



Sambro Island 1758

The Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society
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The Lightkeeper

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

leasing or taking ownership of lighthouse sites; to provide access to written research and photographic documentation, to initiate oral history research and to classify and monitor the status of historic lighthouse sites.

WEBSITE: <http://www.nslps.com>

LIGHTKEEPER EDITOR: Chris Mills

LAYOUT: Ayla-Monic McKay, NSCC

NEW MEMBERS

Leslie McLean
David Lesley
Sybil Nunn
Jill Smith
Nigel Kidd
Age of Sail Museum
Mel Cutler
Elizabeth June Smith
Nina Herne
Bettina Saier
Dominique Gusset
Frances Higgs

NSLPS EXECUTIVE 2015/16

President: Joanne McCormick

Past President: Barry MacDonald

1st VP/Secretary: Denyse Contrasty

2nd VP/Webmaster/Membership: Peter MacCulloch

Treasurer: Matt Burke

Lightkeeper: Chris Mills/Peter MacCulloch

Member-at-Large: Graham McBride

Member-at-Large: Janet Leigh Schaffner

Member-at-Large: Glen Fry

Member-at-Large: Gertrude Sweeney

Member-at-Large: Joe Flemming

Member-at-Large: Tom Roberts

Member-at-Large: Nigel Kidd

Cover Photo: Sid and Betty June Smith take a tea break below Cape Sable's powerful diaphone fog horn. Sid Smith passed away this March at the age of 83. *Courtesy Sid and Betty June Smith*

FROM THE EDITOR

2015 has been a roller coaster year for Nova Scotia lighthouses. In the spring, we revelled in the news that the feds had decided to pony up more than a million dollars to restore Sambro light. We also lost a good friend and prominent lightkeeper in March with the passing of Sidney Smith. We learned that indeed, "This Lighthouse Matters", thanks to The National Trust for Canada, and thanks to the generous donations of concerned Nova Scotians. And we saw more lighthouses go dark, replaced by utilitarian steel towers with LED lights.

It's perhaps too easy to blame government policy for the loss of so many of our treasured lightstations. On one level, it's true, but on another, it's really up to all of us to step up to the plate to save the remnants of our lighthouse heritage.

Community groups at sites such as Cape Forchu, Port Bickerton, Hampton, Port Medway, Sandy Point, Dingwall, and Walton, to name just a few, have shown that perseverance and passion can and will go a long way towards saving a lighthouse and its history.

Other groups, such as those on Brier and Long Islands, and Digby, have been stepping up efforts to raise the profiles of their guiding lights. All work under increasing pressure to take over sites and structures deemed by government to be far too expensive, and in fact, unnecessary. This challenge will not diminish, but it's comforting to know that dedicated groups *do* have the power to raise public awareness and save *our* lights.

Through all of this, as a lighthouse enthusiast, researcher, lightkeeper, and member of NSLPS, I've watched the ebb and flow of this part of our marine history. It's been a pleasure and a privilege to research our lighthouses, interview their keepers, help write their stories, and edit the journal which you are reading right now.

I took over duties from Kathy Brown, who was our first editor. After 15 years "at the helm", it's now time for me to pass duties our next editor. I've enjoyed sharing our lighthouse history and stories with you. It's been a pleasure to speak with many of you on the phone, and in person, as I solicited articles and updates.

In the early days, I wrote, edited and laid out each issue. For several years now, graphic print and production students at the Waterfront Campus of the

Nova Scotia Community College have taken all of the copy and photos I provide, and done all the layout, as part of their course of study. Thus, *The Lightkeeper* has become a teaching tool, as well as a tangible way of connecting various groups and interested individuals across Nova Scotia, Canada, and to a few points in the US and overseas.

I'd like to thank instructor Doug Lewis and his students for doing an excellent job. Thanks also to Nancy Eisener and Ashley Lohnes for taking over *Lightkeeper* duties for a year during the 2000s.

After 15 years it's time for me to pass duties on to a new editor. As much as I'll miss pulling each issue together, it's time for fresh energy and ideas, and I know Peter MacCulloch is up to the task.

Thank you all for your support, and your patience. I look forward to contributing to *The Lightkeeper* in the future!

Chris Mills

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS 2015

Joanne McCormick

2015 was a year of many highlights!

Our meeting was opened by a very special musical group, From the Heart, who have not only contributed their voices, but who also have donated a very generous portion of the funds from their CD, *For Sambro Beside the Sea*, to NSLPS. The CD is dedicated to Sambro, "where people know that real treasure is found in family, friends, and community."

The usual reports followed with Treasurer Matt Burke stating that we finished 2014 in good shape due to donations in memory of Jalynn Bennett. These donations were passed on to The National Trust for our on-line competition for funds, THIS LIGHTHOUSE MATTERS.

Peter MacCulloch reported that membership is down this year. We will be embarking on a campaign to boost our membership for the coming year. Joanne McCormick suggested that for special occasions, members give family and friends gift memberships.

Lightkeeper report: Our long-time editor, Chris Mills, conveyed that he will do one more issue and then will assist the new editor with future issues. Chris has been a hard-working and loyal editor for many, many years, and we thank him from the bottom of our hearts for his dedication.

