

Welcome to this report, which starts on May 16th. Last month I had already planned the next info but there was too less space to use it because I had already too much photographs in the report.

April 29th was a special day for Juul Geleick. He worked as technician for Radio Veronica and later for decades for the TROS. This public broadcaster began her broadcasting as RTV Noordzee from a platform in the Northsea, way back in 1964. The platform is still off the coast of Noordwijkerhout and is used this year by the TROS for several programs to pay attention to the fact it all happened for the first time 40 years ago. So Juul went out on the 29th and wrote: Herewith some of the 200 photos I took during my trip to the REM island. On that day it was exactly 39 years and 9 months ago that Radio Northsea came on the air for the very first time. On one of them you see me with the '192 cap' on, which in the meantime is lost in the Northsea as it was blown of my head when the helicopter started again. It was a wonderful day and on the isle are 19 beds, so a few of my colleagues decided to stay overnight. You can use the photos for your famous radio report.

Thanks a lot Juul for sharing your memory to this day and sharing the photos with all the readers.



REM island taken
platform
from helicopter



Juul Geleick on deck

Steve Szmidt, an avid Caroline man in these days, wrote in to thank me for the latest edition of the International report and also did sent his report on 'Radio Caroline'. I will take some of the interesting notes so that you know the latest on Caroline too:

Steve on May 16th: 'I have still been listening to Caroline and Seagull, although from the first of June I and other listeners will no longer be able to listen to the later via Sky Channel 913, because Apple FM has sold their airtime slot to a higher bidder. Hopefully their imminent 1602 AM transmissions will be of sufficient audible quality in Kent. Details from www.radioseagull.com

Sadly one of Caroline's best presenters, Roger Day, has not been able to do many shows recently. Initially this was due to the 40th Anniversary celebrations and other birthday parties that he had to attend up and down the country, plus presenting shows on BBC Kent (covering for his old buddy Dave Cash) and Pirate Essex. Roger described these as some of the happiest

days of his life. Over the next weeks Roger will be doing "paid for" shows for Saga in the West Midlands on both Saturdays and Sundays. He did manage to do around one and half-hours last Saturday evening, after what turned out to be a bit of disastrous day. Tony Christian was absent, with no cover for his 9.00 -12.00 hours slot (normally Dave Fox stands in for him), Pandora and guests were on as usual from 12.00 till 15.00. Roger had arranged for Dave Foster to cover his slot, but poor "Fozzy" was unable to do so, because he had lost his voice! When Roger got back from the West Midlands, he was bored at home and surprised to find out there had been only one "live" presenter on all day, so he went to the Maidstone studios and did a show from 18.30 to around 20.00 hours. Mark Dezzani was on as usual at 21.00 till midnight. After listening to the start of Mark's show, I turned over to Seagull to hear Chris B. At first I thought I had failed to do so properly, because I was still hearing the dulcet tones of Mr. Dezzani. After a few moments I knew I was indeed tuned to Seagull, when the voice of Chris Bent popped up in the background. Mark was doing a guest appearance, on a programme recorded in Seborga, Italy during Chris's recent travels. It was nice to see this harmony between Caroline and Seagull, especially with Chris. Finally, apparently last Saturday's Worldspace transmissions carried for much of the time, the audio of BBC 1 instead of Caroline, because when Sky do system updates this can reset some Digibox's

from Radio Caroline to Channel 101 (BBC 1). The answer would be for WS to replace their Sky Digibox with a Free to Air (FTA) satellite receiver to receive the broadcasts of Radio Caroline. These can be purchased for as little as £79, at UK retail prices.

Caroline promoted the first open day of the "MV Communicator", the former Laser 558 ship. An advert featuring the voice of Jessie Brandon, a former Laser DJ, gave details of the open weekend in Lowestoft, Suffolk on the 8th and 9th of May. The ship is currently being restored as a working radio ship. You can find out more details at the ships' dedicated website

<http://www.mvcommunicator.com>

Last week was the annual Sony Radio Academy Awards 2004 and it was nice to see that Johnnie Walker, in Radio Caroline's 40th Anniversary year, win the "Outstanding Contribution Gold Award". Elton John, who gave recognition to Johnnie for helping him to launch his career, presented the award to him. Well done Johnnie! "Man's fight for freedom" and Johnnie's recent fight for life have been deservedly recognised. For full details of the award, including a web cast, go to <http://www.radioacademy.org/awards/> or for the feature specifically about Johnnie <http://www.radioawards.org/winners04/win04.htm> (Radio Caroline, MOA etc are mentioned). 'L A Steve

Well thank you so much for the update on Caroline Steve from Canterbury..

