

On March 27, 1964, the offshore station Radio Caroline started its transmissions from the former MV Fredericia. In 2004, forty years later, Hans Knot opened up a series of memories of the station's wet and wild history.

The wet and wild history of Radio Caroline - 40 Years of Radio Caroline

By Hans Knot

Part 20

THREE IN ONE PERSON

Working on a pig farm was not the kind of work which he was really enjoying and as his interest in radio was enormous he decided to get his luck on the international waters. Working for several stations including The Voice of Peace, which was transmitting special programs on a radio ship off the coast in international waters near Israel, our 'morning lads' man used different deejay names like: Johnny Moss, Stephen Bishop and Johnny Lewis. Under this third name he is still well known within the radio industry for listeners in the County Kent. So Johnny Lewis, who worked for Radio Caroline during four decades, has some good and bad memories to share with us.

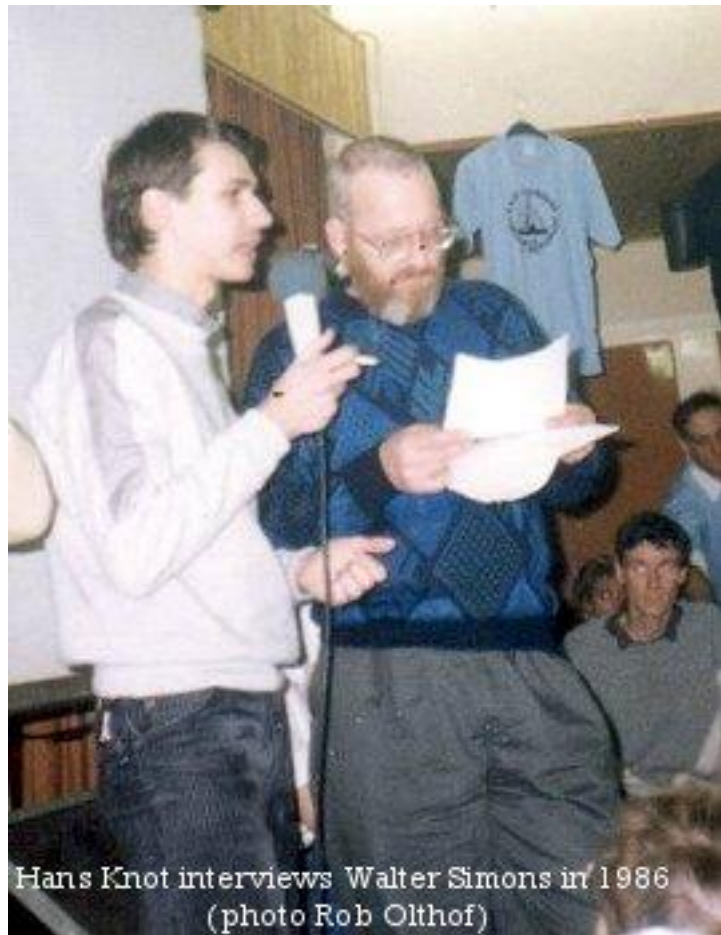


Good to see so many former Caroline Staff sending you memories of their time on 'the Boats' over the years. It's hard to really pinpoint one out of so many I've got.

I do remember going out to the MV Mi Amigo for the first time with the thinking what a great ship. It did not look too new it has to be said, but once on board you always felt it was a very special home from home. Out of all the Radio ships I've been on it was the smallest, but what a great atmosphere.

On my first trip out I was lucky to be working with the likes of Tony Alan and Peter Chicago, who taught me all the Ropes in more ways than one. I remember the Mi Amigo in the late 70's used to leak a wee bit. What sometimes happened was after a bad storm we would sometimes spring leaks in the bottom of the ship, normally only one hole at a time, but they were about the size of a 1 euro coin, so water did used to come in a bit fast at time's but nothing the ships pumps could not handle. Some time's a little water did get into the English Studios down stairs, and you might well be able if you have tapes to hear this on some of the links.

The way we used to repair the holes was to cut a bit of wood to slightly over the size of the hole, then knock it in (sometimes making the hole even bigger). This would stop the water, then we would pump the ships bilge's dry and make a load of concrete to go around the hole, instant ships puncher repair kit. As luck would have it at that time in England they were building the Orwell Bridge just out side Ipswich and a mate of mine was working on it, so we got free bags of cement as well!!!!. Think in all while I was on the Mi Amigo we must have repaired 20 plus holes, but I don't think any one on the ship felt unsafe, we all had that feeling the Old Lady would never let us down, and 'She' did not.



Hans Knot interviews Walter Simons in 1986
(photo Rob Olthof)

It was also strange to come aboard the MV Ross Revenge in 1984. I had been on the Mi Amigo and compared to living on the Lady it was totally different on the Ross Revenge. I think the one thing that was lacking on the Ross Revenge at that

stage that it was a very young ship as far as the radio station concerned. The Mi Amigo had such an history when I did start to work there. Every where you went in the ship was history. You went to the studio's and two of the cart machines were from Radio Nord days. The mixers were from the original Caroline South and North days. The bunks had things like 'Tony Blackburn was here 1965' written all over them. Another thing we kept on there, which has been kept since 1972, was on a door; everybody put down their name when they came for their very first stint. So everywhere where you looked on the Mi Amigo there was some history.

Dioptric Surveyor in 1985
(photo Theo Dencker)



But there were other periods where also some memories are coming back from. We all know the Euro Siege period in 1985 when the Dioptric Surveyor was sent out by the British authorities and they tried to

intimidate us as much as possible. But earlier on that year, early March there was a police boat hanging around us for a good part of the day. I think to remember they came with 'the Ian Jacob'. All of the time they came back and forward between the Communicator and the MV Ross Revenge. It was a lovely day and we all did enjoy our spells on the deck of the MV Ross Revenge. On deck of this Police vessel were a few guys who had nothing else to do than making photographs. Also there was a bloke with a big video machine and another with a camera. As they had already enough photos in their archive from this lad, I thought they were allowed to take some other footage too. There were, next to the Police men some officers from the Home Office on the ship. I recall these three didn't even got a simple smile on their face. I think maybe they weren't even allowed to smile at us. They had to behave themselves, which was silly, really, isn't it? Shocking basically!

And how far could we go with our ship's dog Raffles? Chicago saved him out of the harbour of Santander from where he was taken aboard the Ross Revenge to international waters in 1983. At Eastern 1985 we had once again one of our



Mi Amigo (photo Rob Olthof)

famous brewing parties where our own beer had to be tasted at this special day. And like us Raffles did enjoy himself when everybody had a good time. We didn't leave Raffles out of everything as he was a part of the Caroline family. We actually put home-brew in his water bowl. We thought he wouldn't drink it, but 'Shlurpp!' gone! Gave him another lot...gone. He was staggering around as well. And the next day he was a bit subdued though - I think had a bit of a hangover. I decided to take him for a walk around the deck. People probably won't believe this but we actually did take Raffles for a walk on a collar and a lead round the deck and he absolutely loved it. Old Raffles was a great dog. He was very shy, but he did get often in the mess room. When we were watching telly he often got upon friendly. He was like an Alsatian. I called him 'Riff Raff'. When dinner was on table in the messroom and he was outside he knew how to handle and open the door. On one occasion he got on the table so from that point on when he's coming in we threw him a few odds and ends to keep him off the table. He had an enormous appetite.



Loads of things came out for Easter 1985. We had champagne that listeners had sent in, and 'The man himself' he sent us a few bottles of champagne out as well, to celebrate. Then we had a few crates of beer and cans of coke

and orange. And the home brew, The Birthday Beer, which went down rather well I think! We only drank half of it. We made eighty pints, there were eighteen people onboard and we expected it all to go down, because eighty pints into eighteen is not a lot when you think about it. But that stuff was evil. It actually tasted lovely, everybody said that. A truly stunning brew it was. One of the bottles we thought was going to explode, we took the top off and Boom. The cork flew off and hit the ceiling! Everybody enjoyed it but it was just that it went to your head a bit because it was very, very strong, The Campaign For Real Ale would have been proud of us. It's something I've got into since I've been out to the Ross really. I've spent so long out there, I thought I'll have to get myself a little hobby, while I'm out there and I just got into brewing beers and experimenting with them - not doing as they say on the packs! Like you're supposed to put one kilo of sugar to forty pints of water, well, I was putting two kilos of sugar and thirty pints of water just to see what it came out like. I even tried one lot with brown sugar, and it tasted OK. Fergie, who was also a long time onboard and we did the brewing together. It didn't cost a lot and it was a nice hobby in those days. When the Caroline office had to sent out the kits, which were about 2.99 each and add 60 p for the sugar in those days than the forty pints were very cheap to drink. We got a perfect room to let it ferment away; the transmitter room. A constant temperature was down there, nice and warm and perfect!

Going back to my notes I recall the contact we had with the Coast Guards. The same Sunday we did taste the new brew for the first time, the weather became suddenly very bad during the afternoon. On Easter Sunday morning we had Tony come aboard. He was a fisherman from Walton-on-the-Naze and he was putting some of his nets down to do some fishing around the top of the sandbanks and the weather started to blow up. He came alongside and for safety reasons said: 'Can I come aboard?' to which we weren't going to say 'No', because of safety and the weather really did get up, so actually we brought his boat aboard the Ross Revenge. It was only a small boat although it had an engine and everything and of course with our



Samantha (photo Rob Olthof)

winches we can bring massive things aboard, so we hitched it up and brought it inboard. We informed the Coastguards that he was inboard; they knew him as a local fisherman and he worked on the Walton life boat as well. And they said 'No problems, thanks for letting us know'. That's the thing you do because people got worried and phoned the Coastguard as he wasn't seen for say two days. Tony did enjoy himself a lot and I don't think he wanted to go when the weather came down again, but he had to go back to work. A nice guy that old Tony and one wonders, if we hadn't been out there, what would have happened to him?

Also do remember that we did play fools at each other. At one stage Radio Caroline got a sister station on board the MV Ross Revenge. It was solving the problem of tendering. The owners of the sister station, Radio Monique, got airtime and provided the ship with everything was needed for both the running of Radio Caroline as well as Radio Monique. So we had to share our accommodation with the new people, mainly Dutch deejays. One night, Walter Simons one of the Monique deejays, was doing production work in their studio. Whilst he was there working to do his upper best all the rest of us went down to his cabin and complete stripped it bare! We even took the wooden slats out of his bunk. Of course, when he went downstairs to his cabin he found nothing at all. I think he was searching around for about two days before he found

everything back. I myself had my bed filled with foam another night and we tend to take doors of people's cabins of their hinges so when people do them open they fall straight down. The typical thing on a radio station is lacing the carts. I was doing the top of the hour one day and they got me. I said 'Live from the North Sea on 963 and 576, this is Caroline, it's three o'clock.' And instead of a 'ding ding' I got Big Ben Booming Booming' and then a load of pig noises afterwards as well.

So we did play practical jokes on each other, some funny things and some not so funny.



Johnny Lewis in 1985
(photo Hans Knot)

Then the nickname I became during my stay at Caroline. It was Wally (Simon Barrett) who gave it to me. There was a list on the studio door. On there was written what all people do during their stay on shore - that means in the

mind of Wally. Everybody was allocated to a part time job to earn some money and that brought in some funny things. Simon was into cricket and so he became the cricket inspector at the Kent Cricket Ground, Andy Johnson would never travel on public transport so he had to be a ticket collector for London Transport and for me after working on farms in the seventies, I was of course The Herdsman. That's how I got the name; but I won't tell you what they put down as Samantha's other job! Hope that my memories will put a smile or two on your readers face.

Thinking back to the watery days I do recall also the regular check ups. We cleaned the decks a lot and checked the fire hoses and all the fire-hydrants around the ship to make sure they were still working properly. All the safety things had to be done regularly. I knew at one stage the fire extinguisher worked, because the engine in the rubber boat had been off to be repaired and came back onboard. I started it up and it caught fire! So I screamed for a fire extinguisher, got a huge great one down, and that put it out just like that. The

engine started again, so it didn't do any damage, because we got it out so quickly.

Another thing we did were the lifeboat drills so that everybody knew where their lifeboat stations were, and their fire stations just in case it was a fire. And everybody knew what to do, basically. So there was no 'Oh Christ, we're on fire' and there shouldn't have been any panic because as soon as you panic you might as well give up. So we had lifeboat drills, and we've got bells on board, very loud alarms and what they did say was 'there's to come another drill'. The crew and deejays were warned on forehand that a drill was to come and they were told where to go when the alarm would go off. Sometimes we had problems with people who didn't know how to put their life jacket on. Every cabin got life jackets and a hand held fire extinguisher; the ones you pull off

the wall and bang on the top and away they go. There were the foam ones too, the water ones, the CO2 ones, everything. The engine room was also fitted with a fire system as well, which suffocated the engine room of air. But to turn the switch on you have to open a box, and as soon as you open that box it sends an alarm off. So if you were in the engine room you got out of it quick, because it literally did suffocate it, so if you were in there you could become in trouble.

So all of that was working. On the life-rings we had light-beacons, so as soon as a life ring was in the sea it was all illuminated with lights, so if somebody did get over the side at night they could see where he was. All the life-rings had about two hundred yards of rope. We did have three of the 'dome' inflatable life rafts that you see on most of the ships. And what you do is pull a lever and they





Stuart Clark and Raffles

literally go over the side. And they got, what you do call a taper on them. There was about eighty foot of taper. And you pull that and they'll just inflate on their own. They hold ten people each so we could have thirty in them. They all got radio's in them, just emergency distress radios, and they were all full of tins of water and food and things like that and not forgetting the torches. And then there was also the rubber boat, with an outboard and so if one went over the side we could go after them. It was also used to go out in the night into the Communicator pub, when it was still there.

