

The beautiful lighthouse at Flamborough Head in this 2016 photograph only slightly resembles the station that existed during the period of seventy years or so of this chapter. There was much change afoot as, from the 1830s onwards, Trinity House began to establish new working practices more appropriate to the Industrial Age. Not least of these was to upgrade the accommodation provided for the light keepers.





Henry & Ann

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mid-19th century

The family divides, part of it moves north to Flamborough; Lights kept by single families are now more carefully managed by a minimum of two light keepers; Their living quarters remain cramped

A Family Light in Yorkshire

In 1839, when Trinity House became the owners of the two lights at South Foreland, it must not be forgotten that North Foreland was included in the deal, and as a consequence there would have been a flurry of visitors to assess the capabilities of the lights and their keepers. Although the previous owners, the Greenwich Hospital, was a social institution closely linked with the Royal Navy, Trinity House also had an affinity to the Royal Navy, emulating its discipline and its procedures which included a watch system that did not exist at lighthouses in private ownership. To gain the information they sought, the visitors did not need to speak to the light keepers, often considered to be of little education, but if those visitors included the Superintendent of Lights for the district, then he was very likely to have sought out the keepers. He needed to get to know them and their idiosyncrasies and Sam Finnis and Henry Knott (1797 – 1870) were those two men at South Foreland.

Watching from a discreet distance with a young man's curiosity was Henry Knott (3), the family's eldest son now 20 years old and his younger brothers were eager to listen to the snippets of the

conversations that had been overheard. John (18) was already working as a carpenter and George (11) was still at school.

In June 1841 little had changed. Henry 3 is described in the census as his father's assistant keeper, but that was the way it had always been. It would not last, as plans were made for the rebuilding of both lighthouses. Young Henry's position as his father's assistant may have been entirely informal, but at some point the Superintendent must have suggested that Henry should take up formal employment with Trinity House which would then take care of his future. He probably had come to know the family well enough to have confidence in young Henry's knowledge, character and ability, yet he was concerned that there would be no place for him at South Foreland when both lights had been transformed into two-man stations so that watches could be kept.

As that transition gradually took place, the newly rebuilt Upper Light was the first to come into operation in 1843, and this should have created a place for Henry 3 as assistant to Samuel Finnis, but Henry had already left and John Knott took that place, he too having joined Trinity House and abandoned his trade as a carpenter. Young Henry



ABOVE: The appointment of Henry 3 from his home at South Foreland to the distant Flamborough Head in Yorkshire was part of the new administration of Trinity House. It marked the commencement of a new kind of formal career structure for light keepers and demanded flexibility from them and their families in return for a reasonable standard of living and secure employment.

had embraced the wider world that Trinity House offered and sometime around 1843 he had taken the opportunity to see something of the other lighthouses that guarded the coasts of England, but how could he be found? It could only be the 1851 Census and to my astonishment Henry was in the Flamborough Head lighthouse – with a wife, Ann!

It transpired that his departure from Kent came sooner than was expected as on the 22nd July 1843 he married Ann Monkman in Bridlington Parish Church by Licence so Banns were not called and residence was not required: Henry's presence was needed at the lighthouse. This was a surprising turn of events for it meant that Henry must have left South Foreland in the New Year of 1843, if not earlier. His new wife, Ann, had been born in Burton Agnes, about 12 miles to the south west, but she was in Flamborough on the 6th June 1841 as the only servant to the licensee of the *Sea Birds Inn*, Thomas Ward.¹ The inn is unnamed on the census sheet, but Tom Ward was not the only publican in the village as there were

five other inns with typical English names.²

Despite the similarities of their chalk cliffs, Yorkshire was a world apart from South Foreland and this research had a new challenge – to uncover a story of new people and new circumstances which Henry Knott had chosen to adopt.

