



The Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society
Vol. 12, No. 4, January/February 2006

The Lightkeeper



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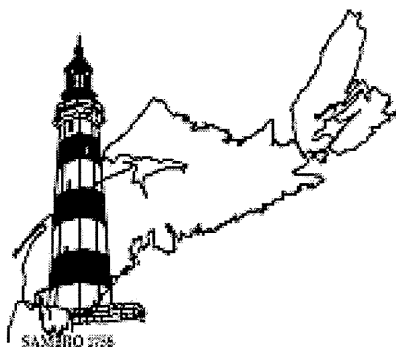
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**IT'S TIME TO
RENEW YOUR
MEMBERSHIP!**

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COVER: Geraldine (Boutilier)
Stevens grew up on Croucher's
Island, in Saint Margaret's Bay.
NSLPS/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.

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FROM THE EDITOR

I'll be stepping down as editor of *The Lightkeeper* in April. Our quarterly journal has become a very important element of the NSLPS, as a tangible way of sharing our challenges and successes and as a way of showcasing the stories of the people who kept Nova Scotia's lights. It's been a rewarding experience for me, but after six years of writing, collecting material and editing I think it's time for some new blood. I've found it increasingly difficult to produce *The Lightkeeper* on time (the issue you're reading is technically December's!) and I believe it needs new energy and direction. I'd like to thank all of the board members and other contributors who have helped make our journal so successful over the years. We are fortunate that Nancy Eisener and Ashley Lohnes have added their layout skills to the *Lightkeeper* – their contributions have greatly increased the quality of the publication.

At this point, no one has stepped forward to express interest in the editor's position. If you are interested, please contact any of the board members or myself, care of the NSLPS address on page 11.
Chris Mills

NSLPS NEEDS YOU!

As we approach our 12 anniversary, the NSLPS is facing the need for new blood and new ideas. We need new members, and we need some fresh faces to help keep up the momentum that has so far enabled us to become a leading force in lighthouse preservation. Although we have an extremely dedicated and competent board, many members have volunteered with the NSLPS for more than a decade and some need a break!

If you have an interest in lighthouses (or know someone who does), or if you have specific talents that you think would benefit the board, please contact a member of the Nominating Committee (Chris Mills, Bryan Andrachuk and Dorothy MacLeod) at the e-mail address or phone number listed on page 2.

Our mandate and our ability to save Nova Scotian lighthouses *depends* on your involvement. Get involved and help secure *our* guiding lights for future generations.

NSLPS COMMUNICATION

In addition to publicizing information in the *Lightkeeper*, NSLPS is planning to send out our activities, programmes, regular event updates, as well as special notices via email. If you would like to receive information from NSLPS and have not already told us your e-mail, please contact Peter MacCulloch (peterm@twrsoft.com).

NSLPS Public Programmes: January - April 2006

Wednesday, February 22

Maritime Museum of the Atlantic

7:00 PM - Reports of NSLPS Activities

7:15 PM – Program: **ILE HAUTE**

Where is Ile Haute? How much do most of us know about it? Dan Conlin, Curator of Maritime History of the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, will give an illustrated talk about the history of this lofty and mysterious island in the Bay of Fundy.

MARCH BREAK WORKSHOP

Build the *Sambro Lightship* (Children's Workshop)

Saturday, March 18

10:00 AM - 12:00 NOON

Maritime Museum of the Atlantic

How can you squeeze a big red lightship into your living room? If you make it in miniature at this workshop! Have fun building the famous *Sambro Lightship* that was once anchored off Halifax Harbour and learn its history. For children aged 6 - 12 years. Younger children should bring a helper. Call 423-8034 to register. Fee \$4.00.

Wednesday, March 22

Maritime Museum of the Atlantic

7:00 PM - Reports of NSLPS Activities

7:15 PM - Program: **PICTOU BAR LIGHTHOUSE**

The tragic fire in July 2004 that destroyed the Pictou Bar lighthouse became headline news. The loss of this wooden octagonal tower with its red vertical daymark was felt keenly by all who hold lighthouses dear. Join Pictou Area historian Fergie MacKay for his illustrated talk on the history of the lighthouse, the second on this site to be destroyed by fire.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday, April 25

Maritime Museum of the Atlantic

7:00 PM - Annual Meeting with Reports and Presentation of the Craig Harding Award.

