



Introduction by Wayne Wheeler



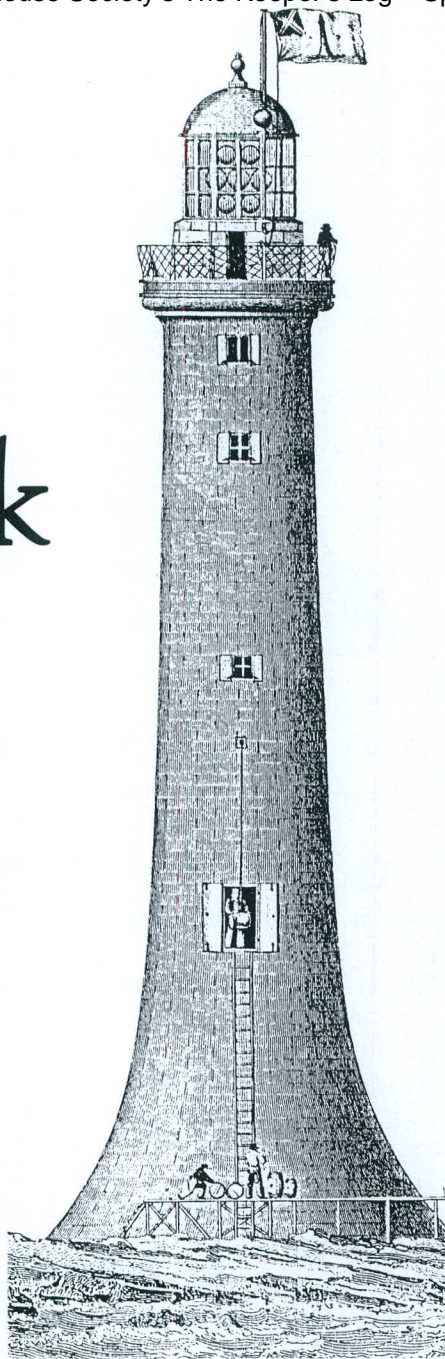
In all the annals of lighthouse history no family has contributed so much to the development of those noble structures as have the Stevensons of Scotland. The patriarch of this family was Thomas Smith (1752-1815). He emerged from a career as a white metal worker (or tinsmith) in Edinburgh, Scotland to construct that country's first lighthouse (Kinnaird Head, in 1787) under the Northern Lighthouse Board. His evolution from tinsmith to builder of lighthouses progressed through the construction of street lights and then the invention of reflectors for street lights and their eventual application in lantern rooms.

Through a series of circumstances Thomas Smith employed a young Robert Stevenson in his shop and later, when Thomas lost his wife through childbirth, he married Robert Stevenson's widowed mother, further cementing the relationship between Thomas and Robert.

Robert had five children of whom three, Alan (1807-65), David (1815-86) and Thomas (1818-87), continued the tradition of constructing Scottish lighthouses. His son David had two sons, David A. (1854-1938) and Charles (1855-1950), who also constructed lighthouses; and Charles's son, D. Alan Stevenson (1891-1971), became the last of this long line of Scottish lighthouse builders. Thomas Smith's great grandson (Thomas Stevenson's son) was the black sheep of the family declining to construct lighthouses. He wanted to be a writer and traveled the world, his name was Robert Lewis Stevenson.

The Inch Cape, or Bell Rock, is situated 12 miles off the east coast of Scotland and 11 miles north of the Firth of Forth and the Isle of May lighthouse (see Keeper's Log Winter 1988). The reef is about 1,500 feet long, 30 feet wide, and the highest portion is 12 feet under water during high tide. The oldest charts of the area (1583) call it Inch (Island) Cape but it later became known as Bell Rock apparently because of a warning bell on a float (bell buoy) placed on the rock by the abbot of Aberbrothock. There is enough evidence to confirm that some sort of a warning device did, for a while, exist but the exact years of operation have been lost to the ages. A folk tale, which may not have truth to it, emerged in the form of a ballad called "Sir Ralph the Rover" a pirate who sank the bell buoy in a fit of spite only to have the act be his undoing years later (see inside of the rear cover).

A Lighthouse for Bell Rock



by Robert Stevenson
as told to Wayne Wheeler

My father died of a fever in the West Indies when I was but two, that was in 1774 and mother and I were living in Glasgow. A short while later she married a wealthy man named James Hogg, but I don't remember him and mother never talked about him. I don't know whether he died or they were divorced, rather the latter I think. Anyway, mother managed to provide for our welfare after a fashion and with a lot of church going which always gave her strength. She managed well enough to enroll me in the Royal High School, hoping that I would eventually become a minister in the Church of Scotland. However, I was never all that keen about the languages and in the end she couldn't afford to see me through that school and I finished up at one of the better Glasgow schools and under a language specialist, McIntyre, in 1786.

