

*"A month later, protesters had a demonstration outside of my workplace. They said that I was the pirate and then marched down to the River Thames and ceremoniously ditched the glasses I'd left behind into the river."*

Mr Murphy was also issued with a writ from the station's owners, as was Home Secretary David Waddington.

The writ claimed \$2.5m in compensation for trespasses and damages, and it took 11 years for the case to be thrown out.

However, the reaction from Radio Caroline's crew was not purely anger. On Mr Murphy's retirement in 1993, the station's shore manager, Malcolm Smith, gifted the ship's lifebelt, a T-shirt, and an inscribed picture to his old foe.

For Mr Murphy, the respect was mutual. He said: *"I'd spent three years on a mine-laying destroyer sailing on the North Sea and I knew how inhospitable the weather could be."*

*"I had great admiration for those on board to keep going, especially considering one of my tactics was to cut off their fuel supply by prosecuting anyone providing them with diesel to power their generators."*

"I used to call the station's founder Ronan O'Rahilly the sage of radio and there is no doubt about it that he did succeed in breaking the stranglehold of the BBC over the content of broadcasting."

During a storm two years after the raid, the ship drifted onto Goodwin Sands, a perilous sandbank off the Kent coast.

The ship was recovered and these days stays safe in port at Tilbury, Essex.

Radio Caroline later resumed broadcasting and can now be heard legally over the internet.

## **THE SCANDINAVIAN PIRATES-4**

### **Part 3 - Radio Syd Goes Abroad -England and west Africa**

#### **Philip Champion**

Before she left her anchorage off Sweden the antenna masts were lowered. Paul Dane said that the ship was due to go off Holland, near Radio Veronica. She seems to have lain off the Dutch coast until Britt offered her as a substitute ship for Radio Caroline South after the "Mi Amigo" ran aground. With agreement reached "Cheeta II" was anchored off Harwich by January 31st. Things had moved quickly and work found for the displaced radio ship. She lasted in that role until April with a rental fee of £700 a week.

Impressions of the people from Caroline South of the ship differ. When Colin Nichol visited her along with Britt and Ronan O'Rahilly he found her bigger than the "Mi Amigo". He found there were endless stairways and passages *"and scores of doors to penetrate, and explore beyond."* Britt led the tour of the ship of which she seemed very proud. She clearly made an impression on Colin as he said, *"Even now, long after, I can feel the friendliness and homely warmth that seemed to characterise the old vessel. I had the feeling that many people over many years, had enjoyed being aboard her, and I knew that I was to feel more relaxed and at home on the 'Cheeta II' than I had felt on board ship, ever before. Perhaps what appealed to me most was the comparative spaciousness of her, compared with my older home on Caroline South, 'Mi Amigo'."* He spent about nine weeks there. At first, there was just the basic ship's crew, Caroline's engineers, Britt's son Kalle (K-G Alfe) and himself. There was not a lot he could do during his long stay aboard. He found the Swedes good company and the food was better than on Caroline. Engineer George



Saunders found the ship's interior was "quite nice but very old-fashioned. A long mahogany passageway was below deck, with brass fittings and bevelled-glass panels in doors leading into her public rooms." Later, Robbie Dale had a favourable impression of the "Cheeta II." She was more comfortable than the "Mi Amigo" which he later joined. She was rather tired looking on the outside but nothing that a coat of paint would not put right. Inside she was more spacious and nicely fitted out with wide stairways, mahogany and brass bannister rails, a big galley and dining room with a studio on the upper deck having a panoramic view.

Though the Swedish ship had two captains on board it seemed to be Britt's son Kalle in charge; he had sailed with her all the way from the Öresund. Gerry Bishop's "Offshore Radio" book said the ship had 20 cabins to accommodate 40 people and 7,000 records - mostly continental- in the library. Now the aerial masts were put back up and the ship broadcast on medium wave rather than VHF, using '199'. When the repaired ship returned in April and on a new wavelength for a couple of weeks "Mi Amigo" went out on '259' metres while "Cheeta II" relayed the same programmes on '199'.



LEFT TO RIGHT: CAROLINE DJ COLIN NICOL, BRITT WADNER AND RONAN O'RAHILLY

(<http://www.offshoreradio.co.uk/odds31.htm>) which has text, photos and recordings from this period. Colin Nichol was given the task by Ronan O'Rahilly of getting the studios set up for broadcasting in the way the Caroline djs were used to. George Saunders and others had to put Spotmasters cartridge machines in the studios as they weren't fitted for one-man operation; they were the traditional studio for an announcer with a double-glazed window for the control room next door.

