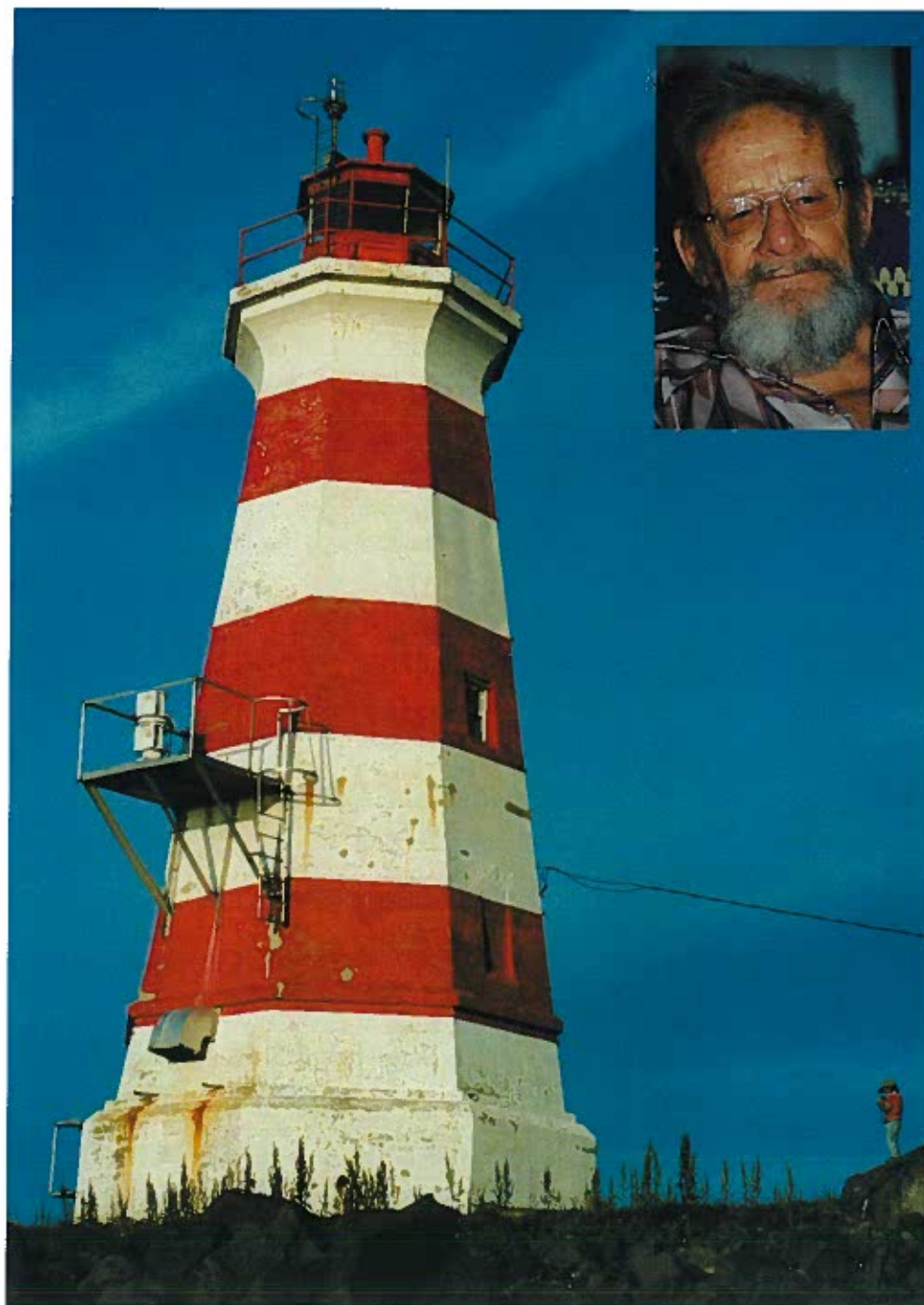




The Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society
Vol. 12, No. 2, June/July 2005

The Lightkeeper



IN THIS ISSUE:

Trips & Programs

News & Views

Voices of the Lights

Farewell

Battery Point: Then & Now

Divestiture 101

Categorizations of
Lighthouses

Lightshop

**Brier Island light. Inset-Light-
keeper Wick Lent in 2001.**
Chris Mills



The objectives of the Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society are: to promote and support preservation and awareness of Nova Scotia lighthouses; and

also 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

COPY/PHOTO EDITORS: Nancy Eisener & Ashley Lohnes

PATRONS: Carl Lautenslager, Betty Schloss, Richard Hamilton, Edith Northfield

AFFILIATES: Chebucto Head Lighthouse Society, Gilberts Cove and District Historical Society, Five Islands Lighthouse Preservation Society, Friends of the Yarmouth Light Society, Henry Island Lighthouse Preservation Society, Louisburg Lighthouse Society, Medway Area Communities Association, Nova Scotia Lighthouse Interpretive Centre Port Bickerton, Port George District Lighthouse Society, Region of Queens Municipality, Spencers Island Community Association, Terence Bay Lighthouse Committee, Village On The Canel Association, Walton Area Development Association.

NSLPS EXECUTIVE 2005/2006

President/Lighthouse Protection Act Committee- Barry MacDonald 827-2027 e-mail: threefathom@eastlink.ca

Past President - Tony Thompson 477-7366 e-mail: tony@mscs.dal.ca

First Vice President- John Langley

Second Vice President/Editor, *The Lightkeeper* Chris Mills 868-2313 e-mail: ketch@ns.sympatico.ca

Treasurer - Peter Flemming 477-7531 e-mail: peterf@nscad.ns.ca

Secretary - Denyse Contrasty

Director, Membership - Annelise Chapman

Director, Webmaster, - Peter MacCulloch e-mail: petermac@ocean1.net

Director, Trips and Programmes/Mail person Dorothy MacLeod 423-8034

Director, Member-at-Large - Josette d'Entremont e-mail: josette_dentremont@msn.com

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

Director, Member-at-Large - John Ure

Director, Member-at-Large - Bryan Andrachuk

NSLPS TRIPS – Summer 2005

ON-THE-WATER TOURS OF HALIFAX HARBOUR LIGHTHOUSES

Saturdays: July 30, August 27, and September 24

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 magnificent Halifax 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 for a closer look at the lighthouse and to have lunch (weather permitting). Please wear appropriate clothing and footwear.