8:15 PM – Program: **CAPE FORCHU**

Cape Forchu is undoubtedly one of the best-known lighthouse in Nova Scotia, guarding the rocky approaches to Yarmouth Harbour since 1839. In 2002, the Canadian Coast Guard transferred ownership of the lighthouse to the Municipality of Yarmouth with the community group, the Friends of the Yarmouth Light as its manager. President Nancy Knowles will share with us the challenges and joys of maintaining this beautiful site with its museum, gift shop and café.

NEWS AND VIEWS

Brier Island Area Lighthouses

Anyone who has recently driven down Digby Neck to Brier Island will know that two of the areas's four lighthouses are in terrible shape. The Brier Island light (known locally as "Western Light") has not been painted in years and the 1944-vintage concrete tower is showing signs of deterioration.

The Peter Island light, located between Brier and Long Islands, looks to be in worse condition. It's difficult to believe that the wooden octagonal tower was ever painted white. The elements have stripped most of the paint from the shingles and there appears to be a healthy dose of moss or lichen growing on the exterior walls.

Recent concerns raised by local residents received the usual stock response from Federal Fisheries Minister Geoff Regan. In a letter published in the January 2006 issue of *Passages: The Long and Brier Island News*, Regan states that "The Department of Fisheries and Oceans is custodian of a large portfolio of real property and facilities across Canada, including lighthouses. For several years limited funding has only been allocated to highest priority repairs which include health and safety issues. The painting of the lighthouses at Boar's Head, Grand Passage, Brier Island and Peter Island doesn't have any impact on the operations and your request to paint these lighthouses cannot be accommodated at this time."

Regan goes on to say that the advent of electronic aids to navigation have made lighthouse less important for mariners and that surplus lighthouses can be taken over by community groups.

Regan and others in DFO do not seem to understand that lack of maintenance of these lights will eventually lead to the point where major, expensive repairs will be required. By this time, it will be too late for some lights. At this point the Coast Guard will not repair lighthouse structures and if they are taken over by local groups, communities will be saddled with costly repairs and renovations.

This is just a further example of the federal government's lack of willingness to exercise a pinch of preventative maintenance, while waiting for an inevitable large dollop of major damage control.

Coast Guard Helicopter Crash in Newfoundland

On the December 7th the crash of a Coast Guard MBB 105 helicopter off the south coast of Newfoundland claimed the life of its pilot and a technician. The helicopter had just dropped a lightkeeper off at an island station and was on its way to a navigation aid at Go By Point when it crashed into the water off the Burin Peninsula.

Searchers found the bodies of the pilot, 65 year old Gordon Simmons and technician, 46-year-old Carl



A Canadian Coast Guard Messerschmidt MBB-105 helicopter. *Chris Mills*

Neal within hours of the crash. Three days later crews discovered the wreckage of the helicopter, located about 3.5 kilometres off Marystown, in 33 metres of water.

The wreckage has been taken to the Transportation Safety Board's lab in Nova Scotia to help determine the cause of the crash. Reports indicate that Simmons and Neal

may have died from either hypothermia or drowning.

Estevan Point Medevac

On January 16, 2005, the principal lightkeeper at Estevan Point, on the west coast of Vancouver Island earned himself a ride on a Canadian Forces Cormorant Helicopter after falling ill. A National Defence news release said the keeper had a "potential life-threatening condition."

Bad weather conditions kept an Emergency Health Services aircraft from reaching the remote area, so the Cormorant was called in as an alternative. The "...61-year-old [keeper] was in a lot of pain," when the crew arrived. They secured him for the flight to Victoria where he was

taken to hospital. There was no word on the keeper's illness.



