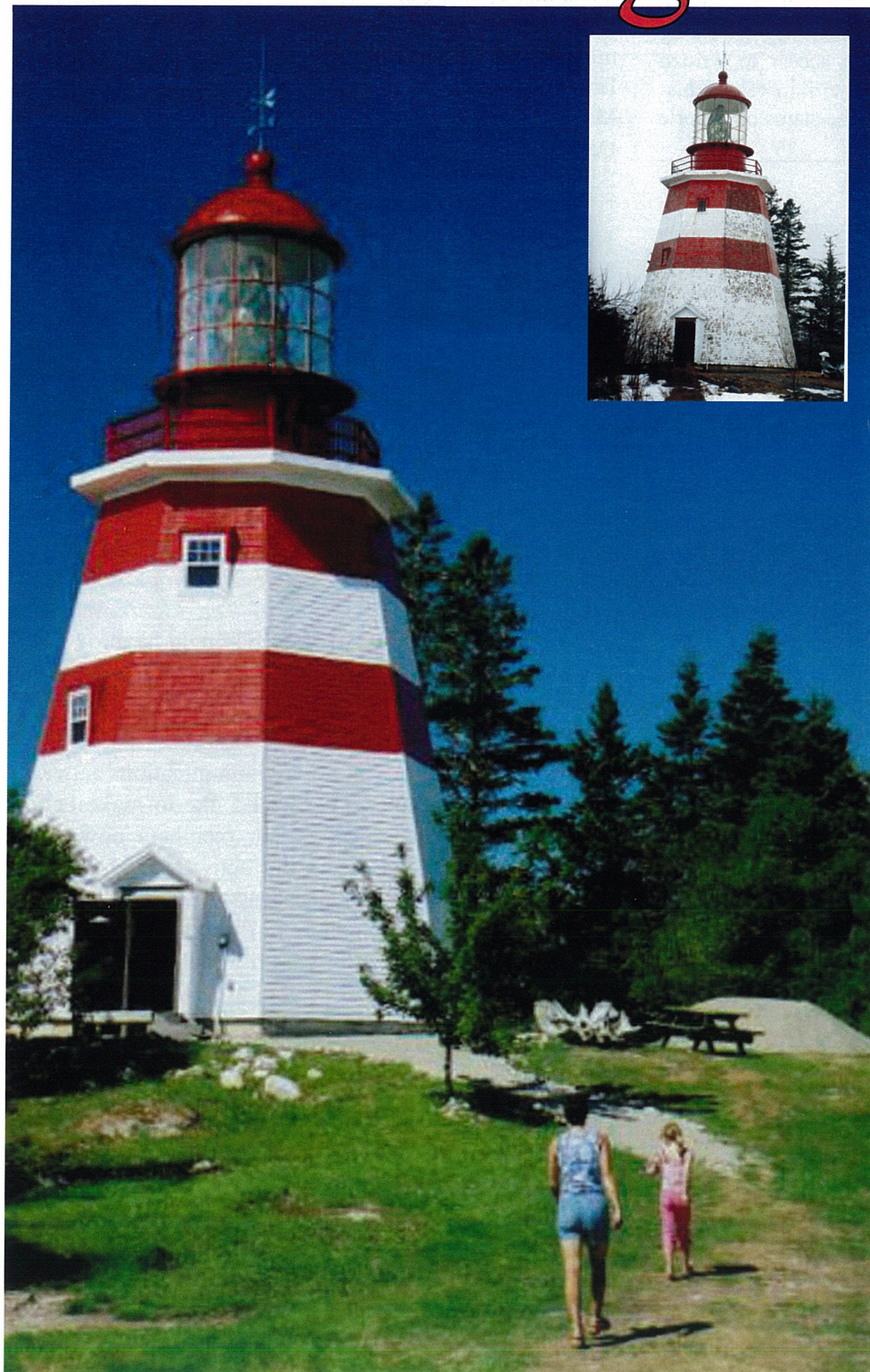




The Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society  
Vol. 12, No. 3, October 2005

# The Lightkeeper



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COVER: Seal Island Light  
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The objectives of the Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society are: to promote and to support the 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, to initiate oral history research and to classify and monitor the status of historic lighthouse sites.

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**Director, Member-at-Large -** Bryan Andrachuk

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

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## **WELCOME ABOARD!**

We are pleased to report that the following new members have joined the NSLPS: Tim Blackwood, Trina Ervin, Paul Falvo, Bruce & Sandy Flemming, Michael MacDonald, Gail Montgomery-Clarke, Everett Scott, Dan Sinclair, Greta Cumming, Norman Goodwin, Duane Penney

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## **FROM THE EDITOR**

I'd like to apologize for the delay in getting the fall issue of *The Lightkeeper* out to members. A computer crash recently put me out of commission for a couple of weeks and work commitments have kept me away from my NSLPS duties. We always strive to produce each issue so that trips and programs can be adequately advertised - this has been a problem lately and we'll do our best to make sure that your journal is produced in a timely manner. As we are all volunteers with varying schedules and commitments, this is not always possible and we appreciate your patience. As always, your comments about the content and layout of *The Lightkeeper* are welcome, as are any story ideas you might have.

Thank you. *Chris Mills*

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## **COMMUNICATION UPDATE**

The NSLPS is trying to improve communications between the board and members. We would like to make better use of the fact that most of our members now have e-mail. We plan to send out our activities programme, regular event updates as well as special notices via email, in addition to publicizing these in *The Lightkeeper*. If you would like to receive information from the NSLPS and you have not already told us your e-mail, please contact Peter MacCulloch ([peterm@twrsoft.com](mailto:peterm@twrsoft.com)).

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## **WEBSITE UPDATE**

The following website lighthouses now have images: Bunker Island, Candlebox Island, Pease Island (2 images), Queensport, Black Rock Point, and Pearl Island (1927). Comments or suggestions for the website can be sent to Peter MacCulloch ([peterm@twrsoft.com](mailto:peterm@twrsoft.com)) or to Kathy Brown.

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## PROGRAMMES

### Wednesday, October 28

7:00 PM: A brief report on NSLPS activities of the past few months

7:15 PM: A Lighthouse Tour of Cape Breton Island  
Barry MacDonald, NSLPS President.

Have you always wanted to drive around scenic Cape Breton and see all those fascinating lighthouses? Now's your chance to save gas and enjoy them in armchair comfort. If you have been up to Cape Breton, then this is an opportunity to learn more about the lighthouses you saw from someone who knows a lot about them. Illustrious NSLPS president and Ingonish native Barry MacDonald will start at Cape St. Lawrence, zoom up to Saint Paul Island (not available to cars), then back to Cape North and right around the coast to Pleasant Bay. It will be a whirlwind illustrated tour, highlighting some of his favorites.

### Wednesday, November 23

7:00 PM: Build a Model of the Sambro Lightship  
Graham McBride

When ships approach Halifax Harbour, they pick up the big red and white "Halifax Alpha" whistle buoy which lies southeast of Sambro Island. But from 1872 until October 1966, they had a much bigger target - the *Sambro Lightship*. Continuing his "Build a Model Lighthouse" series Graham will help participants build a model of one of the ships that bade "farewell" and "welcome" to thousands of vessels great and small. This workshop is open to only 15 people, so register early. Call Dorothy MacLeod at 423-8034.

