

ON AIR

ON A

SHOESTRING

Today's pirate radio is on-shore
—but even more active

You might think, in these hard, commercial times, that the vacant space around your head (on the outside, that is) is the just about the only thing that's free. You might have to buy every other necessity but the atmosphere is there for the taking/using/breathing, right? Well, no, wrong. The state got it first. And they guard it so closely that your chances of using the airwaves legally for wholesome, civilised communication are slight in the extreme, unless you happen to have BBC or IBA for initials. And Iris Brenda Appleyard needn't get too excited. But despite the might of the airwaves' controlling body, the Home Office, the ether is not as easy to police as, say, the highways of this fair land. And a number of brazen individuals have gone right ahead and trespassed on this sacred territory. Call them pirates or alternative broadcasters, they are increasing in numbers and attracting public support by the day. Well, it's a free country. Isn't it?

On a warm September evening, two suspicious-looking characters emerge from their car. One is carrying a blue hold-all, the other a mysterious collection of aluminium rods and brown cable. Together, they climb one of the hills surrounding Glossop, on the edge of the Pennines to the East of Manchester. It's a hard climb, but fortunately the load is light.

These gentlemen are about to put out test transmissions for a projected new radio service for the good citizens of Glossop. Every Sunday evening (nearly) residents tuning their FM sets to 94.2 MHz at seven o'clock will hear a mixture of music together with an announcement. The announcement says: 'On test transmissions, this is Glossop Radio on 94.2 VHF. If you would like us to stay on the air, please write...' Back to the hill...

Near the top is a clearing among the

bracken, at the centre of which is a little pile of stones. Out of the hold-all comes a wooden tent pole, in two sections, which is seven feet long when assembled. One of the radio enthusiasts fits the mast into the pile of stones to secure it; the other turns a collection of aluminium tubing into a three-element FM aerial. This he fixes to the top of the pole, while cotton guys are extended from both ends of the



aerial to pegs in the ground to make a stable, if somewhat temporary, transmitting aerial.

One operator (we'll call him John) takes two small die-cast boxes out of the bag and connects them first to a battery and then to a small, cheap cassette recorder. A radio is produced and tuned to 94.2 on its FM band. The cassette is played, while the other radio man (we'll call him John too) checks the quality of reception. John tweaks the azimuth setting on the cassette machine's head by ear, something he has clearly done before, many times. The other John checks his watch. It's ten to seven, and getting dark.

The transmitter quality has now passed the test procedure, but what about the power of the transmitter? From his pocket, ace engineer John (the second one) produces a vital piece of test gear. A six-volt torch bulb is connected to a co-ax plug and fitted into the end of one of the die-cast boxes. Hey presto! It lights.

Power is OK, quality OK, the frequency looks about right, all we have to do is wind the tape back to the start, plug the aerial in, and slap on a tone to warm the channel up for the evening's broadcasting. This tone is produced by flicking a switch on the side of the tape recorder. John plugs in the aerial and Radio Glossop is on the air.

At seven o'clock precisely, the tape starts to roll. The Johns retire to a discreet distance to listen to the transmission. What they are doing is illegal, you see. If the forces of law and order come across the transmitting gear the Johns don't want them to come across them too.

WHY DO THEY DO IT?

'We're looking for a sign of appreciation,' says John, 'perhaps someone out there would like to get involved in this.' They want to use the transmissions to generate interest in the people of Glossop to run a station for themselves.

'We'd be prepared to put a lot of time into it, help them get started — even put them in touch with our solicitor,' says John. 'But then they can do what they like. What we'd like to see at the end of this is something run by the people round here, say three or four nights a week, without them having to climb a hill or anything like that. We're just setting an example, showing people that if they want their own radio station it doesn't have to be either expensive or difficult.'

People have been brainwashed into thinking that radio is way up in the air, with the DJs as some sort of gods...

He calls to mind the foyer of the slick commercial station in Manchester, Piccadilly Radio, with its giant cardboard faces of the people who are on the air: 'I was in there and four lads came in and said 'Can you play us a record?' but the woman there said 'No, you have to go home and write in'. Even then they won't play exactly what you want'.

Both Johns have full-time jobs, which limits the amount of time they can spend demonstrating low-tech radio, but they want to show people what can be done with radio. Their ideal would be to have a local radio station without slick superstars, but with an open door to local talent, however quirky or unapologetic.