Barry MacDonald informed members that the Heritage Lighthouse Protection Act was drawing to a close on May 29, 2015. 35 business plans in Nova Scotia were submitted to the government for consideration

under the Act, and 15 are on the Minister's desk, waiting for reports of any environmental remediation. By the time of this printing, more information may have been released by Parks Canada.

Election of Officers and Directors:

President: Joanne McCormick

Past President: Barry MacDonald

1st VP/Secretary: Denyse Contrasty

2nd VP/Webmaster/Membership: Peter MacCulloch

Treasurer: Matt Burke

Lightkeeper: Chris Mills/Peter MacCulloch

Members at Large: Graham McBride, Janet Leigh Schaffner, Glen Fry, Gertrude Sweeney, Joe Flemming, Tom Roberts, Nigel Kidd.

Natalie Bull, Executive Director of Heritage Canada the National Trust, was guest speaker for the night. Natalie worked with Barry for many years on the Heritage Lighthouse Protection Act. She explained the initiative THIS LIGHTHOUSE MATTERS, an on-line competition for funding for community groups trying to restore their lights. Natalie declared Barry a national hero for his work, and a dear colleague. She presented Barry with a collage of photos and a copy of the HLP, which was received with great appreciation. Barry is retiring as President, and an article on this is included separately in this newsletter.

Following the business meeting, Dan Conlin, curator of the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21, made a presentation on immigration to Canada. This featured stories, photos and quotes; the common theme was the harbour lighthouses as the immigrants' first view of Canada. Between 1928 and 1972 more than a million people arrived at Pier 21. Now, immigrants arrive at Halifax International Airport, but if one looks closely, there is a miniature lighthouse decorating one of the baggage carousels.

BARRY MACDONALD RETIRES AS PRESIDENT OF NSLPS

Joanne McCormick

Barry MacDonald, active in lighthouse preservation for 17 years, and President of NSLPS for the past 12 years, announced his retirement at our Annual General Meeting. He was honoured at the April Annual General Meeting in the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, by a large crowd of well-wishers.

Following the business meeting, two board members who have known Barry many years, Chris Mills and Glen Fry, said a few words about their long-



JOANNE MCCORMICK AND PETER MACCULLOCH THANK BARRY MACDONALD FOR HIS YEARS OF SERVICE AS PRESIDENT OF THE NSLPS. *MATTHEW BURKE*

time friend. Natalie Bull, Executive Director of Heritage Canada the National Trust also spoke, and presented Barry with a framed picture of memorabilia – glimpses of his national record of achievement through the years.

Incoming president Joanne McCormick added her thoughts to what had already been said:

“In the ten years I have known Barry, I have never heard him raise his voice. He has been a calm and thoughtful presence at our meetings, and with his teasing brand of humour, has made countless friends both in the NSLPS and across the Province; indeed the whole country. His vision led us to ultimately partner with Heritage Canada the National Trust, which is proving to be a very happy relationship, opening up tremendous opportunities to assist more than 25 lighthouses this summer, through the THIS LIGHTHOUSE MATTERS initiative.”

Following these remarks, Denyse Contrasty presented Anne Marie, Barry’s wife, who has stood by and helped Barry these many years, with a bouquet of a dozen red roses, and Joanne presented them with an Air Canada gift certificate “to go visit those little grandchildren of yours out in B. C.!”

WELL DONE, BARRY!! We will miss you more than we can say.

SIDNEY SMITH: YOU WEREN’T LONELY, THIS WAS HOME

Chris Mills

It’s difficult to think of the Cape Sable lighthouse without thinking of Sid Smith. Together with his father Benjamin, and his cousin Reg, Sid was part of a family continuum on the Cape that kept watch for more than half a century. Benjamin and Lottie moved to the lighthouse off Nova Scotia’s extreme southwest tip in 1929, and in 1931, their son Sidney came into the world, following older brother Gerald. Later, sister Dellas completed the family whose name was to become synonymous with service and dedication on the Cape. Cousin Reg finished up at the light, serving from 1979 to 1984, just before the Coast Guard de-staffed the lightstation.

I was fortunate enough to meet Sid in the early 80s, shortly after he’d left lightkeeping on the Cape to take up a new job as lifeboatman on CG 101, the 44’ lifeboat based in Clark’s Harbour. My father and I had driven down in a slashing rainstorm in the wee hours of a June morning from our home in Head of St. Margaret’s Bay, in the hopes of getting out to Seal Island for a birding trip. We’d stopped in at the lifeboat station to check on the weather, and I followed Sid into the kitchen area of the trailer where he was making a cup of tea, to ask him about diaphones (Canada’s noisy gift to safe navigation) and his time at the Cape. Sid, recognizing a lighthouse keener (not yet a keeper!), smiled and patiently answered my questions. When we learned that the weather wasn’t expected to moderate in a hurry and just wouldn’t suit a two-hour run to Seal Island that morning, my disappointment was tempered by the fact that I’d finally met and talked with Sid Smith.

My folks ran across Sid and his wife Betty June from time to time over the years, at various Nova Scotia Bird Society gatherings around the province, but I didn’t



BENJAMIN AND SID SMITH AT CAPE SABLE. *COURTESY SID AND BETTY JUNE SMITH*



SID IN THE ENGINE ROOM AT CAPE SABLE. *COURTESY SID AND BETTY JUNE SMITH*

see Sid again until 2000. He and Betty June, and Betty June's sister Anne were among close to a hundred people attending an international lighthouse conference at White Point on the South Shore where I was presenting a talk. We caught up and made plans for me to visit their Barrington home to record an interview with Sid, about his time on the Cape.

