

## **Former Radio England and Caroline South DJ, Johnnie Walker has died**

**DATELINE** 31st December 2024

Legendary offshore radio DJ, Johnnie Walker, has died after a long illness.

Johnnie began his radio career in 1966 on Swinging Radio England, before moving to Radio Caroline South, becoming a household name by hosting the hugely popular night-time show. When the Marine etc Broadcasting (Offences) Act came into force on 15th August 1967 Johnnie (with fellow DJ Robbie Dale) decided to defy the new law and stayed with Radio Caroline. Their programme at midnight on 14th August 1967, as the Act became law, probably had the largest offshore radio audience ever.

He shared the duties of Programme Controller and Senior DJ for the South ship with Robbie Dale until the station was taken off the air in March 1968.

Johnnie joined BBC Radio 1 in 1969 continuing until 1976 and establishing a reputation as a DJ who prioritised records above chat. On his lunchtime show, which launched in 1971, he pioneered new names like Steve Harley, Lou Reed, Fleetwood Mac, The Eagles and Steely Dan.

Following his departure from Radio 1, he moved to KSAN in San Francisco in 1976, where he also recorded a weekly show for broadcast on Radio Luxembourg.

Johnnie returned to Britain in the early 1980s, and following stints with Independent Local Radio (ILR) Radio West and Wiltshire Radio in the West Country, he returned to Radio 1 to present The Stereo Sequence in 1987. In the following years, he also presented shows on the new local station BBC GLR and on BBC Radio 5 Live.

Johnnie then joined Radio 2 in 1997, presenting documentaries and standing in for other DJs presenting shows across the station as well as his own Saturday afternoon show from 1998. He also hosted Radio 2's Drivetime show from 1999.

In June 2003, Johnnie broke the news to his listeners that he had cancer, and would be taking a break from presenting his show. He returned in March 2004.

Johnnie left Radio 2 Drivetime in 2006 to present a new Sunday show on the station, whilst also standing in for Terry Wogan on the Radio 2 Breakfast Show, and presenting various special

programmes. That same year he was awarded an MBE in the New Year's Honours List for services to Broadcasting. From April 2009 Johnnie presented Sounds of the 70s and in 2018 he launched The Rock Show.

Johnnie retired from Radio 2 in October 2024 because of ill health, suffering from pulmonary fibrosis, and he sadly died on 31st December 2024

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## Veteran Dutch DJ, Willem van Kooten (Joost den Draaijer) has died

**DATELINE** 3rd January 2025

Veteran Dutch DJ Willem van Kooten (Joost den Draaijer) has died at the age of 83.

Willem Van Kooten was born in January 1941 and started his career as a radio disc jockey, using the name Joost den Draaijer, eventually becoming Programme Director at Radio Veronica.

During the time he worked for Radio Veronica, he introduced ideas from U.S. commercial radio stations - presentation style for DJs, the horizontal programming format, as well as the concept of charts and tip parades. The Veronica Top 40 was first broadcast on 2nd January 1965. Van Kooten also instigated other charts - the Hitwezen Top 50 in 1964, the Hilversum 3 Top 30 in 1969 and the Radio Noordzee (RNI) Top 50 in 1971.

Van Kooten owned his own record label, a production company and a music publishing company, all under the name Red Bullet. In this capacity, he was the main investor in the group Golden Earring from 1965 to 1988.

Joost den Draaijer left Radio Veronica at the end of 1968 because of business and artistic differences of opinion, (partly related to his other business interests). Later that year he presented the AVRO TV programme *Moef Ga Ga*. At the VPRO he managed to present a pilot of the Hilversum 3 Top 30 in the spring of 1969. In 1971 he worked simultaneously at the NOS (on Hilversum 3) and at offshore Radio Noordzee (RNI), where he promoted records for his new label, Pink Elephant. He remained with Radio Noordzee and until the spring of 1972.

