SOS

10 days in the life of a lady

Simon Barrett

SOS — Ten Days in the life of a Lady is a moving story of twentieth century adventure. It is the dramatic account of a terrifying event of a radio ship at sea, told by one of the disc jockeys, Simon Barrett. When he joined Radio Caroline, Simon Barrett never imagined he would witness anything like the incident that happened during November 1975.

It all began when the 50 year old *Mi Amigo* lost her anchor at the height of a gale. For several days the little boat drifted around the Thames Estuary, bouncing off buoys and navigational aids and finally running aground on a sand bank.

Eventually when an anchor was lowered the radio ship returned to the air, but unknown to its occupants, from inside territorial waters. A day later Radio Caroline was boarded by Police and Home Office officials, the disc jockeys arrested and later prosecuted.

SOS — Ten Days in the Life of a Lady captures the feelings and the agonies of the desperate crew, and reveals the full story of what happened during those lonely and frightening days in November 1975.

£4.50

SOS – 10 DAYS IN THE LIFE OF A LADY

SOS ~ 10 DAYS
IN THE LIFE OF A LADY

SIMON BARRETT

LONDON

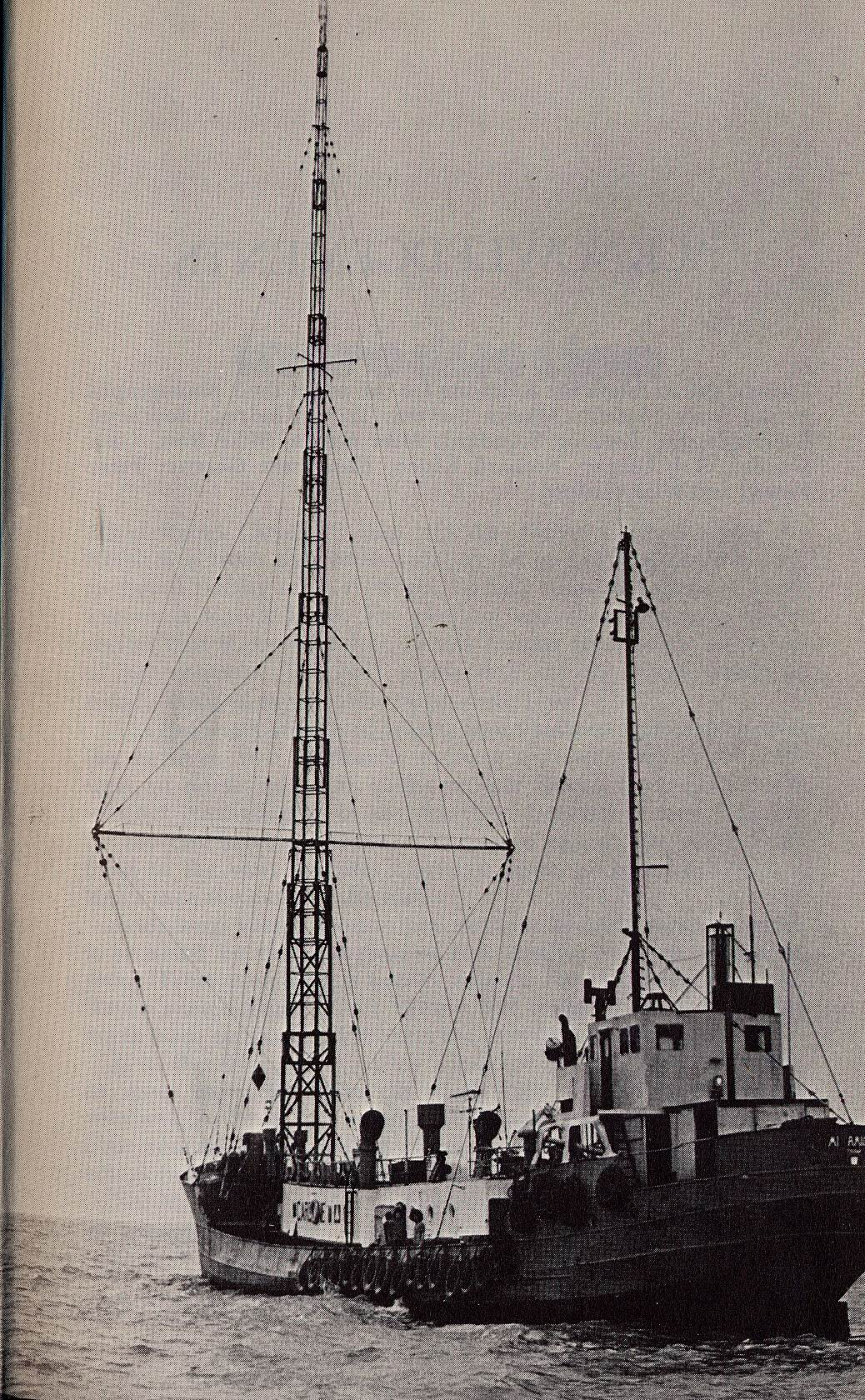
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introduction

When Radio Caroline's ship, the *Mi Amigo* sneaked across the North Sea from the Dutch coast at the end of August 1974, she anchored twenty miles from the English coast in a piece of water known as Knock Deep. The position was chosen because of the shelter that it provided from winds coming from nearly all points of the compass. The only winds that the *Mi Amigo* would be totally exposed to would be north-easterlies.

The Deep is a stretch of water, about sixteen metres deep, that lies between two sandbanks running approximately from south west to north east. The banks protect Knock Deep from harsh weather emanating from any direction from south west to north on the one hand and from south east to east on the other. Long Sand to the west provides a greater degree of protection as it is larger than the bank to the east.

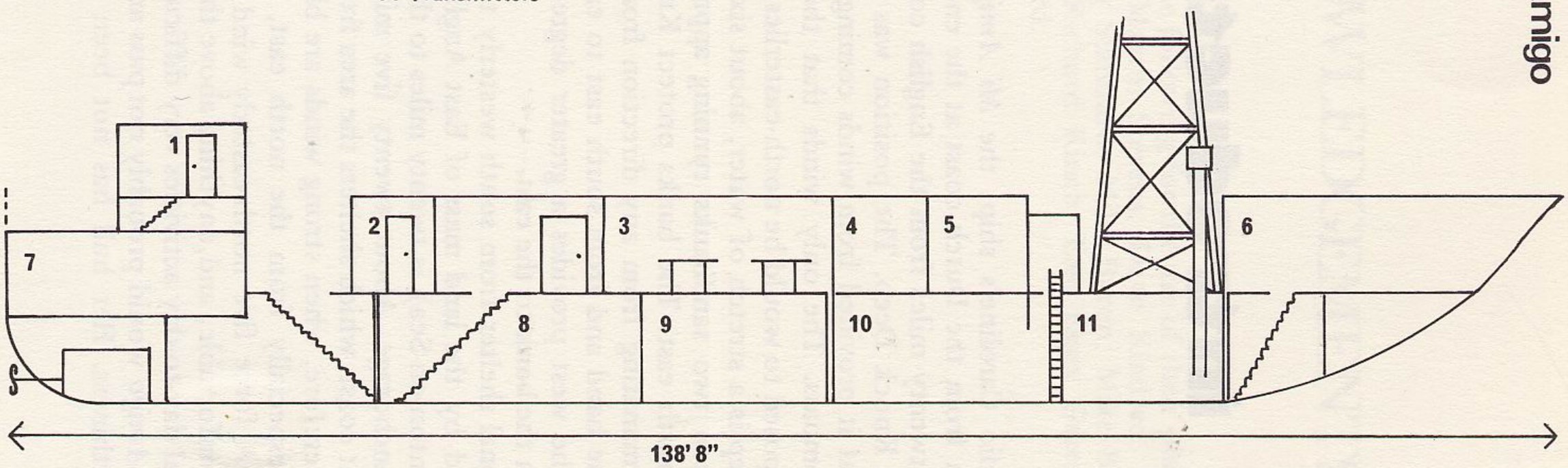
Additional shelter from south westerly to north westerly winds is provided by the land mass of East Anglia, which at its nearest point (Frinton-on-Sea), is twenty miles to the north west of the *Mi Amigo*'s anchorage. About twenty five miles to the south is the north Kent coast, which shelters the area from southerly winds.

It is, therefore, when strong winds are blowing from the north, or more especially from the north east, that the sea is at its roughest. A force five north-easterly wind makes life on board a little uncomfortable, and anything above that starts to make work and normal day-to-day activities very difficult.

The *Mi Amigo* would probably not pass any official examination of seaworthiness. Her hull has not been scraped for about ten

The Mi Amigo

1 Wheelhouse
2 Kitchen
3 Messroom
4 Studio 1
5 Studio 2
6 Store
7 Captain's and Crew's quarters
8 Cabins
9 TV lounge, disco and Studio 3
10 Water
11 Transmitters



years and is covered with barnacles. This covering is referred to as a beard. Much of the metalwork is thick rust and the only navigation equipment on board at the beginning of November 1975 was a compass that had a tendency to stick. However, compared to other ships of similar size, the *Mi Amigo* behaves well in bad weather and has a reputation for being the best radio ship to be on in a bad storm.

The *Mi Amigo* is normally staffed by a captain, first mate, engineer, chef, radio technician and three English speaking disc jockeys. The crew are Dutch.

As far as the interior is concerned there are three main sections. Firstly the central superstructure of the ship, which holds the main living quarters. At deck level, working back from the fore or front end, this houses two adjacent studios with a connecting door leading into a short passage and another door into the mess room. At the other end of the mess is another door leading into a passage, which in turn leads to the galley. To the side of this passage is the washroom, which houses two basins, a shower and toilet. Coming down from the passage is a staircase descending below deck to the main sleeping quarters. At the bottom of the stairs to the left is a small food storeroom and to the right two store cupboards.

Doubling back from the stairs is a long straight passage that has cabins on either side of it. Three to the left, or port side, and two on the starboard side. At the end of the passage is a door that opens into the record library on the left, and another door on the right leading into another studio.

Four other cabins, including the Captain's, are positioned beneath the poop deck at the aft, or back end, of the vessel. Above this deck is the bridgehouse. Below the fore, or front deck, and main mast is a workshop, water tanks and the transmitter room, which holds one 50 kw and two 10 kw transmitters.

The engine room, housing the ship's three generators, is below deck in the space between the poop deck and the end of the central superstructure.

Duties of the captain and crew under normal circumstances are not very demanding and the main day-to-day task is keeping the ship clean and tidy. During good weather one of the main activities is painting the *Mi Amigo*, a job which even disc jockeys have been known to do. Of course the generators have to be looked after, serviced and repaired in the event of a breakdown.

The leisure hours of all on board are spent by watching, in the mess room, one of the four receivable English TV channels, or by

playing cards, draughts, a game called Mastermind or darts on the board downstairs in the record library. In the summer one of the main pastimes is getting a deep brown suntan out on deck.

Since her heyday in the sixties Caroline has changed from being a singles station to 'Europe's only album station'. The format now includes the best of the new albums, which means anything from Pink Floyd or Led Zeppelin to the latest by the Stylistics. Into a typical hour, there are four or five tracks from older albums with an emphasis on the biggest sellers of the last ten years.

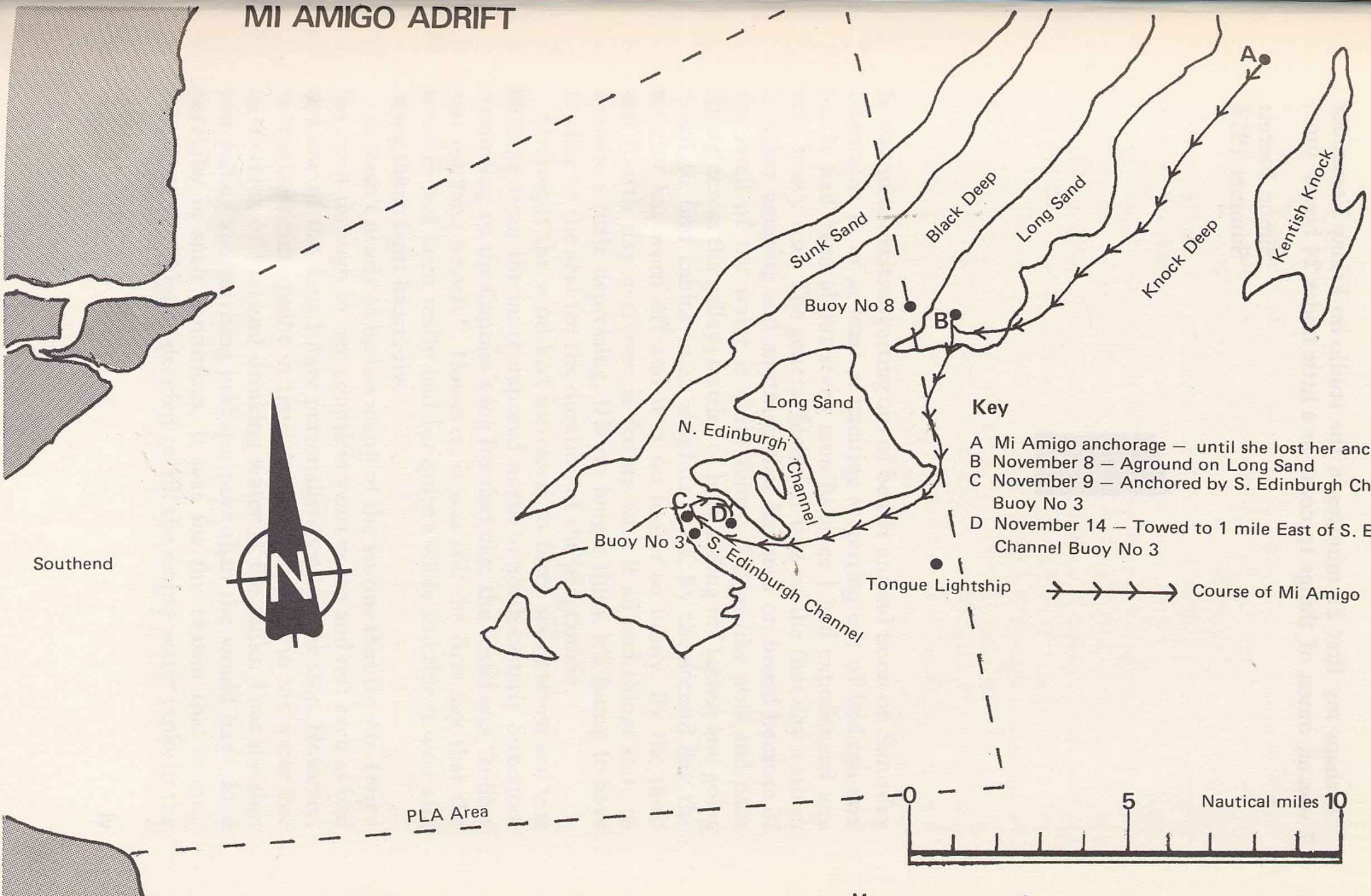
Since the summer of 1974, the station has also been selling an idea. The idea, or some might call it an ideal, is called Loving Awareness or LA as it has become known. LA is open to many different interpretations but the basis of the idea is for people to be more open with each other and to have more tolerance, understanding and love for fellow human beings. Now there is an album called Loving Awareness, with a sound and message first started by the Beatles.

On Friday November 7, Mike Lloyd and myself had been aboard the *Mi Amigo* for one day short of three weeks and the crew for two weeks and two days. I most remember the day not so much for the sea conditions, which for the first time in two weeks were not calm, but more for the first twenty-five minutes of my programme. If anyone had ever wondered if the shows on Caroline are live, by six thirty on this Friday night they would have been in no doubt.

At 6.00pm the first record I played was completely distorted. I managed to play the third at the wrong speed and as if that was not enough misfortune, after 30 seconds of the fifth record on the programme the stylus decided that it had had enough and slipped across a complete album side. I did not even have another record ready on the other turntable, and had to talk about nothing in particular until I had got a record out of the rack at the side of me and cued it up.

Because of the calm seas that we had been having, I must have gained a false sense of security. By now the sea was fairly rough and the *Mi Amigo* was rolling around in the water; not violently but enough to make things just a little difficult. The weather did not make my first 25 minutes any better, as after leaving the studio for about one minute, I came back to find that a full bottle of beer had spilt over about a dozen albums. The start of the programme was made to sound even a little worse by the jingle machine which twice refused to work.

MI AMIGO ADRIFT



Key

A Mi Amigo anchorage — until she lost her anchor
B November 8 — Aground on Long Sand
C November 9 — Anchored by S. Edinburgh Channel Buoy No 3
D November 14 — Towed to 1 mile East of S. Edinburgh Channel Buoy No 3

→→→ Course of Mi Amigo

Perhaps my first 25 minutes in the studio on Friday November 7 was an omen of things to come in a little under 24 hours' time.

Simon Barrett
Summer 1976



It was quite exciting getting out of bed at around noon on Saturday November 8, or at least as exciting as getting out of bed can ever be. It had been about seven months since I had experienced any very heavy seas. The general feeling is that on the first day a storm is rather amusing and anything that happens on board because of the swell of the water is quite funny. Things like pots and pans flying across the galley; bottles of beer sliding off tables; and going down to find cabins in an absolute mess. By the second day the novelty has worn off and it is no longer so funny. By the third and fourth day everyone is fed up with it all and things start to become a little depressing. DJs no longer think it's funny to have to cling to the seat for the duration of the programme.

Overnight the wind had increased to force six or seven and was blowing from the more exposed north to north-easterly direction. According to the Captain's log for that day, the vessel was "rolling and pitching heavily". However, it was still the first day that the weather had been really bad for quite a while and things were still being taken light-heartedly.

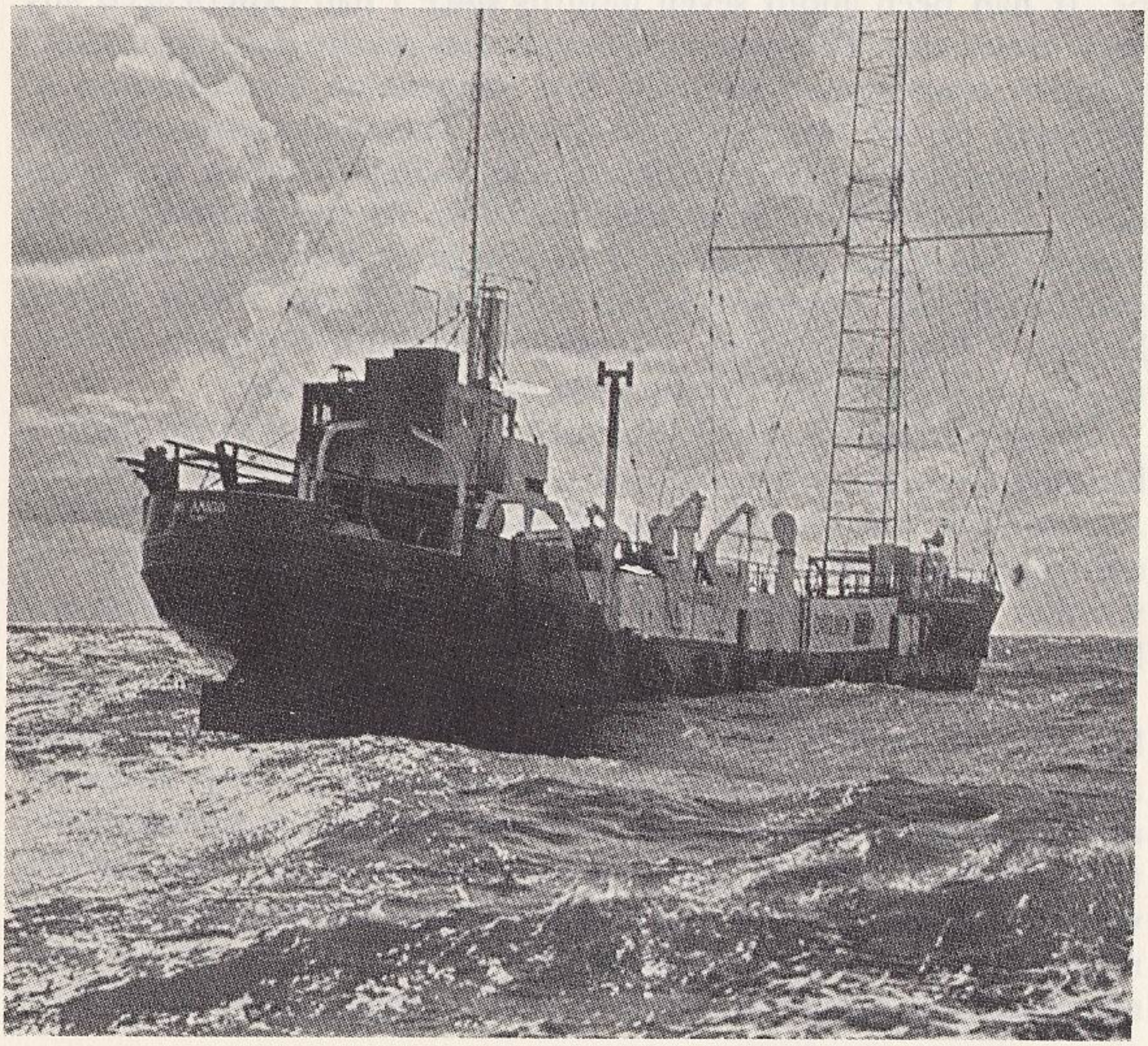
It wasn't nearly as bad as many of the storms that the *Mi Amigo* has been through in her countless years at sea and not even as bad as some of the days I have personally spent on the ship. However, at this particular point in time she was very light in the water due to the lack of fuel and drinking water in the tanks. Thus the ship was rolling and pitching perhaps more than she would have done normally in such conditions. It was for this reason that in mid-afternoon the skipper decided to fill the empty water tanks in the

fore of the *Mi Amigo* with salt water.

Having previously said that programmes for Radio Caroline are live, I shall now contradict myself. Saturday is distinct from any other day in my week for being the night when my favourite TV programme is shown. Maybe you've guessed it already: *Dr Who*. Because of a ten minute long clash with my own programme, I decided during the afternoon to pre-record the start of my show for that evening. If my efforts of the previous evening's disaster were anything to go by, then it was probably a good idea anyway.

With the movement of the ship, it was quite a struggle to get settled in the studio. Once I had tidied the mass of records and tapes on the floor and desk and had installed myself in the chair, it seemed a little ridiculous to only pre-record about 10 or 15 minutes so I could see *Dr Who*. So I ended up with the first two hours of my four hour programme on tape and was set to do the final two hours live later that evening.

Rough Weather in the North Sea



For myself, most of the rest of the afternoon was taken up with being thrown around the mess room and putting everything breakable in my cabin on to the floor. I must have nearly ruptured myself whilst diving half the length of the mess room to save a bottle of orange and one of beer as they slid across the table. In uncharacteristic style I saved the orange but not the beer. What a waste of energy my actions had been.

The cook had quite an afternoon as well; trying to prepare that evening's meal with the terrible sea conditions. If he'd known what the future held in store for him, he would probably not have bothered.

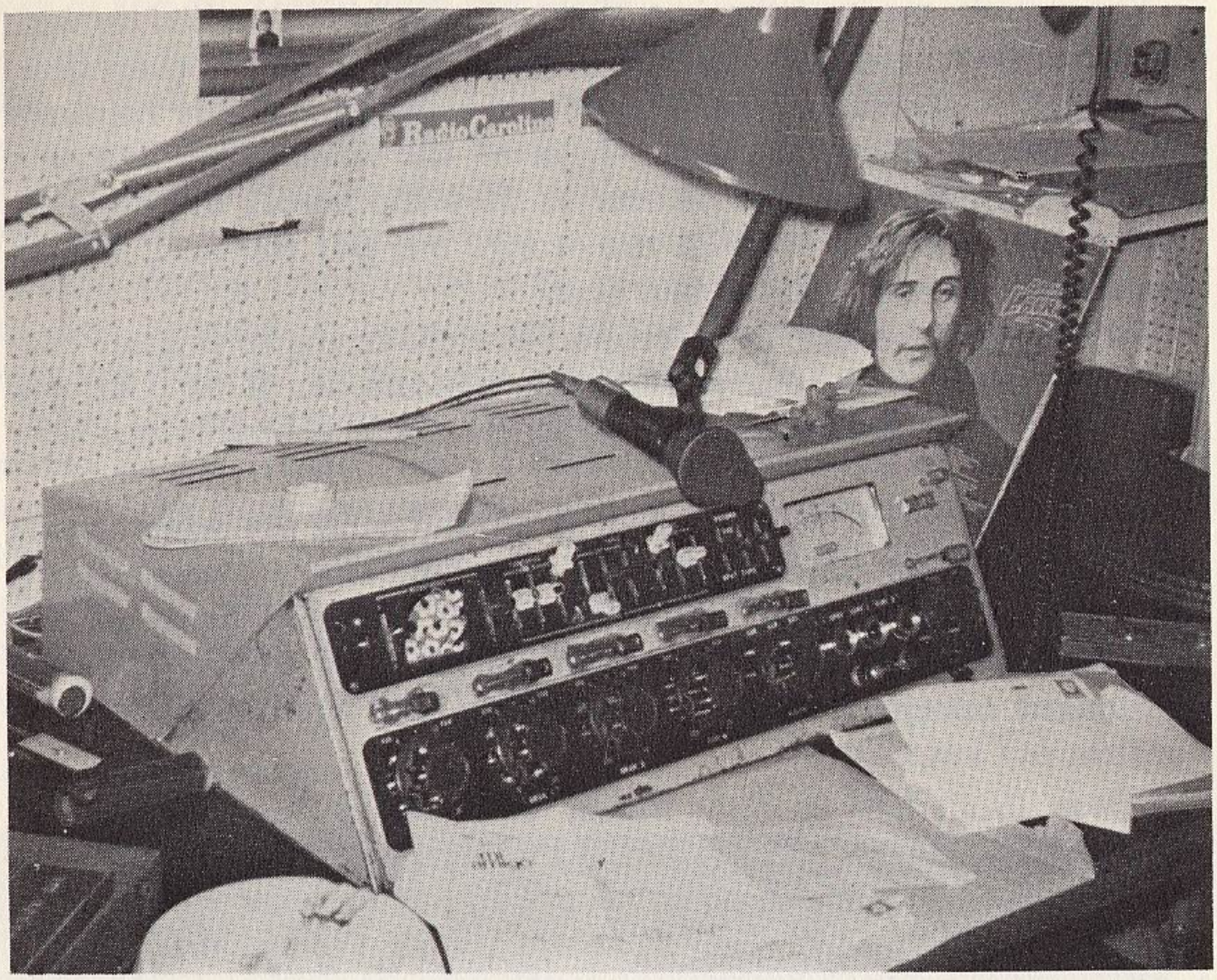
The first hint of trouble came at around 4.30 pm when, being November, it was almost dark. We suspected that we were adrift, but because of the lack of marker buoys or fixed lights of any kind in our patch of water and the absence of any navigational equipment except a sticking compass, it was at first difficult to confirm our suspicions.

It was about half an hour before everyone on board seemed to realise that we were drifting, and at the mercy of the North Sea. In this situation the first thing to do is find out the exact position of the ship. It's no good trying to steam the ship in any direction or in fact do anything much until the vessel's exact position is plotted on a chart. It would theoretically have been possible to start the engines and steam in the opposite direction to the way we were drifting. However, the biggest problem was that due to our wonderful compass, we did not know which way that was.

