

Hans Knot International Radio Report Winter 2024

Earlier as promised is here another edition of the radio report as so many e mails, topics and more came in. So I hope you will be delighted that another edition is in the mailbox or on internet, if you read it there. Let's see what we have:

First is Colin Palmer who wrote: 'Have a great Xmas Hans and thanks for the reports in 2023 and not forgetting many years before.'

Indeed more than 20 years the report is published Colin and I hope to go on for a long time. Next is Rob Parsloe: 'Thank you Hans so very much for the latest report and all the reports this year. They are always so fascinating. My very best wishes to you and all those you hold dear at this festive time. Rob Parsloe.'

Third one came from Northern Ireland: 'Christmas greetings Hans and Jana and do have a great 2024. Thank you for your tireless input over the years with many unearthed facts, stories and tunes about the best pirate radio years. Best Wishes, David Belfast.'

And it was also very nice to hear from Steve in Canada: 'Dear Hans, wishing you and Jana all the best for Christmas and the coming year. Thanks for working so hard to keep the memories alive. Your Radio Reports are always so interesting and filled with great content. Stay well, and we hope we'll see you again at some future pirate radio event. Sincerely, Steve (The Curly Headed Kid in the 3rd Row) and Trish, Young from Victoria BC Canada.'

And yes I was a regular listener to Steve Young's programs on Caroline in the sixties and still have some recordings, including election night in 1966, a recording we saved from Buster Pearson garden late 1987.

From the Radio Luxembourg 208 FB pages on January 2nd 2024
Renée Aakrann-Fezzo: 'I just found out via a message written by her sister on Adrienne's fb that Adrienne Sebastian-Scott passed away yesterday after many years of fighting her illness. I will always remember her beautiful personality, the sunshine she carried with her at every moment even when she was in pain. All my love to this wonderful woman.'



**Kirchberg Studio with Jodie Scott - Adrienne Sebastian-Scott.
Photo - Renée Aakrann-Fezzo**

Of course the real anorak remembers here from a short period she worked on Radio Caroline and had her own unique style of presentation.

From the Pirate Hall of Fame: 'Judy Murphy A Canadian DJ, she had studied Radio and TV in Toronto. While travelling in Europe, a chance meeting with former Radio Monique DJ Herbie Visser led to her joining Radio Caroline. Her first show was on 19th July 1988. She left the station before Christmas but, before departing, made a

taped show to be broadcast on New Year's Eve. She then joined Radio Luxembourg where she broadcast as Jodie Scott. She later worked on Sunshine Radio but went back in the UK where she worked as an actress, voice-over and singer.'

I attended Herbert about her passing and he wrote a special item about how she got into radio: "Although I hadn't been in touch with Adrienne for I guess over a decade (we were still Facebook-friends) and our lives moved apart, we were close friends throughout the 1990's and kept our friendship going on for many years. Her death comes certainly as a shock to me. I met Adrienne together with her Canadian friend Karen Evans in the spring of 1988 sitting on the stairs outside of the then Radio 10 building in the Honthorststraat in Amsterdam.



Radio 10 had just launched as a legal commercial radio station on cable only (versus an Italian broadcast-license) and I was working there as a news broadcaster. The two Canadian ladies were on a trip to Amsterdam to check out the quality of the coffeeshops. One of them, Karen, was actually at that time working for a radio station in Toronto called CHUM and when she saw she was passing by a radio station in Amsterdam she decided that the stairs of the Radio 10 building would be a great place for a short rest.

I stumbled upon them and when Karen told me she did radio as well I asked both of the ladies to come in and have a cup of tea. And showed them the studio of course. The other lady had no such background although she occasionally had lend her voice in Canada to

a radio commercial. But now she lived in London and her friend Karen had come over to see her there and together they decided to also include a visit to Amsterdam during Karen's stay in Europe.

While Karen and I were discussing our mutual love for the medium radio, Adrienne said: "I wished I had a radio job as well. Would you know any opportunities in Europe?" Ehm, well, what I knew was that Radio Caroline was still broadcasting from the high seas that spring of 1988 but was dealing with a severe staff shortage.

And her Canadian passport would make Adrienne not violating any European laws if she'd be out there. Her voice sounded good to me and she had this friend Karen who could teach her a few presenting-skills. So I said to her: "Mmmm, I may know something but would it be a problem for you to not getting paid? I mean: at this radio station you can broadcast in English, you will have a comfortable bed, you'll get all the food and drinks for free, lots of fun but don't expect a regular financial income".



Adrienne photo: collection David Dankervoort.

Adrienne answered: "well at this moment my source of income is busking on the streets of London (singing songs with her guitar on the street and people passing by throwing some coins in a basket). This makes me just enough to pay rent and food and then all the

money is gone. Having a place to stay and food and drinks but no money is equal to me" she answered.

I then started explaining about Radio Caroline and its unique position broadcasting from the high seas and that working for Radio Caroline was illegal for almost anyone on board but not for her as she was a Canadian. And of course I had a AM-radio on my desk and thus could tune in to Radio Caroline to let her listen to the radio station for a short while. Adrienne got very excited realizing that this was from a ship in international waters and against the laws of all surrounding countries but it was there anyway and blasting pop and rock to western Europe.

Knowing the understaffing situation on Radio Caroline I gave Adrienne Mike Craig's (chief-engineer Mike Watts) phone number in Brighton. And told her to call Mike when she'd be back in London. Adrienne herself didn't have a fixed telephone line in London as she was staying here and there and renting whatever was available for an affordable price. In the evening I called Mike from my home and told him the story about the two ladies visiting Radio 10 in Amsterdam and he promised me he'd introduce her into the Radio Caroline-organisation (or lack thereof) if she indeed would get in touch with him.