During this era, 'my dark period' as mother referred to it, she became ac-

quainted with a neighbor named Thomas Smith and his wife Elizabeth. They became close friends and I grew up with the Smith children. Thomas Smith was the first engineer of the newly formed Northern Lighthouse Trust (later Board) and was given the honor of constructing the first four Scottish lighthouses under that trust. He had been up to that time a successful white metal worker (tinsmith) and his business had evolved into the construction of street lights for Glasgow and other cities. In fact he invented a reflector system that improved the system of street lighting. His work with street lights came in very handy when he began to construct lighthouses.

Poor Thomas Smith, he lost his first wife, lovely Elizabeth, in 1786, married a Mary Jack in 1787 and she died of consumption in 1791 leaving him with three small children. My mother had remained a friend of the Smiths and it was at this time that she stepped in to take care of the small children while Thomas was off on a lighthouse inspection trip. Just prior to this event, in 1790, I was invited to "come into" Thomas Smith's works. I was delighted with this invitation as I had always been fascinated with things mechanical and spent many idle hours watching the operation of his shop, asking questions and trying my hand at some of the work. After my formal acceptance into the shop I must say that I took on as many matters as I felt comfortable with when Thomas was away. The next year, 1792, mother married Thomas when he returned from his lighthouse trip and I was delighted as my mentor was now, also, my stepfather. I enjoyed my apprenticeship immensely

and was rewarded for my hard work by being sent to install a reflector light at Portpatrick Harbor. This was my first independent task and at the age of 20 I felt very proud...and confident of Thomas's trust in my abilities. 'Father' began making yearly inspection trips and was gone for increasingly longer periods of time, this required me to take on more and more of the business at the shop.

In 1793 the shipping dues collected by the Trust had risen to well over 3,000 Pds.; funds were still vastly insufficient to allow more than a thought about constructing a lighthouse on the terrible Bell Rock. In 1794 I was apprenticed to Thomas Smith for a 6 year period. The wages were low during this period, but being single and living at home I had few expenses. In fact I even had enough extra to commission an artist to do a small painting of mother which I carried on my trips. I accompanied him on a lighthouse inspection voyage in 1796 and on a trip to Ireland. In Ireland, with the Bell Rock ever on our minds, we witnessed the progress the Irish Board was making with their Kilwarlin lighthouse on the isolated South Rock off County Down. It was during this period that we heard that the Trust was beginning to take seriously the construction of a lighthouse on Bell Rock. The Kilwarlin structure was similar to what we might come to experience on Bell Rock and we journeyed to Ireland to learn about their effort.

In the Summer of 1797, with the agreement of the Trustees, I was sent on my own to make the annual inspection. This was a very big day in my life as it proved that Thomas considered me fully qualified to undertake the important duties of an inspection trip. And, from then on he left all the lighthouse business to me. Wishing to insure the Northern Lighthouse Trust that I was capable of the tasks at hand I reported to them (during the voyages 1797 through 1806) via a daily Log which gave weather conditions, ship's movements and work completed by Laborers and, also, with a general report that outlined the general state of the lighthouses visited and recommendations for changes or repairs to be carried out the following year.



In June of 1799, when I was 27, I married Jane Smith who at 20 had been my step sister for a full 12 years. My mentor and step father now became my father-in-law and there were, from time to time—you may be sure—quips about that arrangement.

About this time "father", who had become fairly wealthy with his street lamp business and was attending more to it in this period than lighthouses, purchased and outfitted a boat under construction and presented it to the Trust—a most unusual occurrence for that age. The vessel was named, I thought rather appropriately, *Pharos* [Keep'—this was the first of a long line of Northern Lighthouse Board vessels named *Pharos*].

I must admit, in retrospect, that I was quite the impatient young engineer, always wanting to accomplish things before their time. That is; before funds were available, materials procured and knowledge in hand. The period 1800 to 1805 was a period of considerable growth for me. I was married and soon afterwards became a father (and suffered the loss of children), and I was also traveling farther afield; constructing & altering lighthouses and altering the lives of the keepers too. And the Bell Rock was always on my mind...always. It would be difficult to name a location along the Scottish coast more important for the erection of a lighthouse than at Bell Rock, that sinker of ships and killer of men. But, I needed more experience, the Trust needed more confidence that a structure could be erected on the rock, and, certainly, the necessary funds had to be procured.

I met my adversary on October 5, 1800 when I first set foot on the rock or reef. That previous winter the *HMS York*, of 74 guns, had struck Bell Rock and sank with the loss of all hands. This tragedy brought a tremendous public outcry in the press and demands were again made to the Trust and Crown for the erection of a lighthouse on Bell Rock. In fact after the loss of the *York* two noble, but naive, individuals constructed modest iron daybeacons on the rock. They were, in short order, quickly dispensed with by Neptune's hand.

