

ON AIR

Issue 102
January/February 2005



HBATM
HOSPITAL BROADCASTING ASSOCIATION



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The Official Journal of the Hospital Broadcasting Association

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FRONT COVER PICTURE:

Members of Hospital Radio Brockley busy selling raffle tickets for their record breaking Christmas draw



Dear Reader,

I had a dream over Christmas that I would wake up to a sackful of mail from hospital radio stations all over the country, telling me of the wondrous things that their station had done over the Yuletide celebrations. How busy they had been entertaining patients, shaking tins at their local supermarket and even dreaming up some whacky idea to raise much needed funds for their station. But then I woke up. And apart from the faithful few who always manage to find time to write an article, however busy they are, I received very little else.

The whole purpose of On Air is for interaction between the stations, so that we can learn and help one another in our mutual aim to improve the service we offer to patients in hospital. One of the best ways to achieve that is to throw everybody's ideas into the melting pot.

So what are you waiting for? Please send me in an article, whether or not you think it is great, some one will find it a good read. Otherwise I will have to bore you with developments at my own station (painting, cleaning and more painting) followed by entering thousands of records on to our computer.

You have been warned!

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.

Registered in England No. 2750147. A Registered Charity No. 1015501.

Registered office: Michael Letch, Bleak House, 146 High Street, Billericay, Essex CM12 9DF

On Air is distributed free of charge to all member stations of the Association plus interested parties.

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COPY DATE NEXT ISSUE 16th February 2005

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Simple to use ? ☒

Superb build quality and reliability ? ☒

Stylish modern design ? ☒

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Committee Report

At our last Executive Committee meeting, as nobody else had volunteered, John Watson reluctantly agreed to take on the role, on the understanding that he did not intend to continue in the role beyond the 2005 AGM.

Those of you that have had any dealings with John will, I am sure, agree that John will make an excellent Chief Executive. The rest of the EC would like to thank him for agreeing to take on this new role.

In filling the Chief Exec's position, we created another vacancy – the Deputy Chief Executive. All members subscribed to the "announce" e-mail list will have seen a plea from the EC to consider nominating yourself, or persuade someone else to offer their services so that we could co-opt them into the role at our January meeting. As I'm writing this before Christmas, I have received no nominations so far. Hopefully by the time you read it, someone will have stepped forward and we will have been able to appoint them.

AGM and Autumn Conference

I trust that those of you that attended the Autumn Conference in Stoke-on-Trent enjoyed yourselves and went away suitably filled with both knowledge and food/drink! The draft minutes of the formal AGM and the informal meeting that followed are now available on the HBA website – go to the members home page and follow the links – you'll need your member's username and password.

Model Policies

Those of you who attended the Autumn Conference in Stoke will know



by Nigel Dallard, Secretary

that the first two HBA Model Policies were launched by John Watson during a conference seminar. A model Data Protection Policy and associated guidelines and a model Confidentiality Policy for hospital broadcasting organisations are now available on the HBA website. Once again, make sure you have your member's username and password, then go to the members home page and follow the links. We hope to add more model policies over the coming months, so watch this space!

Programme Adviser

Last time, I mentioned Chris Bereza's idea of creating a Programme Adviser position on the EC. The idea was discussed at the informal meeting at the Autumn Conference and was well-received.

The EC are now tasked with developing the idea – refining the idea, firming up the role description, etc in time

for the Spring Conference. In the meantime, a discussion has taken place on the 'Onelist' e-mail discussion forum about one aspect of the proposed role – co-ordinating a library of shared programmes. We've even had a couple of expressions of interest from people who may be willing to get involved! If you have any thoughts, please do get in touch.

Ambassadors and Advisers

We are asking members to suggest potential new Ambassadors, perhaps from people well-known in their area but not necessarily nation-wide, in an attempt to build up a list that both HBA and our members can call upon.

We have had a number of suggestions, but more would be welcome. Please submit your ideas to June.

June is also drafting a role description for Ambassadors so that those invited know what we're expecting of them.

Insurance

At this point I can only hope and assume that all members have managed to find insurance, either through Access Underwriting, Crosbie and Jack or another broker.

You will have seen from our recent letter that the EC is still trying to resolve our differences with the directors and shareholders of Enterprises.

As I write this in mid-December, the first signs of progress are becoming apparent. Watch this space!

And finally...

It just remains for me to hope that you've had a good Christmas and New Year and to wish you and your station a happy and prosperous 2005.

Grief Never Grows Old

The Tsunami charity song, 'Grief Never Grows Old' has been made available for free download to all HBA members.

The song, written by DJ Mike Read and sung by Cliff Richard, Bill Wyman, Russell Watson, Barry Gibb, Robin Gibb, Steve Winwood, Brian Wilson and the Beach Boys, Kenny Jones, Rick Wakeman, Jon Anderson, Boy George, Gary Moore, Jon Christos, the National Children's Orchestra and the Holy Family Convent Choir of Colombo (Sri Lanka) is released on 24th January 2005, with all proceeds going to the Disasters Emergency Committee appeal for the Tsunami victims.

Download instructions are available at:

<http://www.hbauk.co.uk/members/exec/docs/tsunami.txt> (username and password required).

Please note that the song is watermarked so if it gets out into general circulation, it will be possible to tell that it leaked via a hospital broadcaster. Please don't let the side down. Thanks, Nigel Dallard, Secretary

Records Smashed

Over £2,500 has been raised for London's longest running hospital radio station!

The figure raised in this year's yuletide spectacular, beats all records set in previous raffles and ensures the continuation of Radio Brockley, which provides the patients of the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital in Stanmore with a personal radio service to their bedside.

Eleven volunteers gave up their Christmas morning to broadcast live from the wards, bringing festive cheer to patients and staff.

Who Are Your Charity Trustees?

Over the last year or so, I've had a number of enquiries from people wanting to know who are their station's Charity Trustees and/or what are their responsibilities?

The Charity Commission for England and Wales explain (in booklet CC3):

'The charity trustees are the people responsible under the charity's governing document for controlling the management and administration of the charity (s.97(1) of the 1993 [Charities] Act). They may be called trustees, managing trustees, committee members, governors, or directors, or they may be referred to by some other title. In the case of an unincorporated association, the members of the executive or management committee are its charity trustees; in the case of a charitable company it is the directors.'

The position is basically the same in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The governing document is your station's Constitution or, if the station is a limited company, its Memorandum and Articles of Association. An unincorporated association means an organisation with a membership but which is not a company.

Charity Trustees versus Executive Committee

Basically, the top-most layer of management within the organisation, as defined by its governing document, are the Charity Trustees. In most Hospital Radio stations, there is only one tier of management – the Executive or Management Committee. In this case, it is clear from the above that these people are the Charity Trustees.

A minority of stations have a two-tier management structure. They have a set of Charity Trustees (whatever they are actually called) and a separate Executive or Management Committee. This structure may be found in an independent charity but is usual where the Hospital Radio station is part of another larger charity, such as the Hospital League of Friends or the Lions Club.

There are pros and cons for both structures:

In many regards, a two-tier structure is a purer management structure, as it clearly separates the two roles of Charity Trustee and day-to-day management. The Charity Trustees may only need to meet only three or four times a year to discuss the more strategic matters, agree the annual budget, sign-off the Annual Report and

And what are they responsible and liable for?



by Nigel Dallard, Secretary

Accounts, set the Executive Committee goals and monitor progress against these targets. The Executive Committee simply take the strategic direction from the Trustees and manage the station on a day-to-day basis to provide the best possible service within the available resources and according to the overall policies and directions set by the Charity Trustees. However, this two layer structure is probably overkill for a small organisation such as the average independent Hospital Radio station.

Having a single layer of management means that you don't have to try and recruit two sets of people. The downside is that it is all too easy for them to spend all their time dealing with the minutiae of the day-to-day running of the station and neglect the more strategic planning necessary to ensure the long-term stability and survival of an organisation effectively meeting its charitable objects.

Nominees or Holding Trustees

Confusion may arise if your station was formed prior to the 1993 Charities Act, as it is not uncommon for constitutions before this date to refer to another body of people as the Trustees – those who hold title to any land, lease or other property of the association. In modern terms, these people are Nominees or Holding Trustees. They are not the Charity Trustees.

Nominees or Holding Trustees are

people appointed by the Charity Trustees to hold the title to the charity's property, leases or investments on behalf of an unincorporated Charity because an unincorporated association is not allowed to hold these in its own name. They are not needed if your station is set up as a limited company.

In the absence of any additional powers or responsibilities being given to these people by the governing document, they have no role in the management of the charity. They must act on the instructions of the Charity Trustees unless to do so would be a breach of trust. They are only liable where they, themselves, breach trust.

What are the responsibilities of Charity Trustees?

As explained above, the Charity Trustees are responsible for controlling the management and administration of the charity. They are the equivalent of Company Directors – in fact, if the charity is set up as a company, they are also the Company Directors.

They are usually elected on a regular basis by the membership of the association. Some charities' governing documents allow another organisation to appoint an ex-officio Charity Trustee (for example, the NHS Trust that runs your hospital may be eligible to appoint one of your Charity Trustees). Once elected or appointed, working together as equals, they are entitled to make any decisions they like within the bounds set out by the governing document and within the law.

