

# The Lightkeeper

The Nova Scotia  
Lighthouse Preservation  
Society

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Summer/Fall 2017  
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ANCHOR  
W. LAURENCE  
WHOSE ANCESTOR  
GILBERT'S COVE  
1860

Anchor near Gilbert Cove Lighthouse  
provided by Larry Peyton

See article on  
Pages 3 about  
the No Ka Oi Drone Guys





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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## Welcome New Members

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## From The Editor

Like our beloved lighthouses throughout Nova Scotia, the NSLPS newsletter carries on no matter who its keeper may be. My name is Meredith O'Hara and I took over editorship of the Lightkeeper from our friend and dedicated former board member Peter MacCulloch last winter.

This is my second lightkeeper and I hope you find it full of interesting and useful information. It's been another lovely summer and fall season in Nova Scotia.

Now its time to bunker down for winter and make plans for the spring.

What I love about our province and its lighthouses are the stories people gather and share about their communities. In this issue we have a story about a lighthouse assumed to have been lost decades ago. But the curiosity of a Navy Admiral and the dedication of a couple of our lighthouse lovers have uncovered the story of this light and how it disappeared from our records. Hope you enjoy!



# No Ka Oi Drone Guys Looking for Support

By Meredith O'Hara



Larry Peyton and his drone.

Larry and Cory have had another busy summer and the #LighthouseProject has only 20-some lights left to go. The issue now is that most of the remaining lights are off-shore. To get around the problem Larry has turned to his fans and supporters with a crowdfunding campaign. By the end of November they've raised \$3250 with

\$3250 to go. The following is an edited Q&A with Larry about the project. You can help fund the project at [GoFundMe.com/NSLighthouseProject](http://GoFundMe.com/NSLighthouseProject).

## How long are you planning to run the funding campaign?

There is currently no set end date for the crowdfunding campaign, though I certainly do not want it to go on for an infinite period. I am truly hoping more people will become involved in promoting the campaign, reach out to their contacts, approach local businesses and societies, and make personal donations. There are no small, unappreciated donations. Every single dollar counts!

## Why do you feel it's important to get to all the lighthouses if possible?

Over the past two years, I have captured photos and drone video footage of 130 lighthouses; of those, some have since been destroyed, had structural compromises, or are certainly taking their last gasps.

Of the 28 lighthouses remaining to capture, 26 of them are offshore. Since these are amongst the most difficult to access, and they hence have the fewest allotment of recent video and photo footage, capturing them is of great importance to deliver the full picture of Nova Scotia's lighthouses.

## What's been the best part of the project?

There have been an absolute abundance of "bests" with this project. Visiting the many beautiful landscapes, coastlines, crooks and crannies of this province has been amazing. Bringing more interest to our lighthouses, and appreciation from people for doing so has been humbling.

## What's been the hardest part of the project?

Working on this labour of love has also had its challenges. There are certainly the obvious ones: ridiculously early rises from a warm bed on a day off to drive for hours in hopes of capturing a lighthouse; standing for hours in the bitter cold; hiking over rough terrain, loaded with filming gear, for kilometers; and more. All that said, currently the most difficult part is ascertaining the financial assistance for the logistics to reach those remaining lights.

## What do you hope people get out of your videos?

Pride. History. Knowledge. Culture. Awareness. Appreciation. Passion. Compassion. That is what I hope people find within themselves, and their surroundings, once they watch this aerial story of their lighthouses unfold before their eyes on a screen directly in front of them. And then a fire within to step away from that screen and experience them firsthand.



Photo provided by Larry Peyton

## NSLPS Bylaw Update Announcement

The Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society is working to update our by-laws so the society can work more efficiently to help communities and individuals throughout the province protect and preserve our amazing lighthouses.

Included in this issue of the Lightkeeper are the full set of

bylaws. Please take this opportunity to review the bylaws and send any feedback you have on these to the Board before our AGM in the spring.

We will vote on the bylaws at the AGM. Any feedback, or suggestions must be received no later than March 30, 2018. Please send feedback to [dcontrasty@nslps.com](mailto:dcontrasty@nslps.com).

Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society, est 1993

## In Lieu of a Light

By: Mark Wilson



City of Saint John - three lamp light  
From the New Brunswick Museum

running a lamp up the pole at night, and then lowering the lamp at dawn. For roughly \$100-200 they were relatively cheap to build, and were far more affordable than a proper lighthouse at ten times the cost.

In the 1944 edition of the Pilot (Nova Scotia edition, Federal Dept. of Mines & Resources), they describe one such example that is part of a set of range lights: "The front light is exhibited, at an elevation of 55 feet (16m8), from a mast on a white shed, 31 feet(9m4) in height, near the head of the cove." This particular light would not have survived much longer, as this style of lights was discontinued and removed sometime after World War II. A very small number remain today as museum pieces and relics.

**"...they came down from the fort, a distance of 12 miles, to Cape Disappointment, on which they hoisted the flag we had seen, and set fire to several trees to serve in lieu of a lighthouse"**

**- Ross Cox, The Columbia River, 1831**

Much has been written about the large iconic lighthouses throughout the western world, and deservedly so. Their architecture and individual histories provide great fodder for those who wish to write about them. And part of that appeal is that they represent some of the most elaborate and refined attempts at protecting us from the sea.

But for every engineering marvel like Eddystone, and for every monolith like Cape Hatteras, there was something far more humble that served the same purpose. This article takes a quick look at the more simple and rudimentary things that our ancestors employed when full-fledged lighthouses were not in the offing.

Some of these examples were the result of cost saving measures by governments of the day, while others came about because individuals or communities took matters into their hands. Whatever the reason, some of these lights have gone on to become a part of our history and folklore.

Take, for example, the light poles and masts (often attached to a shed) that dotted the coasts of the Maritimes during the 19th and early 20th centuries. They worked by

Also gone from service is a pair of makeshift lights in Ontario and Nova Scotia. Though it is not widely known, both the old City Hall of Kingston and the Pictou Customs House acted as navigational aids. Neither was purpose-built as a lighthouse, yet both acted in that capacity and were supported financially by the Dept of Marine and Fisheries.

It was done, presumably, because it was a cheap alternative to building complete lighthouses. In the 1879 list of lights by the same department, Kingston's light is described as "city clock" because the light was thought to reside in either the clockface itself, or the cupola just above it.

In the book "For Want of a Lighthouse", author Marc Seguin paraphrases from an 1866 newspaper and notes that "the large clock tower of the Kingston City Hall was kept illuminated after dark to help guide ships to the wharves."

Likewise, the Pictou Customs House was fitted for a gas light in 1878. It was the Dept. of Marine and Fisheries who paid the Pictou Gas Co. \$36.57 to fit the top of the Customs House. Even in those days, it was a relative pittance. In their 1878 report they go on to say, "A range light has been placed last summer in the tower of the new Custom House. ... [It] is elevated 60 feet above high water, and has been seen 7 miles outside the bar in clear weather."



These two lights were unusual, to be sure. But the city of Saint John, New Brunswick was not to be outdone. Described rather blandly in the 1944 Pilot as being: "at an elevation of 42 feet(12m8), [and] from a lamp post...", a person could easily miss its unique physical characteristics and its historical importance. It was, in fact, 3 lamps on a trident that resembled a very large Victorian era light pole.



Range Lights, Big Bras d'Or Lakes  
From the Nova Scotia Archives

To the mariner, that meant you needed all three lights to be abreast. If you saw only one or two lights, then you were not on the right angle to negotiate the harbour.

From the very beginning, it was intended to double as a regular street light AND a navigational aid. It is also quite rare, though another in Savannah, Georgia is similar in design. After Canadian Confederation, the Dept of Marine picked up 2/3 of the operating costs given its importance to sea-going vessels.

The common link to all of these lights is their official, governmental origins. It was the City of Kingston, the Commissioners of Light Houses, the Dept. of Marine or some other body who started these lights, or quickly jumped on board to subsidize them. They stand in contrast to lights that were implemented by individuals or small communities.

With that in mind, it is here where another aspect of lighthouse folklore develops. In places where no lighthouse existed, people sometimes took it upon themselves to offer visual aid to the fisherman or seabound traveler. The English explorer William Dampier noticed this himself in 1699 when he traveled to Salvador, Brazil and wrote: "its lights (which they hang out purposely for ships) we saw the same night." He was referring to the fort at the southernmost part of the town.

