

LIFE ABOARD A PIRATE SHIP

First day of a Sketch series about the Defiant Ones, afloat in a world of pop

by **DERMOT PURGAVIE**

WHO HAS JUST SHARED LIFE WITH THE CREW ABOARD RADIO CAROLINE

AT ABOUT the time Robbie Dale is getting up and thinking of his breakfast, Dave Lee Travis will be having supper before going to bed. For you it's almost lunchtime . . . the clock shows 12 noon.

Robbie and Dave live in a timeless world. They are floating disc jockeys, whose only outside contact is the tender that butts out from the mainland once a day.

Racy

The tender carries supplies, newspapers, mail from the fans—they call them "pun-ners"—and, of course, the newest record releases.

The shows hosted by Robbie and Dave and their brother jockeys are urgent and racy, irreverent—"We send each other up rotten"—and so highly personalised that they are daily submerged by letters of loyalty and affection.

The shows are also lined with ads., sold for an average of £120 a minute.

Seven disc jockeys operate Caroline South, anchored off Felixstowe, Suffolk. They are a hip bunch with mid-Atlantic accents, who wear suitably swinging clothes in the sort of colours you find inside chocolates.

Twit

"Everyone here is very sincere about it," says head disc jockey Dave Travis. "We all believe we are involved in a cause which is worthwhile and in the public interest."

Others seem to agree.

One hundred and twenty eskimos at Baker's Lake in the Yukon think Harold Wilson is the igloo equivalent of a rotten old fuddy duddy twit. Along with about 12 million others they are addicts of Radio Caroline, now threatened with closure by the Government.

Defiant and laden with records and their primary lubricant, Coca Cola, the network's two transmission ships rock at anchor a tantalising half-mile out of reach of the British courts.

Mr. Ronan O'Rahilly, Caroline's founder, who is Irish and therefore lyrical, says they are the last stand of individualism in a world of monopolies. The Prime Minister and Postmaster General say they are impertinent intruders and propose to fire off some legislative torpedoes later this year.

Mr. O'Rahilly is equally determined to stay afloat.

Still in his middle twenties, Mr. O'Rahilly is an impressive leader. He says he's a natural rebel like his grandfather, who was killed charging an English machine gun post outside Dublin Post Office during the Easter Rising.

He started his own Easter Rising. He opened the first pirate station on Easter Sunday, 1964.

He admits now that the odds of it succeeding were 1,000 to one against, but he soon found an eager audience.

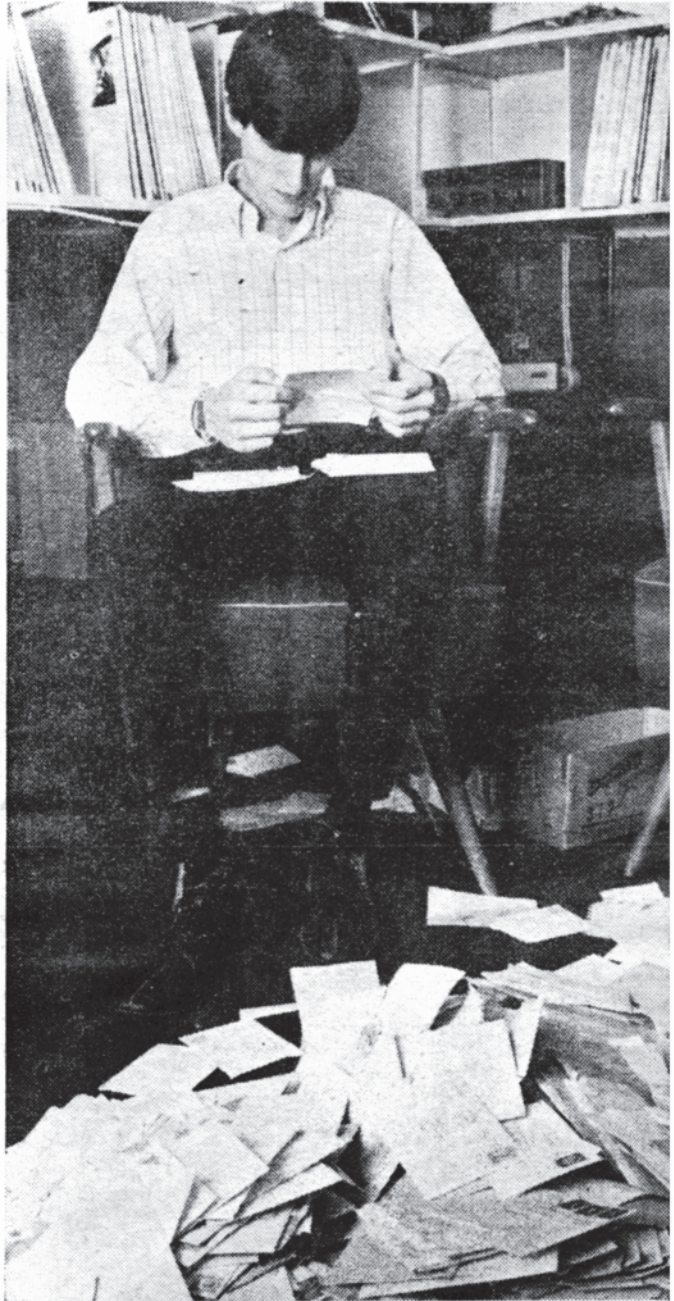
The influence of Caroline is even credited with helping to lose Patrick Gordon Walker an 8,000 majority and a chance of returning to the Commons in 1965. A pressure group campaigned against him with the slogan: "Don't vote Labour—they're going to kill Caroline."

