

TRANSITION COUNCIL
3rd session



10-13 December 2024
Headquarters, France

14 – CONFERENCE, SYMPOSIA AND OTHER EVENTS

14.4 – Heritage lighthouse of the year

14.4.1 – Commendation for the IALA Heritage Lighthouse of the Year 2025

Note by ENG

1. INTRODUCTION

The Incheon Declaration, adopted at the 19th IALA Conference in 2018, has significantly enhanced IALA's focus on the cultural and historical aspects of Aids to Navigation maintained by its members.

The IALA Heritage Lighthouse of the Year (HLY) award spotlights the most representative lighthouses, celebrating their outstanding contributions to conservation, public accessibility, and education. A Heritage Lighthouse is defined as any lighthouse that possesses cultural significance beyond its operational role and historical era.

2. NOMINATIONS AND MEANS OF ARRIVING AT A COMMENDATION

In line with rule (C75-14.5.2), all participants of ENG were invited to complete a ranking sheet in respect to nominees. 15 Ranking sheets were received. These sheets were then collated to determine the three IALA Heritage Lighthouses that the Committee would commend.

The Final three Lighthouse were:

- Lingao Lighthouse, China
- Eddystone Lighthouse, England
- Hook Head Lighthouse, Ireland

3. COMMENDATIONS

The ENG participants reached a consensus that each nominated lighthouse was deserving of the IALA HLY title. The task of comparing and contrasting these historic structures proved challenging.

After thorough deliberation, ENG resolved to recommend "Lingao Lighthouse, China" to the Council as the IALA Heritage Lighthouse of the Year 2025.

4. THE COUNCIL IS REQUESTED TO

Consider the commendations and **determine** IALA Heritage Lighthouse of the Year 2025.

ANNEX A INFORMATION OF COMMENDED LIGHTHOUSES

1. LINGAO LIGHTHOUSE, CHINA

Standing as the oldest lighthouse in the Hainan Province on Hainan Island, Lingao Lighthouse is a fascinating example of how a heritage lighthouse can be celebrated through innovative tourism ventures, good conservation, clever design technology and educational endeavours.

Building was completed by November of 1894, one of 59 lighthouses built by the General Taxation Department of the customs between the years of 1858 to 1927. This cast iron tower was designed for suitability to the local climate – particularly the need to withstand storms. Comprised of 6 columns and 350 steel rods supporting the tower, Lingao Lighthouse stands at 22 meters tall and decorated with red and white bands for unique visibility. It was remarked in 2010, following structural investigation, that the lighthouse was exceedingly stable – a testament to the design and continued care of the tower since its completion.

Between China MSA and the Ministry of Transport, China has prepared and published a variety of key documents including The Measure for the Protection and Management of Historical Lighthouses in the Maritime Areas of China (China MSA), and the Regulations for the Protection of Historical Lighthouses (Ministry of Transport) – documents which underpin concentrated efforts to maintain, repair and protect heritage sites. This work is exemplified in the continued care given to Lingao Lighthouse and its unique features – most notably the rotating lantern which has continued to be serviced and has remained in operation.

An absolutely fascinating part of the lighthouse and its cultural impact is its position within a larger Lighthouse Park complex – known as the Lingao Lighthouse Liberation Park. Comprised of four themes, the park explores and celebrates the different centuries of lighthouse use with an in-depth on-site presentation on the history of the tower and artefact display. Considered a ‘pearl’ in a necklace chain with another 24 lighthouses located around the shores of Hainan Island, the tower forms one of numerous historic sites along the Hainan Round-Island highway loop. Visitors are encouraged to visit the island and travel along this highway route to uncover the history and natural beauty of the region.

Lingao Lighthouse itself is open to educational visitors, where members of school groups, maritime institutions, and government organisations can visit the lighthouse free of charge by appointment. Open days for World Navigation Day and World AtoN Day are celebrated events open to all, and media outlets have centred on Lingao Lighthouse in recent years, cementing it in popular culture.