A couple of weeks later on Radio Caroline on 558 KHz all of a sudden a female voice appeared calling herself "Judy Murphy" which I instantly recognized as the voice of this lady who visited Radio 10 together with her friend Karen. And as a DJ she got better by the day. After a couple of stints on the Ross Revenge she disappeared again but soon after reappeared on Radio Luxembourg as "Jody Scott" .

Of course I called Radio Luxembourg after hearing her to congratulate her on her fast career and she immediately invited me to come over to Luxembourg and see her. She didn't need to say this twice. I'd also wanted to visit the 208 studio's at Villa Louvigny and

now even became a regular visitor, hanging out not only with Adrienne but with almost all the staff. Adrienne will be sadly missed. "

A photo Adrienne made when she was visiting me in the Radio 10 studio.



Herbert Visser January 3rd 2024.

E mail time with Colin Wilkins: It has got to a stage where I'm thinking what is going to happen to all these recordings when I have passed away. I know it is a terrible thought but we're not getting any younger. I don't want these recordings to end up in a skip, .so I wondered if any of your readers to the Radio Report would like them to add to their own collection. All the cassettes are listed and numbered. They can have them for free. I can't post them all as there are too many. They would have to arranged a collection at some date and time. For more information write an e mail to me at: colinw.photographer@btinternet.com '

Shipboard Radio Stations

"Wavescan" is a weekly program for long distance radio hobbyists produced by Dr. Adrian M. Peterson, Coordinator of International Relations for Adventist World Radio. AWR carries the program over many of its stations (including shortwave).

Dr. Adrian Peterson is a highly regarded DX'er and radio historian. For more than two decades, he has concentrated on researching the early days of radio and has an extraordinary knowledge of the very first shipboard radio broadcasts. Now a long article written by him is on line on offshoreradio.info:

https://offshoreradio.info/shipboard-radio-stations/?fbclid=IwAR1wbxzckGxADVaoxQkpheAkX_BVvr9r89ikXyPQQiLGkejR8kZ2rKv6Smo

Experiences with the special call PD50VOP by Arie Rietveld

Many members of VERON A12 will know that Arie PDOARI is absolutely crazy about offshore radio. He collects everything to do with these stations in international waters, likes to talk about them and a few years ago exhibited his collection in the local museum. In the past, he has been active with the special call PD538RNI. In late May 2023 (50 years after the Voice of Peace started), he activated the call PD50VOP. The Voice of Peace tells a wonderful story in offshore radio's history. Hans Knot (a well-known 'offshore radio station guru') was approached for photos of the ship and beautiful QSL cards featuring the transmitting ship were printed.

The first connections were made in May with Henk PE1MPH: a real "offshore radio station buddy" of Arie's. Both are especially fond of Radio North Sea International. Connections were made in SSB and AM. Both gentlemen are also always up for a nice DX connection on AM and FM. After those first connections, things took off.

Arie says: 'The special call costed me a lot of time, but above all it gave me a lot of pleasure. What I like most is all the wonderful stories you hear. Many amateurs are full of memories and stories

about the offshore radio stations. Regarding the Voice of Peace, the stories were mainly from amateurs from Israel, but also from various amateurs who lived or worked in that region and listened to the station. A few contacts were with former sailors who sailed in that region and saw the ship often. I even spoke to radio amateurs who were also in possession of a response to a SWL report they sent to the VOP.

Apart from this, the conversations were very often about the other offshore radio stations. Incredibly, so many memories remain! I also find it extraordinary that after connections, I received a lot of mail traffic with reactions and stories about these stations. I also made several contacts with Chris Rolfe aka Chris Garrod M3OZP: a radio amateur who himself worked as a DJ on the ship for a number of years. How incredibly nice to talk to him!

31 December 2023 was the last day the call was used and then the balance was taken. A total of 5572 worldwide connections were made with the PD50VOP call. About 2000 handwritten QSL cards have been sent so far. Quite a few QSL cards have also been sent to me by "direct mail". This is probably also because those people received a QSL card as well as a VOP sticker in return.



Arie Rietveld and his offshore collection: from his personal archive

It was also notable that I also received a lot of SWL reports. The PD50VOP page on QRZ.com was visited almost 11,000 times during that period. Conclusion: It was great fun and I enjoyed hearing all those offshore radio memories. It is still alive with many people! It was a lot of work, but it was also more than worth it! Who knows, I might activate another offshore radio station call in the future.'

<https://www.qrz.com/db/PD50VOP>

e mail time again

'Dear Hans,

What a great piece about the De la Mar - Advertising advertising agency from 1963 and I read that there was also a demo of it and could I perhaps have a copy of it? Thanks in advance , Albert Pleijsier'

It took some searching but Albert is a happy man after I sent the demo tape to him. Next is: Chris Faulkner 'Have a Great Christmas Hans and thank you for all the reports.'



And there's Paul Fraser: 'Hi Hans, It was very interesting to read Theo von Halsema's recollection of his visit to Israel in 1988. Was the hotel in Tel Aviv the Astor? That would be most appropriate - we stayed there on shore leave. Do any of his recordings still exist? It

would be good to have them converted to mp3 format and put online, if that would be OK. Best Wishes for 2024.'

Also Paul is happy as I could provide him with many recordings from the Voice of Peace from and around the time he worked for the station.

