nl)

We had e mails from all around Europe and this one comes from an avid Radio Luxembourg listener from the past, Alfons Gelens, who wrote: 'First of all thanks a lot for the monthly report, everything is read by me! Just a short message from this side, not shocking news but the Post Office of the Principedom Andorra has released last year a stamp in honour of the 'Radio', with a picture of the tower of the building from Radio Andorra. The stamp shows the text: Radio Andorra Postes 2010. Greetings from Benidorm, Alfons Gelens. '<http://tunein.com/?locale=fr-FR&z=666188023>

For a very nostalgic movie on the station go to:  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YNhTq\\_zMJPA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YNhTq_zMJPA)  
and a brief history in OEM go to  
<http://f5nsl.free.fr/andorre/histoireg.html>

Talking about OEM, don't forget to have a watch at the recent updates of our befriended sites:

[www.offshoreradio.co.uk](http://www.offshoreradio.co.uk)

[www.radiolondon.co.uk](http://www.radiolondon.co.uk)

[www.bobleroi.co.uk](http://www.bobleroi.co.uk)

and [www.offshore-radio.de](http://www.offshore-radio.de)

Next is the first part of the promised three part series on Carl Mitchell.

## THE CARL MITCHELL FILES

Early March 2006 I got a phone call from Mrs. Hoodle van Leeuwen in Amsterdam. She told me that she had been searching for me for a long time. Although she found my name sometimes in articles about the history of radio she never knew where I lived. Internet was a thing she never had access to. When Dutch newspaper NRC had an interview with me late 2005 they mentioned that I worked for the University Groningen. To keep things short, she told me that for 36 years she kept the personal belongings from a former RNI deejay from whom she didn't know what became of him after 1971.



Carl Mitchell 1965

I could tell here he worked in Groningen during 1969 and early 1970. Also I could add more about his career as well as the fact that Dave Carmichael died in the early nineties of last century. We know him all as Carl Mitchell, deejay on Caroline International in 1967/1968 as well on RNI in 1970. Weeks later I met Hoodle and her husband Tom at their current house in Amsterdam and it seemed they hired a room to Carl in 1968 up till late 1970 at their former house at the Prinsengracht. When he left them he still had to pay some 800 guilders for rent, left his personal archive and belongings and never came back. As I'm researcher on the history of radio Hoodle thought it was time to give the archive to me.

Disc 4-4-1970

## How Weird Beard became a pirate

**M E E T** Carl Mitchell, the "Weird Beard" and amiable American second-in-command of the good ship Mebo II, better known to all as Radio North Sea.

He's a personable young chap, 23 - years - old and full of the spirit of adventure so necessary in a pirate disc-jockey.



*Carl: great venture*

He has a funny face with a snub nose, and the "beard" tag really fits. His accent has been dulled by years on the Continent and because of his age he's unlikely to return to the States and face conscription to Vietnam.

Three years ago, nothing was further from Carl's mind than life as a DJ. Having completed four years studying design in America he came to the Continent to work for a public relations firm in Brussels.

"At the time I didn't even like pop music — I was a classical freak and always had been. But I'd heard about all these pirate stations on the North Sea and started to listen out of curiosity.

Radio London was my favourite station and I was actually quite moved to hear their final hour before the Marine Offences Bill forced them off the air. Then I turned over to Caroline and heard Robbie Dale asking for more disc-jockeys. 'Right,' I thought, 'this is for me'."

"I'd told them I was coming for a job, and they said 'You'll be lucky' but I went nevertheless."

Twenty-four hours later and fast-talking Mitchell was on the tender out to the illegal Radio Caroline, the first DJ to join them after the M.O.B.

"The change in me has been amazing. I fell in love with the life and with the music — I'm a music addict now and when Caroline was forced off the air I couldn't bring myself to go back to public relations work again."

On the subject of Radio North Sea, Carl is as enthusiastic as his shipmates.

"It's a great venture," he says, "and we're all determined to make it succeed. I know it will."