In October 1972 he made an appearance again at the NOS on Hilversum 3, to present a programme every day between 6 and 7 pm - the first horizontal format programme on public radio. On 29th May, 1978, after a disagreement with the NOS about a conflict of interest, the programme was taken over by Frits Spits. In honour of his farewell, the single *Joost mag het weten* was released by the Dutch Artist Choir, making it into the top 20 of the Dutch charts.

From 18th May, 1985, Van Kooten could be heard as Joost den Draaijer on the offshore station Radio Monique.

In the 1980s and 1990s, Van Kooten increasingly focused on his real estate business, including houses and golf courses, particularly in Portugal. As a businessman, Van Kooten amassed a fortune (estimated at 200 million euros by business magazine **Quote**). He also acted as a financier for Samuel Meyering's software house Parallax and made initial capital available for the political parties Leefbaar Nederland and Leefbaar Hilversum.

In recent years, Van Kooten has been a major shareholder in Arrow Classic Rock, Arrow Jazz FM and the spring water company An'l'eau of WMD Drinkwater in Anloo. In 2006 he was appointed Officer in the Order of Orange-Nassau. On 17th December 2018, Van Kooten received

the Marconi Oeuvre Award from his grandson in the television programme *Time for Max at Omroep Max*.

Willem Van Kooten died on 3rd January 2025.

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## **Former Caroline South and Britain Radio DJ, Garry Kemp, has died**

**DATELINE** 13th January 2025

Former Caroline South and Britain Radio DJ, Gary Kemp, has died.

Garry was born in Hampstead, London, in August 1934 and was educated at Finchley Grammar School.

He served as a pilot in the RAF during his National Service, worked for the Gas Board, taught English to foreign students and worked for the BBC (a Light Programme series called *Let's Go*) before joining Radio Caroline South in December 1964.

Garry was fluent in seven languages and presented a multi-lingual programme called *Caroline Continental* on Sunday mornings in addition to his normal weekday shows. This programme attracted a huge number of fans from all over Europe. He was one of the Caroline South "Good Guys" when the station tried to re-brand itself in early 1965 in the light of competition from the recently launched Radio London.

In September 1965 Garry left Caroline and did some freelance work for the BBC. In 1966, at the same time as appearing on the BBC Light Programme's Pop Inn, he also presented shows on offshore station, Britain Radio, where he broadcast under the name Gordon Bennett.

After leaving offshore radio Garry moved to Tulsa, Oklahoma and was heard on KXXO, KVOO, KWGS and KCMA. He also broadcast on WNCN, New York.

He returned to the UK and was heard on the BBC World Service during 1995-96.

Later Garry moved to Camdenton, Missouri, working for a local AM/FM station, KRMS, in the Ozark hills of Missouri, but left in 2012 after a dispute over payment. He became an author and in 2012 his book - *The Windfall Chameleon* - was published .

Garry died on 12th January 2025, aged 90.

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## **Former Radio England and Radio City DJ, Gary Stevens, has died**

**DATELINE** Florida, 18th January 2025

Former Radio England and Radio City DJ, Gary Stevens, has died.

Born on April 5, 1940, in Buffalo, New York, Gary launched his radio career in 1959 at WWOW in Conneaut, Ohio, while on break from college. His early years in radio took him to WCKR and WAME in Miami—as well as WFUN while he was a student at the University of Miami. In 1961,

he moved to WIL in St. Louis before making a name for himself at WKNR in Detroit in 1963.

Gary joined WMCA in New York City in April 1965 as one of the station's "Good Guys", hosting a weeknight show from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m.

In 1966 he hosted a daily taped programme for UK offshore station Swinging Radio England, until that station closed in November of the same year. Gary's recorded programme was taken over by another UK offshore station, Radio City and continued until that station was closed in February 1967.

In September 1968, Gary retired from his role as a disc jockey and relocated to Switzerland and London, where he launched a company selling US TV programmes to broadcasters across Europe and the Middle East.

