



10<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY!

THE

# Lightkeeper

The Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society

Vol. 11, No. 2

June/July 2004

## DOUBLE LOSS FOR NOVA SCOTIA LIGHTHOUSE COMMUNITIES...

"There was an unmistakable  
audible moaning sound, almost like  
a last breath of a living being..."

*-Janet Francis, Pictou Landing*

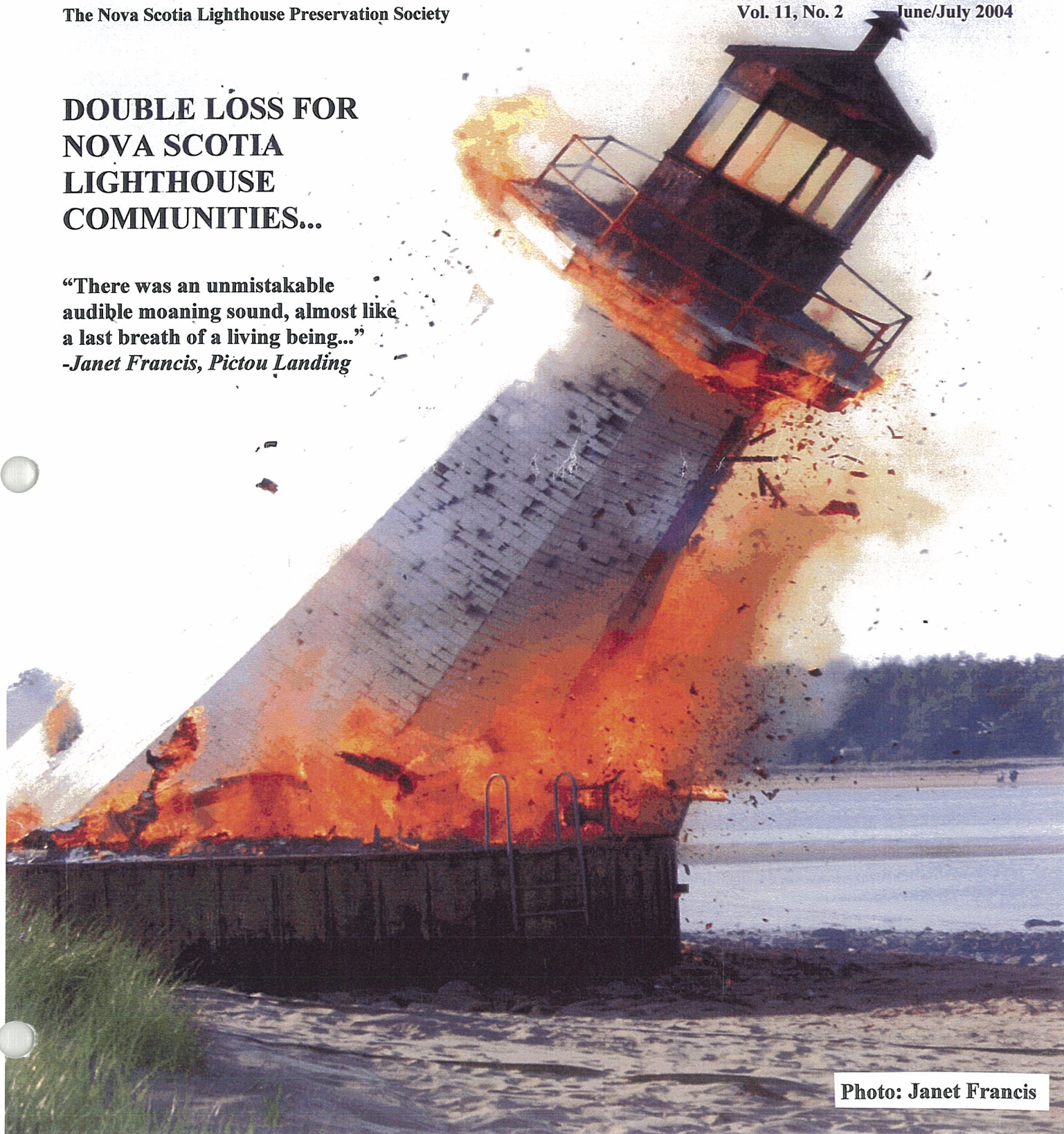
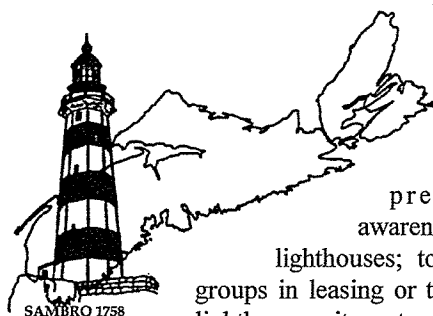


Photo: Janet Francis





The objectives of the Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society are: To promote and support preservation and awareness of Nova Scotia 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.nslps.com>

**LIGHTKEEPER EDITOR:** CHRIS MILLS

**PATRONS:** Carl R. Lautenslager, Anne and Eric Mills, Raye Miles, Betty Schloss, C.A. Straughn, Peter Westaway.

**AFFILIATES:** Beacon Memories, Burntcoat Head Park, Cape Sable Historical Society, Central Nova Tourist Association, Chebucto Head Lighthouse Society, Cunard Steamship Society, English Harbour Heritage Society, Gilberts Cove and District Historical Society, Greville Bay Shipbuilding Museum Society, Fieldwood Heritage Society, Five Islands Lighthouse Preservation Society, Friends of the Yarmouth Light Society, Henry Island Lighthouse Preservation Society, Islands Historical Society, LinArt Designs, Medway Area Communities Association, Mosher Island Lighthouse Preservation Society, Municipality of the District of Yarmouth, North Shore Development Association, Nova Scotia Lighthouse Interpretive Centre, Port George District Lighthouse Society, Region of Queens Municipality, Spencers Island Community Association, Sydney Harbour Fortification Society, Terence Bay Lighthouse Committee, Town of Lockeport, Walton Area Development Association.

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**Director, Member-at-Large-** Annelise Chapman.

**Director, Member-at-Large -** John Ure

**Director, Member-at-Large-** John Langely

**Director, Member-at-Large-** Dan Sinclair 677-2133

## WELCOME ABOARD

*The following new members recently joined the NSLPS:*

Raye Myles, Harvey Smith, Dave Feretti, Celeste Flight, Joanne Kovacs, Lloyd MacKay, Wilnot Main, Mike McFalls, Clifford Wasson, Bette Yetman, Gerald LeBlanc, Graham Long, John David MacCulloch, Spurgeon Roscoe.

## PROGRAMS

### CHEBUCTO HEAD LIGHTHOUSE: PAST AND FUTURE

Wed. Oct. 27

7:00 PM - Reports of NSLPS Activities

7:30 PM - Illustrated Talk

In May 2004, the tragic fire which destroyed the house at Chebucto Head made headline news. Join us for a special evening about this well-loved light at the entrance to Halifax Harbour. Learn about the four lighthouses that have stood on this headland. Meet some of the lightkeeping families who lived there and hear their stories, and get an update on future plans from the Chebucto Head Lighthouse Society.

### BUILD POINT PRIM LIGHTHOUSE

Wed. Nov. 24, 7:00 PM

Point Prim Lighthouse in your living room? How!?

In miniature of course. Make a model of this historic lighthouse with attached dwelling which guarded the entrance to Digby Gut beginning in 1817. This workshop is for adults. There will be a fee for the materials. Sponsored by the Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society. Number of participants is extremely limited. To register, call 423-8034 after October 1.

