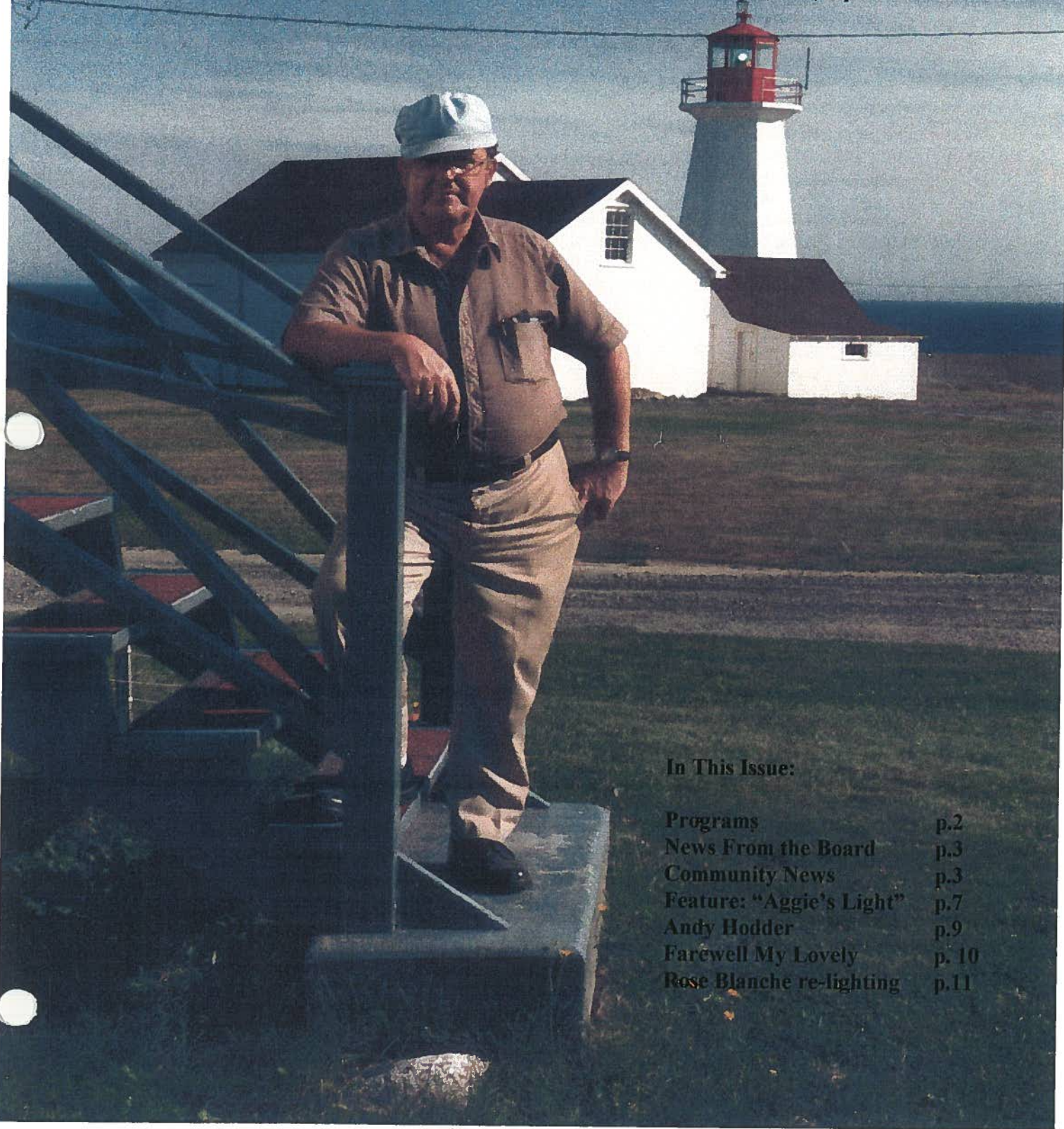




THE Lightkeeper

The Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society

Vol. 9, No.3, September/October 2002



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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 people recently joined the NSLPS:

Leslie Rogers, Anne-Marie Lindley, Ken MacKinnon, Jane Trimble, Nancy Eisner, Ashley Lohnes, Florence Bagnell, Emilie Gould, Barbara Bauld, Jane Ann Chisholm, H. Malette Poole, Tom & Frances Howard, Patricia White, Karmel Taylor, John Holland, Jeffery M. Ferguson, Sherry, Tony, Sarah & Elizabeth Zampino, James & Audrey Whitney, Craig, Kathleen & Whitney Thomson, Juliana & James P. Whitney, Ms. Bruce Blakemore, Hugh Jones.

PROGRAMS

Wednesday, October 23, 7:30 pm

Nova Scotia Lights, Then and Now

NSLPS treasurer Lew Perry has photographed many Nova Scotia's lighthouses. Tonight evening he'll share his contemporary colour images, and contrast them with archival images of historic lighthouses.

Come and see what your favourite lighthouse looked like in the past, or enjoy photos of its predecessors. (Did you know that there have been four lighthouses at Chebucto Head?)

Lew has stories to tell of the history of the lighthouses and of the people who kept them shining.

Presentation follows the 7:00 pm monthly meeting of the NSLPS.

Wednesday, November 27, 7:00 pm

Who wouldn't want to build a miniature of the lighthouse on Bon Portage Island, made famous by Evelyn Richardson's *We Keep A Light?*

This workshop is for adults. There will be a fee for the materials provided to make a quality model. Registration required.

To register, call Dorothy MacLeod NOW at 423-8034.