I can reveal that there will be a big reunion from the Class of 73/74. People who will be attending on this reunion have worked either on the ship or on land for the Caroline organisation in 1973 and 1974. Already a lot of people have been found including office people and Crewmembers and deejays. At a later stage more info on this reunion but we would like you the reader to help and search for some people who can't find: Peter Hayes (known as the Cheshire Flyer) he was an engineer who did programmes in 1974 René van der Snoeck who worked in the office. Graham Kay (English service of Radio Mi Amigo) He came from Australia and Eddie de Boeck who was Sylvan Tack's representative in The Hague.(A very funny man!). Andy Archer, Elija van den Berg and Teun Visser.



Andy Archer in the sixties

So if you know anything, just mention it in an e mail to Hknot@home.nl

Then an e mail is coming in from Belgium from former Radio Caroline newsreader Dave Williams: 'Thanks for your latest report, it is always very comprehensive and contains a lot of information about many of my ex-colleagues. In the report you copied a letter from Paul Rusling which made mention of a list of persons at the Caroline reunion which you got from Chris Cortez. I would be very interested to see that list if you have a copy. We had a fantastic day, but inevitably we missed people, it would be great to have a better idea of exactly who was there (and who we missed!!). regards Dave Williams.'

In the meantime I forwarded the complete list to Dave, the one which was published in the 1st of May edition of the International Report. Maybe Dave you could tell the reader some more about what you've been doing since we heard you for the last time on Caroline way back in the late sixties?

From California a very nice remark regarding me saying 'no thank you' to an invitation to come over to Vancouver:

'Thanks, as always, for the report. Fascinating reading. It's a real shame that flying is a problem for you-- I wonder,

one day, if getting to the U.S. by boat might be possible? I hate flying, and I've been looking into cheap ways to do it by sea. It works out that you can travel over on a freightliner in about 5-7 days for about the price of a hotel room each night. It might be worth thinking about. We'd surely love to drive you around California to hook up with all the pirates out here.' Yes thanks a lot for that one and maybe I will consider when I've stopped working and there's more time for such a trip.

Also mentioned in the above e mail from California Tom Lodge was mentioned again: 'Sorry to read about Tom Lodge's immigration problems; it's very awkward, and I went through the same thing for a while. Hope it works out. He seems like a lovely guy. And listening to the interview he did with John Patrick on Caroline over Easter, I've got to say that I love his philosophy of radio. ..we need more Tom Lodges. Cheers, Shaun B.

Then from Scandinavia an short note from Svenn Martinsen: 'Thanks very much for the report and the plug, but the link is: www.northernstar.no/konigs.htm

From far away from Australia a message from Colin Nichol:

Hello Hans Thanks for your latest Report. Fascinating to know where everyone is and what they are doing. I heard a while back of the possibility of yet another pirate reunion in Toronto and Mary Payne at Radio London has provided more information. I copy it here to you. It seems we are getting to the point where former (I won't say 'old') pirates could travel the world attending get-togethers!'

Hi Hans,

Thanks for the report; I always find them very interesting. I thought you might like to know, I've joined the team at Radio Seagull and my 60 Jukebox programs will be broadcast at 10 AM CET (9 GMT) every Tuesday and again 12 hours later at 10 PM CET the same day. Radio Seagull has struggled in the past, but I can see them doing much better in the future. Any of my old mates who'd like to join me, I'll see ya at 9 and 9 on Tuesday on the internet at nine AM and on SKY channel 913 in the evening. See Ya!

Phil Mitchell

Phil worked on Radio Caroline in the Seventies as well on Abe's Voice of Peace. One of the chapters in the forthcoming book 'The wet and wild history of Radio Caroline' is written by Phil about his days onboard the MV Mi Amigo.

The 4th ERKRATH RADIO DAY will be held on Sept. 11th. 2004

This day has nothing to do with the original Radio Days which are organized by The Foundation for Media communication since 1978 and will be held on October 2nd in Amsterdam but it's a German version, which is held for the 4th time this year. The event is scheduled from 14.00 noon to 21.00 hours in the rooms of the Observatory of Sternwarte Neanderhöhe at D-40699 Erkrath .Program : a new book release presented by author W.D.Roth , South Tyrolean early broadcasters / the Offshore- 98 video / Radio Caroline 40 years / Netherlands and North-Rhine-Westfalia : nothing new on AM after the new frequency plan ? The entrance fee is 7.-EURO. Preliminary registration or requests please to: Jan Sundermann, Millrather Weg 74, D 40699 Erkrath: e-mail : rp10510@online-club.de

