

Norah Head Lighthouse Land Manager Board
P.O. Box 4 Toukley, NSW 2263 Australia

February 2020 Newsletter

Norah Head Lighthouse Tours

FEBRUARY 9 2020

Guided Night Tours

Public

Hosted by [Norah Head Lighthouse](#)

The next full moon is on the 9th February, 2020. Three Tours are planned; **Tour 1** 7.30pm; **Tour 2** 8.15pm and **Tour 3** 9.00pm. All sunsets and moon rises are unique. On 9th February moonrise is at 8.08 pm. If the night is clear you have the best vantage points on the reserve to drink in the spectacular view as well as photograph the full moon shimmering over the ocean as well

Tours are available at a ticket price of \$20.00 each payable by credit card at time of booking (no refunds). Flat soled shoes must be worn for the tour. Tickets will be allocated to the first 60 callers for each date and are available by phoning Tracy – the Reserve Site Manager on mobile 0452 564 102

Lunar phases

The Moon orbits the Earth every 27.3 days — which is the same amount of time it takes to spin on its axis, and this is why the same side of the Moon always faces us. Two things change about the Moon's appearance every day — how much of it is lit up by the Sun (giving us the phases), and what time it rises in the east. It's a common misconception that the phases are caused by the Earth's shadow falling on the Moon (that's what happens in an eclipse). The dark parts of the Moon are dark for the same reason the night side of Earth is dark — they're not being illuminated by the Sun.



The lunar cycle takes 29.5 days starting with the "new moon" where there's no moon at all, quarter moon, full moon, last quarter and ending with the thin morning crescent

As the Moon orbits Earth, it changes its angle to the Sun, relative to the Earth. A complete lunar cycle — the time taken for the Moon to go through its various phases and return to the same position — takes around 29.5 days.

Guided Daylight Tours

Public

Hosted by [Norah Head Lighthouse](#)

Step back in time to feel what it was like to be a Lighthouse Keeper at Norah Head Lighthouse. Climb the 96 stairs and enjoy the 360 degree views from the tower balcony. Marvel at the optics prism and imagine polishing the 700 lenses of the prism. Learn about the duties of a Lighthouse Keeper. Learn how the light was originally operated, compared to how it works today. Hear the stories of shipwrecks in days gone by.

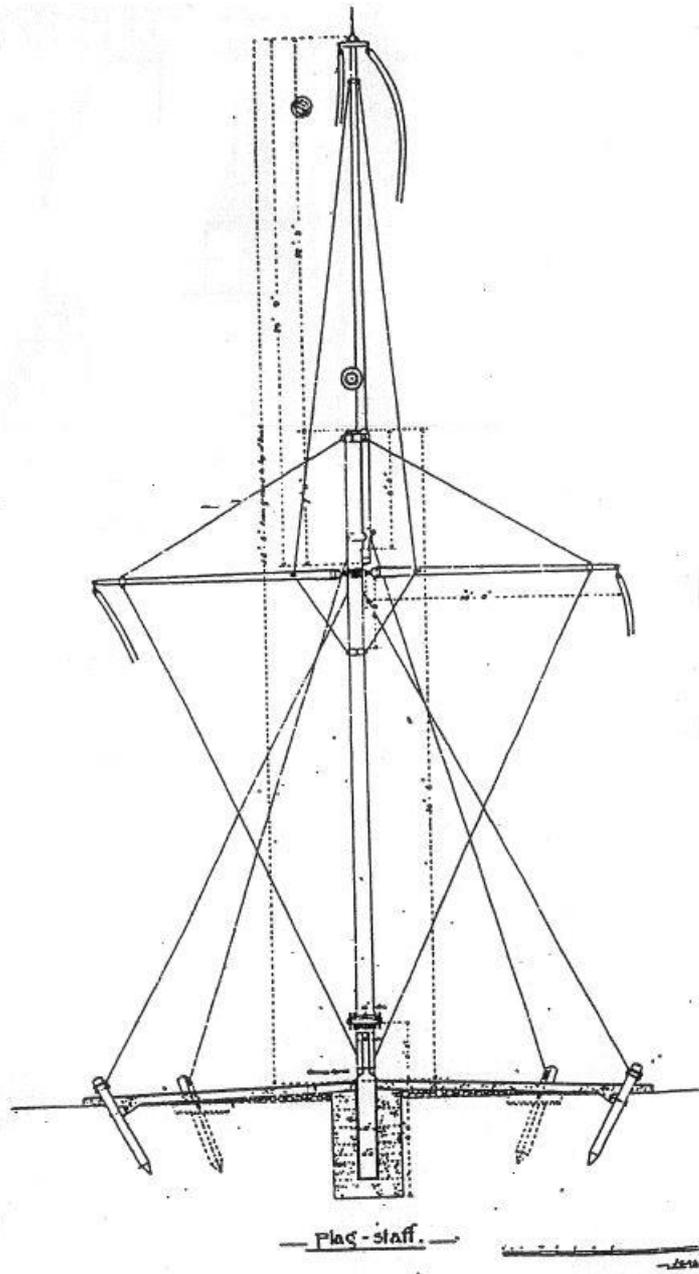
Operating Days and Times

- Normal Operating Hours: 10:00am to 1:30pm, open for tours every day of the year (except ANZAC Day and Christmas Day). Duration of the tour is 30 minutes.
- Extended Hours on Weekends and Public Holidays: 10:00am to 3:30pm