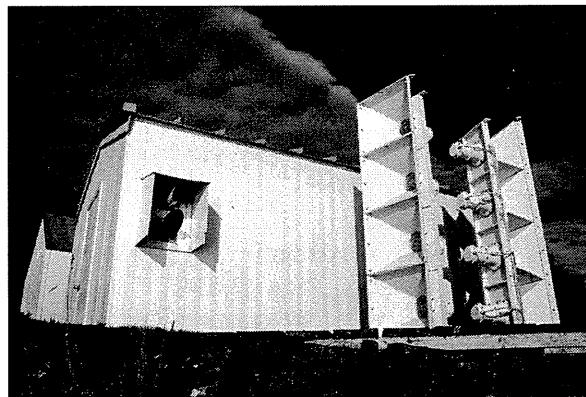
The graceful Estevan Point lighthouse is located near Hole-in-the Wall, on the west coast of Vancouver Island. *Abe Van Oeveren*

Fog Horn Fiasco on the West Coast

In late November it looked as though a number of British Columbia's fog horns would be fired up again. A 2002 review had suggested that 13 fog horns would get the axe by 2003. After complaints and lobbying by mariners, three fog horns slated for decommissioning were left operating in 2004. That leaves the number of active fog horns on the west coast at seven.

In November last year Senator Pat Carney said she was expecting an announcement that several *more* horns would be turned back on. Unfortunately, what Carney described as a "complete about-face," by the Coast Guard did *not* happen.

A December 1st article in the *Vancouver Sun* revealed that the feds had no plans to re-connect horns. Carney said the decision was "Liberal politicking with West Coast lives." A Coast Guard spokesperson said that fog horns are not an effective aid to navigation because the human ear cannot accurately judge the source of a fog horn from the water.



The Coast Guard silenced the Green Island, BC Stone Chance fog horns in 2003. *Chris Mills*

An earlier article in the *Sun* said that 60 fog horns have been retained on the east coast of Canada due to "denser fog patterns." One would surmise though that east coast ears can't judge a sound source any better than our counterparts in B.C., and that beaurocratic whims, as opposed to real need, drive federal government decisions such as these.

International Lighthouse Conference

Current NSLPS president Barry MacDonald will attend the 2006 International Lighthouse Conference in Southampton, Ontario. The conference runs from June 1 to June 4 at the Bruce County Museum and Cultural Centre. Invited speakers include writers and preservationists from Canada and the U.S. Barry will speak about Canadian lighthouse preservation, with emphasis on the divestiture program. For more information, check the Chantry Island lighthouse website at <http://chantryisland.com/>

Legislature News

NDP MLA Michele Raymond continues to support efforts to save Nova Scotia lighthouses. On November 2nd she moved the following in the Nova Scotia legislature:



The original Pearl Island lighthouse in Mahone Bay, built in 1874. *Courtesy DFO/Canadian Coast Guard*

“Whereas the Canadian Government is divesting itself of its distinctive lighthouses around the coast of Nova Scotia, as no longer useful navigation aids; and Whereas the Nova Scotia Government was offered a menu of lighthouses to choose from more than two years ago, but has yet to make a decision; and Whereas these valuable heritage assets are vulnerable and decaying while the provincial government plays dog in the manger, refusing to refuse or accept the lighthouses so that they can be offered to functional owners; Therefore be it resolved that this House require Cabinet to make a decision for once and for all whether or not to acquire lighthouses and to convey the decision to the federal government within the next six weeks, so that lighthouses can be preserved and those living on lighthouse access roads are no longer held hostage to indecision.”



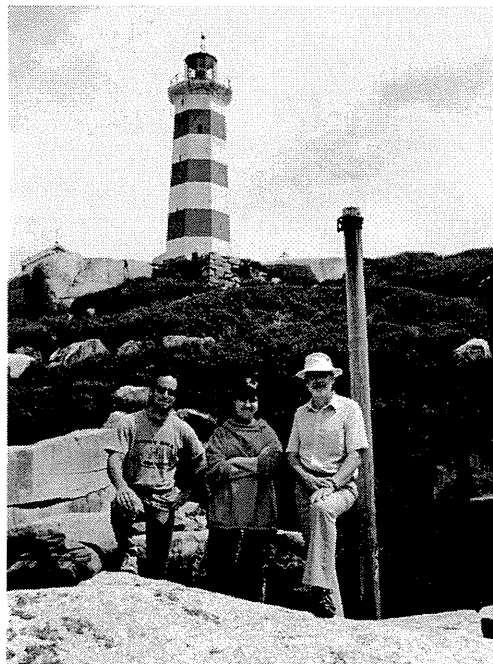
The rotting Cape Roseway lighthouse near Shelburne, in 2002. *Nancy Eisener*

This motion did not receive unanimous consent and was tabled. We owe Michelle Raymond our thanks for her continuing efforts to bring lighthouse issues into the provincial political arena.

