

## **OFCOM LOCALNESS MONITORING – “Local Added Value”**

### **Executive summary**

Ofcom carried out monitoring of the local content of a sample of stations in January 2009. The broad conclusion of that monitoring is that, within the Ofcom localness guidance, stations choose to deliver localness in a number of different ways.

Some of the stations monitored clearly saw localness as a programme ‘driver’, demonstrating a heavy emphasis on updating local news stories with studio-quality audio interviews and constant references within programming to local touchstones (people, events, history).

Other stations preferred a lighter approach to localness, with less by way of hard news stories or geographically important issues, and instead an emphasis on music and entertainment (e.g. local concert ticket giveaways). These stations methodically directed listeners to the station websites to find details of local events.

Scheduled information – such as travel and weather – is not demanded by the station Formats, but is clearly seen by all monitored operators as a way of both imparting vital information quickly, as well as establishing local credentials through the use of additional ‘added value’ information from local presenters.

This monitoring report is only for the purposes of informing our consultation, it does not specifically examine whether or not the stations monitored are compliant with their Format.

### **Background**

Ofcom has duties to ensure that within each service there is an appropriate amount of local material and that a suitable proportion of that is locally made. We do this via each station’s Format (included in its licence) and via our localness guidance (as required by statute).

Following the implementation of changes proposed in Ofcom’s Future of Radio consultation last year, each local commercial radio station is required by its licence to provide a number of hours of locally made programming each day (usually at least 10 hours a day during daytime on weekdays, including breakfast, and at least 4 hours during daytime at weekends) and to include within that programming an appropriate amount of local material, as set out in the localness guidelines. Some smaller stations have been granted permission to share six of those ten weekday hours outside breakfast with a nearby ‘sister’ station, broadcasting local programming of relevance to both audiences.

This report provides a snapshot of the amount of locally relevant content on a sample of eight local commercial radio stations in the UK. Its aim is to determine the amount of bespoke local material delivered on typical local commercial stations, particularly beyond the provision of local news, weather and traffic bulletins; for example mention of local events, the involvement of listeners, or references to the local area.

Our previous research has demonstrated the three elements of local material that audiences value about local radio:

- Local news

- Local information – traffic & travel, weather, what's-ons, sports news
- Softer local content – providing a sense of belonging and community, giving listeners a feel for the area

We have considered the output of the stations we listened to against these three types of local material.

As required by statute, we set out how we would expect localness to be delivered in our localness guidance:

## **OFCOM LOCALNESS GUIDANCE**

*Localness is not an issue for all stations, but where it is demanded within the format, it should be addressed directly as per these guidelines. Localness can be both characterised and delivered in a number of ways (news, information, comment, outside broadcasts, -what's-on, travel news, interviews, charity involvement, weather, local artists, local arts and culture, sport coverage, phone-ins, listener interactivity etc.), therefore precise definitions can be unhelpful.*

### Localness - What it is

- *Station programming of specific relevance which also offers a distinctive alternative to UK-wide or nations' service;*
- *Content drawn from, and / or relevant to, the area is often the major point of difference between stations, and therefore licensees should be able to identify a range of local aspects of their stations and how they are providing output specific to their area;*
- *The feel for an area a listener should get by tuning in to a particular station, coupled with confidence that matters of importance, relevance or interest to the target audience in the area will be accessible on air; and*
- *Programming likely to give listeners a feeling of ownership and/or kinship, particularly at times of crisis (snow, floods etc).*

### Localness - What it isn't

- *Localising news (e.g. conducting vox pop interviews in one area and playing them out as if from another or inserting local place names into national stories) without local news/information generation would not be regarded as a contribution towards localness;*
- *Pure promotional off-air activity such as station promotion in the area (vehicles carrying station logos, roadshows, etc.) are not in themselves substitutes for localness without on-air activity involving something other than self-promotion;*
- *Competitions/promotions that invite and involve listener participation from outside a station area would not be regarded as a contribution to localness; and*
- *The Communications Act 2003 [Section 314] stipulates that advertisements are not regarded as local programming within the context of localness and Ofcom' s localness guidance.*

*These statements are guidelines which recognise localness can be delivered in many ways, which are neither mutually exclusive nor individually obligatory. For instance, regular featuring of local music or artists is not a pre-requisite ingredient for the*

*delivery of localness, but would certainly be regarded as a contribution towards such delivery. Similarly, the organisation of roadshows and the presence locally of promotional vehicles are regarded by Ofcom as important aspects of radio station activity, but could only be regarded as a contribution towards the delivery of localness if such activity manifested itself constructively on-air, as Section 314 requires Ofcom to consider only what is included in programmes.*

### **The stations monitored for this exercise**

We monitored a sample of 8 stations over a period of two days to see what is actually being delivered.

The stations we monitored demonstrated varying degrees of local material delivery and the feel of the output varies by the size of the station, by its age demographic target and by its location:

1. Real Radio (Scotland) : A GMG full-service A/C station for Central Scotland (MCA 2,463,854)
2. Mansfield FM : A smaller, independent locally-focused station (MCA 137,739)
3. Red Dragon FM : A chart-based Global music and information station for Cardiff and Newport area (MCA 658,903)
4. Radio City (Liverpool) : A 'heritage' Bauer music and information station for Liverpool (MCA 1,465,433)
5. Citybeat (Belfast) : A CN locally-oriented A/C station for Belfast (MCA 501,402)
6. Lincs FM : Part of Lincs FM Group serving Lincoln and the area (MCA 639,134)
7. 96.4 Eagle Radio (Guildford) : UKRD station with music and information for the Guildford area (MCA 535,886)
8. Heart 103 (formerly Q103, Cambridge) : A Global-owned locally-oriented chart and information station for Cambridge and Newmarket are (MCA 292,489)

### **The criteria**

Local news is a mainstay of local programming and, therefore, we looked at how local news stories were presented, how they developed, whether they found their way into general programming and, overall, how comprehensive the local news aspect of each station appeared over the three days.

With news-related features such as the weather and travel we also took notice of extra information provided within programming over and above a general report which could be produced from a national weather centre.

We listened to the output from each station from Saturday January 10 and/or Monday January 12 2009, but conscious that spot monitoring does not always give a true picture of general output we gave stations the opportunity of providing us with audio

from around the time of the monitoring period which might help give a fuller indication of local output.

As stressed in Ofcom's Localness Guidelines, the delivery of localness may vary from station to station and from context to context. Localness can be achieved in a number of appropriate ways, and is most easily recognised in its absence.

The commercial stations monitored were selected to represent a cross-section of the industry, from a small, independent station, to stations which are part of medium-sized groups, one from a large group which favours maximum hours of networked programming, a regional station and city-focused stations.

All stations make much of their local credentials, usually through jingles, and this report seeks to ascertain how these credentials are manifest on air.

## Conclusions

- News is generally well delivered, although some stations focused more on local news than others. This was not always a function of size – e.g. the smallest station monitored (Mansfield FM) and the largest station (Real Radio, Scotland) were both very heavy with local news, including locally-gathered audio quality clips. Other stations, such as Red Dragon and Heart (Cambridge) preferred less on-air information and made much of directing listeners to website information. In some cases the local news bulletins fed across into the rest of the programming with the presenter referring to local news stories and adding context (such as knowledge of crash areas and past interviews with news-makers). While none of these stations operate news hubs from outside the area, the use of news hubs can bring benefits by freeing up journalists within the station's area to do more newsgathering rather than being tied to the routine of reading hourly bulletins.
- Other local information was also generally well delivered. This was often enhanced when the presenter could add his or her local knowledge (in such items as interviews with celebrities about their times in the area, or understanding local context such as the background of companies when taking requests or conducting interviews).
- Softer content. Some stations saw this as a more important ingredient than others. This sort of material can bring content alive, whether referring to news or information content (e.g. personal experience of weather conditions or having attended local event) or to softer experiences of the area (such as local music history and charts and concerts). This differentiates those stations which are truly local from those which are more akin to juke boxes with local promotions.

