

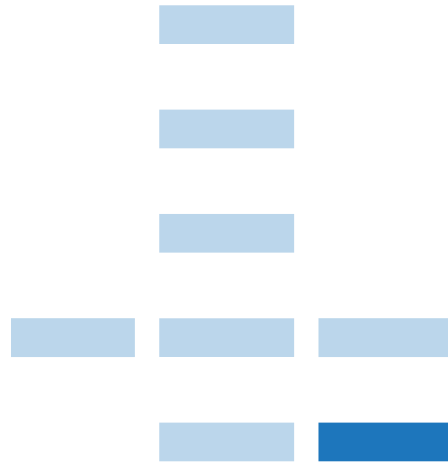


ABOVE: This image of the low lighthouse on an old postcard was taken in the early years of the 20th century when Edmond and Alice became occupants of one of these two cottages, just before the light was discontinued.

BELOW LEFT: All that was left of the low lighthouse in 1985.

BELOW RIGHT: In this 1974 photo, the low lighthouse was already dangerously close to the cliff edge.





Edmond & Alice

Extracted from: Light On The Forelands by Ken & Clifford Trethewey, Jazz-Fusion Books (2022)

20th Century

Edmond is a young brother of Henry Thomas in the fifth generation of Knott lighthouse keepers; Harsh treatment makes a sad ending to a long tradition; Installation of new lighting equipment; closure of the Low Light; The dangers of cliff erosion

An Ever-Changing Scene: 1901 - 1910

Edmond had never been to South Foreland before, unlike his eldest brother Henry Thomas Knott who had not only been born at the light but had allegedly returned for a short while in 1886/87. Trinity House had been acquiescent to Edmond's request to come to South Foreland. It allowed an occasional opportunity to see his parents, George and Catherine, in their twilight years in Dover after his father's retirement from North Foreland.

When he arrived in Dover, Edmond probably assumed that he had a life's career in front of him provided Alice could agree that life on a lighthouse was tolerable - something which I suspect had so far not been the case. Alice's father was a straw hat manufacturer in Luton and her entire family were involved in manufacturing. They were listed in all the contemporary trade directories in a compact town that did little else but make hats. Life by the sea, waiting for the sun to set every day, must have seemed strange to Alice.

Edmond's appearance at South Foreland as a light keeper in the family tradition should not be

taken for granted. Before 1895 and his marriage to Alice Goodwin he was not to be found. When his parents left the lighthouse at Bull Point and headed home to Kent at the end of 1888 so that his father could take the Principal's position on the North Foreland Light, Edmond was 16 years old. He should have accompanied his young sister Florence, who was only 13, but did he do that? What else could he have done? He did not follow his older brother, Walter, into the Royal Navy, as Walter had done in 1885. I have found no record of his joining the Merchant Service. He was too old for school and too young for the Trinity House service. He might have been indentured to a trade master, but there is no evidence of that. So, how and where did he meet Alice Goodwin, a hat machinist in her father's factory in Luton, a place that could hardly be farther from the sea?

The date of Edmond's entry into the lighthouse service could not have been before 1892/3, but in 1895 he was living at the Trinity Wharf, Neyland in Pembrokeshire (see map on p286) when he married Alice Goodwin in her home town of Luton. Christ Church in Upper George Street, Luton is still



ABOVE: A studio photograph of Edmond Knott - aged about 25/6 - in North Shields, probably taken during his time at Coquet Island at the end of the 19th century.

there, as it was on Friday 25th October 1895 when our couple stood in front of the curate, Frederick Bedale, to plight their troth. They were to have over 30 years together, but not blissfully moving from one light to another, as we shall discover.

Whilst at Neyland towards the end of 1896, Alice realised that she was expecting their first child, and they must have known that Edmond's eldest brother, Henry Thomas, was not far away down the coast at St. Ann's Head having his own problems with childcare. An arrangement was made between them to send one of Henry's twin girls, who were now approaching 11 years old, to Neyland to help Alice around the house in Lawrenny Street. Violet was chosen and she was enrolled into the Neyland National School on the 2nd December 1896 from No.4 Lawrenny Street, but how long she stayed is uncertain. The column of the school register dedicated to her date of departure is empty.

Edmond and Alice's first child was a daughter named Catherine Mary in honour of both grandmothers, and she was born in Lawrenny Street, Llanstadwell, Neyland in South Wales on the 21st June 1897. Alice registered her daughter on the 2nd July, suggesting that Edmond was away on a light, but which light? I despair of the number of times that I have had to write that a census return for a rock lighthouse has been lost. It was frequent at each of the early censuses, but it improved with each decade as the bureaucracy became better understood. However that did not apply to the 1901 return for the South Bishop. It has been lost. In that year there were four wives of light keepers living in Neyland. Two were in Lawrenny Street and the other two were just a short walk away. Unfortunately without the return for the lighthouse I cannot match the keepers with their wives. The returns for 1891 and 1911 present a similar picture, but I feel justified in suggesting that Edmond was serving his time on the South Bishop lighthouse.

Neyland was a small fishing and ship building community facing a creek named the Milford Haven in the parish of Llanstadwell which had two hundred inhabitants in 1851. However it was the choice of Isambard Kingdom Brunel for a port connected to the South Wales Railway that would operate an Irish steam packet service to Waterford, and later Cork; it continued until 1906. But Brunel's real vision was for a London to New York service for his *Great Eastern* steam ship, and the ship visited Neyland several times in the period 1860-62. When the railway terminal opened in 1863 it was named Milford at first, but in 1910 it was changed to Milford Haven.

Lawrenny Street took its name from the Lawrenny Estate and is a very long street leading steadily uphill away from the harbour side, but overlooking it. The neat, unpretentious houses today are numbered as far as No. 76, meaning that there are 38 houses, so it was a pity that Alice had not confirmed that it was No. 4 that she occupied. The two keepers' wives who were listed in 1901 - Mary Nicholas and Sarah Eynon - were at Nos. 2 & 5 and there are now two modern semi-detached bungalows on the 'odds' side of the street, suggesting an earlier demolition. I have never been clear whether keepers were left to make their own arrangements or whether the local Superintendent had a hand in it. It would be logical to suggest that once a property was rented to a family associated with the lighthouse service, it was passed from one family to the next as the one



Above: The lighthouse on Coquet Island, completed in 1841 to James Walker's designs (see p115). The first keeper was Grace Darling's elder brother, William. Edmond Knott served here also, at the very end of the 19th century.

light keeper's appointment ended and his relief's appointment began. A landlord would have been content with the regularity of a tenancy by Trinity House employees, the income reliable and the good character of the tenants assured. It seems likely that Edmond came to Neyland as a bachelor in 1894 and was accommodated in Trinity House cottages, but when he married he moved with his new wife into No. 4 Lawrenny Street. They stayed at Neyland until Edmond's time on the South Bishop was spent. This must have been about September 1897 for Violet was sent back home to St. Ann's Head and was readmitted to her school in Dale on the 20th October 1897. Edmond then had a very unusual move to Coquet Island off the coast of Northumberland. The timing of this move is hard to estimate, but two years as a married man was about right for a stay on a rock lighthouse. However, it does mean that his daughter had barely reached six months old. The move is also unusual in that keepers usually remained within the jurisdiction of one District Superintendent and it was rare for a 'southerner' to head so far north.

Coquet was lit in October 1841 and the first two censuses (1851 & 1861) featured William Brooks

Darling as its Principal Keeper and Agent, who would have tended to favour local keepers, but this wasn't the policy that Trinity House favoured. Their preferred policy was to use keepers who did not come from the local area, and this can be seen in 1881 and 1891 when the Principal Keeper, William Evans, was from Milford, Pembrokeshire and his assistant was George Carpenter from Orford in Suffolk, whose family had dominated the Orfordness light 30 years before. Both men were new arrivals in 1881, and both of them stayed for 10 years.

