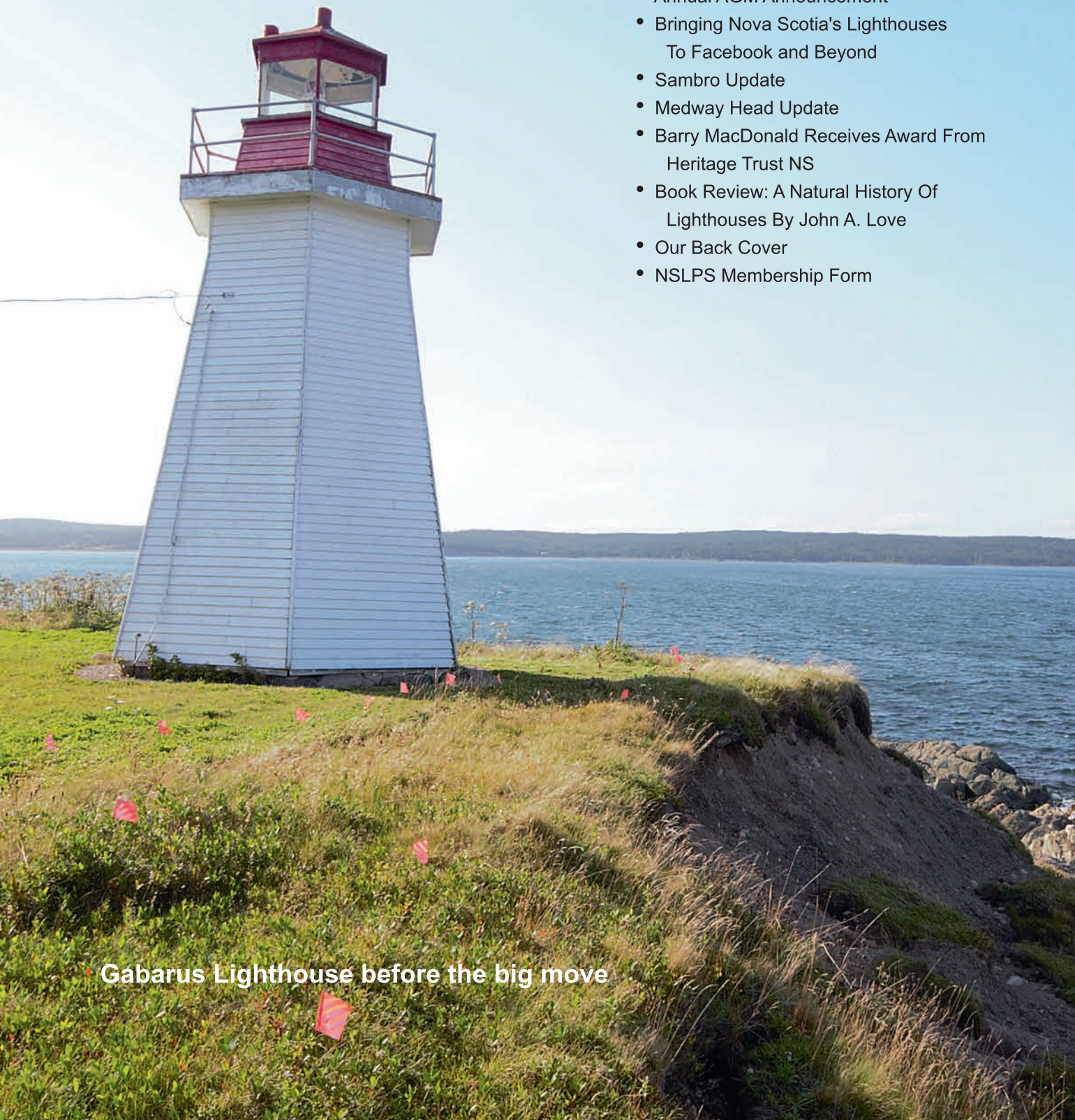


The Lightkeeper

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Gabarus Lighthouse before the big move



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

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Cover Photo

Dangerously at the edge of an eroding bank, the **lighthouse at Gabarus** is held from falling by the power line attached. Gabarus was the winner of the ***This Lighthouse Matters*** competition and this funding saved the light from a certain fate.

Welcome New Members

Kathy Oakley, Prospect NS, Randy and Brenda Crozman, New Minas NS, Valerie Mitchell-Veinotte, Bridgewater NS, Meredith O'Hara, Dartmouth Nova Scotia, Katie Prescott, Aylesford Nova Scotia

Patrons

Kathy Oakley, Dan Conlin, Roderick MacLennan, Edith Northfield, James Lockhart, Jeanne McIsaac, Leslie McLean, Rachel Hoogenbos, Randy and Brenda Crozman, Roderick MacLennan, Ronald D. Stewart

Sustaining Members

Denyse Contrasty, Barbara Joan Davis, George Himmelman, John Stewart, Sherry Mochinski

From The Editor

Last year, Chris Mills announced the end of his almost two decades of service as Lightkeeper editor. After much consideration I have accepted the challenge and will put my shoulder to the wheel. Now, wondering why I volunteered, I find myself frantically trying to unravel the mysteries of doing a newsletter layout.