In making decisions, Charity Trustees are legally obliged to consider only the best interests of the charity and its present and future beneficiaries. They are not allowed to take into account their own best interests, the interests of any organisation that appointed them, or the interests of the association's members.

If one of your station's Trustees if a Charity Trustee or any close relative or other organisation that they are involved with, could benefit in any way from a decision to be made, they must absent themselves from the meeting for the duration of any debate and vote on the issue. Not doing so can invalidate the decision.

A Charity Trustee, is currently not allowed to be paid by the Charity, either for acting as a Charity Trustee, or for any other work they (or any close relative or organisation in which they have an interest) may undertake unless the governing document specifically

Who are your Charity Trustees (contd)

allows it.

The proposed Charities Act 2005 and the proposed Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 are both likely to relax this rule slightly.

What are the liabilities of Charity Trustees?

If the Charity Trustees act prudently, lawfully and in accordance with their governing document then any liabilities they incur as Charity Trustees can be met out of the charity's resources. However, if they act irresponsibly they may be found to be in breach of trust. In this case, they would be personally responsible for liabilities incurred by or on behalf of the charity, and for making good any loss to the charity.

Furthermore, since Charity Trustees act collectively in administering a charity, they will usually be responsible collectively (the legal term is jointly and severally) to meet any liability. This means that even if only one of the Charity Trustees acts irresponsibly, all or any of the Charity Trustees could be held liable for the full amount if they are unable to prove that they had taken all reasonable steps to ensure that nothing untoward would occur.

In practice, assuming that the Charity Trustees acted reasonably and not recklessly or maliciously, the regulators will not usually demand restitution as they realise that it would be disproportionate and unfair to saddle well-meaning volunteers with such a financial liability. However, currently, the only way to get the liability removed is to ask the courts. As this is expensive and time-consuming most of those held liable don't bother. This means that, in theory, at any point in the future, they could face demands for repayment.

Again, it is hoped that the proposed new legislation both in England and Wales and Scotland will allow the regulator to legally absolve well-meaning Charity Trustees of a liability they have incurred.

Further reading

CC3 – Responsibilities of Charity Trustees (<http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/pdfs/cc3text.pdf>)

CC42 – Appointing Nominees and Custodians (<http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/pdfs/cc42text.pdf>)

Brief Guide to the Regulation of Charities in Scotland

(<http://www.oscr.org.uk/Docs/IMINF C Brief Guide to the Regulation of charities in Scotland.pdf>)

Obituaries

MRS FRANCES CLARKE Radio Frimley Park

Mrs Frances Clarke, a founder member of Radio Frimley Park, has died.

She had been among the founder volunteers of the station, back in 1976 and was well known by patients for her programmes, both Down Memory Lane and her ghost stories in the series One Step Beyond.

Frances would come to the hospital in the late afternoon on days when she was to broadcast and spend time touring the wards, chatting to patients and taking their dedications – and wearing out many pairs of shoes and trainers over the years.

Then it was back to the studio where a story in Frances' extensive repertoire of Ghost Stories would be broadcast. Each story lasted a quarter of an hour, which is ideal in a hospital environment where it may not be practical for a patient to concentrate for long periods of time. Frances spent hours researching and adapting many stories that she found so that they would fit the allocated time-slot.

Frances' other programme, immediately following the Ghost Story, was called Down Memory Lane. This was a trip back to the days of yesteryear, with stories and anecdotes from the old days with music and dedications. The music was often from the fifties and sixties, or earlier and was very much of the easy listening variety, with some old 'standards' as well.

Frances spent much of her life in Farnborough in Hampshire; indeed in the late 1930s she was Miss Farnborough. Tall, elegant and striking with her shock of long brown

hair, she took a considerable pride in her appearance and maintained a phenomenal collection of clothes. It was a source of frustration to her in later years, that the only shoes she could be comfortable in were trainers, which she always thought of as faintly disreputable!

She was fanatical about getting the quality of her shows as high as possible, although throughout her 28 years with the station she had no idea how the studio equipment worked.

She always had a technical operator, or 'driver' to do all that for her, whilst she concentrated on the speech element of her broadcasts.

Radio Frimley Park acknowledges the huge contribution that Frances made over many years and it is very much hoped that a fitting memorial to her will be the importing of her ghost stories into the station's 24 hour output, when that stage in development is reached.

JIM BLACK Radio Grapevine

Radio Grapevine is sad to announce the passing of Jim Black.

Jim presented his own blend of Scottish music and chat on a Friday night to the patients of St Johns Hospital in Livingston for many years, although it was round the wards that Jim was most at home and will be most sorely missed.

Not only did Jim help keep the Grapevine boat afloat with request collecting and presenting, he also steered us through some challenging times as Radio Grapevine's chairman, and as such he was the voice of reason and maturity.

Jim was one of the founder members of Radio Grapevine and will be sadly missed by all involved.

wanted ... wanted ... wanted ... wanted
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telephone hybrid unit
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wanted ... wanted ... wanted ... wanted

Setting the standard

It has always struck me as odd that we have no-one on EC to oversee the 'end product' of what every single hospital radio station is in existence for – the programmes that are transmitted to patients. We have experts to advise on setting up a station, how to build a studio, what to do with equipment, how to obtain licences, how to fundraise ... the list is endless. But no-one to advise or help with the flagship – broadcasting!

I therefore suggested to the EC that we create a role of Programme Officer. This proposal was examined by the EC, who decided to offer it to the membership for discussion at the AGM meeting in Stoke-on-Trent. Those stations present agreed that such a role is needed and charged the EC with taking it further.

The brief I devised for the role are simply suggestions – there's nothing hard and fast in place, that will be formally agreed as a job description by EC after we've heard opinions from the membership. Here's my thoughts on what the role should involve for a starting point:

1. To advise stations on structuring station output (if you like, a Programme Controller Controller!)

2. To advise on patient-orientated programming (to say 'get up the bloody wards and get requests!' – you'd be shocked by how many don't actually do that.)

3. To act as liaison between stations for shared programming (to point stations in the right directions for obtaining programmes and/or operate a holding library for HBA members to obtain



by Chris Berezai
Regional Manager

generic programmes from different stations)

4. To offer advice and help on specialist programming (such as classical, Big Bands, Country and Western, etc.)

5. To encourage and assist with sports commentary services, acting as liaison for stations to share commentary and coverage (particularly to help when a station may want to cover a local team's 'away' matches)

6. To set up regional training days in association with the Regional Reps.

7. To advise on programme standards and help with raising broadcasting standards.

8. To create a 'model' programme

schedule helping stations to choose the type and range of programmes to suit their audience.

To suit the role, I identified a number of factors that would give the ideal person for the job. Again, nothing hard and fast, my suggestions only, but I came up with the following:

1. An experienced Hospital radio broadcaster, confident and at ease with presenting request programmes, and with at least ten years experience across a range of programming (it's no good, with all due respect, to put a novice into this role – they've got to know what they're doing and what hospital radio is all about!).

2. Someone very good at training techniques (because you may have to do it ...)

3. Someone with a confident and likeable radio manner (OK, I admit, this is stating the obvious...!)

4. Someone au fait with the concept of good speech radio (as opposed to music-based programmes. It's a different ball game and much more difficult to fill time with)

5. A sports-orientated background (sorry, but it's essential because of the large amount of sport output within the HBA. Remember that football commentaries is where the HBA started.)

6. Someone who knows the world of hospital radio inside out and with a clear idea of what a hospital patient may want to hear (DJs need not apply!!)

So, that's the general idea – now it's over to you out there for

Chris Berezai

Beware the Patient Who Tells You Lies

Over the Christmas period we had a patient in the Heart Ward called Richard Blackmore.

He claimed to be the lead guitarist of the famous Heavy Metal Group DEEP PURPLE.

I spoke to him on Sunday 2nd January and he told me that he had been knighted in the New Year's honours so over the following week we played requests for the 'Newest Knight' feeling honoured for the privilege.

Foolishly I sent off an email to the local press advising them of this world famous personality, who was currently in our local hospital and they duly reported the item in the press, on the strength of my detailed story.

Two days later, the local paper called me to ask whether 'Sir' Ritchie Blackmore was the genuine article as they had received an anonymous email claiming that he was a conman.

Incredibly embarrassed, I telephoned the man in the hospital ward and spoke to him at some length trying to disprove his story. He convinced me he was the genuine person and when asked why he was not in a private hospital or private ward – he replied to say that he was a private patient in an NHS hospital but he didn't want to be in a small private hospital room as he liked the company of other people around him.

He also claimed that he had spoken to his own doctor in Los Angeles (which is where he now lives, he told me) about his treatment and he hoped to be going back to LA fairly soon for more tests.

He claimed that he was on the 13th gig of a 16 gig tour of the UK and after his performance at the Portsmouth Guildhall he doesn't remember anything until he woke up in the Southampton Heart Ward.

Whilst in hospital he had a collecting tin and he was giving away his autograph in exchange for a donation towards the Tsunami appeal and I understand it was 'quite full' with generous donations. It later transpired he was a conman and he ran off with the collection of Tsunami funds as well.