Perhaps there's someone out there who writes poetry, or can play the flute or the banjo or the xylophone,' says John. 'How many people down there could read some really good bedtime stories?'

So far the Johns have received calls and letters from a handful of people — some musicians wanting publicity for their band, a few people wondering what was going to happen next.

'We're going to hold a meeting,' they say. 'If we get 20 or 30 people along that'll be fine...'

THE MERSEY BEAT

Thirty-odd miles further west, over in Merseyside, a flourishing scene has erupted after the break-up of MAR — Merseyside Alternative Radio. Radio Elenore, Station M, Veronica, Jackie North and Central, operate with what one observer has called an 'uneasy alliance' using various shared frequencies on medium-wave. A 24-hour money-maker is also rumoured but has yet to surface.

Merseyside stations are run from blocks of flats, with nearly-invisible wires strung between one block and the next, and lookouts posted at strategic locations. Until about six months ago, the authorities took little notice, but since then £125 fines have been the order of the day for those caught. Once more, the idea is to bring to the air the voices of ordinary people.

'We talk like a next-door neighbour,' says Jerry from Radio Veronica, 'we don't put on airs and graces. We're just one of them, not something above them, talking down from on high.' Even though pirate broadcasts can sometimes be a bit erratic, Jerry says there's always an audience waiting for him. 'Everybody round here's on the dole, and if they've got no money to go out and have a pint, they'll tune around, waiting for somebody to come up.'

Liverpool stations have seen more than the usual measure of inter-station rivalry and strife. This is aggravated by the problem of frequency congestion, since in this part of England the stronger Irish pirate stations are a force to be reckoned with. There have been some attempts at frequency planning with phone calls across the Irish sea trying to resolve problems of interference, as quiet frequencies become scarce.

There is also a shortage of suitable sites from which to transmit. Not everywhere has two convenient blocks of flats the right distance apart for a transmitting aerial. Blame it on the architects.

'Squatter's rights' prevail on plum sites and plum frequencies. Any station that doesn't make it two weeks running may find its place taken up by someone else.

CHEAP AND EASY

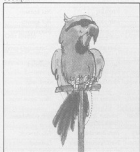
'Setting up a radio station is easy,' claim the people from Electronic Sound Transmission in Birmingham. 'All you need is some basic equipment to make programmes. You don't have to spend a fortune — the greatest virtues required are common sense and a very basic knowledge of electricity.'

'Having said that,' adds EST's Dave Cooper, 'operating a station is now a much more serious business than it used to be, and with £1,000 fines you have to make the broadcasts worthwhile otherwise it can be an expensive waste of time.'

The average British radio listener is, to be frank, dull and apathetic. He or she will tend to accept what's offered without question, and will not use their radio dial properly. If the signal is weaker, as it invariably is from a pirate station, then the programming has got to be stronger to attract a regular audience.

EST are responsible for a six-page guide to operating a local free radio station, which is full of helpful tips on avoiding ego trips and arrests. Their approach to the law is the traditional one — it's better to lose equipment than to get caught yourself.

If the authorities do turn up, and there isn't time to save the equipment, at least save yourselves. The two raids on EST were when we were operating from tower blocks. British Telecom simply turned up, went to the roof and took the gear away. All we were left with were receipts!



RAIDS AND BUSTS

All pirate stations spend much time debating the tactics of the authorities, and trying to figure out how their policy works. Great and glorious tales of myth and legend surround the activities of British Telecom. But lately, several stations in London have been able to operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week, without changing site. They're taking commercials, and by some accounts are managing to accumulate several thousand pounds a week.

The stations are raided, but instead of everyone hiding and allowing the transmitting gear to be removed, someone claims ownership of the transmitter, but doesn't admit to operating it — since operating it is the offence under the Wireless Telegraphy Act. Without a court order, only the police may remove equipment and then only in connection with an arrest and the bringing of charges.

However, the police are only likely to accompany the radio tracking teams if there is a near-certainty of catching someone in the act of operating equipment, or if the Radio Regulatory Department have a watertight case

against someone, in which case the police will have a warrant for their arrest. So without a court order, or police presence, the trackers are obliged to leave the equipment with its owner, and in the meantime the stations are continuing to broadcast seven days a week, day and night.