2. HOOK HEAD LIGHTHOUSE, IRELAND



Many nations are blessed with historic lighthouses, but few can boast one as old as Hook Head Lighthouse in Ireland. Constructed some-time between the years 1210 and 1240, it is the second oldest operating lighthouse in the world existing largely in its original form - after the Tower of Hercules in Spain.

William Marshall, a Knights Templar, known as the greatest knight, built the lighthouse tower to protect and develop the shipping trade – a priority that is unchanged in 700 years. It was monks from a nearby monastery that likely undertook the construction work and became its lighthouse keepers for the next few centuries. The monks lived in the tower which served the additional function of monastery until 1641. Traces of their chapel which projected to the east of the building still survive. Architecturally, it is one of the most fascinating examples of medieval architecture in Ireland with its 4m thick walls, its stairway built within the walls and its rib-vaulted chambers.

Having been a lighthouse for so long, Hook Head Lighthouse has seen technologies come and go and is able to tell their story. Coal burning lanterns were replaced by whale oil, then gas (manufactured on-site), then Paraffin oil before giving way to electricity. Different optic and rotation systems similarly came and went as the tower remained constant through it all. Yet whilst accommodating this constant change, much has been conserved – testimony to the esteem in which the lighthouse is held and the care that has been taken of it.

Innovation extends to the way in which the lighthouse has been developed as a community asset and a tourist attraction. The Hook Heritage Community enterprise was established for this purpose and the lighthouse officially opened to the public in 2000 by the then President of Ireland Mary McAleese and is one of Irish Light's Great Lighthouses of Ireland – itself a commendable initiative by its operator the Commissioners of Irish Lights. Since 2019 it has attracted over 250,000 visitors from all over the world. Former keepers' houses now provide a retail gift shop, café and bakery offering local products and employment. Guided tours of the tower are offered where visitors get a fascinating insight into the

workings of the lighthouse combined with stories and facts of this unique building, past, present and future. Interestingly it has been observed that such tours improve ventilation and so building conditioning – a great example of symbiosis between the interests of managing AtoN and complementary use.

3. EDDYSTONE LIGHTHOUSE, ENGLAND



Standing tall offshore from Devon (England), Eddystone Lighthouse shines brightly as a rock lighthouse tasked with safely guiding mariners past the dangerous Eddystone Rocks.

First built by Trinity House in 1882, it is the fourth lighthouse to mark the hazardous rocks, its predecessors being the Winstanley Tower (1698-1703) – which was the first lighthouse to be built on a small rock in open sea - Rudeyard's Tower (1709-1755), and Smeaton's Tower (1759-1882). When concern for growing cracks in Smeaton Tower grew, it was agreed that the existing lighthouse ought to be dismantled and re-erected as a monument on-land, and a new tower be built in its place.

We now find on site Douglass' Tower, a technically beautiful tower influenced by the likes of the renowned Stevenson family, John Smeaton and Douglass. The lighthouse was first opened in 1882 by the Duke of Edinburgh, who laid the final stone of the tower.

This lighthouse stands as a shining example of a heritage lighthouse with impressive technical pioneering and strong aesthetic value that has permeated through the surrounding communities. Eddystone Lighthouse showcases the evolution of both technical lighthouse architecture, as evidenced by the variety of towers that have been built at this site, and of AtoN technology housed inside the lighthouse (it was the first Trinity House rock lighthouse to be converted to automatic operation by 1982).

Fascinated by the isolation of the tower, Eddystone Lighthouse has consistently inspired writers, artists, the television industry, and the local and national communities, and the lives of the hardy lighthouse keepers have been celebrated, romanticized or pitied over the centuries.

Despite its inaccessibility, Trinity House endeavours to keep the history of Eddystone Lighthouse alive, most recently with an exhibition of the tower at its visitor and education site at Lizard Lighthouse Heritage Centre in 2009. The Smeaton Tower continues to be a popular tourist site, offering visitors a glimpse into the beautifully restored 1759 tower set against the glorious views of Plymouth Sound.

The effort to educate and illuminate national and international audiences on the isolated Eddystone towers is a testament to Trinity House. With the inability to allow visitors to physically visit the tower, promotion of the lighthouse's history, hand-in-hand with its aesthetic and technical prowess, has made it a standout to lighthouse communities around the world.