I did just that in the late fall of the same year. Sid and Betty June welcomed me into their home, built by Betty June's parents Evelyn and Morrill, when they



SID SMITH AND FRIEND RELAX BY THE RADIO, CAPE SABLE. *COURTESY SID AND BETTY JUNE SMITH*

retired from their own lightkeeping career on Bon Portage Island. Neatly trimmed spruces along a narrow driveway created the impression of travelling down a tunnel. At the end of the tunnel, a small house almost surrounded by more trees. Outside the big kitchen

window, all manner of nuthatches, chickadees, jays and thieving grackles competing for space at the feeders.

I don't remember if we had tea first, or got down to the business of the interview, but either way, the trip down the tunnel of spruces led me through the years to Sid and Betty June's life and times on Cape Sable, while keeping me firmly in the present with their friendship and hospitality.

That friendship persists. Sid and Betty June have unfailingly answered my questions about their lives on the coast, and their lightkeeping memories. In the



SID, BETTY JUNE, LOCKE AND BEVERLY SMITH AT CAPE SABLE IN THE 1970s. *COURTESY SID AND BETTY JUNE SMITH*

mid-2000s, when I was working on my second book, they graciously allowed me to borrow and scan family photos for use in the book. On another occasion, I drove to Barrington and Sid took the time to explain the operation of a 55 mm vapour burner for an article I was working on. Sid knew the burner inside out, from his years on the Cape, and during an earlier visit, he'd told me how effective, and how temperamental they could be.

"[The] kerosene vapour light, you couldn't trust the things", he said. They gave a good light but they weren't really that reliable. You had to have proper air



CAPE SABLE IN THE 1970s. *COURTESY SID AND BETTY JUNE SMITH*



BETTY JUNE AND SIDNEY SMITH WITH THEIR GRANDCHILDREN IN 2000. CHRIS MILLS

pressure, the rights drafts and all this sort of thing.

“You had kerosene under pressure coming into [a] vapourizing tube [which] came out of the top through a little pin hole and that was just a vapour. Little burners on the side kept the tube hot so the next batch of kerosene coming along would also get hot and vapourize. It was very much like a Coleman lantern, only much bigger.

“If those pilot lights that kept the tube hot went out, why then your kerosene came out as raw kerosene instead of vapour and it burned. And what a mess! How many times have I looked up there and said ‘Oh, should I go up there and put it out, or should I just set here and cry?!’”

“If you happened to catch this thing before it had been doing this for very long why it might not be too bad. It might only be a day to clean it up. But if it had been 10 minutes in the process of burning raw kerosene, all the lens the Fresnel lens, the iron work up overhead even, the window frames, even the windows themselves would have about an eighth of an inch of just a black grease. It was on EVERYTHING, and of course all the iron work and all the glasswork [and the] prisms. It wasn’t something you could take down and wash. You had to do it all right where it was!”

Flaring vapour burners side, Sid loved lightkeeping, and it’s likely that love was inspired by and facilitated by his life partner, Betty June. When I asked Sid if he was surprised that a job as assistant to his father would lead to decades living on the Cape, Sid had this to say:

“Did I think I would last that long? Well, I don’t suppose I would have if I hadn’t gotten married. Betty June just loved it out there and all aspects of lightkeeping of course because she grew up at Bon Portage light. I know that most lightkeepers that really hang it down and are successful, or were successful, [did well] because they had a wife that liked it too. I suppose if I hadn’t married Betty June, it could have been a different story. I feel it

might have been a different story. But to marry her and for her to enjoy it and take part in it, it just made the whole thing truly worthwhile.”

Of course there was more to Sid than lightkeeping. A man of faith, and a dedicated husband and father, Sid was an engaging companion, and whenever I was with him, unfailingly cheerful and interested in the world around him.

As my work schedule became busier, and took me to the opposite end of the province, my visits with Sid and Betty June decreased. But we continued to keep in touch by letter, and the occasional phone call.

Betty June wrote this past Christmas to say that Sid was responding well to cancer treatments, but on March 1, just a few weeks shy of his 84th birthday, Sid passed away. He left his beloved wife Betty June, son Locke, and daughter Beverly, and several grandchildren.

It was a privilege to know Sid Smith. His broad smile, his laugh, and his cheerful head-first dives into reminiscences of life on the Cape were a delightful treat: “Well, ok, I gotta tell you a little story...”he’d say, and off we’d go into an account of the time the duck flew into the belts in the engine room, or the time the survivors of a U-boat attack rowed more than a hundred miles and landed on The Cape.



SID SMITH RETURNED TO THE CAPE EVERY SUMMER FOR MANY YEARS. COURTESY SID AND BETTY JUNE SMITH

Sid's was a life well-lived, and a line from his obituary sums it up, just so: "Sid finished as he began, loving and well beloved."

Amen.

THIS LIGHTHOUSE MATTERS: A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN NSLPS AND THE NATIONAL TRUST OF CANADA

Joanne McCormick

Supporters: Four Champions, RBC Foundation, & Telus (featured next issue)

This summer was a very exciting one for lighthouses in Nova Scotia!!! 26 lighthouses took part in our on-line competition for a quarter of a million dollars in donated funding. There were nine winners of cash prizes ranging from \$75,000 to \$5000. Crowdfunding also was a key component. The goals of this project were to inject funding to help save Nova Scotia's lighthouses, to raise public awareness and to mobilize community support through our model, and to use social media to engage new audiences.