An oil tanker that was passing seemed at this stage to be our only hope. Our Captain called the ship via the VHF radio, but to no response. They had, however, heard our calls as they were now signalling by light, through which we eventually made radio contact on a different channel. They informed us that we were about a mile east of Black Deep buoy number eight, which our skipper believed to be incorrect.

The Black Deep buoy is to the south west of our anchorage in Knock Deep and our Captain believed that we were drifting in the opposite direction. This would have meant that the buoy which we were passing was the North Knock and the tanker had been mistaken. However, it was to be a while before we discovered our error.

It was by now just after 5.00 pm and the cook had served a dinner of steak in the mess room. Because of our predicament, the ship was now rolling more than it had been for most of the day,



Caroline studio

and eating the meal was a fairly difficult task. Only four of us ate that meal – Mike Lloyd, Peter Chicago, the cook and myself. I had already got visions of spending half the night in a liferaft, so I decided to eat as much as possible. I still vividly remember thinking that it might be my last meal on board the *Mi Amigo*. The three other people on the ship were hard at work trying to lower the reserve anchors and never even saw the dinner except all over the floor about half an hour later.

The time was now nearly 6.00 pm and most of us now had life-jackets on. After almost a year on and off the ship, I had to ask where they were kept. Of that I felt a little ashamed.

The taped programmes of Radio Mi Amigo had finished and Caroline had commenced transmissions for the evening with the programme that I had recorded earlier in the day. Of course it contained no hint of what was happening on board. Thousands of people were listening to Caroline when she was going through perhaps the most eventful drama of her life and not one of them knew about it. At around 6.20 pm it all changed, at least as far as the listeners were concerned.

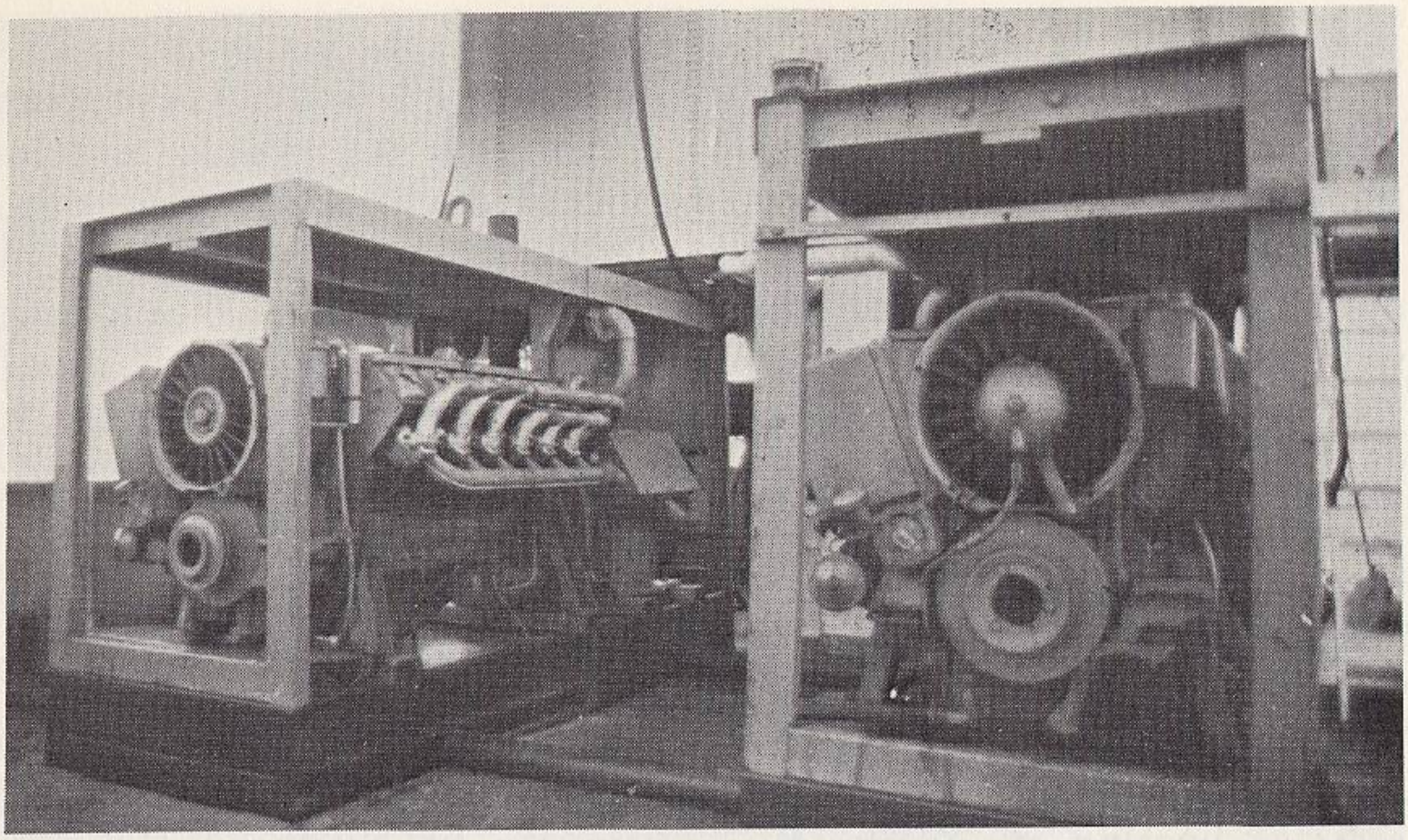
I broke the news with the words "This is Radio Caroline on 259 and at the moment we are adrift in the North Sea". There were then appeals from Peter Chicago and myself for people to telephone our office or contact people concerned with our organisation. I don't quite know why but I kept telling listeners that we were in no immediate danger and that friends and relations should not worry, but this was the basis of most of the message until about 7.00 pm. I also broadcast the position where we thought we were. It was during this time that the crew spotted a helicopter overhead. It did not stay more than about half-a-minute and was not seen by any of us again. It had presumedly come out as a back-up for people monitoring our movement by radar on shore. Radar cannot of course identify the name of a ship and it had probably come to verify that the ship being monitored by radar was in fact the *Mi Amigo* and not just any vessel going about her normal business.

After hearing about the helicopter, I confidently expected a lifeboat alongside soon after. However, I learnt later that it is normal procedure, in this type of situation, for a lifeboat to be sent only upon the Captain's request. All the same, I think we all would have been a lot happier with one standing by us.

Just after 7.00 pm events started to become very precarious. Theoretically a ship that is adrift and out of control is not in danger until it hits something. Unfortunately, in the Thames Estuary this is a high possibility, be it another ship, a buoy or, in our case, a sandbank. That is exactly what happened at 7.00 pm when we were still dragging most of our anchor chain. Until that moment it had been slowing down the speed of our drift but it would have been useless to start the engine to try to steam off the sand with an extremely long anchor chain still dragging along the bottom. So a decision was made to burn off the chain so that we could attempt to manoeuvre away from the sand.

Although we did not know it at the time, our attempts to move off the sandbank were, in a way, to lead us into deeper trouble, or looking at it another way shallower trouble; or at least it should have done. However, that's becoming confusing and I will let the next few lines explain. We were still under the impression that our drift had been in a northerly direction and were thus believing that we were aground at the northern most end of Long Sand. In fact the opposite was true. The *Mi Amigo* had drifted south westerly and was stuck on the southern end of Long Sand.

Eventually the engine was started and the ship was set in a direction approximately to the north, which, unknown to us, was a



The generators

course further onto the bank. Naturally enough the engine did not seem to have much effect in moving us back to deep water. After it had been running for half an hour the Captain started to have doubts as to our exact position and attempted, to no avail, to contact the coastguards on the ship-to-shore radio on channel six. Appeals followed from Peter Chicago and myself over the medium wave transmitter for the coastguards to contact us on that channel. At 7.55 pm I left the studio for a few minutes to see what was happening on the bridge. I returned to the studio to find it soaking wet from a wave that had broken over the porthole, and with the news that we had got into deeper water after almost an hour on the sand. It had seemed like more. However, it was nowhere near the end of our problems as we were now even more uncertain about our precise position.

Possibly by some sort of miracle our engine had not even been powerful enough to keep us in the same spot and gale force winds had swept us off sooner. It wasn't long before the coastguard made contact and informed us of our exact whereabouts, when of course our mistake was fully realised. They also sent a message asking that we should make an appeal for listeners to stop telephoning them. Although there had been no request for people to do so, thousands had, and in the process jammed the coastguard's lines. Of course we immediately responded to this request.

Between 7.00 pm and 8.00 pm at least two people on board,

Peter Chicago and Mike Lloyd, had decided that the situation was serious enough to warrant clearing their cabins of personal belongings and packing them so that they were ready to take in the event of abandoning ship. It did not really bother me as if we had had to leave the vessel, I wanted to take only myself clad in warm clothing and a lifejacket. I suppose it was the tense situation that we were in that created an argument, on that point, between myself and one of the others. It was suggested in no uncertain terms that I should also pack my things away. I explained that I had a thick pullover and a lifejacket on and an Afghan coat ready to grab and that that was all I was interested in. I might add that the person with whom I was arguing was not even in a lifejacket.

After we had got off the sandbank I left the studio as I was curious to know what had been happening on the bridge. Mike took over the show while I was away. Our Captain was now in contact with the ship-to-shore station near Margate (North Foreland Radio), who were ready to send a lifeboat if we were to need it. The *Mi Amigo* was now moving in a south-westerly direction due to a combination of wind, current and engine power and some of the crew were once again working on lowering one of the two reserve anchors, but were not having much success. I looked into my cabin, on my way back to the studio, and found it just as wet as the others. A soaking floor but worst of all, a wet bed.

Upon returning to the studio I subconsciously decided to continue the programme in as normal a way as possible. Maybe listeners were getting tired of hearing about us and just wanted to, in the words of the song, 'listen to the music'. After all that is what Caroline is all about.

Outside, however, there were still frantic efforts from the crew to lower one or both of the reserve anchors. Although our engine was still working to steam the *Mi Amigo* east, north east, and back to the Knock Deep, due once again to a combination of a very strong current and high winds, the vessel was still heading south, south west. At around 9.30 pm, we passed within about a mile of the Tongue Light Vessel, about which I commented on the air at the time, "The *Mi Amigo* is steaming somewhere or other to find deeper water. I just had a look out of the porthole and there was a lightship that's not normally there, so we're in waters unknown to me but the Captain's up on the bridge and I'm sure he's got the situation well in hand."

Of course, although through no fault of his own, he had not got the situation in hand as the ship was still drifting and out of

control. I remarked, as I finished my show just before 10.00 pm, that it had probably been the most dramatic programme that I had ever done. Of that, I now have no doubt.

As usual, following me at 10.00 pm was Mike Lloyd until closedown, which was to come a lot sooner than we anticipated. The Captain, together with Peter Chicago, had taken the decision to go off the air. It was halfway through Mike's first record, ironically entitled 'She's Gone' by Daryl Hall and John Oates, that Peter broadcast the following announcement:

"As most of the listeners now have realised, we have got problems at the moment. We broke our anchor chain this evening and since then we've been drifting in a south or south-westerly direction and we're approaching the point where we're going to enter British Territorial Waters. So for that reason we are now going off the air. Our current position is latitude 51 degrees 31 minutes north and longitude one degree 22 minutes east. We are in no immediate danger. We've no real problems except the fact that we are drifting and we're unable to correct the drift of the ship. We've also got difficulties in lowering our stand-by anchors. So if anybody in the office is listening, you'll realise that the situation has got quite desperate and I'm sure you're doing all you can.

"We are in touch with the coastguard authorities, who've been a great assistance to us in establishing our position and if the people there are listening we'd like to ask listeners once again not to telephone the coastguard authorities as they are already helping us a great deal and you'll only block up their telephone lines. So thanks again."

Both Mike and myself then said our goodbyes and assured ourselves over the air that we were both a little nearer home that night, although I was a lot nearer to Bromley, Kent than Mike was to New York, USA. We also assured listeners that we would be back the following night and Mike then closed the station with the theme tune 'On My Way Back Home' by New Riders of the Purple Sage and the transmitter was turned off.

There were no charts on board the *Mi Amigo* that marked British Territorial Waters. The Skipper had no time to consider the possibility of the ship drifting within the limit, when his main responsibility was the safety of the seven people on board and secondly, that of the ship. We were not at all certain that the ship was nearing the territorial limit and it was only the possibility at the back of our minds that made us go off the air. If we had had

time to think deeply about where the limit was, and had come to a decision, it would have been incorrect. This was to be proved later.

After leaving the air, Mike and myself went into the mess room and one of the first things that we heard was an enormous noise that sounded like a cross between a bang and a grind. I ran out onto the port side deck and came literally face to face with a great big steel buoy. It was the width of the deck away, which is about five feet. It was also about ten feet tall and by this time emitting a very loud and strange siren noise. It was apparently travelling from the aft to fore end of the *Mi Amigo* and was scraping along the side as it went. Of course it was us who were travelling and not the buoy.

I could not believe that I had come face to face with such a monstrosity making such a strange row. When I stepped out on deck, as I was assured later, my face was a picture. I was told that my eyes were popping out of my head. The Captain and some of the crew viewed the spectacle from the bridgehouse and because of my reactions, the buoy in all subsequent conversations was referred to as 'Simon's Buoy'. We joked about it afterwards, but it could have done a lot of damage to the side of the ship. Luckily it had not.

We were of course still adrift and now fearing two things, one of which was drifting into territorial waters and being arrested, although we were not certain at this time whether we were already inside the limit. No one can say for certain, but with help of knowledge gained after the event, it seems that at about 10.30 pm on that Saturday night the *Mi Amigo* was probably still just outside the limit.

Our second fear, and the major one, was being swept on to the North Kent coast of which the only comfort was the thought of awaiting girlfriends. The crew were still working frantically to lower an anchor before we entered territorial limits. We believed that the ship would be arrested as soon as it did, or as soon as possible afterwards. The situation seemed now to be completely hopeless and the only factor in our favour was the slight shelter that the sandbank was now providing from the north-easterly winds. If the wind had receded a little it was still too strong for the engine to make any headway.

The first mate on board thought that there was no hope of lowering either of the reserve anchors and with the best intentions had given up the task. He, I know, thought it was the end for Caroline. Most of the other people on board thought the same,

except perhaps for Peter Chicago, who at no stage lost hope. As for myself, I took the opinion that if the *Mi Amigo* was still afloat then there was still a chance of survival for Caroline. But at around midnight, I must admit, I thought that chance to be a very slim one.

The first glimmer of real hope arrived just after midnight when the Captain and myself were joined on the bridge by Peter, who informed us that the port anchor had been lowered. Although this was of course good news, it was the start of a problem that was to haunt us all for four whole days. Unknown to the crew who were working on the anchor, they had managed to drop it no more than thirty metres from yet another giant solid steel buoy. The South Edinburgh Number Three Buoy in the South Edinburgh Channel.

When a ship is at anchor, it does not, as a landlubber might believe, remain in exactly the same position. In fact it swings on the chain and is normally a distance away from being directly above the anchor. A distance which depends on the amount of slack chain. Of course, as the tide changes so does the position of the ship in relation to the anchor, which is embedded in the sea bed.

The Skipper was still in contact with North Foreland Radio on VHF channel 16, which is normally just a calling frequency. That is to say, one on which contact is established and a different channel is arranged for any further conversations. It seemed that although we had about eight channels available for our use, only two of these, 16 and 26, were ones to which North Foreland could listen. Twenty-six was tried, but we were told that our signal was not getting through to Margate. For this reason North Foreland Radio gave us permission to continue using VHF channel 16. They seemed pleased that we had dropped anchor successfully, but concerned that we were so near the buoy. Their concern was justified as it was soon after dropping anchor that the *Mi Amigo* collided with South Edinburgh Buoy Number Three.

For hours it seemed as though we were crashing into that infernal buoy. In reality it was probably no more than three to four minutes; by turning the ship's wheel we had escaped the menace for the time being. The buoy was, however, still too close for comfort. It was partly for this reason that the captain decided that there should be a two man watch kept 24 hours a day. He also wanted someone listening to the ship-to-shore radio in case we were called by North Foreland Radio or any ships in the area.

As the anchor was only a light one, and because of the closeness

of the buoy, it seemed very unwise to shut down the engine. So by a combination of the anchor and engine power, we managed to halt our drift. At this point I decided to be brave and remove my lifejacket, something which most people on board had done earlier.

Beside everything else that Peter Chicago had been doing during the evening, he had been attempting to get messages through to members of the Caroline organisation on land. His method? Calling up radio hams. He contacted one in Sussex and gave him a 'phone number to call, where he was to make sure that Caroline staff on land knew of our plight and to find out if any assistance was being sent or planned.

It seemed days before an answer came, but eventually at about 2.00 am on the morning of Sunday November 9, a message arrived. A tug with a new anchor and chain was on the way and would arrive at 10.00 am that day to take us back to our old position in the Knock Deep. Most of us did not believe it, and thought that it was a message sent to keep our morale high. After nearly a year with the station, I knew that it was always a policy of Caroline's bosses to keep spirits up when things went wrong. None of us saw any hope of a tug arriving in such a short space of time. We had only been adrift about nine hours. However, the people on land asked for our exact position, which was supplied and broadcast to the radio ham, who passed it on.

The skipper decided to stay on watch all night, with Mike Lloyd, and some of the others. Personally, I had had enough and was ready for some sleep. My sheets had had time to dry out on the radiators, over which I had placed them earlier. After everything that had happened that evening I went down to my cabin to find it in darkness and I had to tidy up and completely re-make my bed by match light, and I never did see *Dr Who* that Saturday.

2

"How the hell could he sleep? After all that had happened and was still going on?"

I can almost hear you saying that as you read this. Admittedly, after the fateful Saturday evening, there was always the fear that some dramatic event would occur whilst one was asleep. It became quite normal, before going to bed, to be asked to be awakened immediately, if there was a slight indication of anything unusual. Yes, there was enormous fear of missing something whilst asleep.

Before sleeping, I took the opportunity to view the beautiful 'new' sight of the lights of Margate and a 15 to 20 mile section of the North Kent coast. After four weeks on board thoughts of home and girl friends were already in my mind. In the Knock Deep, 20 miles from the nearest coast, it is extremely rare to sight land and thus fairly easy to erase thoughts of home from the mind. However, here we were nine miles from the coastline of my home county and thoughts of homesickness were a little more difficult to forget. I think the phrase is so near yet so far. All the same, the sight of England was a beautiful one and I spent an enjoyable five or 10 minutes trying to pick out landmarks before turning in.

After tidying up and making my bed by matchlight, the electricity was mysteriously restored to my cabin and I set about adding a few lines to a letter to my girl friend. Because what I wrote was not of a personal nature and also because very basically it summed up our circumstances at that moment in a nutshell, I now quote those few lines.

"Sunday morning 2.40 am.

"I'm sure you know what's happening tonight. A tug with a new anchor is meant to be coming in the morning to tow us to our old position. I don't want to go into everything right now as I want to sleep. We have a secondary anchor down, which took about eight hours to lower but we are now anchored about 30 metres from a buoy, which we are in constant danger of hitting. Explain more tomorrow."

Having written those few lines I turned the light out to get some sleep, which was to be deep and uninterrupted. Whereas many DJs in the past have had trouble sleeping with the ship riding heavy seas, I have always found it easier to sleep in such conditions, with the motion of the vessel probably having the same effect as rocking a baby to sleep in a cradle. The only factor that delayed me entering 'the land of nod' that night was the sound of a heavy canister rolling around on the deck above me. So, clad in only underpants and slippers, I went up to stop the row. Fortunately, unlike the incident with 'Simon's Buoy', I was not spotted and there were no repercussions from the others afterwards. If there had been I'm sure that, due to my lack of clothing, they would have been worse than those of the events with the buoy.

During the night, the intensity of the wind and the swell of the sea decreased. As I have already mentioned, a 24 hour vigil had been mounted on the bridge to keep a watch for anything that might happen in our new surroundings, on the VHF radio or, of course, with South Edinburgh Buoy Number Three. Still, there was a fear that the British authorities might attempt to seize the *Mi Amigo*; but as time passed this fear became less, as we believed that if they were going to make a move, they would have acted as quickly as possible. The skipper, who had been up all day and had had the strain of the previous few hours, stayed up all night and kept watch with Mike Lloyd and some of the crew. Supplies of gin were good and it was this that presumably kept the captain and crew going throughout the long night. Dutch gin is normally as close to a Dutch seaman as the carpet is to the floor. The only exception on board was Jan, the first mate, who could normally be found struggling with the top of a Heineken bottle.

The engine continued to run throughout the night, but the engineer put it on half speed. The engine was old, rarely used, and had been running for over ten hours. It was, however, enough power to keep the strain off the anchor chain.

During the height of the storm the wind had probably been up to force eight or nine. The Captain's log for early on Sunday morning, quotes it as having "decreased to north-easterly force six." The crew, who braved the conditions, and stayed up, spent some of the night attempting to lower the reserve starboard anchor. As there was not a working winch on board, it was a job that needed a lot of muscle and skill to unravel the shackles.

I rose from my bed probably a good deal quicker than I normally do. After all anything could have happened whilst I had been sleeping and it was possible that no one had had time to wake me. I went through the normal morning vigil of washing, dressing and having a cup of tea, without which I cannot start any day. All this, however, was not very normal as for some time we had been very short of fresh water. This was due to numerous problems with the tender. The shortage had now become acute and there was only about a hundred litres remaining, which was a brownish colour as it was from the very bottom of the tank. It is very difficult to clean your teeth and wash with about two cupfuls of water and on that Sunday morning it seemed to take an age.

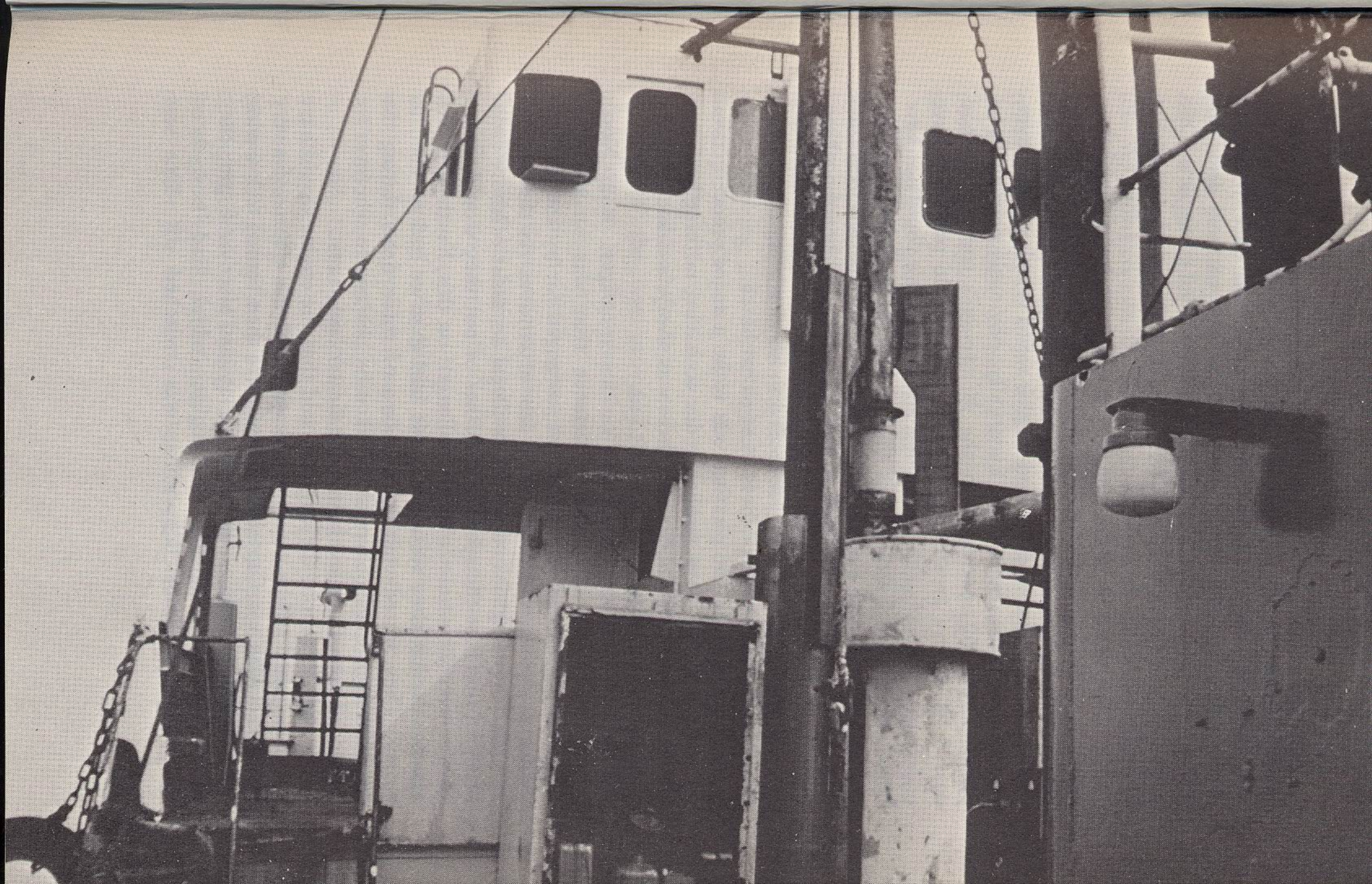
I had been dreading the day when the water was finally exhausted. Fortunately I have never been in the position of being unable to wash, clean my teeth and all the other things that are normally done with water. I now knew almost for certain that that day was the next one.

I chanced the brown water to make a cup of tea, against the advice of the engineer, Derrick, who said it would probably kill me. I took the opinion that missing my morning 'cuppa' could have the same effect. The proof is in the eating or in this case in the drinking, and I am writing this several months later.

Having made the tea, I rushed to the bridge to get the news. There was little. As expected the tug had not arrived and there was no sign of it. The wind had dropped considerable as had the visibility and it was now raining. As I have already mentioned the engine was now running at half speed and attempts had been continuing to drop the starboard anchor. Those were the two main events of the night.

The bridgehouse had taken on a lived-in look. It is only about four metres long by six metres wide and had now been in use for 20 hours as a bedroom, kitchen, bar, living room and dustbin, not

A 24 hour watch was kept from the bridge



to mention a radio room, look-out post, wheelhouse and map reading room. The floor was beginning to resemble a giant ashtray with cigarette ends, matches and bottle tops all over it. Empty bottles and uneaten sandwiches littered the surfaces and two makeshift beds had been made out of discarded lifejackets. One was in a corner on the floor and the other on a desk top in the opposite corner.

There had been no ships seen during the night, but at lunchtime one was sighted. Appearing out of the depressing damp gloom was a French tanker called the *Commandant Henry*, whose Master was obviously surprised and amazed by this weird vessel, with an over-sized mast, in his ship's path. Eventually, obviously perplexed, he passed about 60 metres from the *Mi Amigo*'s stern. If he had passed us at any greater distance his ship would probably have ended up on the adjacent sandbank, and besides we could not have heard anything of the crew's shouts for us to listen on VHF channel six. Having got this message by a combination of shouts and hand signals, we listened to the frequency but heard nothing. The *Commandant Henry* had livened up a generally dismal looking day and having done so she proceeded to her destination and while I remained on watch the others went to eat lunch.