The Flagstaff

Norah Head Lighthouse commenced operating in 1903 and is still operating today. Adjacent to the lighthouse was a large flag pole raising to a height of 19.675 metres (64.55ft). It had four 4.3metre (14.1 ft)yard arms



ORIGINAL DRAWING

The first mast was 10.9 metres (35.76ft) high with a diameter of 260mm (10.24 inches) for its full length.

The second mast was 8.775 metres (28.78 ft) and tapered from 200mm (7.87in) at the bottom to 75mm (3in) at the top.

The 4.3metre (14.1 ft)yard arms tapered from 180mm (7in) at the pole to 75mm (3in) at the end.

A Flag Locker Building was built to house more than 40 flags for communication between the passing ships and the Lighthouse during the day.



The image on the left is an early photo by J Degotardi, showing the original flagpole with it's four yard arms. On the right is rendition of the original flagpole, courtesy of Tony James' spelling out Norah Head Light House.

Prior to the introduction of Radio ship to ship, ship to shore, communications were made with the use of flags. The use of flags to communicate with other ships has been in use and developed over many hundreds of years and has played an essential role in communications at sea.

Prior to 1857 this system of flying flags was formed by a variety of naval and private signals. The first International Code, which was drafted in 1855 and published in 1857 by a British Board of Trade, contained 70,000 signals, 17,000 messages, and used 18 flags. In 1887 it was revised again after an International Conference in Washington DC to become on January 1st 1901, the International Code of Signals.

At Norah Head the flags are held in the Flag Locker immediately adjacent to the Flagstaff. There being 40 flags in all held there.

The Lighthouse Keepers had to be skilled in the minimum knowledge of setting flags. A full knowledge of the Code would require a vocabulary of the 70,000 combinations that could be made. For apart from emergencies the real need at Norah Head was to provide information on the local weather conditions at Norah Head and at Nobbys Head. Prior to the construction of a breakwater at Nobbys Head, a sand bar would change its size and orientation, subject to winds and tides on a regular basis. For the sailing ships on the day, knowledge of the position of that sand bar and direction of wind were critical to their approach into Newcastle.

By telephone, morse and later by radio these conditions were reported from Nobbys to Norah Head, where the advice on conditions were set. It would not be until all commercial vessels at sea were required to have radios that this practice would cease.

Perhaps as a result of decreasing importance the Flagstaff went through several changes over time. The original Timber and metal fitting Flagstaff were of a 4 yardarm configuration. It is suspected that due to operational complications of halyards being compromised by the yardarms, it was then reduced to two yardarms.



The existing Flag pole



The Lighthouse Volunteer Maintenance Team replacing the halyards and ensuring all is in readiness for flying the flags on Australia Day 2020.

Prior to 1970 the original flagstaff was replaced; it is thought it was damaged by a storm. The replacement flagstaff was of metal throughout and had but one yardarm fitted at its base. This yardarm was free to revolve around the flagstaff mast being unencumbered by stays.

The light was automated and de-manned in 1994. It was one of the last stations in Australia to be de-manned after over 90 years of being staffed. When the Department of Industry appointed a Volunteer Trust to manage the reserve in 2002 there was no flagpole remaining. Volunteers erected the small flagpole you see today to enable flags to be flown on special occasions such as Australia Day.

The current Norah Head Lighthouse Reserve Land Manager Board has a long list of projects it would like to implement, if only funds were available. Unfortunately, in the current climate, the Board is even having difficulty in obtaining funds for urgent Occupational Health & Safety items that have been identified.

Drawings of the original flagpole were prepared by Lighthouse Volunteer Tony James from prints of the original drawings that had been microfilmed and are of poor quality. They were used to obtain a detailed quotation from Bristol Wooden Flagpoles to have an accurate replica made of the original flagpole. It would require expenditure of approximately \$200,000.00 to complete a replica of the original.

Ben Oliver of Bristol Wooden Flagpoles has a passion for his work and in the covering correspondence for the quote wrote:

“This is a really fabulous and exciting project and should you ever get the green light, I would be honoured to be involved. If the green light were given, you would end up with a flagstaff that would be the envy of everyone. It would be spectacular and rather glorious sight to behold.”