

MERSEYSIDE FREE RADIO SCENE

Week ending Sunday 18th October 1987

Local press and radio reports about the interference caused to the emergency services by Merseyside Free Radio last weekend seem to have made many stations stay off the air in anticipation of a back-lash from the DTI, who attempted to raid Radio Atlantis on Monday. On the very week that others chose to stay off the air, Radio Mersey Waves made a come-back, although the schedule was Sat/Sun only for this weekend.

On Wednesday, Phil Davies was in court to answer charges arising from the DTI raid on Liverpool Pirate Radio on 10th May. The court called for a Social Enquiry report and the case was adjourned till 28th October.

RADIO VERONICA 104.7MHz: c/o 81, Lark Lane, Liverpool L17 8UP

A very weak signal was noted from 11:50am on Sunday, carrying a Free Radio Show. At noon, there was a big increase in signal strength at official sign-on. Neil Frazer said that the station would only be on the air for a short while due to a high level of DTI activity in the Merseyside area. His Free Radio News was then followed by music till 1:48pm, when he closed the station down till next week

NORTH COAST RADIO: 1350kHz: 18, Downham Drive, Heswall, Wirral, Merseyside L60 5RF

On Monday, this station announced that they would be on the air 7 days per week with a full day's output (9am to 2am) Fri to Mon and 6pm to 2am on Tues to Thur. However, when checked at 6pm on Tues, they were already on the air and announcements suggest that they had been on the air all afternoon and possibly all day. They have not been heard since Tues night. Noted were:-

Mon: 9am Tony West; 11am carrier only; 12:25pm Andy Rogers; 3pm continuous music?;  
4pm Kevin Burnett; 5pm DJ Crezzey; 7pm Phil Collins; 9pm Dave Moore; 11pm Kevin Burnett; 1am(?) close-down

Tues: .....6pm Mark Ross; 8pm Tony West; 10pm Tony Scott; Midnight Dave Collins; 2am c/d.

RADIO ATLANTIS 1197kHz: 150, Rake Lane, Wallasey, Merseyside L45 1JW.

The number of tapes and repeat tapes played by this station makes it very difficult to pick out "live" announcements of their current plans from conflicting updated announcements on tape. On Monday they signed on at 11am, but weren't on the air at 12:30pm. They were next found at 4pm and Steve Bishop later said that they had been off the air due DTI activity. Close-down time was 8pm. On Friday they operated 11am to 6pm with Steve Bishop/Rick Dane/Dave Ross line up. On Saturday the signal was intermittent till noon and the start of the Steve Bishop show. The latter appears to have been on the air continuously till 6pm close-down, except for a 3:45pm-5:45pm show by Rick Dane.

Steve Bishop reported that from next weekend the station would be Sat/Sun only but with a full 10am to Midnight line-up on both days. They would also be changing frequency to somewhere very close to 1197kHz and also putting the FM frequency back on the air. In Radio Veronica's Free Radio News, Neil Frazer speculated that these changes might have some connection with the station's planned move to Eire. On Sunday they were on the air 11am(?) to 6pm, with Free Radio Show/Steve Bishop/Rick Dane/Dave Ross line-up.

RADIO MERSEY WAVES 1242kHz: 9, Meadfoot Road, Moreton, Wirral, Merseyside L46 7UW

This station was back on the air at 9am Saturday, announcing Sat/Sun operation this weekend and hopefully back to four day operation by next weekend. Burt Williams told listeners that they intend to stay on the air in spite of DTI raids. Noted, or announced were:-

Sat: 9am Mark Palmer; 11am Dave Ralphs + John Cecchini; 1pm Peter Thomas; 3pm Steve Coltrane; 5pm KtC; 7pm Paul Jay; 9pm Paul Woods; Midnight Tony Marshall; 1am Phil Davies; 3am close-down

Sun: 9am Mark Palmer; 11am Wayne Scott; 1pm Pete Cetrine; 3pm Burt Williams; 5pm WJC;  
6pm Dave Benitez; 8pm Don La One; 10pm BJ the DJ; Midnight DJ Sidney; 2am close-down

MERSEYSIDE FREE RADIO now closed down.

In its 7am newscast on Mon, Radio City carried a report that this station had played havoc with the emergency services, particularly the Gas Board, on Sunday. It wasn't repeated after 7am, though it might possibly have gone out on the hour for most of Sun afternoon and throughout the night. On Monday evening the Liverpool Echo carried the story and included quotes from spokesmen at British Gas and Merseyside police. I understand that MFR rang Radio City on Tuesday and asked them to broadcast an apology to British Gas on their behalf. The apology is said to have been put out around 1pm-2pm by Radio City, who went on to add that the police were still looking for the pirate station. On Thursday, the Wirral Globe, a local free newspaper carried the story, again quoting a spokesman for British Gas, who said that the matter was being investigated by the police. The Wallasey News, the area's other free newspaper, printed an apology to British Gas on behalf of MFR, as requested. This apology included a statement to the effect that that the station has temporarily closed down till they can find a better frequency.

In his show on Radio Mersey Waves, KtC said that he had spoken to the person behind MFR, who confirmed that the transmitter had been dismantled and that the station has closed down. MFR were said to have phoned apologies to radio City and all the local newspapers. KtC went on to say that he had been told that when MFR rang the police in Wallasey, Birkenhead and Liverpool, none of these forces was aware of any complaints. When MFR rang British Gas, they were passed from department to department in the hope that the gas board could find anyone who knew anything about their broadcasts being jammed. KtC came to the conclusion that Radio City, who seemed to be the only people aware that MFR were on the air, had blown the whole thing up out of all proportion and no interference was noted or reported. This most certainly isn't the case. Jim Browne told me on Monday evening that on Sunday he had heard the British Gas engineers trying in vain to contact their HQ and in Neil Frazer's free radio show this weekend, he said that Radio Veronica had been out and about, monitoring MFR's signal. Not only were they interfering with British Gas, but they were also wiping out the "mobile doctor" service.

