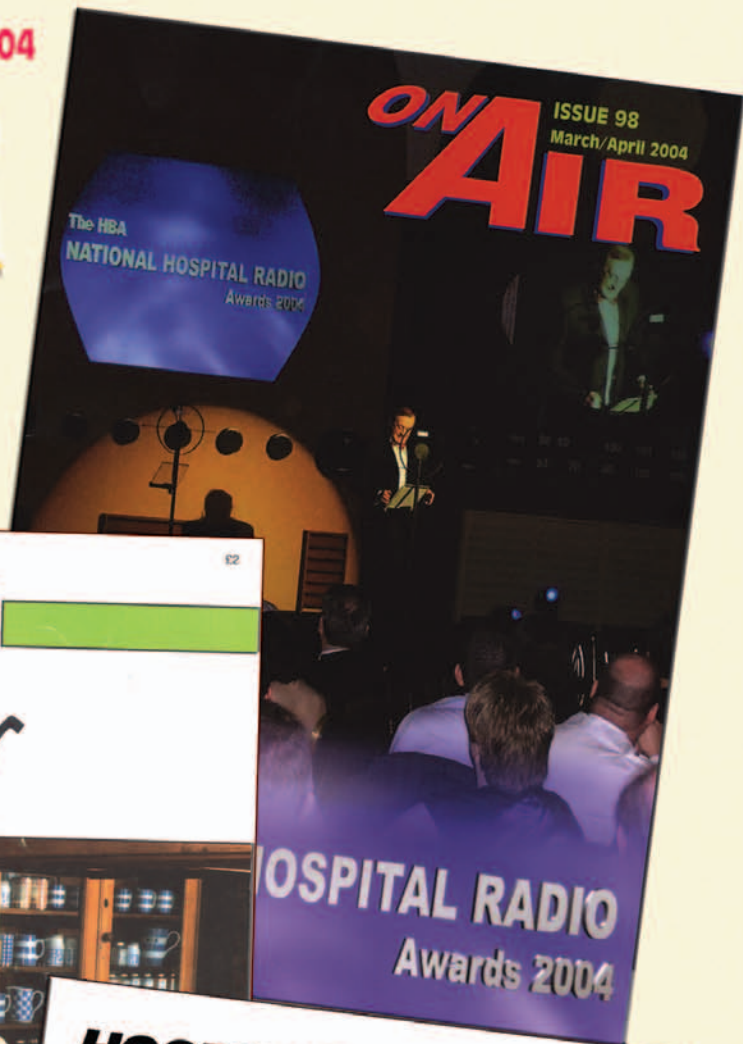


# ON AIR

ISSUE 100  
September/October 2004



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**BACK AT THE  
NEC FOR  
2004**



## The Official Journal of the Hospital Broadcasting Association

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#### FRONT COVER PICTURE:

The changing covers of On Air. Pictured how the magazine started life as Hospital Radio News, changed from A4 to A5, then went to spot colour and has now ended up in A4 format in four colour throughout

## 100th ISSUE



### *Dear Reader,*

Welcome to our very special 100th issue of On Air. As you can see from the front cover, the format has changed considerably over the years – you can read from former Editors how they tried to make their mark on the magazine. I took over as Editor at the beginning of 2001, when, unfortunately a magazine had not been published for nearly a year. Now three and a half years later and 19 issues on, I have hopefully established a regular routine for publishing on time; alright with a slight hiccup last year. I think I may be excused that one.

I was delighted to receive congratulatory messages from Jimmy Savile, Ken Bruce and the Duchess of Devonshire, which you can read in the magazine.

I make no apology for publishing some features from previous On Airs. I am sure newer members will find them fascinating and older members (in years served, not age!) find they bring back memories.

I had a wonderful response to my plea for stories from stations and I hope now you have been bitten by the bug and will continue to fill up my letterbox, so that we can ensure a good read.

Now please sit back and enjoy this bumper issue and look carefully at the photographs extracted from old On Airs. See anyone you recognise?

Have a good read and don't forget the copy date.

*Michelle*

**On Air is the Official Journal of the HBA which is the trading name of the National Association of Hospital Broadcasting Organisations, a Company limited by guarantee.**

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**COPY DATE NEXT ISSUE 9th October, 2004**



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# Committee Report

## Hello and Goodbye

Most you will have heard by now that Ray Oxley tendered his resignation as HBA Chief Executive in early August, his recent resignation from Radio North Tees meaning that he no longer met the criteria of being a bona fide member of a Full Member of the Association. The Executive Committee were saddened by Ray's untimely departure and thank him for his hard work as our leader over the last nine months or so. Hopefully it won't be too long before Ray finds himself another station to become actively involved with.

We have also said goodbye to Craig Robinson, the North Regional Rep for the last few years. Craig is taking a well-earned rest and John Williamson from Kendal Hospital Radio has taken over the reins. Thanks to Craig and a welcome John.

## PPL

I wrote this two months ago but there is very little more that I can say other than that the discussions with PPL over music licensing are still on-going!

## 'Patient Power' Providers

As you will hopefully be aware, June Snowden and Geoff Fairbairn have struck up a good working relationship with Patientline over the last couple of years. They are now working on forming relationships with the other 'Patient Power' bedside entertainment system suppliers and have already had success with Wandsworth. If you have any queries regarding delivering your signal over these new systems, please contact June (general enquiries) or Geoff (technical issues). If you can provide them with contacts at any of the other system providers, once again please get in touch.

## AGM

At the time of writing I'm busy preparing the mailshot inviting nominations for election to the Executive Committee at the AGM at the end of October. By the time you get this, nominations will probably have closed and I shall be busy preparing the next mailshot with the agenda for the AGM, the Annual Report and the list of nominations.

Please find the time to read the Annual Report and, if possible, come along to the AGM – the HBA is your association and it's important that you are involved in taking decisions that define its future. Our governing documents preclude postal or proxy voting at the moment, which means that only those stations which physically attend the AGM can have their say and cast their vote. Unfortunately, only a small minority of stations do so. If you are able to send a representative, please do so. Those of you that are intending to come along, please remember that, in a change to the previous procedure, you will need to bring a signed 'authorised representa-



by Nigel Dallard, Secretary

tive' form with you if you want to speak/vote at the AGM.

## Draft Charities Bills

The Parliamentary Joint Committee scrutinising the draft bill for England and Wales has finished taking evidence and its members are spending the summer drafting its report to the Home Office, which will be published in late September. Reviewing the other written submissions and reading the transcripts of the oral evidence sessions, it was heartening to see that many of HBA's comments were echoed elsewhere. Hopefully, the government will take note and amend the proposed legislation before submitting the final bill for discussion in parliament.

At the time of writing John Watson and I are just finalising our comments on the equivalent draft bill for Scotland. Although the scrutiny of the draft bill doesn't seem to be taking place quite so publicly as south of the border, all comments made will be available on the Scottish Executive

website in late September, so we will be able to see if others agree with our view at that time.

I hope to be able to give those of you attending the conference and AGM in Stoke-on-Trent an update on the position at that time.

## HBA Enterprises Ltd.

As previously explained, the Charity Commission find the relationship between HBA and HBA Enterprises Ltd to be irregular. I'm pleased to report that the directors of HBA Enterprises Ltd have now indicated that they will attend a meeting with representatives of the Executive Committee. Unfortunately, my attempts so far to suggest dates for the meeting have been frustrated by either Colin or Vera being on holiday.

## Regions

As part of the on-going review of the structure of the Executive Committee and the services HBA provides to its members, the Executive Committee have asked Chris Berezai and the Regional Reps to undertake a thorough review of HBA Regions and what they provide for members. This may result in a re-structuring of the Regions – one idea that has been suggested is having fewer, larger regions but then holding meetings and other get-togethers more frequently in different parts of each region, so that station representatives have to travel less to get to meetings. Also under discussion is the role that Regions play in supporting stations in this era of electronic communications. Any comments or suggestions would be gratefully received either by your Regional Rep or by Chris Berezai.

Because of this review and the impact it may have on the work of regions are the position of Regional Reps on the EC, we have deferred proposing Regional Bylaws to regularise the position of Regions with in the HBA.

## From Ken Bruce

23.08.04

Dear Michelle

My warmest congratulations on the 100th issue of On-Air. The magazine simply gets better and better in serving the Hospital Broadcasting movement, which itself reaches ever-higher standards of service and entertainment. May all concerned go on to even greater heights.

Best wishes

Ken Bruce



# To the On-Air team

## Congratulations

on your

From everyone at

# 100th issue



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# A Page from the Presidents

This is what Alan Grimadell, as President, wrote in September 1994 ...

'The future of Hospital Broadcasting will always remain with the patient – the question to be asked is are we as members of the HBA providing the proper service for the patient?

The service we should provide is 'output' in the form of entertainment and communication. If we fail in this service, then we fail as hospital broadcasting stations, and we fail as the HBA.

The national magazine 'On Air' is the voice of our member stations and is to be used as a platform for their views and ideas. The magazine not only expresses the points of view of the HBA National Executive, it HAS to express the concerns of our membership.

I was very surprised to learn that BT had cancelled their advertising contract (On Air issue 58). I sincerely hope they will reconsider their action for future issues.

We are all involved in hospital broadcasting for the benefit of the hospital patient. Anyone who has ever spoken to a patient will realise how important and effective the work of a hospital broadcasting station can be.

Hospital Broadcasting throughout the UK has a very high profile. It is well respected at the highest level. The HBA is recognised as a strong national organisation and its respect has been earned because we as individuals give our time freely for the benefit of hospital patients.

It may be time to stop discussing mixers, microphones, loops and frequencies and concentrate on our audience, the patients, who are benefiting from our service.

**Alan Grimadell, President HBA**

## NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:

I have received many calls following my last Editorial, from people concerned at the direction that Hospital Broadcasting is taking. Most are fearful that the basic therapeutic concepts of the service are gradually being lost and that many stations are becoming 'technically' heavy and are generally run like community radio stations. If you have an opinion on the subject, why not put it in writing and get it published in On Air.

## This is a message from Alan today:

The Organ, the Mouthpiece of our National Association, and our National Executive, celebrates its 100th issue – Congratulations 'On Air'.

I still retain the first copy I ever received, then called 'Hospital Radio News', February 1980, editor David McGealy.

From 1981 to 1987 I used to contribute with a regular column sent from the 95th Floor, NAHBO Towers!

On Air represents the views of all concerned within Hospital Broadcasting. May 'On Air' grace my door mat for many more editions. Cheers.

**Alan Grimadell  
Former President, HBA**

## I have dedicated this page to the words of the three National Presidents of the Hospital Broadcasting Association

### I received this letter from Ena Montgomery, who was President for three years

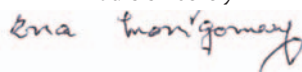
Dear Editor,

Congratulations on the HBA's one hundred edition of the magazine 'On Air'. As a Founder Member, as Secretary for nine years and as National President for three years, I have watched the magazine grow from a mere acorn into a mighty oak tree and have rejoiced to see the quality and the standard flourish throughout the years. I especially wish to congratulate you, Michelle, as Editor of the magazine of today's excellence – one which compares, if not surpasses, any periodical on the Newsagents' shelves. We are fortunate to have you as our Editor for this 100th issue, which is a very important milestone for the HBA. It is difficult to express fully the pleasure I have every other month on reading each new issue of 'On Air'.

The April issue, No. 69, in 1997, pictured me on the cover after the award of the MBE, presented by His Royal Highness, Prince Charles. I received this award with great pride, not only for myself but for the whole of Hospital Radio throughout the country. Prince Charles spoke to me at length, expressing his personal interest as he asked me many questions about the project. So many questions that I was almost overcome and lost for words. It is rewarding to know that His Royal Highness so clearly acknowledges the value of our work.

Once again, may I offer my congratulations on the achievement of reaching 100 editions of 'On Air' and to say how honoured I feel to have been associated with Hospital Radio which has proved of increasing therapeutic value and support to patients in medical care.

Yours sincerely



Cllr Ena Montgomery, MBE, JP

## Congratulations 'On Air'

One hundred editions of On Air is a milestone indeed and I would like to thank all those editors who have worked so hard – tirelessly – to produce On Air, often in difficult circumstances.

Thank you on behalf of every involved in hospital broadcasting to all editors, not only of On Air but the fore-runners – they include David Cottom, Dave McGealy, Roger Manley, Roger Richards and John Watson.

If it had not been for the initial idea of Steve Coote in the early 1970's and the early contributors to former magazines, On Air, may not be where it is today.

A big thanks is also due to our advertisers, as without them the magazine could not be viable – Thank you to you all.

We must also remember all those who have contributed articles and have sent information about stations. Thank you and please continue to contribute with all your news.

Finally, my thanks to Michelle who has continued to produce On Air, especially following the death of John and that could not have been easy – so well done Michelle and a very big thank you. I was delighted that I saw her recently too at Radio West Suffolk.

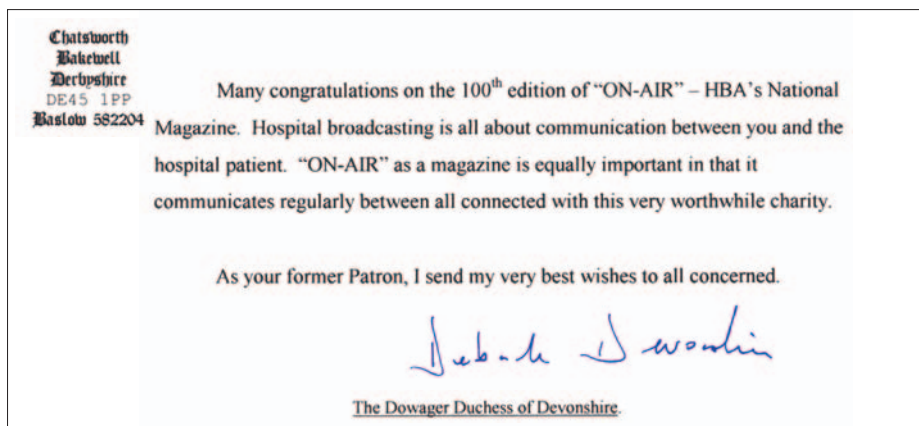
I have received many comments during my station visits, all positive, about On Air – and I know it is well read. John Whitney recently congratulated the Association on a recent edition – it is lovely to hear how much interest there is.

On Air has, in my view, always been important and I look forward to receiving my copy. I like to read what is happening around the country, but it has also become a very important means of communication for the HBA.

Congratulations to everyone who has made it what it is today.

Here's to the next 100 editions.

**June Snowden  
President, HBA**





# Hundred Not Out

by Dennis Rookard

It's a frightening thought isn't it? A hundred issues of On Air! Been though a few changes in its time and had quite a few editors. Now, of course, it's a full colour A4 magazine but back in those early days when issue number one was published, it was called just Hospital Radio News, our Association's magazine was a few A5 size photocopied sheets, with the only photo – if you were lucky – on the front cover. But the content was the same, new studios, reports of meetings and conferences and the same old problems being voiced in letters and articles.

But one thing has changed. Hospital Broadcasting itself. Today, of course, we have computer aided studios, CD machines and jingles and music from hard disc. With perhaps the greatest change being that of having broadcast transmitters. Something those early pioneers could only dream about.

Interestingly, hospital radios stations back in the late sixties, fell into three main types. First were the stations such as Bristol and Portsmouth that had grown from being a half hour request show before and after the main Saturday afternoon broadcast of the week ... a local football commentary. Then there were those stations like York, who had developed from the local tape recording club, who, looking for listeners, hit on the idea of playing their programmes to patients at the local hospital by taking a tape machine into the wards before building a studio.

All very worthy, which is something you could not say about the third group. Those local bands of radio anoraks who really wanted to work on the pirate radio ships but had to settle instead for those listeners in ward ten. Here I plead guilty and bless that Hospital Secretary at the East London Hospital who allowed a small group of teenagers to build a studio

and run cables across the hospital campus as well as the hospital League of Friends who financed the station in its first years. For the hospital it meant request and entertainment shows but for many of us involved, hospital radio became a life changing experience.

