



Sambro Island Lighthouse
Credit: Kraig Anderson



Smeaton's Tower post Storm Amy
Credit: NSLPS - DPC

Guess the name of the lighthouse that was built by the British using granite stones, has red and white horizontal stripes and was lit in 1759 to indicate the presence of dangerous ledges to mariners bound for a major port. If you said "Sambro Island Lighthouse" outside Halifax Harbour, Nova Scotia, correct! If you said "Smeaton's Tower" Plymouth, England, also correct! So how are they different? Smeaton's Tower was the 3rd lighthouse erected on the small but deadly Eddystone reef with self-contained quarters for the lightkeepers while Sambro Island is the original lighthouse with enough land space to build nearby two lightkeepers' houses, a fog horn shelter and an acetylene gas manufacturing shed. Sambro Island is taller at 25 m (82 ft) while Smeaton's Tower stands 22 m (72 ft) high. Smeaton's Tower light was produced by 24 candles that had to be replaced every 30 minutes by the lightkeeper on duty while Sambro Island used fish oil in 13 lamps whose light was intensified by the use of 9 reflectors. As mariners complained about the quality of light from both lighthouses, Smeaton's Tower got its 1st order Fresnel lens in 1845 while Sambro Island got a 2nd order Fresnel lens 32 years later in 1877 and was upgraded to a 1st order lens in 1905. The biggest difference is that Smeaton's Tower was moved to Plymouth, UK where you can climb 93 steps to the top while Sambro Island is still an aid to navigation 266 years on and off limits to the public. BTW does anyone know how many steps you would have to climb inside Sambro Island Lighthouse?



Smeaton's Tower ring to hold 24 candles
Credit: NSLPS – DPC



Smeaton's Tower: Hide-a-bed for Lightkeeper
Credit: NSLPS -DPC