



# THE POMHAM GLOW

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

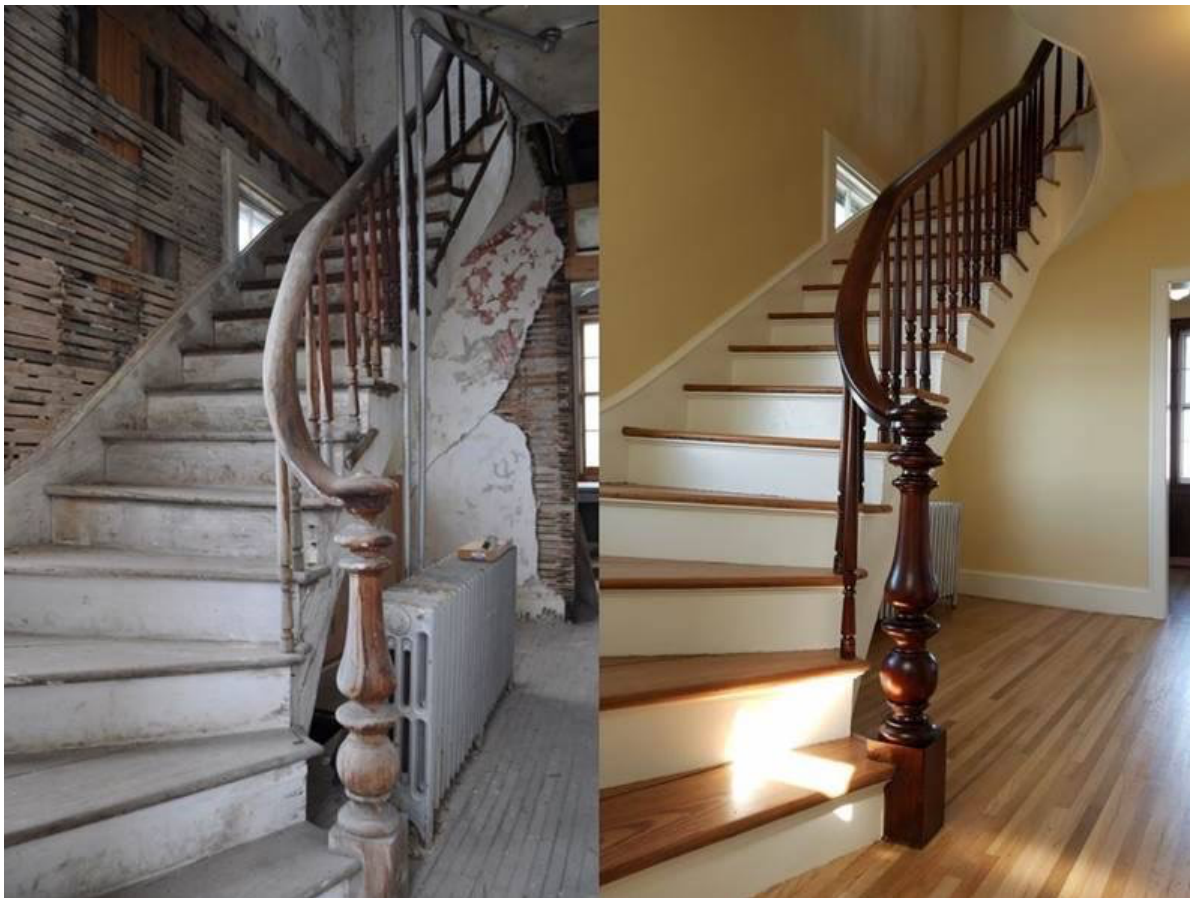
To ensure the historic restoration and preservation of Pomham Rocks Lighthouse and to improve public awareness, appreciation and access to Pomham Rocks Lighthouse.

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AUGUST 2018

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## POMHAM ROCKS LIGHTHOUSE FULLY RESTORED



**THANK YOU TO ALL THOSE THAT HELPED  
SAVE THE POMHAM ROCKS LIGHTHOUSE**

# HISTORIC RIBBON CUTTING



On June 10, 2018 local dignities, invited guests and Board Members of the Friends of Pomham Rocks Lighthouse, departed the Squantum Association on Save the Bay's *Alletta Morris* for the Pomham Rocks Lighthouse. Arriving at the lighthouse at 12:00 p.m. the group took a tour of the completed interior restoration. Shortly after 12:30 p.m. the group lined up on the lawn with a red ribbon passing across each of them. At this point, the historic moment was being live streamed back to the Squantum Association for all to watch and be a part of. The Chairman of the Friends of Pomham Rocks Lighthouse, Joe Estrella, said a few words and passed the ribbon cutting scissors over to U.S. Congressman David Cicilline. At this moment, with the 1871 lighthouse happily presiding in the background, U.S. Congressman Cicilline cut the ribbon, officially marking the end to our 14 yearlong restoration effort and opening a new chapter in the history book of Pomham Rocks Lighthouse.

