Northern Lighthouse Board

Serving the Mariner since 1786

Journal

Summer 2026

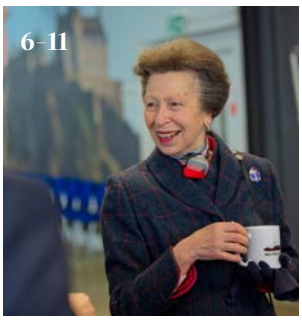


POLE STAR Naming Ceremony

Journal

SUMMER 2026 | ISSUE NUMBER 128













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Welcome from Mike Bullock

CHIEF EXECUTIVE



From the outset of this article I seek your forbearance on the same basis you would tolerate an excited first time parent, who seems to think that fatherhood is an entirely novel experience...

The arrival of POLE STAR into Oban on 25 December, accompanied by our friends from the RNLI, and against the backdrop of a completely clear and azure blue sky, was an emotional experience – even if viewed on a mobile phone, hundreds of miles away. Possibly the best Christmas present ever!

Similarly the Naming Ceremony in Leith on 21 January was nothing short of joyful. Endless planning went into the preparations. This was truly a team effort not only by NLB, but also in partnership with Forth Ports, Port of Leith Distillery, East Coast Catering, Police Scotland, Buckingham Palace, Edinburgh College and of course our piper and former Commissioner, Lord Colbeck who provided the music.

On the actual day the meticulous planning paid off – everything went perfectly (not least the expertly designed contraption to break the whisky bottle at the right moment). And looking back at the video of the day (which is available on NLB's YouTube channel) the genuine pride and happiness on everyone's faces is tangible. If you haven't seen it, take a look, and you will know exactly what I mean. Obviously, and for the record, my wedding was the best day ever, however this has to be a very close runner up!

Like any new vessel, there have been a number of engineering challenges to iron out but I am delighted to report that these are largely behind us and POLE STAR is proving to be everything we hoped for, and more.

We are now turning our attention to the replacement of PHAROS. We have had the first Project Board, work on the detailed requirements and specification has commenced and the Governance Board have confirmed that the new vessel will be called PHAROS. This will be the eleventh vessel to hold the name. Although there is a great deal of work to do between now and the expected in service date of 2032, NLB's proven track record at delivering successful projects gives me every confidence that we will receive the helicopter capable vessel we need to deliver our vital safety service.

And talking of helicopters, NLB has been leading the work on the Aviation Services Project on behalf of both Trinity House and NLB. The new contract will be awarded this summer and will take over from the current arrangements with effect from 1 December 2027. The new contract will give us more available days to overcome the challenge of increased incidence of extreme weather due to climate change.

We started the year with a very multinational flavour when in early February we welcomed over 70 delegates from 26 nations into 84 George Street. The event was a week long workshop on Future Radionavigation and Radiocommunication Systems on behalf of IALA (International Organization for Marine Aid to Navigation). This was another exacting test of the NLB team's organising skills, adaptability, patience and creativity. I have absolutely no doubt that in addition to stimulating technical discussions, everyone had an enjoyable time and a very positive and memorable Scottish experience (including haggis, Rabbie Burns, bagpipes, whisky, tablet, Irn Bru and of course Tunnock's tea cakes and wafers).

In February we heard the sad news about the death of Davie Ferguson our Retained Lighthtkeeper (RLK) for Ardnamurchan. Davie was literally a leading light in his community. And in March the sad news about the death of Hector Lamont MBE, the final Principal Lightkeeper (PLK) of Mull of Kintyre. I was privileged to be able to attend both funerals to represent NLB. Inevitably over the last six months we received other sad news which is recorded at the end of this publication.

The campaign to spread the word about NLB's work continues. We have had numerous visitors including the new Chair of the Lights Advisory Committee, Department for Transport's Maritime Resilience Team and the Consul General for Japan. We have also hosted meetings for the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, Scottish Maritime Cluster, Transport Scotland Ferries and Ports Directorate, Women's International Shipping and Trading Association. Externally presentations have been delivered from Perth to Girvan, and we hosted a visit to 84 George Street for Leith Women's Institute.

I have only scratched the surface of what has taken place over the last six months, but the pages that follow will fill in at least a few of the gaps. Every article illustrates, in one way or another, the professionalism, innovation and skill of the NLB team – I hope you enjoy reading it.

Finally, as I have recently hung out my first line of washing of 2026, I am pretty certain summer isn't too far away. May I wish all of you a warm and relaxing summer and thank you for your continued support to NLB.

MIKE BULLOCK

OUR MISSION:

"To deliver, in the most sustainable way practicable, a reliable, efficient, cost-effective and resilient Aids to Navigation service for the benefit and safety of all Mariners"

Northern Lighthouse Board

COMMISSIONERS OF NORTHERN LIGHTHOUSES
(As at 1 April 2026)

Hugh Shaw (Chair)
Elected by the Commissioners

Commodore Brian Archibald (Vice Chair)
Elected by the Commissioners

The Rt Hon Dorothy Bain KC
Lord Advocate

Ruth Charteris KC
Solicitor General of Scotland

Sheriff Principal Kate Dowdalls KC
Sheriff Principal of
South Strathclyde, Dumfries and Galloway

Sheriff Principal Gillian Wade KC
Sheriff Principal of Tayside, Central and Fife

Sheriff Principal Sean Murphy KC
Sheriff Principal of North Strathclyde

Sheriff Principal Andrew Miller
Sheriff Principal of
Grampian, Highlands and Islands

Sheriff Principal Nigel Ross
Sheriff Principal of Lothian and Borders

Sheriff Principal Aisha Anwar
Sheriff Principal of Glasgow and Strathkelvin

Dick Welsh
Nominated by the Lieutenant Governor of Isle of Man
and appointed by the Secretary of State

Captain Jamie Finlay
Elected by the Commissioners

Ron Robson
Appointed by the UK Secretary of State for Transport

Fiona Larkin
Appointed by the Scottish Government
Cabinet Secretary for Transport

Councillor Robert Aldridge
The Rt Hon The Lord Provost of Edinburgh

Councillor Jacqueline McLaren
The Rt Hon The Lord Provost of Glasgow

Councillor David Cameron
Lord Provost of Aberdeen

Councillor Bill Lobban
Convenor of Highland Council

Councillor Dougie Philand
Provost of the Council of Argyll and Bute

"In Salutem Omnium"
For the Safety of All



Hugh Shaw

CHAIR'S MESSAGE

Since my last message much has changed globally and within NLB. The conflict in Ukraine continues into its fifth year and a few months ago war in the Middle East escalated and spread across many countries in the region. As I write this, the Strait of Hormuz is blockaded stranding seafarers and the safe passage of shipping that would normally be transporting roughly 20% of global oil and LNG. Energy prices, supply chains and financial markets are impacted and this affects us all.

Sadly, the human toll also continues. As ship and aviation fuel prices escalate and supply chains are being stretched, I am however confident that the resilience planning and preparation within NLB will continue to ensure that we meet our risk response statutory duties in the waters around Scotland and the Isle of Man.

Our replacement vessel POLE STAR arrived in Oban on Christmas Day 2025, escorted into the bay by the Oban Lifeboat. As the fifth vessel to bear this name since 1892, she was then officially named by HRH The Princess Royal on 21 January 2026, in her port of registry at Leith. Those fortunate enough to attend the ceremony, and go onboard the vessel, should have been left in no doubt that the vessel is a step change in NLB's journey towards greater sustainability and will be more energy efficient than her predecessors.

I personally have been amazed to see what has been achieved with a relatively small but fantastic project team, supported by the wider organisation. I should also add that over £1million was saved on the fixed price contract!

Although several years away, work is underway on the PHAROS replacement project and inaugural meetings of the Project Board and working groups have taken place.

The NLB led Aviation Services Project (ASP) to replace the existing helicopter contract continues to make good progress. Pending final approval from the DfT, the contract may be awarded to the successful bidder in July 2026 for an operational start date towards the end of 2027.

With respect to governance, we will be seeing two changes this year. The GLA Joint Strategic Board (JSB) formally established in 2010, has been revised and will now be Chaired by DfT. Membership has been widened to include the Lights Advisory Committee (LAC), Safety Policy and Risk and Assurance representatives. Its primary purpose is to promote strategic understanding and where appropriate alignment, efficiency and benchmarking and to oversee long-term collaboration and planning.

The other significant change will be the introduction of a DfT / NLB Sponsorship Board. Unlike the JSB which is Tri-GLA, each GLA will have their individual Sponsorship Board with their supporting department. The Board's remit will include ensuring accountability, strategic alignment, and efficient service delivery. More importantly, it is an opportunity to focus on forging stronger and trusting relationships between the relevant individuals at all levels of the ALB and the department.