Cost: \$50.00 per person, lunch & refreshments included. Registration is required. A portion of the trip fee will be donated to the NSLPS. For trip information and to register call George Hebb, (902) 477-6537.

TUSKET ISLANDS CRUISE & LOBSTER DINNER

Saturday, July 16

Leave Wedgeport at 12:30 PM and cruise through the natural beauty of the Tusket Islands, past wharves, fish stages and fish houses. Learn the history of how the islands have been used by generations of lobster fisherman and see three lighthouses: Big Fish, Pease Island and Candlebox Island.

Enjoy a lobster dinner on one of the islands. The captain will share his knowledge of the islands and an NSLPS guide will be along to tell you about the lighthouses. For information: www.tusketislandtours.com

Cost: \$60.00 per person including lobster dinner. To register call Dorothy MacLeod, (902) 423-8034.

SPECIAL VISIT TO CAPE FORCHU

Sunday, July 17

On Sunday morning you will be specially greeted at Cape Forchu Lighthouse, Yarmouth for a visit, tea, coffee, and muffins. As well, folks at the newly restored Seal Island Light Museum in Barrington, will be expecting you for a visit in the afternoon (completion of repairs permitting).

TRIP TO ROCKBOUND - EAST IRONBOUND ISLAND

Saturday, August 13

Leave Lunenburg Waterfront at 1:00 PM and enjoy a scenic ocean trip on a Canadian Coast Guard approved

"Cape Islander" charter boat. We head out from Lunenburg, birthplace of the *Bluenose* and around into beautiful Mahone Bay.

Visit the setting for the novel *Rockbound* by Frank Parker Day, which won the CBC "Canada Reads" Contest in March 2005. Author Donna Morrissey, who nominated the book and shepherded it through to a win, will be along as a guest of NSLPS.

On this trip you will pass Battery Point Breakwater lighthouse in Lunenburg Harbour, and Cross Island lighthouse, with a view of Pearl Island light (called "Barren Island" in *Rockbound*), visibility permitting. Land on East Ironbound to view the lighthouse with its tower rising from the roof at the front of a small dwelling and visit the school house.

Take a walk around this scenic island at the mouth of Mahone Bay. A guide from NSLPS will tell you about the history of the lighthouses. Most of the island is privately owned and it is difficult to access, so this is a unique opportunity. Return about 6:00 PM. This is a special offering for this summer and it is sure to be popular, so register quickly.

Cost: \$40.00 per person.

To register call Dorothy MacLeod, (902) 423-8034.

ISLE HAUTE, BAY OF FUNDY

September 10, weather date September 24

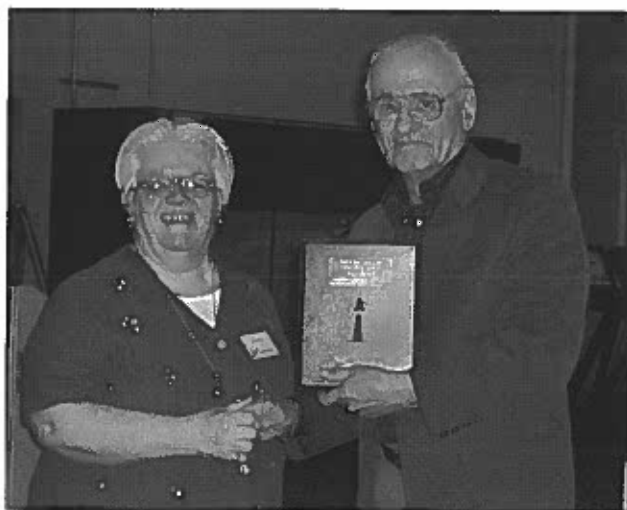
An all-day trip out of Harbourville on the Bay of Fundy.

Ile Haute lies off Cape Chignecto in the Bay of Fundy. Often shrouded in mist, it has the reputation of disappearing by times! Dan Conlin, Curator of Marine History, Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, and an expert on the history of the island and Tony Thompson, past-president of the NSLPS will lead this unusual trip. This an opportunity not to be missed! It is a fairly strenuous outing (getting on and off the boat via a Zodiac, and hiking up to the lighthouse site). Take appropriate and good hiking shoes, food, and adequate water.

Arrangements are still being made for this trip. Trip is limited to 20 persons. Registration will be required. We expect this trip to fill quickly. No children under 12 years of age.

Cost at least \$50.00 per person.

For further details and to register contact Tony Thompson, (902) 477-7366, or e-mail: Tony.Thompson@dal.ca.



NSLPS Secretary (2004-2005) Donna Merriam presents the 2005 Craig Harding Award to Stanley Spicer. *Josette d'Entremont*

NEWS AND VIEWS

Cape Forchu Horn

The Coast Guard granted permission for the Friends of the Yarmouth Light to salute the Cat ferry on its season-opening day on May 27, with a blast of the decommissioned fog horn. There was an ironic catch though – they could *not* blow the fog horn if there was any fog!

Cape Sable Light Looks Terrible

One of Nova Scotia's two lighthouses with full heritage protection looks like it has *no* protection. In a three minute news item that aired June 10th, CBC television reporter Sophia Harris visited the Cape Sable light, near Clark's Harbour. Video footage shows a still-impressive, but crumbling and peeling 101-foot tower. Concrete at the base and under the lantern has deteriorated badly, and various leaks have left the interior with water damage and rusty iron access ladders.

The Cape Sable light reveals the shameful neglect of a "protected" lighthouse. What is the point of FHBRO classification if a historic structure such as this light, is allowed to literally fall apart? The federal government needs to get its act together and at the very least, do *some* work to protect the structures it is mandated to preserve.