Dave Burke from England is next: 'Hi Hans, How are you?! Long time no contact! I hope you're well and enjoying life. I still very much enjoy reading your reports! It is great to know that there is still a huge community of offshore radio fans around, although increasingly, inevitably, some of our cherished friends are passing away Thanks Hans. Best wishes, Dave.'



Dave Burke and me somewhere in a London pub in the early nineties

Photo: Rob Olthof

Of course I answered Dave in a personal mail. He was an avid Radio Scotland listener and had his own internet pages about the station during the early days of the internet. We met several times during the decades in England as well on a Radioday in Amsterdam.

Gerry Atkinson is next: 'Hello Hans just a quick greeting and to wish you a Merry Christmas and thanks for all the hard work you do and the great reads too and also best wishes to you and Martin van der Ven for the new year, enjoying the new web pages, and memories they invoke. I love all things offshore days, my favourite is Radio Northsea International, good days back then from all offshore ships.'

Looking to all the reads and your radio reports in the coming years. best wishes to all. Gerry.'

Thanks Gerry and yes another report earlier than promised in de Christmas edition so enjoy!

Bob Price reflected on this photo taken in Amsterdam in 1968 by the late Rob Olthof:



'A wonderful photo of a very sad occasion. The Fredericia would never sail the high seas again, a sad end to the pioneer of UK offshore Radio.

Best wishes for 2024 Hans, the photos and information you've provided have enlighten and increase our knowledge beyond that stored in our slowly fading memories. Here's to next year.'

Rob Mastenbroek: 'Thanks for the coverage this year Hans. And yes, the offshore radio thing is one year further into the past. I hope it will still be remembered through these reports that you also keep posting and I enjoy reading them. My grandchildren find it a strange phenomenon, radio from a boat, why. After explanation, they understand a bit and they also know right away why the radio station is called Radio 538.

These were wonderful radio years for me, I was born in 1956 and I just experienced a small part of the English period. In Delft, Radio London was poorly received but I did listen to it. In short, in the early 1970's it was wonderful off the coast of Scheveningen. I was introduced to Tamla Motown by three-master team, with a Tamla

Motown record almost every hour. So for next year too, I look forward to your posts. Hans, happy New Year and a healthy 2024 to you and your family. Nijmegen, 24-12-2023

Next news about a video on YouTube.

'On August 3rd, 1974, Kurt Sellenthin was one of the offshore radio fans to visit the Mi Amigo, the Norderney and the MEBO II. The trip on the MS Fortuna was organized by Hans Verbaan of FRC in the Netherlands.

This film is a straight copy of what was filmed and edited by Kurt back in 1974. No footage has been removed from that original edit. Please note that this has been filmed from a boat out on the Northsea, which means that the picture sometimes is somewhat shaky.

Werner Tschoepe was also on board of the MS Fortuna, where he met Kurt for the first time. In the description of the film on YouTube, Werner shares some of his memories on this period and this trip.

<https://youtu.be/Nbzq3P2q4LA>

Kind regards, Werner Tschoepe and Ben Meijering. '

Next update time with Jon from the Pirate Hall of Fame:

- In January 1984 we heard the first test transmissions from a station which went on to become Laser-558. Forty years later we bring you part one of The Laser Story;
- the sad news of the passing of a popular Radio 270 DJ;
- it is Tea Cosy OBE;
- more Pirates in Podcasts;
- and contributor Mark Reed has provided a 1966 letter and photograph from Big L.

My thanks to everyone who has contributed to or supported The Pirate Radio Hall of Fame in 2023. Happy New Year to you all.

Best wishes, Jon

www.offshoreradio.co.uk

Paul Fraser worked for a certain period in 1988 on the Voice of Peace and now 36 years later recalls his time on the ship off the Israeli coast: ' I was with the station from January-April in 1988. This was the tail end of my nearly-continuous first year's service. As it includes some of the Winter, we would undoubtedly have gone through some storms. Kenny Page said that we always had 7 Winter storms.



Kenny Page: Photo Collection SMC

At sea, I found that I became really attuned to the slightest change in the weather. Other presenters did also. The ship's rolling, which only occasionally stopped completely, would become more pronounced and we would automatically begin leaning to either side as we walked along.

There would be advance warning of a storm of course; Captain Aaldijk used to listen to the maritime weather transmissions from Europe on short wave. He said that they were more reliable than the Israeli reports!

I think Haifa Radio was our local source of forecasts, on the marine VHF band. We actually helped the Israeli meteorological office in their work. They equipped our bridge with weather instruments, in return for twice-daily readings taken by the Captain and sent in by

phone. This meant that we could give 'The Captain's Weather' on air in the morning and evening. A really good deal for all concerned!

Anyway. As a storm built up, we would make sure all the storm bars were up in the record library. The storm bars were metal poles, some a foot or two, some a yard or two in length, which slotted into brackets spaced out along the shelves. No matter what, one or more of them would always come crashing down during the storm. Great sound effects during a link!

As the ship's rolling worsened, we would stop using turntables and favour CDs. This helped to extend our time before storm tapes became the only option. The ultimate determinant, however, would most often be our antenna system. As all the more recent photos show, our medium wave antenna included a sloping wire section slung from the remains of the main mast and forward. This section was not secured; it would sway in even slight sea conditions. Heavy rolling plus a gale force wind would put great stress on the connections at the upper end. Connections would become intermittent, showing up as arcing and bursts of static on air. This was not a good thing for our medium wave transmitter.



Fortunately, its protection circuitry was very fast-acting. I can recall no transmitter failures due to these operating conditions. Eventually, though, the medium wave antenna would become unusable and we would leave 1539kHz. Usually around this time, or not much

later, we would shut down on FM also. This is because the wires in the medium wave antenna would become detached, one by one, and start flapping about. This posed a threat to the FM aerial array, which was mounted on the side of the mast.

