

# The Lightkeeper<sup>TM</sup>

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**Bull Point Lighthouse,  
Sambro Harbour**

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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 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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## From The Editor

The Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society has been working tirelessly for over twenty two years to promote and protect lighthouses. They also assist lighthouse groups with information and assistance in their bid to acquire lighthouses for their communities.

My tenure as Lightkeeper editor has been cut short as I must step away from NSLPS to pursue other projects. This will be my last issue as editor.

The organization is strong with new and young board members Nigel Kidd, Krystal Tanner, Joe Flemming, Matthew Burke and Meredith O'Hara taking up the cause of preserving lighthouses. With their youthful drive and dedication NSLPS will continue to be a positive force in our communities protecting our lighthouses and ocean heritage well into the future.



**Peter MacCulloch**

## Lighthouses Online: Media Review

By: Meredith O'Hara

Another busy summer has wrapped up in Nova Scotia and as we move into fall and winter it can be easy to lose touch with our lighthouses and the work being done by communities throughout the province to protect them.

The NSLPS is on Facebook and Twitter and works to make sure you can stay up to date with news and stories from groups around Nova Scotia.

This summer the No Ka 'Oi Drone Guys continued their amazing project to collect footage of all of Nova Scotia's lighthouses. When new videos and photos from the project are posted they are available through the NSLPS Facebook and Twitter pages as well.

Whether you want to keep up to date with the groups in your backyard, or you've moved away and want a little

Nova Scotian beauty in your Facebook feed, following along with NSLPS will guarantee that you stay in the loop. Or if you're a member of a lighthouse community group, please make sure to post your event on our page, or send us the details, photos of your community at work, or stories about your light and what it means to the community and we'll be happy to share to share your story too.

On Facebook you can find us at [facebook.com/NSLPS1993](https://facebook.com/NSLPS1993) or on Twitter go to [www.twitter.com/nslps](https://www.twitter.com/nslps) - and keep up to date about the work being done to keep our lights beautiful and shining strong for generations to come.

***Meredith O'Hara is an online media specialist and NSLPS media director.***

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## Annual Medway Head Lighthouse Art Show

By: Catherine Pincombe

### ***A bright future for the Medway Head Lighthouse thanks to an Art Show***

The Lighthouse Awareness Art and Craft Show has become a major annual event in Port Medway each August. The purpose of the show is to increase awareness of our lighthouses, showcase the impressive inspiration and talent of artists in the area and raise much needed funds for repairs and maintenance of the Medway Head Lighthouse.

The 6th annual show was held for 10 days at The Warehouse in Port Medway. Many artists and artisans from the local area participated as well artists from other areas of Nova Scotia and as far away as Ottawa. The show was well attended with over 500 visitors stopping by to enjoy the huge array art and crafts on display.

The 2016 show was the greatest success to date. A huge "triumph" for everyone involved. The show organizers welcomed the participation of the many artists who have supported the show previously and the 17 new artists who, this year joined the Lighthouse Art Show family. In total the work of 67 artists was showcased, with sales exceeding all expectations.

The diversity of mediums which included photography, sculpture, rug hooking and felting as well as acrylic, watercolour and oil painting was a tribute to the creativity

of all the participating artists. Visitors were also treated to the vibrant colours of the whimsical folk art. This show is truly unique in its presentation of art and crafts together in one space.

To raise additional money, the Society has produced its 4th fundraising calendar. The 2017 Lighthouse Art Show Calendar features works from the 2015 show. In previous years the sales of the calendar reached over 500 copies, many of which were sent around the globe.

The Medway Head Lighthouse Society took ownership of the Medway Head Lighthouse in April 2014. The Society is responsible for the repair and maintenance of the Lighthouse. Visitors were able to see the importance of this show and how their financial support from the previous 5 art shows, enabled the Medway Head Lighthouse Society to carry out the much need repairs to 2 sides of their lighthouse in November of 2015.