## TRIPS

### ON THE WATER: TOURS OF HALIFAX HARBOUR LIGHTHOUSES

Saturdays: July 31, August 28, and September 25

**Depart** Purcell's Cove Marina, 521 Purcell's Cove Road at 9 AM

**Return** at approximately 4 PM

See the Lighthouses of Halifax Harbour and approaches close up aboard the *Sea Tiger*, a Canadian Coast Guard approved 42-foot Cape Islander. Get an on-the-water view of Halifax's magnificent harbour. NSLPS guides will tell you

about the lighthouses: **Maughers Beach (on McNabs Island), Chebucto Head, Sambro Island, Devils Island, and Georges Island.**

There will be a trip ashore on Sambro Island (weather permitting) to get a close look at the lighthouse and have lunch. Please wear appropriate clothing and footwear. **Cost- \$50 per person - lunch and refreshments included.** A portion of the trip fee will be donated to the NSLPS. Registration required.

For further information and to make arrangements for a wonderful day on the water, call George Hebb at 477-6537.

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## SEAL ISLAND

August 14 and 15. Weather dates: August 28 and 29

Trip Leaders: Dan Conlin and Kathy Brown, Past-Presidents of NSLPS. **Two day offshore trip 18 miles out to sea off Cape Sable Island.**

This is our premium offshore trip, which only takes place every second year. Enjoy a two hour offshore voyage in the Canadian Coast Guard approved Cape Island charter boat *Adam and Samantha*. On the way out, view (from the water) the towering and historic Cape Sable Lighthouse, a Federal Heritage Classified Building. Then, visit one of Nova Scotia's most remote and interesting islands. Stay overnight in the fishermen's look house and explore the island -- enjoy beaches, rocky shores, shipwrecks, ocean and bird life, and sheep! See the magnificent lighthouse -- the oldest wooden light in Nova Scotia and one of the most important pre-Confederation buildings in our province. Learn the fascinating history of the island and the lighthouse from your guide. Limited to 18 participants. No children under 12 years of age. Cost \$70.00, including boat trip and accommodation. You bring your own food.

Registration required.

For complete details and to register, e-mail NSLPS or call 423-8034

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## NEWS FROM THE BOARD

*Donna Merriam*

The new board year got off to an enthusiastic start with the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting held in the Small Craft Gallery of the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic on April 28<sup>th</sup>. A crowd of more than 60 was in attendance to hear the round of year end reports from all committees and from the continuing president, Barry MacDonald.

Highlights included a bank balance of just under

\$12,000 plus \$28,000 remaining from the Kaplan Foundation funds, active memberships from 165 individuals and organizations, exceptional advancements in technology making new strides in publishing possible for the *Lightkeeper*, an informative and fun array of trips to lighthouses and programs over the past year, and last but certainly not least, the great successes and hard work on lights assisted this past year in communities across the province thanks to the Kaplan Fund grants for lighthouse restoration projects. All in all, it has been a busy and productive year, thanks to each board member's involvement and leadership.

The board bade a grateful farewell to Dan Conlin, Brenda Shannon and Brien Liekens for their steady involvement as hard working, expertise-sharing board members over the past year(s). The board was pleased to welcome three new members-at-large: John Ure, Dr. Annelise Chapman and John Langley. See page 2 for the complete list of officers and directors for 2004/05.

In recognition of his long-standing work on behalf of lighthouse preservation, E.H. Rip Irwin was presented with the 2004 Craig Harding Award. His passion for lights spurred him to become the founding president of NSLPS ten years ago.

Rip was instrumental in securing heritage status for the Sambro Light and his recent book, *Lighthouses and Lights of Nova Scotia* is further evidence of his energy in visiting and researching 160 Nova Scotia lights. Congratulations Rip for producing such a unique and admirable record of our lighthouses.

A Special Volunteer Award for 2004 was presented to Graham McBride, who worked long and hard with Rip in the early years to establish NSLPS to support communities in preserving our lights and to educate the public about their essential value and beauty.

The award featured a model (made by Dan Conlin) of the Point Prim Light at Digby, a fitting tribute to Graham's unflagging involvement in offering an annual lighthouse model building workshop for children during the March Break. Our many thanks to you, Graham, for your continuing support of the work of NSLPS and your commitment to educating the public about our historic beacons.

Kathy Brown forwarded greetings from the World Lighthouse Society, established two years ago. Kathy has just been elected to their board for the coming year. A highlight of the program was the launch of the amazing new website by Kathy and Peter MacCulloch who, with Peter Eastwood, showcased the latest in technical aids to make your cruise through the lights of Nova Scotia a pleasure.

Last year there were 79,000 hits on our website. The last of the adjustments and additions are being completed as the

website launches a new future in helping visitors and residents alike appreciate lighthouses "along the shores".

As the business meeting adjourned, Chris Mills presented a fun and informative stroll down memory lane. Chris escorted us back for an historical view of lights over the 10 year history of NSLPS.

Wonderful photographs from across the province and happy / sad stories of life at the lights entertained us all. Some reminded us of our own childhood memories, some brought the sad realization of what has really been lost, while others gave us a glimpse of the peace and hard living that was the lightkeepers' fare.

The entire talk reminded us once more why we stay involved in the work of NSLPS. Its true value will be felt by our great-grandchildren who we hope will one day look at these treasured photos and marvel at a life style long-since gone. The walls of the lighthouses will whisper their stories for decades to come.

The Oral History project undertaken by Chris is recording these stories in the voices of lightkeepers and their family members before they are lost. This rich resource will be added in the development of the NSLPS website where it can be accessed and enjoyed freely. It was a valuable and entertaining piece of work that Chris presented and it continues to explore and record.

To top the evening off and give us a chance to spin a few yarns with each other, an anniversary cake was presented with a steaming cup of coffee or tea.

The warmth of the beverages well matched the warmth of the crowd as we renewed old friendships and made a few new ones. In ten years we hope to look back over another decade with equal satisfaction in the accomplishments of NSLPS in its efforts to preserve the lighthouses of Nova Scotia.

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## NEWS AND VIEWS

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### Abbots Harbour's Peripatetic Lighthouse

The Abbots Harbour Light has a new home. The little wooden tower has been moved from Lobster Bay to Le Village Historique Acadien in Lower West Pubnico.

It's the second move for the 11 metre wooden tower – in 1922 it made the trip from Amherst to replace a pole light established in 1884.

The light was decommissioned in the 1990s and sat on privately owned land. For more information about the lighthouse see Rip Irwin's *Lighthouses and Light of Nova Scotia* (Nimbus Publishing Ltd.) and the NSLPS

website at [www.nslps.com](http://www.nslps.com)

### Borden Wharf (Canning)- *From Lighthouse...to Pig's House...to Tool House....and back to Lighthouse!*

As reported by the *Halifax Herald* in early July, the future looks good for the Canning lighthouse. 70 years after it was decommissioned, the light has been refurbished and now takes pride of place near the Canning library on Main Street.

The 101-year-old tower formerly guided vessels around a sharp turn in the Habitant River until shipping on the river died off in the 1930s. Over the years, flooding isolated the little wooden tower.

The Department of Transport proposed to demolish the structure in the mid-1940s, but the little light received a dubious reprieve in the form of a local farmer, who salvaged it for use as a pig sty. Two decades later it became a toolshed, and then a tourist bureau.

With a little help from the Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society and the J.M Kaplan Fund, the Fieldwood Heritage Society began the job of restoring the tower to its original state last year. Most of the work was done by students at the Northeast Kings Education Centre.