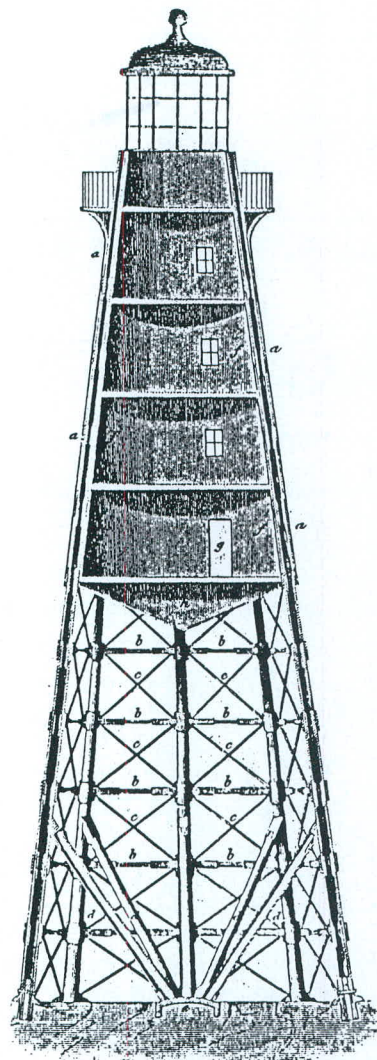


I unsuccessfully tried to board the rock in May of that year, heavy weather thwarted my attempts, and then I departed for my annual inspection voyage. I must say I had the devil's time procuring a boat that Fall. The Customs boat promised me was laid up for repairs and most local fishermen, when approached—knowing the bell Rock only too well, begged off. Finally I located a small boat at Broughty Ferry owned by a fisherman who augmented his income by scavenging materials from Bell Rock at low water. After a short span of time in which the crusty old man of the sea squinted at us, studying us up and down wondering just what our game was, agreed to take James Haldane (an architect under whom I had studied) and me to the reef. We arrived while a Spring Tide was out and had but two hours to study this reef off the Firth of Tay, eleven miles from the Port of Arbroath.

I later wrote in my journal 'I am sure no one was fonder of his own work than I was till I saw the Bell Rock.' Until boarding that slimy demon I had passing thoughts of stationing a light vessel off the reef or of constructing a beacon on cast iron pillars. The rock spoke for itself...and of the folly of my thoughts. The heavy swell made it all too evident that a light vessel would, in a heavy sea, part its mooring and be dashed on the very reef it was stationed to guard ships from. The use of cast iron pillars in support of a structure would never resist the seas rolling over the rock. I wrote they would have trembled like 'the baseless fabrick of a dream.' But I was confident that a tower of stone could be constructed on Bell Rock...and I knew well that it would be several years before this become a reality.

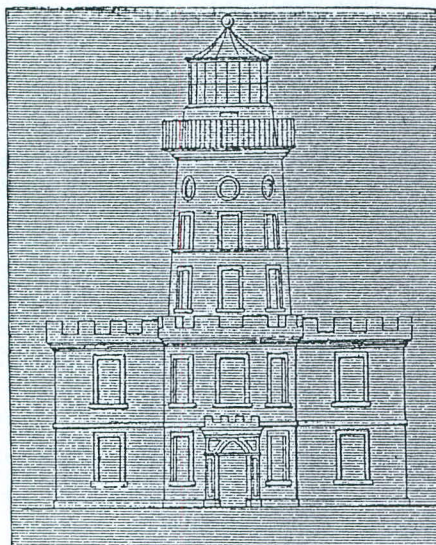
In the meantime I had my work cut out for me. I was still learning and then there were repairs to be made at Eilean Glas, supplies to be landed at existing stations, and new lighthouse sites to be surveyed at Start Point, Burwick Bay and Rattray Briggs.

In 1802 I was successful in convincing the Trust that it would be beneficial to tour the lighthouses of England to gain insight into other opera-



Above—One of Robert Stevenson's initial designs for a lighthouse on Bell Rock which he realized, if built, would have trembled like the "baseless fabrick of a dream."