Lighthouse Legacies: Stories of Nova Scotia's Light-keeping Families is the official title of Chris Mills' new book about lighthouse life in this province. Nimbus Publishing in Halifax will release the book in April, 2006.

Sambro Island in 3D

Parks Canada has launched a website featuring 3D tours of various themes, including historical and technological sites across Canada, women in history, endangered species, national parks and ethnocultural communities. The tours allow you to “fly” over each featured site while clicking on various structures and features for more information. Five Canadian lighthouses will be added to the list of 3D



tours during the spring, including Sambro Island, Cape Spear, Newfoundland, Île Verte, Quebec, Point Abino, Ontario and Fisgard, British Columbia. Chris Mills researched and wrote material for the Sambro Island site.

NSLPS founding members Chris Mills, Patsy MacDonald and Graham McBride at Sambro Island in the summer of 1993. *E.H. Irwin*

For more information, see http://www.pc.gc.ca/apps/dci/source/3d_E.asp

NSLPS Website

Kathy Brown

The website continues to be popular, with about 37,000 visits over the past year. I have been working on additions and numerous small corrections have been made. The following lighthouses now have images: Bunker Island; Candlebox Island; Pease Island (plus a panorama); Queensport Lighthouse; Grandique Point Lighthouse; Black Rock Point Lighthouse; Pearl Island Lighthouse (1927 photo); Sheet Harbour Passage has an image and intro text. People have sent corrections of names and dates for lightkeepers. These require special attention from Peter MacCulloch and will be done as soon as possible.

VOICES OF THE LIGHTS: ISLAND OF DREAMS

It was 1922, late in the year. Maggie Boutilier sat in a small open boat as it cut through the choppy waters of Saint Margaret's Bay. Her husband had just been appointed keeper of the Croucher Island lighthouse. It was a good job for Wentworth Boutilier -- he'd served with the 85th Nova Scotia Highlanders in the First World War. Burrowed into muddy holes in the battlefield and always on the lookout for snipers, Wentie was stricken with trench leg. He spent the remainder of his tour in a military hospital, returning to Nova Scotia in May 1919.



The Boutilier Family on Croucher's Island in the early 1930s. *Courtesy Geraldine Stevens*

Three years later he'd bought most of Croucher's Island and then was appointed as its lightkeeper. Maggie wasn't so sure she wanted to move a mile offshore, away from friends and family. But it was a good steady job for her husband and as the boat reached the granite shore of the island, she remembered that she had agreed to try lighthouse life for one year.

That year turned into 22. Maggie fell into the rhythm of island life, raising five kids, creating extravagant flower gardens around the tiny lighthouse, chopping wood and cooking for summer visitors.

Her daughter Geraldine, now 84, says Croucher's was her mother's "Island of Dreams," because she had no "hope" of getting off the island. But the dreams finally came true in 1944, when the Boutiliers packed up and left Croucher's Island for good. Almost 60 years later Geraldine remembered life at her family's lighthouse home.

My father kept lighthouse on Croucher's Island for a little over 22 years and he wouldn't have been able to do it if my mother hadn't been such a wonderful help to him! It's not just keeping the lighthouse. You have to make your gardens and if you want flowers, you make



Geraldine (Boutilier) Stevens grew up on Croucher's Island, in Saint Margaret's Bay. *NSLPS/Chris Mills*

a lovely little flower garden, which my mother did. She also cut limbs off of trees down at the end of the lighthouse [yard], so we could have a little nook where we had swings and hammocks. Dad made an apple orchard and he built two hen houses and a barn a workshop. One day my brother Bert got locked inside the workshop. But that was no problem! All the tools were in there for him to get out, which he did!

I had two brothers and two sisters. The older sister is Ethel Kennedy. Then there was myself, then my brother Bertram, and my brother Wayne and my sister Joyce Cook.

I often heard [my mother] say she was there seven months before she had the first trip off of the island. She said there were times she wondered if this is going to be it? It seemed so long and lonely [out there]. But after we children got older, she taught us to row the boat. She used to take us just off the shore there and we would fish -- we'd get perch, flatfish. Every now and then we'd get one of those hideous sculpins!

Fred Hiltz was the [lighthouse] inspector and I remember him sayin' to Mum "How do you keep it lookin' like *this* with all these children?" Then he says "You're teaching them to knit and sew and embroider?!"