Well that's a picture of stormy life on the Peace Ship from 1988 and undoubtedly valid for many other years also! Technical notes: AM transmitter was a Nautel Ampfet ND10, 10kW. FM was a Harris FM20K, 20kW.'

Thanks Paul for this inside story about your period on the Voice of Peace in the late eighties of last century.

Next from England is Robb Eden: 'Many thanks for the extensive report. I don't know how you find the time to collate the information, much appreciated. I'm looking forward to meeting up some of the Caroline crew on 22nd December. Grant Benson has organised a get together. No doubt your name will be mentioned more than a few times! Just to say, have a wonderful Christmas to you both from Nickki and myself. Robb Eden.'

Thanks Robb, most appreciated and good memories from the time we met a few times during Radio Days in Amsterdam. Next an e mail from Phil from in the USA: 'Hans, old friend, thank you very very much once more for this new report. I can't wait to settle down tonight for the read.

You are the best. My pirate 87.9 fm is still going strong since 2016. A few incarnations have passed since I started out with a CZE-05B 1/2 watt transmitter. Since, it has seen upgrades of CZE-7C, and the current ST-15 (15 watts/10 mile range) on a Comet CFM-95SL Tunable FM Broadcast Antenna 25' HAAT above ground. Neighbors are still loving the varied fare I shoot out to 'em.

Everything from Frank Sinatra to polka to 60's oldies to Sunday shows I call Faith FM. I'm 74 (till May 17) but I hope I can keep doing this for a long time. It's my hobby. Radio is in my blood since childhood. I make no money from my hobby. It's truly a labor of love.

I was gonna tell you about the remarkable antenna I use for my pirate station. When I bought it, the price was \$99. Now you can see what those 'liberal' asses have done to us in this country and the price of the same antenna today.

<https://www.dxengineering.com/parts/cma-cfm-95sl>

Anyway, I bought it because I read that broadcasters all over the world praised it highly. They're not wrong. My "Hotter 15 Watter" as I call it, goes out the full 10 miles and clean. I highly recommend this antenna to anybody who wants to 'get out' on the FM (pirate) band below 88.1. It's quieter there and safely away from the aircraft band above 108mhz. I used to use a dipole and this antenna blew it away in range! A happy user here! Christmas greetings Hans! And a prosperous 2024. Take care, stay safe, I'm doing the same. Phil-{stateside}'

Thanks Phil for the wishes and update and surely Jan Sundermann in Germany appreciate the story about your antenna.

And of course I had contact again with the Emperor Rosko in Los Angeles. January 13th he send me a link to an very long and interesting interview which was published the day before:

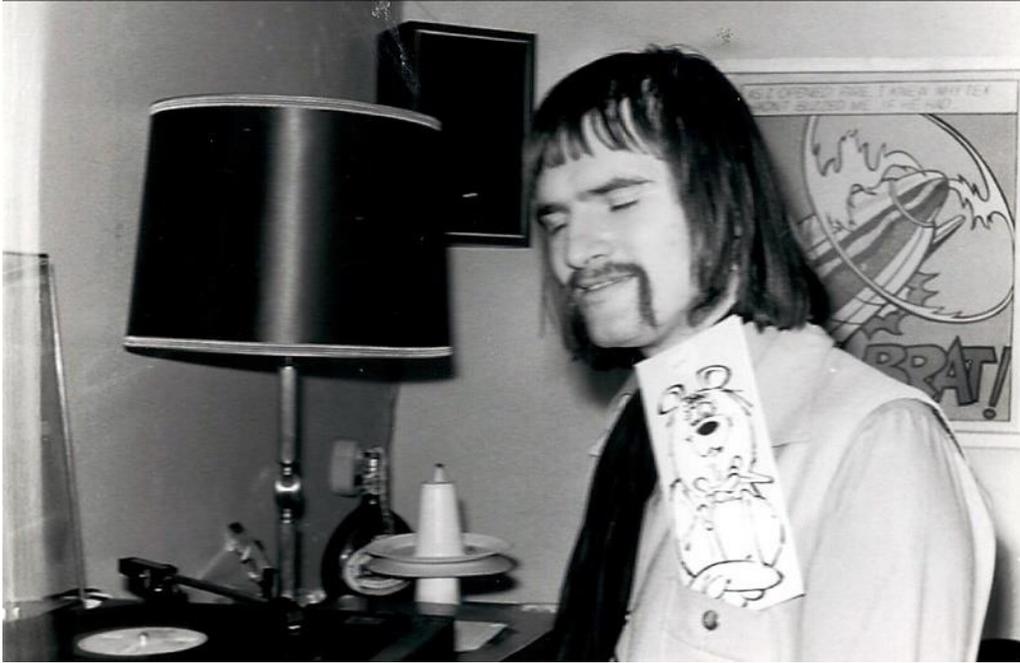
<https://radiotoday.co.uk/2024/01/emperor-rosko-60-years-on-the-radio-and-still-rockin/>

THE CARL MITCHELL FILES

Early March 2006 I got a phone call from Mrs. Hoodle van Leeuwen in Amsterdam. She told me that she had been searching for me for a long time. Although she found my name sometimes in articles about the history of radio she never knew where I lived. Internet was a thing she never had access to.