East Ironbound trip, summer 2002. *Josette d'Entremont*

NEWS FROM THE BOARD

Fiona Marshall

The NSLPS board met twice this summer. On both occasions, the primary topic of discussion was the need to devise, implement and enforce heritage standards for the divestiture of lighthouses. David Cooke of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans was invited to give the board an update on the current schedule for divestiture, as this plan seems to be moving very quickly.

As a result, the NSLPS board prepared a list of recommendations that were submitted to, and accepted by DFO with great success. Special thanks are extended to Dan Colin and Brenda Shannon for spearheading this list.

Barry MacDonald, wearing both his NSLPS hat and that of Chair of the Lighthouse Protection Act Committee, worked diligently this summer trying to save the Low Point Light in Cape Breton. It seemed as though it was not possible to secure an interested community group to assume responsibility for the light before the demolition deadline. But at the last moment two groups came forward to take over the house. See community news for more information.

Trips

There were three very successful and enjoyable trips this summer: Sambro Island in June, Seal Island in July, and East Ironbound Island in August.

Fortunately the weather was stellar on all occasions, and East Ironbound travellers were lucky to climb the old wooden lighthouse and visit the schoolhouse. Many thanks are extended to Dorothy MacLeod, our Trip Director, and our trip leaders: Tracy O'Brien, Fiona Marshall, Tony Thompson and Dan Conlin.

We hope all our members had a safe and happy summer and that you were able to visit many of our province's lighthouses during your travels!

VISIT OUR LIGHTHOUSES BROCHURE

Kathy Brown

Affiliates and others will be wondering what has happened about the new *Visit Our Lighthouses* brochure that was supposed to be available in July.

Well, we tried very hard to fulfill that promise but it became impossible. We started working on the application early in the spring and applied for funding from Tourism and Culture on May 2. Then, the guidelines changed and we had to apply again. On August 7th we received notification of funding for 50% of the cost of the new brochure.

We've worked as hard and as fast as we can, but late summer is not the best time to put a project like this through. Both Kathy Brown and Chris Mills worked on gathering information, writing and editing, juggling holidays and other major responsibilities. The project is now at the design stage and is expected to be completed early in November.

Participating lighthouse groups will receive a two-year supply of brochures and the rest will be distributed province-wide for use over 2003 and 2004. This new brochure is a joint project with the Atlantic Lighthouse Council. They gathered some of the information and are looking after the raising of funds for the 50% of the cost not covered by the provincial grant.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Burntcoat Head

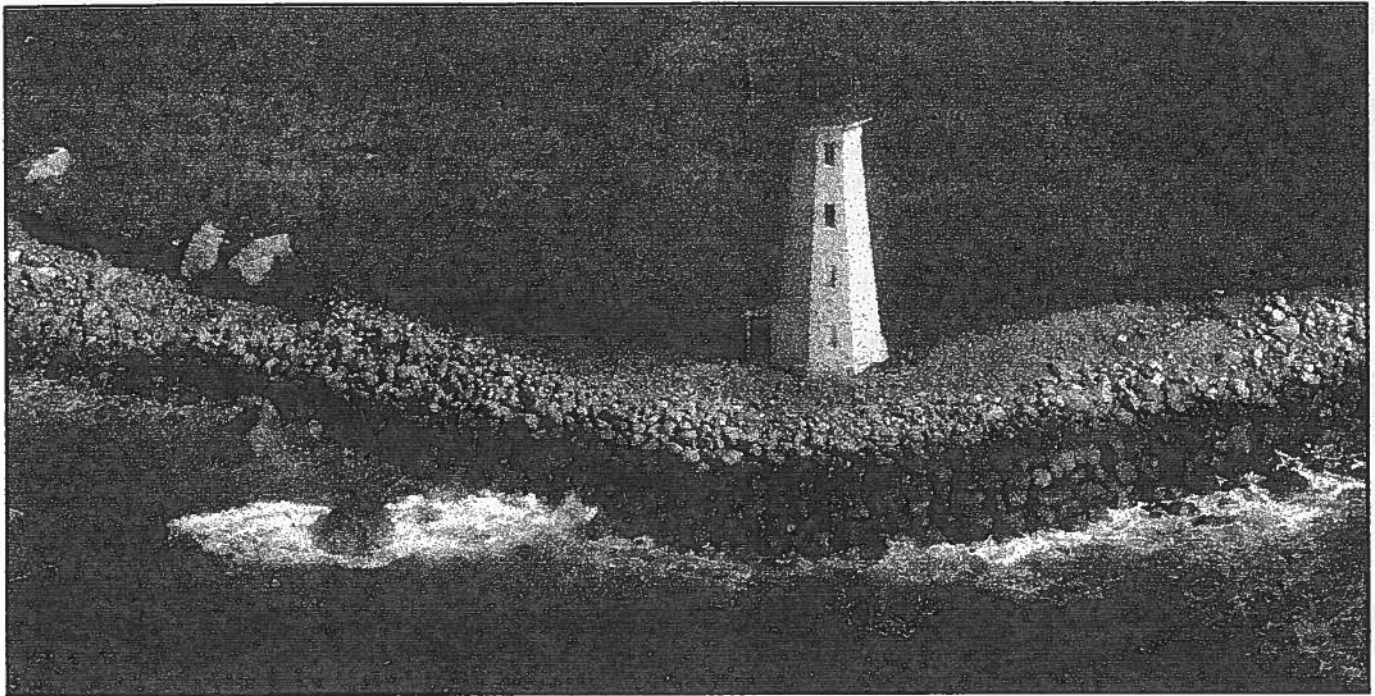
Charlie MacCulloch reports the Burntcoat Head light has seen a five per cent increase in visitors this year. To date, about 6,300 people have signed the guest book.

