

# UNOFFICIAL RADIO

by John Campbell, Newcastle, Australia



Thanks to the excellent articles by Larry Magne and Carol Feil on clandestine stations in the 1976 and 1977 editions of the WRTH, and to the publicity which European offshore pirates have attracted over more than 10 years, it is easy to appreciate that there is a whole world of broadcasting which is less official than the world described year by year in the "white pages" of WRTH. But are political clandestines and offshore pirates really the best examples of unofficial radio? Probably not; to maintain a successful station of this type over a long period requires budgets, permanent staff, and all the trappings of a regular broadcasting enterprise. The necessary organization is provided by groups, like thinly-disguised commercial companies for the longer-lived offshore pirates and the Spanish Communist Party for Radio España Independiente, which are definitely official and public in some sense, even if they are not officially engaged in broadcasting.

By this interpretation, clandestines are merely semi-official. A truly unofficial broadcaster is one which arises spontaneously, with little or no organization and certainly no organizational backing. Do stations that fit this description actually exist? Certainly! European listeners may have heard of them already as Free Radio stations or hobby pirates. Unofficial broadcasting is most strongly developed in Europe, but it is found to an increasing extent in North America, and there is occasional activity in other parts of the world too.

The story of unofficial radio is difficult to piece together, because sources of information are even harder to find than in the case of clandestine stations. This article is therefore designed to give a personal view of the state of unofficial radio, and also to persuade listeners who are unfamiliar with the subject that it is a subject well worth their time and attention.

## Free Radio, hobby pirates, or . . . ?

Particularly in Britain and the Netherlands, where the greatest numbers of non-legal unofficial stations operated by one man or by a few friends exist, the choice of a phrase to describe the stations is a delicate exercise. The programming on most of these stations is modelled on the style of the best of the old offshore pirates, with lively and informed presentation of music (e.g. advanced forms of rock music) which does not get a sufficient airing on more official channels, so that it seems obvious to give

them a name that includes the word "pirates". But, if you use this word too casually in the presence of some operators, it may earn you a punch on the nose. The reason is that, among the unofficial radio community, there are people who insist on the name of Free Radio, to suggest a form of broadcasting that is independent of the disadvantages and pressures of official radio without the disreputable overtones which the pirate label possesses.

Some European stations live up to the Free Radio ideal, while some are as rough and piratical as Blackbeard or Captain Henry Morgan. Therefore it seems that the best compromise for someone who is trying to describe the whole field with one phrase is to coin a new one, like Unofficial Radio.

## Where to find the action

At the time of writing, unofficial radio is at its most vigorous in Western Europe. It is an international tradition for stations to operate irregular schedules on Sundays between about 09.00 and 14.00 in the stations' local times, or about 08.00-14.00 GMT, with frequencies between 6200 and 6300kHz. Chasing stations on this shortwave band can be a frustrating business: broadcasts are most often no more than 30 minutes in length, sometimes only a few minutes long (if the police in the neighbourhood near the station are very active, for example), and on occasional Sundays no stations at all can be heard. Normally, though, an average Sunday of listening produces three to five stations. At the most lively periods, e.g. near Christmas, I have heard as many as 15 in one day, but this is exceptional.

Apart from pressure by official agencies that try to put these stations off the air, a schedule is a very chancey affair. The most original schedule I have ever received from any station was from a broadcaster in the west of England who was well known a few years back. The chief engineer wrote that he tried to keep to a 10.00-10.30 GMT Sunday timetable, but that he had certain difficulties. Before each broadcast, he had to erect an antenna between two tall trees in a particular field owned by a local farmer. Therefore, broadcasts would not take place on Sundays when it was raining in his small West Country village - a condition which Continental listeners might be expected to have problems in checking for themselves. Then, even on Sundays when the weather was fine, there would be no broadcast if the farmer had chosen that day to leave his bull in the field.



