

# HANS KNOT INTERNATIONAL RADIO REPORT

NOVEMBER 2008

First of all a good day to everyone, and welcome to the November edition of the Hans Knot International Radio Report. A lot has happened since last issue and also we have some things, which didn't make the October issue. For instant the e mail Martin Kayne sent me in which he mentioned that 48 photos could be seen on the following internet link. Martin would like to share the photographs taken during the Caroline North Convention, in September.

<http://smilebox.com/playEmail/4e4463794d6a4d334d4877354d6a55774e44497a0d0a&sb=1>

Thanks a lot Martin, your contribution is always most appreciated.

Then an e mail from former RNI and Caroline deejay from the seventies, Ian Anderson, who reflect on a topic in last issue: 'I was interested to read your piece from Dutch Media of Ton Lathouwers stepping down from the Sky Radio Group virtually 20 years to the day of the start of his Sky Radio on Eutelsat 13 East. No doubt you will have something on Ton's past. I spoke to Ton several times in the weeks before Sky Radio started, mainly to discuss the Schafer automation system that he had chosen. This was based on a bank of Betamax players with video-cassettes of music and a personal computer to select and to fire them all off. The year before we had installed another system that had failed to work properly and the supplier kindly took it back so I was interested in his choice. We at SIBC never did go for Schafer, opting a couple of years later for the Pristine system.'

Ian Anderson SIBC, which stands for Shetland Islands Broadcasting Corporation.

Thanks Ian, yes I remember the enormous rack with Betamax recorders, when visiting the Sky Radio outlet many years ago. In the late eighties also the people at Cable One worked with the same system. Still have some tapes in my archive with many hours of Cable One. Only can't play them as the system they used was regulated.

Look who we have as third entry this month: 'Cher Monsieur Hans! Excellent report as always. I had to read the whole report to find me so rest assured the tactic worked! You said: He good rocking Emperor, there on your chair in California , why didn't you mention the next news: 'Hi Hans, You may be interested in this news from Ayia Napa , Cyprus . (with thanks to Mark).'

'I think it's the L.A. Connection (one of my shows). If it is 106.3 fm is on that station so I got confused! So lets give them a plug: Thanks: NAPA FM for your good taste and keep rocking @! Real big news next month! I will send you a photo, that may be a clue as to the direction! The details next

month, but you can use one as a teaser if you like! :) Take care and have a great radio day! The Hans Knot fan club of the So Cal Emperor Rosko.'



Mysterious Photo Emperor Rosko

Thanks Emperor and surely you will be back next month with more mysterious hints. We will have fun on the Radio Day and hopefully you will drop in one day too!

Last month we had the question where to find an old television commercial from the Esso Company. Well within 2 days I had 5 answers and here's one of them: 'Hello Hans, regarding the request for information about the Esso advertisement on British television: 'Boom boom boom boom, Esso Blue'. The actor who did the voice over for those animated advertisements was the Yorkshire actor Gordon Rollings, who did many voiceovers in the 50s and 60s as well as appearing in films - he was in Carry on Doctor - and television series and plays, including Coronation Street. He is best known as the pub gofer for John Smiths Beers, see <http://theherbs.homestead.com/GordonRollings/Arkwright1.JPG>. Rollings worked a lot in animations. The Esso Blue advert is viewable on the Whirligig website, <http://www.whirligig-tv.co.uk/tv/adverts/commercials.htm>. Unfortunately Mr Rollings has died.

Hope this helps, Paul.'

Well Paul and all the others thank you so much sharing your knowledge with us.

Then an e mail from Willem de Bruijn who wrote: 'I really enjoyed the last Knot Report. Also thanks for the link to the recently published photos of the MEBO II. It really gives an inside look on how the radio sip was in those days. It is nice of Hans Hogendoorn that he wanted to share the photos with your readers. In those RNI days it was always a pleasure for me when Hans ten Hoge presented the program 'Driemaster'. A pity it was he was not too much on the air with the program. Nico Steenberg, I think, not always had pleasure doing the show (and he also gave a token about it). The other Driemaster presenter, Leo van der Goot, was a bit too lively. In 1971, and I don't know if this

question was asked earlier, there was a certain Mark Stuart on the MEBO II, who worked for the English Service. He had his own style of presentation and: 'Can't be bad, could be worse' were his stopgaps And don't forget his phrase: 'RNI news... now....'



Mark Stuart: Freewave Archive

I remember Mark didn't stay too long with RNI because he felt seasick. There was a little article about him in Muziek Parade. During the weekends he was on shoreleave he was also part of the drive in show. One day he told a few times in his program that he forgot his shoes in Ferry Maat his car. I think 1971 was a very good year for the RNI English Service with people like Mike Ross, Dave Rodgers, Andy Archer and Brian McKenzie, to name a few. My question is what happened to Marc Stuart.'



Trip Tender and Trip Senior in Scheveningen harbour in 1997

Photo: Willem de Bruijn

Thanks Willem for the photo and can I add Paul May to the names for he was also excellent, that is in my ears. Well I forwarded your question to Hans ten Hooge and he came back with: 'Yes Mark Stuart, he was about 18 years of age. Children work it was in those days at the RNI Company and

Strengtholt-concern. I remember him as a nice chap. But for the rest I know not too much. One of the things I found on internet:

<http://www.quizquest.fsnet.co.uk/markstuart.htm>

I haven't been able to find out much about Mark Stuart, real name Mel Bowden. He joined RNI in June 1971, from BBC Radio Brighton as a replacement for Tony Allan. His first broadcast was on June 17th. He left RNI in October 1971, in protest at the sacking of his friend Crispian St. John, returning to BBC radio Brighton. Mark's last show was on October 20, 1971. He later found fame and fortune as the boss of electronics company MBI, who produced studio equipment, including mixing tables.' But I found more as Mark Stuart still, I think, has a running company with 6 people working for him:

<http://www.applegate.co.uk/company/10/56/308.htm>

Maldwyn Bowden International Sales Ltd  
168 Edward Street  
Brighton  
BN2 0JB (Road Map)  
East Sussex

Thanks a lot Hans Hogendoorn for your research.

Then a certain Steve who wanted some promotion, which of course he will get: 'We have started up a web site showing a missing part of the UK land based pirates 60'-70's that may be of interest to you. [www.radiokaleidoscope.com](http://www.radiokaleidoscope.com)

All comments welcome. Kind Regards, Steve.

Of course for all readers count that it's possible to comment at [HKnot@home.nl](mailto:HKnot@home.nl) and if you've photographs or other attachments please use [hans.knot@gmail.com](mailto:hans.knot@gmail.com)

Then Bob LeRoi with his monthly feature: 'Welcome to the Autumn October 2008 Update. In 'Scrapbook' we venture to 'cloggie land' for the continuation of the MV Communicator saga, includes the torturous ship owner changes all in never before published pictures of the ship in Holland

'One Subject One Link' asks in a contribution is it right that Kids are on radio? We've added yet more Albums titles to the Record Store with the Beat, Beck Carmine and Appice. Whilst in the CD Store you can find Bread & the first of the Beatles CD Albums. To conclude if you're interested you can see some National treasures of Scotland with pictures of the RY Britannia, the Forth Rail Bridge & Tayside Enjoy Your Visits

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

Alex Bervoets from Belgium had a short phrase in his e mail station: Once again I want to congratulate you with the Radio Report. Every time I've hours of reading pleasure. Simply Fantastic.

Then Oeds Jan from Holland : 'Maybe the next is of interest for your readers. From Sunday October 26<sup>th</sup> I will in my program 'Anno 1900', which can be heard on OOG Radio 105.5 on the local cablenetwork in Groningen , 106.6. on the air and on [www.oogtv.nl](http://www.oogtv.nl) from 14-15 hrs Dutch Time bring back, for a couple of weeks, musical memories from the sixties and Radio London and Caroline. I will play during those weeks all the number one hits London and Caroline had between early 1965 and September 1967. In total 80 songs. In between original Caroline and London jingles will be played and in the last show also we have airchecks of several stations and their closedowns at August 14<sup>th</sup> 1967. ' Was signed Oeds Jan Koster.