But there are examples much closer to home. If you live in Nova Scotia, for instance, it is said that Old St Edward's Church (1793) in Clementsport acted as a navigational aid in its earliest days. An old church handout that gives the church's history explains, "For over 30 years after the church was built an oil lamp was hoisted up in the tower to guide the sailing ships through the [Digby] gut."

The timing of when the lamp was exhibited is important (and gives credence to the notion) since that area had no lighthouse for most of those 30 years. During the late 1700's and the first two decades of the 1800's, it was quite possibly the lone guiding light within the Annapolis Basin.

We see another example of this type of thing along the shores of Lake Ontario, though with commercial overtones. A mill owner in Belleville displayed his light in 1835 because no other light existed there, and because it had economic advantages.

Just a few weeks after he began the practise, it was written: "It is now twenty days since Billa Flint Jr. commenced building a large commodious warehouse at the foot of his wharf, and on Wednesday night last for the first time, a light was suspended from the steeple of the same as a beacon to guide boats navigating the bay.

"In reality Billa Flint was just doing something that many others also did - display lights in a casual, informal manner, especially in the early days. For someone who is willing to look, there are various references to be found about lights being casually hung from warehouse eaves or from dwelling windows for the purpose of navigation.

One of those people was Marie-Louise Arseneault, a notable historical figure in Dalhousie, New Brunswick. In the early to mid 1800's, well before a lighthouse existed in her area, she began her own form of keeping a light. In the book, "The Way It Was Along My Bay, Vol.2", Vetta Faulds described it this way:

Since there was no lighthouses in those early days, Marie-Louise kept a candle in her window to guide her family safely back home. From that first candle, to an oil lamp in her window to a fixed white beacon light and in 1870, to the traditional style tower lighthouse so familiar to my generation, this Inch Arran light was cared for by the Arseneault family until 1935.

This lady was from a different time, when those on the water were desperate for light and guidance. It is hard, perhaps, for us in the modern era to imagine just how dark the world was back then.

Today, we don't set the forests alight to aid those on water. We don't put candles in windows. And we don't hang lamps from 30 foot poles. Those days are behind us now.



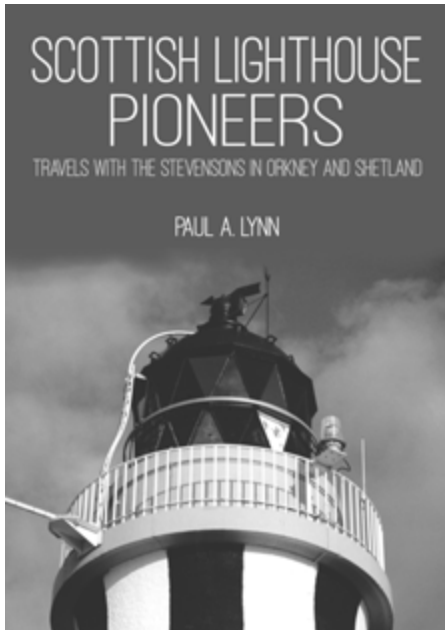
Point Clear Light, Bras d'Or  
Lakes, Cape Breton  
From the NS Archive

# The Stevenson Family: Lighthouse Book Reviews

By: Chris Mills

## Scottish Lighthouse Pioneers: Travels With The Stevensons In Orkney and Shetland.

Paul A. Lynn. Whittles Publishing Ltd., Dunbeath. 2017. 118 pp.



The last day of March, 1998 marked a definitive moment in Scottish lighthouse history. On that early spring Tuesday, Princess Anne, patron of the Northern Lighthouse Board (NLB), visited with the guardians of Fair Isle South lighthouse. The princess unveiled a commemorative

plaque and shook hands with the final shift of lightkeepers on that final day of lightkeeping in Scotland, ending a 211 year tradition of service and dedication to safety at sea.