As told earlier the annual Radio Day organized by Foundation for Media Communication and Freewave Media Magazine will be held at hotel Casa 400 in Amsterdam, very near to the Amstel railroad station. Also we told that former Radio 227 deejay Look Boden will be interviewed about Radio 227 in the past and at present. Probably Jessie Brandon will come over from the States to talk about her career on Laser 558 and afterwards and now we can tell you that also the class of 1973/1974 is joining in. Andy Archer, Elija van den Berg, Brian Anderson and Teun Visser are working in getting together as much people as possible, who worked on Radio Caroline in 1973/1974. A part of this group will be sitting around the table to talk to the public about their memories, whereby Andy Archer will be the anchorman.

I can tell you some of the names already of the people who will be seeing each other again – most of them haven't seen each other since 1974: Here is the list of definites (so far)

Elija, Brian Anderson, Teun and Andy Archer (the so called organizing committee!), Captain Jaap Taal. (now 84), Captain Aad Meyer, Charlotte Ribbelink (Charlotte was the office manager), Johnny Jason, Robert de Goede or Ad Roberts as most of the people know him. Further more Bob Noakes, Dennis King, Graeme Gill, Will van der Steen, Peter van Dam, Bert Bennett, Jaap de Haan (engineer, and has a wonderful film which he is bringing with him), Peter and Koos van Dijken (crew members), Leon Keezer and Robb Eden

Other contacts which are made are with Norman Barrington, Mike Hagler, Peter Chicago, Jeremy Bender and Steve England. They will decide on a later stage if they will join in.

On May 19th an e mail comes in with answers on the question 'who are the people on the photo', which was in the last issue of the report and taken onboard the Voice of Peace. Lucky there a lot of crewmembers and former deejays of the station reading this report and the mail comes from Scandinavia where Stevie Gordon is living nowadays:

'Dear Hans The man with the moustache standing by the deck rail is Charly, the ship's famous French chef. In the background, the fellow with the curly hair is an Englishman called Maurice who was employed as a helper. The person in the foreground with his back to the camera is probably Reuven Levi, the station's long serving Israeli DJ. Sorry, I can't remember the name of the man standing next to Charly, but I am fairly certain that he was one of the English DJs. Also, can't identify the person looking over Reuven's shoulder. By the way, there was another lady, a rather attractive young lady, who worked on the VOP around the same time. Her name was Else (I hope that is the correct spelling) and she was on Dutch. She was onboard together with her boyfriend (who I think was called Wilhelm), and like Maurice they worked as helpers - doing a bit of everything apart from going on the air! I am sure you will be able to make it down the road to Harlingen when Sietse and the team find the time and energy for a 1602 launch party. I am looking forward to meeting you again, then.'

Thanks Stevie, and yes I will come to the Party whenever it will be held and it fits in my agenda as it will be good to see you again too!

As Stevie was mentioning the name of the Dutch lady I was looking on my consisting list of female offshore deejays and she wasn't there yet. So we can add Else to it. On Mi Amigo can be added on the same list that Haike Dubois also presented programs under the name 'Loes'. And she had a nickname too: 'Roodborstje' (Red Breast).

While listening to some very old jingles produced in the sixties including station KLAK and performed by Anita Kerr and her Singers (Thanks to J.B) a message comes in from Mark de Haan that the decision to take the internet site Marine Broadcasters from internet last August, has been withdrawn by the management and after long waiting the site can be find back at:

www.marinebroadcasters.tk

Which is slightly different to the one used earlier on.

Then again a female presenter can be added to our list. I was preparing an article about media and music memories regarding the year 1964 and during the research work I found an article about Annie M.G. Schmidt, a very famous author of books for children who died a couple of years ago. In 1964 she was working on writing a musical and in the interview to a magazine she told that during the past 14 months she had worked with many pleasure for both Radio Luxemburg as well as Radio Veronica.

Peter van Dam, who started his radio career in 1972 as Peter Brian on Radio 199 has worked for a couple of offshore radio stations like Radio Caroline, Radio Joepie, Radio Atlantis and Radio Mi Amigo. Also he worked through the years for several public radio stations in the Netherlands like the KRO, AVRO and TROS. There we the commercial radio stations in Holland who had him on the pay role too like Radio 10 and Radio 192. The later didn't pay him and other deejays anymore and so earlier this year he decided to quit the station. Since the end of May Peter, who originate from Belgium, is program director or the Belgium radio chain Radio Contact. Next to making the program schedule he will work on training the presenters for the station.

