

Harwich 9-11th August

This was the weekend earmarked to commemorate August the 14th 1967, on board the LV18 lightship with live broadcasts on Radio Mi Amigo.

Having had fun in April broadcasting from the ship I readily agreed to come for the August weekend and I was in the programme schedules, once again next to the legend which is Keith Skues.

Radio Mi Amigo broadcasts continuously on the internet, using recorded shows, but goes live for these special weekends. After the rather makeshift but working arrangements which were put together from the non-smoke damaged bits of gear in April, the studio on the bridge has now been re-equipped with a refurbished mixer and cd players. There is still a slight smell of smoke but Tony and Heather O'Neill and others have worked tirelessly after the fire to get the ship back in as much order as possible and it is now open to visitors, free of charge, but there is a collection box which, I am pleased to say, needs frequent emptying.

Enthusiasm took hold and the station went live unscheduled prematurely on Thursday evening and I volunteered to do 9pm til 11. There is a certain tranquillity that descends on the harbour in the late evenings and, looking out over the water from the studio, the atmosphere is one of calm and peace, which I tried to reflect in the choice of music – laid back til almost horizontal.

Friday saw the arrival of Keith Skues, in fine spirits, but determined to plan and craft his shows, with a playlist and a script, no less. All the other djs mustered and the usual conversations took place, on deck and in the galley and mess. There were visitors and onlookers, and the boat was lit up with fairy lights in the dark.

I was delighted to do three scheduled shows, more up tempo than the late night indulgence, trying to recreate the sounds and atmosphere from 1967. All the other djs played a fascinating selection of music from the 60s and 70s, there being so much to choose from, and the expertise and musical knowledge concentrated on board was immense. I think we all heard something new at some point.

Perhaps the greatest coup, an exclusive, of the weekend was the appearance by telephone, of one Johnnie Walker. Of course he has been to so many of the Harwich reunions, and he had been told of this weekend. It was known that his health would not permit him to come but we were hoping for a message which we could read out to the multitude of listeners from around the world. But, he sent a message back saying he'd like to speak to Keith, so, on being sent a phone number, he called up Tony O'Neill whilst Keith was on air, and asked to speak to him. By dint of holding the phone, on loudspeaker, next to the mic, the whole conversation, some 6 minutes, went out live. Johnnie sounded bright and breezy and Keith was delighted to speak to him. The conversation was recorded and it was decided to replay it later in the evening and I put a one hour show together, complete with some original Caroline recordings, and

it went out again. It can be heard on the lv18radio web site <https://www.lv18radio.uk/2024/08/ks-jw20240811/>

There are photos, a report and schedule of the entire weekend's broadcasts.

Amongst the visitors over the weekend were Steve Scruton and Ian Wyatt from BBC Radio Essex, though in mufti as, unlike their wonderful show last April, they weren't broadcasting but being social. John Sales' brother Roland and his wife also came along, bringing some more of John's offshore radio effects to add to the memorabilia display.

As is tradition, it was party time on Sunday evening running up to closedown of the live weekend, and some enthusiastic dancing too place on the helideck. It's probably best that the video remains private though.

It's fair to say that a great time was had by all and we look forward to another live broadcast around Christmas.

Duke Anthony