But it wasn't the end of the story of Scottish lighthouses. Technology had allowed the elimination of the lightkeeper, but the lighthouses themselves were built far too well to just disappear. The reason for that can be found in one family name: Stevenson. The history of Scottish lighthouses is inextricably tied to the Stevenson family of engineers: a remarkable collection of troubled, brilliant doers and dreamers, who lit the coasts of Scotland, as well as those of New Zealand and Japan, and who contributed to lighthouse development in Canada, India, Burma, and China.

In 2015, professional engineer and author Paul Lynn published an account of Stevenson involvement with the famous Skerryvore lighthouse on the wild west coast of Scotland. In his latest book, Lynn sheds further light on Stevenson contributions to the lighting of Scotland's rugged Orkney and Shetland Islands. Perhaps most importantly though, Lynn helps us to better understand the motivations of, and the superhuman work ethic belonging to, the family self-charged with the enormous task of lighting Scotland's treacherous coastlines. As a Stevenson, whether you liked it or not, you were expected

to learn the science and the art of lighthouse engineer, and to apply both diligently and without fail.

Lynn sets the scene with a trip to Orkney and to the Shetlands, with descriptions of "The Northern Isles and Their Lighthouses", "the most extraordinary", Muckle Flugga, and many more. After completing his tour of each lighthouse, Lynn delves into the lives and work of "The Remarkable Stevensons", providing enticing and revealing views of just what made the lighthouse Stevensons tick: to a large degree, a herculean drive and work ethic, fueled by strong Calvinist doctrine and practices.

Interestingly, the story of the Stevenson dynasty begins with a non-Stevenson: Thomas Smith. As the Northern Lighthouse Board's first engineer, it was Smith who hired Robert Stevenson as an apprentice, setting "...the Stevensons on the path to lighthouse fame...". Robert's sons Alan, David and Thomas carried on the family tradition, which involved not only designing and building lighthouses, but clambering over the very tide-scoured rocks they sought to mark.

Lynn uses first-hand accounts from poet Sir Walter Scott and Robert Louis Stevenson, the "troubled engineering apprentice desperate to become an author" to explore this. Their writings and ruminations not only reveal much about the lighthouses of Orkney and Shetland, but about the family who designed and built them.

In 1814, poet Scott sailed as a guest aboard the Northern Lighthouse Board's yacht Pharos, covering Orkney, Shetland, north mainland Scotland, and the Hebrides. His "eye witness" account provides rare and sometimes grimly amusing insights into the conditions of the voyage. Scott sought literary inspiration from the landscape of Shetland, and observed the lives of its people.

Lynn's second "eye witness" was a little closer to the family. Robert Stevenson's grandson Robert Louis Stevenson was the reluctant and sometimes recalcitrant member of the family. RLS "endured several years of engineering apprenticeship totally unsuited to his talents and inclinations." As Lynn writes, RLS was later able to look "...back at his family with a mixture of fascination, regret and admiration; and fortunately for us, he wrote about them."

Scottish Lighthouse Pioneers provides an important window into not only the lives of Scotland's lighthouse engineering dynasty, but into the social and economic conditions of the day. Lynn serves up a vivid account of wild country and a beleaguered people decimated by the Highland Clearances, where wealthy landowners allowed

sheep to trump crofting families, forcing hundreds of families across the Atlantic to begin new lives in a land as equally as harsh: Nova Scotia. Amidst this, and the punishing environment of wind and tide, the Stevenson family persevered to bring lifesaving light to the wild coasts of Orkney and Shetland. They did their work diligently, nay, reverently, with 110 per cent focus, drive and dedication.

Scottish lighthouses and the Stevenson family: the two are almost synonymous, with four generations of the Edinburgh-based family conceiving, designing, and constructing close to 200 lighthouses along the coasts of Scotland and The Isle of Man. Author Paul A. Lynn has called the family's work "...one of the most extraordinary sustained efforts by any family in the world of civil engineering."

### **Southern Lights. The Scottish Contribution to New Zealand's Lighthouses.**

Guinevere Nalder. Whittles Publishing Ltd., Dunbeath. 2017. 280 pp.

The Stevenson legacy also extends far beyond the craggy shorelines of their native country. The family lent their experience and expertise to lighthouse authorities in Canada, India, Burma, and China. They also played a crucial role in lighting the coastline of Japan. And for almost a century, Scottish lighthouse technology, with services provided by the firm founded by Robert Stevenson, helped construct and equip more than 30 lighthouses in New Zealand.