From the period starting March 1968 there are some documents found: In the Carl Mitchell archive letters can be found sent to 'c/o' in several places. In Amsterdam, Groningen, Haarlem and Amstelveen he had several so called 'hiding' addresses, where people could send in letters and on several occasions also money for his 'prestigious' projects. This was in the period 1968 up till 1971, so after he left RNI. He had all kind of ideas to make money. The first one, I found, were several letters in which Caroline listeners had been asked to send in a card for more information for flats to be rented in Spain. A commercial for that purpose had been produced just days before the last transmission from the MV Mi Amigo of the British East

Coast, early March 1968. Letters were coming in up till late March asking for more info and the brochure about the flats. The original Dutch address from Radio Caroline, at Singel 160, was used, as well as one at Bieschbosch in Amstelveen, a place not far away from Amsterdam. Also I found back a bunch of letters, concerning the same issue 'flats to rent in Spain' in an envelope whereby a typed memo was found, written by Nan Richardson, who - together with her husband Don, were doing the daily running of the office in Amsterdam till the end of March 1968. You can see that the letter was sent to a certain 'Jim'.



Who can tell us more about this 'flat project' as well as Jim? I think it's the same person who once was the personal guard for Ronan O'Rahilly and was on the MV Mi Amigo for some time in the seventies, Jim Houlihan. So I contact another person on Radio Caroline in 1968, Andy Archer, who wrote to me: 'I think you are right about Jim being Houlihan, although he was known as "Jimmy" so it could be someone else but most likely to be Houlihan. I can't think of any other Jims in the Caroline organisation at that time. I know Jimmy was involved in the property business. For a while he was the minder for a guy called Peter Rachman, who was a notorious London landowner. Rachman had hundreds of flats, which he used to let out mostly to immigrants. Jimmy had connections in Spain, in fact he retired years ago and died late 2010. You have to remember that back in 1968, Caroline was desperate for money and they were prepared to try anything to get more money coming in. The revenue from the "plug" records didn't amount to very much money and none of the advertising on the station was being paid for. I didn't know about the Spanish flats, or possibly can't remember such a project'.





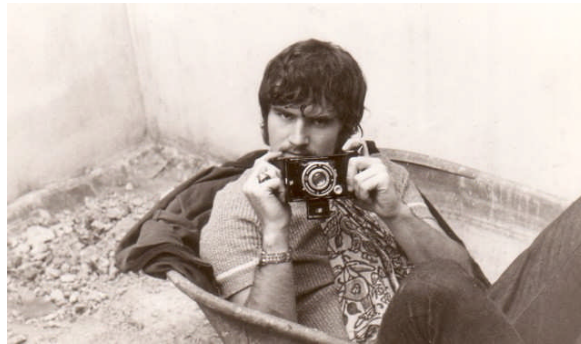
Part of the Carl Mitchell belongings

Also Andy added some info about Don and Nan from the Amsterdam office: 'Nan Richardson was a very nice person. I should imagine that both she and Don (The Chief engineer on the Mi Amigo) are both dead. I saw Don very briefly in 1969 on the island of Guernsey; he was working in an amusement arcade looking after the gambling machines. I've been searching death records, but no luck as yet. Hope I have been of some help, Best as ever, Andy'

After reading Andy's answer I asked him if it was true that Jimmy was working for Rachman, as this person died already in 1962 and if Jimmy was also working on the Mi Amigo in 1973. Here's what Andy wrote: 'Jimmy was in London from the late 1950s. He worked for Rachman for a year or two. He was on the Mi Amigo really keeping an eye on things for Ronan. Ronan didn't trust Gerard van Dam so he wanted to know what was going on. Jimmy enjoyed being on the ship. He did a lot of work out there including helping to fit the new mast. Jimmy was also David McWilliams's manager, hence all of the advertisements for the film Gold which included some of McWilliams's music.'

Within the photo collection from Carl Mitchell there were also pictures from a guy called Stevie Gee. In his personal notes Carl wrote down that Stevie was one of his mates in Amsterdam and he had done a short stint on Radio Caroline. Personally I hadn't heard him at all in 1967 or 1968, after the MOA became law. Also in the many tape lists I've seen through the years; never

saw a recording from this deejay. Looking for other material in my archive I also found a newspaper cut from April 16<sup>th</sup> 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 former Radio station Radio Caroline, has really found his place in Amsterdam. For many weeks he plays 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 him for spinning the records for a live audience.'