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

### Betty Island

From the sea, the tower at Betty Island appears to have sustained some damage (likely from Hurricane Juan) which has not been attended to. The seaward face of the wooden structure is missing a few rows of siding at the bottom and the exposed sheathing appears to have been covered with a blue tarp. From a distance (looking through binoculars) it also looks like there are holes in the sheathing. We understand that the Coast Guard is strapped for cash, but one would reasonably expect damage of this type at an operational lightstation would be fixed *before* two years had passed.

### Burntcoat Head Progress

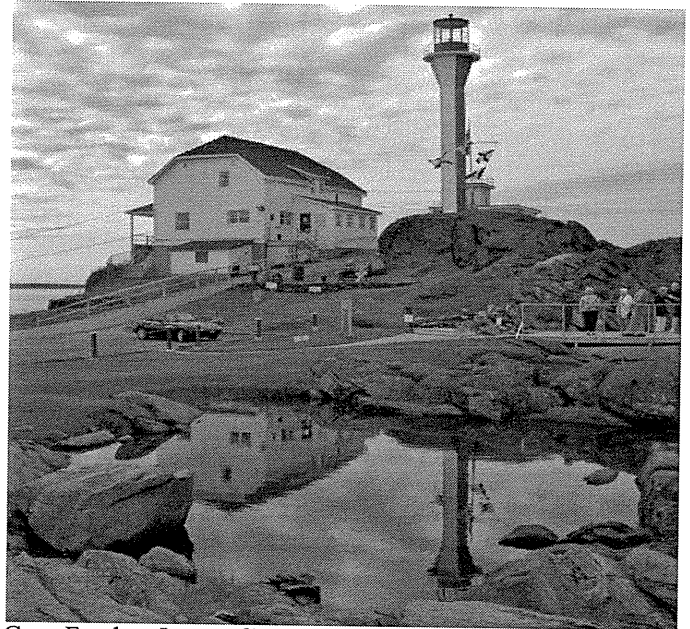
Charlie MacCulloch

Visitor traffic at the park this summer was down 13% from last year. We have six new picnic tables at the park

and the entrance to the site and the parking lot is being upgraded at a cost of \$20,900 plus HST. The power poles will be installed in the near future and the lighthouse will be wired this fall. There will also be new interpretive displays -- both audio and visual -- installed this fall. The biggest problem for the association is obtaining funding for staffing at the park. For the second year in a row our application for funding by the province has been turned down. This results in the park being open shorter hours during the season. The high cost of insurance has also been a problem, with the cost for this year being \$3,219.

### Cape Forchu

The Friends of the Yarmouth Light Society have had a very busy and productive year at "The Cape," beginning with a visit in April from a European journalist who writes for the magazine *Madame*. This "top rated," fashion magazine will feature an article about the light in its spring 2006 issue.

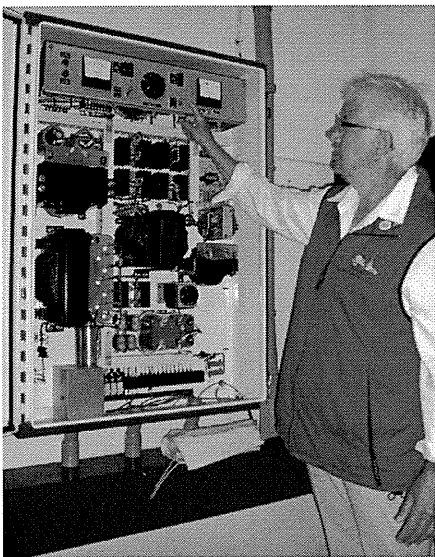


Cape Forchu. *Josette d'Entremont*

During the same month, president Nancy Knowles travelled to Toronto to promote Yarmouth and its lighthouse at a four-day tourism and trade show. The Friends say there has been an increase in visitors from Ontario at the light, likely thanks in part to the board's promotion of the Yarmouth Light.

Two couples got married at the light this year, evidence of the site's popularity for activities other than sightseeing and souvenir buying. In August, the Friends held the first Family Day at the Light, with entertainment provided by CJLS radio personality Loran Fevens.

The site officially opened for the season on May 27, with the sounding of the Cape's fog horn for the first time since 1998 when it was officially decommissioned. The horn has been dubbed the "fair weather foghorn," because



Nancy Knowles, a founder of Friends of the Yarmouth Light and the current President of the Society pushes the button to activate the fog horn at the Cape Forchu

the Coast Guard will not allow it be operated on foggy days (*Some say it will confuse mariners – but as the Coast Guard says, fog horns are largely obsolete now, so what's the difference!! –Ed*).

Plans are in the works to open a tea room in the keepers' house for the 2006 season. The lower parking lot will also be enlarged and the Friends hope to install a small dock so that Zodiac harbour tours can stop at the station.

Although the site officially closes for the season on October 17, folks are invited to gather at the Cape for dumping day on November 28<sup>th</sup>, as lobster fishermen kick off their annual season. As you watch dozens of colourful fishing boats loaded with traps heading out to sea, you'll be able to enjoy muffins and coffee. Check it out!

For more information about the latest news from Cape Forchu, see <http://home.klis.com/~omniworks/foyl/update.html>

### Cape Negro Island For Sale

While walking down Yarmouth's Main Street in early September, the editor noticed a photo of Cape Negro Island (located between Shelburne and Barrington, near Blanche) in the window of a real estate office. A good portion of the island is for sale, as is much of Seal Island in Yarmouth County. On the same trip, the editor noticed in a summer edition of a *Land's End* mail order catalogue, an article about the do's and don'ts of island buying – the article featured a photo of Inner Sambro Island, which is apparently for sale for under \$300,000 U.S. In the last few years, the non-DFO part of Betty Island has been sold, and there is now a home near the site of the old lightstation boathouse. There appear to be few or no restrictions on private/foreign ownership of our islands, as we lose more and more of our coastline to private interests.

### Coffin Island

The sea-battered Coffin Island lighthouse is living on borrowed time. Ken Wilkinson reports that the ocean has now helped expose the southeastern side of the 1914 concrete tower and that in time, "the light itself will be an island." The armour-rock wall installed a few years ago was not enough to protect the tower from the force of fall and winter storms.

Ken says the Coast Guard has committed funds for a fibreglass replacement tower on the island which, he says, will likely be installed 30m (100 feet) inland from the present tower. Ken adds that the Coast Guard has bent over backwards to keep a light on the island and despite a delay in getting the new tower up and running (work was supposed to have started in September, according to Ken) he gives them full marks for their efforts. But he says he is concerned about further rounds of environmental testing which are pushing back a timely transfer of the light to the Coffin Island society.

For the time being the beleaguered concrete tower continues to send out its warning flash every 4 seconds, counting down the days to its demise as a hungry ocean gnaws at its base.

### Devils Island Bought...and Bought Again!

Since the last lightkeeper left Devils Island, off Dartmouth's Hartlen Point, the tiny barren island has been largely deserted. A few people have camped out in the old lightkeeper's house over the years, but in recent times the island has slowly reverted to its natural state. Once boasting more than a dozen fishing families, it is now home to two rotting buildings and a decapitated lighthouse.



