



Stargazing, *Memoirs of a Young Lighthouse Keeper*

By Peter Hill

The year is 1973, and our nation is embroiled in the Viet Nam debate, the tragedy at Kent State and the Watergate Hearings. In Scotland a young first year art student is accepted as a summer replacement lighthouse keeper. The newly discovered North Sea oil fields have lured able-bodied Scottish lighthouse keepers to more lucrative employment. The Northern Lighthouse Board is desperate, so desperate that they would trust the care of their revered lighthouses to the care of a college art student with hair brushing his shoulders.

This wonderfully written summer odyssey is told in the first person. Peter Hill's memory of that unusual and, to him, delightful summer skips along, laced with humor and detailed accounts of what the real keepers were like in that era – with automation breathing down the necks of those crusty keepers whose jobs are about to be made redundant.

Young Peter is taken under the wing of several old time keepers. He not only learns the ropes of running the lighthouse along on the mid watch, but also is made a successful cook having to take his turn preparing meals for the four keepers of the station.

Peter meets several characters on the three lights to which he is assigned during that summer of 1973. He interacts with the keepers as they train him, relate sea stories from the good ol' days and comment on world events such as Watergate and the Viet Nam War.

This charming book skips along, an easy read, and one that really tells the reader just what keeping a lighthouse was all about in the years shortly before automation. A wonderful read!

Author Hill ends his book, "... The stories kept tumbling out. And it was only then that I realized that the profession of lighthouse keeper was perhaps the only one that paid you to tell stories. Stories to keep your colleagues awake at night so they could turn the light and start a new watch. I wanted to collect those stories like a beekeeper collects honey..."

Soft cover, 5-1/2 x 8 inches, 275 pages. The book hasn't been released in the U.S. yet but can be preordered on the www.Amazon.com website priced at \$16.80. They will ship it when it arrives.

Burnside's amphibious campaign into North Carolina was one of the initial successes during the early part of the Civil War. Part of his strategy was to ensure that the rebels didn't destroy the lighthouse towers on the Outer Banks. An overall discussion of the South's treatment of many of the lighthouses under the Confederate Lighthouse Service is discussed and the disposition of the lenses removed from the towers is explained and many of the myths debunked.

The U.S. Lighthouse Service not only wanted to relight the southern towers during the Civil War, but also to recover the various lenses that have been removed by the rebels. Generals were instructed to find the lenses, especially the valuable 1st order from Cape Hatteras. As the North closed in on the lens's location, it disappeared, just out of the grasp



The Pladda Lighthouse, Scotland. Peter Hill's first lighthouse. Photo courtesy of English Lighthouse keeper John Mobbs, May 1989.

The Lost Light – The Mystery of the Missing Cape Hatteras Lens

By Kevin Duffus

This extraordinary book is a most enjoyable read and hard to put down. Not only is it well written, but very well researched as evidenced by the eleven pages of footnotes.

Although the history of the 1st order lens and its voyage during the Civil War is a story in itself, the book also details the history of the Cape Hatteras Light Station and the towers that served that station. Author Duffus brings alive the struggle between the North and South on the Outer Banks – battles, strategy and lighthouses. The North's General

of General Sherman's troops and others during the on-going conflict. Woven into the story are characters who were instrumental in keeping the lens away from the Yankees and who appear again and again throughout the book – fascinating! Also, a link between the various keepers at the Cape Hatteras Light Station over the years is traced.

The book is so well written that even the Forward and Prologue are interesting. Included are a smattering of historical photographs and drawings. This is an outstanding read. If you are interested in Civil War history, as well as lighthouses, this is the book for you.

Soft cover, 6" by 9," 238 pages with black and white photos and illustrations. \$29.95

Lighthouses of Australia, A Visitors Guide

By John Ibbotson

John Ibbotson has released another terrific guide to Australia's lighthouses. A few years ago author Ibbotson published a beautiful coffee table book on Australian lighthouses called *Lighthouses of Australia, Images from the End of an Era*. It is a meaty volume packed with beautiful photographs and a lot of information. Now he has produced a handy guide to over 150 lighthouses.

The eight sections of the book relate to eight areas of the continent and the edges of the pages are color-coded to help one locate a specific geographical area. Lighthouses in each area are individually described, including a location map and directions on reaching it and the visiting hours, if applicable. Commercial and charter operator names and contact numbers are included for many and costs mentioned (although may change over time). If the light station offers overnight accommodation, that is mentioned. The index area contains over 100 different definitions and facts about lighthouses.

If you are going "Down Under" to visit lighthouses, this guide is a must.

Hard cover, 8.3" by 6.3", 264 pages, 180 stunning color photographs. Price \$40US, plus shipping. Phone from the U.S.: 011-61-03-9809-5474 or 011-61-0412-165-262 or visit John's site, Australian Lighthouse Traders, at WWW.lighthouses.com.au.

Safely to Shore (America's Lighthouses)

By Iris Van Rynbach

We were recently sent a nifty children's book on lighthouses. It's nicely illustrated with childlike watercolors. The book provides a brief, and accurate, history of 21 lighthouses representing all the areas of the country and one Life Saving Service station.

This is the perfect book to get that toddler interested in our nation's lighthouses.

Soft cover, 8-1/2 by 11 inches, 32 pages, full color. You may order this from Charlesbridge Publishing, 85 Maine St., Watertown, MA 02472. It's only \$6.95 plus shipping.