Who has ever heard Stevie on Radio Caroline? As I did send the info to Jon at the Pirate Hall of Fame to, he came back with: 'Hi Hans, Thank you very much 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 and October 1967. He was only on the ship for one stint. '

When I wrote first about Stevie in the Hans Knot International Radio Report there was one reader, Derek May reflecting with: 'With regard to Stevie Gee, I cannot recall him specifically, but I recall his jingle. On Radio Caroline he used to play the Monkees, 'Wake up Sleepie Jean', from 'Daydream Believer', with the words 'Wake up Stevie Gee, Oh what can it mean, to a daydream believer.....', or was it 'Cheer up Stevie Gee'? But there were more people reflecting on his name, for instant Alan Hamblin from

London: 'Dear Hans, just a short note about Stevie Gee on Radio Caroline. 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.'

Some weeks later Jon Myer from the Pirate Hall of Fame came with a lot of information about Stevie Gee, which he got from him personally after he came in contact with him by Stevie's brother in law, Steve Skinner: Stevie Gee was born as Stephen Hackett in Lewisham, south London, Stevie had a job in a production office in the city after finishing his education, but also worked as a musician on the side. After five years in the same job, he decided to go travelling and, after following a roundabout route, arrived in Amsterdam in 1967. He saw a story in a newspaper that mentioned Radio Caroline was opening an office in the city so he and a friend went to pay them a visit. The friend got work helping out in the office while Stevie was offered a job as a disc-jockey, despite never having done any DJ work before in his life! He joined Caroline South at the end of August 1967 and presented the overnight show, starting at midnight. Stevie can't remember exactly how long he was on board Caroline. For most of the time he was on the air from midnight until 6.00am. Following his time on Caroline, Stevie returned to Amsterdam where he shared a house with fellow broadcasters Carl Mitchell and Alan Clark, and worked as a disco DJ and musician. He spent five years in Amsterdam, DJ'ing in clubs and, while there, he wrote a number of pop hits. He also appeared on some Caroline road shows 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, compere 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.'



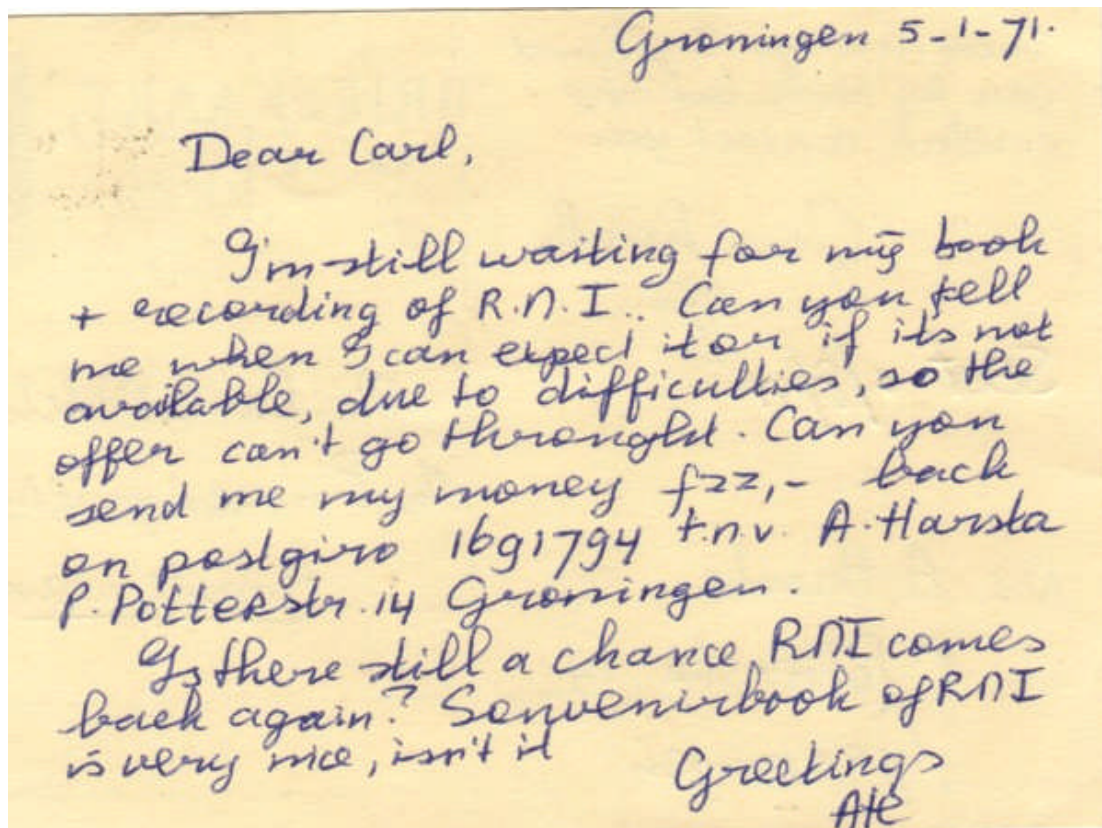
Alan Clark, Carl Mitchell and Stevie Gee Amsterdam  
1970