Gary returned to the United States in 1971 to manage a Phoenix-based radio station, KRIZ. In 1975, he moved to Minneapolis to oversee KDWB 63 AM and played a pivotal role in acquiring its FM counterpart at 101.3. He was promoted to President of Doubleday Broadcasting in 1977, where he remained until 1985. During his tenure at Doubleday Broadcasting, Gary managed stations across major markets, including WLLZ in Detroit, KWK in St. Louis, KPKE in Denver, WAVA in Washington D.C., as well as WAPP and WHN in New York City.

When Doubleday decided to sell its broadcasting assets in 1986, Gary moved into media investment banking as Associate Managing Director at Wertheim Schroeder & Co., Inc., where he brokered many major radio transactions. Later he started his own media investment business, becoming President and CEO of Gary Stevens & Co. He also served on several boards, including the National Association of Broadcasters, the Radio Advertising Bureau, the Electronic Media Ratings Council and several public companies, including Saga Communications, where he served as Lead Director.

Gary died on 17th February 2025, in Delray Beach, Florida, at the age of 84.

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## **Internet station Radio Mi Amigo from the LV18 Lightship granted AM licence**

**DATELINE** Harwich, 16th July 2025

Internet station, Radio Mi Amigo, broadcasting from the LV18 lightship anchored in Harwich Quay has been granted a low power AM licence by OFCOM.

Tony O'Neill, Station Manager and Licensee, said "We've been broadcasting on temporary licences for twenty five years and are pleased to announce that we have now been granted this five year licence. Our long term aim has been to remember the important part the offshore radio pirates played in sixties pop music and this ties in with our on board museum. Harwich has a very important role in this aspect of its rich maritime history."

Our Medium Wave station programmes are the same as our 24/7 online station, broadcasting a mix of 60s and 70s music, reflecting the era of the offshore pirates. Those in the vicinity of LV18 in Harwich can now tune in on 1575 kHz MW.

We will be holding a live weekend between 14 - 17 August when a team of DJs, many of whom were themselves pirates of the airwaves, will be live from the LV18 on 1575kHz Medium Wave, for those in the vicinity of the LV18, plus online at lv18radio.uk and via Alexa.

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## **Former Radio Veronica DJ, Chiel Montagne, has died**

**DATELINE** Hilversum, The Netherlands, 26th July 2025

Former Radio Veronica DJ, Chiel Montagne has died.

Chiel Montagne, whose real name was Bert van Rheenen, became best known with the music programme Op losse groeven, which later continued under the name Op volle toeren and which has been on TV for almost twenty years. The programme was entirely dedicated to Dutch music.

Chiel Montagne started as a radio DJ in the 1960s at Radio Veronica, then in 1971 he moved to TROS TV presenting the programme Op losse groeven every week.

Montagne was active in the music world in many other ways too. He had his own studio where many artists recorded their work and he was co-founder of the radio station Holland FM, which was dedicated to Dutch music. He also had an agency and wrote lyrics for Dutch artists.

In 2010, he was made a Knight in the Order of Orange-Nassau.

Chiel Montagne died on 24th July 2025 at the age of 80.

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## **Former Voice of Peace DJ and founder of The Radio Ship, Doug Wood, has died**

**DATELINE** Kent, 31st July 2025

Former Voice of Peace DJ and founder of the internet based offshore tribute station, The Radio Ship, Doug Wood, has died.

Doug's interest in radio started when he heard Radio Caroline in March 1964, a few days after the station began broadcasting. Before becoming a broadcaster Doug had many jobs in the electrical industry, sales, pub management and eventually as a Club DJ.

In October 1981 Doug was offered his first professional radio job on The Voice Of Peace off the coast of Israel where he presented a regular morning programme from 9am to 12noon, as well as with many other shows on the station.

In April 1983 Doug moved to the French and Italian Riviera and presented the Breakfast Show on Radio Nova International. Later that same year he joined Signal Radio, the new commercial radio station for Staffordshire and Cheshire, where he stayed for 31 years before moving to Moorlands Radio and then The Hitmix.