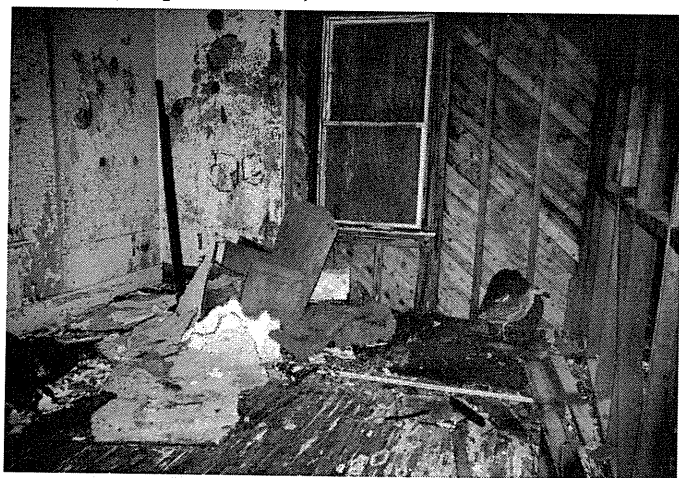
Abandoned keeper's house on Devils Island in 2003. *Chris Mills*

Halifax businessman Bill Mont has owned a good portion of the island since 1963. But in July this year, the island went up for tax sale after Mont failed to pay his back taxes. Enter Rick Condon. The Toronto businessman was one of two bidders for the island at the end of August. The starting price was \$4,244 – jumping to \$31,000. Condon, who has roots on the island, told the

*Halifax Herald* he was thrilled to purchase a four-hectare portion of the island. "I'm on fire," he told reporter Amy Pugsley Fraser. "It's like I'm possessed by the ghosts of the Henneberrys, who want me to do this."

Condon said he had plans to rejuvenate the island – including fixing up the old keepers house and restoring trees to the island. "From there, I'll use it as a summer home until I'm ready to retire," he said.

But within two weeks, Bill Mont had stepped up to the plate with the \$4,244 back taxes – a legal option as long as he could pay up within a week. Mont told *Herald* reporter Barry Dorey that Condon was "very gracious," about backing down from the deal. Mont added that he has received a number of requests to revive the island on a joint basis. "I'd like to bring it back to the old village. I'm always open to ideas," he said.



A devil of a mess: Inside the ransacked keeper's house on Devils Island. *Chris Mills*

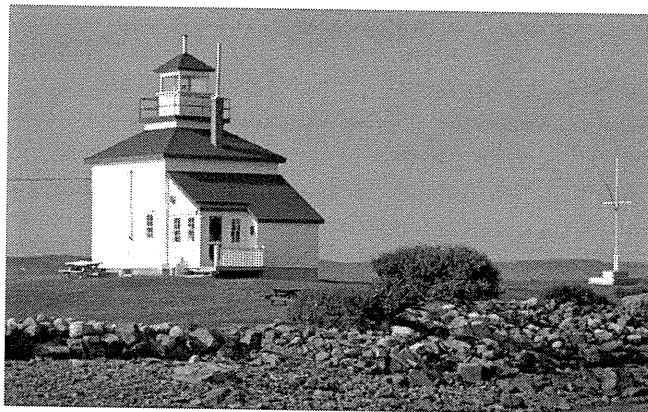
After more than 40 years of ownership by one person, let's hope that happens. The old keeper's house won't stand many more winter storms. Once it is gone, only the ghosts of the Henneberrys will remain on Devils Island.

### Five Islands

Gloria Lewis says the Five Islands light had a good summer, despite lower-than-average tourism numbers. Two students "who went out of their way," to promote the light and the Five Island area staffed the tower during the summer. Gloria says the two even took the time to make handcrafts, donating the proceeds for upkeep of the tower. More than 2,000 people stopped in to climb the lighthouse and enjoy the spectacular view of lofty off-shore islands. In late July Lighthouse Day drew a large crowd despite rain, and folks gathered to listen to live music and have a bite to eat. The Five Islands light is a good example of the way a modest wooden beacon can be an important draw for the surrounding community.

### Gilbert's Cove Busy Summer

*Lorraine Lovett*

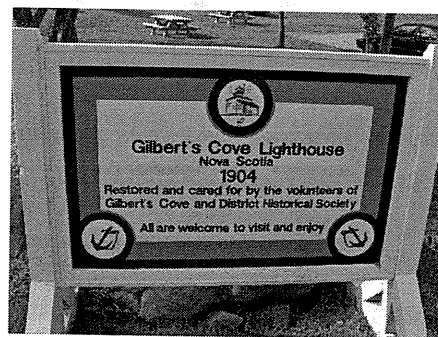


Gilberts Cove. *Josette d'Entremont*

After some driveway reconstruction and electrical repairs to damage caused by wild winter winds and high tides on St. Mary's Bay, the Gilbert's Cove Lighthouse opened to thousands of visitors during the 2005 summer season. A new permanent driveway entrance sign was erected and a brass plaque was installed on a large boulder thanking all who contributed to the recent restoration of the property. Our new flag pole, in the form of a schooner mast, made a beautiful sight with four flags flying out on the point.

A pot-luck lunch followed the June clean-up by a dozen members of the Gilbert Cove and District Historical Society. Volunteers spent several days tagging and setting up locally made merchandise for the gift shop. A group of knitters met weekly over the winter months preparing wool socks and other knitted items for sale in the little craft shop. A greater variety of lighthouse souvenirs are now available with the addition of caps, lapel pins, key rings and spoons.

Staffing of the lighthouse was increased this year with one full-time and three part-time adults. This freed up volunteer members to



Gilberts Cove. *Josette d'Entremont*

gather in the quilt room to knit, quilt and hook rugs. Some enthusiastic visitors, young and old, added some stitches to our colourful quilt top. The finished quilt is now being raffled in support of the lighthouse.

The annual Lighthouse Family Picnic in mid-July was an all-around success with \$1,800 realized from food and ticket sales. The weather was perfect and the favoured band "Dave Coggins and Bonded Stock"

played to the delight of all attending. Children played on the beach and painted scallop shells while many folks enjoyed Rapure Pie and hotdogs.

The Historical Society's annual general meeting was held on the grounds of the lighthouse in August with five directors being elected to office. On the evening of September 3, the lighthouse experienced its first wedding. More than 100 guests witnessed the marriage vows of Gilbert's Cove residents Joyce and Jason Weaver on the lighthouse lawn as the glowing sun settled over the western horizon. As a departure from the romantic, plans are now underway to wrap up our 2005 season with another Haunted Halloween Night at the lighthouse which has become a favoured tradition for young and old alike.

### Hampton Comes Alive

Louise Sanderson reports that the Hampton Light thrift shop has moved to 407, Highway 1 in Lawrencetown. It's a bigger premises and business is good, she says. This summer, carpenters built a deck in front of the lighthouse. The light is open by appointment and there were 10 or 12 visits to the tower during July and August, with visitors from Germany and the States. Louise says the community held a fund-raiser garden party on September 11<sup>th</sup> where the band Overdrive played to an appreciative crowd.

### Margaretsville Status Quo

John Freeman reports that in July the Coast Guard did a good job "scraping, and painted the tower". The community has not heard of a change in status of their light.