Chartered civil engineer and author Guinevere Nalder chronicles this "...exercise in technology transfer from Scotland to New Zealand..." in *Southern Lights: The Scottish Contribution to New Zealand's Lighthouses*. Between 1859 and 1941 New Zealand built 38 major lighthouses. Scottish lighthouse technology proved invaluable to a developing colony (and later dominion) with a limited industrial base.

Various stages of lighthouse administration, from the Marine Board, to Marine Department (which operated under the Post Office, and later the Customs Department of New Zealand) took responsibility for site acquisition and lighthouse construction. Nalder sets the progression of New Zealand lighthouse building in the context of New Zealand's growth as a nation, following the North Island land wars of the mid-19th century. It was a tumultuous time with a government that in some cases paid little or no heed to land claimed by the indigenous Maori people.

Nalder draws extensively from the detailed correspondence between the New Zealand lighthouse authority and the Stevensons, in an era where the post took weeks or months, and materials arrived from Scotland by steamer. Everything from small discrepancies to major problems with equipment, along with questions about the suitability of various lenses and towers for particular

locations, required constant letter-writing and alterations in plans and equipment orders. All this in an era when split-second electronic communication was no more possible than a fully automated light on a pole.

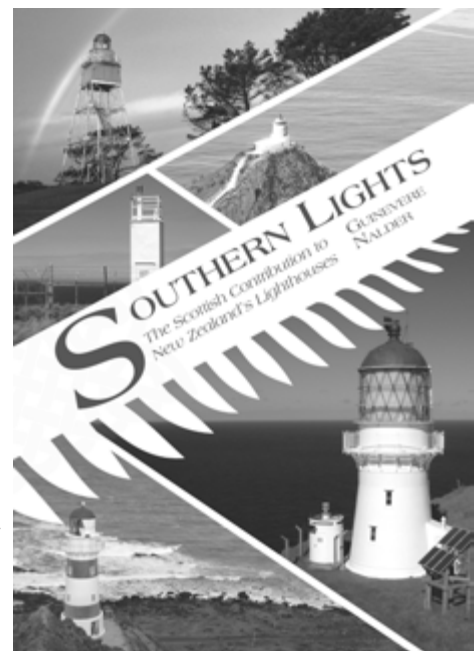
Although many of New Zealand's early lights were constructed of wood, their Scottish lanterns and English and French optics were highly sophisticated pieces of equipment, requiring exacting standards and expert installation. Later towers of iron and concrete provided longer-lasting structures, many of which continue to operate as active aids to navigation today.

Nalder details the construction of all the "Scottish" lights on the South and North Islands in New Zealand, while also exploring developing technologies for lighting; from the somewhat inefficient Doty Burners, to the brilliant incandescent paraffin burners, to automated acetone-acetylene lights, and finally, electricity.

Nalder wraps up her book with accounts of the construction of cast iron and concrete towers. By 1884, the last timber tower had been built, just one year after the appearance of the first concrete tower. During the first years of the 20th century, New Zealand established four new major lights, with the technological innovation of mercury, instead of rollers, as a frictionless bearing for their large rotating lenses.

*Southern Lights* is an important record of the far-reaching expertise of the Stevenson family, and the spread of Scottish lighthouse technology. Lavishly illustrated with photos and documents, the book is jam-packed with details. However, those details can be a bit overwhelming at times. Copious end notes will be of use to the serious researcher/pharologist, but for a broader audience, the book tends to be more academic in tone.

More personal stories would have enlivened what is otherwise a very valuable contribution to the growing body of literature exploring the fascinating story of the Stevenson family and their unflinching drive to provide safety at sea around the world.





## Another Great Year of for Sambro Island Lighthouse Tours

By: Joe Flemming

Our 2017 tours to Sambro Island were a smashing hit. Dan Conlin graced our presence as our gracious and extremely knowledgeable tour guide. Despite rain, fog, mist and lumpy seas, we filled nearly every boat.

At the end of the day, we lost count of the smiles and those who departed with a sense of wonderment that could rival any theme park experience.