The transmitting set up needed to be changed. In the hold where TV Syd had been Caroline's engineers laid out equipment in crates and tea chests with connecting leads between them. With Radio Syd having broadcast on FM its antenna masts were not big enough for Caroline's AM signal. The temporary aerial set up could not have coped with Caroline's folded dipole system. They rigged copper cables to the ship's low fore and aft masts and tuned the 7kW transmitter into that "lash up" as George Saunders called it. Sparks flew if high power was attempted so Caroline South from "Cheeta II" was on very low power. It returned with tests on 1493 kc/s on Saturday February 12th around 2pm then normal programmes began the following day. The Swedish ship had allowed Caroline to return after just 24 days. With reception impossible at night even in Essex due to low power and foreign stations broadcasting hours were reduced to 10 am -4 pm. This was certainly better than being off for months and the audience drifting away to the powerful Radio London or others.



BRITT WADNER (LEFT) WITH RONAN O'RAHILLY AND ON THE RIGHT THE CHEETA II CAPTAIN HOLGER JENSEN



With Radio Caroline South coming from the "Cheeta II" djs Tom Lodge, Graham Webb, Norman St. John, Tim Yale and Tony Blackburn came onboard. Later Tommy Vance, Tony Prince and Emperor Rosko came on.

With the transmitter not being powerful a 10 kW one from the "Mi Amigo" was brought back from



**THE CHEETA II**

Holland on a tender and loaded onto the "Cheeta II" at sea, causing some anxious moments as it was transferred. Engineering staff installed it. The generators too were not powerful enough for Caroline's equipment so they transferred their General Electric 75 kV diesel alternator from the "Mi Amigo." Power was increased and broadcasting hours extended, particularly from early March.

However, it seems "Cheeta II" was not an ideal place to work. One February day in Graham Webb's show he mentioned that they had been off air the day before and that there was no news service today. George Saunders regarded it as a technical nightmare "where everything that could go

wrong did so." The power failed frequently and there were very frequent breakdowns in the Caroline gear which had "suffered seriously" in the transfer from the "Mi Amigo" (the 10 kW Tx had water damage), they were cold, the water supply was irregular and both it and the electric lighting



**CAROLINE SOUTH DJ TIM YALE**

failed for long periods. "It really was most unpleasant" though "Apparently everything had worked perfectly when she was off Sweden." One bitterly cold night he and the others huddled in the ornate lounge with just a 1 kW electric fire element suspended from the ceiling by its wires to provide heat and light. He didn't get on as well with the Swedish crew as Colin. Unlike the extrovert Dutch crew of the "Mi Amigo" with whom they would have conversations at mealtimes he found them almost silent and rarely talking among themselves. He wondered if they resented the English being onboard or being off England. Tony Blackburn in his book too



**CAROLINE SOUTH DJ GRAHAM WEBB**

indicated it was not a pleasant place to work. They were off the air a lot plus water and heating failed. With this being in mid winter he "was totally fed up." Norman St. John recalled many transmitter problems too. Both these two were caught inadvertently using choice language on air. Blackburn thought they had gone off in his show and opened his mic. to say, "This is Radio Bulls--t," which brought in letters from listeners saying they had enjoyed it! Norman St. John was on the air another time with Graham Webb and thought they had gone off the air for the sixth time in as many minutes so he said, "Oh f---!" He got a number of letters but most took it in good spirit as the station was having a difficult time. The [radiolondon.co.uk](http://radiolondon.co.uk) website says Caroline South was off from after Friday February 25th until Sunday March 6th then again Friday March 26th until Saturday April 2nd. The [offshoreechos.com](http://offshoreechos.com) website says that there had been several breaks in the first period until transmitter repairs were done on March 6th with power increased. However, it seems that at the end of March the ship started to take in water and develop a list after three days of storms. The tender "Offshore One" was sent out and it stayed alongside to pump out water. She was towed north to a more sheltered position. Next the ship developed engine trouble so was



towed to the Richard's (Shipbuilders) Ltd, quay at Lowestoft on February 25th where it was found that a flange had cracked, caused by water getting in the lubricating oil. With repairs complete it was back at sea and on air on April 2nd.

