

Copy of Emails dated 17th November and 11th December 2013 from David Prewett, former CIB/NCRM Hon. Chairman and former FRA Hon. Secretary & Hon. Public Relations Officer to Fred Bunzl

Hi Fred,

I have studied carefully the documents you provided ([Free Radio Association's Spotlight 1970 Magazine](#) & [Barry Schofield's 1969 brochure](#)) which bring back some of the events which had passed into the mists of time in my memory. To be honest I find that it is all so long ago that the fine details and dates are lost to me. The overriding feeling that I do have is that Geoffrey Pearl had many connections with other fringe organisations and groups which were doubtful and which are touched on in the material written up by Barry Schofield and others.

For example, I and others were against the activities by Geoffrey (Pearl) to run the Football Syndicate [which as stated was his "hobby"] (because) it was felt that it was too easy for funds designed for the Free Radio Association (FRA) to "mingle", as well as the dilution of the main effort of the campaign.

Reading the [notes written up by Barry Schofield](#) at this distance in time, (they) do seem to provide a pretty fair record, and (were) of course written close to the events. Some of the events recorded stick in my memory, like the Epsom meeting where other "miscellaneous" far-right organisations etc. were proposed as "loosely" linked to the FRA.

I can confirm 100% that the meetings (mentioned in [Barry Schofield's brochure](#)) took place at Mottingham, South London, as per the info you found on Google. I drove there. I can't remember precisely that it was an old persons' home run by a relative of Geoffrey Pearl (but) I remember it having large rooms with high ceilings and there was a sizeable group of people there. The fact that Ronan (O'Rahilly) was there is very strong in my mind and the fact that he didn't want (Radio) Caroline to be identified with a listeners' group at that time (February 1967).

The formation of the National Commercial Radio Movement (NCRM) was a small breakaway group which were really appalled at the continual strife surrounding (the FRA in) Rayleigh [amply covered in Barry Schofield's notes] which gave rise to the feeling that the real work and campaigning was getting lost.

I remember Fred Hasler, Martin Rosen and myself used to meet in Fred Hasler's flat in North London closely following the increasingly bitter events building at Rayleigh. It was determined that we could achieve more as a small but extremely active, focused, group.

Funds were extremely small, there were no attempts at big fund raising, in fact Fred (Hasler) carried much of the cost himself by way of printing etc. [I seem to

remember he had some printing contacts]. Fred's initial decision was to call the group NCRM and in the first few weeks/months that was the name we adopted.

However I soon came to the conclusion that if we were to develop a clear thrust across the political spectrum, the name of Campaign for Independent Broadcasting (CIB) gave us much more room for manoeuvre, and so it was decided. It gave us room to embrace non-commercial broadcasting and to more effectively distance ourselves as being a front for vested interests. Also we could comment on and develop some of the best non-monopoly aspects of the BBC.

Accordingly (in 1969) our small committee adopted the title CIB. From this point as a virtual 3/4 man grouping we set about extraordinarily concentrated lobbying and writing targeted at the (House of) Commons and the press. It was a real task to try and get some acknowledgment by the press. Luckily we had over the years established some relationships with reporters in the Times etc. who recognised the work done.

I remember organising a press conference when we launched the so called study designed to show that the BBC MF frequencies could be reworked to allow the introduction of other broadcasters into a large regional basis. This study, which I produced, was in reality a bit amateurish, we didn't have the funds £ks to get (professional) people like Brown Boveri to do it.

I remember, in our innocence, we picked an old hall somewhere right in the heart of Fleet Street, timing a conference as we thought for 11.30 to get people out, just up the road from their desks. We got probably about 10 reporters, most were tabloid types just interested in getting some juicy bits and names being attacked. They gradually drifted away under the onslaught of technical terms from me. We got little in terms of mainstream coverage, the most was a rather sarcastic coverage in one of the Times gossip columns.

I later learned much from my time working for Ted and Roger at Allbeury Coombs PR in Tunbridge Wells, I learned that the first thing is to use a hostelry to get them in, and then most importantly to give them a short pithy press release hand out. Press people have busy lives and will use things which provide them with almost ready-to-use copy which they can sub straight out, and it helps a bit if you can give them some little quotes exclusively tailored to the format of publication [a] or [b] so that they think they have got some exclusivity.

After that, all efforts (from autumn 1970 onwards) were directed to influencing the Sound Broadcasting Bill which had started its way through parliament. Martin and myself spent night after night in the committee rooms (of the House of Commons) trying to steer the bill into our aspirations. Like all things we succeeded in many aspects but never got all we wanted. Of course as you and I know what is written into law, i.e. the IBA etc., gets changed over the years,

with successive Governments and commercial efforts of big money, coupled with financial recessions.

I don't know if any of my ramblings help you at all? If I can help you further I will try. Let me know if you have further specific points.

David