The Borden Wharf light is the oldest lighthouse remaining in Kings County. The Fieldwood Society plans to place interpretive panels around the light, showing the history of the lighthouse and shipping along the river.

### Cross Island-Lights Out

The Cross Island light, one of Nova Scotia's oldest navigational aids, has been discontinued. The light was established in 1832 and automated in 1989.

### Former Lightkeeper Dies

Lloyd Franklin Perry died on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2004 at the age of 86. Perry was a lighthouse keeper on The Salvages from 1967 to 1976.

### Gilbert's Cove Celebrations

Folks in Gilberts Cove are now gearing up for this beautiful light's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations in August. See article on p.11 for details.

### Port Maitland-Soon To Be Quieter

A recent edition of Notices to Mariner notes that the Coast Guard intends to permanently silence the Port Maitland fog signal on Saint Mary's Bay. The Department of Transport established the fog horn in 1949.

### Sable Island-Lights Out

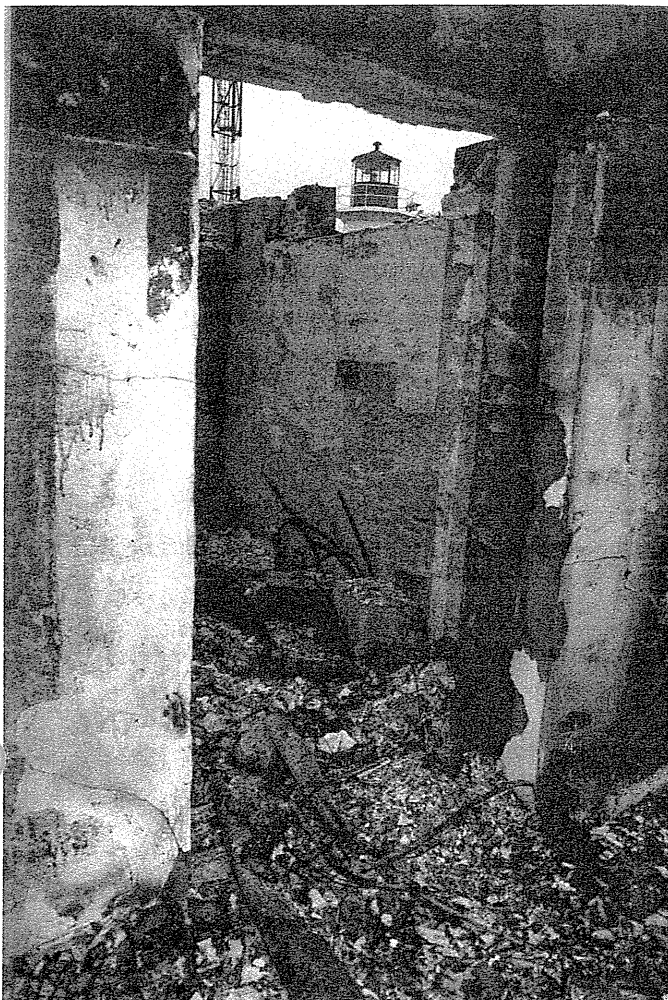
The Sable Island West Light has been permanently discontinued. The East Light will also be de-commissioned in the near future.

News and Views cont'd on page 12...

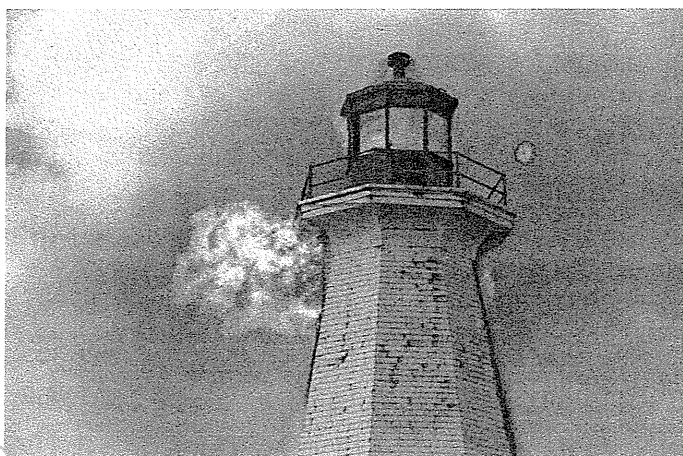


# DOUBLE LOSS FOR NOVA SCOTIA LIGHTHOUSE PRESERVATION EFFORTS

Chris Mills



The scorched foundation of the third Chebucto Head lighthouse frames the current tower. *Chris Mills*



The Pictou Bar light. *Janet Francis*



Happier days at Chebucto Head. CHLS members and well-wishers celebrate the signing of a one-year lease on May 15<sup>th</sup>.  
*Courtesy Josette d'Entremont*



The same location less than two weeks later. *Chris Mills*

Lighthouse preservation in Nova Scotia has suffered a major setback with the recent losses of the lightkeeper's house at Chebucto Head and the century-old Pictou Bar lighthouse.

The third Chebucto Head lighthouse, built around 1940, burned to the ground on the night of May 26.

Less than two and a half months later, 101 years of history went up in smoke when the Pictou light caught fire and burned.

The Chebucto Head fire took place on a foggy night. In fact, no one noticed that the building was gone until the morning of the 27th. There was no power or heat in the structure which had been vacant since the late 1990s. The cause of the fire still isn't known, but the loss of the structure is a huge blow to the Chebucto Head Lighthouse Society (CHLS), which had signed a one-year lease to refurbish the structure just 11 days before the fire.

"This is a tragedy," said CHLS president Annelise Chapman shortly after the fire. "We are devastated, but we



Only the chimney survived the fire at Chebucto Head. *Chris Mills*

won't be defeated. We cannot stop now. A vision is in our heads and hearts and is not limited to a building."

On July 8<sup>th</sup>, the insurance adjuster passed cheques for \$40,000 to the DFO, "which were immediately signed over to the Receiver General," according to Dominique Gusset of the CHLS.



CBC Radio's Hance Colburne interviews CHLS member Tony Chapman at the "wake" for the Chebucto Head keepers house on May 29<sup>th</sup>. *Chris Mills*

CHLS members (to say nothing of NSLPS people and others) wonder *why a policy the CHLS bought and held has not benefitted them at all...*

"The DFO is now planning to have the site cleaned up," says Dominique "and [the DFO] is optimistic that divestiture of the site will take place more quickly now that its status has changed."

Dominique says the group would like to see the mess cleaned up before the Tall Ships arrive in late July, and have the gates

open once again for general public access.

The group's immediate priorities also include promoting a development plan for the site to the province and the Halifax Regional Municipality, putting up information boards outlining Chebucto Head's history, recent events and contact information, and to promote the society's goals during the Tall Ships weekend.

Dominique adds that "there seems to be support from various sources (DFO, NSLPS) to have the CHLS take on the task of some sort of reconstruction on the site.

But there is no point in pushing forward in a fund-raising campaign for reconstruction until we are assured of acquiring the site for more than our on-year lease."

Although the building was scarcely more than 60 years old, it was the third of four lights to be located at Chebucto Head, and one of a remaining handful of lighthouses designed to accommodate a lightkeeper and his family.

Although the Coast Guard removed its lantern after the construction of a new concrete lighthouse in 1967, the building continued to house lightkeepers and other tenants off and on until the late 1990s.

The CHLS had hoped to use the structure as an operations base for their efforts to develop the site as an historical/environmental interpretive centre for the lighthouse and surrounding barren lands.