There has been a functioning light on the site since 1851. Thanks to the hard work of the dedicated Art Show Committee, the generosity of the Artists and the continued support of the Art Show Enthusiasts, the light will continue to shine bright atop the Medway Head Lighthouse.

***See images on back cover...***

## A Warm Welcome To Henry Island

### Winner of \$20,000 in This Lighthouse Matters (TLM)

By: Denyse Contrasty

On Saturday August 20th, six Board members of NSLPS, and one lighthouse enthusiast, met at the wharf in Judique harbour in anticipation of a day trip to Henry Island. There we boarded a Zodiac boat skippered by Donald Macdonald, a member of the Henry Island Lighthouse Society, and took the scenic route to the island. Donald explained the history and fishing economy of the area as we circled the Island. He stopped the boat so that we could admire a Bald Eagle perched on the side of a cliff. We arrived at our landing spot to be greeted by Bill Baker, owner of Henry Island since 1992. On our walk up the hill to the lighthouse and former lightkeeper's house, Bill



Credit: John McCallum

#### Shawnee on guard

explained the challenges of living on the island such as drilling for water. While the island is now heavily forested, it had once been cleared to provide pasture for animals, a garden and an orchard to supplement the lightkeeper's family provisions.

We reached the house where Bill's spouse, Jeannemarie, introduced herself while holding onto a very friendly Shawnee, their Golden Retriever. A barbeque and two picnic tables were at our disposal so we fortified ourselves with a sausage roast before visiting the lighthouse and wandering about the island at Bill's invitation. While lunch was being cooked, Larry Peyton, the Drone guy, flew his drone around the lighthouse to get aerial footage to move one step closer towards his goal of filming every lighthouse in Nova Scotia.

After lunch, we proceeded to this lovely and majestic lighthouse which is undergoing major exterior renovations, helped with the \$20,000 TLM prize money. All the shingles are being replaced and backed with a polymer mesh fabric to provide an air gap between the shingles



Credit: John McCallum

#### Path to Lighthouse Henry Island

and the pressure treated plywood backing to prevent shingles rotting from behind. Red and white stain is being used as new stain can be applied directly on top of old stain when it fades over time as opposed to the usual scraping that must be done before new paint can be applied over old paint – a great future saving of time and money. We then walked into the lighthouse where the first floor is presently being used as a workshop for the



Credit: Meredith O'Hara

#### Lighthouse & Larry Drone Guy



ongoing repairs. Eventually the first floor will be used as a display and gathering area for visitors. The long term plan is to hopefully make it a guest house, with all proceeds going to the maintenance of the lighthouse.

We went up the first flight of stairs to the second level where Bill had set up an office space along with two futons that doubled as a guest room for company overflow. Up the second flight of stairs, we entered the electrical room where Bill has a satellite receiver for an Internet connection along with the gear necessary to power the lighthouse at night.

Ladder stairs brought us to a smaller space where once the mercury bath stood that rotated the original 4th order Fresnel lens. We could see evidence on the wall of a fire that a former lightkeeper had luckily been able to extinguish. Climbing up a second set of ladder stairs, we entered the lantern room at the top of the lighthouse where today an airport beacon acts as a guiding light at night. Visitors with a head for heights were allowed to exit the room via a hatch and walk around the gallery to take photos and admire the breathtaking and panoramic views over the entire 160+ acres of the island.

Once back on the ground, Bill offered us a tour of his home, the former lightkeeper's house. When he had acquired the island, the house had been badly vandalized and much time, effort and money was spent by Bill and his wife to restore it to what are now comfortable, modern living quarters. Modifications have been made such as converting the mudroom to a sunroom that looks onto the lighthouse and a skylight had been inserted in the master bedroom to check at night from the comforts of bed that the lighthouse is indeed flashing.

