



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.

OCTOBER 2020

INTRODUCING: LADY POMHAM II



BOAT NEWS

The summer of 2020 brought us the brand new 26' passenger launch Lady Pomham II meant to conduct tours of the lighthouse. Because of the State of Rhode Island pandemic rules, Lady Pomham II was only used as transportation for work parties to the lighthouse. Due to social distancing rules, only a maximum of 6 people was allowed on board.

We also have experienced an administrative mix-up between records of the manufacturer of the launch and the U.S. Coast Guard. A mandatory USCG witnessed Stability Test was supposed to have been conducted on our launch before we took delivery of it. A Stability Test is required every certain number of identical hulls the manufacturer makes. The mix up was that the USCG said it was our hull in line to be tested and the manufacturer said it was the hull after ours. The USCG won.

Because of a lack of the Stability Test, a Certificate of Inspection was never issued by the USCG and instead of being able to carry the rated 21 people, we unknowingly were limited to 6. The launch is being returned to

the manufacturer at its expense for the Stability Test this fall. A Certificate of Inspection will be issued for the launch after that and we will be able to carry our full rating of 21 people for the 2021 tour season. The launch will be put in winter storage at the manufacturer's facility and will be returned to us in the spring with all the annual maintenance done by the manufacturer, again at no cost to us.



We will still have access to the lighthouse using our trailered 18' "Red Boat" now named "Li'L Pomham". The Li'L Pomham had its engine inspected and steering cable replaced this summer. The bottom and deck were repainted, new wiring for lights was installed, the bilge pump replaced and new USCG required safety equipment was purchased.



RHODE ISLAND “LOW NUMBER PLATE”

In keeping with the Rhode Island propensity for “Low Number Plates”, the Lady Pomham II has been approved for a custom State of Rhode Island registration number of RI 1 LH. It is only appropriate as it stands for Rhode Island’s # 1 Lighthouse.



WORK PARTIES

This year’s work parties were extremely successful given the obstacles the group had to face. A maximum of 6 members were allowed to come on the new launch each work party under State of RI COVID-19 restrictions. Volunteers had to maintain social distancing and wear a mask at all times.

The group went right to work clearing brush at all ends of the island. After the brush was cleared at the front of the lighthouse, part of an original 1871 stone wall was revealed. This stone wall is slated to be restored in the recent future.

The main project of the season was restoring the lighthouse’s cellar. The cellar acted as a workshop and held all tools and equipment throughout the restoration process. The group transferred the workshop over to the Oil House. The group restored the cellar to its original 1871 colors, whitewashed brick walls and red floor. The group also reopened a window that has been sealed shut for decades on the north facing wall. This window brings in an abundance of natural light along with a fantastic breeze.

The group also restored and reattached the original 1871 cellar door which was removed years ago. The group coated the cistern in two layers of swimming pool paint to seal any potential leaks. The cistern will be put into operation in Spring 2021.



A big thank you to the following volunteers who participated this season: Louise Paiva, Don Paiva, Sandi Barber, Nancy Phillips, Rich Rudert, Nate Chace, Mary Chace, Mike Tripp, Susan Dunnington, Deb Laughlin, Joanne Donahue, Alex Dias, Adam Dias, Nikki Tiernan, Dennis Tardiff, Brad Huntley and Fred Mikkelsen. We hope to see you all and more in 2021!



MUSEUM COMMITTEE

The museum committee completed their project of hanging informational foam board displays inside the lighthouse. Although tours of the lighthouse did not happen this

year, the group benefited from having extra time to finish up odds and ends. With the cellar restored thanks to the many dedicated volunteers on work parties this summer, the museum committee is now in the planning stages of turning that room into an exhibit. This room will feature the restoration process in its entirety along with wood moldings from different parts of the lighthouse for visitors to see up close.

POMHAM ROCKS LIGHTHOUSE IS TURNING 150!!!

Join us in planning 150th anniversary celebrations!

At its meeting in August, the Board began discussions on how to celebrate this momentous time in Pomham's life. Invited to that discussion were Laura McNamara - founding member of FPRL, and Executive Director of the East Providence area Chamber of Commerce, along with Pat Resende, member of EP Mayor Bob DaSilva's staff (and contact of Judianne Point). The Board agreed that the goal of the anniversary year should be spreading the

word of the Lighthouse to a much larger population.

A very productive follow-up meeting took place at City Hall, where Mayor DaSilva joined the brainstorming, and offered enthusiastic support for helping us expand word of the Lighthouse even beyond the East Providence community. Community awareness activities could begin at the end of December 2020 and continue throughout 2021.

Ideas include student art contest to design a logo, which would appear on tee-shirts and elsewhere, a road race on the bike path, a National Lighthouse Day (Aug. 7th) event, with trips to the Lighthouse, and/or a gala event on December 1st 2021, when the light was first lit.

The Events Committee will be considering all these and more at its upcoming meetings. If you wish to join the committee, or have ideas to contribute, please contact Mary Chace.

