

# CHAPTER CHATTER



September/October

---

**Happy Halloween**

## NELL Fall Meeting 2017 Plymouth, Massachusetts



### Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> September

John Donovan our Web Master has made arrangements for us to visit the Hull Lifesaving Museum (around 10am) and Scituate Lighthouse.

Our fall membership meeting will be on Saturday evening. Tentative time is 5:00 pm. Location to be determined. Any suggestions from members would be helpful.

### Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> October

We will be to join The Friends of Flying Santa's Cape Cod Bay Lighthouse Cruise.

The boat will leave from Plymouth, MA at 10.00am and return at approximately 4.00pm. The boat is Captain John Boat. Lighthouses on this trip are, Duxbury Pier (Bug), Plymouth (Gurnet), Long Point, Wood End, Race Point, Minot's Ledge and Scituate. Town parking lots are around the corner and across the street from the town dock.

The ticket cost: \$80 per person. You can purchase on line <http://www.flyingsanta.org/Cruises&Tours.html> or contact Brian Tague at (781) 438-4587 or email him at [Info@flyingsanta.org](mailto:Info@flyingsanta.org).

## Whitehead Island All-Inclusive Rest & Relaxation October Weekend

**Saturday, October 7th - Monday, October 9th**, with an optional additional day on **Friday, October 6th**

As is true for all of our programs, guests will stay in the historic Light Keeper's House and enjoy:

- Three delicious meals each day (**sample menu**), prepared with local ingredients (including one lobster dinner) and served in our dining room or al fresco with an unparalleled view
- Beautiful bedrooms with private bathrooms
- Ample time to relax in the Keeper's House library, sitting room, porches and grounds
- A chance to explore an amazing part of Maine's maritime history first hand - climb the stairs and stand in the lantern room of the lighthouse that has been a beacon to navigation for more than 200 years
- Full use of the 11.1 acre spruce woods and rocky shoreline, a unique and beautiful ecosystem
- A boat excursion to explore the seascape of this special part of the Maine coast
- Unobstructed views of Penobscot Bay

Please visit our **website** <http://www.whiteheadlightstation.org/2017-columbus-day-weekend.html> for more information and **contact us** with any questions. (207) 200-7957

### The lighthouse on the Cape Cod Potato Chips bag is real (and you can visit it)

**Constructed in 1877, Nauset Light has survived years of encroaching ocean on the Cape**

Maybe you spotted it while snacking on some potato chips by the pool, or it caught your eye while you were driving down the Mass. Pike. But the iconic red, white and black lighthouse that adorns countless bags of Cape Cod Potato Chips — and some Massachusetts license plates — really exists, and you can find it overlooking the water in Eastham.

Now more than a hundred years old, Nauset Light was saved from tumbling into the ocean 21 years ago. You can climb its historic stairs and tour the 48-foot tall building for free. Here's the story behind the stately old beacon.

Long before Nauset Light became an Instagrammable, picture-perfect destination, there were the [Three Sisters](#).

Just 15 feet tall each, the three brick lighthouses stood about 150 feet apart and comprised the Nauset Beach Light Station, according to Christine Ebert, a member of the board of directors for the Nauset Light Preservation Society. Though lighthouses already stood watch in Truro and Chatham, there were so many shipwrecks that the Three Sisters were erected in 1838 to help guide disoriented mariners off the coast.

"The story goes, from sea if you looked on shore, it looked like three ladies in white dresses and black hats," Ebert said.



Wooden towers replaced the brick ones in 1892

Two of the sisters were made redundant and eventually auctioned off when a Fresnel lens, which could flash three times every 10 seconds, was installed in the central tower. That lighthouse became known as "the beacon."

In 1877, the lighthouses in Chatham were replaced with two cast iron, brick-lined towers. One of them, which was later moved to Eastham in 1923, became the present-day Nauset Light. In 1940, it was painted its distinctive red-and-white blocks of color, thanks to a suggestion from local fishermen.