Whilst I welcome both 'changes', I do recognise the additional workload that will be placed on many, on top of the other significant challenges that you are dealing with today.

The definition of resilience is to recover quickly from difficulties, and I believe it is a word that best describes the world we are living in today. NLB's true strength which enables us to tackle any challenge, no matter how difficult, are the people who make up the organisation. Whether it be our mariners, or shore based teams, it is your talent, creativity, enthusiasm, professionalism, hard work and pride that make NLB better – and leaders in all that we do.

Thank you! I greatly appreciate your support and hope that you have an enjoyable summer.

HUGH SHAW

Emergency Casualty Rescue

Billy Byrne, HS&E Manager

NLB has been working with HM Coastguard Rescue Teams in Scotland to undertake casualty rescue exercises from lighthouses for over a decade. During this time a number of training exercises have taken place at Tiumpan Head, Butt Of Lewis, Ardnamurchan, Buchan Ness, and Eilean Glas with the HM Coastguard search and rescue helicopter.

Different HM Coastguard operational team areas and staff have also been involved, with Richard Morgans, Senior Coastal Operations Officer, undertaking the last rescue exercise at Mull of Galloway in May 2025.

Until recently, no rescue exercises had been carried out with the Coastguard on the Isle of Man (IoM). This changed when Kevin Scott from the IoM Coastguard contacted NLB Navigation Manager, Peter Douglas.

Following this, Kevin undertook scoping visits to Douglas Head and Langness lighthouses, accompanied by Fred Fox, NLB Retained Lighthouse Keeper (RLK), to better understand the different lighthouse layouts and how a casualty rescue exercise could be effectively facilitated.

In parallel, there was ongoing dialogue with Murdo Macaulay from HM Coastguard to gain further insight into casualty rescue training within lighthouse environments. The enthusiasm from Murdo to carry out a lighthouse rescue training exercise was infectious. A joint HM Coastguard and Isle of Man Coastguard exercise was subsequently arranged for a Scottish lighthouse. This would provide an opportunity to share lessons learned and best practice from previous training exercises with NLB.



NLB/Coastguard Team Photo
Back Row left to right: Joe Jeffrey, Karen Ross, Ruairidh Macrae, Colin Laing, Kevin Scott, Murdo Macaulay, Andy Mulhern, Ron Maclean.
Front Row: Keith Parrish, Michael Burley, Colin Smith

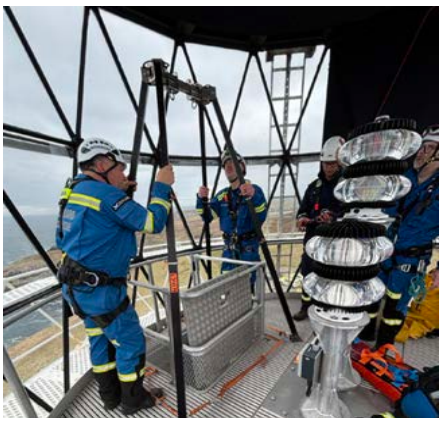
Tiumpan Head

The exercise took place at Tiumpan Head on 7 May. The design and structure of this lighthouse, with its open core staircase and mirrored interior – features common to many NLB towers – made it an ideal location. It effectively represented the key characteristics found across the wider NLB lighthouse estate.

The team practiced a range of scenarios for rescuing a casualty which gave everyone a chance to hone and enhance their knowledge and skills.

When casualty rescue training exercises first took place, it took over 2 hours to get a casualty from the top of a lighthouse to the entry door. Regular training exercises have reduced that time to safely carry out the rescue in under 20 minutes.

Tiumpan Head was where the very first casualty rescue training exercise took place with HM Coastguard. It was therefore fitting that we returned to this lighthouse with both HM and IoM Coastguard teams. This meant that all NLB operational areas had been covered by the relevant Coastguard Teams.

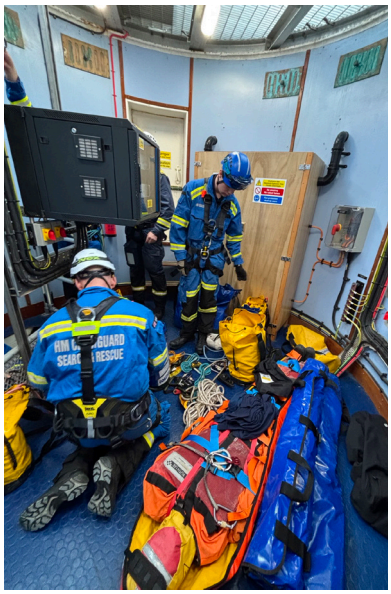


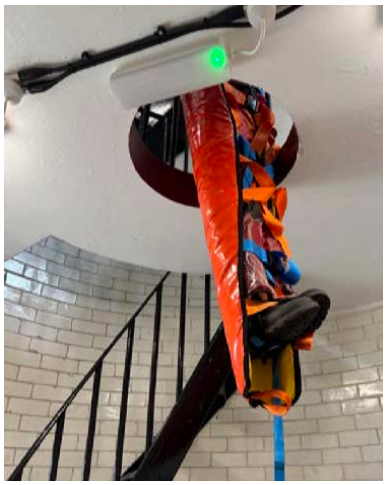
NLB staff who visit lighthouses undertake specialist working at height training. This includes casualty rescue techniques but in the event of a more complex emergency situation, it's reassuring that both HM and IoM Coastguards are trained and ready to help.

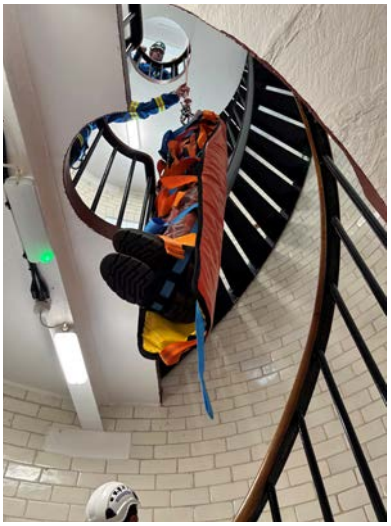
These joint training exercises would not have gathered momentum without the initial action of NLB's Peter Fleming (now retired) and HM Coastguard's Murdo Macaulay, Coastal Operations Area Commander for the Western Isles, Skye and Lochaber, and his colleagues Ron Maclean and Dave Smith. Both are based in Clan Macquarrie House in Stornoway on the Isle of Lewis.

NLB is delighted to have collaborated with both HM Coastguard and Isle of Man Coastguard on this initiative. It is a strong example of government organisations working together in partnership to enhance safety and operational readiness.









Site Visits

In April, NLB's Delivery & Planning Manager Joe Jeffrey, and I joined RLK Johnny Dobson to walk out to McArthurs Head lighthouse on Islay. The purpose of our visit was to assess the route and determine whether it would be suitable for access on foot.

Thankfully, on the day the weather was kind to us which made the walk out to the lighthouse more enjoyable. The walk took over 2 hours but on reflection part of the route to access the lighthouse, particularly on the last leg, wasn't great.

The safety of NLB staff remains our top priority. On this occasion, we decided that, as part of the RLK's duties, McArthur's Head should not be routinely accessed on foot.



Johnny Dobson and Joe Jeffrey at McArthur's Head Lighthouse

During May, Joe Jeffrey and HS&E Advisors Keith Parrish and Derek Main, pictured below, visited Eilean Glas lighthouse, on the Isle of Scalpay. They undertook a spot check inspection of the lighthouse and while every day is a good day at NLB the sun shining and fantastic scenery made it even better!



Christmas Day Arrival for POLE STAR

Our new vessel POLE STAR arrived into Oban on Christmas Day after a 3 day journey sailing from Spain. A huge thank you to Oban Lifeboat crew who made sure the vessel received a spectacular welcome



"It was a brilliant feeling to sail our new vessel into Oban Bay, and to be escorted in by the Oban Lifeboat crew is the best Christmas present we could have wished for.

"We left Gijon in Spain on 22 December, and the vessel has proved to be excellent. We experienced some rough weather for the first 12 hours of the passage in Biscay, then again some rough wind waves as we approached Bishop Rock in the Isles of Scilly, but the ship dealt with this very well."

Master Chris Somerville

The Naming Ceremony

POLE STAR was officially named by our Patron HRH The Princess Royal at a special ceremony at Forth Ports Cruise Terminal in Leith on Wednesday 21 January 2026.

