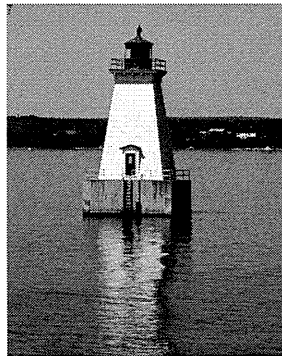
### Paddy's Head Needs Work

Along with Betty Island, Paddy's Head joins the growing list of under-maintained lights across the province. From the water it appears that the tower's western side has been stripped of its shingles, leaving only bare sheathing to protect the interior from the weather. It is interesting to note that the federal government has spent *millions* of dollars over the past few years upgrading staffed west coast lighthouses, with new roofs, helipads, entire new generating systems and fuel tanks, new aluminum walkways, boathouses – the list goes on. Given the Coast Guard's desire to de-staff lightstations, this seems like a colossal waste of taxpayers' money. Many keepers' duties have been reduced even further, with changes to weather reporting procedures, the installation of solar-powered lights and removal of most fog horns. Meanwhile, they live in state of the art homes, powered by huge diesel generating systems.

At the same time, on this coast, it appears there is not enough money to repair or paint a lighthouse. Makes you think...

### Sandy Point Problems

Bernice Goodick is frustrated. The woman who helped save the Sandy Point lighthouse and who played a large part in developing the adjacent community centre says the lighthouse is in terrible shape. The Atlantic Lighthouse



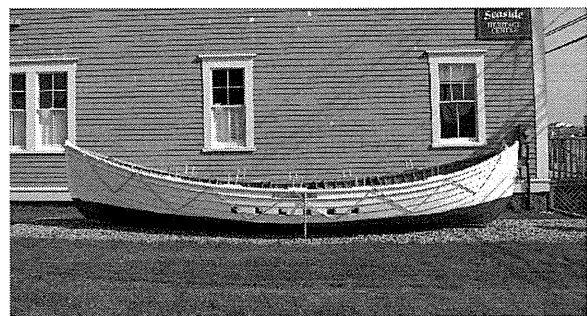
Sandy Point light. *Ashley Lohnes*

Council took the light over in May 2004, and Bernice says she has not been able to reach the ALC in more than a year. In the meantime, a leak in the light's balcony is causing rot in the tower's walls, and the cribwork which supports and protects the 1880 structure is deteriorating. Bernice says the Sandy Point group's hands are tied without word or direction from the ALC.

On the bright side, the community centre is still going strong, with the completion of a 35' x 35' addition this year. A Swiss man proposed to his wife near the lighthouse during the summer and a Halifax couple tied the knot at the site, holding a large reception at the community centre. Bernice says at least 1,800 visitors signed the book this year – up from previous years.

Meanwhile, she is frustrated and concerned at the lack of maintenance on the light she and other volunteers worked so hard to save. If the ALC wants to be in business of saving lighthouses, it needs to stay in touch with the communities that care about their lights, and it better get moving.

### Seal Island Lifeboat Secure



The Seal Island lifeboat. *Dan Conlin*

After being rescued from Seal Island last fall, the Beebe-McLellan-type life boat has been restored and now sits on a gravel bed next to the Seaside Heritage Centre in Clark's Harbour, on Cape Sable Island. Thanks to the efforts of Ronnie Kenney and many other volunteers, this rare surviving lifeboat has been saved, after playing an important role in the history of search and rescue from Seal Island.

### Seal Island Light Museum Shines Anew

Barrington's landmark lighthouse museum now sports a vivid red and white paint job and many structural improvements. Although the museum was closed in June and for part of July, Brenda Maxwell says visitor numbers were up in August and September. New vinyl windows have been installed and artifacts are back on display. Brenda says only finishing touches remain, such as some interior painting and exterior caulking. The structure looks excellent and stands as a tribute to the Cape Sable Historical Society's hard work and perseverance.

The Seal Island Light Museum has published a 2006 black and white calendar of the lighthouses of Shelburne County. Most of the photos are archival images. The cost is 10.00 per calendar plus shipping and handling of \$6.00. You can email [maxwellshouse@eastlink.ca](mailto:maxwellshouse@eastlink.ca). Money order or cheque payable to the Cape Sable Historical Society can be sent to P.O. Box 67, Barrington, N.S. B0W 1E0 or call (902) 637-2185. Great for Christmas Gifts!



Maris Mills checks out the view in the newly restored lantern at the Seal Island Light Museum in Barrington. *Chris Mills*

### Terence Bay Celebration

On a sunny and breezy September 11<sup>th</sup> about 90 people gathered near the Tenant Point light in Terence Bay to celebrate Lighthouse Day. Mary Thomas says the idea behind the occasion is to keep community members interested in their lighthouse. Visitors were treated to hot dogs, pop and cake and many made the short trek to the point to visit the light. Unfortunately, "the tower is in really bad shape," Mary says. She adds that the paint is peeling off the shingles and there are holes in the walls, and "birds inside it, likely." Mary says the most urgent need is to find out if the Halifax Regional Municipality will take responsibility for the light – she says she has heard that there are municipal funds available to spruce up the tower, but nothing can be done until the light is transferred out of Coast Guard care.

### Walton Light a Beacon to the World

Reg Clark estimates that about 12,000 people including visitors from Germany, England and the local community stopped by the lighthouse over the summer. This number is a bit lower than the previous year due mainly to a decline in tourists from the United States. The society had a yard sale and a wedding was held at the light as part of the summer events.

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## NEWS AND VIEWS

### She Kept A Light

Evelyn Richardson's legacy continues to grow. The woman best known for writing *We Keep A Light* has a school and a literary prize named after her and this fall she became the subject of a stage production.

Lance Woolaver's play *She Kept A Light* wrapped up a six night run in Chester and Shelburne on September 24<sup>th</sup>. *Chronicle Herald* arts reporter Elissa Bernard wrote that the Richardson's life on Bon Portage (where they kept the light from 1929 to 1964) was "an interesting story worth telling and Woolaver's script easily indicates the love Richardson felt for all the tiny details of her island home."

In "a series of beautifully composed pictures of domestic and family life," Woolaver explores the trials and tribulations of the Richardson family on Bon Portage, as portrayed by five actors in a kitchen set. According to Bernard, the play lacks drama and passion, but scored well in ambience and atmosphere. The Chester Playhouse production drew large crowds and at least one standing ovation.

*She Kept A Light* is further evidence that Evelyn Richardson's legacy as a lightkeeper, author and historian continues to flourish almost three decades after her death.

### Lighthouse Chronicles...

...is the working title of Chris Mills' new book on Nova Scotia lightkeepers. Scheduled for release by Nimbus in April 2006, the book is based on the stories of 60 former lightkeepers and their families. Their memories, anecdotes and sometimes harrowing tales are arranged thematically, covering everything from the daily grind of lightkeeping, to the role of women on the lights, to living with fog horns. Already six of the people interviewed for the book have died, underscoring the importance of a work that will save memories of what lightkeeping was all about before automation put the boot to this venerable tradition. Many of the oral histories collected for the NSLPS are featured in the book.

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## VOICES OF THE LIGHTS

*Adalene McSheffery and her husband Wilfred spent 16 years on three Nova Scotia lighthouses - Liscomb, Saint Paul and Cross Islands. More than two decades after they retired and moved away from the sea to Middle Stewiacke, Chris Mills sat down with Addie to learn more about the trials and tribulations of life on these lighthouse rocks. She was living alone in her small, neat house - Wilfred died after retiring in 1980 - and despite failing health, Addie displayed a sharp wit that accompanied her fond memories of life on the lights.*



Addie McSheffery: "God, if a woman can get used to livin' with a man, she can get used to livin' anywhere!" Chris Mills

*Adalene McSheffery died July 28, 2005 at the age of 87.*

\* \* \* \* \*

*It was 1964, and Wilfred had been laid off from a civil service job. According to Addie, he saw an add for a light-keeping job, applied for it, and got it. That simple. The station was Liscomb Island, on the eastern shore, and it was a life that Addie took to pretty quickly.*

I enjoyed it. No nosy neighbours, no bill collectors! There were two keepers. My husband was in charge of the station -- after we were there for a few years they built another house and it was a three-man station.