For a long time, Dutch stations have been appearing between 1610 and 1660kHz late at night on Fridays and Saturdays. In the past, most of the stations made no announcements, and specialized in playing snatches of barrel-organ music. While there are still some stations which behave in this unsociable way, most Dutch stations now announce their names, along with addresses at which listeners' letters can reach them. The most remarkable unofficial radio phenomenon of 1976 has been the sudden increase in the number of Dutch stations operating in the ranges 1320-1360 and 1610-1660kHz between about 22.45 and 02.15 GMT. The open season for the Dutch stations starts at 22.45 twice each week: on Friday nights, and again on Saturday nights. One proprietor of a Dutch station, in a letter to me, estimated that there were 2000 stations in the Netherlands! This is obviously an over-estimate, but more than 40 different stations have been reported by European listeners in the last year. Most of the stations seem to be in rural districts in the east and north of the Netherlands, and relatively few in the heavily-populated west.

Occasionally, in the 08.00-14.00 GMT Sunday period when 6200-6300kHz is in use, a few Dutch barrel-organ stations have been heard between 7390 and 7420kHz. Listeners may find it a good idea to try this part of the radio spectrum on Sundays occasionally in the future, because the management of one British unofficial station has suggested recently that 7.6-7.9MHz is a more suitable frequency range than 6.2-6.3MHz. A few stations have tried tests between 9.2 and 9.3MHz, 9.9 and 10MHz, and 15 and 15.05MHz, but they have not been successful in attracting an audience.

Yet another frequency range which repays attention on Sundays is 6.6-6.65MHz, the so-called EC or Echo Charlie band. In Britain, a small but apparently dedicated collection of pirates whose main interest is in conducting conversations with each other on the air has existed for a long time. Occasionally one or two of these stations may give out mailing addresses for listeners, and play some music. At least two of the pop stations which have used 6.2-6.3MHz in the past have graduated to that exalted status from their humble beginnings in the EC band.

British mediumwave operators have shown a fondness for 1320-1360kHz for several years. Traditionally, they use this part of the mediumwave band both on Sundays (when sometimes they run as late as 17.00 GMT) and at the times on Friday and Saturday nights when the Dutch stations are also active. Places where the activity is greatest at present are London, Essex, East Anglia, Birmingham, Manchester, Leicester, Edinburgh and Belfast.

Late on Friday and Saturday nights, European listeners should not overlook the possibility that there will be some unofficial activity on their FM bands too. This is particularly true in London.

The Western European stations on all the traditional frequencies use powers which are typically between 10 and 100 watts. Occasionally some 6.2-6.3MHz stations conduct special tests for North America, arranged by DX clubs there, even though one may think that the low powers make this a futile exercise. Nevertheless, three and possibly four European stations have been heard by American listeners in the past six years.

The unofficial radio habit has even spread eastwards, to the Soviet Union. There, public attacks on "radio hooligans" do nothing to reduce the

numbers of unofficial stations. On the contrary, the evidence which leaks out of the country from time to time is that the numbers are continually increasing. Probably there are even more unofficial Russian than unofficial Dutch stations. They fill an obvious need for private communication, and newspaper correspondents' reports therefore credit them with a much wider variety of programming than the stations which I have mentioned so far. Pop music is much in demand, although the music is ancient by Western European standards, going from precious smuggled Beatles records all the way back to Bill Haley. However, the music fare is varied by talks on everything from cooking to do-it-yourself sex education. Stations have been heard scattered over the mediumwave band above 1100kHz, up to 1700kHz, and even on the 60-metre shortwave band. They broadcast at nights, and seem to favour no particular night of the week.

North America has its own traditions of unofficial broadcasting. Stations are not very numerous, and not very long-lived, but there are regular reports of broadcasts between 1610 and 1650kHz and at the high-frequency end of the 80-metre amateur band. Most recently, stations observed have been "WCPR" from Brooklyn, N.Y., with 100 watts on 1620kHz, "KLOG" from near Chicago on 3873kHz, and a station on 3923kHz, probably on the west coast of the USA. In the local time of their regions, such stations usually broadcast from mid-night to about 3 a.m. Occasionally American stations have been heard too in the ranges 6150-6210kHz and 7000-7100kHz at these times.