It is a great pleasure to be with you today as we celebrate this new chapter in the history of the Northern Lighthouse Board, and officially welcome POLE STAR into the NLB Family.

As the fifth vessel to bear the name POLE STAR, the ship will support NLB's vital role in maintaining and managing lighthouses, buoys, and other marine aids to navigation across Scotland and the Isle of Man. She will do this in a more energy efficient way than her predecessors, marking an important step in the organisation's journey towards greater sustainable maritime operations.

I would like to thank everyone at the Northern Lighthouse Board - the mariners, engineers, technicians and all those staff behind the scenes - for keeping our shipping lanes safe and for providing this vital safety service to all seafarers navigating Scottish and Manx waters.

HRH The Princess Royal



Images below from left to right: Mike Bullock delivers his speech; The Princess Royal meets NLB staff; Minister, Rev Dr Iain May delivers the blessing

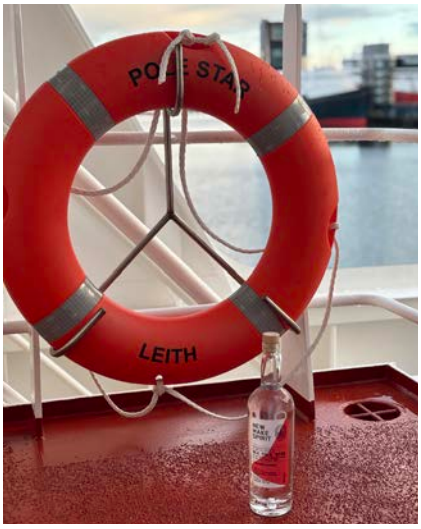














The vessel was christened with a bottle of New Make Whisky, produced by the Port of Leith Distillery.

Principal Mechanical Engineer Ross Russell constructed a brilliant device that made sure the bottle broke on the side of the ship first time.



Our former Commissioner Craig Turnbull is a piper of some considerable talent and renown. Craig composed a special piece of music for the occasion which he played on the bagpipes.









The acceptance into service of POLE STAR is a massive team achievement for NLB. There are few who haven't had a direct hand in this success and I thank each and every one of you. I would also like to thank the UK Department for Transport, Ministers, OSK Design, KPMG, Seaplace and of course GONDAN.

In the words of Captain Alisdair Graham: "We have taken delivery of a beautiful ship. She is everything that we could have hoped for, and GONDAN Shipyard have done themselves proud."

Mike Bullock, Chief Executive

Awards for POLE STAR!

It felt like we had only just taken delivery of POLE STAR when we received the exciting news that the vessel had won two awards.

The first was the Baird Maritime / Work Boat World Award for **Best Large Buoy Tender 2025**. The second was awarded by the Association of Naval and Oceanic Engineers of Spain (AINE), recognising POLE STAR as the **Most Notable Ship or Shipbuilding Project of 2025.**

Technical Superintendent Graham Moffat (pictured, second from left) accepted the AINE award at a special ceremony held in Malaga on 23 April.

Congratulations to OSK Design, Seaplace and GONDAN for the design and construction of our award winning vessel!




SIRTEF
SIRTEF
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Christine's story: Five decades with NLB

Christine Middleton

Christine has worked for the Northern Lighthouse Board for almost 50 years, after spotting an advert for a Clerkess/Typist in the Edinburgh Evening News in the late 1970s. From typewriters and paper-based systems to today's digital world, Christine offers her own perspective on how things have changed.

I was offered the post, and joined what I considered to be quite an old fashioned workplace. The bosses were addressed as "Mr" or in the case of the General Manager "Commander" – never their first name, and men wore suits and ties on a daily basis. Woe betide the new start who would go to see the Engineer-in-Chief without his jacket on – that was almost a sackable offence!

I was lucky to join at a time when a lot of new office and workshop staff were also starting. NLB has always been a good employer and staff stayed a long time so while it sounds like a cliché, we did end up like a family. When we have Pensioner (retired staff) events in HQ nowadays, you would think it's a family wedding! You know everyone who comes in through the door, and hear the same stories time and time again – and still laugh at them.

47 Years in the Same Job!

I admit that to the younger generation, a working life spent in one place would be seen as career suicide. I always say when people ask incredulously – "***you've been in the same job for 47 years***?!" that during my time here, I've served in several different departments and held quite varied roles. I started out as the Office Junior, copy typing and doing the bun run.

I then had a short stint as Secretary to the General Manager, progressing to accounts/payroll clerk. Then followed a varied time working with the GNSS Engineer that saw me attending meetings in glamorous European hotspots. This was followed by my first posting to Engineers as a Database Assistant.

In between jobs, in my spare time, I managed to get married, have a baby and represent NLB on the BBC quiz Eggheads along with team members in the ***Pharos Five*** – and no, we didn't win.



Christine and the NLB Eggheads team

After Engineers, I was promoted to PA to the Director of Marine Operations. Then, after an office re-evaluation, I became Executive Assistant and finally I moved to my present position of Maintenance Systems Assistant back in Engineers. I must be on my second lap of the building by now!

When people ask me what I do (or more likely these days – are you still working?) I take great delight in telling them that not only do we still have lighthouses, but my current role is to make sure the equipment on them is all present and correct.

Ashtrays & Typewriters

So how has life changed at NLB since I started in the 1970s? Well, when I joined it was still common to smoke in the office and ashtrays littered the desks. There was talk of when the office had coal fires in each room, which sounded very Dickensian to me. My office skills improved greatly going from manual typewriters and the old-fashioned Gestetner duplicating machines to electric typewriters and photocopiers. Things moved on even quicker thanks to high tech computers and printers, although they did just about kill off the typists.

> "Woe betide the new start who would go to see the Engineer-in-Chief without his jacket on – that was almost a sackable offence!

Back in the 70s and 80s the Drawing Office was full of large drawing boards that could hide a multitude of sins from the Drawing Office Manager. The payroll figures for each employee were written into large ledgers then given to the Data Processor to be put through the old steam powered computing machine. The thought of a computer on each desk in those days was like science fiction!

I've always been office based, but I somehow managed to join the AIS team on a trip to Belfast. This was to check the AIS on Cairn Ryan was working correctly. In Belfast, I booked into the "most bombed hotel in Europe" but the only thing exploding was my head the next morning after a night on the town with Davie Wilson.

I also got to travel to Norway for the deployment of the first AIS unit on a buoy. This was an incredible experience as it coincided with their National Day. I thought Scots were patriotic, but we have nothing on Norwegians and their national dress! I also had the opportunity to go down the Kiel Canal on a German survey vessel. I don't remember the reason for that – I'm sure there was one – but I do remember it had an honesty bar in the messroom for wine, which was nice.

The Ultimate Away Day

In the 80s and 90s NLB had a thriving Sports and Social Club. There were skittle nights, barbecues and the putting competition in Edinburgh's Princes Street Gardens. As well as evening activities, there was the Golf Outing and the Ladies Trip.

The Ladies Trip was a wee day out, or a jolly as it was known around the office, on one of the ships. The ship would come into Leith or Granton and load us all up early in the morning to take us for a sail down the Forth.

These outings were the ultimate away day. Breakfast was offered as we embarked, then deck chairs put out on the upper deck if it was sunny (along with a small beverage) until lunch, and a trip to a nearby lighthouse in the afternoon. Of course, there were always some ladies who had a raised enjoyment level, and had to disembark in Leith on all fours!

At the end of the 90s, we had the AIMS (Automatic Installation Maintenance & Storing) trips when desk-based staff could apply to join one of the ships, and see how the storing and helicopter work on the lighthouses was carried out. This meant that a typist like myself, who had hardly seen a lighthouse in real life could have a couple of days on PHAROS and visit the lights that were being inspected by the maintenance team.

> This really was something that money couldn't buy. Being flown about the Hebridean islands in the helicopter, jumping into ribs and workboats and experiencing a 'silver service' meal onboard the ship was an incredible experience that I will never forget.













Half a Century of Changes....

Christmas parties – when I joined NLB, you could get very merry for £5 (if you were a member of the Sports and Social Club) and experience a 3-day hangover starting on Christmas Day, as the Office Xmas party was always held on Christmas Eve.

Camaraderie – lots of teams went out to the pub on special occasions, so you got to meet other people in a good atmosphere. This led to office romances – some of which are still going strong today.

Presentation – The 80s and 90s were the age of power dressing for office workers, and no woman was properly dressed without padded shoulders and sky high heels. Now, thanks to the corporate uniform allowance, the ladies look like they are ready for a week on the tools of the nearest oil rig, with their polo shirts, jeans and trainers.

