

BIRMINGHAM SOUNDWAVES



The Music Leader, 255m Medium Wave
10am - 6pm, Target area Birmingham & The Black Country

Sounds Alternative Dept 255, 190 Monument Rd, Edgbaston, B'ham.

Hello again & welcome to Soundwaves, the official newsletter of Sounds Alternative where information can be guaranteed accurate, lots of info for you plus news of the possible closure of your favourite free radio station.

But first for our new readers/listeners, here's some background info on ourselves;

Sounds Alternative is the Midlands longest running Free radio service. We think this is due to, the fact that 255m has never created interference or annoyed the appropriate authorities, however we do have our problems, which can be heard over 255m on occasions. The station has been known to have slight problems with audio quality (our main transmitter is slightly temperamental).

Sounds Alternative first commenced test broadcasts in Dec 1980, and after reorganising started once fortnightly transmissions Sunday in March 1981.

Programmes were mainly music based with 2 hours of Rock & 2 hours of Reggae followed by various shows of album tracks or 1960s pshcadelia.

The response to the shows was amazing with mail recieved from B'ham (of course) The Black Country, Derby, Notts, Manchester & Leic, with regular listeners tuning in 60 miles away.

As the success grew & the workload increased it became almost impossible with the existing staff and broadcasts site to continue fortnightly & in Dec 1981 the station was silenced returning on Easter Sunday 1982 on a Bank Holiday schedule.

The reggae staff left the station to form the short lived Radio Star which regreably was closed by the Home Office due to several raids.

IN addition to 255m an F.M. service to Walsall was still active on 94.2 fm most Sunday evenings, it was decided to extend this service with local council encouragement, but a successive line of errors and other problems prevented this from becoming a reality, merely a comedy of unfortunate errors (more details on request to Dept 255m)

As time went on & after a very successful 3 days of broadcasting xmas 1982 plus new year, Sounds Alternative continued on bank holidays until July 1983. New staff & new sites joined us and it was decided to resume fortnightly broadcasts to the schedule now heard on alternate sundays.

Transmitter input power is 80 watts - Antenna 1/4 wave long wire

Broadcast hours alternate sundays from 10am until 6 or 7 pm

On air staff Feb 84;

Rick Marks, Steve Dunne, Keith Rogers, Bob Barton, Nick Richards
Andy Duncan.

Norman Nelson & Dave Marshall have left the station.

Norman can be heard weekly on the short wave station Radio East Coast Commercial every Saturday 48 or 25 meter band.

Over Xmas our two days of broadcasting went ahead as planned, even though several staff let us down re programmes. Also a few gremlins in the works plus a peice of deli berate sabotage on our antenna system on Boxing Day reulted in a late start plus transmitter damage.

Many thanks to all of the listeners who rang us during the two days & also over the New Year period.

RIP OFF DEPT

.At the end of November B.B.C. radio W.M. repeated word for word a competition aired by 255 the previous day, it makes me wonder if W.M. regular tune into 255 for ideas. In an edition of Brum Beat magazine it was wrongly stated as bieng first aired by F.M. Pirate E.S.T. in a gossip column, much embarrasment cuased at monument road with an apology apearing in the December edition of Brum Beat.

Current B'ham activities & the Black Country:

County Radio evry Sunday 94.4 FM from either 1500 or 1600pm until 2300 hrs (11 pm) Adress PO.Box 319 Edenbridge Kent.

E.S.T Sundays 94.2 FM 11 -2 pm

Black Country Sounds Mondays 94.0 FM 20.00-2200(8 - 10 pm)

From Shropshire 7 days a week on 295, 1017 khz don't forget Sunshine radio. 0700 - 2100pm 500 watts of community radio to the peo ple of South Shropshire & surrounding area.

Sunshine Radio;
PO.Box 299 Ludlow Shropshire

THE END OF AN ERA.....OR JUST A BEGINING ?

After months of rumors it seems that the new Telecommunications Bill will be law before the summer, also the Criminal Justice Act is also expected to be on the statute book. Both acts will make Alternative broadcasting difficult and for many stations it will be impossible for them to broadcast. It seems almost certain that after several years of operating SOUNDS ALTERNATIVE will cease regular transmissions when the bill becomes law.

The existing law does not allow radio equipment to be legally confiscated until after a conviction has been recorded, neither can gear be used as evidence in court. Search warrants are also required before access to premises can be made.

