



LAMP

SUMMER 2021

ISSUE 128



The Quarterly Journal of the Association of Lighthouse Keepers

www.alk.org.uk

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Personal column

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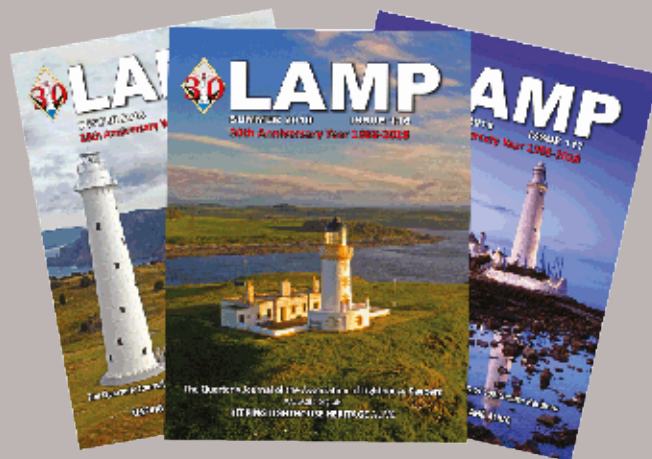
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Front cover: Longships lighthouse. Photo by Paul Campbell

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by 15 July 2021
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Making waves

Neil Hargreaves, Founder/Chairman

At the time of writing this we are still in uncharted waters regarding the COVID situation, although we are beginning to see some light on the horizon. It was not an easy decision that the trustees had to take to defer the Belfast AGM again to 2022 and to have an online Zoom AGM for this year. Full details can be found in this issue which lays out all our reasoning behind this decision.

It was sad to hear of the passing of HRH the Duke of Edinburgh on 9 April. He was the Master of Trinity House from 1969 to 2011, which made him the longest serving Master in the history of the Corporation. On the odd occasion he would join the Elder Brethren on their annual inspection of lighthouses and lightvessels on board THV *Patricia*. I did have the pleasure of meeting him myself when the Master and the Elder Brethren gave a dinner for all the lighthouse keepers along with our wives and partners, after the automation program was completed. This took place at Trinity House. The Duke welcomed each and every one of us on our arrival with a quick chat and a hand shake. We were each presented with a medal at the dinner. It was a most pleasant evening, and it finished with music and dancing and much convivial conversation going on throughout. His legacies will live on of course in the charities he was instrumental in getting off the ground, such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and the Playing Fields Association. He was also involved with many other charities, London Zoo to name but one.

I was also saddened to hear of the passing of ex-keeper Handel Bluer, or Andy Bluer as he was known to everyone in the service. His passing was reported in *The Cornishman*, which stated: '*Handel Bluer passed away at St Mary's Haven, Penzance, on 6 February 2021 due to COVID 19. Beloved husband of Joan, loving father of Janet, Hayden, Ruth (deceased)*'. A private service was held due to the situation at that time.



Prior to living in the care home Andy lived at Pendeen, and used to be a member of the Pendeen brass band. Fellow ex-keeper Paul Hickley remembers when he served with Andy a few times when Andy was Principal Keeper at Pendeen lighthouse. Paul was on the Pool at the time, but he remembers that the shifts at the lighthouse had to be worked out so that Andy was off on the evenings of his brass band practice. RIP Andy. I would like to thank ex-keeper Larry Walker for bringing Andy's passing to our attention.

I have been very pleased to see that the Zoom events we have been running have been well supported and enjoyed by the members who took part. There is a demand there that some Zoom events will continue after we have returned to having actual events again, as it does mean that more members can participate.

I would like to thank our long-standing north-west reps Gordon and Louise Medlicott, who have recently stood down, for their unstinting dedication and the hard work they have both put into this role over many years. Gordon being an ex-keeper and Louise being an ex-keeper's wife, they were both a mine of information regarding the lighthouse service. As Gordon had served much longer than I as a keeper, I would often go to him for information when various enquires came in. I am also very grateful to him that I will be able to continue to do this, as he said to me that they will still always be there when we need them in any way. They will also support Nerys in her new role as our north-west rep, for which I am eternally grateful. Every International Lighthouse Day would see them both at Leasowe lighthouse on the Wirral. They have also been regular faces at our AGMs and lighthouse events, so many of our members have come to know and love them. I speak for all the trustees and members in giving our heartfelt thanks to them both.



*The last Trinity House keepers at North Foreland. This was the final British lighthouse to be automated, on 26 November 1998, and a ceremony took place, attended by the Master of Trinity House, The Duke of Edinburgh. From this date the British lighthouse service was completely automatic.
Photo courtesy of Trinity House*

Letters to the editors

From Gareth Hughes

I am a member of the Society for Model and Experimental Engineers (SMEE) and one of our members has been making a very fine working model of the foghorn outside the Trinity House Museum. He recently gave a very interesting Zoom talk on its history too. He has modelled, but has not been able to identify, the devices in the attached photos. He would like to know what they are and their function in the operation of the foghorn. Would any ALK members be able to help in their identification?

Any information gratefully received! Please contact me via email at: whoseg@gmail.com



Editors' note: Brian Johnson (Sumburgh lighthouse engineer), makes the following comments:

'Our horn is a siren diaphragm and neither it nor any other of the various types of horns I have worked on has this. My first thought was that it was a housing for a thrust bearing for a vertical shaft but its position on the frame, small size and the fact there is no obvious shaft, or in fact, any use for a shaft sort of knocks that... The only other thing that comes to mind is some sort of oil reservoir. Sorry, but the honest answer is I don't really know! Perhaps if you could establish what other holes or openings were on it, that might give us a clue.'

From Kim Fahlen (ALK USA representative)

I would like to think I represent all ALK members of the United States, and also of Canada, in offering heartfelt condolences to our UK members on the death of Prince Philip. May Queen Elizabeth's deepest sorrow soon be gently eased and a strength and peace come to her as she carries on. May the Royal Family find comfort in each other—and recognise and value all the good in each other that comes from Prince Philip.

We mourn with you.

From Paul Easton

If only they had been tractor postcards!

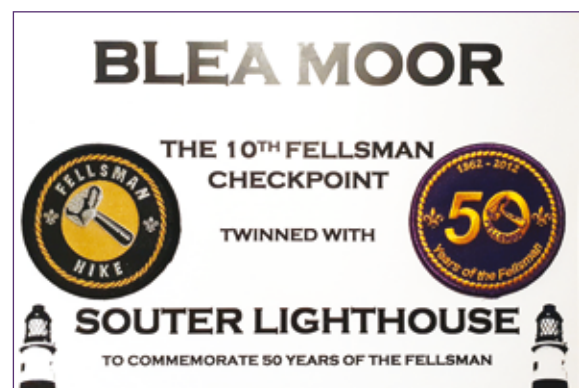
The ALK now has ten new members, and the numbers continue to grow, all because a Sri Lankan shopkeeper had nearly 100 Sri Lankan lighthouse postcards, all of which I bought, while on holiday in Sri Lanka in 2008.

One of my other hobbies is fell walking and once a year I am part of a safety (sweep) team with the Fellsman Hike. This event is a high-level traverse including Ingleborough and Wharfedale and covering more than 60 miles over rugged moorland. Starting in Ingleton, hikers cover over 11,000 feet before reaching the finish in Threshfield. Three safety teams take turns following the last of the hikers through hilltop checkpoints, registering hiker tally numbers to ensure that no one is missing.

I started sending my safety team colleagues Sri Lankan lighthouse postcards (yes, I had nothing better to do), pointing out the virtues of lighthouses in Sri Lanka. Very soon this had snowballed and lighthouse literature/items were regularly being sent between us.

In 2012, the hike committee (the 50th Fellsman hike) twinned the Blea Moor checkpoint with Souter lighthouse, much to the amusement of the hikers. Some of the roadside checkpoints had flashing lighthouse models during the hours of darkness (the hike continues throughout the night) to help guide the hikers safely on their way.

Recently we have started to enrol one another into ALK and the number of new ALK members is likely to grow. So what started as a bit of fun with lighthouse postcards has now escalated into ten ALK memberships (and counting). If the Sri Lankan shopkeeper had had tractor postcards instead we would probably be walking around farmyards and not lighthouses!



From Stephen Pickles

Sadly we have to announce that Geoff Brown, our long standing Chairman of The Friends of Leasowe Lighthouse CIO, has recently passed away.

Geoff was totally dedicated to the aims and values of Leasowe lighthouse and was often on site when no one else could be. He would be beavering away at fixing any of the myriad of things that needed his attention. He had a special battle with the water ingress through the lamp room windows on more than one occasion.

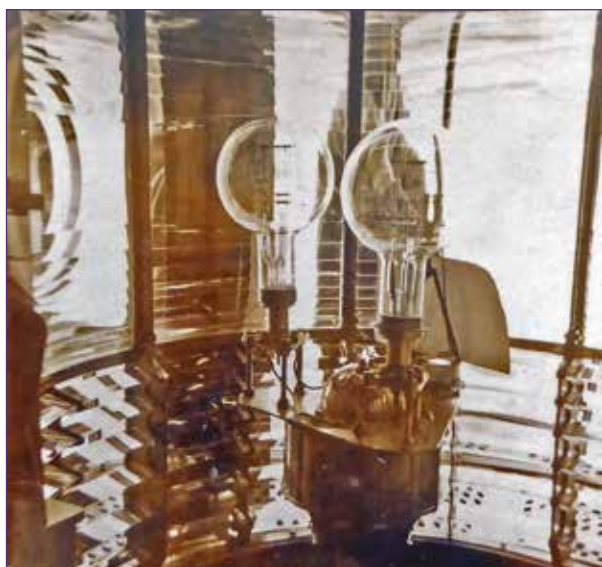
Geoff led the amateur radio side of the lighthouse, running our ham radio weekend in August under the call sign GB4LL. He also taught many new beginners in the hobby to get them through their licence exam, and helped with the morse code classes run by the late David Oakden.

Geoff was also a key member of the small team of trustees who negotiated the transfer of the lighthouse from Wirral Council to The Friends of Leasowe Lighthouse CIO, culminating in the signing of the 99 year lease in 2016.

We will all miss Geoff immensely and hope that his spirit will help those of us remaining to achieve our goals.

From Julian Stevens

The article by Patrick Tubby re Graham Fearn, North Foreland and St Catherine's lighthouses (Lamp 127) brought back some memories. I went up these two towers with my father in 1961, aged 14. Armed with my Kodak Brownie camera I took the photo below of the lamps which I was very pleased with (it's easy to forget now how hit-and-miss photography was 60 years ago with basic cameras). Then on to St Catherine's: although I didn't take a photo, the thing that fascinated me here was the huge plumb bob dangling from the ceiling onto a target on the floor. The Keeper (before Graham Fearn's time) may have been having this schoolboy on but I'm pretty sure he told me it was to monitor the tilting of the Isle of White from east to west! With hindsight it was probably more to do with monitoring the tower from the coastal landslips. Anyway, my father's drawing shows the full arrangement at the time, which readers might be interested to see. I've been fascinated with plumb bobs ever since (and used them professionally) ...and lighthouses of course!



From Gordon and Louise Medicott

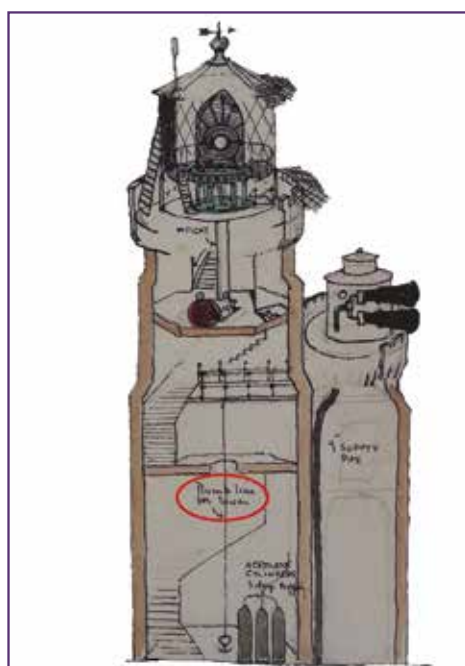
Dear Northwest members,

Since our last report in 2020 we have all faced many challenges, and we trust you managed to cope with the various lockdown and isolation periods, making practical use of, or learning new skills during the enforced time. With the events outdoor programme having been put on hold or cancelled again this year the trustees and events team have worked tirelessly on your behalf in arranging new activities through the communication hub of Zoom, in which we hope you have managed to participate.

Louise and I became regional representatives many years ago because we felt that with a working background in lighthouses we would be better placed to pass on our first-hand knowledge of life within the Lighthouse Service to local members, and have always been available and pleased to hear from members via phone, letter or email. Throughout our tenure we have been privileged to meet some great people and have had some wonderful times promoting the ALK – the most memorable being our visits to local primary schools which were not only fun and unpredictable, but resulted in the reward of an invitation to remain for school dinner... how could we resist!

We have also over the years been delighted to meet some members for a casual lunch date, and during International Lighthouse Weekend in August had the pleasure of representing the ALK at Leasowe lighthouse. However, 2020/21 has proven to be not only challenging, but a life changing period for us that has required some serious consideration. Louise and I now feel that as we are no longer able to give our full commitment to the role of northwest representatives, it is in the best interest of you our members that we stand down in favour of someone who can, and so as of March this year our role has been transferred into the very capable hands of our neighbouring N. Wales representative Nerys Lamerick. Please give her your support.

When able, we will meet some of you again on future events, but in the meanwhile, whatever the remainder of the year brings, stay safe.



Meet our new regional representatives

Arent van der Veen European Representative

My name is Arent van der Veen and I happily have taken on the European Representative role in the ALK earlier this year. As my name may suggest, I originate from the Netherlands, but I have actually been living in Sweden for almost a decade now. In my professional life I am involved in tendering and technical sales for a marine survey company specialising in hydrographic, geophysical, geotechnical and environmental seabed surveys. My interest in lighthouses started when I was very young. At that time I spent all of my summer holidays on the Dutch island of Schiermonnikoog. I can still remember that, being just a small boy, I was quite impressed by the mysterious lighthouse on top of the sand dune. When I saw the rotating light beams at night I was hooked! An interest that still lasts. A large part of my spare time I spend in reading and researching lighthouses, but I also like to discover the coastal areas of West Sweden, and to travel abroad (including lighthouse visits of course), together with my wife and three-year-old son. I am looking forward to getting to know all the European members and other ALK Officers and Regional Reps.



Schiermonnikoog lighthouse.
Photo by Baykedevries (Creative Commons Licence)

Ian Hogarth Media & Publicity Officer

I'm delighted to be appointed the Interim Media & Publicity Officer for the ALK.

My own love of lighthouses can probably be traced back to my childhood when I borrowed a copy of Tony Parker's book, *Lighthouse*, from the local library and became absorbed and fascinated by the world of lighthouses and lightkeepers. It is an interest that has grown over the years and following a family holiday to Start Point lighthouse in Devon back in 2015 this enthusiasm accelerated beyond all recognition. I'm originally from the West Midlands in England but am now based in West Cork, Ireland, where my family and I have lived for over ten years. I'm lucky to have lighthouses such as Galley Head and Fastnet just a short drive away. Even my children have now caught the lighthouse 'bug' and no family holiday is ever too far away from a new lighthouse to explore. I must also thank my good friend and fellow ALK member Gerald Butler, attendant lightkeeper at Galley Head, for his wealth of knowledge and never-ending encouragement. I'm very fortunate to be able to play a role helping with Open Days and events at Galley Head, which in my eyes is one of the most beautiful lighthouses, and indeed places, I know!

The ALK is a fantastic organisation and uniquely combines the heritage of both the lighthouses themselves and the lightkeepers who served them. As a member I've enjoyed meeting other like-minded lighthouse enthusiasts determined to keep this heritage alive. My role as Media & Publicity Officer within the ALK is an exciting one and it is great to get the opportunity to promote the aims and activities of the ALK. I'm conscious too that I'm taking the role on from Laura Burkett who was a much-loved member of the ALK team until her recent unexpected passing, and I hope to continue and build on the fantastic work that she started.

I look forward to meeting some of you at ALK events and lighthouses in the not-too-distant future.



The Executive Committee in action

David Taylor, Secretary

All those for whom we hold email addresses will have seen the plans for the 2021 Annual General Meeting. There is a formal announcement about it elsewhere in this issue (see page 9). At their meeting on 7 April the trustees felt they had no choice but to go for the least-risk option to try and avoid a last-minute cancellation owing to all the uncertainty still with us at the time of the meeting.

The trustees have been monitoring the development of Zoom online meetings since my last report. There has been another online quiz about lighthouses, a Meet the Keepers event and regional meetings for members have now taken place. At the time of writing six have happened: Europe, Isle of Man, Central England, East Midlands, North East, Scotland

Plans are in place for more in the coming weeks: Ireland, South West England, South East England, and North West England/Wales.

If you would like to be kept up to date about events in your region please let us have your email address so that we can ensure you receive the relevant information. Check with secretary@alk.org.uk – if you didn't get the email about the AGM arrangements which was sent out on 8 April, chances are we don't have an up to date email address for you on our files.) You can check with your own regional representative if there are any plans afoot for your group – their email link can be found on the Meet the Officers page of the ALK website (www.alk.org.uk.)