Let us see what the recordings show us. Graham Webb, as mentioned above, said that Dave Lee Travis would be on the air from 12 till 3 with a special Top 50 that day as they were off the previous day and so couldn't play the Caroline Countdown. Also Norman St. John would be due along with the news but there was none that day. Graham was sure that the news would resume as the week progressed. Tony Blackburn's breakfast show from late March or early April showed that Caroline from its temporary ship sounded good with a fast -moving, lively show with jingles, pop records including the Radio Caroline 'Personality Pick to Click' (dj tip record.) He gave that day's schedule from the "Cheeta II" :6-9 Tony Blackburn, 9-12 Graham Webb, 12-3 Tim Yale, 3-6 Dave Lee Travis, 6 pm Norman St. John.

On April 5th "Mi Amigo" arrived back from repairs, an overhaul and with a new 50 kW transmitter to



**THE REFITTED MV MI AMIGO**

compete better as "The Sound of the Nation" with Radio London. Tests started on April 17th or 18th but a short in the aerial put it off the air: "Offshore Radio" says tests resumed on the 25th. At first these were on 1169 kc/s 257 metres then moved on the 26th to 1187 kc/s 253 metres though later announced as '259.' From the 25th both ships broadcast Caroline South with listeners encouraged to use the new wavelength. From the 27th at 6 am the "Mi Amigo" took over regular programming with "Cheeta II" relaying them until 11 am on May 1st. Some Caroline djs moved back to their own ship while others stayed on the Swedish vessel. Often they did link -ups between the two. One was Dave Lee Travis and Graham Webb on "Cheeta II" linking up with Norman St.

John and Tony Blackburn on the "Mi Amigo" around 10 am one day. Graham said on air, "Radio Caroline South has

competition with...Radio Caroline South!" The Top 50 and American Hot 100 records had been sent over from "Cheeta II" to the "Mi Amigo." Norman played the new "Sound of the Nation" jingles on 259 which were also heard on 199. After the 10 o'clock news with DLT you could listen either to Graham on 199 or Tony on 259. Another was Dave

Lee Travis on the latter linking up with Graham Webb on "Cheeta II." Djs on the Swedish ship would try to persuade listeners to retune like when Tony Prince said: *"If you want really good music tune in to Tom Lodge on 259,"* and when he said, *"We're on 199 but switch over to the tests on 259."* He later invited listeners to retune to the new wavelength of 253 to hear Caroline a lot louder and clearer. Some shows went out over both '199' and '259' like Tony Prince's "Caroline Club Request Show." Once DLT doing tests on 253 linked up with Graham Webb on 199 who could be heard distant and muffled on 253. They said the best thing was to

listen to 253 where DLT was on until 8 pm then Emperor Rosko until midnight -well after 199 closed



**EMPEROR ROSKO IN THE STUDIO ON CHEETA II**

down for the night. Graham though told DLT that he wanted a word with the technicians (off air) after the link up. The best way to help listeners retune was when Tony Blackburn on the "Mi Amigo" played a minute's worth of (six) Caroline jingles as 253 was testing so that listeners



hearing them relayed on 199 could find the new wavelength easily (and probably, not stray onto Radio London instead!)

In time most of the djs, newsreaders and records were transferred to the "Mi Amigo." Graham Webb gave the newest dj Robbie Dale the task of being the last dj on "Cheeta II" and to persuade listeners to retune. He was given a box of singles and had to repeatedly redirect listeners to '259.'



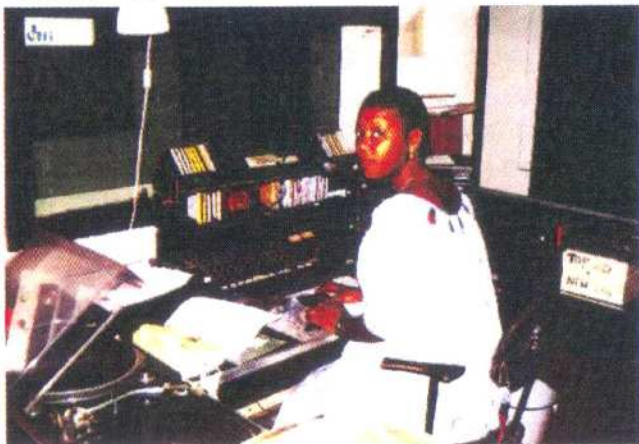
**BRITT WADNER IN THE STUDIO  
OF RADIO SYD IN GAMBIA**

Between records he made announcements like, "Radio Caroline on 199 is closing down soon. All the DJs have moved across to the new 'Mi Amigo' and can now be heard on 259 with a much better signal. Rosko, Tom Lodge, Tony Blackburn, Norman St.John, Tony Prince and Graham, together with the ships' crew are now about half a mile west of the mv "Cheeta II" and much closer to Frinton-on-Sea." For a day and that evening Robbie did this then a tender took him and the others across to join those already on the Mi Amigo. The "Cheeta II" switched off '199' on May 1st. He added that "the sad looking Cheeta II was then towed away."