Abroad

Well, so far they haven't. But when the Marine Offences Bill becomes law they'll try.

"Then," says O'Rahilly, "we may have to remove our operation abroad and get all our revenue from foreign advertisers. Certainly they won't be able to stop the ships transmitting."

Whatever happens, Mr. O'Rahilly certainly won't be sunk without trace. He intends to become president of the United States one day.



POST FOR A PIRATE: Just one day's mail in the life of Radio Caroline D.J., Johnnie Walker

Tomorrow: The men who man the turntables

Life on a Pop Ship—Day 2

by **DERMOT PURGAVIE**

ABOARD RADIO CAROLINE

AT 5.55 a.m. Tommy Vance gropes out of the bunk "feeling like a reject from the glue factory."

At 6.0, teeth brushed but shoeless, he has relieved Robbie Dale behind the microphone and begun his three-hour show with a cheerfulness self-imposed with such pain that it should be reported to the Council for Civil Liberties.

To cut his studio-to-bed time Dale has been on the air wearing his pyjamas. "Sometimes," he says, "I wear nothing but pyjamas for a fortnight."

At nine a breathless Mike Ahern, "Fink University" written across his T-shirt and slopping coffee, arrives to take over the turntables.

Another timeless day has begun on Radio Caroline South. Another 24 hours of brisk pop music and ruthless happiness.

The ship—470 tons of throbbing pop culture—is manned by seven disc jockeys. They rush in and out of doors toing and froing to studio or beds with such frequency and purpose that it is like being locked in with the Marx Brothers.

If Ronan O'Rahilly, the station's founder, was anxious to lose his former buccaneering image the word hasn't yet got through to the ship.

Colour

The disc jockeys are what is known as colourful. They look as if they dressed in the dark at a jumble sale. On the air they insult each other, abuse the records—"What a dirge, take it off"—commit indiscretions and "take some shocking liberties" with the listeners.

The formula is successful. The offshore stations have an estimated audience of 2½ million. And Caroline claims the biggest chunk of it.

Dave Lee Travis is chief DJ of Caroline South. He is 21, has hair and beard resembling a thick knit balaclava, a fringed Buffalo Bill jacket and more rings than a youth hostel bath.

"Our audience identifies with us," he says. "They like us because they recognise us as normal human, fallible people like them and not remote anonymous impersonal voices."

They all have a highly developed sense of the station's superiority and do not even bother to monitor the competition.

Despite the glamour that accrues to them—"listeners see us as swashbuckling pirates defying authority and I suppose that's romantic"—the life is monotonous and monastic.

They work two weeks on and one off and during their time aboard the 150-foot long boat may never step on deck. It is cosy but restricted. The food is good but the life is celibate and rigidly governed by round the clock schedules.

The beer is free (no spirits) and the cigarettes are 1s. for 20 but in the frequent gales it is difficult enough to stand let alone provide the brittle cheerfulness demanded on the air and ten DJs have had to quit because of sea sickness.

The pirates who play in pyjamas

And, ironically while broadcasting 24 hours a day to millions, they cannot have a conversation with the shore because it is illegal to use their radio telephone. Because of the sleep and transmission rotas they see little of each other but try and gather to share the communal TV addiction to Thunderbirds, Batman and any show with girls.

THE pay: between £25 and £60 a week, depending on service and experience, with little opportunity to spend it.

"We would be better off in the nick or in the Foreign Legion really—at least we'd get some exercise," says Johnnie Walker, a former car salesman in Birmingham with a precocious line in chat and a consequent swooning following among girl listeners. He came from Radio England in November.

"It's a hard scene and we earn every halfpenny of our bread. We may be on the air for six hours a day but we frequently don't know what day it is.

"I keep taking my vitamin pills but I've lost 1½ stone on the boats. Twelve months is enough if you don't want to end up in the nut-house."

Travis is the longest server with 15 months: "The equivalent of 15 years with the same firm ashore."

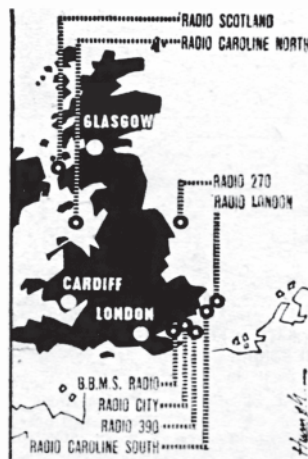
They endure it because they are bitten by broadcasting.

