



THE Lightkeeper

The Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society

Vol. 7, No.4, December 2000/January 2001

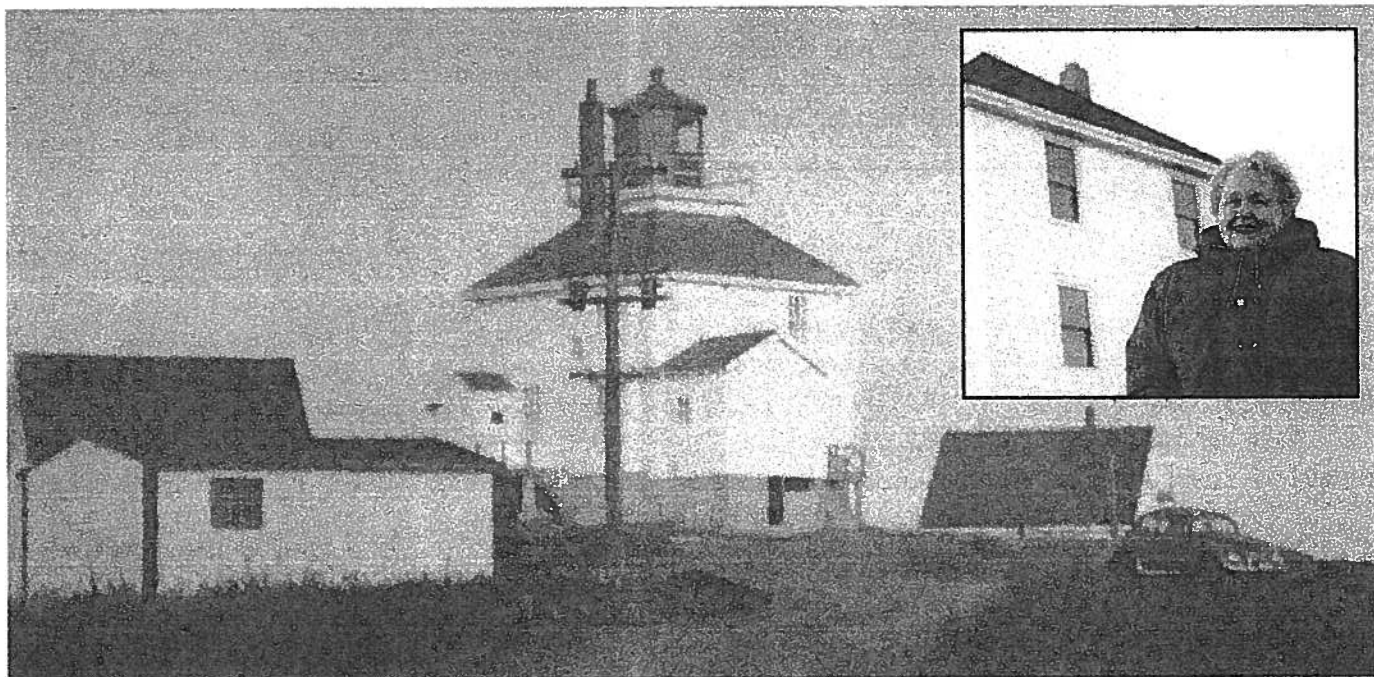
The objectives of the Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society are: To promote and support preservation and awareness of Nova Scotian lighthouses; to assist community groups in leasing or taking ownership of lighthouse sites; to provide access to written research and photographic documentation and to initiate oral history research; and to classify and monitor the status of historic lighthouse sites.

WEBSITE: <http://www.ednet.ns.ca/educ/heritage/nslps>

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WELCOME ABOARD!

The following new members recently joined NSLPS:

Ami McKay, Nancy Dorkin, Fran & Art Stewart, Kelley Jefferys, Shirley & Klaus Langpohl, Eileen Beiswanger, Lori McAllister, Carolyn Jones, B. Joan Davis, Marike Finlay, Karin Copie, Elizabeth Bigras, Shirley McIntyre, Joan & Sandy Munro, C.A. Straughan, David & Shirley Whiston, Emilie Pronovost, Christian Ruel, Mac Mackay, Doug Bamford, Gloria MacQuarrie, Dean T. Carter, Nathan Tupper, Gene & Gail Rolls, Miranda McKinley, David McAleenan, Larry Shaw.

MEMBERSHIP FEES DUE FOR 2001!

NSLPS LIGHTHOUSE TRIPS

NSLPS trips and tours for the coming summer will be listed in the June *Lightkeeper*.

NSLPS MEETINGS & PROGRAMMES

are held monthly except August
at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic,
1679 Lower Water St., Halifax

GENERAL MEETING:

WEDNESDAY, January 24, 7:00 pm

No programmes will be held in January

The Lightkeepers!

Wednesday February 28

7:00 pm: Reports from the NSLPS Board

7:30 pm: Programme

Lighthouse keepers have been the guardians of Canada's coastline for more than 250 years. At the turn of the century, there were more than 800 lightkeepers posted on isolated islands and headlands across the country. Today, that number has dwindled to about 100. Join former keeper Chris Mills to learn about the men and women who kept and keep Canada's lighthouses burning bright against dark and tempest.

Build a Model Lighthouse

Saturday, March 17

Children's Workshop

10 am - 12 noon

How do you fit a lighthouse in your room? In miniature of course! Make a model of the East Ironbound Lighthouse located in Mahone Bay. For those aged 6 to 12 years. Younger children should bring a helper.

AGM

Wed. April 25

7:00 pm: AGM

8:30 pm: St. Paul's Island

Slide show and talk by Bill Budge, son of a former keeper on this isolated island off the north tip of Cape Breton. Bill has presented his talk to enthusiastic audiences in the northern part of Nova Scotia.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Burntcoat Head

Charlie MacCulloch

Burntcoat Head Park Committee

Charlie says 6363 people signed the visitors book at the replica Burntcoat Head lighthouse in 2000. Committee members added a playground for children at the site last year. They also installed a generator and an electric pump for running water. The site does not have hydro power. Charlie reports the committee had hoped the Bay of Fundy Product Club would pick Burntcoat as a location

for a tidal interpretive centre, but he says the lack of hydro power and insufficient parking means Burntcoat Head may not be chosen for the centre. It costs \$25,000 annually to run Burntcoat Head park – that money is raised through donations, fundraising activities and merchandise sales.

Cape Forchu

Gert Sweeney

Dear Lighthouse Friends,

The "environmental assessment" has raised a lot of questions and concerns to all groups who have an interest in taking over lighthouse sites in the future. Our group's first reaction to our assessment was how is this ever possible and where is the money coming from?