A third man on the light was local, but although he was designated as a light keeper he had a specific task peculiar to Coquet. James Grey/Gray of Berwick, was a buoy keeper and was reported in four censuses from 1871-1901 aged from 30 to 60 years. At Coquet, Edmond and Alice met James Gray and his wife Elizabeth with their family. One of his daughters was Isabella, but she had already left and married another light keeper, Cornishman John Pearce, when our couple arrived on the island. They were to meet at South Foreland, but their acquaintance would be short-lived.

One of the photographs in the family album



LEFT: A satellite map of the lighthouse sites of southwest Wales. (Purple and yellow pins. Green marks are places of interest.) This region contains a high density of important lighthouse sites. Three important rock lighthouse sites were used for training light keepers in the early phase of their careers, viz. Smalls, South Bishop and Skokholm, photos of which have been presented on pages p274, p272 and p275 respectively. Another island lighthouse at Strumble Head is linked to the mainland, just as the South Stack lighthouse on in the northwest of Wales is linked to Anglesey. The important lighthouse site at the entrance to Milford Haven is linked to Anglesey. The important lighthouse site at the entrance to Milford Haven is St. Ann's Head and has already been discussed on p269. Other harbour lighthouses were at Great Castle Head and Fishguard.

features Edmond in Trinity House light keeper's uniform wearing a full frock coat (see p284). The significance of the photograph is not the uniform, although it is important. It was the photographer, H. Sawyer & Sons of West Saville Street, North Shields that is of special interest for North Shields was the port that serviced the lighthouses off the northeastern coast. In this period, a studio photograph was usually inspired by a specific occasion, yet this photograph seems to have no particular occasion attached to it as there was no wedding or promotion to celebrate. However, it could have been a photograph for Alice to take home to her family and it may have been the first time that Edmond - fresh out of training as an SAK - had featured in his AK uniform - hence the frock coat, which makes much more of an impression.

As the winter of 1899 approached, Alice decided to go home to Luton because she was pregnant and the birth of her next child was expected in November/December 1899. It was the storm season on the northeast coast and Coquet Island was not the best place to be expecting a baby. That baby was a girl, Florence Matilda Knott, born on the 2nd December 1899 at 17 Harcourt Street, Luton. It was nearly six weeks before Alice went to the registrar's office on the 8th January 1900, but when she did

she gave her address as 'Coquet Island, Amble, Northumberland' - proof that she had indeed accompanied Edmond to such a wild location.

A Career Cut Short

William and Annie Warder

When the message arrived that Edmond's request to return to South Foreland had been accepted, he was quietly pleased, even if he had hinted that it might be a suitable light as it was close to his parents in their retirement. William Warder was already there when the family arrived and the two families would soon get to know one another as neighbours on the Lower Light, especially as they were almost the same age. When Edmond was born at the Bull Point lighthouse, William was already toddling around the wide expanse of sand at Burnham-on-Sea in Somerset where he grew up and went to school. In 1891 he was 20 years old and without any occupation when the census found him and his family at the St. Ann's Head light in Pembrokeshire. He was a third generation light keeper as his father and grandfather had been before him. At St. Ann's Head his father was sharing



ABOVE: Without firm proof, we believe this family album photo to be Alice and Edmond Knott with their three children: Percy George (b1901) on Alice's lap; Catherine Mary (b1897) standing; Florence Matilda (b1899) on Edmond's knee. The youngest child is but months old and the photograph would have been taken just after Edmond's dismissal from the Service. Of significant interest is the fact that it would most likely have been taken in the studio of F. Deakin yet it looks very much like the background is the outside of the lighthouse. Little Catherine died from diphtheria in December 1902.

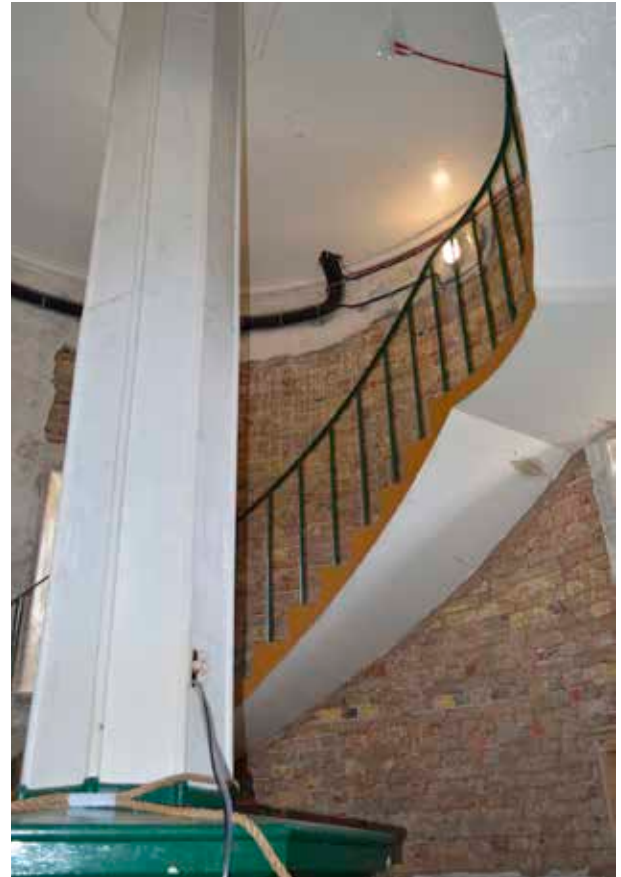
watches with Henry Thomas Knott and I have no doubt that William learned a little of life at South Foreland during times of reminiscence. Within 18 months he had decided to join Trinity House and ended 1892 by getting married. His wife, Annie Clayson, was from the village of St. Margaret's at Cliffe, and she married William in the parish church there on Boxing Day 1892. That is not to say that William was a keeper at South Foreland; he was at Dungeness when they married, but it would seem that the local Superintendent was a very accommodating man as the newlyweds found their

way back to the locality by the time that Edmond was on his way down from Northumberland.

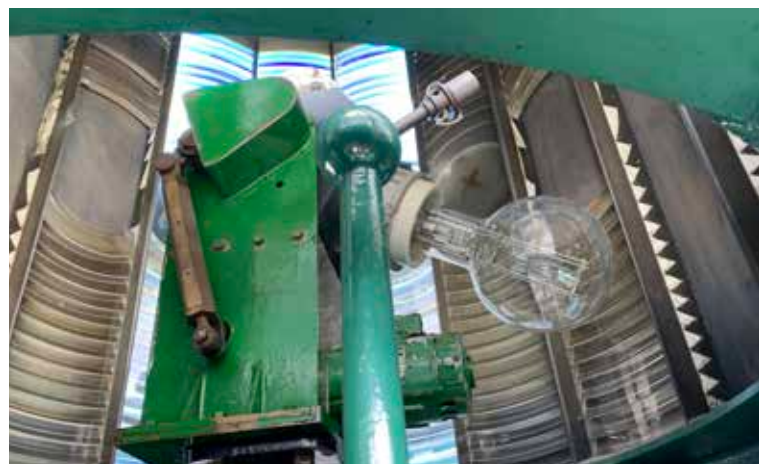
William and Annie Warder had no children and I wonder what affect that might have had on the relationship of the two women, especially as Alice Knott was expecting her third child. Sometimes when women found that they were unable to have children they were not envious of those that could. Instead they grew closer and became almost like sisters. This made the inevitable parting of the ways even more difficult with a strong bond of friendship between them, but I am certain that it was accepted as a part of their chosen pattern of life.