For this and future issues, I will be using an open source (free) tool for doing the layout called Scribus. It looks like it has all the features I will ever need. Unfortunately there is a steep learning curve. Even so, I am working through my first issue and look forward to the day we publish.

All in all I think I am getting the hang of it. When I finish my first edition, I will have the satisfaction of having learned a new skill.

As I see it, being editor is the easy part. I want to thank all the people who have submitted the materials that are going in to this issue. Without these news stories and articles, this publication would not be possible.

I welcome all images and story ideas that we can use in future Lightkeepers. Please send those to me at pmacculloch@nslps.com



Saving the Gabarus Lighthouse – A Journey

Gabarus Lighthouse won second prize in the competition "This Lighthouse Matters" in 2015. With certain disaster looming, the Gabarus lighthouse group were able to move the lighthouse back from the eroding bank. Here is their story.

On November 27th 2015, the historic Gabarus Lighthouse was saved from certain destruction. The 125 year old lighthouse had stood on the shore of Gabarus Bay in Cape Breton guiding seafarers and fishermen to safety for generations but recently faced two enemies. The cliff on which it sat was being rapidly eroded by a process known as slumping. The

metropolitan centre. But this diverse community works together and the results were seen in the restoration of the Gabarus seawall and now in the rescue of the lighthouse.

In May 2014 a group of Political Science students from Cape Breton University met with the Gabarus residents to develop a business plan for the Gabarus Lightkeepers Society to take over responsibility for the lighthouse through the governments divestiture process. The plan was submitted to DFO in June of that year. Except for an email acknowledging receipt of the business plan nothing further happened. In the meantime, the erosion continued and word of lighthouses being torn down spread. The CBU students prepared a comprehensive report on the impact of erosion at the Gabarus site and it was forwarded to DFO in the hope of moving the divestiture process forward. This report was a contradiction of previous



DFO statements that erosion was not a problem in Gabarus.

In April 2015, the Gabarus Lightkeepers Society sought and received confirmation from the community that there was a commitment by the residents to take responsibility for saving the lighthouse, and to work to

destruction was unstoppable and irreversible, the remaining ground measured 3 metres. The second attack was coming from the government agency formerly charged with protecting and maintaining lighthouses. Oceans and Fisheries Canada (formerly Department of Fisheries and Oceans and still referred to as DFO) had declared most of the lighthouses across Canada as surplus. This declaration included the Gabarus lighthouse, and being surplus meant that it could be torn down and replaced by a red light on a metal pole at any time. While the local community wanted desperately to save the lighthouse, the question was, which act of destruction might take it first?

The 300 year old Village of Gabarus is historically a fishing community and some of the 78 residents have family ties going back generations. Others are new-comers, from across the world. The population reflects the economic, cultural and life experiences one would expect to encounter in a large



raise funds for all necessary costs. This was a huge commitment because actual costs were unknown. Having contractors provide estimates for moving and restoration necessitated gaining access to the interior of the lighthouse. The only key was in Dartmouth, and it could take months to co-ordinate the arrival of the key with contractor's schedules. Taxes were another unknown, because once the lighthouse was turned over to the community, the property would be re-assessed and as is common practice the taxes would be based on "the view", which is extraordinary. But the lighthouse was the heart of the community and residents declared they would find a way to raise funds, through hard work, reaching out to the broader community and asking for help wherever and whenever possible.



Communications with DFO was re-established and the community's commitment to take responsibility for the lighthouse was declared. At about the same time the Society became aware of the National Trust for Canada and the Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society contest "This Lighthouse Matters" designed to help communities save their lighthouses. Our Society applied and was accepted as a participant in the High Tide category and the race was on. On-line votes were solicited by residents, who were also requested to contact everyone in their personal networks and ask for their support not just in voting but in passing on word about the contest and the desperate need of the Gabarus Lighthouse. One of the Society directors contacted every lighthouse association, group and society world-wide that he could locate through the internet and asked for their voting support. This tactic worked as we began to see votes growing around the clock as different time zones came on line. The possibility of winning prize money bolstered hope that the lighthouse would be saved. The Gabarus lighthouse story and word of the contest spread across the country, in store check-out lines and doctor's offices and workplace lunchrooms. The votes began to grow and hope became expectation.

Meanwhile, contractors were contacted for quotes, local government support was solicited and the erosion continued. The Gabarus Lightkeepers Society placed second in the contest, winning \$50,000 and the race

was on.

As little had transpired with the divestiture process, DFO entered a licence agreement with the Society which would allow work to proceed on moving and repairing

the lighthouse while it remained DFO property. This relieved the Society of the tax burden and liability insurance for the time being and all efforts could be concentrated on saving the lighthouse. The cliff continued to wash away and just over 2 metres of ground remained between the lighthouse and a 10 metre drop into the ocean.

A contractor with years of house moving experience was engaged and an early November moving date was set. Preliminary work began and then the whole moving crew came down with the flu. And the rains fell and the winds blew and daily measurements of the ground were taken. At some point there would not be enough ground left around the lighthouse for the equipment necessary to move it and that point was getting very close. On November 26 all of the preliminary work for the move was completed and the move was set for November 27th. The forecast was for clear but windy weather and the decision to go ahead would be made by the contractor in the morning. There was little sleep happening in Gabarus that night.