In our next issue, we will be featuring our winners, but here is a summary of some of the results this competition produced:

- \$260,000 distributed to lighthouse projects through cash prizes and matching funding.
- \$39,666 raised through crowdfunding.
- 361 contributors, \$110 average contribution.
- 71 earned media articles, interviews, and op-eds reaching a potential audience of 6.5 million.
- 190 new Twitter followers, 482,700 re-tweet reach
- 427 new Facebook "likes" 75,141 FB impressions, 95 new Instagram followers
- 474,856 hits on THIS LIGHTHOUSE MATTERS.ca
- 238,571 unique visitors to THIS LIGHTHOUSE MATTERS.ca
- 96% of competition participants agree THIS LIGHTHOUSE MATTERS raised public awareness for Nova Scotia's lighthouses.
- 26 lighthouse groups participated.
- 219,794 votes were cast.
- 10 youth social media volunteers gave 250 hours as part of the LIGHTS Team.
- Two lighthouse groups reached their crowdfunding goal.
- Five lighthouse groups reached 50% of their crowdfunding goal.
- 76% of competition participants reported that they expanded their network of supporters.
- 65% of competition participants learned new fundraising techniques and gained knowledge about using social

media.

- 68% of competition participants would crowdfund on the THIS PLACE MATTERS site in the future.

Quotes we love:

"Does this have to end tonight? It has shed such an important spotlight on our built heritage!"

"Just wanted to let you know how much I enjoyed the contest. I think we did a terrific job to bring awareness to people about our lighthouses, which makes us all winners."

"THIS LIGHTHOUSE MATTERS generated more excitement in the village than we have seen in a very long time."

"THIS LIGHTHOUSE MATTERS brought the lighthouse directly to the forefront of community concern. People were discussing it in Tim Horton's. It really raised the bar of awareness."

"THIS LIGHTHOUSE MATTERS brought the community together, emotionally involved. It was a huge positive influence for the entire community, not just the heritage lighthouse project."

Why preserve Nova Scotia's lighthouses? The motto of the Port Bickerton lighthouse says it all: "The light of our past illuminates the path to our future." (Ron Stansfield, Port Bickerton Lighthouse)

We are so happy with the progress we have made this summer, but the excitement isn't over. More crowd funding will begin in the fall! Stay tuned!

HOPE FOR SAMBRO LIGHT

Stephanie Smith

Hope and chatter has been building around what looks like a brighter future for the oldest operating lighthouse in the Western Hemisphere, the Sambro Island lighthouse.

This spring, word spread quickly throughout the village of Sambro and surrounding areas of a government announcement in regards to the lighthouse.

On May 9th, 2015, lighthouse supporters gathered and excitement grew in St. James United Church in Sambro. On this momentous day for the community, The Honorable Peter McKay, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada on behalf of the Honorable Gail Shea, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, announced that the Federal Government is investing over \$1.5 million for a two-year rehabilitation project of the Sambro Island lighthouse.

Gerald Keddy, Member of Parliament for South Shore Saint Margaret's, a true lighthouse friend, was also in attendance that day, along with members of the Sambro Island Lighthouse Heritage Society and the Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society.



VISITORS ENJOY SAMBRO ISLAND ON A BEAUTIFUL AUGUST DAY.
JOSETTE D'ENTREMONT

At a number of points during both Minister McKay's and Gerald Keddy's heartfelt speeches there were plenty of tears of joy and smiles throughout the crowd. We felt the pride and unity in that room: Maritimers banding together to do what's right! It was a huge victory for us all. This funding is a very important first step in the long-term preservation of this iconic Canadian light. Finally, the Sambro Island Lighthouse, dubbed by some as Canada's Statue of Liberty, is getting some of the much-deserved attention, recognition, respect and care that it so much needs and deserves.

MP Gerald Keddy stated that the \$1.5 million in funding will go towards concrete renovations, rehabilitation of the original lantern and gallery, installation of a heating and ventilation system and repainting of the lighthouse. The lighthouse will be strong and will be able to withstand the force of the harsh Atlantic's conditions for many years to come.

However, this work is not a permanent solution. Sambro Island lighthouse needs a commitment from the federal government to continuously fund and maintain the light for generations to enjoy. This iconic structure needs to be taken care of in perpetuity. It has been perched on its rocky island home for a stretch of more than 250 years; more than a century before this great country's confederation. It was the first act ever passed by the Nova Scotia House of Assembly.

Sambro Light is more than just a working navigational aid. It holds Heritage Building status along with being deemed a National Historic Site. The tower holds an immense amount of historical importance, along with so much cultural pride.

The natural beautiful landscaping of island, the sightings of seabirds and wildlife on and in the waters, the views of passing ships and fishing vessels heading into Halifax Harbour or out to sea, the great amount of shipwrecks that surround the island, even a resident ghost, along with countless tales and lure of our coastal community, are all there for anyone curious enough to tour the island. Breathing in the salt air, while hearing

the sea gulls cry as the tour boat steams out on the open water to get to the remote island; doesn't that sound like a park setting? Doesn't that sound like the trip of a lifetime for a tourist who has never seen the Atlantic Ocean and wants to experience maritime lifestyle? Yes, yes, it does!