There are no patterns of North American FM-base use for unofficial radio, but occasionally some activity may be heard in the larger cities. Larry Magne in Philadelphia has heard several FM pirates over the years, including "Radio Free North Philadelphia".

In other parts of the world, unofficial broadcasting is fairly sporadic, so that no hard and fast rules can be laid down.

#### **A selection of European information**

The unofficial radio scene is always changing. Some stations which were regular broadcasters in the past, and which were known well outside the ranks of unofficial radio specialists, are still remembered even though they have now disappeared. Probably the best examples of famous past stations are World Music Radio and ABC Europe, which held a virtual monopoly on 6250kHz on Sunday mornings for several years, and set a standard for others to follow. More recent but extinct stations that are well remembered for the quality of presentation of their programmes include the German station Radio Valentine. The name of World Music Radio is still alive; programmes produced by its volunteer staff are now broadcast over Radio Andorra on 6230kHz. According to rumours, Radio Valentine is negotiating for a similar arrangement.

Because of the rapid changes in the identities of the most active stations, no detailed list is likely to remain fully accurate for very long. By careful selection of stations, however, it is possible to make a list which should stay useful over much of the lifetime of the present WRTH. This list is given below. A station's presumed country of location is given in brackets after its name. The letter "v" following a frequency indicates that the frequency is variable.

The final item of information for each station is



	<b>kHz</b>	
R. Gloria (England)	1187	91 Scalpay Close, Leicester, England
Tomcat R. (Netherlands)	1330	Postbus 47, Oude Pekela, Netherlands
R. Jackie (England)	1331	West Molesey, Surrey, England
Centrale R. Omroep (Netherlands)	1331	Postbus 77, Raalte, Netherlands
London Music R. (England)	1358	19 Newport Court, London W.C.2, England
R. Valleri (Ireland)	6203	134 Eastworth Rd., Chertsey, Surrey KT16 8DT, England
Condor R. (Germany)	6207v	Postfach 512, D-444 Rheine, FRG.
Westside R. (Ireland)	6210	c/o Doctor Don, 90 Ranelagh, Dublin 6, Ireland
R. Casablanca (Netherlands)	6220v	Postbus 428, Almelo, Netherlands
Freaks R. (Netherlands)	6225	c/o Pol, Den Burgstraat 1, Amsterdam-Nieuwendam, Netherlands
R. Northsea International (England)	6225	Postbus 41, Dedemsvaart, Netherlands
R. Gemini (England)	6234	6 Farm Way, Bushey, Hertfordshire, England
R. Verona (Netherlands)	6250v	Postbus 81, Vroomshoop, Netherlands
Skyport R. (England)	6250	134 Eastworth Road, Chertsey, Surrey KT16 8DT, England
	or 6260	Ken Place, Norwell, Newark, Nottinghamshire NG23 6JX, England
Britain R. International (England)	6260	42 Arran Close, Cambridge, England
ABC England (England)	6270	Kent Place, Norwell, Newark, Nottinghamshire NG23 6JX, England
R. Solent City International (England - Isle of Wight)	6280	

an address to which listeners' mail can be sent. Almost all stations welcome clear and detailed reception reports, and issue QSL-cards or other confirmations of reception quickly. Listeners who are sure that they live in the same country as a station should include a stamped addressed envelope with their letters; other listeners should send 2 or 3 International Reply Coupons if a QSL is desired.

This list omits any mention of Scandinavian stations, and does not say much about German unofficial radio. I apologise to listeners and station operators in those countries, but it is my impression that Scandinavian stations are not on the air as frequently as Dutch or British broadcasters. Until recently there was much regular activity by German stations, but following some closures there has been an unusually lean period lately.