Coast Guard Helicopter Crashes in British Columbia

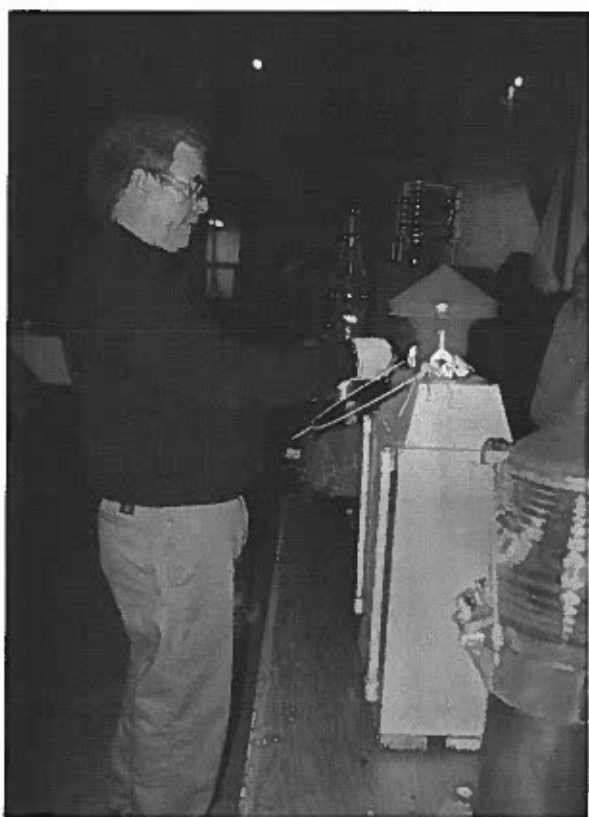
Helicopter CG 357 ditched off Dryad Point lightstation, near Bella Bella on May 7. Reports indicate the helicopter had been slinging supplies between the lightstation and the *CCGS Bartlett*. As the helicopter made a last run to the ship with a longline (sling) load of cargo bonnets, a gust of wind may have forced the sling into to tail rotor, causing the helicopter to crash.

A nearby boater pulled pilot Stan Ulrichsen from the water within minutes of the crash. He was then taken to hospital in Bella Bella by a Coast Guard fast response vessel, and later to hospital in Victoria. Ulrichsen is now recovering at home and he says he is keen to return to work.

Stan Ulrichsen is an experienced Coast Guard pilot, having also worked in the heli-logging industry.

Lighthouses of the Eastern Shore

NSLPS president Barry MacDonald gave a brief talk at the Lake Charlotte and Area Genealogy and Archives research centre on the 28th of May. Attendance was modest, but Barry reports great interest from area residents in the preservation of information about eastern shore lighthouses.



Barry MacDonald shares his knowledge of lenses and lights with interested lighthouse enthusiasts.
Josette d'Entremont

NSLPS and ASARM: Archives Launches New Website

The Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management (NSARM) have launched a new website that includes images of sailing vessels, shipwrecks, ports, harbours and lighthouses. The purpose is to make a very large number of images (mostly photos, but also documents) from the archives available to a wide public via the web. There are three large files of lighthouse images: (a) the Clara Dennis collection (1930s); (b) the Department of Transportation collection; and (c) the Wallace

MacAskill photos. The NSARM lighthouse collection can be viewed at: <http://www.gov.ns.ca/nsarm/virtual/lighthouses/>. It contains 775 digitized images showing a wide variety of lighthouses, fog horns, keepers and documents. The site is searchable by light or by county. This is an invaluable resource for people interested in Nova Scotia lighthouses, showcasing many rare images for the first time.

Sounds Like...Foghorns!

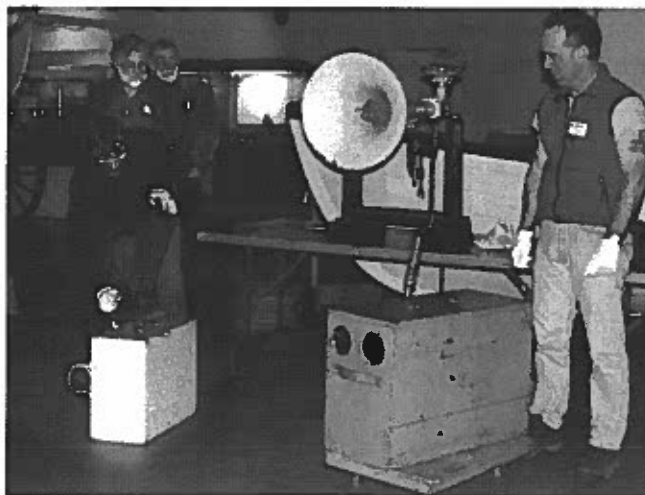
Just after 11 am Atlantic Time on May 31, the airwaves resonated with the sonorous sounds of foghorns. Lots of horns. CBC Radio One's *Sounds Like Canada* broadcast a 20 minute segment dealing with the lure, lore and loss of coastal sound signals.

Dan Conlin and Chris Mills made contributions, and we heard the Coast Guard angle on land-based sound signals from Carl Goodwin in Dartmouth. Alex Mason produced the piece, covering many aspects of fog signals, from the romance of the coast soundscape, to today's dearth of horns in a time when radar and GPS have reduced their usefulness to some mariners. The show generated some positive feedback on the *Sounds Like Canada* message line, which was broadcast the next day.

Sounds Like...Silence

It's been quiet for more than three months, but the Georges Island fog horn is still in the news. In a June 18 *Chronicle Herald* article, Halifax resident Elizabeth Snell says she's unhappy that complaints from residents of condos at Bishop's Landing – almost directly across from the light – helped make up the Coast Guard's mind to de-commission the signal.

"Technology might have moved on, but we should be very cognisant of our history," she said in



Dan Conlin sounds a hand foghorn at a the NSLPS Light and Horns night at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic.
Josette d'Entremont

the article. The Coast Guard's Carl Goodwin was quoted as saying if people are looking for the romance of the fog horn, they're too late, as the new horns don't have the "unmistakeably deep sound," of the old boomers.

He added that the horn had been operating in clear weather and needed upgrades to its fog detection system. In these days of fiscal restraint, it is unlikely the horn will be turned back on. The Coast Guard says they did not receive one complaint from mariners about the silenced horn.

Lack of use by mariners combined with the complaints of uppity seaside condo-dwellers have spelled the end of the Georges Island fog horn. Forget about romance – it's only cold hard logic and the bottom line that rule in the end.