And the t-shirts, they just keep on coming! The one you see next is from 1985 and the days that on the Ross Revenge a Dutch station, called Monique, was the sister station for Radio Caroline. I don't know if the girl's name is Monique but the photo was found in Amsterdam . Next time more about the 'Fight for Free Radio' t-shirt.



On Radio 5 the Jewish Broadcast Cooperation in Holland paid attention to the Voice of Peace in a one hour documentary produced by Peter Kroon. It featured the stories from Kas Collins, Bob Noakes, Rabi Soetendorp and I as well as many jingles and promotional spots from the station. The same week, on Saturday October 18<sup>th</sup>, almost a whole page in the Volkskrant in Holland , paid attention to the humanitarian work which Abe Nathan did 40 years ago, written very well by Marie Louise Schipper. She is writing a book in which Abe is playing also an important role.



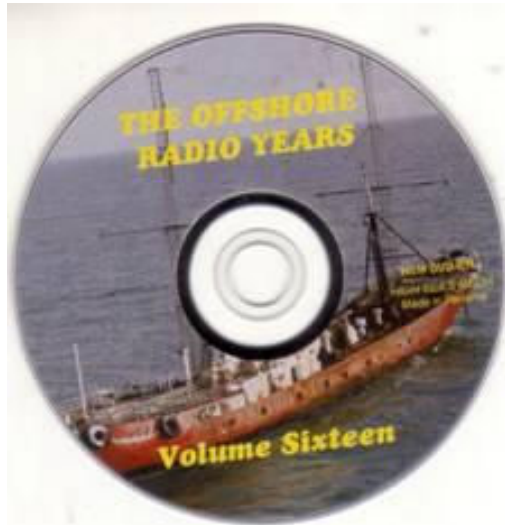
In last issue we had the wonderful painting made by Martin van der Ven 's mother and Mary Payne replied to the question if someone else has also a painting of a radioship: 'It was interesting Martin to see in Hans's newsletter the photo of you and your mother with the painting of the Mebo II. What a lovely gift! Your mother is very talented and I'm sure you're delighted with her beautiful painting. Many members of my family (all now deceased) enjoyed painting and drawing and I have so many of their pictures that we don't have enough wall space to display them! However, the only offshore radio picture I have is a cartoon of the Knock John fort. Here's the photo of the cartoon presented to me in 1999 on my 50th birthday, by my good friends Pauline and Dave Miller. Pauline was the person who in 1998 came up with the idea of us holding Radio London reunions - and look what that led to! Because I used to run the Knees Club, Barney, the cartoonist, turned fort Knock John naval fort into 'Knock-kneed John '! (I love ' John 's' rusty shorts!) He has even shown the Ross Revenge on the horizon. As you can imagine, I was really delighted with this original and very witty offshore gift. Yours kneesily, Mary Payne.



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Review of 'The Offshore Radio years Volume Sixteen'. From High Sea 's Media another DVD has been released, this time covering the last year of the eighties and the time Radio Caroline was on the air from international waters in the early nineties of last century. I have seen most of the 16 DVD's in this series but I never was so astonished about the many, beautiful and very clear recordings, which have been made during that period. Most beautiful shots taken from an airplane, as well as recordings made on the 25th birthday, the station celebrated in spring of 1989. Also a part of this, 60 min plus DVD, tells the story about the raid on the Ross Revenge by Dutch and English authorities. For the first time I've seen shots from the Volans, the Dutch tug, arriving near the radio ship. On the DVD it's told that there were negotiations under which the Dutch could go back to land without problems. Also it's shown that, thanks to Chicago and his efforts, the station came back on the air in no time after most of the equipment was brought on shore in Holland . A pity no recordings are used from the Dutch radio, who reported much on the happenings that August Day. Of course is mentioned that on

one stage that a part of the equipment was brought back on the ship, however not of the fact that the costs for the deliverance was paid by Dutch Foundation for Media Communication. As happened many times before, Dutch money would help the Caroline organisation this time. Also it's shown that a lot of listeners donated their own LP question; equipment came from several ILR stations to help Caroline back on the air on 558. Of course the problems with this frequency (Spectrum Radio in London was officially given this frequency so interference would happen) is not forgotten. In 1990 the ship came in severe problems due to a heavy storm and all the crew had to leave the ship by helicopter. When the new UK Broadcasting Act became law in 1991 it was time to go on legal for the organisation. Dover became the first city to get a RSL license to have a 28 days broadcast for Radio Caroline. From that point on Radio Caroline wasn't anymore 'Establishment Enemy Number One.'



For more information on this and other DVD's go to:

<http://www.offshoreechos.com/Accueil%20English%20Catalogue-01.htm>

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Hi Hans.. Some weeks ago we were asked if we could play a song sung by children from the Mayflower Primary School in Dovercourt Essex in the UK on Radio Seagull and also give out there web site address where anyone could watch the video and download the song (with a £1 donation to the Charity CLIC Sargent that cares for Children with Cancer). I loved the song and sent it to Sue Marchant at the BBC as she has a show that covers the east of England on BBC local radio each evening. She liked it so much that she had the kids in the studio to sing it live. It's a great song sung by a 12 year old young lady "Laura Green" and the children from the school. The original was sung by the Wiredaisys. The Web Site is [www.moonbootson.com/rocketgirl](http://www.moonbootson.com/rocketgirl) Its a great song and the £1 go's to a very good cause. Hope you can print this in your international radio report and they can add a few more £ to help kids with Cancer. Thanks Dave Fox "Radio Seagull" PS a great web site!

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Now time for Jon's Pages:

Time for an update to The Pirate Radio Hall of Fame.

New for October..... Over the weekend of 19-21 September, a celebration of Radio Caroline North took place on the Isle of Man. We have a four page report packed with photos from this excellent event; Colin Nicol provides a 1965 newspaper interview with Caroline's founder Ronan O'Rahilly; and we have another page of cuttings and memorabilia from Keith Martin's offshore archive.

Jon at The Pirate Radio Hall of Fame

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

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Remember Mark Stafford going for a weekend with his lady to London finding out there was something special with 6 Chesterfield Gardens ? Well he came back again with the next spy information: 'Hans, thank you for the mention on the recent newsletter and also the nice comments about my show.

After writing to you I got in touch with Mary & Chris Payne who also got John Myer involved. Between us we pieced the whole story of Caroline House at 6 Chesterfield Gardens prior to Caroline moving in. This is what we found:

We know the following to be true:- 1. In the book, "A Spy's London : A Walk Book of 136 Sites in Central London Relating to Spies, Spycatchers & Subversives". There is a clear reference to MI5 agent Tomas (correct spelling!) "Tommy" Harris Living at 6 Chesterfield Gardens , the quote being ... "Number 6 Chesterfield Gardens (the home of MI5's Tomas Harris), the drawing room of which was the scene of roisterous wartime bashes, attended by exactly the same people!" On top of that No 6 Chesterfield Gardens, is now part of the "SPIES' & SPYCATCHERS' LONDON " walk, were tourists are told that it has an association with Kim Philby.

2. Tomás (Tommy) Harris was born on the 10 April, 1908 at Hampstead, London and died on the 27 January 1964 in Majorca , Spain in a motor accident. On the internet it is eluded that his death was the centre of some mystery. He was a Spanish-speaking officer with MI5 during World War II who worked with Garbo, an important double agent for the British. Together they made up a fictional team of 27 fake sub-agents, who were created in order to convince German intelligence that Garbo was a reliable spy. This resulted in what became known as The Garbo deception. He was also an artist, and an art dealer. In later years he is known to have had friendships with British MI5 agent, Kim Philby, who defected to the Russians in 1963.