I've been conned and indeed all our ward visiting record request collection team were also conned by him but all we have done is given a significant boost to the music of Deep Purple on our request programmes.

Perhaps we are wrong to take at face value the stories our patients tell us but that is a sorry state of affairs.

I hope that the genuine Richard Blackmore never ends up in a Southampton Hospital – no one will believe in him.

Roy Stubbs, Embarrassed Chairman
Southampton Hospital Radio

All Our Yesterdays

Time for another look through the dusty archives of ON AIR, or as it was known back in 1981 – Hospital Radio News. Then as now the subject of conferences was been hotly debated.

Editor, Dave McGealy, reporting Executive discussion, wondered why only forty stations had sent representatives to conference, leaving the other 185 members of the Association at that time not bothering. What, asked Dave in his editorial, would you like at a conference, how much should it cost and most important, what part of the country should it be held?

These days, Quentin Howard is a high flying commercial radio executive but back in December 1981 was in hot debate with Dave Langer over that much-vexed subject of radio jingles. Now as we all know Mr Langer has as they say ‘an interest’ in these musical epics. So it was not surprising that following a letter from Quentin slamming the use of jingles in hospital radio, Dave hit back in our letters page, saying ‘Quentin mentioned that no old ‘biddy’ a derogatory term’ he said, ‘wants to hear ‘the old Rugged Cross’ zapped by an American jingle’. This went on Dave agreeing ‘was purely bad programming, unfortunately there are far too many presenters who play a particular jingle because of what it says instead of playing the right jingle which fits the link’. Then wrote Dave, ‘most hospital radio stations mould themselves on the Radio 2 style of programming and presenta-

Dennis Rookard looks back at past editions of On-Air

tion – do they use zappy jingles’, he asked. Considering how both these gentlemen’s careers have developed, I wonder what they would say today. Actually thanks have to be made to Dave Langer – a hospital broadcaster to his fingertips as his was the only advertisement appearing in that 1981 issue.

Leaping forward two years to April 1983, the cover featured a photograph of new Ambassador Frankie Vaughan. The idea of having an Ambassador had come from the then Public Relations Officer Alan Grimadell, who soon became an expert at finding show biz characters to add to our list of Patrons and Ambassadors.

He also used to grace the pages of ON-AIR with his Hype Page allegedly written from his office on the 75th floor of NABHO Towers, said to be located in Paddington. On a personal note here, when I took over this post, I felt that this vast office would have to go and so moved his mythical band of workers down to my garden shed.

Conference for 1983 – at that time we still only had one per year. And for that year Manchester and the Owens Park Conference Centre had been selected with the redoubtable Dave McGealy running the organising committee. Unlike today, back then stations

took it in turn to host the conference, making it as a point of honour to organise a better one than the previous event.

Finally on the technical front, how many of you remember that staple tool for outside broadcasting – the Partridge OB 100, designed and built by Alf Partridge in his Benfleet garage in Essex, originally for his local hospital radio station at Basildon. The unit first saw the light of day in its final form and for sale in the early seventies, enabling anyone to produce an outside broadcast by simply plugging in a microphone and headphones for studio talk back, before using a pair of crocodile clips to connect to a standard telephone line. In an age when arranging an outside broadcast often meant hiring in expensive broadband lines, the Partridge OB 100 in that age before mobile phones and ISDN or computer broadband was a sensation. For now any domestic quality line could be used.

It proved ideal for local football commentaries and live reportage from an event back to a studio. The one thing it could not handle very well was music, due to its restrictive bandwidth. But at £200 plus VAT it was a bargain. Indeed it was not long before it was selling in large numbers to the commercial radio sector. A case again of Hospital Broadcasting engineering technology leading the way. Some I understand are still in service today.

More next month ...

Goodbye to Standish

It is with much sadness I have to tell you that Standish Hospital Radio, member 196, closed down on Christmas Eve after over 50 years of broadcasting.

The station closed down with a special farewell show to the few remaining patients at the hospital, finishing with the song The Party’s Over after Station Manager Richard White had thanked patients, staff and volunteers for supporting the station.

The relocation of patients from Standish Hospital to the Gloucester Royal Hospital was completed on 28th December 2004.

The radio service at Standish was introduced in 1950 when staff in the OT Department suggested it would be a good idea to provide musical entertainment for the long stay patients on E block. Initially the Rediffusion Replay equipment was housed in a small room (nicknamed the broom cupboard) in the Recreational Hall. The radio service was run by the Junior League of Friends with their request programme becoming a great success.

In 1958 the station became a member of HBA and in 1969 the radio room was

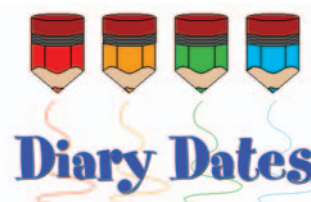
relocated to its final accommodation when a new Westrex broadcasting system was installed.

In 2000 the radio room was refitted by the League of Friends when the outdated equipment became too expensive to maintain.

Always very popular with its listeners Standish broadcast a patients request show every evening between 8 and 10pm.

Radio equipment and over 8000 records and CDs has been put into storage awaiting the final decision on the hospital site by the Health Minister and the Secretary of State. Two bids are in for the site, one from a Private Mental Health facility and the other from Standish Mutual Care, a co-operative venture owned by its members to serve the community. The dilemma for the D of H is whether to sell the site to the highest bidder, or donate the site to the community for a nominal fee. Standish Mutual Care would be the first mutual trust in the UK, although they are well established in other countries including Japan, Canada and Spain.

Richard White, Station Manager



1st-3rd April 2005
Spring Conference in Belfast

2nd April 2005
HBA Awards

2nd-10th April 2005
Hospital Broadcasting Week

14th-16th October 2005
**Autumn Conference,
Portsmouth**

15th October 2005
AGM

31st March-2nd April 2006
**Spring Conference at the
Hilton Hotel, Blackpool**

1st April-9th April 2006
Hospital Broadcasting Week

Going Twenty Four Seven

THE BIG IDEA

We first thought about setting up a sustaining service around six years ago. We had a brave idea of buying a Panasonic domestic CD jukebox and recording 300 CDs worth of sequenced music with jingles, and then rotating them. Clearly the drawbacks were many: repetition of material, problems with timing, the effort to record all those CDs and, of course, mechanical reliability. The idea went the same way as the Zeppelin airliner and the Ronco button stitcher.

Then the computer market changed – the price of machines dropped, the specifications soared (and by implication the reliability) and, really importantly, the cost of hard disk storage plummeted. The possibility of an affordable computer-driven system opened up. We spotted a playout system called 'Myriad' from a small UK company, PSquared, who were clearly aiming at the small commercial/RSL/hospital radio market and understood the financial models such stations work to.

Luckily we have a strong technical team, my colleague Terry who is an IT/electronics expert and myself from a BBC Radio technical and music background. We felt that between us and with help from another member, Jon Emmins (who had some experience of using the Encodad system), we could tackle the project. After talking to several other stations and visiting Harefield Hospital Radio who were already running Myriad, we jumped in feet first. We did not expect it to take quite as long as it did – almost eighteen months.

DECISIONS, DECISIONS

The main reason for installing a system in the first place was to get a 24-hour presence around the hospital – in the wards and in the public areas. We knew that with just three hours a night and Radio 2 the rest of the time, we would never be able to make much of an impact on the soon-to-arrive Patientline. The other thought at the back of our minds was to make any future RSLs a great deal easier than the first two had been!

There were two basic options for the type of service a playout system might provide. The first would be an all-singing, all-dancing installation. This could provide manual playout of jingles and music from the studios and then an automated sustaining service from the server. We could modernise the studios, throw out the cart machines and probably we would only need CD players as a backup. The second option

How one station went round the clock without going round the bend!

by Phil Hughes
Whipps Cross Hospital Radio



would simply be to provide an automated service to take the place of Radio 2 when we closed of an evening and to leave our studios untouched.

We opted for the second choice on the basis that we felt some presenters would find it hard to adapt to new technology, that we did not want to lose traditional radio operational skills and that it would be cheaper, quicker and easier to install.

Cowards maybe, but with hindsight it has turned out exactly as we had planned, disruption has been minimal, the result is highly effective and we have had no on air failures. It will be easy to upgrade the studios next time around.

The more we looked at Myriad the more it became obvious that it was a well thought out and reliable system that we could afford. In fact we applied for an 'Awards For All' National Lottery grant and we were successful. At that time it was a fairly simple process to apply for a grant for under £5,000 (it may still be) and we calculated that we could buy the hardware and software for around that figure. Applying for the grant was a little time consuming but was not rocket science – all we had to do was demonstrate a real purpose and that we were a financially responsible organisation. We did and we are! PSquared were able to adjust the invoice so that we paid directly for a few items and the rest were covered by the grant application. Nothing under-

hand, simply a splitting of costs – I think we paid £130 over and above the lottery grant.