Wallace Light Shines On

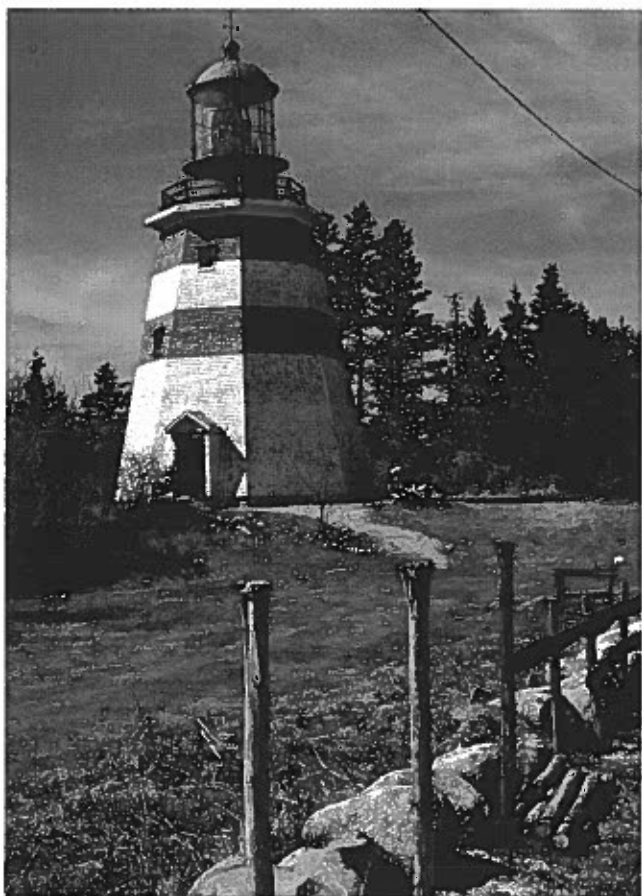
A recent article in the Halifax Chronicle states that MP Bill Casey is "delighted" that the DFO plans to "put a new bulb," in the Wallace lighthouse. Casey says local mariners were worried the light might be reduced in intensity or replaced with buoys. The article goes on to say that "the cost of replacing the light bulb, which lasts 15 years, is about \$87,000."

We did a little research and found that it's more than a bulb! The Wallace light is a sector light, which means that it uses colours to mark a safe channel into a port or harbour. As opposed to range lights, sector lights use a single tower to mark the channel. A high powered light (which looks a bit like a telescope) mounted on the tower shows red, white or green colours when viewed from sea. Normally a white light marks the clear channel. The unit at Wallace is due for replacement, and will reportedly cost \$83,000.

Seal Island Light Museum Delays

Although the Seal Island Lighthouse Museum restoration project is a go, there are a few hitches. Brenda Maxwell reports that tender applications closed on March 28. The original estimates for repairs to the rotting structure were about \$116,000. When the contractor (Hook Construction, Sable River) and an engineer did a further examination of the tower, they found vapour barrier in the structure had retained water in the lower levels, causing extensive decay on four sides.

In addition, all of the lantern windows will have to be removed and replaced, because of improper caulking of the replacement Lexan windows installed some years ago. The Cape Sable Historical Society is now looking for more money. The Municipality of Barrington has contributed a further \$8,000. ACOA has assisted with almost \$20,000. The society has asked local MLA Cecel O'Donnell to seek the remaining \$15,000 required from the province.



Seal Island Museum. *Chris Mills*

Heritage Lighthouse Protection Act Update

The Lighthouse Protection Act (Bill S-14) has all but passed second reading in the House of Commons. There is still one hour of debate booked in the House before it passes second reading. The word is that the governing Liberals have amendments they wish to see and if these amendments are accepted, the bill then goes to committee one final time. The substance of the amendments seems key at this point but it should be noted that this is the farthest the bill has progressed to date. Thank you to our friends in Newfoundland, PEI, New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia for the great lobbying. With the House now into overtime, it is doubtful whether this debate will take place before fall. Watch *The Lightkeeper* for updates.

CHEBUCTO HEAD LIGHTHOUSE SOCIETY UPDATE *Dominique Gusset*

It is now just over a year since the lightkeeper's house at Chebucto Head was destroyed by fire and as vegetation begins to take over the area leveled after the clean-up, there will soon be little evidence of the building which once stood there. The spectacular view however, is the same, and the site remains a popular spot for visitors.

Hopefully, the recent designation of the surrounding crown land as an Ecological Reserve (the Duncans Cove Nature Reserve) will contribute to the overall protection of the site.

On May 5th, 2005, the CHLS signed a new, one-year 'License of Use Agreement' with DFO for the property. This year's agreement includes slightly more area than last year's lease which was for the footprint of the keeper's house. The light and foghorn (which are located 15 metres away, next to DFO's navigational aids) remain operation for the time being. DFO will continue to pay the gate keeper's salary, while the Society is responsible for liability insurance and continues to act as a liaison between the local community, gate-keeper and DFO.

The society's vision for the future involves possible reconstruction of the keeper's house using green technologies. This centre would be used for local heritage and ocean celebration. The society is obtaining professional assistance to develop a workshop forum to discuss its plans. Recent CHLS meetings have included presentations by Andrew Hebda (of the Museum of Natural History) on tales of sea monsters off the coast of Nova Scotia (including Chebucto Head) and a slide presentation by Doug Conrad -- Scenes from Chebucto Head Light - shot during the 1970-80s, during his time working for Halifax Harbour Traffic Control.

Essentially, the society wants Chebucto Head and the surrounding area to remain accessible to the community and the general public for the appreciation, interpretation, and enjoyment of our heritage and our natural and marine environment.

Neil's Harbour Light



This lighthouse on the Cabot Trail was built in 1899 and burned kerosene until 1956. *Josette d'Entremont*

VOICES OF THE LIGHTS

Chris Mills

Donald Wickerson (Wick) Lent was born in Westport, in 1919. I met him fifty years later, while he was a keeper at Brier Island's "Western Light". As a summertime visitor to the island, I'd listen to the fog horn down the road and once in a while we'd walk down to visit Wick, along with his wife Madeline and daughter Faye.



After working at Western Light in the early 1960s, Wick moved to the Grand Passage Light, where he retired in 1984. Although he moved ashore and inland, he never forgot his connection to the island, returning many years to camp at Western Light, on the spot where his house had stood.

