

## Radio rebels in mystery base blast out pop

by MAGGIE RICHARDS

RADIO rebels operating from a mystery base in Watford began blasting pop music to South West Hertfordshire over the weekend.

Transmitting on 236 metres on the medium waveband, the pirates reported strong radio reception in Watford and Hemel Hempstead.

About 10 students armed with home-made transmitting equipment were responsible for the weekend's broadcasts. Calling themselves Radio South West Herts, the rebels plan more broadcasts in the future.

The weekend's transmissions, they claim, were a prelude to regular illegal broadcasts.

Said a member of the radio group: "We are just testing at the moment and it is going very well. The actual signal is very strong in Watford and Hemel Hempstead. We have broadcast several times before, but this is the first time we are running at high power."

The rebels say they want to offer an alternative to the BBC's Radio One programmes.

"We appeal mostly to young people who want a change from Radio One. We are not trying to give better programmes, we are just aiming to present an alternative," said one of the pirate operators.

The rebels are keeping a constant watch for any attempt to trace their base by the GPO.

"If the GPO come we will try and conceal the transmitting gear. If the police come we will have to give ourselves up I suppose," said a spokesman for the group.

# Tele pirates told 'You must be joking'

by PATRICK STODDART

"DON'T TRY IT" was the advice given today to a would-be Hertfordshire pirate television station by the Post Office.

The station, allegedly a branch of Radio Free Herts, claims it will broadcast a Top of the Pops style show just after midnight on Tuesday, on the BBC-1 channel.

A spokesman said: "We're not going to say where the programme will be transmitted from, but we're recording it this weekend in North London and it will be picked up in Watford, St Albans and Hemel Hempstead."

The anonymous tele-pirate added: "It is the first

truly independent television station in Britain."

The Post Office expressed little concern at the announcement.

"Pirate radio is one thing — all you need is a couple of kids with a tiny transmitter and a tape recorder, and you can cut into regular broadcasts fairly simply and cheaply.

"Television is another matter. You need very potent and expensive equipment. I doubt if the sort of kids who get themselves involved in this sort of thing are in that league.

"We'd have them in ten minutes flat, so our advice to them is don't waste your time."

## THE DODGERS — 2

### Pop pirates go back on the air

RADIO SOUTH Herts, a pirate radio station operated by a group of Hemel Hempstead schoolboys, was back on the air at the weekend after a break of several months.

The pop music station was being run from the back of a van and a spokesman said: "We're hoping to broadcast regularly now."

Radio South Herts first started broadcasting about a

year ago during the school holidays. But it closed down at the end of last summer.

"There was no particular reason for us stopping at that time," said one of the organisers. "Of course, there's always the problem that you've got to keep moving around so the Post Office can't trace you.

"Getting caught is a gamble we're prepared to take for the sake of giving local teenagers a good pop music station."

### TV pirates go on air — without pictures

TELEVISION pirates went on the air in Hertfordshire last night — without pictures.

When BBC-1 closed down shortly after midnight the pirates took over the channel.

But their claim that they would transmit in sound and vision making them the country's first pirate television station was not fulfilled.

Their anonymous announcer apologised for the lack of pictures.

"There has been a technical hitch but we will continue to broadcast in sound tonight and for the rest of the week," he said.

And he promised: "Stay tuned, pictures will follow."

But a Post Office spokesman today poured cold water on the claim.

"It is only a little more difficult to come on the air on a television frequency in sound only than it is to put out an illegal radio broadcast. Pictures are something different.

"If they plan to put out pictures they will have to dig pretty deep in their pockets to pay for the equipment. It can be bought but it is expensive.

"They will have to spend a pretty penny and if they continue they could end up behind bars."

A spokesman for the pirate station Radio South Herts, who contacted the Echo to announce their television bid, said they were a group of people in their early 20s who were "interested in communications."

"We do not agree with the virtual monopoly that exists in broadcasting. You don't need a licence to publish and we believe the same freedom should exist in broadcasting. Why should the Government have the power to decide who is allowed to broadcast?"

But the Post Office spokesman added: "We cannot have anarchy on the air or a free-for-all battle for frequencies. There must be controls.

"These people are breaking the law and the consequences could be serious."

# PIRATES THREATEN AIR SAFETY

**RADIO PIRATES** operating in the area could endanger aircraft using Luton Airport, a Government spokesman said today.

The warning came after a pirate used the BBC-1 television channel after midnight to beam out a programme of taped music and announcements. They had planned a pirate TV show — but failed to transmit it due to “technical difficulties.”

Today a spokesman for the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications told the

Evening Post: “The pirates can be dangerous. There have been cases in the past of their broadcasts interrupting pilots air-to-ground contact.

“If this happens at a vital moment during landing procedure, it could cause a fatal crash.”

The pirates — who call themselves Radio South Herts — plan to become the country's first TV pirates. They took over the BBC-1 channel on Monday night after close down and presented a sound only broadcast.

The anonymous announcer claimed a technical hitch had prevented them putting out pictures. He promised that sound and vision broadcasts would follow.

## The careful pirates

AS CHIEF ENGINEER for Radio South Herts. I feel I must reply to the misleading report in the Echo on April 5, on the subject of pirate radio.

It gave the impression that we transmit on random frequencies, without wondering whether we would be causing any interference. In fact a lot of consideration goes into our choosing of a frequency. Frequencies when chosen are crystal-controlled, and therefore cannot drift.

When we transmitted on the BBC-1 TV channel, we did not do so until after the BBC close-down. Also our power was so small compared with that of the BBC's, that to talk of interference with public service transmissions or aircraft transmissions is ridiculous. In saying this the Post Office is merely repeating what it always says when its monopoly is challenged.