Spotting ships in the distance was to be a major preoccupation over the next few days, probably due to having nothing better to do whilst on watch and because there was always a chance that the one spotted was a tug on the way to us.

Sunday afternoon produced various messages, from North Foreland Radio, about tug assistance that was on the way. Apparently, a tug from Felixstowe, arranged for by the station's owner in Spain, would arrive by late afternoon. As the tug was coming from England, where it is illegal to assist offshore radio stations, our first thought was whether or not they would tow us to wherever we wanted. When challenged on this, North Foreland assured us that they would and also said that we had no need to worry. They stated emphatically two of three times during the same message that we would be taken by the tug to wherever we wanted. There, for a few hours, the matter laid at rest.

By mid-afternoon, the engineer said that the engine would have to be switched off as it was overheating. All the efforts of a very tired Peter Chicago, Captain and crew were then turned to lowering the starboard anchor. In half-light, at just after 4.00 pm, they succeeded. Immediately, the engine, which had now been operating for almost 24 hours, was switched off. This was

followed by a few moments of suspense as we stood on the bridge.

Two fairly light anchors were now down, but where they going to be sufficient to hold the 470 tons of the *Mi Amigo*? Together they were probably not as good as the anchor that had been burnt off the night before. Without the help of the engine power we were not sure whether the two anchors were going to do a good job. We crowded into the bridgehouse to watch our bobbing buoy as the engine was cut. Was our distance from the buoy changing? If it was, then once again the ship was adrift and in trouble.

The seconds, and then minutes passed. Eventually a sigh of relief was heard as it became apparent that the buoy was not getting any nearer or any further away. We were holding our position and although still in great danger, we could feel a little more secure.

Immediate problems were far from over. Interest was now centred around the weather for the forthcoming night. So we once again contacted North Foreland, who obliged us with our request for the expected weather conditions over the southern North Sea and Thames Estuary for Sunday/Monday night. The information was not good. "Winds veering from north east to east, force six to seven reaching gale force eight." If the wind was to come up directly from the east, then the shelter provided by Long Sand would be lost. To the East was nothing but open sea.

6 pm produced the forecast on Anglia Television, which did not agree with the one provided by North Foreland. The wind, according to Anglia, was to be south-easterly force five or six decreasing. Our Skipper seemed to think that the first forecast could have been falsely given to frighten us into a rash decision. The British government would, it appears, do anything to close Caroline and Mi Amigo. It seems likely that the Home Office was in constant contact with North Foreland and were to an extent telling them what to say to us. If the idea was to frighten us, we were not going to be scared that easily. We would wait and see what happened; besides a tug was still on the way.

To add to everything, our fresh water supply had now come to an end. It was quite horrible having to wash hands with soap and sea-water.

Remembering his chemistry classes from school, the cook had turned the galley into a fresh water reclamation plant. He was boiling salt water and letting the steam rise to a cold metal surface. By employing this technique, the drips that fall off the surface are pure water. He was not exactly successful, as all afternoon had

produced just over a litre. It was not the end of the world, as milk, for making coffee, was abundant, and there was plenty of fizzy orange, tonic water and beer remaining.

During late afternoon the Captain decided to take his first sleep for about 30 hours. Jan, the first mate, and myself were to stay on watch. Mike Lloyd and Peter Chicago, who had been up all night, were now sleeping. A radio message had come through from the Trinity House ship, the *Mermaid.* (Trinity House is the authority responsible for the maintenance of lighthouses' navigation aids around the British coastline.) As the *Mermaid*'s Master seemed to consider the *Mi Amigo* as a navigation hazard, he was very interested to know of our future plans. After having answered some of his questions myself, I decided that it would be best for him to speak to the Captain. The poor man was disturbed from his sleep after only about one hour.

When was our ship going to be moved? And where to? And had any damage been sustained to the South Edinburgh Buoy Number Three?

The answer to the first two questions were of course unknown and "no" was the response to the final inquiry about the state of the buoy. Our overtired Skipper, who had been answering the questions in a rather dazed manner, returned to his bed.

Late afternoon had come and gone, and there was still no sign of the tug from Felixstowe, which we had been informed, had definitely left. The tug was called the *MS Sauria* and North Foreland requested that we listen out for the vessel on the VHF radio. Decision time was getting near. What were we to ask of the tug?

It is illegal for British subjects or companies to assist offshore radio stations, except in cases of distress. Was the *Mi Amigo,* however, still classified as being in distress? If she was, would this clause in the Marine etc. Broadcasting (Offences) Act 1967 provide for a tug taking us back to the Knock Deep? Or would this be illegal and could the tug only assist in towing us to a British port — the last thing that we wanted. The Captain had emerged from his bed and a discussion commenced in the bridgehouse.

After 10 or 15 minutes, no decision had been reached as to what we were to ask the tug to do. If it was to tow us, then we wanted to go back to Knock Deep. But would the tug take us towards land whatever our request? If this happened, we could always cut the line, but we could then be a ship without an anchor. What were the instructions given to the *Sauria*'s skipper by his

company, Gaseley? Besides, if the *Sauria* was to tow us, this might firstly involve having to cut off the two anchors. There didn't seem to be much chance of the approaching tug bringing a new anchor and chain for us, as this would almost certainly have been illegal. There was a slight chance that together the crew and disc jockeys of the *Mi Amigo* and the crew of the tug could haul up one of the anchors manually. Our Captain decided that perhaps it wasn't such a good idea to return to Knock Deep until a new heavier anchor and chain were on board.

During the discussion, I remembered that I had the telephone number of a Spanish company connected with Radio Mi Amigo. Perhaps we could contact them for orders. There were problems, however. It was unlikely that anyone would answer on a Sunday night.

North Foreland could not hear our transmissions on channel 26, for technical reasons the only channel on which we could receive calls. The only alternative was to give the number to North Foreland who could call it and relay any messages from the station's owners in Spain. This was done but as expected there was no reply in Spain.

The Captain had the difficult task of deciding what to do before the *Sauria* arrived. He chose to stick to his original decision until a heavier anchor was brought out. The adjacent sandbank was providing protection from the wind, which was not as strong as the forecast had indicated. It was blowing from the north east, quite treacherous in Knock Deep, but not as bad in the South Edinburgh Channel. Even though we believed that the *Mi Amigo* was still in International Waters, (simply because it had not been seized by the authorities), we decided that we should stay off the air so as not to jeopardise any help we might get. If off the air, the *Mi Amigo* might not be classified as an offshore radio station and possibly exempt from restrictions.

When she arrived at 9.00 pm there was nothing to ask the *Sauria* but to remain overnight on standby in case of emergency. We only had to drift a little way and we would be crashing into the buoy or aground on one of the two sandbanks in the vicinity.

The radio operator of the *Sauria* informed us that they were to be relieved in the morning by a larger and more powerful tug.

Once the *Sauria* arrived, much uncertainty disappeared, along with many of the crew who went to catch up on lost sleep. The Skipper and myself remained on watch for a fairly uneventful four hours, occasionally checking by radio with the *Sauria*, ironically

enough to make sure that they were alright. At 2.00 am on the morning of Monday, November 10, we were relieved by one sailor, one engineer and one disc jockey, in the form of Mike Lloyd.

The Skipper, hungry after his long watch, raided the food cupboard to make a small meal and we both had to endure cleaning our teeth with tonic water and washing our hands with soap and sea-water.

With a tug now anchored within shouting distance, the safety of the *Mi Amigo* and her inhabitants now appeared to be certain. But did that also apply to the ship's occupation as the floating home of Radios Caroline and Mi Amigo?

3

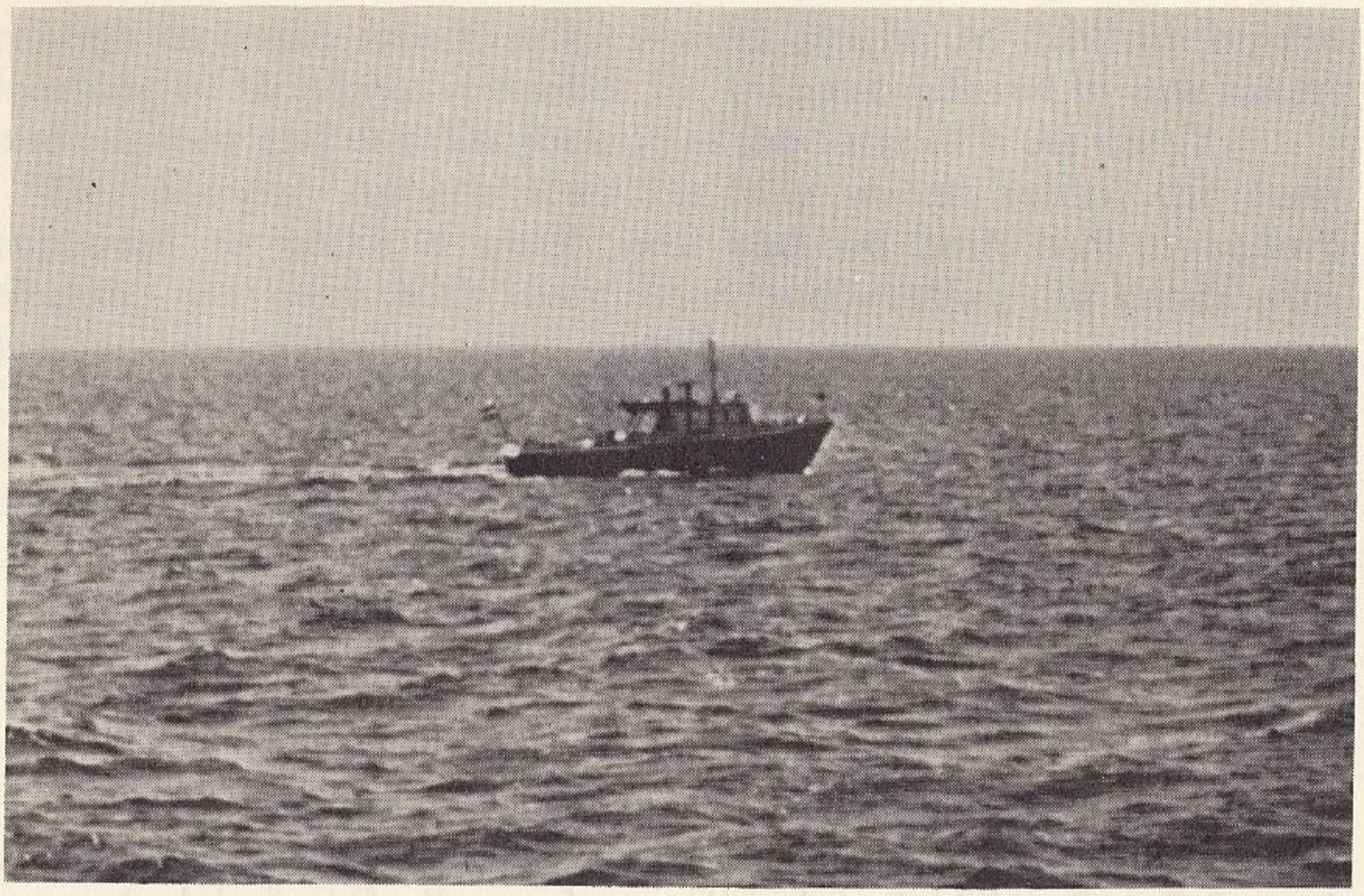
The sound that awoke me at midday on Monday November 10 was that of The *Sauria's* siren bidding us farewell after a night by our side.

The night had been uneventful, with radio links maintained between the *Mi Amigo* and the *Sauria*, whose Master had received word from his company in Harwich that another tug, the *Sun XXII* was on the way, and would arrive within two hours. The weather had improved. The wind was down to force two or three southerly and there was now only a slight sea breeze. For these reasons the *Sauria* had decided to leave a little before the arrival of the *Sun XXII*. In mysterious circumstances the *Sauria* was to re-appear later in the week.

Of course there was still no fresh water on board; or was there? Upon entering the washroom I turned on the tap hoping for a few drips and was pleasantly surprised to see flowing light brown water coming out. I have never turned a tap off so quickly. Enough water had collected to enable myself to wash my face and wake myself up. A miracle had not occurred overnight, but evidently, due to the comparative flatness of the sea, the little water left in the bottom of the tank had levelled out, allowing some of it to be distributed around the ship. This amount was precious little.

Overnight, Jan, the first mate, had cleaned and tidied the bridgehouse and it was now more pleasant to have to keep watch in, with a liberal supply of full bottles around the room.

Having just got out of bed, I kept watch while the others went to eat lunch. It was soon after they had gone that the *Sun XXII*



The Sauria leaves

came into vision to the north west. Unlike the *Sauria*, the *Sun XXII* came alongside and made fast to the *Mi Amigo*, immediately wanting instructions.

Our Skipper gave fresh thought to being towed back to the Knock Deep and work commenced on raising one of the anchors. The weather was, by now, almost perfect and the sea was very nearly flat.

A powerful tug was alongside and said that they were not only willing to tow us back, but also to remain on standby in the Knock Deep until a new anchor and chain arrived for us.

Because of the overtiredness of our crew and the complete lack of knowledge about any attempts that the station's owner might have been making to help us, we didn't quite know what we wanted. One moment it was one thing and the next something else.

Seeing new faces was very refreshing after all we had been through together. The only let-down was that the *Sun XXII* did not have a female crew, although we did not expect her to. The tug's crew did have visions of a 'pop pirate'. They seemed to think that the *Mi Amigo* would be full of loose women, but in fact nothing could be more removed from the truth.

Whilst others were working on the anchor, I remained on watch. It wasn't long before North Foreland Radio came through to see if we were alright, and if the *Sun XXII* had arrived. I gave a positive answer to both questions, but was very surprised by the next thing that was said to me. Would we like to speak to the owners who were on the telephone from Spain. My answer was once again positive but I asked how it would be possible when on the previous day North Foreland could not hear our transmissions on VHF channel 26, which we had been told was the only channel on which a direct telephone link was feasible. The answer was that we should once again transmit on 26 and if North Foreland received our signal they would reply. I called them and the answer came back that they could hear us loud and clear.

North Foreland could now hear us on a frequency on which apparently a day earlier reception had been impossible. Had they been given instructions during the night to the effect that they could now after all give us a phone call? A question to which an answer will probably never be known.

The Captain was told that a call was coming through and within a few minutes was talking to Radio Mi Amigo DJ and programme director, Joop Verhoof, who was speaking on behalf of the station's owner. One firm instruction was that we should stay off the air until we could be moved back to our old position. We were also informed that attempts were being made to charter a private tug that would reach us from Spain as soon as possible. The owner, however, wanted a precise rundown on our situation. Both the Captain and Joop were very aware that authorities were able to listen to the conversation, which took place in Dutch. It was made clear by Joop that if we could get back to the Knock Deep by any other means than the chartered Spanish tug, then we were to do so as the opportunity arose.

Although most of the crew of the *Sun XXII* seemed friendly enough, there were one or two people on board who at the most were very strange or at the least were very uneasy about the legality of the whole affair. The Captain of the tug became agitated by our failure to make a firm decision and did not seem to want to mix with or talk to anybody on the *Mi Amigo* other than the Captain who had to be the one to leave his ship when the two skippers had to confer.

Two or three crew members of the *Sun XXII* did come aboard to look at the home of Radio Caroline and we gave them drinks and sandwiches and generally made them welcome. In exchange

for bottles of whiskey they gave us a few newspapers including ones for that day, which is a rarity indeed on the *Mi Amigo*.

Our suspicions were aroused further by some of their very technical questions about our transmitters and generators. We began to think about the possibility, however far-fetched, that the Gaseley Tug Company was not only being paid by Caroline and Mi Amigo, but also by the British government to hinder our efforts to get back to Knock Deep. Because of our thoughts it was requested by us that the tug moved away from our starboard side to an anchorage close-by.

Earlier, the Captain had used the *Sun XXII's* direct link with their headquarters to talk to a representative from Radio Mi Amigo, who was in the offices of Gaseley. The instructions were only a repeat of the ones we had received on the phone from Spain.

Just after 4.00 pm, as darkness was falling, the *Sun XXII* left us for a position about 100 metres away from our portside deck. The tug was now where we could keep a good watch on it and vice versa. Whilst alongside the *Mi Amigo*, most of the tug's crew had been relaxing by eating and drinking and two or three of them had taken to scraping our hull for fishing bait.

Although the water was now calm, there were always a few nervous moments as the tide changed. Overall, our distance from the South Edinburgh Buoy Number three had remained the same, but as the tide changed the ship would swing round and for a few moments would get even nearer the buoy. A 24 hour two man watch was still being observed and this meant an average of eight hours a day in the bridgehouse for each man. The exception to this was the Captain, who spent nearly all his time on watch, except when he was asleep.

There were now a few more home comforts on the bridge. As there is no installed heating in the room, an electric radiator had now been taken up there. Previously it had been such a cold task to stay on watch. There was also a transistor radio for amusement and countless hours were spent listening to Capital Radio, and even more to our friends at Radio Orwell, whose news broadcasts also indicated that certain restrictions against assisting our ship had been lifted. Anglia Television also carried a story in their news programme about the *Mi Amigo's* weekend advanture. We had failed, however, to hear anything about ourselves on any of the national news broadcasts, both on radio and television.

The half-hearted attempts to raise one of the anchors had

ceased soon after they had started, and life was settling down to a routine once again. It was different to the one that we had been used to, but in any situation a routine seems to evolve as people still get tired, and go to bed roughly 16 hours after they get up.

For a moment on the Monday morning, a spot of amusement crept on board the ship. A boat, obviously in the area, radioed North Foreland: "What's all this fuss about *Tia Maria*?" they asked. "We wish it was Tia Maria," came the reply.

Excluding Jan, the first mate, who stayed on watch, we all had a meal together on Monday evening, for the first time since Friday's dinner. Since Saturday most of us had been existing on fried eggs, sandwiches and plates of chips. After the meal, the first mate, the engineer and Mike Lloyd took the opportunity to sleep, while the Skipper and Peter Chicago remained on watch. I was very lazy and spent a few hours in front of the television and watched a horror film about strange happenings on the London Underground.

That accounted for everyone on board except the cook, who, despite everything, had hardly done anything except cook one meal and make coffee a couple of times. It was a time when all on board had to give everything possible to make the best of the situation. I exclude myself from these comments, but everyone did do all they could to help out. I naturally hope that I did as well. Our cook did not seem to want to have anything to do with standing on watch and did very little except occasional work in the galley. He would not be made very welcome on the *Mi Amigo* again.

Life was, for the first time since the start of our ordeal, a little quiet and certainly more relaxed. At 11.00 pm I made tea for the, no doubt bored, watchmen on the bridge, and afterwards I took over from Peter and joined the Skipper. Shortly after there was a false alarm. When the ship turned on the tide we began to get very near the buoy. The Captain thought that it would be a good idea to start the engines and attempt to manoeuvre it away a little. I rushed down to awake the engineer, who had had only a few hours' sleep. But by the time he had reached the bridge to see what all the bother was about, the danger had receded. We had swung to the other side of the buoy. Apart from this incident our watch was an uneventful four hours, only brightened up by the Skipper's strange habit of pacing up and down the bridge for hours on end. It was a habit that he apparently acquired on bigger vessels than



the *Mi Amigo* and ones which obviously had larger bridges.

At 4.00 am on Tuesday morning we were both ready for our sleep and our places were taken by the first mate, the engineer and Mike Lloyd.

The *Mi Amigo* had been in the South Edinburgh Channel for over 48 hours and we still had no idea if and how we were going to get her back to Knock Deep. We did not know if the station's owners were having any success in chartering a private tug and our Captain was still toying with the idea of letting the *Sun XXII* tow us back.

Sun XII standing by
Ioop Verhoof



4

Was Tuesday to be the day that our good ship could return 'home'?

There was a pessimistic atmosphere on board, with some of us believing that the end of an era had finally arrived. Logically there had to be a point where either the money ran out or it was considered that enough had been spent. The latter was a feeling that was to grow stronger as time passed. The longer the tug was on standby, the more it had to be paid and thousands were being lost whilst programmes were not being broadcast. On top of that, Radio Mi Amigo had been having a poor financial time in the weeks prior to all these events and this seemed to increase the possibility of the project being abandoned.

I awoke on Tuesday at midday to find the weather good and the sea still fairly calm. Our water problem had been alleviated somewhat by some 'passing friends', who gave us a gift of enough water to last a week.

So having had a good wash, I went to the bridge to receive the overnight news. There was little. The *Sun XXII* had remained close by and we had kept up radio contact with them. The two man watch had been relaxed a little, so I spent much of the afternoon on lone watch with just the radio and the programmes of Radio Orwell to accompany me. That turned out to be a great advantage.

The 4.00 pm news bulletin carried a report on the latest situation with Radio Caroline. It was said that a tug called the *Sun XXII* was standing by the *Mi Amigo* and that the Skipper of

the tug had orders not to tow the pirate seawards. It was said that the tug's orders were only to tow us towards land along the South Edinburgh Channel. Any thoughts left of allowing the *Sun XXII* to tow us were immediately dispelled. We would wait for a privately chartered vessel to arrive. Following the news, disc jockey Andy Archer, formerly with Caroline, was kind enough to wish us luck and play our theme. "For our friends at sea," as he put it.

There were now thoughts in certain ranks of going back on the air. I was one who half supported this idea. After all, the ship had received no trouble from the British authorities and it was therefore believed that we were anchored in International Waters. Returning to the air was not given serious thought, though, for as long as we were relying on help from land the Skipper was against it. We had also been instructed by the owners to keep the ship silent. As we had been allowed help from a British company and had only received co-operation from the coastguards, it was thought that if we recommenced transmissions it would only serve to embarrass the British Government further and thus 'rub salt in the wound'.

The only thing left was sit, watch, wait and hope that a private tug would arrive as soon as possible. But we were to be kept occupied as there was a vast amount of tidying-up from the storm.

There were some two or three hundred albums spread over the floor of the record library. Although I had no enthusiasm for anything to do with programmes or music, whilst we were off the air, I decided to at least pile the records in one corner of the room. It had previously been impossible to enter the library without walking over albums and singles. The two studios, used for broadcasts, were in a dreadful state and for a while were to remain so. Neither Mike Lloyd or myself had any interest in going into them.

The watch routine carried on, as what by now had become normal. The Skipper was still spending nearly all of his time on the bridge. He completed the early evening shift with Peter Chicago and at about 10.00 pm I relieved Peter, who went to get some well earned sleep. At 3.00 am both the Captain and myself finished our watch and it was time for Mike, the first mate and the engineer to take over.

The day had been uneventful after the previous 48 hours, and for the first time an amount of boredom began to set in. There

was nothing to do on the bridge except drink, smoke and speculate. Never before or since have I known a bunch of people do so much of the latter. We also worried about friends and relations who were perhaps not entirely sure about our safety.

Because of this the Skipper thought about getting through to North Foreland and asking for a phone call using the name of a different ship. There was no question of the *Mi Amigo* being allowed to make private phone calls. The Captain had evidently used this method whilst working on the *Mebo II* (Radio North Sea International) and knew all the ropes. His worry was that North Foreland would recognise his voice and there was no one else on board who would know the correct answers to give to quick-fire questions about the ship's name, position, destination and the company's name and address. The idea was therefore discounted.

It was now over 80 hours since our troubles had begun and the only thing to lift our spirits would have been the arrival of a tug with a new anchor and chain. Even the supply of beer was getting low.

Peter Chicago on deck



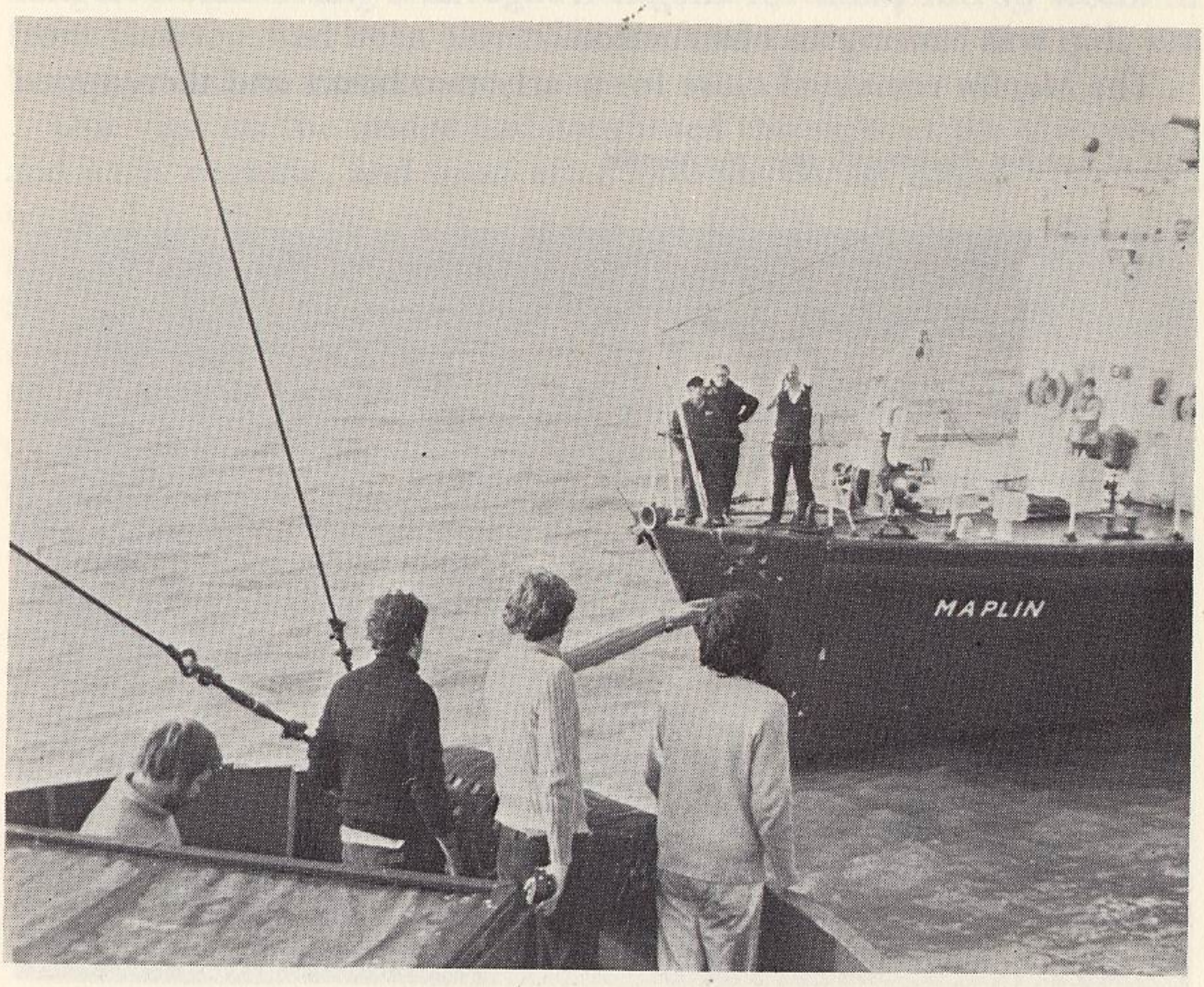
A screaming Mike Lloyd prompted my awakening on Wednesday November 12.