Finally Hans remembered me during our last drink session in February 2004 on the famous trip we had in 1985 when one of the beautiful Green Peace ships was out to visit us. I don't remember the full

story of it, but the MV Sirius was going into Great Yarmouth, then sailing across to Amsterdam. CBS and Veronica Television were on board and they brought Dutch and American TV crews out to do a programme on us. They actually came out to us, not for anything else. It anchored there all day and it was there for 24 hours and during a afternoon program they were sailing around us and blowing the horn. Also they did have their rubber boats 'flying' around giving a hell of a display. I think it were four of five going around the Dioptric which was still out in those days, a beautiful sight. The Veronica program went out on Saturday night and was fairly good. Actually short, but it was good. It was Frank van der Mast, old Mi Amigo chap, who did the interview with me as the captain of the ship. He was very impressed, in fact all the people of the television crews were. And Hans told me he has a copy of the master tape of the interview; that's the unedited version where interviewer Frank van der Mast is at least coming aboard 6 times and shaking 6 times the hands of the captain, welcoming him aboard the Ross Revenge. Nice memories!

JOHNNY 'THE LAD' LEWIS

Part 21

A PIRATE'S LIFE FOR ME

From an unexpected corner a chapter for the series 'The Wet and Wild History of Radio Caroline 1964 - 2004' arrived from an unexpected corner. It's from Phil Mitchell who has not only worked on the MV Mi Amigo for Radio Caroline but got a lot of experiences on pirate land based radio; not forgetting in international waters off the Israeli coast on the famous Voice of Peace, which was set up in the late sixties of the last century from a former Groningen coaster, called the MV Cito by Peace fighter Abe Nathan. Phil Mitchell takes us back to his memories.



To say I was excited would be an understatement by any stretch of the imagination. Oh sure, I had worked on plenty of 'land based' pirate radio stations in the past, WFRL, Radio Kaleidoscope, NOVA and a number of others I'm not quite so proud of and would rather not mention. But this was altogether different; it was the big one. The

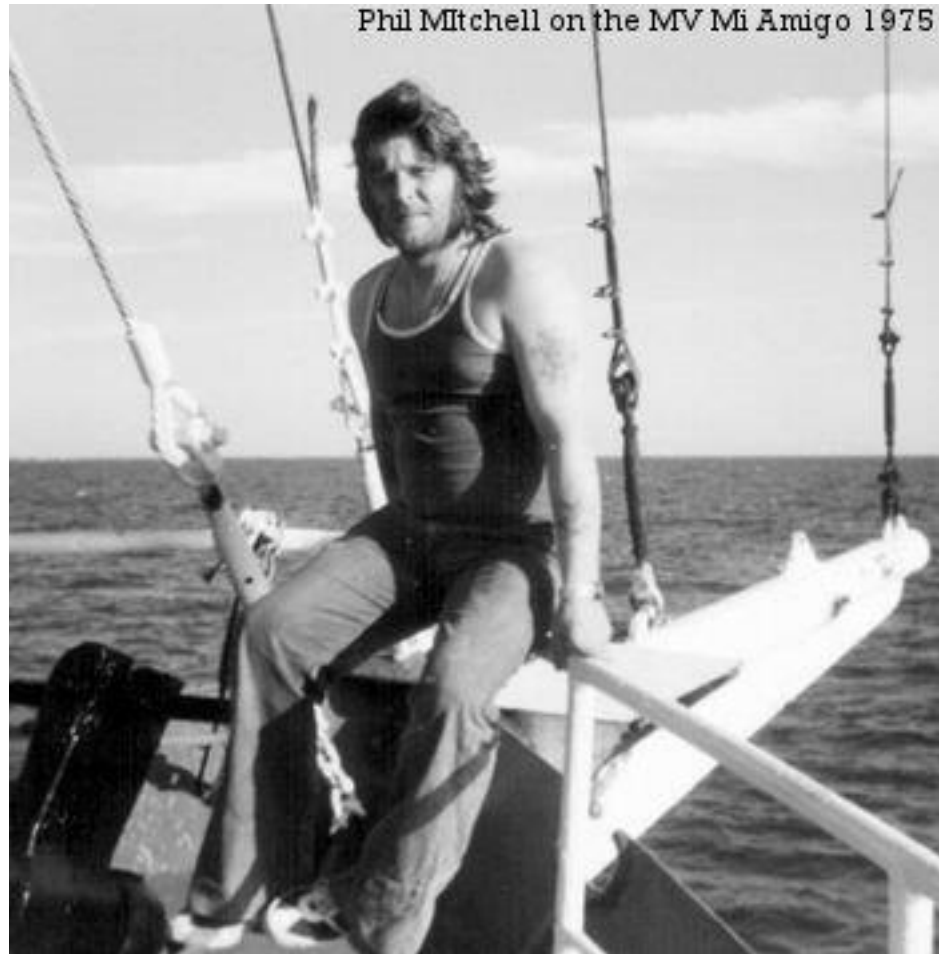
job that other deejays would only ever dream of: the very radio station that influenced my teenage years. I had been offered a job on Radio Caroline.

It was a chilly autumn afternoon in October 1974 when three of us, Simon Barret, James Ross and I, met Ronan O'Rahilly in a pub on the Kings Road, Chelsea. He furtively furnished us with hastily scribbled details of contacts and

addresses necessary for our trip out to the 'Mi Amigo' and then left in a hurry for a meeting with, we were later informed, George Harrison. It was all so wonderfully cloak and dagger in those days. In later years I often have a little laugh to myself when I recall the extreme lengths we went to keeping the details of our departure secret.

The majority of the travel arrangements were left to us, passports, tickets for the ferry to France, negotiations with the tender captain and so on would all become second nature in time. But for the time being, this was all new and exciting to me. Within the short space of a two or three days, we landed in France, each of us heavily laden with large, dark blue 'British Airways' bags, crammed full of albums for Radio Caroline's record library. After traipsing around for a couple of hours, we eventually found the tender captain in a bar in the waterfront area of Boulogne, where he was enthusiastically consuming vast amounts of red wine. Although we had only disembarked from the ferry a few hours before, all of us were keen to put to sea again and get out to the ship. I will never forget our looks and feelings of disappointment when we enquired about our departure. He muttered something to the barman, which none of us could fully understand, but contained a fair amount of French expletives and seemed to be a subject of great hilarity between the two men, and then glared at us through his heavy, bloodshot eyes, before slurring bluntly, "Non, not today!" Dismayed by his decision, but undeterred we left the bar after arranging to meet him the next day.

We managed to scrape together just enough money between us to spend our first night in a small fleapit hotel in the town, but for the following three nights we were forced to sleep rough on the tiled kitchen floor of a benevolent Frenchman's house who was sympathetic to our plight and a Radio Caroline fan. We



sustained ourselves on sticky buns of questionable origin, sweets or dried fruit and French sticks and cheese, until the Captain was sober enough to make a rational decision regarding our departure.

I had been informed that the tender journey usually took about 11 or 12 hours in good conditions, but could take anything up to 24 hours if the weather was bad. This in itself was a daunting prospect, but despite our disappointments and hardships of the previous four days, we were all eager to get underway. It was 2 am when, carrying fishing rods to disguise our actual reason for being at the quay at that time of the morning, we finally boarded a very small, smelly fishing boat and put to sea. Despite the discomfort of the sparsely fitted boat, we were ecstatic to be on our way at last. The sea was a little choppy, but that didn't worry us and our spirits remained high until we passed Cap Gris Nez and the weather changed for the worse.

The little boat shuddered unnervingly, made horrible creaking noises and was tossed and buffeted until I felt sure it would fall to pieces beneath our feet. The Captain ignored our communal retching sessions over the side, apart from shouting at us to improve our aim when we threw up. He resolutely hung on to the wheel with one hand, while swigging wine from a bottle with the other, which

he also used to bash a sticking compass from time to time. We had endured a nightmare roller coaster ride across the North Sea for around twelve hours, when suddenly, the clouds lifted, the wind dropped and the sun began to shine. The sea almost instantly calmed and we found ourselves surrounded by a low swirling mist, which rose eerily from the millpond sea. Our stomachs felt raw and the violent tossing of the boat had exhausted us, but even through all that, we felt like brave pioneers who had fought long and hard against the elements.

The Captain started to express doubts whether he could find the MV Mi Amigo in the mist, even suggesting at one point that we should turn back and try again tomorrow. But we were having none of it, and determined that we should not give up, particularly after enduring that awful, sick making, sleepless night. I suddenly remembered that I had a radio in my bag and insisted that with this invaluable piece of equipment, I could easily find the ship by direction finding. The Captain mumbled incoherently to himself for a while and then began swearing at us under his breath, before reluctantly agreeing to give it a try.

If truth were known, I had no idea whether or not I could actually do it, but I had seen it done and I thought. 'What the hell! We've come this far by what seemed to be the seats of our pants, how hard can it be?' The Captain glanced at me dubiously as I clambered up onto the bow, tuned the radio to Caroline's frequency and then rotated the radio until I found the null. "That way," I announced authoritatively, waving vaguely ahead, "Caroline's over there." Quite honestly, I had absolutely no idea whether the Mi Amigo was in front or behind us, but it seemed to me that someone had to make a decision and I was it.

More by luck than judgment, we successfully navigated our way around the sand banks of the Knock Deep. Then, more than three hours later, it appeared. Like some monstrous monolith, the sixty-metre antenna mast of the MV Mi Amigo loomed above the mist. It was the most wonderful sight when we finally broke through the mist and breathed a heavy sigh of relief as we saw the little red and white ship rolling steadily in the gentle swell. Once alongside, I jumped aboard the Mi Amigo into the arms of Captain Donald and began imparting the horrors of our journey to the deejays we were replacing. To my initial surprise, they were singularly unimpressed by our ordeal. But they were all old hands at dealing with what I eventually named 'The Radio Caroline Dis-organisation.'

Once on board, I just couldn't contain myself. I just had to see absolutely everything. Here I was on the very ship that had defied the government almost continuously since 1964. 'This is the stuff dreams are made of.' I remember thinking as I hastily stowed my gear in my appointed cabin, which was a dump, but that didn't seem to matter at the time, and began exploring the ship. It was

exactly as I had seen it in magazine pictures and photographs from the sixties. Maybe not quite as glamorous as I had imagined; but that didn't seem to matter, I was there!



Later that evening, at 10 pm, as I opened the door of Radio Caroline's main 'on air' studio to begin my first live program, I felt that I had hit the big time at last. I couldn't wait to explore the Mi Amigo; I wanted to see every nook and cranny. This was the little ship that had defied the Government

for so many years, disappeared into oblivion when the Wijsmuller Company snatched it in the late sixties, then reappeared like the proverbial phoenix in the early seventies.

I had closely followed Caroline's fortunes throughout the years with such zeal that from the moment I stepped on board, I felt that I knew it inside out, but it took me a few days to figure out why everything about the station had an uncanny familiarity about it. Finally I twigged; it was because virtually nothing had really changed that much since the sixties. The studio, built in the sixties on the upper deck behind the mess was still controlled by an old valve operated Gates, four channel sound mixer, which, during warm weather, produced so much heat it made the studio feel like a sauna. But despite the oppressive heat, you really had to keep the porthole shut while you had the microphone switched on, otherwise the listeners could hear the continuous drone of the generators in the background.

The turntables were Garrard 501's, I think the 60s originals were 401's or older. Wonderful old reliable clunkers they were, in fact, I still have one at

home, which I keep purely for sentimental value. But they were ancient technology, even in the seventies. They took a good turn and a half to reach full speed and once they got moving, could rip your arm off if you made any attempt to stop them. However, it was the old open topped Spotmaster cart machines that gave us the most trouble. These machines were cranky at best. Held together with chewing gum and string, they seemed to be intent on thwarting any attempt at smooth programming rather than do the job for which they were designed. I remember hearing Simon Dee once waxing lyrical about these things. He said how wonderful it was to have this facility of being able to bring up jingles or commercials instantly. But by now these almost 'Jurassic' era machines were old, worn out and I rapidly began to suspect, possessed by some fiendish radio station gremlin.

They seemed to defy any sense of rationality. If you were lucky, they would merely play the tape at completely the wrong speed, making the jingle sound like a manic Donald Duck. At their worst, and usually at a my most unprepared moments, the damn machine would grab the tape, wrench yards of it from the cart, proceed to devour it, then spew it out over the studio floor at an incredible rate. Only the occasional bouts of bad weather could cause worse problems, but having said that, we were only ever forced to play pre-recorded program tapes once because the weather was too rough to continue live programs.

During very high seas, the waves would often wash over the deck and soak the undersized insulator, which connected the transmitter to the antenna. This would cause the transmitter to arc, which caused a crackling sound on your radio. However, if a large amount of water hit the insulator the transmitter would completely shut down, which would send us scurrying for the engineer to reset the controls and fire it up again.

Despite these little problems, life aboard the *Mi Amigo* was everything I expected it to be. Food was good, beer plentiful and as many ciggies as you could smoke were free. I was, for the most part, happy. Simon Barrett, James Ross and I had a good, professional working relationship and although I say it myself, we produced some good programs and original promotions.

I had been on board for about three weeks when the Dutch tender arrived with food supplies, fresh water, diesel fuel and a new crew. Among them was Peter Chicago, who was then the chief transmitter engineer. I had wanted to meet him for some time, as I knew of his reputation and had great admiration for his work on aboard the *MEBO II*. I can't say I was disappointed; he was a brilliant and inventive engineer, although he could sometimes be a little abrasive and pompous. That was just his way and to be fair he was under a lot of pressure, but on his

better days he had a wicked sense of humour.

We would break the day-to-day monotony by carefully planning and carrying out the most outrageous practical jokes on each other. Some of which, I have to say, were so disgusting that I couldn't possibly reveal them here, (or anywhere else really, you just had to be there). However, one of the more harmless, but nevertheless cruel practical jokes took place late one night. A certain deejay, who shall remain nameless, had often delighted in watching me squirm as the recipient of his twisted sense of humour, decided to feature the Rolling Stones on his program and play half an hour of their music, non-stop. When Chicago and I heard this, we secretly cued a tape of more Stones music in the Mi Amigo studio, then waited patiently for him finish his feature.