The smaller stations monitored demonstrated that localness is at their heart, and the proportion of links delivered was tilted heavily in favour of local value, rather than the more general links covering showbiz, television and so on.

Promotions such as sticker-spotting, playing tracks for local factories and offices and competitions designed to create listener interactivity are prevalent on these stations and present opportunities to raise the names of towns and villages in the area, and for presenters to display their local knowledge. Lincs FM, for example, ran birthday

requests and competitions with prizes from local firms which boosted its localness value.

These stations tend to have a high proportion of quality audio within their features and the news and sport, which clearly demonstrates they are able to get and about within the community they serve, rather than rely on interviews conducted over the phone with the consequent poorer sound quality.

It was also particularly noticeable that during the bad weather these stations recognised the need for comprehensive lists of soccer matches cancellations, delving deep into village and county leagues for their information, and reporting at length from across the area, as well as lists of likely school closures.

The heavy local focus on smaller stations tends to be maintained by a less prescriptive schedule which can be changed at the last minute to accommodate the unexpected (such as a visit to the studios by a local pop group, as happened in the case of Mansfield FM during our monitoring)

Delivery of localness by the medium-sized stations tended to fall into three categories. There are tightly-focused stations, music-dominated stations which deliver networking outside the minimum number of local hours required, and larger city-focused stations.

*Tightly-focused stations* As with smaller stations, medium-sized stations have retained local flavour through direct-access promotions, such as Surrey Swap Shop on 96.4 Eagle Radio, and Bulletin Boards as well as displaying a willingness to weave any local useful information – such as sport cancellations and weather conditions – into programmes at length and in detail, or to carry out live studio interviews.

Also in evidence were the listen-at-work features which involve either local offices and factories in listening out for requests, or the station actually going out to broadcast from the work venues.

Localness is key for these stations, as with the smaller stations, and their ambition to be the first port of call for information means a speech/music mix that often brings a slightly older demographic. Much of the localness is unplanned as it manifests itself through debate and banter with local listeners on air about events in, or history of the area concerned.

Presenters are knowledgeable about local news and sport and, again, a high percentage of the audio in news and sport is studio quality as opposed to phone.

*Music-dominated stations* Stations such as Red Dragon target the younger end of the market with music and music-related promotions as the main ingredients. Heart (formerly Q103) in Cambridge appears to target its audience through showbiz and celebrity news, competitions and certain types of music. The level of localness achieved is through the creation of a 'club' feel based on listening to the station, getting involved in its local activities and visiting its website.

So, for the younger audience much of the localness manifests itself less in traditional whats-ons, but in the local club, film and music scene.

The local value links are not long enough to distract from the music – and can often be top-line information followed by an invitation to get the rest of the detail from the

website. This method of delivery – designed to prevent long lists of what's-ons being aired as well as increasing traffic to the stations' websites - is becoming more and more prevalent across the local commercial radio landscape. Red Dragon charity events are promoted in that way with links of less than ten seconds.

*Larger city-based stations* Radio City, with a Measured Coverage Area of one and a half million, is well established in its market and delivers localness in much the same way as regional stations.

It is clearly city-proud (as demonstrated by the number of references to the City of Culture tag) and it takes possession of the local sports scene by going further than simply reporting from games. It creates the Saturday sports studio at the stadium and broadcasts the entire afternoon output through that studio.

Listeners are regularly encouraged to ring in – often on topics related to the area. It also aired a station-created “local top 30” run-down, and across the two days monitored there were a number of mentions of presenter visits to local venues. The station delivers much of its localness through request-heavy programmes. Radio City, as with many of the other stations monitored, also made great play of its website activity to promote local information and videos of local events.

Real Radio, a regional station, targets a slightly older audience with more mature music, and attempts to ‘own’ regional sport as well.

It creates a regional feel by attempting to be inclusive in its coverage of events and information across the area. At times it is achieved through friendly rivalry (eg comparing Glasgow and Edinburgh concert audience reaction, and running a Hearts/Hibs rivalry through the sport programme).

Extensive use of studio quality inserts – particularly in sport – confirms the impression that particular areas are not excluded by having to be on the end of a phone rather than in front of a microphone.

Presenters talk knowledgeably of the area and attend events across the region, such as the Winterfest in George Square and a Burns Supper, and this creates talking points.

Listener texts, quick calls and wind-ups are also used to hone the ‘family’ feel listening to the station.

Over and above straight local news stories, localness manifested itself in a number of ways, including :

- What's-Ons
- Phone and text competitions
- Listener calls
- Requests
- Presenter knowledge of events in the area
- Knowledge of the area's history
- Station involvement with events
- Local weather
- Contact with emergency services
- Contact with news-makers
- Travel news

The extent to which any specific element was utilised depended very much on the character of the particular service and was calculated to feed that character delivery.

This was not a full monitoring exercise, as it only covered two days (one day in one case), and does not specifically examine whether or not the stations monitored are compliant with their Format, but it does bring out some useful messages. Some stations are fully rooted in their communities providing a valuable local service with a solid music backdrop. Others reverse this situation and rely more on music as the main offering, with localness used as 'spice' to create a point of difference. As long as stations meet their Format obligations, both are valid approaches.

## **1. REAL RADIO (CENTRAL SCOTLAND)**

### **The Station**

The station is owned by GMG, one of the larger UK radio groups, and is part of the Real Radio network of regional stations (In South Wales, Yorkshire as well as Central Scotland, the North-East and North-West) which targets 25 to 54 year-olds with adult contemporary music and higher than usual levels of speech, majoring heavily on sport, particularly football.

### **Saturday**

#### **Local News :**

Local news ran hourly through the day, including the networked three-hour Chris Tarrant Show. The morning stories concerned the Gaza march in Edinburgh, knife crime in Hamilton, a Renfrewshire computer activities story and the Hamilton cup-tie. All stories were accompanied by studio quality clips which were changed during the course of the morning. There was also a cup round-up in each bulletin. After 1pm the schedule was changed to get the latest audio from the march and details of an assault in Glasgow and a Scottish angle on the John Lewis sales warning. At six o'clock, quality (as opposed to phone) sport audio was included. Sport headlines at 7.30 am and 8.30am included seven pieces of quality audio of previews with games involving Inverness, Hamilton, Aberdeen, Falkirk, Kilmarnock, Celtic and St Mirren as well as a run-down of which games were on or off.

#### **Presenter Links :**

Breakfast (7am to 10am) : A dozen links were general in that they were promoting other Real Radio programmes, a New Kids on the Block competition, and showbiz and music chat.

In addition to the local weather and local headlines, a dozen links were locally focused in that they involved talking about a Disney premier in Edinburgh, where Bob Dylan might stay when he's in the region for a concert, and meeting Grace Jones in the area. A local winner was on the line speaking about the New Kids competition, with a number of texts from listeners (with their locations mentioned). There was also banter with the travel reporter about local services being cancelled in the bad weather and pronunciation of some of the areas involved. Presenters also joked about their cars breaking down in the area and going to the local pantomime. The show also included the Real Guide, a list of whats-ons in the area.

Mid-Morning (10am to 1pm) : This was a three-hour networked show presented by Chris Tarrant and, therefore, little was of direct relevance to the specific area, but of wide general appeal. Local news continued to run through the programme.

Real Saturday Sport and Phone-In (1pm to 6.30pm) : Bad weather brought about a number of match postponements. All the links through the programme were involving games of a national or regional interest, with reporters on line following Partick Thistle, Kilmarnock, Celtic/Dundee, Dunfermline/Clyde and Falkirk. There were studio quality interviews with managers including those from Celtic and Kilmarnock and the round-the-grounds links continued through to the phone-in at 5pm when listeners voiced their views on the day's events.

