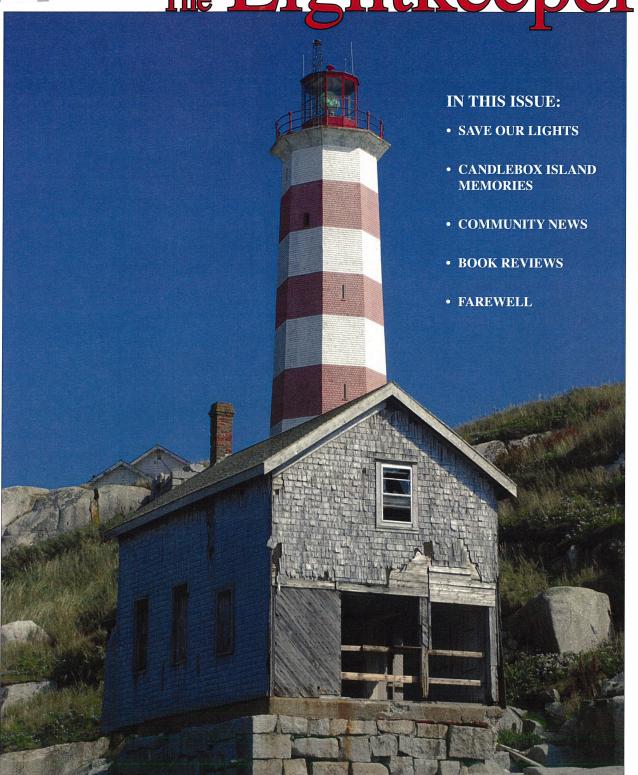
The Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society Vol. 14, No. 3, Sept/Oct 2007

The Lightkeeper



Sambro Island 1758



he 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.

WEBSITE: http://www.nslps.com

LIGHTKEEPER EDITOR: Chris Mills

LAYOUT: Shawn Connors

PATRONS: Jean-Louis Desrosiery, Richard Hamilton, Rob Hardy, Robert C. Howard, Edith Northfield

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Barry MacDonald 827-2027 e-mail: threefathom@eastlink.ca

Past President: Tony Thompson 477-7366

e-mail: tony@mscs.dal.ca

First Vice-President: Graham McBride Second Vice President/Lightkeeper Editor:

Chris Mills 868-2313 e-mail: ketch1@eastlink.ca Secretary: Joanne McCormick

Treasurer/Membership Secretary: Lew Perry 434-7208

e-mail: lewis001@ns.sympatico.ca.

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TRIPS AND PROGRAMS

To date we have not been able to recruit a board coordinator for this position. As a result, trips are temporarily on hold. If you'd like to help with this position, please contact the NSLPS c/o the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic at the address on page 19.

Building a Lighthouse in the 21st Century Maritime Museum of the Atlantic Wednesday, October 24, 2007, 7 p.m.

There's new lighthouse life on the Northumberland Strait after the tragic loss by fire of the Pictou Bar light. The folks at the Northumberland Fisheries Museum have built a new lighthouse on Pictou's waterfront, based on the design of the old Caribou light. The combined dwelling/lighthouse will house Rip Irwin's extensive collection of lighthouse photographs, artifacts and records.

Join Gary Nowlan of the Northumberland Fisheries Museum as he talks about the planning that led to their lighthouse, the community outreach to get it built, actual construction of the lighthouse and the Museum's "vision" for the future. This is an exciting project that shows how museums, community and hard work can come together to help save our past, while building the future of heritage.

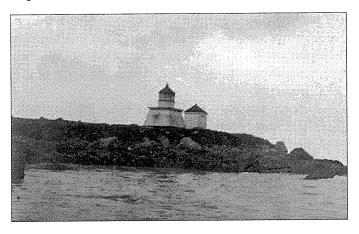
Cover:

The warehouse on the site of Sambro Island's former acetylene gas house was damaged by Hurricane Juan in 2003. *Chris Mills*

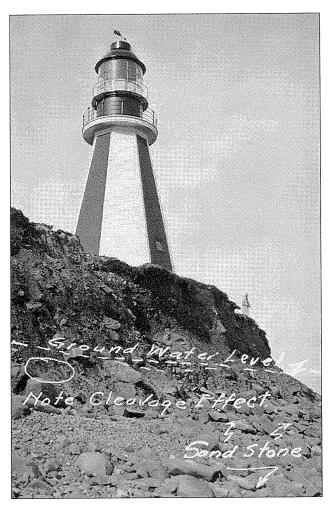
DO YOU RECOGNIZE THIS LIGHT?

In each issue of *The Lighkeeper* this year, we're publishing a photograph of a "mystery light" in Nova Scotia. If you have any information about this month's light, please contact Chris Mills at ketch1@eastlink.ca or at 902-868-2313.

We had no guesses for last issue's light, which was the original Low Point lighthouse, near New Waterford, Cape Breton. The photo was taken in October, 1936.



MYSTERY LIGHT. NSARM



LOW POINT. COURTESY DFO/CCG

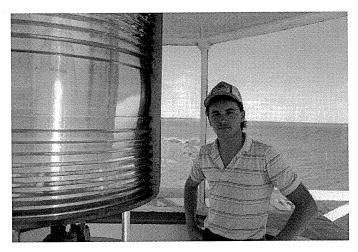
FAREWELL

The last keeper of the Caribou Island lighthouse passed away on July 5th. Foster Welch was 78. Mr. Welch was a lightkeeper for 23 years, beginning on Entry Island (les Iles de la Madeleine, Quebec), where he was born. He transferred to Caribou Island (near the ferry to P.E.I. from Nova Scotia) where he worked and lived until 1990, when the Coast Guard de-staffed the light.



The Caribou lightstation while Foster Welch was keeper. Courtesy DFO/CCG

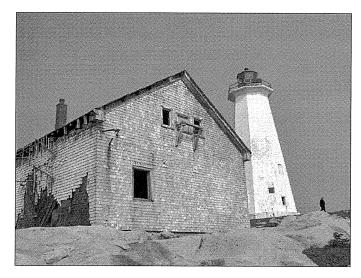
On July 24th, the last lightkeeper to live on Prince Edward Island passed away. Leon Patton was 68. Patton was the last keeper at Prince Edward Island's Wood Islands light-station, living in the lighthouse until the Coast Guard built a new, separate dwelling several years before the station was de-staffed in 1989. Patton also worked as a light-keeper on Bird Rocks in the Magdalen Islands.



LEON PATTON'S SON AT WOOD ISLANDS, PEI IN 1988. CHRIS MILLS.

SOL: SAVE OUR LIGHTS, or SH*T OUT OF LUCK?

Chris Mills



This is possibly the oldest fog alarm building remaining in Nova Scotia, built a few years after the turn of the last century. How many years does it have left? Barry MacDonald

he title is not flippant, and it's not a joke. A trip to any of Nova Scotia's offshore or remote mainland lighthouses begs this very question. It's been almost 15 years since a lightkeeper lived at a lighthouse in our province, and it shows. Weather, salt spray, storms, vandals, government indifference and time have hammered many of our lights into submission, or extinction.

And the clock is winding down.

Canada's 3rd lighthouse site at Cape Roseway is a mess. The wind has scoured singles from the vacant buildings. Windows gape. Roofing has been ripped off.

The second oldest wooden lighthouse in the country leaks. The Seal Island tower also needs a coat of paint. It doesn't have adequate ventilation. It's not even classified by the Federal Heritage Building Review Office.

The keepers' houses at Cross Island, near Lunenburg, still stand, as does the fog horn building, a garage and a shed. But they're basically gutted. Vandals have smashed the windows and the grass is knee high.