In 2018 Doug gave up broadcasting to become a full time carer for his wife, Lynn, whose health was sadly deteriorating.

Doug launched The Radio Ship in 2014, as an internet based station playing music, jingles and DJ clips from the original offshore stations, including The Voice Of Peace.

Doug was a great friend of the Offshore Radio Museum, promoting us on The Radio Ship (for which he voiced our promos) and building a 'just for fun' quiz around information to be found at the Museum.

Doug died on 30th July 2025 at the age of 69 after a short illness.

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## **Former Radio City and Caroline South DJ, Tom Edwards, has died**

**DATELINE** 26th October 2025

Former Radio City and Radio Caroline South DJ, Tom Edwards, has died at the age of 80.

Tom was born in Norwich on 20th March 1945. He first appeared on the air at the age of 18 when he was the announcer on a Border Television programme *Beat On The Border*. In 1964 he was working as a 'blue coat' at a Pontin's holiday camp and joined Radio City in September 1965 eventually becoming the station's senior DJ.

He earned the nick name "Tatty Tom" because he was always so immaculately dressed. After Radio City was prosecuted and closed in February 1967, Tom joined Radio Caroline South where he stayed until August and the introduction of the Marine etc Broadcasting (Offences) Act.

Tom then became a regular presenter and newsreader on BBC Look East and in 1968 became a staff announcer and newsreader BBC Radios One and Two. He was also for many years a continuity announcer on Thames Television.

Despite some well publicised problems with alcohol which interrupted his career, he fought back with help from Bob Monkhouse and was heard on five series of the comedian's TV show *Wipeout*. He also occasionally presented programmes for BBC Radio Norfolk and Saga Radio. Tom was also a participant in the Pirate BBC Essex broadcasts in 2004.

Tom's autobiography, *Is Anybody There?*, was published in 2018

Tom died on 25th October 2025 after losing a battle with cancer.

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## **Former Radio Atlanta, Caroline South and Radio England DJ, Colin Nicol, has died**

**DATELINE** Perth, Western Australia 29th October 2025

Former Radio Atlanta, Radio Caroline South and Radio England DJ, Colin Nicol, has died age 89.

Colin was born in Perth, Western Australia on 29th December 1936 and his first job in radio was in 1957 with the 6PM network. He moved to the 6KY network in 1960 where he was also programme director.

Colin arrived in the UK in early 1963 and a chance meeting with Ken Evans, a fellow Australian

who was involved in the launch of Radio Atlanta, led to Colin's recruitment as a disc jockey in September 1963 - although the station itself did not go onto the air until May 1964.

He presented the first full show on Radio Atlanta's opening day 12th May 1964. Most of Atlanta's programmes were pre-recorded on land and the tapes sent out to the station's ship, *Mi Amigo*, to be broadcast, but in June 1964 Colin and Bryan Vaughan were sent out to the ship to play the recorded shows and present some live ones.

In July 1964 Radio Atlanta merged with Radio Caroline and the *Mi Amigo* became home to Radio Caroline South. Colin stayed with Radio Caroline South until 1966 when he transferred to the newly launched Radio England and Britain Radio team.

After a few months he moved to Radio Luxembourg, later becoming a BBC staff announcer, working also on BBC World Service and BBC Radio London. That was followed by five years with the British Forces Broadcasting Service in Malta and Gibraltar. After returning to Western Australia, he ran shopping malls, but also found time to do some part-time broadcasting and lecturing to university media students on the subject of offshore radio.

He retired to a southern suburb of Perth where he was busy with his interest in radio and was in regular contact with radio, entertainment and musician friends worldwide. At the same time, he researched local history and wrote on that and other matters for local newspapers.

Colin was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and passed away on 28th October 2025 at Fiona Stanley Hospital in Perth, Western Australia.

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