The bulletin of the pirates' umbrella organisation, Free the Airwaves, sums up this new approach with caution:

'We would only recommend this form of broadcasting to stations that can afford to be prosecuted, and then it is a matter of balancing the costs of prosecution against the advantages of continuous, seven day a week broadcasting.'

For a commercially-run station carrying a lot of advertising, the price of prosecution may not be too high. Alternatively, it would be an appropriate stand for a station committed to legal confrontation as a political tactic. A station with considerable public support might have more to gain through confrontation than by having its energies sapped by continual removal of equipment without protest.

NEW LAWS

People are becoming used to the pirates; taking them very much for granted. A combination of measures, including the new Telecommunications Bill and the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill, will give police the power to seize and detain equipment during a search of premises regardless of whether or not an arrest is made. This would make it impossible for stations to stay on the air continuously — but the public interest and support which a station might attract between now and the new legislation could be substantial.

The money could be even more attractive, as small stations offer radio advertising at rates well below those of the legal commercial stations, bringing radio ads to small businesses for the first time.

This, of course, does not amuse the legal commercial stations at all. They have to pay for music copyright, union rates for employees, full fees for their news, and a whacking great rental to the IBA for the use of its transmitters. Meanwhile, the pirates can knock up a transmitter for £100 or less, pinch Independent Radio News off the air from one of the IBA stations and play records night and day without filling in a single form or contributing one penny to the Performing Rights Society. The Association of Independent Radio Contractors have made a lot of noise, calling for the pirates to be taken to court.

Free the Airwaves is pretty uncompromising in its position, too: 'As we are sure you realise every time you tune around your radio dial, there is a lot wrong with the current broadcasting

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This list of naughty wireless stations was compiled by superleuth Nigel Watkinson and is the most comprehensive yet published. However, some of the information might be a little inaccurate (if not totally wrong) by the time the ink's come off on your fingers. The problem with keeping track of pirate radio stations is that they appear,

put programmes together, start broadcasting, change frequency, get busted, change members and format, get busted, change schedule, give up, start again, get busted, get married... well, you get the idea.

To keep things up to date we would like the stations, or their listeners, to let us know of any changes immediately they come about, so we can update it continuously and run a revised list in a future issue. Mark the envelope 'pirates' and send it to the usual Croydon address shown at the front of the mag.

The list as it stands does show the scale of pirate radio activity in the UK and shows that during any one week there are probably more pirate stations on air than BBC and commercial stations.

The frequencies quoted are the ones that the stations have actually been heard on — many stations, particularly on FM, do not announce the actual frequency they're using and some have transmitters which choose their own frequency