When Dutch newspaper NRC had an interview with me late 2005 they mentioned that I worked for the University Groningen. To keep

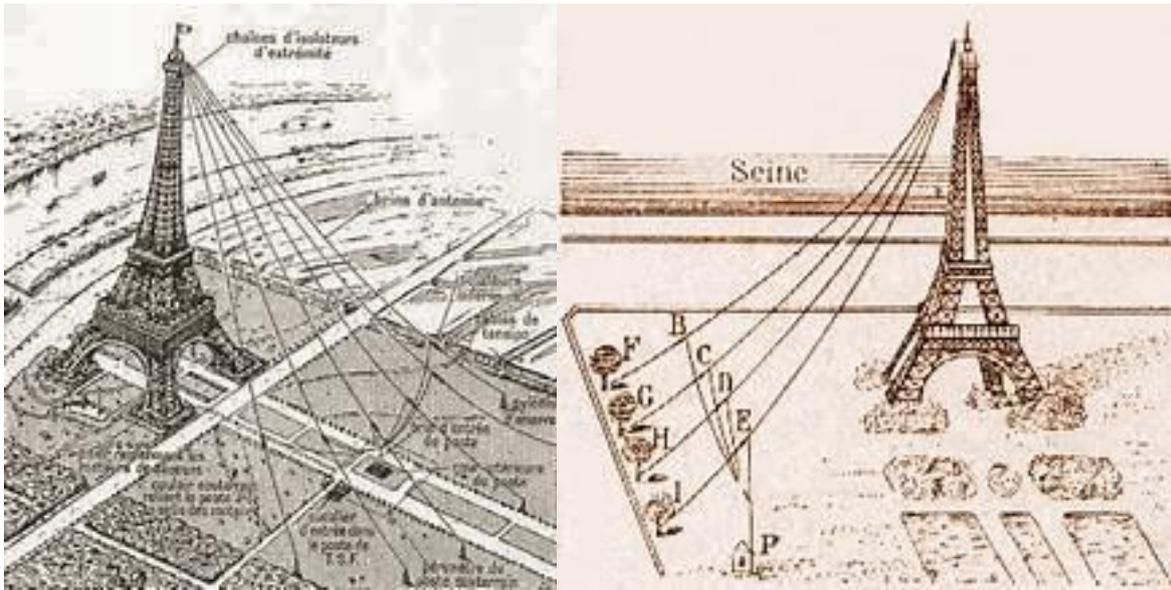
things short, she told me that for 36 years she kept the personal belongings from a former RNI deejay from whom she didn't know what became of him after 1971.



Carl Mitchell listening to music

I went to Amsterdam to get the personal belongings including letters from and to family members, listeners, photos and more. I decided to write a kind of history about Carl Mitchell. Now on our internet site: <https://offshoreradio.info/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/carlmitchell.pdf>

Next is Jan Sundermann from Germany: 'Yesterday was on TV a documentation about life and work of Gustave Eiffel (TerraX series of ZDF). Interesting to know, that the Eiffel Tower originally had a limited time of life by contract of the Eiffel Company and the City of Paris. With the introduction of wireless telegraphy and radio broadcasting that changed. The tower became a strategic (modern 'system relevant') point for military morse communication already in 1898.



Later in 1921 Radio Tour Eiffel started broadcasting on 2650m / 113,5 kHz. The sketches attached show the arrangement of the antenna then. The rest is history, where the page <http://100ansderadio.free.fr> is quite a Bonanza of information.

Also interesting to find under the sources there listed the book *Death Of A Pirate* by Adrian Johns being published in the French language. In my opinion a very important book, as written by someone looking from the outside of our scene.

Best regards, Jan.'

Thanks Jan for another interesting subject for the international radio report. Most appreciated.

Next a recent update for our massive discography on offshore radio:

Georgie Fame and the Blue Fames - *Green Onions*. This song is already in the list but can be added to. It was Juul Geleick who, in late 2023, told of his meeting with Georgie Fame and that Juul sometimes used 'Green Onions' as a filler in his Veronica days. He took the LP from the Veronica discotheque to his home, as there were three copies anyway, and he chose the British pressing.



After I published this in a private group of people who exchange information about offshore radio design a response came from Kent: 'Hi Hans, Juul chose well, Georgie Fame's version is a tune that always sends a shiver up my spine being the first Radio City theme.

We had the single and a 3" tape in the rack over the radiator, which didn't work until Tony fixed the solid fuel boiler. Up until then the Fort was freezing in the winter, tolerable in the summer but the west facing studio did get rather warm from the summer sun! Bob Le Roi.'

Of course Juul came back with another reflection:

'Hi Bob, thanks, I took the original mono LP with me from de Veronica disco after we closed down on 31st august 1974. So he's now in my archive. Years later I got the signature of Georgie during a live performance at TROS radio I did as producer in September 1996.



Greetings Juul.

Juul Geleick watching Georgie Fame play. Photo: collection Juul Geleick

Next a question coming in from England: Hello Hans. Are you familiar with Charlie Taylor?



Charlie Taylor was with the Ross Revenge during its transition from a fishing trawler into the radio ship. She was mainly in the background but has the right to claim she played the first record on Radio Caroline's return during the midnight test transmissions - before the studio microphone was installed!

Charlie's current role is on Radio Jupiter, mainly in the background but with a Friday morning programme (U.K. time). Radio Jupiter was founded by Peter Philips and Johnny Lewis, the two who created the sound of Radio Caroline 558 in the 1980's.