Ultimately this is what both societies (SILHS and NSLPS) and many community members want to see happen for the Sambro Island Lighthouse: for it to become a national park and be placed under Parks Canada's inventory. That would be the ultimate solution! Not only would that guarantee the survival of this beacon, but it would also mean economic growth for Sambro and all of Nova Scotia. Lighthouses, after all, are Nova Scotia's tourism icons.

Back on November 10, 2014, Megan Leslie, MP for Halifax and Peter Stoffer, MP for Sackville-Eastern Shore, held a press conference at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic to discuss and promote the importance of the Sambro Island Lighthouse. Members from NSLPS and SILHS along with Brendan Maguire, Halifax Atlantic MLA, were in attendance.

We had the pleasure of listening to George Zwaagstra, a Dutch immigrant, tell his story of desperation and seasickness during his travels across the Atlantic by ship, and the overwhelming feeling of hope that spread through the vessel when word of a light was spotted. The passengers came up on deck to witness it; some so ill that they needed to be carried. They stood in awe of Sambro Light; the first glimpse of their new country! That feeling will be forever in their hearts.

We also had the honor of listening to navy veteran Earl Corn, as he shared his memories of seeing Sambro Light. His Sergeant ordered Corn and his crew members to stand on deck as the naval ship drew closer to Halifax Harbour.

"We are home boys, we are home, there is the Sambro light", they cheered.

That light represented an immense amount of pride, joy and sorrow to the brave crews. The crew also felt sadness for the fallen sailors who never had the privilege to see that light again. Earl's tale was so moving that there wasn't a dry eye in the room.

Megan Leslie spoke of a Private Members Bill that she had draughted: Bill C-588, the Sambro Island Lighthouse Act, an act to amend the Heritage Lighthouse Protection Act. If Megan's bill is passed, Sambro Island Lighthouse would then be placed under Parks Canada's care which would assure its long term preservation.

Megan first introduced Bill C-588 in The House of Commons on April 8th 2014. On June 12th, 2014 Megan presented a petition with more than 5,400 signatures strong from all over the country, gathered by the determined residence of Sambro and beyond, requesting that the federal government take responsibility for its maintenance.

On May 25th 2015, the second reading of Bill C-588

took place. Megan and other members of parliament spoke truthful and beautiful words about this beacon of hope as they read their speeches. Many politicians of all stripes and levels of government agree that the Sambro lighthouse is one of the most historically important in Canada.

As the president and one of the co-founders of the Sambro Island Lighthouse Heritage Society, I feel tremendously privileged to be part of this journey and to witness the profound pride of Canadian Maritimers of all backgrounds and political stripes work together to do what's right, to save Sambro Lighthouse. This is more than just saving a lighthouse. It is about saving our Canadian history. It is about teaching our children to dream big and to wholeheartedly go out there to accomplish those goals. If we don't save our Canadian history, we will have no Canadian culture. This is about sharing a better sense of who we are and where we come from.

SPECTACLE LIGHT SOCIETY: STILL ON COURSE TO OWN THE LIGHT

Mel Cutler

Port Mouton, a South Shore community should finally take ownership (hopefully!) of their lighthouse before the end of 2015.

May 29th of this year proved to be a big step forward as we received official notification the lighthouse had been declared a heritage building. Hooray!! ☺☺☺ Hooray!!

With that step complete, the divestiture (ownership) process could start to roll again after "collecting dust" for over a year. Having started on this path in 2004, we are now hopeful we can own our beloved Spectacle Light before the sun sets on 2015 - but DFO will determine that!

As of writing this article, the Spectacle Light Society is currently part of a "Crowdfunding" Competition that started two weeks ago (on June 17th). The competition is open to all lighthouses within Nova Scotia, and there is some serious money to be won - \$75,000 for 1st place in the top category! The money being awarded will really help some lighthouses that desperately need funding, so our congratulations to everyone who does win some prize money, even if it is not us!

We have a handful of projects planned for when we do own this light. One of them is to purchase and install artistic signs on the island as storyboards to help provide for increased safety for visitors, tell of the historic and cultural past of the island and lighthouse, and to pursue environmental education.

Hopefully, we can win a share of the pot of the crowdfunding competition to fund that expenditure. However, like an old nag slow out of the gate on a racecourse, we are not "going well" in the voting at the moment. No



MEL CUTLER IN THE LANTERN ROOM OF SPECTACLE LIGHT IN 2013.
CHRIS MILLS

matter, as in all things, it is better to try and fail than not try at all.

In closing: our sincere gratitude to Chris Mills for his effort/dedication to *The Lightkeeper* for many years. Thanks to Chris, as we have all been able to share in some history and wonderful stories about something dear to all of us, and that should remain standing forever: our lighthouses.



MEL CUTLER AND VISITOR SEANA BRACKETT AT SPECTACLE LIGHT IN 2013. *CHRIS MILLS*

Ed's Note: We have learned that Mel has decided to step down as president of the Spectacle Light Society, effective upon registry of the lighthouse in the society's name, and the transfer of grant money to the society. We wish Mel the very best and thank him for his hard work and perseverance in saving Spectacle Light, along with the work of the entire SLS

NEWS AND VIEWS

Sambro Island Damage

Vandals have once again been at work on Sambro Island. Over the years, certain "intrepid" and inspired visitors have placed planks from a bluff near the island's gas house (once used for the manufacture of acetylene) to allow access to the structure's roof. In the past, some visitors have jumped off the roof into the island's main landing cove, but this year, a thoughtless individual or two decided to smash the building's chimney off level with the roof. This mindless act underscores the need for restoration and possible surveillance on the island.