ALL SYSTEMS GO

Our design concept was to provide a central server in our apparatus room that would hold the music and databases on mirrored drives of 80Gb (IDE RAID arrays were just becoming available cheaply). The principle was that if one drive failed the other would have an exact copy, so we would never lose any audio tracks. We thought that reloading music tracks manually after a crash would be too much pain to bear. At that time an 80Gb drive was about the biggest we could get. Nowadays 250Gb and even 300Gb can be bought reasonably cheaply. This central machine would spew out music 24-hours a day and we would simply opt in and out around our live output.

On advice from PSquared we planned-in a second, simpler machine onto a 100Mb Ethernet network for inputting new tracks and doing the housekeeping. We realised that although we would have to take down the server once a month for servicing (defragging etc.) by having a second machine we could merrily schedule and input new tracks remotely without living in fear of doing something dramatic on the server when it was on air. Good move! In fact we later added a third machine to the network so that two people could add tracks and edit while the main machine was doing its stuff. PSquared were unsure of the system's ability to cope with this but it seems to work.

Each machine had to have the software loaded – Autotrack 3 Pro runs the databases and scheduling, Myriad runs the wall of audio 'carts' and also the playout system (QNXT) – that displays three virtual cart players with a vertical stack of tracks. It auto-loads the tracks you have scheduled and segues really rather well. The crucial thing here is 'crap in, crap out' ... more on that later, we are getting ahead of ourselves.

On delivery of the machines (we bought base units from PSquared plus Win 2000 operating systems, very specific audio cards and the PSquared software) there was still a fair amount of setting up and configuring to do. We supplied monitors, keyboards etc. from our stock to keep costs down. Any station would need someone with real IT skills to get up and running and even then some of the settings require a study of the manuals. PSquared offers a free day's training but we decided to go our

Going Twenty Four Seven

own way. They also run a user group forum and their website has answers to plenty of the frequently asked questions. For instance a common one that prevents normal playout is the setting of "wave-sync devices" on the audio card settings panel.

We found that over time and with a few phone calls we gradually understood most of the variables and refined the system settings to do exactly as we required. WIN 2000, by the way, seems to be the most stable operating system for audio playout. Windows 98 is dying and is inherently unstable, ME is dead and XP just does not seem suited to long term audio playout stability. So far in 18 months of testing and playing to air we have not had a single system crash. I suppose one rule is, when you have got it stable and working – do not tinker! Keep the server as a server and mess around and input via the other machine. More recently we have fitted a £50 uninterruptible power supply, which will keep things running for 35 minutes. If there is a long-term power failure (bearing in mind the wards will be off anyway) the system will eventually restart itself, when the juice returns, and will automatically get back on time.

ALL THE NEWS THAT IS NEWS

As it arrives the server pc needs an interface box to combine its three separate stereo audio cart player outputs. So with some advice from Paul Blitz's website at Winchester HR we constructed a box that not only did that but also enabled an hourly feed of IRN (off satellite) via an I/O line switch from the server. Our unit provides level controls and also monitors the audio output and activates an alarm if there is 40 seconds or more of silence, so we know when we next come in if there has been a problem – very reassuring. The whole issue of the IRN feed and its solidity is now something we are experts at. We have found a cheap satellite receiver that works on Hotbird 4 to take the IRN feed AND can be programmed to reboot itself repeatedly each day just to make sure it is always on channel.

We also invested in a signal processor to flatten out the audio levels. Although all the audio files on Myriad can be digitally normalised, the variations can still be significant with dense modern pop singles sounding much louder than older recordings. Our Innovonics processor keeps the levels of the news, the jingles and the music consistent and comfortable for the listener.

MUSIC, MUSIC, MUSIC

We negotiated a database of songs from another station to start us off, which we found to be about 60% satisfactory. Then we spent the next year deleting tracks we would never require, adding some 2,000 tracks and correcting data errors and missing fields to get us to the point we are now at – just under 4,000 perfectly logged active tracks. We had to re-record from CDs the tracks that had been taken from vinyl, re-record some mono tracks and also re-source the correct, original versions of some tracks. At this stage now most of the tracks from the past 50 years that anyone might require for an easy listening/gold (rather than Top 40) station, are in there. From Sinatra to Springsteen and Robbie Williams to Andy Williams as well as all the 60s, 70s, 80s and 90s and Christmas tracks and carols, classics, novelties and nostalgia tracks – we made a great effort to cover the genres.

When you inherit a database, for consistency, you need to follow the conventions that come with it (or else go through every track yourself) – capitalisation, layout in the audio cartwall, how the 'feel' of the tracks is defined etc. The 'feel' is important as this is how the computer knows what the track actually sounds like; you have to define it in a mathematical way for it to understand what your ears hear. How you split tracks into categories and genres is one of the first big decisions and there is no right answer, though there are lots of wrong answers. This is really where the time has to be spent and the old adage about computers comes into play – you only get out what you put in. However, having now got a spot-on database of tracks at Whipps Cross, a thought occurred.

What if the worst happens and the server catches fire? Apart from me slashing my wrists, we would be truly stuffed. Out came the chequebook and we spent £150 on a removable hard drive and FileSync, an incremental backup software system. After one massive backup, now each week we back up any changes or additions to the server's drives, Terry takes home the removable drive – and I sleep easy. Belt, braces and a safety pin!

MORE BLACK MAGIC

So much for the music, what about jingles? The secret is to get as many as you can. Remember that these will be repeated far more frequently than the records. In fact you cannot have enough. We have had sets made from

JAMS in the USA and S2BLUE here (both of which are excellent sources of properly sung jingles) and we have made many custom sets using professional voices such as the very obliging Jon Briggs (The Weakest Link, Radio 2 promotions etc.). Again it is worth dividing them up into categories to give yourself more scheduling options.

The scheduling itself is the secret to the overall output, as you need to define the station sound musically and also the format of each programme's hourly clock. With Myriad it is possible to either hard code certain elements in each hour e.g. the news jingle, or tell the system to pick from certain categories at certain times. Therefore you can tell it what type of track to play but it will pick the first suitable one off that particular pile at that particular point – skipping over ones that would break rules. It will take into account all the rules you have set over repetition rates, tempos, energy, percentages per hour of each category and specific instructions such as 'play the news jingle at 59.50'. It will back time each hour to hit the news exactly by either dropping tracks or early fading or a combination of both. You can even set a rule against how much it is allowed to fade early. The one thing it must always do is hit that hourly junction – if that is what you want. Some stations may not require the news but everyone needs to run to an hourly clock.

WHERE ARE THE PRESENTERS?

It was on a Wednesday that one of our members, John, had a brainwave, curse him! We were originally planning to have music tracks interspersed with jingles, idents, public service announcements and programme trailers. The suggestion was why not include voice links from presenters? Great idea, let's make it sound like a fully-manned station. The downside of course is that we had to record and input literally hundreds of presenter links.

We built a 24 hour, 7 day schedule of presented programmes (it is amazing how automated presenters can do a six hour shift without tiring) and we divided their links into show openers and closers, hour openers and closers, and general links. With Myriad it is then possible to schedule accurately but randomly what the station plays, not just the music and jingles but also the voice links. The software is able to 'voice-over' sweepers across the top of the music intros just like a real pro. Get these bits right and you do begin to

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sound like a 24-hour station. And my goodness it works! When you finally see it working on the screen and hear the output, you may be tempted to comment that it sounds better than some of your presenters! The hours of extra work have really paid off for us.

The presenter links do repeat of course, but if you record enough it will be a month by the time they come round again. Since the average patient stay at Whipps Cross is three days (and very few go beyond a few weeks) the chances are nobody will ever know. Can you remember what a jock said on the radio last week? Recently a patient stopped one of our presenters on a ward visit and, after recognising his voice (!), asked him how he kept awake on the overnight shift to 3am. I do not think we told him the truth.

FORMATS, FILES AND FANCY STUFF

Storage is cheap but not free. At a very early stage you need a policy for how you will store your audio and P Squared recommend using the Microsoft IMA ADPCM format for the music. This is about a 3 to 1 compression ratio and much kinder than MP3. You can compress an average song down from 10Mb per minute to 3Mb per minute and you will not normally hear the difference. However, we found that presenters' voices (particularly the ladies) all 'buzzed' a little and solo pianos sounded fuzzy. So we decided all voice links would be linear wav files as would the few solo piano pieces that we have on the system. Honour was satisfied and for 95% of the playout the compressed files sound absolutely fine.

We have set up our inputting machines with Myriad, CoolEdit Pro and WinDac – a ripper. The three applications interlink smoothly and it is possible to rip a track, title it, top and tail it and mark intro/extro times in the Audiowall and then catalogue it in the Autotrack database in less than 4 minutes. However, work out what that means going full steam for 4,000 tracks – which is probably what you need for a 24-hour station. Even with our three networked machines (though the server should be taken out of the equation for routine inputting) it is an onerous and exacting task. One slip and instead of our carefully tailored late night mellow format for overnight shows (to be honest Radio 2 at night is now far too strident for patients), we could have Meatloaf blasting out to the wards. For consistency it is probably better if just

one person does most of the inputting. The devil, as always, is in the detail, though Myriad does include some crafty search routines to spot wrongly inputted material.