The morning was cold and bright. The winds were from the west which meant that the lighthouse site was protected by a row of trees and the decision to go was made. The press from the major networks and local media were all assembled. The move was expected to take 3 to 4 hours but in fact took almost 8 hours



because the liquid dishwashing soap used to lubricate the rails on which the lighthouse was sliding, kept drying out in the wind. By dark the lighthouse was re-located on its new foundation, far enough from the cliff edge to ensure its future for at least another hundred years.

Images by Gabarus Lighthouse Society

Author's note: There are many more stories to be told about the saving of the Gabarus Lighthouse and we hope to share them with other lighthouse communities one day. But for now the process is on-going and the community has much work still to do. If you have questions, please contact me at gabarus.lighthouse@gmail.com.

Janet McGillen, Chair, Gabarus Lightkeepers Society.



Cranberry Island Lighthouse, safely guiding seafarers since 1815

By Joe Fleming



Courtesy Nova Scotia Archives

Canso is a small, resilient fishing village on the eastern tip of mainland Nova Scotia. Established in 1604, Canso was one of only two British settlements in Nova Scotia prior to the founding of Halifax in 1749. The second settlement was Port Royal.

Canso's strategic location and deep, protected harbour made it a key sea port during several historic battles. In 1745, Canso acting as a staging area for the British expedition led by Sir William Pepperrell and Sir Peter Warren which led to the defeat of the French at Louisburg, home of Canada's very first lighthouse.

During the 19th century, Canso prospered as a fishing

and trading town. And in 1888, The Commercial Cable Company laid a communications cable from Europe to mainland North America, landing in nearby Hazel Hill. This cable became a key link in Trans-Atlantic communication for newspapers, stock markets and military operations during WW1 and WW2.

Through the ages, access to Canso was primarily by sea, and its waterfront was often bustling with activity. Schooners, steam ships and fishing vessels alike would take up every linear inch on the docks, sometimes working their way partially up the Tickle, a narrow waterway between nearby Durrells Island and the mainland. Crews from near and far could be found

working tirelessly to exchange goods, or land their fresh catch and return to sea. Clearly, this flurry of sea traffic made it necessary that a safe passage to Canso Harbour be established and vigilantly maintained. Enter, Cranberry Island!



Cranberry Island is a small island approximately 1.7 miles offshore. It's low, rocky



and only $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile long, often divided into several parts at high water. It marks the eastern side of the entrance to Canso Harbour and stands watch over some of the coldest, deepest and roughest waters on Nova Scotia's Eastern Shore. A place rarely talked about and seldom visited, it has an air of mystery and intrigue.

At the southern end of Cranberry Island, you'll find a light station. It looks as though it were simply dropped there. Built in 1815, the Lighthouse was a 60 foot octagonal wooden tower with red and white bands. The light was constructed to help mariners navigate several shoals, rocks and ledges guarding the harbour, such as Pink Rock, Patch, Boom and Washball Rocks.

In 1857, the light was fitted with 2 vertical fixed Argand lamps, invented and patented in 1780 by Aimé Argand. Fast forward to 1864, and the light station became the home of Nova Scotia's very first Fog Signal. In 1883, after the original structure was destroyed by fire, it was replaced with a white,

square wooden tower attached to a dwelling. The early 20th century brought with it many technological advances, and in 1911, the original fog signal was replaced with the Diaphone Fog Signal, followed



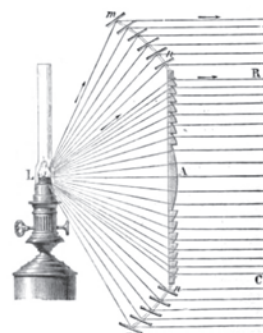
Diaphone Fog Signal

by the fitting of a 3rd order dioptric lens 10 years later.

An extensive overhaul was completed in 1929, and when finished, the lighthouse would maintain its square

shape; however, it would be constructed of concrete with a red lantern fitted with a 3rd order dioptric lens. The fog signal building was attached. In 1992, lighthouses throughout Nova Scotia began the process of becoming automated. Electric lanterns and an electric tone fog signal were installed that same year at the Cranberry Light Station. The tower being 48 feet tall; the light reaching 55 feet above sea level, with a white light flashing at 15 second intervals.

Many personal stories can be told of life on Cranberry Island; Stories of Light Keepers and their families. Tales of friends enjoying a rare visit when the weather permitted safe passage on otherwise treacherous seas. In spring 2016, I'll be visiting Canso, my Dad's hometown. I will go not only as a family member, but as a proud member of the Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society. I plan to meet with local residents of this historic coastal town so they can share their experiences and stories passed down through the ages. I want to capture the warmer, human side of Cranberry's storied past. It's a picture I'm sure will be in steep contrast to the turbulent and icy waters that surround it. You can look forward to those stories in a future edition of the Light Keeper.



Argand Lamp with Fresnel Lens



Fresnel Lens

NSLPS Annual General Meeting

Wednesday April 27 2016

Please join us for the Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society's 22nd annual meeting. The meeting begins at 7pm in the Small Craft Gallery of the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, at 1675 Lower Water Street in Halifax. We'll feature reports covering exciting news in lighthouse preservation, our annual reports and the awarding of the Craig Harding Award.