But just for fun – and old timers can shed the odd tear here, lets look inside a typical hospital radio studio in the late sixties. Everybody had their own ideas of studio design ranging from the large multi room complexes of Southampton and Birmingham to small back of the boiler house tiny one room studios. But most were similar in concept.

First off the mixer. If you were not lucky to have an old cast off commercial desk, you had to build your own. And many and various were the crazy designs to be found back then. At Harold Wood Radio, for example, our six channel mixer featured faders made from Meccano strips fixed to a 500k volume control. No meters you understand. At another station, a small four channel disco mixer did the job whilst over at Chelmsford – now in their 40th year – they had a wonderful ex-ITN television sound desk refurbished by some kind folk at the local Marconi factory and which featured faders with little lights that changed from green to red when opened.

Turntables were cheap back then. No instant start mind you, just a couple of domestic SP25 units with slip mats to hold the record on cue until released were quite normal. Open reel tapes were also much in evidence in those early days and standard tape decks were those that featured all three speeds. Domestic four track machines for the smaller groups but high quality semi broadcast machines for those

groups better at fund raising

As for microphones. Well what ever was to hand and sounded good on air. Usually a microphone that had seen service on stage. As for getting the signal to the wards, for many it was a long cable that via a line amplifier wound its way around the hospital from the studio to the Rediffusion relay box in some remote part of the hospital, which might well involve someone in the early days having to journey from studio to the box to switch it over from BBC Radio Two to the hospital service before tamping back again at the end of transmission. Remote switching was just a dream for many. And who can ever forget those SG brown headphones in the wards.

But back to the studio. Egg boxes on the wall were reckoned to be good for sound deadening, proper sound boards being far too expensive. There was also much argument to be had over self operation or having a team to produce a programme. Feeling was that having a presenter, engineers and someone to play in the records and tapes all controlled by a producer made for great team spirit. Having self operation would mean that stations would be empty of members as they would be down the pub. Finally, in the age of equality, it's interesting to remember that back in those early days, Hospital radio was a boys' toy. Women were suffered, so long as they knew their place. Collecting requests, cleaning the studio and making the coffee for their adored boyfriends.

As these stations developed, On Air was there to faithfully report their activities. It was on hand to report on the development of the National Association along with its conferences.

So a hundred issues later, here's a happy birthday to HBA's house rag. Long may it continue!



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## From the Editors

So, who are those hardy souls, who come rain or shine made sure your copy of On Air dropped onto your doormat regularly every other month? Let me introduce them to you: Roger Manley, Roger Richards and John Watson and I believe they each deserve a medal for all their hard work. Their style may have been very different but their intentions were pretty much the same: to bring you a good read, up-to-date news and the latest edicts from the Executive Committee. That, on the face of it sounds quite easy but as I have said many times over the past few weeks, if I had a pound for every time I have been asked the copy date, I would be quite rich now! Mention must also be made of Dave McGealy, who edited our very first magazine, then called Hospital Radio News. Well done Dave. It would be very remiss of me in this article not to mention our advertising sales reps. Not an easy job, I am sure you will agree but each one (Emma Willson, Richard Ellison and now Gary King) have each done their bit in making the magazine virtually self financing. Please give them a pat on the back, they deserve it!

### ROGER MANLEY 1983-1985

I took over as editor of the NAHBO magazine, then called 'Hospital Radio News' in 1983 in succession to David McGealy. At that time, it was a duplicated publication. The first few editions kept the same title but was later changed to 'Hospital Broadcasting News' in order to reflect the growing importance of hospital television. It was, however, clear that the publication was in need of improvement and updating.

A new look with a new title was what was required, the EC saying any improvement should be, as far as possible, paid for by increased advertising. The big problem was what to call it; I had already arranged with a printer in London, near to where I lived at the time, what I wanted, with a colour cover and A5 format but what were we going to call it? Any title had to reflect hospital television as well as radio and the answer came from David Cottam – 'On Air'. When we broadcast, we go 'On Air' so I thought this the most appropriate title. I also received an offer from Roger Richards to typeset it for me and that offer was gratefully received.

I felt the general membership had a right to know what was discussed at EC meetings, so, after each one, myself and Peter Dixon, then either Technical Officer or Membership Secretary, prepared a new column 'Topics Discussed at EC Meetings' which was included in each issue.

The first issue of 'On Air' was published in time for the Spring Conference 1984, held in Leeds. It soon gained the approval of the delegates.

I had other problems to deal with. The main one was ensuring the EC kept to the press date as published in the magazine, they wanted constant reminding. This was fair enough as they would be involved in other aspects of running the organisation but I also had to bear in mind that, if the magazine was not published in time, there would, rightly, be complaints from the membership and that I wanted to avoid. I decided to remind them a few days before the press date of their contributions but if it were not received in time, it would be held over until the next edition in two months time. This did in fact happen on two occasions to 'Chairman's Chat'. In my time as editor the magazine only appeared late once, not a bad achievement in over four years of editorship and that during 1986 I was living in temporary accommodation after my home had been destroyed by fire.

Since I left the editorship in 1988, the magazine has greatly improved, the one noticeable fact is the enlargement from A5 to A4, which was overdue and each successive editor has improved it, which is good for the HBA and the magazine. ➤

### ROGER RICHARDS 1985-1996

My first involvement with On Air was in 1985. I had just bought a quality daisy-wheel printer and the latest version of 'Wordstar' and offered my services as typesetter to the then editor, Roger Manley.

In those days, the pages were printed on to paper rolls, which were a column wide and were then literally pasted with Pritt Stick or melted wax onto A4 sheets of paper ready for printing. From then I can claim to have literally typed every word in every edition of On Air for some eleven years, approximately 60 odd editions.

I became Editor in 1988 and in October 1990 I managed to persuade the NAHBO committee to produce an edition in A4 size for the ill-fated Hull Conference. The hotel burnt down, the conference moved to Birmingham and Issue 39 was produced in A4 size with a three colour cover. The main talking point at conference though was not the wonderful new look of On Air but the Message from Prince Charles enclosed within which I had headed – A MESSAGE FROM HIGHBURY. My football-besotted brain had neatly moved him from his real home at Highgrove.

Fortunately the NAHBO Exec decided to continue with the A4 format despite the extra costs. This resulted in increased revenue from advertisers and the magazine became self-financing.

From then on, On Air was produced six times a year with an average content of 36 pages and a full colour cover. The editorship was taken over by John Watson in 1996.

I read with interest the editorials from our current editor, Michelle Newstead but was surprised when she quoted something I had written in September 1986 about contributions. I have always believed the magazine, whatever it is called, is a major means of communication within the membership of the HBA but it is not the Editor's job to write as well as edit it, something I point blank refused to do. It seems some things never change. It is your magazine and your contributions to it depend on whether it is published. I hope 'On Air' goes from strength to strength and wish Michelle well for the future.

### JOHN WATSON 1996-1999

When Michelle phoned to ask if, as a former editor, I could write a little bit for the 100th issue of On Air, it prompted me to look back over the years to earlier issues.

I don't have the very earliest issues; my collection begins in November 1985 long before we began using the term HBA. Even then it was great read. 36 pages packed with station news and latest happenings, technical advice and badly exposed photos!

Over the years On Air has changed as technology has changed. As printing processes have improved it has progressed to glossy paper, grown from A5 to A4, included spot colour and eventually has become a full colour magazine. Some of the photos still leave a bit to be desired though!

But that's not the only way in which technology has affected the magazine. The arrival of e-mail and the worldwide web has meant that long detailed discussions can take place on-line over a number of days and involve many contributors. The e-mail forum was almost solely responsible for the end of the On Air letters page. Those who are interested can get all the latest hospital radio news almost as soon as it happens. It must make it very hard indeed to keep the magazine fresh and interesting.

Michelle tries to keep a balance between the detail of legal and business issues and the excitement of new studio launches and the latest fun day in the shopping centre. I don't envy her the job.

I'm proud to have been editor for four years. If there was a downside, it was knowing what was in the magazine. For four years I lost that excitement that I always get, ripping open the packaging and reading On Air cover to cover in one sitting.

But it was an enjoyable time when I got to know a huge number of hospital broadcasters from around the country and learned an awful lot about what hospital radio can do for the patient. On Air should be a magazine that shows the fun we all get from our hobby, week after week.

So, Happy Birthday On Air, you may not get a telegram from HRH – but I'm sure you have a lot of great years in you yet.

# Why Are You Involved in Hospital Radio?

Is this a question you have asked yourselves and can you in all honesty, answer with – 'It's for the benefit of patients and not to fulfil my ambition to be on local radio.' I would be very surprised if there is anyone in NAHBO who does not have a desire to work on a radio station where they might receive greater recognition.

A few years ago, the only chance for presenters to get into professional radio was to join Hospital Radio. If you applied to a BBC or ILR station, they would suggest you go along to your local hospital and gain some experience. The reason the local BBC, or ILR would send these people along to us was quite simply to let hospital radio have the expense and do the donkey work in giving presenters that much needed kick up the backside.

It was quite often the case, that people who ran discos, etc. would join Hospital Radio to gain experience with the view to gaining a position on what was considered professional radio.

BBC, ILR, Satellite, Community, and Cable Radio, are all now looking towards Hospital Radio for their future staff. The deregulation of radio will mean community radio especially, will be on our doorstep. We at Radio

**Asks Peter Davidson-Smith  
of Radio Heatherwood  
in On Air Issue 44  
September/October 1991  
when he took the opportunity  
to air his views**

Heatherwood have always recognised this desire by presenters to move up the radio ladder.

The volunteers who join hospital radio could probably be put into three categories.

First the volunteers with no desire to join other types of radio and they will enjoy fundraising and being a part of the station's development and will stay for many a year.

Second the career volunteer who has been told to join an HBO for the much needed kick up the backside and is only passing through and doesn't care what happens in two years time to the station.

Thirdly, the volunteer who is a mixture of both of the above. David, the manager and myself have over 22 years' experience between us now of dealing with would be presenters or volunteers, and we can tell the ones who are going to stay and the one's who are career pre-

senters.

The station's reputation for training has grown over the years. Yes, we have full off air training in the subjects of equipment and presentation, PRS, copyright, libel and slander.

The station has a twenty page book called the Code of Conduct. Every item in that book which is full of common-sense rules to most people are there because a presenter in the past acted without thinking of others. It's not just a code of conduct, it carries the station's policy on any particular item. It informs the presenter of legal requirements. The code of conduct started from the display of notices at the station and the constant visits to the studios to give a newcomer an ear bashing by the management. The code of conduct lets everyone know how we would like the station to continue. It is important that we become more professional in our outlook towards the future but true volunteers, who are the backbone of the stations in the UK, will become disillusioned if they are used to supplement the training of others who give nothing in return.

If you are having problems with staff training or you have ideas about attracting the right sort of people we would love to hear from you.

Is there something you feel particularly strongly about? Do you agree with what Peter says? Why not take this opportunity to get on your soapbox and share your views with the readers. If you totally disagree with Peter, we'd like to hear from you as well. I will however, not print personal attacks on any members. Please write to the Editor (see page 1 for details) with your views on any matter you have strong feelings about. This is your opportunity to let off steam! – Ed

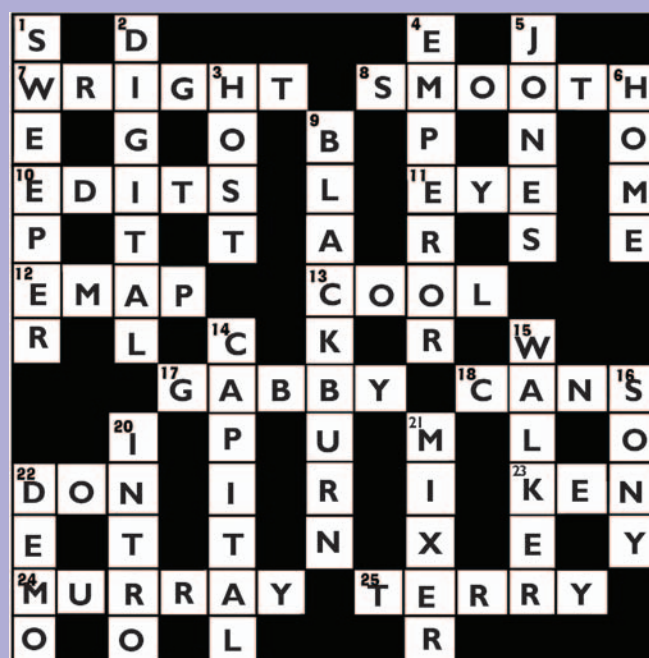
**Thanks to Roy Stubbs, Chairman of  
Southampton HR for the following gem:**

**March 2004, Memo from The Department of  
Highways and Road Safety.**

'In order to assist other motorists in identifying potentially dangerous drivers, it is now compulsory for anyone with a lower than average IQ and driving ability to display a warning flag. The flag, composing of a red cross on a white background, will be attached to the top of at least one door of their vehicle. If the passenger, who may also be an occasional driver, is also of a low IQ, then two flags must be displayed. A large consignment of these flags, manufactured in China, have been put on sale in local supermarkets, at a subsidised price, so they are readily available to everyone.

Ladies who often lose their car in the supermarket car park, may also be permitted to display such a flag in order to easily locate their 'lost' vehicle.

**Here is the solution to the Crossword in issue  
99, which was kindly supplied by Alan Wayne**





## Feeling Good

Someone once asked me what was the purpose of a hospital radio station now that there were so many entertainment options to choose from. I replied that unlike other stations our prime aim is to cheer people up, to be sensitive to their needs and to play their specific requests.

It is important to stress that it is not our role to play what we want to hear or to increase our station's ratings to encourage advertising revenue. Neither are we blathering on about what we are going to do next week, because we hope that most of our listeners will be out of hospital and playing their own favourites by that time.

Understanding our audience is vital, so everyone who joins Radio Mayday, in whatever capacity, must spend a certain amount of time as a ward visitor. Thus they obtain experience in talking to people who are feeling rotten, fed up, anxious, weak, in pain and sometimes tearful.

by Roy Topp  
Radio Mayday

Reproduced from On Air 82  
January/February 2001

Our presentations and programmes are really audience led. Therefore it is our regular custom to research our audience to ensure that we are sensitive to their requirements, both content and scheduling. Thus we now provide programmes for late listening, tip until midnight.

Sensitivity to requests is an acquired and vital talent for the experienced hospital radio presenter. A request for a sad or sentimental piece may have poignant associations for the patient. It is important for the presenter to have a 'nose' for this and introduce the item in a gentle

and sensitive manner.

The music before and after the piece should not contrast too much from the all important request, so that the mood is gradually changed, perhaps to a lighter vein.

Secretly, I know, we might, sometimes, want to ask 'Is there anybody out there?' – but then, once the phones start ringing, the Ward Visitors return with the requests and occasionally we receive an appreciative letter or card – we know there is. It makes all the careful planning and preparation worth while.

It is good if we can sometimes highlight inspirational news stories. We want the patients to know that we are there for them, with something to suit all tastes.

If anyone asks what we would like the patients to feel after listening to hospital radio, I reflect on Nina Simone singing, 'It's a new dawn and a new day ... and I'm feeling good!'

### 86 and Not Out

I was founder of Hospital Radio Reading in 1957. At first we broadcast to three hospitals, with commentary from Reading Football Club using army headsets. We were the first station to broadcast over the airwaves.

In 1959 our first studio negotiated within the football club's ground.

After many years, due to lack of space, we moved into Battle Hospital. At that time we had approximately forty members.

Apart from commentating, presenting Big Band programmes, record requests, outside broadcasts, the rest of our time was spent fund raising with PA dates, ballroom dances (believe it or not, I did have a day job too!).

I retired from Chairmanship in 1996 and was elected President. For family reasons we moved into Suffolk but am still very much involved with 'my baby' Hospital Radio Reading.

Now I am a committee member of the local League of Friends, Chairman of the local Probus Club, member of a local jazz club and do a little PR for the world famous Joe Loss Orchestra.

Les Warth, MBE, TD

*Sir James Savile*

"On Air" 100 years old,  
next. Wow!

