

# Top Lantern Housing of Cape Pogue Light Returned By Helicopter After Refurbishing

By MARK ALAN LOVEWELL

The newly restored top lantern housing was returned to the Cape Pogue Lighthouse on Tuesday morning. The top has been missing since October, when it was taken to an East Hartford workshop for repairs. Workers with Able Rigging and Transfer Inc. of East Hartford scraped the housing and removed black, lead-based paint. They repaired and repainted the lantern housing.

The black top was returned to Cape Pogue by a 1,100 horsepower B Model Huey helicopter, built in 1961. The wrapped package was estimated to weigh more than 2,500 pounds.

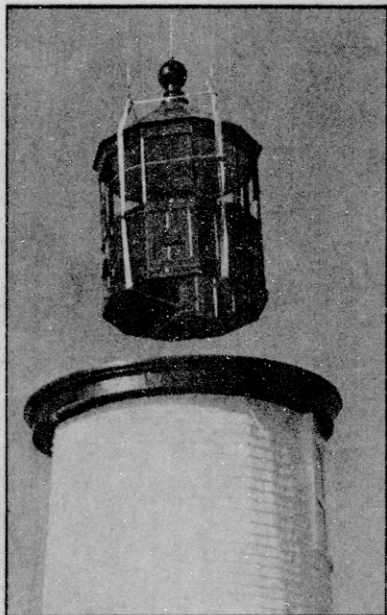
No one knows for certain how old the housing is, although it is likely to be at least 100 years old. David Belcher of The Trustees of Reservations said a lighthouse has been in the vicinity for 190 years. Over the years it has been removed and rebuilt.

In the absence of the lighthouse beacon, a temporary beacon was placed on the beach to aid passing vessels.

Russak Restoration of Portland, Conn., was responsible for the restoration of the wooden lighthouse while the top was off for repair. Eric Russak said when he first started working on the tower two months ago, the whole building would wobble as his crew went about their business. "We rebuilt the top, put new crown molding all around," he said. The top of the wooden structure was then coated with an epoxy roofing system.

He said his firm normally works on church towers as steeplejacks, but this is their first lighthouse. "We worked on a windmill at Fisher's Island," he said.

The project costs \$70,473 and is being paid for by the U.S. Coast Guard. The Trustees of Reservations has a lease arrangement with the Coast Guard to maintain the building. Superintendent Chris Kennedy of the Trustees said the organization has put \$15,000 into the maintenance of the Island's outermost lighthouse so far this year. There is a plan to sheet rock the interior of the building. As in past summers, Mr.



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Kennedy said, they will open the lighthouse to the public for tours during the summer.

The Trustees of Reservations has been taking a larger interest in the management of lighthouses. The organization has already put \$29,000 into painting the Great Point Light on Nantucket. They have a similar lease arrangement with the Coast Guard over the management of that historic building.

Restoring the old lighthouse wasn't all work. Mr. Russak said that he and his crew of three had some memorable fun earlier in the season when they broke for lunch. "We went fishing," he said. "We caught small stripers."

## "Job Well Done"

Exterior Restoration By  
Eric Russak, Kevin Wall,  
Sam Doherty, Guy Cone  
Michael Osborne,  
Custom Mill work By  
Thomas Kennedy  
Completed December 1997