The loss of the lighthouse was perhaps most keenly felt by Don Gallagher, whose father Edward kept two of the Chebucto Head lighthouses burning from 1928 to 1950. Don had a difficult time expressing himself as reporters and TV camera operators descended on "The Cape" to interview him and his brother Max, along with CHLS members.

Remembering his childhood at the lighthouse, Don says he was "heartbroken and devastated," by the fire.

"I was hoping that something could be done with the place," he says, "but it never really had a chance."

The loss of the 1903 Pictou Light in July had a similar effect on local residents.

"It's an awful, tragic loss to the community," David MacKeil told the *Halifax Herald*. "It's kind of like an icon for Pictou Harbour."

Although the 15-metre tower burned very quickly, it was the beach – or lack of it – that hampered efforts to save the structure. Part of the bar is washed out, making it difficult to reach the light.

The cause of the fire still isn't known, with speculation ranging from a lightning strike, to vandalism. Either way, Pictou residents feel the loss of their light.

Pictou West MLA Charlie Parker has written to federal Fisheries Minister Geoff Regan, asking for an "appropriate," replacement light.

"It's tremendously important that beacon is turned back on," he says on a New Democrat Party website. "We can't afford to lose such a picturesque landmark like this light and not replace it."

"The minister should understand this, and understand that this community will not rest until they see a lighthouse on Pictou Bar again."

**NOTE:** On the 15<sup>th</sup> of July, a contractor hired by the DFO cleaned up the fire site at Chebucto Head. Dominique Gusset of the Chebucto Head Lighthouse Society says "The concrete foundation was not salvageable

and was therefore filled in and levelled.” With the vigorous re-growth of surrounding vegetation, any evidence of the past keepers house will vanish without a trace.”

As of July 17<sup>th</sup>, the gates at Chebucto Head are open, allowing public access to this spectacular lookoff.

## CHEBUCTO HEAD: BEFORE AND AFTER



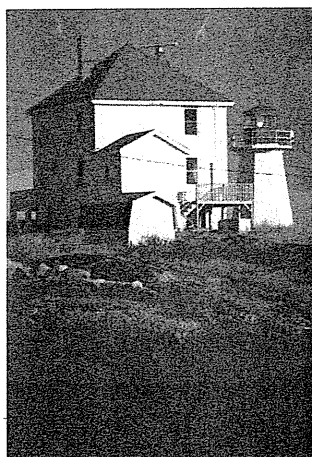
Chebucto Head circa 1960. *Courtesy Anne Flemming*



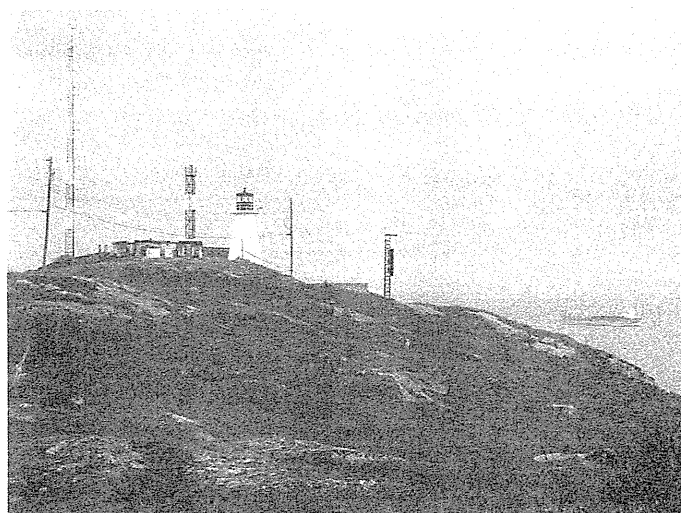
The charred foundation at Chebucto Head. *Chris Mills*



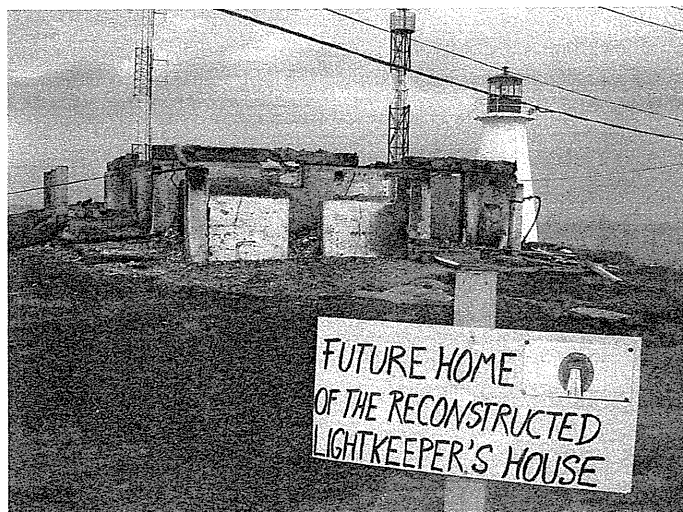
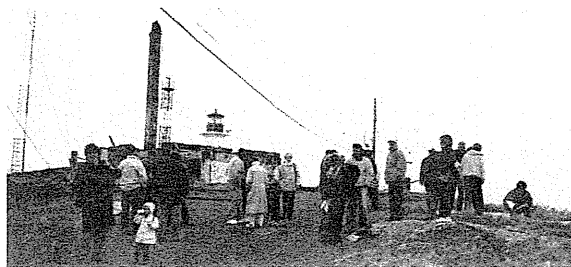
Lightkeepers son Donald Gallagher cuts the ribbon to celebrate the CHLS lease of the Chebucto Head keepers house on May 15th



The 1940 lighthouse with its 1967 neighbour, in 2002. *Chris Mills*

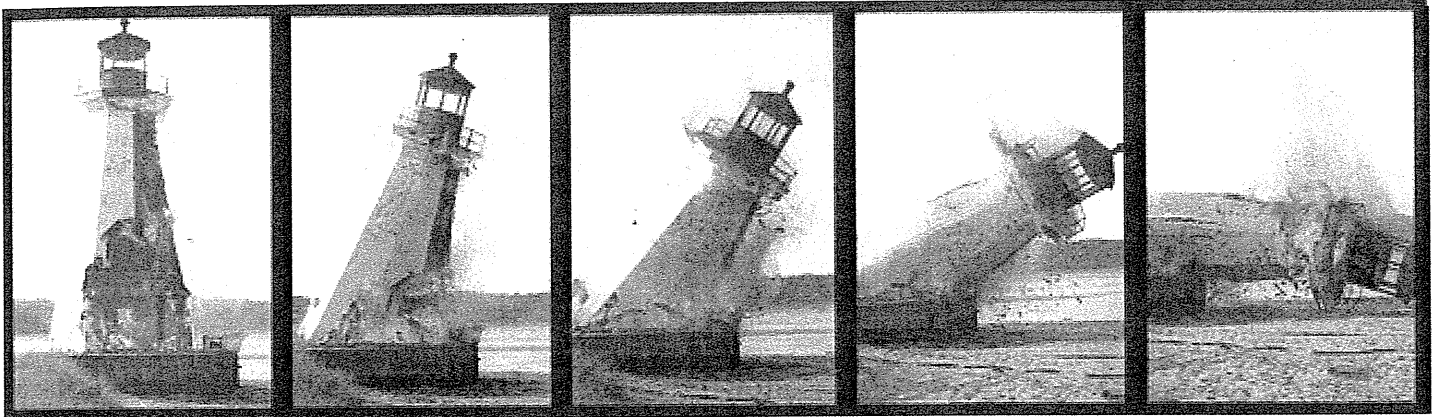


The keepers house was a prominent land/seamark for visitors and locals in the Halifax area. *Chris Mills*



Hope for the future. *Chris Mills*





*Janet Francis*

## PICTOU BAR LIGHTHOUSE: 1834-2004

*E.H. Rip Irwin.*

In just over one hour in the early evening of July 5th 2004, Nova Scotia's Pictou Bar Lighthouse was totally consumed by fire, ending one hundred and seventy years of aids to navigation for vessels large and small, entering and outbound from Pictou Harbour.