Down the eastern shore at Kent Island, the French Point light needs new siding. The balcony around the lantern is so rotten that it's not safe to stand on it. The Kent family, who have owned nearby property for close to two centuries, lobbied the government to fix the light up or allow then to take it over, but to no avail.

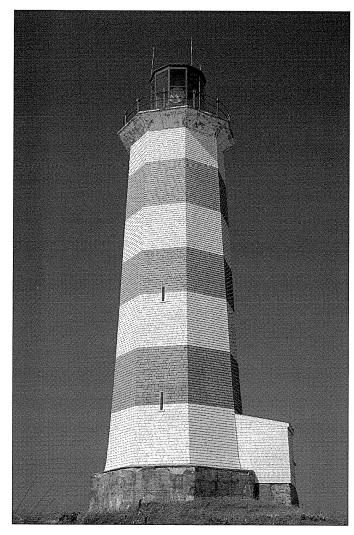
And then there's Sambro Island. North America's oldest operating lighthouse has been restored, but it hasn't been touched since 1999. The keepers' houses have been badly damaged by vandals and the elements. The "gasouse" shed is badly compromised after Hurricane

Juan ripped out a wall and undermined its stone foundation.

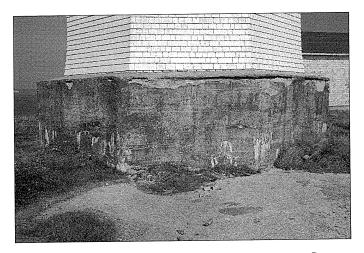
The NSLPS has lobbied for repairs to this historic structure, as well as the entire station. But aside from the exterior restoration of the 1758 lighthouse, the federal government has done nothing to stabilize, protect, recognize or promote North America's premiere lighthouse site.

It gets tedious, listing the state of our lights. Not that it's all bad news. More than a dozen community groups have saved their lighthouses and made them a viable part of local life. Port Medway, Cape Forchu, Port Bickerton and Hampton are just a few examples of community involvement that has led to a revitalization of our guiding beacons.

Cape Forchu is perhaps the best example of all, illustrating how federal and municipal governments can work together for the good of all. Back in 2000 when the Coast Guard announced that Yarmouth's famous light would be transferred to the municipality for a dollar under Real Property Directive 96-1, it looked like the tide was



THE SAMBRO ISLAND LIGHT HAS NOT BEEN PAINTED SINCE 1999. CHRIS MILLS

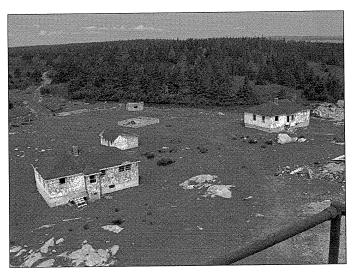


THE CRUMBLING CONCRETE SKIRT AT THE BASE OF THE SAMBRO TOWER. CHRIS MILLS

turning. But today it seems divestiture has stalled.

As a result, whether they're isolated or accessible, our lights are suffering. NSLPS efforts to create a national lighthouse protection act have been de-railed six times since 2000. According to Dan Conlin, writing for the on-line encyclopaedia Wikipedia, "Bill S-220, is a proposed federal law to designate and preserve historically significant Canadian lighthouses. The bill would designate heritage lighthouses using public consultation and require public consultation before alterations, sale or proposed demolition. It would also require that designated lighthouses be maintained to heritage building conservation standards."

Sounds like just the ticket. Back in 1998, the NSLPS found that only about four per cent of Canadian lighthouses were protected from demolition by the Federal Heritage Buildings review Office (FHBRO), compared with close to 70 per cent of lightouses over 50 years of age in the U.S. There was obviously a problem in Canada that could be addressed by a national act.



THE ABANDONED KEEPERS HOUSES AT CAPE ROSEWAY IN 2006. BARRY MACDONALD

But as Dan Conlin writes in Wikipedia, the road has been rough.

"Despite the broad public support for the bill, some federal departmental staff have opposed the bill suggesting it could cost up to \$384 million dollars to upgrade all of Canada's lighthouses to heritage standards. Supporters of the bill have called these numbers inflated, pointing out the assumption that every pieces of navigational equipment in the country, including hundreds of steel tower, fibreglass poles and floating buoys, would be designated whereas even the strongest proponents only anticipate the nomination of a select number of landmark lighthouses."

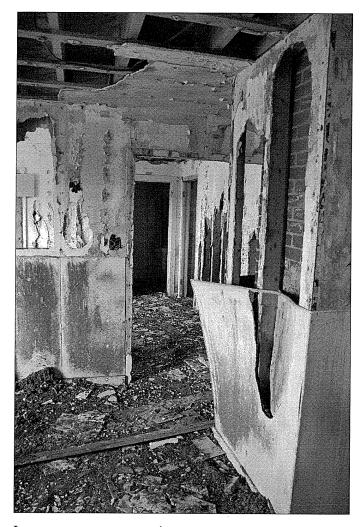
Landmark lighthouses such as Sambro Island.

The oldest operating lighthouse in North America. Although its exterior has been restored, the spiral wooden staircase inside the tower needs immediate attention. The concrete base of the structure needs repairs. There's a broken window at the top of the light.

The rest of the station is a shambles, with the roofing on both remaining keepers houses ripped away and rot in the sheathing. Piles of pigeon droppings leave an acrid smell in the musty interiors. The warehouse built on the site of the former gashouse, once used for the manufacture of acetylene, was badly damaged by Hurricane Juan in 2003. When the NSLPS approached the federal



The wooden spiral steps in the Sambro Island light show signs of rot. Chris Mills



Inside the assistant keeper's house on sambro island—pigeons have left piles of droppings and rot is everywhere. $Chris\ Mills$

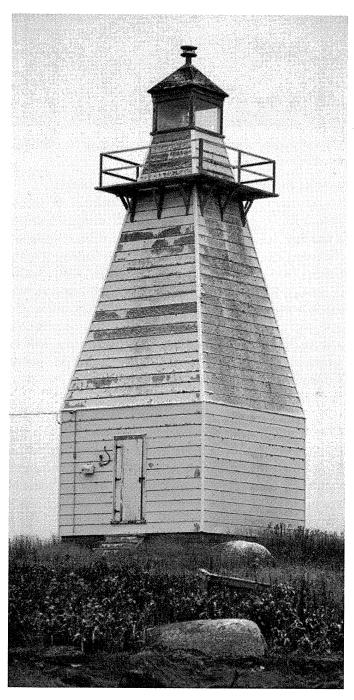
government with concerns about the building, the society received an outlandish cost estimate to complete the work. So we offered to go out to the island, with society materials and labour, to make the place weather tight.

No go.

So here we sit. It's heart-warming to see the lights that have been saved by dedicated grassroots efforts around Nova Scotia. But it's gut-wrenching to witness sites like Sambro and many others, rot into the ground while bureaucrats turn a blind eye to efforts to save something that's an integral part of Canadian maritime heritage.

It's a crime and it's a slap in the face to any Canadian who ever had the slightest interest in our ighthouses.