"Get up. Get up quick. The Captain wants everyone on deck."

What the hell was happening? I asked myself. Having just woken up I was in no fit state to ask Mike. I quickly dressed and went up on deck to find a ship called the *Maplin* circling us.

Five minutes earlier the vessel had been alongside the *Mi Amigo* and there appeared to be attempts by some of the crew to come on board. Our Skipper had been asked by his opposite number on the *Maplin* for the right to come aboard. The answer was a definite no. The ship, from the Port of London Authority, took to circling the *Mi Amigo* at a very close proximity and there still existed the possibility that they were going to board us without permission. Our Captain's reaction was to get everyone on deck in a show of force. There was one person who wanted to use force to defend our rights, but the idea was not popular with the rest of us and the Captain forbade it. However, he did want to create the impression that the use of force was a possibility in the eventuality of a boarding.

Crew with Captain Werner telling the Maplin to leave



I don't think that the seven of us standing there on deck provided much of a deterrent. The *Maplin* continued to circle us for 10 to 15 minutes perhaps to frighten us. To an extent it was working, as there appeared to be many people on board, perhaps as many as twenty five, but we were not going to do anything irresponsible or rash. Eventually, the *Maplin* (a large ship, almost as big in length as the *Mi Amigo*), anchored about one hundred metres from our starboard side. Our eyes became firmly fixed on their anchor chain to watch for the first indication that she was on the move again. It was about 15 minutes later that activity started around the anchor hold and a few moments later the *Maplin* was steaming towards the fore end of the *Mi Amigo*. She headed for a position about one hundred metres from our stern, where once again the ship anchored. Perhaps it had all been designed to scare us. The manoeuvre had otherwise seemed pointless.

The Port of London Authority's Press Office said afterwards that neither radio nor loud hailer contact could be established with the *Mi Amigo* and for this reason the *Maplin* had gone alongside the radio ship. It was claimed that her skipper wanted to know of our plans for the *Mi Amigo* as it was considered that our ship was causing an obstruction.

The *Maplin* remained close for nearly two hours and then upped

Port of London Authority's ship; the Maplin



anchor and headed for her base at Gravesend.

The *Sun XXII* was still on standby and her captain and crew had no doubt watched the events with interest. A message passed on, via her radio, had said that a privately owned tug would arrive during early evening. Like other messages that had been received over the previous days, it was not taken very seriously, but it did add interest to our pastime of spotting every ship within miles. The area was not a busy one and there had been very few ships that had passed close to the *Mi Amigo* since Sunday morning.

During early evening, the *Sun XXII* received word that a relief tug, called the *Egerton,* was on the way. With our Skipper's permission, the *Sun XXII* left our side and within one hour the Egerton had arrived. She tied up to our side and her master came aboard. He carried with him a letter from our representative who had been in Gaseley's office. Tug assistance and a new anchor and chain would definitely arrive within the next few hours. A previous attempt to send a tug had apparently ended in failure. As for the *Egerton,* it was to be, according to the letter, our Captain's decision whether the vessel remained or not. With very calm seas and a good forecast, there seemed to be little danger in dismissing the tug. The *Egerton,* the third tug to come from Gaseley, had been alongside for half an hour and was now on her way back to Felixstowe.

Our vigil on the bridge had continued throughout the afternoon and early evening, and soon after 5.00 pm we ate dinner together, while Jan, the first mate, stayed on watch. During the evening Mike, Jan and the engineer had come off duty to sleep and the Skipper, Peter Chicago and myself remained on watch during mid-evening. I went off to watch yet another horror film and for taking such a liberty was bribed into making chips and a pot of tea for the other two, once the film was over. Peter went off to bed and I took over his watch with the Captain at just after 11.00 pm.

The tug had not arrived, but we were now scanning the horizon more than ever and every moving light, even if it was miles away, would receive a complete scrutiny from us, Where was it coming from? Was it getting any nearer? And what kind of ship was it? Every movement of a light provided a conversation full of different theories.

At 2.00 am, Jan, Mike and the engineer were awoken and in no time Jan had arrived on the bridge. I went to my cabin and left Jan chatting to the Skipper. I bid the newly awoken Mike

goodnight and within 10 minutes was snuggled up in a warm bed with a good book. I read for nearly half an hour and then switched the light off to go to sleep. It was only to remain off for around 20 seconds.

5

For the second time in only 15 hours a screaming Mike Lloyd came tearing into my cabin. On the previous occasion I was nearing the end of a night's sleep but this time I had barely had time to close my eyes.

"Get up! Get up! The tender's here," yelled Mike, to which my answer was that it wasn't. However, I was already out of bed at a speed that must have been close to that of Concorde's, when I heard the cry repeated as Mike entered Peter's cabin opposite my own.

The arrival of a tender is always a great moment of excitement amongst us, but never more so than on this occasion. After perhaps two weeks on board, only seeing the same six faces, a tender is always a tremendous morale booster. It must be remembered that a tender is not only a postman and paperboy, but also a chance to see new faces and catch up with all that has been happening with the organisation on land. A tender can also mean the arrival of fresh food, milk, mountains of new groceries, new studio equipment or transmitter parts, clean sheets and new programme tapes and commercials. In addition to all this, the arrival this time of a tender meant that Caroline and Mi Amigo could soon be back on the air.

When I got up on deck I could quite understand why Mike had referred to the ship as a tender, as it certainly bore no resemblance to a tug. It was, however, rather large in size.

Evidently Jan had spotted the lights of the vessel in the distance a few minutes after he had arrived on the bridge and this time was

absolutely convinced that the lights were bound for the *Mi Amigo*. In fact he was so convinced that he bet 10 Guilders (just over £2) on it, with the Captain. Our days of playing spot the light had paid off for at least one member of the crew.

It was soon after 3.00 am on Thursday November 13 that the ship pulled alongside and tied up. She had at least 15 crewmen on board, who were soon working furiously and there was no doubt that they were in a great hurry. A point that was later confirmed to me by their Captain. Firstly, he had another job to reach by a deadline and secondly, he didn't want to be caught doing this one.



Jan and Werner watch the tender drawing nearer

Sprawled over the massive deck of the vessel was an anchor and an extremely long chain, the shackles of which were enormous. The anchor was suitable for a ship many times the tonnage of the *Mi Amigo* and it appeared that no chances were being taken this time. Also on board the tender were two of the *Mi Amigo's* relief crew, a first mate and an engineer, who had come along to help out. There would have been a complete crew change at this time but the other Captain and cook were both on holiday and out of contact.

Besides the enormous chain on the deck, there was a large supply of fresh food of all kinds, and hundreds of boxes, which contained everything from soft drinks and a new refrigerator, to new parts for the engine. There was also no less than 48 cases of beer, something which we had run out of during the previous day. A human chain was formed on the deck of the tender, and the transfer of the goods to the *Mi Amigo* began. I was given the 'dummy's' job of keeping watch on our old friend South Edinburgh Buoy Number Three. There was now the weight of two ships on our anchors and the chances of them behaving incorrectly had, thus, increased.

From my position on the bridge I did, however, have an excellent view of all that was going on below. Boxes of drink were almost flying along the chain of hands on the tender and were somehow ending up safely on our deck. There were a few anxious moments as a rather large refrigerator was passed between the two ships. Despite the many helping hands, there was such an abundance of goods that it was well over an hour before they were all on the *Mi Amigo*.

There was now the task of pumping fuel and water on to our ship. We had in the tanks only enough of each to last for about a week. The tender had fuel and water to fill our tanks to the top and there was now no doubt at all to us that the two stations' owners still meant business in a big way.

All the work was being carried out at an extremely fast rate and there was a moment of terror as the fuel was being pumped on. The inlet to the fuel tank is close to the exhaust pipe for the main generator, which, although we were off the air, was still running for the purpose of providing light. Suddenly as the tank became full, fuel started pouring out all over the deck and on to the hot exhaust pipe.

As the Skipper screamed at his crew to shut off the flow, I saw, from my vantage point, vapour coming from the side of the pipe. I was terrified that the whole ship was going to blow up. I yelled at Peter to get some water to at least cool down the pipe. But by the time he had got a bucket full from the washroom, the gushing fuel had stopped. Both the port and starboard decks took on a surface as slippery as a skating rink. Besides that, the pipe was still steaming, but the danger seemed to have passed.

About one and a half hours after the arrival of the tender, all the goods were on board and the tanks of the *Mi Amigo* were full. Hundreds of boxes were stacked all over the deck and the



hallway inside the centre shell of the vessel, which was almost impassable. It was only just possible to enter the galley as about 80% of the floor area was taken up by boxes, that in some cases were stacked almost two metres high.

I had already taken the chance to grab my first can of beer for a day, which makes me sound like an alcoholic, but it is true that whilst on the ship, most people tend to drink more through lack of anything better to do. This was not the case at this particular moment, but having a can in one's hand does become a bit of a habit.

The Skipper of the tender, certainly in a tremendous hurry, was keen to get the towing operation underway as soon as everything was loaded up.

Unfortunately there was no way in which we could raise our two anchors from the sea bed and because of this they had to be lost. They were both burnt off which brought the total number of anchor chains burnt off the *Mi Amigo* to three within a space of just over four days. We marked the spot where they were left in the rather optimistic hope that at some time in the future they could be retrieved by our company. Two makeshift buoys, made out of empty oil barrels, were attached to each of the chains. Unless anyone else has bothered to salvage them they will still be there to this day, next to South Edinburgh Buoy Number 3.

Directing the towing operation was a representative of Radio Mi Amigo, who had come out with the tender. The sea was like a pond and the night was clear, conditions that were perfect for the job. Mike and myself had set about lowering some of the boxes at the top of the stacks as it was possible that the motion of the ship, under tow, would dislodge them, sending them all over the place.

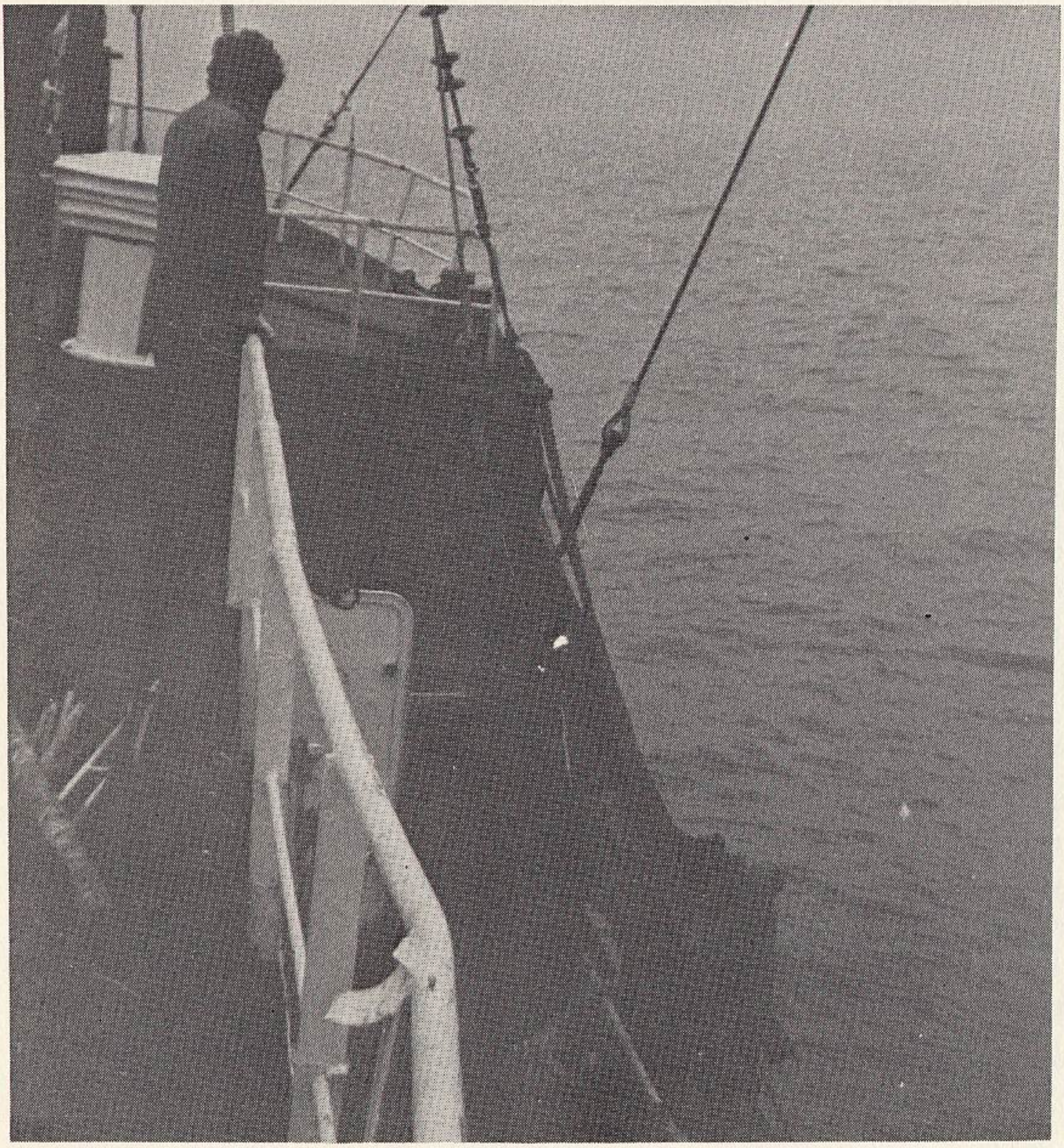
It had been decided that instead of a rope, the new anchor chain would be used to tow us. It had been attached to the deck railing at the fore end of the starboard deck, just behind the fore deck and close to the base of the main mast. The anchor end of the chain was made fast to a point on the deck of the tender. The operation was ready to commence. The two ships, now free of each other except by the chain attachment, were lying fore to stern. The engine of the *Mi Amigo* was once again pressed into use as the two powerful engines of the tender, turned tug, roared into action. About 50 to 60 metres of chain had to slip

The tender comes alongside

into the sea before it became taut and it was then that the *Mi Amigo* could be classified as being under tow.

As the ship was pulling away from our side, a final touch of irony struck. The two anchors had been sacrificed about one minute earlier and the chain was still slack. The two ships had had a few seconds free to drift and had done so in the direction of South Edinburgh Buoy Number Three, which started to split the minute gap in between the two vessels and to scrape along both hulls. The ship quickly started to move away from our side and the *Mi Amigo's* engine managed to manoeuvre the radio ship away from the buoy.

Examining the damage left by the tender



Within a few short moments the two ships were at right angles to each other and the chain became taut. As the pressure was applied, it was a case of 'something's gotta give', and something did. It was the side of the *Mi Amigo* where the chain had been made fast. A four metre section of rusting iron had been ripped away and was hanging into the sea with the chain still attached.

The idea of trying to move the ship sideways had not been a good one, especially as our engine was working to move us forward.

As the use of the chain had been unsuccessful it was decided that a rope would be used. The chain was secured to a different point on the *Mi Amigo* and a rope of shorter length was found. It was attached to the rail around the fore deck and to a point to the rear of the tender's deck. This time all three engines were going to be working together and not against each other.

On the bridge the captain was in radio contact with the Radio Mi Amigo representative on the tender. Instructions were passed between the two ships in Dutch and finally the two engines of the tender, once again, roared into action as she pulled away to the front of us. As the rope became taut, the *Mi Amigo* shuddered and a split second later, whilst my eyes were trained on the tow rope, I saw it part in the middle as though it was a piece of elastic. Knock Deep began to feel even further away. The tender's great hurry was not helping and there appeared to be a clear case of 'more haste less speed'.

Another rope was located and attached to the same points. The two ships were, once again, close together and the slack rope was trailing in the sea. As the ship again pulled away from us it managed to move at such an angle that made the rope become entangled with the propeller of one of her engines. The rope was spliced in two and the engine was tendered useless.

There was one engine left on the tender, plus all the power that our own ship could muster, and an anchor chain for a tow rope. As I witnessed the next move, I shuddered. To me the end had come but this time it was to be through sheer incompetence.

I don't profess to be a great expert on the sea or even ships. After a year on and off the *Mi Amigo*, I suppose I have learnt something about both, and perhaps know a little more than the average person in the street. I also know, from history, that the weakest part of a radio ship is the abnormally high mast. All this was not only the concern of myself but also of Peter, who on seeing what was happening, got so fed up with the whole affair

that he went back to his cabin to sleep.

The part of the *Mi Amigo* that was now chosen to attach the chain was the base of the mast! I immediately had visions of the whole 160 metres of the structure collapsing and I presume that Peter had the same thoughts. Unable to bear watching it all, he stormed off the bridge with the words "Oh I'm going to bed!"

The tender was ready to tow again. She moved off ahead of us and as the chain became taut, the whole of the *Mi Amigo*, including the mast, shook. From the bridge it was possible to see every part of the ship shaking each time that the chain became taut. It was a horrific sight, made even worse by thoughts of the *Mi Amigo's* old age.

There then followed one of the most incredible pieces of seamanship that I have ever witnessed. Instead of attempting to tow us in a straight line, the tender took to zigzagging. A few metres in one direction and then a few metres in a direction 30 degrees away. For once I was not given the 'dummy's' job and for a while I was spinning the *Mi Amigo* wheel to try and keep the two vessels on the same setting. Firstly full starboard and then, as the tender swung across our path, full port. It was not so much a smooth tow as a series of jolts forward.

The tender's one remaining engine did not seem able to give enough power. Every time the chain became taut, the *Mi Amigo* would jolt and the whole ship would shudder. Much of the strain, of course, was on the base of the mast and I still had visions of it collapsing. As the *Mi Amigo* responded to the pull on the chain she would move forward and once again the chain would become slack. This continued for about 20 minutes until, for no apparent reason, the stern of the tender swung round and was at right angles to our port side. The two ships bumped against each other two or possibly three dozen times and looking down from the *Mi Amigo* from the bridge, it began to look like a quivering jelly.

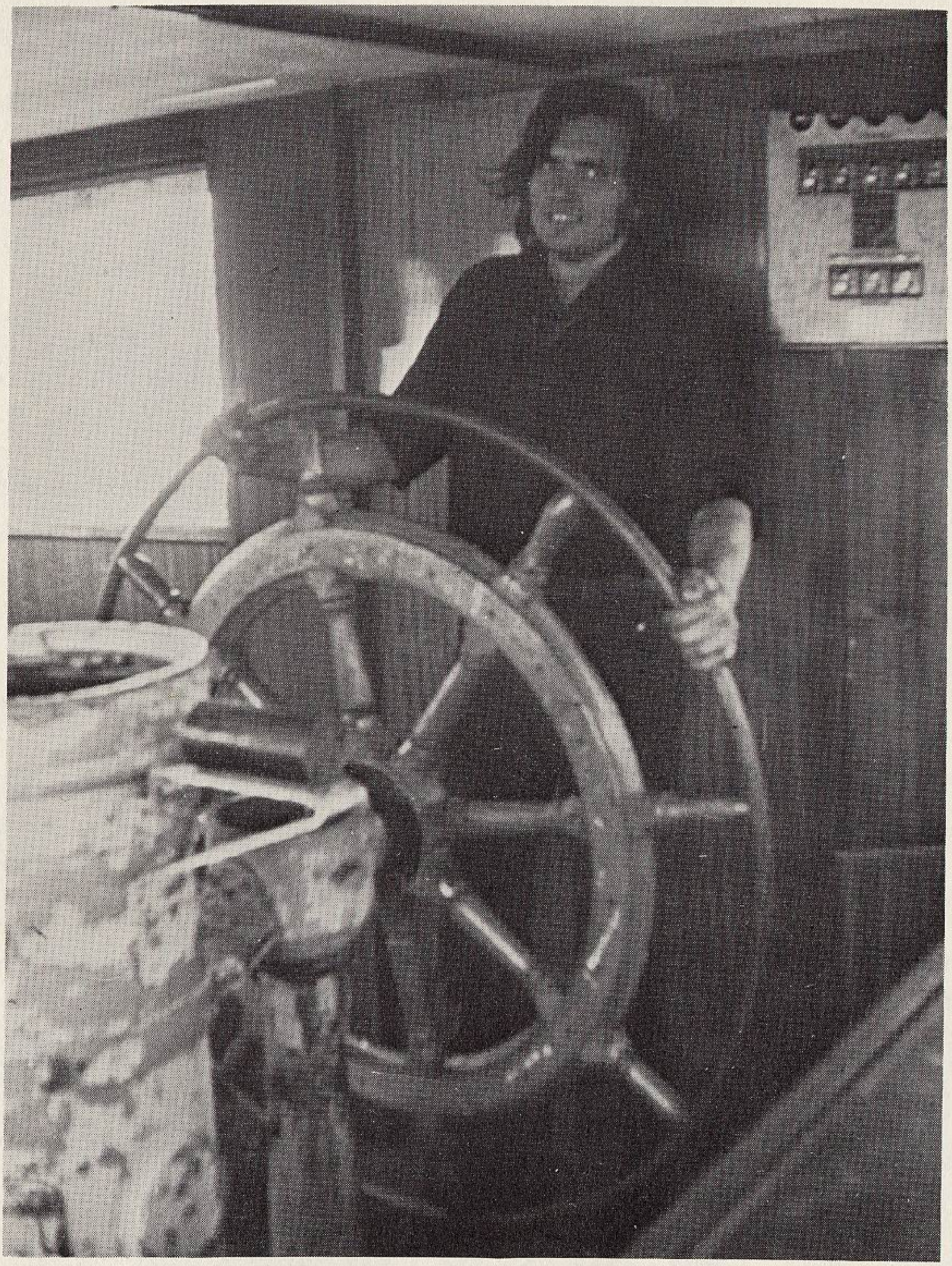
Eventually the tender managed to pull herself away and unwrap the chain from the front of our hull. She moved off at an excessively fast speed and once again the chain became taut. The pressure was too great and the anchor loosened itself from the deck of the tender and fell into the sea.

By now dawn had broken. It was impossible to raise the anchor and start again. The voice of the representative from Radio Mi Amigo came over the radio to say that we would have to stay at

that position and resume broadcasting. The tender went back to base on her one remaining engine.

Through a series of jolts and the power of our own engine we had managed to move the Mi Amigo about half a mile and we could now recommence transmissions. Our adventure had seemingly come to an end but in reality it was still just beginning.

The wheel house



6

When the tender sped off into the distance it was a little after 8.00 am on Thursday morning November 13. There were now two extra crewmen aboard the *Mi Amigo* and she began to feel quite crowded; but morale was at a peak.

The chain was, of course, still made fast to the base of the mast and a more suitable place had to be found to attach it. The Skipper did not want us to go back on the air until it had been moved and so the crew immediately went to work. Within an hour they had secured the chain, with steel cord, to several different points along the starboard deck. The chain left the ship at the point where the side had earlier been ripped away.

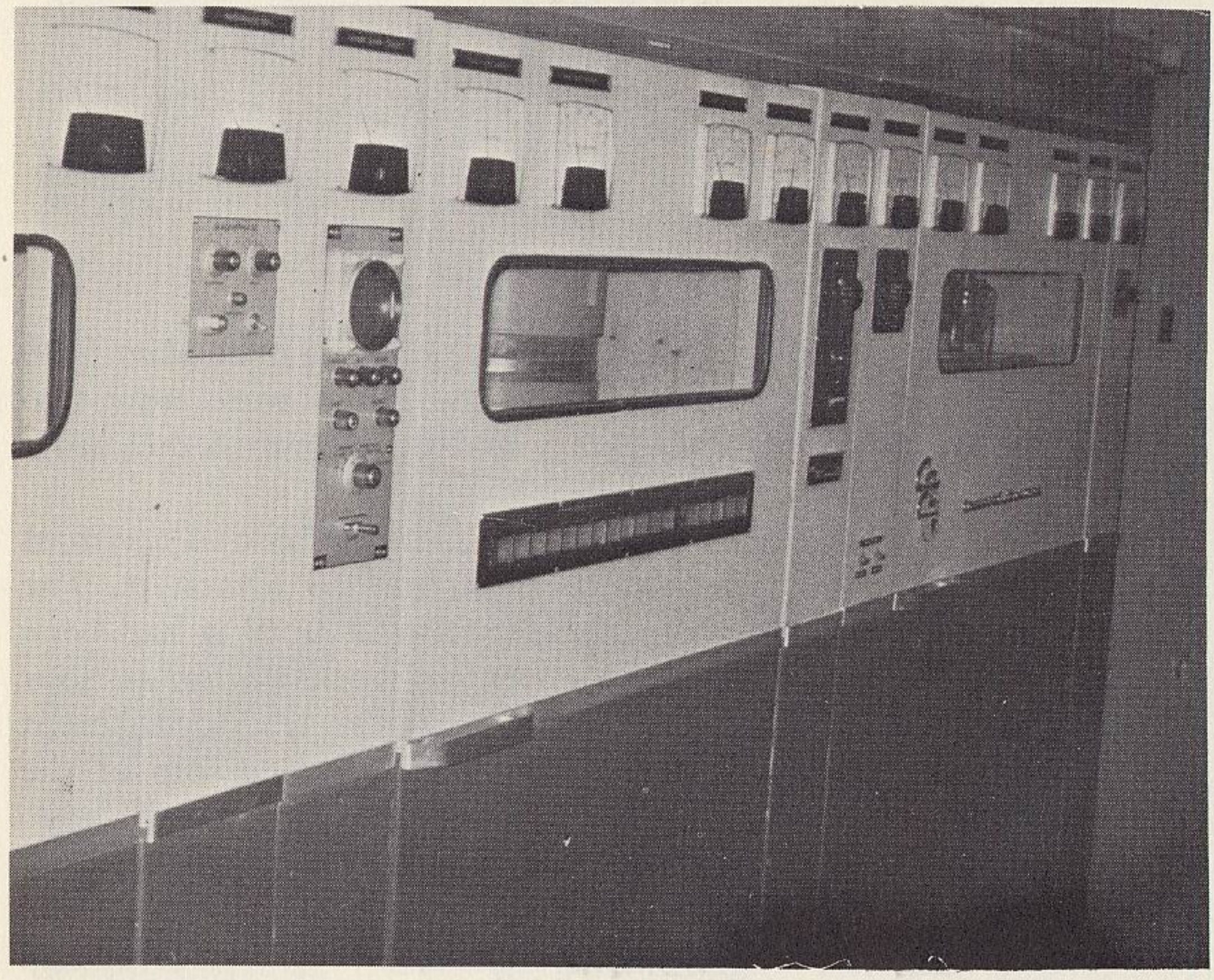
Amongst the 'goodies' that had been brought out, was not only a large amount of food, beer and soft drinks, but also a wide variety of spirits including Scotch and Rum. Previously there had only been Dutch Gin and in the soft drinks line, tonic water or a rather revolting brand of fizzy orange. Every conceivable kind of drink and food was now available and there was a new refrigerator, new Radio Mi Amigo programme tapes and new parts for the engine and transmitter on board. I had never before seen the ship so well stocked up.

As there had previously been certain problems with tenders, the opportunity had been taken to stock up the *Mi Amigo* for as long a period as possible.