3. Kim Philby's book ..."My Silent War; the Soviet Master Spy's Own

Story: The Soviet Master Spy's" by Kim Philby 1968 has the following quotes: Page 43: "During my occasional visits to London, I had made a point of calling at Tommy Harris's house in Chesterfield Gardens, where he lived surrounded by his art ..." Other books have also confirmed the visits to 6 Chesterfield Gardens.... The Climate of Treason: Five Who Spied for Russia by Andrew Boyle 1979 - 504 pages Page 246 "...or in the more elegant surroundings of Tommy Harris's home in Chesterfield Gardens , Mayfair , where good food and wine never seemed to run out." Philby: The Long Road to Moscow by Patrick Seale, Maureen McConville, 1973 - 282 pages. Page 166 "... into the spy- catching world of MI5, where his intimate knowledge of Spain and Spaniards was put to good use. His house in Chesterfield Gardens ..." Operation Garbo: The Personal Story of the Most Successful Double Agent of ... by Juan Pujol, Nigel West 1985 - 205 pages. Page 192: "... Harris's gallery home in Chesterfield Gardens and had known Philby, Blunt, ... But had he also been a Soviet spy?" Philby: the hidden years by Morris Riley 1999 - 198 pages. Page 8: "Once more, access came about through a friend, in the form of Tommy Harris. He and Philby often met at Harris's home at Chesterfield Gardens , London ..." I think we have more than enough substance there to confirm this interesting chapter in the



history of Caroline House.

I spoke to Peter Moore recently, and told him about all of this. It was something he had never heard Ronan talk about and he is quite sure that Ronan would not be aware of this. By pure coincidence, he was meeting Ronan a few days after and was going to pass on the info. I've been away on holiday and I've not spoken to him since. If anything interesting comes out of that I'll let you know. Best regards, Mark Stafford.'

Well thanks to you Mark, Jon and also Mary for the additional information. Great work but I presume you don't ask me to read all those books, as I've so much other material to read!

It's Jam time, a sorry it's Robbie Dale time: 'Good morning from sunny Lanzarote. I thought you may like to see these pictures from our recent reunion in Dublin . It was a great joy to taste the "kindred spirit" and see the sun-shiners gel as they did so many years ago. A radio is only radio, what makes radio special are the people in it, who create the love, the joy and excitement we share with them. It was a fabulous experience to be united again with so many members of my former team, to see at first hand how well they looked and hear about their continued successes in life, broadcasting, media and travel. We have one former Sunshine Radio top jock that traded his love of wearing cans and flying a mixing desk in Ireland for literally taking it to the heights by becoming a Swiss-Air Captain wearing cans and flying passenger jets across Europe . Other team members are presenting programs, in news and management both in radio and television; across Europe some have become very high profile personalities other have moved into top jobs in the newspaper and entertainment industries. They came together to celebrate and rekindle that golden thread of friendship and passion that binds us radio folks forever.

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/sunshine-reunion/sets/72157607644369596/>



Robbie Dale together with his son and wife at the reunion Sunshine Radio

Organiser Roger Lane was heard to say several times "Never Again" however there are rumours of a

25th reunion being organised in Lanzarote!

Remember the question two issues ago about a part of a jingle where two of the lines were "the summer came and the summer went and so did one or two of our gents" appeared? Robin Richardson wrote to me: 'I believe that it was heard in 1973 or 1974 on Radio Caroline and wonder if you have any more info. Last month we had suggestions from Andy Archer and John ny Jason and this time the answer is given by Bob Lawrence with just one sentence. .... the line was from a song which Tony Allan made over a Judge Dread record. It was the superb 1974 Christmas Song and the title of the song of Judge Dread was 'Big Nine'. Regards, Bob Lawrence .' Thanks Bob and I sent your answer at once to Robin who just came back with: 'Hans, this is the one -excellent! Thank you, Robin.

From Andy Sennit the sad message that Tim Thomason died: 'He was involved with the King David in its brief life as an offshore radio ship.' Thanks Andy for bringing this message. As a tribute to the late Tim Thomason I've decided to republish a 2003 interview which was published before on [www.soundscapes.info](http://www.soundscapes.info)

The interviewer was my brother Jelle Knot :

'In the 1960s Tim Thomason and his then wife Berthe Beydals initiated the International Broadcast Society. Backed by investor Dirk de Groot and his friends, the IBS realised the plan to start an offshore radio station in the North Sea . To this end two companies were formed — the Kangaroo Pioneering Company and the Salt Water Foundation — and two ships were acquired — the MV Zeevaart, renamed into King David, and the tender Twee Gezusters, renamed into Kangaroo. The King David was equipped with a strange but revolutionary circular antenna. On May 1, 1970, Radio Capital aired its first test programmes. The adventure didn't last long. That very same year, on November 10, the MV King David broke adrift and ran ashore near Noordwijk. Recently Jelle Knot met Thomason at his home in Elisabethgaarde, Bussum — where Capital's studios were situated in the 1970's — and asked him how it all started...

Jelle Knot: As a born Canadian, Tim, what brought you to the Netherlands ?

Tim Thomason: I came to the Netherlands in 1960 to work on the Wereldomroep, the Dutch World Service, English department. Before that time I was on the radio in Ottawa , Canada . I was also a radio journalist. In the Netherlands I ended up with Capital Radio as my own project; it was an idealistic project, it wasn't completely done for the money.

Jelle Knot: In our archives we found something — the first reference dates back to 1965 — regarding the Global Reference Work. Can you tell us something more about it?

Tim Thomason: During my stay at the Wereldomroep, I was invited by the then managing director to investigate the usefulness of the Wereldomroep. To my regret, I was very naïve, not politically correct: I said what I thought to be the truth. I wouldn't do that again. I arrived at the conclusion, that the Wereldomroep as an enterprise had no reason to exist. I thought that, except for children, nobody really was listening to the station — people only listened to receive QSL-cards. I didn't make

a secret of my conclusion. I gave the report to the managing director, and he was furious about it. We had a huge argument, and the result was that I established a society on the international level, the International Broadcasting Society, aiming at assembling broadcasting companies over the whole world as professionals. It was not a political thing: there were Russians, the then Eastern Block and Asian Countries who were, in those days, unfriendly towards the Western World. It was a professional association and it had two levels: companies could be members ... I won't exaggerate, because I don't have the figures anymore, but I think that we had about 100, 150 organizations that were members, amongst them companies in Africa, Latin America, Canada, Australia ... and next there individual members, probably more than 1,000 of them, all broadcasters.

Jelle Knot: Can we see, in the same light, the events in Czechoslovakia? You were very active, it seems, during the Prague Spring in 1968 ...

Tim Thomason: Yes and no; we had quite a few members in Prague. When they wanted to leave Czechoslovakia because things went wrong there, they had evidence that they were allowed to go abroad to pay a visit to the International Broadcasting Society; in those days they had a legal cop-out to get a visa. Many people made use of that to leave the country.

Jelle Knot: I heard, the International Broadcasting Society was also presenting awards...

Tim Thomason: Yes, the aim was to reward individuals, not companies, for their broadcasting contributions. Bull Verweij, and his two brothers, is also a hero in my eyes, for various reasons, not only because he has established Radio Veronica, it's more than that. When there were problems, with the bombing of the RNI transmitter ship, he took the responsibility, though he was not involved personally. I know that by coincidence. I won't give any names: the guy who performed the whole operation is a tricky guy, very intelligent. Verweij took the blame and went to prison. For that reason I very much respect him, as well as for what he did during World War II and afterwards. He had a criminal past and, after the war, he wasn't allowed to work for the bank anymore where he used to work. So he was more or less forced by his brothers to go working with them. OK, in the end everything turned out well, but it's all about the man. A first class man!

Jelle Knot: How did you get the idea to establish Capital Radio? Did you have specific intentions and did you think there was there a market for the station?

Tim Thomason: I have to speak for myself, yes, I believed in it — if only we had been on the air for a longer period of time. We had a wad of contracts, mostly from religious and political circles; each wanted some time to broadcast. I have no objection against left wing, right wing, middle wing ... as for me; everyone is allowed some space on the airwaves. For me, it's not one against the other. In America, at the beginning of the 1970's, there were many churches with broadcasting companies and money to pay those broadcasting companies; amongst them the Baptists. Here in the Netherlands we had Toornvliet. In those days we were still building up, we weren't ready yet to do business and acquire contracts.

