

## Concert trims its bandwidth costs

**GN is firmly committed to helping the Concert Alliance in its Network Cost Reduction Programme - an all-round attack on costs and overheads.**

Within the Concert Alliance GN manages the supply of bandwidth in Europe and Asia Pacific, at a considerable annual cost to Concert. Bandwidth comprises 75% of all network costs and network costs account for more than 70% of Concert's entire cost line. So it was readily apparent that GN would have a key role to play.

Derek Bell, Programme Manager, is managing the bandwidth cost reduction programme for GN. He recently hosted the first in a series of workshops intended to explore ways of driving down bandwidth costs to the Alliance. By reducing network costs, Concert's competitive position in the global market place can be maintained.

Derek said: "We are attacking this cost base from all angles, leaving no stone unturned. The Programme is already identifying savings across the Alliance and the sums are considerable, which is good news for us all."

The attack is concentrated on three main areas: network re-grooming, ie getting the best from bandwidth consolidation and optimisation, handling more traffic on the network by changing the configuration; cost controls, ie ensuring all available discounts are being

exploited fully, and finally actively pursuing the PTTs via GC in-country offices to get special deals for BT.

Derek said: "We must remember that thanks to Concert's product offerings, we are in most countries the PTT's biggest customer for international bandwidth, and so for cost, service delivery and quality of service we must aggressively reinforce this position."

"The Programme is very much a team effort, demonstrating the co-operation between Concert, GN and GC across Europe and Asia Pacific, which is essential to accomplish our goals and help Concert meet its commercial objectives."

Pierre Yves Roué is the GC European Regional Customer Service Manager, and represents GC Europe on the Cost Reduction Programme. He said: "From a distributor's point of view, this work is



*The Bandwidth Cost Reduction team takes a breather on the balcony of Mondial House, London. From left: Martin Rabbitt (GN), Ian Wiseman, John Goodman, Joe Fitzgerald, David Lee (all Concert), Doris Bressand (GN Hong Kong), Derek Bell, Andy Radley (both GN), Mike Cansfield (Alliance Management), Andy Groves (GN), Tor Saunes (Teleworld-Concert), Rachel Fetner (Concert), Pierre Yves Roué (GC Paris).*

essential to the Alliance. It has benefits not just for Concert and the core network costs, but also at the access end of the network, ensuring that end-to-end costs are stripped to the bone and allowing us to compete with reasonable margins."

*Further information from Derek Bell on \*7 300 7067 / (01904) 657067.*

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## Happy 75th anniversary Portishead!

**Portishead Radio BT's long range radio station in Somerset recently celebrated 75 years of service to the maritime community by hosting a week of festivities last month.**

From its beginnings in 1920 at Devizes in Wiltshire, the station quickly grew and was eventually expanded to Burnham in 1924. Increased traffic resulted in the establishment of a new transmission site at Portishead near Bristol.

Eventually all the work was consolidated at Burnham, but the name Portishead (Callsign GKA) was maintained because it was - and still is - synonymous with the friendliness and efficiency with which the station has long been associated.



*State-of-the-art in 1948: radio officers in the Operations Area at Portishead Radio Station.*

At one time the station handled over 1000 calls from ships every day. It played a vital role in the legendary Battle of the Atlantic during the Second World War as well as handling other important radio traffic, including distress calls, secret messages from Occupied Europe, and other essential communications.

By 1965, 86 radio officers were handling over 11 million words of traffic per year, but the advent of satellite communications has taken its toll of Portishead's business. However, the popularity of the station and its staff was amply demonstrated by messages from customers as diverse as entrepreneur and balloonist Richard Branson, polar explorer Sir Ranulph Fiennes, and round-the-world yachtswoman Lisa Clayton, as well as scores of less famous patrons.

On the 'Big Day' more than 150 ex-radio officers, both maritime and Old-Boys, paid their respects and took a look around. Local MP David Heathcoat-Amory and the Lady Mayoress of Burnham-on-Sea, Cllr Hilary Rose, also visited the station.

The day was rounded off with a group photo call and cake cutting ceremony, all duly recorded by local press and TV.

Radio officer Larry Bennett organised most of the events and said: "We were very pleased to host

the week-long celebrations, and believe that its success serves to illustrate just how the service is still appreciated and respected by customers all around the world. The station has adapted to meet the challenges of the modern world, and we expect to be around for a while yet..."

*Further information from Larry Bennett on (01278) 772253.*

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*Ideas for items to be included in the newsletter are always welcome and should be forwarded to the Editor at the address above.*

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