Casquets Lighthouse

(Rocks 13 km Northwest of Alderney)
History

About 1722, the owners of ships passing certain dangerous "Rocks called the Casketts" off Alderney in the Channel Islands, applied to Thomas Le Cocq, the proprietor of the Rocks, to build a lighthouse and offered him ½d. per ton when vessels passed the light. Le Cocq approached Trinity House and a patent was obtained on 3rd June, 1723.

Trinity House decided that a light of particular character to distinguish it from those on the opposite shores of England and France was needed. Three separate lights in the form of a horizontal triangle were proposed, and three towers containing closed fires, i.e. coal fires burning in glazed lanterns were erected. These three lights called, St Peter, St Thomas and Dungeon were first exhibited on 30th October, 1724.

The lease granted to Le Cocq by Trinity House lasted for 61 years at a rent of £50 per annum. The three Casquets lights reverted to Trinity House (in 1785) and were converted to metal reflectors and Argand lamps on 25th November, 1790; a revolving apparatus was fitted to each tower at the Casquets in 1818, and the three towers were raised by 30ft in 1854.

The Casquets Lighthouse and rocks have been the scene of many shipping disasters, among them the SS STELLA in 1899 with a loss of 112 lives and the British Man O'War VICTORY in 1744 with a complement of 1,100.

The three original towers at the Casquets are still in use, although only the North West Tower still exhibits a light. The East Tower contains fog-signal equipment and a helideck is mounted on the third tower.

Casquets Lighthouse was converted to automatic operation in November, 1990 and is now monitored from the Trinity House Operations and Planning Centre in Harwich.