Left to right: Katy Pomplum, Carleen Joiner, Anne Greene, Nate Chace, Michael Tripp, Jean Zunda, David Kelleher, Donald Doucette, U.S. Congressman David Cicilline, Keith Lescarbeau, Friends Chairman Joseph Estrella, Dennis Tardiff, Adam Dias, Alex Dias, Louise Paiva, Justin Carr, John Andrade, Carlos Neves and Robert Randall.

## CELEBRATION ON THE ROCKS



Friends of Pomham Rocks Lighthouse in East Providence recently marked completion a 14-year effort to renovate this historic New England landmark. The official opening was held June 10 at Squantum association with a “Celebration on the Rocks.”

Pomham Rocks Lighthouse is the only surviving lighthouse of the five that once guided commercial and recreational vessels on the Providence River along the coast of Riverside. Built in 1871 on an island, it has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 1979. Thanks to the concern and dedication of Friends of Pomham Rocks Lighthouse, the exterior has been completely restored, electricity has been once again connected and interior renovations have just been completed. The lighthouse will serve as a museum to preserve the rich maritime history of East Providence.

Many individuals helped to make the dream of restoration a reality and shared their good wishes with attendees of the Celebration. Current Friends Board Chairman Joseph Estrella watched over the

interior renovation process. With a background in construction management, he monitored the day-to-day progress of contractors and directed the hands-on work of Friends’ members in the building, logging in more than 150 work trips to the island lighthouse in this final phase of restoration. “It’s been a long journey made possible by so many people, companies and organizations, not the least of which is our membership, Board and committees,” he noted.

Nate Chace, Friends’ Director of Development, acknowledged the Friends’ members – 96% of whom contributed to the capital campaign for the interior restoration. He thanked ExxonMobil Corporation for the continued support, Gilbane Building Company for serving as pro bono Project Manager of the restoration, and Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission for providing a \$150,000 grant. With the help of these and others, the group was able to raise \$1.2 million to pay for the project and Friends of Pomham Rocks Lighthouse is debt free. Mr. Chace thanked Squantum Association for waiving their rental fee and Save The Bay for providing boat transportation at the Celebration for guests to visit the newly restored lighthouse.

“Anyone who has not been involved in the restoration effort will be very impressed,” he said, “with what a determined group of volunteers can do to bring an iconic piece of Rhode Island history – a working

Lighthouse on the National Register of Historic Places – back to life.”

More than 200 guests gathered at Squantum Association to help celebrate the opening day of the lighthouse. They included Donald Doucette, the first Board Chair of Friends of Pomham Rocks Lighthouse and other former Chairs David Kelleher and Jean Zunda. Dennis Tardiff, Board member and the last Coast Guard member to serve as a keeper at the lighthouse, shared stories of this experience at Pomham Rocks with guests. Keith Lescarbeau, President of Abcore Restoration Company, Inc., showed wood samples and before and after photos of the restoration. A canon firing of the Civil War canon on the grounds of Squantum Association marked the start of boat tours to the lighthouse, conducted by Save The Bay. Lighthouse Lantern Sponsors of the event included Save The Bay and Specialty Diving Services, Inc. We thank all those who made this possible.



*U.S. Congressman David Ciciliine descends the newly restored staircase inside the lighthouse*



*Friends of Pomham Rocks Lighthouse Chairman, Joe Estrella, speaks to the guests attending*

A big thank you to the members of the Celebration Committee pictured at right. (L to R: Alex Dias, Lisa Dias, Eileen Moser, Mary Chace and Louise Paiva). Beginning in August of 2017, this dedicated group of individuals began meeting, putting in countless hours of planning and organizing to make the day enjoyable for all. Job well done!



*Celebration Committee*



*Joe Estrella presenting a frame print of the Lighthouse to Justin Carr and John Andrade of ExxonMobil*



*An array of silent auction and raffle items for guests to win*



*Keith Lescarbeau describing the process of restoring the staircase to U.S. Congressman David Ciciliine*



