

# Radio Caroline: The Pirate Radio [B1]

Fondata nel 1964 per contrastare il monopolio della BBC, l'emittente continua ad andare in onda nonostante tempeste, naufragi, mancanza di fondi e persino attacchi armati.

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It's hard to believe, given the wide choice of music available today, that the BBC held a monopoly on UK radio broadcasting until 1973. Celebrating its sixtieth anniversary this year, Radio Caroline was the first of a new wave of pirate radio stations to challenge and disrupt the state-owned service

## READY TO ROCK

In the early 1960s, as rock music exploded across the [airwaves](#), the BBC [allocated](#) just six hours a week to popular music on its UK network. The only competition came from Radio Luxembourg, which played hits from the major [record labels](#). But how could anyone hear new, independent artists?

## OFFSHORE

In 1961, Ronan O'Rahilly, an Irish entrepreneur, arrived in London full of ideas for music promotion. He decided to set up his own radio station, on a boat, knowing that the British broadcasting laws only extended to a three-mile limit [offshore](#). O'Rahilly named his new station Radio Caroline, after the daughter of US President John F. Kennedy.

## ANCHORED

Together with businessman Alan Crawford, O'Rahilly prepared two ships for broadcasting. On 28 March 1964, the [off the Suffolk coast](#) MV Caroline anchored legally in international waters and announced: "This is Radio Caroline on 199, your all day music station". Radio Caroline was on air...

## PIRATES

By autumn that year, Radio Caroline had seven million listeners. Inspired by O'Rahilly's example, other pirate radio stations [took to the airwaves](#). The British government quickly introduced new legislation [to outlaw](#) the stations, which were forced to close. Radio Caroline went [off air](#) for several years but was relaunched in the early 1970s.

## LOVING AWARENESS

With its eclectic mix of album tracks and concept of [Loving Awareness](#), a form of peaceful [eastern](#) philosophy promoted by O'Rahilly, Radio Caroline had a strong new identity. Through the following decades, thanks to O'Rahilly, the [crew](#), DJs and supporters, Radio Caroline stayed on air [despite](#) storms, an armed [raid](#) by Dutch and British officials, [breakdowns](#), a [sinking](#), and, always, a lack of money. When Ronan O'Rahilly died in April 2020, he left a lasting legacy: Radio Caroline was an act of musical rebellion, a philosophy, and a family of broadcast pioneers remaining on air [against all the odds](#).

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# Glossary

- **airwaves** = onde radio
- **off the Suffolk coast** = al largo della costa
- **to outlaw** = dichiarare fuori legge
- **off air** = non trasmettere più
- **record labels** = etichette discografiche
- **off the Suffolk coastMV** = imbarcazione a motore (motor vessel)
- **took to the airwaves** = andare in onda
- **crew** = squadra
- **raid** = incursione
- **allocated** = assegnare
- **offshore** = al largo, in alto mare
- **despite** = nonostante
- **breakdowns** = guasti
- **sinking** = affondamento
- **Loving Awareness** = Amanti della conoscenza
- **eastern** = orientale
- **against all the odds** = contro ogni previsione