Our annual report and accounts were submitted to the Charity Commission and can be examined by anyone wishing to do so by visiting the Charity Commission website (www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission) and searching for charity number 1089142.

We are delighted that we have a new Media and Publicity Officer (Ian Hogarth) and also a new European Regional Representative (Arent van der Veen) – information about both can be found elsewhere in this issue (see page 7). Sadly, Gordon and Louise Medlicott have decided to step down from their role as NW reps after many years of devoted service to the ALK and their local membership. Nerys Lamerick has kindly agreed to take on the role in addition to her North Wales group.

The trustees are also monitoring the situation at Hurst Castle with the major breach of the Eastern wall. This doesn't impact directly on our Museum rooms which are at the other end, but the castle being open to visitors later in the year looks questionable.

The trustees are especially grateful to Sarah Kerr for her amazing hard work in organising online events for us in the absence of physical events – lots of work goes into a lighthouse quiz or organising speakers and Sarah has done a wonderful job for us.

Enjoy your summer.

Hurst News

John Best

After the success of the 2019 programme of works to stabilise the foundations of the west wing wall, tragedy struck on 26 February 2021, when a section of the wall of the east wing collapsed. The sea had previously exposed and undercut the foundations and plans had been made to start restoration work. This work was only days away from commencing when the collapse occurred. Thankfully, nobody was hurt. The castle is now closed to the public, and 24 hour security is in place to protect the area.

At the end of April, as a stakeholder, the ALK team received a letter outlining plans for the future of the castle. 6000 tons of shingle had been delivered and 5000 tonnes of large boulders had arrived by barge from Cornwall. The shingle will be used to replace what has been lost and a protection revetment will be built with the rocks. This will help absorb and dissipate the energy of the waves during future storms. This is the first step of the plan to reduce future potential damage to the castle.

English Heritage have made it clear that they remain resolutely committed to Hurst Castle but that there is no quick fix and the works will take many months to complete. It is not known when the castle will be reopened to the public, and for the moment no-one is allowed inside.

The ALK rooms are completely safe as they are housed at the opposite end of the castle complex.



Hurst Castle damage. Photos by Andy Amor



The Association's Annual General Meeting 2021: Arrangements

Neil Hargreaves, David Taylor and Sarah Kerr

Many members will be aware that our AGM weekends have always been the highlight of our annual schedule of events. The last was in and around Hull in 2019. Lately we have witnessed very successful growth in the numbers attending, reaching over 100 in the most recent ones.

We had very exciting plans for an outstanding AGM weekend in Belfast scheduled for 2020 – but COVID ensured it had to be dropped, along with all of our other events for 2020 and, so far, for most of 2021 too.

We, like most other charities, received approval for special arrangements for the 2020 AGM and we published all the paperwork we would have submitted to an AGM in editions of *Lamp*.

We fervently hoped for the AGM this year to be in Belfast and we know, from the levels of interest we saw back then, that many of you will be disappointed to learn we have decided we have no option but to cancel it for this year too.

Huge uncertainties over travel, social distancing, availability of venues, travel between lighthouses by minibus, worries over health and safety generally and the inability of the CIL to open lighthouses to us for the foreseeable future as they, like the NLB and TH, are concentrating all their efforts on essential maintenance only. Logistically it's impossible, since events in places like Belfast, for 100 or so people, require meticulous planning up to a year ahead. In April, the decision made by the trustees was the Belfast AGM is just too risky to be viable this year.

There may well be opportunities for short events in the autumn, but some members will also know that the Isle of Man and Cornwall trips have also been cancelled again for the same reason.

The 2021 AGM will be run online using Zoom. We are joining a very large club here, sadly. Nothing will ever replace lighthouse fans getting together, socialising and learning about lighthouse heritage in real time and space.

But for now, we can't plan for that before the autumn at the earliest and even if it happens, it's likely to be a modest, one-day event like a visit to Chance Bros in Smethwick or the Creative Isolation Project celebration day at Bidston lighthouse in October. Sadly, we can't confirm these either yet, for the same reasons.

Running the AGM online isn't ideal but at least there's zero risk of it being cancelled between now and the end of September!

We're going to try and build in some added attractions around it as our online events so far have all proved very enjoyable and been much appreciated.

But for now, please add it to your diary:

SATURDAY 25 SEPTEMBER 2021 at 3.30pm

We do hope this exceptional event will be a one-off and that Belfast will happen in 2022. We know not everyone has access to Zoom, or is comfortable with it. We shall aim to make all the reports and so on available via the ALK website between now and the actual meeting. But it also opens up the possibility of some members being able to join us who wouldn't normally be able to – those overseas or for whom mobility is a challenge.

Please bear with us in these difficult times. The trustees hated having to take this decision but were left with no viable options given the need for everyone – the Association itself and all its members – to plan far ahead for this kind of real-time event.

We do hope you will be able to join us on 25 September. If you're unfamiliar with using Zoom and have access to a computer or tablet that has good wifi access, Page 16 and 17 of *Lamp* 127 contain all the information you need to get you up to speed.

Meantime, thank you for your patience and understanding and fingers and toes crossed for Belfast in 2022!

Ratray Head lighthouse was part of the tour in 2017, when our AGM took place in Fraserburgh



Gem of the Norfolk Coast

The conclusion of Graham Fearn's career memoirs

Patrick Tubby

As one of Trinity House's most senior keepers, Graham was transferred to Cromer on the Norfolk coast in 1982. Cromer lighthouse was built in 1833, replacing an earlier tower that was threatened with erosion. The light was originally provided by a three-sided frame with ten oil lamps and reflectors on each face, giving one flash every minute with a range of over 20 miles (32km). And from 1905, the town's gas supply provided the main illuminant – two banks of seven gas burners and reflectors mounted back-to-back – exhibiting a single white flash every 30 seconds.

Though the lighthouse at Cromer was of a stout and solid construction, the keepers' cottage was comparatively small. This was remedied in the late 1920s by the building of a large semi-detached dwelling. In 1935 the lighthouse was connected to mains electricity, and for the next 23 years the light was produced by an unusual combination of gas burners and electric lamps on one revolving frame. The lighthouse was fully electrified in 1958, which saw the removal of the original 1833 lantern and the 1935 gas/electric combination frame. A fixed third order optic was installed with a flasher unit giving five flashes every 15 seconds and a range of 20 miles (32km).

At the time of Graham's arrival in 1982 the lighthouse was manned by two full-time keepers, a principal (PK) and an assistant (AK), who lived with their families in the dwellings behind the tower – the Fearn's lived in the east cottage. In an effort to further reduce manning costs, plans were already afoot to re-class some stations as keeper and wife



Cromer lighthouse. Graham and Audrey Fearn lived in the right-hand side of the semi-detached dwelling. Photo by Patrick Tubby

(K&W) lights; indeed Withernsea, on the Yorkshire coast had been redesignated as such as early as the 1950s. The keeper's wife would be employed as the assistant keeper, and these more favourable postings were offered to more senior PKs. By this time, it had been possible to automate many lighthouses around the coast that didn't include a fog signal. However, automatic fog detection equipment was still unreliable, and many lighthouses reclassified as K&W in the 1970s were effectively unwatched lighthouses. As they still had operational fog signals, the main purpose of the keepers was to watch for fog, and sound the fog signal if necessary.

Audrey Fearn was officially appointed as female assistant keeper at Cromer lighthouse on 1 January 1983. Effectively, Graham and Audrey were required to be at the lighthouse overnight six days a week. A local assistant keeper (LAK), who did not live on site, was employed to keep watch one night a week. Audrey and the LAK were fully trained in the operation of the lighthouse, and in the event of Graham being taken ill, Audrey would have been



Graham in the lantern at Cromer lighthouse, mid-1980s. This was a publicity photo for Trinity House, and the image appears, usually uncaptioned, in some Trinity House visitor centres.

Photo courtesy of Trinity House



Bolkow MBB Bo 105 Xray-Oscar under-sliding a load destined for an offshore lightvessel, viewed at Cromer. Photo by John Jefferies



*Third order fixed optic at Cromer lighthouse, 1987.
Photo by Trevor Haywood*

expected to monitor and maintain the light until other arrangements had been put in place. Attached to the east side of the tower was an engine room and workshop.

With the second dwelling at Cromer becoming vacant, it was used, as many redundant properties were, as an amenity dwelling for Trinity House staff to use for holiday accommodation, and Graham and Audrey added the turnaround of this to their duties in 1983. To provide facilities for the LAK, a mess room was incorporated into the ground floor of the tower, so that he didn't need to go into the main dwellings during his watch.

As at Withernsea, there was no fog signal at Cromer, so it is perhaps surprising that the lighthouse wasn't automated much earlier. However, during the 1980s, Cromer fulfilled another role; visitors walking along the cliffs at Cromer are often surprised to find a concrete helicopter pad in front of the lighthouse. This wasn't to fly supplies to the lighthouse, but for use by offshore lightvessel crews; from the late 1970s Cromer was the crew transit point for several lightships off the Norfolk coast, and also the Inner Dowsing light tower. Most of the Trinity House lightvessel



*Graham in full uniform on the helipad at Cromer.
Photo by Trevor Haywood*



*Former Cromer optic, on display at East Cowes Depot, 1990s.
Photo by Graham Fearn*

fleet in the 1980s had been built in the years following the Second World War – though there were still a few pre-war lightvessels in use also. During the late 1970s to early 1980s, all existing lightvessels were fitted with a small aft deck helipad to facilitate helicopter reliefs.

Although powered by mains electricity, during an upgrade of the engines in the 1980s, two new generators were installed in the basement of the tower itself; and as a second reserve, there was a battery-powered emergency light (part of the Service Room had been partitioned off to form a Battery Room). The old Engine Room now became a heli-ops lounge, where personnel could relax while awaiting either transport to or from the lightvessels.

Often crews would assemble at the Trinity House Depot in Great Yarmouth and then be transferred via minibus up to Cromer for the reliefs. Neil Hargreaves was an assistant keeper on the Inner Dowsing, and on one of his transits via Cromer, he suggested to Graham that, with the onset of automation of lighthouses and lightships, soon there would be no keepers left in the Service, and that perhaps an old keepers' association should be formed. Graham agreed that it would be good to have a medium of maintaining contact with personnel once they left the Service.

By the time Neil next passed through Cromer he had managed to get support from a couple of other East Anglian based keepers, and had arranged an initial meeting at Southwold Yacht Club. A couple of early meetings were held at Lowestoft and others in the heli-ops lounge at Cromer lighthouse, and soon, as roles were allocated,



*Graham and Audrey Fearn at Cromer lighthouse, 1987.
Photo by Trevor Haywood*

Graham found himself as the first Chairman of the Association of Lighthouse Keepers. By this time there were several serving and former keepers supporting their efforts and he suggested writing them a letter with progress on the initial musings – the letter was typed by Audrey on an old typewriter.

Eventually, Gerry Douglas-Sherwood agreed to edit a more formal newsletter – and *Lamp* was born. Gerry was at that time assistant keeper on the Needles lighthouse off the Isle of Wight. Traditionally, keepers on rock stations used to fill their off-watch hours with hobbies and crafts (model making, woodwork, ships in bottles etc); Gerry's off-watch hours were now filled with the methodical thump, thump, thump as he bashed away on a typewriter to produce *Lamp*.

When Gerry came back ashore he would post his hand-typed proofs to a print shop in Norwich who would print the journal – which Graham would then collect and mail to members. Through the 1990s Graham had various roles with the ALK, serving for a time as Membership Secretary and Treasurer. He stepped back from committee roles in 1998, but continued to hold the stock, and fulfil orders of back issues of *Lamp* until 2004.

Painter, Frank Windas, used to be employed directly by Trinity House, but in later times was employed on a sub-contractor basis. Frank has been involved with most repaints at Happisburgh lighthouse over the last 40 years, and speaking to him during the 2018 repaint, he asked of Graham up at Cromer. He had fond memories of the Fearn – particular mention was made of Audrey's wonderful baking! On one occasion in the 1980s, Frank was engaged in some internal painting at Cromer lighthouse one December. On this particular day it was scheduled to have a celebrity switch-on of the Cromer Christmas lights – the celeb in question was Benny from Crossroads (aka actor Paul Henry). Graham, Audrey and Frank decided to pop into town to join the celebrations, but the snow had been falling in the afternoon, and as they made their way down to the High Street, the conditions became more blizzard-like, so bad in fact, that Paul Henry couldn't reach Cromer that evening, and the lights were switched on instead by a civic dignitary.

In the summer of 1989, Graham received a letter from Manuel Peralta Sanchez, who worked for the Spanish Lighthouse Service at the port of Castellon to the north of Valencia. Amongst Manuel's duties was that of attendant for the remote Columbretes lighthouse. There are four main islands making up Illes Columbretes. The lighthouse stands on the largest of these, Illa Grossa, a crescent-shaped volcanic remnant, about 35 miles (56km) offshore from Castella, part way between the mainland and the island of Majorca. The lighthouse, built on the highest part of the island, was built in 1859; initially staffed by four keepers and their families, it was automated in 1961. Graham recalled:

'He informed me he would be in England from August to December, and would like to visit Cromer lighthouse. In due course, he arrived in the early afternoon of 14th August, and after a leisurely tour of the station to see the light, radio beacon, RACON, remote equipment for automatic lightvessels, and helicopter operations equipment, comparing notes, we



*Illes Columbretes lighthouse:
In 1989 Manuel Peralta Sanchez visited Graham at Cromer – Manuel was attendant for this remote lighthouse. Manned until 1961, this was largely considered the worst posting in the Spanish Lighthouse Service.
Photo courtesy of Paisajes Españoles*



*Taken at the 1990 ALK AGM at Cromer.
Back row: Neil Hargreaves, Gerry Douglas-Sherwood, Pam & John Shippey, Audrey & Graham Fearn.
Front row: Andy Balls, Keith Langridge, Tony Elvers, Paul Hickley.
Photo by Paul Howard*

retired to the lounge for tea and cakes, and a further chat on lighthouses and other subjects in general.

It was at this moment that I noticed a car coming to a halt and parking in the middle of the road behind the barrier across the driveway, blocking the access. A man and three women got out and I presumed they were about to start walking to the cliff-top. Upon informing them not to leave their car blocking a private road, etc, the male member of the party said, 'I've come all the way from Europa Point to see you.' I then realised it was none other than Brian Burdiss with his wife and two daughters, on holiday from Gibraltar!

Bearing in mind I had a Spanish lighthouse keeper in my lounge, and Brian's wife being Spanish, I couldn't get them inside my lounge quick enough for a good old chat, with Brian's wife acting as interpreter to speed up the conversation, which up to that time had been somewhat slow and stilted. The result was that we all had a terrific afternoon and a highly enjoyable time.

But what a coincidence occurring in one day at Cromer, the result being that Manuel Sanchez and the Burdiss family could all exchange addresses, and possibly exchange visits in the future.

As I took Manuel to the railway station I commented several times to him that it was the most amazing coincidence that I had come across in years!

As a precursor to automation, a new smaller prismatic optic was installed in April 1988, and the third-order optic moved to the Trinity House depot at East Cowes on the Isle of Wight. The new light gave one flash every five seconds and had a range of 23 miles (37km). A PRB46 sealed beam emergency light was mounted above this.

Graham retired from Cromer lighthouse upon its automation in early 1990, but he and Audrey continued to live at the lighthouse for the next six months while he held the role of attendant. In an article in the *Eastern Daily Press* in 1989, Graham said he felt he lived in 'Cromer's most desirable residence'.

In spite of having moved throughout his career, the Norfolk coast favoured Graham and Audrey, and they bought a house on Station Road in the town – with a view of the lighthouse, naturally! Graham's replacement as attendant at Cromer was Ted Whaley, another long-time Trinity House servant, and retired PK, and as Graham had done, he lived on site. Sadly, Ted Whaley's stint at Cromer came to a premature end when he was taken ill at the lighthouse in 1995; he was transferred to hospital, but died shortly after – he was 69 years of age.

In 1990, Anneka Rice was challenged to repaint Happisburgh lighthouse as part of the BBC programme *Challenge Anneka*. Once she'd arrived in the village, the first person she was sent to see for advice was 'Mr Fearn – the lighthouse keeper at Cromer'. Graham gave her some contact names at Trinity House, and the task was underway. By mid-afternoon the next day, a non-stop concerted effort by local contractors saw Happisburgh lighthouse repainted inside and out!

Happisburgh lighthouse had been scheduled for closure in 1988, but a campaign by the local community led to it being formally handed over to an independent trust in 1990. Trinity House, and Britain's other general lighthouse



*Graham with HRH The Princess Royal, Happisburgh lighthouse, 2010.
Photo by Jim Whiteside*

authorities, can only dispose of a working lighthouse to an established local lighthouse authority – and over the years, a number of lights have been taken over by port authorities. Happisburgh though doesn't fall within the jurisdiction of a local port, so a Private Members Bill had to be promoted through Parliament to form the Happisburgh Lighthouse Trust as a local lighthouse authority. The Trust formally took over control of the lighthouse on 1 August 1990.