They made 'em bigger in the old days. Wentie Boutilier shows off claws from a 13 pound lobster.

Courtesy Geraldine Stevens

Maggie gave her kids a practical education, but lack of proper schooling was something that bothered her continually.

As Geraldine remembers, "our education was going nowhere, because poor Mother didn't know what



The modest Croucher's Island lighthouse in 1939. *Courtesy Geraldine Stevens*

to teach. So my Uncle Willis told her to get in touch with the Nova Scotia Technical College. That's mainly where our education came from, through correspondence.

My older sister, I think she had only grade six education. I made it through grade nine. Bert's was a grade eight [education] and then Wayne and Joyce were able to go to school when we moved from the island to the mainland, but it was a two-mile walk!

But by being on the island, we learned a lot of things that other children wouldn't learn. We learned about gardening and how the soil has to be manured to make the seeds grow. We grew peanuts one year as an experience and they grew! And watermelons one year! To us, this was the normal way of living and growing. Mother taught us so much. In our embroidery work, Mother bought little squares of stamped white material and the first quilt Ethel and I did, we did with all red embroidery floss. We got first prize on it at the exhibition!

Two years later my brother Bert decided he wanted to help. So he did one. It was a bunny sitting down and Mum said, "He sure put a reliable backbone on that bunny!", because I think he went over it twice! We got first prize *again*! We were told not to *dare* put any more needlework like that on because it wasn't fair to other



"Call Again." Maggie B. with a welcome mat she hooked on Croucher's Island. *Courtesy Geraldine Stevens*

children! So the next year, we hooked our first mat. We got third prize on it! Mum says "Well, that's enough now!"

I remember showing Mum the picture of a dress in a magazine. She sat down and she made me that dress. And I thought "Wow, what a mother!" Then I learned to sew of course and I made a lot of my dresses, including formal ones. That's the way life was supposed to be!



Wentie chopping wood for Croucher's hungry stove. *Courtesy Geraldine Stevens*

COMPANY

It was enough work to take care of five children, keep house, chop wood and maintain the gardens on Croucher's Island. Then came the summer season, with endless visits from local fishermen, tourists and school kids on day trips.

We had visitors from *everywhere*. They'd come out from Boutilier's Point. Our neighbours, they'd come from French Village. Believe it or not, we've even had American relatives come and they'd overnight. They'd sleep on the kitchen floor! Usually the minister in the area would come out one day.

One time when the Ingramport Mill was [operating], this one [lumber] ship came in [to Saint Margaret's Bay] for the night, so they came out to the island. One man -- I think Mother said he was a Norwegian -- he says "How am I gonna remember your husband's name?" She said "You just tell folks you *Went* there, and it was *worth* it!" He says "Well, I won't forget that one!"



Geraldine Stevens with the mat her mother hooked more than 60 years ago. *Chris Mills*



A school visit to Croucher's Island.
Courtesy Geraldine Stevens

THE LIGHTHOUSE

Built in 1882, the Croucher's Island light was the standard Marine and Fisheries wooden tower with a small attached house for the keeper and his family. These lights were built for economy and not for comfort, but they did the trick in both the habitation and aids to navigation department, as Geraldine told me.

The first floor was the kitchen and on the southern end then was a bedroom. The porch was on the northern end of the house and that's where we kept our wood. That's also where Mum did the washing. She had one of those washers on a stand, shaped something like the half of a barrel. It had a handle on and you just worked it back and forth. That was a lot better than an old scrub board!

Above Mother's and Dad's bedroom was where the boys slept. Above the kitchen is where the girls slept. Then above that was the lamp room. That's where the soap and the polish for the lamp was kept. That's where you lit this lamp and you carried it upstairs while it was lit and then you had to put it in the reflector. When the sun shone on it the [lens] seemed to have lights of yellow and blue and green. I presume that helped to throw [the light so] that you could see it about 20 miles.

Every Sunday morning [Dad would] bring this brass lamp down in the kitchen and he would clean it. We kids used to just sit there and watch him. Big thing for us! We saw Dad doing something that we kind of thought maybe a woman would do – clean the lamp, for one thing. Oh, he used to make it so you could see your face in it!

MOTHER

While Wentie tended the light and polished the lamps, other 'women's work' consumed most of Maggie's time.