Whilst the crew were working on the chain, Mike and myself cooked ourselves a real English breakfast. The meal consisted of fresh bacon and eggs, fresh bread and tea. When the work had

been completed on the chain and we had all had time to digest the realities of the new situation, we seemed set for the return of Radio Mi Amigo.

I ventured into the studios to work for the first time in days. Mike had already found the correct Dutch programme tapes for that day, which had been recorded nearly three weeks earlier and would therefore make no reference to the previous five day's events.



The transmitters were turned on for the first time since Saturday

It was 9.30 am when the 50 kilowatt transmitter of Radio Caroline and Mi Amigo returned the two stations to the air. Each tape lasts for 60 minutes, starting and finishing on the hour, and as there seemed little point in starting a programme in the middle, there was half an hour to fill until 10.00 am.

I decided to play live music from Caroline's studio until the top of the hour and announce the station as Radios Caroline and Mi Amigo. The studio was still in an untidy state. Records and tapes were all over the floor, and the desk had a coating of dried salt on

it when the seawater seeped in on Saturday evening. At 9.30 am, 259 metres once again burst to life with Caroline's theme tune; 'New Riders of the Purple Sage', followed by the Mi Amigo Instrumental. Ignoring the mess around me I officially announced ourselves with the words "Good morning, this is Radio Caroline and Radio Mi Amigo on 259 metres".

Unfortunately the return was somewhat marred by the third record that I played. The playing arm decided to slip across it, producing a terrible noise followed by silence. The stylus had seen better days and was not helped through its old age by the rather large dosage of seawater that it had had on it. By a combination of one turntable and two or three records that I played from a tape, I managed to reach 10.00 am without any further mishaps. Normal programming recommenced with the *Stan Haag Show* part two. At the time that part one should have been broadcast, the *Mi Amigo* was still under tow.

It seemed a bit late to go to bed. In a little over one hour I would normally be getting up. I decided to stay up all day and told Mike to go and get some sleep and that I would look after the hourly tape changes. Mike was not overtired and decided to remain awake. With thoughts of how I would feel during my 6.00 pm programme, I could not resist the temptation that my bed offered. I went to sleep for the first time in 24 hours. Many of our enlarged crew, including the Captain, did the same thing.

Shortly before 4.00 pm I emerged from my bed. Some of the newly arrived goods had now been put away and it was a little easier to move around the ship.

Our new surroundings were different from the Knock Deep. Within a radius of about a mile were four or five buoys, one of which was South Edinburgh Buoy Number Three. Our new position was closer to the main waterways in and out of the Port of London and it was easier to sight other ships in the distance..

In the gathering gloom, soon after 4.00 pm, a curious turn of events occurred. The two man watch had been discontinued ever since we had anchored and it was therefore not until they had come very close that we noticed the presence of two small ships. One of them, surprise, surprise, was the tug *Sauria*. The other was a tiny blue fishing vessel. Once again we were prepared to be boarded. The two crafts had stopped side by side about one hundred metres away. Most of us were crowding onto the bridge, when we heard a message being sent to North Foreland Radio. From the strength of the transmitted signal, it was obviously



The Mi Amigo from the Sauria

coming from one of the newly arrived boats. The voice came booming over the VHF receiver. "This is the Home Office. Would you please not accept any more calls from the *Mi Amigo*."

North Foreland answered, saying that they would comply with the request. The small fishing boat was obviously carrying a cargo of seagoing Home Office men. But that did not explain why the *Sauria* had returned.

After hearing the message from the Home Office, we expected trouble. Again everyone was awoken in the face of the new threat. As I came down from the bridge to the deck, I hid my face to prevent any photographs being taken that could establish my identity. An invasion of some description was expected and I prepared the Caroline studio so that we could broadcast live at the first sign of trouble. About ten minutes after arrival, the *Sauria* suddenly upped anchor and started circling the *Mi Amigo* at close range. As one of the two British subjects on board, I kept well out of sight. The *Sauria* circled a couple of times and then went off to re-join the Home Office launch.

A permanent watch was re-started from the bridge, and other work continued as normal, but under the watchful eye of the British Home Office. The two newly arrived crew members were designated the duties on the bridge. Having eaten the day's main meal, soon after 5.00 pm, it was time for me to prepare my

programme, which basically means sorting out a selection of oldies from the record library downstairs as all new records are kept in the studio. I also had to cue my first record and jingle and check all the levels.

That night there was the additional problem of the studio porthole, through which I could see our two neighbours and through which they could take photographs if they had good enough equipment with them. With an old rag from the engine room I erected a makeshift curtain, which blocked any view that the Home Office might have been able to get of Mike and myself.

The moments ticked away towards 6.00 pm and the return of normal programming from Radio Caroline.

I spent much of the programme thanking people who had helped us on Saturday night and over the following days. On behalf of everyone on board I expressed thanks to North Foreland Radio, the Captain and crews of the tugs *Sun XXII, Egerton* and *Sauria*. My mention to the *Sauria* was said a little sarcastically and was immediately followed by a promotion for Loving Awareness. I also thanked our own Captain and crew for all their hard work, the coastguards, all the listeners who had phoned our offices and the staff of Anglia Television and Radio Orwell, who had covered

Jan, Derrick, the engineer, and Werner on look out



our story. I also dedicated a record to South Edinburgh Buoy Number Three.

The show went smoothly but I was conscious that the Home Office was sitting a very short distance away. Because of this it was decided to stay on the air all night. If the Home Office were to board us, it now appeared likely that they would attempt to do so once we had ceased transmissions. With the transmitter on they might not have been so keen on approaching us, as there existed the possibility of us informing listeners that we were being boarded by the British Home Office.

I finished my programme at 10.00 pm and Mike Lloyd took over. The small fishing boat had left the scene but the *Sauria* was still anchored close by. She left soon after 11.00 pm but we still thought that it was better to stay on the air rather than closedown at 2.00 am. Shortly after 1.00 am I went to sleep and Mike worked hard keeping Caroline going until the commencement of transmissions from Radio Mi Amigo at 5.00 am.

For four of us, that night's sleep was to be the last aboard the *Mi Amigo* for a very long time.

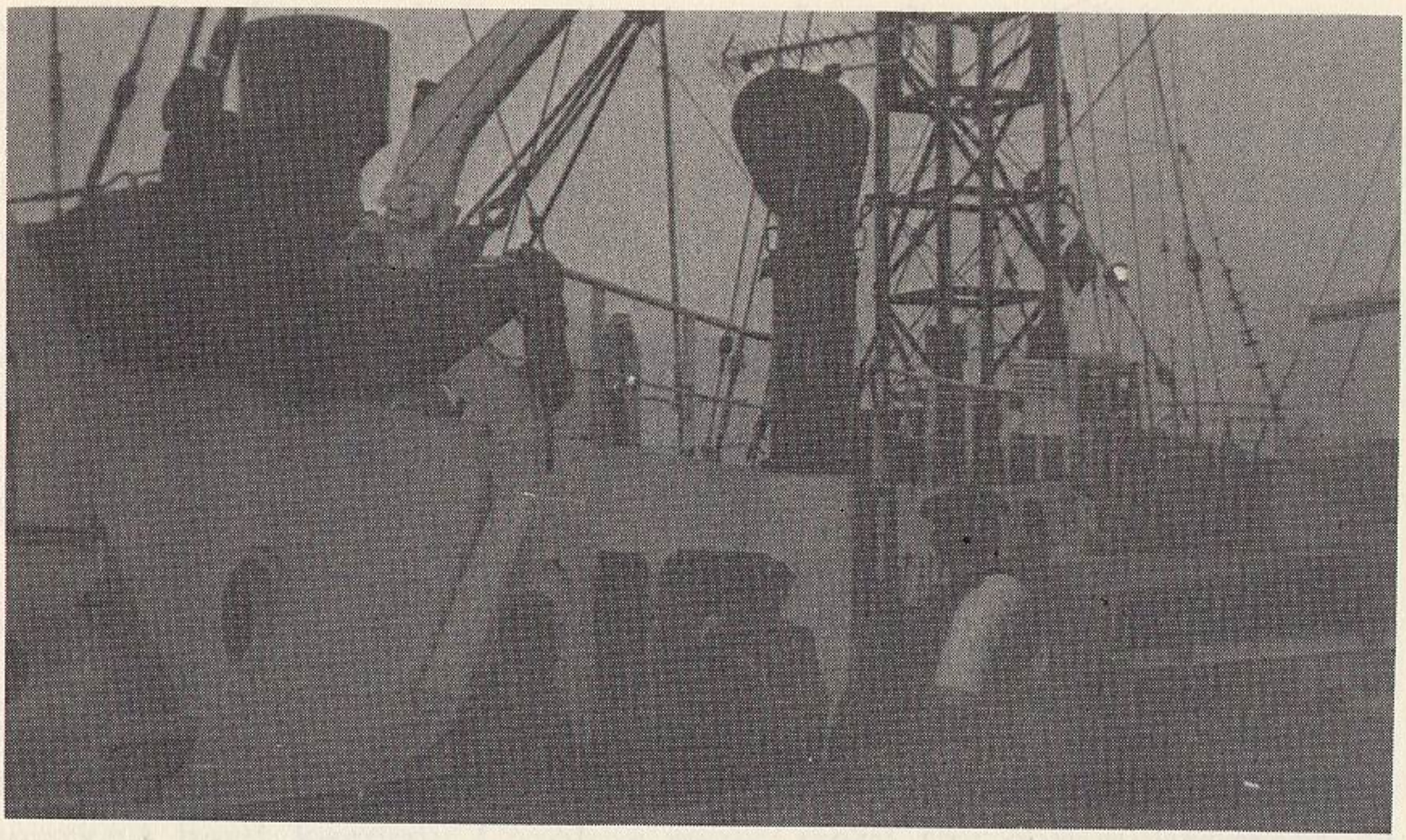
7

Friday November 14 was a beautiful day. One of those days that are all too rare in the middle of November. After a foggy start, by late morning the sun was shining and there was not a cloud to be seen in the deep blue sky. It was a good to be alive day.

Mike Lloyd changed the programme tape at 10.00 am and then awoke me to continue the work. He went off to sleep. All appeared to be back to normal, the other two members of the relief crew were expected to arrive during the day or the following night and the four crew members, who had been aboard for over three weeks, were to go home.

It was a day for getting back to the old routine and for tackling more clearing up. Having done little before lunch except sit around and wake up, I set about putting the record library to rights. It was still very untidy. Albums were piled around the perimeter and the carpet was very dirty. I re-filed all the records and thoroughly vacuum cleaned the floor. I took great pains to make it look nice. If I had had any knowledge of what was soon to happen, I doubt if I would have bothered. For some reason that day I had a lot of energy to work and after organising the record library, I cleaned the floor of my cabin and put the few remaining goods that were scattered around, away in cupboards.

For three weeks there had been precious little water on board and all efforts had been made to save every drop. For this reason there had been no washing done and I had a pile of dirty clothes stacked high in my cabin. There was now plenty of water in the tanks so I set about my least favourite task.



Members of the Police and Home Office coming on board

While I was busy, the Captain had noticed, miles above the ship, in the cloudless blue sky, the vapour trail of a jet aircraft. From its great height it was producing a trail of circles above the *Mi Amigo*. Whether this was deliberate or whether the circles were above us by coincidence, we had no idea. Either way it seemed a particularly strange thing to be doing, but we thought nothing more of it.

It was a quarter to three when I took advantage of the beautiful weather to hang a pair of drip-dry trousers over the rail around the top of the centre deckhouse. Before descending down the ladder back to the main deck, I couldn't help taking a few moments to admire the beauty of the blue sky and exceedingly calm sea. And then suddenly I saw it! At first, it could have been a distant marker buoy. Whatever it was my eyes focused on it for nearly two minutes, until it became apparent that it was getting nearer. It was not a buoy but a vessel of some description that was heading directly for us.

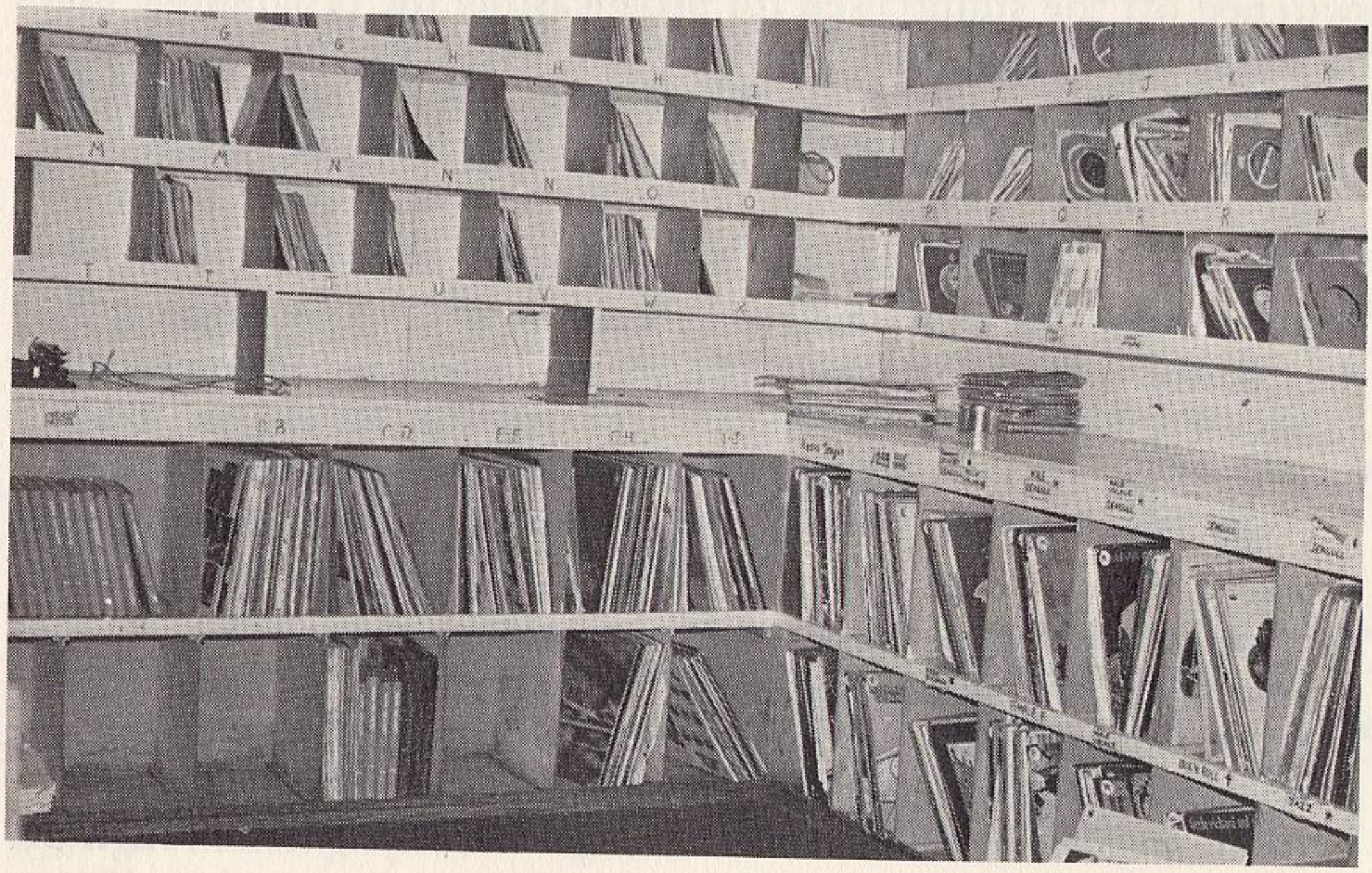
I casually told the skipper and within a few minutes everyone who was up and about was watching the boat gradually coming closer. At first, thought was given to it being a ship bringing the rest of the relief crew, but this was discounted when it was discovered to be coming from the wrong direction. The craft was now getting very close and suddenly someone shouted out that the people on board had uniforms on and that it was the Navy.

I dashed down to awaken Mike, who I found was not asleep

but deep in a novel. The tape change was almost due and I requested that Mike should handle it. I am British and had more cause to feel hunted than Mike, who is an American and who in any case was not in the least bit worried by the British authorities. Peter was not in his cabin and there was no time to find him. Everyone else besides Mike and Peter had been up anyway. Having been to the two cabins, I sprinted up the stairs. Our Captain and crew were all out on deck and the launch was just pulling alongside but the ship did not belong to the Navy. I peeped through the porthole and observed that the uniforms were not those of the Navy, but the British police.

As I knew that a summons had almost certainly been issued for me weeks earlier and as I had been with Caroline for over twice as long as any other disc jockey, I regarded myself as the prime target of the police. However, the main task to me was still to keep the station on the air as I take the view that in all circumstances the listeners must come first. And that meant before the British police, who informed our Captain that his ship was in British Territorial Waters. They requested permission to come on board. The skipper did not refuse but obviously strongly questioned the statement that the *Mi Amigo* was inside British Waters and insisted that we were in fact outside.

Half way through the clearing up in the record library



There did not seem much point in denying permission to the police to board us. About 20 river police and Home Office officials were crammed onto the fairly small vessel and they probably would have used force to come on board had our skipper not granted them permission.

I was crouched down in the mess room trying to watch all this through the porthole without being spotted. When it looked as though the police were about to come aboard, I decided that it might be a sensible idea to find a good hiding place. Unfortunately my cabin was obviously not a very good place to choose, but it must have been instinct that drew me to my own private room. On my way down I passed Mike, who assured me that he would do his best to get the next programme on the air. As I entered my cabin my loudspeaker was still playing Radio Mi Amigo but I turned it off as I did not want anyone to be attracted to my room by the noise. I also bolted the door. Looking back, it was a little ridiculous to hide there as I was bound to be found.

Since the event I have given much thought to where I could have hidden. The police could have searched for quite some time before finding anyone in a water tank, under the floor boards in the bilges or even in a cupboard locked from the inside.

No sooner had Mike arrived upstairs than the police and Home Office were aboard. Just ahead of them in reaching the studio was the engineer who had come out with the tender. He quickly switched off the studio used for broadcasting the programme tapes of Radio Mi Amigo and activated the live Caroline one. By the time he had run round from the Mi Amigo studio into the live one and had turned up the microphone, the police had arrived on the scene.

Listeners reported hearing an argument in which a voice was heard to say, "is that thing on? Turn it off." The engineer said that it was only a tape but within a few seconds 259 metres was completely silent, but the transmitter was still on the air. I could hear the hum that it creates on the speaker in my cabin.

I sat there trying to relax but smoking like a chimney and thinking about better places to hide. I gave thought to unlocking the cabin door and then hiding in my cupboard with its door locked from the inside. Probably because I was so nervous, and because I wanted so much to know what was happening above me, I stayed out of the cupboard.

I stood on the chair to look through the skylight. Through the dirty glass I could pick out the blur of the policemen's uniforms

at the other end of the deck. As I was standing on the chair I heard the sound of footsteps coming down the stairs towards my cabin. They belonged to one uniformed officer and one official from the Home Office. I obtained that information from lying on the floor and peering through the ventilation grill at the bottom of my door. Opposite me the four feet entered Peter's cabin and the attached bodies started sorting every piece of paper in the room. It seemed that they were looking for information on the transmitter.

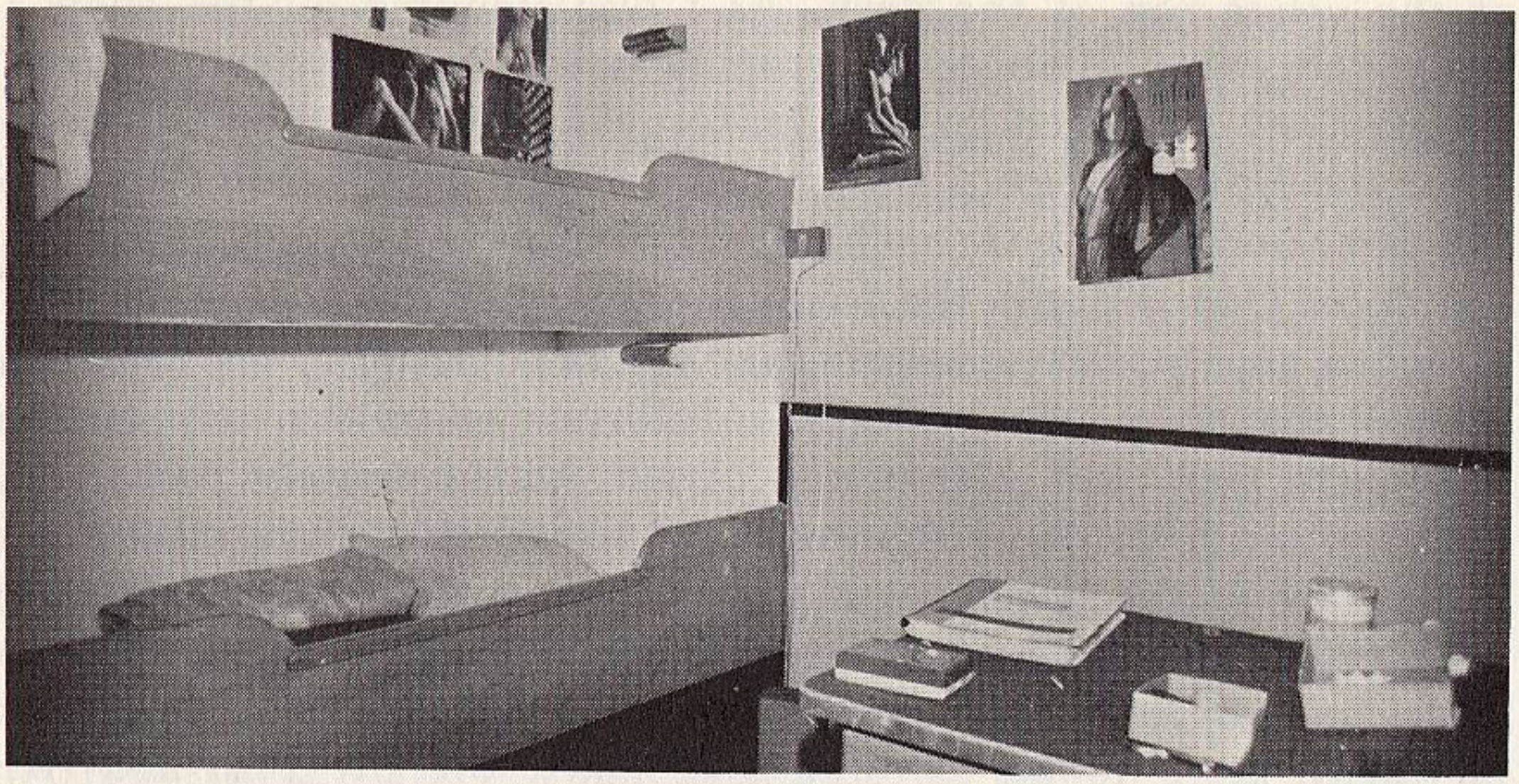
I went back and sat on my couch. Unfortunately there was nothing to drink in my cabin but I did have plenty of cigarettes.

Meanwhile the skipper was talking with leading police officials on the *Mi Amigo*'s bridge. He had declined to let them into his cabin and private living-room. He was told that he and three others on board were to be arrested and taken off the ship and the officials wanted to know if there was anyone available who was competent enough to take over as captain. He immediately said that Jan would. His fear was that if he had answered no to try and avoid being arrested, the police might take over the *Mi Amigo* and take her into custody. For this reason the police were told that Jan had Captain's papers, although in fact, he did not.

The police and Home Office were gradually looting the ship from top to bottom and eventually they were bound to come across me. It was just a question of sitting and waiting. Everyone else was around upstairs and no one else had attempted to hide. If I could have contacted Peter when the police were first spotted, he too would have probably hidden. As it was he walked straight into a policeman. All the rest of the *Mi Amigo*'s staff were foreign nationals and not in the least bit worried by the British police.

I had been locked in my cabin for around 20 minutes when the door was tried. It, of course, did not open and I then expected to hear a knock. It did not come. The door was charged, the lock broken and in walked a camera swinging official from the Radio Regularity Department of the Home Office. We did not have to introduce ourselves for we had met before, when he had questioned me two months earlier, while I was in the process of leaving the country to go overseas.

The man's first reaction was to photograph me. I quickly covered my face before he had time to press the button. Obscene language more normally associated with young hooligans followed. He told me that they had got me now and that it was all over. The only thing to say in the man's favour is that he later apologised to me.



... Perhaps my cabin wasn't the best place to hide ...

He took about half a dozen photographs, all of which were of me covering my face, and then disappeared out of my room to reappear three or four minutes later. I was still sitting down and by this time staring blankly at the floor. The man in question popped his head round the corner and called out my name. Naturally I looked up and before I could cover my face the camera had clicked.

Having got his picture, the man left. It had been a dirty trick. I was immediately joined by Detective Sergeant Hargreaves, from Chelmsford CID, who handed me a warrant for my arrest. I did not look at it, but just threw it down beside me. He then informed me that I should pack my case as we would soon be on the way to Southend. Derek German from the Home Office's Radio Regularity Department had also arrived on the scene and was searching my cabin for, as he put it, personal effects. He found none that he was interested in.

Being denied my freedom to move about, I resented having to ask permission to get a beer. My request was granted and I was accompanied to the storeroom and back to my cabin to pack. My packing included a visit to the washroom to retrieve my wet clothing. It took me a full 15 minutes to squeeze them all and I was watched throughout by a detective, who was fastly growing impatient. I returned again to my cabin. Previously there had been about nine large boxed reels of tape stacked on the corner of my couch. The tapes contained some of my programmes from the previous few weeks, but they had now fallen into the hands of the

Home Office. I completed my packing and put on some warmer clothing anticipating a long cold journey ahead.

By now the transmitter had been turned off by Peter Chicago, under the supervision of a Home Office technical 'boffin'. I asked our cook to make up some sandwiches for our journey, but his answer was that dinner would be served at the usual time. If he had not been already sent to Coventry, he certainly was now. Instead of ready-made sandwiches I grabbed some ham, bread and butter which I slung into the top of my bag along with about a dozen cans of beer. I had previously been informed that I was to have the company of three colleagues on the journey to Southend, the Captain, Mike Lloyd and Peter Chicago.

My bags were packed and I was set to leave the *Mi Amigo*. Others, however, were not. Police and Home Office officials were still busy combing the ship, paying special attention to the transmitter room and workshop. A mixture of crew, disc jockeys and policemen had gathered in the mess room and most of them, excluding the police but including myself, were drinking like fish. The policemen present had refused our offer of a whiskey. Four of us were soon to be denied our freedom to drink and it therefore seemed a good idea to drink now to calm our nerves. Over the drink, the staff of the *Mi Amigo* chatted together, but in the presence of police officers we were careful with our words so as not to give anything away.

We were given two hundred cigarettes and a litre bottle of Scotch by Captain Werner; that was the last that the four of us were to see of the fresh supplies, which had so much brightened the prospect of staying on the ship for three or four weeks longer. Mike and the Captain had also been busy with their packing, but Peter had decided to leave most of his clothes and just take the bare essentials.

