

Association of Lighthouse Keepers

Keeping Lighthouse Heritage Alive

AT HURST



CASTLE

SUMMER 2014 NEWSLETTER

Trinity House 500th Birthday Celebrations

Trinity House was 500 years old on Tuesday May 20 and we felt we couldn't let the day go past without some sort of celebration. Unfortunately, in a sea of warm, sunny days, this one dawned grey and uninspiring and attendance was disappointing with only about half the people who had asked for tickets turning up. Despite this, we had really good feedback from those who did. The 'Audience With' our President, Gerry Douglas-Sherwood, and member Pat Gumbrell, the daughter of a lighthouse keeper, had proved very interesting for all participants, with a wide variety of topics being covered in the question and answer sessions. Visitors also enjoyed tours of Hurst Point lighthouse and Acetylene Room led by knowledgeable members of the ALK. It proved to be a very sociable occasion for those members of the ALK who had turned up to help, some travelling considerable distances to do so, with lots of catching up done during and after the event.



Gerry and Pat sitting in the Needles kitchen exhibit c.1859

The Nab Tower Lighthouse Lantern

We have now started fundraising for our next major project – the refurbishment of the Nab Tower Lantern as a child-friendly exhibit to be located outside the ALK Museum Rooms. You will find a display board in the ALK No. 2 Museum Room giving the history of the lantern and how it came to rest at Hurst Castle. ALK volunteers at the Castle have the enthusiasm and necessary skills to carry out the work required but sadly not the funds.



The Nab Tower lantern in pieces at Hurst Castle

We have estimated that we need approximately £700, most of which will go to replace the ten panes of glass which unfortunately did not survive the journey to Hurst. We are looking for a sponsor for each pane of glass at a cost of £50 per pane or just a donation, however small, would be very gratefully received. If you would like to help please pick up a sponsorship/donation form or just put your loose change in the jar. We hope to put a base down for the lantern fairly soon but the majority of the work will be done late 2014/early 2015 ready for the summer 2015 season and an official opening in September 2015, to coincide with the ALK AGM which is due to be held in the area. We will also be producing some 2015 ALK at Hurst Castle calendars which will be available from September. For more information please contact Keith Morton, details below.

Keith, our Project Manager here at Hurst Castle, has recently been elected, with effect from the 2014 ALK AGM in September, as representative for the South Central area and will now be busy thinking up some interesting lighthouse related events for members in his area. Watch this space!



As ever, there are things we would like to have finished before the season started at the beginning of April but other work took priority. One of these is the purchase and installation of a video player and screen for the ALK No. 2 room, specifically to show a film shot at the Needles Lighthouse and narrated by our President, Gerry Douglas-Sherwood, and Trustee, Gordon Medicott, both of whom were Principal Keepers there. We have been given a grant by the Solent Protection Society to fund the project and hope to be able to complete it fairly soon. Despite the Castle days now being longer than in the winter, time runs out just as quickly and our volunteer force is small. We look forward to being able to tick another box as 'job done'.

The weekend of August 16/17 has been designated International Lighthouse Heritage Weekend with events planned around the country. Here at Hurst we are unable to open the lighthouse for health and safety reasons but the historic Acetylene Room will be open on Saturday August 16 between 11am and 4pm for tours and explanations of how the acetylene was produced. Tours are free but any donations to our Nab Tower Lantern Project would be gratefully received.

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. Or have a chat with Keith Morton, the ALK Project Manager at Hurst. He is usually at the Castle on a Monday or can be contacted on 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.