Name	Frequency	Location	Hours of operation	Format
Abbey Radio	1415 kHz AM	Swindon, Suffolk	Weekdays 9-12pm Saturday 9-1:30am	Not known
Alices Restaurant	90.4 MHz FM	Woodford Green, Essex	Saturday 11pm-3am	Sooty rock
Alternative Community Radio	1604 kHz AM 94.2 MHz FM	Basildon, Essex	Sunday Daytime	Not known
Andromeda Independent Radio	103.5 MHz FM	Manchester	Wed 8.30pm-10.30pm	Album rock, community news
Radio Activity	93.0 MHz FM	London	Sunday 3pm-6pm	Rock
Radio Amosda	1404 kHz AM	Wood Green, London	Weekend afternoons	Rock/oldies
Radio Aquarius	92.5 MHz FM	West Wickham, Kent	Monday 7pm-10pm	Not known
Bookham Radio	90.9 MHz FM	Surrey	Irregular	Not known
Border Radio	90.2 MHz FM	Twickenham	Late night, irregular	Not known
Radio Boulogne Littoral	103.7 MHz FM	Boulogne, France	(English) Monday 8.30pm-5am	Magazine prog
Cambridge Community Radio	96.6 MHz FM	Cambridge	Currently inactive	Community prog
Central Radio	1399 kHz AM 104 MHz FM	Merseyside	Saturday noon-7pm Sunday 10am late	Pop/rock
City Sounds	92.0 MHz FM	London	Monday 7pm-10pm	Soul, with rock/funk
Cornat Radio	1386 kHz AM	Woodford Green, London	Sunday noon-12pm	New wave music
County Radio	94.2 MHz FM 1323 kHz AM	Edenbridge, Kent	Sunday 2pm on (Bank Holidays)	Top 40/Album
Radio Caroline	963 kHz AM	Thames Estuary	7am-2am daily	Album rock
Radio City	90.3 MHz FM	Gravesend	Wed 11pm-midnight	Soft rock
Radio Contact	1612 kHz AM	Croydon	Not known	Not known
Douglas Valley Community Radio	102.5 MHz FM	Wigan	Sunday 7pm-12pm	Local info, various music
Radio Dix	90.1 MHz FM 1602 kHz AM	Surrey	Irregular	Not known
Eagle Radio	96.0 MHz FM	Merseyside	Thursday & Sunday	Pop/rock
Electronic Sound Transmission	94.1 MHz FM	Birmingham	Sunday 11am-2pm	Rock/comedy
Epsilon	103.2 MHz FM	London	Friday 9/10pm till late	Magazine prog
Radio Earwig	1132 kHz AM VHF not known	Walsure	Sunday 3-3.45pm	Local info
Radio Elmore	1413 kHz AM	Merseyside	Sat & Sun 9am-9pm	Pop/rock
Radio Eleven	1179 kHz AM	Manchester	Not known	Continuous music
Flashback Radio	92.0 MHz FM 92.5 MHz FM	London	Sunday 6-9pm	Jazz/funk
Freestide Radio	90.2 MHz FM	E London	Fridays	Not known
Radio Piona	1566 kHz AM 1485 kHz AM	Hitchin	Not known	Rock
Radio Floss	1350 kHz AM	London (WC)	Sunday 10am-4pm	Heavy metal
Radio Free City	95.7 MHz FM	Edinburgh	Sunday 7-10pm	Not known
Radio Free London	92.1 MHz FM	London	Sunday 6pm-12pm	Not known
Radio Freedom	1242 kHz AM	Derby	Sunday 3pm-midnight	Rock/heavy metal
Radio Freedom International	98.0 MHz FM	Edinburgh	Sunday 9am-12am	Oldies
Radio Funky	104 MHz FM (varies)	Leeds	Sunday 7-7.50pm	Not known
Horizon FM	94.4 MHz FM	SE London	Wed pm-Thu 10am, Sunday 9-12pm	Jazz/funk
Radio Infinity	92.4 MHz FM	London	Friday 8pm	Soul/funk



almost at random. Some radio dials are so inaccurate that you should allow 0.5 MHz either side for calibration error, though a digital set should be accurate to the digit after the point. AM stations are likely to be difficult to hear well after dark, unless you're close to the transmitter, and may operate daytime only schedules.

The list doesn't include the many shortwave stations, which broadcast (mainly to each other) between 6.2 and 6.3 MHz and around 7 to 7.5 MHz, mainly on Sundays. Some of the stations listed are, however, offshoots of, or connected to, shortwave exercises. Many stations with very local coverage are not listed either and the only way to make sure you don't miss anything is to go systematically and slowly across the whole dial. Which is as good a time as any to point out that tuning into any illegal broadcast is also illegal — although if the airwaves get much busier, it will be difficult to avoid them...



