

## **Dutch Offshore Radio legend, Ben Bode, has died**

**DATELINE** Antwerp 22nd January 2022

Dutch offshore radio legend, Ben Bode, has died at the age of 66.

Ben Bode (together with Fred Bolland) was famous for his role in tendering offshore stations off the coast of Britain and the Netherlands in the 1970s and 1980s. He was involved with Radio Delmare in 1978 and in 1979 he was instrumental in launching the new Dutch service of Radio Caroline from the *Mi Amigo*.

He became Programme Manager and managed the station's office in The Hague. Many Radio Caroline programmes and commercials were recorded at his home in the Hoge Nieuwstraat.

In 1980 Ben Bode launched Radio Paradijs, personally equipping the ship in Cuxhaven and Ireland and preparing programmes, but unfortunately the venture failed when the ship, *Magda Maria* was impounded and towed in by Dutch police and The Navy.

He fought (and won) a prolonged legal battle for compensation from the Dutch government over the illegal seizure of the ship in international waters.

After that he was the initiator behind Radio Monique, broadcasting from the *Ross Revenge* between 1984 and 1987.

Ben Bode was also the founder of Probe Score, a jingle company serving stations in Belgium and the Netherlands,

Ben died in hospital in Antwerp on 21st January, aged 66.

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# Former Radio Caroline and Voice of Peace DJ Tom Hardy, has died

**DATELINE** Dublin 3rd March 2022

Former Radio Caroline (70's) and Voice of Peace DJ Tom Hardy has died at the age of 67.

Tom (real name Brian Johnson) was born on 31st August 1954 in Abbots Langley, Hertfordshire. After broadcasting on hospital radio and un-licensed college radio stations he left his secondary school teaching job in June 1976 to join Abe Nathan's Voice of Peace radio station off the coast of Israel.

After nearly two years with the Voice of Peace Tom joined Radio Caroline in June 1978 and became one of the station stalwarts during its last couple of years of broadcasting from the *Mi Amigo*.

He was rescued from the *Mi Amigo* by life-boat in January 1979, but later returned to the station when it resumed broadcasts in April of that year. His last show on Radio Caroline was on 15th March 1980, a few days before the *Mi Amigo* sank.

In 1981 Tom joined (former Radio Caroline South DJ) Robbie Dale's landbased pirate station, Sunshine Radio in Dublin.. Two years later he joined rival stations, Kiss FM/Radio Nova (operated by another ex Caroline DJ Chris Carey/Spangles Muldoon).

After government raids on Nova in May 1983 and a concerted jamming campaign by the Irish state broadcaster, he and a number of his colleagues were eventually 'let go' by the station in early 1984.

A few months later Tom joined the Chiltern Radio network as presenter, Music Director and Assistant Programme Director. In 1987 he returned to Ireland to establish, manage and present on Kiss FM in Monaghan.

He briefly returned to Chiltern and after a short spell at Oxford's Fox FM, he went back to Dublin to help launch Classic Hits 98FM, working as Assistant Programme Director. During his time with Classic Hits 98FM, Tom was seconded to Prague, to help set up the company's first overseas station.

After a further year at 98FM in Dublin, Tom joined GWR to re-launch Leicester Sound and in 1994 took up the group programming position at SBS in Stockholm with responsibility for 12 stations across Sweden, Denmark and Finland.

Tom then spent around 18 months as Programme Director at 2CRFM, in Bournemouth, before becoming Programme Manager at Ireland's national commercial station, Today FM in August 1998. After 14 years there, Tom left to run his own consultancy company.

In 2021 he was diagnosed with throat cancer and underwent radiotherapy treatment. Tom suffered a heart attack while in hospital in February 2022 and sadly passed away on 2nd March.

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# Absolute Radio salutes 60s offshore stations on 55th Anniversary of the Marine Broadcasting Offences Act

**DATELINE** London 26th July 2022



For one day only on Friday 12th August between 10am and 4pm Absolute Radio 60s will present Absolute Radio Pirates - a day celebrating the music and personalities of the pirate radio stations of the 1960s 55 years after the introduction of the Marine Broadcasting Offences Act..

To mark the anniversary, Absolute Radio Pirates, combines new interviews with archive broadcasts - and loads of great music - to tell the real story of the pirates, their love of music and the move into illegality.

The **Offshore Radio Museum** has been working with production company Unusual to provide information and archive material which will be used throughout the day's broadcast, hosted by Tony Blackburn and Johnnie Walker.