Jelle Knot: The ideal of the organization was that radio had to be made in an attractive way, without influence from above.

Tim Thomason: Yes, where the public clearly has a say in programming. I had specific ideas from experience, I came from the broadcasting world, I was completely against the Dutch system, I found it incorrect ... it had to be more American-Canadian. I think, particularly of FM, the public broadcasting system that it was all right, but difficult to sustain financially ... but, right, that was

good. One doesn't have to become rich, to have too many staff, like here in the Netherlands. Radio has to be made by a small group reacting immediately to the public's wishes. If the public wants classical music, it has to get classical music, if it wants more pop, it has to get that. In our days, the 1970's, there wasn't sweet music anymore, only pop. I found it appalling; in my eyes there wasn't music anymore. Thus by programming American country and western music, Latin American music again, the station became enormously popular.

Jelle Knot: The station even aired classical music on a Sunday!

Tim Thomason: Yes, and not only on a Sunday, but certainly on a Sunday. And I was popular. When we went down, the great drama on the sea at Noordwijk ... who were our supporters? They came in bus loads. The Red Cross was there, with all staff working there, the police, the fire brigade; they were all there to say: "We enjoyed it, keep on; maybe you can be back on the air very soon." It was amazing to see the reactions to our trials and tribulations. We weren't doing better than Radio Veronica. They did their thing and we did ours. They reached for their audience, and that was nice for us because we hadn't to do it. We ploughed another field.

Jelle Knot: The MV Zeevaart had been lying at the quayside in Groningen for years before you bought her. How did you find this particular ship? At the time you were searching in England too for a good ship to sail out.



King David in Groningen Harbour under her former name Zeevaart

Archive Freewave

Tim Thomason: The Kangaroo was a small trawler from Katwijk; we bought her, not as a radio ship, but as a tender, for fuel and so on. That was the first ship, but later, from Groningen, we acquired the Zeevaart, formerly the Tiny Unitas Veritas. The ship had been built in the 1930's, she was a coaster. Used by the Germans during the war, she had been rather seriously damaged by the Allied aircraft. The former owner, ship owner Van Bruggen, went bankrupt. The ship was offered to us by a shipbroker ... we had various possibilities. There was a nearly new, but sunken ship off Delfzijl; she too had been offered. She hadn't been too long under water — a week or so ... salt does little harm to a ship providing she's handled quickly — and the main engine too could be salvaged if cleaned quickly. Unfortunately she had been impounded, thus I didn't buy her. That's the only reason why I haven't bought her. The price was only fl. 7,000. Later on, I was really sorry I didn't buy the ship: for the ship that we did buy, we had to pay fl. 70,000. In those days that was a lot of money and she wasn't equipped yet. Later on, we invested yet quite a lot more money in the ship.

Jelle Knot: The ship sails out of Groningen , and then bad luck strikes for the first time. Murphy's Law definitely was exerting its power over this ship!

Tim Thomason: Quite right. We had bought that ship in Groningen . She had to go through the canal to Delfzijl, and then to the sea. On the way to Delfzijl, I had a pilot on board and he rammed the lock. That's right.

Jelle Knot: Just off the coast the captain had to leave the ship.

Tim Thomason: Yes, he was so frightened, and he was responsible, because he was the captain, but it wasn't his fault ... He went to pieces after the accident.

Jelle Knot: The story goes that he had appendicitis...

Tim Thomason: Indeed, that's what he said at the time, it might be right; it doesn't matter, he was on the verge of a breakdown.

Jelle Knot: Then you went to Zaandam where the ship was equipped. In the dock new plates were put on the hull. The ship was not in a bad state, it was just an old ship. The necessary amount of concrete was poured into the ship to give it steadiness on the high seas. Which technical facilities were built then? Where there already studios on board or were the programs recorded on land?



Studio on the ship Photo Freewave Archive

Tim Thomason: Two emergency studios were built ... In case a message had to be send from sea to land or vice versa. But in fact ... all we did ... have you ever heard Capital Radio? It was a middle of the road music station. I didn't want to have deejays, no shouting guys or girls or whatsoever. Just music and a time signal every hour. My wish for it was to be 100% accurate. And it was. You get fifteen minutes of uninterrupted music, then the name of the station in different languages: "Here Capital Radio." That was it. The aim was to sell blocks of fifteen, thirty minutes, one hour to the financial backers, in which they could give their message to the audience ... but only restricted messages, not an hour of blablabla. It had to be music.





Tim Thomason Photo: Rob Olthof

Jelle Knot: At the start, there was only one pair of emergency studios?

Tim Thomason: (showing some pictures of the ship) Here, at the right, we had recording studio's, two. We had a fairly large record library, because every music producer saw to it that his records were delivered to the station. The collaboration with the commercial world was excellent; we were willing to pay all costs to Buma / Stemra, the Dutch Music Copyright / Performing Rights, but we had no intention of keeping records in order to justify every minute of the day, and they didn't care, as long as we were willing to pay. We had made a deal to pay a particular sum.

Jelle Knot: While the ship was being equipped, were there any signals from the authorities, letting you know that they were aware of what was going on and that they intended to take action against it?

Tim Thomason: We're talking about two countries, the Netherlands and Great Britain ; the Dutch government had no objection to pirate ships, because our enterprise had nothing to do with the Dutch laws. The ship was registered in Liechtenstein ; we were the one and only offshore station airing from a Liechtenstein ship. And furthermore, as long as we didn't do it in the Netherlands , it was OK. The British had another opinion, but they too have a kink in their law. For a device to be named as a transmitter, it must have a crystal. As long as it's an electronic device without a crystal, for the British it wasn't a transmitter. I bought the old apparatus of Radio 270, I bought two brand new generators with the diesel in England , I collected them with our "Kangaroo," and then we sailed to Aberdeen . The English didn't like it, they damn well knew what we did, we made no secret of it, but we had no crystal on board ... the good crystal had been smuggled to the Netherlands . That was a funny story. The crystal came from the RCA 10kW transmitter, the crystal had the shape of a dildo, and you can imagine where you had to use it. That makes it exciting and funny, we were laughing continuously. The English impounded us, with the aim to make it impossible for us to sail out, and at first they succeeded because the only thing that was faulty with us, was the fact that we had no rocket line ... and there was a shortage of fire extinguishers. So we bought everything on the spot. Don't forget that we had capital backing us at that time ... it was fairly easy to buy out and, still all laughing, we sailed out of the harbour, to great anger of the British.

Jelle Knot: It has been said that initially the Kangaroo Pioneering Company had a shareholder capital of one million guilders with Dirk de Groot as major shareholder. Who was that man?

Tim Thomason: Dirk de Groot was a capitalist. In those days he dealt in metal: the Mississippi Trade and Investment Company. The Kangaroo Company too belonged to him, he owned several companies; he

was my age, now 67, in those days around 40. He was adventurous, an honest man, very honest in every respect. He supported the idea of Capital Radio and he was ready to put a considerable amount of money on the table. My wife too, Berthe Beydals, had put the family fortune in it, and she lost it. I wasn't worth anything, I was only a broadcaster. A broadcaster and brains.

Jelle Knot: A special construction had been made to finance the whole enterprise. The International Broadcasting Society would pay a certain sum to the Liechtenstein enterprise. What about that? Was there already a shortage of money, even before the station came on the air on the May 1, 1970?

Tim Thomason: Yes, that's when we got an additional financial injection of Mister de Groot ... Not only him, for he represented a lot of people who were, we can't say too stupid, but still ... There are people who have money and want to invest it themselves. Mister de Groot was such a man, who liked to do it himself ... And while he was doing it very well, supporters, let's call them parasites, came to him saying: "Dirk, help me, I've too much money!" So he helped them out with their investments.

Jelle Knot: The Zeevaart, the later King David, with its weight of 359 tons, had only been used for coastal navigation to Scandinavia in parts of the North Sea and the Baltic Sea . Was the ship fit to ride the North Sea lying at anchor, where the sea is much rougher?