"This place is a drag," says Tommy Vance, the first established British DJ in America

Involved

"It really is an abominable existence but I'm involved with broadcasting and this place has a microphone and a 50 kilowatt transmitter which I can use exclusively for many hours a day. We all enjoy the work but recognise there is more to broadcasting than playing pop records." He wants to read poetry on the Third programme and be a film director.

It is also gratifying exposure of the ego—"and everybody involved in the entertainment business has one."



The most recurrent word aboard—flung affectionately at each other when the tapes of broadcasts are replayed—is "Meglo."

The BBC's pop coverage is proscribed as "square." But they all envy the status of the country's top five DJs—Jacobs, Murray, Freeman, Savile and Simon Dee—projected on it.

Watching The Five on Juke Box Jury, Mike Ahern, an energetic little Liverpudlian who used to be a grape picker, erupts indignantly: "What do they know about it? Simon Dee is the youngest and he's 29. And Savile must be 50. They're all out of touch. The average age on Caroline is only 22."

"Meglo, baby," shouts Robbie Dale.

TOMORROW: The fans

LIFE ABOARD A PIRATE SHIP

WHEN DEVOTION IS AN AVALANCHE OF WOOLLY HATS

DERMOT PURGAVIE, aboard Radio Caroline, has been finding out just how much the station's fans really care.



DAVE LEE TRAVIS:
Power to command

GIVING unwitting assistance to Mr. Wilson's redeployment scheme, several girls have skipped work to listen to Caroline disc jockey Steve Young and been fired for their devotion.

Once a week Robbie Dale, who is supposed to have a sexy voice and housewife appeal, gets a packet of jelly babies from a lady in Hull. He only eats the black ones.

Keith Hampshire mentioned on the air that he didn't like the Dutch beverages on board and was sent enough tea to stabilise the whole of the Indian economy.

AT the drop of a whim, the obsessed fans of Caroline respond with the dedication of kamikaze pilots.

"You only have to sniff on the air," says Dale, "and you get avalanched with crates of tissues, woolly hats (which he wears constantly),

pills, sweaters, scarves and, in one case, a pair of battery-heated socks."

Each DJ gets more than 200 letters a week—cooing testimonies of devotion, proposals of marriage, and adolescent pleas for autographs, locks of hair or (dare they hope) a date.

Appeal

"They are marvellous—there is nothing they

will not do for us," says Johnnie Walker, who early in his young life learned the formula for radio appeal: "You don't speak to them collectively, you speak to each listener individually."

Mr. Walker—known as Sir John round the transistors since he adopted a knighthood after being overlooked in the New Year Honours—has recently been so successful with his appeal that there is a danger of civil tumult.

"I decided," he says, "to do something for all the fans who were parked up after a cinema." (Where the BBC might blush and look away, Caroline, see, encourages such rituals).

So at 11.30 each night he plays the longest record he can find and orders his under-tree parkers: "Get your shoes off, get the windows well steamed up and snog all the way through it."

Those who fulfil the conditions are entitled to display his car-kissing licence on their windcreens.

He says, with some satisfaction: "It's only been going a few weeks and already I've had nearly 5,000 applications for licences. Crazy."

AS the disc jockeys sit at their turntables through the long night hours their pursuit for diversions for the fans becomes inspired.

by **DERMOT PURGAVIE**

ABOARD RADIO CAROLINE

AIR TIME ON CAROLINE: the ship's crew with (aloft, left to right) news reader Jim Aston and pop-around-the-clock disc jockeys Tommy Vance, Mike Ahern, Dave Lee Travis, Johnnie Walker and Robbie Dale. Duty jockey Ahern only got into the picture by putting on a longish record—"Dylan's good for that"—sprinting out on deck, and rushing back to the turntable as soon as it was taken.



SQUATTER PIRATES IN BATTLE FOR POP FORT

By MICHAEL HOUSEGO

TWO flags—Dutch and Irish—flew over a Thames estuary fort last night as two pirate radio chiefs argued about who got there first.

The dispute was over their "squatters' rights" on Rough Towers, a disused wartime fortress six miles off Felixstowe, Suffolk.

A lifeboatman whose boat rescued four men from Rough Towers early this week said: "Both sides keep sending out groups of men to throw the others off."

First, 28-year-old Ronan O'Rahilly, Dublin-born chief of Radio Caroline, put two men on Rough Towers.

Then Roy Bates, 45-year-old owner of Radio Essex—which broadcasts from a ship flying the Dutch flag—sent four men to put off the other two.

Walton-on-the-Naze lifeboat had to rescue the four from the fort on Monday night after their supplies ran out.

NEW PROJECT

Then Mr. O'Rahilly sent two of his men to squat on the fort. They were still there last night.

Mr. Ron Braley, assistant secretary of the lifeboat, said: "There seems to be a lot of argy-bargy on the fort as to who got there first."

