

**Tired of trying to find rock on the radio?
Then tune into...**

PIRATES OF THE AIRWAVES

Metal fans in the States are spoilt for choice as numerous stations play rock music round the clock. In Britain though there are no stations devoted entirely to rock music. No legal stations that is, but a pirate radio station; Radio Free London has been broadcasting pure rock and only rock since 1968. Initially the station went out on medium wave but moved to FM in 1974.

Jodie, a young lady with a lyrical voice who, as well as being a trained photographer, (see photos) is a walking encyclopaedia of rock music. Until recently RFL were on the air seven nights a week: 7pm till 1am Saturdays; 6pm till midnight Sundays with live and recorded hosted programmes, and a continuous music service on weekday evenings. The latter has had to be temporarily suspended



The men behind RFL, which goes out on 101.3, are 28 year old Nigel Grant and a slightly older Kenny Myers. Grant spends most of his free time clambering around on rooftops and showing a clean pair of heels to the Department of Trade and Industry's anti-piracy squad. On Sunday 22nd July their transmitter was raided and they were forced off the air. The following Saturday they found themselves locked out of 'RFL Towers', the name they give to any block of council flats they broadcast from.

Notwithstanding this, Grant claims to have a good working relationship with the DTI and this is only the second time they have been busted in over a year: the DTI gives them less hassle than black pirate stations because their equipment is professionally set up and they don't interfere with emergency services operating on their part of the spectrum. The government is less tolerant though, and later this year RFL (and all pirate stations) will lose their mailing address and phone-in when new legislation makes them illegal. Undeterred, they plan to use a mailing address in France.

Currently RFL has only three staff, the latest recruit being

but weekend broadcasts continue.

In spite of its name, Radio Free London broadcasts are regularly picked up as far afield as Luton, and under freak conditions they have been heard as far north as Stoke-on-Trent. Black Sabbath, Motorhead, Whitesnake, the Doors, Magnum, Rainbow and Gillan feature heavily on RFL. Magnum, Motorhead and Gillan have made jingles for the station and Ian Gillan himself is a listener. As well as these golden oldies, lots of new bands get airplay including GWAR and St Helier, the latter, who have also had airplay on Radio One's Friday Rock Show are hailed by Grant as the second coming of Def Leppard. RFL has a small but loyal audience estimated by the recently departed Peter Russell to be around 3,000 but thought by Grant to be much higher. Although the station has been around for 22 years, Grant in particular is despondent about the radio scene in the UK; currently he is looking for a job in the States where he can play rock around the clock, a prospect which he feels will never come about in Britain.

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