In our previous instalment (*Lamp* 127) about Graham's time at St Catherine's lighthouse, we mentioned Peter Halil, who had served as a junior keeper under Graham. Peter had joined the Service in 1974, and went on to serve as a keeper until redundancy in 1997.

During the 1990s Peter travelled to many lighthouses while the automation process was underway; and, as an amateur film-maker, recorded many stations while this change was in progress. He also undertook a series of interviews with serving and retired keepers in an effort to record a way of life now gone forever. In the early 1990s, Peter visited Graham at his home in Cromer to record some of his service recollections. Many of these interviews and films are now available on YouTube.

One of Peter Halil's interviewees was Ralph Humphries, who joined Trinity House in 1971; in response to a question about which keeper had influenced him over the years, Ralph answered:

'I think that would have to be Graham Fearn, who was my Principal Keeper at St Catherine's between 1974–78. I was still young, a bit of a rebel, and he retaught me the values of doing a job worthwhile – you get out of a job, what you put into it. There's no good me just sitting here and saying I'm a lighthouse keeper when I didn't know what was going to happen if something went wrong. You've got to know what to do when things go wrong because the PK might not always be there. One day, you might be the man in charge, so you've got to know your equipment and how it works. Now that has stayed with me – also Graham's man-management ideas: if you did your job well, all very good, but if you didn't, you had to watch out, and everyone knew where they stood. I guess that's how I've tried to play it. I guess he was my biggest influence.'

In recognition of his long service with Trinity House, Graham was awarded the British Empire Medal in the Queen's Birthday Honours List of 1991, which was presented on Her Majesty's behalf, by the Lord Lieutenant of Norfolk, Timothy Colman, at County Hall, Norwich on 1 November 1991.

Sadly, Audrey Fearn died suddenly in 2001, but Graham remained active within the local community. I think it was around this time that we began our annual lunches for ALK members at the Lighthouse Inn at Walcott – Graham



Graham Fearn keeps vigil in the Service Room, Cromer 1989. Photo by Paul Hewitt

was a regular attendee, though he always joked that there would be some roadworks on the coast road from Cromer. Later, we coupled these lunches with a visit to Happisburgh lighthouse. And if we were visiting Cromer, we knew Graham would have the kettle on.

Graham's support for Happisburgh lighthouse continued through his membership of the Friends, and on a couple of occasions, he gave slide show presentations on his time in the Lighthouse Service in the Church Room at Happisburgh. In 2008, Her Royal Highness, The Princess Royal was invited to become Patron of the Friends of Happisburgh Lighthouse, an invitation she accepted from 1 January 2009. It is well known that the Princess

has a passion for lighthouses; she has been the Patron of the Northern Lighthouse Board (covering Scotland and the Isle of Man) since 1997, and since 2011 has been Master of Trinity House. As Patron of the Friends, The Princess Royal visited Happisburgh on 12 May 2010. In planning that special day, we were asked if there was perhaps an old Happisburgh lighthouse keeper that we could introduce to Her Royal Highness; but as Happisburgh was switched to an 'unwatched' beacon in 1929, that wouldn't be possible. However, as a long-time supporter, Graham Fearn was invited as a special guest of the Friends, and was awaiting the Princess Royal when she arrived in the lantern, where they spent a few minutes sharing stories of lighthouse keeping in the good old days!

As he became more frail, Graham moved into residential care, first in Sheringham, and then to the Royal British Legion's Halsey House in Cromer in 2017. His first room at Halsey House again had a view of the lighthouse, and at night he could go to sleep with the flash of the lighthouse reflecting off his mirror – once a lighthouse keeper, always a lighthouse keeper!

Graham Fearn died in September 2018. Over the last three years, I have been able to share Graham's career and memories through the pages of *Lamp* – this has only been possible because Graham recorded anecdotes of his time in the service and shared so many of his memories. His daughter Janet has also been kind enough to share some of her memories, and has passed on Graham's slide collection. I have digitised the slides and many have appeared in these *Lamp* articles; copies will also be passed to the ALK Archive Team.

In December 2020 I was contacted by Tracy Haywood, whose late father, Trevor Haywood, had interviewed and photographed Graham and Audrey at Cromer in 1987. Tracy also left me with her father's slides from that visit – copies will again be passed to the archive.

Farewell Graham – keep your lamp burning bright...

Blackhead lighthouse

Lee Maginnis

In Northern Ireland, clinging to the cliff on the northern lip of the mouth of Belfast Lough, is Blackhead lighthouse. It has been watching over the sea here since 1902.

Despite only being a short distance from the nearest town, amusingly called Whitehead, the tower and associated buildings are in a location that feels totally remote and like going back in time. The gigantic ships that nose their way in and out of the lough from time to time, shatter the illusion. It is like an invasion of modernity.

Blackhead lighthouse actually featured in *Lamp 126*. It is to receive a new bearing system that will allow the rotating lens to be retained. The illumination will be provided by LED. Not a perfect solution, but it could be a lot worse. At least it safeguards the sweeping beam. More about that later.

The tower was initially painted red, but became white on 20 August 1929. It is 16m (52ft) in height, but due to its lofty perch, the light is 45m (148ft) above the sea. The beam can currently be seen 27 nautical miles (50km) away.

If you look at the photo below, bottom left, you can see that the back section of the lamp room has been blocked off, preventing the beam from sweeping round a large portion of the landward sector. There is a story



The beam sweeps round Belfast Lough



An old building on the hill behind, perhaps the culprit in the false flash problem?



Close up of the lantern room



A beautiful profile as darkness falls

about this. When the lighthouse was first operating, ships' captains reported seeing a light flashing from further up the hill behind the Blackhead tower. A subsequent investigation of this dangerously misleading phenomenon found that the beam was reflecting off a mirror inside the room of a house. The owner proved to be very awkward, refusing to relocate the mirror or even to draw the blinds at nightfall. The shielding of the back of the lamp room was the ingenious solution.

Photos by Lee Maginnis unless otherwise stated



*Former keeper accommodation is now available for vacation rental.
Photo by marinas.com*

Memories of a keeper's son

Nick Hart

Start Point

At the end of a very long road, Start Point pushes almost a mile into the sea on the south side of Start Bay. Sited at the very end of the headland is the lighthouse. Built in 1836 by Trinity House to guide shipping along the English Channel, it marks one of the most exposed points on the English Coast.

Two lights are exhibited, one revolving and a fixed red subsidiary light, which marks the line of the Skerries Bank – a shoal of sand and rock which at low tide may be less than 2 metres (6 ft) below the surface.

When first built, the only way to access the site was by boat and via a precipitous path from the beach at the foot of the cliffs. Water was supplied from the well house, a small building just to the north of the lighthouse. This contained a holding tank for rainwater collected by a slate lined catchment area to the rear of the building.

Before the road was improved, station supplies came by sea. To reduce their reliance on this the keepers and their families were expected to grow their own vegetables in the large gardens supplied by Trinity House (TH). Given the exposed nature of the location it is to be wondered at just how successful the gardens were. In a gale you could be blown off your feet just walking across the yard.

Peggy, my mother, had been living ashore in Cardiff with her eldest sister Bet, so whilst she was used to the privations of island living, she had become used to a more modern way of life: flush toilets, electric light, gas cooking and running water.

Start Point was a step back in time: earth closets, oil lighting and a Rayburn cooker (like an Aga, but not as posh). Mains electricity did not reach the station until 1959, via a long overhead route, so lighting was provided by either a Tilley lamp, a soft pleasant light accompanied by a soft hiss, or an oil lamp. The only real drawback was having to clean them every day and, as they were brass, polish them as well – and there was always the lingering smell of paraffin.

The other downside as far as Peggy was concerned was the colour of her living room walls. Engine room green was as close as she could come to describing it. She mentioned this to the PK's wife, Mrs Guppy, who said as far as she could remember it should be apple green. Peggy attacked the walls with sugar soap and removed a thick film of nicotine. Sure enough they were apple green.

In many ways Start was a landlocked island. Being used to island life, where you can't just pop to the shop when something runs out, Peggy out of necessity, kept a large store cupboard. However, this did need refilling periodically. Did I mention Start was isolated? The nearest bus stop was an eight km (five miles) walk to Stokenham followed by an eight km ride on the Dartmouth – Kingsbridge bus, which ran once a week in both directions, with a two hour turn around in Kingsbridge.

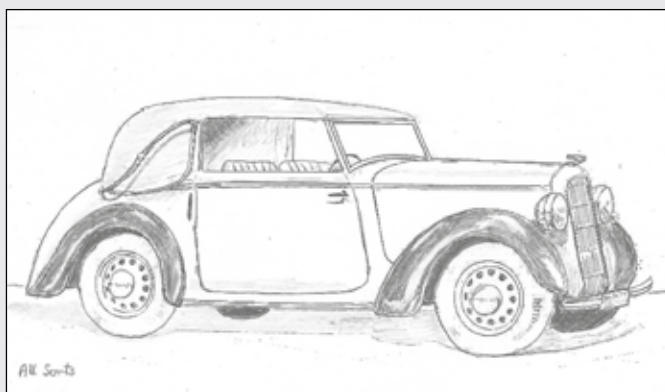
TH paid for a shopping taxi once a month for the keepers' wives to use. Len, with a new family, decided that a car was needed.



The pay of a keeper was not so great; therefore, a second-hand car was required and the local papers were scoured. A shopkeeper at nearby Hall Sands had an elderly black and cream Hillman for sale. The shopkeeper's name being Liquorish, Peggy decided there was only one name for it: 'All Sorts'.

The car, whilst temperamental, was a life saver; and Len, my father, became very popular with the other wives, when he had to go to Kingsbridge. Or he was until All Sorts developed a bad case of fleas. Len had ordered some cockles from Swansea, and the package had been lost on a train somewhere. When it finally arrived, it was a little ripe, but dropping the hood sorted that problem. A few days later Peggy found a flea and that's when it was discovered that the car had some extra passengers. A drum of DDT was obtained from Boots the Chemist and normal service was quickly restored.

However, with the car came the problem of the cost of petrol. This was discussed at the morning work meeting and it was decided that for the good of station morale some of the paraffin for the light should be diverted. Using their combined mechanical expertise, a Ferguson manifold, complete with vaporiser was fitted to All Sorts. This was a common modification at the time, producing an original



dual fuel car; started on petrol, and when the engine was hot enough switched to paraffin. Mind you, as it wound its way through the Devon sunken lanes it left the smell of paraffin in its wake, and you had to ensure that Her Majesty's Customs and Excise didn't get wind of it. They frowned a bit at the practice and could be quite vindictive.

Not having much money, fishing became a necessity rather than a hobby. With the passing of the years the original access path had not improved and was still alarming. First a narrow path, protected by a low wall, followed by a scramble over rocks and finally a steep stair, chipped in the rock, leading down to a little cove with a narrow strip of beach.

On one occasion Peggy wandered off the path and managed to get herself stuck. Luckily a young supernumerary assistant keeper (SAK) noticed her predicament and came to her rescue. Calmly he walked down the slippery rocks:

'Now Mrs Hart, just take my hand and only step where I do.'

The man calmly led her off the steep section and back to the safety of the path.

It was later explained that his sure-footed ability was due to his prior employment as a male ballet dancer. Sadly, I cannot recall his name.

Notwithstanding her scare, Peggy, who never learnt to swim, was frequently to be seen, weather permitting, scrambling over the rocks of the point, child on hip, with a crab hook and sack.

The young lad eventually grew to have a crab hook of his own and on at least one occasion was found fighting with a crab whilst muttering;

'Come out, you little bugger, come out!'

For once it was my mother's vocabulary I was using, rather than my father's.

The beacon

The art of navigation could leave a lot to be desired. Allowances had to be made for drift etc and at the end of a long passage you could be well out of position. To improve the situation a network of Radio Beacons were set up. The beacon transmitted a carrier signal and an identification signal consisting of up to three letters in Morse code. This allows a navigator to determine his position by triangulating his position on two or preferably three beacons.

Start was chosen to be the location of one of these beacons.

Robust in construction, the beacon more or less ran itself; however, it did require some attention. The accumulator had to be changed every other day. It had to be periodically checked to ensure that it had not drifted off frequency and that the Morse identifier was running correctly. These were added to the list of the keeper's additional duties and an allowance of 2d a day paid in compensation.

Ken, the current SAK, was due to be trained in how to check and if necessary, adjust the beacon.

Len stuck his head around the door to the SAK's quarters, 'Ken it's time to check the beacon.'

'Righto!'

Ken appeared and the two men walked to the charging

station to collect the recharged accumulator. I was a toddler, and hanging about, so I followed them.

Len swapped the accumulators as he started to explain the system to Ken.

Then he stopped. 'Nick, you know how to adjust the transmitter – now show Ken how to do it.'

I ran through the routine perfectly naming each control as I did.

'Right, you have seen it done now run through it yourself.'

Ken ran through the sequence whilst grumbling about being trained by a 3-year-old.

'Can you do it now?', Len asked.

'Well yes, but...'

'But nothing. That little tacker picked it up really quickly. Truth tell, I have to think about it every time and I still get the sequence wrong, if I don't concentrate, and now you know how to do it.'

Inspections

Every year the Elder Brethren, or EBs, had an inspection cruise of all the lighthouses under their supervision, a sort of busman's holiday. This year was no different. Everywhere was freshly painted, brass and copper work polished, the lens washed and polished, every door dusted including the top edge. EB's were mostly ex Royal Navy and the annual inspection was conducted as 'captain's inspection', i.e., wearing white gloves, and running them over the tops of doors or thrusting them into dark corners. Rue the day any dust was found.

Maybe it was because of this they were frequently referred to as the OB's, old bug***s or some such saying...

'Dad! The OBs are here!' Len winced as my voice carried across the courtyard and he could see the chairman of the visiting committee, in his uniform of a fleet admiral, looking at him.

'I'm sorry, Sir, but he's just learning to talk and still has problems with his vowels.'

'I'm sure he does, Mr Hart, but are you sure that he is not just copying his father's example?'

'Wouldn't dream of it, Sir.'

'Quite so, I'm sure.' Turning to the assembled families, the chairman smiled.

'Is the kettle on Peggy? I'll be in when the inspection is finished!'

'It is, Captain J, and there are fresh scones as well.'

'Glad to hear it.'

Captain J had been Walter Layzell's apprentice when it had been 'Captain Layzell' rather than Walter.

Looking at the astounded PK he added, 'You get the rest of the OB's to entertain Mr Guppy. I'm sure you will excuse me if I catch up with news about my old Captain.'

Station Log, Elder Brothers' Visit:

'An outstanding visit. PK and assistants to be commended for the condition of the station and the warm welcome we received.'

*Drawings of Start Point lighthouse and All Sorts car
by Nick Hart*

Our cover picture

Christopher Nicholson and Paul Campbell

The dramatic shot of Longships lighthouse on the cover of this issue was taken by photographer Paul Campbell. I've known Paul for nearly 40 years – our first meeting was when he supplied the cover image and some stunning inside black and white photographs of Longships lighthouse for the first edition of *Rock Lighthouses of Britain*. It's a beacon he's returned to over the years to produce some startling images of it under assault from Atlantic storms.

I thought Lamp readers would be interested to learn a little more about his obsession with photographing lighthouses during ferocious winter storms, and why Longships in particular. I asked him to write a few words about what started it all and why he is still doing it. He called this 'Getting the perfect shot.'

Getting the perfect shot

My fascination with lighthouses and the power of the sea has been a life-long passion. It probably began from my rock climbing days on the granite cliffs at Land's End. Watching the waves breaking and battering the Longships lighthouse made it seem like it was a Cape Canaveral rocket launch surging out of the sea leaving a trail of white spume. Being a professional photographer I knew I had to capture this drama.

I was also inspired by an old b/w picture of Wolf Rock taken by the RAF that I saw in the Old Success Inn at Sennen Cove. I realised that if I could repeat this at Longships it would make a very dramatic shot. So I contacted Trinity House and arranged to do a couple of trips in their helicopter doing the keeper reliefs. But the sea conditions were never bad enough to get those enormous wave breaks over the top of the lantern that I was after.

I was determined to get that shot but quickly realised it would be highly unlikely an opportunity would arise to co-ordinate a TH helicopter relief day together with the right sea conditions. I needed my own helicopter that could fly on a stormy day, during a spring high tide and with perfect light for photography. Forecasting and monitoring the weather became an obsessive occupation – which it is still today. I even went as far as ringing the receptionist at the Land's End Hotel to ask her to look out of the window and describe the sea conditions to me!

Eventually the right day arrived in March 1980 and I chartered a Jet Ranger helicopter from Castle Air in Cornwall, piloted by Keith Thompson. Previously, on 14 August 1979, as a Royal Navy Search and Rescue pilot, Keith had rescued 75 people from the Fastnet Race disaster. Later, after leaving the Navy he was much in demand for television filming and went on to work on programs like 'Coast' and 'Trawlermen' for the BBC and was the sky runner in Channel 4's 'Treasure Hunt'.