"The four men we took off kept asking us: 'Did the other two get ashore all right?'"

Mr. Bates, whose Radio Essex is still broadcasting as Britain's Better Music Station after being fined £100 for illegal transmitting last November, said:

"It is quite amicable now. Ronan and I have been having discussions and we have a project in mind."

January 12, 1967

Radio Essex man refused aid

Paddy Roy Bates, head of Radio Essex, applied unsuccessfully for legal aid at Rochford, Essex, yesterday.

He wanted to appeal against a £100 fine for illegal broadcasting from a radio station on a gun tower in the Thames Estuary

January 12, 1967

a.m.-12.5 a.m. **RADIO CAROLINE** (259m.) 24 hours. **RADIO ESSEX** (222m.) 24 hours. **RADIO LONDON** (266m.) 5.30 a.m.-2 a.m. **RADIO CITY** (299m.) 6 a.m.-midnight. **BRITAIN RADIO** (355m.) 24 hours.

Daily Express 1966

4 hungry pirates rescued

FOUR pirate radio men, hungry and cold, were rescued by Walton-on-Naze lifeboat from a fort off the Essex coast last night.

Richard Palmer, aged 23, senior disc jockey of Radio Essex, and three maintenance engineers were brought ashore after they were seen flashing torches.

They had been stranded without food or fuel when seas swept away their six-week store left on a lower platform of the Rough Towers, a wartime fort eight miles out.

The men were preparing the fort for the station's removal there soon.

January 10, 1967

Back on the air, pirate challenges 'Prosecute us'

Express Staff Reporter

POST OFFICE legal experts will this week consider whether to bring a fresh prosecution against Radio 390—the "pirate" ruled illegal in November—which has begun transmitting again from Red Sands Tower in the Thames estuary.

The station closed down on November 25 after Canterbury magistrates had decided that the tower was inside territorial waters and fined the company controlling the station £100 for transmitting without a licence.

Managing director Mr. Ted Allbeury and company secretary Mr. David Lye were also found guilty and given absolute discharges.

'New evidence'

Mr. Allbeury explained last night that the decision to put the station back on the air came after he discovered that Radio 390 was not, in fact, within territorial waters.

Said Mr. Allbeury: "We shall stay on the air now. We have new evidence that our Red Sands Tower is at least a mile and a half outside the limits."

"We made a mistake last time. We have had new soundings taken. It is now up to the G.P.O. to summon us again if they feel they have a case."

Said a G.P.O. spokesman: "This new development will be considered by our experts."

January 2, 1967

Pop pirate queen lowers the flag

By DAVID THURLOW

WIDOW Dorothy Calvert—the queen of the pop pirates—abdicated last night. She was fined £100 for broadcasting without a licence—and at midnight took her Radio City station off the air.

She said: "I will not fight on. It's not worth while. I think the others will follow."

Mrs. Calvert, 38-year-old mother of two, is the first pop pirate to surrender in the Government's fight to close them down.

Ted Allbeury's Radio 390 and Roy Bates's Radio Essex—although both fined £100 for the same offence—are still on the air.

Said Mrs. Calvert: "We are closing down for good. I am having nothing further to do with the water or pirate radio stations."

"But I have plans for commercial radio—on land and legal. And I'm keeping my team of eight together."

THE COST

The decision will cost her £24,000-worth of advertising already lined up and £50,000-worth a year.