8

Shortly after 4.00 pm one of the police officers announced that it was time to leave and so, slowly, we trekked out of the mess room onto the deck ready to board the police launch. For the four of us it was a time for handshakes, some of which were rather lengthy. We had been through so much together and in parting realised how close we had come to one another. My hand was extended for the longest time to our hard working engineer, who had recently contacted an eye infection, and our first mate, turned skipper. Of the other three left behind, two had arrived the day before and had not been through the ordeal with us and the other was the cook, about whom I have already said enough.

One after another we jumped down onto the boat, which had been guarded by about three or four policemen. When Captain Werner, Peter, Mike and myself were safely on the small deck of the craft, we were followed by more police who had still been searching the ship.

After nearly 10 minutes of standing on the deck, a very senior looking official emerged from the transmitter room with the Radio Regularity Department's technical advisor. They came aboard the launch and all was set for our departure. At that time we did not know if another police launch was going to arrive later. That was one of the many thoughts on our minds at that moment. We had already been informed that we would probably be spending the coming night in Southend Police Station. And that meant in a cell. There was no doubt that we were going to be treated like hardened criminals.

Sailing away from the Mi Amigo

The launch was untied from the *Mi Amigo* and pulled away. For myself, at least, it was a moment filled with emotion. One cannot appreciate the beauty of the *Mi Amigo*, in all her colour, from merely living on her. The only way to see the ship properly is from a short distance away, upon arrival or departure, both of which are, in a certain way, rather romantic moments. In addition, this time there was what I can only describe as an incredible 'vibration' between those left on the *Mi Amigo* and the four of us on the launch. The 'vibe' was one that said we would all continue on against authority, or as Johnnie Walker once put it, 'the might of the British Government'.

Better than that I cannot describe what happened as we pulled away, except that V for victory signs were exchanged between the two groups of staff. As we drew away the sun was going down and the victory signs and waving ceased. The *Mi Amigo* looked majestic sitting in the calm sea but at the same time depressed and deprived. But ready to fight on. I write as if the ship was a person but at that moment that was just how I felt. A person with whom not only had I been through so much in the previous few days, but also in the preceeding years; a person whom I was now deserting. As 'my friend' grew smaller in the distance we passed South Edinburgh Buoy Number 3 and the buoys marking our lost but not forgotten anchors and chains.

As we braced ourselves for the long journey ahead, about 10 people squeezed into the rear covered part of the vessel and jostled for seats. We offered beer to our captors, some of whom accepted the gesture. The only thing left to do to pass the time was to talk. Peter, naturally enough, became heavily engaged in conversation with the Home Office's technical expert and for my own part I was chatting to Derek German.

He admitted to me that the Home Office had been on the small fishing boat, the previous evening, but he denied that the tug *Sauria* was assisting them. He claimed that the two vessels had arrived on the scene purely by coincidence, which was something that I found difficult to believe. He was, somewhat understandably, confused by our towing operation, which the Home Office had monitored by radar. Even via that method it had been clearly apparent that the *Mi Amigo* was not moving in any given direction and was in fact zig-zagging. I explained to the best of my ability

Simon, Werner, Det.-Sergeant Hargreaves coming off Southend Pier with police



what had happened. We also talked about Home Office tactics in the struggle to stop the broadcasts of Radios Caroline and Mi Amigo. It seemed that their main difficulty was the small amount of staff allocated to the Radio Regularity Department. He wouldn't tell me how many people worked in the department, but when I mentioned the figure of seven he said that it was a fairly good guess.

The journey continued. Darkness had by now fallen and a thick fog had formed. Visibility was down to barely two or three metres but, equipped with the latest navigational aids, the police launch continued unhesitantly.

Peter had decided that the journey was a time to indulge in excessive drinking and by the time we reached Southend he had consumed a good few beers as well as a large amount of Scotch. At the least he could have been classified as merry by the end of the voyage. Due to our situation merry was possibly not a bad way to be, and as Peter said later, it was the last chance that we would have to drink freely for some time. The most we could hope for later on was tea or coffee.

With one or two exceptions, the prevailing atmosphere during the afternoon had been one of friendliness. This had continued throughout the trip and there was a tolerance of each other's beliefs and aims. A senior police officer on the boat asked that I sell him a packet of cigarettes. I refused to sell but gave them to him instead, sneakingly saying that perhaps he could return the favour 'sometime'.

At half past six our destination, the end of Southend Pier, loomed up out of the dense fog. Our arrival turned into a complete farce. After we had tied up, most of the policemen and all of the Home Office men left the vessel swiftly and the four of us remained with an equal number of uniformed police and the plain-clothed Detective Sergeant Hargreaves. We were about to be subjected firstly to Passport Control and then to the over rigid scrutiny of British Customs. After a 10 or 15 minute wait, a passport officer arrived equipped with rule book. For Peter and I, as British Passport Holders, this was a straightforward procedure, but when it came to Mike and Captain Werner, it was a different matter entirely. The rule book allowed for the temporary confiscation of their passports by immigration authorities. With objections from the holders the officer decided to put the rule to

The transportation to Southend Police Station



use. The relevant law was read out of the book and after much haggling eventually the passports were handed over. I suggested that my two colleagues be given receipts but this was turned down.

Part two of the charade started with the entrance of an over officious customs man, who immediately demanded that all of us open our bags and suitcases and that we turned out our pockets. It became obvious that we were not going to be allowed to bring into England one cigarette end or one drip of Scotch over the legal tax-free limit. Some of us also had bottles of wine and sherry in addition to Scotch and a ridiculous game of transferring the goods to one another started. The idea was that we could spread the bottles so that each one of us had in our possession an amount of drinks either below or on the tax-free limit. By this method we succeeded in bringing through the control all the bottles except one, but the official had richer pickings with cigarettes. He managed to find six or seven packets on the four of us that were over the limit. With the bottle and packets of cigarettes piled on the side we were presented with a bill for over three and a half pounds. We refused to pay and said that he could keep the goods.

The farcical formalities were over and we were now set to leave the vessel. We were accompanied onto the quay by the ever present police officers. On the quay more were waiting for us, but with a shock. The most outrageous incident was about to happen. The four of us were in the company of about eight of our captors on the longest pier in the world. (Southend Pier is one and a quarter miles long.) It was a cold and densely foggy November night and our only means of escape would have been to run to the other end of the pier, by which time more police could have been alerted, or to risk dying from exposure by jumping into the sea. In short, there was no way out.

It was unfortunate that the police did not see the situation in the same light. They had decided to take the step of handcuffing us. I was the first off the boat and on the quay and I was the first to be told of this. I refused to co-operate and appealed to the senior police officer, to whom I had given the cigarettes, to revoke the order. He refused. By this time the other three had arrived on the quay and, with the exception of Mike, reacted in exactly the same manner as I had seconds earlier. Mike had kept very quiet during the previous three hours and was accepting things as they came along, and it was therefore without a great deal of protest that he was handcuffed to a uniformed police officer. Werner, Peter and myself were still vigorously complaining about these

measures which we regarded as being totally ridiculous. Our joint protests were not completely in vain as although I was handcuffed to Werner, Peter was allowed to remain free from the cuffs and walk alone. The walk, to the train that runs the pier's length, took about one minute.

Previously, I would not have attempted to escape even if the perfect opportunity had presented itself. However, I had now been handcuffed, humiliated and I was enraged and livid and ready to consider running if the chance came. As I write this months later, I still feel the same way about this part of the affair, my main anxiety being that a British Government sees it fit to handcuff people for playing records to those who wish to listen.

More notice of our objections were taken than we had previously thought. When we reached the train depot the three of us were released from the chains. After a five minute wait the train arrived and a short journey to the other end of the pier began, where two local press photographers were waiting. They quickly snapped pictures of the four of us as we were bundled into the back of a police transit van for the short ride to Southend Police Station.

Upon arrival, the four of us were split into two groups, (Peter with Werner and myself with Mike) and taken into separate rooms to undergo normal formalities. This included the taking of our full names and addresses and the confiscation of our bags and everything in our pockets except handkerchiefs. I felt as it I had been involved in a violent street mugging or an armed bank robbery rather than an alleged illicit radio broadcast.

Mike and Werner were perhaps lucky to have been separated in the way that they were. Being foreign nationals their knowledge of a person's rights whilst under arrest by British Police was perhaps not as good as Peter's and my own. Peter was with Werner to scream for rights were they not offered and I was with Mike to do likewise.

After about half an hour of police station formalities it became apparent that we were soon to be locked up without being offered an evening meal or a hot drink. I requested that we be given food and drink but was told in answer that we were too late for supper and if we wanted a drink we would have to pay for it. Neither Mike nor myself had any English money and so a police officer bought us a hot chocolate each from the station's automatic drink dispenser. We were obviously not going to be fed until breakfast which was about thirteen hours away and for this reason I requested a knife to make sandwiches out of the food which I had

earlier taken from the ship. This was granted without objection and I made four rounds of still partly frozen ham sandwiches, one for each of us, which Mike and I ate with the hot drink. The other two sandwiches were taken to Werner and Peter in the other room.

I had already made two formal requests for a phone call but was told that this could be done in good time, which could have meant the middle of the night. Soon after 8.00 pm as Mike and I were about to be taken to cells, the police officer to whom I had earlier given cigarettes returned a new packet. We were led to the depths of the police station to two cells that lay opposite to each other. Werner and Peter had already been put in cells that were adjacent to our two.

The heavy metal door slammed shut. I was a prisoner for the alleged 'sin' of playing music for people. The room was sparse and unfriendly and its only contents were a bed and a toilet that did not flush. I sat on the bed and never being one to despair, thought about my next move. I was not spoilt for choice. Peter and Werner were having a conversation across the passage between their two cells but I didn't feel like joining in as it was too much of a strain to shout. Opposite my cell Mike was his usual subdued self and I could just see that he was lying down either asleep or trying to. I found under the dirty pillow in my cell a strip cartoon book which must have been written with the idea of appealing to people with moronic intelligence. In short it was rubbish. However, there was nothing better to do and I therefore started to read it, something that I was still doing nearly an hour later.

I had been promised a 'phone call "in good time" and was hoping that someone would appear to inform me that I could telephone. At around 9.00 pm I rang the bell on the wall to alert the jailer. It was almost an hour and a half later when he arrived and said sarcastically that he believed that I had rung the bell. I replied that I must have done but I had forgotten about it. His visit was of no use to me because he informed me that it was not possible to use the telephone until the detective in charge of the case gave the clearance and that he could not get me any of the cigarettes from my bags.

The conversation between Peter and Werner could still be heard echoing off the cold stone walls and I occasionally joined in. It was close to 11.00 pm when Werner was taken away from his cell for questioning. One at a time and in turn Peter and Mike also went and it became clear that I had been left until last. Shortly before 12.30 am my turn came and I was taken up to be questioned

by Detective Sergeant Hargreaves. I told him that I would feel more able and willing to supply answers once I had been permitted use of the telephone. I was soon talking to my girl friend who had heard that four men had been arrested on the *Mi Amigo* and was worried stiff. My 10 minute conversation was followed by a few basic questions from Mr. Hargreaves, some of which I refused to answer or tried to dodge.

Although there was little doubt about all four of us being granted bail, I received the distinct impression that if I assured the detective that I would plead guilty then he would have no objections to recommending bail to the court for myself. I asked for a cup of coffee and cigarettes from my bag and was fortunate enough to get both. After the questioning was over I asked if it would be possible to make another telephone call, this time to my father. To my surprise the answer was yes. My father assured me that he would be in court for the bail hearing, which we had been told would be at 10.00 am.

I wanted to delay returning to the dreaded cell for as long as possible and got into a conversation with a local CID man about methods that the police use in their work. It was the last thing I wanted to talk about at that moment, but it was preferable to going back to the cell as I would rather have spent the night in the centre of a roundabout. Half an hour later I was accompanied back to the depressing room and I delayed the moment further when the door would be locked by asking that I be allowed to smoke a cigarette and sought out some books from my bag. I was not allowed to have matches in the cell for the incredible reason that I might have set it on fire. I had never been so insulted before. I could not be trusted not to burn the building down. Werner was luckier as he had managed to smuggle a lighter into his cell and was able to smoke when he wished. In the company of the detective with whom I had been talking about police methods, I stood outside my cell for twenty to twenty five minutes slowly smoking my way through two cigarettes.

Delayed as long as possible by myself, the time eventually came for the thick metal door to slam shut. Once again I was alone and a prisoner in the room. For half an hour, one hour, maybe even two, I read until I decided that the quickest way to pass time would be to sleep. I did, and managed to do so surprisingly well.

Depression had also set in back on the *Mi Amigo*. The crew believed that the ship and contents would soon be taken into custody and were determined to make the best of her stores while

they were still free. During the evening they had had what only can be described as a large 'booze up' with the mountain of newly arrived liquor.

By late evening a small tender had arrived with the relief skipper and chef who were totally unaware of the drama that had been going on. It was at the very final moment, just before their departure that Jan and the engineer told them what had happened. They feared that they would be scared by the news and want to return home. Previously the skipper and chef had been searching the ship high and low for Captain Werner, much to the amusement of the others, who persisted with the bluff that they did not know his whereabouts.

It was an amusing end to what, for the *Mi Amigo*, had been a sad day. The next was to be a little happier for four people sleeping the night in Southend Police Station.

9

The big question on our minds as the four of us awoke on Saturday November 15 was one to which the answer was almost certainly yes. Would we be granted bail?

It was probably only us, sitting there in our cells, who were considering the possibility that we would have to remain in custody. After all, we were the ones who would have to endure what could have been weeks in prison. Peter and Werner had had more experience of the places than either Mike or myself. Werner had been held in a Japanese police station for two or three days over a misunderstanding about a passport and Peter had endured a day in a Dutch police station cell, which he assured me was far worse than the English one we now found ourselves in. Mike was new at the game and I had once spent thirty minutes in an English station cell.

At 8.00 am we were individually awoken and taken in turn to the washroom and accompanied back to our cells. 9.00 am produced a surprisingly pleasant breakfast of fried egg, fried bread, beans, bread and butter and a mug of tea. The only implement given to us to eat it with was a spoon because we were not allowed knives or forks. What a low opinion of us the police must have had, as we seemed to them to be potential men of violence. The meal was, however, well received by all of us and it had the distinction of being the first breakfast that I had eaten on land for years.

As the hour approached 10 we were collected from our cells and led through the long passages of the police station, firstly to



be charged under the Marine Broadcasting (Offences) Act and then to the adjoining courtroom. On our way there we were handed a telegram from two listeners who wished us good luck. It was a great morale booster and to think that someone had remembered what we had been going through perked me up considerably.

As we entered the court, the gallery was filled with about a dozen friends and supporters, whose number included my father who was to stand bail for me and a friend of Mike's from London who was to do likewise for him. The bail prospects for Peter and Werner did not seem to be so bright.

The magistrate seemed to view the whole affair light-heartedly and appeared to be wearing a permanent grin on his face. After a few minutes of courtroom formalities a 'friend' of Radio Caroline entered the room and offered to stand bail for us. He was quickly followed by a local solicitor who appeared on our behalf. After a short adjournment to talk to him we returned to the court and the magistrate wasted little time in granting us all bail. The sum was £500 on our own surety and £500 stood by another party. In the case of Mike and Werner this was put up by the friend of Radio Caroline, for Mike by his friend from London and for myself by my father.

The police had not objected to bail, but asked that our passports should be confiscated until the case came before the court on December 11. The request was complied with, and the four of us left the court to retrieve our property from the police station. Peter and myself were free to leave immediately but Werner and Mike had to be locked up again, this time to await delivery to the station of their passport. They were still with immigration control.

Personally, if I had had to spend many more hours in that depressing cell, I am almost certain that I would have been driven mad. As it was, I was free, re-united with my girlfriend and on my way home. Peter waited for Werner and Mike, who were released after about half an hour. For them the prospects were not so good as they were stuck in a strange country until December 11.

Upon arriving home I discovered that the police are not totally efficient as they had inadvertently returned my passport to me. However, two days later I had a visit from the conscientious Detective Sergeant Hargreaves who had come to retrieve the document.

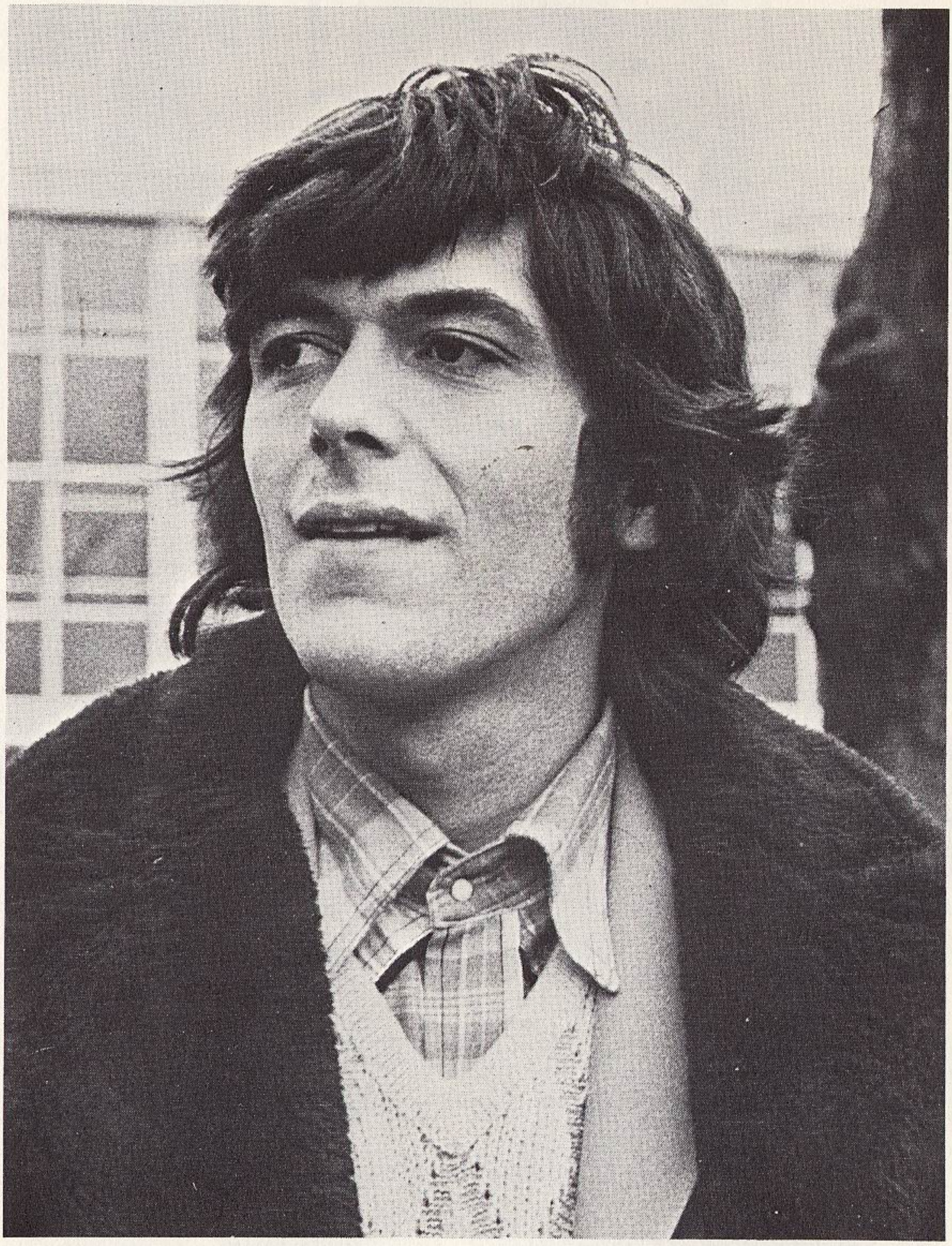
Outside Southend Magistrates Court — free at last *Simon Barrett*



Michael Lloyd

After numerous appeals to the police by Werner for the return of his passport, towards the end of November his wish was granted after a minute long hearing at Southend Magistrate's Court. He was now free to return with his girlfriend to his home in Spain until December 11.

Peter Chicago



Captain Werner

10

Sunday evening November 16 brought more trouble to the storm battered *Mi Amigo* and yet again a north-easterly gale was to blame. After a VHF radio call from the ship's Captain to North Foreland Radio, Ramsgate lifeboat was launched to collect two seasick Irish visitors to the ship. Their arrival on land, early on Monday morning, was filmed by BBC News cameras for inclusion in national TV bulletins later that day. They were also met by police and immigration officials who subjected the two to an extensive interrogation. The police did not prefer charges though, as by simply being on board the *Mi Amigo*, the two had not broken the law. Besides being covered by BBC TV News the incident also received publicity in the London *Evening Standard*, London *Evening News* and in the *Daily Mirror* and *Sun* the following day.

During the following weekend, help once again reached the *Mi Amigo* in form of the same ship that had, 10 days earlier, towed her into such deep trouble. On this occasion more time and care was taken over the operation and the *Mi Amigo* was successfully towed back to her old position in the Knock Deep. There was now the additional problem that there was no one aboard who was capable of turning on the transmitter. Two new deejays, James Ross and Geoff Bolan, had arrived on board but, like the crew, they did not know how to do it. However, by Wednesday November 26 a transmitter technician had arrived and at 1.30 pm that afternoon Radio Mi Amigo returned on the air.

Prior to our court case, the *Mi Amigo* was beset by even more

trouble. On the evening of December 1, a storm, caused by severe south-westerly winds, brought down the top section on the transmitting mast. Shortly before 10.30 pm transmissions from the *Mi Amigo* ceased only to return six and a half hours later for the start of Radio Mi Amigo. There was no way to replace the top of the mast without a new section being brought out from land, and therefore the signal strength was now weaker. The mast was eventually repaired in the New Year.

December 11 loomed on the horizon and in no time seemed to be upon us. The scene was set for the hearing at Southend Magistrates Court. Werner had returned to the country the previous evening and made his way to Southend with Peter and myself.

The hearing had been set for 10.00 am, but this is a time set for all cases and in reality ours could have commenced at any time during the day.

About 150 friends and supporters had packed themselves into the building. Some of them had managed to gain access to the court's small public gallery, while others stood peacefully outside the courtroom, displaying stickers, posters and banners voicing support for Radio Caroline.

By 10.00 am Mike Lloyd had arrived to join us. All four or us were being charged with contravening various sections of the Marine Broadcasting (Offences) Act on November 13 and 14 whilst in external territorial waters of the United Kingdom. Mike and myself were accused of having made an illicit broadcast, Werner of being the master of a ship from which an illegal broadcast was made and Peter of repairing and maintaining radio equipment knowing that it would be used for an unlawful purpose. In addition I was charged with a second and similar offence which was alleged to have taken place in International Waters on March 21, 1975.

At midday, after two hours of sitting in the courtroom listening to other cases, our own was called. We were to appear in the dock together. There had been a few last minute decisions on our behalf. Mike Lloyd had been considering the possibility of pleading not guilty to the charge levied against him on the grounds that he believed the *Mi Amigo* to be in International Waters when he made the broadcast. An American making a broadcast from International Waters would not be liable to be prosecuted under the British



Marine Broadcasting (Offences) Act. However, he finally decided not to pursue his not guilty plea as the case would have to be adjourned and he would have been prevented once again from leaving Britain as he wished. Peter had kept quiet about his plans in the preceeding weeks and appeared to be in two minds until the last moment. After a degree of persuasion administered by his bailor, Peter decided on a plea of not guilty. Werner was in no doubt at all that he would not be contesting the charge made against him. I was almost certain that I would plead guilty unless anything changed my mind at the last moment. It did not.

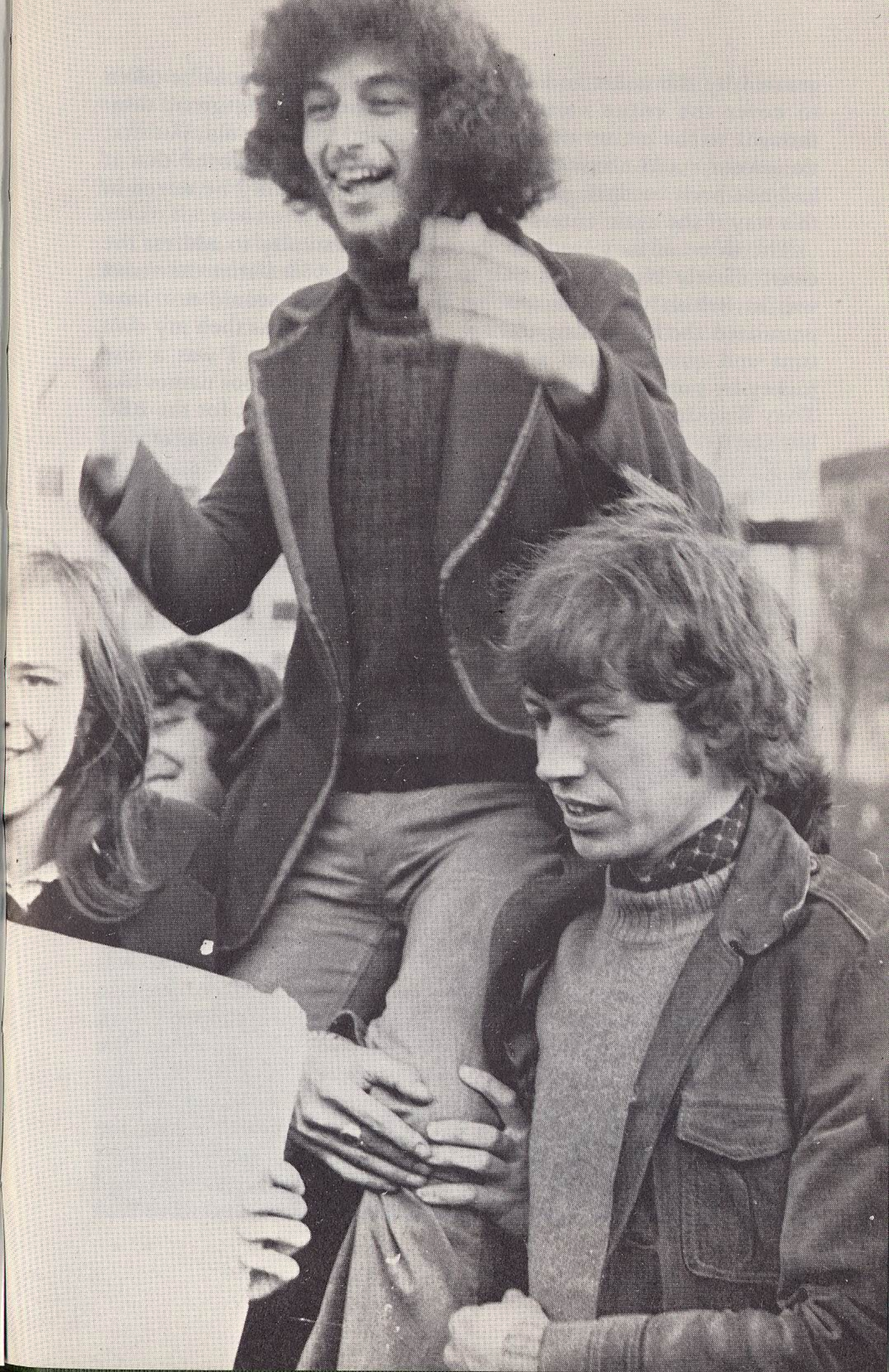
Having filed into the dock, we, in turn, registered our pleas to the court. The first four, covering Werner, myself and Mike, were admissions of guilt. The final voice to be heard was Peter's, who of course pleaded not guilty. This was followed by a faint cheer from the Caroline supporters in the gallery.

