

You all know that I always want to share the many memories I've since I'm started to research and writing about radio, way back in 1969. Just hours after our mutual friend Bob Noakes informed me about the sad news of Graham Gill passing away, few memories directly came to my mind. I listened to Graham for the first time in 1966 on Britain Radio and met him for the first time in 1973. Together with Jacob Kokje I produced for RNI boss John de Mol sr. the RNI double LP and it was Graham who did the promo spot which was aired several times on the international service of the station.

He invited me to come one day to his house in the Blassiusstreet in Amsterdam, where Paul Jan de Haan and I had a lovely day with some good memories and some studiotapes he gave us. Also, I've to tell that from that day on we stayed in contact till 2 months ago. Graham was a special person. Not only he wanted to be in the middle of attention but gave a lot of warmth with fine words to other persons. It's after all those decades a pleasure to listen to his shows from almost half a century ago.

Through many years we stayed in contact, talked about radio, did visit each other many times and often Martin van der Ven went with us to Amsterdam to be with another mutual friend, Rob Olthof. And also we went to happenings in England related to radio, together with Martin and our both wives. It was, I think, in 2007 we went to a reunion in London for some days. My wife Jana and I went to our regular Bed and Breakfast in Hanwell and we found a place for Graham above an Indian Restaurant in the same surrounding and around 9.20 in the morning we were standing in front of the bed and breakfast being very surprised that Graham was standing there with a double suit which didn't fit him too well.

Can you image what happened there in the middle of the road Jana helping him to get everything right when I tell you that the suit he

was wearing was the same one as he was wearing when he wanted to go for a job in 1966 at Radio London?

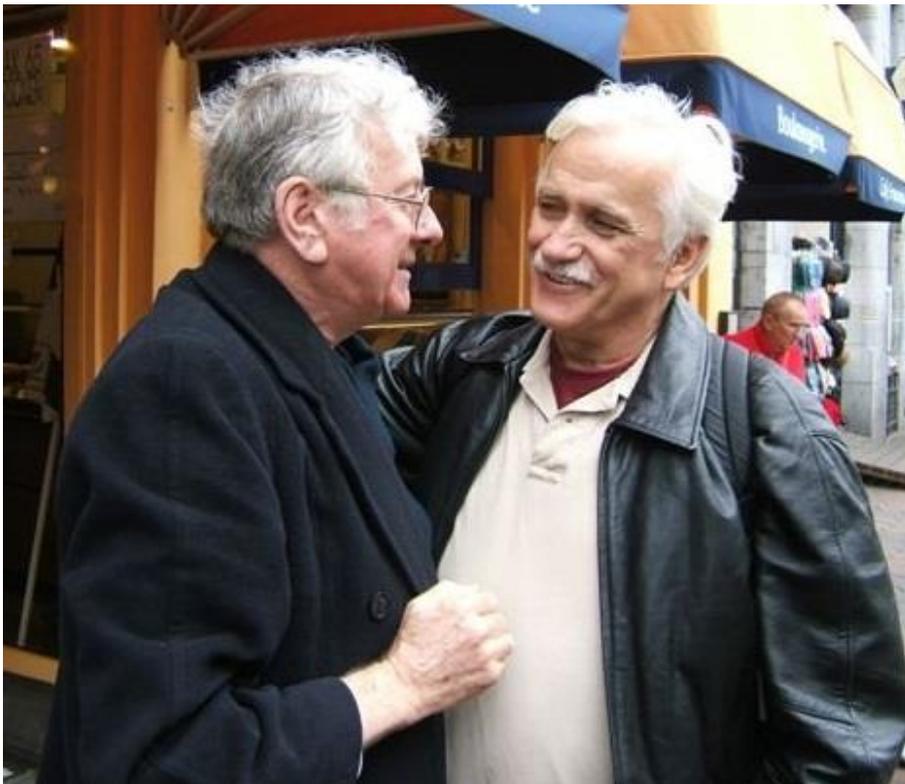


Graham Gill in London Photo: Jana Knot-Dickscheit

I know that Graham decided to go on an earlier stage to stop working in 1984. He was well appreciated at Radio Netherlands but the problem was either the Dutch Railway system brought him into problems or Graham didn't liked to be programmed at certain times by the organization or forgot to have a look at his watch on a regularly base. Graham was a latenight person who wanted, after he stopped working, to enjoy television from countries as far as possible. Probably he was one of the very first persons having a satellite dish in the eighties of last century in Amsterdam. When on the phone he could talk very long about special programs he was watching and of course about his favorite radiostation from Austria, which was easy listening programmed.

People who went with him to a restaurant for the very first time could be very surprised about Graham's behavior. One day we went

with about 20 people to an Italian restaurant in Notting Hill in London. Graham often couldn't hold back when it came to the mass productions that were served in such a restaurant and made this loud and clear to the shame of his fellow guests and those present. When it came to giving his order, he had special requirements because he did not want to eat the container garbage. Everyone was served according to their wishes and at a certain point, when Graham's food was not yet served, we decided to start in order not to leave our food cold. When everyone was eaten, Graham's food was served. It was as if the operating staff had been waiting for it. Many years later, after similar incidents, I understood that he was playing a game in the restaurants; it was never good. But of course it was good for some more laughing with Grasilda, which was his nickname in the seventies when all male presenters got a female nickname.



Graham Gill and Rick Crandell Photo: Hans Knot

And getting up early was not easy for Graham too. When I told him 14 years ago that one of his former colleagues from Swinging Radio England would make a stopover at Schiphol and would therefore have several morning hours to meet us in Amsterdam, I made an appointment at a breakfast restaurant in the centre of our capital. There we met Rick Crandell and his wife and it was the first time since 1966 that both former colleagues saw and talked to each other. Until the night before Graham was grumbling that the meeting had to take place at such an early time. But he was there and happy to see his former SRE colleague again and they didn't get talked out.

We also remember the long period in which we collaborated on the book about Graham's life and work, which was published for the first time in 2006. To write the book, to make it historically correct and readable, Graham Gill, Cornelia van den Berg, Hans Knot and Jana Knot-Dickscheit collaborated in parts. Cornelia has spent a long time describing and typing out, little by little, the period during which Graham still lived in his native Australia, went to school and began working after graduating from school of broadcasting.

I myself jumped in to describe the radio-periods of Graham Gill in Europe as historical well as possible. And in the end, we have jointly selected many, partly never published, pictures and Jana has done the layout. A process that - between all kinds of other publications - lasted a year. But what a joy he had when we went to see the first proof at a print shop on the Amsterdam canals, also a moment we could never forget.

It was a great pity that Graham had his secrets and didn't release them in time when we were preparing the publication. Two years later, when Martin van der Ven and I visited him in his apartment in Amsterdam, he suddenly proposed to go to his cellar.



In Graham's cellar Photo: Martin van der Ven

A stale smelling space that was really full of all sorts of collected things. These include three suitcases full of collected mail from listeners and memories in his own notes, but also many unique photos. The link below will take you to such a page with photos of his time on Radio 390, which Graham has often told me was the finest radio station for which he has worked. We will certainly not forget Graham!

<http://www.offshoreradio.co.uk/album91.htm>