Well I must say that Friends of The Yarmouth Light have never given up on achieving their goal of saving the light from possible destruction and keeping this light station open to the public. Everyone's assessment will be

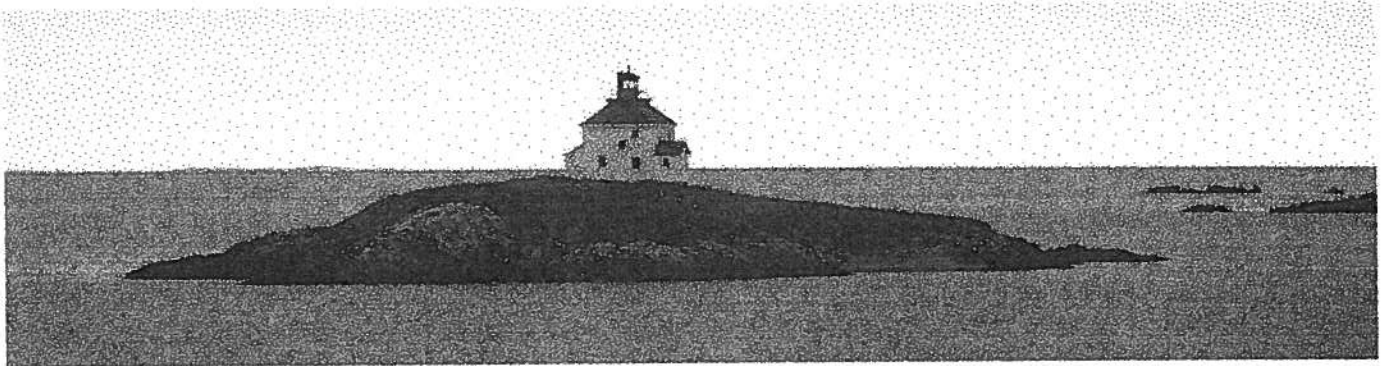


Cape Forchu light in a late 1960s postcard view.

different according to the findings at their light station so the following are the areas that our group had to address. Because the municipality will be the owners of the Cape Forchu site they made application to receive funding for the environmental clean up and site improvement work.

The following has been accomplished: The fog building scraped and re-painted, the tower cleaned totally and re-painted, the large dwelling house scraped and repainted, the second dwelling house foundation scraped and painted, drainage created to divert the surface water away from this house, the lower garage was stripped of wooden shingles and re-shingled, and the contaminated earth around these buildings was removed and new earth replaced.

An old septic area was cleaned and new basement drains replaced to correct an area that flooded the basement when there were heavy rains. Sod was placed on the new septic field, a new rock wall was installed to form the base of the septic field area and the old weather



Queensport Light, Rook Island. *Courtesy DFO*

fence from the tower to the house was destroyed for disposal.

Yet to be accomplished is replacing the weather fence and removing the contaminated soil from the site of the original fog building.

At this time the municipality is awaiting the reassessment reports of the cleaned areas, and reviewing the turnover documents from Canadian Coast Guard to them. Friends of The Light are anxiously awaiting an agreement between us and the municipality so we can be the managing group or new keepers of this light station.

The process for all this is lengthy, time consuming, discouraging as a third party, but we hope that in the final stages all parties will have open communications, have achieved their own goals and maintain the cultural, historical, and environmental aspects of the Lighthouse Station. Friends of The Yarmouth Light believe that all groups need as much assistance as they can receive to help the learning process of a lightstation takeover to become a quicker, easier process and remain informed of new developments. For that reason we have visited the Friends of The Head Harbour Light Station in New Brunswick, and will soon be speaking at a public forum in the Clare area of Nova Scotia in order to help people understand all the issues we have faced, give encouragement and help the best we can to make their dreams possible.

Port Bickerton

Gwen Robar

Port Bickerton and Area Planning Association

Gwen reports about 5000 people visited the Nova Scotia Lighthouse Interpretive Centre at the Port Bickerton lighthouse in 2000. That's roughly the same number of visitors for the previous year. In 2000 the association introduced several new displays at the centre, including models of 13 styles of Nova Scotia lighthouses. Gwen says the Coast Guard recently did another environmental assessment of the site, to follow-up a 1997 assessment in which lead contaminants were reportedly found. Gwen says plans for the Port Bickerton lighthouse in 2001 will depend on the outcome of the second assessment, the results of which may be released this month.

Queensport (Rook Island)

Gloria MacQuarrie

Keepers of the Beacons

We started our group *Keepers of the Beacons* to help protect our lighthouses and save our heritage. We have written Mr. Larry Wilson (Coast Guard Regional Director, Maritimes) with a proposal to take over Queensport lighthouse. It is an island station, on Route 16 on your way to Canso in Guysborough County. But the Municipality of Guysborough is going to take it over. We had a meeting with them in November which went well. They are looking very seriously at turning it over to us. We had one meeting with the community in Queensport. We have scheduled another meeting on January 14 to meet more of the people. We feel we need all the support we can get. We want to restore the lighthouse as close as we can to what it was like when the last lightkeeper came off and open it up for tours. If anyone can help us in any way, we would be very grateful.

Walton

Reg Clark

Reg reports the Walton lighthouse had its best year so far last year – 12,000 visitors signed the guest book at the light. That's an increase of 2000 people from 1999. Reg says a coin-operated telescope has been installed near the lighthouse, giving great views of Cape Blomidon, Cape Split and the Parrsboro shore. He says a chain link fence will be installed along the cliff edge near the lighthouse in 2001.



NEWS AND VIEWS

Membership in NSLPS has passed the 200 mark.

WEBSITE: JUST LOOK AT US NOW!

The website has a new masthead courtesy of Christian Ruel of Sambro, NS. Also, the "List of Lighthouses by Location" has been subdivided to reflect the Scenic Travelways on Nova Scotia's highway map - it's now "The Doers and Dreamers Guide to Nova Scotian Lighthouses". Two new lighthouses have been added: Enragee Point, (Cheticamp, Cape Breton) with a spectacular sunset photo of the light by Christian Ruel; and Ingonish Ferry, with an intriguing story. Take a look. The website had 9700 "hits" in the year 2000.

NEWS FROM THE BOARD: SEPT. - DEC. 2000

The NSLPS held three regular board meetings, plus three extra meetings.

GEORGES ISLAND KEEPER'S HOUSE: The president wrote several letters to Parks Canada about the future of the building. The President met with Ron MacDonald of Parks Canada about plans for the house. There was fear it would be demolished because of its condition. Members of the board accompanied people from Parks and from the Dept. of Public Works on an inspection of the house. It was found to be in better condition than anticipated.

Later, an official assessment was made. The report, sent to NSLPS, states that it will be more expensive to replace the house than to repair it. At this point Parks is assessing their needs for space in preparation for opening the island to the public. They will be making use of the house. NSLPS is of the opinion that at least part of it should be open to the public and used to interpret the lighthouse history of the island and the harbour, which has a close relationship to the naval history and fortifications.

SEAL ISLAND LIGHTHOUSE: The president wrote a letter supporting the Cape Sable Historical Society in their appeal of the Federal Heritage Buildings Review Board evaluation of the lighthouse. Seal Island, (the second oldest standing lighthouse in Nova Scotia, and second oldest wooden lighthouse in Canada) missed "listed" status which would give it full federal heritage building protection by two points.

