

Article titled - 'From the Germanium Diode to a Radio Tower.'

First published in 'WACRAL' members newsletter May 2014 - 'World Association of Christian Radio Amateurs and Listeners' . Included below photos within the article.

New Life Radio – for good news and good music'. By Mike Coles 2E1GZZ

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I have been involved with a large Christian Conference at Liverton, South Devon since the mid eighties. The radio station idea began when a friend – Peter - came to me and said that although he and his wife would be at the Conference the following year – camping - they would not be able to attend the meetings together that particular year, as they would be looking after their new baby. That immediately made me think. 'I wonder whether we could relay some of the Conference meetings to the campsite that stretched over a mile? I wondered what could be done?.' That was the first thought, and we finally ended up with a full-blown public radio station on FM serving not only the Conference site, but the local community.

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After a lot of homework on the subject and visiting several Christian RSL (Restricted Service Licence) stations in the UK and posting the completed application form I still had no clue whether the then 'RA' (Radio Authority) would grant any form of licence. However, I was reading the Scriptures one morning and came across Psalm 90 v 16,17: *'Let Your work appear to Your servants, And Your glory to their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us. And establish the work of our hands for us; Yes, establish the work of our hands.'* That to me was assurance that the thought I had had would go ahead. Certainly no presumption on my part; just the goodness and faithfulness of God. A short time later I received a phone call from the RA saying 'Mr Coles you have your licence'. I was thrilled. Over the years every part of those two verses has been fulfilled.

From that thought in the summer of 1997 New Life Radio (NLR) was born twelve months later, licensed by the then Radio Authority – now called Ofcom (The UK Government Licensing Authority). To fulfill regulations two broadcast and four copyright licences are granted. Our station reaches a number of towns and villages in South and East Devon, and, since the beginning of this decade our broadcast goes out worldwide online. As the digital clock reads 00.01 midnight UK time, the opening announcement each year is 'This is New Life Radio' broadcasting from Liverton South Devon on 106.2 FM and online worldwide.' This marks the the start of another two weeks broadcasting.

We started off with a broadcast sound mixer kindly donated by a local hospital radio station. A secondhand portacabin for the studio was obtained, three CD players, a couple of minidisc recorders, all the bits of cable and microphones, a broadcast amplifier and transmitter initially loaned by UCB and then gifted to us. It was the beginning of our own kitted-out studio with Axminster carpet on the walls and floor to provide the soundproofing. Over 2km of cables carry the signal from the studio to a 500 foot hilltop nearby and finally to the top of our radio tower. This makes possible our broadcasting for two weeks 24/7.

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The enjoyment of building crystal sets and valve radios as a youngster proved to me that there is something magical about radio waves and the ether. To those of us in amateur radio it must be part of our build! And may I suggest it's lifelong! Living here in the middle of Exeter and in an office I enjoy monitoring the local repeaters – that's 'my background music.' HF is not so easy to use as we are drowned living by nearly 20 broadband signals and we have a very small garden. Over the last two years on New Life Radio we have featured programmes on Amateur Radio and the relevance of radio communication in our hi tech world. Something more on this line is planned for 2014

From the first year of our operations we are blessed to have had a professional radio

communications engineer, Mike Ilieve who over the years has become a great friend, Mike makes sure that the signal is broadcast within all the parameters and regulations required. A member of WACRAL Derek Chivers was also instrumental in helping us with the engineering during the early years. The 'radio' team is made up of a group of very willing volunteers who come together each year. There is no advertising for reward and practically all our equipment has been donated, including our 20 metre purpose built tower).

Within the Ofcom application we state that one of the purposes of the station is to encourage 'training- live on air' and, in fact, the 'baby' referred to in the first paragraph above - 'Ruth' now 15 years old, has since the age of 10 years produced and presented her own daily programme. Ruth's programmes include music, readings and interviews, including talking live on air with the owner of a local wildlife park, with some special voice greetings from many of the animals!

The majority of our programmes contain some Christian content. As New Life Radio operates in conjunction with the New Life Conference, held annually each summer we relay over 15 of the public meetings from the main Conference marquee. This takes place during the second week of our broadcasting when several hundred people gather together in worship and to hear different speakers. The Conference brings people from many countries and therefore offers a great opportunity for interviews. Using our telephone hybrid equipment we are able to put many an interview live on air, including a daily call to our friend Captain Greg on the Teignmouth and Shaldon Ferry, chatting about all things to do with the river, the sea and the local lifeboat.

The professional broadcast software we use is perfect for our station; we can prepare the overnight programme schedule weeks ahead and it can be used 'on the fly'. This has numerous facilities including seamless 'on air' editing, though there are always times when we 'fly by the seat of our pants!' Gone is the age of cd's and minidisks, we now have over 14,000 mp3's of music, sermons, testimonies, drama, interviews and so forth. To keep our station connected to our online hosting company we broadcast 'the sound of the sea' outside our broadcast dates.

*Mike 2E1GZZ interviews Lucy from Malawi*

It is difficult to monitor the number of those who listen locally on FM, but we certainly don't have the competition for air waves that the big cities have and with the feedback we receive we are assured that many tune in for the two weeks.

It is very encouraging to receive e mail feedback from around the world. We broadcast non-stop for 336 hours, play around 4,000 tracks of music, have over 70 live interviews, drink numerous cups of coffee and make a few mistakes!-



My motto...His work by His people done for His glory -

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*Ruth in Studio 1*

*And our 20 metre tower*

