



NEWSLETTER

Lighting the Way



You haven't heard much from the Bahamas Lighthouse Preservation Society (BLPS) lately, but that is because we have been extremely busy over the past two years. Restoration is never ending, but happily, we are making progress, though much of what we have accomplished has been behind the scenes. We are heartened by talks with the new central Government which assure us that our lighthouses will be getting more attention and support and will not be automated. The Bahamas National Trust also sees the Bahama lighthouses as important parts of their growing heritage and environmental tourism plan.

Last summer, with the blessings of Marsh Harbour Port Department and the help of many members of our local Abaco and international lighthouse community, BLPS oversaw the

successful installation of the first replacement panels of curved weatherglass for the lantern room at Elbow Reef Light. There are many more panels to refit but the major logistical challenges are behind us.

Lighthouses the world over are endangered and many do not have sufficient involvement from their communities to survive the assault of time and nature.

With our national government supporting increased local community involvement we are excited by the current potential for the Lighthouses of Abaco which are the first built (Hole in the Wall- 1836) and the last still lit by kerosene: (Elbow Reef- 1864). The BLPS sees a brighter era for all Bahamian lighthouses, particularly the lightstations of Abaco. We are doing what we can to help

The Bahamas Lighthouse Preservation Society was founded in 1995 by Dave Gale of Hope Town in direct response to the Bahamian Government's intention to automate its remaining hand-wound, kerosene fueled lighthouses.

We are a non-profit, volunteer advisory organization which supplies parts, labor and technical support vital to maintain these historically correct lightstations. We work to improve the living conditions of the lightkeepers. By training Bahamians in the restoration of their national treasures, we hope to retain a vanishing part of the country's unique maritime heritage.



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PONCE INLET LIGHTHOUSE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR VISITS ELBOW REEF LIGHT

Who do you contact for an assessment of the condition of a Fresnel Lens over a century old? This is the question we had to answer in February 2012 when we noticed unexpected deterioration in the five bulls-eye, first-order Fresnel lens at Elbow Reef Lightstation. The answer for us was Ed Gunn, Executive Director of the Ponce Inlet Lighthouse near New Smyrna Beach, Florida. Not only is the lightstation at Ponce Inlet the second tallest brick lighthouse in the United States and impeccably maintained, it also houses one of the largest collections of restored Fresnel lenses in the country. We emailed Ed photographs of the problem areas we were seeing in the lens and he agreed to come out to Hope Town as soon as possible to take a look. Lighthouse folks are like that.

Elbow Reef Lightstation originally had a gently curving brick facia and smaller lantern room when it was completed in 1864. At that time it did not have the diamond-shaped weatherglass windows nor the stair-stepped concrete exterior we have come to recognize. The tower was rebuilt in the 1930s to

accept a “new” lantern room (recycled from Gun Cay near Bimini) and the additional concrete bands were not added to the tower until the 1950s.

Lucky for us Ed Gunn was able to stabilize our lens and train our keepers in its cleaning and care. We thank him for his guidance and welcome him back anytime.



SECURITY DOOR INSTALLED AT HOLE IN THE WALL LIGHT



Everything about the location at Hole in the Wall Lightstation (HITW) is magical. Unfortunately weather and vandals have been working on its structure. The oldest British Imperial Lighthouse Service’s lightstation’s lighttower

(1836)itself is now unsafe to climb and the batteries for keeping the solar powered navigation light running have been stolen.

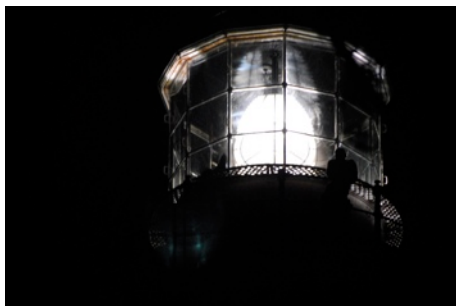
With the blessings of Port Department, Marsh Harbour, BLPS designed, fabricated and installed a security door which now limits access into the tower.

The Bahamas National Trust is strongly supporting its parks in Abaco and HITW is near the large Abaco National Park. There are caves and other natural attractions

nearby. BLPS advises replacing the broken weatherglass panels at the top of the HITW lighttower. This will stop rain and salt spray from further deteriorating it.

Measurements have been taken and materials and expertise are available locally to do this work which could be accomplished in only a few days.

To contribute time, materials or funding contact a team member of BLPS.



A Note of Sadness

After nearly one-hundred and fifty years of continuous service, the magnificent second-order Fresnel lens was removed from the Inagua Lighthouse in June 2012 when the lightstation was automated and its keeper retired from active service. BLPS was not consulted and we do not believe it was understood that automation could have been achieved while leaving the lens in place. It is reported that government would like to reinstall the lens at a later date if funds become available. BLPS is doing what we can to help preserve this Chance Brothers lens which was manufactured in 1868 specifically for Inagua Light.



Coleman Company Fabricates Mantles for our Burners

Miracles happen. For several years it has been difficult to find mantles for our venerable, circa 1910 designed Hood petroleum vapor burners. There is no other need for 55mm woven mantles and the ones that have been fabricated especially for us in China have not burned reliably. Working properly our mantles burn for 12-14 nights.

We had been told that because they contain heavy metals, mantles were no longer being made in the USA. However, we discovered that the Coleman Company has an in-house mantle manufacturing division in Wichita, Kansas.

The mantle room workers in Wichita solved our problem and Coleman donated one hundred of their mantles to us. We are happy to pass along that Principal Keeper Jeff Forbes reports his Coleman-made mantles are lasting at least two weeks. Thank You Coleman!



YOU can help-

We have a donor willing to match up to \$25,000 for replacing the remaining weatherglass panels at Elbow Reef Light. We estimate this work will cost \$100,000. By collecting these funds before April 1st, we could complete the job before the 2013 hurricane season. A donation of \$250 or more is tax deductible for US federal tax purposes. Please contact Doug Hyde at dhyde.PERC@gmail.com to help us take advantage of this matching funds opportunity. For other donations and inquiries contact a BLPS team member in Hope Town or email us at blps.bah@gmail.com



BAHAMAS LIGHTHOUSE PRESERVATION SOCIETY- HOPE TOWN, ABACO

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Many Hands



75 years ago this month, the kerosene fueled burner and rotating five bull's eye lens became operational for the first time at the Elbow Reef Lightstation, Hope Town. From 1864 until 1938, the light had been an array of standing kerosene lamps. This change in the lighting machinery was so dramatic that acting Principal Keeper J.A. Hanna broke his wrist when setting the newly turning lens in motion.

The lighthouse at Hope Town inspires those who visit. It is now the only lighthouse in the world at which, with special permission, one can experience the sound of its hand-wound lens and the sight of the warm glow of its kerosene burner.

With the management of the lighthouses of the Bahamas in transition, the BLPS asks your support for the work ahead of us. Please lend a hand.



Bahamas Lighthouse Preservation Society

c/o Dave Gale, General Delivery

Hope Town, Abaco, Bahamas