Below—The Inchkeith lighthouse designed by Thomas Smith but the first lighthouse for which Robert Stevenson was solely responsible for constructing. He finished the structure in 1804.



tions and designs. There were very few treatises on the subject in those early days and certainly no standard designs of even the relatively new reflector systems; some of the English lights still employed coal fires (St. Bees as an example). My odyssey covered 2,500 miles and during that time I visited 14 lighthouses and several minor harbor lights. I saw all manner of arrangements, some extremely crude. I was amazed at the 13 foot diameter reflector at Bidston Hill (Keep'—near Liverpool) which had a wick that consumed a gallon of oil in four hours, THAT wasn't designed by a Scotsman! And, I was appalled at the construction of St. David's Head in West Wales: a small 15 foot diameter wooden cabin supported by nine oak pillars sunk into the seabed. The 24 year old structure appeared ready to collapse and I for one would certainly not have boarded that facility if anything but smooth seas were running. The three keepers, speaking Welsh which I had an embarrassingly difficult time understanding, seemed to say that the number of legs supporting the structure varied from year to year and that their only means of summoning help was via a note in a bottle.

Some of the English lights were better than anything in Scotland and I was quite impressed with the Argand lamp with its glass chimney and hollow wick. And I definitely favored the silvered parabolic reflector over the crude and difficult to produce mirror glass we were using. All in all, a very successful trip which was reported to the Trust in some detail.

In 1802 I finished the Start Point Lighthouse on Sanday in the Orkney islands and I must relate the oppressive gloom cast by the locals. Like the Cornish wreckers, the Orkney people benefited from the spoils tossed ashore from ship wrecks—they did not take kindly to our attempt to prevent same. I wrote to Jane, 'You would hardly believe with what evil eye the wreck-brokers of Sanday viewed any improvements along the coast and they openly regretted them.'

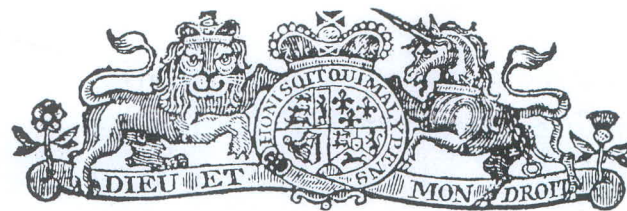
I was learning all the time, not only new construction techniques but about people—the crews of vessels, my

workmen and the people of the different areas where we constructed our new lighthouses. The first lighthouse for which I was solely responsible was that at Inchkeith, in the Firth of Forth. This was exciting as it was my first but also because it allowed me to use knowledge that I had gleaned during my travels in England. I ordered Argand lamps and reflectors and employed metal instead of wood in construction of the lantern room...and the cost was five times what father would have spent (5,000 Pds. compared to 1,000 Pds.) But my structure was more comfortable and required less repairs and the lamps gave a far brighter light. It was during this year, 1803, that my lovely wife bore me twins named Thomas and Elizabeth. Father, delighted by this turn of events gave us a floor in a tenement building he had recently erected in Edinburgh at the foot of Carlton Hill.

I learned that the Commissioners of the Trust had been unsuccessful in their attempt to obtain funds from Parliament for the lighthouse, due to the objections of a member from London. But they were apparently undaunted because they made it clear they supported such a venture...and they were not convinced that a stone structure could be built on a rock that was 12 feet under water at high tide. I wrote to the Lord Advocate 'I wish one of two things were in my power, either to have an opportunity to show his Lordship that Rock upon the spot—or that it suited my finances to erect 10 or 15 feet of such a building before making any call upon the C's for money, in either way I should be able to convince them there is not the difficulty which is at first imagined.... and I wrote father 'I am sorry the doubt remains about the possibility of a stone building...'

I set off again on *Pharos*, that summer, to inspect and survey the rock. I wrote in my journal that 'the more I see of this Rock the less I think of the difficulty I at first conceived of erecting a building of stone upon it.' I was excited, and confident that it could be done.

As fodder for thought I mentioned in my annual report to the Commissioners that a temporary wooden structure could be erected on



ANNO QUADRAGESIMO SEXTO

GEORGI II. REGIS.

C A P. CXXXII.

An Act for erecting a Light House on the *Bell or Cape Rock*, on the Eastern Coast of *Scotland*, and for enabling the Commissioners of the Treasury to advance a certain Sum of Money out of the Consolidated Fund of *Great Britain*, towards that Purpose. [21st July 1806.]