Tim Thomason: That's a good question. I'm not a seaman ... of course I have some experience; but not enough to say it as an old sea captain. I presume that the ship was large enough.

Jelle Knot: The ship was 43 meters long, 7 meters wide, with a draught of nearly 3 meters. For the antenna installation a very special construction had been chosen: a ring antenna, with all kinds of problems involved. It had to be folded, while sailing through the harbour, and so on. What was the advantage of this antenna, offshore? How is the polarization of such an antenna?

Tim Thomason: Remember that we were an idealistic group, not only in the sense of broadcasting our music ... I have to give a broad answer ... Our crew composition, for instance ... we had a mixture of men and women, we were in those days in favour of a mixed crew, half women, half men. That was one of our little breakthroughs. The ring antenna ... we had in our group of the International Broadcasters Society some BBC-engineers who were wildly enthusiastic about specific technical developments. The law in Europe stipulates ... they regulate who has the frequencies, they restrict that very strongly to avoid competition ... we said, that's all bullshit, that isn't really necessary, you can also have a city radio that can broadcast on low power with high quality, in FM or AM, technically spoken that can be very easy on very low power. Prove it, everybody says, well, we did it. The ring antenna had the following advantages: with an AM-broadcast you get nearly FM quality within a certain distance; quality was super, really good. We used a 10kW transmitter, but we used less than 1kW; energy saving, good broadcasting power, all possible thanks to the ring. The broadcasting radius was limited, I have to admit that. As you're on the high seas, however, that is no problem. Five kilometers off the coast of Noordwijk, we could easily cover a large part of Zeeland, Rotterdam , Den Haag up till Amsterdam , somewhat more north maybe. In that area reception was good. In England on the East Coast reception was good as well. That was from the high seas, however. If we had been on land, the limitations would have been far much greater. In political terms, though, that means that it would be interesting for a city such as Utrecht , for instance, to use a ring antenna with low power that could be covering the whole city.



King David on International Water: Freewave Archive

Jelle Knot: You could broadcast with only 500 milliWatt?

Tim Thomason: That is to say ... that has to be tested ... that was part of our message. We wanted to prove that a ring antenna, as developed by the BBC, could be made to work. Besides, there was the fact that both transmitters on 270 meter couldn't give interference, because the one was far away in the north of Norway, the other one the south, in Italy.

Jelle Knot: When things went wrong with the antenna ... why did they keep on trying to use that ring antenna over and over again? Why did they not just simply put up a normal mast on the ship?

Tim Thomason: The problems we experienced were not electronic problems. They purely were engineering problems: the ring was too slack, soft, or light, you name it. It had to be able to go up and down rigidly. That's where the problem was. The last time we went to sea, it went good, even during the storm. The initial structure was wrong.

Jelle Knot: So the idea was good and the realisation faulty. Now, let's go to the May 1, 1970. At that date, Capital Radio aired its test transmissions using some BBC World Service tapes. The station also used the well-known opening of Beethoven's Symphony Nr. 5 c-Moll Opus 67.

Tim Thomason: As I said before, we had BBC engineers ... I have no idea where the tapes came from. In respect to the Beethoven Symphony: don't forget, we felt like freedom fighters ... we had the impression that the whole world was against us. Well, Winston Churchill was such a fighter as well, and every Englishman knew the opening of this symphony: "ta-ta-ta-tam" was "V" in Morse code, with "V" standing for "Victory." It was used by the BBC in World War II and at the time it meant tremendously much for people. Today it doesn't mean anything, it has become just a little bit of Beethoven music ...

Jelle Knot: Initially, it was said there was no interference. Then the ship is offshore, broadcasting, and all of a sudden the PTT — the Dutch GPO — says that there is interference. Was this a political inspired move or was the station really interfering with other stations?

Tim Thomason: I don't know. The PTT never came to me with that story. And, we were always in official contact, with other broadcasting companies as well. Officially they were against us, but unofficially they had enormous respect for what our people did. The PTT never complained and there

has never been any serious interference, as far as I know.

Jelle Knot: Next to man, you said, there was an equal number of women forming the crew. Many people were skeptical about that innovation. Did it prove to be a good idea afterwards? I know the crew members had to sign a contract prohibiting sexual excesses, and so on ... but was it pleasant to have three men and three women on board instead of six males? Did these women perform typical gender-specific tasks, like making breakfast in the morning, washing the dishes, doing the laundry ...

Tim Thomason: Oh no, not at all. It was not gendered at all. Man and women were all doing the same things. All what the boys did was also done by the girls and vice versa. Tim Thomason: Oh yes, and they did! I have pictures of the girls working. There's even more to say about this topic. Have you ever noticed, in movies or TV, when there's a panic scene, that the men are always acting brave while the women go screaming? In reality, you will see nothing of the sort! If you ever have to live a disaster, take women with you! They stay cool; they know exactly what they have to do ... as in our case they did. We've noticed that on several occasions on the high seas. One time a man had a severe accident on the ship and the women took care of him. Meanwhile, one of my male officers ran downstairs, screaming, because he couldn't take it, he couldn't face the sight of blood, he couldn't handle the disaster, while we were busy talking in a helicopter above the foredeck in order to lower a man from the Sea King helicopter and to take the injured man from the ship. The women gave coffee, made soup and helped everyone, while the others were broadcasting. The women stayed cool. That's only one example, but they were always cool. When the ship was lying on the beach, the panic level also stayed low.

Jelle Knot: Each ship has to carry a flag of a particular country. By all means, how did you end up in Liechtenstein? That country is totally surrounded land: Switzerland, Germany and Austria. At its borders, there are neither seas, nor waterways at all. The MV "King David" was the first vessel ever to fly the country's flag. What was the reason for that and did it give way to any comic situations?

Tim Thomason: It has created enormously comic situations ... Mister de Groot who was our financial backer and we ourselves; we have always been a little bit pioneers. Now he's dead, but he knew the former Prince of Liechtenstein, and he asked him: "What do you think of putting a ship under the Liechtenstein flag?" and he said: "I have no objection, if you comply with all the laws of the other countries." These laws concern ship's safety, insurance; there are two large insurance companies: Lloyd's and the Scandinavian circuit. With that we had no problems as our ship was insured. So we got the permission to fly the Liechtenstein flag. It was decided over a cup of coffee and a joke.

Jelle Knot: At one stage, the ship sails out and there's no Liechtenstein flag. Then at once the Swiss flag is raised. Why did this happen?

Tim Thomason: That was because we couldn't find a Liechtenstein flag. That was an emergency situation for two or three days.

Jelle Knot: Were all crewmembers on board by definition also members of the Liechtenstein Navy?

Tim Thomason: We made it that way, because there is no Liechtenstein Navy. Everybody believed it, so it was OK.

Jelle Knot: There still is a picture of you as a Commander of the Liechtenstein Navy. It seems that Paul Harris, the author of the book *When pirates ruled the waves* also had a rank ...

Tim Thomason: Yes, Paul Harris was a Lieutenant Commander. We were showing off, because we were very suspicious of the other offshore stations. Radio Veronica was no problem, but Radio Noordzee was a unknown factor. I knew both owners, but there was a shady thing, and I didn't know what it was. I know one thing of the sea: if you're outside land, and you need help, you've got to help yourself. That's why we were armed, not heavily ... we had a German machine gun, some stenguns, pistols ... but we made a lot of fuzz about it, so much that when we finally was towed into IJmuiden harbour, the marechaussee — the Dutch State police — were awaiting us with a whole string of trucks. They thought that we had guns and cannons on board. We wanted to frighten our pirate colleagues. Now, I'm not talking about Bull Verweij and Radio Veronica, I mean Radio Noordzee and the others, who would gladly take over something if it was there for the taking. On sea, there's not much you can do against it. So, we took care to have some arms and more so to make some fuzz about it to make sure they would think twice before taking any action.

Jelle Knot: If I'm well informed, there were two stenguns, two machine rifles, a Browning machine gun and a number of nerve- gas bombs. The arms were taken on board when the ship was in IJmuiden harbour in September 1970 for repairs. The arms were mainly provided to deter others in case they had plans to take-over?

