



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 2022

TOURS COMING SOON!



STAY TUNED FOR OUR TOURS!

We are hard at work finalizing our plans and putting together the calendar for our Pomham Rocks Lighthouse Tours this summer. Once the 2022 Tour Season begins, we will be hosting self-guided tours of our historic 1871 lighthouse. You will now be able to visit and see all the beautiful restoration both inside and out as well as our incredible fourth-order Fresnel lens.

Many posters throughout the lighthouse will guide you through the history of Pomham Rocks as well as other lighthouses that once lit up the Providence River. Come see how a lighthouse operated and learn all about the daily life of the lightkeepers, their families and the U.S. Coast Guard era activities. Knowledgeable docents will be on hand to answer your questions and share a story or two.

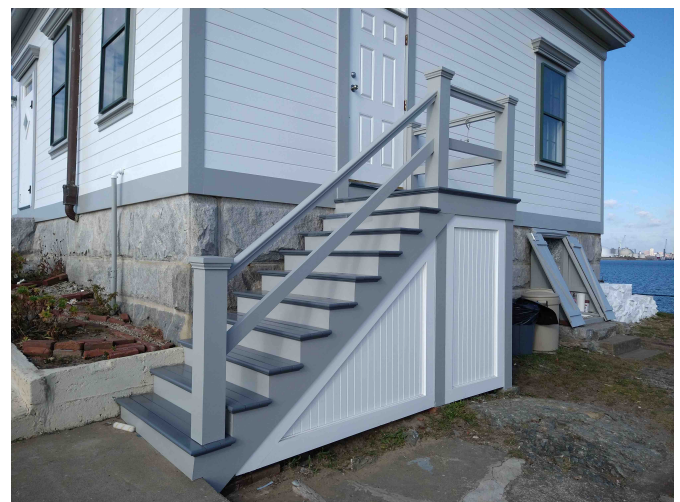
Please be on the lookout for an email blast announcing the tour schedule around early spring and keep an eye on our website (pomhamrockslighthouse.org) under ‘Tours’ for updates, details and pricing. Also note that all participants in our tours must be at least six years of age and there is no handicap accessibility due to the location.

LIGHTHOUSE EXTERIOR MAINTENANCE AND PAINTING COMPLETION

As reported in the previous edition of The Pomham Glow, extensive maintenance was underway to the exterior and lantern

room of the lighthouse. The contractor - ABCORE Restoration, led by Keith Lescarbeau – completed all work in mid-November. What has been completed since last reported were: The replacement of the rotted staircase to the east side door, rust removal, sealing, and floor repair of the lantern room, and a complete painting of the exterior of the lighthouse.

After the removal of the rot on the east side stairs, the bead board used here as well as the risers, stringer and some trim boards were all constructed of PVC. Most of the cedar stair treads are new and coated in an epoxy paint. The new handrail and middle railing are mahogany. The lower newel post also had to be replaced. It was made with a pressure treated 4 x 4 set in concrete and clad in PVC.



East Side Staircase

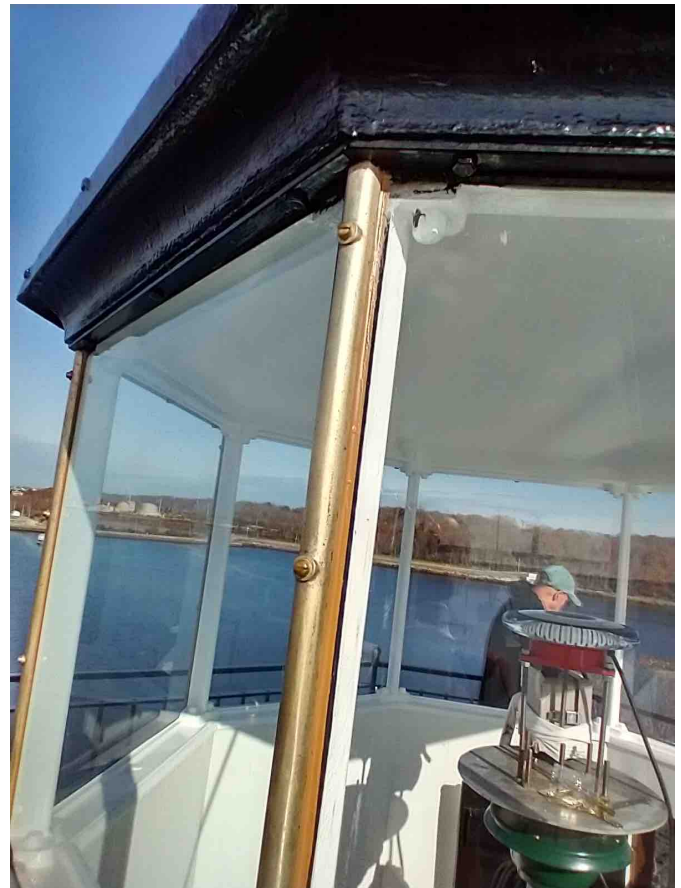
The repairs in the lantern room were necessary due to signs of water intrusion on