Remember the other feeble excuse offered when stations like Caroline and Big L were around? Not enough frequencies available for commercial stations, they said. Now, magically, it suits them and numerous frequencies have appeared for the proposed government-controlled commercial stations.

Edwin P. Borg  
Radio South Herts

Hempstead Road  
Watford

## Monitor

The ministry spokesman said Post Office experts had been ordered to monitor all frequencies in the South Hertfordshire area in a bid to pinpoint the source of the Radio South Herts broadcasts.

He added: “It takes a little time to plot the source of a broadcast, but if they stay on the air they will be pinpointed and prosecuted.”

Last year, he said, 63 people were prosecuted and fined for operating illegal broadcasting equipment. The equipment is automatically confiscated, and in a serious case a prison sentence could be imposed, the spokesman said.

Luton Airport's telecommunications officer, Mr Norman Wright, said: “It is an actual possibility that broadcasts could interfere with instructions from ground control to the air, and endanger flights.

“But this would only happen if the pirates were using the same frequency as us. If so, there would be a very loud howl and contact between ground and air would be made impossible. The aircraft would have to change frequency in such a case.”

He said there had never been any interference in the past, but if he found any he would report the matter to the ministry.

# Radio pirates asked: Stop your broadcasts

by RON MITCHELL

A GROUP of radio pirates in Hertfordshire are to be invited to a meeting where they will be asked to stop their illegal broadcasts.

The pirates have taken the name of Radio South Herts — the title Mr Peter Harris is planning to use for a legitimate £100,000 company to operate a commercial radio station when current Government legislation is finalised.

Mr Harris, of Prospect Road, St Albans, said: "Myself and other Hertfordshire business and professional men and church representatives are in the final stages of forming a company to operate a commercial radio station.

## Asset

"There is a potential audience of two million in Hemel Hempstead, Watford, St Albans and the surrounding areas.

"I do not want to see listeners fobbed off with non-stop pop music in a commercial station that is simply geared to making money.

"With control by local people — something we understand the Government

favour — commercial radio can be an asset to the community."

Mr Harris, a 31-year-old research engineer, added: "I must make it clear that we have no connection with the pirates — in fact I do not know who they are.

"But I do want to meet them. I believe I can convince them that what they are doing is pointless.

"If they are interested in communications — as they claim — I would suggest they join our group. Our policy will be to give air time to local groups who feel that their views have no chance of expression in the present broadcasting set up.

"Their present illegal broadcasting will get them nowhere. But by taking air space on our station, they could make a positive contribution to local broadcasting."

A spokesman for the illegal Radio South Herts group said the group would probably be keen to meet Mr Harris.

"Many of our group have tried to get jobs in radio in the past. They would be interested in a chance of getting in on a legitimate radio operation," he said.

4 EVENING ECHO, Saturday 8 April 1972

# Airline pilots warn TV pirates

THE AIRLINE pilots union has warned pirate broadcasters that they could cut the lifeline between an aircraft and ground control by beaming television pictures.

And Luton town council said no one operating a high powered transmitter near the airport could guarantee not to interfere with the airport's communications system.

BALPA were replying to the Radio South Herts group, who have described as "nonsense" a Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications statement that pilots' air to ground link could be cut.

The association spokesman said: "That link is the lifeline between the aircraft and its control and its has been cut accidentally.

"I remember one occasion when a hotel near Heathrow got a new microphone for its bar singer. Her voice cut in when a jet was coming in to land. Even model aircraft, which are remote controlled, can cause trouble."

The broadcasters, who say they are not "bungling amateurs", have passed Post Office radio operators examinations.

Their spokesman said: "It is nearly impossible to interrupt the link deliberately and it couldn't happen accidentally."

BALPA said: "It has happened accidentally before and although interference is the exception rather than the rule, it is a worry."

# Pirates face legal action

by RON MITCHELL

RADIO PIRATES operating under the call sign Radio South Herts have been threatened with legal action by the leader of the Hertfordshire group which hopes to operate an official commercial radio station using the same name.

This follows the meeting of seven members of the illegal broadcasting group with Mr Peter Harris, the St Albans research engineer who is the spokesman for the Hertfordshire business and professional men who are in the final stages of forming a £100,000 limited company.

The company title will be Radio South Herts and the group plans to obtain a commercial

licence when Government legislation is finalised.

Mr Harris says his group hopes to be on the air by the summer of 1973.

But the pirates are already broadcasting five hours of illegal programmes a week.

When the two sides met in St Albans at the weekend they couldn't get on the same wavelength.

Mr Harris said: "I couldn't get them to agree to stop their broadcasts or to stop using the name Radio South Herts.

"When our company is formed within the next few months, this will leave us no choice but to take legal action against them."

Mr Harris added: "I did not get

the impression that they are entirely serious about local broadcasting. They seemed to have no idea of the costs involved in running a local station and I think they regard what they are doing as a bit of a lark.

"But technically they seem competent. If we get our licence I would have no objection to offering some of them jobs with us."

A spokesman for the pirates said today that they plan to increase their number of broadcasting hours.

"We are carrying on and are taking steps to register the name Radio South Herts for our own use. We hope to expand our group and to set up a trust to apply for a commercial licence

# Pirates in park raided

By our own Reporter

Four people were assisting the police with their inquiries yesterday after police and Post Office workers had raided a station broadcasting in Non-such Park, in Sutton, Surrey, under the name of Radio Jackie. The pirate station has been on the air at weekends for the past two years.

Equipment including a transmitter, a tape recorder, a rotary transformer, and three car batteries was seized while a recorded programme by the disc jockey, David Owen, was being broadcast.