I was there at the launch (I  
was about 30) + someone asked me  
how long it would last. "Forever"  
I said, as long as there are hospitals  
+ patients. Congratulations! I'll  
send another congrats 100 years from now!

Cheers,

*Sir Jim Savile*

# Hospital Radio Channel - a promise from Kerfone

The Patient Power Project to provide bed-head entertainment for patients' individual use (TV, radio and telephone) is now getting properly underway, but the big question has been "what about Hospital Radio" ?

We are pleased to report some good news on this front. Licence Holder Kerfone has made provision within their system to ensure that a dedicated high-quality Hospital Radio channel is available at each hospital - and at no charge to the patients.

Kerfone uses the VIP-Stream™ distribution system from Vortex Communications which sends TV and Radio over IP using traditional computer network architecture. It is a development of Vortex's Broadcast networked transport package which, until recently, was only really cost-effective for high-end use.

By taking advantage of improvements in DSP and networking technologies, the system has become viable for Bedhead Entertainment use, providing near-broadcast quality video and audio to patients at an extremely competitive price. Screens run browser software which make possible e-mail, meal ordering, games, video-on-demand, internet browsing and electronic patient records.



The Kerfone DataVision System provides near-Broadcast quality audio and video using VIP-Stream™ technology from Vortex Communications Ltd



Broadcast Solutions  
**VORTEX** COMMUNICATIONS LTD  
[WWW.VTX.CO.UK](http://WWW.VTX.CO.UK)



## STAC Talk Show System

The STAC - Studio Telephone Access Centre - is Comrex's brand new IP-based Talk-Show system. Powerful call management can be quickly mastered with minimal training using the dedicated control surface, plus screening and control can be accessed from any networked computer by using a standard web-browser to access the in-built STAC-IP interface.



## MATRIX GSM Codec

The Industry-standard Matrix Codec provides full-broadcast audio using PSTN or ISDN and needs only the SIM from a suitable GSM network to be free of wires altogether. With remote broadcasts now possible from virtually anywhere with the Matrix-GSM, IS THIS THE END OF THE RADIO CAR ? ! ?

Call us for a demo - why not ask about "previously enjoyed" equipment

E-mail: [info@vtx.co.uk](mailto:info@vtx.co.uk) or Tel: 020- 8579-2743

Video

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Time

Remote Broadcasting

Applications



# The View from the Bed

I had been in hospital for three days, having had my operation on day two. I live on my own, my husband passed away five years ago and my only son and his family now live in Manchester. It would be the end of the week before any of them could come and visit me, so I was feeling quite lonely.

Not only was I lonely, I was sore and unwell and, to be honest, quite frightened. I knew that I was over the worst and that I was in the best place (the nurses were wonderful) but my spirits were down. It was visiting time (again) and Elsie in the bed opposite had yet another member of her extended family keeping her up to date with the outside world. I pretended not to be bothered – totally disinterested – buried my face in my magazine.

It was then that a smartly dressed young man with a clipboard approached me. He was very polite and I do remember how lovely and fresh his aftershave smelled.

'Excuse me love, I'm from Radio Skerne, the hospital's radio station. I wonder if you'd like a request played on the radio this evening?'

Feeling sorry for myself, I'm afraid that I couldn't be bothered and snapped at him, 'No – I'm not interested.'

I thought he'd got the message and would just go away and leave me alone – but he was politely persistent. 'Are you sure? Can't I tempt you? By the way those are the loveliest bunch of flowers on the ward!'

He had broken down a barrier and suddenly I wanted to chat. I told him they were from my son and he asked questions about what he did for a living. Full of lip and charm, he even suggested I didn't look old enough to have teenage grandchildren!

Reproduced from  
On Air March/April 2000

The articles on this page indicate that hospital radio remains true to the principles of the pioneers who relayed the first broadcasts over 75 years ago

I didn't even know I had a radio headset by my bed, so he showed me how it worked and tuned it into Radio Skerne for me. Then came the hard bit – what music would I like? 'I don't like a lot of this pop music, you know and you'll not have what I would like.'

'Not a problem,' he said, 'We don't play loads of pop music and we've got 44,000 titles from the 1930s to the present day – so fire away!'

Well, I couldn't think of anything, so he suggested Harry Secombe, Jim Reeves, something from the musicals, Shirley Bassey, John Denver and so on.

I had an idea of a song but couldn't think of the title or the name of the man that sang it but we had a few suggestions and after a bit of humming and the odd word he surprisingly said, 'It's Roger Whittaker isn't it? The song's 'New World In The Morning'. By golly – he was right!

He must have spent 15 minutes chatting to me, just for one request. His time had come to move on but I can honestly say how much he cheered me up and I waited with anticipation for the radio show to

start at 8 o'clock. At around 20 past, I heard my name and my song. It was lovely. I hadn't heard it for years and it reminded me of my late husband singing it to our son when he was a baby.

After the song had finished, the presenter even mentioned my son and the lovely flowers. Then he dedicated the next song to me too. It was Ralph McTell and 'Streets Of London' – another of my favourites – how did they know that? I don't know but I felt that it was a wonderful service.

After my songs, I was feeling much better, my spirits were lifted and I couldn't help humming to myself. I listened in for Elsie's request and at 9 o'clock I wandered along to the payphone and called my son. I told my granddaughter all about my visitor and about being a radio 'star'.

The next night nobody visited our ward but I read the booklet the young man had left me and I went along to the internal phone and requested 'Love Changes Everything' by Michael Ball. This time they also played some comedy sketches and I laughed so much at Bobby Thompson doing 'The Little Waster' that my stitches ached!

Radio Skerne certainly made an impression on me and helped me to put my situation into perspective. After I was discharged, I went to my son's for a couple of weeks to convalesce. It was he who first suggested I contact Radio Skerne. I'm now very proud to be request collector myself. Every Tuesday afternoon without fail. And funnily enough, I often come across people who are just like I was – ready to snap my head off.

However, I always manage to win them round and spend a little more time with them than normal!

## Surfing the Airwaves

Well, it's Thursday night once again. Time for my good deed for the week. Three hours at Seacroft Hospital Radio trying to entertain the patients ...

Touring the wards can be a real experience. After all, there's illness and disease in every room so it's not always easy to maintain a cheery demeanour, especially when someone is wired up to the hilt on a monitor. However, I am there for only one reason, so here goes:

'Hello, I'm Tony from Radio Skeba. Any requests?'

'Can ye pick me false teeth up?' 'Doctor, my dressings leaking!' – 'Give us a hand to the loo will you?'

OK, so how about a song? Spice Girls, Meatloaf – er, Vera Lynn it is then! Sometimes I feel like asking a nurse to check my blood pressure. I bet Jimmy Savile never had this bother when he started. Anyway it's time to head off to the studio with my catch for the evening.

### A Beginners Guide to Hospital Radio

I need around fifteen songs to fill my hour long show and I nearly always get them. But not tonight! Luckily our extensive record library will help me fill my playlist to the brim. Trouble is, I've got to be careful. Who wants to hear 'Stairway To Heaven' just before they head off to theatre for an operation? I know I would not find that funny, so let's find something else.

Sorted! Pitney, Schubert, Abba, Cliff, ol' blue eyes, a couple from the charts plus my five from the wards. OK, that should do it. Right, time to sit in the chair and pretend to be Bruno Brookes!

This is the part I enjoy the most – going LIVE ON AIR. Talking to the patients, editing the records, messing

with the jingles, everything going smoothly.

'DAMN! The microphone's not working. Oops, it is. Sorry for that!'

'The speaker's knackered. Oh, maybe if I push the fader up!'

'Watch the needle' SCREECH!

'And now a request for Philip – Phyllis? I apologise – I can't read your writing!'

Yes, it can be most enjoyable. Even when the odd thing goes wrong! But we are well received by the patients and they do appear to like our nightly shows.

OK, that's the end of the request show for tonight, we hope you are all home soon – thanks for listening.'

There, I think it went well this evening although next time I'll pick something better to end with. Don't think 'Another One Bites the Dust' really sounds the part. Oh well, there's always next week!

Tony Poole

## Countryside ... News from the Stations

### A Winning Combination

Last month you read about Hospital Radio Tunbridge Wells launching its 24 hour broadcasting service to the Kent & Sussex, Pembury and Tonbridge Cottage Hospitals. Since the launch in May, the station has run smoothly in much the way that we wish it would when it doesn't but often take for granted when it does.

Our fundraising has been a fairly focal point over the past few months. With plans for a big new hospital replacing two of the hospitals we currently broadcast to, we cannot afford to become complacent for a moment, the hard work is only just beginning!



*Our outside broadcast at Sevenoaks*

HRTW has seen some innovative fundraising since the station's conception in the 1960s. Most successful of late have been our outside broadcasts, which are hosted by a local shop or supermarket chain and may be run with a street collection. This proved particularly successful in July when, on Saturday 17th, despite rain, we collected £445 from shoppers in Tonbridge High Street with a live outside broadcast from B-Wise. This was a 76% increase on last year's total! Outside broadcasts allow the public to actually see what a Hospital Radio station does, takes the patients out on the road for a bit of fun and may even get the public interested enough to enquire about becoming a member.

We are lucky enough to have a wonderful engineering team to rig all this each time we embark on these outings, which are currently running at nearly one a month. Our engineers can overcome almost anything although recently at Sainsbury's Sevenoaks, their expertise was tried when one of our ancient CD players wouldn't open! They didn't worry too much though because back at the studio were four wonderful new players kindly donated by a fundraising committee at the White Horse pub in Otham, a local of one of our members.

At the end of the day, hospital radio has one major advantage over commercial stations; we interact with the patient!

This has been made even easier of late with the Oldies Magazine taking on sponsorship of our Request Shows. Their names were added to an already extensive list of local businesses who sponsor a variety of shows and features on the station. We currently enjoy a two-fold partnership with Waitrose and with the Co-op Store in Tunbridge Wells, who not only sponsor our shows but also host outside broadcasts events!

### Gateway to Success

The Gateway Hospital Broadcasting Service has had two very different outings in a month and they were both hospital fetes!

The first, in late July, for our Dover Hospital at Buckland started well enough with a sunny day. As is the norm, the fete officially opens at 11am, however some stalls were, as usual, selling just after nine. Come eleven, all the official press pictures had been taken and it started to rain. Then it rained fairly hard, then very hard. As we took shelter, we wondered what the noise was: hailstones the size of golf balls! At about 12.30 it was decided to abandon the fete. There was no chance of clearing up however, those golf balls were mighty dangerous. Cars were dented and shop awnings decimated. Luckily, the League of Friends have been offered some tables at the forthcoming Dover Regatta to make up for the shortfall.



*Norman Wisdom signs an autograph for Emily Turner, a young fan*

And so to Deal, our other hospital, in the first week of August. What a difference! As the tabloids would say, 'What a scorcher'. It must have been the busiest and hottest fete I've been to for many years. Even Norman Wisdom popped in for an ice cream to cool off and say a few words to the patients.

I've been to sunny fetes and dull fetes but in 35 years of attending them, I've never been to two so closely spaced and so extreme. Here's to next year.

**Terry Nunn**

### NHR Open New Studio

Northumberland Hospital Radio (NHR) based at Wansbeck General Hospital in the north east of England, held the official opening of the newly-completed Studio Centre on 2nd July, just a few weeks short of the organisation's 30th anniversary.

Apart from the ribbon cutting ceremony and some kind words from Councillor Mrs Kay Morris, Mayor of Castle Morpeth and Councillor Colin Parker, Civic Head of Wansbeck, the proceedings were relatively informal. Other guests included representatives from Northumbria Healthcare NHS Trust, Mrs Margaret Featherstone, MBE, of the League of Friends and Ray Oxley and Craig Robinson. Mrs Featherstone said she was pleased to see just how far the hospital radio service had come in 30 years, having been started with a grant of £100 by the League of Friends in the Summer of 1974.

NHR Volunteers moved into the new accommodation in early 2003 before the closure of the old Ashington Hospital (now almost completely demolished). It has taken over 1,000 hours of effort by a team of 11 people to move equipment from the old site and rebuild the facility in what is now NHR's permanent base. During the construction phase, the volunteers also maintained a busy schedule of outside events and collections. The move was largely funded by a grant from the Northern Rock Foundation.

The facility is almost a carbon copy of the former facility at Ashington Hospital, except with an additional room (referred to as Studio 3) which houses the 24-hour automation servers and playout PC as well as a new centralised broadcast transmission rack. Staff benefit from natural light in all four rooms and both studios have separately controllable state-of-the-art heat recovery ventilation systems which are virtually silent even on full speed.

Everyone at NHR is looking forward to improving the 24-hour service first introduced in 2000, with more information sequences for patients and visitors and introducing in-house programme material in the evenings and at weekends alongside live request shows.

**Iain Miles, Station Manager**

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## Countryside ... News from the Stations

### Good Timing as Radio Gwendolen Hits 30!

Congratulations 'On Air'! Well done for hitting a century of issues and how kind of you to make this auspicious occasion coincide with Radio Gwendolen's Thirtieth Birthday!

Radio Gwendolen, 1287AM, at the Leicester General Hospital, celebrated its 30th anniversary with a 30-hour live broadcast on 14th and 15th August.

Radio Gwendolen's fantastic (aren't they all?) team of volunteer presenters all took turns to provide live commemorative programmes from 12pm on Saturday 14th non-stop through till 6pm on Sunday, 15th August. Darren Harte, our 78s and sixties specialist, kicked us off at midday on Saturday and later that afternoon, founder members, Ray Lovejoy and Bernard Smith joined Bill Tong and Jon Stocker as they 'Rambled On' through tracks from the previous 30 years, 1944 onwards. Listeners were able to hear something of the background to starting up the station and how the members built up their profile in the hospital.

Special programmes followed through the night and into Sunday morning. These included a reflective interview with past Chairman, Norman Rich and a special focus by presenters Colette Hall, Dave Angell and Dave Willcocks on the music of the 70's, not to mention John Peverill's marathon stint in the early hours!

Former members and guests joined the celebrations on Sunday for the last three hours of the special programmes,



Members of Radio Gwendolen receive their long service certificates from June Snowden

with presenters Dave Willcocks, the station manager and Julian Smethurst, trusty station engineer, without whom ... etc. etc. In fact, Dave and Julian were amongst those presented with long-service awards by June Snowden, whilst on air. Five members received these special awards, Station Manager, Dave Willcocks; Station Engineer, Julian Smethurst; Librarian, Greta Wrigley;

member, Beryl Frost and past Chairman, Norman Rich, all of whom have given at least 15 years of service individually to Radio Gwendolen. Splendid achievements on a very appropriate occasion!

Celebrations concluded with a party at the hospital social club, complete with birthday cake, organised by Gwendolen's own food fancier, presenter Ian 'Sumo' Green!

Gwendolen's Chair, Jon Stocker, said, 'We are indebted to those who had the foresight to set up Radio Gwendolen 30 years ago and delighted two of its founding members are with us to celebrate the occasion and we hope patients and staff at the General enjoyed the special programmes. We have a great team at Gwendolen and I'd like to thank them all publicly for their commitment to the station and its form of quality broadcasting.'

So, congratulations on your hundredth issue, On Air, thanks for all your work promoting news about hospital radio and best wishes to the editorial team on your success.

Jon Stocker, Chairman

### A Member's Report

Friends and family often ask me what I do when I present for hospital radio from the Children's Ward. It started nearly two years ago when I saw a white van parked on Falmouth Moor in Cornwall, playing music, with people handing out flyers all about the radio and its work. It was an Arts week and I was telling stories for children in Falmouth Library.

When I retired from primary school teaching, I wrote and published five children's books about giants. I work in Adult Education as well as Supply Teaching and run story and writing workshops in local schools. I also belong to 'Lapidus', an Arts for Health initiative, so I am very interested in the therapeutic use of writing and story. I approached the van to find out more, put my name on a contacts list and offered to read stories for children on air.

Some weeks passed and then I had a phonecall from Elizabeth Sanders. She arranged for me to visit the recording studio at Truro Hospital to record some stories. I couldn't have approached them at a better time. The team were hoping to take a portable unit on to the Children's ward and I was to become a presenter working on the ward with the children and parents.

