



THE POMHAM GLOW

Friends of Pomham Rocks Lighthouse,
A Chapter of the American Lighthouse Foundation
Mission Statement

To ensure the historic restoration and preservation of Pomham Rocks Lighthouse and to improve public awareness, appreciation and access to Pomham Rocks Lighthouse.

MARCH 2023

**NEW TOUR SEASON DATES
RELEASED!**



2023 POMHAM ROCKS LIGHTHOUSE TOUR SEASON

After a very successful 2022 season, the Pomham Rocks Lighthouse Tours will be back in full swing this year with more tours than ever. Sixty tours are scheduled during June, July, and August and our launch will now be located at the Edgewood Yacht Club in Cranston.

After a short ride across the bay, participants will disembark and enjoy a self-guided tour of our beautifully restored lighthouse. Many authentic brass artifacts are on display as well as our original Fourth-Order Fresnel lens. Knowledgeable docents will also be on hand to answer questions and share stories, and our gift shop will be open at the end of the tour.

To find out more about this year's lighthouse tours, please visit our website at pomhamrockslighthouse.org.

THIRD ANNUAL POMHAM ROCKS LIGHTHOUSE RUN

The Third Annual Pomham Rocks Lighthouse Run will take place on Saturday, April 22. This event is a major fundraiser for our organization, and it brings more community awareness to our beautiful lighthouse. The race attracts participants from all over New England and beyond and takes place at Rose Larisa Memorial Park across from the famous Looff Carousel. The 10K will kick off at 8:00am and the 5K will

begin at 8:30am, followed by an awards ceremony at 9:30am.



Runners Going by the Lighthouse

If you do not plan to run or walk that day, please join us to volunteer or come by the park to cheer everyone on. It's a beautiful location for a wonderful cause!

For more information, visit our website at pomhamrockslighthouse.org. If you are interested in volunteering, please email [us](mailto:us@pomhamrockslighthouse@yahoo.com) at pomhamrockslighthouse@yahoo.com

SHUTTER UPDATE

As many have heard these past few months, a project in the works is to have working shutters added back to the Lighthouse. It was just approved at the last board meeting to finalize a contract with ABCORE to restore shutters back onto the building. ABCORE, led by Keith Lesarbeau, has done several restoration and maintenance projects for us over the years, and has done exceptional work.

Adding shutters onto the building has been a subject tossed around for a while, but

never came to fruition mainly due to the costs. The lighthouse originally had shutters when its construction was completed in 1871 and is the only item missing from the lighthouse's original 1871 look. The total cost will be roughly \$65,000, which includes new storm windows to accommodate the shutters. The current storm windows stick out several inches, which would prevent the shutters from fully closing. New storm windows are needed to make sure the shutters are fully functional. The intentions of adding shutters are not only for historical accuracy and aesthetic but are also to serve as additional protection of the structure, the interior, and museum artifacts. The shutters will be fully operational adding more protection during future storms.

To fund the project, FPRL has received a \$10,000 grant from the USLHS (United States Lighthouse Society), which we have graciously accepted and very appreciative the USLHS wants to support our group in adding back shutters. FPRL has submitted grant applications to a few other groups in the hopes of having this expense offset more, in which those applications are currently pending. The timeline for when shutters will start being put onto the lighthouse will be sometime in late spring, and the project should take about a week's time to complete once work has been started on the island. The shutters themselves are being custom fabricated to fit the lighthouse on land before being brought out to the island.

STORM DAMAGE

On December 23, 2022, a powerful storm hit the Rhode Island coast and Pomham Rocks Lighthouse was not spared from damage. As the storm surge came up the bay the floating docks rose as they are designed to rise and fall with the tide. The stationary dock, which is from 1939, was under 2-3 feet of water during the storm. This pushed the dock ramp up to an angle of 45 degrees. When the storm subsided, and we were able to get to the light to access the damage, we were surprised as to what we found. The 1939 dock platform appears to have detached from the support beams and attempted to float off. As the surge receded, the boards mostly settled back into place. Many boards are warped and loose. Many of the nails were pulled out by the boards attempting to float off. Multiple boards were also lost on the dock ramp up to the island from the dock. The damage to the dock is due to its age and severely deteriorated condition.



Dock Submerged by Storm Surge

One of the most surprising points of damage was a collapse of 8' X 8' of the island on the north side. This collapse of rock has also revealed that further parts of the island in that area are in danger of collapse. Most notable - the lilac bush that Tommy the Cat would store fish under.