<https://www.radiojupiter.studio>



Another update in our photo archive is a selection of 18 photos taken during Pirate BBC Radio Essex on 26 of March 2005 by Steve Szmidt:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/offshoreradio/albums/72177720313389528/>

10th April to 17th April 2004 also such a Pirate BBC Radio Essex took place and Freddie Schorsch made sixteen photos, which you can find here:

https://www.flickr.com/photos/offshoreradio/albums/72177720313378641/?fbclid=IwAR3ZN3Oi2NxMvDgeH5vYkJVqqU0hYD4tnsp2QM7b7WfTtpQfRghFIX5mE_U

And of course there was an event in 2007: Pirate BBC Essex 2007 Thursday 9th to Tuesday 14th August 2007 - 40 pictures © Steve Szmidt and Charles J. van Doornewaard

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/offshoreradio/albums/72177720313391343/?fbclid=IwAR2r4NFdBsscOP7v3RNJS42cjLgmrzgUC2v3tyu81Q3DZHBZA0VdaNfJU8>

And here are those from April 2009 also taken by Steve Szmidt:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/offshoreradio/albums/72177720313377297/with/53396972767>

26 photos: The heritage of David Sinclair and Radio Essex

<https://www.flickr.com/.../offs.../albums/72177720313734712/>

December 23rd the sad news came in that Mike Hayes passed away. His radio career started when he was working at the RAF and later he got in offshore radio by working for Radio 270. On the page of Jon Myer more information about Mike Hayes work:

<https://www.offshoreradio.co.uk/djsh.htm#hayes>

Also have a look at one of Mike Hayes personal internet pages as he wrote lyrics for famous Dutch group Focus: <http://www.mike-hayes.nl/>

He attended a couple of RadioDays in Amsterdam and was interviewed on stage by me. A pity his memories on the good old offshore radio had faded away and he had almost nothing to tell about the time at Radio 270.

Just another find

For over five decades I have been writing about the history of the media, with the offshore broadcasters in particular. History can be accessed in many ways, with an awful lot of sources to consult. The public availability of many newspaper archives sometimes still brings surprises for me, as recently when I found an entry in the newspaper of Saturday 13 November 1965.

Looking for stories surrounding the launch of the then Hilversum 3, my eye fell on an article claiming that in addition to Radio Veronica, a second transmitter ship would be anchored on the North Sea off the coast of Scheveningen, about a mile away from Radio Veronica's Norderney.

The information given in the message was not followed up in the following weeks and, like so many messages in the 1960s and 1970s concerning the offshore radio stations, can be placed in the category of 'thumb suckers'. Indeed, it was announced that, if the initiators' plans went ahead, a new station would be launched off the Dutch coast from the month of December to send light music into living rooms in the Netherlands and Belgium. The initiative came, the report said, from three former employees of the British offshore radio station Radio City.

Broadcasts were to take place on medium wave at a frequency around 200 metres. Obviously a frequency far too close to the 192 metres used by Radio Veronica at the time. Programmes, said the initiators - who were not named - were to take place between eight in the morning and eight in the evening. They did not want to disclose the names of the people involved 'in view of the opposition already encountered and still to be expected in the implementation of their plans.' They did report, however, that they were working with a

number of Dutch people, who were mainly employed to make contacts in the advertising world and with potential advertisers.

The story became even more interesting for some when they claimed to have already made contacts with Jos Brink (then NCRV) and Herman Stok (then VARA) to get an appointment as a deejay. They also claimed to have contacts with a number of people from Jazz bands and Beat groups. It was suggested that a small yard in London was hard at work finishing and furnishing the future broadcasting ship, with a berth a mile away from the Norderney already in mind.



Jos Brink photo SMC Archive

It remained at that thought. A photo was never shown of any ship and Stok and Brink remained loyal to the public broadcasters.

And yet I'm going some time further back with memories to April 1st 1964:

A stunt that generated a lot of publicity and money

Early on Wednesday 1st of April 1964, the best-known morning newspaper in the whole of the Netherlands was on the front doormat and managed to report, among other things, that 'Hijackers were on their way to Radio Veronica.' Readers were then urged to listen to Radio Veronica: 'Tune in now on 192 metres, listen to Radio Veronica and hear for yourself if it all worked out.'

It turned out that a group of top Dutch performers had left Scheveningen harbour early that morning on a fishing boat to spend

an entire day broadcasting a 'live programme' from the broadcast ship Borkum Riff, hijacking the ship and moving it. The newspaper even went so far as to announce this April 1st action as one of the most large-scale April 1st operations, the Netherlands had ever known.

The night before, a large number of performers had already gathered to discuss, under the leadership of AVRO's Fred Oster and director Bob van Rooyen, the boarding of Radio Veronica's transmission ship for the last time. These preparations took place at the Kurhaus in Scheveningen, where they also spent the night as they had to leave for the harbour early. As early as five-thirty they were on the quay for departure. The evening before, Oster had spoken to the press: "We want to go on air with live programmes from Radio Veronica from a quarter to seven in the morning, that is if we manage to board the ship. We have high hopes and all the artists are extremely enthusiastic."



Who, among others, were present at the Kurhaus that night? Mainly Dutch artists who were playing a role in the music world at the time. These included Anneke Grönloh, Mieke Telkamp, Rob de Nijs, the Jumping Jewels, Willy and Willeke Alberti, Bueno de Mesquita and

Toby Rix. Not all the programmes would go out live, as it had already been leaked that this host of artists had recorded the requisite in one of the Philips Phonogram record studios, programmes that went on tape with them on board.

'The Telegraaf reported: 'There was a pleasant atmosphere in the studio yesterday. Everyone only then began to realise, that this stunt was no joke and everything was at least being taken seriously. In any case, it took the initiators a lot of effort to persuade the artists, because nobody actually believed in this stunt.' Among others, Mieke Telkamp stated, "My very first impulse was that it couldn't be true. Then I contacted Fred Oster and Willeke Alberti and they managed to convince me, that it is not a one-April joke and I do believe it will be fun."