That half an hour passed very slowly, but our patience was rewarded when at the very moment he opened the microphone to back announce the feature, Peter switched studios and started the tape so that the listeners would

be unaware of what was about to happen. As the poor unsuspecting man began his announcement, I burst into the Caroline studio pretending to be drunk. I will never forget the look of sheer horror on his face when I grabbed the microphone and began slurring obscenities into it, or the panic that crossed his face after he'd managed to wrestle the microphone from me, push me to one side and hastily start one of the turntables. But I was not content with reducing him to a shambling wreck oh no! I scraped the stylus noisily across the record, removed it from the turntable and walked out of the studio with it. He was sweating profusely, frantically trying to explain to his non-existent listeners what had happened and cue another record at the same time, when both Peter and I returned laughing our socks off to tell him that he wasn't on the air anyway.

It took a little while for the penny to drop, but I think he saw the funny side of it, eventually. Nevertheless, the very next day he insisted to anybody who would listen that a bolt should be fitted on the inside of the studio door. I don't think he ever really forgave me for that one.

After months of only being able to broadcast in the evenings, we were excited to learn that we were to begin broadcasting on two frequencies. Caroline was to be on 389 metres during the day and on both 259 and 389 metres in the evenings, from seven in the evening when Radio Mi Amigo closed down. At last, we assumed, that we were going to be able to begin restoring Radio Caroline to her former glory as an all day music station.

Chicago was in his element as he beavered furiously, building the diplexer to connect two transmitters to the same antenna and after a few weeks, he was ready to begin testing. These tests were initially performed at night when both radio stations had ceased normal programming, but very soon after, we were running both transmitters during the day. Radio Mi Amigo on 259; and non-stop music from Radio Caroline on 389. Despite our repeated pleas, Peter would not let us begin programming on the new frequency. None of us could understand why until we returned to England, only to find that the ancient 10-kilowatt transmitter used for 389, could only just be received on the south east coast barely eight or so miles away.



The experiment at this time was a complete failure and tests were abandoned soon after and any ideas of daytime programming shelved, as parts necessary to get the transmitter working properly were either not available or not affordable. We were at our lowest ebb at this point. All Chicago's work seemed to have been wasted and our efforts and plans to make Caroline an all day

station were, at least temporarily, dashed.

The following year, after I had left Caroline to join the Voice of Peace in Israel, Chicago did eventually get the 389 transmitter going at somewhere near full power, and some worthwhile transmissions were made, but I was long gone by then and sunning myself in the hot Mediterranean sunshine on the MV Peace.

Further to an article regarding my arrest: I was not actually arrested at Dover customs, but stopped and questioned for an hour or so until I insisted on having a solicitor present if I was to be questioned any further. I was quickly told I could leave at this point and I asked, hypothetically "Why are you making all this fuss about a simple radio station that doesn't seem to be doing any harm?" The answer came from the Home Office official, "Why? Because we can't have these people cocking a snook at us!" To which, as I made my exit, I replied politely, "Seems more like they're cocking a leg at you sir."

If anyone remembers me from those days, or even better has any decent quality recordings of my shows, I would love to hear from you. You can contact me at: philmitchell@fsmail.net.

Part 22

BACK TO THE ROSS REVENGE IN 2004

In England, Holland, Germany, Belgium, France and Scandinavia during the Eastern period 2004 attention was paid to the fact it was with Eastern in 1964 that the first broadcasts were transmitted from Radio Caroline off a ship, called the MV Fredericia, in international waters. John Patrick from the Caroline Organisation invited a lot of people versus side contacts and one of the people who was invited came from Holland, Ad Roberts. John Patrick and his friends were planning to get together many of the former Caroline deejays at a special party in the Riga Bar in Southend on Sea. I remember that Ad Roberts was first working on the MV Mi Amigo already in 1974 as 'starter of the tapes' for the Flemish Service of Radio Mi Amigo. In 1979 he could be heard for the first time as a deejay for Radio Caroline. In the eighties of last century he also could be heard on stations like Radio Monique and Radio 819. Ad didn't reject the invitation and decided to do the trip to England.

Ad Roberts (Radio Caroline, Monique, 558/819) reporting

Some time ago I received an invitation by e-mail to come to England during the special Easter celebrations for the 40th birthday of Radio Caroline. Together with Dutchmen Martien Stappers, who send me the invitation, we took the ferry to Dover.

Late Thursday evening I was able to lay my head to rest in the lovely BB; Graystones in Rochester.

The next morning, slightly overcast, I paid my respects and took the trip from the nearby docks to the Ross Revenge. I hadn't seen her since my last broadcasts on the North Sea during the Radio 819 outfit. It was busy at the pier to get to the lady so we waited our turn.

The support group, amongst others Peter Clayton, did a lot of work on the Ross and seeing her after so many years was a revelation. After checking the nuts and crannies I decided it was time for some R&R and some coffee in the Messroom.

It was very crowded in the mess, but I spotted Eric Wiltshire who was in a conversation with Mel Vondrau. I hadn't seen Eric in years and I was pleased he was doing well. We had our how are you doing, and what have you been doing lately talk and then time for some practical jokes and fun (this is what always happens with Eric). Anyway after a while I decided to get some coffee so I walked into the brand new galley.

It was a busy day with lots of visitors, over 80 I heard. So when Tony Allan arrived, lots of folk were asking his attention. I decided to wait for a bit, and let him be for a while until things got back to normal. So when I patted him on the back, to get his attention, he was very surprised to see me. It was a real emotional moment for him and it took a couple of minutes for us to start talking. The last time I worked with Tony it was still on the Mi Amigo, so we had some catching up to do. (actually a lot!)

A lot of people have asked me what I thought about the Ross after seeing it and I must say, it looked great but I was missing something, the dynamics of being a working offshore station. You see, at sea it had a total different atmosphere of people working, sorting out the news or preparing their program, cooking a meal or doing any of that ship stuff that normally goes on. To me it was like an old steam engine in a museum, nice to look at, great history, but sad in a bit. I do hope it can come back to its former glory and be used as floating studios for Caroline, who by then are broadcasting on AM nationwide (be it DRM) or on DAB

or via satellite but getting the audience it deserves. Maybe then I will find the atmosphere more in tune with my expectations.



After dinner I had a meeting with Busby, Richard Thompson. He also was a colleague of mine during the Mi Amigo days, as he could not make it to the Party in Southend we met in a pub. It was lovely to see him again. Nowadays a lot of communications are handled by e-mail, but talking one on one is

always better. As he had to get up early he did not stay until last orders, but he did explain to me, why the pubs in the UK close this early. (we cloggies don't have that, we can drink until very late)

The next morning it was time to head to the Riga Bar. Underway in the car with Martien, we listened to an excellent programme by Roger Day on Pirate BBC Essex who was broadcasting from the Light Vessel 18. I enjoyed his show immensely.

After arriving at the Riga Bar I found that it was not so crowded as I expected. Looking at 50 or so people and a video I shot during my time on the Ross, I wondered how it got there. The quality wasn't that great so it must have been a copy of a copy, but the raw footage was nice to look at.



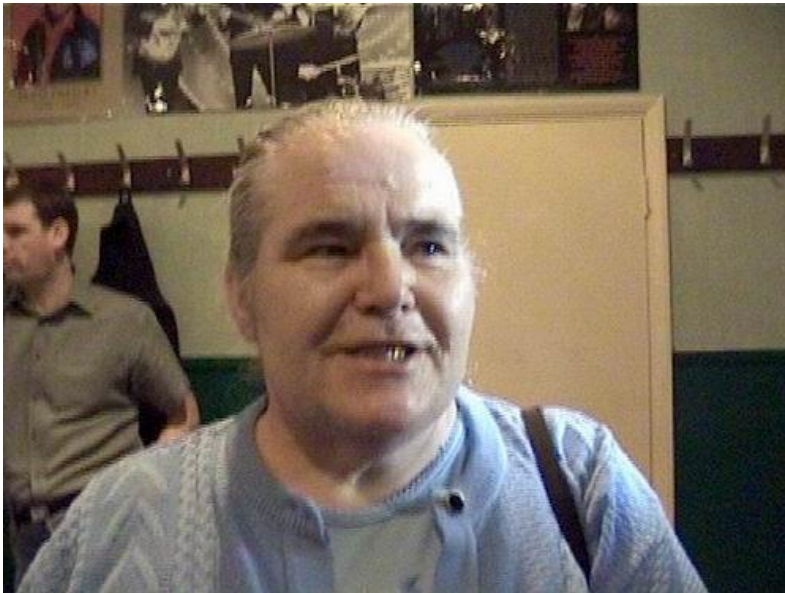
On stage Mark Dezzani and Dave Foster started explaining how the afternoon would evolve.

First up were a couple of the good old boys from the beginning of Radio Caroline (North and South) some even arrived from as far as Canada. The stories they told were great, with humour and heroism.

Tony Allan then arrived together with Elija van den Berg (who also worked for Caroline during the Mi Amigo days). Tony was asked on stage and he was his usual self, fun to see and hear. Naturally he was interacting with the audience.

Then time for Peter Moore who read out a prepared statement dismissing a lot of the rumours floating around. He did mention the EPG on BskyB and said Caroline will have one later this year and it will take a great amount off money to do it.

Now Dave Foster introduced RTD who was having the stage for his own. Roger Day first went on to talk about the private Birthday party some weeks ago with some of the old DJ s and Ronan, than he went on about the people who are no longer with us anymore. He tried to compose himself but it was hard to talk



about this for him. Twiggy also mentioned people who do not like Caroline and the rumours they are spreading, in particular, Christopher England. After his great monologue, witch lasted about 45 minutes it was time for a nice oldies show with great music from the era.

During this show people had some time to see some old friends amongst the

audience. This is were I met up with Albert and Gergina Hood, who were

responsible for keeping a lot of the ships DJ s happy during the offshore period . I also run into other saltwater friends like Dave Asher, Martin Fisher , Paul Graham, Roger Mathews, (Eamon Brooks) Barry James and Jerry Wright. After the music from RTD it was time for dinner, next door. Because the music was not so loud people could really talk and you could see groups with DJ s and fans having dinner together. We had until 8pm so a lot of time to talk with one and other.



The Riga bar surprised us with an excellent performance by the Roosters, a local band who played some great music. During the set more oldies but goodies arrived, like Mike Watts and (World Service) Peter Philips, who I went to speak with in the café next door. As we returned the Roosters were about ready with their set.

But everybody really wanted to see the Fortunes. They had a good show and what surprised me most, they sounded great. Their harmonies were fluent and the music they played would entertain any audience . They closed their performance with the National Anthem; her name is Caroline, Caroline ya ya ya n It was Tops! Or as they say nowadays cool . The audience in Steve Riga s bar could look back at a really great night.

My visit to the UK would not be complete without a visit to the Maidstone studios. So the next day, Easter Monday, Martien and I headed for the Caroline studios. We met up with Dave Foster and Mark Dezzani who wanted to interview me on their program, but time for me in the UK was coming to an end and they had to record it During the interview Mark videotaped it as its going to be on a special DVD for Caroline. On this DVD there will also be some video s I shot on the Ross Revenge. I promised Mark and Radio Caroline that they could use my raw footage if they want it for de DVD. After the taping Martien and I had to get back to Dover, to make the ferry on time. On our way over we heard Busby

playing us a song and thanking us for our visit. Well we thank England for being so nice to us!

Part 23

HOW I BECAME INVOLVED WITH THE ROSS REVENGE

Next to the endless list of deejays who have worked for Radio Caroline through the past four decades there are also numerous people who have worked for the organisation, on land as well as on one (or more) of the radio ships. One of them is Stuart Dobson, who tells us how he got involved and brings us a lot of his own bad, dangerous as well good memories with the Ross Revenge through the years.



The telephone rang and as I answered it I was expecting it to be somebody from the Voice of Peace. Are you still interested in working onboard radio ships - a voice asked me? When do you require me to go out to the MV Peace I Inquired? The voice on the other end of the telephone said that his name was Andy and that he wanted me to go onboard the MV Ross

Revenge, the home of Radio Caroline and not the MV Peace, the home of the Voice Of Peace. Andy then started telephoning me four or six times a day asking me to go out to the MV Ross Revenge. Eventually I agreed to go down to London and meet Ronan O'Rahilly and Andy at the Dome. I waited two hours for Ronan and Andy and was just about to call it a day, when Ronan and Andy turned up. Ronan bought Andy and me a cup of coffee and Andy asked me a few questions. The only thing that Ronan wanted to know was could I be ready tomorrow to go out to the MV Ross Revenge.

Onboard the Ross Revenge I had the great honour and privilege of working under the late Captain Ernie Stevenson. He was not only a great shipmate, but also my very best friend. Not only were we friends onboard but onshore as well.

Even at on stage with Ernie and his wife Betty spending their holidays on my farm. When Ernie wanted a hand with some engineering work he always asked me to give him a hand and as we worked he would explain what it did and how it operated. In fact it was Ernie that got me registered as a crewman. On one occasion Ernie and I was on the tender on our way back from the MV Ross Revenge when the engine developed a diesel blockage on a few occasions. While the tender drifted Ernie set to work and got it unblocked. On several occasions I took the helm of the tender's on the way out to the way out to the Ross Revenge and back.

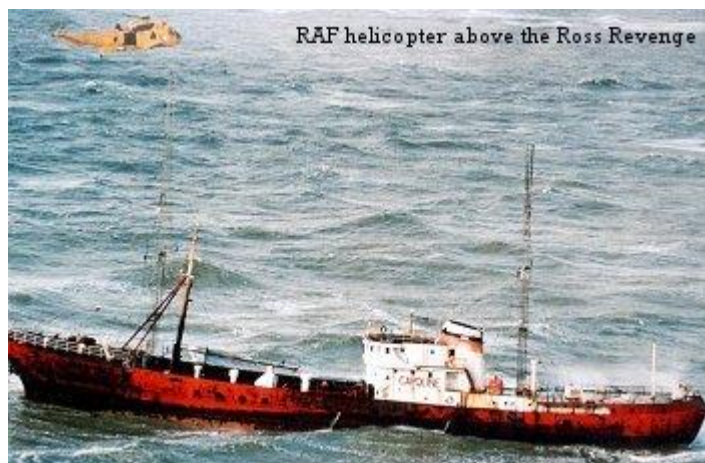
If I had not worked on Radio Caroline I would not have had great friends like the late captain Ernie Stevenson and his wife Betty who I still keep in touch with, Peter Chicago, James Kay, Dick Palmer, Phil Mitchell, Norman Barrington, Steve Masters, Albert and Georgina Hood are some of the shipmates that I still keep in touch with.

