

THE PIRATE RADIO REVOLUTION OF THE 1960s

with CHARLES WRIGHT & BRIAN NICHOLS

If you didn't manage to see this talk by Charles Wright and Brian Nichols then you missed a treat!

Several of the AVSFHG's committee dressed up for the occasion and one had brought along a transistor radio made locally by Pye in Yoxford.



Other stations that were mentioned, such as Radio Veronica (Dutch) and Radio Mercur (Scandinavian).

This year celebrates the 60th anniversary of Radio Caroline and it was interesting to note that the station was initially moored off the Felixstowe coast. Charles' late brother (Andy Wright) shot cine footage of a visit to see Radio Caroline where the famous radio DJs (disc jockeys) came out on deck and introduced themselves because no-one actually knew what they looked like!

Caroline was on air from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily and the first record played by DJ Christopher Moore was Not Fade Away by the Rolling Stones: "I'm gonna tell you how it's gonna be, you're gonna give your love to me."

Many other DJs were mentioned including Tony Blackburn, but the one that I associate the most with the 60s was Simon Dee. He joined Radio Caroline in March 1964, though I remember him later as the TV host of Juke Box Jury.

Charles explained that he and a friend, Tom Day, built a radio station in his bedroom in Trimley when he was just 15 years old. He called it Radio Walthamstow to confuse the authorities with their illicit broadcasting, which in reality only went a few hundred yards.

I won't readily forget the image (above right) of Charles in a cupboard lined with empty egg boxes to act as sound proofing!

Charles and Brian demonstrated effectively and comically why a revolution was needed on the radio, because the BBC played "nice music and nice serials" but they just weren't playing popular music.

Although a late-comer to the 1960s I had heard of some of the offshore radio stations such as Radio Luxemburg and Radio Caroline but not of the



Charles Wright running Radio Walthamstow from a cupboard

Though offshore radio became illegal, Radio Caroline carried on broadcasting until 1991 when it was forced to dock after running aground. Radio Caroline now broadcasts legally.

Charles and Brian recounted the history of Caroline in detail but also included information about other offshore radio stations such as Radio London, Radio Scarborough and Radio Northsea International.

With a mix of rare cine footage, photographs, music and jingles we were all able to easily reminisce about radio in the 1960s and 70s.

If this has whetted your appetite and you would like to know more, why not visit the Radio Caroline Exhibition at the Felixstowe Museum (www.felixstowemuseum.org)?

Jane Evans



Simon Dee