This leads me back to my curiosity concerning the manning procedures. Someone (whom in those days long before the invention of HR we might designate as the 'Trinity House light keeper appointer') must have had a 'box full of cards' with a lot of detail about their staff from which an intricate pattern was woven. Percy George Knott was born at the South Foreland Lower light on the 10th May 1901. He was the last Knott to be born at a South Foreland lighthouse. Edmond and Alice now had three very young children to tend to, and life in such circumstances can become exhausting. For Edmond it had become a 24-hour day, and eventually he succumbed and let himself fall asleep whilst on duty. He was not the first light keeper at South Foreland to fall into the arms of Hypnos, and neither would he be the last, but in Trinity House service everyone caught asleep was charged with grossly neglecting their duty. Perhaps seen today as a harsh punishment, Edmond was dismissed from the lighthouse service on the 5th July 1901. He took off the uniform he so proudly wore to the photographer's studio in North Shields three years earlier. He folded it neatly into a pile and wrapped it as a brown paper parcel and addressed it to the storekeeper at Ramsgate. Then the family packed their cases and waited for the village carrier to take them into Dover.

Five keepers were found to be negligent and disciplined in the ten years from 1898 to 1907. Only two were sacked, and Edmond was the first. Two others served their time on the station with a blot on their copy book, yet the punishment of one isn't stated, only the misdemeanour. So what was happening here? This was only one station. Was it widespread or commonplace? Why was this happening now? Was there someone on the station who was adept at finding shirkers? As a one-time Night Duty Officer in a major shipyard, I was often paired with a colleague who would not let a night



LEFT TOP: The clockwork mechanism that rotated the optic in the lantern of the South Foreland High Light. Like all mechanical clocks, it needed the keepers to wind it, in this case, 100 turns of the winding handle to keep the rotation going for about $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours. LEFT BOTTOM: The winding of the clock raised a weight suspended on a wire on the inside of a tube at the centre of the lighthouse. As the clock ran down, the weight fell to the bottom whereupon it was time to wind it back up to the top. RIGHT TOP: The octagonal tube containing the clock weight occupies the centre of the tower and predominates in the lower room of the lighthouse. RIGHT BOTTOM: The tube is also present in the service room (below the lantern room), of course, where a bell is mounted so as to give warning to the keepers when the clock needs to be rewound.



LEFT TOP: The optic viewed in 2021 from the balcony is the original of 1904, although some of the panels have been removed. Notice the diagonal arrangement of the astragals that hold the curved lantern glass in place. Left Bottom: Two of the vertical panels. RIGHT TOP: The bulls-eye lenses offer beautiful reflections by day. RIGHT CENTRE: The mercury bath that supports the weight of the four-ton optic is hidden inside the base. The frictionless rotation is assisted by balance wheels that help to keep the optic in the horizontal plane. RIGHT BOTTOM: The more modern lamp changer with its tungsten filament bulbs replaced the original electric arc equipment in 19xx.

pass without finding someone asleep. He became famous for it. Maybe that was the case here and there were two men in authority whose time had spanned this period?

In December 1902 Edmond Knott was a gardener and florist living in the aptly named Rosedale Cottages on the Manor Road, Maxton in the Dover parish of St. James when little Catherine contracted diphtheria. She died in the Cottage Hospital on Saturday 13th December 1902 and Dr. Elliot recorded that she had suffered for three days. She was now at peace, whilst Alice was distraught. Edmond had thought to settle in Dover and take a little business. His parents and several of his siblings were in the town, but he had brought shame upon them. There was nothing for it, but to move away where no one knew them.¹

Edmond didn't specify a house number in Rosedale Cottages when he visited the Registrar in 1902, but that was the address that Walter and his wife, Emma, gave in 1911. Then it was No.8 Rosedale Cottages, although there is nothing to suggest that it was the same house.

Life has a New Order

The census for 1901 would be the last census to record seven light keepers at South Foreland, but James Core would not be the last Engineer-in-Charge. This was the new age. Queen Victoria had died on the 22nd January 1901 having reigned for almost 64 years and most of the population had known no one else. King Edward VII was now on the throne. He had attracted the title of the 'Sailor King,' but he would not live to see his modern fleet go to war with his German cousin. At South Foreland the experimentation was over. Electricity was no longer the wonder of the age.

The 20th century ushered in a new appreciation of invention and innovation among ordinary people, as their education improved and their understanding of the benefits mitigated an underlying resistance to change. Electricity was being seen and talked about by the working man as trams took to the streets and carried him to work, so the councils debated the removal of gas lamps in favour of the new, clean electric light to turn their nights into day. Electric light in homes was considered to be too bright for people used to candles and paraffin lamps. It was even said of the South Foreland light, that its light was too bright, for

it could be seen six miles inland in France when all that was needed was a light bright enough to be seen by inward shipping three miles from the headland.

It had been an electric station now for 30 years, and the light keepers were used to the well established procedures. There would be no more experiments at the station. There *would* be more changes, but they took place without a Knott to see them, and that is not what Edmond had anticipated when he opened the door of his cottage at the Lower Light to a welcome from William and Annie Warder.

William and Fanny Hast

All the keepers recorded on the 1901 census had left by 1904 with the exception of the senior keeper, William Hast, who had arrived in 1893 and stayed for sixteen years, until 1909. It was not until I began looking into his career that I found it was anything but straightforward. Occasionally the family historian will encounter a person who can only be described as elusive in a society in which most people are content to conform. Trinity House employees were in this majority group, but inevitably there were those individuals who didn't conform. William Hast was one of these.

Hast was born on the 3rd October 1845 and baptised on Christmas Day in the Parish Church of St. Nicholas in Harwich. His father, William, was a mariner and his mother was Harriet. In 1851, William Hast senior was at sea when the census enumerator called at East Gate Street, Harwich to find Harriet with her three children, Harriet (9), Mary Ann (3) and Samuel (1)², but young William was not recorded. He was 6 years old and the gap on the record where he should have been is blatant. He was not found in any censuses until 1901 at South Foreland. Neither his marriage nor his children's births were found in the GRO Indexes.³ Even his 16 years at South Foreland appeared in only one census. William and Samuel Mayor Hast seem to have shared the same mother, but Samuel was completely conventional. So what was it about William? What kind of man was it who took the Principal's cottage at the South Foreland High Light in 1893 when he was 38, but seven years later said that he was only 41. Perhaps it was just a transcription error.

August had become the month for swimming the Channel after Captain Matthew Webb succeeded for the first time without any assistance in August

1 A local directory of 1908 listed a greengrocer's shop at number 2 Sotheron Road Watford where they were in 1911.

2 1851 Census, HO107/1780 Folio 81 p25.

3 General Registrar's Office of Births, Marriages and Deaths.



ABOVE: The lighthouse at West Usk, as seen in 2015 following restoration by its owner. Two lights on either side of the river once showed mariners the way into Newport, South Wales.

1875. As the century rolled to its conclusion the attempts increased until it had become an annual event by 1900. Every attempt was followed in detail in every newspaper and every report featured the South Foreland light as this was every swimmer's dominant marker. Dover beach had been the original objective, but often the tide and the wind decreed that it would be St. Margaret's Bay where they staggered ashore to become a celebrity.