The Burntcoat Head Park Committee is now working with the local regional development authority to prepare a study addressing future plans for Burntcoat Head. Charlie says the committee would like to see a tidal interpretive centre based at the lighthouse park. He says that plan would be partly contingent on bringing hydro power and parking to the site.

Cape Forchu

Adrienne Speck says the Cape Forchu light has had a great year so far, with 15,191 visitors signing the guest book to September 15. The lighthouse site had a busy summer, becoming a municipal heritage property in June and hosting the Lieutenant Governor in July.

Seven local tour companies now visit the lighthouse on a regular basis, along with other tours from Canada and the U.S. This summer a geologist



Coffin Island Light, Summer 2002. *Jamie R. Clarke - Canadian Coast Guard, Maritimes Region*

spent time at the site, researching rare rock formations, some of which date back 570,000 years.

Adrienne says the Friends of the Yarmouth Light plan to expand parking for next year, along with placing more picnic tables around the property. She also says the group ultimately wants to re-install the large, rotating DCB-36 lens removed from the tower in 1998. The groups would also like to revive the Cape Forchu fog horn. These two improvements would certainly revitalize the "navigational spirit" that has been sadly lacking at Cape Forchu since the Coast Guard downgraded the station equipment four years ago.

Cape George

The Cape George Lighthouse continues to be a major tourist attraction in the Antigonish area. Although the Antigonish North Shore Development Association does not keep records of the number of visitors to the light, Mary MacLellan says the adjacent recreation park has seen an increase in use this year. Visitors at the Tuna Interpretive Centre in nearby Ballantynes Cove can view a 3rd order Fresnel lens similar to one removed from Cape George in the 1960s.

Coffin Island

The Coffin Island Lighthouse continues to stand firm against the fury of the open Atlantic. In 1999 the Coffin Island Lighthouse Heritage Society had an armour rock wall placed along the eroding shoreline in front of the lighthouse, to prevent the structure from toppling into

the sea.

The light is still shines by night. Pending a maintenance/access agreement with the Coast Guard, Ken Wilkinson says his society would like to restore the lighthouse and install interpretive panels at the site.

Eddy Point

Plans are underway at Eddy Point to re-install the light which was removed earlier this year by the Coast Guard. To date, materials have been donated to shore up the old foundation which was part of the reason the Coast Guard gave for removing the lighthouse.

Gloria MacQuarrie, spokesperson for the local group trying to save the light, says the Coast Guard has agreed to return the lantern and optic from the light, pending receipt of a viable business plan from the group.

It is unclear when or if the fibreglass light tower will be returned. One can only assume the Coast Guard may have other plans for the expensive tower; which begs the question: "What use is the lantern, without the tower?"

Ms. MacQuarrie says local support for the return of the Eddy Point light has been encouraging, with pledges of everything from manual labour, to free crane services. Once the light is re-installed, it will once again be listed as an active aid to navigation. Another positive development in lighthouse preservation. Well done!

Fort Point

Visitors to Liverpool's distinctive "hunchbacked" light

are up over last year. Jill Cruikshank, of the Region of Queens Municipality, says she anticipates around 16,000 people will have visited the lighthouse by the time it closes for the season on October 20.

"The Gift Shop containing the work of local artisans has had another very successful year," Jill says. "This year for the first time we featured a hanging pewter ornament of Fort Point Lighthouse, which is the first in a collector's series of 'Lighthouses of Queens County' - next year's pewter ornaments will also feature Coffin Island Lighthouse and Port Medway Lighthouse."

Gilberts Cove

The Gilberts Cove lighthouse closed for the season at the end of September, wrapping up a busy summer for the Gilberts Cove and District Historical Society. President Gail Long says 3,505 visitors signed the guest book this year, with people from Pakistan, Sweden, Australia, Korea and Austria (to name just a few countries), visiting the combined lighthouse/keepers house.

The lighthouse houses a genealogy room, where people can research their family trees. School records for Gilberts Cove and two adjacent communities, dating back to 1901, are also located at the lighthouse.

The Gilberts Cove lighthouse celebrates its centenary in 2004, and the society is planning to produce a community cookbook, and a 2004 calendar featuring archival photos of the lighthouse, to mark the occasion.

Low Point

The keeper's house at Low Point, Cape Breton will stay in the public trust thanks to a partnership between the Fort Petrie Group, a local preservation society, and the Atlantic Lighthouse Council. The Coast Guard had planned to demolish the structure, which was being continually vandalized.

Patricia Grezel, spokesperson for the society, is optimistic about the future for the property and hopes that it will be used as a museum to display photos and information about the history of the historic lightstation as well as artifacts which she is confident will turn up.

It is interesting to note that the 3rd order Fresnel lens from Low Point, which was on display at the Coast Guard Base in Dartmouth, is now on loan to a group in Ballantynes Cove, near Antigonish.

Mrs. Grezel says negotiations are currently underway with The Coast Guard for a lease/sub-lease agreement and she hopes a final agreement will be reached early in October 2002. After the legalities are over with, serious planning will get underway, but in the meantime, the building has been secured. Congratulations to all concerned!

Margaretsville

The Margaretsville lighthouse had "a good summer in all respects," says John Freeman. During the summer months about 50 people a day visited the black and white striped tower overlooking the Bay of Fundy. John says the community has taken over the local wharf, and would like to assume responsibility for the lighthouse under Directive 96-1. But as far as John knows, the Coast Guard plans to hold on to the operational lighthouse for the foreseeable future. Meanwhile, the community is working on a development plan that would link the wharf, lighthouse and nearby community centre.