When studying all these letters of the late Carl Mitchell files I naturally come across many very personal notes not meant for the public but I can tell that I came to the conclusion that Carl Mitchell had a very difficult character. Carl seems to have been a very lonely person that was constantly on the move, still searching for a suitable way of life in foreign countries many miles away from his native country, the USA. He spread his wings from the USA because he would not fight in Vietnam. He also tried to get other nationalities, which he requested in countries like Canada, Belgium and Austria. He also stayed for some weeks in a psychiatric clinic in England, before working on Radio Caroline.

I suddenly started to learn that there was a big difference between the disk jockey on the wireless set, whom you sometimes adored and the real

person 'behind the curtain'. Carl Mitchell obviously didn't respect several laws and developed a bigger burden of debt. He searched for more and more excuses, tried to change his identity desperately playing hide-and-seek. Until the early seventies, he didn't succeed in finding a partner whom he could trust and love. But he loved the radio. In the files were a lot of letters, I think about 800, from which some 600 were never opened. Including there were a lot of people writing to Carl Mitchell when a book and LP, they paid for, would be delivered. Carl had advertised in several musical magazines that such a book would be published and how people could send the money for it. He never wrote a book, either produced an LP. In the archive personal notes were found in which Carl tried to make a line up for the book.



Groningen 5-1-71.

Dear Carl,

I'm still waiting for my book + recording of R.N.I.. Can you tell me when I can expect it or if its not available, due to difficulties, so the offer can't go through. Can you send me my money f22,- back on postgiro 1691794 t.n.v. A. Harsta P. Pottestr. 14 Groningen.

Is there still a chance RNI comes back again? Sevenirbook of RNI is very nice, isn't it

Greetings  
AHC

So exclusively I will launch the personal notes of the late Carl Mitchell. His note block has a lot of items, starting with his notes about how they got the news on RNI in 1970. The first thing he wrote down was the meaning of RNI:



'RNI, a radio station which is a means of communicating to a large number of people. 'A means of entertaining them, through music, with transmitters and aerial. RNI, also a radio ship with sailors in storm, attempting Piracy'. RNI is also a commercial radio station and a series of events and an organisation involving people. RNI also is a daily source of entertainment to several million of listeners as a daily part of their lives.'

8.4.70

THIS IS RADIO NORT<sup>SEA</sup> INTERNATIONAL, EUROPE'S ONLY  
ALL DAY MUSIC STATION, BROADCASTING FROM  
51 DEGREES, 42 MINS-30 SECONDS NORTH - 1 DEGREE, 17 MINUTES  
EAST, ON ~~219~~ METRES ON THE MEDIUM WAVE BAND.  
ALSO BROADCASTING. ~~ON 6.210 MEGACYCLES,~~  
IN SHORT WAVE ON THE 45 METER BAND - 6.210  
MEGACYCLES. AND IN F.M. ON CHANNEL 50 - 102 MEGACYCLES.  
ON THE AIR FROM 5:30 A.M. TO 2:00 A.M. - THIS  
IS RADIO NORT<sup>SEA</sup> INTERNATIONAL -

I'll try as much as possible to write this story as penned on the notebook by the late Carl Mitchell himself as well as the many letters from the listeners will be the main subject in the story, for without the enormous amount of letters coming in during those days the sound of RNI wouldn't have been so happy as well all do remember.