CHEBUCTO HEAD LIGHTHOUSE: Tracy O'Brien contacted Coast Guard about the graffiti sprayed on the tower in late summer. It was repainted after she contacted them. The board has been tracking the condition and status of the keeper's house. To date, nothing has happened, though it has been declared surplus.

LIGHTHOUSE DAY, SEPT. 30: Many members of

the board participated in the activities at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic which included an information table, children's art display, lighthouse quiz, model workshop and museum tours.

LIGHTHOUSE ACCESS: Kathy Brown, Jim Guptill, George Hebb, and Dorothy McLeod met with members of The Coast Guard, Coast Guard Real Properties Division, and Dept. of Public Works about access inside lighthouses for NSLPS guided trips. We were able to stress the limited time that people are inside the buildings, the careful organization of the trips especially regarding safety, and the importance of access to the towers. We were assured that a licence for access could be issued for the year 2001. We gave those attending the meeting a list of lighthouses that might be visited. Names of the actual lighthouses for trips in 2001 will be submitted at the end of February. Notification from Coast Guard Real Properties Division re access has been promised for March, 2001.

LIGHTHOUSE LEGISLATION: The board sent a motion on behalf of NSLPS to the Canadian Heritage Foundation annual meeting in Calgary regarding support for the lighthouse preservation legislation. The motion was passed unanimously. The Canadian Heritage Foundation is one of the interveners in the Senate Committee Hearings on the bill. David Curry and Dan Conlin also made submissions to the committee on behalf of NSLPS.

ELECTION: The president sent out two news releases about lighthouse preservation to Nova Scotian and national media, plus a letter and questionnaire to all parties' national headquarters and to some NS candidates. The questionnaires were scored, resulting in coverage by CBC Newsworld. Nova Scotian members were telephoned to remind them to ask their candidates about their attitude to lighthouse preservation. (See detailed report on next page.)

GRANT APPLICATION: George Hebb put together a grant applying for funds from Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) for collecting oral history from former lightkeepers in HRM. Grants are announced in May.

ATLANTIC LIGHTHOUSE COUNCIL: The president attended an all-day meeting of the council in October. The council is continuing to work on the reports and studies promised to their funders: Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and Canadian Tourism Commission. They will deal with issues that affect all of Atlantic Canada, leaving provincial groups like NSLPS to look after more local problems and development. The relationship between the council and the provincial groups is still not very clear.

FOR SALE: ONE ISLAND

Jodi DeLong, *Canadian Geographic*, Jan/Feb 2001

For centuries, tiny Isle Haute, off the Nova Scotia shore in the Bay of Fundy, has hosted aboriginals, picnickers and scientists alike. Its cornucopia of flora, fauna and stunning geological features is now on the auction block.



Isle Haute, circa 1950. *Public Archives of Nova Scotia*

The Canadian Coast Guard, which currently owns the property, needs only a small parcel of land around its automated lighthouse. The rest of the 2.5 kilometre-long island -- named in 1604 by Samuel de Champlain for its 175-metre shoreline cliffs -- is being offered to other federal departments, then to provincial or municipal governments. If there are no takers it will be sold privately.

Naturalists, historians and locals are hoping the last resort never comes to pass. The island is "a rare gem rich in human and natural history," says Dan Conlin of the Maritime Museum in Halifax. Mi'kmaq archaeological treasures abound, and the island is one of a handful of peregrine falcon nesting sites in the Maritimes.

The Canadian Wildlife Service is considering buying Isle Haute, but some suggest the island should simply be tacked onto nearby Fundy National Park or Cape Chignecto Provincial Park to preserve its pristine ecosystem.

FEDERAL ELECTION REPORT CARD

During the election, NSLPS sent each party a questionnaire to assess their policies and knowledge. The Progressive Conservatives earned a B+ for their knowledge and their champion of a Lighthouse Protection bill in the Senate. The New Democratic Party received a B for knowledge of lighthouse issues but lacked any detailed plans. The Canadian Alliance scored a B-, showing interest and commitment but a lack of familiarity.

All three opposition parties pledged to support the Lighthouse Protection Act which is expected to be re-introduced in the Senate this session. NSLPS gave the

Liberals an F for evasive and misinformed answers. (Among other things the Liberals and their DFO advisors did not know how many provinces have lighthouses!) They avoided taking a position either for or against the Lighthouse Protection Act. Despite this disappointing response, the Nov. 16 Liberal response did contain some useful commitments.

The Liberals strongly supported the Coast Guard Alternate Use program (somewhat of surprise since recent moves at Coast Guard, cancelling leases, denying community access, disbanding the Alternate Use Advisory Committee gave the impression that the program was over!): "A new Liberal government will continue to support this program as it encourages lighthouses to remain as cultural symbols, while possible, generating economic growth."

Although the Liberals were evasive on moving from "selling to the highest bidder" disposal process, they express a sort of support for bending the rules: "The federal government, when possible, has relaxed the regulations and policies on the disposal of federal policy. Additionally the Canadian Coast Guard is maintaining the necessary infrastructure at its sites to allow time for considering the proposals for re-use of the sites." Although this is pretty laughable considering the shocking Coast Guard neglect of precious sites such as Seal Island, this promise does give an opportunity for communities to confront Coast Guard and DFO with this promise.

If you would like to see the full responses, please contact David Curry or members of the Lighthouse Protection Act Committee. See NSLPS website for contact information.



Re-shingling the Seal Island lighthouse. Note the original lantern containing a fixed Fresnel lens. In 1907-08 the Department of Marine and Fisheries installed a new lantern enclosing a rotating (group flashing) second order lens, manufactured in Paris. *Courtesy Mary Nickerson*

VOICES OF THE LIGHTS

This is a new feature in The Lightkeeper, where Nova Scotia lightkeepers and their families tell their own stories of life on the lights. Anne Flemming and her husband Stanley spent three decades at the Chebucto Head lighthouse, at the southern approaches to Halifax Harbour. Here, Anne shares her memories of life on the Nova Scotia coast.

THE HAPPIEST YEARS OF MY LIFE

Anne Flemming



Anne Flemming on her old porch at Chebucto Head Lighthouse. *Chris Mills*

Well my husband got out of the navy in 1945 and he worked at the radio station in Camperdown (Portuguese Cove) for a year. We saw the ad in the paper for the position at Chebucto Head. Of course I suggested he apply for it, never dreaming that he'd get it! Then when he did get it and was confirmed I had second thoughts. But he just loved it. He was born down in Ketch Harbour and he loved it around here, loved the water, so it was great for him.

It was dusk when we first saw the lighthouse. It was in the fall of 1949. There were rocks on either side and I thought the water was just below the road. Of course it wasn't. We went up and unloaded our furniture and well it was a large house and we didn't have too

much furniture, having lived in a small apartment in Halifax before that. The fog alarm was about a mile and a half down the hill.