Collapsed Section of Ledge

FPRL will be working over the coming months to contact a specialist to access the collapsed section and create a plan to stabilize the area from future collapse. We are also actively planning for the removal and replacement of the 1939 dock.



Security Camera Photo of Dock Submerged

STATUS OF LADY POMHAM II

Our launch, the Lady Pomham II, will no longer be docked in East Providence this summer. We are excited to announce that we have signed a contract for a slip at Edgewood Yacht Club in Cranston this season and hopefully for many more to come. The transit to the lighthouse will now be 10 – 15 minutes instead of the 30-minute trip we were used to from East Providence. This will cut our fuel usage by half or more. Additionally, the amenities at Edgewood Yacht Club are much nicer with water, electricity, restrooms, and ample parking.

Our current U.S. Coast Guard certification that stated “no more than 1000 feet from shore” did not allow us to cross the Providence River from the lighthouse to Cranston. In order to enable us to make this crossing, the U.S. Coast Guard required us to add another row of railings to the launch, increasing the height of the railing to forty inches from the deck to the top rail instead of the original thirty-four inches. We also had

to add an additional fire extinguisher and a function to our radio that would broadcast our launch's name and position if a special emergency button were pushed. FCC Radio Station licensing was also a requirement.

The launch was pulled from the water in February and trailered back to where it was built at Crosby Yacht Yard in Osterville, Mass. There, it will have the modifications done along with a couple of minor repairs. We expect the launch back in Rhode Island in early April and will take the launch to its new summer home at Edgewood Yacht Club on May 13th.

EDGEWOOD YACHT CLUB

Lady Pomham II's future home, the Edgewood Yacht Club in Cranston, held an Open House on Sunday, March 19th. Our three Captains, (left to right in photo) Jim Cain, Dennis Tardiff and Alex Dias visited that day, along with Gary Point and Tour Director Judianne Point to see the club and the slip for our launch. We are so excited to begin our 2023 tour season in partnership with the Edgewood Yacht Club. Be sure to visit our tour schedule online at pomhamrockslighthouse.org and check out the EYC website to learn more about Edgewood at www.edgewoodyachtclub.com.



Meet with Edgewood Yacht Club

2022 WORK PARTIES

The 2022 work party season at the lighthouse was jam packed with projects. Our volunteers were able to accomplish the following projects:

The Lighthouse - A small crack was discovered on the floor of the cistern. The cistern had to be drained, cleaned and the crack repaired. It will begin taking water again in Spring 2023.

All lighthouse lantern rooms have a vent in the center to allow the heat to escape from the oil being burned. Pomham's vent was plugged up when electricity came to the island. This has been trapping heat in the lantern room, making it unbearably hot during the summer months. The vent was reopened during the summer of 2022 and has

helped considerably in making the temperature lower by almost 20 degrees.

Each doorway in the lighthouse originally had a four-panel door. We have reinstalled a door to the 1st floor vestibule that has been in storage since 2017. The door will be painted in 2023. We will be reinstalling the other 5 missing doors to bring back the original appearance of the interior structure. This will add extra security during tours if a room needs to be closed off. It will also help greatly in the winter to keep the Fresnel lens room warmer.

Oil House – The steps to the Oil House were replicated back to their original 1900 design. The steps that were in use prior were made of concrete and added during the Coast Guard era. Those steps were badly deteriorating and sinking. We are fortunate enough to have the original blueprints to the Oil House, including the steps. We were able to replicate these.

Grounds work – We purchased and assembled 15 white Adirondack chairs for tourists to lounge in during their trips. They proved to be quite the draw during our tour season. Work also commenced on replicating the white picket fence that was on the island in 1900. This project will carry through 2023.

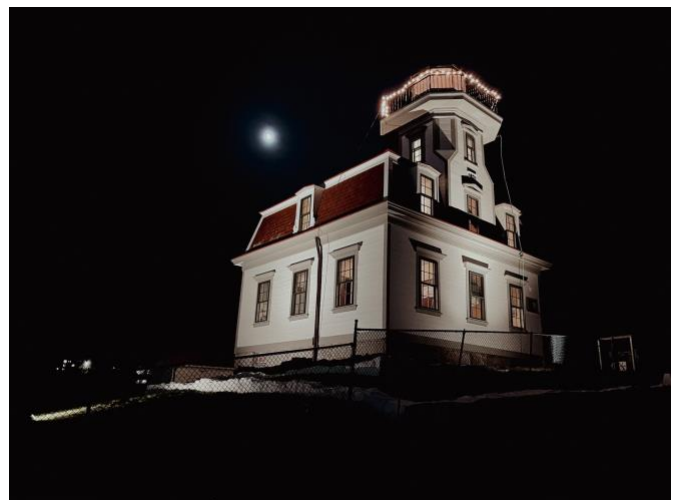
Thank you to all who came out on work parties in the 2022 season! We hope to see you in 2023!