We are pleased to present the Nō Ka 'Oī Drone Guys as our featured presentation as well as other very interesting special guest speakers.

We'll have light refreshments afterwards, and you'll have a chance to meet up with old friends. You can also renew your NSLPS membership, or join for the first time.

We look forward to seeing you on April 27th.

Nō Ka 'Oī Drone Guys

Why is Low Point threatened? Why are there "keepers" in Cape Sharp and Spry Bay? What would you see if you could walk off the cliffs of St. Mary's, climb outside to the top of Cape Sable, or surf the breeze and soar over Rook Island?

The Nō Ka 'Oī Drone Guys invite you to learn the answers to these questions and more during their presentation at the NSLPS Annual General Meeting. Larry Peyton & Cory Webb – the Drone Guys – will not only be speaking about the experiences, challenges and achievements of their personal hobby venture, but will also be sharing video footage of lighthouses they've obtained while using a drone for their "[#NovaScotia #LighthouseProject](#)".

Having made appearances on Canada AM, CBC News, the Rick Howe Radio Show, and Global Halifax

Morning Show, as well as interviewed for stories by several traditional and internet broadcasters and publications, including CTV National News, CTV Live At Five, and The Chronicle Herald, the Nō Ka 'Oī Drone Guys are promising a flavorful, insightful and fun presentation that shouldn't be missed.

Oh... and they'll also be bringing the drone.

Larry Peyton

A proud Newfoundlander, Larry has an intrinsic appreciation for the rugged beauty of his home province and the Maritimes. Enthralled with the visual perspectives and potentials of quadcopter video capture, he began operating drones in March 2015. Larry has used a drone to capture video in Newfoundland & Labrador, Nova Scotia, Alberta, Florida and Hawaii. Since June 2015, his video footage has been obtained with the use of a DJI

Phantom 3 Advanced, though he still operates other UAVs for fun. With the exception of audio recording, all video post-production tasks are completed by Larry, who is exceedingly passionate about producing quality visual art.

Cory Webb

A born and raised Nova Scotian, Cory is extremely proud of his province, and hence is focused on capturing its landscapes and lighthouses for others to appreciate. During the drone flights, Cory maintains constant visual presence of the

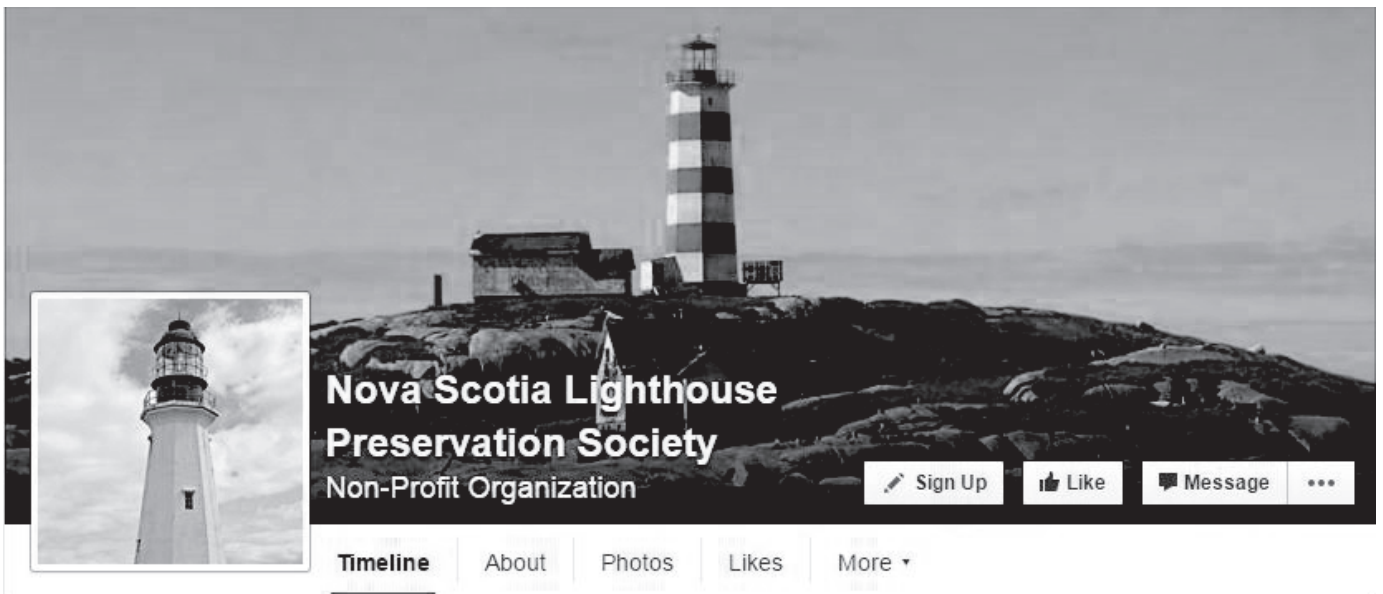
quadcopter while also providing navigational advice. For video post-production, he either composes new music or records instrumental versions of original songs from "Saxby's Gale", a Celtic-punk band in which both he and Larry perform. A musician since high school, Cory plays guitar, mandolin, bass and some percussive instruments.