Incidentally we discovered early on that WIN2000 is missing some files known as ASPI files that are essential to enable audio ripping. They can be patched in from the Creative.com website but for a while we were foxed – Windows 98 worked fine but WIN2000 did not – nor incidentally does XP. So if you cannot rip a CD at home that is probably why. Another foible we found with the WIN2000 operating system was that it did not talk to the Galleon clock module and the software supplied by P Squared. This locks the machine to Rugby MSF and is critical if there is to be an hourly news opt-in. Terry had to write an interface that did the job.

THE SUPPORTERS' CLUB

We have found the P Squared discussion groups and e-mail exchange to be very useful and as a company they are very responsive. They were patient with our questions, offering phone time with the programmers and when we discovered numerous small bugs in the systems they were keen to receive details and also to accept ideas for improvements. Invariably these bug fixes and improvements appeared in the next software releases. We found we had some sense of partnership with them and with a number of other hospital stations on the same system there is always someone out there to help. In fact we are only using three parts of a much bigger portfolio since we do not use the advert scheduler or voice-tracking facilities. We do not need, thankfully, to worry about PRS/PPL reporting and we are not engaging in multi-media magic.

Our only real gripe is the rather tortuous annual licensing process P Squared use. Fair enough to protect your software, and they have tried to make it easier with an on-line re-registration option, but we made a decision a long time ago that not one of our machines would be connected to the internet – the best firewall money can buy! So now once a year I take time off work to reset the licences during office hours, over the phone. It turns out to be five separate codes and you have to give them part of the code before they give you the other part – the Enigma machine had nothing on this. So what would happen if they went bust? Apparently their solicitor has universal

unlock codes in the safe. I should add that for hospital radios there is no annual licence cost – once you have bought the software that is it.

THE STATION NOW BROADCASTING

^a We have spent around £6,000 and we are running a radio station 24-hours a day, seven days a week.

- The system is settled and stable and we have become proficient at tweaking it and inputting new material, but like any music library the work never ends. Our original 80Gb drives are just over half full – so still room for plenty more tracks!

- The live programmes join seamlessly to the automated playout across news junctions and we provide the news on the hour, every hour.

- The station sounds as if it is presented live around the clock. We are constantly tickled and impressed by the segues, the news opt-ins and the voice-overs by our virtual jocks.

- Our database of nearly 4,000 songs is targeted at a hospital audience and is now an accurate and balanced database of music.

- Within the weekly schedule we have now established specialist hours to break up the format and to give some variety. There is a presented comedy hour each lunchtime with over 70 classic comedy clips in the bank, love songs at 5pm on a weekday, a once a week country show and Jukebox Saturday Night with some rock 'n' roll and doo-wop classics. More specialist shows are planned.

- We are one of 26 radio and tv channels available on Patientline (who incidentally came on line just as we went 24-7, which was very handy). Patientline gave us the listening figures for May that showed that after ITV with 15,000 hours of viewing, BBC1 with 13,000 hours, we were next (and we were the top-rated radio station) with some 9,000 hours of listening. We believe the properly formatted and targeted sound we have achieved with Myriad has helped achieve this, together with plenty of ward visiting during the evenings.

- At the moment we can hold our heads up and say we are providing what the patients want, until the next set of figures!

Phil Hughes

(I am more than happy to provide more information or advice. Contact at Whipps Cross 0208 535 6997 or email phil.hughes@bbc.co.uk)

Aggressive Marketing and Promotion in Country Music

Country music is big business in America and is growing in popularity by leaps and bounds all over the world, with the notable exception of one major market place – Britain.

Although there are several signs that it might change with country music in the future, there is still much work to do and most importantly a much needed change in attitude is required.

Many times in the last 20 years, I have been asked why has country music not had a bigger hold in the UK, although several times it looked as it might have happened.

In the early 1960s, country acts like Marty Robbins, Jim Reeves, Patsy Cline and Hank Loddin featured extensively in the charts. The latter part of the decade saw the first Wembley Festivals and record breaking attendances for the music.

The 1970s saw a steady consolidation for the music and by the end of that decade, with such stars as Kenny Rogers, Don Williams, Crystal Gayle and Boxcar Willie all made a big impact, it finally looked as if country music was ready to be established as a major musical force in the UK.

But it never happened and for the past 15 years or so its popularity has plummeted.

What has happened?

I do believe strongly that a major contributory factor has been the lack of AMP: that is Aggressive Marketing and Promotion. Country music has always lacked this one vital and much needed ingredient.

I have seen it from the major labels, the smaller independents, the hard working bands, singers and musicians, the agents and promoters, the dedicated enthusiastic amateurs who run the club scene and dare I say it from you, whoever reads this, and yes, at times I am as guilty as the rest.

We all seem to be content to allow country music to be treated as a second class act. What we need to do is to get out and meet the public, stand up and promote country music. Ignore the long held prejudices and concentrate on the musical strengths.

For several years, close friends and associates have suggested that the way for country music to make a bigger impression in Britain is to give it another name – why? Whatever the label you decide to tag the music with, I love it and dare I say you love it as well but are afraid to say so, it still remains country music.

Country music for me reflects every day life, good times and bad times – in



an honest and uncompromising manner, so why change a name that has been perfectly acceptable for the last fifty years. I am afraid that country music does not need to be compromised in that way.

Even at the height of his career, Jim Reeves was proud to be known as a country singer and the same goes for all the artists of today. They don't hide their music under some modern meaningless name (ie rap, garage, techno, etc) they stood up proudly and justifiably called themselves country singers. Let me give you an example, not so long ago, a country artist, namely Garth Brooks, proved that in America you could work in a positive and aggressive way to sell country music to the masses. It's not down to the guy's talent (and he had plenty of that), the main reason for Garth Brooks' amazing success was AMP.

And the breakthrough he had achieved, has opened the doors for many more country acts like Vince Gill, Alan Jackson, Brooks and Dunne and Shania Twain, etc, to pursue AMP. This paid off with sell out shows and million selling albums – an achievement many years ago would have been nothing more than a pipe dream.

Could it happen in Britain?

The plain and simple answer is Yes. All we need to do is change our attitude and in doing so, change the attitude of others in the music, entertainment and media business. We in Britain have many talented country music singers, musicians and entertainers but what do they lack – that vital ingredient AMP. The starting point was getting the American music accepted, which has slowly happened but we still need a massive change from the media, record companies, radio broadcasters and television companies in this country.

Record companies cannot sell country music in Britain if they do not believe in the music. You cannot be aggressive and believable about a product if you don't like it. Broadcasters (there are a few who believe in country music) need to be aggressive and promote country music and new acts and names in order to get people to realise that country music is up and coming.

If record companies, radio stations, television companies don't have anyone working for them who enjoys and believes in country music, then for

goodness sake go out and recruit someone who does and I don't mean a free-lance token. Get full time staff members who believe in country music. Because if the music takes off in the way I think it's threatening to do, then those who do will recoup those salaries and listening figures in double quick time.

Record companies' staff need to be trained to sell country music as aggressively as they do other styles of music. It seems at the moment that sales people, when dealing with record shops, are almost apologetic about country music, ie 'oh yes, in case you might be interested, we also have this new release by Jo Dee Messina, I am not keen on it myself but you might want to stock a few copies'. I know, I have heard it. That's not the kind of attitude we need. We need AMP.

Education to the Media

Why is it that magazines like 'Q' and 'Vox' continuously give country music releases poor reviews in comparison to other forms of music. It's not that country music is sub standard, it's because the staff on these and other publications do not like country music or don't understand it or must not been seen to enjoy it, less it should shatter their street cred!

This type of discrimination is wrong. Most country music today can and does stand on equal terms with classic rock, soul, jazz, R & B and any other style of music and should be given similar and equal treatment. If everyone involved in country music was to take a stance against this discrimination, then we might start to win the battle, be it a big one.

I firmly believe that if we can get the American country music of today accepted in the same way as American soul music was in the 60s and 70s, then the doors will start opening for the British country acts, of which there are many good ones around. It happened for soul music and other types of music. Why shouldn't it happen to country music?

The more the aggressive market and promotion, not only by record companies but by the media and broadcasting services, will ensure a better chance of success to country music. We all need to do our best and attract the vast untapped audience of 18-30 years to country music. They are the ones who will carry the music long into the next century and beyond. It is the responsibility of anyone into country music to make it happen, just as it has happened over the water in America.

Phil Keast

**Country music presenter
Hospital Radio Plymouth**

Countrywide ... News from the Stations

EpsomHospitalRadio

EPSOM HOSPITAL RADIO AIMS TO BOOGIE 24/7

Epsom Hospital Radio held a fundraising event at the Boogie Lounge nightclub, Epsom, in an attempt to boost income for their 24 hour project.

Currently broadcasting 30 hours a week (8-10pm weekdays and 10am-8pm weekends), Epsom Hospital Radio aims to increase their output and be on-air 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

With the PatientLine system now installed in many of the wards at Epsom General Hospital, patients are able to hear the range of programmes in the clarity of stereo. It is now hoped to purchase the Myriad automation system, enabling EHR to broadcast around the clock.