The promoters had also resolved some legal issues beforehand. They had to get customs and shipping papers in order and moreover, they were made aware by experts, that boarding a ship was punishable by 12 years in prison. That next morning, indeed while it was still dark, about 20 performers, accompanied by a number of staff from various broadcasters, departed from Scheveningen harbour. It turned out that a number of television crews had also been invited in advance but Dutch television was not interested, unlike Belgian television, which did send a camera crew along.

It had been announced that Veronica's programmes, which at the time normally started at eight o'clock in the morning, would start more than an hour earlier, provided cooperation was obtained from the technicians and crew on board the Borkum Riff. Again 'The Telegraph': 'However, there will be no crackdown. Everything will be kept under the sign of 1 April and with expects cooperation from Radio Veronica for this. How long the broadcasts will last is not yet

known, but some adventures await the artists on board and the listeners too might be surprised.'

April 1964, the Netherlands was still under construction, by no means everyone was well off and so owning, say, a tape recording device was an exception and if you had one then a tape was used several times to record something different each time.

Nevertheless, a number of short fragments have survived from that memorable day. At six minutes to half past ten, for example, "Here is an announcement, an announcement for Rederij de Ruiters. Rederij de Ruiters in Scheveningen. Requested, if you can understand me, to ask the people who are now on their way to Scheveningen with your cutter if you would like to ask these people to take Willy Alberti's bag out of the back of the car and deliver it to you at the shipping company office, so that we can pick it up."

It was the voice of Fred Oster, who delivered the message live from aboard the Borkum Riff via the 192m. He then announced that it was impossible to sail after the cutter as the other ship, the Borkum Riff, was not going to Scheveningen but to the port of Rotterdam. It turned out that the suitcase contained items he needed for a performance that same evening. The suitcase was in the car of a certain Mr. Jacobs.

People then pretended to go from the Borkum Riff towards Hook of Holland, a programme item that was simply broadcast from the station ship at fixed anchorage. People pretended to have boarded the ship and were waiting for it near the Hook of Holland pier by thousands of people. The aim was to park the ship at the Parkhaven in Rotterdam and start up there as free radio. At one point in the programme, there was a knock on a piece of wood and a question about who it might be, which included the comment 'there is always a Herman Stok behind the door somewhere to chase us away'.

The name of the station, as well as its slogan, had also been changed: 'Free Ronica, the station where the laughter is in', while the names of some programmes had also been changed. At 10.30, for instance, 'Koffietijd with Mieke Telkamp' was heard. Jokes abounded in connection with commercials, such as the question in which the prime minister of the moment kept his whisky cold? In a 'Marijnen'. Coincidentally, the name of both the then prime minister and a popular refrigerator that was being marketed at the time. At a good 11 o'clock in the morning, the entry came to an end but far from the publicity surrounding the event.

On the day after the special broadcast, Thursday 2nd of April 1964, Henk van der Meyden had an extensive report in his 'Telegraaf', proudly reporting that 'we conquered Veronica but the artists were seasick'. He went on to write that according to reactions, the programme had been heard by hundreds of thousands of listeners. At the same time, he gave a little kick in the direction of the broadcasters in Hilversum: 'It was a radio programme in which all taboos, both in Hilversum and in the commercial radio world, were broken. The usual Veronika spots were parodied and, moreover, a new brand was amusingly introduced in the broadcast: the brand 'Ostro' did not exist at all.'



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In addition, it was reported that there was plenty of improvisation, which could not be expected at all from the sleek broadcasters in Hilversum at the time. The article also revealed which ship was used to take most of the performers and broadcasting staff to Borkum Riff. It was the Scheveningen 71, a ship that later became known in Veronica history for the commercial 'Sportfishing on the North Sea with the Loekie'. A name change took place in the early 1970s. The cutter was also occasionally used to supply the Veronica organisation's second broadcasting ship, the Norderney.

The cat popped out of the bag when the article reported that all meetings in preparation for the so-called entering had been attended by one or more of the Verweij brothers and it was therefore logical that the crew of the broadcasting ship gave no resistance at the entering and the artists were able to transfer to the Borkum Riff. But they didn't really have it easy as Van der Meijden knew to report that 90 per cent of the group were seasick and partly, immediately after arrival, took to their bunks. Anneke Grönloh and Willy Alberti were particularly affected. According to the reporter, a frequently heard phrase was, "if only this ship could sink."

What was written about the live coverage? 'On the deck of the broadcasting ship, exciting reports were made, with artists playing to the thousand-strong quayside audience with murmurs. Dick Wama played the harbour master, while members of the Jumping Jewels played the passers-by. In this way, it became a reportage that approached reality and made many rush to Rotterdam's Parkhaven. However, the number of sick people on board rose so alarmingly that an inspection along the berths showed that almost every berth was occupied.'

The programme ended when the Verweij brothers came on board the Borkum Riff and thanked the initiators Oster and Van Rooyen for the stunt and also handed over a cheque for ten thousand guilders

But far from everyone was happy with the wave of publicity this action, from the artists and broadcasting staff, had generated in the Netherlands. A few days after the broadcast, on 6th of April 1964, 'de Volkskrant' announced that "the public broadcasters" were going to take action because of the 1st of April joke. It reported that VPRO television directors Almar Tjepkema and Huib de Vries had been suspended for the time being because of their collaboration in the joke: 'Today they will be given the opportunity to discuss the matter with their management.' Han Mulder, then KRO Brandpunt editor, had consulted his management beforehand about his cooperation in the broadcast. In doing so, they had not banned him but had advised him to refrain from doing so. Not wanting to heed the warning, he had taken a few days off. As a result, the KRO management informed him, when asked, that they were considering taking action against Mulder.