Liverpool Echo, Monday October 12, 1987

PAGE 14 - WIRRAL GLOBE - THURSDAY, 15th October 1987

# Cops in hunt for radio pirates

By Andy Byrne

HI-TECH Mersey cops are hunting pirate radio operators whose broadcasts have jammed British Gas emergency frequencies. The station — called Merseyside Free Radio — brought chaos over the weekend. It was using the FM waveband to play pop music on a DIY transmitter. Gas engineers had to use public telephones to keep in touch with control as pirates jammed the emergency network. Police were alerted and began tracing the pirates whose transmitter is believed to be around Leasowe in Wirral. Today a spokesman for British Gas described the dangers of jamming emergency frequencies. He said: "It means we cannot communicate with our engineers out on the road and the result could be very serious. "This is the first time we have had problems like this. "The FM waveband is so crammed that any pirate broadcasting on it is bound to interfere with someone." A spokesman for Merseyside Police said they were still investigating.

34 Weekly Star, Thursday October 15, 1987

## A new station on air

A NEW concept in radio broadcasting began this month when the non-commercial United Christian Broadcasters started transmitting to Merseyside and to the Northwest as a whole. From last week, the UCB started transmitting from the facilities of Manx Radio in the Isle of Man, between the hours of 10.00 p.m. and 2.00 a.m., however they do propose to increase this to nine hours a day. Ken Eaves, promotions manager for the organisation told the Star: "UCB offers the people on Merseyside an alternative to broadcasting at the present time, because it is independent from the BBC and the IBA." However with the independence comes the problem of finance. It is estimated that costs per week total £3,500. Therefore the station will depend upon donations and membership subscriptions to survive. The station's format is said to be like any other radio station but with the added dimension of uncensored Christian material. Based in Stoke-on-Trent and broadcasting from the Isle of Man, UCB's main goal is covering the whole of the UK, but the Northwest is seen as their important first step, with a potential audience of up to 8 million.

# British Gas slam radio pirates

A PIRATE radio station based at a secret Wirral location threw British Gas emergency services into chaos at the weekend. The mystery station is illegal. It piggy-backed the same airwave used by British Gas engineers and an intrusion of chat and pop music made it almost impossible for them to receive orders from central office. Engineers rely on their radio to enable them to make a quick response to emergency gas leaks and other repairs. Now crime squad detectives are investigating the incident and hope to swoop in on the pirates, believed to be operating from Leasowe. A spokesman for British Gas North West told the Wirral Globe: "Our services were interrupted from early Saturday through to midnight on Sunday. It is the first time we have had trouble like this and the matter was referred to the police straight away. All we want to do is to maintain the best possible service to customers." But the spokesman declined to comment when asked of British Gas' feelings about pirate radio. The airwave intrusion meant engineers had to shout out over the radio station's programme. In the end, they had to use "alternative methods" of communication.

4 THE NEWS, 14th October, 1987

# Ahoy there! Pirates say they're sorry

A pirate radio station, broadcasting from Wirral, has apologised through the News after music interfered with emergency channels used by British Gas vehicles and ambulances. A spokesman for Merseyside Free Radio, giving his name only as Derek, said it was not the station's intention to cause trouble. "We have heard through the press and radio that the police are investigating us. We have apologised to British Gas for the inconvenience caused and have decided to shut down temporarily until we can find an alternative frequency which will not interfere with anything important. "No one at Merseyside Free Radio makes any money, and we aim to raise money for charity. Unfortunately our signal was stronger than we anticipated, and was picked up as far afield as Southport and Wigan." The station started broadcasting on 106 FM on Sunday, giving a mailing address in Leasowe.

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THE NEWS  
16 SEPT 1987

### Radio call

From Robert Gill  
Why hasn't Wirral got its own radio station when Liverpool has two — Radio's City and Merseyside? The latter does give some coverage to Wirral but is dominated by news and events in Liverpool — it is even referred to in Wirral as Radio Liverpool. So come on Wirral people, let's get a Radio Wirral. Torrington Drive, Thingwall.

THE NEWS -  
30 ~~23~~ SEPT 1987

## Radio plan was shelved

From Mark Wright programmes that could be broadcasted.

I echo Robert Gill's plea for a radio station in Wirral (letters 16.9.87), but I can also supply him with some information.

Wirral is well served by unlicensed community radio stations (pirate stations). Most of these are involved with community work/charity fund raising. The biggest of these stations is Radio Merseywaves, which broadcasts most weekends on 1242kHz on the medium waveband.

As far as legal radio is concerned, a couple of years ago the Government published a Green Paper outlining proposals for community radio in Britain. Wirral was one of more than 20 areas to be given a licence for one low power F.M. station, which was to be self supporting (ie) commercial, while being very restricted with regard to the types of

The Home Office invited applications from interested parties to apply for the licence and six consortiums applied for the Wirral licence. Before the successful applicant was announced, the Government has a sudden change of mind and shelved the proposal nationwide. No proper explanation has ever been given for this bizarre behaviour by the Government, and that is still the situation.

If Mr Gill (or any other interested parties) would like further information, they can write to the Home Office, their local MP, or the radio monitoring organisation "Anoraks UK" which has followed the story of the community radio proposals closely. The address is P.O. Box 539 Blackpool, Lancs. Meadfoot Road, Moreton.