Courtesy Halifax Herald

Bringing Nova Scotia's Lighthouses to Facebook and Beyond

By: Meredith O'Hara



While lighthouses were once one of the few technologies that acted as a welcoming signal to the site of a community, or the entrance to a safe harbour, modern technology provides us with new and amazing ways to communicate and connect with people around the world.

Starting last summer the Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society began using its Facebook and Twitter accounts to promote the “THIS LIGHTHOUSE MATTERS” campaign. Through outreach by the community groups who participated, the NSLPS, and the National Trust for Canada, (both in person and online) thousands of individuals voted to help save 26 of Nova Scotia’s lighthouses and donated funds as well. This campaign showed the power of social media to connect those who love our province’s lighthouses.

It is with that in mind that NSLPS is working to expand its online presence. The newly designed website was launched in recent months and allows us to accept membership applications and fees online. We also have an active Facebook page and Twitter account (@NSLPS) where we will keep our friends, followers, and fellow lighthouse protectors up to date with all the events, news, and pictures that are lighthouse related.

Facebook is an important social platform that allows organizations, companies, and individuals to create pages to connect with their friends, fans, and customers. The Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society will begin to use Facebook more in the coming

months, in the lead up to our AGM and beyond. By ‘liking’ our page you’ll stay up to date on any events NSLPS hosts, news about lighthouse preservation projects in the province and articles about lighthouses from across Nova Scotia and around the world. We plan to share new and old photos of your favourite Nova Scotia lights, and encourage you to share your own photos with us too. Find us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/NSLPS1993>.

Twitter is one of the most popular social networks in the world. By following groups and individuals on Twitter you can find out their take on recent events, see photos shared in real time, and get up-to-the-minute news from around the world. NSLPS will use Twitter to share news, announce meetings and events, and ask for help on special projects. Twitter is a flow of information but you can check in on specific accounts and check up on what NSLPS is doing anytime you like. Find us online at www.twitter.com/nslps.

By increasing our activity on social media the Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society will work to engage with new people, increase our connection to community groups working to protect lighthouses around the province, and make sure you have all the information you need to help us, help protect Nova Scotia’s beautiful lighthouses.

See you online!

Sambro Update

By Joe Flemming

Busy year for Sambro Island Lighthouse

This year brought promise for the Sambro Island Lighthouse. Years of lobbying government and working with community members brought the lighthouse one step closer to being saved. On May 9th the Federal Government announced the funding of over 1.5 million dollars for the renovation and rehabilitation the of lighthouse.

We are extremely excited about this announcement. It's an important first step in the long term preservation of our lighthouse. We look forward to working with all levels of government, and the members of our community to ensure that the lighthouse, a national treasure, is taken care of for generations to come.

Sambro Lighthouse Heritage Society's mandate has always been to convince the Government of Canada to include this lighthouse in the Parks Canada inventory. In April 2014, NDP MP Megan Leslie introduces a Private Member's bill, Bill C588-Sambro Island Lighthouse. This bill, should it have passed, would have resulted in our lighthouse being included in that inventory. At the time, the passing of a private members bill seemed unlikely. As the process of voting for this bill moved forward it gained support across all party lines. When the 2nd reading of the bill went to the House of Commons, it passed, receiving 267 yes votes of 268 MP's present! Unfortunately, the election was called, and our political process killed the bill before it could go to the Senate for the 3rd and final reading.

In July, ahead of our public tours, a call was put out to the community for volunteers to help prepare the island for visitors. The support was overwhelming! The island got a haircut and really good clean up. We even had a couple of picnic tables built. For all present, a day of work seemed more like a day of fun! Thank you to all that came out!

SILHS and NSLPS co hosted public tours on September 5th. The weather in Sambro cooperated and it was a beautiful calm day. We had a great turn out of folks wanting to enjoy the island. Despite experiencing a mechanical set back on our tour boat, it

was wonderful to watch Patty Gray and Skipper Dave working together to come up with a solution!. What a great display of community spirit.

Where are we going from here? SILHS and NSLPS are working with our new federal government and will be conducting meetings in Ottawa in early March to discuss our options moving forward. We are optimistic that 2016 will bring more positive change and see our historic lighthouse protected by Parks Canada.

Medway Head Update

by Medway Head Lighthouse Society

The Medway Head Lighthouse Society is pleased to report the completion of Phase One of the construction upgrades to their lighthouse in November of 2015.

Over the years, ongoing water penetration into the Medway Head Lighthouse has caused serious rotting in certain areas of the structure. Two walls were considered to be urgently in need of repair and four windows were so deteriorated they provided no security at all and could have been pried loose with bare hands. The exterior siding was removed in order to properly perform the remedial work. New pedimented windows were built on site to replicate the originals. These were



put in place and when everything was repaired and made watertight, new cladding was installed. The work so closely matches the original that to the casual observer the lighthouse looks as though it has just been cleaned up.

Craig Whitehead of Excellence Five Star Construction, the contractor who did the work, said they "enjoyed the challenges presented by the shape of the lighthouse and the extreme weather conditions of the exposed site". Substantial scaffolding was necessary to provide a safe working environment and to properly access the thirty foot high sloping walls and overhang of the pepper pot shaped lighthouse .