ENHANCED COMMUNICATION WITH OUR MEMBERS

In addition to the long-time publication of the Pomham Glow newsletter, FPRL is improving the way we communicate with our members. Those of you that provided email addresses when you paid your membership dues will receive occasional emails from us. We will use this means to announce important events such as tour or events schedule changes or cancellations or to keep you up to date on the goings-on with the lighthouse between periodic publishing of the Pomham Glow. Those of you who do not have email addresses will be mailed a printout of the email to keep you informed as well. The Pomham Glow newsletter will continue to be published and mailed to all members as always.

STORIES FROM THE LIGHTHOUSE

Story 1: The Five Sisters

Once upon a time in East Providence, there were Five Sister Lighthouses along the Providence River. Their names were Bullocks Point, Sabin Point, Pomham Rocks, Fuller Rock and Sassafras Point.

They were all built in the 1870's and were set along the riverfront of a neighborhood called Cedar Grove, which was later named Riverside.



Figure 1: Bullocks Point Lighthouse – Courtesy of Providence Public Library

When the Bullocks Point light gleamed, it could be seen by Sabin Point, and when Pomham Rocks sounded its horn, it could easily be heard by Fuller Rock, and so on up and down the line. These were true Sister Lighthouses who illuminated dark nights and who sounded their bells and horns both day and night. What was it like to be a lighthouse in those days?



Figure 5: Sassafras Point Lighthouse

During the 1800's, thousands of sailing ships, barges, steamships, fishing boats, canoes and other watercraft cruised up and down the River, bringing supplies from the seas and farms and goods from all over the world to the busy Port of Providence, and carrying passengers to Newport, Fall River, and New York City.



Figure 3: Sabin Point Lighthouse – Photo from National Archives

The ships were faithfully guided by the lighthouses. But then, the lighthouses started disappearing. Why? Today, 150 years later, only one remains. Pomham Rocks Lighthouse still stands regally on its steep rock foundation, perfectly poised to look down the river to Warwick Neck and up the river to the open skyline of Providence. Few places in Rhode Island offer such a majestic view. From her rocky perch, The Pomham Rocks Lighthouse is also perfectly poised to

look back on what she has witnessed during her 150 years – the joyous celebrations, the dazzling days on the water, and the dark days of hurricanes and disasters. She is still there to share these stories with us. She remembers the people who made the lighthouse their home - the old solitary lightkeepers, the families with children, even the United States Coast Guard. She recalls the long lonely years when she was abandoned, and a time when she was rescued from near destruction.

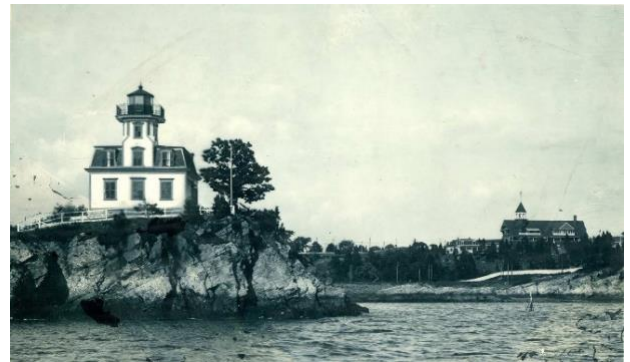


Figure 4: Pomham Rocks Lighthouse with Pomham Club in Background- Courtesy of Providence Public Library

What adventures did the lighthouse live through during these 150 years? What was it like to live in a lighthouse with no electricity and no running water? Whatever happened to her Sisters? How did Pomham Rocks survive when the other lighthouses did not? The Pomham Rocks Lighthouse holds many stories within her 150-year memory. We will

begin to tell them in this series called Stories from the Lighthouse. Come back for Story 2 called “The Early Days”.

ANNUAL MEETING

The Pandemic continues to hamper FPRL’s usual events and functions. At this time of year, we would have been planning our Annual Meeting for the month of November in a venue that accommodates 100 or so of our members. Due to the required social distancing, the FPRL Board of Directors has decided it is not practical to have an Annual Meeting this year as relatively few members would be allowed to meet together. We will all miss the comradery of sharing a nice meal together and discussing Pomham Rocks Lighthouse business.

The officers of the FPRL Board of Directors will remain in the positions they were appointed to at the 2019 Annual Meeting for the year of 2021. Any changes to the Board that may become necessary during the year will be announced to our members.

LAST CALL FOR 2020 MEMBERSHIP DUES

The very uncertain year of 2020 is winding down. What remains certain however is the maintenance and care that Pomham Rocks Lighthouse and our boats require.

Despite the cancellation of tours and events this year, we have still actively been maintaining and improving. We have cleared the grounds of the island of brush and poison ivy, transformed the cellar and Oil House, and improved our boats. Your membership dues go directly to fund this work. Thank you very much to all of you who have renewed your dues this year.

There are still a number of members who have not renewed yet, however. Please consider renewing your 2020 dues to help support our ongoing efforts. Please remain a FPRL member to enjoy our beautifully restored lighthouse, museum displays and the 150th anniversary celebrations next year.

LADY POMHAM II PHOTOS



EVENTS

- **POMHAM SANTA:**

TENTATIVELY, DECEMBER 5TH

FOLLOW THE RESTORATION WORK @

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