the walls of the watch room. Water was found in the globes of the ceiling light fixtures of the watch room and one floor below, as well as in the interior troughs below the 8 windows of the lantern room. FPRL attempted to seal the leaks in 2018 with little effect. The last time the lantern room had major maintenance was in 2005 with the exterior restoration. Identifying and sealing the lantern room leaks was the major reason for the ABCORE contract last fall.

There were a number of problems ABCORE found that led to leaking in the lantern room. First, there were two small holes caused by rust on the south side of the steel roof along with surface rust on the exterior of the roof. ABCORE was able to fix all holes and leak areas around the lantern room and fully seal it up. All rust on the lantern room was removed. On top of that, the silicone sealing the 8 lantern room windows was failing to seal in various places. Several of the astragals' windowpane retainer strips were deformed from rust and lifting away, which led to unsealing of the lantern room windows. All the horizontal astragals' windowpane retainer strips were replaced with new custom-made stainless-steel ones. Two of the eight lantern room windowpanes had minor cracks and were replaced with new panes.

Another problem was that the black painted copper sheaving had areas where the joints between sections were parted, which was also repaired. What turned out to be a

nice aesthetic touch was that the vertical astragals windowpane retainer strips were found to be made of bronze and in good condition. They were stripped of paint and sealed, adding a shine that was once covered up with paint.



Bronze Vertical Astragals Restored

While work was being done to seal up the lantern room, a few cosmetic projects went on as well to clean up additional rust on the outside and fix the wood flooring on the inside damaged from the water leaks. The damaged oak flooring was replicated and replaced to match the adjoining original

flooring inside the lantern room. The entire floor was stained with three coats of polyurethane.

Finally, the entire exterior and interior of the lantern room got a full paint job. The exterior was painted with the proper black color, and the entire interior of the lantern room was repainted in the proper white color. It was previously painted black in the 2005 restoration. Research & historical pictures proved the interior was supposed to be white. The lantern room will be structurally sound and shining bright once again for some time to come.

After the stairs and lantern room were complete, the last part of the contract was to give the entire lighthouse a fresh coat of paint. The lighthouse was repainted to its original 1871 colors, and all works were completed by mid-November 2021.



Finished Project

POMHAM ROCKS LIGHTHOUSE RUN 2022



Runners at the First Annual Run

The Second Annual Pomham Rocks Lighthouse Run is fast approaching! Mark your calendars for Saturday, April 23. The starting gun will sound at 8:00am for the 10K race and again at 8:30am for the 5K. Both races will start and finish at Rose Larisa Memorial Park in Riverside and will take advantage of the same courses we used last year. The 5K will go through scenic neighborhoods in Riverside as well as a picturesque stretch of the bike path for runners and walkers alike. The 10K will bring the runners as far as the Squantum Club, where they will head back south on the bike path enjoying sweeping views of the lighthouse along the way.

Last year, many participants in our First Annual Lighthouse Run were extremely

grateful that we held the race because everyone was chomping at the bit to get out and be in an actual race again. This year, unlike last, we will be able to hold an awards ceremony for the winners at 10:00am as well as serve pizza to all participants. DJ Skip Donnelly along with his wife MaryAnn will be back and keep the party lively. As an added bonus, race participants will be able to show their race bib later that day at the 133 Club in East Providence to enjoy a free pint of beer or a glass of wine.