One week before our tours a small, but devoted group of community volunteers, led by Bub Smith and Eoin Duffy, carved the paths on the island for the tours to come. Without this group of dedicated volunteers, it would be impossible to safely operate these tours to the island. It's a naturally dangerous place, made relatively safe by the hard work of these hard working community members.

### TOUR DAY

The day started quite gloomy, and rain, my goodness did it pour. We thought for sure it was a bust. But when that first boat pierced the fog, came the site of a full compliment of eager tourists itching to step foot on the island. Boatload after boatload, our guests were greeted by our shore volunteers, Sue Paul of the Sambro Island



Tours of Sambro Island were a great success again this year.  
**Photo provided by Joe Flemming**

Lighthouse Heritage Society, and Matt Burke of the Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society.

Then it was off to the dock where Capt. Paddy Gray welcomed them aboard the famed Pickpocket for the journey to the island. Paddy always keeps everyone engaged, and he sure knows how to tell a good story. They sailed through quite a choppy sea, in weather fit for a duck, but they safely persevered.

Upon arriving in the cove at Sambro Island, they were met by our wonderful volunteers John and Josette, Larry Peyton (No Ka Oi Drone Guys) Nigel Kid and tour guide/local history expert, Dan Conlin. With the lighthouse looking proudly over them, each group was treated to a guided tour by Mr Conlin. It did not disappoint.

There was something for everyone. History, technology and folklore. For most, they got a glimpse into the solitary, and quite dangerous world our lightkeepers have endured for centuries.

All in all, we were able to bring nearly 100 people to the island this day. We're proud of the work our volunteers did to make it happen. And we're humbled by outpouring of support shown by those who took the time to come see our beautiful lighthouse.

We can't wait to do it again next year. We'd like to send out an extra large thank you Tasha Andrews, Kathryn Cooper-Macdonald, John Ford and the rest of the great team at DFO for all that they do for Nova Scotia lighthouses and the communities they serve.



Don Conlin giving tours  
**Provided by Joe Flemming**



**Provided by Joe Flemming**



# Denyse and Joanne's Excellent Adventure

By: Joanne McCormick

An invitation to an Art Show in New Glasgow wound up being a wonderful adventure for Denyse Contrasty and myself, as it became an opportunity to scout out and see some lighthouses on the North Shore. Starting out early the morning of July 9, we headed out on what proved to be an informative and greatly satisfying adventure. We decided to see one lighthouse before the Art Show, and then proceed to another following the Show. Cape George Lighthouse was chosen as the first light.

## Cape George Lighthouse: Sunrise Trail

Perched on a dramatic headland jutting out into the waters of the Northumberland Strait, this majestic light sits 360 ft. above sea level, at a height of 45 ft. (14 m). An octagonal concrete tower, built in 1968, is the third light since 1861, when a series of shipwrecks moved residents to petition for "the safe navigation of all vessels passing through the straits of Northumberland."

A graceful, curved gravel road leads to the imposing light as one approaches the Strait. The grounds are maintained by the volunteers of the Cape George Lighthouse community group, and they are doing a wonderful job. Seaside roses accent this beautiful site, and wild Nova Scotia flora and fauna abound cliffside.

Although we didn't hike in this area, Heritage Trails offer 37 km of trails of panoramic views and elevations of up to 600 ft. above sea level. As they looked out to sea, they could see the lighthouse on Henry Island off the Cape Breton shore.

On June 8, the deed and key to the Cape George lighthouse were handed over to the Antigonish North Shore Development Association, in trust for the Cape George Community. On July 23, a wonderful celebration was held at the lighthouse by this very deserving community group.

We lingered for awhile drinking in the beauty surrounding Cape George, and then – on to the Art Show!! After attending the fabulous art show "A Stitch in Time" by artist Mary Goodman, and having a bite to eat, we set off for:

## Caribou Island Lighthouse: Sunrise Trail

Even though the newly formed Friends of Caribou Island submitted an article in our spring Lightkeeper, we had such a wonderful trip to the light we thought we would include a little more info and observations on seeing the area and light for ourselves this summer. Off the beaten path, this area is a little gem of Nova Scotia! The drive to the lighthouse is so beautiful with many beaches, and Waterside Beach Provincial Park in the area. Wildlife and

the sound of waves crashing make it truly special. The panoramic view is outstanding. In winter, we learned, one can see baby seals offshore.