First I want to go back to the Goodwin Sands. At 09:00 on the Tuesday November 19th, 1991 I woke up in my bunk, this bunk being the lower one in room 2 onboard the Radio Caroline ship, the MV Ross Revenge. I went to the galley and helped myself to breakfast and a cup of coffee. Then I went a walk round the deck, the sea was quite calm. A short while later the sea became quite choppy and soon it was very rough and things began to slide around in the mess room, books, ashtrays and bugs fell off the table. Apples and pop cans started to roll around the floor as the ship was tossed from side to side. The waste bin fell over sending all its contents over the place. In the galley crockery, cooking utensils and food started to fly around. We cleaned up everything and made sure everything was restrained from moving around as much as possible.

I went out to deck for a walk, dodging the odd wave that came over the side. I headed for the bow to watch the sea getting rougher. I was sitting in the port doorway under the bow deck, having a smoke watching the waves going over the side and break on the main deck.

Occasionally a big wave would go right over the bow deck and

break a few yards in front of me. Steve came up and said "the gas bottles have come a drift will you help me to secure them?" We made our way carefully along the main deck, which made it very slippery by the seawater being on top of the



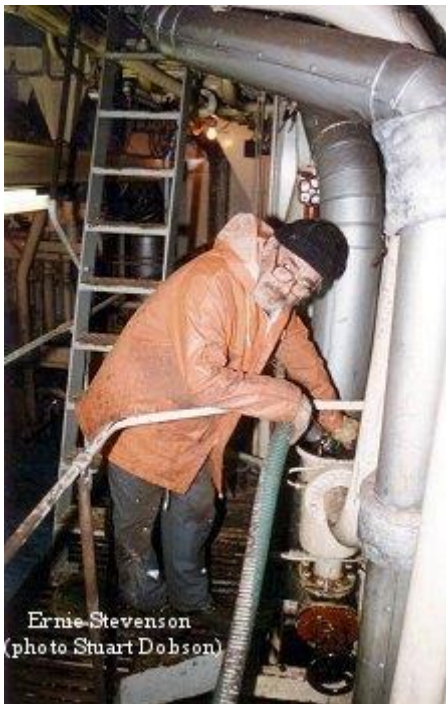
oily wooden deck. As the two-meter long gas bottles rolled and bounced around the decks, Steve and I ran after them trying to miss the waves coming over the sides this was made very dangerous because when the ship rolled over the other way, the bottles were rolling and bouncing after us. Eventually one by one we managed to catch and secure them. Finally, cold, wet and covered in oil, Steve and I went inside to get cleaned and warmed up. Looking back on it, all this was rather funny, but certainly not at the time. On the contrary, it was really very frightening. Having watched a video and had some supper, at 02:30 I retired to my bunk leaving Neil and Christian on night watch.

At 04:15 in the night I was awakened from a deep sleep by Ricky Jones banging on my cabin door and shouting "get dressed, get your lifejacket on, we are aground on the Goodwin Sands, so straight to the bridge." I put on plenty of warm clothes with my oilskins on top of them then my lifejacket. And I arrived at the bridge to find the rest of the crew there. At different times Neil and Steve went to check the hull in the engine-room. At all times when leaving the bridge we moved about in pairs. Christian and I checked the water tight-doors doors into the steering room.

The crew from the tug Dextrous said it would be with us in an hour. The helicopter arrived and asked if we wanted to be taken off the ship. We thanked them and said we were waiting for the tug and nobody wanted to leave. They said that they were going back to base to refuel. The Ramsgate lifeboat was standing off us. While we were waiting for the tug, the waves crashed over the ship hitting the bridge windows. When the hour was up we were in touch with the Dextrous on the ships radio, they said that it would be another half hour before they reached us as the MV Ross Revenge rolled, she began to keel over to the starboard.

After the half hour had gone we got in touch with the dextrous who said the bad weather was holding them up. It was decided as the radio ship was tilting further and further over to ask Ramsgate lifeboat to take us off. They began to approach us on our starboard and ran aground. The Dover lifeboat as on its way and the helicopter was on its way back. When we heard the helicopter we filed out side. As we went through the doorway on the starboard side of the bridge the wind and spray hit us. Holding onto the rails because of the list a Royal Air Force man was being lowered from the helicopter. We all crossed the wet sloping deck and hung onto the transmitter mast, as the waves crashed over us the RAF man was lowered on to the back of the boat deck. Neil escorted Wendy across the deck to the RAF man who put each one into a harness, and then they were winched up. Steve and Nicky made there way across the deck and they were winched up. While all this was going on, Chris and I were hanging onto the rear

broadcasting mast as the waves smashed over us. Now it was our turn. Chris led the way with the wind blowing that hard we had to lean into the wind to be able to walk. With the deck on the slant down to the starboard, I slipped on the wet deck and slid down to the starboard rails. Fortunately I hit one of the rear mast sections, which had never been put up. From here I managed to crawl to the back. Chris was already in a harness and the RAF man was able to drop the harness loop over me and attached himself. I shut my eyes due to suffering badly from vertigo. I felt my feet leave the deck and then they got stuck under the safety rail. With the helicopter pulling and my safety boots refusing to bend, something had to give way. I started to fall out of the loop so the RAF man grabbed my life jacket and stopped me. The helicopter moved away from our stricken ship then we were winched up, when we were at the helicopter door the RAF man kicked us in.



Inside the helicopter we took off our life jackets off and put on our safety belts. In no time at all we were landing at the RAF base. We were taken inside and given a shower. Steve, Wendy, Neil, Ricky and Chris were all given flying suits to replace their wet clothes. I did not need one, as I was warm and dry due to the oilskin I was wearing.

We were interviewed by the Customs and Excise and Police. Next the Press, Television and Radio Reporters came to interview us. The television people filmed us and the press cameraman took loads of photographs.

We were picked up in two cars and taken to a friendly house, where we were given food and coffee and watched the news on the television, which included our rescue. A few more photographs were taken and I was asked if this experience had put me off the sea or would I be willing to go back to the Ross Revenge if she was salvaged. Of course I said, "yes".

Another memory I should name: three men on a radio ship. It was just a few minutes before midnight on Saturday 18th September 1993 when we pulled up outside the gatehouse of the Granville Docks in Dover. As we drove around the harbour we could see the beckoning lights of the Ross Revenge. It had been a six-hour drive to reach the radio ship and we were both very tired and more than ready for a cup of tea as we climbed the gangplank on to the deck. After

our tea we unpacked our gear into our cabins. Onboard the Ross at the time of our arrival was Steve Masters, Simon Cowper-Smith, John (24volt), Doughnut and John.

The next day was an average workday and Simon filled me in on what had been happening while I had been away. The two Johns departed at 14:00 and doughnut sometime after. Simon asked if my brother was staying. He answered he was probably going home. Simon gave me the keys saying Ernie would be arriving sometime the next afternoon. Simon and Steve left the M.V. Ross Revenge at about 23:00. Later my brother decided to stay to meet Ernie again. The next day at 14:00 Ernie arrived and after a long chat about the old days on the high seas and a cup of tea, Ernie unpacked his gear and then had dinner and planned our work for the next day.

First thing next morning Ernie, Keith and I set about finding the deadlights that were not in position and freeing up the ones that had rusted up. Covers were made up to fit over the vents. Later that day Howard Beer arrived to help us haul the anchor and 550 feet of chain onboard. The next day was very wet as Howard; Keith and I inspected the anchor, which was sitting on top of the chain. A lot of grunting and heaving was needed to move the two-ton anchor off the chain, only to find the lengths of chains were in knots. Eventually they were removed and the lengths joined together. Keith and I went to the anchor locker, while Ernie and Howard lowered a rope, which was tied to the bit of anchor chain that was left. Using the winless Ernie winched the old chain onto the focsle. Something that could not have been done until the day before when Ernie, Keith and I spent the afternoon freeing off this unit. The old chain was lowered over the side onto the quay side and the new chain and anchor were joined to it. Then it was hauled on to the ship; Howard guided the chain in. Keith and myself were busy in the chain locker laying out the chain and preventing it from mounding up and getting jammed. While the anchor was still on the quayside, Howard, Keith and I put a rope round the anchor and pulled so that when Ernie pulled it on the winch it did not hit the side of the ship.

The next day Ernie and Howard set to work on getting the main engine started. Keith and I started tank topping in the transmitter room and then the focsle where a tank had to be emptied. That went down 3 levels to the bottom of the ship. I had to climb down two ladders and to reach the bottom I had to climb the sides of the ship because there was no ladder down there. Ernie and Howard had the main engine running. Then it was time to retire for dinner and retire for the day.

The next day Howard was away, which just left the three of us again. Keith and

I continued tank topping in the engine room. At the aft of the engine room there are four cod liver oil tanks. That we tackled one by one not knowing what was in these tanks, when we were slackening the nuts on the first tank we found out. Old cod liver oil, gallons of the stuff, eventually we got the top off and I climbed into the tank to have a look. There were great big balls of congealed cod liver oil floating in the liquid. The tank had not been opened for twenty or so years so; you can imagine the smell we were working in.

In the focsle on the port side on the 3rd floor down the aft of the room which houses the anchor locker is a very small trapdoor, which Keith and I could only just squeeze through. Down there in a void between the tanks there is no room to stand up being only about 3 foot 6 inches high and only just about enough room for two people to squeeze into. Keith and I spent 3 days down there, cutting the bolts out due to them being rusted solid. With only an electric bulb on the end of a wire, using a disc cutter to cut the nuts carefully out not knowing whether the tanks were full or empty. Eventually water started to squirt out. We quickly replaced the bolts we had cut out with new ones. From then on we cut a bolt and replaced it. Eventually we had replaced all of them. Then we loosened them and got out of there as fast as we could also remove the power cables. The water was pumped out over night. Then Keith and I would start all over again.

The next day Ernie and Keith moved the command lamps from on top of the Monkey Island to the top of the funnel. Meanwhile I was busy mixing some concrete to seal around the anchor chains, this was done by ramming some old rag around the chain in the mouths of the anchor hawse pipe then sealing it up with concrete. This was a necessary requirement for the department of transport. At the end of the day Ernie left the M.V. Ross Revenge bound for home. Keith and I did likewise with a date set for the three of us to return for another assault on the task list.

It was 19:00 on Tuesday the 12th October 1993 when Keith and I started off in my car for Dover. We had left it to this late to try to miss the rush hour traffic. But in the end we failed to do this because it was not till 01:00 on the early morning of Wednesday that we drove along side the MV Ross Revenge in Dover. At the gatehouse the security guard had easily recognised we were returning crew of the MV Ross Revenge and had let us into the harbour. The morning breeze felt quite cold as we climbed the gangplank on to the boat deck. We had seen Ernie's car parked up and knew he was already onboard. Eventually we were let in and we had a cup of tea and were told that Ernie had retired about an hour earlier. Keith and myself collected our bags out of the car and took them to our cabins and unpacked. After the six-hour journey we were quite

hungry and made ourselves something in the galley. It was about 02:00 when we retired to our cabins.



Later on in the day during breakfast Ernie asked us if we knew the Department of Transport were coming to inspect the ship tomorrow. I told him I was aware and it was the reason Peter Moore had phoned me to make sure we would definitely be onboard for this. Keith and I went to work on the doors making sure they were

water tight and freeing off the door latches that had rusted up. Then Ernie and I finished putting cover over the vents. All three of us worked right through until 04:00 when Ernie retired to his cabin leaving me to pump the diesel up to the day tank. It was about 04:30 when Keith and I managed to retire to our cabins.

The next day Ernie was already up at about 08:30 and gave Keith and me a shout. Just after breakfast Peter Moore and our surveyor had arrived. Later on at 10:00 the two men from the ministry of transport arrived. Over a cup of tea we were all introduced to each other and then the seven of us went on a tour of the ship starting at the focsle. The senior man from the Department of Transport told us of jobs that we had to in order for the ship to be allowed to leave Dover Harbour; at 12:00 the men from the Department of Transport left for their dinner. Keith and myself paid a visit to the fish and chip shop to purchase our dinner. At 14:00 the officials returned and went back to the tour of inspection, Keith and I required moving things. The senior man seemed surprised at all the work that had been completed since the last inspection. They departed at 15:00. Over dinner that night we talked how we had painted the Plimsoll lines. How I said that the plug in the small boat should have been replaced before launching it, upon Howard getting in the small boat had started to sink. "I think you should have this drain plug in Howard" "why have you got it Stuart" he replied. "Everyone said it was not needed" I said, "well it is, please give it to me before the boat sinks" said Howard. I threw it to him and told him I knew it should have been in from the start. Howard quickly fitted it and bailed out the water from the bottom of the boat. I threw him a rope down and pulled him around to paint the Plimsoll lines. Meanwhile Keith had given him the paintbrush and paint. Howard managed to paint them without getting wet.

The next day Keith and I started to replace tank tops down in the engine room, transmitter room and the focsle etc. With there being a lot of tanks took a long time. One of the tanks in the focsle had to have new studs welded on for the tank top to be refitted. Ernie took his time to prepare and run up the main engine as this would be the last time it would be possible as the vents were going to be welded up next day for the move. That night over dinner Ernie, Keith and I talked about the old days out on the high seas when Ernie was aboard the Radio Ship and Keith and I took out the supplies on different tenders. The next day Keith and Ernie set about welding up the vents on the funnel.