I usually go around the Harlyn Ward with a stack of CDs. I introduce myself and ask if any of the children or parents would like to choose a request to be played. While they are choosing, I check



Angie Butler in the Children's Ward

the headphones by their beds and explain how to use them to anyone who is unsure. If the children are able to get out of bed they are invited, with their parents if they are there, to come to the small room at the end of the ward where the portable recording system has been set up for the afternoon.

I encourage the older children to read stories or tell jokes on air with me, also many parents, relatives or friends will do interviews, much to the amusement of the younger patients who may be a little shy. The ice is soon broken and it doesn't take long for even the poorest children or the most anxious parents, to have smiles on their faces. They listen excitedly when their name is mentioned and their request is played, just for them. The children get a hospital radio sticker and a certificate from me to celebrate their involvement on air with the team. The older children and relatives are also invited to sign the Guest Book.

The Guest Book has been a real insight into the value of hospital radio and the particular value of the portable unit which is able to visit the ward. The comments confirm the looks on the children's faces when the hour of Children's Choice is over. Sparkling eyes from the smiling faces. All fears have been forgotten for that hour and strangely hospital doesn't seem such a bad place after all, in fact the thought of telling school, friends and family that they have been on radio and helped read a story or tell a joke on air, makes the rest of their stay feel much, much better. The children have something

## Countryside ... News from the Stations

exciting to their tell aunts and uncles when they visit or when they get home. The certificates are taken into school and are shown off at School Assemblies, an important message to other children who may have to visit the hospital in the future. The positive memory of their stay in hospital is sure to help in their recovery and feelings about a return for more treatment if it is needed.

Hospital Radio is a great initiative, presenters give their time and energy enthusiastically week in, week out. For some of the youngsters presenting, it may be the first step on the road to a broadcasting career. The patients feel valued when asked for requests. They can listen to the music they enjoy, which can entertain or soothe them for a time and take their minds off any discomfort they may be feeling. Having a portable unit to take on to the wards must be the icing on the cake. For patients it is entertainment with a capital E. It ticks every box of the feel good factor and it is certainly one of the most satisfying and worthwhile things I personally, have ever done. I have come a long way from when I approached a white van playing music, parked on Falmouth Moor. I think they call it a win/win situation ... you bet!

**Angie Butler**  
Truro Hospital Radio  
Children's Presenter

### I Do Like to be Beside the Sea

Hospital Radio Southlands was established by a handful of volunteers in 1972. It became a registered charity in 1987. Financial support was from the League of Hospital Friends at Southlands Hospital.

Permission was granted by the hospital authorities for a disused butchery store in the hospital grounds – since demolished – to be converted into a studio. At the first meeting of the volunteers in January, it was decided to hold a charity disco and spend £3 on raffle tickets.

By the second general meeting on 28th February, a bank account had been opened with £37.78 – the proceeds from the disco – plus £50 from the League of Friends. So heralding the birth of Hospital Radio at Southlands.

Whilst construction of the studio was carried out, a constitution was agreed and plans were underway for programming material and these included contacting Kenny Everett and Cliff Richard.

Tony Hender was the first chairman and was in charge of programme content and seeing that presenters were up to standard.

The building work was completed;

the studio was fully equipped and was in working order by July. The presenters began practising to ensure they were ready for the inauguration in September 1972. They were to broadcast for two hours a day on Sundays, Mondays and Tuesdays.

By the first AGM in January 1973, plans were already being discussed of a possible move into the new hospital block when it was completed, so it was agreed to keep expenditure on the present studio to a minimum.

The studio equipment fell short of the requirements and a second studio was proposed but plans went ahead for a landline link-up with Worthing Hospital on Christmas Day, with live programmes coming from both hospitals and BBC Radio Brighton helping with publicity.

It wasn't until 11th April 1986 that hospital radio returned to Worthing with the launch of Worthing Hospital Radio with a studio at Swandean Hospital. A couple of years later, work began to convert a semi-detached house in Park Avenue into a studio complex capable of broadcasting a service to the Worthing Hospitals and into Brighton. The dream of seven hospitals being connected to one radio service, via a complicated telephone network, became a reality. Worthing Hospital Radio was renamed Coastway Hospital Radio to reflect the station's increased broadcasting area.

Coastway continued to broadcast live programmes to Worthing until 2003 when various technical problems meant only recorded programmes could be heard in the new section of Worthing Hospital. At the end of 2003 discussions took place between Coastway and Radio Southlands to see how live programmes could be heard in all parts of Worthing Hospital. These discussions resulted in Radio Southlands taking over the broadcasting rites to Worthing Hospital from 1st April 2004.

It was 15th May 2004 when Radio Southlands held a reception at the hospital attended by members of the Worthing and Southlands NHS Trust, Adur District Council and volunteers from Coastway and Radio Southlands. With the extension to Worthing the name of the station was changed to Seaside Hospital Radio. This was also the day when plans were announced concerning the updating of the studio equipment, making the studio complex wheelchair friendly and the introduction of a computer system for the studio. Various grants were received for the work to be carried out including a grant from the national lottery 'awards for all' and another grant from the NHS Trust.

A new patient entertainment system is being installed in the wards at Worthing Hospital by Hospital Telephone Services Ltd. As part of the modernisation of Seaside Hospital Radio, the station will link into the HTS system to bring an additional service to the patients in the hospital.

Although the NHS Trust are providing the landlines between the two hospitals, equipment is needed at each end for the stations output to be sent from Southlands to Worthing. Thanks to the help of the League of Friends from both Southlands and Worthing, this equipment has been purchased and work is underway to connect the hospitals.

Volunteers at Seaside Hospital Radio will visit patients in both Worthing and Southlands for requests. Patients will also be able to contact the studio from their bedside telephone.

**Eric Ruell**  
Publicity Officer  
Seaside Hospital Radio

### Oops! I've Done It Again!

'Well', said my Station Manager, Malcolm Salmon, to one of our presenters, 'I did suggest you didn't let the levels go too high!'

Only joking but pictured is our old studio now as you can see a heap of rubble. Fortunately, at Hospital Radio Braintree, we do have a new home, now a snooker room, resplendent with snooker table



(any offers for a snooker table?) and members have been very busy moving everything from the old studio (up two flights of stairs) to our soon to be new studio. Hopefully we will only be off air for a couple of months or so before we can start broadcasting to the William Julien Courtauld Hospital in Braintree and our new community hospital when it is built.

**Michelle Newstead, Chairman**

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## Countryside ... News from the Stations

### HBSA – Hospital Broadcasting Service Ayrshire

The Hospital Broadcasting Service Ayrshire was formally opened in 1980, with its first programmes that were pre-recorded on an old disco unit – the service has progressed to a vibrant organisation serving patients in Ayrshire Central Hospital, Irvine and Crosshouse Hospital, Kilmarnock.

HBSA is currently looking forward to its 25th year and it is set to be a double celebration with PatientLine being installed in Crosshouse Hospital, which will allow the service to become more dedicated and widely available for patients.

The service is in good shape, with more than 40 volunteers bringing over 50 hours of live programming each week to patients from the hospital gatehouse building in Irvine. Programme controller, Stephen Graham believes that the station has a good ethos. 'A station can only be as good as its membership and we have a fantastic group who all really enjoy what they do and this definitely shows on-air.'

In almost 25 years, HBSA has seen lots of presenters passing through its door with many moving onto the media industry professionally. A small samples of past presenters includes Jeff Graham, Colin McArdle, Gary Marshall and Jakki Brambles.

The current chairman is a name well known to many connected to Hospital Radio, John Barbour, who was a founding member of the organisation from back in 1979 and is still very involved in the day-to-day running of HBSA. He remembers the days when broadcasts were made to three hospitals in the area; however, Ravenspark Hospital in Irvine closed in the early nineties.

'In many years, I've seen lots of different faces pass through Hospital Radio [Ayrshire] in 25 years, however the faces may change – but the service still remain dedicated to the patients.'

### Patients and Staff Get Fruity in Winchester!

A grateful patient found an appealing way to say thank you for the care he received at the Royal Hampshire County Hospital, Winchester.

The gentleman was regularly visited by volunteers from Winchester Hospital Radio during his stay on four different wards and was very impressed by the care and attention he received throughout the hospital. By way of thanks, he donated a large basket of fruit to WHR to raffle on air for staff and patients on one of the wards to enjoy.



*Winchester Hospital Radio presenter Nick Hughes, awarding the Fruit Basket to patients and staff on Clarke Ward*

The live draw took place during our nightly patients' request programme, The Sound Remedy. Patients and staff within the hospital's cardiac unit – Clarke Ward were the thrilled and lucky winners.

Not only was this patient's kind gesture a real boost to other patients, staff and our volunteers but it also helped to raise WHR's profile within the hospital and enhance the programme.

Donations like this are good PR for hospital radio stations – maybe through promos on air or within station magazines when we talk about fundraising, we could all also encourage those who wish to express their thanks to the hospital, to consider giving gifts that we at HRs can raffle or use as patient giveaways?

Anna O'Brien

### Britain's Smallest Hospital Radio Broadcasts to New Hospital!

Castle Mead Radio, the smallest hospital radio station in the country, which has been broadcasting to patients and staff for more than 13 years, is now being heard at a brand new hospital.

Whilst it continues to broadcast from a studio suite on the first floor of Hinckley and District Hospital in Leicestershire, its output is now heard at Hinckley and Bosworth Community Hospital about a mile or so down the road.

Chairman Peter Worthington says, 'It is a new era for the station'.

The station's Publicity Officer, Mathew Hulbert, says 'All the members are really enthusiastic about broadcasting to the new site and continuing the mix of great music, local news and information, as well as the best chat on the radio.'

Despite our relatively small listenership, we own totally committed to providing the best service we can to our dedicated listeners.'

### Chorley Hospital Radio

John Taylor is one of Chorley Hospital Radio's longest serving presenters.



John Taylor

He started working at the station in 1989 at the age of 20 and following a break, to honour outside work commitments as a resident DJ at a club in Preston, returned to the station in 1996.

In his early years at the station, John recalls taking part in OBs from the Royal Lancashire Show at Astley Park and walking alongside a float, promoting hospital radio at the Leyland Festival.

He also recalls taking part in a sponsored 24 hour non-stop presenter marathon, with each presenter broadcasting for three hours at a time! And the biggest change he has seen at the station was the move from a prefab hut to new purpose built studios in 2001.

As well as presenting a regular request show, John now enjoys responsibility for doing voice-overs and making-up jingles for other presenters, something which appeals to his creative side.

John has a passion for 1980's soul music and cites Luther Vandross and George Benson among his favourites although he admits that he enjoys 'anything from rock to classical'.

In 2003, John was fortunate enough to soak up the atmosphere of the Glastonbury festival and explained that one of the best parts of it was hearing Alison Moyet singing live.

He said of the whole Glastonbury experience, 'It's not just the music, it's the entertainment theatres, people walking on stilts. There is just all sorts going on. You can't have a shower, you just have to go to a running tap for a wash. But it's all part of the festival experience'.

In his life outside hospital radio, John now works as a supervisor for a petrol company. But he has also worked at Butlins holiday camp as a senior supervisor on the leisure department, a job which brought him into contact with stars of stage and screen.

Joanna Flynn

# Countryside ... News from the Stations

## TOYOTA TUNES INTO HOSPITAL RADIO REQUEST

Monday 6th September, 2004. Thousands of patients at hospitals across Derby can now enjoy the uninterrupted sounds of hospital radio thanks to a donation from Toyota Manufacturing UK.

The Derbyshire based car manufacturer has given Radio Link – Derby Hospital Broadcasting a community donation of £1,000 to purchase new state-of-the-art equipment which will help them to protect their software and audio recordings.

Radio Link is based in two studios at Derby City General Hospital. The station was established in 1974 and broadcasts daily programmes 24 hours a day to patients at Derby City General Hospital, Derbyshire Royal Infirmary, Nightingale Continuing Care Unit and Derbyshire Children's Hospital. Last year over 51,000 patients tuned into the station.

Commenting on the donation, John Huddleston, Radio Link secretary and founder member, says, 'We are very grateful to Toyota for their donation. A significant amount of our broadcasts depend on computerised systems and we now have the peace of mind that our software and recordings will be protected by this new technology.'



Pictured (from left to right), Susan Wilkinson, Public Relations, Toyota Manufacturing UK, Wendy Holden, local novelist and Radio Link's celebrity ambassador and Andrew Hartshorn, Radio Link presenter and Membership Secretary

## East Surrey Hospital Doesn't Suffer Miss You Nights For Cliff Richard

After the recent controversy following the suspension and subsequent reinstatement of DJ Tony Blackburn from a 'Golden Oldie' radio station, for playing Cliff Richard tracks during his show, East Surrey Hospital's award winning station, Radio Redhill, announced it would not be implementing a ban of its

own on Sir Cliff's records and was in fact pleased to play a selection each day on its various shows.

Warren Selwood, Head of Programming, said 'Radio Redhill is pleased to continue to have Sir Cliff on our play-list with tracks from him played regularly on our programmes and chosen by the patients during our daily request shows'. He added, 'Sir Cliff has always been a favourite with our listeners and we will continue to play the songs performed by the UK's most famous Bachelor Boy'.

## Radio Redhill Meets Katie



Pictured, Chairman of Radio Redhill Nigel Gray, Katie and presenter Irwyn Davies

Radio Redhill, went celebrity spotting recently and met with singing sensation Katie Melua. Katie was visiting the East Surrey Hospital for an art exhibition in the new Trauma and Orthopaedic unit. All of the exhibits were the work of doctors working at the hospital.

Irwyn Davies covered the event for listeners of Radio Redhill and Nigel Gray recorded an eight minute interview with the singing star, which is available to download from our website.

Nigel Gray, Chairman of Radio Redhill, said, 'It was lovely to meet with Katie at this event. We were pleased to be able to bring some of the excitement to our listeners and it is hoped we will be able to record a programme with Katie in the near future, when work commitments allow'.

## Hospital Radio Medway

Hospital Radio Medway was established by Brian Faulkner some 35 years ago now and, although he has moved out of the area, we are still in touch with him. We are indebted to Brian for his hard work and I know he is pleased to see the progress that has been made.

Like all stations, we rely totally on our volunteers to turn up for their regular stints and also ask for them to turn out for OBs which take place at various local supermarkets and are the main part of our fundraising activities and anyone

who has stood outside with a collecting tin in December knows just what I am talking about when I say that this is really quite 'an experience'. HRM also has a good relationship with Gillingham Football Club, covering live the home matches which also resulted in getting a substantial donation from the Club.

Medway Maritime Hospital decided to take up the patients' communication system supplied by Hospicom which proved to be an interesting learning curve for all of us. As the installation was taking place, so HRM was isolated and for a while had only about ten per cent of the potential audience but once the wiring was completed we were broadcasting to wards that previously did not have any radio. Our Ward Reps are trained in minor fault solving which enables us to tune the patients in as we visit and can promote the station, conversely the staff from Hospicom who are on site during the day, also promote Hospital Radio Medway so can ensure that all new admissions find out about hospital radio as soon as possible. I am pleased to report that the number of requests has risen substantially.

As far as specialist programmes are concerned, we have sport and local interest news programmes, country and western music, 50s, 60s, love songs and of course the main hub everyday of the request programme.

Probably the best compliment that any hospital radio can be paid is to be asked back again by the organisers of events for a repeat performance!

## Tower Sound

Templar House, part of the hospital at Newton Abbot, was the venue for Tower Sound, Newton Abbot Hospital Radio to hold a quiz night recently. Tony Clarke was the quizmaster and an enjoyable evening was had by all; it also helped to boost our funds.

During the course of the evening, long service awards were given to some of our presenters. David Hyde, from Newton Abbot and president of the team, received a citation for 20 years service with Tower Sound.

Fifteen years of service was presented to Richard Totall from Chudleigh and Terry Carr, who has recently moved away. Our chairperson, Maureen Tucker, presented these awards.