*Over 200 guests enjoyed the formal atmosphere at the Squantum Association*



*The Cannon echoed across the bay signaling the start of tours for the event*



*The Lighthouse proudly greeted each visitor as they arrived at the island*

## POMHAM ROCKS LIGHTHOUSE MUSEUM

Future visitors to the Pomham Rocks Lighthouse will find a museum to explore once inside the lighthouse. A subcommittee of the Board of Directors has been formed to plan and maintain the newly formed museum. Upon entering the lighthouse, one will see the restored kitchen. The kitchen features life in the 1950s. The stove is original to the lighthouse and the 1940s refrigerator and kitchen table compliment the look. The kitchen table also displays an Aladdin lamp used at the Conimicut Shoals Lighthouse, which was donated by former Keeper of Conimicut and member of the Friends, Fred Mikkelsen. The lighthouse's parlor highlights the Pomham Rocks Lighthouse itself. This room will be used for displaying items related to the lighthouse. Currently on display in this room, is the lighthouse's 250mm lens that was active in the tower from 2006-2017. Along with the 250mm lens that was once on the skeleton tower outside the lighthouse during the lighthouse's decommissioned years (1974-2006).

The second-floor rooms each have a specific theme. The small bedroom was converted into an exhibit to feature the Coast Guard years of the lighthouse. This room is complete with the actual Coast Guard uniform worn on decommissioning day in 1974 by former Keeper Dennis Tardiff.

One large bedroom is now an exhibit featuring the history of the former Bullocks Point Lighthouse, complete with a scale model and vintage pictures. The other large

bedroom is an exhibit featuring the former Sabin Point, Sassafras and Fuller lighthouses. This room also houses an 1880s rope bed to complete a period look.

In the cellar, visitors will be able to view the lighthouse's original 1871 cistern which is now operational and holding water. The former first floor Coast Guard office now houses a "Rotating Exhibit." This room will be periodically changed to highlight different topics. Currently, it features the 14 yearlong restoration process including original and replicated molding side by side for visitors to see the attention to detail applied in the restoration.

The museum is in its beginning stages and featuring the lighthouse's and local maritime history. It will always be a work in progress as we work to improve the education experience visitors will encounter. Anyone with pictures, stories or potential artifacts please reach out to [history@pomhamrockslighthouse.org](mailto:history@pomhamrockslighthouse.org) or write to Friends of Pomham Rocks Lighthouse, P.O. Box 15121 Riverside, RI 02915 c/o Alex Dias.



*Cistern*



*Kitchen*



*Bullocks Point Lighthouse Exhibit*



*Rotating Exhibit Room*



*Sabin Point Exhibit*



*Pomham Rocks Exhibit*



*Coast Guard Era Exhibit*

### **THE RHODE SHOW**

Louise Paiva contacted the Rhode Show at WPRI to see if they would be interested in doing a program about Pomham Rocks Lighthouse. They did get back to her and were interested.

On July 18<sup>th</sup> Brendan Kirby and Eric the photographer joined David Kelleher, Joe Estrella and Dennis Tardiff on a visit to the island. Brendan engaged all three with many questions and comments about what he was seeing. Eric, in the meantime, was taking many pictures of the interior, exterior and views from the island and lantern room. The Rhode Show crew seemed to enjoy themselves and were very easy to work with.

Dave gave Brendan a tour and Brendan talked with Joe about his roles at the lighthouse and also talked to Dennis about his role as the last Coast Guard personnel to live on the island. The station will contact Dave as to the date and time the program will air.

### **CAMPERS TO THE ISLAND**

On July 2<sup>nd</sup>, twenty 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders from Save The Bay Camp visited the lighthouse as a trial for future visits to the island by children groups. Dave Kelleher was the guide for the visit and members of the Save The Bay staff helped with supervision and conducting the program. The campers then had lunch on the tables outside the house.

Dave toured the first and second floors of the lighthouse with the group. He then divided the group into groups of three so that he could show them the lantern room and the cistern.

While he guided the small groups of three to the lantern room the rest of the group were supervised by the Save The Bay staff. The staff entertained questions from the group.

The children and the staff seemed to enjoy their time out at the lighthouse and after the 2 hour visit were returned to the Save The Bay Campus.

A second visit to the island was held on July 30<sup>th</sup>. This was a group of 25 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> grade students. On this trip Louise Paiva went with Dave and helped the larger group do activities along with the staff.

Based on these two visits going well, these types of visits to the island next year will be considered by the board.

### **LAUGH AND LEARN ABOUT RHODE ISLAND**

Roberta Humble, English professor at Community College of Rhode Island, was the guest speaker at our October speaker program. Her lively presentation, entitled "I am Rhode Island," will entertain attendees with little known facts and quirks about the Ocean State. Proud of her native state, she loves to show off Rhode Island to local residents as well as those from the other 49." Ms. Humble is the author of six books, songs and even a game about Little Rhody. This fascinating program will be held on Wednesday, October 24 at 7:00 p.m. in the St. Brendan School Hall, 55 Turner Avenue, Riverside. The public is invited to join The Friends for this free, fun and fact-filled presentation. Refreshments will be served.