The Pictou Bar lighthouse in 1994. *E.H. Rip Irwin*

Because of its location, the importance of this lighthouse cannot be overstated. Situated at the end of a narrow, low lying sand bar jutting out almost 1.5 kilometres into the harbour entrance it is not difficult to imagine the hazard this unmarked bar posed when on September 15, 1773, the first wave of Scottish Highlanders arrived in the barque Hector, with 33 families and 25 unmarried men for a total 180 colonists.

Pictou town, now known as the birthplace of New Scotland, was well-established by 1834 when the Canadian Board of Works recognized the importance of building a lighthouse here. Only ten other lighthouses existed around Nova Scotia's 7,443 kilometre coastline at that time.

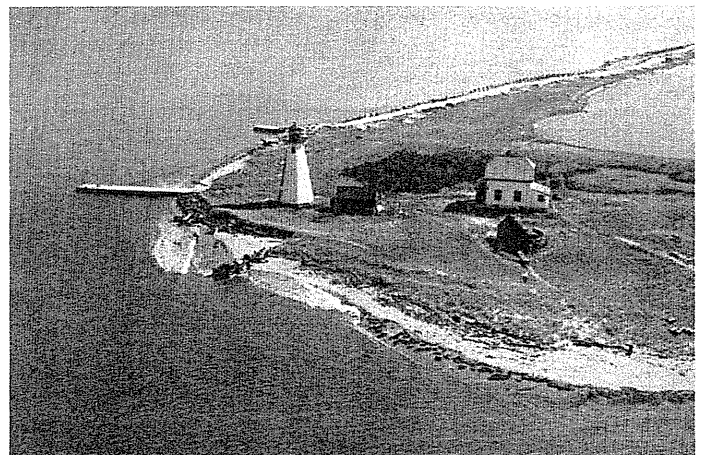
The first lighthouse was a wooden octagonal tower 17 metres high, from the base to the weathervane. Seven oil lamps with reflectors showed a fixed white light from the lantern 20 metres above high water. 7.6 metres below the lantern, as a distinguishing mark to seaward, one flat wick oil lamp with reflector showed a fixed red light from a small window. The tower was

painted white at that time, with the red vertical stripes being added in 1841. A dwelling house for the keeper was built alongside the lighthouse.

Because of the low elevation of the sand bar (less than three metres above high water) the building of an extensive breakwater was undertaken to protect the lightstation from the sea, which during gales caused severe erosion of the bar.

In fact there were times when the sea washed completely through the bar, leaving the lightstation on an island. Maintenance and repair of the breakwater was an ongoing and expensive business and even at that, there were times when it was unable to provide the protection expected of it.

On 24 August 1873, a gale blew with terrible violence for more than 24 hours, carrying away the breakwater on the east side, moving the dwelling house



The Pictou Bar lightstation before its 1960 automation.

*Courtesy E.H. Rip Irwin*

from its foundations, and totally destroying the kitchen part of the building.

All of the other outbuildings were swept away and the lighthouse itself was breached, upsetting the oil tanks and destroying the oil in them.



*Janet Francis*

Another constant danger was in the light produced by oil-fired lamps which sometimes burning out of control, particularly in wooden lighthouses. Many towers were lost in the early years in that way.

So it happened on May 26, 1903 that this lighthouse was totally destroyed by fire. A temporary 15 metre-high mast was erected with two anchor lights showing white lights, attached to the top.

One shone up the harbour and the other to seaward. A lantern showing a fixed red light was attached to the mast on the seaward side, six metres below the white lights, giving a characteristic similar to the lost lighthouse.

A spherical wooden cage, painted white to serve as daymark, was also attached to the top of the mast.

Because of the importance of this light, construction of a new lighthouse was begun immediately on the same site and put into service by the end of the year 1903.

This is the lighthouse that burned down on July 5th 2004. It was also an octagonal wooden tower, two metres shorter but otherwise quite similar to the previous

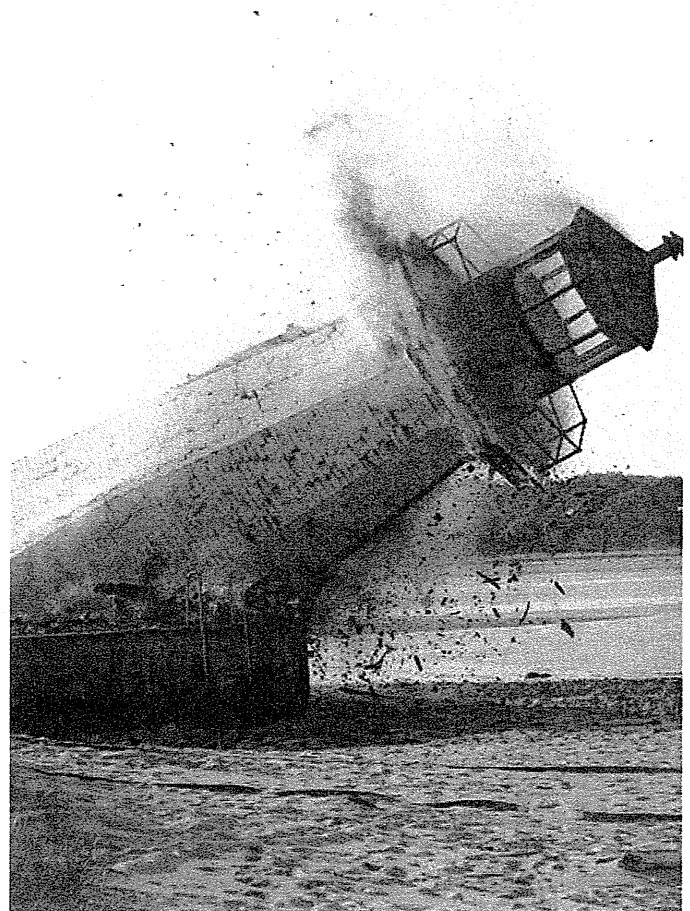
lighthouse and with the same light characteristic. The tower was painted in alternate red and white vertical stripes and surmounted by an octagonal red iron lantern. This lighthouse was erected by day's labour under foreman E. F. Munro at a cost of \$3,471.99.

Fire was not unknown at the new lightstation. Lightkeeper William H. MacFarlane had a minor fire on January 24<sup>th</sup>, 1929 which was quickly extinguished.

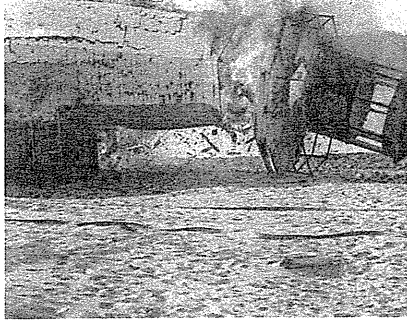
MacFarlane wasn't so lucky on July 16th, 1931 when another fire occurred, causing considerable damage to the top section of the tower.