Sambro Renovations

During the summer of 2014, visitors to Sambro Island noticed that at least one pane of glass in the lighthouse had been broken. This issue had the potential to lead to more rot inside the tower, where the top portion of the structure's wooden stairs, landings and steps had been failing for years.

Finally, after months of requests and letter-writing (thank you, Barry MacDonald!!), the Department of Fisheries and Oceans authorized emergency repairs to the upper portion of Sambro Light. Although the tower is not open to the public, it is now safe for Coast Guard technicians to climb, and the tower's TRB 400 lens is protected from snow and rain.

Sambro Island Tours A Success!

Josette d'Entremont

On Saturday, August 5th, 2015, NSLPS volunteers sold 72 tickets to folks from all over, visiting Sambro Island's historic lighthouse, the oldest operating lighthouse (1758) in the Northern Hemisphere. It's an annual event, usually occurring during Sambro's Sou'wester Days in August. It couldn't have been a better day, with clear blue skies, a southern breeze and a whole lot of enthusiasm! Visitors enjoyed the beauty and nature of the island, the lighthouse, the geology, and the panoramic views! Many thanks to all the volunteers who helped organized this annual event. In all, 17 volunteers assisted during the day of the tour on the boat, both on the island, and on land selling tickets, etc. Prior to the tours, a work party of 20 volunteers from the Sambro area helped cut

grass and paths and cleaned up picnic areas, which this year, included picnic tables! Four volunteers helped get the island ready the day before the tour, and Captain Patrick Gray ferried everybody safely to and from the island during six round trips. Visitors saw lots of seals and seabirds but the ghost of Double Alex (Alec) remained shy. However, he may show up next year! Stay tuned!



ANOTHER LOAD OF VISITORS ARRIVE AT THE LANDING COVE. HISTORIC GAS HOUSE AT RIGHT. *JOSETTE D'ENTREMONT*



COMING IN TO THE LANDING COVE, SAMBRO ISLAND. *JOSETTE D'ENTREMONT*



HAPPY VISITORS GET READY TO DEPART AFTER ENJOYING SPECIAL TIME ON SAMBRO ISLAND. *JOSETTE D'ENTREMONT*



DEDICATED SAMBRO TOUR VOLUNTEERS JOSETTE D'ENTREMONT AND JOHN BEER. *COURTESY JOSETTE D'ENTREMONT.*

Skeleton Towers replace Traditional Lighthouses

Chris Mills

The Canadian Coast Guard is now several years into a program to replace many traditional lighthouse with low maintenance galvanized steel towers. From Cape North, to Cranberry Island, to Gull Rock, to Green



CRANBERRY ISLAND IN 2011. *COURTESY DAN MACNEIL, DFO/CANADIAN COAST GUARD*

Island in Yarmouth County, the old towers are going dark while their new neighbours send beams into the night. The new towers support lights, daymarks and in the case of Cranberry Island, a Racon. The following photos show some of the changes that will continue to take place along our shores as the old lights fade and new lights shine into the 21st century.



THE NEW STEEL TOWER AT CRANBERRY ISLAND. SIMILAR TOWERS HAVE REPLACED MANY TRADITIONAL LIGHTHOUSES IN ATLANTIC CANADA. *MELANIE SILVER, DFO/CANADIAN COAST GUARD*



THE NEW LIGHT AND HORNS AT GULL ROCK WITH THE ABANDONED TOWER/DWELLING NEARBY. *COURTESY DFO/CANADIAN COAST GUARD*



THIS VIEW OF CRANBERRY ISLAND FROM THE 1970s SHOWS JUST HOW EXTENSIVE MOST NOVA SCOTIA LIGHTSTATIONS WERE BEFORE THE ADVENT OF STEEL TOWERS AND LED TECHNOLOGY. THIS ENTIRE STATION HAS NOW BEEN REPLACED BY SOLAR PANELS AND A COUPLE OF STEEL TOWERS SUPPORTING LIGHT, RACON AND FOG HORNS. *COURTESY DFO/CANADIAN COAST GUARD*



GREEN ISLAND, YARMOUTH COUNTY, WITH ITS NEW STEEL TOWER NEXT TO THE DE-ACTIVATED LIGHTHOUSE. *COURTESY DFO/CANADIAN COAST GUARD*

BOOK REVIEW

The Lighthouse on Skerryvore. Paul A Lynn. Whittles Publishing Ltd., Dunbeath. 2015. 130 pp. Illustrations, drawings, photographs. Appendix. Index.

The Stevenson name is synonymous with Scottish Lighthouses. Beginning with civil engineer Robert, four generations of the family conceived, designed and constructed guiding beacons along Scotland's sea-battered coastline. Between 1801 and the late 1880s, the Stevensons helped light craggy capes and isolated wave-washed reefs around the country's entire coast. Robert's involvement with the Scottish lighthouse authority (Northern Lighthouse Board), and his role in the building of what is now the oldest rock tower in the world on Bell Rock, formed the granite-solid foundation of a family dynasty that eventually chalked up more than 100 lighthouses to its credit.

