

Lighthouse in danger of crumbling

Campaigners have warned that one of Scotland's most iconic lighthouses is in danger of crumbling away unless restoration work is begun urgently.



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North Queensferry Lighthouse was constructed between 1810 and 1813 under the direction of celebrated Scots engineer John Rennie.

Mr Rennie also built the Crinan Canal and London Bridge.

He superintended Robert Stevenson on the construction of the Bell Rock Lighthouse off Arbroath.

Stevenson, in turn, advised on the lighting arrangements for the North Queensferry tower, also known as The Lantern Tower.

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James Lawson
North Queensferry Heritage Trust

It is hoped that local schoolchildren interested in building techniques will assist in carrying out the work on the tower.

A facsimile of the original lamp will be installed, though not lit, in order not to confuse modern shipping.

A project to restore the tower has been launched by the North Queensferry Heritage Trust.

James Lawson, trust chairman, said: "There's not a huge amount of money involved. I'd put it at the moment at less than £10,000.

"We are hoping that funding will be available from local sources, rather than going through the Lottery."

He added: "This is one of the oldest lantern towers in Scotland. Before then all they had was braziers and things like that.

"It is notable, not only for its early date, but also because it was on probably the most important crossing in Scotland at the time."

Guide ferries

Stevenson's 120ft Bell Rock tower remains in use, the oldest sea-swept lighthouse in the British Isles, warning of the semi-submerged menace of the Inchcape, or Bell Rock, to shipping entering the Firths of Tay and Forth.

Rennie's North Queensferry tower, a mere 20ft tall, was built to guide the ferries that used to ply the Forth between North and South Queensferry and has been dark since the opening of the Forth Road Bridge in 1964.

It was originally lit by whale oil, commonly in use until about 1850 when the much cheaper paraffin became available.

Plans are also afoot for the restoration of North Queensferry's Town Pier, also designed by John Rennie, and the construction of a new visitor centre at North Queensferry station.