Destination Yorkshire

It is 304 miles on the roads of today from South Foreland to Flamborough Head in Yorkshire. It might take up to six hours by car, but the journey in 1842 was far from straightforward as the railway 'mania' was only just beginning. Kent was very slow to respond to the railway builders so Henry's first problem was to reach London by stage coach from Dover. Once in London he must have been overwhelmed by the sheer complexity of it all. Railway building was concentrated in the north of England, spreading its tentacles in every direction. London was almost an afterthought. The first direct train from Kings Cross to York ran in 1842 via Doncaster, and Henry might have been bold enough to try it as it only took five hours and was cheaper than the stagecoach. The Royal Mail coach to York left the General Post Office in Lombard Street in London and took four days at a cost of £2 riding inside and travelled the Great North Road, changing horses every 15 miles. Once he had reached York he was still far from his destination on the East Yorkshire coast. The railway did eventually reach Flamborough in October 1847, but that was of little help to Henry Knott on his journey into the unknown. It must have seemed to him that England was a huge country when all he had known before was a tiny portion of Kent.

It was a carrier's van that brought him in to the village from Bridlington and dropped him off at the *Sea Bird's Inn* where he would find lodging and before long a wife. Ann Monkman would have served ale with his meals as he contemplated the magnificence of the Flamborough lighthouse and its open location, and he liked everything he saw.

Described in 1840 as a 'lofty promontory' Flamborough Head is a long finger of land protruding nearly five miles into the North Sea with its extremity over a mile and a half from the village. As the Romans had crossed the Channel from France to Dover under the white cliffs, so the Vikings crossed to Yorkshire and settled the coastal areas. The coast from Bridlington, on the south side, boasts limestone cliffs that are as 'white as snow' and rise to some 50-60 m in height. They must surely have stirred memories of home as Henry absorbed his new surroundings. The headland itself is flat and windswept with its village just a short walk from the light. In 1831 its parish of 3000 acres held 975 souls, a

1 1841 Census HO107/1214/3 Folio 33 pp16&17.

2 1840 White's Directory – *Dog & Duck; North Star; Rose & Crown; The Ship and The Strickland Arms*.



ABOVE: An old engraving of the lighthouse at Flamborough Head where vertical, indented, chalk cliffs rise to heights of around 40-50 m above the sea.

large proportion of whom engaged in fishing the North Sea for its bountiful harvest. By 1841 this had risen again to 1297 just before Henry arrived.

A Magnificent Lighthouse

A contemporary guide to the district describes the lighthouse as follows;

“Within 400 yards of the extreme point of the promontory a lighthouse was built in 1806 and its revolving luminary has flamed nightly at 330 feet above the sea.³ Its elegant brick structure, 80 feet high, is ascended by a circular staircase. It was built by London’s Trinity House and its lantern is admirably arranged. By means of revolving machinery it exhibits every two minutes, one of its three faces, each with seven reflectors. One of the faces is coloured red to distinguish it (Flamboro’) from other lights. In the lower part of the building is the oil vault and a neat house for the keeper. Its lightage receipts amount to about £3500 annually against an expenditure of about £700 and on a

clear night its light may reach as far as 30 miles.”⁴

A modern description of that original light emphasizes how unusual it was in 1806.⁵ It said that it had a distinctive light characteristic of two white flashes followed by a red flash. This was provided by the lighting apparatus, which was designed by optics specialist George Robinson, who was also Chief Inspector of Lighthouses at Trinity House. It consisted of a revolving vertical shaft with a three-sided frame on which were mounted 21 argand lamps, 7 on each side, with parabolic reflectors. On one of the three sides the reflectors were covered with red glass. This was a prototypical use of red glass in a lighthouse and represented the first use of the colour as part of a light characteristic, an idea which was soon taken up elsewhere. According to a description of the lighthouse written in 1818, the red light was used to distinguish Flamborough’s lighthouse from the one at Cromer – a situation not unlike South Foreland’s two lights where it was

³ This height is exaggerated.

⁴ 1840 White’s Directory for Yorkshire.

⁵ Wikipedia: *Flamborough Head*.

necessary to distinguish them from North Foreland's single light.

Many lighthouses are sited in such a position as to ward off the unwary seamen from rocks, reefs, shoals and sandbanks, but there was no such hazard off Flamborough Head. The hazard was the Head itself when sailing craft were at the mercy of any storm from north to south with an easterly component driving the ships towards the coast. If they were too close and the headland loomed over the bowsprit, there was no escape. Between 1770 and 1805 there were 174 vessels wrecked or lost on or near Flamborough Head, but after the light was lit, none had been lost when the light could be clearly seen.