There have been previous prosecutions against people broadcasting under the name of Radio Jackie, the last one arising out of a raid almost exactly a year ago. Post Office officials confiscated about £150 worth of equipment a few weeks ago.

# Pirate Radio Boosts College Rag

USING home-made portable equipment, three young "pirates" have been putting out Hemel Hempstead's answer to Radio One to boost the Dacorum College Rag Week events.

With a bevy of pop music, jingles, dedications and recipes that would make even Jimmy Young's mouth water, the programmes were broadcast daily on 253 metres medium wave from about 11 a.m. until 2 p.m. Tomorrow (Saturday) there will be a longer programme for weekend listeners.

The two 19-year-old D.J.s and a 20-year-old "technical consultant" have had to move their location every day to avoid being traced by G.P.O. investigators. They said that their usual venues were friends' houses, but they were

considering transferring to a van.

No newcomers to the medium of pirate radio, the trio said that last year they broadcast "Radio Free Caroline."

When asked if they were worried by the fact that they were breaking the law, one of them said, "We are hoping they will let it go as it is only for a week and supports the Dacorum College Rag which is in aid of Shelter."

The music they play is first taped from L.P.s and singles and the live programme is broadcast with home-made jingles and others taken from American radio shows.

There have been plenty of "plugs" for tonight's Rag Dance as well as support for the Herts Free Radio Campaign.

2-4-72

# 26-3-71 THE 'POP PIRATES' STRIKE

A PIRATE radio broadcast, heard in parts of Watford on Sunday afternoon, was the latest of several similar broadcasts, and the telecommunications department of the Post Office think one "pirate" could be responsible for the lot.

The broadcasts have all been of pop music, and have all emanated from the Watford area.

Sunday's "programme" lasted only a few minutes, during which the announcer claimed he was speaking from Hempstead Road, Watford.

However, he gave a Bushey telephone number, and later checks in Hempstead Road revealed no trace of any "radio station" there.

The last reported pirate broadcasts in Watford were said to come from the Cassiobury Estate and from Oxhey.

# 2-4-71 Student 'pirates' on air

CASTING caution to the winds, or perhaps more appropriately to the sound waves of the atmosphere, students of Hemel Hempstead's Dacorum College of Further Education hit on a new publicity slant for launching their 1971 Rag Week, on Monday.

Their own pirate radio station, broadcasting on 253 metres, medium wave, began churning out Rag Week "plugs" to the accompaniment of pop tunes and jingles.

The students felt they could be happily unconcerned about the legality of it all. The location of the college's radio station was being kept a closely guarded secret. It would be switched to a new location each day for the duration of the week, as a precaution against detection, they pointed out.

This year's Rag Week events will be raising funds for Shelter.

A folk evening, a concert by the Dacorum Youth Orchestra, the annual "Miss Dacorum" beauty contest, dances, and a tug-of-war event across the River Gade passing through the college grounds, were some of the attractions planned to take place this week.

Plus, of course, a number of novelty money-raising collection projects directed at the general public.

# Mutiny on the airwaves

IT is time that people woke up to the imminent legalisation of commercial radio, and the great opportunities that may be lost if we do not act now. The disagreement between the local officials and the Radio South Herts pirates has revealed the situation that is developing.

While the community is unprepared, businessmen smelling a potential source of easy money are quietly mobilising and organising, so that when the franchises are handed out by the Independent Broadcasting Authority, they will walk off with the cake.

We must get together and support the South Herts pirates and similar groups to ensure that this gift from the

# Radio pirates asked: Stop your broadcasts

by RON MITCHELL

A GROUP of radio pirates in Hertfordshire are to be invited to a meeting where they will be asked to stop

government is not snapped up for exploitation.

Steve Graham

20-4-72

# RADIO PIRATES 'COULD KILL'

RADIO pirates in Hertfordshire could be responsible for a fatal crash at Luton airport by interrupting pilots air-to-ground transmissions.

The warning comes today from the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications claiming that the illegal broadcasts could endanger the lives of passengers and crew.

A spokesman told the Echo: "These amateur radio pirates can be dangerous. There have been cases in the past of their broadcasts interrupting pilots air-to-ground contact and if

this happens at a vital moment during landing procedure it might cause a fatal crash.

"This is one reason why we are so strict about illegal broadcasts. In Western Europe there is such a demand for the limited number of frequencies that control must be strict."

The Radio South Herts group plan to become the country's first TV pirates. They took over the BBC-1 channel on Monday night after close-down and

presented a sound-only broadcast.

Their anonymous announcer claimed a technical hitch had prevented them putting out pictures. He promised that sound and vision broadcasts would follow.

The Ministry spokesman said that Post Office experts had been ordered to monitor all frequencies in the South Herts area in a bid to pinpoint the source of the broadcasts. The Echo listened in last night — but heard nothing.

5-4-72

# 'Give us air' says pirate Jackie

by CHARLES GLASS

RADIO JACKIE, Britain's longest established 'pirate' radio, today begins its ninth year of illegal broadcasting from a field somewhere in Surrey.

The pop music station has been 'reaching out, touching you on 227 metres medium wave' every Sunday since 1969, despite hundreds of Post Office raids, £2,000 court fines, confiscation of £2,000 worth of equipment and one prison sentence.

Radio Jackie, while optimistically claiming 25,000 listeners in south-east London and north Surrey, is one of a dozen or so pirate stations fighting for access to the airwaves. Mike Knight, one of Jackie's founders, who recently spent 28 days in prison for broadcasting without a licence, said: 'We do it because we want to see the introduction of truly local radio.'

Mr Knight and his companions, who largely finance the enterprise out of their own pockets take elaborate precautions each Sunday to avoid detection. The day's programme is pre-recorded and a 180-ft aerial is set up the day before.

