

# CHAPTER CHATTER



**May/June**

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## **NELL Spring Meeting 2017**

**Martha's Vineyard - Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> & Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> May**



The first order Fresnel lens that is on the Martha's Vineyard Museum's campus was ordered for Gay Head Lighthouse, in order to provide it with a more powerful light. This lens was made in France in 1854 and served as the Gay Head Light from 1856 until it came to the Museum in 1952. The Fresnel lens was replaced at the Gay Head Lighthouse by an electrical beacon. The first light at Gay Head was a "spider" lamp with several wicks in 1799.

If you have not signed up and are interested please contact Dave Dingledy (781) 767-3018 or [da17lmwo@gmail.com](mailto:da17lmwo@gmail.com).

**Hollywood A-lister Gerard Butler has started filming his role as Arbroath lighthouse keeper for a new movie.**



Butler and a 60-strong crew have shaken up a quiet corner of Dumfries and Galloway where they have been shooting psychological thriller *Keepers*.

The Paisley-born actor plays Arbroath lighthouse keeper James Ducat who was one of three men to vanish without a trace from the island of Eilean Mor in the Outer Hebrides in 1900.

A spokesperson for Mull of Galloway Lighthouse said: "Gerard Butler fever is sweeping the Rhins of Galloway just now. "We were delighted to welcome Gerard Butler, Peter Mullen and Connor Swindells to the Mull of Galloway Lighthouse and Mull of Galloway Lighthouse Holiday Cottages."

Butler has been getting plenty of attention in Galloway where he surprised staff at the Gallie Craig coffee shop during a break in filming.

Owner Angela Sloan said: "They were posing for photos with people and some of them bought cakes.

"Gerard seemed like a really down to earth guy, very accommodating and happy to take photos with people too."

Butler sported a shaggy beard, a flat cap, cable-knit jumper and thick coat while filming his role as Arbroath lighthouse keeper Ducat who was a 43-year-old with more than 20 years' experience in lighthouse keeping.

He had arrived on the deserted island to man the lighthouse with Thomas Marshall and Donald McArthur.

Just a few weeks into their stint, on December 15, a passing steamer on passage from Philadelphia to Leith noticed the light was not working, which it reported three days later when it docked in Oban.

A relief vessel, the *Hesperus*, carrying supplies and a relief lighthouse keeper Joseph Moore, had been due to arrive on Eilean Mor on December 20 but had been delayed until Boxing Day due to rough seas and dangerous weather.

Mr. Moore rowed to shore and found the lighthouse in complete darkness.

Inside the beds were unmade and the clock had stopped.

A chair had been overturned and a pair of oilskins was still on its hook, indicating that one of the three men had gone outside without dressing for the wild winter weather.

There was no sign of Ducat or the other men.

In the days after the discovery of the abandoned lighthouse, the crew of the *Hesperus* made thorough searches of the island, hoping to find a clue.

At one of the harbours they discovered considerable damage, with part of an iron rail wrenched out of the concrete and a rock estimated to weigh a ton dislodged.

Turf on top of a 200ft cliff had been ripped away from the edge but there was no sign of any of the men.

The lighthouse log was kept up to date until December 15.

The final entry read: 'Storm ended, sea calm. God is over all'.

## Other Lighthouse News

### National Lighthouse Museum – Staten Island, NY

The National Lighthouse Museum would like to be your guide as we turn back the clock on Staten Island history.

Come learn about the vital role the USLHS General Depot played in building America.

Visit Staten Island's best kept secret and learn about our hidden maritime heritage.

Arrangements can be made for a site tour when visiting the museum.

Tour Starting Point - Educational Resource Center

Building #11, 200 Promenade at Lighthouse Point, Staten Island NY 10301

Pricing: Cost of admission plus \$3.00 Pre-registration is required

### Lighthouse Boat Tours 2017 Season

Boat tours that leave from Staten Island leave from Pier 1 adjacent to the Museum site.

Due to space and safety requirements, large coolers are not permitted on board, only very small carry-ons.

Light refreshments available for purchase on board.

Please note that there may be boarding limitations for the disabled at certain piers.

Kindly call us to discuss if this might be an issue for you or your guest. (718) 390-0040

Lighthouse Boat Tours commence rain or shine.

Sunday, May 21, 2017 - Circumnavigate the Isle of Staten - See lighthouses, hidden bird sanctuaries, ship graveyards.

Leave 1:00pm from Pier 1 adjacent to the Museum site, St. George, Staten Island, 10301.

*Click on link to learn more and purchase tickets. May 21, 2017 Circumnavigate the Isle of Staten*

Saturday, June 17, 2017 - SUNSET EVENING Signature Lighthouse boat tour, see the lighthouses in the NY harbor region and points south (Navesink & Sandy Hook, NJ) Leaves at 6:00 pm from Pier 1 adjacent to the Museum site, St. George, Staten Island, 10301.