WHEREAS by an Act, made in the Twenty-sixth Year of His present Majesty's Reign, intituled, *An Act for erecting certain Light Houses in the Northern Parts of Great Britain*, His Majesty's Advocate and Solicitor General, the Lord Provost and Eldest Baillie of *Edinburgh*, the Lord Provost and Eldest Baillie of *Glasgow*, the Provosts of *Aberdeen*, *Inverness*, and *Campbelton*, the Sheriffs Depute of the Counties of *Edinburgh*, *Lanark*, *Renfrew*, *Bute*, *Argyle*, *Inverness*, *Ross*, *Orkney*, *Caithness*, and *Aberdeen*, for the Time being, or any Five of them, were appointed Commissioners or Trustees for putting the said Act into Execution, and erecting Four Light Houses in the Northern Parts of *Great Britain*; One at *Kinnaird's Head* in the County of *Aberdeen*; One on the Island of *North Ronaldshaw* in the *Orkneys*; One on the Point of *Scalpa* in the Island of *Kernies*; and the Fourth on the *Mull of Cantyre*; and certain Duties were thereby granted for answering the Expences of making the Works, and the Commissioners were thereby empowered to borrow Money on the Credit of the Duties, and if any Surplus should remain after the Payments therein directed to be made, and necessary Expenditure, the same was once in every Year to be vested in some one or other of the Publick Funds of the Kingdom, until the Yearly Interest of the same should amount to a Sum equal to the whole Expence attending the said Light Houses, and then and in that Case, the Sums that should have been theretofore payable by the several Ships and Vessels passing the said Light Houses, should *ipso facto* cease, determine, and be no longer payable: And whereas, by another Act passed in the Twenty eighth Year of His present Majesty's Reign, intituled, *An Act to render more effectual an Act passed in the Twenty-sixth Year of His present Majesty's Reign, intituled, 'An Act for erecting certain Light Houses in the Northern Parts of Great Britain;'* the said Commissioners were authorized to take certain additional Duties, to borrow more Money,

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the rock as the tower was progressing. This would serve as a barracks and workshop for the crew, and at the same time, with a lantern room on top, it could function as a beacon and they could be collecting dues to finance the project while we were at work. I reasoned that

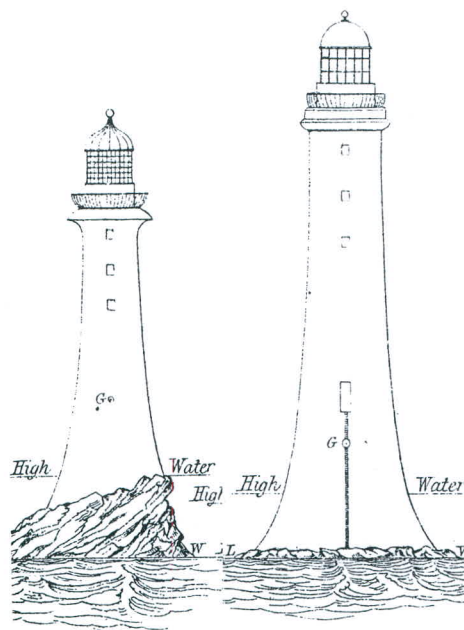
the ability to be right on the Rock waiting for low tide would save considerable time over boating the men to and from shore or even a nearby anchored vessel. As usual the conservative Commissioners had their doubt about this scheme.

In 1804 and '05 I completed my university classes, conducted experiments with lighthouse apparatus and made inspection tours of our lighthouses. Finally, in April of 1806 another Bill was presented to Parliament and after much debate and my cross examination in London, permission was granted to borrow 25,000 Pds toward construction, although a few M.P.'s thought the money would be better spent financing the war against Napoleon.

So, our project was on...rather, my project was on. I was excited and could think of little else. I must admit that I was sorely tempted to copy the design of Smeaton's Eddystone tower. His had now been standing for some 45 years, and it was, after all, the prototype for a wave swept tower. But I thought that the differences of the two sites required a different solution. Perhaps I cherished the conceit to express my own invention. No, Bell Rock was hardly ever dry and Smeaton's tower was almost always above the mean water level, not that the base didn't get a good soaking from wind driven waves. The difference between the Eddystone above water site and the Bell Rock below water site meant that I must construct a taller, and thus, larger tower to provide proper elevation for the light. I also was not enthralled with the floor design. I thought the connection of Smeaton's floors with the walls a weak link.

1807 was a monumental year for me. Baby Alan was born in April, a healthy bairn and good omen. I was most busy with all the necessary preparations. I needed to locate suitable stone and there were few Scottish quarries with blocks as large as I would have liked, but I finally located what I needed at several sites. I chose the small fishing village of Arbroath as a base of operations and leased a work yard for the seven years I thought might be necessary to construct the tower. I needed to arrange for transportation of the stone to the work yard, construct worksheds and a barracks. It was almost amusing to see the surprise?, concern?, curiosity? of the villagers at all this hurly-burly. As huge hills of stone started to reach above thatched roofs, as hundreds of men, some with families, ar-

rived and the constant bustle of arriving goods and people coming and going...it turned a sleepy little fishing village into a veritable bee hive of activity. Certainly it was to the benefit of local businesses and, really, to all concerned...but, they were surprised.