That first night my husband had to go down there when the fog came in. I was left alone in this huge house with all sorts of strange noises. If anyone had come along I would have sold them the whole lighthouse for about five dollars! But I grew to love it very much. It was a beautiful place.

The light was on top of the house. There were 13 steps from the kitchen to the first landing. I can't remember how many up to the light, but I remember the number to the landing because I used to have to scrub them every single day!

The light would have to be wound every single night. Usually the kids, when they got old enough, did that. And I did my share of it too. And then of course there was the fog horn... there was a lot of fog when we first moved there. My husband had to go down to get the fog alarm on and then he'd come again for a lunch or snack or something for a little while. But then he had to go right down again. At night if the fog horn happened to stop for some reason everybody in the house would wake up immediately. We were so used to it that if it wasn't on we would wake up!

We did have electricity but we had no inside plumbing. It was the worst thing to face with five small children. Well, "mother" always had to go down with the smaller ones of course, when they had to go. And then the older ones would take the smaller ones too, which helped me a lot. It was just down below the house. We also had a hen house with about 13 hens. That was near the outhouse too. Oh it was terrible! I don't even want to talk about that! There was a chemical toilet down in the basement and no one wanted to use that. Anyway, I'll not go into that!

My husband just loved lightkeeping. There was a person from the Department of Transport, it's now called Coast Guard. They used to come down once a month to see that everything was going well. Well after the first inspection trip Stan told them "this is my place now, don't bother coming down again". And they didn't.

He kept the station very, very well. It was one of the best kept lighthouses on the coast, he was told by the department. So they didn't bother him too much. Only when there were repairs to be done would they send someone down.

My husband would get up in the morning and



Chebucto Head lighthouse in the mid-1960s. *Courtesy Anne Flemming*

he'd go up and clean the light. He'd clean the lantern and clean the lens and the glass. Then he'd go down to the fog alarm and do a little bit of work down there. Sometimes there wasn't too much to do when the fog alarm wasn't on but he would work around and make little gardens when he had the time. I don't know where he got the earth -- it was all rock! He had plots of garden everywhere. I couldn't even find them. But he occupied himself very well down there. There was always something to do at the lighthouse -- cleaning up after a storm when things'd be rolling around ...empty barrels and things.

Well it was quite dangerous. Sometimes he'd have to stay in the fog alarm and the kids or I would have to take his meals down to him. But that also was adventurous. It was really a whole series of adventures. I just loved it.

For me, well, I had five children. It's not too hard to say what I was doing! Washing clothes, ironing, cooking, baking, scrubbing floors, sewing, everything! Everything! And I did a lot of reading too. So that's how I occupied my time. I did a lot of writing too.

Sometimes I was concerned, but the older ones used to watch the younger ones and of course after they grew up and told me some harrowing tales of where they had been, it turned my hair a little greyer! They used to go on a toboggan from the front of the house. I didn't see them. There were a lot of rocks. They'd go down towards the water and put the brakes on just about before they got to the water. I didn't know that! I'm glad I didn't know!

The sea was ever-changing, it was never the same. Each morning you'd get up and you'd look out and there'd be freighters going in, there'd be whales, there'd be dolphins. And the sunsets were gorgeous and it was so peaceful and the storms were even fascinating.

Sometimes the waves would hit the rocks below the house and the spray would hit our kitchen window.

Lots of times you couldn't see out the kitchen windows because of the salt spray. In winter time too we had a lot more snow than we do now and sometimes we'd be stranded there for four or five days but we'd always had a good supply of groceries and things that we needed. I used to get panicky of course. Mothers do that with children around, thinking you might not be able to feed them.



Stanley Flemming with his daughter Sara, 1957. *Courtesy Anne Flemming*

There was one time...it was Christmas and the



Pat and Norm Flemming with "Blackie" at Chebucto Head in the 1950s. *Courtesy Anne Flemming*

power went off. It was off for three days and we had to cook our turkey in a wood stove that was down in the fog alarm. The wood stove would only take half the turkey at a time so we had to put one end in first, cook that and then turn the other side and cook it that way. I had started to make pies and of course the power was off, and I couldn't do them in the oven, so he took those down and cooked them on top of the stove. Well it was a very very odd Christmas believe me! Pies that were half-cooked. The turkey was half cooked. But it was fun.

There was another storm -- I can't remember when -- a real hurricane. I was really frightened. It was at night and I was sitting on the side of my bed and I could feel the floor covering just lift. There was no fear of the house blowing over, but it was really scary. The wind whistling between the buildings. It was noisy, believe me it was noisy! The sea -- that was what was most frightening. You never knew. You would think that the waves would be right up on your doorstep, but they

wouldn't, they'd just hit the rocks below and make a tremendous noise, a crashing noise.

The waves would hit the rock and then hit the window. The spray would hit the windows with an awful thud. We thought we were going to lose the windows at one time.

There was one shipwreck. I can't remember the year but it was the first part of January and a man appeared at the door of the fog alarm. He was soaking wet. Stan went to the door and asked him in and he said his ship had run ashore down between Portuguese Cove and Chebucto Head. The assistant at that time was Artie Gray and they went down with this man, followed him down with a makeshift stretcher because one of the men apparently was hurt.

The man had a broken leg. They brought him up and all the men came up to the fog alarm. I think there was about nine or ten, I have the names in a book. They were soaking wet and they had nothing but the clothes on their backs. Between Artie's wife Violet and myself

we tried to get blankets and things around them, and get them to take off their wet clothing.

I had some homemade bread and I had made a big pot of stew the day before. That came in very handy because they were very hungry. And of course there was a little bit of spirit left over from Christmas which came in handy to warm them up -- the insides and the outsides! We looked after them and then they called the



Pat (with Patches the cat), Carol and Sara Flemming, 1956. *Courtesy Anne Flemming*

shipping company and they sent a taxi down for them the next morning. We did all we could for them and we heard from them after they left.

A lot of strange things happened but if I tell you and you wouldn't believe them anyway! Well, I'll tell you one occasion. My husband was in the fog alarm and my daughter was in her playhouse which was an old army bunkhouse down below the lighthouse. They had one there during the war. I was upstairs in the bedroom looking out the window and I heard someone come in the kitchen door, and come up the steps going up the light. I counted the footsteps -- 13 going up.

Then my daughter came in, she was only about seven and she said "Mum, what did you do that for?" And I said "What are you talking about?" She said "Someone threw some gravel on top of my playhouse." And of course my husband came in shortly after. His face was white as a ghost. He said "someone just tapped me on the shoulder down there", and he said "there's no one around." All at the same time, the pebbles hit the roof of her playhouse, someone came up the steps and someone tapped him on the shoulders. This was around dusk, with no one else around. Just the three of us. I have no explanation for that whatsoever.

We always did get the feeling the place was haunted. One of my daughters, you could not give her enough money to spend a night in what used to be her bedroom. She could hear music there when there was no music on. Once she saw a lady going up the steps, with a long skirt. Pat followed her up the first flight. When she went up to the second flight, there was no one there. So that was another reason why she would not spend a night alone in that house. Even now, and she's 50!