Bill encouraged us to wander along a trail made by his brother-in-law that lead to a shrine and views from the cliff onto St George's Bay. Too soon it was time to depart and we said our good-byes to Jeannemarie, and thanked her for her hospitality. We walked down the hill to our departure point and after thanking Bill for suggesting and hosting this unique visit, we boarded Bill's Zodiac. This time we took the direct route (about a 20 minute ride) back to Judique harbour and were glad to get back to terra firma as the seas were now choppy.



Credit: John McCallum

#### Panoramic Views from the gallery



Credit: John McCallum

#### Back at Judique Harbour

After posing for a group photo in front of the Zodiac, we said our good-byes and headed home after a most rewarding day. Pleased to have met with a true TLM winner, NSLPS wishes to congratulate Bill Baker and the Henry Island Lighthouse Preservation Society for their careful restoration of this stunning lighthouse.

***Denyse Contrasty is NSLPS vice president and secretary, NSLPS website content editor and Lightkeeper contributor.***

## This Lighthouse Matters: One Year Later

**Joanne McCormick**

I recently received my copy of *Heritage* – the magazine for the National Trust for Canada, and I would like to quote, and paraphrase, Robert Pajot, who we are working closely with to monitor the success of *This Lighthouse Matters*:

R. Pajot: “One year may not seem like a long time in the life of an historic site, but for the nine winners of *This Lighthouse Matters*, what a year it's been! Over a quarter million votes were cast in this rousing six-week competition last summer. Now, just over a year later, most projects are nearing completion.”

Key to the success of TLM was our partnership with the NS Lighthouse Preservation Society, whose local knowledge and strong network spread the message across the province.”

J. McCormick: In our previous *Lightkeeper*, we showcased the Gabarus Lighthouse and its amazing story, so in this issue we will report on Cape Forchu, winner of \$25,000 in the High Tide category, plus \$10,000 crowdfunding, and on the Digby Pier Light, top winner of \$15,000 in the Low Tide category, plus \$490 in crowdfunding.

### Cape Forchu:

R.Pajot: “(At the far end of the Province) the Friends of Yarmouth Light Society worked over the cold winter months to carefully restore the impressive BC-36 lens that originally sat atop the Cape Forchu lighthouse when it was built in 1962, but which had since been placed in storage. A new interactive display of the restored light is now being assembled in the lighthouse's museum. Visitors and local residents will be able to appreciate the beauty of the light that shone for decades in southwestern Nova Scotia.”



**Cape Forchu Lighthouse**

### Digby Pier:

R. Pajot: “(At last) Digby Pier Lighthouse has returned to its rightful place, following a 40-year exile across the Bay of Fundy. Moved to Saint John, NB, after being deemed redundant (or, as a local joke goes, after being lost in a card game), the light stood as decoration on the waterfront, to the chagrin of Digby residents. With their

winnings, the competition project team was able to repair and re-assemble the lighthouse, which had been stored in pieces after it was repatriated three years earlier. Many volunteer hours were spent repairing the light, and



**Scallop Queen Taylor Barnaby, mayor Ben Cleveland, NSLPS president Joanne McCormick**



**Digby Pier lighthouse in its new location**



community pride was on full display at the re-dedication ceremony earlier this summer.”

J. McCormick.: I was invited to speak, and went to the Digby Pier Lighthouse celebration, along with long-time Board member, Graham McBride, who also said a few words, as he is a native son of Digby. It was a joyous occasion which included music, and free, mouth-watering Digby scallops. The lighthouse is located at Admiral's walk, and can be seen as one comes over the hill and descends into town. This is an historic light (1887) which originally had been at the end of Digby wharf, but is now showcased where it can be better seen.

Ben Cleveland, mayor, famously went to Saint John in August 2012, with 240 lbs of delicious scallops as an offering to city council to return the lighthouse to its rightful

home. It worked.

Today, the lighthouse is still 90% original. Honourable mention goes to Keith Weagle, a local carpenter, who donated approximately 240 hours of his high-quality work. Other members of the community helped to paint and shingle it.

