

LIGHT ON AN ECCENTRIC'S FOLLY



Electrician Peter White, above checking the lighthouse which sits atop Folly Tower, left

STANDING in the land-locked fields, its new use makes it as much of a fish out of water as the lobster

designed by its creator's great friend Salvador Dali.

In a moment of Millennium madness, Folly Tower – the loopy landmark built by the great English eccentric Lord Berners in 1935 – has been transformed into a lighthouse.

The lighting up of the beacon of barmy at Faringdon, near Swindon, some 80 miles from the nearest coast in Dorset, marks

the opening of a crazy new chapter in the bizarre history of the ornate 100ft Gothic-style tower.

And, according to the brains behind the caper, it would have delighted the late Lord Berners and his Da-Da friend Dali.

For Lord Berners, who was himself a surrealist painter and a composer of considerable note, only built Folly Tower – the last folly to be built in England – to tease his snifty neighbours.

He even placed a sign at the base saying: "Members of the public committing suicide from this tower do so

at their own risk."

Now the tower, which sits on top of a hill close to the Wiltshire/Oxfordshire border, casts a revolving beam for miles around. His bright idea of a Millennium project sparked an instant response from local businesses, who contributed £5,000 to turn the dream into a reality.

The scheme was master-minded by electrician Peter White, aged 38. He said yesterday: "It's something people can see for miles and seemed to be a good way of marking the new Millennium. I'm sure Lord Berners would have approved."