Twenty sentries are posted around the site and at nearby police stations to warn the four people who operate the tiny home-made transmitter of an impending raid. If the Post Office men show up, the broadcasters flee with their equipment, and Radio Jackie continues from a stand-by transmitter at another site.

'In 1972,' Knight said, 'we were raided every week. Now they raid us only about four times a year.'

Radio Jackie hopes to open the way for local community radio, financed by small advertisers and contributions, in the same way that the original Radio Caroline forced open the door for licensed commercial radio in the 1960s.

Jackie is not alone in the pirate field. Radio Caroline is again transmitting daily from outside British territorial waters on 319 metres. Radio Victor puts out soul music every Bank Holiday in London.



ANTHONY VINCENT

Mike Knight (right) and his assistant 'Dave' prepare to 'reach out and touch you on 227 metres' as they set up Radio Jackie somewhere in Surrey.

Stations like Rebel Radio and Radio Concord provide a political service. Radio Concord broadcasts documentary tapes on virtually any issue.

Radio Concord was the first British station to introduce phone-in programmes, an idea later picked up by licensed stations. Concord was raided in London 18 months ago when it broadcast a controversial discussion on Michael X. Many of the pirate stations say they are raided when they explore sensitive issues.

For that reason, Jackie has abandoned current affairs and news. 'We did a drug story once,' an engineer said. 'They cracked down on us. It's safer just to play music.'

**The spirit of Radio Caroline is not dead — it's buried under a bush in a Hertfordshire park.  
PATRICK STODDART reports**

8 *EVENING ECHO, Tuesday 29 June 1971*

**T**HREE hairies in a wood near Watford. Faded jeans, ragged coats, a box like the inside of an old fashioned wireless, a car battery, a cassette tape recorder and lots of wire.

One of them drapes the wire across the lower branches of the surrounding trees. Another throws the switches and turns the knobs and the third starts the tape rolling. After a while they pack up and go home in misery because a farmer complained about having wire in his trees and the box with all the valves didn't work properly anyway.

Pirate radio is alive, none too well, and hiding under a bush in Cassiobury Park.

The pirates, every bit as unlawful as the seaborne disc jockeys sunk by the Statute book in 1967, call themselves Radio Free Caroline. Or Radio Free South. Or Radio North London. Or Radio South Herts. Or Radio anything else that occurs to them as they throw the switch and pour pop music into the unsuspecting medium wave-bands of Britain.

Names don't matter, it's the principle of the thing that counts. Every time an

illegal radio station turns on, it's one in the eye for the men from the Post Office to whom Section One of the Wireless Telegraphy Act is divine law.

Every time an anonymous voice announces that Radio Free Wotsit is on the air,

broadcasting on 235 metres medium wave, a few listeners know that pirate radio, the pop dream of the Sixties, is not yet dead.

Just how many people are involved with land-based free radio is a mystery even to the people who are

involved in land-based free radio, but certainly the number is growing.

Every weekend — radio piracy seems to be a weekend crime — hundreds of stations all over the country invade the medium wave band to perpetrate

illegal outrages which range from non-stop pop to little chats between mates who think it's more fun to use the over-congested airwaves than to pay for telephone calls. These gossipers, say pirates, are giving free radio a bad name.

If you want to be a pirate all you need is a small transmitter, a long aerial, lots of records, and somewhere to plug the whole lot in. It would also be handy to have a good solicitor in case they catch you at it.

Exactly why you should go to all the trouble is something the pirates don't always agree about.

A Bushey girl, Nik Oakley, runs the Herts branch of the Free Radio Campaign, a pressure group made up of largely young people who want to see the return of offshore stations like the struggling, but surviving, Radio Northsea International.

Continued on  
Gem-Sheet SP13



Continued from  
Gem-Sheet SP12

"We support all land-based and sea-based radio stations who produce responsible programmes. It's the people's right to own their broadcasting channels and we don't see why the Government should have a monopoly.

"We want local radio stations with unlimited needle time, public service broadcasts and complete freedom of speech. We'll have no producers, no overpaid stars like Tony Blackburn, who gets £150 a week for ten hours work while the technicians get peanuts, and we'll have just enough advertising to pay the costs."

So free radio is part of a high-minded campaign to Free The People From The

Yolk Of Arbitrary Government-Run Entertainment.

Or, maybe, it's just a bit of good fun.

One of the hairies of the wood told me: "What do I do it for? I just like messing around with radios. I used to belong to a society, and even now I go along to Post Office lectures about getting better results out of your transmitter and things like that. I haven't got a ham radio licence or anything, I just like playing music and having people listen to it.

"The other week I gave out the number of a public phone box and it was jammed for two hours by people ringing in to say they had heard me.

"That's what it's all about — just giving people an alternative to Radio One."

Most of the broadcasters are students who have to fit piracy into their A-level schedules or the demands of technical college courses. They haven't got much money, but then they don't need it.

Although one operator insisted that his equipment is insured for £700 another said he put a whole radio station together for about £3.

"You can build a transmitter from old bits for next to nothing, and if your aerial is long enough you'll get results. I got as far as Chigwell in Essex once. But you need a lot of wire for that."

In a way it is just as well that price-wise anyway the equipment is expendable. If you are caught broadcasting without a licence, your gear is confiscated as a matter of course, whatever the penalty imposed by a magistrates' court.

Radio Jackie, a powerful South London land-based station, has been prosecuted

28-3-71

# Pirate radio hits the airwaves

by JACKIE ADDISON

three times. Its equipment has been confiscated three times and its operators fined hundreds of pounds. They haven't paid and now they are under a suspended three-month prison sentence.

Radio Jackie is still broadcasting.