Lunches – back in the 80s, most men, if not having a pub lunch, would grab a pie or sausage roll from the Greggs equivalent of the day or bring in a home-made sandwich. Nowadays the HQ kitchen fridge is full of vegan delicacies, kombucha and soy.

All I can say is I hope we never have a Die Hard situation occur in 84, and we have to rely on a millennial Bruce Willis for rescue.

Meetings – at the start of my working life, meetings were for "high heid yins" who had important matters to discuss; they had agendas and minutes, occurred a couple of times a year and tea was served with biscuits. Today it's common to have 2 or 3 meetings a day – some even at lunchtime – with no agenda, no minutes and more importantly, no biscuits.

Smoking – controversial subject, but there's no better bonding situation than being out in the cold and pouring rain at the back door, swapping office chat with someone over a shared cigarette. That's the real office "Share" point.

After 47 years, Christine will be retiring this year. We can't quite believe it! We wish her all the best for a happy retirement.

As I look back on my 47 years with the Northern Lighthouse Board, I can honestly say it's been a truly remarkable journey. I feel very fortunate to have experienced what I believe were some of the very best times -opportunities and experiences that may be quite different for those beginning their careers today.

Over the decades, I've made friendships that have stood the test of time, many of which now feel more like family. I've always been proud to tell people that I work for the Northern Lighthouse Board. It's an organisation with a rich and proud history and while the future might look different, I'm sure it remains a bright one.

Contributions Wanted!

Trevor Boult retired from the sea to become a writer. He sailed on the final voyage of the RRS John Biscoe, documenting the journey and the unspoilt Antarctic at a time when few people had ever visited the Southern Ocean.

Trevor is now involved in a digital online magazine, called Sea Winds: All Aspects of the Sea & Seafaring.

Trevor is inviting you to contribute to the magazine.

Contributions can take the form of:

- An article
- An illustrated article
- A poem
- Two captioned photographs – under the themes of either 'Through the Porthole' or 'Through the Lens'
- One artwork/craftwork, supported by explanatory text.

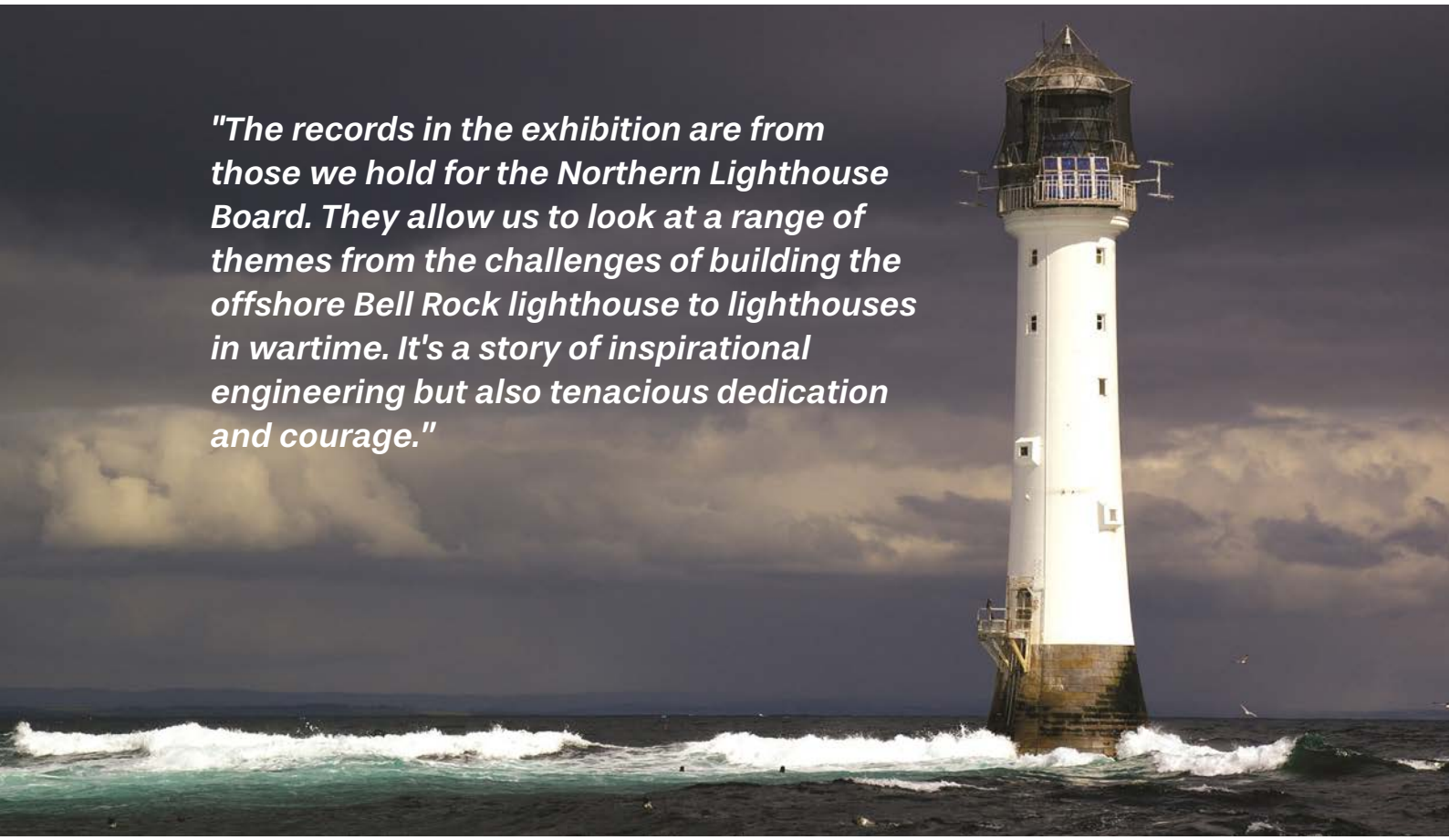
Copyright issues will be the sole responsibility of the contributor.

If you would like to contribute, email: Trevor@seawinds.uk

www.seawinds.uk

Lighthouse Exhibition

As part of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Archivists at the National Records of Scotland (NRS) have curated an exhibiton on Scottish lighthouses, using NRS archival collections.



The exhibition will focus on the story of NLB with a strong focus on the history of the Bell Rock lighthouse. The tragedy on the Flannan Isles will also feature through the letter from Joseph Moore, Assistant Lightkeeper.

Archivist Jessica Evershed said: *"Scotland's coastal waters are among the most beautiful and treacherous in the world. They have fed and sustained communities for centuries but they also claimed many lives.*

"The records in the exhibition are from those we hold for the Northern Lighthouse Board. They allow us to look at a range of themes from the challenges of building the offshore Bell Rock lighthouse to lighthouses in wartime. It's a story of inspirational engineering but also tenacious dedication and courage."

The exhibition will take place in the Adam Dome at General Register House, Princes Street, Edinburgh, EH1 3YY. Admission is free. It will be open Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm, from 3 August to 25 September 2026 and during Doors Open Day on Saturday 26 September 2026, 10am to 4pm.

The exhibition is suitable for all ages and will run as part of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2026.

Our Chief Executive Mike Bullock will be giving a talk about NLB at the National Records of Scotland on Thursday 13 August at 1630. Tickets are available from the NRS website.

Hestan Island Uncut

A short story of an Engineer's woes

Michael Hayter, Electrical Engineer

Another opportunity 'bagged' to again provide support, and sample Lighthouse Technician life. The 2026 site visits for Annual Inspection and Maintenance in the Solway Firth's Hestan Island and Little Ross Island are now firmly registered in the memory bank.

And that's where I thought those memories would stay – in the memory bank. But then I was invited to share aspects of Technician life that are not often written about – probably for good reasons and are unlikely to appear in recruitment adverts– in the Journal.

Hestan Island is further afield from Kirkcudbright marina than Little Ross Island (sometimes referred to as 'the Ross'). Trips to Hestan Island were prioritised when the sea state was suitable for a beach landing by tender from the Gallovidian III.

Hestan was different this year. To supplement the scheduled maintenance, a stack of Adhoc and Defect Repair Work Orders to follow up from 2025 were very much on the to do list. So, in addition to the typical carrying of tool bags and bottled water, this year would require the team to load up like pack horses with additional equipment and accessories, installation materials, power tools, socket sets, assorted box containers, working at height kits and most importantly a tarpaulin and assorted bungee cords. The kitchen sink was left onboard.

Once kitted up the prospect of navigating the 30–minute inclined sheep trail over rough terrain from the shoreline to the Solar Powered Lattice Aluminium Tower (SPLAT) awaited.