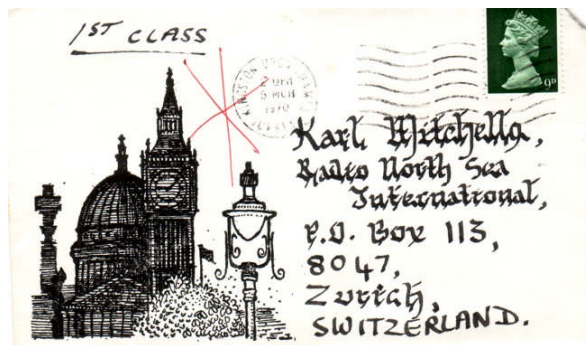
'We got an enormous amount of letters during our stay off the Dutch as well as the British coast. A part of them have been read in our programs, others have been opened and enjoyed by the deejays. I had my very first letter from 19 years old Mervyn Martin from Newmarket in Suffolk who wrote: 'Dear Carl, I got so fed up with listening to these childish DJ's on Luxembourg tonight that I thought I'd try to pick up some foreign stations along the medium wave band, but surprise, surprise as I picked up Radio Northsea International. I say surprise because for weeks I tried to get RNI, but up tonight I've failed. What a fabulous contrast to Radio Luxembourg. RNI sounds just like Caroline and London. I hope you don't mind the comparison. What I'm saying, or trying to say is that RNI is just too much; really great. Could you tell me if you were on Radio London about three years ago? You sound a lot like the bloke who scared me to death with the

horror stories around midnight. If so, keep them coming as they were pretty cool, really. Are there going to be any underground shows on RNI in the future, like Kid Jensen had to have on Luxembourg before he went back to home in Canada? I'm converted to the 186 metres medium wave band. Keep up the good work. Best of luck, to all the deejays on the boat. I hope you just can beat the establishment's attempts to have you silenced.'



'When the owners from RNI, Edwin Bollier and Erwin Meister from Switzerland, decided that it was better to transmit off the British Coast the ship went from Scheveningen to the Essex Coast. As a result the station won a lot of British listeners and letters too! For instant the one from Veriti Anne Meldrum, who was 20 years young in 1970. Living in Surbiton in Surrey she wrote on March 4<sup>th</sup>: 'what a fabulous birthday present to have Free Radio once again (not that I thought for a minute you'd ever gave up) and to have my nights after midnight full again with the weird beard. The thing is the transistor hardly can pick up - so I'm using a powerful radio at the moment, which, I fear, my brother will pinch when he comes home from

University and then I'm stuck!" What a nice letter which was sealed in a more marvellous envelope directed to Karl Mitchella.



Going back to Carl's notes: 'Direct after we officially came on air memories were flooding back from the pirate days in the sixties as well a lot of people writing about Harold Wilson like Roz South from Lewes in Sussex: 'Congratulations for bringing back Pirate Radio. I was so overcome when I tuned into RM and found that, after three years of exile, the pirates were back. I got quite hysterical. I was 13 when the law banning the pirates came into being, way back in 1967. And I thought that defeat was inevitable especially when Caroline was finally taken off the air. I remember written countless letters to Harold Wilson. The majority of which weren't answered. The Dreaded Beeb came into being and we were forced to live and love governed by certain deejays on their mid morning shows. We suffered indignity. England was getting like Pepperland when the blue meanies took over. Anyway inspiration is running out and my boss is giving me some very good looks. So I wish you all the best wishes in the world and don't get seasick. Can you get seasick when your anchor is dropped? Au revoir, Love, Peace and Happiness.

I like to mention also the letter from Jean Fluit from Salfords in Surrey. She wrote: 'I was delighted when I heard on the BBC that you had started broadcasting. Soon found you - very clear and good reception. How I've missed the Pirate stations. At least we got a mixed bag of pop standards. I'm a middle aged addict (music, not drugs). My son, I might say, works for the BBC TV as a catering manager. Would I be a traitor? The very best of luck and calm seas!'



MEBO II on the go to British Coast with on the left Carl.

In the first week of March we also got a letter which was sent in by D Skandon from Deal in Kent. 'We have been testing your station between myself and two other trawlers for three and four days, and we were very pleased to hear you back on the air. To us it sounds like the old ship Caroline. To get back to the facts, your signal is coming in through 6x6, so a very strong signal and a very good modulation. Our last test on you was on 24/2/70 at 24.00 hrs, when you had a couple of small breaks but still flying strong. Keep up the good work, and don't forget to remember us poor hard working trawler men in our small boats risking our lives to catch your dinner. Please do not mention about us testing your station on the air, as it could us into trouble with the GPO being that we are licensed by them and they do not like pop pirate stations.' I answered in the program, which was aired on March 4<sup>th</sup>, late evening around 11.20: 'You said that working on trawlers is a little bit rough and I can understand, basically knowing being here for only a week on RNI in unprotected waters and being a fish lover myself a great hello to all your poor hard working fishermen. I'll play you a lovely tune called 'Instant Karma'.

