Lighthouse heritage waiting to be explored this



Blackhead Lighthouse

Northern Ireland is famous for its maritime heritage, and with attractions such as Titanic Belfast and SS Nomadic amongst the most visited tourist spots last year, it’s clear that we just can’t get enough of our shipbuilding, seafaring past.

Great Lighthouses of Ireland has been working to unlock and share the hidden maritime and industrial heritage associated with Rathlin West Light Seabird Centre, Blackhead Lighthouse and St John’s Point Lighthouse, County Down. This is part of a new initiative to mark the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018.

With funding in place from HLF, Tourism NI and the Department for Communities Historic Environment Division, the heritage and stories associated with these special places will be curated and digitalised. They can then be shared with all from home and abroad who are keen to learn more about the lighthouses, their history and how they work today.

Over 21,000 visitors have enjoyed the spectacular views, abundant wildlife and unique heritage of Rathlin West Light so far this season. Known as Ireland’s only ‘upside-down’ lighthouse, visitors can tour the lighthouse, marvel at its cliff-edge location and enjoy the many thousands of seabirds which make the island their home.

Or maybe you'd like to enjoy a unique break at Blackhead Lighthouse or St John’s Point Lighthouse.

Blackhead Lighthouse, County Antrim

During Belfast's shipbuilding golden age Blackhead Lighthouse safely guided many famous vessels to sea, including RMS Titanic. Lighthouse keepers lived at the station, which marks the North East approaches of Belfast Lough, until 1975. Today guests can stay in one of the three restored light-keeper's houses that are available to hire.

St John's Point Lighthouse, County Down

One of 70 lighthouses operated by the Commissioners of Irish Lights around the coast of Ireland, the distinctive black and yellow stripes of St John's Point Lighthouse are unmistakable. Stay in one of the two restored light-keeper's cottages - the perfect base for exploring nearby Strangford Lough

Lighthouse heritage - did you know?

- A pharologist is a person who studies or is interested in lighthouses. It comes from Greek word Pharos, meaning lighthouse
- There were usually three light keepers and their work was divided into six four-hour watches. Each keeper was at the lighthouse for six weeks at a time, followed by two weeks off
- George Halpin Snr designed and established 53 new lighthouses in Ireland including St John's and Rathlin West Light

The Great Lighthouses of Ireland website has further information for visitors, including opening hours and directions and overnight accommodation details.

To learn more about lighthouses and how they deliver essential safety and navigation services around the coast of Ireland visit the Irish Lights website.



The Mew Island Lighthouse Optic

Historic optic to light up Belfast's maritime heritage

What is happening in Whitley Bay?