It was a great shoot and I got the 'WOW' factor shot. I'll always remember how skillfully Keith had to fly the nose of his helicopter into a gale force wind in a forward motion, synchronised with the moving wave that would produce that dramatic wavebreak over the lighthouse. The shot that is on the cover of this issue of Lamp was taken in 2010 and again I had the privilege of working with Keith, demonstrating the point that sometimes teamwork is invaluable.



G-BCXO at Longships: One of his visits to the Longships happened to be on a relief day for the keepers and led to this unique shot of why helicopters revolutionised the reliefs of rock lighthouses.



The original 1971 shot from an RAF flight past Wolf Rock in a winter storm (at exactly the right moment) that inspired Paul in his quest to photograph Longships in similar conditions.
Photo by Ministry of Defence



One of Paul's 'WOW' factor shots. Only the helideck distinguishes this shot of Longships from the one of Wolf Rock (opposite below). Imagine what it would have been like for the keepers inside the tower?



One of the photographs from Paul's first ever helicopter shoot (on 35mm slide film) of Longships in a storm.



When he's not photographing lighthouses in storms Paul is an accomplished photographer based in London with clients like the British Army, the RAF, Champney's, Fiat, Land Rover, Mercedes, P&O Cruises and Sainsburys. Quite a lot of his work has involved aerial photography and if you want to see some stunning images of mountains, cruise liners, city skyscrapers, industrial locations and rural landscapes from around the globe all captured from above, a few minutes browsing www.paulcampbellphotographer.com will introduce you to outstanding examples of colour, light, pattern and tone, the like of which you'll probably never have seen before.

His expertise at aerial photography resulted in the publication of his very first book of images from somewhere much closer to home. *Bird's Eye London* explores the capital's best-kept secrets; the unique shapes, designs, colours and landmarks which come together to form a remarkable artwork in over 150 spectacular images. These revealing new images of the iconic city and its major sights take on a fascinating new angle from the air. From major landmarks and historic sites to sporting stadia, music venues, green spaces, and more, each photograph is informatively captioned, giving a concise introduction to the city's most popular sights as well as others that are perhaps not so well known. You'll be amazed at how many roof gardens there are on top of high rise corporate buildings, unseen by all who walk below! Highly recommended if you love London and great photographs!

Bird's Eye London by Paul Campbell
Hardback | 216 pages | 270 x 270mm
ISBN 9781913134532
Bird's Eye Books www.graffeg.com

All photographs on this spread are courtesy of Paul Campbell, unless otherwise specified.

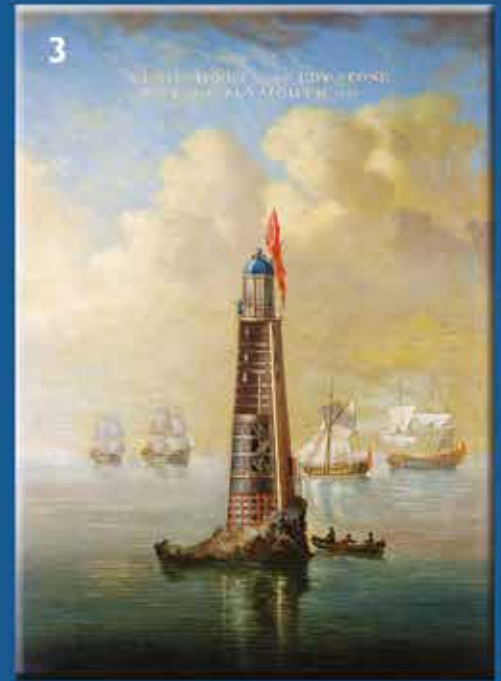


EDDYSTONE LIGHTHOUSES OVER THE CENTURIES



4

1. The opening of Winstanley's first tower on the Eddystone in 1698 by Peter Monamy (1681–1749)
2. Winstanley's enlarged and strengthened tower of 1699 by an unknown artist
3. Eddystone's third tower by John Rudyerd showing its construction details and oak planking. Unknown artist c1754
4. John Smeaton's tower – rough seas and dramatic light in 1846, before it acquired red bands. Danish artist Anton Melbye (1818–1875)
5. A busy day at Smeaton's tower in 1868 with what looks like a keeper relief under way by William Gibbons (1841–1890)
6. HMS Vivid passing the old and new Eddystone lighthouses around 1882 by Richard Brydges Beechey (1808–1895)



You're probably unaware, as I was until I checked, that June 2021 is the 325th anniversary of Henry Winstanley starting his attempt to mark the Eddystone reef with a lighthouse. But you probably are aware that things didn't go terribly well for him, and his first attempt, lit in 1698, was followed by four others – one from him (in which he perished) and three from different engineers before the reef was lit by a permanent and stable structure. It became the most famous lighthouse in the world.

Only the Douglass tower of 1882 had its construction documented in early black and white photographs. But thanks to artists who were fascinated either with painting the sea, the sky or ships, we do have a colourful and detailed record of what the previous lighthouses might have looked like. Here are a few wonderful pieces of artwork from various artists that record the history of the five Eddystone lighthouses in colour. Beside the detail of the lights themselves, look at the intricate and skillfull brushwork to give dramatic lighting, towering clouds and stormy seas, not to mention the flotillas of sailing ships and rowing boats far too close to the reef to be safe! Artistic licence I suppose?



Who put the ‘house’ in ‘lighthouse’?

John Grierson

In general English usage, the word ‘lighthouse’ is applied very loosely, often describing structures such as harbour lights which were never intended to be lived in as ‘houses’. However, even the major lights are often not strictly ‘houses’. The towers of the classic rock lighthouses (Skerryvore, The Needles, Wolf Rock, etc) are indeed houses for the keepers as well as being a tower for the light. On the other hand, a large number of shore-based lighthouses have a tower for the light and separate cottages for the keepers. So why are they all called ‘lighthouses’? Are they described in the same way in other languages?

For this sort of question it is often interesting to start with some of the older languages and try to trace similarities. A good starting point would seem to be one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world – the Pharos of Alexandria. Whilst almost certainly not the first navigation light to be used, it is nonetheless undoubtedly the most famous and probably the largest lighthouse in the ancient world. Built around 280 BCE it was about 100 metres (328 ft) high, and on a base of about 30 metres (98 ft) square it guided ships into the harbour of Alexandria through the use of a large fire on the top which was kept alight day and night. It was damaged by two earthquakes and finally ruined by a third in 1323. In 1994 divers located many of its massive building stones on the floor of Alexandria harbour, though many had been used to build the citadel of Qaitbay, and by 1480 all visible traces of the lighthouse had disappeared. So why was it called ‘Pharos’? Well strangely the name was not of the structure but of the tiny island on which the structure was built. The island of Pharos no longer exists as an island, having been absorbed into the sprawling city of Alexandria

as its docks expanded into the waters around it. However, the name became one of the most significant amongst the various names used for a lighthouse.

In ancient Greek the island and lighthouse were called *φάρος* (phonetically *Pharos*) and this was taken over by the Romans, converting it into either *Pharos* or *Pharus* in Latin.

From these original languages the word *Pharos* has spread into many other modern languages. The following are the words for a lighthouse in some European languages:

French: *phare* (*this is also the word for car headlamps in French*)

Spanish: *faro*

Portuguese *farol*

Italian: *faro*

Romanian *far*

Bulgarian *far*

Even the artificial language of Esperanto uses the word *faro*.

Perhaps surprisingly, *Pharos* is little used in the English language. The only surviving Roman lighthouse in the UK is the structure within Dover Castle which is known as the *Pharos*. But that was presumably named by the Romans! The High light at Fleetwood is also known locally as the *Pharos*. *Pharos* is the origin of the word *pharologist* for a lighthouse enthusiast, and *pharology* for the study of lighthouses. Probably the best known use of the word in English is the name of *NLV Pharos*, the Northern Lighthouse Board’s lighthouse tender (sister ship to *THV Galatea*). The first *Pharos* started operating in 1799 and the present vessel is the tenth to carry the name.



*The Pharos of Alexandria from a 2013 study.
Image by Emad Victor Shenouda - Wikimedia Commons*

It is clear that in many modern languages which are derived from Latin, the word for ‘lighthouse’ is derived directly from the original *Pharos* and has no connection with any attempt to describe the use or form of the structure.

In Scandinavian and some other northern European languages, the words for a lighthouse are much more closely derived from the function or original operation of a lighthouse. All the original lighthouses (including the *Pharos* of Alexandria) consisted of fires (wood or coal) kept alight by the ‘keepers’ and often burning on top of a tower. So a logical name for such a structure would be a ‘fire tower’ and this is how several languages describe a lighthouse.

Danish	<i>fyrårn</i>
Swedish	<i>fyr (or fyrårn)</i>
Norwegian	<i>fyr (or fyrårn)</i>
Frisian	<i>fjoertour</i>
Dutch	<i>vuurtoren</i>

Other languages use the fact that the lighthouse is often not a house at all, but simply a 'light tower' which is the word used in:

German	<i>leuchtturm</i>
Hungarian	<i>világítótorny</i>

A quick search through other dictionaries for 'lighthouse' reveals words in other languages that seem to be simply a word for a beacon. This is particularly the case for countries with no sea border, which therefore have no original connection with lighthouses.

From this very brief and probably unscientific search it seems that English is one of the few languages (perhaps the only language?) that uses a word that includes the idea that the light was part of a 'house'. When was the word first used in English? Chris Preece in his excellent series of articles in *Lamp* issues 119, 120 and 121 showed that in medieval times many lights were exhibited from chapels, so the name 'lighthouse' would almost certainly have been considered inappropriate. The original charter of Trinity House of 1514 was supplemented by the Seamarks Act of 1566 which enabled Trinity House 'to make, erect and set up such and so many beacons, marks and signs of the sea'. No mention of lighthouses! In fact the first reference to the word lighthouse appears to be around 1620 – 1650.

So my conclusion must be a question. Why did the English language (with words frequently derived from Latin, Norman or Scandinavian roots) ignore the historical words (Pharos) or the function of the building (eg light tower) and decide to use a word which, unlike any other language, concentrates on the fact that the light and the 'house' were part of the same structure? All countries have numerous designs of lighthouses with some requiring the keepers to live in the tower but it appears only English concentrates on this aspect of some of its structures. With the enormous expertise in pharology (or even lighthouses!) in the ALK can someone answer my question?

A note from the Editors: Having had a bit of a debate at Lamp HQ, we wondered if perhaps there is an alternative explanation here... The definition of 'house' as a verb is to give someone (or something) a place to live, or to be the place where something is kept (to contain or accommodate). So in this sense the house is for the light itself, rather than the lightkeeper. We look forward to hearing more thoughts and comments!



The Needles lighthouse – where the light tower is also a house.



Nash Point lighthouse – with separate light tower and keepers' cottages



*Le Phare de Port-en-Bessin, Normandy – definitely a light in a house!
All photos on this page by John Grierson*

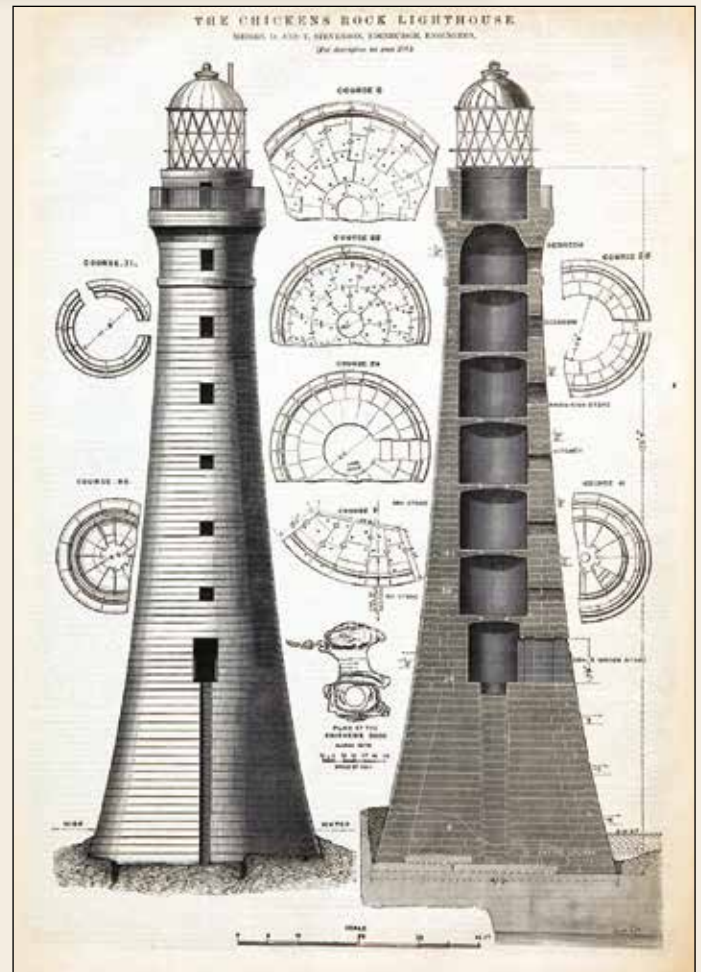
The art of dovetailing

Christopher Nicholson

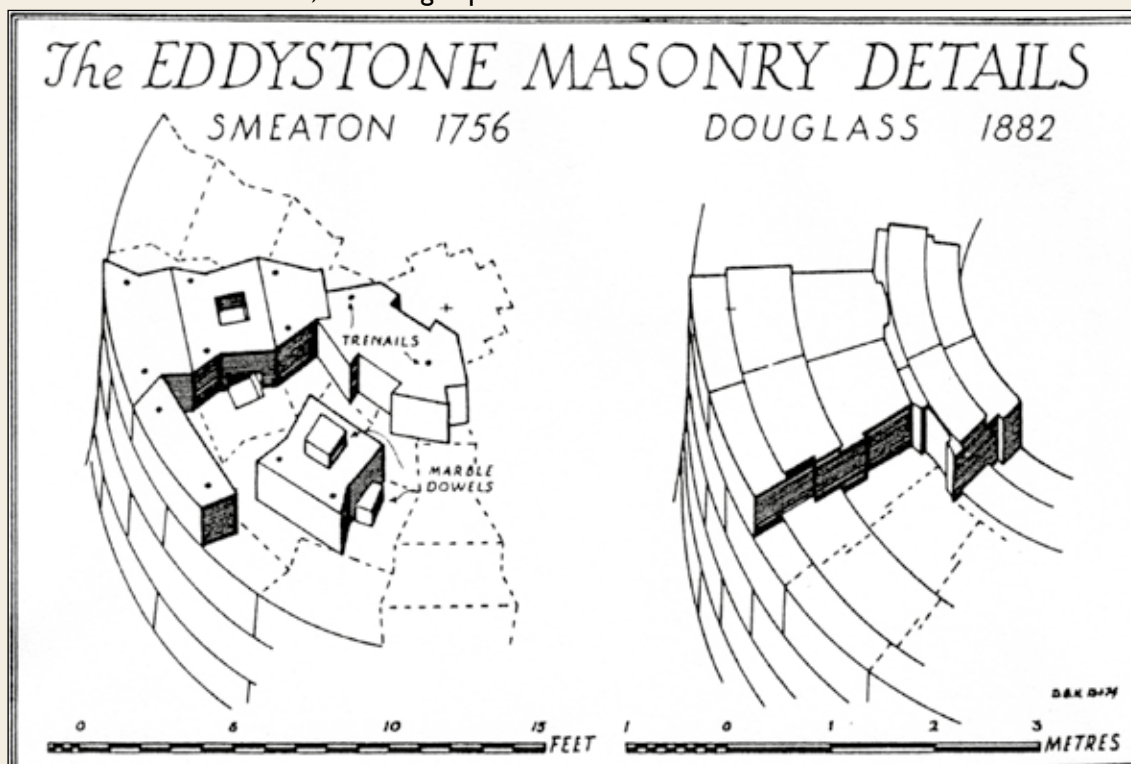
The fact that you're reading *Lamp* probably means you have some understanding about how lighthouses were built. Rock lighthouses, in particular, had to be constructed to be able to withstand unimaginable assaults from wave and wind, and this was usually achieved by using granite blocks shaped with precision and locked to one another so there was absolutely no vertical or lateral movement.

The accurate shaping of the blocks was done using wooden templates by teams of skilled masons, but the setting of the stones on the reef so they couldn't move in any direction was usually done by 'dovetailing'. It's a joint well known to woodworkers as being the strongest interlocking joint there is – so strong that it could be used without any sort of glue. Stone blocks could be dovetailed in the same manner on several of their faces by stonemasons at the shore base to give an immovable bond between blocks in the same course and in the courses above and below.