Note: This article is not intended as a slur against Coast Guard and other federal employees who have been and continue to be helpful and supportive in lighthouse matters. Under Barry MacDonald's guidance, the NSLPS has been able to forge sometimes meaningful relations with various levels of bureaucrocay. But the system is failing us, and it's time the government allowed and helped us to Save Our Lights. CM



THE ROTTING FRENCH POINT LIGHT NEAR MUSQUODOBOIT HARBOUR IN 2001. CHRIS MILLS

VOICES OF THE LIGHTS

Lois (Cottreau) Nickerson, Candlebox Island Chris Mills

Lois Nickerson was born in a lighthouse. It was June 18, 1924, and her parents Clara and Norman Cottreau had lived on tiny Candlebox Island, in the Tusket Islands, for the past 7 years. Little Lois arrived with the help of a midwife – the doctor arrived later, "after all the horror was gone," to find a healthy baby girl. Lois, along with her four sisters and four brothers, spent about 15 years on Candlebox, until she left to make her own way on the mainland. Almost 70 years later she shared her memories of a life that she didn't always enjoy, but always made the best of.

"My life wasn't funny at all"

I'm sitting in a board room at Tidalview Manor in Yarmouth. It's an extended care facility attached to the hospital, just above the tidal flats at the head of Yarmouth Harbour. Lois, her friend Charlotte Frankland and I have just made our way along the sterile hall, Lois using her legs to move her wheelchair. She's a tiny lady and frail after a recent illness, but she's got plenty of spirit

when I ask her to tell me about life on Candlebox Island.

My first memory! It was a bad storm and my father had went to Comeau's Hill to get the mail. When we were coming back, it breezed up. The boat was going [up and down] and the propeller would rattle.

My father would say "That was a bad one!" And we'd say "Dad, don't say that. You're scaring us!"

I had four brothers and we were five girls. When I was small, it was great. But when

I got a little bit older that I needed friends, it wasn't so great. I didn't like it at all. No, I never liked it. It was too closed in. No friends, no nothing.

Summer time we'd go fishing, swimmin'. We couldn't go very far in the water because it was too cold. My father would plant a little vegetable garden. We'd put nets out to get mackerel and herring and we'd salt 'em for the winter. We had to salt everything, meat and all. It's a

wonder we haven't all got high blood pressure! I guess we were well salted down!

My father used to get great big bags of sugar, great big bags of flour, great big cans of baking powder and baking soda. And he'd buy a whole barrel of molasses. And that's what we lived on.

We had a cow there to have fresh milk. One time my father couldn't find his cow -- and that island isn't that big! Anyway, they had brought a bull on the next island -- Deep Cove Island. The darn cow had swim there! My father had to go get her, aboard the boat!

The cow's name was Bessie. We used to say "Dad, you're gonna have to lock her up in the barn!" But the barn was so tiny, she'd get overheated. I said "Dad, see, it takes a woman!" She wanted romance and she wasn't gonna get it!

The farming part of the lighthouse operation was crucial when you depended on gardens and livestock to feed your family. But there were some procedures that didn't sit well with family members, such as the annual slaughter of the pig.

We had a dog home and every time my father would kill a pig – the pig makes an awful noise – the dog would climb the stairs, but after that was all over, he

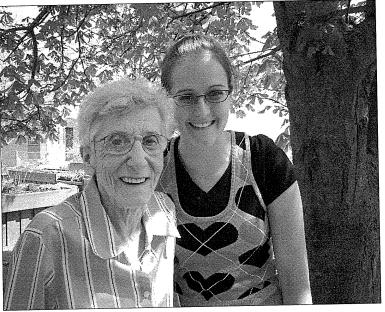
couldn't come down! My father had to go carry him down! The stairs were quite straight and he'd go up them stairs like nothin', but boy, after everything was over, he couldn't come down!

From farming to travel weather ashore, the affected everything the Cottreau family did cutting them off from the mainland, confining the kids in the house and ruining garden crops. family Although thestayed snug in the lighthouse, Candlebox was a noisy place to be in a storm.

[The wind] would make

an awful noise, like you were in a ship. It would whistle, you know, 'round the corners. Like a thunderstorm. And [the house] would tremble. The sea didn't come very close but the spray did. I remember my father – we laughed – he planted corn. So the corn came up high. [Then] we had a storm and it turned it all black!

Hurricane Edna was terrible. There was people



Lois Nickerson and friend Charlotte Frankland. Chris Mills

visitin' us and they had to stay. The company was fine! They played cards and [it was} company for my father and mother, but the storm was terrible.

In them days they had outdoors toilets, as you know. My father looked out the window. He said "There goes our bathroom!" [The outhouse] went right over the bank. Then he looked again and he saw his boat goin'. It was a brand new boat and he lost that.

Fortunately, Norman was able to recover his boat. Back then, the boat served the same purpose as the family car does today. But it was doubly important when you didn't have neighbours to help out with transportation to the mainland. Not that the Cottreau's got there very often. Lois says trips ashore were scarce.

Once a year. My father would take so many of us when he'd get the month supply in Yarmouth. My mother would come and the older ones would take care of the young ones while they were gone. Well, it was kind of strange. Yarmouth looked like a big city to us!

For the rest of the year, the family remained on the island, farming, fishing and keeping the light. Norman would light duplex (two-wick) kerosene lamp inside the small lens at dusk and put it out in the morning. Then there was painting and repairs to wind and seadamaged buildings. Once a year the government supply ship brought supplies and a visit from the district inspector of lighthouses.

There was the Dollard and the Lauren-

tian that used to come. They used to bring our coal and cleaning stuff for the lighthouse. Rags and all kinds of junk. I don't know why they brought rags 'cause there was enough of us could keep rags goin'!

They used to come once a year. I can see the inspector now! There was three steps from the kitchen to the dining room and he'd stand there and he'd look all around – even the top of the stovepipe. So my mother used to have to keep that dusted off!

We had to have everything polished clean. We'd take the lamps and polish 'em with Brasso, so they'd shine! My mother had a white bedspread for each of our beds, and she'd put them on when he would come. We'd see [the ship] comin' from Yarmouth, so we had plenty of time to get ready!

Once the excitement of inspection and re-supply was over, it was back to the routine of day to day life on Candlebox. But there were moments that demanded planning and ingenuity, to say nothing of a cool head in the case of an emergency. As we talked, I noticed that one of Lois's thumbs was shorter then the other.

My thumb is cut off to the knuckle. I was washing clothes and I decided I'd wring my finger and all! I wonder I

didn't lose my whole hand. [On] them old-fashioned wringers there was a thing you'd screw [down] and when you put that tight, it was no spring to it at all. And that's how I done it.

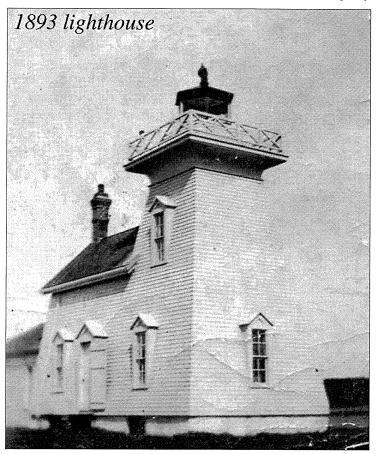
I was a little kid. I pushed a chair against the washer and started pulling out the clothes and put 'em into the wringer. We had a maid, but she was at the clothesline. My mother was on the mainland, waitin' to have a baby. She had left me and [my brother] Vernon and my father there alone. I decided I'd help her do the washing while she was at the clothesline.

She said "I heard you screechin' way to the clothesline!" I said "Well, I imagine." You put your thumb into a wringer...! They took me to Doctor O'Brien and I stayed there

to his house for two months and he fixed it up.

Old O'Brien! He put me in mind of a fisherman. He used to come on the island with [his] sou'wester on. He didn't look like a doctor at all! He'd come with his valise. I said to Mum, "Is that where he has the babies?" We didn't know no better and she'd say "Yes!"