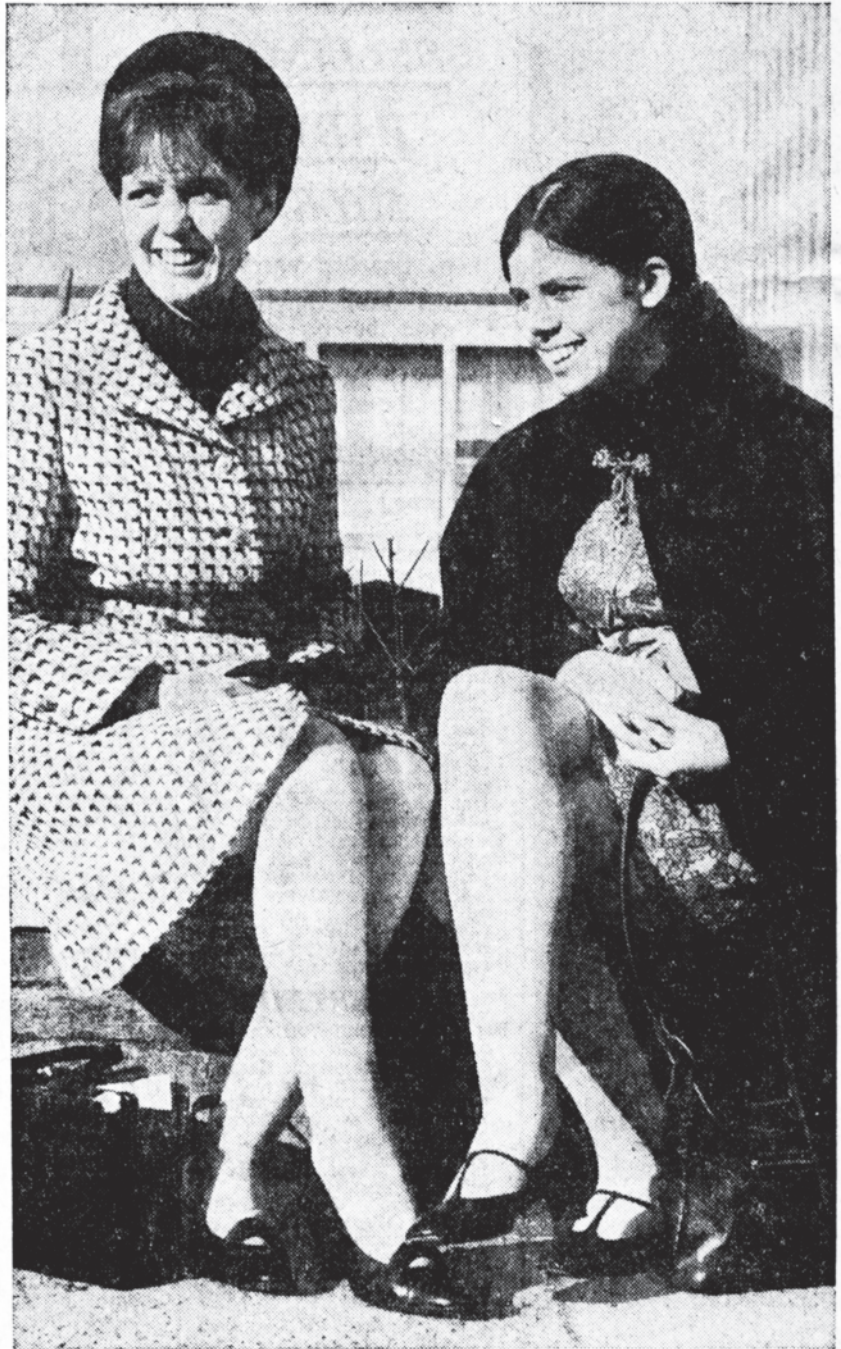
She said: "I will not starve. I still have my music publishing company and dance hall in Nuneaton, Warwickshire, and other interests."

Today she will go out to Shivering Sands, the old wartime fort in the Thames Estuary, to take off equipment.

Behind, she will leave the transmitter which led to the death of her 38-year-old husband, Reginald.

Last June, Major Oliver Smedley led a boarding party on to the fort to reclaim the transmitter.

Two days later Calvert was killed in a shooting incident at an Essex village. Major Smedley was cleared of his manslaughter.



Mrs. Calvert and her 16-year-old daughter Candy yesterday

POP PIRATE BOSS QUILTS

Ted Allbeury, 48, has quit as boss of the Thames-fort pop pirate station, Radio 390.

Mr. Allbeury, who defied a court ban to put Radio 390 back on the air in December, said last night: "I feel the station is doomed."

POP PIRATE IN NEW BATTLE

POP pirate station Radio 390 is to be taken to court again for illegal broadcasting.

The station returned to the air last month after being fined £100.

This time, four summonses have been issued against Estuary Radio, of Folkestone, Kent, and against each of the company's five directors and secretary.

They face a maximum total fine of £2,800 when the case comes up at Southend, Essex, Wednesday week.

February 14, 1967

RADIO LONDON

5.30 a.m. Mike Lennox. 7.30 Herald of Truth. 8.0 Mike Lennox. 10.0 Request Hour. 11.0 Coffee Break. 11.15 Tony Windsor. 12.0 Dave Dennis. 2.0 Dave Dennis. 3.0 Fabulous Forty. 6.0 Kenny Everett. 7.0 The World Tomorrow. 7.30 Kenny Everett. 9.0 Mark Roman. 12.0-2.0 London After Midnight.

CAROLINE

6.0 a.m. Tom Lodge. 9.0 Mike Ahern. 12.0 American Top 100. 3.0 Rosko Show. 6.0 Requests. 7.55 Epilogue. 8.0 Action. 9.0 Rick Dane. 12.0 Nite Trip. 3.0 Night Out Prowl.

Pop pirate in 'pay for disc' row.

By KENELM JENOUR

A ROW broke out yesterday between Radio Caroline and NEMS Enterprises, the organisation which represents the Beatles and other pop stars.

Mr. Bernie Lee, NEMS booking manager, accused the pirate station of demanding £100 a week to play a record by NEMS artists Cliff Bennett and the Rebel Rousers until it gets into the top fifty.

Mr. Lee said: "We won't pay it, and that goes for all NEMS artists, including the Beatles and Cilla Black."

"This is a form of payola [under-the-counter payments to disc jockeys to play records] and we won't have it."

Cancelled

Because of the £100 demand, Cliff Bennett has cancelled a free personal appearance he was to have made for Radio Caroline on Saturday night.