The new Bill proposes;

- 1/ The arrest without warrant anyone SUSPECTED of an offence.
- 2/ For the seizure of any equipment suspected of use. Which will then be used as evidence against you.
- 3/ The equipment will be forfeited even if the person ordered to forfeit is not the owner.
- 4/ Trial by Jury as well as magistrate, (however this may not be a disadvantage).

Fines are £1000 and a 6 month prison sentence is also a possibility for persistent offenders.

- 5/ It will also be illegal to manufacture whether or not to sale or for offering to let on hire, or indicating (whether by display of advertising) one's willingness to sell or let on hire.

- 6/ Having in one's custody or control.

- 7/ It is also illegal to import such equipment.

It seems that there appears to be a few items that could cause confusion to existing legal manufacturers & Radio Amateurs and without doubt numerous alterations will have to be made to the Bill.

There is also a remote chance that the House Of Lords may demand alterations.

The 2 F.M. stations in the 255 target area have stated that they will continue broadcasting.....

B'HAM ACTIVITIES

Telecom/Home Office/Dept of Trade/Guestapo were again active after a long lay off. On Feb 26 the F.M. station E.S.T. were raided & closed by the authorities. The transmission on this occasion was file 1d based and a well executed raid enabled confiscation of all equipment and the detention & searching of 3 people found nearby sitting in a car.

The force of 2 Telecom(unmarked)vans plus 2 Police cars ensured that the station was silenced. It is understood that the E.S.T. station manager was not present at the site on the day of the raid.

This is the 3rd occasion that E.S.T. have been raided, I tend to think that there must be some reason why this station has recieved several visits over the last 2 years, still none of our buisness. Lets hope that they resume broadcasting soon on 94.3 F.M.

The Sounds Alternative broadcast on the same day did not have any problems, although we were a bit cautious during the later half of the broadcast.

For the first time in 18 months County Radio were also missing from their usual sunday broadcast on 94.4 F.M. County Radio cancelled the schedule due the risk of a possible raid and due to the fact that they were also tracked by suspicious vans over the last 3 weeks. Two weeks previous County lost some equipment due to nosey wardens near one of their transmitter sites, however the station reappeared the following week on their regular channel but with a slightly weaker signal than usual. Best Regards to all concerned.

COMMUNITY RADIO CONFERENCE, the 4th national meeting will take place April 14th & 15th at the Moat Community College, Maidstone Rd, Leic. It is hoped that the Community Radio Association will meet on the 15th. For futher info (S.A.E.) write to; Mr Hackney, 5 Redwood Walk, Leic.

Emergency Telephone no 0533(Leicester) 22317

B'ham Soundwaves Edition 3 March 1984 free to Sounds Alternative listeners. Many thanks to allof our contributors to numerous to mention. Happy Listening.

SOUNDS ALTERNATIVE, DEPT 255, 190 MONUMENT RD, EDGBASTON
BIRMINGHAM B16 8 GU.

CONTACT ADRESSESS

Afew usefull organisations you may like to contact,first off is ;

The Caroline Movement

London based group who operate with the full support of the offshore station Caroline,run by enthusiasts they publish an excellent magazine about alternative broadcasting mostly offshore.

A year subscription costs £3 and is well worth the fee & the CM Magazine is published 5 or 6 times a year.

The Caroline Movement(Subsctiption Dept)

BCM-BRFM,LONDON WC1

OREE THE AIRWAVES

Organsation set up to encourage the groth of unlicensed community radio stations and to provide info to those wanting to start such a station,

A regular bulletin is printed for more info(S.ae.please) write Box CCR,C/O The Bath House,Gwydir Street,Cambridge.

Community Radio Association

The only national body dealing with the campaign legally to legalise stations such as Sounds Alternative,and can be reached atthe following adress;

Communit y Radio Association,92 Huddelston Rd,LONDONN7 OEC
Tel 01 263 6692

Yestderday in Parliment Dept

February 28 th 1984 Suprise surprise.....

Proposals by the governmnet to closedown Pirate stations were announced.....The Consumer Affairs Minister(who ?)Mr Alex Fletcher,said the "Government planned to introduce new clauses in the Telecommunications Bill to enable pirate station equipment to be seized pending prosecution."

Big Sister is watching you.....

Late News

Offshore station Laser/Northsea Radio have announced that in order to prevent interference to established stations the station will move to new freuency before offical broadcasts start.Several exOffshore dj's have joined including at least one well known voice.