She was always busy, always doing something. When we children were still small, she gave us a lot of atten-

tion. She [also] helped Dad. To be truthful, I think when he came to a job like that, mother was stronger than Dad. Dad was a very quiet kind of timid-like person. Mum always said he went to war and he came home a wrecked man.

Mother was kind, understanding. To escape from we children she used to like to go out and go up in the hayloft to escape. But we usually found her and cuddled up there with her. She didn't seem to mind being found!

Stuck out on Croucher's Island, Maggie brightened her summer days with prolific gardens.

Mother had rose bushes and Dad used to bring her seeds from the grocery store, which was usually Burchill's down in French Village. He'd bring her packages. And she used to save some seeds from the poppies and what we called little Johnny Jump-Ups, those little pansies. We had gooseberry bushes and Dad planted a pear tree but we didn't get anything offa that. He said maybe he should have had two pear trees!



Maggie Boutilier shows fine form as she and her husband split wood on Croucher's Island. *Courtesy Geraldine Stevens*

HELPING OUT

Maggie and Wentie also lent a hand when there was trouble on the water.

There was a hotel down here in Seabright, and there was a couple staying there. During the late evening it was calm and they decided they'd get a boat and go out for a little row. After a while, they got away from shore and the wind started to come up and they didn't have a clue how to get back to shore. The land at that time looked all the same because there weren't so many lights to be seen.

It was kind of dark by this time. My mother happened to be outdoors and she heard a woman scream. So she told Dad about it and he come out. Then by this time, the both of them were calling for help. Dad got in his little motorboat and he went and he got them. [The woman] was crying by this time. Dad found out what happened, so he says "Okay, I know where to take you," and he took them home. The next day, they got somebody with a motor-



Maggie B. presents a mock salute while wearing WW II coveralls belonging to her son Bertram. *Courtesy Geraldine Stevens*

boat to come to Croucher's Island so they could go up in the light and see it and to thank Dad for what he and Mother had done.

I don't recall anybody else being in that distress, but I know when the last war was on, the old *St. Clair* – I think she was an American ship – we were out aboard her. There were corvettes and

minesweepers and oh, it was quite a sight at night. You really knew there was a war on. The sailors used to come in – one sailor said he never had sauerkraut, but Mother served it. "Oh," he said "it was delicious!"

LEAVING CROUCHER'S

21 years after that one trial year on Croucher's Island, it was finally time to leave. Wentie and Maggie retired to their property on Indian Point, on the east side of Saint Margaret's Bay.

Mum said she couldn't stay any longer. She said "22 years!" and here was her life going. The life that was so different from what she thought her life would be. With three children [grown up and] gone and the other two still at home, she said she didn't want to stay anymore.

Maggie died in August 1986, just three weeks short of her 88th birthday. Her son Bertram penned a tribute for the December 1986 issue of The Bay News. "On the island, everything ran by 'Norwegian Steam', he wrote. "In their twenty-two-year stay on the island, no draught animal or motorized device ever moved a pound of the tons and tons of supplies that were carried, wheeled or dragged up the steep hill to the lighthouse. But Maggie B. did! A robust woman, she was capable of shouldering a hundred-pound sack of stock feed and carrying it up the hill."

Bertram wrote that even with the challenges of providing an education for her children "...

Maggie B. had something else to teach her children that exceeded academic lore. She was able to instill in them the same insatiable curiosity and the love of beauty that she herself possessed. I shall always believe that the isolated situation in which they lived enhanced those qualities. When necessity dictates that tools or toys be invented and manufactured with whatever happens to be at hand, even the average intelligence can be most ingenious."

And so Maggie's 22 years on her "Island of Dreams" paid off in the end.

Note: Chris Mills interviewed Geraldine (Boutilier Stevens) in 2002 as part of the NSLPS "Lighthouse Life in HRM" oral history project and again in 2005 for his forthcoming book *Lighthouse Legacies: Stories of Nova Scotia's Lightkeeping Families*.

FAREWELL

The last lightkeeper to serve at the Little Hope Island lighthouse has died. Gilbert Charles Bowers passed away Thursday, December 29, at the age of 76. Bowers had lived in Eagle Head, near Liverpool, for 54 years. The Little Hope lighthouse was established in 1865 and de-staffed around 1950. A 77-foot concrete tower built on the barren island just off the Keji Adjunct (near Port Joli) in 1908 toppled into the sea in December, 2003 after being weakened by Hurricane Juan.