Martin Relland was awarded 15 year award, received by studio manager, Martyn Paddon. A 10 year award went to Alan Ashdown, collected by Barbara Thompson, as both presenters were unavailable.

Ann Dobbs, Publicity Officer



# Countryside ... News from the Stations

## Basingstoke's Birdman

Picture the scene. It's eight minutes past seven on a Wednesday evening and 'Disco' Dave Leonard is working his magic with the wheels of steel, broadcasting live to patients and staff throughout the North Hampshire Hospital.

Suddenly, completely out of the blue, the phone rings. Dave picks up the receiver. It's a listener! 'I'd like to complain about your radio station', barks the voice at the other end. 'I was tuned in all afternoon and all I heard was 'Chas 'n' Dave in concert' over and over again'.

Dave looks stunned for a few seconds until the realisation of what has just happened finally hits him. He smiles. 'Someone just phoned in during one of my programmes! I've finally had a caller!' He had long suspected that the other presenters at Hospital Radio Basingstoke had been teasing when they told him that the Patientline \*800 number didn't really work.

A couple of days later the entire HRB committee gets together at the usual venue for their monthly strategy meeting. Attendance is good this time around. Dave's idea of agreeing to buy the first round clearly did the trick. 'We need to think of some more exciting programme ideas for the autumn' he announces, in his capacity as station Chairman, 'Any ideas?'

Silence. 'Alright' says Dave, 'I'll set the balling rolling. I'd like to put together a show called 'Desert Island Des', where we can get local celebrities to talk about their favourite Des O'Connor records'. The response from the rest of the committee is recorded in the official minutes but cannot, unfortunately, be reprinted here. 'So, is that a 'maybe'? asks Dave, optimistically.

The pile of empty glasses on the table in front of the committee continues to get higher. 'Why don't we play the original version of 'Tubular Bells' on a continuous loop for a couple of hours a day' suggests Programme Controller Neil Ogden. This idea is greeted with enthu-



HR Basingstoke members and their partners took part in the HRB v HR Winchester skittles night earlier this year. And we won the match!

siasm, until station secretary Rosemary Kershaw spots the flaw in this clever plan. 'I already use that ploy during my live Sunday afternoon programme. And there's no way that I'm changing the format of my show for you lot'.

The landlord calls for last orders. The committee knows that in a few minutes time the opportunity to reinvigorate the autumn 2004 programme schedule will be lost forever. They stare into their now



Beaver Scouts from the Old Basing Beaver Scout Colony visited the studios recently. They helped presenter Alan Minto put together a very entertaining show. One of next year's HBA Awards perhaps!

empty glasses in search of inspiration. 'How about broadcasting some live shows from the hospital wards', one of the committee suggests timidly. 'I'm sure it will be a lot of fun for us as well as the patients and staff'. Station Engineer Peter Hawken isn't impressed. 'That means I finally have to pull my finger out and start sorting out some equipment for you. And I suppose you'll want to be doing all sorts of other outside broadcasts as well, won't you?'

'There are plenty of local events that we could feature,' adds Vernon Pearce, the station's Treasurer. 'I'm helping to organise a classic car show in October. Perhaps we could start with that!'

'And what about doing a live sports show on Saturday afternoons?' chips in PR Officer, Andy Konieczko. 'I normally spend my time sat on my sofa at home watching the football scores on Teletext. I could do the same thing in the studio instead and perhaps get interviews with some of the Basingstoke Town FC players.'

The committee continue to chat enthusiastically about these ideas as they make their way to the taxis that are waiting for them outside. 'So it looks like we've got lots of exciting new ideas for programmes for the next few months!' announces Dave with pride. 'But does that mean I won't get any more callers during my show ...'

## Sports Link for Haslar

Hospital Radio Haslar in Gosport, Hampshire, has arranged an historic link with its local football club whereby live reports and commentaries will be broadcast to the patients and staff at the two Gosport hospitals. These will form part of the station's Sportsbeat programme which highlights all local sport events every Saturday afternoon.

Chairman, Chris Pearce and John Stimpson, Chairman of Gosport Borough Football Club, commented, 'We are very pleased to announce this link between our two organisations. We are delighted to be able to provide listeners at our two local hospitals, commentary on matches. GBC has started the season by playing a friendly match with local premiership side Portsmouth and this drew a capacity ground attendance. This partnership is part of the community link being established by HR Haslar.

Jim Barry, Events Manager

## Trying Times for Portsmouth

As one of the first hospital radios in the country, we would like to endorse the many congratulations you have no doubt received on your 100th edition.

In our 53rd year, these are trying times for Portsmouth Hospital Broadcasting – how many times have you heard that! The local authority is building a 'super hospital' which means we will be uprooted yet again; this will in effect be our third move. Although we began in 1951, our main studios at St Marys' in the centre of Portsmouth were in full operation by 1970. But due to rebuilding and space, we were forced to relocate to our present site at Queen Alex on the hillside above the city in 1986. Converting an old laundry store into a three studio complex with record library, tech room, kitchen and foyer took time, energy and a lot of hard work. Now all that has to go.

We have been allocated an area about a third of our present space and can you imagine the chaos as one hospital is demolished and another built around us. PatientLine means we are received in perfect clarity and no longer have the bug bear of dodgy headsets that plagued us so much in the past but with rising costs of BT, insurance, PPL and now the new authority want to charge us rent, I fear we are facing the biggest crisis I have seen in all my 30 years with PHB. Does any other hospital radio pay rent? So are we downhearted? No. We will continue merrily on with our happy band of exuberant enthusiasts covering all ages and tastes.

Mike Underdown, President

# Countryside ... News from the Stations

## Hospital Radio Bedside

Broadcasting to five local hospitals and having recently celebrated our 30th anniversary, Hospital Radio Bedside is going from strength to strength! Our programme schedule includes something for everyone and we are proud to say that we broadcast



Our 30th anniversary

24 hours a day. Our membership is increasing at the moment, thanks to a very successful recruitment drive which includes a slide being displayed in the local UCI Cinema complex for an entire year.

Our fundraising department has seen many changes recently, the biggest of which is a new partnership with D & R Marketing Solutions, a local company willing to help us raise our funds.



The opening of our second charity shop

Recent events at HRB include a 35 hour broadcast, a summer raffle and the construction of a third studio as well as the usual fetes, open days and carnivals. Without doubt, our single most important development would have to be the opening of our second charity shop. Our first shop has been open for over ten years and is a wonderful success. We hope our new shop works as well and the early signs are certainly encouraging.

Our website continues to develop reflecting life here at HRB and we would love you to give us a visit at [www.hospitalradiobedside.co.uk](http://www.hospitalradiobedside.co.uk).

Mark Venus  
Publicity Officer

## London's Longest Running Hospital Station

At Radio Brockley we held a collection at the end of July and pulled in just over £375, a good boost to our funds.



Daya Nair and Dave Sacks give up their spare time to rattle tins at Sainsbury's in Stanmore

The event took place at our local Sainsbury's Supermarket in Stanmore, home to the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital.



Veteran presenters Graham Rich and Lorraine Joyce know the importance of fundraising, as they use the opportunity to collect charity funds and to catch up for a gossip and a laugh

Radio Brockley is London's longest running hospital station.

Radio Brockley have just heard the hospital has been given the go ahead to be rebuilt, so the hard work starts here.

Two of our members (Josh Holzman and Angela King) met at the station, married and pictured is their little boy Jake, our youngest listener!



Our youngest listener.

## HRC's Birthday Reunion

Hospital Radio Chelmsford is celebrating its 40th Anniversary this year and the pinnacle will be on the official birthday weekend, 25th and 26th September 2004.

HRC is looking to make contact with as many former members as possible for a huge Reunion Party to be held at St John's Hospital. Did you play a part in HRC's history, present a programme, visit the wards, file the records or build a studio? No matter how big or small the contribution you paid, please come and be part of it again, for one more night.

Many of the guests already confirmed have found HRC the perfect springboard into professional broadcasting careers in radio or television. Who are they and what are they doing now?

Former members attending include: Dennis & Irene Hance (original members from 1964); Peter Moore (original member from 1964); Bob Willis, Tony Wright, Russel White; Martin Avis, Des Shephard; Don McNab; Alain Heasman; Ken Oliver; Tony Taylor; Gavin Bunn (now Gavin Matthews of MFM); Brian Eringa (now Rick Edwards of Gemini FM) and Steve Campen (of LBC).

Those hoping to attend: Steve Scruton (of BBC Essex); Dianne Stradling (of Anglia TV News); Jonathan Overend (of BBC 5 Live); Andrew Reeve; Brian Wilmer; Ian Deal (now Ian Gilmour of Kingdom FM); Heather Sach; Trevor Thomas and Dave Monk (of BBC Essex).

For more information please contact Adam Ravenscroft on 01245 513333 or email [reunion@hrc.org.uk](mailto:reunion@hrc.org.uk).

## Funds for Kendal Hospital Radio

After two charity events organised by Churchill's Bar and The Albert Hotel of Bowness-on-Windermere over £2,000 was raised. This is to help KHR purchase state of the art OB equipment and a new telephone hybrid system for the studios.

Kendal Hospital Radio received the cheque from Tim Collins, MP for Westmorland and Lonsdale, at the Churchill's Bar in Bowness recently. Mr Collins said it was a great comfort that local people had raised this amount of money to help a vital service to the patients of the Westmorland General Hospital. John Greig, President of KHR thanked all concerned in raising the very welcome £2,000.

**DON'T FORGET TO SEND IN A REPORT FOR YOUR STATION BY 9TH OCTOBER**



## Countryside ... News from the Stations

### Citizenship Award

Radio Calderdale was presented with the Citizenship Award in June from the Mayor of Calderdale, Councillor Geraldine Carter, for its outstanding contribution and benefit to the local community.

Radio Calderdale, which provides 50 hours of non-stop entertainment for the Calderdale Royal Hospital a week, collected the award in a special ceremony at Halifax Town Hall.



Radio Calderdale member George Sumner accepts the award on behalf of Radio Calderdale

The Mayor of Calderdale praised the marvellous work of the radio station and commented on the past shows they have featured that have cheered patients' stay.

### Jingle Warfare from Doctor Feelgood

A Harrogate Army Officer has kept night-watch at Harrogate Hospital Radio, presenting a marathon 24 hour long show.

Lieutenant Laurence Roche from the Army Foundation College, Penny Pot Lane, Harrogate deployed to Harrogate District Hospital to assist on the patients' radio station and help launch their new 24 hour service.

Regular broadcaster Laurence, known as 'Doctor Feelgood' to his listeners, was broadcasting from midday Wednesday 17 March until midday Thursday, presenting a show and interviewing guests. At the end of his marathon he completed a simulcast with British Forces Broadcasting Services (BFBS) radio, with an interview that was broadcast live around the globe to troops serving abroad, from Canada to Iraq. He also received messages of support from military colleagues in Cyprus and Northern

Ireland, as well as hosting visits from personnel from the Army Foundation College.

Harrogate Hospital Radio has previously only been able to broadcast when the volunteer presenters are in the studio. However, the introduction of new computer equipment allows for the radio station to play throughout the night. The facility is available exclusively for the patients of Harrogate District hospital, and can be heard through the controls at their bedsides.

Harrogate Hospital Radio chairman, David Simister, said: 'We're very excited about being able to broadcast for 24 hours a day. It means we can offer a better service to the patients. Calling in the Army to assist with the launch, seemed the obvious thing to do. Lieutenant Roche already presents a show once a week and in the Army he is used to working with radios for long hours. I'm delighted he responded to our call to arms.'

Laurence said after the event, 'This wasn't too dissimilar to some of our military exercises where we might be expected to man a radio for hours on



Lieutenant Laurence Roche, known as Doctor Feelgood to his patient listeners

end, only this time I could also play some music. I just hope I kept the patients entertained, particularly early in the morning when I felt most tired. Some of my colleagues came into the studio to keep me company and take part in the show. Others rang me up from the other side of the world, taking advantage of the time difference.'

The Army Foundation College, Harrogate trains 16 and 17 year old Junior Soldiers, grooming them to be the future Warrant Officers and Senior NCOs of the British Army. A group of

Junior Soldiers from the Duke of Edinburgh Journalism Group, led by Lieutenant Roche, are learning to become presenters at the hospital. They are quickly getting to grips with the equipment and will soon be presenting their own shows. Junior Soldier Lee Baines said: 'It's good to help out the local community and learn about basic radio presenting. I like getting out of camp for a few hours, listening to good music and meeting some interesting people.'

Anybody who may wish to help at the Hospital Radio station, either presenting shows or collecting requests, is invited to contact the chairman David Simister on (01423) 553342.

### Evening in ... Manchester!?

Northern Air Radio's annual Talent contest had something different this year. Dave Bee was amazed to received an entry from Paris for the station's annual competition. First Jack Brice made the 900 mile round trip from Paris to Crumpsall to compete with other finalists at the Cleveland Hotel.



Dave Bee with Jack Brice, the night of the contest, 24 hours before the England v France game in Euro 2004!

He finished second, pipped at the post by Bury band Badger, who are led by Fairfield hospital physio Gian Rothwell but returned to perform at the Crumpsall Carnival, notching up a total of 1,8000 miles.

Event organiser, programme controller, Dave Bee, said, 'we have never, ever heard of a hospital radio station's talent contest having an entrant willing to travel so far to take part. It's unbelievable and must have set a record.'

After the competition night, Jack said how much he had enjoyed himself and that he would return for the Carnival but we were amazed when he actually did.

The winners of the talent contest received studio recording time plus the

## Countryside ... News from the Stations

chance to headline at the Crumpsall Carnival.

Sadly Badger couldn't make it but in addition to Jack, we had 16 year old Carlyann Corcoran. Our very own



Margaret Moran

Margaret Moran, a volunteer at Northern Air, took third place in the competition.

Margaret has just recorded a CD for the station to help with our fundraising. If anyone out there would like one, please ring 0161 740 7471.

Joe Sambrook, Chairman

### Long Service Certificates



Paul Stellings from Radio Medica receives his 20 years service certificate from Deputy President, Dave Nicholson



Pictured, left to right: Staff from Radio Tyneside receiving their certificates from Patron, Ann Andrews. Left to right: Geoff Lisle (20); Dave Wheeler (25); Ian Hornsby (20); Ann Andrews; Tony Sloan (20) and Richard Finch (20).

### Christine's 15 Minutes of Fame

Woman's Weekly recently featured Chris in an article entitled 'How to have your 15 minutes of fame'. With their kind permission we have reproduced the article below ...

Christine Skinner, 45, an NVQ assessor from East Sussex, has been doing hospital radio broadcasts for 19 years. In 1991 she joined Mid-Downs Hospital Radio at the Princess Royal Hospital in Haywards Heath, where she presents a regular weekly show.

'I had always been interested in broadcasting, so when my local adult education centre started a course on radio presenting, I enrolled. It was run by some people from a hospital radio station, and at the end of the course I was taken on as a volunteer. At first, I worked alongside an experienced presenter, until I felt comfortable enough to do the show on my own. The hospital was for the mentally ill and many of the patients were institutionalised. Over the five years I was there, I established a rapport with the patients, and could see them getting better.

I persuaded one of them to come into the studio and we'd clap and tap to the music. Just to see him co-ordinating his movements and getting pleasure from a Rachmaninov concerto was brilliant. It felt like I was doing more than just produce a radio programme – it was therapy for the patient.

The show was a mixture of music requests, interviews and local events. Once I did a report on a local carnival procession. I had to interview people as they ran alongside the floats, without getting run over, which was a challenge. I loved doing things like that.

Sadly we had to wind up the station when the hospital closed, and that's when I joined Mid-Downs Hospital Radio.

My two-hour show is called Let's Go Round Again and, as well as music requests, we have a regular nostalgia spot where we feature music, news and events from a previous year. I write my own scripts and sometimes my husband Mike joins me to present.

Part of the job is meeting the patients, and I go round before my programme to get their requests. Our policy is to give them what they want to hear, so we will, for instance, mix Mantovani with Meatloaf.