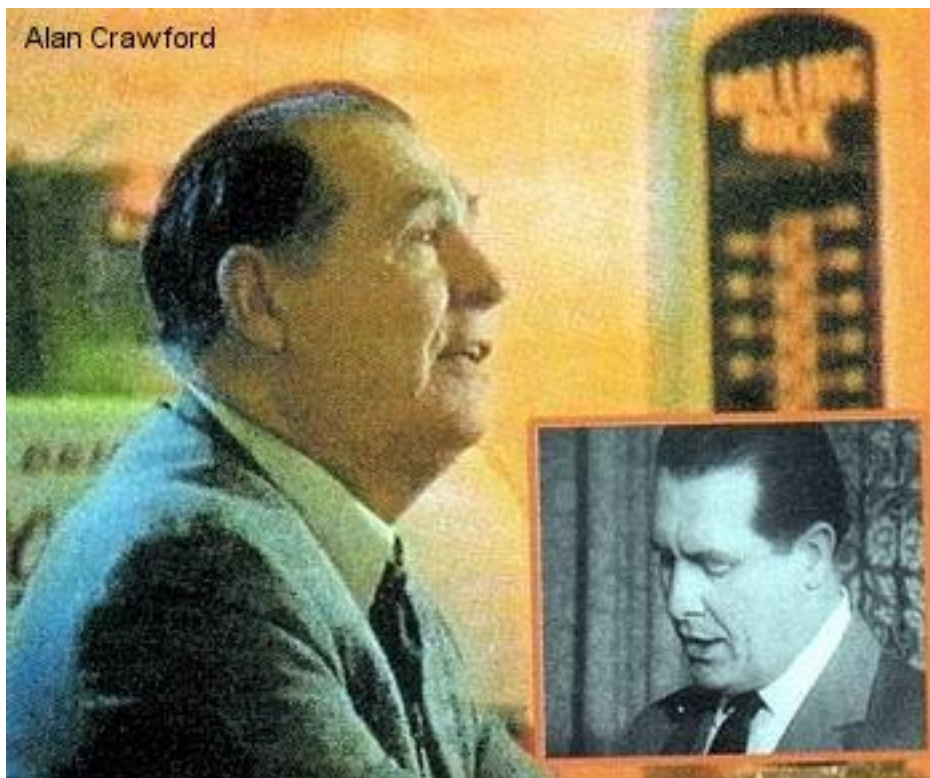


The rest of the time I was on board the MV Ross Revenge on this stint was spent welding up the vents on the funnel. Ernie asked Keith if he would stay, as he had not said he would stay, meanwhile after I took some sleep I started on the journey that would take me nearly four hours. Later that morning Keith and Ernie started to mend the hole in the galley wall. This was not a simple job as the hole had been made for the sink drain. The pipes in cabin 3 had to be unblocked. These pipes were behind the false wooden walls. His first attempt to do this was from a boat moored along side using various methods, all which failed. He was then forced to strip the wood back to get at the pipes, when he had done all this he found a lot of tea bags, knives, forks spoons etc in the pipes. The pipes them selves were very rusty and full of holes and from the mess had been leaking had been leaking for years. All corroded pipes were cut out and new parts were made and were welded into the rest of the system by Ernie, Albert who had arrived two days previously had been giving Ernie and Keith a hand due to the pipes being hard to get to. Albert had arrived with clean laundry and was collecting dirty laundry along with Keith. Who was originally going home with Ernie, but Ernie had decided to stay longer to see the MV Ross Revenge leave Granville docks, being towed by two docks out of Dover. The next job Keith tackled was the hand washbasin in the galley, which had been blocked for years. Some of the woods work in cabin number 2 had to be removed. When the pipe was removed it was found to be blocked with fat. Keith cleaned out and reassembled the pipe and woodwork, and then all that was left was to divert the pipe from the hand wash basin to where it used to be. Keith returned home with Albert from where I picked him up. This was the last time we both saw the Ross Revenge in Dover, the next time we returned she was at her new moorings in the River Blackwater at Bradwell-on-Sea in Essex.

Part 24

ALLAN CRAWFORD, THE UNSUNG OFFSHORE RADIO PIONEER

During research for his new book On Radio North, which came out just before Eastern 2004, Bob Preedy spoke to many people who wished to see a proper recognition of Allan Crawford's contribution to the offshore radio story in the UK. In this chapter Robert Preedy takes us to some known and many unknown facts of the person Allan Crawford, who stood too much in the shadow of Ronan O'Rahilly. The story was earlier published in Offshore Echos Magazine 2004 and thanks to the final editor of this magazine and also my good friend since 1971, Chris Edwards, it could be republished for the book 'The wet and wild history of Radio Caroline'.



Although Allan Crawford is mentioned briefly in many offshore radio studies, his enormous contribution to the establishment of viable offshore radio is largely unknown. His early life in the music business was considerable and his post Radio Atlanta

career was equally as intriguing. His life encompassed major musical compositions, oil deals and the financing of a huge loan that ultimately brought down a government. In his later years he lost a small fortune to religion but remained eternally optimistic to the end even though struck down by disease and disability.

Throughout his life, Allan Crawford had a profound love of music. His interests

ranged from pop, jazz, country, show tunes to classics. In Australia he discovered and recorded the then 16 year old Frank Ifield. In contrast Crawford later worked with the French composer Raoul Breton. In the UK his name came to prominence in the early 60s when he tried to buy the Swedish offshore station Radio Nord. The Swedish government followed the course of other European countries in closing stations that dared to break the national state broadcasting monopoly. Crawford's scheme to start offshore radio in the UK had been planned for a few years. In 1960 he was part of a consortium, with Kitty Black and Oliver Smedley, who formed CBC (Plays) Ltd - a company described as 'Commercial Radio Agents'.

On a business trip to Denmark. Kitty Black had heard the excitement caused by Radio Mercur broadcasting on FM since 1958. Miss Black shrewdly noted that the ship was registered in Panama and a company in Liechtenstein handled advertising. Meanwhile Radio Nord was experiencing the full opposition of the Swedish authorities when a bill was introduced to outlaw, pirate broadcasting. The station was given the deadline to close down by August 1st 1962, but ceased transmissions in June once negotiations were at a final stage with Crawford's consortium.

The dream to bring offshore radio to the UK was within sight and by late September 1962 the Radio Nord ship had returned from servicing in North Spain and was moored in the Thames Estuary. Radio Atlanta, on board the renamed Mi Amigo, was reputed to have made a number of short test transmissions but at the last moment. a raid on the Danish Radio Mercur (16th August 1962) caused panic amongst the Atlanta shareholders and one of them, John Delaney, eventually withdraw his finance.

The owners of the boat wanted a quick deal and refused any offers from Crawford of a lease.

Consequently the boat was given orders to sail for the US where she would be refurbished into pleasure craft - a safer option than continuing to defy governments.

Allan Crawford's optimism took a

battering but he continued to negotiate with backers and eventually did buy the ship and it sailed back to the UK in late December 1963. Much time had been lost and most of the radio equipment and the mast had been removed making the project a far more costly enterprise than was planned.

During 1963 many financiers had been approached but it was the music entrepreneur Ronan O'Rahilly who immediately saw the potential. He, like many before and after, had sensed the frustration of a BBC monopoly and a record company stranglehold on Radio Luxembourg. O'Rahilly was well aware of the Dutch station Radio Veronica and had already been thinking about a similar project for the UK- Crawford's detailed planning galvanised O'Rahilly into action. Instead of joining Project Atlanta he would co-operate but plan his own station in parallel.

Talking on BBC TV's Arena documentary about the experience, Allan Crawford shows his benevolent attitude -Ronan was one of many people who used to visit my building. I was talking to many people by this time about my idea for a radio on a ship, because I was looking for backers. He was full of praise - he's always full of praise when he wants something.

He offered immediately to take me over to meet his father who was a rich man in Ireland. I was very keen to meet possible backers. So I flew with him, within a day or two, to Ireland. His father took me in his car -a beautiful car- to the



border, where he had control of a port, which was no longer in use, but which would be very convenient for surreptitiously erecting a new radio mast on the ship, when we had it.



Part of the plot, which I didn't know when I first met him, and met his father, was that the father would get possession of the key, which was a copy of the QC's opinion as to why it could be legal. Innocently I gave him a copy, and he must have given it to Ronan,

who was then able to run around and show it to his backers. I couldn't find another port into which to fit out my ship, the *Mi Amigo*. It had to be his father's port as originally agreed. We were tied up against his ship which was bigger, and all the time getting a kind of Irish mafia treatment - things disappearing, and so on. You could never put your finger on who was doing what, but we were being delayed all the time.

A comedy in a way. Naturally Radio Caroline was the first to broadcast and Radio Atlanta had to be content to be the race runner-up. And with two stations competing for the same audience, advertisers were reluctant to buy airtime. An uneasy alliance was formed with the merger in July 1964 and O'Rahilly's Caroline North sailed for the Isle of Man where it enjoyed a northern monopoly. Within six months Crawford Caroline South faced awesome competition from Radio London and entered a year of low morale and a slump in ad revenue. By the end of 1965 Caroline South was almost bankrupt and a furious Allan Crawford was bought out by Ronan O'Rahilly. The whole year had been an intense battle of wills as each boss plotted to undermine the other.

In Tony Blackburn's biography he recalls that Crawford's open and pleasant manner was no match for the "mafia ways" of the other side. Allan Crawford stayed on with the group for a number of months selling airtime and perhaps

quietly observed the growing influence of Phil Solomon, brought in to save the whole company - and eventually to outmanoeuvre the other boss. Returning to the music business, Allan Crawford put his musical experience to good use by producing the most successful series of albums ever. He produced tracks for the Pickwick label's 'Top of the Pops' cover version LP's. On Radio Atlanta he had extensively plugged cover version 45's on his Cannon and Sabre labels - so he was no stranger to recreating the hits - he had even produced a cover of the Fortunes 'Caroline'

Speaking about how his cover version records were produced.



Cover version singles on Allan Crawford's Cannon and Rocket labels



a system, it was like a railway station, with trombone players, violin players arriving. We were doing one hit copy every twenty- three minutes. My favourite singer of them all was a man called Ross MacManus, father of Elvis Costello. who was Joe Loss's main vocalist, and he used to always be there recording for me. Whenever we did Elvis Presley's numbers, he was magnificent and better than Presley. Elvis often used to sing off key - I don't know why he was such a worldwide success, because he was not very good in my opinion. Allan also continued to write and publish music. His early experience in London after the war had introduced him to many big names and in 1948 he had met Ralph Peer, owner of Southern Music, who wanted to establish an Australian office.

In the mid 50's of last century Allan Crawford was asked to take over the London office and later established his own record labels and publishing house, Merit Music. He added to this group a number of record shops in the West End as well as a talent agency and management office. With all this enterprise he soon came across the barriers at the BBC. Only established publishers and record companies seemed to have access to the airwaves and, as we know. Crawford's mind slowly turned to offshore radio.

After Radio Atlanta and Radio Caroline and during his time with Pickwick Records he tried to set up an European radio station capable of broadcasting to the UK. He almost concluded deals with Spain and Andorra but the costs proved too much and reception was unsatisfactory. During the seventies he also became involved with Scientology and even studied in Spain to be a high priest. What little money, he had was enthusiastically committed to the religion. Also at this time Australian radio stations were locked in a battle with record companies over the payment of broadcasting royalties. Familiar arguments were used like the promotion value of airplay but the state broadcaster ABC agreed to pay for needle time, making life more difficult for commercial stations.

Their solution was to set up a record label, M7, which mentally Allan Crawford ran very successfully producing many contemporary rock tracks. His next move was into the brokerage business. He teamed up with an Indian businessman, Tirath Khemlani , and proposed a massive loan to the Australian government. The 1972 Labour government needed the loan to exploit mineral and energy reserves. They also had plans for electrification of the railways and for a uranium enrichment plant. The loan was raised not along the usual route of American of Europe but from Saudi Arabia. Tirath Khemlani negotiated with the son of the Crown prince for the loan - the Gulf was awash with dollars following the quadrupling of oil prices from 1973.

The secret loan was available but never called down and no commission was paid

to Khemlani but the government was portrayed as reckless - and suffered political consequences. After some months the Governor-General sacked Gough Whitlam, the Prime Minister. Many stories appeared in the press about the influence of the American CIA in the downfall. Australia had been opposed to the Vietnam War describing the bombing of Hanoi as the work of 'maniacs and mass murders'. An ex-CIA officer revealed in 1980 "The CIA's aim in Australia was to get rid of a government they did not like and that was not co-operative."

After this Allan Crawford kept a low profile but in 1979 in a letter to his brother, he talks about oil contracts that he and Khemlani had signed with Saudi Arabia, Indonesia and Iraq. He estimated that by Christmas 1979, their profits could be a million dollars a day - which, within ten years, could rise to twenty million ~ dollars a day. From this income he dreamt about staging his musicals on Broadway, and perfecting his many inventions. He had already patented a 'Master Conductor' device for conducting a tape recording, which responded to your tempo without the music going out of pitch. Another invention was a method of allowing a boat to sail directly into the wind without tacking. Perhaps his most fantastic patent was that of producing artificial oil.

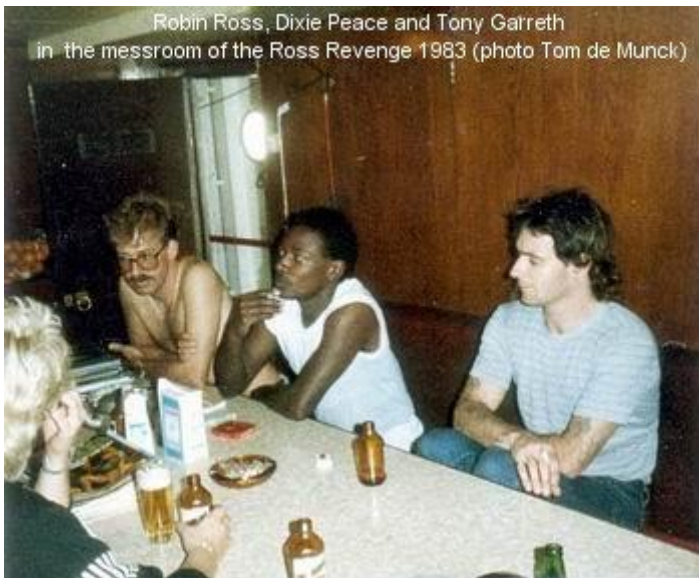
Sadly by the mid 80s Allan was suffering, ill health. He was afflicted by diabetes and in 1994 had a leg amputated. A year later his second leg was removed and his eyesight also tailed. But even during these dark days he remained in fine spirits, planning new inventions, writing music and holding a firm belief in the power of religion. He was firmly convinced that God would help his legs to grow again.

