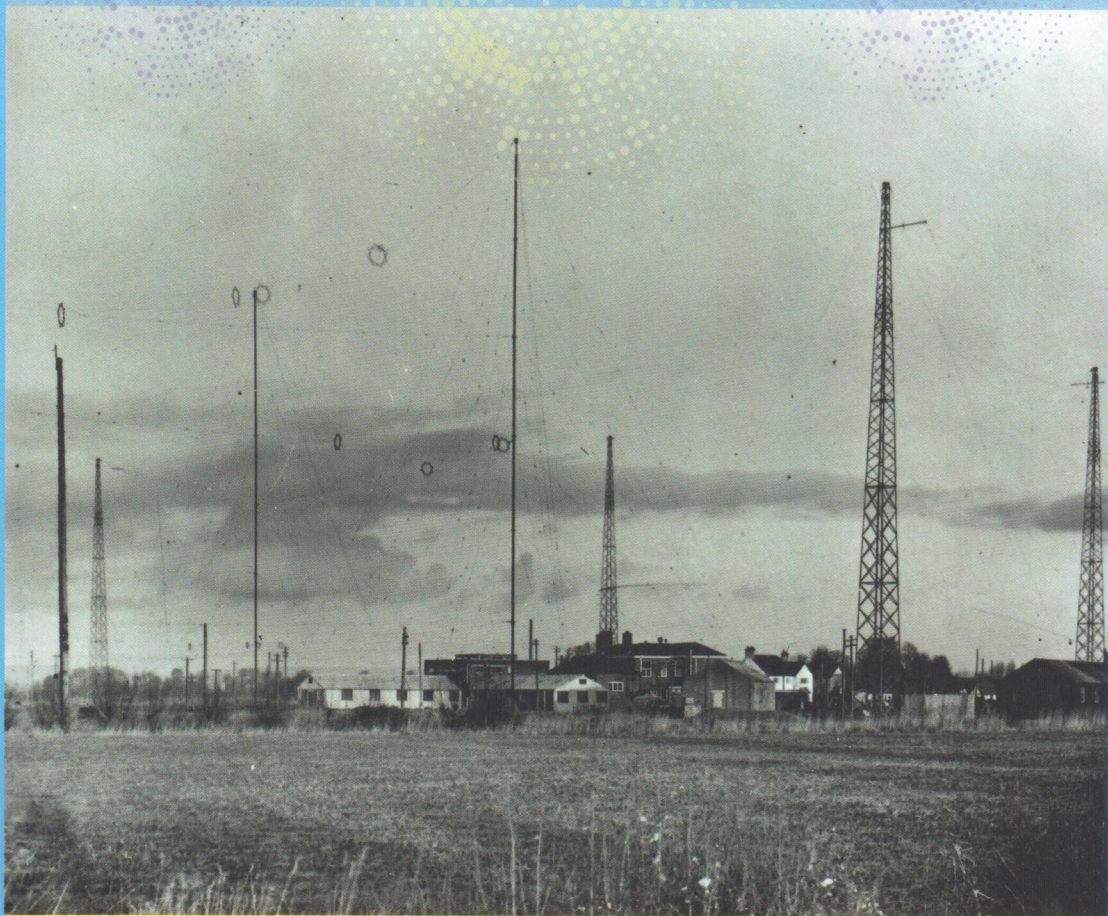


PORTISHEAD RADIO



A FRIENDLY VOICE ON
MANY A DARK NIGHT

Larry Bennett

•---PORTISHEAD RADIO---•

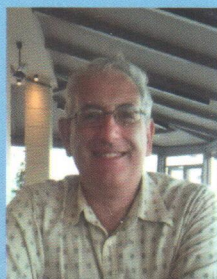
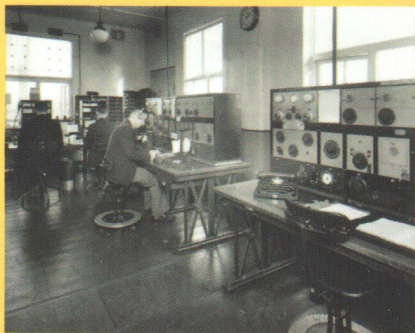
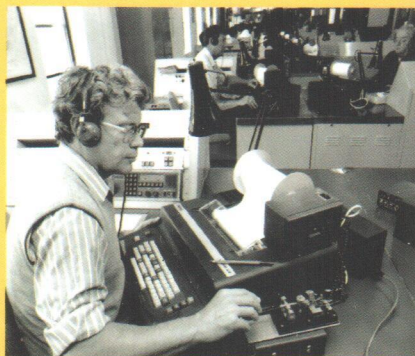
A FRIENDLY VOICE ON MANY A DARK NIGHT

Portishead Radio was the world's largest long range maritime radio communications station. Originally located at a site in Devizes, Wiltshire in 1920, the transmitters were relocated to Portishead, near Bristol, shortly after the receiving station was moved to Highbridge, Somerset during the 1920s. The station, originally operated by the British Post Office, provided vital communication links both to and from ships at sea, using Wireless Telegraphy (Morse code), Radiotelephony, and latterly, Radiotelex.

The developmental and war years are recounted in detail, as well as the rise (and eventual fall) of commercial maritime radio traffic over 80 years of service. The aeronautical and leisure markets are recalled, as well as other services provided by the station. The station closed in 2000, as satellite technology became the preferred method of ship-to-shore communication.

This book gives both a technical and social history of the station; how it worked, what it was like to work there, and fondly recalls many of the stories and characters who became part of the station's charm.

Using many photographs, staff memories, and with recently-found magazine and newspaper articles, the complete history of this important and much-missed station can be told for the first time.



Larry Bennett

Larry Bennett has been involved in radio communications for his entire life. He obtained his Maritime Radio General Certificate in 1979 before joining the BBC Monitoring Service at Caversham Park, Reading as an electronics technician later that year. He then found employment as a Radio Officer at the Post Office/BT's Portishead Radio Station for over 20 years, joining the service in 1980 and leaving BT in 2001 when the Aeronautical and Maritime service was sold.

After a short spell of processing historical documents from the station for BT Group Archives, he worked as a Radio Signals Editor for the Admiralty List of Radio Signals section of the UK Hydrographic Office in Taunton. In 2011 he was promoted to Radio Signals Manager, overseeing the ALRS suite of publications. He subsequently served on various IMO and IHO radio communication committees and working groups as both Secretary and Chair of the IMO NAVTEX Coordinating Panel before taking retirement at the end of 2019.

He is the webmaster of the Portishead Radio website www.portisheadradio.co.uk and has had numerous articles published in specialist radio magazines. He has also given illustrated lectures about the station to radio clubs and local history groups around the country. He is a licensed Radio Amateur (G4HLN) and lives in Somerset.

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