The Light Keepers Identified

The Directory for 1840 emphasising the neat house for the only keeper could not be validated in 1841, but the census for 1851 told a different story. It divided the parish into two parts, north and south of the *Ship Inn*: the lighthouse was in the southern part together with its neighbour, the 'Preventive Station,' comprised of four families. It was a typical rural scene with far more agricultural labourers than there were farms to employ them. There were about ten farms from 87 to 350 acres with farm houses large enough to employ indoor servants and barely half of the farms named. One of them was *Lighthouse Farm*, next to the lighthouse with the Coastguard Station on the other side of the light. It was a very large fishing community which some say totalled over 80 fishermen and a number of fish mongers. This suggests that catches were significant for the immediate neighbourhood. So, although there was a vague resemblance to St. Margaret's at Cliffe, there was a difference in the balance of trade represented.

David and Elizabeth Stratton

David Stratton married Elizabeth Christie on the 2nd May 1816 by Licence in the parish church of Flamborough and they had three children. Their first was Ellen Milne when it was recorded at her baptism in 1817 that David Stratton was a light keeper. William was baptised in 1818 and Jane followed in 1823 and both entries in the register continue to reveal the link to the light. Therefore, it is possible that this man had been appointed Flamborough's light keeper when it was first lit in December 1806. It cannot be said with certainty that he was the first keeper, but if his birth date is

accurate, then he was a 36 year-old bachelor when the light was lit. Unfortunately the parish register is inevitably faded almost to obscurity, but had his name been seen in 1767-70 it would not have added to this debate. However, his marriage in 1816 to a very much younger woman provided a paper trail that is indisputable. David Stratton died shortly after the 1841 census and was buried in the village churchyard on the 9th July 1841 when it was thought that he was 74 years old.

William and Elizabeth Stratton

In 1851, the lighthouse station contained not one, but two small families, as both light keepers had only just turned 30 years old. William Stratton was 32 and came from the village as did his wife Elizabeth Maltby who was 28. Following the death of his father William must have assumed the job was his for the taking. He had helped his father so many times with the task of cleaning the reflectors, and he had climbed the single spiral staircase to trim the wicks, when his father had not felt able to do it. It was his home. It was where his widowed mother and his sister lived. They were his responsibility now that his father was dead. Mourning at this time was a serious business, but not as extreme as the pattern set by Queen Victoria following the loss of 'her Albert' in 1861. Of course mourning affected the women in families more than the men, but it was expected that sons should observe 12 months of restraint following the death of a parent. That did not appear to include William Stratton as his first thought was to marry, a ceremony in the parish church of St. Oswald that was conducted on the 8th August 1841 – just 30 days after his father's burial.

At the census in June 1841 the Enumerator did not record an occupation for William as, in theory, he had none for he could not be the light keeper whilst his father was alive, but William's marriage to Elizabeth Maltby changed that situation and he at once became light keeper one month following his father's death. All was well during 1842 as the ripples on life's pond settled and Elizabeth accepted the child that was growing within her. Jane Ellen was born at the height of winter and taken to the parish church for her baptism on Christmas Day 1842, but whether William knew it or not, change was on the way to Flamborough and it came in the form of a Kentish man named Henry Knott.

The Superintendent arrived in the New Year to inform William that the new system of watches that Trinity House was adopting would mean that

Flamborough was now a two-man station and no longer a Stratton Family light. William had done the job alone for 18 months. His father had done it alone for decades. It was difficult to accept that someone else would inhabit the lighthouse and even more infuriating to be told that a man from Kent would be the 'keeper in charge.' Anyway, where would they live?

There was no suggestion that there was any complaint about the diligence of Stratton's work. It was more concerned with having someone in charge who was not from the local community. Smuggling was rampant along the Yorkshire coast as it was along the south coast of England. A lighthouse keeper from the local population was vulnerable to bribes and incentives that might be overlooked by Flamborough's own Riding Officer,⁶ Thomas Lacey. The Preventive Station represents a time when the word 'coastguard' had a different meaning. They were not there to save souls from shipwreck; they were there to save money for the Government's Treasury, and the fact that the lighthouse keeper's sister was courting a man from the Preventive Service might have made it even more sensitive. Jane Stratton married Henry Bullers at the parish church by Licence on the 2nd September 1845. However, the timings I have suggested for Henry Knott's arrival are uncertain. The two known facts are that Henry was at South Foreland in June 1841 and he married in Bridlington in July 1843. During the two intervening years a lot happened, but the next evidential document is the census for 1851.