He spent his last few years in a North Wales nursing home where he died in December 1999. His enthusiasm for life and living was with him to his last day and he will be remembered for optimism against adversity. One leading musician described Allan as a musical genius." We affectionately recall his pioneering efforts to break the BBC monopoly and bring fresh vibrant radio to the UK." Those four years of vitality on the airwaves would not have existed without Allan Crawford's passion for turning ideas into action.

Part 25

THE LISTENER, THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR FOR A RADIO STATION

As for every radio station it's very important to have a listener ship and if this is not the case there could be severe financial problems as advertisers always look at the RAJAR figures from a station. This is also the case with offshore radio stations. In the sixties always very high figures were brought into the press when Radio Caroline and Radio London would like to have attention again from the journalists. At one stage the two stations were claiming more than 8.8 million listeners each. Airtime was quickly sold but we're four decades further, Radio Caroline has no real office anymore and the income has to come from other sources. Lucky enough they could sell, up till the end of last year, a lot of airtime to American religious organisations. Another source of income is gifts, yes financial gifts from listeners. So this group is nowadays very important for the life of the Lady. So also in this book some pages with personal memories of the readers:



Lucky there are a lot of people who have those little memories to the station. When this book had his pre-publication on internet I asked the reader to write in just a few lines his or her memory to the station. Chris Faulkner goes back to his youth by writing: 'My memory of 'the Old Girl' comes from the time she moved to the Isle of Mann in 1964. My parents house in Holyhead, North Wales, looked out over Newry Beach and we

often saw various ships stopping off just behind the breakwater to pick up the pilot for their onward journey. (Blue Funnel line vessels in particular). Just as I was about to go to school one morning, my mother called me and my brother into my parents bedroom to watch the M.V. Caroline coming in to pick up her pilot. We were so amazed at the size of her mast never having seen anything like it before. She stayed behind the breakwater for about 15-20 minutes and we watched before heading north toward, we assumed the I.O.M. This memory has

never left me and I can remember it made us all late for school, though as my mother was also my teacher at primary school, it didn't matter so much for me!

From Shaun in California response on our chapters on internet: 'Thanks for the latest instalment. This chapter, about the coming back of Radio Caroline in 1983, brought back some very happy memories. I vividly remember the days leading up to the first broadcast from the Ross, the test tones, the (usually incorrect!) media reports and the shock of hearing just how powerful the signal was. I'd never heard anything like it before. Nice to think about Dixie Peach, too. Have you ever met the guy? I could never figure out if he was "high on life" or high on some of that famous Falls Head Herb (usually found in the Overdrive studio, so John Bennett tells me). Wonder where he is now? The late seventies model of Radio Caroline is still my favorite, despite the fact they were on and off the air more than a partisan station in WW2. This is shaping up to be a great book!

Andries Peterson from the Netherlands has also his own memories: 'I had heard from Radio Caroline before the period they re started transmissions of the Dutch coast, late 1973. But next to hear talking other people on the subject I never heard really the Sound of the Nation, as it was mentioned. I must say the people on the station got my sympathy very



quickly. I have to say it perfectly simple that I always hated the intrusive way deejays tried to influence my taste on other radio stations. I never had the idea to buy singles as they got so much airplay and therefore entered the charts. No, I did buy records which were also nice and were brought to my ears by listening to Radio Caroline, which was other music than brought on other stations. They really got more and more sympathy after August 31st 1974, when other stations in international waters of the Dutch coast stopped their transmissions and Radio Caroline survived and went on enjoying the listener. I tried also to get the best quality out of my car radio, while listening to the station and was always terrible fed up when Caroline was off the air again and I was forced to tune in to the sound of Hilversum 3, the then so called national pop station in the Netherlands. This was all in the seventies but to round up my memory I've to say that the above lead to helping the Dutch Caroline. And that's the group from Sietse Brouwer in Harlingen. It was the reason to help them with the promotion team when they were busy getting as much as possible cable networks, putting the

signal of Radio Caroline on their network in the late nineties of last century and in the early years of this century. It resulted in something called a promotion team but due to the fact there was a guy, Peter Fransz, who was - in my eyes - totally arbitrary, I decided to step aside.'

Next one comes from Groningen in the North East of the Netherlands. From there Bert Alting wrote in: 'I was sleeping and living partly on a little room on the loft of the house and in the early evenings in the mid seventies I tried never to miss the closedown of Radio Mi Amigo, the sister station in those days of Radio Caroline, and the daily opening of Radio Caroline. Reception at that hour was far more difficult than during daytime and so I did my utmost to get the best reception possible, although not every day I was successful. Bit how glad I was every time I heard the famous 'ding ding' Caroline bell, followed by the opening tune from those days 'On my way back home' from The New Riders on the Purple Sage'. So when I succeeded to get a good signal during the evening I knew it would be a very good evening. Radio Caroline, the phenomenal. She was so fine, I made her mine, her name is Caroline!'



And then a little memory which came in from Mary Payne, director of the Radio London company which does a lot of work, including maintaining an excellent site on the history of Radio London - together with her husband Chris. Mary wrote: 'On another matter, I have been thinking about your forthcoming Caroline book and wondered if you would be including the titles

of any of the records played on the Test Transmission tapes? I can clearly recall 'Pushover' by Etta James and The Shoop Shoop Song (It's In His Kiss) by Betty Everett being two of the tracks. I recall that Easter weekend in 1964 when Radio Caroline arrived very well. I was extremely excited about the new station and borrowed a big transistor radio from my grandmother, so that I could take the music everywhere I went. On Easter Saturday, my parents wanted to go and view a show house on a new estate. This was not because they wanted to buy a house, but because the ones on the new estate had been constructed with an innovative type of central heating, which blew hot air through ducts under the floor. They were keen to see what this heating was like, with a view to installing it in their own home. I remember wandering around that show house with my tranny on my arm. The whole of the school Easter holiday, my friend Mozz and I

took the tranny with us everywhere. The only problem I had with it was the weight of it hanging on my arm (my right arm is probably longer than my left one now) and being able to find sufficient pocket money to buy the batteries! I don't think Grandma saw her radio again till I managed to get a small tranny of my own to replace it.'

Here's one from 'a Johnnie'

'Firstly may I say that I always enjoy reading your reports and congratulate you on a splendid job. Secondly, I feel that I have to put forward a little in the way of defence for Radio Caroline. I am enjoying their programmes immensely at present but there always seems to be a lot of criticism about the station no matter what they do. "Why do we have to pay, why aren't they out at sea, the music's no good", etc. I wonder if any of the people who criticise have even tried setting up or running a radio station on land, let alone from 12 miles out to sea with the law heavily biased against them. Now I don't know Peter Moore personally so cannot comment on the type of person he is, but I do know that he has done a lot for

Caroline over the past few years and I'm sure without him it would still be nowhere to be heard. The fact is that the station is on air 24hrs a day, 7 days a week - something I would have not thought possible not that long ago. People have to move away from the idea that Caroline can only broadcast from a boat - I thought that back in the early days we were fighting for free radio to be legalised ('free' as in freedom of speech) and on land!! There are very few restrictions placed on Caroline's licence, allowing them to broadcast virtually what they like within the law. To keep it this way they have had to steer clear of big investors (and conventional means of broadcasting) which, although a nice idea, has it's draw backs. One is lack of finance, so presenters work for nothing - we (Caroline supporters) can ask for no greater dedication - and I am quite happy to do my bit and help keep the dream alive with my monthly subscription. Gaining advertising is very much a Catch 22 situation, firstly you need good audience figures and to do that a greater prominence needs to be sought, hence the push for a Sky EPG listing. It also requires a good sales team and, of course, sales people don't work for nothing. Gradually Caroline is fighting it's way back and I'm sure that once there, and advertising is coming in there will be no need for listener donations. No one said it would be an easy or fast journey, but I, for one, can only see better things for the future. Best regards Johnnie Lang



Caroline Supporter



Also Philip Coleman was selected to be a part of this chapter:

'I do not think my Caroline memories deserve a mention in the Caroline's special but there are two which may be of interest to you: 1: On 30th September 1972 I was a student with a part time job. I took my radio to work and annoyed everyone by listening to RNI in

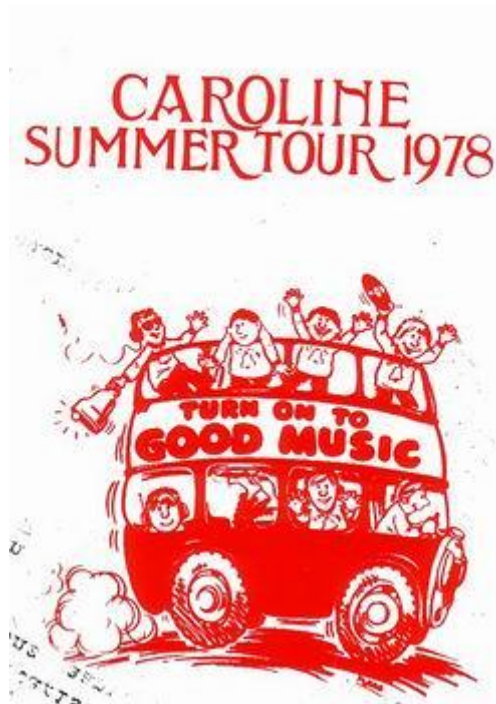
Dutch on short-wave. I thought something may happen and sure enough at 1pm British time on came RNI 2. By about 3.45pm the signal was really very poor so I tuned into Manx radio and there was Daffy Don Allen with his country and Western Jamboree. He announced towards the end of the programme that it was his last show because he had accepted an offer to become programme controller of RNI! At that time I thought RNI 2 was here to stay. The highlight however was picking up test transmissions from Radio Caroline (I had missed the tests of the previous day).How different it seemed 6 weeks later when the Mi Amigo had no mast and RNI no English service.

Between 26th and 30th December 1973 a friend and I went to Holland for a few days. We almost got on board the MEBO II with the assistance of Brian McKenzie but although we went out on the Trip tender the weather was too bad to allow boarding. The following day we went to Caroline House in the Hague. We simply knocked on the door which was answered by a young Canadian who called himself Rob Day. By and large the old hands ignored us but Rob was very enthusiastic and took us to the top floor where the new studios of Radio Mi Amigo were being given a dry run. Andy Archer then came in to say he and Johnny Jason wanted to record the opening programme for Radio Seagull and



asked Rob, my friend and I to buy a bottle of sparkling white wine for 10 guilders which could be used to sound like champagne when 'opened' on air. We duly bought the wine but do not know if it was the one heard when Radio Seagull opened on the 7th January 1974. Knowing the lads at Caroline it was probably drunk and a replacement bought.

We arranged to meet the Caroline tender to go out to the ship but no one turned up. A well nourished captain said they often failed to appear for a tender but he always got paid! Rob Day never made it to the airwaves (to the best of my knowledge) and that was that. A little about myself. I live in Wigan, just west of Manchester. I remember Caroline North with great affection. I am taking a career break from my profession as a Solicitor and in 2001 was fortunate to be allowed to run the news service from the Mi Amigo RSL from the LV18 where I met Bart Serlier among many others. I came to your Radio Day in 2002 and thoroughly enjoyed it but could not make it to Radio Day 2003 when you changed the date at the last moment (no criticism meant at all) and the new date coincided with half term for schoolchildren in the north of the UK and air fares rocketed. So don't change from the 2nd October so I can enjoy that day too!! With very best wishes Phil Coleman'.



Early in this special celebration year my good friend Rob Olthof, from the Foundation for Media Communication, and I did our annual visit to England and once of the days during the week, mostly on Wednesday, we visit our friends in Whitstable. Although we only come in once a year in one of the pubs in main street, the landlord knows us very well. If this is why we have always such high level noises or he does enjoy the atmosphere all the guys gathering together talking about the Offshore Radio from the past is for you, the reader, to decide. We did meet up with some five other people, including Bob LeRoi and Johnny Lewis. Of course we did talk a lot on the subject 'Caroline'. To my surprise Bob mentioned just in short the plans to get

an ILR- stations on the MV Ross Revenge, after the ship stranded on the Goodwin Sands. He promised to send me some lines on it for the book and here it is: 'In the early 90's, soon after the Ross Revenge was dragged off the Goodwin Sands and taken into Dover, a plan was conceived by the team of the then Invicta Radio Group. Comprising the fairly nautical crew of Roger Day, Andy

Archer, Johnny Lewis, Nigel Harris, Bob Matthews and Bob Le-Roi. The ship would be moved to a permanent mooring in Ramsgate Harbour with the Gold service at the time called Coast operating like the FM services from Whitstable studios being moved onto the ship to become Radio Caroline. Much improvements to the layout of the ship was planned but basically the studios would have remained. Links would have been to the 603 and the 1242 kHz transmitters as before, but programmes would have taken on a slightly different slant. The project not unexpectedly hit the quay side, but it would have been interesting should the plan have come to fruition.'

Hopefully one day either one of the boys will give a full report on the subject. Maybe when it's 50 years ago Simon Dee opened the station officially.