Additional construction activities will be phased in when funds permit and the society also wants to make site improvements so visitors can better enjoy the oceanfront and learn about the important role the lighthouse has played in the community.

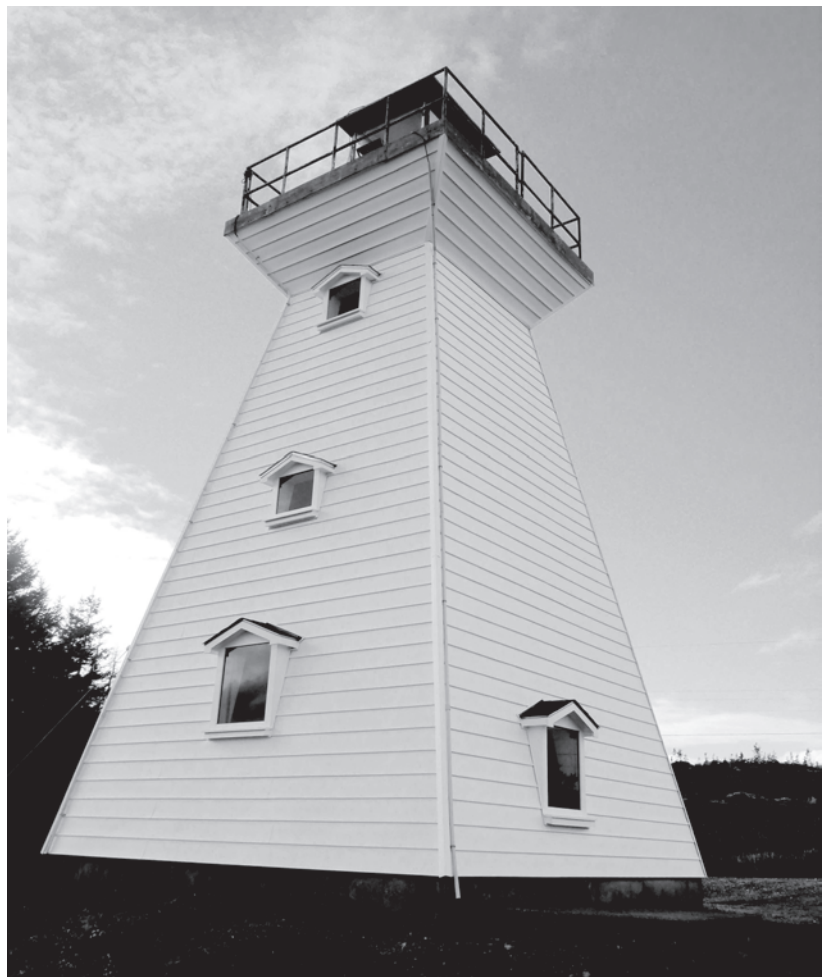
Lighthouses were declared surplus by the federal government and the Medway Head Lighthouse Society was formed to preserve and raise awareness of this specific icon. It is located approximately 4 km outside of Port Medway, and can be reached by taking Long Cove Road from the centre of the village. This scenic road hugs the shoreline and the location provides beautiful vistas out to sea and the islands beyond that protect the entrance to Medway Harbour. This structure was built in 1983 but three previous lighthouses have been guiding watercraft into port since 1851. When an earlier lighthouse erected in 1927 was declared surplus, many local hands were involved in moving it up an adjacent hill where it now sits as a private residence and contributes to the nautical history of this location.

Medway Head was officially transferred to the society in April 2014 by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans but fundraising efforts started much before. Five successful Lighthouse Awareness Art Shows selling the

works of talented artists from throughout the province have been held in Port Medway. This and the subsequent sale of calendars illustrating works from the previous art show are major fundraisers. Without the wonderful support from the public and the dedication of so many volunteers, we would not have raised sufficient funds to start our construction project.

This past summer, This Place Matters, the crowd-funding competition sponsored by the Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society and the National Trust for Canada, raised public awareness of the sad plight of so many Nova Scotia lighthouses. Medway Head Lighthouse received an impressive 4381 votes of support from the public over a month long period and succeeded in raising \$4600 on line which provided a big boost to the construction fund.

Much work still remains to be done but the organization is already actively involved with fundraising events for 2016. The annual art and craft show is once again scheduled for August. Details will be forthcoming and also posted on the Medway Head Lighthouse Facebook page. We hope to see you there.



Barry MacDonald Receives Award

By Denyse Contrasty

On February 14th, one hundred Heritage Trust Nova Scotia members and guests gathered in the historic Royal Artillery Park Mess in Halifax to celebrate Joe Howe Heritage Day. The program included the presentation of an annual award to an outstanding individual whose efforts have led to the preservation and rehabilitation of NS heritage properties.

Dan Conlin, curator at Pier 21, introduced the 2015 Award recipient, Barry Macdonald, past president of the NS Lighthouse Preservation Society, whose years of advocating and networking for lighthouses led to the passing of the Heritage Lighthouse Protection Act in Parliament in 2008. To date fourteen NS lighthouses

have obtained heritage designation under the Act. Dan Conlin stated that lighthouses were essential in defining coastal boundaries and that visitors to NS remark on the two landmarks to be found in a seaside village – a church in the centre of town and a lighthouse on the wharf or at land's end.