When starting on Caroline and having a beard, way back in the sixties, I gave myself a nick name 'The Weird Beard', which was also used by one of the American top deejays Russ Knight. After coming back on the air on RNI I decided to still use is, but during the first program I dropped the idea to maybe get rid of it. And I had forgotten the opinion of the listeners as they directly reflected with letters. An example is from Andy Douglass in Plymouth: 'I was busy doing decorating a room and staying up until I'd finished. It was during your first program on RNI that you had intended

dropping the 'weird beard' image. I think it's a pity. Reconsider it.' But also letters from non weird beard lovers came in: 'I don't find it positively annoying or off putting, but I do think it's a bit silly and using 'the weird beard thing' spoils your presentation.

During the first weeks RNI used the 186 metres, which was very near to maritime frequencies and the listeners were worried we could become in severe problems. Some really thought we were doing a damn fine job and hoped we would get a lot of advertising. As one listener wrote to us: 'I have two things, which are worrying me. If the station stays on 186 metres, where it clashes with the maritime Morse traffic, it will provoke a militant disapproval, with consequent swift severe action, from the authorities. In addition most trannies can not get 186 metres which is on the very edge of the medium scale. Many of your most ardent potential listeners are youngsters, who have only cheap radios and find their scale does not extended down to 186 metres. In any case the Morse makes listening intolerable. So I must insist that the station should in its own interests move from 186 metres.'

I want to mention a very early letter which was written on February 23<sup>rd</sup> 1970 in Groningen. This is a place in the North East of Holland, where a lot of offshore admirers lived and I did my gigs regularly in a local discothèque called the Berenkuil. One of the guys, At Harsta, wrote also in the name of his girlfriend Betty Bergsma: 'Today on RNI we heard you were joining the deejay team on the MEBO II and we want to wish you a lot of success at the station. We've often visited your show in the Berenkuil and in the JOK building in Leeuwarden and everytime we enjoyed ourselves very good. If you think about it you will remember us: A girl with short red hair and a tall boy with a little beard, not half as nice as yours (you told so). You once played for us 'Stagger Lee' by Wilson Picket and we want to ask you if you can play this for us as a kind of request. Well Carl, good luck on the station, don't be seasick and we'll listen when you're on your best and at your worth but remember we think you're the first'.



Leeuwarden 4-7-70.

Hello Carl,

Here's a letter from us in the north of Holland. We're the couple whose letter you answered as one of the first on the station when it was still on the Dutch coast.

I'm studying in Groningen and so we often met you in the Berenkull. The first time we wrote a letter to you I gave an address in Groningen. But now I have holidays and am staying with my parents in Leeuwarden where you've worked in the JOK building which burned down some months ago.

The reason I'm actually writing is that I should like to make a trip to the station with the tender. Because I'm going to write an article about the station in a paper over here and would like to include something about the trip to the ship and the living on the station. I understood the tender leaves Scheveningen every Thursday and now I would like to ask if there is a possibility to go with the tender and at what time it is leaving. Or should I first contact one of the owners in their hotel in Scheveningen? Can you please write me a little note telling me how I can go with the tender, before you are leaving again to the ship this week. For this I enclose a stamp of 25 cent.

Hoping you can understand my English and that you'll write me a little note I'm ending this letter but not before I've wished you every success with the station and that the jamming will stop in the very near future.

Yours sincerely,

*Ate Harsta*  
Ate Harsta

My address:  
Ate Harsta  
Gerard Terborchstr. 66  
Leeuwarden.

Although our postal address in Zürich, where Bollier and Meister originated from, was mentioned a lot in our programmes from the very first week (Radio Northsea International, PO Box 113, 8047 Zürich in Switzerland, people tried to find a faster way. They thought sending it to an address in Holland would save a lot of time as the post had not to be sent first to Switzerland and then back to Holland and with the tender to the radio ship. As both directors stayed a lot of time in the Grand Hotel in Scheveningen, this hotel got a lot of mentioning in the programmes. One day I got a letter from someone in England which was addressed to: 'Carl Mitchell c/o Grand Hotel in Scheveningen. But another one appeared on the ship, which was sent away from Southend on Sea on February 23<sup>rd</sup> 1970 and received in Amsterdam only four days later. Then it was brought out to the ship. It was sent to: Radio North Sea International, 5, miles off the Dutch Coast, Europe.

