

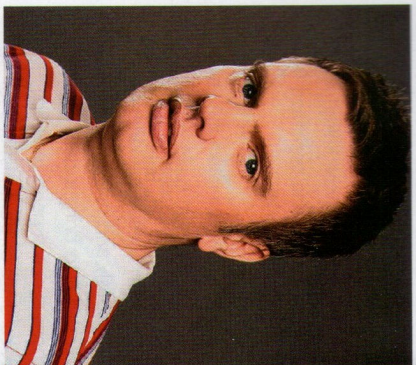
If there is ever a Mr Down To Earth bloke in radio it's this weeks hot seat guest, he's cool, hip and with it, he's so relaxed and laid back that he walks round with a mattress on his back! Not only have I nicked named him the Harry Potter of radio but he also works for Magic as well (see what I did? the connection, priceless) so please be upstanding and wave your wands for Richard Allen.

So what's it like being the Harry Potter of radio, making some real radio magic at times? (How I haven't been nominated for a journalistic award for these questions I will never know) What's your secret, research and prep?

Harry Potter? No, I'm all muggle. Maybe Harry should forget about witchcraft and wizardry and learn a new trade by attending The Hogwarts School of Radio. He could learn about cost cutting from Professor Dumbledore. I think prep is an over used word in Radio. It often means logging on to digitalspy and reading out some banal showbiz reportage. To me, this isn't prep. Any idiot can do that. Prep is real life: thoughts, feelings, cares, observations etc. Of course you need to be topical, but as information is so plentiful, it's important to be selective with it. Quality over quantity: and trying to take a more lateral spin on things. As for me being a magician, well perhaps I'll be able to work a little magic someday, if I'm given the right platform from which to cast my spells. (Platform nine and three quarters maybe).

(His eyes just sparkled and a smile came across his face, better watch this one!)

Like Harry at Hogwarts you have found a real home at Magic playing 60's and 70s. What's it like playing



songs that were made before you were born?

Good question. (Thank you, see told you I should get an award!) When I first joined The Magic Network in Newcastle, it was more akin in style and music to its big sister in London, but then almost overnight, we went 45-54. The eighties were very much my decade for music (I was born in 1971). I knew about 60's and 70's rock music from my time at Virgin, but I knew surprisingly little about the other genres from those two decades, so it's been a real musical education for me over the last five years, and one that I've thoroughly enjoyed. Most of my listeners assume that I'm at least ten years older than I actually am. I feel very much at home broadcasting to a 45+ audience. It suits my style and delivery. Also, doing 'Mellow Magic' for two hours every night, gives me an opportunity to be more thoughtful and connected with the audience.

(Some kind of fairy dust just went in my eyes and I seem to be feeling strange and hanging on his every word, I need to know more about him) Yes oh master please let me know more about your past and great wisdom!

A friend who was doing Hospital Radio cajoled me into trying it. This

was in my hometown of Bridlington, East Yorks, circa 1990. Prior to this, the only Radio I'd ever listened to was the Sunday Chart Show on Radio One (which I used to tape). Tony (curry for breakfast) Fisher gave me my first ever professional shifts at Minster-FM in 1993. Craig Morris offered me my first full time gig at KLFM in Kings Lynn in 95, and three years later Geoff Holland hired me at Virgin. Following three years at Golden Square, I spent eighteen months as a journo-jock at The BBC in Hull before joining Magic in 2005.

(Wait a minute that wasn't fairy stuff but some dust from his wallet! And the strange feeling was the lack of coffee, been here an hour and he still hasn't offered me a drink, time for some hard questions.) What would you like to bring back to radio from your past and what would you like to get rid of and why?

From my past, I'd like to bring back the job opportunities. I started out on overnights and then local evenings. Although the money was poor, it was a wage. If I was starting out now, I'd probably have to learn the job at Community Radio, which is unpaid, and it's likely I would have pursued a different career path. I think it's tougher now for talent coming through. What to get rid of? Well, I think the nepotism and cliqueness which has always pervaded the business. As Radio is learner these days, I think a lot of the "jobs for the boys" mentality has diminished, but it will always be there.

(He made that one seem easy, better try with a political question, here goes.) Which three radio babes would you like to take out on a date and why?

Radio Babes? Your correctness knows no political! Look, Politics and Radio =

showbiz for ugly folk. Of course I'm referring mainly to the male of the species. There are some gorgeous ladies who earn a buck behind a microphone, and I may even have dated one or two in my youth. They are though, in my opinion - high maintenance divas. General rule: never date a woman who takes more than an hour to get ready.

(I thought he was going to give in and dish the dirt, last hard question here goes, the good old boss question) If you were the boss of your station what three things would you change and why?

Firstly, I'd pump some marketing money into promoting Magic on Digital Radio. I know DAB has its knockers, but it's a terrific platform for an AM music station. Secondly, I'd install a night-time canteen for the Magic and Metro evening workers. The poor wretches don't eat properly and could do with some proper nourishment. Thirdly, I'd give the Magic Evening Presenter a well deserved pay rise.

(He doesn't work at night time by any chance?) You're a presenter and writer what about acting?

I've always fancied having a go at it. Having said that, it's an even more precarious job than Radio, and I'd be hopeless at learning lines. My current sideline is writing. I've written a children's book called THE MYSTICS which I'm hoping to get published next year.

Well its time for me to wave my wand Mr Allen and bring out some random questions, lets see. If you Google your name three other Richard Allen's come up, if you were not on the radio which one of these could be you and why? A, Richard Allen fitness; B, Richard Allen artist or

C, writer Richard Allen of the book Skin Head?

I could be the author. In fact if I do get published I'll have to use a nom de plume. A lot of people think Richard Allen is my made up "DJ" name, but it's my real moniker. I would have come up with a better name than Richard Allen. The formula is simple: think of two first names and put them together, like Christopher John (apologies if there is a Christopher John broadcasting somewhere). I think though, that I would have probably called myself Tom Tom for the sponsorship opportunities. Of everyone who shares my name, I would have loved to be Richard "Pistol" Allen, the legendary drummer with the Funk Brothers. Pistol is an impressive sobriquet don't you think. Much better than "pea shooter".

I like Jordy 'Rent a Gob' Cernik, which blows me away. Taking of blowing away I think its time I jumped on the old fire bolt broomstick and returned to my cupboard under the stairs, its small but it keeps me out of trouble, so thank you Harry, oops sorry Richard and as a the great sorting chair of Hot Seat once said, please give us your shameless plug.

Richard Allen broadcasts across the eight Magic Stations in the North of England, on AM, DAB and online at Magic.co.uk. Mon - Fri 6-10pm and Magic at the Movies, every Sunday night from 7-10pm. He's on twitter @Richard_F_Allen and facebook at www.facebook.com/richardallen1971.

See knew he worked nights! If you work nights and want to do something during the day I hear golf's good! Or you can contact me and have a go at casting your spell over the hot seat send a email or owl to editor@theradiomagazine.co.uk