To ensure with absolute certainty that the blocks wouldn't move once laid and cemented into position, many engineers also used a system of joggles and trenails. Joggles are small, square blocks of stone, often marble, sunk into the stones of one layer but projecting above the top face. This projection fitted into an identically sized square recess in the lower face of the stone above it – ensuring there was no horizontal movement between courses. Trenails are wooden wedges, approximately 30–35mm (approx. 1 inch) in diameter, driven through two or more holes drilled right through each block. They lined up with holes drilled into the blocks below. Each trenail had a cut made in its end and a small wedge of wood inserted. When driven through the top blocks and into the blind hole below, the wedge split the trenail and



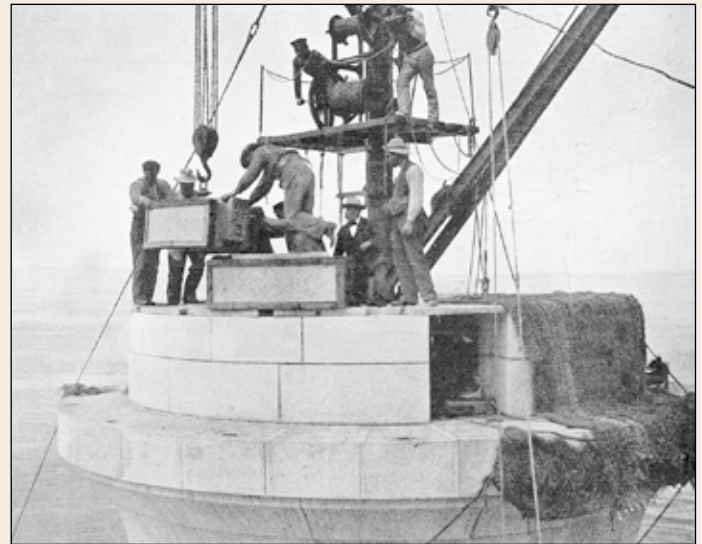
Chicken Rock lighthouse off the southern tip of the Isle of Man was built by David and Thomas Stevenson in a style they had already used successfully at Dubh Artach three years earlier. Notice how the pattern of dovetailing changes as the tower rises



A wonderful example of draughtsmanship, showing the different dovetailing techniques used on the Smeaton and Douglass towers on Eddystone. Illustration by Douglas Hague



A remarkable view showing the damage over a century of winter storms have done to what remains of Smeaton's Eddystone. The dovetailed blocks, trenail holes and even a couple of marble joggles are clearly visible. This image was taken a few years ago; today the damage is much worse. How long before the sea reclaims this historic monument? Photo by John Nicholls



It's 1903 and the masonry of William Douglass's new Fastnet lighthouse tower has reached the level of the lower lantern gallery. Notice how the edges of the new blocks have been protected against accidental damage, and the area where the crane lands them on the tower is covered with sacking to prevent damage to the blocks already set. The number 3 is just visible on the dovetail of the block being laid.

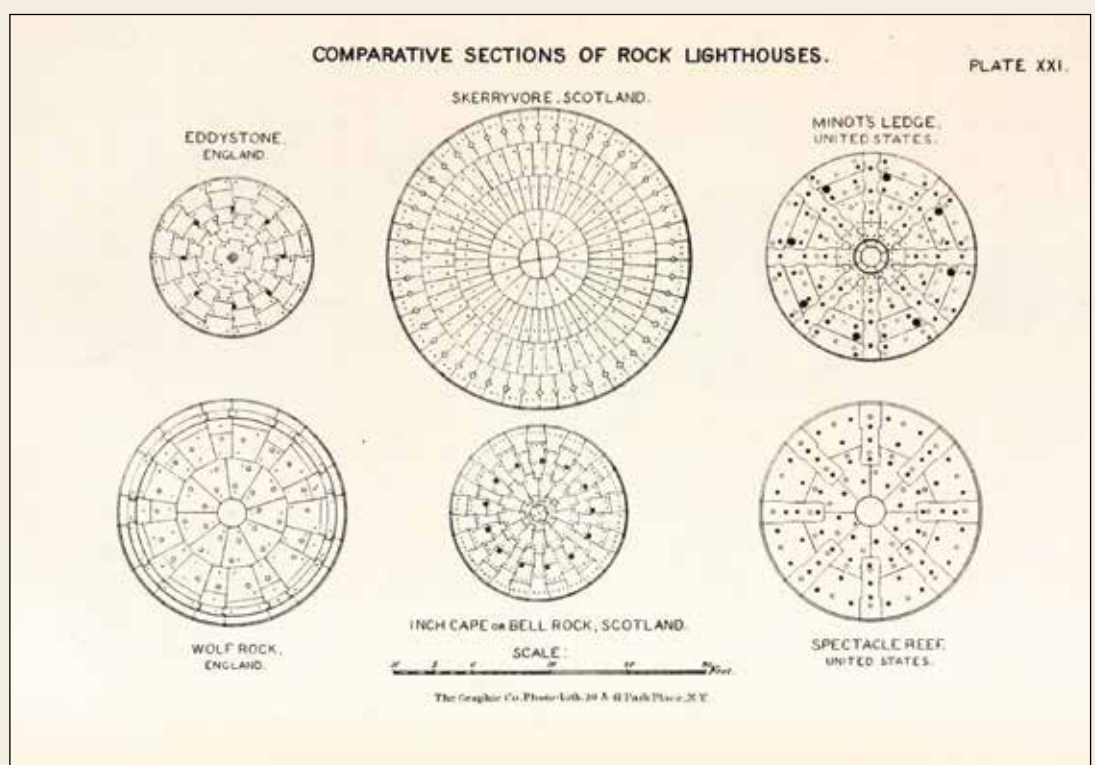
Photo courtesy of the State Library of South Australia

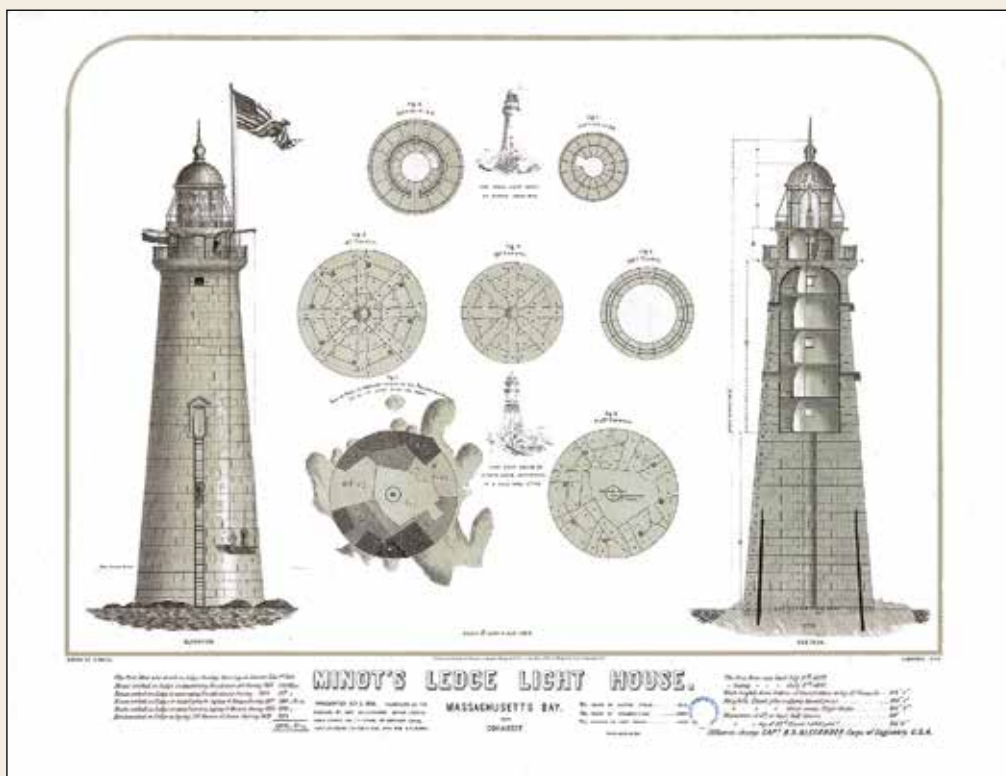
made it impossible to remove or for the block to move horizontally. It was a foolproof system that relied on an incredible level of accuracy by the masons to get the dovetails, trenail holes and joggles to line up perfectly. It's the main reason why rock lights like Bell Rock, built over two centuries ago, are still standing.

The diagram showing a range of different dovetailing styles from British and North American lighthouses is a good illustration of how styles could vary. The round dots are trenails and the small square shapes are joggles. Interestingly, Skerryvore has no dovetails at all – Alan Stevenson did it all with joggles and trenails – but compare its diameter, and the amount of granite used, with the other towers.

The intricate patterns of dovetailing granite blocks to construct a rock lighthouse varied from engineer to engineer, the era in which they were built, and how far up the tower a particular course was. The six in the comparison below range from the very first rock lights that used the dovetailing technique (Smeaton's Eddystone tower from 1759), through Robert Stevenson's Bell Rock of 1811 up to the 1874 light on Spectacle Reef in Lake Huron, but only show the dovetailing from one specific course. They are all different, but each has an attractive pattern of blockwork that invites careful study to see how it all works – that's the art of dovetailing.

The art of the dovetail.
Taken from 'European
Light-House Systems,
a report of a tour of
inspection made in 1873',
by George Henry Elliot





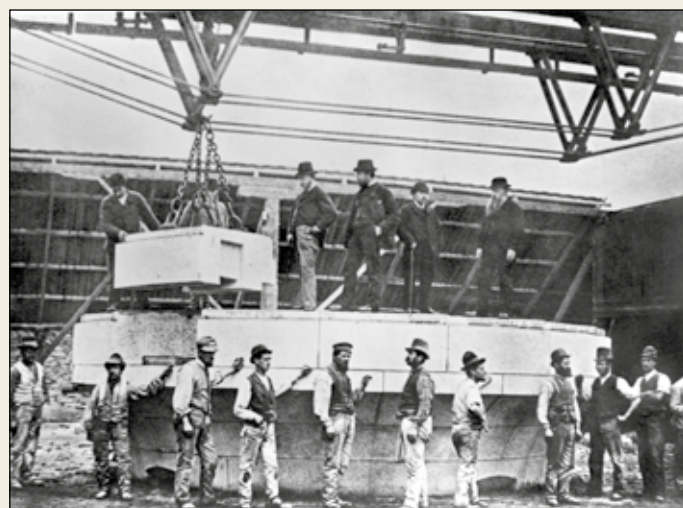
An interesting historical document showing how the pattern of dovetailing at Minot's Ledge light changes depending on how high each course is above sea level. The bottom left cross section with the different shades shows how a real jigsaw of blocks had to be laid on the rock to create a level base for the tower to stand on.



One of America's most famous rock lights, Minot's Ledge, off the Massachusetts coast in the winter of 1978.
Photo courtesy of the U.S. Coastguard



Spectacle reef lighthouse was built on a reef in the middle of Lake Huron in 1874. Photo courtesy of the U.S. Coastguard



Right: Some of the masons responsible for the incredible accuracy of the Douglass tower on Eddystone pose on the final few courses of the lighthouse prior to their despatch to the reef in 1881. The dovetailing of the blocks can be clearly seen. The third figure from the right standing on the top course is believed to be none other than James Douglass himself who has come to watch the final block of the final course being dry set in the yard of the De Lank quarry, Wadebridge.
Photo courtesy of Trinity House

Shetland lights show the way

Sydney T. Scott

Sumburgh Head

On Monday 2 June 2014 flying into Sumburgh Airport was an emotional experience. My mother came from Unst. My father was stationed at the Muckle Flugga light (or North Unst as it was then called) where my eldest brother, John, was born and named by semaphore. My father was then posted to Sumburgh Head where my eldest sister, Norna, was born. Place names which I had heard throughout my life but never visited. Now was my opportunity. An unexpected invitation to the opening of the Sumburgh Head Visitor Centre was the reason. Another guest? HRH The Princess Royal, Princess Anne, who, as the Patron of the Northern Lighthouse Board, had been selected to conduct the opening and unveiling ceremony.

I hired a car and checked in to the Sumburgh Hotel. The receptionist was related to an ex-keeper. I headed for the bar. Two or three local men who either worked at Sumburgh or who had lighthouse relations, propped it up and we exchanged relatively interesting stories.

Nearly midnight and the 'simmer dim' was apparent. A lonely evening stroll to the lighthouse beckoned, so I wandered along the west footway of the head in the moonlight. A couple of ponies lifted their heads from their chewing and glanced nonchalantly at me then bowed their heads again. The sound of the waves gently massaging the rocks in the geos* below kept me company. A steepish climb through the fields and over the dykes brought me to the eerie confines of the deserted lighthouse grounds. Various interesting areas were identified by several strategically planted information boards. Not a soul was in sight. The sea views through the muted light were magical. I wondered if I was being watched bearing in mind that Princess Anne would be here the following day. I doubted it. Peace reigned.

A gentle downhill saunter along the road took me back to the hotel. The native sheep and their lambs eyed me with suspicion and sidled away if I approached too close. No fences. This was their domain. How dare I disturb their breakfast.

Next morning there were several buses to take the invited guests to the rendezvous point below the complex and then a steep winding climb to await the arrival of her Royal Highness. It was a gey dreich grey day with a fresh wind and squally showers. We huddled in a large marquee, suited,



Sunset at Sumburgh Head. Photo by Regina Verheyen

booted, coated, gloved and hatted – you get the picture. And so did those with the many cameras, iPads and mobile phones. There, I met many ex-lighthouse keepers and their wives and their names sprang out of the darkness of my memory. The Tullochs, the Eunsos, the Watts and the Blacks were there and, I am sure, several others.

Princess Anne, in her hooded raincoat, together with her entourage, toured the several buildings, pausing now and again to chat to the assembled crowd who waited patiently despite the weather. Speeches were made and then HRH unveiled a commemorative plaque.

Wine and nibbles in the warmth of the beautifully designed observation room was most welcome. I met Brian Gregson, the Chairman of the Shetland Amenity Trust whose members were responsible for the amelioration of the buildings and the design of the wonderful, interesting and informative exhibits. I presented him with a mounted glass etching of the Muckle Flugga and Sumburgh Head which had been part of a larger plaque that my late brother had made for my mother for her 90th birthday. (Don't ask...)

The following day I wandered around the superb interactive information centre and I was not disappointed. The displays and the accompanying texts were enlightening and instructive and it was obvious that much work had been carried out by knowledgeable and dedicated staff. I climbed the foghorn where there were stupendous views over the cliffs with many varieties of sea birds swooping and diving. Visiting the radio rooms was a revelation. They were crucial during the Second World War giving early warning of the approaching German aircraft intent on destroying the British fleet sheltering in Scapa Flow in Orkney. The importance of the messages was immense.

Any visit here will be imbued with the natural beauty and variety of the fauna and flora on a rugged headland jutting out into the North Atlantic which is pounded or tickled by the incoming waves. This was just the start of a fantastic adventure throughout Shetland.

* A geo or gio (/gjou/ GYOH, from Old Norse gjá) is an inlet, a gully or a narrow and deep cleft in the face of a cliff. Geos are common on the coastline of the Shetland and Orkney islands. They are created by the wave driven erosion of cliffs along faults and bedding planes in the rock.



HRH Princess Anne unveils the commemorative plaque.
Photo courtesy of Shetland.org

Netherby: The importance of patience

Denise Shultz

Netherby was a wooden clipper built at Sunderland, United Kingdom, in 1858. She was 176 feet (54m) long, 33 feet (10m) in the beam, with a draft of 22 feet (6.7m) and was registered at 944 tons. The original owner named it after his country estate Netherby Hall. In 1866 *Netherby* was owned by the Black Ball Line of Liverpool. She made three successful voyages to Australia in 1861, 1862 (both to Melbourne) and 1863 (to Sydney).

On 1 April 1866, *Netherby* embarked on its fourth voyage to Australia under the command of Captain Owen Owens. His second officer was John Parry, who later played a most important role in the rescue operation. Aboard were mostly people travelling as part of the 'Queensland Land Assisted Package.' They were immigrants from poor families, for whom the government had paid most of the cost of the ticket. These passengers travelled in steerage below deck, in cramped dormitory style accommodation. More affluent passengers, who paid for their own tickets, were accommodated in saloon and second class cabins below the poop deck, where they had plenty of room to move around, dine and socialise. For them, emigration was not a necessity, but a choice. Altogether, there were 413 passengers and 38 crew. Besides the passengers, the ship also carried three locomotives, railway carriages and assorted consumer goods for the colony.

Netherby departed East India dock in London on 1 April 1866 and after calling in at Plymouth to collect more passengers, set sail for Australia on 13 April 1866.

The shortest way to navigate from one spot to another is to draw the plane through the centre of the globe and both ends of the route. The line that the plane cuts on the surface of the Earth is the shortest route, even though it does not look like it on an ordinary map. This route is called 'the great circle'. Whilst it is easy for aircraft to follow such a course, it is much more difficult for vessels at sea. Quite apart from land getting in the way, there are other obstructing factors. Strictly following the 'great circle' from Great Britain to Australia would have taken the ship way down south, where the waters were strewn with Antarctic ice. Therefore, the 'composite great circle route' was established. It ran south of Tasmania, as close as possible, but not crossing the 55th parallel south. This was the route *Netherby* intended to follow.

During the long voyage to Australia, a news bulletin for the benefit of the passengers was published aboard. Thanks to this newspaper, *The Netherby Gazette*, we have an excellent record of her voyage.