Oh, it was a big island! Farmers used to keep sheep there. It was only about 20 minutes by boat to the island. There was two dwellings and the lighthouse and the fog alarm building.

*I asked Addie if they had electricity. She replied:* Just what you generated yourself! Ask me if we had water!

*I asked and she said, laughing:* Only what God gave us in the cisterns! We didn't have wells or anything like that. The only water you got was what came offa the roof.

*And how did Addie fill her days on the island?*

Fightin' with Wilfred! Who's gonna hear this?! Oh well, you had your dwellings to keep clean and I used to help out around the buildings if there was something to do. You could walk around the island a lot. We had tame ducks we used to look after.

*Addie and Wilfred lived on Liscomb for seven years. But then came an opening at lonely Saint Paul Island, off the north tip of Cape Breton. Another factor sealed the deal for their move, as Addie remembered.*

It was rumoured that Liscomb was gonna close down and go automatic. There was an opening at Saint Paul's so Wilfred was silly enough to take it! We were fools enough to go! We didn't have a clue where we were going! You were out in the middle of the ocean. But it was nice. I liked it.

*When I asked Addie what her impressions of Saint Paul were after living on the larger Liscomb Island, she laughed.*

Oh My God, there must be somebody besides me alive in the world! We were just out in the middle of the ocean. You couldn't see anything but water. Well, you could see a bit of Cape Breton Island. You got terrible storms. That was interesting. Sometimes you'd go to bed at night and know you were on the island but wonder where you were gonna wake up in the morning with the wind blowin' against the house!

We had a family on there one time. They had their Christmas tree sittin' in the corner of the living room. They heard an awful racket in the night and they got up to see what happened -- the sea had hit against the house and knocked the tree over!

The sea would just blow right over the house. The waves would break against the rocks, and it would just go right over the island. In the winter time from the houses up to the beacon room, we used to put a rope up so you could get up. Many's the times I've gone up on my hands and knees, 'cause you didn't dare stand up! It'd be icy and the wind'd blow you over.



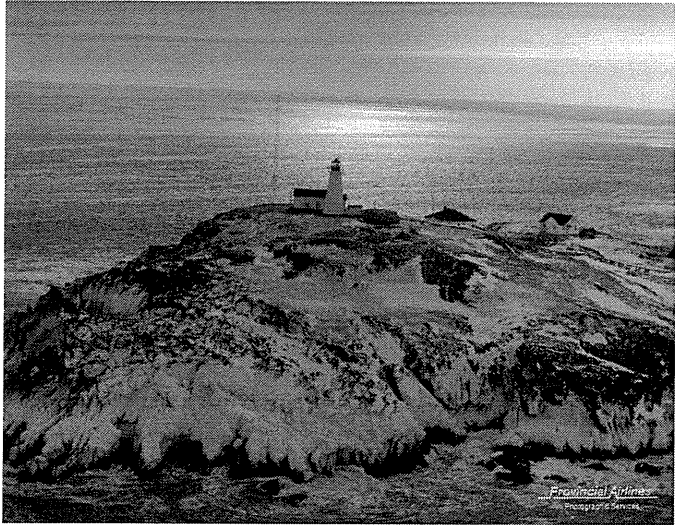
Addie and Wilfred at Cross Island in the late 1970s.

*Courtesy Adalene McSheffery*

*Wind and sea, Addie took it all in stride.*

It was nice in the summertime. Great place for a vacation, 'cause you had nobody to bother you. You'd be all by yourself. But I never minded it anytime. Even in the wintertime.

You made your own entertainment. On Saint Paul's we had TV. But out there, if you got the picture on TV, you didn't get the sound. And if you got the sound, you didn't get the picture! Some days you'd sit there and watch the picture and the next day you'd listen to the sound!



Lonely and rugged Saint Paul Island. *Courtesy Provincial Airlines*

*But the most important way of keeping in touch with friends and family ashore was through the mail. I asked Addie just how important mail day was.*

Oh God. Talk about Christmas to kids! Especially in the winter time. You'd go 8-10 weeks without mail. You'd be talkin' to people on the mainland with a CB radio, but your family or relatives, you wouldn't get anything from them until the mail came.

When the newspapers came, you got all the news and regardless of how old it was, it was news to you! Wilfred was a great reader. He used to wait for mail day to come! Then there'd be a stack of papers here and a stack here and don't touch 'em! He was a great reader.

*There were also occasional visitors to break the tedium – usually work crews from the Coast Guard. They'd often stay for a few days at a time, adding to Addie's work load as she prepared meals for the hungry workers. The McSheffery's dog Pepper – a saucy Schnauser – did not endear himself to some of the workers.*

The dog was a bugger! He was awful for carryin' stuff off. We had one fellow, I can't think of his name. His last name was Chandler. He was sawin' off a piece of wood. He wanted a certain angle for this piece of wood. Pepper would stand back and watch him. As soon as the stick would drop, he'd grab it and off he'd go to the end

of the island! He and Pepper didn't like one another! Poor old Pepper, he was a bugger for cartin' things off!

*The years passed with a succession of winter gales, summer sunsets and visits from Coast Guard helicopters and ships with supplies and fuel. Then came time for another transfer – this time to Cross Island, at the entrance to Lunenburg Harbour. Addie and Wilfred began the tedious process of crating their belongings.*

The last year that we were on there, the Coast Guard said they would move us before the end of November. So I came ashore to do all the banking and get things straightened up on the mainland. It kept getting later and later and they weren't takin' me back to Saint Paul, so I called the department. Dave Walker was our head pilot then and I asked him what the chances were of gettin' back, 'cause I said "I hate to leave Wilfred on there alone for Christmas!"

I think it was the 20<sup>th</sup> or the 21<sup>st</sup> day of December Dave took me back. Everything was packed up, and I thought "They're not gypin' me out of a Christmas tree!" So, I rooted around and found the box where the Christmas tree was and stuck a little piece of it in a box with some lights. We had everything packed but tinfoil plates, and that was our Christmas. I thought that was pathetic! That was the biggest Christmas tree I ever had! Oh, just a piece off of an artificial tree that I stuck in the top of the box and put some lights on. My God!

*After their last Christmas on Saint Paul the McShefferies set up house on Cross Island. The 200-acre island was quite a contrast from the barren, wind and sea battered north east light on Saint Paul.*

Well, you were down to sea level anyway! And it was a bigger island than Saint Paul's. You had room to move around.



Adalene McSheffery shows off a painting a painting of barren Saint Paul Island, where she and her husband Wilfred lived in the early 1970s. *Chris Mills*

*The island had plenty of wildlife – rabbits, muskrats and deer. The deer led to an interesting episode after*

*the McShefferies had bought a house ashore in anticipation of their retirement, as Addie told me with a laugh.*

The authorities were after some jackers on Cross Island, and they wanted me to stay on board with the officers. I said I wanted to come home for Hallowe'en, 'cause I didn't know what it was like in Middle Stewiacke since we were strange to the community.