Disco Divas (6.30pm onwards) : This is a locally-produced party programme and links involve 'shout-outs' to Diva Parties going on in the area.

## **Monday**

### **Local News :**

Local news ran hourly with half-hour news and sport headlines through breakfast and drive. Early morning stories involved a Lanarkshire drugs bust (with a trailer for a longer piece at 1pm, as a Real Radio news reporter was with the officers); a Lloyds TSB meeting in Edinburgh, a local footballer in court, Scottish hospital car park charges and a look ahead to a Scottish Cup game. By 8am these main stories had been re-written and were joined with a story of human remains found locally and quality audio with someone who had lost their job. The full report of Lanarkshire drugs bust (2mins) ran at 1pm with a business report and cup latest as well as a round-up of other local stories running. In the afternoon the main stories were a local court case with voice report, a rescue from a hotel explosion with quality audio, more audio on the car park charges, credit crunch advice from Edinburgh University, and GMG presenter Mark Goodier was interviewed as the first voice on the Now That's What I Call brand of albums which were celebrating 25 years in business.

### **Presenter Links :**

Breakfast (6am to 9 followed by Golden Hour to 10am) : Around eight links were general links, including chat about the "tanned" list, film awards, showbiz chat, competition plugs and talking about the Mamma Mia stage show.

Around 20 had specific local value, in addition to the local travel (three times an hour), including listeners on air joining in the chat about Mamma Mia and talking about Friday's breakfast show (in which the presenters checked each other for lumps as part of a Real Radio listener awareness campaign in Central Scotland on self-examination for cancer). Locations were given for each caller and were from across the region. There was also banter about Tommy Sheridan's activities in Big Brother and two wind-up calls made locally, one to an individual set up by another listener, and one to a local bus company. There was also a "keep healthy" feature with a local interview

Morning (10am to 2pm) : Around eight links were non-local, plugging competitions, programmes, requests and general music debate.

Around 15 had local value in addition to local weather, and there were three traffic flashes through the programme (not surprising in such bad weather) where the presenter spoke knowledgeably of the area involved. Other links included talking about the recent George Square party, the bad weekend for Hibs fans, a local charity Burns supper and calls with Real Radio winners who were off to a music awards event, as well as listeners' requests.

Drive Home (2pm to 6pm) : Non-local links included half a dozen promoting competitions, plus the breakfast wind-up and trawls for calls.

Local value links, of which there around 18, centred on calls with listeners for requests, competition entries (four) and texts; chat about which areas still had Christmas decorations up; a South Lanarkshire and the National Youth Choir tie-up, chat about the Winterfest Finale (in George Square, Glasgow; and joking about being out with Alan Rough ('Roughy') in a local club the previous evening and

surmising that illness was not the reason for non-appearance in the forthcoming phone-in programme, but it was because of the results of the Hibs match! Local travel was aired three times an hour from 4pm, but there were also texts from listeners reporting problems (such as Motherwell roads and the Forth Bridge).

Football Phone-In (from 6pm onwards) : Calls about the Scottish Cup from across the region ... including fans of Hearts, Hibs, Rangers and Dundee in the first half-hour.

#### Conclusions :

Outside the football phone-in local links numbered around 53 and more general links totalled around two dozen. All three programmes had roughly similar ratios of local to non-local (ie 5 to 2).

Important aspects of the local links included :

- Presenters talking about their attendance at local events, among them the Winterfest in George Square, the local Pavilion pantomime and local clubs.
- The number of local listeners joining in general chat as well as competitions.
- Presenter involvement in the announcement of road closures and similar problems.
- References and jokes about local place names and locations.
- Intense knowledge of football clubs across the region, and extensive use of quality audio throughout news and sport

#### **Local Flavour :**

Real Radio is a regional station and, therefore, its localness remit is different from that of a smaller station. It avoids appearing to favour either Edinburgh or Glasgow in its news and sport. The news provided cross-region information, as did the local presenter links.

## **2. MANSFIELD 103.2 FM**

### **The Station**

The station is an independently-owned station. Its only 'outsourcing' is its subscription to GTN (its travel supplier) and to Independent Radio News, and it runs locally-produced and presented programmes 24 hours a day (automated overnight).

### **Saturday**

#### **Local News :**

Local news runs hourly on Saturdays, with the first bulletin at 8am. The non-sport local news stayed roughly the same through the morning until 1pm. The main stories concerned market traders' rates, and a police warning about shopping left in cars (with studio quality audio). These were re-written after 11am. But the bulletins were dominated by the day's local sports agenda. These included studio quality interviews about Mansfield Town (which were rotated), cancellation of the Mansfield Town match when it came through at 10am, a run-down on likely other cancellations which consisted of a detailed list of non-league matches affected, such as the Blue Square Conference League, and studio quality interviews on non-football sports such as local road-racing.

#### **Presenter Links :**

Breakfast (7am to 10am) : Travel news ran once an hour, and immediately following the first news at 7am the presenter spoke about which roads had been icy on his way in. Half a dozen links involved texts from listeners – and their locations from across the region were given out. In addition to a newspaper round-up, general chat and "tell me why you're up" links, a local pop group, Calling for Heroes, appeared in the studio at 9 15am, talking about their latest EP and giving an interview.

Mid-Morning (10am to 2pm) : This a local speech-heavy segment, as it incorporates a look back on the week's news through the repeating of five individual stories with audio from Mansfield FM's bulletins across the week (and this included a clip of an interview played earlier with Mansfield's MP about his economic forecast for the region.) Travel news was hourly.

Sport (or lack of it, due to the weather) dominated the content, including a studio quality interview with Mansfield Town's manager. In addition to links containing music and showbiz chat, there was a round-up of pubs showing football that afternoon; a feature on listeners' tracks which comprise the local chart; and a what's-on round-up including cinemas and theatres.

Sports Show (2pm to 6pm) : Travel news continued hourly. Apart from one link promoting the station's stop smoking (Wii) competition, all the links (around 40) involved the latest position with sport cancellations and latest scores in featured games locally. There were also regular voice-pieces from the grounds of nationally-interesting matches and a comprehensive list of rugby union matches locally affected by the weather.

In the final hour there was a round-the-grounds feature nationally and locally, and a round-up of local match reports.

Soul Night (from 6pm) : This is a specialist show with presentation purely music-based (involving a tribute to Motown at 50, artists who have passed on, comment about the lack of new singles, and news of the record business generally).

## **Monday**

### **Local News :**

Local news runs hourly during the whole of daytime weekdays, starting at 7am, and from 8am. Most bulletins through to 1pm contained three local stories (free parking in the town, biker deaths and the funeral of a local soccer star), which were updated/re-written for each bulletin. The afternoon bulletins contained three different local stories (Simon Hughes on local Lib Dem prospects, bogus callers and the announcement of a forthcoming Paul Weller concert in the town), again with variation of audio clips.

The fourth major item in each morning bulletin was an item used to report the launch of the local NHS campaign to encourage non-smoking. Each day through the week the breakfast bulletin ran with a different piece of studio-quality audio with a local person whose life has been in some way transformed by giving up smoking.

### **Presenter Links :**

Breakfast (6am to 10am) : Within the first fifteen minutes following the 6am IRN news there was travel news (which runs generally three times an hour) and local weather followed by the presenter relating his experience of the amount of ice on the local roads in to the station.

On average, around three times an hour the breakfast presenter promoted, referred to – or ran – the stop-smoking competition in conjunction with the local NHS. A local listener went into the draw each day and today's was a Mansfield listener. Sports updates ran at 7 30 and 8 30 with news of local cancellations and interviews with local sporting characters.

Local links included texts, messages and jokes from listeners (sometimes mentioning where the listener was from); competition responses with names and locations; chat about the effect of the weather in the area ; a local sticker-spotter giveaway.