The latest listening figures on radio in Holland (March/April) still give a number 1 place for the Sky Radio with 11.3% but they're steady followed by youth station Radio 538, which reached up till 11,2%. Third in the ranking is Radio 2, the public station, with 10.8%. Radio 1 has 5.8% on place 4, followed by 3FM, the national pop station at place 5 with 8%. Radio 10 is at 7 with 4.7% and Arrow Rock at 13 with 1,8%. A pity for the two last stations is that the enormous amount of British listeners, they both have, are not counted.

In the last week of May thousands of school kids in the Netherlands had to do their examinations. The VWO, the schools who have the kids who are planning to go to the University in the future, had to write an article for 'the final editor of the Veronica Magazine' which could be published next year when the organization is 45 years old. Well they got some newspaper cuts, some backside info and so they could write and historical article.

I don't know what will happen when these future students have to do proper scientific research as several mistakes where in the paper: the organization was established in 1959 and not 1960. That was the year the first broadcast was. A further mistake was given with an newspaper cut in which the demonstration in The Hague (18-4-1973) was mentioned. Above the newspaper article the date April 18th 1972 was mentioned. Also the slogan which was used was totally wrong in the paper. When talking about the very first official program Veronica did as public broadcaster the paper mentioned the year 1976 and as stations Hilversum 3. Well it was December 27th 1975 on Hilversum 4. By the way a very historical day as Hilversum 4 was on the air for the very first time in the Netherlands as classical station and it was the honor for Radio Veronica not only opening their very first broadcast as public station but also opening the new classical station. Another case of rewriting the history.

And then a message from Tel Aviv which came in on May 31st and which made me laughing while reading: "A mole has been discovered in the Israeli Ministry of Communications. The person was warning land based pirate radio stations of imminent raids, therefore giving them time to dismantle the equipment and flee, before the authorities reached them. Suspicion was aroused, when the ministries successes in the past few months grew less and less. An undercover operation was set up to trace and track the person 'tipping off' the stations, and after a few weeks, the person was found, fired, and legal proceedings started against him.'

Thanks Mike and keep us informed!

The Pirate Radio Hall of Fame has been updated and you can see the June update now.

The webmaster marks the fortieth anniversary of the first broadcasts from Radio Invicta, Britain's fourth offshore station, with some exclusive photos once owned by the station boss, the late Tom Pepper. Also there is part three of Roger Scott's photo album - this time pictures dating from his time on Radio 390. There are also some more recent pictures of Red Sands Fort, the home of both these stations. There are some extra bits of memorabilia, more information, a couple of audio clips, the news that Tommy Vance is set to rocks the airwaves again.....and more. Go and have a long look, but don't forget to come back to the international radio report: www.offshoreradio.co.uk

A lot of questions came in during the last week regarding the licenses given away to all kind of organizations to start their own medium wave station, starting at last at June 1st 2004. Those licenses were given away early last year and of course we heard some test transmissions of some stations, including the test programs from Wonderful Radio London last July. Well all the organizations which have got the license and are not on the air yet, have got a three month extension so they still have the time to start with their programs before September 1st this year. Also in the letter it was mentioned that this will be the only extension and so the stations which are not on the air on September 1st will loose their license.

A long e mail came in regarding the early land based pirate stations, which came on the air in England after the MOB became act in 1967. It was written by Freek Jonkers and a small part I want to publish in the international report: ' It's not too long ago I read an article in which was claimed that Radio Free London was the very first station which came illegally on air from land after the Marine Offences Act came in. I think it was early 1968 the station could be heard and after a short period they became bigger and had really a success during the Free Radio Rally in 1968. RFL could be heard on 255 metres on the AM and I do recall the deejays Michael Christian, Andy Archer and Spangles Maldoon. Internal problems meant that the station crew fall into pieces, but it was not the end for RFL. There came two stations

RFL East and RFL South. When they were on the air they mostly transmitted programs after each other. In the early seventies they left the AM for the FM frequency of 92.3 MHz. In the eighties they even used the 819 kHz during the days after the raid took place on the Ross Revenge in August 1989. I cannot attend the radio day but I would love to see what they do recall from those days with RFL'.

Thanks a lot Freek for sharing this memories and up to Peter and Andy to put their memories in an email.