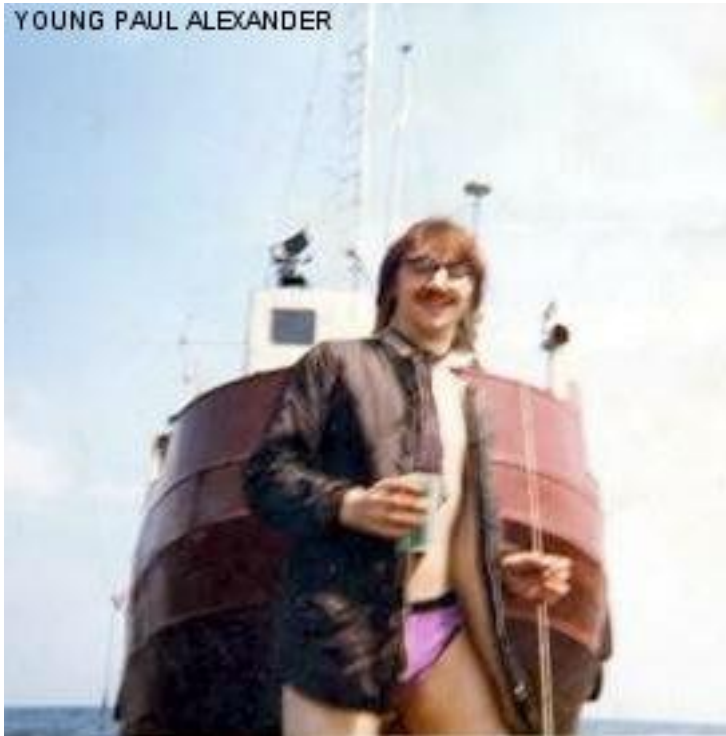
It was Mark Reynolds writing in from Buckinghamshire responding on the question to bring in his personal memory: 'I did learn about offshore radio in late 1966 and followed the stations from that point on. After the MOB became law on August 15th 1967 we had to wait a long time for new offshore radio stations - although we did have our Caroline stations up till March 1968. From 1970 on a lot happened in offshore radio, which has often be forgotten by people who write about this subject in books. In the seventies and eighties is was great to follow all the things which were happening as there were two magazines in which all the facts and figures were published from day to day. Therefore I would like to thank the Monitor Magazine from Benfleet from the later Buster Pearson and the Pirate Radio News team from the Netherlands, including Hans Knot. Since a couple of years we can read a lot on the subject Offshore Radio on several internet sites and versus the International Report. Next to that we can listen in to Radio Caroline on internet and satellite. The station hasn't anymore the glamour it had in the High Seas Days but I'm still enjoying all the memories. As those people, who did promote the stations with their magazines and internet sites, wouldn't have been there, we wouldn't celebrate Caroline's 40th birthday this year.

Part 26

THE YOUNG PAUL ALEXANDER

I've to go back to the late spring of 1973 which was one of the most memorable periods for Radio Caroline. Two stations calling themselves Radio Caroline; one in English language with a Top 40 format, the other in Dutch with an easy listening

format. In those days I did visit the MV Mi Amigo and the Caroline offices at Van Hoogendorpstreet a lot and got befriended with a lot of those people walking around. There was also a young lad who wanted to go out to the ship desperately. Now 31 years later I still see him on radio days, reunions and other occasions. I also invited him to do his 'memories' from his early days: Paul Rusling.



I came rather late to the Caroline family: we were too poor to have our own television and family evenings were spent listening to Radio Luxembourg. I remember that the radio wouldn't be on much during the day - the Light Programme was pretty square, except for Saturday mornings, and we would borrow a record player from neighbours from time to time. At Christmas 1964 I got my own transistor radio and my interest was sparked - I helped to set up a school electronics club and realised

that I was outside the reception area of a lot of stations which I had read about 'down south'. A friend came back from a holiday in the Lake District with tales of a Radio Caroline and we eventually heard it very late one night around 199. It sounded so different - the deejays were enthusiastic about the music, but somehow still 'cool'.

My holy grail was to hear this Caroline station during the day and I strung out some elaborate long wires across the school fields (claiming them to be a pilot for changing the PA system to a 100 volt line system!). Eventually one lunchtime I found Radio Caroline North, weak, but there and what a breath of fresh air.

Big L was still my main listening - one day I woke to find it obliterated by a station playing 'Strangers in the Night' by Frank Sinatra. Yuk, not a schoolboy's favourite cup of tea at all, and that station was much discussed at school that day. It turned out to be a new offshore station, Radio 270, which later played an important role in my life. Tuning away to lose Radio 270 and find Big Lil again, I suddenly found Radio Caroline at an unusual spot on the dial. They had of course moved up to '259' with the return from Holland of the Mi Amigo and a brand

spanking new 50 kilowatt transmitter. The signal was now superb and it had some new deejays. I hadn't heard before- this American guy Emperor Rosko, but still DLT (I didn't realise until some years later that he had moved down from the North ship to the Mi Amigo). Quite a difference to the old 199 spot with 10 kilowatts - Radio Caroline was now listenable and a big part of my life.

One day they mentioned a new station, Swinging Radio England, and I found it immediately - on 355 metres. The best signal I had ever heard from any station. Loud, shrill and playing my music. The jocks were wonderful to my young ears and I became an SRE listener, for a few weeks until they disappeared off to 227 metres, where reception was more difficult. They were replaced by Britain Radio - with the old 'Radio 270' diet of easy listening music. I went back to Radio Caroline which improved tremendously and simply became hipper and hipper.

Over the next few years I became a staunch offshore radio supporter, organising petitions, clubs and DJ sessions up in Hull with star deejays - the 270 men of course (Mike Hayes, Rusty Allen, Mike Baron and Alan West, who we knew better as Ross Randell) plus Daffy Don Allen who became pretty well known across Yorkshire - even his fan club was run from Yorkshire by Norah Swallow in Halifax. Caroline North had become listenable across Yorkshire some time previously when it moved from 199 to 259 metres. When we brought Don to Hull the first time in June 1968 the club was packed with fans eager to see him - so Caroline North did have listeners that far east!

Winding my life forward a few years, at the time the MV Mi Amigo sprang back to life off the Dutch coast I was working in night clubs as a deejay to pay my way through college doing radio engineering. One day I had a phone



call that changed my life from Kate Carey. She said that her husband Chris wondered if I would be interested in coming out to the ship for a while and doing some programmes. They were soon to relaunch the 'Caroline International' service at full power and wanted some bright and breezy Top 40 deejays.

To say that I was pretty excited for the rest of that day would be an understatement - I was over the moon! I couldn't eat (unusual for me!) or concentrate on my gig that night at a new venue in Bridlington. It had opened only three days previously and the owners had spent a fortune promoting it with billboards, newspapers, and so on and my face was incorporated into this. Imagine their dismay when I told them I was leaving to join Radio Caroline! I didn't know when, the arrangements had been a bit flaky to say the least. I remember being told by either Chris or Kate that "there wouldn't be a great deal of bread in the trip". I didn't mind - I would eat toast instead!

My long suffering girl friend Anne was the most difficult to break the news to as she had just moved her own career up to be near me in Bridlington and we planned a great Summer up there - now suddenly I was darting off elsewhere. I was scared stiff what her reaction might be - a big girl (four inches taller than me) and with a fiery temper and a tongue like a knife, she could be formidable when crossed, but to her eternal credit she was 100% supportive and knew it was something that I had always wanted to do. She wouldn't let me go now, after 32 years together though.

Eventually I found myself at Van Hoogendorpstreet in The Haque, an office near the Hague's 'Holland Spoor' railway station. There was much reconstruction going on with a suite of studios being built on the top floor and someone assembling a motorcycle in the downstairs porch.

Kate gave me a lovely warm welcome and said that they were worried that I wasn't coming as I hadn't said I would join when asked. I was surprised - the question "Would you like to join Radio Caroline" at that time was similar to asking a musician if they would like to join the Beatles. Did it really need an answer?

After a tour of the building we ate lunch using some carpet tile cartons as tables and chairs - they took up almost every available nook and cranny in the offices, presumably the result of some advertising contra deal. The company cars were supplied by 'Stam' auto rental, until the ones returned were too battered and bruised.

The offices were fairly buzzing at that time with a constant procession of wheelers and dealers - Caroline was big news having just helped out Radio Veronica for a few weeks at a critical time for radio politically in Holland and the ship was running test transmissions on two frequencies - both of which were covering wide areas of the Benelux and the UK. Hot Chocolate, at that time

Mickie Most's hottest property, were in town for Radio Veronica, but when he called Caroline House to do an interview there was nowhere to sit down and no studio complete to record an interview, so they went off to a bar instead!

Our advertising contracts were coming together very well - we had probably the best guy ever to handle this for us in the form of Terry Bate. He had been brought over from Canada by Ronan in 1966 to help boost Caroline's profile and had come up with 'Cash Casino' and 'Partners in Profit', two excellent promotions which resulted in Caroline House being deluged in mail. Although he had three applications in to the IBA for the forthcoming ILR network, here he was bagging deals for Caroline and still finding time to help out train deejays and record commercials on the top floor at Caroline House.



The whole of one huge wall was dominated by 'Radio Caroline' picked out in cyan blue using the legendary square letters, I remember it as clearly as

yesterday and only wish someone had taken a picture, it was so imposing and impressive. There were a small army of helpers 'getting things together' in the office at that time - Dennis King probably being one of the hardest workers after Chris and Kate who worked like trojans day and night to get the station operational. But one of the most interesting was a little girl of about 3 years old, whose image became part of the Caroline logo - the outline if a little girl eating an ice-cream? That was Louise Cary, a little bundle of energy who was proficient than most of the English team at taking calls in Dutch and acting as translator. She certainly knew her way around - I remember going to the post office with her to swap the huge bundles of International Reply Coupons that arrived at Caroline House each day for postage stamps. Louise was able to show me where to buy ice cream on the way back!

That day there was only one tender out to the boat, we often had three and even four, perhaps a measure of how disorganised things were and how things could change rapidly as new supplies became available. Tender time was often hectic - everyone decamped down to the office of Jacques Vrolijk on the quayside in 'De Tweede Binnenhaven' in Scheveningen - about 15 minutes away from the office, unless the Police got too interested in your unusual load. The comings and goings to the radio ships were all a magnet for radio aficionados of all types - I spent many happy hours here myself!

Dick Palmer gave me an introduction to the *Mi Amigo*, 'and how to stay alive out here' as he so worryingly put it. The ship's engine room was a bit of a death-trap with several contraptions in varying states of disassembly and, one presumes, repair. The big problem seemed to be getting parts - everything was awaiting something or other. The one remaining generator had no intercooler so Dick and his assistant had rigged up an inventive way of cooling, where jets of seawater simply cascaded over the outer jacket of the engine and flowed off into the bilges. Rudimentary, but it worked and kept us running for a long time.

Dick was a first class engineer, driven to despair by a lack of tools and parts (for the equipment, not personally!) who was also a superb mentor. He was always willing to give pearls of wisdom, on life, after-life, but above all on human consumption of food, drink and other ingestibles. He knew so much about everything, or so it seemed to a young 19 year old, and I remember being totally amazed at some of his theories, many of which he would expound late into the evening. He was genuinely concerned for some of the young guys who ended up out on the ship and many of my colleagues and I plus the greater Caroline family and indeed the listeners owe Dick a great debt of gratitude.

Dick was ably assisted by two terrific guys from the Hague called Peter and Jaap. Like Dick, they had a wicked sense of humour and loved winding people up - we had some terrific times and I can still break into fits of giggles even now, thirty years later, thinking of some of the antics we got up to while people were on the air - some involving such props as frozen bananas and cans of cream (I think!).



I seem to recall doing a period of test transmissions, the usual pleading for reception reports. We decided against trying to spell out the van Hoogendorpstraat address as it would diminish the amounts of mail, and simply announced Radio Caroline, the Hague in Holland. To the credit of the Dutch PTT, we received all the mail without a problem at all. I understand that we took up an entire corner of the sorting office for quite some time and the amounts of mail certainly kept the army of workers at the office occupied.

Mail addressed to the deejays was sent out to the ship and I have to say that it is one of the most pleasing things about working in radio - receiving mail. The mail we received at Caroline was phenomenal - I have never seen so much. I used to sit for hours opening the stuff, and of course it provided superb programme material. My sincere thanks to everyone who has ever written to a deejays on a radio ship - you made the life so much more fun.

After some time doing test transmission as Radio Caroline 1 and Radio Caroline 2, Chris decided one Sunday that we would start full programmes the following day. It was a bit of a surprise to most, in particular our breakfast deejay Roger Day. He was to record his breakfast programmes on tape at his home in south London and we would play them . . . when they arrived. Of course, none were available for the first day, so at 7pm on Sunday 3rd June I was told that I would be hosting breakfasts, from the very next morning.

Andy Archer had come out to the ship to live host the morning strip (a technical term for programme, sometimes very representative of one's attire) from 9 to 12 and he assured me that the TV and press would all be out in force the next morning for the launch, and I should dress smartly. I obediently wore a snazzy psychedelic necktie and a mauve three piece suit at 6am the next morning, I

even polished my shoes! Of course no press showed up, however I kept the suit on just in case. One visitors boat showed up and on board were two very keen radio aficionados of the day who came out are still stalwarts of the offshore radio scene, Hans Knot and Rob Olthof. I should think they wondered what on earth I was doing dressed like that!

Chicago wanted to take some measurements of how far the two signals were going - its normal to measure field strength at about a mile distance to gauge the radiated power, so I set off with him in one of the ship's lifeboats to do this. We had no outboard motor, just an old oar and about a mile and a half of rope which we tethered to the ship as a safety line. We drifted off on the tide and were soon quite a distance away from the Mi Amigo, and enjoying the warmth of the sun and perhaps the radiation of the ships too - there were at that time us pumping out RF on 773 and 1187 kHz, Radio Veronica with about 20 kilowatts on 557 kilohertz about a mile away, and 'a bit further along the street' was the MEBO II, pumping out its 80 kilowatts on 1367kHz, and a fair bit on other channels too.



Peter told me to pay out all the line so we would drift a bit further. Being slightly wet behind the ears I took him at his word and paid out all the line, including the last few inches which were tied to the end of the boat. Peter didn't think anyone could be so stupid, but there is always one and here he was, in a small open boat with him and now drifting a lot faster on the tide away from the Mi Amigo, now we were no longer dragging a mile and a half of rope astern! We hastily began paddling frantically back, but the tide was quite rapid - the guys on the ship couldn't understand why we were now waving. I tried semaphore for help - but they didn't twig for quite some time.