At the time of writing, the best all-round programmes are being produced by ABC England, which is heard on the first Sunday of each month. ABC England features an excellent DX program, which is also the best source of up-to-the-minute information on what is happening in unofficial radio.

Following the disappearance of the very informative magazine of the Clandestine Listener's Club of Germany because the editor could not spare the time to continue it, the best current magazine containing unofficial radio information is "Free Radio Focus", obtainable from 13 The Chase, Crawley, West Sussex RH10 6HW, England. The cost per issue is 15 pence plus SAE, or 2 IRCs.

As a supplementary source of information, with special attention to Scandinavia, the bulletin "Free Radio Supporter" is probably still being produced by the FRL, Postboks 46, N-6650 Surnadal, Norway. The FRL mailing address is also used by several stations to receive listeners' letters.

Finally, a list of unofficial stations and addresses is produced regularly by the Dansk DX-Lytterklub, Kystvejen 27, DK-8000 Aarhus, Denmark, for a cost of 5 IRCs.

#### Unofficial radio novelties

Not all stations conform to the stereotype of the pop pirate, with audiences composed entirely of pop freaks. Three examples should be enough to illustrate this claim.

In the official world, there are (amongst other categories) pop stations and religious stations. There are pop pirates too, so why not religious pirates? The answer to the question was provided in 1974 by the appearance of a genuine religious pirate, Jesus Radio, on 6235.7kHz. Jesus Radio, which has already been mentioned in Larry Magne's article in the 1976 WRTH, produced half-hour programmes combining classical music with strange religious services derived from the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England. The overall effect was unusual, but it made for compulsive listening. The station's first address was c/o a bona fide priest of the Church of England in a parish in Somerset, but this was soon changed to a more anonymous forwarding address. Perhaps the priest felt that he could be held responsible if the programmes lapsed into heresy. Jesus Radio seems to be no longer active - unfortunately, because it brightened the Sunday mornings of many European listeners through its unique ability to put something different into unofficial radio.

Alternative technology is a popular subject now that the need to conserve energy and behave in ecologically respectable ways is obvious. Magazines on this technology (particularly in England and France) have often carried articles on alternative communications, another name for unofficial radio. Therefore it is no surprise that festivals or exhibitions of alternative technology have been known to give birth to their own unofficial radio stations. For example, during such an occasion in Bath, England, BBC Radios 1 through 4 on the FM band were rivalled for local listeners' attention by Radio 5, the Voice of the Comtek (community technology) Exhibition, on 104MHz. Radio 5 publicized the exhibition, described the exhibits, and exhorted listeners to be more ecological, e.g. to give up their cars in favour of bicycles.

One of the longest-lived and best-known Sunday morning shortwave stations is Radio Valleri, which has broadcast since 1973 from near Dublin in Ireland. Active shortwave listeners who lament the fact that Ireland has had no official shortwave broadcasts of any kind since about 1961 have turned enthusiastically to Radio Valleri in the hope of receiving an Irish QSL at last. For this reason, and



because the standard of programming attracted many other listeners who were concerned simply to enjoy the broadcasts, Ireland itself received favourable publicity of a kind which official activities like tourist campaigns were unable to duplicate. Several offices of the Irish tourist board and Aer Lingus in Europe received enquiries in which the name of Radio Valleri was mentioned. Finally, a question was asked in the Irish parliament about this mysterious source of publicity. An ironic question, because one of the government's old arguments for closing down the official shortwave transmitter at Athlone was that shortwave broadcasting was far too expensive a way of promoting tourism and a favourable Irish image abroad. Through Radio Valleri, unofficial radio has conclusively disposed of this argument. The total operating budget of Radio Valleri in its entire lifetime is not known, but it can scarcely have been more than \$250!

#### **Stations outside Europe and North America**

Here is a random selection of information about stations far from the centres of unofficial radio. It shows little pattern, except that stations in a given area tend to operate near the frequencies of regular stations which are most popular with listeners in that area.

