

On October 25th 2004 came sudden death of **John Peel**. All British stations paid a lot of attention to his passing away as well as his outstanding work for BBC and the music industry through the decades. On Dutch ANP news bulletins it was the very first item on the bulletins. VPRO radio repeated in the evening a one hour program from the archives in which he did way back for the VPRO in the mid eighties. On Dutch TV News also attention was paid. The NOVA program had a 7 minute item. Sky News brought the news too in their bulletins but made a bad mistake stating he was one of the founders of Radio Caroline. Belgium television paid also attention in two programs on the same broadcaster, Flemish Canvas. Also thanks to David and Lynn at Offshore Radio, the online radio station in memory of the former Offshore stations, who rescheduled their programs. Tried to listen in to Skues that evening via internet but as so many tried I couldn't get in touch.

I thought there is one deejay/presenter in Holland whom I had to ask for his words about the passing away of John Peel Paul Harald van Gelder. Paul started his career on Radio 227, way back in 1967. He nowadays makes radio on VARA Radio, Radio 227 and on a local radio station in Lelystad. Like John Peel, Paul van Gelder has a clear ear for new and alternative music: I didn't know John Peel personally, but I admired him for his enormous choice in music and his impulse to search again and again for new music and talent. He was one of the last really so called music-deejays, which was in the past a pleonasm. Of course he made sometimes a mistake but what Alan Freed was for the rock and roll John Peel made it for the alternative music. I have pity with all those small and new bands and alternative record labels who will not be discovered in the future. I would have been better for John



if he had the Dutch nationality as then he had to work after his 65th birthday!

Tabloids advert on John Peel (Photo Andreh van der Kolk)

From down yonder came the next message: Hello Hans, I was taken aback to hear of the death of John Peel. I appreciate your being able



to let us all know. Strangely, although he is not usually often in my mind, he was a day or so ago. Perhaps it was just a matter of my mind re-running past experiences - happens a lot. My strongest memories of John were when he and I were in adjacent studio cubicles at the BBC. As well, I often read the news in his studio, sitting opposite him - as was the custom in

my early post-pirate days at the BBC as a staff announcer. He always seemed to me to be operating in a different world - which was a large part of his talent. Regards, Colin Nichol.

A rare photo from my archive taken in 1965 with Tony Blackburn, Norman St John and Colin Nichol

Then I've chosen two out of the many e-mails from listeners, which came in: I am devastated, part of my life has gone. I was 17 in 1967 when I heard his last radio show and at 3.00 that afternoon the music died - Radio London the greatest radio station ever was savagely cut off in its prime. On tape I can go back to 14/8/67 on Radio London from midnight to 5.30 am -the whole show was superb and John's swansong in radio - he thought he was unemployed (really no hint then of a Radio 1 or Radio anything job!) and suggested listeners made "Perfumed Garden" badges so if they saw each other they would say hello. He read from Winnie the Pooh, the bells jangled

in the background as the ship rocked, he said the sky was beautiful and was probably mildly stoned on cannabis. He was a rebel then, didn't play the jingles or pop music, just underground which was new music that later became well known. A unique person (not personality) has left a legacy we all will treasure to our dying days - a great broadcaster and friend. Mike (in Bournemouth)'.

The next one is from Eric Wiltsher, who reflected on my opinion that Radio One was garbage in the early years and just put on the air with a thanks to the offshore stations: I listened to the Radio One tribute to JP and it was excellent Hans. In fact, whilst I don't go on about it, I often listen to Radio One in the car because it's alive which is more than can be said for Radio Two which sends me to sleep. Radio One, tricky I'm nearly too old for Radio 2 now, has done a whole load of good things and still does today - people knock as it was, as you say, born out of the offshore stations. It would have happened at some stage anyway, just the offshore situation pulled it forward a bit. Loads complained that the station was rubbish when it had its first big clear out - funny that JP wasn't dumped. That might have had something to do with the fact that he still had his pulse on the button of newer things and proved it right up to 2004. JP was a Radio One man and played new things - he stayed the champion of things new and deserved to be on a new music station. As that's what Radio One was and still is - new. And let's hope it stays that way. Yes we do need good Gold stations but other services should move on and forward. Look out here comes the knives - if you want me to retune just play an Elvis track ARGHHHHHHH!!!!!! Or something out of the 50s or UK copycat era - it was rubbish to me then and is even more rubbish now. People go on about Helen Shapiro and Eden Kane - oh please, they were pap. Sure I like some 60's tracks, I like and enjoy some from the 70s, 80s, 90s and today - shame there isn't a station for me anymore. And yes by all means, JP was one of the true greats. Shame I only bumped into him once and that was for no more than a couple of minutes, but at least we

chatted and boy did he know his stuff - for someone like him to know what I was doing was one of the best treats or compliments I've ever received.