For the prosecution, Mr. David Knight explained to the court that Radio Caroline had been broadcasting from the MV *Mi Amigo* in International Waters until November 8, when she broke her moorings and drifted across the Thames Estuary.

Mr. Knight continued to say that on November 13, at 9.00 am, when the vessel was just under one mile within British territorial waters, broadcasts started and references were made to the incident. The following day at 2.55 pm a police launch pulled alongside the *Mi Amigo* and the radio ship was boarded. The defendants were found on board along with certain others. The court was told further by the prosecution that the police had also found two radio studios, one equipped for live broadcasts and the other for broadcasting pre-recorded tapes. Photographs of these were shown to the bench.

Mr. Knight went on to say that Werner de Zwart was first questioned and he admitted that he was master of the *Mi Amigo*. He said that he thought that he was in International Waters. The police had made sure that the mate was able to command the ship before taking off the Captain.

The prosecution also drew to the attention of the bench a section of the Criminal Justices Act which allowed an order to be made that would deprive convicted persons of property used in the commission of a crime. On these grounds it was requested that certain items removed from the ship (tapes, technical papers and a broadcasting crystal) could be held by the police. The request was



granted by the court and Mr. Knight asked if this could be taken to cover the entire vessel and its contents. Having given deep thought to the matter the magistrate replied that it could, but that the owner could claim the ship back if it could be proved that it had not been used illegally. (The *Mi Amigo* can only be seized in this way if she again enters British territory.)

The three of us were then given the opportunity to address the court. Firstly Werner said that he had had no idea that the vessel was in British waters and if he had realised he would not have permitted the broadcasts to have been made. It was then my own turn and quoting from a prepared text I said that I was a disc jockey by profession just the same as nationally famous names like Tony Blackburn and Johnnie Walker. They both work for the BBC but started their careers in radio in exactly the same way as myself on Radio Caroline. "I am simply younger and therefore starting a few years later," I said. "On several occasions I have made audition tapes in order to apply for work with the BBC and other land based stations but these have all been confiscated from me by the police and Home Office and therefore my only alternative has been to return to Radio Caroline."

I continued, "It is my opinion that my offence has not caused any harm to anybody," and then referring to Caroline's Loving Awareness campaign I said that what I had done had only served to make people a little more tolerant of each other, less willing to spurn others and thus the ordinary person had been made a little happier in what I called "these troubled times".

It was then Mike's turn. He said that he was an American DJ touring Europe and working for Radio Caroline was a chance to earn enough money to continue his travels. He added that he would not have broadcast had he known that the *Mi Amigo* was not in International Waters.

After a 15 minute adjournment the magistrates returned with their sentences. Werner was fined £100 plus £50 costs; Mike was fined £50 plus £25 costs and I was fined £100 on each of the two charges with £50 costs. An order was made to the police to return to me one of the audition tapes. All three of us chose to pay the fines immediately.

Earlier Peter's case had been adjourned until February 23 and the prosecution had asked for the bail conditions to remain the same. Peter objected saying that he wished to have his passport back so that he could return to his home in Holland and to spend Christmas with his girlfriend. He explained that he stood to lose

£500 of his own money if he did not come back and that this was more than any subsequent fine would amount to.

Mr. Knight said that if the passport was returned to the accused he could return immediately to Radio Caroline. After listening to both sides of the argument the magistrate ordered the police to return the passport.

The case, which had lasted for about three quarters of an hour, was over and all that remained was for the passports and audition tape to be returned, the money to be paid and a few formalities with the court usher to be dealt with. I was still in the courtroom

Peter Chicago on board the Mi Amigo in Amsterdam

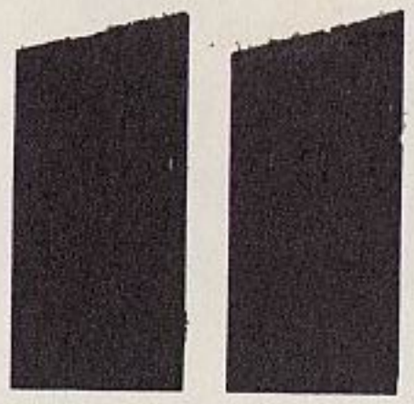


and probably a little dazed by all that had been going on and I was most surprised when the young clerk of the court came up to me and said that he liked the show. I just thanked him not knowing whether he was referring to my speech or the bright jacket that I was wearing. It was nearly 10 minutes later when I was still in the courtroom, that the third and most obvious meaning of his statement dawned on me. I asked him what he had meant and sure enough the show that he had been referring to was my one on Caroline.

As we left the front entrance of the court building about 150 people had grouped together and were playing Radio Mi Amigo from transistor radios. I must admit that at the moment I was quite moved.

A photographer from the Southend *Evening Echo* wanted to take my picture with some of the supporters and against my wishes persuaded them to hoist me on to their shoulders. I was embarrassed to be at the receiving end of such star treatment, but the occasion was an ideal opportunity to talk face to face with some of Caroline's listeners.

Having lunched with some of the listeners, Werner, Peter and myself returned home.



Throughout the whole drama, the British press, for a change, gave fairly wide coverage to our story. With the exception of one or two specialist publications, Radio Caroline and anything associated with it is normally completely ignored by the British press.

On November 9 the *Mi Amigo*'s drifting and distress calls made the front page of two Sunday newspapers. The story was the only news item on page one of the *Sunday Mirror*. Early editions had the headline, "Radio Caroline adrift – but the pop goes on" and in later editions this had been amended to "Radio Caroline adrift – so pop has to stop".

The article, which was extremely complimentary to myself, started, "Hundreds of pop fans went to the rescue of popship Radio Caroline last night.

"The flooded coastguards with 999 calls when a disc jockey broadcast that the ship was adrift in heavy seas.

"At one point the pop pirate ran aground on sands off the Essex coast – but disc jockey Simon Barrett kept the music playing. He donned a lifejacket as waves broke over the decks."

As long as the decks referred to were not record decks, then the report was totally factual.

We also made the front page of the *Sunday Telegraph* as a down page filler and some editions of the *Sunday Express*. Reports also appeared on Monday November 10 in the *Irish Independent* and *Evening Echo*.

The drifting on Saturday night was covered by Independent Radio News and during the next few days the story of the *Mi*

Amigo's plight and involvement with the Gaseley Tug Company was reported in many news bulletins on Radio Orwell and in local news programmes on Anglia TV.

The boarding of the *Mi Amigo* by police and Home Office officials on November 14 was reported the following day in the *Times, Daily Mirror, Daily Telegraph,* the *Sun,* the *Guardian, Daily Express, Financial Times,* the *Scotsman, Glasgow Daily Record* and *East Anglian Daily Times.*

The headline in the *Sun* bellowed: "Police invade pop pirate ship" and in smaller print "closedown for Caroline". The article explained, "the pop pirate ship Radio Caroline was closed down yesterday — by a police boarding party ... Two Caroline disc jockeys and two engineers were arrested and taken by police launch to Southend ... Just before 3.00 pm yesterday, listeners heard someone swearing and a voice saying 'What is going on there?' ... A second man said: 'I've switched the music off.' ... Home Office officials refused to discuss the raid."

The previous night the raid had hit the headlines on Independent Radio News, being the lead story in all the evening's news broadcasts. One such bulletin went as follows:-

"The Police say that the four men will appear in court at Southend in the morning, charged under the Wireless Telegraphy Act of 1949. Meanwhile the men are spending the night in cells at Southend Police Station.

"Police boarded the ship, the *Mi Amigo*, earlier today, and ordered the crew, who are mainly Dutch, to end transmissions because they were inside territorial waters. The ship's crew maintained they were twenty miles off the English coast and weren't breaching any limits..

"People who had been listening to broadcasts from the ship, phoned IRN to say they heard an argument during the afternoon show, and then what sounded like a scuffle before the transmission ended. It's understood the ship has not been taken into custory."

Our bail hearing in Southend Magistrates Court was reported in the London *Evening News* and the following day by the *New of the World*. On Tuesday November 18 the boarding and subsequent bail hearing in court was surprisingly covered in the European editions of the *Herald Tribune*, the news pages of which proclaimed: "Pirate Radio Crew Is Charged In England."

The rescue of two seasick visitors to the *Mi Amigo* in the early hours of Monday November 17 was reported on the same day in



Seasick visitors to the Mi Amigo being brought off

the London *Evening News*, London *Evening Standard* and Southend *Evening Echo*. The *Standard* carried a picture of the two coming ashore at Ramsgate. The same picture was published the following day in the *Daily Mirror* under the headline: "Pop Ship Tricked us say Rescuers." The article explained, "The pop ship's skipper said that his anchor chain had snapped nine miles north of Margate, Kent, and asked for a lifeboat to take his men off. But after a perilous sea journey in appalling conditions the lifeboat arrived only to find the Caroline's Captain and crew refusing to leave their ship.

"Instead the lifeboatmen brought ashore Kelvin O'Shea, 19, of Chartridge Estate, Chesham, Bucks, and 40-year-old Ronnie Doyle of Liverpool."

In the same edition, the *Daily Mirror* also printed a Keith Waite

cartoon depicting a ship with the words Radio Wotsit on the side being approached by a Royal Navy vessel. With reference to the Anglo/Icelandic cod war the caption read: "More trouble — he claims we have been broadcasting from Icelandic territorial waters."

The rescue story was also reported by the *Sun*, the *Times*, the Southend *Evening Echo* and the East Anglian *Daily News*.

For the first time since the sixties BBC TV national news gave coverage to Radio Caroline. The early evening and main 9.00 pm news showed a film of the two rescued visitors to the *Mi Amigo* arriving at Ramsgate.

The only newspaper to report that the *Mi Amigo* had been successfully towed back to the Knock Deep was the Southend *Evening Echo* on Monday November 24 and the only one to acknowledge Caroline's return to the air was the *Daily Express* on November 27.

The court case on December 11 was covered by the London *Evening Standard*, London *Evening News* and the Southend *Evening Echo* on the same day, and on December 12 by the *Times*, *Daily Mirror*, *Sun* and *East Anglian Daily Times*.

The most amusing article to appear throughout the whole affair was published in the Southend *Evening Echo* on November 21. A story in the newspaper reported that a man, formerly from Westcliff, Essex, was planning to buy the *Mi Amigo* to locate the legendary *Titanic*. The article claimed that the *Mi Amigo* would carry sophisticated underwater camera equipment to take photos of the *Titanic* sixteen thousand feet below the surface of the North Atlantic.

Five days after the article appeared, Radio Caroline went back on the air.

Amazed by the response by readers to Caroline's drifting and boarding, the *New Musical Express* started to take an interest in the station and covered some of the events concerning it. In January 1976 the newspaper printed a two page article on the history of Radio Caroline. Previously the only music paper to have taken any interest in Radio Caroline had been *Record Mirror*.

12

By the time February 23 had arrived Peter had changed his mind and reversed his plea of not guilty to the allegation made against him of repairing and maintaining illicit radio equipment.

Mr. David Knight for the prosecution explained to Southend Magistrates Court that on November 14 when a party of police and Home Office officials boarded the *Mi Amigo* the defendant was told to switch off the transmitter and a Mr. Davis of the Home Office noted that Peter Murthur knew how to operate the unit.

Peter was quoted by Knight as having said to a uniformed officer that he was the engineer but that he would not admit it in court.

After a 20 minute hearing the magistrate fined Peter £100 with £50 costs and ordered the confiscation of eleven radio crystals seized by the police when they boarded the radio ship.

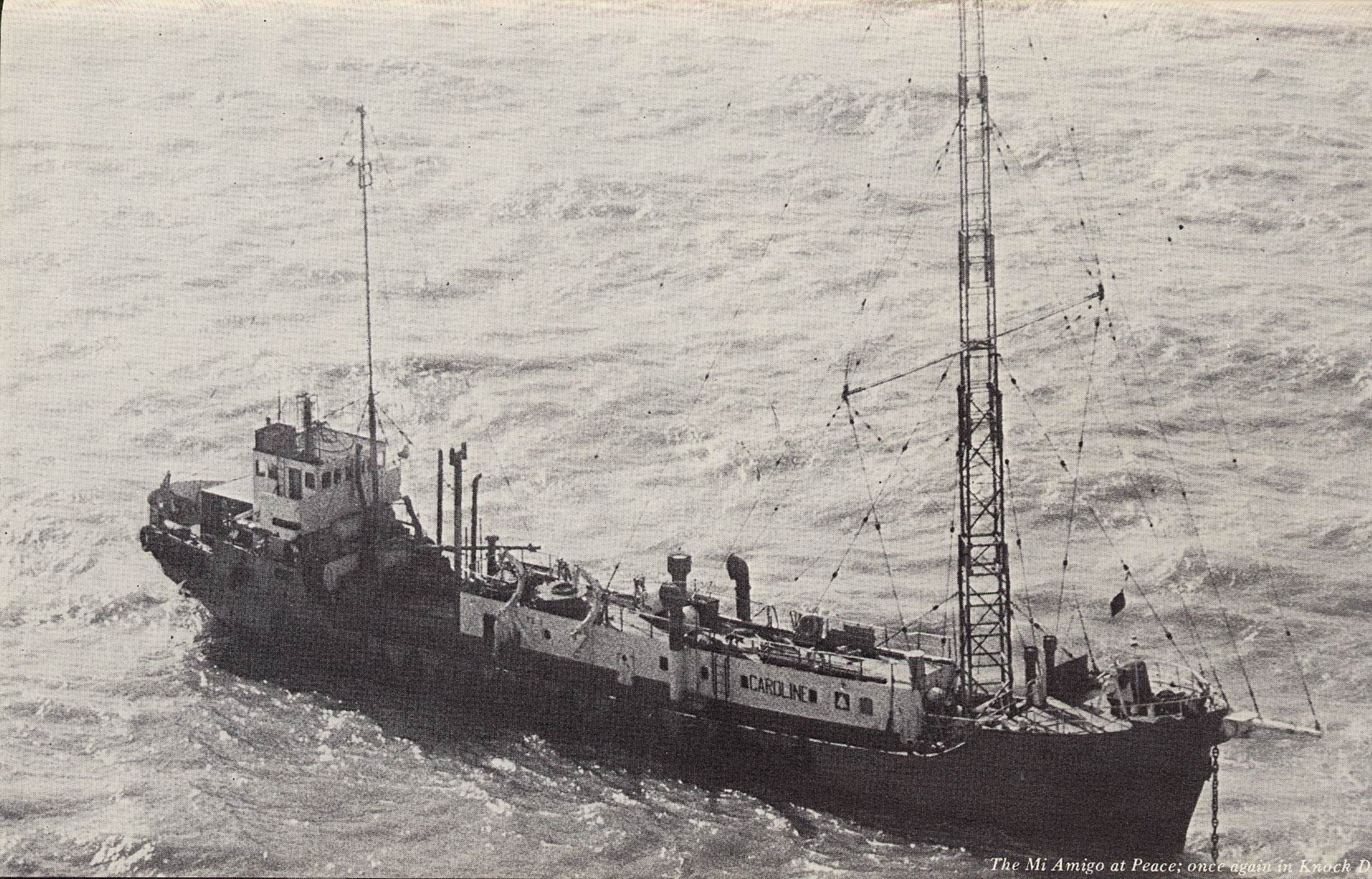
So, the whole story ends. Werner has now gone back to the *Mi Amigo* and does alternative spells as Captain. Peter still works for Caroline as an engineer, and Glenn has returned to the States. He is now account executive selling advertising time for a commercial station in Houston, Texas. Myself, I am now looking for a job in legal radio on land.

Meanwhile the show goes on. Caroline and Mi Amigo are still playing good music from the *Northsea*. It will take more than the weather and the law to silence her transmitters.

In the 1960s Radio Caroline pioneered the concept of a Top 50 singles chart. Now in the mid-70s, she is concentrating on albums in the same way. Although the media try to ignore her presence,

Caroline has definitely had a considerable influence on album sales. In the past couple of years land based radio stations across Europe have started to recognise this factor. There is now a definite trend towards playing more album tracks on those stations – thanks to Caroline.

The vessel itself is now becoming very old, but her spirit is still alive. After nearly seventeen years as a radio ship, she has seen thousands of faces of disc jockies, engineers, crews and visitors. Together they have produced radio programmes which have been a source of enjoyment to hundreds of millions of listeners. I am proud of the fact that I was once part of that team.



The Mi Amigo at Peace; once again in Knock D

appendix 1

The problem facing a young Irishman in 1963 was how to bring a new singer to the attention of the public. The BBC and Radio Luxembourg had both refused to play the singer's record, and in 1963 there were no other stations to approach as an alternative. The singer was Georgie Fame, and the young Irishman 23-year-old Ronan O'Rahilly.

When someone suggested to O'Rahilly that he start his own radio station, he did not hesitate and immediately took the idea seriously.

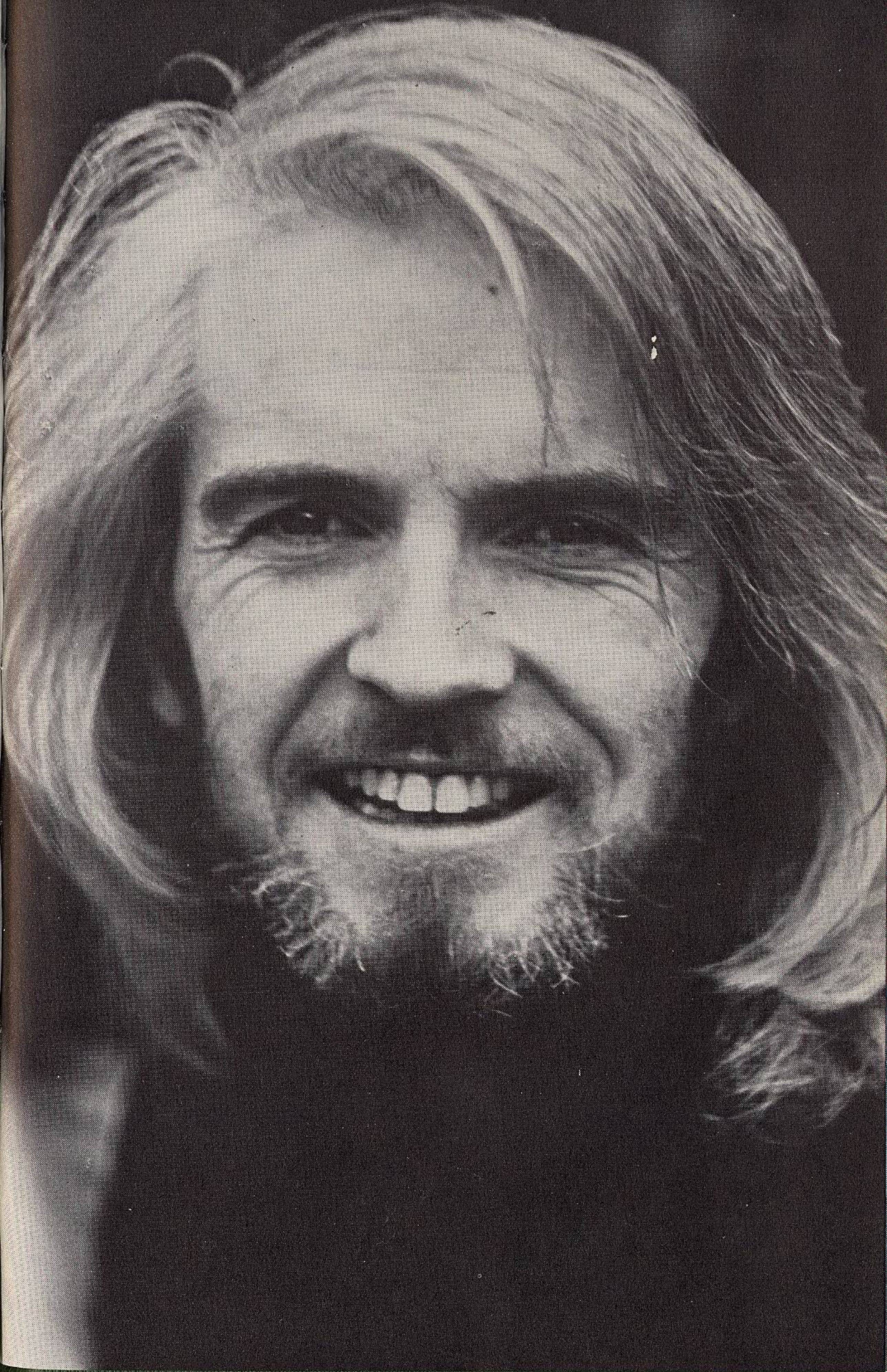
Radio Nord had been successful as an offshore radio station off the Swedish coast; and Radio Mercur off Denmark. Two other offshore radio stations were on the air at that time; Radio Syd off Sweden and Radio Veronica broadcasting close to the Dutch coast.

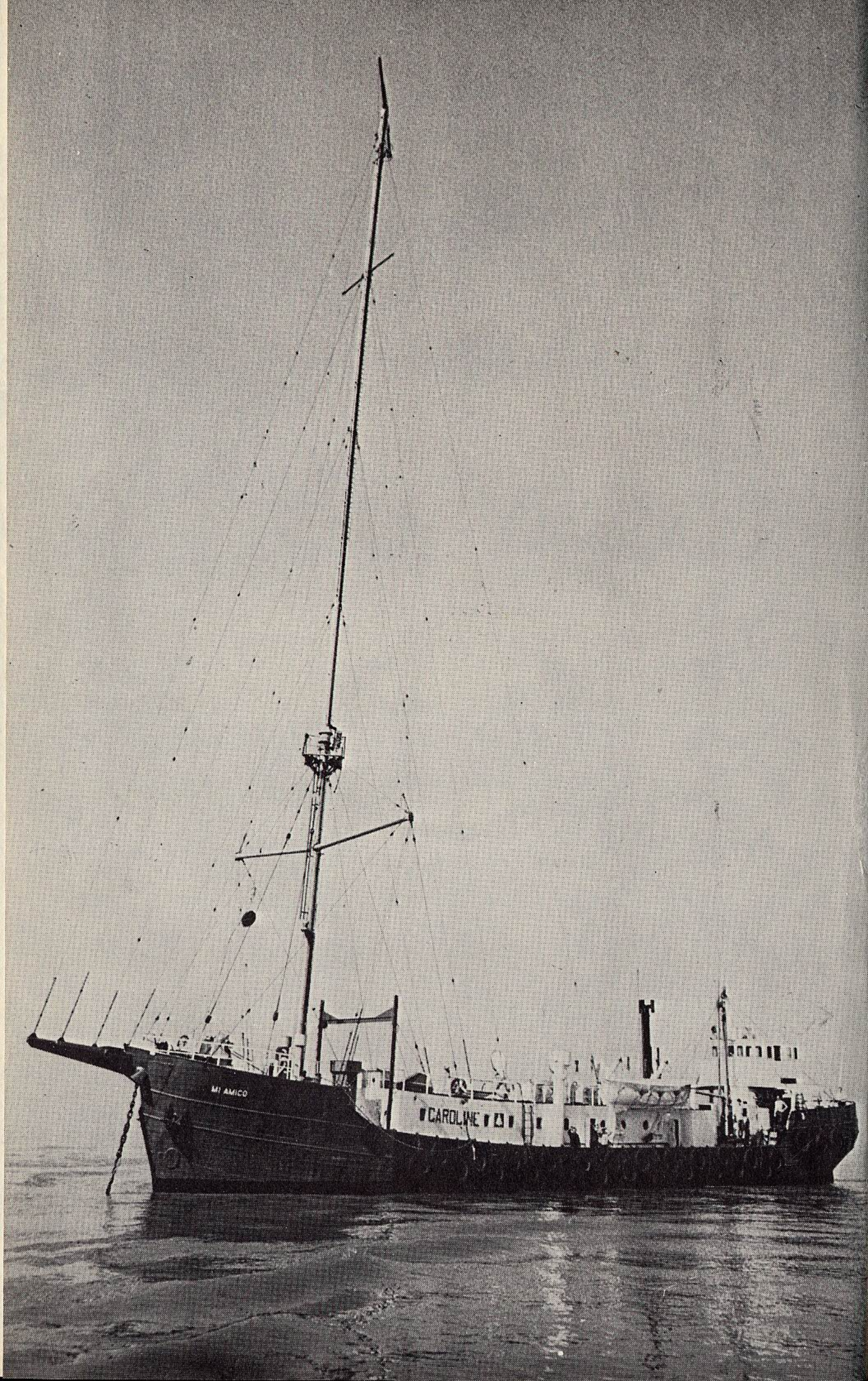
O'Rahilly saw the success of these stations, formed a company with the financial aid of Irish, British and Swiss companies and rented the 763 ton *Frederica*. The ship was fitted out for her new role in Greenore harbour, which belongs to O'Rahilly's father. He re-named both the boat and the station Caroline after John F. Kennedy's daughter.

After a voyage from Greenore, the MV *Caroline* dropped anchor off Harwich, Essex, on March 27 1964. The following day at noon Radio Caroline was born.

Ronan O'Rahilly, however, was not the only person who wanted to run a radio station off the Essex coast. Alan Crawford

The man who started it all — Ronan O'Rahilly




MI AMICO
CAROLINE

had brought from Radio Nord the *Bon Jour*, which had been renamed the *Mi Amigo*. Crawford had also used the facilities of Greenore harbour for work on his ship, and by April 27 1964 the *Mi Amigo* had also anchored close to the Essex coast. The ship broadcast under the name of Radio Atlanta with a similar pop music format to Radio Caroline.

By the beginning of July the two stations had agreed to merge under the name of Caroline. One of the ships would move to a position off the Isle of Man and broadcast as Radio Caroline North and the other vessel would remain at the London anchorage, off Essex and broadcast as Radio Caroline South. Both the stations broadcast with a power of 10KW.

On the night of January 19th 1966, the *Mi Amigo* broke loose from her moorings just over three miles from the Essex coast, and landed on Frinton beach.