## LIFE IN LIGHTHOUSE PRESENTATION

On Monday, March 19<sup>th</sup> members of the Friends of Pomham Rocks Lighthouse and general public were invited to attend a presentation on Conimicut Shoals Lighthouse by former Keeper of the lighthouse, Fred Mikkelsen. The event was extremely well attended with over 50 people grabbing a seat for the presentation. There were complimentary refreshments for attendees along with merchandise for sale.

Fred brought along a few artifacts to compliment his presentation including an extremely accurate model he made of the lighthouse. Fred gave firsthand accounts and stories of life at this lighthouse few, if any, have ever been to. He explained daily life at the lighthouse and shared his vintage pictures of the Conimicut to better explain what the circular cast iron structure looks like inside. Being one of the last keepers from the Conimicut Shoals Lighthouse, we hope to learn and preserve as much as we can about the lighthouse through Fred, who is also a member of Friends of Pomham Rocks Lighthouse.

Thank you to St. Brendan's Church for allowing us to use the hall free of charge, volunteers for the event and Fred for offering his presentation at no cost to the Friends. It was a great evening for all that attended.



*Fred Mikkelsen pictured with a 35mm IOV*

## LOOFF ARTS FESTIVAL & NATIONAL NIGHT OUT

We would like to thank all those that volunteered their time to man the Pomham booth of those events.

## **GRANGE COMMUNITY CIZITENS AWARD**

Dave Kelleher presented a program about the restoration of Pomham Rocks Lighthouse to the members of The Roger Williams-Rumford grange on July 7<sup>th</sup>. After his presentation, John Lawson, Jr. Master/President of the grange and Secretary Shirley Lawson made a surprise award to Dave, the Grange Community Citizens Award for 2018.

In her reading of the award, Mrs. Lawson commented about David's work in his many years as an educator in the East Providence School department, his work with the East Providence Historical Society, the Land Conservation Trust, the Historical Properties Commission, the local Historic District Commission and his many years in restoring the Pomham Rocks lighthouse.

After a reception, a check was presented to Dave to be presented to the Friends of Pomham Rocks Lighthouse towards it continuing maintenance of the lighthouse.

## **MEMORIAL DAY PARADE**

It was perfect day for a parade. Dennis came in his truck pulling our red boat all decorated with American flags. Dave Kelleher came with his car with magnetic Pomham Rocks Lighthouse signs. There seemed to be more group participants than usual this year and everyone was having fun. Slowly we proceeded up Bullock's Point Ave. People on both sides of the street

greeted us enthusiastically. There seemed to be more people watching the parade this year too. As we moved down Turner Avenue and then Willett Avenue, it became apparent that his was the largest crowd we have seen. It was a great day.

Thank you to all Pomham members that showed up to represent the lighthouse in this year's Memorial Day parade.

## **ANNUAL SHORE CLEANUP**

Our annual Earth Day Clean-up was held on Saturday, April 14<sup>th</sup>. The weather was perfect, so we were able to accomplish a good day's work comfortably. This year we worked on the bike path near the Squantum Club about 200 yards to the south and to the north of the property. Members of Suez joined us again this year as they have for the last 10 years, a few from the Renaissance group and of course our members.

Thank you to all Pomham members that attended this year's clean up.

One of the things that made the day a little special was the many people that were riding or walking on the bike path who stopped and thanked us for cleaning up the waterfront.

# 2018 EVENTS

SEPTEMBER 23: RIYC VISIT TO POMHAM

TIME: 12:00 P.M. TO 3:00 P.M.

OCTOBER 21: RHODY AWARD

THE FRIENDS OF POMHAM ROCKS LIGHTHOUSE WILL BE THIS YEAR'S RECIPIENT

LOCATION: BELCOURT CASTLE NEWPORT

TIME: 4:00 P.M.

OCTOBER 24: "I AM RHODE ISLAND"

PRESENTATION BY ROBERTA HUMBLE

LOCATION: ST. BRENDAN'S HALL

TURNER AVE RIVERSIDE, RI

TIME: 7:00 P.M.

DECEMBER 2: ANNUAL BANQUET

LOCATION: RHODE ISLAND YACHT CLUB

TIME: TBA DETAILS TO FOLLOW

DECEMBER 8: POMHAM SANTA

LOCATION: SABIN POINT

TIME: 10:00 A.M.

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FOLLOW THE RESTORATION WORK @

[www.pomhamrockslighthouse.org](http://www.pomhamrockslighthouse.org)

Facebook: Pomham Rocks Lighthouse

YouTube: Pomham Rocks Lighthouse

Instagram: @pomham\_rocks\_lighthouse

