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Farewell to Croydon Radio

By [Liz Sheppard-Jones](#) - Tuesday 28th March, 2017

“The journey has been brilliant”: Croydon Radio’s DJs on what the station meant to them



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Based first at [Matthews Yard](#) then later at Airport House Business Centre on Purley Way, [Croydon Radio](#) began broadcasting in July 2012. On Friday 24th March, its founders Tim Longhurst and Tracey Rabbetts [announced that it will cease to operate](#) from the end of this month.

The reasons given were that “the difficulties of running the station without the benefit and security of a fixed location” (after leaving Matthews Yard) had proved a “challenge and a limiting factor” in the station’s growth. “We are very proud”, they continued, “to have created a community radio platform that has given a voice to so many people, organisations, businesses, causes, performers and more, in and around our town”.

Whilst the station was on air, a team of over forty volunteer [presenters](#) brought Croydon a schedule ranging from chat to children’s entertainment and from a show supporting and advising carers to political analysis with heavyweight interviewees including the leader of the local council.



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So, if you'd done something interesting in Croydon, chances were that this would be followed by an invitation to get down the Yard, slip on a headset and entertain the population with your thoughts... and, of course, with your choice of tracks. With shows ranging from 'Encyclopaedia Croydonia' to 'The Public Gallery' and from 'Croydon Matters' to 'A Cellarful of Noise', the station kept it cool, quirky and local, expressing the wonderful liveliness and diversity of Croydon. And with every broadcast also available after transmission as a podcast to be embedded in tweets, websites, Facebook posts and more, it reached a wide audience.

Here, in their own words, some of its DJs pay tribute to Croydon Radio.

"I did four happy years at Croydon Radio. It was a great team to work with and I'm sad that it's coming to an end". (**Dave Etheridge**, presenter of 'If Music Be The Food Of Love'.)

"My application to the station in January 2013 was based on a love of playing music, conversation and a desire for the people who make Croydon great to be celebrated and heard. My initial shows were a bit flaky with a penchant to say "err" a lot, but they grew over time.

"It was a great pleasure to interview local gallery creators, brewers, business people, authors, chefs, environmentalists...so many people who help the town thrive. And of course, there was the nature feature, 'Crocus Watch', which was the origin of [the amazing Croydon Saffron Central project](#).

"Tim and Tracey always gave me the freedom to have creative ideas and produce a show that would be interesting both locally and beyond. I dearly wish there was a way of continuing this great local resource that not only connects the community but allows the community to be creative. There will always be a crocus that will bloom for Croydon Radio in my heart". (**Ally McKinlay**, presenter of 'Made in Croydon'.)



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"I started my fortnightly show as a novice not long after the station opened and have been able to interview and profile many of the borough's terrific community-based initiatives. From poetry projects in Thornton Heath to dance fitness initiatives in New Addington, the journey has been brilliant. Tracey and Tim worked tirelessly to provide this unique platform, and were incredibly patient with my many mistakes. Croydon Radio was a fantastic success and its closure is a huge loss to the borough. It can only be hoped the momentum it created will be built upon". (**Paul Macey**, presenter of 'Diverse Croydon'.)

"When I first joined the station, I was immediately struck by how both welcoming and professional everyone was. I received training from Dave Etheridge, and soon had a very capable producer in the





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shape of Jean from the Aussie Music Show. To interview politicians, artists, businesspeople and others shaping our town was a privilege, only enhanced by doing so on a station with the credibility of Croydon Radio. It's perhaps too easy to make a play on words relating to Croydon's community's voice going silent with this closure, but the borough is losing something quite profoundly important. It was a great thing to be part of, and it won't be forgotten." (**Tom Black**, presenter of 'The Public Gallery')

"I will never forget sitting in Matthews Yard, waiting to go on air on James Tighe's show in 2013 with that pre-radio interview butterfly dance in my tummy. It left me buzzing with the feeling of Croydon's creative connection. Tracey and Tim had a bold and big-hearted vision for Croydon. They created a dynamic station with a diverse programme of shows sharing good news and good vibes. As a singer, I could sense

how much growth was occurring for presenters, their guests and the wider community as a result of being given a voice.

"I feel enormously lucky to have broadcast 'Inside Story' with my co-presenter, **Rob Wilson Jnr**, since March 2016. I have been enriched and inspired by our interviews and I hope our listeners have too. Croydon Radio played a vital role in post-riot community regeneration and the re-telling of the Croydon story. Thank you for giving the people of Croydon a platform". (**Katie Rose**, co-presenter of 'Inside Story')

Let's hope that this sad moment prompts reflection on ways to support and value such projects

In the words of one of the presenters: "This is a big loss and is indicative of issues faced by many organisations. It can be challenging for community ventures to raise the income required, particularly in the early stages. Seeking funding is far from a magic wand as applications can be time-consuming and complex. And whilst people power can be mobilised, managing and retaining volunteers can then be challenging too.

"Looked at from this perspective, Croydon Radio was a heroic effort. The station needed and deserved a strong, accessible and safe home and it is so disappointing that this could not be found in Croydon. I can only hope that this sad moment prompts reflection on ways to more fully value and support projects like this one which make an invaluable contribution to our community".

Our town's a quieter place now. Croydon Radio, your sounds will be missed.

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Liz Sheppard-Jones

Writer and editor. Views personal, not representative of editorial policy.

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Spike Hammond • 2 years ago

Congratulations guys, it was wonderful.

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share



Amy Gillespie • a year ago

was grateful to be a part of Croydon radio from 2015 to the end - sad to see it go and wonder if with all the proposed regeneration in the area, there may be a space for it or something similar to come back?

^ | v • Reply • Share



Steve Lawlor • 2 years ago

Was proud to be in the first batch of presenters since Croydon Radio started back in July 2012. I broadcasted a music show called "Eclectic Avenue" and was free to play most types of music (as long as it didn't contain swearing, as we are a family friendly community radio station). Even when I wanted to go outside of that subject, ie. I wanted to interview Mind in Croydon/Cycle Alert, both nothing to do with music, and the station bosses Tim and Tracey allowed me to venture outside of my natural show theme. I also got the opportunity to co-present a comedy/music show with some other CR colleagues, and also co-hosted (Janet co-hosted with me) a music/science fiction show called "From Croydon to Gallifrey". Also got the chance to Produced a CR colleague's show "Hugh's Fine Tunes". Thanks to everyone who helped support my show, plus all the other shows and the station in general. Not forgetting, big thanks to Tim and Tracey, without whom there would not have been a Croydon Radio. I will miss you all.

^ | v • Reply • Share



Anne Giles • 2 years ago

So so sad!

^ | v • Reply • Share



Mark Johnson • 2 years ago

I might be wrong but I think Croydon Radio may have started in a small shop in South Norwood on Station Road. Can anyone else confirm this? It may have just been advertising.

^ | v • Reply • Share

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Anne Giles — Good luck!

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