"The Post Office blokes keep thinking they've put Jackie off the air for good, but they don't realise how

**'Some radio stations are very professional: they employ people to climb trees'**  
— A PIRATE

many people are involved. It's a big operation, with a lot of very powerful equipment," said an envious Radio South Herts operator. "They employ people to climb up trees with aerials and everything. Their approach is very professional."

Most of the radio operators aren't so ambitious. They try to strike blows for freedom but sometimes freedom hits back. Like the time a clandestine station broadcasting from a Hemel Hempstead New Town house went off the air abruptly in the middle of a record. The electricity ran out and the pirates couldn't find a shilling for the meter.

And like the time a bunch of pirates were routed from

A PIRATE radio station burst its way on to the air in Hemel Hempstead today with jingles and recipes that made Jimmy Young's show sound like a party political broadcast.

Only just avoiding a disaster of crossed wavebands with Radio One the mystery station churned out its messages and pop on 253 metres medium wave.

"This is Dacorum College Rag Week 1971," announced the mid-Atlantic voice, in between disc-spins and time-checks and a barrage of wild jingles.

But identification stopped there. Surprised housewives tuning in by mistake would never be let in to the secret of where the action packed sounds were coming from.

their lair by the indignant father of a girl who had lent them his front room for a studio. He said he'd set The Authorities on them, daughter and all, if they didn't weigh anchor immediately.

Strangely enough the only people who don't seem too concerned about Hertfordshire's radio rebels are The Authorities themselves.

It isn't that they can't track down the pirates — all they need is a transistor radio and a car to do that. One radio operator says casually that he could be picked up any time the Post Office wanted.

"You just turn the radio around until you get a strong signal from a station, and draw a line on a map in the direction the radio aerial is pointing. Then you move to another location, do the same thing, and the station can be pinpointed to where the lines cross."

The Ministry of Posts and Telecommunication says: "Quite honestly our chaps are far too busy catching up with people who haven't paid their television licences. If we have complaints from airwave users who say they are suffering interference, we investigate and prosecute.

"The majority of the operators are teenagers and students cocking a snook.

"What we are concerned with is not the content of these programmes, but the simple fact that they are adding to the already congested airwaves we have available on the medium waveband.

"Thousands of radio enthusiasts and broadcasting media buy licences and pay for airwaves, and we want to protect their right to use them. The pirates talk about freedom, but in fact they are interfering with the freedom of those people

Rag week organisers listening to the station in the Dacorum student's union office, said: "All we know is that it's coming from Hemel Hempstead. We don't know who the DJ is."

Suggestions that such a station was illegal were brushed aside.

"They'll never track it down. The transmitter is being moved each day to a new location. No one's worried about being done for illegal broadcasting."

Meanwhile Radio Rag made the most of its chance to amuse, confuse, advertise and give helping cooking hints. For example: "Take two cat's eyes... preferably not off the A41... add some shampoo, from Boots... and add some best Worcester sand..."

There were plenty of plugs for the Folk Night at the College this evening too.

Proceeds from Rag Week are going to Shelter.

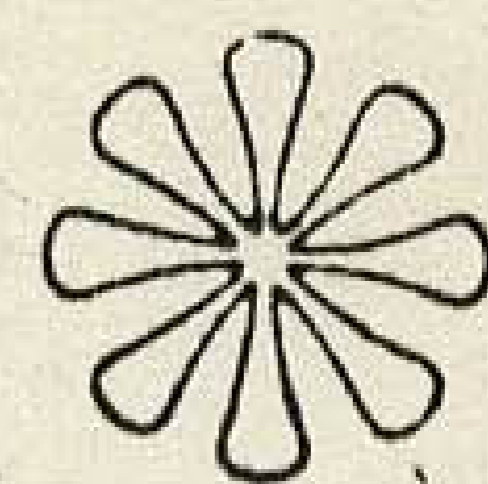
who have paid for the right to broadcast.

"Some interference can be dangerous. We had a case involving an airline pilot who said he was getting pop music through his headphones instead of landing instructions."

Free radio operators agree that their activities should not interfere with so important a radio function as that. Nik Oakley says: "Our association tries very hard to make operators discipline themselves, so that they don't interfere with each other or with legitimate radio users.

"The last thing we want to do is interfere with public service broadcasts and emergency calls."

The British Airline Pilots' Association don't seem so concerned.



"Modern airliners' radio equipment is so sophisticated it would take an electronic genius with limitless funds to build a transmitter which would cut in on our frequencies. We don't talk pilots down any more, we use instrument landing systems."

So it seems that apart from the listener who loses his cool when Your 100 Best Tunes is blasted off the air by a radio pirate who lets his pop station wander too close to the Radio One waveband, broadcasting for freedom doesn't have much effect.

For the time being at least, the pirates can roam free through the woods of Watford, bringing free music to the masses.

As long as they can find somebody to climb up the tree of course.

# Bushey campaign to end radio monopoly

**I**N a bedroom in a local house young people are organising a campaign. Posters are splattered on the walls. "I'm Anti Aunty BBC" they boldly read, and "Bring Back the Pirates," "Radio Tracy!" "Radio Veronica!" "Free Radio Campaign."

Revolution? Yes, but in this case it could involve piracy — young piracy on the wavelengths. The hope is to disrupt the present radio monopoly.

The bedroom, is the headquarters of the South-West Herts Free Radio Campaign. Nik Oakley is the protagonist, founder and campaigner of the cause.

"As a schoolkid I always used to listen to offshore stations such as Radio London, Radio Caroline and Radio 355, but when I heard in 1967 that they were closing down, I started a national organisation, called Campaign for Commercial Radio. The response was tremendous and we had hundreds of members. In 1969 we amalgamated with "Free Radio Campaign," said Nik enthusiastically.