World Lighthouse Society (WLS)

Kathy Brown

The World Lighthouse Society communications are carried out though e-mail and the newsletter is sent out quarterly in Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) format. It comprises two pages of interesting information about lighthouses around the world, plus updates from various countries and organizations. This new membership rate makes WLS a very economical membership for lighthouse enthusiasts. For members without Internet access, hard copies of the newsletter will be mailed for a yearly donation of (10 Euro, US \$10).

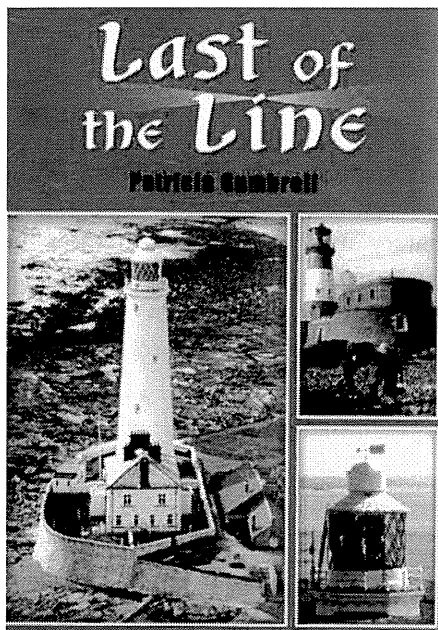
If you want to join, send a Money Order for US\$35.00, plus your name, street address and e-mail address to: Peter Williams, Treasurer, WLS

1 Marine Gardens,
Milford Haven
Pembrokeshire, SA73 3JS
UK

If you do not have e-mail, send an extra US\$10.00.

Book Review: *Last of the Line*

Patricia Gumbrell. Whittles Publishing, Caithness, Scotland. 2005



The profession of lighthouse keeper has always been a family affair. This was true in Nova Scotia where for example, the Young family were lightkeepers on East Ironbound for 55 years and the Finck family for 60. One also thinks of the Hichens and Crowell families on Seal Island and the

Richardsons on Bon Portage. With a longer history of lighthouses, this was even more true in Britain as this book testifies so overwhelmingly.

Last of the Line can be roughly divided into three separate sections. The first deals with the history of the Hall family as lightkeepers dating back to the early nineteenth century. The second deals with the career of the author's father Harold Hall, as a lightkeeper from 1918 until the birth of his daughter in 1937. The final section is partly concerned with his later career but is much more involved with the author's childhood and early adult life as a lightkeeper's daughter. While all three sections contain some fascinating material I was disappointed that much of it had to be gleaned by reading between the lines. Unfortunately, the author does not distinguish between the telling detail that illuminates a whole situation and irrelevant detail that the reader finds rather boring.

John Hall who was born in 1810 and became the lightkeeper at St. Anne's Head on the south west coast of Wales in 1831. An uncle, William Warlow and a brother-in-law, Richard Lloyd, were already lightkeepers. John was followed by his son Thomas Owen, his grandson John William and his great-grandson Harold, who retired from the service in 1966. John moved from Wales to the Farne Islands on the northeast coast of England and it was there that his son married into the most famous English lightkeeping family, the Darlings. Teenager Grace Darling and her father William Darling reivers of the wreck of the paddle steamer

Forfarshire in September 1838. This incident became a legend of British lightkeeping which all school children (at least until my generation) were taught. The author's account of this extended family history is marred by unnecessary detail and confusion in many places.

Harold Hall began his lighthouse duties at Flamborough Head on the Yorkshire coast under his father in 1918 and served as a temporary keeper for the next 18 months in 6 locations all over England and Wales. After a short break, he officially joined Trinity House in 1922 and served until 1966. For the first 6 years he was a Supernumerary Assistant Keeper (a replacement for keepers on leave). The travels during this period to very many of the most remote lights round the coast makes fascinating reading. He was able to compare, for example, the amount of sway in the towers on Wolf Rock and Bishop Rock in storms. The latter swayed more - to the extent that mercury spilled from the lens bath! What would modern day health-worriers say about that?