Had it not been for Mr. MacFarlane's quick action the lighthouse would have most certainly been completely destroyed. McFarlane received extensive burns and was in hospital for quite a long time, during which time Mrs. MacFarlane kept the light. The Department of Marine commented that she did it very well.

The lightstation dwelling, familiar to older residents of the community, was built in 1919. A two-storey house with woodshed and an attached veranda consisted of a kitchen, living room and four bedrooms



*Janet Francis*



*Janet Francis*

upstairs. The house was described by lightkeeper William Edward Watts as commodious compared to the old dwelling. There was also a small barn and a shed on the station.

The lighthouse was automated on May 5th, 1960 and Gordon Chisholm was appointed caretaker. All buildings other than the lighthouse were disposed of in 1960-61.

The lighthouse continued to be watched by caretakers until July 2nd, 1973 when its care came under the departmental forces of the Canadian Coast Guard in Charlottetown, P.E.I.

Subsequently, the breakwater was allowed to deteriorate and erosion became a serious concern with the sea coming closer and closer to the lighthouse with every storm.

Fire was probably the furthest thought on anyone's mind when it occurred.

Just before 6 p.m. on Monday July 5th 2004, Janet Francis, who lives very near the mainland end of the bar, became aware of the fire in the lighthouse and of a great commotion in her community of Pictou Landing as fire-fighters prepared to trek 1.5 kilometres out the sand bar to the lighthouse.

Ms. Francis grabbed her camera and joined the group, intent on doing all she could to help and to get some pictures to record this disastrous event.

There wasn't much she or anyone else could do, as the lighthouse was an inferno by the time they got there. Adding to their troubles was the fact the sand bar had been breached about one-quarter of the way out, making a gap of thirty metres or so of water to be crossed.

Fortunately it was just at low tide and could be waded across. Incredibly, some vehicles were actually able to drive across the gap but it was to no avail.

In less than one hour, the lantern floor had burned through and the beautiful lead crystal glass lens came crashing down inside the tower. The lighthouse then started to take on a list and shortly afterward toppled over.

It didn't crash to the ground as one might expect,

but as described by Janet Francis, "There was an unmistakable audible moaning sound, almost like a last breath of a living being, accompanied by a great shower of sparks and flying debris, followed by a loud gasp from those folks assembled, adding to the solemnity of this disaster".

After 170 years of service, the Pictou Bar light is not only dark, but all traces, except for the concrete and steel foundation, are gone.

How did this happen?

Provincial fire investigators and the RCMP have said that there isn't enough evidence to determine the cause of the fire and that it is not suspicious. Vandalism has been a huge problem ever since lighthouses were de-staffed and I am personally suspicious of this fire and mad as hell about it but must respect the conclusion of the experts.

Residents in the area are shocked by the fire and mourn the loss of this historic icon. Lighthouses are very often referred to as symbols of hope, strength and endurance, but nothing lasts forever.

However, in the minds and hearts of folks who were accustomed to seeing this lighthouse regularly over their lifetime and knowing it was there throughout the lifetime of generations before them, it had to be considered about as permanent as anything could be.

Another lighthouse can be built at this site but the century-old tower is gone forever.

With the Canadian Coast Guard making every effort to divest itself of lighthouses and the responsibility of maintaining them, it is highly unlikely that it will ever build another lighthouse on Pictou Bar.



*All that is left of the Pictou Bar lighthouse. Rip Irwin*

However, the Coast Guard is committed to doing consultations with the community and mariners in the area to determine if there is still a need for a navigational light in that area.

Already there is talk among folks in the community of rebuilding this lighthouse. Although the cost would be great, it is not beyond possibility.

Other groups have accomplished similar goals and experience shows that if lighthouses are to be saved, restoration, preservation and ongoing care must be taken on by community groups.



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## THE RED ROOF IS BACK!

Lorraine Lovett



Courtesy Lorraine Lovett

When William Joseph Melanson, his wife Mae and young son Percy moved into the little square lighthouse at Gilbert Point on Saint Mary's Bay in 1904, they couldn't have imagined that 100 years later there would be such attention and excitement over such a modest home.

Their five-room white house was a cottage-type building with a lantern on top housing a fixed red light "to be seen for seven miles from all points of approach by water".

This "seventh order illuminating apparatus was first shown on August 18<sup>th</sup> 1904". (Sessional Papers, Dept. of Marine, 1905). The *Digby Weekly Courier* reported "the building is well built and has every modern convenience with the necessary closets and pantry."

The Gilbert's Cove Lighthouse became a welcome beacon for vessel captains running up Saint Mary's Bay. Mr. Melanson, or "Willie Jane" as he was called and his family of five children were the only family members to occupy the lighthouse during its 68 years of service.

At the pensionable age of seventy-five, Willie Jane retired and his daughter Louise took over the official duties until her death in 1972. At that time the family home became vacant.

Over a ten year period the boarded-up lighthouse was vandalized. In 1982, under the leadership of Ernie Morrissey, community members formed the Gilbert Cove & District Historical Society in order to repair and operate the lighthouse as a small museum/tearoom.

With the passage of time, the structure had deteriorated and was in dire need of some major repairs to the leaking roof, rotted catwalk, soggy sills and much more.

With private donations, society fundraising, a \$21,000 NSLPS/Kaplan grant and \$29,000 from the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, a major restoration project got underway in September, 2003.

With a copy of the original 1903 blueprint in hand, contractor Nathan Francis of Bear River carefully restored the exterior to a fine finish. The rebuilt lantern has four windows of clear shatter-proof glass, a ventilator, new sloped catwalk with metal railings and new red shingles.

The chimney has been rebuilt, new hand-made reproduction porch windows installed, along with new steps and railing.

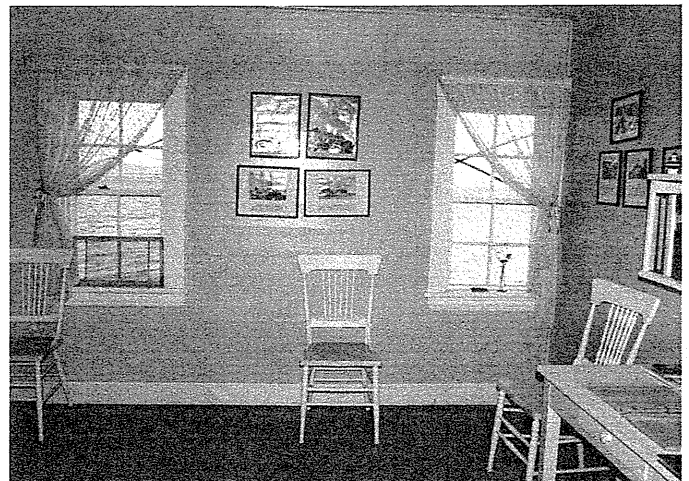
In November 2003, after our ACOA grant was offered, an armour rock wall was positioned around the erosion-sensitive areas of the shoreline. Currently, work has been contracted out to install a new electrical panel, along with a heat source and some track lighting to allow better viewing of the museum images.

Outside work will enhance the grounds for visitors who like to picnic or just enjoy the spectacular views up and down the bay.

Our 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations will commence on Sunday morning, August 1 at the Holy Cross Church in Plympton where a Mass dedicated to our ancestors will be celebrated.

Soon after the Mass, members and visitors will be offered a tour of the cemeteries associated with the local community. At noon hour, festivities will begin at the lighthouse grounds in Gilbert's Cove at the end of the Lighthouse Road.

A chowder lunch will be served followed by the anniversary cake. Live music will be performed by local talent while our elders will be available to talk to members and visitors while showing some of their locally-made tools, utensils and crafts of the past.