Graham and I had a wonderful day. There were so many happy, smiling faces on this sunny, summer day.

Digby's mayor and community members are a shining example of what can be done with team effort. What a town!

***Joanne McCormick is the NSLPS President and Lightkeeper contributor.***



The Digby Pier lighthouse celebration with live music and free Digby scallops.

## Port Medway and Medway Head Benches Placed

**Joanne McCormick**

On a lovely, summer August day, friends and family of Jalynn Bennett, gathered for the dedication of two granite memorial benches in her name.

The first bench was placed at Port Medway, a stunning setting for its historic lighthouse, and the location preferred by her husband, Bill James. The bench overlooks a carefully crafted garden of roses, hardy evergreens, and bayberry, the concept of which was developed by the Mayor of Queens Municipality, Chris Clarke.

The second bench was placed at Medway Head, whose rugged setting was preferred by her sister, Jennifer Rogers. The President of the community group, Donald Allen, and several members were present. Mr. Allen gave

a history of the lighthouse, followed by a tour of the light and grounds.

All were then invited to a spectacular tea given by active members, the Bethels, who have a lovely home in the area. NSLPS would like to extend a warm and heartfelt thank-you to these fine people.

Even though Jalynn Bennett didn't live to see the results of her efforts with This Lighthouse Matters, we think she would be very, very pleased.

***Joanne McCormick is the NSLPS President and Lightkeeper contributor.***

## Bull Point, Sambro: *The Rebuilding Of A Lighthouse in the 21st Century*

By Joe Flemming

Bull Point lighthouse, Sambro Nova Scotia. In 1899, the small lighthouse was established on the southwest side of the entrance to Sambro Harbour. It guides small vessels safely into Sambro Harbour to this day.



**The old Bull Point lighthouse before it was replaced.**

First placed in service on December 1, 1899. The lighthouse stood a mere 30 feet from the water's edge. A square, white wooden tower with sloping sides and a square wooden lantern. It is 33 feet from its base to the lantern. Bull Point Light shines a fixed red light, elevated 38 feet above high water mark. Due to its orientation, the

light and structure itself are visible at seven miles from all approaches. The original light had a seventh order dioptric lens. According to records, the tower was built at a cost \$676.04.

John H. Finlay was appointed as first keeper of the Sambro Harbour Lighthouse on December 7, 1899. Albert Gilkie started tending the light in 1929 and was still keeper when it was electrified in 1947. Keeper Gilkie notified his superior that he intended to retire upon turning sixty-five in July of 1961. Rather than hire another caretaker, the government installed a photo-electric switch that would activate the light when necessary. (Info courtesy of Lighthousefriends.com)

In 1971, the lighthouse's deteriorated lantern room was removed, and a watertight mount was installed with an automated beacon. From that point forward, the community of Sambro watched their beloved Bull Point Light slowly fall into disrepair. The Coast Guard, staffed by many folks who love these lights as much, if not more than the rest of us, were faced with shrinking budgets and constraints that prevented them from providing the much needed service and upkeep to their beloved lights.

In April 2014, after many conversations with Sambro harbour Master Paddy Gray, and a bit of a fund available for community projects, Councilor Steve Adams reached out to Dan Pike of the Canadian Coast Guard in an effort to get some work completed on the Bull Point Lighthouse.

Despite the optimistic approach, upon further inspection, the condition of the light was deemed to be degraded beyond repair. Many were heartbroken.

But it wasn't to last. In May 2016, the Canadian Coast Guard, with a new and improved budget for the upkeep and repair of properties in their care, chose Bull Point Lighthouse for replacement with a brand new structure. Not just a tower with a lightbulb on top. An actual structure that would maintain the character of the many lights found around Nova Scotia. Only this time, it would be completed with materials that can weather the storms and elements far better. Thus ensuring the future upkeep is easier and less expensive. In Late May 2016, they demolished the historic wooden lighthouse, painful to watch, to make room for the new salt shaker style light. Dan Pike, the regional superintendent of maritime and civil infrastructure with the Canadian Coast Guard for the Atlantic region assured the community that "The one that we're going to replace it with is slightly larger but basically the same shape. It'll actually look much better because the cupola, which is the cap on top of the structure which contains the light, will be reinstalled." This was much to the delight of the community.