HOLIDAY LIGHTS AT POMHAM

For the second year in a row Pomham Rocks Lighthouse was illuminated for the month of December. Lights were strung from the lantern room railing and on the Oil House wreath. Spotlights were also projected on each side of the lighthouse house. The lights were programmed to come on at 4:30 pm each night. The lights were best viewed from the bike path but could also be seen from Sabin Point.



Holiday Lights



*Holiday Lights***POMHAM SANTA**

As the tradition continues, Santa made his way down the Riverside coastline to greet a large awaiting crowd at Sabin point again this year. Many residents along the shore came out to wave to Santa, as he made his way up the bay sounding the boat horn and jingling the sleigh bells. Everyone of all ages crowded the park to greet him and were excited to get close as the boat pulled all the way up. Many thanks to Andy Leddy, who plays the role of Santa every year, and all the other volunteers that make this joyous event possible.



Santa Arriving at Sabin Point

**2022 ANNUAL MEETING - A
CELEBRATION OF LIGHT**

With over 80 members and guests in attendance, the Friends of Pomham Rocks Lighthouse celebrated “all things Fresnel”

this year, especially the long-awaited return of our Fresnel lens - now on full display in our lighthouse museum. At the Annual Meeting, we introduced our new Fresnel lens Holiday ornament which guests could purchase. Cakes were adorned with a full color frosting of our Fresnel lens. And all attendees enjoyed a live performance by actor Joseph Smith, who portrayed Augustin Fresnel, the French physicist who invented the lens. Joseph took us on a lively chase through the history of the development of this navigational device that made lighthouses more visible and significantly diminished shipwrecks.

The business meeting highlighted exciting news about our new boat, the Lady Pomham II, which is ready to start tours in 2023. We had a successful Lighthouse Run this year and look forward to a repeat in May, 2023. It was noted that our membership continues to grow, and that work continues on restoration and maintenance of the lighthouse, as well as additions to our museum. We could see some of those improvements via a brief slide show. It was also noted that we had a number of successful events this year for members and for the public. And to top it off, our fundraising efforts enjoyed another good year, and our organization is in good financial condition! Well-deserved thank you’s were extended to all who worked to make this happen.

Anne Greene ran the yearly election of officers for the Board. The results are as follows: Chairman - Dennis Tardiff, Vice Chairman - Alex Dias, Treasurer - Mike Tripp, Secretary - Anne Greene, Board Member at Large - Nate Chace, Board Member at Large- Adam Dias, Board Member at Large - Dave Kelleher, Board Member at Large - Rick Lux, Board Member at Large - Louise Paiva, Board Member at Large - Judianne Point.

And what would our Annual Meeting be without the camaraderie of our members? It was a great opportunity to meet each other and to welcome new members. The luncheon was delicious, and as usual, there was a lot of fun and spirited competition at the well-stocked raffle and silent auction tables. We thank everyone who helped to make the Annual Meeting such an enjoyable event, and we look forward to seeing all our members at Annual Meeting 2023!

MEMBERSHIP

It takes the help of many friends to maintain the century-and-a-half-year-old lighthouse. Hands-on work and financial support from the community have helped to restore the exterior of the light station to its original state and the interior into an outstanding museum that shares the history of Pomham Rocks and five other lighthouses – past and present along the Providence River. If you haven't already, please consider renewing your membership of

Friends of Pomham Rocks Lighthouse for 2023. Members have an opportunity to be actively involved with events, on boats, on work parties or as tour docents. All members receive a subscription to Pomham Glow newsletters, to keep you informed of programs and activities. As a member, you have the privilege of a discounted rate on boat trips to The Lighthouse and invitation to members-only events. This year for this first time, we are able to accept memberships online through our website, or by mail if you prefer.