If we had toothaches, he'd be our dentist. He'd be everything. And he was good. He was one of my father's best friends. Him and my dad, I remember they used to get a



The original Candlebox Island lighthouse, in which Lois (Cottreau) Nickerson was born. $Courtesy\ Lighthouse\ Digest/John\ Cottreau$

bottle of liquor every time my mother had a baby, and have a drink! But my father was never ugly at us. It's a wonder, with all us kids. Wonder we didn't drive him crazy!

But Norman Cottreau had his own demons to deal with. Lois says he had been gassed while serving in France in the first world war, leaving him to re-live the experience for the rest of his life.

My father had had a nervous breakdown and we had to watch him every minute. That wasn't very funny. It was hard on us. One time, I remember I was walkin' on the island and my father was goin' towards the shore. So I followed him, and he went on the wharf. He was gonna go drown himself. So I yelled and I grabbed him, and I said "Dad, you can't do that!"

I turned him around and we came back to the house. That night I had to stay up all night. So you see, I

didn't have a very fun life. My life wasn't funny at all. It was awful to see him sick like that. He'd sit down to the table and we had to tell him to eat. We had to tell him to stop. I've seen him cry for I don't know how long. And that was hard on a small kid.

But there were happy times too, and Lois remembers her father as a very giving man.

He'd do anything for us. He used to make us toys, like doll's cribs, cradles, stuff like that. He even

built us doll houses. He always was pretty thoughtful about his kids. He thought the world of his kids. We were a big family but he loved us all!

When I asked Lois what kind of a person her mother was, she had this response.

My mother was more of a cook and a sewer and that stuff. I used to laugh – my mother would put clothes in the wringer and you'd hear "snap, snap, snap" – the buttons would break! That night my mother would take a needle and thread and start sewing buttons!

Norman and Clara had to be on their toes at all times, with 9 children running around their small, barren island.

We used to do a lot of silly things. My sister Betty used to go to the barn and make believe there was a trapeze. She'd take a rope and tie it on one of the beams and my father would catch her. Wouldn't he punish her! He didn't know how tight she'd tied that rope! She'd say, "Well, I wasn't doin' anything wrong!"

On the island of course we had to make mud

cakes. We had a camp -- it was a hollow in the side of the island, and we used to have broken dishes and leaky pans and stuff. We used to make mud cakes. We'd go pick dandelions and decorate it all up!

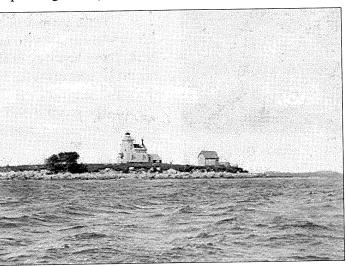
Of course I had to ask Lois how good the mudcakes were.

Didn't taste like nothing! We'd give them to my brother. We'd say "taste it!" He'd say "Do you think I'm crazy!" Oh dear! We used to treat him awful.

He had a room up in the light, and we'd go at night and knock on his door. He'd say "What do you fellas want?"

We'd go in [with] a little suitcase. We'd say "Do you need a doctor?" And he'd get so mad at us!

Once in a while, the entire family got involved in outdoor fun.



TINY CANDLEBOX ISLAND. NSARM

The island wasn't big. It was only an acre of land. But my father used to say he had enough players to have a baseball game. We'd go and play baseball after supper. My sisters and my brothers would all play together. My father would stand there and watch us, so none of us would get hurt. We'd take the baseball bat and hit the ball and sometimes it would land right in the ocean. My father would say "I'm not gonna buy you fellas any more balls if you're not gonna take care

of 'em."

Christmas was also a special time on Candlebox Island, thanks to Norman Cottreau's love for his kids, and a little imagination.

My father used to do a lot of things that no other father would do. He'd make great big prints in the snow to make believe it was Santa Claus, or he'd take a sled and make sled runners [in the snow].

He'd say "Look out the kitchen window -- what's there in the snow!" We'd all go running to the window! All our toys that we needed for Christmas and he'd [have] the box in the middle of the island and make believe Santa Claus had dropped it there. Well, we thought it was great! Santa Claus had come with the snow!

He was a great dad!

Many thanks to Lois Nickerson for sharing her good and bad memories of life on Candlebox Island. Thanks are also due to Lois's friend and former caregiver Charlotte Frankland, for setting up the interview in May, 2007.

COMMUNITY NEWS 2007

This is the most important lighthouse news roundup of the year. It's a chance for us to share the trials and tribulations of lighthouse and community groups across the province as they strive to preserve and protect their guiding lights. As you'll note in the following updates, people wanting to save their lighthouses face daily challenges in doing so. Although the tone here is



Arisaig's replica lighthouse. $Photo\ provided\ by\ Dan\ MacNeil,\ DFO$

not always positive or happy, it's a true indication of the frustrating challenges faced by communities as they try to keep their lighthouses alive.

Unless otherwise noted, all updates are by Chris Mills.

Arisaig Rises Again

The original lighthouse in Arisaig – near Antigonsh – was built circa 1904, on the same plan as the Gregory Island light on the Bras d'Or Lakes. A fire destroyed the little tower in the 1930s. The Arisaig Harbour Authority contacted NSLPS president Barry MacDonald in 2006 with a view to reconstructing the tower. This goal came about recently, with the completion of a small wooden tower which will be lit. Local fisherman and harbour authority member Clarence Arbuckle was a driving force behind the project, which recognizes the area's lighthouse heritage. Good work!

Battery Point Battered

Anyone entering the historic and much-revered seaport of Lunenburg (a UNESCO world heritage site) from the open sea may wonder just what to expect after they view the Battery Point lighthouse. The Coast Guard restored the little tower at the end of the breakwater about 17 years ago, but it looks like that's when the care stopped.

The light is in desperate need of a paint job, although the cormorant (shag) guano which coats the 25-foot tower has left its own whitening effect. The concrete deck of the breakwater is deteriorating badly and adds to the overall feeling of neglect at this once pretty station.

Boar's Head

Barry Buckman of the Tiverton and Central Grove Heritage Association was just getting home from closing the gate to the Boar's Head light when I called him for an update. The road to the light is now open from 9 am until dusk. The Department of Natural Resources has provided two picnic tables at the lighthouse site, along with trash and recycle bins. Barry says the TCGHA set up a donation box in late July, which has so far netted about \$300, which will go towards upkeep and development of the site.

Plans are now in the works for a small shelter at the lighthouse to house interpretive panels and a guest-book. Barry says they're also hoping to build a cairn listing the keepers of the light from its establishment in 1889, to the year the last keeper left -1987.

The group is also working to have a sign placed near the ferry in Tiverton directing visitors to the light.

Cape Forchu

On-site visitation is down at the Cape Forchu lightstation from 2006 for the months of August and September, but remained about par for the months of May, June and July. The tea room saw an increase in customers for its second season and continued to have local support.

We took part in the Lights Along the Shore festival by hosting a pancake breakfast for three mornings. We hosted some events this summer such as morning tea with the red hatters, lighthouse walk and lunch with members of a local gym, Appreciation Day for all involved with the light, Easter Sunrise service and Dumping Day for the first day of lobster fishing. We also had bonfires with roasted marshmallows, barbeques and hosted the opening ceremonies for the second annual Yarmouth & Acadian Shores lobster Festival. *Denise Nickerson, Friends of the Yarmouth Light Society*

Coffin Island Stands Anew

Last year's demolition of the 1914 Coffin Island light brought to an end a valiant fight to save the structure. Almost a decade and \$70,000 dollars after a local group placed a barrier wall in front of the eroding structure, the sea washed it all out and threatened to topple the tower. As a compromise, the Coast Guard placed a new fibreglass tower topped with a red lantern on the island, back from the eroding edge. From the shore at least, the look and function of a traditional lighthouse have been preserved.