Working at the highest standard of policy and providing sound, technical advice to community groups planning to take ownership of their lighthouse, Barry has created an amazing legacy for generations to come. Using a long standing military expression of commendation, NSLPS says Bravo Zulu Barry, well done!



Laura MacNutt, chairperson of the Awards HTNS committee, presents the 2015 Award to Barry Macdonald

Photo credit: **Formation Imaging Services**

NSLPS Book Review

By Chris Mills

A Natural History Of Lighthouses. John A. Love. Whittles Publishing Ltd., Dunbeath, Caithness, Scotland. 293 pp. Colour photos. 2015.

Lighthouses and their guardians have always been frontline forces where the angry sea meets treacherous coastline. For hundreds of years, until automation and de-staffing allowed most (but not all) lighthouses to be abandoned, keepers kept the lamps burning, standing lonely watches as the wind and sea pounded their rocks, islands and headlands. In many cases, their only company was the wildlife which surrounded them: birds, bats, fish, aquatic mammals, insects.

Given their exposure to the natural world, it seems only, well, natural that lightkeepers should take an interest in the wildlife surrounding them. In the early days, lightkeepers would have been aware of birds and fish as a source of food. But during the nineteenth century, many came to be interested in the study of the fauna surrounding them, making careful notes and observations, and in rare cases, publishing their work.

Since the 1970s there have been an increasing number of books written about lighthouses and their keepers. The bulk of these deal with lighthouse history, architecture, and the lives of their keepers. A few former keepers have written their own stories, breathing personal experience and immediacy into a vocation and way of life that is now all but extinct.

However, lighthouse books dealing with lighthouse history and natural history are much more rare. In the 1985, taxidermist-turned lightkeeper Norman McCanch wrote and illustrated *A Lighthouse Notebook*, in which he offered a unique view of birds and other wildlife observed from various English lighthouses.

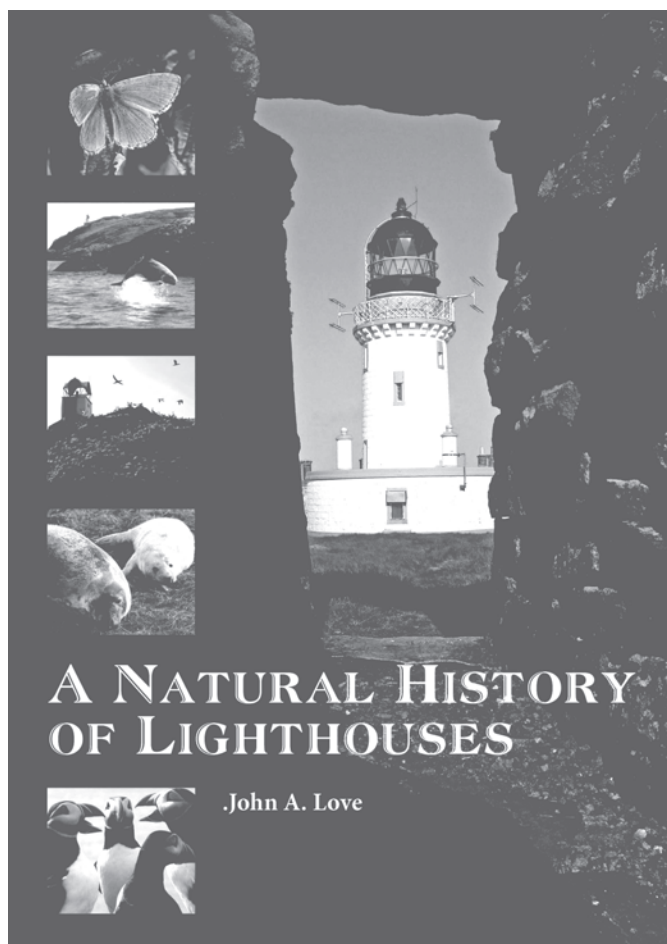
Now, author John Love has produced an in-depth look at lightkeepers and their contributions to the study of natural history. *A Natural History Of Lighthouses* also highlights the almost immeasurable contributions of one family to the lighting of the Scottish coast: the Stevensons. Love details the family's role in the construction of a good portion of Scotland's guiding lights, which form the cornerstone of safe navigation to this day.

Love sets the stage with a look at the hazardous nature

of lightkeeping, illustrated by the disappearance of the three keepers of Scotland's Flannan Isles lighthouse in 1900. Since then, the story has become steeped in myth, but as Love notes, it is likely the three men were washed off the island's landing by a huge sea, possibly a rogue wave.

It wasn't just the keepers who faced hazards and challenges. The designers and workers who built offshore rock lighthouses pitted themselves against unimaginable dangers from the sea, and from fire. Love explores some of these challenges in the context of the Eddystone, off Plymouth, on which four lighthouses have stood since 1698. He also discusses "The Dark Coast", beginning with the lights of the ancient world, and moving through Roman times (when Britain's first "lighthouse" was built in Dover), and continuing on to more modern lights, and the influence of the Stevenson family.

The Stevensons are best remembered for Robert's design and construction of the Bell Rock light, some 18



kilometres off Arbroath on the east coast of Scotland. Lit in 1811 following four laborious and dangerous years of construction, the tower remains in service to this day.