Netherby experienced no trouble until she reached Australian waters. Once there, bad weather with gale force winds and low cloud prevented sextant readings and the captain was unable to accurately establish their position. The storms were so

severe the steerage passengers were locked below deck for a fortnight. We can only imagine the terrible conditions the poor emigrants were experiencing. Nevertheless, according to the *Netherby Gazette*, the steerage passengers showed great fortitude during those two stormy weeks.

Seeing the suffering his passengers were enduring, Captain Owens lost his nerve and decided to abandon the 'great composite circle' route which would have made him go around Tasmania and opted instead to steer north, to pass through the 'eye of the needle' between the mainland and King Island. It was a risky manoeuvre, considering he was unsure of his position and was aiming for the entrance to the Bass Strait which was only 91km (56.5 miles) wide. Despite it being marked at both ends by lighthouses at Cape Otway and Cape Wickham, it was still a challenge to find and navigate through. The last reliable observation made on 11 July implied the need to steer ENE in order to safely pass between the two capes into Bass Strait. This proved disastrously wrong.

At 7.15 pm on 14 July, to starboard the land was found to be very close. The order was given to turn the ship around immediately, but before this could be executed, she hit the reef. To the captain's credit, the rescue operation started immediately. A lifeboat was lowered and Chief Officer Jones and a few other crew were sent ashore to find a place where the passengers could be landed. They made three attempts to pass a rope and anchor it to the shore, but it was so dark the captain decided to wait till daybreak before allowing another try. During the night the men wasted no time and carried a lot of supplies up from the flooding lower hold, managing to save some bread and flour.

Three quarters of an hour after the ship ran aground it started to fill with water and, even though the crew were busy pumping, it was soon full up to the tween decks. The passengers sheltered as best as they could until daylight, when the crew made another bid to take the line to shore. This time, Jones and his mates were successful. After landing, they fastened the rope to the rocks. By 8.00 am, the first passengers, mostly women and children, were boarding the lifeboat and being ferried to the shore. An hour later, the second (starboard) boat was also launched and with two lifeboats shuttling the people, by 3.00 pm they were all safely on dry land. Considering the huge breakers through

which the boats had to steer, it was a miracle not a single life was lost, nor was there any major accident. Once again, the passengers were praised for their conduct. Despite there being a rush for the lifeboats at the beginning, the passengers ultimately behaved in an orderly and patient manner. Class differences were set aside as the saloon passengers, both ladies and gentlemen, refused to leave the ship until all the others were safely landed. This achieved, some of the crew attempted to



The wreck of *Netherby* with survivors camp. Wood engraving by Samuel Calvert.

salvage as many provisions as possible. They were not very successful since most of the provisions were lost or damaged when the starboard lifeboat, bringing in the supplies, was inundated and smashed in the surf. All the crew were unharmed, but the boat was rendered useless. The port lifeboat was also doomed when it was badly damaged while bringing back some of the crew. There was also a long boat, which First Officer Jones intended to launch, but in the chaos, the captain's gig was launched instead. It carried the remaining crew from the shipwreck to the shore, landing by 5.00 pm. Once the gig and all the people had been taken ashore, they could only watch the unsecured long boat tumbling off its skids, drifting towards the shore and then being smashed to pieces on the rocks before it reached the beach.

It was a miracle that all 451 people were rescued and safe on solid ground. That said, how could so many people survive with such meagre supplies until they were found and rescued? Most of the passengers had no idea where they were, let alone how long it would take for them to be found. Captain Owens suspected that he was on King Island, however, he chose only to disclose the information to a select few. (According to the captain's diary, these were mainly 'the gentlemen of the saloon and second cabin'.) He was afraid panic and chaos would reign if the rest of the castaways learned about their hopeless situation.

At the time, King Island was virtually uninhabited. The sealers who used to camp there were long gone since the seals and sea lions had been exterminated. The only inhabitants of the island were the lighthouse keepers who lived at Cape Wickham, 47km [29 miles] to the north. It was essential to contact the lighthouse and pass on the information about the wreck.

It would have been quicker and easier to go by boat but none of the four boats were seaworthy, so Captain Owens sent Second Officer Parry with a group of second cabin male volunteers, on foot. They left early in the morning on 16 July after spending a troubled night in the makeshift camp. Apart from scant supplies of bread, they carried three letters. One was to inform the Colonial Office in Melbourne, the second, to inform the agents for the Black Ball Line in Melbourne and the third, for the lighthouse keeper, asking him for help with supplies for the castaways. The captain stayed behind, concentrating efforts on recovering the provisions from the shipwreck. They were quite successful, saving a lot of food, but still far from enough to feed all the stranded people. Moreover, they had to guard the supplies, just in case some unruly scallywags wanted to pillage them. To bring some order to the chaos, the captain organised the passengers in 'messes' where each mess built a temporary hut framed with spurs and branches and covered with sails, tablecloths and just about everything suitable they could find. For the steerage passengers it was nothing new, as they were



Wreck of Netherby: wood engraving by Frederick Grosse.

All photos on this spread and the portraits on the next page are courtesy of State Library Victoria

used to assembling into messes aboard the ship. Such groups would include members of the same family or a gathering of friends from the same village. However, the etiquette aboard required the older children to live in single quarters which were separated.

On 17 July, the crew managed to repair one of the lifeboats well enough in order to be able to bring more supplies and some passengers' possessions from the shipwreck. It was greatly needed because some people were still wearing the clothes they had been rescued in. Human kindness prevailed in this time of distress, those who had anything spare shared it with those in greatest need, mainly women and children. The men actively supplemented the scant ration by hunting for wallabies (while the ammunition lasted) and fishing.

Meanwhile, Second Officer Parry and his group of men were slowly progressing towards the lighthouse. Since they did not know their precise location, they followed the coast, which made their original journey more precarious and much longer. The walk to the lighthouse took four days.



Second Officer John Parry

On 20 July William Hickmott, the assistant lighthouse keeper, was out hunting for wallabies when he happened upon three exhausted men. They told him about the shipwreck and the 'five hundred people' camping at the site. They asked for his help. Hickmott took them back to the lighthouse and shortly after, Parry and the other three men also arrived. Superintendent Spong took over looking after them. They were hungry and in need of rest, but at the same time, they were keen to send the telegram, informing the authorities at Port Phillip. When Parry learned that the telegraph cable connecting Cape Otway and Cape Wickham lights had long been broken, he did not hesitate. Within two hours, he boarded the lighthouse's whaleboat and, together with three other men, set off to Port Phillip Heads. It was a brave decision, as the destination was 165km [102 miles] away across treacherous Bass Strait. The whaleboat was meant to be powered by rowing, but it could also be rigged with sails, which was precisely what Parry and his mates did. They left in the afternoon, bound north. They spent a terrible night in driving rain. Even though they had plenty of food, they realised they had forgotten to bring a lamp and as a result, they had a very hard time navigating. They had to light a match now and then to see

what their little pocket compass was showing. When the day broke, they were happy to see the land but it took a while before they were able to find a suitable landing spot. After spending another night there, on 22 July, they finally found the surveying camp of Mr Allan, who lent Parry a horse and some money and sent him to the nearest place with a telegraph link, Queenscliff lighthouse, 30km (19 miles) away. The situation developed apace. From Queenscliff, a telegram was sent to the harbour master in Williamstown who took immediate steps to dispatch rescue boats to King Island. Parry took a train to Geelong a further 30km away and informed the newspapers, who published the story in the *Geelong Advertiser* on 23 July.

Meanwhile, in the *Netherby* camp, Captain Owens became worried about Second Officer Parry's long absence. It had been four days and there was no sign of anyone coming back. He used the partially repaired ship's gig and accompanied by five other crewmen, took off towards the lighthouse. Bailing all the way, they arrived eight hours later. To their relief, they learned Parry and his companions had arrived that very day but left within a couple of hours for Port Phillip in the station's whaleboat. They had just missed him. If this hadn't been the case, Owens would have been desperate enough to cross the Bass Strait in his leaky gig. Thankfully, he could see that the lightkeepers had enough supplies to help to sustain the castaways. He decided to return to the camp the next morning to share the good news and permit the increase in rations.

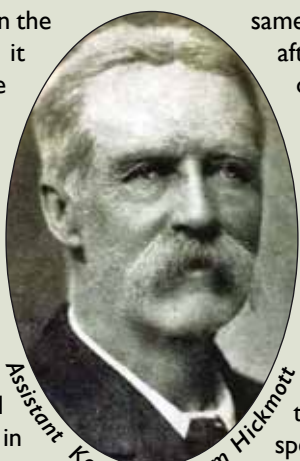
That same night, Head Keeper (HK) Spong sent Assistant Keeper (AK) Hickmott overland to find the camp and the shipwreck. The AK walked all night without a break until midday the next day. Then, when he finally decided to have a rest, he spotted three men fishing. They did not recognise him and thought he was just one of the passengers. When he revealed who he was, they flooded him with questions, while they led him to the site of the shipwreck. There, he immediately became the centre of attention and a star attraction. The same ovation was awarded to Captain Owens, who arrived in his leaky boat later that evening. It seemed that rescue was now in hand and everyone celebrated accordingly. It was Saturday 21 July, the

same night Officer Parry and his men went to sleep after landing at Point Roadknight on the other side of Bass Strait.

Of course, no one knew this on King Island and after two days hope began to fade and uncertainty prevailed. Prudent action was required. To relieve the camp of a few hungry mouths, all the single men, 117 altogether, would walk back to the lighthouse, led by AK Hickmott. Most of the young men did not heed Hickmott's advice to travel lightly, and expecting it to be an easy walk, piled up all their possessions intending to carry them all the way. They soon regretted it. After walking and spending an uneasy night at Bass River, about halfway to the lighthouse, Hickmott noticed that the bundles the men were carrying were substantially smaller. Offloading their burdens along the way, the path behind them was now littered with discarded items. AK Hickmott, on the other hand, had no such limitations. Being a fit man, used to the hardship of living on a remote island, he collected washed up items of clothing on the beach and wore them all. When he finally arrived at the lighthouse, he looked so fat that his boss, Spong, did not recognise him. HK Spong had seen the 'procession line' through the telescope when they were about 16km [10 miles] away. He went to meet them on his horse, carrying a sack of biscuits. Hickmott had a hard time distributing them evenly among his hungry, unruly mob. Spong returned to the lighthouse and by late evening, the first of the men started to arrive. The trickle continued throughout the night and by the morning, all 117 men were accounted for. Little did they know that their long walk would prove unnecessary. Later on the same day that they left, two ships (*HMS Victoria* and the lighthouse service ship *Pharos*), arrived and picked up most of the castaways. Both steamers were seen by the men on their way to the lighthouse, but by then, they were too far from the camp to consider turning back. They spent the night at the lighthouse, each keeper had over 50 men crammed into his own cottage.

On 23 July after nine days spent in rough conditions as castaways, the camp residents were jubilant when they spotted the rescue ships. The transfer of the passengers commenced soon after. Women and children went first, assisted by their men.

The rescue proved difficult but at least there was no wind to make the situation worse. The first lot of 230 immigrants were taken aboard *Victoria* and given hot, nutritious food and dry clothes. Another 60 were taken by *Pharos*. It could have been more but some of the first class passengers flatly refused to board the ship, citing that they would not go 'with that rabble'. At 4.00 pm, both ships got under way, leaving a group of 23 people behind. Among them were saloon and second class passengers including five ladies, as well as 11 crew members, led by Captain Owens. They spent another three days at the wreck site before they were finally evacuated. They did not seem to mind living for a few more days in such rugged conditions. The normally pampered saloon ladies were described as 'cheerfully chopping and cutting wood and carrying water for culinary purposes'. On



Assistant Keeper William Hickmott



Head Keeper Edward Spong



Cape Wickham lighthouse and keepers quarters in 1911.
Photo courtesy of Lighthouses of Australia Inc.



In November 2011 Cape Wickham lighthouse celebrated its 150th birthday in grand style. Hundreds of people attended the outdoor party, many dressed in period costumes. One of the attractions was the Seahawk helicopter landing. Photo by Denise Shultz

24 July the remaining camp residents witnessed the wreck of *Netherby* finally disintegrate and disappear below the surface. The contents of the hull spilled out and were eventually washed up on the rocks. The following day crew members were busy picking up the scattered wreckage and dragging it above the water line. So much alcohol was washed up that the remaining denizens of the camp were grateful the rest of the party were gone. How much trouble had been avoided by keeping separate so many rowdy young men and spirits?

The 117 single men at Cape Wickham still needed to be rescued. *Victoria* was on site the morning after the group arrived, exchanging signal messages with the lighthouse. They learned that some of the men were too sickly to be taken aboard immediately, as they were 'very much knocked up from their long walk.' Indeed, some of them had diarrhoea, others had badly blistered feet. When *Pharos* arrived the next day, they arranged via flag signalling for the men to be taken to a more suitable landing place early the next morning. The nearest such spot was Phoques Bay, 24 km (15 miles) south west. Once there, the men embarked *Pharos* and were soon on their way to Melbourne. It was 27 July a mere 14 days after the disaster and all of the passengers and crew were safely evacuated.

After surviving a shipwreck and avoiding starvation, the emigrants faced an uncertain future. With all their possessions lost, they literally had to start anew. But they proved to be a tough lot. Two days after the disaster, in a camp, a baby was born to 24 year old Ellen Cubbins and her husband William. It was their fourth child, a girl. They named her *Netherby Victoria Luisa*. Little 'Nettie' became an inspiration; the healthy baby being born in such dire circumstances was a symbol of hope, a new life in a new world.

While all the people from *Netherby* made it to their destination alive and well, the shipwreck eventually claimed its victims. It was sold to a Melbourne syndicate, who sent a crew of men led by Archibald Currie to conduct a salvage operation. They successfully recovered most of the items of value, including the locomotive and railway carriages but in the process, three of the salvage crew drowned.

The story of the *Netherby* shipwreck will never be forgotten. It is kept alive by the many descendants of the castaways, who today live in Australia and around the world. In 2016, over 100 of them gathered on King Island to commemorate the shipwreck's 150th anniversary. Imagine that none of them would be around if it was not for the skill of the crew, quick thinking of Captain Owens, the courage of First Officer Jones and Second Officer Parry and the kindness of lightkeepers Hickmott and Spong.

Resources:

The wreck of the sailing ship Netherby - a miracle of survival by Don Charwood (2012), Burgewood Books, Australia
 Karina Taylor's website: netherby.homestead.com/index.html



The descendants of Netherby shipwreck survivors commemorated the event's 150th anniversary in 2016. Photo by Noel McKay, courtesy of Karina Taylor

Was lighthouse keeping the 'new' chivalry?

Helen Gerrard

According to vocabulary.com,

'The word chivalrous originally described gallantry, valour, honour, and courtesy, associated with the medieval code of knighthood...'

Bravery and dutiful service, whilst abiding by specific rules and requirements could equally apply to lighthouse keeping, and perhaps it is not so fanciful to see those who served so diligently as having something in common with medieval knights. Attention to detail, undergoing training, keeping physically and mentally fit as well as constant dedication – all seem a very fair comparison to me. There are a good many recognised acts of outstanding courage and heroism attributed to those who tended the lights over the years. With this in mind, I wondered if there might be even more of a link between chivalry and lighthouses than my mere idle whimsy...

Of COURSE there is!

In order to find it, I had to delve quite a long way back into history. Those who know anything about the first English Civil War, reputedly a time when 'Christ and his saints slept', will recognise that it was peopled by some of the most remarkable characters ever known. Amidst the maelstrom brought about by the warring factions of the Empress Maud and King Stephen an amazing young boy began to shape his future. He was five years old when he found himself on the wrong side of the conflict. When King Stephen took the boy prisoner and held him for ransom, his father refused to pay up, stating he would have more sons and he was prepared to sacrifice this one. Stephen was allegedly horrified by this, because having played a mock sword fight with the young boy using plantain leaves, Stephen recognised an intelligence and drive in the lad and could not bring himself to have him killed. Despite all the

odds our hero survived. He went on to inherit an estate which, thanks to his father, was worthless. From a position of relative poverty, he set about making a name for himself on the tournament circuit. As the Dark Ages made way for the Middle Ages, the need for mastering weapon-craft, horsemanship, strategic planning and the skill set required to take part in such displays and competitions (prize monies being how livings and reputations were made) was huge. These knights were the heroes relied on in real-life battle scenarios. If they were good, they were highly prized by nobles. William Marshal had begun what was to become an incredibly 'heroic' life story. He served as a faithful retainer to some of the greatest figures of the day, including the legendary Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine, a wife to two kings and mother of several more! During the reign of Henry II (Eleanor's second husband) his eldest son (also Henry) was crowned whilst his father was still alive, so for a while, England had two kings! Marshal taught the headstrong younger king all he needed to know about chivalry and warfare. Henry the younger died before his father, but Marshal went on to serve his younger brothers King Richard the Lionheart and King John.