Non-local links included general showbiz chat, a film game quiz, newspaper round-up and so on.

Mid Morning (10am to 2pm) : This programme did not have its usual presenter, although it was fronted by a regular Mansfield FM presenter. Again local travel was usually three times an hour, and there was heavy plugging of the local NHS stop-smoking competition. Other similar links included a trawl for local requests, plugging the station schedule and competitions, general showbiz chat, which-film-is-it-from, plugging the station website and 'can it be too cold to snow', and the like.

The workplace request spot contained mentions of a number of local offices and workers for whom records were played in the 12-1 hour, and general texted and e-mailed requests from local residents,

Drivetime (2pm to 6pm) : As with all programmes, travel was generally three times an hour. During this programme the presenter added local knowledge to those reports with regard to certain roads and their icy state. There were two links giving details of theatre performances and a round-up of what's-ons, centring on pubs and

clubs; local cinemas ; local live music venues; birthday mentions for local listeners; general banter with the newsreader, including comments on Paul Weller's career after the announcement of his appearance in Mansfield; phone-in winners of a guess-the-year game; the present state of the weather in Mansfield. Local sport ran at 4 30 and 5 30 looking at local sporting events (and national headlines).

Other links were general chat links, competitions and plugging the station schedule.

### Conclusions :

On average, from 6am to 6am on Monday there were 50 "local" links compared with 25 more general offerings. The local links were most prevalent, as would be expected, at breakfast and drive-time.

Some important aspects of the local links were :

- The number of requests (around thirty on Monday) through texts and e-mails for listeners from within the licensed area, giving a sense of localness and giving the opportunity to weave geographical locations through the programmes,
- Likewise with competitions, some of which (such as guess-the-year and the sticker spotting) are small-prize or just-for-fun competitions which sit well locally and provide an opportunity to highlight local areas.
- The local half-hour sport slots (four) were very detailed in their coverage, particularly with football cancellations, and were different from breakfast to drive.
- Whats-Ons (twice daily) were weaved into programming, covering cinemas, theatres, clubs, pubs and live music venues, rather than broadcast as a pre-recorded 'drop-in'.
- Given the state of the weather, the links (four) that warned listeners about specific roads hit by ice, rather than generalities, would have been particularly useful.

The Saturday coverage was sport-dominated, with all the major local sports stories being accompanied by a choice of studio quality clips. It also included a round-up of the week in which major news items from the week were replayed, along with audio. During the non-sport hours (from 7am to 2pm there around 30 "local links" compared with around a dozen more general links.

### **Local Flavour :**

The station runs a high percentage of studio quality news and sport and this helps enforce the feeling of reporters being in the area (as opposed to ringing in). It also runs detailed sports items about the state of grounds at numerous local lower league clubs, which also adds to the local flavour. The station manager says all the presenters were born around the Mansfield area and their knowledge of the area is clear during some of the what's-ons (as they sound conversant with some of the venues they're talking about) and with the local roads (which were in the news because of their icy state.) This local knowledge clearly enhances the overall local flavour.

### **3. RED DRAGON FM (CARDIFF AND NEWPORT)**

#### **The Station**

The station is a relatively large (658,000) chart-based station for under 44s in the Cardiff and Newport area, and was recently acquired by Global Radio. Its remit is to deliver music and information to the area. The station runs no daytime networking like many other Global stations.

#### **Saturday**

##### **Local News :**

News bulletins with local content ran hourly through from 7am to 1pm. The major stories at 7am were a Llanelli court case, accompanied by a voice piece; Welsh fire statistics with audio; studio quality audio about local rugby union; a new Cardiff City Football Club signing ; and the weather. These stories were updated through the morning, with local sport round-ups, and at 1pm a 4-minute round-up included all those stories with new audio on the Cardiff Blues (Rugby Union), and confirmation that the Cardiff game that afternoon was cancelled.

##### **Presenter Links :**

Breakfast (7am to 11am) : This programme - and all the daytime programmes – was dominated by a ticket giveaway competition which ran across the weekend. Tickets for the forthcoming Pussycat Dolls concert in Cardiff (at the CIA) were given to random callers who rang in on hearing the Pussycat Dolls' latest single played.

Most links acted as prompts for the competition. Other links also plugged the station's Help a South Wales Child Charity, and others threw ahead to a Dan Mills interview, the programme schedule and showbiz chat.

Other than the local weather and the mention for the station charity other local links included the announcement of a listener winning tickets with the location from which they were calling.

Mid-Morning (11am to 3pm) : This followed the same pattern as the previous programme., General links were mainly prompts for the Pussycat Dolls competition, along with plugs for the station's Pay-Your-Bills competition starting in the next week, programme schedule mentions and general music links.

Local links involved a non-winner from Caerphilly on air, two requests and a mention for the Tile Mile charity event at the Red Dragon centre.

Afternoon : 3pm to 7pm) : Also dominated by the Pussycat Dolls competition, and a couple to promote the Pay-Your-Bills competition. Three links involved general chat about films or music.

Local links involved three competition non-winners, with their locations, who were put to air, and two other links involved listener texts.

## **Monday**

### **Local News :**

Local news ran hourly from 6am. The main stories of the day were Charlotte Church, born near Cardiff, having a baby (that ran through the day, first with news of the birth, then speculation on the name and then at 6pm when the name was announced); and the progress of the Llanelli court case which was updated through the day, usually accompanied by voice –pieces. At 12 noon and 1pm a date rape drug case was added. Local hockey updates and studio quality audio with Welsh footballer Ryan Giggs was used in the sport news.

### **Presenter Links :**

Breakfast (6am to 10am) Around 20 links were general links, including chat about the Pussycat Dolls competition, music, station promotions and showbiz.

Local value inserts were local weather bulletins and travel news and travel flashes. A local listener's council tax bill was paid in the Pay-Your-Bills competition, and she was put to air and her location mentioned.

Morning (10am to 3pm) : 15 links were general, about station competitions and promotions, TV chat and showbiz chat. There was also an invitation to comment on the station website about Charlotte Church's baby.

Local value links included the weather reports, one reference back to a competition winner and two mentions for a volunteer programme (which was also running as an advert).

Drive Home (3pm to 7pm) : Non-local links (around 13) were for the station competitions and TV and celebrity chat.

Local value links, other than weather and travel (three times an hour at drive-time) involved talking about the weather in the centre of Cardiff, a trawl for texts and a request for a school bus driver.

### **Conclusions :**

The station was very competition-centric over the monitored days – and all competitions are locally-pegged (i.e. the concert tickets were for a Cardiff concert, and Pay Your Bills winners would be from the area, as would the Ride-to-School promotion winners).

Important aspects of the local links included :

- Winners and texters either getting mentions (along with their locations) or being put to air.

### **Local Flavour :**

Red Dragon makes much in its jingles about broadcasting live from Cardiff Bay and its local credentials, are delivered mainly through the news and sport bulletins, and through listener involvement in its competitions and promotions.

## **4. RADIO CITY – LIVERPOOL**

### **The Station**

Radio City is a heritage local service broadcasting to Liverpool, the North West and North Wales. The station's programming is produced locally including its news, travel and weather output.

### **Local News:**

Local news is broadcast as an integral part of main news bulletins. These are broadcast hourly around the clock, with additional news headlines on the half hour during peak hours (07:30 to 09:30 on Saturday and Sundays and 06:30 to 09:30 & 16:30 to 18:30 on weekdays). Although the subject matter of stories broadcast was often carried for several hours, it was rarely the case that the exactly the same story was broadcast twice. Bulletins were both re-written and re-organised very frequently.

A major story which featured heavily during the period of analysis was coverage of events marking the end of the 'Liverpool City of Culture' year. Celebrations to mark the conclusion of this event, for example a major fireworks display, took place of the weekend in question. The station reported both the build-up to the events, for example warning of road closures, and then reported further after the events had concluded including interviews with organisers and vox-pops with members of the public.