Every success narrowed the Channel and brought France ever closer in the minds of visionary travellers. Inevitably there would be suggestions of a Channel Tunnel. Talk began in the same decade as the swimmers, the 1870s, but the first probing excavations began in 1880. This attempt ended in failure in 1882, but there was a tunnel that extended for 2,300 yards (2,100 m) towards France. This nurtured the belief that it could be done, and there was a determination at large that would eventually make the world a smaller place. When talk of a tunnel was revived in 1904 it included a proposal for a bridge, and a very reasoned argument was put forward based upon the slight variation in railway gauges between France and Great Britain. It was thought that this would present a problem. Cars, however, would not, and the French were leading the field in automobile manufacturing.

In 1900 Trinity House announced a small shift in the moorings of the South Goodwin Lightship (sometimes known as South Sands Head). It was moved five cables, but a cable length was one tenth of a nautical mile or 100 fathoms - 600 feet (183 m). Five cables then become quite significant as it was 3,000 feet, when a mile was 5,280 feet. Normally I

would not include issues relating to the Goodwins Light Vessels in this text, but in this case there would be repercussions.

In 1903/04 there was a considerable swell of discontent among ship owners' associations who wrote 'memorials' to Trinity House concerning inadequacies in coastal lights and fog signals. Trinity House responded with a programme of upgrades that embraced fourteen light stations, many of which are featured in this text.⁴ Five of that number focused upon the fog signal and a sixth was an entirely new fog signal station at Penlee overlooking Plymouth Sound. Portland Bill was a new lighthouse replacing two older lights and the twin lights at the entrance to the River Usk were reduced to one on the west bank. Portland had attracted Richard Comben as its first Principal Keeper, but also featuring on the list was the South Foreland Light which simply reports an 'improvement of the light.'

In May 1904 Trinity House announced changes to the characteristic of the South Foreland Upper Light as it would be upgraded to a revolving optic with a flash of 2½ seconds. However, the Lower Light was to be discontinued and the new position of the light vessel was cited as the reason for closure. What had been South Foreland's signature identity for more than two centuries was now at an end. Two beacons were no longer necessary.

As is often the case with any change there are always sceptics, and even some who oppose it outright. The Liverpool Chamber of Commerce were quoted in the *Dover Express*⁵ for a blatantly sarcastic comment that the trials at the South Foreland...

"... had been almost laughable with lights fixed, rotating, blinking and floating. The two fixed electric lights show most brilliantly on a dark night and dazzle the sight of men who have to pick up the dim glimmer of the meanest little lamp on a small vessel. These men have no concern to make their presence known to the rapidly moving ocean leviathan, they concern themselves only with being on the right side of the law governing the night navigation of vessels."

It is interesting that, once again, here is comment that is almost saying that the light is too bright, and it may have been the fact that it was an incredibly bright **fixed** light that inadvertently drew attention to it. However, the fixed light was about to change to a flashing one, and the completion date had been set at the 23rd November 1904.

⁴ *Lloyds List* 23 February 1905.

⁵ *Dover Express* 3 June 1904.

A New Light Is In Place, But Is It Safe?

The necessity to douse a light when an optic is changed is never made clear in the Notices to Mariners.⁶ There must have been a prescribed period during which the light was 'Off.' How else could a major task of that nature be achieved, especially as it might involve a partial dismantling of the lantern?⁷ Obviously the Lower Light would remain lit each night, but there must have been a time when there was no light in the upper tower.

The optic that was designated for South Foreland was not new and that may come as a surprise, especially as we recorded earlier that those at South Foreland had been specially made for an electric light in 1872. They were unique, so why was this situation different? In fact this optic had been new in 1888 and fitted into another electric light station – St Catherine's Point on the Isle of Wight. John Williams had been there to see it turned on, so he would have been interested to know that it had found its way to South Foreland, as he enjoyed the last years of his retirement in Cornwall.⁸

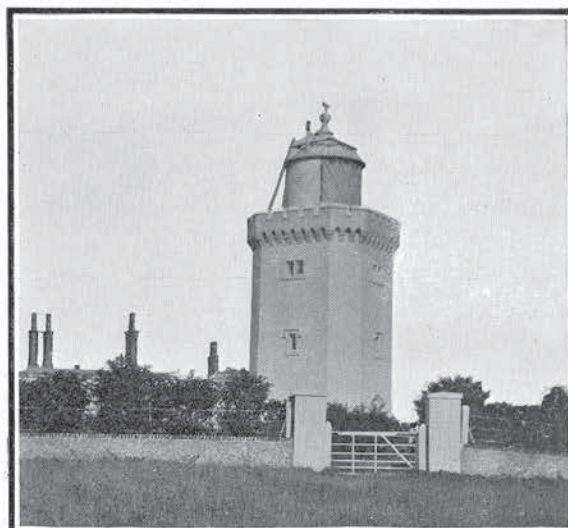
When the optic had been at work in St. Catherine's lighthouse it had been a revolving optic rotating on rollers, but the friction incurred in such an arrangement meant that it could only revolve slowly, and its flash was consequently quite long. In 1892 the French began experiments with a mercury bath at La Teignouse light which promised the possibility of a frictionless movement to such an effect that they installed one in the lighthouse at Cap de la Hève in the following year. This development had been monitored by David Stevenson, Chief Engineer of the Northern Lighthouse Board, who had a light at Noup Head, Westray in Orkney, on his drawing board at the time. The light was lit in 1898 and considered to be a great step forward. As a consequence, Trinity House were about to try it at South Foreland in 1904, but it wasn't the first to enter service. That was reserved for Lundy North in 1899.

Mercury does not behave like water. It is a metal in a liquid state. If a phial of it is dropped and

6 Notices to Mariners were (and still are) the official method of communicating changes to the ways of working at sea. Naturally, whenever a change was to be made to the system of navigational aids, Trinity House issued such a Notice to the general public.

7 In later years it was usual to substitute a temporary light for one being repaired or upgraded. A Notice to Mariners was still required.

8 John & Elizabeth Williams were living in Portscatho in 1901 and he may have died in 1905 aged 83.



SOUTH FORELAND HIGHER LIGHTHOUSE (LIGHT TO BE ALTERED FROM "FIXED" TO "FLASHING")

A light-ship having recently been placed at the southern extremity of the Goodwin Sands two lighthouses on the South Foreland are not required, so it has been decided to alter the higher one from a "fixed" to "flashing" light and to do away with the lower altogether. The alteration, which is now in progress, must be completed by the night of November 23 next, for all shipping throughout the world has been notified of the change on that day



THE LOWER LIGHTHOUSE, TO BE DEMOLISHED

The Foreland lights are among the most important round our shores, for the dreaded Goodwins lie between them and only a few miles out at sea. There are two lighthouses about a quarter of a mile apart at the South Foreland, one being on ground 100 ft. higher than the other, but only one on the northern headland

ABOVE: The changes to the South Foreland lighthouses attracted attention across the southeast of England. This feature appeared on page ii of the magazine *Sphere*, October 15, 1904.

smashes on the floor the mercury escapes as if it is alive, and it soon attracted the name 'quicksilver.' It is notoriously difficult to 'mop up' if it has been spilt and there are stories in the folklore of light keepers describing large spills after a rock lighthouse using a mercury bath was battered by an exceptional storm. No doubt there was a lot of jocular during the cleanup, but it was a process that should have been treated with respect.

Beyond its novelty, mercury is a poisonous neurotoxin that affects the brain. Mercury poisoning led to the term, 'as mad as a hatter.' Edmond Knott's wife, Alice, might well have heard the stories, as her family were involved in hat manufacture in Luton. The comic title originated among the Huguenot hatters of Paris who specialised in felt hats of all shapes and sizes, but it was no joke. Felt is made from animal hair removed from fur pelts in a process known as 'carroting'. The hair is bonded together into a pliable material in a process that required both heat and pressure and was very far from easy. Paris hatters discovered that mercury made the task easier, and to better effect, but they kept their process a closely guarded secret. The downside was that the hatters' constant exposure to mercury vapours gave rise to serious medical conditions that in turn attracted the unsalutary title of 'mad hatter.' When the Huguenots were driven from Paris and came to East London in the mid-1800s they brought their secret (and their disease) with them until the use of mercury in the trade was made illegal in France in 1898 and prohibited in England in the early 1900s - just as the South Foreland mercury bath was being fitted!