*Click here to learn more and purchase tickets. June 17, 2017 Sunset Signature Lighthouse Tour*

Sunday July 16, 2017 - Circumnavigate the Isle of Staten - This popular tour is being repeated due to popular demand.

Leave 1:00pm from Pier 1 adjacent to the Museum site, St. George, Staten Island, 10301.

*Click here to learn more and purchase tickets. July 16, 2017 Circumnavigate the Isle of Staten*

Sunday, August 6, 2017 - Celebrate Lighthouse Weekend with our Signature Tour. See at least ten lighthouses, NY harbor and points south (Navesink & Sandy Hook, NJ) Leaves at 11:00 am from NY Waterway's Pier 11, South St. and Wall St., East River.

*Click here to learn more and purchase tickets. August 6, 2017 Lighthouse Weekend Signature Tour*

Saturday, September 16, 2017 - East River Lighthouse Boat tour through Hell's Gate to Long Island Sound as far as Execution Rocks Lighthouse. Leaving at 11:00 am NY Waterway's Pier 11, South St. and Wall St., East River.

*Click here to learn more and purchase tickets. Sept. 16, 2017 East River-Long Island Sound Boat Tour*

Saturday, October 14, 2017 - Hudson River Lighthouse Boat Tour. Enjoy our awesome river, magnificent Palisades, several lighthouses and lightships and all the beautiful sites along the way north to Tarrytown. Leaves at 1:00pm from NY Waterway's Pier 11, South St. and Wall St., East River.

*Click here to learn more and purchase tickets. October 14, Hudson River Fall Foliage Boat tour*

## International Lighthouse News

### \$550,000 gift to speed Sheringham Point Lighthouse restoration



A \$550,000 donation from an Ontario lighthouse enthusiast could mean the restoration plan for Sheringham Point Lighthouse near Shirley is completed in as little as three years, rather than 10.

Preservation efforts have been underway since 2003, when a group dedicated to the lighthouse, 57 kilometres west of Victoria and built in 1912, was formed.

“Here we are now on the precipice of restoring this beautiful lighthouse to its original magnificence,” said John Walls, a Sheringham Point Lighthouse Preservation Society board member, at a funding announcement Monday at the Maritime Museum of B.C.

The major gift to the project, which is a multi-year commitment, was made by Ontario resident Peter Westway through his Westway Charitable Foundation, and is the largest private donation ever made to a lighthouse restoration in Canada. Westway previously made a \$1,000 donation after hearing about the effort.

The society, with more than 350 members, will work to match the funds, Walls said.

“We have to,” Walls said. “Because restoring this is going to take a lot of money.”

Westway, who could not attend the announcement, said in a statement that he was impressed with the planning expertise of board members and volunteers “and their vision of this site as a coastal asset open to all.” The foundation, established by Westway and his sister in 1986, is largely dedicated to the arts, medical research and heritage ventures. The project includes maintaining a park around the lighthouse, which has an automatic flashing light but is not fully operational. The goal is not to make it fully operational, Walls said.

Painting and further repairs to the lighthouse tower, about 20 metres high, are planned for this year, he said. Plans include refabricating the badly corroded metal structure on site, replacing broken windows with specially manufactured ones and installing a solar power array to provide electricity for the site. Repairs to the access road were completed last year, along with reinforcement of both sides of the causeway that connects the tower to the park.

Sheringham Point Lighthouse was built in response to the wreck of the SS Valencia off Pachena Point while en route from San Francisco to Seattle in 1906. The ship struck a reef after missing the entrance to Juan de Fuca Strait, and the official death toll was 136. An inquiry found more aids to navigation were needed on the southwest coast of the Island. After operating for 77 years, the lighthouse was destaffed and automated in 1989, and the grounds were closed to the public.

One of 21 heritage lighthouses in B.C., its ownership and that of the two hectares around it were transferred to the society by the federal government in 2015, and the site was reopened in 2016.

Walls said the lighthouse is expected to become an attraction.

“That West Coast Road traffic, especially in the summertime, really picks up,” he said. “Our vision is that the lighthouse is going to be a destination for the Canadian ‘stay-cationers’ and the American visitors and international visitors.”

He described the view as “jaw-dropping.”

Mike Hicks, the Capital Regional District director for the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area, said the Sheringham Point Lighthouse is an important piece of history. As a veteran fishing guide, he said the lighthouse holds a lot of meaning for him as a beacon when coming back to port. It also marks the spot where the ocean gives way to the Salish Sea, he said. Former senator Pat Carney, a longtime advocate for lighthouses and the Heritage Lighthouse Protection Act, said lighthouses are “key icons” in B.C. “Lighthouses are essential to the health of the coast,” she said. “They can be used for environmental protection. They can be used, and are, for weather. They can be used for safety.”