They said if I'd stay on, they'd make sure I got home. They did -- the Coast Guard helicopter landed me across the road from our house. A fellow from up the road come down to see what was going on, and there was another girl down the road came up. 'Course with the helicopter landin', they wondered what was goin' on!

The man -- I think it was Frankie Kaulbach -- he said "Where's your husband?" I said "Oh God, Mounties caught him jackin' deer on the island!" He looked at me and said "And the dog?" I said 'Oh, they put the dog in the pound, 'cause he was chasin' [the deer]!"

Then I said "You don't know where I can get a good lawyer, do you?" And here I was a stranger in the community! Oh, he was feelin' so sorry for me!

I had some things that I had brought ashore. He'd helped me in with them before he left. I said "No, Frankie, I'm lyin' to you" and told him what had happened. But this girl down here heard one side of the story, but she didn't hear 'em both. She had told all over the neighbourhood that Wilfred was in jail from jackin' deer! And the dog in the pound for chasin' them!

*By 1980 it was time to leave Cross Island. When I asked Addie why they had to move to the mainland, she laughed.*

They kicked us off! We had no choice. They didn't want us! No, Wilfred retired. He'd become of age! I wasn't happy about it, but what could you do? You're finished, you're not wanted anymore. There's not much you can do about it, is there.

*Looking back at the life, Addie told me she didn't like the idea that most lighthouses have been automated. She says their presence on the islands was important to fishermen.*

I've heard so many fishermen say that it was good that you had a man in back of that light. It meant a lot to them. They knew if anything happened, there was somebody there who could help them. You take the way it is nowadays, you just trust in God. Pray to God nothin' happens.

*I pressed Addie for her thoughts on lighthouse automation and destaffing. He answer was simple.*

I think it's a crime. I think it's a sin. 'Cause I'd like to be back on an island! Don't ask me such foolish questions! Well, I think I'd feel the same way the fishermen did. You know, I don't know just how you'd say it, but, I think if I was a fisherman or anybody at sea, that I

would have more secure feeling if I knew there was somebody on that island, instead of just an electric eye. Somebody with a brain.



Liscomb Island, on Nova Scotia's eastern shore, was home to Addie and Wilfred McSheffery for 7 years beginning in 1964. *Courtesy Adalene McSheffery*

*The day was getting on and it was time for me to drive home. Addie had gotten used to the microphone, and I could see she was happy to relive memories of her days at the lights. I asked her how, when she looked back now, she had adapted so well to a life of isolation.*

It just come natural, I guess. You felt isolated, but you got used to it. You get used to anything. God, if a woman can get used to livin' with a man, she can get used to livin' anywhere!

*Addie thought for a moment and added:* You miss the water. When you're by the water, you never see the same thing two days. You know, nothing is the same twice. Oh God, I can see water on TV and get homesick!

*I still would go back to it if I could. Tomorrow.*

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## FAREWELL

We are sad to report the passing of Anita Irwin, after a long battle with cancer, on August 29th, 2005. Anita was the wife of former NSLPS president and founding member E.H. Rip Irwin. Our sincerest condolences go out to Rip, and his children Jimmy, David and Catherine.

\* \* \* \* \*

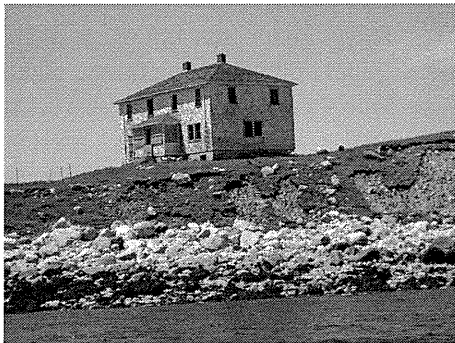
On February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2005, Waldena Jones passed away at the age of 86. During the early 1980s, Waldena and her husband Claremont did several stints as relief keepers at the Seal Island lightstation. They also maintained a home on the island and their son Gerry worked as an assistant keeper on the station. Waldena is survived by her sons Gerry and Paul.

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## THE TUSKET ISLANDS, CAPE FORCHU AND THE SEAL ISLAND LIGHT MUSEUM

*Kathy Brown*

The Tusket Islands tour in July was just great. Weaving through the islands was grand – like a tropical cruise! Apart from being a perfect day for a boat trip with warm sunshine and calm seas, Captain Simon LeBlanc took us really close to the lighthouses on Pease and Candlebox Islands. The commentary on the islands and lighthouses was good too. Sadly, the big keepers' house on Pease Island is in very bad condition. A few years ago it could have been saved, but now that is questionable. The light-houses looked okay, though Candlebox will soon need paint. The stop on the island from which Simon runs his lobster fishery in season was fun and the lobster dinner was delicious.



The keepers duplex on Pease Island has been abandoned since 1986. *Kathy Brown*

Another year Simon will do a special lighthouse trip for us and go over to Tusket Island (Big Fish) and out to Green Island as well as to Pease and Candlebox. It's a long drive down from Halifax, but this one afternoon made the time and expenditure on gas worthwhile and we still had Cape Forchu and the Seal Island Light Museum to come!

The visit to Cape Forchu took place on a bright sunny day. Lorna Saulnier, daughter of former Keeper Joseph Chetwynd talked to us about life at the light station. We were served coffee and delicious muffins and we got to sound the fog signal. The Coast Guard says this can only be done in fair weather, so boats don't get mixed up. Officially the signal is turned off, but Friends of the Yarmouth Light and The Municipality of Yarmouth County got permission to reactivate it for the benefit of tourists! (No comment!)

Members of the Friends of the Yarmouth Lighthouse board were there, including president Nancy Knowles. It was good to talk to them and learn that the

arrangement with the Municipality is working well. The big keepers' house has been completely painted this year and windows are being replaced - with modern aluminum sash windows. The Municipality is in the midst of talking with Coast Guard about painting the tower next year. The red paint has faded to old rose on the seaward side. A deep well has been drilled and water tests were being done. The Friends hope that with this well the water problem has been solved. This will give them more options for uses and interpretation of the site.



NSLPS members on the Tusket Islands tour off Pease Island. *Kathy Brown*

After lunch we drove to the Seal Island Light Museum and climbed up to the lens just two days after the repaired museum opened again. The repairs look good. For one thing, the building is now tied together inside with steel rods. The exterior was being painted and the windows still had to be installed. Most of the artifacts were not there, except for the Bon Portage lens and the diaphone from Cape Sable. This museum desperately needs money to hire someone to do a proper exhibit of the things they have. They have a fascinating and valuable set of artifacts and written records from the lighthouses in the area and could really benefit from help with the display.

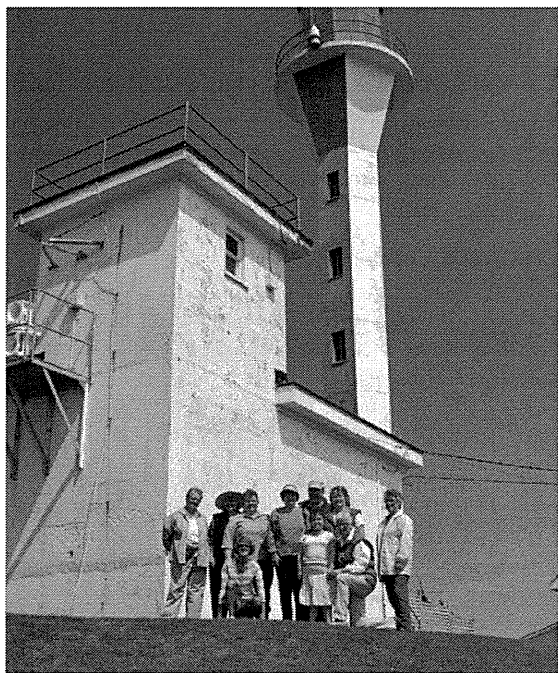


Green Island, south of Yarmouth. *Josette d'Entremont*

They have all the bits and pieces for the mechanism to turn the lens, too. What a wonderful thing it would be to see it lit and rotating!