It seems that she remained at anchor there after the "Mi Amigo" returned but on July 21st lifted her anchor and drifted. A tug gave assistance then she was moored near Harksted Buoy in the River Stour. There were disputes over ownership; one report claimed that Britt was just a front for a bigger American organisation but it is not known if there is any truth in this. She was reported to have gone to Vlissingen in the south of the Netherlands. Several attempts by a tired and

disappointed Britt to sell the vessel as a complete radio station failed. One report says that one potential buyer was a French student organisation which wanted to use it in their struggle to overthrow President de Gaulle. Another said that Radio 390 planned to buy her and anchor her off the Wirral as Radio 390 North.

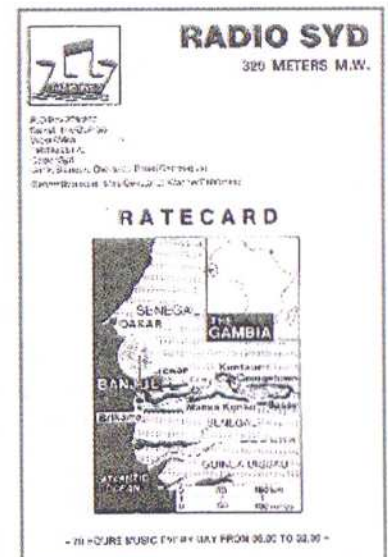
Britt sailed her in May 1967 to Spain where she encountered rough weather in the Bay of Biscay before calling in at La Coruna in northern Spain. Five days later she was off to Safi in Morocco where she arrived five days later. On the 21st she moved to Tenerife in the Canary Islands. In November 1968, she upped anchor and arrived in



**MAJA IN THE RADIO SYD STUDIO IN GAMBIA**

the Gambia in west Africa. There she set up another Radio Syd and opened the Wadner Beach hotel. Eventually the ship sank in Banjul (Bathurst) harbour.

A report and photos on <http://home.swipnet.se/offshoreradio/radiosyd/gambia/index.html> from



**THE RADIO SYD RATE  
CARD FOR GAMBIA**

1999 says that in 1969 she got a licence to broadcast from land; the station opening on May 7th 1970 on 909 kHz 329 metres, Gambia's first private radio station. It seems that "Cheeta II" was used as a base for the new Radio Syd until landbased facilities became available. Radio Syd was now located two miles outside the capital



Banjul on the road to the main commercial centre of Serekunda. She used a former Radio Sweden Tx from Hörby which was capable of 2.5 kW while a Marconi Tx was standby. The antenna mast



**BRITT'S DAUGHTER CONNY WADNER-ENHORNING WHO TOOK OVER THE RUNNING OF RADIO SYD**

has been described variously as 57, 80 or 85 metres or 257 feet high. A report from 1976 in the Swedish magazine "Se" showed it to be something of a family affair. The station broadcast in local languages Mandinka and Wolof but did programmes in English, French and Swedish for foreign tourists. English is also the official language of Gambia while French is understood in Senegal. The Swedish shows ran during the October-May tourist season. It was heard in Gambia and neighbouring Senegal. Later the French was dropped in favour of a third local language Fula. It had a (potential?)