STORIES FROM THE LIGHTHOUSE STORY 6: AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE

After the Hurricane of 1938, Pomham Rocks Lighthouse knew she had been lucky. She had escaped major damage and her new lighthouse keeper, William J. Howard and his family had come through it as well. Keeper Howard stayed on for 14 years tending the light and doing his share of saving lives in the waters around the lighthouse. Life in a lighthouse was still not easy. It was the 1940's - homes in Riverside now had electricity, running water and modern bathrooms. But there were no such luxuries at Pomham Rocks. Light still came from oil lamps, and for water, rain was collected from the roof and stored in a cistern under the house. If Mrs. Howard wanted to wash the dishes or bathe, she used a hand pump in the kitchen to pump water up to the sink. Keeper Howard jokingly called

Pomham Rocks his “Little Alcatraz”. But Pomham knew that even Alcatraz had running water and electricity!

Pomham was getting worried about her only remaining “sister” - Sabin Point Lighthouse. In 1943, Sabin’s beloved light keeper, Charles Whitford and his wife Annie, retired from Sabin Point after 27 years of service and loving care of the lighthouse. But instead of a new family moving in, the Coast Guard took over. Pomham had heard that the U.S. Lighthouse Service had merged with the U.S. Coast Guard, and that the days of lighthouses as homes for families were near the end. The Coast Guard performed their duties as caretakers and light keepers, but it was not the same. Pomham felt lucky that she still had the Howards as her light keeper family. But she wondered how long that would last.

Then suddenly, there was much more to worry about. In 1941, the United States entered World War II. More than 90,000 Rhode Islanders served in the war and Pomham watched as young men and women left East Providence to join the war effort.



USS Artemis (AKA-21), built at Field’s Point, 1944

To support the soldiers, local companies quickly shifted their manufacturing. The famous Imperial Knife Company started making thousands of trench knives, US Rubber made heels for soldiers’ boots, and a company that would later be known as Textron switched from making fancy yarns to making parachutes. But the biggest war manufacturing was located at Fields Point, right near Pomham Rocks. Pomham could clearly see the huge shipyard that was being built to make “liberty ships” and attack cargo ships called AKA’s. Field’s Point, once filled with summer tourists, popular beaches and the best shore dinner halls in New England, was now a huge industrial field. In 1942 the Kaiser Shipyards opened and grew to 20,000 employees. They were able to produce and launch a 4,000 ton ship in 136 days or less! In all, 63 ships were built at Field’s Point, and every single one of them sailed by Pomham Rocks as they got underway to their assignments in the Atlantic or the Pacific. Pomham was proud of the contributions of Rhode Island. But she was most happy when the war ended in 1945. There was tremendous joy at the return of soldiers. Parades and homecomings touched nearly every household in East Providence.

After the war, life went back to normal at Pomham Rocks Lighthouse. Mr. Howard

retired in 1951 and then came the new light keeper, Howard Beebe with his wife, four young children, a dog and two rabbits! Life was pretty exciting for the next five years though still not easy. Each day the children had to be taken ashore in the motorboat to go to school. It was the 1950's, and many homes in Riverside were getting TV's. But without electricity at Pomham Rocks, a TV was out of the question. The family had a small windmill that charged a battery, so they could listen to the radio. But the Beebe's had a lot of experience living in lighthouses, and they made the best of it until 1956 when Mr. Beebe retired. Pomham was happy that the family would finally move into a comfortable home, but she was pretty sure that there would not be another family moving in.

She was right. The Coast Guard took over the operation of Pomham Rocks Lighthouse in 1956. One of the first things they did was to bring electricity to the island! For the first time, the lights, the refrigerator, and other appliances no longer needed to be run on kerosene. The modern day had come! But that modern day also brought the reality that electricity could also power lighthouse beacons, foghorns and bells. Throughout the 1950's and 1960's, Pomham heard more and more stories about lighthouses being decommissioned, discontinued or deactivated by the government – all words that meant they were pretty much doomed.



Sabin Point Lighthouse, circa 1900

And then it happened to Pomham's own sister. There were plans to widen the shipping channel and unfortunately, Sabin Point Lighthouse was in the way. It happened suddenly. In 1968, Sabin Point was "discontinued" and ordered to be demolished, and on July 4, 1968 she was burned down by the East Providence Fire Department. Pomham watched in shock and disbelief. She did not understand how her beautiful twin sister, who had protected the ships and the shores of Riverside for 95 years, could be discarded so carelessly, with no ceremony and no thanks.