Next to the English language programs RNI, or Radio Nordsee as I have to say, had some German deejays. Not all the English listeners were happy with this and reflected like: 'There's one thing that bugs me and that is that I cannot understand how, in view of Britain's laws against citizens advertising on offshore operators, RNI can hope to get support for a mainly English Service. Surely if you were to run service whereby you played a record; the English deejay spoke giving titles of preceding and following discs, you played another record. The German deejay spoke giving titles and so on in one program. Germany has no Marine Offences Act, I think and so a high

problem will be solved. A similar service with French as well was run by Europe 1. This would truly be an international station.'

It was always very nice to get response from the listeners. We were not normal radio people, who were going to work and having done their daily job going home again. We were out in international waters for several weeks and letters were a very welcome diversion in the long hours. In the first weeks letters came in remembering the high days of the sixties offshore radio, where I had also a small spot. Let's go to Michael Gillaert from London who wrote, among other things: 'I feel I must write and tell you how pleased I am to hear you on the air again. I would hardly believe my eyes when I read that the Caroline ship had been towed back to port, never to return. I missed very much the sound of my favourite deejays, but I did not listen to Radio One once!' Well a real lover of offshore radio and of course totally against governmental radio too. Another lady wrote in her letter, dated March 8<sup>th</sup>, that she even thought she was listening to Steve Young, a former Radio Caroline deejay from the sixties and working under another name: 'I must apologise for thinking such a thing, but you so sound like him. Have you ever heard anything of him at all, at it would be lovely to have to old crew together again? Still I'm satisfied at heaving you, Roger Day and Andy Archer again.'

One day, early March 1970 when we were still off the Dutch coast, singer Dorothy Squires would come out to the ship to be interviewed by Ed Mereno. It was all arranged on forehand by Rodney Collins. With older listeners it was a success as 'letters of thank you' were coming in, like the one from Bobbie Elstere in London: 'Dear Beardie Wierdie. Lovely 1-15 you've just played Dorothy Squires, was wondering after 7.30 Sunday Night her chat with Ed, all way interesting and hope you will have many more artists weekly like her. Let's hear it daily please. More chats and smoochie song, Frankie Laine, Elvis Presley, Tony Bennet, Andy Williams, Brook Benton, Nat King Cole and so on.' Well we made some of Andy's as well as Elvis hits in 1970 as we also had the official 'World Service at one stage in 1970 with a format that reminded many to Radio 390, with Alan West on his best. Coming back to Dorothy it seemed to many listeners, she was aboard the radio ship, just as it was planned. On forehand a stand by interview was recorded on shore in Holland as you never knew how the weather would be. At the end Dorothy didn't want to go out in a small tender to the MEBO II and so the tape was

played like it was a live interview with Ed Mereno on one side and Dorothy on the other.

In the letters there were nice 'hello and welcomes' but also many of the letters - which mainly were sent in by former Caroline listeners - had suggestions for us on board the radio ship. For instant Philip Coleman from Wigan in Lancashire wrote: 'I have noticed that RNI does not have too many jingles. One of the great things about the pirates - especially Radio Caroline International - was the jingles. They played both between and during records. Radio Veronica has pinched English jingles, why can't you. But I'm not complaining you provide a great service thanks a lot, a true pirate radio fanatic.'

Molly from Croydon was one of the other listeners who wrote in very early and regularly to me on the station: 'I can tune in to 186 metres and the reception is very good during the day, but after dark we get a lot of Morse code which spoils it. Never mind, one can't have all I suppose. There are two people missing of course, gorgeous Robbie Dale and Johnnie Walker. I have heard you saying hello to Robbie and Steve, but not to Johnnie. I hope you still are friends. We don't blame him for joining Radio 1. After all he was never very good unless the wind was in his sails. When he was unhappy, it came over the radio, but with you other deejays it didn't. Remember to visit Robbie when you're in Amsterdam. I loved his show on Radio Veronica and could have cried when I listened to his last program. He has such a lovely voice.' What she didn't know that I was living next to one of the boutiques, which was ran by Robbie's lovely wife Stella at the Prinsengracht in Amsterdam.