Once we arrived, we were immensely glad that the community group has stepped up to restore this lighthouse. Standing 44" high, it looks basically in good condition, but needs some tender loving care, and we think with this group in charge with its good ideas, that will be achieved. The structure around the lighthouse was torn down last year and only the tower remains.

On the plus side, the tower is concrete, and the beacon is still working. When the Dept. of Fisheries and Oceans divested itself of lighthouses in 2012, no community group was able to submit a plan to save it. Now, with the dedicated "Friends of Caribou Island", chances are we will see just that.

Several years ago, Barry MacDonald, our past president, donated the original lens from the 2nd Caribou light to the Northumberland Fisheries Lighthouse Museum in Pictou. In December, Glen Fry, former board member of NSLPS, met with the Friends of Caribou Island and some Pictou County municipal councillors, for a presentation by the non-profit community group.

The value of the lighthouse to the local community, county and tourists was stressed, and a general discussion followed. The former Warden for the Municipality of the District of St. Mary's (owners of the Port Bickerton Light) was also there for support of the Caribou proposal. Glen explained the transfer process, and the following relationships that would occur.

Happily, the Council is giving consideration to requesting a transfer of ownership with an alliance with the Friends of Caribou Island. Saving a lighthouse can be the most satisfying and fun thing a group of like-minded people can do. It can draw a community closely together. Once this light is restored, it will be a jewel waiting at the end of that gorgeous, winding road. We wish the "Friends of Caribou Island" a bright future. Off again to explore the:

## Northumberland Fisheries Lighthouse Museum

As we arrived, we found ourselves in the midst of the Pictou Lobster Festival. Unfortunately, the Lighthouse Museum was closed, but we had a delicious ice cream and poked around this charming town with its many heritage buildings. But we will go back. Rip Irwin's collection of lighthouse pictures and memorabilia is housed there, and would be a grand experience some fine summer's day. We encourage you to visit all three of these sites.

# The Story of Battery Point Breakwater Light

By: Joe Flemming

## Sometimes the history we know, leads us to the history we didn't.

With the amount of research and time invested in learning about Nova Scotia's beloved lighthouses, surely we couldn't have missed anything. Hasn't every stone been turned? We've talked to keepers, keepers' families, and spent painstaking hours licking our thumbs in order to turn the hundreds of dry pages of the history books written by those fog chasers and lighthouse junkies before us. Those with a love for lighthouses, tend to have a geeky relationship with them. And with that, comes an amazing attention to detail. But every once in a while, as is with all of history, new details come to "light".

My journey with the NSLPS began as a result of my team's work and preservation efforts for the Sambro Island Lighthouse. Through that work, I was fortunate enough to have been introduced to Rear Admiral John Newton, Commander of Joint Task Force Atlantic. He and his men were assisting us in providing the gas house on Sambro Island with some much needed preservation work. Being new to the lighthouse scene, I had, and still have, a lot to learn about our lights. But I wanted to impress John with any knowledge I did have. So I stuck with what I knew about Sambro, and didn't stray off topic. Then, just as one would expect, less than 30 minutes into our relationship, on a trip out to the Island on a boat I couldn't get off of, John hits me with the inevitable. A question about another lighthouse. And a lighthouse I'd never even heard of at that.

The commander of JTFA had just asked me about a light he had seen in his neck of the woods, and I had nothing. I'm figuring my credibility had gone under the keel and been sucked right through the jet drive. But I was honest, and I promised we'd figure it out someday, and we moved along to our talk about Sambro. Fast forward a year and I have thought about John's question several times, but never had the time to dig in. I figured it was just another light that was well known, but lost to time. But the more I looked into it, the more of a mystery it became.

Then, this October, John and I spoke again about this mystery light. With a few more details he had provided, we were able to dig a little deeper. We found indications of a lighthouse in a place we didn't know had a light. Little East Point Island, just off the coast of Blue Rocks near Lunenburg N.S. It wasn't just hearsay. There were pilots' journals and ships' logs that made reference to this light. So it had to be real. But if that was the case, why didn't we have record of it on our Lighthouse Maps.