Medway Head

The former lightkeepers dwelling (vacated in 1987) at Medway Head is for sale. The privately-owned house (the standard Coast Guard bungalow found on lightstations across Canada) is on the block for a whopping \$249,000, even though the house sits on a small lot not connected with the water!

When queried about the astronomical price for a small house that "needs work", the real estate agent stated that the price reflected the stunning ocean vista from the property. This is precisely the type of situation we must avoid with the remainder of Nova Scotia's lighthouses and keepers dwellings.

Port Bickerton

Gwen Robar reports that tourism numbers were down at the Port Bickerton lighthouse this year, reflecting a trend along the eastern shore. About 4,000 people visited the site; of those, 2,188 were paying customers.

The outside of the old lighthouse recieved a coat of paint this summer. Gwen says she is now waiting for a visit from Public Works to discuss the possibility of a transfer of the lighthouse and property through directive 96-1.

Port Greville

The Port Greville Lighthouse and the Greville Bay Shipbuilding Museum saw about 3,000 visitors this summer. Museum society treasurer Ora Collins says part of the lighthouse was re-shingled this summer.

Students at the Parrsboro Junior/Senior High School are now preparing a history project about the lighthouse.

Port Medway

Just call the Port Medway lighthouse "The Little Lighthouse That Could"! Only two years ago the decommissioned and dilapidated harbour light sat next to the community's abandoned fish plant, paint peeling and siding flapping in the wind. The light had been unlit

for more than ten years.

Today, the lighthouse stands proudly at the edge of a park on the community's scenic waterfront.

In 1998 the Medway Area Community Association decided the light should be saved, and in July 2001, work started on the project. The abandoned fish plant was demolished and a park established around the lighthouse, which has been completely refurbished. The project was funded by the sale of equipment from the old fish plant, the Region of Queens Municipality, ACOA, Nova Scotia Sport and recreation, and Nova Scotia Tourism and Culture. The total cost of the project was just under \$602,000.

The park's official opening ceremony is slated for Saturday, October 19, 2002 between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. Join residents of Port Medway for family fun, music, crafts and celebrations. (Exit 17A off Highway 103)

The park is located in the scenic harbour at Port Medway and features a look-off, picnic pavilion, and interpretive panels detailing the maritime history of the area. Fisheries and Oceans Canada has donated an old lighthouse lens, which has been installed in the restored lantern.

Although no longer used as a navigational aid, the lighthouse has been restored to replicate the details shown in old photographs.

Queensport

Gloria MacQuarrie says the Municipality of Guysborough is now renovating the Queensport Light. The tower had been leaking – Gloria says much of the tower has now been replaced. Workers have also installed some new windows and fixed cracks in the basement, and painted the structure. The Municipality is still waiting for the results of an environmental assessment done more than a year ago.

Terence Bay

The Terence Bay Lighthouse Committee reports that two months ago the light at Tennant Point was assessed for possible federal heritage status. Marilyn Peters says the community would like to take over the light and maintain it "as an icon," of the marine heritage of Terence Bay, without developing the light as a glitzy tourist attraction. Peters says the committee hopes to eventually re-shingle and paint the lighthouse, and restore a lantern to the top of the tower.

Walton

Jennifer Robert says the Walton Light had an "excellent" tourist season this year. The light has seen an increase in the number of visits from local nursing homes. Visitors

have also been serenaded by a local guitar player at the lighthouse. The addition of a beautiful fourth order Fresnel lens with kerosene vapour burner and working clockwork mechanism makes the Walton light a must-see for lighthouse enthusiasts.

Sandy Point

Bernice Goodick reports that tourism numbers were down at the Sandy Point Community Centre this year. The lighthouse continues to be a big draw though -- for the past few months it has been lit up with coloured lights around the lantern deck and bottom railing.

The Sandy Point Recreation Group has hired two painters to paint the light this month. The group is still waiting for the results of environmental tests done two years ago around the community centre, part of which was once the control/generator building for the lighthouse.

Seal Island Light Museum

From June to the end of August, more than 7,300 people visited the Seal Island Light Museum.

In the meantime, Brenda Maxwell reports the Cape Sable Historical Society is still waiting to hear from the Municipality of Barrington concerning a grant they applied for to help repair the lighthouse. The walls and floors of the structure are rotting in places as a result of leaks in the 1907-vintage lantern.

"If they do get their money, it will leave us with 20,000 to raise," Brenda says. "At present we have about \$500, and we are just beginning.

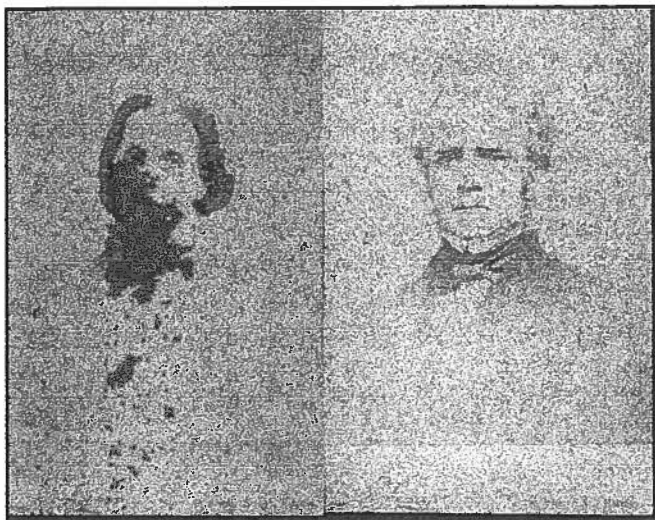
"We are kicking off the fundraising with a variety show on the 5th of October. Local talent are volunteering their time, location, the Lions Hall, Barrington. Admission will be \$5.00.