One's Company, Two's a Crowd!

It was the weekend of the 30/31st March 1851 when Henry filled out the census form on behalf of himself and his Assistant, William Stratton. It was Henry's duty. He was the Principal Keeper and he was only 31. Surprisingly there was only one child on the station - William Stratton aged 1 year. Henry and Ann Knott did not have a family and little Jane Stratton (now 9) was absent, but there was an easy explanation. She was found in the village keeping company with her widowed grandmother, Elizabeth Stratton who was in receipt of an annuity from Trinity House. With this small income she could rent a cottage for herself, and the six cottages on the sheet were home to three widows and two fishermen with the house next door to her, empty.⁷

⁶ The officials charged with policing the crimes of smugglers were called Riding or Preventive Officers.

⁷ 1851 Census HO107/2367 Folio 335 p19.

Although this census does not specifically record houses, only households, it gives a sense that the lighthouse residence was small, even cramped, with little room for expanding families. This is exacerbated when we find another child missing from the Stratton household - Ann Stratton (3). She was living with her other grandmother, Elizabeth Spink, who also had her mother Jane Maltby visiting the house - a remarkable thought that Jane was great-grandmother to little Ann. James Spink was a retired farmer and he (72) and his wife (56) were both elderly.⁸ Betsy Spink had been baptised Betty Maltby on the 30th November 1794, and she had married James Spink in 1835, so Jane Maltby was her mother.

A lovely engraving published by Furby in 1870 (p126) shows the lighthouse accommodation to be a traditional cottage with a pitched roof. It provided a home for one keeper and his family. Two families would have to live in shared facilities, not uncommon or unusual at this time, but there was a dilemma. Henry Knott was the Principal Keeper and he could have exercised his right to be resident in the cottage, whilst Stratton looked elsewhere. Being a man from the local community that may not have been a problem, yet that didn't happen. As a consequence it provides an insight into the characters of the two keepers. Henry deferred to William's 'squatter's rights.'

Evidence of their mutual tolerance is supported by other observations. One such observation is that Henry and Ann Knott had no family, after eight years of marriage. Was this deliberate in the circumstances, as it could not have been easy? Two Stratton children had been bedded out in spite of being placed with elderly widows. It was not ideal, even if they were the children's grandmothers. Henry had arrived at the light as a bachelor. It may have been assumed from the outset that he would simply be the lodger, but he was already affected by the new policy of Trinity House that saw the accommodation at South Foreland being scrapped and rebuilt for two keepers at each light. Eventually, this would spread to every lighthouse as they were assessed and re-developed along similar lines. Flamborough Head may have been a long way down that list, but life at the lighthouse took an unexpected turn when Henry met Ann Monkman and liked what he saw.

⁸ 1851 Census HO107/2367 Folio 311 p11.



ABOVE: An engraving of the Flamborough Head Lighthouse in 1870 by G Furby.

A Turn for the Worse

At the end of January 1852 little Ann Stratton (4) died and she was buried on the 4th February whilst Ann Knott was pregnant with her first child. That was a period brimful of pathos. Sharing the same house meant that the two women would have shared the trials and tribulations of pregnancy and childbirth. They would have helped each other through the rough times, whilst the men were sent on their way to the lantern. There is no doubt in my mind that little Ann Stratton had been named Ann in 1848 in recognition of that female bond, so it was a blow to both women when they had to stand at the graveside and watch her tiny coffin lowered into the grave. Then it was Ann Knott's turn to be confined - her first child. It might be difficult. It needed the presence of her friend, Liz Stratton, to see her through the hard times. Memories of that graveside were fresh and it was now July when another girl was born. At her baptism she was poignantly given the name Jane Ann Knott. Jane was destined to be Ann Knott's only child, but that was not the case for Elizabeth Stratton. Ann Knott was needed to play the part of the midwife twice more in 1854 and 1855, but Wednesday April 12th 1854 was not a happy day. It

was the week before Easter Sunday and Elizabeth had given birth to a son whom they named David. He lived for a day, but on that Wednesday William Stratton had to carry the tiny box that contained his son to the parish church to see him buried. The baby had never been given the opportunity to see the world about him, as the vicar - the Rev. John Furniss Ogle - conducted the only burial for that month. On his way out of the churchyard William paused to contemplate the headstone marking his elder sister's resting place. Ellen Stratton was a year older than William and she had been only 14 when she died in 1831. That headstone is still there, but none were erected for William's children, Ann and David.