Bulletins also included coverage of a number of local crime stories, for example the death of a 22 year old man following a stabbing earlier in the week and news of a local shooting. Other crime related stories included reports about the day-release of a local man currently appealing his sentence for murder and the story of a St. Helens man convicted following a drink-drive incident in which his passenger was killed.

Bulletins included actuality clips and journalist reports both from within the studio and on location within the station's broadcasting area. Quite complex packages including vox-pops and interviews were included for some of the major stories. Although regular news bulletins were not included during live match coverage on Saturday afternoon - a 'breaking news bulletin' was included during the afternoon, reporting a double-stabbing on the Wirral and following this with two other local stories previously reported.

Sport news was typically carried as a separate second half of news bulletins and was dominated by stories about Premier League football clubs, Liverpool FC and Everton. Other sports were also reported on, including stories about Wigan, Tranmere Rovers and Lancashire County Cricket Club. As with news coverage, stories also included clips of actuality and interviews with stories being regularly re-written and re-ordered.

### **Presenter Links**

#### **Saturday**

**Breakfast Show:** The presenter of this show included various references to local Premier League football matches, including trailing of station's full coverage of Everton home match and Liverpool away match later that day. The presenter also made several references to the Liverpool 'City of Culture' celebrations taking place to mark the end of the event in January 2009. In relation to a fireworks display taking place on that evening in connection with this event, the presenter warned of local road closures etc. Other links referred to local entertainment, for example a

pantomime in Runcorn. Local traffic and weather information was regularly included along with various competitions encouraging listener input.

**Morning Show:** Taking place between 09:00 and 12:00 this programme included a run-down of the local Top 30 music chart. Although light in terms of speech, the output did include a montage of output about Liverpool's City of Culture celebrations, and various listener birthday greetings etc. The presenter also pointed listeners to the station's web-site for details of local gigs, and encouraged people to tell the stations about music they either like or don't like.

**Lunchtime:** Sports Coverage - Terrace Talk (12:00 - 14:00). From midday on Saturday the Radio City output became speech only, focusing primarily on football and the two major local teams, Liverpool FC and Everton FC. The programme opened with a three-way discussion which went into some detail about apparent disagreements between the management at Liverpool and the management at Manchester United. It also looked at issues such as contract negotiations and ahead to forthcoming Liverpool vs Everton local derby matches. Other match fixtures, cancellations etc. were also briefly summarised and mention was made of other sports, such as cricket. Actuality was included as were various interviews and phone-in contributions in what was a busy and complicated production.

**Mid Afternoon to Early Evening:** (14:00 - 19:00) Live match coverage. Broadcasting live from Everton football stadium with build-up from 14:00, the station covered the Everton vs. Hull match in full with both commentary and analysis. Brief updates of other fixtures, scores and cancellations were also included. From 17:00 to 19:00 the live match coverage came from another team of presenters, this time broadcasting from Stoke, covering the Stoke City vs. Liverpool match. Once again, this section of the station's output did include updates of other match results etc..

### Monday.

**Breakfast show:** (06:00 - 10:00). The presenter of this programme encouraged a great deal of listener inter-action for example via text, phone and e-mail, in relation to various competitions. Listeners were invited to phone in with requests birthday greetings etc. For example, one section of the programme invited listeners to call in with stories about being born in unusual places.

Some links referred to local football results and to the City of Culture closing celebrations over the previous weekend. Another link referred to the presenter's visit to a local comedy club over the weekend with greetings to various people met there.

The programme presenter has his own FaceBook page and during one section of the programme was reading out various status updates, at least one of which was immediately changed to reflect the fact that it had been mentioned on-air. The programme also included local weather updates and traffic and travel news.

**Mid Morning:** (10:00 - 13:00). This programme began with a 'Top 10 at 10' feature. Tracks from two top tens were features and listeners were invited to guess the years involved. Answers were sent in by text, e-mail and phone, with some listeners being put on air to give their answers. During the first half hour of the programme the presenter played a track and noted that the successful single version had been produced / mixed locally. Later in the show, it was noted that a particular track played was the most requested in Liverpool over the previous weekend. As well as the 'guess the year' competition, listeners were also invited to call in with requests and dedications etc. In a subsequent section of the programme, linked to

comments about the TV programme 'Most Haunted' (an episode of which it was noted was being recorded locally), the presenter invited callers to ring in and discuss their belief or non-belief in ghosts. Several callers rang in and the presenter, taking a very sceptical line, talked to them about what they had seen or felt.

Towards the end of this programme there was also a feature called 'There's no such thing as a free lunch' in which the presenter rang up a local restaurant and encouraged it to give away free food to listeners. This feature did encourage listeners to contact the station.

**Lunch time / afternoon show:** (13:00 - 16:00). This programme began with the 'total request lunch' the presenter encouraging listeners to get in touch with ideas for tracks etc. Some callers were put on-air in relation to this feature, with the presenter mentioning various locations within the station's coverage area.

After the first hour, much of the content of the programme did not have much of a local flavour; however, mention was made of the MTV Europe Music Awards which took place in Liverpool during November 2008. The presenter also looked ahead to the two local football derby matches taking place over the next few days.

In the final hour of this programme, the presenter talked about the Liverpool City of Culture celebrations and told listeners about some video footage of the event which had been made available on the Radio City web-site.

**Drive-time:** (16:00 - 19:00). This programme included various traffic and travel updates as well as regular local weather summaries. Various competitions encouraged input from listeners. Various references were made to the forthcoming 'Liverpool Challenge' which aims to help local residents shed a million pounds (weight) between them.

During the final hour of monitoring the presenter read out an e-mail from a very happy listener who had previously won a competition and trailed the forthcoming 'Liverpool and North West Going Out Guide'. There was also reference to a caller very unhappy that he could see Alex Ferguson's face on a newspaper via the station's studio web-cam!

## **5. BELFAST'S CITYBEAT**

### **The Station**

This CN-owned station serves Belfast City. It provides locally made programmes 24-hours a day. The station has a strong news team and there is clear evidence of radio reporters going on location to gather news stories/audio. The province's religious, cultural and political divide necessitates high journalistic standards and this manifests itself in two weekday flagship news programmes – a ten minute lunchtime news programme at 1300 Belfast Now, and a one hour (including advertisements) evening show Belfast Tonight. Both focusing on local issues, stories and controversies

The music programmes are clutter-free in terms of there being no Bulletin Boards and other such features that have a local feel. What the programmes do deliver is an empathy with listeners, where listeners and their listening requirements are perceived to take precedence over any playlist. Indeed requests rather than dedications are often the order of the day.

### **Saturday**

#### **Local News:**

Local News runs from 09:00 to 1800 – hourly. Among the stories broadcast were an injury from a building site accident; a big fire in some shops in Antrim; a Middle East protest march in Belfast (leading to road closures in the City centre – information which was passed on in Traffic & Travel reports) and job losses following a large store closure. Many had audio to go along with the stories.

#### **Presenter Links:**

Breakfast (0700 - 1000): A competition and listener interaction by text and phone and a quiz were the main points in this programme. The presenter link also encouraged listeners to give blood to the N.I. Blood Transfusion Service.

Mid Morning (1000 – 1400): This was essentially a request show where listeners' songs were played. The programme also had a competition and the Give Blood - DJ link.

Drivetime: (1400 – 1800): Dedications and a competition and the Give Blood DJ link made up much of this programme.

#### **Tuesday/Monday (analysis made of output across parts of both days)**

#### **Local News:**

Local News ran half-hourly in the Breakfast Show 0600-0900. Traffic & Travel also every half-hour during the show. News Bulletins always led with a local story. Stories ranged from the opening day of a five-month Public Inquiry, a stabbing, Londonderry Middle-East peace protesters being arrested, an attack on a young girl and shots fired at a Belfast House – in total nine separate stories between 0600-1215. At least 30% of these had audio, some of studio quality. News bulletins between 1000 and 1700 ran hourly.