We certainly went through a rough patch.

Through the wind, sun and rain we arrived at the SPLAT with the joy of having to do it all again and then again, fetching the rest of the gear. Then, repeat in reverse, to a lesser extent, at the end of the day.

On the first day, while catching our breath at the top of the first section of incline, the warning cacophony of seagull screeching deafened the ears. Then came the realisation that a vast colony of nesting gulls, camped out on the uncut grassy slopes, had us in their sights.

What an experience. It was awful!

With head down, much care was taken to side–step, carving a path around the ubiquitous egg–filled nests and sheep droppings. The sun now emerged from behind a cloud. I could see shad–ows. Aggressive hovering shapes of pink–legged parents were cast on the trail in front. I felt the down draught on my follicly–challenged head from swooping attacks. The scene would not be out of place on a Hitchcock movie set.

In addition to the typical carrying of tool bags and bottled water, this year would require the team to load up like pack horses with additional equipment and accessories, installation materials, power tools, socket sets, assorted box containers, working at height kits and most importantly a tarpaulin and assorted bungee cords. The kitchen sink was left onboard...







> *“Is this it? Is this how it is going to be every day we are on site?” I would ask myself, as thoughts turned to working on the exposed top level of the minor light. Curiously the term ‘splat-on-SPLAT’ came to mind for any future bombardment.*

And then the bomb doors opened. They really did a number on me (and that number was 2). Never have I been splattered to such an extent in my entire life (justifiable I would later consider – they are only protecting their young after all). I asked a colleague for a tissue only to be met with the response the gull would be some distance away by now (old jokes are of little comfort at times like this).

"Is this it? Is this how it is going to be every day we are on site?" I would ask myself, as thoughts turned to working on the exposed top level of the minor light. Curiously the term 'splat-on-SPLAT' came to mind for any future bombardment.

Impending journeys running the gauntlet would see me sporting the latest NLB bucket hat that not only provides protection from the sun, and although stylish perhaps not impeccable. My preferred anti-guano wear was the zipped up Musto boat suit with hood deployed, or boil in the bag for 30 minutes as I would refer to as the temperature rose.

Sometimes I would carry a paint roller on a broom handle (improvised tarpaulin tent pole) or a spade, both kindly loaned by the boatman. The implements would be held aloft in an attempt to distract the gulls with an alternative focal point. Leading the way, and from afar, our small group must have looked like a budget religious procession on a pilgrimage that would head towards the light for their daily sacrifice.

Arriving at station, tool bags, dry bags, plastic and alloy boxes now under cover, a quick inventory check would reveal casualties from a short and thorough downpour on the trail. One test meter exhibited temporary failure in nature's laundry but dried out days later. Sadly, a Boombastic Boombox to provide some on site cheer was ready for the bin. Future musical accompaniment would be replaced with spontaneous outbursts of out of tune singing to lighten the mood when tasks did not go to plan.

What did provide some cheer was the comedy from amateur half-hour with the securing of a tarpaulin (parachute) around the solar array and tower sides in a strong wind. The perfect activity for airing grievances. The result was better than expected and formed a little refuge from the prevailing wind and driving rain at a ground level work area.



Travel, unfamiliar accommodation living, altered sleep pattern, a change in diet can sometimes have an impact on the natural flow of the body's rhythm. A fruit detox is not uncommon during maintenance site visits but does come with consequences. It is perhaps my greatest dread that at some point I will feel a stomach cramp and bowel growl. Despondently, this would be the starting pistol for dancing the sour apple quick step and reaching for the hand gel and the damp quilted 2-ply that with any luck would now be dried-out and crinkled.

Heading off across the island in search of secluded privacy for what the Urban Dictionary describes as an eagle's breakfast, it is prudent to be aware of passing leisure craft at sea, or walkers on the island that made it across the causeway at low tide. I search for humour to spin my unwelcome situation remembering a recent joke on social media citing squat, head between legs, lean forward – that's how I roll!

But the humour can fade when back onboard the Gallovidian III and the wind picks up and the swell rises and that looming queasy feeling of sea sickness descends. I self-medicated, chomping on a fistful of ginger nuts and wearing acupressure wrist bands. A placebo effect? Maybe. These measures did tend to lessen the drama for me so long as I visually maintained a fixed reference point for the late return journey lasting around two hours and feeling like forever.

I still remember the intense and constant heave and sway felt in the cabin one evening, resulting in short periods of mild disorientation over subsequent days.

All said and done, aches and pains were eased well past bedtime by the accommodation's power shower. The water temperature would be set to inferno to create sauna conditions with the shower head warming a chilled back and shoulders and relaxing tired legs. This was the ideal preparation for a good night's rest of quality sleep, ready for the 5am alarm set on my mobile phone and tomorrow's déjà vu.

Island issues and frustration from job activities were swept away with offers of hot tea from visiting residents and sharing anecdotes of wildlife observed. There were onsite laughs and boat cabin laughs and funny banter in between and throughout, with breakfast rolls, apple turnovers and coconut fingers to be demolished.

The lasting image of a Senior Technician being 'rag-dolled' at sea during rough weather, out of sync with the hydraulic seat motion while clutching onto the navigation desk, is unlikely to be forgotten.

Then there was the hunger at later tides and island disembarkation that was well satisfied onboard. Hot scotch pies and pizza warmed in the Gallovidian III oven, accompanied by tea, coffee and the best rhubarb pies in the galaxy from Galloway and beyond, courtesy of the boatman.

After sucking up the physical in poor weather, angry birds, unexpected job difficulties, island inconveniences and choppy sea, the real treat that makes it all worthwhile was still to come. Days of calm water, sunshine and blistering heat, the beautiful views and the tranquillity on what I call Scotland's Riveria. All this and on return to the mainland visits to the Skipper's Scran Van at the harbour wall for Dynamite Prawns or a Loaded Crab Roll.

Sure, it's a no brainer, I would do it all again!



Above left: Hestan Light (the SPLAT). Left: Michael Hayter with bucket hat (for protection).

Main photo: Little Ross Lighthouse. Image by Craig Pake, Planning engineer



Escape from Orkney

Hunter Peace

Hunter's father, David John Peace, of Dishes, Stronsay, Orkney was a Relief Lightkeeper during his teenage years, serving at Auskerry Lighthouse in the late 1920's and early 1930's.

Having researched the family history I found my family had farmed Dishes since at least 1720 and the farm had always passed through fathers to sons. It was accepted in Orkney that sons would automatically take over the farm but my father had no interest in farming and decided to leave Orkney on his 21st birthday in 1933.

He had an amazing ability with 'things mechanical' and during these teenage years, in order to raise funds for his escape from Orkney, he helped at Auskerry Lighthouse, a serious 3 mile row from the farm. Thanks to his salary from the Northern Lighthouse Board he accumulated sufficient funds which he buried in a tin on the farm. Together with a good reference, he left home with a friend on his birthday and set off for Edinburgh... without a word to his parents.

Shortly after his escape he gained employment with LNER installing signalling systems. He studied at night school as a scientific instrument maker and in 1938 joined the Air Ministry at their Telecommunications Research Establishment [TRE] in Dundee.

In 1939, TRE and the Scientific Research Establishment [SRE] at Bawdsey Manor in Suffolk were combined and moved to Worth Matravers near Swanage in Dorset. This was where the first early warning radar station was built. A string of similar stations were subsequently built along the south coast to give early warning of German aircraft. In 1942 the establishment was moved to a safer inland location at Malvern in Worcestershire to continue radar research and was later established as the Royal Radar Research Establishment [RRRE].

After 12 years of absence, my father eventually returned to Stronsay in 1945. With him was his wife (my mother) and 3 month old me. His mother forgave him but sadly his father never did. The farm was sold in 1965 on my grandfather's death.

My father continued to work at RRRE on defence research. He was involved in the development of the laser and many other inventions including being part of a small group that developed the first prototype automated machine tool. He retired in 1972.

It's possible he wouldn't have had these opportunities without his employment at Auskerry Lighthouse, and for that my father and I are indebted to the Northern Lighthouse Board.



Left: Photo shows Hunter's father on the right and his fellow 'escapee' David Fotheringhame taken at a studio in Edinburgh in 1933 which they sent to their parents with letters of apology

Opposite: Auskerry Lighthouse by Rob Ionides, Electrical/Electronic Technician





Leuchie is a charity supporting individuals and families living with neurological conditions such as MS, MND, Parkinson's and stroke through short respite breaks at Leuchie House in East Lothian. From 1 July, fifteen 8ft lighthouse sculptures will light up the streets, parks and open spaces of North Berwick in East Lothian to celebrate the 15th anniversary of Leuchie.