Our race last year was an amazing success because of members like you who came together and volunteered in all capacities. This year, the race will be bigger and better, and we will need **MORE VOLUNTEERS** than ever. Please consider volunteering your time for this benefit run by contacting the Race Director, Judianne Point, at judianne@protonmail.com. You may volunteer to hand out food or direct racers along the route as a course marshal. Any and all participation will be most appreciated! Spread the word about the race to your family and friends and please check out our website where you can read more about the Lighthouse Run at www.pomhamrockslighthouse.org. From here, one may register for the race or give a donation. Just click on this logo on the website to learn more!!



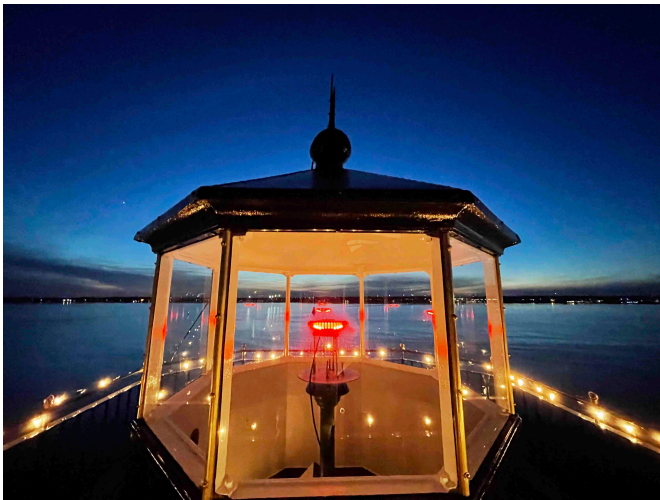
2nd Annual 5k/10k

SHORE CLEANUP

The Friends of Pomham Rocks Lighthouse and members of Suez will have their annual cleanup for Earth Day on Saturday, April 9th off the property of the East Providence Water Treatment Plant on Crest Ave in Riverside. The times will be from 9:00am to 12:00pm, weather permitting. Bags and gloves will be available thanks to the city. Water, coffee, and refreshments will be provided. The rain date will be Sunday April 10th, 11:00am to 1:00pm. Parking will be at the north end of the property. **150TH HOLIDAY LIGHTING**

For the first time ever, Pomham Rocks was decked out with holiday lights this year. On December 1st, 150 years to the day from when the light was first lit, a few board members made their way out to the island to

decorate the lighthouse for the season. Usually, a wreath is placed on the back of the oil house to celebrate the holidays on the island, but this year, we decided to do a bit more. White string lights were wrapped around the gallery outside the lantern room, and multicolored string lights were wrapped around the flagpole. In addition to that, spotlights were placed on the ground of the four sides of the lighthouse to show the whole product off. It is undoubtedly the most glamorous Pomham Rocks Lighthouse has looked for the winter season.



Lantern Room Décor

On the same day, it was appropriate to give a toast to all that have served at Pomham Rocks to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the light being in operation. Dave Kelleher led the group that was out there in a toast to all keepers, coastguardsmen, and all those who have kept

the light shining. A video of the toast can be viewed on our YouTube account.



Floodlights Light Up the Lighthouse

WINTERFEST

Every year, the East Providence Senior Center has an array of decorated trees, in what's called Winterfest. Pomham Rocks once again decorated a tree this year, this time with decorations commemorating the 150th anniversary of the light. Thank you to Anne Greene, Joanne Donahue, Carlene Joiner and Deb Peterson who helped set the tree up!



Winterfest Volunteers

ANNUAL MEETING RECAP

Due to an increase in new members, we outgrew the capacity of the RI Yacht Club to accommodate our Annual Meeting on the occasion of the 150th Anniversary of Pomham Rocks Lighthouse. While we missed the view of the lighthouse from the Yacht Club, we found a very welcoming space at Hillside Country Club in Rehoboth, Massachusetts. The Club was inviting and spacious, allowing us to feel comfortable holding the meeting in person as Covid concerns waned.

Hillside provided a delicious meal, after which Nate Chace led a champagne/ginger

ale toast to 150 years of Pomham Rocks Lighthouse guiding the way in the Upper Bay; the 17 years of hard work of the FPRL to restore the Lighthouse; and the return of the fourth-order Fresnel lens. We closed the meal with a celebratory cake honoring the 150th anniversary.