We also take part in lots of fund-raising events and have an outside broadcast unit so we can do the show live from wherever we are. There's a great atmosphere, with volunteers from a variety of backgrounds, and a range of ages, from 18 to 80.

One of the thrills for me is working everything in together – getting it technically right, and thinking and speaking at the same time. You used to go into the studio and have a nice big desk with lots of knobs to twiddle – now it's all done with the click of a computer mouse. The problem is, if the computer crashes you're off air. The first time that happened to me, I was completely stumped – now I keep a CD on standby, ready to play while I get the computer working again.

Doing hospital radio has fulfilled my broadcasting ambitions as well as making me feel I'm doing my bit to help someone's recovery. When a patient thanks you for playing a piece of music for them, that's great.

• For details of Mid Downs Hospital Radio, visit [www.mdr.org.uk](http://www.mdr.org.uk)  
WANT TO GET ON AIR?

• To work on hospital radio, you don't need any technical expertise – just a willingness to learn.

• If presenting isn't for you, you can help on the technical side or go round the wards collecting requests.

• To find your local station, contact your local library, hospital or NHS Trust. Details are also available from the Hospital Broadcasting Association: call 0870 321 6002, or visit [www.hbauk.co.uk](http://www.hbauk.co.uk)





## Hospital Radio Barnet

It is always difficult to say what is new and what is different about a hospital radio station in any one year. Each year, presenters produce programmes to entertain the patients of the hospital. Normally we do this as a matter of routine. Our ward visitors go out to the wards and collect requests from the patients, they take them back to the studio and the presenter plays them.

However, one week recently, one of our team received a personal letter (sent from the home address of an ex-patient). This was actually a letter of complaint. It seemed that the request collector may have misheard the patient when he asked for a particular record. The presenter announced that we didn't have that particular artist and played what he considered a suitable alternative. The ex-patient was writing to correct the name of the artist and said that he didn't like the alternative! (We didn't have the corrected artist either!).

Normally, something like that would upset the presenter not fulfilling his role of entertaining the patients; however, he was pleased that the ex-patient remembered his name, the title of the programme and had bothered to write. It was a pity he didn't try and ring us on the internal phone at the time and it

could have been rectified straight away.

Each year we go out and about to local school fetes and fairs and entertain the visitors there, playing music and organising a tombola stall and often running the PA system. One of the more interesting fetes we attended recently was to play for the residents of Arkley Park, a mobile home park on the borders of London and Hertfordshire. It seemed the residents there knew each other on a nodding acquaintance but had never really got together. So the business partner of a 60s pop singer manager who lives there, got together with her boss, Jack Lawford who heads Diamond Entertainments agency, to organise an afternoon of entertainment for the residents. And the residents all joined in by organising their own stalls, including tombola, coconut shy etc.etc. They were also entertained by a number of live singers. Hospital Radio Barnet did the PA and the result was that £600 was kindly donated to our funds.

Throughout the summer, we have been organising a raffle in conjunction with local radio stations, LBC and Heart for a trip in their Sky Patrol (traffic jam spotting plane). This is the second year we have had this prize and it has proved extremely popular, as well as a good fundraiser. The prize will be drawn by

the reporter who reports from the skies every morning, helping Londoners get on their way to work.

We are now looking forward to the end of the year when it is expected the new Patient Entertainment System is likely to be installed in the hospital. It is likely to be Patientline but dotted lines, etc have to be completed first! For our part we are putting in a bid to the Friends of Barnet Hospital to loan us the money so we can purchase one of these new 'computer thingies' that will allow us to broadcast 24/7. (Whatever happened to records and steel needles?!). Then the 'fun' begins, because not only will everybody have to be trained on the system but a selection of our record library will need to be installed plus our jingles, in-house promotions. How long has it taken other stations from purchase of the equipment to getting set up for regular on air use?

Finally, congratulations to On Air and its 100th edition – Michelle you cannot be that old! (Gee, thanks Martin, that makes me feel much better - Ed). We are coming up for our 26th birthday later this year. I wonder if there still will be hospital radio in 74 years time?

**Martin Rosen**  
Press & Publicity Officer

## Radio Northwick Park



Radio Northwick Park is the hospital radio for Northwick Park Hospital, Harrow, North London. Northwick Park Hospital is one of the largest hospitals in London, with patients of all ages. In addition to their health problems, one of the difficulties facing these patients, many of whom are bed-bound, is passing the time. For many of them, Radio Northwick Park, the hospital's own radio station, plays an important part in making their stay in hospital more pleasant.

Radio Northwick Park was set up in 1971. Originally broadcasting took place

from a makeshift studio every Sunday. Unfortunately the studio was shared and everything had to be plugged and unplugged every week.

We have moved on since then. We now have three purpose built studios and broadcast seven days a week, 24 hours a day, thanks to a grant from the National Lottery in 2000 which enabled us to buy the latest high technical equipment making us one of the most modern hospital radio stations in the UK. We now have three CD players, 1 MD player, 2 turntables, 2 cassette decks and our OTSDJ system

which enables us to play music for 24 hours.

RNP only broadcasts to patient and staff within the hospital. Within Northwick Park Hospital wards there are 530 bedside radio terminals and at any time, during the day, around 85 per cent of them are being used by patients.

Our music output is very varied – there are also specialist programmes for those who like country and western, classical, Asian, jazz and folk music to modern shows such as 60's music.

At RNP our patient-visiting volunteers go to the wards every week day evening and get requests and dedications from the patients and staff and these appear on the daily, on-hour request show every week day evening from 9-10pm.

We have many fundraising events at RNP including river boat trips, Christmas pub collections and our main event of the year, the Harrow Show. From this summer fete, we do an OB back to the hospital, which is always good fun – especially at our 'Soak the DJ' competition!

We have our own website at [www.radionorthwickpark.org](http://www.radionorthwickpark.org) if you would like to read more about our station or please do contact us on 020 8869 3959.

**Many thanks!**  
**Ben Hart, Chairman**

# Across the Sea – in the Land of Green

A retrospective review of hospital broadcasting since the inception of ON AIR, should include a special group of people. Not because radio waves were tested by Marconi at a regatta in Dunlaoghaire but because of their enormous contribution to what Hospital Broadcasting is all about, entertainment assisting the relief of pain. It cannot go unsaid that on more than one occasion they caused quite a lot of pain themselves, yet objectively without them Hospital Broadcasting would have been so much the POORER. This group of people were well schooled in the art of story-telling, partying and mischievous activities. Who else can it be but the good people from the Emerald Isle.

NAHBO, the previous incarnation of the Hospital Broadcasting Association, provided a medium for people from a Green and Troubled Land, which is now enjoying the benefits of the Peace Process to come together and show, a positive image of the Irish Cultural Identity, whatever region one came from. This motley crew produced some strange but loveable characters, whose Conference activities would have added many more outings to the enduring cinematic classics called 'Carry On's'. Whether you were living north of the Yorkshire Dales or south of the M25, countless delegates wondered, was their arrival a mere re-enactment of the Wedding Feast of Cana. Who cannot forget the ingenious ways they availed of the duty free process, prior to its much lamented abandonment, in the cause of a united Europe. Alas, this was not true, for the Irish were far more complicated than that. They were inquisitive, thought provoking, compassionate about the craft of broadcasting.

While on a return visit to her native Dublin, Peggy Madigan from Cotswold Hospital Radio unleashed to hospital broadcasting a personality, whose eccentric ways endured him to folk on the mainland, officially named on his birth certificate as Patrick Hugh Lynch. To others he became what is best about the Irish: witty, charming and thought provoking. This was at a time when the Green Land was a hive of troubled activity. However, this contact with a returning emigrant was complimented with an introduction to a bastion of wicked English humour, divine cooking and kindness that words cannot describe, Alf and Vera Partridge. Whether or not one can attribute the blame of unleashing Patrick Lynch on the greater mass of hospital broadcasters to

by Patrick Lynch

Peggy Madigan or Alf and Vera Partridge, only the Lord Almighty can justly cast judgment.

In the opening paragraph, reference was made to 100 but this year is also the 21st anniversary of the Owens Park Conference, where both sides of Irish Hospital Broadcasting came together: Messrs Bannister, Lynch and Morris. Lynch's mysterious little brown bag going around the tables at Owens Park, apparently had a endless supply of medicinal compound, not readily available on the NHS. This lone crusade to Manchester, Patrick served as an advance guard from the south of Ireland who came to conferences for many years,

The much loved and lamented George Burton, Chairman of NAHBO, decided to present Patrick with a phone at the Llandudno conference in 1984, because with such regularity as the Greenwich time signal, a phone call would come from what some termed, this little Green Man. In a mixture of

*'Patrick's attention to detail endured him to many agents but not to some of his fellow hospital broadcasters.'*

brass neck and sham rockery, he actually appeared on the front page of On Air in the company of the favourite group of His Royal Highness Prince Charles, the Three Degrees. The objective in question was the recording of a message for a young Dubliner, Austin Mc Kenna form Finglas who was in a coma. (Can you name the edition number April 1983?)

Fundamental to Patrick's strategy to advance the cause of hospital broadcasting were methodically planned visits of celebrities from show business or politics. Patrick's attention to detail endured him to many agents but not to some of his fellow hospital broadcasters. In saying this, Patrick's rationale behind the allocating of interviewing of personalities was the ability of the hospital broadcaster to research the personality and the body chemistry with the personality. This reasoning caused much friction with those who thought that they were being left out. Personnel management in a voluntary context, would eventually

lay the basis for why Patrick left hospital broadcasting on November 27th 1989, this will be explained later.

Patrick's persistent refusal to compromise on the high standards that he had set resulted in former Prime Ministers, being subjected to Patrick's charm. Patrick actually did not like the presenting side of hospital broadcasting. It was his love of wheeling and dealing and the development of a strategy that counteracted the ever popular image of radio as seen through the pirate broadcasters of the 1980's. If one looks to another Irishman whose contribution to broadcasting, Ronan O'Rahilly, founder of Radio Caroline, possibly one can attribute to Patrick, such words as controversial, thought provoking but one thing that is undeniable is his total commitment to the basis of Hospital Broadcasting, the Patient.

Patrick's legacy to Irish Hospital Broadcasting can be based on two events in the years of 1988 and 1989. Patrick saw that headsets or earphones at the bedside were problematic and unreliable. As an employee of the Irish Government, Patrick saw the solution in a legislative environment. The Government at the time were under a barrage of not dealing with land based pirate broadcasters. This thinking would eventually mature into Section 8 of the 1988 Broadcasting Act which allowed for institutional broadcasting. His foresight has in 2004, lead to the establishment of many FM based hospital and occasional educational based broadcasting entities.

November 27th 1989 was previously mentioned and now this will be further explained. Placing the power of the religious orders in the context of the time and anxious to promote Hospital Broadcasting, it was concluded that an interview with the often controversial Cardinal Thomas O'Fiach, Catholic Primate of Ireland, would be a very advantageous move for hospital broadcasting in the Irish Republic. Whether or not it was because of the perceived, threatening persona or not, none of the other hospital broadcasters would take up the challenge. As many people across the water on the mainland have realised, saying 'no' or 'it cannot be done' rarely enters into Patrick's vocabulary.

The methodology of this interview was no different to that of any other interview, treating the interviewee with the respect that they deserve, whether or not you agree with their view. Obtaining a copy of his biography from



## Across the Sea – in the Land of Green

the Catholic Communications Office, Patrick dissected it with the professional attention to detail that David Dimbleby, Jeremy Paxman, Walter Cronkite and Edward R Morrow would have been proud of. Accepting the fact that perceived view of the Cardinal in the eyes of the people in the United Kingdom was one of an extreme Nationalist, to leave out a question on the identity of Irish Nationalism would be very unprofessional from a journalistic perspective. In saying this, those that have heard what turned out to be a piece of broadcasting history, have clearly stated that what was reported in the papers as a piece of political sensationalism, was in reality a very tough provoking, well researched and professional interview.

This interview was a one on one, hour long interview with a complex, controversial national character. The use of character must not be seen in terms of a disrespectful degrading of the Cardinal's religious importance but it was Patrick's ability to get inside the person. In an hour, Patrick was able to bring to the hospital patient, the childhood of

the Cardinal, his years of religious formation including many hair-raising cross-border smuggling escapades, which should be considered in the environment of wartime Europe. The sensitive political question was a miniscule segment of a major one on one, hour long interview. To leave it out simply could not be considered. The aftermath of this interview is very much regrettable and sad, Not alone for Patrick personally but for hospital broadcasting generally.

To say that this interview created a sensation would be a definite understatement. From being mentioned in the first ever televised Prime Ministers question time in the House of Commons, to headlines in the national papers. As Patrick has often stated, his error was not in letting his number one contact hear it first. Instead, a journalist from a Sunday newspaper got a cheap headline, which failed to mention that politically the sensitive question was a minuscule segment in the part of a major interview. Such is the regrettable stance of what has now become seen as the gutter press.

Patrick could have sensationalised the

interview more, based on the approaches from several national newspapers and broadcast mediums. He chose not to, instead he spent a quiet period of often painful personal reflection.

What of Patrick now you may ask?

On the occasion of On Air's 100th anniversary, Patrick is an Hons Graduate of University College Dublin in History and Politics. He is about to commence Post-Graduate work which will lead to enriching his still much loved interest in the broadcast medium. He works voluntarily with the Royal British Legion, handling historical queries about Irish participation in the First and Second World Wars. In 1998 he married a wonderful, kind and loving lady called Patricia. Those hospital broadcasters who attended this occasion wondered would the fun-loving, hair-raising Patrick of conferences be mellowed by Married Life. Perhaps only time will tell.

What is certain is that at the Belfast Conference, Patrick and Patricia will be meeting fellow hospital broadcasters in the WONDERFUL CITY OF BELFAST.

**COPY DATE 9TH OCTOBER 2004 ... COPY DATE 9TH OCTOBER 2004 ... COPY DATE**

### LINK & OB EQUIPMENT

**Economy Mono Link Transmitter.** Synthesised 1W on 48 or 52 MHz in diecast box, £195.00.

Optional mains to 13.5V 2A power supply unit £20.00.

**Economy Link Receiver.** Crystal controlled 48 or 52MHz receiver in 2 part painted aluminium box, £195.00. Optional mains to 12V 500mA adaptor £10.00.

**Rack Mount Mono Link Transmitter.** Synthesised 1W on 48 or 52MHz in 2U x 250mm rack case with integral mains power supply £330.00. 10W version £410.00

**Rack Mount Mono Link Receiver.** Crystal controlled 48 or 52 MHz receiver in 1U x 150mm rack case with integral mains power supply £342.00.

**Rack Mount Stereo Link Transmitter.** Synthesised 1W 48 or 52 MHz in 2U x 250mm rack case with integral compressor and encoder & mains PSU, £455.00. 10W version £536.00.

**Rack Mount Stereo Link Receiver.** Crystal controlled 48 or 52MHz receiver in 1U x 150mm rack case with integral decoder and filter & mains PSU, £410.00

**Antennas.** Dipole £20. Horiz. 2 element Yagi £70, Vert. £75. Three element Yagi £100.00.

No VAT. Insured Carriage £20.00

### SPECTRUM COMMUNICATIONS

Proprietors: Mr. A.J. Nailer HNC BA G4CFY & Mrs. J.R.Nailer  
12 WEATHERBURY WAY, DORCHESTER, DORSET, DT1 2EF.

Tel & Fax 01305 262250 email [tony@wway.screaming.net](mailto:tony@wway.screaming.net)

<http://members.tripod.co.uk/spectrum>

## From the Deputy Chief Executive

Many of you will be aware that HBA Chief Executive, Ray Oxley resigned on 5th August. Ray had given up membership of his station and as such felt that he was no longer able to continue as Chief Executive of the HBA.

It's a disappointing end to Ray's year at the head of the organisation. A year where he had led a team determined to get HBA back on track and to return it to being an organisation that we could all be proud to be part of.

I am convinced that the process remains on track. We are making great strides towards resolving the issues with the company's Mem & Arts, we are addressing the problems surrounding Enterprises and are still fighting a robust battle on the PPL payments front. We are even looking at ways to reduce the size of the EC! I'll avoid any references to turkeys and Christmas.