A lot of tourists came up there and we had to show them the light. I kept a log and everyone that came up to visit I had them write their names in the book. Sunday, dinner, Sunday lunch, it didn't matter. They'd come to the door and want to go up and see the light so my husband would take them up there, through my house, upstairs to the light. Of course his dinner had to wait while he explained everything to them. Actually we met a lot of people there that I still correspond with. People from Tampa, people from Connecticut, Kansas, lots of people that came there. And that's a long long time ago.

Around the building it was always nice and clean and mowed. There were flowers there and as I said before I don't know where my husband got the earth to plant flowers in because it was all rock there. He loved gardening. He had

gladiolas, dahlias, all sorts of things. And a vegetable garden also, with potatoes and carrots and the usual kitchen garden stuff.

Well, the reason he left...he had open heart surgery around 1978 and he had to take a year's leave of absence. When he went back the lighthouse became automated. He could have stayed on as caretaker I guess and he tried it for a while but he didn't like it. He couldn't. He said no and he said he thought it was time for him to retire.

When we had to leave I was the last to leave. All my furniture was in this house (Ketch Harbour) and I was over in the little house at the lighthouse with a little bit of furniture. I didn't want to leave at all. I just loved it. I felt sad.

I still go over there two or three times a week and sit in the car and reminisce and think of all the happy times we had there and a few sad times. But I did not want to leave. It was a beautiful place to live.

Those were the happiest years of my life. It was as though you were in your own home. It didn't seem to belong to anyone else. It belonged to us while we were there. We looked after it as though it were our own. It was a very happy place to bring up children and my husband loved it and I loved it.

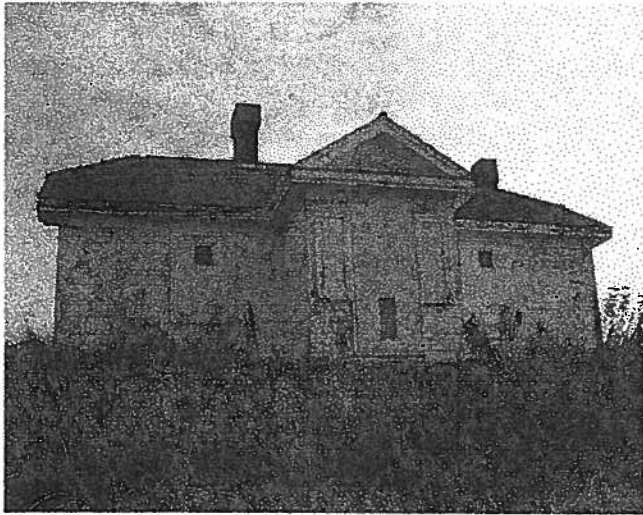
So there's no other explanation. I just loved it. And I would go back tomorrow if I were able, and young enough to, believe me! And spend another 30 years. I certainly would.



Anne Flemming: "Those were the happiest years of my life." *Chris Mills*

GEORGES ISLAND: STATUS OF THE LIGHTHOUSE KEEPER'S HOUSE

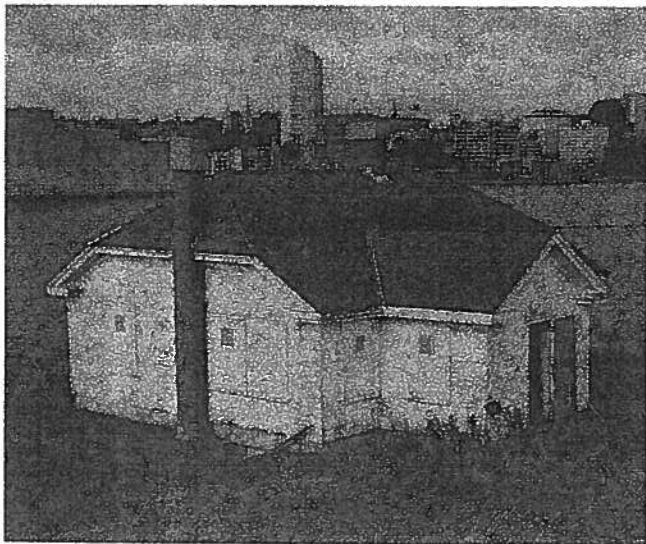
George Hebb



Abandoned lightkeeper's house, Georges Island. *William Hockey*

On the morning of September 27, 2000 the following NSLPS board members visited Georges Island: Lew Perry, Dorothy MacLeod, Jeanne Thomas and George Hebb. They met with Dr. Ron McDonald, Cultural Resource Manager, Parks Canada; Warren Peck, Parks Canada and Bill Hockey, Public Works and Government Services Canada (WCSC) at the lighthouse keeper's residence.

The purpose of this meeting was for NSLPS board members to be (a) present when the initial building assessment was being conducted and (b) to hear what options were being considered for the lighthouse keeper's residence in particular and for Georges Island

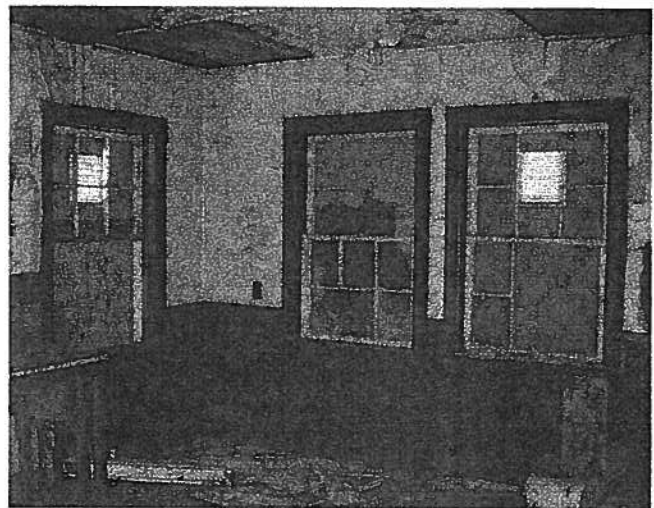


Abandoned Georges Island lightkeeper's residence with Halifax skyline behind. *William Hockey*

in general. The lightkeepers house was abandoned when the light was automated in 1972.

The interior of the dwelling has been abused, i.e. holes knocked in drywall, interior doors removed and windows broken out, but over the past ten years this abuse apparently has decreased. Ventilation had been provided so the interior was not as damp as expected. Structurally there needs a lot to be done to bring the facility up to building and fire standards if it is to be used for office space or to allow the public access, i.e. electrical wiring, adequate water and sewer, accessibility and fire prevention equipment.