Robert wrote an account of the Bell Rock, which even today eclipses the existing records of other Stevenson-built lights. His sons David, Alan, and Thomas went on to design and build dozens of lights, while David's sons built a further 30 lighthouses. But none seemed to garner the same celebrity and popularity as Robert - despite their impressive accomplishments.

Alan Stevenson published an account of the building of the lighthouse on Skerryvore, a god-forsaken reef 12 miles (19 km) west of Tiree, in 1848. Strangely, setting down in print the arduous task and herculean efforts of the men who constructed the massive granite tower, to say nothing of the man who designed every inch of the 156-foot (47.6 m) goliath, didn't seem to create waves amongst the general public.

Author Paul Lynn, himself a professional engineer, purchased a rare first- edition of Alan's account several years ago, and soon became convinced that he needed to know more about the man who he calls "...a largely unsung hero...". The results of his "fascinating journey" into Alan Stevenson's life are encapsulated in *The Lighthouse on Skerryvore*.

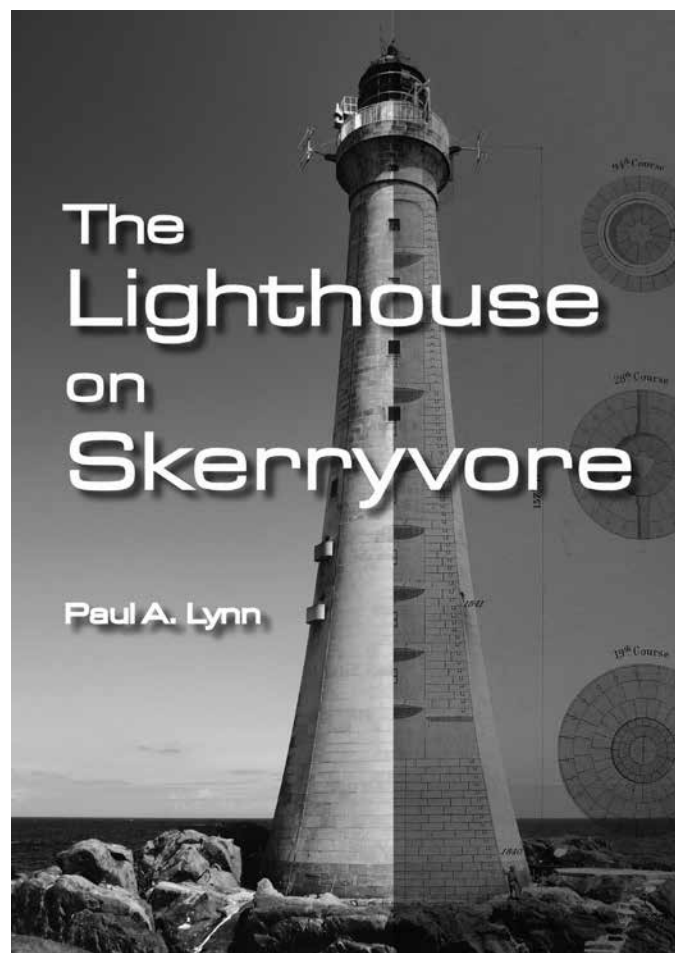
It's tempting to assume that a lighthouse book written by an engineer, about a lighthouse engineer, will be factual, dry, replete with heavy technical detail, and in general a heavy go. In this case, nothing is farther from the truth. Lynn writes with a light hand, weaving descriptive prose with science, setting the construction of Skerryvore in natural and social-historical context.

In Part I – Precedents – Lynn sets the stage for the building of a lighthouse on Skerryvore by writing of his own interest in the Hebrides, and his introduction to the lighthouse Stevensons. Beginning with Robert ("son of a thrice-married mother" by the age of 15), Lynn outlines the ambitions, growth, and the trials and tribulations of a

family destined to become the pre-eminent engineers of Scottish lighthouses. Lynn also makes note of the loss of shipping that was so key to the building of Skerryvore, and he explores the lessons learned from the building of Bell Rock (1807-11) and England's famous Eddystone (1696-98). The design (more or less from scratch) of towers able to withstand the massive forces of wind and sea, to say nothing of the "...technical, organisational, and personal..." challenges faced by the builders of these lights, formed the foundation of Alan's efforts to establish a light on Skerryvore.

Part 2 – Skerryvore – explores the preparations to build the great tower and then chronicles the construction of the massive granite structure, beginning with "A faltering start" in 1838. From the detailed survey of the entire 7-mile (11 km) reef system, to the exacting conception and design of the lighthouse, to the observation of ocean waves and their effects, Lynn leaves no granite unturned. He also delves deeply into the design of the tower, exploring Alan's challenges of pitting mass against strength, and the design decisions based "on the tensions between 'feelings' and 'calculation'". It's a bit technical in places, but Lynn never loses the reader in a quagmire of numbers and equations.

And what curves would be the most effective in



the design of the tower? Parabola? Logarithmic, Hyperbola? Conchoid? In the end, Alan decided on Hyperbola, and the graceful lines of his tower began to take shape on paper.