Sounds Alternative has recieved a few enquiries as to why we decided to change back to our original channel of 1179 khz, our signal long distance was not of sufficient power to cause interference to stations on adjacent channels e.g. Signal R on 1170 khz in their target area. So we could safely return to 1179 khz, a lso 1188/253 was not exactly the best channel to move due to a lot of noise emanating on that frequency.

Don't forget, if you would like to help us continue broadcasting we need to hear from you NOW otherwise it will be too late. Required urgently; new broadcast sites to use after the new bill becomes law. It seems unlikely that we will be continuing broadcasting unless 255 obtains more locations and st aff. Anyone wanting to join us write to our address.

No ego trippers required, & anyone joining the station must be present at the broadcast during a large part of the transmission. Many thanks for your co-operation.

* DJ'S MUST BE PRESENT ON SITE TO ASSIST EVEN IF ONES SHOW IS TAPED.
Leicester

Radio Nova in Leics then 7 day pirat on 212m closed down on December 28th due to insufficient income (advertising) to run the station. The station, although not the most professional, had a large audience and will be missed in the area.

It is understood that 9 of the staff allegedly connected with the station are to receive summonses, although as yet we have not received details court dates etc.

Also in the town there have been two applications for the I.B.A. franchise to replace the bankrupt Center Radio, one a local community group the other a consortium from the Nottingham station Radio Trent. It is a forgone conclusion as to who gets the franchise.

B'ham

As expected BRMB have been permitted to continue under franchise for another 8 years. Aysmal news for radio fans as the station continues to drive away its listeners to other stations. The I.B.A. have hinted that they would like a second station in the city, but that will require governmental approval.

Walsall whoops Walsall

Plans for the return of an F.M. free radio station have been abandoned unfortunately.

Publicity Dept

One of the most unusual happenings recently is the amount of press exposure given to Pirate stations, it seems that the media have realised that Pirate/Free/Etc radio can sell newspapers.

The Melody Maker have been rather active covering the current Radio Caroline set up and were the first known journalists since Caroline returned to have been questioned by Customs & Police.

The East Anglian Times carried a report late December stating that Caroline were having cash problems & a quote by presenter Andy Archer claiming that he hadn't been paid since September?

Pleased to hear that Caroline are now carrying adverts and can be heard in B'ham (if you have a — good radio) daily from 0700-2 am on 963 khz 319 m medium wave.

Radio Caroline ,11518, New York, U.S.A.

The station replies to mail fairly quickly usually posted in North London.

Numerous daily papers mentioned the news re a new offshore pirate station Radio Laser which is currently anchored in the Thames Estuary. The new station frequency 729 khz 406 m mw will operate from the m.v. Communicator built in 1954.

The station is all American staffed & backed and is claimed to have a top 40 music format. The station could interfere with a Radio 4 channel in some areas (recent monitoring proves this) and the Dept of Trade issued the following statement;
"Jamming a signal is virtually unprecedented by a Western Government, it is not something we would undertake lightly because it has undertones of Eastern Europe. But we are very concerned about increasing pirate activity, we will be considering a number of measures including jamming".

Laser was heard in B'ham mid January with a signal similar to Caroline, however the station disappeared after the days testing and are currently messing about testing on low power using the callsign North Sea Radio International & announcing a New York address (B'ham Feb 20th 84).

Several publications have featured news on landbased free radio stations including a 6 page spread in the January edition of Stereo magazine, but by far the largest amount of publicity in every daily paper in January was given to the B'ham T.V. pirate station Telstar broadcasting most Friday evenings to the North field, Bartly Green & Rubery areas.

Telstar t.v. the U.K's first known T.V. pirate station had been broadcasting for months & building an audience of approx 5000 people with a low powered transmitter and programming of Horror films & Pop videos plus pre-recorded continuity announcements by John Taylor.

The station was born out of an ego trip by several staff of an unnamed FM. pirate station. The T.V. station was to be called second city vision & was featured on the BBC Oxford road show in 1982.

However no progress was made with too much publicity given to the station even before they had a transmitter.

Station member, Steve Collins left the station decided to run things properly; forming Telstar T.V, broadcasting most ~~Friday~~ evenings to the Bartly Green, Northfield & Rubery areas. However according to press reports the station had listeners/viewers in Selly Oak. (in fact an interview with said viewers took place on BBC Midlands Today.