As usual, door prizes and merchandise sales were available during the afternoon.

Our chairman, Dennis Tardiff opened the business meeting by introducing board members and other members who took an active role this year in promoting the lighthouse. He recognized past chairpersons of the board, with a special tribute to Joe Estrella, our last chair, who passed away in 2020.

As revealed by reports of all activities - restoration, work parties, fund-raising, merchandise sales, public relations, Facebook, events, museum enhancement, Fresnel lens return, new boat repairs, and newsletter, the Friends were very busy, and accomplished much despite the fact we had to cancel many events - in particular trips to the lighthouse and our 150th Celebration in the summer at the Squantum Association.

Election of new officers closed the business meeting.

The Board members for 2022 are: Dennis Tardiff, Chairman, Alex Dias, Vice-Chair, Mike Tripp, Treasurer, Anne Greene, Secretary. Members at large are: Dave Kelleher, Nate Chace, Louise Paiva, Carlene Joiner, and Judianne Point.

Then Alex Dias, who plays so many roles in the FPRL, presented the story and slide show of the restoration of the lighthouse to its 1871 appearance, and of the return of the 4th order Fresnel lens - certainly a highlight of the year.

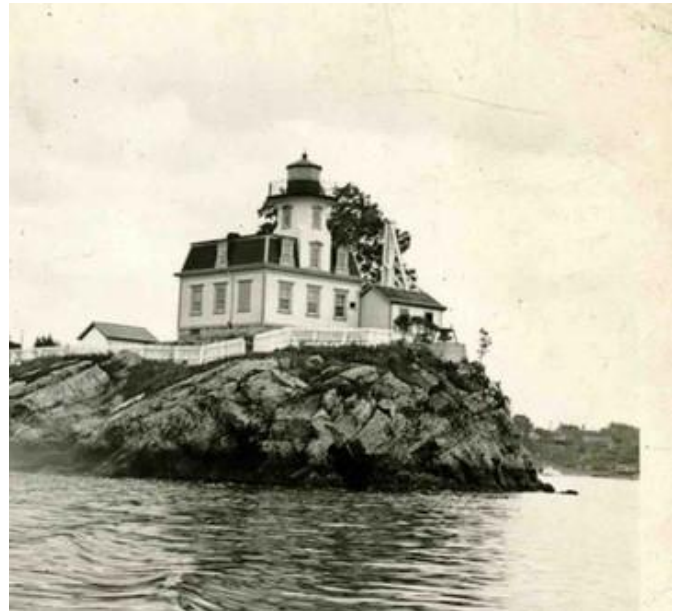
Dennis adjourned the meeting, which reflected lots of good news, despite the interference of Covid, and was a most enjoyable gathering.

STORIES FROM THE LIGHTHOUSE

STORY 5 – The Brewing Storm

The morning of Sept 21, 1938, was pleasant and breezy. Pomham Light sat atop her tall rocky ledge surveying the Providence River and reminiscing about her last lighthouse keeper, Adolf Aronson. It had been a wonderful 29 years with Mr. Aronson and his wife and their three children. They brought in lovely furniture and a piano that wafted music through the house. They even had a cat who could catch fish! Mr. Aronson retired in 1937 and the new light keeper, William Howard had taken over. Pomham thought about all the changes during these years. Train yards and tracks now lined the waterfront, moving goods and people all over! And Providence had become one of the biggest oil ports in the country. There were lots of oil barges and tankers, but not so many steamers and pleasure boats as in the past. Riverside's "summer colonies" were on the decline. But nowadays there were

automobiles, automobiles everywhere! Folks could now choose to live outside the city, and many were moving to East Providence, especially to Riverside.



*Pomham Rocks Lighthouse
Courtesy of Providence Public Library*

As the morning of September 21 progressed, Pomham became concerned about the weather. Around 9:00 AM she heard Mr. Howard say that there was a warning about a storm hitting New Jersey, with winds projected around 35 mph. Accordingly, he was preparing for wind and some rain. But as the day went on, the warnings suddenly got much worse, and by afternoon a huge storm hit Rhode Island. People were caught by surprise, and many were stranded in boats, office buildings, schools, and outdoor locations.