Tim Thomason: Absolutely, and the uniforms too.

Jelle Knot: Once, when the tender was in Scarborough , four Landrovers came on board. What was the joke behind those four Landrovers, or wasn't it a joke?

Tim Thomason: No, it was serious matters. We bought a double- deck bus in Aberdeen and we bought four Landrovers. We even had been negotiating with the British authorities, a British government institution that had gone bankrupt, to buy a fleet of trawlers. The reason was that we wanted to establish a program of developmental aid by means of radio in Colombia , off the coast of South America . We knew someone in Colombia , who wanted to make use of the radio for distant learning. I believed in the concept; I knew the man for many years and he knew me — we could cooperate very well. For a start, we had to show that we were serious about it. It never materialized, however. The project was enormous and the financial means were rather scarce. I bought four Landrovers; they were put on the deck of the tender "Kangaroo" ... to show the outside world that we were busy buying material so we could get some more funding.

Jelle Knot: To show that there was more to Capital Radio than an offshore radio station near Noordwijk?

Tim Thomason: Yes, that's right.

Jelle Knot: Capital Radio cultivated its own club of listeners, the "Vrienden Van Vrije Radio" — Friends of Free Radio. In his book Paul Harris wrote, that within one month the association already counted 5,000 members. Is that a fairy tale? And, is there more to say about the association?





MV Kan ger oo Photo Freewave Archive

Tim Thomason: I know it only from memories ... if Paul Harris says there were 5,000 members, OK, and then it's true. However, I don't think there were that many of them, but not much less either. The response of the Dutch listening public was enormous; if I remember well one had to pay five guilders to become member. There was no program magazine, no nonsense. There was just that one goal, to prove that we had as much support as possible so the Dutch government would not take any action against us. That was our greatest wish. We have had bad luck on the high seas, but the aim was to establish the kind of following Radio Veronica had.

Jelle Knot: Paul Harris played an important role in the events around the King David and Capital Radio ...

Tim Thomason: Yes, Paul Harris still was a young man; I didn't know him before we started, but I knew his book *When pirates ruled the waves*. I found it, I read it and I phoned him. It clicked almost instantly because his knowledge of the so-called piracy was huge, and my knowledge was nearly nil. I wasn't interested in pirate radio, I was interested in radio, free radio ... it's a matter of interpretation, of words. Paul Harris had the knowledge and he has given me a tremendous amount of tips and advice, but in the end I was the one who acquired the necessary equipment like the transmitter and I was the one who made the necessary supporting contacts all over Europe .

Jelle Knot: In those days, when one phoned Capital Radio in Bussum, it was very often Paul Harris who answered the call. What were his tasks in the Capital organisation?

Tim Thomason: At one stage the Capital Radio Project started employing people, girls for instance for the studio's here downstairs. When everything started running, Paul Harris joined my group at the service of the International Broadcasters Society; his salary wasn't high, mine wasn't high either, that's not the point, we worked together officially.

Jelle Knot: When you talk about the accident, then you are referring to Noordwijk, where the ship ran ashore. However, there were some other serious problems or incidents. When the ship sailed out for the first time, on April 25, 1970, there was a force eight gale. The ship had to return within a few hours with the aerial all twisted. On September 10, 1970, the ship again had to seek refuge, first in Zaandam and then in IJmuiden harbour for repairs for almost a whole month. There were also some personal accidents...

Tim Thomason: Oh yes, several ones. Two incidents concerned our third officer, Arie van der Bent; one time he fell out of the mast, when he was retuning the antenna; because of his weight the whole

thing collapsed, but there was also a more serious incident

Jelle Knot: That's the accident you referred to earlier when talking about the women keeping and cool and the men panicking...

Tim Thomason: Yes, in fact Van de Bent was a fisherman that was his profession. The man knew the sea, he could do welding work, and he was very good at it. He was one of the few guys who could go in such a saddle to do the job. I had long forgotten the story, because there were no real consequences. Yes, indeed, he slipped and fell ... The other time was far more serious. We went to sea with a very heavy anchor, our ship was 350 tons and we had bought an anchor with a chain for, let's say, a 10,000 tons ship. The thing was hanging on cables from the side of the ship; it was so heavy that the ship went over to one side. When we arrived at the spot where we intended to anchor the ship, we had to cut those cables to let the chain go down. Unfortunately one of the crew members, Van der Bent hadn't made his position clear to the others. They didn't know where he was on the deck. That chain ran back and forth and he had to stay out of that area. But he stood there and when the chain went down into the water, it hit his left foot and the foot was almost torn off. He wasn't dead, but it was extremely painful. That was the serious accident.

Jelle Knot: He was then taken off the ship by a navy helicopter to a hospital?

Tim Thomason: Yes. His foot was amputated there.

Jelle Knot: An important side to a commercial offshore radio station is the advertisers. Did you have many advertisers at the start?

Tim Thomason: Promises, yes ... but not very much real advertisers. We didn't need much, though, initially. Four advertisers for one hour would yield a lot of money and our salaries were low. Fuel in those days was very cheap ... believe it or not: one liter of diesel in those days only amounted to ten cents for us, on the high seas. So you can understand ... we only needed a small income. We hoped to establish something good by taking little steps at the time.

Jelle Knot: Each day, over a period of twelve months, I read that advertising at prime time amounted to a prize of only fl. 1,000 ... that is not a prohibitive sum at all.

Tim Thomason: Oh no, compared to our colleagues of Veronica ... we were nothing; we were asking throw-away prices. Again, idealism was the main driving force behind the whole project. Sure, we were out there to make money, but we were not that poised to have it all at once.

Jelle Knot: Let's go back to September 1, 1970. At that date the station had just officially started. Then the ring antenna breaks again. On September, 11, it is clear that the ship has to return to harbour for repairs. Next, the ship sails to Zaandam and there you get an official visitor: Mr Neuteboom. Tim Thomason: When we heard that name, we knew that something was wrong; he was the man of the Radio Controle Dienst, the Dutch Radio Detection Service.

Jelle Knot: He boarded the ship with his men, do you still remember that? What did he find there, and why did you leave the Zaandam harbour so secretly?

Tim Thomason: He found that some things weren't right at all and he said that he would make a report and that fitting measures would be taken. So we decided to leave in secret. The ship left Zaandam at 5 o'clock in the morning covertly, to use a German saying, "bei Nacht und Nebel." It's

only an anecdote, but I remember us sailing in the middle of the night. On board we had a cameraman of the NTS — the Official Dutch Television — and we were aware of the fact that there was a very large navy ship, I believe it could have been a minesweeper, in IJmuiden harbour ... seemingly it was not there for us, but somehow we were suspicious of it ... I asked the crew of our tender, the Kangaroo, to block out that navy ship when we should sail out ... that what I asked them, saying that everything must be done nicely, no arms, no threats ... You could hang a black ball halfway the mast, meaning that you were busy doing underwater activities. Other ships then wouldn't be allowed to come in your vicinity because there are people working under water. So I told the crew of the Kangaroo to go and lie in front of that minesweeper at the harbour entrance, to hang up the black ball and just sit there till we were back on the high seas. They sure weren't enthusiastic about it. They were all Dutchmen and they knew the laws. But they were prepared to do it. In IJmuiden, we repaired the damage, brought the weapons on board that we talked about and also the heavy-weight anchor and the chain that was to be the cause of the accident. Then we sailed out again ... in fact, it appeared to be a bona fide spot ... nobody associated us with Capital Radio. That's the whole story.

Jelle Knot: On October 10, Radio Capital was back on the air with its regular programmes. Only one month later, on November 10, 1970 things went wrong again. That's what you called Capital's bad day. What exactly did happen on that day?