A long-lived pirate, specializing in old light and popular music, broadcasts on 11725kHz from about 15.00 to after 16.00 GMT. No identification or address is given. This station is probably in southern India or Sri Lanka.

According to the Melbourne listener Geoff Cosier, a Victorian station with the fictitious call-sign 3BW has been heard on 6176kHz until sign-off around 09.00 GMT. 3BW has previously been heard just above the high-frequency end of the mediumwave band, a position in which a small group in Mildura, Victoria, plans to operate a new station Radio Sunraysia soon. Radio Sunraysia is predicted to be on 1610kHz.

Actual announcements of plans to broadcast are rare in Australia and New Zealand. Numerically, probably the majority of unofficial stations in these countries conform to no plan, and are the ephemeral products of experiments by schoolchildren with a taste for electronic construction. For example, 5XYZ "The Voice of Gilberton" has been heard on 595kHz in South Australia with 2 watts, and there were some radio experiments by children in Hamilton, New Zealand, in mid-1976. A better-known spontaneous station, which is now famous in New Zealand DX history, is Radio Guano, which was heard by excited listeners at a DX camp a few years ago. From the programmes, Radio Guano seemed to be located on Ocean Island in the Gilbert Islands group, but eventually it was discovered to be a "service" provided by a fellow-DXer from a site close to the camp. The joke was not entirely on the listeners: several of them are now the proud possessors of the extremely rare Radio Guano QSL, and claim to have verified the only New Zealand-based rival ever to Radio New Zealand on shortwave.

New Zealand has also seen an interesting example of unofficial radio in the service of the community, according to the New Zealand DX Times. The operator of Radio Sunshine, which broadcast on 1580kHz with 25 watts from a part of the Southland region rather remote from official stations of the New Zealand Broadcasting Corporation, was caught

and put off the air early in 1977. There were prompt complaints from his local community, which considered that he had been providing very welcome entertainment that was more popular than what could be obtained, with worse reception, from the NZBC. Moreover, because of the isolation of his district, he had been on the air for about four years before the authorities realized that he was there at all! In court, he was fined \$96 and his equipment was confiscated – a sad ending to a harmless and probably quite socially useful station.

It is not unknown for lonely or bored operators of point-to-point utility stations to come back onto the air, when they are not on official duties, with programmes and station names of their own invention. At least this saves the aspiring unofficial broadcaster the trouble of building his own transmitter. An example heard from Guyana in 1972 was the Porknockers' Broadcasting Service, on 3060kHz in theory and about 2788kHz in fact. The theory, of course, would take the station close to the frequencies of both the official Guyanese broadcasting organizations in the 90-metre band, and was no doubt intended to attract listeners away from them.

Finally, in countries with a somewhat relaxed attitude to administration, stations which appear unofficially (perhaps because someone interested in radio wants to build a transmitter in his spare time) in districts remote from the capital cities and the administrators have a habit of becoming legitimate eventually, if they survive long enough. Sometimes they are even taken under the wing of a local government authority, and become the broadcasting outlet for that authority. It may be invidious to name names, but some Colombian and Indonesian stations listed in the official white pages of WRTH had their beginnings in very unofficial circumstances.

#### **A nursery for clandestine stations**

Unofficial radio stations can be separated from the much better-known category of clandestine stations, but there is no simple or sharp dividing line. The basic distinction is that one type is "political" while the other is not. But it can take only a small change in the political or social climate to turn even a hobby pirate operator into a clandestine broadcaster overnight. Therefore the listener specializing in clandestines should pay some attention to the un-officials, who may after all be about to provide him with his next new station.