Pomham Light and Sabin Point Light, her twin sister, took a final glance toward each other around 3:00 PM and hunkered down as the storm began to rage. With high tide on its way, and winds mounting to 100 mph, Pomham could see the waters of the Providence River rushing toward the city at a furious rate, with unmoored boats, docks, and even parts of houses in its wake. The roaring 100 mph winds were almost too loud to bear. Pomham imagined the terrible things people were going through. The storm made everything dark as night; she closed her eyes and prayed.

Little did she know that just down the river from her, Bullocks Point Lighthouse was being literally torn apart by wind and huge waves, while keeper Andrew Zuius maintained his post and vowed to keep the light burning. At that very same time, a young girl had been thrown off Conimicut Point and she was clinging to a raft for four hours as she rode the waves from one side of the river to the other. Did the light at Bullocks Point, in the middle of the raging river, give her hope? Did it help her somehow to hang on until her raft crashed to safety at Narragansett Terrace? It is very likely she saw it, because keeper Zuius kept the light burning all night.



Courtesy of Providence Public Library

It wasn't until the next morning that Pomham finally dared to open her eyes. Thanks to her position on her tall rocky ledge, she had been above the highest surge of the river. A few outbuildings had been destroyed, but she herself had escaped unscathed! But right across the river, her daily view of the beautiful Rhode Island Yacht Club in Pawtuxet was now a flat lot. Nearly every summer cottage on the riverbanks was gone. The railroad tracks

were mangled and hundreds of huge railroad ties and parts of houses were now floating around her. As she looked up the river toward Providence, she could only imagine the devastation. Nearby she could see a huge oil tanker leaning helplessly against the ledge of the Squantum Club. Many of the steamers and tugs that had waved to her every day were sunk, and she was sad that she would never see them again.

As with all great disasters, there was a heavy toll, the greatest of which was the 600 lives that had been swept away. And as with all great disasters, there were many heroes who emerged. One was keeper Zuius. The morning after the storm, he was rescued at Bullocks Point Lighthouse, whose whole front had been ripped away. But even his heroism could not save the beautiful Victorian building that had hosted so many parties and even a big wedding in its day. In 1939 it was closed, and the remains were removed and replaced by a light on a skeleton tower.

That morning, as Pomham Light sat atop her tall rocky ledge surveying the river, she was sad for the losses, but grateful that so many had survived. Her last remaining sister, Sabin Point

Light, was still there, and in spite of the chaos and destruction of the previous day, she knew that, as with all great disasters, people would come together, and things

would recover. The rebuilding had already begun.

Join us next time for *Story 6: An Uncertain Future*, as the fate of Sabin Point Light is determined, and Pomham Rocks future hangs in the balance.



Keeper Zuius at Bullocks Point Light Sept 22, 1938

WORK PARTIES

With our first year of tours coming up, it is more important than in our past to keep the grounds maintained and looking great for any visitors. Please be sure to check off your interest in work parties on your membership renewals.

2022 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

As members of Friends of Pomham Rocks Lighthouse, you have all had a vital part in providing the needed funds for the restoration and care of the lighthouse as well as the maintenance expenses of our boats. There are ongoing expenses for maintenance and repair issues to keep our lighthouse in the beautifully restored condition we have worked so hard to achieve and to keep our boats running. If you haven't already done so this year, please consider renewing your membership for 2022. Dues are requested by April 1st. All dues that are postmarked by April 1st will have their name placed in a free drawing for a Tour for Two to the island this season. Also, please indicate on the membership selection form any change of contact information and any committee you would like to serve on.



EVENTS

○ SHORE CLEAN UP

- APRIL 9TH, 9:00 AM TO 12:00 PM
- EAST PROVIDENCE WATER TREATMENT PLANT.
CREST AVE, RIVERSIDE.

RAIN DATE:

APRIL 10TH, 11:00 AM TO 1:00 PM

○ ROAD RACE

- APRIL 23RD, 10K @ 8:00 AM
5K @ 8:30 AM
- ROSE LARISA MEMORIAL PARK, RIVERSIDE

FOLLOW THE RESTORATION WORK @

www.pomhamrocksighthouse.org

Facebook: Pomham Rocks Lighthouse

YouTube: Pomham Rocks Lighthouse

Instagram: @pomham_rocks_lighthouse