## Scotland's Most Southerly Lighthouse Engines Up and Running After 30 Years of Silence



After 30 Years of Silence the 1955 Kelvin Diesel engines, which used to create the compressed air to run the Fog Horn at the Mull of Galloway Lighthouse are now operational again, The Mull of Galloway Trust and South Rhins Community Development Trust are delighted to announce the news and will be holding a Grand Switch On & Demonstration of the Kelvin Diesel Engines. The Fog Horn, which is located 100 feet below the lighthouse was last sounded in 1987, a year before the Lighthouse became fully automatic.

On Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> April there will be a 'Grand Switch On' and demonstration of the engines. This memorable event will take place at 1.30pm with a piper welcoming you to Scotland's most Southerly Point. This will be followed by the switch on at 2pm by John Ross, Commissioner of Northern Lighthouse Board. George McDermid, Former Lighthouse Keeper, will be on hand to chat to visitors and answer any questions about the engines and the role of the keeper in the operation of the Fog Horn. The ladies from Kirkmaiden Church will be serving tea, coffee, scones and fruit cake and all proceeds will go towards church funds. The event is sponsored by Portpatrick Brewery who have named one of their real ales after the Mull of Galloway Fog Horn. This event is free of charge to attend and everyone is welcome. This is a great opportunity to celebrate Lighthouse Heritage as part of the 2017 Visit Scotland Year of History, Heritage & Archaeology.

### Just for fun....can you guess the lighthouse I am visiting?



If you think you know you can e-mail me. (Answer next Chapter Chatter)

Last edition's answer: Portland Head – Maine

Dear NELL Member(s)

If you have not paid your 2017 NELL Membership Dues they are way past due. Your dues payment must be received by May 8, 2017. Send your check, \$20.00 for single membership or \$30.00 for a dual membership to:  
NELL, c/o Kathy Santucci, 38 Lime Kiln Rd, Tuckahoe, NY 10707.

If you would like to pay your NELL dues by PayPal click on the link below and follow the instructions.  
<http://www.newenglandlighthouselovers.org/membership-form/>

All unpaid members will be removed from the membership list on May 11.

Thank you,  
Walter Mills  
Membership

### **Happy Birthday**

Seamond Roberts	5/01	Harry Wass	5/07	Bob Trapani	5/14
Fran Dollinger	5/14	Tom Cardaci	5/25	MaryAnn Clark	5/27
Anna Klein	5/28				
Bob Kerber	6/01	Amy Wininger	6/06	Frank DePasquale	6/10
Hilari Seery	6/16	Irma Streeter	6/16	Walt Mills	6/24
David Dingley	6/26	Linda Whidden	6/27	Ellen Granoth	6/28
Doug Scott	6/30				

### **Anniversary Wishes**

Bill & Odette Kent	5/01	Robert & Sharon Mills	5/09	John & Linda Whidden	5/24
Bob & MaryAnn Scroope	5/28	Doug & Ellen Scott	5/30		
Hilari & Jim Seery	6/10	Tom & Arlene Pregman	6/21	James & Nancy Cope	6/24
Henry & Arlene Winkleman	6/29				

### **Please Note:**

We are looking for **volunteers** who are interested in serving on committees, those who have good ideas for lighthouse preservation, fund raising, suggestions on improving the operations of the club, or just getting more involved. Please contact Greg Fitzgerald: [seagirlight@gmail.com](mailto:seagirlight@gmail.com)

**The Lighthouse Digest** – For each subscription, please use the subscription envelope that you can get from NELL's 2nd VP Lynne Kerber, or the form on the NELL website. Mail with check to Lighthouse Digest, ATTN: Kathleen Finnegan, P.O. Box 250, East Machias, ME 04630. Be sure to write NELL in the memo section of your check and NELL will receive \$10.00 per subscription to go toward restoration and preservation of lighthouses.

If you have any **knowledge of an upcoming event or news to share**, please send it to me: [chapterchatter@outlook.com](mailto:chapterchatter@outlook.com)  
All articles and information must be received by the 25th of the month prior to make the publication.

**The NELL Beacon** wants your stories too, send with pictures to Lynne Kerber: [lighthousecats@comcast.net](mailto:lighthousecats@comcast.net) for publication. The NELL Beacon is our official club newsletter and will be published three times a year in time for our events. Deadline for the LHC&Y issue will be mid-December, for the Spring Event issue mid-April and for the Fall Event issue mid-August.

If you know of a member that needs **some cheer, get well wishes, condolences or congratulations**, please let Cynthia Bosse - Sunshine Chair know at: [bossnjc@comcast.net](mailto:bossnjc@comcast.net) or call 1(860) 688-7347.

Please let me know your **birthday** (month & day only) and **anniversary** so I will be able to recognize you on your special day in our monthly Best Wishes section.