Nik has, she says, broadcast many times from transmitters made by friends "with the know-how." Stations she has worked on include Radio Free Herts, Free Cassio, Radio Deamon and, more recently, Radio Odyssey. Not long ago the GPO sat outside Nik's house. "Nothing happened," she told us.

What does this anarchy on the air hope to achieve? "We wish to get small stations run by the community for the community, and free from government interference. We don't think that the new commercial radio stations to be launched soon will be sufficiently free from government control.

"In any case, there are no restrictions to the number of publications you have, so why shouldn't there be opportunities to have alternative stations?"

"Obviously there has to be some control, but not a monopoly," Nik stressed.

## 'Pirate' stations

The two pirate stations currently operating from the London area are Radio Jackie covering the south, and the station for this area, Radio Odyssey, Nik told us.

She went on to say that the programmes cover a wide spectrum of music and that different young people do half-hour shows.

And, she added, it is not only young people. A Church of England vicar even has his own show, which he uses to play hymns. Both stations also give extensive information as to what's on in London.

Nik tells us that many people telephone her, especially old age pensioners, to say how much the shows cheer them up. One 'phone call we weren't expecting, though, was one from the GPO. They were trying to collect evidence of the Free Radio Campaign's broadcasts.

Her aim is to enter a job in independent radio, and she says she is quite prepared to leave the country for it. If the dog and cat chase between her and the GPO lasts much longer, then it is more than likely that leave the country is what she will have to do.

Mr Marshall, a spokesman for the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications, told us: "It is an offence under the Wireless and Telegraphy Act of 1949 and

amended in 1967 to transmit in an illicit way, and the penalty is a fine of £400 or three months imprisonment, or both, and the transmitting equipment is usually confiscated.

"It is a very serious misdemeanour to illegally transmit as this may interfere with public services and normal broadcasting. Frequencies are very scarce and it is essential that they should be properly allocated.

"There are about 100 prosecutions each year involving people who have illegally transmitted, and we have special investigations, especially at weekends, when these broadcasts are usually made, to track down these people. I cannot stress more that it is a very serious and dangerous offence."



Photo: Mick Bennett

**ONE OF** the original British pirate stations is to return to the air for one day only on August 14 to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the Marine Offences Broadcasting Act.

Radio Sutch — at one time the brainchild of Screaming Lord Sutch, is to broadcast on August 14 on land with high power land transmissions on both medium wave and VHF frequencies.

Meanwhile, Screaming Lord Sutch himself will be appearing at the Flashback '67 radio conference at Heathrow at the reunion dinner for ex-pirates. Rare films to be seen at the conference include a Canadian CBC film, 'Public Eye On Caroline', made in 1967