The wet and wild history of Radio Caroline

Like in the last report we do have a pre publication of one of the chapters for the forthcoming publication, which will be out in autumn. This time it's one of the chapters from my own memories

THE TIME IN BETWEEN MARCH 1968 AND SEPTEMBER 1972

Next to the thousands of newspaper cuts I've an enormous amount of diary notes, which I've started to make since 1964. Let's see in this chapter some of the notes I did make in the period between 1969 and 1972 – a period Radio Caroline wasn't on the air from her own ship(s). The 'Sound of the nation' only could be heard twice. First a one hours show on a foreign radio station and after that during the famous campaign backing the Conservatives in 1970, when they used the transmitters from the MEBO II. There was only made a station name change from RNI into Radio Caroline as this station name was more familiar to the listeners in Great Britain. In an earlier book, '25 Years Radio Caroline Memories' you can find back my memories from 1968, when there were some plans, including trying to get the former Radio 270 vessel for a restart of Radio Caroline off the South East coast of Britain.

Here's what I did wrote down in March 1969: 'The Caroline Revival Hour was transmitted on Radio Andorra on 428 meters, which is 701 kHz. It happened on March 2nd from midnight up till 10 minutes past one. The program was a commemoration for Radio Caroline, that went of the air a year ago, when both ships were towed away from international waters by tugs – which had been hired by the tender company Wijsmüller. Reason was that the station owners didn't pay their bills for tendering the Fredericia anchored off the West Coast of England as well as the MV Mi Amigo off the Eastern Coast. I've also heard that the program was a test for eventual further programmes as such. It was first announced in Spanish and later the microphone was taken over by Caroline deejays. I heard the voices of Don Allen, Bob Stewart, Bud Bullou, Bobby Dee an Steve Merike. The reception was very poor during the first 20 minutes in the Netherlands. There was interference from a German radio station, but afterwards the reception became better. The deejays led us back to the earlier days of Radio Caroline and many well known records of those years were played. Also an air-check of the August 15th broadcast from Radio Caroline South was played. I did hear some adverts for the Free Radio Association and music papers. I read in 'Disc and Music Echoes' that this kind of programs can be expected soon between midnight and four in the morning soon on Radio Andorra.'

It didn't happen and it would take some other years before Radio Caroline came back. Strange to see my own writing back, it looked like the station had already a long history. Of course they were on the air for almost four years, in which happened a lot. But this period was only 10% of the period we're now talking about as the station is 40 years of age in 2004.

In the diary from the month April 1969 I do rewrite the next item: 'The Sunday Telegraph announced that there's a plan for a Beatles plane. John Lennon and Yoko Ono have agreed to appear in a colour programme for a television station which will be broadcasting to Britain from an aircraft over the Irish Sea. Mr .Ronan O'Rahilly is the initiator and the station will be called 'Radio Caroline Television'. A lot of show business people have agreed to take part, when the station gets on the air. And strange enough the station won't break any law. The broadcasts will be between 6 in the evening and 3 in the night the following day and Ronan has bought two Super Constellations, which will be transmitting in turn. I did read in the newspaper that the organisation is discussing with a number of agency people about large contracts for advertising. Most of it will be bought and paid for outside Great Britain. Three countries have agreed to let the airplanes take off and land. The station's policy will be mainly light entertainment with the accent on old films. There will be also a serious program with reporters interviewing people in the streets. Swear words will not be censored.'

At the moment I'm writing this part of this chapter it's December 29th 2003 and Simon Dee makes his return to television today at Channel Four. And I do read back in my personal notes from September 1969: 'I am extremely flattered about the invitation to do a program on Caroline TV and will consider joining Caroline TV very seriously. At the end of the year I will be a completely free agent. If Caroline TV has a normal, mature format, I see no reason why we should not be involved. I've heard it will be financed by overseas advertisements and the nerve centre will be in New York. But also offices will be opened in Switzerland and Holland. In the Bahamas is a co backer, called George Drummond, who is only 26 years of age. Ronan told me that the prices for advertisements will be 300 Pounds for 30 seconds compared to the 5500 Pound on ITV. '

We're now 35 years later and I've written some articles on this ill fated projects through the years in some magazines. And of course we know by know that all the plans for this television project was just one of the many dreams our Irishman had and made up to stay in publicity.

Going back to my diary in 1969 I did found some lines in the agenda from September of that year: 'The Caroline ships Mi Amigo and Fredericia are still in Amsterdam and have been plundered by thieves and corrode from the influence of water and weather. Four tape machines and a television set have disappeared. The water police, so I did read in a newspaper, is now guarding the ships. It was stated that the owners of the ships are Kernan Corporation and Tesman Investments Inc. from Panama with an address too in Liechtenstein. This company do not react on this. It has been reported in the newspaper that Ronan has visited the ships in Amsterdam at least three times and rumours are going that he want to bring at least one of the two on the air again with Dutch and English programs. It has also been told that Mr. Nathan could buy the complete equipment of the MV Mi Amigo for 450.000 dollars, but the Peace ship left for New York, without the equipment.