Had it not been for the B'ham Evening Mail pestering the station it would without doubt still be broadcasting regular to its viewers. National press, T.V. & Radio followed up the story with several front page banner headlines, plus support for the station came from numerous sources; including Selly Oak M.P. Antony Beaumont-Dark with an outspoken call for Telstar to be legalised.

Telstar can prove that like radio it is not difficult and expensive to operate an alternative service and the station is currently off air to avoid detection.

We do know however that Telstar will be back with a bang, with a lot of prearranged publicity it could make things very embarrassing for our friends at British Telecom, whom according to the Dept of Trade have only a remote chance of catching Telstar.

One person not amused was Jack Reedy from the I.B.A. who was monitored talking rubbish about the subject on television recently.

Telstar used to broadcast on the BBC 2 wavelength on Friday evenings after the station had closed and the transmitter power 3 watts & a directional T.V. antenna Telstar T.V. 151 Dudley Road, Edgbaston, B'ham.

OUT AND ABOUT

In London it is not clear exactly how many stations are broadcasting illegally 7 days a week but it is known that Radio Jackie 24 hrs a day continue on 227 1323 khz, with live programmes from a studio cleverly hidden within a building that is mainly used by accountants & solicitors with the transmitter (of course) elsewhere hidden in an attic. Does anyone know how much money they make?

One of the most popular stations down south is SKYLINE RADIO operating on both mw & fm between the hours 0600-2400 with soul station RADIO INVICTA sharing the channel from 2400 until 0600 hrs.

Radio Sovereign 200m in south west London has reported to have closed down after ~~two~~ maximum fine prosecutions (2 x £1000). The station allegedly created interference and was founded by a well known crook Crispian St John & is run by businessman & disc jockey John Kenning. Kenning as a result of fines also has 3 month suspended prison sentence awaiting him.

Sovereign's turnover was said to be £2000 a week with 5 full time staff employed and numerous part time members.

The music format was golden oldies plus local news with broadcasting 20 hours a day, more info re the activities of persons connected with Sovereign elsewhere in Soundwaves.

Shropshire; SUNSHINE RADIO have received a few more visits from telecom recently with court cases pending, a Sunshine DJ has said that the only way the station will close is by all the staff being locked up & the key thrown away. On Dec 8th the station founder Graham Symonds was prosecuted and ordered to hand over the transmitter, this was agreed to comply with the court order for seizure of the tx.

It just so happened that someone else installed a new one a few minutes later and the station continued 7 days a week.

Current main power of the tx into a vertical 100 foot mast is 500 watts with a reserve rig lower power tx available in the event of an emergency.

Radio Sovriegn -

The station has now closed with station member & well known rogue Howard Rose alias Crispian St John fleeing the station with a large amount of advertising revenue. We can reveal that he is now working on board Radio Caroline as the newsreader Jay Jackson.

John Kenning station manager is now in Italy attempting to set up a rival station to the long established riviera operation Radio Nova. Nova commenced broadcasting April 1979 and is very popular among the many tourists that visit the region.

Radio Elenore;

Eminating weekends from Liverpool, the station can now be heard on a new channel of yes you've guessed it 255 m 1179 khz, so unfortunately long distance merseyside dx'ers in Merseyside can no longer receive Sounds Alternative. One of the problems that the merseyside stations have is that of frequency congestion, as many of the Irish stations receivable in Liverpool occupy most of the band.

Southern Ireland;

A new radio bill law shortly aims to issue licences to 30 new stations. One of the conditions of the bill is that R.T.E Eire's B.B.C. will have the right to own up to 25% of the stations ownership although they will have no operational connections.

Eire's longest running pirate Radio Dublin is one station hoping for a licence & intends applying for an additional channel to operate an additional service to Europe on short wave. Radio Dublin has been relaying its local show to Europe for years, and if the licence is granted will be Eire's only legal international service.

Radio Nova 819 khz 102.7 F.M. is expected to get a licence but I understand that there is opposition to the station due to the current high power of the station. Transmitter power; maximum input 50kw, but is not known if full power is used. Nova can be heard in many parts of England & Wales but unfortunately in B'ham suffers from interference from B.B.C radio W.M..

IN Dublin one can receive more F.M. radio signals than any city in Europe & throughout southern Ireland there are more than 70 known stations broadcasting 7 days a week with stations varying from high power setups to low power community signals of a few watts on F.M.