EDDYSTONE BELL ROCK

Once the construction of buildings was underway and the necessary crew began to assemble I turned my thoughts to the temporary light, the one which I promised the Commissioners would allow them to collect light dues whilst we were building the tower. I convinced them to purchase a vessel which would become a floating light [keep'—lightship] until we could erect the wooden temporary beacon. They acquired an 82 ton Prussian fishing boat (seized during the Napoleonic Wars) and renamed it *Pharos* [Keep'—the first *Pharos* was sold in 1805]. She was outfitted for 30 workmen to use as a barracks when not working on the reef, equipped with reflector lamps on her masts and anchored off Bell Rock. The water here, however, was three times deeper than any previous lightship location and I feared she would drag anchor and, possibly, be dashed on the rocks. I had a special mushroom anchor designed that would retard the movement of the vessel should she start to drag anchor [Keep'—this design became the standard for lightship anchors]. It worked, as *Pharos* only once broke away during five years.

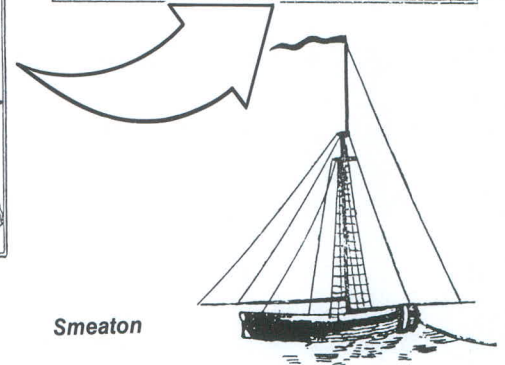
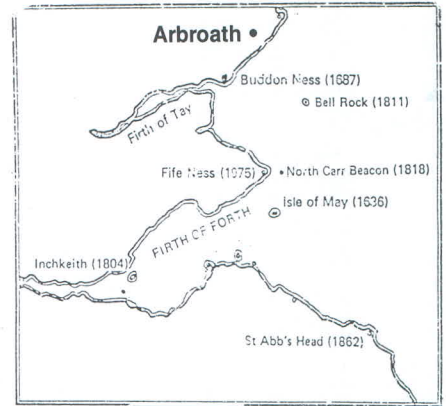
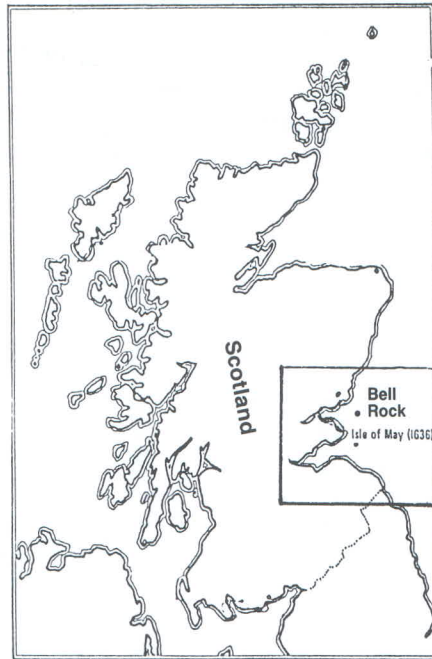
Another large item of business I had to attend to was the procurement of a supply boat, one suitable to bring the



dressed stone eleven miles out to the rock from Arbroath and to ferry the men from the rock to the *Pharos* when the tide came inundating the building site. I had a 40 ton sloop constructed to my specifications and named her *Smeaton* in deference to that great English lighthouse architect. I had individual templates made for every stone that was to be fashioned for the tower and personally went over the design of each with my foreman mason. I explained to him the utter importance of the stones being cut exactly to the templates. The tower tapered and thus each course, or tier, of the tower would be different from the one below and above, yet all had to marry together: dovetails of one block fitting into the respective cavities of the next, like a three dimensional jigsaw puzzle. Then too, holes for wedges and trenails between the blocks also had to align perfectly. I impressed upon him and the leading workmen that one ill cut block could hold up the works for months. We not only had to contend with the tide twice each day, but we had a limited working season and even in that season weather could deny us access to the rock.

And yet, all of this was just a fraction of the details needing attention. One had to schedule shore leave, providing for working clothes and tools, prepare and provide wages in a timely manner, supply the men on the *Pharos* with food and alcohol...all this required scores of hand-written letters and a great deal of thought to ensure all aspects were covered. And finally, one in my position had to be a father figure: congratulating a worker on his recent marriage, ensure others that all safe measures (that were possible) would be taken, and tend to the seasick. Yes, it was more than just designing a lighthouse.

