

# RADIO PIRATES: STORMS AHEAD



*Top: Radio Caroline has a well-equipped control room*

*Above: Caroline at anchor 3½ miles off Frinton. Coverage is better than expected, but the crew still have to face a winter at sea*

*A man-made TV island is the latest phase in the battle of the air waves. But it could prove the pirates' undoing. Report by John Parkyn*

One of Holland's most popular tourist attractions during the summer was a boat trip to see the world's first pirate television station.

Using the call-sign "TV Noordzee", the station operates from a man-made island five miles off the Dutch coast. At the time of the tourist trips, it was still being built. Now it is on the air—and threatening to blow the pirate broadcasting controversy straight back into the headlines.

Whatever one's views on this 20th-century brand of buccaneering may be, TV Noordzee stands as a remarkable tribute to engineering ingenuity.

Similar in design to the rigs used for drilling oil at sea, it was built in less than eight weeks. Six stilts, each 75 ft long, were driven into the sea bed. A concrete platform was placed on top, and on the platform a two-storey building. This houses the 200 ft transmitting mast and control rooms, and also provides accommodation for a colony of ten residents—engineers, maintenance men and cooks.

After a short trial period of two weeks, Noordzee began regular broadcasts on Sep. 1. It had been a race against time. The station's backers were determined to get on the air before any parliamentary debates on the island's future could take place. In this way, they hoped that their programmes, a shrewd mixture of comedy, music, thrillers and Westerns, would prove so popular with Dutch viewers that the Government would be chary of taking hasty action.

To some extent, these hopes seem to have been fulfilled.

The first weeks of transmission have proved devastatingly effective. Programmes, taped in advance in an Amsterdam studio and delivered to the island by tender, have built up big audiences in the thickly-populated western region of the Netherlands.

A wealthy Rotterdam shipbuilder, Cor Verolme, is backing the project. He looks upon the island as a hobby, but objects to the term pirate on the grounds that his real intention is to speed up the introduction of commercial television in Holland. "If my only aim was money, I would use the island as a casino," he says. Verolme claims that recent polls show 80 per cent of the Dutch population is in favour of his station, and argues that the Government can do nothing against him without violating the constitution and international law.

But the Dutch Minister of Justice, Ynso Scholten, believes that the island has created an entirely new situation not

provided for in international law at all. It is unacceptable, he told newspapermen recently, that a government should allow private citizens to set up installations at sea where they could conceivably carry on all sorts of activities without regard to any kind of law and order.

Verolme reacted quickly to Scholten's statement by sending representatives—nicknamed ambassadors in the Dutch press, which has been having a field day over the whole affair—to see the Minister. They promised that any criminals who sought refuge on the island would be returned to the mainland immediately.

This offer Scholten coldly rejected, saying that he could not conclude extradition treaties with private organisations. Now Noordzee supporters are saying that what really concerns the Government is the protection of Holland's present state-owned radio and TV set-up. For years the authorities have fought a losing battle with Radio Veronica, whose offshore pop music programmes served as a model for Britain's Radio Caroline. Now, the prospect of pirate sound being reinforced by pirate pictures seems to have given the Government fresh impetus.

This week, the Dutch Senate debates a controversial Bill which has already gained the approval of the House of Representatives.

In the Bill, the Government asks for powers to enforce Dutch law on installations built on the bottom of the North Sea at points nearer to Holland than neighbouring coastal countries, such as Britain, Belgium and Germany.

The implication is clear: unless Noordzee ceases transmissions, the Dutch staff may find themselves being invaded by a contingent of the Royal Dutch Navy.

Perhaps what matters most is that Noordzee seems to have brought the pirate broadcasting controversy to a head. The Dutch are not alone in their concern. In Strasbourg, a special committee set up by the Council of Europe is solemnly debating the same subject.

Britain heads their list of countries who are currently enjoying—or suffering from—a surfeit of unauthorised pop music.

There are now three pirates operating off British coasts. Radio Caroline South, three-and-a-half miles off Frinton, can be received by some 19 million people in London and Southern England. Caroline North, anchored three-and-a-half miles off Ramsey, Isle of Man, can be heard by 21 million in the crowded industrial regions of the Midlands and North.

Radio Invicta, a latecomer operating from a disused Ministry of Defence fortress eight miles off Whitstable, has a smaller range, but claims high listening figures in East Anglia and the Home Counties.

Just how the Council of Europe will propose to deal with the errant pop music men is not known, but it is unlikely that there will be an attempt to extend the limit of territorial waters.