Tim Thomason: Well, there was a powerful storm and the ship lost her anchor. There are some well-known pictures of the ship where you can see that ship had two anchor chains; in reality there was always one chain, because two chains twist and turn into each other, and that's not good. We had that very, very large chain of a very large freight ship and to my great surprise it broke during what I would call a hurricane, force-twelve if my memory serves me well. It was a heavy storm for two days, and during the storm that large chain with its bulgy links broke down. At that moment the ship was adrift, the engine was still in working order, but there was no rudder anymore. The rudder had gone and it wasn't our intention to sail as the ship was without any control. We could start the engine and go in circles, but we would have no control. They haven't done it, and here I return to the attitude of our crew ladies; the female crew stayed cool, you never know what could have happened. The ship easily could have capsized, you name it. The girls, however, stayed calm, made coffee and warned the men: "Stay calm, sit in the mess room and wait."

Jelle Knot: Were you still on the air at that time? Tim Thomason: Yes and no, we were on the air when we lost our anchor, but we stopped the transmissions as soon as we realized that they were within the borders of the three-mile zone.

Jelle Knot: The stories in the press saying that the ship ran aground as a result of sabotage of the engines, are totally unfounded? Tim Thomason: Yes, that's pure nonsense! The rudder had gone and so the ship couldn't sail properly.

Jelle Knot: When the ship had ran ashore on the beach at Noordwijk, several attempts were made to pull her loose. How did she in the end come loose rather quickly?

Tim Thomason: First of all, the MV "King David" was a small ship. Moreover, she was flat-bottomed and she was lying in the sand. You don't need a lot of power to pull a ship like that free under these conditions. There was no heavy damage ... Wijsmuller pulled us loose. One of the Wijsmuller brothers is an acquaintance of mine, and they pulled us loose quickly. In the end Wijsmuller impounded the ship. I was both shocked and amazed about this, because Wijsmuller had promised me personally not to impound the ship. The company's management, however, demanded that it was done. The world of

ship salvaging is a hard world. Wijsmuller already had set an example by taking the ships of Radio Caroline in 1968, because Caroline hadn't paid them for tendering. Both Caroline ships then were impounded too by Wijsmuller. At the time, I didn't know that ... I was amazed, because I had made an agreement with one of the Wijsmullers. Later on, he told me there was nothing he could do about it. The decision had been made by the management. He wasn't up against me. He just needed his money, his claim wasn't unreasonable, and if I had been in the position at that moment to come up with the requested sum of fl. 10,000 or fl. 15,000, we would have been set free.

Jelle Knot: There has also been an inquiry about Capital Radio's activities by the Officier van Justitie — the Public prosecutor — in The Hague ... Did this have any consequences?

Tim Thomason: I never heard of it. Indeed, there was an inquiry on the whereabouts of our weapons, but I haven't told them where they came from. The man of the Rijksrecherche — the Criminal Investigation Department — who was with me, here downstairs in the office, said: "You don't have to say nothing, and it's better to say nothing than to tell lies." He was curious about the weapons and how they came on board; he wanted to know if the weapons were boarded in the Netherlands, and I said: "No, they came from Belgium." They asked: "And how did it come on board?" "By ship," I said, "with another fishing trawler." He said "That's the way it's mostly done." And I said: "OK, that's good! I won't say anything anymore." I don't remember any details, it all happened a long time ago. I never told the police where the weapons really came from ... but I can tell you now ... there was a very well-known arms dealer in Amsterdam, nicknamed Pistolen Paultje — Pistols Paul. I got the weapons from him. He was a very nice guy with a good sense of humour!



Pistol Paul (middle) Archive Freewave

Jelle Knot: You couldn't acquire the necessary funds for Wijsmuller to let you have the ship again? A sum of fl. 15,000 is not that big for a fully equipped radio ship. Weren't there any financial backers left ready to pay such a relatively small sum?

Tim Thomason: I just made an estimation of the amount we would have had to pay Wijsmuller to release the MV King David. I guess that a sum somewhere between fl. 10,000 and fl. 15,000 would have been sufficient. I think that if we have had that sum at our disposal, Mr. Wijsmuller could have said to his fellow managing directors: "I can free the ship." But we were totally broke. Those Liechtenstein companies, or the company that backed us, already had paid us twice; in both cases they had come up with some ten thousands of guilders. From Mr. de Groot's point of view, it was a just and well-considered decision to say: "No, we don't go on like this." Maybe he had lost confidence in the whole enterprise after we had run ashore. I don't know it for sure, but it might be so. I myself don't think so, because we are still good friends, and every two months I see him here when he is over from Switzerland. As a good businessman, at a certain stage he's inclined to say: "Thus far, and

not any further." Probably we had reached that point, where he had to say: "OK, not a penny anymore, sorry!"

Jelle Knot: Do you have any idea what happened next to the ships of Radio Capital?

Tim Thomason: The MV "King David" was towed into IJmuiden , then to Amsterdam Noord. There I've stayed on board as long as I could. Nothing has been paid, there was no money anymore. At a certain stage the people who stayed on board and I left the ship and we lost sight of the ship. I have been told that she has been towed to the South of the Netherlands and was sold as scrap.

Jelle Knot: Yes, the MV King David was towed to the Betuwe in the province of Gelderland . There it was used as a provisional warehouse for a steel company. In 1972 the ship was auctioned and sold to a ship yard in Heerwaarden. The ship was then towed to where the rivers Maas and Waal cross each other. In 1981 a new shed was built on the wharf, and the ship was moved to another mooring between the villages of Heerwaarden and Kerkdriel where the remainder of the hull was filled with concrete and used as the base for a floating pier. In 1984 the hull was sunk in seven metres of water and is used by a local diving club for practicing under water swimming. Do you still have memorabilia of those days? We talked about uniforms?

Tim Thomason: We're talking about things that happened many years ago ... and you ask for uniforms of the Napoleonic era ... I don't know, the flag has gone, one of my children has inherited it years ago ... but uniforms: thick jackets and so don't fit me. Why should I walk around in a captain's or commander's uniform? The caps are gone, I lost one cap in Thailand , I still have the other one, that's a relic ... it's a beret.

Jelle Knot: We are now living more than thirty years later and now you're in your late sixties. Have you been involved in radio since the Capital days?

Tim Thomason: No, it has cost me years to overcome the shock and the loss of the station. I put a considerable amount of love and energy in my career and later on in Capital Radio. It was an huge disillusion to see that it was all lost.

Jelle Knot: Do you have a message for all people who listened to free radio and who in the past also listened to your Capital Radio?

Tim Thomason: The only message I have for whoever it might be, is that if you strongly believe in something, for instance in free communication, in free radio: "Keep it up, carry on, because those people who are not in favour of free radio — and sadly enough that's about ninety percent of the population — those people are just too idle to fight for their rights, they won't do anything, so keep on!"

Another sad message came from China :

Dear Hans, It is with deep regret that I have to inform you that Fergus Penman was found dead at his apartment on October 4th 2008 at around 3pm. He had been working for me in Tianjin China since June 1st this year where he was embarking on yet another new adventure. Mr. Penman was one of my most respected teachers and had already made a string of friends and colleagues that will miss him. The cause of death has as yet not been confirmed only to say that there was no evidence of foul play



and that he died peacefully while sleeping. My deepest sympathy and regret go out to his family and his daughter Valery. I personally will miss him as both a colleague and a friend. Thank you, yours sincerely, John Savage, Heping Director of Studies English First, Tianjin China



Fergie McNeal in Caroline studio. Photo: Leen Vin ger ling

The mentioned Fergus Penman and I were in contact for many years and he was one of the Caroline deejays in the second part of the eighties under the name Fergie McNeal. Just some six weeks ago he wrote me how happy he was since he went to work in China . Before that he worked for a school in Thailand . It's not yet known when his body will come to Europe . It will be either buried in England or Holland . Fergus became 51 years of age.

From Radio Netherlands the next report: 'Struggling UK broadcaster Big L announced on air this morning that it is to become part of a "newly formed company." The name of the new company was not disclosed, but it was described as one which is expanding, and appears to involve a group that currently holds FM licences in the UK . Details of what exactly will happen, and when, are still sketchy, but presenter Mike Read said that some Big L programmes will be on FM (Cheltenham, Gloucester and Swindon were mentioned), and the plan is to "build up the brand". Big L will make use of a new studio facility currently under construction (location unknown), but some programmes will continue to come from the station's present studio in Frinton-on-Sea. The station may reappear on Sky channel 0190, but if this is no lon ger possible there is another Sky channel that will become available in January. No decision has been made about the future of 1395 kHz, but that remains an option. The station has so far not issued an official statement.