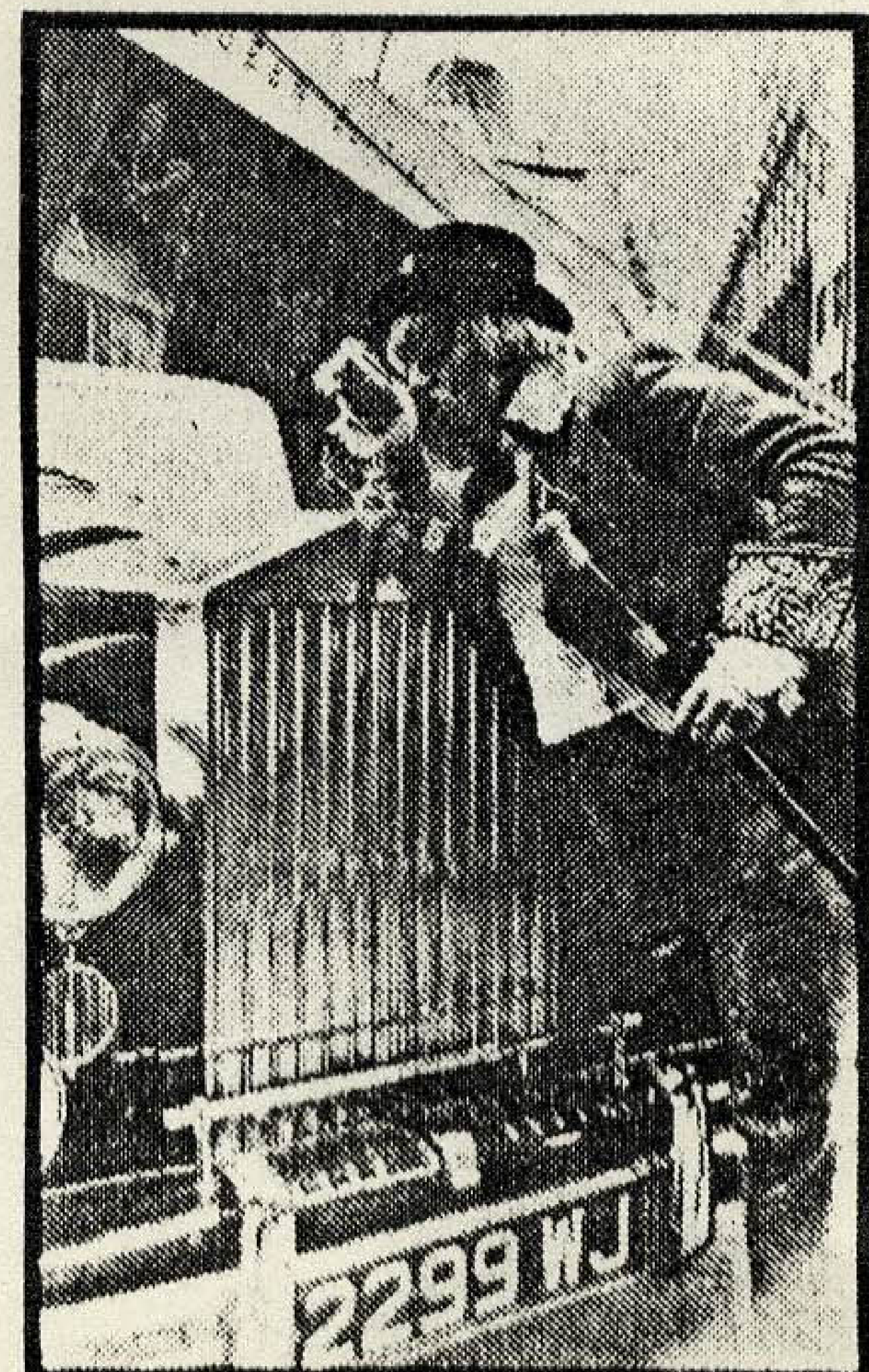
## Sutch is life

and never screened here before, and 'The Tower Of Power' about Radio City, also not seen here.

Lectures added include Paul Harris talking on pirates and politics, Mark Roman remembers Big L, Alan West recalls life on RNI, and also a history of the radio jingle.

350 seats have been sold and they still have 150 left, admission is £15 including meals for the two days and £9 for one. There is a disco planned for Saturday night free for conference goers and £1 for others.

Details from Flashback '67, PO Box 400, Kings Langley, Hertfordshire.



LORD SUTCH



# Jackie — the lady of the woods

IT'S A sunny summer Sunday morning and somewhere in South London the busy main road traffic drives by oblivious of what's going on in a nearby clump of bushes.

No, it's not that, but something equally naughty — Radio Jackie, Britain's longest surviving land based radio pirate takes to the air again.

For the past eight years they've broadcast most Sundays and this one goes without a hitch and there is no visit from the Post Office officials who occasionally come along to try and close the station down again.

There have been many raids on Jackie and station operatives have been heavily fined, imprisoned in one case, and had their transmitting gear confiscated time after time, yet still it continues.

For seven hours their DJs put put a bright Top

40 format linked with professional chit chat and DJs, in a manner reminiscent of the sixties offshore pop pirates.

They have one aim, to provide 'local' local radio, ie they believe each area is capable of having its very own radio service to provide relevant up to the minute news and info and requests etc.

Some DJs have used the station to get experience before going on to established stations (though the Jackie staff don't like that sort), others on a personal ego trip and some are strictly summer jocks, who don't mind being a pirate in the warm weather but aren't too keen on sitting in the cold, damp woods in the winter.

But the majority are confirmed believers in what they are doing, fanatical to the point of giving up every Sunday to man the station, and most of the money for records and equipment and so on

comes out of their own pockets.

The set-up (known as a 'rig' to the radio bods), is remarkably simple. A cassette player with pre-recorded shows is connected up to a small transmitter, which uses a couple of car batteries for power. A wire from the transmitter goes up to the aerial, a length of wire strung between two trees. A qualified PO detector can spot the aerial from some distance and if one of the many station lookouts spots someone suspicious the station is easily disconnected and the pirates make a hasty retreat with the transmitter.

Shows are pre-recorded in Jackie's own studios and cassettes are changed every hour, on the hour. They operate from several ever changing sites South of London and have a range of up to 20 miles.

Jackie's first broadcast was in 1969 when on March 30 a two and a half hour programme went out beginning a saga that has come to play an important part in Britain's erratic free radio history.

The station use a medium wave transmitter at present, but at one time had a VHF service as well, but found that this didn't go down

too well with IBA stations.

Jackie made history by becoming the first radio station to be heard in the House of Commons when questions were asked about the station. The Hon members of Parliament were a bit uncertain about procedure when it came to playing music in the hallowed hall, but hear it they did.

Jackie has received considerable publicity in the press and features with many snippets on the many court cases involving the station and features in papers from The Esher Times, in a recent story in The Observer. Like all good radio stations they have all the usual merchandise — stickers, T-shirts and so on, plus associated discos.

They have no intention of closing down until their goal is reached — real local radio. Until that is achieved the pirates will broadcast every Sunday for seven hours and more if possible.

Surprisingly, one of their main problems is not, in fact, the visits from the PO man, but a more pressing problem is catching up with them — with the advancement of Dutch elm disease they're running out of trees to string their aerial from!

## Pirate radio: 2 for trial

TWO radio magazine publishers from Herefordshire were committed on £100 bail each for trial at Knightsbridge Crown court accused of printing illegal advertisements promoting the interests of Radio Caroline, the pirate radio station.

Carolyn Oakley and Michael Bridgen, both of Old Mill Road, Kings Langley, appeared at Marlborough Street magistrates' court in London yesterday on 12 summonses each, brought by the Director of Public Prosecutions under the Marine Broadcasting Offences Act, 1967.

The summonses concern publication in the magazine Radio Guide and Wavelength and the pamphlet M.R.P. news of advertisements for Radio Caroline T-shirts, photographs, slides, jingles records, badges and wall posters.

The magazines are said to have been published from premises in Kings Langley and New Bond Street, Mayfair.

## They're on the run

VALVES GLOWING in the back of a van, enthusiasts huddled around strange contraptions, men playing cassettes in the middle of fields . . . all part of London's underground radio story.

With the demise of the offshore stations the free radio fans took to the airwaves on land with varying degrees of success.

It is obviously easier to trace an illegal broadcast on land and easier to nab the offenders if they're operating from a house or vehicle than if they're sitting on a boat outside the territorial limits, but the land pirates battled on.