Name	Frequency	Location	Hours of operation	Format
Radio Invicta	92.4 MHz FM	S London	Sunday 9am-3am	Soul/jazz/gospel
Radio Jackie	1323 kHz AM	SW London	24 hours 7 days	Commercial
Radio Jackie North	945 kHz AM	Merseyside	Sat/Sun noon-8pm	Rock
JFM	94.2 MHz FM 103.7 MHz FM	SW London	Planned 24 hour	Jazz/funk
KFM	94.1 MHz FM	Wiltshire	6 hours a day planned	Pop/rock
Radio King	1404 kHz AM	Leicester	Bank holidays	Rock
London Music Radio	94.4 MHz FM	N London	Saturday 6-12pm	Rock/comedy
London Town Radio	91 MHz FM	Middlesex	Not known	Soul/jazz/funk
London Weekend Radio	92.6 MHz FM	Sutton	Saturday 8am-1am	Pop, Top 40
Manchester Alt. Radio	104.0 MHz FM	Manchester	Saturday 7-9pm	Rock/pop
Merseyside Alt. Radio	1137 kHz AM 92.5 MHz FM	Merseyside	Sat/Sun daytime	Pop/rock
Merseyside Free Radio	1139 kHz AM	Merseyside	Sunday 11am-7pm	Rock/Top 40
Radio Nemesis International	1359 kHz AM	Merseyside	Friday 11am-8pm	Pop/rock
Radio North Staffs	97.5 MHz FM	Stoke-on-Trent	Not known	Not known
Radio Nova	1305 kHz AM 92.1 MHz FM 97.6 MHz FM	Derby	Sunday 7pm onwards	Not known
Newtown Radio	90.6 MHz FM	Shrewsbury	Wednesdays	Not known
Our Radio	103.7 MHz FM	W London	Wednesdays 5pm-12pm	Open access
Radio Phoenix	94.4 MHz FM	Wolverhampton	Alternate Sundays	Not known
Phoenix Radio	90.4 MHz FM	Exeter/NE London	Saturday 5-11pm	Rock/new wave
Radio Sovereign	1494 kHz AM	Tewkesham	7am midnight daily	Oldies
Radio Spectrum	91.8 MHz FM	Chertsey	Saturday 6pm-2am	Not known
Radio Suburbia	91.9 MHz FM	Croydon	Saturday 7:30pm-midnight	Not known
SCR (Storeton Community Radio)	1296 kHz AM	Strickenhead	Daily, daytime	Old pop
Shropshire Sound	94.2 MHz FM 1404 kHz AM	Telford	Not known	Not known
Skyline Radio	1413 kHz AM	S London	24 hours 7 days	Pop
Sounds Alternative	1179 kHz AM	Birmingham	Alternate Sunday afternoons	Rock/reggae
South East Sound	1342 kHz AM	SE London	Sunday noon-4pm	Rock, etc
Shoreline 105	105.0 MHz FM	Anglesey	Just testing	Not known
Station M International	1413 kHz AM	Merseyside	Sunday 11am-8pm	Rock
Sunshine Radio	1017 kHz AM 94.2 MHz FM	Leicester, Herts	Daily 6am-8pm	Pop, own news
Sunshine Radio	98.0 MHz FM	Brighton	Sunday 10am-10pm	Rock, etc
Surrey Broadcasting Service	91.9 MHz FM	Chessington	Not known	Not known
Thameside Radio	90.4 MHz FM	London W5	Sunday 7pm-11pm	Top 40/album
Radio Teletar	92.5 MHz FM	South Norwood	Sundays 7pm-9pm	Not known
Radio Terrapin	103.0 MHz FM	Tollerton, Notts	Not known	Pop
Robin Hood Radio	94.4 MHz FM	Nottingham	Testing	Not known
UK Radio	94.0 MHz FM	Wolverhampton	Alternate Sundays, 7pm	Not known
UKGM (United Kingdom Good Music)	90.2 MHz FM	Salisbury	Tuesday 7-10pm	Jazz, blues
Upton Radio	94.4 MHz FM	Chertsey	Sunday 7-9pm	Not known
Radio Veronica	1413 kHz AM	Merseyside	Monday 6-12pm	Unusual rock, etc
Weaver Sound Radio	1406 kHz AM	Cheshire	Some sundays 10am-5pm	Pop/rock
West London Radio	92.4 MHz FM	W London	Wednesday evening	Not known
West Midlands Free Radio	? MHz FM	Wolverhampton	Not known	Not known
Wrekin City Radio	94.2 MHz FM	Telford	Alternate Sundays, noon-4pm	Not known
Radio Xanadu	? kHz AM	W Croydon	Sundays, irregular	Not known

system,' says this organisation in a recent bulletin. The present structures and control in the BBC and the IBA prevent them from stepping outside the bounds of 'average listening figures' and 'programming for all the family'. The trite, bland and patronising sound of the mass media doesn't change much even on the so-called 'local' radio stations.'

THE WORLD SERVICE

Although Home Office activity comes and goes, it's never going to be heavy enough to wipe out the pirates. Elsewhere in Europe, pirate radio has been tolerated and some stations have been legally recognised. In France, the Mitterrand government has recently legalised non-commercial broadcasts from a variety of stations, although the most controversial have been excluded from the legal carve-up and so have returned to piracy. Belgium has legalised small, local VHF stations, while in Norway small radio stations are allowed to use official Norway Radio transmitters during certain hours of the day. Italy has no laws effectively regulating the radio spectrum at all, and so there is a clamour of noise from all shades of taste and opinion across the waveband.

Nearer to home, land-based pirate radio in Ireland is as big a business as commercial radio is over here, with the rather limp regulation over the airways being blatantly disregarded by high-powered and well-financed stations.