With a new Lighthouse at Bull Point, and the restoration of Sambro Island Lighthouse offshore, the community of Sambro will continue to shine for many years ahead, just as it has shone for many years before. It'll just shine a little brighter now. This is what happens when community and the bodies which govern them come together for a common cause. No goal too lofty when reached for together.



**Completed Bull Point lighthouse as seen from the water.**





Laying foundation



Crane lifting the frame pieces into place.



Sheathing is then attached to the frame.



Finally the outside is covered in durable vinyl siding

## NSLPS Book Review

By Chris Mills

**Scottish and Manx Lighthouses: A Photographic Journey in the Footsteps of the Stevensons.** *Ian Cowe. Whittles Publishing, Dunbeath, Scotland. 2015. Colour, photographs, 182 pp.*

It's difficult to over-estimate the positive effect the famed Stevenson family has had on marine safety around the world. Four generations of the Scottish family of engineers played a vital part in lighting not only the coasts of Scotland, but those of Canada (Newfoundland), New Zealand, and Japan. Beginning with Robert Stevenson in the late 18th century, the family designed and constructed lighthouses in some of the most inhospitable rock piles on the face of the planet. It is a testament to their skill and perseverance that dozens of these lights remain in service today.

Photographer Ian Cowe pays homage to Scotland's gift to lighthouse construction in the form of the lavishly illustrated Scottish and Manx Lighthouses: A Photographic Journey In The Footsteps Of The Stevensons. The book is among the more recent releases from Whittles, more than dozen of which deal with lighthouses and their keepers.

Other recent books by the Caithness-based publisher have dealt with the family histories and accomplishments of the Stevenson family, but in this case, it's the photographs, more than the text, that reveal the Stevenson legacy.

Photographer/author Ian Cowe admits he's "probably been a lighthouse enthusiast since birth." Childhood trips to lighthouses eventually led to seven years'- worth of travelling to Scottish lighthouses by foot, car, sea, and air. Cowe's enthusiasm shines through in this handsome volume, which includes all of the Stevenson-designed and built lighthouses in Scotland and the Isle of Man.

Cowe sets the stage with brief but informative introductions to early Scottish lighthouses (primitive stone towers topped by coal braziers) and to the Northern Lighthouse Board, the Scottish

lighthouse authority. The remainder of the book covers Stevenson lights, beginning in the east, and travelling counter-clockwise around Scotland, ending on The Isle of Man. Between each geographical area, Cowe writes about the keepers, their experiences during the second world war, foghorns, the work of the Stevenson family abroad, and finally, lighthouse automation and the Northern Lighthouse Board's (NLB) work in the 21st century.

What emerges from all of this is an appreciative portrait of the dogged determination of the Stevenson family to light the coasts of Scotland and the Isle of Man, along with a photographic exploration of some of the most dramatic coastal scenery and structures to be found in Scotland. The NLB has allowed Cowe unprecedented access to isolated sites not generally accessible to the public. His keen eye has captured not only the grandeur and isolation of fabled sites such as the Bell Rock and Skerryvore, but the details of cramped tower interiors, magnificent lenses, dramatic aerials, and the finer elements, such as the marble bust of Robert Stevenson (which once adorned the "Stranger's Room" in the Bell Rock tower), and the initials of generations of keepers carved into rock on the Bell, and Skerryvore.