The weekend lighthouse trip was a treat, thanks to Captain LeBlanc, the folks at Cape Forchu and at the

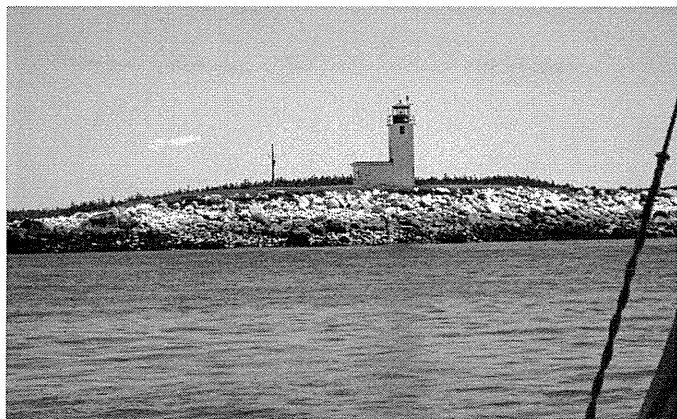
Seal Island Light Museum. Hopefully next time this trip is offered more people will take the opportunity to visit the lighthouses at the southern tip of Nova Scotia.



NSLPS members tour Cape Forchu lightstation.  
*Josette d'Entremont*

*Josette d'Entremont also participated in the Tuskets trip and has this to add:*

One more adventure that I did was a great tour onboard the Yarmouth Zodiac on Sunday afternoon with Capt Emery White, off the Lobster Wharf, just past the Terminal Wharf where the Cat ferry docks. He's a local fisherman and gives a great narrated tour of Yarmouth Harbour, John's Cove, Bunker Island ("Bug" Light), Cape Forchu (spectacular views from both sides), Green Island lighthouse (south of Cape Forchu), shipwrecks and local stories. He tours all around Green Island and we saw lots of puffins, seals and other sea birds. From afar we could even see the Tusket Islands and Candlebox Island lighthouse! Our tour was between 2 and 4:30.



Candlebox Island Lighthouse is in good condition.  
*Kathy Brown*

## NOVA SCOTIA ARCHIVES ON-LINE

*Tony Thompson*

As we reported in the last issue of *The Lightkeeper* the Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management (NSARM - formerly the Public Archives of Nova Scotia) has been developing a new web site titled "Nova Scotia and the Sea". It contains nine main headings: Lighthouses, Schooners, Barques and Brigs, Shipwrecks, Privateers, Royal Navy, Ports and Harbours, de Garthe gallery and W.R. MacAskill photos. 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 internet. This can now be viewed at [www.gov.ns.ca/nsarm/nsandsea](http://www.gov.ns.ca/nsarm/nsandsea).

On June 10th, prior to the launch of this new site, I attended a meeting at the NSARM on behalf of the NSLPS board to discuss some of the issues relating to the site. It became clear from the meeting that there is an element of conflict between the mandate of the Archives, which is to preserve documents and make them available to the public without comment and, on the other side, historians (there were three Dalhousie professors there) who would like to see the records and photos presented in historical context with "story." I think NSLPS shares some of the views of the historians.

With regard to lighthouses, there are three large files of images -- the Clara Dennis collection, the Department of Transport collection (a very large collection of photos taken by DoT personnel), and the MacAskill photos. As I understand, ALL of these have been scanned and are available in digital format, but only a selection will be put onto this web site.

The web site is now up and running. It is a wonderful new resource for lighthouse enthusiasts of all kinds -- a fully searchable site containing an extremely large collection of historical photos.

Under the lighthouse sub-head one can get thumbnail pictures of the various images and click on those to get more details. There was a comment about the thumbnail views of tall ships that suggested the reduction to this format introduced significant distortion. The ships looked too tall. I suppose the same may be true of the lighthouses. When one does look at one of the lighthouse images there is of course, its provenance and NSARM reference. However, there is also a section of "Notes" and for the lighthouses these are taken almost exclusively from our data base with due acknowledgment.

There are several things that NSLPS might do to improve this site.

1. The Introduction. Each section has a brief writ-

ten introduction. The one for Privateers was written by David Sutherland and is a significant historical essay. I think we could do something similar for the lighthouses.

2. In addition, David Sutherland has organized the Privateers section into something more like an informative museum display. Should lighthouses have the same treatment?

3. Locations. The lighthouse images have no indication of where they are in the province. On the other hand, many of the ports and harbours images are accompanied by charts and these do show lighthouses.

4. Links (a) within NSARM. There should be links from this site to the Evelyn Richardson material! They have many of her documents and photographs. There may be other documents at NSARM relating to lighthouses -- about Maugher's Beach and kerosene? About Samuel Cunard? (b) Outside links. Obviously there should be links to our site but how should this be done to make the best use of both? This is an important issue to think about. Are there web sites that deal with lenses, fog-horns, the lives of lightkeepers, other issues? What about linking with the school walking tour of NS lights?

5. The last point raises the question about schools. Two people at the meeting were former teachers who have been developing curriculum material based on this web site. What they have looks good but so far nothing on lighthouses. Could NSLPS help them with this aspect?

This web site is a "work in progress" and I think the rest of us should get busy with the issues 1-5 above (and perhaps more). It is clear that this is an important web site for lights in Nova Scotia. The more we can do to make sure that it is accurate and informative, the better.

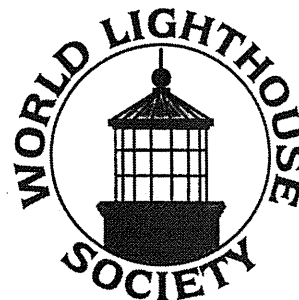


The first Pearl Island lighthouse - around 1925. NSARM

At the last meeting the Board appointed a committee to consider these questions. If you would like to have input to that committee, please contact a board member from the list on page 2 of this issue.

NSLPS member Kathy Brown adds these comments: It's fun to look, but very useful, too. Months ago, NSLPS was sent this photo of a lighthouse for identification. No-

one knew which one it was. By chance one evening, I searched "Lunenburg" on the NSARM site and there it was, a similar photo of Pearl Island Lighthouse, big and beautiful. Now, I have to get this photo onto the NSLPS website. Over time, the two sites will be linked so that they complement each other. Do take time to visit the "Lighthouses of Nova Scotia" section of the NSARM Website, and while you are at it check out "William E. deGarthe," "Brigs and Barques" and "Privateering." There's more, too, all at the click of your mouse.



## WORLD LIGHTHOUSE SOCIETY

*Kathy Brown, Executive Board Member, WLS*

The World Lighthouse Society was formed three years ago as a result of several years of discussions, some of which took place during the International Lighthouse Conference held at White Point in 2000. The office is in London, England, but WLS member are from 16 countries world-wide.