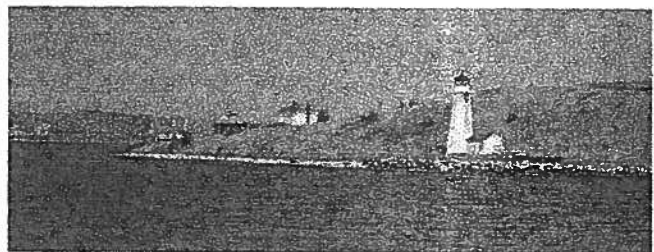
We were advised that a feasibility study would be initiated in the near future. This study will include docking facilities, landscaping, public accessibility, facility requirements for Parks Canada, etc. A review of the lighthouse keeper's house will be part this feasibility



Interior of the Georges Island lightkeeper's house, abandoned in 1972. *William Hockey*

study. Apparently Parks Canada will require more facility space than the residence will provide and will be looking at other existing buildings on the Island, i.e. the brick military marriage quarters situated close to the lighthouse keeper's residence.

We were advised by Ron McDonald that the NSLPS would be kept advised as to the progress of the feasibility study and that we could contact him at anytime to be brought up to date.



Chris Mills

OLDEST FORMER LIGHTKEEPER?



East Ironbound light in 1990.
E.H. Irwin

Violet Finck may well be the oldest former lightkeeper in North America. Mrs. Finck celebrated her 107th birthday on January 8th at Melville Lodge in Halifax. She was born on Big Tancook Island but lived for many years on East Ironbound Island, where her husband Edward took up lightkeeping duties in 1930. Those duties later passed to her son Charles and then his son Paul, who was the last

lightkeeper on East Ironbound. The light was de-staffed in 1990.

HOW'S YOUR FOGHORN HISTORY!

Bruce Nunn is researching a foghorn invention of 1887. The keeper of the Point Prim light in Digby County, Nova Scotia, a Captain William Ellis claimed in the May 10, 1912 *Digby Courier* that he invented a new way of sounding a fog whistle. Rather than requiring a man's full strength to pull a rope his new rig allowed a child to do it. In another article, dated 1910, his invention is referred to as the Automatic Time Steam Whistle. That article claims "they are now used everywhere in fog alarms on shore and on board many ships." Any idea what these articles are referring to? Is it true Capt. Ellis invented this thing?

Please forward any information on this to:

Bruce Nunn

(AKA Mr. Nova Scotia Know-It-All, CBC Radio/TV)

Box 3000

Halifax, NS

B3J 3E9

Or by email: cbcknowitall@hotmail.com

Or phone: 902 420 4337.

Klaus Hulse is a lighthouse enthusiast who collects post cards. He would like post cards of Nova Scotian lighthouses. He has cards of European lights for exchange!

Klaus Hulse,

Brandstr. 1a,

D-30890 Barsinghause,

Germany

Mrs. Mary K. Russell, 3615 Chadam Lane, 2D, Muncie, Indiana 47304 collects lighthouse postcards. She is willing to purchase or trade cards.

DOOMSDAY LIST

This is a List of Canadian Lighthouses and lightstation buildings in danger of being lost:

Cape Roseway, NS Dwellings and old fog alarm building

Country Island, NS Keepers houses

Cross Island, NS Keepers houses

Fish Fluke Point, NB Combined light and dwelling

Flowers Island, NF Combined light and dwelling

Georges Island, NS Keeper's house

Guyon Island, NS Keepers houses

Keppel Island, NF Lighthouse, keepers houses, fog alarm building, boat house

Liscomb Island, NS Keepers' house

Man of War Point, NS

Margaree Island, NS Lighthouse and dwelling

Moshers Island, NS Keepers' houses and small fog alarm building

Point Abino, ON Greek Revival style lighthouse, keeper's dwelling

Queensport (Rook Island), NS Combined dwelling/lighthouse

Sambro Island, NS Dwellings and Gas House

Seal Island, NS Lighthouse, radio operator's house, barn

Shampers Wharf, NB LIGHTHOUSE DESTROYED IN 2000.

Southwest Point, Anticosti Island, QC

Saint Paul's Island, NS South light keepers house, wireless operators house

SHAMPERS WHARF LIGHT DESTROYED

The old Shampers Wharf lighthouse, named as one of Canada's most endangered lighthouses, is no more. The light was built in 1913 and de-commissioned in 1961. In September 2000 the landowner torched this old dilapidated lighthouse, which he had every right to do as it was a de-commissioned light sold to a private party with no protection what-so-ever. This old lighthouse, along with the Fish Fluke Point light on Grand Manan's Ross Island, were the only two New Brunswick lights listed on the "Doomsday List" put out by the Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society in April 2000. Hopefully in the future this will not happen again, but there are many lighthouses left in New Brunswick, such as at Fish Fluke Point, that remain in private hands and very vulnerable to the whim of the owners.

From Kyle Purves, New Brunswick Lighthouse Preservation Society

CROSS ISLAND LIGHT- A PHOTO ESSAY

Chris Mills

The first of these photos was taken in 1989 when the Cross Island light was staffed by two keepers. The remainder come from a trip to the island, 11 years later.

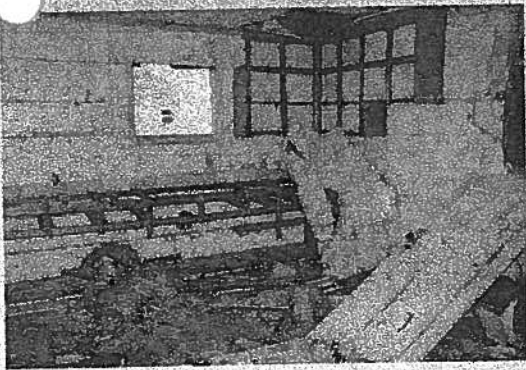


Better days. Cross Island Lightstation with brightly-lit keepers' houses, February 1989

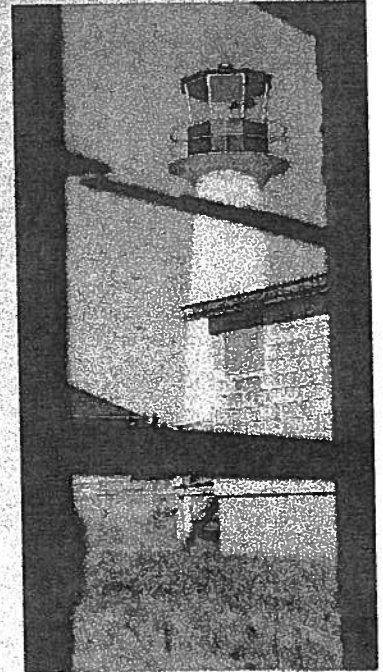
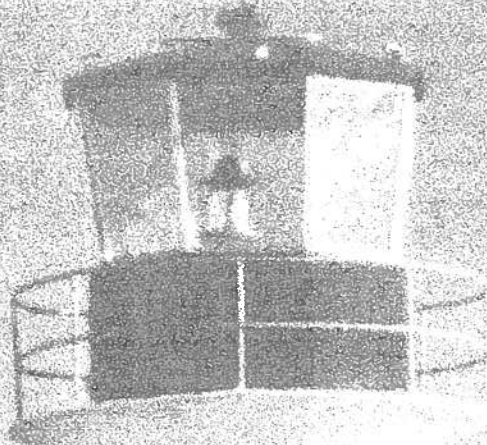
Cross Island lies at the broad mouth of Lunenburg Harbour on the south shore of Nova Scotia. The colonial government built a lighthouse on the southern end of the wooded island in 1834 as part of a chain of beacons extending from Cranberry Island, off the far-eastern tip of mainland Nova Scotia, to Cape Roseway in the south west.