A classic example of the transition is the case of Radio Free Scotland. In the recent past, three different Radio Free Scotlands have been active. One of the stations, and possibly two, have been unofficial stations that have merely changed names and programming on special occasions, such as the British elections in 1974. When political ferment is absent in Scotland, the normal unofficial identities are resumed. There is an exact parallel with the transformations of Clark Kent into Superman and back to Clark Kent. Listeners in Scotland may even have some difficulty in keeping up with all the different Radio Free Scotlands that may be on offer during election campaigns, but they can try their luck by monitoring the BBC Radio 4 frequencies on both the mediumwave and FM bands immediately after the BBC closes down, and the range 6220-6290kHz. They should also keep their TV receivers running; the broadcasts have been known to appear on the BBC 1 TV sound channel after the regular



occupiers have closed down for the night.

Mediumwave hobby pirate activity in Northern Ireland has also served as a nursery for politically-oriented stations, particularly when the unauthorized use of radio as a means of putting over points of view was at its peak between 1971 and 1973. Once again, the BBC Radio 4 frequency (and a spread of 20kHz either side of it) is the best place to hear what is happening between 23.50 and 01.30 British Standard Time on most nights of the week. A station need not be converted permanently to clandestine status, or even to fit one type of description during a single broadcast. If an announcer interrupts his pop programme for five minutes to criticize a decision on parking regulations by his district's council, is he acting as an unofficial broadcaster, a clandestine, or both?

The most interesting new clandestine station of 1977 is French. As anybody who has read the unofficial decorations among (and often pasted over) the advertisements on the Paris Métro can testify, the Parisian fashion of 1977 is Ecology. In support of the fashion, the unofficial ecological broadcaster Radio Verte has appeared. Because of its programming, Radio Verte belongs properly in an article on clandestine stations, particularly because of what it says against the French government's policy on nuclear power stations. However, I mention it here because I have heard the comment that Radio Verte grew out of an experiment in unofficial radio. As ecological enthusiasm spreads, particularly to England and the Netherlands, we can expect to hear more high-minded pirates converting themselves and their stations to ecological missionary broadcasters.

### The Italian situation

The unofficial radio scene in Italy deserves a whole article to itself, preferably based on detailed first-hand research. I regret that I have not visited Italy since the present wave of activity started. Therefore I can give only a short and incomplete account of what must now be the Paradise of unofficial radio.

Like the weekend broadcasters in London, the first few pirates in Italy operated on the FM band. Several were unlucky enough to be caught, and were put on trial. Somewhere along the line, an intelligent broadcaster or his lawyer discovered an ingenious defence: Article 21 of the Italian constitution, which guarantees freedom of communications. Eventually, the question of Article 21 was submitted to the Italian constitutional court, which handed down a decision whose effect was not only to give a green light to unofficial radio, but also to declare that the broadcasting monopoly which Radiotelevisione Italiana had enjoyed since the war was unconstitutional!

The sole limitation on the scope of the judgment is that it has been interpreted to apply to broadcasting whose range is only local, not national. But, since FM has been the traditional Italian unofficial medium, most operators comply automatically with that limitation. (An exception, Gamma Radio, flourished briefly on 6225kHz, but has now disappeared.)

The growth of unofficial broadcasting in the last 18 months has been amazing. Not only are there at least 500 stations of all degrees of sophistication, but it has been estimated that over 100 TV stations are active too. In Rome, every TV channel is full, and over-full, mostly with test cards, sometimes with old

films, occasionally with visual material produced by the stations themselves. The FM band also would gladden the heart of any classical anarchist.

Many of the stations do not restrict themselves to pop music, but present views on politics, sociology, education, the "proper" psychological outlook for good living, and so on. Political conservatives have made protests that up to half of all stations are devoted to political radicalism, which seems to be one of the main trends of Italian unofficial radio. However, short of a change of the law or the interpretation of the Constitution (which is unlikely to come from coalition governments in the present or foreseeable future state of Italian politics), those stations will hardly disappear spontaneously. The old saying, "If you can't beat them, join them", is relevant: the best way for non-radical political views to be heard is for new non-radical political stations to take to the air.

To anyone with curiosity about novel forms of broadcasting, the best advice I can give is: go and hear. Unofficial radio, Free Radio, pirate radio (and TV) . . . Italy has it all.

