The Harbor Lighthouse, Season Two

The harbor lighthouse was built in 1874 to mark the entrance to the inner channel. It operated continuously until 1968, when an automated beacon on the breakwater replaced it, and then stood empty for five decades while water worked its way into the brickwork from the parapet.

The restoration society took ownership in 2021 with three goals: make the structure watertight, return the tower to public access, and relight the lantern with a historically accurate lens. The first two were met in the second season, and the lens arrived on loan in November.

Repointing of the exterior brick was completed in June. The contractor removed the hard cement mortar applied in the 1950s, which had trapped moisture against the softer original brick, and replaced it with a lime mortar matched to samples taken from the base of the tower.

The spiral stair is original and is the most fragile part of the building. Twelve of the ninety-one treads were cracked or missing, and the central column had corroded badly at the second landing. The treads were cast from patterns taken off an intact tread.

The grounds opened to visitors on weekends from July. Nearly three thousand people climbed the tower over the summer, with no incidents. Volunteers staffed the entrance and the lantern room on every open day.

Over the winter the volunteers will finish cataloguing the keepers' logbooks, which run from 1874 to 1931 with a gap during the First World War. The logbooks will be scanned and made available online.

The lantern room frame was stripped, primed and repainted in the original dark green. New curved glazing was ordered from a specialist and fitted in August, and the society located a fourth-order lens of the correct period at a museum in the next county.

Admission was free this year. The committee has recommended a modest charge for next season, with the proceeds going toward the remaining work on the keeper's cottage. A decision will be taken at the annual meeting in March.

Grant applications for the cottage have been submitted to two foundations and to the state historical commission. Decisions are expected by the end of the first quarter, and the reserve covers the winter maintenance whatever the outcome.