Wick Lent died on March 21 this year. Here is some of his lighthouse story, as recorded in January, 2001.

Wick Lent before he took the job at Grand Passage light.
Courtesy Faye Lent

Anything To Keep You Off The Water!

I was fishing under difficulty where I have an artificial limb and I come in one day. It was heavy sea and there was no fish. The keeper at Grand Passage light was hiring people to fill in for sick leaves and he stopped to see how I made out that day.

"Nothing at all." I said "Why the hell don't you give me a chance to go up there and make some easy money?" He said "You mean that?" I said "Sure do."

Well, I was getting ready for lobster fishing that fall and one night about ten o'clock there was a rap come to my son's porch door and who should arrive but Percy Welch, the keeper of Grand Passage Light. He said "Did you mean what you told me about wanting to go to Grand Passage?" I said "Damn sure."

I called Saint John and they said "Find out if your wife would be willing to move up there," 'cause he said it might be three months, it might be six months, it might be a permanent job. I said "She'll go anywhere to keep me off the water!"

I went home and talked to Madeline and she said "Yes, certainly, anything to keep you off the water!"

I Was Trying To Heat ...Grand Passage!

It was the old house and the old lighthouse and they were just getting ready to build the bungalow which is the headquarters for the lifeboat now. The old house was cold, terrible! Heated by coal. You could stand with your butt against the kitchen stove and your ears and your belly would freeze!

So I went investigating one day. I went up the back stairs and I could look right straight through the attic and see the bell buoy in the passage out in front of the house! That's what I was trying to heat, was Grand Passage!



The old and leaky lightkeeper's house at Brier Island light in 1962. *Courtesy Faye Lent*

I went over in the lighthouse, and somebody had picked up a bale of oakum. So I said "I'm gonna caulk that seam!" It was the eaves trough had sagged with dirt, never been cleaned out. I went to work stuffin' in oakum and tore up boards that was there and nailed them on for to hold it down.

[The lighthouse] was electric powered by the time I got there. When I first went there it was a kerosene lamp and then they wired it. The stand-by was a stationary engine and a shaft went out through to a concrete block



Northern Point in the winter – exposed and cold! *Chris Mills*

and the [fog]bell that is in front of Digby Post Office (the bell is now on the Digby waterfront –*Ed*), was on a concrete base out in front.

When they'd start it up, that would swing and BANG, BANG! When I was a kid I was up there a good many times. Poor old Mr. Charlie Buckman! The motor wouldn't go and he was up there with his watch in one hand and a sledgehammer in the other. When it would come time he would "BONG". He'd watch again and "BONG". He done that for hours and hours and hours by hand!

Brier Island Light

There was Percy Welch, George Denton and myself, three of us. The horn was compressed air with the big diaphone, one of the bigger ones on the coast. And the light was a big kerosene light, first off.

When it come a rainstorm, Madeline had to get all these pots and pans and pails and put them here, there and everywhere. She tried to get them in tune so they'd play a tune!

We stayed there pretty near a year and they were building the bungalow that's gone now. It was supposed to be for me.



Brier Island light's once extensive complex (1980), showing assistant keepers duplex, garage and head keeper's bungalow. All that remains now is the tiny pumphouse just visible at the left of the duplex. *Chris Mills*

But Don Denton from Grand Manan moved over. His wife wanted that, so I had to move into the duplex. Were they ever sorry, because you couldn't heat that bungalow to save your soul, the hell you couldn't!

It Would Just Fairly Shiver Your Timbers!

[The fog horn] was one of the most powerful on the coast. The only one anywhere near it was Sambro and Louisbourg Lights. It was so loud that when it would blow, the dishes on the shelf in the pantry in the duplex would shake!

[One year] young Percy Welch's son was being married in the living room and just as they were getting started I looked out and [saw] the fog was shutting in. So I knew what was gonna happen. I had to run and start the fog whistle.

It took a while for poor old Mr. Darby the Christian Church minister to catch on. He'd say a few words and he'd watch his watch. And after the fog whistle would blow, then he'd say a little bit more. He had to work his service in through that, 'till he got them married. Which was a sad thing because it was only a very, very short time after that they were both lost at sea.



The concrete tower at Western Light shows lack of maintenance in 2004. It looks worse this year. *Chris Mills*

There was no gate there then. You could drive right up [to the fog horn]. Where you'd park was right down under the horn. One day, this old lady and her grand daughter got out of the car. I was in the window, and she says "Could we come in and see what's going on?"

I said "Help yourselves but it's kind of noisy". So they come. It happened that it was long enough space that they got up around the corner 'till they didn't mind [the noise] so much. So in between the blasts I explained to her when the cam came around and pressed down on that lever, that's when the noise would come.

That old thing cut loose and that roar, it would just fairly shiver your timbers! The old lady got right down on her knees on the floor and the little girl was



Wick Lent's daughter Faye at the Brier Island lighthouse circa 1967, with the diaphone building in the background. *Courtesy Faye Lent*

laughing to kill herself! The next time it blew the old lady was out front and the little girl said "Let it go again, let it go again!"

Speaking Plainly, It Was Hell.

[The worst weather I ever saw was] Ground Hog Day. Speaking plainly it was Hell. I was stuck in the fog alarm building, that little one, for three hours before I even *dared* think about getting down to the house.

The sea was going up through. There was a break in the North Mountain and it was coming in there and coming up through. You couldn't get down, You'd wash right out to sea. You had to wait 'till the tide ebbed off a little bit, then make it down.

Anyway, it come a little bit of a lull and I took to my scrapers. I couldn't move to fast with an artificial leg, but I got down.

When I got down right abreast of the house, I looked down the shore and here's this huge great thing comin', bouncing this way and that. It looked like a great big wooden crate, big enough to be part of a building. That was coming up the shore, bouncing this way.



Madeline Lent helps paint the Brier Island light tower in 1964. *Courtesy Faye Lent.*

I rapped on the window and got Madeline's attention. She came to the front door and I said "If you think that's gonna hit the house, go out the back door and get right down close in behind the wall!"

But over across the road, there was a little hill. When it hit that, it bounced and missed the house about six feet. It kept right on a goin'. Far as I know it's still goin'!