Finally, on August 17, 1807 all was ready, and I wrote: "The tide happened to be falling late in the evening of Monday the 17th, the party, counting 24 in number, embarked on board of the *Smeaton* about ten o'clock p.m. and sailed from Arbroath with a gentle breeze at west. Our ship's colours having been flying all day in compliment to the commencement of the work, the



other vessels in the harbour also saluted, which made a very gay appearance. A number of the friends and acquaintances of those on board having been thus collected, the piers, though at a late hour, were perfectly crowded, and just as *Smeaton* cleared the harbour, all on board united in giving three hearty cheers, which were returned by those on shore in such good earnest, that, in the still of the evening, the sound must have been heard in all parts of the town, echoing from the walls and lofty turrets of the venerable Abbey of Aberbrothwick."

We landed our party, that first work day on the rock, without incident and began, immediately, to bore holes for the legs of the temporary wooden beacon, which would also serve as a barracks and work platform. Prior to leaving the rock the first day I allowed time for the men to explore it and become, if that was possible, familiar with the terrain and to take away what they might find interesting. Several found belt and shoe buckles and coins from ship wrecks past; others took limpets for use as fishing bait when on *Pharos* and some picked dulse (*fucus palmatus*) which they ate with relish...and I discovered tended to assuage those with a penchant for seasickness.

Early on we selected a location for the smith's forge. Although he had to remove the bellows and certain other items from the rock at each change of tide, we were able to chain the large metal forge and anvil to the rock so that it would stay in place when 12 feet of water covered the site. As the tide crept in and if the seas were anything but glassy smooth, the Smith was often surprised in the middle of sharpening some tool or making an implement, and having his fire just so, by a rolling wave that slithered over the rock, striking his forge and dashing out his fire. But, if the sea was smooth and the smith could often be seen, knee deep in water, as the tide ever steadily rose, coaxing fire on, attempting to strike just a few more blows before the cold water extinguished his fire.

I often wonder what our party must have appeared to be to some unknowing passing ship when we worked on the rock in dark hours. Bellows of smoke from the forge, a gang of men clanging pick ax on rock and blazing torches casting an eerie glow on the scene. Perhaps a sailor or two thought that he had steered the wrong course and was approaching the river Styx, the entrance to Hades.

I had the *Smeaton* anchored a half mile off the rock which greatly facilitated our access to the rock. But being only 40 tons it was a very cramped situation for providing for 24 men. As our labours were rigorous and the men worked hard at their chores, I provided each day hearty rations per man: 1½ lbs. of beef, one lb. of ship biscuit, 8 oz. of oatmeal, 2 oz. of barley, 2 oz. butter, 3 qts. of beer, vegetables and salt...they got, with this, into excellent spirits. The first Saturday of the month a ration of rum and water was allotted to all hands, we drank a toast to 'wives and sweethearts' and when the musical instruments were brought out, each man played a tune, told a tale or sang a song. The next day, being Sunday, proper services were held on the fantail. It was with great deftness that I managed to convince most of the crew that it would be, in the Lord's eyes, satisfactory to work on the Sabbath. I reasoned that the sooner the tower was complete and lighted, the sooner lives would be spared from a watery grave. I certainly understood the reluctance to this practice but...time and tide wait for no man and our season was short and the weather unpredictable. All save four masons followed me to the rock.

In two weeks the site of the tower had been traced out and workmen were busy excavating the rock to take the first course of the tower. Work was progressing well and I had high hopes that the wooden temporary beacon would be erected by season's end.

On the 2nd of September a particularly gusty wind blew up and some of the crew took one of the boats to check out *Smeaton*. Sometime later I looked toward the *Smeaton* and realized that she had parted her cable and that she and the boat that had departed the rock to check on her were a good three miles to leeward...and the tide was coming in! I quickly calculated that the rock would be long under 12 feet of water before they could reach us.

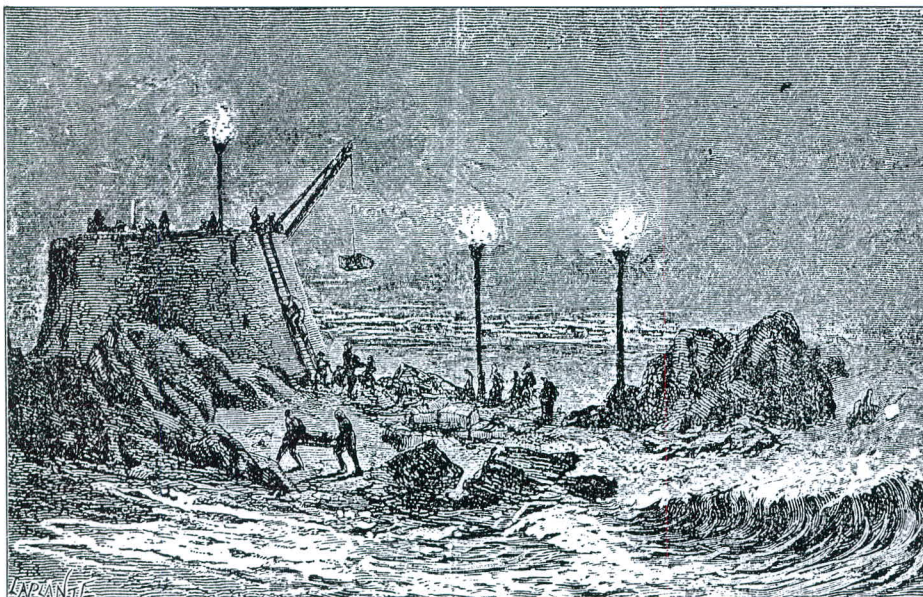
My stomach felt like a lead ball and a flash of weakness overtook me as I soon realized our predicament, my breath caught up short...I was stunned...I felt despair as I have never felt before or since, knowing for certain not all of the crew could survive.

