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Friends of Wood Island Lighthouse

woodislandlighthouse.org

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[Bill Edmunds](#) - photographer

[NEWSLETTER ARCHIVE](#)

Newsletters are published six times a year, April, May, June, July, Fall and Winter.

Fall 2005

Friends of Wood Island Lighthouse Newsletter

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From the Executive Committee

The EC would like to give a special *Thank You* to Eve McPheeters at the Geranium Gift Shop in Biddeford Pool. She has continually supported FOWIL by selling Wood Island Lighthouse items in her store at full benefit to FOWIL.



Eve McPheeters and Judy MacGillivray

WHO IS THIS?



Cliff Trebilcock
Keeper 1970-72

Perhaps you have seen Cliff around as he has come on many tours over the last two summers. Visitors are very excited to have a chance to talk with a Keeper.

We look forward to introducing our "Logo" in the Winter Newsletter. Design has been underway with the help of Anne Bassett and should be complete shortly. A Wood Island Lighthouse logo will give us the opportunity to have things as hats and shirts made for sale to benefit the restoration. Work to permission from the Maine Historical Preservation Commission for the construction in the tower is underway, hopefully with a start date of next year. We have been very happy with the swell of enthusiasm that has embraced the Wood Island Lighthouse. Many people are learning of this special historical site everyday. We are sure that the hundreds of volunteer hours which have gone into this effort have been worthwhile.

WOOD ISLAND KEEPER FINDS FOWIL

SUMMER TOURS

The very first visitor to Wood Island this year was Tom Crowther, a descendent of Edwin Tarbox Keeper 1865-1872 (see the [April Newsletter](#)) Tom is accompanied by Ruth Nason, Keeper Tarbox's great, great, granddaughter. Keeper Tarbox had 11 children.



This was a very busy season for the Captain, Crew and Hosts of *Light Runner* who made tours to Wood Island possible.

Many new people discovered this wonderful opportunity to visit an island lighthouse. 58 trips took 908 visitors to Wood Island to learn about one of America's maritime treasures.

Plans are underway to revamp the tour system next year to make it more convenient for both our visitors and the community which hosts the landing for *Light Runner*.



Our Keeper's List was complete except for four years - 1982-1986. This summer Phillip and Brenda Brothwell were surfing the web looking for photos of Wood Island and they found our Web site and got in touch with FOWIL. Phillip and Brenda kept the light from October 1983-October 1985. They told us that at that time, families with children were not allowed to keep the light at Wood Island for this reason Phillip and Brenda had to leave their position a bit early as Brenda was expecting. Before his tour of duty at Wood Island, Phillip was involved with the laying of electric cable to many of Coast Guard District One's Lighthouses. As Keepers, the Brothwells will join the list of honorary members of FOWIL as an honor for us to have them return to Wood Island.

FALL WORK DAY

An exciting, wet trip out to Wood Island aboard *Light Runner* evolved in a picture perfect WORK DAY. Eighteen people came to work hard and help Wood Island Lighthouse by doing clean-up and repair of the boardwalk, dwelling and tower.

Large logs were cut up and moved to the landward side of the boardwalk so they wouldn't ram and walkway in a storm next winter.

The most fun was seeing Paddy get power washed!

[WORK DAY PHOTOS](#)

OUTREACH PROGRAM

Our new Outreach program is underway. It offers a great presentation for groups wanting to know more about Wood Island Lighthouse and the Friends of Wood Island Lighthouse. A beautifully made DVD shows what a tour to the lighthouse is like, a great display board gives visual representation to what is being done.

FOWIL. Presenters Diane Noble and Kathleen White give an interesting presentation giving a glimpse into the history, our boat *Light Runner*, tours and how they are involved. They recently gave a presentation to about 40 people in the Supper Club of West Point Pepperill.

Click on [OUTREACH](#) for more information.



Kathleen White represents FOWIL at the opening of the American Lighthouse Museum in Wells. Tim Harrison (on left) is the president of the American Lighthouse Foundation. Rear Admiral David Pekoske is commander of the First Coast Guard District.

SHIPWRECK

On December 16th, 1856, the 156 ton American Schooner *Washington*, in route from Baltimore to Bath with a cargo of ship building supplies - oak plank, pine decking and locust knee rails, wrecked on the west side of Wood Island. She was a total loss.

At 10 am on Sunday morning during a snow storm, the *Washington* anchored under the lee of Wood Island. Between 6 and 7 pm she commenced dragging both anchors and soon was grounded on the beach west of the Island. On Monday morning, when the tide left her, she was 20 feet above low water mark and buried some 5 feet in the sand. Captain and crew escaped and the cargo was most likely rescued.

OIL HOUSE

The little stone 'Oil House' was built on Wood Island in 1903 to house the flammable kerosene a new fuel at the time, for powering the light. The 'Oil House' seems a bit of a misnomer as it wasn't built for storing oil. It was built for storing oil (whale oil, rapeseed oil, etc.) was no longer in use and had been replaced by diesel kerosene. In the early 1960s when the light was powered by diesel generators, the 'Oil House' became known as the 'Kerosene House'. In the 1970s it was designated as the 'Paint Locker' or 'Paint Shed'. All flammables were to be stored there. Keeper Trebilcock tells us that in the winter, many needed flammables, such as gas for the boat motor, didn't make it to their designated storage facility "Paint Locker" (Coast Guard inspections were rare in the winter.) The light was powered by electricity from the mainland at that time. In the mid 1980s the structure didn't have any name at all and was hardly used. Now in the twenty-first century, the little stone building has reclaimed its original name - the Wood Island "Oil House".

In the Spring of 2004, the 'Oil House' at Wood Island was almost completely covered with poison ivy and almost inaccessible due to a tremendous overgrowth of ivy around it.

Now, after much work, the poison ivy, tall weeds and destructive lichens are removed and it stands ready for structural repair and new paint.

	BEFORE	AFTER	
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The nameplate of this ship is in the possession of a family in this area. Hopefully we will get to see it someday!



Web Team: Sean Murphy, Bill Edmunds and Sheri Poftak
Newsletter Team: Sheri Poftak, Bill Edmunds and contributors

The Friends of Wood Island Lighthouse

is a chapter of the American Lighthouse Foundation. It was formed in the Spring of 2003 specifically to preserve and restore the Wood Island Light Station. Please visit our web site for information.

www.woodislandlighthouse.org

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photo by Sean Murphy