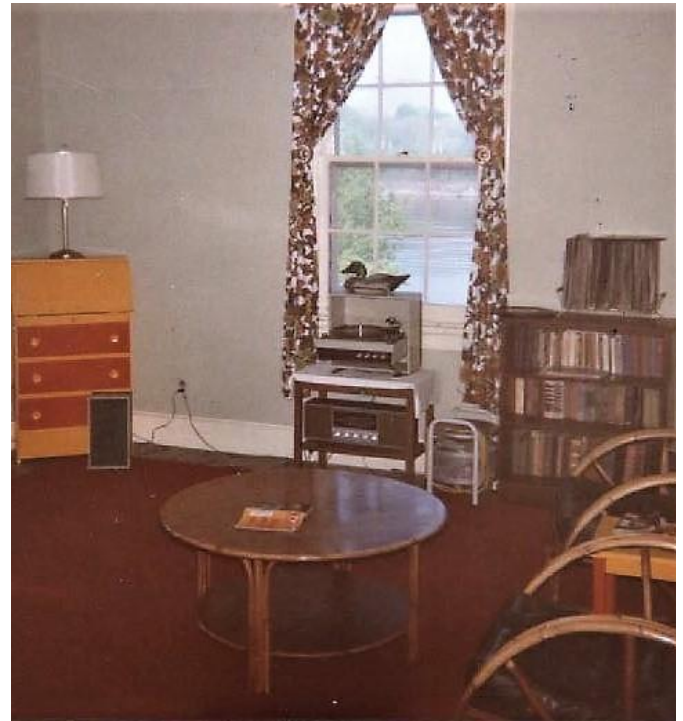


*Pomham Rocks Lighthouse Post
Deactivation*

Three years later, on December 1, 1971, Pomham sat on her lofty rock, thinking about her own future. It was her 100th birthday! But there was no ceremony or recognition for her 100 years of service. She felt discarded and forgotten. Since 1956 there had been many Coast Guardsmen who had brief assignments at Pomham Rocks – it was their job. This evening, there were two young Coast Guardsmen who had just been assigned as keepers.

One of them, Petty Officer Dennis Tardiff, was relaxing in the living room and was taking photos. Pomham wondered if this young man would keep his photos. Would he ever show them to anyone? Would he remember Pomham after he left her and went off to other duties? Would anyone remember?

Join us for *Story 7 – The Orphan Lighthouse*



Pomham Rocks Living Room, 1971

Block Island Tour

Come join us as we celebrate Pomham Rocks Lighthouse's second Keeper, Nathaniel Dodge, on Wednesday, June 7.

The day will include a graveside dedication at the Island Cemetery and tours of Block Island's two lighthouses, Southeast and North* Lights.

Space is limited, so be sure to book early!

Schedule

- 8:00 am** Meet at Point Judith ferry terminal ticket window
- 8:30 am** Take traditional ferry from Point Judith
- 9:30 am** Arrival at Block Island - taxi pickup at ferry landing and head to Island Cemetery
- 11:00 am- 12:30 pm** Taxi drop-off for Lunch at Harbor Grill (no taxi service during lunch time)
- 12:45 pm** Taxi pickup at Harbor Grill and head to Southeast Light for a 1:00 tour (approximately one hour)
- 2:00 pm** Taxis bring group to Settlers Rock - some in group can hike on the beach to North Light, others can take tour around Island
- 3:30 - 4:00 pm** Taxis bring group back downtown where members can sightsee, shop, get ice cream, etc.
- 5:00 pm** Take ferry back to Point Judith

This tour is being provided for FPRL members and their guests only, FIRST-COME, FIRST-SERVED. All reservations must be received no later than Friday, April 28.

*An inside tour of North Light is dependent upon availability of volunteers



Interested?

The total cost for the day will be \$140 per person and will include the ferry, transportation on the island, lunch, and lighthouse tours. To sign up and pay online, go to

pomhamrockslighthouse.org

Questions?

Email Judianne Point at

pomhamrockslighthouse@yahoo.com

or call her at 401-474-0943

EVENTS

- Lighthouse Run 5K/10K
 - Location: Crescent Park, Riverside RI
 - Date: April 22nd. 10K – Starts at 8:00 am, 5K – Starts at 8:30 am

- American Lighthouse Foundation Gala
 - Location: Nonantum Resort, Kennebunkport ME
 - Date: May 6th. 5:00 pm – 9:00 pm

- Memorial Day Parade
 - Location: Begins at Oldham School, Riverside RI
 - Date: May 29th. Starts at 10:00 am

- TOUR SEASON
 - Sixty select dates from June 1st – September 2nd

FOLLOW THE RESTORATION WORK @

www.pomhamrockslighthouse.org

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