Love's account of the Stevenson family and the construction of the Bell Rock tower provide a natural jumping-off point for his exploration of the "endless calendar" of natural history at lighthouse sites. It was thanks to the keen observations and writings of assistant keeper John MacLean Campbell that the wider world came to know the significance of the flora and fauna surrounding the Bell Rock. As Love writes: "Who would have thought that a granite tower 18 km offshore and surrounded only by a few hundred square feet of encrusted sandstone exposed for only a few hours of each tide...could furnish...such a wealth of careful natural history observations?"

Campbell arrived on the Bell in 1895, and spent almost nine years working shifts on the rock. He chronicled the "endless calendar" of migratory birds, the habits of fish, marine plants, all interspersed with ruminations on lighthouse life and events. The lighthouse telescope brought Campbell eye-to-wing with gulls, gannets, larks and eiders; it even afforded him and his workmates a view of Coronation celebrations ashore in Arbroath in 1902!

But Campbell's chief interest lay in the natural world around him, as he kept running records of encounters with strays, low-tide excursions around the base of the tower, and "queer visitors" such as owls and butterflies. In one instance, a male lump sucker fish, defending its eggs, grabbed a whelk in its mouth, swam to the surface of a tidal pool "and spat the whelk out, almost in Campbell's face!"

Campbell was later posted south to the Bass Rock, where he continued to keep records, and he was still taking notes and marvelling at the world around him when he died at the age of just 55. Today, modern reprints of his 1904 book, *A Natural History of The Bell Rock*, are available online.

For the next three chapters Love returns to the work of the Stevensons in lighting the Scottish coast, including the massive undertaking at Skerryvore on the west coast. He also makes mention of living conditions on the lights, and the technology behind the flashing lights.

By Chapter 10 – "More Interest and Variety", Love returns to his exploration of naturalist lightkeepers, including Robert Clyne, a "keen ornithologist" who worked at several stations during his career. Among others, he worked on the Bell, and likely met John MacLean Campbell there. He definitely 'took a page' from Campbell's diary, writing and submitting weekly features to a paper in Dundee. Over the years, Clyne "...submitted valuable notes on the birds he encountered...", recording rarities and bird behaviour.

Clyne also noted the lethal effect of lighthouses on birds, when flocks of confused flyers would dash their heads against brilliantly lit tower lanterns, especially during migration. At one particular light, the keepers found more than 200 dead birds on the ground below the tower the morning after birds had swarmed the lantern. In 1917, Little Ross lightkeeper William Begg submitted his autumn migration report, noting the high mortality of lapwings; "We collect them and have stews and pies."

The problem exists to this day at some sites (although I'm not aware of lapwing pie being made anymore!), but lower-powered lights and floodlight systems have reduced bird mortality at most lighthouses.

In his final chapter, Love brings us up to date with lighthouse experiences and developments during the two world wars, after which automation and de-staffing came along. Automation had been possible as far back as the 1890s, but it wasn't until the 1960s and 70s that Scotland's Northern Lighthouse Board began to make muscular cuts in the number of staffed lights. In 1998, with the closure of Fair Isle's South Light, more than three and a half centuries of lightkeeping came to an end in Scotland, and with it "...the loss of human eyes and reaction in the event of shipwreck, oil spillage...or drug smuggling." It also meant the end of the ears and eyes of the coast that for so many years took careful note of the natural world around them.

John Love has produced a valuable account of the role of lightkeepers in recording bird movements, and the keepers' keen interest in the wider natural world around them. It's a lengthy book, which at 293 pages, feels a little disjointed at times, as the author takes us from where lights were built and why, to the natural world around them, then back to the Stevenson family, and then back to the keepers and their observations.

Perhaps a slightly shorter historical background at the beginning of the book followed by the natural history portion, would have improved the flow.

However, Love has produced a valuable account of those keepers who kept detailed records of bird sightings, weather, and other natural phenomena. As he notes, keepers made use of the natural world around them "...not just as a handy source of food, but as a useful distraction, to add interest and intellectual stimulation to their lonely lives."

Unfortunately, with the full automation and de-staffing of all lighthouses in Scotland and the rest of the U.K. and the Republic of Ireland, there are no keepers to scan the sea and skies, and to record their sightings. We are fortunate though, to have the writings of John MacLean Campbell, Robert Clyne, and John Love, to remind us of the important role lightkeepers played in recording some of the natural history of their coastal wilderness.

Chris Mills

Our Back Cover

Lighthouses throughout Nova Scotia, that do not have a sponsor or champion, are quickly falling in to disrepair. Left to the elements, it doesn't take long to see the signs of destruction. Nowhere is this more prevalent than the lights on our islands. Out of site and hard to get to, these offshore lights have seen the most deterioration.

One of the island lights is Guyon (Guion) Island Lighthouse along the eastern shore of Cape Breton, adjacent Louisbourg and Gabarus. The back cover images are from our Chris Mills who continues to visit our island lighthouses at every opportunity. As Chris's pictures poignantly show, the keepers house is rotting away and unsafe and the concrete tower is disintegrating. Let's not forget Guyon Island.

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Guyon Island Lighthouse Cape Breton, NS