Usually one of the three boats had to make a second trip to transport all the men from *Smeaton* to the rock or vice versa, and the *Smeaton* was close by our work site. Now we had two and there was no way that we could reach the drifting *Smeaton* and return against the wind and current to take a second load; no, the work site would be a long under water before that could happen. Similarly, weather conditions made it impossible for the boats to go the other way and transport men to the *Pharos*. Perhaps, I calculated, with eight men to a boat we could make *Pharos*, with some difficulty, but that would leave 16 artificers on the rock, and certain doom.

I moved to a higher elevation and pondered the situation, perhaps, I thought, with eight men in each boat and eight hanging on the sides, in the water...if it didn't get too rough and we rowed to leeward, towards *Smeaton*...there might be a chance. But, then, the water was bitterly cold and as most of the men did not know how to swim, if any in the water should lose a grip...well, that would be the end of it. I also thought, the instinct for survival being what it was, there might well be a scuffle for a place in one of the boats.

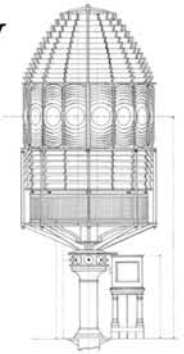
While thoughts raced through my mind, the clanging of the anvil resounded over the rock. Most of the workers were still at work, sitting or kneeling excavating the rock, oblivious to the danger at hand. Then the run of the sea upon the rock extinguished the smith's fire...sooner than usual today and, as usual, the sound and great billows of steam signaled the end of the work period. For the most part the men ceased work and began to make toward their respective workboats, jackets and stocking caps in hand, joking and bantering as they walked. Then the steam cleared and all was quite visible in every direction and silence fell upon the Bell Rock. They all, almost as a body, realized not only that there were only two boats, but in a trice, realized the gravity of the situation. And, as one, they turned to me, where I was standing on high ground checking the progress of *Smeaton* heading our way but too far off to arrive in time. I was perplexed that the crew now on *Smeaton* chose to continue to tow the work boat which was, in the strong current, greatly retarding *Smeaton's* way. The men looked at me, stared...waiting for the solution from the lips of their leader. I was about to impart my thoughts about stripping of upper clothing and hanging on the gunwales, I found that I could not speak, so parched was my mouth and tongue. I turned to one of the pools of seawater on the rock to gain moisture, so that I might address those 32 men, whose eyes were riveted upon me.

(Continued in the Summer Log)





Join the U.S. Lighthouse Society Today or Give the Gift of Membership!



Restoration & Preservation



Thomas Point Shoal Lighthouse, MD

The U.S. Lighthouse Society has donated to many lighthouse preservation projects throughout the U.S. Most recently we were honored by being presented with the Preserve America Stewardship Award from The White House for our restoration work at Thomas Point Shoal Lighthouse.

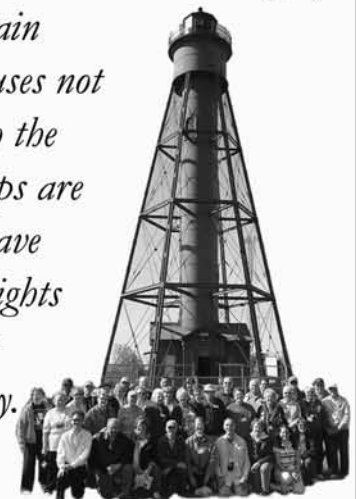
Help Support Our Important Mission!

Education



The Keeper's Log magazine is the only one of its kind and has been published quarterly since 1984. Receive this award-winning publication as a benefit of membership.

The Society organizes domestic and international lighthouse tours. Many of our excursions gain access to lighthouses not normally open to the public. These trips are a great way to have fun, see lots of lights and learn about lighthouse history.



Tincum Lighthouse, NJ

*To learn more visit
www.uslhs.org
or
call Headquarters at
415-362-7255*