

Foreword.

I suppose it all began in the late 40's and early 50's, when families would sit around their old radio sets, possibly listening to the news, or the latest cricket score. And every now and then, one of the family would lean over, to give the set a thump with their fist, because it had started making crackling noises again. The radio in those days was usually a wooden box, with little knobs on the front, and strange glowing things in the back, and voices, that seemed to come from little men inside.

Not many people had TV then, and radio was their main source of 'light entertainment'. When some people bought radios with strange symbols printed on the dials like, 15m 25m 41m & 49m band, they realised they had a set that could pick up 'Short Wave' radio stations.

Long lengths of wire were produced, and strung up in back gardens, as some enthusiastic listeners tried to pick up radio transmissions from, Mars or Venus, or so, some of them thought. But that was radio in its innocence, radio that people were happy to listen to. Something for the amateur technician to build or repair. Radio free of petty bureaucracy. But that freedom and innocence was, years later, to come to an odious end.

By the summer of 1971 the vindictive, Marine Offences Act, (M.O.A.), had been in force for nearly four years. This deliberately spiteful act created a large void, in the listening pleasure of millions of people, who had been loyal to the offshore radio stations, between 1964 and 1967. Imposed upon the people by the government, these new, so called local radio stations, were given licenses to broadcast from 1967 on-wards. These licenses were awarded to both, the new BBC local radio stations, and those controlled by the I.B.A. (Independent Broadcasting Authority). And although a multitude of these inferior stations sprang up, with their egotistical ideas, and arrogant attitudes, they were, (and still are), lacking in both professional, and moral standards. They show a complete lack of expertise and presentation. Something which the Offshore stations always had.

It isn't unusual these days, to hear interviewers on local radio 'phone in' programs, discussing controversial subjects such as drug abuse, or other offensive material usually intermixed with sexual topics. Worse still in some cases, the DJs themselves invite comments about one immoral subject or another.

What really bothers the decent listener is the way all of this is portrayed as normal practice. 'Take it or leave it', seems to be their attitude. Where the owners of local radio are concerned, profits come first, and the listener last. It is a complete waste of time trying to complain to the broadcasting Authorities, about the low levels of professionalism these stations have sunk to, in their obsession to attract more listeners. In fact this egoism has the opposite effect.

Decent people would rather switch their radios off, or change stations, than put up with such offensive material. Children own radios too, and unfortunately, parents can't very well prevent their offspring from listening to these types of program each day. Furthermore, parents have little recourse to complain about the stations that transmit these offensive programs. They don't play decent music either, just awful repetitive din.

Even some of the advertising on local radio is offensive to many people. With it's over persuasiveness, sexual innuendo, and double standards. Not forgetting the parrot like, frequent repetition, which eventually borders on an insult to people's intelligence. This is apart from the

ranting's of some of the worst, so-called DJs, I've ever heard on radio. The whole resulting, crescendo of noise, eventually becomes an obnoxious assault on one's ears.

Another problem with these local radio stations is, how full of their own importance they are. One would get the impression, that the people running these stations were doing the listener a huge favour, broadcasting to them. Rather than the listener, doing the owners an even bigger one, listening to such garbage.

But 1964 certainly became the year, when radio in this country was historically transformed from, the boring monotones of the antiquated BBC, to the brilliant format of American radio, adopted by Radio Caroline and most of the other Offshore stations.

Shortly after it began broadcasting in 1964, Radio Caroline, owned at the time, by the pioneer of Offshore radio in this country, Ronan O'Rahilly, amalgamated with, Australian entrepreneur, Alan Crawford, who owned Radio Atlantis. Atlantis broadcast from the ship MV MiAmigo, and, under an agreement reached, became Radio Caroline South, anchoring off the coast of Frinton, Essex. Meanwhile, the other ship, owned by O'Rahilly, sailed north to the Isle of Man, dropping anchor in Ramsey Bay, thus becoming Radio Caroline North.

Although Radio Caroline North had an extremely successful history, and was listened to by millions of people in Ireland, Scotland, and Northwest England, it was the South ship, the MV MiAmigo, which became the main focus of attention, from 1964, until her unfortunate sinking, during bad weather, in 1980. During those years she had many adventures, and several stories were written about her. This is one of those stories.