Brier Island lighthouse and keepers house in 1985. *Chris Mills*

She Was A Dear Old Soul

Visitors thought it was a wonderful spot. There was one man that stands out in my memory. He was a professor of some kind. I don't know whether he'd had an operation or an accident, but the top of his head has been completely cut off. It was flat!

He come down there with an old lady, friend of mine. She loved flowers and things like that and I showed her the curly grass fern. It's a rare, rare fern. At that time the only place it was known to have grown was on the approach to the Kennedy International Airport. Then they found it on Brier Island and one small place in Newfoundland.

It looked so odd for him to be down in that swamp with his head down. It looked just like someone cut the top of his head off! He was a wonderful man to talk with.

Miss Moorhouse was a friend of his. She was a dear old soul. She used to come down to study the flowers. She lived down in Brighton, not very far from where my mother lived. Mum wouldn't go up to see her, no, no she was too high class for her.

I said "She's not too high class for me," I said, "She stops me and asks questions." My sister Margaret, she loved flowers too, so I took her up and introduced her to Miss Moorhouse, and we got along wonderfully well.

She and a friend would take a trip around the world. Two old maids! I'd get letters from all around the world everywhere. One card I got, I'll never forget it. I've got it somewhere. She says "Wick, you'll never believe what I'm sitting here at the table eating for my breakfast!" She was in Japan and she was eating raw fish! Eating raw fish! She was a dear old soul!

There's Nothing There Now

There's nothing at Western Light – just the tower. And that's only got a little tiny light in it. It's almost useless. It's terrible. There's a hope right now that they're going to keep some of the lighthouses. Now this is just hearsay. They're gonna keep some of the bigger, stronger ones and man them. But now, whether that's true or not, I don't know.

My son Chester was on the west coast for five-six years, fishing, and he said they were just starting the automation out there, and they stalled it and wait to find out what was gonna happen. It's not too late. I notice the big main ones, they've held on to them. They should stay where they are. We need them. Radar is only as good as the one that programs that thing.

There was a piece come out here the other day in the *Chronicle Herald*. There was a whole page all about how careless and useless a job they were doing with the boats, the lights and the marker buoys and everything like that. It should be taken in hand and straightened out. Wholeheartedly I agree with them. They should take some of those guys that are trying to run things and banish 'em, send 'em over to Russia!



Wick Lent in 2001, displaying a painting of Brier Island's Western Light in its heyday. *Chris Mills*

FAREWELL

We are sad to report the passing of Jean Barkhouse on May 31, 2005. Jean was married to lightkeeper David Barkhouse and spent more than two decades living on sev-



Jean Barkhouse in 2001. *Chris Mills*

eral lights, including Cross Island, Pearl Island, Maughers Beach and Georges Island. Jean raised four children on the lights, and we were fortunate enough to be able to interview her and two children for the NSLPS oral history project in 2001. Our condolences to Patti, Lawrence, Richard and Bobby.

BATTERY POINT: THEN AND NOW

Chris Mills



Battery Point light with Stone Chance Foghorn in 1987. *Chris Mills*

Battery Point lights stands guard at the eastern side of Lunenburg Harbour. The first light, built in 1864, sat on the point itself but by 1951, the Department of Transport had constructed the present tower on the end of the Battery Point breakwater. These images show just how much the site has changed since the early 1980s. Lightkeeper Leonce Huskins left when the Coast Guard de-staffed the light in 1987. His house was removed 8 years later. An empty shed and gutted engine room remain, but alders and tall grass have obscured the site of the house. Although the Coast Guard refurbished the lighthouse in the late 1980s, it is now covered in moss and cormorant deposits. The breakwater itself is in bad shape, and the Coast Guard says when the light's power cable finally breaks, the fog horn will be removed from service.



Battery Point light from the water in 2005, showing cormorants and the damage they do! *Chris Mills*



The keepers house sat on the hill overlooking the breakwater and Lunenburg Harbour. Keeper Leonce Huskins left in 1987 and the house was removed in the mid 1990s. *Chris Mills*



Battery Point in 1981, showing the hill above the breakwater, shed, engine room and keeper's house. *Chris Mills*



Today, alders and spruce trees have taken over the site of the keeper's house on the hill overlooking Battery Point. *Chris Mills*

DIVESTITURE 101

Annelise Chapman

"It is really necessary for people to understand what the divestiture programme is all about. We are interested in the future of lighthouses. We hear so many misconceptions; people think the federal government is just selling off lighthouses and are worried that they don't get a say in what is happening." Glen Fry, Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

Divestiture. The "D" word. For anyone involved in lighthouses and lighthouse preservation, it's become a common term. But what does it really mean? We know the government has a plan to rid itself of properties and structures it no longer needs, but how does divestiture work for lighthouses, and what does it mean for the communities interested in saving their historic beacons? Lise Chapman recently sat down with Glen Fry, Chief of Divestiture for DFO's Real Property Safety and Security department, to get the low-down on the government's plans for our lighthouses.

What is the rationale of the Federal Government's divestiture programme for lighthouses?

"Under the programme, we are really talking about 'landfall' and 'hazard avoidance' lights that are still used to provide an aid for marine safety," Fry says, defining some of the basic terms for me. "As there has been much advancement in technology for marine navigation, some of those 'landfall' lights are no longer required to safeguard navigation."

Fry continues to explain how DFO-Coast Guard has to strike a balance between their mandate to provide navigational safety on the one hand and their financial limitation to do so on the other. Hence, there is an incentive for the department to divest themselves of property which is either no longer necessary or no longer cost effective.

"On the other hand," Fry adds, "there is the heritage aspect of many lighthouses, and as a department which has had a long-standing relationship with many coastal communities, we were looking to find a way in which lights could be preserved within their communities rather than be replaced by more cost-effective structures, or some lights eventually being extinguished and the property sold."

Fry explains that under the federal divestiture programme (which also applies to other DFO prop-

erties such as wharves), operational lights can be transferred to communities for a nominal sum of money and may be retained for future generations.

"The programme has been running since 1998, but it has taken time to see results because there are many things to be considered," Fry says. "We have developed experience with the community communication needed along the way. In this sense, we are exploring the nitty-gritty details of the national divestiture policy in the Maritimes, because we have always had a lot of contact with communities. We are the ones to test whether all of this could work for other regions also, but we do get our directives from Ottawa."