"They had said, 'You know the lighthouse would be easier to see in the daytime if it had the top part red,'" Ebert said.

All three of the sister towers were [eventually obtained by the National Park Service](#), which reunited the small lighthouses in their original formation, not far inland from Nauset Light



Nauset Light was moved further inland in 1996

When Nauset Light was moved to Eastham, it was placed about 200 feet from the edge of the beach's cliff. By 1993, because of beach erosion, it stood about 50 feet from the precipice. Ebert said the Coast Guard, which owned and maintained the lighthouse, didn't have the funds to move it away from the edge and planned to disassemble it. Concerned members of the community formed the [Nauset Light Preservation Society](#) and raised funds to supplement a federal grant to cover the \$330,000 cost of moving the tower.

Nauset Light was moved back 360 feet in 1996, a process that took 11 hours. The lighthouse keeper's house, which was built in 1875, and an oil house built in 1892 that was used for storing the fuel used to light the tower were also moved. "By then, it was about 35 or 36 feet from the edge of the cliff," Ebert said. "It was really getting very close." The Coast Guard transferred ownership of Nauset Light to the National Park Service, which established a partnership agreement with the preservation society to maintain and operate the light as a private aid to navigation.

### From historic beacon to potato-chip fame



The original design, on the far left, beside the images of Nauset Light painted by Elizabeth Mumford in the early-90s



A bag of the chips with Mumford's artwork beside Nauset Light

The Cape Cod Potato Chips company was founded on July 4, 1980, and sold five years later to Anheuser-Busch. Its original owners, Stephen and Lynn Bernard, bought back the chip company in 1996 to rescue it from closure. According to *The Boston Globe*, Bernard and his daughter, Nicole, then turned their attention to reintroducing the snacks with new bags and new art. They asked local artist Elizabeth Mumford, who lives in Hyannisport, to create an oil painting that included a lighthouse and a boat, since the company already had that image combination copyrighted for their bags. Mumford said she settled on painting Nauset Light because of its bright red and white colors, along with a Cape Cod cat boat with its distinctive four-sided sail. "Then they went ahead and they used it a lot," Mumford said. "They had prints made, and they did mugs, and they did beach towels and a ton of stuff with that one image." Mumford said she didn't receive any royalties for the use of her work but said it was amazing to see her painting used in the company's graphic. The company did not respond to a request for comment on the story behind the lighthouse image. Her work was featured on the bags until 2010, when the company, again under new ownership, decided to revamp the design, she said. The bags still depict Nauset Light, but they no longer use Mumford's paintings. "It's a very iconic image for Cape Cod," she said.

Today, the tower uses two rotating beacons with a 10-second light signature, which flash five seconds of white light and five seconds of red light.

Volunteers with the preservation society lead tours [open to the public on Sundays from 4:30 until 7:30 p.m., May through October](#). In July and August, tours are also open during the same time on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

Visitors are led up to the lighthouse's watch room, below the light itself, where the lighthouse keeper would record the ships that passed in a logbook. The book provided a record of where a ship was last seen, should it go missing or be wrecked, Ebert said. While the lighthouse keeper's home remains private property, visitors can take a look inside the oil house, which has been repurposed by the preservation society to house information about the lighthouse and the people who served as keepers.



A new Massachusetts license plate depicting Nauset Light was introduced in 1996



**Happy Birthday to:**

Dot Black	9/02	Tim Harrison	9/03	Tom Kenworthy	9/06
Ann Solaequi	9/13	Anita Norris	9/14	Marcia DeClerk	9/16
Lee Benford	9/18	Bob Scroope	9/22		
Christine Cardaci	10/06	Arlene Pregman	10/09	Anthony Savino	10/12
Jessica Schulman	10/17	Tom Pregman	10/22	Frank Carbone	10/30