"We are hoping to have a Hallowe'en haunted light house in October. Funds for this will be shared by the Society and the Regional Library Committee. If all comes together as we hope, the haunted light house will be on October 28, 29 and 30. Please call 637-2185 for more information.

"The Society will also doing Christmas baking. We will take orders for breads: cherry, cranberry, and lemon cakes: fruit, carrot, cranberry pudding, and gumdrop.

"Christmas is right around the corner and we will once again be holding the annual lighting of Seal Island Light Museum and Christmas Carol Concert in the Old Meeting House Museum, December 14th beginning at 7:15 p.m. Come early to get a seat!"

Anyone wishing to donate to the Seal Island Museum repair fund can call 637-2185 for more information. All donations are tax deductible.



Maria and Michael Wrayton. *Courtesy Joyce McEachern*

Michael Wrayton and "Aggie's Light"

Joyce McEachern

Emerald Isle (known officially as Stoddart Island) is located about a mile off Shag Harbour, in south western Nova Scotia. In this month's feature, Joyce McEachern shares some of the history of this little island, its early settlers and its tiny, 20-foot high lighthouse. The light was automated in 1961.

My great-grandfather, Michael Wrayton came to the south west coast of Nova Scotia from Ireland during the

winter of 1830/31 aboard the Brig *Mary*, with Captain Duncan at the helm. Michael was 21 years old. He and his partner were actually heading for St. John, New Brunswick to start a merchant business, but the *Mary* had problems off the coast of Nova Scotia, so he stayed for the long run in the Shag Harbour area. (There is another whole story around the *Mary* and the court case that followed this trip).

Michael set up as a merchant in Doctor's Cove and spent several years there. He married Maria Cunningham, daughter of Captain James Cunningham and Addra Jane (Guyon) of Churchover. N.S., in 1843. Michael and Maria had eleven children. My Grandmother, Agnes Elizabeth Wrayton, was the ninth child, born in 1859. Around 1860, my great grandfather purchased Stoddart's Island from the Stoddard brothers and moved his large family to the island, re-naming it Emerald Isle.

In 1870 a lighthouse was built on the island, and Michael Wrayton was the first lightkeeper on the east coast to use kerosene instead of whale oil as fuel. My grandmother Aggie was twelve years old at the time and she was given the job of tending to the light. She lit the light each night and snuffed it in the morning. The lighthouse came to be called "Aggie's Light" and remains so to this day.

Maria Wrayton died in September 1879 and in December of the same year Michael Wrayton, his two youngest children, Lovell, 19 and Cassie, 17 and a friend, Jacob Sears were drowned off Lower Argyle



The Wrayton home on Emerald Isle. *Courtesy Joyce McEachern*



"Aggie's Light" today. *E.H. Irwin*

when their boat, the *Ocean Belle* went down. This left Aggie and her brother Will alone on the island. Aggie married John McDonnell of Lower Argyle in 1881 and left the island to raise her own family of nine children. She died in Winnipeg, Manitoba in 1947.

Will and his wife, Mary (Mihan) went to nearby Bon Portage Island to be lightkeepers there and remained until 1897 when they moved to Halifax. Arthur, the third son of Michael and Maria then purchased the Emerald Island from the Wrayton estate and moved his wife and several children there. He was there until his death by drowning in Argyle Bay 1892. He left a wife and nine children. In 1893 Arthur's wife Alice was charged with manslaughter, but ultimately exonerated in the death of Billy Thurston, a hired hand on the island.

Alice then sold the island to Captain Ephraim Larkin, grandfather of Evelyn Richardson, author of *We Keep A Light* and other great books about the area's islands. Evelyn was born on Emerald Isle in 1902.

Unfortunately, Michael failed to file the necessary documents with the government and the name of the island was never officially changed. It remains today as Stoddart (Stoddart's) Island although it is referred to by many names, including Emerald Isle, Wrayton's Island and Eph's Island.

Around 1873 or 1874 the cable ship *Minia* was

fog bound at the island for a period of time. The Wraytons were obviously grand hosts to the captain and crew as the captain wrote a song about the family and the island. I have tried to find out who the captain was, but to no avail.

Here is how the document reads:

The following song is respectfully dedicated to the inhabitants of the Emerald Isle as a small token of regard and acknowledgment of the pleasure of their musical genius and other endearing qualities afforded the Captain and Officers of the cable ship Minea during their long detention caused by fog.

(To the tune of "God Bless the Prince of Wales")

Sweet Emerald Isle, Farewell

How hard it is to say good-bye
 To friends so kind and dear
 The parting ever brings a sigh,
 And oft a bitter tear.
 The happy isle we'll ne'er forget
 Though now for aye we part,
 It's mem'ry will bring gladness yet
 To cheer an aching heart.

Chorus:

Then lend your voices loud awhile
And give a hearty cheer
For Wrayton's and the Emerald Isle
God bless them be our prayer.

As o'er the mighty deep we roam
To mend the broken link.
We'll ne'er forget your happy home
Nor cease of you to think,
The fair ones near our heart we place
Whose smiles are sweet and bright
Where images we'll ne'er deface
Hurrah for Aggie's light.