Cross Island's first lighthouse burned to the ground in 1960; the present white fibreglass tower dates from the early 1980s. Today the solarized light and its deserted dwellings stand at the mercy of the elements on the exposed southern point of Cross Island. Eleven years-worth of rain, wind, snow and vandalism have taken their toll on the abandoned wooden structures.

Although the dwellings are still structurally sound, they will not stand forever. The Cross Island light illustrates the fate that has befallen dozens of Nova Scotia lightstations. Without community support and governmental help through transfer of properties and buildings to public groups, more Nova Scotian lighthouses *will* be lost.



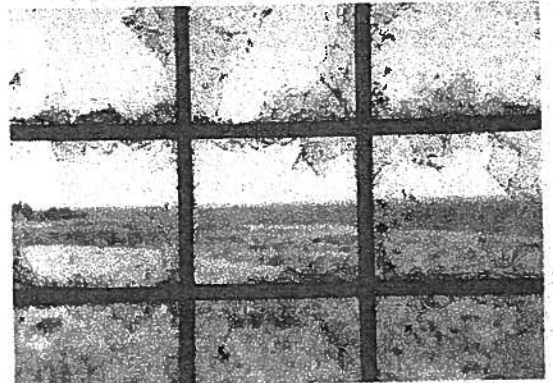
Vandalized kitchen in principal keeper's house



Through the windows of the gutted garage



Abandoned assistant keeper's house



Picture window in principal keeper's house



Cross Island engine room, lighthouse and solar panels



Assistant keeper's house (left), lighthouse and principal keeper's house

LOST LIGHTS

This handsome lighthouse was established in 1871 on Beach Point, at the entrance to St. Ann Harbour. The tower had a fourth order lens giving a fixed white light visible for 11 miles. This unique board and batten-sheathed lighthouse was destroyed some time before 1950.

If anyone has information about this light, please contact the editor, *The Lightkeeper*.

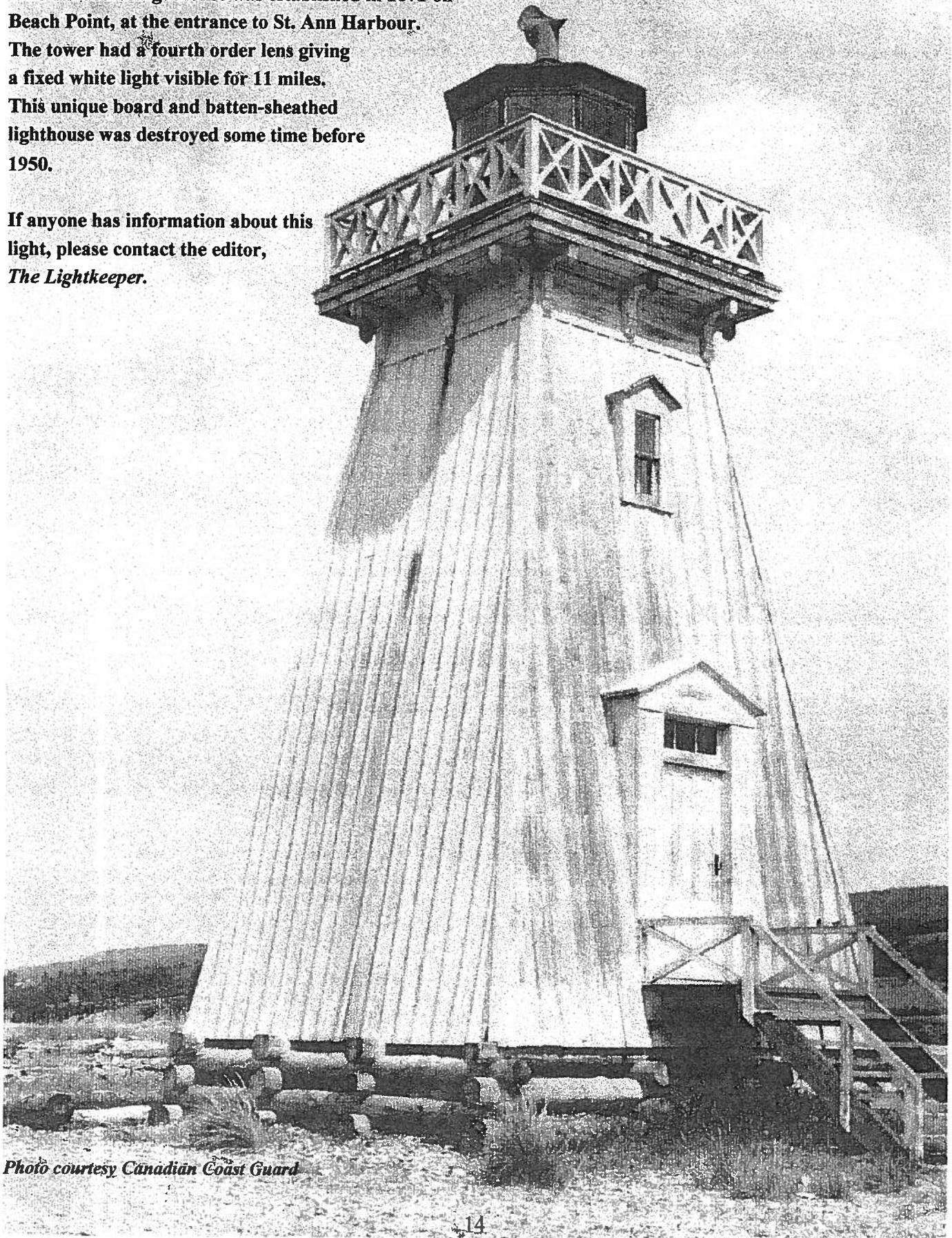
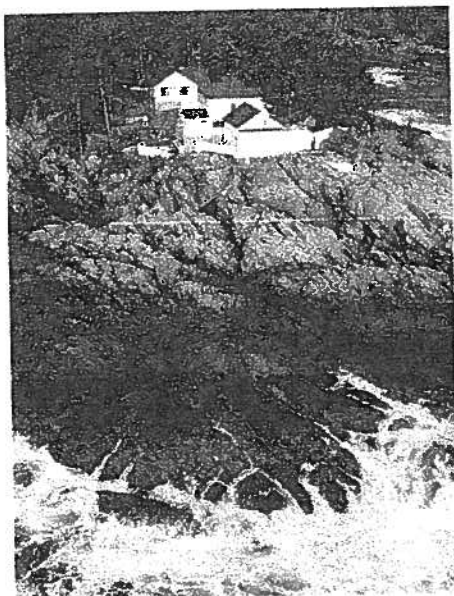


Photo courtesy Canadian Coast Guard

FROM THE WEST COAST: TENSE TIMES AT IVORY ISLAND LIGHTSTATION



An eagle's eye-view of Ivory Island lightstation. Chris Mills

Lightkeepers have always lived at the mercy of the elements. Vicious storms have flattened exposed lightstation buildings and even washed keepers into the sea. Although living conditions for Canada's remaining lightkeepers are vastly improved over the days

when families lived in draughty, leaking houses on sea-pounded islands, today's keepers are still mindful of the power of the sea. This damage report from January 11, 2000 was written by British Columbia lightkeeper Sherrill Kitson. It shows that lightkeeping is still a risky business when the weather is wicked.