Five Islands Wedding

The lovely little Five Islands lighthouse which stands along the Glooscap Trail, was the scene of its first-ever wedding on August 19th this year. It was a fitting place for Kimberly Lewis to be wed – she's the daughter of Gloria Lewis of the Five Islands Lighthouse Preservation Society and her first job was at the lighthouse as a summer student.

Gloria says the light was not open this summer, but the society plans to apply for a grant so that the tower will be accessible to the public in 2008. The light remains in good shape, with the front of the tower being painted this summer.

Fort Point, LaHave Expands



THE NEW "LIGHTHOUSE" AT FORT POINT, LAHAVE WITH THE 1990 FAUX LIGHTHOUSE AT RIGHT. CHRIS MILLS

A new "faux" lighthouse has been built next to the 1990 "replica" light, which in turn sits next to the existing keeper's house. The original light was built in 1876 and replaced by a short succession of skeleton towers until the site was decommissioned some time in the 1980s. The 1950s-vintage keeper's house and the new structure now house the Fort Point Museum, which commemorates the area's history as the first capital of New France. Explorer Samuel de Champlain visited the area in 1604 – Fort Ste. Marie de Grace stood on this point from 1632 to 1654.

Gilbert's Cove Happenings

The summer season at Gilbert's Cove began on June 11th, with the opening of the combined dwelling/light tower overlooking St. Mary's Bay. The Gilbert's Cove and District Historical Society notes that "The Lighthouse survived its 103rd winter with no apparent damage. However, surf from high winds and tides did wash out some parking lot gravel and kill some lawn grass. A culvert on the road near the lighthouse that was washed out

and replaced only last year was washed out once again. We expect to have it repaired by the Department of Transportation as it presents a major hazard on a public road.

"This year is the 25th anniversary of the Gilbert Cove and District Historical Society. It was on September 29, 1982, that Ernest Morrisey, Douglas Bertram, Larry Melanson, and Brenda Miller signed the by-law documents as the first officers of the new Society. Its objective was to restore and preserve the lighthouse property for future generations not only for historical interest but to guarantee continued public access to the shores of St. Mary's Bay.

"Haunted Hallowe'en at the lighthouse is planned once again for October 31. The event has been popular and the kids enjoy it but some of the ghosts and goblins are getting a bit long in the tooth. Perhaps if a few younger parents volunteered to give a hand and bring some fresh ideas for decorating, it will continue to grow in popularity."

Hampton Hopping

Louise Sanderson of the Hampton Lighthouse Society reports a successful and busy summer at this little light on the north shore of the province, near Bridgetown. Louise says there was an "exceptionally good turnout" for the Lights Along the Shore festival in September, with about 50 people from Europe, the U.S. and Canada stopping in to see the 1911 lighthouse and its 6th order Fresnel lens.

Louise has typed up 160 recipes from local residents and cottagers which have been published in the Hampton Lighthouse Recipe Book. The proceeds will go towards maintenance of the light. The cookbook is \$10 and can be ordered from Louise – for more information e-mail bayham@xplornet.com, or call 902-665-2138.

The society's thrift shop in nearby Lawrencetown also continues to turn a small profit for the lighthouse. Louise says Hampton's "very energetic" society members are also interested in housing a "paper" museum in the lighthouse, with photos and stories detailing the history of the lighthouse and surrounding community.

Kidston Island

This much-photographed lighthouse on Baddeck Bay is another victim of the Province of Nova Scotia's "chokehold" on the federal divestiture program. It is our (NSLPS) fear that hard-working volunteers like Baddeck's Eddie Keiling will tire of this bureaucratic footdragging and walk away, leaving sites like Kidston Island to an uncertain future. *Barry MacDonald*

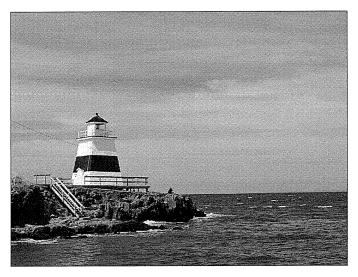
Mabou

There is new life ahead for the Mabou lighthouse. One of two lighthouses to be given trial leases in Cape Breton, this 1908 structure has been in a state of serious disrepair for the past number of years. Problems include rotting and broken windows, deterioration of the lantern framing and most serious - a crumbling foundation.

Restoration work will include moving the light-house to a new, safer location, slightly back from the waters' edge and placing it on a new, concrete foundation. The old beacon will also be outfitted with new windows, with repairs to the shingling and lantern. Work is scheduled to begin on October 1, 2007 and take approximately eight weeks to complete. Stay tuned for a progress report, with photos! *Barry MacDonald*

Margaretsville Pride

John Freeman of the Margaretsville Wharf Committee has heard nothing about divestiture of his community's lighthouse, but things are going well for the beacon. The light has been out a couple of times this year, but John says the Coast Guard is always quick to restore it. The deck around the 1859 structure is popular with visitors, who often want to know if they can get up in the



MARGARETSVILLE. COURTESY JOSETTE D'ENTREMONT

tower. For safety reasons, the light is not open to the public. When I spoke with John on the evening of September 25th, the light had just come on and there were at least eight people watching the sun go down from the lighthouse.

The community's wharf committee continues to pay for insurance on the deck surrounding the tower. John says Margaretsville folks watch their light very closely, and they're very proud that this operational beacon continues to be a focal point of their community on the southern shore of the Bay of Fundy.

McNeil Beach Surprise

The little lighthouse on Boularderie Island that you see as you drive across the Seal Island Bridge on the Bras d'Or Lakes now appears to be fully restored. The tower has been abandoned since the late 1960s, but now sports the standard lighthouse white, with red trim.

Medway Head Caregiver

Thanks to the efforts of the owner of the old Medway Head lighthouse, the current structure looks good, with mowed grass on three sides and rugged shoreline on the fourth. When he's here, Alden Wambolt, who lives in New Jersey, cuts the grass and keeps and eye on this operational Coast Guard lighthouse. Alden says he contacted the Coast Guard a while ago about painting the fading red trim on the tower, but to this point, they've done nothing.

Neil's Harbour Not Open

This picturesque lighthouse was once again closed for the season. Community spokesman David Donovan says Neil's Harbour hopes to develop a new management plan, but he adds that until divestiture of the property becomes a reality, long-term plans are speculative at best. At the heart of this problem is the reluctance on the part of our provincial elected officials and bureaucrats to allow transfer of lighthouse properties to willing volunteer community groups. *Barry MacDonald*

Out of the Fog Museum Thrives

Guysborough County's Out of the Fog lighthouse museum is still in business after four years of operation. Paul Ehler is the on site "curator". He explains his job as the meeter and greeter and interpretive tour guide for the museum's large collection of lenses, lights, fog horns and other lighthouse-related equipment.

Paul says 2007 has been a relatively successful year, with about 300 visitors to the museum to date. As well as "drawing awareness to the function of lighthouses within the Maritime fabric and as part of the community," he says the museum is striving to meet the criteria of the Nova Scotia Museum in order to secure funding – at present the facility is a non-profit operation.

Paul notes that the museum is also working towards establishing a database of oral and pictorial information about lighthouses in the area, including Cranberry Island, White Head Island and others.