Amazing to see a 25 year old girl writing to me on the very first time she heard about us being there in a television program. Carole Drake from Newport: 'I saw your ship on television last night and it was the first I knew of the station. I tuned in to listen to you and 12.20 AM. I hadn't tuned in before, as I was watching television with football and wrestling. No, not the BBC TV, but the ITV). Anyway Carl long live RNI, it's a great station. It's just like Caroline with you Roger Twigg Day as well as Andy Archer. Where's Robbie Dale these days. The last I heard of him was that he had his own television show in Amsterdam, and that was ages ago. I know that Dave Lee Travis and Johnnie Walker are now working for the BBC. I was surprised

Johnnie went to work there too. I wonder how married life is treating Steve Young, if I remember correctly he went back home to Canada to get married. One thing Ronan O'Rahilly could always boast that he had first class deejays working for him. You were all a terrific bunch of lads on Caroline North and South. I'm sorry I've carried on a lot about Radio Caroline in this letter Carl, but hearing your voice brought memories flooding back of the good days when she was blasting out over the airwaves."

May Newstead from Cantley in Norwich heard the MEBO II would leave for England, took pencil and paper and warned us: 'You have just told us you are moving nearer to us so we can hear you better, that is great news. But be careful; don't come near enough so our lousy Government can get you. We couldn't bear to lose you all again. You have no idea the difference it has made to us, to have you on the air again.'

In March 1970 the owners decided we have to change our anchor position, which was off the Dutch coast. As selling commercials wasn't successful it was thought we were better off the British coast. So late afternoon March 23<sup>rd</sup> the anchor was lifted and off we went to the British coast where a new spot was found near Clacton. 'England here we come', we mentioned in the programs and when we arrived everyone thought that better days would come. Very soon the first letters came aboard, in which the British listeners, who did not had a proper own pop station from international waters since March 1968, welcomed us: 'We thank you RNI very much for our Easter Present of bringing the ship to England. We hope soon if you do desire to come 3 miles off Frinton. Please put the wave length up a bit as not so many of us have 186 metres on our radio, so many can not pick you up.' Smashing to hear you, it makes Radio 1 seem like it never existed.' Parts of a letter, written by Michael and Veronica Kerena, from Richmond in Surrey.

A long letter, complete with a warning, came in some time after we went off to the British coast and I will mention some parts of it: 'I live at Southampton and am writing in to give you a reception report from this area. My work is in de marina radio and I hope I won't blind you with technical terms; maybe it will be of some use to you fellows. Reception on the H.F. transmission of 6 Mhz is coming through well, a higher signal strength reading than M.F. but slightly fading, thus making a better quality of reception on M.F.' Further on the sender of the letter gave a warning: 'I am

at sea as a radio officer in the merchant navy. It was early March and we were in the Channel after four months away of cruising between Capetown and South American ports. I was on the 8-12 watch the evening before docking in Southampton, when I came across a strange station while I was tuning in to your 'morse opposition'. One of the so called valuable marine serviced that you are supposed to be interfering with. The final comment I would like to mention is involves the recent statements the Postmaster General has made on the reasons why RNI shouldn't continue. I find most, false and inaccurate. I can't comment on interference to light ship frequencies, I don't know anything about that. But certainly the claims of interference to distress and safety of shipping is absolute bullshit. It certainly annoys to hear a guy publicly go to the extent of lying in order to achieve public support from people who don't know enough about the subject to know whether they are being told the truth or not. Please don't mention my name, I could loose my job!.' What a luck for the guy we didn't mention his name. It couldn't be mentioned as either on the envelope or in the letter he mentioned his name.

Gaynor Hunt, Coleen Dawson and Christine Oliver were three typists from Benfleet writing in to the station: 'We three typists listen to your programme every day in our office, especially between 12 am and 1 pm, and your signal comes through the transistor beautifully. Too well in fact, because the boss keeps complaining. Don't say it too loud when you read our letter on your programme, which we hope you will do, just in case he hears.' With the early letters, the station received in March, were also those from our regular listeners on Radio Caroline

'Dear Carl, I would like to say how nice it is to hear you again over the air waves, it is really wonderful to have our offshore radio station back again. Makes our days so much more enjoyable listening to the music we like and the friendly chat of you deejays. I enjoyed your lunchtime programme very much yesterday. It was the first time I had the chance to hear you during the day as I go to work at 3pm, I hope you will always has that particular spot whenever you are on board.





*Mary Warner*

When Andy Archer played 'Caroline' this morning I could have wept as it brought back so many wonderful memories. I often get my Caroline scrap book out and read some of the letters I received. It is really great, the way you, Andy and Roger, have all been able to get back altogether on our first transmissions for 2 years nearly to the day. '

Well friends, next month more and for all memories, questions and more write to [HKnot@home.nl](mailto:HKnot@home.nl)