The lunchtime Belfast Now news programme covered eight local news stories four of these carried audio.

Belfast Tonight carried ten local stories and four national stories. The one hour programme carried traffic & travel, Sports news including two local dimension stories (Antrim player goes through at snooker and the Belfast Giants make a sporting comeback). There was a listener soapbox interaction opportunity. This was based on Prince Harry's comments about a Pakistani soldier. The question posed on air was with the background of "our religious divide" what do you think? Four texts were read out at the end of the show. There was music news including some information on upcoming concerts, a seven minute restaurant review which contained five short interviews. Similarly there was a feature on the Lyric Theatre which had just opened up an archive which was open to the public. The show ended with an "And Finally ..." feature with three non local story headlines. The show also contained other items that were not local but nonetheless interesting for listeners.

Breakfast, Mid-morning and Drive shows were all music based with requests for one-off records and dedications and one three-in-a-row feature (Sit Back and Relax) again a listener choice. Between 1200 and 1300 the station ran a request hour, CityBeat by Request, where eight listeners had called in, in the hour. Each presenter made at least one Give Blood appeal. The rest of the time was filled with listener interaction through Robinson's Rant an opinion piece to get listeners to contact the station. The example on Monday resulted to a one-minute phone conversation with a listener. Competitions and Quizzes were also used a vehicles for interaction.

### **Local Flavour:**

Listening, you get a good sense of localness. For example, a comment by a listener that they were picnicking by the coast in January, led the presenter to talk about eating fish & chips in the car at a particular beauty spot. There were other such references like one presenter taking his young daughter to a local cinema the day before. The response from the station's listeners is that whenever the station asks for texts, phone-calls or emails for a competition, quiz, for music, or even a point of view, minutes later the presenter is rewarded by listener content. The contribution of listeners, in this context is, very much, the station's localness.

## **6. LINC'S FM**

### **The Station**

The station is the founding station of the Lincs FM Group, which also owns stations in Yorkshire and Leicestershire as well as Lincolnshire. Lincs FM is locally-produced 24 hours a day. With a 21.9% share of listening (RAJAR Q4, 2008), Lincs FM is one of the most listened-to commercial stations in the UK.

### **Monday**

#### **Local News:**

Local news bulletins ran hourly throughout daytime, starting at 6am. There were also half-hour headlines at breakfast and drivetime. The bulletins majored on three local stories during the morning: a suspect held by police following a knife attack in Stamford over the weekend; schoolchildren in Wickenby faced with a 300% price hike in their school transport costs; and Cleethorpes MP supports plans to reduce the Humber Bridge toll. All three stories were accompanied by studio quality audio, either interviews or reportage from a station reporter. Both the audio clips used and the bulletin writing were regularly refreshed. A fresh local story was introduced for the 11am bulletin, and the station stopped running with the breakfast stories from 1pm onwards, when a further four local stories were introduced (all with accompanying studio-quality audio cuts) for the extended 1pm bulletin. These were: Detectives investigating the suspicious death of a Boston migrant worker; Lincs farmers to find out from the EU today whether they can still use certain pesticides; ex-soldiers based in Grimsby to offer support to soldiers returning from Iraq; and teenage pregnancy rates in Lincoln highest in the county. These stories were run throughout the early afternoon and drivetime period, albeit with regular refreshing and different audio cuts being used. Three further 'new' local stories were then introduced at 5pm for the extended (seven minute) 'Report At Five', though these didn't carry audio. The 6pm bulletin was also longer than the station's regular bulletins.

Local sports coverage was equally extensive, with in-depth bulletins on the half-hour at breakfast and drive. These led on studio quality interviews with the Lincoln City manager and at least one Lincoln City player, giving their reaction to the team's performance on Saturday. As with the local news, the writing and choice of audio cuts was regularly varied. News about Scunthorpe United was also featured, though with less depth and no audio cuts.

#### **Presenter Links:**

##### **Breakfast (John Marshall, 5am to 9am) :**

Marshall regularly trailed the top local news stories in addition to the formal news bulletins, meaning the listener was never more than 15 minutes away from hearing the morning's main Lincolnshire stories, plus local weather. The show was busy, with news of a number of school closures coming in (due to heating/boiler problems), which were constantly reprised by Marshall. There were also twice-hourly traffic updates, though nothing much was happening on the roads on the morning of monitoring.

Two competitions were run, both offering locally relevant prizes. The 'Initial Thoughts' competition involved chance to win a bowling trip to Grantham, and there was also a competition to win £200 spending money at Wickes DIY. The participating callers

were taken to air, providing Marshall with the ideal opportunity for light-hearted banter.

Indeed, listener interaction and banter was a particularly strong feature of the show, giving the show a 'one-big-family' feel and plenty of location name-checks. Marshall invited texts/e-mails/calls about obsessions, on the back of a tabloid story about the Rubik's cube. An old-fashioned touch was the (sponsored) birthday feature which read out listener birthday dedications, with plenty of name-checks and references to where the person would be at this time, and what they'd be doing.

More generic non-local links included entertainment news and stories from the tabloids, but local links were very clearly in the majority.

#### Mid-mornings (Eddie Shaw, 10am to 1pm) :

There was less obvious localness than during breakfast, but this segment still retained a strong local feel and relatively high speech percentages, mainly because of the number of small-scale, locally-relevant contests and interactive features in which listeners were mentioned, or their calls taken to air. Shaw also informally reprised the local news and weather on the half-hour each hour. The competitions run were 'Good Hair day' (win £50 haircut at Toni & Guy in Lincoln – this competition runs on the station every Monday); and a daily Showbiz Quiz. Both of these provided opportunities to talk to the audience – e.g. where they work, what they are doing etc. The male contestant for the Showbiz Quiz had an unusual job - mixing rabbit food!

The interactive features were 'The Time of Your Life' (guess the mystery year); 'Firm Favourites' (three records chosen by firm of builders in Grantham); 'Lunch Hour' music requests and dedications. Also, the 'Six of the Best' feature invited listeners to make song suggestions around a topical news story. All of these gave the opportunity for lots of place name mentions, and dedications, enhancing the sense of localness.

Travel news during this show was on an ad-hoc basis (i.e. no formal scheduled bulletins), and a woman phoned in to report some traffic delays on the A17. The 'Lincs FM Guide' highlighted two pantomimes that were starting, in Scunthorpe and Louth, and also mentioned the local cinema releases.

Non-local links included showbiz/entertainment stories (Golden Globes, Motown's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary), and Shaw talking about the potential obsolescence of plasma TVs.

#### Classic Hits (1pm to 2pm) :

An hour of oldies was kicked off by the 'Number Ones At One' music feature. The show did have a presenter, but there were only a couple of minor locally-based links...most of the links related to the songs being played. The show is likely to have been voice-tracked.

#### Drivetime (Rob Hammond, 2pm to 6pm) :

2-4pm was quite music-oriented and featured a number of music-based features – 'Artist In Focus' (James Blunt), 'Download of the Week' (the new Lily Allen album, including a pre-recorded interview with Allen) and the 'Top 3 Countdown' feature. There were few local links during this period, outside of a couple of dedications and listener mentions.

The second half of drivetime was more local and speech-oriented, with long news bulletins at the top of the hour. The County Hospital in Lincoln took part in the 'Teatime Takeover', where they chose three songs, and Hammond interviewed one of the workers at the hospital, who introduced the songs. There was regular, presenter-read traffic news as well as the news headlines and sports news bulletins on the half-hour. The presenter highlighted the station's 'Fit for 2009' campaign with the Yarborough Leisure Centre, which included audio of Hammond and a fellow presenter going for a country run.