We are delighted to show you a sneak peak of five of the lighthouses.

Each lighthouse has been individually painted by an artist and matched with a business. Together the lighthouses will form a free, fun, family-friendly trail of discovery for local people and visitors to enjoy.

The trail runs from 1 July for 10 weeks, finishing on 21 August, when the sculptures will be auctioned to raise funds for Leuchie.

Salty Selkie Lighthouse Sea Swim Challenge

The Salty Selkies are a swimming group and for the last six years have been setting their own swimming challenges.

This year their swimming challenge will support Leuchie House and a fund called Brain Power, raising money for the charity, Brain Tumour Research.

Salty Selkie swimmer Claire Gardner said: "*When we heard about the Leuchie Lighthouse Trail, we thought it would be lovely to create our own Lighthouse version, from the sea.*"

The Salty Selkies plan to swim to 5 lighthouses including two managed and maintained by NLB – Fife Ness and the Bass Rock. The other lighthouses are Barns Ness, Elie Ness, and Fidra.

For the Fife Ness swim the team will have three support crew watching and walking the swim with them along the coastal path.

The Bass Rock swim will finish at North Berwick's West Bay, approximately a 6k distance. The swimmers will be joined by two support boats and a group of kayakers. They have been in training for the last few months.

The swims will take place in July or August with an exact date still to be finalised.

For details on how you can support the swim, follow:
Salty Selkies Instagram page **@saltyselkies**
Leuchie House **@leuchiehousebreaks**
Brain Power **@glenncampbellbrainpower**



Bass Rock Lighthouse by Ania Kwolek, Document Administrator

Northern Lighthouse Heritage Trust

Alastair Beveridge, Chair of the Heritage Trust

Launch of Lighthouse Lives Book

After many years of work, the NLHT Oral History Project has reached an important milestone with the formal launch of the book Lighthouse Lives on Wednesday 15 April. The occasion was marked with a reception held in the Stevenson Rooms at NLB headquarters.

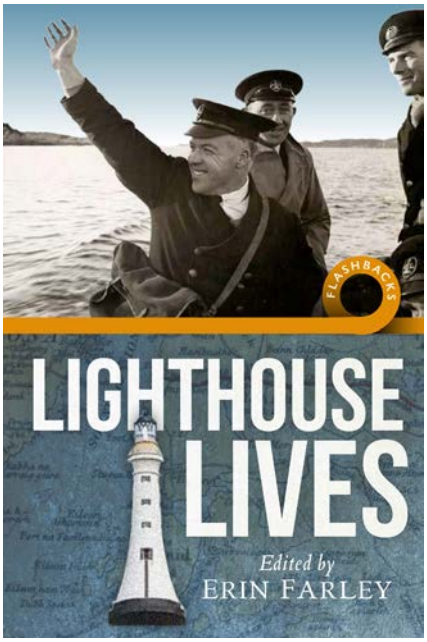
This was a significant event, particularly for past and present NLB employees and their families, who so generously shared their memories with Erin Fairly and Martine Robertson some years ago. Erin's meticulous work in transcribing these interviews has transformed a wide-ranging and diverse collection into an accessible and engaging record of the lives of NLB staff and their families, up to automation. The book captures the experiences of lighthouse keepers, headquarters staff and ship crews.

The reception was jointly hosted by NLHT, the European Ethnological Research Centre (EERC) and Birlinn Publications. A second reception, hosted by NLB, was also held in the Stevenson Rooms on the Friday lunchtime. As part of the launch, both the Lighthouse Lives film and Reg Lacon's films were shown on screens throughout the room, helping to create a memorable atmosphere.

Many guests who were previously unaware of the scale and richness of the project commented on the depth and breadth of the material presented.

This launch marks the conclusion of the Lighthouse Lives story—at least for now. On behalf of NLHT, I would like to extend sincere thanks to everyone who contributed to making this project happen. In particular, thanks are due to Erin Fairly and Martine Robertson for conducting the original interviews, and to Erin again for her extensive transcription work. We are also grateful to Mark Mulhern of the EERC and editor of the Flashback series of books which record rural life around Scotland and without whose input and advice the book would probably not have happened. Thank you also to Birlinn Publications who kindly agreed to take on the significant task of editing, publishing and distributing the completed book.

Most importantly, we extend our deepest thanks to everyone who agreed to be interviewed. While some are sadly no longer with us, their stories have now been preserved—surely the central purpose of this Oral History Project.







Books, Charts, Maps and Tableware

We are continuing to work through the remaining books, charts, maps and items of tableware inherited from NLB. Some of the tableware has now been transferred to the Museum of Scottish Lighthouses, while a number of larger charts and maps – those without specific historical significance or direct links to NLB – have been sold at auction, with the proceeds added to NLHT funds. Looking ahead, we hope to expand display areas around NLB HQ to better showcase the remaining items, particularly the silverware.

It is very encouraging that public interest in lighthouses – and, in particular, local commitment to preserving and improving access to shore based structures associated with remote stations – has led to an increasing number of community trusts being established. These groups play an important role in safeguarding the infrastructure and sharing its stories, and we try to support these initiatives wherever possible.

At the same time, we continue to receive a steady and encouraging volume of funding applications from a wide range of organisations and interests. Each application is carefully considered against the core objectives of the Trust to ensure that our support is directed where it can have the greatest impact.

The Light Mill

We recently approved an application from Eleanor Taylor to support the creation of a short, animated fiction film. The film explores the heritage and history of lighthouses, drawing specifically on Girdle Ness Lighthouse in Aberdeen and the Girdle Ness Peninsula. Through hand drawn illustrations, which are then transformed into 2D animations (see images below), the project entitled 'The Light Mill' encourages the audience to consider how the future of this 200 year old lighthouse, and the role of its Keepers, may continue to evolve. The project will specifically look at how Girdle Ness and similar lighthouse structures may adapt, to our fast changing world of technology and navigation. The target audience is educational and aimed at older children and young adults.

Equity Lighthouse

Equity Lighthouse is a similar project we are supporting. Again this is an educational outreach project based in the Aberdeen area and uses lighthouses and Keepers and their families as a metaphor for social development and change.

We have agreed to support both projects with the aim they will collaborate and produce something truly appealing to young people in the area.

Our People

I am delighted that our former Chair Elaine Wilkinson's appointment as Director has been confirmed. The appointment of Meredith Greiling from National Museums of Scotland (NMS) has also been approved, which is excellent news. Meredith's appointment helps to maintain our strong and longstanding relationship with NMS, which has served us well in the past.

It's important the Trust's work and its Directors remain transparent and true to our governance structure and rules. The Directors reviewed our Articles of Association, Objectives and Investment Policy Statement in January 2026 with some minor changes to reflect how our methods of working have evolved since the inception of the Trust in 2009.

To find out more about the Trust visit https://www.nlb.org.uk/heritage-trust/







Museum of Scottish Lighthouses

Museum Management Team

Life at Kinnaird Head is continuing apace. Now that we are into the summer season our visitor numbers are going up fast. We have been busy all winter and spring, getting ready for the 2026 season.

Collections staff have been flat out returning all our collections from outside storage back to the museum store. A big thank you to John, Andy and all at Historic Environment Scotland for their help. We must also thank James Gray OBE and all at Gray and Adams for their skill and assistance in transporting the heavier collection items.

Thanks also goes to International Fish Canners for giving the time of a forklift driver to ensure boxed lenses were expertly stacked in our store. Finally, thank you to our museum volunteers for their help in the process including three of our catering volunteers Carol, Jill and Donna, for making sure we were all well fed. And thank you to John and Alexis, for helping to move and transport collections back to the Museum. Thank you all, we couldn't have done it without you!

The only problem with the return of the collection objects is that the store is now very very full as you can see! Not for long though as this is the summer when we finally begin the actual building of our new and exciting Fresnel lens gallery. It has taken longer than we had hoped but we are finally there, and we expect the building work to commence soon and be completed by the end of September.

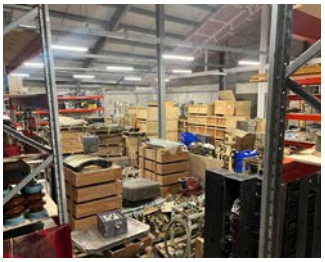
Once that work is complete we can start building our fabulous Fresnel lenses! A formidable task when you realise how many there are to build.