The lovingly-maintained interior of the Gilberts Cove lighthouse. The windows offer beautiful views of Saint Mary's Bay. *Chris Mills*

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**Sable Island...News and Views cont'd from page 4...**

Reports indicate the east tower will be removed as it poses a hazard to air traffic landing on the island

**Sambro Island Light-Shiny in Silver**

North America's oldest operating lighthouse is now featured on a solid silver \$20 coin, issued by the Royal Canadian Mint. The Sambro Island light was chosen as the first in a series of historic Canadian lighthouses to appear on coins. 25,000 coins have been produced. The cost for each \$20 coin is \$69.95. For more information, see [www.mint.ca](http://www.mint.ca)

**Sambro Island Gashouse Still Needs Work**

The gas house on Sambro Island is still open to the elements, after being damaged by Hurricane Juan last September. The NSLPS has a fund dedicated to this work, but we need the person-power to make the building weather-tight for the coming winter. Contact Barry MacDonald or Chris Mills for further information.

**Sandy Point-New Management**

In May the 1880 Sandy Point Lighthouse in Shelburne Harbour was transferred from the DFO to the Sandy Point Recreation Group and the Atlantic Lighthouse Council. The Coast Guard decommissioned the lighthouse in 1996.

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**WEBSITE NEWS****NEW WEBSITE LAUNCHED AT AGM**

*Kathy Brown*

The NSLPS has had a website since 1997. In the beginning, the website was designed by students at Cole Harbour High School in Dartmouth. NSLPS volunteers later took it over. In 1997 we had 3,000 visitors. Last year we had about 39,000.

Recently, visitor numbers have been doubling each year, an indication of the popularity of lighthouses and increased use of the internet.

Our site was very popular, but it was out of date in technology, difficult to expand and update and did not have a consistent look. We also had a large database, with information about every lighthouse, which was not available to the public.

We are fortunate that one of our board members, Peter MacCulloch, is an IT technologist. He and I decided all the information we have should be made available and proposed a new website that would use the latest technology and "roll together" the old website and the database. Little did we know what we were getting into!

NSLPS funded an initial investigation which showed what we would gain and how the site would be built. This was crucial to the project and is the basis for the success of the new site.

The Nova Scotia Department of Tourism and Culture and the Westaway Foundation were our major funding supporters for a little over half the cost of the basic site. Many thanks to both of them!

Members also contributed and the NSLPS picked up the rest of the \$15,000. Thanks to the board and members for their support!

The new site was built, beginning January 15, 2004, by Peter MacCulloch, Tower Software, and Peter Eastwood of Eastwood Design. We now have a professionally built, easy to navigate site, with a consistent look.

On April 28 at our AGM we launched what is really just the beginning of this new site. Much more will be added in the future.

What we have now is 1,590 pages and 351 directories. From the database we have 328 different buildings and 912 historic records

Putting all this together in such a short time was a major achievement! Every lighthouse in Nova Scotia is included, plus some that are no longer standing. Thousands of data records were checked and hundreds of photographs re-named and edited.

And still the work goes on! We discovered that the old website did not easily translate to the new. No way were we rolling things together. We were building a whole new edifice!

We are continuing to re-arrange and add to the current pages. Just after the house at Chebucto Head burned, Peter MacCulloch and I conferred over the telephone, re-ordering and adding to that page so that people would get the full story of the building that burned.

The new website is easier to maintain; we could never have done that using the technology of the old website.

The new Website had 2,847 visits during the month of May. Mail from the site has increased, as well. People are beginning to use it to find out about our trips and programmes. People are also getting in touch with us about information they have regarding individual lighthouses. We even have a professional photographer willing to take photos for us when she visits Nova Scotia in the near future! All this is just great!

There is more information, and many more photographs to add. Fund raising continues because we have only placed about half the information, photographs and searches that could be on the site.

In order to achieve what we want to provide to our clients, we are still looking for a corporate partner.

To check the site out, and watch it grow, visit [www.nslps.com](http://www.nslps.com). We urge everyone to mail the Webmaster (Peter) or Content Editor (Kathy), about errors, omissions or information you have that we can use.

## NSLPS SPREADS THE GOOD WORD

Chris Mills



NSLPS trip to East Ironbound on July 10<sup>th</sup>. Josette d'Entremont

Despite the reduced number of lighthouse trips this summer, the NSLPS has organized and participated in a number of successful lighthouse visits and talks.

Board members Dorothy MacLeod, Josette

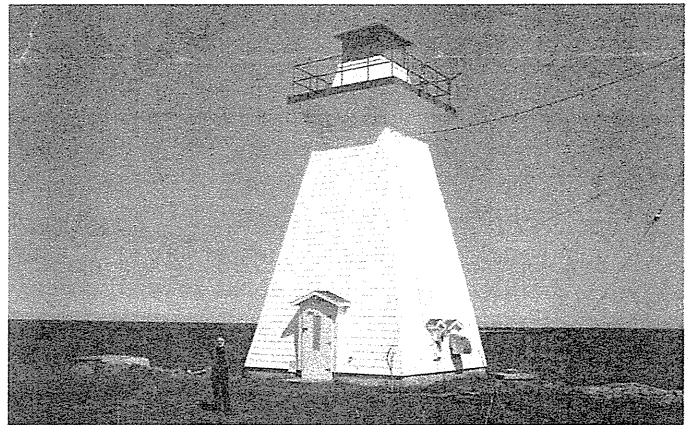
d'Entremont, Kathy Brown, Barry MacDonald, and former board member George Hebb have all carried the NSLPS torch during the summer.

Josette reports that all tours of Halifax Harbour lighthouses aboard the *Sea Tiger* have been successful, despite the 'occasional' appearance of fog, wind and rain during scheduled trips. On June the 25<sup>th</sup>, Josette and George did an excellent job of promoting the NSLPS and Halifax area lights on ATV's *Breakfast Television*.

Past president Tony Thompson and board member Dan Sinclair attended the launch of the *Explore Our Lighthouses* brochure in Port Mouton on May 17<sup>th</sup>. The brochure was launched by the Region of Queens Municipality. Thanks to Jill Cruikshank for her untiring support and promotion of Queens County lighthouses.

Kathy Brown gave a well-received talk to an Elderhostel group in June and Barry MacDonald travelled to Sydney, Baddeck and Lunenburg to give public presentations. Barry also wrote an excellent article which appeared in the Spring 2004 issue of *The Cape Bretoner*, dealing with the challenges facing lighthouse preservationists in Cape Breton. Barry's article generated some positive feedback from readers in Cape Breton, and helped raise the NSLPS profile on the island.

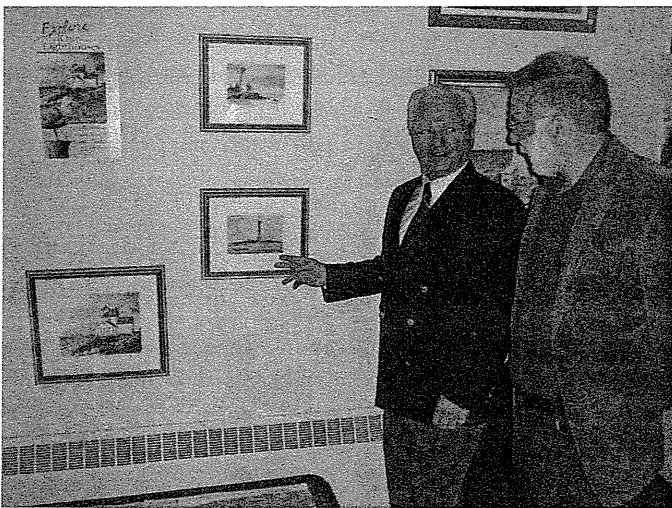
The NSLPS also made a presentation to the



Tony Thompson at Medway Head. Dan Sinclair

province in early July, outlining the advantages of municipal ownership of Nova Scotia Lighthouses. Although society members realize that the province does not have the resources to assume responsibility for all sites, we would like to see the province play a supportive role in the municipal stewardship of *our* lighthouses.