Twelve months later, and Easter Sunday came on the 8th April, but it was a much happier family group that stood with Rev. Ogle around the curious, diamond-patterned, drum shaped font to baptize another daughter named Ann on Friday 27th April 1855. There would be no more Strattons. Ann was the last of the line.

A Change in Direction

On the 5th June 1857, James Spink was buried in Flamborough leaving Elizabeth Stratton's mother a widow. She was now in need of a home and the Strattons had growing children. There was no room for them at the lighthouse so William asked the Superintendent to consider him for the next vacancy in the neighbourhood. There were not too many choices and the resulting move to Spurn Point was a mistake they would live to regret. Poor little Ann died there aged 8 years old and was buried in the Parish Church at Easington on the 12th November 1863. The family was in turmoil and it was decided to return to Flamborough.

In 1859 a fog signal station was built at Flamborough Head, almost on the cliff edge and some distance from the lighthouse. It was equipped

with a rudimentary 18-pound cannon with military gunners to fire it every 15 minutes when visibility was poor. Astonishingly, a residence was built for the gunners inside the perimeter wall, which must have been intolerable for anyone not working the gun, but William Stratton was desperate to return to Flamborough. The Trinity House Superintendent did his best for this compassionate case and the 1871 census finds him lodging with the gunners, Thomas Rutter and Joseph Cain. William Stratton was a 'Temporary Acting Gunner,' but his wife was not with him.⁹ There is a certain poignancy in this situation as it was little different from his years in the lighthouse with Henry Knott. He said that he was married, but his wife does not share his life. Perhaps she could not reconcile living with the noise as Hannah Rutter did. William's life became one in which he was never able to reconcile the loss of his family lighthouse. The only Elizabeth Stratton found in the record was lodging in the village in Front Street which was the address of blacksmith Theophilis Traves.¹⁰ She seems to be among relatives, but at 48 she said that she was not married...

A New Keeper Arrives at Flamborough

A family of five arrived at the little house attached to the light at Flamborough Head sometime around 1858.

George and Maria Appleton

George Garsham Appleton was a new light keeper and his sizeable family presented a problem for his Principal Keeper, Henry Knott. George was a Norfolk man who had been apprenticed to a painter in his home town of Great Yarmouth in 1851, but he couldn't see himself settling to a life of painting doors and windows. Somewhere in South London he met Maria Brock who was also from Great Yarmouth and they married in the Camberwell District at the beginning of 1854. Twelve months later, a daughter Mary was born in the Old Kent Road and Priscilla was born in Peckham, Camberwell in 1857. When George arrived at the light he had an unmarried sister in his entourage who was 10 years his senior and no doubt that brought its own problems.

The decade-long gaps between censuses force family historians to rely on other documents mainly from the births, marriages and deaths of family

members, especially as Assistant Keepers were often young with young families. It is also problematic that they stayed for such short periods, often no more than 2 or 3 years. Therefore it is difficult to be sure when they came and when they left a station, and George Appleton was one such. There is no evidence that he had any additions to his family at Flamborough and the light itself did not appear to attract a significant turnover in keepers. As a consequence George Appleton could easily have stayed for ten years.

His service career is extraordinarily difficult to uncover. In 1871 Maria was in St. Ives with the family, so we conclude that George was on the Godrevy light, although the record for the island has been lost. It was 1876 before his daughter, Priscilla, married in Pembroke Dock on the 11th July, but her father, George, was not at the wedding. She married Stanley Blake 'of the Trinity Service,' but it is clear that he was a light keeper and by 1881, Priscilla and Stanley Blake were at St. Ann's Head lighthouse with their first child. Also in 1881 George Appleton was the Principal Keeper at Hurst Point in Hampshire with daughter Mary (now Maria) still unmarried.

Much of the text so far in this narrative has inadvertently focused upon the trials of family life in a lighthouse on the northeast coast of England. The purpose of its existence has not been ignored. It was a measure of its success that there was little loss of life or shipping during the period of this narrative. Any seaman will not hesitate to say that his ship stays afloat due to his own understanding of the winds and the tides. The slightest mistake puts everything at risk.