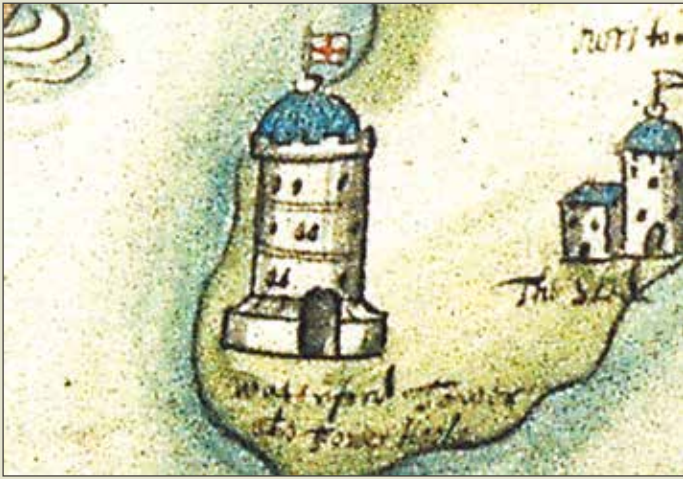
Throughout critical battles in Europe, at so many vital moments in history, like the signing of the Magna Carta to the very survival of the Angevin/ Plantagenet Royal families, despite courtly intrigues and periods of exile, Marshal kept turning up. He fought as a Templar Knight in the Crusades. He was at most of the major European battles and sieges leading the charge. Hardly surprising then, given he was the only non-royal personage to have a contemporary epic poem written about him (which still survives), that he was a 'superstar'. He is known simply as 'The Greatest Knight'.



William Marshal 1st Earl of Pembroke. Photo courtesy of Historic UK



Original Hook lighthouse. Photo courtesy of Irish Archaeology



Original Hook lighthouse map 1591. Photo courtesy of Irish Archaeology



Hook lighthouse spiral staircase. Photo courtesy of Irish Archaeology

This may all be very fascinating, but how is this connected to lighthouses? Well, as part of a very generous royally approved marriage settlement to Isabel de Clare, Marshal took control of estates from Ireland, England, Wales and Normandy, thus becoming one of the richest and most influential men in Europe and taking the title of First Earl of Pembroke. He received all this as a mark of deep respect and to thank him for years of loyalty and commitment to those he served.

By his instruction (and presumably funding), Hook lighthouse (the second oldest operating lighthouse in the world) had its beginnings back in the early 1200s. Marshal had established a sea port at the town of New Ross, some 18 miles (29 km) up the River Barrow. The mouth of the river was made hazardous to shipping by shoals and rocks. Clearly Marshal was anxious to protect his extensive business interest. His entrepreneurial prowess can be surmised from his earliest forays into making his fortune and doubtless by his serving with the Templars. Although it is unclear what the 'lighthouse' actually looked like, or precisely when it was constructed, it is depicted as well established on maps as early as 1240. It is believed to have been a tower with a fire on top, erected, tended and maintained by monks for several centuries. As time progressed, they even fired 10-minute interval warning guns if it was especially foggy. The lighthouse used a coal fired lantern until the eighteenth century, a continuing link back with its long history. Eventually, the guns were



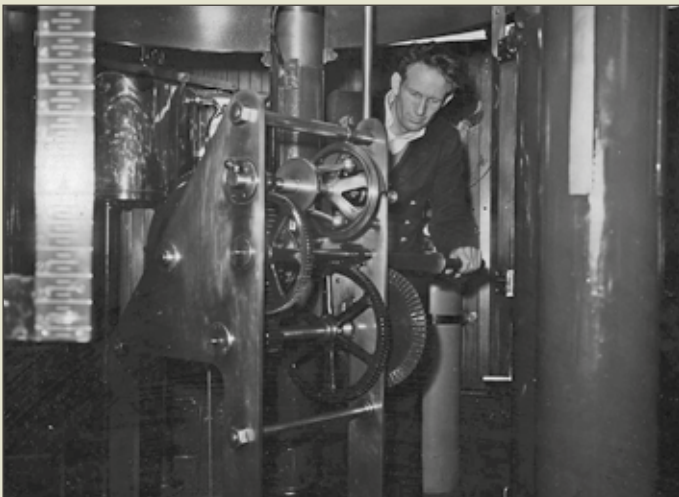
*Hook lighthouse interior.
Photo courtesy of Irish Archaeology*

replaced by foghorns and the light was modernised.

The lighthouse was converted to burning whale oil, which basically consisted of a ring of 12 separate lanterns which all needed tending! The original mechanism installed to make the light flash rather than burn continuously had

to be hand wound every 25 minutes. One can't help but feel a certain William Marshal probably smiled kindly on the dedication to duty these particular tasks required from the keepers.

William Marshal never took retirement; unlike some, he was still in active service besieging castles at the age of 70. He died at the venerable age of 72 in 1219 – quite an achievement given the times and circumstances of his extraordinary life. He enjoyed a chivalrous, long life, acting like a beacon of triumph over adversity. Perhaps, this long established, still serving lighthouse, is his legacy. All those who have served as keepers have kept the flame of his chivalrous life alight. Perhaps as legacies go, this is neither inappropriate nor far-fetched after all.



Winding the clockwork. Photo source unknown



Polishing the lens. Photo source unknown

Book talk

The Douglass Lighthouse Engineers – How did they build them? By Timothy Douglass Reviewed by Patrick Tubby

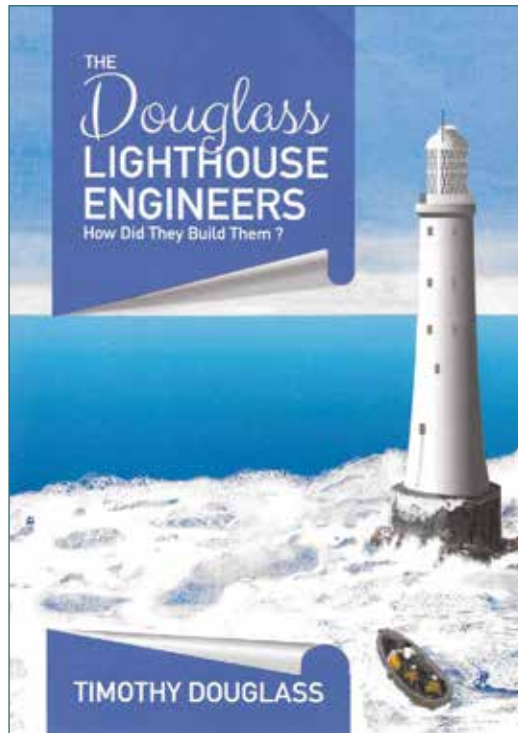
When one delves into the histories of British lighthouses, there are several names that reoccur – Wyatt, Alexander, Nelson, Walker, Stevenson and Douglass. These of course are the engineers who designed and built many of our most well-known lights. For sheer numbers, no family will come close to the 100 odd lighthouses built by six members of the Stevenson family around the coast of Scotland in the 140 years from 1790. In Ireland, the Halpins (George senior, and junior) designed over 40 between them.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, Trinity House lights were largely designed by Daniel Alexander, Joseph Nelson or James Walker – again, establishing over 40 lights between them. When the latter died in 1862, his place as senior Trinity House engineer was taken by James Douglass, in the new position of Engineer-in-Chief.

Walker had been designing and building lights for Trinity House since 1830, and from 1839, Nicholas Douglass, James' father, had become involved, often in the role of resident engineer (overseeing the actual builds). Both Nicholas and James Douglass had involvement in the original lattice tower at Bishop Rock that was washed away before a light could be established in 1850, and they were both on hand for the construction of its stone replacement, although the design was Walker's. Smeaton's Eddystone tower, which at that time had stood for 100 years, was a major influence in Walker's stone tower for the Bishop.

From the mid-1850s there was an almost continuous trail over the next thirty years, with engineers, stonemasons, and seamen moving from one wave-washed rock to another – establishing or replacing existing lights. Once the Bishop had been established in 1858, the team moved on to replacing the wooden piled Smalls lighthouse off Pembrokeshire – with another Walker designed stone tower, with Nicholas and James Douglass as resident engineers. Nicholas Douglass then oversaw the construction of the Les Hanois lighthouse off the coast of Guernsey in the early 1860s.

Walker's design for Wolf Rock again followed the similar pattern. The hostile and isolated location made this a mammoth undertaking; James Douglass was the initial resident engineer, but following Walker's death, passed



day-to-day management over to his father and brother William. Once Wolf was operational, James Douglass moved on to replacing the Longships lighthouse with his own tower based on Walker's design.

In the 1870s, James Douglass designed towers for the Great Basses and Little Basses reefs off the south coast of Sri Lanka. Most of the stone was quarried and cut in Scotland, and transported half-way around the world; most other components were also manufactured in Britain. William Douglass was resident engineer for these works.

The Douglass family are best remembered for these 'headline' rock lights, but they built or improved many shore based lights

that are still standing today – St Bee's, Hartland, Lowestoft, and Anvil – to name just a few. But James Douglass's crowning achievement, for which he was knighted, was his replacement for Smeaton's Eddystone lighthouse. Although Smeaton's tower was still in reasonable condition, the rock on which it was built had started to fail, and a replacement was deemed necessary. The new tower was almost twice the height of its predecessor, and although continuing to use the dovetailed blocks theme devised by Walker, now had a vertically sided, drum-shaped base to stop waves rolling up the side of the tower. The classic 'oak-tree' profile of Smeaton's lighthouse was the basis for rock lights around the world for the next 150 years, and as a tribute to him, his tower was dismantled and re-erected on Plymouth Hoe where it still stands today.

James Douglass wasn't quite finished – his last main project saw him return to the Isles of Scilly and Bishop Rock – where it had all started for him. Walker's 1858 tower was found to be suffering badly when hit by large Atlantic rollers. Initially, strengthening bands were added, but when these were found to be ineffective, Douglass designed a whole new lighthouse that would be built around and dovetailed to the existing tower. An innovative temporary lantern allowed for a light to be shown throughout these works. At the same time, a new lighthouse was also being built on Round Island – on the north of the Scilly archipelago.

James' son, William Tregarthen Douglass, was resident engineer for many of these later projects. In 1878 James' brother William, became Chief Engineer for the

Commissioners of Irish Lights – William’s crowning achievement was the new lighthouse completed on Fastnet Rock in 1904.

Timothy Douglass is the great-grandson of James Douglass, and has produced a valuable work chronicling his family’s involvement in lighthouse construction and design in England, Wales, Ireland, and the Indian subcontinent. He has been able to draw on family papers and the records of papers presented to the Royal Institute of Civil Engineers. Much of the early part of the book is given over to covering those who came before the Douglass’ – Winstanley, Rudyerd, Smeaton etc.

Indeed, the book opens with the retelling of the incarceration of BBC journalist Edward Ward and his sound engineer on the Bishop Rock over the winter of 1946/47 – he’d initially been tasked with a Christmas Day broadcast from the tower. They’d managed to get aboard the Bishop a couple of days before Christmas, but conditions quickly deteriorated, and the radio men found themselves stuck on the rock for almost a month before conditions moderated enough for their removal.

The book is illustrated throughout with many maps and schematic plans produced by the author, and a number of black and white photographs. At the end of the book are a number of comparative tables looking at the Douglass towers and many of their contemporaries.

We think of the Douglasses as the engineers behind many of our most well-known rock lights, but they also built many of the shore based towers around England, Wales and Ireland. James Douglass introduced the helically framed lantern in 1864, and also improved oil burners to produce more incandescent and, at the same time, efficient lights. In total, the three generations were involved in the construction of over 40 lighthouses, either as resident engineers or designers – most still standing and operational today – a testament to their forebears and the innovations they themselves introduced.

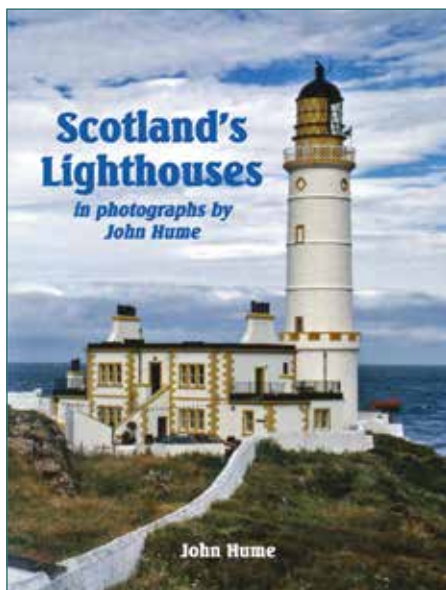
The Douglass Lighthouse Engineers – How did they build them? Timothy Douglass, 273pp. Published on demand via Amazon (Hardback £34.81, ISBN 978-0-2288-4016-9 / Paperback £15.71, ISBN 978-0-2288-4015-2)

Scotland’s lighthouses in photographs by John Hume

Reviewed by Emma Stevens

When I was asked to review this book of photographs I expected to find some images of the remote and wild landscapes that hinted at the locations I associate with the dramatic coast of Scotland, and this book didn’t disappoint. This is a tour of the lights around the mainland and islands of Scotland, taking in houses, towers, lightships, foghorns, harbour wall lights, pier heads and river lights from a range of towns, villages or remote outposts. This is a photographic tour that you can take without getting a Force 8 in your hair or getting your feet wet, that captures the working fishing ports and harbours, breakwaters reaching out to wild, cold seas, remote clifftops and islands, breezy headlands and rugged, shallow reefs. This book will resonate with many ALK members who enjoy visiting lighthouses, marvelling at their geography, architecture and finding them so very photogenic. Often the subject of my own holiday snaps, I know others will have their own photos from visits, or lights as homes or workplaces.

The author fell in love with lighthouses as a child. In his introduction he refers back to childhood visits to lights in the 1950s, before studying Industrial Architecture and a career which took him around Scotland indulging and feeding his love of ‘these remarkable structures’. This collection has images dating from the 1950s right through to more recent times, and as a result, some are captured in black and white, yet they all feel timeless. As anyone who has been to any lights in Scotland knows, the weather can



be quite varied too, and this collection reflects that mix of beautiful sunny days with overcast or threatening clouds.

Each photograph is annotated with brief details of the light, its history, geography, fabrication or relationship to local industry. This is not just a testament to the Stevenson family architecture either; although many of the lights were designed by them, other noted architects get a mention such as John Rennie, but there are also nods to Thomas Telford’s scheme to improve the harbours of North and North-East Scotland in the early 19th century.

Physically the book is just over A4 size, and each page has two or three pictures on it, so the images are clear and a lot of detail can be seen. What perhaps strikes me the most from consulting this book is the variety of architecture which can be found, from Egyptian-style keeper’s cottages, square, angled or rounded towers, tall or short, ornate or simple towers, built to withstand great powerful waves on remote outposts at sea to those that guide travellers into safe ports. This book really does offer an armchair journey around some of the most stunning locations where lights can be found, or perhaps will serve as a tour guide to those of you who may be more adventurous on your next Scottish coastal visit.

Stenlake Publishing
ISBN 978-1-84033-872-0
£24.95

The Light Between Oceans

A novel by M L Stedman (2012) – and a film directed by Derek Cianfrance (2016)

Reviewed by Helen Gerrard

Lockdown has doubtless left many of us revisiting our bookshelves and dusting off DVDs. What follows is a brief review of a best-selling novel and its adaptation to the screen. It is a heartrending tale of integrity, honour, truth, love and betrayal...

The novel opens with Isabel in prayer, kneeling on a remote island, Janus Rock, perched between the vastness of the Indian Ocean and the Great Southern Ocean. She hears an infant's cry but dismisses it. Yet, it persists. Behind her stands a lighthouse; from its gallery her husband, Tom, has spied a small boat washing onto the beach below. The male occupant of the boat is deceased, but the child with him is miraculously alive, a baby girl. Tom hands the baby to Isabel and covers the body. He is a stickler for doing everything by the book. The incident must be reported in full, immediately and the authorities notified. The child may have family, he concludes. However, Isabel tells him to delay and he reluctantly agrees to wait to send the signal until the following morning, despite a deep-seated sense of unease.

The story backtracks to reveal Tom Sherbourne, a veteran soldier from the Great War, accepting a position as a temporary lighthouse keeper on the incredibly isolated island of Janus Rock.

'You pay your own passage to a posting. You're relief, so you don't get holidays. Permanent staff get a month's leave at the end of each three-year contract... Welcome... to the Commonwealth Lighthouse Service.'

Tom, blighted by his experiences of the War, needs time to heal. He has survived a training stint on lights elsewhere and welcomes the challenge of time left alone, coming to terms with everything he has experienced. On his arrival at Point Partageuse a party is thrown in his honour and he encounters the Headmaster's daughter Isabel Graysmark for the first time.

The book lavishly describes the outward journey to the island on the support vessel *The Windward Spirit*, the island, the lighthouse station and the characters. The previous keeper has been removed for health reasons, leaving traces behind of his life. Tom remains on the island for six months, returning to port because he has been made permanent following the demise of his predecessor, Trimble Docherty. He has two weeks to spend with Isabel and contrives to see her every day. She asks him to marry her. Back on the island he spends a year working alone, thinking about her and writing letters.



Eventually he agrees to marry her.