For the aforementioned initiators, Fred Oster and Bob Rooyens of the AVRO, no measures were to be expected at that time, although it was reported from the AVRO management that the joke had turned out differently than expected. And a day later it was announced that Tjepkema and De Vries had been told by VPRO chairman Dr J.A. de Koning that a written reprimand awaited them.

They were also unofficially suspended for a few days and were thus not present on the shop floor for a few days, though with retention of salary. On the part of Radio Veronica, they called this measure a 'petty grocery measure' that once again accentuated the pillars' attitude towards Veronica. Almar Tjepkema left VPRO the same year to work for the REM project.

Han Mulder fared worse as this oft-praised Brandpunt contributor was more or less forced to resign from KRO. Via the newspapers of the Joint Press Office, the following was reported on 11th of April:

'Han Mulder, editor of 'Brandpunt', KRO TV's current affairs programme, has tendered his resignation for personal reasons. He has been granted it, according to the short announcement, which KRO released yesterday afternoon. The announcement does not say that Han Mulder was fired when he had not asked for resignation himself. The reason is his cooperation in the boarding of the radio ship Veronica on 1st of April last.' Initially, it was said that Han Mulder had got off with a reprimand, were it not for the fact that the case had not been placed in the hands of the KRO management.



Dick Wama: Photo Stichting Norderney

In 2013 donated for this story in Dutch

Thus Han Mulder found himself up against KRO chairman Mr. Van Doorn. As a KRO man, Mr. Van Doorn was of the opinion that, if advertising was to be put on air, it should be done by the existing broadcasting associations and also benefit the then existing system. De Telegraaf reiterated: 'In this situation, Mr. Van Doorn has taken it extremely high that precisely an employee of his broadcaster has lent himself to a joke, which the broadcasters in Hilversum classify as particularly objectionable. On Thursday, Han Mulder had to

appear before Mr. Van Doorn. He recognised the consequences and asked for instant dismissal.'

On 15 April 1964, a report appeared in 'de Telegraaf' that the young presenter had decided to leave the Netherlands for a few weeks to recover with his brother in Verona. The same year, the 'Brandpunt' column was awarded the annual Nipkowschijf, something Han Mulder could no longer celebrate. In his book: 'Brandpunt a journalistic breakthrough', Richard Schoonhoven reflected on this: 'It was unfortunate that Han Mulder had left Brandpunt and KRO just before the Nipkow. He had taken part, despite a ban, in the 'hijacking' of the pirate ship Veronica, which became a popular rival to Hilversum just outside territorial waters with its illegal broadcasts. The prank lasted longer than anticipated by the participants, causing Mulder to reach Brandpunt's offices too late. Denying his participation was no longer possible, after an illustrated weekly published a two-page photo about the hijacking in which he was prominently visible. He was reprimanded for this. He resigned some time later, as I heard later under pressure from the chairman who gave him several months' salary as a *douce*'.

Next news came in on the day the Winter started in our part of the world: Radio Pirates are back in Harwich.

Radio Mi Amigo, from the historic Lightvessel LV18 on Harwich Quay, is returning to the air on Christmas Eve and will continue on a permanent basis through the New Year. The station will be bringing the sounds and spirit of the original radio pirates back to their roots of Harwich.

Returning to the floating newly-installed studios are Garry Lee, Neon Nancy, Chris Cooper and the Reverend Rabbit as well as many new DJs who are broadcasting in support of the Pharos Trust charity, which owns the LV18.

Tony O'Neil, Chairman of the Pharos Trust, said he was excited to bring a nostalgic 'retro' sound to Harwich once again and appreciated all who were giving their time and expertise towards the project.



Photo from the press report

Listen via our dedicated website <https://lv18radio.uk>



Another picture from the Tom de Munck collection in our archive I recently put on our SMC FB page: **September 1983: Annie Challis Tony Garret Steve Masters and Robin Ross.**

It was Albert Hood responding: 'I remember Annie she was one of the main contacts at the Caroline office in 1983 when the Ross first appeared. In fact she was not only on the first planned tenders out to the Ross a day after it appeared. Unfortunately this trip had to turn back when halfway out owing to increasing bad weather with Annie and a couple of others looking a bit green. That was despite Reg our suggesting about 15 minutes earlier that we should turn as there way we'd be able to get aboard or even alongside.

However they did successfully get out a couple a day's later on what I was told it was going to be a much bigger than the one I was using and had used in the last years of the Mi Amigo.

I later learned it was a much smaller speed boat from Ipswich paid for by the press. And they were only allowed to stay for a few minutes as the skipper got cold feet as he pulled alongside.

However our boat with new crew and a few anoraks made a very successful trip a few days later. That's my memories of the first trip that turned back. I wasn't able to go out on that second trip, that was successful as a lorry fire at work meant I couldn't get the arranged day off but Georgena was there and took many of the earliest photos of the Ross at anchor in the Knock Deep.'

Excellent share Albert, thanks for this information.



Nick Richard and Albert Hood. Photo: Chris Garrod

And so we have come to the end of the first edition of the Hans Knot International Report for 2024. I hope you've enjoyed reading it and if there are questions, photographs, memories and more just take contact versus my regular e mail: HKnot@home.nl

Till next issue with best wishes

Hans Knot