### How legal?

Needless to say, the Italian experiment is at present special to Italy alone. Elsewhere, unofficial stations are hunted vigorously (but sometimes rather laboriously, as in New Zealand) by the telecommunications authorities and the police, and their life expectancy is short unless their operations are planned with great care. As it is undeniable that the stations are broadcasting on frequencies not allocated to them, all of them are pirates in at least a technical sense. During court actions against station personnel who have been detected in the act of broadcasting, it is common for the prosecution to declare that the stations have been causing interference to important legitimate transmissions such as ship-to-shore communications. Sometimes this is true – although offshore pirates of the 1960s were more serious and consistent sources of interference – but sometimes a prosecutor who has put up this claim has been guilty of severely bending the truth in an attempt to make his case more convincing. The most thoughtful unofficial radio operators have been trying to avoid even the possibility of interference by choosing frequencies whose legitimate owners vacate them at specific times of the day. This is part of the explanation for the recent expansion of activity in Europe in the range 1320-1360kHz late on Friday and Saturday nights.





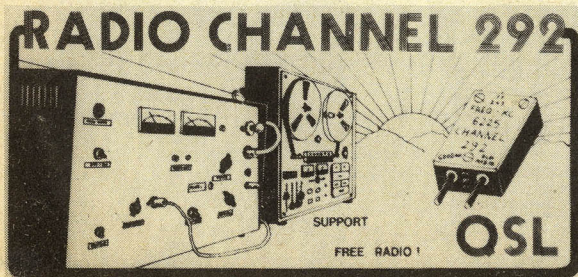
Enthusiasts in the Free Radio corner of the unofficial picture argue that their stations provide a service to listeners which is not duplicated by the larger and more impersonal broadcasting organizations. They also claim, correctly, that the act of transmitting gives as much pleasure to the technicians and announcers as to the listeners. So, is there a way of satisfying the desires of these people which nevertheless breaks no laws or rules?

One answer comes to mind: change the rules. The present tendency, encouraged by developments in electronic technology; is for point-to-point, marine and similar utility transmissions to move away from HF towards VHF and UHF facilities, especially with the help of satellite communications. The fact that this will free many HF channels for other uses is already being taken into account in the preliminary discussions for the forthcoming World Administrative Radio Conference, which will lead to a new plan for frequency allocation in broadcasting. Present unofficial broadcasters who aim for an international audience co-exist happily in slices of the HF spectrum which add up to about 100kHz. Why not reserve a specific 100kHz range for Free Radio, hobby pirates and all intermediate shades of opinion? For unofficial stations wanting only a local audience, an FM allocation on the Italian model is a ready-made solution.

This suggestion, alas, is probably too radical for governments to consider, since governments have a habit of exercising tight monopolies on broadcast communications, and issue licences only to themselves and their friends. Even so, it is worth some debate. It is not a suggestion for a complete free-for-all: obviously stations should still be required to respect all the general categories of law (e.g. laws against libel and sedition) which responsible citizens observe in daily life, and to maintain good technical standards, e.g. in modulation, frequency stability and absence of interference to other stations. Most unofficial operators regard it as a point of pride to achieve these standards, and exercise strong reforming pressure on those few of their fellows who are not so careful. The pressure has only been needed to improve the engineering quality of broadcasts: in five years of listening to unofficial stations I have never met any example of a programme containing libellous or similarly illegal material.