### **Overall Local Flavour**

Lincs FM gave the impression of being a locally-grounded station, providing a flow, and variety of, local news and information and giving a real sense of what was going on in Lincolnshire that day. Its news bulletins were unusually long by modern commercial radio standards, with high standards of reporting (e.g. studio-quality interviews or reportage accompanied most of the local news stories we heard) and news reading. That said, much of the sense of 'localness' was also derived from interaction with listeners, who were regularly put to air and talked to about more than just the specific competition they were entering. It was also noticeable the amount of dedications/requests and themed music features that Lincs FM still does, again helping to reinforce the sense of an on-air community. The presenters were able to relate to the people and places they broadcast about.

## **7. 96.4 EAGLE RADIO**

### **The Station**

This station is part of UKRD, a radio group that operates seven local commercial stations. It sources national news from Sky Radio News and its travel news supplier is Global Traffic Network. It provides locally-produced programmes 24 hours a day. Automation during peak hours is confined to one hour between 1200 – 1300.

Over the Saturday, Monday and Tuesday broadcasts, a news story: the row over Heathrow's third runway and a sports story: the future of Chelsea's Phil Scolari dominated. While these were clearly national in nature, the geographic close proximity of both merited this level of coverage. For the purposes of monitoring, these have not been considered as local, but, through listening to the station it became clear that these two stories struck a resonance with listeners.

### **Saturday**

#### **Local News:**

Local News runs half-hourly between 0700 and 0900 and then hourly between 0900 and 1300. Among the stories broadcast three such stories were: an appeal to walkers and cyclists to look out for stressed livestock on local heathland (due to the recent steep fall in temperatures), replacement bus shelters for the town of Alton, and a new advice service for householders facing eviction threat due to the credit crunch. The stories were re-written to keep the output fresh and comprised live reads and inserted audio.

Sports News reports became sports alerts due to the severe cold weather. Local sports news (this weekend was the FA Trophy 2<sup>nd</sup> Round) included some 13 games featuring local teams playing in villages or small towns, either at home and away. Sports news in the breakfast show ran every thirty minutes – news of one away match being cancelled was broadcast first thing and repeated as the morning progressed to take account of audience churn. Additional match postponements were broadcast to listeners as part of a public service as the morning progressed. Some reports carried information of all 13 teams in the one bulletin. Other local sports news included a local rugby fixture and an update of a darts championship at nearby Frimley Green. These reports were accompanied by different audio clips with players (of studio quality).

#### **Presenter Links:**

**Breakfast (0700-1000):** The weather conditions comprised patchy fog and snow in different parts of the station's coverage area. As a result during the morning, weather forecasts (standard read) were more like weather warnings and these were supplemented by additional presenter links, for example by the breakfast presenter giving a personal recollection of experiencing patchy fog on the A3, driving in to the station's studios that morning, and, later referring to the snow fall in central Guildford and asking listeners to text in from other parts of Surrey and Hampshire to discover the extent of snow cover. Traffic & Travel were standard reads and ran in tandem with weather forecasts. Between 0700 and 0915 this service ran half-hourly. The show included Bulletin Boards (described below) promos read live with local references (see below) and dedications naming the person, their place of work and location e.g. Don at HSS in Old Woking.

Mid-Morning (1000-1400) Show-biz Saturday: The presenter continued to update listeners with regard to the sports events that had been cancelled weaving this in with the crux of the programme - the week's show-biz gossip. There were references to the weekday breakfast presenter who was nearing the end of his run on stage at the local pantomime (starring Nigel Havers) at the region's principal theatre. There were requests or dedication appeals to which listeners responded including James of Farnborough who had his specified song played.

The Bulletin Board was aired five times across the peak Saturday hours and comprised free bike security coding in central Guildford, a local Scouts jumble sale and an invitation to join up with the Woking ramblers later that day. All Bulletins were read live.

Afternoon Show (1400-1800). This programme followed a similar format and included hourly Travel and Weather reports. Music-led, it had local requests (eg a dedication to Gina of Horsham ... milking the cows) and ran a number of promos. However these invited listeners to take part in station events for the coming week and directing listeners to the station's website to view production elements such as Lovin' Your Work (where the station visits a local place of work bringing doughnuts and makes a short video too, to put up on the station's website). Similarly Crew Ride to School, where a chosen school child and friends were driven to school in a limousine. On many occasions these promos were read live and had audio with distinct local references fed in. Other such promos included the Surrey Swap-shop.

Legends (from 1800): The programme comprised music sweeps featuring established artists across various genres and included links aimed at driving traffic to the station's website to catch up on the station's local involvement over preceding week

### **Monday:**

#### **Local News:**

Local News runs half-hourly between 0600 and 0900 after which it is hourly. All bulletins have a bias of local news over national and international news and all bulletins are prepared in-house. Typically of the local news stories broadcast one contains studio quality audio in the form of a comment or as an edit from an interview. Typically the top stories on the Monday included the murder trial of a local man, the death of a motorcyclist, pig welfare (including audio clip with a Farmer from Hogs Back), an escaped prisoner, Alton's Woolworths building to be turned into an Iceland store and the proposed expansion of Farnborough Airport (again with studio quality audio.) These were updated as the stories evolved, such as the murder trial being re-set for another date. There was an item of breaking news as three men were arrested (details broadcast at 1300) following a police swoop. Traffic & Travel ran across the hours monitored, every 15 minutes in the Breakfast & Drivetime shows.

Sports News which included local sports such as basketball results and the call-up of a Surrey tennis player to the Australian Open was broadcast every 30 minutes in the breakfast show, at lunch time (one-off) and hourly in the drivetime show.

#### **Presenter Links:**

Breakfast (0600-1000): There were links – some of some length – after every record. The programme was interactive with competitions and callers to the show, taking part. Names of winners and losers, their place of residence or the name and location

of their place of work were broadcast. The presenter and co-presenter had just finished separate panto appearances and made references to this and the locality – theatre etc. Additionally this Saturday the host was appearing in Guildford town centre as part of Swap Shop and made reference to this throughout the show. One school was closed because the heating had broken down and this information was relayed by the presenter to listeners.

Mid-morning show (0900 – 1200): Competitions carried names of winners and their place of residence or the name and location of their place of work. The show carried details (broadcast & available online) of the stations' Bulletin Board. This programme and others monitored, made reference to Lovin' Your Work, Swap Shop and Crew Rides To School (see below). The detailed familiarity was evident in this programme which was presented by an established presenter. An example was a link where the shared experience of seeing "two red lights in the sky" on the A31 – driving away from Guildford in the evening. The 'lights' turned out to be Venus and Jupiter. This comment gave way to a talk about extra terrestrials and another local reference to an unexplained occurrence last year.

(1200 – 1300): Music Legends (automated but with live and updated news). . (This automated feature has since been incorporated within live programming and the station now runs no daytime automation).

Afternoon Show (1400 - 1600): A generalist music programme with the Bulletin Board, dedications or mentions (by name and location) and Show-biz news (not local).

Drivetime (1600 – 1900): Traffic & Travel ran every 15 minutes with updates and an open invitation to listeners to call the Jambusters' line. A competition - which celebrity would you like as your best friend? - received responses from listeners (names & locations given).

## **Tuesday:**

Again local news was the most prominent. Stories included a local man on a rape charge; county road deaths down; Surrey resistance to government aggregate extraction proposal; Blue Tongue animal threat; school laptop theft; rail ticket office closures and a children's workshop in Guildford exploring life before the introduction of children's rights. This story ran with a reporter from the station visiting the workshop, interviewing the organisers and children and recording part of the play that the workshop produced. These pieces were added to the story which was broadcast across three lunchtime news bulletins.

Local sports news included Woking Town's preparation for the FA quarter finals (and news of three other local teams).

Traffic & Travel benefited from an Eye In The Sky. These reports occurred a total of 12 times. 6 in the Breakfast Show and 6 in the Drivetime Show. The Eye In The Sky reports were bespoke, giving localised references, appeals to listeners to call in with Jambusters reports which the in-the-air presenter read out.