Unfortunately, this does not come cheap. The event at the Boogie Lounge raised approximately £700 for the project. 'It was a great success. People had a lot of fun and a lot of money was raised' proclaims Serena Smyth, Fundraising Co-ordinator. 'Our thanks go to the owner Neil and manager Ish at the Boogie Lounge for providing the venue and staff; Lee from ice-agency.com for donating a superb vodka luge ice sculpture; Sainsbury's for supplying items for our prize draw and the Mayor and Mayoress of Epsom & Ewell for supporting the event'. The Mayor and Mayoress of Epsom and Ewell later visited the studios for an interview and showed support for the station and its value within the community.

25 YEARS FOR ROSSENDALE

Hospital Radio Rossendale celebrated their 25th Anniversary on 17th December 2004 with a great party at St. Mary's Chamber's Rawtenstall. It was an opportunity to say a big thank you to members past and present. Although a small station, Radio Rossendale looks after a number of voluntary functions at the hospital and has more than 60 volunteers.

The party got underway with great live music provided by the band, One Nite Stand, which includes an ex HRR member! A local DJ provided a disco with games. The supper was hot and tasty and led in to the presentations with a number of members receiving 25 Year certificates. The presentations were performed by the Mayor of

Rossendale, June Forshaw and the local M.P. Janet Anderson.

Station Chairman, Stuart Haines, paid tribute to founder members Arthur, Vera and David Foster, who are still very active in the station. Arthur Foster (founding chairman) was presented with a crystal decanter and David Foster (secretary) with a silver tankard.

Publicity Officer and organiser Pauline Haines said, 'Although Hospital Radio Rossendale is a small station, we were all proud to be able to celebrate our first 25 years with a great party. We would like to thank everyone who attended or sent their good wishes.'

One of our many ways of marking the anniversary was the creation of a celebrity cook book.

We were overwhelmed with the help we received from local, national and international celebrities. Recipes range from Sir Michael Caine's carrot cake to Tony Blair's pasta. Celebrity chefs contributed including Ainsley Harriot and Rick Stein, Radio 2 presenters helped including Steve Wright, Terry Wogan and Jeremy Vine, GMTV presenters Eamon Holmes and Fiona Phillips contributed, as did soap stars from Coronation Street and EastEnders.

The cook book totals 66 A4 pages and is available for £5 plus £1 postage and package from Pauline Haines, Publicity Officer, Hospital Radio Rossendale, Haslingden Road, Rawtenstall, Rossendale, Lancashire, BB4 6NE. Cheques to be made payable to Rossendale Hospital Radio

ARROWED MOVE FORWARD

During the past 12 months Arrowed Sound Hospital Radio based in Wirral Merseyside has undergone considerable change. We thought as the hospital had to install the new Patientline bedside station we could lose our radio to a commercial concern.

It was decided to install a computer, software, update the mixer and purchase new microphones.

As funds were very low we approached our League of Friends. We asked for a grant of just over £3000 to purchase a new mixer to replace our old and forever breaking down one. We received, after a presentation explaining why we needed a new mixer, the total amount required.

The station then decided to send a representative to meet the Chairman of the hospital trust to ask if they would fund a computer capable of running an unmanned radio station. After the meet-



Pictured, top: Stan Boardman on our re-launch; below David Foster, Secretary of HRR receiving his 25 year long service certificate

ing we were told permission had been granted and go ahead and purchase the machine.

Paul Head, one of our presenters, used money donated to him by his employer, Lloyds Trustees Bank, to buy Autoplus software, which is capable of running a 24-hour broadcasting station unattended if required and can be programmed even by a station manager!

We then approached Wirral Hospital Lottery for money to buy new microphones to compliment the new system. Again this was granted to us and we were ready to give our patients music and chat for different moods 24 hours seven days each week manned or on automatic.

The studio looked dirty. It was decided to contact the works department for any spare paint. Not only did they provide the paint and painter to paint the studio and entrance, they even cut and moved work surfaces to the new layout we had planned.

A re-launch was planned for early December for our Christmas schedule. Local celebratory Stan Boardman, the comedian, consented to do the honours

Countrywide ... News from the Stations

and open our new studio. We invited lots of guests to thank them for their valuable contribution to our new equipment, etc. We now don't feel as threatened by our competitors.

We now broadcast in digital sound. Oh! what a difference to the old tubes we used to have to buy. The patients are provided with real headphones and can ring with their requests from their bedside station.

The station manager would like to thank all the presenters for their loyalty during the lean times, Mark Sanders of Truro Hospital Radio, for his support and help and, of course, all our many friends and ex patients on Wirral for their support.

Keith Robertshaw

CHEEKY CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FOR WILLIAM HARVEY HOSPITAL PATIENTS



Cheeky Girls Monica and Gabriela with Daniel Jones

Chart toppers the Cheeky Girls were in Ashford on Christmas Eve, the final stop on their current tour of personal appearances promoting their new single 'Boys and Girls', before heading home to East Sussex for Christmas.

The Transalvanian singing sisters, who shot to fame after winning a place in the hearts of the nation with their wacky audition for the ITV1 series, Popstars The Rivals took time out to record a Christmas message for listeners to Ashford Hospital Broadcasting Service hospital radio in the William Harvey Hospital and to chat to AHBS Chairman, Daniel Jones, about their plans for the coming year.

THE DAY I WAS COMPARED TO JONNY WILKINSON!

It was the biggest sporting day in the UK since a certain football match in 1966. England's rugby players were attempting to win the World Cup in the final of the competition.

At that time (late 2003) I was presenting a weekly sports programme every Saturday afternoon, on Castle Mead Radio in Hinckley and District Hospital, Leicestershire.

After a particular young man performed a spectacular kick and the final whistle blew, the whole country suddenly went rugby and Wilko crazy and there was much excitement in our small studio.

It was an amazing moment in which to be broadcasting!

Finally my generation (early 20's) had a sporting achievement to match 1966 and all that.

However, whilst I was celebrating a famous victory and trying to relay to our listeners a sense of the joy now sweeping through the national consciousness, my female co-host, Juliet, had something, or rather someone, else on her mind.

She was rather more concerned with the face, thighs and indeed every other part of Mr Jonny Wilkinson (typical woman some might say!).

Despite my best efforts to bring the conversation back to our world-beating victory, my co-host decided that that the next couple of minutes of air-time should be spent talking about how gorgeous Jonny is.

So, by this point, I, as someone with a good face for radio, was feeling distinctly intimidated.

This wasn't helped when my lovely co-host (bless her!) decided to contrast my features with those of Wilko.

Within the space of a few minutes I'd gone from thinking Jonny was the best thing since sliced bread (in his sporting capacity), to wishing his face had been mauled a bit more during the match by his opponents!

Some might say that's what happens when females are allowed on to sports shows (I couldn't possibly comment).

Needless to say, just recently, when our local footy team, Hinckley United, were playing in the second round match of the FA Cup, which was broadcast to the nation on BBC1, the biggest day in our small borough's sporting history, I presented our coverage by myself and without any girls who might have been more concerned with players' tackle, rather than how they tackled.

Anyway, I'm sure I've got no need to feel inadequate, I mean Jonny Wilkinson isn't that good looking, is he?

Mathew Hulbert.

Publicity Officer, Castle Mead Radio

A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

The New Year has got off to a great start for Grimsby Hospital Radio when they were awarded a grant of £5,000 by the National Lottery's 'Awards for All' scheme. This money can now be used towards two new stereo mixing desks and to cover marketing costs.

Awards for All is a national programme aimed at local communities, giving grants of between £500 and £5,000 to enable people to participate in art, sport, heritage and community activities. Projects promoting education, the environment and health in the local community, are also recognised by the scheme.

Station officials sent in the application in early December. In line with the scheme's promise to be straightforward and make a decision on grants within eight weeks, confirmation of the award was received just before Christmas. The money will be received at the end of January.

GHR Chairman Brian Leonard was understandably delighted with the news. 'What a great end to our 21st year,' he said. 'We are planning to carry out a studio refit to convert our current mono signal into stereo. This will bring our audio output into line with the quality of the Patientline system on which we broadcast. We will need to raise up to £15,000 to achieve this goal but getting the grant from Awards for All is a great start.'

Grimsby Hospital Radio is the radio station for the Diana Princess of Wales Hospital.

Richard Lyon, Station Manager

IRN NEWS

Following the various postings on the One list, details of the agreement reached with IRN were printed in a recent edition of On Air. Basically every hospital radio station that carries IRN news bulletins must apply for a licence at £100 + VAT. This includes any station taking the feed from their local ILR station. Once you have a licence, you can register to use Newsweb and receive all sports reporting details for a weekend. If you do carry IRN via your local ILR you must also get permission from the station to do so. Without going into things too deeply, the main reason for the agreement with IRN is for copyright purposes and effects every station carrying IRN.

Dave Nicholson, Vice President, HBA

Sound Broadcasting Equipment Show 2004

'It's good to be back in Birmingham', that was the general consensus of those visiting this year's busy Sound Broadcasting Equipment Show, held at the end of November at the National Exhibition Centre. With another successful show out of the way, organisers Point Promotions, are already making preparations for the 30th SBES which will take place at the same Pavilion NEC venue in November.

