

Another sad message in the afternoon of Wednesday July 7<sup>th</sup> from Spain, which came from Juliana Meehan: Wally Meehan passed away last night. It was unexpected even though he had Parkinson's Disease for a long time. But he was not too good in health for the last few weeks. For those who did not follow the radio scene in the sixties I can mention that Wally worked for a short period on Radio Caroline North. But he did not stay too long on the radio ship Fredericia, due to the introduction from the Marine Offences Act in August 1967.

Many years ago he met up with Jon Myer - from the Pirate Hall of Fame - on the Isle of Man when Wally still had the ability to tell his interesting life story:



Wally Meehan in the sixties photo collection PHoff.

"Before I joined Radio Caroline North, I was a guitarist and vocalist with the 'Nevada Showband' in Ireland. We toured all over the world - Las Vegas was the one of the highlights. I left the band after the tour of the U.S.A. I tried to get another band together in Dublin but it did not work out. I then moved to London, where I was in a trio. Again, we travelled a lot."

During travelling he had also the possibility to tune into Radio and soon he was a lover of Radio Caroline and decided to contact the station in London. "Not long after, I was asked to drop in for a chat, which naturally I did. I did three interviews and it was there I met (station founder) Ronan O'Rahilly. We got on very well. He

remembered me from the showband days in Ireland. The week I got married, a letter arrived for me to collect my flight tickets from London Airport. That was the beginning of my Radio Caroline days.

I was given a big welcome on board by all the DJs. I remember they played a record called *Five Little Fingers*. I just could not believe I was part of the famous Radio Caroline crew. That day was the best day of my life. It is one of the best moves I ever made. The worst day was when we had to leave the ship due to the Labour government, who pulled the plug on the pirate ships."

When the deejays and technicians, who decided to leave the Fredericia when the MOA became law it was Ronan O'Rahilly who was in Liverpool to welcome the 'crew': "On the flight back to London Ronan spoke very little. It had hit him very hard. I remember, he also had an arm in plaster. After that I joined another band and also became an international DJ. I cut a single in 1981 called *I Ran All The Way Home*. It made no.25 on the Radio Dublin chart."

But the love for radio stayed and Wally came with the idea of an in store radio station, an idea which came over from the USA and was in Great Britain introduced by United Biscuit, to get more pleasure working in the factory. Wally again: "I suggested it to the Tesco branch in Northampton shopping centre as that was their flagship store. They agreed it was a good idea so I was one of the first in-store radio DJs in the U.K. I stayed with Tesco for 20 years."

But there came an end to living in England and Wally Meehan and his lovely wife Juliana decided a change in lifestyle. Wally about Spain: "It is great here. I was asked to join a new radio station that had just started called TKO-FM, here on the Costa Blanca. It was great to be in from the very beginning and was known on the air as Tony Moore."

Wally Meehan joined us a few times during the Radiodays in Amsterdam. In 2012 he was in a special panel called: **The Big Wide Wonderful World of Radio Caroline North**, where he was joined by former colleagues like the late John Aston, Mark Sloane, Roger Scott, Alan Turner and Andy Wint, with moderator Paul Rawley.

After that Wally Meehan made a surprise performance by singing 'The Ballad of Radio Caroline', which he had specially composed for the 2012 edition of the RadioDay in Amsterdam. Also two years later, during the last big event in 38 years, he and Juliana were part of the big Radioday family.



**Wally Meehan at Radioday 2014. Photo Alan Milewczyk**

Dear Juliana: Although we have known for many years that your beloved husband Wally suffered from the dreaded Parkinson's disease, we were shocked to read that he passed away. It has been of great value that you Juliana in all those difficult years Wally optimally assisted and cared. We hope you have the strength to bear the sad loss and that all the beautiful memories are cherished. You are certainly in our thoughts. Hans Knot.