audience of 800,000 people. Ingvar Hjulström was the Managing Director. Daughter Conny was an accomplished presenter and news-gatherer. Britt's son (and Conny's half-brother) who is described as being Donald and Kalle (believed to be K-G Alfe) had several jobs. If there was a Tx problem he would fix it. He used to record the news on shortwave from Radio Sweden, listen to it through the whistles then write an edited copy which was aired at noon and midnight. He presented the 30 minute show for Swedish tourists with tips, music and news from home; it went out nightly at 8 pm and was repeated next morning at 8 o'clock. It was sponsored by a Danish beer company. In 1976 he was 35 and had been interested in radio since being a child. By this time Britt was not involved in the radio station but concentrated on the hotel. Some of the records must have been from the offshore days as the record library stops abruptly in 1965 then jumps forward to 1970. There were some 1970s Swedish artistes on record like ABBA which were obtained when Wadner family members went back to Sweden on holiday. Radio Syd was on air 6 am to 2 am. Kalle found it best not to switch off the old Tx at night. There was a team of 10 freelance Gambian male and female presenters. Engineer Klas Wik had gone to Gambia with the Wadners. Another engineer, Åke Olsson had joined in June 1962 and stayed with the station until it left the Öresund giving over three and a half years of service. In fact he had once been interviewed by Jimmy Kronsäter in "Nattvakten" (Nightwatch) in the offshore days. By 1999 daughter Conny was running the station. She did programmes for Swedish expats living in Gambia as well as tourists. She was helped by her husband Benny Holgerson in running the station. Coastal erosion meant that the studio was now just metres away from the sea. Stays for the mast had already had to be moved. Already Radio Syd's buildings had been flooded several times. Over 30 years the sea had advanced about 100 metres, according to the Swedish radio ham magazine "QTC" which visited in 2000. Now Radio Syd's premises were on a peninsula.



**THE STATION BASED ON LAND AND THE AERIAL MAST**

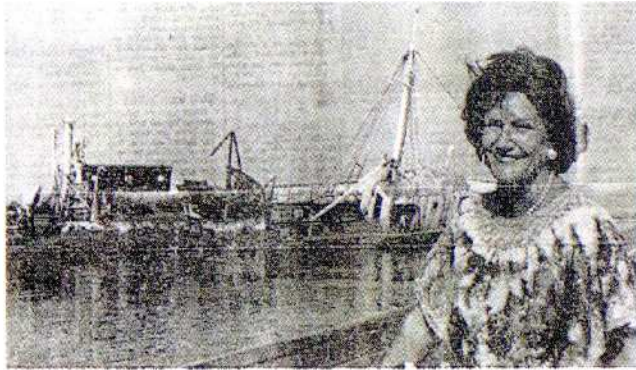
At first the "Cheeta II" was used as a floating disco, shop and restaurant in Banjul harbour for Swedish tourists. One report seems to indicate that by this time the vessel had been sold to a Gambian. Access was from a pier at the Maurel & Prom wharf. A photo is at <http://www.icce.rug.nl/~soundscapes/DATABASES/RP2/Syd04.shtml> Later a tropical storm sent it to a sandbank in the Gambia estuary at Banjul opposite Britt's hotel and where the vessel became a wreck in the 1970s. Photos are at [http://home.swipnet.se/offshoreradio/radiosyd/gambia/cheeta\\_slut/index.html](http://home.swipnet.se/offshoreradio/radiosyd/gambia/cheeta_slut/index.html) She was persuaded after a week by the visiting Swedish "Kvällsposten" reporters to go out and visit the wreck. She



said it was like losing a dear old friend. She wondered if any other ship would have such a tale to tell as this one. She was still recognisable as a ship. In the mid 1970s Britt moved to Florida, USA but returned to Sweden in 1985 to her old home town of Lund where she had kept a house. Britt died in 1987. In the 1999 photos the wreck seemed like featureless metal just above the surface of the water.

Only the ship's bell remained. Britt herself had gone out to the wreck to take this but to her great disappointment found it had already been taken by a Gambian. Some time later her daughter Conny was on holiday in America and visited a former American ambassador to Gambia whom she knew. On the wall in his living room was a clock with 'Cheeta' engraved. He had bought the ship's bell to take home but duly gave it to Conny who returned it to her mother.

An idea by the Swedish Radio Club led to the MW broadcasts being relayed on shortwave for a short while in 1984. Radio Syd ceased broadcasting when the mast came crashing down in a storm on September 11th 2002. However, a group of southern Californian radio amateurs revived transmissions from the site as a special event in 2003. They used the fallen antenna as a support for their own antenna on the beach and seemed to use the former Radio Syd studios for their transmissions on 10, 15, 20, 40 and 75 metres.