During the 1850s there were one or two incidents when ships ran ashore or were lost, but they were not disasters. However, the sea is an unforgiving mistress and she revealed her hand on the weekend of 27/28th December 1862. Nautical men were agreed that there was the most fearsome sea running that had not been seen for a number of years. During Saturday a steamer, ironically named *Lifeguard*, left North Shields on a passage from Newcastle to London. She had 35 passengers on board and a crew of 22. Off Flamborough Head during the night of Saturday/Sunday, the lights of two steamers were observed when suddenly one set of lights disappeared whilst the other continued. This may have been seen from the lighthouse if the keeper on watch had chanced upon it. On the Monday a fishing smack from Bridlington named *Idra* found a box floating in the sea. In it were letters and Christmas presents that were known

9 1871 Census RG10/4812 Folio 104 p25.

10 1871 Census RG10/4812 Folio 112 p10.

to have been on board the *Lifeguard*. The worst had happened and 57 people were never seen again.

But seafarers are a canny lot. It had been noticed in North Shields that she was riding low in the water at the stern. Knowing looks had been exchanged concerning a freeboard of barely 12 inches (30 cm) – all was not as it should be. This was when the sea took command and the ship's feeble defences could not resist the speeding swell from overwhelming her from the stern. 'Pooped,' the seamen called it. They had all seen it before.

A lighthouse can do nothing to help in these situations. It is only there to guide the seafarers in their navigation and it would have been lit that night as on every other night, yet it has been impossible to throw any metaphorical light on the dark years of the 1860s.

It might therefore seem appropriate that it should end on a sombre note. Ann Knott died on Tuesday 20th July 1869 and the confines of the house never felt smaller. She could not lie there longer than was necessary and she was buried on Thursday, two days later. She was just 48 years old. As Henry stood at the graveside lost in his memories, it was 26 years to the day since they had stood at the altar on their wedding day. When Henry came to the decision concerning the marking of her resting place, he did not count the cost. The beautifully sculpted memorial is the epitome of good taste and exudes his love for her. It carries the inscription: "The sun has gone out while it is yet day."¹¹ Yet her spirit is still alive in Flamborough and her memorial is as good as the day it was made.

The seeds for Henry's future were sown on that day in July 1869. It has already been said in this narrative that the census data appears to show that Principal Keepers could exercise a certain amount of personal preference in their appointments and who served with them. I think it could also be true of those Senior Assistant Keepers anticipating promotion. The preceding story concerning the loss of the steamer and the discovery of the box of letters destined for addresses in London is a reminder that people have always found ways to communicate with each other. Each time a keeper changed, the new keeper brought news and gossip from other light stations; each visit of the local Superintendent did the same. But the question that will never be answered is – did the Knott family write to each other? Literacy is, of course, the key and is brought into focus on Henry and Ann's marriage entry in the

¹¹ *Jeremiah* 15:9 – often quoted in influential sermons of the day – 'The' should read 'Her.'

Bridlington church register as Ann scratched her cross on the page. In contrast, Henry could write confidently and clearly, as could his brother George.

Is it possible that Henry knew that his brother John (who had taken his place at the South Foreland Upper Light) had died? Did he know that brother George had left South Foreland for Eddystone and then moved on again to be in Braunton at the Bideford Bar Light in 1869? Did he know that his sister Elizabeth had married Charles Hood and had died shortly afterwards? Charles Hood would become Henry Knott's next Assistant Keeper, but was that a random permutation by Trinity House, or had Charles Hood chosen Flamborough Head as his next appointment knowing that Henry Knott was there? To say, the least, it was unusual to move from Cornwall to Yorkshire.

