

Meet the guest host – Heart FM DJ Neil Kefford

How did you get into radio?

I wanted to be in radio from an early age. Aged 5 or 6, can't quite remember, one day off school I was in the kitchen playing at being on the radio. Two cassette players, mine and my sisters, I'd turn one tune off, talk to myself, and then play another song. Weird thing is, I'm pretty much doing the same thing for a job right now ! The only difference, I don't do it in my Mum's kitchen anymore!

When is your show on and how long have you been doing it?

My Drive Time show's on weekday afternoons. Starts at 4pm, ends at 7pm. And I love it. I've been doing it 3 years now. I remember the day I walked in the building for the first time, it was very exciting, and it seems like just last week. Time flies when you're having a bundle of fun.

What advice would you offer to anyone who wants to get into DJ-ing?

Depends on which sort of DJ-ing you mean. Nightclub DJ-ing's very different from radio presenting. Nightclubs, practice for hours on your equipment, it's all in the mix and presenting your music, with minimal speaking. On the other hand, on the radio it's all about the speaking. Very different. If you want to get into radio, first make sure you love it, or the idea of doing it, and then be prepared to work for nothing. I did voluntary hospital radio, it's a great place to start, you'll learn a lot, and I really recommend it !

What is the best thing about presenting a radio show?

It's a buzz for 3 whole hours, and you know it is because the time just flies by. There's not a moment you can take your eye off the ball, you have to concentrate and when things work out the way I planned, it's a brilliant feeling! Add to that the great phone calls, and texts I get from listeners, all good stuff!

What is the worst?

When it all goes wrong and listeners look at their radio and think you're a plum. I try to laugh it off, saying that "yes, I am stupid". I'm not the most technical guy in the World, so sometimes it's a bit of a struggle. Too many buttons, not enough brain !

How much planning goes into an average show?

I plan every show carefully. I know, listening to it, it can be hard to believe ! But everything that happens on the radio has to be carefully timed. Time is very important. So knowing what you're going to do and when you're going to do it is very important too. I write everything down, and the trick then is to make it sound conversational. Sometimes I manage it better than others.

Do you look to emulate another DJ's particular style – perhaps one you enjoyed listening to when you were younger?

There is one guy who I thought was, and still is, a brilliant communicator. He also has a similar sense of humour to me. It's Simon Mayo. He had a superb breakfast show back in the late 80's and early 90's, it was just the best thing I'd ever heard. It was that that made me realise the job I was doing at that time was not what I really wanted to do. What I really wanted to do was radio, just like Simon Mayo.

What are your hobbies and interests?

Sport, any sport. I don't play anything now, but I love to watch sport. I used to play a lot of rugby. I was ok, as well. So that is my sport of choice, but anything will entertain me !