Mr. Philip Solomon, 41-year-old boss of Radio Caroline, confirmed last night that it is now his company's policy to charge £100 for playing a record, until it is a hit. For the £100, the record is played 30 times on each of Caroline's two stations, one in the North and one in the South.

Mr. Solomons said: "It works out at about 32s. 6d. a play. This is not payola. It is a way of giving the smaller, independent record companies and their artists a chance to be heard."

MUSIC THAT WIVES LIKE—BY THE P.M.G.

GEORGE LOCHHEAD

THE battle of Britain's pirate radio stations reached its high water mark in the Commons last night—with the mark drawn out by Mr. Edward Short, the Postmaster-General.

To the astonishment of Tory M.P.s he turned the whole issue into something much larger than the mere dishing out of pop music round our coasts.

For, as he made clear presenting a Bill that would put the pirates out of business altogether, he is also totally against allowing any commercial interests to have a hand in his own legal local radio stations, the first three to be announced soon.

The Tories' Front-bench spokesman, Mr. Paul Bryan, protested: "It is not only the pirates who are 'untouchables.' Anything commercial is anathema to you."

But what angered the Tories most of all was Mr. Short's almost vicious approach to their own plan, namely that any change should be held back until a proper alternative scheme has been worked out.

February 16, 1967


'NEW RAID' THREAT TO RADIO CITY

DETECTIVES are investigating a reported threat to raid the Radio City pop-pirate station. The station, on an old fort at Shivering Sands in the Thames Estuary, was silenced for a time last year after one party of raiders seized it.

Radio City's boss, 37-year-old Reg Calvert, died in a shooting incident ashore, a few days later. His widow, Mrs. Dorothy Calvert, 38, who now runs the station, said yesterday:

"Scotland Yard told me they have had information that the fort would be raided within the next few days. Then a friend told me that someone had offered to sell him the fort for £1,000."

February 1, 1967

 LISTEN TO GOOD MUSIC

K-I-N-G RADIO

On **236 METRES** Medium — Wave Band

The SKETCH says

THERE'S one thing you can say for this Government — they're a happy lot of kill-joys. And the youngsters can say that again as the Government clears its decks to sink the pop pirates.

The pop pirates, who give 25 million listeners in this country the kind of music they want, are to be blasted out of existence with the full force of British law.

Mr. Edward Short, the Postmaster General, steps up the proposed penalties against the pop pirates from a £100 to a £400 fine.

Even to send the crew of a pirate radio ship the odd sustaining packet of crisps will be an offence.

"As I listened to the Postmaster General," says Tory MP Mr. Eldon Griffiths, "I was reminded of the inquisitors who said that they were condemning and punishing people in order to save their immortal souls."

Those who tune in to Radio Caroline or Radio London don't want or need this brand of salvation.

And what is the Postmaster General offering in return for spoiling their enjoyment?

Pop put out by the BBC? The kids have never looked on Auntie BBC as a swinger.

Local radio? Who wants this dull and expensive experiment which will have to be paid for from your pockets via the BBC's licence fee and the rates? It is certainly not the housewives' choice.

The pop pirates, whatever their errors, are a rip-roaring success. They don't cost you anything and they give a lot of pleasure.

Just like the motor car. That gives a lot of pleasure.

But, only this week, Mrs. Jane Phillips, Labour's traffic chief on the Greater London Council, said that there would be no place in London for the two-car family.

Whether they are dealing with a teenager listening to pirate pop on his transistor or with a two-car family, the Government's motto is the same:

IF YOU CAN'T TAX IT, BAN IT.

Texan 'pirate' sunk by £111,000 debts



WILLIAM VICK

By GARETH PARRY

FORMER pop pirate chief William Vick faced the music at a creditors' meeting yesterday — his company sunk by debts of £111,000.

This was the amount lost in just a year of the company Pier Vick Ltd., being formed to handle advertising and supplies for Britain Radio and swinging Radio England.

Accountant Mr. Martin Spencer, appointed liquidator by the creditors, promised that one of the matters he would be looking into was the "tremendous amount of expenditure by the company" on the floating radio ship *Laissez Faire*.

And he added: "Creditors must be astonished to see such an amount of money lost in such a short time."

Vick, a 40-year-old Texan, promised: "I want to see everyone get his money back. I hope to try some other venture."

He faced a barrage of questions from angry creditors at the meeting in London.

'ASTOUNDING'

One of them said: "The lack of information given to us is really quite astounding."

The ship is owned by a group in America. Mr. Vick said he had been hoping that the company would be rescued with more money from the group, but it never came.

Asked if he was to continue a pirate station himself from the *Laissez Faire*, Mr. Vick gave an emphatic "No."

But the debts of the Pier Vick company have not affected Britain Radio. It will be back on the air soon when repairs to the *Laissez Faire*—dismasted in a gale ten days ago—are completed at Amsterdam.