When asked to describe the main process of divestiture, Fry says that fundamentally it follows general procedure for disposal of surplus federal property. "First, we ask internally, whether anyone within our department, for instance the science branch, is interested in any one light property. If no-one wants it at that level, we circulate an offer of operational transfer among other federal departments, i.e. Parks Canada, Environment Canada etc."

Fry says that in most cases, other federal departments don't have an interest taking responsibility for an operational lighthouse. The 2nd level of priority offer has to go to the provincial government, then to the 3rd level, municipalities. Until June 2000, a municipality was the end of the line before a decommissioned lighthouse would then be up for grabs on the private market.

With the amendment to the 96-1 policy, however, the federal government treasury board recognised that non-for-profit community groups should get a chance to acquire a lighthouse in recognition of potential local heritage interest. "We need to consider the long-term public accessibility of coastal properties," he says. "Therefore an opportunity exists for local groups to become involved as the 4th level of priority."

Fry stresses that "there is *no option* for an offer of transfer of an *operational* lighthouse to the general public. If among the 'priority levels' no-one expresses an interest, Coast Guard would continue to operate the light until no longer required."

Does the DFO-Coast Guard treat all lighthouses alike under the divestiture programme?

"No, definitely not," says Fry. "In the Maritimes, Coast Guard Maritime Services has developed a system of categorizing lights according to their forecast role as navigational aids in the short and medium-term future." He continues to elaborate that under this system, a category 'A' light is one that has already been discontinued. Although his department will divest such a light and

follow the same sequence of offering it to the various departments, the big issue is that a non-operational light has to be sold at the market value of the property.

Given that many lighthouses are in scenic spots around coastal Nova Scotia and looking at rising property values, especially for ocean frontage, this would likely discourage non-profit societies thinking about taking on a lighthouse like that. However, if they do, they have to guarantee public access to the property under the transfer regulations.

"Most community groups would probably become involved with a 'Category B' light," recalls Fry from his experience with the programme. He has been heading the group working on lighthouse divestiture since September of 2004. "A 'Category B' light is still operational and forecast by our Maritime Services people to become operationally surplus within the next 10 years. Such a light can be turned over under the terms of a transfer agreement to a new owner for a nominal sum. However, it is noted in the transfer agreement that operation of the light will be the responsibility of the new owner for at least 10 years thereafter."

Is there a liability problem, especially if local communities take on such a task?

"No, because the navigational liability for the light stays with DFO," Fry replies. "We provide the new owner with a set of standards, maintenance and service requirements which they will have to take care of. But if a ship runs aground although the light was run properly, the department is still responsible as it has just contracted operation of the light."

When asked about the costs of keeping a light operational, Fry comments that it is mostly the structure which needs repairs, painting etc. The technical aspects of operating the light are usually relatively inexpensive. "That's normally just money for the bulbs and that kind of thing," he says.

He goes on to add that "foghorns and their operation are not included in such a transfer agreement. Those, we keep looking after ourselves." Fry also emphasizes that, as with 'Category B' lights, the procedure of offering them to be transferred is the same as for 'Category A' structures.

What is a 'Category C' light?

Fry hesitates slightly, because his department does not usually offer those lights for ownership transfer, although there are some exceptions. "A 'Category C' (Hazard Avoidance) light will continue to be operated by the DFO-

Coast Guard in the long term, because it is classified as a necessary aid to navigation," he explains. Fundamentally, Fry's department is not interested in turning over either the lights or the structures.

"However, in cases where the tower, let's say, is deteriorating and we have to do something about it, we might have to consider the most cost-effective way of dealing with such a problem. With our priority being navigational safety, we would perhaps just take the old building down and replace it with a steel structure of no heritage value whatsoever."

Fry draws up a scenario that is daunting for any lighthouse enthusiast. "In that case, we would consider the transfer of the structure only – under the same procedure as for A and B lights – but keep all responsibility for the actual operation of the light."

Fry says that sometimes, as in the case of Kidston Island in Baddeck, taking joint responsibility for the light's continued operation on the one hand (Coast Guard) and its cultural preservation on the other (a new public owner) is the only way to see it survive.

Kidston Island, Baddeck



Members of the Baddeck community are working on securing ownership of this light located near the village waterfront.

Josette d'Entremont

What have been the main problems with the divestiture programme?

"Some of our biggest issues are that people in coastal communities, who have a very strong connection to 'their' lights, misunderstand the process," Fry says with a sigh. "I have heard it said so many times that we are selling off ALL lights on the coast. That's clearly not true!"

But he thinks there is hope. "As a department, we have a long tradition in working with coastal communities and we want to build on that. We try to reach

local groups and stakeholders as much as we can and we are getting better in making our sometimes bureaucratic practices more transparent to everyone."

Fry also emphasizes the importance of outreach and the good relationship with the Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society. "NSLPS has really helped a lot," he says, "especially in its role as mediator between our department and the local communities."

Where do people find out how a particular light has been classified?

'The List' of A,B,C lights is not a secret. "It has not been published anywhere," Fry says, "but if you call either myself or Carl Goodwin, Superintendent for Aids to Navigation, we will be able to tell you straight away. We do encourage people to become involved. In many locations we are still having difficulty in finding active community members and groups to work with us towards transfer."

Do you have a 'preferred' target group for the transfer of lights?

Fry explains that every lighthouse property is unique. "But," he adds, "I think that the lower levels of government, especially municipalities, are often a good target, because they still represent the public (and guarantee public access into the future), whereas at the same time they are not exposed to the same kinds of risks as non-profit societies. Community groups, as we all know, exist through the work of individuals. Therefore, they are at risk of breaking up and disappearing, especially if it takes many years to reach a particular goal."

Why does it take so long to actually hand over a light?

Fry explains that DFO has to follow a strict protocol for checking out a property before it can transfer ownership: "We have to carry out a series of assessments, including a legal land title search, a check for potential aboriginal interests, a FHBRO (Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office) and an environmental contamination assessment," he says.

"It makes sense, of course, that the property is 'clean' in every respect before we hand it over, but it can be a very lengthy process." In the case of Annapolis Royal, one of the department's successful transfers under the divestiture programme, it took roughly six years from the first negotiations between Coast Guard and the municipality until the light was finally transferred.