BRITT WITH THE WRECK OF THE CHEETA II IN THE BACKGROUND

Photos are at <http://www.contesting.com/articles/480/>

Interestingly a placard they held up of Radio Syd 329 metres shows that the Gambian station had still used the old Radio Syd logo of a stylised ship and musical notes from its offshore days. It seems that a group of Slovaks and Czechs have done a similar thing from the Radio Syd site in 2009, 2010 and 2011 and planned to do so again in October/November 2012.

What of the other personnel from the station? Ingvar Hjulström died in 1990. He was partly responsible for the start of Radio Syd in Gambia and was running this station from 1968 to 1985. In 1985 K-G Alfe/Kalle moved back to Sweden where he again became a well known and popular presenter when he started as a DJ on Radio Malmöhus, one of Radio Sweden's local radio stations. He was 54 years old when he died in 1995. Announcers Ivo Grenz and Lennart Atterling went on to Radio Nord. Lennart later became a freelance producer in advertising production. Ivo later was a journalist and news anchor on Sveriges TV in the 1970s and 1980s. Engineer Kenneth Andersson worked for almost 40 years as an audio technician in advertising production, and later became the first technician when community radio started in Stockholm. He has been involved in retirement in the Radio Nord Revival broadcasts in the last few years. Engineer Christer Swede's name can be seen on the local Sveriges TV news credits as editor. Rolli Frölsch became a journalist with Sveriges Radio in 1971 in Malmö where for the next two years he presented or edited a youth programme. He also opened a record store in that city which was the first to import records directly into Sweden and claims to be the first shop in the world to sell the



THE WRECK OF THE CHEETA II IN AN EVEN MORE SUNKEN STATE (EXACT DATE UNKNOWN BUT THIS PHOTO WAS POSSIBLY TAKEN AS RECENTLY AS 1999)

Frölsch became a journalist with Sveriges Radio in 1971 in Malmö where for the next two years he presented or edited a youth programme. He also opened a record store in that city which was the first to import records directly into Sweden and claims to be the first shop in the world to sell the



Beatles "Sergeant Pepper" LP ! After Radio Syd had ceased operations in the Öresund engineer Hasse Hansson was offered a job in Rolli Fölsch's record store where he dealt with the direct import of records. He continued using his technical and musical skills when he later found employment with the Skandinavisk Press, a publisher of gramophone records and newspapers. However, his life was shortened by disease and he died only 57 year old in 2004.

In the UK -and the Low Countries- we hold in regard those who continued with offshore radio despite legislation and other hazards: Ronan O' Rahilly and others who brought back Radio Caroline twice, Edwin Bollier and Erwin Meister who brought back RNI and Sylvain Tack and others who kept Radio Mi Amigo going. Yet before all of these Britt Wadner persisted in trying to keep Radio Syd going despite court appearances and jail for her. If her tribulations had happened round our part of the North Sea and been a decade or two later I am sure many more offshore radio enthusiasts and others would hold her in high regard and remember her well.

## **CONTACT 94 - BY TERRY STANDISH**

September 5th 1988 the Channel Islands awake to the new sounds of Contact 94, a radio station transmitting on 94.4 Mhz from the town of Lessay in Normandy, broadcasting in English throughout the day with a single French programme in the evening.



The station's main owner and backer was travel agent and hotelier Stephen Clipp, also involved was Frenchman Alain Tardiff who had various business interests which included the nightclub/restaurant La Campagnette (a converted farmhouse) where Contact 94's studio complex was built, this consisted of two studios, a small office and an area for news and programming.

The station's transmitters were at Cambernon outside the town of Coutances and had a microwave link to the studio's in Lessay.



KEVIN PALMER (LEFT) WITH STEPHEN CLIPP AT THE FARMHOUSE THAT WAS CONVERTED INTO THE RADIO STATION CONTACT 94

The backers of contact 94 had bought out a French FM station which had used 94.6 Mhz on very low power; this frequency was OK on low power but Contact 94 had upped the power to 80Kw, which ended in interfering with BBC Radio Four in Jersey. So, a move down to 94.4 Mhz was made; this followed with complaints of interference to other French stations, so, a few more moves were made.

February 28 1989 with the station using 97.7 MHz, fifteen gendarmes silenced the station by entering the studios and switching off the equipment. It was reported that the station was transmitting as an illegal pirate, with regional courts agreeing, resulting with the confiscation of the transmitter. After a further court

appeal the station returned to the air in August on a new frequency of 94.6 MHz.

In later years, technical difficulties made reception difficult in Jersey. Transmitter and link problems meant that Contact 94 ended up on mono with very low power.