Nor would this seem necessary. By mak-



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*Top: Food, fuel and the latest batch of taped programmes are hoisted aboard TV Noordzee.*

*Above: Noordzee, seen from the vessel "Bolocan", which makes a daily call from Scheveningen*

ing it an offence for agencies to place advertising with unauthorised broadcasting stations, the pirates could be sunk without trace. Alternatively, legislation could be introduced forbidding supply of food and fuel to the ships.

Ironically, the fact that so much high-powered time and energy is being devoted to rounding-up the pirates is mainly due to the success which they have had with the listening public.

It is only eight months since Radio Caroline began regular broadcasts to the South of England. Now, with its sister ship in the North, it claims a peak-time audience of four million, representing 10 per cent of the 40 million people who live within reach of the two Caroline transmitters.

Advertising, slow to come in at first, has picked up. Average monthly revenue for the two ships exceeds £50,000.

Rates are low compared with most legitimate commercial stations. A 60-second commercial at peak-time on Caroline South costs £120, dropping, according to time and length, to £10 for a seven-second spot between 6 a.m. and 7 a.m.

Rates for the Northern ship are lower by about a third, although the audience claimed is slightly bigger.

Both ships are well equipped. As well as a crew of ten—large enough, when you remember that the vessels are permanently anchored—each ship carries a team of three radio engineers and three disc jockeys. All personnel work on a two weeks on/one week off arrangement, journeying between ship and shore on the tenders which deliver supplies.

At Caroline House, in Mayfair, the company's land-based staff take pains to present a respectable front. Broadcasting fees are regularly paid in to the Performing Rights Society. Only six minutes advertising an hour is allowed, and the company's rate card states that all commercials must comply with the British Code of Advertising Practice.

Despite their present success, few of the pirates believe they will be allowed to operate much longer. The men who run Caroline have always maintained that their chief objective was to stake an early claim to a share in Britain's proposed commercial radio network.

This, of course, was before the General Election. Now, with Labour back in power, commercial radio seems further away than ever.

The pirates face other problems, too. Winter lies ahead. The prospect of putting out programmes from a 750-tonner in a North Sea gale is hardly attractive.

One can imagine the agonies of a disc jockey feeling twinges of *mal de mer* while desperately trying to announce the latest disc by Lulu and the Lovers. And the problem of how to prevent the stylus from sliding across the record as the ship pitches has still not been solved.

After their long hot summer, the pirates of the air waves may be facing a bleak winter. TT

## Yet another pirate radio station

Radio Caroline, the pirate radio station off Felixstowe, Suffolk, will soon be joined by another. Radio Atlanta, which expected to take up station off East Anglia in the next few weeks, although a spokesman for the company declined to give a firm date.

It is learnt yesterday that Radio Caroline is being received in Holland much more clearly than Radio Veronica—that other pirate radio ship moored in international waters off North Holland. Radio Veronica is said to have a 92 per cent coverage of Dutch listeners.

Aboard the Caroline yesterday, the man in charge of programming denied that there was any interference with official radio channels. "We would be the last to endanger life—in fact, our main transmitter is available for help in an emergency. All we want to do is entertain people."

Radio Caroline is now known to have taken up her station prematurely. She was forced to get on the air as soon as possible by the threatened rivalry of Radio Atlanta. When the spokesman for Radio Atlanta was questioned as to whether an all-out advertising war would develop, he declined to comment.

"Radio Atlanta's programme will offer something quite new in radio entertainment, but the full details are not for release at the moment," he said.

## "PIRATE RADIO" IN ACTION

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT

FELIXSTOWE, MARCH 29

A transmitting station called Radio Caroline began working this weekend off Felixstowe, Suffolk.

Although the motor vessel Caroline, from which it operates, can be seen from the beach, she is immune from British law so long as she remains beyond the territorial limits. A senior Post Office official said today that the matter was "up to the Council of Ministers in Europe".

Radio Caroline started broadcasting yesterday at the bottom of the medium waveband on 199 metres and closed down at 6 p.m. It resumed at 6 a.m. today and it is understood that it will continue daily with a 12-hour non-stop programme of popular and light music.

The Post Office said last night that the tests had been causing "fairly serious" disruption of the North Foreland radio station's ship-to-shore communications. This station, sited off Margate and Broadstairs, Kent, serves ships in the Strait of Dover and the Thames estuary. Mr. L. Perrin, press officer for Radio Caroline, said they would investigate the complaint and take any action necessary.