We hope to complete the building of the lenses, with a little (or a lot) of help from our friends, over the winter months. Once the new gallery is complete we will relocate some of our other large lenses from our current lens gallery making space to re-display that gallery. Definitely a lot of hard work will take place at the Museum of Scottish lighthouses this year! This project will mark the final recovery of the museum from Storm Arwen after almost five years.

Whilst all these exciting things are going on our staff are also busy. We are open seven days a week until October, offering visitors the chance to see our wonderful museum, castle and lighthouse.

Operations manager Michael Cruikshank has been kept busy with the day to day running of the museum's front of house. This includes welcoming back our guiding staff, volunteers and shop assistants. Our shop is looking fantastic also due to the talent of our operations manager who has restocked the shelves with many new lines for the 2026 season.

Images from left to right: the empty store, the packed store, fresnel lenses, Operations Manager Michael Cruikshank



Our Collections Manager Michael Strachan has also been busy planning and building new exhibitions. The museum holds a fabulous and extensive collection and the new exhibitions share many of our unique objects with visitors. For 2026, the year which saw the naming of POLE STAR, our exhibition 'Lighthouse Ships' touches on some of the key roles of the lighthouse ships in the supply and operation of Scotland's lighthouses.

Featuring some never before displayed objects, the exhibition tells the fascinating and rich history of the Northern Lighthouse Board's ships. Other exhibitions include 'Landings', a dangerous task that was undertaken by the crews of the NLB ships. They launched boats in order to get close enough to the lighthouses to use ropes and pulleys to deliver the necessary supplies, a particularly dangerous task during bad weather. One exhibition focuses on the 'Pastimes and Entertainments' pursued by the lightkeepers during their downtime when they were not on watch.

New acquisitions to our Recognised Collection include two lighthouse chairs. The interesting part of this donation is that they are another example of items returning to Kinnaird Head after a lengthy spell away! The donor told us that the chairs were given to his father by Jock Scott, Principal Keeper at Kinnaird Head 1957–64. Perhaps old stock.

We are also unsure if the paint job was a later addition. The donor's father kept the chairs in his Fraserburgh home for over 60 years until his sad passing late last year. We might use the chairs in our project to set the 1st Assistant's House back to 1963, given that the chairs only left the site in 1964.



We were very sad to learn of the recent passing of Sydney Scott, a friend of the Museum, author, contributor, and son of Jock Scott. We are sorry that we didn't hear of his passing at the time and send our belated condolences to the late Mr Scott's family.

Our Museum Manager has been busy fundraising for the new gallery. She has also been on her travels, attending VisitScotland's trade fair 'Connect' in Glasgow and meeting tour operators from Europe and North America to promote the museum and the town of Fraserburgh.

We do hope you will find the time to visit us in the coming year. Have a great summer.













Images from top to bottom:
Ships Exhibition – Landings & Pole Star
Ships Exhibition – Pharos
Ships Exhibition with recently donated silverware
Ships Exhibition 2
Pastimes & Hobbies Exhibition
Museum Manager Lynda at Connect.

Commissioners' Award 2026

Chief Engineer Scott Morton was selected to receive the inaugural Commissioners' Award for 2026.

Assigned to the NLB vessel replacement programme since 2024, Scott's innovation, contribution and significant input throughout the design, build and delivery of POLE STAR project was instrumental in NLB accepting delivery of the vessel from GONDAN in December 2025.

Scott stepped out of his day-to-day role as Chief Engineer into the challenge of having to learn new skills and management challenges. These included working with a new list of stakeholders – Danish contractors, Spanish shipbuilders and numerous foreign equipment providers – who all had to comply with NLB, Class and Flag requirements.

His work will have a long-term impact on NLB's operational management of the vessel including improved safety measures, planned maintenance for our state-of-the-art vessel and increased efficiency. The work he has undertaken will provide a solid background for future crew members for years to come.

Scott's work will also assist us with our future major projects. The best practice and key lessons learned can also be of value to the other General Lighthouse Authorities as they work through their vessel replacement programmes.

The award is given both in recognition of his own efforts and in recognition of the wider team's contribution to the project delivery.



Scott pictured above with Vice Chair Brian Archibald and below with his partner Laura.



Long Service Awards

Celebrating 10 years to 35 years service! Congratulations to all staff who received their Long Service awards at a special ceremony on FINGAL in May.



Louis Maclennan, Base Assistant celebrating 20 years service.



Colin Brolly, Procurement Manager celebrating 25 years service.



Craig Field, Project Lead celebrating 35 years service.



Ruth Millan, Procurement Officer (far right) celebrating 30 years service.



Mairi Rae, Director of Business Services (far right) celebrating 10 years service.



John Mowat, Retained Lightkeeper celebrating 15 years service.



Finlay Mackay, Base Assistant celebrating 20 years service.



Ewen MacKerchar, Marine Operations Manager celebrating 15 years service.

Fingal provided the perfect venue for our Long Service and Commissioners' Award Ceremony. Vice Chair Brian Archibald presented the awards to staff.

















Apprenticeships

Deck Rating Apprenticeships

Allan MacNeil and Adam Scowcroft are Deck Rating Apprentices with NLB. They started their 2 year apprenticeship in September 2025 and combine sea training on NLB's vessels PHAROS and POLE STAR with shore training at City of Glasgow College.

Find out from Allan what his highlight has been so far and if he'd recommend an apprenticeship to other young people.

What has been the highlight of your apprenticeship?
My highlight so far has been working alongside experienced crews aboard PHAROS, learning directly from them, and gaining hands on experience in real operations. I'm also very much looking forward to joining POLE STAR on the next trip and continuing to build my knowledge across the fleet.

What appealed to you about the Northern Lighthouse Board deck rating apprenticeship?
What appealed to me most was the complex and varied work carried out around Scotland and the Isle of Man. The opportunity to be involved in maintaining vital aids to navigation, while travelling to remote locations and places I never imagined I would see, made the apprenticeship particularly attractive.

Would you recommend an apprenticeship to other young people?
Yes, I would highly recommend an apprenticeship with the Northern Lighthouse Board. It is a supportive organisation that genuinely cares for and invests in its workforce, while providing excellent training, valuable experience and clear career development opportunities.



Above from left to right: Ewen Mackerchar, Marine Operations Manager with Adam & Allan at College. Below from left to right: Rachel Aitken Senior HR Partner, Allan, Kizzy Shepherd Trainee HR Partner & Adam at the UK Careers Fair in Edinburgh.



> *It's a great experience and a really good way to get your foot in the door in the maritime industry. There's plenty of hands on work, learning from experienced crews, and getting out to parts of the country you wouldn't normally see.*

Spotlight on our People

Engineering Apprenticeships

Cameron Crowe and Mckenzie Johnston started their Electrical Engineering Apprenticeships in August 2025. They combine study at Forth Valley College with on the job training.

Cameron tells us what the highlight has been so far and what appealed to him about the NLB apprenticeship.

What has been the highlight of your apprenticeship?
The highlight so far has been learning new skills and getting out on site to see some of the lighthouses I'll be working on once I finish college.

What was it about the Northern Lighthouse Board apprenticeship that appealed to you?
I liked the idea of getting to visit different parts of the country and with my interest in electrical engineering this is giving me the opportunity to do both.

Would you recommend an apprenticeship to other young people?
Yes I would very much recommend an apprenticeship.



Cameron pictured at College

> *I liked the idea of getting to visit different parts of the country and with my interest in electrical engineering this is giving me the opportunity to do both.*

The Deck Rating Apprenticeship Scheme started in 2016. The introduction of the Scheme has had the obvious benefit of selecting and nurturing young talent to join NLB's workforce. And more particularly ensures that by the end of their training, they have the combination of specialist skills and knowledge that are bespoke to NLB's requirements. For example, deck work, buoy maintenance, helicopter operations and lighthouse storing operations.

Consul General for Japan Visits HQ

We were delighted to welcome the Consul-General for Japan, Mr Katsutoshi Takeda to our HQ in May.

The Consul General visited 84 George Street for a briefing on NLB's work and a tour of the building. This is part of our ongoing relationship with Japan following the twinning of Mull of Galloway and Inubosaki lighthouses.

Discussions highlighted the long-standing connection between Scotland and Japan, dating back to Richard Henry Brunton, the "Father of Japanese Lighthouses", and explored opportunities for continued collaboration.

Mr Takeda presented a copy of the Journal of Maritime and Lighthouse Studies that we contributed to.

We look forward to building on this strong relationship.



Mike Bullock is pictured with Consul General for Japan, Mr Katsutoshi Takeda

Learning About Lighthouses



In June, Retained Lightkeeper Jeri Cormack and Sarah Kerr from the Association of Lightkeepers (ALK) visited pupils at Canisbay Primary School in Caithness. During their session, they explained the purpose of lighthouses and how they are maintained. The visit ended with a creative activity, where pupils designed their own lighthouses.