It is today more than 30 years since a light tower has been inhabited by keepers and, as far as I am aware, no investigation has ever been conducted into their general state of health. There have always been concerns about their mental health and instances of depression and even suicide have occurred, even at South Foreland, but nationally these instances were very rare. In Canada it was a little different. The lighthouse authorities there were sensitive to abnormal behaviour in their light keepers and a study was instigated to evaluate the presence of mercury in their west coast lighthouses. Studies conducted with the lighthouse personnel and their wives found that it was lower than expected for the occupational group, and a careful clinical examination of the lighthouse environment concluded that, with good, convectional ventilation, it was under control and well understood by its keepers.⁹

Any investigation of this nature requires working patterns to be studied. What were the keepers doing that put them in close contact with the element? It must not be forgotten that in 1904 the use of mercury in lighthouses was entirely new and very few lighthouses were using the medium, yet

somehow the keepers had decided that the dirt that inevitably settled on the surface was detrimental to the smooth running of the optic, driven by its clockwork mechanism. After all, they were the ones to be disciplined if the flash was not precisely what the mariner expected. It was generally accepted that a light keeper kept everything spotlessly clean and that now embraced the mercury, so a practice developed that involved emptying the bath, cleaning it and then straining the mercury through linen cloths before refilling it again in time for the night's duty watch. Doing this meant handling the mercury and the soiled cloths. Emptying and refilling the baths would mean occasional spillages, no matter how small, and the quicksilver would disappear into cracks and crevices that would defy recovery.

As a consequence, these hazards should never be dismissed. There is a story recorded from the period under discussion which is best told by the Friends of the Ballenas Island Light off the coast of British Columbia who know their light and its history.

"In 1898, Captain Smythe of the Royal Navy survey ship Egeria recommended that a light and fog alarm be established on Ballenas Islands to serve the growing number of vessels using the Inside Passage. James Gaudin, the marine agent in Victoria, endorsed the proposal and, after securing approval from Ottawa, dispatched a crew in May of 1900 to select a suitable site.

A knoll on the south easterly part of South Ballenas Island was chosen as the location for a square, pyramidal, tower, built of wood and topped by a square, wooden lantern. The tower measured thirty-three feet from its base to the vane on its lantern and exhibited its light at a height of 100 feet above high water. The light had a repeating pattern of fixed white for twenty seconds followed by an eclipse for ten seconds.

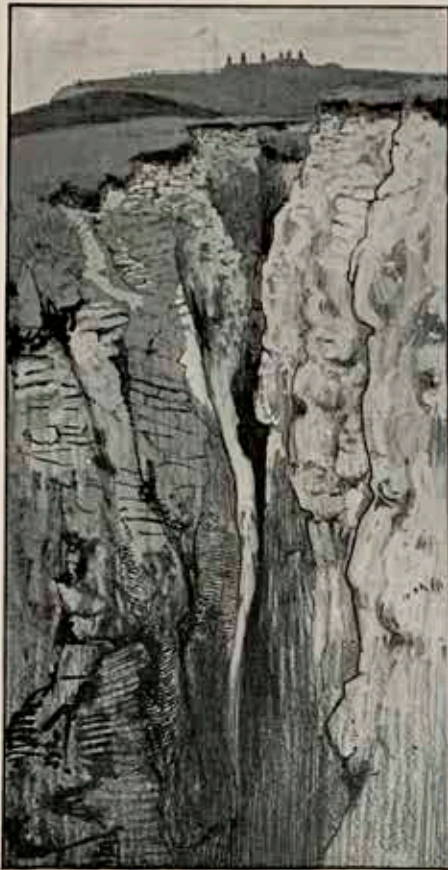
Ballenas Islands had belonged to Charles Drummond, but after he drowned while rowing home from Nanaimo one evening, his will dictated that the islands be given to Maggie, his Indian wife. Maggie later married Wilhelm Betait, a German immigrant who anglicised his name to William Brown.

When Ballenas Lighthouse was completed in 1900, William Brown was appointed its first keeper. The following year, Brown was given a hand foghorn along with a charge to use it in response to the signals of vessels near the islands. In 1905, Gaudin learned from police at Nanaimo that Keeper Brown

⁹ Presented at the 11th Annual History of Medicine Days at the University of Calgary and deposited in the National Library of Medicine, Bethesda MD, USA.

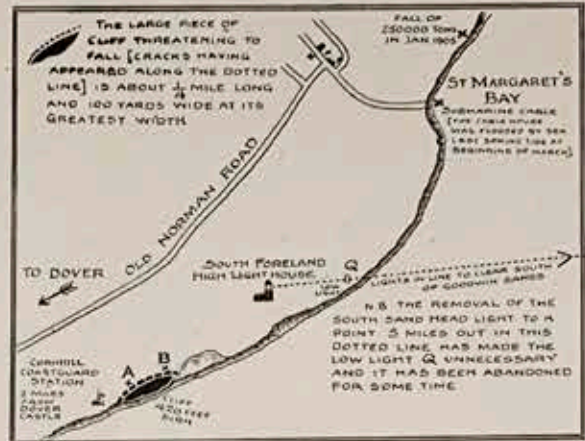
THE SAFETY OF THE SOUTH FORELAND LIGHT FROM A FALLING CLIFF.

SKETCHES BY A. HUGH FISHER; PHOTOGRAPH BY FRITH



ONE OF THE FISSURES FROM POINT "B" IN THE PLAN.

IT was rumoured recently that the South Foreland Lighthouse was in danger, and that the cliff on which it stood was ready to fall. The lighthouse, however, is perfectly safe, for the dangerous part of the cliff is, as will be seen from the plan, some distance from it. Huge fissures have opened in the rock, and these are still widening, so that there is little doubt that before long a great subsidence must take place. The line of the crack entirely clears even the old low light of the South Foreland, and a higher light cannot in any way suffer from the fall when it does occur. Formerly the higher and the lower lights were used as leading lights for ships, and sailors took important bearings by getting the two lights in line. Now, however, they find the same position by taking a bearing on the existing high light and one on another lighthouse some distance at sea. On the plan will be found a line explaining the old and the new bearings. The low light has been superseded by the removal of the South Sand Head Light to a point five miles out in the direction of the arrow on the plan. The bearings given by the two lights enable ships to clear the Goodwin Sands.



MAP SHOWING THE SAFETY OF THE SOUTH FORELAND LIGHT, AND THE POSITION ("A B") OF THE TOTTERING CLIFF.



THE DISUSED LOW LIGHT IN THE SOUTH FORELAND.



was being held in the city jail and was described as insane and irresponsible. Shortly thereafter, Maggie had to have her husband committed to the lunatic asylum in New Westminster as he was “hopelessly insane and violent.” Miraculously, Brown returned to the station a month later, but his recuperation proved temporary, as he was recommitted the following year, never to be released again.

Maggie cared for the light as needed until Brown’s nephew, Wilhelm Betait, arrived from Germany and was put in charge of the light.”¹⁰

While there is no mention of mercury and there is no way to be sure that William Brown was suffering from its effects, his case has been included by those who have made a study of lighthouse keepers’ health on the North American continent in modern times.