Full details of the programme can be found at <https://planetradio.co.uk/absolute-radio/music/news/introducing-absolute-radio-pirates/>

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# Pirate Radio Exhibition



## **DATELINE** Felixstowe August 2022

Between Friday 5th and Sunday 7th August, a Pirate Radio Exhibition was held in a 200 year old Napoleonic Martello Tower in Felixstowe, overlooking the North Sea. The Tower is owned by East Suffolk Council and occupied by the volunteers of National Coastwatch Institution, and used for the Exhibition with both their permissions.

Spread over two floors, Chris Dannatt displayed his Flashback 67/Pirate Memories material, Ray Anderson showed much of his Pirate Radio Museum display from Clacton, while Chris Brisland (Wireless of the Week on Facebook) and Felixstowe & Offshore Radio combined for a display of vintage radios. On the Saturday, Dave and Rob Cragie from Southwold brought their Morris 1000 van, with a display of vintage radios inside! There was also merchandise available for sale, and a display about Martello Towers.

The Exhibition was opened by current Radio Caroline presenter, Stephen Foster, and featured book signings by Ray Clark (Radio Caroline and BBC Eastern Counties Radio) and Ray Anderson. By the end of the weekend, more than a thousand people had visited!

We were delighted to be joined by a number of people with pirate connections from the past. These included Alan 'Neddy' Turner, who was on board the *MV Caroline* when anchored off Felixstowe in 1964, before sailing with the ship and becoming a DJ on Caroline North off the Isle of Man. Caroline South engineer, Carl Thomson, one of those rescued when the *Mi Amigo* ran aground in 1966, came, as did fellow engineer John Lait from the opposition Radio London! Bill Rollins from Tower Radio in the 1960's, and Viewpoint 963 from the *Ross Revenge* in the 1980's was another visitor.

From Radio Caroline on the *Mi Amigo* in the 1970's, and the *Ross Revenge* in the 1980's were Martin Fisher and Michael Barrington, who is still working on The Principality of Sealand.

From 1980's Radio Caroline were Paul Graham and Barry James, while other visitors included press photographer David Kindred, journalist Rob Hadgraft, and **Offshore Echos Magazine** editor, Chris Edwards.

There was also support from current staff on Radio Caroline, including transmitter and *Ross Revenge* engineers, Alan Beech and Peter Clayton.

The weather was fantastic, the feedback likewise, and we hope for further opportunities to use the venue again in future.

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# Former Radio Caroline South and Radio Scotland DJ, Mel Howard, has died



**DATELINE** Canada 17th October 2022

Former Radios Caroline South and Radio Scotland DJ, Mel Howard, has died

Mel was born in Winnipeg, Canada, on 2nd July 1940. After university he became an actor then planned to study music at the San Francisco State College, but instead went on a trip to Europe.

Arriving in Britain in 1961 Mel worked for EMI Records before continuing his travels by moving to Spain.

He soon returned to the UK where he joined Air Canada but, fascinated by the emerging offshore radio scene, applied for work with a number of stations.

Mel joined Radio Caroline South in October 1965, but following management changes and a purge of on-air staff he was 'let go' at the end of that year.

He worked at the 100 Club in London's Oxford Street until March 1966 when he was offered a job with the recently launched Radio Scotland.

After Radio Scotland closed in August 1967, Mel re-joined to Air Canada for a time before returning to Winnipeg where he became a teacher - a job he continued until retirement.

Mel died in hospital on 13th October from Pulmonary Fibrosis, aged 82.

(Additional information courtesy Pirate Radio Hall of Fame)

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# Former Radio Invicta, Radio 390 and Britain Radio DJ, John Ross Barnard, has died



**DATELINE** Coventry 2nd November 2022

John Ross-Barnard, a DJ on many fort-based offshore radio stations as well as Britain Radio has died.

John's first broadcast was in 1964 on Radio Invicta where he used various names as well as his own - JRB, Larry Pannell, Pete Ross and Peter Barraclough.

He stayed with the fort-based broadcaster when Radio Invicta was replaced by KING Radio in 1965, and later the same year by 'sweet music' station Radio 390.

In 1966, he moved to newly launched easy listening station - ship-based Britain Radio, and also read the news on its Top 40 sister station, Radio England.

After Britain Radio closed in 1967 John joined the BBC as a television continuity announcer and later became head of BBC Video.

He was later Chief Executive of Coventry Cable Television, Managing Director of Satellite Media Services as well as acting as a broadcasting consultant.

John also took part in various Radio London Restricted Service revival stations.

He died on 2nd November 2022 in Coventry University Hospital.

(Additional information courtesy Pirate Radio Hall of Fame)

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