Later that evening, Jeri and Sarah each delivered presentations at the John O'Groats Book Festival. Sarah spoke about her book *The British Lighthouse Trail,* while Jeri provided insight into the Northern Lighthouse Board and talked about the duties of a Retained Lightkeeper.



Able Seafarer Andy Dunmore received this fantastic painting from his colleagues as a wedding present. Congratulations on your marriage Andy!



Congratulations to Anna Beckett Electrical Project Engineer and her husband Richard who welcomed their son Innes Finlay Beckett on the evening of Monday 9 February.



Congratulations to Alec Bruns PMO Project Lead and his wife Bec who were married in May.

Merchant Navy Association

Edinburgh and Forth Branch

The Merchant Navy Association was launched in 1989 for the purpose of raising awareness of the role merchant seafarers played during wartime and the sacrifices endured. We still try to promote that commitment today as representatives of the 'Fourth Service', striving to raise awareness of our maritime heritage and the contributions of merchant seamen and fishermen alike.

The Edinburgh and Forth Branch of the Merchant Navy Association was inaugurated in November 2022, at NLB's Headquarters in Edinburgh.

We are a group of seafarers, both retired and currently serving, who come together locally on a monthly basis to socialise, support and help each other, recognise achievements, mentor those earlier in their careers, raise public awareness of our industry and promote a career in the Merchant Navy.

These are all charitable aims of the Merchant Navy Association but we can apply them at a local level too. We have an active social aspect to the group, with occasional outings to various places of interest. These include ship visits, with recent visits to the Royal Yacht Britannia and the SS Explorer.

There is a branch committee which is currently made up of a Chair, Treasurer, Secretary and Social Secretary, who organise the routine running of the branch and events, however at each monthly meeting, members are free to raise anything they wish to discuss.

Votes are frequently held by all in attendance and at the AGM more formal matters are voted on, including the election of committee members.

If you are interested in joining us, please contact:

Ned Kelly, Chair
mna.edinburgh@gmail.com
Edinburgh1345@gmail.com

NLB Online Shop

From teddy bears, ties and cufflinks to our 2027 calendar and limited edition POLE STAR mugs, tea towels and tote bags, we're sure there will be a lighthouse inspired gift for you. Take a look at the shop on our website to see the full range of items. This is just a selection.







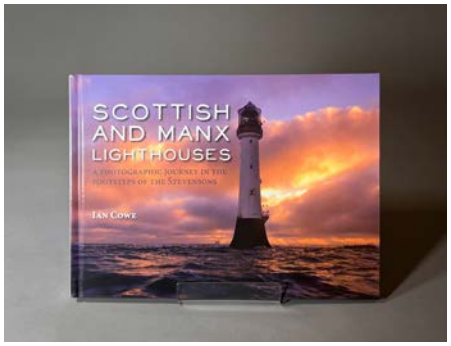














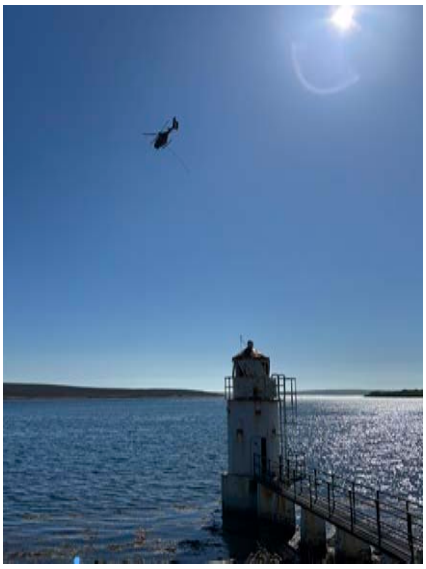


Our 2027 Lighthouse Calendar will be on sale at the end of August.

Order from our online shop at https://www.nlb.org.uk/shop/

Lighthouses & Ships through our lens









Above: Heliops at Calf of Eday Lighthouse. The team were there to prepare for the lighthouse refurbishment. The refurbishment will include replacing the access ladder, balcony and lightroom, along with a complete electrical rework. Calf of Eday is a minor light situated on the island of Eday north–east of mainland Orkney.

Photos by Jenny Elder, Civil Project Engineer.

Far right from top to bottom: Ardnamurchan Lighthouse; POLE STAR; PHAROS & POLE STAR.

Photos by Steven West, Assistant Bosun.



APPOINTMENTS

Norman Macdonald
2nd Officer

Steven McDonald
2nd Engineer

Jeri Cormack
Retained Lightkeeper, Caithness

Martin Duthie
Able Seafarer

Keith Hastings
Able Seafarer

Alan Simmons
Able Seafarer

Kizzy Shepherd
Trainee HR Partner

Shaun MacTaggart
Engine Room Technician

Erik Roulson
Electro-Technical Officer

Lorn Chisholm
Mechanical Technician

Jake Cameron
3rd Engineer

PROMOTIONS

Katarina Schillerova
Maintenance Systems Assistant

RETIREMENTS

Mark Shelton
Able Seafarer

Jim McIlroy
Able Seafarer

Trish Donaldson
Compliance Officer

LEAVERS

Craig Price
Mechanical Technician

Jonathan Stewart
2nd Engineer

Fergal McCloskey
Apprentice Able Seafarer

Martin O'Malley
Able Seafarer

Chris MacFarlane
Principal Electrical Engineer

Ian McDownie
2nd Engineer

John Mowat
RLK Orkney

Clare Kearney
Cook Steward

Bruce Turnbull
2nd Engineer

DEATHS

It is with sadness we have to report the following deaths:

Alan Law
Former Lightkeeper

Davie Ferguson
Retained Lightkeeper (RLK)

Robert D Watt
Former Lightkeeper and Monitor Officer

Hector Lamont MBE
Former Lightkeeper

Alistair J C MacDonald
Former Lightkeeper

Colm O'Brien
Former 2nd Engineer

OBITUARIES

Alan Law
Alan served at Stroma Lighthouse as Assistant Keeper from 1983 to 1991.

Davie Ferguson
Davie was the RLK for Ardnamurchan Lighthouse and was Manager of the Ardnamurchan Trust since 1997. He was a driving force within the local community and so proud to be part of NLB.

Robert D Watt
Robert joined NLB as a Supernumerary in 1967 at Kinnaird Head Lighthouse. He then became Assistant Keeper and served at Ailsa Craig, Bell Rock, Tod Head and Corsewall Lighthouses.

Hector Lamont
Hector joined NLB in 1960 as a Supernumerary at Duncansby Head Lighthouse. Four months after joining, he became Assistant Keeper and served at Heliar Holm, Maughold Head and Skerryvore. In 1975 he was promoted to Principal Keeper and was stationed at Sanda, Corsewall and finally Mull of Kintyre Lighthouse.



Northern Lighthouse Board

MarineServices

Over 200 years of service to the mariner

Our primary function is to carry out our statutory duties providing Aids to Navigation (AtoN) for the safety of the mariner. When we have spare capacity in our statutory programme, the Merchant Shipping and Maritime Security Act 1997, allows us to offer marine support services to clients. As the most experienced provider of AtoN services in Scottish and Manx waters, find out how we could support you.

Vessel Hire

Equipped to levels normally only found in much larger vessels, PHAROS and POLE STAR provide versatile platforms for buoy handling, marine research, sea trials, hydrographic surveying and other marine support services.

Buoy Services

Whether you need to mark a port approach, marine renewable energy site or a decommissioned oil rig, we can provide a temporary or permanent AtoN solution. Our commercial buoy services include rental, inspections, maintenance and refurbishment. PHAROS can also assist with deployment and removal.

Marine Base Support

NLB Oban offers full marine base support facilities, including berthing services, buoyage preparation and supply, and workshop services.

The Northern Lighthouse Board is Certificated to:

- BS ISO 45001:2018 Occupational Health and Safety Management System
- BS EN ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management System
- BS EN ISO 14001:2015 Environmental Management System
- BS EN ISO/IEC 27001:2022 Information Security Management System





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The Northern Lighthouse Board is the General Lighthouse Authority responsible for Scotland and the Isle of Man.

PATRON:
Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal

Chair: Hugh Shaw
Vice Chair: Brian Archibald
Chief Executive: Mike Bullock
Director Of Operations: Phil Day
Director Of Business Services: Mairi Rae

Journal produced by Fiona Holmes, Communications Officer

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"In Salutem Omnium"
For the Safety of All