The NSLPS would like to see a program that would guarantee that lighthouses remain publicly-owned and accessible. A lighthouse "alternative use" program needs a "common strategy and a set of universal operating guidelines," facilitated by the province, municipalities and communities. With lighthouse divestiture bearing down on us, it's time to move!



Region of Queens Municipality Mayor John Leefe and NSLPS past president Tony Thompson look at some of the original artwork for the *Explore our Lighthouses* brochure. Dan Sinclair



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## A TOAST TO WINSTANLEY

Arthur Lane



This historic photo, taken at ten minutes past midnight on 27 November 2003, shows on the left, Dr Ken Trethewey, whose great-grandfather served on Smeaton's Eddystone, and on the right Arthur Lane, B.A. who did some two and a half years on Douglass's tower in the final years of traditional lightkeeping, before it all went soft at the core (he likes to think) with one-month turns and helicopter reliefs.

Why historic? Because exactly three hundred years earlier, give or take an hour or two, Henry Winstanley, on his pioneering lighthouse, was preparing to pay the ultimate price of the pioneer in the Great Storm of 1703 (always so capitalised, but an anniversary given curiously little attention in the national press). The location for the photo-shoot was the now disused coastguard lookout at Rame Head, with the cliff-top a few yards beyond the fence and the Douglass Eddystone winking brightly some nine miles to the south.

What is in the glasses, or had been in Lane's case (Trethewey was doing the driving) does much to explain their cheerful expressions at an hour when anyone with any sense would be at home in bed. A full gale and driving rain had been half-hoped for. Unfortunately the night was cold and clear with the Milky Way displayed in its full splendour. But there, you can't have everything.

If the printer hasn't cropped the picture the posture of the happy pair will need a word of explanation. Their knees aren't bent with age, nor are they breaking wind. It so happens the camera was perched on the look-out window-ledge, the first shot took their heads off, and it was easier to change the position of the subjects than to adjust the camera. For the four-

hundredth anniversary in 2103 they intend to take a tripod.

Where are they now? Trethewey updates and expands his Lighthouse Encyclopaedia, and with a Ph.D in photochemistry teaches instrumentation to submariners at Gosport. But that's education for you. Lane, after twenty-two years in the same profession and twenty-one years in retirement, now sees his life as moving peacefully towards its close. And he has every intention it should stay that way.

*Arthur Lane is a former lightkeeper, who served, among other stations, at the Eddystone lighthouse in the 1950s, 14 miles south west of Plymouth, England.*

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## The Heritage Canada Foundation's 2004 Annual Conference

***Stewardship of Heritage Buildings: Are We Committed?***

Saint John, New Brunswick

September 9 – 11, 2004

**The Heritage Canada Foundation** is pleased to extend a welcome invitation to its upcoming 2004 conference at the **Saint John Trade and Convention Centre**.

We are excited to welcome **Dr. Anthony Tung**, author of *Preserving the World's Great Cities* and former New York City Landmarks Preservation Commissioner, as our keynote speaker.

In addition to our sessions dealing with such crucial issues as legislation and regulation of heritage properties, policies and programs designed to support heritage conservation, and the insurance of heritage buildings, the conference is offering a series of technical sessions focusing on preserving the heritage character of commercial buildings, repointing and maintaining masonry, preparing conservation plans for heritage buildings, and more.

As well as the celebrated Heritage Canada Awards Ceremony and reception with The Honourable Herménégilde Chiasson, Lieutenant Governor of New Brunswick, the program includes a selection of five tours through the streets of Saint John as well as the option of dining in privately owned historic homes throughout the city.

This year's theme is certain to spark lively discussion about the many factors that will continue to move heritage conservation forward into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

For additional information on the conference program and early registration opportunities please visit our Web site at [www.heritagecanada.org](http://www.heritagecanada.org)

*Carolyn Quinn, Director of Communications*

Heritage Canada Foundation

Phone: 613-237-1066

Fax: 613-237-5987

E-mail: [cquinn@heritagecanada.org](mailto:cquinn@heritagecanada.org)

## LIGHTSHOP

**Help support the NSLPS!** Profits from these items go to the society to help save our historic lights.

*Please note: NSLPS now has Charitable Tax Status and an HST number. Because of this we must add tax to our prices.*

***Lighthouses and Lights of Nova Scotia: A Complete Guide***, by E.H Rip Irwin. Nimbus Publishing, 2003. The definitive book on all existing Nova Scotia lighthouses.  
\$32.00 including tax.

**Book + packing and postage:** Nova Scotia: \$40.00. For mailing in Canada outside Nova Scotia: \$43.00. For mailing to USA: \$45.00. Air mail to USA please add\$3.00

### ***NSLPS Membership Pin:***

Enhance your prestige with this oval pin, showing the NSLPS logo in red and gold on a dark blue background.  
\$7.50 including packing and postage.

### ***Sambro Lighthouse Pewter Key Chain:***

\$16.00 including packing and postage.

### ***Lighthouse Locator Map:***

Correlates with the book *Lighthouses and Lights of Nova Scotia*.

\$18.00 including packing and postage

**Order from: Pam Tupper**, 6501 St. Margaret's Bay Road, Head of Saint Margaret's Bay, NS, B3A 2C5  
e-mail: gannetrock@yahoo.ca

**Orders must be pre-paid. Please make cheques payable to the NSLPS.**

## DOOMSDAY LIST

*This is a partial list of Canadian lighthouses and lightstation buildings in danger of being lost:*

**Cape Roseway, NS Dwellings and old fog alarm building**

**Chebucto Head, NS 1940 Keepers House Burned to the Ground in 2004**

**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**

**Ingonish Island, NS Keeper's house**

**Isaac's Harbour, NS Combined dwelling/lighthouse**

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

**Liscomb Island, NS Keepers' house**

**Margaree Island, NS Lighthouse and dwelling**

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

**Peases Island, NS Keepers duplex**

**Pictou Bar, NS 1903 Lighthouse Burned to the Ground in July 2004**

**Queensport(Rook Island),NS Combined dwelling/lighthouse**

**Sambro Island, NS Dwellings and Gas House**

**Seal Island, NS Radio operator's house, barn**

**Southwest Point, Anticosti Island, QC**

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

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NSLPS MEMBERSHIP FORM - January 1 - December 31, 2004

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ POSTAL CODE \_\_\_\_\_  
E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_ New ☐ Renewal ☐ Membership Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Family/Group names for extra cards \_\_\_\_\_

Single - \$15.00 Institution/Group - \$30.00 (4 cards)

Patron - \$100.00

Family - \$20.00 Sustaining - \$50.00

Foreign - \$15.00 U.S. Funds, or equivalent.

Amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Please make cheques payable to Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society

Mail to: THE NOVA SCOTIA LIGHTHOUSE PRESERVATION SOCIETY

c/o Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, 1675 Lower Water Street, Halifax, B3J 1S3



FUTURE HOME  
OF THE RECONSTRUCTED  
LIGHTKEEPER'S HOUSE