The Out of the Fog Museum remains open until the Thanksgiving weekend. For more information contact

keepers_of_the_beacon@hotmail.com

Paddy's Head Needs Work

Back in September 2003, this little pepper-shaker light at Indian Harbour, near Peggy's Cove, took a beating from Hurricane Juan. At last inspection, the west-facing wall was still down to the bare sheathing, with no protective shingles. Despite this, the light continues to shine, although it's just a matter of time before the weather does increasingly expensive damage to this little 106-year-old tower.

Pictou Progressing

From now until the spring of 2008 we would like to start work on the interior of the lighthouse. The rough wiring has been done and we now need to run power to the lighthouse, insulate and gyproc the walls and ceilings,

and finish the floors.



PICTOU'S WATERFRONT LIGHTHOUSE WITH INTERPRETIVE PANELS. BILL HENDERSON, NORTHUMBERLAND FISHERIES MUSEUM



PICTOU'S NEW LIGHTHOUSE LOOKS GREAT! BILL HENDERSON, NORTHUM-BERLAND FISHERIES MUSEUM

We would like to start on the first floor, where we will house the Rip Irwin collection and his animated map of lighthouses of Nova Scotia. We would like to have this completed by the spring.

All our plans centered around are financial support. One of the fundraisers we are looking at is selling a plaque representing past and present lighthouse keepers. The plaque can be pre-ordered through our museum business co-ordinator Michelle Davey. She can be reached at 902-485-4972 through or e-mail at nfm-business@

ns.aliantzinc.ca

The plaques will be mounted on an appropriate board that will be fixed to an exterior side of the light-house. The cost has not yet been set.

If interested, please contact Michelle and leave your name and contact information. When a decision to proceed has been reached you will be contacted. *Bill Henderson*, *Northumberland Fisheries Museum*

Port Bickerton Holding Steady

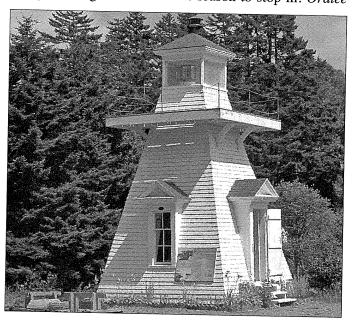
Port Bickerton development committee chair Don Dodge reports another successful year with visitor numbers close to those for the 2006 season. Staffing the lighthouse interpretative centre was aided by two summer students, courtesy of both federal and provincial levels of government.

The DFO promise of a building(s) facelift was quashed when all five potential bidders walked away due to unduly stringent environmental requirements imposed on them. Again we see "demolition-by-neglect" being applied within a framework of "environmental due-diligence". Barry MacDonald

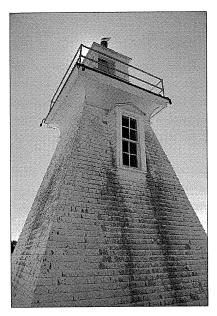
Port Greville Shines Bright

Our season, like many, has been slow this year with numbers definitely down. We have had about 3,500 visitors to date, including a bus tour from New Jersey touring 39 lighthouses in seven days! Our lighthouse has undergone some paint touch-ups and the volunteers have done a nice job on the flower garden at the base.

Although the top of the lighthouse is closed off to the public, the light continues to shine in the evenings year-round, a welcome sight to locals and visitors alike. John Merriam, a member of the society with a cottage across from the lighthouse, has volunteered as our light-keeper, checking on the bulb and timer to make sure our light continues to shine. We are currently working on stage two of a site addition. It's a new building which will be in the shape of an overturned ship half-model on a wharf. We hope to start construction next spring and we are currently clearing land. One more reason to stop in! *Oralee*



PORT GREVILLE. ORALEE COLLINS, AGE OF SAIL MUSEUM



THE RESTORED PORT MEDWAY LIGHT-HOUSE SHOWS THE EFFECTS OF WIND AND SALT. CHRIS MILLS

Collins, Age of Sail Museum

Port Medway Peels

The restored lighthouse at this south shore community is having trouble holding its paint. Although the Port Medway Lighthouse Park looks good, the paint on the northern exposure of the structure is in bad shape.

Pubnico Harbour Beams

After being decommissioned a few years ago, the Pub-

nico Harbour light has been re-lit with an ML-300 red lens. The fog horn has been removed.



PUBNICO'S RE-LIT LIGHTHOUSE IS DWARFED BY WINDMILLS ACROSS THE HARBOUR. JOSETTE D'ENTREMONT

Queensport Fix-Up

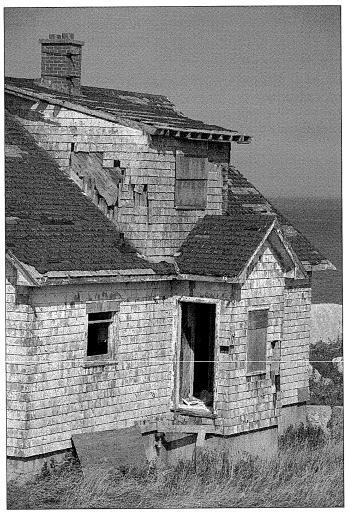
Paul Ehler of the Out of the Fog Museum reports that the Queensport Light on Rook Island in Chedabucto Bay is in good shape overall, with recent repairs and upgrades to the structure's roof, lantern room, lantern deck, balcony and verandah. The Keepers of the Beacon lighthouse group would eventually like to tie the light in with its museum operation and provide boat tours to the island.

Paul has a vested interest in and connection with lighthouses – his grandmother lived on Rook Island for 16 years. Lavinia Munroe left the island in 1948, after spending eight years as its head keeper.

Sambro Island Declines Approaching 250th Birthday

Damage to the hydro cable to Sambro Island from Sandy Cove means that the station is now on diesel-generated power. The Coast Guard has been flying fuel in at regular intervals, since the station no longer has its large diesel tanks. On October 18, the Coast Guard announced its intention to discontinue the Sambro Island fog horn. Mariners have three months to voice any concerns they may have. Unless there is a concerted effort, Sambro's horn will be silenced, changing the hostoric soundcape of Halifax Harbour and approaches forever. Officials are now saying that the large electric fog horn will be likely be decommissioned and the light will be solarized. Although this move may make economic sense, the loss of its powerful light and horn will be a great blow to North America's oldest operating lighthouse, which celebrates its 250th anniversary next year.

The keepers houses continue to deteriorate rapidly, while the shed on the site of the former gas house is



The former principal keeper's house on sambro island. *Chris Mills*

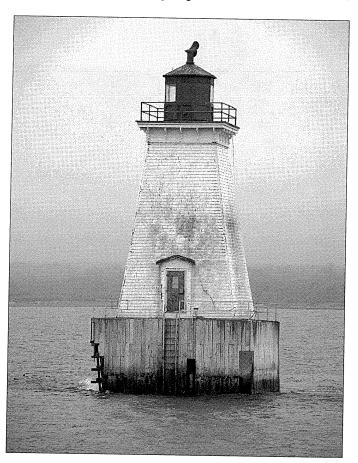
open to the elements after being damaged by Hurricane Juan four years ago. The lighthouse is also in need of a paint job, after going without for eight years.

Meanwhile, the NSLPS and the Mainland South Heritage Society (MSHS) are partnering to help raise the light's profile in preparation for the big 250. Barry MacDonald and Chris Mills met with the MSHS's Leslie Harnish in late September to map out a preliminary plan for events to celebrate Sambro's birthday. The next step will be to meet with provincial and municipal leaders to garner political and grassroots support for this historic lighthouse complex.