Fredericia in Amsterdam

Abe, in the meantime had already bought his own ship, the MV Cito, which was lying along the quayside of the Oosterhamrikkade, in Groningen. Just away 150 meters from my home at that time. With help from volunteers the ship was partly repainted in Groningen and later in Amsterdam. With help of inhabitants of the Netherlands – who bought shares from the Peace company, the ship set sail to New York. What has happened to the VOP is another story, where many Caroline people – including Bob Noakes, Tony Allen en Chrispian St. John were involved too.

But going back to my agenda from 1969, when I was 21 years of age, there must have been a strong believe in Ronan's power as I did wrote down at the end of December: 'On December 25th there should have been a testtransmissions of twenty minutes duration form Caroline Television on the UHF channel 25-30. Regular programs will commence during spring 1970 at some 20.000 feet altitude above the North Sea.'

In the meantime it became 1970 and two people from Switzerland, the then 33 year old Edwin Bollier and 32 year young Erwin Meister, both from Switzerland, had brought their own radio ship on the North sea. Much has been written about this station through the past three years in the section 'RNI memories', including the Caroline participation, on the online Journal for Media and Music Culture www.soundscapes.info

After the period RNI was renamed into Radio Caroline it did take a long time before I did use my diary again for

writing down the word 'Caroline'. It was on December 18 1970 that I found back the following: 'The formerly Radio Caroline radio ship MV Mi Amigo, now in Amsterdam Houthaven (wood harbour), was sinking today as a result of sabotage. A tap in the engine room was open and the ship listed. Crewmembers of a tug of the Amsterdam port authority saved the famous pirate by getting some pumps aboard'.

The British guard on the MV Mi Amigo, Dave Fletcher told me a few days later that Ronan O'Rahilly had come to Amsterdam to see if the ships were still suitable for broadcasting. He also told me that Ronan has plans to restart Radio Caroline when the rumours, that RNI is coming on the air again, are true. RNI closed down at the end of September 1970 to come back on the air in February next year. It would however take up till September 1972 before Ronan did it again, or should I write Chicago and Spangles did it again?



Spangles Maldoon and Gerard van Dam

In the last week of May 1972 I've written some lines again on both Caroline ships: 'The two Caroline vessels which were in Holland since March 1968 have been sold.' To go into detail I can tell that the Monday afternoon May 29th it was the shipbroker Frank Rijdsdijk, from Hendrik Ido Ambacht, who bought the Caroline vessel, we all know as the MV Fredericia, for an amount of 26.500 Dutch guilders. This amount was not only paid for the ship but also for what had left of the inventory of the Fredericia. The MV Mi Amigo was bought by ships agency Hofman for an amount of 20.000 guilders. He could not tell for whom he did buy the former Caroline South ship. The paid money was only a small fraction of what the ships and their inventory were worth, when entering Holland way back in 1968.



MV Mi Amigo and Fredericia in Holland

About the MV Fredericia I can be very short. Frank Rijdsdijk resold the ship to Rinus van der Marel in Ouwerkerk in the province of Zeeland and so her final destination would be the broker in a small place near Zierikzee. The arial mast was already taken down in Amsterdam harbour and on own power the Fredericia made her way through the canals of the Netherlands to a sand-bank near Ouwerkerk, called 'Het Keeten'. The 1350 hp motor seemed to be in good condition. During the month of July the Fredericia was still at the mud flat and the new owner had to wait until a period of very high tide would come so the ship could be going into one of the small channels near the broker's place. Early August 1972 the first work on the Fredericia had been done by breaking down the upper decks of the ship, were once the studio's were situated. It soon came out that it would be a heavy work to break down the Fredericia completely, as it has been a very strong built ship. It was formerly used as a ferry in Scandinavia, where during wintertime there's a lot of ice.

After the upper deck had gone the people decided, as they had seen that everywhere in the ship insulation material could be found, to set the ship on fire to get rid of the materials. What Van Marel didn't know by then, was that on this

ship as ballast heavy anchor chains were used. Strange enough the work on the ship stopped after it had been set on fire and through the many years, that followed, Ouwerkerk became a new pilgrimage place for Anoraks who wanted to make photo's of the former radio ship. I must admit I did too.