Last Man Out Turn Off the Light

At South Foreland, the new mercury bath to float the eight-sided lens was designed by Chance Bros who also designed the clockwork mechanism to drive it. This needed to be wound by hand every 2½ hours, and whilst they were making one for South Foreland they made another set for the light at St. Catherine’s Point, together with a new four-sided optic that is still in use today.

There is no record of the timescale for this work, but I would imagine that it was nearing completion when James Sparling gave his illustrated lecture to the Institute of Marine Engineers at their headquarters at 58 Romford Road, Stratford on Monday 31st October 1904. He chose as his subject ‘Lighthouses,’ but it doesn’t say if he was using a limelight projector. It was lectures like this at Workers’ Institutes that inspired the working man to improve his knowledge and his situation. In 1904 the talk among lighthouse engineers was all about acetylene gas, newly introduced in Canada and Sweden, and their enthusiasm for it soon reached the ears of the national newspapers and frequently featured on their pages.

Wednesday 23rd November 1904 was a day that South Foreland changed permanently, the day that the keepers left the Lower Light for the last time. It was also a poignant moment in the history of the Knott Family. There had been two lights on the headland for almost 300 years. The Low Light had just passed its 60th jubilee in its present form. It was the only place that the Knotts had known until the

1860s. Yet the Upper Light was still essential, and had a long life in front of it, unlike George Knott who died on the 27th January 1904 without knowing what had been planned for the future of ‘his’ light.

It is not known who turned off the light for the last time. It usually fell to the Principal Keeper, William Hast. It was his station. Without a light, William Warder had lost his home, but he would find another light on the Admiralty Pier in Dover, whilst his wife settled into 38 Stanhope Road with her widowed visitor. The second keeper cannot be named with any certainty, but it was possibly John Robert Hall who had taken Edmond’s place by 1902. It was no coincidence that he had been the senior Assistant Keeper at St. Catherine’s Point in 1901. He would have brought with him the knowledge of the old optic he knew so well. He left in 1905, once his task was done

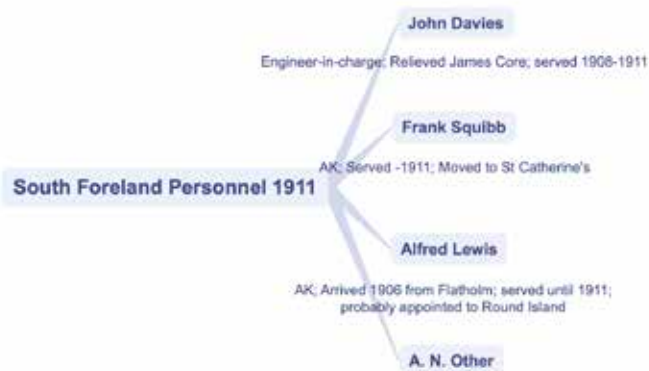
It would have been appropriate for the Lower Light to have had Edmond as its last keeper, but he may not have known of its impending closure when he arrived. Instead he had come to South Foreland to introduce Alice and his young family to their grandparents, George and Catherine, a lovely idea that had sadly ended in disgrace. The date of their move to Watford is unknown, but that is where they were found when the 1911 census was conducted. Edmond was now a greengrocer.

The Trinity House management did not see the necessity to explain their actions in these circumstances, but it was the talk among the seafarers that the lights were still being used by some as leading lights. This was putting them in the wrong position to pass safely outside the new moorings of the South Goodwin light vessel. Another unstated, yet obvious reason was the instability of the cliff face.

The Cliff Remains a Danger

A large part of the cliffs fell on Wednesday 11th January 1905, barely six weeks after the closure of the Low Light, and - just like today - as soon as the word got around hundreds of sightseers flocked to the cliffs to see what had happened. Reports in the London Newspapers vary. The *London Daily News* published an account by their own correspondent, whilst a reporter from *The Standard* had been talking to James Core. He said that the incident ‘had kept him busy’, but offered the opinion that the fall was due entirely to erosion, and he disagreed with public opinion that blasting at the Dover Harbour works had weakened the cliff face. It was true that the Low

¹⁰ <https://www.lighthousefriends.com/light.asp?ID=1185>.
Downloaded July 2021.



Light was now only 65 feet (20 m) from the cliff edge, but he felt that it was in no immediate danger.¹¹ The official stance was that its safety was not threatened, and the portion of the cliff that had detached itself in no way affected the foundation of the lighthouse. It would appear that there had actually been two falls over the Tuesday/Wednesday period. The first had been close to the Low Light on the Tuesday, but the second fall at Fan Bay was extensive. It extended for about 300 yards (270 m) along the base of the cliff and had formed a small causeway into the sea. Sightseers were being warned not to venture along the shoreline and the Coastguard had mounted a watch, not to keep people away, but to watch the huge crevices that had opened at the top of the cliff.¹²

The situation on the South Foreland was so sensitive that a full page was dedicated to it in the *Illustrated London News* published on the 21st April 1906 (see p294) using extraordinary etchings of the damage, together with a map and a photograph of the Low Light. It might have been over a year since the catastrophe, but it left no one in any doubt that more significant landslips were inevitable, if not imminent.

The rapid thaw of the heavy frost of the winter of 1906 was blamed for the fall of several thousand tons of chalk on the 2nd January 1907 which was reported in the *Globe* on the following day. This fall occurred mid-way between the Cornhill Coastguard Station and the lighthouse and the large fissures along the cliff top opened up to an even greater extent.

Alfred and Rowena Dale

It was, perhaps, unfortunate that there was so much attention focused upon the cliffs for in the midst of all the publicity and even quite a bit of

¹¹ A similar fall is shown in the photo on p198.

¹² *London Daily News*, Thursday 12 January and *The Globe*, Friday 13 January 1905.

gossip, there was someone on the light who was not herself. Rowena Dale had returned to South Foreland with her husband Alfred, possibly during 1905, following his appointment at the Cromer Light in Norfolk which had lasted about four years. Although they had no children, St. Margaret's was Rowena's home village where they had married in 1894. She should have been among friends and relatives.

On the morning of Friday 2nd March 1906 Alfred Dale got out of bed at 4 a.m. to go on watch, leaving Rowena in bed in their cottage in the Middle Buildings. When he returned to the kitchen at the end of his watch (about 8 a.m.) he noticed that she was not about and was alarmed to find an apologetic, farewell note on the kitchen table. George Pascall a Supernumerary Assistant Keeper, who was lodging at the coastguard station, had seen her twice at around 7.15 a.m. near the Engine House. On the first occasion she had her hair hanging down her back, but on the second occasion she had a shawl over her head and was walking past the Engine House as if towards her own front door.

After finding the note, Alfred went straight to James Core. The time was 8.15 a.m. and they set off to search the foot of the cliffs. They found her on the beach about 18 feet (5.5 m) from the foot of the cliff at a point where it was about 280 feet (85 m) high. Her shawl was nearby.

The inquest into her death was held at the lighthouse on the following day. James Core told the Coroner that he believed that when she was seen near the Engine House she was checking to see that the curtains had been drawn in the lantern. He explained that curtains were essential to prevent anything catching fire in the lantern due to the effects of the sun. If they were drawn, she knew that she would not be seen, in spite of the fact that everyone was up and about at that time.

Alfred Dale told the Coroner that his wife had not been herself for about a year, but he blamed her melancholy state on a very bad bout of influenza in about 1901. She had never been quite the same since and was often very depressed. The court ruled that she had committed suicide due to a temporary insanity.¹³ Needless to say that Alfred Dale had no wish to remain at the South Foreland light after he had seen her buried in the St. Margaret's Churchyard. There had been only one burial in 1906 when the vicar, Rev. Basil

¹³ *Dover Express*, 3 September 1906.