Breakfast (0600 – 0900): Similar format to Monday. Competitions and other forms of audience interaction yielded 13 listener names with local references being broadcast on this show. The Sticker Patrol, broadcast both days, had a winner this day.

Mid-morning Show (0900 – 1200): As Monday. Traffic & Travel (which ran throughout the show) had input from the Jambusters line. Lovin' Your Work feature came live from a vet's surgery in Milford.

(1200 – 1300): Music Legends. Automated, as above, but with live updated news.

Afternoon Show (1400 – 1600): A Jambuster call was fed into one of the reports; the Bulletin Board being the other localised feature of prominence.

Drivetime (1600 – 1900): Among the more frequent Traffic & Travel reports broadcast, listeners were in evidence responding to the Jambusters appeal, and their names and locations broadcast. A local man called the station to help the presenter pronounce a singer's surname. The programme also included listener mentions/birthday greetings and some presenter talk about local football matches.

### **Programme Elements:**

Lovin' Your Work is broadcast live on Tuesdays and Thursdays from a workplace location in the coverage area. The station takes along doughnuts, talks about the work being done there and the people at the workplace. Photos and/or a video is made to record the visit and this is placed on the radio station's website. The feature is cross-promoted around the clock and is a driver to listeners to access the website.

Crew Ride To School is broadcast on Fridays when a winning schoolchild and friends are driven to school in a limousine. This is broadcast live into the Friday Breakfast Show.

Bulletin Board is supported with a full listing on the stations' website and one or two activities are read out by presenters around the clock. Typical items include: a Scouts jumble sale, a free talk on back pains, first aid courses held by the Red Cross or a talk and optional book signing by Charley Boorman.

Surrey Swap Shop was an exchange of unwanted Christmas presents and the opportunity to receive vouchers to spend at a local shopping centre. The station's breakfast presenter was scheduled to meet and greet listeners at the event on the following Saturday morning. This was mentioned by fellow broadcasters across each day.

### **Local Flavour:**

Set in the London commuter belt, traffic & travel (road and public transport) reports were a vital public service undertaken by the station. These were supplemented with frequent Eye In The Sky reports at key times. These upheld the station's local identity. Programmes called for listeners to interact with programme content such as, when did you last use a phone-box? Competitions included mystery voice and the £1,000 minute quiz. Programmes also made a point of reading out a listener mention/dedication together with messages e.g. Happy Birthday, get well soon etc. at least once an hour. The local-related inserts that were of studio quality added to the localness.

## **8. HEART 103**

### **The Station**

Formerly Q103, the station owned by Global Radio and was re-branded as Heart 103 at the start of January, becoming part of the Heart network. Consequently, the monitoring took place only a couple of weeks into the station's new guise. Heart 103 is locally-produced during weekday daytime (except 10am until 1pm) and for the weekend morning show. At all other times, Heart network output is broadcast from London.

### **Saturday**

#### **Local News:**

Local news was run hourly between 8am and 11am (inclusive). The bulletins were short (approx. 2 mins) and featured two local stories, plus a sport story. The main local story, run through the morning, was a piece about how Cambridge's Winter Comfort shelter was coping with the sub-zero temperatures. An organiser was interviewed, and the clip varied later in the morning. The other local news story was plans for an anti-Israeli Gaza demonstration in Cambridge on Saturday afternoon. Sports news consisted of news of postponement, due to weather, of Cambridge United and Histon's games. Networked news was run on the hour at all other times on Saturday.

#### **Presenter Links:**

##### **Morning (8am to 12pm, Freddie Scherer) :**

Saturday morning's output was highly music intensive, with most links concerning the music and plugging the schedule and/or competitions running on the station. There was a Time Tunnel music feature between 9 and 9.30. Aside from weather-checks, there was little local material (no travel news, for example). A visit to Grafton Great Court shopping centre by the 'Heart Angels' promo team was trailed, and there was a mention for the fact that Jimmy Carr was playing some sold-out shows at the Cambridge Corn Exchange. The presenter directed listeners to the Heart website if they were looking for ideas for things to do over the weekend, rather than talking about any events on air. Beyond this, localness output included location-mentions for listeners guessing the Time Tunnel year correctly, and dedications.

### **Monday**

#### **Local News:**

Local news bulletins were run on the hour, at breakfast and drivetime only. Breakfast also featured news on the half hour, with bulletins of similar length to the top-of-hour bulletins. Bulletins running between 10 am and 3pm (inclusive) were national.

There was a difference between the length and nature of the local news bulletins at breakfast and drivetime, with the focus appearing to be on the former. Breakfast ran with three local (or at least locally-slanted) stories, though no more than two of these were run in any one individual bulletin. The two main stories both focused around health issues – the national measles 'epidemic' story was accompanied by the measles figures for Cambridgeshire, while there was a report on how unused medicines in Cambridgeshire cost £4m annually. There were audio interview cuts for both stories, and the copy was refreshed. The other local story featured local story

concerned a travellers' site at Smithy Fen. The half-hour bulletins were followed by a brief sports news bulletin, although not all the sports news bulletins featured local sport (a reminder that Cambridge United and Histon's games were both postponed at the weekend).

The local bulletins broadcast at drivetime were less extensive. The hourly bulletins were often between a minute and two minutes long). As with breakfast, there were three local stories running (though one of these was actually a local sports story), but unlike breakfast there was no accompanying audio on any of the local stories.

### **Presenter Links:**

#### Breakfast (Tom and Emma, 6-10am) :

Aside from weather and travel, the local content generally revolved around competitions and competition prizes, most of which involved local prizes. There was a competition to win gym sessions at a gym in Ely, while the 'Heart Angels' promo team were in Bar Hill for the 'Ease The Squeeze' competition, in which the contestant had to undertake a challenge live on air. Listeners entering the competitions were location name-checked, and a winner was taken to air for both competitions. Most of the show focused on the banter between Tom and Emma about the morning's celebrity and showbiz stories (e.g. Charlotte Church having a new baby, Kate Winslet's Golden Globes speech, Graham le Soux being voted off Dancing On Ice). Tina Baker was interviewed as part of a regular 'TV Gossip' slot, and there was an interview on the phone with former Dancing On Ice contestant Natalie Pinkham. The final hour of show (9-10am) was built around 'The Time Tunnel' oldies feature, with some location-name checks for callers who correctly guessed the year.

#### Mid-mornings (Toby Anstis, 10am to 1pm) :

This was a networked show from London with no local content (though Heart does have the facility to insert local traffic bulletins into commercial breaks, an example of which was provided in the additional audio supplied by the station).

#### Afternoons (Greg Martin, 1pm to 4pm) :

This was a highly music-intensive show, with the first half of each clock hour being almost entirely music. There was only one local link in the show (a reference to the fact that Slumdog Millionaire is now showing at cinemas in Cambridge). Most of the links were devoted to promoting other parts of the station's schedule, including competitions.

#### Drivetime (Pat Sharp, 4-7pm)

This show was also fairly music-intensive, with a live presenter. The stand-out local content was the travel news three times per hour, which was presenter-read and regularly updated, generally featuring 'live' items. An eyewitness caller on the A14 called in to report a broken down lorry.

A local competition offered a 'free cut and colour' at a hairdressers in Saffron Waldon, and the winner was taken to air. Aside from this, Sharp's links generally revolved around promoting the schedule and competitions, trailing the music and showbiz stories.

### **Overall local flavour**

The target audience seems to be reflected in the choice of music, the emphasis on showbiz and celebrity, and on competitions in particular. On the evidence of the monitoring, Heart 103 appears to be a station defined more by its 'brand' and target audience than its particular locality; more a music themed station than one that is ultra-local. Nonetheless, the monitoring indicated the delivery of top-line local information, as set out above.