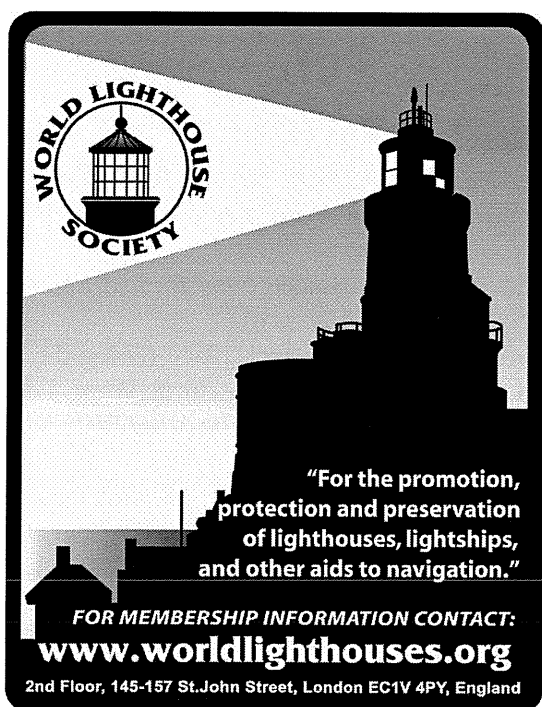
Membership is small (110 individual members and 10 organizations of which NSLPS is one) but mighty. Many very knowledgeable lighthouse enthusiasts are active in the society. Work is accomplished through a board, much like NSLPS, a chairman's work group which meets regularly, and through various work groups.

The most successful group over the past two years has been the Optics Work Group, in which I played a small part and learned a lot. This group has produced a very professional CD-ROM "Glossary of Lighthouse Optics Terminology" in which more than 100 terms used to describe lighthouse optics are collected. Many of the definitions are backed up by detailed coloured images which are often quite beautiful. You can learn more about this and see a sample page and the index at the WLS website [www.worldlighthouses.org/](http://www.worldlighthouses.org/) The CD-ROM costs 16.00 Euros including postage for Non-WLS members, and only 6.00 Euros including postage for members. Details of ordering should soon be on the WLS Website, or email: [treasurer@worldlighthouse.org](mailto:treasurer@worldlighthouse.org)

It's worth cruising around the site to get more

information about the WLS. As well, there is a forum where anyone can post a lighthouse question they would like answered. The forum was where I posted a query about the age of the Sambro Lighthouse, when we were making sure that it is the oldest operating lighthouse in North and South America.

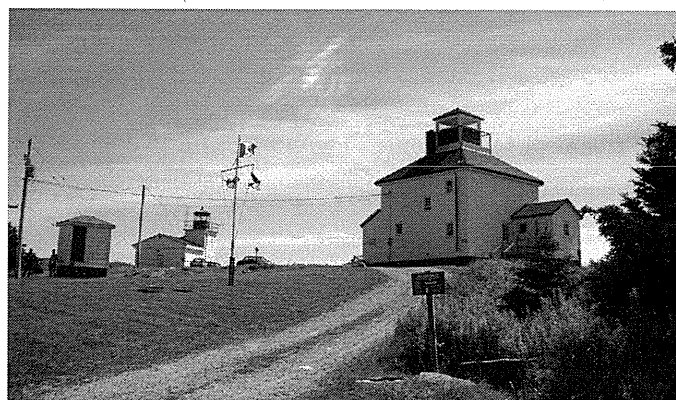
Members have their own space for photos of activities and links to their home pages. The WLS publishes a very interesting illustrated electronic newsletter quarterly in which you find out about WLS activities and read articles about lighthouses around the world. Communication is via the internet, and if you have that capability, this is a very worthwhile group to join. Information is on the website, or you are welcome to contact me at [kathy@fromthesea.ca](mailto:kathy@fromthesea.ca)



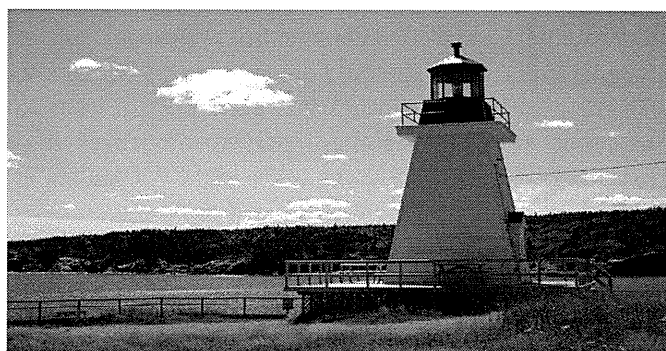
## LIGHTHOUSES OBSERVATIONS FROM A SUMMER TRAVELLER

*Following are some photos and comments from Kathy Brown documenting her visit to the Port Bickerton lighthouse and several lighthouses in Cape Breton.*

Lighthouse Point light, located within the bounds of the Fortress of Louisbourg National Historic Park, has been recently painted. It looks good except for a crack above the door which needs to be filled. Quite a few people were visiting the site despite nasty weather. The interpretive panels are well done.



The fine condition of the historic lighthouse at Port Bickerton shows what happens when an enthusiastic community group is allowed to maintain their lighthouse. *Kathy Brown*



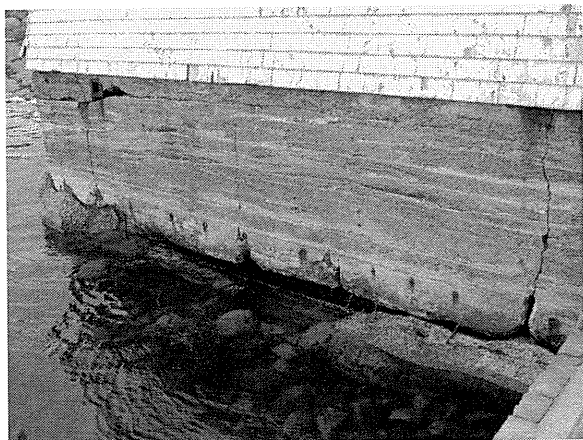
We missed out on buying an ice cream cone in a lighthouse when we found that the Neils Harbour lighthouse was closed. *Kathy Brown*



The Rear Range Light at Great Bras d'Or badly needs maintenance. *Kathy Brown*

Great Bras d'Or Range: These we saw from the water. The rear light looks to be covered with mould and must need scraping and painting, if not new shingles. The front light does not look too bad.

The Mabou lighthouse was open with a small display and a student on duty. She told me Jody Rankin was in charge of the light and that they have a \$25,000 grant to shingle and paint the tower. The foundation is cracked and also undermined on the seaward side. It looks like the Harbour Authority owns the wharf and they were working on it.



Foundation of Mabou light. *Kathy Brown*

The Kidston Island light in Baddeck has recently been painted and also looks like some protective stones were added on the outer side of the base.

I was shocked when I saw the McNeil Beach light from the Seal Island bridge over Great Bras d'Or. There is a boarded up window and it looks like it is falling to pieces. No sign of new work except for plywood on the window. It needs paint and looks forlorn and abandoned.



McNeil Beach light. *Kathy Brown*

## 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](http://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.

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*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](mailto:ketch@ns.sympatico.ca). Deadline for December issue: November 15, 2005.

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NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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NSLPS President Barry MacDonald tends a Chance Brothers 7th order lens lit by a duplex (double wick) kerosene lamp. *Chris Mills*