I did take some visits to Ouwerkerk and on one occasion the owner showed the bell from the MV Fredericia. Rinus van der Marel was very proud he had this bell hanging in his office. It would take up till late 1980 that the Fredericia had been completely broken up. Later we heard the bell went to an African country as the old man had decided to emigrate from Holland. Since a couple of years he's back, as well as the bell. On the place where formerly the broker was nowadays a museum on the history of ships can be found. Lucky enough the MV Mi Amigo got another destiny and soon after the auction it came out in the small world of Anoraks, a word which wasn't used in those days yet, that it was Gerard van Dam and a certain Rob Vermaat, who had asked Hofman Shipping Agency to buy the MV Mi Amigo.

Gerard van Dam was already known from his other activities: While Radio Veronica was busy distributing and collecting postcards for the 'Veronica stays ...' campaign in 1971, some Dutch offshore radio fans were trying to organize the fan base. Mobilise all Dutch and Belgian Free Radio fans, was the idea of a young lad from The Hague in 1971. To this end, he formed the ISFRA, the 'International Society for the Promotion of Free Radio.' Together with Hans Verbaan, who in those days lived in nearby Scheveningen and who was the chairman of the Dutch FRA and FRC branches, he wanted to make a front. By a written protest to the government, they wanted to make clear, that the ratification of the Treaty of Strasbourg would make it almost impossible for the Dutch offshore radio stations to continue their programming. This young man was also the driver of the car that in those days picked up the people of the RNI at their Naarden studio to bring them to the tender in Scheveningen harbour. He told a journalist: 'We simply have to try to get more members. At the moment, we've 1,000 members in Holland. In Germany and Belgium, we now have around 10,000 members and we hope that this all eventually leads to a total of 250,000 members. That would be fine.'

It is clear, that — just like the spokesman for the FRA in England — this guy really had not a good sense for numbers, though, he certainly had a good sense for drama. In the interview he said that the FRA stood for answering just this one question about Free Radio: "Going on or not going on as legal stations." The journalist and this young guy next discussed the fact that the Dutch national pop station Hilversum 3 in the meantime, according to the results of recent polls, had recruited more listeners than Radio Veronica. These facts, though, didn't impress him at all. He even made some critical comments about the fact that the programmes of Hilversum 3 were not interrupted by commercials, by saying that commercials were an essential part of the attractiveness of any radio program. This man, who was the RNI driver and front man of the ISFRA, I can now reveal, was no other than Gerard van Dam, also known as Gerard van der Zee. Moreover, in many ways he proved successful in his love for Free Radio. He worked for Ronan O'Rahilly, bringing back the MV Mi Amigo to sea in 1972, next for Radio 199, Radio Caroline and Radio Atlantis. For his own station Radio Delmare, he brought several ships to sea in the late seventies of last century.

Gerard van Dam made a remarkable appearance in the press in July 1971, just after the MV Fredericia and the MV Mi Amigo were sold. The buyer of MV Amigo was Van Dam himself, and he successfully tried to fool the press. Together with Hans Verbaan, he did sent out a leaflet, revealing their plans with the ship as a temporary resort for nostalgic anoraks: 'After long talks with the owners of the former Radio Caroline South ship, the MV Mi Amigo, we have succeeded in making an agreement. For a short period of time, the ship will be kept away from the ship breakers yard. During the next few months, everyone will be enabled to visit the ship for as short a time as one day, or for as long a stay as is required. Food and accommodation on the ship are being arranged. Original studio guidance will come from a well-known deejay. In case the costs of ship are not being covered by the profits for next few months, the owner will carry out his original plans and scrap the ship. This fate has already befallen Radio Caroline North. So, make the most of this unique offer and use what possibly is your last chance to visit the first and last outpost of the golden age of British Pirate Radio.'

This evocative appeal was followed by an extensive price list, stating the costs of different arrangements for stays on the Mi Amigo. The leaflet was taken serious by several newspapers, which uncritically brought the news. The VPRO radio also made a nice small documentary about Van Dam's plans with the former radio ship. In fact, the leaflet contained an error. The MV Fredericia, the ship of Radio Caroline North, was not yet scrapped. It would be on dry land for a long time at the Van Marel Ship Brokery in Ouwerkerk, before the bell was taken away and the rest would

be broken up. More important, though, was that Gerard van Dam was not really on the lookout for any paid visitors for his museum ship at all. Instead, the ship was towed into international waters. Equipment, stolen earlier from the ship in Amsterdam by Peter C. and Spangles M., were brought back on board.

