ANCIENT LIGHTS

The giant statue, the Colossus of Rhodes, which is said to have stood astride the entrance to the harbour, was one of the Seven Wonders of the World. It was the work of the Greek architect Chares of Lindos in 280 BC. Standing around 100 feet high, it represented the sun god Helios and is generally depicted holding a flaming torch, making it an early lighthouse though this remains unproven. It was destroyed by an earthquake.

(The Great Works of Mankind, Robert Laffont (Ed), 1962)
The Pharos Lighthouse of Alexandria, generally regarded as the world’s first lighthouse, was considered one of the Seven Wonders of the World and dates from the 3rd century BC. It is now believed to have been designed by a man called Sostratus, but was requisitioned by Ptolemy who is generally credited as being responsible for its building. It was destroyed by an earthquake in the 14th century having operated for some 1500 years.

(Lighthouses, F Ross Holland, 1995)
An alternative impression of the Pharos Lighthouse

The Dungeness light in 1692 with coal being hoisted to the rooftop brazier
(Lighthouses, Patrick Beaver, 1971)
The tower of the present Genoa Lighthouse in Italy was erected in 1544, the original structure dating from the 12th century. In 1499 the keeper of the light was an uncle of Christopher Columbus (Holland).
A sectional view of the Tour de Cordouan in 1610, it was built at the mouth of the Garonne to guide shipping to Bordeaux. It was first topped by an oak wood fire. Later, in 1727 a coal fire was laid in an iron basket and a crude reflector was added. In 1791, 12 Argand burners with parabolic reflectors were employed (Beaver)
La Coruna Lighthouse in Spain, originally built by the Romans, was known as the Tower of Hercules and extensively altered in 1791. It has housed braziers, then an oil lamp and Fresnel lens, then finally converted to electricity (Holland)
Bell Rock Lighthouse, just north of the Firth of Forth in Scotland, dates back to 1811 and was designed by Robert Stevenson and constructed under the supervision of John Rennie (Holland)
The Smalls light of 1818, a cramped wooden structure on top of 15 stout timber piles, was located on a small rock 20 miles west of St David’s Peninsula in Pembrokeshire, Wales. It stood from 1778 to 1855 surviving severe storm damage in 1831 (Beaver)