Mr. R. O'Rahilly, who is responsible for Radio Caroline, said on Saturday that he had heard the broadcasts clearly in Chancery Lane, E.C., with the help of a transistor radio. Asked about a recent statement by Mr. Bevens, Postmaster General, that broadcasts would contravene international regulations and endanger agreements on sharing radio frequencies, he said: "We are not contravening any international regulations."

March 29 1964



RADIO CITY Broadcasting on 299 and 188 metres.

7 Denmark Street,  
London, W.C.2.

TEMple Bar 6303

The Beginnings of Radio City

Early in May 1964 Screamin' Lord Sutch suggested to Mr. Reginald Calvert that they should start a "Pop" Radio Station. Mr. Calvert's comment was "Are you mad!" and the answer - "No!" ..... so on 16th May a boat set sail from Westminster Bridge flying the Radio Sutch pennant with music blaring. They were chased down the Thames and finished up outside the three mile limit. When night fell, hostilities ceased and the disused Forts were spotted and marked as the most suitable base for future operations. On May 18th Screamin' Lord Sutch and His Savages took over one of the Forts and continued to broadcast from there for many months. It was during the General Election that followed that the name of the station was changed to RADIO CITY.

So RADIO CITY was firmly established in a Fort on the Shivering Sands, nine miles off Whitstable, Kent. This Station has the smallest staff of any of the Pirate Radio Stations, the whole of operations being controlled by Mr. Calvert.

Approximately 500 letters are received every week asking for requests etc. and these are dealt with at one or other of the two offices - c/o Record Centre, Oxford Street, Whitstable, or 7 Denmark Street, London W.C.2. Photographs of the Station and the Disc-Jockeys are available, also car Stickers, Posters etc. Photographs 1/6d. each.

The Tower from which programmes are broadcast is some 140' above sea level and the following is a rough idea of the set-up there :

- 1st Stage - Supply Wynch, Spares, Toilets, Diesel generators.
- 2nd Stage - Studio with turn-tables, tape recording equipment. Transmitters and electrical equipment. Several thousand records and tapes.  
Staff quarters, kitchen and Stores.

The following equipment is used in the operation of RADIO CITY - G.E.C., Cossor, Geloso, Ferrograph and Garrard. Transmission is from 7 am to 7 pm every day and programmes also include Religious and Cultural Broadcasts.

RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL BROADCASTS

299 metres and 188 metres

Radio City (London)  
7 Denmark Street,  
London W.C.2.

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VOICE OF PROPHECY	Monday - Friday	9.00 - 9.30 am
	Monday - Saturday	6.30 - 7.00 pm
	Sunday	7.00 - 7.30 pm
A.A. ALLEN REVIVAL HOUR	Monday - Saturday	6.00 - 6.30 pm
WINGS OF HEALING	Sunday	5.00 - 5.30 pm
OLD FASHIONED REVIVAL HOUR	Sunday	6.00 - 6.30 pm
RADIO BIBLE CLASS	Sunday	6.30 - 7.00 pm
YOUR RADIO DOCTOR	Monday, Wednesday, Friday	11.00 - 11.15 am

PLEASE DON'T FORGET THAT THE ONLY WAY WE CAN GIVE ENCOURAGEMENT AND INSPIRATION TO OUR AMERICAN FRIENDS IS BY SENDING THEM YOUR LETTERS ABOUT THE BROADCASTS. WE HOPE TO HEAR FROM YOU VERY SOON.

Yours in Truth,

Reginald Calvert



# RADIO CITY

**299** MEDIUM WAVE



200 300 400 500

LISTEN TO YOUR FRIENDLY HOST  
ON THE BRITISH COAST  
7am till 7pm

7, Denmark Street, London W.C.2.

RADIO STATION **K-I-N-G**

236 metres Medium Wave

L  
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D  
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N

OXFORD HOUSE  
FOLKESTONE, KENT

TELEPHONE: 51666

Dear *Mu Stroud*,

Very many thanks for writing, we on King Radio appreciate this very much. Your correspondence has been passed to the department concerned and will be dealt with by them as soon as possible.

We should be very pleased to hear from you again, with your comments on the programme, D. Js., type of music you most want to hear, and a dedication from you to someone of your choice, which we will play, when you want, if we are given enough time - i.e., 2 weeks in advance.

Car Stickers are enclosed, would you please hand them to your friends, letting us know the number you have given them, the Registration number of their car, and their name and address, the reason for this is a lucky number competition, which we will run each week, the stickers are numbered on the back. The Station will give out over the air what exactly it is all about. Listen to 236 metres on the medium wave.

Tell your friends to write for Car Stickers now.

Kindest regards from all on King Radio.