**Anniversary Wishes to:**

Bob Lynne Kerber	9/02	David & Phyllis Idell	9/22
Herb & Tracie Carpenter	10/07		

# International Lighthouse News

## Inishtrahull Island

### Emigrants last sight of the homes they were leaving



Inishtrahull Island, Malin Head, Co Donegal, the most northerly point of the country and the last sign of Ireland that most who emigrated to America from Derry ever saw. This beautiful island, once home to a thriving fishing population, has two high ends on which are situated a current and a historic lighthouse and a low fertile plateau that links them. It lies 10km north-east of Malin Head and is your last stop if you are sailing the 1,000-plus kilometres to Iceland, if you are so inclined. Inis Trá Tholl translates as the island of the hollow beach and flanked by those two pinnacles, east and west, it is an exact topographical description. Strictly speaking, but we don't need to be strict - this is an amicable column, the most northerly point is a further kilometre away at the Tor Beg rocks. These inhospitable crags were once the target for derring-do currach locals who raced there and back for sport.

Inishtrahull's claim to fame is twofold. First, its distinctive latitude and second its antiquity. Its rocks are 1.7 billion years old. This should impress anyone except perhaps for a few DUP creationists. The distinctive metamorphic ochre hues of its gneiss are nearly half as old as the planet itself. However, they do not form part of the main geology of the country which is estimated at around 600 million years old. The Inishtrahull gneiss actually is kin to Greenland and parts of Scandinavia. Of course, in the mere blip of time that it has been occupied by humankind, it is as Irish as Drimoleague. The population of Inishtrahull peaked at 80 people in 1911 but by 1936 was down to four. Thereafter, numbers were more or less static until 1986 when the last person left. Since then there have been no permanent inhabitants, just a lighthouse maintenance crew that travels twice yearly for a few days.

The first lighthouse was built in 1812 and was replaced in 1958 when the new lighthouse came into service.

For all shipping coming around the north of the country, the flashing light from Inishtrahull was and still is a vital navigational aid. Such was its importance to international shipping that Lloyd's of London bought the island and leased back land to the locals. Lloyd's later sold the island to Irish Lights. Locals were employed by the firm including 100-year-old Barney Biddy James who used the semaphore system of flag signaling to communicate with the mainland.

One reason advanced for the depopulation of the island was over-fishing by foreign trawlers. In the island's heyday, the fishermen were renowned for their turbot catches, which would frequently end up in markets in Scotland the same day as the men rowed out to meet a passing steamer. At the turn of the previous century the school had one teacher and was sometimes used for dances when boatloads would come over from the mainland.

In Sheila McClay's book *Tar Isteach: A Walk Down Memory Lane* she writes that though life was tough, there was a great sense of community. "One of this area's most famous singers was from the island - John Donovan who sang 'My Lovely Irish Rose'." The families lived in the centre of the island where they grew corn and potatoes. They kept sheep, goats, cows and chickens. Diets were supplemented by dulse and carrageen moss. The islanders were subsistent and a great variety of trades ensured they survived.

Hardly a ship passed by without the men rowing out to barter their produce for knives, ropes, alcohol or tobacco.

Inishtrahull was the very last sight of Ireland for many people emigrating to the US from Derry over the years. The flashing light of the lighthouse was a poignant reminder of the homes they were leaving.

One emigrant wrote: "The voyage was quite pleasant for a while. There was, however, one milestone to pass, Inishtrahull lighthouse off the coast of Donegal was the last glimpse emigrants would have of Ireland and everyone stayed on deck until it disappeared."

How to get there: In the summer months, a charter boat departs from Bunagee pier in Co Donegal, with passengers for Inishtrahull. Cost €15; [www.donegalanglingholidays.com](http://www.donegalanglingholidays.com). The Irish Examiner travelled courtesy of the Commissioner of Irish Lights.

**Just for fun....can you guess which lighthouse I am in?**



If you think you know you can e-mail me  
July/August answer: Cape Poge, Martha's Vineyard, MA

**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: [seagirltlight@gmail.com](mailto:seagirltlight@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 LHHC&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.