The Government has tried to get to grips with the situation, and has published a paper which will establish a Local Radio Authority. The existing pirates hope to get contracts with the Local Radio Authority to provide legal services, but RTE — the existing broadcasting authority — remains hostile to the new plans, even though RTE will have a right to own up to 25 per cent of the shares in any new stations.

KEEPING UP THE PRESSURE

In this country there are more local radio stations on the air than there were in other European countries before their pirate scene took off. Abroad, the pirate stations have usually been the only local broadcasting ever to have been heard in any particular area. But here their strength is still to highlight the weaknesses of the present system. If you like any music a little way from the mainstream of popular taste, you won't hear much of it on the radio.

In the States, of course, your personal hi-fi or stereo tuner can provide music for many tastes 24 hours a day. Many people visiting the States or Canada have wished that they could hear some of the specialist music stations over here.

Stations like Invicta, in South London, have a clear aim to provide this sort of programming, and there's no denying

their popularity. They play soul, jazz, funk and gospel with great dedication and enthusiasm to a large and grateful audience every Sunday.

'You've got to have standards, objectives, aims, otherwise you're like a ship without a rudder,' says Invicta's Mike Strawn. His favourite station, by the way, is Radio 3. Invicta have been running for 14 years. Home Office permitting. He and other pirates have been taking part in various attempts to get new radio stations licensed, but he's a little contemptuous of people who just talk and don't act:

'At least we have the guts to go on the air,' he said, at a recent GLC meeting



held to discuss the future of radio.

Bob from Andromeda Radio in Manchester has similar feelings:

'If Ronan O'Reilly had started holding meetings and electing committees in 1964 he'd still be doing it now,' he told me during one of his practical demonstrations. Ronan O'Reilly, you may remember, was the man behind the offshore pirate ship Radio Caroline, which started transmitting on Easter Sunday 1964 from a ship anchored off the Essex coast. At that time the BBC's pop music output was minuscule, and the pirates of the sixties revolutionised British radio.

Radio 1 was started to appease young listeners after most of the pirates were outlawed in 1967, while the ILR stations came about as a result of Conservative pledges made in the same period.

SO WHAT'S NEXT?

Will the pirates of the eighties be able to provide a similar extension of choice? Their main aim is to give the Home Office an uncomfortable feeling, to prove the case for more choice by providing it, at no small risk to themselves. The

London pirates, in particular, feel that the period before more severe legislation comes into effect gives them the opportunity to provide some quite spectacular demonstrations, if they can pool resources. There's talk of a large, very powerful pirate station combining the best of many smaller stations' programming, with enough people and money to stay on the air no matter what.

At least two local councils have taken an interest in local radio. The GLC is keen, while Nottingham's council are prepared to back a community radio station, outside the BBC and the IBA, with money and resources. Their timetable envisages going on the air in mid 1985. Coun. Robert Howard says:

'Obviously there are a great many hurdles to be jumped before this becomes reality but the will is there and I am very optimistic, particularly if HO support is obtained.'

Ah, but will the Home Office cooperate? Although they were involved in tracking down pirate stations until their duties in this respect were transferred to the DTI, they have listened quietly to various arguments for 'community radio'. This is a polite way of describing some of the programming ideas and formats already practised by the pirates. Ideas for community stations include 'neighbourhood' radio — covering smaller areas than the big, professional local stations. There's also much support for 'community interest' stations — serving soul, jazz, reggae and other musical tastes, as well as providing programmes for ethnic minorities in their own language.

But so far, their tactics have been to delay. No experiments in legal community radio will take place until after a big international conference in Geneva at the end of next year. Even then, there's no promise of any positive action at all. Unlike CB — which was legalised after the largest outbreak of mass lawbreaking ever seen on these shores — support for new broadcasting services is still not widespread enough for the authorities to feel bound to make concessions.

Meantime, on hilltops, blocks of flats and bedsits up and down the country, Free Radio eighties-style continues to prove that you don't need £750,000 from wealthy friends to start a radio station, or the backing of Auntie BBC's bureaucrats. The list of stations gives some idea what to expect from this band of dedicated amateurs. The best time to listen is usually Sundays (they have to pay the tracking engineers overtime, you see, so they're less likely to come out).

But remember, won't you, that it's not only illegal to broadcast without a licence. It's also illegal to listen to these broadcasts. So perhaps you'd better not.

Norman MacLeod