Charles, Elizabeth and Martha Hood

Charles Hood married Elizabeth Knott in 1858 in the parish church at St Margaret's at Cliffe. Their first child was born at the new light on Godrevy Island, a windswept oversized rock close to St. Ives in Cornwall. Their son died on the island barely 18 months later and Elizabeth abandoned the light for her parent's home at South Foreland where she then died within weeks of her arrival. Charles Hood soon re-married and he chose Martha Tonkin of St. Ives to exchange rings on Christmas Day 1862. Charles was still on the Godrevy light in 1868 when his fourth child was born on the 24th October 1868. He was baptised on the 4th January 1869 at the Wesleyan Methodist chapel in St. Ives, but during the following months it was decided that Charles Hood should move his family to Flamborough Head which was in need of a new Assistant Keeper. Only eight years had passed since that fateful year when he had lost his first wife, Henry Knott's younger sister. We don't know how much of the story Henry was familiar with.

It is possible that Charles Hood chose Flamborough Head for two reasons. First, he wanted to tell Henry personally what had happened. The second reason is more subtle. Charles was anticipating his promotion to Principal Keeper at a straightforward two-man light that had been in Henry's care for more than 15 years. It was time Henry made room for those beneath him and Charles was playing his cards as he saw fit. He is likely to have taken up his appointment in the autumn of 1869, for early in January 1870 Martha presented him with another son who was named

John. There is no baptism for him in the parish church which concurs with normal practice for those of the Wesleyan Methodist persuasion.

However, sometime in this period embracing 1868 there was another move that was not without its connotations. Charles Hood's Principal Keeper at Godrevy Island had been George Thomas who had moved to South Foreland at about this time to facilitate Henry's father's retirement and then to coincidentally be present at the time of Elizabeth's death at South Foreland after leaving her husband Charles Hood at Godrevy. It was on the 7th July 1870 that Henry Knott 2 died at St. Margaret's at Cliffe and this multi-faceted set of circumstances cannot help but raise eyebrows with the two central characters at Godrevy being present at both of the Knott lights, 300 miles apart, in the summer of 1870.

The census for Flamborough Head on the weekend of the 1st/2nd April 1871 formalized the situation after Charles Hood's arrival and revealed a new set of domestic living arrangements. Charles Hood was present on the light, as would be expected of a light keeper at midnight on census night. If it was exact and taken at that hour, then Hood was on watch, whilst Henry was in the house with his daughter Jane. Adjacent to the light was North Farm and Martha Hood had her own house on the farm with five children that included 3-month-old baby John, born in Flamborough.

Charles Hood played his hand to perfection. He became the Principal Keeper at Flamborough Head until he died in the summer of 1895 aged 62 years. He was laid to rest in the protestant churchyard of St. Oswald, Flamborough. Two of Martha's children didn't marry and in 1911 she was living with Rachel and Richard in Viking Cottage in the village.

In 1872 Flamborough Head was chosen to be the first lighthouse to adopt James Douglass's new design of paraffin burning lamps which, when proved to be successful, were installed in all of the oil-burning lighthouses belonging to Trinity House. With the new fuel came a new revolving optic turned by clockwork and installed by the Chance Brothers of Smethwick, which retained its characteristic of two white flashes followed by a red one. This was significant engineering work that required the lantern to be rebuilt and it may have coincided with the upgrading of the keepers' accommodation. At last, Nos. 1 & 2 Lighthouse Buildings were correctly recorded at the 1881 census.

William Stratton died in July 1877, the year before the cannon was replaced by explosive rockets at the fog signal station. He was buried in Flamborough's

churchyard aged 58, but he had outlived his son, William, who had died in 1873 aged 22. Joseph Cain was now the Principal Gunner, but this story will never record whether William Stratton had made it to the rank of a fully qualified 'gunner.' It was a sad end for a man who had inherited his father's lighthouse and this pattern was repeated all around the coasts of England and Wales. Henry Knott had been caught up in this new management policy adopted at Trinity House in London. He had been the means of William Stratton's demise, but the Knott family were also affected by this shift away from family-orientated lighthouses.

It seems probable that Henry did not see any of the technical changes at the Flamborough lighthouse. His time on the station was over, but where did he and his daughter Jane go next? I have never been able to find an answer to that question. Henry and Jane disappear from the record. He does not appear on any other lighthouse in 1881 suggesting that he had died, but there is no practical way of uncovering that information without knowing his circumstances. His wife, Ann Knott, lies in the churchyard at Flamborough marking their life together at the Flamborough Head lighthouse, but she lies alone. Henry does not lie at her side. His resting place is unknown. The lighthouse is his memorial.



ABOVE: Henry Knott's memorial for his wife Ann (1821-69).