The first major broadcasts were in 1968 during the summer free radio rallies as stations such as Radio Free London took to the air. Before long there were all kinds of involved set ups, designed to give the city free radio and if possible not get caught. Stations would broadcast for ridiculously short periods, then another transmitter elsewhere in the area would be brought into use to take away the scent from the original signal.

There were also amateur operators who put out a poor service with a weak signal and gave the more professional stations a bad name. Elaborate combines like the Helen Network was set up incorporating several stations to give a wide coverage in London.

Most of the stations stuck rigidly to a similar Top 40 format as popularised by the radio ships, and remained opposed to stations like Radio One, BBC local stations and the IBA commercial programmes, even though at times they were playing the same sort of records.

One station that did provide a real radio alternative was the imaginative London Underground radio, which had nothing to do with London Transport but put out an exciting diet of sci-fi type sounds making maximum use of experimental electronic music and

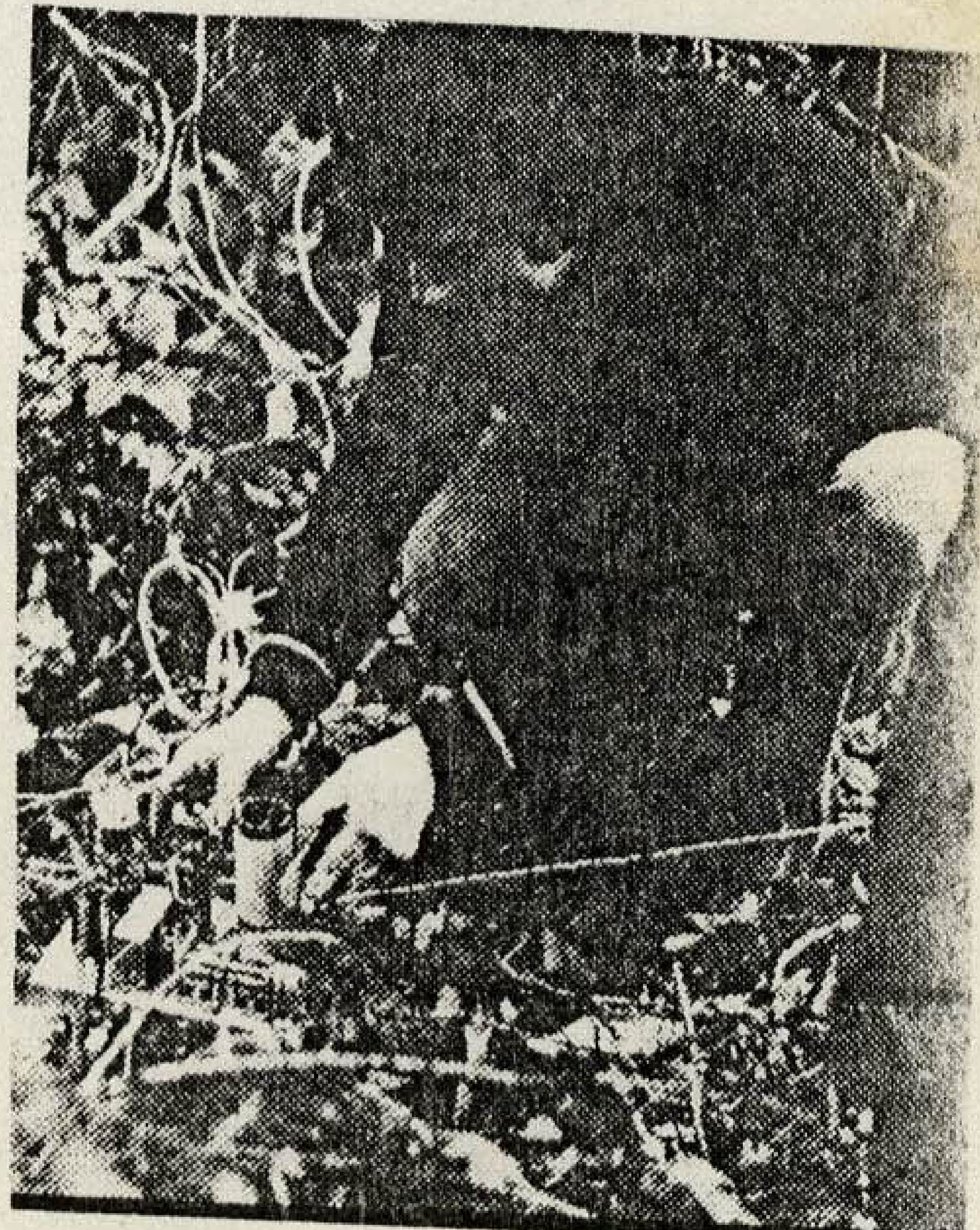
anything else on the radio scene either then or now.

Post Office raids got to be too much for most of the stations and many dwindled while stations like Jackie went from strength to strength even broadcasting quality VHF programmes and using new methods such as the long aerials strung between trees to give a better transmission and wider reception area.

Another station worthy of mention is Kaliedoscope with its policy of playing good music even if it perhaps wasn't in the charts, for example they were playing music of acts like The Eagles, Poco, etc long before most stations. It was a well organised station and closed after three years, not because of repeated raids but due to many of the staff drifting away and they decided to go out with good memories of what they had achieved rather than drag it on for the sake of it.

The full story of London's pirates is told on a 90-minute documentary cassette, 'On The Run', a Pyramedia / LUP Production including many interesting snippets — such as the would-be pirate being interrupted on the air by his irate mum! — and an almost up to date breakdown of the uphill struggle against the authorities to provide Britain with a bigger choice of radio.

'On The Run' is available for £2.60 including postage from Music Radio Promotions, 77 New Bond



If you go down to the woods today.