This time Mr. Ted Allbeury, one-time boss of Radio 390, is taking over the job of handling advertising and supplying the ship.

Pop pirate ship goes off air

Britain Radio, the American-financed pop pirate ship, has moved from its anchorage off Harwich, and its music programmes are off the air.

Last week the transmitter mast was snapped in a Force Nine gale. Now the ship has been ordered to make for the Dutch coast to find cable to repair work can begin.

March 9th, 1967

Pirate station fined £80

The company operating the pirate radio station Radio Scotland was fined £80 at Ayr yesterday for using a transmitter without a licence in territorial waters.

The station operated from a craft moored in the Firth of Clyde, but after the hearing, a company spokesman said their craft was being moved to a position near North Berwick, on the East coast of Scotland.

March 14, 1967

March 15, 1967

PIRATE RADIOS BAN ON AUG. 15

Minister's warning to 'rebel' stations

DAILY TELEGRAPH REPORTERS

THE Government is to enforce the law banning pirate radio stations from Aug. 15, it was announced in the Commons yesterday by Mr. Short, the Postmaster-General.

It means the end for some of the eight pirate stations now broadcasting off the British coast, although several are planning to move their headquarters to Holland to evade the Marine and Broadcasting (Offences) Bill.

Last month it was announced the BBC's pop music programme, Radio 247, would begin on Sept. 30.

Mr. Stratton Mills, Conservative MP for Belfast North, asked Mr. Short yesterday if he had seen reports that Radio Caroline and Radio London and some other pirate stations were planning to operate from abroad, "as we warned would happen."

TORIES ACCUSED

"Making task difficult"

Mr. Short, who maintained that Conservative MPs had made his task more difficult by supporting the pirates, said: "After Aug. 15 anyone rendering assistance to the pirate stations will be guilty of a criminal offence."

The Postmaster-General said the suppression of the pirate stations would depend "on our European colleagues. Most countries have legislated on this matter. I think Holland is the only one which has not yet done so."

GOING OFF AIR

Aug. 14 shut-downs

Four pirate radio stations announced last night that they would go off the air on Aug. 14.

They were Radio 355, Radio 227, which operate from a ship off the Essex coast, Radio 270, which broadcasts from a Dutch lugger in Bridlington Bay, and Radio 390, which operates from a disused fort in the Thames Estuary.

Radio Caroline and Radio London, which is registered in the Bahamas, have said they intend to carry on from new headquarters which have been established abroad. But there was doubt last night among their rivals whether they would be able to get sufficient advertising revenue abroad.

ALLBEURY ADVICE

"Don't evade the Act"

Mr. Ted Allbeury, head of Radio 355 and Radio 227, said at his Kensington home last night that he had recommended to his shareholders they should not attempt to evade the Act.

"It is possible to avoid the law by moving to Holland, but once the law is the law you have to abide by it. I have done so, so far."

He emphasised that in future British citizens who were involved in any way with a pirate radio station would have to become exiles, or face arrest under the Act, if they returned to Britain.

MOVE ABROAD

Radio 390 hope

The managing director of Radio 390, Mr. D. B. Lye, said his organisation would cease broadcasting "in its present form," but was hopeful it would eventually be able to establish itself abroad. The station would not be moving to Holland.

He estimated Radio 390 had more than eight million listeners. The station's future plans would be based on obtaining an authorised wavelength. This would take many months to negotiate, and meanwhile most of the station's staff of 25 would be dismissed.

Mr. Wilfred Proudfoot, managing director of Ellambar Investments, which operates Radio 270, said in Scarborough last night: "We close down at 23.59 hours on Aug. 14."

"We have not broken the law up to now, and we don't intend to in the future."

He said they would be considering whether to restart broadcasting from abroad, sell the broadcasting vessel as a radio station or sell it for conversion as a club.

Last night it seemed that Radio Scotland, which operates from a ship, the Comet, off the Fife coast, would also close down.

Mr. Tom Shields, managing director and founder, said: "This is terrible. On the surface, it would certainly seem that we have lost the battle."

He disclosed that earlier yesterday he offered Radio Scotland to the Postmaster-General, because there is no plan for a BBC local radio station in Scotland.

RELAYS "GO ON"

Radio London aim

Radio London, which is expected to continue to broadcast, said the law should be delayed until "a satisfactory land-based alternative has been provided to continue supplying 25 million listeners with a popular music service."

It was disclosed in *The Daily Telegraph* last week that Radio Caroline, Britain's first pirate station, was preparing to challenge the Government.

Mr. Ronan O'Rahilly, 27, managing director, said the new law was to be broken on the first day by a newscaster, a disc jockey and a religious broadcaster, all British subjects.

He asserted that each pirate broadcaster breaking the law would have to be prosecuted. "I want this to happen, because I am going to take each case to the Court of Human Rights."

Radio Caroline, started three and a half years ago, is transmitted from two ships off the Isle of Man and Frinton, Essex. When the Bill becomes law, Caroline's administrative headquarters will be moved to Amsterdam.

