



## AT HURST      **SPRING 2014 NEWSLETTER**

After the excitement of our 25<sup>th</sup> birthday last year, this year we look forward to celebrating the 500<sup>th</sup> birthday of Trinity House on May 20th.

On that day in 1514 Henry VIII granted a charter to a fraternity of London mariners who became the Corporation of Trinity House, charged with improving the safety of navigation on the River Thames. Since then, Trinity House has looked after pilotage, buoys, beacons and light vessels around the English, Welsh and Northern Ireland coastlines and, over the last five hundred years, has prevented countless shipwrecks and loss of life around the coasts of England, Wales and Northern Ireland.



Over the winter months, and despite the truly awful weather which made getting to and from the Castle a wet and windy experience on many occasions, the Trinity House Room in the West Wing is being refurbished by volunteers from the Friends of Hurst Castle and the ALK at Hurst volunteers are looking after the exhibit side of things, cleaning up the existing and bringing some new ones out of storage to put on display.

Trinity House will be providing some new display materials and our President, Gerry Douglas-Sherwood, is joining us for the celebration day. Gerry was at the Needles Lighthouse from 1982 to 1994 and became Principal Keeper in 1992. He is always happy to answer questions about life in a lighthouse so come and join us on this special day for **'An Audience with a Lighthouse Keeper'** if you want to know more. We will also be opening the historic Acetylene Room to visitors and possibly the Hurst Point lighthouse too.



Eddystone— one of the best known Trinity House lighthouses



### **The Nab Tower Lighthouse Lantern**

Our really big project for this year and next is turning this pile of rusty bits and pieces, which used to be the Nab Tower Lighthouse lantern, back into how it should look. And for that we really need a little bit of help.

The Nab Tower, to the east of the Isle of Wight, was originally planned to be part of a defence against German U-boats in the straits of Dover. A number of the fort-like towers were to be positioned and linked together with steel nets and armed with 4" guns to close off the English Channel to enemy ships. Unfortunately, only one and a bit had been completed when the war ended in 1918. The 'bit' was dismantled but it was decided to use the completed tower, now a very expensive white elephant, in place of the old Nab light vessel located at the eastern end of the Solent marking the approach to Spithead and Portsmouth harbours. In 1920 two tugs towed the tower to its position, its base was flooded and it sank, coming to rest with a 3° list. And there it has been ever since. It was manned as a lighthouse until automation in 1983. In 1985 the light was converted to solar power operation meaning a new lantern was needed. That left an old lantern going spare. But not any more! The old lantern has arrived at Hurst, a story in



**The Nab Tower, still with the Lantern which is now in Hurst Castle**

itself, and we are intending to refurbish and reassemble it to make a child friendly exhibit to be located in the West Wing of the Castle near to the ALK Museum Rooms. Most of the work can be paid for and carried out by the ALK but unfortunately all ten panes of glass were broken in transit. We need approx. £700 to replace the ten 5' x 2' panes of glass and complete the lantern ready for the 2016 season. We are looking for sponsorship or donations and if you can help us in any way Keith would be very happy to hear from you, contact details below.

And then - in our spare time (when we find some), there are also finishing touches to be made to the second museum room and a bit of housekeeping to keep the first museum room up to scratch. And International Lighthouse Heritage Weekend to look forward to in August, hopefully with better weather and more visitors than last year.

The Castle season starts on March 31 and it is open every day from 10.30am to 5.30pm. Come and see us.

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If you would like to help us in our efforts by becoming a member, or just because you like lighthouses, please pick up a leaflet or have a look at the website on [www.alk.org.uk](http://www.alk.org.uk). Or have a chat with Keith Morton, the ALK representative at Hurst. He is usually at the Castle on a Monday or can be contacted on [hurst@alk.org.uk](mailto:hurst@alk.org.uk) or 01329 843883. There is also a social side to the ALK who organise events, both locally and countrywide, and also 'lighthouse themed' tours in the UK and abroad.