I hope we are getting things right. If we are not, or if you think there are other things we should concentrate on, please feel free to get in touch. It's your organisation and it's here to assist you.

Ray was determined to get the HBA working as it should and had begun the process with great commitment and enthusiasm. I'm sure he will be back before too long.

I hope to see as many of you as possible at Stoke – if we haven't met, please come up and introduce yourself. Those of you who do know me will not be surprised to hear that strangely, it still isn't my round!

John Watson

## UHF Band Alignment Update

by Geoff Fairbairn, HBA Technical Adviser



Ofcom has made an announcement about its UHF Band Alignment project.

The project, initiated by the Radiocommunications Agency and scheduled to commence in 2006, was intended to reallocate a large part of the UHF radio spectrum. It would have affected all stations that operate radio links within the frequency range 440 - 470 MHz.

The project will not take place as originally planned but Ofcom is still considering the way forward. Consequently, the caution about the possibility of frequency changes at some time in the future still applies. If you are considering the purchase of new UHF radio equipment, you are strongly advised to ensure that transmitters, receivers and any ancillary equipment can be retuned over the frequency band from 440 - 470 MHz.

Ofcom's announcement can be read at:

[http://www.ofcom.org.uk/licensing\\_numbering/radio-comms/pbr\\_licensing/450-470update](http://www.ofcom.org.uk/licensing_numbering/radio-comms/pbr_licensing/450-470update)

## The Power of Radio

from On Air, December 1996; written by HBA Trustee, John Whitney



Radio holds a special place in our hearts – we can all conjure up vivid memories of programmes and shows we heard from childhood. For me it is ITMA, Dan Dare and Toy Town; the voices of Gracie Fields, Vera Lynn, Tony Hancock, John Snagge. The picture in the mind created through radio never fades. Radio reaches into our subconscious and triggers our imagination.

The sound of a milk bottle on a doorstep, the clip-clopping of a horse's hooves. It's a cold early morning. Slowly the town is waking from its sleep. Just two sounds bring this about – create a backdrop of atmosphere that sets a scene more effectively than television or film.

The intimacy offered through the medium of radio unites people across the world. Forces Favourites became the lifeline between loved ones during the years of separation caused by World War II. The World Service continues to unite and link millions of

listeners across the globe.

Perhaps one of the greatest virtues of radio and the power of broadcasting is radio's ability to communicate in 'real time'. We can share in the same moment, savour the same feast of delight, feel the same anguish. No other medium can compete with radio to provide instantaneous communication.

It is the life blood of sound broadcasting and gives radio its pre-eminence and its enduring vitality and quality.

The intimacy that radio engenders has no more practical use than the advantage it brings to today

Hospital Radio. Here is living proof of the power of radio – one to one communication that lifts the spirits and comforts when and where it is most needed.

Radio's link between listeners and broadcasters is as close as one between friends. Use it with sensitivity. Respond to the moment. Use radio's immediacy to share in the triumphs or traumas of the day. Make a virtue of its power to move the spirit.

Winston Churchill's speeches gave courage and the will to win against great adversity. The battles to win back health, fought every day in hospitals provides the same challenge. As in the past, radio has its part to play.

John Whitney



## June's Travels

I hope you have all had a good summer – and the weather has not dampened your fund raising activities. Where has this year gone to?

Many stations have been celebrating anniversaries this year and I am delighted that it has been possible to share the celebrations with them. 30 and 40 year anniversaries have been very important milestones for many and to those who are celebrating – I hope you all have successful events. Stations have been doing the most amazing things tracking down former members, original members and in the case of Radio West Suffolk they traced the first patient to receive a request on their station.

Our July executive committee meeting took us to Bristol and many thanks to them for their hospitality. Unfortunately it was only a flying visit as I had a family 60th birthday party to attend. I was also in Brighton for my god-daughter's graduation and was sorry that time did not permit me to go along and see the station – one of these days I will get there!

I have continued to get out as much as possible and took the opportunity when I was in Sunderland to join in John Harper's significant birthday celebrations to visit two stations – Durham and Sunderland. It was good to see both stations and thank you.

I am pleased to let you know that Geoff Fairbairn and I have now been able to make contact with the company installing the Wandsworth system in hospitals. We are pleased that they were very keen to meet us and are enthusiastic about getting to know and support hospital radio stations where this system is being installed. For us it was a very important meeting as we established contacts for the future.

A Scottish Regional meeting arranged for August encouraged me to make a visit and I was able to sample the wonderful hospitality of John and Julie Mackin (formerly of Radio Lion, Jersey) in Fort William – I recommend their wonderful guest house. While there I visited the local radio station and tried to find Ben Nevis – sadly covered in cloud most of the time. I regret it was only a short visit. I then drove to Perth as the conference committee arranged to meet, to coincide in Perth and again I enjoyed excellent hospitality – at the home of John and Alice Watson. John and I went to Edinburgh Hospital Broadcasting after taking John and Marie Harper to the station and spent the whole evening at EHBS – another good evening and my thanks to everyone I met. On the Sunday I drove to Irvine for the Regional Meeting hosted by HBS Ayrshire – it was good to meet you all and the Regional Meeting was very well supported. John Barbour, who many of you will know as a regular conference goer, is a member there and I learned he had not been too well after the meeting – I have kept in touch with the station and am pleased to



**Pictured, from the top, the celebratory meal; presenting long service certificates at Radio Gwendolen; flowers for me and for Jenny, who received Radio West Suffolk's first request and fundraising at Monks Cross in York**

learn he is much better – his old self, I am told. So John – keep up the progress and I hope you are back to full health just as soon as possible.

Norwich was the next visit – to their committee meeting, which was a good opportunity to meet many committee members and enjoy the hospitality of Irene who kindly offered me somewhere to rest my head for the night – thank you again for your kind hospitality, much appreciated. I also appreciated the chance to see their new hospital – a PFI hospital – and a pretty impressive looking building it is. Like many hospitals being newly built it is on the outskirts of the City which brings advantages and disadvantages.

Radio Gwendolen, Leicester, were celebrating their 30 years with a marathon broadcast and I was so pleased I could attend during the afternoon/evening and while there presented some Long Service certificates. Well done and thank you for inviting me Radio Gwendolen.

Radio West Suffolk, Bury St Edmunds have just had a very successful celebration for their 30th anniversary too – a lovely evening – with the local broadcaster at BBC Radio in Ipswich, Mark Murphy, cutting their celebration cake. Not only did they manage to track down the first patient to receive a request but as it was a lady in the maternity ward – Jenny – they invited her and her son – now almost 30 of course and they both attended the event. I was also surprised with a card and a lovely bunch of flowers to celebrate my 30 years in hospital broadcasting. Thank you so much for remembering – I think I had mentioned it was coming up when I was over at Radio West Suffolk on a previous occasion.

Next day I was up with the lark on the train to York – we have just had a good day's fundraising at one of the local shopping parks – Monks Cross. The weather was excellent and we had a tombola stall as well as selling some goods and it went very well – it is our fourth year at this site and has proved to increase in popularity each year.

Long service certificates are still being requested at a pace, so please continue to ask for them – over 280 have already been issued since the beginning of 2004. The Association regards it as a very important opportunity to thank members for all their hard work. I have been delighted to attend and presented certificates on several of my visits but if I am not able to come along, Dave Nicholson will see if he is able to do so. Well done all those who have received certificates and a very big thank you for all you are doing for hospital radio.

I already have several forthcoming visits and look forward to meeting as many of you as possible. Don't forget the forthcoming conference in Stoke on Trent which has booked up well; I look forward to seeing many of you there too.

**Best wishes, June**

## Early Days at Leeds

My name is Charles Hullighan, I was the Head Porter at the Infirmary until 1981. In the late 50s I was checking the work undertaken by the porters on the wards, when I noticed a number of patients listening intently to their headphones. One patient in particular appeared to be highly delighted. His name had been mentioned and a record played especially for him on national radio. It was this incident that started me organising the Patients Broadcasting Service at the General Infirmary at Leeds. I approached the house governor, who thought the idea was good, having been a patient himself in the past and knew what it was like to lie in the bed with nothing to do. He put the idea to the next meeting of the Board of Governors, they liked it but it was emphasised that the project had to be a voluntary one.

I canvassed other members of the hospital staff, and to my surprise there was no shortage of voluntary help, they were all equally enthusiastic, there were doctors, nurses and technical and electrical engineers. These engineers, along with one from the G.P.O. telephone services (as it was then known) proved to be invaluable. They installed all the equipment and borrowed a reel to reel tape recorder and a small room belonging to the Infirmary's Chapel became the studio.

Auditions were held and three presenters were chosen. Each presenter had a producer along with a team of five who were responsible for studio work and interviewing of patients. With record requests in hand and the telephone links organised, the first programme of the Patients Broadcasting Service was presented at 7pm on Tuesday 23rd August 1960. It was a tremendous success. The local press gave the show excellent coverage, so much so that many volunteers offered their services but I had already a waiting list from the hospital staff. I had also a voluntary part-time hospital porter, the name, Jimmy Savile, one of the most extraordinary characters in show business. He was always available to help with the P.B.S. broadcasts if not in person, he was always available on the other end of a telephone line. Jimmy gave great pleasure to so many patients and adding the many touches of humour that is so natural to his character. I did, however, enlist the services of two volunteers from the 'outside' Mr Bill Ellis, sports desk reporter and Mr Bert Darlow, he became responsible for obtaining the stars and what excellent work he did. With the increased listeners to the service, I decided to add additional programmes. Already we had the request programme going out every Tuesday evening, the Sports Desk programme every Friday evening and every Sunday Morning service from the Infirmary's Chapel. On Fridays at 12.30pm we started the Juke Box Jury programme; a panel of four were made up with two in the studio and two patients in the long stay wards. They were linked with the studio by telephone and this programme was unanimously acclaimed a big 'Hit' by the patients young and old.

Many stars appeared on this programme including that famous comedian Tony

**Charles Hullighan MBE, former Head Porter at Leeds General Infirmary, remembers the early days of Hospital Radio at Leeds General Infirmary**

**This article has been reproduced from On Air March 1994**



*Charles Hullighan meets Jimmy Savile on his TV show*

Hancock. Bert Darlow travelled many miles around the Yorkshire night clubs and theatres and every week he persuaded stars of screen, TV and radio to appear live on our programmes. Judy Garland, Cilla Black, Lulu, The Beatles, all four of them, The Kinks, all appeared on the show and The Beach Boys did a live show from the nurses home and performed live for a world first. 'Good Vibrations', a tune that took 700 hours to record and had never been performed in public before.

Bert also produced shows from the stage of Working Men's Clubs, he also organised and produced an organ recital with Arnold Loxam, a BBC theatre organist from the Odeon Cinema, this was a weekly show with patients requests.

In the 60's and 70's so much happened that it would be difficult to remember every special programme but of course I remember so well our very first interview with a super star; Judy Garland in October 1960 was appearing at a theatre in Leeds and thanks to the enterprising effort by the team not only did we get three of the best seats to watch the show but a great interview with the star, which included a special dedication for a patient who had requested her record,

### BIRTHDAY SURPRISE

A lady in the wards who had never been able to nurse her twin baby boys due to a heart complaint was going to miss their first birthday. With the help of a good team which included TV singing star Ronnie Hilton and a doctor who owned a 8mm camera, a five minute film was made of the twins at a very special birthday party. A week later, with a screen fitted up at the foot of their mother's bed, we rolled the film. Ronnie also did a running commentary which was put out to the rest of the patients.

For some years after the lady patient

brought me a slice of the twins birthday cake.

### THE LUNCH TIME 'LIVE' SHOW

This show was born out of the voluntary efforts of top entertainers and local musicians to entertain the patients at Leeds General Infirmary. The Kaberry Lecture Theatre was fortunately next door to our studio and with help of our technicians, lines were laid and microphones installed in the theatre. The seating was tiered and this enabled the teams to get many patients who were up and about, down to the theatre to see and hear the stars. The artists were booked by Bert who also sought the permission of the clubs to enable the stars to perform. Stars such as Eartha Kitt, Dickie Valentine, Lulu, Cilla Black, Lenny Bennett, Bob Monkhouse, Frank Carsons and many, many more.

These shows and other programmes were recorded and sent to the Devonshire Royal Hospital P.B.S. for broadcasting to the patients there. Mr Jim Dingle, who was the Head Porter there in 1963, went one better. He started live closed circuit TV shows which were very successful.

### ROYAL VISIT

This was one of our most ambitious programmes with telephone links from 17 vantage points along the route. The reporters who covered 5 miles of the route did excellent work with very few slip ups. The last commentary came from three of the team who were on the canopy of the outpatients entrance, (I often wondered who put their foot through!).

Other special programmes were Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, when efforts were made to make these something out of the usual. There were Christmas greetings from patients' relatives in distant lands and one Christmas Eve, The Royal Corps of Signals offered their services (they called it an exercise): with five radio transmitting vans and a receiver set up in the studio and linked in with our system, messages came in fast, from relatives, friends and neighbours. It was four hours of good fun and Christmas cheer. There are many stories that could be told, some good and some sad.

There is one programme which should be mentioned. Easter Saturday 1963, the inimitable and unpredictable Harry Secombe presented records of his own choice. What a programme that was. A Yorkshire Evening Post photographer went around the wards taking pictures, seven of these were printed that evening, I have kept that cutting and it reminds me of the good old days. A member of the nursing staff summed up the day with this comment, 'These programmes do so much to brighten up the patients time in hospital'.

For myself and my teams to see what we started as 'just a good idea' come to be a vast national organisation is a great feeling. Also to know that hospital radio has given a start and experience to so many top presenters is an additional bonus. Keep going all of you and make our good idea even better.



# The Dimmer and More Distant Past

The September 1978 members' magazine was known as 'Hospital Radio News' and ran to 16 pages of black on white. With copy quality similar to that which you might expect from a modern photocopier, the photographs were surprisingly clear. Mind you the style of fonts indicated how far things have changed with the arrival of the personal computer.

The editor was Peter Arnold of Watford HBS, who, much like today's incumbent was bemoaning the lack of articles submitted for publication.

If you were planning to take part in the forthcoming Hospital Radio Week then there was the grim warning that if you hadn't already ordered your goodies you were in trouble, because stations 'can only blame themselves if they don't have these saleable items in time, you were warned to order early'.

As now, there was plenty of news on what was going on around the country. Dave Nicholson and Lindsay Williams had introduced 'Saturday Getaway' on the Radio Tyne-side Network, a new and innovative sports programme for Saturdays when commentary from Newcastle United was unavailable. Radio Royal, Liverpool were moving into new premises and Hospital Broadcasting Service (Hull and East Riding) changed its operating name to Kingstown Radio and was looking forward to the opening the following year of the longest single span suspension bridge in the world.

The issue featured a consultative document on NAHBO policy. The policy group suggested the formation of NAHBO regions but their vision included a fairly hefty committee which would have probably proved unmanageable especially when one considers how difficult it is to establish regional reps throughout the country.

The group also considered the introduction of a full time paid organiser for NAHBO, who would encourage the formation of new hospital radio stations and take care of the organisation's administration. Twenty years on, this is still a step which the organisation is considering but never seems brave (or flush) enough to implement.

It was felt that the organisation was in need of more formal procedures, better organised meetings and general meetings. Bearing in mind that the organisation remains purely voluntary, this is the one area that has seen most improvement over the years.

It was on the issue of NAHBO services for members that the policy group got a little carried away. Their hopes to

I have reprinted this article from On Air 75th edition, I think you will find it makes very interesting reading!



organise group insurance for member stations, obtain discounts and donations of equipment and records and act as a pressure group regarding landline costs were admirable and to a greater or lesser extent took place over the next few years. But their plan to offer loans to new member stations or those in financial difficulty were doomed to failure from the off. Nothing would have bankrupted NAHBO quicker than a policy of shoring up lame ducks.