Chorus

Now may the King and Queen my boys,
Of this most charming spot.
Have richest blessings, many joys
Contentment be their lot,
Arthur and our friends within
The matrimonial sphere
Oh! may your richest blessings win,
To drive away dull care.

Chorus

For Bella's sweet melodious lays,
For Maggie's bright black eyes,
For Aggie's many winning ways,
All strengthen friendships tie.
Sweet Cassie all our love first won
Her charming smiles are sweet.
And Love, the Hero with his gun
We'll ne'er his equal meet.

Chorus

Right jovial son of Erin's Land
And your thrice happy wife,
May both glide smoothly hand in hand,
Adown the stream of life.
So farewell true and generous hearts
We part but for awhile.
We'll ne'er find friends in foreign parts
Like those of Emerald Isle.

Then lend your voices loud awhile
And give a hearty cheer
For Wrayton's and the Emerald Isle
God bless them be our prayer.

FAREWELL

On September 17th, Nova Scotia lost a real treasure when Andrew "Andy" Hodder passed away at the age of 84. Andy was born in Marystown, Newfoundland, and spent

his entire life associated with the sea in one way or another.

Andy graduated with a wireless ticket from the Eastern Radio School in Halifax, in 1944. He served with the merchant marine until 1945, when he joined the Department of Transport as a radio operator. Andy's wireless certificate became a ticket to adventure -- after spending six months on Sable Island, Andy was transferred north to Resolution Island (southern tip of Baffin Island). He spent a 16 months there, transmitting weather reports, maintaining contact with shipping, even acting as lightkeeper (for 50 cents a month!) At the small wooden lighthouse near the wireless station.

In 1947 Andy began a seven year association with the Sambro Lightship, at the south eastern approaches to Halifax Harbour (See 'Tunderation! Seven years on the Sambro Lightship, *The Lightkeeper*, Vol. 9, No. 1 March 2002). He went on to work installing and repairing radio telephone equipment on lightstations along Nova Scotia's Atlantic Coast, from Lockport to Cape Breton.

In later years, Andy maintained his connection with the airwaves through amateur radio (call sign VE1BV), from his 'ham shack' in the basement of his Melrose Avenue home.

Andy was well-known and greatly appreciated at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, for his volunteer work bringing the wireless cabin aboard CSS *Acadia* to life with HAM radio broadcasts and teaching children (and adults) the basics of Morse code during demonstration days.

Andy is survived by Lillian "Lilly", his wife of 64 years, and son Randall.

Andy was a true gentleman, and always happy to share memories of his adventures at sea, on land, and on the airwaves.

Thanks for everything Andy.

★ ★ ★

NOTICE

Nova Scotia Nature Trust Fifth Annual Dinner and Silent Auction

Saturday, October 19, 2002

Halifax Sheraton (now called the Casino Hotel)

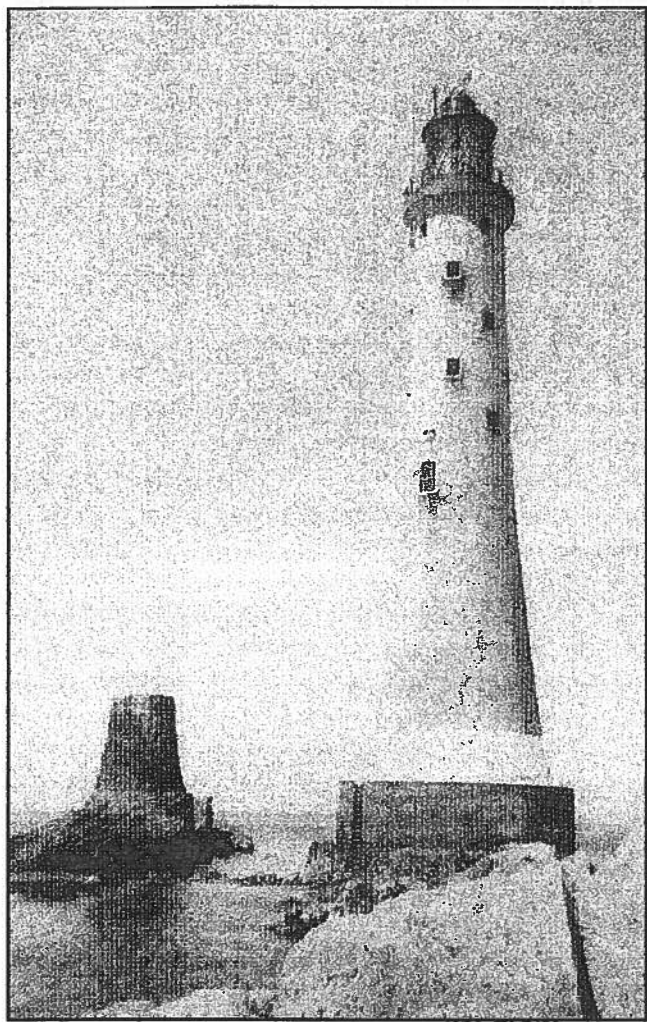
Special guest speaker WADE DAVIS - Explorer-in-Residence with *National Geographic* (described as a living Indiana Jones!)

Tickets \$75 a person

6:00 pm silent auction/7:30 pm Dinner and guest speaker. For tickets call Jeanne Thomas 902-479-1626 or e-mail jthomas1@hfx.eastlink.ca

FAREWELL, MY LOVELY ...

