

School Holidays in the 1930s

It was August and I was on holiday from school. My Uncle John had asked my parents if they were willing for me to accompany him to Burry Holms Lighthouse to do his monthly maintenance tasks. This was readily given, and so the following week was set for the trip. We set out for the railway station at nine a.m. armed with a gallon tin of paraffin, sackful of clean old rags, and an oilcan. We caught a train to Gowerton station, got off there and waited for the bus to Llangennith. We got on the Swan Bus. When it arrived, it was a double Decker painted white.

The journey took over an hour. We were like a furniture van; people put articles on the bus, offered a couple of coins and gave the driver directions for dropping them off. After arriving at the village we set off across the sands. Of course the tide was out, as my Uncle had calculated the best time to make the trip.

Whitford Lighthouse had ceased operation in 1929, and this had been manned by three men. Now Burry Holms was an automatic affair, needing maintenance once a month. The light was housed in a low stone building on the headland. The land all around belonged to the farmer and security was good. We set to work and soon I was busy cleaning the mirrors being very careful as instructed. Meanwhile my Uncle was oiling the gears and winding up the weights which were the motive power for turning the light, enabling it to give the correct sequence of flashes.

The time soon flew and then it was another journey across the sands. I was nine years of age then and felt quite proud of the opportunity to do a useful job.

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