Well over 100 companies took part in November 2004, including a number of new exhibitors experiencing SBES for the first time. Companies such as Saras Technology, CTP Systems, SSQ Software, Advanced Studio Projects, First Sense and Wohler Technologies, all became part of what is undoubtedly the most important domestic exhibition each year for the UK sound broadcasting industry.

By any standards, the 2004 event was a tremendous success. Despite expanding by some 25% compared to SBES 2003, all available stand space had sold out weeks before the event. This success was emphasised once the event opened, with the crowds around the various exhibitors' stands, not just looking, but obviously doing some serious business as well.

Another indicator of success was that predictions of increased attendance figures compared to 2003 certainly proved correct! For example, BBC Wales, having missed the SBES 2003 event in London, bussed in a crowd on the first day. Even this wasn't enough and the day-trip proved so successful that one of those involved dragged his departmental boss to the show the following day!

A first for SBES this year was the presence of two vehicles, displayed on the forecourt of The Pavilion. GlobeCast, who also sponsored the lounge area with free internet connections within the SBES, were showing their control vehicle, whilst SSL had also brought along a mobile control room. Both vehicles were popular with visitors and as a result of their success, other exhibitors are already making plans to increase the number of outside



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exhibits on show at next year's SBES.

Commenting after the event, Dave McVittie of Point Promotions Limited, organisers of the SBES, said: 'We knew we had a successful event when we sold out of stand space early. Visitor numbers were well up on 2003's attendance in London. The show was very busy and, to me, there seemed to be more people engaged in serious discussions on the stands rather than just walking up and down the aisles'.

Asked about the reactions of exhibitors in particular Dave McVittie replied: 'All the exhibitors seemed very happy with the show and the attendance. It just goes to show that after 29 years of SBES we seem to be getting it right.' As if to emphasise the point, soon after the show, Point Promotions Limited announced that exhibitors have already re-booked some 53% of the available stand space for the SBES next year.

The 30th Sound Broadcast Equipment Show takes place in The Pavilion at the NEC, Birmingham on Wednesday and Thursday the 16th and 17th of November 2005. More information can be found on the SBES

web-site at: www.sbes.com/ For the first time the SBES organisers Point Promotions Limited offered prizes for three categories of stand: Best Space Only stand, Best Shell Scheme stand and Best use of Colour and/or Graphics. There were three independent judges, all with a great deal of experience in exhibitions and marketing, and their decisions were unanimous. Wood & Douglas Limited won the prize for the Best Space Only stand for their innovative stand featuring a golf course! Chris Young of Wood and Douglas commented: 'It was a great pleasure to be awarded the best 'open space' stand at SBES, especially as it was the first one. This was a great credit to our Stand Designers, Adlab Creative Design.'

The category of best shell scheme stand was won by IPE Systems. IPE had missed 2003's SBES but had returned for 2004. They said of their win: 'IPE is delighted to have won a Best of' award for our stand at SBES. The credit must go to Anna

Halfpenny of Coldsoba, who listened to what we wanted, designed the stand, prepared all the graphics and put it all together for us.'

The stand voted by the judges to be the Best use of Colour and/or Graphics was Sound Network. The judges were impressed in the way the graphics on this stand grabbed visitors' attention. They said it was noticeable that when visitors turned into the aisle with the Sound Network stand they made straight for that stand.

Dave & Paula McVittie of Point Promotions both agreed the competition, whilst meant as a bit of fun, had encouraged some exhibitors to think carefully about their stand design and layouts. 'It is amazing how many exhibitors think that just booking a stand and attending an exhibition will bring results. Not many exhibitors consider how their stands look from the visitor's point of view. A stand space is a showcase and exhibitors must take more care to present themselves and their products effectively. Hopefully The Best of SBES competition will encourage them all in future years.'

Twenty-one EHR Christmases

Christmas 2004 will (hopefully) be the 21st consecutive year I have seen in Christmas live on Epsom Hospital Radio.

Those 21 Christmases have seen us broadcast from three different studios and have nine different station controllers during ever-changing and progressive times. It's only at moments like this, when you actually take time to look back and make comparisons, that you realise how life around us has changed too.

Monday the 24th December 1984 was the very first time that Epsom Hospital Radio extended its normal weekday broadcasting hours. Back then, weekday programmes would finish at 10:00pm. The decision was made to continue for an extra three hours until 1:00am that day, which hardly seems like a big deal nowadays. However, what people don't realise, or may simply have forgotten, is just how much this country has changed culturally over the relatively short time span of the last twenty years. Christmas seemed much more sacred to people then, more of a special occasion and a cause for celebration than it seems to be now.

Back in 1984, the decision to broadcast until 1:00am was met with scepticism by some with arguments that nobody would want to listen at that time. Twenty years ago, there was no satellite TV and the terrestrial channels would close down around 11:30pm. BBC 2 being the exception, as they stayed on air until ten minutes into Christmas Day to cover a Midnight Mass.

It always felt as though the whole country closed down for Christmas. By the time that first programme went to air, the last trains had already left Epsom Station. The local busses had long since got back safely to the Bus Garage and all the shops had closed some six hours earlier, not to be open again until at least Boxing Day. Even the one all-night garage had turned off its pumps and shut up shop as I drove by on the way in, hardly passing another car en route. A few pubs seemed active enough though but even they would call time at the usual hour with extended licences not being granted on Christmas Eve.

In hospital it was different. Sadly, people do not stop needing medical treatment just because it's Christmas. The feeling was that in a general hospital environment like ours, patients

by Trevor Leonard



find it hard to sleep at night anyway. On this night in particular it would be close to impossible. Nobody wants to spend time in hospital anyway, being away from family and friends on Christmas Eve night must be the worst night of all. It was hoped that having the option of a live programme presented by somebody actually inside the hospital with them and talking to them exclusively, might have some appeal compared to the other stations who were probably being held together over Christmas by a technical operator playing out an abundance of pre-recorded programmes at designated

***It always felt
as though the
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for Christmas***

times. When we received two requests telephoned in from patients in the first ten minutes of the show, that decision had already been fully justified.

This was also the first ever occasion that Epsom Hospital Radio had broadcast after 11 o'clock at night and most of the management committee, as well as other presenters, were present to hear the chimes of Big Ben marking the birth of Christmas Day 1984. They, and subsequent management committees, must have liked the show

as I have been allowed back every year since. If the truth were known, I'd be breaking the door down if they didn't! It's firmly established as part of my Christmas ritual now.

Like all programmes, some have gone better than others. I recall 1988 being an extremely hard programme to present with a major rail disaster and the Lockerbie atrocity occurring a couple of days beforehand. Even the Queen had to make some last minute changes to her Christmas address to the nation that year to reflect the prevailing rather sad and sombre mood of the nation.

1996 was an interesting year as I was also presenting a regular evening programme for a local ILR station at the time. That finished at 10:00pm, the same time as my show for Epsom Hospital Radio was due to start.

I think I'm safe in confessing now that while I was presenting the ILR show live, I was also using an adjoining studio to pre-record the last forty minutes of the programme. A colleague then played in the recording while I got in the car and shot round the M25 – keeping to the speed limit officer, honest! – in time to get to Epsom Hospital with a full eight minutes to spare.

Things have certainly changed in the studio over the twenty years. For that first show, and for many years afterwards, everything was played off vinyl. We had one huge, chunky Plessey Cart machine for the playing of jingles. The novelty of the show, (I hesitate to call it 'humour') were the 'drops' used, which were just my attempts at interacting with excerpts of hit songs. All these had to be played in live, making a reasonable sense of timing essential.

That's all gone now of course. Modern day broadcast studios complete with digital editing make everything that bit easier – or at least it will be when I begin to understand it all!

I've honestly not thought about whether I'd like to still be doing this in another twenty years. I'd be happy if I'm still physically able to do it!

For starters it would mean the local authorities hadn't made the potentially catastrophic error of closing Epsom General Hospital! But it would also mean that I hadn't yet been carted off to the home for mentally bewildered – thus proving many who've known me completely wrong!

Radio Gosh

A reply to the letter from Mike Smith of Radio Skerne, regarding the demise of Radio Gosh

Thanks for your letter to On Air, as you correctly point out Radio Gosh no longer broadcasts to the Great Ormond Street Hospital; this is due to the hospital trust stating they wanted to provide a play based service to the children at the hospital and have been talking to Radio Lollipop about providing this service.

As soon as the HBA committee became aware of the situation facing the members of Radio Gosh, we started a dialogue between the Chairman of Gosh (Peter Losch), the contact at Great Ormond Street (Pattie Hogan) and Radio Lollipop (Hedley Finn). After discussions with Great Ormond Street, it became apparent that they had made a decision about the continuation of the Radio Gosh service that they were not going to back down on. Despite much rumour and speculation, it appears on the face of it that Great Ormond Street have initiated proceedings with Radio Lollipop and that Lollipop has not made a hostile takeover bid for Radio Gosh.