Hall was sometimes storm-stayed and reduced to eating emergency rations. On one occasion he was hospitalized for malnutrition. Although this is interesting stuff, this section is largely a catalogue of his postings. I would have liked either more details of his life or more technical details about the lights (or both!).

Author Patricia Gumbrell was born while her father was keeper on St. Mary's Island, close to the mouth of the Tyne. Some of the stories about the family crossing the causeway (only at low tide) to the mainland for provisions and to school are very interesting but many of the details are not the ones I was hoping for. After the war, many of Harold Hall's postings were again to "Rock" lights, meaning that the family stayed ashore. This means that the account of these years is more about Gumbrell's mother's search for suitable housing than about her father's career. One is surprised that Trinity House seemed to show such little interest in the welfare of the families. I found this section of the book less appealing.

The book is more interesting if you know the British coastline and some of its lighthouses (the one map is hardly enough). The best part of the book is its photographs. However, I would have liked them to be dated. I wonder if the lights are in such wonderful condition today.

If you enjoy lighthouse lore, by all means buy the book, but do not be disappointed if you learn less about the lights and more about the author's cats and dolls. What you *will* appreciate is how much of a family business lightkeeping was. You will certainly regret that we are at the *Last of the Line*.

Tony Thompson

History of the Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society (NSLPS) *Kathy Brown*

The NSLPS is the oldest lighthouse preservation society in Canada. It began in the summer of 1993, when four lighthouse enthusiasts visited Sambro Island, home to the oldest operating lighthouse in the Americas. They became concerned about the condition of the light, which had been de-staffed since 1988 and about other lighthouses in the province. As a result, the NSLPS was founded and registered in 1994.

The society's mission is to promote and support preservation and awareness of Nova Scotian lighthouses; to assist community groups in leasing or taking ownership of lighthouse sites; to provide access to written research and photographic documentation and to initiate oral history research; and to classify and monitor the status of historic lighthouse sites.

In October 1994, participants in a NSLPS sponsored trip to the Sambro Island lighthouse received society membership as part of the trip fee. Now, NSLPS has about 200 members in Nova Scotia and world-wide. This seems a small number, but it includes more than twenty-five affiliated lighthouse and historical groups, so membership actually measures in thousands.

This small, entirely volunteer group has accomplished much over the past 12 years. Due to the tireless efforts of founding president Rip Irwin, the Sambro lighthouse received protected heritage status in 1996. Two years later the Canadian Coast Guard restored the exterior of the large stone tower.

The NSLPS has had two grants from Halifax Regional Municipality to record oral history of the district's lighthouses. Second vice-president Chris Mills conducted many interviews and two binders of this information are available to researchers and commu-

nity groups at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic. In return, the society holds three or four programmes each winter at the museum. This helps the public and society member learn more about lighthouses. In the summer, trips to lighthouses are very popular.

In 1999 and 2003, NSLPS published a total of 101,000 copies of the visitor's brochure *Nova Scotia: Visit Our Lighthouses*, in partnership with the Nova Scotia Department of Tourism. The society has also had a website since 1999. In 2004, in partnership with the Department of Tourism, the site was modernized and expanded into one of the largest lighthouse sites on the web. More than 40,000 lighthouse enthusiasts, and tourists visit it per year. NSLPS publishes the quarterly newsletter/journal *The Lightkeeper*, full of news about Nova Scotia's lighthouse groups and interesting articles about lighthouses and their keepers.

In 2003, NSLPS received a grant of US\$50,000, from the J.M.Kaplan Fund of New York City, for the preservation of Nova Scotia's lighthouses. This supported the repair and preservation of ten lighthouses across the province. Many of these lighthouses would be in sorry shape today were it not for those funds.

Over the years NSLPS has been successful in raising public awareness of the importance of lighthouses. It seems unlikely that surplus lighthouses will be burned down, as happened before NSLPS was established. The society monitors the methods used for disposal and is now encouraging the Canadian Coast Guard to award surplus lighthouses to the municipalities where they stand. NSLPS believes that there are no better people to preserve these heritage buildings than those in nearby communities. Let's hope this thrust is successful and that Nova Scotia's lighthouses shine on for decades to come.

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 April issue: March 1st, 2006.

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A young visitor, Stan Golightly, displays monster lobster claws at the Croucher's Island light-house in 1931. *Courtesy Geraldine Stevens*