Unexpected on Friday afternoon, September 1st 1972, the MV Mi Amigo was towed by a tug of the Iskes Company from Amsterdam through the Noordzeekanaal (North Sea Canal) to the harbour of IJmuiden and after passing the locks of the harbour the Mi Amigo was towed to a position 4 miles northwest of the Northern Pier. By returning to the harbour the skipper of the towing vessel told to a journalist that he thought it very strange that the guys wanted to go out with the Mi Amigo as it was so unstable. And still the same afternoon it was Gerard van Dam in a newspaper telling everyone that the ship would go to England to be a pirate museum. During the night from 2nd to 3rd of September it was the towing vessel from Koos van Laar which towed the Mi Amigo to a new position. The next morning people on the MEBO II – off the coast of Scheveningen – suddenly saw the Mi Amigo anchored on a position 500 metres on the north side of the RNI vessel.

It was in the Sky Line program the next evening on RNI that Tony Allan told the listeners that another ship was anchored near the MEBO II whereby he told that the ship was empty and had no transmitters onboard. Also mentioning the radio ship was on the news reports on Sunday afternoon on Radio Veronica and the Dutch NOS Journaal (News on the Public Broadcasters). The camera crew had taken a skipper with them to the Mi Amigo and this guy told that the people on the MV Mi Amigo were big amateurs and that the ship was anchored in the wrong way – whereby drifting could be expected. Also the Mi Amigo had no position lights on. An official warning was brought out to the captain by a vessel of the Dutch Navy, the same afternoon a pilot boat came out and brought a penalty to the captain. Some lights were brought on the vessel the same afternoon.

Confusion started with an article in the biggest newspaper of the Netherlands, Telegraaf, on September 4th 1972. They wrote that the Bell Broadcasting Company Ltd had bought the MV Mi Amigo and that a radio station would start at the end of that year or early 1973. The 259 as well as the 270 kHz were mentioned as well the power of the two transmitters (50 and 100 kW). The ‘259 spot’ was planned for an international edition for Radio Caroline and the ‘270 spot’ for a Dutch language version. Only the international service should carry commercials. It was Rutger van den Berg who came forward as spokesman for the BBC Ltd in another newspaper. He mentioned that the station would start on September 6th, which was a totally different date than earlier mentioned in the Telegraaf. Soon after the second publication it came out that the Journalist of the Telegraaf was trapped by two practical jokers, Roel Koenders and Henk Meeuwis. Both from Amsterdam and radio addicted. Later on Roel Koenders became a well known producer at VARA Radio and Henk Meeuwis became news reader for Radio Caroline on....the MV Mi Amigo.

Strange enough it was Gerard van Dam who came, in the second week of September 1972, with the news in the Algemeen Dagblad, that the Mi Amigo would become again a radio ship. He couldn't mention a name for the station or a frequency to be used in the then future. But more confusion came in when Dutch Telegraaf brought a big article on the front page on September 15th. Three days earlier they brought a photo on the front page on which the reader could see that the Mi Amigo was tendered by the MV Dolfijn, a tender from the Jacques Vrolijk tender company from Scheveningen. The strange ship off the coast of Scheveningen, according the article on September 15th, would not become a radio ship but an illegal casino. People visiting the ship could go ahead with gambling as it was planned in international waters and no action could be taken by Dutch authorities. A spokesman for the Casino company – who told that he had already worked as a technician for Radio Veronica and RNI – was Anton Rabeljee from Groningen city. He told to the journalist of the Telegraaf – Bert Voorthuijzen – that all the transmitter equipment and other technical gear was taken off the MV Mi Amigo when it was still in Zaandam harbour. That this was not true would become known very soon afterwards.

Some days later, on September 18th 1972, it was RNI deejay Spangles Muldoon who mentioned in his program that he would soon leave the station to cross the street to another ship. And for those who didn't understand he told on RNI: Just count 39 and 220 (the RNI spot) together. We then knew that from the MV Mi Amigo the transmitter would be used on 259 metres medium wave band. And so it was on September 29th 1972 in the late evening that for the very first time since March 1968 a signal could be heard from a transmitter on the MV Mi Amigo; this time on 252.7 metres

(1187 kHz) with non stop music.

Subsequently, the MV Mi Amigo would host a whole range of stations like Radio 199, Radio Caroline, Radio Caroline 1 and 2, Radio Atlantis, Radio Seagull, Radio Joepie and Radio Mi Amigo. Those stations were all active somewhere between 1972 and 1980, the year in which the ship finally sank down beneath the waves.

AND FOR THOSE WHO WANT TO BE INFORMED WHEN THE BOOK COMES OUT, LATER THIS YEAR, JUST SENT AN E MAIL TO HKNOT@HOME.NL

That's all for this time and I will be back before the end of this month. Let your memories and questions coming in and greetings to you all.

Hans Knot

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