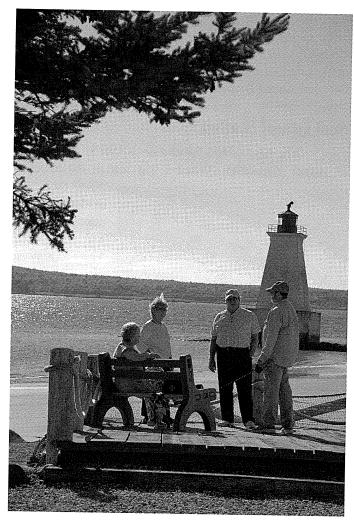
Sandy Point Future Looking Brighter

Stalwart lighthouse saviour Bernice Goodick reports that despite pressing structural issues at the Sandy Point lighthouse, help is on the way. The light now belongs to the Sandy Point community group, which also operates a large public centre adjacent to the light. The cribbing at the base of the 1880 tower is badly eroded and there are leak issues in the lighthouse itself.

Bernice says it'll cost between 50 and 60 thousand dollars to make the necessary repairs. "In a fit of optimism," she says, "I said we would raise \$10,000." So far, the Sandy Point group has raised about half that



Sandy Point, showing the deterioration of the tower's base. *Chris Mills*

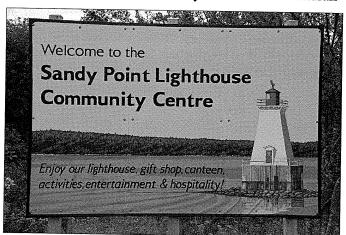


SANDY POINT VISITORS. CHRIS MILLS

amount. The provincial Department of Development has stepped up to the plate with \$20,000 and Bernice says she'll know by the end of September if a possible \$10,000 will come from the Shelburne Municipality.

When I spoke with Bernice on September 20th, workers from Willfield Construction of Bridgewater were already looking the tower over.

Plans are now underway for a series of fundrais-

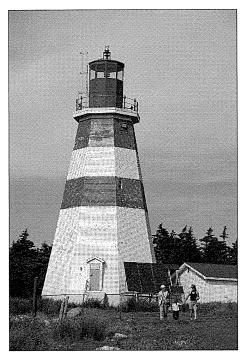


SANDY POINT. CHRIS MILLS

ing events, including a walkathon, seniors' dance and a raffle of items including a night's stay at Boulder Cove Cottages, across Shelburne Harbour. Anyone wishing to make a donation or looking for information about the raffles can contact Bernice at 902-875-2919.

Seal Island Stalled

The Seal Island lighthouse is still in urgent need of proper ventilation. When I was last in the tower in



THE HISTORIC, BUT UNDER-PROTECTED SEAL ISLAND LIGHTHOUSE IN OCTOBER, 2007. CHRIS MILLS

2004, there was evidence of a number of leaks and some rot. This historic 1831 tower also needs a coat of paint. The remainder of the station, including an 1870s fog whistle boiler, a single bungalow and a large barn, is slowly deteriorating. The Coast Guard has not moved on any requests suggestions to improve the despite site, offers of local help. Amaz-

ingly a recent Federal Heritage Buildings Review office (FHBRO) review did not recognize this singular tower as a structure worthy of classification.

Seal Island Lighthouse Museum Holds Firm

The Seal Island Lighthouse Museum in Barrington experienced a drop in numbers this year, in keeping with other tourist attractions in south west Nova Scotia. The structure looks good after a recent major facelift and structural work, although the tower still leaks during rainy conditions.

Terence Bay Turmoil

The Terence Bay lighthouse group continues to experience difficulties over access to the community's lighthouse as a result of ongoing issues with an adjacent landowner. According to the Coast Guard though, the matter has been settled. Perry Rideout of DFO's Real

Property, Safety and Security office, says "The exact location and existence of the Crown's customary right of way to the lighthouse in Terence Bay was challenged via a "Quieting of Titles" action over the last couple of years. This has been settled with DFO agreeing to move the ROW a short distance based on advice from the Department of Justice."

Despite past or present access issues, the community held their annual lighthouse day in early September, with more than 80 people making the trek out to the point. Local lighthouse advocate Mary Thomas says she "has not heard a word" regarding divestiture, despite her group being "willing and hoping to be able to take it over."

Mary adds that the light is in dire need of leak and rot repair. It's time for the Coast Guard to step forward and do the necessary repairs to this small and accessible lighthouse, or let the community get in on the action.

Walton Does Well

The Walton lighthouse is open until November 1st this year and accepts walk-in donations to assist in the maintenance of the tower. A graduating high school student was employed as an interpreter at the lighthouse Monday to Friday, until summer's end. The number of visitors in May and June was down from last year judg-



THE WALTON LIGHTHOUSE IN THE SUMMER OF 2007. DENYSE CONTRASTY

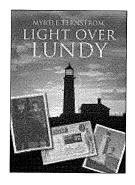
ing by a scribbler used to log visitors. Most were from Nova Scotia this year, with a few people travelling from Alberta, Germany and the Netherlands.

There is a gift shop next to the lighthouse and a 12 hundred-foot trail leads to a lookout over Five Islands on the other side of the Bay of Fundy. No major repairs have been necessary since 2002 and Reg Clark, who helped refurbish the structure, is pleased to say the smell of kerosene still lingers in this 134 year-old lighthouse. *Denyse Contrasty*

BOOK REVIEWS

Tony Thompson

Light over Lundy. Myrtle Ternstrom. 160 pp. b&w photos. Whittles Publishing. Caithness, Scotland. 2006.



Lundy Island is probably not a familiar name to most Canadians, but fans of P.D. James will have encountered it as the inspiration for the fictional island in her recent murder-mystery The Lighthouse. For Nova Scotians it can be compared with Ile Haute in the Bay of Fundy. It is similar in size (4km by 1 km), has very high cliffs (over

100m) all round with only one not very convenient landing place at one end. It is in the mouth of a large inlet (the Bristol Channel) which has very high tides and much fog. It lies across busy shipping lanes with the ports of Swansea, Cardiff and Bristol further up the channel and numerous smaller ports and fishing communities along both shores.

Given this situation, it is a little surprising that a lighthouse was not planned until 1818 or so (60 years after Sambro Island) and not built until 1819-20. It was, however, a splendid lighthouse. The Parliamentary Report of 1861 stated `the verdict of the commissioners was that the Lundy light ranked first among all the lights mentioned, either at home or abroad". It was a granite tower (quarried on the island) some 30m high and built on the highest point of the island 135m above high water. This meant the light was the highest in Britain.

In fact, it had two lights: a revolving light at the top with, eventually, a first order Fresnel lens like Sambro Island in Nova Scotia and machinery installed by Chance Brothers, with a fixed light near the bottom. The problem was that the planners did not think about the fog. Even when visibility was reasonably good at sea level, the cloud base was often below the 165m elevation of the top light. One keeper claimed that the light was obscured by fog for 9 months of the year but an investigation by Trinity House found this to be exaggerated. However, when fog cannons were installed they were fired 788 times in the first year. I'm not sure what the frequency of firing was but this suggests over 100 foggy days.

If you want a book to dispel any romantic notions you might have of lightkeeping life in the 19th century, Light Over Lundy might do the job. Two sets of the "Instructions to Lightkeepers" are given -- the 1829 set and the 1845 revisions. There were just two keepers (a Principal and his assistant) who had to share the watch

every night (alternating the sunset-to-midnight and midnight-to-dawn shifts). They had to keep the place spotless, painted, whitewashed and polished. There were two lamp rooms to maintain. They had to transport all stores (including coal for heat and oil for the lamps) from the shore. At one stage Trinity House decided to forego the donkeys and rely on the keepers! Another report found that too much time was spent bringing water from the well (1km away) and that zinc spouts should be installed to collect rainwater.