But while NAHBO were insisting that they were there to advise, not to interfere, the letters page featured a letter which vilified On Air advertising/sponsorship and stations who served multiple hospitals. It ended, 'Please NAHBO, take more action about commercialisation, take action about poor format stations, discuss our hospital role with the DHSS decision makers (at the TOP) and be ever mindful of the responsibility carried by your member stations.'

The first issue to be called 'On Air' appeared in spring 1984 at the Leeds Conference and replaced 'Hospital Radio News'. The members present seemed impressed by the new 'smart' look.

The first editor, Roger Manley, wanted to improve Hospital Radio News but was unsure what to call it. After one or two suggestions at the preceding conference, it was eventually David Cottam who suggested 'On Air'.

Roger Manley was editor from 1984 to 1988. The magazine appeared in A5

format. The cover was in the same colour for six issues in an effort to keep costs down.

In 1988, Roger Richards took over as editor. He thoroughly modernised 'On Air'; moving to A4 format and introducing colour.

John Watson took over from Roger Richards as editor in 1996, again giving 'On Air' a more modern look.

The following year saw the introduction of CleanFeed, the cover CD designed to assist with programme making and featuring interviews and programme inserts.

Page 7 arrived in 1996 demonstrating the humorous side of hospital broadcasting. In the late 80s and early 90s it was the Garden Shed Workers who brought humour to the 'On Air' pages.

'On Air' is only partially financed by the adverts within, with the HBA taking up the small shortfall and paying for the distribution. The editor receives about 30 letters, articles and press releases each month and they form the basis of the finished magazine.

The magazine takes about two weeks work to collate, type and set. The photographs and some of the adverts are then scanned in and the entire collection is compiled on a CD Rom which is then sent off to the printers with the film for the more complex adverts. All being well, the finished magazines are delivered some two weeks later when some poor soul gets the job of packing them in their plastic sleeves and posting them.

Between 800 and 1,000 copies are printed of each issue and subsequently make their way all over the globe, including Eire, The Netherlands, Saudi Arabia and New Zealand.

## ED'S NOTE:

**So some things never change! It would make your present Editor a very happy bunny indeed if you could ensure that copy for the next On Air is sent before the copy date of 9th October, 2004.**

**Even if your station has done nothing at all this year (and that's very hard to believe) why don't you make a comment on this feature or anything else you feel strongly about. My address, as usual, can be found on page 1.**

# The First Seventy Years

## INTRODUCTION

In practically every major town and city in Britain, and in countries as far apart as Holland, Australia, USA, Germany, Zimbabwe, Norway, India, Uruguay, Malawi and New Zealand, hospital patients have enjoyed over the years a unique service called 'hospital broadcasting'. It is run by volunteers who present music, sport, news and other programmes that are heard mainly on headphones as the patients lie in bed. In Britain alone, these volunteers make up one of the largest groups of unpaid charity workers and it is surprising that so little is known of the origins of the service and how it was developed.

The important pre-requisite for a hospital broadcasting service is the installation of headphones or loud speakers in wards and there are various reports of such equipment, connected to a wireless receiver, being installed in some hospitals as early as the 1920s. In some cases microphones were installed to allow doctors' lectures, messages, general information, etc. to be relayed to the patients. The number of hospitals with such facilities was, however, very limited and it was just after the inception of the National Health Service in the United Kingdom, in 1948, that headphones became more common place at patients' bedsides. With this important prerequisite becoming available, it was the well publicised start of the football commentary service in October 1951, at the Portsmouth Football Club in England, that was to trigger off a rapid expansion.

Indeed it was to be the sports commentary organisations, covering football, rugby, cricket, etc., and not the music based services, that were to lay the foundation during the 1950s for many of the services currently operated in Britain's major towns and cities.

## CHAPTER 1

### The Early Days (1926-1951)



*Hospital Broadcasting at York County Hospital in 1922*

**YORK:** In 1921 a professional photographer in York, Mr. Thomas Joseph Wilmott Hanstock, began corresponding with the General Post Office in London in an effort to obtain a licence to 'conduct experiments with portable wireless telegraph apparatus'. On May 19th, 1922

Reproduced from *On Air 1995*, a series of extracts from a book written by HBA historian Bryn Goodwin.

The book was entitled 'The History of Hospital Broadcasting – The First 70 Years'

Thomas wrote to the Postmaster General: 'On the 24th instant I have arranged with the Matron of the York County Hospital to give a demonstration with my wireless receiving outfit, used for the benefit of the hospital. The aerial I propose to use will be an indoor or an external aerial according to your specification'.

The Secretary of the General Post Office replied on 8th June, 1922: 'I am directed by the Postmaster General to say that he hereby authorises you to give public demonstrations of wireless reception from time to time at addresses in Yorkshire'.

His son, Peter Hanstock, wrote in 1990: 'My father was born in 1871 at Doncaster but moved to York around 1898 with the building contractor he worked for. His work at that time was mainly joinery but he branched into professional photography in 1908. In that capacity he frequently helped the Chief Physician at the County Hospital, Dr. Micklethwaite, to take X-ray photographs'.

It is almost certainly this association with the hospital and his great interest in constructing wireless receiving apparatus that brought him to the point of demonstrating to the Matron, Miss M.K. Steele, the potential of broadcasting to patients, music, church services and later gramophone recordings via an electrical pick-up.

In 1925/26 the installation of an extensive wireless system in the York County Hospital commenced. Mr. Schumacher, a York electrical engineer, installed the wiring throughout the wards, an installa-

tion that eventually consisted of 200 pairs of headphones and 70 loudspeakers. Whilst the wiring was being installed, Thomas Hanstock constructed and installed a wireless receiving set, which was housed in an alcove of a small room in the Watt wing of York County Hospital.

Only three people were involved in the hospital broadcasts at York; Thomas Hanstock, Mr Schumacher and Dr Micklethwaite. Sometime in the mid-thirties the system was taken over by Cussins and Light and the Radio Relay Co. It is thought that they dispensed with the original radio receiver and relayed programmes direct from their Parliament Street premises in York.

The York County Hospital is the first known hospital in the world to be equipped with a wireless system feeding both music and speech to patients, and with the capability of broadcasting solely to hospital patients.

## CHAPTER 2

### Expansion of the Sports Commentary Services

By late 1951 there were only ten, possibly 11 hospital broadcasting services operating in the world; one in Holland, one in the USA and the remainder in the United Kingdom, all operating with little or no knowledge of each other. Five of these services two in Scotland (at Greenock and Stirling) and three in England (at Tottenham, Preston and a service that had just started in Newcastle) were providing a football commentary service. By the end of the 1950s there would be over 100 services, a high proportion of which were sports commentary services.

The trigger for this rapid expansion was the commencement on the 27th October 1951 of what was to be a very successful and most important of all, a highly publicised football commentary service at the Portsmouth Football Club. The service so impressed Vernon Stokes, who was one of the Club's Directors, that at every oppor-

## HOSPITAL RADIO SERVICES TO 1951

Location	Date	Service
Oldham	1933	Music
Tottenham	1935	Football
Greenock	1946	Football
Iwakuni (Japan)	1946	Music
Rotterdam	1947	Music
New York	1948	Plays, etc
Ulverston	1949	Music
Stirling	1949	Football
Grimsby	1951	Music
Preston	1951	Football
Bebington	1951	Music
Newcastle	1951	Football
Eastbourne	1951	Music



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tunity he mentioned the idea to the Chairmen and Directors of other league clubs. His enthusiasm was one of the two major factors that lead to the rapid spread of football and other sports commentary services between 1951 and 1958. The charitable organisation TOC H was the second major factor in spreading the idea. During the four years following the start of the service in Portsmouth, TOC H was responsible for starting no less than one in three of the new football, rugby and cricket commentary services that were broadcasting to hospitals in 53 towns and cities in Britain.

The number of services providing sports commentary or match reports continued to expand as the newly emerging music based services started to include sport in their programme schedules. NAHBO's 1974 Directory lists 99 hospital broadcasting services, of which 25% had their own sports commentary services, covering football, rugby, cricket, ice hockey, bowling and wrestling. By comparison the directory records that 11 of the listed music based stations used the services of 'separate sports services'. The number of sports services probably reached a plateau in the mid 1980s, as the rapid expansion of the music based services came to an end. NAHBO's 1992 directory records that sports services were operating at 103 football league and non-league grounds in England, Scotland and Wales, at 28 rugby league and union clubs, at 8 county cricket clubs and at 1 ice hockey stadium.

## CHAPTER 3 Emergence of the Music Based Services

By early 1952, 46 years after the start of the world's first known music based services in York, there were still only 5, possibly 6, services providing music and, in one case, plays in existence; at Ulverston



*Hospital Football Commentary at Bristol Rovers*

(the exact date when this service ceased is not known), Grimsby, Bebington and Eastbourne in England, New York in the United States and Rotterdam in Holland. Eight years later, in 1960, the number of towns and cities in the United Kingdom with a music based service had increased to over 30. The main cause of this sudden expansion was the realisation that the vast landline networks that were being built up by the rapidly emerging sports services were only being used once or twice a week and that they could be used for other purposes. During the decade follow-

ing the start of the sports commentary service at Portsmouth in 1951, 70 percent of the new music based services started in towns and cities that already had a sports commentary service. During the following decade (1961-71) this figure reduced to 20 percent. As with the expansion of the sports commentary services the charitable organisation TOC H made a significant contribution to the spread of the music based services. At 22 of the known locations at which TOC H had started as sports service during the 1950s, exactly half were operating a music based service by the end of the 1960s.

By 1969, music based services were operating in about 87 locations in the United Kingdom; 3 in Wales, 6 in Scotland and the remainder in England and the number of actual services had risen to about 100. By 1992 there were over 520 music based services operating worldwide, the majority in the United Kingdom (391) and Holland (126 plus). Services were also operating in Germany, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, Norway, USA, Malawi, Zimbabwe and, by 1995, Uruguay.

A fact sheet on hospital broadcasting which was produced in 1987 included the following data:

- There are approximately 250,000 beds in 800 hospitals served by hospital broadcasting in the United Kingdom
- One of the largest services is in Manchester which broadcasts to 8,500 beds in 21 hospitals. The smallest service has less than 10 members, the largest 100.
- There are over 11,000 unpaid volunteers involved in hospital broadcasting in the United Kingdom and Ireland. The largest known service existed in Liverpool and used to broadcast to 37 hospitals.
- By 1995, the typical service consisted of 36 members and was broadcasting 31 hours per week to patients in 650 hospital beds at two hospitals.

## Calling all ex-Hospital Radio Plymouth Volunteers

One of the UK's pioneers in hospital broadcasting celebrates its 35th anniversary this year and they are desperately trying to track down ex-members.

Hospital Radio Plymouth launched a comprehensive service in October 1969 following a decade of football commentaries provided by Toc-H. The station continues to broadcast to patients from its Studio Centre at Derriford Hospital in Plymouth.

Members, past and present, will be coming together to mark the special occasion with a celebration dinner at the College of St Mark and St John on Friday 1st October. Live entertainment will be provided by the award winning Roger Mark's Armada Jazz Band.

Former members have moved into broadcasting throughout the UK. Local broadcasters who have links with the station are BBC Radio Devon's Pippa Quelch, Douglas

Mounce and Plymouth Sound's Matt Lissack. Other well known personalities on the invitation list include Jonathon Morrell of Sky News, Tris Payne of ITV and Helen McDermot of Anglia TV.

It is hoped that Hospital Radio Plymouth's most famous former volunteer – Phillip Schofield – will attend.

However, due to numerous moves over the years they have lost many former members' contact details and are trying to track people down to invite them to the event. We know many past members have since moved away from Plymouth and joined other Hospital Radio stations.

If anyone used to be a member, or has contact details of ex-members, could they please contact the station on 01752 763441 or email [annihrplymouth@aol.com](mailto:annihrplymouth@aol.com)

For further information please contact: Michelle Treagust, Hospital Radio Plymouth office: 01752 763441.

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All HBA Regional Reps now have national rate (0870) telephone numbers. The majority of Reps have now routed the number to their home phone number and thus are able to receive calls made to the new number. Hopefully the remainder will set up their numbers within the next few days.

As with the existing 0870 numbers for other members of the Executive Committee, the HBA gets a very small commission on all calls made to these numbers. We would ask, therefore, that if your Regional Rep is not a local call for you, please use the 0870 number. It should cost you no more but the HBA will recover a small percentage of the cost from your telecoms provider.



## A Blast from the Past



The NAHBO EC at St Mary's Hospital, London before a meeting in the 80s. Standing, l to r: Roger Manley, Alan Grimadell, Peter Dixon, Paul Travil, Deryck Jones, Vera Partridge, Bill Williams, Dennis Needham, Ray Williams. Seated: June Snowden (treasurer), George Burton (secretary), Peter Milward (chairman), Alf Partridge (vice chairman)



Daniel O'Donnell in bed with seven nurses shock!  
Opening of Hospital Radio Perth studio complex, 1994



An hour at Gas Mark 5 and we'll be warm enough to get our coats off! HBA President Ena Montgomery with engineer Peter Wayne at Chorley's first broadcast on 7 September 1969



Andy Swain interviews the Mayor of Derby in 1986  
Photo: James Bel



1953 hi-tech hi-fi at Bradford (just love the cigarette!)

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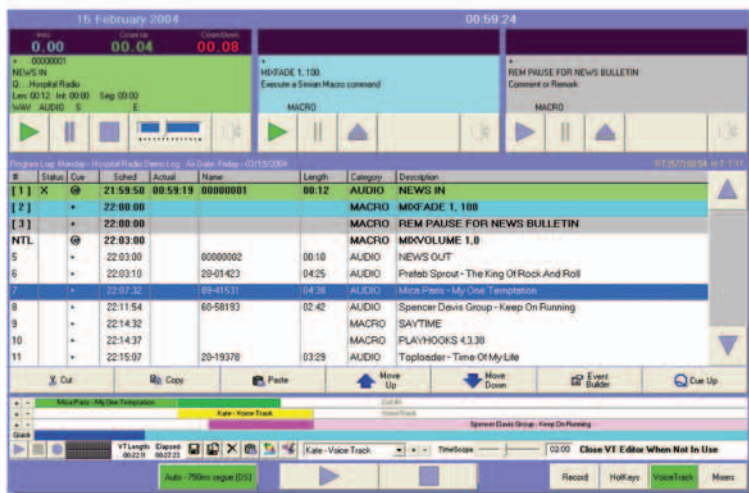
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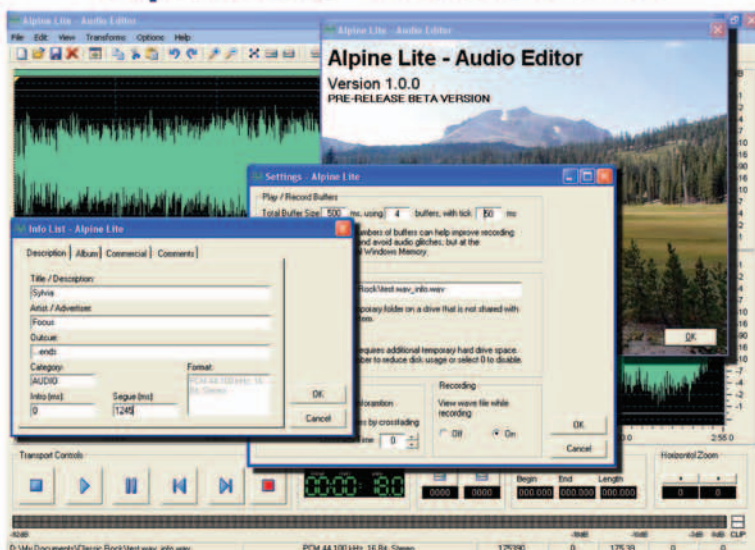


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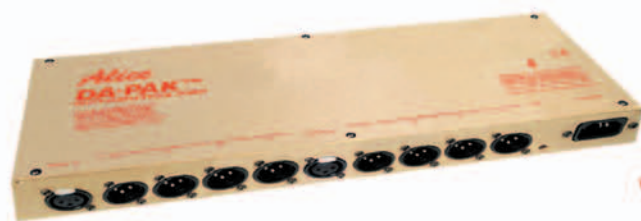


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