Arthur Lane



The Eddystone lighthouse as it appeared during Arthur Lane's tours of duty. *Courtesy Arthur Lane*

Arthur Lane served as a lightkeeper on England's famous Eddystone lighthouse during the 1950s. The following story more than speaks for itself:

Some time in early 2001 I had a phone call from Ken Trethewey; he of the Lighthouse Encyclopaedia. Would I care to provide some reminiscences of lighthouse keeping pre-modernisation (and, he might have added, pre-extinction) for a programme about the Eddystone's lighthouses? It was going to be made by that energetic bicycling radio and television personality, Adam Hart-Davis. The programme was for radio and would be broadcast north of the Scottish border.

Scotland sounded a safe distance away. I said Yes.

I spent a morning making a few notes about what lightkeeping had been like in the rough old days before helicopter reliefs and one-month working. When a call came from the BBC – a female voice with background partying noises – I read some of it over the telephone. 'It sounds a bit formal', she said. 'That's because I'm reading it'. 'Not quite what we want', she said. 'What we're after is spontaneity'. 'I don't do spontaneous', I said, 'I have never done spontaneous. And I have a really bad st-st-st –'

'S-s-s-so do I!' she said.

We arranged a meet. She turned out to be a PPE graduate working her way up through the BBC ranks and starting at the bottom. The bottom today was me, a geriatric ex-lightkeeper who did not do spontaneous.

'Now, how shall we approach this?'

'You tell me', I said. I didn't want to approach it at all. I had in my pocket five hundred well-chosen words on traditional lightkeeping which I thought would be found interesting by anyone who didn't mind a touch of formality. And I wasn't impressed by her equipment. It looked like a souped-up Walkman. To this miserable pass, I thought, had the BBC come.

'Well, describe a typical tower lighthouse. You know, the kind that's surrounded by sea'.

I took her up a lighthouse that's surrounded by sea, room by room: entrance with ropes and lime, engine-room with batteries, paraffin room with tanks, winch-room with winch. Gripping stuff. She kept herself awake by watching the level meter while politely covering a yawn with one hand. When we reached the lantern and I was about to climb onto the roof and describe the wind-vane she called a temporary halt.

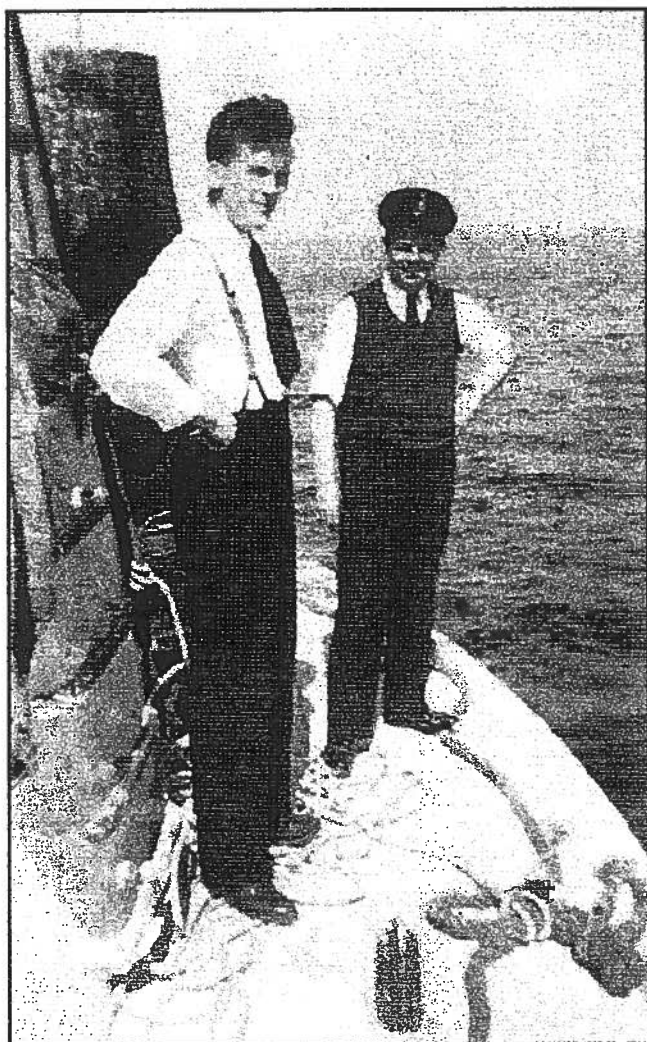
'That's awfully interesting', she said, 'but what our listeners really want to know is, what was it really like?'

I've written a book about what it was like, my dear child, I thought, in several thousand well-considered words, and I'm not going to make a fool of myself now by ad libbing a lot of crap off the top of my head.

And then I looked at her and realised it wasn't just desperation I saw there. She was frightened, and I cursed myself for my selfishness. Here was this pretty little thing, at the start of a brilliant BBC career, and I was about to send her back to Edinburgh with an unusable tape to a roasting from the producer, and perhaps something worse from Hart-Davis. An irritable man could do a girl a lot of harm with a carelessly handled bicycle. I let a faraway look come into my eyes – the eyes of a man who has seen terrible things.

'You knows them li-tho-graphs of tower rocks with seas romping up the lantern, over the top, and down

the other side? Wa-al, my lovely, it were worse. Many's the time we've wore our life jackets in the kitchen with solid seas sweepin' in through the shattered window and carryin' away our 'umble fare. And that be eighty feet up or I lie. I can remember our Principal Keeper, old 'Smilin' Tom' Horsley, passin' the Davis apparatus round to give us a whiff of the life-givin' oxygen, and us cursin' Trinity for the mean varmint they were in not gettin' us a set each from the submariners at Gosport - 'I broke off. 'Is that enough?' I asked in a normal voice.