The Mystery deepened. Then came a picture John had

found. Taken in the 1950's, of an old house, with the mystery lighthouse out front, clearly not in use anymore. This at least gave us visual proof of its existence. However, it simply created more mystery surrounding the reason we knew nothing about it, how it got there, and who looked after it. So I reached out to Chris Mills, a lighthouse guru and powerhouse of knowledge when it comes to Nova Scotia's lights. Chris was a founding member of the NSLPS, and if anyone was going to have an answer, or the resources to find one, it was he. Chris discovered information regarding a light on a pole in this area, East Point Island Gut Light. Well, this lighthouse was no pole. So now, we had 2 lights on our hands, in a place in which we had none before. Helpful in one way, confusing in another.

After sharing a few pictures and notes, comparing them, and a little more digging, Chris, myself, and Admiral Newton all agreed. The Lighthouse in question was the old Battery Point Breakwater Lighthouse. The Fog Bell Housing being the distinguishing feature.

As far as everyone was concerned, this light had been long lost. Never to be seen again. Could it be that the light John has been frequently seeing, on its side unfortunately, be a lighthouse we thought we'd never set eyes upon again. It appears that way. It has always been thought, that when the current Breakwater Lighthouse was built in 1951. The old light had been destroyed or lost to the sea. I suppose if one had asked around and found the right person who just happened to know the story, we might have known earlier. But unfortunately, these are the stories that so often go to the grave with their keepers. If no one thinks to ask, the story rarely gets told.

So now we're left with an old lighthouse in a place it wasn't meant to be. We have more questions than answers. Why was it put there? When? And most interestingly, HOW did they get it there? The current light at Battery Point was built in 1951. So we know the original 1937 light was relocated near that time.

In the next edition of the LIGHTKEEPER, you can look forward to an update and answers to our questions surrounding the old Battery Point Breakwater Light. Admiral John Newton has made contact with folks in the know. We can't wait to hear their stories so we can share them with you. If you have any knowledge, pictures or stories regarding this lighthouse, please reach out to our editor. We'd love to speak with you. We're making plans to visit this light and can't wait to share the photos and discoveries we make along the way. STAY TUNED!



## Parrsboro Lighthouse gets renewed support

By: Matthew Brewer

Parrsboro's iconic lighthouse may not have actually had more voltage added to it, but it does seem to be shining much brighter these days.

At a well attended general meeting of the Parrsboro Lighthouse Society held on October 10, the lone remaining executive member of the Society's original board made a desperate plea to its members to save both the Society and the lighthouse. Dozens of new members signed on and six of those stepped forward to serve on the new board. The



Parrsboro Lighthouse  
Provide by Matthew Brewer

Society hopes to preserve the structure as it has fallen into a state of general disrepair and to continue to work toward divestiture from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

This lighthouse is an extremely important cultural and historic fixture in this once seafaring community. It attracts hundreds of visitors and tourists to the shorelines

each year and is undoubtedly one of the most photographed attractions in the area.

## NSLPS Looking for New Board Members

The Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society is looking for new board members. The group has been around since the early 90s and in the last few years many founding members have moved on to other projects after decades of commitment.

We are looking for individuals who are passionate about Nova Scotia's lighthouses and who would like to volunteer their time to help saving them.

The society works with communities and individuals throughout the province to raise awareness about our lighthouses and to support different efforts to preserve, protect and renew these wonderful icons of our past.

There are over 150 lighthouses in Nova Scotia, many of which are falling into disrepair. Groups throughout the province are doing their best to bring these lights back to life for the benefit of their communities.

The NSLPS is here to work with people throughout the province and support their efforts to save our lighthouses.

The Board meets once monthly at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic. We are able to make arrangement for people to video call into the meeting if you do not live in the Halifax area.



If you're interested in becoming part of our board or have any questions about the work we do and how you can help please get in touch with Joanne McCormick, our president at [info@nslps.ca](mailto:info@nslps.ca).



**Thank You  
to everyone  
who  
sent in photos  
for our  
World Lighthouse  
Day  
Contest**