The challenges continued. During the summer of 1838 Alan landed on the rock with a team of close to three dozen men, to construct a temporary barracks on the rock. The housing of 30 men in a 13' diameter room built on stilts, with no mention of toilet facilities, is a large enough feat of endurance to consider, let alone the years of construction to come.

Then there was the hiring of skilled workers to cut and dress stones for the tower, the setting up of portable forges, and the transferring of building materials from the supply vessel to Skerryvore itself – all when the weather was in cooperative mood. Completion of the pyramidal wooden barracks raised spirits, and the men left the rock in September with a feeling of accomplishment – only to learn that by November, a heavy storm had laid waste to the structure.

Despite this enormous setback, Alan set about re-designing the structure and throughout 1839-40, the laborious and exacting tasks of erecting the new barracks and laying the base of the tower moved ahead. Lynn details this work, and provides some insight into the harsh living conditions on the rock. During one particularly harrowing stretch of bad weather, Alan and his men spent two weeks with no communication with the shore, or their supply steamer. “They spent most of the fortnight in their beds,” he wrote. “One particularly violent wave produced cries of terror from the men...convinced that they had all been washed into the sea.”

Work continued, and by late 1842, the soaring granite tower had been completed – “topped out” with a last piece of granite, and then, the glazed lantern. During the 1843 season workers began the tedious job of fitting out the interior of the tower for its keepers, and installing the very latest in lighthouse illumination – a catadioptric Fresnel lens manufactured in France. On the night of February 1, 1844, the brilliant pencil beams of Skerryvore’s lens stabbed at the dark North Atlantic night.

As Lynn says, the completion of Skerryvore did not mean Alan Stevenson was done with his tower. He’d been appointed Engineer to the Northern Lighthouse in early 1843, and among his many responsibilities were laying out the keepers’ duties, and providing insight into their conditions of employment and salaries. Who better to do so, given his intimate knowledge of life on the rock?

Alan went on to construct another 11 lighthouses around Scotland (he’d completed a light on Little Ross the year before Skerryvore went into operation). In the final section of his book, author Lynn reflects on Alan’s accomplishments, his friendship with Leonor Fresnel

(brother of Augustin, the dioptric lens pioneer), and his personal nature. The product of stern and “forceful” parents, Alan was “shy and introspective”, “preferring literature and poetry to physical activity”. He was also “...ruled over by a Father with an old-fashioned Christian outlook, a superhuman work ethic, and strong views about the education of his sons.” Parental pressure won out in the end, and Alan agreed to join the family business of engineering.” Yet he rose to the challenge with humour, and not a little grace.

Lynn notes that Alan continually wrestled to balance the practical need to forge ahead with construction on the Sabbath, with his feelings of guilt for having violated “the sanctity of the Lord’s Day. This guilt undoubtedly stayed with Alan to the end of his days, but Lynn speculates that despite this, Alan’s “later years were made more bearable by the love and respect of his family and friends”.

Paul Lynn has written a gem of a book that is more than just an account of the building of a massive stone tower on a treacherous ledge. *The Lighthouse on Skerryvore* is an important record of the efforts of a man who lived under the shadow of a strict father, lived within the religious conventions of the time, and worked under the almost insurmountable difficulties of not only designing a lighthouse to withstand all the sea had to throw at it, but build that light on a wave – washed ledge 12 miles offshore.

Instead of getting lost in technical detail Lynn blends art and science, distilling the story of Skerryvore into a highly readable, engrossing chronicle. *The Lighthouse On Skerryvore* is as complete as possible an account as can be fit into 130 pages.

Poet William Wordsworth wrote to Alan Stevenson in May, 1848, after the engineer had sent him a copy of his account of Skerryvore, “...the perusal of which I promise myself confidently both instruction and pleasure, in no small degree.” Whether you’re a fan of lighthouses, or just interested in a solid read about an amazing man and his drive to make life safer at sea, I believe the same “instruction and pleasure” are to be found in Paul Lynn’s *The Lighthouse on Skerryvore*.

Chris Mills

THANK YOU, JALYNN!! A TRIBUTE TO JALYNN BENNETT – FRIEND OF NOVA SCOTIA'S LIGHT- HOUSES

Joanne McCormick

Jalynn came to us out of the blue, contacting our Society with concern over the condition of the local lighthouse near her cottage in Nova Scotia. Upon meeting her, we found a lovely and gentle lady, unassuming and caring. We loved her from the beginning. She clearly wanted to help us achieve our goal of saving as many Nova Scotia lighthouses as we could: not just for nostalgia, but for business, for tourism, for our grandchildren.

Her great mind was perceptive.

"It makes no sense to see these disappear," she remarked.

We had no idea at that time that Jalynn was a prominent Canadian director and pioneering female executive. She had served as director at many major companies and she was a leader in both public and private sectors. With her practical approach and her ability to connect and inspire, her wisdom, good humour and warm personality won many hearts.

Together with the Honourable Margie McCain, and later the Honourable Myra Freeman and Jane Nicholson, a course of fundraising was initiated, which has led us to THIS LIGHTHOUSE MATTERS.

Jalynn passed away on January 23rd of this year. Thank you, Jalynn, Nova Scotia will not forget you.

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SID AND BETTY JUNE SMITH AT CAPE SABLE. *COURTESY SID AND BETTY JUNE SMITH*



CAPE SABLE LIGHT DURING THE SUMMER OF 2015. *JOSETTE D'ENTREMONT*