Front Cover



His camera captures lighthouse supply operations by ship and helicopter, the dizzying views from tower balconies, and importantly, the faces of the people who keep the lights burning in these days of GPS and electronic navigation: technicians, engineers and ships' crew. Perhaps most evocatively, Cowe presents beautiful visuals of the work of the Retained Lighthouse Keeper (RLK) who keeps an eye on the four land-based lights on the Isle of Man – a man who continues the proud tradition of lightkeeping into the 21st century, and who keeps brasswork and glass gleaming and shining, just as it did in the days of resident lightkeepers.

Cowe lets his photographs do the lion's-share of the talking. The curve of Robert Stevenson's Bell Rock light rising from a dark ocean, with an oil rig on the horizon, and the full-frame view of a massive glowing lens at Mull of Kintyre say more than words. And where words are needed, Cowe keeps it brief and interesting. He provides basic information for each light (engineer, year established, year automated, character of light, height, etc.). Some lights get a few paragraphs of history and interesting facts (for instance, in 1960 the three keepers at Chicken Rock in the Isle of Man had to escape their

burning lighthouse by a hand-igniting descent by ropes from the tower's balcony!). Others include Cowe's personal accounts of his visits to the Bell, Skerryvore, Rattray Head (the scene of childhood family walks) and a 10 mile, five hour round-trip walk to Ushinish, one of Scotland's most isolated land-based lighthouses.

Scottish and Manx Lighthouses does not present a critical view of the Stevenson family, or of the loss of the lightkeeping tradition, or the challenges facing the people striving to save Scotland's lighthouse heritage. But then again, it doesn't profess to do these things. With a foreword by HRH Princess Anne (Patron of the Northern Lighthouse Board), it's an affectionate and admiring portrait of the legacy of a family which pretty well single-handedly lit the wicked coastlines of Scotland and the Isle of Man. Ian Cowe's photography, and his accounts of Scottish lighthouses will help to ensure that lighthouse enthusiasts and casual readers alike will not forget this shining legacy.

*Chris Mills is an author and NSLPS board member.*

## Medway Head Lighthouse Awareness Art and Craft Show 2016 Raffle Prize

**By: Catherine Pincombe**

### *Raffle winner receives prize and art lesson*

One of the most exciting aspects of the Lighthouse Awareness Art and Craft Show is the annual fundraising raffle. Previous raffle prizes have included paintings, a mosaic quilt, a window frame turned into a work of art, and a hand painted floor mat. The raffle prize from this year's show is no less exciting. Visitors were encouraged to spend time looking at the wonderful array of artwork on display and then choose the piece they most wanted to own. Once the winning ticket was drawn, the winners selected piece was photographed matted and framed, and made ready for presentation to the winner. The organizers of the show felt this idea would encourage visitors to spend more time enjoying the fabulous art and envisioning their desired piece in their own home.

For this year's winner, Donna Lee of East Berlin, this was most definitely the case. "It made you really look at all the art and soak in the images. A great way to engage with the art." Donna Lee selected a piece, "Downtown Tie Up" by local artist J. Marshall Burgess. "It was so hard to choose with so many beautiful paintings. I picked it because of the colours; I was just drawn to it."



**Donna Lee is presented the raffle prize from Marshall Burgess**

Donna and artist Marshall Burgess met at White Point Beach Resort, where Marshall presented her with the print. For Donna it was very exciting "I haven't won anything for years."

This story doesn't end with the prize being awarded, for Donna Lee it was just the beginning of a new adventure.

Marshall Burgess was at White Point as guest artist and instructor of the very successful "A Brush with Good Cheer" experience. The session involved Marshall guiding a group of beginners and would be artists through a 2 hour art class. In honor of our Nova Scotia Good Cheer Trail; Marshall had selected Tidal Bay Wine from Nova Scotia's Avondale Sky Winery. Donna along with the other participants created their very own masterpieces while sipping and savouring as they added strokes to their canvas.

While never having painted before, when invited to join the session, Donna Lee happily accepted and was thrilled with her afternoon experience. "This class was so much fun, I am already planning to come to another session and bring my Mother."