Yours sincerely,

*Virginia Berkeley*



**RADIO CITY 299**

7 a.m.  
to  
7 p.m.

RADIO CITY · 7 DENMARK STREET · LONDON · W.C.2.

WONDERFUL  
**RADIO LONDON**  
BIG L CLUB

**266**

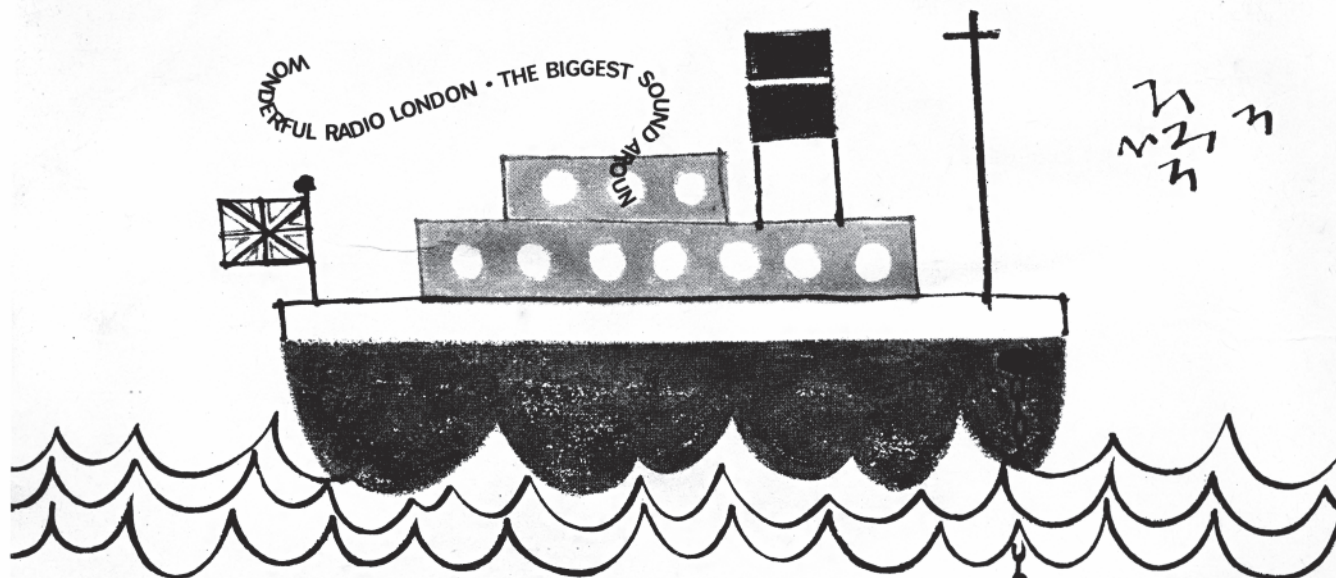
WONDERFUL  
**RADIO LONDON CLUB**

**266**

**BIG L** on **266**



# IT'S FUNNY. THAT'S WHY



## A RAVE look at the popular pirate pop ship — RADIO LONDON

It's an escape, a laugh, a refreshing breeze blowing in from the sea. A pop pirate radio station from an old ship that once saved the lives of five hundred men, onto which someone has put a mast (sixteen feet higher than Nelson's Column) and eight disc jockeys.

It broadcasts on 266 metres medium wave band, and successfully combines pop with humour and "a couldn't care less" attitude.

### Strange Voices

Broadcasting time (from 6 a.m. till 9 p.m.) is filled with apt and funny comments, pop music, and carefully planned ads that don't bore.

There are strange little voices that keep piping up to interrupt announcements, and crazy comments from disc jockeys, some of whom even insist on singing along with records!

The ship itself is quite small and rocks about off the east coast of England (Radio London is mostly received in the South of England area.) Twenty-five years ago she had another name and did another job. She was called *The Density* and she

was a wartime minesweeper: responsible for saving five hundred men from drowning—following shipwrecks in the icy North Sea.

After the war, she became a cargo vessel and it wasn't till last year in Miami that her cargo was unloaded for the last time. She returned to the North Sea to be called Radio London and welcome her eight new disc jockeys.

Who decided on the form Radio London was to take? Mr. Toney, one of the men behind Radio London, explains, "I did mostly, I've had a lot of experience on American networks where the programme formula is kept simple. So I decided to do the same on London. I called each programme after a disc jockey. Since his name was given to the show, it followed that his personality should be used to the full on that show. Each show lasts three hours, and every record in the top forty has to be played at least once. Also played are new Radio London climbers, and older 'revived forty-fives'. As long as the dee-jays follow this pattern, they can talk out of the back of their necks for the rest of the air time. I don't care."