But Fry is positive about recent developments. "Our experience is growing, and the whole programme is

gaining momentum," he says. "This year, we are expecting to complete about 25 transfers of lighthouses in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Most of the properties go to municipalities and community groups."

Has the Province of Nova Scotia expressed any interest in taking over lighthouses?

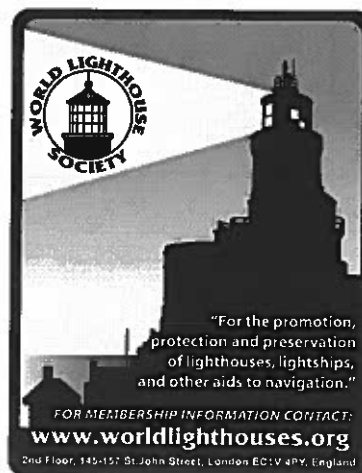
Fry hesitates. "We have been asking the province – and mainly it is the tourism department that might be interested – for some time now to let us know whether they are interested in individual or groups of lights, but they have been slow to respond. Clearly, they need time to consider their interests, and we want the best possible solution for ALL Nova Scotia lights, so we try to be as patient as we can. But ultimately, we will have to offer properties to the next level."

When asked about a deadline for all transfer completions, Fry is adamant. "No, there is no deadline. As long as the programme is funded, we will keep divesting. However, it is in the best interest of everyone to take ownership of a light while it still has 'B' status and is available for a dollar plus the responsibility of operating it."

What is your vision for lighthouses in Nova Scotia – 20 years down the road?

Fry gives me a big smile and says "I think that there will be as many lights as we have now." In his vision, several government-owned and operated lights will blend with those that will have been taken over by the province, municipalities and community groups -- some perhaps run as private aids to navigation.

"Most of all," he concludes, "Canadians will still have public access to their coastlines, and lighthouses will be in better condition than today, because we will be able to allocate our funds more effectively."



Categorization of Lighthouses (tool used in Maritimes divestiture programme only)

Categories are assigned through the 'Level of Service (LOS)' reviews, i.e. within seven zones in NS, coastguard assesses whether a light is still a necessary navigational safety requirement in a given area. Once every five years, each light is assessed.

Category	Status	Divestiture	Process	Contacts
A. Discontinued	out of operation	Market Value Sale <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public access must be guaranteed 	Priority circulation offer: <p>Within DFO</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Other Federal Departments Provincial Departments Municipal Departments Local non-profit societies General Public 	Glen Fry Chief, Divestiture Programme Real Property, Safety and Security Fisheries and Oceans P.O. Box 1000 Dartmouth NS B2Y 3Z8 Tel: 902-426-6223 Email: fryg@mar.dfo-mpo.gc.ca
B. 'Landfall' Light (forecast to be discontinued by DFO within 10 years)	operational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be transferred to new owner for nominal sum (1\$), but Must be kept operational for 10 yrs by new owner (service costs and maintenance rests with new owner, navigational aid liability remains with DFO) and After 10 yrs, operation can be continued – then as private aid to navigation 	Priority circulation offer to: <p>Within DFO</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Other Federal Departments Provincial Departments Municipal Departments Local non-profit societies 	Carl Goodwin Superintendent Aids to Navigation P.O. Box 1000 Dartmouth NS B2Y 3Z8 Tel: 902-426-3151
C. 'Hazard Avoidance' Light (DFO forecast to remain operational for more than 10 years)	operational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mostly not divested, special consideration only In some cases, structure might be transferred to new owner for heritage interest, but operation of light remains with DFO 	Priority circulation offer to: <p>Within DFO</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Other Federal Departments Provincial Departments Municipal Departments Local non-profit societies 	Barry MacDonald President NSLPS Head Divestiture Committee Contact Tel: 902-827-2027 Email: threefathom@eastlink.ca

LIGHTSHOP

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

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.

Lighthouse Locator Map:

Correlates with the book *Lighthouses and Lights of Nova Scotia*. \$18.00 including packing and postage.

**Order from: Kathy Brown, 24 Armshore Drive,
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3N 1M5
e-mail: kathy@fromthesea.ca**

**ORDERS MUST BE PRE-PAID. PLEASE MAKE
CHEQUES PAYABLE TO THE NSLPS**

Fundraising for Islands' Historical Society

The Islands' Historical Society of Long and Brier Islands has issued a set of prints of the four lighthouses including: the Brier Island, Peter Island, Grand Passage and Boars Head lights. For information or to purchase contact Joanne Whitenect at 839-2810.

LIGHTHOUSE LUMINARIES FROM CHESTER CANDLES

These are carved-in-relief replicas of lighthouses which have been lovingly painted by local artists. They each have a history on the back on the luminary. The outer shell with the design and information is everlasting. Included with each is a candle and holder, a certificate of authenticity with the limited edition number and a guarantee.

Nova Scotia lighthouses available are: Peggy's Point; Sambro Island; Henry Island; Cape Forchu (1962) and Cape Forchu (circa 1839); Louisbourg (circa 1734). Twenty five percent of each sale will be contributed to the work of the NSLPS. Luminaries depicting other lighthouses are available from our website www.chestercandles.com. They can be ordered for the same benefit of 25 percent to the NSLPS. If ordering directly from us, tell us you would like the donation to go to NSLPS. Cost \$49.95 plus \$8.00 shipping.



The Lightkeeper is published 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 Chris Mills, 1121 Ketch Harbour Road, Ketch Harbour, Nova Scotia, B3V 1K7, or e-mail ketch@ns.sympatico.ca. Deadline for September issue: August 15, 2005.

NSLPS MEMBERSHIP FORM: January 1 - December 31, 2005 ☐ New ☐ Renewal: Membership # _____

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

E-MAIL: _____

Family/Group names for extra cards: _____

Single - \$20.00 Institutional/Group - \$30.00

Family - \$25.00 Sustaining - \$50.00

TELEPHONE: _____

POSTAL CODE: _____

CELL PHONE: _____

Patron - \$100.00

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

Amount enclosed \$ _____ Please make cheques payable to the 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, Nova Scotia, B3J 1S3



Lightkeeper Morrill Richardson with a hooked rug showing the original Bon Portage lighthouse. *Courtesy Betty June Smith*