One counter to the suggestion of a free unofficial HF band is that it has been tried already by accident, with unfortunate results. This trial, of course, is Citizens' Band radio in the USA, where the sheer number of stations has made it impractical for even the technical regulations to be enforced effectively. The types of communication for which CB was first intended are now extremely difficult, because of interference, congestion, and frivolous or inconsiderate operators. There is a risk that legalized unofficial radio will go the way of CB, but it is a very small one, because there is an essential difference between the two cases. CB has grown because the mass marketing of ready-made cheap equipment has encouraged large numbers of what the Chinese would call "bad elements" to go on the air thoughtlessly, by impulse and without any form of self-discipline. Two factors are against this happening in the case of unofficial radio, provided that its HF frequency allocation or choice is well away from the 27MHz CB band. Firstly, the past history of free and pirate radio indicates that the demand is far less broadly based than for CB, and not large enough to make the production of cheap special equipment a commercial proposition for manufacturers. Secondly, and more important, the simple fact that CB now exists means that the "bad elements" will be attracted into that activity, and filtered off from unofficial radio.

The argument for a small part of the radio spectrum to be reserved for unofficial broadcasting is a reasonable one. Thanks to the constitutional court, it is now taken for granted in Italy. It is the same argument which, on a miniature scale, has justified the city council of Boston in setting up a large blank graffiti board in a public park, with the inscription "Let every man his own censor be". Most significantly, the same argument is a familiar and respected part of the history of political thought and philosophy, particularly in the 19th century. The political fashions of the present are against the idea, and some naive political spokesmen would have us believe that things were never different. The reply to this state of affairs is that things **have** been different, and that fashions can be changed. It will be interesting to see if the various groups campaigning for free radio in European countries will be able to rise to the challenge of bringing about such a change.







**RHI**

CONFIRMING  
YOUR REPORT ON OUR  
BROADCAST ON 6235 KHZ,  
ON 1973-7-15, FROM 10.10 TO 10.25 GMT.

RADIO H.I. INTERNATIONAL  
Test transmissions

## RADIO SCOTLAND INTERNATIONAL

broadcasts on:

MW 242 metres - 1250 kHz 0.010 kW  
SW 49m band - 6225 kHz 0.012 kW  
\* SW 31m band - 972 kHz 0.03 kW

## OCEAN GATE RADIO

P.O. Box 512, D-444 Rheine,  
West - Germany

Dear J. R. Campbell

Thank you very much for your reception report  
dated 25.5.75 on 6130 KHz at 0.15 GMT.



## RADIO TIFFANY INTERNATIONAL QSL - CARD

Hi J.A. CAMPBELL

Confirming your reception

Of April 20th 1974

Time 1039-1100 GMT SMT

RADIO TIFFANY'S  
SUPPORTERKLUBB  
FACK 1  
100 73 Stockholm 44  
SWEDEN

Power 15 Watts FREQ 6237 kHz

ANTENNA Halfwave dipole

## WMR

Date: 22/6/75  
Freq: 6350 kHz  
Time: 0900-0930 GMT  
Power: 0.05W



**QSL**



## radio Valentine

Frequency: 625 kHz 49m.

Power: 50W

Time: 1000-1100

Date: 18.7.75 SINFO 4573252

**QSL**

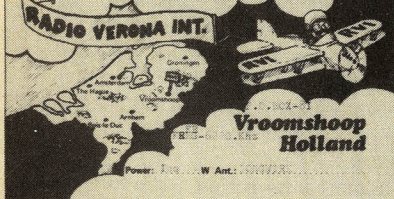
Address: D-26 Offenburg P.O. Box 1823

Thank you for your reception report

To Mr. J.A. Campbell c/o prof. Radisson

with kind regards from

**RADIO VERONA INT.**



**Vroomshoop  
Holland**

Power: 100 W Ant.: 10000000



## ALL STAR RADIO TEST TRANSMISSIONS

Frequency: 6230 kHz

Power: 10 W

Time: 1000-1100 GMT SINFO

Date: 18.15.75 4573252

**QSL**

Address: D-26 Offenburg P.O. Box 1823

Thank you for your reception report

TO: Mr. J.A. Campbell

## RADIO FREEDOM FROM SCOTLAND

49 Meterband Shortwave

6220 KHz

35 Watts

mailing address:  
Free Radio Enterprises  
15 Springfield Place,  
Radin, Midlothian,  
Scotland.



**QSL**

received from Radio