On January 9th, 2000 after 0530 hours, westerly winds blowing in excess of 45 knots for several hours generating heavy seas resulted in us taking a wave over the station. The hit was direct on the south westerly side of the station, washing over a portion of the fog horn building and slamming into the principal keeper's dwelling, curving around the dwelling and washing across the station past the engine room and flooding past the garden storage shed building. After the wave cleared, swells continued to break and spray over the station for approximately another one and a half hours before the winds dropped off somewhat and sea conditions abated due to the falling tide.

Shortly after the hit, the kitchen sink, basement sink and toilet backed up with salt water and debris as the wave poured water down the outside vents. The upstairs west-northwest facing bedroom window was knocked slightly ajar by the impact and salt water clean-up was required.

The west corner siding was ripped off the principal's dwelling as the wave came around. The shingles on one side of the weather office roof were torn off on impact and this will require repair. Salt water entered the fog horn building (approximately two inches

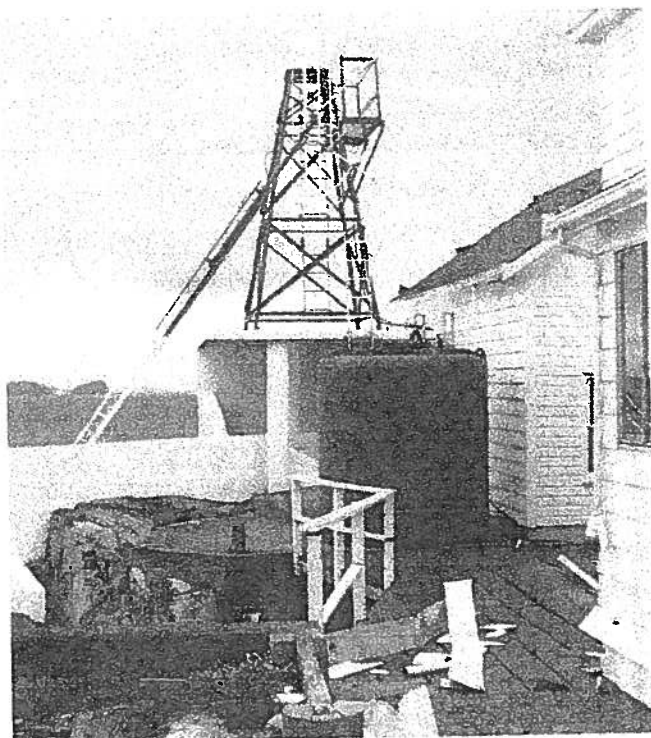
on the floor), the engine room and the tractor shed. All buildings have been mopped and washed down with fresh water. Numerous mussels and barnacles have been picked up off the station and as many areas possible rinsed with fresh water.

It was not until the 11th [after being ill for 24 hours] we discovered our cistern contains salt water, presumably due to the wave washing over the roof and flooding the gutters. A lot of clean-up will be required after the snow melts but we were really very fortunate and consider the damage minimal realizing what could have resulted, especially had we not had the sheet of Lexan (clear bullet-proof material) protecting our kitchen window.

[The relief assistant keeper] and I were both up for nearly 24 hours to deal with what had to be taken care of so I wish to pass on how hard she worked and how cooperative and supportive she was to me.

Sherrill Kitson later had this to say about the experience:

When the wave hit it was such an impact the house shook from top to bottom – for a split second I thought we were all goners but [I] didn't have the time to reflect on it until the next day when the aftershock of it all hit me as I had to start running around combatting the salt water that was coming in. Thank God we had the Lexan.



Storm damage at Ivory Island in 1989. Note radio mast leaning against lighthouse tower and siding torn from house lying on the deck. On Christmas Eve in 1982 huge seas toppled the 30-foot high metal light tower. The present lighthouse is the top section of that tower. Gordon Schweers

WHY THIS ISSUE IS LATE!

We decided to delay and expand this issue to include more community news and a longer feature. We welcome story ideas and photographs for future issues. Contact the editor at the address at the bottom of this page.

DONATIONS

The Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society now has charitable tax status. That means you'll get a receipt for your donation to the NSLPS. We'll gladly accept donations in memory as well.

LIGHTSHOP:

Order from: Jeanne Thomas, 262 Purcell's Cove Road
Halifax, N.S., B3P 1C3

Telephone 479-1626

e-mail: <jmthomas@navnet.net>

Please make cheques payable to the Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society.

Peggy's Cove Paper Weight

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7" x 10.5", ready to frame

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Friends of McNabs Island

Third Annual Dinner and Silent Auction

Slide presentation by park planner Brian Kinsman.

Learn about Nova Scotia's newest park, McNabs and Lawlor Island Provincial Park.

Support the society's Silent Auction.

Enjoy a splendid Dinner in the 18th century atmosphere of Royal Artillery Park.

Door Prizes to be won.

Date: Saturday, February 17th

Time: 6:30 - 10:30 pm

Where: Officers Mess, Royal Artillery Park, Queen Street (corner of Sackville St. across from the Halifax Citadel)

* Dress Code in effect *

Cost: \$30.00 per person

full course Dinner

(vegetarian plate available on request)

Tickets must be purchased by February 7th

For ticket information Contact: Victor Dingle at 463-4761 or send your cheque payable to:

Friends of McNabs Island Society

c/o Victor Dingle

1 Oak Street, Apt. 1007,

Dartmouth, NS, B3A 1Y7



Maughers Beach Lightstation, McNabs Island. Chris Mills

COMING IN THE MARCH ISSUE: APPLE RIVER LIGHTHOUSE

The Lightkeeper is published quarterly by THE NOVA SCOTIA LIGHTHOUSE PRESERVATION SOCIETY, c/o Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, 1675 Lower Water Street, Halifax., B3J 1S3 Editor: Chris Mills. Send items for publication to Editor *The Lightkeeper*, c/o 1121 Ketch Harbour Road, Ketch Harbour, NS B3V 1K7, or e-mail ketch@ns.sympatico.ca. **Deadline for March issue: February 20, 2001.**

NSLPS MEMBERSHIP FORM : January 1 - December 31, 2001

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E-MAIL _____ New ☐ Renewal ☐ Membership Number: _____

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