

Lighthouses of the North East Coast

Robin Jones

The coast of the North East has been described as one of the most dangerous in the British Isles. The North Sea had for centuries provided a vital line of communication between Scotland and England, not only for trade but also for the conveyance of passengers, and shipwrecks had been by and large taken as par for the course. However, with the upsurge in cargoes being carried from the ports of the North East, there was a corresponding rise in the number of wrecks, leading to increasingly vitriolic demands for action to be taken, in the form of better navigational aids. At one stage it was said that there were an average of 44 wrecks per mile on this coast.

The Newcastle Trinity House received its first royal charter in 1536 and it eventually took responsibility from Berwick-upon-Tweed in the north to Whitby in the south. It established buoys and beacons, licensed shipmasters, mates and pilots, advised and carried out improvements to rivers and ports. In 1584, the Lord High Admiral issued a proclamation empowering Hull Trinity House also to establish buoys and beacons, and to collect dues for their maintenance. The modern era of lighthouse building began at the start of the eighteenth century. In the wake of the Industrial Revolution bigger ships carried payloads that mariners would at one time have barely dreamed possible. Advances in structural engineering and new and efficient lighting equipment paved the way for bigger and more powerful lighthouses to be built, including ones that could stand everything the sea could throw at them.

Today, improvements in maritime navigation and GPS have all helped to make lighthouses redundant. But the public love lighthouses. They are popular with photographers, painters and even poets, and the whole of Britain and way beyond was inspired by keeper's daughter Grace Darling who defied tempestuous seas to rescue survivors from an 1838 shipwreck in the Farne Islands. Britain is a great seafaring nation, and lighthouses are an essential part of its proud national tradition and heritage, on its picturesque yet savage North East coast, more than anywhere. These magnificent structures, from Berwick-upon-Tweed to Whitgift, are celebrated in this fascinating book by Robin Jones, with a hugely informative text and a stunning collection of historic and contemporary images.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Robin Jones graduated in English from Birmingham City University and is a former news editor at the *Birmingham Evening Mail* who established *Heritage Railway* magazine in 1999.

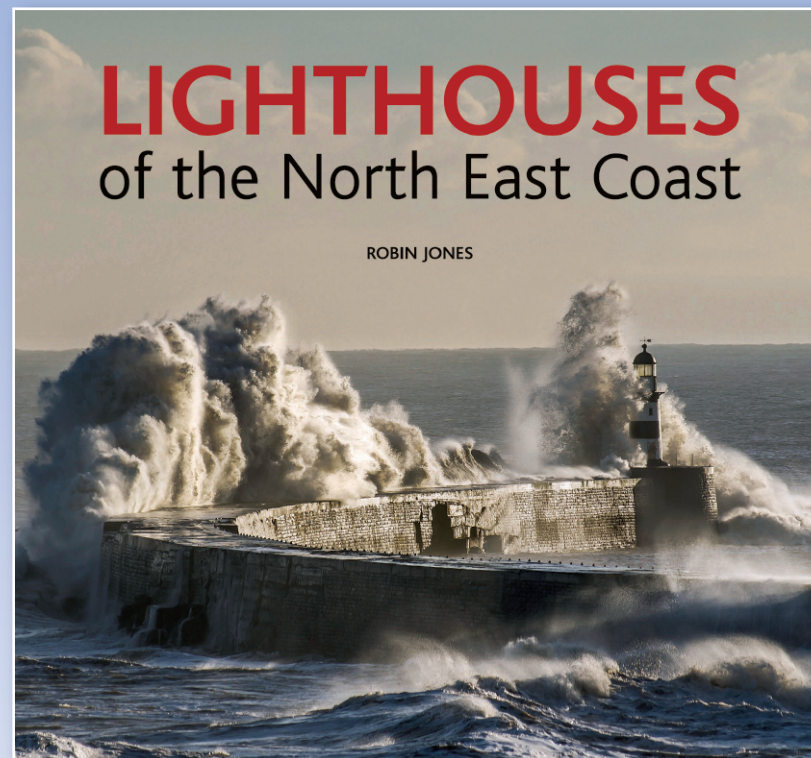
A resident of Baston in Lincolnshire, he spends much of his time exploring and photographing the coast with his wife Jenny.

His previous books for Halsgrove include *Lighthouses of the South West*, *Lighthouses of the East Coast*, *Shakespeare's Warwickshire*, *Steam's New Dawn*, *Spirit of Padstow* and *Britain's Bizarre Railways*.

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HALSGROVE TITLE INFORMATION

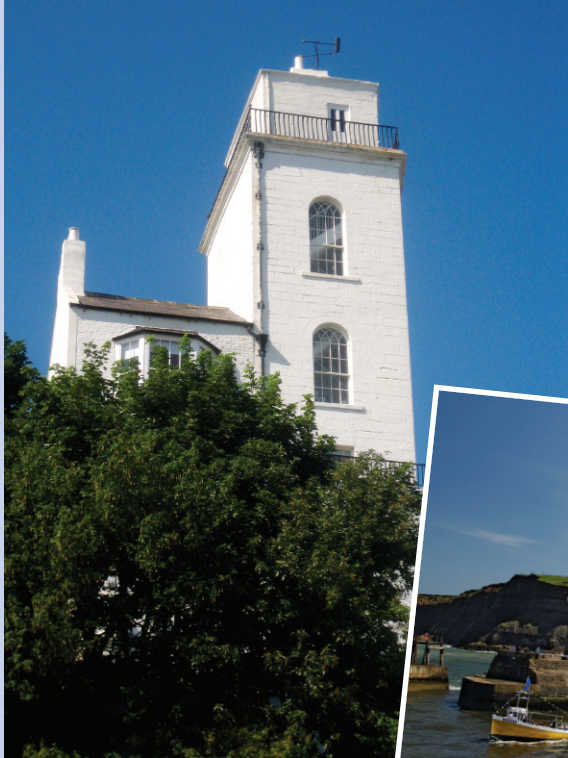


Format: *Hardback, 144 pages, 214x230mm, profusely illustrated in colour throughout*
Price: *£16.99*
ISBN: *978 0 85704 234 7*
Imprint: *Halsgrove*
Published: *October 2014*



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Wellington, Somerset TA21 9PZ Tel: 01823 653777 Fax: 01823 216796
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LIGHTHOUSES OF THE NORTH EAST COAST



Left: The North Shields High Light in Dockwray Square which dates from 1807. JOHN WIGHAM*

Right: Flamborough Head lighthouse overlooks the chalk cliffs, designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest for both geological and biological significance. There are an estimated 200,000 nesting seabirds, including one of only two mainland British gannetries. IAN COWE/TRINITY HOUSE

Below: View from the sea: the East and West Pier lighthouses looking towards Whitby. ROBIN JONES



Left: The restored lantern house at the top of Roker lighthouse. SUNDERLAND CITY COUNCIL

Example of a double page spread.



Lighthouses like this one at South Gare near Redcar were designed to take the worst that nature can throw at them. DAVID PYE