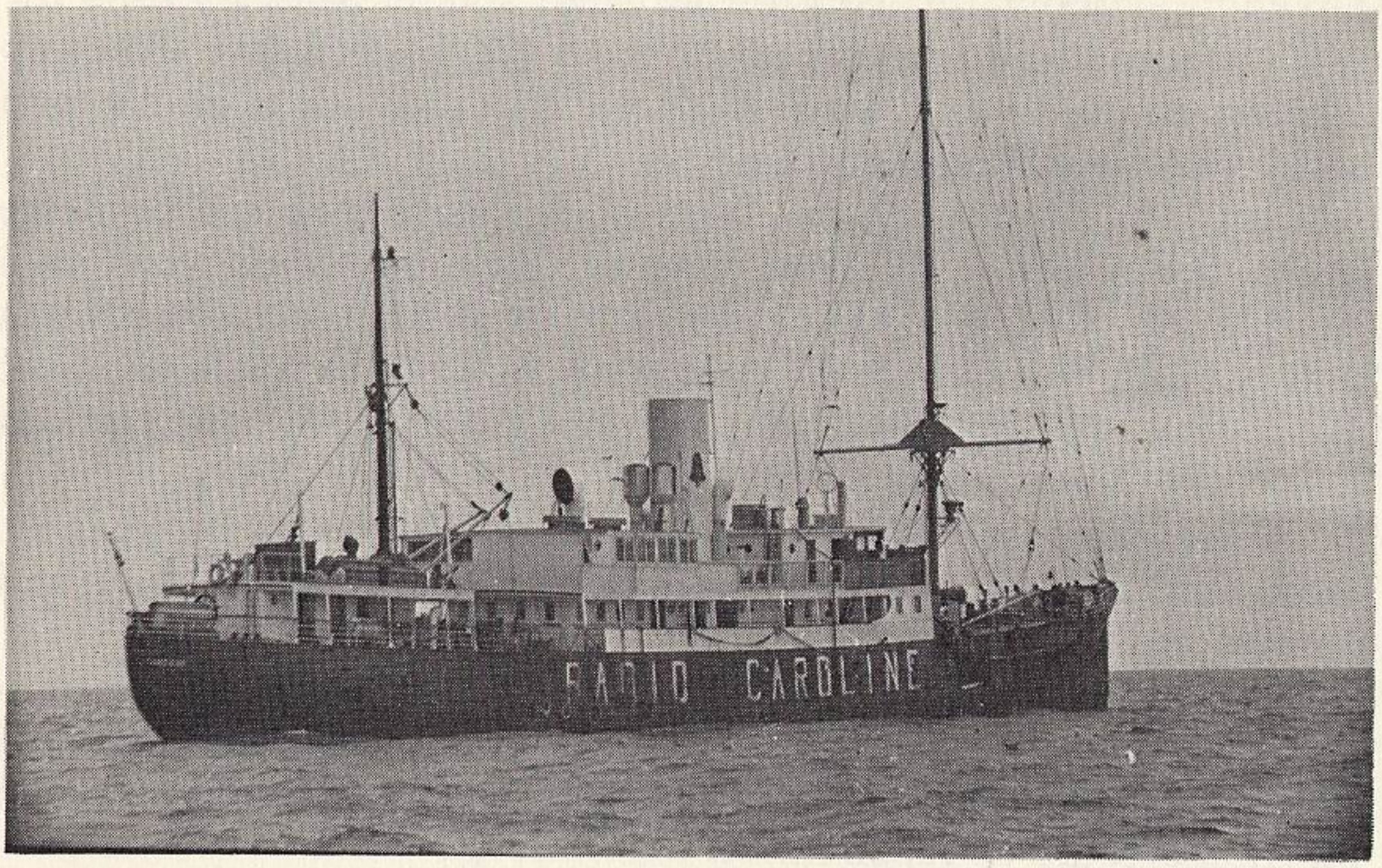
The owner of the *Cheetah II* , which had until recently been in use as the base for Radio Syd broadcasting off Sweden, heard of the *Mi Amigo*'s plight and offered the use of the ship until the *Mi Amigo* could be repaired.

By February 13 Radio Caroline was back on the air from the *Cheetah II*. The *Mi Amigo* went to Amsterdam and was repaired, overhauled, and even more importantly, fitted with a 50KW transmitter designed to broadcast on 259 metres. On April 1 the *Mi Amigo* joined the *Cheetah II* off the Essex coast and Caroline South was heard simultaneously on 199 metres and on 259 metres. Eventually, 199 metres was phased out; the north ship changed frequency and broadcast on 259 metres.

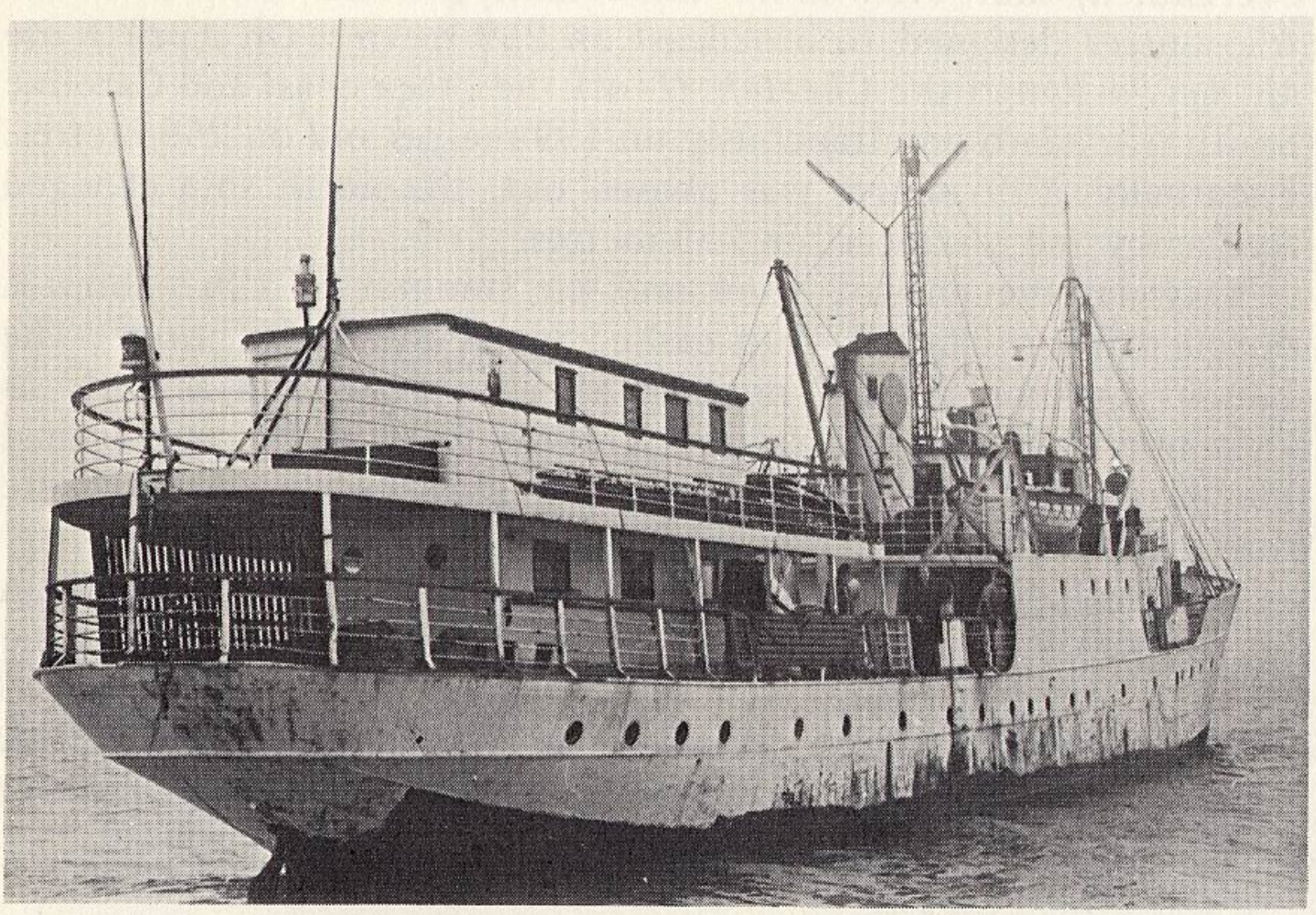
Between the end of 1964 and the summer of 1967 about a dozen offshore stations had cashed in on the 'radio boom'. The Labour government did not, however, approve, and as early as December 1964 the Postmaster General had spoken out against the 'pirates', saying that he was seeking legislation to make sure that a famine hit the Carolines.

It was not until August 14 1967 that legislation was brought in by the British government against the stations. The new Marine Broadcasting (Offences) Act made it illegal for British firms to advertise on or supply seaborne radio stations, or for British subjects to work for them. By midnight of the 14th all the stations except Caroline North and South ceased transmissions.

The Mi Amigo in its heyday in the 60s.

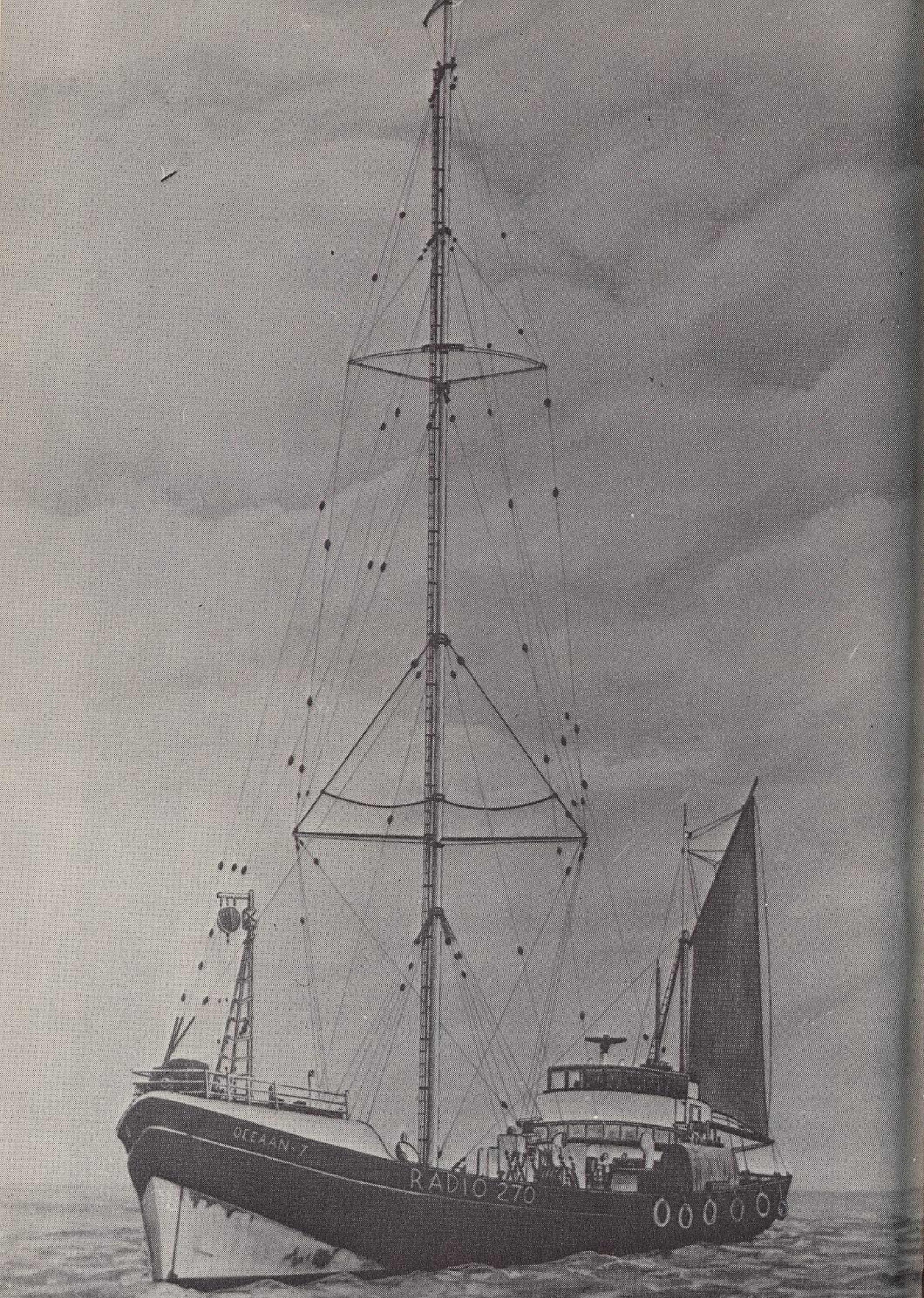


The MV Frederica anchored off the Isle of Man



Assistance came along in the form of the Cheeta II

Aground on the beach



Oceaan VII

Supplies to the two ships now came from Holland and th.. Carolines were supported by a few international advertisers and paid record 'plugs'. The stations' offices moved from London to Amsterdam.

Both stations continued normally until the beginning of March 1968, when the two ships were simultaneously towed to Amsterdam by the Dutch Wijsmuller company. It is believed that there was an internal dispute within the Dutch firm.

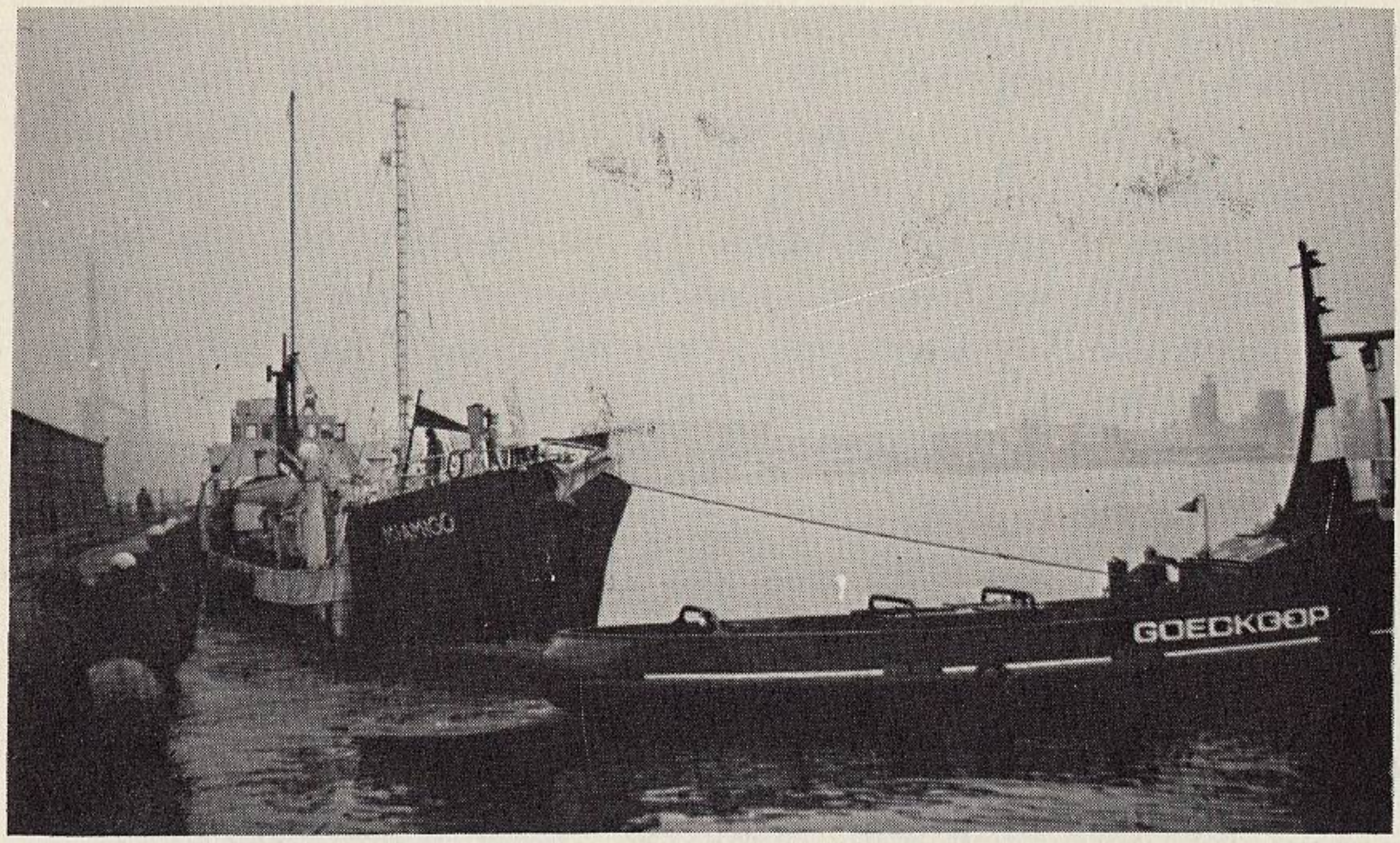
Attempts were made during the following weeks to get Caroline back on the air and an agreement was reached with the owners of the *Oceaan VII*, a ship that had been used for Radio 270, broadcasting off the coast of Yorkshire. It was planned that the ship should anchor off the Essex coast, but news was leaked to the press and the owners of the *Oceaan VII* were warned that they would be summonsed if they let the ship be used in this way.

It was in fact to be four years before Radio Caroline returned.

At the end of May 1972, the *Mi Amigo* was put up for public auction in Amsterdam and bought by agents acting for Caroline's owners. By the end of August, the *Mi Amigo* had left her berth in

The Mi Amigo in Amsterdam harbour





The Mi Amigo being towed into Amsterdam after the mutiny

Amsterdam and by dawn of September 3 she had dropped anchor off the Scheveningen coast. She had supposedly left Holland to be turned into a pirate radio museum.

The first test transmission was made on 259 metres on September 29 and while restoration work was carried out on board these tests continued. They stopped on November 13 when a storm brought down the transmitting mast. A makeshift long wire aerial was erected and by the beginning of December, spasmodic test transmissions were once again heard on 259 metres. After nearly three weeks these switched to 197 metres and were announced as Radio 199. The *Mi Amigo* was broadcasting programmes in Dutch and English on this wavelength. On December 22 the station changed its name to Radio Caroline and continued programmes on 197 metres in two languages until December 30, when it was announced that the station would close; returning soon on 259 metres.

At about the same time, the Captain and crew mutinied over a pay dispute. The *Mi Amigo* was towed into Amsterdam. Two days later, after some legal wrangling, the ship went back to sea.

On the night of April 2 the worst storm in living memory hit the North Sea and the *Norderney*, housing the Dutch station Radio Veronica, ended up on Scheveningen beach. The owners of Veronica were anxious to get the station back on the air as soon as possible and accepted the offer of the use of the *Mi Amigo*. The

Veronica organisation supplied the *Mi Amigo* with new equipment and on April 11 was back on the air on 259 metres. Programmes were broadcast from the *Mi Amigo* until April 20, by which time the *Nordeney* had returned to sea and the air.

During the spring of 1973 the English service, Caroline International, was heard from 6.00 am to 2.00 am on 389 metres, and the Dutch service was broadcast simultaneously on 259 metres during the day.

On July 15 a new station was heard broadcasting from the ship on 259 metres. Radio Atlantis was hiring airtime from the Caroline organisation and was broadcasting primarily to the Flemish speaking population of Belgium. Atlantis was on the air between 6.00 am and 7.00 pm and continued to use the *Mi Amigo* until mid October.

On July 24 Radio Seagull was born. The station broadcast from the *Mi Amigo* in English and its format was totally based on album music. Radio Seagull could be heard during the evening, after the closedown of Radio Atlantis.

On October 1 a storm brought down the new aerial mast and a long-wire aerial was again put up. Atlantis and Seagull were soon

The Radio Atlantis Crew



back on the air but with reduced signal strength. This continued until October 18 when the temporary aerial blew down. Radio Atlantis found another ship, but work on the *Mi Amigo* commenced on the task of constructing another new mast. It was not until Christmas Eve, however, that work on the 165 foot high mast was finished. Short test transmissions followed on 259 metres, eventually identified as Radio Mi Amigo.

Radio Mi Amigo was to broadcast to Belgium and Holland in Dutch during the day. On February 17 1975 police raided a farmhouse at Oprakel, Belgium, and three people were arrested. The farmhouse had been used as a studio.

Plans had already been made to move the studios to Spain (where there is no law against offshore radio stations) and the move was due to take place on the day after the police raid. It went ahead as planned and transmissions from the *Mi Amigo* were not interrupted by the activities of the Belgian police force. The station now records programmes quite openly in the town of Playa de Aro on the Spanish Costa Brava. Radio Mi Amigo broadcasts many advertisements for Dutch companies, but programmes are aimed primarily at the Flemish population of Belgium.

Radio Seagull returned to the air from the *Mi Amigo* on January 7 1974, a week after the opening of Radio Mi Amigo. For a time during 1974 live English programmes were broadcast between 7.00 pm and 9.00 pm as Radio Mi Amigo International.

On February 23 at 9.00 pm, when Radio Seagull should have opened up, Radio Caroline was re-born. Seagull had been scrapped without notice and replaced by Radio Caroline. The album format remained.

By the start of August 1974 Caroline was on the air from 7.00 pm until 6.00 am. At the end of the month, just prior to the Dutch Marine Offences Act becoming law, the *Mi Amigo* upped anchor and headed for her new anchorage twenty miles off the Frinton, Essex, coast.

The other stations off the Dutch coast closed down and Caroline and Mi Amigo were now alone. There were problems at first with Dutch programme tapes reaching the ship and a shortage of English DJs. Most of them had left before the *Mi Amigo* had crossed the North Sea.

Several tenders returning to England with DJs were arrested at the end of 1974 and the beginning of 1975 and some DJs were brought before the courts. Disc jockeys Andy Archer, John B. Mair, Don Stevens, Mike Lloyd and myself have all been fined



Peter Chicago, Tony Allan and Simon Barrett on deck in 197

under the British Marine Broadcasting (Offences) Act for working for Radio Caroline.

A tender returning to Holland, with an out of order generator from the *Mi Amigo*, was arrested by Dutch authorities in the summer of 1975 and court action against the crew on board the vessel is expected to follow.

In the summer of 1975, the *Mi Amigo* began non-stop music test transmissions on 389 metres. These continued during August, September and early October. The test had been for an English service that had been planned to broadcast during the day while Radio Mi Amigo was on 259 metres but Caroline has not been heard on this wavelength since.

During the first week of April 1976 Radio Caroline was heard testing on 192 metres with a relay of the 259 metres signal.

After a few days, non-stop music programmes were broadcast on 192 metres during the day. These transmissions continued throughout the spring, once again in preparation for an all-day English service. The all-day English finally started during May. Now Radio Caroline broadcasts on 192 during the day and on 259 in the evening. For a few hours in the evening they broadcast on both channels simultaneously.

appendix 11

"Rusty, small, ugly, worn and surrounded by the overpowering stench of rotten herring which hit you at a distance of twenty metres." A description given to the motor ship *Olga* as she lay in Hamburg Harbour in 1960.

Prior to that, the vessel had spent more than thirty years carrying cargo between the Baltic and North Port. She had been built in Kiel in 1921 as a three masted schooner and christened the *Margarethe*. At 30 metres long, she weighed in at 156 tons.

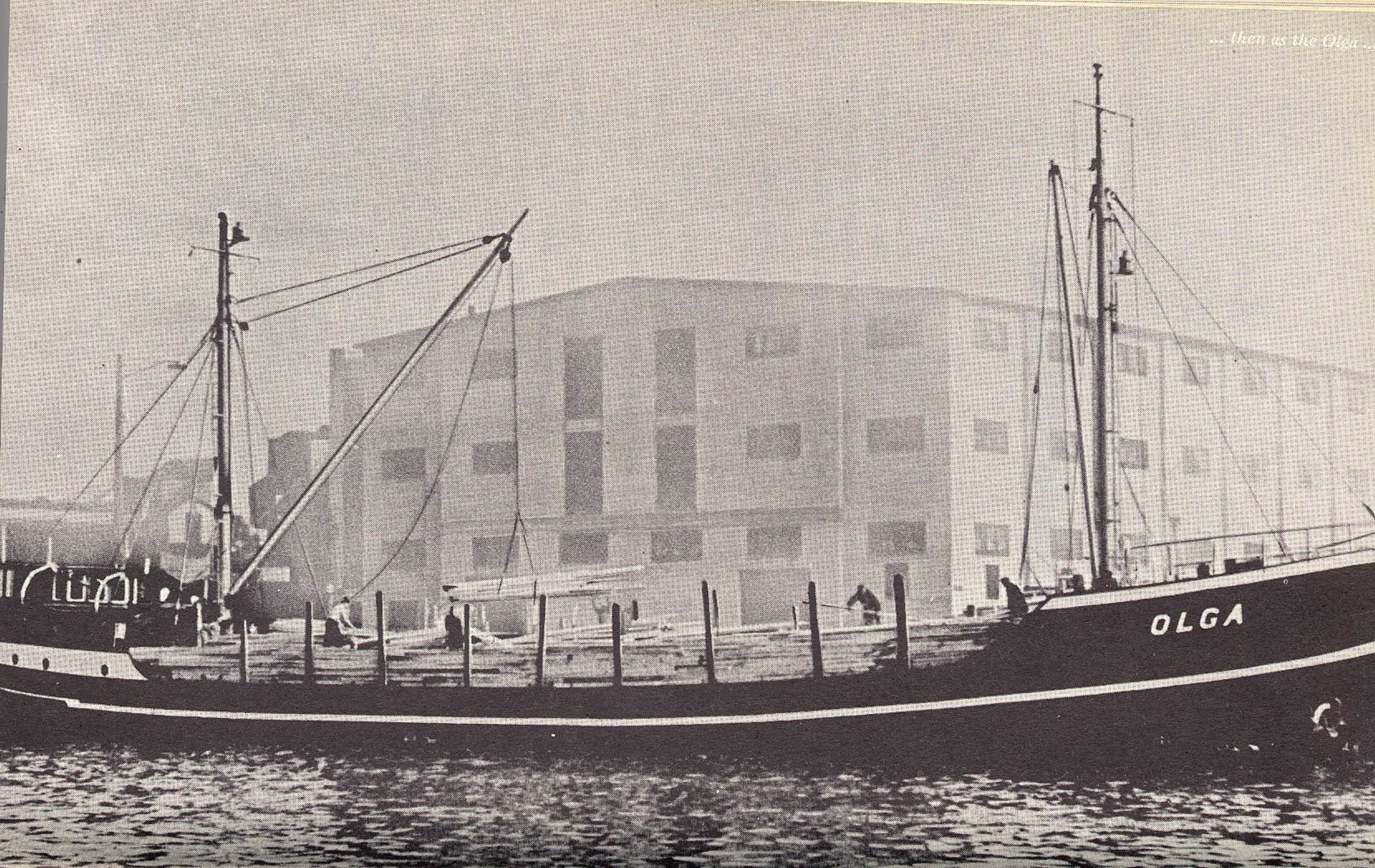
In 1927, she was rebuilt as a motor vessel and her length increased to 44 metres and her weight to 250 tons. At the same time, her name was changed to the *Olga*.

If this ship had had a mind, she might well have preferred not to have ever met Jack Kotscack in the spring of 1960. If she knew what lay ahead of her during the following two decades, the *MS Olga* would have probably chosen to retire gracefully, after nearly 40 years of service.

Jack Kotschack, a Swede, was the mastermind behind a project to launch Radio Nord off the Swedish coast. He rebuilt the vessel, constructing a central deck house to house extra cabins, a studio, mess room and transmitting room. A transmitting mast was also erected. At the same time, the ship was renamed the *Bon Jour*.

Radio Nord closed down in 1962 and lay unused, for two years, until bought by Alan Crawford for Radio Atlanta; her name finally changed to the *Mi Amigo*.

... then us the Olga ...



now as the Mi Amigo



Simon Barrett was born in June 1954 in Bromley, Surrey. Educated at Dulwich Prep School and the City of London Public School, he joined *Record Mirror* as a trainee journalist in 1971. After writing about the pop scene for eighteen months Simon Barrett decided to gain first hand knowledge of it. He gave up his job in publishing in favour of a club disc jockey. His job took him to Spain for a summer season, before returning to Britain in 1973. Simon Barrett's experience in journalism found him at the BBC as Assistant Publicity Officer for Radios One and Two.
From there he went back to disc jockeying and in late 1974 Simon joined Radio Caroline until November 1975. Since then he has turned once again to writing and settled in Britain as a broadcaster.

MIAMI