Assistant keeper Arthur Lane (l) and Principal Keeper "old 'Smilin' Tom' Horsley". *Courtesy Arthur Lane*

'A little more', she said. I could see she was getting excited. 'Tell me about the food, the candles - '

'Candles!?', I said bitterly. 'There warn't no candles. T'were Michaelmas, and candles had been gorn these twenty sennight's since. We were down to paraffin for drink and - ' here I lowered my voice at the remembered horror of it - two hundred tons of corned

beef - '

'Tons?' she queried, a hint of doubt in her voice.

'Tins', I corrected. 'Mashed, sliced, diced, puréed and marinated - '

'Marinated corned beef - ?'

'Nar!' I rasped at the stupidity of the girl. 'Corned beef 'ad long gorn. Our third 'hand. 'Ee drew the short straw, pore beggar, but 'ee were a supernumerary (trainee lightkeeper-Ed) anyway'.

'But even so, a marinated supernumerary - ?'

It was the Delia Smith input that was the breakthrough. Presently we were off together like a house on fire, dying, sewing ourselves up in sailcloth, stowing ourselves on the downwind side of the gallery. If I'm any judge of lunacy I would say we both ended up as mad as hatters, but I saw her on to the train to Edinburgh a happy woman.

I didn't hear the broadcast, taking occasion to be absent and drunk that evening, but someone who did tells me very little of the recording was used. I hope the girl came to no harm. The fifty quid fee, I sent to Amnesty, who work for people confined unjustly in small spaces. It seemed appropriate.

For more hilarious and poignant details of Arthur Lane's experiences on the Eddystone and other Trinity House lightstations, the editor highly recommends a read of Lane's It Was Fun While It Lasted: Lighthouse Keeping in the 1950s. Published in 1998 by Whittles Publishing, Caithness, Scotland KW5 6DW.

ROSE BLANCHE LIGHT SHINES BRIGHT

Chris Mills

The beginning of August 2002 witnessed a new lease on life for four Newfoundland lighthouses. From August 2nd to the 11th, the Southwest Coast Lighthouse Festival celebrated the historic lights at Rose Blanche, Channel Head, Cape Ray, and Cape Anguille.

The highlight of the festival was the re-lighting of the Rose Blanche lighthouse, a beautiful granite lighthouse/keeper's house recently restored by the Southwest Coast Development Association (SWCDA).

The tower was built between 1871 and 1873, and served until the 1940s, when it was decommissioned and replaced by a beacon nearby. For more than 50 years the tower lay at the mercy of wind, rain and lightning strikes.

In 1988, Rita Anderson of the SWCDA, decided the tower should be rebuilt, but it wasn't until 1996 that restoration work began in earnest. It involved the

labourious task of salvaging granite blocks from the ruins and quarrying new local stone for the re-construction. After three years and \$1.5 million (Canadian), local workers finished the job. In July 1999, the lighthouse was opened to the public.

But the real icing on the cake came on the night of August 3rd this year, when Rita Anderson flipped the switch to illuminate Rose Blanche's flashing red light. Although the day before had been clear, Newfoundland's infamous fog and rain rolled in for the re-lighting. But about 150 people braved the damp to join the ceremony, and as the beams of the light cut through the darkness, everyone clapped and cheered.

For Rita Anderson, the event was the culmination of 14 years of sweat and tears.

"It has been not only my job, but a work of love to restore that lighthouse," she says. "It is unique and will always be so."

"It's active, it's there now, it's whole. You can look out now and see a light where there wasn't one for over 50 years. People from Rose Blanche see it standing now instead of just in ruins. So it's like new life has been brought back into her."

In late September, the Rose Blanche lighthouse was designated as a provincial heritage site, thus providing even more protection for this historic beacon.

Congratulations to Rita and her team - true grassroots lighthouse preservationists one and all!

Note: Other events in the Southwest Coast Lighthouse festival included the ceremonial handover of the Cape Ray and Cape Anguille lightstations, from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (Canadian Coast Guard division), to the SWCDA.

Cover Photo: Lightkeeper Lemuel Moreau at the Western Head lightstation, Liverpool, NS, 1987. *Chris Mills*
Back Cover: Rose Blanche lighthouse, Newfoundland. *Chris Mills*

NOTE

This issue of *The Lightkeeper* is late for a number of reasons, including work on the *Visit Our Lighthouses* brochure. We apologize for the delay, and plan to be back on track for the December issue. Thanks to everyone who helps make each issue a success. And remember, we're always happy to hear your suggestions and story ideas!

2003 CALENDAR

Argyle Township Court House and Archives

Yarmouth County Lighthouses is the theme of our eighth, annual, bilingual calendar. The lighthouse is today a romantic symbol of safe haven and a reminder of Nova Scotia's proud maritime history. In our calendar fifteen photographs of original lights and light keepers, dating from 1800-1958, with accompanying notes and a map, illustrate this tradition.

We have lighthouses from: Pease Island, Whitehead Island, Yarmouth, East Pubnico, Green Island, Big Fish Island, Bunker Island, Candlebox Island, Abbott's Harbour (West Pubnico), Seal Island, and the Burcher Lightship and four lighthouse keepers. The calendar has thirty-two pages printed on heavy semi-gloss paper. Principal holidays are indicated and there is room for appointments.

Calendars are \$10 each. Earlier calendars: 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2001, 2002 - same price. (2000 sold out.)

Price includes postage and handling. American orders requested in U.S. funds. Cheques payable to Argyle Municipality Historical and Genealogical Society.

Mail to: Publications Secretary, AMHGS, Box 101, Tuskent, Nova Scotia, Canada B0W 3M0.

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