ABOVE: The lighthouse at St. Anthony Head seen in 2018. It guards the entrance into the busy Fal estuary in Cornwall.

Smythe, was confronted by three within four days. Rowena's burial on Tuesday 6th March 1906 was the second in that week, but the gathering of keepers standing around the church must have felt most uncomfortable.

Alfred Dale stayed in the lighthouse service. In 1911 he was at Mucking and had married again in 1910. His new wife, Evelyn Green, was from the local village of Stanford le Hope and the lighthouse was the same one to which Henry Thomas Knott went when his wife died unexpectedly. A curious coincidence?

And Then There Were Four

The 1906 inquest on poor Rowena Dale featured a young man named George Pascall, who was not only one of the new breed of 'flying light keepers' staying on a station sometimes for only a matter of weeks,¹⁴ but his lodging in the coastguard cottages

¹⁴ Part of the Trinity House training programme was to give new recruits experience of the different equipment to be found in lighthouses. The men were called Supernumerary Assistant Keepers (SAK) and were allocated to lighthouses for short periods. This name was not generally used until the early 20th century. This



ABOVE: The lighthouse at Spurn Point, the head of a long spit of sand that encloses the estuary of the Humber and the route into Kingston upon Hull, Immingham and Grimsby.

was a major departure from anything previously known at South Foreland. He was not alone in avoiding capture in official records, and before the next census two keepers slipped through my net and departed. They had spent between 3 and 5 years at the light: Frank Squibb (1904-07) and Alfred Ernest Lewis (1906-11) were there in the new era of a single South Foreland lighthouse when appointments were growing shorter.

Alfred and Julia Lewis

Alfred Ernest Lewis was born on a lighthouse in 1864. It was the less well known light at St. Anthony Head, overlooking the Carrick Roads with Pendennis Castle and Falmouth in the background. In 1871 the family had moved to the Spurn High Light on the long and inhospitable spit of land created by the tides building a sandbank in the Humber estuary as they turned the river southwards. Alfred's brother, Arthur, was born on Spurn light in 1872. Burnham-on-Sea, however, on the coast of north Somerset was a world of difference, and the Lewis family were

might, from time to time, increase the men on station from three to four.



ABOVE: An old photograph of the two leading lights at Burnham-on-Sea. In the foreground, the Low Light is mounted on piles on the beach, whilst the High Light is just visible ashore in the distance.

settled there in 1881 with only the two youngest children with them. They were still at Berrow Road in Burnham ten years later with both children still at home. Alfred was not in the family house in 1881, but he was still in Burnham. Next to the Mason's Arms on Royal Parade was Nos. 1 & 2 Regent Street and it may have been a large property as twelve people were living there. It was the premises of Albert King and his wife Charlotte. They were both in their 20s with three children under 2 years of age, but Albert King was the local draper and grocer with four of his shop assistants living in; Alfred Ernest Lewis was one of them. At 17 years old, he was a grocer's apprentice¹⁵ and it wasn't what he wanted to do.

Alfred probably met Julia Roberts in the serpentine shop on the Lizard where she worked with her elder sister, Mary.¹⁶ It was mandatory for every visitor to take home a souvenir lighthouse turned from the peculiar, green serpentine rock found in the spectacular cliffs at Kynance Cove, not far from the lighthouse. They married in the parish church on the 11th May 1893 and their daughter Claire was born at the Lizard lighthouse in 1895.

¹⁵ 1881 Census RG11/2418 Folio 6 p5.

¹⁶ 1891 Census RG12/1841 Folio 130 p13.



ABOVE: The lighthouse on Flatholm is situated in the middle of the Bristol Channel. Unlike its name, the island rises to a height of 105 ft (35 m) above sea level.

By 1901 they were at Flatholm lighthouse on a small, limestone island in the Bristol Channel, four miles from the South Wales coast near Cardiff. The lighthouse return for Flatholm had been completed in the ship format and filed with the Cardiff Harbourmaster along with the two light vessels of Breaksea and East & West Grounds. There was a farmhouse on the island, but close by was a new isolation hospital for the Cardiff Docks & Harbour Board, opened in 1896, and a small contingent of the Royal Garrison Artillery housed in a barrack block. It was a strange place. It was 1906 before they arrived at South Foreland, but they left again just before the census of 1911. They were heading for St. Mary's on the Scilly Isles where Alfred, Julia and Claire were found in the Trinity Cottages at the Garrison. Alfred may have been appointed to Round Island and was 'off watch' at home on the Census weekend.

Frank and Emma Squibb

Frank Squibb is difficult to identify as there were two men of that name. Coincidentally both of them lived with the St. Catherine's Point Lighthouse as their neighbour, but the younger Frank born in 1879 was the son of Jacob Squibb, a police constable



ABOVE: The Lizard lighthouse in 2018.

in the Hampshire Constabulary.¹⁷ This Frank was new to the Trinity House lighthouse service in 1901 and was an SAK at the Lizard before returning to St. Catherine's by 1911. However, his presence on the South Foreland light was confirmed with the birth of a daughter, Elsie Mary, at the lighthouse at the beginning of 1906. All three Squibbs frequented lights along the south coast and only William is known to have visited South Wales on one occasion.

John Davies

A third name, John Edmond Davies (1908-11), was erroneously listed as a light keeper and we find that he was actually an engineer and the Engineer-in-Charge of the Lizard Light in 1901. John's arrival, apparently in 1908, was mistakenly quoted as ending in 1910 but he was still at the light for the 1911 Census. Davies was born in Pembroke Dock in 1864 to William and Martha Davies and in 1881¹⁸ he was at home with the family at 21 Dimond Street (sic) in the parish of St. John, Pembroke Dock, but without any trade or occupation. They were Milford people and his father was an Officer at the Customs House. Surprisingly, John was still at home in 1891 and home had changed to Hamilton Terrace, Steynton, Milford, where John was now a mechanical engineer

¹⁷ 1881 Census, RG11/1190 Folio 59 p11.

¹⁸ 1881 Census, RG11/5412 Folio 4 p5.

aged 27.¹⁹ His presence on the South Foreland Light suggests that he took charge after the retirement of James Core, who had reached the age of 64. James and his wife Anna originated from Scotland, but they had decided that they were too familiar with St Margaret's to leave it behind, so they had settled on a house in Walmer and we will meet them again later.

The Old Lighthouse Tells a New Story

In 1855, before the old traditional life at the South Foreland lights was transformed by experimentation, Henry Knott would never have imagined that 50 years later, his old home would lie deserted on the cliff top as discussions were held at Trinity House to decide what should be done with it. There had been a considerable amount of talk and some interest in trying to promote St. Margaret's at Cliffe as a Health Resort, news of which was published in 1905. There had also been much talk of encouraging the mildly aristocratic gentlefolk to purchase pleasant villas with exceptional views across the Channel to France. Examination of some of the images reproduced here shows the expansion that took place in the vicinity. It was not the intention to be a resort like Folkestone, or the newly burgeoning Margate. St. Margaret's would be 'select'

¹⁹ 1891 Census, RG12/4533 Folio 6 p6.

to attract a 'certain kind of person' and there were people interested. One of those was James Neale.

Any historian will tell you that there are times when research becomes an unrewarding slog, but he or she continues in the hope that a hidden nugget will be exposed and all will be revealed. This was one of those occasions. It began with a single clue written in a small booklet about the history of St. Margaret's published in 1910. It read,

*"The building and land around the old lighthouse reverted to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners who sold it to a Mr. Neale and he in turn converted it into a private residence. A stipulation was made that no light was to be lit in the lantern unless curtains were used to veil it."*²⁰

There was only one place to start looking for a single name and that was in the local newspapers. Eureka! A death announcement was the key to the door.