Eventually Dick and Jimmy on the ship realised we were in trouble, reeled the line in and repaid it out, this time floating on an empty canister towards us. We were busily trying to row our way back and making no headway at all. After about an hour of drama, which included us both ending up in the water when I managed to lose our only oar, we got back to the ship and as a penance I had to single handedly crank up the lifeboat back into position on the davits - it took me almost 90 minutes. I was a good boy after that - until one day I popped across to the Radio Veronica ship (they always seemed to have more beer than we did and their newsman Arend Langenberg and Chief Engineer José van Groningen always made us more than welcome!). Dick Palmer had to sack me after that

episode, I think he sacked me a few times, or confined me to painting duties, all good disciplinarian stuff I suppose for those who had served in a public school, which life on the Mi Amigo was very much alike! My misery was usually short lived as a few hours later there would be a tender and either Chris or Kate would unsack me as we were short of deejays.

One of the nicest surprises was one morning when I was summoned out onto deck to see a visiting boat - the Dolfijn from Scheveningen I think it was, with a lady out on deck yelling something or other. It was a pen friend, Lesley Reas, who had come all the way over from Harlow in Essex and chartered her own boat (and it cost about two weeks wages for a trip out there in those days) and just all to say how well I was doing and please play her a record. I was really touched by that, it was a lovely thing to do - a plane trip to Holland, taxi to Scheveningen and then out on a boat - the sheer dedication of Caroline listeners is something that I don't think any other radio station enjoys. All power to them, their efforts are really appreciated.

For a time we had not one or two but really four services running - the four seasons of Caroline. On 389 metres we had the English language Top 40 hit music station, while over on 259 they had easy listening by day in Dutch until about 6pm. We would then have about 3 hours of classical music, until around 9pm Norman Barrington and Dick Palmer would take over and slowly change it from classical, via stuff like ELO, to progressive, which continued until around 6am when the Dutch language Radio Caroline easy listening format would take over again.



From left: Jacques Vrolijk, Hans Knot, Martin de Wit, Hans Verbaan and Steve England, and some more other people

When one looks back at the line ups, we had a very strong team - Roger Day (when the tapes showed up!), Andy Archer, Spangles Maldoon, Robin Adcroft, Peter Chicago, Steve England, Norman Barrington, Dick Palmer, Dave West and Johnny Jason. Oh, and that Yorkshire guy with a Beatle fringe masquerading as Paul Alexander! Andy had become PD of the Dutch easy listening service and also recruited a strong team including Joop Verhoof, and two ace readers - Henk Meeuwis and Leo de Later, who we lost to Radio Veronica, and more recently a star TV performer with RTL in Holland.

The Mi Amigo still had a lot of equipment missing at the time and it was a credit to Peter Chicago and Robin Adcroft that they got two services operating at the

time. The main 259 studio had the big Gates mixer and the cart machines. It was used for the main revenue earner, the Dutch daytime easy listening station, and in the evenings by the Caroline rock music or progressive 'album' station. The 389 studio next door was the large old wrap around desk, rather like a counter from a fish and chip shop, with a very basic home made mixer that looked like it had been purloined from a night club. We had simply two Garrard SP25 turntables that cost about twenty pounds each and an old Grundig open reel tape recorder on the floor for commercials and the occasional jingle. The microphone was excellent however, an AKG D202 - or rather it was excellent until it failed on me at 7.30 one morning. I dare not wake Chicago, his sleep was sacrosanct, so I set to disassembling the microphone. I got it working again, but couldn't get it back together; I think I was fired for that too!



We did our programmes perched on what Andy Archer called a splendid antique dining chair, which I think is what it was. I looked very out of place, and in a rough sea you couldn't stay on it for very long. The station's record library was also rather thin - we had a superb new Caroline Countdown 40 dreamed up in London by one of Chris's old friends, Mike Lindsay, who was managing Purple Records at EMI. The first week we only had 13 of the 40 records listed.

The early mornings were good times to be on the ship, watching the sun rise over Holland and eating a superb real Irish breakfast cooked by one of Ronan's pals, Jimmy Hoolihan, who was a tireless worker and always willing to help. Jimmy looked fearsome as he was really tall (if he wasn't 7 feet tall he was at least 6 feet 12 inches!) but was one of the kindest and most helpful people you could wish to meet. Peter Chicago too is of course a big guy, but also one of the biggest hearts too - I'm proud to call him my friend, and others to from this golden era - such as Robin Adcroft.

On one trip home I was talking to an old friend in Hull about the station and he asked if we needed an experienced seaman. I called Chris in the office and we certainly could - bring a welder too was his instruction. No need for that, as Mike Hydrophoor as he became known due to his accomplishment with that particular piece of kit in the engine room, could do both. We soon had quite a

contingent of engineers on the boat, being joined by Bob Noakes and others, and things improved rather rapidly, until suddenly on evening the tender came alongside and I stood in for Steve England while he helped do something else. Kate was in the studio with Andy Archer and we were talking about some great new plan, when suddenly during a link the light flickered, the turntable slurred and I flipped - "that bloo*** **** generator again" I said, and thought "Oh No, I swore on the air" Fortunately for me the transmitter had tripped out seconds before my expletives.

But the generator had finally died and the only way to get back on the air was for a deal for some new ones that involved giving up our coveted 389 transmitter to the new Belgian station, Radio Atlantis. That's why when Radio Atlantis debuted its jingles said it was on 385, although it was actually broadcast on 259 as the 50 kilowatt transmitter could not be made to work on the lower frequency at full power. The Caroline International service was finished however as the team dispersed to ILR, Luxembourg and all points west.

For me it was a wonderful induction to the wacky world of watery wireless. It was one of the best times of my life. I made some fantastic friends and still think of those days with fondness and affection. Maybe one day

Part 27

IS THE CAROLINE MANAGEMENT STILL RELIABLE

In January 2004 the Horizon arrived, a 'magazine' which comes in on a regular base into the post-box of the editor of this book and that of other Caroline lovers. Thanks John and Jenny. That time Hans Knot was very surprised to see a letter from the upper manager Peter Moore. Caroline's 'manager' started his letter with 'I am ashamed that often when I put pen to paper, is to beg yet another favour from Caroline Supporters'. He, as manager of the Caroline organisation, wants to use it to get the name 'Caroline' on the Sky Electronic Program Guide. In this way he hopes to get probably millions of listeners so advertisers can see that it's useful to buy airtime on the station. Hans Knot thinks that the term 'free radio' is a thing of the past if Peter Moore starts openly asking for money to the listener.



Unlucky for the Caroline organisation, there's no sales office for the station yet. In the eighties they had at one stage a company in America who did partly the work for them. A real office with at least one sales man at the desk from 9 am up till 5 pm is the only way to get this station way back where it once was. And that was on the top. I can't see this happening the time being.

No office but pledging, or begging the listener for money. Even those who only tune in to the station versus internet got this letter. Radio Caroline, as it now is, has nothing to do with the free radio, which Ronan and his managers and program directors brought us and the deejays in the past. We, the listener, could

listen without paying any money and the deejays could play as much what they wanted. Now, 2004, it has totally changed: the organiser behind Radio Caroline wants the listener to pay money. I know from a few very good sources - people I know for many years and who are very trustful - that they tried to get some money into the Caroline organisation during the past year. One organisation tried to get CD's from new bands played on the station, whereby the bands would pay a little amount of money - if the songs would be played on regular time.

Peter Moore - yes the organiser for the station - told to the person, Rob Olthof of FMC, that 'it's too much work to organise it'. So no plugs for new bands and also no money for Radio Caroline. I know that it's true as I sat next to both persons when they were talking for the third time in a row on the possibilities to gain more money for the Caroline organisation and to get new bands a possibility for airplay on the station.

Where are the days that 120 different companies could be heard with their products on Radio Caroline



within one week? No, don't say we're not in the sixties. If a good team is arranging a good rate card (the last one I've seen from the Caroline organisation was in 1982 when the proposed MV Imagine would come on the air) the station

finally would be making money again, so it could be providing the programs as a free radio station. Asking the listeners for money would be ending by then in a healthy way. Another way of making money is selling airtime. I know that there are a couple of very fanatic supporters in Germany who want to pay a regular amount of Euro's to a bank account in Germany. This money is transferred three times a year to Caroline account in Highgate, which makes around 1000 Pounds a year for the organisation. And you know what? The station's manager thinks this is not so much!

Well I can tell you that in my archive is a letter from early 1992 to the Foundation for Media Communication (FMC), written by Peter Moore, in which he begged and begged for 300 Pounds. In those days some of the products of the Foundation were Caroline related - like the Caroline 'The Legend Lives On' CD. I was and still am an advisor to the board of FMC and as the producer of this mentioned cd I advised that all the money earned from this project could go either to the Caroline organisation or to Peter Chicago. So of course FMC (SMC in Holland) also paid the 300 Pounds Moore asked for in 1992.



MV MI AMIGO IN ZAANDAM HARBOUR

With this money a big Van could be rented in London and Mike Dundee and some other guys went to Holland to pick up all the equipment and records from the storehouse of Dutch OCD in Bleiswijk Holland. This was the equipment which was raided in August 1989 by the Dutch authorities and taken to Holland with the MV Volans after an illegal radio on the radio stations in international waters.

So at that stage 300 Pounds was good money. I must say that FMC paid the money with all the love to get the Caroline belongings back from Holland to Dover harbour, where the Caroline vessel was at that moment. Now, in 2004, Peter Moore isn't happy with 1000 Pounds.

I also know of the fact that some people - who are either working to get the promotional sales of the radio station on a higher level or who are making radio programs now and then (free of charge) - want to bring in more possibilities to make it a more commercial station. They've ideas and one of the persons brought the plan to 'Highgate Headquarters'. And you can guess the answer: 'sit back, wait a moment and I will come back to you'. A moment are probably many moments in Manager Moore his live. And so people are waiting and waiting.

Myself had some problems with Peter Moore with this book. The first idea was to come with a photo book on the history of Radio Caroline. During the last 40 years I gained an exclusive photo archive relating to Offshore Radio and so the first idea was to bring those photo's which are not common to the fans and ask some former deejays to write some lines. Moore would get, in this way, some profit for the 'organisation'. Already the day afterwards I had a bad feeling. Not only my archive would be used, Moore would have the control on the book, which mend also influence on the contents of the text. I thought it would be no good idea. I'm researching and writing since 1969 and so the idea changed into the book you've now on your table. Several e mails went to Highgate Headquarters from the desks of FMC and my computer. Every time we had enclosed a copy to the one who was not addressed directly. Sometimes an e mail came back and when writing once to him that I would like to have answers on my questions, he simply wrote back 'I hate internet'.

I think it's more a problem of not having anyone around who can get an influence on his work, as long as we can talk about this work. It's like he feels his little baby is falling out of his hands when someone else or more people want to have some input. Of course several people concerned are in contact with each other and we have some 'back up people' who are reading the chapters of this book. Those are very reliable persons who have followed the Caroline organisation through the years.

I will mention some of the comments they gave on the subject 'Is the Caroline management still reliable'? One of the back up group wrote about Peter Moore: 'He seems afraid of change and nervous of offers of help to the point of paranoia.' And after reading the first version of this chapter an avid Caroline listener since ages now living in the USA, Shaun Brennan wrote to me: 'Amen to all that you've said in there. PM shoots himself in the foot again and again. Someone offers money, it's either suspicious, or too much hassle. He needs to go.'



Nice guy or not, he's got about as much know-how when it comes to running a functioning radio station as I have on knitting. Where there is Ronan O'Rahilly in all this? Surely he can't see the name of an organization he started dragged through the mud and made into a laughing stock and not come out of hiding? I can imagine what the reaction of 'the management' will be to this chapter! I think you know that there's a lot of us out here who agree with your thoughts on the station. So no change at all. It will be a sudden death. But again we have good memories. And that's one thing that time can't diminish. I just hate seeing Radio Caroline in this state...breaks my heart.'

Another person, who's following the station since 1972 wrote: 'He seems to me like an arrogant guy who's also condescending and I think he's unreliable. I've heard several people offering him service and every time he refuses someone assistance; even ideas are not coming through. I think he knows always everything better than other persons and is unthankful when someone or more persons are offering him money. It seems he has in all cases an answer ready, which gives him the ability to do nothing at all on that subject or proposal. His lethargy can be comparable to the one of a certain Ronan O'Rahilly. In one way he is totally inefficient to manage a radio station like Radio Caroline. On the other hand the Caroline organisation is already under his management for 17 years. Maybe it's so that such an anarchistic team of people can be hold together only by a person like Peter Moore. And then I mean working together with sometimes very difficult people. So it can be said that without Peter Moore the station would be already for many years a normal radio station - like so many others in the world. This would bring it into the category of 'dull and non dynamic', which it isn't under Moore's management.'

More comes from an avid listener from South London who has written the next to me: 'Dear Hans, firstly thanks for your excellent work! Yes I agree (although I give Caroline £7.50 per month) I like so many others love the station, although not uncritically. The problem of power and control, can like so many other things in life, be taken too far. Caroline really was a great station. I now find myself listening to other stations as Radio Caroline seems Oké to listen to now and then. Not most of the time as I used to listen in the past.'



Earlier this year John Knight from Caroline Sales, the company which brought a lot of money in for the Caroline organisation, not only to run the satellite programming but also to restore the Ross Revenge, decided that it was time to quit with

Peter Moore. Just one reason I will mention why Knight decided to stop cooperation with Moore in this way: every time John was there when a cheque had to be signed for Moore but when John wanted a new commercial on the radio station he had to wait and wait and wait.

Again my good feeling for a free Radio Caroline partly drifted away. And you've seen that I'm not alone. Lucky enough, as one of the people wrote in, there are so many good memories which we all can share in all the freedom we want. And finishing this chapter I want to repeat the words of the late Ronald C 'Buster' Pearson. In 1987, when we were both interviewed by Radio Netherlands, he told the listener: 'I can't see it will ever happen that Radio Caroline comes ashore and I wouldn't want to see it. I think when it once comes on dry land it will lose all the glamour that has at the moment with the Ross Revenge or 'Ronan's Revenge' as a lot of people are calling it.' And I must admit that the Buster was for 100% right with his words.

By the way, the money this book is bringing in, so is decided by the board of the Foundation for Media Communication - the publisher of this book - will not go to the Caroline Organisation. The reason of this decision will be clear to most of you after reading this chapter. The board of FMC has decided that the money will go into the special research fund which made this publication possible and can give Hans Knot more 'air' for further research on the history of radio.