Mr. Ronald Duncan, 52, poet, dramatist and founder of the English Stage Company, said last night he had advised the Director of Public Prosecutions he would be writing scripts at a fee of 6d for Radio Caroline after the Bill became law.

He hoped he would be prosecuted as the Government "has to be tested on this matter."

Police turn down 'pop' pirate's SOS call

By BRIAN FREEMANTLE

POLICE last night refused to answer an SOS call from a pirate radio ship that a man on board had gone berserk with a knife.

The reason: the 480-ton *Laissez Faire*, registered in Honduras, is outside territorial waters, anchored 4½ miles off Frinton, Essex.

Two "sweet music" programmes—Radio 355 for English listeners, Radio 227 for Dutch listeners—are broadcast from the ship.

Essex police referred the SOS to the Navy at Portsmouth, which in turn put it to the Defence Ministry.

The Ministry decided to take no immediate action, but asked the coastguard to keep it informed.

A senior officer at Portsmouth said: "Presumably the police turned to the Navy because if a ship were on the high seas and trouble broke out, a warship of any nation would be entitled to put a party aboard to restore order."

'LOCKED IN'

Walton-on-Naze coastguard picked up the SOS which said: "We have a man on board who is threatening murder. He has already assaulted the captain."

The radio operator, who said he was locked in his radio shack, asked for police to be sent out.

Senior police officers at Clacton discussed the message.

They decided the ship was outside their jurisdiction, and the matter then went to the Navy.

The vessel, which has a Dutch crew of 17, is owned and maintained by the Weismuller shipping family, of Baarne, Holland.

The pirate radio is controlled by a firm called Carstead Advertising, whose managing director is 49-year-old Mr. Ted Allbeury, former boss of Radio 390.

'PUNCHED'

From his home in Kensington, London, last night, Mr. Allbeury said: "It seems that a crewman was sacked, got drunk, and attacked the skipper, Captain Luke Hurst, who comes from Kent."

"The captain was punched but—as far as I can establish—was not seriously hurt."

"The police told me they consider the ship outside their jurisdiction. I told them it will be all right by us for them to go out, if they feel it necessary."

Both stations continued to operate last night.

FOOTNOTE: Last week Michael Bates, aged 15, and David Barron, 25, armed with a 12-bore shotgun, defended the wartime sea fort Rough Towers, off Harwich, against a boarding-party from Radio Caroline.

'Pop' pirates told: Ban on Aug. 15

Express Staff Reporter

RADIO pirate chiefs were told yesterday that their pop stations face official scuttling next month.

One of them immediately warned the Government that the new regulations would be defied.

Mr. Edward Short, the Postmaster-General, told the Commons that he hoped to bring the Act banning private radio stations into force on August 15.

An Order would make it illegal to work for, supply, or advertise with an unregistered station.

Asked how soon he expected to silence the pirates, Mr. Short said: "This depends a good deal on our European colleagues. Most of these countries have legislated. Holland, I think, is the only one that has not."

Fight

Mr. Ronan O'Rahilly, founder of *Radio Caroline*—the first and biggest pirate station—said last night: "I am prepared to go to prison to fight for freedom on the air."

"But I am an Irish citizen and I don't know if the law affects me."

Caroline, with a transmitting ship off Frinton, Essex, and another off the Isle of Man, plans to gather advertising from abroad.

Said Mr. O'Rahilly: "We shall keep going, although obviously the new law will be a slight inconvenience."

"We shall have a two-minute silence for Mr. Harold Wilson on August 15, then it will be back to the swinging sounds we have been giving listeners for nearly four years."

"Some of our disc jockeys are prepared to give up their British citizenship to keep us on the air. Others are willing to go to prison."

"We realise we have a great battle ahead. We shall stop our business activity in Britain, although we shall continue campaigning against this infringement of our freedom."

Radio London, the other big pop station operating from an American-owned boat off

Harwich, Essex, has made similar plans to get advertising from abroad. But owners of the station would not discuss the beat-the-ban measures last night.

A spokesman, commenting on the August 15 date, said: "This is the anniversary of the end of the greatest fight for freedom 22 years ago [VJ Day]."

"It is sad the P.M.G. has picked this date to strike the blow against freedom of the air."

There are nine pirate radio stations—eight of them operating off the British coast.

Two of them—*Radio 355* and *Radio 227* (competed in Dutch) will go off the air when the ban begins, managing director Mr. Ted Allbeury said last night.

And Mr. Tom Shields, who runs *Radio Scotland* from a ship off the coast of Pife, said: "This is terrible. On the surface it would certainly seem that we have lost the battle."

Other pirates believe they can carry on with advertising from American firms and supplies for their ships from Holland.

But the Government is convinced that without advertising revenue from Britain, the pirates will soon be forced off the air.

To replace the pirates, the B.B.C. is starting a day-long pop radio service in the autumn. And the first of nine experimental "local radio" stations—*Radio Leicester*—will be opened on November 2.