*"On the 18th January (1909) at 10 Bloomsbury Square W.C., very suddenly, James Neale F.S.A. & F.R.I.B.A. of 10 Bloomsbury Square, London and the Old Lighthouse, South Foreland."*²¹

James Neale was an architect who had been working on designs for a client's house at St. Margaret's when his attention was drawn to the deserted lighthouse. The first clue that he had intentions for the place came barely noticed among the 'Situations Vacant' advertisements in the *Dover Express* for the 20th April 1906. A man and wife (without encumbrances) were wanted for the Old Lighthouse at South Foreland, near Dover. The wife was to be a good plain cook and the man would attend the stable and garden and be generally useful. Ages and references were requested and replies were to be sent to 'N' 10 Bloomsbury Square, London WC.

There was no doubt about it. This was the Old Lighthouse. It now had a name and it was ready to be occupied, but I don't think he found his couple. This simple, innocuous advertisement infers that the successful purchase of the old Low Light was completed by James Neale in the latter months of 1905, allowing its conversion into a single eight roomed property to be completed over the winter of 1905/1906. It was said that he spent a considerable sum of money on its conversion into a country residence and, of course, a garden had to be created

from almost nothing. He became a frequent weekend visitor and gradually his generous nature was recognised by the local residents. The response to his initial advertisement is unknown, but he was unsuccessful in finding a suitable couple. He did accept the credentials and references brought by Anne Kilkin and he installed her in the Old Lighthouse as his Housekeeper. If Anne had come from the position she held in 1901,²² then her credentials were impressive. She had been Housekeeper to the Montgomery Family on their 2,800 acre estate in Norfolk known as Garboldisham which is about 15 miles north east of Bury St. Edmunds. She was sharing Hall Farm, close to the main house, with the Estate Agent Herbert Bateson. They were both about the same age, in their 40s, and neither was married or widowed, so perhaps life at the Hall may have become a little sensitive.

In September 1906 as Housekeeper at the Old Lighthouse, she placed an advertisement in the *Dover Express* for a parlour maid for what she termed a 'small family.' The applicant was to be from 17 to 20 years old and prepared to work for £16 per annum or 6 shillings per week, presumably 'all found.' Two insertions were made before the position was taken.

At 4.30 on the afternoon of Sunday 13th September 1908 Captain Robert Jarrald, late of the 13th Light Infantry, succumbed to a stroke at his home called White Cliff at St. Margaret's. He was very well known around the village where he had lived for eight years. His funeral at the parish church attracted a large gathering of mourners for a service led by the Vicar the Rev. Basil Smyth. The chief mourners were his two brothers, but no less than 17 eminent people gathered around the graveside for the committal. Among them was the local historian Colonel Cavanagh and Miss A. Kilkin, representing Mr. J. Neale of the Old Lighthouse, South Foreland. Captain Jarrald was 63 years old and his coffin of unpolished oak was carried to the grave by four men in his employment. It is possible that James Neale had not been present at the funeral because he too had suffered a heart attack from which he never fully recovered. On the weekend of Friday 15th to Sunday 17th January 1909, James Neale had been staying at the Old Lighthouse, but travelled back to London on the Monday morning. During the afternoon, at his town residence, he was taken

²⁰ St. Margaret's Bay – the Piccadilly of the Sea by J. Harris 1910 and revised by John Jewell circa 1980.

²¹ *Faversham Times* 30 January 1909.

²² 1901 Census RG13/1866 Folio 44 p14.

suddenly ill and was dead within half an hour. His heart had failed and he was only in his 59th year.

Number 10, Bloomsbury Square is still an impressive building with 'WHITE HALL' inset into the entrance floor in black and white marble tiles. In fact it is three addresses 9, 10 & 11 with a central, arched entrance at No.10. As it is 5-storeys high, it is unclear whether each house is divided into apartments as the three grand houses overlook the immaculate private gardens that are so much a part of this London scene. It is only a short walk to both the British Museum and the Lincoln's Inn Fields, which will also feature in this story shortly.

On the 5th March 1909 Neale's Will was proved in the Probate Division of the High Court by his Executors Walter Pattison and Samuel Clarkson and they published a notice seeking anyone who might have a claim against the estate. It was all very normal. Clarkson was an architect from Kensington and probably a friend as well as a business associate. Walter Pattison was one of the partners in a firm of solicitors practising from 52 Lincoln's Inn Fields known as Hores, Pattison and Bathurst and this last name will cross our path again as we seek out the story of the Old Lighthouse.

Concurrent with these advertisements and on the same page of the *Dover Express* the Executors of the Will of James Neale's friend, Captain Jarrald, had instructed local auctioneers to sell his property. It was a charming bungalow called White Cliff just outside the village of St. Margaret's at Cliffe. It had a dining and drawing room opening on to a conservatory. There was a lounge/hall and seven bedrooms. A bathroom had hot and cold water. The gardens commanded an unrivalled sea view and extended to three quarters of an acre with a full sized tennis court as well as a lawn with flower borders, terrace and rose pergola. The whole property was completed by a two-stall stable, coach house and gardener's cottage and was to be auctioned at the *Metropole Hotel*, Dover at 3 p.m. on Thursday 15th April 1909,

The outcome of that auction is not known, but it had to be included in this text as it is likely that White Cliff was familiar to James Neale. Captain Jarrald may have sought Neale's professional expertise and drew attention to the Old Lighthouse in the process and Neale became his neighbour. The events are too coincidental to ignore.

James Neale named only one beneficiary in his Will, his cousin Mrs. Henry Bevill, but it was a great deal of money - £63,456 - and a part of that must have been the value of the Old Lighthouse.

Postscript

We began with the story of Edmond Knott and left him in Watford in 1911, so it is appropriate that I bring his story to its conclusion. The 1920s found Edmond and Alice in Bedfordshire with Florence and Percy. Florence was first to leave home when she married Arthur H. Grubb in the Bedford District in 1921/4Q, whilst Percy joined her in the marital stakes in 1925/3Q when he married May Laughton in their home district of Bedford. Alice Knott died towards the end of 1926 (4Q) aged 60. Three years later, Edmond married Elizabeth Hammond, still within the Bedford District in 1929 (1Q). As the war clouds began gathering again in 1939 the family were found at 197 Stewartby, Bedford. Elizabeth was within a few days of her 70th birthday (10 October) and Edmond (67) was a retired gardener. Astonishingly, he still had Alice's sister, Louise Goodwin (78) living with him.

Stewartby is a strange name that aroused my curiosity. Historically it was a small farming settlement called Wootten Pillinge, where there was a small brickworks at the end of the 19th century. The Stewart family, who took over the management of the Wootton Pillinge brickworks in 1899, were shrewd business people who connected the welfare of their employees to the economic success of their business. Under their management the development of the brickworks and the dream of Stewartby as a model village for their employees started to take shape. Although two blocks of four cottages were built as early as 1910 for the workers, the main development of the village began in 1926 when the Stewart family started to build more housing for their ever increasing number of employees. With this came local amenities, improved canteens, a magnificent swimming bath and a village social centre, namely Stewartby Memorial Hall. It soon developed as a truly model village and in 1935 the decision was made to rename the hamlet Stewartby in honour of its creators.

It was here that Edmond must have found employment as a gardener working for the community beneath the pall of smoke that continuously belched from the forest of brick chimneys that stood for the London Brick Company, which at one time was the largest brick producer in the world. It was here that Edmond died in 1943 and I might be forgiven for wondering if he ever harboured any regrets for dozing off on that one night in 1901.