That's the fun. The big bosses at head office don't wave any sticks. And often the

disc jockeys do tend to talk out of the back of their necks, which is quite marvellous to listen to. Kenny and Cash are especially funny. These two young men Kenny Everett (twenty years old) and Dave Cash (twenty-two years old) are slick comics. Their show, the Kenny and Cash Combine, is funny and fast. They have a terrific sense of timing, and a patter that seems to roll off their tongues.

### Tuned In

Listeners usually hear when Kenny goes to his bunk in the early hours of the next day, because Pete Brady, on The Breakfast Show, announces it.

Despite much planning and some spontaneous gestures, things do go wrong on Radio London.

"So here is the next record," the dee-jay says and absolutely nothing happens. But he doesn't cough and fill the gap with a tense silence, or pretend nothing has happened and repeat the announcement hopefully. He plays on the fact that something has gone wrong. He may criticise the whole station, or say terrible things about the engineer, or put in a quick ad for another dee-jay post. He makes the listeners feel like friends.

Sometimes strange voices

come from the radio when tuned to 266. Two little girls keep popping in to say an overdone cheerful "Good afternoon!" Dee-jay Tony Windsor, an Australian, has a catch word, "Ha—lo." If he wants to greet a listener or a pop star he says, "Ha—lo, to you," and it is special and private and strangely warm.

The news "On The Half-Hour," on the other hand, is authoritative and quite without humour.

The weather forecast is not quite so serious. Factually correct, it is jazzed up by an echo chamber through which the reporter's voice comes. In winter you might hear, "and there will be SNOW . . . OW . . . OW." Which adds humour to an otherwise sane piece of information.

Radio London, combines magically, the crazy with the reliable. It is the most listened-to piece of marconi in its area. Why? It must be the humour, the arguments, and the mistakes that are delightfully turned into jokes. It is slick, it plays good straight pop, and it's funny. Maybe, that's its real secret. It's nice to be gay all the time.

BY DAWN JAMES







Estuary Radio Ltd.  
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Folkestone, Kent

Sales Organisation  
Allbeury Coombs & Partners  
35a Bessborough Place  
London S.W.1  
Telephone: Victoria 0412

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## 'EVE' Woman's magazine of the air

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### The Station

Latest type RCA transmitter, 35 kw output. Location - Red Sands Fort, outside territorial waters off Whitstable. (One of the Maunsell Forts, built for coastal defence in the last war). The aerial is 200 ft high on a 90 ft base, (effectively 290 ft). Primary signal area of 150 miles radius includes Hull, Nottingham, Birmingham, Bristol, Bournemouth. This covers 26 million potential listeners. Fringe areas are getting more than satisfactory reception.

### Wave Length

390 metres, medium wave.

### Broadcasting Hours

From 6.30 a.m. to midnight.

### Programmes

Complete break-away in both content and presentation from current commercial radio pattern. Main day-time aim is to please housewife audience. From 9.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. week-day presentation is "EVE" - the Woman's Magazine of the Air". Mainly tuneful music made up of the best standards, music from films and shows, records by the top performers of today and yesterday. There will be very little pop music, except in a special format. Features of interest to women are always being planned.

The above covers the types of programmes we have broadcast so far. You will have heard, we are sure, the fantastically popular serial of the air - DR. PAUL, and you should listen, too, for the FAMILY DOCTOR 390 five minute series each day from 10.30 - 10.35.

Almost every week we organise an EVE "easy-to-win" competition, for which there is never an entrance fee, and for which there are hundreds of prizes,

We particularly draw your attention, too, to the many offers of samples, catalogues, etc., made by our advertisers, no less than the competitions sponsored by them.

Above all, do please remember that RADIO 390 is YOUR station.

At all times we want to hear from you - your likes, dislikes, your suggestions, your requests for special plays of favourite records.

— Thank you for your interest.





Estuary Radio Ltd.  
14 Bouverie Square  
Folkestone, Kent

Sales Organisation  
Allbeury Coombs & Partners  
35a Bessborough Place  
London S.W.1  
Telephone: Victoria 0412

Thank you so much for writing to us.  
Letters have poured in from the first day  
so I hope you'll forgive me for not being  
able to reply to them individually.

We are hoping to play all listeners'  
requests and we shall shortly be putting  
on an extra hour of requests in the  
evening.

Many thanks for your encouragement  
it really does mean a lot to us.

Love from us all,

Ted Allbeury  
Managing Director  
Radio 390.