(Source: Mike Read show on Big L).

Then we go back to the Anorak term. Who came up with the idea to use the name, I once told who it was in an older report and Ron Murch is reflecting on it: 'Just been reading your story on the term 'anoraks' and how it belongs to the history of offshore radio. I would disagree with your comment that "During the 1970s there were hundreds of 'wankers', gluing themselves to their radios", surely this should be 1960's! By 1970, all the offshore stations had closed down, with only the newly opened RNI braving the North Sea, broadcasting from some 12 miles out, 9 miles outside British Territorial Waters - way to far for the boatloads of anoraks who would have technically had to have required passports to travel so far out to sea. Although the RNI signal was illegally jammed by the UK Labour government, it was possible to minimise the effect by changing the orientation of your radio, or running a mains lead over it. For the 1970 General Election, RNI, in agreement with Radio Caroline, renamed itself Radio Caroline International, pushing for changes in UK legislation. It's uncanny, but on that night I had been DJ'ing at a 21st Birthday party, where I played Man of Action segued into The For tunes Caroline, and made a comment about how good it would be to have Caroline back. Then on the way home from the gig, RNI announced their name change. Regards, Ron Murch'.

Hi Ron and thanks for your comments. Of course Free Radio Fans where there in the sixties but the word 'Anorak' really was used for the very first time when a boat with wankers was near the Mi Amigo. Most had Anoraks as a coat whereby Andy Archer made for the first time the comment that there were Anoraks nearby. Ron can be heard on the radio:

Wednesday evening - The Midweek Music Mix - 6-8pm (UK) - CRMK Online - [www.crmk.co.uk](http://www.crmk.co.uk) - From the heart of the universe to the ears of the world.

The answer given by me, was also send by email to him and he came back with: 'You certainly are a prolific writer, and very informative too. Personally I credit UK offshore radio with giving us the radio we have today. I'm not too sure if that's a good thing or not though:) I heard the story years ago as an anecdote, and read it recently on a site here in the UK . Googling the terms "Anorak" and "Wankers" led me to <http://www.offshore-radio.de/HansKnot/may2005b.htm>, where I found your e-mail address.

Your answer mentions Andy Archer and the Mi Amigo. As I recall, that was the name of the Caroline South ship, RNI's vessel was sarcastically named after the Labour governments Marine Etc Broadcasting Offences Act - MEBO II. Radio Caroline, last of the original offshore stations ceased broadcasting in 1968, and it was not until 1970 that RNI began transmissions to the UK . RNI was to far outside territorial waters for 'day-trippers', hence my query over the decade. Regardless of the date, it is still a good story. As a side note, I was actually in a BBC Radio 2 studio on the night of Saturday, 15 May 1971 when news broke of the attempted bombing of RNI and the BBC relayed the Mayday message, probably the first time the BBC carried a broadcast from any of the offshore stations. Regards, Ron'

Mary Payne asked me to give as much publicity to a question she got from the BBC, so here we go:

'I'm producing a series for BBC Radio 2 called 'Wish You Were There?' taking four musicians back to a gig in history they would have loved to have been at. For one of my programmes Cerys Matthews is going back to the '1967 Stax Revue Tour' at the Finsbury Park Astoria, recently released by Concord as 'Otis in London and Paris'. The idea of the programme is to speak to as many people who might have been present that night, or who were involved in the scene, so as to collect stories to build a picture of what the night would have been like, and, why it was important in musical and social history. Would you know if anyone who was broadcasting on Radio London in 1967 covered the gig during a show, or who may have been a fan and went along to that gig? I'd be grateful with for any help you can offer, Kind Regards, Gemma.'

So if you were there on that gig don't hesitate to mention it to [HKnot@home.nl](mailto:HKnot@home.nl) Certainly the e mail will be forwarded to the BBC.

Next person is on search for a magazine or a copy of a magazine: 'Dear Hans, Yesterday evening, when trying to find some definite information on the status and future plans for the 1395 transmitter, I thought I'd try your web site. I didn't find any news about Big L (presumably because there isn't any!) but was amazed at the extent of your September newsletter! There was a lot of information I was unaware of. Someone queried the availability of a free radio magazine (I think it was 'Wavelength') so I wonder if you know where I can get hold of a copy of 'Script no. 3.' About nine years ago someone came to see me, discovered I had the above magazine and asked me if he could photocopy it and promised he would return it - that's the last I saw of it! When I queried it he said he thought his wife must have accidentally thrown it away! I'd also like to obtain 'Scripts 1/2' but I'm particularly interested in no. 3 as it includes a good comprehensive report of the Caroline mutiny of 28/12/72 plus some good photographs of the towing operation. If you can help I'd be very grateful and if you have any news on the 1395 position that would be a bonus! With very best wishes, Ian Godfrey.'

Well Ian the Big L info was earlier on in this issue of the report. I hope someone can help you with copies of the requested issues, so if anyone can make copies please inform me at and I'll forward the info.

More request time from England . Former Caroline deejay from the eighties Dave Windsor, who's now working already for years at BFBS, with a special search for songs: 'I wonder if you can help me with the last few songs I am seeking to complete my collection of Dutch/Eurosongs. These are: 'ZOVEEL' from the Belgium Group 'Elegasten'; 'P.S. I LOVE YOU' from Macduffs Dimension; 'Huil maar niet kleine meid' from Ciska Peters; 'Surprise surprise' solo single from Mac Kisson and an LP track from 1975 from Rob de Nijs called 'Zo vaak'. Also I love to have the song played by Gerard Smit on August 31<sup>st</sup> 1974 when he said forever goodbye to his listeners. I don't know the title. Thanks a lot and many greetings from Dave Windsor.'

Well maybe Gerard, who is also a reader of the report, can help with the title. Anyone who has a song wanted please send the mp3 to Dave Windsor at: [Dave.Windsor@bfbs.com](mailto:Dave.Windsor@bfbs.com)

Then from France we have Paul Ciesielkski: 'Tell me, Hans, have you some news on the wreck of the MI AMIGO! At the last meeting in Calais ; I heard a rumour: maybe, this wreck could be refloated, or extract off the sandbank, this operation could be directed by a Dutch enterprise?'

Well Paul if you go to [www.hansknot.com](http://www.hansknot.com) you'll find the old editions of the Hans Knot International Radio Reports. The latest issue is first and at the end of that report you can click to the older edition(s). In the September issue there is information about the diving to the Mi Amigo including the sonar photograph.

But Paul has more: 'I've read your rapport, and I've seen a article on model radio ships. Please, see on [www.luc.de.groot.com](http://www.luc.de.groot.com) ,and, you could see many photos of a big model, that I've realised in2007, for Calais ' meeting  
Many greetings. Paul Ciesielski.'



**Radioday 2008**  
This year's main topic: **8th. November**  
**Radio Caroline in the late seventies**  
**1977-1980**  
In: Hotel CASA 400, J.Wattstraat 75, Amsterdam  
10.30 AM- 5 PM CET - Admission € 12,50  
Information: Stichting Media Communicatie,  
PO Box 53121, 1007 RC Amsterdam, The  
Netherlands. E-mail: [rob@mediacommunicatie.nl](mailto:rob@mediacommunicatie.nl)

Nickname time and first we have Brendon 'Brenge' Powder on Radio 270 and in 1979 Steve 'G I A' Gordon on Radio Caroline. Well that's all we have this time. Hope to see a lot of you on November the 8<sup>th</sup>. I know that there will be coming people from America , France , Germany , Belgium , Scotland , Ireland , Scandinavia and even from Holland . Surprises are always there so see on [www.offshore-radio.de](http://www.offshore-radio.de) for more info on the 30<sup>th</sup> year in a row for the annual Radio Day in Amsterdam .

Till next time all the best, Hans Knot