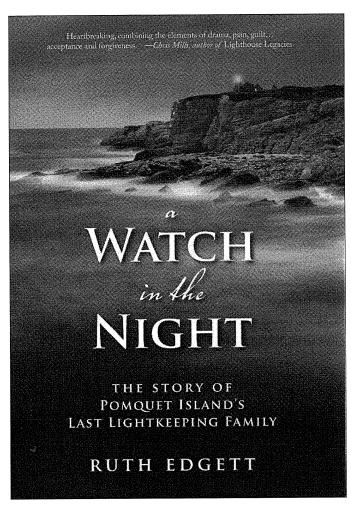
Is it any wonder then that many keepers asked for transfers? The book quotes several reports of disagreements and quarrels between the keepers. One is said to have deliberately stopped the light mechanism, for which he was fired. Unlike many lightstations, keepers on Lundy did not pass the job down from father to son. But family members must have been used as unpaid auxiliaries all the time. In the 1860s the staff became quite large with a third keeper added and two gunners for the fog battery. In 1871 these five families totaled 28 people.

All this makes for interesting but not very lively reading. The book has a tendency to quote reports and make lists, especially of wrecks. There is little evidence from these accounts of wrecks that the lighthouse and guns had much impact on their frequency. But there are no figures for the total number of vessels passing the island so, as a percentage, the figures might be well down.

The book covers much more than just the history of the lighthouse. Tales of wrecks, smuggling and wrecking (as well as salvaging) take up more space than the light itself and there is also the history of the owners of the island. It is a pity that the book does not provide a good feel for what it was like to be a lightkeeper on this small, remote, windswept and foggy island. No doubt this is because the historical material is too slight and one has to rely on the reports from the Trinity House Commissioners who paid only occasional visits. This only serves to highlight the personal accounts we have been able to save in Nova Scotia – of what it was like to live this singular way of life.

A Watch in the Night. Ruth Edgett. 196 pp. b&w photos. Nimbus Publishing. Halifax, Nova Scotia. 2007

This is a remarkable book about a very remarkable family. Like *Light over Lundy* it is a book about a lighthouse on an island and, like that book, it dispels romantic notions of life in such a setting and shows how hard it really was. But the resemblance ends here. While *Light over Lundy* is a rather dry account of the history of the island with very few personal details to grab the reader's attention, this book consists entirely of the personal



stories of the Millar family: parents Ruth and George and their children, Thelma, Rosa, Malcolm, Minna, David and Barbara. A Watch in the Night book tells one precisely what island life was like.

Family gatherings of these six siblings and their children must be wonderful affairs with one after another launching into memories of their early lives. This is a collection of those memories, deftly told by the daughter of the oldest, Thelma. She claims that it is part fiction but an outsider would have a very hard time guessing where fact ends and invention begins. Every sentence rings true and the whole story is bound so seamlessly that it is an entirely believable portrait of life on the island.

The island is Pomquet Island in St. Georges Bay – the large bay on the north shore of Nova Scotia, bounded on the west by Cape George and on the east by Cape Breton. It was busier with shipping before the causeway was built; the Strait of Canso being a convenient route from the Gulf into the Atlantic. But the main reason for the light on the island's north end was to guide fishing boats into Bayfield Harbour to the southeast. The island is only about half a kilometre off the end of Pomquet Point but it is about twice as far to the Bayfield wharf - more than far enough if one is rowing a small boat into a head wind or walking across on poor ice.

The story begins with a (slightly fanciful) prologue about the building of the lighthouse at the time of Confederation in 1867. It then takes up the story of Ruth George and Millar who began their life on the island in 1924. There is some biographi-



THE POMQUET ISLAND LIGHT DURING GEORGE MILLAR'S TENURE. DFO/CCG

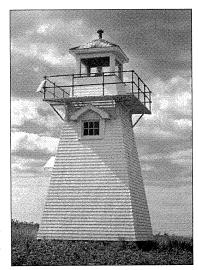
cal detail of their earlier life, especially George's army career in France (Vimy and Passchendale) in the first war. The story ends in 1959 when they leave the island and the light is automated.

Those 35 years saw then raise and educate their six children, face the upheaval and turmoil of the Second World War off the island (George was needed in the army again) and then retirement, leaving the island to the gulls and cormorants. Those 35 years were full of drama. The various episodes are told with great skill and the differing points of view of the participants -- parents versus children, sibling versus sibling – are presented with equal understanding. The author has obviously heard both (or

the many) sides of these

stories.

A Watch in the Night is a book that is hard to put down. One wants to know what happens to these people and, at the end, one feels that one knows the family and would like to give them a call and ask how they are doing. It is a story of great determination in the face of hardship. It is a story of how a family faced those hardships together; how the various personalities interacted, coped with



THE CURRENT POMOUET ISLAND LIGHT IN 1987. DFO/CCG

difficulty, shared the resources they had and helped each other through. It is an inspiring story showing how rich life can be with limited material possessions.

Buy it and enjoy reading it.

DOOMSDAY LIST		Ingonish Island, NS Concrete lighthouse and keeper's housi
This is a partial list of Canadian lighthouses and lightstation buildings in danger of being lost through neglect and environmental conditions. Please contact the editor with any suggestions or comments.		Isaac's Harbour, NS Combined dwelling/lighthouse
BEAR RIVER, NS DECOMMISSIONED WOODEN LIGHTHOUSE		KEPPEL ISLAND, NF LIGHTHOUSE, KEEPERS' HOUSES, FOG ALARN BUILDING, BOAT HOUSE
Cape Roseway, NS Dwellings and old fog alarm building		*Liscomb Island removed from list because keepers' house are now gone.
Country Island, Kee	EPERS HOUSE (ONE HOUSE BURNED IN 2005)	MADCADEE ISLAND, N.S. I KOMENOVED AND DARROWS
Choose Is the MC II		Margaree Island, NS Lighthouse and dwelling
Cross Island, NS KE	EPERS HOUSES	Moshers Island, NS Keepers' houses and small fog alarm
Devils Island, NS Wooden lighthouse and keeper's house		BUILDING
FISH FLUKE POINT, NB COMBINED LIGHT AND DWELLING		Peases Island, NS Keepers' duplex
French Point, NS Wooden lighthouse		QUEENSPORT(ROOK ISLAND), NS COMBINED DWELLING/LIGHTHOUSE
Gannet Rock, NB 1831 wooden tower and attached concrete keepers' house		Sambro Island, NS Dwellings and Gas House
		SEAL ISLAND, NS RADIO OPERATOR'S HOUSE, BARN
Georges Island, NS F	Keeper's house	
		SOUTHWEST POINT, ANTICOSTI ISLAND, QC
Green Island, Richmond Co., NS Keeper's house and old lighthouse (one house burned in 2005)		SAINT PAUL'S ISLAND: SOUTHWEST LIGHTKEEPERS HOUSE, WIRELESS OPERATOR'S HOUSE AT ATLANTIC COVE
Guyon Island, NS Ke	EPERS' HOUSES	
The Lightkeener is	published by the NOVA CCOTIA LIGH	ITHOUGH DD EGEDY ATTOM GO GYPTY
Museum of the Atla Lightkeeper, c/o Chr	ntic, 1675 Lower Water Street, Halifax,	THOUSE PRESERVATION SOCIETY, c/o Maritime B3J 1S3, Editor: Send items for publication to <i>The</i> tch Harbour, Nova Scotia, B3V 1K7, or e-mail ketch1@er 15, 2007.
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