Their life begins like an idyllic honeymoon. The surroundings are breathtaking. They are absorbed and in love. Sadly, the whole is blighted as Isabel has three pregnancies in rapid succession which all end in miscarriage. Understandably, given the stress, harrowing grief and relentless isolation she becomes depressed.

It is at this point that we return to the opening of the book. Isabel still has milk from her most recent miscarriage and is able to breastfeed the shipwrecked baby. Who would know of any substitution? Against his conscience and better judgement, Tom agrees to go

along with Isabel's plan. He does not report the incident. They name the girl Lucy and treat her as their own.

The little girl grows up with her new parents, who idolise her. Theirs is a close-knit family born from disasters. On their return for shore leave, Isabel's parents are delighted with their new grandchild. However, during this time, Tom has a chance encounter with Hannah Roennfeldt. She is still mourning the loss of her dearly loved husband Frank and their baby daughter, Grace. At that time, following repeated xenophobic attacks, Frank had been forced to flee in a boat with their little girl and both were never seen again. Tom is convinced this is the man he has buried on the island, and the little girl he is raising with Isabel. He mentions this to Isabel and says Hannah should be told the truth. Isabel is outraged and tells him this would cause more harm than good. Tom, who adores her, acquiesces.

Following a further two years on station, the little family again return to the mainland. Once again, Tom sees Hannah, whose whole life has been blighted by grief at her extensive losses. He leaves her an anonymous note indicating her daughter is still alive. This sparks an enormous police search. Bluey, a crew member from *The Windward Spirit*, recalls seeing Lucy holding Grace's unique silver rattle. Conclusions are rapidly drawn. To save Isabel, Tom admits it is all his doing. Feeling furious and betrayed, Isabel further harms Tom's case by stating Frank was still alive when the boat came ashore...

Meanwhile, Hannah is delighted to have her daughter back, but naturally the confused little girl only wants to be with who she considers to be her real mother and father. Much heartache and many tantrums ensue. The child runs away. Distraught, Hannah promises to give Grace back to Isabel if she denounces Tom for all his crimes so he may be either executed or spend his life in prison. Isabel is

horribly torn between the love of the child and that of her estranged husband. Despite her fury, and the obvious inducement made by Hannah, will she actually betray the man she loves, who throughout has acted honourably and done everything only to protect her?

You'll simply have to find out by either reading the book or seeing the film.

The book is peppered with references to lighthouse keeping, its isolation and duties. It has been well researched. Chance Brothers are mentioned too. Despite being an obvious work of fiction, it is peopled with believable characters and magnificently detailed.

The film gives visual reality to the book's descriptions and storyline. It too is well executed and heart wrenching. The

scenery is spectacular and the acting excellent. Obviously, it cuts short some sequences but in general remains true to the novel. It is a gripping tale set against a sumptuous visual backdrop.

If nothing else, they are worth a look – perhaps grab some popcorn and tissues too...

Published by Penguin ISBN 978-1-784-16106-4

Paperback 461 pages

Dreamworks Pictures, eOne UK certificated 12

127mins duration

Starring Michael Fassbender, Alicia Vikander

and Rachel Weisz

(Online) Events update

ALK Events Team

Following the trustees' decision to postpone all of this year's in-person events, although there may be some opportunities for smaller events later in the year depending on the status of the pandemic, our events activities have really centred on our online alternatives.

Our online events programme has proven to be a very popular 'consolation prize' for a number of our members so far this year. We have been delighted with the number of members attending and the feedback we have received from these events in recent months. We have been particularly pleased to be able to connect with members from other parts of the world who aren't usually able to join our in-person events.

On 23 February we hosted a Meet The Keepers event, which gave members a unique opportunity to pose questions to former lighthouse keepers. The event began with introductions from the keepers: Gerald Butler, who continues to work for the Commissioners of Irish Lights; ALK President and former Northern Lighthouse Board keeper Ian Duff; and ALK Chair Neil Hargreaves, who is a former employee of Trinity House. There were tales aplenty of the highs and lows, dramatic incidents, favourite pastimes and the joys and perils of working so closely with others. We were also joined by ALK Patron Lord Hector MacKenzie of Culkein who gave a fascinating insight into life as both a lighthouse keeper's child and as a keeper himself, particularly in the Clyde lighthouses. The lively questions and answers session with the three keepers prompted a number of members to say, 'I could listen to them talk all night'.

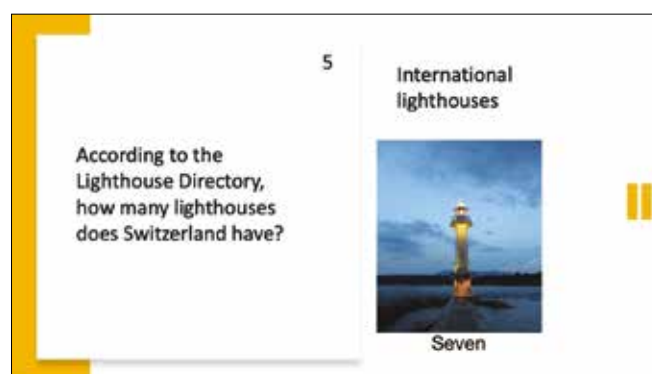
Our second quiz took place in late March and with the winners' result being so close last time we were excited to see who would fare best. Joy and Patrick Tubby were top of the leader board again with their prize being to collaborate on the next quiz on 16 June. Joy and Patrick were closely followed by Kim Fahlen, Ruth Drinkwater and Ian Duff. The quizzes seem to be enjoyed by everyone involved, regardless of anyone's scores.

In addition to these events, there have been a number of successful regional meetings taking place, the first of which was with our European members. At the time of writing online regional meetings had also taken place for members in the Isle of Man, East Midlands, North East England and Scotland. Plans are afoot for meetings of members in Ireland, South West England, South East England, and North West England/Wales in the coming weeks. A number of these meetings have featured talks from ALK members including former keepers, book authors and our new Media & Publicity Officer, Ian Hogarth.

We will continue to organise online events on an ongoing basis for the time being and the best way to keep track of what is coming up is by visiting the events page on our website, alk.org.uk/events.

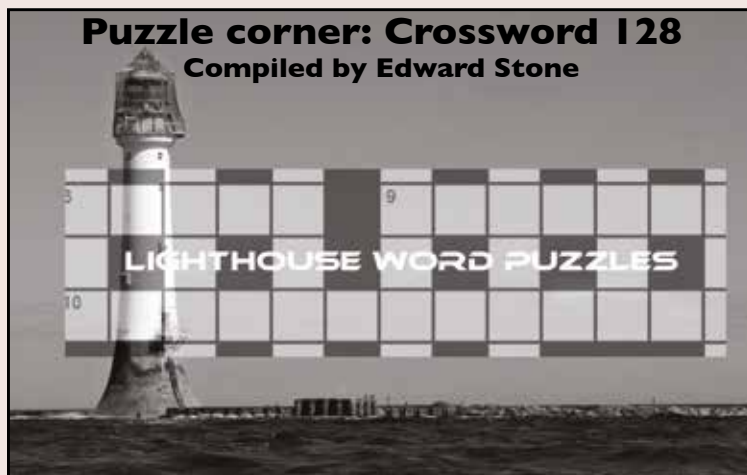
We recognise that many of our members either aren't able or would prefer not to take part in online events, which is entirely understandable. If you don't have internet access but would still be interested in listening in on one of the Zoom events you can join by telephone instead. If this would be of interest then do give me a call on 01641 531239. For those with email you can reach me on events@alk.org.uk.

We hope to be able to start offering some in-person events again as soon as we can safely and logistically manage it. Let's hope that the coming months bring us closer to that light at the end of the tunnel.



Puzzle corner: Crossword 128

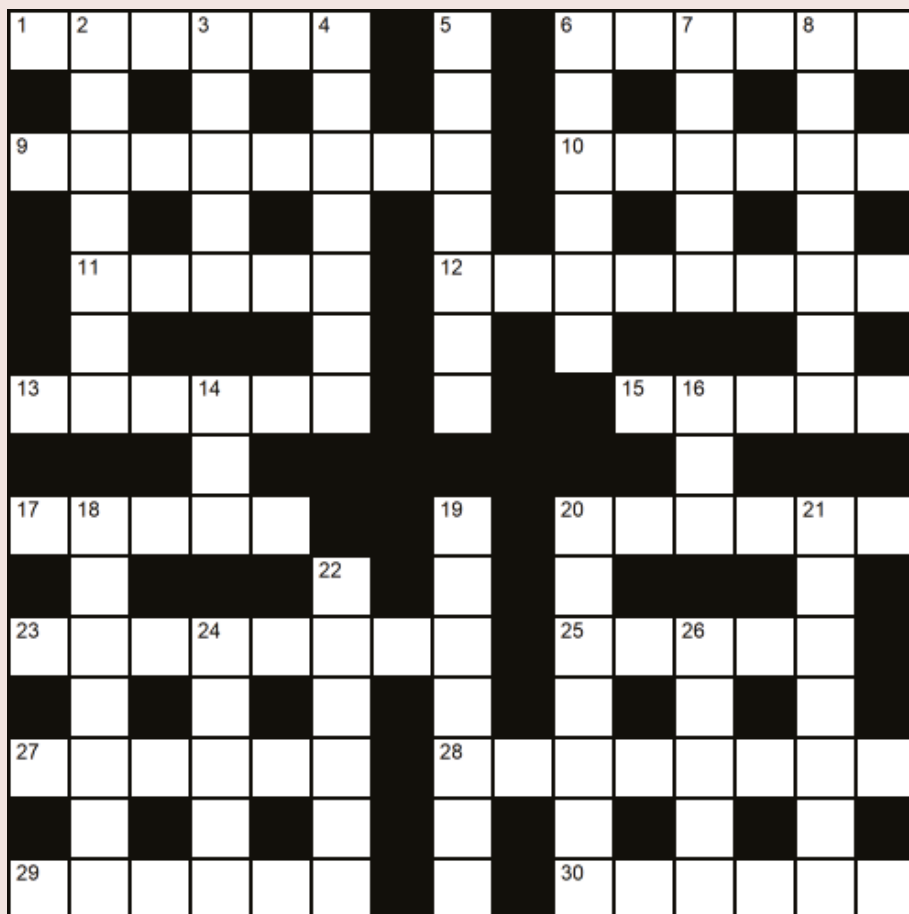
Compiled by Edward Stone



This is a normal crossword with straightforward clues..

Once you've completed it, look for a lighthouse that you would no longer find on the East Coast of England as it vanished in 2020.

Like the real one, you might find it hard to track it down – if so, go diagonal!



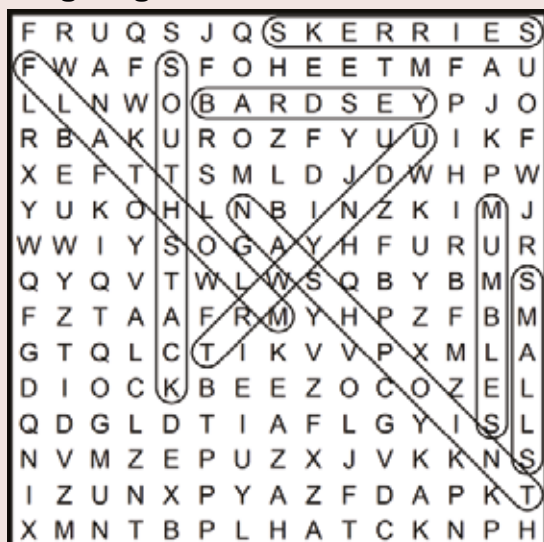
Across

- 1 East Central African republic (6)
- 6 Hands on the hips (6)
- 9 Office spaces shared with others (3,5)
- 10 Food cooked slowly (6)
- 11 Someone who looks after others (5)
- 12 This fails to react to chemical changes (5,3)
- 13 Westminster chimer (3,3)
- 15 Wants something (5)
- 17 Colorado municipality (5)
- 20 Vice Admiral Horatio (6)
- 23 Typically blue gemstone (8)
- 25 Facial scent detectors (5)
- 27 Afternoon snooze (6)
- 28 Outside (8)
- 29 Team member or musician (6)
- 30 Yellow tropical fruit (6)

Down

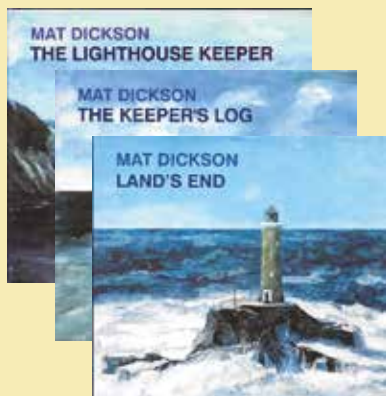
- 2 Form of pasta (7)
- 3 Lowest, unsuccessful point (5)
- 4 Race loser (4-3)
- 5 Playing music live on the streets (7)
- 6 Being a structure with a curve at the top (6)
- 7 Fit? No! (anag) (2,3)
- 8 Bandit, specially in mountain areas (7)
- 14 Insect (3)
- 16 Fish (3)
- 18 Popular dog breed (7)
- 19 Pure substance (7)
- 20 Without a break (3-4)
- 21 A place where the bones of the dead are placed (7)
- 22 Not on the ground (3-3)
- 24 Unpleasantly assertive (5)
- 26 Something to pick up at the chemist maybe? (5)

Solution to the Wordsquare puzzle in the Spring issue Eight lighthouses of Wales shown.



ALK Shop

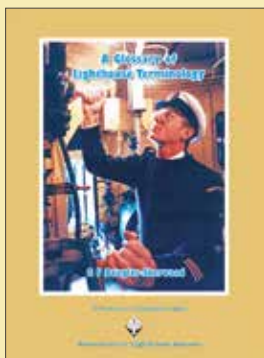
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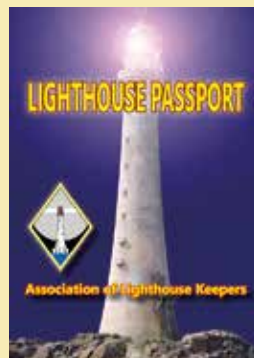
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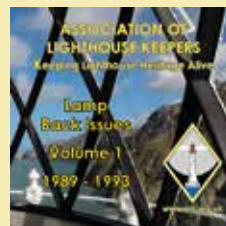
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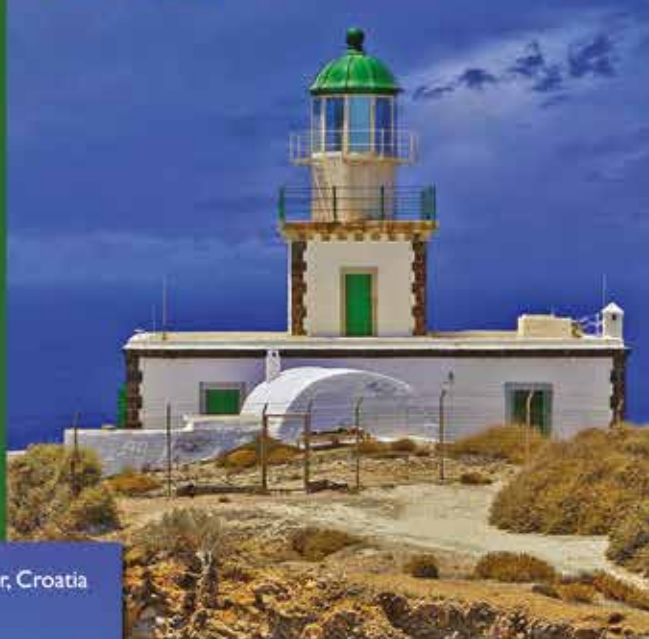
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Santorini, Greece



Bremerhaven, Germany



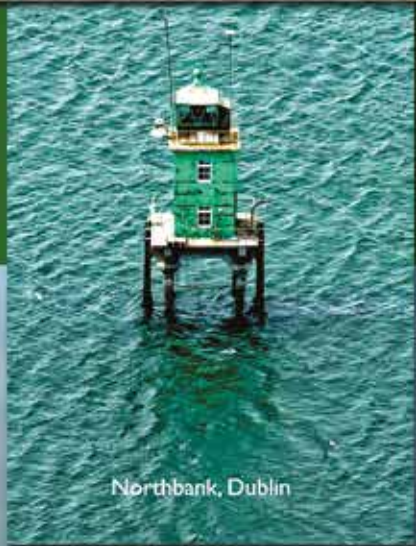
Split harbour, Croatia



Green Lighthouses



Cartagena, Spain



Northbank, Dublin

Painting a lighthouse tower a different colour (to white or natural stone) was done to make it a more prominent 'daymark' - a bright colour would make it stand out from either the cliffs behind it or the sky above.

Red (or red and another colour) was the most popular because it would always stand out against a cliff, sandune, or the sky. Green was an alternative, as well as being a starboard channel marker or harbour entrance light.

Exactly how much of the tower got painted and in what sort of pattern is, of course, another way of identifying them. Variations include painting the whole tower or just a small part such as the lantern roof or gallery.

We've featured several red and white lights in our pages over the years so here is a selection of some green lighthouses I've found in various European countries that you might not have seen before.

Christopher Nicholson

Cap Fréhel, France