I feel a great deal of sympathy with Peter and his members about the loss of the ability to provide a broadcasting ser-

vice to the children at Great Ormond Street, however, HBA is not in a position to force Great Ormond Street to change its mind on this matter as this is an internal policy decision by the hospital. What we are doing for the members of Radio Gosh is to provide them with access to as much information as possible on alternative hospital radio stations in the London Area (view my letter On Air 101, p23). I very much hope Peter and his team will take up opportunities with other stations and I have no doubt that the experience that they will bring to these institutions will be highly valued.

As for your other comment about the possibility of the Patient Power providers starting network stations to be broadcast through the hospitals that they serve, I would find this highly unlikely to occur. It is simply not in the remit for these providers to do such a thing and it would be questionable as to whether they would be able to turn a profit on such a venture.

Regards
Ben Hart
London Rep

CHASE

The Charities & Associations Exhibition

Now in its 13th year, The Exhibition will be held on 15/16 February 2005 at the Business Design Centre, Islington, N1 and will be sponsored by top 20 chartered accountants Kingston Smith for an eighth consecutive year.

The event is the leading business-to-business forum for the non-profit sector and expects to attract about 70 exhibitors. Organisations booked to date include the European Parliament, Endsleigh Insurance, The Guardian, Unity Trust Bank and Charity Logistics. IT is well represented by ASI Europe, Ascent Technology, Consensus, ESiT and Care Business Solutions.

For the first time, the popular free seminar programme will be extended to include a stream dedicated to Events Management within the non-profit sector. This has attracted Conference Aston, Thistle Hotels, VRG, University of Manchester and The Association Gateway to exhibit.

The full programme will include sessions on fundraising, HR, finance, IT and general management plus the Kingston Smith Charity Lecture and Charity Question Time. Registration for the exhibition and seminars is FREE to visitors. Visit the website for full details and registration: <http://nfptechno.netextra.net/265.article>

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No Longer a Virgin

I was all alone in a crowd. No one to talk to. And that was just the Virgin train. This was my first time, so, smiling in what I hoped the young man would believe was a friendly manner I squeezed apologetically onto one of those modern seats designed to fit 'Everyman', well, every man as long as he is in the last stages of anorexia nervosa and listened to the Billy Connolly tapes kindly lent to me by another member of Hospital Radio Tunbridge Wells. It was all Billy's fault but suddenly barking out loud with laughter seemed to scare the young man, so I proudly explained that I was a sometime hospital radio presenter on my way to an important conference and that, as performers ourselves, we are sometimes inclined to steal professional material in order to brighten the lives of poorly people.

I was met at the station by a friendly man who said he knew Tunbridge Wells and sometimes went shopping there, which I thought was a little eccentric for a taxi driver who lived in Stoke-on-Trent! I found out later he was a member of the H.B.A. and lived in Southampton but has friends in Tunbridge Wells.

The Quality Hotel was a delight from the start. One of those elderly buildings with musical floorboards in every room and mine was right at the

top. Without more ado I stretched out on the bed and found that it put me low down enough to be able to miss the buildings and gaze right across to the far distant hills. It was quiet up there and I found myself smiling into the tranquillity of a warm and still afternoon on my own. I could go swimming, or not. I could look at all the paperwork and timetables I had been given, or not. I could doze off but I thought I had better not. Better look enthusiastic instead, El Presidente June had given me a very warm welcome and a very heavy carrier bag in which I was dismayed to find a list of attendees showing that most people had come in groups and that I really was going to be on my own.

But it started well when I went for a swim and, as we cruised companionably to and fro, this man and I, (in the pool, Stoke is not very near the sea,) found it was Mike Skinner from Uckfield, a mere 15 miles from Tunbridge Wells. He even threatened to come and admire the new carpet in our studio! Later, at dinner, after an excellent carvery, I had an awful job to avoid eating puddings pretending to be ordinary cakes but that exuded thick, shiny, slicks of chocolate and cream which pooled slowly at their base when a slice had been cut.

Saturday, and we are down to serious business now. I sharpened my wits,

and a pencil and absorbed all kinds of information I did not know I needed.

The seminars were most efficiently organised and perfectly timed with space and food in between to help us assimilate what we had heard. By now I was relaxed and talking with men to whom I had not been introduced, how daring, it was enough to peer at each others name badges and and just talk. The sense of unity and belonging was tangible and I experienced nothing but kind and thoughtful hospitality so that when the evening came and with it the Gala Dinner, it really was like dining with friends.

On Sunday we were invited to what was advertised as 'A Lunch to Remember.' And so it was. Those of the H.B.A. executive committee who had worked so hard already had gone the full nine yards and surprised us with a marvellous Halloween lunch party for which they had really let their imaginations fly.

Belfast in the Spring and another 'Bit of a Do?' I should say so. I feel proud to have given up my conferential virginity in Stoke-on-Trent with a rather special set of people doing a fine job.

Diane Clarke
Secretary

Hospital Radio Tunbridge Wells

LINK & OB EQUIPMENT

New 215MHz 25W erp OB and speech talkback system. 5W transmitter NBFM on 12.5KHz channels, 13.5V DC operation, £20.00. Economy crystal controlled NBFM receiver, 12V operation, with signal meter, £254.00. 5 element Yagi antenna £75.00.

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

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June's Travels

I hope you all had a good Christmas; I'm sure many of you had a busy time with Christmas/New Year programmes – Happy New Year to you all.

The Stoke conference seems such a long time ago now and preparations for Belfast are in full swing.

In November I visited Radio Bedside, Bournemouth for their AGM. Alan Dedicoat, the station's President, was present. A couple of days later I was back in the area to visit Lymington, for my first visit to their station, for their Executive committee meeting. I stayed over so I could return to the studios on the Thursday for lunch and ensure my punctured tyre was repaired before setting off for home.

The Anglia regional meeting was held in Norwich; it was good to see the new hospital. It was Norwich member, Mike Sarre's birthday – but no cake Mike? The following weekend was the EC meeting in Northwick Park so on the Friday I met up with an old work colleague. After the meeting I met Peter Losch – founder of Radio GOSH, which sadly closed last year.

Great to see so many members at SBES – back in Birmingham again after the brief move to EXCEL in 2003. It was certainly good to be back there and you will read elsewhere in On Air that it will be in Birmingham again in 2005 – our stand is already booked, so hope to see many of you there, again. Excellent also to see some who were formerly involved in hospital radio and who have moved on.



Pictured, top: Stoke Mandeville HR line up for the camera; middle: HRH Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex visits Sandwell HR

December was to have been busy too but I regret it was not possible – several of the various bugs going around caught up with me! My only visit was the annual Christmas dinner with Radio Addenbrooke's and, as always, it was great to be with them. I could not even get to York for their get together or

visit Brian's family. However, that's life and I hope when we get there, December 05 will be a bit better! I am happy to say I am back in the swing of things now.

24th January saw me in Stoke Mandeville for the presentation of a long service certificate to Martin Kinch; the station held a party with many former members attending too. Next day I drove to West Bromwich as, at SBES, Sandwell HR in West Bromwich had invited me to attend their 20th anniversary celebrations. To my surprise just before the event I learned there were to be some very special visitors – HRH Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex and his wife, the Countess of Wessex, Sophie. They were a pleasure to meet and were absolutely lovely, making sure they spoke to everyone in attendance. The other special event was Ed Doolan, a founder member of the station, who is at BBC Radio in Birmingham; he brought his programme that day from the Sandwell HR studio. I was invited to speak to him on air.

Coming up – I will be talking to a group in Cambridge about hospital radio; we have a conference team meeting and I am hoping to get to some of the regional meetings shortly.

Have you booked your flights to Belfast yet? It is a good time to book and I hope to see many of you there. In the meantime, to stations who have invited me, thank you all for your wonderful hospitality.

Congratulations to stations who have special anniversaries coming up. I look forward to seeing some of you soon.

Best wishes, June



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CAN YOU HELP?

This message has been received from Keely. If any station wishes to contact her, please do so direct. I cannot see that we can help with sponsorship but maybe the stations in Hampshire would give here some air time.

Mike Skinner, Public Relations Manager

Hi! My name is Kelly Turner and I am 17 years old and studying music at South Downs College. A few years back, I lost my friend to cancer and a few weeks ago I lost my Grandad. Now my other Grandad has an untreatable type of liver cancer. I have been in touch with Marie Curie Cancer Care and we have decided on an idea to raise money for the charity to help those in need.

We are going to make a CD with myself singing and sell it for a few pounds and we hope to raise a fair bit. However, it is going to cost around £800 to make. We are currently trying to find some sponsors to help raise the money.

Do you have any ideas on how I might be able to raise the money and would there be any chance of appearing on hospital radio to promote it to patients and their families that may be suffering with cancer?

Thank you for any help you can give.

Kelly x

My e-mail address is kellie.marie@ntlworld.com
My address and phone numbers are as follows:-
21 Minstead Road, Eastney, Southsea, Hants, PO49JP
023 9236 3627 07799637212

If you would rather contact directly to Marie Curie then here is contact:

info on Kat Butterworth the fundraising manager.

E-mail: kat.butterworth@marie.curie.org.uk

Or phone: 02380263123

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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.

Who to Contact on the Executive Committee



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